



DISTRICT OF SAANICH

Housing Needs Report

November 2024



TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The District of Saanich is within the territory of **Ləkʷəŋən** peoples known today as Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and the **WSÁNEĆ** peoples, represented today by the **WJOLEŁP** (Tsartlip), **BOKEĆEN** (Pauquachin), **STÁUTW** (Tsawout), **WSIKEM** (Tseycum) and **MÁLEXEŁ** (Malahat) Nations. The First Peoples have been here since time immemorial and their history in this area is long and rich.

The District of Saanich is proud that our name is derived from the **WSÁNEĆ** peoples. Saanich Council is committed to taking a leadership role in the process of healing wounds of the past and becoming a more just, fair and caring society.

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Housing Need Report Requirements	7
1.2	Data Sources	7
1.3	Data Limitations.....	8
1.4	Actions Taken Since the 2020 Housing Needs Report	9
2	Community Profile.....	12
2.1	Population	12
2.2	Age	12
2.3	Mobility	13
2.4	Households	14
2.5	Economy.....	16
2.6	Household Median Income.....	17
2.7	Summary.....	19
3	Housing Profile.....	21
3.1	Overview of Housing Stock	21
3.2	Trends in the Homeownership Market.....	29
3.3	Trends in the Rental Market	32
3.4	Non-Market Housing.....	38
3.5	Homelessness	40
3.6	Student Housing.....	41
3.7	Housing Indicators	42
3.8	Core Housing Need	42
3.9	Summary.....	49
4	Projections.....	52
4.1	Methodology	52
4.2	Limitations	53
4.3	Population Projection.....	54
4.4	Age Projections	55
4.5	Household Projections	55
4.6	Summary.....	57
5	COVID-19 Implications	58
6	Housing Needs Assessment	59

6.1	Total 5-Year and 20-Year Housing Need.....	59
6.2	Number of Units Needed by Unit Size in Saanich.....	60
6.3	Suppressed Household Formation.....	61
6.4	Statements of Key Areas of Local Need in Saanich	61
APPENDIX A: Glossary		65
APPENDIX B: Community Engagement Findings		69
6.5	Regional Findings.....	69
6.6	Findings for Saanich.....	73

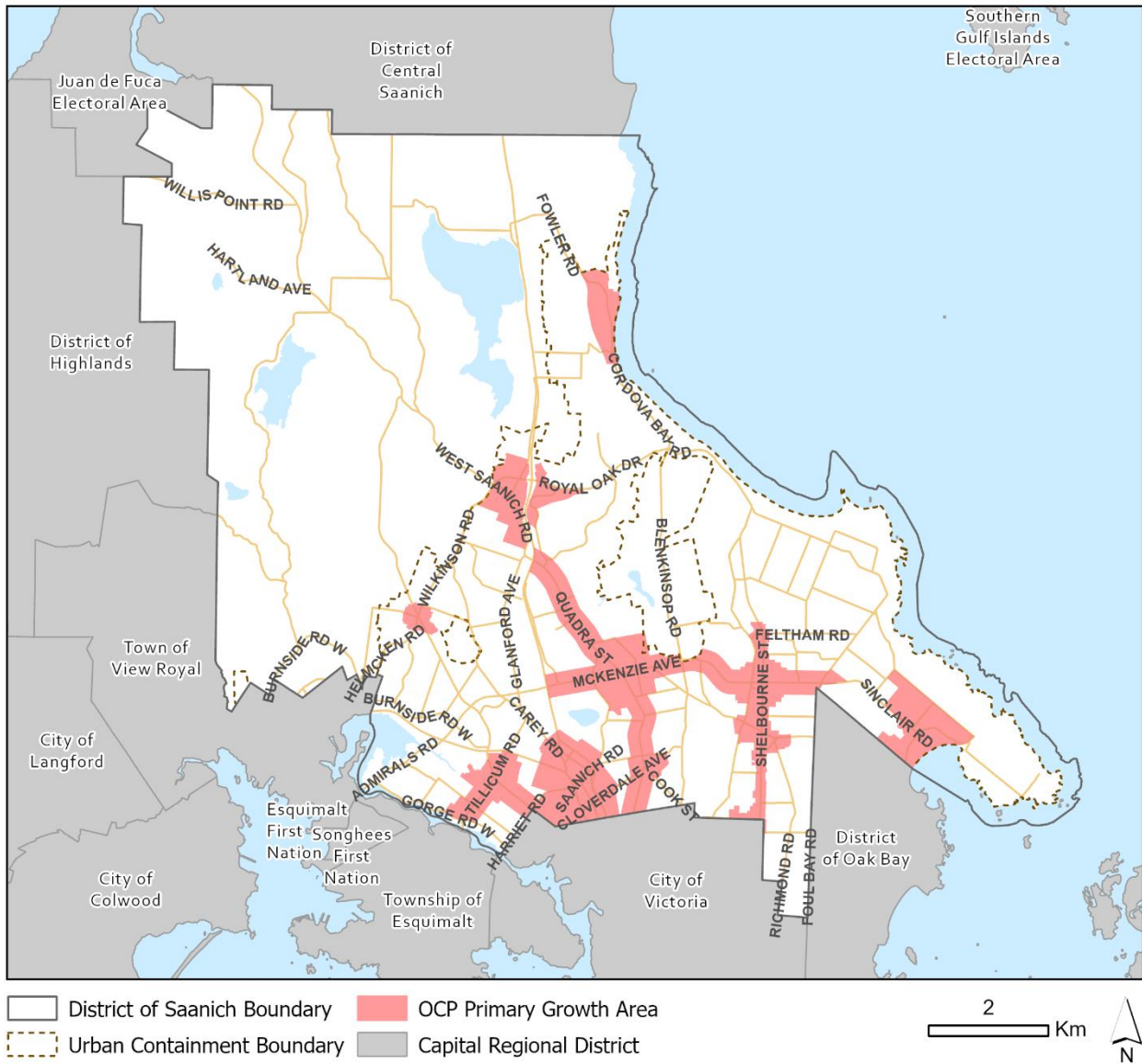
1 Introduction

With a mix of urban and rural neighbourhoods, Saanich is the largest municipality in the Capital Regional District (CRD) by both size, at 103.78 square kilometres, and population, with 117,735 residents as of the last census in 2021. Saanich makes up almost 30% of the CRD's population. An abundance of parks, trails, recreation centres, beaches, and education facilities offer a high quality of life for Saanich residents.

As of 2021, approximately 57% of dwellings in the community were single-detached houses with or without suites. Like other communities in the CRD and across the province, Saanich is experiencing increasing pressures on its housing market and the dominant housing form is out of reach for typical households. As the population grows and ages, affordability and changing demographics are shifting the types of housing that can support local needs and development trends are shifting towards multi-family housing forms.

The District of Saanich Official Community Plan (OCP) was updated in 2024, to modernize the land use framework and align with other recently adopted plans including the 2021 Saanich Housing Strategy. The 2024 OCP identifies Primary Growth Areas which support higher levels of housing density linked with transit and other sustainable forms of transportation. The framework also supports greater diversity in housing forms and tenures within all neighbourhoods inside of the Urban Containment Boundary, while maintaining lower densities and protection of the Agricultural Land Reserve in rural areas. Several policies were added to support the development of non-market housing, protect and increase the supply of secure rental housing, and establish clear expectations around the need for both family-size units and smaller units in multi-family buildings based on findings from the 2020 Housing Needs Report.

Figure 1 Map of Saanich



In Saanich and the Capital Regional District, the cost of home ownership and rental housing has continued to increase at a pace much greater than household incomes, and the rental vacancy rate is critically low. There continues to be a pressing need to understand housing needs across the housing continuum, now and into the future, related to affordability, accessibility, types of units, support structures and services, and more (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Housing Continuum



Through the Housing Supply Act, the Province has the authority to issue housing target orders to municipalities with the most pressing housing needs and the highest anticipated growth. In September 2023, the Minister of Housing assigned a Housing Target Order to the District of Saanich effective October 1, 2023, through to September 30, 2028. The Order mandates the provision of at least 4,610 net new housing units over the five-year period. This is the minimum number of new housing units required for compliance with the order and 75% of the Province’s total housing needs estimate for the District of Saanich. The District is required to monitor and report its annual progress towards achieving this target using performance indicators based on two conditions:

1. Progress toward achieving the annual cumulative housing target; and
2. Actions taken by the municipality toward meeting the annual housing target.

This Housing Needs Report serves as a crucial initial measure for thoroughly documenting both the current and anticipated housing requirements of the District.

Note that throughout this document, some technical terms are used when referring to statistical data. There is a glossary at the end of this document with relevant definitions and links for further information.

1.1 Housing Need Report Requirements

In response to growing housing challenges across the province, the Government of BC introduced changes to the *Local Government Act* in 2019 requiring municipalities and regional districts to complete Housing Needs Reports. Local governments must collect data, analyze trends, and present a Housing Needs Report that will be updated every five years. The report is intended to help local governments better understand current and anticipated housing needs to inform local plans and policies and provide publicly accessible information on housing.

In November 2023, the provincial government adopted new legislation which seeks to streamline the delivery of new housing and implement proactive planning tools to remove barriers to housing development. In June 2024, the Province provided updated legislative requirements for Housing Needs Reports which require all local governments to complete an Interim Housing Needs Report by January 1, 2025. Local governments' Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws must then permit the number of housing units projected to be needed over the next 20 years. Following the interim update, local governments are required to complete a regular Housing Needs Report update in 2028 and every 5 years thereafter.

Interim Housing Needs Reports are required to include the following information:

1. Total number of housing units required for the next five and 20 years, calculated using the standardized provincial Housing Needs Report Method provided in the [Regulation](#);
2. An additional statement of need focused on housing and proximity to transportation infrastructure; and
3. A description of the actions taken by the local government since the last Housing Needs Report to reduce housing needs.

This Report fulfills provincial requirements for an Interim Housing Needs Report, providing information on housing needs across the housing continuum. This Report is intended to be used by the District, the CRD, and other stakeholders to inform the planning and development of housing, through local plans, policies, and the management of development. It is also a public document intended to support decision-making around housing and provide information to stakeholders to help improve local understanding of housing needs.

1.2 Data Sources

Provincial regulations require the collection of approximately 50 different data indicators about past and current population, households, income and economy, and housing stock, as well as projected population, households, and housing stock to inform the Housing Needs Report.¹ Most of this data is made available by the Government of BC through their data catalogue. Some data indicators have not yet been made available and are noted as such (e.g., historical BC Assessment data). Data is collected from a number of sources, including:

¹ www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/housing-and-tenancy/tools-for-government/uploads/summary_of_legislative_and_regulatory_requirements_for_housing_needs_reports.pdf

- Statistics Canada 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021 Censuses and 2011 National Household Survey, via:
 - Data available online through Census profiles and data tables
 - Custom Housing Needs Report data provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)
- BC Housing
- BC Assessment
- Victoria Real Estate Board
- BC Stats
- AirDNA
- District of Saanich

This Report provides an overview of housing needs based on analysis of quantitative data from these sources, as well as qualitative data from engagement. This data is used to identify housing units required currently as well as over the next five and 20 years, the number of households in core housing need, and statements about key areas of local need, in fulfilment of Housing Needs Reports regulations.²

1.3 Data Limitations

There are limitations to the data used in this report. Significant limitations that may affect interpretation of the data presented in this Report are described here.

Different Census Datasets

This Report refers to both the standard Census Profile from Statistics Canada and a custom data set that was prepared by Statistics Canada for the purpose of Housing Needs Reports. This data provides some information not available in the Census Profiles. However, it is based on a 25% sample. It also differs slightly from the Census Profiles as it only reports on private households and excludes those living in institutions or any form of collective dwelling. Both the Census Profiles and custom data sets are used and are referenced.

Age of Data

The most recent national census was completed in 2021. While it provides important demographic and housing information, it does not capture more recent trends. Other, more recent sources of data are used where possible and quantitative data is supplemented with stakeholder engagement which provides insight into emerging trends. The next national census is scheduled for 2026, and results will begin to become available in 2027.

2011 National Household Survey

The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) was voluntary and had a much lower response rate than the mandatory long-form census. Because of this, data from the 2011 NHS is of a lower quality than census data. In particular, this adversely impacted income data, and any comparisons

² <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/housing-needs-reports>

between Census income data and NHS income should be viewed with caution; overall income trends between 2006 and 2021 are therefore a more reliable indicator of future income direction than 5-year trends.

Projections

The projections contained in this Report offer possible scenarios and should be used with caution. In reality, local conditions like population, immigration patterns, decisions on growth and density, and market forces impact the nature of the projections. Wherever possible, the projections should be informed by an understanding of the context within Saanich and the CRD.

Covid-19

The statistical data reported in this document is largely from the 2021 census, reflecting programs and realities related to Covid-19 and thus, may not entirely reflect current housing trends. The data reported should be considered together with Section 6 Covid-19 Implications. The findings in the concluding chapters consider both available data and desk research on Covid-19 implications on the housing system.

1.4 Actions Taken Since the 2020 Housing Needs Report

Interim Housing Needs Reports are required by provincial legislation to include a description of the actions taken by the local government, since receiving the most recent Housing Needs Report, to reduce housing needs.

2024 Official Community Plan Update

The updated OCP identifies primary growth areas which support higher levels of housing density linked with sustainable forms of transportation. The framework also supports greater diversity in housing forms and tenures across all urban land use designations, provides support to non-market and rental housing, and aligns with recently adopted Provincial housing legislation. The updated OCP includes a significantly expanded Housing section, to ensure that District wide policies are in alignment with housing needs and objectives (including, but not limited to, findings outlined in the 2020 Housing Needs Report and the 2021 Housing Strategy).

2021 Saanich Housing Strategy

The Saanich Housing Strategy was adopted in August 2021. The Housing Strategy includes 73 specific actions to be undertaken within a 10-year framework and sets out Priority Actions for the first 4 years. A new Housing Division was created within the Community Planning Department to implement the Housing Strategy. Progress is reported annually. Actions carried out supported by the housing strategy include many of the items listed below.

Small Apartment Infill Policy (May 2023): A new Small Apartment Zone and Small Apartment Infill Policy was adopted in 2023 to support the creation of smaller, infill apartment buildings.

Tenant Assistance Policy (June 2023): The Tenant Assistance Policy requires developers to provide support to tenants who are being displaced as part of redevelopment.

Permissive Tax Exemptions (June 2023): The purpose of the Permissive Tax Exemption (PTE) Policy for Supportive and Affordable Rental Housing is to incent the development of new non-

market housing supply, and to support the viability of existing non-market housing. Over 17 housing developments have received PTE's since the introduction of the policy.

Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) and Inclusionary Housing Policy (July 2023): The CAC policy supports the provision of affordable housing by exempting non-market developments and purpose-built rental developments, providing options for inclusionary housing units, and specifying contributions to the Saanich Affordable Housing fund.

Strategic Plan Update (November 2023): Council's Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027 was updated to incorporate action items related to meeting the targets in the Provincial Housing Target Order.

Strategic Housing Advisor (2023): A Strategic Housing Advisor term position was created and filled. The role is focused on advancing housing projects on Saanich owned lands and potential partnerships to increase the supply of housing.

Development Cost Charge (DCC) Exemptions (January 2024): The DCC exemption bylaw was amended to give non-profit housing providers 100% DCC exemption.

Saanich Land Capacity Study (February 2024): A land capacity analysis was conducted to ensure sufficient residential, commercial, and industrial land-use capacity within the new Official Community Plan based on anticipated population growth.

Priority for Non-Market Housing Development Approvals (March 2024): A new Non-Market Housing Policy was adopted to expedite eligible development applications through all stages of the development review and permitting processes.

Transit Oriented Areas (May 2024): Zoning Bylaw Amendments to comply with Provincial Transit Oriented Development Area legislation were completed in May 2024.

Rezoning for Non-Market Housing on Saanich-owned land (June 2024): The Nellie McClung Library and Capital Regional Housing Corporation (CRHC) housing project is an exemplary project which will co-locate municipal facilities with approximately 200 units of affordable housing on municipally owned land.

Neighbourhood Homes Study (June 2024): Zoning Bylaw Amendments were adopted to allow 3,4, or 6 units on residential lots within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and support a variety of infill typologies on the lot.

Rapid Deployment of Non-Market Housing (June 2024): Zoning Bylaw Amendments allow non-market housing providers to build to the upper limits in the Official Community Plan without a rezoning, and delegate Development Permit approvals for non-market housing to staff.

Saanich Affordable Housing Reserve Fund (August 2024): A new Saanich Affordable Housing Reserve Fund was established, with more clearly defined eligibility criteria and funding amounts. The new fund was expanded to support both Pre-Development and Capital costs.

Building Permit Digitization Pilot Project (August 2024): Saanich is participating in the Ministry of Housing's pilot project for building permit digitization. Through the BC Permit Hub applicants can currently submit any building permits for up to 4 dwelling units.

Implementing new parking standards (September 2024): Interim Zoning Bylaw Amendments will reduce off-street parking minimums for residential projects with 12 or fewer units and establish parking maximums, TDM plan requirements and on-site loading space requirements for residential projects with more than 12 units.

Primary Growth Area/Rapid Transit Corridor Plan Implementation (in progress): Staff are undertaking the Uptown Douglas Pre-Zoning and Network Design Project to implement the long-term vision of the Uptown Douglas Plan, catalyze development, and deliver targeted density and housing supply. Additional pre-zoning projects are anticipated as other Centre, Corridor and Village Plans are completed.

Digitizing the development application process (in progress): The cross-departmental improvements to the Development and Rezoning Application process will decrease application review and processing timelines. This includes fully digitizing the application process.

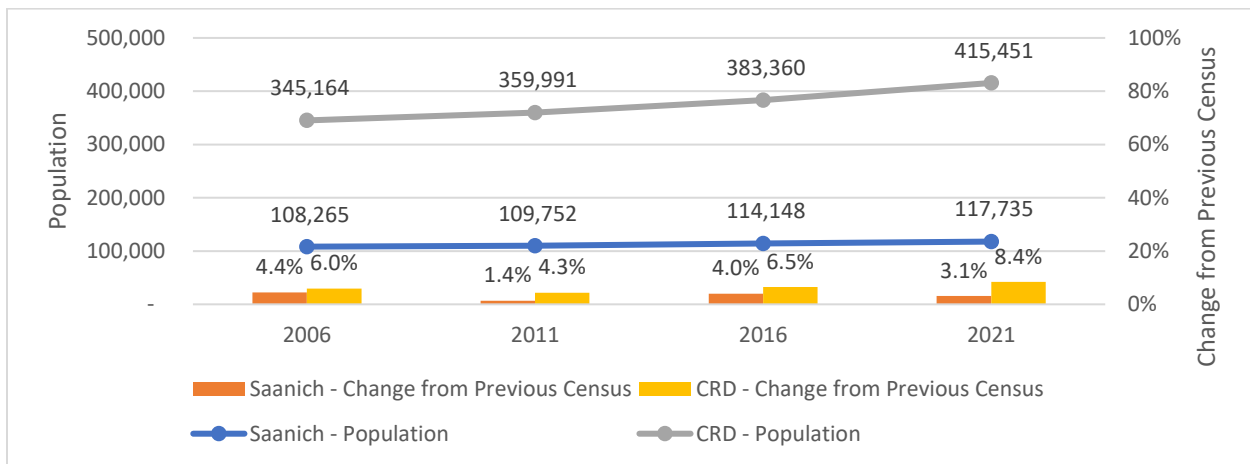
2 Community Profile

The demographic and economic context of a community shape its housing needs. Age and stage of life, household type and size, income, and employment all directly affect the type of housing units, sizes, and tenures needed. This section provides an overview of these factors, using a combination of data from the Statistics Canada Census Profiles and data tables and custom data prepared for Housing Needs Reports.

2.1 Population

Between 2016 and 2021, Saanich grew by 3.1%, from 114,148 to 117,735 residents. This was slower growth compared to the CRD as a whole, which grew by 8.4% over the same period. As of 2021, Saanich residents made up 28.3% of the CRD's population.

Figure 3 Population Change in Saanich and CRD, 2006 to 2021



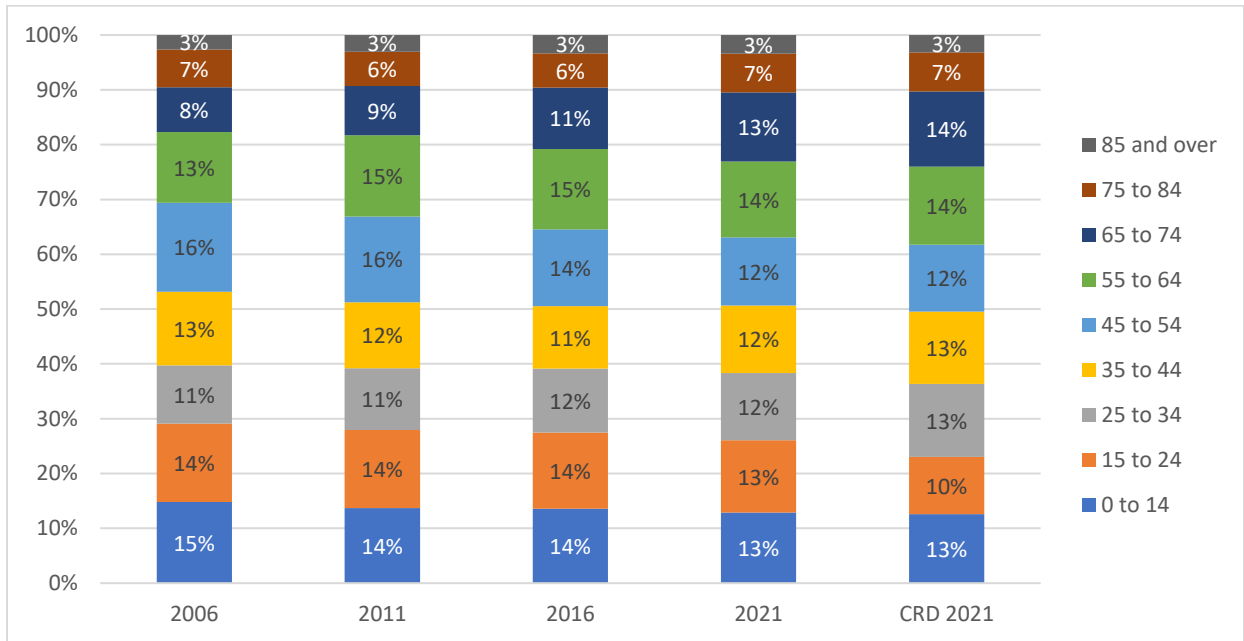
Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021

2.2 Age

From 2006 to 2021, the median age in Saanich rose from 42.9 to 44.4, indicating a slight aging of the population, consistent with national trends. The median age in the CRD in 2021 was similar, at 45.2.

The age distribution in Saanich was fairly stable between 2006 and 2021 (Figure 4). Over this period, there were slight decreases in the proportion of residents aged 0 to 14, 15 to 24, and 45 to 54. There were slight increases in the proportion of residents aged 25 to 34, and 65 to 74. The population between age 65 to 74 saw the most notable proportional increase, from making up 8% of the population in 2006 to 13% of the population in 2021. Saanich has a similar age distribution compared to the CRD as a whole.

Figure 4 Age Distribution in Saanich, 2006 to 2021

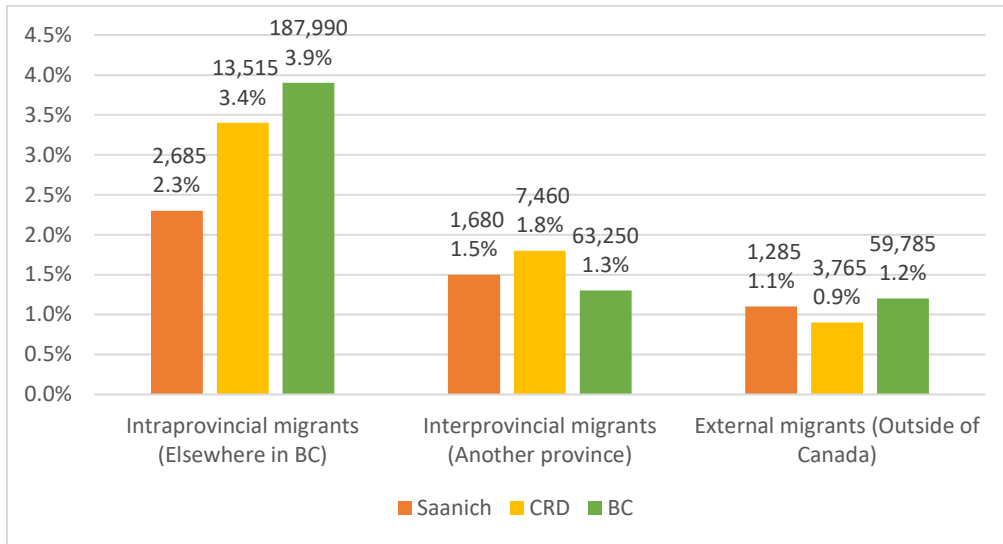


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021

2.3 Mobility

In 2021, 4.9% of Saanich residents had moved to the community in the previous year, compared to 6.1% and 6.4% in the CRD and BC (Figure 5). Of those who moved into Saanich, 48% were intraprovincial migrants (people who moved from elsewhere in BC), 30% were interprovincial migrants (people who moved from another province), and 23% were external migrants (people who moved from outside of Canada). The percentage of residents that had moved to Saanich in the previous year remained overall consistent with the 2016 Census findings (5%). A greater proportion of Saanich’s new residents were interprovincial migrants in 2021 in comparison to 2016 (24%). Compared to the CRD, Saanich had a lower proportion of individuals who moved from elsewhere in BC or another province.

Figure 5 1-Year Ago Mobility Status in Saanich, CRD and BC, 2021



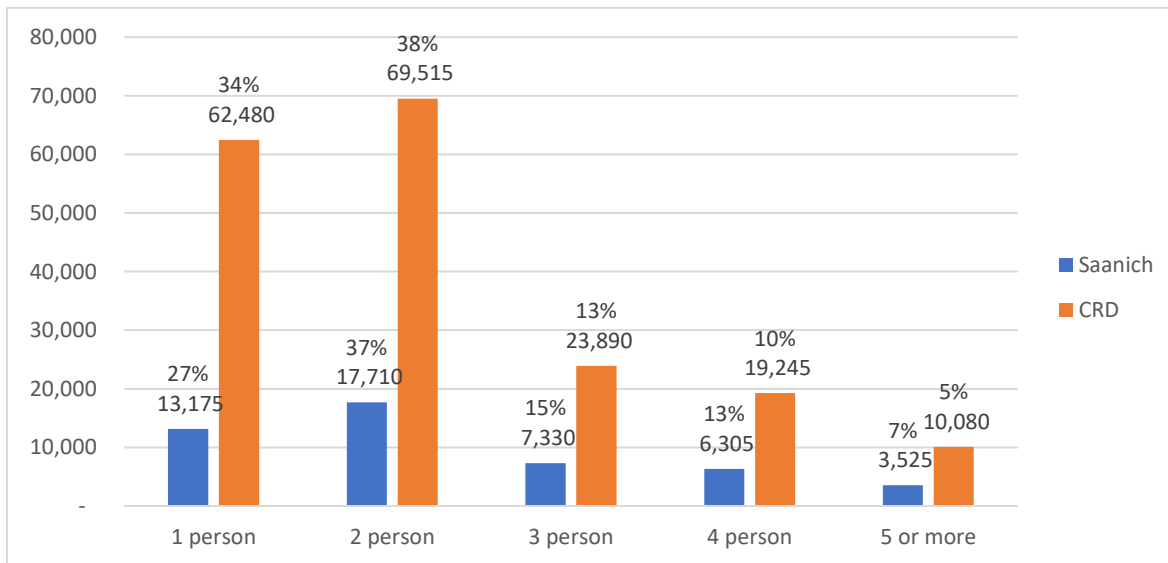
Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2021

2.4 Households

Between 2006 and 2021, the number of households in Saanich grew by 7.8% from 44,570 to 48,045. The average household size for Saanich was 2.4 in 2021, compared to 2.2 for the CRD. The average household size in Saanich has been the same for the past four census counts.

In 2021, 64% of households in Saanich were one or two person households, compared to 71% of CRD households (Figure 6). There was a higher proportion of larger household sizes in Saanich than the CRD, suggesting a higher prevalence of families in Saanich than the CRD.

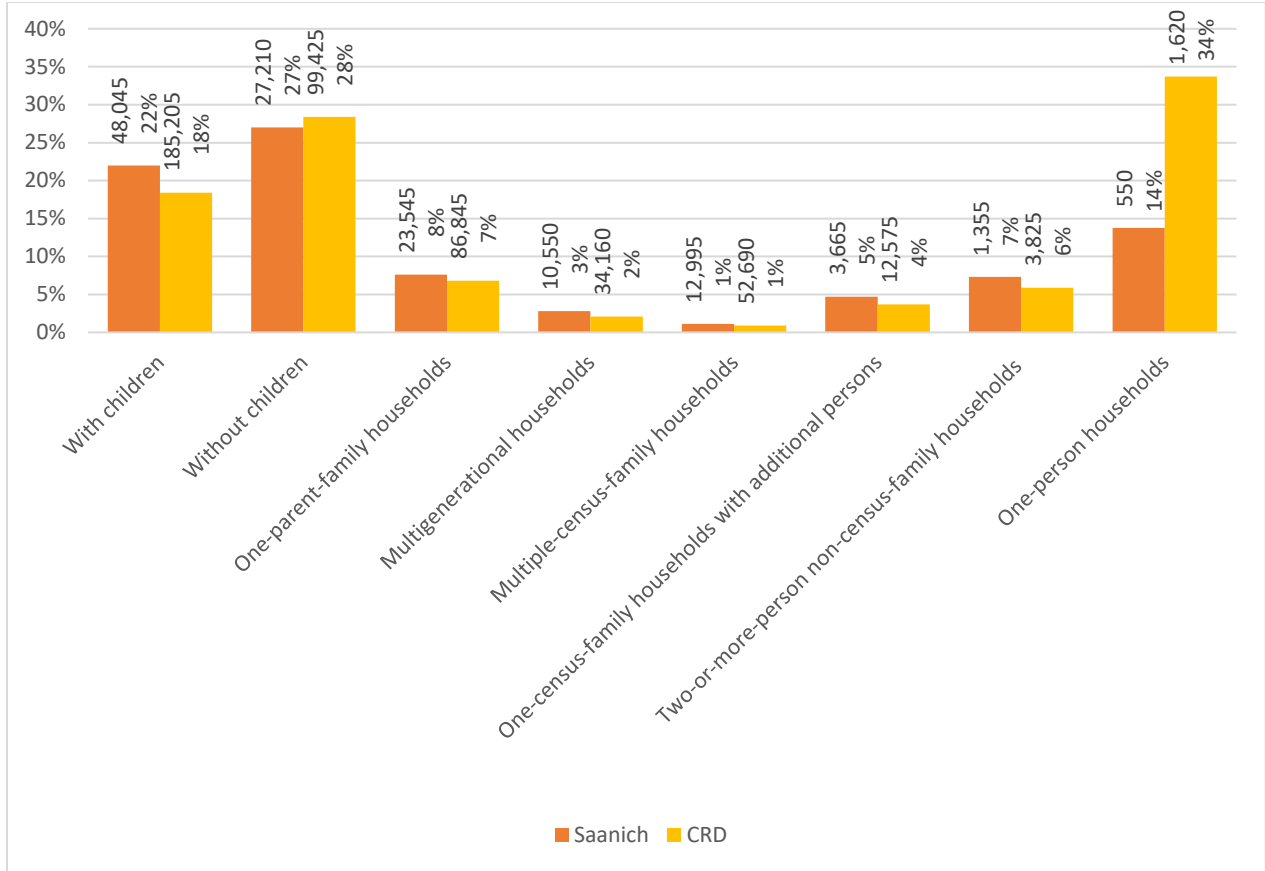
Figure 6 Households by Size in Saanich 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2021

Figure 7 shows the proportion of households by household type. Saanich had a higher proportion of family households with children than the CRD, and a lower proportion of one person family households.

Figure 7 Households by Household Type in Saanich and CRD, 2021

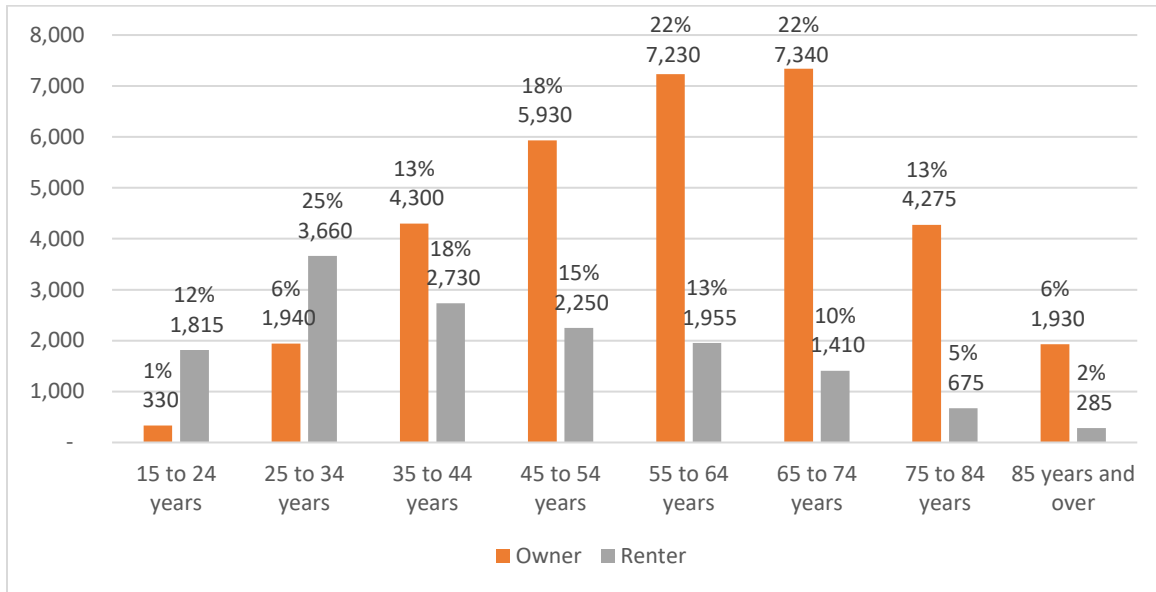


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2021

Figure 8 shows the ages of primary household maintainers by tenure, to illustrate how tenure changed across age groups in 2021. Primary household maintainer refers to the person leading a household. The census allows two to be identified per household and the data is based on the first entry.

In the District, there was a smaller proportion of households headed by the youngest and oldest age groups. Renter households are more likely to be led by a younger age group (more than half were under 45), while 60% of owners were 55 or older.

Figure 8 Age of Primary Household Maintainer by Tenure in Saanich, 2021



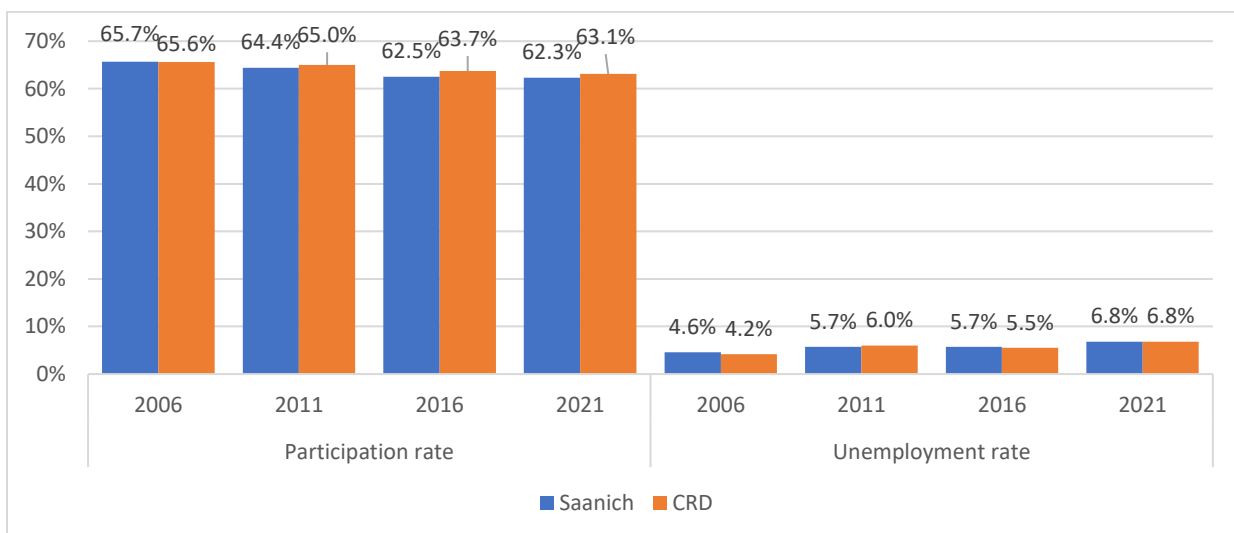
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0232-01

2.5 Economy

In 2021, the top five industries of work for Saanich residents were health care and social assistance (15%), public administration (12%), retail trade (11%), professional, scientific and technical services (10%), and educational services (9%).

Between 2006 and 2021, Saanich and the CRD as a whole saw a slight decrease in the labour participation rate and an increase in the unemployment rate (Figure 9). In 2021, the unemployment rate was 6.8% in both Saanich and the CRD.

Figure 9 Labour Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate in Saanich and CRD, 2006 to 2021

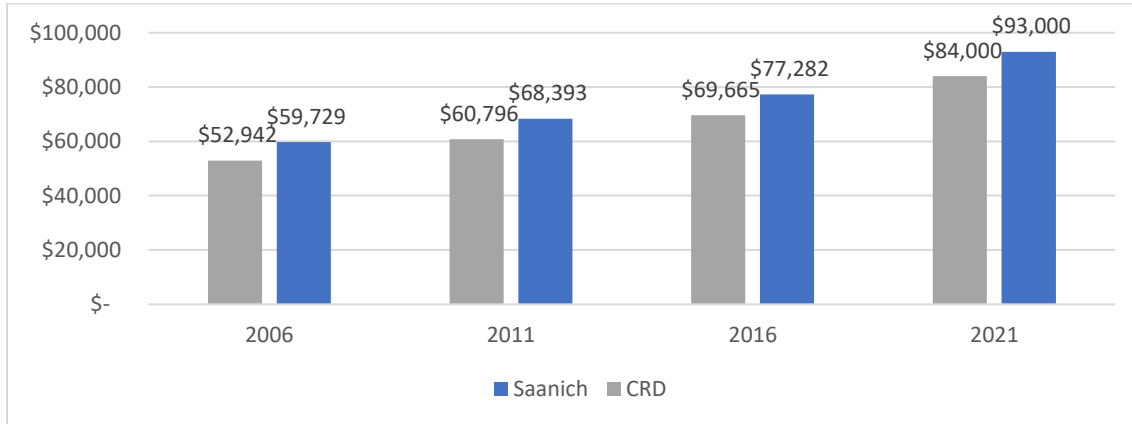


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2001, 2006, 2016, 2021 NHS Profile 2011

2.6 Household Median Income

Between 2006 and 2021, median before-tax household income grew by 56%. Median before-tax income increased by 20% between 2016 and 2021 in Saanich, compared to 21% across the CRD. In 2021, the median income in Saanich – \$93,000 – was \$9,000 higher than the CRD median income of \$84,000 (Figure 10).

Figure 10 Median Before-Tax Private Household Income in Saanich and CRD, 2006 to 2021

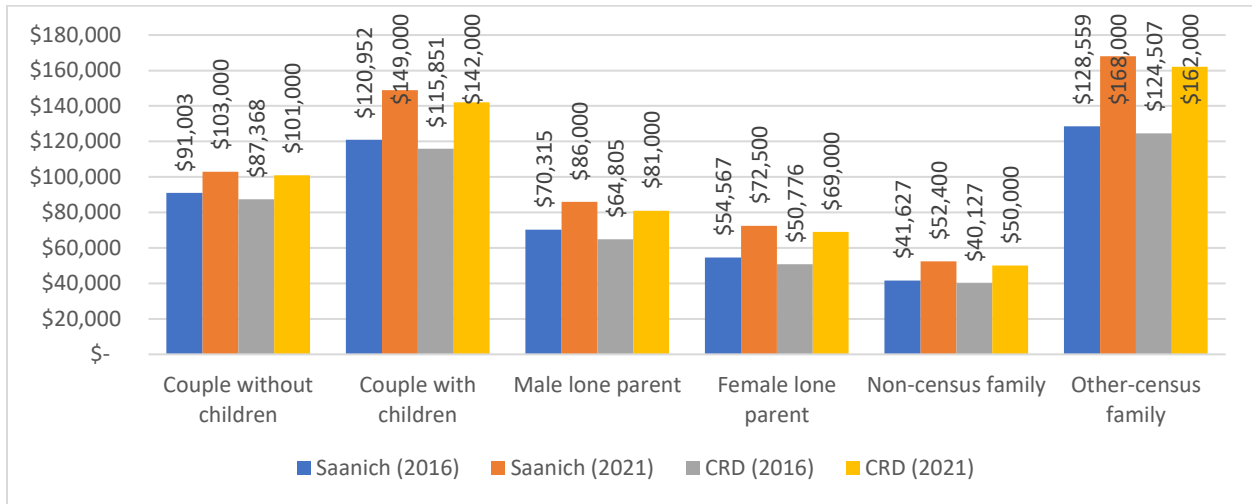


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2001, 2006, 2016, 2021 NHS Profile 2011

Median household income differs by household type. Households with one-parent families often have lower median incomes than households with two or more incomes. In 2021 in Saanich, female-led one-parent households had much lower median household incomes than other family types. Between 2016 and 2021, female-led one-parent families, followed by other census families and non-census families saw the highest proportional increase in median household income. However, it should be noted that lower-earning households (e.g. single-income households like single-parent households and most non-census family households) were more likely to benefit from the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), and this high proportional increase is likely partly driven by a short-term benefit that as of 2024 would no longer be in place.³

³ <https://hart.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Understanding-2021-Core-Housing-Need-Data.pdf>

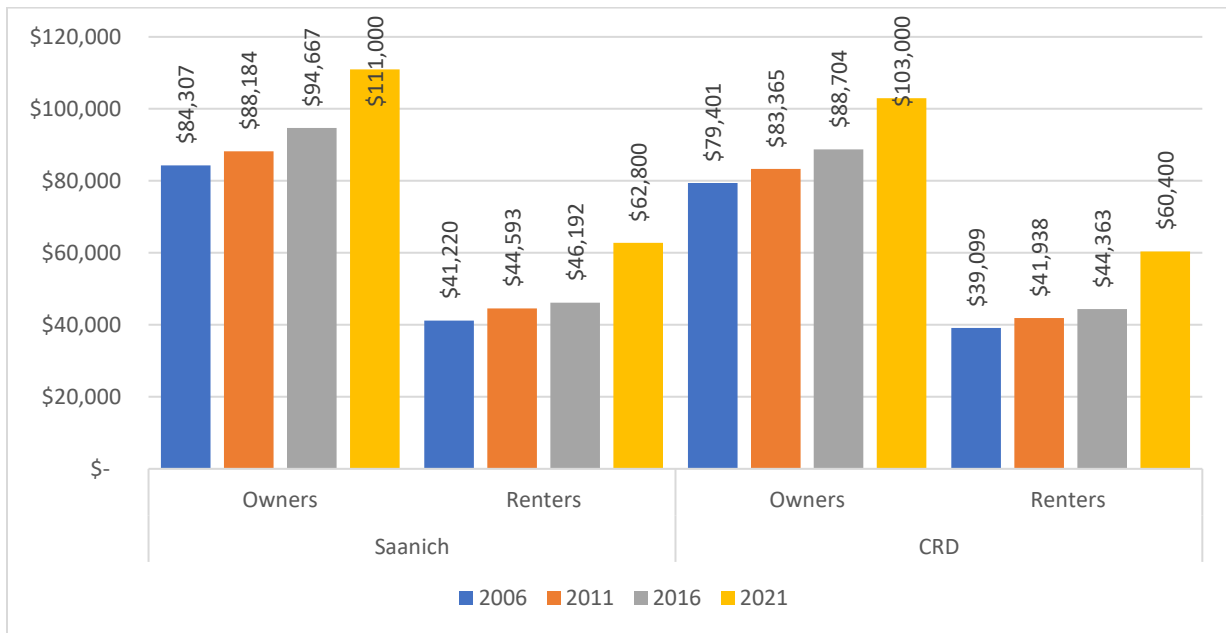
Figure 11 Median Total Household Income in Saanich and CRD, 2016 to 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Table 98-10-0060-01, Table 98-400-E2017099

The median renter household income in a community is often much lower than the median owner household income. In Saanich, the median renter household income in 2021 was 57% of median owner household income (Figure 12). However, the noticeable increase in the median renter household income in 2021 compared to previous years can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lower earning households were more likely to benefit from government relief efforts such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) during this time and therefore may have experienced an artificial increase in their household income reflected for 2021.

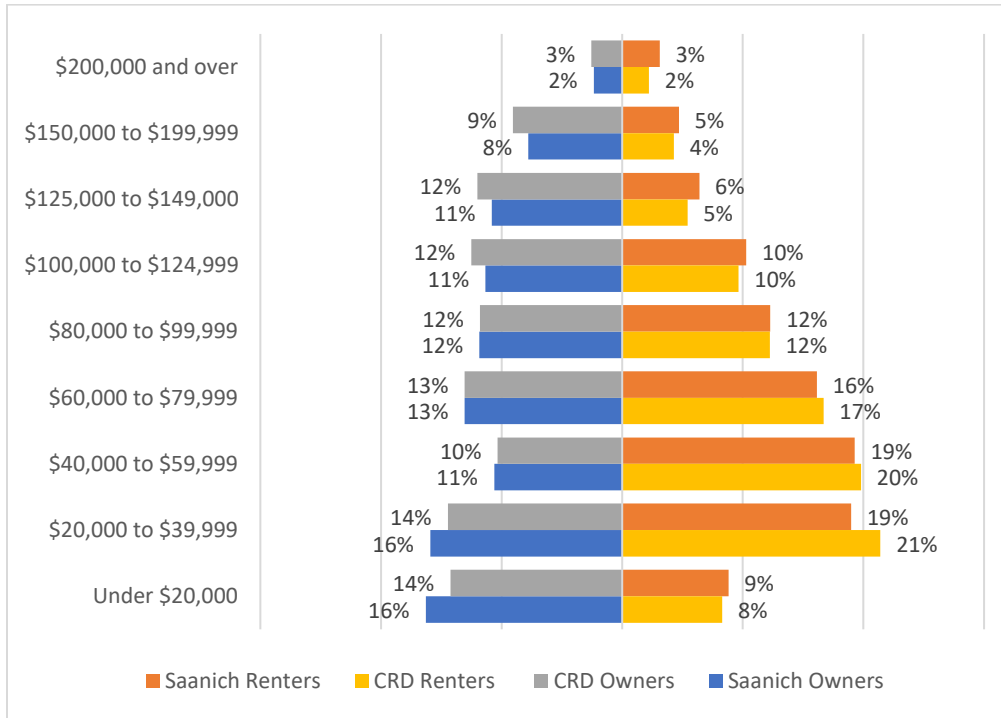
Figure 12 Median Before-Tax Private Household Income by Tenure in Saanich and CRD, 2006 to 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Custom Data Organization for BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Saanich had a slightly higher proportion of households in higher income brackets compared to the CRD, among both owners and renters (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Income Distribution by Tenure in Saanich and CRD, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Custom Data Organization for BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

2.7 Summary

- While Saanich is the largest community by both land and population in the CRD, and continuing to grow, its growth is slower than the CRD as a whole. Between 2006 and 2021, Saanich grew by 8.7%, from 108,265 to 117,735 residents, while the CRD grew by 20.4% over the same period.
- In 2021, 48% of new residents moving to Saanich were from other parts of BC (including the Capital Region), 30% were from other parts of Canada, and 23% were from other countries. Compared to the CRD as a whole, Saanich attracted a larger proportion of new international residents.
- Consistent with national trends, Saanich is experiencing a slight aging trend. The median age rose from 42.9 in 2006 to 44.4 in 2021.
- While Saanich's age distribution was similar to the CRD, Saanich has a higher proportion of families with children and other larger households than the region. There were lower proportions of one- and two-person households in Saanich compared to the CRD average.
- In 2021, the top five industries employing Saanich residents were health care and social assistance (15%), public administration (12%), retail trade (11%), professional, scientific and technical services (10%), and educational services (9%). Challenges finding housing can affect the ability to attract and retain employees, especially as housing costs increase more quickly than incomes.

- Saanich had higher incomes compared to the region over the past four census counts. Renter households reported incomes that were nearly half that of owner incomes in 2021 (\$62,800 versus \$111,000). Households with single incomes, especially female one-parent households and non-census family households, reported much lower incomes compared to other household types.

3 Housing Profile

This section provides an overview of community housing stock (dwelling type, size, and age), market and non-market housing trends, and indicators of housing need. The content in this section forms the basis of the statements about key areas of local need provided in Section 7.

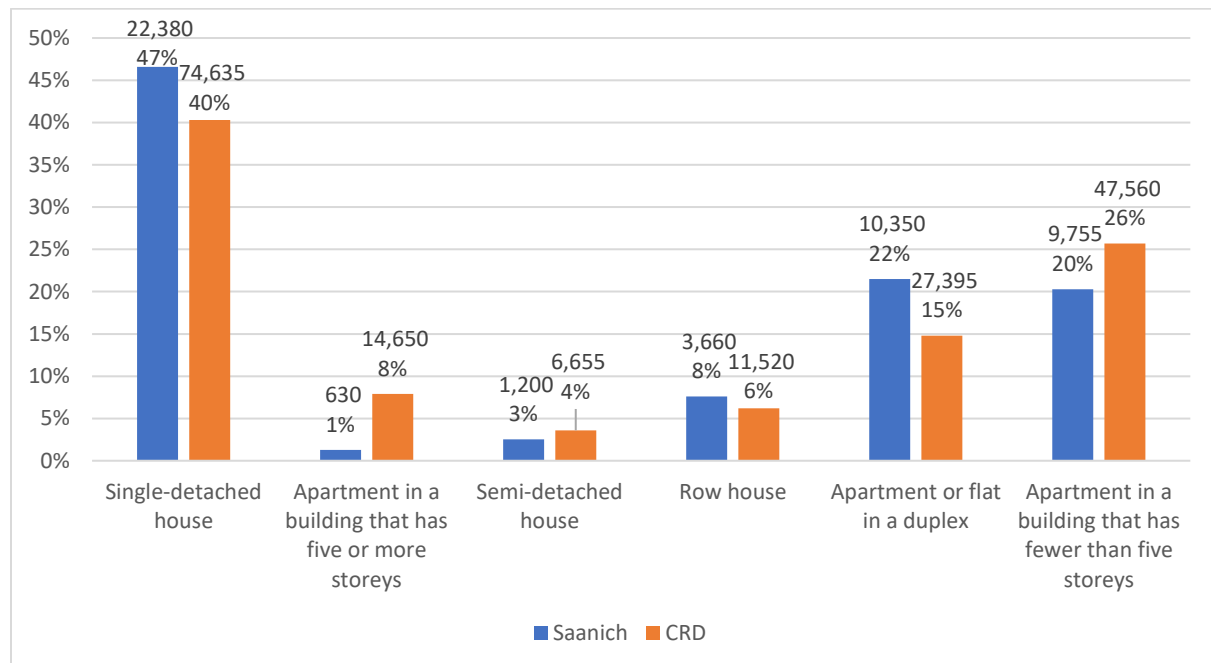
This section uses data from the following sources: 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021 Statistics Canada data from the Census Profiles and data tables and custom data prepared for Housing Needs Reports; 2011 National Household Survey; CMHC Rental Market Survey; BC Assessment data; BC Housing, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, and AirDNA.

3.1 Overview of Housing Stock

3.1.1 Housing Units

As of 2021, there were 48,050 dwellings in Saanich. Saanich’s housing stock has a higher proportion of single-detached houses and duplex homes than the CRD. In 2021, 47% of dwellings were single-detached houses and 22% were apartments in a flat or duplex (Figure 14). An apartment or flat in duplex refers to single-detached houses with secondary suites. Usually, half of the units recorded as apartments or flats in a duplex (approximately 5,175) are assumed to be main units in single-detached houses with secondary suites, while the other half are assumed to be secondary suites themselves. Saanich had a lower proportion of apartment buildings compared to the region. Between 2016 and 2021, Saanich saw a minor increase in the proportion of apartments in buildings with fewer than five storeys.

Figure 14 Dwellings by Structure Type in Saanich and CRD, 2021⁴



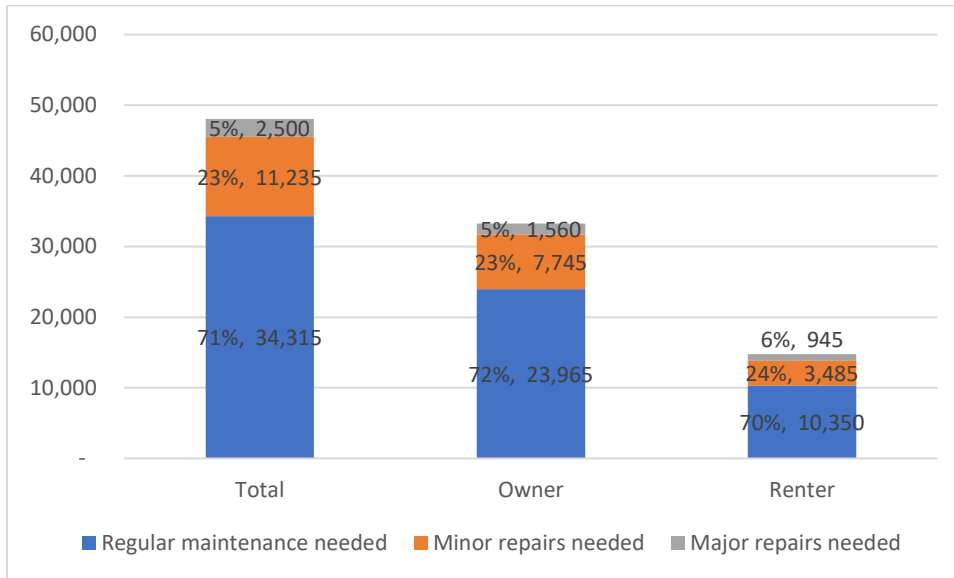
Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2016, 2021

⁴ Due to their small proportion, other single-attached houses (60 units in Saanich) and moveable dwellings (10 units in Saanich) are not shown.

3.1.2 Condition of Housing

In 2021, dwelling conditions were similar between renter and owner households, with most dwellings only requiring regular maintenance (71%) (Figure 15). There were 23% requiring minor repairs and 5% requiring major repairs. Renter households had slightly higher instances of minor repairs and major repairs being needed.

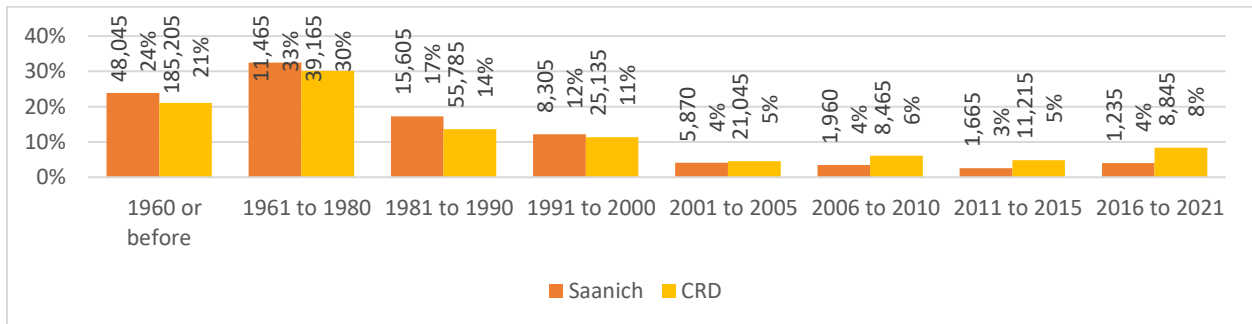
Figure 15 Dwelling Condition by Tenure, 2021⁵



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Table 98-10-0233-01

Compared to CRD, dwellings in Saanich are slightly older, with a higher proportion built prior to 2001 and only 15% have been built between 2001 and 2021 (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Dwellings by Period of Construction in Saanich and CRD, 2021

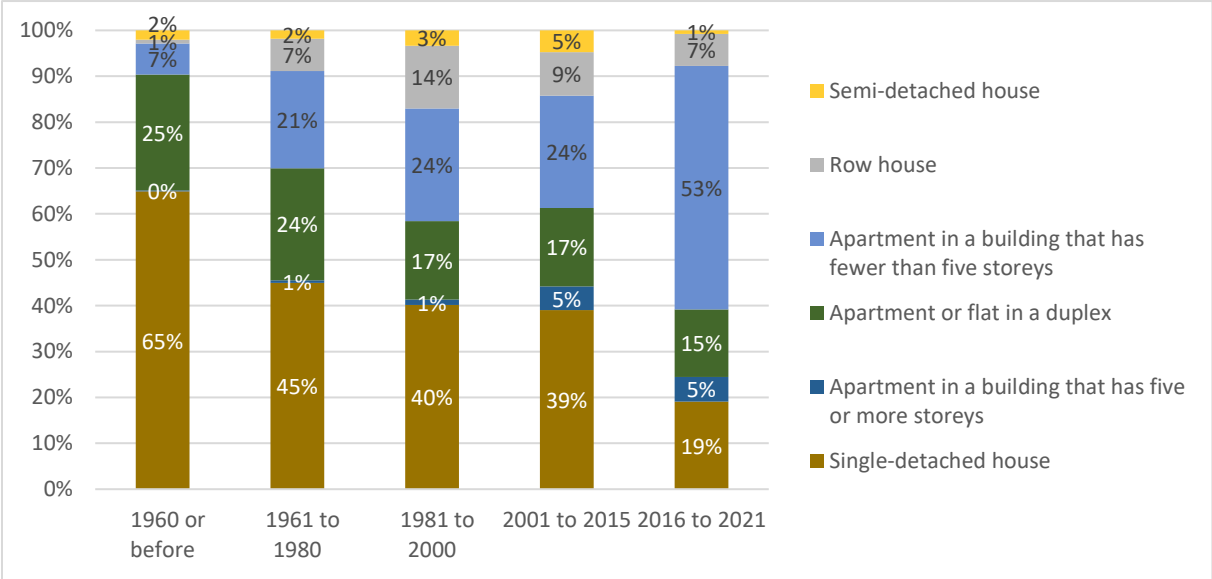


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2021

⁵ Note that for some census data, errors and / or random rounding can result in numbers that do not add up to their totals and percentages that do not add up to 100%. Random rounding means that each individual value is randomly rounded up or down to a multiple of 5 or 10, and sub-totals are independently rounded. These discrepancies are especially common when looking at aggregations with different variables, such as tenure and condition.

Figure 17 shows that single-detached houses were the predominant structural type of housing built in each period of construction up to 2016. From 2016 to 2021 the structural types shifted, seeing a significant increase in apartments in buildings with fewer than five storeys. During the same period, single-detached houses, duplexes, row houses, and semi-detached houses saw a proportional decrease. In terms of proportional growth, apartments in a building that has five or more storeys have been increasing over time. The growth of row houses has fluctuated from 1961 to 2021.

Figure 17 Dwellings by Period of Construction and Structural Type in Saanich, 2021

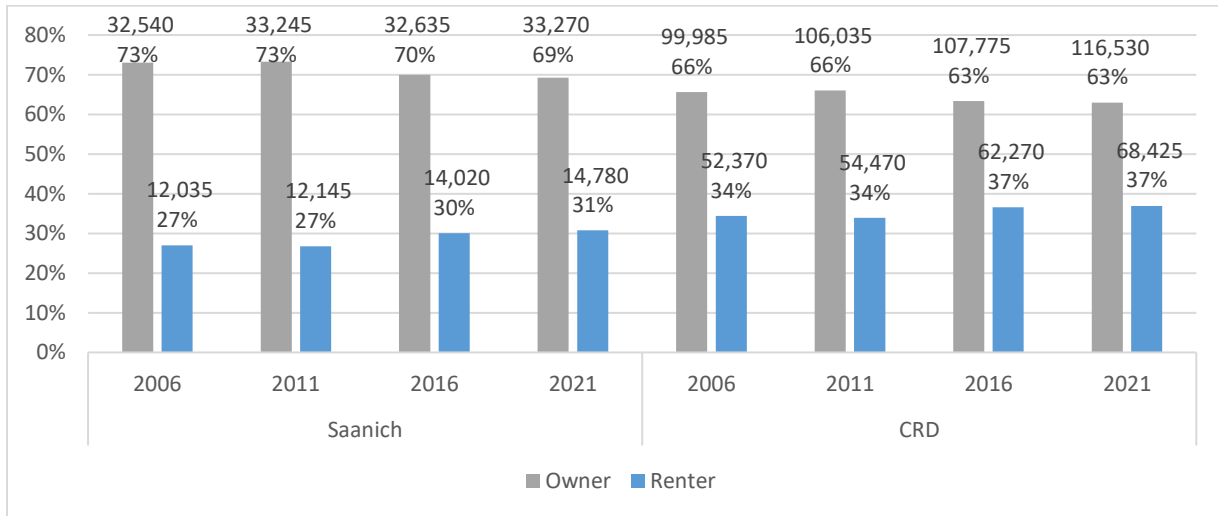


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2021

3.1.3 Tenure

Saanich saw the proportion of owner households decline slightly over the past four census counts, from 73% of all households in 2006 to 69% in 2021 (Figure 18). For comparison, in 2021, 63% of CRD residents were homeowners and 37% were renters. In part, this trend is related to escalating housing prices and lower rates of homeownership by younger primary household maintainers compared to previous generations.

Figure 18 Households by Tenure in Saanich, 2006 to 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 2006, 2016, 2021 NHS Profile 2011

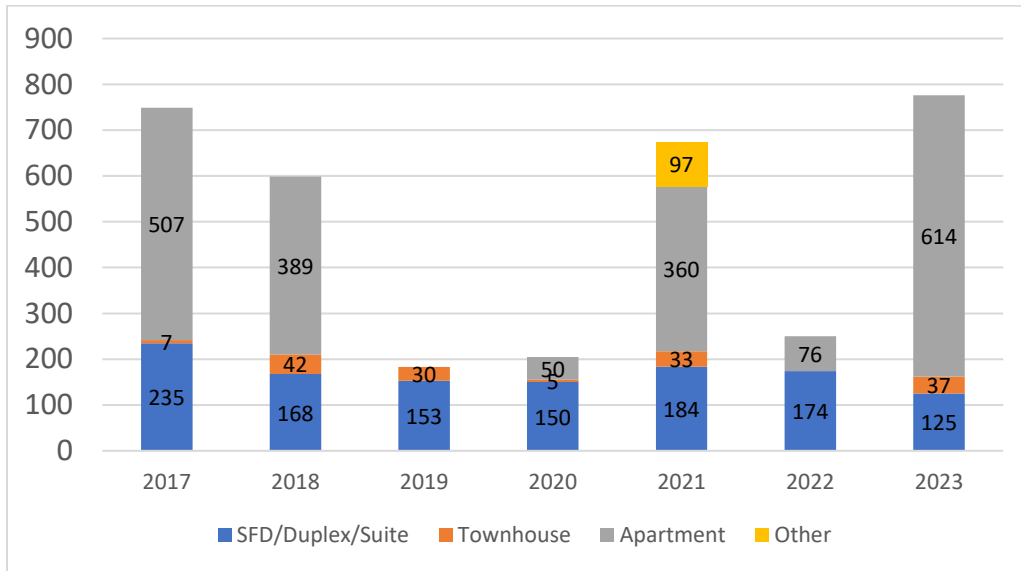
In 2021, 12.4% of renter households reported that they lived in subsidized housing.⁶ This is a slight decline from 13% of households in 2016 and 16% of households in 2011 reporting that they lived in subsidized housing. There is no data available for 2006.

3.1.4 Recent Changes in Housing Stock

Between 2017 and 2023, 58% of building permits were issued for apartments, 35% were single-family dwellings, duplexes and suites, and 4% were townhomes (Figure 19). The proportion of new homes that were single-family dwellings, duplexes, or suites has remained relatively consistent while permitted apartments fluctuated significantly from year to year. Yearly totals can fluctuate depending on the timing of individual approvals and construction starts.

⁶ Subsidized housing is self-reported by census respondents. It includes rent supplements like those provided by BC Housing, which support households renting in the private market. It can also include rent geared to income, social housing, public housing, government-assisted housing, and non-profit housing. More detailed information on non-market housing in the District is provided in Section 3.4.

Figure 19 Building Permits Issued Annually by Dwelling Type in Saanich, 2017 to 2023

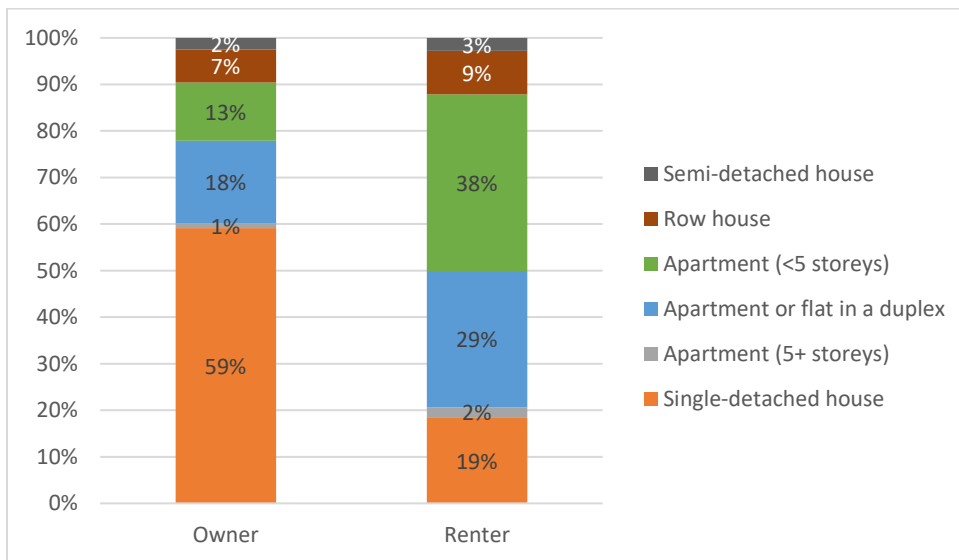


Source: District of Saanich Permit Data

3.1.5 Households and Structure Types

Among owner households in Saanich, the most common structure types in 2021 were single-detached houses (59% of owner households), followed by homes with secondary suites (apartment or flat in duplex) and low-rise apartments (fewer than five storeys) (Figure 20).

Figure 20 Structure Type by Tenure in Saanich, 2021

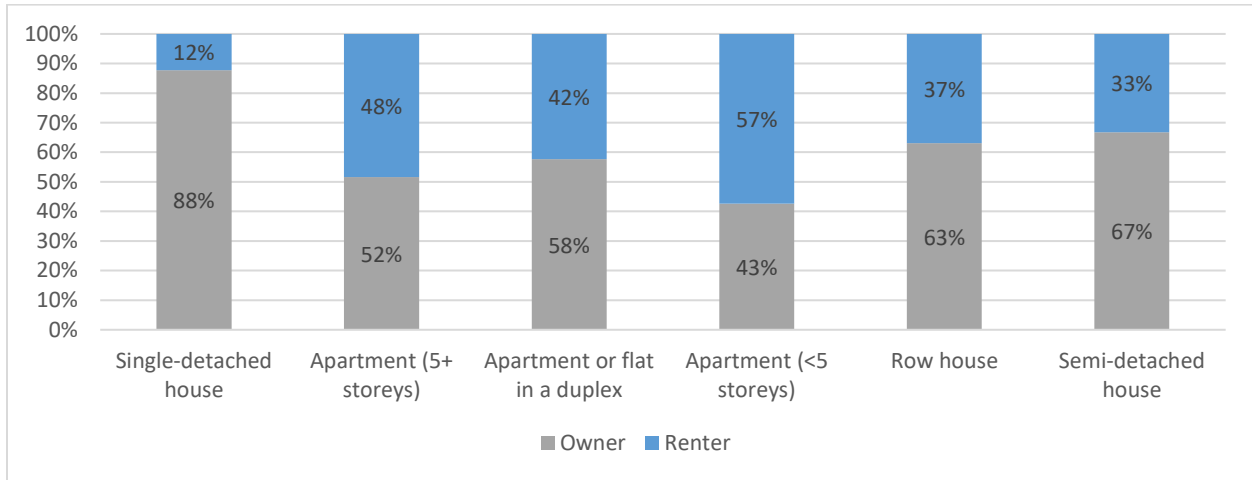


Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census. Table 98-10-0240-01.

Data from 2021 suggests that most single-detached homes in Saanich were occupied by owner households (88%), however it should also be noted that renters residing in “Apartment or flat in a duplex” generally represents tenants in secondary suites. Renter households occupied a more

evenly distributed mix of structure types with low rise apartments (fewer than five storeys) being the most common (Figure 21).

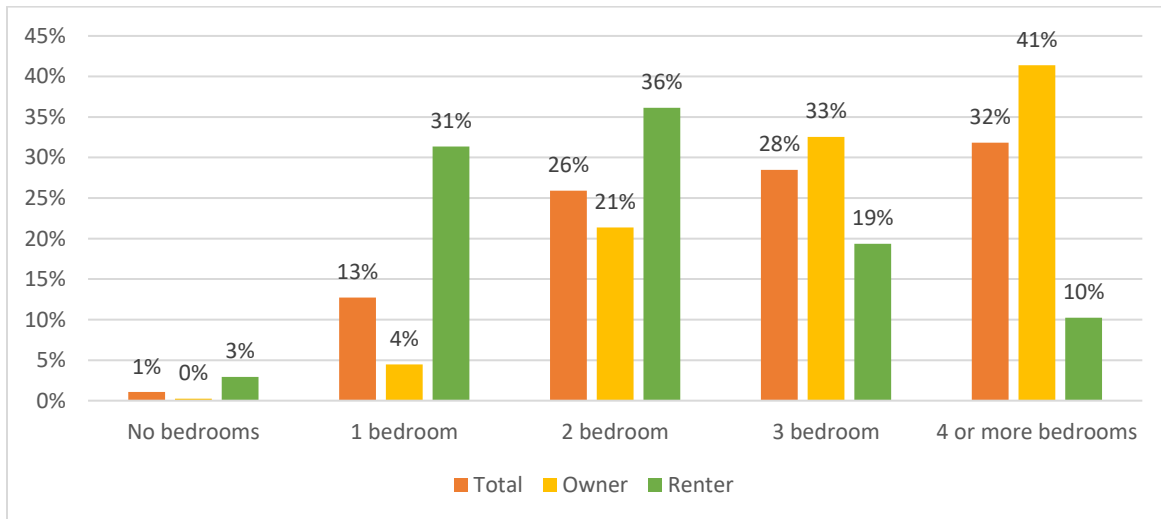
Figure 21 Tenure by Structure Type in Saanich, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0240-01

In 2021, 60% of dwellings in Saanich were three bedrooms or more (Figure 22). Most dwellings with three bedrooms or more were owned; 74% of all owned dwellings had three bedrooms or more, compared to 29% of all rented dwellings. Most rented dwellings had two bedrooms or fewer (70%).

Figure 22 Dwellings by Unit Size and Tenure in Saanich, 2021

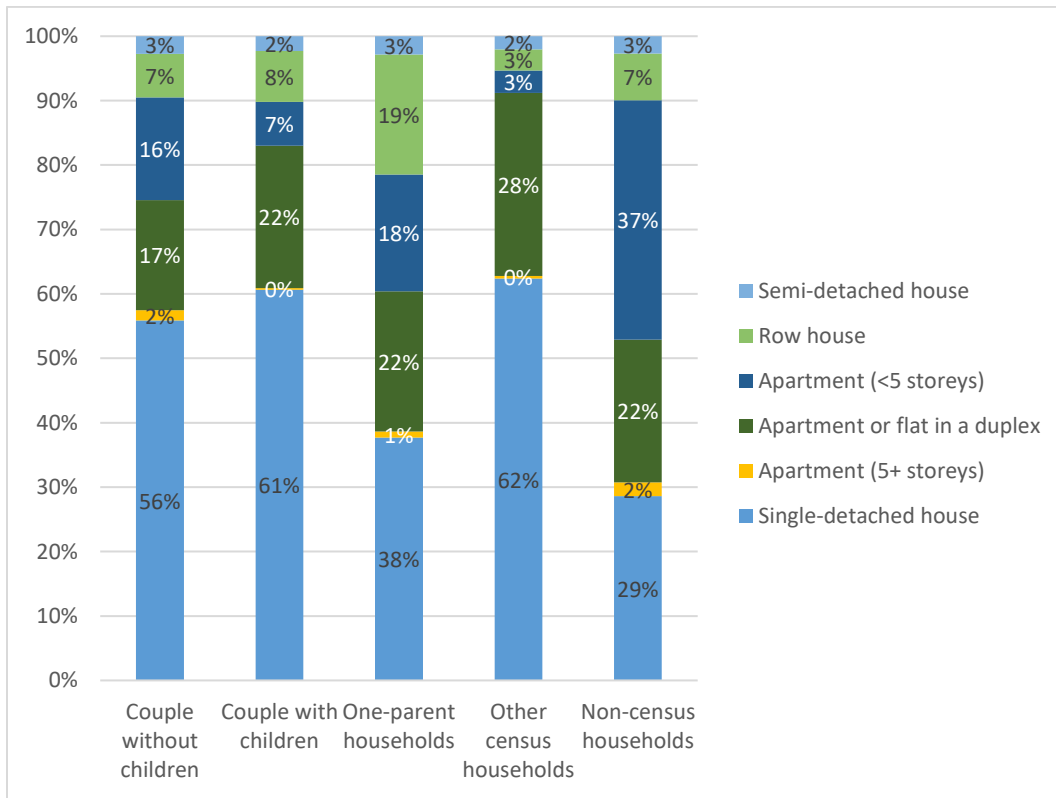


Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0240-01

Figure 23, Figure 24, and Figure 25 show the types of households, sizes of households, and ages of primary household maintainers living in different structure types. Due to the large proportion of single-family homes in the District, they are often the dominant structure type.

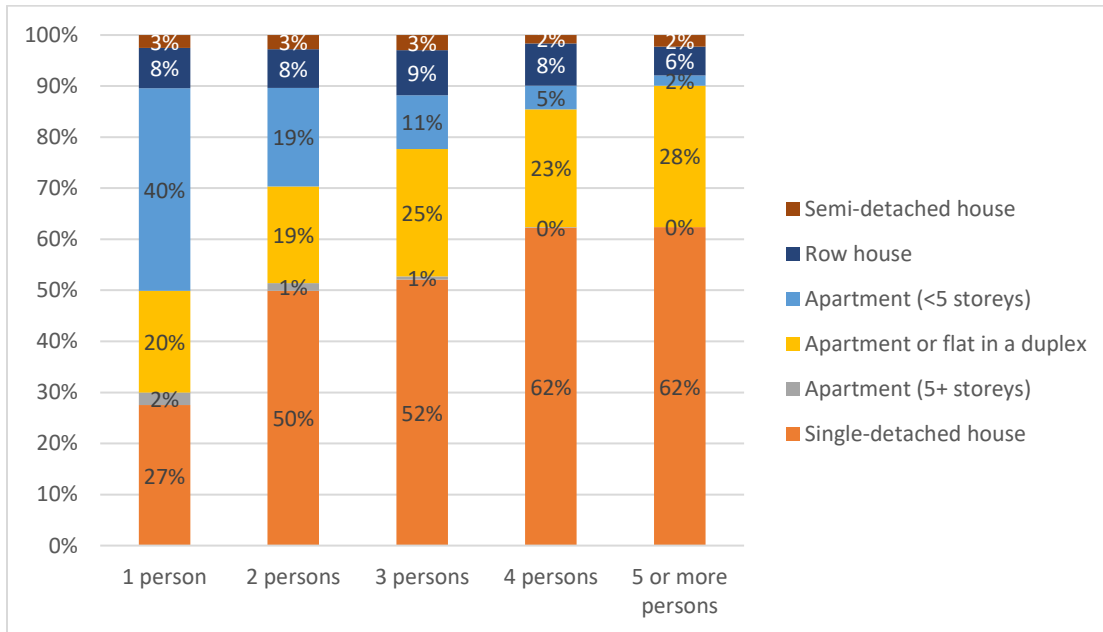
Among couples (with or without children) and other census households, the single-detached home is the dominant structure type, while one-parent households and non-census families are far more likely to live in multi-family dwellings (Figure 23). 50% of all 2+ person households live in single-detached homes (Figure 24). The majority of households led by primary household maintainers between age 45 and 84 also live in single-detached homes (Figure 25). Saanich's residents aged 85 and over saw a decrease in the proportion of the age group living in single-detached houses from 57% in 2016 to 49% in 2021. The proportion of individuals aged 25 to 44 living in single-detached houses also slightly decreased between 2016 and 2021, while the proportion of residents aged 15 to 24 living in single-detached homes increased from 14% in 2016 to 20% in 2021.

Figure 23 Households by Structure Type and Family Type in Saanich, 2021



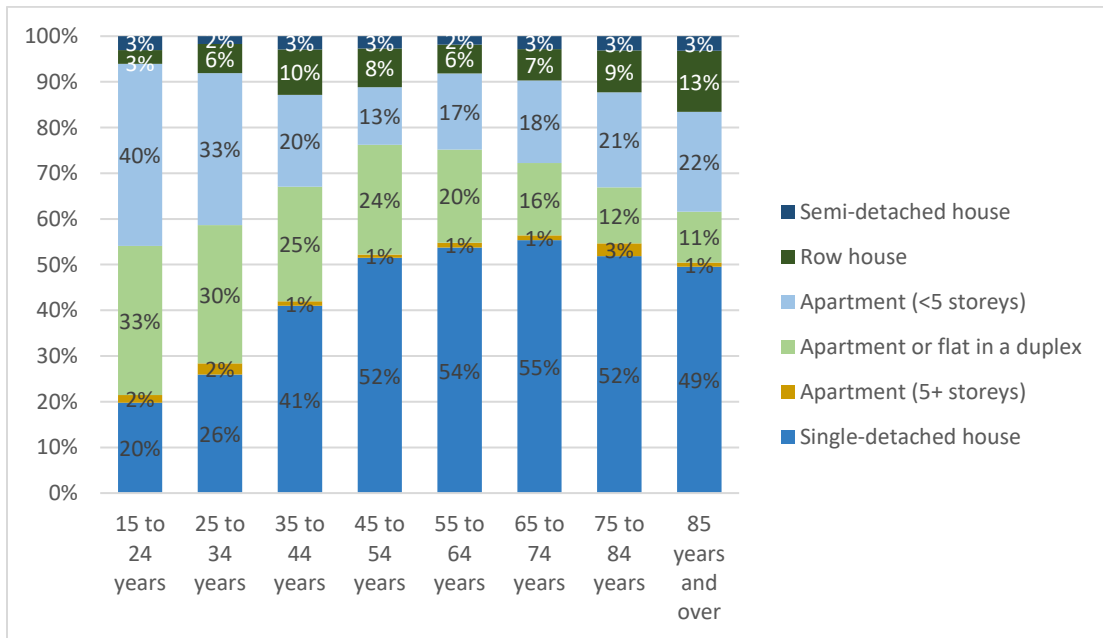
Source: Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue Table 98-10-0232-01

Figure 24 Households by Structure Type and Household Size in Saanich, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue Table 98-10-0232-01

Figure 25 Households by Structure Type and Primary Maintainer Age in Saanich, 2021

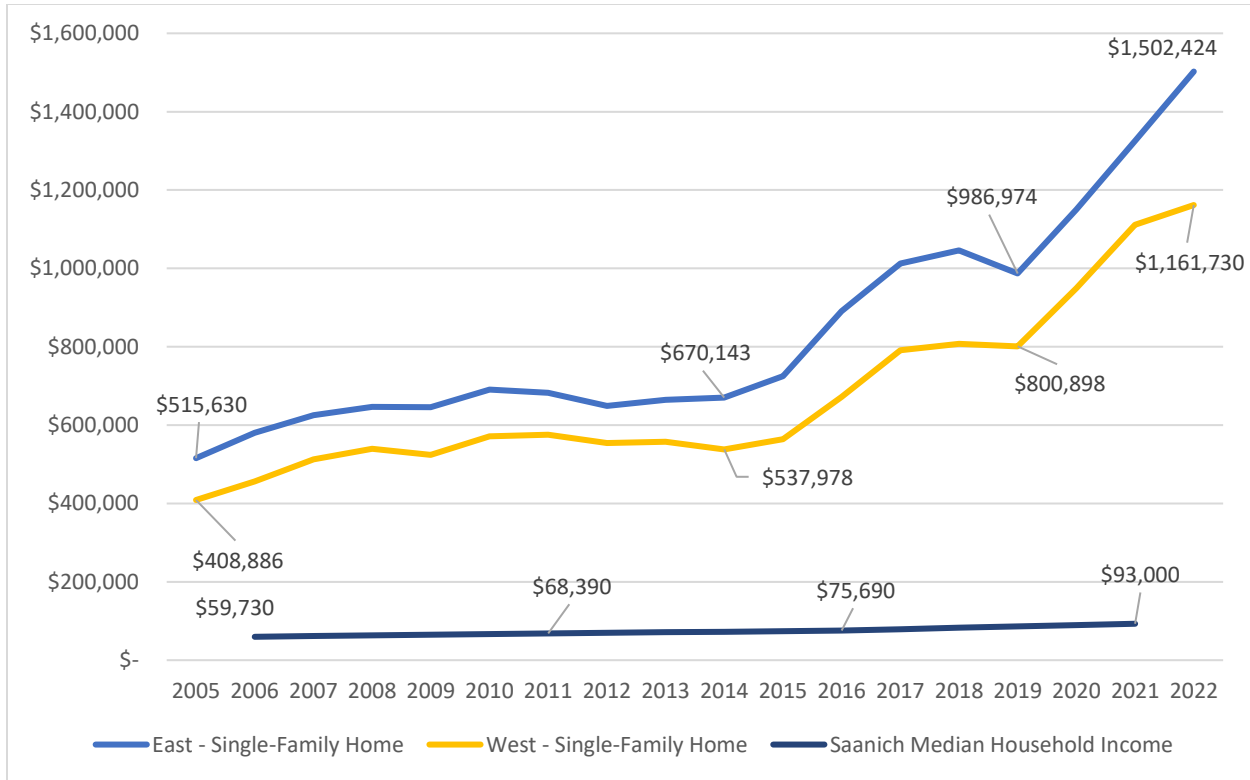


Source: Statistics Canada. 2021 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue Table 98-10-0232-01

3.2 Trends in the Homeownership Market

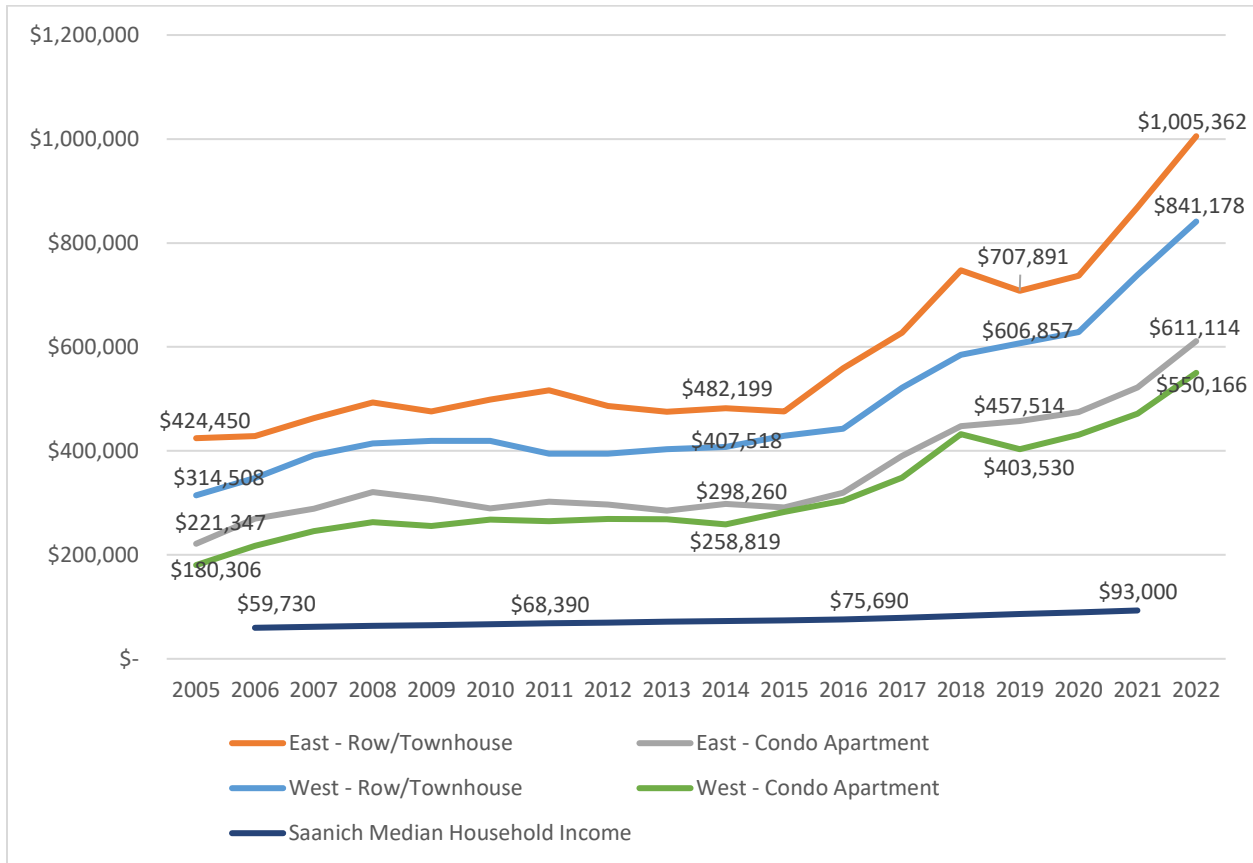
The Victoria Real Estate Board divides the Saanich market into neighbourhoods east and west of the Patricia Bay Highway. Average home sales prices are higher in Saanich East than Saanich West. In both areas, average home sale prices have grown rapidly, with price increases accelerating after 2014 (Figure 26 and Figure 27). Between 2005 and 2022, average home sales prices for single family homes in Saanich increased by 191% while incomes increased by 56% in the same period.

Figure 26 Average Home Sale Prices for Single-Family Dwellings in East and West Saanich, 2005 to 2022



Source: Victoria Real Estate Board

Figure 27 Average Home Sale Prices for Multi-Family Dwellings in East and West Saanich, 2005 to 2022



Source: Victoria Real Estate Board

3.2.1 Homeownership Affordability Gaps Analysis

An affordability gaps analysis was prepared to assess gaps between local housing costs and median household incomes. This provides insight into whether households are spending an unaffordable amount of monthly income on shelter costs. Affordability is defined as spending less than 30% of gross household income on shelter costs.

For ownership housing, shelter costs are primarily driven by the cost of mortgage payments, but also include other monthly expenses like property tax, utilities, home insurance, municipal services charges, and strata fees (see Glossary). The analysis is based on 2022 average sales prices and Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Housing Price Index (HPI) benchmark sales prices⁷ from the Victoria Real Estate Board and median total before-tax household incomes from the 2021 census. Since these household incomes reflect 2020 incomes and have likely grown since then, for the purposes of comparing with 2022 housing costs, incomes were adjusted to 2022 using the average annual percentage increase between 2006 to 2022. Incomes were also adjusted to reflect

⁷ The MLS HPI benchmark prices take into consideration a set of housing features that can be compared year-to-year and exclude extremely low or extremely high prices that may not be representative of the market overall. The HPI is considered to be a more accurate measure of housing price trends.

the higher median income of owner households relative to renter households based on the difference between owner household median income and overall median income for 2021.

To calculate total monthly shelter costs, several assumptions were made: mortgage payments are based on a down payment of 10% with 6.54% interest on a 5-year fixed-rate term, and a total of \$374 to \$818 (depending on the housing type) per month for property tax, utilities, home insurance, municipal services charges, and strata fees (where applicable).

The values highlighted in green, orange, and red are the difference between what is affordable for each household type and housing costs per month. Green cells indicate the household is spending less than 30% of monthly household income on housing costs; orange indicates they are spending 30 – 49%, and red indicates they are spending 50% or more.⁸

Table 1 shows there are considerable gaps for all household types in affording single-detached homes, the most common type of home in the District. “Other census families” often have higher incomes compared to other family types because they can include multi-generational or other family living arrangements with multiple incomes. This type of household faces the lowest gap for a single-detached house at the 2022 average sales price. Couples with children making the median income would need to spend approximately 60% of their monthly income on shelter costs, while couples without children would need to spend 87%.

Townhouses were also not attainable for any census groups earning the median household income. Apartments could be an affordable option for couples with children and other census families, but there may be limited stock of units with enough bedrooms to be suitable for these household types.

Homeownership is likely out of reach for single-income households like lone-parent and non-census families as well as couples without children; these household types would need to spend 50% or more of their monthly income to be able to afford most housing types.

⁸ Statistics Canada considers households spending 30% or more of total before-tax household income to be living in unaffordable housing. This may include households in Core Housing Need. Households spending 50% or more of total before-tax household income may be in Extreme Core Housing Need. These indicators are described in more detail in Section 3.8.

Table 1 Affordability Gap Analysis for Owners in Saanich, Average Sales Prices, 2022

	Estimated Median Household Income (2022) *	Affordable Monthly Shelter Costs	Monthly Shelter Affordability Gap		
			Single-Detached Dwelling (2022 price)	Townhouse (2022 price)	Condominium (2022 price)
Couples without children	\$127,753	\$3,194	-\$6,032	-\$3,599	-\$1,070
Couples with children	\$184,807	\$4,620	-\$4,605	-\$2,173	\$356
Lone parent families	\$93,024	\$2,326	-\$6,900	-\$4,467	-\$1,939
Non-census families	\$64,993	\$1,625	-\$7,601	-\$5,168	-\$2,639
Other census families	\$208,373	\$5,209	-\$4,016	-\$1,583	\$945

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census. Victoria Real Estate Board, 2022.

* For owners, shelter costs include, as applicable, mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes, condominium fees, and payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services. For the purposes of this exercise mortgage payments are calculated using a 25-year amortization, with 6.54% interest, and a 10% downpayment. Mortgage costs do not include any other shelter costs.

**Incomes are adjusted to 2022 estimates using historical growth rates.

	Spending less than 30% of household income on shelter costs
	Spending approximately 30-49% of household income on shelter costs
	Spending 50% or more of household income on shelter costs

3.3 Trends in the Rental Market

The rental market can be divided into primary rental and secondary rental. The primary rental market consists of purpose-built rental buildings with multiple units while the secondary rental market consists of rented homes, secondary suites, individually rented condominium units, and other dwellings that were not built as exclusively rental properties.

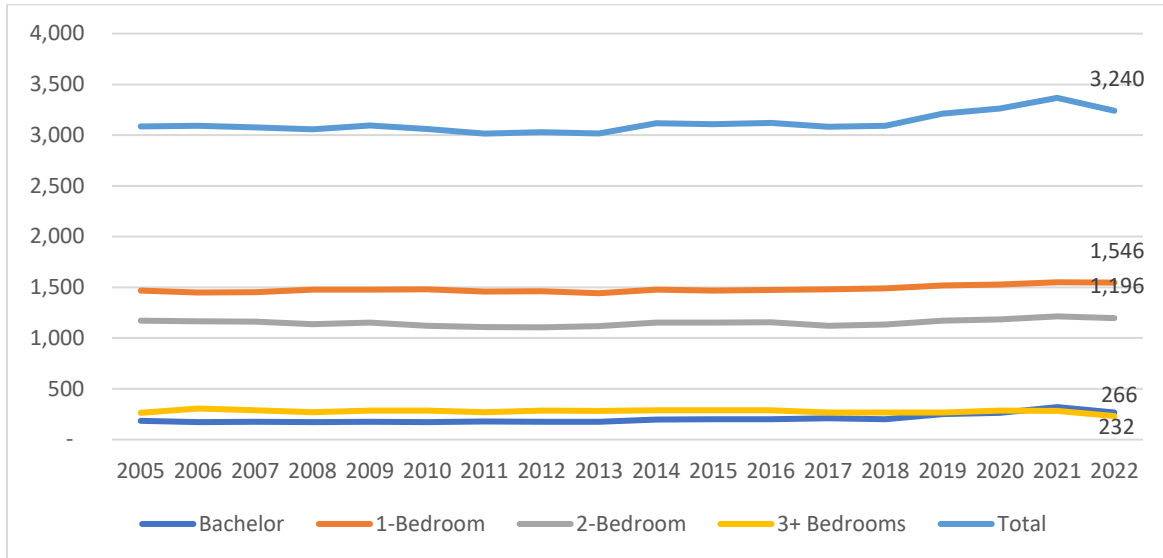
3.3.1 Primary Rental

Between 2005 and 2022, there was little change in the number of primary rental market units in Saanich (Figure 28). The overall stock increased by 5% over this period. Compared to other unit types, there was a large increase in the number of bachelor units (increasing by 45%). Only 7% of primary rental units were 3+ bedrooms in 2022, which is an 11% decrease from the number of 3+ bedroom units in 2005.

Saanich has generally seen an increased rate of growth in total rental stock starting in 2019, except in 2022. In 2023, a net 71 new units were added for a total of 3,311 units (representing a 7% increase since 2005).

As described in Section 3.1.3, the District has seen an increase in the proportion of renter households since 2006. In 2021, there were 14,780 renter households in the District and 3,367 primary market rental units, suggesting that only 23% of renter households were served by the primary market at that time.

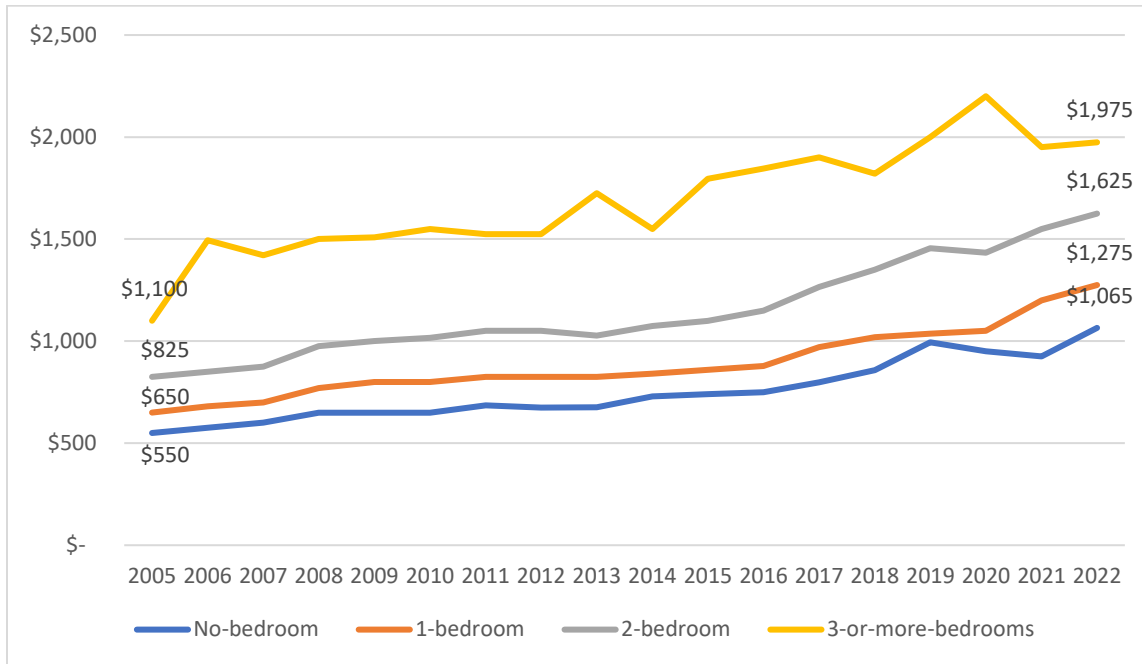
Figure 28 Primary Rental Market Units in Saanich, 2005-2022



Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2022

The median rent for primary rental market units in Saanich increased between 2005 and 2022 (Figure 29). The increase in cost of rent was more gradual than seen in the homeownership market. Monthly rents for new purpose-built rental housing are expected to be higher than the median rent in a community as the median rent usually captures a larger proportion of older buildings. Between 2019 and 2022, the median rent increased by 12%, with most significant increases in rents seen for one-bedroom units (23% increase).

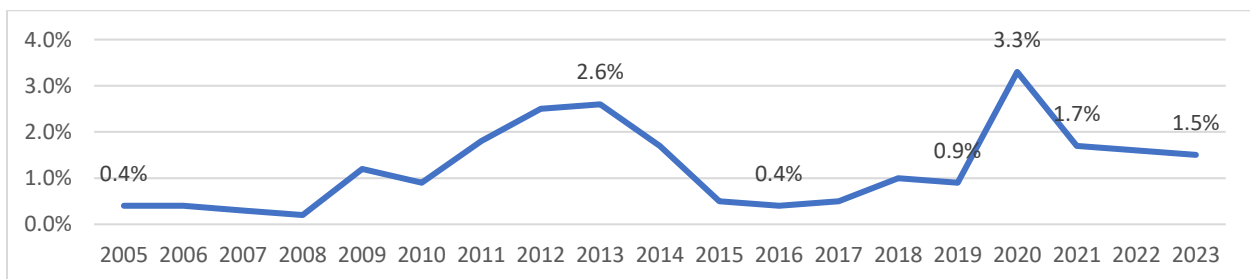
Figure 29 Median Rent in the Primary Rental Market in Saanich, 2005-2022



Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2022

Saanich has a history of low rental vacancy rates, with vacancy rates below 3% with the exception of 2020. In 2022, the vacancy rate had increased slightly to 1.5% from 0.9% in 2019 (Figure 30). A healthy vacancy rate is generally considered to be between 3% and 5%. A low vacancy rate often indicates a high level of rental demand and can result in excessive competition for available rental units and upward pressure of prices, making it especially difficult for vulnerable populations to find safe, suitable, and affordable rental housing options.

Figure 30 Primary Rental Market Vacancy Rate in Saanich, 2005 to 2023



Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2023

3.3.2 Rental Housing Affordability Gaps Analysis

To assess affordability gaps for renters in the primary market in Saanich, a rental housing affordability gaps analysis was conducted. Similar to the affordability gaps analysis for owners, this analysis is based on median total before-tax household incomes from the 2021 census, adjusted for 2022 based on historical growth rates and further adjusted for renter household incomes. Renter households typically make far less than owner households. In Saanich, median

household income for renter households is 67.5% of the median household income for the community as a whole. This adjustment helps to avoid underestimating the gap renters face in the rental market.

The rents used in this analysis are 2022 median rental rates for primary rental units from CMHC's Rental Housing Survey and median total before-tax household incomes from the 2021 census. While this analysis helps to better understand affordability gaps for renters, there were enough primary rental market units for only 23% of renter households in 2021, suggesting that 77% of renters in the District are likely residing in secondary rental market units. CMHC does not provide secondary rental market data for Saanich.

Since these household incomes reflect 2020 incomes (from the 2021 census) and have likely grown since then, for the purposes of comparing with 2022 housing costs, incomes were adjusted to 2022 using the average annual percentage increase between 2006 to 2021. Incomes were also adjusted to reflect the lower median income of renter households relative to owner households based on the difference between owner household median income and overall median income.

In addition to the median rents listed in the table, this analysis includes \$58 per month for utilities and tenant insurance in shelter costs.

The values highlighted in green, orange, and red are the difference between what is affordable for each household type and shelter costs per month. Green cells indicate the household is spending less than 30% of monthly household income on shelter costs; orange indicates they are spending 30 – 49%, and red indicates they are spending 50% or more.⁹

There are considerable gaps for single-income households, like lone-parent families and non-census families. Although there are no affordability gaps for couples with children making estimated median renter household incomes, it is important to remember that half of households of this type living in the District will make less than the median household income.

Couples without children include older couples whose children have left home. These couples may be living on a single income or, if retired, on fixed income from pension and investments. These households are within the affordability threshold for a 1- and 2-bedroom apartment; however, they are also more likely to own a home and benefit from rising market prices when downsizing, offering more financial resources to put towards housing.

Non-census families, most commonly, individuals living alone and lone-parent families, who are earning the median household income for their household type would be unable to afford any suitable units at the median rental rates. Non-census families will be closer to the affordability threshold when housed in a 1-bedroom apartment, with households earning the median income spending 43% of their income on housing. Lone-parent families require a minimum of two bedrooms to suitably house their children; a median income-earning household would be spending 38% of their income on a 2-bedroom apartment or 46% on a 3-bedroom apartment.

⁹ Statistics Canada considers households spending 30% or more of total before-tax household income to be living in unaffordable housing. This may include houses in Core Housing Need. Households spending 50% or more of total before-tax households' income may be in Extreme Core Housing Need. These indicators are described in more detail in Sections 3.7 and 3.8.

Table 2 Affordability Gap Analysis for Renters in Saanich

	Median Household Income (Renters, 2022) *	Affordable Shelter Costs (monthly)	Monthly Shelter Affordability Gap		
			1-Bedroom Apartment	2-Bedroom Apartment	3-bedroom apartments
Couples without children	\$65,492	\$1,807	\$489	\$139	-\$211
Couples with children	\$94,741	\$2,614	N/A	\$946	\$596
Lone-parent families	\$47,688	\$1,316	N/A	-\$352	-\$702
Non-census families	\$33,318	\$919	-\$399	-\$749	-\$1,099
Other census families	\$106,822	\$2,947	N/A	\$1,279	\$929

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census. CMHC 2022 Rental Housing Survey.

*Shelter costs for renters include rent and the costs of electricity, heat, and water.

	Spending less than 30% of household income on shelter costs
	Spending approximately 30-49% of household income on shelter costs
	Spending 50% or more of household income on shelter costs

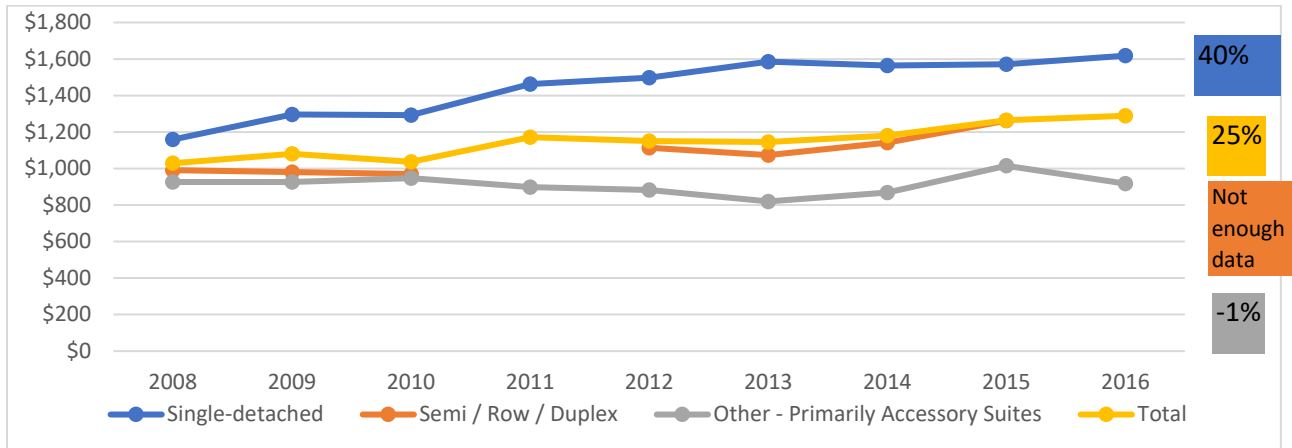
3.3.3 Secondary Rental Market Trends

Secondary rental refers to both secondary suites as well as other types of units that are rented by the property owner, including single-family homes, apartment condominiums, and townhomes. In 2016, there were 14,020 renter households in the District and 3,119 primary market rental units, suggesting that 78% of renter households were in the secondary rental market. Unregulated suites are extremely common. As of 2023, BC Assessment estimates that there are a total of 7,364 dwellings that are main or secondary suites in a single-family home in Saanich.

CMHC provides data for the secondary rental market for the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area, which includes most CRD communities, except Salt Spring Island and parts of the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. This data is of much lower quality than data for the primary rental market.

Between 2008 and 2016 (the years for which data is available), average rents for rented single-detached homes grew by 40% (Figure 31). This is a substantial increase, but not as large as seen in the primary rental market (Figure 29). The available data indicates that, as of 2016, the average rent of an accessory suite did not see major changes since 2008.

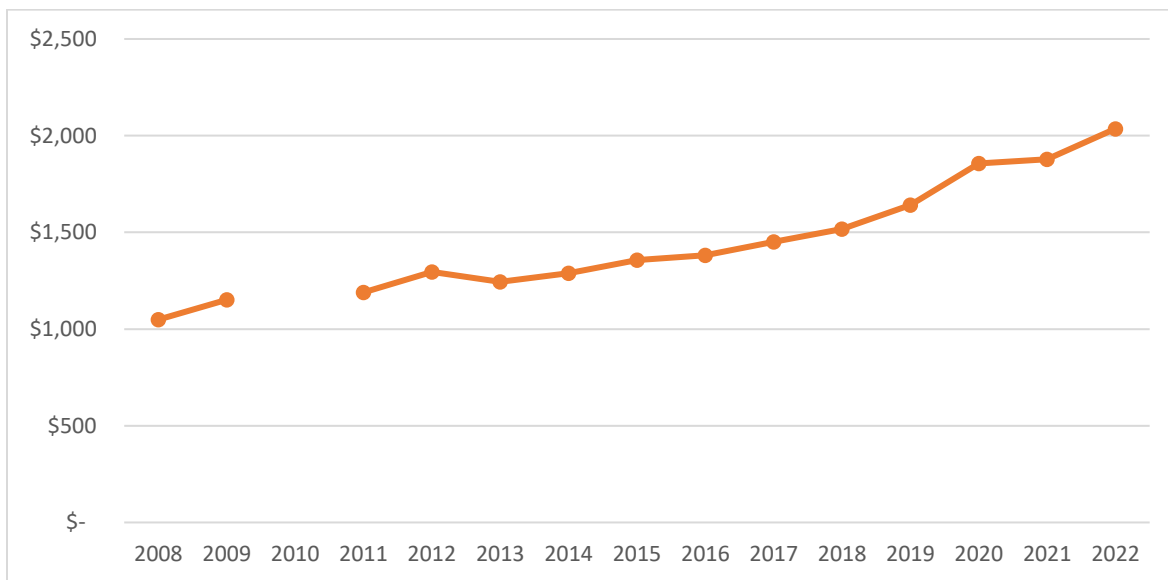
Figure 31 Average Rents for Secondary Market Units in Victoria CMA, Excluding Condominiums, 2008 to 2016¹⁰



Source: CMHC Secondary Market Rental Survey.

While the data for rented condominiums shows a slow, steady increase in average rents, there are data gaps and some of the data is of poor quality (Figure 32).

Figure 32 Average Rents for Rented Condominiums in Victoria CMA, 2008 to 2022



Source: CMHC Secondary Rental Market Survey, 2023.

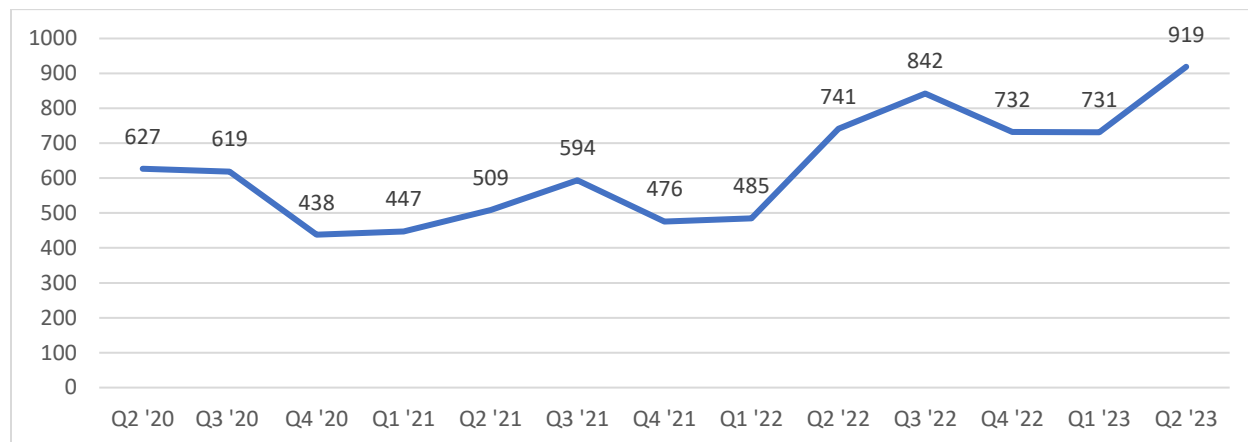
3.3.4 Short-Term Rental Market

On August 30th, 2023, scans of AirDNA data on short-term rentals (STRs) were completed. 817 active short-term rentals were listed for Saanich in August 2023. Of these active rentals, in August 2023, 81% were entire homes for rent and 19% were private rooms in a home. AirDNA also

¹⁰ Note that there are some data gaps and that some of the data is of poor quality. 2016 is the latest year for which there is available data.

provides data on previous quarters. The number of recorded short-term rental units has been increasing with the highest number of recorded STRs in quarter two of 2023 (919 STRs) whereas the lowest was in quarter four of 2020 (438 STRs). This is despite the fact that short-term rental (less than 30 days) is not permitted in any of the District of Saanich’s zones.

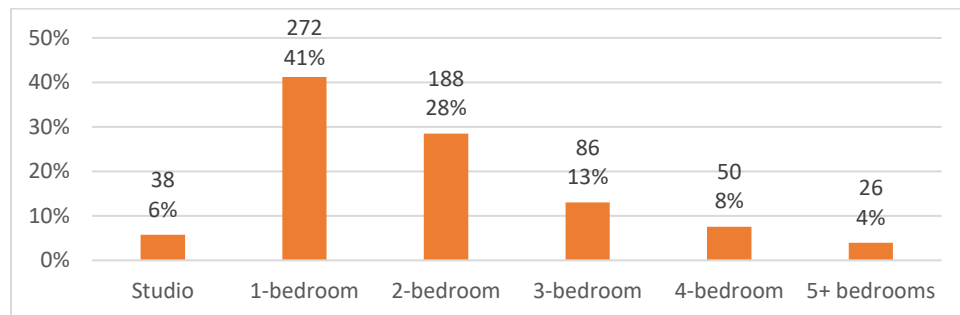
Figure 33 Number of Short-Term Rentals Per Yearly Quarter, Q2 2020 – Q2 2023



Source: AirDNA, August 30, 2023.

When looking at unit size, 75% of active rentals reported on August 30th, 2023, were smaller units (i.e., studio, one-bedroom, or two-bedroom) (Figure 34).

Figure 34 Short-Term Rentals by Number of Bedrooms, August 2023¹¹



Source: AirDNA, 2023.

3.4 Non-Market Housing

As of March 2022, there were a total of 2,455 non-market units where BC Housing had a financial relationship located in Saanich (Table 3). This is an increase of 148 units from March 2019, distributed between the Independent Social Housing and Rent Assistance in Private Market categories. Non-market units represented here include subsidized units, shelter beds, rent supplements, or other BC Housing supports (units with no relationship to BC Housing are not

¹¹ The number of short-term rentals reported by AirDNA for each bedroom type does not report data for all units available at the time of data collection due to data limitations.

accounted for). Most units in Saanich were independent social housing units for families and seniors, including the redeveloped Townley Place where 64 new units became available in 2021.

Table 3 BC Housing Subsidized Units, 2022¹²

Emergency Shelter and Housing for the Homeless			Transitional Supported and Assisted Living			Independent Social Housing		Rent Assistance in Private Market			Total
Homeless Housed	Homeless Rent Supplements	Homeless Shelters	Supportive Seniors Housing	Special Needs	Women and Children Fleeing Violence	Low Income Families	Independent Seniors	Rent Assist Families	Rent Assist Seniors	Canada Housing Benefit	
89	6	0	118	223	18	856	557	110	379	99	2,455

Source: BC Housing Research and Planning Department, 2022.

As of 2019, 40% of the CRD's stock of cooperative housing was in Saanich (376 out of 945 units) (Table 4). Half of cooperative housing units were 3+ bedrooms. For comparison, 8% of primary rental market units were 3+ bedrooms. Cooperative housing is an important source of affordable housing for families with children.

Table 4 Cooperative Housing Units in Saanich, 2019.

Cooperative Name	Total	Bachelor	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3+ Bedroom
Kailasa Housing Cooperative	17	0	0	0	17
Greenway Housing Cooperative	26	0	1	8	17
Orchard Green Housing Cooperative	16	0	0	6	10
Craigilea Housing Cooperative	22	0	5	10	7
Waterside Housing Cooperative	27	0	5	15	7
Marigold Co-operative Housing Association	86	0	0	27	59
Twin Oaks Housing Cooperative	32	0	4	15	13
Lavender Housing Cooperative	40	0	6	17	17
Krisineleos Housing Cooperative	34	0	0	19	15
Homeward Housing Co-operative	20	0	0	4	16
North Ridge Housing Cooperative	16	0	0	6	10
Broadoaks Housing Cooperative	40	0	0	15	25
Total	376	0	21	142	188

Source: Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, 2020.

3.4.1 BC Housing Waitlist for Non-Market Housing

As of March 2022, there were a total of 573 households on BC Housing's Housing registry for non-market housing in Saanich. The number of households on the waitlist in 2022 increased by

¹² The data includes non-market housing units where BC Housing has a financial relationship. There may be other non-market housing units in the community.

16% from 2020. This list does not consider any other waitlists of housing providers that are unaffiliated with BC Housing and should not be considered comprehensive.

Table 5 Households on BC Housing Waitlist for Non-Market Housing in Saanich, March 2020 to December 2022

	Family	People with Disabilities	Seniors	Wheelchair Modified	Singles	Total
Households on Waitlist December 2022	198	111	208	30	26	573
Households on Waitlist March 2020	173	108	172	27	13	493

Source: BC Housing: WebFocus Report HCSTAT002: Housing Registry Statistics. Prepared by BC Housing's Research Department - March 2023

3.5 Homelessness

It is estimated there was a minimum of 1,665 individuals who experienced homelessness in Greater Victoria on March 7, 2023. The Point-in-Time (PiT) count identified at least 282 individuals who were emergency sheltered, 601 who were provisionally accommodated in transitional housing and institutions, and 85 individuals who were couch-surfing. There were at least 242 individuals who were unsheltered and a minimum of 45 individuals who stayed in unknown locations. The remaining 410 individuals experiencing homelessness were in public systems (e.g. corrections, hospitals). Compared to the 2020 PiT count, there was an increase in homelessness with an additional 142 individuals accounted for.

Of those individuals who were accounted for in the PiT count, 65% identified as male and 36% were 40-54 years of age. Youth respondents aged 14-24 years old made up 7.7% of the total individuals surveyed and as many as 35.6% were unsheltered at the time of the count. Nearly one-quarter (24.8%) of individuals identified as being 55+. Indigenous people continue to be overrepresented, making up 33% of individuals surveyed, 35% of whom are women.

It is important to note that although these counts provide valuable data and can suggest trends, they face several challenges. PiT counts are widely understood to under-represent actual numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness, as they only capture individuals who are accessing shelters and/or who are out on the street, available for interviews during the count. Individuals who are not interviewed during the day of the count are not counted. These counts are also recognized to be inadequate at capturing hidden homelessness, such as couch surfing, living in cars or boats, and other forms of housing vulnerability.

The province also conducts the Integrated Data Project (IDP), which aims to better understand, respond to, and prevent homelessness in B.C. using de-identified provincial administrative data to get a more complete picture of who is experiencing homelessness. To date, the project has generated estimates of the population of individuals living in British Columbia who experienced homelessness in 2019, 2020, and 2021. In 2021, the IDP estimated that 2,043 individuals (0.5% of the total population) were experiencing homelessness in the Capital Census Division. If this population were distributed equally across the region based on per capita population shares in each community, Saanich's share would be 28.44% of this total, as Saanich represents 28.44% of

the CRD's total population. This amounts to approximately 581 individuals experiencing homelessness in Saanich. Based on the IDP estimates, 581 new units are needed to address the housing needs of the population experiencing homelessness.

At time of writing, an initial estimate indicates that 2,199 individuals living in the Census Capital Region experienced homelessness in 2022; however, for the purposes of the 5 and 20-year housing needs assessment calculation, provincial guidelines require the use of 2021 IDP figures.¹³

3.6 Student Housing

University of Victoria and Camosun College have locations in the District of Saanich. Royal Roads University is located in Colwood. Data from all three postsecondary institutions is provided below, because students attending all three may be looking for housing throughout surrounding CRD communities.

As of 2022, there were a total of 24,548 full-time equivalent enrolments at these three postsecondary institutions (Table 6). The University of Victoria has 2,858 beds available for student housing. Royal Roads University's has 92 available beds that are identified by the Institution as temporary housing for residencies. They are not offered to students taking full-time programs on campus. Students attending Camosun College and Royal Roads University, as well as students who are not able to access housing at the University of Victoria may be looking for housing in Saanich. Many students look for affordable rental housing, such as studio or one-bedroom units, including secondary suites.

The University of Victoria opened an additional 385 beds in September 2023, as the second part of a two-phase project to bring 621 new beds to students, which are not accounted for in the 2,858 beds available as of 2022.

Between the 2013/14 and 2022/23 school years, the University of Victoria and Royal Roads University saw full-time equivalent enrollments grow by 3% and 0.4% respectively, while Camosun College saw a decline by 29.6%. There is a net decline in the number of students enrolled across these post-secondary institutions with there being 1,564 less students enrolled in 2022/23 than in 2013/14.

Table 6 Public Post-Secondary Institutions in Capital Region District, Number of Beds and Full Time Equivalent Students, 2022/23

School	Beds	Full-Time Equivalent Enrolments
Camosun College	0	4,946
Royal Roads University	92	2,451
University of Victoria	2,858	17,151
Total	2,950	24,548

Source: Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

¹³ BC Data Catalogue: <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/annual-estimates-of-the-homeless-population-in-b-c-/resource/af1592a1-852b-4f1b-bdf9-46454e2c3839>

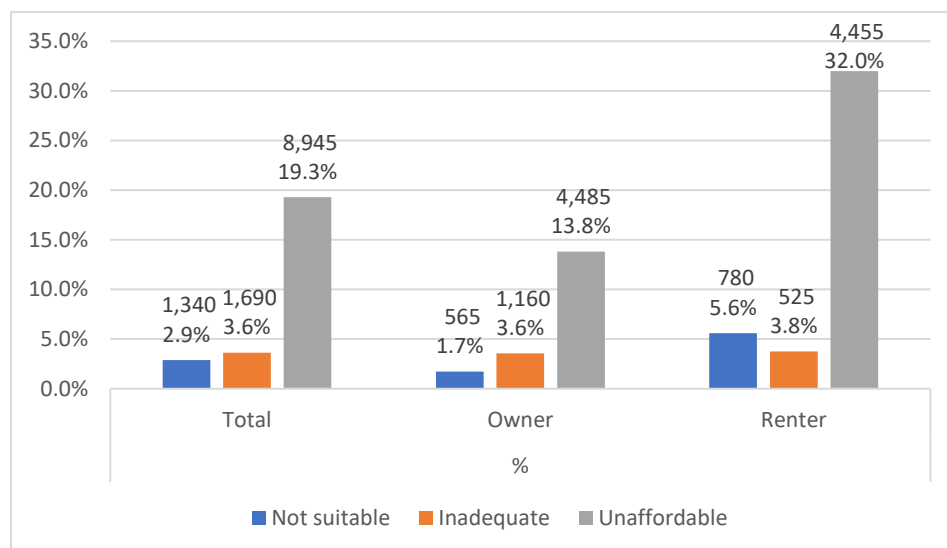
3.7 Housing Indicators

Statistics Canada collects data on housing indicators to show when households are not meeting three housing standards: adequacy, affordability, and suitability. These are defined as follows:

- Adequate housing is reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.
- Affordable housing has shelter costs that are less than 30% of total before-tax household income.
- Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of resident households according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.¹⁴

The percentage of total households living below adequacy or unaffordability standards declined between 2016 and 2021 in Saanich from 5% below adequacy standards and 23% below affordability standards in 2016 to 3.6% and 19.3%, respectively, in 2021. Households under the suitability standard remained the same. Over the previous four census periods, there was a larger proportion of households not meeting the affordability standard compared to the other standards. This is typical of regional and provincial trends. In 2021, 19.3% of all households spent 30% or more of their income on shelter costs, including 32% of renter households and 13.8% of owner households (Figure 35). There were also higher proportions of renters living in unsuitable or inadequate housing compared to owners. Renter households were more than three times more likely to be living in unsuitable housing compared to owner households.

Figure 35 Private Households Below Housing Standards by Tenure in Saanich, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profile 2021

3.8 Core Housing Need

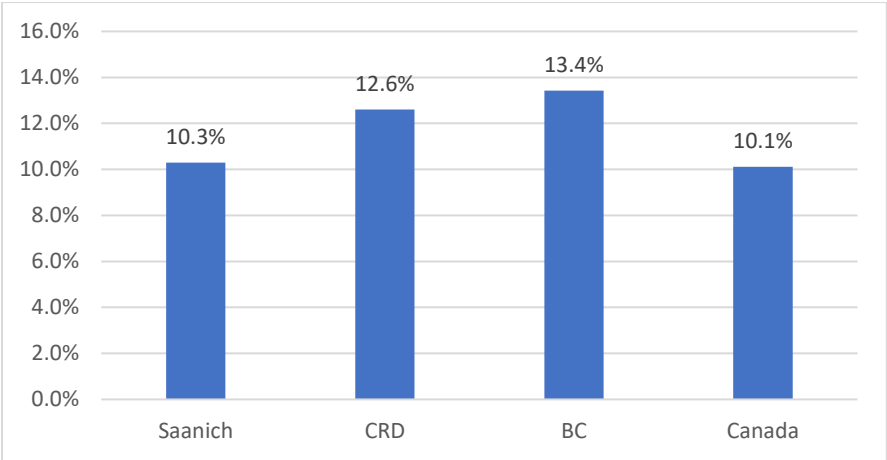
Core Housing Need is a two-stage indicator developed by CMHC, which builds on the housing indicators described in the previous section to help identify households with the greatest housing needs. A household in Core Housing Need is living in housing that does not meet one or more of

¹⁴ The National Occupancy Standard provides the number of bedrooms required based on household composition (see Glossary).

the housing standards *and* would have to spend 30% or more of their total before-tax household income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that does meet all three housing standards. Those in Extreme Core Housing Need meet the definition of Core Housing Need and are currently spending more than 50% of their income on shelter costs.

In 2021, Saanich had a slightly lower proportion of households in Core Housing Need compared to the CRD and British Columbia (BC)(Figure 36).

Figure 36 Private Households in Core Housing Need, Comparison of Geographies, 2021

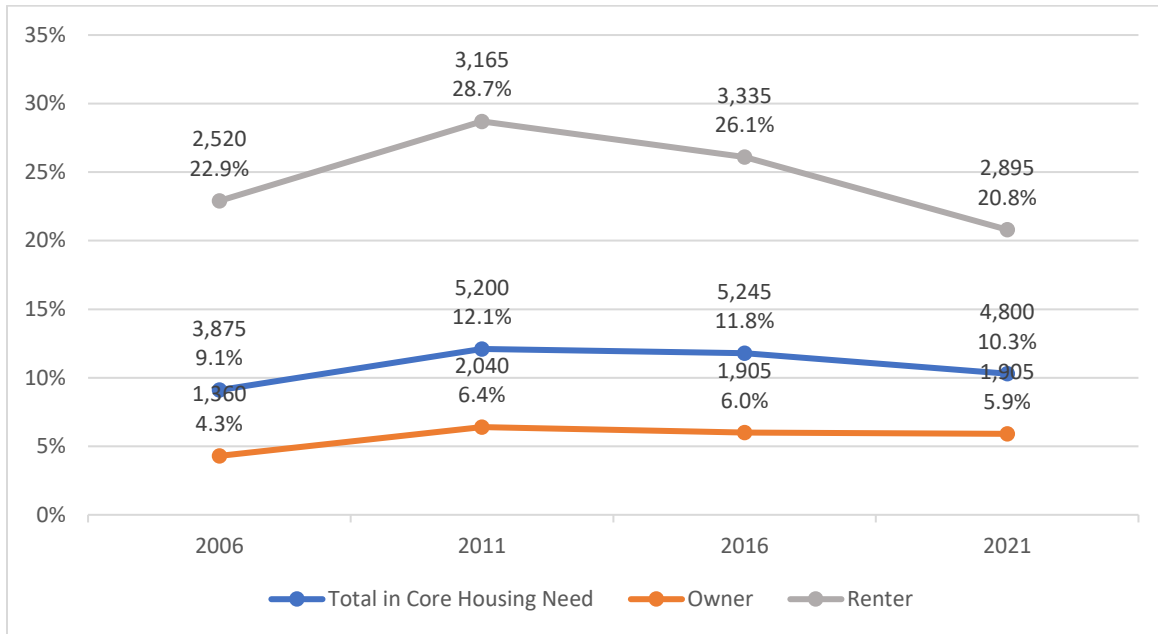


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Custom Data Organization for BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2021

The percentage of households in Core Housing Need in Saanich decreased between 2016 and 2021. The renter population experienced the majority of this decrease from 26.1% in Core Housing Need in 2016 to 20.8% in 2021. The trend of housing need should be considered in conjunction with Sections 3.3 and 7 of this Report, which consider the level of affordability of various housing types for households and implications of Covid-19 on rates of core housing need. This decline in core housing need is often attributed to the impact of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), which provided significant support to low and very low-income households in 2020 and 2021. It is unlikely that the decline in core housing need reflects an improvement in housing affordability, and instead is likely a reflection of point-in-time income interventions from senior government.¹⁵

¹⁵ <https://hart.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Understanding-2021-Core-Housing-Need-Data.pdf>

Figure 37 Private Households by Tenure in Core Housing Need in Saanich, 2006-2021

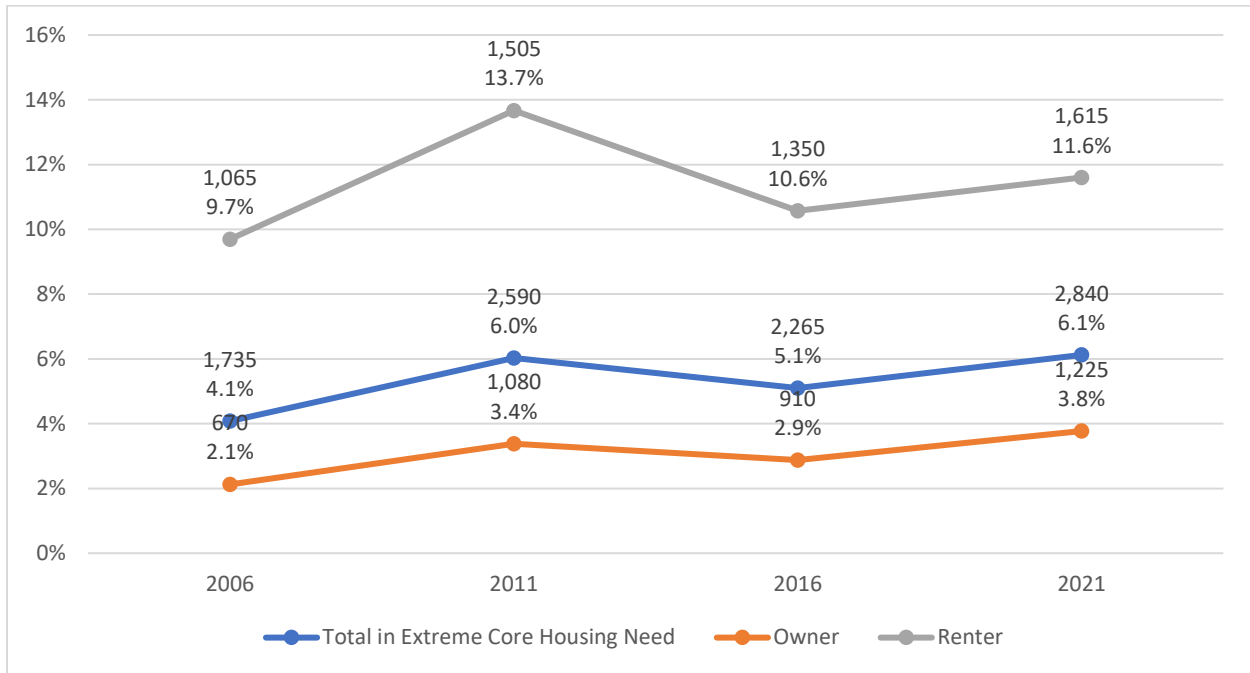


Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Custom Data Organization for BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2021

3.8.1 Extreme Core Housing Need

When separating households in Extreme Core Housing Need from the overall Core Housing Need, Saanich has 6.1% of households in Extreme Core Housing, showing an increase from the previous census (Figure 38).

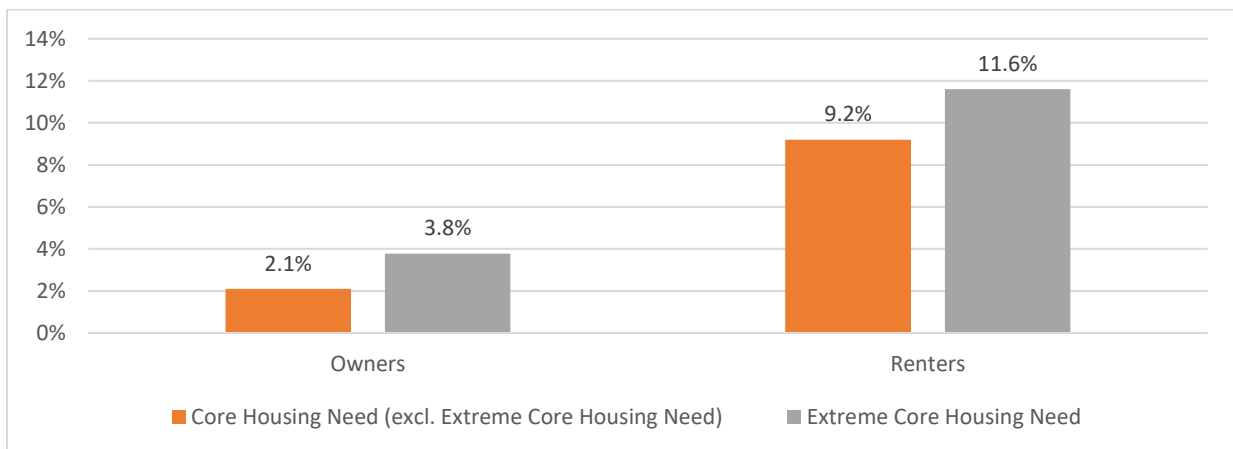
Figure 38 Private Households by Tenure in Extreme Core Housing Need in Saanich 2006 to 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Custom Data Organization for BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.

A much higher proportion of renter households in Saanich (11.6%) are in Extreme Core Housing Need than owner households (3.8%) (Figure 40). Across the region, renters are far more likely to be in Core Housing Need than owners.

Figure 39 Private Households in Core Housing Need by Tenure in Saanich, 2021



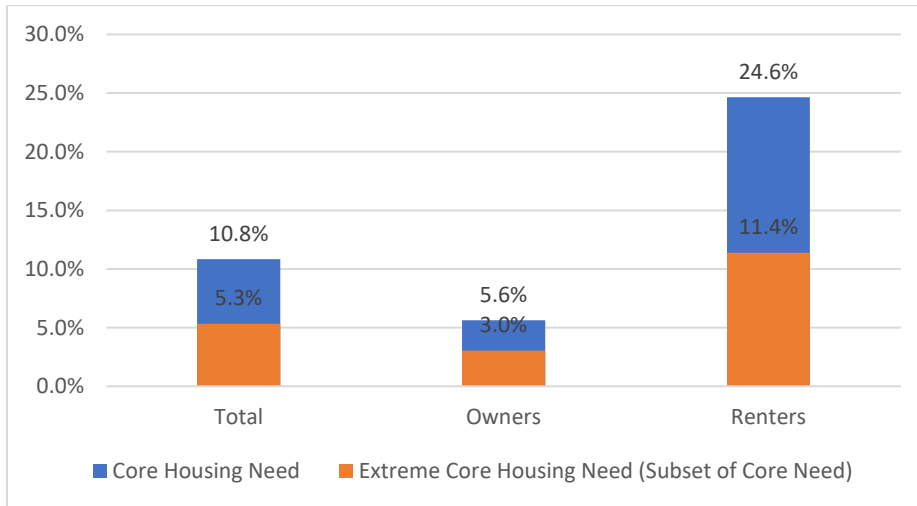
Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Custom Data Organization for BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2021

3.8.2 Average Rate of Core and Extreme Core Housing Need

The Ministry of Housing has used the average rate of core housing need across four census years as an indicator of core housing need in identifying housing targets as part of the Housing Supply

Act. The four-census average provides an indication to the rate, lessening the impact of differences at the time of the census (e.g., employment income programs provided in 2020). Saanich’s average rate of Core Housing Need over the past four census counts is 10.8% of households, 5.3% of which are in Extreme Core Housing Need.

Figure 40 Average Rate of Core and Extreme Core Housing Need in Saanich, 2006 - 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Custom Data Organization for BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.

3.8.3 Household Characteristics by Core Housing Need

Core Housing Need can help identify those in greatest need of housing assistance. In most communities, populations facing barriers such as seniors, young adults, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people dealing with mental health and addiction issues, recent immigrants, and more, are disproportionately likely to be in Core Housing Need. Table 7 provides a more detailed breakdown of Saanich households in Core Housing Need by different household characteristics.

Each row in Table 7 shows the proportion of households with that household characteristic that is in Core Housing Need. For example, 10.3% of all households are in Core Housing Need, while 13.8% of households led by a primary household maintainer aged 15 to 19 are in Core Housing Need. Of households led by a primary household maintainer aged 15 to 19, 14.8% of renter households in this age group are in Core Household Need.

Based on a review of Housing Assessment Research Tool (HART) custom data of core housing need for equity-deserving demographics, affordability is the primary factor driving Core Housing Need in each of these demographic groups. In households where multiple factors cause households to fall into Core Housing Need, affordability is highly likely to be on of these factors. Other factors contributing to Core Housing Need include adequacy (state of repair) and suitability (overcrowding).

Table 7 Household Characteristics by Core Housing Need and Tenure, 2021¹⁶

	Total Households In Core Housing Need		Owner Households In Core Housing Need		Renter Households In Core Housing Need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Households in Core Housing Need	4,800	10.3%	1,905	5.9%	2,895	20.8%
Core Housing Need by Age of Primary Household Maintainer						
15-19	20	13.8%	0	0%	20	14.8%
20-24	180	11.3%	20	9.5%	160	11.6%
65-84	1,335	9.9%	750	6.5%	635	31.4%
85+	350	16.1%	215	11.3%	140	50.9%
Core Housing Need by Household Type						
Couple without Children	530	3.8%	280	2.5%	235	9.7%
Couple with Children	455	3.9%	215	2.3%	240	10.7%
One-Parent Household	855	20.4%	315	12.7%	530	30.9%
Multiple-Family	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
One Person Household	2,650	21.6%	1,020	14.3%	1,630	31.6%
Other Non-Family	305	9.5%	60	6.1%	245	11.0%
Core Housing Need based on Immigration Status						
Immigrant Status	1,290	10.7%	750	8.0%	540	20.0%
Recent Immigrant	150	16.4%	65	16.0%	80	15.8%
Core Housing Need by Indigenous Household Status						
Indigenous Household	305	14.4%	80	7.8%	230	21.0%
Core Housing Need by Visible Minority Household Status						
Visible Minority Household	1,155	10.2%	490	6.4%	665	18.2%
Core Housing Need by Gender Status						
Household includes a Transgender Person	25	7.2%	0	0%	15	10.7%
Household includes a Non-binary Person	60	17.1%	25	18.5%	35	16.3%
Core Housing Need by Gender of Primary Household Maintainer						
Men+	1,910	7.6%	700	3.8%	1,205	17.4%
Women+	2,890	13.6%	1,200	8.4%	1,690	24.2%
Household Family Type of the Primary Household Maintainer						
Female lone-parent primary household maintainer	705	21.5%	275	14.8%	435	30.7%
Household with a Physical Activity Limitation						
Household has at least one person who had at least one activity limitation	1,205	8.6%	555	5.0%	650	21.9%
Household with a Cognitive Mental or Addictions Activity Limitation						
Household has at least one person who had at least one activity limitation	790	9.0%	255	4.6%	535	16.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2023, "HART - 2021 Census of Canada - Selected Characteristics of Census Households for Housing Need - Canada, Saanich DM [custom tabulation]", <https://doi.org/10.5683/SP3/8PUZQA>, Borealis, V9.

¹⁶ Note that for some census data, errors and / or random rounding can result in numbers that do not add up to their totals and percentages that do not add up to 100%. Random rounding means that each individual value is randomly rounded up or down to a multiple of 5 or 10, and sub-totals are independently rounded. These discrepancies are especially common when looking at aggregations with different variables, such as tenure and condition.

In Saanich, Table 7 offers the following key takeaways:

Tenure

Across household characteristics, renter households are far more likely to be in Core Housing Need than owner households.

Age of Primary Household Maintainer and Households with Seniors

Households with a primary household maintainer between 15 and 24 are slightly more likely to be in Core Housing Need. This is to be expected as this age group is most likely to be in school and/or working in lower paid jobs. Within this age group, key areas of concern are households headed by young adults who are likely to be facing other vulnerabilities, like being in precarious employment, lacking family supports (e.g., youth aging out of care), and other factors that contribute to housing vulnerability. Renter households with a primary maintainer age 65+ are more likely to be in Core Housing Need, as well as all households with a primary maintainer age 85+. This suggests a need to support seniors who are renting, such as those relying on limited fixed incomes to make rent payments and those who may wish to age in place.

Household Type

Among household types, one-parent and one-person households, particularly those who rent, are far more likely to be in Core Housing Need than others. One-parent renters likely face challenges finding rental housing of a suitable size (i.e., with two or more bedrooms to accommodate their children) that is affordable, as is illustrated in Section 3.3.2.

Immigration Status

Among households based on immigration status, owner households that are immigrants are most likely to be in Core Housing Need. Recent immigrants are particularly more likely to be in Core Housing Need.

Indigenous Status

Households with Indigenous status are more likely to be in Core Housing Need across both owner and renter households.

Visible Minority Status

Among households with visible minority status, owner households are slightly more likely to be in Core Housing Need.

Gender

Households that include a non-binary person were, overall, more likely to be in Core Housing Need. Owner households in this group experienced higher rates of Core Housing Need. Households with a primary household maintainer identified as woman+ were significantly more likely to be in core housing need across both owner and renter households. Female-led one-parent households were even more likely to be in Core Housing Need across tenures.

Disabilities

Renter households that have at least one person who had at least one activity limitation were more likely to be in Core Housing Need. Across households with physical activity limitation(s) and cognitive mental or addictions limitation(s), renter households were far more likely to be in Core Housing Need. Statistics Canada research shows that individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience lower incomes than individuals without disabilities, which in turn drives affordability issues.¹⁷

3.9 Summary

Housing Stock

- Compared to the CRD as a whole, housing stock in Saanich is slightly older and less diverse. While recent building permits suggest a trend towards more apartments, the single-family home is the dominant dwelling type in Saanich, with most houses having three or more bedrooms (60%). Most (64%) households in Saanich contain one or two people, likely older individuals or couples whose children have moved away, suggesting some of the population may be living in larger homes than they need.
- Single-detached houses were the predominant structural type of housing built up until 2016. From 2016 to 2021 the structural types shifted, seeing a significant increase in apartments in buildings with fewer than five storeys.
- While 59% of owners occupy single-family homes, renters occupy a much wider range of structure types with fewer bedrooms. The most common structure type for renters are apartment buildings under five storeys, which house 38% of renter households.
- There may be a lack of options for older adults looking to downsize out of large single-family homes and for families looking for rental units with enough bedrooms to suit their needs or to enter the homeownership market.

Homeownership Market

- In 2021, 69% of households owned their home and 31% rented. The percentage of households owning has continued to be in decline from 73% in 2006.
- Prices have risen substantially in both the homeownership and rental markets over the past few years. Ownership prices have risen for all housing types, with the most rapid increases occurring between 2019 and 2022.
- The single-detached home at the 2022 average sales price is unaffordable for median incomes of all household types, despite this being the most common type of home in the District. Couples with children making the median income would need to spend approximately 60% of their monthly income on shelter costs for a single-detached home at the 2022 average sales price, while couples without children would need to spend 87%.
- Townhouses, at 2022 sales prices, were also not affordable for any household type earning the median income. Apartments were affordable for couples with children and other

¹⁷ MacDiarmid, Carly. "Earning pay gap among persons with and without disabilities, 2019." Published by Statistics Canada, 2023. Available at: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2023002-eng.pdf?st=dNVkFemi>

census families earning the median income. There may, however, be limited stock of units with enough bedrooms to be suitable for these household types.

- Homeownership is likely out of reach for couples without children and single-income households like one-parent and non-census families; these households making the median income would need to spend 50% or more of their monthly income to be able to afford most housing types.

Rental Market

- In the primary rental market, Saanich has seen low vacancy and rising rental costs over the past 15 years. There has been little development of new primary rental units over this period. While there has been a slight increase in primary rental units built since 2018, overall, the total number of purpose-built rentals has increased by less than 10% since 2005. At the same time, renter households in the District increased much more quickly compared to owner households; the District saw 2,745 new renter households between 2006 and 2021, compared to 730 new owner households.
- With enough primary rental units for just 23% of renter households, most renters are relying on the secondary market. The secondary rental market is less secure than the primary rental market and while prices have risen more moderately according to CMHC data, rent in the secondary rental market is largely driven by housing prices, which have risen substantially.
- Single-income renter households, like one-parent families and non-census families, likely face affordability challenges when renting housing in the District. Specifically, it may be challenging for one-parent renters to find rental housing of a suitable size (i.e., with two or more bedrooms to accommodate their children), which they can afford. Non-census families, like individuals living alone, face similar affordability gaps across all rental types, even for one-bedroom units.

Non-Market Housing

- Saanich has 2,455 units receiving non-market supports, as well as a large share of the region's cooperative housing. Half of the cooperative housing units are three or more bedrooms, offering an important source of affordable housing for families with children. Despite nearly 2,500 units receiving non-market supports, there are 4,800 households experiencing core housing need and 2,840 households experiencing extreme core housing need in Saanich as of 2021. Given the growing challenge of accessing affordable housing and low vacancy in the primary rental market, the supply of non-market housing is not meeting demand. There is a significant need for additional resources to support households in Core Housing Need and Extreme Core Housing Need.

Homelessness

- The Point in Time Count and Integrated Data Project are two methods of gathering data on homelessness. The Point in Time Count identified 1,665 individuals who experienced homelessness in Greater Victoria on March 7, 2023.
- In 2021, the Integrated Data Project estimated that 2,043 individuals (0.5% of the total population) were experiencing homelessness in the Capital Census Division. If this

population were distributed equally across the region based on per capita population, there would be approximately 581 individuals experiencing homelessness in Saanich.

Student Housing

- Despite declines in full-time equivalent enrolments at Camosun, growth at the larger University of Victoria as well as Royal Roads suggests that there is a need for more student housing in the region.

Housing Indicators and Core Housing Need

- Housing indicators show that affordability has been the most significant issue in Saanich since 2006, with 13.8% of owner households and 32% of renter households not meeting the affordability standard in 2022.
- Renter households are far more likely to be in Core Housing Need, with 2,895 renter households meeting this definition in 2022, compared to 1,905 owner households. These households are currently living in unacceptable conditions (i.e., overcrowded housing, housing in need of repairs) and cannot afford an acceptable alternative housing unit in their community based on median rents.
- The rate of Core Housing Need in Saanich was slightly lower than the rate seen in the CRD as a whole in 2022.
- One-parent renter households are one of the household types most likely to be in Core Housing Need, as they likely face challenges affording rental units with two or more bedrooms to accommodate their children. One-parent households also have some of the lowest median incomes in the District, especially female-led one-parent households. Women fleeing domestic violence are a vulnerable population and may be disproportionately in Core Housing Need.
- Renters living alone are similarly likely to be in Core Housing Need, with individuals not in census families having the lowest median incomes of all household types in the District.
- Renter households led by or containing seniors are another household type with high rates of Core Housing Need in the District, suggesting there may be a lack of affordable rental options that are accessible and suitable for aging.

4 Projections

This projections section is intended to support planning work by providing a more focused 10-year outlook for population, household and housing growth in Saanich. The projections presented here use 2023 as the base year, which was the year when the bulk of research and analysis for this report was undertaken.¹⁸ This means that projections are presented for 2023 to 2028, as well as 2028 to 2033.

However, it should be noted that the new HNR Method, per legislative requirements, calculate growth from 2021-26 and 2021-2041 for the housing needs analysis presented in Section 6.1. The rationale for this is that most of the data used in the HNR Method originates from the 2021 Census. Section 6.1 outlines this total calculation, which was undertaken as per provincial legislation and will inform the future iterations of Saanich's Official Community Plan.

Population projections such as these offer a glimpse at a possible future scenario. Real community growth depends on many influencing factors, including the economy, housing market, growth in the region, trends in neighbouring communities, locational desirability, and planning and development decisions. The availability, type, and affordability of housing in the community will influence growth and the demographic make up of the community.

4.1 Methodology

The population projections presented in this report are based on the most recent BC Stats population projections developed at municipal level for the CRD and its communities. These population projections are based on historical fertility, mortality, and migration for the District.

These projections use the same overall methodological approach as the provincial estimate (as outlined in Section 6.1, Component D), but focus specifically on a period of time between 2023 and 2033, in order to achieve a detailed 10-year outlook on housing. The other primary difference is that the provincial HNR requirements use 2021 Census figures as the base population, and then BC Stats figures for future growth. However, BC Stats population estimates have been adjusted to account for a typical Census undercount. Thus, the population estimates by BC Stats are generally higher than the Census number. This means that the growth documented in this section may appear slightly smaller than the growth projected in Section 6.1 for a comparable timeframe.

Provincial legislation for housing needs reports requires that Component D, Supply for Anticipated Growth, be based on the average of two household projections scenarios described below. This section provides a snapshot of what this growth may look like in terms of tenure, age, and household composition of those new households, over a ten-year period. The two scenarios that are averaged are as follows:

- BC Stats Local Scenario: The household projection for the District of Saanich developed by BC Stats is used to determine the household growth in the District following the projected local trajectory of population growth and household size in the District.

¹⁸ It should be noted that this report's release for late 2024 was dependent upon the release of a finalized provincial methodology for calculating housing needs for a 5 and 20-year period, which occurred in July 2024.

- **BC Stats Regional Scenario:** The household growth of the District of Saanich is assumed to follow the rate of growth in the number of households at the Capital Regional District level. First, the projected households for Capital Regional District are extracted from BC Stats household projection. The projected rate of change in number of households at regional level each year is applied to the household projections at the District level. The regional scenario is developed in response to cases when the housing development is suppressed in the community, leading to lower levels of growth than would otherwise be expected based on regional trends.

The first of the two projection scenarios is developed based on BC Stats household projection, which is averaged with the regional scenario, and used to determine the housing target launched by the provincial government. The household projections in BC Stats are derived from the forecasted average household size based on factors including fertility, marriage and separation¹⁹. Under this approach, the projection reflects changes in household pattern in terms of changing household size and growth of smaller households, resulting in larger household growth.

BC Stats household projection does not include projection of households by tenure or household types. The projected renter tenure distribution is determined by extrapolating the proportion of renter households up to year 2028 (in 5 years) based on the trend of renter proportion from 2006 to 2021 and assumed to remain constant after year 2028.

The projected households by household types are determined by deriving the number of households by age groups based on 2021 headship rates by age groups and applying the distribution of household types in 2021 for households in each age group to reflect the change in household patterns under changing age structures. The number of households by household types are then scaled and standardized to the total households as defined in each of the scenarios.

The total household projections for the next 20 years are included in the report for the purpose of long-term planning. The figures here are aligned with the methodology for provincial requirements, but extending out beyond their forecast window of 2041 to 2043, to provide a full 20-year analysis. However, in all cases, the household tenure distribution and the number of households by household types will be projected in a 10-year time horizon, up to 2033 only, due to limitations of the projecting long-run tenure splits and household type pattern, which are subject to changing housing market conditions²⁰.

4.2 Limitations

The population projections presented here are limited by the fact that they are, by necessity, based on historical patterns of growth. Implicitly, these population projections assume that

¹⁹ Source of methodological document: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/data/statistics/people-population-community/population/pop_small_area_household_projections_1999.pdf

²⁰ While it is reasonable to expect that the historic tenure trends will continue for the short-term, a major limitation to extrapolating a growing proportion of renter households to the future period is that it does not fully capture situations where some renter households transition into owner households under changing housing market conditions and exaggerates the actual proportion of renter households as the time horizon expands. An ideal (or healthy) mix of rental and owner households in a given community is also subject to further discussion.

conditions will generally remain the same.²¹ Numerous factors can influence population growth, including job opportunities, household preferences, and the supply of housing available.

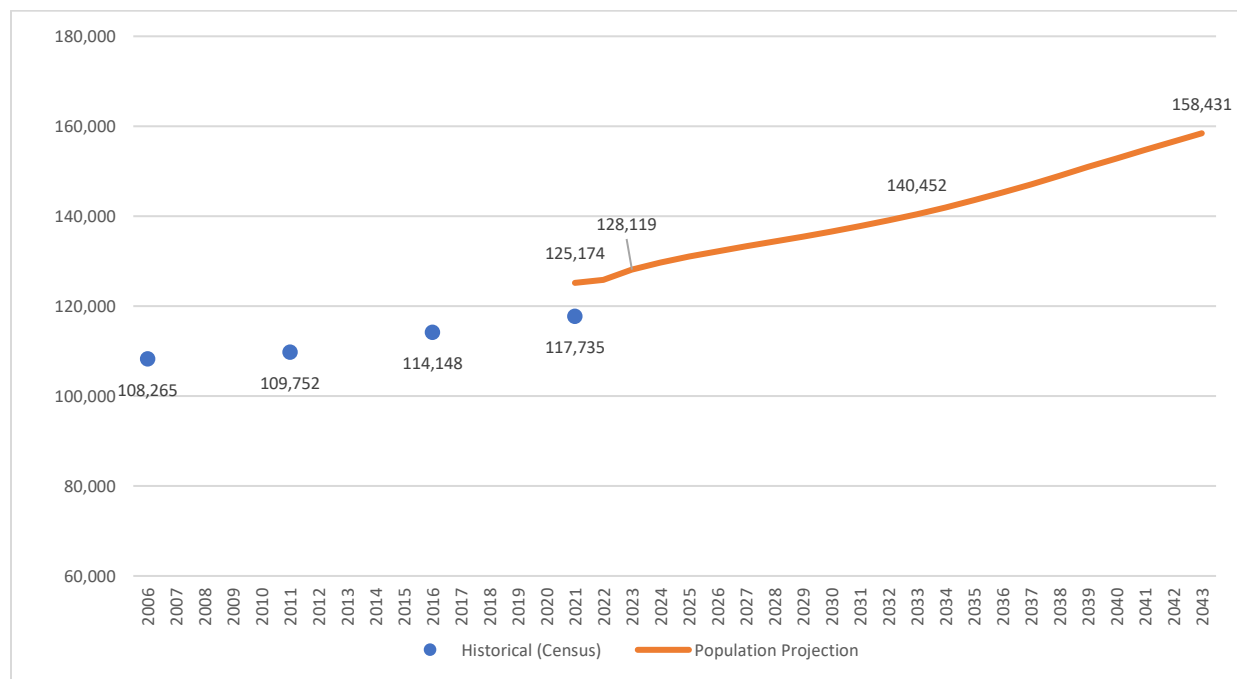
For the household projections, the derived household distribution in this analysis may not necessarily be reflective of the projected average household size used by BC Stats in their household projections, as our analysis layers household type and age to provide a more granular projection of household composition. This means that assumptions underlying some of the BC Stats household size may not fully align with assumption underlying our analysis around household composition.

In summary, these projections present one potential scenario of the future. The actual growth in the community will be determined by numerous factors.

4.3 Population Projection

The population projections in this section are based on BC Stats projections, and are the basis for one of the two households projections scenarios explored in Section 4.5, below.²²

Figure 41 Historical and Projected Population, 2006 to 2043



Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Census Program and BC Stats Population Projections

Over the next ten years, the population of Saanich is projected to grow more rapidly than it did between 2011 and 2021. Projections suggest that Saanich could grow by an additional 6,225 residents from 2023 to 2028.

²¹ Or will continue to change in the same manner as they have been changing in the past.

²² It should be noted that the second household growth scenario, based on regional growth, is derived from the overall regional growth trajectory, and not reliant on population projections.

Table 8 Projected Population and Population Growth, 2023 to 2043

	2023	2028	2033	2038	2043
Population	128,119	134,344	140,452	148,997	158,431
Change from prior period	N/A	6,225	6,108	8,545	9,434

Source: Derived from BC Stats Custom CRD Population Projections

4.4 Age Projections

Population growth is expected to be mostly in the older age groups (65 to 84), with strong growth also expected for the 35 to 44 age group (Table 9). Moderate growth is expected for the population of the 45 to 54 age group, while the child age group (aged 14 and under) are expected to shrink.

Table 9 Projected Population Change by Age, 2023 to 2031

Age Group	2023 to 2027	2027 to 2031
0 to 14 years	-208	-17
15 to 24 years	1,405	-757
25 to 34 years	-134	497
35 to 44 years	1,608	1,625
45 to 54 years	573	1,685
55 to 64 years	-960	-868
65 to 74 years	464	-180
75 to 84 years	1,719	1,518
85 years and over	706	984
Total	5,173	4,487

Source: BC Stats Population Projections

The large increase in seniors is expected to drive the median age up slightly, from 43.4 in 2023 to 44.1 in 2031 (Table 10).

Table 10 Median and Average Age, 2023 to 2031

	2023	2027	2031
Median	43.4	43.5	44.1
Average	44.0	44.5	45.2

Source: Derived from BC Stats Population Projections

4.5 Household Projections

The future households in this scenario is derived from the median of the Local Growth Rate (based on the above population projections) Scenario and Regional Growth Scenario (based on overall growth rate for the Capital Regional District). Household projections anticipate an additional 4,774 households between 2023 and 2028, and 3,992 households between 2028 and 2033 (Table 11).

Table 11 Projected Households and Household Growth, 2023 to 2043

	2021 ²³	2023 (Estimated)	2028	2033	2038	2043
Households	49,328	50,729	55,503	59,495	63,739	68,001
Change from prior period		1,401	4,774	3,992	4,244	4,262

Source: Derived from BC Stats Household Projections

4.5.1 Projected Households by Tenure

The proportion of households are determined through extrapolation of proportion of rental tenure from 2006 to 2021 up to 2028 and is assumed to remain constant afterwards up to 2033.

Table 12 Proportion of Rental Tenure, 2006 to 2033

	2006	2021	2023	2028	2033
Proportion of rental tenure	27.0%	30.7%	30.7%	32.5%	32.5%

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Census Program, and BC Stats Household Projections

The proportion of rental tenure households in Saanich has been increasing in recent years and this trend is expected to continue, with renter households making up 32.5% by 2028.

Table 13 Projected Household Change by Tenure, 2021 to 2033

Tenure Type	2021	2023 ²⁴ (Estimated)	2028	2033	2023 to 2028	2028 to 2033
Owner	34,160	35,130	37,465	40,160	2,335	2,695
Renter	15,168	15,599	18,038	19,335	2,439	1,297
Total	49,328	50,729	55,503	59,495	4,774	3,992

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Census Program, and BC Stats Household Projections

4.5.2 Projected Households by Household Types

Non-census family households are projected to see the largest increase in numbers among household types. This is likely related to the aging population trend, which is typically accompanied by an increase in households comprised of individuals living alone. From 2023 to 2028, couples without children have the second largest projected growth among all household types. From 2028 to 2033, couple family households with children have the second largest growth, exceeding the growth in number of couples without children. This could possibly be explained by larger growth in younger age groups projected by BC Stats.

²³ BC Stats household estimates have been adjusted to account for Census undercount. Thus, the household estimates by BC Stats are generally higher than the Census number.

²⁴ Assume constant tenure distribution as 2021

Table 14: Projected Household Change by Household Type, 2021 to 2033

Household Type	2021	2023	2028	2033	2023 to	2028 to
		(Estimated)			2028	2033
Couple without Children	13,417	13,816	15,104	15,966	1,288	861
Couple with Children	10,794	11,035	12,004	13,078	969	1,074
Lone-Parent	3,807	3,885	4,259	4,676	374	417
Other-Census-Family	4,259	4,343	4,685	5,022	342	337
Non-Census-Family	17,051	17,650	19,451	20,753	1,801	1,302
Total	49,328	50,729	55,503	59,495	4,774	3,992

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Census Program, and BC Stats Household Projections

4.6 Summary

- Saanich is projected to experience more rapid population growth from 2023 to 2043 than seen in the past. Over this period, Saanich could see an increase of 30,312 people and 17,272 households.
- Based on recent historical trends, the proportion of renter households may continue to increase. It is projected that renter households will make up 32.5% of the population in 2028. However, the actual distribution of owner and renter households will be affected by the supply of housing in the community.
- Between 2023 and 2027, persons aged 75 to 84 will be the largest growing cohort in Saanich, followed by age 35 to 44 and 15 to 24. Some of the age groups falling within common working age (i.e., 25 to 34 and 55 to 64) are expected to decrease. Between 2027 to 2031, the most growth will be seen in the 45 to 55 and 35 to 44 year-old age groups. The increase in seniors is expected to increase the median age from 43.4 in 2023 to 44.1 in 2031.
- The most growth is projected for non-census families, likely reflective of the aging population, which is typically accompanied by an increase in individuals living alone. From 2023 to 2028, couples without children have the second largest projected growth among all household types. From 2028 to 2033, couple family households with children are projected to have the second highest growth rate, exceeding couples without children.

5 COVID-19 Implications

In March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. Local economies have been, and continue to be, significantly impacted. At the same time, some populations have faced exacerbated longstanding social inequities as a result of the pandemic. This section provides an overview of the COVID-19-related impacts on housing at the time of Report writing.

Across Canada, fewer households received income from employment in 2021. In Saanich, the unemployment rate rose from 5.7% in 2016 to 6.8% in 2021. Despite this, the rate of core and extreme core housing need decreased in Saanich between 2016 and 2021, particularly for renters, whose core housing need dropped from 7.5% to 6%. Until 2021, these rates had been increasing since 2006. Losses in employment income at this time were offset by pandemic-related benefits, primarily the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) which provided significant support to low and very low-income households in 2020 and 2021. In this period, after-tax income increased by nearly 10% in Canadian households, in comparison to the previous census, while income inequality decreased.²⁵

Supports established during the pandemic reduced the pressure on households in core and extreme core housing need during 2016 to 2021.²⁶ This was particularly felt by single-parent led households that had much lower median household incomes than other family types during these years. However, with these pandemic-related supports no longer available, current rates of core and extreme housing need are likely higher than those reflected in the 2021 census.

COVID-19 led to supply chain disruptions which, alongside skilled labour shortages, has contributed to rising building costs. These factors have likely impacted the rising housing costs in Saanich and in local governments across the country.

Based on observation in Saanich and mirrored in other communities, significant speculation took place in the market during the early period of COVID-19 which led to notable increases in property value. Inflation and corresponding interest rate hikes, in combination with rising building and property costs have led to significant increases in the cost of housing.

²⁵ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220713/dq220713d-eng.htm>

²⁶ <https://hart.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Understanding-2021-Core-Housing-Need-Data.pdf>

6 Housing Needs Assessment

To take action on the housing crisis, Saanich must understand current and anticipated levels of housing need. This section uses components of need to calculate how many units are required to address housing need and demand for 2021 to 2026 and 2041. It also presents the statements of key areas of local need which are supported by the data and engagement feedback outlined in Sections 3 and 6 of the report.

6.1 Total 5-Year and 20-Year Housing Need

In June 2024, the Province released a standardized methodology (HNR Method) that outlines how local governments must calculate their total housing need. Local governments are required to calculate their five and 20-year housing needs to inform corresponding OCP updates according to the method depicted in Table 15 below.

The HNR Method estimates housing need in two parts:

1. Estimating the existing gaps in Saanich's current housing supply by combining components A, B, C, E, and F.
2. Projecting future housing need based on household growth over the next five and 20 years as shown in Component D.

Each component is described in detail in the Guidelines for Housing Needs Reports – HNR Method Technical Guidance.²⁷

The District's five-year housing need is calculated by combining a portion of the existing need and additional supply to meet household growth over the next five years. The District's 20-year housing need is calculated by addressing the total existing housing need as well as the supply of units to meet household growth over the next 20 years.

Table 15 below provides an overview of the District's housing needs between two periods, 2021-2026 and 2021-2041. Based on this methodology, Saanich needs 7,683 new units in the next five years and 23,559 new units by 2041. This includes 2,043 affordable units to address extreme core housing need and 581 units to address homelessness by 2041. More than half (58%) of the total units required to meet projected and latent demand by 2041 are driven by projected community growth (Component D).

²⁷ Ministry of Housing (2024). Guidelines for Housing Needs Reports – HNR Method Technical Guidance. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/housing-and-tenancy/tools-for-government/uploads/hnr_method_technical_guidelines.pdf

Table 15: Summary of Total Housing Need

Component	5 Year Need (2021-2026)	20 Year Need (2021-2041)
A. Supply for Extreme Core Housing Need	511	2,043
B. Supply for Persons Experiencing Homelessness	291	581
C. Supply for Suppressed Household Formation	520	2,078
D. Supply for Anticipated Growth	5,054	13,624
E. Rental Vacancy Rate Adjustment ²⁸	50	202
F. Additional Local Demand Buffer ²⁹	1,258	5,032
Total New Units	7,683	23,559

Source: Housing Assessment Resource Tool HNR Calculator³⁰

6.2 Number of Units Needed by Unit Size in Saanich

Table 16 presents the projected number of housing units needed in Saanich to meet estimated population and household growth in the community until 2041 (Component D of Table 15).

The projected number of housing units are distributed according to household type and number of bedrooms. The total of 13,624 projected housing units reflects the total by bedroom type specifically, not the total housing supply needed to accommodate anticipated population growth (Component D in Table 15). This analysis has been completed to support the statements of key areas of local need in Saanich, further described in Section 6.4, but is not mandatory content for Housing Needs Reports.

²⁸ The provincial Guidelines for Housing Needs Reports defines the rental vacancy rate adjustment as measure that “adds surplus rental units to restore local vacancy rates to levels representing a healthy and well-functioning rental housing market. Including a RVRA in calculations of housing need has been recommended by multiple sources, including the Expert Panel on Housing Supply and Affordability (BC/Canada) and CMHC. Typically, rates between 3% and 5% are considered healthy rates. These calculations use the more conservative rate of 3%.” Available at:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/housing-and-tenancy/tools-for-government/uploads/hnr_method_technical_guidelines.pdf

²⁹ The provincial guidelines note that the demand buffer component is “is a calculated number of housing units reflecting additional demand for housing within a given community, beyond the minimum units required to adequately house current and anticipated residents. This is called the “demand buffer” and is designed to better account for the number of units required to meet “healthy” market demand in different communities.”

³⁰ The five and 20-year housing needs have been rounded to the nearest unit for each component resulting in minor discrepancies with the total new units needed.

Table 16 Projected Housing Units for Anticipated Growth in Saanich, 2021-2041³¹

Household Types	Studio /			Total
	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3+ Bedroom	
2021-2041	4,478	4,903	4,243	13,624
Couple without Children	1,570	1,570	0	3,141
Families with Children and Other Families	0	1,879	3,758	5,637
Non-Family	2,907	1,454	485	4,846

6.3 Suppressed Household Formation

Large metropolitan areas, such as the Capital Regional District, Metro Vancouver, and surrounding real estate markets, as well as other urban centres in British Columbia, have experienced sharp increases in housing prices since 2006, which is used as the baseline year as it is prior to both the economic downturn of 2008 and market restructuring, and prior to market increases (and decreasing vacancy rates) that began taking hold in 2014 to 2015.

The purpose of suppressed household formation calculation is to estimate the number of households that have been suppressed due to market pressures (e.g., high cost of ownership, low vacancy rates) since about 2006, when more favourable conditions for household formation were at play in the market.

Table 17: Estimated Suppressed Households by Tenure, 2021³²

	Estimated Suppressed Household		
	Owner	Renter	Total
15 to 24 years	-25	-206	0
25 to 34 years	726	-228	498
35 to 44 years	758	-201	558
45 to 54 years	759	-582	177
55 to 64 years	712	-491	221
65 to 74 years	361	-295	66
75 years and over	136	423	559
Total			2,078

Source: Housing Assessment Resource Tools HNR Calculator

6.4 Statements of Key Areas of Local Need in Saanich

6.4.1 Affordable Housing

Housing costs are continuing to rise in Saanich, across the CRD and Province. Stakeholders reported that the costs of living in the community are impacting the ability of individuals and families to stay. Households are increasingly moving to further communities such as the West

³¹ Note, not all columns may tally perfectly due to rounding error.

³² Minor discrepancies in totals may be present due to rounding.

Shore communities and Sooke for more affordable options, which is putting pressure on the housing stock of these communities.

The cost of renting and owning in Saanich has risen significantly in recent years. In the primary rental market, the median rent increased between 80% (for a three-or-more-bedroom unit) and 97% (for a two-bedroom unit) between 2005 and 2022. In the last five years, alone, the median rents in the primary rental market increased by 29%. The affordability gap analysis showed that in comparison to median household incomes, the Saanich purpose-built rental market is still relatively affordable for couples with children and other census families, but extremely unaffordable for non-census families and one-parent families. However, as most renter households in Saanich are in the secondary market, this analysis may not capture the full picture of affordability in the community. This affordability gap analysis also only considers rents in the primary rental market using CMHC's median market rents, which includes a high proportion of older, more affordable rental units. However, the asking rents for units in new buildings are considerably higher than the current median market as captured by CMHC's rental market survey.

In the homeownership market, housing prices have risen dramatically. Between 2005 and 2022, the average home sale price increased between 145% (for a townhouse) and 191% (for a single family home). The affordability gap analysis showed that one-parent families, non-census families (e.g., individuals living alone), and couples without children are facing the greatest housing challenges. The median income for these household types is not enough to afford an appropriate unit in the ownership market. Based on the affordability threshold of housing costs being no more than 30% of gross household income, a single-detached home is out of reach for all households making the median income, even couples with children and other census families who tend to make higher incomes than other household types.

As housing costs have increased, many households are not able to meet their needs in the private market. As of December 2022, there were 573 households in Saanich on BC Housing's waitlist.

6.4.2 Rental Housing

There is a need for more rental housing supply and diversity in all neighbourhoods in Saanich. The proportion of renter households is growing, from 12,035 households in 2006 (27% of the total population) to 14,780 in 2021 (31% of the population). Despite this growth, there has been very little growth in the stock of purpose-built rental housing in Saanich, indicating that most of this growth is being absorbed by the secondary rental market for which there is little available data. Between 2005 and 2022, the total stock of purpose-built rental market units in Saanich only increased by 5% to a total of 3,240 units. Rental vacancy rates are low across the region without enough supply coming onto the market to meet demands. As of 2023, the rental vacancy rate for Saanich was 1.5%, lower than what is considered to be healthy (between 3% and 5%). High demand and low vacancy contribute to increasing rental costs and can push renter households out of the community.

6.4.3 Housing for People with Disabilities

Renter households that have at least one person who had at least one activity limitation were more likely to be in Core Housing Need. In 2021, 22% of households with a member with at least one activity limitation were in Core Housing Need, in comparison to 21% of all renter households. Across households with physical activity limitation(s) and cognitive mental or addictions

limitation(s), renter households were far more likely to be in Core Housing Need. A review of detailed core housing need data showed that affordability was the primary driver of core housing need.

As noted in Section 3.8.3, Statistics Canada’s analysis shows that individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience lower incomes compared to individuals without disabilities, and income is a key factor in accessing appropriate and affordable housing. For individuals with disabilities who are unable to work, the provincial housing supplement of \$375 (for an individual) is extremely low and limits access to housing options.

As of December 2022, there were 111 people with disabilities on BC Housing’s waitlist seeking non-market housing in Saanich, in addition to 30 households requiring wheelchair accessible units.

6.4.4 Housing for Seniors

Saanich is experiencing a slight aging trend with the median age growing from 42.9 in 2006 to 44.1 in 2021. Aging in place is a priority for many households and this can look different depending on the individual and their needs. Increasingly, communities are looking to provide options for aging in place when housing needs change by ensuring downsizing and supportive housing options are available. The need for more supportive housing for seniors was identified as a significant area of need by stakeholders. The lack of supportive housing options means people may live in housing that lacks the accessibility or health supports required.

As of 2022, 208 seniors were on BC Housing’s waitlist seeking non-market seniors housing in Saanich.

6.4.5 Housing for Families

Family-sized housing in Saanich is increasingly out of reach for families with children. The affordability gap analysis showed that the cost of a single detached home is out of reach for couples with children making the median household income, and far out of reach for one-parent families. For those in the rental market, there is a limited supply of larger units – only 232 units with three bedrooms or more as of 2022. This is a decline from 168 in 2019.³³ The median rent of a three-or-more bedroom unit has increased by 80% between 2005 and 2022. As housing costs increase in the core communities of the CRD, stakeholders reported witnessing individuals and families grapple with whether to stay or move. The availability of housing for families will also influence the demographics of a community and can contribute to an aging population trend as younger households without equity struggle to gain a foothold in the community.

As of 2022, there are 198 families on BC Housing’s waitlist seeking non-market housing in Saanich.

6.4.6 Homelessness

The Point-in-Time count and province’s Integrated Data Project are two methods available to estimate homelessness in Saanich. There has been an increase in individuals experiencing homelessness across CRD communities in recent years. The March 7, 2023, Point-in-Time count identified a minimum of 1,665 individuals experiencing homelessness in the region. There were

³³ Figure 28 Primary Rental Market Units in Saanich 2005-2022 (CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2022)

at least 601 individuals who were provisionally accommodated in transitional housing, 282 who were emergency sheltered, 410 who were in public systems (e.g. corrections, hospitals), 242 who were unsheltered, 85 who were couch surfing, and 45 who stayed in unknown locations.

In 2021, the Integrated Data Project estimated that 2,043 individuals (0.5% of the total population) were experiencing homelessness in the Capital Census Division. If this population were distributed equally across the region based on per capita population shares in each community, Saanich's share would be 28.44% of this total, approximately 581 individuals experiencing homelessness in Saanich. Based on the IDP estimates, 581 new units are needed to address the housing needs of the population experiencing homelessness. Based on the findings of the PiT count, it is likely that this is an underestimate, and that Saanich has a higher share of the individuals experiencing homelessness in the region.

6.4.7 Housing in Close Proximity to Transportation Infrastructure

By locating housing near transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit, and alternative forms of transportation, multiple cross-sectional objectives can be met. This includes accelerating the transportation mode shift to sustainable modes, ensuring people have equitable access to their daily needs, and reducing monthly household costs by reducing motor vehicle dependency.

Guiding Saanich's Official Community Plan is the vision of a compact, complete 15-minute community where all households within the Urban Containment Boundary are within walking distance of key amenities that support daily life. Convenient access to frequent transit service and high-quality cycling facilities are essential components of a 15-minute community. Other District wide policies and bylaws support this high-level vision, and also serve to implement new Provincial legislation related to urban infill and transit-oriented development. Working towards the vision of a complete community means directing housing density in already well-connected areas, for example through detailed planning for Centres, Corridors and Villages, as well as working on improving transportation networks and other amenities in less well-served areas.

APPENDIX A: Glossary

Activity Limitation: “Activity limitations refer to difficulties that people have in carrying out daily activities such as hearing, seeing, communicating, or walking. Difficulties could arise from physical or mental conditions or health problems.”

<https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en#TableMapChart/59/2/British%20Columbia> – Core Housing Need, Activity Limitations

Adequate Housing Standard: “[Housing] not requiring any major repairs.”

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage037-eng.cfm>

Affordable Housing Standard: “[Housing with] shelter costs equal to less than 30% of total before-tax household income.”

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage037-eng.cfm>

Census Family: Census families include couples with and without children, and a single parents with children living in the same dwelling. Census families are restricted to these family units and cannot include other members inside or outside the family (including a grandparent, a sibling, etc.). Grandchildren living with grandparents (and without a parent) would also count as a census family.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/fam004-eng.cfm>

Core Housing Need: “A household is said to be in 'core housing need' if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards).” Some additional restrictions apply.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage037-eng.cfm>

Household Income: The sum of incomes for all household members.

Household Maintainer: A person in a household who is responsible for paying the rent, mortgage, taxes, utilities, etc. Where multiple people contribute, there can be more than one maintainer.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage008-eng.cfm>

Headship Rate: The proportion of individuals of a given age group who are primary household maintainers.

Household Type: “The differentiation of households on the basis of whether they are census family households or non-census family households.”

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage012-eng.cfm>

Income: For the purposes of this Report, unless otherwise indicated, income refers to “total income” which is before-tax and includes specific income sources. These specific income sources typically include employment income, income from dividends, interest, GICs, and mutual funds, income from pensions, other regular cash income, and government sources (EI, OAS, CPP, etc.). These income sources typically do not include capital gains, gifts, and inter-household transfers, etc.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop123-eng.cfm>

Indigenous Household: An Indigenous household is one of the following: i) a non-family household in which at least 50 per cent of household members self-identified as Indigenous people; or ii) a family household that meets at least one of two criteria: a) at least one spouse, common-law partner, or lone parent self-identified as an Indigenous person; or b) at least 50 per cent of household members self-identified as Indigenous people. An Indigenous person is anybody identifying as an Indigenous person (question 24 on the 2021 Census long-form questionnaire), or who is a Treaty Indian or Registered Indian (question 26), a member of an Indian Band/First Nation (question 27), a registered member of a Metis organization or settlement (question 28) or enrolled under, or a beneficiary of, an Inuit land claims agreement (question 29).

Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) Housing Indicators.

Labour Force: The labour force includes individuals aged 15 and over who are either employed, or actively looking for work. This means that the labour force is the sum of employed and unemployed individuals. Individuals not in the labour force would include those who are retired.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop056-eng.cfm>

Movable Dwelling: A single dwelling type used as a place of residence and can be moved on short notice that includes mobile homes, as well as a tent, recreational vehicle, travel trailer houseboat or floating home.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements013-eng.cfm>

Multiple Census Families: A **household** in which two or more **census families** (with or without additional persons) occupy the same private dwelling. **Family households** may also be divided based on the presence of persons not in a **census family**.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/dict/households-menage012-eng.cfm>

National Occupancy Standard: Standard for the number of bedrooms required by a household based on household composition. For example, lone-parents living with their child would require two bedrooms, one for themselves and one for their child.

<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=100731>

Non-Census-Family Households: Households which do not include a census family. “Non-Census-family households are either one person living alone or a group of two or more persons who live together but do not constitute a Census family.”

<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=251053>

Other Family or Other Census Family: When comparing households one way to distinguish between households is by “household family types.” These types will include couples with children, couples without children, lone-parent families, and non-family households; they will also include “other families” which refer to households which include at least one family and additional persons. For example, “other family” could refer to a family living with one or more persons who are related to one or more of the members of the family, or a family living with one or more additional persons who are unrelated to the family members.

Participation Rate: The participation rate is the proportion of all individuals aged 15 and over who are in the labour force.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop108-eng.cfm>

Primary Household Maintainer: The first (or only) maintainer of a household listed on the census.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage020-eng.cfm>

Seniors: Individuals aged 65 and over.

Shelter Cost: Total monthly shelter expenses paid by households that own or rent their dwelling. “Shelter costs for owner households include, where applicable, mortgage payments, property taxes and condominium fees, along with the costs of electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services. For renter households, shelter costs include, where applicable, the rent and the costs of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services.”

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage033-eng.cfm>

Subsidized Housing: “‘Subsidized housing’ refers to whether a renter household lives in a dwelling that is subsidized. Subsidized housing includes rent geared to income, social housing, public housing, government-assisted housing, non-profit housing, rent supplements and housing allowances.”

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/dwelling-logements017-eng.cfm>

Suitable Housing Standard: “[Housing that] has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of resident households.”

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage037-eng.cfm>

Supportive housing: A type of housing that provides on-site supports and services to residents who cannot live independently.

<https://www.bchousing.org/glossary>

Supportive Housing for Seniors: This document defines assisted living and long term or residential care options as supportive housing for seniors.

Transitional Housing: “A type of housing for residents for between 30 days and three years. It aims to transition individuals to long-term, permanent housing.”

<https://www.bchousing.org/glossary>

APPENDIX B: Community Engagement Findings

This section summarizes the findings of stakeholder focus groups and interviews that were held through late July and August of 2020, supplemented by engagement findings from the Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) and Inclusionary Housing Policy & Program process held in April 2022. The CAC process engaged three focus groups of Community Housing Providers, Real Estate Groups, and Community Organizations. In the sessions held in 2020, stakeholders across the housing system were invited to provide insight into housing needs across the region and for the core area communities of Saanich, Esquimalt, and Victoria. Findings were determined to remain relevant at the time of the 2024 HNR update. Focus groups discussed community strengths, housing needs and gaps, and opportunities to address community housing needs. Stakeholder interviews focused on unmet needs and demands, issues and challenges when it came to addressing housing needs, and potential solutions.

Eleven interviews were completed with service providers, housing providers, and First Nation serving organizations from across the CRD. The organizations interviewed included the Community Social Planning Council, CRD Electoral Area Director, Cool Aid Society, Coalition to End Homelessness, BC Housing, Greater Victoria Housing Society, Pacifica Housing, Urban Development Institute, Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, and M'akola Housing Society. Most interviewees worked across the CRD and provided insight into the housing system on a regional level.

Four focus groups were held for the core area communities. These were attended by stakeholders from community serving organizations, housing providers, institutional (education and employers), and development and real estate. Participants included the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Intercultural Association, Together Fighting Against Poverty Society, Mount Douglas Seniors Housing, Threshold Housing Society, Seaspan, Camosun College, University of Victoria, Coalition to End Homelessness, and South Island Prosperity Project.

6.5 Regional Findings

Many interviewees and focus group participants spoke about housing challenges and opportunities that were relevant across CRD communities. This section provides a summary of cross-cutting themes and insights. Section 6.1 includes findings from focus groups and interviews held through late July and August of 2020 which were determined to still be relevant at the time of the 2024 Report update.

6.5.1 Housing Challenges

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability was a concern across stakeholders, with particular mention of the need for affordable housing for low-income households, including lone-parent families, youth, Indigenous peoples, renters, and seniors on fixed incomes. As housing costs increase in the core area communities of the CRD (Saanich, Victoria, Esquimalt), stakeholders are seeing individuals and families move to further communities such as the West Shore communities and Sooke for more affordable options. Family-sized housing in Victoria, Saanich, and Esquimalt are desired but are increasingly scarce, and to afford it requires two parents making much more than minimum wage.

Although the demand for housing is high and there is a need for more housing supply, stakeholders noted that the downtown core of Victoria is already built out. Greater distribution of affordable housing options is needed across the region over the next five to ten years.

Homelessness

There has been an increase in individuals experiencing homelessness in recent years. While there are varying degrees of housing pressures across the CRD communities, homelessness is experienced in every community. Individuals experiencing homelessness tend to access support services in Victoria and on Salt Spring Island as the climate is milder and where the culture is more accepting, according to engagement participants. Some individuals experiencing homelessness have been present in the region for a long time.

Options for Renters

There is a need for more housing options for renters and other low-income groups across the CRD, regardless of gender, age, or ethnicity. Rental vacancy rates are low across the region without enough supply coming onto the market fast enough to meet demands. The high demand for market rental housing puts renters at a disadvantage as landlords can be selective or demanding when leasing to tenants.

The lack of rental market housing puts pressure on the low-end of market rental housing as more households seek affordable options. Stakeholders emphasized that households who do not qualify for rent-geared-to-income housing programs are left without alternative housing options and can become vulnerable to homelessness. To keep up with demand, a few stakeholders have either recently refocused their service programs or are in the process of expanding their services to new municipalities.

Indigenous Housing

There are rental housing options available for Indigenous families with children across the CRD. The gap that stakeholders see in the region is housing for Indigenous households who require housing supports after their children have moved away. There is also opportunity to provide affordable housing options for non-traditional families, such as children whose guardians are not their legal guardians.

Additional non-market housing options are needed as low-end market housing can often be out of reach for very-low income Indigenous households. There is also a need for more culturally appropriate housing for Indigenous peoples in the CRD as they are disproportionately represented in the homelessness population. Stakeholders report there is a service gap in terms of land-based healing, decolonized harm reduction framework, and more pathways for healing. Elders are particularly in need of culturally appropriate housing and activities.

Supportive Housing

The need for more supportive housing is seen by stakeholders as a significant area in need of investment. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, supportive housing providers across the CRD were operating at capacity. More supportive housing is needed for Indigenous peoples, seniors, and women. The lack of supportive housing options pushes people to live in rental housing where they may not be receiving the supports they require (e.g., care for mental health, substance use disorders, or other health needs).

In addition to increasing the supply of supportive housing, there is also a need to increase or improve programs that serve specific groups, such as harm reduction programs, human-centered supports, permanent and flexible housing programs (e.g. Housing First approach), and Indigenous healing programs.

In terms of community and social wellness, housing for those with concurrent disorders is a key service which is currently missing in the CRD. Relative to the general population, the amount of people in the CRD who experience overlapping mental health and substance use disorders is small. However, stakeholders report that supports for individuals experiencing complex needs are important.

Youth Housing

Housing for families and children is considered an important issue in the CRD, and stakeholders felt that more attention should be given to the housing gap for youth and for youth aging out of care. Youth aging out of care have a much higher risk of experiencing homelessness in their first year.

Student Housing

Student housing was identified as a service gap in the core communities of the CRD. Students represent a large proportion of the regional population influx, and they are seeing a deep affordability crunch. On-campus residential development requires higher density, fewer parking requirements, and transportation options to support the successful implementation of new housing.

6.5.2 Barriers and Challenges in Developing and Operating Housing

The overall development process to build new housing can be challenging, particularly for affordable or supportive housing. In the CRD, non-market housing developers need to have the capacity to overcome barriers related to buying property or land, bridging financing, and securing funding to make the development feasible.

Although supportive and affordable housing development applications are fast-tracked in some local governments in the CRD, a few stakeholders reported that the development process can still be challenging. This is due to issues related to prescriptive zoning, not-in-my-backyard attitudes (NIMBYism) in the community, policy directions that encourage development of other types of housing, and parking regulations. In some cases where there is opposition against a proposed development project, it is felt that people become the focus rather than land-use issues.

Many non-market housing providers in the CRD are operating at capacity. Where there is opportunity to provide more non-market units, organizational capacity becomes an issue on the operations side. It is felt that there is a limited pool of trained staff who are experienced working alongside vulnerable populations (e.g., individuals with mental health or substance use disorders). The high housing costs in the CRD also make it difficult for the retention of housing staff as they are more likely to take on two jobs and more prone to experience burnout. It can be an issue to collect rents from tenants who are experiencing mental health crises.

6.5.3 Opportunity Areas

Multi-sectoral Collaboration and Partnerships

It is encouraged to continue fostering collaboration in the region by convening partnerships between the actors, such as Indigenous partners, First Nations, non-profit housing providers, private developers, municipalities, BC Housing, and CMHC. Regional consultation and brainstorming sessions can result in action and new housing being built.

Local Government Leadership to Support Affordable Housing

In the CRD, affordable housing buildings can be designed with local context and local need in mind. It was felt that affordable housing across the region has historically been driven by program requirements by senior government funders such as BC Housing and that local governments can lead the way to new affordable housing initiatives and play a bigger role in unit design and mix. In addition, participants felt that local governments have a role to increase public awareness about misconceptions about people who live in non-market housing and to be supportive of affordable housing projects.

Continued Support for Culturally Supportive Housing

There have been new initiatives aimed at providing culturally supportive housing for the most vulnerable Indigenous populations in the CRD. Stakeholders who serve Indigenous peoples are developing new frameworks and pilot projects to better meet the needs of this population (e.g. Elders support, using traditional foods, land-based healing, family reunification). Providing space for Indigenous people and organizations and trusting Indigenous ways of knowing and being can lead to new models of care.

Encourage Broader Public Engagement

There is opportunity to broaden the public engagement to engage different voices and groups during the development approvals process. While community associations are an important group to hear, it is equally important to provide space for more individuals and groups to represent the diverse housing needs in the CRD.

Other Opportunities

Stakeholders noted other opportunities to build new housing or to support groups in need:

- Explore the encouragement of mixed-income residential buildings to promote inclusive communities
- Partner with First Nations that have set aside land for revenue through housing development
- Adopt a shelter model that provides wraparound services and assessments to individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the day
- Implement a coordinated access system with a bynames list to guide individuals to services they require
- Ensure all affordable housing developments have housing agreements and consider implementing a universal housing agreement within the CRD
- Explore an organization-specific bus pass program to help tenants get to/from services
- Pilot inclusionary zoning in areas where this policy can be supported and to test and iterate ideas

- Continue to support renewal of purpose-built rentals
- Reduce parking requirements to support new affordable housing
- Informal forums are needed to help find housing for certain groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community

6.6 Findings for Saanich

In engagement conducted in 2020, focus group participants were asked about housing challenges and opportunities in Saanich and the core area communities (Saanich, Victoria, Esquimalt). The housing needs identified in section 6.5.1 reflect those identified for Saanich and are not repeated here. The demand for housing has increased in Saanich while housing unaffordability has deepened. Stakeholders reported that some households are being pushed to consider moving out of the community due to rising housing costs. Unaffordability is being felt throughout the housing systems and impacts vulnerable households the most.

In 2022, the Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) process engaged three focus groups of Community Housing Providers, Real Estate Groups, and Community Organizations on questions about factors impacting affordability and price of units, operating costs, and types of units needed. Where relevant, these findings have been summarized below. Due to the extensive nature of the engagement conducted in Saanich's 2020 Housing Needs Report and through additional housing-related processes, including the CAC engagement, the District is using this available information so as to not over-engage stakeholders.

This section focuses on specific barriers to addressing housing issues and opportunity areas in Saanich.

6.6.1 Barriers and Challenges in Developing and Operating Housing

Housing Supply is Not Keeping Up

Stakeholders noted that housing starts in Saanich are declining and that high development costs and policy changes do not encourage developers to build in the community (e.g., large increases in development cost charges).

Lengthy Development Approvals Process

Stakeholders felt that the average timeline to obtain approval for a development application is significantly longer in Saanich than in other CRD communities, which has discouraged some builders from developing in Saanich. Participants noted there is an opportunity to fast-track affordable housing applications to encourage developers to build new housing similar to other CRD communities. Participants in 2022 CAC engagement identified that in addition to lengthy development approval processes, there can be significant opposition at public hearings, leading to increased carrying costs that impact the cost of housing.

Lack of Rental Incentives

Stakeholders felt that there is a lack of incentives (e.g., both policy and financial incentives) to direct developers to build specific housing types and forms. Although rental housing is needed in Saanich and rental vacancy rates are low, there are currently no municipal incentives to encourage the development of rental housing.

Family Housing Regulations

Larger units for families are needed. One stakeholder noted that the regulation for family-sized housing (e.g., 2 and 3 bedroom units) in development projects should be aimed away from corridors and targeted towards lower-density areas.

Uncertainty for Developers

Stakeholders in 2022 engagement identified that there are significant levels of uncertainty for developers in Saanich and elsewhere. Uncertainty is fed by rapidly increasing construction costs (e.g., materials, transportation, and meeting updated building code requirements) and other financial challenges present in the market. These factors compound challenges from development approval processes.

Clarity of Regulations

Stakeholders engaged in 2022 identified challenges with boundary delineations, noting that it could be challenging, in some cases, to determine whether they were in a Major Centre or not.

6.6.2 Opportunity Areas

Large Land Base for New Housing Development

Saanich has one of the largest land bases across all the CRD communities. Stakeholders felt that there were opportunities to build new housing across the housing continuum to address pent-up demand. In addition, locating housing close to outdoor public amenities and spaces in Saanich was viewed by participants as a community benefit that supported health and wellbeing, especially during times of crises (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic). It was also noted that the large land base may be an opportunity to explore co-location of affordable housing and community services in Saanich.

Encourage Higher Density Housing

As developing housing in Saanich is costly, allowing higher density housing would encourage more affordable housing to be built. A participant highlighted the need for smaller land plots and more infill development. Mixed-use six-storey affordable housing projects with amenities are possible because there are strong capital, developer, and labour markets in the core area communities including Saanich. In 2022 engagement, stakeholders identified that Saanich has good amenities but lacks density. Amenities should be based on best practices for walkability, transit, and active transportation. It was also noted that it is important to prioritize housing in areas where people can easily walk to commercial centres, community and social services, schools, and recreation. Many Saanich residents are already regularly travelling to areas with these amenities.

Protect Rental Housing Options

Participants reported an opportunity to protect existing rental stock in Saanich. Stakeholders reported that the demolition of rental stock is outpacing the growth of affordable rental housing options in Saanich.

Support Workforce Housing

One stakeholder reported that supporting housing for the workforce was important and could be facilitated by allowing residential and industrial uses to co-exist in Saanich. Participants noted that the protection of industrial lands drives employment and co-locating housing around these areas would allow for long-term economic growth.

Housing Indigenous Households

Based on engagement with stakeholders completed in 2022, Indigenous households may have different requirements for housing units. For example, some Indigenous households require higher bedroom counts to support multi-generational families. In particular, some Indigenous households require higher bedroom counts to support multi-generational families. Saanich's current supply may not support this, particularly the rental market which has a lesser supply of 3+ bedroom households.