Housing Needs Assessment

City of Cambridge

SHS Inc. ● April 2025

Contents

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1 Introduction

This section includes the following sub-sections:

- *Project Background*
- *Study Purpose*

Project Background

The City of Cambridge sought a Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Strategy (the Strategy) to determine the near and long-term demand for housing and the current gaps observed across the housing continuum. The objectives of this study were to:

- Provide a measured assessment of present and future unmet housing demand from now to 2051, which addresses the entire housing continuum;
- Evaluate the success and challenges of existing affordable housing;
- Provide clear guidance on what, where, and how housing needs and gaps can be addressed through the future Affordable Housing Strategy;
- Provide the necessary background information and supporting analysis to inform the policy directions of the City's new Official Plan and make informed policy recommendations to develop new and updated Official Plan policies, as required; and
- Ensure that there are sufficient housing options in the City to meet the full spectrum of housing needs to the year 2051.

// Project Background

Study Purpose

A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) provides a systematic and quantified analysis of housing needs in a community. This assessment aims to link the supply of housing with the need for housing.

Housing Needs Assessments help all levels of government understand the local housing needs of communities – how they may relate to infrastructure priorities - by providing the data necessary to determine what kind of housing needs to be built and where.

This HNA will address the requirements of these reports under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). Under the HAF, the Government of Canada currently requires funding recipients to complete an HNA by year 3 of the program, if one has not already been completed within two years of the 2022 federal budget announcement (April 7, 2022). Once an HNA has been completed as a federal program requirement, a community will not be required to complete a new one for other Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada programs, other than to update it every five years.

The Strategy will help decision makers, stakeholders and community members have a meaningful sense of the housing market, understand key issues and provide policy recommendations to inform decision making.

The following components will be completed throughout this study:

Background Research
The policy context, including applicable legislation from all levels of government, strategies, and plans, will be reviewed and detailed.

Public Engagement
Qualitative data from engagement with residents, including an online survey, and elected officials will be incorporated.

Housing Needs Assessment
Assesses the current housing demand and supply in Cambridge to inform housing insights to be addressed in the Strategy.

Housing Strategy and Action Plan
Formulates a made-in-Cambridge approach for community-specific housing priorities, policy alternatives, and intervention strategies.

2 Key Housing Insights

Key Housing Insights

The Housing Needs Assessment has identified key trends and challenges shaping the current and future housing conditions in the City of Cambridge. The findings highlight the mismatch between existing housing supply and the needs of current and future residents of Cambridge.

Building on these trends, this Key Housing Insights section examines the demand for housing is not currently being met by the supply within the housing stock in Cambridge. By comparing current housing availability, affordability, and suitability with projected needs, this analysis identifies potential shortfalls across housing types, tenure options, and affordability levels for a range of household compositions and income levels.

This analysis serves as a foundation for evidence-based decision-making, informing municipal strategies and housing policies aiming to address these housing.

The following ***Key Housing Insights*** were identified through this Housing Needs Assessment:

- *There is a need for an **increased supply of rental units** to match renter household growth and increase affordability for these renters.*
- *There is a need for an **increased supply of community housing, including supportive units,** to meet the demand for affordable and supportive housing accommodations in the City*
- *There is a need for **affordable housing for young households** looking to work and form new households*
- *There is a need for **suitable and affordable housing options for aging households** in Cambridge*
- *There is a need for **diverse housing types** to provide options for households looking to start or grow their family*

How to read this section:

Key Trends will outline and summarize the ***Key Takeaways*** that were identified throughout the Housing Needs Assessment report. These **Key Trends** were observed through quantitative and qualitative trends in the community. For more data or context for the data that informed these **Key Trends**, please refer to the corresponding section within the Housing Needs Assessment report.

Housing Gaps Analysis will distill the conclusions and provide the final takeaways for the ***Key Housing Insight***. This **Housing Gaps Analysis** will analyze how the ***Key Takeaways*** found throughout the Housing Needs Assessment relate to potential solutions to address the ***Key Housing Insight***.

Key Statistics will augment the ***Key Trends*** outlined throughout the section. These **Key Statistics** are data points that can be found within the Housing Needs Assessment report and aim to highlight the key figures and trends that inform the ***Key Housing Insight***. For more context surrounding the **Key Statistics** used in this section, please refer to the corresponding section within the Housing Needs Assessment report.

// Key Housing Insight #1:

There is a need for an increased supply of rental units

Key Trends Summary:

- **Renter households drove household growth** in the City of Cambridge in recent years, outpacing the growth of owner households in both absolute terms and growth rate between 2016 and 2021.
- The size of the primary rental market universe in Cambridge was much smaller than comparable municipalities in the region. **Growth in purpose-built rental units has been insufficient** given the recent growth in renter households in the City. The lack of new primary market units has led to renters relying on the secondary rental market in Cambridge for housing.
- Renter households were **more likely to be facing housing affordability issues and be in core housing need relative** to households who owned their homes. Renter households were much more likely to be living in unsuitable housing in core housing need.
- The lack of new rental supply, and high prices for new supply introduced, has tightened the rental market in Cambridge, leading **to dramatic increases in rent prices and low vacancy rates** over the last decade.

Housing Gaps Analysis

- The City of Cambridge, as a part of one of the fastest growing regions in the country, is **expected to continue recent trends of population growth**. In recent years, this population growth has led to an increase in households that is **driven by households who rent their homes**. The supply of purpose-built rental housing in Cambridge, already insufficient to accommodate the renters in the city, has not grown at a pace proportional to the demand for rental units. The number of purpose-built rental units that contain three or more bedrooms has been cut in half relative to the universe in the 1990’s. **There is a lack of variety within the primary rental market**.
- Rental housing is typically associated with apartments, a dwelling type that was more likely to be considered unsuitable in Cambridge. This likely indicates **households are settling for units that are too small for their household composition due to the lack of available or affordable rental accommodations in their community**. Developers have been less likely to build affordable units large enough for families, leaving renter households with larger families few affordable and suitable options on the market.
- The **lack of affordable and suitable supply of rental housing in Cambridge has led to negative housing outcomes for renter households**. Households who rent their home are disproportionately spending 30% or more of their gross household income on shelter costs and more likely to be in core housing need relative to owner households. Without a sufficient supply of affordable, suitable rental options, renters in Cambridge will seek accommodations on the secondary rental market where prices are higher and tenures are less stable.

// Key Housing Insight #1: *There is a need for an increased supply of rental units*

Background

Existing supply of rental units insufficient for current renters and future renter growth

While renter households only made up just one-third of the households in the City of Cambridge, recent household growth in Cambridge has been driven by the growth in households who rent their homes.

The supply of purpose-built rental units in Cambridge has historically been much smaller than comparable municipalities in Waterloo Region. The lack of rental supply has not been addressed through new development, as the number of new rental units added to the primary rental market has been insufficient, in magnitude and growth rate, for the recent growth of renter households.

Most renter households in Cambridge lived in apartments or row houses. Apartments make up a smaller proportion of the housing stock relative to comparable municipalities in the region. This lack of supply may be creating unsuitable housing conditions for those looking for rental accommodations. Apartment dwellings, particularly those in buildings with less than five storeys, were older and more likely to be considered unsuitable for the households residing in them. This may indicate a mismatch between the demand and the supply of rental units in Cambridge.

Key Statistics

Renter households driving household growth in Cambridge

Cambridge added **1,795 renter households (+12.7%)** between 2016 and 2021, outpacing the number of owner households added **(+1,235 owner households, +3.6%)**.

Primary rental universe growth lags renter household growth

In 2021, there were **15,955 renter households** in Cambridge and **6,196 units on the primary rental market**.

Between 2016 and 2021, **306 purpose-built rental units** were added.

Renters more likely to live in more dense housing types and unsuitable housing

Almost four-fifths (**78.9%**) of renter households lived in apartment dwellings or row houses in 2021.

Row houses (**9.2%**) and apartments (**7.8%**) were the most likely housing types to be considered unsuitable for the household residing in them.

// Key Housing Insight #1: *There is a need for an increased supply of rental units*

Background

Key Statistics

Tight rental market conditions have led to increased rent prices and decreased vacancy rates

Between 2014 and 2023, the average rent price across all unit sizes increased by **49.2%**. In 2022, the vacancy rate across the primary rental market was **1.4%**, including a vacancy rate of **0.2% for three- or more-bedroom units**.

Rental market conditions have led to increased core housing need rates for renters

In 2021, **21.2%** of renter households were in core housing need, relative to **4.1%** for owner households.

Renter households in core housing need fell below the **suitability standard** (**9.3%**) at approximately twice the rate that owner households did (**4.6%**).

Lack of supply has led to tight rental market, increased prices, and low vacancy rates

After an initial stagnation in rent prices in 2020 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, most municipalities, including Cambridge, have experienced a sharp increase in rent prices. Inflationary pressures, increased interest rates, population increases, and economic factors have all contributed to an increased demand for rental housing and tightening of the rental market in Cambridge. These impacts have led to sharp increases in rent prices and a decrease in vacancy rates across all unit sizes in Cambridge in recent years. Vacancy rates in Cambridge have indicated a tight rental market with little availability for over a decade.

Tightened rental market has led to increased housing affordability issues for renters

The rental market in Cambridge has led to renter households disproportionately facing housing affordability issues and living in core housing need relative to owner households. Increased demand for rental units has led to a gradual loss of more affordable rental units across the city. Renter households were much more likely than owner households to be living in unsuitable housing in core housing need, indicating the need for more affordable options with a suitable number of bedrooms to accommodate a range of renter household sizes.

// Key Housing Insight #2:

There is a need for an increased supply of community housing

Key Trends Summary:

- The **loss of affordable housing units**, particularly on the rental market, has left many low-income households without options for housing.
- The existing supply of community and affordable housing in Cambridge, provided by the Region of Waterloo and non-profit housing organizations, has **not met the level of demand in the community for this type of housing**. This is particularly true of **supportive or accessible housing demand**, as these housing types make up a very small proportion of community housing supply.
- The lack of housing that is affordable for low-income households has increased the demand for community housing in Cambridge. The **number of households on community housing waitlists** in the community has grown to a level that makes the pace of **new community housing development insufficient**.

Housing Gaps Analysis

- **Rental housing in Cambridge is becoming more unaffordable for low-income households in Cambridge over time**. In recent years, the city has lost units that would be considered affordable for low-income households through rent price increases and demolitions. **This loss of affordable units leaves these low-income households with little housing options on the market and has created an increased need for community housing in the city**.
- The existing supply of community housing lacks supportive and accessible housing units for those in need in Cambridge. The rate of **households with a member with an activity limitation in core housing needs indicates that the level of demand for housing that is affordable and meets the needs of these individuals is lacking in the existing supply**. These types of units foster inclusivity and independence for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and others with mobility challenges.
- The number of community housing units has increased in recent years in Cambridge, but not a sufficient pace to satisfy the growing demand for these units. The lack of **development of units affordable for low-income households will leave these households without viable options for a place to live**, potentially leading to increased rates of homelessness, including hidden homelessness, in Cambridge.

// Key Housing Insight #2: *There is a need for an increased supply of community housing*

Background

Naturally occurring affordable housing units are being lost

The municipality has experienced a loss of housing that would be considered affordable for low-income households, particularly on the rental market where they would typically seek accommodations. The income threshold for low-income renter households, or households within the first three income deciles, in 2020 was $40,000. This household would require rent of $1,000 or less per month to be considered affordable.

The increase in rent prices in recent years is likely due to the insufficient development of housing to meet the needs of a variety of income levels, as most new rental developments in Cambridge contained high-end rentals. This development pattern contributed to the tightening rental market. Considering the rental units with shelter costs of $2,000 or higher in 2021, over one-third were built between 2016 and 2021. This is particularly true for larger units, as developers less likely to build affordable units large enough for families, leaving renter households with larger families few affordable and suitable options on the market. Of the rental units built between 2016 and 2021 with three or more bedrooms, over four-fifths had rents above $2,000 per month.

Key Statistics

Rental units affordable for low-income renter households decreasing in Cambridge

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of rental units that were rented for $1,000 per month or lower had decreased to **5,190 units**, or a loss of **2,505 rental units** (**-32.6%**) affordable for low-income renter households.

There were **8,520 low-income renter households** in Cambridge in 2021.

New rental units are more likely to be expensive

Considering rental dwellings constructed between 2016 and 2021, **58.8%** were rented for **$2,000 per month or higher**. Renter households would need to be considered high-income to live in these units affordably.

Three- or more-bedroom units built during this period were the most expensive, as **83.5%** were rented for **$2,000 per month or higher**.

Background

Key Statistics

Core housing need rates higher for households with a member with activity limitations

Households containing at least one member with an activity limitation related to physical (**14.3%**), cognitive (**15.8%**), or mental health (**13.2%**) disabilities were more likely to be core housing need relative to all households (**9.3%**) in Cambridge.

Community housing waitlists indicates demand for this housing is not being met

The Active Waitlist for community housing located in Cambridge had **4,210 listed households** as of late 2024.

As of 2024, there were **959 Waterloo Region housing units** (**10 supportive units**) and **585 non-profit housing units** in Cambridge.

Lack of supply of supportive and accessible units

The current supply of supportive housing in Cambridge is insufficient for the level of demand. The incidence of core housing need among households with members with activity limitations indicates demand for affordable housing with supports are in need in Cambridge. These households are more likely to be in core housing need due to inadequate or unsuitable housing, likely indicating these households are willing to move to housing they can afford despite the need for major repairs or the lack of suitable number of bedrooms.

Development of new community housing insufficient for the level of demand

While the development of community housing is a priority of the Region of Waterloo, the current waitlist figures for households seeking affordable housing accommodations indicates that the supply of this housing has been insufficient.

The number of new community housing being created has been outpaced by the naturally occurring affordable housing that has been lost in recent years. These conditions increase the demand for community housing at a pace that is not sustainable, given the current rate of development for community and affordable housing in Cambridge.

// Key Housing Insight #3:

There is a need for affordable options for young households

Key Trends Summary:

- The Waterloo Region has experienced rapid population growth in recent years, including the City of Cambridge. Cambridge, one of the three major urban municipalities in the region, experienced population growth faster than provincial trends. However, **younger population age cohorts are not growing as fast** in Cambridge.
- There were **very few households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years** in Cambridge in 2021. Headship rates for this age cohort has decreased in recent years.
- Cambridge is an **employment source for workers throughout the Waterloo Region**. Cambridge had the lowest proportion of workers commuting to other municipalities within the Region in 2021.
- While households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the **highest share of households falling below two or more core housing need standards**.

Housing Gaps Analysis

- While population growth was occurring across all age cohorts in the City of Cambridge, the **youngest age cohorts were not growing as fast** as comparable municipalities in the Waterloo Region. These trends were occurring while household types that contain children were among the most common in Cambridge. **Declining headship rates for younger households indicate that household formation is becoming more difficult in Cambridge**. Younger adults may be living with family members longer or moving to another community for affordable housing accommodations.
- Without affordable housing accommodations, **households maintained by young adults were the most likely age cohort to be facing housing affordability issues**. These **households were the most likely to meet two or more standards for core housing need**, indicating that young adults are forced into housing that is unaffordable, unsuitable, and/or inadequate to remain in the community.
- The economic opportunities in Cambridge provide incentives for young adults to look for housing in the community**. Providing housing for these households should be a priority for Cambridge**, as it looks create communities where people can live, work, and play.

// Key Housing Insight #3: There is a need for affordable options for young households

Background

Younger population age cohorts growing slower in Cambridge

As the population of the City of Cambridge, and the Region of Waterloo, continued to grow in recent years, the growth of younger population cohorts in Cambridge fell behind growth trends for the Region. The proportion of the Cambridge population that was aged under 25 years was among the lowest in the region and fell below region-wide rates in 2021. This was not the case in 2016. However, Census families containing children (i.e., couples with children, lone-parent households, multiple family households, etc.) are just as common in Cambridge as they are in comparable municipalities in the region.

The number of households primarily maintained by someone aged under 25 years was smaller in Cambridge than comparable municipalities in the region, and less than half the region-wide share in 2021. Headship rates, or the ratio of the number of households by age to the population of adults by age in a community, for individuals aged 15 to 24 years has decreased in recent years.

These may indicate difficulty in household formation for younger adult populations in Cambridge. These individuals may be living with a family member or moving to another municipality to find more affordable housing accommodations.

Key Statistics

Growth of younger population age cohorts lagging in Cambridge

Cambridge had the second lowest proportion of population aged under 25 years (**29.8%**) in the Waterloo Region in 2021.

Between 2016 and 2021, the total population aged under 25 years in Cambridge **grew much slower** (**+2.5%**) relative to the City of Waterloo (**+12.4%**) and the City of Kitchener (**+7.4%**).

Households led by someone aged under 25 years are decreasing

Households maintained by an individual aged under 25 **made up just 1.6% of households in in Cambridge** 2021 (**815 households**), less than half the share for the Waterloo Region (**3.6%**).

The number of households maintained by someone aged under 25 years **decreased by 160 households** (**-16.4%**) between 2016 and 2021 in Cambridge. Headship rates for this age cohort **decreased from 5.9% in 2016 to 4.9% in 2021**.

Background

Key Statistics

Commuting patterns in the region indicate economic activity in Cambridge

The proportion of workers in Cambridge that commuted to their place of work within their municipality (**37.7%**) was the highest of any municipality in the Region (**28.6%**). .

Conversely, workers in Cambridge commuted to other municipalities in the Region at the lowest rate (**10.9%**) in 2021, lower than Region-wide trends (**20.7%**).

High rates of young households in core housing need meeting multiple standards

In 2021, **16.4%** of households maintained by an individual aged younger than 25 years were in core housing need, the **highest rate for any age cohort.**

While this age cohort did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the **highest share of households falling below two or more standards** (**19.2%**). This was almost double the rate city-wide (**10.4%**).

Economic opportunity in Cambridge should attract young household age cohorts

The City of Cambridge had a higher share of manufacturing, construction, and transportation and warehousing jobs among its labour force relative to the Region. These industries are long-term and would create conditions for households to seek housing accommodations within the community, potentially creating demand for affordable ownership housing.

According to commuting data, Cambridge is an employment source for workers throughout the Waterloo Region. Cambridge had the lowest proportion of workers commuting to other municipalities within the Region in 2021. Commuting into the city for work signals economic opportunity in Cambridge, but may also indicate unaffordable housing in the community causing younger households to move further away from their employment.

Lack of affordable options for younger households

Households maintained by someone aged under 25 years were more likely to be considered low-income relative to all households in Cambridge. Due to a lack of affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income households in the city, households maintained by younger adults were the most likely to be spending 30% of more of their household income on shelter costs. While households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the highest share of households falling below two or more standards.

// Key Housing Insight #4:

There is a need for suitable and affordable housing for aging households

Key Trends Summary:

- The **population of Cambridge is aging**. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and older is considerable, leading to higher average ages than the Region, and has grown in recent years.
- Households led by an adult aged 65 or older represented a quarter of the households in Cambridge. The growth of these households was the **fastest growth of any age cohort and the fastest growth of this age cohort** across municipalities in the region.
- The housing stock in the City of Cambridge was **predominantly large, single-detached dwellings** with three- ore more-bedrooms, especially relative to trends region-wide.
- Households maintained by an adult aged 65 years or older were **more likely to be considered low-income and in core housing need** relative to all households.

Housing Gaps Analysis

- As the population of the City of Cambridge continues to grow, **the aging of the population that has occurred in recent years is expected to continue**. These populations may require additional supports to remain in their community and age in place.
- The existing stock in Cambridge does not meet the needs for older adults as they look for options within their community to age in place. **The mismatch in supply appropriate for older adults may be contributing to housing unaffordability issues for these households in Cambridge**. Older adults were more likely to be in core housing need relative to all households in Cambridge, mostly due to housing unaffordability.
- **These trends point to the need for increased housing options**, such as affordable rental, or programs targeted at promoting aging in place (i.e., assisted living, accessible units, home renovation programs). For populations with higher levels of need, there may be a need for increased housing options that will provide deeper or more intensive levels of supports as care needs grow (i.e., long term care, campus of care models).

// Key Housing Insight #4: *There is a need for suitable and affordable housing for aging households*

Background

Aging population in Cambridge

The population in the City of Cambridge was, on average, older than the population region-wide, due to the proportion of the population that was aged 65 and older being among the highest share the region. Households maintained by an adult aged 65 or older made up over one-quarter of the households in Cambridge, higher than comparable municipalities in the region. These households have been the fastest growing age cohort in recent years in Cambridge with growth rates that exceed any age cohort in any municipality in the region.

Population projected to continue to age

According to population projections completed for this study, the age of the population in Cambridge is expected to continue these aging trends. This is particularly true for the population aged 75 or older, populations that have increased needs for either supportive housing or housing with supports to remain in their community.

Key Statistics

The population of Cambridge is aging and projected to continue to age

The population in Cambridge had a **higher average** (**40.0 years**) and **median** (**39.2 years**) **population ages** than the Region-wide population (39.4 years and 38.0 years, respectively).

This older population age was due to the proportion of the population that was **aged 65 and older** (**16.0%**), **among the highest share of this age cohort** in the region.

Population projections completed for this study forecast the population of people **aged 75 and older** will account for **15%** of the Cambridge population by 2035, an increase from **10.5%** in 2021.

Households maintained by adults aged 65 or older were the fastest growing

In 2021, **one quarter of the households in Cambridge were maintained by an adult aged 65 or older**, slightly higher than region-wide trends (**23.7%**). The growth of households maintained by this age cohort grew by 2,200 (**+20.8%**) between 2016 and 2021, the **fastest growth of any age cohort** and the **fastest growth of this age cohort in the region**.

Background

Key Statistics

Households maintained by an adult aged 65 or older split between large single-detached dwellings and smaller apartments

While **84.8%** of these older households contain **one or two people** in 2021, by far the highest rate for an age cohort, **53.0% live in single-detached dwellings**.

In 2021, **31.0% of households maintained by an adult aged 65 or older lived in an apartment dwelling**. The only age cohort to have a higher rate in these housing types were young households (55.8%).

Existing housing supply contributing housing affordability issues for older populations

In 2021, **52.5% of households maintained by an adult aged 65 or older were considered low-income households**. This was the **highest rate** for any age cohort in Cambridge.

These older households were more likely to be **core housing need** (**13.8%**) relative to all households (9.3%) in 2021 due to affordability issues.

Mismatch between demand and supply of housing for older populations

Single-detached dwellings made up over half of the housing supply in Cambridge in 2021.These dwellings are predominantly three- or more-bedroom dwellings. Single-detached dwellings were the most expensive dwelling type available on the housing market in Cambridge and typically require more maintenance to keep in adequate condition.

Households primarily maintained by an adult aged 65 or older were more likely to live in apartment dwellings relative to other age cohorts, other than households maintained by someone aged 25 years or younger. These older households were much more likely to contain two or less people and to be low-income relative to all households in Cambridge, although it should be noted that they are more likely to own assets, such as their home.

Housing conditions for older adults impacted by lack of affordable options

Households maintained by an adult aged 65 years or older were more likely to be core housing need relative to all households in Cambridge in 2021. This difference was due to the higher rate of these older households living in housing that was deemed unaffordable relative to all households in core housing need in Cambridge. The lack of community housing designated for seniors and available rental have contributed to the housing affordability issues faced by older households in Cambridge.

// Key Housing Insight #5:

There is a need for diverse housing types to match growth trends

Key Trends Summary:

- Population growth in the Waterloo Region has led to an **increase in households of a diverse range of sizes** in Cambridge. One-person and four- or more-person households were the fastest growing household sizes in recent years. These household size tend have dramatically different household incomes, limiting options for smaller, low-income households.

- The housing stock in Cambridge was **older than region-wide trends** and **predominantly large, single-detached dwellings,** the most expensive dwelling type available. Cambridge had the **lowest share of dwellings located in apartment buildings** relative to comparable municipalities in the region. Apartment dwellings and row houses were the most likely to be deemed unsuitable for the household occupying them.

- While housing completions and starts in Cambridge have historically been predominantly single-detached dwellings, there has been a **recent shift to more dense residential built forms**.

Housing Gaps Analysis

- **Household growth trends in Cambridge indicate the need for a diverse range of housing options to meet the demands of the growing population**. To meet this demand, the housing supply in Cambridge must continue to add housing options suitable for one-person households and larger household sizes, including households containing four or more people. Demographics that may have additional housing considerations, such as immigrant households and Indigenous-led households, require affordable and suitable housing accommodations in Cambridge.

- The **most common housing type in Cambridge, single-detached dwellings, are the most expensive housing types on the market**. While this housing is typically suitable for larger families, it is unaffordable for most household in the city. **Apartment dwellings, a more affordable housing option on the ownership market, are typically sized suitably for one-person households, but are not typically available for purchase and may be inaccessible to those looking to buy**. There appears to be a trend of households living in unsuitable conditions in apartment dwellings, possibly households with growing families who are unable to find larger but still affordable housing for their families. **The existing ownership market is currently unaffordable for even moderate-income households**.

- Recent development trends in Cambridge indicate increased construction of more dense housing types, such as row houses and apartments. These dwelling types offer more affordable options for households looking to buy. **There is an opportunity to use these development trends to pursue more dwellings suitable for families within these developments, providing housing options for a diverse range of households in the community**. As development increases, the opportunity presents to replace an aging housing stock with more adequate housing options for residents.

// Key Housing Insight #5: *There is a need for diverse housing types to match growth trends*

Background

Household growth in Cambridge shows growth in range of household sizes

As the population in Cambridge continued to grow, the number of households in the city has been increasing. This household growth was driven by one-person and four- or more-person households. These household sizes were the fastest growing between 2016 and 2021, indicating a need for a diverse range of housing options for singles and for households containing families with children.

Predominantly large, expensive existing housing stock

Single-detached dwellings made up over the half of the existing supply of housing in Cambridge in 2021. These dwellings, typically containing three or more bedrooms, are the most expensive dwellings types on the housing market. Historically, single-detached dwellings have been the most common dwelling type constructed in Cambridge, although this trend has begun to shift in recent years with the increased development of row houses and apartment dwellings.

These housing types, in their current size and price, are not suitable or affordable for one-person households in Cambridge. Although the large size of single-detached dwellings is more suitable for larger households, these price for these dwellings has exceeded the maximum price that moderate-income households can affordably pay, making these dwellings inaccessible to most families in Cambridge.

Key Statistics

Diverse range of household growth in recent years in Cambridge

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of **four- or more-person households** (**+1,055 households, +8.0%**) and **one-person households** (**+855, +7.8%**) grew at the **fastest rate**. This growth in one-person households was among the **fastest rates for municipalities in the region**.

Housing stock is predominantly made up of large, expensive single-detached dwellings

In 2021, over half of the dwellings in the Cambridge were **single-detached dwellings** (**29,110 dwellings, 56.8% of the housing supply**). This was a much higher proportion than comparable municipalities in the region.

The **average re-sale price for single-detached dwellings** in 2023 was **$746,600**, higher than **row houses** (**$631,500**) and **apartment dwellings** (**$484,600**)

Background

Key Statistics

Lack of row house and apartment dwellings suitable for large families

While **89.6%** of single-detached dwellings had **at least three bedrooms**, this was only true of **15.2% of apartments** in Cambridge in 2021.

Row houses (**9.2%**) and apartments (**7.8%**) were the most likely housing types to be considered unsuitable for the household residing in them.

Recent development trends indicate shift to more dense housing types

From 2014 to 2023, **row houses** (**38.9%**) and **apartments** (**32.9%**) were the **two most common housing types for new housing completions** in Cambridge.

Single-detached dwellings (**27.7% of completions**) have seen their share of housing completions **fall in recent years**.

More dense housing types offer more affordable options, but are not suitable

Among comparable municipalities in the region, Cambridge had the lowest proportion of dwellings located in apartments with five or more storeys. According to re-sale data, apartment dwellings are much more affordable than other dwelling types on the ownership market. However, these dwellings are the least available in Cambridge.

Apartment dwellings in Cambridge are unlikely to have three or more bedrooms, potential contributing to the higher rates of unsuitable dwellings within apartment structures as larger households seek a more affordable option despite the lack of bedrooms. There is currently a lack of options on the market for households looking for home ownership at prices between small apartments and large, expensive single-detached dwellings.

Recent development trends offer opportunity to provide more options for households

Residential development has increased in Cambridge in recent years, according to housing completions data from the CMHC Starts and Completions Survey. The number of units completed in 2023 was the highest total since at least 1990. Increases in housing completions in recent years has been due to an increase in row houses and apartment dwellings.

3 **Appendix I:** Housing Needs Assessment

This section includes the following sub-sections:

- *Methodology*
- *Community Profiles and Trends*
- *Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics*
- *Priority Groups*
- *Housing Profile*
- *Projected Housing Needs and Next Steps*
- *Use of Housing Needs Assessment in Long-Term Planning*

Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology used to inform the completion of this Housing Need Assessment. This includes detailed methodology, any assumptions used, and any necessary justification.

Methodology Overview

There are two main types of research relied on for this Housing Needs Assessment:

- **Qualitative research** such as interviews, policy analysis, and stakeholder engagement; and
- **Quantitative research** such as economic data, population, and household forecasts.

Both qualitative and quantitative aspects of this guidance document are equally important.

Qualitative Methodology

Consultation with stakeholder groups, such as residents of Cambridge, non-profit organizations, and other housing partners in the community, is critical to the development of a fulsome Housing Needs Assessment study. This consultation provides an opportunity to engage with groups throughout the community with differing backgrounds and perspectives, introducing qualitative data and input to provide additional context to the study.

This study will be informed by two phases of qualitative consultations:

- Identifying Needs
- From Needs to Opportunities

Identifying Needs:

This stage focuses primarily on understanding local community housing needs and will touch on some initial opportunity areas. Previous engagements in the community, including consultations completed by the City of Cambridge and the Region of Waterloo, will be relied on for qualitative analysis.

This phase will include a resident survey to provide a breadth of broad knowledge across demographic groups in the City. This survey would address existing housing needs, existing barriers, and priorities for addressing housing needs from the general public.

From Needs to Opportunities:

This stage serves as the bridge between describing local community needs and identifying promising opportunities to address housing gaps. Engagement participants will receive an overview of key messages from the resident survey and quantitative findings as a starting point for their conversations.

This phase will include future engagements with housing partners in the community. The methodology may be augmented to include full engagement activities.

Priority Groups Engagement

As a part of Waterloo Region's Corporate Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027, consultation with individuals estimated to be experiencing homelessness has been completed. The Region has completed Point-in-Time Counts, coordinated through the Reaching Home Program: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, with the most recent count taking place in 2024. This count was completed with support of more than 40 community partner agencies, including three hospitals, two correctional institutions, rural and Indigenous partners, in conjunction with Regional staff. All seven area municipalities in the Waterloo Region were included, including the City of Cambridge, spanning the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Chonnonton, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Community engagement and coordination efforts heavily focused on making contact with populations that have higher rates of hidden homelessness, including newcomers, Indigenous, veterans, women, and gender-diverse individuals.

// Methodology
Quantitative Methodology

Community Profiles and Trends

The **Community Profile and Trends** will highlight factors influencing housing demand, including an overview of population trends and characteristics.

This profile details demographic trends on the population found in the community.

The Data

The characteristics examined in this section include:

- **Population trends**, including population growth and population age trends, and mobility
- **Demographic information**, including immigration trends, Indigenous identity, and other demographic trends as applicable

Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics

The **Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics** in the community will highlight factors influencing housing demand, including an overview of household trends and affordability.

This profile includes trends regarding household income profiles and the economic profile for the labour force.

The Data

The characteristics examined in this section include:

- **Household characteristics**, including tenure, size, and composition, as well as characteristics of primary household maintainers
- **Household incomes**, including average incomes and income decile information
- **Economic characteristics**, including labour market trends, industries of employment, and commuting patterns
- **Housing affordability indicators,** including shelter-to-income ratio and core housing need

Priority Groups

This **Priority Populations** analysis of the community will highlight factors influencing priority population groups as defined by CMHC.

These populations may not be captured within the Statistics Canada community profiles. Trends impacting priority populations are crucial in determining the need for different types of supports for those in need in a community.

The Data

Census data does not disaggregate core housing need data by all priority populations, including veterans, individuals who identify as LGBTQ2S+, survivors of domestic violence, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

The characteristics examined in this section include:

- **Housing affordability indicators** for priority population groups
- **Incidence and severity of homelessness** in the community, including temporary and emergency relief resources available for those experiencing homelessness
- Housing needs of other priority population groups

Housing Profile

The **Housing Profile** of the community will highlight factors influencing housing supply, including the characteristics of the existing stock, new dwellings, and housing market trends.

Supply data will be compared against demand data to help determine the need for housing in the community.

The Data

The characteristics examined in this section include:

- The **existing housing stock**, including dwelling types, size, and the age and condition of the stock.
- **Non-market housing** (Supportive, transition, and emergency) stock characteristics
- **New Dwellings**, including housing starts and completions, demolitions, and planning application data
- **Market housing supply**, including ownership and rental prices, vacancy rates, and rental units
- **Affordability for owner and renter households**, comparing household incomes to existing market prices

Data Sources and Limitations

Source of Information

Unless otherwise stated, the data used in this report is from the Statistics Canada Census of Population to create a social-economic profile of the City of Cambridge. These robust statistics are gathered by Statistics Canada every five (5) years and provide a wealth of information. Custom Census data tabulations for 2016 and 2021 were acquired to supplement and enhance the publicly available data.

Housing statistics from CMHC, including the Rental Market Survey, Housing Starts and Completions Survey, and Market Absorption Survey, have been used extensively to help inform the assessment, due in large part to their reliability and reporting frequency. Most statistics from CMHC are reported no less than annually and there is typically only a modest lag in the publishing of this reported information after the data collection year. As a result, these data sets provide a snapshot of current trends and market conditions.

Additional data regarding local housing markets have been provided by the City of Cambridge, the Region of Waterloo, and other housing partners including non-market housing supply, emerging trends for key population groups, and local residential development activity.

Qualitative data from community consultations, including a resident survey, supplement the quantitative data reported throughout this report.

Data Limitations

Data limitations are commonly experienced in communities where the number of households being assessed is small. These limitations present themselves through data suppression and rounding practices. Data suppression typically impacts variables involving income, while ‘random rounding’ may impact variables with low totals. To ensure confidentiality, the Census values, including totals, are randomly rounded either up or down to a multiple of "5" or "10“ by Statistics Canada. With small samples, this rounding can have an impact on analysis. This will be identified throughout the document when it is applicable.

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Census of Population was tabulated using data that was impacted by the public health measures that were implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19. The Federal Government of Canada introduced COVID-19 income relief programs in 2020. These relief programs impacted household incomes through the provision of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) financial support for the year (2020) that was reported on for the 2021 Statistics Canada Census. While these incomes were correctly reported, this relief was not permanent and will likely not be available to households in the future.

Community Profile and Trends

In this section, community profile and trends are outlined at the population level. This profile begins the housing story through the lenses of the community and household profiles using both qualitative and quantitative data. This information includes past benchmarks, present figures, and current growth rates at a local, regional, and provincial level.

Overview

- **Municipal housing policy and regulatory context**, including municipal, regional, provincial, and federal policy and legislation that impacts housing
- **Population trends**, including population age trends, population mobility trends, and demographic trends

Municipal Regulatory and Policy Context

Housing in Canada operates within a framework of legislation, policies, and programs. This section provides an overview of the planning and housing policies at the Federal, Provincial, County and local level that influence residential development in the City of Cambridge.

This section includes a review of the following legislation, policies, and strategies as they relate to housing at various levels of jurisdiction.

Federal

- National Housing Act (1985)
- National Housing Strategy: A Place to Call Home (2017)
- Solving the Housing Crisis: Canada's Housing Plan (2024)

Provincial

- Planning Act (1990)
- Municipal Act (2001)
- Provincial Planning Statement (2024)
- Housing Services Act (2011)
- Development Charges Act (1997)
- More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan (2019)
- Changes to Provincial Legislation
    - Bill 108, More Homes More Choice Act, 2019
    - Bill 134, Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, 2023
    - Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024
- Community Housing Renewal Strategy

Regional and Local Municipal

- Region of Waterloo Regional Official Plan (2015)
- Region of Waterloo 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (Five Year Review)
- Region of Waterloo Affordable Housing Framework
- Region of Waterloo Master Housing Plan (2019)
- City of Cambridge Official Plan (2018)
- City of Cambridge Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (2016)
- City of Cambridge 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Federal Legislation, Policy, and Strategies

National Housing Act, 1985

The National Housing Act (NHA) is the principal legislation concerning housing in Canada. Its purpose is to facilitate access to housing finance and low-cost funding to promote new housing construction, the modernization of existing housing stock, the improvement of housing conditions, and the overall wellbeing of the housing sector within the Canadian economy. The Act is administered by CMHC and authorizes the Corporation to: administer mortgage loan insurance and guarantees, provide loans, subsidies, and guarantees for rental and student housing projects, undertake social housing projects with the Provinces, assemble and lease lands for residential development and the establishment of new communities, provide loans and funds for housing repairs and rehabilitation, and support housing research, community planning, and international support, among other priorities.

National Housing Strategy, 2017

Released in 2017, the National Housing Strategy (NHS) aims to ensure all Canadians have access to housing that is affordable and meets their needs. The NHS focuses on creating new housing supply, modernizing existing housing, and providing resources for community housing providers, housing innovation, and research. Funding programs administered under the NHS have changed over time.

Solving Canada’s Housing Crisis: Canada’s Housing Plan, 2024

In April 2024, the Government of Canada released Solving the Housing Crisis – Canada’s Housing Plan (the Plan). The Plan has three key target areas: building more homes, making it easier to rent or own a home, and helping Canadians who can’t afford a home.

In tandem with Budget 2024, the Plan earmarks funds for several new and existing funding programs. This includes expanded funds for the Housing Accelerator Fund for partnerships with additional municipalities, a major intention of which is to streamline permitting and promote new 'missing middle' and affordable housing. The Plan also introduced the new Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund, which aims to accelerate construction of critical housing infrastructure, and the Infrastructure for Housing Initiative, a financing tool for municipalities and Indigenous communities through the Canada Infrastructure Bank. The Plan further calls for the expansion or creation of funds for the development and preservation of affordable and non-profit housing (e.g. the Affordable Housing Funds, Rental Protection Fund, etc.) and homelessness prevention (e.g. Reaching Home, Interim Housing Assistance Program, etc.).

Many of the Plan's commitments are intended to be implemented in coordination with, and supported by, provincial, territorial, and local governments. Examples that may particularly impact municipalities include targeted funds towards the development of housing above shops and businesses, making use of publicly owned land for affordable and deeply affordable housing, updating the National Building Code to support more accessible, affordable, and climate-friendly housing, tying public transit funds to increased density, and providing a short-term rental enforcement fund.

The Plan further recommends commitments that provinces, territories, and municipalities can make to complement this Plan. These include incentives for the construction of purpose-built rental housing, limiting or waiving planning and development-related fees and charges, undertaking municipal zoning reforms to support densification and transit-oriented development, implementing stronger vacancy control, developing a framework to avoid bad faith renovictions and excessive rent increases, supporting non-market and community housing, expediting approvals and permitting processes, and enforcing regulations on short-term rentals.

Provincial Legislation, Policy, and Strategies

Planning Act, 1990

The Planning Act is the provincial legislative framework for land use planning in Ontario and establishes the authority of municipalities to regulate different uses of land and ensure that matters of provincial interest are taken into account by planning decisions. The Planning Act requires municipalities to adopt an official plan and establishes restrictions on the kinds and nature of policies that may be contained therein. It also authorizes municipalities to adopt zoning by-laws, among other forms of land use regulation, to implement the policies and objectives of their official plans and establishes timelines by which planning authorities must issue decisions regarding requested amendments to Official Plans and zoning by-laws.

Municipal Act, 2001

The Municipal Act, 2001 sets out the rules for all municipalities in Ontario (except for the City of Toronto, which is governed by the City of Toronto Act, 2006) and gives municipalities broad powers to pass by-laws on matters such as health, safety, and wellbeing, and to protect persons and property within their jurisdiction. The Act provides direction for land use planning purposes, but it does not directly legislate municipal official plans or zoning by-laws as these are governed by the Planning Act.

Section 163 of the Act sets out the definition and requirements for group homes within municipalities in Ontario. The Act defines group homes as "a residence licensed or funded under a federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of three to ten persons, exclusive of staff, living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who, by reason of their emotional, mental, social or physical condition or legal status, require a group living arrangement for their wellbeing."

The Act allows municipalities to enact business licensing by-laws for group homes if they permit the establishment and use of group homes under section 34 of the Planning Act. A business licensing by-law for group homes can require a license and impose licensing fees as conditions for establishing a group home.

Section 99.1 of the Act allows municipalities to prohibit and regulate the demolition of residential rental property and the conversion of residential rental property to an alternative purpose. However, this authority does not apply to residential rental property that contains fewer than six dwelling units. The More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 empowers the Minister to make new regulations regarding the powers of municipalities to regulate demolition and conversion of residential rental properties.

Section 106 of the Municipal Act, 2001 prohibits municipalities from directly or indirectly assisting any commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses. This includes giving or lending municipal property, guaranteeing borrowing, leasing or selling municipal property at below fair market value, or giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee. This prohibition does not apply to a municipal council exercising its authority under subsection 28 (6) (7) and (7.2) of the Planning Act (Community Improvement Plans) or section 365.1 of the Municipal Act,2001 (cancellation of taxes, environmental remediation).

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

On October 20, 2024, the new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS, 2024) came into effect and replaced the former Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS, 2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019. The new PPS 2024 is intended to be a streamlined, province- wide land use planning policy framework that builds upon the 'housing-supportive' policies of the former documents. The PPS, 2024 outlines the Province's policies on land use planning and is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act. It provides policy direction on land use planning to promote 'strong, healthy communities' and requires all local decisions affecting land use planning matters to be consistent with the PPS, 2024.

Provincial Legislation, Policy, and Strategies

Housing Services Act, 2011

The Housing Services Act is the legislative framework for the delivery of social housing and homelessness services in Ontario. The Act sets out requirements and regulations for service managers and housing providers concerning housing and homelessness plans and the administration of housing projects under legacy federal-provincial housing programs. It also regulates the activities of the Social Housing Services Corporation, which oversees the operation and financial management of social housing providers, including the pooling of capital reserves for investment purposes.

Development Charges Act, 1997

The Development Charges Act, 1997 regulates municipal authority to levy development charges, which are fees collected by municipalities to finance the capital costs of new infrastructure to accommodate residential growth such as roads and servicing infrastructure. Municipalities must complete a development charge background study and conduct statutory consultation before passing a development charge by-law.

More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan, 2019

More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan is the Province's plan to address Ontario's housing crisis. The plan does not contain specific actions or housing targets but rather high-level goals concerning "cutting red tape" in the form of reducing planning approval timelines and permitting fees and reforming land use regulation with the objective of permitting a wider range of housing options in different locations.

Recent Changes to Provincial Legislation Impacting Planning and Housing:

- *Bill 108, More Homes, More Choices Act, 2019*
  - This Act removed "soft services", such as parks, community centres, libraries, and other community facilities as eligible services under a development charges by-law and required such services to be financed through a new "community benefits charge" (CBC) regime based on land value post-planning approval. Further, municipalities are now required to prepare and undertake public consultation on a CBC strategy prior to adopting a new CBC by-law.
  - The CBC regime replaced the former density bonusing provisions under Section 37 of the Planning Act, as well as former requirements and municipal by- laws for parkland dedication.
- *Bill 134, Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, 2023*
  - This Act was introduced in the provincial legislature on September 28, June and received royal assent on December 4, 2023. The bill updated the affordable housing definition within the Development Charges Act, 1997.
- *Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024*
  - In June 2024, this Act received royal assent. The new legislation aims to support the provincial government's goal of building 1.5 million homes by 2031.
  - Some of the changes to the Planning Act that resulted from this legislation included:
    - Introducing a new 'use it-or-lose it' authority for municipalities to lapse unexercised draft plan of subdivision and site plan approvals;
    - Removing the planning application fee refund framework introduced through Bill 109;
    - Exempting public universities from planning approvals;
    - Limiting third-party appeals for approved official plans and zoning by-laws; and
    - Removing planning authorities from seven upper-tier municipalities.

Provincial Legislation, Policy, and Strategies

Community Housing Renewal Strategy

In 2019, the Ontario government announced a new Community Housing Renewal Strategy with $1 billion in funding to help sustain, repair, and build community housing and end homelessness. The Strategy includes the following elements:

- Removing penalties for tenants who work more hours or are completing post-secondary education;
- Simplifying rent calculations;
- Freeing up the waitlist by prioritizing tenants' first choice of unit they are offered;
- Ensuring rent calculations exclude child support payments;
- Imposing an asset limit for applicants; and
- Making housing safer by empowering housing providers to turn away tenants who have been evicted for criminal activity.

The Province has also launched three programs under the CHRS:

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)

COCHI provides funding to Service Managers to replace the federal Social Housing Agreement funding which expires each year beginning in April 2019; and,

Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)

OPHI provides flexible funding to all Service Managers and the two Indigenous Program Administrators to address local priorities in the areas of housing supply and affordability, including new affordable rental construction, community housing repair, rental assistance, tenant supports, and affordable ownership. Housing providers can dedicate a percentage of spending for supports that will keep people housed and prevent homelessness.

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

COHB program provides a direct, monthly benefit payment to eligible households to help pay their rents. The benefit is portable, which means a household may continue to receive the benefits even when moving to another rental address in Ontario. The program is jointly funded through the 2017 NHS Bilateral Agreement and is provincially delivered.

Regional Policies and Strategies

Region of Waterloo Regional Official Plan (2015)

On June 16, 2009, Regional Council passed By-law No. 09-025 to adopt a new Official Plan for the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (ROP). The new Regional Official Plan replaced the Region's previous Regional Official Policies Plan approved in 1995. This Plan represents a fundamental shift in shaping Waterloo Region towards a more balanced community structure, building from a strong, long standing planning policy framework that has supported substantial historical growth and change.

Diversified Housing Stock

Chapter 3 of the ROP outlines policies aimed to improve Livability in Waterloo Region. This includes planning for an appropriate range and mix of housing choices for all income groups (Objective 3.1). These policies are outlined in Section 3.A and aims for the provision of a full and diverse range and mix of permanent housing that is safe, affordable, of adequate size and meets the accessibility requirements of all residents, is important if the region is to maintain and enhance its quality of life. Policy 3.A.2 specifically outlines the requirement for local municipalities will plan to provide an appropriate range of housing in terms of form, tenure, density and affordability to satisfy the various physical, social, economic and personal support needs of current and future residents.

Residential Intensification

Section 2.D outlines Urban Area Development Policies that aim to focus most of the region's future growth. Lands within the Urban Area have the greatest capacity to accommodate growth and serve as the primary focus for employment, housing, cultural and recreational opportunities in the region.

Complete Communities

Policies 3.A.8 through 3.A.10 outline the Region's support for community housing and additional needs housing (formerly special needs housing) throughout Waterloo Region. Policy 3.A.10 requires additional needs housing to be permitted within all residential designations throughout local municipalities.

Retention of Existing Housing Stock

Policy 3.A.4 outlines requirements for the replacement of existing rental affordable housing in new developments, including vacancy rate limits (policy 3.A.4.a).

Affordable Housing

Policies 3.A.4 through 3.A.7 outline affordable housing policies for the Region. This includes requirements, where appropriate, for some developments to include affordable housing (policy 3.A.4) and the encouragement for municipalities to offer incentives to develop affordable housing locally (policy 3.A.6).

Policy 4.C.5 outlines the Region's desire to collaborate with local municipalities and the development industry to plan and build affordable housing.

Regional Policies and Strategies

Region of Waterloo 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (Five Year Review) (2019)

Developed and reviewed with community input, the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan) is adapted as needs change in the Region. In this five-year review, the Region outlined five (5) strategic directions:

1. Create more affordable and community housing
2. Retain and maintain the existing affordable housing stock
3. Facilitate the development of an appropriate range of housing options
4. Expand supports for people to find and secure housing
5. Improve access to housing and homelessness programs

Within these strategies, there are thirty-three (33) actions of the Plan focused on improving housing conditions in the Region.

Region of Waterloo Affordable Housing Plan

The Region of Waterloo's *Affordable Housing Plan* commits to making housing affordable for all. With the need for affordable housing growing, the Region is dedicated to increasing the number of affordable homes. For the purposes of this plan, housing is affordable when the household spends less than 30 per cent of their income on housing costs.

The plan aspires to develop up to 2,500 new homes over the next five years, increasing the affordable housing generated from an average of 50 units per year to 500 units per year.

The plan includes the following elements:

- Lands for Affordable Housing: using land to develop affordable housing
- Funding and Resources: including a procurement process to provide access to funding and land for developing affordable housing
- Community Engagement: seeking input and feedback from the community to realize this vision and meet objectives
- Cross Departmental Staff Support: building the right team to lead the ambitious plan

Region of Waterloo Master Housing Plan (2019)

The Waterloo Region Housing Master Plan maps out the vision for Waterloo Region Housing communities over the next two decades, including the creation of 638 affordable housing units in five communities.

The plan looks for ways to create more affordable housing in WRH communities. It was developed between 2017 and 2019 with help from the community. The plan would:

- Ensure that all WRH buildings are kept in good repair.
- Build 638 units on five WRH properties over 10 years to address the growing waitlist for housing and requests for transfer.
- Outline design guidelines for WRH

Municipal Policies and Strategies

City of Cambridge Official Plan (2018)

The Region of Waterloo approved the new Cambridge Official Plan (the OP), in part, with modifications, on November 21, 2012. The September 2018 consolidation includes Official Plan Amendments 1 through 35 to the 2012 Cambridge Official Plan. the City of Cambridge Official Plan, provides a long-range, comprehensive land use strategy for areas located within the municipal boundaries of the city. This document will provide the framework for land use decisions for all development and public works projects within the City of Cambridge for the next 20 years by protecting, managing and enhancing the natural environment, directing, influencing and managing growth patterns and facilitating the vision of the city.

Diversified Housing Stock

Within the *Residential Lands* section, the OP notes that the City will encourage the development of a wide range of housing unit types to accommodate the needs, preferences, and economic resources of the households in the city (policy 2.8.a).

Section 2.8.2 – *Range and Mix of Housing Types* outlines policies encouraging a range and mix of housing that is affordable, accessible and safe throughout the city.

Residential Intensification

Section 2.6.1 outlines policies dealing the *Intensification within the Built-up Area*, including meeting or exceeding the Regional reurbanization target (policy 2.6.1.1), areas of encouraged intensification (policy 2.6.1.2), and the goals of the planned intensification (policy 2.6.1.6).

Complete Communities

In Chapter 2, *Growth Management*, the OP outlines that the policies of this Plan are intended to plan and manage growth in accordance with the complete community concept (policy 2.1.1) This includes an appropriate mix of jobs, a range of housing options, access to local services, and access to a range of transportation options.

Community Core Areas are historical central business centres in the city that are planned to support the complete community concept (policy 2.6.3.1).

Retention of Existing Housing Stock

Within the *Residential Lands* section, the City notes it will pursue housing rehabilitation as a means of increasing the life of the existing housing stock (policy 2.8.f). The City will promote the maintenance of an adequate supply of both ownership and rental housing stock to meet the needs of the residents in the city (policy 2.8.2.6).

Affordable Housing

Policy 2.6.1.6.b, within the *Intensification within the Built-up Area* section, outlines the intent for intensification to provide a range and mix of housing that takes into account affordable housing needs.

Within the *Residential Lands* section, the City notes it will provide opportunities for affordable housing (policy 2.8.j).

Section 8.4.1 – *Affordable Housing* outlines the importance of affordable housing in Cambridge. The City outlines policies to increase the supply of affordable housing in Cambridge, including requiring, where appropriate, affordable housing in new developments (policy 8.4.1.2 and policy 8.4.1.3) and encouraging the development of community and affordable housing through the private sector (policy 8.4.1.1.c).

Municipal Policies and Strategies

City of Cambridge Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (2016)

Community Improvement Plans are widely used across Ontario to focus and initiate change and redevelopment. The Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool intended to incentivize the development of affordable housing in the city of Cambridge by both public and private sectors. In accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act, the Affordable Housing CIP encourages investment by providing financial incentives that may be applied to eligible properties for purposes that conform to the goals, objectives and policies of the CIP.

The overall goal of the Affordable Housing CIP is to minimize the financial barriers to the creation of affordable housing projects by introducing the following incentive-based programs:

- Exempting eligible projects of planning application fees.
- Exempting eligible projects of building permit fees (including sign permit fees).
- Deferring development charges for eligible projects.
- Providing a Tax Increment Grant to eligible projects.

The objectives for the Affordable Housing CIP are:

- Providing public sector investment in affordable housing opportunities.
- Encouraging private sector investment in the provision of affordable housing.
- Promoting the redevelopment of vacant or under-utilized properties.

In 2021, the City launched a new ***Core Areas Community Improvement Plan***, the new Core Area CIP Programs are:

- Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program (CPIG)
- Commercial Building Restoration, Renovation and Improvement Grant Program (CBRRIG)
- Mixed Use Conversion and Restoration Grant Program (MUCRG)
- Core Areas Waiver of Application Fees
- Tax Increase-based Equivalent Grant Program (TIEG)

City of Cambridge 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

In January 2023, the City of Cambridge began the process of updating its Strategic Plan, Cambridge Connected. The aim was to refresh the existing plan, with a focus on establishing an enhanced performance measurement framework which will measure the City’s progress on implementing the Strategic Plan. This Plan provides the foundation for decision making, priority setting and resource allocation in order to deliver high-quality public service that meets the evolving needs of the community.

The strategic plan includes five (5) components:

- Public Value Statement
- Goals
- Objectives
- Actions
- Initiatives

Actions in the strategic plan include increasing housing options. This action focuses on identifying tangible ways that the City of Cambridge can support and create innovative supports for attainable and affordable housing. This action was included to identify ways that the City can diversify hosuing types and make Cambridge a more affordable place to live.

Population Trends

The following section assesses trends for populations in the community to assist with determining the demand for housing. ***Population*** refer to a group of people, or individuals, and is the unit of analysis for most social statistics programs. Population attributes, such as the age, mobility, Indigenous identity, and immigrant status are explored in this section.

In 2021, the population of the City of Cambridge was 138,480 people, representing an increase of 8,560 people (+6.6%) from 2016 levels. This growth was higher than the province-wide population growth (+5.8%) during this period, but lower than the growth across the Waterloo Region (+9.7%). The population of Cambridge accounts for approximately a quarter (23.6%) of the population of the Region.

Population Age

The population in Cambridge was, on average, older than the population region-wide. In 2021, the average and median population ages in Cambridge were 40.0 years and 39.2 years, respectively. These were higher than region-wide trends (39.4 years and 38.0 years, respectively).

This older population age was due to the proportion of the population that was aged 65 and older (16.0%), among the highest share of this age cohort in the region. Cambridge had the second lowest proportion of population aged under 25 years (29.8%) in the Region in 2021.

Between 2016 and 2021, the population of adults aged 65 and older grew by 17.3%, the fastest growing age cohort in Cambridge. The growth of population aged under 25 years (+2.5%) in the City was much lower than the growth of this age cohort region-wide (+6.5%).

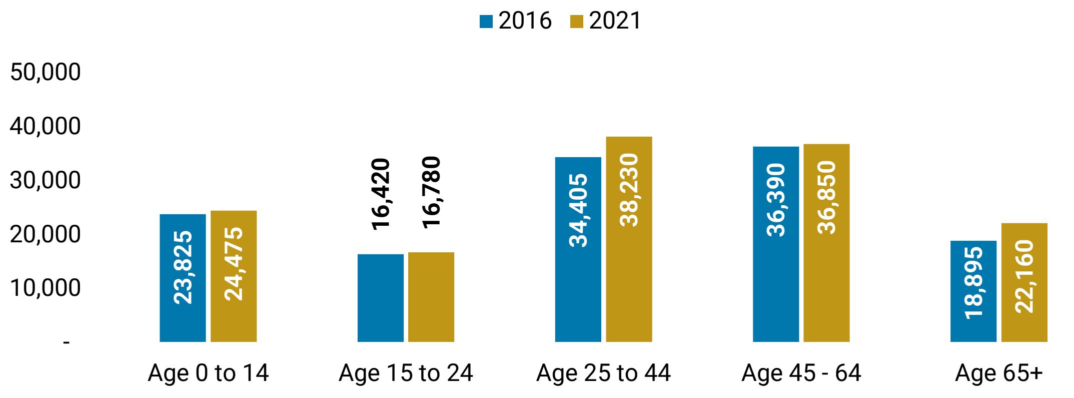
Age of Primary Household Maintainer

Some household indicators are assessed by the characteristics of the ***primary household maintainer***. A household maintainer is the first person in the household identified as someone who pays the rent or the mortgage, or the taxes, or the electricity bill, and so on, for the dwelling.

In 2021, Cambridge had 12,800 households (25.0% of households) that were maintained by an adult aged over 65 years old. This represented one quarter of the households in Cambridge, slightly higher than the proportion this age cohort accounted for region-wide (23.7%). The growth of households maintained by this age cohort grew by 2,200 (+20.8%) between 2016 and 2021, the fastest growth of any age cohort and the fastest growth of this age cohort across municipalities in the Region.

There were very few households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years in Cambridge in 2021. This age cohort made up just 1.6% of households in 2021 (815 households), less than half the region-wide share (3.6%).

Figure 01 ● Population by age cohort in the City of Cambridge, 2016-2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2016-2021

Mobility Trends

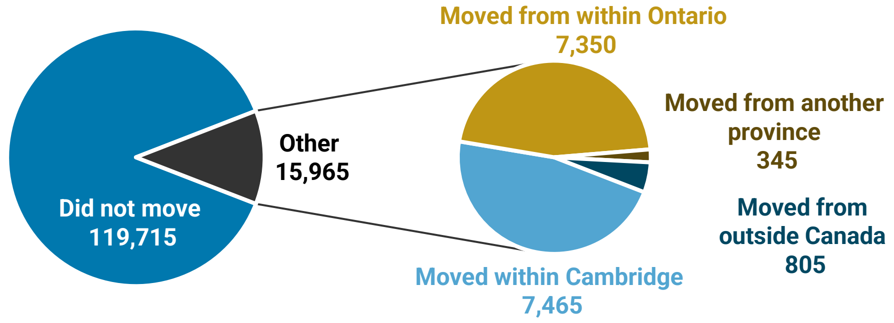
Geographic ***mobility*** refers to a population's geographic movement over time. The Census of Population collects information on a person's usual place of residence one (1) year or five (5) years prior to the census reference date. By comparing an individual's place of residence on a past date with their current place of residence, information can be obtained on geographic mobility. For this report, mobility data is presented at both the population and household level. Household mobility is determined by the mobility of the primary household maintainer.

In 2021, 11.8% of the population (15,965 people) in Cambridge had moved in the last one (1) year. This was lower than the region-wide trend (13.4%). Of these movers, 46.8% moved from within the Region, 46.0% moved from elsewhere in Ontario, 2.2% moved from another province, and 5.0% moved from outside Canada. Cambridge had a higher rate of population that had moved from elsewhere in Ontario relative to the region-wide trend (37.6%) in 2021.

Assessing the population of Cambridge in 2021, 38.2% (49,530 people) had moved within the last five (5) years. This was lower than the region-wide trend (41.3%). Of these movers, 39.6% moved from within the Region, 46.0% moved from elsewhere in Ontario, 3.5% moved from another province, and 10.9% moved from outside Canada. Similar to trends from the last year, the City had a higher share of population that moved from elsewhere in Ontario relative to Region-trends (43.4%).

Assessing by households, 10.6% of households in Cambridge had moved within the last one (1) year. Renter households (17.3%) were much more likely to have moved than owner households (7.6%) during this period. This was due to the higher rate of renters the moved within the community (10.5% of renter households). Owner households were more likely to have moved from elsewhere in Ontario or Canada, accounting for 62.3% of the internal migrants that had moved in the last year.

Figure 02 ● Population mobility trends from the last one (1) year in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Population Trends: Key Takeaways

- The Waterloo Region has experienced rapid population growth in recent years, including the City of Cambridge. Cambridge, one of the three major urban municipalities in the Region, experienced population growth faster than provincial trends. Considerations for affordable and suitable housing for this growing population are critical.
- The population of Cambridge is aging. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and older is considerable, leading to higher average ages than the Region, and has grown in recent years. Housing this aging population requires consideration, including potential supports to help age-in-place within their communities.
- Younger population age cohorts are not growing as fast in Cambridge, potentially signaling difficulty with household formation or growth.
- Populations are moving less frequently within Cambridge relative to elsewhere in the Region and Cambridge populations are more likely to have moved from elsewhere in Ontario than populations in other Waterloo Region municipalities. This indicates an in-flow of migrants into the City.

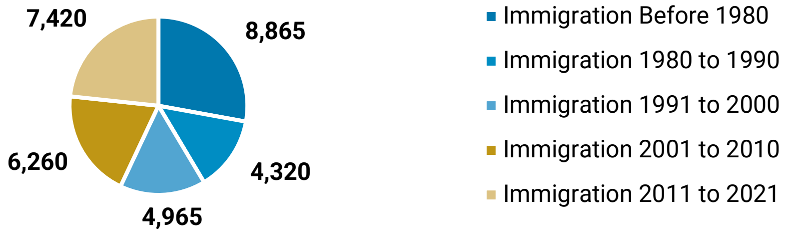
Immigration Trends

In 2021, 23.2% of the population of Cambridge had immigrant status. This was slightly lower than the proportion of this population region-wide (25.4%). The most common immigration period for the immigrants in Cambridge was before 1980 (27.9%). This was higher than Region proportion for immigration during this period (19.6%). Immigrants region-wide were more likely to have arrived between 2011 and 2021 (30.4% of immigrants) and between 2001 and 2010 (21.5%).

Immigrant-led households had higher rates of homeownership (75.7%) than all households in Cambridge (68.9%) in 2021. Dwelling type trends for these immigrant-led households were consistent with all households, as most lived in single-detached dwellings (58.6%), while apartment dwellings (20.1%) and row houses (13.7%) were other common dwelling types. Immigrant-led households were more likely to have larger households, with 34.1% of these households containing four or more people. This was higher than the City-wide proportion (27.8%) in 2021.

Immigrant-led households who arrived in Canada between 2016 and 2021, or recent immigrants, were much more likely to be renter households (48.1%) relative to all households in Cambridge (31.1%). These households were more likely to spending 30% or more of their gross household income on shelter costs (36.6%) relative to all households in the City (21.1%) in 2021. Almost half (49.4%) of recent immigrant households contained four or more people.

Figure 03 ● Immigrant population by immigration period in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Indigenous Identity

In 2021, 1.9% of the Cambridge population identified as Indigenous (2,575 people), slightly higher than the region-wide rate (1.7%). Of this population, 61.2% identified as First Nations, 30.1% identified as Métis, and 2.9% identified as Inuit.

Despite the growing population of the City, the population of those who identify as Indigenous grew just 1.4% (+35 people) between 2016 and 2021.This growth rate was much lower than the trend region-wide (+10.9%) during this period.

Household led by an individual who identifies as Indigenous were more likely to rent their homes (52.8%) relative to all households in Cambridge in 2021. These households were more likely to contain one or two people (60.2%) relative to City-wide trends (55.0%). Indigenous-led households were more likely to be core housing need (12.5% of households assessed) relative to City-wide trends (9.2%).

Demographic Trends: Key Takeaways

- Although immigrant-led households had high rates of home ownership, recent immigrants were more likely to rent their homes relative to all households in Cambridge. Housing that is appropriate for these households, potentially with services for newcomers, should be considered.
- Immigrant households were more likely to contain more people, or larger household sizes, relative to all households in Cambridge. Suitable housing for these households should be considered in new development in the City.
- The growth in the Indigenous population in Cambridge was lower than province-wide trends. Households led by an individual who identifies as Indigenous were more likely to rent their homes and be in core housing need, indicating a need for more affordable rental housing with cultural considerations for Indigenous households.

Community Profile: Impact to Housing Market

The City of Cambridge, one of the three major urban municipalities in one of the fastest growing regions in Canada, has experienced population growth faster than provincial trends in recent years. Population growth patterns, interprovincial movement, and immigration have all impacted the population growth in Cambridge. Considerations for affordable and suitable housing for this growing population are critical.

Population Growth Patterns

The growth rate of the population exceed the growth of households between 2016 and 2021 in Cambridge, indicating that households may be trending larger in size over time. Historically, Cambridge has had larger household sizes than the region-wide average. This may indicate a higher propensity for larger families in Cambridge, leading to greater demand for housing that accommodates these families.

The population of Cambridge is aging. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and older is considerable, leading to higher average ages than the Region, and has grown in recent years. Within the Cambridge housing market, consideration for the aging-in-place of these aging population is required. This may include smaller housing units for this aging population to downsize into or supports for older adults that require more assistance.

Population age cohorts under the age of 25 are not growing as fast in Cambridge relative to region-wide trends in recent years. This trend may indicate difficulty with household formation for younger adults or family growth. The demand for housing units appropriate for these households, including affordable one- or two-bedroom units for new households and affordable larger dwellings for family households, is apparent. This may include more affordable rental accommodations for younger adults or family-size units within apartments.

Migration Patterns

Cambridge is more likely to be the destination of interprovincial migration relative to other municipalities in the region, signaling an attraction to the City bringing in additional population.

Immigration Patterns

While the proportion of the population that had immigrant status in Cambridge was lower than region-wide and province-wide trends, the immigrant population has been growing in recent years. Although immigrant-led households had high rates of home ownership, recent immigrants were more likely to rent their homes relative to all households in Cambridge. Housing that is appropriate for these households, potentially with services for newcomers, could be considered. Immigrant households were more likely to contain three- or more-people relative to all households in Cambridge. Suitable housing for these households should be considered in new development in the City.

Community Profile: Key Takeaways

The following takeaways are explored in detail throughout this section:

- **Population Trends:** The Waterloo Region has experienced rapid population growth in recent years, including the City of Cambridge. Cambridge, one of the three major urban municipalities in the region, experienced population growth faster than provincial trends. Considerations for affordable and suitable housing for this growing population are critical.
  - The population of Cambridge is aging. The proportion of the population aged 65 years and older is considerable, leading to higher average ages than the Region, and has grown in recent years. Housing this aging population requires consideration, including potential supports to help age-in-place within their communities.
  - Younger population age cohorts are not growing as fast in Cambridge, potentially signaling difficulty with household formation or growth.
  - Populations are moving less frequently within Cambridge relative to elsewhere in the Region and Cambridge populations are more likely to have moved from elsewhere in Ontario than populations in other Waterloo Region municipalities. This indicates an in-flow of migrants to the City.
- **Demographic Trends:** Although immigrant-led households had high rates of home ownership, recent immigrants were more likely to rent their homes relative to all households in Cambridge. Housing that is appropriate for these households, potentially with services for newcomers, could be considered.
  - Immigrant households were more likely to contain more people relative to all households in Cambridge. Suitable housing for these households should be considered in new development in the City.
  - The growth in the Indigenous population in Cambridge was lower than province-wide trends. Households led by an individual who identifies as Indigenous were more likely to rent their homes and be in core housing need, indicating a need for more affordable rental housing with cultural considerations for Indigenous households.

Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics

This section provides a snapshot of the housing profile and economic characteristics of the community, highlighting factors influencing housing demand. In this section, a general overview of income, housing, and economic characteristics of the community are assessed. Understanding this data assists in the observation of the incidence of housing need among different socio-economic groups within the community.

Income categories used for this analysis have been completed in accordance with the HART methodology and income decile breakdowns.

Overview

The household profile and economic characteristics for a community are used to describe the demand for housing. The demand-side characteristics examined include:

- **Household trends**, including household growth, size, composition, and tenure
- **Household income data**, including categorizations by HART method and income deciles
- **Economic conditions**, including data related to the labour forces, common industries in the community, commuting patterns, and labour market conditions
- **Households in core housing need**, including core housing need standards and breakdowns by tenure

// Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics
Household Characteristics

The following section assesses trends for households in the community to assist with determining the demand for housing. ***Households*** refer to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad. Household attributes, such as the tenure, size, and composition are explored in this section.

Household Trends

In 2021, there were 51,270 households in Cambridge. This was the second highest total in the Waterloo Region, accounting for 23.1% of the households in the Region. Between 2016 and 2021, there was an increase of 3,030 households (+6.3%) in Cambridge, a growth rate lower than region-wide trends (+9.1%), but consistent with provincial growth (+6.2%).

The growth in households from 2016 to 2021 in Cambridge (+6.3%) was slightly lower than the growth in population during this period (+6.6%). This indicates stable household sizes in the municipality in recent years, and potentially an outlook to larger household sizes in the future if these trends continue.

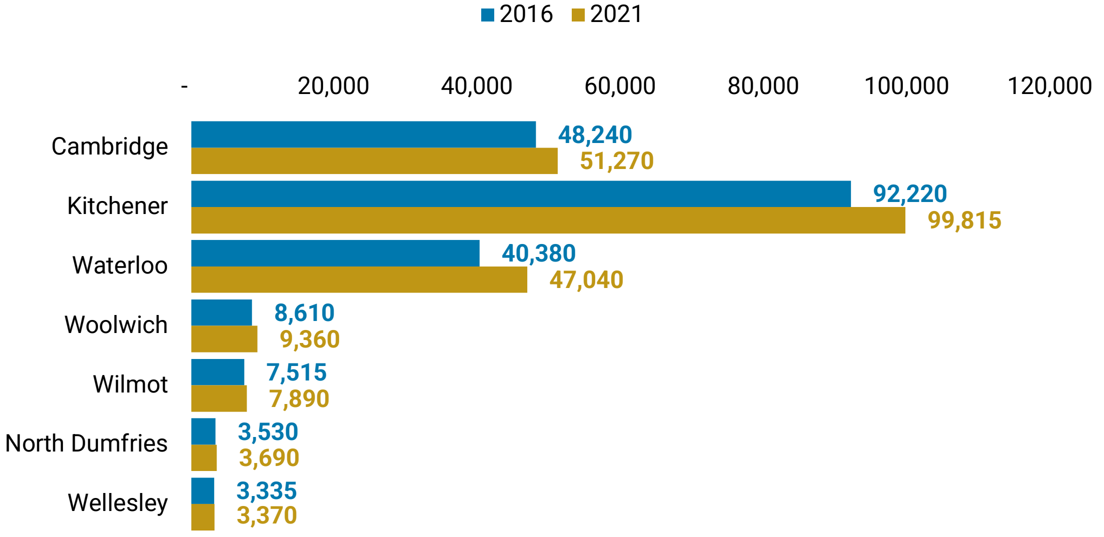
The growth in the Region was driven by growth in the largest municipalities **(Figure 04),** as the City of Kitchener (+7,595 households, +8.2%) and the City of Waterloo (+6,660, +16.5%) added the most households during this period. The Township of Woolrich (+750 households, +8.7%) was the only other municipality that experienced growth that exceeded household growth rates experienced in Cambridge.

Household Tenure

Over two-thirds (68.9%) of the households in Cambridge owned their home in 2021 (35,315 owner households). This proportion was higher than the region-wide trends and higher than Kitchener (59.7%) and Waterloo (61.3%). In 2021, 15,955 households rented their homes.

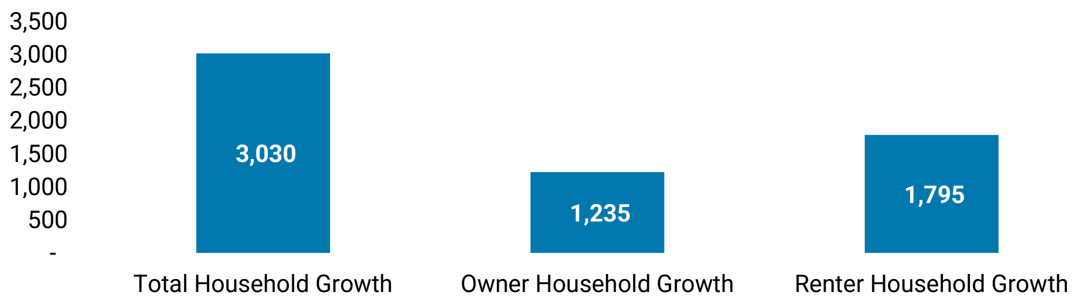
However, from 2016 to 2021, the growth of renter households (+1,795 households, +12.7%) outpaced the growth of owner households (+1,235, +3.6%) in both absolute terms and by growth rate **(Figure 05).** This growth was experienced region-wide, as renters grew by 20.3% in the Region relative to 3.9% growth in owner households.

Figure 04 ● Household growth by municipality in Waterloo Region, 2016-2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2016-2021

Figure 05 ● Household growth by household tenure in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2016-2021

// Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics
Household Characteristics

Household Size and Composition

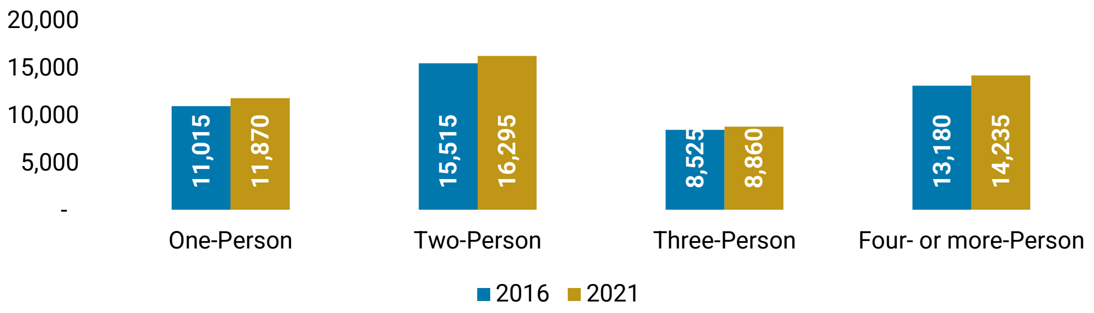
The average household size in Cambridge was 2.7 persons per household in 2021. This was higher than the region-wide average (2.6 persons) in 2021 and was consistent with 2016 levels in the City.

The most common household size in the City was two-person households (31.8%), followed by four- or more-person households (27.8%), one-person households (23.2%), and three-person households (17.3%). These proportions are consistent with Waterloo Region trends.

Between 2016 and 2021, the number of four- or more-person households (+1,055 households, +8.0%) and one-person households (+855, +7.8%) grew at the fastest rate **(Figure 06**). This growth in one-person households was among the fastest rates in the Region.

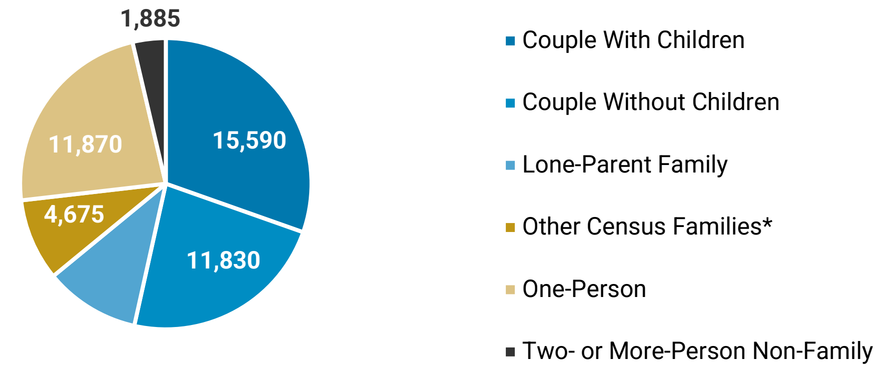
Aside from one-person households, the most common household type in Cambridge was couples with children (30.4%), followed by couples without children (23.1%), and lone-parent households (10.6%) **(Figure 07**)**.** These shares of couples with children and lone-parent households were slightly higher than Regional proportions (29.6% an 8.9%, respectively).

Figure 06 ● Household growth by household size in the City of Cambridge, 2016-2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2016-2021

Figure 07 ● Households by household type in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2016-2021
** Other Census Families include households containing multiple family, multi-generational, and census family with additional persons*

Household Characteristics: Key Takeaways

- Households in Cambridge grew at a rate consistent with province-wide trends. This was slightly slower than population growth, indicating a relatively stable outlook for household sizes.
- Renter households drove household growth in the City of Cambridge in recent years, outpacing the growth of owner households in both absolute terms and growth rate between 2016 and 2021. This indicates a growing demand for rental housing in the City.
- Households of a diverse range of sizes are growing in Cambridge. One-person and four- or more-person households were the fastest growing household sizes between 2016 and 2021, indicating a need for a diverse range of housing options for a variety of household compositions and sizes.

Household Income

This section assesses ***household income*** for different household sizes and compositions outlined previously in this report. Household income is defined as the total combined gross income from all household members, before taxes and deductions.

Household data retrieved from the 2021 Census of Population represents household incomes from 2020. To get a more up-to-date picture of affordability in a community, household incomes are projected forward using the change in Ontario consumer price index (CPI) for a given period.

It should be noted that COVID-19 relief measures impacted household incomes in 2020.

In 2020, the median household income in Cambridge was $93,000, consistent with the region-wide median household income ($92,000) and the median household incomes for the other large municipalities in the Region (**Figure 08**).

Trends with average household incomes in the Region differed slightly. The average household income in Cambridge was $108,200. This was consistent with the average household income in Kitchener ($104,300) and slightly lower than both region-wide averages ($112,500) and the average household income in the City of Waterloo ($122,400).

Projected to 2024 dollars, the median household income in Cambridge is estimated to be $109,200, while the average household income would be $127,000.

Household Income Growth

Median household incomes have increased by 19.6% from 2015 to 2020, much higher than the increase in CPI during this period (+8.6%). This growth trend was consistent for average household incomes (+17.0%) during this period. Median renter household income growth increased a higher rate (+35.1%) relative to owner household income (+18.8%), likely due to temporary COVID-19 relief measures.

Household Income by Household Tenure

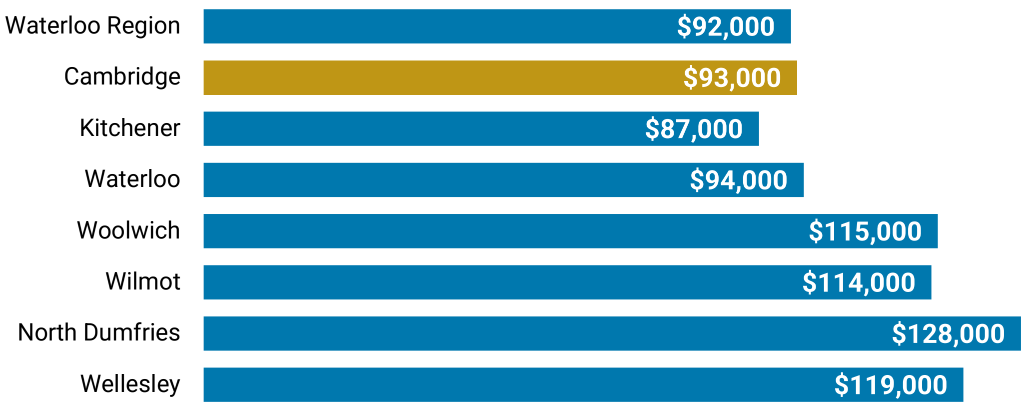
There was a large discrepancy between the median and average owner household incomes ($111,000 and $125,700, respectively) and renter household incomes ($58,400 and $69,300, respectively) in 2020. This discrepancy was consistent across all municipalities in Waterloo Region.

Household Income by Household Size

Households that contained one person had a much lower median income ($42,400) and average income ($42,800) relative to all other households (i.e., households with two- or more-people) in Cambridge ($110,000 and $124,900, respectively) in 2020.

Household incomes in Cambridge correlated with household size, as five- or more-person households had the highest median household income ($147,000) while one-person households had the lowest median household income ($42,400) in 2020.

Figure 08 ● Median household income by municipality in Waterloo Region, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

// Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics
Household Income

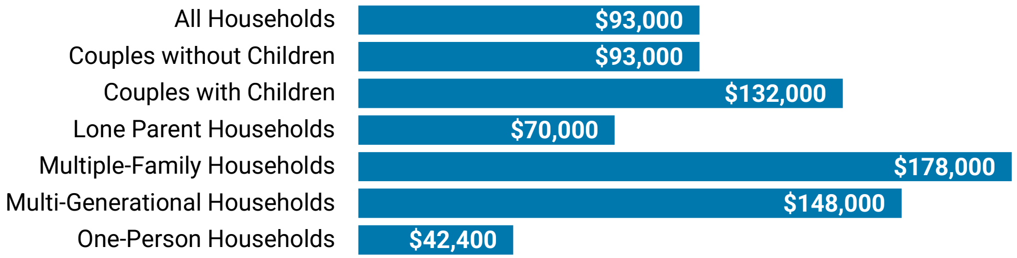
Household Income by Household Characteristics

Household types with the highest median household income were those with multiple income-earning potential. This included multiple-family households ($178,000 median household income), multi-generational households ($148,000), and couples with children ($132,000). One-person ($42,400) and lone-parent ($70,000) households were the household types with the lowest median household income in 2020.

Trends indicate a difference in household income between households maintained by men+ and women+ maintainers. In 2020, households maintained by men+ had a median household income of $101,000, much higher than households maintained by women+ ($81,000). Even within household types, this trend was apparent. Lone-parent households maintained by women+ had a lower median income ($67,000) relative to those maintained by men+ ($81,000).

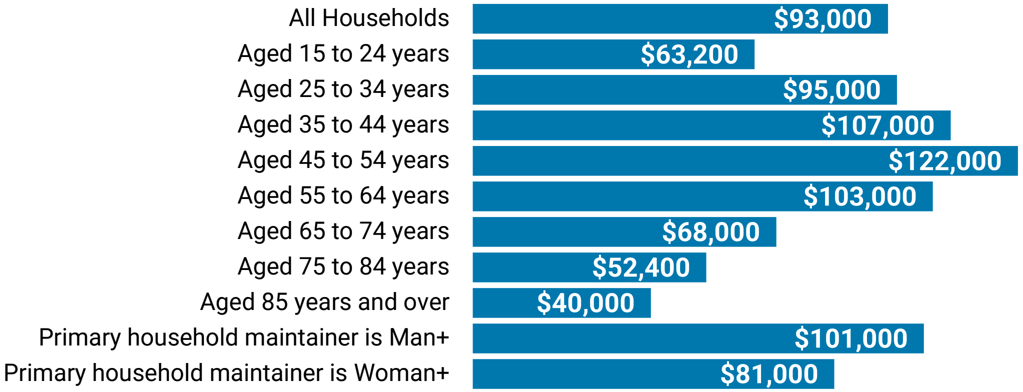
Households maintained by those aged 65 years and older had the lowest median household incomes in 2020. Households with a maintainer aged between 65 and 74 years had a median income of $68,000 in 2020. This median income was higher than only households maintained by someone aged under 25 years ($63,500), an adult aged between 75 and 84 years ($52,400) and aged 85 years or older ($40,000). It should also be noted that while households led by an individual aged 65 years or more may be more likely to have lower household incomes, these households often own a significant asset, such as their house, which gives them a high net worth without producing income.

Figure 09 ● Median household income by household type in the City of Cambridge, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Figure 10 ● Median household income by primary maintainer age and gender in the City of Cambridge, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Household Income: Key Takeaways

- Although household incomes were impacted by the government relief programs administered during the COVID-10 pandemic, there are clear trends with household incomes within household tenures, sizes, and types within Cambridge:
  - Household incomes in Cambridge are lower than region-wide trends. Growth of household incomes has outpaced the growth in Ontario CPI between census periods.
  - Household incomes for renters and one-person households were much lower than owners and two- or more-person households, respectively, indicating demand for more affordable and smaller rental units in the City.
  - Households led by women+, adults aged 65 years or older, or individuals aged under 25 years had the lowest incomes relative to other household maintainer genders and ages. Affordable housing suitable for these households should be considered.

Household Income Deciles

What are income deciles? Using data from the 2021 Census of Population, private households were sorted according to their gross household income and then divided into groups each containing 10% of the population. The decile limits are the levels of gross household income that define each of the ten (10) groups.

The household income decile group provides a distribution of the economic situation of a household based on the relative position of the household in the distribution of the gross household income for all private households in a given jurisdiction.

Household income deciles for all households, owner households, and renter households are displayed in **Table 01**. These deciles for *all households* form the basis of categorizations for *low-income* (households within the third income decile and lower), *moderate-income* (households within the fourth to sixth income deciles), and *high-income* (households within the seventh income decile and higher) *households* for this report. These categories will be used to compare households by tenure, size, composition, and maintainer within Cambridge.

Table 01 • Household income deciles by tenure in the City of Cambridge, 2020

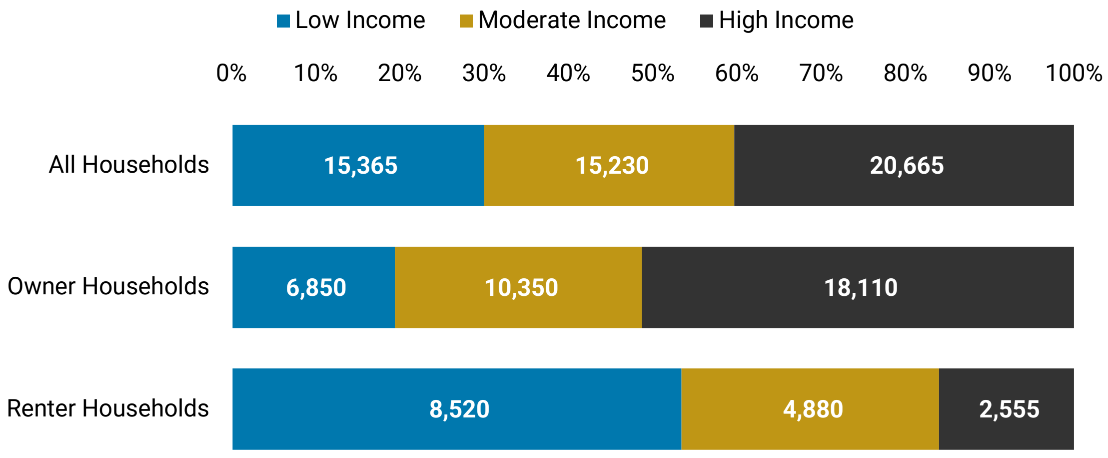
	All Households	Owner	Renter
Number of Households	**51,270**	**35,315**	**15,955**
First Decile	$ 31,400	$ 43,600	$ 23,200
Second Decile	$ 46,800	$ 63,200	$ 30,200
Third Decile	$ 62,000	$ 79,500	$ 40,000
Fourth Decile	$ 77,000	$ 95,000	$ 48,400
Fifth Decile	$ 93,000	$ 111,000	$ 58,400
Sixth Decile	$ 109,000	$ 128,000	$ 69,000
Seventh Decile	$ 130,000	$ 147,000	$ 83,000
Eighth Decile	$ 154,000	$ 172,000	$ 101,000
Ninth Decile	$ 196,000	$ 214,000	$ 129,000
Average Household Income	**$ 108,200**	**$ 125,700**	**$ 69,300**

Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation, 2021

Household Income Deciles by Household Tenure

Owner households in Cambridge were much more likely to be considered high-income when compared to renter households **(Figure 11)**. In 2020, 51.3% of owner households were considered high-income, much higher than the rate for renter households (16.0%). Most renter households were considered low-income in 2020 (53.4%), while less than one-third were considered moderate-income (30.6%).

Figure 11 • Household income deciles by household tenure in the City of Cambridge, 2020



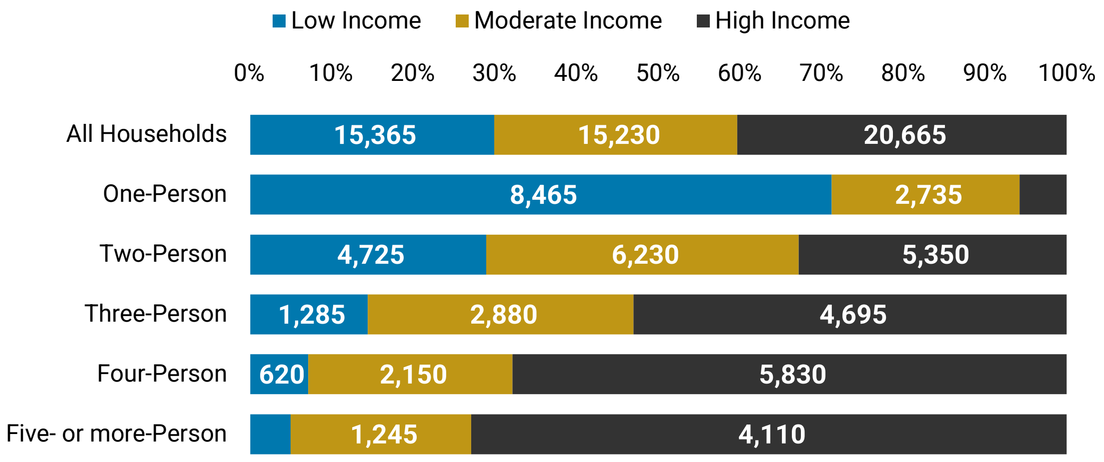
Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation Order, 2020

Household Income Decile by Household Size and Composition

Households that were smaller in size were much more likely to be considered low-income relative to other household sizes in Cambridge **(Figure 12),** as 71.3% of one-person households were within the first three income deciles in 2020. Conversely, 67.8% of four-person households and 73.0% of five- or more-person households were considered high-income households in 2020.

Aside from one-person households, lone-parent households (41.7%) were the most likely household type to be considered low-income. Two- or more-person non-family households were the only other household type in Cambridge to have over a quarter of households (27.2%) considered low-income in 2020.

Figure 12 ● Household income deciles by household size in the City of Cambridge, 2020



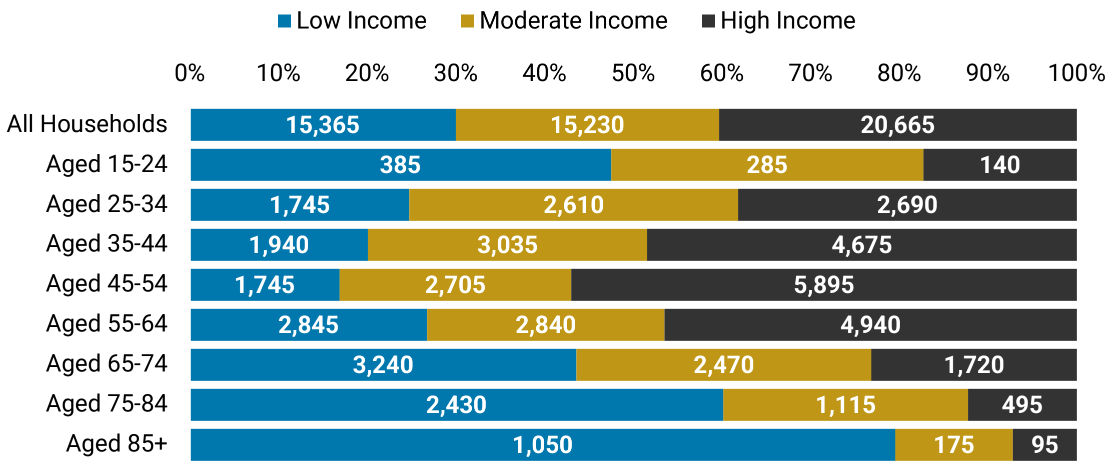
Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Household Income Decile by Household Maintainer Age

Households maintained by someone aged 65 years or older, or under 25, were the most likely to be considered low-income in Cambridge (**Figure 13**). In 2020, 47.2% of households maintained by someone aged under 25 were considered low-income. These households would include households that have recently formed, led by individuals who are starting their career or may include students. Households maintained by an adult aged 75 years or older are the most likely to be considered low-income, as the two age cohorts that include these maintainers, households maintained by an adult aged between 65 and 74 years (60.1%) and adults aged 85 and older (78.4%), are the highest proportion of households that fall in the first three income deciles.

Households that are most likely to be considered high-income are households maintained by an adult aged between 45 and 54 years (57.0%).

Figure 13 ● Household income deciles by household maintainer age in the City of Cambridge, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Household Income Categories from HART

The Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART) project is a research group that works toward evidence and data-based solutions to Canada's housing crisis. Income categories are determined by their relationship with each geography's *Area Median Household Income* (AMHI). These income categories, in 2020 dollars, provide the range of household incomes and affordable housing costs at five levels. The definition of low-income for the purposes of these categories matches the Statistics Canada definition for the *Low-income Measure, Before Tax (LIM-BT).*[1]

According the HART data, approximately 1.8% of households in the City of Cambridge were considered very low income **(Table 02)**. These households had household incomes of 20% or less than the area median household income, or $18,600 or less, in 2020. These households had a maximum affordable shelter cost of $465 per month. These households require deeply affordable non-market housing or rent subsidies to afford rent in Cambridge.

Households that were deemed low income through the HART methodology had incomes between $18,600 and $46,500, or 21-50% of the AMHI. These households could afford housing costs between $465 and $1,163 on a monthly basis and would require affordable housing or rent subsidies to afford most rental units in the City.

Moderate income households, as defined by the HART methodology, would likely be able to afford most available rental units in Cambridge. These households had a maximum monthly shelter costs of between $1,163 and $1,860.

Source: Statistics Canada (2016). Low-income measure, before tax (LIM-BT). Retrieved from: https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/fam022-eng.cfm

Table 02 ● HART income categories in the City of Cambridge, 2020

HART Income Category	% of Total HHs	Annual HH Income	Affordable Shelter Cost (2020 CAD$)
Area Median Household Income (AMHI)		$93,000	$2,325
Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI)	1.8%	<= $18,600	<= $465
Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI)	17.2%	$18,600 - $46,500	$465 - $1,163
Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI)	18.9%	$46,500 - $74,400	$1,163 - $1,860
Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI)	23.0%	$74,400 - $111,600	$1,860 - $2,790
High Income (121% and more of AMHI)	39.1%	>= $111,601	>= $2,791

Source: Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART), 2024

Household Profiles: Impact to Housing Market

The characteristics of households impact the demand for housing within the housing market in a community. Household growth trends in Cambridge assist in the assessment of what tenure and size of housing should be prioritized moving forward to meet the needs of households in the City. The growth of renter households and the diverse household size growth trends indicate demand on the housing market for accommodations that meet the needs of current and future households.

Although household incomes were impacted by the government relief programs administered during the COVID-10 pandemic, there are clear trends with household incomes within household tenures, sizes, and types within Cambridge.

Renter Household Growth

Households in Cambridge grew at a rate consistent with province-wide trends. Renter households drove this household growth in the City, outpacing the growth of owner households in both absolute terms and growth rate between 2016 and 2021. This growth indicates a growing demand for rental units in Cambridge, a trend that is consistent across the Region.

Household incomes for renters were much lower than owners, indicating demand for more affordable housing units in the City. Lower household incomes for renter households hold these households in the rental market and prevent them from moving on to ownership housing, therefore not opening the rental unit for a new households. This stagnation may create a tightening of the rental market as vacancy rates decline. Affordable ownership housing, along with affordable rental, is required to successfully house this growing trend of renter households in Cambridge.

Diverse Household Size Growth Trends

Households of a diverse range of sizes are growing in Cambridge. One-person and four- or more-person households were the fastest growing household sizes between 2016 and 2021, indicating a need for diverse range of housing options for a range of households.

Single income households, including one-person households and lone-parent households, have among the lowest household incomes in the City. Household incomes for one-person households were much lower than two- or more-person households, indicating demand for more affordable and smaller dwellings in the City.

Households led by women+, adults aged 65 years or older, or individuals aged under 25 years had the lowest incomes relative to other household maintainer genders and ages. Affordable housing suitable for these households should be encouraged in future development.

Household Suppression

While households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the highest share of households falling below two or more standards. This may indicate these households have difficulty finding affordable accommodations on the market and are willing to take housing that does not meet their needs just to have housing.

Headship rate is commonly defined as the ratio of the number of households by age to the population of adults by age in each community and can be used to project future households. Headship rates for the age cohort of individuals aged 15 to 24 years has decreased in recent years. In 2021, this age cohort had a headship rate of 4.9%, a decreased from 2016 levels (5.9%). This trend was consistent with age 25 to 34 years households, as a decreased from 40.1% to 36.05 occurred between 2016 and 2021. These decreasing headship rates for younger households indicates difficulty in household formation in Cambridge, such as for those who may be early in their career or still studying.

Economic Conditions

Changing economic conditions influence the demand for housing in a community in terms of the number of housing units required, the type and tenure of housing units, and the ability of households to afford housing. Employment and earnings influence household income, and thus the housing choices that are affordable to households.

The ***labour force*** of a municipality refers to the adult population in the labour market that was employed or unemployed during the survey reference week. This population is defined by Statistics Canada as the non-institutional population 15 years of age or older.

Since the 2021 Census of Population was tabulated during the COVID-19 pandemic, economic characteristics are impacted by closures due to the pandemic. Economic data from this Census represents point-in-time information during the rapidly changing economic conditions at the time. While this data is augmented with more recent data, the Census data is used to demonstrate trends between geographies.

Labour Force Trends

In 2021, there were 112,655 people eligible to be in the labour force in the City of Cambridge (i.e., 15 years of age or older). Of this population, 58.4% were employed, 7.6% were unemployed, and 34.0% were not in the labour force. This latter group includes those not actively looking for work, including students, parents, retired people, and others.

The participation rate for the labour force in Cambridge was 66.0%, consistent with region-wide trends (66.5%). The unemployment rate for the City was 11.5% in 2021. This figure, impacted dramatically by the closures that were a part of the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, was higher than the region-wide trends. In 2016, the unemployment rate in Cambridge (6.4%) was consistent with region-wide levels (6.3%). As of 2024, the Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie economic region recorded an unemployment rate of 6.9%[1], signaling recovering economic conditions in the region.

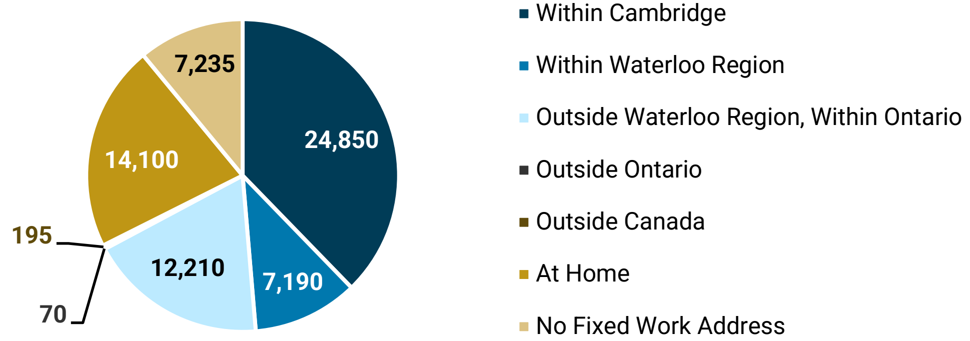
1 - Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0387-01 Labour force characteristics, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, last 5 months

Commuting Trends

In 2021, the most common commute for workers in the City of Cambridge was to workplaces within the City (**Figure 14**). The proportion of workers in Cambridge that commuted to their place of work within their municipality (37.7%) was the highest of any municipality in the Region (28.6%). Conversely, workers in Cambridge commuted to other municipalities in the Region at the lowest rate (10.9%) in 2021, lower than region-wide trends (20.7%). Workers in Cambridge commuted to work outside of Waterloo Region at the highest rate (18.5%) of any municipality in the region and higher than the region-wide rate (11.1%).

Between 2016 and 2021, there was a notable shift to workers with work-from-home arrangements due to the pandemic. In 2021, 14,100 workers from Cambridge worked from home, an increase of 10,920 workers from 2016 levels (+349.0%). This increase was consistent with region-wide trends (+336.1%), but lower than the City of Waterloo (+19,265 workers, +468.2%) and the City of Kitchener (+27,425, +419.0%).

Figure 14 ● Commuting trends from workers by place of employment in the City of Cambridge, 2020



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Jobs by Industry

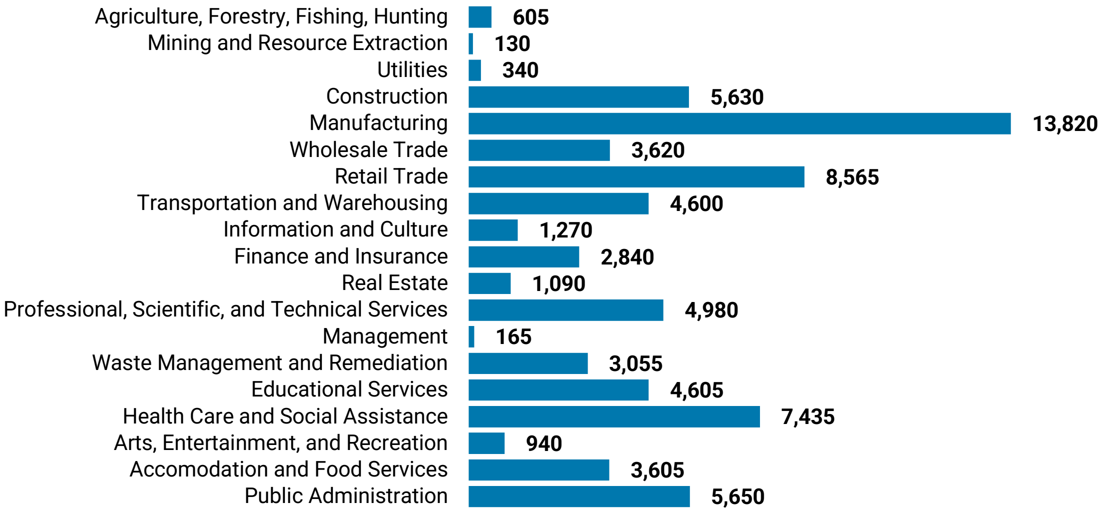
In 2021, the most common industry of employment in the City of Cambridge was manufacturing, employing 13,820 workers, or 18.6% of the labour force (**Figure 15**). This was higher than the region-wide proportion for this industry (15.1%). Other common industries of employment in the City were retail trade (8,565 jobs, 11.5%), health care and social assistance (7,435, 10.0%), public administration (5,650, 7.6%), and construction (5,630, 7.6%).

While these employment trends were largely consistent with region-wide trends, Cambridge had a lower proportion of workers employed by the professional, scientific, and technical services (4,980 workers, 6.7%) and educational services (4,605, 6.2%) industries relative to region-wide trends (9.2% and 8.5%, respectively)

Between 2016 and 2021, the City added 3,050 jobs in public administration (+117.3%), the highest growth in any one industry in Cambridge during this period (**Figure 16**). Other industries that experienced growth during this period were education services (+930 jobs, +25.3%), transportation and warehousing (+845, +22.5%), professional, scientific, and technical services (+830, 20.0%), and health care and social assistance (+675, +10.0%).

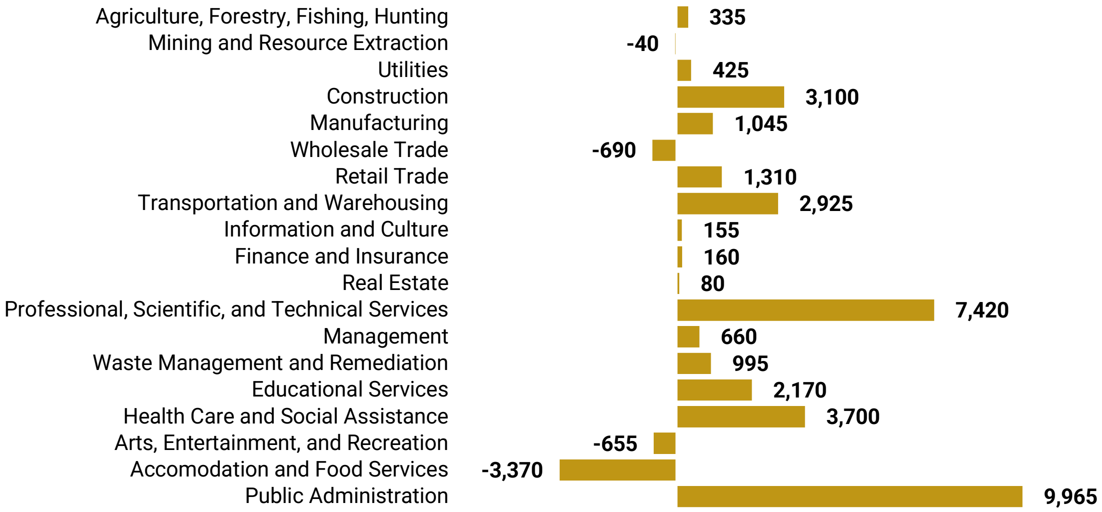
During this period, the City lost 1,170 jobs (-24.5%) in the accommodations and food services industry. This was likely due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other industries that experienced job losses included manufacturing (-635 jobs, -4.4%), art, entertainment, and recreation (-305, 24.5%), and real estate (-155, -12.4%).

Figure 15 ● Total jobs by industry in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Figure 16 ● Net gain or loss in jobs by industry in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Impact to Housing Market: Economic Characteristics

The labour conditions in a community impact the types and affordability levels of housing that are required to accommodate households in the market. The economic characteristics, employment trends, and commuting trends impact the housing demand in the community.

Economic Characteristics

The unemployment rate for the City was dramatically impacted by the closures that were a part of the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, unemployment in Cambridge was higher than the region-wide trends despite historically tracking consistently with Waterloo Region unemployment trends. However, the Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie economic region has recently recorded unemployment rates closer to pre-pandemic levels, signaling recovering economic conditions in the region. As of early 2025, the unemployment rate in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie economic region was lower than the Ontario-wide rate.

Difficult periods in the labour market may create a demand for more affordable housing in a community, potentially including subsidized housing or community housing.

Employment Trends

The City of Cambridge had a higher share of manufacturing, construction, and transportation and warehousing jobs among its labour force relative to the Region. These industries are typically associated with precarious or seasonal employment, such as industries like agriculture or natural resource extraction.

These industries are long-term and would create conditions for households to seek housing accommodations within the community, potentially creating demand for affordable ownership housing.

Commuting Trends

According to commuting data, Cambridge is an employment source for workers throughout the Waterloo Region. Cambridge had the lowest proportion of workers commuting to other municipalities within the region in 2021, meaning that workers from other municipalities were more likely to seek work in Cambridge than vice-versa.

Due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large shift to work-from-home arrangements for workers in Cambridge. While this trend occurred in many municipalities across Canada, this may have lasting impact on the housing market for years to come. Work-from-home arrangement allow for households to move further away from their places of employment, which may provide an opportunity for Cambridge to attract workers from other municipalities within the province looking for a more affordable housing market.

Economic Conditions: Key Takeaways

- While economic market characteristics were impacted by the closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates indicate that the economy in Cambridge is recovering to pre-pandemic trends.
- According to commuting data, Cambridge is an employment source for workers throughout the Waterloo Region. Cambridge had the lowest proportion of workers commuting to other municipalities within the region in 2021.
- Due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large shift to work-from-home arrangements for workers in Cambridge.

// Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics
Housing Affordability Indicators

The cost of housing is one of the largest monthly expenditures for many households in Canada. The availability of affordable, adequate, and suitable housing is a pressing concern for many individuals and families. This analysis of ***housing affordability indicators*** provides a review of housing affordability based on the characteristics of the demand and the available supply of housing units.

It should be noted that the government relief programs as a part of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted household incomes, particularly for low-income households, and thus impacted housing affordability indicators noted in this report.

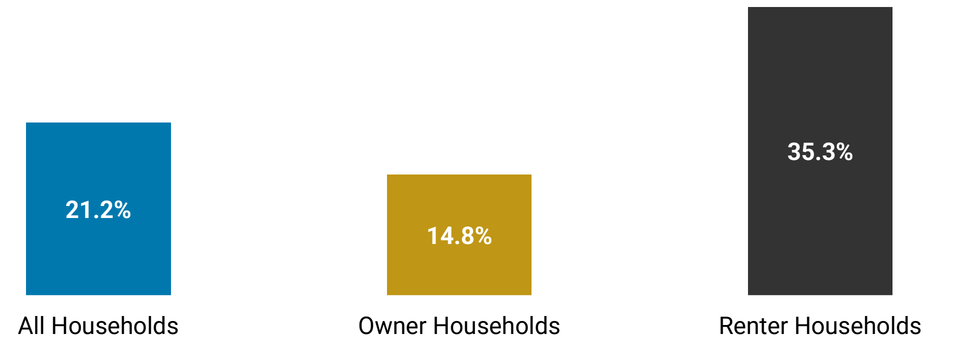
Shelter-to-Income Ratio

In 2021, there were 10,840 households (21.2% of assessed households) in the City of Cambridge that were spending 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs. This was approximately consistent with 2016 figures (10,920 households) and slightly lower than region-wide trend (21.8%). Further, 3,370 households (6.6%) in the City were spending 50% or more of their household income on shelter costs. This represented a lower number of households than in 2016 (3,770 households), likely due to the impacts of government relief programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shelter-to-Income Ratio by Household Tenure

Assessing by household tenure, renter households were more likely to be facing affordability issues in the City of Cambridge (**Figure 17**). In 2021, 35.3% of renters were spending 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs, compared to 14.8% of owners. This trend was consistent with households facing deep affordability issues, as 11.9% of renters were spending 50% or more of their household income on shelters costs, relative to 4.2% for owners.

Figure 17 ● Proportion of households facing housing affordability issues in the City of Cambridge by household tenure, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

What is STIR? A commonly accepted benchmark for measuring affordability in the Canadian context is where a household spends no more than 30% of its gross household income on housing costs. This is referred to as the ***shelter-cost-to-income ratio***, or ***STIR***, and is a key indicator of affordability. Shelter costs (where applicable) include mortgage payments, rent, property taxes, condominium fees, as well as costs of electricity, heat, water, and other municipal services.

Generally speaking, when a household is spending 30% or more of their gross household income on shelter costs, they are considered to be facing affordability issues. If the household STIR reaches 50% of household income spent on shelter costs, the household is considered to be facing deep affordability issues.

Shelter-to-Income Ratio by Household Size and Composition

In 2021, smaller households were more likely to be facing affordability issues (**Figure xx**). One-person households were the household size most likely to be spending 30% or more of their household incomes on shelter costs (4,810 households, 40.7% of those assessed). These households were also the most likely to be facing deep affordability issues (1,880 households, 15.9%). As household size increased, the proportion of those households that were facing affordability issues decreased, likely due to additional household members with income-earning potential.

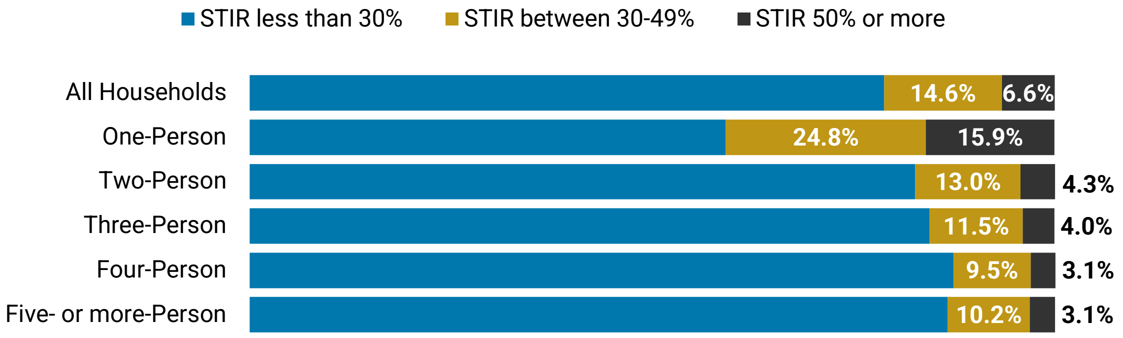
Similarly, household types that tend to be larger in size are less likely to be spending 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs. Households containing multiple families (30 households, 7.8%), multi-generational households (235 households, 10.2%), and couples with children (1,965 households, 12.6%) were all less likely to be facing affordability issues. Aside from one-person households, lone-parent households (1,505, 28.2%) were the most likely to be facing affordability issues in Cambridge, with 9.2% facing deep affordability issues.

Shelter-to-Income Ratio by Household Maintainer Age

In 2021, households maintained by younger adults were the most likely to be spending 30% of more of their household income on shelter costs (**Figure xx**). Households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years old had the highest rates of housing affordability issues (285 households, 35.0%). The next highest rate of housing affordability issues was households maintained by someone between the age of 25 and 35 years (1,825 households, 25.9%).

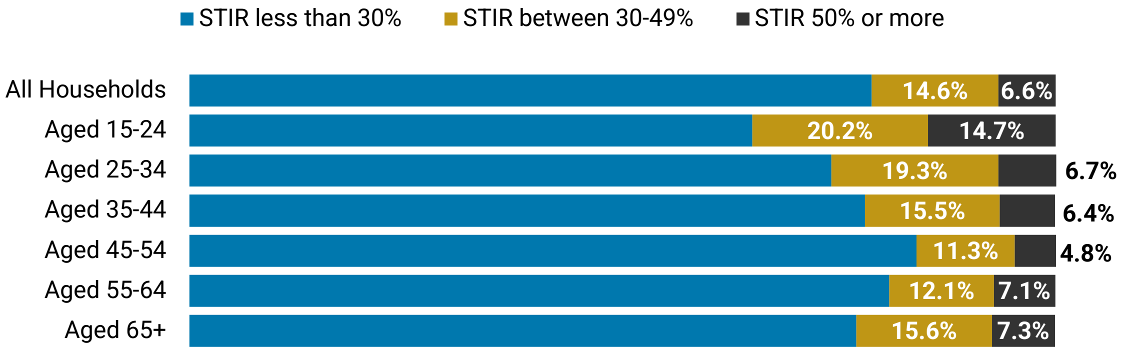
Households primarily maintained by an adult aged 65 years and older faced housing affordability issues at a rate (22.9%) higher than the City-wide trend (21.2%). It should also be noted that while households led by an individual aged 65 years or more are facing housing affordability issues at a higher rate, these households often own a significant asset, such as their house, which gives them a high net worth without producing income. These household may require considerations for age-in-place.

Figure 18 ● Proportion of households by shelter-to-income ration (STIR) in the City of Cambridge by household size, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation Order, 2021

Figure 19 ● Proportion of households facing housing affordability issues in the City of Cambridge by household maintainer age, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation Order, 2021

Households in Core Housing Need

In 2021, there were 4,705 households in core housing need in the City of Cambridge**.** This represented 9.3% of the assessed households, slightly higher than region-wide trends (9.0%) in 2021. The number of households in core housing need in the City decreased between 2016 and 2021, likely due to the impacts of government relief programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

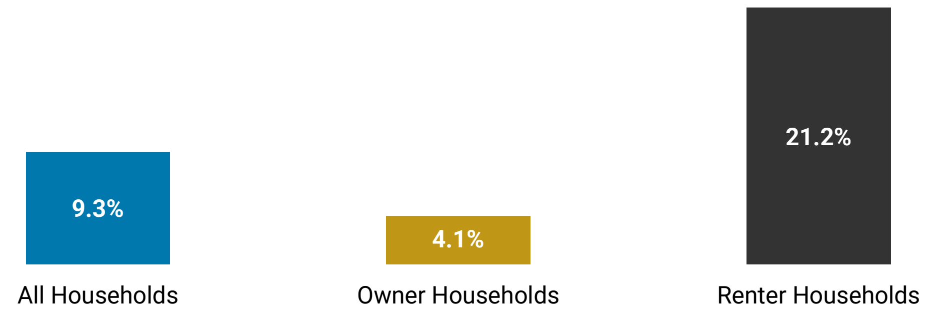
The vast majority of households in core housing need in Cambridge fell below the affordability standard (4,370 households, 92.9% of households in core housing need), i.e., paying more than 30% of their household income on shelter costs. Additionally, 10.2% of households in core housing need fell below the adequacy standard, 8.0% fell below the suitability standard, and 10.4% fell below two or more standards **(Figure 20)**.

Core Housing Need by Household Tenure

In 2021, households that rented their homes were more likely to be in core housing need. Despite making up just 31.1% of households in Cambridge, renter households accounted for 69.8% of the households in core housing need. In 2021, 21.2% of renter households were in core housing need, relative to 4.1% for owner households.

Renter households in core housing need fell below the suitability standard (9.3%) at approximately twice the rate that owner households did (4.6%) in 2021. This may indicate a lack of rental housing with appropriate numbers of bedrooms to suitably house families in the City.

Figure 20 ● Proportion of households in core housing need in the City of Cambridge by household tenure, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

What is Core Housing Need? *Core housing need* is a more complete measure for defining affordability as it assesses the adequacy, suitability, and affordability of housing.

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

This measure differs from STIR, as this affordability threshold is limited to households who cannot afford to move to housing that is adequate and suitable without spending more than 30% of household income on shelter costs.

Core Housing Need by Household Size and Composition

In 2021, smaller household sizes in Cambridge were more likely to be in core housing need (**Figure 21**). One-person households were in core housing need at the highest rate (22.1% of assessed households), followed by two-person households (7.2%). Households containing five or more people were the least likely to be in core housing need (3.5%).

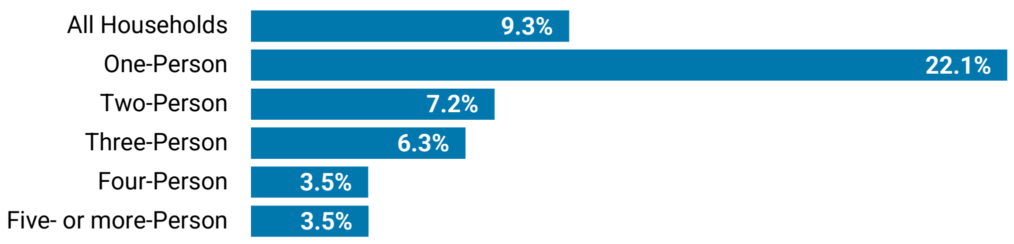
The underlying causes for household sizes to be more likely in core housing need are unsurprising. Smaller households, such as one-person and two-person households, are more likely to fall below the affordability standards (97.4% and 93.1%, respectively) relative to the rate for all households (92.9%). Larger households, such as four-person and five-or more-person households were more likely to fall below the suitability standards (30.5% and 43.6%, respectively) than City-wide trends (8.0%).

Core Housing Need by Household Maintainer Age

In 2021, households maintained by an individual aged younger than 25 years were the most likely to be in core housing need. These households had the highest proportion of households in core housing need (130 households,16.4%), due to a combination of standards. While this age cohort did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the highest share of households falling below two or more standards (19.2%). This was almost double the rate City-wide (10.4%). This may indicate these households have difficulty finding affordable accommodations on the market and are willing to take housing that does not meet their needs just to have housing.

Households maintained by an adult aged 65 years or older had the second highest proportion of households in core housing need (1,750 households, 13.8%). These households were most likely to be in core housing need due to affordability issues (96.6%). The share of this age cohort in core housing need due to affordability issues was higher than the City-wide rate (92.9%0.

Figure 21 ● Proportion of households in core housing need in the City of Cambridge by household size, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation Order, 2021

Housing Affordability Indicators: Key Takeaways

- Although housing affordability indicators were impacted by government relief programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, clear trends can be assessed from households in Cambridge:
    - Households containing one person are much more likely to be facing affordability issues and be in core housing need relative to all other household sizes. These households are more likely to be considered low-income.
    - Renter households were more likely to be facing housing affordability issues and be in core housing need relative to households who owned their homes. Renter households were much more likely to be living in unsuitable housing in core housing need, indicating the need for more affordable options with a suitable number of bedrooms to accommodate a range of renter household sizes.
    - While households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the highest share of households falling below two or more standards. This may indicate these households have difficulty finding affordable accommodations on the market and are willing to take housing that does not meet their needs just to get into housing.

Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics: Key Takeaways

The following takeaways are explored in detail throughout this section:

- **Household Characteristics:** Households in Cambridge grew at a rate consistent with province-wide trends. This was slightly slower than population growth, indicating a relatively stable outlook for household sizes. Renter households drove household growth in the City of Cambridge in recent years, outpacing the growth of owner households in both absolute terms and growth rate between 2016 and 2021. This indicates a growing demand for rental housing in the City.

- Households of a diverse range of sizes are growing in Cambridge. One-person and four- or more-person households were the fastest growing household sizes between 2016 and 2021, indicating a need for diverse range of housing options for a range of households.

- **Household Income:** Household incomes for renters and one-person households were much lower than owners and two- or more-person households, respectively, indicating demand for more affordable and smaller rental units in the City. Households led by women+, adults aged 65 years or older, or individuals aged under 25 years had the lowest incomes relative to other household maintainer genders and ages.

- **Economic Conditions:** While economic market characteristics were impacted by the closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are signals that the economy in Cambridge is recovering to pre-pandemic trends. According to commuting data, Cambridge is an employment source for workers throughout the Waterloo Region. Due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a large shift to work-from-home arrangements for workers in Cambridge.

- **Housing Affordability Indicators:** Renter households were more likely to be facing housing affordability issues and be in core housing need relative to households who owned their homes. Renter households were much more likely to be living in unsuitable housing in core housing need, indicating the need for more affordable options with a suitable number of bedrooms to accommodate a range of renter household sizes.

- While households maintained by an individual aged under 25 years did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the highest share of households falling below two or more standards. This may indicate these households have difficulty finding affordable accommodations on the market and are willing to take housing that does not meet their needs just to get into housing.

Priority Groups

There are 12 groups that CMHC defines as priority population groups for affordable homes: groups who face a proportionally far greater housing need than the general population. There is also a 13th group, women-led households and specifically single mothers, implied in the National Housing Strategy which targets 33% (with a minimum of 25%) of funding going to housing for women-led households.

Note: Census data does not disaggregate core housing need data by all priority populations, including veterans, individuals who identify as LGBTQ2S+, survivors of domestic violence, and individuals experiencing homelessness. Many households may have members in multiple priority categories which may also not be represented in the data. With these limitations in mind, information on housing need by priority population would be helpful for developing inclusive housing policies.

Overview

Priority population groups are:

- *Women and children fleeing domestic violence*
- *Women-led households, especially single mothers*
- *Seniors 65+*
- *Young adults aged 18-29*
- *Indigenous Peoples*
- *Racialized people*
- *Recent immigrants, especially refugees*
- *LGBTQ2S+*
- *People with physical health or mobility challenges*
- *People with developmental disabilities*
- *People dealing with mental health and addictions issues*
- *Veterans*
- *People experiencing homelessness*

Core Housing Need for Priority Populations

Statistics Canada custom tabulation data provided the number of households in core housing need for the priority population groups noted in this section. Priority populations that the Census data does not disaggregate core housing need data by were not captured in this section.

Women-led households, especially single mothers

Households with a primary maintainer that is women+ were more likely to be in core housing need (12.%) relative to all households in Cambridge (9.3%) in 2021. These households were more likely to be in core housing need due to adequacy (12.2%) and suitability (9.1%) standards relative to City-wide trends.

These trends are even more exaggerated for lone-parent households in Cambridge. Lone-parent households who are led by a women+ maintainer were in core housing need at more than double the rate (19.4%) of the City-wide trend for all households in 2021. This was due to much higher rate of unsuitable households (20.4%) and inadequate housing (17.9%) for these women+ led lone-parent households.

Adults aged 65+

Households maintained by an adult aged 65 years or older were more likely to be core housing need (13.8%) relative to the City-wide trend (9.3%) in 2021. This difference was due to the higher rate of these households living in housing that was deemed unaffordable (96.6%) relative to all households in core housing need in Cambridge (92.9%).

Young adults aged 18-25

Households maintained by an adult aged under 25 were the most likely age cohort to be in core housing need in the City of Cambridge, as 16.4% of these households fell below at least one of the standards for core housing need. While this age cohort did not have the highest proportion of households falling below any of the individual standards within core housing need, they had the highest share of households falling below two or more standards (19.2%). This was almost double the rate City-wide (10.4%) for those in core housing need in 2021.

Indigenous Peoples

Households with a primary maintainer that identified as Indigenous were more likely to be in core housing need (12.8%) relative to all households in Cambridge (9.3%) in 2021. This difference was due to the proportion of Indigenous-led households that were facing housing affordability issues (100.0%) and living in unsuitable housing (13.6%) relative to City-wide trends (92.9% and 8.0%, respectively) for all households in core housing need.

Racialized people

Households with a primary maintainer that identified as a visible minority were less likely to be in core housing need (8.6%) relative to all households in Cambridge (9.3%) in 2021. These households had lower rates for falling below the affordability (89.8%) and adequacy (6.1%) standards than City-wide rates (92.9% and 10.2%, respectively), however had more than double the rate of unsuitable housing (17.7%) than households City-wide (8.0%) trends for all households in core housing need.

Recent immigrants, especially refugees

Households with a primary maintainer with immigrant status were in core housing need at a rate (9.2%) consistent with City-wide trends (9.3%) in 2021. These households less likely to fall below affordability (92.5%) or adequacy (7.1%) standards than all households in core housing need in Cambridge (92.9% and 10.2%, respectively), but were more likely to be living in unsuitable housing (11.2%) compared to City-wide trends (8.0%) in 2021.

Households led primarily by a recent immigrant, or someone who had arrived in Canada within five years of 2021, were less likely to be in core housing need (8.4%) in 2021. However, there were only approximately 95 of such households in core housing need during this census period and thus trends with this size of sample should be treated with caution.

// Priority Groups
Housing Affordability Indicators

People with physical health or mobility challenges

Households that contained at least one member with an activity limitation due to difficulty walking, using stairs, using his/her hands or fingers or doing other physical activities were more likely to be in core housing need (14.3%) relative to all households in Cambridge in 2021 (9.3%). These households were less likely to fall below the affordability (89.4%) and suitability (5.9%) standards relative to City-wide trends (92.9% and 8.0%, respectively), but were much more likely to be living in inadequate housing that required major repairs (18.8%) relative to all households in core housing need in Cambridge (10.2%).

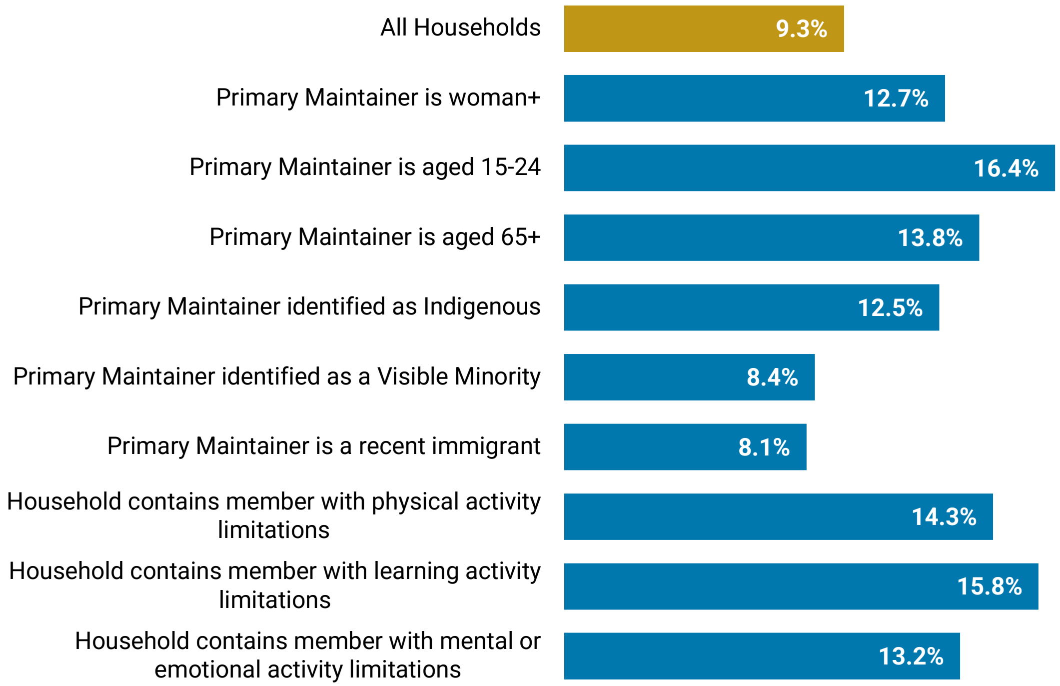
People with developmental disabilities

Households with at least one member with a learning activity limitation were more likely to be in core housing need (15.8%) than all households in Cambridge (9.3%) in 2021. This was the highest rate of core housing need experienced for households with at least one member with an activity limitation. These households were more likely to fall below the adequacy (17.6%) and suitability (14.1%) standards than all households in core housing need (10.12% and 8.0%, respectively) in the City of Cambridge.

People dealing with mental health and addictions issues

Households that contained at least one member with an activity limitation due to emotional, psychological, or mental health conditions were more likely to be in core housing need (13.2%) relative to all households in Cambridge (9.3%) in 2021. These households were more likely to be living in unsuitable housing (10.0%) and much more likely to be living in inadequate housing requiring major repairs (26.0%) relative to all households in core housing need in Cambridge (8.0% and 10.2%, respectively).

Figure 22 ● Proportion of households in core housing need by priority population group in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation Data, 2021

Incidence and Severity of Homelessness

From a Point-in-Time Count completed in 2024, there were 2,371 people estimated to be experiencing homelessness in the Waterloo Region. This was an increase from 2021, when there were 1,085 people experiencing homelessness across the Waterloo Region. During this 2021 count, 673 individuals were experiencing hidden homelessness, in emergency shelters, in transitional housing, or in institutions and 412 people were living rough (in encampments, on the street, or in their vehicles). This count includes all municipalities within the region – not just the City of Cambridge.

The By-Name list in the City of Cambridge contained 532 people in 2024, an increase from 2022 (457 people) but a decrease from 2023 counts (628 people). It should be noted that the 2024 counts only included figures from January to August.

Factors Influencing Homelessness

There are a variety of factors that influence the prevalence of homelessness within a community. The overall lack of supply of purpose-built rental or community housing in the City creates pressures on the existing rental market that drives prices up. The loss of housing units affordable for those with low household incomes and low vacancy rates have led to increased rent prices, particularly for bachelor and one-bedroom units.

These trends are occurring across the Waterloo Region and Province of Ontario, as growth in population and households is not being met with a sufficient supply of affordable housing. The recent development of rental housing in the City has added units that are at the high-end of market prices and are not accessible for those currently experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness.

From the resident survey completed for this study, over one-third (33.6%) of survey respondents who were responsible for making rent or mortgage payments noted that they had trouble making these shelter payments when they are due, either regularly or occasionally.

Temporary and Emergency Relief Resources

The only shelter provider in the City of Cambridge is the Cambridge Shelter Corporation. These operate three programs:

- Bridges: 80-bed emergency shelter for single adult men
- CSC Overflow at Super 8 Motel: 20 overflow motel rooms for single adults (men and women)
- Kinsmen: 24-bed specialty shelter beds for single adults (men and women with medically complex needs)

The average occupancy rate of these shelter accommodations has steadily increased over time in Cambridge. In 2015, the average occupancy rate for shelters in Cambridge was 71%. After reaching a peak of 93% in 2020, the average occupancy rate has been 82% from 2023 to 2024. In response to the increased demand for this type of shelter accommodation, the City has added additional resources. The Kinsmen beds were added in 2024, and the Super 8 Motel has increased from 30 beds in 2022 to 40 beds in 2023.

Priority Population Groups

Some groups, including students, those in congregate housing, and temporary foreign workers, may be excluded from publicly available core housing need data sources.

Students

From the Region of Waterloo's *2023 Population and Household Estimates for Waterloo Region* in May 2024, the City of Cambridge was home to approximately 4,500 temporary students in 2023. The Region estimated Cambridge to receiving an additional 6,530 arriving students in 2023 from other municipalities. Of these new students, all 6,530 were living in other accommodations that were not student residences. Cambridge does not have student residences within the municipality.

In Waterloo Region, roughly half (51%) of the growth experienced in 2023 is a direct result of an increase in international student enrollment at local institutions. The remaining growth is largely driven by both intra-provincial and international migration.

Those in Congregate Housing

As of 2024, there were eight (8) long-term care facilities located in the City of Cambridge. Within these eight facilities, there are 841 beds of varying levels of accessibility accommodation.

Temporary Foreign Workers

Temporary foreign workers are non-permanent residents with employment income in Canada who may hold permits for work, study or other purposes. While there is no data available for the reporting on how many temporary foreign workers are currently in Cambridge, the growth of this type of worker has become more common in southern Ontario. In the third quarter of 2024, 3 million non-permanent residents were present in Canada. Nationally, the transportation and warehousing, retail trade, and manufacturing sectors also posted rapid growth in the share of foreign workers in the workforce.[1] These are industries that are common industries of employment in Cambridge.

[1] - Source: Statistics Canada (2024). *Research to Insights: Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada*. Retrieved from: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2024006-eng.htm

Priority Groups: Key Takeaways

The following takeaways are explored in detail throughout this section:

- Households led by a member of a priority population or contain a member with activity limitations are more likely to be facing affordability issues and be in core housing need relative to all households in the City of Cambridge.
- Increased rates of core housing need among priority population groups was largely driven by households falling below the housing affordability standard and the housing suitability standard. This indicates the need for more affordable housing that is sized suitably to accommodate these households in the City of Cambridge.
- Households with a member with activity limitations were more likely to be in core housing need due to inadequate housing. This may indicate a lack of affordable housing that is in good repair for these households or a lack of programs available to assist these populations to getting the necessary repairs to their housing.
- From a Point-in-Time count completed in 2021, there were 1,085 people experiencing homelessness across the Waterloo Region. During this count, 673 individuals were experiencing hidden homelessness, in emergency shelters, in transitional housing, or were in institutions and 412 people were living rough (in encampments, on the street, or in their vehicles). This count includes all municipalities within the region – not just the City of Cambridge.
- The average occupancy rate of shelter accommodations has steadily increased over time in Cambridge. This has occurred as the City has added addition shelter beds to accommodate the growing demand for emergency shelter in the area.

Housing Profile

This section is an overview of the housing profile of the community, highlighting factors influencing housing supply, including the current stock composition and new development trends. Housing supply data is crucial in determining the need for different housing types in a community. Supply data will be compared against demand data to help determine the need for housing.

This section assesses how housing has changed over time in the community through trends in net change of affordable or below-market housing. This should be expressed through illustrations of net losses or net gains in affordable and non-market housing over the previous three census periods.

Overview

The housing profile for a community is used to describe the supply of housing in the community. Several supply-side characteristics are examined, including:

- The **existing housing stock**, including composition by dwelling types, the size and suitability, and the age and composition of the stock.
- The existing **stock of rental housing**, including the primary and secondary rental markets
- **New Dwelling trends**, including housing starts and completions, and planning application pipeline insights
- The state of **emergency shelters** and **transitional housing**, including the current supply of beds, occupancy rates, waitlist data, and other insights into the emergency shelter system.
- The **existing housing stock** of affordable and social housing, including composition by dwelling types and bedrooms.

Key Trends in Housing Stock

The City of Cambridge is located in the Waterloo Region, south of the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo within the Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo census metropolitan area (KCW CMA). The City was incorporated in 1973, when the three municipalities of Galt, Preston and Hespeler along with parts of Waterloo and North Dumfries Townships were amalgamated into a single legal entity under a new name. The history and trends of these smaller townships exists still today in the City of Cambridge.

The housing stock in Cambridge has historically been predominantly single-detached dwellings, more so than its counterparts in the KCW CMA. These dwellings have been desired within the City in part due to the larger household sizes found in Cambridge and the available land to develop.

While the City has historic downtown areas with higher density built forms, Cambridge has the lowest population density in the KCW CMA due to the amount of low-density residential development trends in much of the City.

Recent migration trends have seen new residents move to Cambridge from larger municipalities in Ontario, such as Toronto, as the impacts from COVID-19 were experienced across many facets of life, including commuting trends and housing market prices.

Source: https://explorewaterloo.ca/about/downtown-cambridge/

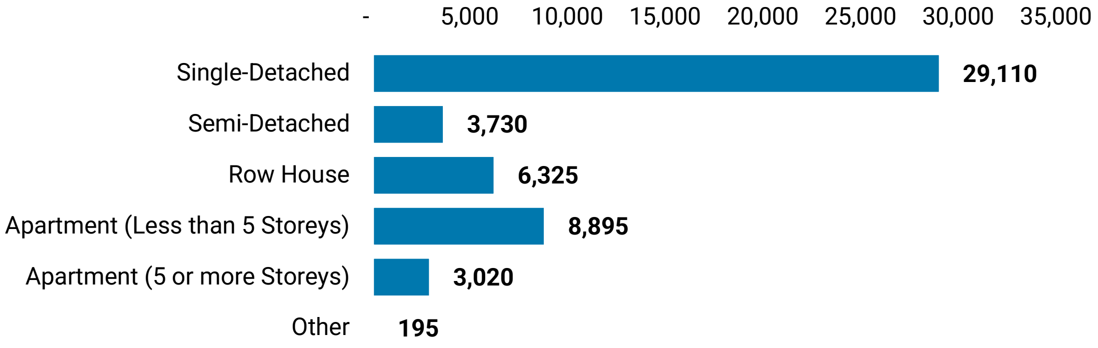
Dwellings by Type

In 2021, over half of the dwellings in the City of Cambridge (**Figure 23**) were single-detached dwellings (29,110 dwellings, 56.8% of the housing stock). This was slightly higher than the region-wide trend (53.5%), but higher than the comparable municipalities in Waterloo Region, the City of Waterloo (49.2%) and the City of Kitchener (47.5%). Among these three municipalities, Cambridge had the lowest proportion of dwellings located in apartments with five or more storeys (5.9%). Waterloo (22.0%) and Kitchener (15.4%) had a much higher share of housing stock within these dwelling types.

Renter households were much more likely to live in an apartment dwelling (59.5% of renter households) compared to owner households (6.7%). Owner households were more likely to live in single-detached dwellings (76.0%) relative to renter households (14.2%).

Between 2016 and 2021, Cambridge added 935 dwellings (+11.7%) within apartments with less than five storeys, the highest absolute total of dwellings by any dwelling type. The fastest growing dwelling types in the City were apartments with five or more storeys (+400 dwellings, +15.3%) and row houses (+680, +12.0%).

Figure 23 ● Dwellings by dwelling type in the City of Cambridge, 2021



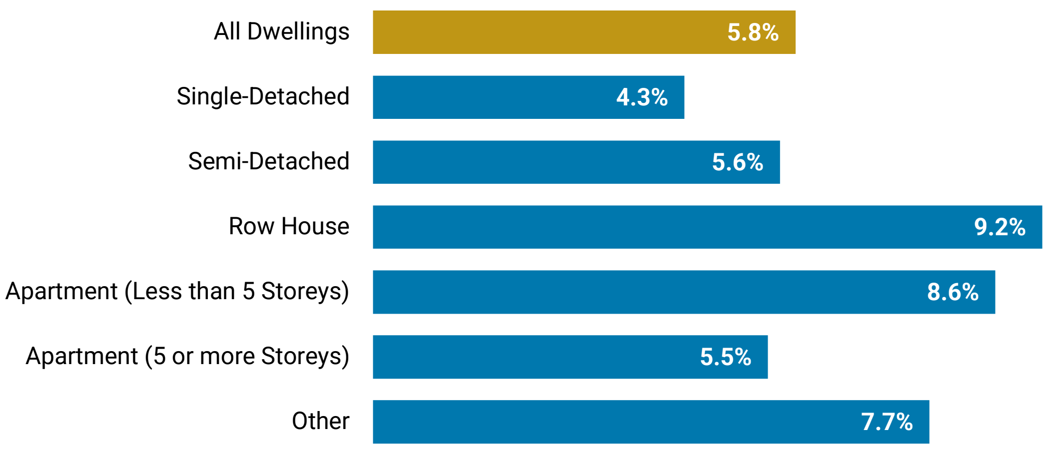
Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Dwellings by Size and Suitability

Dwellings in Cambridge were more likely to have three- or more-bedrooms (68.9% of dwellings) relative to region-wide trends (65.9%). In 2021, there were 205 bachelor dwellings (0.4%), 5,210 one-bedroom dwellings (10.2%), 10,540 two-bedroom dwellings (20.6%), 22,370 three-bedroom dwellings (43.6%), and 12,945 four- or more-bedroom dwellings (25.2%).

These large dwelling sizes contributed to a slightly lower proportion of dwellings that were deemed unsuitable (5.8%) relative to region-wide levels (6.0%). The rate of dwelling suitability varied by dwelling type (**Figure 24**), as row houses (9.2%) and low-rise apartments (8.6%) experienced higher rates of unsuitable housing conditions in Cambridge.

Figure 24 • Proportion of dwellings deemed unsuitable by dwelling type in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

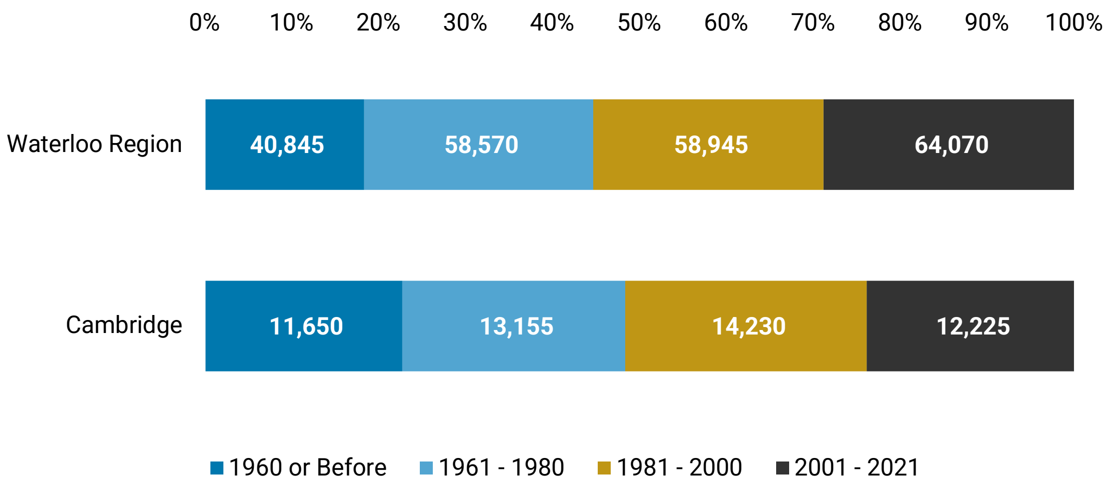
Dwellings by Date of Construction and Condition

The housing supply in Cambridge was slightly older than supply across Waterloo Region, based on the period of construction. In 2021, 22.7% of the housing stock in Cambridge was constructed before 1960, among the highest rates in the region. The City of Cambridge had the lowest share of its current housing stock constructed between 2001 and 2021 (23.8%) relative to other municipalities in the Region.

Apartment dwellings in structures with less than five storeys had the highest proportion built before 1960 (32.3%) in Cambridge.

Due to the age of the housing stock, Cambridge had the highest rate of inadequate housing (5.2% of dwellings), or housing that required major repairs, in the region. This was higher than the region-wide share (4.5%) of dwellings that required major repairs.

Figure 25 • Dwellings by period of construction in the City of Cambridge and Waterloo Region, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2021

Gain and Loss of Affordable Housing Units

The housing market in the City of Cambridge has become more unaffordable for low-income households over time. As these households tend to be renter households, as referenced in the *Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics* section of this report, this section will focus on the gain and loss of affordable rental housing units.

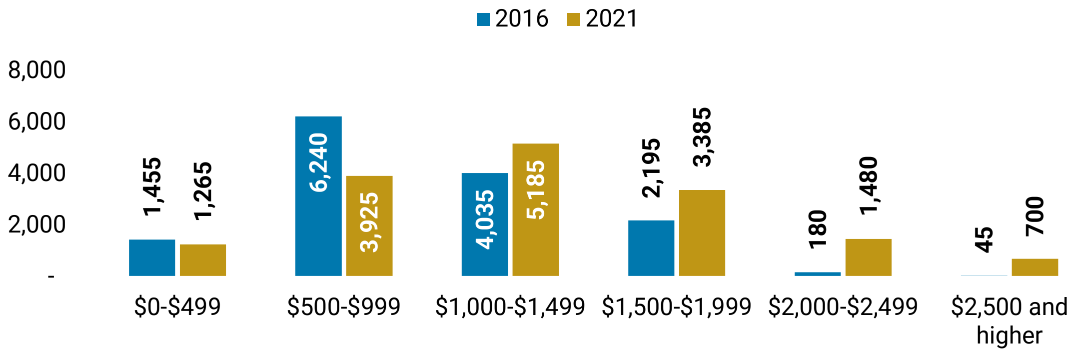
Household deemed low-income, or those with household incomes that fall below the income threshold for the third income decile for renter households, cannot access the average market rents in Cambridge. The income threshold for low-income renter households in 2020 was approximately $40,000. This household would require rent of $1,000 or less per month to be considered affordable. The average price on the primary rental market in Cambridge in 2020 was $1,193, with rent prices rapidly escalating since.

Between 2016 and 2021, there was a dramatic shift towards rental units with monthly rent prices over $1,000 in Cambridge. In 2016, there were 7,695 rental units with monthly shelter costs below $1,000. By 2021, this number had decreased to 5,190 units, or a loss of 2,505 units (-32.6%). Conversely, the number of rental units with monthly shelter costs $2,000 and higher increased from 225 units in 2016 to 2,180 in 2021 (+868.9%). These expensive rental units accounted for 13.7% of the dwellings on the rental market.

The increase in rent prices is likely due to new developments with high-end rentals being built in Cambridge. Considering the rental units with shelter costs of $2,000 or higher in 2021, 37.4% were built between 2016 and 2021.

The creation of new, expensive rental units to the market in Cambridge has increased average rents steadily over time. Developers have been less likely to build affordable units large enough for families, leaving renter households with larger families few affordable and suitable options on the market. Of the rental units built between 2016 and 2021 with three or more bedrooms, 83.5% had rents above $2,000 per month.

Figure 26 • Rental units by monthly shelter costs in the City of Cambridge, 2016-2021



Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2016-2021

Existing Housing Stock: Key Takeaways

- The housing stock in the City of Cambridge was predominantly large, single-detached dwellings with three- ore more-bedrooms, especially relative to trends region-wide.
- Cambridge had the lowest share of dwellings located in apartment buildings relative to comparable municipalities in the region.
- The housing stock was slightly older than supply across the Region, based on the age of construction of dwellings. This led to the highest rate of inadequate housing, or housing in need of major repairs, in the region.
- The municipality has experienced a loss of housing that would be affordable for low-income households, particularly on the rental market where they would typically seek accommodations. There is a lack of affordable units suitable for large families on the rental market in Cambridge.

Primary Rental Units

In 2023, there were 6,235 purpose-built rental units on the primary rental market in Cambridge. This universe was much smaller than comparable municipalities in the Region, including Kitchener (21,71 units) and Waterloo (9,799 units). The primary rental universe has increased steadily over time, with 576 units (+10.2%) being added between 2014 and 2023. However, this growth has not kept pace with the growth of renters in the City. Between 2016 and 2021, the City added 306 primary market rental units while the number of renter households grew by 1,795 households.

Assessing by unit size, the primary rental market universe in Cambridge was made up of 77 bachelor units (1.2%), 1,657 one-bedroom units (26.6%), 4,128 two-bedroom units (66.2%), and 373 three- or more-bedroom units (6.0%).

Secondary Rental Units

Considering all rental units that are not included within the primary rental market, there were approximately 9,750 renter households that found housing accommodations on the secondary rental market. This would have represented approximately upwards of 60% of the renter households in the City in 2021.

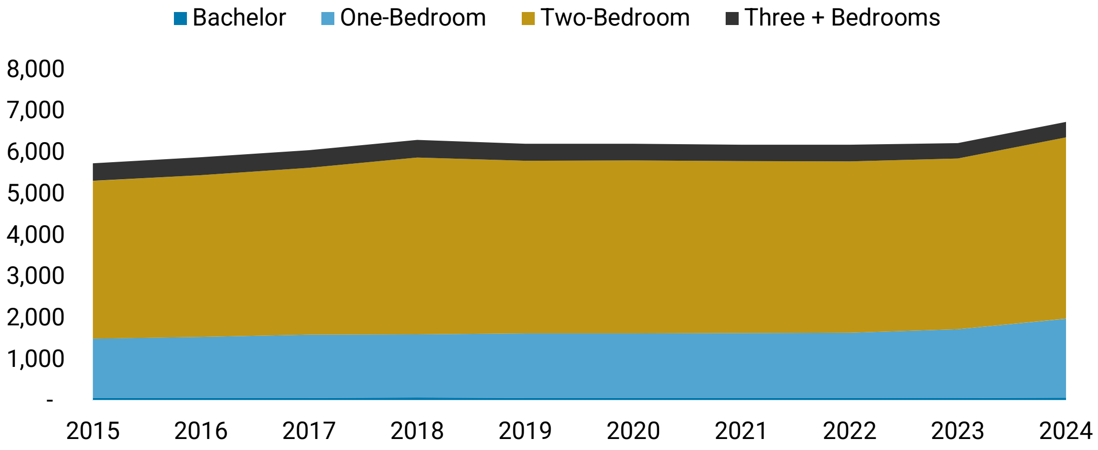
Short-term Rental Units

As of 2024, short-term rental data was not collected by the City of Cambridge.

According to the AirDNA website, which tracks short-term rentals in municipalities, there were 396 listings within the City of Cambridge as of November 2024.

Source: AirDNA (2024). Market Overview: City of Cambridge.
https://app.airdna.co/data/ca/56363?tab=performance&welcome=true&lat=43.402427&lng=-80.332284&zoom=11

Figure 27 ● Primary rental market universe in the City of Cambridge, 2014-2013



Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2014-2023

What is the Primary Rental Market? The **primary rental market universe** includes all self-contained rental units where the primary purpose of the structure is to house renter tenants. The primary rental market includes purpose-built rental apartments and row houses. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reports on the primary rental market in a community although the annual rental market survey that they conduct only includes structures with three or more units.

What is the Secondary Rental Market? The **secondary rental market universe** represents self-contained units which were not built specifically as rental housing but are currently being used as rental housing. These units include rented single-detached, semi-detached, row/town houses, duplex apartments, rented condominium units, and one or two apartments which are part of a commercial or other type of structure.

Factors Influencing Market Rent

Several factors have influenced the market rent prices in Cambridge in recent years. The COVID-19 created a shock to the housing market across southern Ontario, as households moved out to more suburban areas with larger dwelling sizes. However, after an initial stagnation in rent prices in 2020, most municipalities, including Cambridge, have experienced a sharp increase in rent prices since. Inflationary pressures, increased interest rates, population increases, and economic factors have all contributed to an increased demand for rental housing and tightening of the rental market in Cambridge.

Average Purpose-Built Market Rent

The average primary market rent prices in Cambridge have been steadily increasing in recent years (**Figure 28**). Between 2014 and 2023, the average rent price across all unit sizes increased by 49.2%. This increase was driven by the increases in the rent prices of one-bedroom ($1,230 in 2023, +49.7% from 2014) and two-bedroom ($1,512, +52.4%) units. Bachelor unit rent prices increased the fastest during this period ($1,243, +94.5%), likely due to the lack of supply of these units.

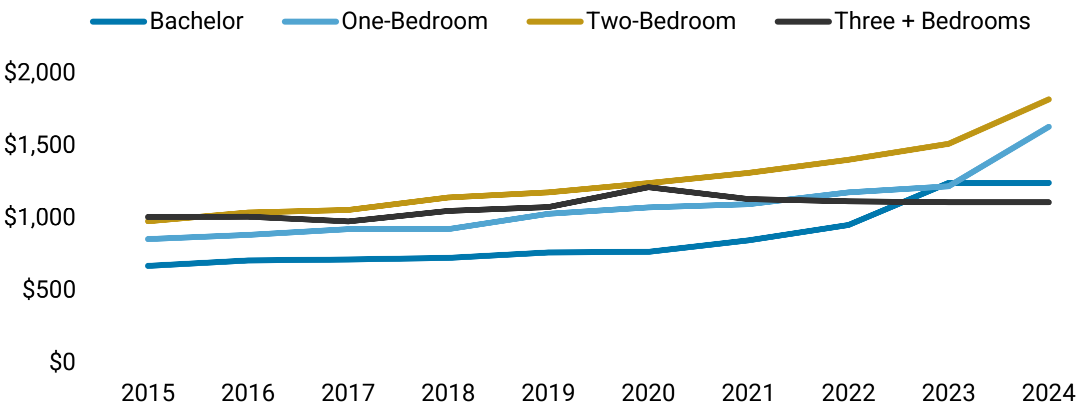
Median Purpose-Built Market Rent

The median rent prices on the primary rental market in Cambridge have increased overall at rates slightly lower than the trends for the average rent prices in the City. In 2023, the median rent price for all unit sizes in the primary rental market was $1,266. This represented an increase of 45.7% from 2014 levels ($869). Two-bedroom units experienced the highest increase in the median rent price to $1,452 (+65.4), with the median price for one-bedroom units increasing at a lower rate during this period to $1,078 (+38.2%).

Shelter Costs for Renter Households

The median shelter costs per month for renter households in 2021 was reported as $1,220. This was slightly higher than the median rent price on the primary rental market in 2021. The average shelter costs per month for renter households in 2016 was $1,310. This was higher than the average rent price on the primary rental market in 2016. These trends indicate the secondary rental market in Cambridge is more expensive.

Figure 28 ● Primary market rent prices in the City of Cambridge, 2014-2013



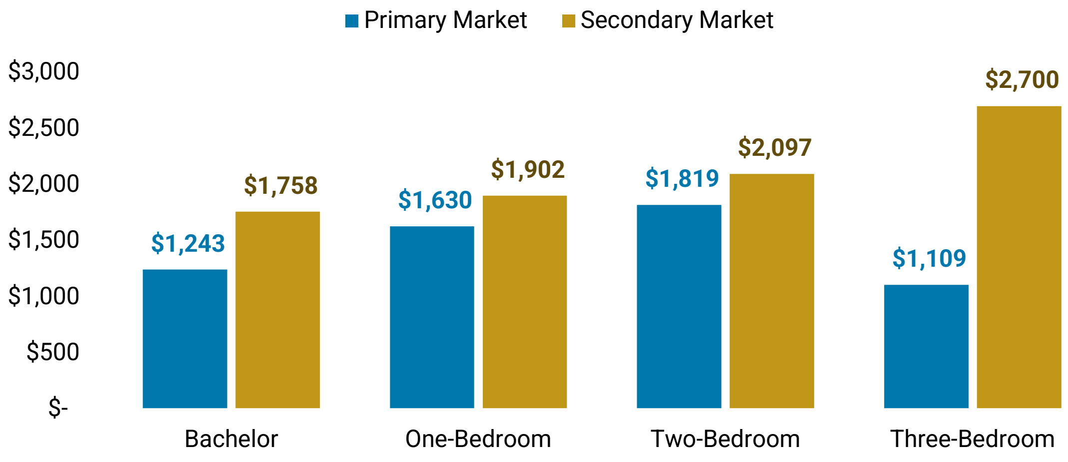
Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2014-2024

Secondary Market Rent

From a point-in-time scan conducted in December 2024, rent prices on the secondary rental market in Cambridge are significantly higher than prices found on the primary rental market (**Figure 29**).

Across all unit sizes, the point-in-time scan found that secondary rental market prices were more expensive than similar sized units on the primary rental market. This is particularly true for units containing three or more bedrooms, where prices on the secondary market ($2,700) were found to be more than double the price compared to primary market units ($1,109).

Figure 29 ● Primary market rent prices compared to secondary market in the City of Cambridge, 2024



Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey, 2024; PIT Scan completed December 2024
Note: Due to lack of available 2024 data, 2023 prices for bachelor units was utilized for this visual

Vacancy Rate Trends

Due to a lack of available data, vacancy rates for the primary market in Cambridge for 2023 and 2024 from the CMHC Rental Market Survey do not provide a clear picture of the vacancies in the primary rental market. The survey provides reliability estimates for the data provided, and CMHC indicated that the 2023 and 2024 data was graded '*good*' and '*poor*', respectively. These reliability estimated are lower than other years, where the data has been typically labeled '*excellent*' and '*very good*'.

In 2022, the vacancy rate across the primary rental market was 1.4%. In this year, the vacancy rate for three- or more-bedroom rental units was 0.2%, while the vacancy rates for two-bedroom and one-bedroom units were 1.4% and 1.5%, respectively. The vacancy rates for bachelor units was not available, possibly due to the lack of supply within the primary rental market universe.

These vacancy rate trends are impacted by the insufficient supply of purpose-built rental developed in Cambridge over time. While the number of renter households increased by 1,795 households between 2016 and 2021, the primary rental market added 306 units. This was much less than comparable municipalities within the Region in Kitchener (+1,700 purpose-built rental units) and Waterloo (+3,159 units).

What is the Vacancy Rate? A unit is considered vacant if, at the time of the CMHC Rental Market Survey, the unit is physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental. *Available for immediate rental* means a new lease has not been signed or the unit is not undergoing major renovations. Typically, a ***vacancy rate*** of 3% indicates a healthy rental market.

Trends in Core Housing Need by Tenure

In 2021, households that rented their homes were more likely to be in core housing need. Despite making up just 31.1% of households in Cambridge, renter households accounted for 69.8% of the households in core housing need. In 2021, 21.2% of renter households were in core housing need, relative to 4.1% for owner households.

Renter households in core housing need fell below the suitability standard (9.3%) at approximately twice the rate that owner households did (4.6%) in 2021. This may indicate a lack of rental housing with appropriate numbers of bedrooms to suitably house families in the City.

The number of both owner and renter households in core housing need in the City decreased between 2016 and 2021, likely due to the impacts of government relief programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, there were 755 less households in core housing need in 2021 relative to 2016 levels. Of these households, 80 were owner households and 680 were renter households. The government relief programs during the pandemic were more impactful for households with lower incomes, so these programs likely caused the shift of renter households being less likely to be considered in core housing need relative to historical trends **(Table 03**).

Table 03 ● Households in core housing need by tenure in the City of Cambridge, 2006-2021

	2006		2011		2016		2021	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Households	43,295	-	46,460	-	48,240	-	51,270	-
Total in Core Housing Need	4,335	10.0%	4,955	10.7%	5,460	11.3%	4,705	9.2%
Owner Households	32,090	-	33,860	-	34,085	-	35,315	-
Owners in Core Housing Need	1,360	4.2%	1,500	4.4%	1,500	4.4%	1,420	4.0%
Renter Households	11,205	-	12,600	-	14,155	-	15,955	-
Renters in Core Housing Need	2,975	26.6%	3,455	27.4%	3,960	28.0%	3,280	20.6%

Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2006-2021

Rental Market Trends: Key Takeaways

- The size of the primary rental market universe in Cambridge was much smaller than comparable municipalities in the region. Growth in purpose-built rental units has been insufficient given the recent growth in renter households in the City.
- In the place of a robust primary rental market, the secondary rental market is accommodating approximately upwards of 60% of renters in Cambridge. The secondary rental market is typically more expensive and less secure than the primary market.
- The lack of new rental supply has tightened the rental market in Cambridge, leading to dramatic increases in rent prices and low vacancy rates over the last decade. These trends in rent prices have led to higher rates of renter households being considered in core housing need relative to owner households. Trends indicate a lack of rental housing with appropriate numbers of bedrooms to suitably house families in the City, leading to higher rates of core housing need.

Non-market housing is made up of temporary accommodation and permanent housing units where monthly rent rates are geared-to-income or below-market rates. These housing units are generally provided by the non-profit sector or the public sector and include emergency shelters, transitional housing, community housing, affordable housing units, and supportive or additional needs housing units, including homes for special care and nursing homes.

Subsidized Units

According to the Census of Population, there were 2,282 renter households that were living in subsidized housing in the City of Cambridge in 2021. This represented 14.3% of renter households in the City and an increase of 46 households (+2.1%) from 2016 totals. This proportion of renters in subsidized housing was the highest share in the Region, higher than the region-wide proportion (10.4%) in 2021.

According to data from the Region of Waterloo, there were 164 households receiving rent supplement in the City of Cambridge in 2024. This included 58 households that were receiving rent assistance with supports.

Community housing in Cambridge is provided through the Waterloo Region Housing. This housing is owned and managed by the Region of Waterloo, with more than 2,700 units in the cities and townships within the region. As of 2024, there were 959 units located in the City of Cambridge with 98 units in development as of late 2024.

There are 585 affordable units available through non-profit organizations in Cambridge. Of these units, 73 are mandated for seniors, 261 are mandated for households with dependents, and 251 were open to all household types.

Below-Market Units

The City of Cambridge tracks the number of affordable housing units built each year based on the Regional definition of affordable housing **(Figure 30)**. These units are funded through various strategies and sources of funding. As of 2024, there were 504 affordable housing units in the City. This include 39 supportive housing units, with 51 in development, and 74 units mandated for seniors.

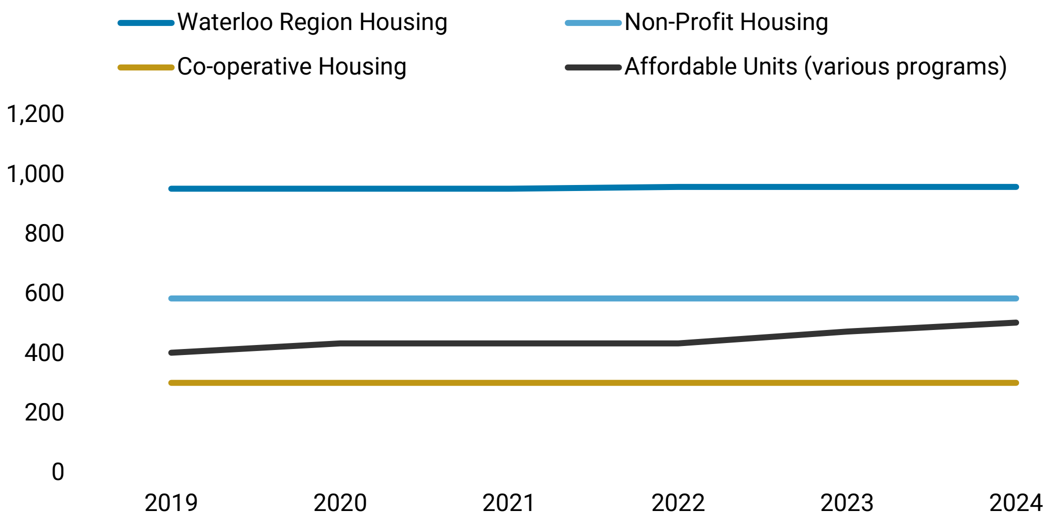
Co-operative Housing Units

As of 2024, there were 302 co-operative housing units in the City of Cambridge. This number has remained unchanged since at least 2019. Of these co-op units, 228 were designated for households with dependents and 74 were open for all household types.

Other Non-Market Housing Units

As of 2024, there were 10 permanently supportive housing units within the Waterloo Region Housing stock. Exact numbers for accessible housing units throughout the non-market housing were difficult to report as there is a range of accessible housing within the stock, from barrier-free units to fully modified units.

Figure 30 • Number of affordable housing units developed in the City of Cambridge, 2021



Source: Region of Waterloo, 2024

Affordable and Community Housing Needs and Gaps

Further to the housing options outlined in this section, several gaps remain unaddressed in the supply of affordable and community housing in the City of Cambridge, including the supply of community housing, supportive housing, and accessible housing.

Community Housing Needs

The loss of affordable market housing units in the community has led to an increased demand for community housing in Cambridge. As of December 2023, there were over 4,000 households on the waitlist for community housing in Cambridge. Over half (53.4%) of these applicants requested one-bedroom units, while 30.0% requested units with at least three bedrooms. There has been a lack of new supply of community housing Cambridge, as the supply of Waterloo Region Housing and non-market housing supplied through non-profit organizations only increased by six (6) units between 2019 and 2024. There have been 101 new affordable housing units developed in the City during this time, a quantity insufficient for the growing demand for this type of housing.

Supportive Housing Needs

The current supply of supportive housing in Cambridge is insufficient for the level of demand. As of 2024, there were 10 supportive housing units among the 959 Waterloo Region Housing units (1.0% of the supply) located in the City, and 39 supportive units among the 504 affordable housing units (7.7% of the supply) developed in Cambridge.

The incidence of core housing need among households with members with activity limitations indicates demand for affordable housing with supports are in need in Cambridge. These households are more likely to be in core housing need due to inadequate or unsuitable housing, likely indicating these households are choosing housing they can afford despite the need for major repairs or the lack of bedrooms.

Accessible Housing Needs

Existing data for the exact number of units that were either fully accessible or barrier free was not available for this report. These types of units foster inclusivity and independence for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and others with mobility challenges. These units eliminate physical barriers, such as stairs or narrow doorways, making daily activities like cooking, bathing, or entering and exiting the home safer and more manageable. By prioritizing universal design features—such as zero-step entries, wider hallways, and adaptable layouts—barrier-free housing allows residents to age-in-place, reducing the need for costly relocations or institutional care.

Ownership Sales Prices by Dwelling Type

Prices for newly constructed dwellings are increasing steadily in the City of Cambridge. In 2024, the price of a newly constructed single-detached dwelling was $1,157,633. This represented a year-over-year decrease of 1.5%, but an increase from 2015 of 174.7%.

Sales prices for homes on the re-sale ownership market in Cambridge has been increasing rapidly in recent years, with a peak in 2022 **(Figure 31).** From data collected from the Waterloo Region Association of Realtors (WRAR), the composite sales price for all dwelling types in Cambridge in January 2024 was $747,000. This represented a year-over-year increase from 2023 levels of $720,600. The 2024 price was a dramatic increase from 2015 sales prices of $301,000, an increase of 148.2% (+$446,000).

The most expensive dwelling type on the market in Cambridge was single-detached dwellings. These dwellings had an average sales price of $778,110 in 2024. Row houses ($651,700) and apartment dwellings ($490,700) were more affordable options on the ownership re-sale market.

Ownership Sales Prices by Dwelling Size

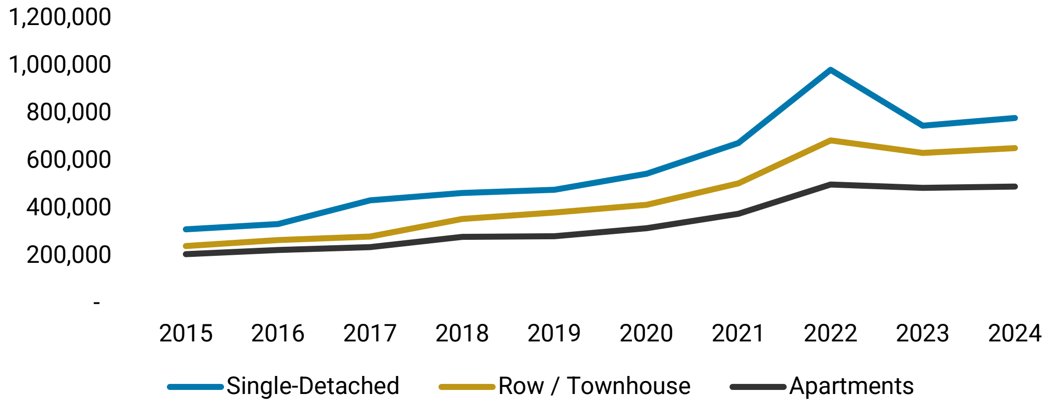
While ownership prices by the number of bedrooms was not available from CMHC or the WRAR, the average reported value of dwellings by dwelling size was obtained through census data (**Table xx**). These values should be assessed with caution, as dwellings with one bedroom are more likely to apartment dwellings (85.1% of one-bedroom dwellings), the least expensive dwelling type, while four- or more-bedroom dwellings are more likely to be single-detached dwellings (87.4% of four- or more-bedroom dwellings).

Table 04 ● Dwelling value by number of bedrooms in the City of Cambridge, 2021

	All Dwellings	Bachelor Dwellings	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four- or more-Bedroom
Average value of dwellings ($)	$ 650,000	$ 700,000	$ 380,000	$ 500,000	$ 628,000	$ 800,000

Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile, 2006-2021

Figure 31 ● Ownership re-sale prices by dwelling type in the City of Cambridge, 2014-2023



Source: Waterloo Region Association of Realtors, 2024

Ownership Market Trends: Key Takeaways

- The price of newly constructed houses in Cambridge has steadily increased in the last decade, reaching prices over $1,100,000 for single-detached dwellings.
- Re-sale home prices peaked in 2022 in Cambridge at just under $1,000,000. Since then, prices have slightly decreased but still represent dramatic increases from prices a decade ago.
- Apartment and row houses provided a more affordable ownership option relative to single-detached dwellings, although row houses have experienced similar increases in prices in recent years.

// Housing Profile
New Dwellings

Housing Demolitions

Between January and November in 2024, there were 32 demolitions permits for residential units in the City of Cambridge. These units were predominantly single-detached dwellings.

Housing Completions

Historical development trends in the City of Cambridge tended to be predominantly made up of single-detached dwellings. From 2000 to 2009, 68.2% of housing completions in Cambridge were single-detached dwellings. However, this trend has shifted in recent years to more dense residential built forms.

From 2015 to 2024, the most common dwelling type among the 6,823 housing completions in Cambridge were row houses (2,800 completions, 41.0% of completions) and apartment units (2,192 completions, 32.1%). Single-detached and semi-detached dwellings accounted for 26.3% and 0.5% of the completions, respectively (**Figure 32**).

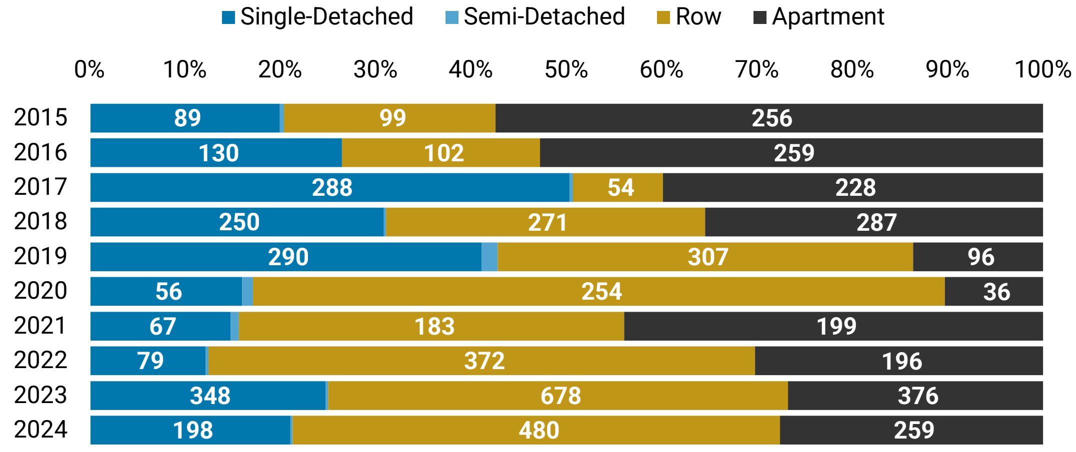
Development has increased in recent years, with 1,406 housing completions recorded in 2023 and 939 recorded in 2024. This 2023 was the highest total since at least 1990, the earliest available data from the CMHC Starts and Completion Survey. Increases in housing completions in recent years has been due to an increase in row (1,158 completions in this two-year period), apartment dwellings (635 completions), and single-detached dwellings (546 completions).

Housing Completions by Intended Tenure

Between 2015 and 2024, 21.6% of the housing completions in Cambridge were intended for rental housing (**Figure 33**). This share of rental housing was lower than comparable muncipalities in the Region, including Kitchener (26.5% of completions) and Waterloo (53.0%).

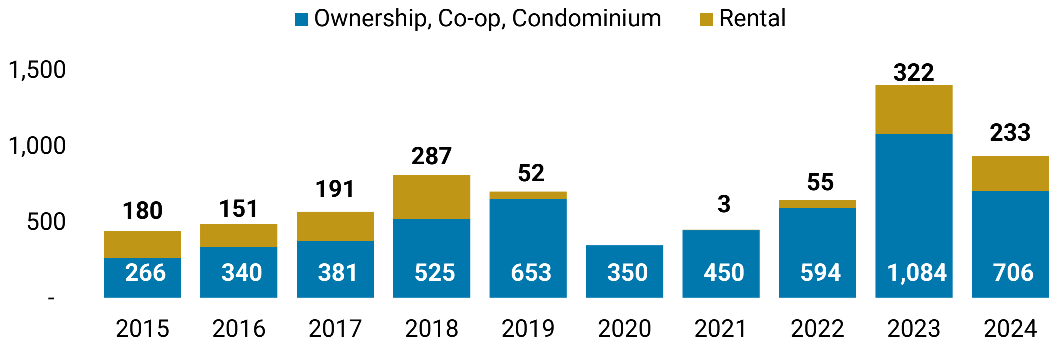
However, the development of dwellings intended for the rental market has been increasing relative to historical patterns. Between 2000 and 2009, 14.6% of housing completions were intended for the rental market. In 2024, there was 233 units completed that were intended for the rental market, accounting for 24.8% of the total completions that year. This was the highest proportion of completions since 2018.

Figure 32 • Housing completions by dwelling type in the City of Cambridge, 2014-2023



Source: CMHC Housing Starts and Completions Survey, 2014-2023

Figure 33 • Housing completions by intended tenure in the City of Cambridge, 2014-2023



Source: CMHC Housing Starts and Completions Survey, 2014-2023

// Housing Profile
New Dwellings

Draft Lots Approved

Between January and November in 2024, there were 8,163 residential units approved through the City of Cambridge. These approved units were all ownership in tenure.

Housing Starts

Housing starts in the City of Cambridge had been increasing in recent years, including a high of 1,009 housing starts in 2022. This was the highest single-year total of housing starts in Cambridge since 2005 (1,112 starts). The increasing number of housing starts was, in part, due to the increased number of row and apartment dwellings that were being started in the City. From 2000 to 2009, row and apartment dwellings accounted for 17.7% and 13.1%, respectively, of housing starts in the City. However, between 2014 and 2023, these dwellings accounted for 72.85 of housing starts (40.3% and 32.5%, respectively).

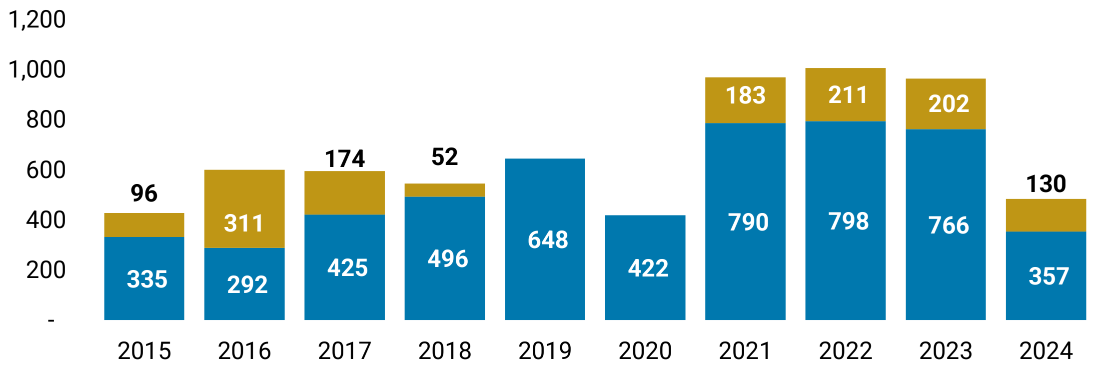
However, 2024 represented a down-year in terms of housing starts in Cambridge. In this year, 487 housing starts were recorded in the City, the lowest total since 2020.

Housing Starts by Intended Tenure

From 2015 to 2024, housing starts that were intended for the rental market accounted for 20.3% of the housing starts in Cambridge (**Figure 34**). This share of rental housing was lower than comparable muncipalities in the region, including Kitchener (27.0% of starts) and Waterloo (34.2%).

However, the development of dwellings intended for the rental market has been increasing relative to historical patterns. Between 2000 and 2009, 8.9% of housing starts were intended for the rental market. From 2021 to 2024, there were 726 units started that were intended for the rental market, the highest four-year total since at least 1990, the earliest available data from the CMHC Starts and Completion Survey.

Figure 34 ● Housing starts by intended tenure in the City of Cambridge, 2013-2024



Source: CMHC Housing Starts and Completions Survey, 2014-2023

New Dwellings: Key Takeaways

- While housing completions and starts in Cambridge have historically been predominantly single-detached dwellings, there has been a recent shift to more dense residential built forms.
- In recent years, row houses and apartments have been the most common dwelling type for housing completions and starts in Cambridge.
- Development has increased in recent years, with housing completions and starts reaching annual highs due to increased development of row and apartment dwellings.
- While the proportion of new development in Cambridge that is intended for the rental market is lower than comparable municipalities in the Region, the share of rental development has increased in recent years.

Ownership Market Affordability

The ownership market in the City of Cambridge is largely unaffordable for households (**Table 05**). In the affordability table below, each decile represents 10% of the total households in Cambridge, which was approximately 5,130 households in 2021.

The re-sale ownership market, with typically lower prices than newly built dwellings, is unaffordable for households who are considered low- or moderate-income. This represents approximately 60% of the households in the City. Apartment dwellings, the most affordable dwelling type for sale, were only affordable for households in the seventh income decile or higher, while row houses (eighth income decile or higher) and single-detached (ninth income decile or higher) were only affordable for high-income households.

Newly constructed dwellings, with an average sales price of $1,157,633, were not affordable for any of the bottom nine income deciles in the City of Cambridge in 2024.

Understanding Affordability Tables: Based on the gross household income, a maximum affordable purchase price can be calculated by assuming the household spends 30% of their income on shelter costs.

Household incomes were calculated using Statistics Canada's household income distribution and projected forward from 2020 using the increase in the Ontario CPI from 2020 to 2024 (+17.4%).

The maximum affordable house price was calculated using the Bank of Canada's conventional 5-year mortgage rate and incorporated considerations for downpayment and mortgage payments.

Within the table, 'YES' denotes a household income decile group that can afford a given dwelling type based on current market prices. 'NO' denotes a household income decile group that cannot afford the current market price without spending more than 30% of their household income on shelter costs.

Table 05 ● Affordability table for ownership market in the City of Cambridge, 2023

Ownership Affordability			Cambridge Ownership Market (2023)		
	2023 Income (All Households)	Maximum Affordable Price	Single-Detached	Row / Townhouse	Apartments
			$778,110	$651,700	$490,700
Low Income Deciles 1-3 (Less than $72,796)	$36,868	$134,400	NO	NO	NO
	$54,949	$200,300	NO	NO	NO
	$72,796	$265,400	NO	NO	NO
Moderate Income Deciles 4-6 (From $72,797 to $127,980)	$90,408	$329,600	NO	NO	NO
	$109,194	$398,100	NO	NO	NO
	$127,980	$466,600	NO	NO	NO
High Income Deciles 7-9 (Greater than $127,981)	$152,637	$559,000	NO	NO	YES
	$180,816	$666,000	NO	YES	YES
	$230,130	$854,000	YES	YES	YES

Source: Waterloo Region Association of Realtors MLS Home Price Index, Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation Order
Note: Tenth income decile omitted as there is no maximum affordable price for this group

Rental Housing Affordability

Available rental units on the primary rental market are largely affordable for moderate- and high-income households in the City of Cambridge (**Table 06**). In the affordability table below, each decile represents 10% of the renter households in Cambridge, which was approximately 1,600 households in 2021.

Bachelor units were considered affordable for renter households in the fourth income decile or higher in 2021, while one-bedroom units were considered affordable for renter households in the fifth income decile or higher. Two-bedroom rental units were slightly more expensive and were considered affordable for households in the sixth income decile or higher. Finally, three- or more-bedroom units, on average the least expensive of these unit sizes, was affordable for renter households in the third income decile or higher. This is not typical for larger units to be considered more affordable than smaller units. This may be for a variety of reasons. New rental units built in the City are typically the most expensive rent prices in the market. These new units are more likely to include two or less bedrooms, likely indicating the new stock of small rental units is driving up their average price, while larger units are not being added to the supply of rental supply in the City as frequently.

Understanding Affordability Tables: Based on the gross household income, a maximum affordable rent price can be calculated by assuming the household spends 30% of their income on rent.

Household incomes were calculated using Statistics Canada's household income distribution and projected forward from 2020 using the increase in the Ontario CPI from 2020 to 2024 (+17.4%).

Within the table, 'YES' denotes a household income decile group that can afford a given unit size based on current market prices. 'NO' denotes a household income decile group that cannot afford the current market price without spending more than 30% of their household income on rent.

Table 06 • Affordability table for the primary rental market in the City of Cambridge, 2023

Rental Affordability			Cambridge Primary Rental Market (2023)			
	2023 Income (Renter HH)	Maximum Affordable Price	Bachelor $1,243	One-Bedroom $1,630	Two-Bedroom $1,819	Three+ Bedrooms $1,109
Low Income Deciles 1-3 (Less than $45,868)	$27,240	$680	NO	NO	NO	NO
	$35,459	$890	NO	NO	NO	NO
	$46,965	$1,170	NO	NO	NO	YES
Moderate Income Deciles 4-6 (From $45,869 to $79,120)	$56,828	$1,420	YES	NO	NO	YES
	$68,569	$1,710	YES	YES	NO	YES
	$81,015	$2,030	YES	YES	YES	YES
High Income Deciles 7-9 (Greater than $79,121)	$97,453	$2,440	YES	YES	YES	YES
	$118,587	$2,970	YES	YES	YES	YES
	$151,463	$3,790	YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey, Statistics Canada Custom Tabulation Order
Note: Tenth income decile omitted as there is no maximum affordable price for this group

Housing Profile: Key Takeaways

The following takeaways are explored in detail throughout this section:

- **Existing Housing Stock:** The housing stock in the City of Cambridge was predominantly large, single-detached dwellings with three- or more-bedrooms. Cambridge had the lowest share of dwellings located in apartment buildings relative to Kitchener and Waterloo.
    - The housing stock was slightly older than supply across the region, based on the age of construction of dwellings. This led to the highest rate of inadequate housing in the Region.
- **Rental Market Trends:** The size of the primary rental market universe in Cambridge was much smaller than comparable municipalities in the region. Growth in purpose-built rental units has been insufficient given the recent growth in renter households in the City. In the place of a robust primary rental market, the secondary rental market is accommodating upwards of 60% of renters.
    - Increases in rent prices have led to higher rates of renter households being considered in core housing need relative to owner households. Trends indicate a lack of rental housing with appropriate numbers of bedrooms to suitably house families in the City, leading to higher rates of core housing need.
    - While the rental market appears affordable for moderate-income households, the availability of affordable rental is low according to vacancy rate data.
- **Non-Market Trends:** The lack of community and supportive housing in Cambridge has led to increased rates of core housing need in vulnerable populations and larger waitlists for these types of housing units.
- **Ownership Market Trends:** The price of the ownership market in Cambridge has steadily increased in the last decade, reaching prices over $1,100,000 for newly constructed single-detached dwellings and at just under $1,000,000 for re-sale home. Prices have slightly decreased in recent years but still represent dramatic increases from prices a decade ago. These prices are affordable only for the top 10% of household incomes in Cambridge.
- **New Dwellings:** While housing completions and starts in Cambridge have historically been predominantly single-detached dwellings, there has been a recent shift to more dense residential built forms. Development has increased in recent years, with housing completions and starts reaching annual highs due to increased development of row and apartment dwellings. The share of rental development has increased in recent years.

Projected Housing Needs and Next Steps

This section aims to project how much and what type of housing is needed to meet the needs of the population in the community in the next ten years. This section projects population trends from the previous 10 years, dividing by income category and target housing costs while considering migration trends.

Assumptions

These projections were developed utilizing Census of Population data from Statistics Canada, including population and household characteristics. These census counts are an undercount of the actual population in a given jurisdiction, mostly due to the inevitable reality of some people not being counted. This could happen either because their household did not receive a census questionnaire, like if a structurally separated dwelling is not easily identifiable, or because they were not included in the questionnaire completed for the household, such as the omission of a boarder or a lodger.

These projections should not be considered comprehensive and only serve as a proxy for the purposes of this study, in the absence of comprehensive local municipal projections with community-specific and recent economic and migration trends considered. The Government of Ontario's Ministry of Finance population projections are only currently available for the Census Division (i.e., the Region of Waterloo) as a whole.

While these projections factor shifting household formation trends, these projections assume linear relationships between historical household formation patterns and future household formation patterns.

These populations projections were developed to align with the existing population projections as outlined in the City of Cambridge Official Plan. These projections state the City is expecting the population of Cambridge to grow to 176,000 by the year 2031.

Projection Methodology

Population Projections

Population data was gathered from Statistics Canada Community Profiles for the periods of 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021. The Cohort Survival Projection Method was used to project the historical population trends into future years. The Cohort Survival Projection Method is a simple method for forecasting what the future population will be based upon the survival of the existing population and the births that will occur. Births were projected using trends in the Ontario birth rates in the last ten years, forecasting these trends to continue in a linear fashion moving forward.

To augment this method with historical trends, a time series regression for the survival rate for each age cohort was utilized to capture shifting population trends in Cambridge over time. Age cohorts were projected to future years and added together for total population figures.

Projection Methodology, continued

Household Projections

Household projections were calculated utilizing the previously developed population projections and the historical trends for household sizes in Cambridge. Household projections were calculated by forecasting trends for the average number of people per household and applying those to the population projections previously developed. These forecasts incorporate shifting trends in average household size in Cambridge over time.

The household projections provided a basis to develop projections by household tenure (owner or renter households), type (family or non-family households), size (one-, two-, three-, four-, and five- or more-person), and age (15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 44-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75-84, and 85+) based on historical trends in Cambridge. Household projections based on these household characteristics incorporated shifting trends in Cambridge over time.

Dwelling and Income Category Projections

Projections for aspects of anticipated dwellings and projected households by income categories were developed using the projections of households and historical trends associated with these households.

Using custom order cross-tabulation data from Statistics Canada, the rate that households lived in a particular dwelling type (single-detached, semi-detached, row house, and apartment) or dwelling size (one-, two-, three-, and four- or more-bedroom) were utilized to calculate the anticipated need in future years given the households that were projected to exist.

A similar methodology was used to project households within the HART income categories (very low, low, moderate, median, high).

Outcomes and Key Takeaways

The population of the City of Cambridge is expected to continue to grow rapidly in the next decade **(Figure 35**). These population projections are consistent with the City's population forecast for 2031 found the *City of Cambridge Official Plan (2018 Consolidation*) of approximately 176,000. The resulting households projected for this population growth is notable and requires adequate planning considerations. This growth represents an increase of approximately 45% between 2021 and 2035.

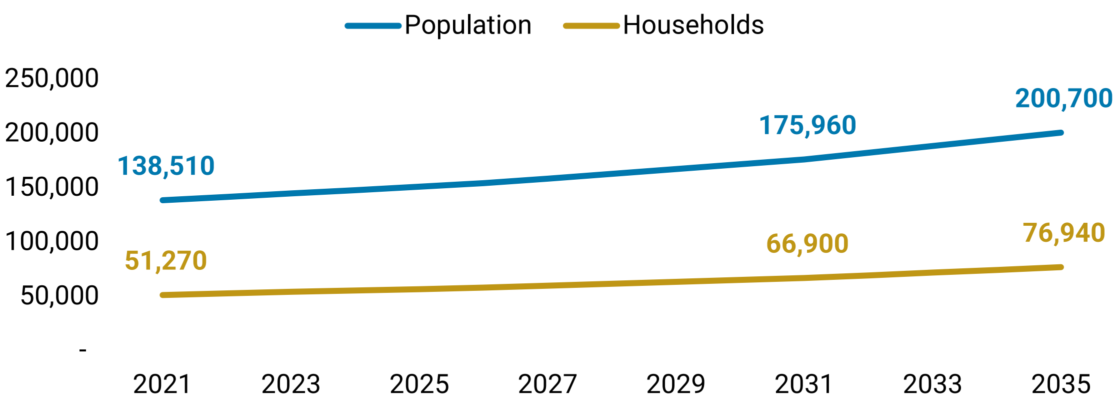
Throughout the projection period, a higher proportion of the population will be adults aged between 30 and 40 years. This may be driven by historically increasing opportunities for employment in the city. The proportion of households aged 65 years and older remains consistent over time, however this cohort grows in absolute terms during this period. This requires consideration for supports to help this population group to age in place.

Projected Housing Needs: Key Takeaways

The projections completed for this study expect the City to contain approximately 76,960 households in 2035. The following trends were observed from these household projections:

- The proportion of renter households is projected to increase slightly, from 31.1% in 2021 to 32.1% in 2035.
- Household size is projected to decrease slightly, with the proportion of one-person households increasing from 23.2% in 2021 to 25.0% in 2035. Households containing three and four persons are expected to make up a smaller proportion in 2035, but households with five- or more-people are expected to grow their share (11.0% in 2021 to 11.5% in 2035).
- Non-family households are projected to account for a higher proportion of households in 2035 (29.4%) relative to 2021 (26.7%) trends. This is mostly due to the increase in one-person households. During this period, households containing couples with children are expected to make a smaller proportion of households (33.3% in 2021 to 28.35 in 2035), while lone-parent households (12.3% in 2021 to 13.0% in 2035) and multi-generational households (3.0% in 2021 to 3.7% in 2035) are expected to increase their share.
- Primary household maintainers aged under 25 years are expected to decline in absolute totals in Cambridge, accounting for 1.6% of households in 2021 and projected to account for 0.6% of households in 2035.
- Primary household maintainers aged 75 years and older are expected to grow considerable and account for a higher proportion of the total households in Cambridge, increasing from 10.5% of households in 2021 to 15.0% in 2035. These households require considerations for supports, either through supportive housing or housing with supports to remain in their community.
- Trends for dwellings types and sizes in Cambridge are expected to remain relatively consistent throughout the projection period. While apartment dwellings with fewer bedrooms are projected to grow slightly, single-detached dwellings with three bedrooms or more are expected to remain the most common dwelling type and size in Cambridge.

Figure 35 ● Projection for population and households in the City of Cambridge, 2021-2035



Source: SHS Consulting projections, 2024; Statistics Canada Community Profiles, 2006-2021

Use of Housing Needs Assessments in Long-Term Planning

This section of the Housing Needs Assessment aims to determine how the community anticipates to use the results and findings captured within the study to inform long-term planning and action to address identified needs.

These identified needs include key housing insights identified in this report and anticipated growth pressures from the projected future growth in the community.

Informing Community Planning, Housing Policies, and Housing Actions

This Housing Needs Assessment, and findings within, will inform several planning and housing policy documents that the City of Cambridge has scheduled to be undertaking and completing in the near term.

The Housing Needs Assessment will inform City of Cambridge's Official Plan policies as the City looks to update this document in the near term. This planning document will set land use planning policies and the inclusion of findings from the Housing Needs Assessment will ensure that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of the community.

The Housing Needs Assessment will inform the future Housing Strategy that is scheduled to be completed in 2025. This Housing Strategy document will assist in the creation of an action plan for the specific needs of the community, including measurable outcomes to address identified needs from the Housing Needs Assessment.

The Housing Needs Assessment will inform the City of Cambridge's Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan, Inclusionary Zoning, and Missing Middle Housing policies that currently being undertaken. These policy documents will aim to provide housing types and affordability levels to the City that will aim to address housing issues identified in the Housing Needs Assessment.

Use of Data to Direct Plans and Policies

This Housing Needs Assessment study will be considered as background study for the Official Plan update. The data collected and presented through this study will assist in the determination of how the City will consider land use designation changes.

The Region of Waterloo is concurrent completing density distribution studies throughout the region, involving capacity for utilities.

The combination of these two studies will assist the City to consider and inform what housing and density is needed throughout the City of Cambridge.

The data collected through the Housing Needs Assessment will give Council the information needed to give staff direction on how the Housing Needs Assessment will help direct future policies, master plans, and capital plans that guide infrastructure.

// Use of Housing Needs Assessments in Long-Term Planning

Anticipated Growth Pressures

Anticipated growth pressure in the City of Cambridge, such as physical and social infrastructure, is expected as the rapid growth of the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo CMA is expected to continue. With this growth, existing and future anticipated infrastructure gaps must be addressed to keep up with the pace of the projected number of housing units required for the City in the future.

The findings from this Housing Needs Assessment will assist the City of Cambridge, in partnership with the Region of Waterloo, assess the level of need for certain infrastructure throughout the community. Currently, the City's Parks Master Plan is under development to assess the state of the existing parks. The Region provides input on the capacity for transit in the City and it is anticipated that the City will use this Housing Needs Assessment study to inform transit planning in the City.

Comments from the Region of Waterloo on development application data has identified sewage capacity concerns in the City. This Housing Needs Assessment will inform the City where additional density is appropriate until these concerns can be addressed and will inform the City where utilities need to be improved for future development. The City of Cambridge plans to develop density planning with the Region to coordinate the development of this infrastructure.

4 Appendix II: Glossary

Unless otherwise noted, the terms found within this glossary have been retrieved from Statistics Canada or CMHC resources.

Glossary of Terms

Household and Population Terms

Household Type: Household type refers to the composition of persons who occupy the same dwelling.

- **Census family** is defined as a married couple and the children, if any, of either and/or both spouses; a couple living common law and the children, if any, of either and/or both partners; or a parent of any marital status in a one-parent family with at least one child living in the same dwelling and that child or those children.
- **Couple with Children** refers to a census family that contains a married couple or a couple living common law and at least one child.
- **Couple without Children** refers to a census family that contains a married couple or a couple living common law and no children.
- **Lone-parent Households** means that single parent takes care of dependent children without a partner.
- **Multigenerational households** means households with three or more generations. These households contain at least one person who is both the grandparent of a person in the household and the parent of another person in the same household.
- **Other census family household** includes both one-census-family households with additional persons and multiple-census-family households.
- **Two- or more-person non-family household** means a group of two or more persons who live together but do not constitute a census family.

Household tenure refers to whether the household owns or rents their private dwelling.

- **Owner households** are considered to own their dwelling if some member of the household owns the dwelling even if it is not fully paid for, for example if there is a mortgage or some other claim on it. Owner households include both freehold and condominium ownership.
- **Renter households** are considered to rent their dwelling if no member of the household owns the dwelling.

Private Household: Refers to a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada or abroad.

Household Income: The total combined income from all household members, before taxes and deductions.

Primary Household Maintainer: First person in the household identified as someone who pays the rent or the mortgage, or the taxes, or the electricity bill, and so on, for the dwelling. In the case of a household where two or more people are listed as household maintainers, the first person listed is chosen as the primary household maintainer.

Immigration Status: Refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.

Recent Immigrant or **Newcomer:** Refers to an immigrant that has moved to Canada within five years of the Census period. For the purposes of this report, newcomer will be used as an umbrella term that includes recent immigrants, asylum seekers, and temporary foreign workers.

Immigrant Household: Refers to households where the primary household maintainer has immigrant status in Canada.

Visible Minority: Refers to whether a person is a visible minority or not, as defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."

Understanding Mobility Analysis

Geographic mobility refers to a population's geographic movement over time. The Census of Population collects information on a person's usual place of residence one (1) year or five (5) years prior to the census reference date.

- By comparing an individual's place of residence on a past date with their current place of residence, information can be obtained on geographic mobility. For this report, mobility data is presented at the population and household level. Household mobility is determined by the mobility of the primary household maintainer.

// Glossary

Priority Groups from National Housing Strategy

Many Canadians have difficulty finding and affording housing that meets their needs. The National Housing Strategy outlines the following priority populations:

Survivors (especially Women and their children) fleeing domestic violence: Survivors fleeing domestic violence are individuals who leave their home because they fear or have experienced violence within that setting. Domestic violence is often associated with gender-based violence (GBV) which is violence that is committed against someone based on their gender identity, gender expression or perceived gender.

Seniors: Usually, the population of individuals aged 65 and over.

People with developmental disabilities: A developmental disability (also called intellectual disability) is characterized as people with significant limitations in both intellectual capacity and adaptive skills (e.g., Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome and autism).

People with mental health and addiction issues: The terms ‘mental health and ‘addiction issues’ refer to a wide range of disorders that affect mood, thinking and behaviour. Examples include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, as well as substance use disorders and problem gambling.

People with physical disabilities: Physical disability is the existence of a long–lasting condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying. This includes sensory disability conditions such as blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment that noticeably affects activities of daily living.

Racialized Persons: Racialized persons and/or groups can have racial meanings attributed to them in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as “visible minorities” under the Canadian census and may include people impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Newcomers (including refugees): Immigrants or refugees who have been in Canada for a short time, usually less than 5 years.

2SLGBTQIA+ community: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit and other gender individuals.

Veterans: Former members of the Canadian Armed Forces who successfully underwent basic training and were honourably released.

Indigenous peoples: ‘Indigenous Peoples’ is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples (sometimes, still named ‘Aboriginal peoples’): First Nations, Inuit and Métis. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. 'First Nations people' include Status and non-Status Indians.

Homeless: The situation of an individual or family that does not have a permanent address or residence; the living situation of an individual or family who does not have stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is often the result of what are known as systemic or societal barriers, including a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household’s financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.

Working poor / housing challenged: A person who is considered of the “working poor” is someone who: has an after-tax income below the poverty line, or Low-income Measure (LIM) for the area in which they live; has earnings of at least $3,000 a year ; is between the ages of 18 and 64; is not a student; and lives independently.

Understanding Data on Sex and Gender:

Data on gender can help in understanding whether household needs vary based on the gender of the primary maintainer. It is important to note that while households are required to indicate one household maintainer within census data, in many instances these responsibilities are shared across gender, and conclusions may be difficult to draw based on this data alone.

Starting in 2021, Statistics Canada began distinguishing between gender and sex at birth in their data collection. Gender refers to an individual’s personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person (a person who is not exclusively a man or a woman). Sex at birth refers to sex assigned at birth, which is typically assigned based on a person's reproductive system and other physical characteristics. The data presented here for 2021 is based on gender. Given that data on gender is not available for 2016, comparisons over time are excluded.

Given that the non-binary population is small, Statistics Canada sometimes aggregates data on to a two-category gender variable to protect the confidentiality of responses provided. In these cases, individuals in the category "nonbinary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol.

// Glossary

Housing Affordability Measures

Shelter-to-Income Ratio (STIR): A commonly accepted benchmark for measuring affordability in the Canadian context is where a household spends no more than 30% of its gross household income on housing costs. This is referred to as the shelter-cost-to-income ratio, or STIR, and is a key indicator of affordability.

For the purposes of this report, the following terms will be used to describe different levels of STIR:

- *A household facing **affordability issues** is a household spending 30% or more of their gross household income on shelter costs.*
- *A household facing **deep affordability issues** is a household spending 50% or more of their gross household income on shelter costs.*

Core Housing Need: CMHC definitions consider a household to be in core housing need if it meets two (2) criteria:

- A household is below one or more of the adequacy (see: *Dwelling Condition*), suitability (see: *Dwelling Suitability*) and affordability standards (see: *Shelter-to-Income Ratio*).
- The household would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax household income to access local housing that meets all three standards.

Low-income population: The low-income measure, after tax, (LIM-AT) refers to a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of private households. The household after-tax income is adjusted by an equivalence scale to take economies of scale into account. This adjustment for different household sizes reflects the fact that a household's needs increase, but at a decreasing rate, as the number of members increases.

- Low-income status is typically presented for persons but, since the LIM-AT threshold and household income are unique and shared by all members within each household, low-income status based on LIM-AT can also be reported for households.

Residential Development Terms

Housing Start: In CMHC's Starts and Completions Survey, a start is defined as the beginning of construction work on a building. This is usually when the concrete has been poured for the whole of the footing around the structure or an equivalent stage where a basement will not be part of the structure.

Housing Completion: For purposes of CMHC's Starts and Completions Survey, a Completion is defined as the stage at which all the proposed construction work on a dwelling unit has been performed, although under some circumstances a dwelling may be counted as completed where up to 10% of the proposed work remains to be done.

Dwelling unit: In CMHC's Starts and Completions Survey, a dwelling unit is defined as a structurally separate set of self-contained living premises. A dwelling unit has a private entrance from outside the building or from a common hall, lobby or stairway inside the building. The entrance must be one that can be used without passing through another separate dwelling unit.

Economic Terms

Labour force: The labour force refers to the civilian non-institutional population 15 years of age and over who, during the survey reference week (when labour force statistics are collected), were employed or unemployed.
Employment rate: The percentage of the population who are employed.
Unemployment rate: The percentage of the labour force who are unemployed.
Participation rate: The percentage of the population who are in the labour force.

// Glossary

Housing and Dwelling Terms

Dwelling Type: The type of dwelling refers to the built-form or structure type of a dwelling where someone lives.

- **Single detached dwellings** are not attached to any other dwelling or structure (except its own garage or shed).
- **Semi-detached dwellings** are one of two dwellings attached side by side to each other, but not attached to any other dwelling or structure (except its own garage or shed).
- **Row houses** are one of three or more dwellings joined side by side, but without any other dwellings either above or below.
- **Apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys** is a dwelling unit attached to other dwelling units, commercial units or other non-residential space in a building that has fewer than five storeys. This category contains apartment dwelling or flat in a duplex. This is one of two dwellings located one above the other.
- **Apartment in a building that has five or more storeys** is a dwelling unit in a high-rise apartment building that has five or more storeys. Also included are apartments in a building with five or more storeys where the first floor or second floor is commercial establishments.

Dwelling Condition: The condition of a dwelling refers to whether the dwelling is in need of repairs, or *adequate*. This does not include desirable re-modelling or additions.

- **Regular maintenance needed** includes dwellings where only regular maintenance, such as painting or furnace cleaning, is required.
- **Minor repairs needed** includes dwellings needing only minor repairs such as dwellings with missing or loose floor tiles, bricks or shingles; or defective steps, railing or siding.
- **Major repairs needed** includes dwellings needing major repairs such as dwellings with defective plumbing or electrical wiring; and dwellings needing structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings. If a dwelling required major repairs, it is considered *inadequate*.

Dwelling Construction Age: Period of construction refers to the period in time during which the building or dwelling was originally constructed. This refers to the period in which the building was completed, not the time of any later remodeling, additions, or conversions.

Dwelling Suitability: Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of resident households according to the National Occupancy Standard (NOS), conceived by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and provincial and territorial representatives.

CMHC's Housing Continuum Definitions

Homelessness: Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is often the result of what is known as systemic or societal barriers, including a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.

Emergency Housing: Emergency Housing is defined as facilities providing temporary, short-term accommodation for homeless individuals and families. This may or may not include other services such as food, clothing or counselling. Emergency housing is short-term accommodation for people who are homeless or in crisis. Shelters and hostels are two common examples of emergency housing. There may also be smaller religious or community-based organizations that provide emergency housing.

Transitional Housing: Housing that is intended to offer a supportive living environment for its residents, including offering them the experience, tools, knowledge and opportunities for social and skill development to become more independent. It is considered an intermediate step between emergency shelter and supportive housing and has limits on how long an individual or family can stay. Stays are typically between three months and three years.

Supportive Housing: Supportive housing is housing that provides a physical environment that is specifically designed to be safe, secure, enabling and home-like, with support services such as social services, provision of meals, housekeeping and social and recreational activities, in order to maximize residents' independence, privacy and dignity.

Community Housing: The term "community housing" is an umbrella term that typically refers to either housing that is owned and operated by non-profit housing societies and housing co-operatives, or housing owned by provincial, territorial or municipal governments.

Affordable Housing: In Canada, housing is considered "affordable" if it costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income. Many people think the term "affordable housing" refers only to rental housing that is subsidized by the government. In reality it is a very broad term that can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors. It also includes all forms of housing tenure: rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing.

Market Housing: Market-rate housing refers to non-subsidized properties that are rented or owned by those who pay market-rate rents or who paid market value to purchase the property.

4 **Appendix III:** What We Heard

What We Heard

As a part of this Housing Needs Assessment, a resident survey was open to the public through December 2024 to January 2025. The survey included several questions designed to assess the current state of housing from the residents. Some of the insights from the resident survey are outlined below:

- Respondents were most likely to say that **housing affordable to a range of household incomes was not accessible to them** (**Figure 36**).
- There were varying opinions on the question of housing size (**Figure 37**), but the most common response was that there was not **enough housing to suitably house all household sizes**.
- **Housing suitable for those with additional needs was always noted as insufficient or unavailable** for residents (**Figure 38**), with over half of respondents indicating that this housing type was not available in their community.

When provided additional space to report other critical housing issues in the City of Cambridge, several key themes were noted frequently:

- **Lack of sufficient services for those at-risk or experiencing homelessness**: Many respondents were concerned with the increased level of homelessness, asking the City to focus efforts on housing these individuals and ensure proper supports are provided.
- **Poor state of existing community housing:** Respondents who lived within subsidized housing noted the general poor condition of the units within the City's community housing stock, highlighting these units as "overlooked" or "ignored".
- **Need to be bold to solve current crisis:** Many respondents left comments urging the City to be bold when developing strategies to address the housing crisis in the community. Many noted the lack of affordable housing for young people looking to form new households and asked for increased supply of housing to address these growing needs.

Figure 36 ● Resident survey responses: *"Housing is affordable to a wide range of incomes is available"*

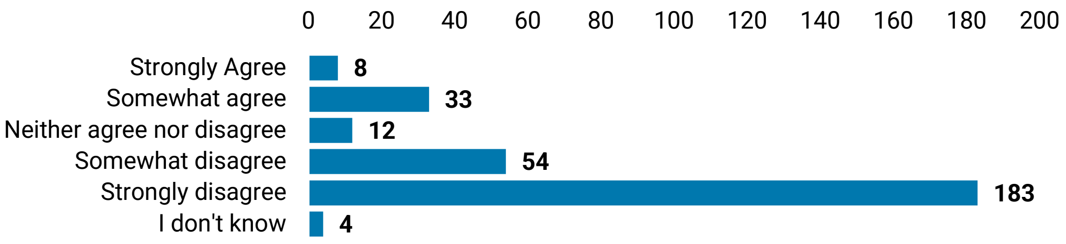


Figure 37 ● Resident survey responses: *"Housing suitable for different family types (big and small) is available"*

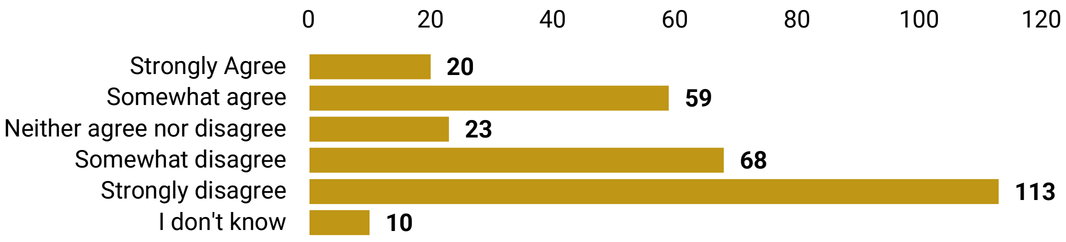
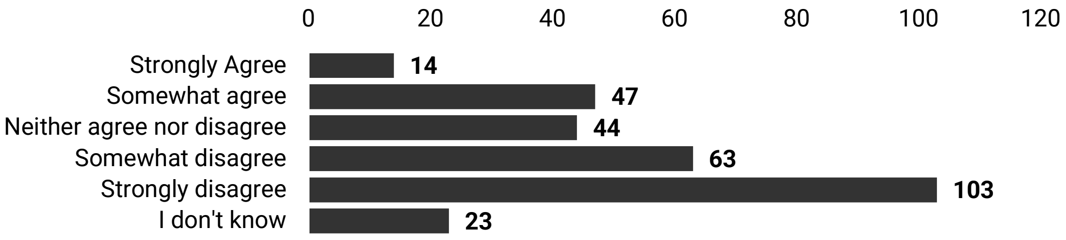


Figure 38 ● Resident survey responses: *"Housing suitable to people with different needs and abilities is available"*



Source: EngageWR Survey; Project: Cambridge Housing Needs Assessment, 2025