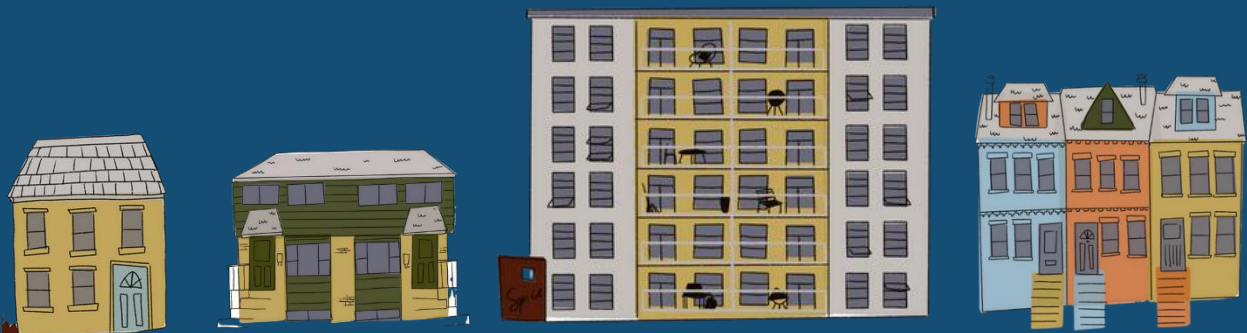


# Municipality of the County of Kings

## Municipal Housing Needs Report

2023



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Key Findings .....	2
3	Housing Supply .....	5
	3.1 Market Housing .....	5
	3.2 Non-Market Housing.....	10
	3.3 Short-Term Rentals (STRs).....	13
4	Housing Shortage .....	14
5	Housing Affordability.....	16
	5.1 Homeownership .....	16
	5.2 Rental Market .....	19
6	Housing Need .....	22
	6.1 Housing Need by Tenure & Indigenous Identity .....	22
	6.2 Housing Need by Household Type.....	23
7	Demographic Profile .....	25
	7.1 Population .....	25
	7.2 Households .....	27
8	Conclusion .....	30

# 1 Introduction

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

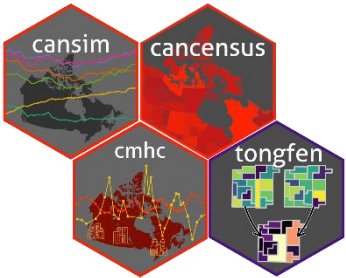
- Identify current and future housing needs and
- Identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply

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

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

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

Note that all data references the municipality unless noted otherwise.



## 2 Key Findings

### **Housing shortage**

As of the end of 2022, there was a gap between housing demand and the available supply of about 230 units, including both market and non-market housing.

Projections suggest that to keep pace with population growth, the municipality will need 1,135 new units by 2027 (including the existing shortage of 230) and 2,325 by 2032. Status quo construction may not be enough to meet the projected demand. About 190 new units could be completed annually based on historical construction trends. If that pace continues, it will leave a remaining gap of 185 units by 2027 and 425 by 2032.

### **Population**

Between 2016 and 2021, the municipality's population grew at a slower rate than the province's population (1% versus 5%). The municipality's population grew across senior age cohorts between 2016 and 2021, with noticeably strong growth among 85+ year-olds. This has led to an increased demand for smaller units among older age cohorts, owing, perhaps, to downsizing in retirement.

Finance & Treasury Board (FTB) estimates suggest that the total 2022 population was 48,870, with a projected increase of 4% between 2022 and 2027. Senior populations should increase during that time, with decreases mostly occurring among non-senior populations. Even so, the 25- to 44-year-old cohort may expand by 8% over the next five years.

### **Households**

Between 2016 and 2021, there was an overall 3% increase in households, with a 9% increase in 1-person households. There was also a noticeable 5% growth among 5+ person households constituting 6% of the total population.

Estimates suggest that total households reached 21,085 in 2022, with a potential increase of 6% from 2022 to 2027 (1,175 total). Household losses should predominantly occur among young adult households (led by 15- to 24-year-olds) and older working professional led households (45- to 64-year-olds). The greatest rate of growth should be among senior-led households.

### **Non-market housing**

As of January 2023, the County of Kings had a public-housing inventory of 352 units, of which 95 are for families and 257 for seniors.

### Short-term rentals (STRs)

Less than 1% of the municipality's housing inventory may have been used as a short-term commercial rental in 2021 (the last full year of data). This means that upwards of 195 units might have been removed from the long-term market in 2022, though it is uncertain exactly how many would have been long-term rentals or purchased for permanent occupancy if not used as a STR.

### Shelter costs

Average rents reported by the Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) did not change from 2020 to 2021, down from a 6% increase between 2019 and 2020.



*Municipality's public survey responses*

The recent lack of change in rental rates reflects the consistency in vacancy among the rental market - the municipality has had an overall vacancy rate around 4.1% since 2018, falling within the healthy vacancy range of 3% to 5% reported by PVSC across Nova Scotia.

Despite this, median home prices increased 77% from 2019 to 2022, compared to 18% between 2016 and 2019. The rapid rise in prices is a combination of increased demand and low interest rates (until recently).

### **Affordability**

In the municipality, affordability has fallen since 2016. About 68% of all couples, 92% of all lone-parent households, and 97% of all single person households earned below the estimated income required to afford the 2022 median sale price of a local dwelling. For rentals, at least 9% of **renting** couples, 23% of **renting** lone-parents, and 60% of **renting** single persons earned below the estimated income required to afford the 2021 average local rents.

### **Housing need**

When a household lives in a dwelling that requires more than 30% of its before-tax household income, is overcrowded, and needs major repairs - and no alternative exists - it is in Core Housing Need. In 2021, about 6% of the Municipality's households (1,195 total) lived in Core Housing Need. Need is particularly prevalent among:

- 14% of renter households (735);
- 6% of Indigenous households (75);
- 12% of lone-parent households (200); and
- 14% of single persons / roommate households (835)

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

### 3 Housing Supply

#### 3.1 Market Housing

As of the 2021 Census, there were 22,958 private dwellings across the County of Kings, 90% of which were occupied by usual residents (those who live in Kings permanently). The rest of the inventory may either be occupied solely by foreign residents and/or by temporarily present persons, and unoccupied dwellings. For those dwellings occupied by usual residents, Table 3-1 summarizes the totals and distribution by structure type for the municipality. The greatest share of the current supply is currently held by single-detached homes at 78%.

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

Total	Single-detached	Semi-detached	Row house	Duplex apt	Apt (< 5 storeys)	Apt (5+ storeys)	Movable	Other
20,725	16,145	1,535	295	505	1,430	10	775	35
100%	78%	7%	1%	2%	7%	0%	4%	0%

Source: 2021 Census



Municipality’s public survey responses

#### 3.1.1 Construction Activity

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

A permit signifies the anticipated future housing to be built, a start reflects how many permits led to a shovel in the ground, and a completion represents how many units were actually added to the occupiable supply. Construction takes time and its pace varies depending on the building type. Consequently, the number of units permitted in one year cannot be directly linked to starts or completions in another. The **Provincial Report** offers a detailed explanation of each element.

Permit activity refers to the total units permitted by a municipality. Table 3-2 shows the number units permitted, started, and completed in the County of Kings between 2010

to 2022 (note that 2022 data reflects an extrapolated September 2022 total and that starts and completions reflect the combination of Kings Subd, A, B, and C).

From 2010 to 2022, there was a 3% increase in units **permitted**. From 2010 to 2022, there was a 12% decrease in construction **starts** and no change in construction completions. There have been more apartment unit types in recent permit applications. Starts and completions indicate that purpose-built owned dwellings make up the vast majority of new construction for the municipality.

Table 3-2: Construction Activity by Dwelling Type

Units permitted							
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
Total	209	138	204	149	236	279	216
Single	121	77	74	75	104	106	133
Semi	0	31	37	41	46	34	37
Row	0	12	33	12	26	4	0
Apartment	83	11	53	17	51	132	37
Other	5	7	7	4	9	3	8

\* 2022 data extrapolated from September 2022 data to end of year 2022.

Units started							
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	226	50	209	130	130	289	199
Single	119	32	100	84	54	147	112
Semi	54	14	34	22	34	53	28
Row	17	4	28	20	30	25	4
Apartment	36	0	47	4	12	64	55
Owned	78%	100%	68%	97%	92%	62%	73%
Rented	23%	0%	32%	3%	8%	38%	28%



Units completed							
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	200	81	155	159	121	226	200
Single	118	59	87	73	79	115	101
Semi	48	22	32	22	28	53	26
Row	7	0	28	14	10	28	27
Apartment	27	0	8	50	4	30	46
Owned	87%	91%	92%	67%	95%	82%	74%
Rented	14%	9%	8%	33%	5%	18%	26%

Source: CMHC Starts and Completions Survey, Statistics Canada Custom CSD Tables 34-10-0001, 34-10-0066

Table 3-3 summarizes the change in unit size and tenure between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses. The distribution of new units shows what sizes are most occupied by renter and owner households. These Census results indicate that the long-term rental supply is growing at a faster pace than ownership relative to percent change - owned dwellings increased 2% and rented dwellings increased 5%.

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

	Total	Studio / 1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3+ bedroom
<b>Owned dwellings</b>				
Owned (2016) - 74% of total HHs	14,885	390	2,885	11,600
Owned (2021) - 73% of total HHs	15,240	385	3,015	11,830
Change in units	355	-5	130	230
Share of change	100%	1%	36%	63%
<b>Rented dwellings</b>				
Rented (2016) - 26% of total HHs	5,220	965	2,400	1,870
Rented (2021) - 27% of total HHs	5,485	910	2,785	1,790
Change in units	265	-55	385	-80
Share of change	100%	11%	74%	15%

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

Note that not all additional units in the table necessarily reflect a new unit, and some may represent conversions from rental to ownership or vice versa. Between 2016 and 2021, total dwellings (not only occupied by a usual resident) increased from 22,548 to 22,958 - a 410-unit increase (about 82 units annually). This suggests a higher share of

the existing inventory transitioned to long-term permanent tenancy compared to what was added to the inventory during that time.

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

Dwellings	2016	2021	% change
Total dwellings (a)	22,548	22,958	2%
Dwelling occupied by a usual resident (b)	20,105	20,725	3%
Share (b / a)	89%	90%	

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 & 2021 Census

### 3.1.2 Housing Accelerator Fund Considerations

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

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

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

The data shared in this overall section (e.g., permits, starts, completions, and historical changes in dwelling sizes) can be used to inform local decisions related to projected permits by September 2026. For additional guidance, Table 3-5 summarizes the growth by unit type (more closely defined with HAF application requirements) and tenure between 2016 and 2021.

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

	Total	Single <sup>a</sup>	Missing middle <sup>b</sup>	Multi-unit <sup>c</sup>
<b>Total dwellings</b>				
Total (2016)	20,105	15,740	4,350	15
Total (2021)	20,725	16,105	4,600	15
Change in units	620	365	250	0
Share of change	100%	59%	41%	0%
<b>Owned dwellings</b>				
Owned (2016)	14,885	13,830	1,045	0
Owned (2021)	15,240	14,140	1,105	0
Change in units	355	310	60	0
Share of change	100%	84%	16%	0%
<b>Rented dwellings</b>				
Rented (2016)	5,220	1,910	3,305	15
Rented (2021)	5,485	1,965	3,495	15
Change in units	265	55	190	0
Share of change	100%	22%	78%	0%

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

*b Missing middle refers to ground-oriented housing types that exist between single-detached and mid-rise apartments. This includes garden suites, secondary suites, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, row houses, courtyard housing, low-rise apartments (less than 4 storeys). Note that this definition for low-rise does not match the Statistics Canada cut off of less than 5 storeys.*

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

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

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

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

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

Table 3-6: Example of Simple HAF Permit Projection

	Historical share of new housing	Possible annual units permitted	Estimated 3-year units permitted <sup>a</sup>	Estimated 3-year unit demand <sup>a</sup>	Gap that HAF can help reduce
Total	100%	200	600 (A)	770 (B)	170
Single	59%	120	360	455	95
Missing middle	41%	80	240	315	75
Multi-unit	0%	0	0	0	0

Relationship between units permitted and shortage	
C: Estimated September 2023 housing stock: <sup>b</sup>	23,290
Projected permitted unit growth over 3 years without HAF (A / C x 100):	2.6%
Projected permitted unit growth over 3 years needed to meet demand (B / C x 100):	3.3%
% increase in units permitted to meet shortage (B / A - 1) x 100:	28%

Relationship between units permitted and HAF requirements (rounded up to nearest 5)	
D: Estimated September 2023 housing stock: <sup>b</sup>	23,290
E: Projected annual units permitted (based on '16-'21 average - see Table 3-2)	200
Required units permitted over 3 years to meet minimum 1.1% average annual growth rate <sup>c</sup> (D x 1.1% x 3 years)	770
Required additional units permitted over 3 years to meet minimum 10% increase <sup>d</sup> over historical average (E x 10% x 3 years)	60

<sup>a</sup> Units permitted between September 2023 and September 2026; 3-year unit demand includes 2022 shortage

<sup>b</sup> 2021 Census (Statistics Canada) + 2022 completions + 2022 completions x 2/3 (September 2023 estimate)

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

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

## 3.2 Non-Market Housing

### 3.2.1 Public Housing

Of the 11,200 total inventory of publicly owned dwelling units (as administered by the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Authority), 352 are located in the County of Kings - 95

of these units are reserved for families while 267 are for seniors' housing. Most units are 1-bedroom apartments, due to the high volume of senior-specific units - 75% of all units and 97% of these 1-bedroom units were for seniors.

About 49% of Kings' public housing tenants have lived in public housing for more than 5 years - with 37% having lived there between 1 and 5 years.

Table 3-7: Public Housing Inventory, January 2023

		Total	Family	Senior
Total unit inventory		352	95	257
Inventory by unit size	Studio	0	0	0
	1-bedroom	263	9	254
	2-bedroom	8	5	3
	3+ bedroom	81	81	0
	Not reported	0	0	0
Inventory by dwelling type	Single family	41	41	0
	Row	62	0	62
	Apartment	249	54	195
	Not reported	0	0	0
Length of tenure in public housing	Less than 1 year	14%	2%	18%
	1 to 5 years	37%	42%	35%
	5 to 10 years	28%	27%	29%
	10+ years	21%	27%	18%
Household income	Median income (mth)	\$1,595	\$1,130	\$1,760
	Median income (ann)	\$19,140	\$13,560	\$21,120

Source: Derived from Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing data

### 3.2.2 Rent Supplements

As of March 2023, 374 households across the Kings Census Division (no data is specifically available for the County of Kings) were receiving rent supplement support, equivalent to 602 total people. About 25% were families, 47% were seniors, and 28% were classified as non-elderly households. Table 3-8 further details the percentage share of rent supplements that served a specific vulnerable population.

Table 3-8: Rent Supplement Demographics, Kings Census Division, March 2023

	Total	Family	Senior	Non-elderly
Total rent supplements	374	93	175	106
People benefiting	602	289	192	121
Average HH size	1.6	3.1	1.1	1.1
Average dependents	0.5	1.9	0.0	0.0
Share of supplements serving a vulnerable group:				
Indigenous person(s)	3%	6%	3%	2%
Person(s) w/ a disability	20%	13%	15%	35%
At risk of homelessness	14%	11%	8%	26%
Homeless	2%	1%	1%	3%
Newcomer(s)	1%	4%	0%	0%
Mental health / addictions	13%	14%	6%	25%
Racialized person(s)	3%	9%	1%	3%
Veteran(s)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fleeing domestic violence	3%	9%	1%	2%
Young adults	6%	12%	1%	8%

Source: derived from Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing data

### 3.2.3 Non-Profit & Co-operative Housing and Shelters

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

According to a community support and service-based count of homelessness in 2022 – performed by researchers at Acadia University<sup>1</sup> – 231 individuals were known to be experiencing homelessness between West Hants and Digby, Nova Scotia.<sup>2</sup> Among them, there are an additional 124 known children. Furthermore:

- Individuals experiencing homelessness were on average 28 years old
- 192 clients could not find a place of their own because rents are too high
- 173 clients could not find a place because options that existed were in poor condition

<sup>1</sup> Town of Kentville. (2023, March 13). Town of Kentville Council Advisory Committee March 13 2023 Agenda. <https://kentville.ca/sites/default/files/town-files/2023-03/00%20Meeting%20Documents%202023-03-13.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Results were mostly presented at a regional level; thus, this section will be similar across municipal reports within the Kings Census Division, with some variation where possible.

- 112 clients mostly accessed supports in the Town of Kentville
- 116 clients lived across the Kings Census Division

The above demonstrates that homelessness is not solely an issue within large municipalities but is a challenge across Nova Scotia - particularly related to hidden homelessness which is incredibly difficult to identify or quantify. Note that a service-based count estimates homelessness by collecting information from knowledgeable service providers and key community informants.

### 3.3 Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

Between 2018 and 2022, there has been an increase of 114 dwellings used as short-term rentals. In 2022, 82% were entire homes or apartments, of which 195 were potentially<sup>3</sup> “commercial” units - meaning they were available or reserved more than half of the year.

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

	Data by year				Percent change		
	2018	2020	2021	2022	'18-'20	'20-'22	18-'22**
Total unique STRs	286	370	392	400	+29%	+8%	+40%
Entire home/apt	219	289	324	329	+32%	+14%	+50%
Hotel room	0	13	13	13	n.a.	0%	n.a.
Private room	65	68	55	58	+5%	-15%	-11%
Shared room	2	0	0	0	-100%	n.a.	-100%
Avg annual revenue	\$6,745	\$5,080	\$8,366	\$10,407	-25%	+105%	+54%
Total market ('000s)	\$1,929	\$1,880	\$3,280	\$4,163	-3%	+121%	+116%
Commercial STRs*	153	131	167	195	-14%	+49%	+27%

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

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

Source: derived from AirDNA data

If 2021 commercial units are compared to the 2021 dwelling stock (22,958 - as per the Census), less than 1% of the municipality’s housing inventory may have been used as a short-term commercial rental.

<sup>3</sup>Noted as “potentially” since 2022 data is only up to September.

## 4 Housing Shortage

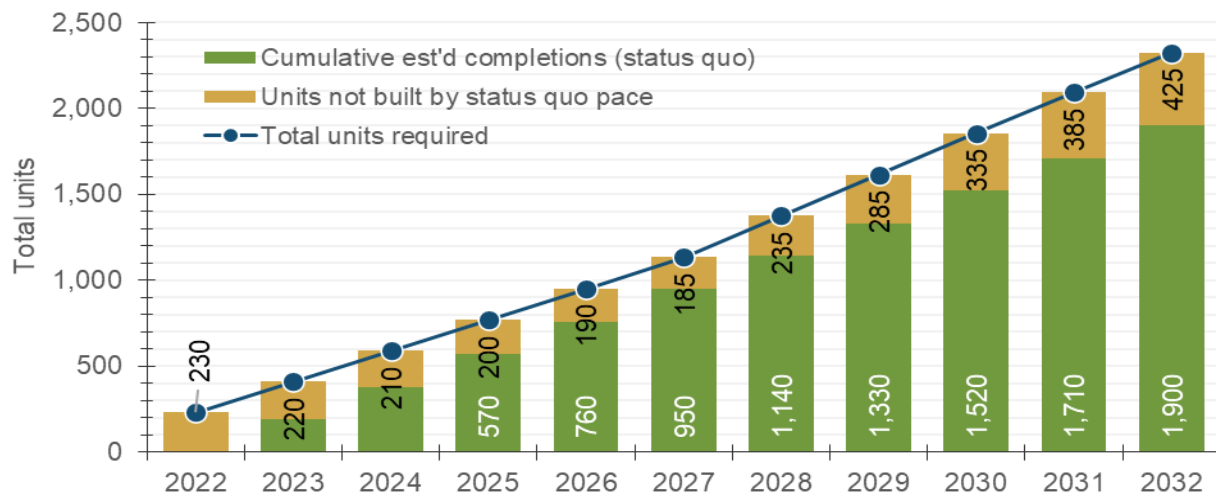
Based on demographic modeling results (see **Provincial Report** for details), the municipality’s potential housing shortage (as of the end of 2022) may be 230 units.<sup>4</sup> Note that this estimate represents the sum of all units, be they rented or owned in terms of their tenure, or market or non-market housing.

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

In five years, the municipality may have a total dwelling demand (existing shortfall plus anticipated demand) of about 1,135 units, which could grow to 2,325 by 2032.

Based on the recent pace of construction, supply could slightly outpace demand over the short-term and the opposite over the medium-term. About 190 new units could be completed annually over the next decade based on assumptions using historical data trends, leaving a remaining gap of 185 units by 2027. By 2032, the remaining gap could be 425 units. Note that status quo construction follows the method used in the provincial report, being average historical permits adjusted by 5% to account for permit withdrawals or cancellations. Results are rounded to the nearest 5.<sup>5</sup>

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



<sup>4</sup> The allocation of unit shortages is based on results for the Census Division, apportioned to its respective municipalities based on their share of local household change between 2016 and 2021.

<sup>5</sup> All municipalities use the same approach for consistency. However, for smaller municipalities, the combination of fewer units permitted and rounding practices can under or over represent anticipated construction activity. As such, greater attention should be directed to the projected demand, instead of anticipated supply, which can be later cross-reference with internal municipal data.



Table 4-1 summarizes possible guides for constructing unit sizes over the next half-decade. As previously described, about 1,135 new units may be needed to meet demand by 2027. Based on historical preferences,<sup>6</sup> about 30% could be studio/1-bedroom dwellings (340 units), 40% 2-bedroom dwellings (460), and 30% 3+ bedroom dwellings (335). This includes the existing unit shortfall.

If forecasting until 2032, Kings may need to build about 2,325 units (cumulative demand plus existing shortfall), which would follow the same unit size distribution. Note that results are rounded to the nearest 5.

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

	Total	Studio + 1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3+ bedroom
<b>A:</b> Current shortfall (end of 2022)	230	70	95	70
<b>B:</b> Anticipated demand by <b>2027</b>	905	270	365	265
<b>C:</b> Total units required by <b>2027</b> (A + B)	1,135	340	460	335
<b>D:</b> Anticipated 5 year supply (status quo pace*)	950	285	385	280
<b>E:</b> Total shortfall	185	55	75	55
<b>F:</b> Total extra units required annually (E / 5 years)	35	10	15	10

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

*"There's a fear that large employers will become frustrated with not being able to attract and retain employees and will leave the area."*

*"Managers of the largest employer in the district say that the number one issue for employment retention is housing".*

<sup>6</sup> In this case, unit sizes reflect the preference for unit size, not the historical distribution of unit sizes in the existing inventory. Briefly, historical distributions of household sizes by household family types are used to estimate required bedrooms. The estimated share of unit sizes is then distributed into forecasted demand calculations. More explanation about how preference distributes can be found in the Housing Shortage section of the Provincial report.

# 5 Housing Affordability



Municipality’s public survey responses

## 5.1 Homeownership

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

### 5.1.1 Market Activity

Median sale prices across Nova Scotia have seen increases since 2016, with significant increases since 2019. The municipality’s median sale price increased from \$165,750 to \$345,000 between 2016 and 2022. This represents a 108% increase in median sale price.

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

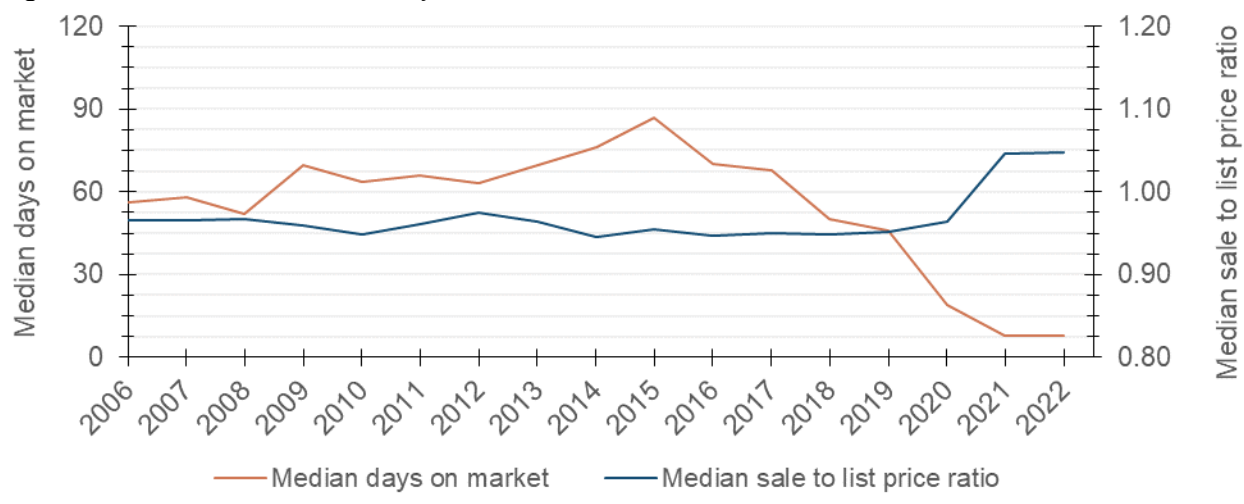
	Price				Percent Change		
	2010	2016	2019	2022	'10-'16	'16-'19	'19-'22
Total	\$159,950	\$165,750	\$195,000	\$345,000	+4%	+18%	+77%
Single	\$165,000	\$170,000	\$204,500	\$355,000	+3%	+20%	+74%
Semi	\$136,000	\$185,000	\$172,900	\$299,000	+36%	-7%	+73%
Row	\$143,300	-	-	\$273,500	-	-	-

Source: NSAR MLS®

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

As of 2021, the median sale price exceeded its listing price, diverging from the historical trend of homes normally being sold for slightly less than what they were asking. The number of median days a dwelling was on the market dropped to below 20 days, but the real median sale price was almost even with the list price from 2021 to 2022.

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



Source: NSAR MLS®

The shift in demand leading to faster home purchases is largely attributed to population growth over recent years, fuelled by both interprovincial and international in-migration, in a market where housing supply growth is not keeping up with the increased pace.

### 5.1.2 Homeownership Affordability

Table 5-2 details the percentage share of households, separated by household types, that could afford a home based on their respective income levels versus the median sale prices from 2022. The affordability threshold is the same used by Statistics Canada and CMHC - 30% of before-tax household income spent on shelter costs. Shelter cost calculations include the direct and indirect costs related to shelter. More detail is provided in the **Provincial Report**. Note that income bracket distributions are based on Kings Census Division data.<sup>7</sup>

Lone parents and single persons are least likely to have income levels necessary to afford to own a home. Row homes are the most attainable types of dwellings based on sheer value, but at least 81% of lone-parent households and 95% of single-person households fall below the income levels necessary to afford the median row local home.

<sup>7</sup> Since Census Division data is used, readers will notice estimate similarities between municipalities belonging to the same Census Division.

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

		2022 median sale price:			\$355,000	\$299,000	\$273,500
		% of HHs below income level			Single Detached Dwelling	Semi Detached	Row
Income level	Attainable sales price	Couples	Lone parents	Single persons			
\$60,000	\$179,500	23%	55%	80%	no	no	no
\$65,000	\$194,500	28%	60%	84%	no	no	no
\$70,000	\$209,500	33%	66%	86%	no	no	no
\$75,000	\$224,000	37%	70%	89%	no	no	no
\$80,000	\$239,000	41%	74%	92%	no	no	no
\$85,000	\$254,000	46%	78%	93%	no	no	no
\$90,000	\$269,000	50%	81%	95%	no	no	no
\$95,000	\$284,000	54%	84%	96%	no	no	yes
\$100,000	\$299,000	57%	87%	96%	no	yes	yes
\$105,000	\$314,000	61%	89%	97%	no	yes	yes
\$110,000	\$329,000	64%	90%	97%	no	yes	yes
\$115,000	\$344,000	68%	92%	97%	no	yes	yes
\$120,000	\$359,000	71%	93%	98%	yes	yes	yes

Homeownership	Total Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling	Semi Detached	Row
Est'd income needed to buy median home	\$115,400	\$118,700	\$100,000	\$91,500
<b>% of total households below income</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>66%</b>

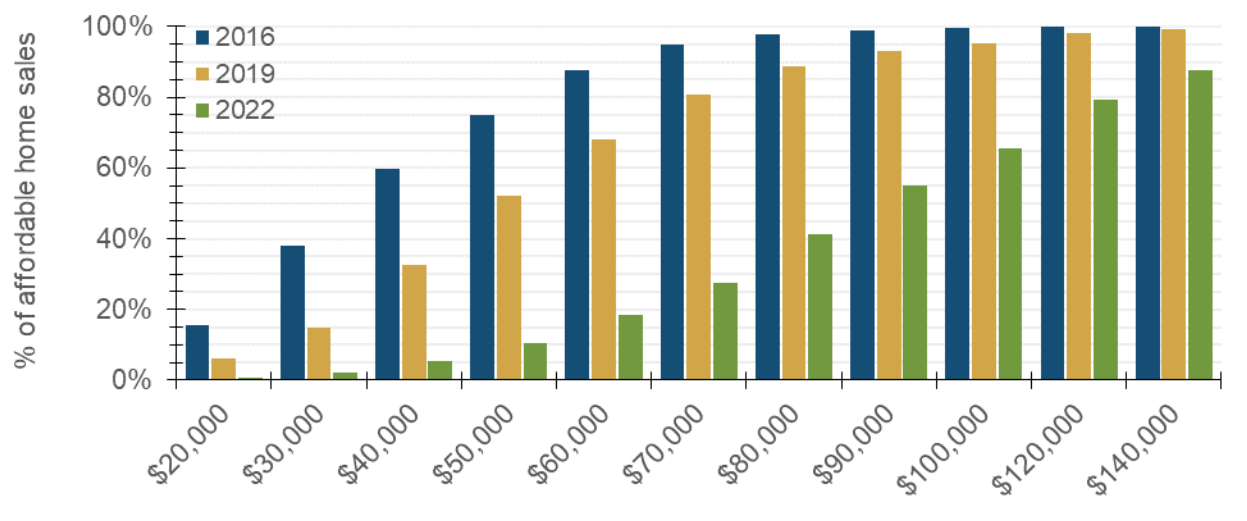
Source: derived from Statistics Canada tables (see Provincial Report), Bank of Canada, NSAR MLS®

About 79% of all local households earned an income below what would be needed (around \$115,400) to purchase the median home in 2022. This highlights the importance of housing interventions to address the shortage identified above to reduce typical housing prices to reasonably affordable levels.

Figure 5.2 presents the levels of affordability for respective household income levels for 2016, 2019, and 2022 for Kings Census Division (no data is specifically available for the County of Kings). It illustrates the percentage of home sales in each year that would be affordable (30% of household income) at a given income level.

While there were already signs of decreasing affordability from 2016 to 2019, the municipality suffered a significant shock from 2019 to 2022. For instance, a \$70,000 income could afford 81% of home sales in 2019. In 2022, this fell to 27%.

Figure 5.2: Estimated % of Households that Can / Cannot Afford Typical Sale Prices, Kings Census Division



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

## 5.2 Rental Market

### 5.2.1 Market Activity

Table 5-3 reports the rental for the County of Kings. The overall average rent in 2021 per PVSC data, was \$620. This is an increase of 4% from 2018. There has been a 5% increase for studio units, a 11% increase for 1-bedroom units, a 3% increase for 2--bedroom units, and a 3% increase for 3-bedroom units.

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

	Price				Percent Change		
	2018	2019	2020	2021	'18-'19	19-'20	20-'21
Total	\$595	\$584	\$621	\$620	-2%	+6%	0%
Studio	\$511	\$511	\$529	\$534	0%	+3%	+1%
1-bed	\$522	\$522	\$576	\$582	0%	+10%	+1%
2-bed	\$665	\$665	\$687	\$684	0%	+3%	0%
3-bed	\$793	\$793	\$819	\$828	0%	+3%	+1%
Vacancy	4.6%	4.1%	4.1%	4.1%			

Source: PVSC Custom Tables

The municipality's vacancy rate decreased from 4.6% to 4.1% between 2018 and 2021 which falls within the healthy vacancy range of 3% to 5%, based on PVSC data.

Note that CMHC data does exist for the individual geographies that make up the County of Kings (Kings Subd. A, B, and C); whereas, PVSC had information for the combined area. For reference, Kings Subd. A had a 21% increase in median rent between 2019 and 2022 to \$850, Kings Subd. B had a 16% increase between 2019 and 2022 to \$850, and Kings Subd. C had a 4% increase between 2019 and 2022 to \$725.

### 5.2.2 Rental Affordability

Table 5-4 details the percentage share of **renter** households, divided by household type and income levels, that can afford 2021 average rent for various unit types. As with ownership, lone-parent and single person households face the highest income barrier to affordability. About 29% of lone-parent households and 68% of single person households fall below the income level required to afford the average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment.

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

		2021 average rent:			\$534	\$582	\$684	\$828
		% of HHs below income level			Studio	1-bed	2-bed	3+ bed
Income level	Attainable rent	Couples	Lone parents	Single persons				
\$20,000	\$330	1%	4%	19%	no	no	no	no
\$25,000	\$420	2%	8%	39%	no	no	no	no
\$30,000	\$500	4%	16%	50%	no	no	no	no
\$35,000	\$590	9%	23%	60%	yes	yes	no	no
\$40,000	\$670	14%	29%	68%	yes	yes	no	no
\$45,000	\$750	19%	41%	75%	yes	yes	yes	no
\$50,000	\$840	23%	50%	80%	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$55,000	\$920	28%	62%	83%	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$60,000	\$1,000	35%	69%	87%	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$65,000	\$1,090	43%	74%	89%	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$70,000	\$1,170	49%	80%	91%	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$75,000	\$1,260	54%	84%	94%	yes	yes	yes	yes
\$80,000	\$1,340	59%	86%	96%	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Renting</b>				<b>Average</b>	<b>Studio</b>	<b>1-bed</b>	<b>2-bed</b>	<b>3+ bed</b>
Est'd income needed to rent average unit				\$37,000	\$31,900	\$34,700	\$40,800	\$49,400
<b>% of renter households below income</b>				<b>34%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>48%</b>

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

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

Approximately 34% of local renter households earned an income below what would be needed (about \$37,000) to afford the average rental unit. Readers will notice that the financial barriers to own appear to be significantly higher than to rent. While this may be the case, it is important to recognize the data source impacts to this discussion.

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

## 6 Housing Need

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

Deep unaffordability (also known as “severe” unaffordability) is when a household is spending 50% or more of their before-tax income on housing.

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

### 6.1 Housing Need by Tenure & Indigenous Identity

Table 6-1 shows the share of households currently living in conditions that meet the three housing criteria, separated by tenure and Indigenous identity.<sup>8</sup>

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

		Total	Owner	Renter	Indigenous
Total Households:		20,185	14,800	5,380	1,230
Households living in <b>inadequate</b> conditions	Total households	1,600	1,200	405	180
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-13%	-7%	-25%	-3%
	Share of households	8%	8%	8%	15%
Households living in <b>unsuitable</b> conditions	Total households	490	260	225	55
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	+29%	+21%	+36%	+175%
	Share of households	2%	2%	4%	4%
Households living in <b>unaffordable</b> conditions	Total households	2,695	1,290	1,405	205
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-19%	-19%	-20%	+2%
	Share of households	13%	9%	26%	17%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

<sup>8</sup> Note that numbers expressed in the housing need tables may differ from those reported by Statistics Canada on individual community Census Profiles. This is because the custom data table applies a different universe than the Census Profile. More information can be found in the Provincial Report.



In Kings County, overall households living in unaffordable dwellings decreased by 19% between 2016 and 2021. Those living in unsuitable dwellings increased by 29%, and those living in inadequate dwellings decreased by 13% between 2016 and 2021. Notwithstanding a 20% decrease in unaffordability between census periods, 26% of all renter households lived in unaffordable dwellings as of 2021. Further, 17% of Indigenous households lived in unaffordable dwellings with a 2% increase.

Table 6-2 shows the municipality’s households currently meeting the conditions of Core Housing Need and those in deep unaffordability, as well as the changes in those categories between 2016 and 2021. Since 2016, there has been a 41% decrease in overall Core Housing Need, with decreases across the tenure and Indigenous Identity. Notwithstanding, 6% of all households faced core need in 2021.

Since 2016 there has been an overall decrease of 32% to households living in deep unaffordability, but 8% of all renters and 4% of Indigenous households remain in these conditions.

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

		Total	Owner	Renter	Indigenous
Total Households:		20,185	14,800	5,380	1,230
Households living in <b>Core Housing Need</b>	Total households	1,195	455	735	75
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-41%	-42%	-41%	-52%
	Share of households	6%	3%	14%	6%
Households living in <b>deep unaffordability</b>	Total households	705	300	410	45
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-32%	-27%	-36%	+13%
	Share of households	3%	2%	8%	4%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

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

## 6.2 Housing Need by Household Type

Table 6-3 and Table 6-4 present information related to housing indicators and Core Housing Need, respectively, by household type.

Generally, renter and single person / roommate households experience similar issues when it comes to housing. About 26% of single person / roommate households faced financial challenges related to shelter in 2021.

Lone parents also faced considerable housing challenges, reporting the highest rate of unsuitability (4%) and inadequacy (11%), as well as the second highest rate of unaffordability (19%).

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

		Couple w/o child(ren)	Couple w/ child(ren)	Lone parent	Single / roommates
Total Households:		6,785	4,555	1,700	6,175
Households living in <b>inadequate</b> conditions	Total households	410	390	190	500
	Change since 2016	0%	-9%	-33%	-12%
	Share of households	6%	9%	11%	8%
Households living in <b>unsuitable</b> conditions	Total households	0	145	75	50
	Change since 2016	-	+16%	+25%	+150%
	Share of households	0%	3%	4%	1%
Households living in <b>unaffordable</b> conditions	Total households	475	215	330	1,625
	Change since 2016	-24%	-31%	-41%	-8%
	Share of households	7%	5%	19%	26%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

Since 2016, single persons / roommate households living in Core Housing Need decreased 32%, reaching a 14% share of all related households in 2021. Lone parents reported the next most prevalent core need (12%), despite a 56% decrease between census periods. Further, 8% of single persons lived in deeply unaffordable conditions as of 2021, despite a 24% decrease.

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

		Couple w/o child(ren)	Couple w/ child(ren)	Lone parent	Single / roommates
Total Households:		6,785	4,555	1,700	6,175
Households living in <b>Core Housing Need</b>	Total households	55	30	200	835
	Change since 2016	-71%	-68%	-56%	-32%
	Share of households	1%	1%	12%	14%
Households living in <b>deep unaffordability</b>	Total households	55	60	45	495
	Change since 2016	-66%	-	-68%	-24%
	Share of households	1%	1%	3%	8%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

# 7 Demographic Profile

## 7.1 Population

### 7.1.1 Current Population

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

The municipality grew across senior age cohorts between 2016 and 2021, with particularly strong growth among 85+ year-olds. This has led to an influx of demand to the municipality among older age cohorts for smaller units, owing, perhaps, to downsizing in retirement.

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

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

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
Municipality of the County of Kings	Total	7,265	4,615	10,745	14,420	9,870	1,020	47,920
	Share	15%	10%	22%	30%	21%	2%	100%
	5yr %Δ	-1%	-12%	+4%	-5%	+16%	+28%	+1%

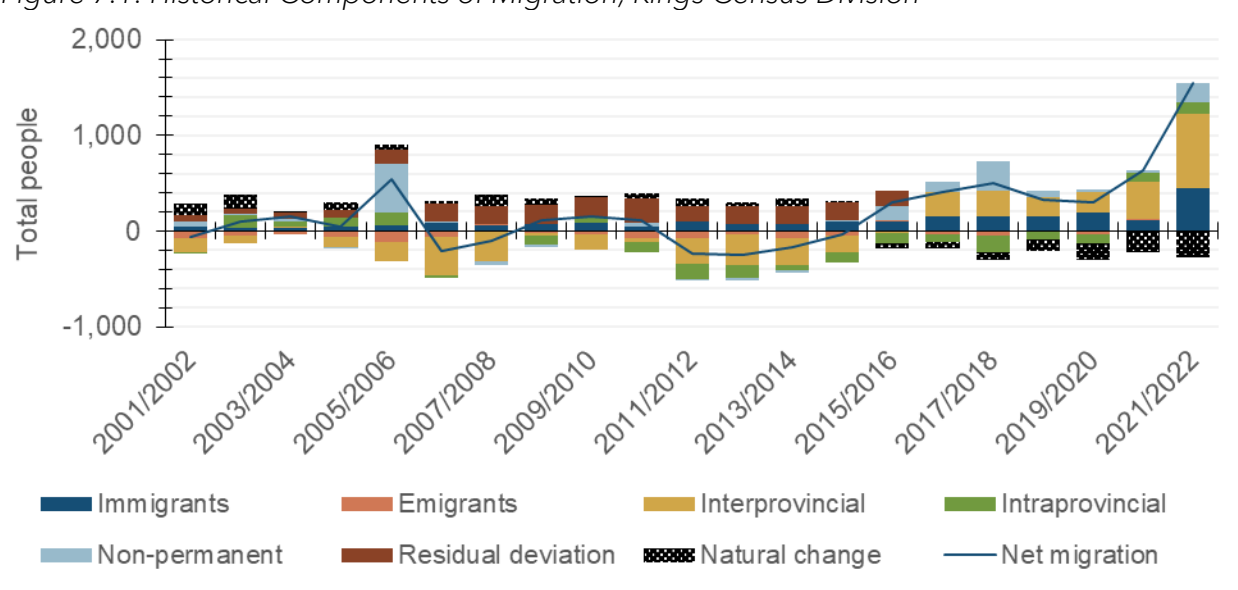
Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016-2021

### 7.1.2 Migration

Shown in Figure 7.1 is the net-migration for the **entire** Kings Census Division (data is not available at the municipal level - the entire Census Division includes all related urban and rural municipalities) between 2001/02 and 2021/22, inclusive of totals for intra-provincial and international migration, as well as emigration.

Between 2016 and 2021, the Kings Census Division’s net-migration steadily increased to a two-decade high in 2021/2022 with a total of 1,541 newcomers.

Figure 7.1: Historical Components of Migration, Kings Census Division



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0140

### 7.1.3 Anticipated Population

The municipality's anticipated population is derived from applying the historical share of local total populations by age cohort to the regional projections by age cohort produced by the Department of Finance & Treasury Board (FTB) in February 2023. In other words, results assume that the municipality will represent the same share of the region's population over the projection horizon.<sup>9</sup> This does not consider nuanced population changes by community.

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

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2027	Total	7,550	4,405	12,055	13,745	11,815	1,375	50,945
	Share	15%	9%	24%	27%	23%	3%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+2%	-8%	+8%	-4%	+16%	+32%	+4%

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2032	Total	7,755	4,505	12,240	13,930	13,015	1,905	53,350
	Share	15%	8%	23%	26%	24%	4%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+3%	+2%	+2%	+1%	+10%	+39%	+5%

Source: Department of Finance & Treasury Board February 2023

<sup>9</sup> Since a municipality represents the same share of its region (i.e., Census Division) over time for projections (population and households), similar rates of growth will exist for each of the municipalities within the region. Therefore, readers reviewing multiple reports may notice a likeness between them.

Estimates suggest that the total 2022 population was 48,870, with a projected increase of 4% between 2022 and 2027. Senior populations should increase during that time, with decreases mostly occurring among non-senior populations. Even so, total 25- to 44-year-olds may expand 8% over the half-decade.

Growth from 2027 to 2032 may be of a slightly greater magnitude (5%) compared to the five years prior, with growth largely coming from senior populations. The total 25- to 44-year-old person cohort could continue to expand, though much slower than prior, with a corresponding slight increase in youth (0- to 14-year-old) population. Senior cohorts should continue to be the main contributor to growth. This demonstrates a short-term need to house families, but a long-term need to meet the needs of an expanding senior age group.

## 7.2 Households

### 7.2.1 Current Households

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

Between 2016 and 2021, there was an overall 3% increase in households, with tenure split into 72% owners and 26% renters in 2021. Non-census families (i.e., single persons or roommate households) have seen the largest increase, with 11% since 2016. Households in Kings are also getting smaller with a 9% increase in 1-person households between census periods. There was also noticeable growth among 5+ person households with a 5% increase and comprising 6% of the total population.

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

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
Household Maintainer Age	Total	465	5,235	8,165	6,165	690	20,715
	Owner	15%	62%	80%	78%	73%	73%
	Renter	85%	38%	20%	22%	27%	27%
	5yr %Δ	+4%	-1%	-3%	+15%	+23%	+3%

		Couple w/o Child	Couple w/ Child	Lone Parent	Non-census*	Other**	Total
Household Type	Total	6,950	4,660	1,735	6,365	990	20,715
	Owner	85%	82%	58%	58%	81%	73%
	Renter	15%	18%	42%	42%	19%	27%
	5yr %Δ	+3%	-3%	+0%	+11%	-8%	+3%

		1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person	5+ person	Total
Household Size	Total	5,640	8,645	2,970	2,210	1,240	20,715
	Owner	59%	79%	76%	81%	79%	73%
	Renter	41%	21%	24%	19%	21%	27%
	5yr %Δ	+9%	+4%	-4%	-7%	+5%	+3%

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

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

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

### 7.2.2 Anticipated Households

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

Estimates suggest that total households reached 21,085 in 2022, with a potential increase of 6% from 2022 to 2027 (1,175 total). Household losses should predominantly occur among young adult households (led by 15- to 24-year-olds) and older working professional led households (45- to 64-year-olds). The greatest rate of growth should be among senior-led households.

Similar magnitudes of growth may continue from 2027 to 2032. Senior-led households (particularly those with a maintainer aged 85+) should remain the cohort with greatest

relative growth. From 2022 to 2032, about 2,045 new senior-led households might live in the County of Kings, again reinforcing the need for senior appropriate or generally accessible housing over the foreseeable future.

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

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2027	Total	415	5,875	7,780	7,240	950	22,260
	Share	2%	26%	35%	33%	4%	100%
	5yr %Δ	-14%	+8%	-4%	+13%	+36%	+6%

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2032	Total	415	6,020	7,865	7,760	1,380	23,440
	Share	2%	26%	34%	33%	6%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+0%	+2%	+1%	+7%	+45%	+5%

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

## 8 Conclusion

The above information provides context for the municipality's housing conditions. Significantly increased demand and low new supply has resulted in higher-than-expected local housing prices, for both rental and ownership markets.

The current estimated unit shortage for the municipality is 230. Demand, which includes the shortage, is estimated to increase to 1,135 by 2027. Using current construction trends, 190 new units are estimated to be introduced into the market annually over the next 5 years, leaving a remaining gap of 185 units by 2027. Unless completions exceed the estimated annual rate of construction, ongoing trends within both rental and ownership markets can be expected to continue.