



Housing Needs

— Assessment

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Drafted by
HelpSeeker Technologies



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Executive Summary	3
External Factors Driving Housing Pressures	3
Internal Demographic Shifts Compounding Housing Needs	4
Marginalized Groups Bearing Brunt of Crisis	4
Eroding Affordability and Escalating Core Housing Need	5
What is a Housing Needs Assessment?	8
Methodology	9
Data Sources	9
Calculated Metrics	9
Alignment with Government of Alberta Housing Needs Assessments	10
Data Limitations	10
Covid Impacts	11
Data Age and Recent Market Trends.....	11
Challenges with CMHC Data.....	11
Accuracy of Projections	12
Community Context	13
External Factors influencing local housing market	13
Interest rates	13
Economy and Labour.....	14
Cost of Living	14
Consumer Price Index and Wages.....	15
Provincial Population Growth	17
Current Policy Challenges and Initiatives	18
Current Challenges	18
Policy and Strategic Direction	19
Goals for Housing.....	20
Housing Initiatives to date	21
Population and Demographic Characteristics	24
Population Growth.....	24
Age	25
Median Age	28
Ethnicity	30
Indigenous Identity	31
Immigration	32
Mobility - 1 year ago	33
Education	34
Income	34

Household Income Characteristics.....	34
Workforce Profile	38
Labour force participation and employment rate.....	38
Industries	39
Commuting.....	40
Household and Family Characteristics	41
Household Size	41
Household Type	41
Tenure	43
Subsidized Housing.....	44
Affordability.....	45
Indigenous Population.....	45
Owners vs Renters.....	46
Housing Characteristics	46
Age	47
Unit Sizes	50
Housing Starts.....	50
Vacancy Rate.....	53
Secondary Suites and Accessory Dwelling Units.....	55
Housing Cost.....	56
Housing Sales and Inventory	60
Rental Market	61
Non-Market and Rental Housing Inventory.....	64
Supply.....	64
Providers.....	64
Purpose Built Rental.....	65
No Shelter Or Transitional Housing	66
Current Housing Need	67
Adequacy, Suitability and Affordability	67
Core Housing need	68
Housing Need Projections.....	73
Homelessness	78
Glossary of Terms.....	80
Appendix A: Projections of Need Under Government of Alberta Requirements.....	84

Executive Summary

The housing affordability crisis in Okotoks, driven by a complex interplay of external and internal factors, has reached a critical juncture. This Executive Summary highlights the multifaceted challenges the community faces due to rising living costs and shifting demographics. Externally, a province-wide inflation spike, urban growth radiating from Calgary, and significant immigrant influxes are intensifying housing pressures. Internally, Okotoks is experiencing demographic shifts, particularly an aging population and an increase in single-parent and low-income households, further straining housing resources.

As affordability erodes, marginalized groups are disproportionately impacted, underscoring the urgent need for innovative policies and investments to safeguard housing access and economic stability for the community's most vulnerable members.

External Factors Driving Housing Pressures

Okotoks is grappling with heightened housing affordability pressures stemming from a confluence of external factors impacting the province and broader Calgary region

- A province-wide escalating cost of living crisis, with Alberta's inflation rate increasing to 3.4% as of January 2024, exceeding the national average of 2.8%. This spike was heavily driven by a 119.9% year-over-year increase in electricity prices.
- The significant influx of new residents to Alberta and the Calgary region is diminishing Okotoks housing supply and driving up property values while straining local infrastructure.
- This is particularly noticeable in Okotoks, where, despite higher interest rates exerting a dampening effect on the Canadian housing market nationally, home prices have continued to rise due to low inventory levels and substantial inflows of new residents to Alberta. This trend is underscored by recent data from January 1, 2024, which shows Alberta's population at 4,800,768. This marks a notable acceleration in growth, with an increase of 202,324 people, or 4.4%, over the preceding 12 months. This surge is significantly higher than the previous year's growth rate of 3.0% and represents the highest annual growth rate since 1981.
- Furthermore, Alberta was the only province to register large net inflows of interprovincial migrants in 2023, contributing an unprecedented 55,107 people—the largest such gain nationally since records began in 1972.

Internal Demographic Shifts Compounding Housing Needs

Concurrent with these external forces, Okotoks is being reshaped by substantial internal demographic shifts that are further compounding its affordable housing crisis

- Okotoks is experiencing a demographic shift towards an aging population that will intensify pressures on the community to provide affordable, suitable seniors' housing options. The prevalence of this aging trend is evident - the seniors aged 65+ population nearly quadrupled from just 960 individuals (5.6% of the total) in 2006 to 4,505 (14.8%) by 2021. This cohort is projected to account for 19.8% of Okotoks' total population by 2031.
- The number of seniors aged 65 and over who live alone more than doubled from 455 to 735 between the shorter 2016-2021 period alone.
- While recent years saw a dampening of Okotoks' overall population growth trajectory due to limited water availability to support growth, forecasts indicate the population will surge by 21% from 2021 levels to reach 36,818 residents by 2031.
- Specifically, the impending completion of a new water pipeline project is expected to enable this projected population growth by expanding capacity for increased housing, transportation, utilities and public services to meet escalating demands.

Marginalized Groups Bearing Brunt of Crisis

As this crisis has intensified, certain vulnerable segments of Okotoks' population have borne the brunt of rising unaffordability and inadequate housing options

- Lone parent female-led families faced economic headwinds, with median incomes of just \$76,000 in 2021, compared to \$99,000 for lone parent male-led families. Moreover, the prevalence of lone-parent female households grew over that period from 835 to 925 families.
- Single person households' incomes dropped from \$65,000 to just \$57,200 between 2016-2021.
- The majority of rental households are in the Low Income bracket, with 455 households (31.2%) affording shelter costs between \$585 and \$1,463 per month.
- Low income rate for seniors aged 65 and over increased from 4.7% to 5.8% between 2016-2021, indicating more of Okotoks' elderly residents were pushed into poverty during this period.

- Renters faced high rates of core housing need compared to homeowners - 8.9% for tenant households versus only 2.3% of owners in 2021. Renters aged 55-64 (15.1%) are the most likely to be in core housing need, followed by youth under 17 (6.5%) and seniors aged 65+ (6.4%)

Eroding Affordability and Escalating Core Housing Need

As this multi-faceted housing crisis has engulfed the community, the ability for residents to afford suitable shelter has deteriorated

- From 2016 to 2024, Alberta experienced significant cost increases across energy (77.3%), water, fuel and electricity (57.4%), gasoline (75.9%), shelter (32.4%), and food (31.7%), while median household incomes in Okotoks grew by only 0.7%, rising from \$116,163 to \$117,000 between 2016 and 2021. Overall shelter costs increased by 9% from 2016 to 2021 in Okotoks.
- The income stagnation has begun impacting even traditionally higher-earning households, with median incomes for couples without children declining from \$118,000 to \$107,000 between 2016-2021.
- With housing costs detaching from income realities, 35.7% of Okotoks renters faced unaffordable shelter costs as of 2021, compared to 14.2% of owner households.

This cascading affordability crisis has resulted in an escalating number of households being pushed into core housing need, unable to access affordable housing that meets adequacy and suitability standards

- With maximum affordable rents at just \$1,463 per month for low-income households as of 2021 census data, 1,755 renter families already face affordability risks. Of those, 335 households have slipped into core housing need status.
- In 2021 alone, 3.2% of all households in Okotoks experienced core housing need due to escalating housing costs and insufficient income to pay the rent/mortgage. Cost of living escalations since 2021 mean this figure is likely much higher today.
- Single mother-led households were among the most vulnerable, with 6.7% falling into core need, followed closely by 5.2% of all woman-led family households unable to secure adequate affordable housing.
- Projections indicate the total number of Okotoks households in core housing need will surge by 50% over the coming decade, reaching 456 by 2031.

- This rise will be driven by a 74% increase in the number of very low-income households in core need (from 90 to 157), as well as a 39% spike in low-income households (from 215 to 299) over that period.
- Breaking it down further, single person households in core need are expected to grow by 21% from 150 to 181, while larger households of 4-5 persons will see a 235% surge from just 40 to 134 families unable to access affordable housing by 2031.
- Looking at projected housing tenures, owner households in core need are forecast to rise by 33% to 250 by 2031. However, renter households in core need will see nearly double that rate of increase at 47%, ballooning to 206 - underscoring how this crisis is disproportionately impacting and displacing the Town's most precariously housed tenant population.

Okotoks has a current deficit of 183 non-market units, which is projected to increase to 279 units by 2031 based on core housing need figures

- Community housing shows the highest demand with a current deficit of 71 units, projected to increase to 98 units in 2031. This is followed by housing geared towards seniors with a current deficit of 33 units, projected to increase to 56 units by 2031.
- Non-market affordable housing has a current deficit of 35 units, projected to increase to 50 units by 2031. Households in need of rent supplement are currently 22, projected to increase to 50 in 2031.
- These deficits reflect core housing need figures and are assumed to be underestimated due to two key factors: (1) CERB (Canada Emergency Response Benefit) provided by the federal government artificially inflated incomes during the 2021 federal census; (2) High inflation experienced in recent years has significantly impacted housing affordability.
- A higher proportional increase in 1 and 2 person households, coupled with a growing seniors population and trends in seniors living alone, highlights the need for smaller unit sizes that incorporate universal design principles that support aging in place.

In conclusion, the Town of Okotoks is facing a severe housing affordability crisis driven by a complex interplay of external pressures and internal demographic shifts. As the community grapples with the challenges of rising costs, stagnant incomes, and a growing population, it is crucial that local leaders and stakeholders work together to develop and implement innovative solutions. This will require a multi-faceted approach that addresses both the immediate needs of those most vulnerable to the crisis, as well as the longer-term systemic issues that have contributed to the problem.

Collaboration with higher levels of government, non-profit organizations, and the private sector will be essential to access the necessary resources, expertise, and funding to create a more diverse and inclusive housing market. Careful planning around the water pipeline project and

other infrastructure investments will also be critical to ensure that growth is managed sustainably and equitably.

Ultimately, by taking proactive measures to address the housing affordability crisis, Okotoks has the opportunity to build a more resilient, vibrant, and inclusive community that provides access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing for all its residents. The challenges are significant, but with the right vision, leadership, and collective action, Okotoks can emerge from this crisis stronger and more united than ever before.

What is a Housing Needs Assessment?

A housing needs assessment is a comprehensive analysis of the current and future housing requirements of a particular community or region. It involves studying the existing housing supply, the demographic, economic, and housing demand trends, and the potential impacts of these trends on future housing needs.

The outcome of a housing needs assessment is a comprehensive report that presents an in-depth analysis of the current housing situation and unmet needs.

Methodology

Data Sources

The data utilized in the report is derived from a collection of sources to ensure accuracy and comprehensive coverage of the subject matter. Primarily, the data is sourced from Statistics Canada and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Additionally, to ensure a localized and specific understanding of the housing situation in Okotoks, data provided directly by the Town of Okotoks and Westwinds Communities has been included. This amalgamation of data from national, sector-specific, and local sources allows for a robust and comprehensive analysis of Okotoks's housing needs. Other sources for this report include the Government of Alberta Economic Outlook, population statistics, and current provincial population projections, the Calgary Real Estate Board, and RentFaster.ca for market statistics. All data is assumed to be from Statistics Canada unless otherwise referenced.

The focus of the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) has predominantly been on quantitative data, as the Town is embarking on extensive community engagement for a social needs strategy that will provide qualitative information to supplement the findings of this report. This HNA was shared with the local housing management body, Westwinds Communities, for their review and critical feedback.

Calculated Metrics

Housing Assessment Resource Tool (HART)

The Housing Assessment Resource Tool (HART), developed at the University of British Columbia and endorsed by CMHC, utilizes an equity-based approach to assess housing needs by focusing on household income. This tool, a collaboration between UBC and Statistics Canada, standardizes census data to measure core housing need and affordability across various income categories, household sizes, and priority populations.

This assessment uses the Housing Assessment Resources Tools (HART) methodology, which is based on a method that is simple, comparable, equitable and replicable. With wide adoption across Canada, communities can identify their housing need now and in the future, pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses in how their current housing stock meets the community's needs, compare progress to neighbouring and similar communities in Canada, and address need where it is most dire.

The HART methodology works by:

1. Identifying deficit, based on existing residents and stock, using the latest available census data, by

- a. Income category//maximum affordable housing cost
 - b. Household size
 - c. Priority population
2. Estimating future housing need based on population projections

[A full description of the HART Methodology can be found here.](#)

Straight-Line Projections

The projections for numbers up to year 2031 were created using a "line of best fit" method to align with the methodology used in HART. This method involves plotting the data points from the 2011, 2016, and 2021 census data on a graph and drawing a line that best represents the trend of these data points. This line is then extended to 2031 to estimate the future housing needs.

The Town of Okotoks is currently working on more nuanced projections of key demographic statistics that accounts for multiple influences on population change. However, for the purposes of this report, straight line projections provide a strong foundation upon which to build.

Alignment with Government of Alberta Housing Needs Assessments

The HART methodology was launched in 2023 and is quickly becoming the dominant methodology to identify and project future housing needs. However, in 2022 the Government of Alberta (GOA) launched a provincial template to assist municipalities in quantifying housing needs. While the HART methodology focuses on an equity-based approach using household income and priority populations to understand housing needs, the GOA methodology projects housing needs based on non-market housing type. The data throughout this report aligned with the information requested by the province through their needs assessment template.

[Appendix A](#) summarizes the projections of need based on the provincial methodology.

Data Limitations

Despite the limitations described below, this housing needs assessment provides a valuable overview of the current and future housing needs in Okotoks and will serve as a useful tool for policy-making and planning.

Covid Impacts

The pandemic has significantly impacted the housing market. Data sources for this report may not fully capture the rapid changes, leading to the possibility of under or overestimating housing needs. COVID-19 has caused shifts in housing preferences, such as increased demand for low-cost, spacious and remote work-friendly homes, which may not be represented in the data. Economic uncertainty due to the pandemic has influenced individuals' ability to afford housing, making it difficult to forecast future housing affordability and demand. Migration patterns have also been affected, with some moving away from densely populated areas, which could impact the demand and supply dynamics in Okotoks.

It is important to note that the situation is fluid, and the housing needs may change as the effects of the pandemic continue to unfold. We recommend regular updates to the housing needs assessment to reflect these changes.

Data Age and Recent Market Trends

Another limitation of this assessment is the age of the data. The most recent census data available is from 2021, as Statistics Canada publishes it every five years. Therefore, the data does not fully capture the changes that have occurred in the housing market in Okotoks after 2021.

This gap could lead to inaccuracies in the assessment of current housing needs. For instance, if there has been a significant increase in population or a change in the economic conditions since the last census, the current housing demand could be underestimated or overestimated.

Challenges with CMHC Data

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) survey reports 98 primary rental units in Okotoks in 2023. This represents less than 10% of all renter households in Okotoks. This means that over 90% of renter households are accessing housing in the secondary market, where rental rates are typically higher. Consequently, a significant portion of households, particularly those employed in lower-income retail jobs who are likely renters, are spending more than 30% of their income on shelter.

A significant portion of the primary rental stock in Okotoks was developed over 40 years ago, primarily in the 1970s and 1980s. The age of these units can skew data regarding average rental rates and the condition of available housing.

The reported 3.7% vacancy rate for 2023 contrasts sharply with the experiences of local landlords and the scant number of listings on platforms such as RentFaster. This discrepancy suggests that the official figures may not accurately reflect current market conditions.

For instance, in 2023, 70 new units of purpose-built rental were added in Okotoks. Despite a small segment of these units being below the following market rates—\$1,700 per month for a 2-

bedroom and \$2,000 for a 3-bedroom, plus water costs—these figures are substantially higher than those reported in the CMHC survey. Such disparities pose significant challenges for the financial feasibility of below-market housing projects.

The CMHC survey is conducted annually in October. However, the timing of this survey can miss significant market developments. For example, the aforementioned 70 units, completed between late 2022 and spring 2023 and financed by CMHC, were not included in the 2023 survey. Additionally, despite these new additions, the survey reports a decline in the number of units from October 2022 to October 2023, which is inaccurate. This oversight is particularly concerning given that CMHC financed these units, suggesting a significant lag in the integration of their financing and survey data.

Accuracy of Projections

It is important to note that while the straight-line projection method provides a general trend of future housing needs, it may not accurately represent the true picture. This method does not consider specific local factors, such as planned developments, economic changes, or shifts in population growth rates.

The Town of Okotoks is currently working on a more nuanced projection model to better consider these local factors and provide a more accurate forecast of future housing needs. Therefore, the projections provided in this report should be considered as a starting point.

Community Context

Okotoks is a vibrant community that is home to over 30,000 residents that is situated near the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The community is located within the broader Calgary Metropolitan Region, approximately 20 kilometres south of Calgary. Its history traces back to the First Nations people, the original occupants of the land. Okotoks is recognized for its environmental stewardship, sports, recreational facilities, arts, and culture, and as a centre for small business and entrepreneurship.

A notable number of its residents commute to Calgary for employment, but Okotoks maintains a strong local community, with active civic participation and well-attended events. Downtown Okotoks forms the economic and cultural core of the town, offering a blend of institutional, office, entertainment, retail, and dining experiences. It hosts numerous community events throughout the year, fostering a vibrant atmosphere.

External Factors influencing local housing market

The local housing market in Okotoks, Alberta, is shaped by multiple factors including the overall health of the Canadian economy, dramatic changes in interest rates, immigration, inflation and demographic trends. Sharply increasing interest rates, climbing from 1.25% in 2022 to 5.25% in 2024, have tightened mortgage affordability. Economic fluctuations are impacting consumer confidence and disposable income, with the province's economy forecasted to grow, boosting employment but also facing periods of economic moderation. The cost of living in Alberta, particularly influenced by rising inflation rates and housing costs, is pushing residents from large urban centres such as Calgary to smaller communities such as Okotoks, where housing prices for certain housing types can sometimes be slightly more affordable. Moreover, significant population growth due to both immigration and inter-provincial migration is intensifying housing demand.

Interest rates

The Canadian economy has faced significant challenges from elevated interest rates, resulting in reduced consumer spending. Interest rates surged from 1.25% in 2022 to 4.75% in 2023, a 280% increase, and slightly increased to 5.25% in 2024, an 11% rise.

Table 1: Interest rate and rate of change, Canada, 2022-2024

Year	Interest Rate	% Change
2022	1.25	
2023	4.75	280%
2024	5.25	11%

Higher borrowing costs mean that fewer people can afford to take out new mortgages or refinance existing ones, leading to a slowdown in housing demand. This results in fewer home sales and can cause home prices to stabilize or even decline, especially in markets that were previously overheated. Additionally, higher interest rates can deter investment in real estate, further reducing demand and impacting overall market activity.

However, despite the dampening effect of higher interest rates on the Canadian housing market, home prices have continued to rise in Okotoks due to low inventory and significant immigration into Alberta. Even with increased borrowing costs making it more difficult for new buyers to enter the market, the scarcity of available homes has maintained upward pressure on prices.

Economy and Labour

The economic forecasts indicate a promising but varied scenario for the coming years in terms of GDP growth, employment changes, and unemployment rates. In 2025, Alberta is expected to see a significant uptick in economic growth with a 3.3% increase in real GDP, likely driven by continued strong performance in the energy sector. Employment growth is expected to remain robust in the same year, increasing by 3.1%, which should positively influence the housing market by increasing demand through higher incomes and job security. However, the economic growth rate is forecasted to moderate to 2.8% and 2.6% in 2026 and 2027, respectively, with corresponding declines in employment growth to 2.5% and 2.0%. The unemployment rate is projected to gradually decrease from 6.5% in 2024 to 5.6% by 2027.

Table 2: Forecaster economic growth (real GDP), employment rate growth, and unemployment rate, 2024-2027

Calendar year	2024 Forecast	2025 Forecast	2026 Forecast	2027 Forecast
Economic growth (% change in real GDP)	2.9	3.3	2.8	2.6
Employment (% change)	3	3.1	2.5	2
Unemployment rate (%)	6.5	6	5.8	5.6

This economic trajectory suggests that while Alberta will likely continue to outperform compared to other regions, the housing market may face periods of intense pressure due to spikes in demand during peak economic performance followed by stabilization that could temper these pressures. Managing this fluctuation effectively will be key to maintaining a healthy housing market that accommodates growth without leading to unsustainable price increases or significant affordability issues.

Cost of Living

Okotoks is experiencing heightened housing pressures due to several factors, including a province-wide increase in the cost of living. As of January 2024, Alberta's inflation rate climbed

to 3.4%, surpassing the national average of 2.8%, influenced notably by a dramatic 119.9% rise in electricity prices from the previous year. Nearby Calgary recorded an inflation rate of 4.1% in the same month—the highest among major Canadian cities—driven primarily by soaring rental prices and shelter costs, which spiked by 12.2% over the year. ¹

Consumer Price Index and Wages

The provided chart shows the trend of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in Alberta from January 2011 to March 2024, using 2011 as the base year (index = 100). The data reveals a significant peak around early 2022, indicating a rapid increase in consumer prices during this period, which then appears to stabilize with some fluctuations afterward. This peak correlates with widespread reports of inflation spikes post-pandemic due to supply chain disruptions, increased consumer demand, and various economic stimuli. This visual representation emphasizes the impact of external economic factors on the cost of living, with implications for household budgets and spending within the province.

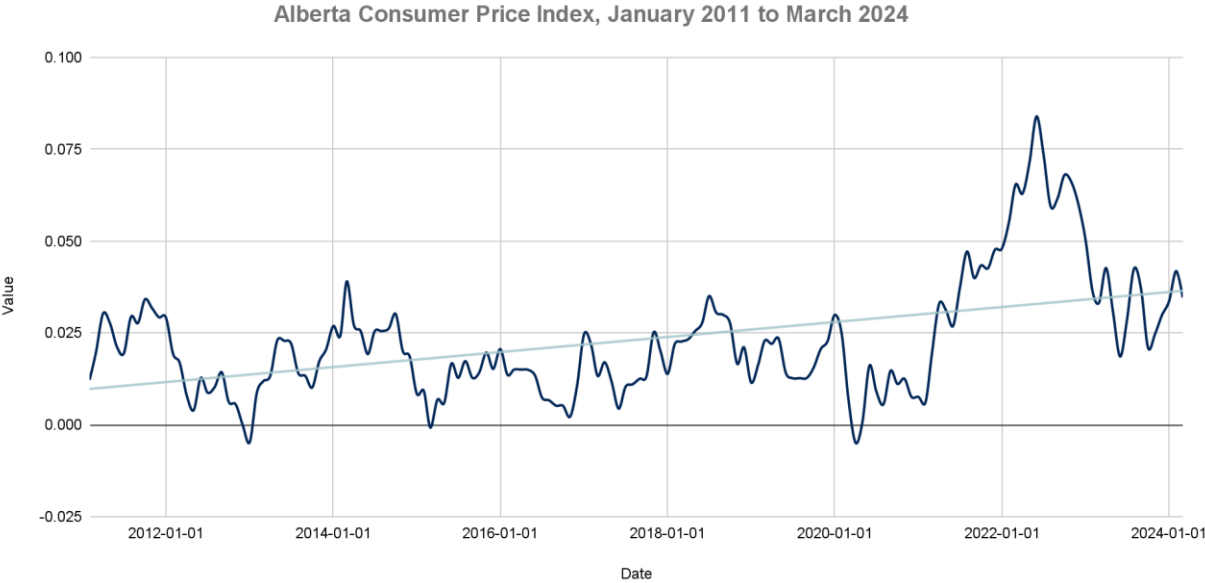


Figure 1: Alberta consumer price index, January 2011-March 2024

From July 2016 to July 2023, Alberta witnessed substantial cost increases in several sectors, notably in energy, which surged by 77.3%, and water, fuel, and electricity, with a 57.4% rise. Gasoline prices also climbed sharply by 75.9%, contributing to an overall 39.8% hike in transportation costs. Shelter and food expenses increased by 32.4% and 31.7% during this period respectively, while median household income only grew by a marginal 0.7% from 2016 to 2021. These stark disparities underscore significant affordability challenges, particularly for lower-income residents grappling with the rising costs of basic necessities.

¹ Global News. (2024, January). Alberta & Calgary inflation rates January 2024. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/10305854/alberta-calgary-inflation-rates-jan-2024/>

Percentage Change Consumer Price Index in Alberta by product type and median income (AT) in Okotoks, July 2016 - July 2023

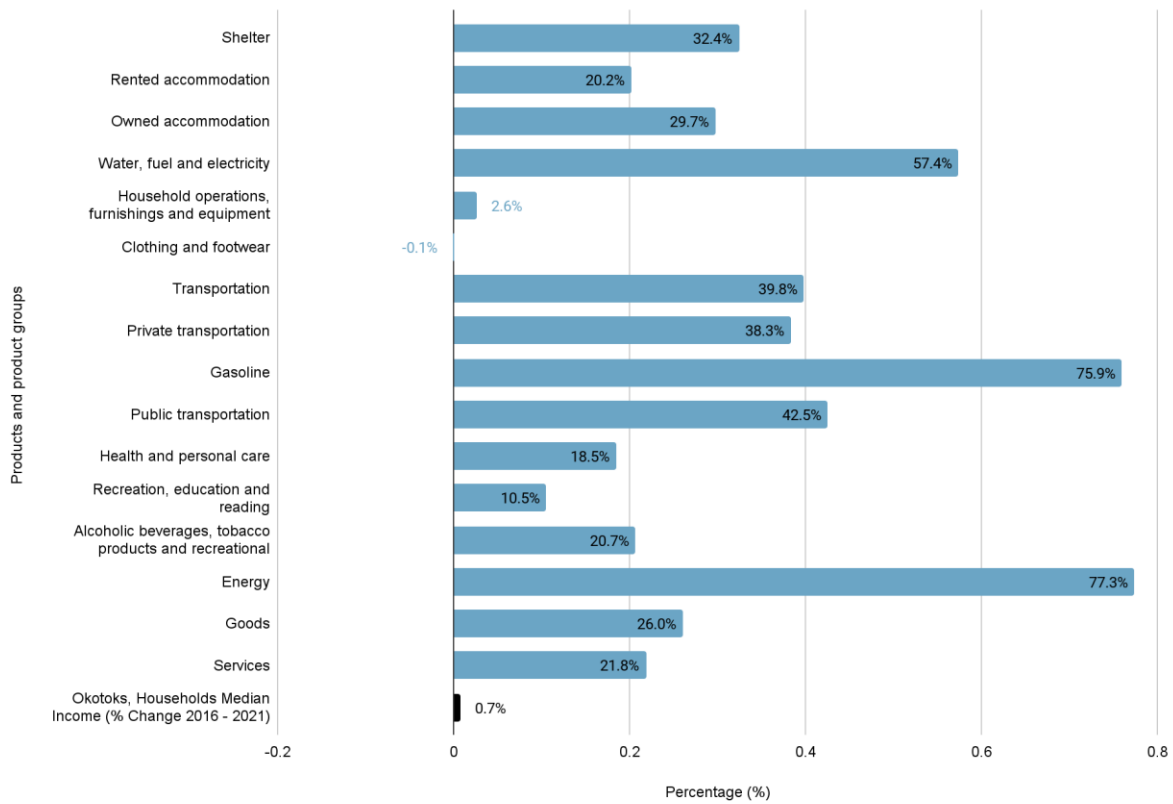


Figure 2: Percentage change in Alberta consumer price index by product type and median after-tax income, Okotoks, July 2016-July 2023

The escalating cost of living in Alberta, particularly due to rising inflation and shelter costs, is significantly impacting the housing market in Okotoks. As residents face increasing financial pressures in major urban centers across Canada, they are seeking more affordable housing alternatives in other regions, such as the Calgary Region. This shift is driving up demand in Okotoks, which is resulting in higher housing prices and reduced availability, as more people look to balance affordability with quality of life outside larger cities.

Provincial Population Growth²

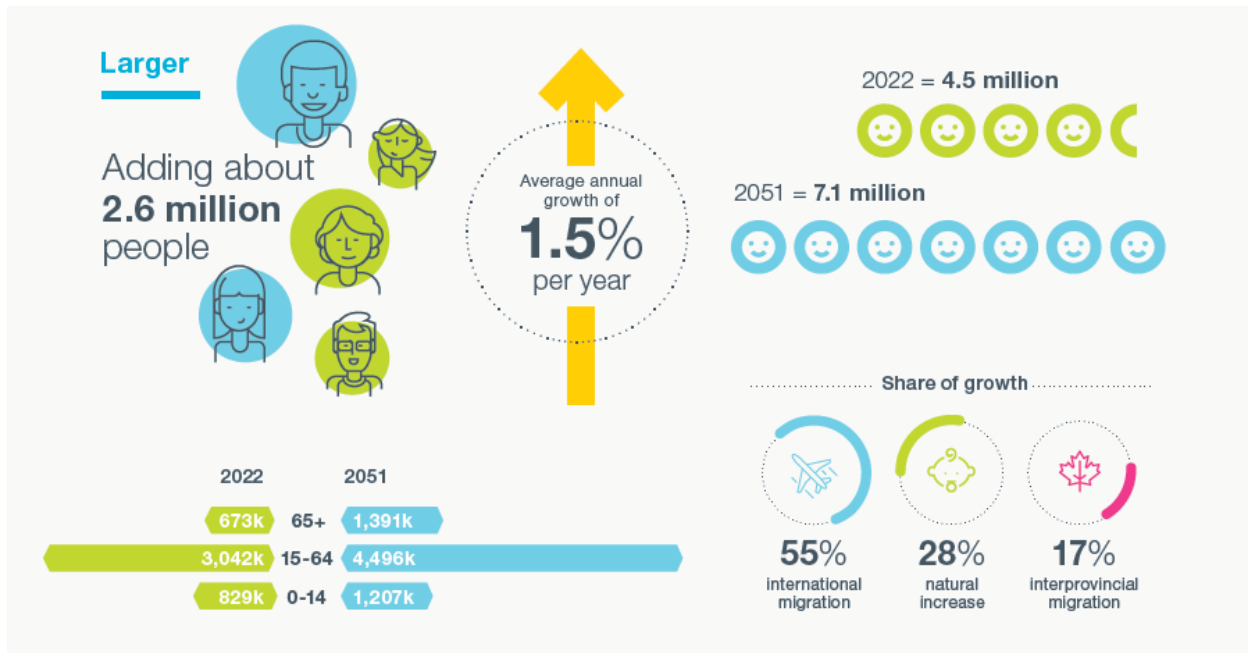
As of January 1, 2024, Alberta's population stood at 4,800,768, marking a notable acceleration in growth with an increase of 202,324 people, or 4.4%, over the preceding 12 months. This surge is significantly higher than the previous year's growth rate of 3.0% and represents the highest annual growth rate since 1981. Notably, Alberta was the only province to register large net inflows of interprovincial migrants in 2023, contributing an unprecedented 55,107 people - the largest such gain nationally since records began in 1972.

This reversal from the trend observed from 2016 to 2021, where more people left the province than arrived, underscores a robust demographic rebound. Projections indicate that by 2051, Alberta could be home to almost 7.1 million people, with an average annual growth rate of about 1.5%. A majority of this expected growth is attributed to migration, with 55% projected to come from international sources and 17% from other Canadian provinces, while natural increase is anticipated to account for the remaining 28% of the growth. Growth is expected to be concentrated in regions with larger urban centres, especially the Edmonton-Calgary Corridor. By 2051, 81% of Albertans are projected to be living in the three census divisions that make up this region, Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton, up from 77% in 2022. This concentrated urban growth will likely result in trickle-down effects for nearby municipalities like Okotoks, driving up property values and potentially exacerbating affordability concerns for first-time homebuyers and low-income families, while also putting significant pressure on infrastructure such as schools, healthcare facilities, and public services, requiring substantial upgrades and strategic investment.

² Government of Alberta. (n.d.). Economic outlook, Population statistics, & Current provincial population projections. Retrieved from

- <https://www.alberta.ca/economic-outlook#:~:text=Real%20GDP%20growth%20is%20forecast,2.7%25%20in%202026%20and%202027>
- <https://www.alberta.ca/population-statistics>
- <https://www.alberta.ca/current-provincial-population-projections>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-population-records-2023-to-2024-data-1.7157110>

By 2051, Alberta is expected to be...



This sustained population increase will likely place continued upward pressure on Alberta's housing market, as demand for residential properties grows in tandem with the rising population, necessitating strategic planning to enhance housing supply and infrastructure to meet future needs. Yet, the housing supply in the region struggles to meet ongoing demand, highlighting the need for new listings and construction to align more closely with migration trends to stabilize the market effectively.

Current Policy Challenges and Initiatives

Current Challenges

Okotoks has several challenges as it strives to meet the housing needs of its growing population.

1. **A primary concern is the availability of land suitable for development**, with land being a finite resource that requires careful management to balance growth with sustainability. The town also faces the challenge of incentivizing the private market to build the diverse types of housing needed to meet demand. This requires effective policy and collaboration with developers to align market-driven projects with the town's housing goals.
2. **The capacity of the non-profit sector to deliver housing solutions** is critical. Non-profits often operate with limited resources and depend on various funding sources to develop and manage affordable housing projects. This leads to another significant hurdle: competition for scarce federal and provincial funding. With many municipalities vying for

the same pots of money, Okotoks must strategically position itself to secure the necessary funds to support its housing initiatives.

3. **Water servicing constraints** further complicate the housing landscape in Okotoks. Since 2010 the Town has had to limit growth based on available water license capacity. This has and continues to influence the Town's housing market placing upward pressure on home prices. A supplemental water line is expected to be complete in 2026 which is expected to alleviate some of this pressure.

These challenges, coupled with those detailed in this report, underscore the need for a customized approach that integrates strategic planning, policy development, active collaboration with various stakeholders, and innovative problem-solving. Creating a sustainable path forward for housing in Okotoks means addressing the immediate constraints, such as land availability, market engagement, non-profit capacity, and funding competition, while also ensuring alignment with the findings in this needs assessment.

Policy and Strategic Direction

The Town of Okotoks has implemented a series of strategic documents outlining a comprehensive housing framework. This framework provides an integrated approach to meeting the varied needs of the town's residents, enhancing living standards through diverse, affordable, and environmentally conscious housing developments to ensure the town's growth is both inclusive and sustainable.

1. The **Municipal Development Plan (MDP)** is the cornerstone of Okotoks' long-term planning, placing a strong emphasis on developing a sustainable and inclusive community. The plan highlights a 'housing first' approach, calling for a variety of housing options that are accessible to individuals and families across all economic backgrounds. The MDP addresses the lack of housing diversity and affordability in Okotoks by setting forth objectives to require housing variety in new neighbourhoods, update regulations to facilitate diverse housing forms, and integrate housing diversity across all new and existing developments. In addition, the MDP promotes the use of inclusionary zoning and the creation of a housing reserve fund to support the construction and operation of affordable housing projects.
2. The Okotoks **Affordable Housing Task Force** was established in 2018 as a direct response to community feedback calling for the town to address the housing challenges. The Task Force's mandate was to offer expert guidance and support to the town in developing and implementing its Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan. Consisting of seven community members with expertise in affordable housing, two residents, and a staff liaison, the Task Force has played a pivotal role in shaping the town's approach to affordable housing.

3. The town's **Affordable Housing Strategy** extends the MDP's objectives by articulating a focused action plan through 2025. It addresses that Okotoks has an affordable housing issue despite having a relatively high median income and most of its residents being homeowners. The strategy identifies a series of actions, such as developing policies and regulations for inclusive housing, advocating for funding to create non-market and special-needs housing, and preparing for tenant displacement and relocation policies.
4. The principles set out in **The Town of Okotoks Community Vision** emphasize flexible, affordable, and desirable housing. The vision commits to meeting the needs of its residents of all ages, income levels, and family types, aligning with the MDP's strategic goals.
5. Finally, the **2023-2026 Strategic Plan** builds upon the goals and strategies of the MDP and Affordable Housing Strategy, outlining the Council's priorities for Okotoks in the immediate future. It reflects the residents' desires for a vibrant, resilient, and interconnected community. The plan commits to responsibly managed growth, maintaining a strong local economy, enhancing cultural and community health, demonstrating environmental leadership, and achieving organizational excellence.

The strategic documents for housing in Okotoks aim to transform the housing landscape from predominantly single-detached homes to a more diverse mix of housing types, including multi-family units, rental housing, and affordable options. The goal is to create a harmonious community where housing policies respond to current needs and anticipate future growth and changes, positioning Okotoks as a forward-thinking municipality responsive to community needs.

Goals for Housing

The Affordable Housing Strategy of Okotoks takes direction from Municipal Development Plan policies that aim to address the pressing needs in the community.

1. The first objective seeks to **increase the variety of housing options throughout the community**. This is intended to foster a range of housing types and tenures in every neighbourhood, thus supporting the differing preferences and requirements of individuals, families, and seniors. By doing so, Okotoks aims to provide a spectrum of housing choices for various stages and circumstances in life.
2. The second objective is to **increase non-market affordable housing for low-income households**. This policy aims to augment the stock of non-market housing to support those community members who must allocate more than 30% of their before-tax household income to shelter costs and utilities, a common benchmark for housing affordability. This is vital to ensure that all residents, regardless of income, can access suitable housing.
3. The third objective addresses the importance of **providing housing that meets the community's diverse and specialized needs**. This encompasses housing for those experiencing homelessness, those in chronic housing need, and those requiring social

support services, including housing designed for people with disabilities. This underscores the town's commitment to inclusivity and support for vulnerable residents.

The objectives set out by Okotoks' Affordable Housing Strategy provide a comprehensive framework to address the spectrum of housing needs in the community. The strategy encompasses provisions for everything from fundamental shelter requirements to specialized housing needs. The policies enacted by Okotoks indicate a commitment to facilitating a range of housing options that are economically accessible and tailored to meet the specific needs of the town's diverse population.

Housing Initiatives to date

To advance its housing objectives, the Town of Okotoks has implemented a range of strategies and initiatives. These include:

- Adopting Housing Friendly Policies
- Establishing Grant Programs
- Facilitating Land donations and Partnerships
- Exploring Home Sharing options
- Engaging in Advocacy to further housing goals.

Significant progress has been achieved through these measures, yet there remains more work to be done.

In 2021, Okotoks adopted a series of housing-friendly policies as part of a new Municipal Development Plan. This plan increased housing density targets and required a higher percentage of multi-unit homes in new communities. Efforts were focused on increasing affordable housing for low-income families and enhancing the diversity of housing options.

A New Land Use Bylaw was introduced to simplify zoning, permit a broader range of housing types, relax regulations on parking and largely remove development permit requirements for secondary suites. Additionally, grant programs have been implemented to support the creation of secondary suites and below-market housing. While funds for secondary suites are not used as leverage since these units are market-driven, the investments made under the below-market incentive program are specifically designed to be leveraged for securing additional funding. This strategic use of municipal resources aims to enhance the affordability and availability of housing in the area.

In 2022, the focus shifted towards infrastructure development to support these housing initiatives. This included significant efforts to advance water pipeline development and upgrade the wastewater treatment plant. The Okotoks Family Resource Centre Database was created to collect client needs information and track trends related to housing availability and homelessness.

By 2023, further steps were taken to solidify these strategies. Additional staff resources were allocated, and the D’Arcy Affordable Housing Site was developed. This development included completing site servicing for shovel-ready projects, financial contributions to reduce site servicing costs, and the start of construction for 32 market rental units. A housing database was also established to track housing inventory and trends, aiding in housing needs assessments.

Also in 2023, Okotoks added 70 units of purpose-built rental housing, including 22 below-market units. This was a noteworthy advancement, as the last time below-market units were added to the town’s housing stock was in 2009 and 2010, through provincial municipal block funding. By the end of 2023 there were another 319 approved purpose-built rentals at various stages of development, with 81 of these units anticipated to be offered at below-market rents. These units are comprised of: 64 - 1 bedroom units, 185 - 2 bedroom units, 133 - 3 bedroom units, 2 - 1 bedroom accessible units, 5 - 2 bedroom accessible units.

Overall, the town’s housing-friendly policies and grant programs have significantly contributed to diversifying the housing stock and increasing the supply of secondary suites. Between 2020 and 2022, nearly 50% of new construction starts were for multi-unit projects, such as duplexes, row housing, and apartments. By the end of 2023, the Town’s secondary suite inventory reached 78, with more than half of these units completed since 2020. These efforts represent significant progress in meeting diverse housing needs within the community.

Table 3: Summary of housing initiatives and development as of December 31, 2023, Okotoks

Year	Initiatives and Developments
2021	Adopted Housing Friendly Policies
	New Municipal Development Plan
	- Increased density from 8 to 12 units per acre
	- 40% of new housing required to be multi-unit
	- Policies to increase below-market affordable housing for low-income households and enhance housing diversity
	New Land Use Bylaw
	- Reduced residential districts from nine (9) to two (2)
	- Housing of any type permitted
	- Base zoning allows up to four (4) units on a parcel
	- Eliminated minimum parking requirements
- Eliminated requirement for development permit for secondary suites (in most cases)	

	Implemented Grant Programs
	Secondary Suite and Accessory Dwelling Unit Grant Program
	- \$10,000 per new suite
	- At end of 2023: 21 suites completed, 9 underway, 7 on the waitlist
	Below Market Housing Incentive Grant Program
	- \$15,000 per door
	- Leveraged municipal investment to secure provincial grant funding and CMHC financing for a 10 unit below market rental project
2022	Infrastructure to Support Housing Development
	- Significant efforts to advance water pipeline development (ongoing)
	- Lifecycle replacement and capacity upgrades at Wastewater Treatment Plant
	Okotoks Family Resource Centre Database
	- New database to collect information on client needs
	- Tracks trends related to housing availability, risk of homelessness
2023	Staff Resource Added to Implement Strategy
	D'Arcy Affordable Housing Site
	- Completed site servicing for shovel ready projects
	- Contributed an additional \$1.0M to off-set site servicing costs and support grant applications
	- Construction of 32 market rental units commenced
	- Partners submitted grant applications for Federal and Provincial funding
	Housing Database Development
	- Working database to track housing inventory and trends to supplement housing needs assessments.
	Home Sharing

	-Partnered with Happipad, a Canadian non-profit home-sharing organization, to launch a home-sharing program in Okotoks.
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Population and Demographic Characteristics

Understanding population trends in a municipality provides valuable insights into the current demand for housing and helps predict future needs. By analyzing factors like population growth, age distribution, and migration patterns, municipalities can anticipate emerging challenges and plan accordingly.

Population Growth

Starting from 11,689 in 2001, the population saw substantial increases: a 47% rise by 2006 to 17,145, and a 43% increase by 2011 to 24,511. The growth rate slowed to 18% by 2016, reaching 29,016, and further decelerated to 5% by 2021, totaling 30,405.

Okotoks' growth trends stand out particularly when compared to Calgary and Alberta. While Calgary and Alberta experienced growth rates of around 11% to 13% in 2011 and 2016, Okotoks surpassed this with a staggering 43% and 18%, respectively. By 2021, however, all three regions saw a synchronized slowdown to a 5% growth rate. This indicates that while Okotoks had earlier seen more rapid expansion, by the latest year, its growth pace had aligned more closely with trends experienced in Calgary and Alberta.

Percentage of population growth in Okotoks, Calgary and Alberta, 2006 - 2021

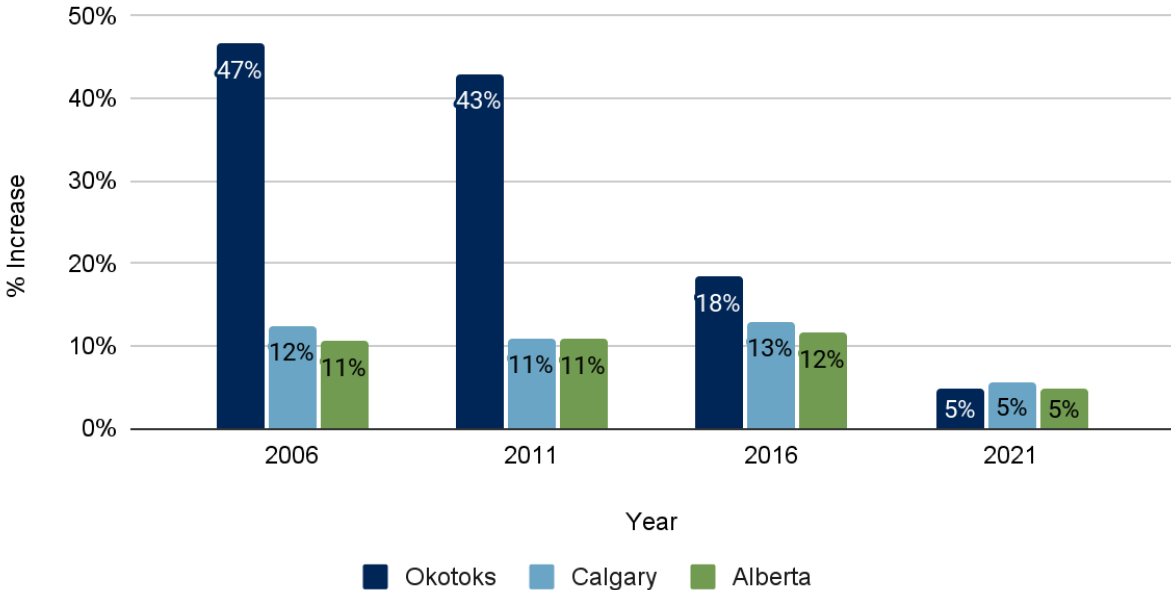


Figure 3: Percentage of population growth in Okotoks, Calgary, and Alberta, 2006-2021

The significant slowdown in Okotoks' growth since 2011 can largely be attributed to the introduction of a Water Allocation Policy in 2010, which restricts growth based on available water license capacity. In contrast, other Calgary region municipalities like Airdrie and Cochrane, which did not implement similar policies, did not experience such a rapid slowdown in their growth. Between 2011 and 2016, Airdrie and Cochrane grew by 42% and 47% respectively. Growth slowed but remained strong from 2016 to 2021 with 20% growth in Airdrie and 25% growth in Cochrane.

Okotok's population is expected to grow by 21% to reach 36,818 by 2031. The projected increase by 2031 represents an annual growth rate of approximately 1.9% from 2021 to 2031.

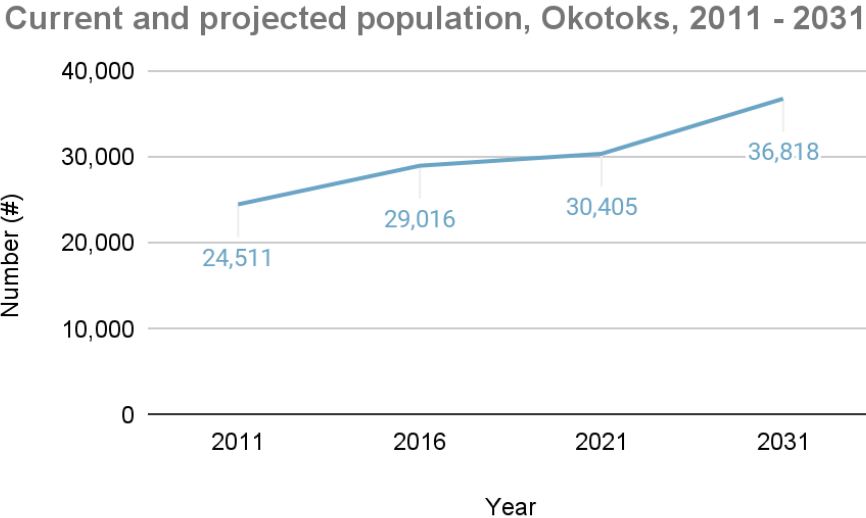


Figure 4: Current and projected population, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Table 4: Current and projected population count and rate of population growth, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Year	Count	% Change
2011	24,511	
2016	29,016	18%
2021	30,405	5%
2031	36,818	21%

Age

From 2006 to 2021, Okotoks experienced notable demographic shifts. The working-age population (15 to 64) increased from 16,630 in 2011 to 19,325 in 2021, accounting for 63.5% of the total in 2021, down from 67.9% in 2011, reflecting a slight proportional decline despite numeric growth. Meanwhile, the senior population (65+) nearly tripled from 1,810 in 2011 to 4,505 in 2021, growing from 7.4% to 14.8% of the community, indicating a significant aging trend.

Looking ahead from 2021 to 2031, projections show the working-age group will expand further to 22,338, while the proportion slightly decreases to 60.7% of the total population. The senior segment is expected to continue its substantial growth to 7,143, making up 19.4% of the population by 2031. These trends underscore a continuing aging of the population alongside steady growth in the younger and working-age demographics, suggesting ongoing shifts in community infrastructure needs.

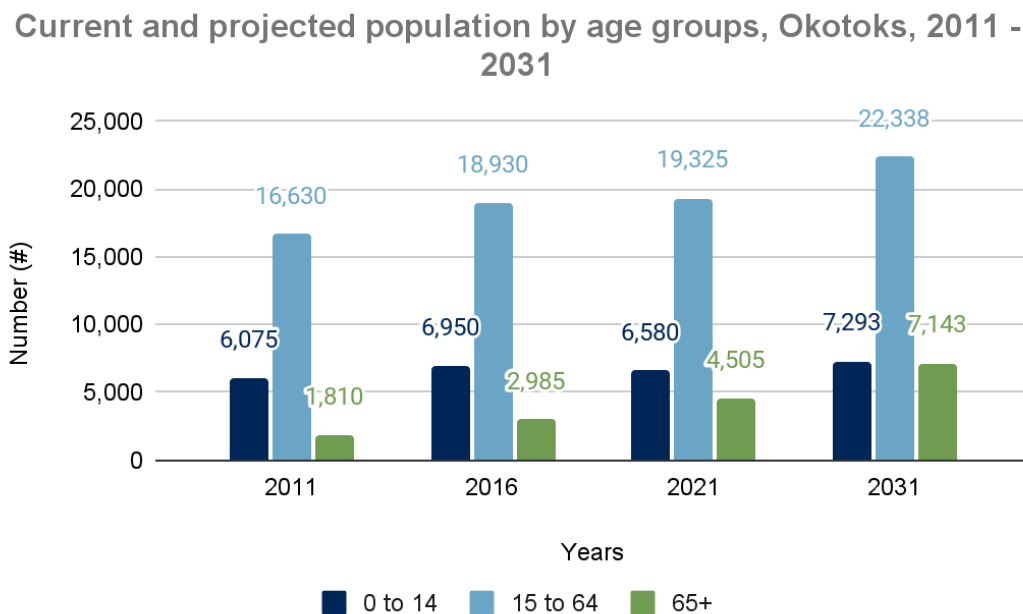


Figure 5: Current and projected population by age groups, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Table 5: Current and projected population count by broad age groups, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Year	0 to 14	15 to 64	65+
2011	6,075	16,630	1,810
2016	6,950	18,930	2,985
2021	6,580	19,325	4,505
2031	7,293	22,338	7,143

Current and projected population by age groups, Okotoks, 2011 - 2031

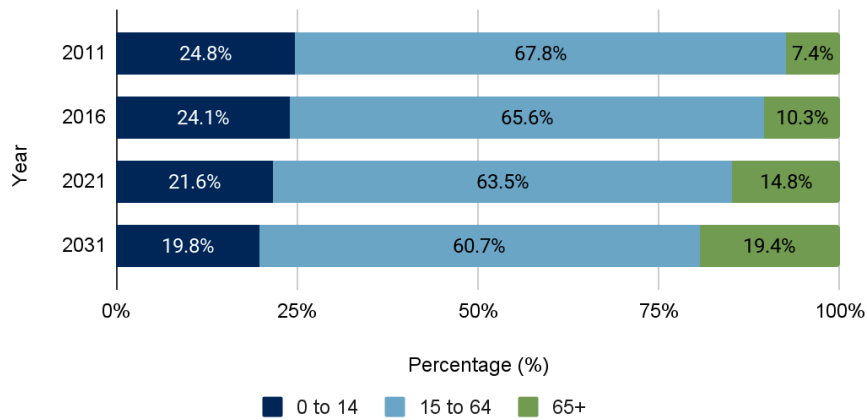


Figure 6: Current and projected population by age groups, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Table 6: Current and projected proportional population by broad age groups, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Year	0 to 14	15 to 64	65+
2011	24.8%	67.8%	7.4%
2016	24.1%	65.6%	10.3%
2021	21.6%	63.5%	14.8%
2031	19.8%	60.7%	19.4%

Median Age

The median age in Okotoks has been steadily rising from 32.4 in 2006 to 39.2 in 2021, indicating a demographic shift towards an older population. This increase aligns with the growth in the 65+ age group's proportion within the overall population, as previously noted. Compared to Calgary and Alberta, where median ages in 2021 were 38.0 and 38.4 respectively, Okotoks has aged slightly faster.

Median age of population in Okotoks, Calgary and Alberta, 2006 - 2021

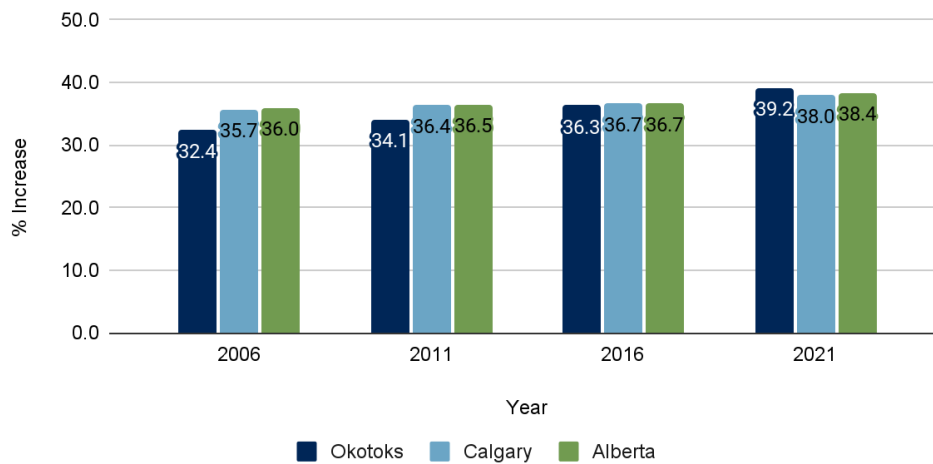


Figure 7: Median age of population in Okotoks, Calgary, and Alberta, 2006-2021

From 2011 to 2021, the median age increased from 34.1 to 39.2, marking an 8% rise. By 2016, the median age was 36.3, a 6% increase from 2011. The projected median age is set to reach 44.2 by 2031, a 13% increase from 2021, reflecting a continued trend towards an aging community.

Current and projected median age, Okotoks, 2011- 2031

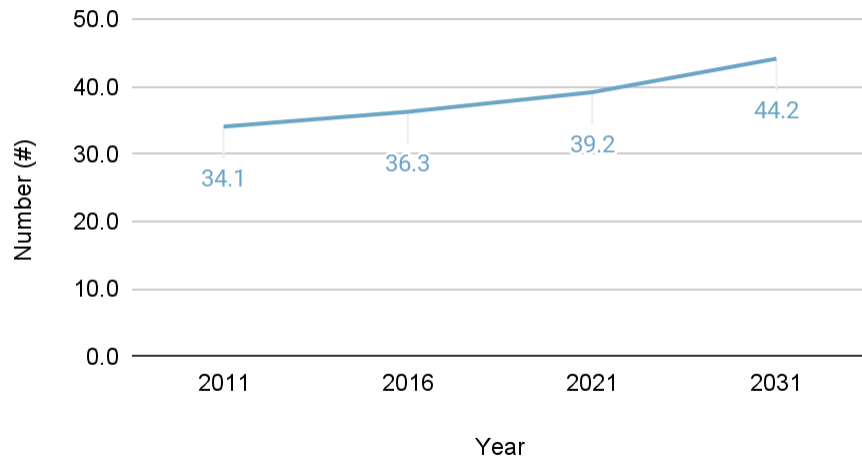


Figure 8: Current and projected median age, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Table 7: Current and projected median age and rate of median age growth, Okotoks, 2011-2031

Year	Age	% Change
2011	34.1	
2016	36.3	6%
2021	39.2	8%
2031	44.2	13%

Ethnicity

The ethnic composition of Okotoks changed from 2016 to 2021. The Filipino population increased from 785 to 835, while the Latin American and Southeast Asian populations increased greatly from 145 to 250 and from 55 to 155, respectively. The Arab and Japanese populations decreased substantially, from 145 to 40 and from 70 to 10, respectively.

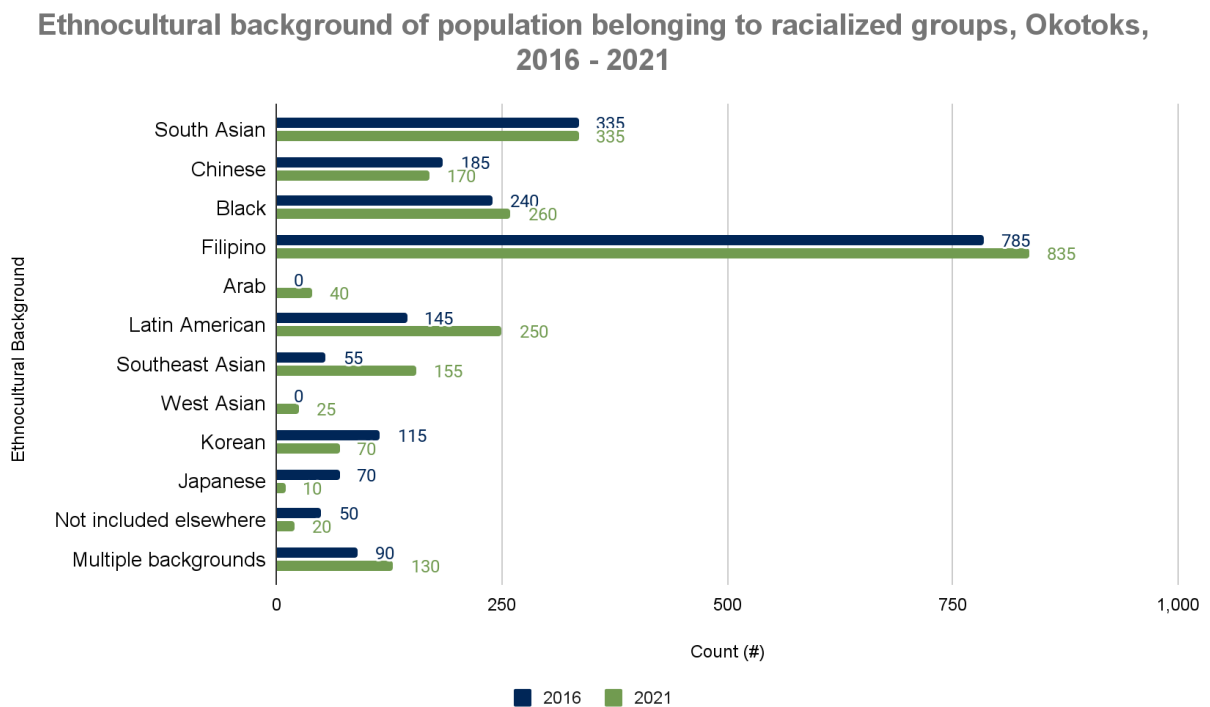


Figure 9: Ethnocultural background of population belonging to racialized groups, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Indigenous Identity

From 2016 to 2021, the Indigenous population in Okotoks rose from 1,135 to 1,605. This represents an increase from 4.0% of the total population in 2016 to 5.3% in 2021. Of the Indigenous population in Okotoks, 33.6% (535) were First Nations people, 59.8% (960) were Métis, and 2.2% (30) were Inuit in 2021.

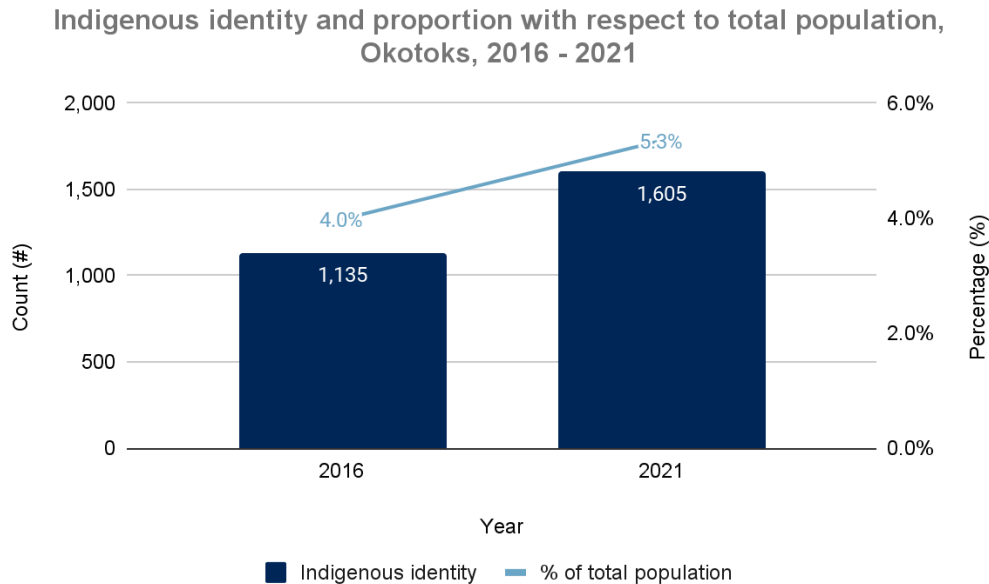


Figure 10: Indigenous identity and proportion with respect to total population, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Table 8: Indigenous population counts by Indigenous identity, Okotoks, 2016-2021

	2016	2021
Indigenous identity	1,135	1,605
First Nations (North American Indian)	405	535
Métis	670	960
Inuk (Inuit)	35	30
Multiple Indigenous responses	10	55
Indigenous responses not included elsewhere	10	25

Immigration

The number of immigrants in Okotoks increased from 3,695 in 2016 to 3,990 in 2021, an increase in the proportion of the total population from 12.8% to 13.1%.³

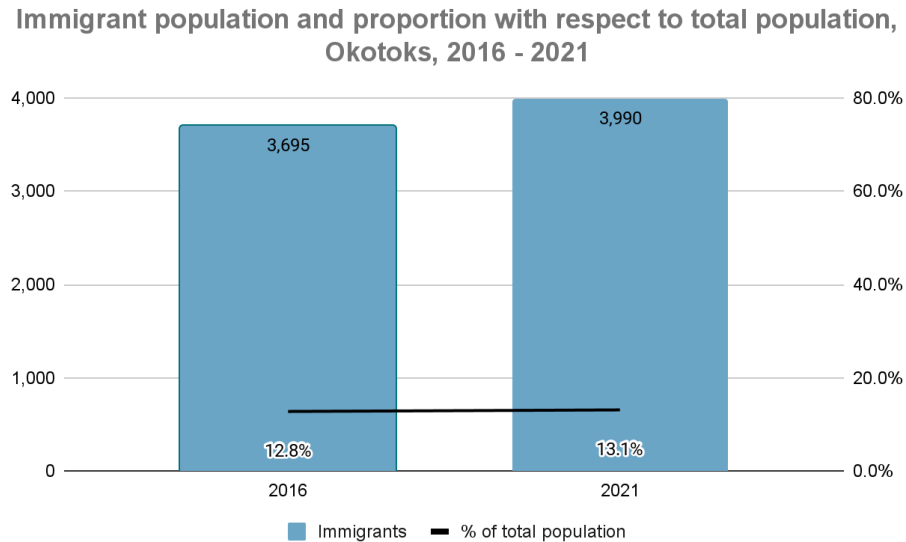


Figure 11: Immigrant population and proportion with respect to total population, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Immigration to Okotoks has been increasing since 1980. There were 1,055 immigrants between 2001 and 2010 and 1,345 between 2011 and 2021, representing approximately one quarter and one third, respectively, of recorded immigrants to Okotoks.

³ Note that the recent surge in immigration to Alberta, with the province experiencing its highest population growth in a single quarter since 1980, is likely to influence trends in Okotoks. The addition of over 61,118 residents, a 1.3% increase in the third quarter of 2023 alone, suggests a major influx of new residents. This demographic shift could affect various aspects of life in Okotoks, including employment patterns, housing demands, and commuting behaviors.

Distribution of immigrants by period of immigration, Okotoks, 2021

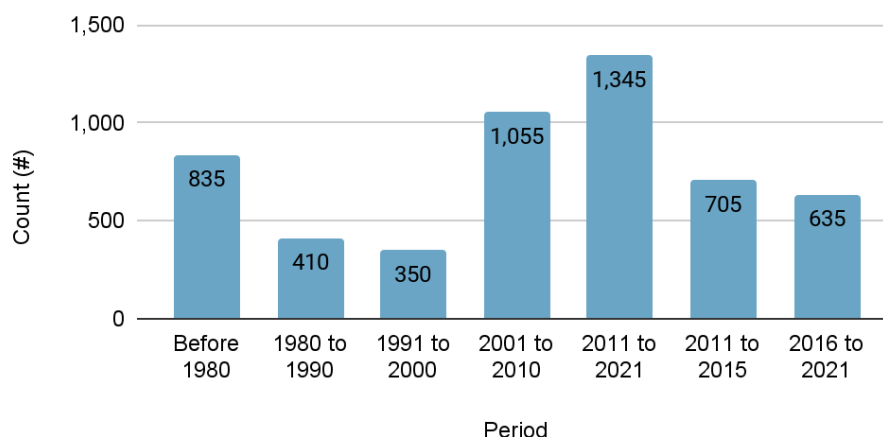


Figure 12: Distribution of immigrants by period of immigration, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Mobility - 1 year ago

From 2016 to 2021 in Okotoks, the number of non-movers within the past year increased from 24,095 to 26,160 (an 8.6% increase), while the number of movers within the past year decreased from 4,115 to 3,565 (-13.4%). The reduction in movers was primarily in non-migrants, dropping from 1,950 to 1,375 (-29.5%), with the number of migrants holding steady. Most of these migrants were intraprovincial, though the number decreased from 1,825 in 2016 to 1,645 in 2021, representing 84% and 75% of migrants, respectively. The number of interprovincial migrants more than doubled from 220 (10%) to 495 (23%), while the number of external migrants decreased from 125 (5.8%) to 50 (2.3%).

Table 9: Population counts by mobility status, Okotoks, 2016-2021

	2016	2021
Non-movers	24,095	26,160
Movers	4,115	3,565
Non-migrants	1,950	1,375
Migrants	2,165	2,190
Internal migrants	2,040	2,135
Intraprovincial migrants	1,825	1,645
Interprovincial migrants	220	495
External migrants	125	50

Education

From 2016 to 2021, the number of people in Okotoks with no certificate, diploma, or degree increased only slightly from 2,875 to 2,935. The number of people with a high school diploma or equivalency certificate increased from 6,545 to 7,455, while the number of people with a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree increased from 12,150 to 13,050.

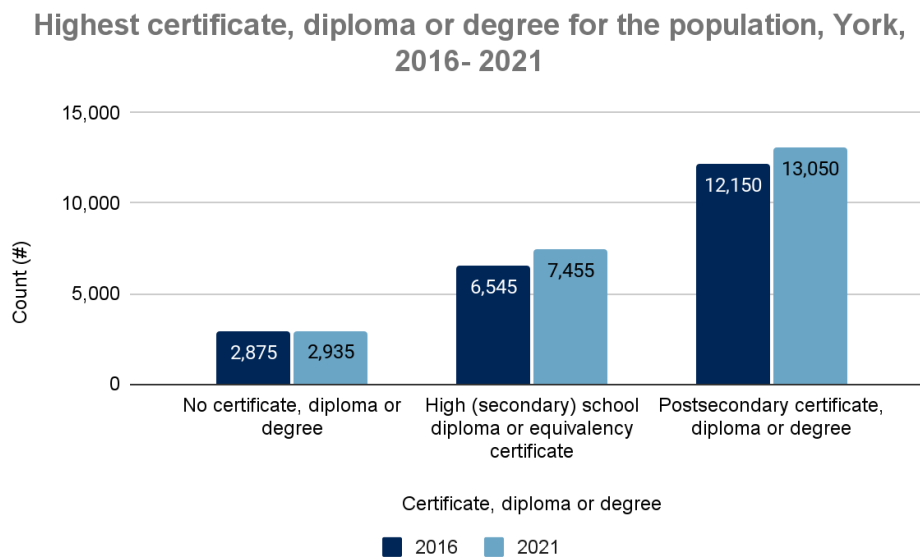


Figure 13: Highest certificate, diploma, or degree for the population, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Income

Analyzing income trends is a key aspect of a comprehensive housing needs assessment, providing valuable insights into the economic conditions of a municipality and helping to identify current housing demand and anticipate future challenges. For example, shifts in the composition of total income, such as a decrease in market income and an increase in government transfers, may indicate changes in the economic stability of residents.

Household Income Characteristics

From 2016 to 2021, the proportion of total income in Okotoks from market income decreased from 94.5% to 87.0%. This corresponds to an increase in government transfers from 5.5% to 13.1%, largely due to COVID-19 benefits.

Composition of total income, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

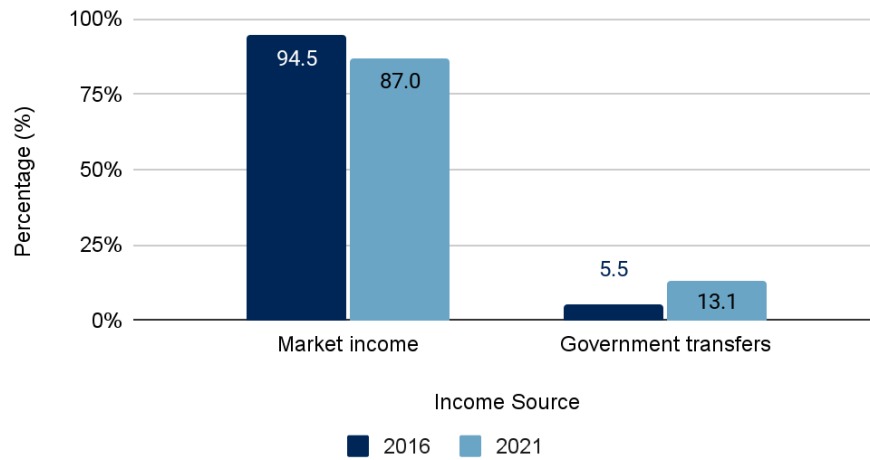


Figure 14: Composition of total income, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Between 2016 and 2021, the median before-tax household income in Okotoks experienced a modest increase of 0.7%, rising from \$116,163 to \$117,000.

Median before-tax income, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

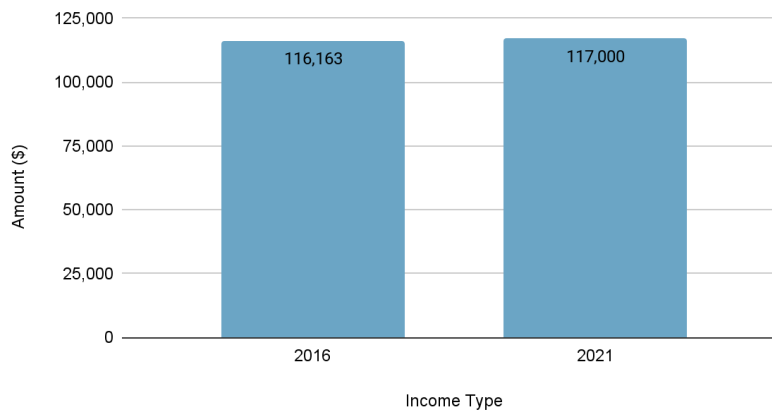


Figure 15: Median before-tax income, Okotoks, 2016-2021

In 2021, Okotoks reported a median income of \$117,000, which is significantly higher compared to Calgary at \$98,000 and Alberta at \$96,000.

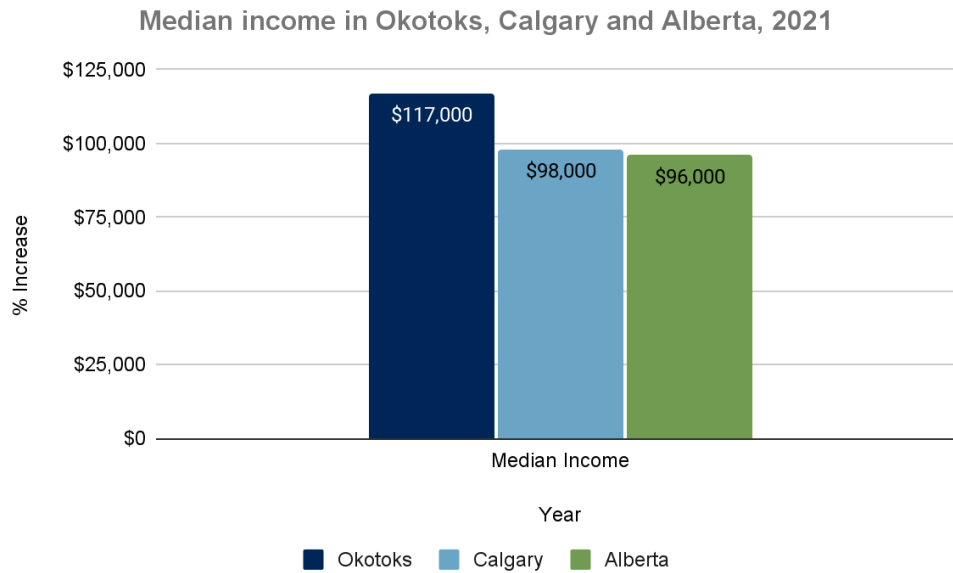


Figure 16: Median income in Okotoks, Calgary, and Alberta, 2021

From 2016 to 2021, median incomes across various household types showed mixed trends compared to the overall median household income, which slightly increased from \$116,163 to \$117,000. Households of couples without children saw a drop from \$118,000 to \$107,000, while single-parent households led by women increased from \$66,000 to \$76,000 which falls below the \$99,000 for single-parent households led by men. Couples with children and other census family households remained relatively stable, closely aligning with the overall median income trend. Non-census family households experienced a significant decrease from \$65,000 to \$57,200, falling further below the median household income over time.

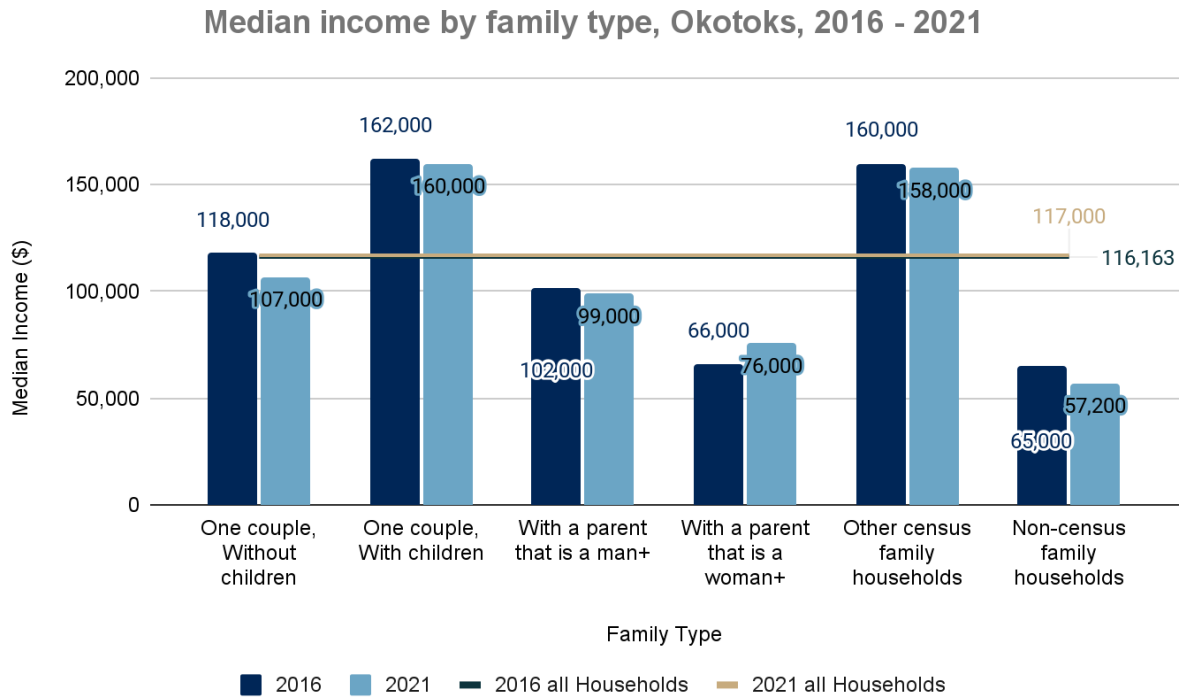


Figure 17: Median income by family type, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Prevalence of Low-Income

From 2016 to 2021, the low-income rate in Okotoks decreased slightly from 5.9% to 5.8%. In the 0 to 17 years age group, the low-income rate decreased from 8.2% to 7.0%. The low-income rate increased marginally from 5.1% to 5.2% in the 18 to 64 years age group and increased from 4.7% to 5.8% in the 65 years and over age group.

Proportion of individuals in low-income by age, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

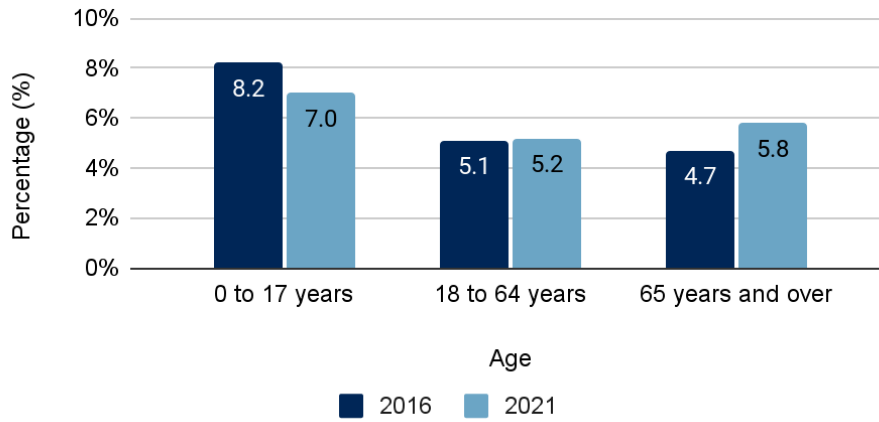


Figure 18: Proportion of individuals in low income by age, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Workforce Profile

Labour force participation and employment rate

From 2016 to 2021 in Okotoks, both the labour force participation rate and employment rate decreased, from 73.4% to 68.1% and from 67.8% to 61.8%, respectively. During the same period, the unemployment rate increased from 7.7% to 9.2%.

Population aged 15 years and over by labour force status, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

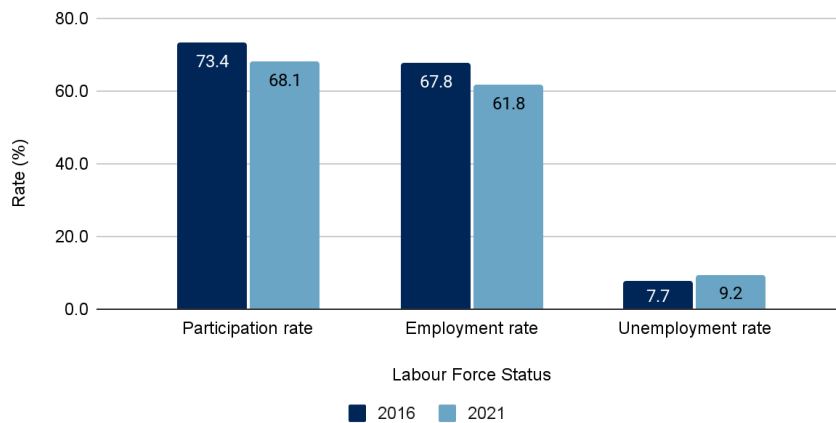


Figure 19: Population aged 15 years and over by labour force status, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Industries

From 2016 to 2021 in Okotoks, there was a shift in the distribution of the labour force. The sectors with the most growth were professional, scientific, and technical services (from 1,195 to 1,440), retail trade (from 1,775 to 1,995), healthcare and social assistance (from 1,595 to 1,705), construction (from 1,890 to 1,975), and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (from 105 to 185). The sectors that decreased the most were public administration (from 790 to 660), manufacturing (from 870 to 780), finance and insurance (from 475 to 390), real estate and rental and leasing (from 290 to 210), information and cultural industries (from 290 to 215), educational services (from 1,250 to 1,175), and accommodation and food services (from 880 to 815).

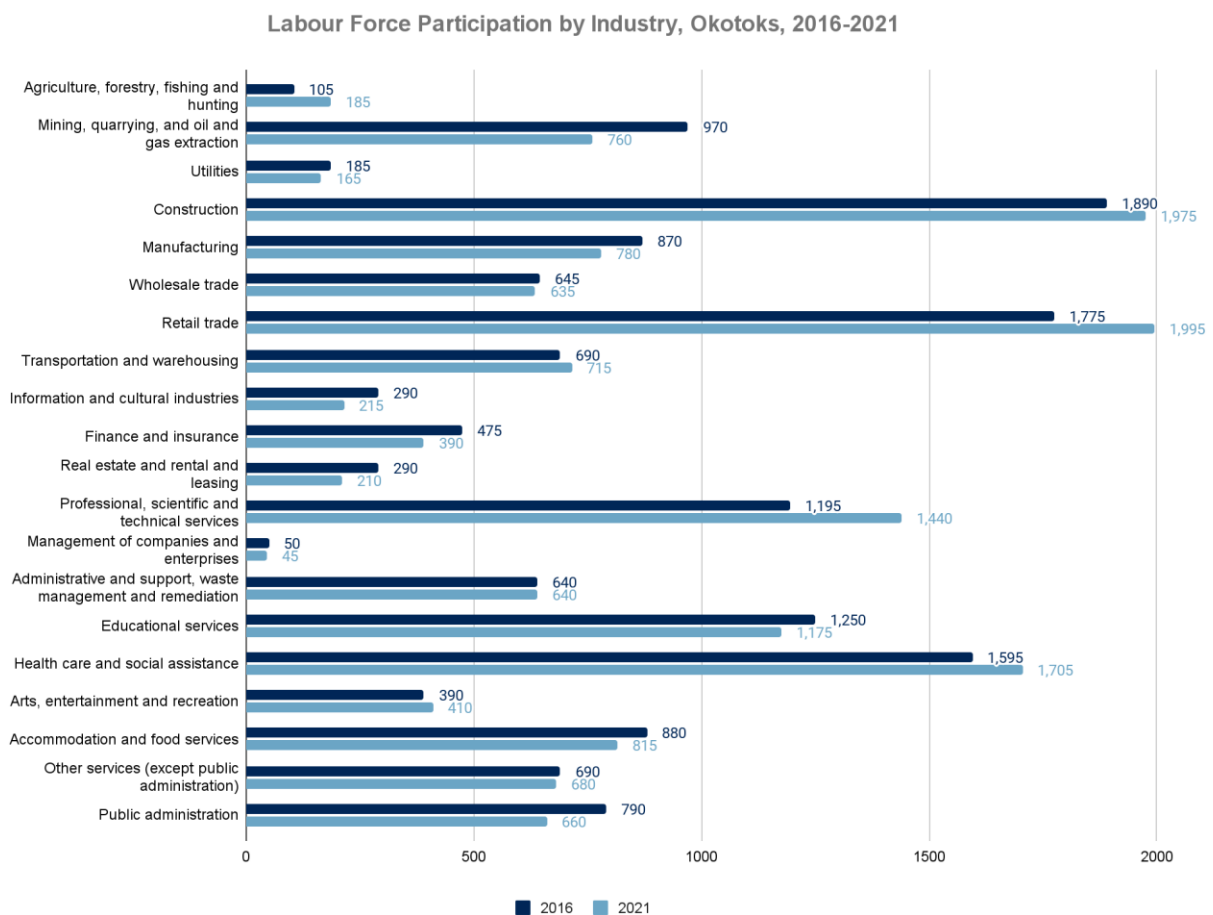


Figure 20: Labour force participation by industry, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Commuting

From 2016 to 2021, the number of people working in Okotoks in their usual place of work decreased by 2,220, from 10,840 to 8,620. This approximately corresponds to the rise in people who worked from home (by 1915, from 1,290 to 3,205) or with no fixed workplace address (by 225, from 2,425 to 2,650). The already-small number of people who worked outside of Canada decreased further, from 60 to 15.

Place of work status for the employed labour force aged 15 years and over, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

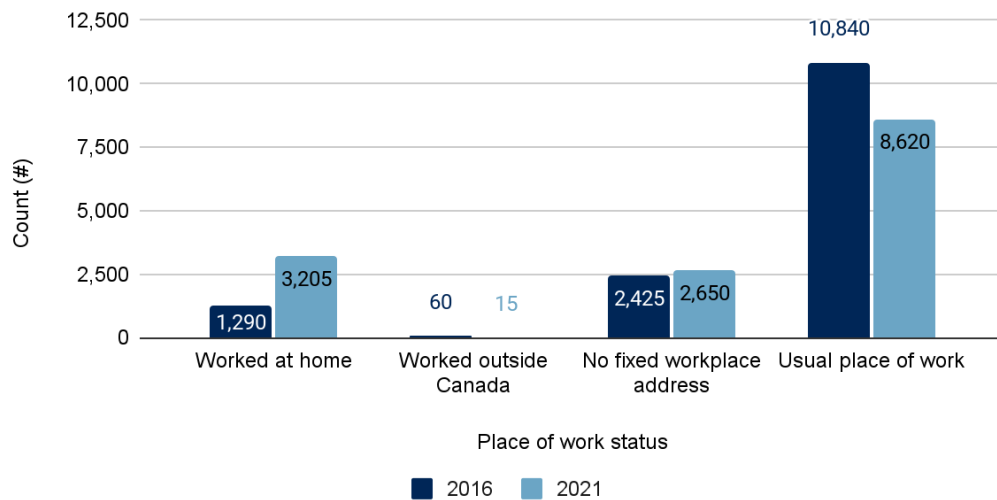


Figure 21: Place of work status for the employed labour force aged 15 years and over, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Household and Family Characteristics

Household Size

From 2016 to 2021 in Okotoks, household size has increased more notably in smaller households. Two-person households saw a significant rise, from 3,085 to 3,540, reflecting a trend towards smaller living arrangements. Meanwhile, households with three or more members remained relatively stable, indicating a sustained preference for larger family units alongside the growth in smaller households. This suggests a diversification in household structures, potentially driven by demographic changes such as aging or shifts in family dynamics.

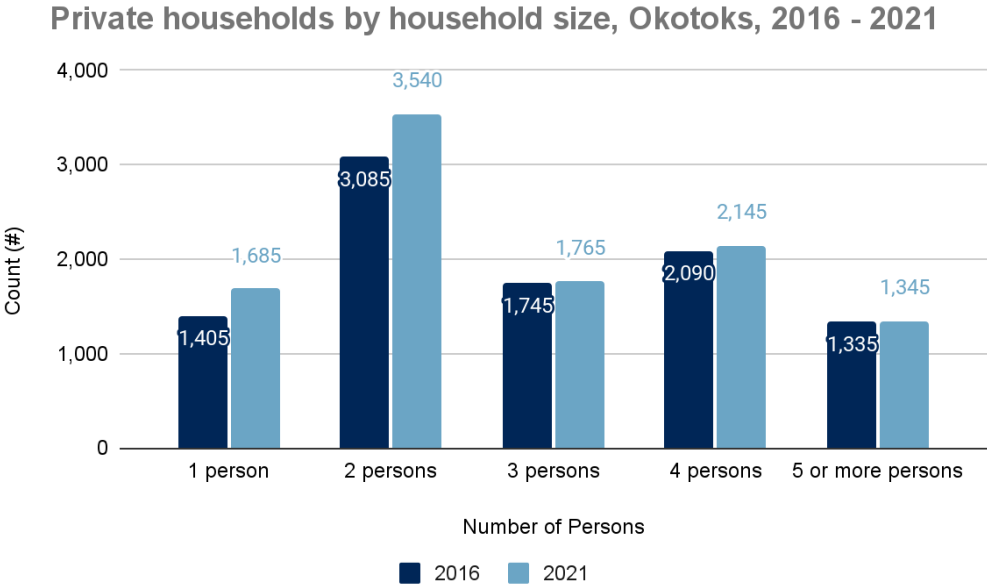


Figure 22: Private households by household size, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Household Type

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of two-person census families in Okotoks increased from 3,315 to 3,775, with smaller increases in the number of four-person (from 2,075 to 2,135) and five-person or larger (from 1,055 to 1,085) families. The number of three-person families remained stable.

Census families in private households by family size, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

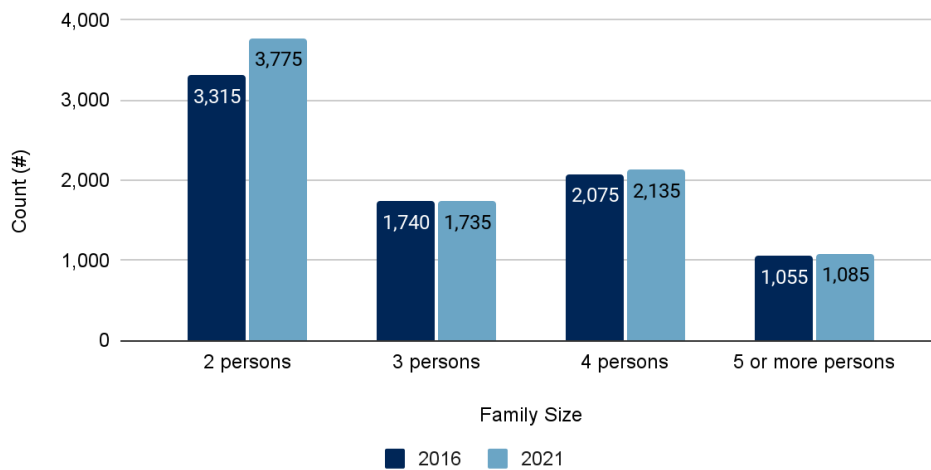


Figure 23: Census families in private households by family size, Okotoks, 2016-2021

One-Parent Families

From 2016 to 2021, the number of couple families increased from 7,100 to 7,545, and the number of one-parent families increased from 1,090 to 1,180. The number of one-parent families led by a woman increased from 835 to 925, while the number of one-parent families led by a man was unchanged at 255.

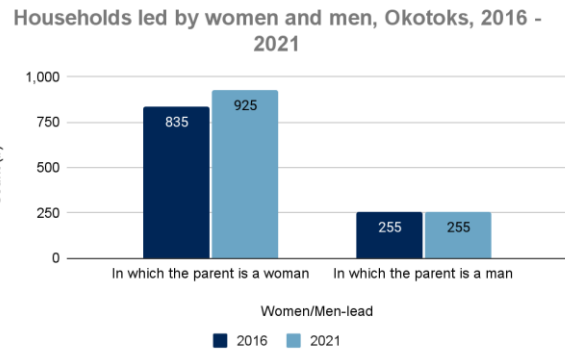
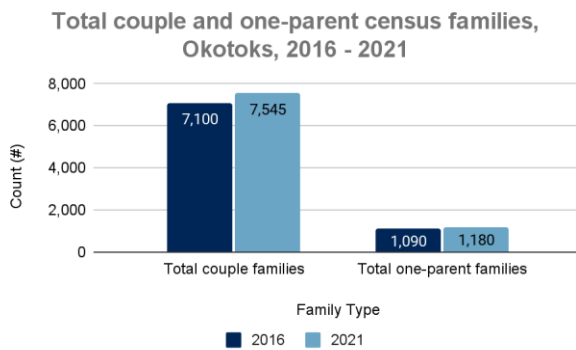


Figure 24 (left): Total couple and one-parent census families, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Figure 25 (right): Households led by women and men, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Living Alone

From 2016 to 2021, the number of people living alone in Okotoks increased from 1,405 to 1,680 overall. The great majority of these were in the 65 years and over age group, which increased from 455 in 2016 to 735 in 2021. The number of people in the 25 to 64 years age group

decreased slightly from 930 to 915, while the number in the 15 to 24 years age group increased from 20 to 30.

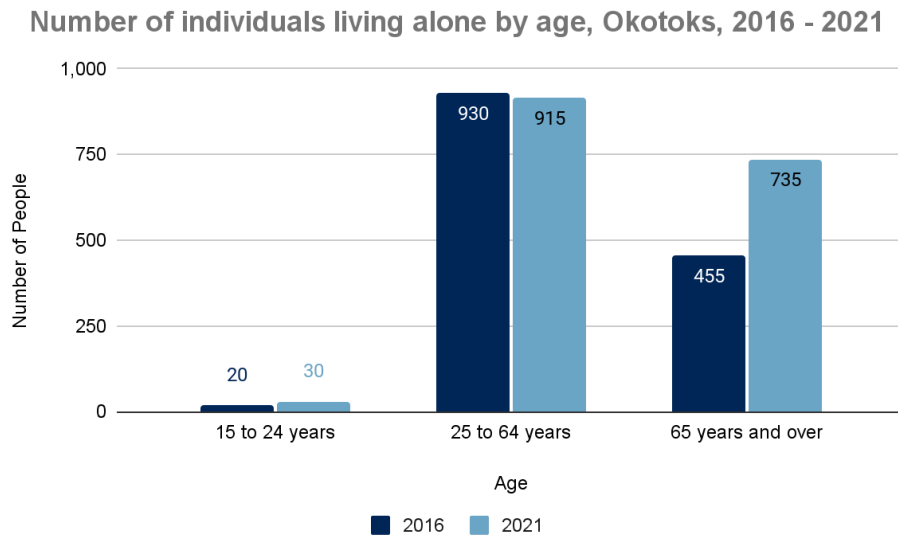


Figure 26: Number of individuals living alone by age, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Tenure

From 2016 to 2021, the number of homeowners in Okotoks increased from 8,120 to 8,980, while the number of renters decreased slightly from 1,545 to 1,495. The proportion of homeowners increased from 84% in 2016 to 86% in 2021, with the proportion of renters correspondingly decreasing from 16% to 14%.

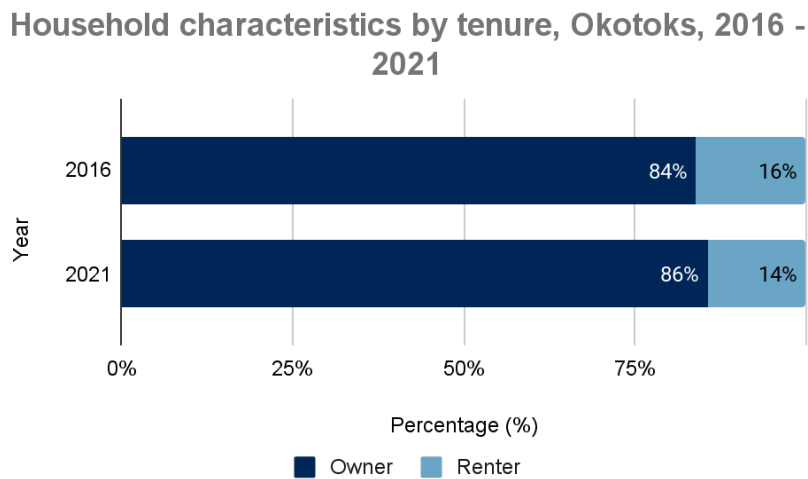


Figure 27: Household characteristics by tenure, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Subsidized Housing

The number of subsidized dwellings in Okotoks increased from 60 in 2016 to 90 in 2021. This increase may be attributed to a rise in rent supplement as there was no new construction of subsidized units at this time.

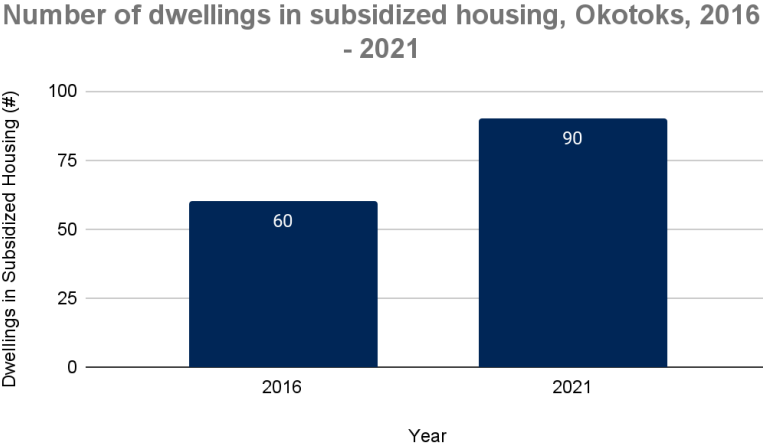


Figure 28: Number of dwellings in subsidized housing, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Affordability

This section on affordability utilizes data from the Housing Needs Assessment Tool (HART). HART evaluates housing needs based on income category, household size, and priority populations. For a detailed description of HART, please refer to the “[Methodology](#)” section of the report.

In 2021, 1,755 households (17.1%) in Okotoks were considered within the very low and low-income category and were unable to afford more than \$1,463 in monthly housing costs.

Table 10: AMHI and number and percentage of households by income category, Okotoks, 2021

Income Category	# of HHs	% of Total HHs	Annual HH Income	Maximum Affordable Monthly Housing Cost (2020 \$)
Area Median Household Income (AMHI)			\$117,000	\$2,925
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	140	1.4%	<= \$23,400	<= \$585
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	1,615	15.7%	\$23,400 - \$58,500	\$585 - \$1,463
Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI)	1,940	18.8%	\$58,500 - \$93,600	\$1,463 - \$2,340
Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI)	2,585	25.1%	\$93,600 - \$140,400	\$2,340 - \$3,510
High Income (121% and more of AMHI)	4,025	39.1%	>= \$140,401	>= \$3,511
Total	10,305	100.0%		

Indigenous Population

In Okotoks, the majority of Indigenous households fall into the high income category, with 360 households (48.6%) being able to afford housing costs of \$3,511 or more per month. Low to moderate income households constitute around 33.7% of the total, with 115 households (15.5%) in the low income category and 135 households (18.2%) in the moderate income category. Median income households account for 130 households (17.6%) who can afford up to \$3,510 per month. Notably, there were no very low income households reported.

Table 11: AMHI and number and percentage of Indigenous households by income category, Okotoks, 2021

Income Category	# of Total Indigenous HHs	% of Total Indigenous HHs	Annual HH Income	Maximum Affordable Monthly Housing Cost (2020 \$)
Area Median Household Income (AMHI)			\$117,000	\$2,925
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	0	0.0%	<= \$23,400	<= \$585
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	115	15.5%	\$23,400 - \$58,500	\$585 - \$1,463
Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI)	135	18.2%	\$58,500 - \$93,600	\$1,463 - \$2,340
Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI)	130	17.6%	\$93,600 - \$140,400	\$2,340 - \$3,510
High Income (121% and more of AMHI)	360	48.6%	>= \$140,401	>= \$3,511
Total	740	100.0%		

Owners vs Renters

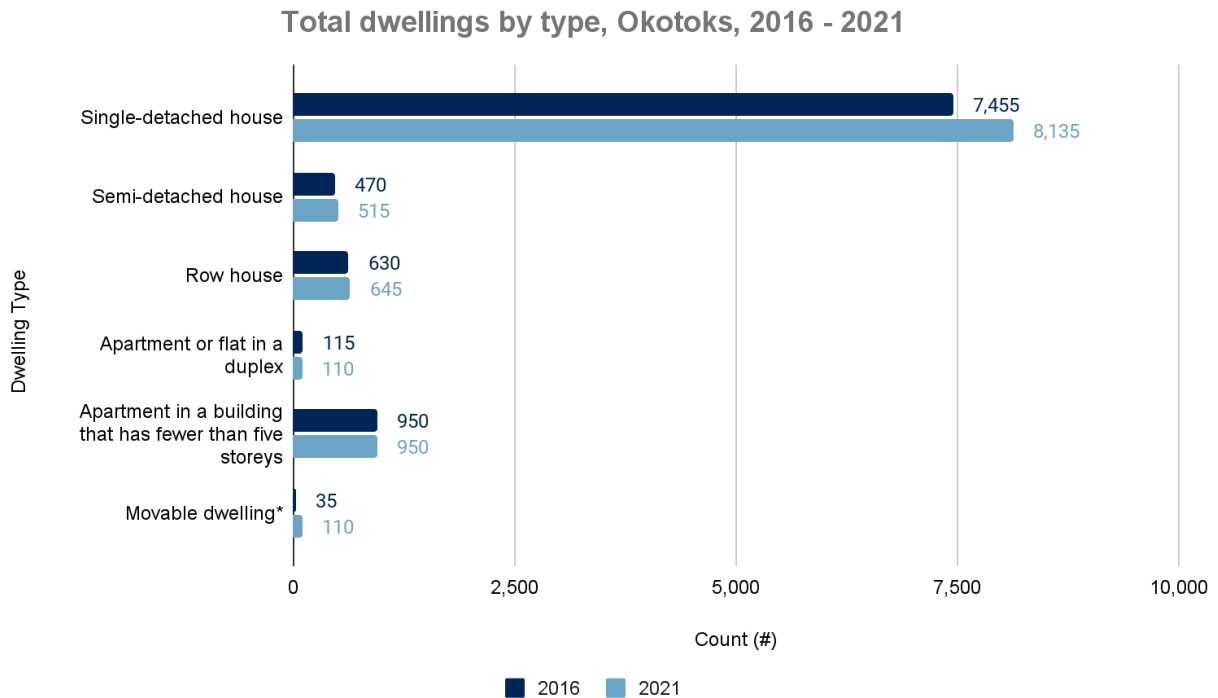
In Okotoks, the majority of owner households fall into the High Income category, with 3,810 households (43.1%) able to afford housing costs over \$3,511 per month. In contrast, the majority of rental households are in the Low Income bracket, with 455 households (31.2%) affording shelter costs between \$585 and \$1,463 per month. The data portrays a noticeable income disparity between owner and rental households in the area.

Table 12: Number and percentage of households by income category and by tenure, Okotoks, 2021

Income Category	# of Owner HHs	# of Renter HHs	% of Owner HHs	% of Rental HHs
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	80	65	0.9%	4.5%
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	1,160	455	13.1%	31.2%
Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI)	1,520	420	17.2%	28.8%
Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI)	2,280	305	25.8%	20.9%
High Income (121% and more of AMHI)	3,810	215	43.1%	14.7%
Total	8,850	1,460	100.0%	100.0%

Housing Characteristics

From 2016 to 2021, the total number of private dwellings in Okotoks increased from 9,840 to 10,750. This includes substantial increases in the number of single-detached houses, from 7,455 to 8,135 and a modest increase in the number of semi-detached houses, from 470 to 515.



* Please note that the Town of Okotoks has indicated that the 2016 census data, which shows 35 mobile home units, is incorrect and likely results from a reporting error.

Figure 29: Total dwellings by type, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Age

The majority, over 60%, of occupied private dwellings in Okotoks were built after the year 2000. The peak of this construction was between 2006 and 2010, with 2,615 dwellings representing one quarter of the occupied private dwellings in Okotoks. The rate of construction has slowed since this peak, with 1,450 (13.9%) constructed between 2011 and 2015, and 895 (8.6%) between 2016 and 2021.⁴

⁴ It is important to note that over 60% of Okotoks' private dwellings were built after 2000, with the peak construction period occurring between 2006 and 2010. However, the rate of new housing development significantly slowed after the introduction of the town's Water Allocation Policy in 2010, a unique measure in Alberta aimed at managing growth based on available water license capacity. This policy, alongside the broader economic slowdown post the 2008/2009 recession, limited housing construction to approximately 200 units per year.

Occupied dwellings by period of construction, Okotoks, 1960 - 2021

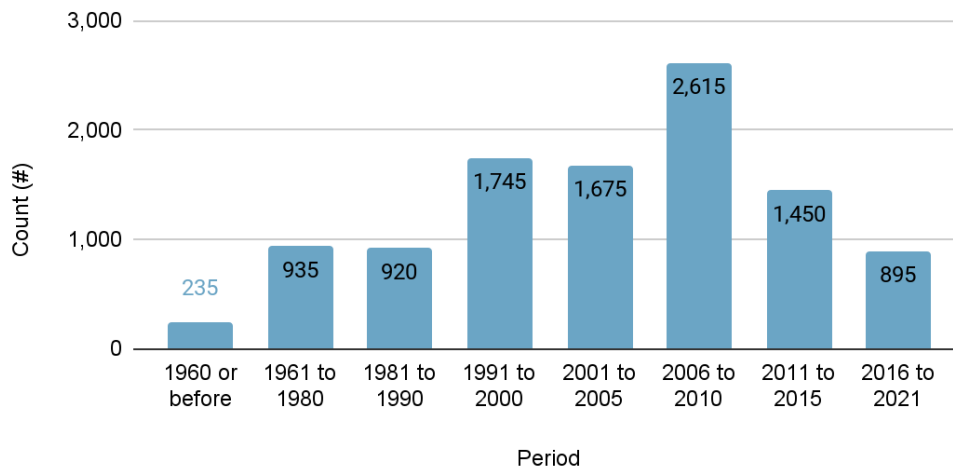


Figure 30: Occupied dwellings by period of construction, Okotoks, 1960-2021

Residents in the 65 years and over age group are more likely to inhabit a semi-detached house (14.3%) or an apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys (16.7%) than other age groups (ranging from 1.1-5.0% and 1.4-6.4% respectively). The 65 years and over age group are also less likely to inhabit single-detached houses (61.9%) than other age groups (82.4-90.5%). Row houses are inhabited by 5.3% of the population across a variety of ages, but are slightly more likely to be inhabited by young adults aged 30 to 34 years (8.0%) or 25 to 29 years (7.3%) compared to other age groups (from 3.1-6.5%). Duplex apartments and movable dwellings are each inhabited by fewer than 1% of Okotoks residents.

Distribution of population by dwelling type and age, Okotoks, 2021

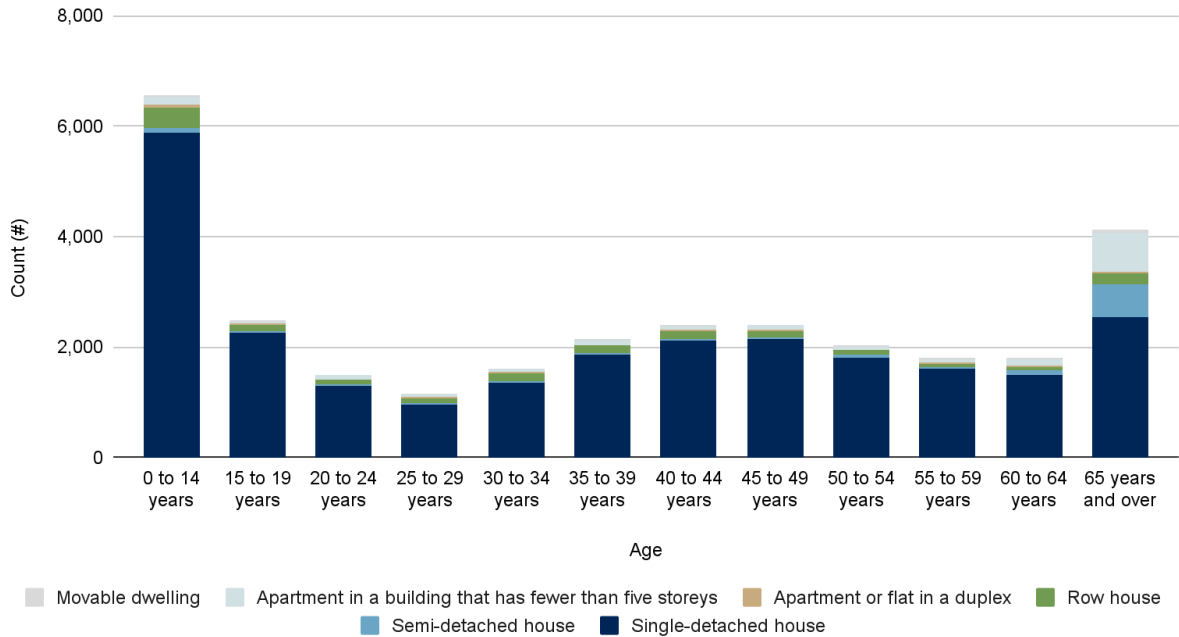


Figure 31: Distribution of population by dwelling type and age, Okotoks, 2021

Table 13: Distribution of population by dwelling type and age, Okotoks, 2021

	Single-detached house	Semi-detached house	Row house	Apartment or flat in a duplex	Apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys	Movable dwelling
0 to 14 years	5,895	75	365	70	120	50
15 to 19 years	2,250	30	125	30	35	15
20 to 24 years	1,290	25	85	10	75	10
25 to 29 years	960	25	85	15	65	15
30 to 34 years	1,365	30	130	15	65	15
35 to 39 years	1,855	30	140	20	80	20
40 to 44 years	2,125	30	145	20	65	20
45 to 49 years	2,135	50	115	25	65	10
50 to 54 years	1,805	45	90	15	60	10
55 to 59 years	1,595	50	55	15	70	15
60 to 64 years	1,500	90	60	10	115	25

65 years and over	2,555	590	190	35	695	60
Total	25,330	1,070	1,585	280	1,510	265

Unit Sizes

From 2016 to 2021, the number of occupied private dwellings in Okotoks with four or more bedrooms increased from 3,995 to 4,705. There was also an increase in the number of two-bedroom (from 1,445 to 1,530), one-bedroom (from 290 to 345), and no-bedroom (from 0 to 10) dwellings. The number of three-bedroom dwellings decreased slightly from 3,930 to 3,885.

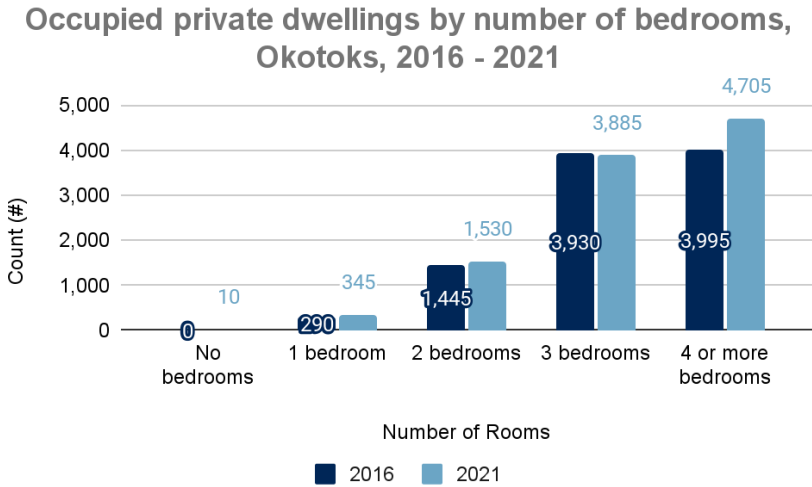


Figure 32: Occupied private dwellings by number of bedrooms, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Housing Starts

From 2003 to 2023, Okotoks experienced significant fluctuations in total housing starts, peaking at 962 units in 2007 and dropping to a low of 126 in 2016. Recent years have shown a recovery, with starts reaching 359 in 2023, reflecting renewed growth in the housing market.

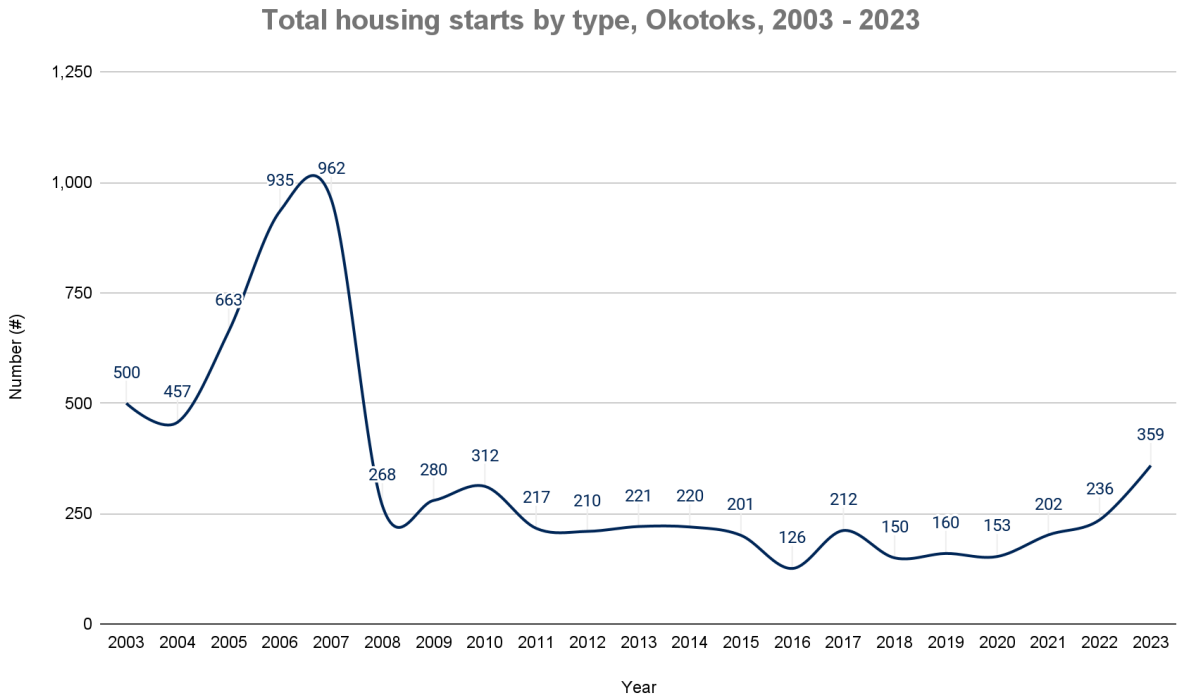


Figure 33: Total housing starts by type, Okotoks, 2003-2023

From 2003 to 2023, there were fluctuations in housing starts across various types. Apartment starts peaked at 372 in 2007 but were absent for several years, with significant starts again only in 2022 and 2023. Row house starts have been increasing, from no starts in 2010-2012 to 70 in 2023. Semi-detached housing saw varied activity, with a notable high of 82 starts in 2006 and a resurgence to 80 in 2023. Single-detached homes remained the most prevalent, although the numbers have varied over the years, with a peak of 691 in 2006 and a low of 76 in 2020.

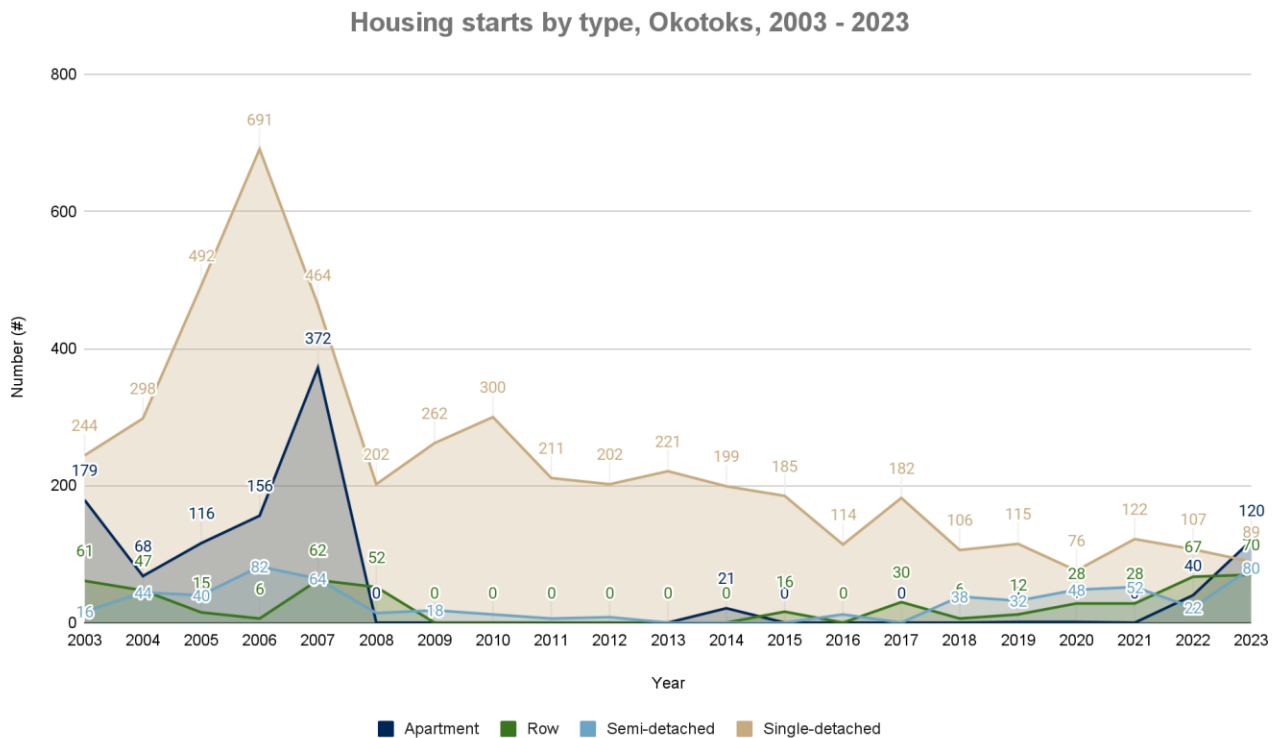


Figure 34: Housing starts by type, Okotoks, 2003-2023

From 2003 to 2023, Okotoks has experienced significant fluctuations in housing start patterns, with a recent strong trend towards multi-unit housing. While single-detached homes dominated for many years, the proportion of multi-unit housing (including row, semi-detached, and apartment units) has increased in recent years.

In 2003, multi-unit starts accounted for 51.2% of all housing starts, but this proportion decreased significantly over the next decade. By 2013, 100% of housing starts were single-detached. However, a shift began in 2014, with multi-unit starts slowly increasing.

The trend towards multi-unit housing accelerated rapidly from 2016 onward. In 2016, only 9.5% of housing starts were multi-unit. This proportion rose to 50.3% in 2020, marking the first year since 2007 that multi-unit starts outpaced single-detached starts. The trend continued, with multi-unit starts reaching 54.7% in 2022 and a striking 75.2% in 2023.

Of note, the sharp increase in multi-unit starts, though influenced by market forces, also corresponds with regulatory changes in 2021 and the development of new communities that began in 2018 and 2019, where land was available for multi-unit projects.

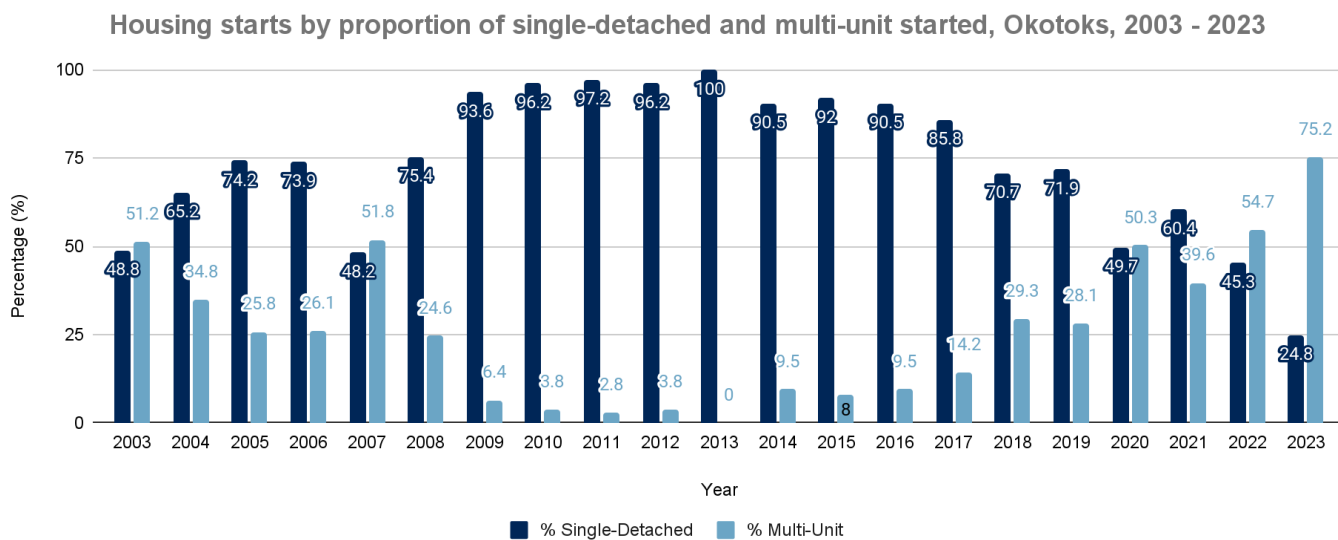


Figure 35: Housing starts by proportion of single-detached and multi-unit starts, Okotoks, 2003-2023

Vacancy Rate

From 2003 to 2023, the vacancy rate in Okotoks showed considerable variation with no clear trend, peaking at 5.8% in 2012 and dropping to 0% in multiple years (2006, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2018, and 2022), with other notable rates including 4.9% in 2003, 3.7% in 2016, 1.8% in 2020 and 2021, and 3.5% in 2023.⁵

⁵ Refer to the notes in the [Methodology](#) section for clarifications regarding data sourced from CMHC.

Vacancy Rate (%), Okotoks, 2003 - 2023 (October)

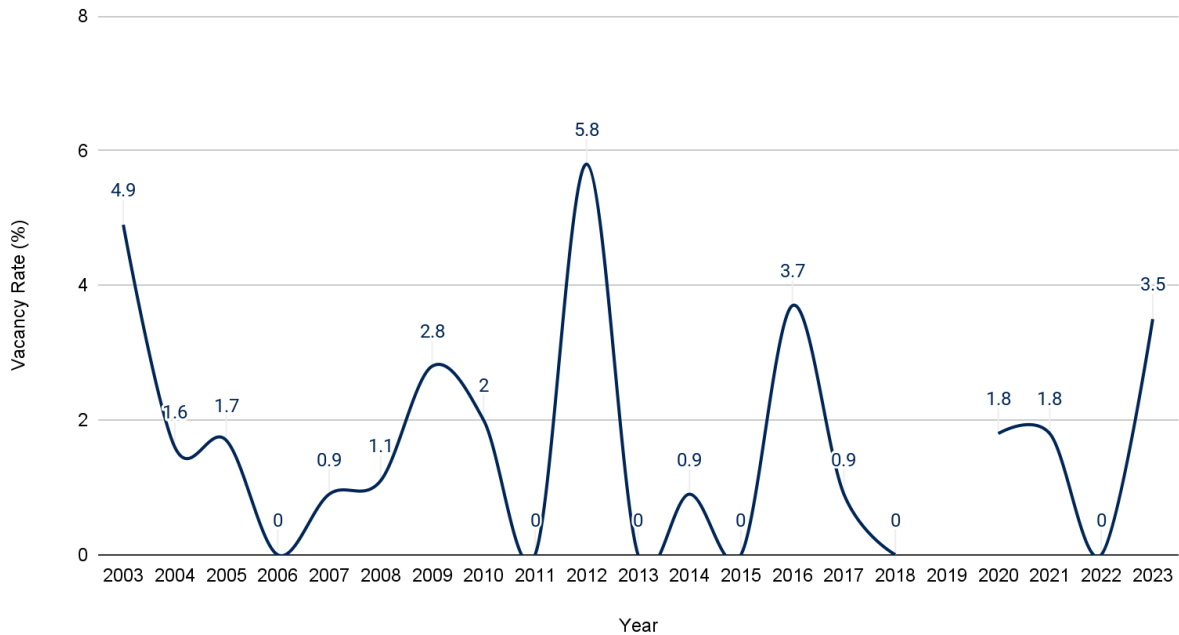


Figure 36: Vacancy rate (%), Okotoks, 2003-2023 (October)

From 2003 to 2023 in Okotoks, vacancy rates for various housing units varied substantially. Notable peaks were observed in 2012 for two-bedroom units with a rate of 11.8%, and in 2019 for three-bedroom units with a rate of 15.7%. Several years, including 2006, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2022, saw a vacancy rate of 0% across multiple unit types. Two-bedroom units registered a rate of 4.5 in 2023.⁶

From 2003 to 2021, the average rent for two-bedroom units rose from \$707 to \$1,032, and rent for three-bedroom units increased from \$757 in 2003 to \$1,112 in 2021. The overall average rent increased from \$714 in 2003 to \$1,193 in 2023. However, as noted in the [Methodology](#) section, this data excludes the secondary rental market. As shown in the [Rental Market](#) section of this report, there is a contrast between the rent prices reported here and those experienced by renters in the broader market.

Average rent by bedroom type, Okotoks, 2003 (October) - 2022 (October)⁷

⁶ Data for 2019 has been omitted to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable.

⁷ ** Data omitted to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable.

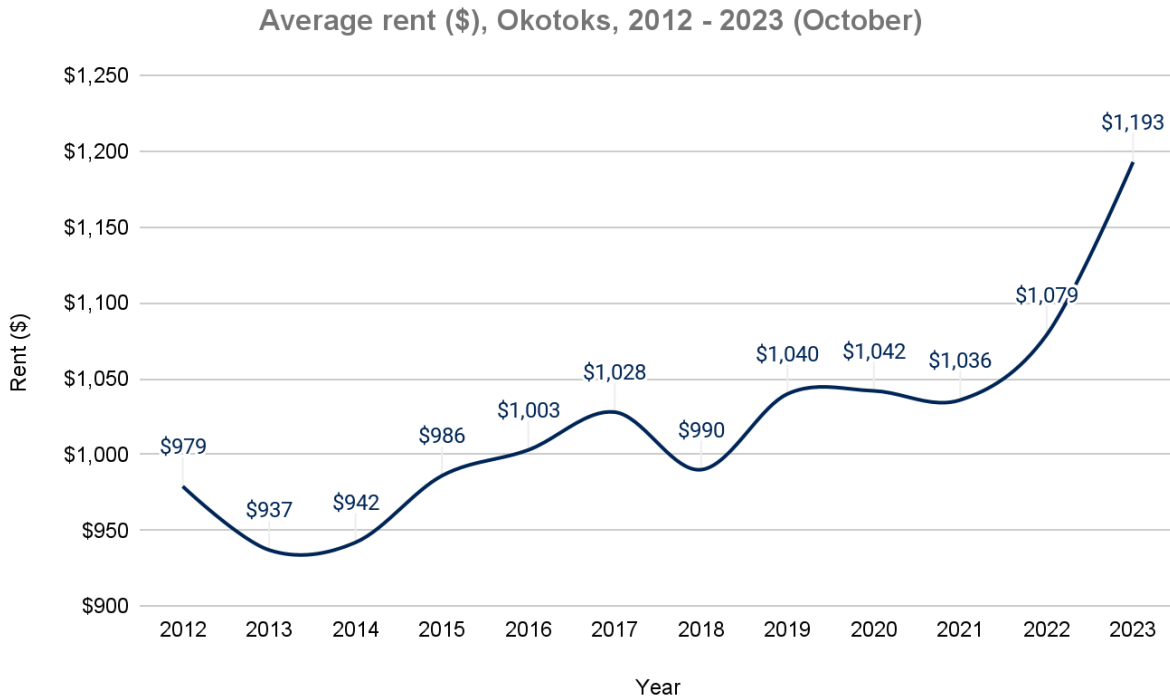


Figure 37: Average rent (\$), Okotoks, 2012-2023 (October)

Secondary Suites and Accessory Dwelling Units

The data on Okotoks Secondary Suites completions from 2003 to 2023 shows a significant increase, particularly in 2020 (12 completions) and 2023 (21 completions), aligning with the progressive easing of restrictions on secondary suites in 2019 and 2021, and the introduction of the grant program for secondary suites and accessory dwelling units in 2021. A total of 78 secondary suites and 8 accessory dwelling units were completed during this period.

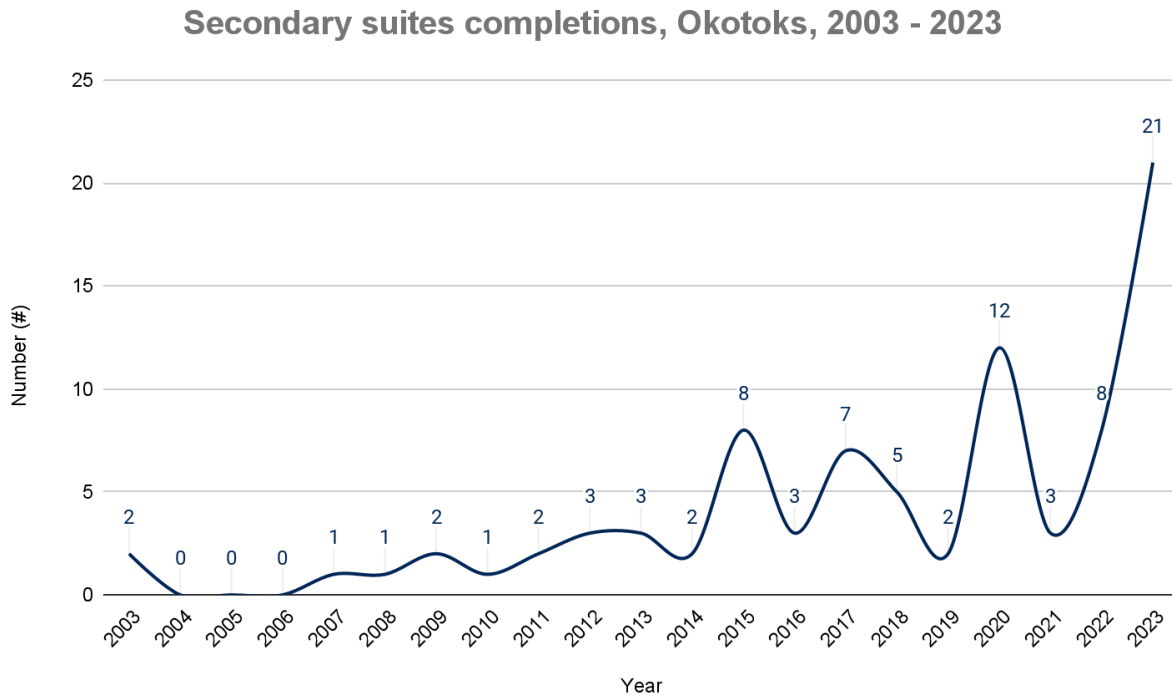


Figure 38: Secondary suites completions, Okotoks, 2003-2023

Housing Cost

The median value of dwellings in Okotoks increased by 0.55% from 2016 to 2021, rising from \$449,544 to \$452,000. The average value of dwellings increased by 1.9% over the same period, from \$472,212 to \$481,200.

Median and average value of dwellings, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

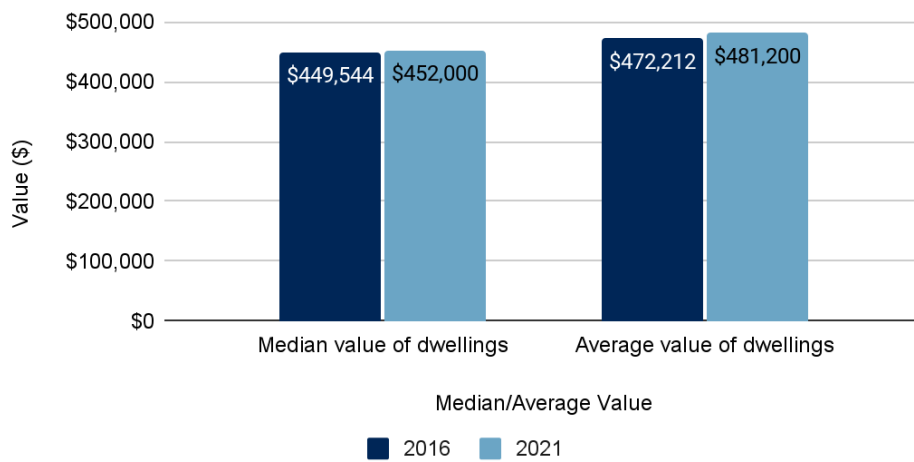


Figure 39: Median and average value of dwellings, Okotoks, 2016-2021

The median dwelling value in Okotoks, at \$452,000, is slightly lower than in Calgary, which is \$456,000, but significantly higher than the Alberta average of \$400,000.

Median value of dwellings in Okotoks, Calgary and Alberta, 2021

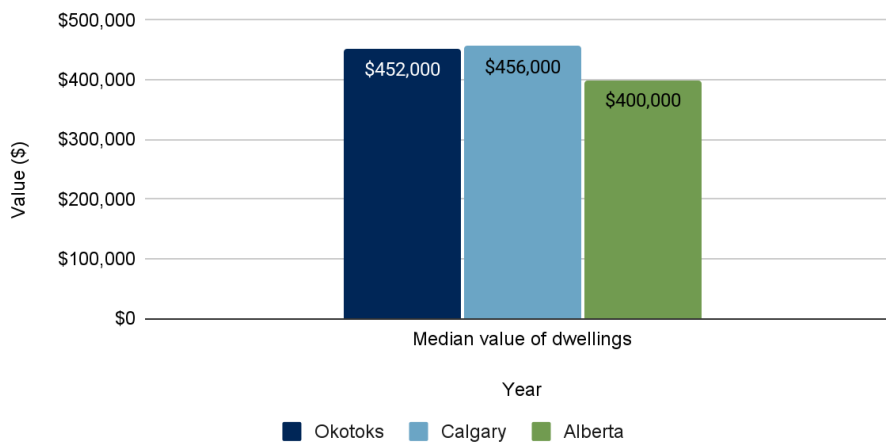


Figure 40: Median value of dwellings in Okotoks, Calgary, and Alberta, 2021

From 2016 to 2021, monthly shelter costs in Okotoks increased for both owned and rented dwellings. The median shelter costs for owned and rented dwellings increased by 1.5% and 0.86%, respectively, while the average shelter costs for owned and rented dwellings increased by 3.0% and 2.8%, respectively.

Median and average monthly shelter costs for owned and rented dwellings, Okotoks, 2016 - 2021

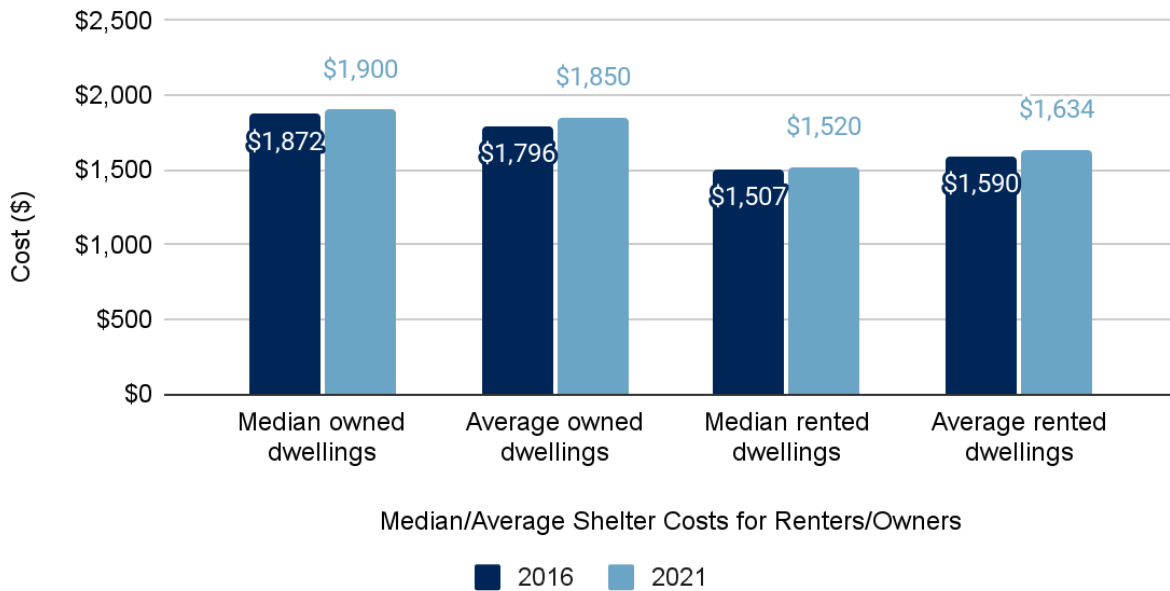


Figure 41: Median and average monthly shelter costs for owned and rented dwellings, Okotoks, 2016-2021

In 2021, the median monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings in Okotoks were \$1,900, higher than both Calgary (\$1,720) and Alberta (\$1,600). For rented dwellings, Okotoks also had higher costs at \$1,520, compared to Calgary at \$1,350 and Alberta at \$1,280. This data suggests that both renting and owning a home in Okotoks is more expensive than in Calgary and the rest of Alberta, reflecting a possibly higher cost of living in Okotoks.

Median monthly shelter costs for owned and rented dwellings in Okotoks, Calgary and Alberta, 2021

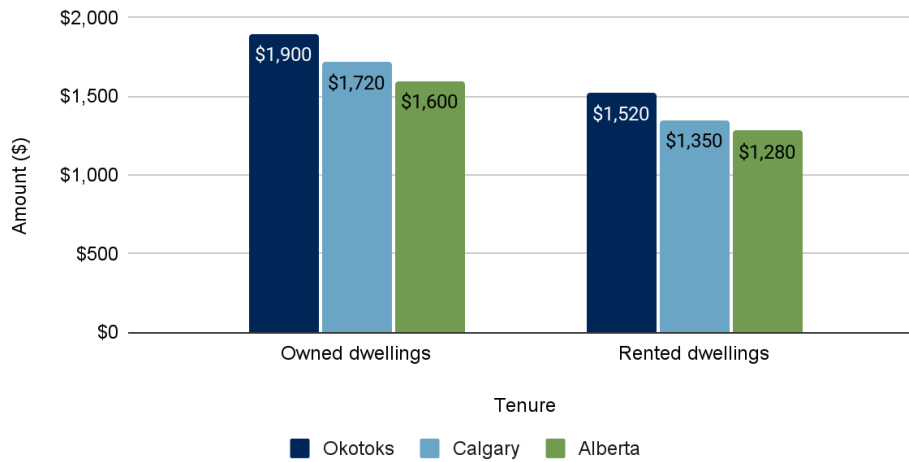


Figure 42: Median monthly shelter costs for owned and rented dwellings in Okotoks, Calgary, and Alberta, 2021

However, when we compare these changes in shelter costs to median income, we can see that the percentage increase in shelter costs far outpaces the growth in median income in Okotoks. From 2016 to 2021, while shelter costs as measured by the CPI increased by 9.0%, median income only grew by 0.7%. Similarly, rented accommodation costs rose by 1.1% and owned accommodation costs by 5.9%, all compared to the same minimal growth in median income. For the most recent data from 2023 to 2024, the increase in shelter costs is even more significant, with a 15% rise in overall shelter costs, and both rented and owned accommodation costs experiencing a 17% increase, starkly contrasting with the stagnant median income growth of only 0.7%. This disparity highlights that housing affordability is becoming a critical issue for residents in Okotoks, as income growth fails to keep pace with rising living costs.

Percentage change in shelter costs in Alberta compared to median income in Okotoks from 2016 to 2021, and 2023 - 2024

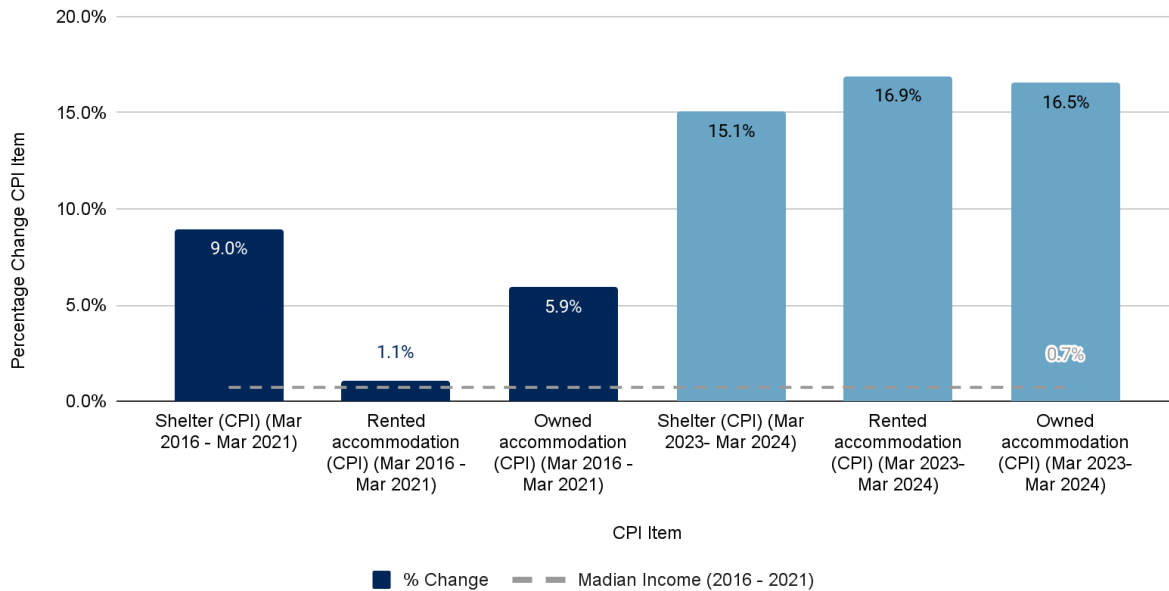


Figure 43: Percentage change in shelter costs in Alberta compared to median income, Okotoks, 2016-2021 and 2023-2024

Housing Sales and Inventory⁸

In Okotoks, the housing market faced its lowest inventory levels ever recorded in 2023, a persistent issue over the last three years. This shortage hindered the ability to meet buyer demand, leading to a significant drop in sales from 843 units in 2022 to 641 units in 2023, a nearly 24% decrease. New listings also decreased substantially from 999 in 2022 to 746 in 2023, reflecting a 25.33% drop, indicating a reluctance or inability among homeowners to sell, possibly due to market uncertainties or holding out for higher prices. Despite these challenges, the benchmark price in Okotoks rose from \$538,367 in 2022 to \$571,742 in 2023, a 6.2% increase driven by tight market conditions.

⁸ Data for this section is sourced from: Calgary Real Estate Board. (n.d.). Housing statistics. Retrieved from https://www.creb.com/Housing_Statistics/

Table 14: Housing sales, new listings, inventory, and benchmark price and percentage change, Okotoks, 2022-2023

Metric	2022	2023	% Change Year Over Year
Sales	843 units	641 units	-23.96%
New Listings	999	746	-25.33%
Inventory	79	64	-18.99%
Benchmark Price	\$538,367	\$571,742	6.20%

The critical issue in Okotoks remains the extremely low level of housing inventory, which has not only restricted sales but also driven up prices due to high demand relative to supply. The continuous rise in home prices, amidst declining sales and listings, suggests a market where potential buyers are fewer but are willing to pay more, further stressing affordability. The sales-to-new-listings ratio has consistently been above 80%, indicating a seller's market where demand outstrips supply. This imbalance is expected to continue exerting upward pressure on prices.

Rental Market⁹

As of May 9, 2024, the Okotoks rental market features 20 listings. There are no studios or 4+ bedroom units available. The offerings include five 1-bedroom apartments priced between \$1,250 and \$1,650, averaging \$1,460. Ten 2-bedroom apartments are listed from \$1,800 to \$2,500, averaging \$2,047. Additionally, five 3-bedroom units range from \$2,100 to \$2,700, with an average of \$2,366. Overall, prices across all listings vary from \$1,250 to \$2,700, with an average of \$1,980.

Table 15: Housing listings and lowest, average, and highest prices by number of bedrooms, Okotoks, 2024

	Listings	Lowest Price	Average Price	Highest Price
Studio	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
1 Bed	5	\$1,250	\$1,460	\$1,650
2 Beds	10	\$1,800	\$2,047	\$2,500
3 Beds	5	\$2,100	\$2,366	\$2,700
4+ Beds	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
All	20	\$1,250	\$1,980	\$2,700

⁹ Data for this section is sourced from: RentFaster.ca. (n.d.). Market statistics. Retrieved May 9, 2024, from <https://www.rentfaster.ca/admin/market-stats/>

The graph comparing rental listings in Okotoks for 2023 and 2024 shows distinct patterns. 2023 displays a gradual decline in listings from February to April. In contrast, 2024 starts with higher numbers, experiences significant fluctuations, including a notable drop in mid-March followed by a peak of 29 listings in early April, and ends with more listings than 2023. This data indicates different market conditions between the two years, with 2024 showing larger variations in rental availability compared to the steadier trend in 2023.

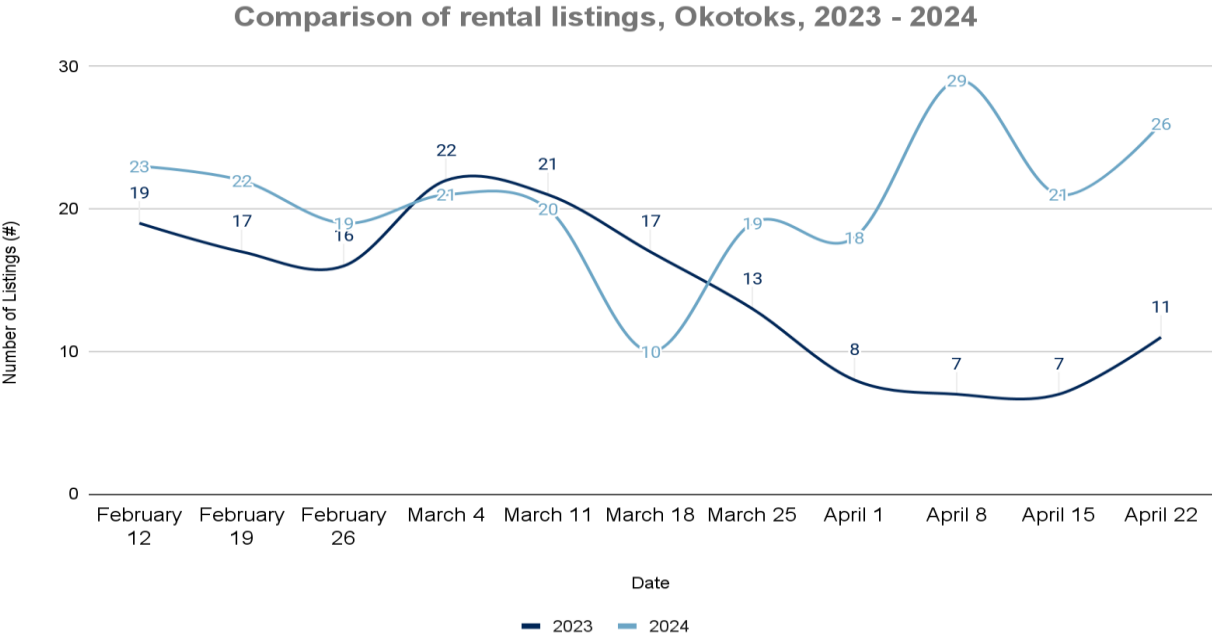


Figure 44: Comparison of rental listings, Okotoks, 2023-2024

The graph compares average rental prices in Okotoks for 2023 and 2024 from February to April. In 2023, prices show a general downward trend, starting at \$2,055 and ending at \$1,873, with some fluctuations. 2024 begins with higher prices, peaking at \$2,244, then experiences more pronounced variations. Despite some drops, 2024 prices consistently remain above 2023 levels. The gap between the two years is largest in February and narrows towards April. By the end of the period, 2024 prices (\$1,999) are higher than 2023 (\$1,873), indicating an overall increase in rental costs year-over-year.

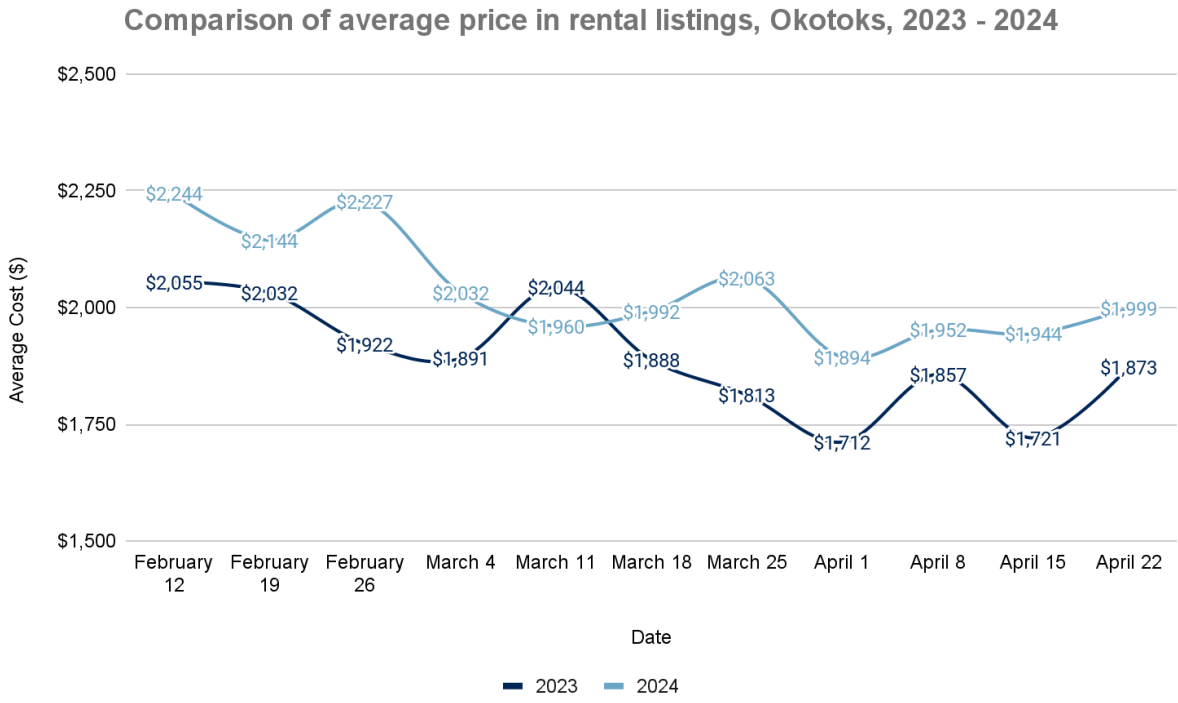


Figure 45: Comparison of average price in rental listings, Okotoks, 2023-2024

Non-Market and Rental Housing Inventory

This section provides an examination of the non-market and rental housing inventory in Okotoks, highlighting the composition and distribution of housing types designed to meet diverse community needs.

Supply

As of May 2024, the total non-market housing supply in Okotoks includes 151 units, encompassing community housing, various forms of seniors housing, non-market affordable housing, and cooperative housing, with a notable 68 households on the waiting list. Additionally, there are 50 rent supplement households, bringing the adjusted total to 201 units, with 78 households waiting for housing. It is important to note that waitlist figures fluctuate substantially throughout the year and the figures in these reports represent a single point in time.

Table 16: Non-market housing supply by housing type as of May 2024, Okotoks

Housing Type	# of Units	# HH on Waitlist May 2024
Community Housing	12	12
Seniors Self-Contained	24	15
Seniors Lodge	46	23
Seniors Housing (Other)	n/a	n/a
Non-Market Affordable Housing	31	28
Permanent Supportive Housing	n/a	n/a
Specialized Needs	n/a	n/a
Indigenous Housing	n/a	n/a
Cooperative Housing	38	
TOTAL UNITS	151	68
Rent Supplement Households	50	16
TOTAL UNITS + Rent Supplement HH's	201	84

Providers

Westwinds¹⁰ is a predominant provider, offering a variety of subsidy types that cater to a broad spectrum of family sizes. Their offerings include community housing with 30% Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) schemes for three-bedroom units and seniors self-contained units with similar RGI terms for one-bedroom setups. Their seniors lodge options further diversify the housing mix, featuring income-based units ranging from studio to one-bedroom apartments, adjusted to 67-71% and 73% of income levels.

In addition, the SKOTOKO Cooperative highlights a different aspect of non-market housing, focusing on community-oriented living with a fixed rate of \$924 as of 2021 for three-bedroom units. Non-market units are being offered by Westwinds and by the private sector through CMHC agreements.

Purpose Built Rental

From 2021 to 2023, Okotoks has 70 completed purpose-built rental units (48 market and 22 subsidized) and 319 units underway (238 market and 81 subsidized), with a composition including 64 one-bed, 185 two-bed, 133 three-bed, 2 one-bed accessible, and 5 two-bed accessible units since 2021.

Table 17: Purpose-built rental counts by completion status, Okotoks, 2021-2023

Status	Total Units	Market Units	Subsidized Units
Complete	70	48	22
Underway	319	238	81

Note: Units are deemed underway when a development permit has been approved for the project

Table 18: Purpose-built rental counts by number and accessibility of beds, Okotoks, 2021-2023

1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	1 bed accessible	2 bed accessible
64	185	133	2	5

Note: Includes all market and subsidized purpose built rental projects

¹⁰ Note that in October 2022, Westwinds instituted a residency requirement for their community housing and seniors independent housing. This policy change was implemented to prevent Calgary residents from accessing Westwinds housing. The residency requirement mandates that applicants must have lived in the Foothills region for at least six months before applying for housing.

No Shelter Or Transitional Housing

Increasing housing costs and overall rising cost of living, coupled with the absence of shelters or transitional housing units in Okotoks has the potential to lead to a rise in homelessness, increased vulnerability, strain on public services, and limited support for individuals seeking a transition to permanent housing. It can also create barriers to recovery for those struggling with addiction or mental health issues. Moreover, it can make it challenging to attract and retain workers, exacerbate social inequality, and contribute to poverty. To address these challenges, Okotoks could benefit from exploring options to enhance the availability of shelters and transitional housing units, such as partnerships with non-profit organizations, incentives for private developers, or direct investment by the local government.

Emergency shelters and transitional housing are generally offered by housing operators in Calgary. Rowan House Society in High River is the only emergency shelter located in the Foothills and provides 24 beds for women and children experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Rowan House also provides outreach and preventative education programs that are available to Okotoks residents.

Current Housing Need

Adequacy, Suitability and Affordability

From 2016 to 2021 in Okotoks, the proportion of households living in unaffordable housing decreased from 19.5% to 17.2%, and the proportion living in unsuitable housing decreased slightly from 2.9% to 2.8%. However, the proportion of households living in inadequate housing increased from 1.9% to 2.4%, and the number of households in core housing need increased from 3.0% to 3.2%. This suggests that most households in core housing need are in this status given that they fall below the affordability standard.

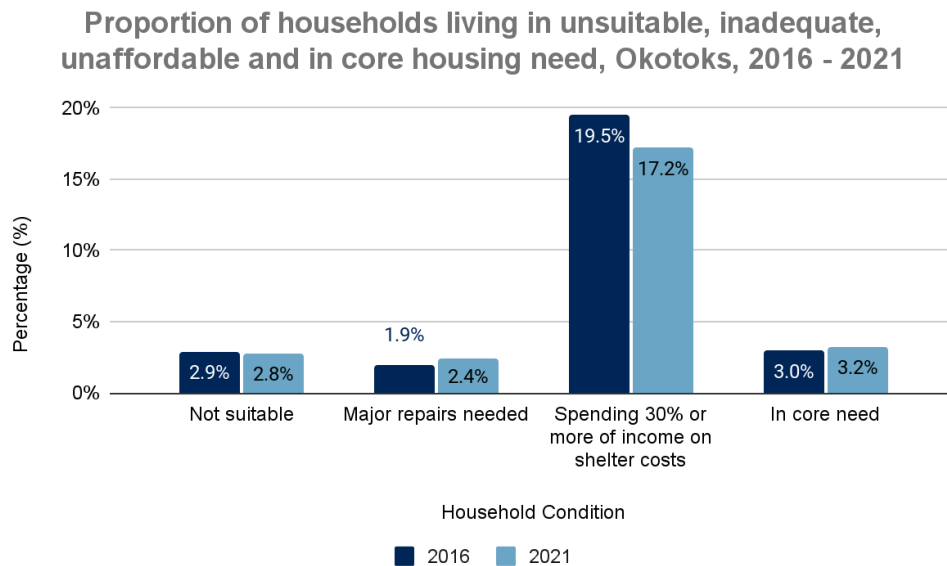


Figure 46: Proportion of households living in unsuitable, inadequate, and unaffordable housing, and in core housing need, Okotoks, 2016-2021

Owners have fewer housing issues with 2.1% inadequate, 2.1% unsuitable, 14.2% unaffordable, and 2.3% in core housing need, compared to renters with 4.7% inadequate, 6.7% unsuitable, 35.7% unaffordable, and 8.9% in core housing need.

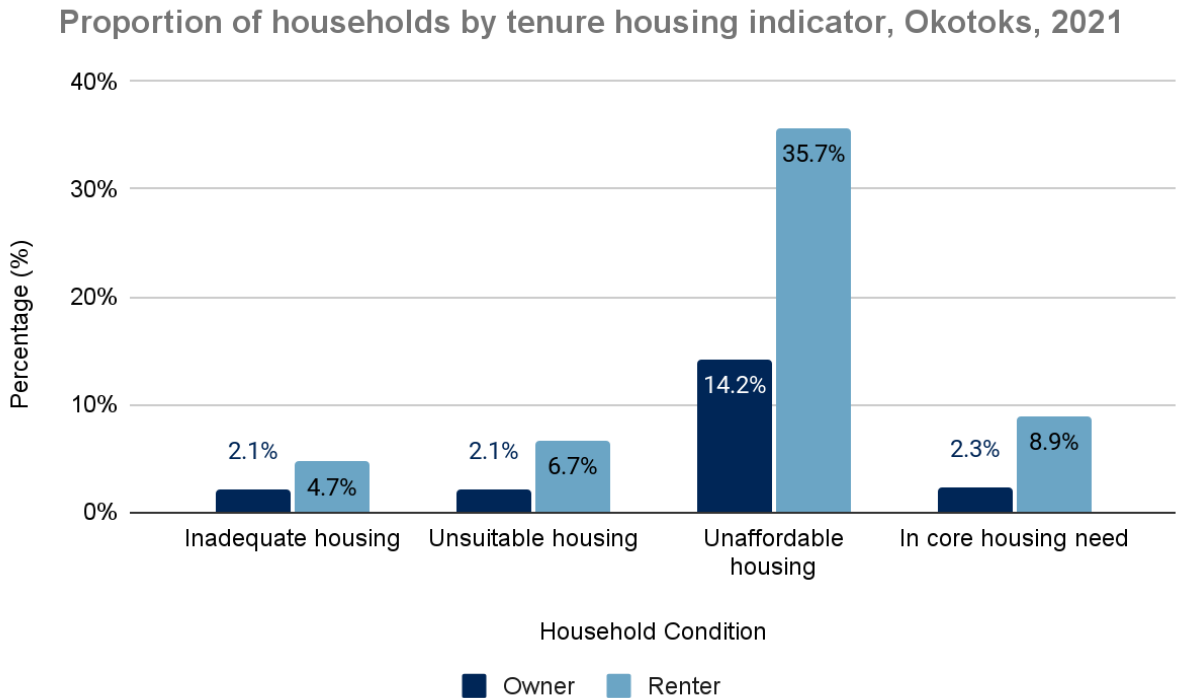


Figure 47: Proportion of households by tenure housing indicator, Okotoks, 2021

Core Housing need

Age

In Okotoks in 2021, the highest core housing need among homeowners was in the 65 years and over age group, at 2.8% (105 out of 3,720), compared to 1.3% to 1.6% in other age groups. No renters aged 18 to 24 were in core housing need, contrasting sharply with other age groups. The most affected renters were those aged 55 to 64, with 15.1% (40 out of 265) in need, followed by 6.5% (85 out of 1,305) in the 0 to 17 age group, 6.4% (25 out of 390) in the 65+ group, and 4.3% (70 out of 1,645) in the 25 to 54 group.

Proportion of population in Core Housing Need by age and tenure, Okotoks, 2021

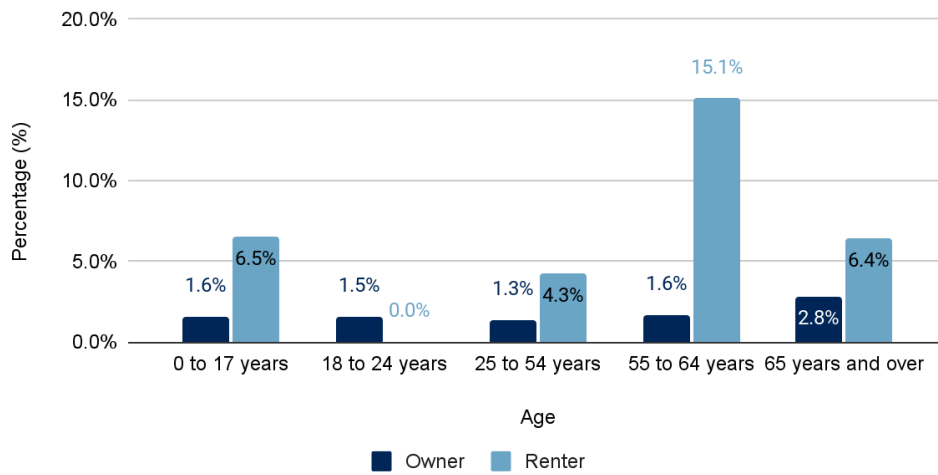


Figure 48: Proportion of population in core housing need by age and tenure, Okotoks, 2021

Income Category

In 2021, all households in core housing need fall within the very low income (82.1%) and low income (13.6%) categories, with no households in core housing need in the moderate, median, or high-income categories.

Table 19: Number and percentage of households in core housing need by income category, Okotoks, 2021

Income Category	# of HHs	% of Total HHs
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	115	82.1%
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	220	13.6%
Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI)	0	0.0%
Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI)	0	0.0%
High Income (121% and more of AMHI)	0	0.0%
Total	335	100.0%

Note: AMHI = Area Median Household Income; HH = Household

Household Size

In Okotoks, all very low-income households in core housing need are single-person households (100%). Among low-income households in core housing need, the distribution is more varied, with 27.91% being single-person, 32.56% two-person, 20.93% three-person, 9.30% four-person,

and 9.30% five-person households. There are no households in core housing need in the moderate, median, or high-income categories.

Table 20: Number and percentage of households in core housing need by income category and by household size, Okotoks, 2021

Income Category	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5+ Person
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	27.91%	32.56%	20.93%	9.30%	9.30%
Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI)	*	*	*	*	*
Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI)	*	*	*	*	*
High Income (121% and more of AMHI)	*	*	*	*	*

*No households in this category, or too few households to report

Note: AMHI = Area Median Household Income

Priority Populations

The data shows that out of the total 10,305 households in the community, 330 (3.2%) are in core housing need (CHN), with single mother-led households having the highest percentage (6.7%), followed by women-led households (5.2%), while certain priority populations like Black-led, new migrant-led, refugee claimant-led, and transgender or non-binary households report no households in core housing need.

Table 21: Number of households, and number and percentage of households in core housing need by priority population, Okotoks, 2021

Population	# of HHs	# of HHs in CHN	% of HHs in CHN
Single mother-led	820	55	6.7%
Women-led	4,140	215	5.2%
Indigenous	755	25	3.3%
Head member of racialized group	795	20	2.5%
Black-led	45	0	0.0%
New migrant-led	180	0	0.0%
Refugee claimant-led	65	0	0.0%
Head under 25	140	0	0.0%
Head over 65	2,420	105	4.3%
Head over 85	155	0	0.0%
With physical activity limitation	3,190	100	3.1%
With cognitive, mental, or addictions activity limitation	2,205	75	3.4%
Transgender or non-binary	105	0	0.0%
Community (all)	10,305	330	3.2%

Note: HH = Household

In Okotoks, a significant portion of households with core housing needs led by women come from very low-income (37.2%) and low-income categories (62.8%). For households led by Indigenous or Ethnocultural background, all are in the low-income category. The senior households in need come from very low-income (36.3%) and low-income categories (63.6%). Also, households with physical activity limitation are split into very low-income (28.6%) and low-income (71.4%), as well as those with cognitive, mental, or addiction activity limitation (31.3%, 68.8% respectively). No data was available for other priority populations.

Table 22: Percentage of households in core housing need by priority population and by income category, Okotoks, 2021

Population	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income	Median Income	High Income
Single mother-led	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Women-led	37.2%	62.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Indigenous	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Ethnocultural background-led	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Black-led	*	*	*	*	*
New migrant-led	*	*	*	*	*
Refugee claimant-led	*	*	*	*	*
Head under 25	*	*	*	*	*
Head over 65	36.4%	63.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Head over 85	*	*	*	*	*
With physical activity limitation	28.6%	71.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
With cognitive, mental, or addictions activity limitation	31.3%	68.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Transgender or non-binary	*	*	*	*	*

*No households in this category, or too few households to report.

Owner vs Renters

The data for owner and renter households in core housing need per income category shows that among owner households, 30% are in the very low-income category and 70% are in the low-income category. For renter households, 43% are in the very low-income category and 57% are in the low-income category. There are no households in the moderate, median, or high-income categories for either owners or renters.

Table 23: Number and percentage of households in core housing need by tenure and by income category, Okotoks, 2021

Income Category	# of Owner HHs	% of Owner HHs	# of Renter HHs	% of Renter HHs
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	60	30%	60	43%
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	140	70%	80	57%
Total	200	100.0%	140	100%

Note: AMHI = Area Median Household Income; HH = Household

Housing Need Projections¹¹

Okotoks is projected to experience significant household growth across all income categories by 2031, with the highest increase in median-income households (39%), contributing to an overall household increase of 34% from 10,445 to 14,008 households.

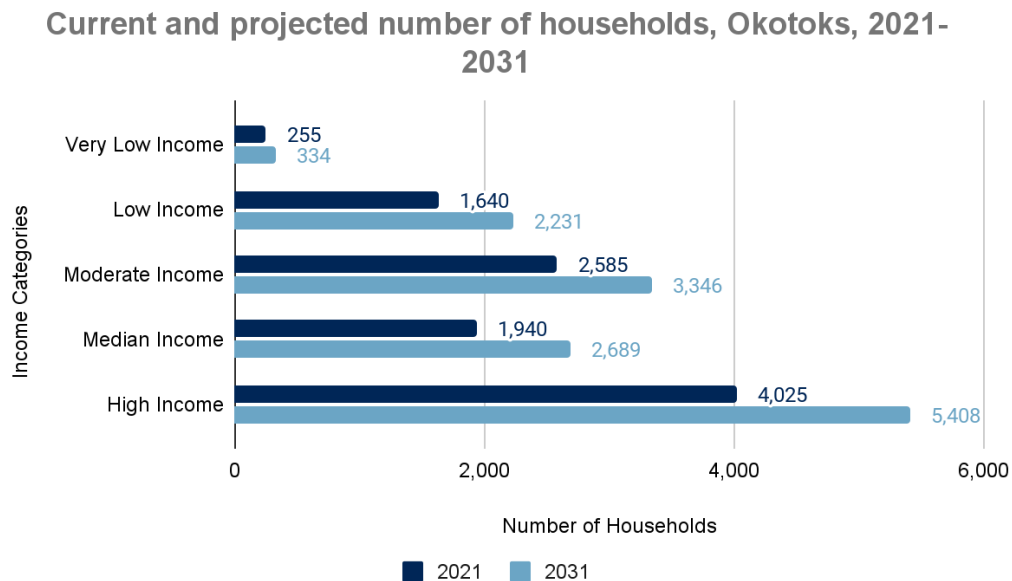


Figure 49: Current and projected number of households, Okotoks, 2021-2031

Table 24: Current and projected number of households and percent change by income category, Okotoks, 2021-2031

HH Income Category	2021 HHs	Projected Gain/Loss of HHs by 2031	2031 HHs	% Change
Very Low Income ≤\$23,400	255	79	334	31%
Low Income \$23,400 - \$58,500	1,640	591	2,231	36%
Moderate Income \$58,500 - \$93,600	2,585	761	3,346	29%
Median Income \$93,600 - \$140,400	1,940	749	2,689	39%
High Income \$>=\$140,401	4,025	1,383	5,408	34%
Total	10,445	3,563	14,008	34%

Note: HH = Household

¹¹ Please refer to the methodology section for details on how the 2031 projections are calculated.

Current and projected number of households by size, Okotoks, 2021- 2031

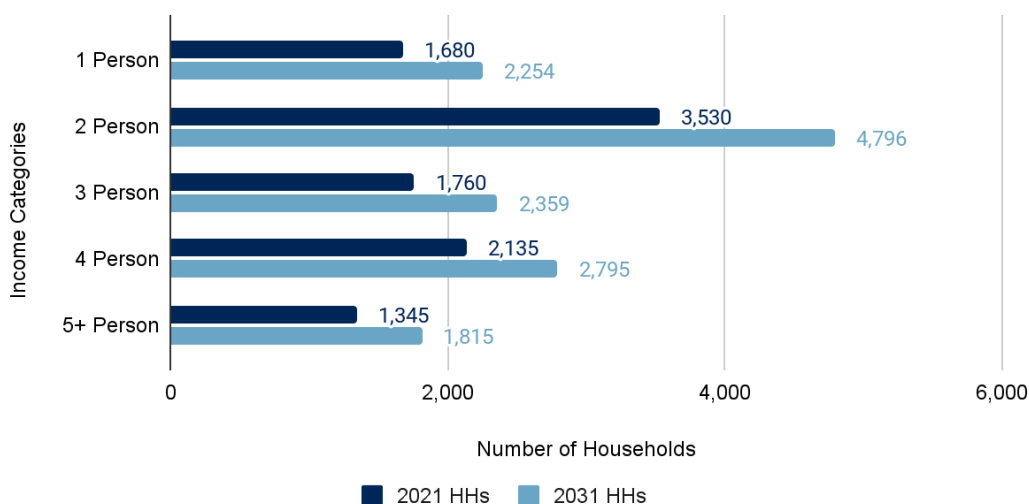


Figure 50: Current and projected number of households by size, Okotoks, 2021-2031

Table 25: Current and projected number of households and percent change by household size, Okotoks, 2021-2031

HH Size	2021 HHs	Projected Gain/Loss of HHs by 2031	Total 2031 HHs	% Change
1 Person	1,680	574	2,254	34%
2 Person	3,530	1,266	4,796	36%
3 Person	1,760	599	2,359	34%
4 Person	2,135	660	2,795	31%
5+ Person	1,345	470	1,815	35%
Total	10,450	3,569	14,019	34%

Note: HH = Household

From 2021 to 2031, the total number of households in core housing need in Okotoks is projected to increase from 305 to 456, primarily driven by a rise in very low-income households (from 90 to 157) and low-income households (from 215 to 299), with significant growth in single-person households (from 150 to 181) and larger households of four and five persons (from 40 to 134). This underscores the need for housing policies addressing diverse household sizes and affordability challenges.

Table 26: Current and projected number of households in core housing need by income category and by household size, Okotoks, 2021-2031

	2021						2031					
	1 Person HH	2 Person HH	3 Person HH	4 Person HH	5+ Person HH	Total	1 Person HH	2 Person HH	3 Person HH	4 Person HH	5+ Person HH	Total
Very Low Income	90	0	0	0	0	90	139	18	0	0	0	157
Low Income	60	70	45	20	20	215	42	63	60	72	62	299
Moderate Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Median Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
High Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	150	70	45	20	20	305	181	81	60	72	62	456

Note: HH = Household

Owners vs renters

The data illustrates trends of households in Core Housing Need by tenure in Okotoks from 2016 to 2031. Initially, there were 150 owner and 135 renter households in 2016. By 2021, these numbers had increased to 200 and 140, respectively. Projections for 2031 show owner households growing to 250 and renter households to 206, totaling 456 households. This reflects a 33% growth for owners and a 47% surge for renters from 2021 to 2031, indicating a faster expansion in rental housing compared to homeownership over the decade. Overall, households in core housing need are expected to increase by 34% by 2031.

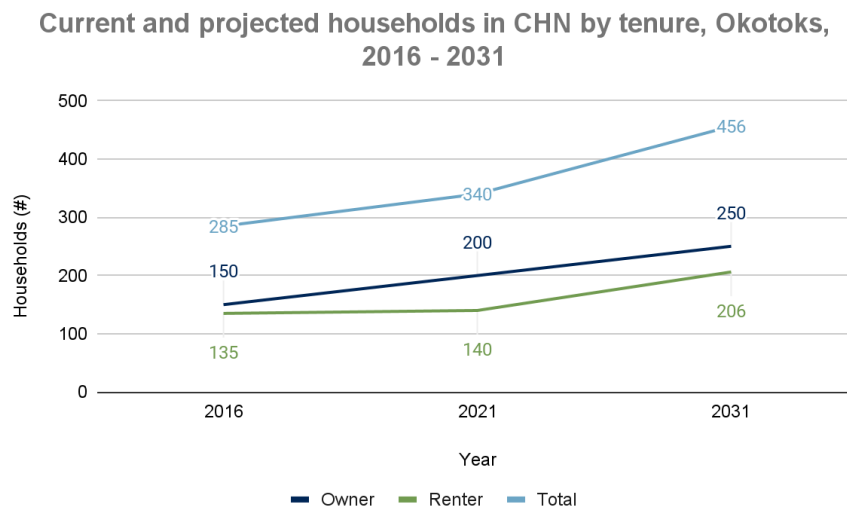


Figure 51: Current and projected households in core housing need by tenure, Okotoks, 2016-2031

Table 27: Current and projected number of households in core housing need and percent change by tenure, Okotoks, 2021-2031

	2016	2021	2031	% Change 2016 - 2021	% Change 2021 - 2031
Owner	150	200	250	33%	25%
Renter	135	140	206	4%	47%
Total	285	340	456	19%	34%

The chart details the percentage distribution and changes of owner and renter households in CHN in Okotoks from 2016 through 2031. In 2016, owners constituted 52.6% of households while renters made up 47.4%. By 2021, the proportion of owner households had increased to 58.8%, and renter households decreased to 41.2%. Projections for 2031 suggest a shift, with owner households decreasing to 54.8% and renter households increasing to 45.2%. This translates to a 12% increase in owner households from 2016 to 2021, followed by a 7% decrease by 2031. For renters, there was a 13% decrease from 2016 to 2021, but a projected increase of 10% by 2031, reflecting dynamic changes in housing tenure patterns over the years.

Current and projected households in CHN by tenure, Okotoks, 2016 - 2031

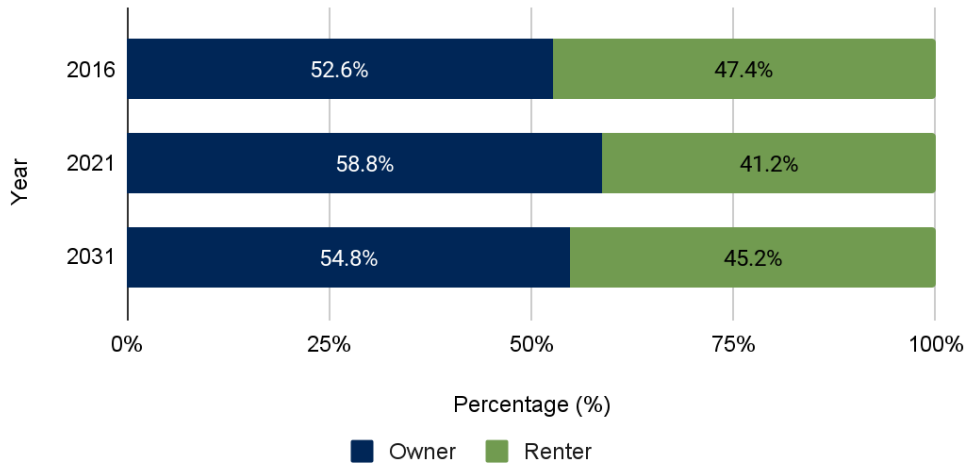


Figure 52: Current and projected households in core housing need by tenure, Okotoks, 2016-2031

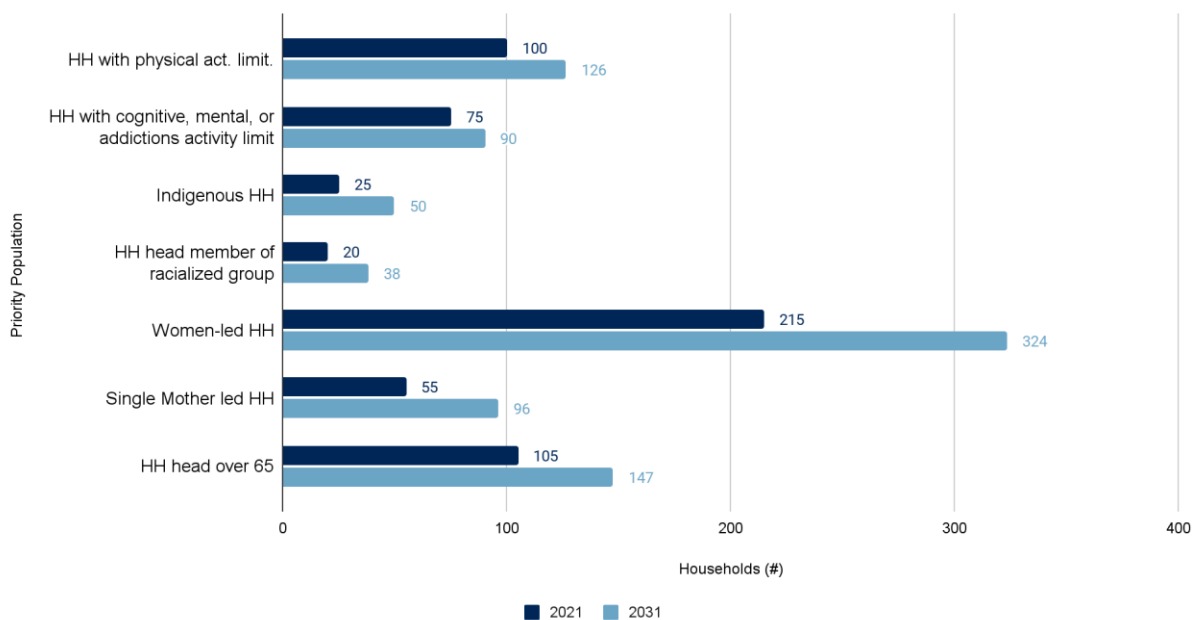
Table 28: Current and projected percentage of households in core housing need and percent change by tenure, Okotoks, 2021-2031

	2016	2021	2031	% Change 2016 - 2021	% Change 2021 - 2031
Owner	52.6%	58.8%	54.8%	12%	-7%
Renter	47.4%	41.2%	45.2%	-13%	10%

Priority Populations

In Okotoks, the number of households in core housing need is projected to increase across various priority populations from 2021 to 2031. Women-led households are expected to see the most significant rise, from 215 in 2021 to 324 in 2031. Single mother-led households will nearly double, increasing from 55 to 96. Households led by individuals over 65 are projected to increase from 105 to 147. Those with physical activity limitations are expected to grow from 100 to 126, and households with cognitive, mental, or addiction issues will rise from 75 to 90. Indigenous households will double from 25 to 50, and households headed by members of racialized groups are set to increase from 20 to 38.

Current and projected households in Core Housing Need by priority populations in Okotoks, 2021 - 2031



Note: These numbers are not mutually exclusive. For example, single mother-led households are included within women-led households, and a household head over 65 could also be counted as women-led if that person is female. Additionally, households with physical activity limitations could also overlap with other categories, such as those led by individuals over 65 or those with cognitive, mental, or addiction activity limitations.

Figure 53: Current and projected households in core housing need by priority population, Okotoks, 2021-2031

Homelessness

Comprehensive data about homelessness in Okotoks is not available; however, residents in need are often referred to the Okotoks Family Resource Centre (OFRC) for information and referrals for community resources and social services, which includes those in need of housing. Social services and faith-based organizations often refer people to OFRC for support in accessing appropriate services. Though not a complete picture of those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, the OFRC collects data on the type of housing related inquiries they receive which does provide some insights into homelessness in Okotoks.

In 2023 OFRC supported 26 clients that were at risk of homelessness, 38 clients in search of housing, and 9 clients that were experiencing homelessness.¹² Homelessness in Okotoks, like many rural communities, is typically “hidden” meaning that those experiencing homelessness are often couch surfing, living in vehicles, or using other precarious accommodations. The “hidden” nature of homelessness in Okotoks makes it very difficult to track and quantify.

Table 29: Reason for client visits to Okotoks Family Resource Centre (unique clients), 2023

	Count
Housing - at risk of homelessness	26
Housing - inquiries	38
Housing - homelessness	9

¹² In this context, “Housing (at risk of homelessness)” applies to clients who have received eviction notices, are affected by owners planning to sell properties, are experiencing unstable family relationships leading to a housing crisis, or are facing affordability issues. “Housing (inquiries)” refers to questions regarding the availability of various types of housing. “Housing (homelessness)” applies to clients who self-identify as homeless and seek assistance from the Okotoks Family Resource Centre (OFRC) primarily for housing solutions.

Glossary of Terms

Adequate Housing: is reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs

Affordability: The household has the financial ability or means to effectively enter or access the housing market, without spending more than 30 percent of its before tax (gross) household income on shelter costs

Affordable Housing: Housing that is financially attainable for households, often defined as costing no more than a certain percentage of household income.

Census Data: Official data collected by a government body that details population demographics and other critical metrics relevant to planning and resource allocation.

Census Family: Defined as a married couple and the children, if any, of either and/or both spouses; a couple living common law and the children, if any, of either and/or both partners; or a parent of any marital status in a one-parent family with at least one child living in the same dwelling and that child or those children.

Census Family Households: Those that contain at least one census family.

Community Housing: Government-supported subsidized rental housing administered by housing management bodies for families, seniors, and individuals with low income who cannot afford other housing options in the community, due to circumstances. A tenant's rent, which includes heat, water, electricity, and sewer expenses, is based on 30% of the household's total income. Regulated under the Alberta Housing Act.

Core Housing Need: Refers to whether a private household's housing falls below at least one of the indicator thresholds for housing adequacy, affordability or suitability, and would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local that is acceptable (attains all three housing indicator thresholds).

Demographic Trends: Statistical data reflecting changes in the population, including age, income, and family dynamics, which are crucial for planning services and infrastructure.

Economic Factors: Elements that influence the economic performance of a region, such as employment rates, industry health, and market dynamics.

Employment Income: All income received as wages, salaries, and commissions from paid employment and net self-employment income from farm or non-farm unincorporated business and/or professional practice during the reference period.

External Migrants: include migrants who did not live in Canada 1 year or 5 years ago.

Government Transfers: All cash benefits received from federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal governments during the reference period.

HART Methodology: Housing Assessment Resource Tools, a method used to determine housing needs based on specific criteria including income, household size, and priority populations.

Housing Composition: The makeup of housing types within a community, such as single-family homes, multi-family units, and high-rise apartments.

Housing Market: The dynamics of housing supply and demand, including pricing, availability, and types of housing.

Interprovincial Migrants: Migrants who moved from one province or territory to another, involving a change in their usual place of residence.

Internal Migrants: Migrants who lived in Canada 1 year or 5 years ago. This includes persons who moved to a different city, town, township, village, municipality, or reserve within Canada.

Intraprovincial Migrants: Migrants who moved from within the province or territory to another municipality in the same province or territory, involving a change in usual place of residence.

Land Use Bylaw: Legislation that dictates how land within a municipality can be used, including restrictions and guidelines for building and development.

Market Income: The sum of employment income, investment income, private retirement income, and other money income from market sources during the reference period.

Market Rent: The average rent that a tenant would likely pay for a rental housing unit in the open market.

Migrants: Include internal migrants and external migrants.

Mobility - 1 year ago: Status of a person with regard to the place of residence on the reference day, May 11, 2021, in relation to the place of residence on the same date one year earlier at the provincial level.

Non-Census-Family Households: Either one person living alone or a group of two or more persons who live together but do not constitute a census family.

Non-Market Affordable Housing: Housing rented at lower than market price due to investment by third-party entities (e.g., a level of government, private business, or non-profit organization).

Non-Market Housing: Housing provided at below-market rates, often supported by government or non-profit organizations to ensure affordability for lower-income households.

Non-Migrants: Movers who lived in the same census subdivision on census day as they did on the same date 1 year or 5 years earlier.

Non-Movers: Persons who, on census day, lived in the same residence as they did on the same date 1 year or 5 years earlier.

Other, Cooperative: Housing co-ops are member-owned and controlled and can provide an affordable alternative for people on moderate incomes. The people who live in housing co-ops are members, not tenants. Monthly housing charges (rent) are set by members to cover the cost of running the co-op.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Housing accommodations for residents of all ages that are dependent on community-based services. Residents may include those experiencing homelessness, persons with disabilities, addictions and/or mental health issues, and others in vulnerable situations. The Permanent Supportive Housing accommodation type includes a wide range of on-site social supports that are designed to build independent living and connect people with community-based health care, treatment, and employment services.

Population Projections: Estimates of future population growth or decline based on current demographic trends and historical data.

Secondary Suites: Self-contained housing units within a single-family home, such as basement apartments, that have their own kitchen, bathroom facilities, and separate entrance.

Seniors Lodge: Supportive living units designated for senior households in a communal setting with meals, housekeeping, and recreational activities. Regulated under the Alberta Housing Act. Appropriate for those who do not require specialized care in a health care facility.

Seniors Self-Contained: Seniors apartments with rent subsidized at 30% of household income. Regulated under the Alberta Housing Act.

Specialized Housing: Provides accommodation to targeted populations, including housing for indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, people experiencing chronic homelessness, and people fleeing family violence.

Subsidized Housing: Includes rent geared to income, social housing, public housing, government-assisted housing, non-profit housing, rent supplements, and housing allowances.

Suitable Housing: Has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of resident households according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

Transitional Housing: Temporary housing for individuals and families transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing, often involving supportive services.

Universal Design: Is the design and structure of an environment or space so that it can be understood, accessed, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age or ability.

Appendix A: Projections of Need Under Government of Alberta Requirements

In Alberta, the Government encourages projections based on non-market housing types, in contrast to traditional household-based projections. This shift necessitates an additional approach for projecting housing needs to comply with provincial assessment requirements. The [Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Guidebook](#) details these calculations' submission requirements and methodology.

The table presents a breakdown of housing needs across various categories. The "Current Need" column shows the total number of owner households with mortgages and renter households in core housing need¹³ as of the 2021 federal census. The "Current Deficit" column represents the current need plus the number of households on waitlists (as of May 2024), minus the existing units in each category (see Table 16). The "Future Deficit" column projects the estimated deficit for 2031, assuming no additional units are built and waitlist numbers remain constant. These projections have been adjusted slightly based on some of the demographic trends shown in the report, such as seniors being the fastest growing demographic. This projection highlights the potential housing shortage if the status quo continues without addressing current needs or accommodating population growth.

Based on 2021 census data, the total current need across all housing types was 255 units, while the current deficit in 2024 is 183 units. Community Housing shows the highest demand with 71 units for both current need and deficit. Rent Supplement Households have a high current need of 56 units but a lower deficit of 22 units. Looking ahead to 2031, the projected total deficit is expected to increase to 279 units. Community Housing remains the category with the highest projected need at 98 units.

¹³ Please note: As previously mentioned in the report, the deficit numbers presented here are likely underestimated. This is due to two key factors: First, the CERB (Canada Emergency Response Benefit) provided by the government during the pandemic artificially inflated incomes for many individuals and families. Second, the high inflation rates experienced in recent years have significantly impacted housing affordability. These factors suggest that the actual current and future deficits in housing needs are likely much higher than the figures shown in this data.

Table 30: Current need, current deficit, and future deficit by housing type, Okotoks, 2021-2031

Housing Type	Current Need (2021)	Current Deficit (2024)	Future Deficit (2031)
Community Housing	71	71	98
Seniors Self-Contained	26	17	26
Seniors Lodge	26	3	12
Seniors Housing (Other)	13	13	18
Non-Market Affordable Housing	38	35	50
Permanent Supportive Housing	10	10	14
Specialized Needs Housing	10	10	14
Indigenous Housing	3	3	4
Rent Supplement Households	56	22	43
Total	252	183	278