



Community Profile Report



Infrastructure and Planning Services

October 2023

Executive Summary

This report is an examination of the population of Yellowhead County based on the information from Statistics Canada. The County covers a vast area between the Pembina River and the gates of Jasper National Park. It contains eight hamlets (Brule, Cadomin, Evansburg, Marlboro, Niton Junction, Peers, Robb, and Wildwood) as well as the service centres of the Town of Edson and the Town of Hinton. The purpose of this report is to (1) identify unknown problems and new solutions, (2) evaluate the effectiveness of future County projects, and (3) place Yellowhead County in its rural context.

Yellowhead County's population has been slowly but steadily growing over the past few decades however it does appear to be aging. This population growth is typically occurring rurally and the hamlets are in decline. Housing and rental prices have risen faster than median household incomes. The main industries are oil and gas, forestry, and agriculture with high employment volatility. The County regularly experiences an influx of temporary residents, which is difficult to accurately capture. The first group comes to the County to work in the oil and gas industry but their families reside outside of the area. The second group are individuals and families who own recreational properties in the County and only visit on weekends or during the summer season.

This report was prepared by the Yellowhead County Planning and Development Department in order to develop a stronger understanding of the County's residents and their unique social and economic circumstances. The Towns of Edson and Hinton have been omitted from this report.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary _____ 2

Part 1: Population and Distribution _____ 5

Part 2: County Households _____ 9

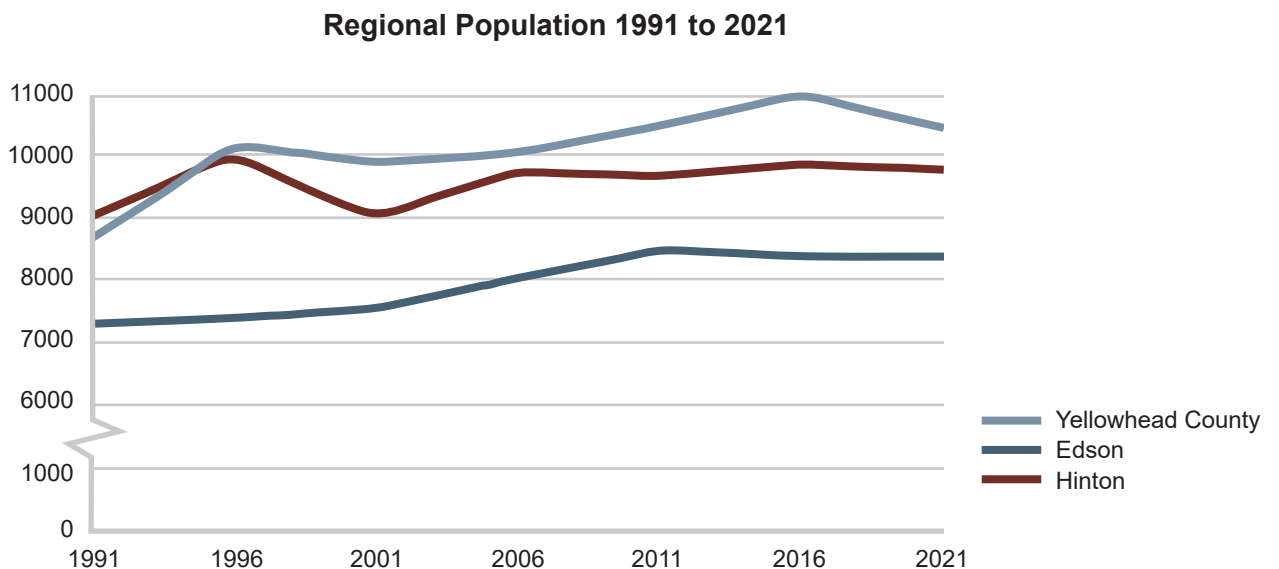
Part 3: Income, Workforce and Education _____ 13

Part 4: Industry and Employment _____ 17



Part 1: Population and Distribution

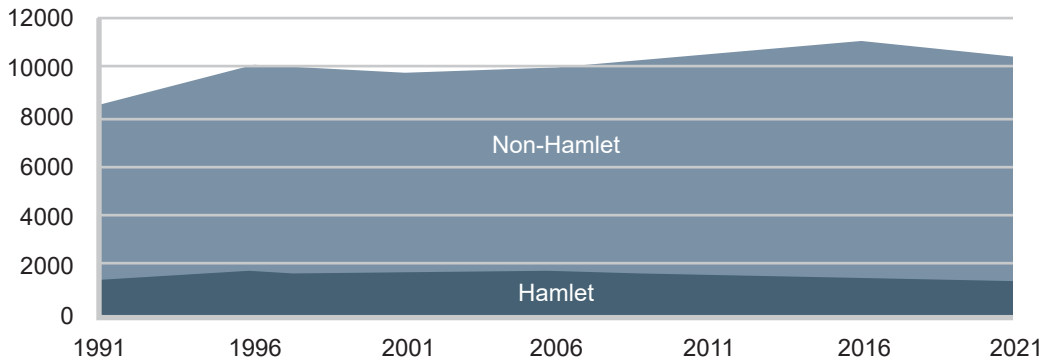
Until recently, Yellowhead County had been experiencing a slow but stable population growth. The average annual growth rate of Yellowhead County over the past 30 years has been 2%. The Town of Edson and Hinton experienced less consistent growth over the years. The populations of all three municipalities between 2016 and 2021 experienced a slight decline which may be attributed to lack of movement due to COVID-19.



The population of residents living in the County's eight hamlets is in decline. The population growth which is occurring in the region is occurring outside of the hamlet boundaries. Given the increasing population of the oldest age cohort and a pause in the growth of 45-64 year olds, this growth may be an influx of retirees.

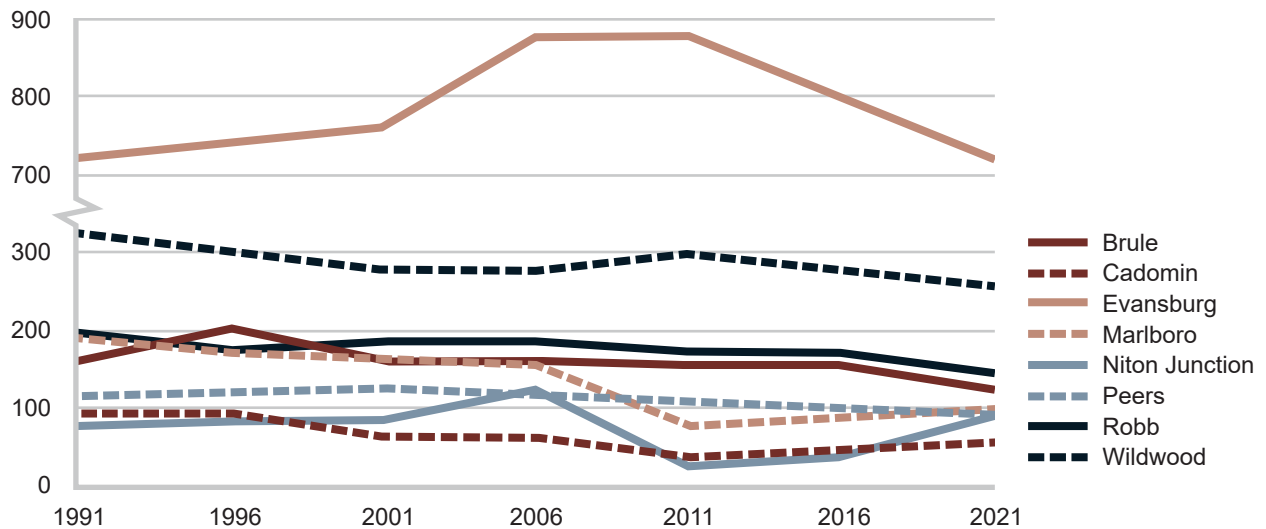
Median age was rising due to the migration of retirees looking for country residential property outside of the hamlets. Combined with a trend of residents leaving the hamlets, this reduced the number of children in the County. This presents a considerable challenge from a number of areas. New country residential residents may require access to goods and services in the hamlets, while the businesses there may not be financially viable due to their decreasing local market base.

Population Distribution 1991 to 2021

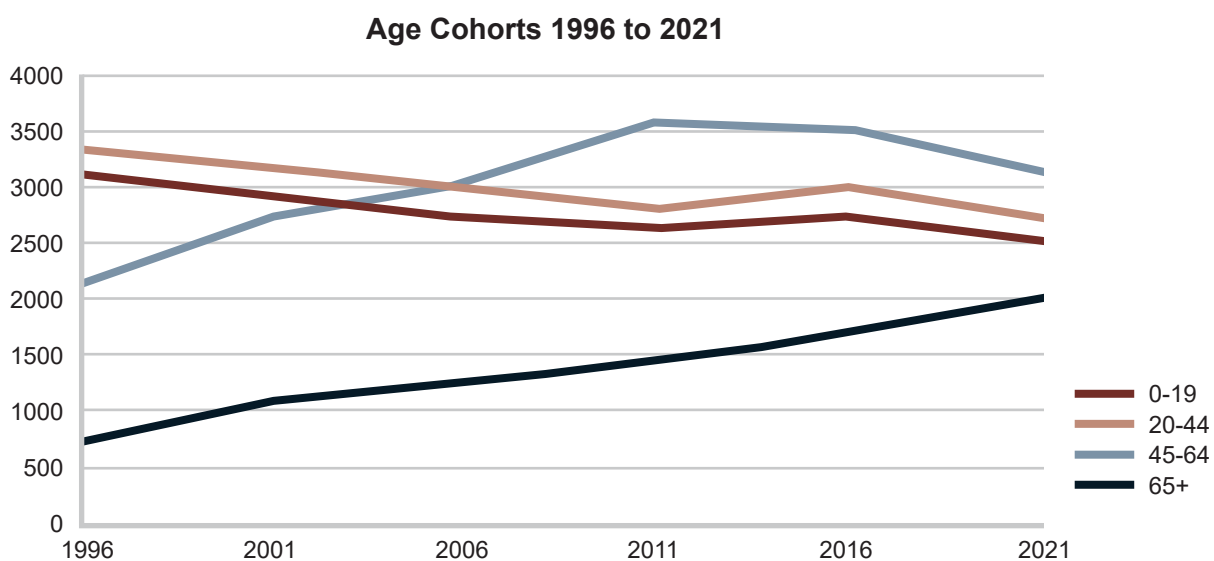


Such a divide may lead to competition for resources between growing country residential residents and declining hamlet populations. Generally improving rural infrastructure (roads, internet, recreation, waste management) does not increase rural development. Communities closer to metropolitan areas are experiencing slower population decline than those located further away. Evansburg is the only hamlet where the population has been growing over the past two decades. This is likely due to its proximity to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

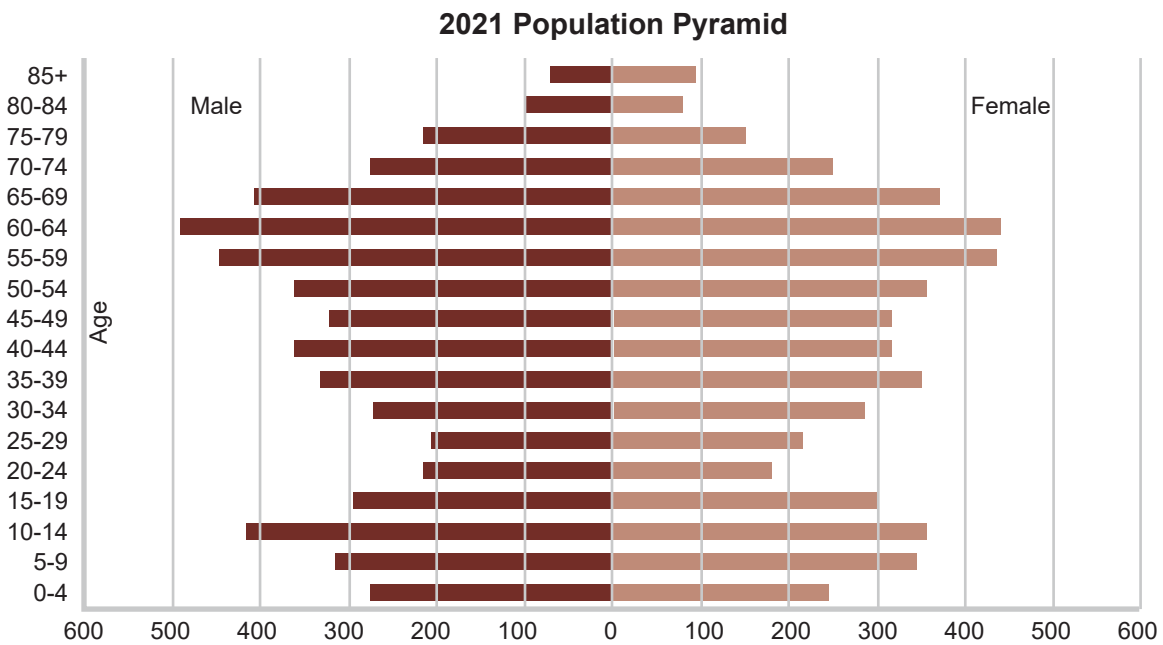
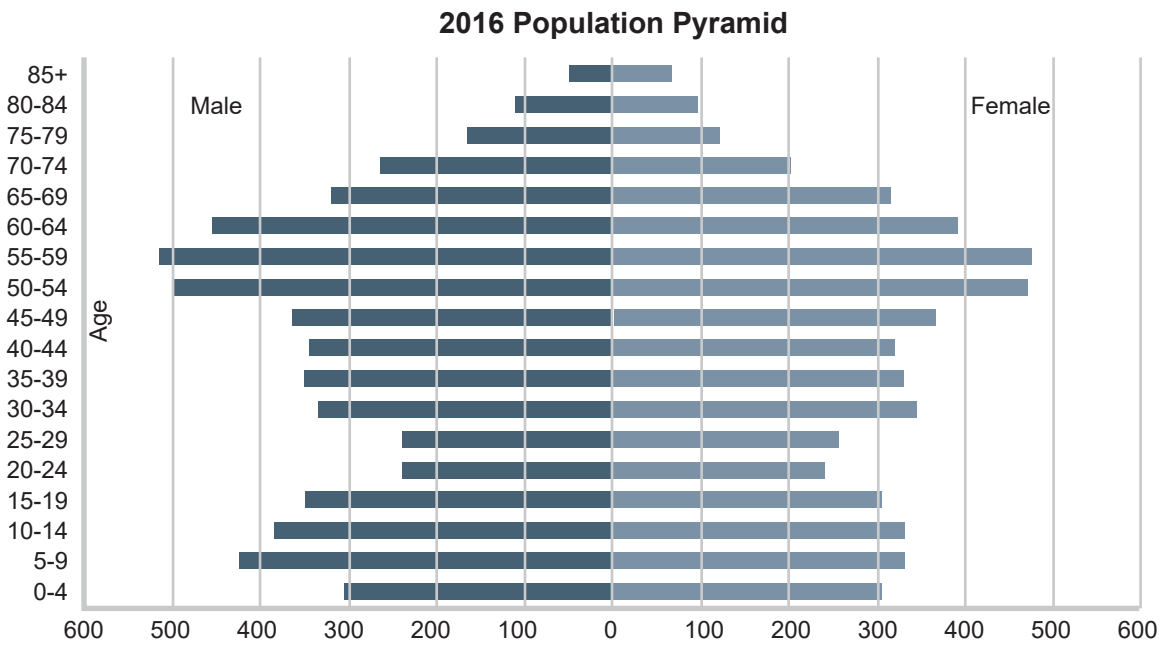
Hamlet Populations 1991 to 2021



The median age of County residents has stabilized due to an increase in 20-44 year olds and a corresponding increase in children aged 0-19. However, the number of children (0-14) and young adults (15-19) has been shrinking. This has had the effect of slowing down the growth of the Dependency Ratio, which consists of dependent seniors (65+) and dependent children (0-14), divided by the working age group (15-64). It may also present a challenge in regards to school viability in the hamlets.

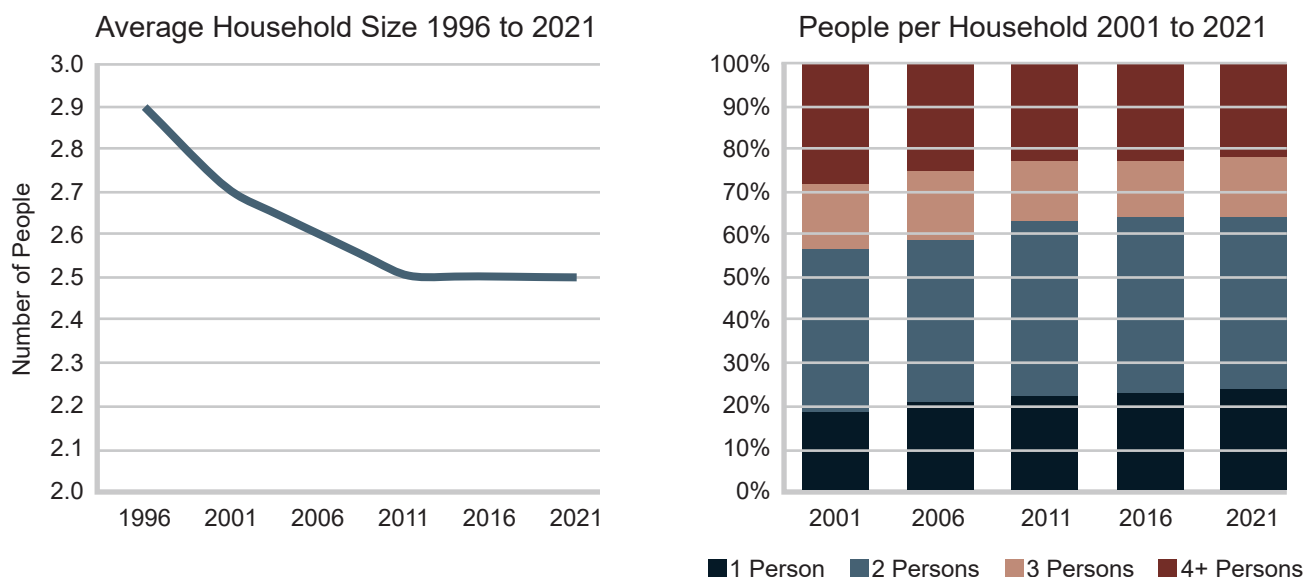


The working age group (15-64) has increased over the past two decades however the 55-64 year olds are leaving the labour force which is becoming a challenge. High dependency ratios decrease economic growth due to a large tax collecting population compared to a smaller tax paying population. This results in increased healthcare, education and social costs, while changing consumption patterns influence housing markets and businesses. Solutions to increase the working population may include immigration and access to affordable child care.



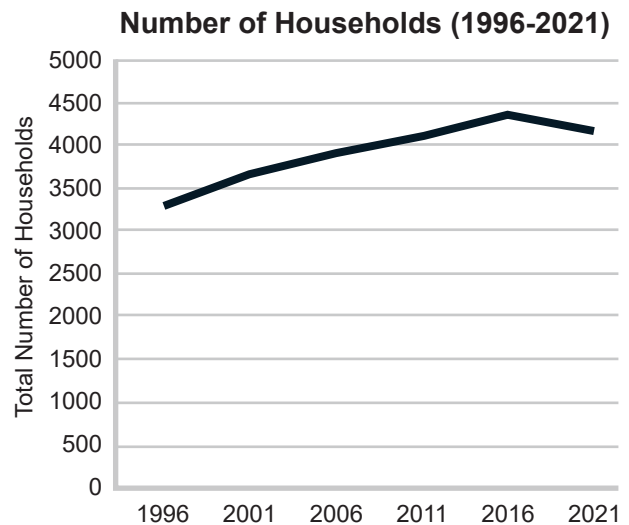
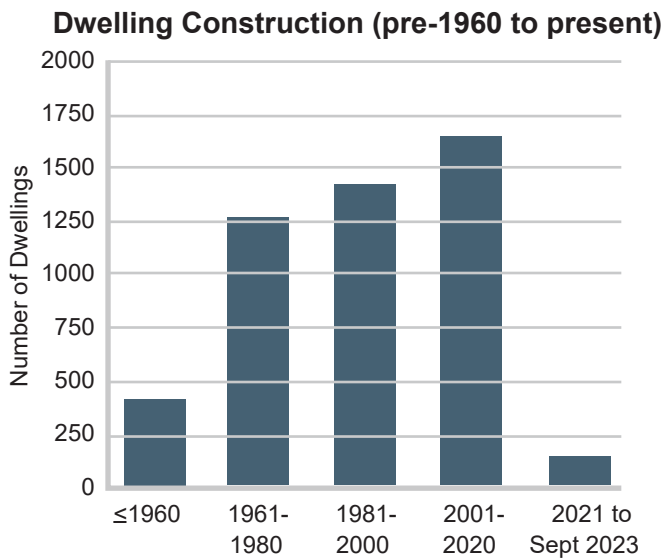
Part 2: County Households

The average household size in Yellowhead County of 2.5 is below the Alberta average (2.6). This decline has remained steady over the past decade due to a much smaller increase in the number of single and two-person households. In 2001, over 40% of households in the County contained three or more persons. Presently over 64% of households consist of either one or two persons. As children grow up and move away or retired couples sell their homes, the demographic of the community changes which can have an impact on the demand for different forms of housing.

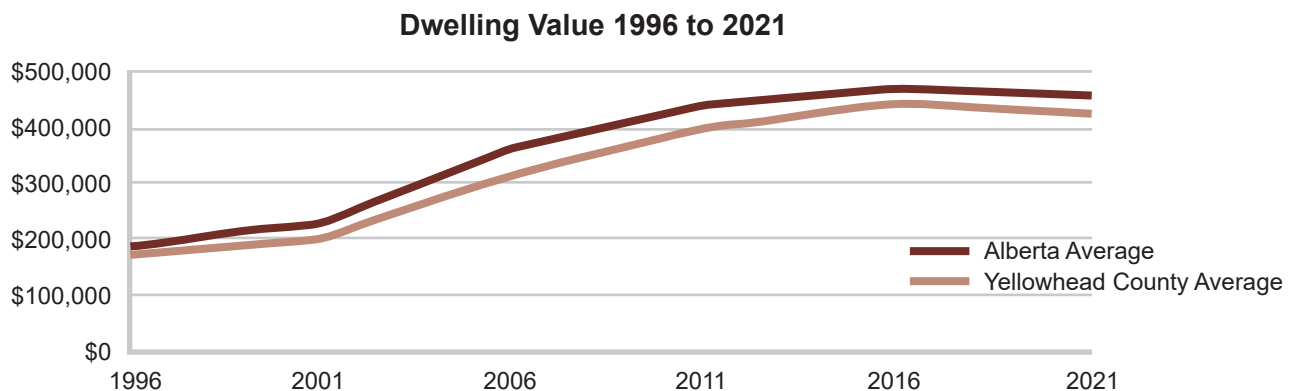


The number of non-family individuals, particularly single males, is on the rise as is the number of single parents with two-thirds of them identifying as female. As family compositions change, the types of housing which families demand also changes. Single detached dwellings continues to be the dominant housing form in Yellowhead County.

The total number of households was steadily increasing over the past decades but has declined in recent years. The number of housing units being constructed continues to increase each year. As the average household size has decreased, the number of households needing housing units has increased. This increased demand is met by a supply which is only in line with population growth, which may lead to higher housing costs. Yearly development permit reports can be used to monitor new housing supply.

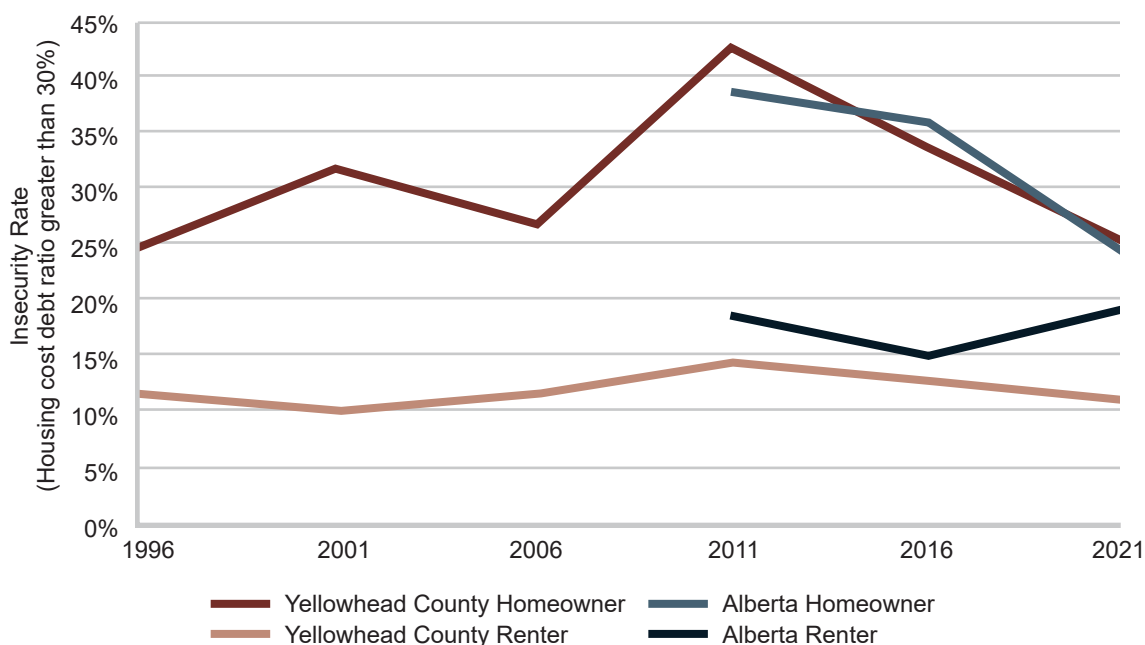


Dwellings in the County have followed the provincial trend by increasing in value. While average dwelling prices did not increase as quickly in the County as in Alberta, the difference has decreased from over \$50,000 in 2006 to \$24,000 in 2016. Tracking median value provides a more accurate representation of actual housing prices in a location. In 2021, the County's housing stock was again below the Alberta median value, with the most common price for a home around \$388,000. As housing in Yellowhead County increasingly shifts towards more country residential properties, the median dwelling value is approaching closer to the 2021 Alberta median value of \$400,000.

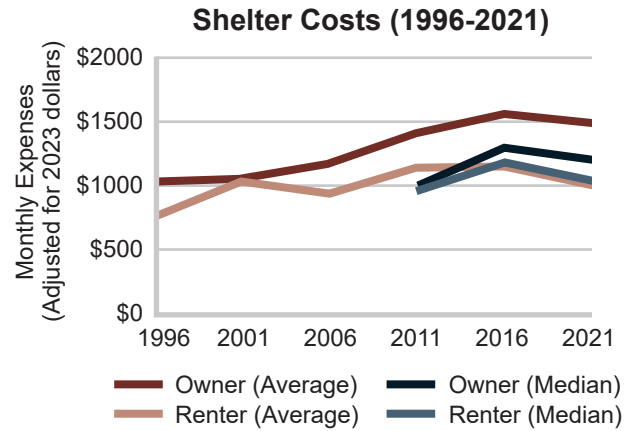
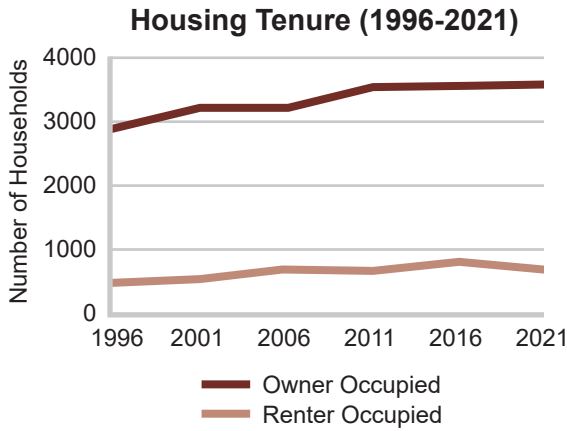


Owner occupied housing makes up 86% of the housing units in the County, while 14% of households rent. This is one of the highest owner occupied households in the province. The high rate of home ownership is likely correlated with the higher median age of County residents. Homeownership rates climb dramatically until age 40, grow slowly to age 65, and then stay constant. The faster annual growth of renting in the County, specifically after 2011, may be attributed to affordability concerns and an increase in non-permanent employment.

Housing Insecurity Rates 1996 to 2021

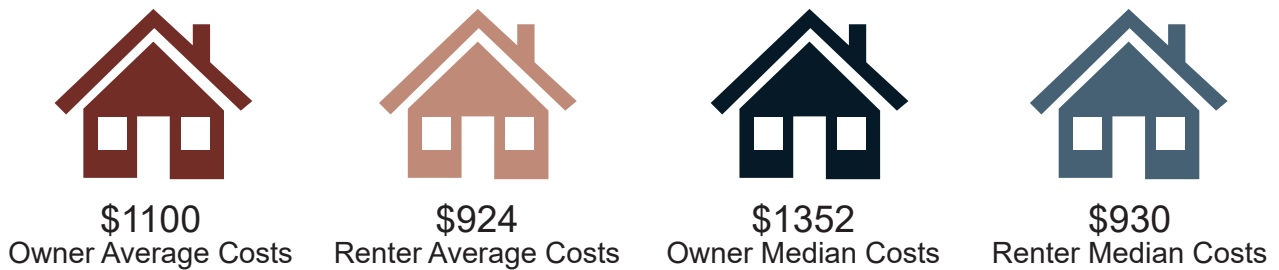


The flexibility of renting allows the insecurity rate to change significantly in line with economic conditions and rental housing demand. Renting in Yellowhead County will primarily be in manufactured or single detached homes however there is a growing trend of renting out individual rooms and secondary suites to temporary workers. Despite rising housing costs and values, housing affordability has not been getting worse for homeowners since 2011 which may be attributed to tighter lending regulations for obtaining mortgages. Rental housing increases may represent a population growth opportunity. More rental friendly housing options may provide new residents with incentives towards working in the County.



The average cost of owning a home in Yellowhead County has been climbing steadily, growing at 2.5% a year. However, this number is less than the 3.7% per year that houses have appreciated in value between 1996 and 2021. Median costs had increased dramatically between 2011 and 2016 but began to decline by 2021.

2021 Monthly Shelter Costs



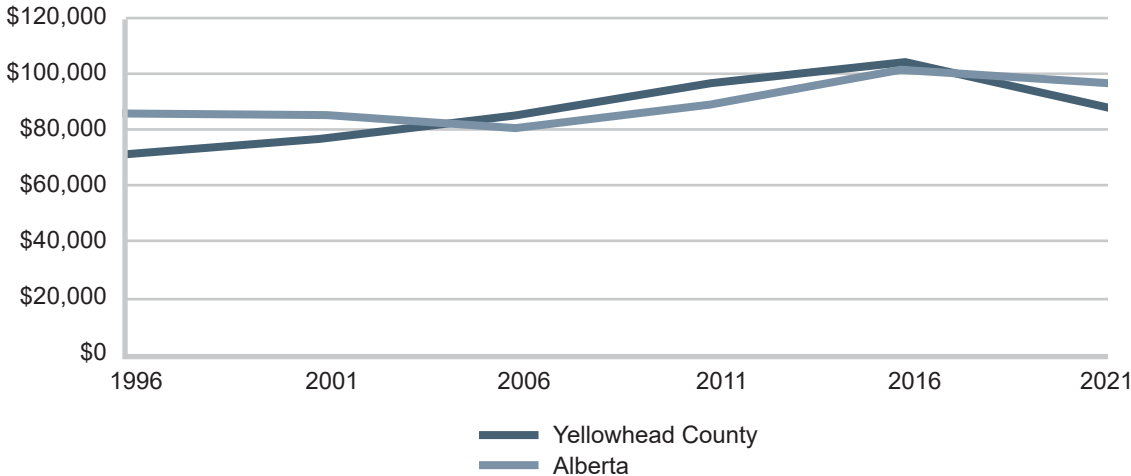
Average rental costs fluctuate in response to the effects of economic conditions of supply and demand. Housing affordability has slowly increased for both renters and homeowner as instability rates decrease. The ratio of homeowners to renters in Yellowhead County has remained fairly consist since 1996. The growth of monthly shelter costs at 2.5% per year outpaces the yearly growth of median household incomes (1.8%) over the last 20 years, contributing to Yellowhead County's moderately unaffordable housing market despite being below the provincial average.

Part 3: Income, Workforce and Education

Adjusted for inflation, median household income was growing steadily at an annual rate of 1.8% until 2020 when it dropped by 9.7% likely attributable to COVID-19. With a median house unit price of \$388,000, and a median household income of nearly \$90,000, Yellowhead County's Median Multiple of 4.3 indicates a Moderately Unaffordable housing market. A median multiple of 3.00 is considered to be representative of a generally affordable housing market.

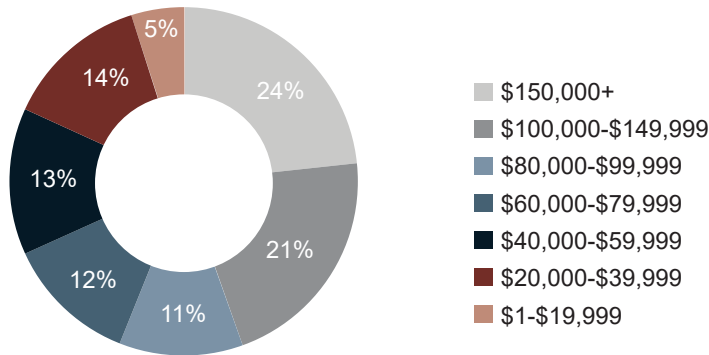
Median Household Income 1996 to 2021

Adjusted for inflation

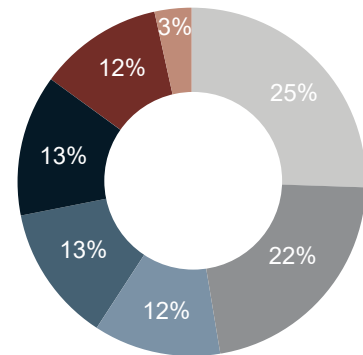


The County's \$90,000 median household income is likely comprised of either one higher income earner, a high income earner with a partner working part-time or for minimum wage, or two workers who each earn around \$40,000-\$59,999. More workers from the household participating in the paid economy may be due to an inability for families and couples in the County to live off of one income. The household income distribution in Yellowhead County for 2020 is on par with the rest of Alberta. The largest household income brackets are now \$100,000 and higher, comprising nearly half of the households.

Yellowhead County Household by Income Bracket (2021)

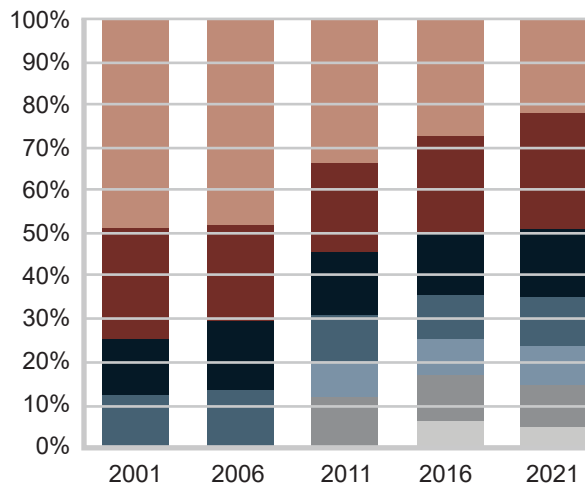


Alberta Household by Income Bracket (2021)

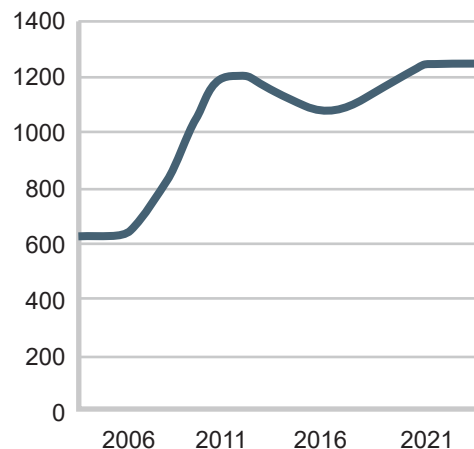


The largest change in income bracket population is a decrease in the lowest income bracket which may be attributed to an increase in minimum wage. The \$20,000-\$79,999 income brackets have largely remained the same percentage over the years. From 2011 onwards, the income brackets of \$80,000+ have appeared and continue to grow. In 2020, 12% of Yellowhead County households were deemed to be low income based on the Low Income Measure after tax (LIM-AT) rating, which has been fairly consistent over the past decade.

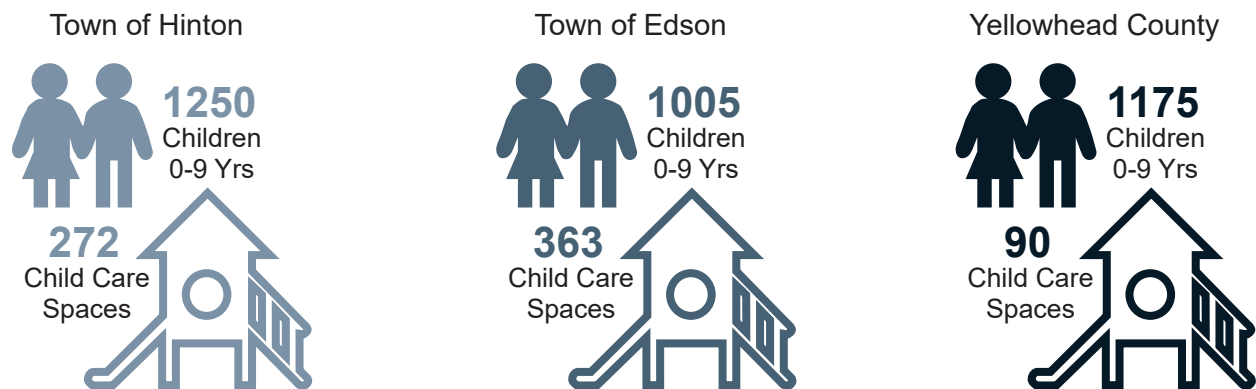
Population by Income Bracket 2001 to 2021



Number of Individuals in LIM-AT Households 2006 to 2021

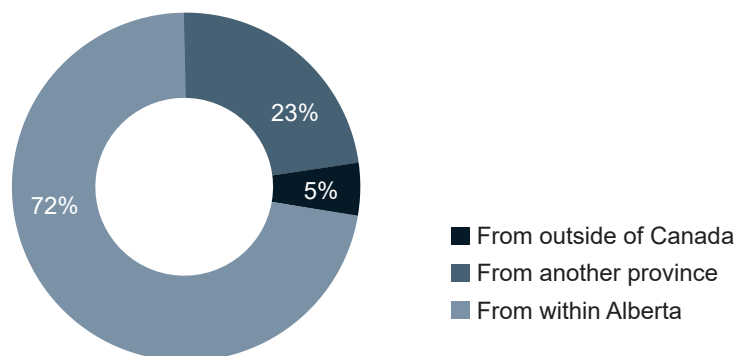


The availability of a large segment of the workforce depends on quality child care. 4.7 children ages 0-9 per space in the region may be an indicator of a potential labour force challenge. The number of known spaces is solely based on registered and regulated child care facilities and does not account for private dayhomes. The unavailability of quality and affordable child care may affect the median household income if a parent is unable to work.



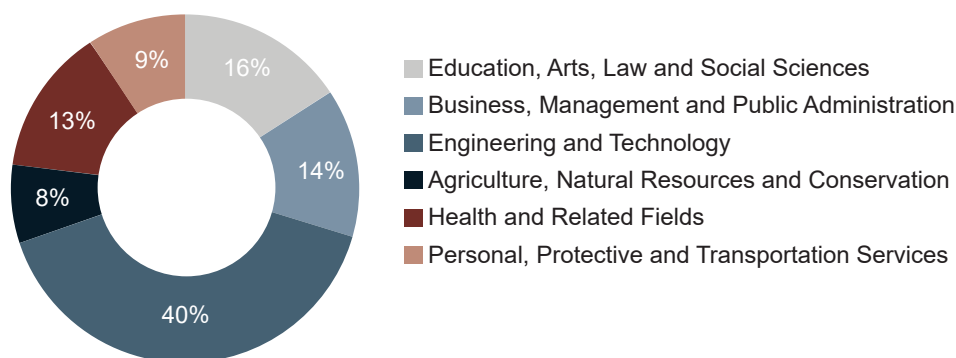
The majority of the new residents between 2016 and 2021 to Yellowhead County come from within Alberta, comprising 72% of all new residents. The origin of newcomers to the County from elsewhere in Canada is unknown as it was not captured in the census data. Newcomers from outside of Canada to Yellowhead County primarily came from South Africa and the Philippines.

Immigration to Yellowhead County 2016 to 2021



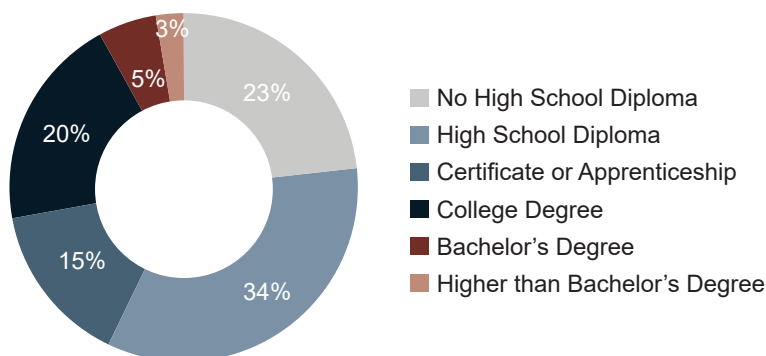
The major field of study of Yellowhead County residents with some post secondary education is overwhelmingly Engineering and Technology. The remaining fields of study were fairly equally split amongst the population.

Fields of Post-Secondary Studies of Residents Aged 15 Years + (2021)

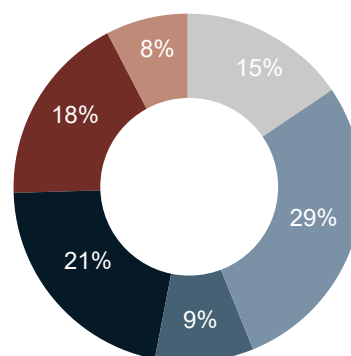


While median incomes are relatively comparable to the rest of Alberta, educational attainment within Yellowhead County differs quite significantly from the provincial statistics. 56% of Albertans have some post secondary education compared to 43% of Yellowhead County residents. More than one-fifth of Yellowhead County residents do not have a high school diploma. Only 5% of County residents have a Bachelors compared to the provincial average of 18%. However 15% of County residents have some form of certificate or apprenticeship training compared to the provincial average of 9% which can be attributed to the local forms of employment.

Yellowhead County Education Levels of Residents 15 Years + (2021)



Alberta Education Levels of Residents 15 Years + (2021)



Part 4: Industry and Employment

Employment in the resource extraction, construction, agriculture and forestry industries employs over two-fifths of Yellowhead County residents. Transportation, warehousing, manufacturing, and wholesale industries also employs a significant segment of the population. The aging local population, the influx of retirees and a largely primary sector economy may present a considerable labour shortage for the area. This may indicate a future challenge in finding qualified employees for growing industries such as health care, education, and professionals. Job growth in general is outpacing population growth in Yellowhead County.

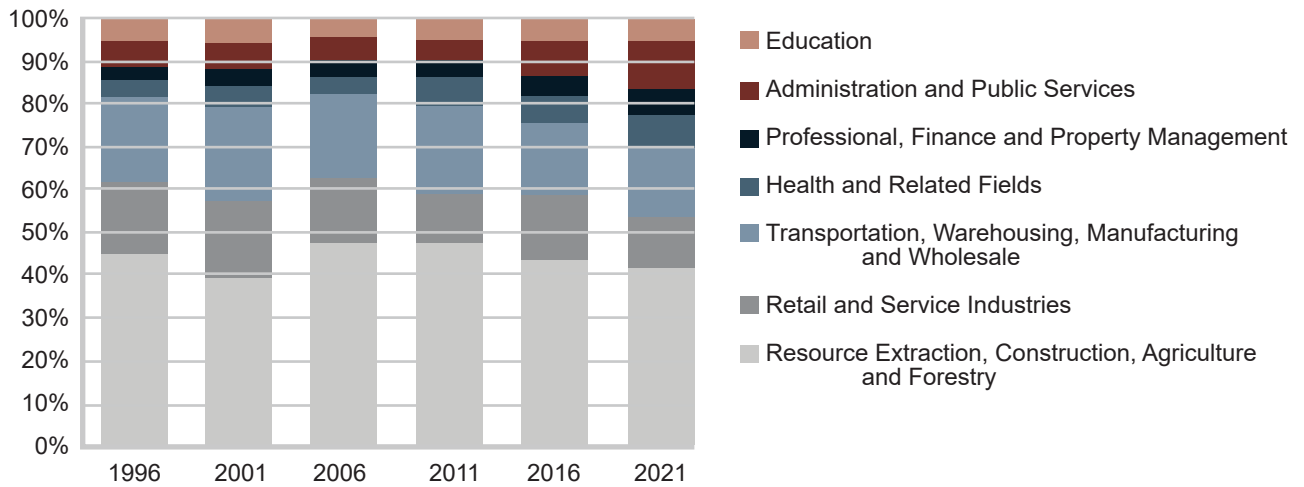
Employment per Industry (2021)



Primary industries that include resource extraction, construction, agriculture, and forestry continue to be the dominant forms of employment in Yellowhead County over the past 25 years. Secondary industries such as administration and public services have been growing over the past 15 years. Employment in the resource extraction, construction, agriculture and forestry industries may be more at risk of loss when there are significant downturns in the economy.

Between 1996 and 2011 there was an approximate +0.9% job growth rate per year amongst County residents. However between 2011 and 2021 this has declined to -0.9% per year. Many workers in the primary industries such as resource extraction, may only be in the area on a temporary basis and do not reside in the County. An examination of regional job growth may provide a more accurate assessment of local employment opportunities.

Employment per Industry 1996 to 2021



The unemployment rate in Yellowhead County has been higher than the provincial average for the past 20 years. This differed significantly in 2016 but has been back on par with the rest of the province as of 2021. This indicates a potential for labour shortages in the industry and occupation classes which are gaining these jobs. It may be challenging to fill open positions in other fields where employment demand is growing faster than the population can provide.

Unemployment Rate 1996 to 2021

