

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE HOUSING STRATEGY

JUNE 2023



Portage la Prairie
Community
Revitalization
Corporation



Portage Regional Economic Development



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GLOSSARY

All definitions are copied directly from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation unless otherwise noted.

Term	Definition
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’s 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.
Core Housing Need	<p>A household is in core housing need if its housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax income to pay the median rent (including utility costs) of alternative local market housing that meets all three standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Acceptable housing: Housing that is adequate in condition, suitable in size, and affordable.- Adequate Housing: Does not require any major repairs, according to residents. Major repairs include those to defective plumbing or electrical wiring, or structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings.- Suitable: Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to guidelines outlined in National Occupancy Standard (NOS).
Headship Rate	The ratio of the number of household heads or household maintainers to the population 15 years of age and older. The figure below shows the share of primary household maintainers compared to the share of total population, both by age group. This shows how households are counted and how the headship rate relates the population distribution to the household distribution. The household distribution can also be seen as a sub-sample of the broader population.
Housing Start	The beginning of construction work on the building where the dwelling unit will be located. This can be described in 2 ways:

- The stage when the concrete has been poured for the whole of the footing around the structure
- An equivalent stage where a basement will not be part of the structure.

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.
Rental Universe	All row projects and apartment structures with three or more units. The universe is presented as a sum of all rental units.
Supportive Housing	Supportive housing is subsidized housing with on-site supports for single adults, seniors and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness. These supports help people find and maintain stable housing (<i>Source: BC Housing</i>).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Across Canada, finding affordable and adequate housing has been increasingly challenging. Factors such as intergenerational trauma, an ageing population, and the pandemic have increased demands for low-income and social housing options. As part of the National Housing Strategy, Manitoba Housing received \$450 million from the Federal government to spend over the next 10 years. While the fund primarily focuses on costs related to affordable housing development and construction, many municipalities in Manitoba, including the City of Portage la Prairie, recognized that they need a better understanding of what is happening in their communities regarding housing. For this reason, Manitoba Housing provided funds to City of Portage la Prairie to explore these issues.

The City of Portage la Prairie, together with the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation (PCRC), and Portage Regional Economic Development (PRED), retained Urban Systems to undertake this Housing Strategy. The goal of the Housing Strategy is to better understand residents' existing challenges related to housing and what types of housing are needed in the future.

The Housing Strategy includes two main parts: a **Housing Needs Assessment** and a **Housing Demand Study**. Combined, these parts allow our community to gain a holistic understanding of housing needs, challenges, and opportunities in the community. The purpose of the Housing Needs Assessment is to understand community members' differing needs, experiences, and challenges with respect to housing. As part of this process, community members shared their thoughts and experiences through an online survey.

The purpose of the Housing Demand Study is to understand trends in the housing market. This involved developing population projection scenarios to predict the number of units of various housing types and tenures needed over the next twenty years. Findings from the study were used to make recommendations around policies and programs that the City, PCRC, and PRED can implement to improve housing for all residents of Portage la Prairie.

The study will focus on housing needs and demands within the city of Portage la Prairie. While the study will not focus on the District of Portage la Prairie as a whole or neighbouring First Nations, it does consider regional impacts and identify opportunities for partnership and collaboration.

1.1. THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

The housing continuum, shown below, illustrates a diverse cross-section of housing that can be found in communities across Canada, ranging from emergency housing to market housing. Emergency and supportive housing usually require some level of senior government funding support, while market housing receives little to no government support. All forms of housing must meet zoning and development requirements.

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM



Figure 1: Housing Continuum. Source: CMHC

The role of local governments differ in supporting the development of various types of housing along the continuum. Municipalities enable the development of market housing through regulation and development planning. As well, municipalities support the development of non-market housing through regulation and development planning, incentivizes, and investments through grants and/or land contributions.

Finally, municipalities enable the development of emergency and supportive housing through regulation and development planning, incentivizing and investing in this type of housing through grants, partnerships with other organizations to develop and operate this housing, and advocating to senior government for increased investment in this type of housing. A housing strategy can help clarify the roles of local government and the points of maximum impact to support the development of priority housing types.

1.2. METHODOLOGY

This Housing Strategy was developed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, including:

1. Background review of existing policies and plans
2. Analysis of population and housing data
3. Community engagement

BACKGROUND REVIEW

To build a baseline understanding of the housing context in the City of Portage la Prairie, a background review of four relevant documents was completed. These included the Portage la Prairie Planning District's *Development Plan*, the City of Portage la Prairie's *Zoning District By-Law*, the Government of Canada's report *A Place to Call Home: Canada's National Housing Strategy* and the Province of Manitoba's *Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation Three-Year Action Plan*.

DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data used to inform this Housing Strategy was collected from a variety of sources including Census data from Statistics Canada, the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Portage la Prairie Planning District, the Manitoba Historical Society, and the Brandon Real Estate Board.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Qualitative data was gathered through a community survey conducted jointly with the Community Foundation of Portage and District to better understand community and housing needs in Portage la Prairie. The survey was available online between Monday, June 6th and Monday, June 27th. The Community Foundation and the PCRC promoted the survey through their social media channels, email lists, and printed posters. The survey was also promoted through a paid Portage Online advertisement and a newspaper story. A total of 695 respondents completed the survey.

2. KEY FINDINGS

The Portage la Prairie Housing Strategy was designed to answer six key questions about housing conditions and solutions in the city. These questions include:

1. What barriers exist that are preventing people from accessing appropriate housing and why?
2. When comparing Portage la Prairie to other communities of a similar size, what are the similarities and differences in their housing/rental market.
3. Why does Portage la Prairie have proportionally more renters than other communities of a similar size? How is the Portage market distinct from similar markets in Manitoba, and what are the causes driving these changes?
4. How affordable is affordable housing? What level would be affordable for Portage citizens now and in the future?
5. Using statistical projections, what will the housing/rental markets look like in the future with no changes, some changes, and full changes?
6. What innovative solutions could be suggested, including policy or by-law changes?

The following section summarizes the answers to these key questions, which are expanded upon throughout the Strategy.

2.1. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HOUSING

The main barriers preventing people from accessing appropriate housing are a lack of affordable housing and a limited supply of appropriate housing types.

The community survey asked whether respondents encountered barriers when searching for their current home. Two of the most common responses were the high cost of buying or renting a home in Portage. As noted below in **Section 2.4: Affordable Housing**, housing is considered affordable if it costs less than 30 percent of a household's before-tax income. Based on this definition, economic families in the bottom two income deciles would struggle to rent market and non-market rate apartments in Portage la Prairie. These families would also not be able to afford a mortgage on an average house in Portage with current interest rates of roughly five percent. Economic families in the third income decile may be able to afford a mortgage on an average home with a low interest rate but would struggle with higher interest rates.

When asked about barriers to finding housing, another common response was the limited supply of the type of homes that respondents were looking for. Another top

concern was the poor quality of the type of housing that respondents were looking for. When asked what types of housing forms they thought were missing, respondents said emergency housing and assisted living facilities, followed by single-detached homes and duplexes, rowhouses, or townhouses. The City has more single detached homes per capita than similar municipalities, but the community's overall housing stock is older than that of communities with more growth more recently, such as Steinbach and Winkler. While there may be a mismatch between the housing forms people want and the available stock of newer housing, this suggests there is a lack of newer single-detached homes in Portage la Prairie.

The data on the current housing market are highlighted in **Section 3.3**.

The data on housing affordability are included in **Section 4.2**.

The survey results are highlighted in **Sections 4.3 to 4.5**.

2.2. HOUSING MARKET COMPARISON

Portage's housing market has some similarities to the markets in the cities of Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler. As noted in the following section, Portage has a similar proportion of renters as the other three cities. As of 2021, 35 percent of residents rented in Portage, compared to between 32 and 40 percent in the other three cities. Another notable similarity is that the housing stock in all four cities is dominated by single-detached houses. However, Portage has more single-detached homes per capita than the other three cities. Portage also has fewer apartments per capita than Selkirk and Steinbach.

Similar to Selkirk and Steinbach, the most common rental unit type in Portage is 2-bedroom units. Portage has a similar number of 2-bedroom units per capita as Steinbach, though less than Selkirk and more than Winkler. The average rental costs are similar across the four communities, with the exception of 2-bedroom units in Selkirk, which are more expensive. Overall, the overall shelter costs and value of dwellings are slightly lower in Portage than Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler. Portage also has a similar proportion of households in core housing need as Steinbach and Winkler.

However, there are notable differences between the housing markets in Portage, Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler. In recent years, nearly all of the new housing starts in Portage have been apartment units, while the other three cities have had a greater mix of single-detached units, semi-detached units, and row houses. The vacancy rate was also significantly higher in Portage than the other three cities. Roughly 10 percent of rental units were vacant in October 2021 in Portage compared to between 2.3

percent and 3.6 percent in the other cities. This is likely due to the completion of new apartment buildings in Portage in 2021.

Another notable difference is the age of the housing stock. Overall, Portage and Selkirk have an older housing stock than Steinbach and Winkler, which have rapidly grown in recent years. Almost 70 percent of dwelling units in Portage were constructed before 1980, compared to just over 30 percent in Steinbach and Winkler.

More information on the past and current housing markets in Portage, Selkirk, Steinbach and Winkler is included in **Section 3.3: Past and Current Housing Market**.

2.3. PROPORTION OF RENTERS

The proportion of renters in Portage la Prairie is comparable to similar communities. In 2021, 35 percent of Portage residents rented while 65 percent owned their home. This is comparable with similarly-sized communities in southern Manitoba like Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler. Forty percent of residents in Selkirk are renters, while 38 percent in Steinbach and 32 percent in Winkler rent their homes. However, the proportion of renters in Portage has increased in recent years, from 30 percent in 2011 to 35 percent in 2021. This increase may explain the perception that Portage has proportionally more renters than other communities.

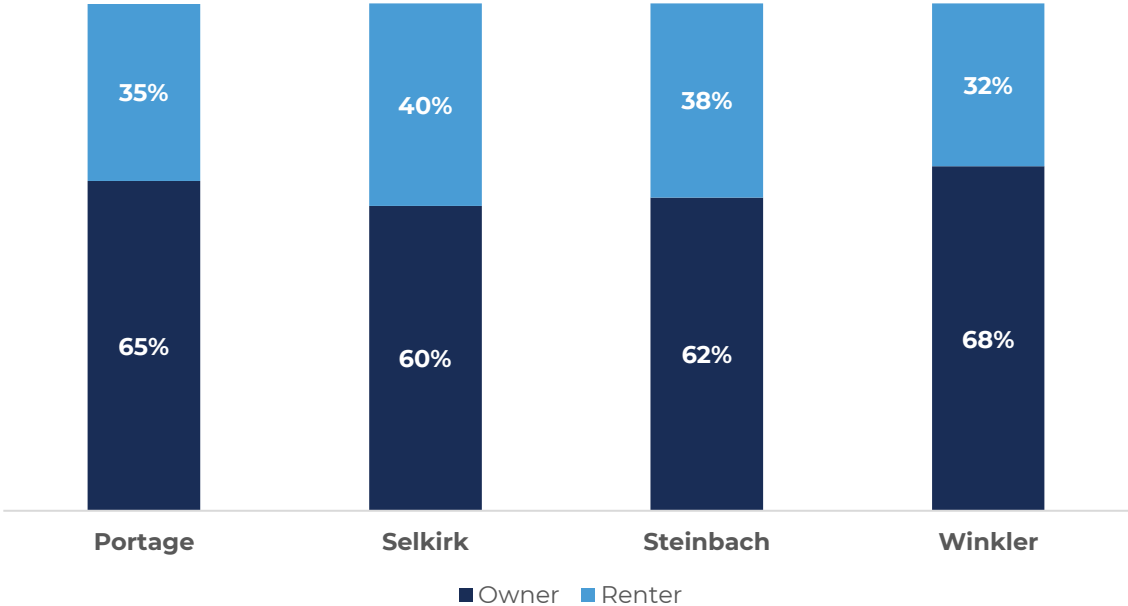


Figure 2: Households by tenure, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

More details are included in **Section 3.3: Past and Current Housing Market** of this report.

2.4. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), housing is considered affordable if it costs less than 30 percent of a household's before-tax income. Based on this definition, economic families in the bottom two income deciles in the City of Portage la Prairie would struggle to rent market and non-market rate apartments.

Families in the bottom income decile have a median income of \$21,600 and could only afford to spend \$540 per month on rental costs. Based on this, they could afford to rent a market-rate studio apartment, which had an average rent of \$556 in 2020. They could also afford to rent a studio apartment through the provincial Affordable Housing Rental Program, which cost \$526 in 2022. Economic families in the second decile could afford to pay a median rental cost of \$880 per month. These families could afford to rent a studio or one-bedroom unit through the provincial program or through the private market, but could not afford a larger apartment.

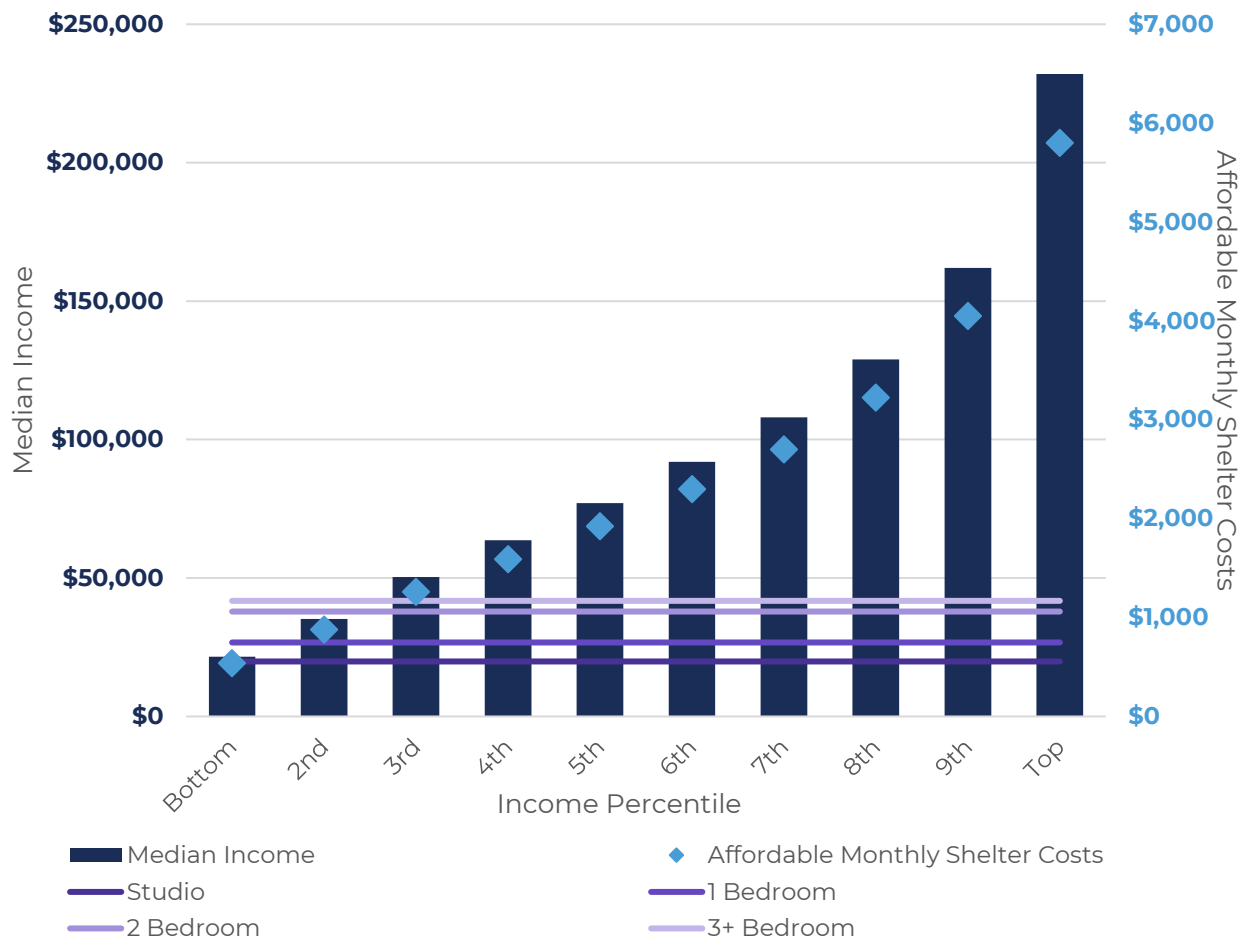


Figure 3: Affordable Monthly Shelter Costs for Economic Families (2020) compared with average rental rate (2020)

More information on this analysis is included in **Section 4.2: Affordable Housing**.

2.5. PROJECTED CHANGES

The population of the city of Portage la Prairie is projected to grow over the next twenty years. As part of this project, three population growth scenarios were developed for the city including a baseline scenario, a medium scenario, and a high-growth scenario. Between 2021 to 2041, the number of households in the city is projected to increase by a range from 1,115 to 1,887, representing an additional housing demand of between 1,115 and 1,887 units. Assuming household tenure remains the same as in 2021, this would include 760 to 1,068 owner households, and 355 to 819 renter households. This would translate to demand for an additional 768 to 1,068 owner housing units, and additional 355 to 819 rental units over the next 20 years.

More information on these statistical projections is included in **Section 5: Housing Demand Study**.

2.6. INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

There are several innovative solutions that the city of Portage could pursue to increase the housing supply and meet future housing demands. These solutions include:

Improve Housing Affordability

1. Incorporate an inclusionary housing policy into the city's Zoning By-Law
2. Incorporate an incentive housing policy into the city's Zoning By-Law
3. Explore partnerships with Indigenous governments
4. Explore tax incentives for the development of affordable housing

Encourage a diverse mix of housing types

5. Explore opportunities to 'up-zone' Single Family Dwelling zones
6. Encourage the development of secondary suites
7. Explore opportunities for modular housing

Regenerate the existing housing stock

8. Encourage landlords, housing providers, and homeowners to access funding for renovations

Enhance supportive housing options

9. Create capacity within the public, private and non-profit sector to provide supportive housing

Create complete and sustainable communities

10. Encourage mixed-use neighbourhoods

More information on these solutions is included in **Section 6: Recommendations**.

3. COMMUNITY CONTEXT

This section describes the community context, including relevant legislation, plans, and policies, demographic data, and an overview of the current housing market. Where possible and appropriate, comparisons to the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie, the Province of Manitoba, as well as the Cities of Selkirk, Steinbach and Winkler are provided for context.

3.1. PLANS AND POLICIES

Housing policy in Portage la Prairie is impacted by provincial legislation, regional plans, and local by-laws. These include the Province of Manitoba's *Planning Act*, the Portage la Prairie Planning District's *Development Plan*, and the City of Portage la Prairie's *Zoning By-Law*. Relevant housing policies in each document are summarized in the following section.

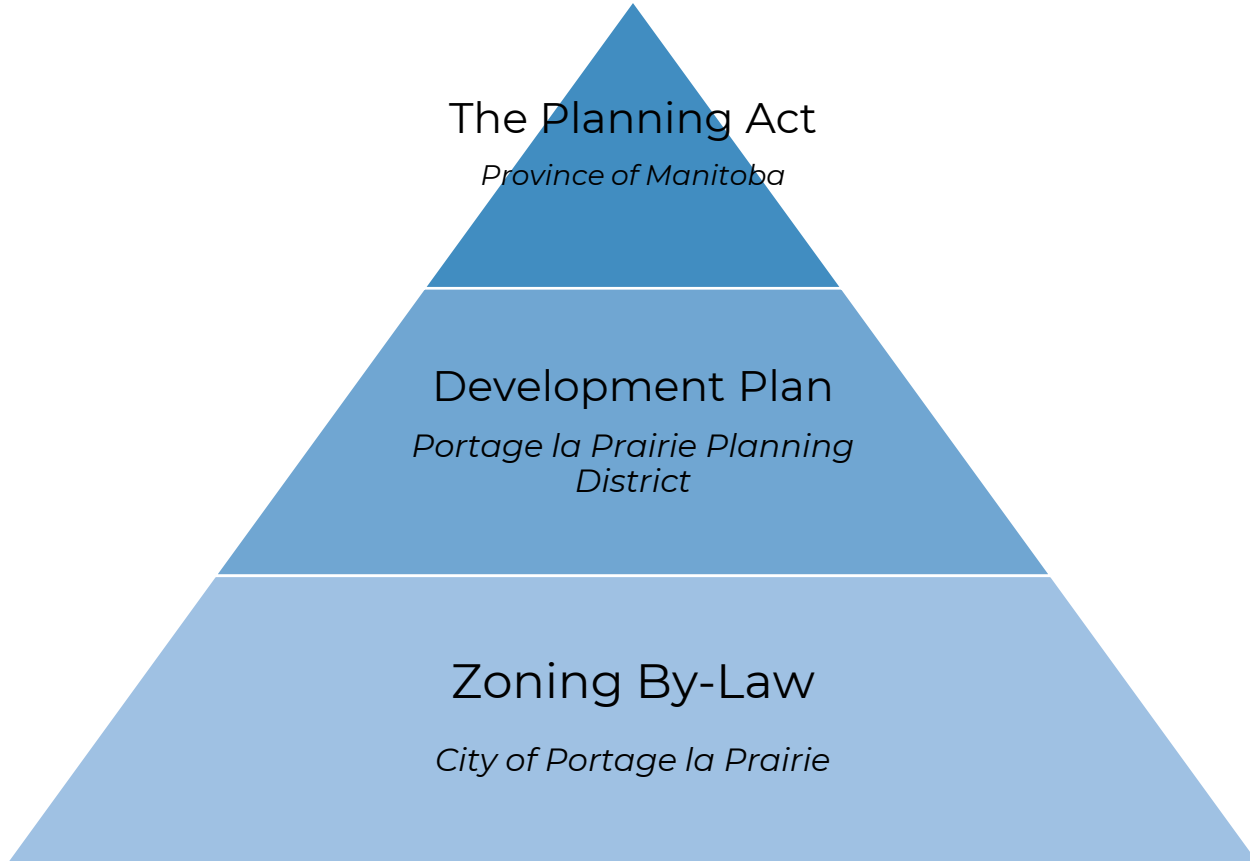


Figure 4: Hierarchy of Planning Legislation in Portage la Prairie

THE PLANNING ACT

The Province of Manitoba's *Planning Act* (C.C.S.M. c. P80) provides a framework for land use planning at local, regional, and provincial levels. The current Act includes several policies related to housing, including:

Inclusionary Zoning: Section 71(5) allows municipalities to require that a certain portion of new dwellings are affordable. Municipalities must provide a definition of "affordable housing", or a way to define whether housing is affordable.

Incentive Zoning: Section 71(7) allows municipalities to implement incentive zoning policies in their zoning by-laws, such as allowing increased project density in exchange for affordable housing.

Municipal Land Assembly: Section 66 allows municipalities to purchase and assemble properties to support the implementation of part of their development plans.

All relevant policies are included in **Appendix A**.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The City of Portage la Prairie is part of the Portage la Prairie Planning District, and therefore is included in the District's current Development Plan. The Development Plan includes several policies related to housing in the City of Portage la Prairie, including:

Housing Mix and Affordability: Section 10.1 promotes the development of a mix of quality, affordable housing types, including single unit, two-unit, row housing, multiplexes and apartment buildings.

Infill Development: Sections 10.2 and 10.3 encourage infill residential development in established neighbourhood areas.

Higher-Density Development: Sections 10.5 and 13.2 encourage higher density residential developments in the neighbourhood and downtown corridor areas.

All relevant policies are included in **Appendix A**.

ZONING BY-LAW

The City of Portage la Prairie's Zoning By-Law governs development within the municipality. The By-Law includes specific requirements and regulations for development in residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and agricultural zones. The By-Law contains seven residential, including Rural Residential (RR), Single Family Dwelling (R1 and R1-60), Two-Family Dwelling (R2), Multiple-Family Zone (R3), Residential Large Lot (RLL), and Residential Mobile Home (RMH).

Notable housing policies in the Zoning By-law include:

Mixed-Use Developments: Multi-Family Dwellings are conditional uses in three commercial zones. Dwelling Units containing less than three units are permitted or conditional uses in the same three commercial zones.

Secondary Suites: Secondary Suite are defined as “an accessory dwelling unit that is self-contained, subsidiary to, and located on the same site as a single-family dwelling that is owner occupied.” Secondary Suites are conditional uses in RR, R1, R1-60, and RLL zones.

Modular Homes: Modular homes are defined as “a single-family dwelling suitable for year-round occupancy that consists of one (1) or more modules either partially or wholly factory fabricated and containing a framework that does not contain wheels or towing tongue.” Modular homes are considered a single-family dwelling unit as long as they are on a permanent foundation.

3.2. PAST AND CURRENT POPULATION

POPULATION GROWTH

In 2021, the City of Portage la Prairie had a population of 13,720 residents. Over the last 20 years, the population of the City as well as the surrounding rural municipality have remained relatively stable.

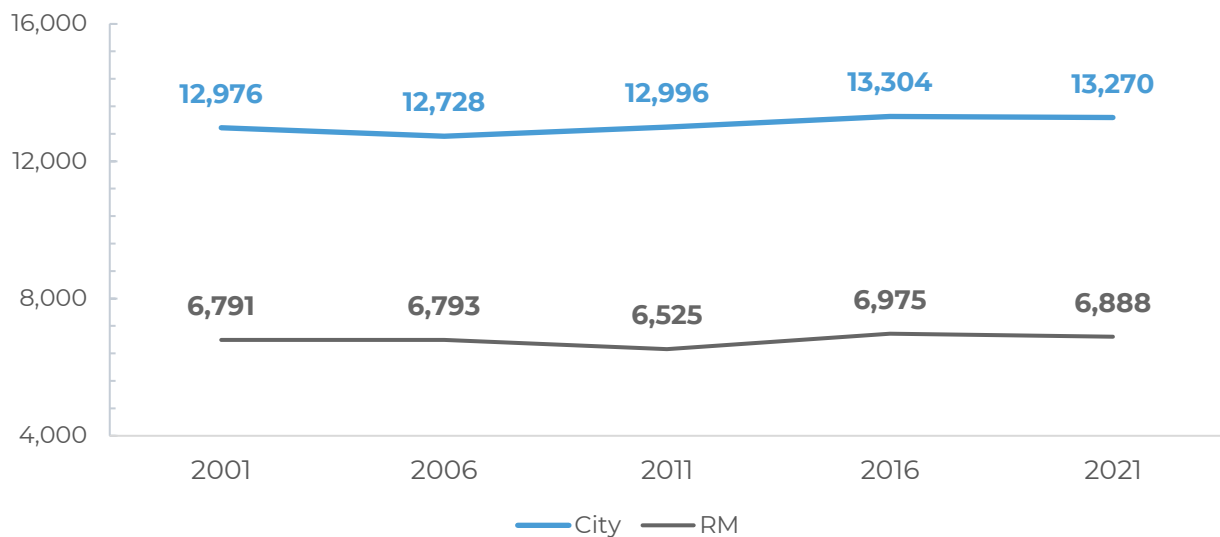


Figure 5: Population growth in Portage, 2001 – 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

AGE

The following population pyramid highlights the distribution of the City's population by gender and age. Compared to the Province as a whole, the City has a slightly higher proportion of older adults between the ages of 55 and 64 and a lower proportion of adults between 40 and 49. Compared to Steinbach and Winkler, the City of Portage has a slightly older population.

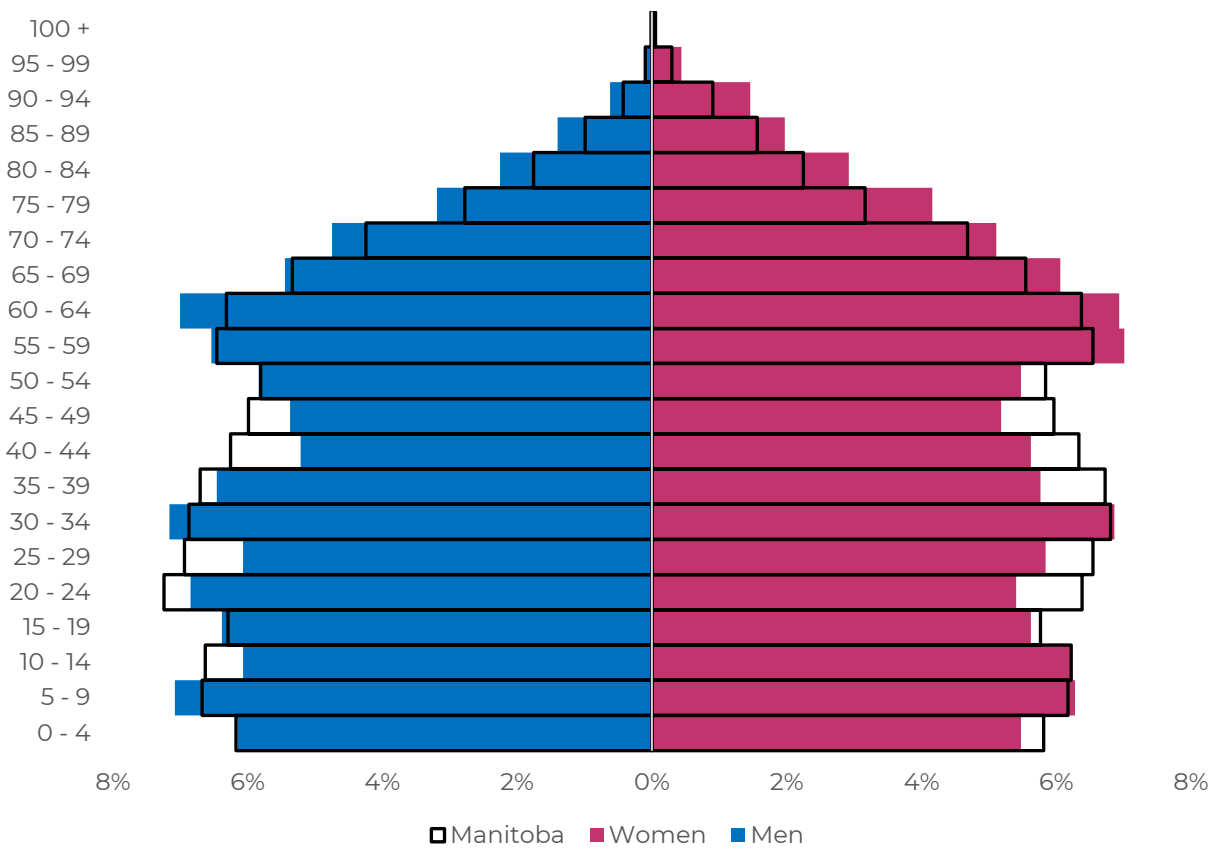


Figure 6: Population pyramid, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

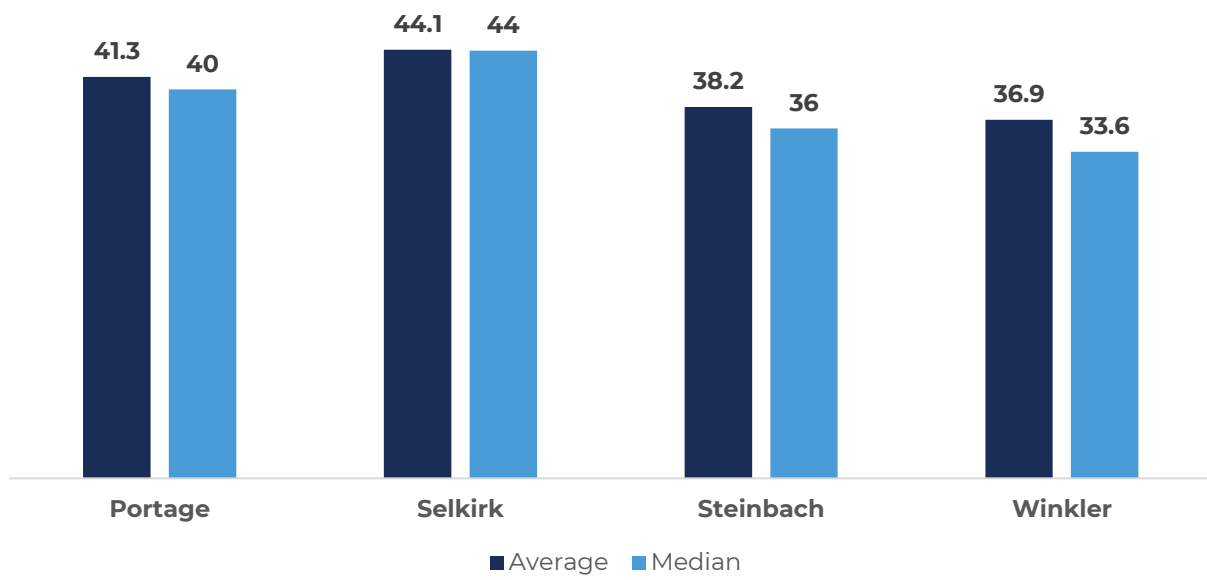


Figure 7: Average and Median Age, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

INCOME

Roughly two-thirds, or 66 percent, of individuals in Portage earned between \$10,000 and \$59,999 in before-tax income in 2020. The most common income bracket was \$20,000 to \$29,999, which included 17 percent of individuals. The median household income in the City of Portage is lower than in Steinbach and Winkler, and slightly higher than Selkirk. Portage also has a higher proportion of youth under the age of 17 living in poverty than Steinbach and Winkler.

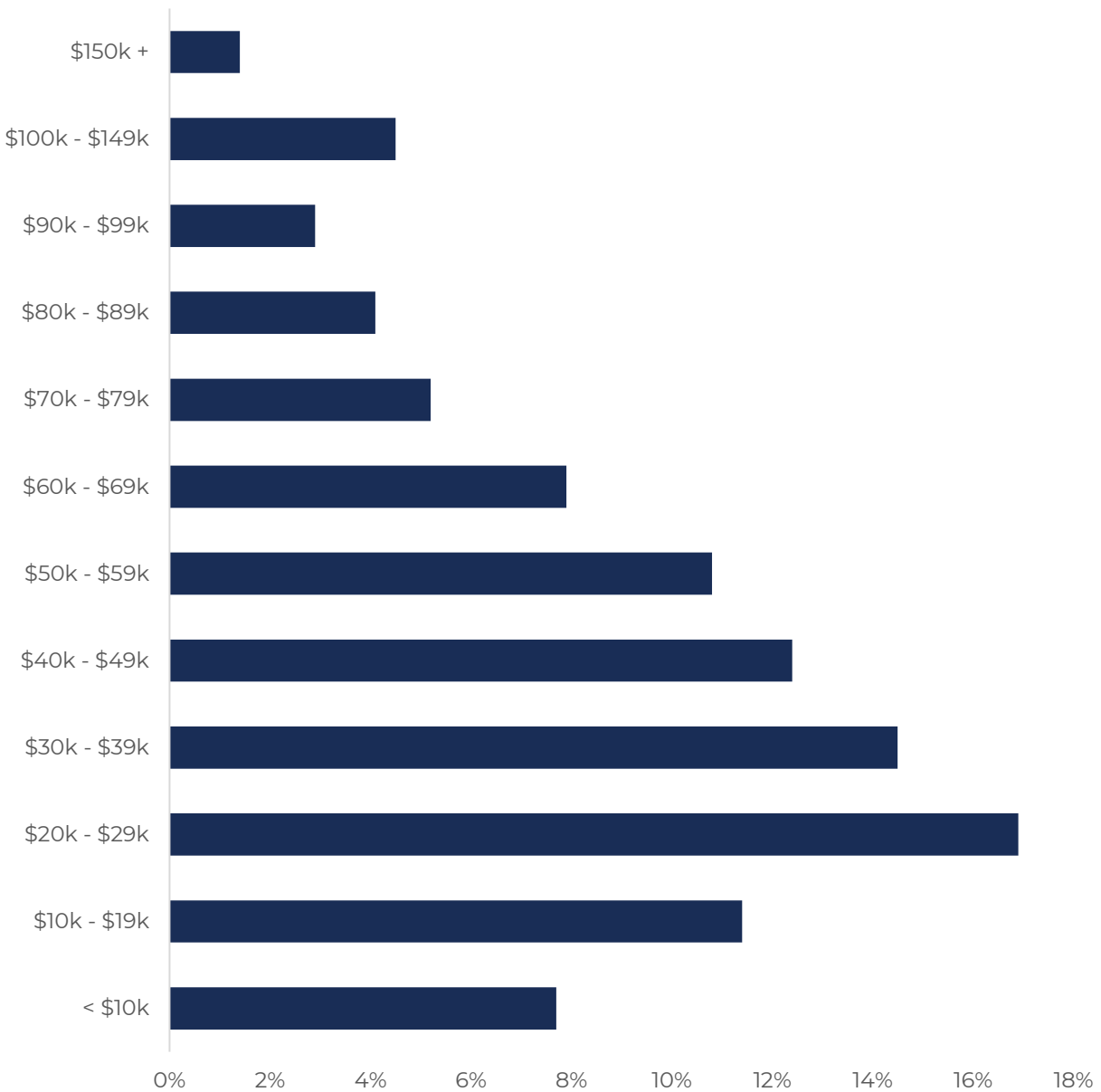


Figure 8: Before-tax incomes for individuals, 2020. Source: Statistics Canada.

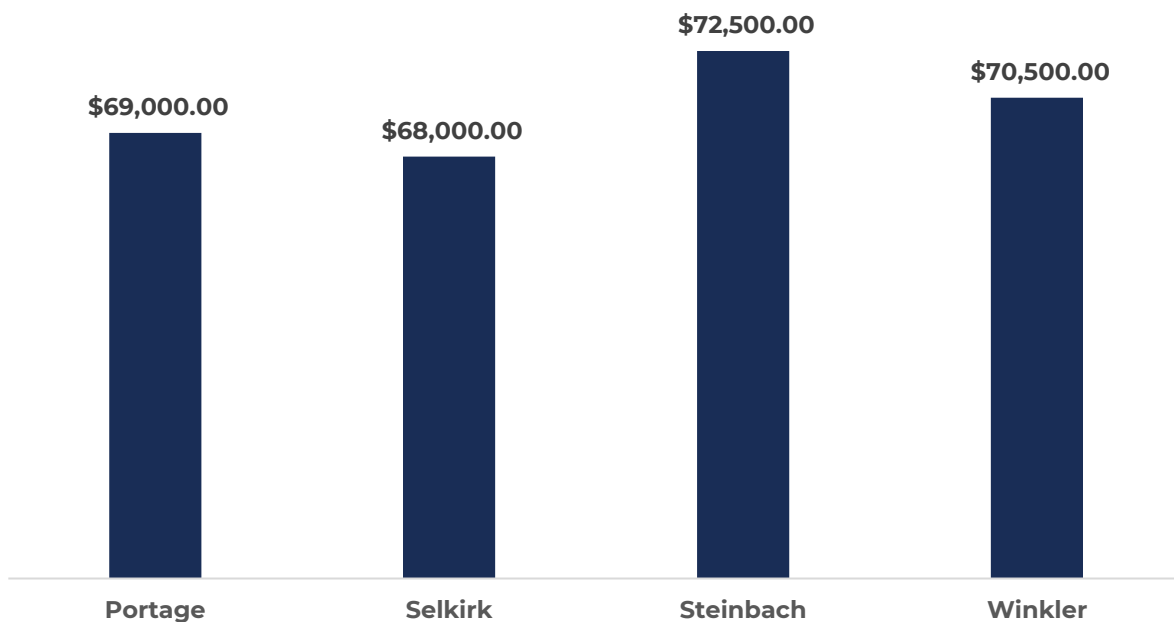


Figure 9: Median Household Income, 2020. Source: Statistics Canada.

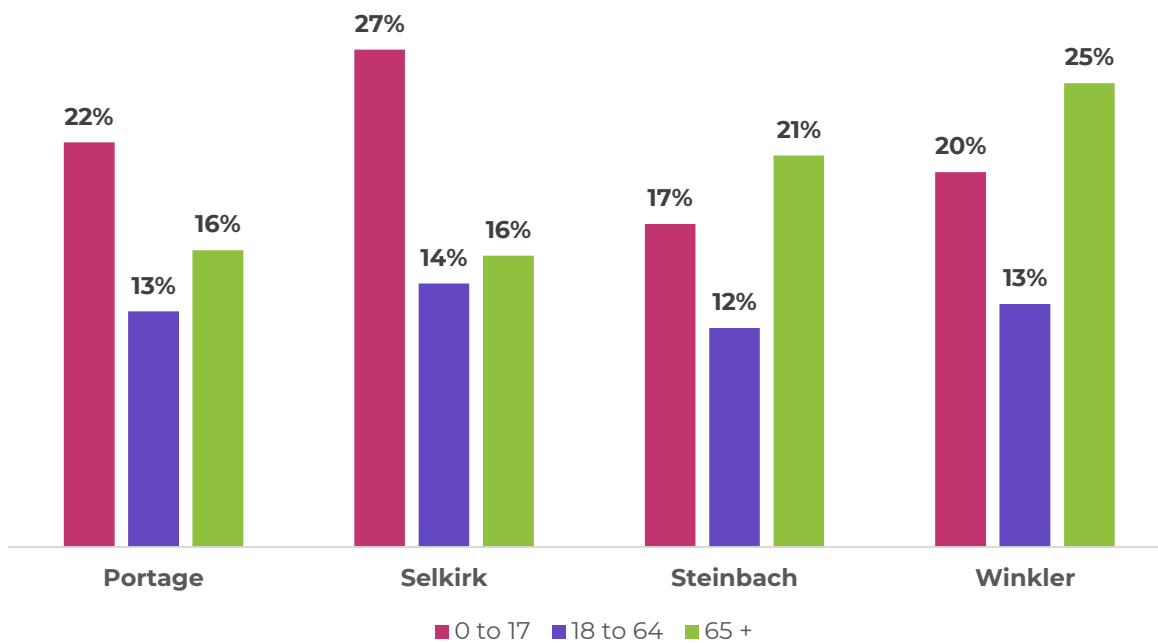


Figure 10: Low Income Status (LIM-AT) by age bracket, 2020. Source: Statistics Canada.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND TYPE

More than a third of households in Portage consist of one person. Roughly a quarter of households include a couple with children, and another one-fifth include a couple without children. The remaining households are one-parent families, multi-generational families, and other household compositions. Overall, Portage has a smaller average size of census families compared to Steinbach and Winkler.

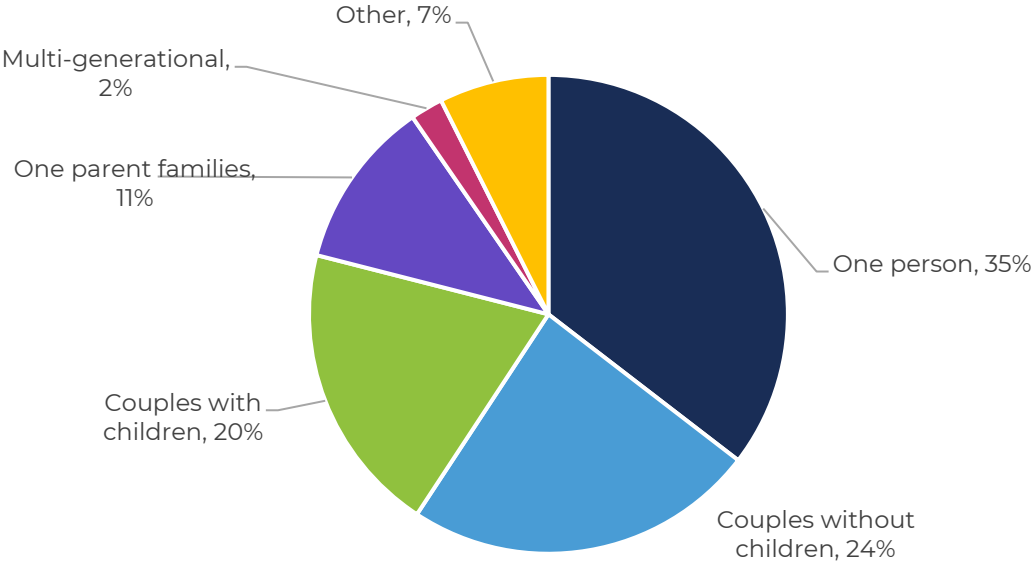


Figure 11: Household types, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

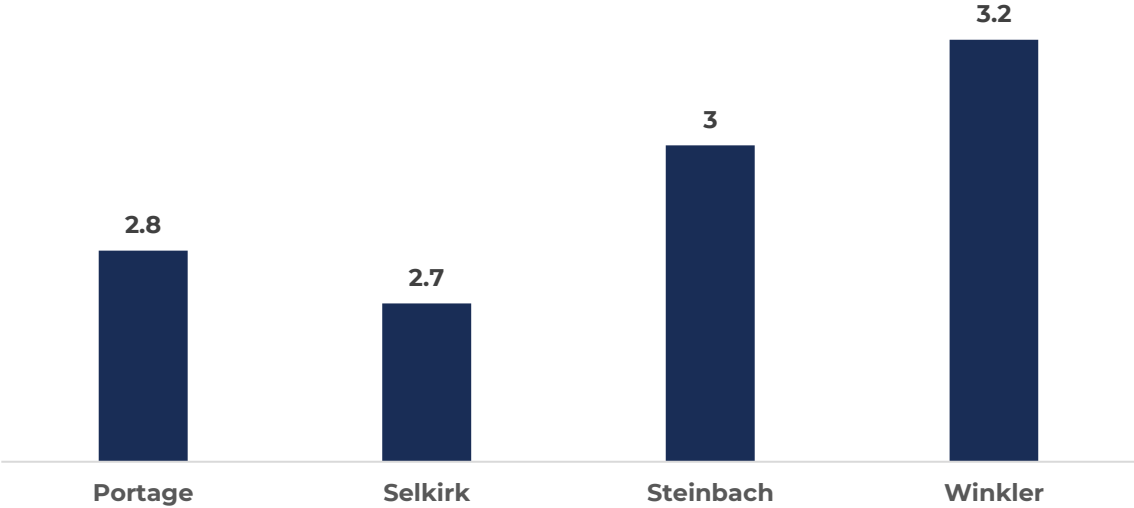


Figure 12: Average size of census families, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER

The primary household maintainer is the first person identified as someone who pays the rent, mortgage, taxes, or utilities for the dwelling. In Portage, the majority of household maintainers are between the ages of 25 and 74.

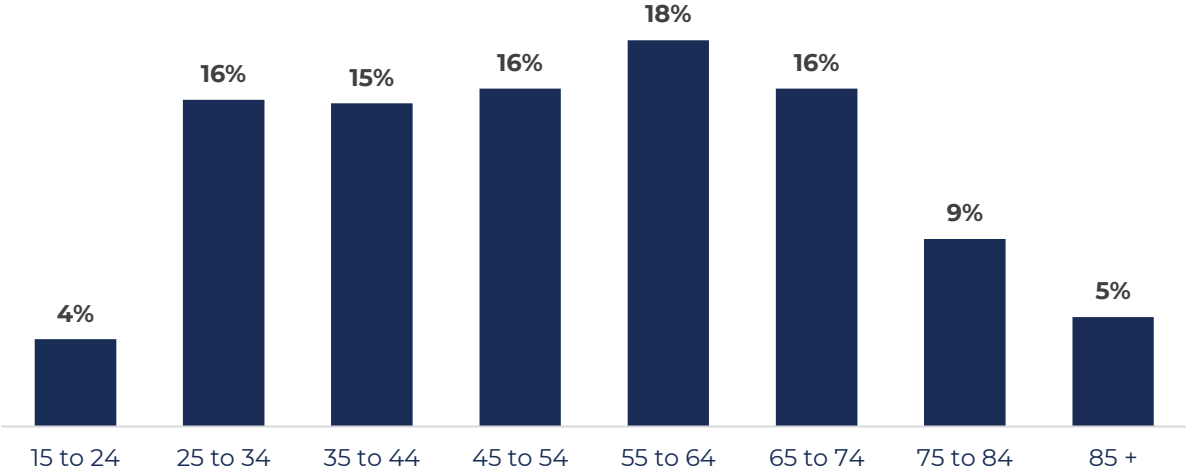


Figure 13: Age of primary household maintainer, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

MOBILITY STATUS

Over the last five years, more than half of residents in Portage have not moved. Roughly a quarter of residents moved to the city, while another one-fifth or 19 percent of residents moved within the city.

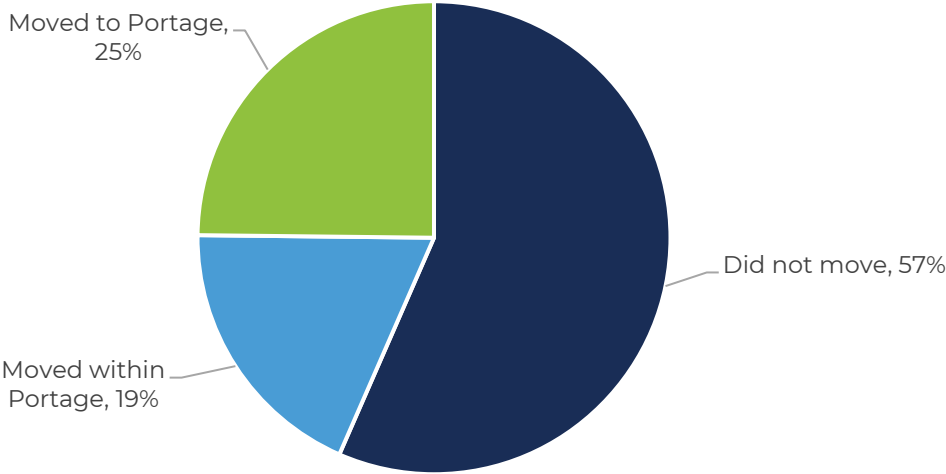


Figure 14: 5 year mobility status, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

3.3. PAST AND CURRENT HOUSING MARKET

TENURE

Roughly two-thirds, or 65 percent, of residents own their home in Portage while the remaining one third are tenants. This proportion is comparable to other similar sized cities in Manitoba, including Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler. However, the proportion of renter households has increased in Portage since 2006.

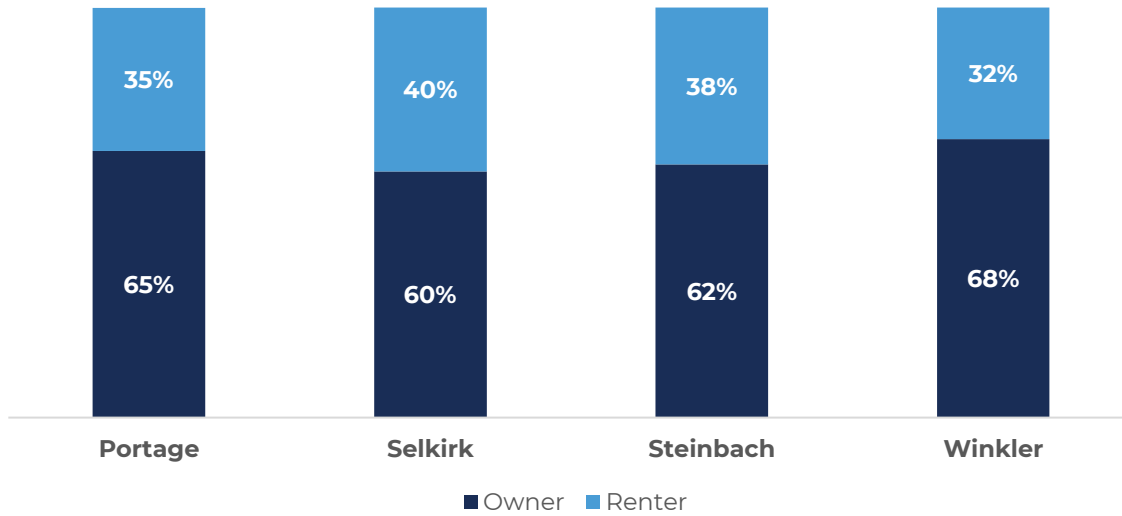


Figure 15: Households by tenure, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

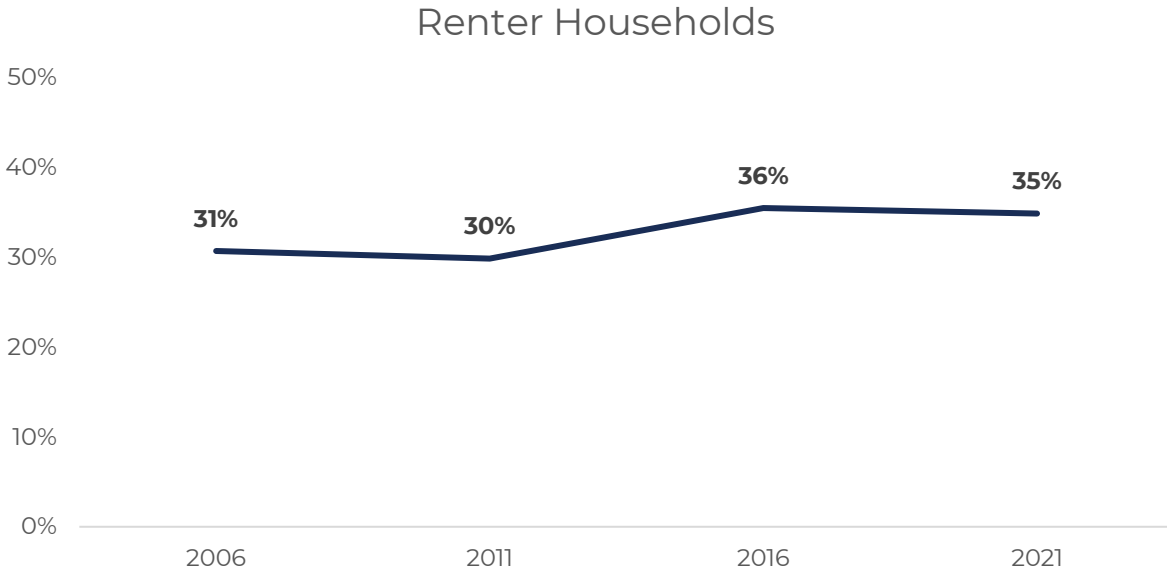


Figure 16: Proportion of renter households, 2006 – 2021

HOUSING STOCK

The housing stock is dominated by single-detached houses in Portage la Prairie. The next most common housing type is apartment units, followed by row houses and semi-detached houses.

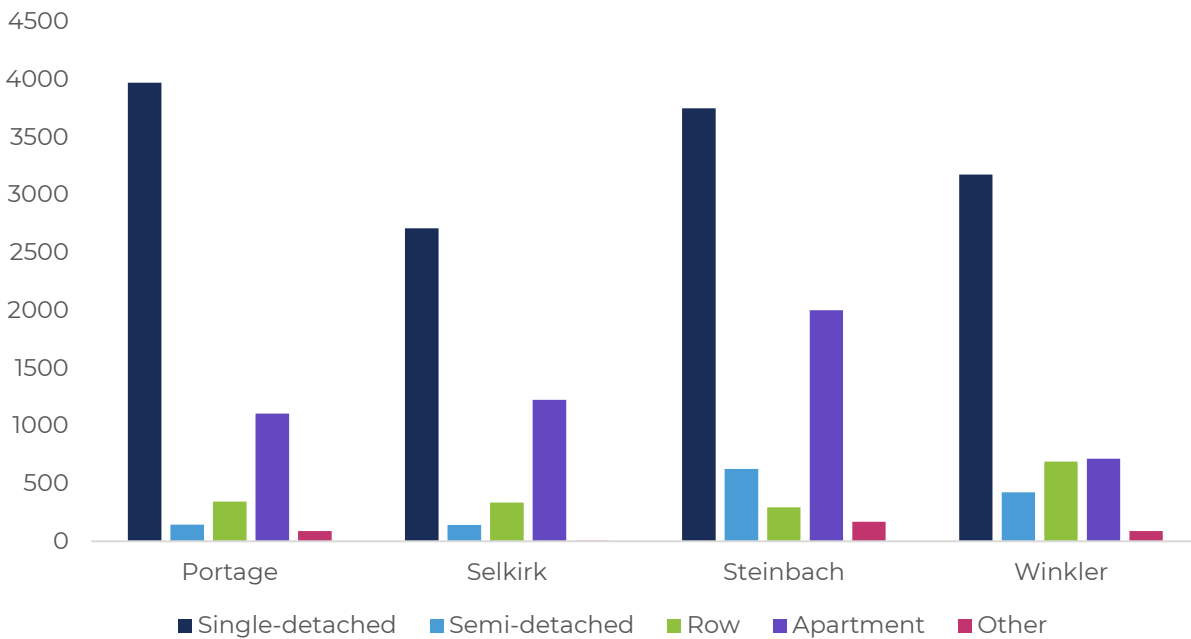


Figure 17: Total private dwelling units by type, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

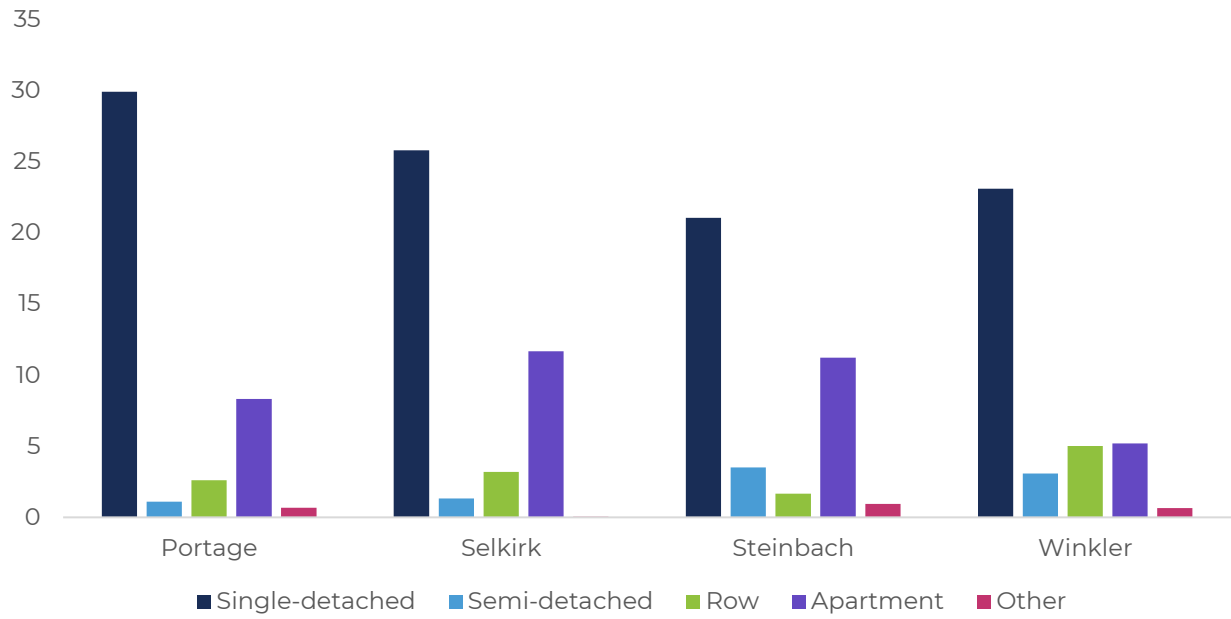


Figure 18: Private dwelling units by type per 100 residents, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

HOUSING STARTS

Over the last four years, the city has seen an increase in the construction of new apartment buildings. In 2018, there were 187 apartment units started and in 2020 there were another 133 apartment units started. This represents a significant increase compared to previous years. However, the city of Steinbach has experienced more new residential construction in recent years than Portage.

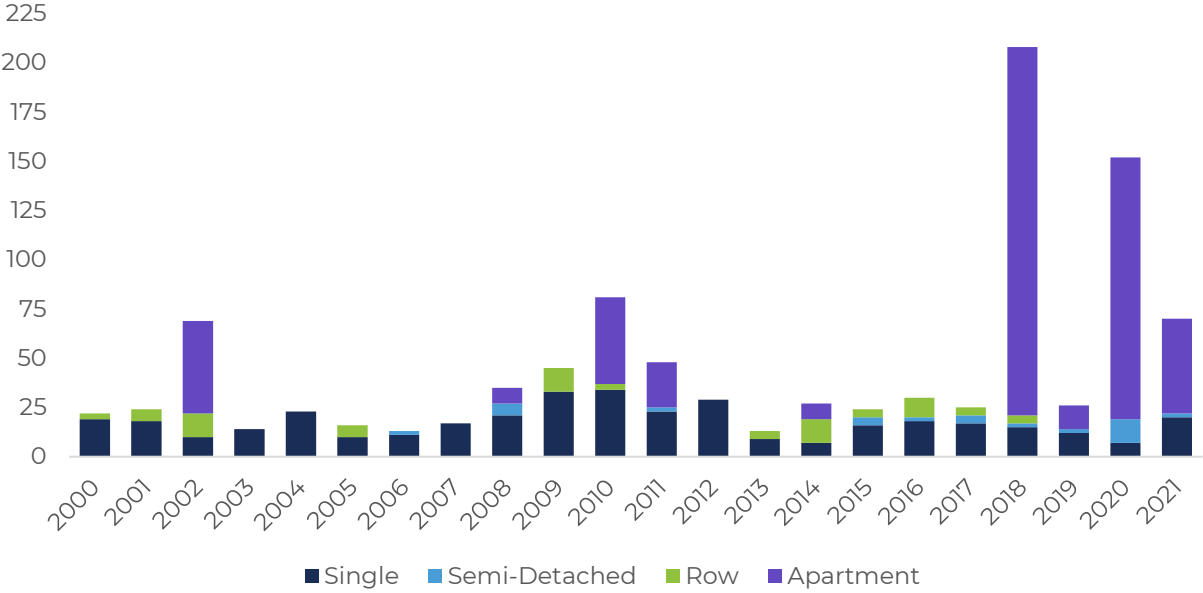


Figure 19: Housing starts by dwelling type. Source: CMHC.

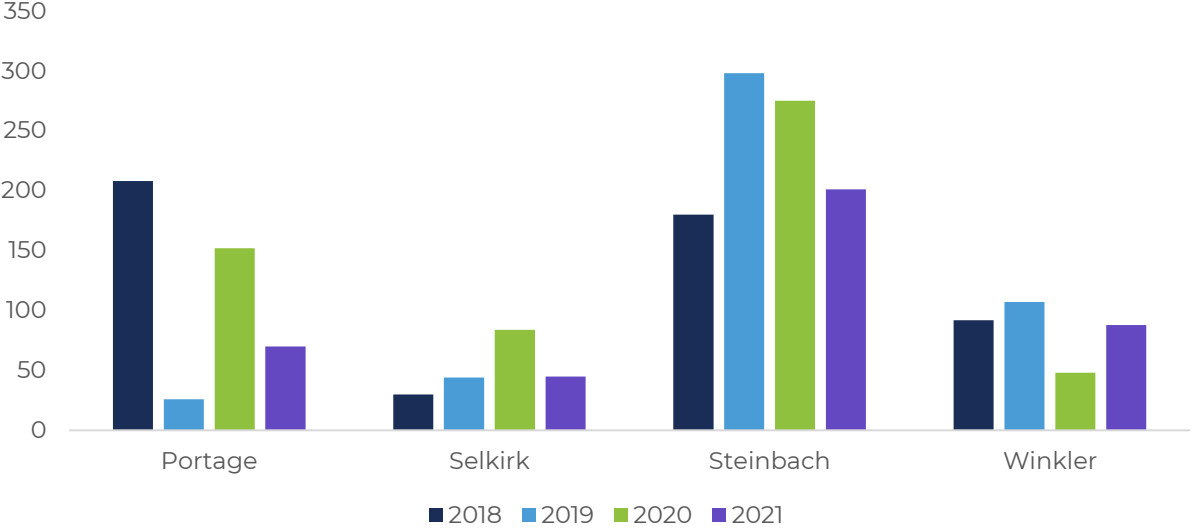


Figure 20: Total housing starts, 2018 – 2021. Source: CMHC.

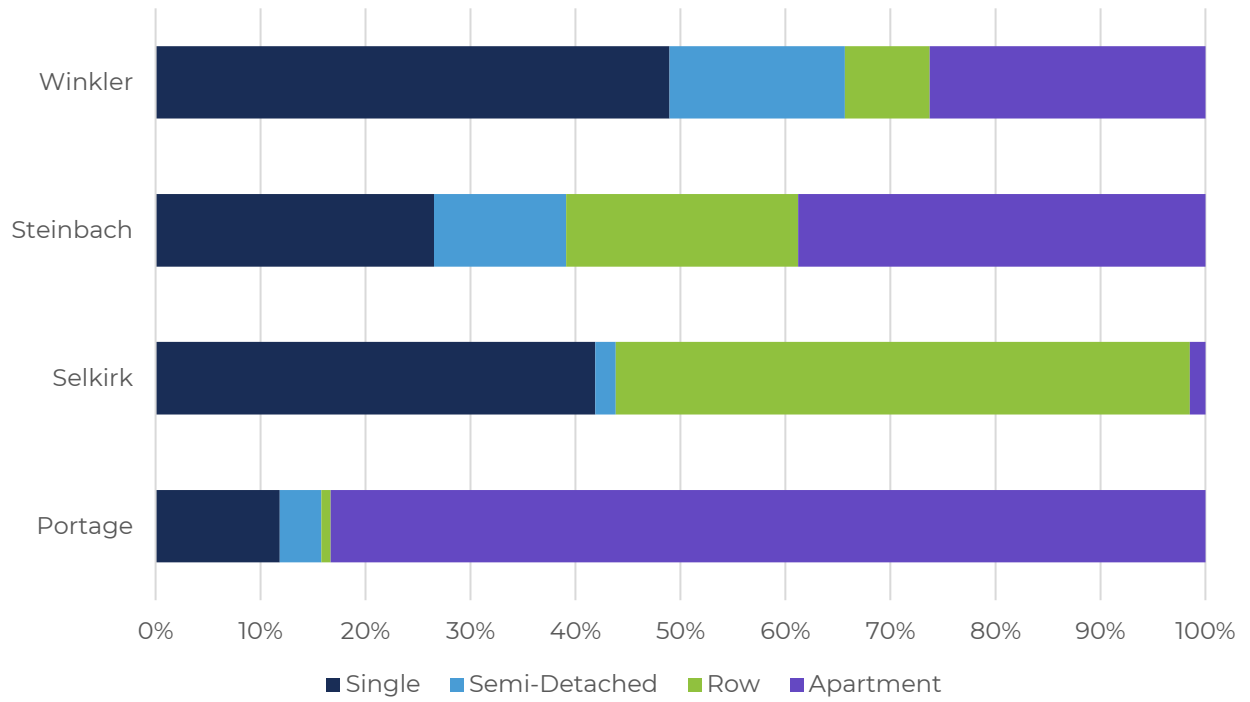


Figure 21: Proportion of total housing starts by type, 2018 – 2021. Source: CMHC.

DWELLING AGE

Portage has a relatively old housing stock compared to Steinbach and Winkler, which have experienced more growth in recent years. More than two-thirds of Portage’s dwelling units, or 69 percent, were constructed before 1980. In contrast, less than a third of dwellings in Steinbach and Winkler were built in the same period. Only 12 percent of homes in Portage have been built since 2001.

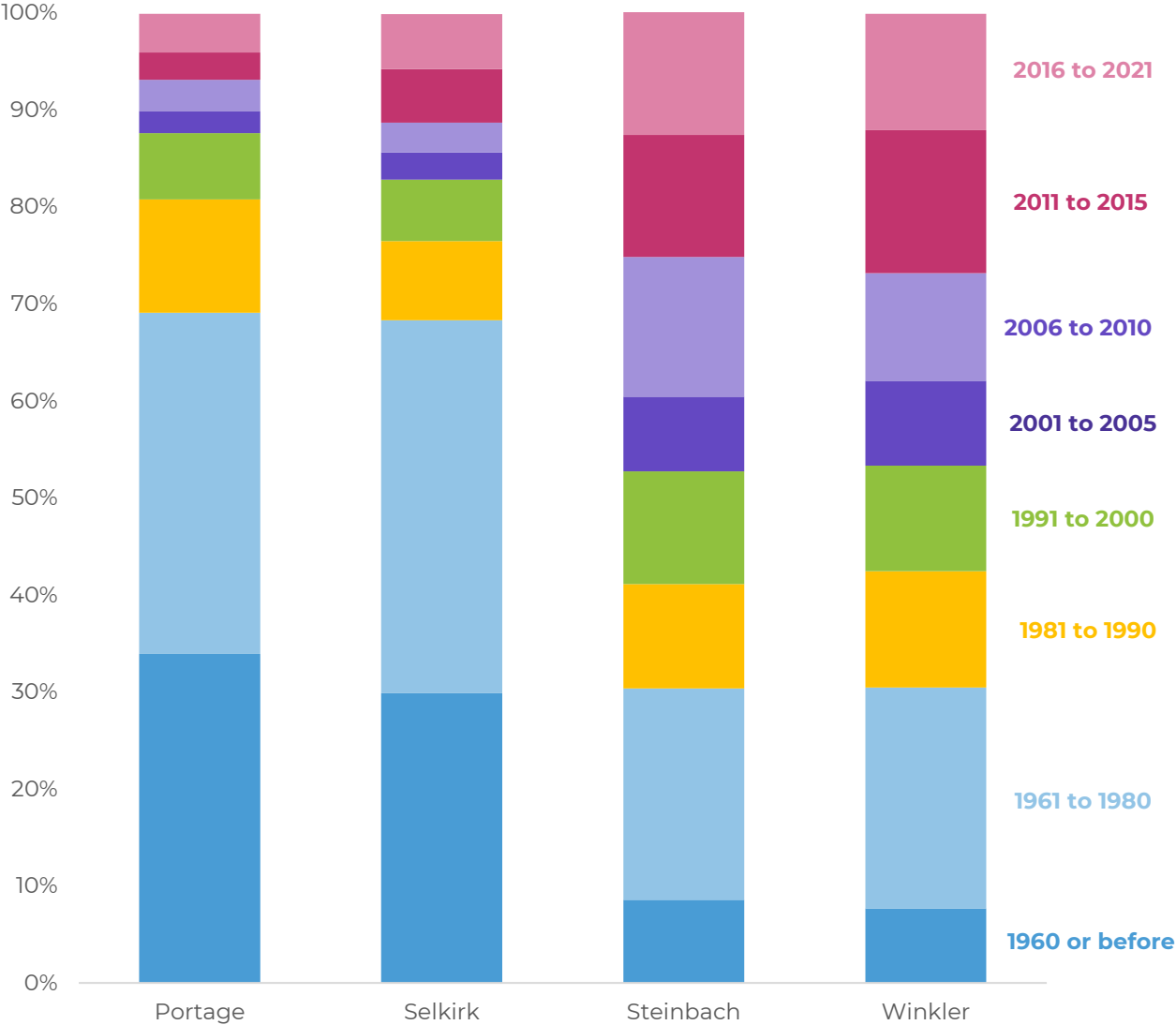


Figure 22: Dwellings by period of construction, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

Roughly a third, or 34 percent, of dwelling units in Portage have 3 bedrooms. A quarter have 4 bedrooms or more, while another quarter have 2 bedrooms. The remaining houses have either one bedroom or no bedrooms.

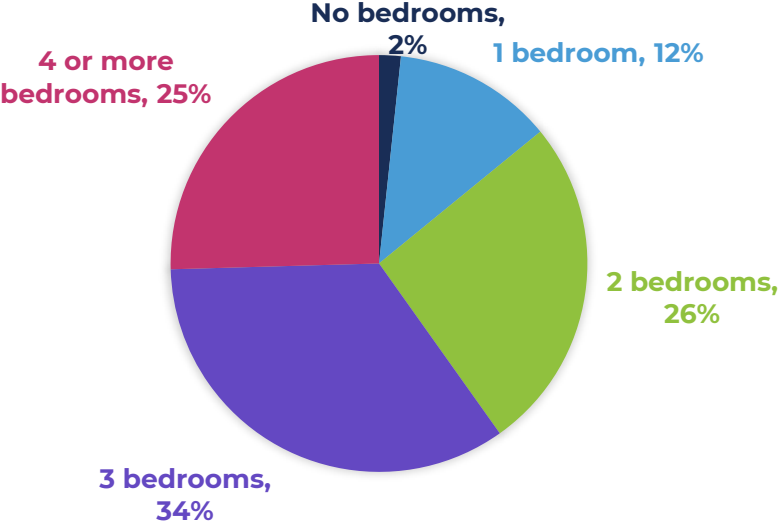


Figure 23: Dwellings by number of bedrooms, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

RENTAL UNIVERSE

The rental universe includes all rental units that are part of row and apartment buildings with 3 or more units. More than half of units in Portage’s rental universe are two-bedroom units. Just under a third are one-bedroom units, while 14 percent have three bedrooms or more. Portage has a similar number of units per capita as the City of Steinbach.

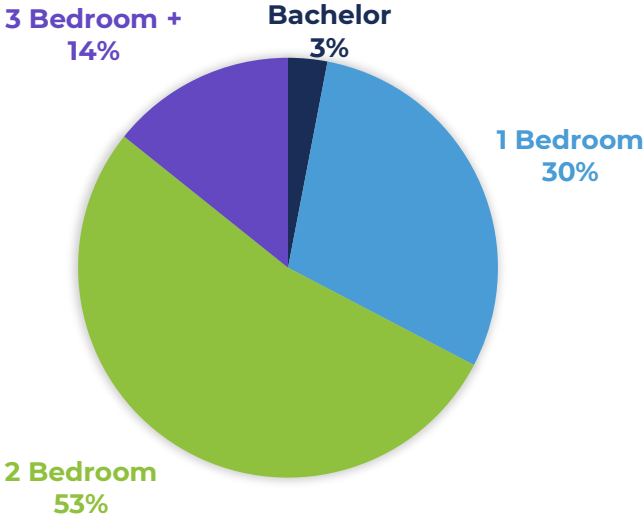


Figure 24: Rental universe by bedroom type, 2021. Source: CMHC.

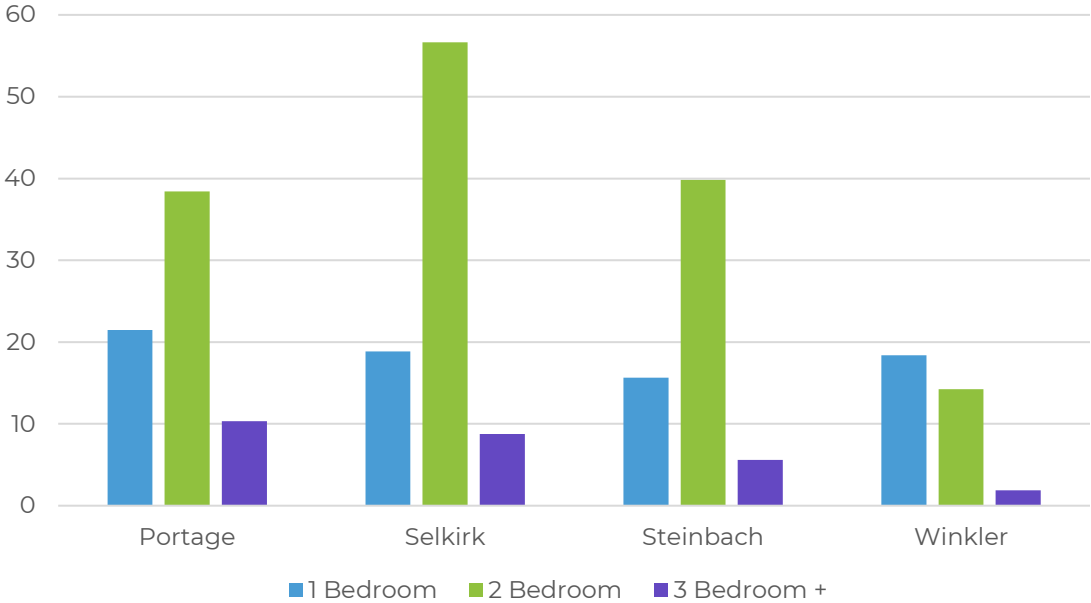


Figure 25: Rental units per 1,000 residents. Source: CMHC and Statistics Canada.

VACANCY RATE

In 2021, Portage had a very high vacancy rate compared to the cities of Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler. Nearly 1 in 10 units were vacant in Portage. The vacancy rate was highest for three-bedroom units.

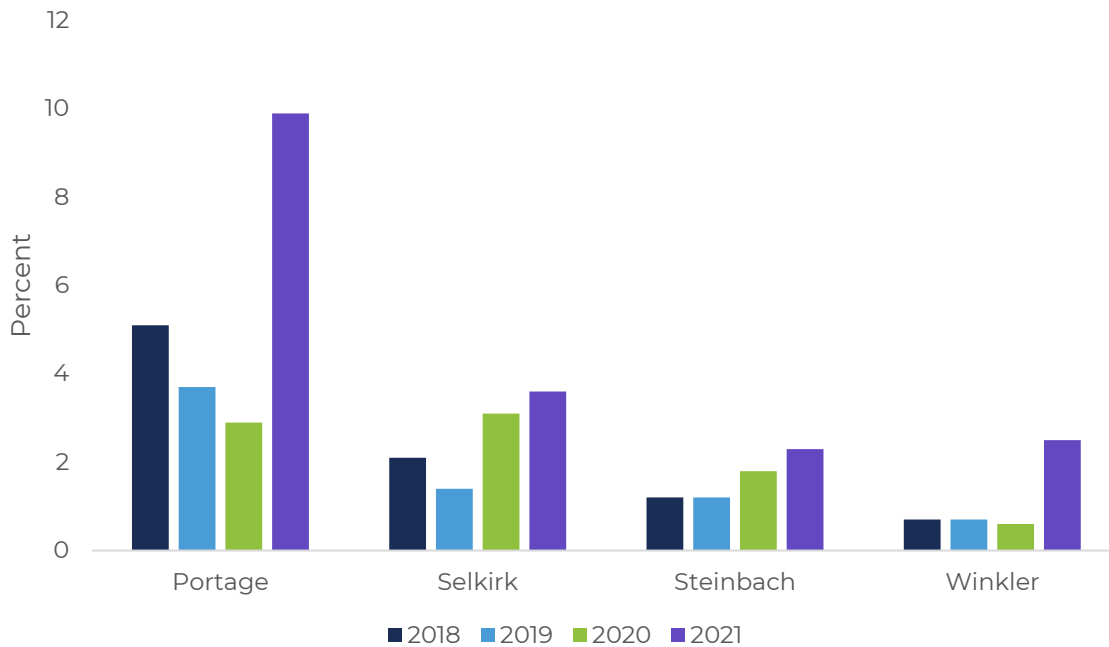


Figure 26: Vacancy rates by year, 2018 – 2021. Source: CMHC.

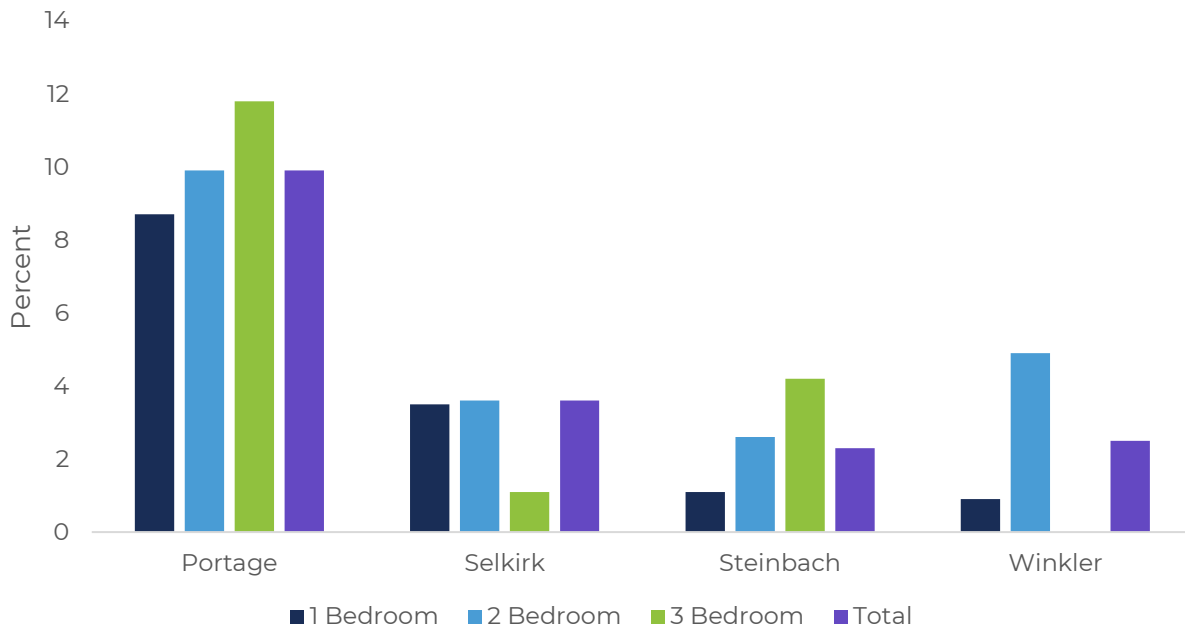


Figure 27: Vacancy rates by bedroom type, 2021. Source: CMHC.

AVERAGE RENT

The average rental price in Portage increased at less than the inflation rate over the last three decades before sharply increasing in 2020. This was likely due to the completion of new apartment buildings, which tend to have higher rents. In 2021, the average total rent was \$975.

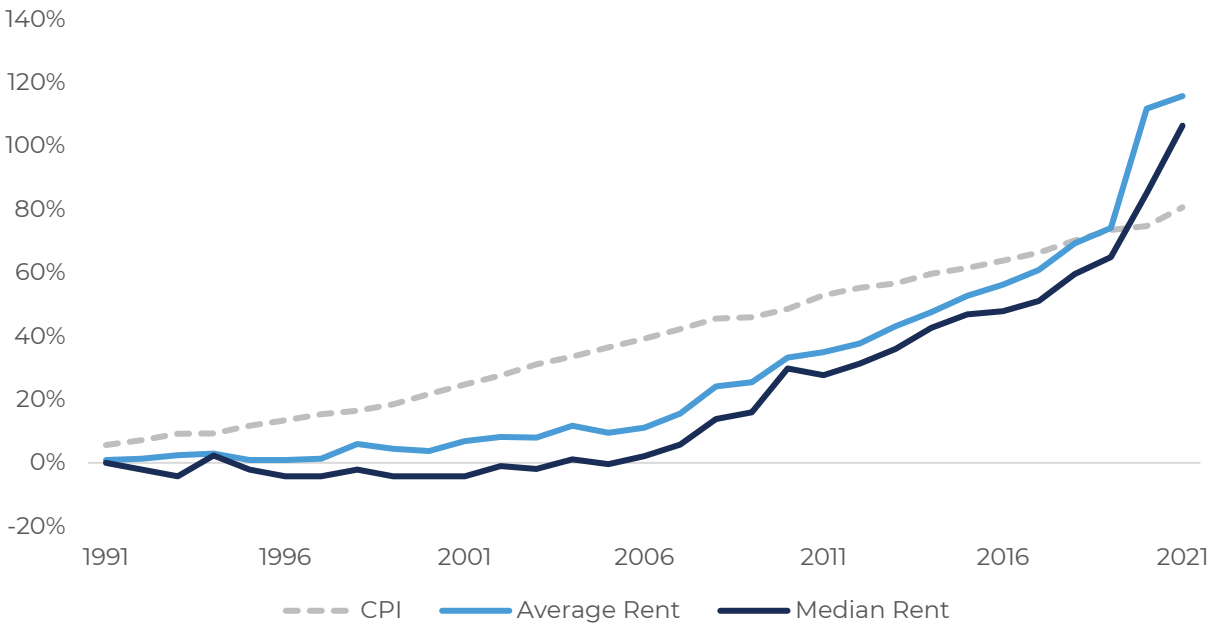


Figure 28: Changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Portage's rent. Source: CMHC.



Figure 29: Average rent by bedroom type. Source: CMHC.

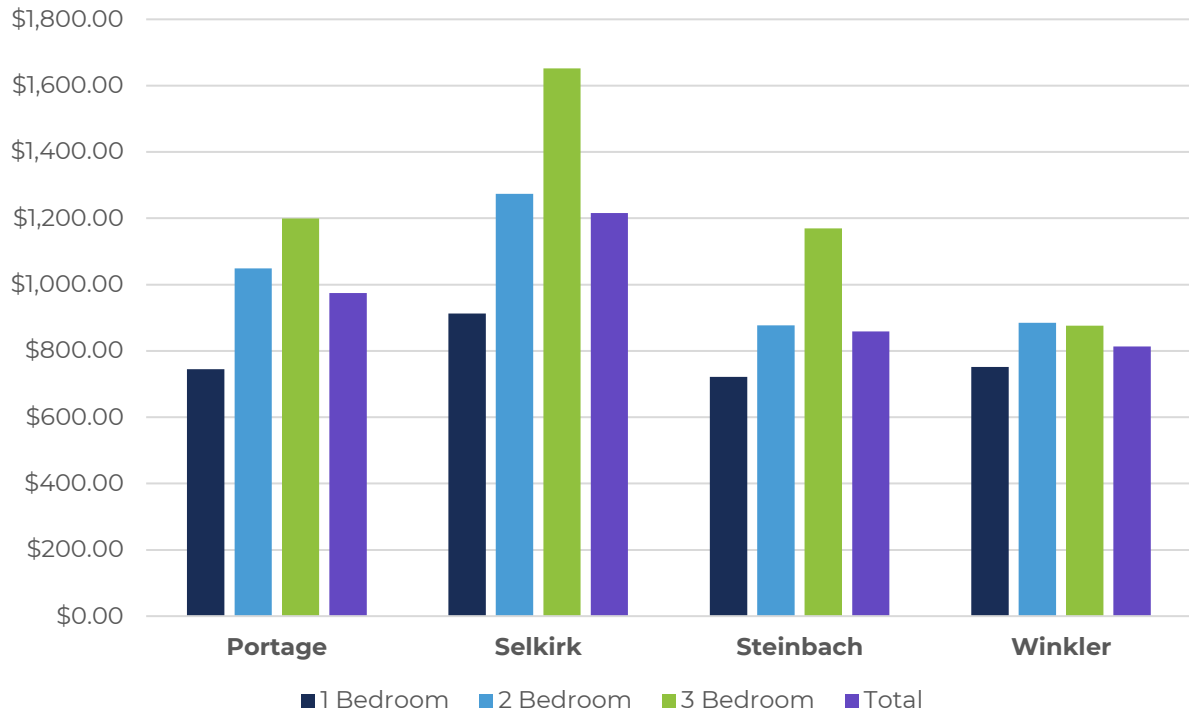


Figure 30: Comparisons of Average Rent, 2021 Source: CMHC.

SHELTER COSTS

Shelter costs refer to the average monthly total of all shelter expenses paid by households, including utilities as well as mortgage payments, property taxes, condominium fees, where applicable. Shelter costs were slightly higher for owners than renters in Portage. Shelter costs for both owners and renters were lower in Portage than in cities of Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler.

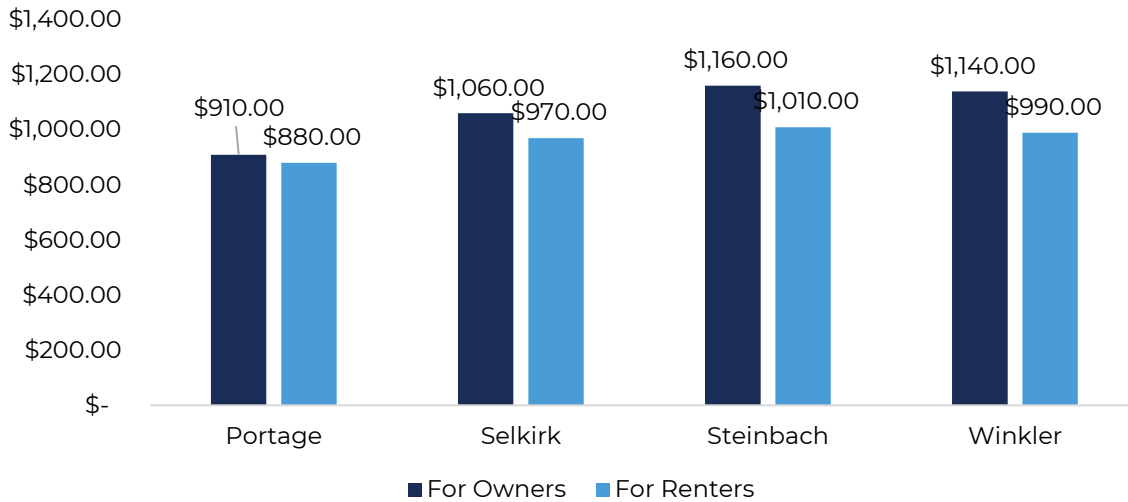


Figure 31: Median monthly shelter costs, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

VALUE OF DWELLINGS

As of 2021, the average value of a dwelling in Portage was \$243,800 while the median value of a dwelling was \$226,000. This is less than the average and median values of dwellings in Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler.

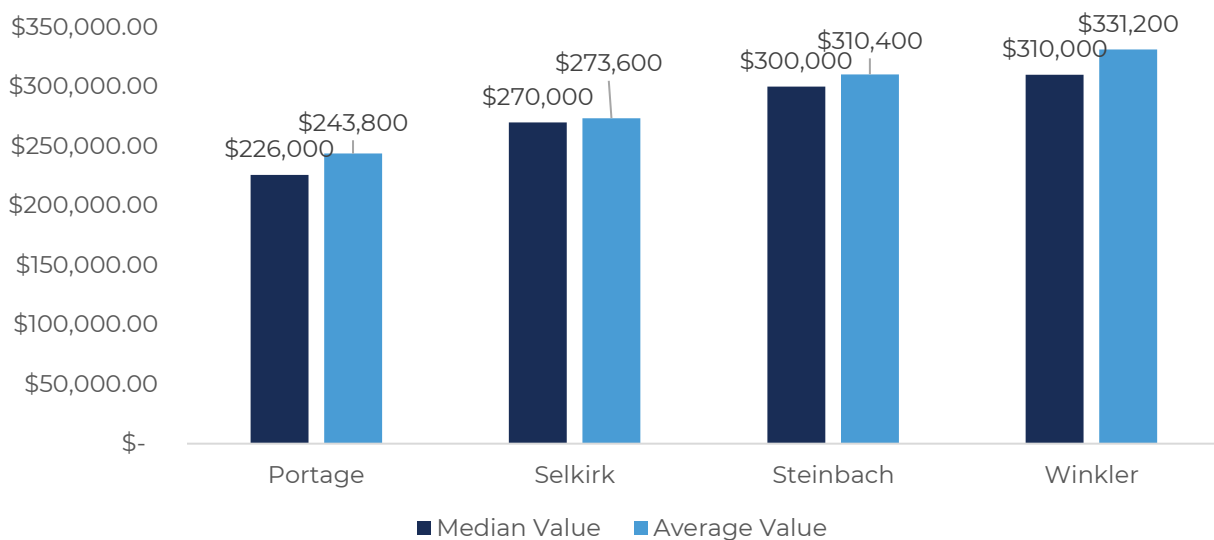


Figure 32: Median and Average Value of Dwellings, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

4. HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the Housing Needs Assessment is to understand what community members' differing needs, experiences, and challenges are in the city with respect to housing. As part of this process, community members shared their thoughts and experiences through an online survey.

4.1. CORE HOUSING NEED

Core housing need refers to when a household lives in either inadequate, unsuitable, or unaffordable housing, and would have to spend more than 30 percent of before-tax income to move to alternative local housing. As of 2021, 8 percent of households in Portage were in core housing need. However, a much higher proportion of renters were in core housing need compared to owners. These rates are comparable to the cities of Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler.

The city of Portage has a lower proportion of households spending 30 percent of more of their before-tax income than the cities of Selkirk, Steinbach, and Winkler. However, the city has a higher proportion of houses in need of major repairs than Steinbach and Winkler, likely due to the older housing stock in Portage.

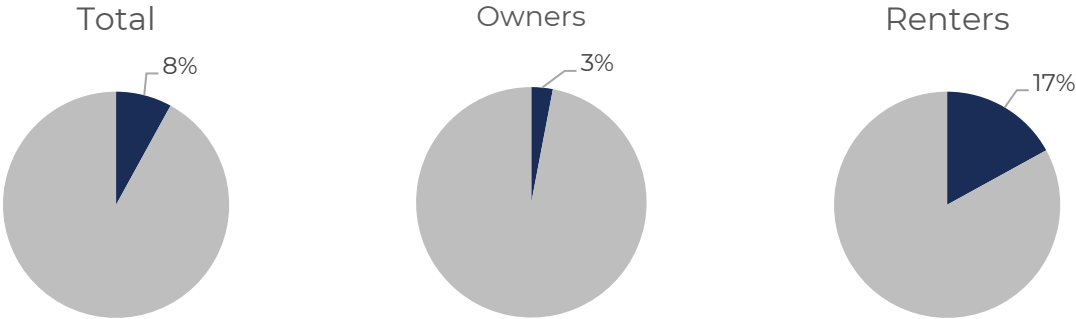


Figure 33: Households in core housing need, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

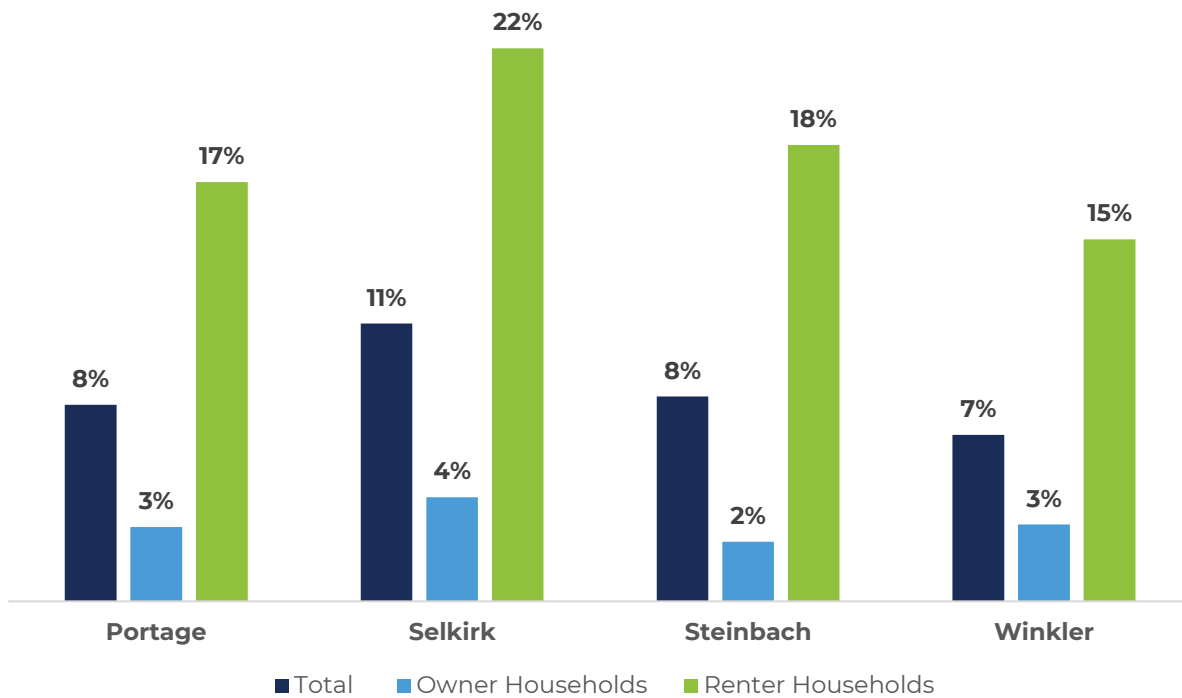


Figure 34: Households in core housing need, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

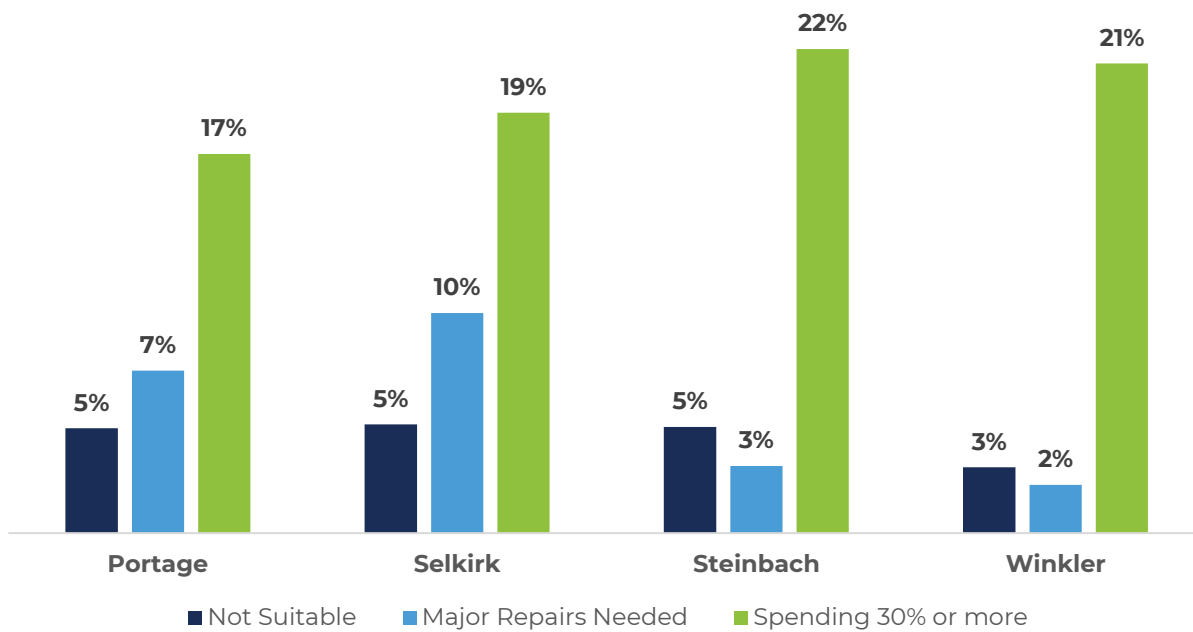


Figure 35: Dwellings by indicator type, 2021. Source: Statistics Canada.

4.2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MARKET RENTAL RATES

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), housing is considered affordable if it costs less than 30 percent of a household's before-tax income. **Figure 36** highlights the median total income for economic families and individuals not in economic families by income decile in the City of Portage la Prairie. Each income decile represents 10 percent of the population. The figure also highlights affordable monthly shelter costs for each income decile based on the median income.

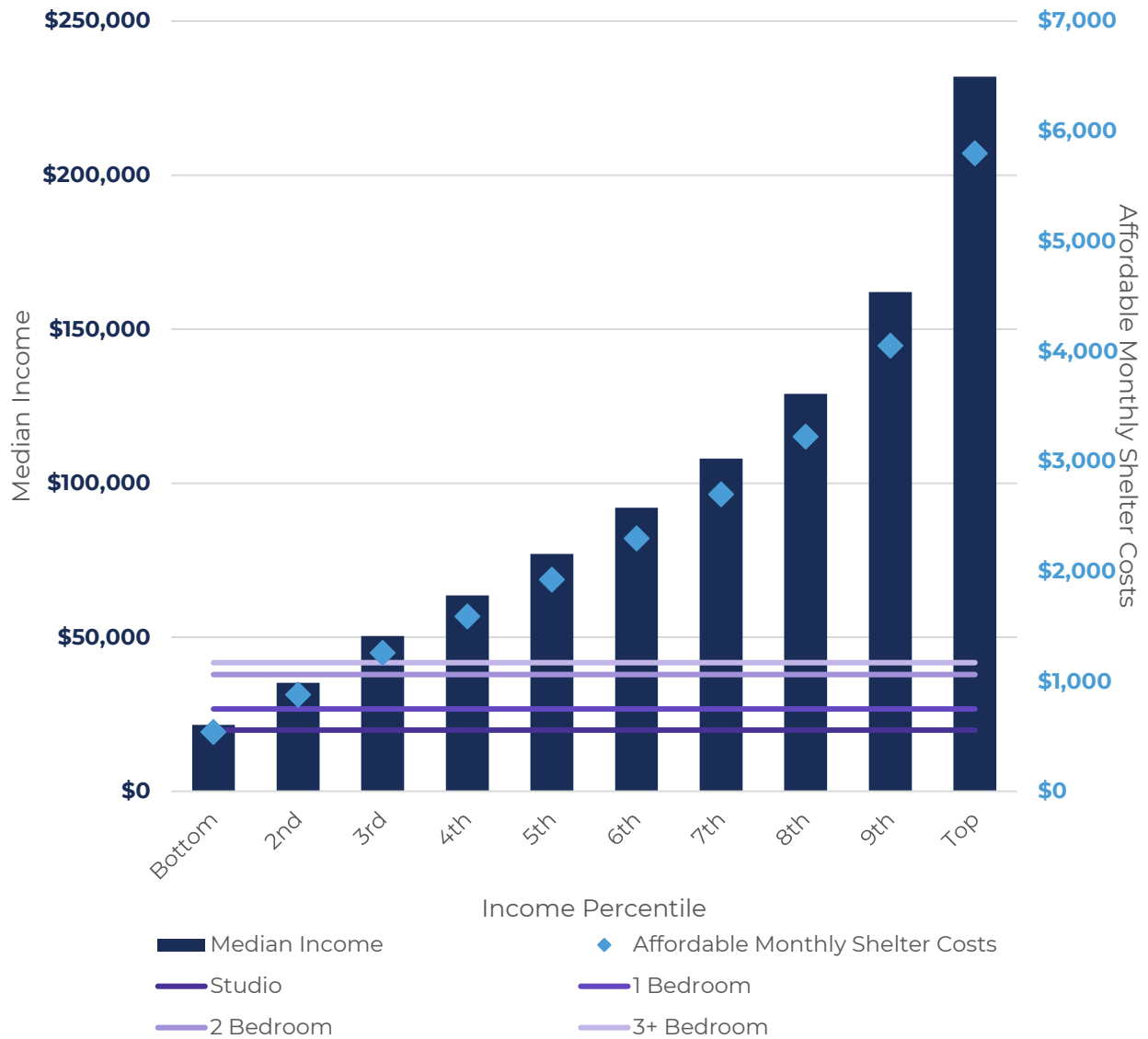


Figure 36: Affordable Monthly Shelter Costs for Economic Families (2020) compared with average rental rate (2020)

Economic families in the bottom income decile had a median income of \$21,600 in 2020. According to the CMHC's definition of affordable housing, a household with this income could afford to spend \$6,480 per year or \$540 per month on shelter costs. Families with this income could almost afford to rent a studio apartment, which had an average rent of \$556 in 2020. However, they could not afford to rent a larger one, two, or three-plus bedroom apartment, which range in average rent from \$748 to \$1,169 per month.

Economic families in the second income decile would also struggle with rental costs. The median income of households in the second decile was \$35,200 in 2021. A family with this income could afford to spend \$10,560 per year or \$880 per month on shelter costs. This means they could afford to rent a studio apartment or a one-bedroom apartment, but not a larger unit. Families in the third income decile could technically afford to rent an average three-bedroom-plus apartment in Portage, but may struggle if there are extra shelter costs such as utilities.

NON-MARKET RENTAL RATES

The Province of Manitoba has an Affordable Housing Rental Program for households below a certain income limit. In 2023, the income limit was \$63,450 for households without children and \$84,600 for households with children or dependents. Eligible households pay an affordable rent based on median rents in the private market. The 2022 and 2023 Affordable Housing Program Rents including essential utilities (heat, water, and sewer) for units in Portage la Prairie are highlighted in **Figure 37**. The figure also includes median income and affordable monthly shelter costs for the income percentiles below the income limits. It is worth noting that the Affordable Housing Rental Program data is from 2022 and 2023, while the income percentile data is from 2020, so the data should only be used as an approximate estimate of affordability.

According to this analysis, economic families in the bottom income decile would only be able to afford to rent a studio apartment through the Affordable Housing Rental Program. The maximum affordable monthly shelter costs for these families is \$540 per month, which is slightly more than the rental rate for studio apartments. Economic families in the second decile, which could afford to pay a median rental cost of \$880 per month, could rent a studio or one-bedroom unit. Economic families in the third income decile could afford a median rent of \$1,260 per month, which means they could technically afford to rent all unit types in the Affordable Housing Rental Program. However, they may struggle to afford units with four or more bedrooms, which are \$1,240 per month.



Figure 37: Affordable Monthly Shelter Costs for Economic Families (2020) compared with Manitoba Housing's Affordable Housing Rental Program rates (2022 and 2023)

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

According to the 2021 Census, the average residential dwelling in Portage la Prairie was valued at \$243,800. **Figure 38** compares median incomes and affordable monthly shelter costs for each income decile with monthly mortgage costs on an average house. These calculations are based on a mortgage with a ten percent down payment of \$24,280 amortized over 25 years using the CMHC’s online Mortgage Calculator. Mortgages with interest rates between 1 percent and 6 percent are included in the figure. Based on these calculations, economic families in the bottom income decile would not be able to afford a mortgage on an average house. Families in the second- and third-income deciles would be able to afford mortgages with a 1 percent and four percent interest rate, respectively. Families in the remaining income deciles would be able to afford to purchase an average house with a six percent interest rate.

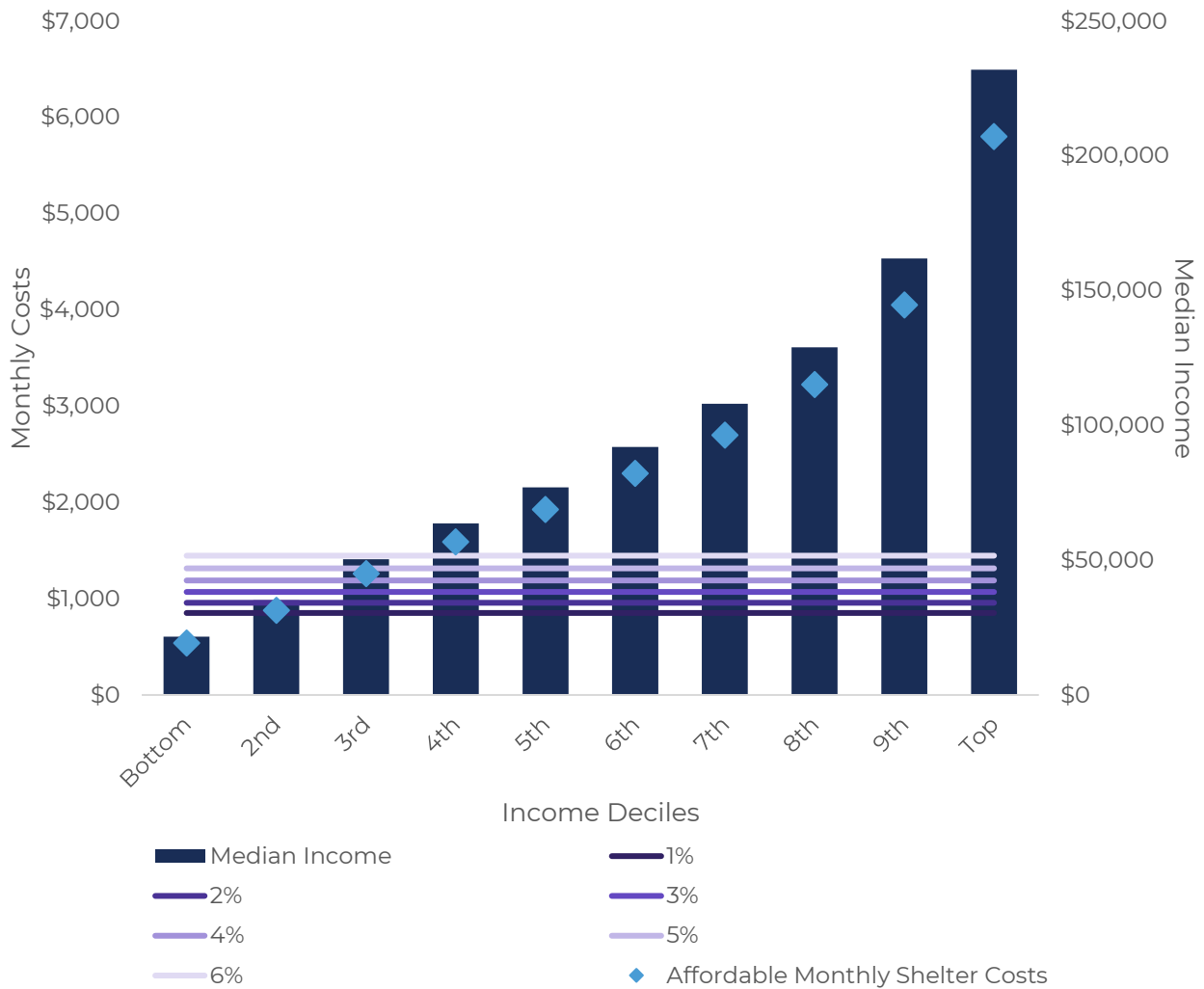


Figure 38: Affordable Monthly Mortgage Costs for an Average House in Portage. Sources: CMHC, Statistics Canada.

4.3. MISSING HOUSING FORMS

Survey respondents were asked what types of housing forms they thought were missing in Portage. Respondents were able to select more than one answer for this question.

More than half of respondents said emergency housing is missing in Portage. Respondents also thought that assisted living facilities, single-detached homes, duplexes, rowhouses and townhouses were missing. Most of the respondents who selected 'Other' emphasized the need for affordable housing, seniors housing, or tiny homes in Portage la Prairie.

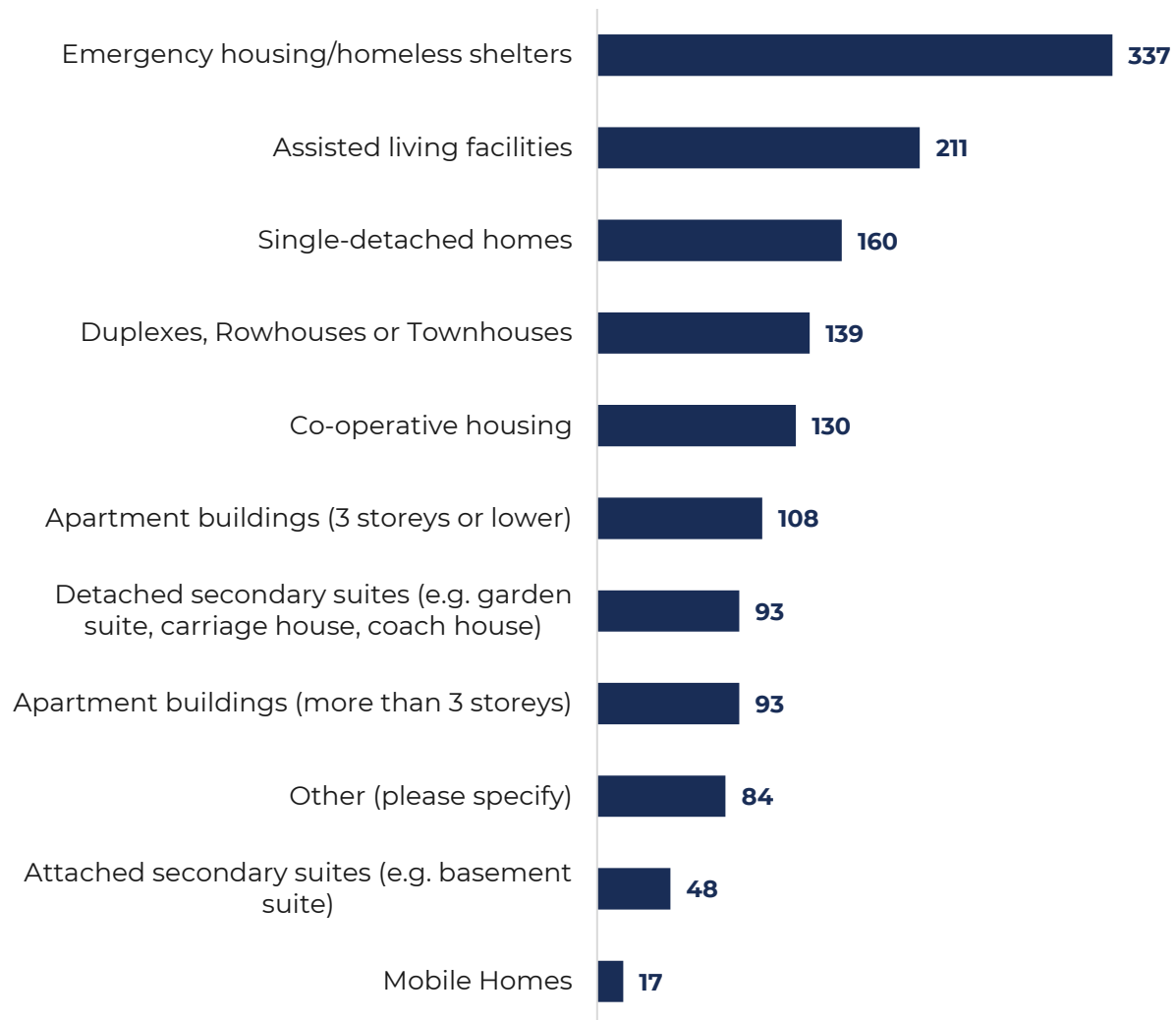
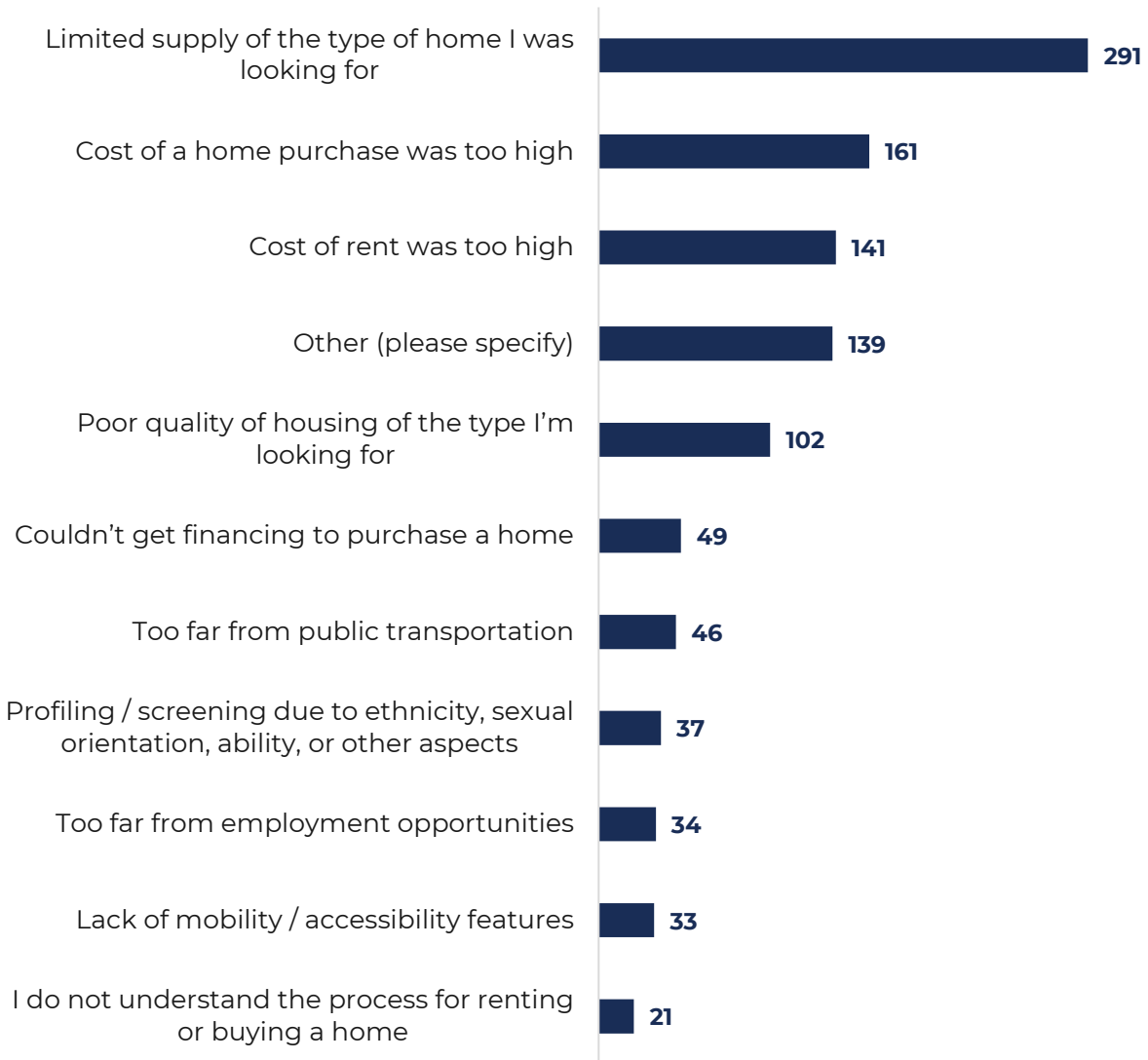


Figure 39: Missing housing forms according to survey respondents, 2021.

4.4. BARRIERS TO FINDING HOUSING

Respondents were asked whether they encountered any of the following barriers when searching for their current home or place of residence. They were able to select more than one response.

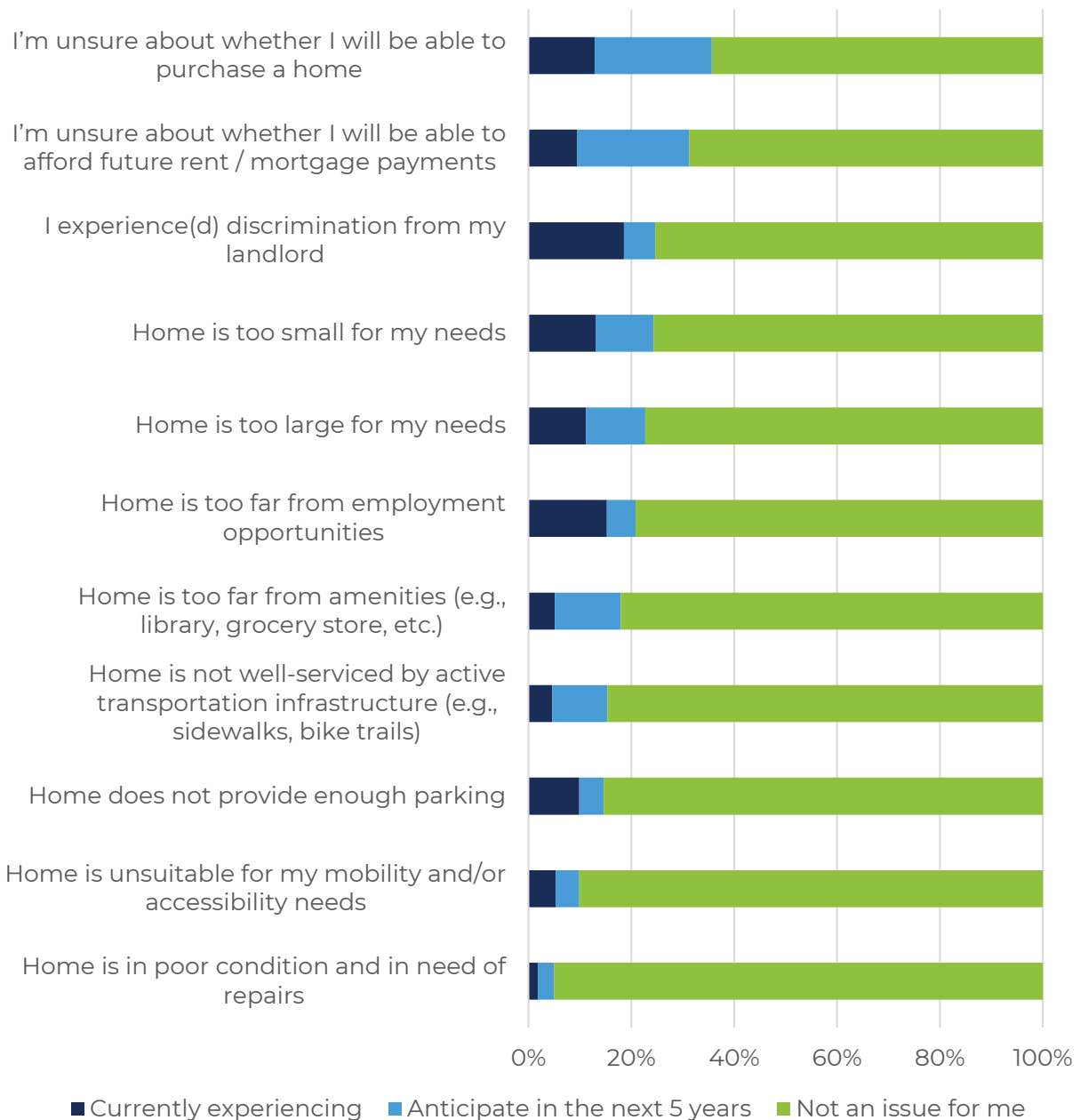
The most significant barrier was a limited supply of the type of home respondents were looking for. Respondents also said the cost of buying or renting a home in Portage was too high. Most of the respondents who selected 'Other' said none of the barriers applied to them.



4.5. HOUSING ISSUES

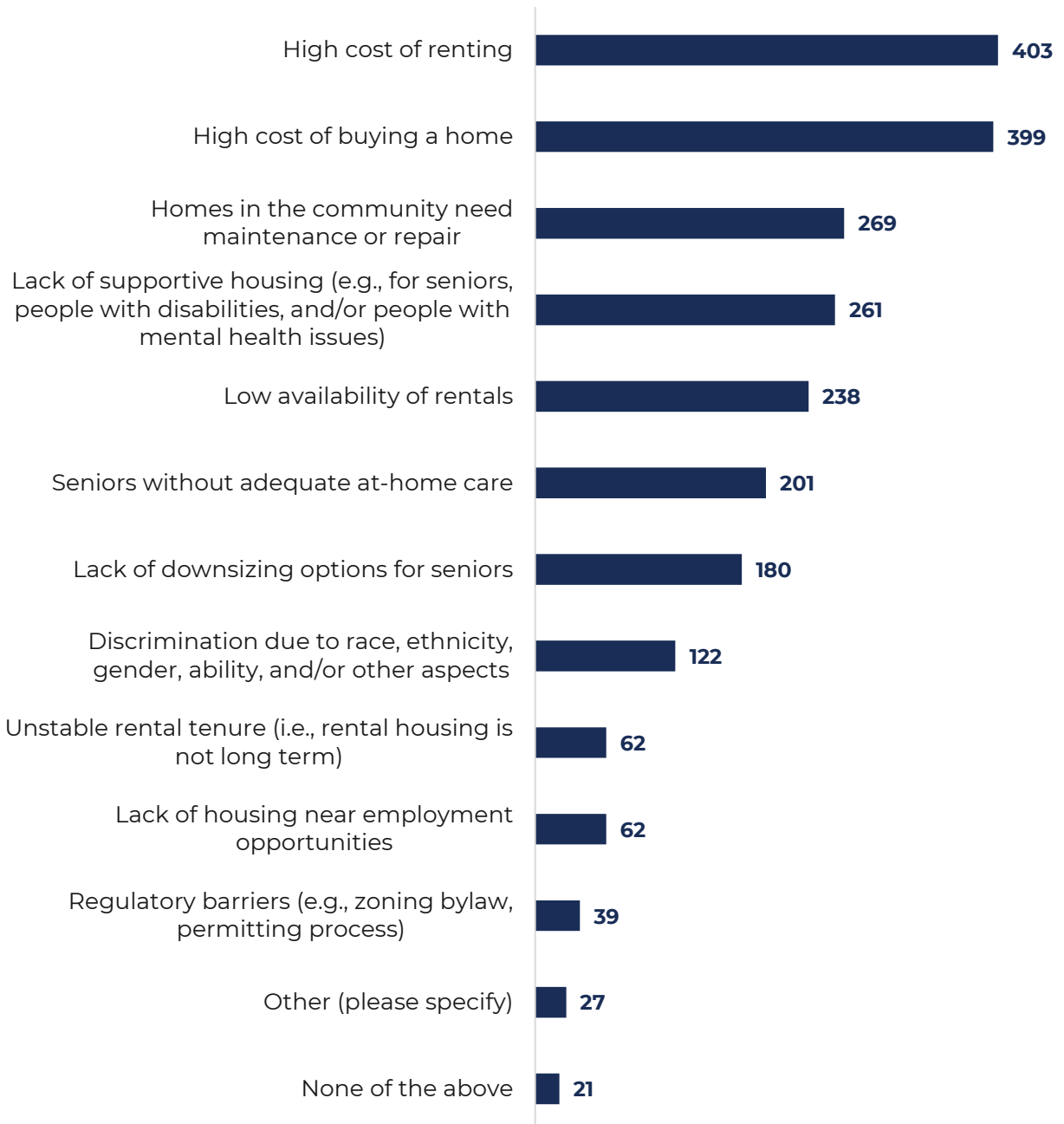
Survey respondents were asked if they were currently experiencing or if they anticipated experiencing any of the following housing issues in the next five years. Respondents were able to select more than one answer.

The most common housing issues were related to purchasing a home and affording future rent and mortgage payments. Some respondents also said they experienced discrimination from their landlord. Other issues included respondents' homes being too small, too large, or too far from employment opportunities or local amenities.



Survey respondents were also asked which housing issues they were seeing in their community more broadly. They were able to select up to five responses.

Respondents said the most significant housing issues in the community related to the high cost of renting or buying a home. Other issues included maintenance issues, a lack of supportive housing, and low availability or rental units.



5. HOUSING DEMAND STUDY

The purpose of the Housing Demand Study was to understand trends in the housing market. This involved developing population projection scenarios to predict the number of units of various housing types and tenures we will need over the next twenty years.

5.1. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Future population growth is projected over the next 20 years based on the historical trend of the City's population and the regional population projection for the North Central Economic Region provided by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics (MBS). Three population growth scenarios are presented below:

1. **Baseline scenario:** The City's population growth in the next 20 years is assumed to be based on the historical local population trajectory in the past 15 years
2. **Medium scenario:** Population trend in the next 20 years is assumed to be driven mostly by the growth of the economic region based on the MBS projection.
3. **High growth scenario:** An additional 30% population growth is added on top of the medium scenario. This scenario represents potential economic activities or development projects (e.g. expansion within the food processing industry) in the region which would attract a larger population to reside in the City

Based on the population projections shown in **Figure 40**, the population of the City of Portage la Prairie is projected to increase by a range between 1,840 and 3,852 individuals in the next 20 years, reaching a population of 15,125 to 17,137 in 2041. This represents a growth of 14 percent to 29 percent over the next 20 years.

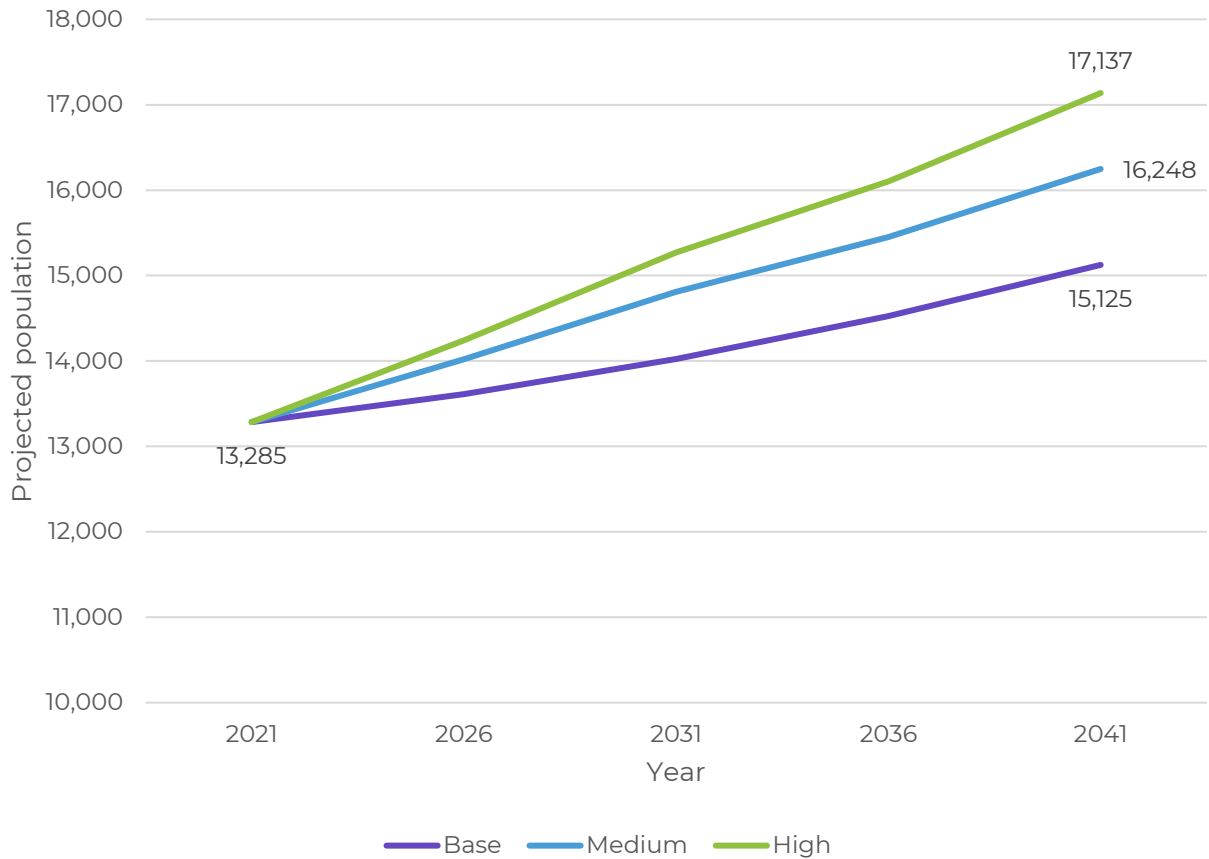


Figure 40: Population Projections for the City of Portage, 2020 - 2041

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada Census Program, Manitoba Bureau of Statistics

The baseline population growth scenario is based on past growth trends and assumes fewer people of working age (35 to 54) and a larger proportion people aged 55 to 74 compared to the medium and high population growth scenarios. Under the medium and high growth scenarios, more working individuals aged 35 to 44 are projected to live in the city.

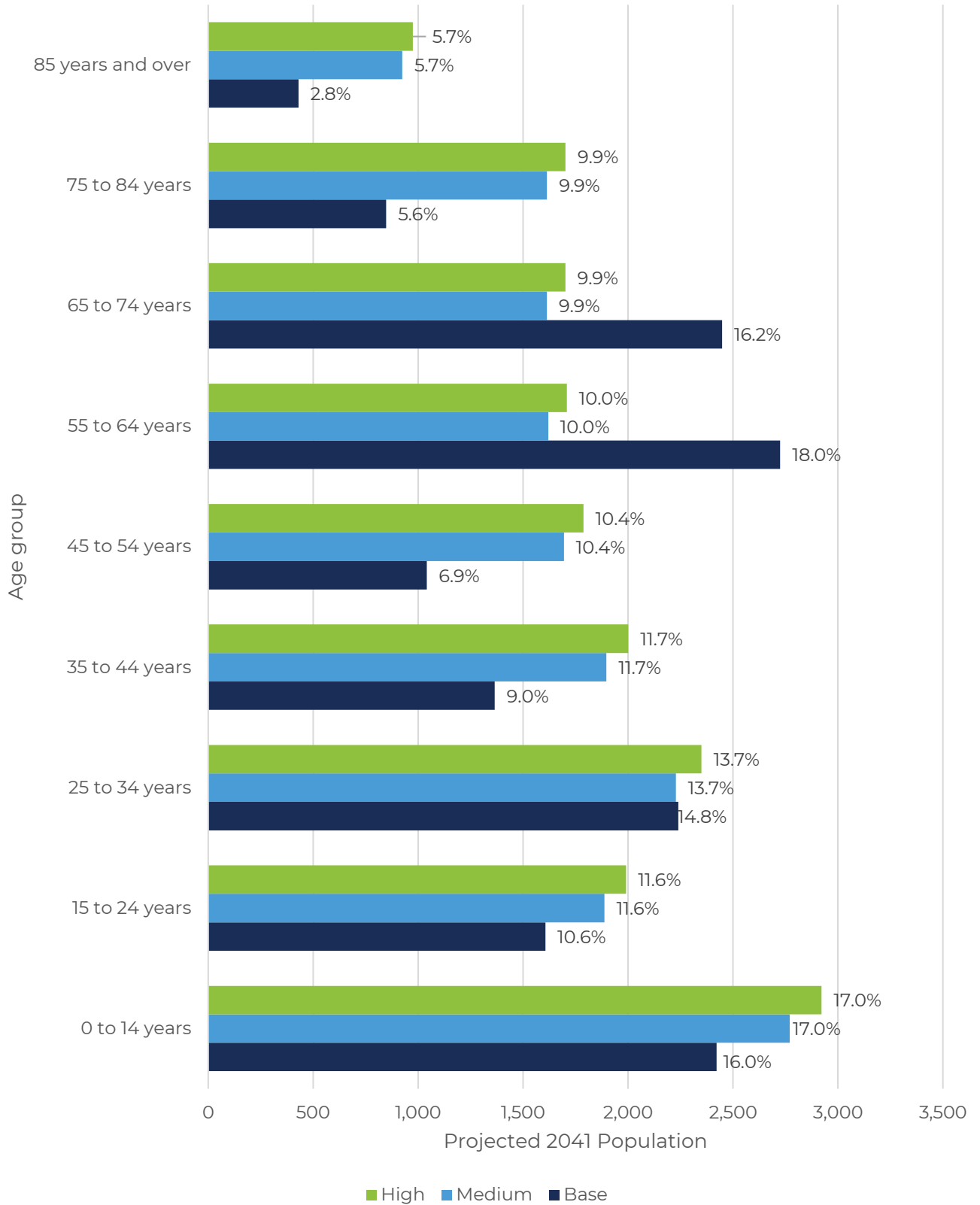


Figure 41: Projected population structure by age group, 2041, City of Portage la Prairie

5.2. HOUSEHOLD AND HOUSING DEMAND PROJECTION

The three population forecast scenarios presented above are used to determine future demand for housing units by structure type over the next 25 years. The housing demand projections are derived using estimated household maintainer rates or 'headship' rates by age group.

Headship rates refer to the proportion of individuals in each age group who lead (or "head") a household. Tracking headship rates is helpful for forecasting future housing demand, as it gives an indication of how housing demand will change due to both population growth and changing age profile. By applying headship rates to population projections, demand for units can be forecast year-over-year, broken out by tenure and family types.

The following table summarizes the estimated number of future households in the next 20 years under each of the population growth scenarios, assuming the headship rates by age group remains static as reported in the 2021 Census.

Between 2021 and 2041, the number of households in the city of Portage la Prairie are projected to increase by a range from 1,115 to 1,887, representing an additional housing demand of between 1,115 and 1,887 units. Assuming household tenure remains the same as in 2021, the city could see an increase of 760 to 1,068 owner households, and 355 to 819 renter households between 2021 and 2041. This would translate to demand for an additional 768 to 1,068 owner housing units, and an additional 355 to 819 rental units over the next 20 years.

	2021	2041			Housing demand 2021-2041		
		Baseline	Medium	High	Baseline	Medium	High
Total	5,645	6,760	7,140	7,532	1,115	1,495	1,887
Owner	3,665	4,425	4,488	4,733	760	823	1,068
Renter	1,980	2,335	2,652	2,799	355	672	819
Average Household Size	2.35	2.23	2.27	2.27			

Table 1: Projected households by tenure, City of Portage, 2021-2041 (Source: Adapted from population projection from Manitoba Bureau of Statistics and Census 2021, Statistics Canada)

Over the next five years, the average household size is projected to decline very slightly. In 2021, it was **2.35** persons per household. By 2041, it is projected to be between 2.23 to 2.27 persons per household. To understand the types of additional housing needed, household projections are further broken down into projections by family types. Each family type has specific housing needs based on the size and

household characteristics, which would require further study to understand the best housing options for them.

	2021	2041			Housing demand 2021-2041		
		Baseline	Medium	High	Baseline	Medium	High
Couple without Children	1,335	1,809	1,677	1,769	474	342	434
Couple with Children	1,120	1,156	1,316	1,389	36	196	269
Lone-Parent	665	738	821	866	73	156	201
Other-Census-Family	315	348	381	403	33	66	88
Non-Census-Family	2,210	2,709	2,945	3,105	499	735	895
Total	5,645	6,760	7,140	7,532	1,115	1,495	1,887

Table 2: Projected households by type, City of Portage, 2021 – 2041

Over the next 20 years, the number of non-Census family households are projected to increase by between 499 to 895, or growth of 23% to 41%. This accounts for the largest proportion of additional housing demand among all household types. Couple households without children account for the second largest proportion of housing growth and demand for the next 20 years. These households are projected to create new demand for between 342 and 474 housing units over that period.

Couple households with children are projected to grow by 36 units in the baseline growth scenario, 196 in the medium growth scenario, and 269 units in the high growth scenario. This represents growth of between 3% and 24% in the next 20 years. Under the medium and high population growth scenarios, more working individuals aged 35 to 44 are attracted to reside in the City, which then creates additional demand for homes for family households with children. Lone parent family households are projected to grow by 11% to 30% in the next 20 years, representing demand for between 73 and 201 additional housing units.

Other Census family households are projected to grow by between 11% and 27% in the next 20 years, creating demand for between 33 and 88 additional housing units over that period.

5.3. LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that population projections are driven by the historical trajectory of populations and assumptions made about the future demographics in regional projections, and the trend could change significantly under changes in various socio-economic factors. As a result, projections are best understood as one possible scenario based on historical growth and responses to that growth – what might happen, especially if similar actions to those in the past are taken in the future with respect to growth and development.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The actions identified below require the participation of not-for-profit, private sector and government partners.

6.1 IMPROVE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

1. Incorporate an inclusionary housing policy into the City's Zoning By-Law

The term 'inclusionary zoning'—also referred to as inclusionary housing—refers to requirements that new development include a certain proportion of affordable housing units. Typically, these requirements only apply to developments over a certain size or number of units. Municipalities will often require that between 10 to 20 percent of new units are considered affordable. Municipalities may also offer incentives to increase the proportion of affordable housing units (as noted below).

Section 71(5) of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning policies. The City of Portage could incorporate an inclusionary housing policy into their Zoning By-Law that requires a certain proportion of new units in apartment buildings to be affordable. Section 71(6) requires that municipalities define "affordable housing" or a method for determining if housing is affordable prior to implementing an inclusionary zoning policy.

2. Incorporate an incentive housing policy into the City's Zoning By-Law

Incentive zoning refers to the process of providing developers with incentives in exchange for a public benefit, such as affordable housing or public space. These incentives often take the form of increased project density but can also include expedited approval processes or reduced parking requirements. For example, a municipality can allow a developer to construct more dwelling units than would normally be allowed on a site in exchange for the development of a certain number of affordable housing units.

Section 71(7) of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities to implement incentive zoning policies in their zoning by-laws. Currently, the City's Zoning Bylaw does not include any incentives for developers to provide affordable housing. The City could encourage the development of more affordable housing by incorporating density bonuses or other incentives into the Zoning By-Law.

3. Explore partnerships with Indigenous governments

Some municipalities have formed partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations to address housing shortages and support the development of more affordable housing units. The city of Portage la Prairie has a large Indigenous population and is located near three First Nations: Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plain and Long Plain. Further, the Portage Manitoba Métis Federation has one of the largest memberships in the province. The city should pursue partnerships with other

governments and non-profit organizations to facilitate the development of more affordable housing.

4. Explore tax incentives for the development of affordable housing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a funding model that municipalities can use to encourage new developments or redevelopments. When a development occurs, the value of the property and the associated property taxes increase. Rather than collecting incremental taxes in general revenues, municipalities can use these taxes for a public purpose, such as revitalizing a neighbourhood. Municipalities can provide developers the value of the total incremental taxes at the beginning of the project to help support new development, which may not have been financially viable otherwise.

Tax increment financing is permitted in Manitoba under the *Community Revitalization Tax Increment Financing Act*. The City of Portage la Prairie could establish a Tax Increment Financing Policy to support the development of affordable and market housing projects that may not otherwise be financially feasible.

6.2 ENCOURAGE A DIVERSE MIX OF HOUSING TYPES

5. Explore opportunities to 'up-zone' Single Family Dwelling zones

Up-zoning refers to the process of altering a municipality's zoning by-law to allow more 'gentle density' in certain zones. Municipalities have used this process to eliminate single-family zoning and allow more than one dwelling unit per parcel in all residential zones. This effectively allows—but not requires—owners to build duplexes and sometimes triplexes in neighbourhoods traditionally dominated by single detached houses. This can increase the supply of housing without expanding a municipality's geographic footprint or infrastructure requirement.

The City of Portage's Zoning By-Law does not currently allow Two Family Dwellings or Multi-Family Dwellings (with three or more units) in the Rural Residential Zone (RR) or the Single-Family Dwelling Zones (R1, R1-60). However, a Secondary Suite is allowed as a conditional use in these zones. The City of Portage could 'up-zone' particular neighbourhoods by eliminating Single-Family Dwelling Zones (R1, R1-60) and rezoning these areas as Two-Family Dwelling Zones (R2). This would effectively allow single detached homes, duplexes, and side-by-side, semi-detached units in all residential zones.

6. Encourage the development of secondary suites

A Secondary Suite (often referred to as a 'granny flat') is a self-contained residential unit located on a property alongside the primary residence. The Secondary Suite is required to have its own kitchen, bathroom, living area, and entrance. There are typically three types of secondary suites: (1) basement suites that located within the primary dwelling, (2) coach houses that are located above detached garages, and (3) garden suites that are separate from the primary residence and located at ground

level. Secondary suites can help increase the supply of affordable housing in a community.

The City of Portage’s Zoning By-Law allows for Secondary Suites as a conditional use in the Rural Residential Zone (RR), Single-Family Dwelling Zones (R1, R1-60), and Residential Large Lot (RLL) zones. The Zoning By-Law defines a Secondary Suite as “an *accessory dwelling unit* that is self-contained, subsidiary to, and located on the same *site* as a *single-family dwelling* that is *owner occupied*.” The City only considers (1) attached suites located in the same building as the primary residence, and (2) garage suites located above or attached to a detached garage. Garden suites that are separate from the primary residence and garage are not permitted. The City could encourage more secondary suites by adjusting their Zoning By-law to allow for garden suites that are detached from the primary residence and the garage.

7. Explore opportunities for modular housing

Modular homes are residential dwellings constructed of one or more prefabricated components. The homes are partially or fully constructed off-site and then assembled on the property. Modular homes can typically be built in a timely and cost-effective manner, often making them more affordable than housing constructed on-site. Modular homes are subject to the Building Code.

The City of Portage la Prairie’s Zoning By-Law defines a modular home as “a single-family dwelling suitable for year-round occupancy that consists of one (1) or more modules either partially or wholly factory fabricated and containing a framework that does not contain wheels or towing tongue.” Modular homes are considered a single-family dwelling unit if they are on a permanent foundation. However, the City’s By-Law does not include prefabricated multi-unit construction in the definition of modular housing, which may restrict this type of development.

The *Municipal Planning Guide to Zoning Bylaws in Manitoba* recommends not defining dwellings based on their construction type (e.g. modular, ready-to-move) in the zoning bylaw. The City may be able to encourage the development of more single and multi-family modular housing projects by updating the Zoning By-Law to remove references to construction types.

6.3 REGENERATE THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

8. Encourage landlords, housing providers, and homeowners to access funding for renovations

The City of Portage has a relatively old housing stock compared to other cities such as Steinbach and Winkler. According to the latest census, roughly seven percent of dwellings in the City are in need of major repairs. There are several federal and provincial funding opportunities for residential retrofits and upgrades. Given that buildings are the third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, many of these programs are focused on energy efficiency upgrades.

The City of Portage could encourage landlords, housing providers, and homeowners to access funding for residential renovations. There are several organizations that offer funding or financing for landlords and housing providers to complete renovations. These organizations include the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and Efficiency Manitoba. There are also rebates available for homeowners who complete energy efficiency renovations through Efficiency Manitoba and Natural Resources Canada's Canada Green Home Grant program.

6.4 ENHANCE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING OPTIONS

9. Create capacity within the public, private and non-profit sector to provide supportive housing

Supportive housing describes subsidized housing with on-site supports for single adults, seniors and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness. These supports help people find and maintain stable housing.

Supportive housing requires partnerships between housing providers and service agencies that address the causes of homelessness and evictions. Often mental health issues contribute to housing issues, and support from agencies that support positive mental health can help prevent evictions and subsequently homelessness.

6.5 CREATE COMPLETE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

10. Encourage mixed-use neighbourhoods

Mixed-use neighbourhoods provide a variety of uses – residential, commercial, recreational and other – within the same neighbourhood. The benefit to this is that residents are able to access a variety of services – and maybe even work – within the neighbourhood they live in. This results in shorter commutes that are more likely to be completed sustainably either by bike or on foot. Mixed-use neighbourhoods are often more densely populated which support public transportation. Mixed-use developments may also include multiple uses in the same building. These buildings often include commercial units on the ground floor and residential units above, but could also include institutional uses. Mixed-use developments can help create more pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods and reduce residents' reliance on private vehicles. They can include a mixture of commercial units, market residential units, and affordable residential units. The commercial and market residential units can help subsidize the affordable units.

The City of Portage's Zoning By-Law currently allows for some mixed-use developments. Multi-Family Dwellings (with three or more units) are conditional uses in Neighbourhood Commercial Zones (C1), Central Commercial Zones (C2), and Avenue Commercial Zones (C3), as long as the dwellings are located above the first floor and are a minimum of 37.2 m² in floor area. Smaller Dwelling Units are a permitted use in Neighbourhood Commercial Zones (C1), Central Commercial Zones (C2) and a conditional use in Avenue Commercial Zones (C3) under the same

conditions. The City could encourage more mixed-use developments by changing the zoning by-law to allow for Multi-Family Dwellings as a permitted (rather than conditional) use in commercial zones.

11. Support sustainable transportation options

Sustainable transportation options enhance both our individual health as well as the health of our natural environment. The City can support sustainable transportation options through designing new communities with a range of uses and housing types. The City should also consider incorporating sustainable transportation options (such as pedestrian facilities, cycling facilities, and public transit) in to the designs of new communities from the outset, while minimizing infrastructure that encourages unnecessary vehicular travel.

While housing costs often receive the greatest attention, the total cost of housing and transportation is often a useful metric to understand how the distance between housing and various destinations contributes to an individual's overall cost of living.

APPENDIX A

PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL HOUSING POLICIES

THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA'S PLANNING ACT (C.C.S.M. C. P80)

PART 2: PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Requirements for regional plan

10.3(2) A regional plan must contain plans and policies respecting ...

- (b) sustainable land use and development in the region, having regard to the need ...
- (iii) for residential development and housing

PART 3: PLANNING DISTRICTS

Agreements

15(1) The board of a planning district may enter into any agreement necessary to enable it to carry out and exercise its duties and powers under this Act, including without limitation ...

- (b) an agreement with a member municipality, the government, an agency of the government or any other person to develop and maintain ...
- (ii) housing facilities in the district

PART 4: PLANS

Acquisition and disposal of land

66 In order to implement any part of a development plan by-law or secondary plan by-law, a planning district or municipality may acquire land by gift, purchase or expropriation under The Expropriation Act. The land may be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of by the district or municipality if it is no longer required.

PART 5: ZONING BY-LAWS

Zoning for affordable housing

71(5) *A zoning by-law for a new residential development may require that a specified percentage of the dwelling units within the development offer affordable housing to low and moderate income households.*

"Affordable housing" to be defined

71(6) A requirement under subsection (5) may be imposed only if a definition of "affordable housing", or the manner for determining if housing is affordable housing, is prescribed in the by-law.

Incentive zoning

71(7) A zoning by-law may allow for the modification of specified development requirements, including increased density of dwelling units, if a development provides the public benefits prescribed in the by-law, such as affordable housing.

PART 9: DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Development Agreements

150 As a condition of amending a zoning by-law, making a variance order or approving a conditional use, a board, council or planning commission may, unless this Act provides otherwise, require the owner of the affected property to enter into a development agreement with the planning district or municipality in respect of the affected property and any contiguous land owned or leased by the owner dealing with one or more of the following matters ...

(c.1) the provision of affordable housing, if the application is for an amendment to a zoning by-law to permit a new residential development that is subject to a requirement under subsection 71(5)

Development agreements for affordable housing

150.1 A development agreement that deals with the matters described in clause 150(c.1) may contain terms and conditions respecting

- (a) the provision of affordable housing, including the number, type and extent of the dwelling units; and
- (b) the measures that are required to be taken and maintained so that the housing remains affordable over the long term.

THE PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE PLANNING DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

9.11 Age Friendly

To support active ageing within the communities of the Planning District, age-friendly planning and development solutions are encouraged, including:

Locating seniors' housing in close proximity to services, amenities and social gathering places, such as within a five-minute walk of the Downtown

NEIGHBOURHOOD AREAS

10.1 Housing Mix and Affordability

Quality, affordable housing is a basic need for everyone and contributes to our wellbeing. As a priority, a greater mix of housing types (single unit, two-unit, row housing, multi-plexes, apartment buildings, etc.) that appeal to a wide range of demographics and incomes will be promoted in **Neighbourhood Areas**.

10.2 Housing Supply

To help ensure an adequate supply of housing in the City of Portage la Prairie while maximizing the utilization of serviced lands, and promoting more walkable communities, the City of Portage la Prairie will encourage the infill of new housing on vacant lots and enable the subdivision of existing residential lots in **Neighbourhood Areas**, where appropriate. In particular, existing lots that are significantly larger than the minimum lot size established in the City's zoning by-law should be considered for future subdivision.

10.3 Infill Development

To ensure that infill development is contextually appropriate, the Planning District will direct the location and design of residential infill in established **Neighbourhood Areas** to respect and reinforce the general physical patterns and character of those areas by considering the:

- i. Pattern of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;
- ii. General size and configuration of lots;
- iii. Heights, massing, scale and type of dwelling unit compatible with that permitted by the zoning by-law or nearby residential properties;
- iv. Prevailing building types;
- v. Setback of buildings from the street or streets, side and rear yard setbacks;

- vi. Continuation of special landscape or built form features that contribute to the unique character of a neighbourhood; and
- vii. Conservation of heritage buildings, structures or landscapes.

In cases where properties differ from the prevailing patterns of lot size, configuration and orientation, it may not be possible to provide the same site standards and pattern of development in these infill projects as exist in the surrounding neighbourhood.

10.5 Higher-Density Residential

Due to the concentrated density of development and potential impacts of high and moderate density housing, within **Neighbourhood Areas** the following siting criteria will apply to such developments

Frontage on, or direct access to, a collector or arterial street, or at an intersection, to ensure sufficient access and traffic movement and minimize through traffic in residential areas;

Lot is of sufficient size to accommodate onsite parking/loading facilities, landscaping/buffering and, where necessary onsite water retention; and

Convenient access to schools, shopping areas or open space areas

10.6 Supportive Housing

To provide for the integration of specialized, supportive housing (such as nursing homes, senior citizens' homes, group homes and residential care facilities) within **Neighbourhood Areas**, supportive housing should be situated in a way that is not intrusive to adjacent residential development. Due to factors such as the size and capacity of the structure, the location of large-scale facilities should consider proximity to public facilities and other services.

INSTITUTIONAL AREAS

11.7 Surplus Lands

When lands in **Institutional Areas** or the sites of government, health care or educational institutions are declared surplus, the owner is encouraged to consult with the local neighbourhood and to investigate the possible use of the site for an alternate suitable public institutional use, affordable housing or public open space, before applying to re-designate the lands for other purposes

DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR

13.1 Downtown Corridor Uses

To create a vibrant and thriving business environment along Saskatchewan Avenue and reinforce the downtown business district as the central hub for community activity, a mix of commercial and complimentary residential, institutional and open space uses is encouraged in the **Downtown Corridor**, in particular, civic, arts, entertainment, professional, local retail and high-density residential uses.

13.2 Residential Uses

Higher density residential uses may be accommodated in the **Downtown Corridor** where they complement adjacent uses and mitigate incompatibilities, subject to appropriate zoning. Residential development that is part of a mixed-use commercial/residential structure or planned development is encouraged, as is the residential use of vacant buildings and empty lots.

13.3 Neighbourhood Area Interface

To ensure a compatible transition between the **Downtown Corridor** and adjacent **Neighbourhood Areas**, developments that back on to or adjoin residential development should be planned and designed to be compatible with the residential context and character. Where appropriate, proposals for development may need to provide additional setbacks, buffering or screening, or provide for a transition in building height.