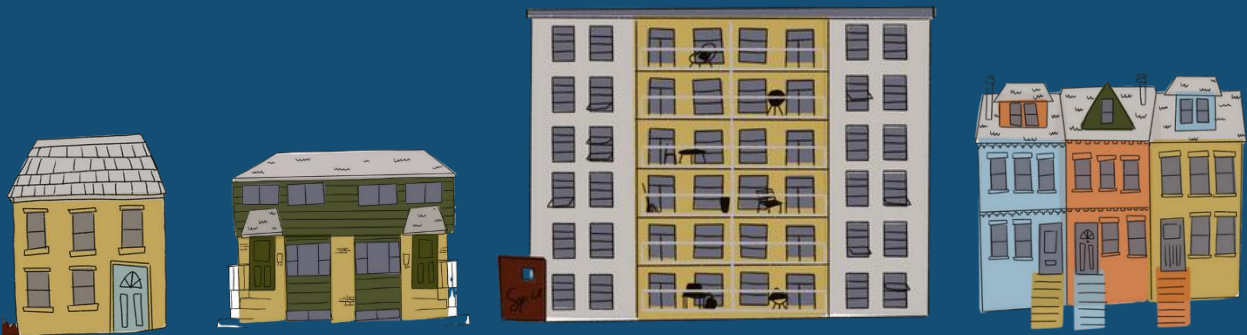


# Municipality of the District of East Hants

## Municipal Housing Needs Report

2023



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Key Findings .....	2
3	Housing Supply .....	5
	3.1 Market Housing .....	5
	3.2 Non-Market Housing.....	10
	3.3 Short-Term Rentals (STRs).....	12
4	Housing Shortage .....	14
5	Housing Affordability.....	17
	5.1 Homeownership .....	17
	5.2 Rental Market.....	19
6	Housing Need .....	22
	6.1 Housing Need by Tenure & Indigenous Identity .....	22
	6.2 Housing Need by Household Type.....	23
7	Demographic Profile .....	25
	7.1 Population .....	25
	7.2 Households .....	27
8	Conclusion .....	30

# 1 Introduction

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

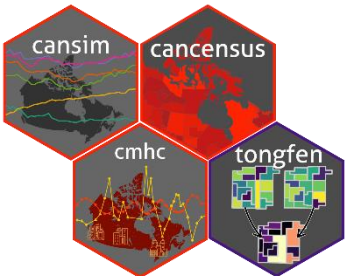
- Identify current and future housing needs and
- Identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply

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

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

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

Note that all data references the municipality unless noted otherwise.



## 2 Key Findings

### **Housing shortage**

As of the end of 2022, there was no gap between demand for housing and the available housing supply - this suggests that historical rates of completions have been adequate in keeping up with the pace of new demand.

However, projections suggest that to keep pace with population growth, the municipality will need 1,090 new units by 2027 and 2,185 by 2032. Status quo construction will not be enough to meet this projected demand. About 165 new units could be completed annually based on historical construction trends. If that pace continues, it could leave a remaining gap of 265 units by 2027 and 535 by 2032.

### **Population**

Between 2016 and 2021, the population of the District of East Hants increased by 6%, compared to the provincial growth rate of 5%, led by particularly strong growth among those aged 65 or older.

Finance and Treasury Board (FTB) estimates suggest that the 2022 total population was 24,005, with a projected increase of 2% between 2022 and 2027. Senior populations should increase during that time, with decreases mostly occurring among non-senior populations. Even so, the 0- to -14-year-olds cohort may expand 2% over the next five years.

Growth from 2027 to 2032 may be of a greater magnitude (6%) compared to the prior five years, with growth being well distributed across all age cohorts.

### **Households**

The share of 1-person households rose by 14% between 2016 and 2021, which bolstered the municipality's total household growth in that time period.

Between 2016 and 2021, there was an increase to total households of 8%. Estimates suggest that total households reached 9,845 in 2022, with a potential increase of 3% from 2022 to 2027 (275 total). Household losses should predominantly occur among young adult households (led by 15- to 24-year-olds). The greatest rate of growth should be among senior-led households.

### **Non-market housing**

As of January 2023, the District of East Hants had a public-housing inventory of 84 units, of which 8 were for families and 76 for seniors.

### Short-term rentals (STRs)

Less than 0.5% of the municipality's housing inventory may have been used as a short-term commercial rental in 2021 (the last full year of data). This means that upwards of 44 units might have been removed from the long-term market, though it is uncertain exactly how many would have been long-term rentals or purchased for permanent occupancy if not used as a STR.

### Shelter costs

Median rents reported by the Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) increased 17% from 2019 to 2022, following a 13% increase between 2016 and 2019. The recent increases reflect a tightening rental market - East Hants has had a gradually declining vacancy rate since 2010, now at 0%, falling well below the healthy range (considered to be between 3% and 5%).

206

Survey Respondents from the Municipality  
of the District of East Hants

#### Top Housing Challenges:

1. Finding housing at a price I can afford
2. Finding housing that is in good condition and not requiring repairs
3. Finding housing that is close to my place of work
4. I am already living in affordable housing
5. I am not experiencing any challenges with finding affordable housing

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

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

43%

of respondents have considered leaving  
their community due to housing issues

26%

of respondents have faced discrimination  
when trying to access housing

9%

of respondents do not feel safe in their  
housing situation

*Municipality's public survey responses*

Median municipality home prices increased 76% from 2019 to 2022, compared to 14% between 2016 and 2019. The rapid rise in prices is a combination of low interest rates (until recently) and other factors driving increased demand.

### **Affordability**

About 69% of all couples, 94% of all lone-parent households, and 97% of all single person households earned below the estimated income required to afford the 2022 median sale price of a local dwelling. For rentals, at least 26% of **renting** couples, 64% of **renting** lone-parents, and 89% of **renting** single persons earned below the estimated income required to afford the 2022 median local rents.

### **Housing need**

When a household lives in a dwelling that requires more than 30% of its before-tax household income, is overcrowded, and needs major repairs - and no alternative exists - it is in Core Housing Need. In 2021, about 6% of the municipality's households (550 total) lived in Core Housing Need. Need is particularly prevalent among:

- 14% of renter households (240);
- 15% of lone-parent households (125); and
- 14% of single persons / roommate households (330)

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

### 3 Housing Supply

#### 3.1 Market Housing

As of the 2021 Census, there were 10,413 private dwellings across the District of East Hants, of which 94% were occupied by usual residents (those who live in the municipality permanently). The rest of the inventory may either be occupied solely by foreign residents and/or by temporarily present persons, and unoccupied dwellings. For those dwellings occupied by usual residents, Table 3-1 summarizes the totals and distribution by structure type for East Hants. The greatest share of current supply is held by the single-detached home (82%).

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

Total	Single-detached	Semi-detached	Row house	Duplex apt	Apt (< 5 storeys)	Apt (5+ storeys)	Movable	Other
9,390*	7,660	360	155	150	590	0	460	10
100%	82%	4%	2%	2%	6%	0%	5%	0%

\* Dwelling count amendments from May 2023 indicate that permanently occupied dwellings totaled 9,750 instead of 9,390. However, amendments could only be applied to the total and not the individual dwelling types - hence the number remains as is. Source: 2021 Census



District of East Hants’s public survey responses

*“The approval processes for developments is too long and there are too many environmental unknowns. By the time projects get approved, inflation has made them unaffordable.”*

*“There needs to be investment in the infrastructure to support new developments; the population growth will eventually surpass development capacity.”*

### 3.1.1 Construction Activity

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

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

Table 3-2 shows the number units permitted, started, and completed in East Hants between 2010 to 2022 (note that 2022 data reflects an extrapolated September 2022 total). Recent construction data shows a notable increase in activity - i.e., a high of 369 units permitted in 2021 and a potential high of 383 in 2022.

Table 3-2: Construction Activity by Dwelling Type

Units permitted							
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
Total	104	102	127	139	143	369	383
Single	88	65	38	68	73	153	211
Semi	4	18	8	34	20	8	25
Row	0	0	0	10	25	22	67
Apartment	12	19	77	19	14	166	72
Other	0	0	4	8	11	20	8

Units started							
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	92	102	128	120	127	288	401
Single	74	45	46	75	66	136	214
Semi	12	10	40	40	26	12	44
Row	0	0	10	3	35	50	73
Apartment	6	47	32	2	0	90	70
Owned	100%	51%	49%	75%	65%	55%	76%
Rented	0%	49%	51%	25%	35%	45%	24%



Units completed							
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	95	66	160	144	102	154	352
Single	73	43	51	61	68	109	182
Semi	16	10	24	48	24	20	32
Row	0	13	28	9	10	25	56
Apartment	6	0	57	26	0	0	82
Owned	100%	76%	40%	53%	81%	81%	64%
Rented	0%	24%	60%	47%	19%	19%	36%

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

Table 3-3 summarizes the change in unit size and tenure between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses. The distribution of new units shows what sizes are most occupied by renter and owner households. These Census results indicate that the long-term rental supply is growing at a faster pace than ownership relative to percent change - owned dwellings increased marginally, and rented dwellings increased 22%.

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

	Total	Studio / 1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3+ bedroom
<b>Owned dwellings</b>				
Owned (2016) - 84% of total HHs	7,625	220	1,460	5,945
Owned (2021) - 81% of total HHs	7,630	240	1,380	6,010
Change in units	5	20	-80	65
Share of change	100%	12%	48%	39%
<b>Rented dwellings</b>				
Rented (2016) - 16% of total HHs	1,435	300	660	475
Rented (2021) - 19% of total HHs	1,755	335	855	570
Change in units	320	35	195	95
Share of change	100%	11%	60%	29%

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

Note that not all additional units in the table necessarily reflect a new unit, and some may represent conversions from rental to ownership or vice versa. Between 2016 and 2021, total dwellings (not only occupied by a usual resident) increased from 9,930 to 10,413 - a 483-unit increase (slightly less than 100 units annually). This suggests a

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

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

Dwellings	2016	2021*	% change
Total dwellings (a)	9,930	10,413	5%
Dwelling occupied by a usual resident (b)	9,060	9,750	8%
Share (b / a)	91%	94%	

\* 2021 numbers reflecting Census count adjustments from May 2023. These will not appear on the Census Profile.  
 Source: Statistics Canada 2016 & 2021 Census

Readers will notice that a 116 unit increase over five years does not match the historical trends of units completed (as per CMHC). The discrepancy may be related to Statistics Canada classifying dwellings as uninhabitable or as seasonal (i.e., they are not fit for year-round habitation, like three-season cottages) in the 2021 Census, when classified as such in 2016. This would underrepresent the change in units between Census periods.

### 3.1.2 Housing Accelerator Fund Considerations

The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) is a program introduced by CMHC with the objective to bolster the housing supply at an accelerated pace. Local governments within Canada - including First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments who have delegated authority over land use planning and development approvals - are eligible to apply to the HAF. Interested municipalities can find the HAF’s pre-application reference material [here](#). Note that a Housing Needs Assessment (such as this one) is required as part of a complete application.

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

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

The data shared in this overall section (e.g., permits, starts, completions, and historical changes in dwelling sizes) can be used to inform local decisions related to projected permits by September 2026.

For additional guidance, Table 3-5 summarizes the growth by unit type (more closely defined with HAF application requirements) and tenure between 2016 and 2021.

Table 3-5: Change in Units by Estimated HAF Dwelling Type & Tenure between Census Periods

	Total	Single <sup>a</sup>	Missing middle <sup>b</sup>	Multi-unit <sup>c</sup>
<b>Total dwellings</b>				
Total (2016)	9,060	7,480	1,575	0
Total (2021)	9,385	7,635	1,760	0
Change in units	325	155	185	0
Share of change	100%	46%	54%	0%
<b>Owned dwellings</b>				
Owned (2016)	7,625	6,970	650	0
Owned (2021)	7,630	6,935	700	0
Change in units	5	-35	50	0
Share of change	100%	41%	59%	0%
<b>Rented dwellings</b>				
Rented (2016)	1,435	510	925	0
Rented (2021)	1,755	700	1,060	0
Change in units	320	190	135	0
Share of change	100%	58%	42%	0%

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 3-6: Example of Simple HAF Permit Projection

	Historical share of new housing	Possible annual units permitted	Estimated 3-year units permitted <sup>a</sup>	Estimated 3-year unit demand <sup>a</sup>	Gap that HAF can help reduce
Total	100%	175	525 (A)	660 (B)	135
Single	46%	80	240	300	60
Missing middle	54%	95	285	360	75
Multi-unit	0%	0	0	0	0

Relationship between units permitted and shortage	
C: Estimated September 2023 housing stock: <sup>b</sup>	11,000
Projected permitted unit growth over 3 years without HAF (A / C x 100):	4.8%
Projected permitted unit growth over 3 years needed to meet demand (B / C x 100):	6.0%
% increase in units permitted to meet shortage (B / A - 1) x 100:	26%

Relationship between units permitted and HAF requirements (rounded up to nearest 5)	
D: Estimated September 2023 housing stock: <sup>b</sup>	11,000
E: Projected annual units permitted (based on '16-'21 average - see Table 3-2)	175
Required units permitted over 3 years to meet minimum 1.1% average annual growth rate <sup>c</sup> (D x 1.1% x 3 years)	365
Required additional units permitted over 3 years to meet minimum 10% increase <sup>d</sup> over historical average (E x 10% x 3 years)	55

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

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

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

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

## 3.2 Non-Market Housing

### 3.2.1 Public Housing

Of the 11,200 total inventory of publicly owned dwelling units (as administered by the Nova Scotia Public Housing Authority), 84 are located in the District of East Hants - 8 of

these units are reserved for families, while 76 are for seniors' housing. Most units are 1-bedroom apartments, due to the high volume of senior-specific units - 90% of all units and 98% of these 1-bedroom units are reserved for seniors.

About 58% of the District of East Hants's public housing tenants have lived in public housing for more than 5 years, most of who have lived there for more than 10 years.

Table 3-7: Public Housing Inventory, January 2023

		Total	Family	Senior
Total unit inventory		84	8	76
Inventory by unit size	Studio	0	0	0
	1-bedroom	75	0	75
	2-bedroom	0	0	0
	3+ bedroom	9	8	1
	Not reported	0	0	0
Inventory by dwelling type	Single family	8	8	0
	Row	0	0	0
	Apartment	76	0	76
	Not reported	0	0	0
Length of tenure in public housing	Less than 1 year	11%	0%	12%
	1 to 5 years	31%	13%	33%
	5 to 10 years	28%	50%	26%
	10+ years	30%	38%	29%
Household income	Median income (mth)	\$1,780	\$1,395	\$1,825
	Median income (ann)	\$21,360	\$16,740	\$21,900

Source: Derived from Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing data

### 3.2.2 Rent Supplements

As of March 2023, 168 households in the Hants Census Division (no data is specifically available for East Hants) were receiving rent supplement support, equivalent to 267 total people. About 27% were families, 46% were seniors, and 27% were classified as non-elderly single households. Table 3-8 further details the percentage share of rent supplements that served a specific vulnerable population.

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

	Total	Family	Senior	Non-elderly
Total rent supplements	168	45	77	46
People benefiting	267	131	84	52
Average HH size	1.6	2.9	1.1	1.1
Average dependents	0.5	1.7	0.0	0.0
Share of supplements serving a vulnerable group:				
Indigenous person(s)	3%	2%	1%	7%
Person(s) w/ a disability	25%	18%	22%	37%
At risk of homelessness	14%	22%	1%	28%
Homeless	1%	2%	0%	0%
Newcomer(s)	1%	2%	0%	0%
Mental health / addictions	15%	16%	5%	30%
Racialized person(s)	5%	11%	1%	7%
Veteran(s)	1%	0%	1%	0%
Fleeing domestic violence	5%	13%	0%	7%
Young adults	7%	16%	1%	7%

Source: Derived from Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing data

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

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

### 3.3 Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

Between 2018 and 2022, there has been an increase of 30 dwellings used as short-term rentals. Of those, 79% were entire homes or apartments, of which 47 were potentially<sup>1</sup> “commercial” units - meaning they were available or reserved more than 50% of the year.

If 2021 commercial units are compared to the 2021 dwelling stock (10,413 - as per the Census), less than 0.5% of the municipality’s housing inventory may have been used as a short-term commercial rental.

<sup>1</sup>Noted as “potentially” since 2022 data is only up to September.

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

	Data by year				Percent change		
	2018	2020	2021	2022	'18-'20	'20-'22	18-'22**
Total unique STRs	78	103	114	108	+32%	+5%	+38%
Entire home/apt	48	70	82	85	+46%	+21%	+77%
Hotel room	0	0	0	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Private room	29	33	32	23	+14%	-30%	-21%
Shared room	1	0	0	0	-100%	n.a.	-100%
Avg annual revenue	\$5,929	\$2,939	\$4,076	\$8,239	-50%	+180%	+39%
Total market ('000s)	\$462	\$303	\$465	\$890	-35%	+194%	+92%
Commercial STRs*	38	35	44	47	-8%	+34%	+24%

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

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

Source: derived from AirDNA data

## 4 Housing Shortage

Based on demographic modeling results (see **Provincial Report** for details), the municipality does not currently have a housing shortage (as of the end of 2022).<sup>2</sup>

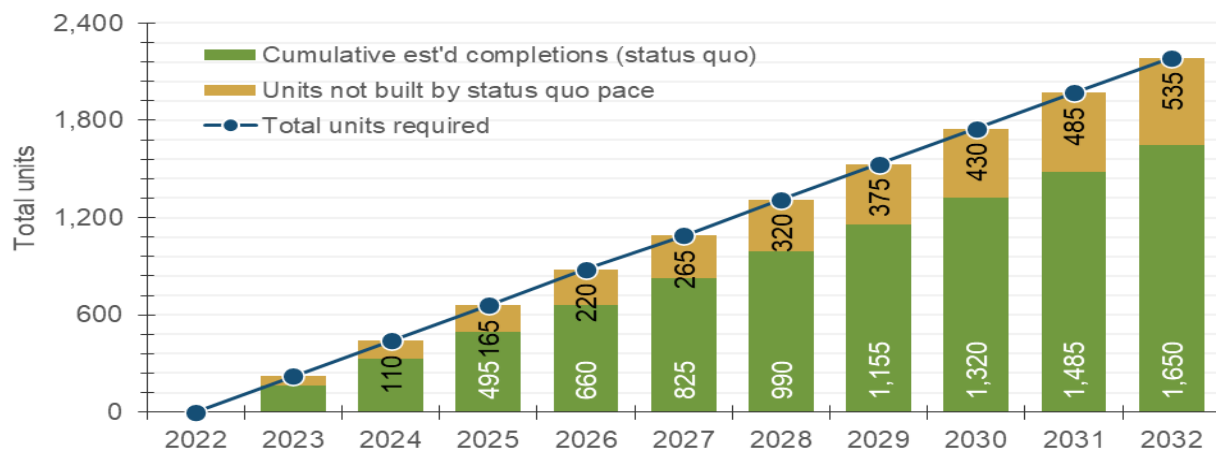
Figure 4.1 offers a high-level summary of the trajectory of the housing shortage over the next ten years under a base population growth scenario provided by Nova Scotia’s Department of Finance and Treasury Board.

While there may not be an existing shortage, in five years the municipality may have a total dwelling demand of about 1,090 units, which could grow to 2,185 by 2032. Note that this estimate represents the sum of all units, be they rented or owned in terms of their tenure, or market or non-market housing.

Based on the recent pace of construction, supply and demand may grow together. About 165 new units could be completed annually over the ten years, based on assumptions using historical data trends, versus 220 annual units of demand. That leaves a remaining gap of 265 units by 2027.

By 2032, the remaining gap after status quo construction could be 535 units. Note that status quo construction follows the method used in the provincial report, being average historical permits adjusted by 5% to account for permit withdrawals or cancellations. Results are rounded to the nearest 5.<sup>3</sup>

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



<sup>2</sup> The allocation of unit shortages is based on results for the Census Division, apportioned to its respective municipalities based on their share of local household change between 2016 and 2021.

<sup>3</sup> All municipalities use the same approach for consistency. However, for smaller municipalities, the combination of fewer units permitted and rounding practices can under or over represent anticipated construction activity. As such, greater attention should be directed to the projected demand, instead of anticipated supply, which can be later cross-reference with internal municipal data.



Table 4-1 summarizes possible guides for constructing unit sizes over the next five years. As previously described, about 1,090 units to meet demand by 2027. Based on historical preferences,<sup>4</sup> about 30% could be studio/1-bedroom dwellings (330 units), 40% 2-bedroom dwellings (440), and 30% 3+ bedroom dwellings (320). This includes the existing unit shortfall.

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

	Total	Studio + 1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3+ bedroom
<b>A:</b> Current shortfall (end of 2022)	0	0	0	0
<b>B:</b> Anticipated demand by <b>2027</b>	1,090	330	440	320
<b>C:</b> Total units required by <b>2027</b> (A + B)	1,090	330	440	320
<b>D:</b> Anticipated 5 year supply (status quo pace*)	825	250	335	245
<b>E:</b> Total shortfall	265	80	105	80
<b>F:</b> Total extra units required annually (E / 5 years)	55	15	20	15

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

It is important to identify the primary limitation of the model: it cannot consider what impacts of nearby community growth might have locally. Specifically, East Hants' market condition is significantly related to the nature of the Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM's) balance of supply and demand.

*"We're undergoing a massive population boom. [The municipality is] in the midst of developing homes for 10,000 new people which represents a 40% growth. And even that amount of development doesn't feel like enough to deal with the boom."*

The HRM's current shortage is 17,500 units, which inevitably means that those who cannot afford HRM prices or cannot find supply that meets their needs seek alternatives elsewhere. This includes East Hants, which has experienced elevated growth in its supply in response to new demand. Given the nature of HRM's market and

<sup>4</sup> In this case, unit sizes reflect the preference for unit size, not the historical distribution of unit sizes in the existing inventory. Briefly, historical distributions of household sizes by household family types are used to estimate required bedrooms. The estimated share of unit sizes is then distributed into forecasted demand calculations. More explanation about how preference distributes can be found in the Housing Shortage section of the Provincial report.

considerable shortage to overcome, it would be reasonable to target housing construction in excess of the above projected dwelling demand over the foreseeable future.

# 5 Housing Affordability



Municipality’s public survey responses

*"There are seniors who can no longer afford the houses they're living in. Canada pension is not enough, when everything costs more these days. People are having to choose between heat and food - which bill do I pay?"*

*"People with 'reasonable' income, are stuck in the middle, and unable to qualify for rent subsidies and unable to afford homes."*

## 5.1 Homeownership

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

### 5.1.1 Market Activity

Median sale prices across Nova Scotia have seen increases since 2016. The District of East Hants’s median sale price has increased from \$189,320 to \$377,340 between 2016 and 2022. This represents a 99% change in median sale price.

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

	Price				Percent Change		
	2010	2016	2019	2022	'10-'16	'16-'19	'19-'22
Total	\$166,190	\$189,320	\$215,000	\$377,340	+14%	+14%	+76%
Single	\$177,495	\$199,835	\$229,600	\$391,920	+13%	+15%	+71%

Source: NSAR MLS®

### 5.1.2 Homeownership Affordability

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

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

		2022 median sale price:			\$391,920
		% of HHs below income level			Single Detached Dwelling
Income level	Attainable sales price	Couples	Lone parents	Single persons	
\$80,000	\$239,000	36%	70%	89%	no
\$85,000	\$254,000	40%	74%	91%	no
\$90,000	\$269,000	44%	79%	92%	no
\$95,000	\$284,000	48%	82%	93%	no
\$100,000	\$299,000	53%	84%	94%	no
\$105,000	\$314,000	56%	87%	95%	no
\$110,000	\$329,000	60%	88%	96%	no
\$115,000	\$344,000	63%	91%	96%	no
\$120,000	\$359,000	66%	93%	96%	no
\$125,000	\$373,500	69%	94%	97%	no
\$130,000	\$388,500	72%	95%	97%	no
\$135,000	\$403,500	75%	95%	97%	yes
\$140,000	\$418,500	77%	97%	97%	yes

Homeownership	Total Dwelling	Single Detached Dwelling
Est'd income needed to buy median home	\$126,200	\$131,100
<b>% of total households below income</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>80%</b>

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

<sup>5</sup> Since Census Division data is used, readers will notice estimate similarities between municipalities belonging to the same Census Division.

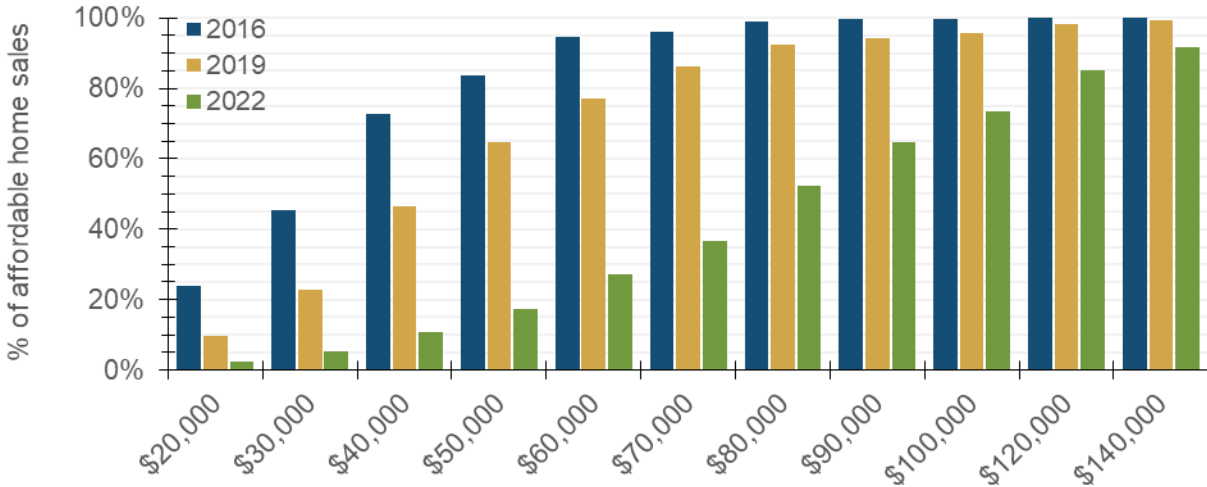
Lone parents and single persons are least likely to have income levels necessary to afford to own a home – at least 95% of lone-parent households and 97% of single-person households fall below the income levels necessary to afford the median single-family home.

About 78% of all local households earned an income below what would be needed (around \$126,200) to purchase the median home in 2022. This highlights the importance of housing interventions to address the shortage identified above in order to reduce typical housing prices to reasonably affordable levels.

Figure 5.1 presents the levels of affordability for respective household income levels for 2016, 2019, and 2022 for Hants Census Division (no data is specifically available for the District of East Hants). It illustrates the percentage of home sales in each year that would be affordable (30% of household income) at a given income level.

While there were already signs of decreasing affordability from 2016 to 2019, the municipality suffered a significant shock from 2019 to 2022. For instance, a \$70,000 income could afford 86% of home sales in 2019. In 2022, this fell to 37%.

Figure 5.1: Estimated % of Households that Can / Cannot Afford Typical Sale Prices, Hants Census Division



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

## 5.2 Rental Market

### 5.2.1 Market Activity

Table 5-3 reports the rental data for the District of East Hants. The overall median rent in 2021, per CMHC data, was \$1,050. This is an increase of 31% from 2018. There has been a 43% increase in 1-bedroom units, a 40% increase in 2-bedroom units, and a 26% increase in 3+ bedroom units.

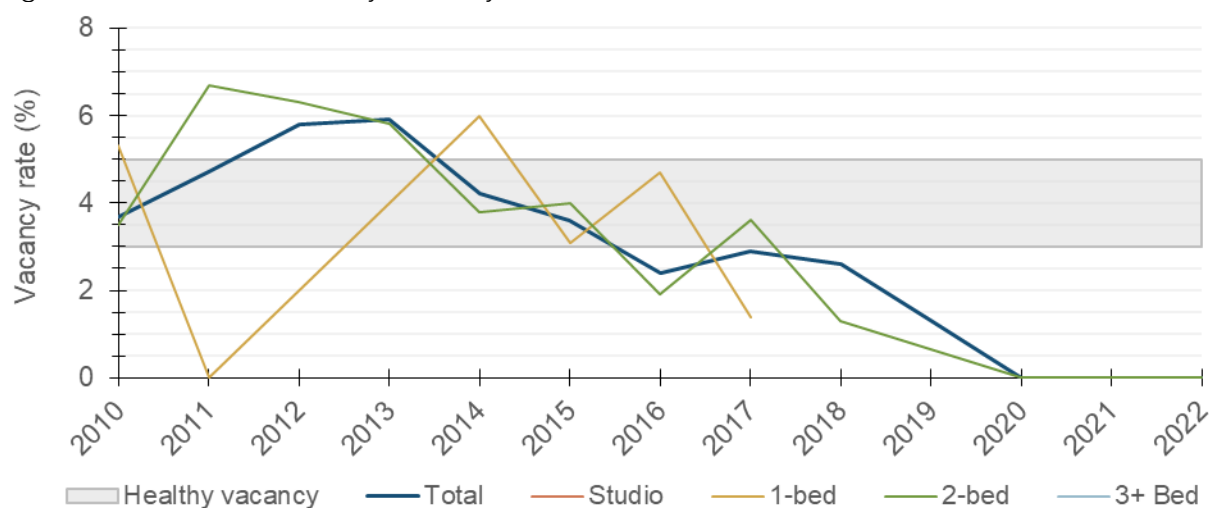
Table 5-3: Median Rents by Unit Size & Select Years

	Price				Percent Change		
	2010	2016	2019	2022	'10-'16	'16-'19	'19-'22
Total	\$695	\$800	\$900	\$1,050	+15%	+13%	+17%
Studio	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1-bed	\$575	\$650	\$700	\$825	+13%	+8%	+18%
2-bed	\$715	\$875	\$1,000	-	+22%	+14%	-
3+ bed	\$775	\$875	\$975	-	+13%	+11%	-

Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey

The District of East Hants's vacancy rate has gone from 2.6% to 0% between 2018 and 2021. This very closely follows the downtrend of vacancies across the province, in both timeframe and magnitude.

Figure 5.2: Historical Vacancy Rates by Unit Size



Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey

## 5.2.2 Rental Affordability

Table 5-4 details the percentage share of **renter** households, divided by household type and income levels, that can afford 2022 median rent for various unit types. As with ownership, lone-parent and single person households face the highest income barrier to affordability. About 38% of lone-parent households and 72% of single person households fall below the income level required to afford the median rent for a studio apartment in 2022.

It should be noted that the affordability is reported based on the ability to afford the rent for the entire unit, not split between tenants. Furthermore, the affordability threshold is the same used by Statistics Canada and CMHC - 30% of before-tax

household income spent on shelter costs. Shelter cost calculations include the direct and indirect costs related to shelter. More detail is provided in the **Provincial Report**.

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

		2022 median rent:			\$825
		% of HHs below income level			1-bed
Income level	Attainable rent	Couples	Lone parents	Single persons	
\$20,000	\$330	0%	5%	18%	no
\$25,000	\$420	0%	10%	38%	no
\$30,000	\$500	0%	15%	49%	no
\$35,000	\$590	4%	23%	56%	no
\$40,000	\$670	9%	29%	66%	no
\$45,000	\$750	12%	38%	72%	no
\$50,000	\$840	17%	45%	79%	yes
\$55,000	\$920	20%	57%	85%	yes
\$60,000	\$1,000	26%	64%	89%	yes
\$65,000	\$1,090	29%	66%	92%	yes
\$70,000	\$1,170	38%	71%	93%	yes
\$75,000	\$1,260	43%	78%	94%	yes
\$80,000	\$1,340	50%	81%	94%	yes

Renting	Total Renter	1-bed
Est'd income needed to rent median unit	\$62,700	\$49,300
<b>% of renter households below income</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>44%</b>

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Custom Census 2021 tables, CMHC Rental Market Survey

Approximately 61% of local renter households earned an income below what would be needed (about \$62,700) to afford the median rental unit. Readers will notice that the financial barriers to own appear to be significantly higher than to rent. While this may be the case, it is important to recognize the data source impacts to this discussion.

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

## 6 Housing Need

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

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

### 6.1 Housing Need by Tenure & Indigenous Identity

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

In the District of East Hants, overall households living in unaffordable dwellings decreased by 3% between 2016 and 2021. Those living in unsuitable dwellings increased by 5% and those living in inadequate dwellings increased by 5%. Along with respective increases of 7% and 18% between census periods, 27% of all renter households and 12% of Indigenous households lived in unaffordable dwellings as of 2021.

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

		Total	Owner	Renter	Indigenous
Total Households:		9,175	7,430	1,740	565
Households living in <b>inadequate</b> conditions	Total households	710	615	95	60
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	+5%	+5%	+12%	+100%
	Share of households	8%	8%	5%	11%
Households living in <b>unsuitable</b> conditions	Total households	230	155	70	15
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	+5%	-6%	+27%	-
	Share of households	3%	2%	4%	3%
Households living in <b>unaffordable</b> conditions	Total households	1,145	675	465	65
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-3%	-9%	+7%	+18%
	Share of households	12%	9%	27%	12%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables



Table 6-2 shows the municipality's households currently meeting the conditions of Core Housing Need and those in deep unaffordability, as well as the changes in those categories between 2016 and 2021. Since 2016, there has been an 11% decrease in overall Core Housing Need, with decreases across the tenure but increases for Indigenous Identity. Notwithstanding, 6% of all households faced core need in 2021.

Since 2016 there has been an overall decrease of 19% to households living in deep unaffordability, but 8% of all renters and 3% of Indigenous households remain in these conditions.

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

		Total	Owner	Renter	Indigenous
Total Households:		9,175	7,430	1,740	565
Households living in <b>Core Housing Need</b>	Total households	550	315	240	35
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-11%	-10%	-9%	40%
	Share of households	6%	4%	14%	6%
Households living in <b>deep unaffordability</b>	Total households	310	170	140	15
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-19%	-19%	-22%	-25%
	Share of households	3%	2%	8%	3%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

## 6.2 Housing Need by Household Type

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

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

Lone parents also faced considerable housing challenges, reporting the highest rate of unsuitability (5%) and the second highest rate of unaffordability (20%).

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

		Couple w/o child(ren)	Couple w/ child(ren)	Lone parent	Single / roommates
Total Households:		2,880	2,490	835	2,385
Households living in <b>inadequate</b> conditions	Total households	165	140	90	275
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	0%	+8%	+20%	+28%
	Share of households	6%	6%	11%	12%
Households living in <b>unsuitable</b> conditions	Total households	-	85	40	15
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-	-15%	+14%	-
	Share of households	-	3%	5%	1%
Households living in <b>unaffordable</b> conditions	Total households	240	90	170	625
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	+26%	-45%	-19%	+6%
	Share of households	8%	4%	20%	26%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

Since 2016, single persons / roommate households living in Core Housing Need increased 3%, reaching a 14% share of all related households in 2021. Lone parents reported the most prevalent core need (15%), despite a 14% decrease between census periods. Further, 9% of single persons lived in deeply unaffordable conditions as of 2021, as well as reporting a 17% increase.

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

		Couple w/o child(ren)	Couple w/ child(ren)	Lone parent	Single / roommates
Total Households:		2,880	2,490	835	2,385
Households living in <b>Core Housing Need</b>	Total households	60	30	125	330
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-20%	-45%	-14%	+3%
	Share of households	2%	1%	15%	14%
Households living in <b>deep unaffordability</b>	Total households	50	-	40	205
	<i>Change since 2016</i>	-23%	-	-62%	+17%
	Share of households	2%	-	5%	9%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

# 7 Demographic Profile

## 7.1 Population

### 7.1.1 Current Population

Between 2016 and 2021, the population of the District of East Hants increased by 6%, compared to the provincial growth rate of 5%. Table 7-1 below illustrates the municipality's population change compared to provincial changes.

The municipality grew across most of the defined age cohorts between 2016 and 2021 (except for youth aged 0- to 14-years old), led by particularly strong growth among those aged 65 or older.

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

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

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
Municipality of the District of East Hants	Total	3,850	2,475	5,705	7,340	4,040	325	23,735
	Share	16%	10%	24%	31%	17%	1%	100%
	5yr %Δ	-2%	+1%	+7%	+1%	+26%	+27%	+6%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016 and 2021

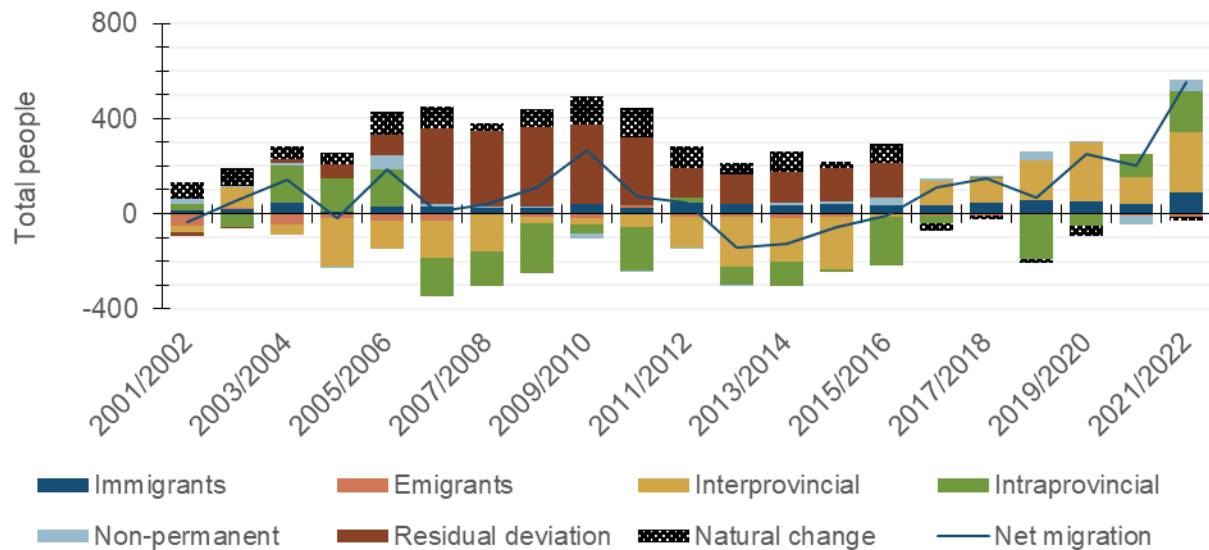
**Important note:** Readers will not see the total population or the corresponding age cohorts (as shown in the above table) on the East Hants Statistics Canada Census Profile. An update to the total population count was performed by Statistics Canada in May 2023, which increased the 2021 total from about 22,890 to 23,735. However, no amendments were provided for individual age cohorts. As such, this report applies the original proportion of each age cohort to the corresponding total to the new overall population. Actual results may differ in real situations.

### 7.1.2 Migration

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

Between 2016 and 2021, the Census Division's net-migration steadily increased to a two-decade high in 2021/2022 at a total of 551 newcomers. Not all newcomers will move to one place and could be distributed across the region.

Figure 7.1: Historical Components of Migration, Census Division



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0140

### 7.1.3 Anticipated Population

The municipality’s anticipated population is derived from applying the historical share of local total populations (adjusted to reflect the amended total population) by age cohort to the regional projections by age cohort produced by the Department of Finance & Treasury Board (FTB) in February 2023. In other words, results assume that the municipality will represent the same share of the region’s population over the projection horizon.<sup>6</sup> This does not consider nuanced population changes by community.

Estimates suggest that total population was 24,005 in 2022, with a projected increase of 2% between 2022 and 2027. Senior populations should increase during that time, with decreases mostly occurring among non-senior populations. Even so, the 0- to 14-year-olds cohort may expand 2% over the five-year period.

Growth from 2027 to 2032 may be of a greater magnitude (6%) compared to the previous five years, with growth being well distributed across all age cohorts. The 25- to 44-year-old cohort see significant expansion, with a corresponding increase in youth (0- to 14-year-olds). This demonstrates a short-term need to house senior age groups, but a long-term need to meet the needs of expanding families.

<sup>6</sup> Since a municipality represents the same share of its region (i.e., Census Division) over time for projections (population and households), similar rates of growth will exist for each of the municipalities within the region. Therefore, readers reviewing multiple reports may notice a likeness between them.

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

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2027	Total	3,975	2,515	5,550	7,160	4,990	405	24,595
	Share	16%	10%	23%	29%	20%	2%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+2%	-1%	-4%	-2%	+19%	+21%	+2%

		0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2032	Total	4,230	2,605	5,855	7,400	5,460	530	26,080
	Share	16%	10%	22%	28%	21%	2%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+6%	+4%	+5%	+3%	+9%	+31%	+6%

Source: derived Department of Finance & Treasury Board February 2023

## 7.2 Households

### 7.2.1 Current Households

Table 7-3 illustrates the distribution of household types and household sizes in the District of East Hants. The tables show tenure splits for each, as well as the 5-year percent change in those populations.

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

		Couple w/o Child	Couple w/ Child	Lone Parent	Non-census*	Other**	Total
Household Type	Total	2,935	2,520	860	2,465	605	9,375
	Owner	85%	92%	69%	69%	83%	81%
	Renter	15%	8%	31%	31%	17%	19%
	5yr %Δ	-2%	-3%	+19%	+10%	+21%	+4%

		1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person	5+ person	Total
Household Size	Total	2,205	3,715	1,560	1,285	610	9,375
	Owner	69%	82%	84%	89%	91%	81%
	Renter	31%	18%	16%	11%	9%	19%
	5yr %Δ	+10%	+2%	+5%	-1%	-2%	+4%

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

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

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

In 2021, households tenures were split into 81% owners and 19% renters. Households classified as “other” have seen the largest increase, with 21% since 2016. Noteworthy is the 10% increase in non-census (i.e., single person or roommate) households given their significant cohort size. Households in the District of East Hants are also getting smaller with a 14% increase in 1-person households between census periods.

Table 7-4 summarizes the total household maintainers in 2021, their tenure split, and how they might have changed since 2016. **Important** is that this table makes the same adjustment as population, proportionally increasing each maintainer cohort to match the adjusted 2021 household total (as amended in May 2023).

The primary household maintainer is the person within a household who pays the rent, mortgage, taxes, or other major expenses for the dwelling. For households in which multiple incomes are present, the first name listed on a census questionnaire is taken to be the primary maintainer.

Table 7-4: Households Maintainers by Tenure (2021 adjusted) & Five-Year Percentage Change

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
Household Maintainer Age	Total	175	2,760	4,095	2,455	255	9,750
	Owner	29%	78%	86%	81%	71%	81%
	Renter	71%	22%	14%	19%	29%	19%
	5yr %Δ	-10%	+6%	+1%	+22%	+38%	+8%

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Census 2016 & 2021 Tables

Between 2016 and 2021, there was an increase of 8% to total households. Mirroring trends for population, growth was most acute among senior-led households, followed by notable growth among 25- to 44-year-olds cohort.

### 7.2.2 Anticipated Households

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

Estimates suggest that total households reached 9,845 in 2022, with a potential increase of 3% from 2022 to 2027 (275 total). Household losses should predominantly occur among young adult households (led by 15- to 24-year-olds). The greatest rate of growth should be among senior-led households.

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

relative growth. From 2022 to 2032, about 790 new senior-led households might choose to live in the municipality, again reinforcing the need for senior appropriate or generally accessible housing over the foreseeable future.

Table 7-5: Anticipated Households by Maintainer Age and Five-Year Percent Change

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2027	Total	160	2,700	3,995	2,950	315	10,120
	Share	2%	27%	39%	29%	3%	100%
	5yr %Δ	-11%	-3%	-2%	+16%	+21%	+3%

		15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 84	85+	Total
2032	Total	160	2,870	4,125	3,160	435	10,750
	Share	1%	27%	38%	29%	4%	100%
	5yr %Δ	+0%	+6%	+3%	+7%	+38%	+6%

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

## 8 Conclusion

The above information provides context for the District of East Hants's housing conditions. Significantly increased demand - brought on by a surge of in-migration and influence from the HRM - has resulted in higher-than-expected local housing prices, for both rental and ownership markets.

While there is no estimated unit shortage in East Hants (as of the end of 2022), projections suggest that there could be a 1,090-unit demand by 2027 and 2,185 by 2032.

Based on current construction trends, about 165 new units are estimated to be introduced into the market annually over the next five years, leaving a remaining gap of 265 units by 2027. Unless completions increase over the next few years, ongoing local housing trends ought to be expected to continue or worsen.