



# Housing Needs Report 2020

## Town of Smithers

December 2020



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## Land Acknowledgement

It is proper protocol to acknowledge that this report has been prepared for the Town of Smithers which is located in the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Gidimt'en Clan and Wet'suwet'en. They have been custodians of this land for thousands of years and we would like to pay our respect to their Elders and knowledge keepers both past and present.





# 1.0 Background and Context

## 1.1 Introduction

Local governments are required to prepare Housing Needs Reports. This report helps to provide a better understanding of current and future housing needs in the Town of Smithers and includes baseline information about current and projected housing needs.

The information and analysis set out in this report is intended to help support local planning and decision making in the Town of Smithers when responding to existing and emerging housing needs. This report is supported by detailed Technical Appendices that provides important baseline information and data on key housing related measures and indicators.

The information included in this report is designed to help to build increased awareness and understanding about the diverse range of housing needs in the community. The information set out in this report is designed to help to support community efforts to meet the needs of local housing and service providers as well as local businesses and industry partners in putting forward housing plans and strategies to effectively respond to local housing needs and priorities in Smithers.

The key issues and challenges as well as opportunities for action were informed by feedback received through an on-line citizen survey as well as through a series of key informant interviews with local stakeholders and community partners. There were 193 responses received to the on-line citizen survey which was launched in October 2020 and which is included in Appendix A of this report. The discussion and analysis set out in this report was also informed by feedback received through key informant interviews with representatives from the real estate, housing development and financial services sectors as well as feedback received from major employers and key institutional partners.

## 1.2 Structure of this Report

This report is divided into the six (6) sections that include information on the following key themes and findings related to the diverse range of housing needs in the Town of Smithers:

- 1.0 Background and Context
- 2.0 Housing Demand
- 3.0 Housing Supply
- 4.0 Housing Costs and Affordability
- 5.0 Recommendations
- 6.0 Summary Report Format

Appendix A:

Results from the On-Line Community Survey

Appendix B:

Detailed Technical Appendices

### 1.3 Data Sources

This report relies on a mix of data sources designed to gain a deeper understanding of housing needs both within the Town of Smithers as well as across the broader Bulkley-Nechako region and includes key measures and indicators from:

- The 2016 Census
- The 2011 Census and National Household Survey
- The 2006 Census
- BC Housing (Unit Count Report)
- BC Assessment data
- Local housing market information including MLS and other market-related data
- B.C. Stats including population and household projections available through P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020 at the regional district and local health area level

### 1.4 Community Context

The Town of Smithers is in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and is found within the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Gidimt'en Clan and Wet'suwet'en.

Based on the 2016 Census, the Town of Smithers is home to 5,295 individuals, or 2,290 households and is recognized as an important and growing regional centre.





## 2.0 Housing Demand

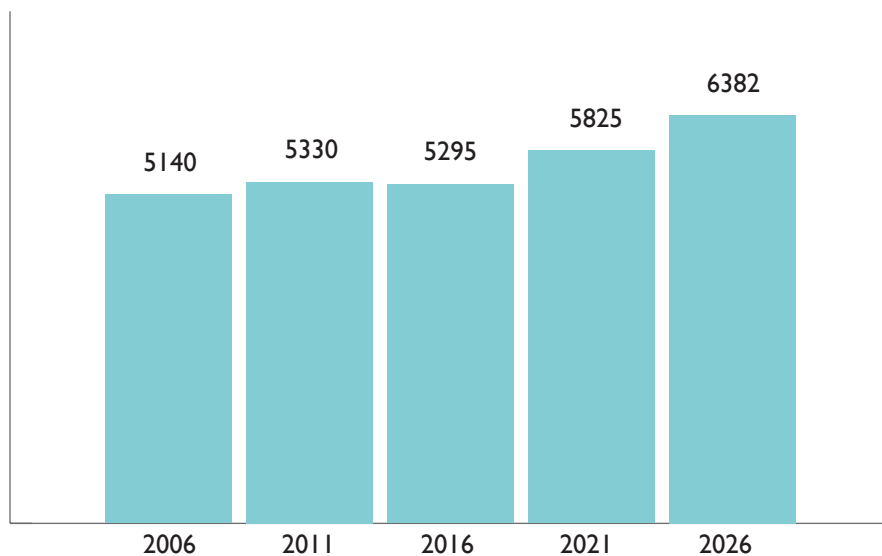
## 2.1 Population Growth and Change

Like many other northern communities, the Town of Smithers is subject to significant shifts in population resulting from broader social and economic forces.

Based on population growth estimates prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020, between 2016 and 2021 the population in the Town of Smithers is expected to increase by 530 individuals, a growth rate of 10%, and by an additional 557 individuals, or 9.5% between 2021 and 2026.

This represents a population growth rate that is 7 times the growth reported in the 2006 and 2016 Census for the Town of Smithers.

**Graph 1: Population Growth and Change**



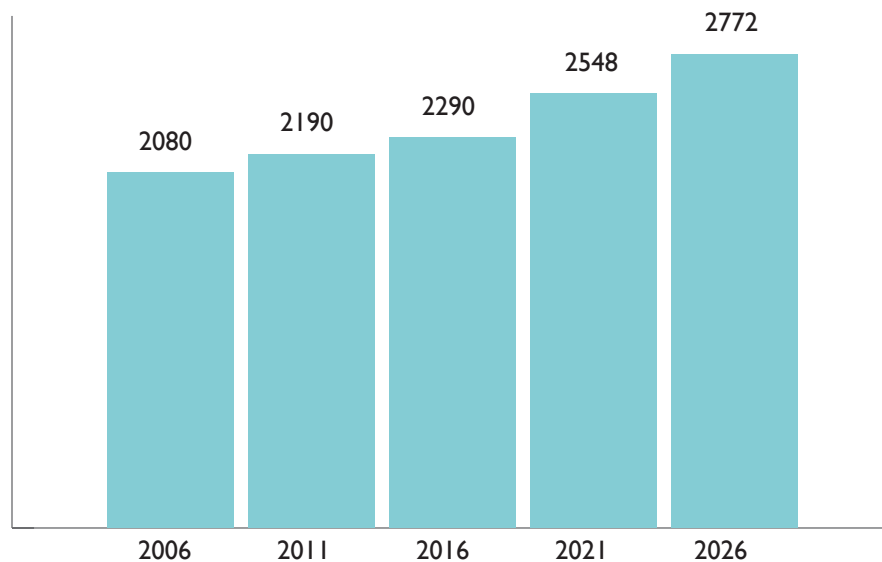
## 2.2 Household Growth and Change

At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 2,290 households living in the Town of Smithers. This represents an increase of 210 households (10%) when compared to 2006.

Household growth projections prepared by B.C. Stats for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako suggest that the RBDN is expected to experience significant growth within the next 10 years (2016 to 2026).

Assuming that the Town of Smithers experiences a similar pattern of growth, it is expected that between 2016 and 2021, the total number of households in the Town of Smithers will increase by 258 households, or a growth rate of 11.2%. Furthermore, between 2021 and 2026, the Town of Smithers is expected to grow by an additional 224 households or an expected growth rate of 8.8%.

**Graph 2: Housing Demand**





## 2.3 Increase in Seniors Population

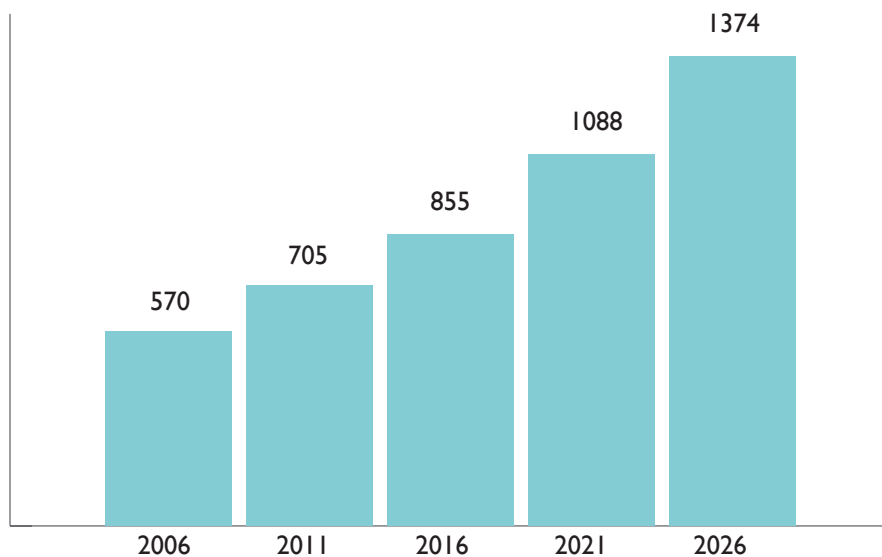
The Town of Smithers has a large and growing population of seniors 65 and older including a growing number of older seniors (85+).

At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 715 seniors between the ages of 65 and 84 living in the Town of Smithers with an additional 140 seniors who were 85 and older. This translates into a total of 855 seniors or 16.1% of the total population in the Town of Smithers in 2016.

Based on population projections prepared by B.C. Stats, it is estimated that the number of seniors 65 and older living in the Smithers Local Health Area will increase by 691 individuals, or a growth rate of 33.1% between 2016 and 2021. Between 2021 and 2026 it is expected that there will be an additional 727 individuals in the Smithers Local Health Area who are 65 and older, representing a growth rate of 26.2%.

Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers, it is estimated that the number of seniors 65 and older living in the Town of Smithers will increase by an additional 233 individuals, or a growth rate of 27.3%. Moreover, between 2021 and 2026 it is expected that the number of seniors 65 and older in the Town of Smithers will increase by an additional 286 individuals, representing a growth rate of 26.3%.

**Graph 3: Growth of Seniors Population**



As the population ages, seniors living in the rural areas and acreage outside of the Town of Smithers may wish to downsize and/or move closer to town in order to access health and other services as their needs change.

Given that seniors 65 and older accounted for 24.7% or almost one in 4 households in the Town of Smithers in 2016, the on-line citizen survey asked for information about the types of housing and supports that seniors living in the Town of Smithers may need in order to allow them to remain living independently in their community. In terms of the range of needs and priorities identified, the following responses were received:

- 120 respondents (70%) identified the cost of housing
- 101 respondents (59%) identified assistance with maintenance and light yard work
- 88 respondents (51%) identified transportation support
- 87 respondents (51%) identified assistance with light housekeeping and errands
- 76 respondents (44%) identified the need for different social activities and supports
- 75 respondents (44%) identified assistance around health and medication supports

As the Town of Smithers continues to plan for the future, there is the need to take these types of concerns into consideration.

## **2.4 Housing Needs of Families**

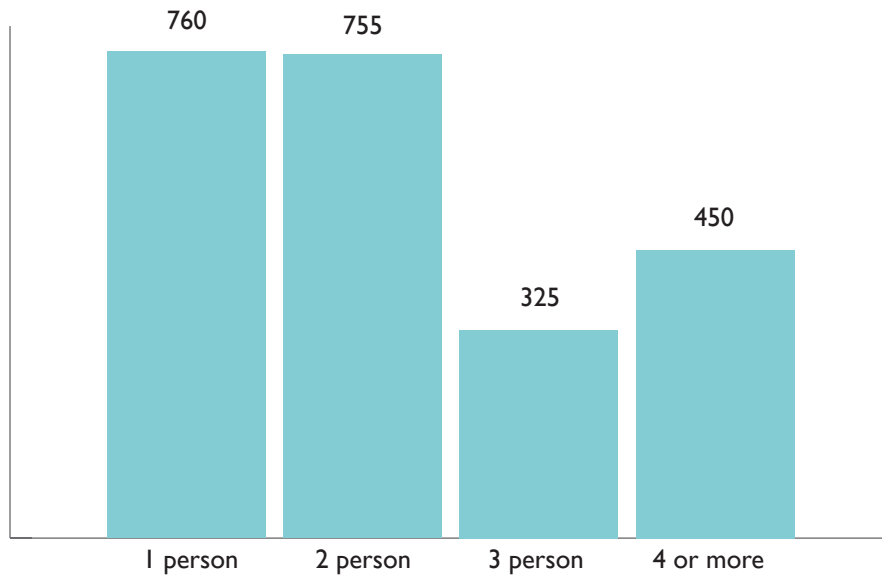
Family households represent 1,415 (61.7%) of all households living in the Town of Smithers with the total number of family households living in the Town of Smithers continuing to increase.

Of the families living in the Town of Smithers, 815 households or 58% have children living at home while 600 households or 42% were couples without children. This can include young couples who have not yet started their families as well as senior couples who are now empty-nesters and whose children have moved away from home.

In terms of the general profile of families and individuals living in the Town of Smithers, the 2016 Census reported that there were:

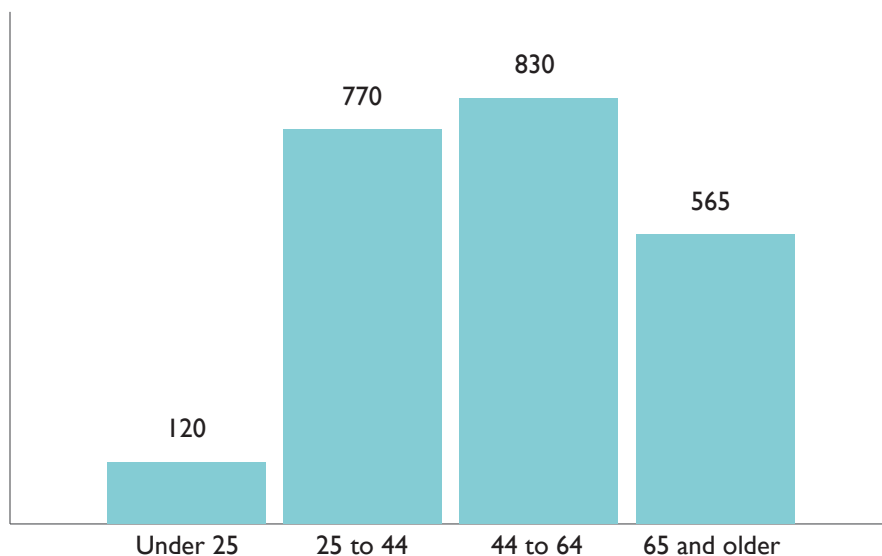
- 760 single person household in the Town of Smithers representing 33.3% of households
- 755 2 person households in the Town of Smithers representing an additional 33.3% of all households
- 325 3 person households in the Town of Smithers representing 14.2% of all households
- 450 households of 4 or more people, representing 19.7% of all households

**Graph 4: Housing Needs of Families**



In looking at the demographic and age profile of households, the 2016 Census shows that the Town of Smithers has been successful in attracting younger families and key workers to the area, resulting in increased housing demand from across different household types. This can have implications in terms of how the community plans for different housing needs and can invite considerations around mixed income, mixed tenure and other forms of housing that also includes a mix of seniors' units.

**Graph 5: Age Profile of Household Maintainer**





## **2.5 Workforce Housing Demand and Households in Transition**

Population and mobility data from the 2016 Census, suggest that the Town of Smithers has an average of 900 movers annually. This includes 382 individuals and households who have moved to the Town of Smithers from elsewhere within the RDBN. This can include households moving to the community for employment as well as seniors living in the rural areas outside of the Town of Smithers wishing to move closer to specific services and amenities because of changing needs.

Furthermore, while most individuals and households moving to the Town of Smithers are initially renters, a significant number of these households are likely to be interested in moving into ownership if affordable opportunities were available and assuming that they have the necessary down payment saved.

Feedback received through the on-line citizen survey suggests that approximately 83 respondents (45%) expect that their future housing situation and needs will change in the next five years with 48 respondents (25%) indicating that they are interested in purchasing a home at some point in the future. In terms of their different types of housing needs respondents identified the need for more space including room to accommodate aging parents, starting a family and more space for home-based businesses.

## **2.6 Housing Needs of People with Disabilities and Health and Activity Limitations**

People with disabilities can have a diverse range of housing needs. Based on the 2016 Census, there were 750 individuals living in the Town of Smithers who reported a permanent disability or health and activity limitation while there were 1,230 individuals who reported episodic challenges. As the population ages, the number of individuals reporting health and activity limitations will continue to increase.

While the Town of Smithers has been successful in creating a mix of targeted strategies to meet the diversity of needs in the community, there is still a significant level of unmet housing need from across different sectors of the community. As well, as the population continues to age, the demand for housing which is adaptable and accessible and that includes integrated housing and supports as well as wrap around services will continue to be in demand.

Based on B.C. Housing's current Unit Count Report, there are currently 14 units of assisted seniors' housing available in the Town of Smithers. This represents a relatively limited supply when compared to the overall anticipated future demand.

## **2.7 Housing Needs of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness**

Homelessness is a significant and growing issue across the Province. At the time of the 2018 Provincial Homelessness Count there were 29 individuals in the Town of Smithers who were identified as being without a place to live. This includes 11 individuals who were identified as sheltered homeless as well as 18 individuals who were identified as unsheltered.

Sheltered homeless include individuals who stayed overnight in an emergency shelter, a transition house for women and children fleeing violence, or a safe house for youth. The unsheltered homeless include individuals who had no physical shelter and who were staying outside or living in different types of temporary and ad hoc arrangement that do not meet the conditions of home and where they are not paying rent.

The housing and research literature also show that people who are homeless in rural areas rarely fit the standard definition of homelessness. Specifically, while some are literally homeless, many more individuals are precariously housed living in over-crowded conditions or moving from one barely affordable housing situation to another. There are also others who live in poor quality or substandard housing because that is all that they can afford.

When asked about the extent to which citizens viewed homelessness as an issue for the Town of Smithers, 142 respondents (73.6%) indicated that they see homelessness as an issue while an additional 11.4% of respondents indicated that they were unsure. Furthermore, when asked to indicate the level of importance that they assign to addressing the issue of homelessness in the Town of Smithers the following were the responses received:

- 76 respondents (39%) indicated addressing homelessness is extremely important
- 66 respondents (34%) indicated addressing homelessness is very important
- 26 respondents (14%) indicated addressing homelessness is somewhat important
- 25 respondents (13%) did not see addressing homelessness as being important

## **2.8 Community Needs and Priorities Identified**

The on-line citizen survey helped to provide important insights into existing and emerging needs in the Town of Smithers from the perspective of local citizens. There were 193 individuals who responded to the survey and who identified the following needs and priorities:

- 132 respondents (71%) identified the affordability of the rents
- 115 respondents (62%) identified the affordability of entry-level ownership
- 71 respondents (38%) identified more housing for people experiencing homelessness
- 61 respondents (33%) identified smaller units to allow more seniors to downsize
- 58 respondents (31%) identified more housing choices for seniors
- 53 respondents (30%) identified the quality or condition of the existing housing

Through key informant interviews and the consultation and engagement process with key stakeholders and community partners, the following priorities were identified:

- 12 (92%) identified the need for more supportive and special needs housing
- 11 (85%) identified the need for more housing for individuals experiencing homelessness

- 9 (69%) identified the need for more supportive housing for seniors
- 9 (69%) identified the need for more affordable market rental housing
- 8 (62%) identified the need for housing for persons with disabilities
- 7 (54%) identified the need for entry-level ownership and work force housing
- 7 (54%) identified the need for housing for low-income families and seniors
- 7 (54%) identified the need for intergenerational housing for Indigenous families and youth
- 5 (38%) identified the need for housing for vulnerable and 'at risk' youth





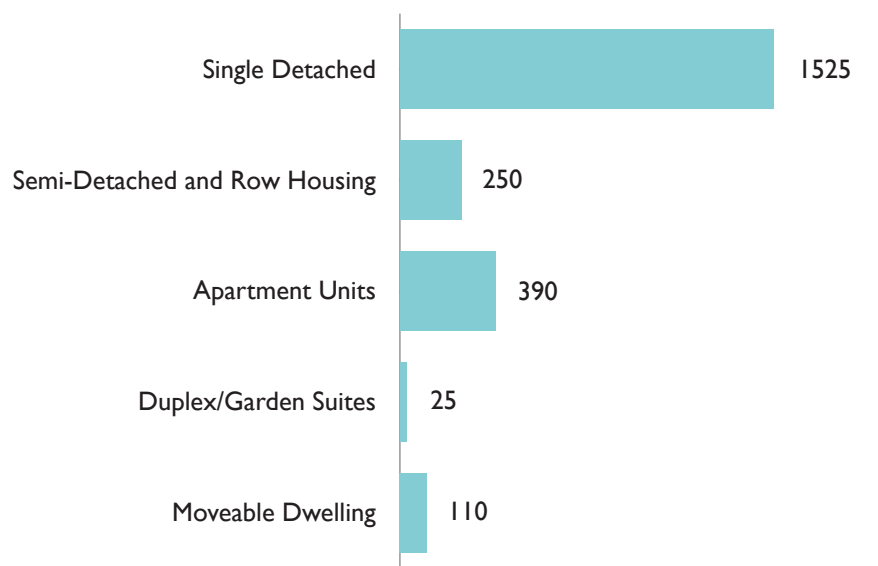
## 3.0 Housing Supply

### 3.1 Mix of Housing Types

While the Town of Smithers has adopted policies to encourage and support greater diversity of housing types, at the time of the 2016 Census, the majority of households living in the Town of Smithers were living in single detached homes. This includes 1,525 households (87%) who are owners and 195 households (13%) who are renters.

The new homes registry maintained by B.C. Housing also shows that there have been 54 single detached homes and 10 multi-unit homes registered between 2016 and 2018, as well as 19 new purpose-built rental housing units.

**Graph 6: Mix of Housing Types**

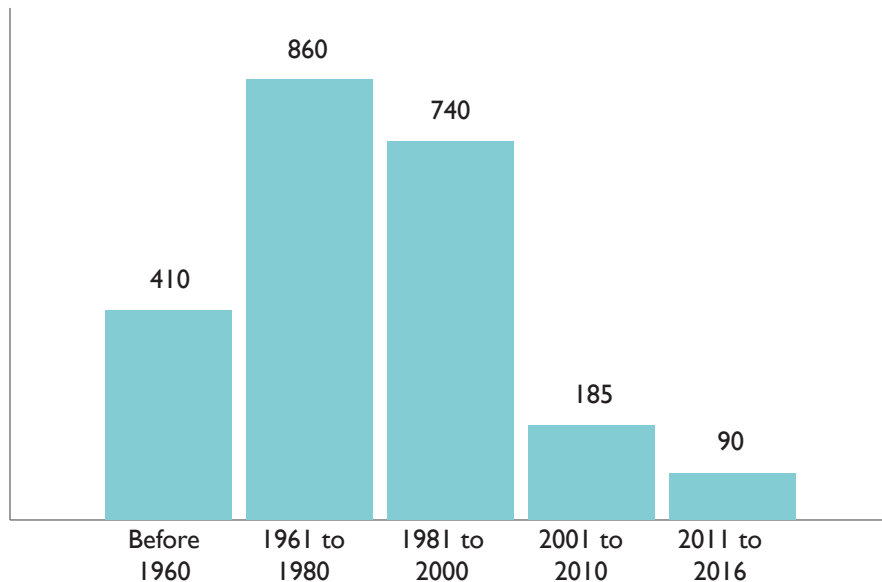


### 3.2 The Quality and Condition of the Existing Housing Stock

The 2016 Census also shows that a significant proportion of the housing stock in the Town of Smithers was built before 1980 and may be reaching the end of its economic life. This translates into 1,270 units or 55.5% of the existing housing stock. Recognizing that as the stock ages there may be the need for investments in replacement housing as well as targeted investments and programs to improve the stock or to bring it up to suitable standards in terms of quality, safety, and energy efficiency.

Based on the 2016 Census the analysis also shows that a large proportion of the rental housing stock in the Town of Smithers is older with 475 units or 62.2% of the current inventory of rental housing being built before 1980.

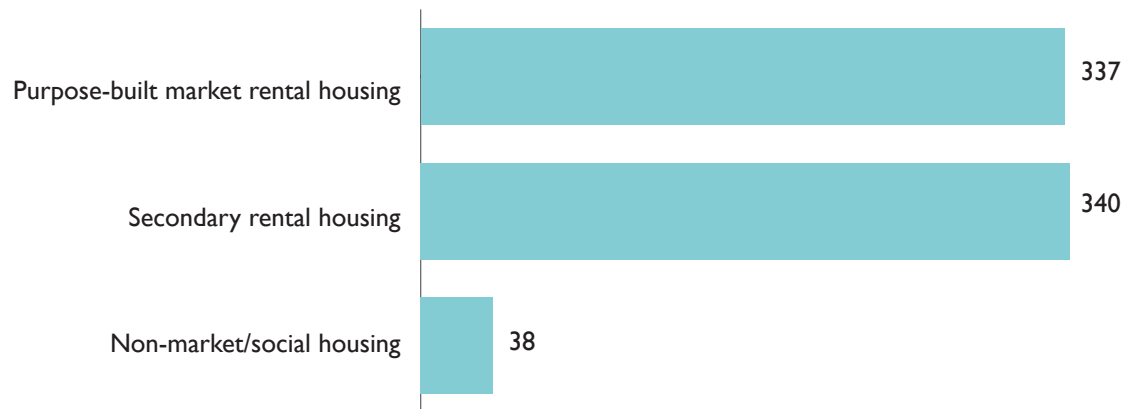
**Graph 7: Age of the Existing Housing Stock**



### 3.3 Limited Purpose-Built Rental Housing

There is limited purpose-built market rental housing in the Town of Smithers. Based on the 2016 Census there were 337 rented apartment accounting for 47.1% of the existing rental housing stock. There were an additional 340 units that were part of the secondary rental market and that rented single detached homes, semi-detached homes and duplex units. This represents 47.6% of the existing rental housing stock. There were an additional 38 units (5.3%) in the form of non-market or traditional social housing stock. In planning for the future, there is the need to encourage and support additional investments in expanding the supply of purpose-built rental housing as it represents a more stable source of rental supply when compared to housing in the secondary rental market. Similarly, there is the need for additional investments (and partnerships) to continue to expand the inventory of non-market housing.

**Graph 8: Sources of Rental Housing Supply**





### 3.4 Community Support for Increasing the Supply and Diversity of Housing Stock

In terms of the feedback received through the on-line citizen survey, when asked about the type of housing that is most needed in the community, the following reflects the responses received:

- 127 respondents (68%) identified more multi-family housing
- 105 respondents (56%) identified more apartment units
- 91 respondents (49%) identified more single detached family housing (bungalow style)
- 80 respondents (43%) identified more ground-oriented seniors' housing
- 70 respondents (37%) identified more coach house units or garden suites

Similarly, respondents were asked if they saw benefit in on-going experimentation in terms of adding different types of housing models or sources of supply such as modular housing, laneway housing, coach houses and garden suites.

Of those who responded to this question, 160 individuals (83%) reported that they felt that there was benefit in terms of continued experimentation with different housing types and models with the following representing some of the ideas and suggestions offered by respondents:

- *Increase the zoning areas for carriage houses*
- *Increase the rental options for temporary residents*
- *Allow laneway housing for properties near the hospital*
- *Support strategies that can help to reduce the cost of construction*
- *Support strategies that can help to bring down operating costs*
- *Work to align housing costs and incomes (i.e. rent-geared-to-income housing)*
- *Explore smaller houses and smaller lot sizes*
- *Explore how garden suites can contribute to improvements in the affordability of ownership*
- *Ensure a variety of housing sizes and types to accommodate different households and incomes*
- *There is the need for more pet-friendly rental housing*
- *There is the need for more affordable family housing*
- *There should be more purpose-built rental apartment stock*
- *There should be more fourplex and six plex units*
- *Manufactured homes can provide for a cost-effective alternative*
- *There should be housing for people with disabilities that allows them to have a pet*

### 3.5 Housing Tenure and Choice

The Town of Smithers is experiencing significant rental housing demand with a shortage of affordable rental housing being identified as one of the most significant challenges facing the community. The community has also identified the need for more entry-level ownership housing. At the time of the 2016 Census, owners made up 1,575 households or 68.8% of all households living in the Town of Smithers while there were 715 renter households, accounting for 31.2% of all households.

In looking at the expected future housing demand and assuming that the general patterns of housing demand are similar to the current profile, it is likely that between 2016 to 2026, the Town of Smithers will experience an increase of 482 households with ownership demand accounting for approximately two-thirds of expected future demand and rental housing accounting for approximately one-third. This translates into approximately 323 new ownership units and approximately 159 new rental units over a 10-year period or an average of 32 ownership units per year and 18 rental units per year.

Given that a significant proportion of the rental housing supply in the Town of Smithers is in the form of rented single detached homes, it is also worth noting that as ownership demand increases, there is the potential for increased pressure on the existing supply of rental housing. Specifically, as the value of housing increases and the demand for ownership units remains strong, there is the likelihood that many of the existing rented single detached homes will be sold into the ownership market. Based on the 2016 Census, there were 195 renter households living in rented single detached homes, representing 27% of the existing rental stock. This could result in significant displacement and dislocation of the renter households living in this housing. The increased competition for the remaining rental units will also create upward pressure on rents.

### 3.6 Sources of Housing Demand

The housing demand projections show that the Town of Smithers is likely to continue to grow by 258 households (11.3%) between 2016 and 2021 and an additional 224 households (8.8%) between 2021 and 2026. Analysis of the Census as well as feedback from the community suggests that the demand is coming from a number of different sources including:

- Young families and singles moving to the community
- Seniors and older adults seeking to downsize and move closer services and amenities
- More housing with supports for individuals who are experiencing homelessness

Based on the responses received to the on-line citizen survey, participants identified the need for:

- More affordable rental housing (71.0%)
- More affordable entry-level ownership housing (62.2%)
- More housing for people who are homeless (37.8%)
- More housing choices for seniors including supportive housing and assisted living spaces as well as smaller units for seniors wishing to downsize (33.2%)

### **3.7 Supply of Rental Housing**

It is clear that the Town of Smithers is facing a critical shortage both in terms of the supply of purpose-built rental housing as well as housing that is affordable to households at the low and low to moderate end of the income spectrum including traditional non-market or social housing units.

Based on the incomes of households reported in the 2016 Census, there were almost 300 renter households living in the Town of Smithers who had an annual income of \$35,000 or less and for whom an affordable rent would be less than \$875 per month. There were also more than 100 households living in the Town of Smithers who had an annual income of \$20,000 or less and for whom an affordable rent would be \$500 per month or less.

Typically, these needs would be met through the inventory of social housing or non-market housing created through a mix of Federal, Federal/Provincial and Provincial housing supply programs. However, based on the most recent Unit Count Report published by B.C. Housing (2019), the Town of Smithers currently has an inventory of approximately 14 units of assisted seniors' housing as well as 24 units of family housing.

### **3.8 Non-Market Housing Supply**

In addition to the traditional inventory of special housing and non-market housing units, the Town of Smithers has been successful in creating a targeted supply of units to respond to specific and on-going needs in the community including 44 units of housing for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness (6 emergency shelter spaces, 10 rent supplements, and 28 transitional and supportive housing units). As well, the community has been successful in creating 27 group home units and 10 transitional and supportive housing units for women and children fleeing violence.

There are also 36 households living in the Town of Smithers who are living in housing in the private rental market and who are receiving housing assistance through the Province's SAFER (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters) and RAP (Rental Assistance for Families) programs. This includes 23 seniors receiving assistance through SAFER and 13 families receiving assistance through RAP.

One of the challenges the community faces is that the escalating cost of renting in the Town of Smithers means that the average rents are now above the rent ceilings allowed under these programs. What this means is that while households are still eligible for assistance, the assistance that is provided will no longer address the full depth of need. Under the SAFER program, the rent ceiling is set at \$734 per month while the rent ceiling under the RAP program is \$1,067 for a family of 3 and \$1,117 for a family of 4.

INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	SUPPORTIVE/ ASSISTED & SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING	INDEPENDENT SOCIAL HOUSING	PRIVATE MARKET RENTAL ASSISTANCE	OWNERSHIP CHOICES INCLUDING ENTRY-LEVEL OWNERSHIP
<b>77 UNITS</b> Region-wide	<b>175 UNITS</b> Region-wide	<b>150 UNITS</b> Region-wide	<b>117 UNITS</b> Region-wide	<b>0 UNITS</b> Region-wide
<b>6 UNITS</b> emergency shelter spaces <b>22 UNITS</b> homeless rent supplements <b>49 UNITS</b> transitional and supportive housing units	<b>96 UNITS</b> for frail seniors <b>38 UNITS</b> of special needs housing <b>41 UNITS</b> of transitional and supportive housing	<b>114 UNITS</b> of housing for low income families <b>36 UNITS</b> of housing for low income seniors	<b>89</b> households receiving SAFER <b>28</b> households receiving RAP	<p>The Province had created an initiative called BC Home Partnership as a way to help individuals gain access to entry-level ownership opportunities.</p>
Smithers <b>44 UNITS</b>	Smithers <b>51 ASSISTED LIVING UNITS</b>	Smithers <b>24 FAMILY UNITS</b>	Smithers <b>36 HOUSEHOLDS</b>	Smithers <b>0 HOUSEHOLDS</b>
<b>6 UNITS</b> emergency shelter spaces <b>10 UNITS</b> homeless rent supplements <b>28 UNITS</b> transitional and supportive housing units	<b>14 UNITS</b> for frail seniors <b>27 UNITS</b> of special needs housing <b>10 UNITS</b> of transitional and supportive housing	<b>24 UNITS</b> of housing for low income families <b>0 UNITS</b> of housing for low income seniors	<b>23</b> households receiving SAFER <b>13</b> households receiving RAP	None

Source: BC Housing Unit Count Report 2019



## **4.0 Housing Costs and Affordability**

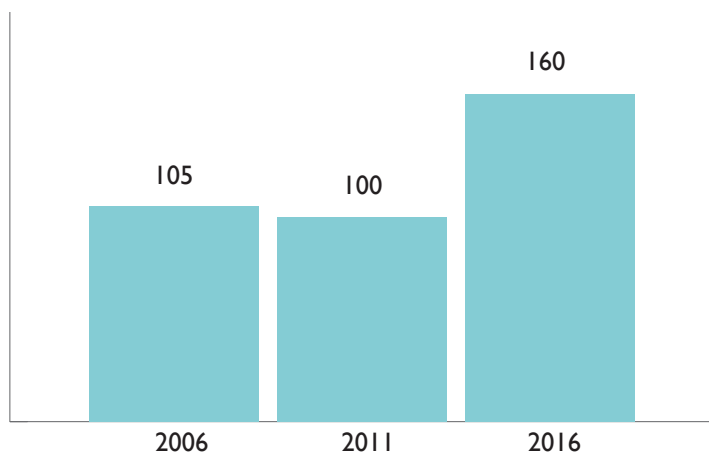


## 4.1 Housing for Low Income Households

Housing affordability can be viewed as both an income problem and a supply problem. It is an income problem in the sense that the high cost of housing can disproportionately affect households at the lower end of the housing and income continuum. This can include households who are in low paying jobs as well as those who are living with limited incomes and who do not have the resources needed to find suitable and appropriate housing in the private market.

Housing affordability can also be viewed as a supply problem in the sense that there is a shortage of suitable units available to households at the lower end of the housing and income continuum resulting in the need for many lower income households to make compromises or trade-offs in terms of the quality or condition of their housing. This could include households having to make the decision to live in housing that is inadequate including housing that is unsafe or in poor condition because that is all that they can afford.

**Graph 9: Households Living in Housing Falling Below Adequacy Standards**



## 4.2 Increasing Monthly Housing Costs (Renters)

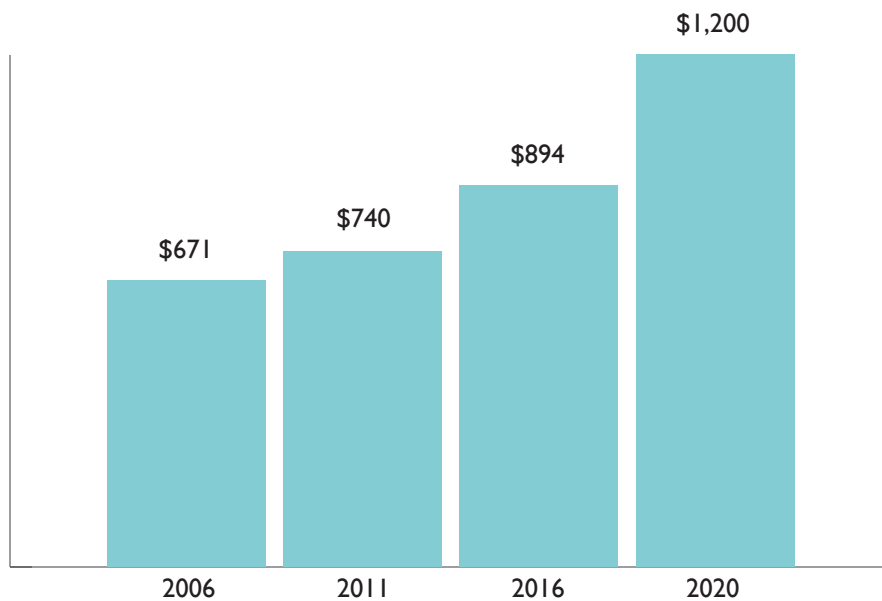
A growing number of renter households living in the Town of Smithers are experiencing affordability challenges. The 2016 Census showed that the average monthly rent was \$894 per month. However, the key informant interviews conducted as part of this research suggests that the cost of housing in the Town of Smithers is considerably higher and that rental housing costs have moved to a range of between \$1,200 and \$1,500 per month.

What is clear is that high and rising rents have contributed to on-going affordability challenges with a critical shortage of housing that is affordable to households at the low and low to moderate end of the income distribution. Furthermore, in the absence of a targeted response, it is unlikely that conditions will improve. Within the context of many

northern communities, it is also important to note that the development economics can be challenging and that this can contribute to constraints both in terms of affordability as well as the overall supply response.

The Town of Smithers has continued to explore ways to help to facilitate and support an expanded supply of housing available to meet the full diversity of needs. This has included working to ensure that there is an adequate supply of zoned capacity as well as consideration of other possible incentives or partnerships that can help enable and support new affordable rental housing supply.

**Graph 10: Average Market Rents**

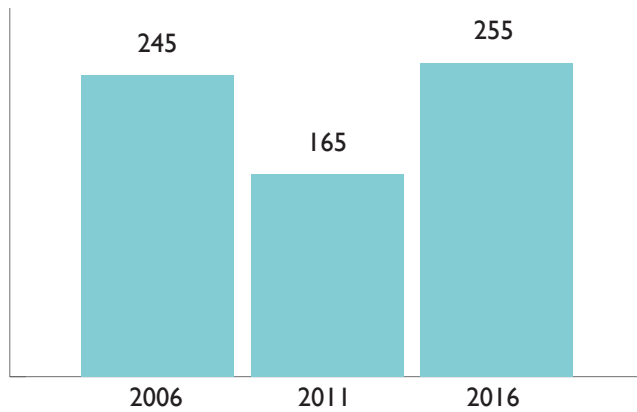


### 4.3 Households in Core Housing Need

Core housing need is a national measure of housing need that identifies the number of households who are unable to find housing in their community that is suitable in size based on the needs of their family (not living in housing that is over-crowded) and that is in good repair (adequate) without spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs.

In looking at the Town of Smithers, there were 255 households in core housing need at the time of the 2016 Census. This includes 190 renter households and 65 owners. This translates into 5% of all owners and 26.6% of all renters.

**Graph 11: Households In Core Housing Need**

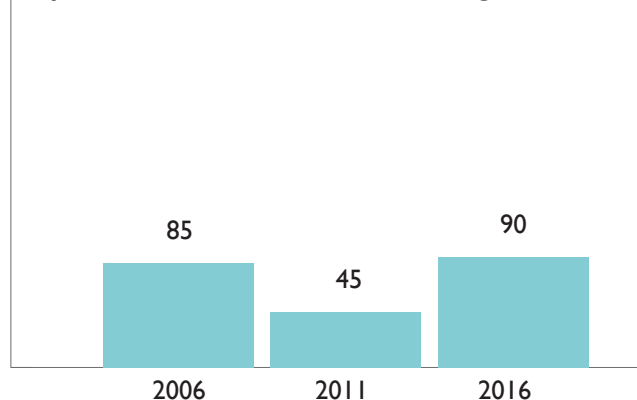


#### **4.4 Households in Extreme Housing Need**

Of the households in core housing need, the 2016 Census shows that there are 90 households in extreme housing need. These are households who are spending 50% or more of their income on their housing costs and who are at increased risk of homelessness through economic eviction with a decrease in their income or an increase in their rent having the potential to adversely affect their housing situation.

The analysis of the 2016 Census also shows that the absolute number of households in extreme housing need in the Town of Smithers has continued to increase between 2006 and 2016 with renter household representing a larger proportion of the households in extreme housing need. Based on the 2016 Census almost 1 in 10 renter households in the Town of Smithers were experiencing this level of housing stress.

**Graph 12: Households In Extreme Housing Need**





## 5.0 Recommendations



## Recommendations

This section sets out possible recommendations for the Town of Smithers to consider as part of their future planning:

### 5.1 Housing for low income and vulnerable seniors

As noted previously, at the time of the 2016 Census, there were 715 seniors between the ages of 65 and 84 living in the Town of Smithers with an additional 140 seniors who were 85 and older. This translates into a total of 855 seniors or 16.1% of the total population. Additionally, it is expected that the numbers of seniors living in the Town of Smithers will grow by an additional 233 individuals between 2016 and 2021 and by an additional 286 individuals between 2021 and 2026.

While many of these seniors will continue to age in place, as their needs change there will be the need for different housing types and supports. There are also a growing number of seniors who are currently living in the rural areas outside of the Town of Smithers and who may at some point in the future wish to move into the Town of Smithers to have better and easier access to the services and amenities that are available.

The Town of Smithers has shown a commitment in its actions and policies to work to increase the supply and diversity of the existing housing stock. This should continue to remain a priority with a specific focus on expanding the range of housing choices and mix of units for seniors and older adults looking to downsize and age in place including an expanded mix of adapted and accessible smaller units (ownership and rental) to respond to the full diversity of needs and economic circumstances of seniors in the community. Over time, it will also mean the need for more supportive and assisted living units.

### 5.2 Housing for individuals experiencing homelessness

There is also the need for an expanded mix of housing to better meet the needs of unsheltered low-income singles and families who have limited incomes and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This would include housing for those who are absolutely homeless as well as housing for those who are precariously housed and who face significant instability in terms of their overall housing situation. At the time of the 2018 Provincial Homeless Count, there were a total of 29 individuals who were identified as being without a place that they could call home but the consensus is that this represents a significant undercount.

Feedback from the community and community partners suggests that there is a significant need to expand the mix of housing and in some cases supports to better meet the needs of individuals facing these types of challenges. This could include an expanded mix of smaller, affordable, self-contained independent housing units in the form of bachelor, studio, or 1-bedroom apartments as well as an increase in the supply of supportive and transitional housing for those who require some type of support in addition to their need for housing. To effectively respond to this urgent need in the community, it will also require on-going partnerships at the community level as well as at the Federal and Provincial level.



### **5.3 Expanded supply of affordable rental and ownership housing**

There is the need for an expanded supply of affordable rental housing as well as entry-level ownership housing. Between 2016 and 2026, the Town of Smithers will experience an increase of 482 households, resulting in increasing levels of ownership demand as well as increasing levels of rental housing demand. In looking at the current inventory of housing in the community, there is a clear need for an expanded supply of purpose-built rental housing as well as an increase in supply of entry-level ownership opportunities. The Town of Smithers is recognized for their innovation in working to increase the supply and diversity of the housing stock that is available, and local residents are supportive of these efforts and open to on-going experimentation both in terms of housing form and type.

Based on the feedback received through the on-line citizen survey there is the need for multi-family and apartment units as well as the need for more single detached and ground-oriented housing for seniors. A number of residents suggested that consideration should be given to increasing the zoning permissions for carriage houses and other forms of accessory suites and dwelling units. Support was expressed for increased experimentation around smaller lot sizes and smaller house sizes, although it was noted that there may be the need to revisit the requirements under the municipality's insurance to allow for these types of changes to happen. The Town's effort to preserve and protect the existing manufactured housing stock has also been valuable in that this represents an important source of affordable ownership and rental supply. There is also an on-going need for the Town of Smithers to look at ways to continue to respond effectively to on-going seasonal demand, as well as the need to look at replacement or reinvestment strategies to preserve and protect the older rental housing stock.

### **5.4 Expanded supply of market and non-market housing choices**

The research shows that there is a critical shortage of housing that is affordable to households at the low and low to moderate end of the income distribution, including housing for low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities. Information available through BC Housing's Unit Count Report shows that there is only 14 units of assisted seniors' housing and 24 units of low-income family housing. Furthermore, while the Province continues to make rent assistance available to low-income families and seniors living in the private market, the level of assistance that is available does not cover the full depth of the need (especially in a market where there is significant competition for the units that are available and upward pressure on the rents).

The Town of Smithers has continued to show a significant commitment to working together with community partners to continue to facilitate and support an increase in the supply of affordable housing and non-market housing units that are available. This has been accomplished through streamlining and supporting the development approvals process as well as through making land available to support new development. In looking towards the future, the Town may wish to continue this practice as well as work in partnership with others to explore the possibility of extending water and services to Crown land as a way of help to advance and support additional supply.

All of these actions should continue within the context of multi-agency partnerships as well as in working in partnership with the other levels of government (Federal, Provincial and First Nations).

## 5.5 Exploration of Incentive-Based Policies and Strategies

The Town of Smithers has also expressed an interest in looking at the development of an incentive-based policy to meet the needs that have been identified. This could include consideration of different regulatory measures and approaches as well as the development of multi-agency partnerships with the following reflecting a list of potential options and opportunities for future consideration:

- Waiving or reducing fees for specific units/unit types
- Making provisions to allow for additional density while taking into consideration community and neighbourhood needs
- Working with representatives from the development community to streamline the development approvals process and to reduce front-end costs
- Maintaining zoned capacity as well as encouraging land banking
- Allowing for gentle intensification in existing neighbourhoods
- Explore potential partnerships with other levels of government including Federal, Provincial, regional and First Nations about the potential extension of services to support the development of housing on Crown land where feasible and in partnership with First Nations communities and others
- Explore opportunities to exempt rental floor space from maximum density allowances
- Incentivize universal design standards in new residential development
- Explore opportunities for mixed tenures as well as smaller more compact forms of development including:
  - Smaller lot sizes
  - Smaller home sizes
  - Smaller unit sizes including studio units, lock-off units, and micro-suites
- Continue to support the creation of secondary suites, laneway housing, coach house units
- Regulate short-term rentals while at the same time work to incentivize the provision of permanent rental housing choices within existing single-family neighbourhoods
- Consider setting targets for affordable housing units
- Continue to expand the type of facilitative role that the Town of Smithers has adopted including continuing to explore opportunities to work together to build and support multi-agency partnerships and collaboration to increase the supply and diversity within the existing housing stock.



## 6.0 Summary Report

# Housing Needs Reports – Summary Form

MUNICIPALITY/ELECTORAL AREA/LOCAL TRUST AREA: Town of Smithers

REGIONAL DISTRICT: Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

DATE OF REPORT COMPLETION: December 2020

## PART 1: KEY INDICATORS AND INFORMATION

LOCATION	<b>Neighbouring Municipalities and Electoral Areas:</b>				
	The Village of Telkwa and the rural areas within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako				
	<b>Neighboring First Nations:</b>				
	The Town of Smithers is located within the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Gidimt'en Clan and Wet'suwet'en				
POPULATION	<b>Population:</b> 5,295		<b>Change since 2006:</b> 3%		
	<b>Projected population in 5 years:</b> 5,717		<b>Projected change:</b> 8%		
	<b>Number of households:</b> 2,290		<b>Change since 2006:</b> 10%		
	<b>Projected number of households in 5 years:</b> 2,548		<b>Projected change:</b> 11.3%		
	<b>Average household size:</b> 2.5				
	<b>Projected average household size in 5 years:</b> 2.3				
	<b>Median age (local):</b> 38.3		<b>Median age (RD):</b> 41	<b>Median age (BC):</b> 42.5	
	<b>Projected median age in 5 years:</b> 38.1				
	<b>Seniors 65+ (local):</b> 16.1 %		<b>Seniors 65+ (RD):</b> 15.0 %	<b>Seniors 65+ (BC):</b> 18.2 %	
	<b>Projected seniors 65+ in 5 years:</b> 1,088		18.7%		
	<b>Owner households:</b> 1,575      68.8%		<b>Renter households:</b> 715      31.2 %		
	<b>Renter households in subsidized housing:</b> 2.2 %				
INCOME	<b>Median household income</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Regional District</b>	<b>BC</b>	
	<b>All households</b>	\$ 74,725	\$ 76,549	\$ 69,979	
	<b>Renter households</b>	\$ 41,962	\$ 47,424	\$ 45,848	
	<b>Owner households</b>	\$90,279	\$ 85,786	\$ 84,333	



ECONOMY	<b>Participation rate:</b> 68.6 %	<b>Unemployment rate:</b> 8.8 %
	<b>Major local industries:</b> The Town of Smithers is dependent on the forestry industry including processing. As well, a major employer is CN as well as different government ministries and agencies. There is a significant amount of seasonal employment year-round including skiing, fishing and other types of outdoor recreational activities.	

HOUSING	<b>Median assessed housing values:</b> \$248,000	<b>Median housing sale price:</b> \$429,000
	<b>Median monthly rent:</b> \$894	<b>Rental vacancy rate:</b> N/A %
	<b>Housing units—total:</b> 2,290	<b>Housing units—subsidized housing:</b> 24
	<b>Annual registered new homes:</b>	<b>Annual registered new homes—rental:</b> 19 (2017)
	<b>Households below affordability standards (spending 30%+ of income on shelter):</b> 17.0 %	
	<b>Households below adequacy standards (in dwellings requiring major repairs):</b> 6.9 %	
	<b>Households below suitability standards (in overcrowded dwellings):</b> 1.7 %	

#### Briefly summarize the following:

##### 1. Housing policies in local official community plans and regional growth strategies (if applicable):

The Official Community Plan adopted in 2010 by the Town of Smithers sets out different policies and strategies for meeting local housing needs including measures to:

- Encourage compact forms of housing
- Provide a balance of jobs, services and amenities and housing for all stages of life
- Support partnerships with the non-profit housing sector as well as local builders
- Leverage town-owned land to support a mix of uses including affordable housing
- Support the creation of new rental housing as well as the retention of the existing stock
- Support manufactured homes as an affordable form of ownership including measures to protect existing residents and prevent the loss of this stock

The Town of Smithers has adopted other measures in recent years to continue to add new supply where it is needed and to respond to existing and emerging housing needs including:

- Support for various forms of supportive and assisted housing
- Provisions to allow for secondary suites in single family and semi-detached dwellings
- Support for small lot developments where feasible

Currently, the Town of Smithers is preparing to undertake a review of their OCP and zoning bylaws including the consideration of the development of an incentive-based policy to facilitate an expanded mix of housing choices to better respond to the range of housing needs identified in this report.



**2. Any community consultation undertaken during development of the housing needs report:**

There were multiple points of engagement to support the development of this Housing Needs Report including:

- The development of an on-line citizen survey designed to build a deeper understanding of housing needs and priorities in the community. The survey was launched in October 2020 on the Town's website and generated 193 responses.
- The initiation of outreach to key community housing partners and stakeholders to learn more about the specific housing needs and priorities they see in the community and to explore potential opportunities for action and collaboration to address these needs.
- A follow-up focus group meeting with interested community stakeholders and partners to gather additional insights about possible opportunities for action and collaboration.
- A follow-up interview with the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre to gain additional insights around some of the specific needs of the Indigenous people and communities in the region.
- A series of key informant interviews with representatives from the real estate, housing development and financial services sectors in the Town of Smithers with a focus on building a deeper understanding of potential actions and strategies to be considered by the Town of Smithers to facilitate and support an expanded supply of housing choices (ownership and rental).
- Outreach and interviews with key employers and institutional partners in the community including representatives from the Local Health Authority.

Key areas of focus through the consultation process included:

- Building a deeper understanding of emerging housing needs and priorities based on the perspectives and insights of key community partners and stakeholders (as well as through the initiation of an on-line citizen survey);
- Consideration of local strategies and actions that have been adopted by the Town of Smithers which have helped to respond to existing housing needs; and,
- Possible strategies and opportunities for action including potential partnerships at the local, regional, provincial, and national level including potential partnership with First Nations communities to work together to better respond to the range of needs identified.

**3. Any consultation undertaken with persons, organizations and authorities (e.g. local governments, health authorities, and the provincial and federal governments and their agencies):**

Interviews were also completed with administrative staff from the Town of Smithers, representatives and leadership within the Northern Health Authority, staff at the RDBN, as well as housing development consultants engaged in working with B.C. Housing on the delivery of provincial housing programs

**4. Any consultation undertaken with First Nations:**

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre participated in the on-line stakeholder survey and focus group involving housing and service providers in the community. SPARC BC also conducted a follow-up interview to build a deeper understanding of the specific needs of Indigenous people living in the Town of Smithers as well as within the broader region given the Friendship Centre also provides outreach to the District of Houston.

## PART 2: KEY FINDINGS

**Table 1: Estimated number of units needed, by type (# of bedrooms)**

	Currently		Anticipated (5 years)	
0 bedrooms (bachelor)	20	1%	20	7.8%
1-bedroom	280	12%	66	25.6%
2-bedroom	585	26%	85	32.9%
3+ bedroom	1,405	61%	87	33.7%
Total	2,290	100%	258	100%

### Comments:

In terms of the general profile of households living in the Town of Smithers, the Census 2016 reported that there were:

- 760 single person households (33.3%)
- 755 2 person households (33.0%)
- 325 3 person households (14.2%)
- 450 households (19.7%) comprised of 4 or more people

The housing demand projections show that the Town of Smithers will continue to grow with an expected increase of 258 households (11.3%) between 2016 and 2021 and an additional 224 households (8.8%) between 2021 and 2026. The expected future demand will come from a number of different sources including:

- Young families and singles moving to the community
- Seniors and older adults seeking to downsize and move closer to services and amenities
- More housing with supports for individuals who are experiencing homelessness
- Based on the responses received to the on-line citizen survey, participants identified the need for:
- More affordable rental housing
- More affordable ownership housing
- More housing for people who are homeless
- More housing choices for seniors including smaller units for seniors

**Table 2: Households in Core Housing Need**

	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>All households in planning area</i>	2,080	100	2,190	100	2,290	100
<b>Of which are in core housing need</b>	245	11.8	165	7.5	255	11.1
Of which are owner households	45	18.4	30	18.2	65	25.5
Of which are renter households	195	79.6	135	81.8	190	74.5

**Comments:**

Core housing need is a national measure of housing need that identifies the number of households who are unable to find housing in their community that is suitable in size based on the needs of their family (not living in housing that is over-crowded) and that is in good repair (adequate) without spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs.

In looking at the Town of Smithers, there were 255 households in core housing need at the time of the 2016 Census. This includes 190 renter households and 65 owners. While renter households are more likely to be in core housing need information from the Census shows that between 2006 and 2016, the absolute number of households in core housing need in the Town of Smithers has continued to increase with the proportion of owner households in core housing need representing a growing proportion of those in need. This can be the result of a growing number of seniors (often living alone) or living on a limited income as well as a growing number of single person households in the community where their dependence on a single income can make them more vulnerable as housing costs continue to increase.

**Table 3: Households in Extreme Core Housing Need**

	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>All households in planning area</i>	2,080	100	2,190	100	2,290	100
<b>Extreme core housing need</b>	85	4.1	45	2.1	90	3.9
Of which are owner households	25	29.4	0	11.1	30	33.3
Of which are renter households	55	64.2	40	88.9	60	66.7

**Comments:**

Of the households in core housing need, the 2016 Census reported 90 households in extreme housing need in 2016. These are households that are spending 50% or more of their income on their housing costs and who are at increased risk of economic eviction with a decrease in their income or an increase in their rent having the potential to push them into homelessness.

Between 2006 and 2016, the Census shows that the absolute number of households in extreme housing need in the Town of Smithers has continued to increase with almost 1 in 10 renter households in the Town of Smithers reporting this level of housing stress.

**Briefly summarize current and anticipated needs for each of the following:**

**1. Affordable housing**

There is a significant need for affordable housing at all points along the housing continuum from entry-level ownership choices for young families and individuals living in the Town of Smithers to an expanded range of rental housing choices (market and non-market). Priorities identified through an on-line citizen survey identified the following needs:

- Affordability of the rents
- Affordability of entry-level ownership
- More housing for people experiencing homelessness
- Smaller units to allow more seniors to downsize
- Concerns about the quality or condition of the existing housing

**2. Rental housing (market and non-market)**

There is a critical shortage in the supply of rental housing in the Town of Smithers (market and non-market) including a shortage of purpose-built rental housing with the secondary rental market accounting for more than 47.6% of the current inventory of rental housing in the Town of Smithers.

There is also a significant shortage in the current inventory of social housing or non-market housing choices. Based on the most recent Unit Count Report published by B.C. Housing (2019), the inventory of social housing in the Town of Smithers includes 38 units (14 units of assisted seniors' housing as well as 24 units of family housing). This represents less than 2% of the total number of housing units in the Town of Smithers or approximately 5% of the existing rental housing supply.

**3. Special needs housing**

The Town of Smithers has also been successful in creating a targeted supply of units to respond to specific and on-going housing needs in the community including 44 units of housing for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness including 6 emergency shelter spaces, 10 homeless rent supplements, and 28 transitional and supportive housing units. The community has also been successful in creating 27 group home units and 10 transitional and supportive housing units for women and children fleeing violence. Through the consultation and engagement process with key stakeholders and community partners, the following specific housing needs and priorities were identified:

- Housing for individuals experiencing homelessness
- More supportive housing for seniors
- Housing for persons with disabilities
- Intergenerational housing for Indigenous families and individuals including vulnerable and 'at risk' youth

#### **4. Housing for seniors**

The Town of Smithers has a large and growing number of seniors 65 and older including a growing number of older seniors (85+). At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 715 seniors between the ages of 65 and 84 with an additional 140 seniors who were 85 and older. This translates into a total of 855 seniors or 16.1% of the total population in 2016.

Based on population projections prepared by B.C. Stats, it is estimated that between 2016 and 2021 the number of seniors 65 and older living in the Smithers Local Health Area will increase by 691 individuals, or a growth rate of 33.1%. Similarly, between 2021 and 2026 it is expected that there will be an additional 727 individuals in the Smithers Local Health Area who are 65 and older, representing a growth rate of 26.2%.

Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers, it is estimated that between 2016 and 2021, the number of seniors 65 and older living in the Town of Smithers will increase by 233 individuals, or a growth rate of 27.3%. Additionally, between 2021 and 2026 it is expected that the number of seniors 65 and older living in the Town of Smithers will increase by an additional 286 individuals, representing a growth rate of 26.3%.

In looking at changing needs of an aging population it is likely the Town of Smithers will experience increased housing demand from seniors living in the rural areas and acreage outside the municipal boundaries from seniors who may wish to downsize as their needs or circumstances change.

Recognizing that seniors make up one in 4 households living in the Town of Smithers in 2016, the on-line citizen survey asked for feedback on the type of housing and supports that seniors living in the Town of Smithers need in order to allow them to remain living independently in the community. Of those who responded the cost of housing was identified as the primary issue.

#### **5. Housing for families**

Based on the 2016 Census, family households represent 1,415 (61.7%) of all households living in the Town of Smithers with the total number of family households living in the Town of Smithers continuing to increase.

Of the families living in the Town of Smithers in 2016, 815 households or 58% reported having children living at home while 600 households or 42% were couples without children including younger couples who have not yet started their family as well as senior couples who are now empty-nesters and whose children have moved away from home.

In looking at the demographic and age profile of households in the 2016 Census shows that the living in the Town of Smithers in 2016, it is clear that the Town of Smithers has been successful in attracting younger families and key workers to the area, resulting in increased housing demand from across household types. This can have implications in terms of how the community plans for different housing needs in the future and can invite considerations around mixed income and mixed tenure housing that includes a mix of seniors' units.



## **6. Housing for individuals experiencing homelessness**

Homelessness is a significant and growing issue across the Province. At the time of the 2018 Provincial Homelessness Count, there were 29 individuals who were identified as being homeless. This includes 11 individuals who were identified as sheltered homeless as well as 18 individuals who were unsheltered.

Sheltered homeless includes those who stayed overnight in an emergency shelter, transition house for women and children fleeing violence as well as safe house for youth. The unsheltered homeless include individuals who had no physical shelter and who were staying outside or living in temporary and ad hoc arrangement that do not meet the conditions of home and where they are not paying rent.

The housing and research literature shows that people who are homeless in rural areas rarely fit the standard definition of homelessness. While some are literally homeless, many more individuals are precariously housed living in over-crowded conditions or moving from one barely affordable housing situation to another. Others live in poor quality or substandard housing because that is all that they can afford.

## **7. Any other population groups with specific housing needs identified in the report**

While most of the needs that were identified were captured above, there were different sub-groups or subpopulations that were also identified through the on-line citizen survey as well as through the community stakeholder engagement meetings. This included:

- Housing for low-income single parent family households
- Housing for vulnerable and 'at risk' Indigenous youth
- Housing for young adults wishing to move out of home and start their housing careers
- Housing for seasonal and transitional workers
- Housing for minimum wage earners
- Low barrier housing for individuals with mental health or addictions-related challenges
- More 'pet-friendly' rental housing

**Were there any other key issues identified through the process of developing your housing needs report?**

## **The quality and condition of the existing housing stock**

The 2016 Census shows that a significant proportion of the housing stock was built before 1980 and may be reaching the end of its economic life. This translates into 1,270 units or 55.5% of the existing housing stock. To address this issue there is the need for investments in replacement housing as well as targeted investments and programs to improve the level of repair of the current stock to bring it up to suitable standards in terms of quality, safety, and energy efficiency. The analysis of the 2016 Census shows that currently 62.2% of the existing inventory of rental housing in the Town of Smithers (475 units) is in housing that was built before 1980.

**Limited purpose-built rental housing**

There is a significant shortage of purpose-built rental housing in the Town of Smithers with a total of 375 units being in the form of apartment stock, accounting for 52.4% of the existing rental housing stock. In terms of future planning, there is the need for additional investments in expanding the supply of purpose-built rental housing stock as this form of rental housing represents a more stable source of rental supply when compared to rented stock in the secondary rental market. Similarly, there is the need for additional investments (and partnerships) to help to expand the supply of non-market housing.

**Challenging development economics in Northern communities**

A discussion paper prepared by the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako highlights some of the specific challenges associated with the development of housing in Northern communities. As noted in the report, prepared by the RDBN, the development economics for new housing construction can be challenging both in terms of the affordability of the housing and in terms of the overall housing market conditions. As noted in the report prepared by the RDBN, for increased land development and housing starts to occur, the market value of the land must increase in relation to the cost of construction to the extent to which the land can be subdivided and housing can be built at a profit (2020:15). The RDBN report notes that Provincial regulations around builder registration and training as well as new requirements associated with the B.C. Step Code have made it more challenging especially within the context of the development of multi-unit family housing. As well there are concerns that the requirements under the B.C. Step Code do not work in Northern B.C. communities both in terms of practicality and in terms of the overall economic feasibility.

**The development of an incentive-based policy**

The Town of Smithers has expressed an interest in looking at the development of an incentive-based policy with a focus on the types of regulatory measures, municipal actions and partnerships needed to help to facilitate and support an expanded mix of housing choices in the community.





# **Town of Smithers Community Survey Results**

## Community Survey Results

As part of the community engagement process, respondents were asked to share their perceptions on the housing needs in Smithers on a range of topics including their perspectives on:

1. Housing needs in the community
2. Future housing plans including changing housing needs
3. General levels of satisfaction
4. Addressing the issue of homelessness in Smithers
5. Local housing priorities
6. Different housing forms and types
7. Support for different housing forms and types
8. Strategies to address the needs of an aging population

## Feedback Received

Over the month of October, there were 193 individuals who responded to the online survey. This included:

- 136 individuals (71%) living in Smithers
- 51 individuals (28%) living in communities outside of Smithers
- 4 individuals (2%) who reported other types of arrangements (i.e. living at home)

Of those who responded to the survey:

- 111 individuals (58%) were owners
- 38 individuals (20%) rent or live in a home rented by family members
- 44 individuals (23%) identified other housing or living arrangements

Most of those who responded to the survey, were longer term residents in Smithers. In particular,

- 98 individuals (51%) had lived in Smithers for more than 10 years
- 48 individuals (25%) had lived in Smithers for between 1 to 5 years
- 21 individuals (11%) had lived in Smithers for between 6 to 10 years
- 16 individuals (8%) had lived in Smithers for less than 1 year
- 10 individuals (5%) do not currently live in Smithers

There were also 10 respondents (5%) interested in relocating to Smithers while 53 respondents (28%) reported that they are considering moving away from Smithers.





# The Current Housing Situation and Housing Needs in Smithers



This section provides an overview of the response receive in terms of the current housing situation and housing needs of those who responded to the survey. This includes the feedback received from across survey respondents in terms of:

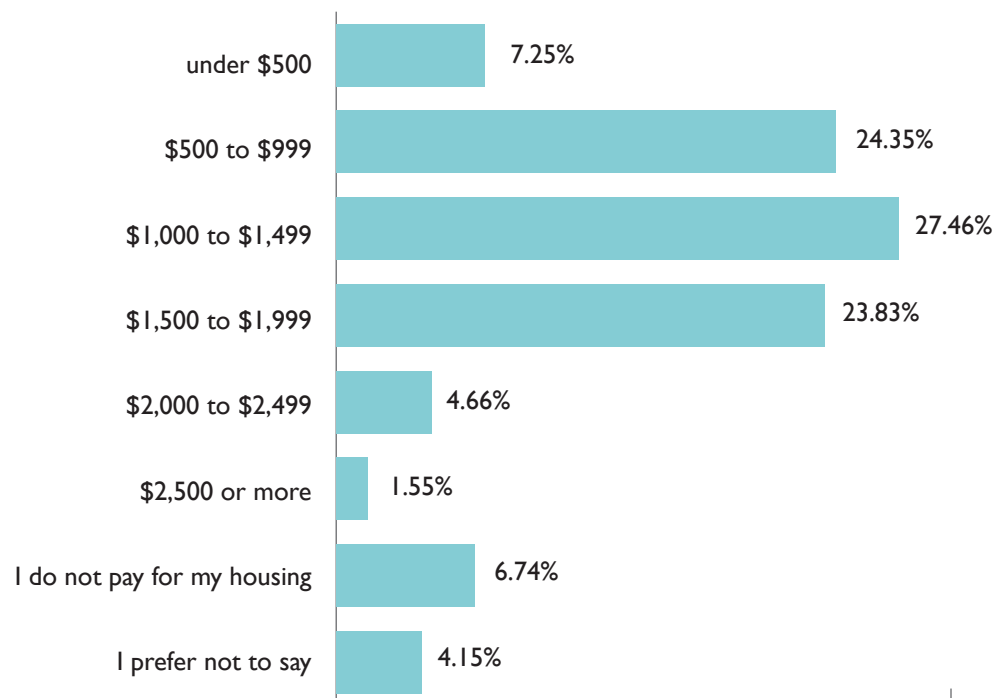
- Current housing costs
- Satisfaction with their current housing situation
- Satisfaction with the affordability of their housing
- Satisfaction with the quality and condition of their housing
- Satisfaction with the size and suitability of their housing

The following section provides an overview of the responses that were received:

## Current housing costs

When asked about the current cost of their housing, 14 respondents (7%) reported that they paid less than \$500 per month for their housing. There were also 47 respondents (24%) who indicated that they pay somewhere between \$500 and \$999 per month for their housing. There were also 53 respondents (27%) who reported that they pay between \$1,000 and \$1,499 per month for their housing. There were 58 respondents (30%) who spent \$1,500 or more per month on their housing as well as 13 respondents (7%) who reported that they do not pay for housing. There were also 8 respondents (4%) who indicated that they would prefer not to answer this question.

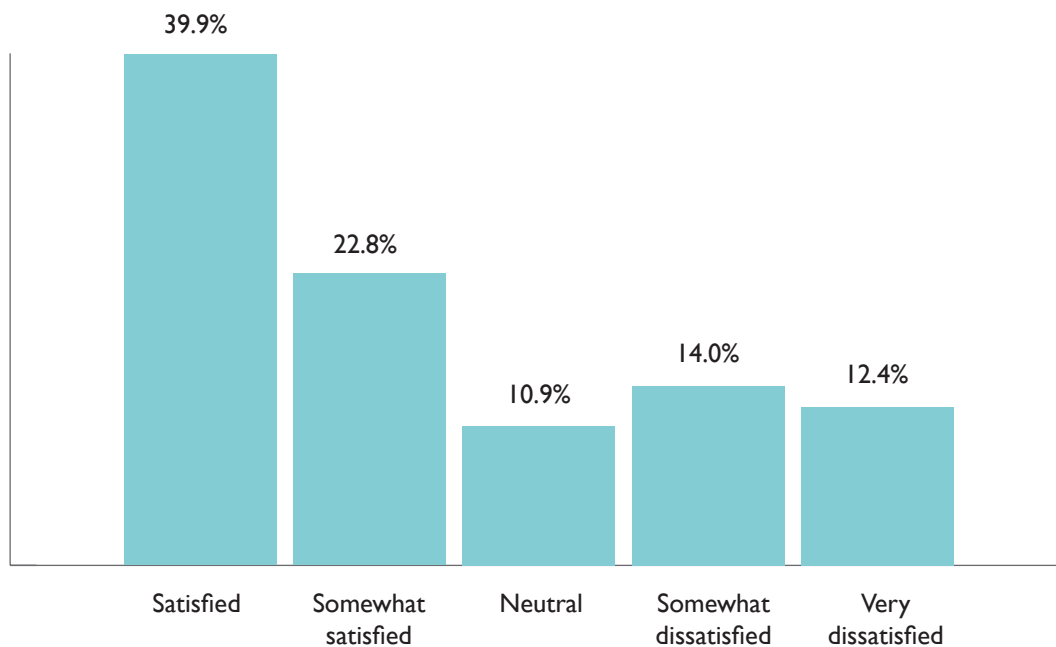
**Graph 1: Monthly housing costs reported by survey respondents (renters and owners)**



## Satisfaction with their current housing needs

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their current housing situation. Of those who responded to the survey 77 (40%) reported that they were very satisfied with their current housing situation while an additional 44 respondents (23%) reported that they were somewhat satisfied with their current housing situation. There were an additional 21 respondents (11%) who reported that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their current housing situation. There were also 51 respondents (26%) who reported some level of dissatisfaction with their current housing situation including 24 respondents (12%) who reported that they were very dissatisfied.

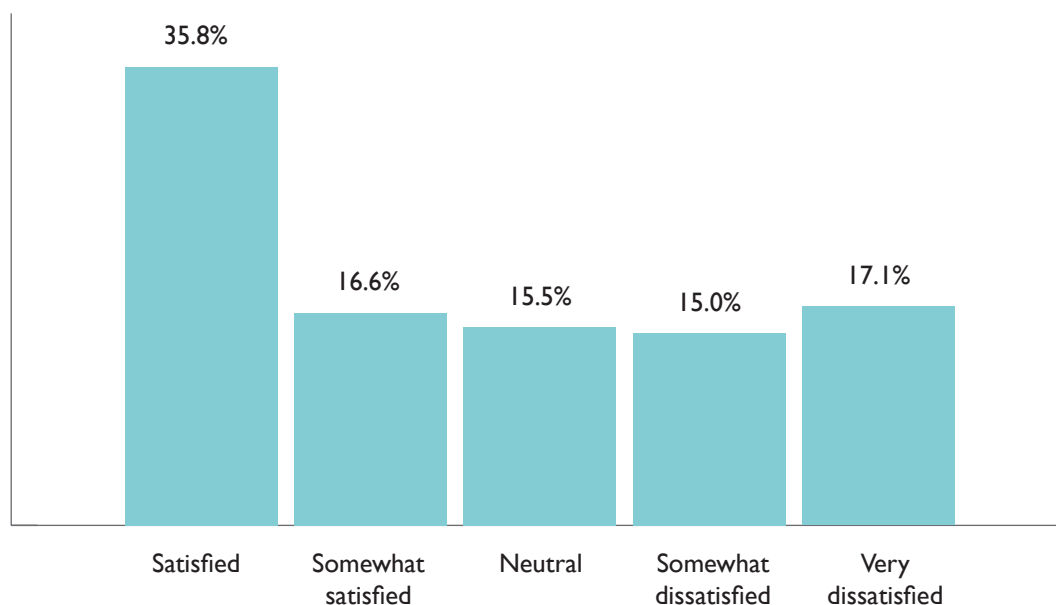
**Graph 2: Reported satisfaction with their overall housing situation**



## Satisfaction with the affordability of their housing

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the overall affordability of their current housing situation. Of those who responded to the survey 69 (36%) reported that they were very satisfied with the affordability of their current housing situation while an additional 32 respondents (17%) reported that they were somewhat satisfied with the affordability of their current housing situation. There were an additional 30 respondents (16%) who indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the affordability of their current housing. Sixty-two respondents (32%) reported some level of dissatisfaction with the affordability of their current housing including 33 respondents (17%) who were very dissatisfied.

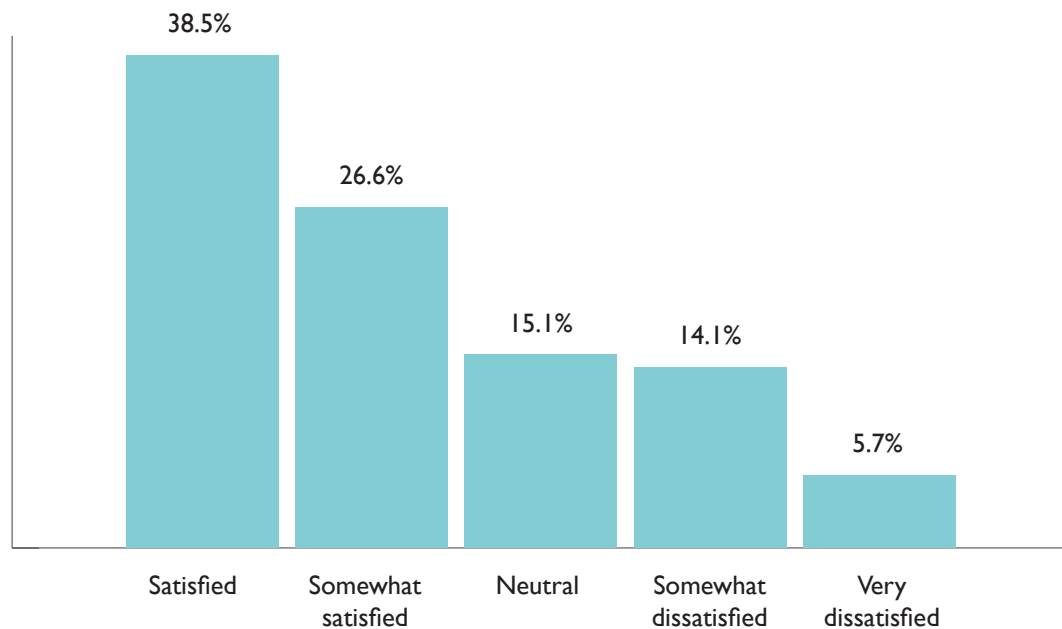
**Graph 3: Reported satisfaction with the affordability of their housing**



## Satisfaction with the level of repair (condition) of their housing

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the overall level of repair or condition of their current housing situation. Of those who responded to the survey 74 (39%) reported that they were very satisfied with the overall level of repair or condition of their current housing while an additional 51 respondents (27%) reported that they were mostly satisfied with the condition or level of repair of their current housing. There were an additional 29 respondents (15%) who indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the condition and level of repair of their housing. Thirty-eight respondents (20%) reported some level of dissatisfaction with the condition of their housing including 11 respondents (6%) who were very dissatisfied.

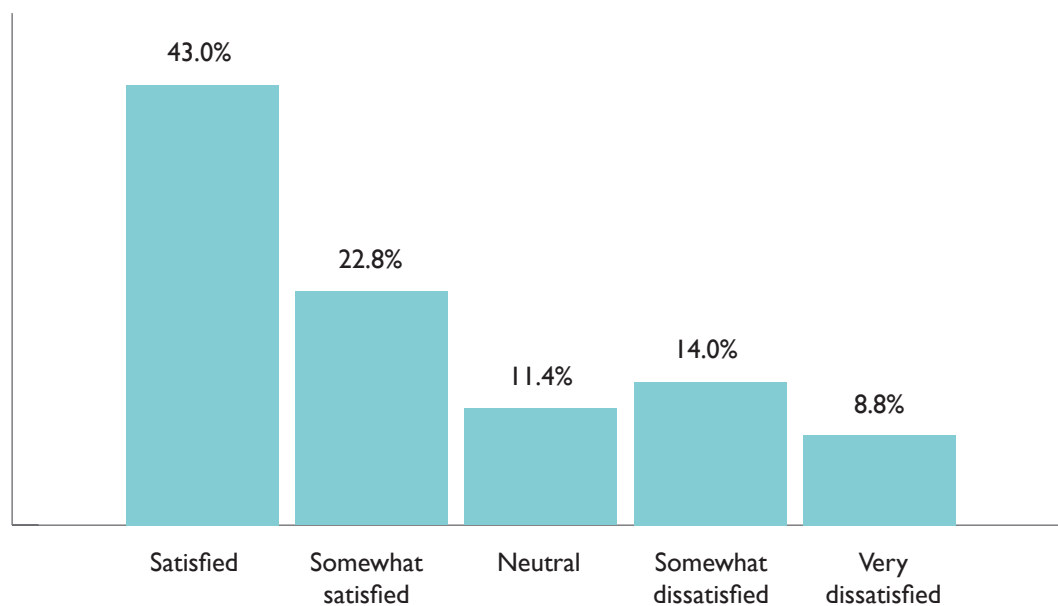
**Graph 4: Reported satisfaction with the level of repair and condition of their housing**



## Satisfaction with the size and suitability of their housing

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the overall size and suitability of their housing. Of those who responded to the survey, 83 respondents (43%) reported that they were very satisfied with the overall size and suitability of their current housing while an additional 44 respondents (23%) reported that they were mostly satisfied with the overall size and suitability of their current housing. There were an additional 22 respondents (11%) who indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the overall size and suitability of their housing. Forty-four respondents (23%) reported some level of dissatisfaction with the overall size and suitability of their housing including 17 respondents (9%) who were very dissatisfied.

**Graph 5: Reported satisfaction with the size and suitability of their housing**







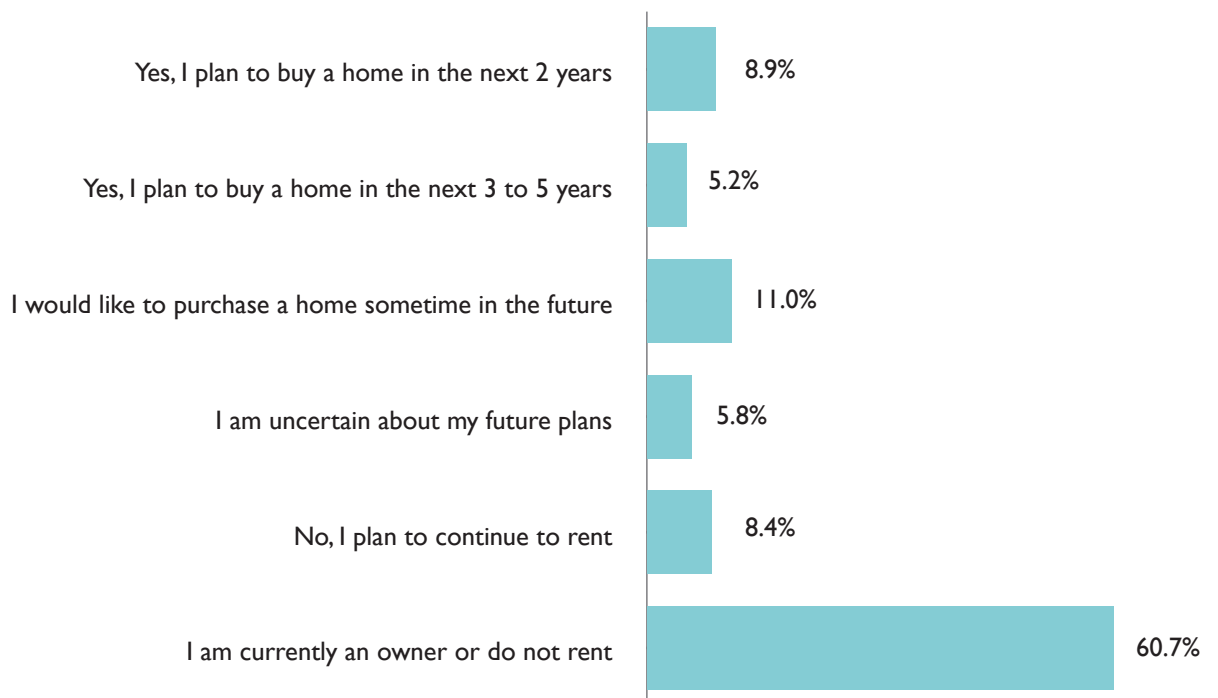
# Future Housing Plans

This section provides a summary of the feedback received from survey respondents in terms of their future housing plans including plans to purchase a home as well as anticipated changes in future housing needs. Highlights of the feedback received are outlined below.

## Plans to move into home ownership

When asked about their plans to purchase a home in the future, 116 respondents (61%) indicated that they were already homeowners and/or do not currently rent. There were an additional 48 respondents (25%) who indicated that they would be interested in purchasing a home at some point in the future. Of those who expressed an interest in homeownership 17 respondents indicated that they plan to purchase a home within the next 2 years while 10 respondents indicated that they would expect to purchase a home within the next 3 to 5 years. There were also 21 respondents who would like to purchase a home but were uncertain as to the time frame. There were also 16 respondents who indicated that they plan to continue to rent.

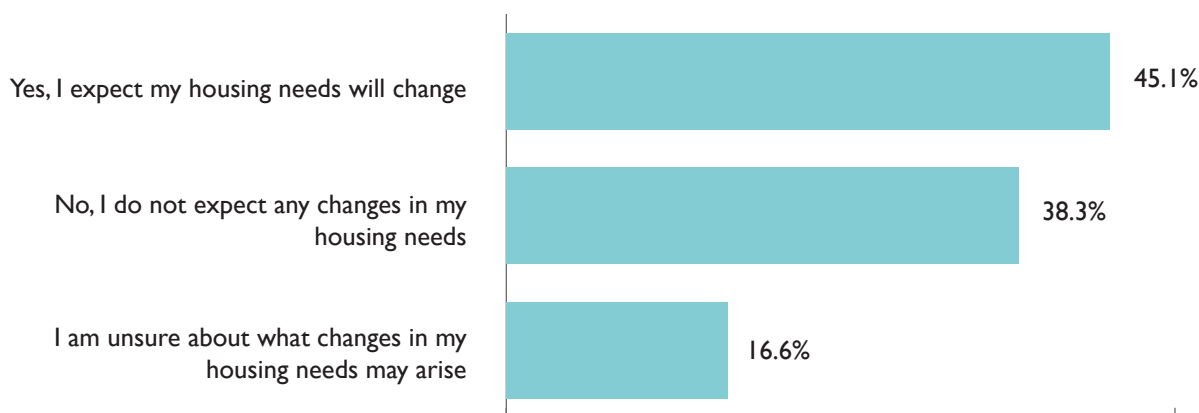
**Graph 6: Expectations for moving into entry-level ownership**



## Changing Housing Needs

When asked to think about their future housing situation, 83 respondents (45%) reported that they expect that their future housing situation and needs will change within the next 5 years. There were also 72 respondents (39%) who reported that they did not expect any changes in their current housing situation. Thirty-one respondents (17%) reported that they were unsure about their future housing needs and the types of changes which may arise.

**Graph 7: Expectations of changing housing needs**



The following reflects the different types of needs that were identified:

- *Need room for aging parents*
- *Senior may need more help*
- *Would like to move away from home and have a place of my own*
- *Would like to start a family*
- *Fear economic eviction as rents increase*
- *Would like to downsize and move into a one-floor rancher in anticipation of age and mobility issues*
- *Applied to be a foster parent*
- *Space for a growing, family, pets, and a home business*
- *Operate a home-based business*
- *Growing house, bigger house, more bedrooms, bigger yard*
- *Would like to downsize and move to town*
- *More space*
- *Would like to purchase outside of town*
- *Would like to sell and move outside of town*
- *Need to develop more culturally appropriate housing for Indigenous families and individuals*
- *Need to improve the accessibility within my current home (i.e. install a stairlift)*
- *My current housing situation is unstable -need to find better arrangements*



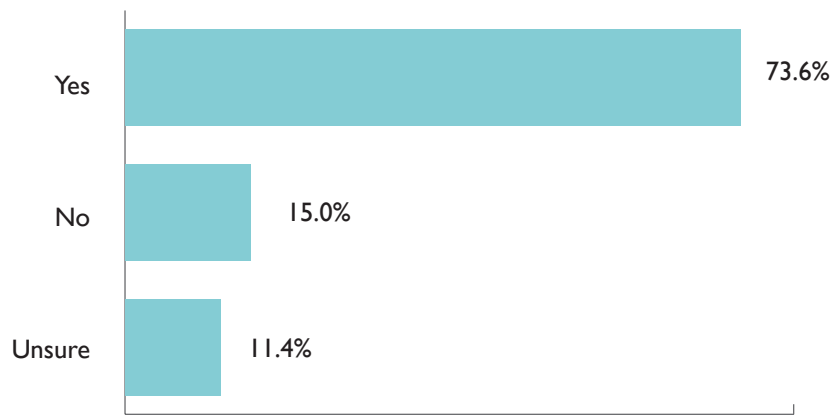


# **Addressing the Issue of Homelessness in Smithers**

## Addressing the Issue of Homelessness

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on the issue of homelessness in Smithers including the extent to which they view homelessness as an issue. Of those who responded: 142 respondents (74%) reported that they see homelessness as an issue that needs to be addressed while 29 respondents (15%) reported that they did not necessarily see homelessness as an issue. There were also 22 respondents who reported that they were unsure about the extent to which they viewed homelessness as an issue.

**Graph 8: Extent to which homelessness is viewed as an issue in Smithers**

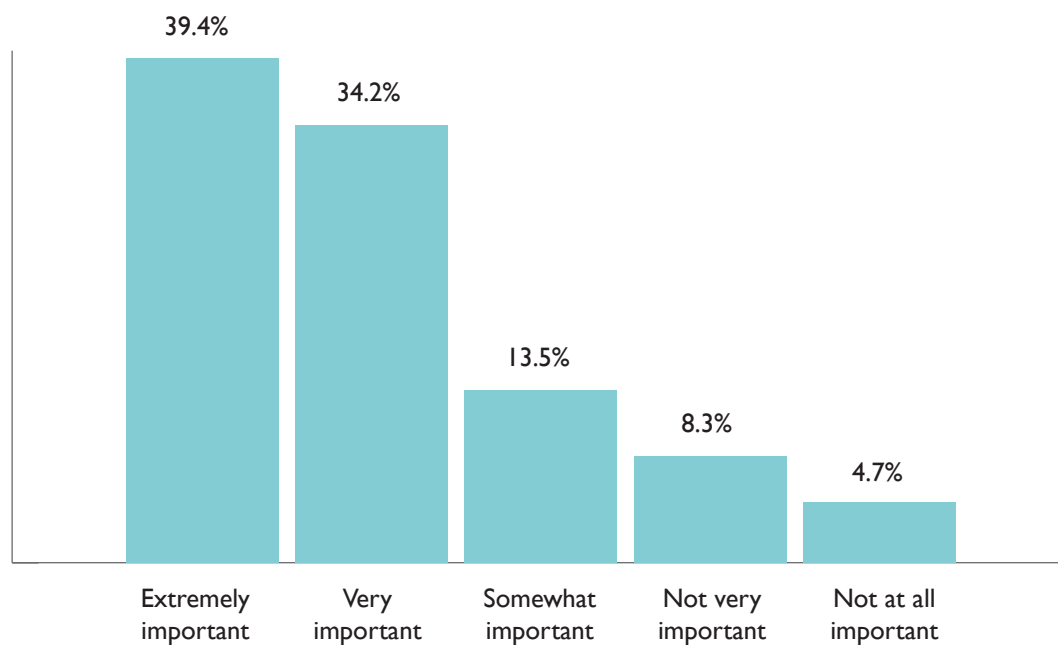




## Level of importance or concern assigned to homelessness

Respondents were also asked to report on the level of importance they assign to addressing the issue of homelessness within Smithers. Based on the feedback received, 76 respondents (39%) reported that they view the issue of homelessness as being extremely important. There were an additional 66 respondents (34%) who reported that they view the issue of homelessness as being very important. There were 26 respondents (14%) who indicated that they view the issue of homelessness as being somewhat important while 25 respondents (13%) reported that they did not see the issue of homelessness as being important.

**Graph 9: Level of importance assigned to address the issue of homelessness**





# Other Housing Needs and Priorities

In addition to addressing the issue of homelessness, respondents were asked to provide feedback on the extent to which there is the need to:

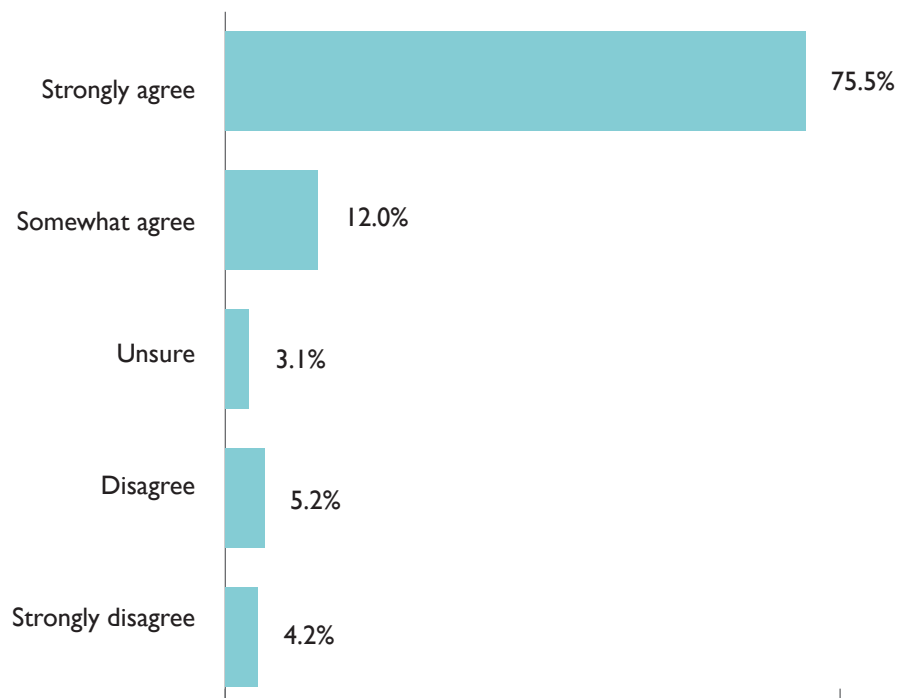
- Address on-going issues of housing affordability
- Add more rental housing options
- Provide for an expanded range of entry-level ownership opportunities

The following provides a summary of the responses received.

## Need to address housing affordability

When asked about the extent to which there is the need to address housing affordability, 145 individuals (76%) indicated that they strongly agree with the need to address housing affordability in Smithers. There were an additional 23 respondents (12%) who indicated that they see the need to address housing affordability in Smithers as being somewhat important. An additional 6 respondents (3%) indicated that they were unsure as to whether they see a need to address housing affordability in Smithers, while 18 respondents (9%) indicated that they did not see a need to address housing affordability in Smithers.

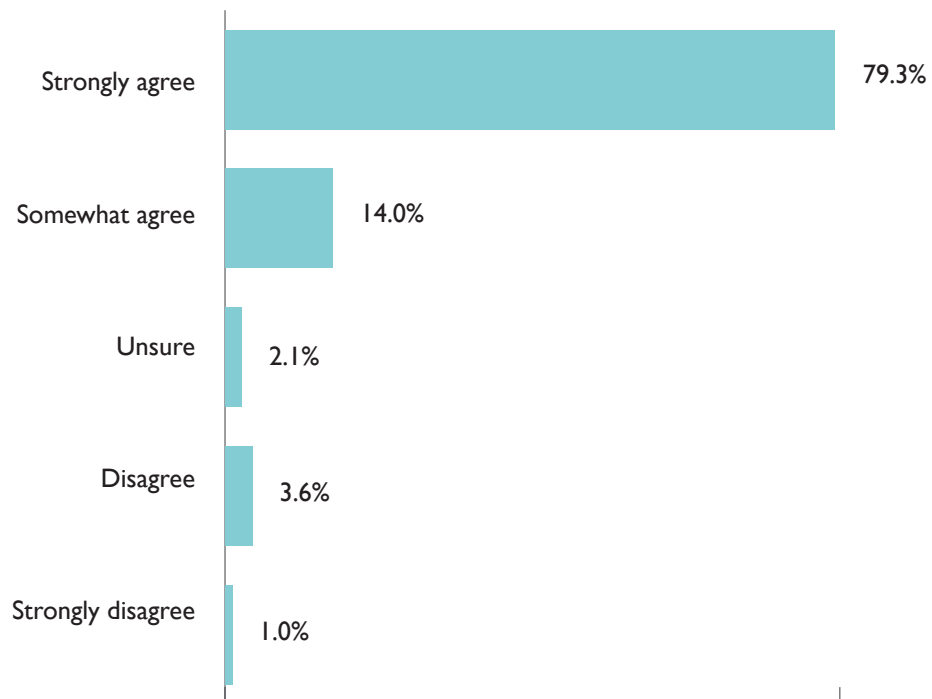
**Graph 10: Level of importance assigned to addressing housing affordability**



## Need for more rental housing

When asked about the extent to which there is the need for more rental housing in Smithers, 153 individuals (79%) indicated that they strongly agree with the need for more rental housing in Smithers. There were an additional 27 respondents (14%) who indicated that they see the need for more rental housing in Smithers as being somewhat important. An additional 4 respondents (2%) indicated that they were unsure as to whether they see a need for more rental housing in Smithers while 9 respondents (5%) indicated that they did not see a need for more rental housing in Smithers.

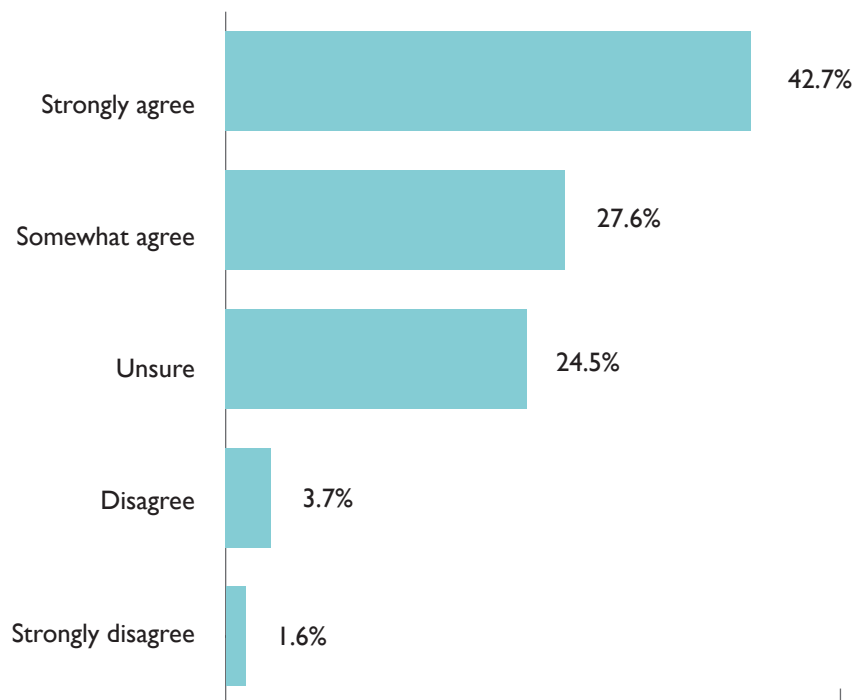
**Graph 11: Agreement with the need for more rental housing in Smithers**



## Need for more ownership choices in Smithers

When asked about the extent to which there is the need for more ownership housing in Smithers, 82 individuals (43%) indicated that they strongly agree with the need for more ownership housing in Smithers. There were an additional 53 respondents (28%) who indicated that they see the need for more ownership housing in Smithers as being somewhat important. An additional 47 respondents (25%) indicated that they were unsure as to whether they see a need for more ownership housing in Smithers while 10 respondents (5%) indicated that they did not see a need for more ownership housing in Smithers.

**Graph 12: Agreement with the need for more ownership housing in Smithers**







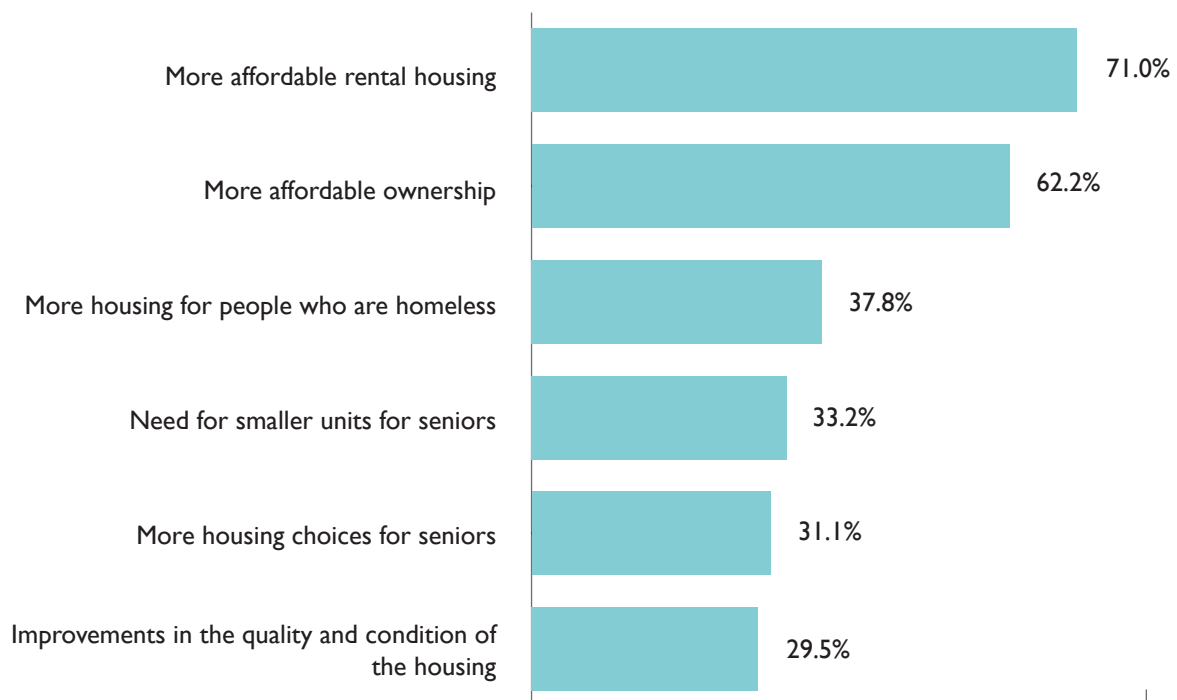
# Housing Priorities Identified

## Top 3 Housing Needs or Priorities in Smithers

Respondents were given a list of choices and were asked to indicate what they see as the top three (3) housing needs or priorities in Smithers. The following list provides a summary of the feedback received:

- 132 respondents (71%) identified the affordability of the rents
- 115 respondents (62%) identified the affordability of entry-level ownership
- 71 respondents (38%) identified more housing for people experiencing homelessness
- 61 respondents (33%) identified smaller units to allow more seniors to downsize;
- 58 respondents (31%) identified more housing choices for seniors;
- 53 respondents (30%) identified the quality or condition of the existing housing

**Graph 13: Top 3 housing need and priorities in Smithers identified**



## Other Priority Needs Identified

There were 35 respondents who identified a list of other priority needs in the community. The following reflects the list of needs identified:

- *Seniors*
- *People with disabilities*
- *Low income families including single parent families*
- *People who are homeless*
- *Low barrier housing for special needs*
- *Affordable accommodation for temporary staff*
- *More long-term care for seniors 80 and older*
- *More housing with supports for people with mental illness and addictions*
- *Housing for minimum wage workers*
- *Housing for individuals living on a fixed income including those with disabilities*
- *Housing for adults living with past trauma and experiencing homelessness*
- *Housing for adults with disabilities who are aging and need more supports*
- *Housing for individuals diagnosed with multiple complex needs*
- *Housing for seniors, young people, and young families*
- *Households living on a single income or fixed income*
- *Vulnerable youth including youth with issues of substance use*
- *Racialized youth*
- *Indigenous people living off reserve*





# Support for Different Housing Forms and Types

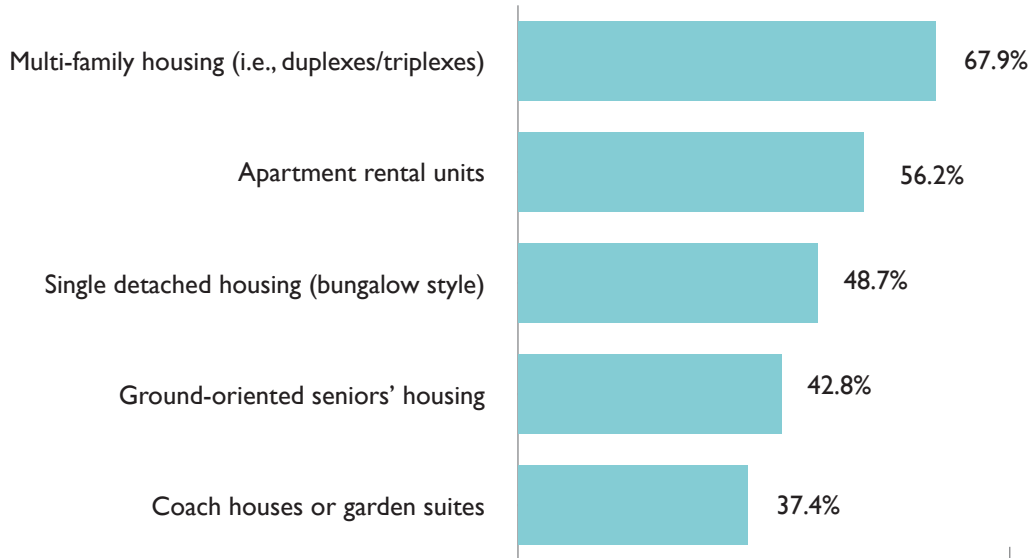
This section looks at the mix of housing types that could benefit the community. This includes considerations around the need for more single detached family housing stock as well as more multi-family and multi-unit developments. This section also looks at the addition of accessory suites including coach house units and garden or basement suites. Consideration is also given to other ideas and suggestions offered by survey respondents.

## Mix of housing types

When asked about the type of housing that is most needed in the community the following reflects the responses received::

- 127 respondents (68%) identified the need for more multi-family housing
- 105 respondents (56%) identified the need for more apartment units
- 91 respondents (49%) identified the need for more single detached family housing (bungalow style)
- 80 respondents (43%) identified the need for more ground-oriented seniors housing.
- 70 respondents (37%) identified the need for more coach houses or garden suites.

**Graph 14: Mix of housing types**





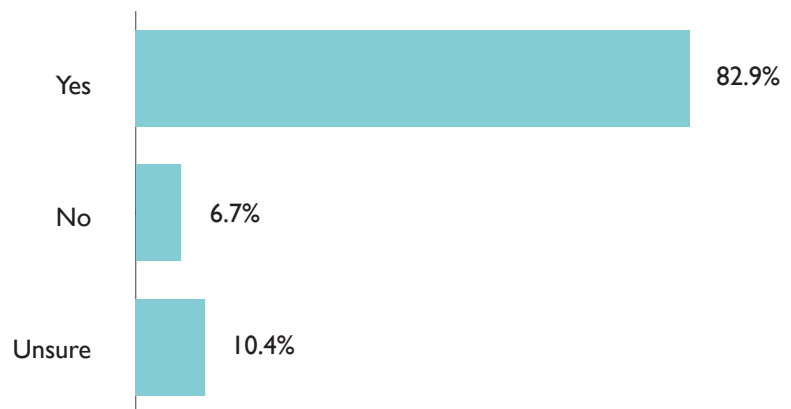
Some respondents also identified other types of housing that should be considered and included:

- *Co-op housing units*
- *More supported housing units*
- *More assisted living (not long-term care housing)*
- *Smaller houses and smaller lot sizes*
- *More tiny homes*
- *More pet-friendly housing*
- *More affordable, independent social housing*
- *More energy efficient housing*
- *An expanded mix of rental units (homes, garden suites, carriage houses, apartment units)*
- *Co-housing models*
- *Supportive wrap around services for youth and families.*

## On-going experimentation in housing types

Respondents were asked if they saw benefit in on-going experimentation in terms of different types of housing models such as modular housing, laneway housing, coach houses and garden suites. Of those who responded to this question, 160 individuals (83%) reported that they felt that there was benefit in terms of continued experimentation with different housing types and models. At the same time, there were 20 respondents (10%) who reported that they were unsure as to whether there is benefit in on-going experimentation with different housing types and models. There were also 13 respondents (7%) who said they did not think that there was the need for on-going experimentation in terms of different housing types or models.

**Graph 15: Support for on-going experimentation in the mix of housing types**



Some respondents also offered specific suggestions for consideration including:

- *Increase the zoning areas for carriage houses*
- *Increase the rental options for temporary residents*
- *Allow laneway housing for properties near the hospital*
- *Support strategies that can help to reduce the cost of construction*
- *Support strategies that can help to bring down operating costs*
- *Work to align housing costs and incomes (i.e. rent-geared-to-income housing)*
- *Explore smaller houses and smaller lot sizes*
- *Explore how garden suites can contribute to improvements in the affordability of ownership*
- *There should be a variety of sizes and types to accommodate different households and incomes*
- *There is the need for more pet-friendly rental housing*
- *There is the need for more affordable family housing*
- *There should be more purpose-built rental apartment stock*
- *There should be more fourplex and six plex units*
- *Manufactured homes can provide for a cost-effective alternative*
- *There should be housing for people with disabilities that allows them to have a pet*

## **Age Profile of Survey Respondents**

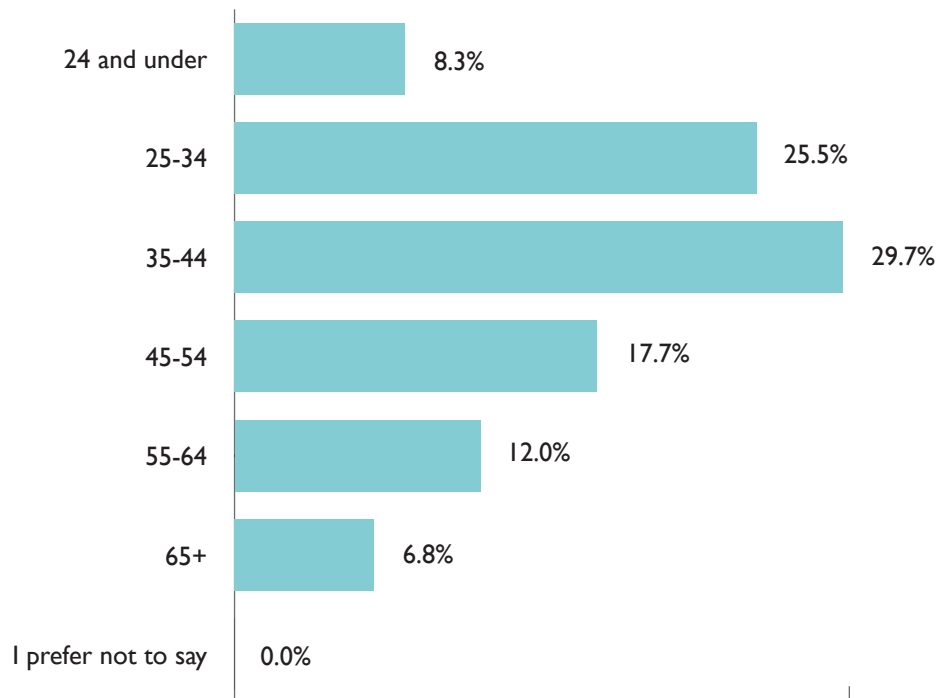
The survey was successful in generating responses from across all age ranges including



# Addressing the needs of an aging population

seniors (those 65 and older) and near seniors (those between the ages of 55 and 64). As shown in Graph 16, there were 16 respondents (8%) who were under 25 as well as 49 respondents (26%) who were between the ages of 25 and 34. There were also 34 respondents who were between the ages of 45 and 54 (18%) as well 36 respondents (19%) who were seniors or near seniors (55 and older).

**Graph 16: Age profile of survey respondents**

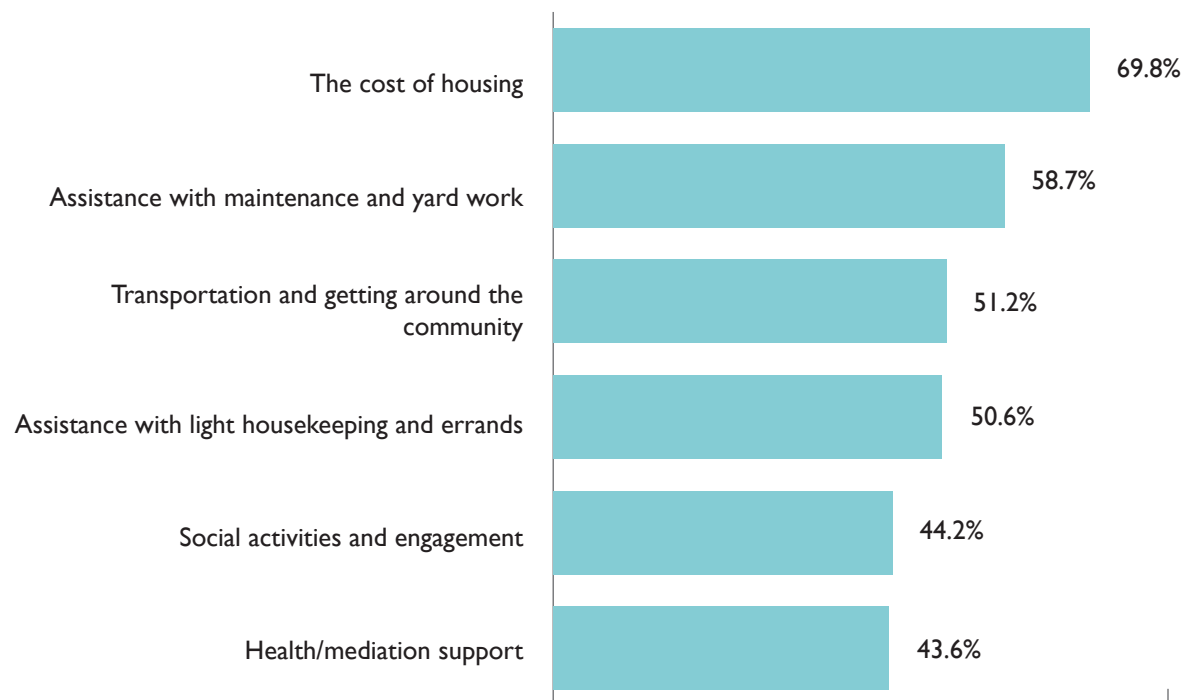


## Housing and Supports for Seniors

Recognizing that seniors make up one in 4 households in Smithers (24.7%), the survey also included a number of questions which looked specifically at the type of housing and supports that seniors in Smithers need in order to allow them to remain living independently in their community. In terms of the range of priorities that were identified:

- 120 (70%) identified the cost of housing
- 101 (59%) identified assistance with maintenance and light yard work
- 88 (51%) identified transportation and support in getting around the community
- 87 (51%) identified assistance with light housekeeping and errands
- 76 (44%) identified the need for different social activities and supports
- 75 (44%) identified assistance around health and medication supports

**Graph 17: Housing and support options for seniors**



The following other supports were identified:

- *Mental health support*
- *Childcare support*
- *COVID 19 has taught us that seniors need basic supports to age in place*
- *Seniors should not be forced to leave their community*
- *Seniors need help with basic grocery shopping and other basic supports*
- *There should be more assisted living and supportive seniors housing in the community.*



## **Appendix A:**

# **The Survey Instrument**

## Smithers Housing Needs Assessment Survey

SPARC BC is working with the Town of Smithers on the development of a Housing Needs Assessment Report. This survey is part of our broader community engagement process and is designed to learn more about the different types of housing needs in Smithers. Please take a few minutes to share your ideas and experiences. Not only will your feedback help to provide a better understanding of the housing needs in Smithers, but it will also help us in identifying potential strategies or actions that can be taken.

**The survey closes on October 30, 2020.**

**1. Where do you currently live?**

- ☐ Town of Smithers
- ☐ Village of Telkwa
- ☐ Rural District of Bulkley-Nechako
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How long have you lived in your current housing?**

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 5 years
- ☐ 6 to 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

**3. How long have you lived in Smithers?**

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 to 5 years
- ☐ 6 to 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years
- ☐ My current housing is not located in Smithers



**4. Do you rent or do you own your home?**

- ☐ I rent
- ☐ I own
- ☐ None of the above

**5. If you are currenting renting, do you plan to buy a home in the future?**

- ☐ Yes, in the next 2 years
- ☐ Yes, in the next 3 to 5 years
- ☐ I would like to purchase sometime in the future
- ☐ No, I plan to continue to rent
- ☐ I am uncertain about my future plans

**6. Approximately, how much do you spend on housing each month?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$500        | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,000 to \$2,499          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 to \$999     | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$2,500           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 to \$1,499 | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not pay for my housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 to \$1,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say         |

**7. How old are you?**

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24    | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34    | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 and older        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44    | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say |



**8. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with your current housing situation.**

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

**9. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the affordability of your current housing.**

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

**10. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the condition or level of repair of your current housing.**

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

**11. Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with the size and suitability of your current housing (i.e. it is the right size/has the right number of bedrooms).**

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied



**12. Thinking about your future housing situation, do you expect your housing needs will change in the next 5 years?**

- ☐ Yes, I expect my housing needs will change
- ☐ No, I do not expect any changes in my housing needs
- ☐ I am unsure about what changes may arise

**12(a). If you said, "yes" you expect your housing needs will change, please describe the changes that you anticipate.**

**13. If you are a current resident of Smithers, are you considering moving away from Smithers in the next five (5) years?**

- ☐ Yes, I am considering moving away from Smithers
- ☐ No, I am not considering moving away from Smithers
- ☐ Not applicable, I am not a current resident of Smithers

**14. If you are not a current resident of Smithers, are you considering relocating to Smithers in the next five (5) years?**

- ☐ Yes, I am considering relocating to Smithers
- ☐ No, I am not considering moving away from Smithers
- ☐ Not applicable, I am a current resident of Smithers

**15. Do you consider homelessness to be an issue in Smithers?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure





**15(a). If yes, please rank this issue in terms of importance.**

- ☐ Extremely important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not very important
- ☐ Not at all important

**16. Do you believe that housing affordability is an issue in Smithers?**

- ☐ I strongly agree that housing affordability is an issue in Smithers
- ☐ I somewhat agree that housing affordability is an issue in Smithers
- ☐ I am unsure as to whether housing affordability is an issue in Smithers
- ☐ I somewhat disagree that housing affordability is an issue in Smithers
- ☐ I strongly disagree that housing affordability is an issue in Smithers

**17. Do you think that there is the need for more rental housing in Smithers?**

- ☐ I strongly agree that there is the need for more rental housing in Smithers
- ☐ I somewhat agree that there is the need for more rental housing in Smithers
- ☐ I am unsure as to whether there is the need for more rental housing in Smithers
- ☐ I somewhat disagree that there is the need for more rental housing in Smithers
- ☐ I strongly disagree that there is the need for more rental housing in Smithers

**18. Do you think that there is the need for more ownership housing in Smithers?**

- ☐ I strongly agree that there is the need for more ownership housing in Smithers
- ☐ I somewhat agree that there is the need for more ownership housing in Smithers
- ☐ I am unsure as to whether there is the need for more ownership housing in Smithers
- ☐ I somewhat disagree that there is the need for more ownership housing in Smithers
- ☐ I somewhat disagree that there is the need for more ownership housing in Smithers



**19. Thinking of yourself and others living in Smithers, what do you see as the top three (3) housing needs or priorities? Choose up to three from the following options:**

- ☐ Purchasing a house is not affordable to younger households
- ☐ There are not enough housing choices for families
- ☐ There are not enough housing choices for seniors
- ☐ The rents are not affordable to some households
- ☐ The quality of the housing is not adequate (i.e. some of the housing is too old)
- ☐ There is the need for more housing for people who are homeless
- ☐ There is the need for more smaller units for seniors to downsize
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Smithers is doing well, there are no immediate needs or priorities

**20. If more housing were to be built in Smithers, what type of housing do you feel the community needs most? Choose up to three from the following options:**

- ☐ Multi-family housing (i.e. duplexes/triplexes)
- ☐ Single detached housing (bungalow style)
- ☐ Ground-oriented seniors housing
- ☐ Apartment rental units
- ☐ Coach houses or garden suite units
- ☐ Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**21. Other communities have been experimenting with different housing types like modular housing, laneway housing, coach housing and/or garden suites to better meet the needs of residents and to improve affordability. In your opinion, do you see any benefit from having a wider range of housing options in Smithers?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure



**Please provide additional information about the types of housing options that are needed:**

**22. Some residents (especially seniors) also need different types of supports) to help them to remain living in their housing for as long as possible. Do you or others that you know need help with any of the following (check all that apply):**

- ☐ The cost of housing
- ☐ Transportation and getting around the community
- ☐ Health/medication support
- ☐ Social activities and engagement
- ☐ Assistance with maintenance and yard work
- ☐ Assistance with maintenance and yard work
- ☐ Assistance with light housekeeping and errands
- ☐ Other\_\_\_\_\_

**23. Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback, if you have any additional comments or feedback please feel free to add your comments below:**

1.
2.
3.

**Questions:**

If you have questions or if you need assistance to complete the survey, please do not hesitate to reach out to Lorraine Copas at 1-888-718-7794 (toll free) and we will be happy to assist you.



**Appendix B:**

# **Detailed Technical Appendices**

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# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## 1.0 Introduction

This report provides an overview of key housing-related measures used to support the development of a Housing Needs Report for the Town of Smithers. This report was prepared by SPARC BC with funding provided through the UBCM Housing Needs Report program. This report includes information required to meet the *Local Government Statutes (Housing Needs Report) Amendment Act 2018*, the *Local Government Act*, and the *Housing Needs Report Regulation*.

This report includes baseline information about current and projected housing needs in the Town of Smithers with specific considerations related to the need for:

- Affordable housing
- Rental housing
- Supported and special needs housing

This report also takes into consideration the specific housing needs of different priority population groups including:

- Families
- Seniors
- People with disabilities
- Families and individuals who are homeless or 'at risk of homelessness'.

Recommendations set out in this report focus on the types of strategies and actions needed to meet existing and emerging housing needs over the next five (5) years with specific consideration related to:

- Housing type
- Housing tenure
- Bedroom size
- Market and non-market housing needs

## 1.1 About This Report

The information in this report is divided into seven sections including:

- Population-related measures and data
- Household-related measures and data
- Measures related to the housing choices available
- Income and housing cost data
- Measures related to households in housing need
- Labour market-related information and data; and,
- Population and household projections for 2016 to 2021 and 2021 to 2026

This report includes the identification of potential opportunities for action for consideration by the Town of Smithers in responding to the needs that have been identified through this research.



## 1.2 Data Sources

This report relies on a mix of data sources designed to gain a deeper understanding of housing needs both within the Town of Smithers as well as across the broader Bulkley-Nechako region and includes key measures and indicators from:

- The 2016 Census
- The 2011 Census and National Household Survey
- The 2006 Census
- BC Housing (Unit Count Report)
- BC Assessment data
- Local housing market information including MLS and other market-related data
- B.C. Stats including population and household projections available through P.E.O.P.L.E. at the regional district and local health area level.

# POPULATION

## 2.0 Population Data

This section provides information on some of the key social, demographic and population-related measures influencing the need for housing in Smithers. This includes information on the general level of population growth and change as well as information on the needs of specific population and household groups. The information set out in this section look at the range of factors both in terms of existing and future housing needs. While additional details can be found in this section, Table 2.1 below shows some of the key drivers of housing demand with the dark circles signifying a significant factor and the light circles signalling less of a concern in the Smithers context.

### 2.1 Population-Related Measures

TABLE 2.1 POPULATION-RELATED MEASURES

<b>Total population</b> In 2016 the population in the Town of Smithers was 5,295 individuals down from 5,330 in 2011.	●
<b>Local population growth</b> Between 2006 and 2011, Smithers grew by 190 individuals while there was a small decrease of 35 individuals reported between 2011 and 2016.	●
<b>Regional population growth</b> Between 2006 and 2011, the Bulkley-Nechako region grew by 1,015 individuals while the region reported a net decrease of 1,500 individuals between 2011 and 2016.	○
<b>Proportion of the regional population</b> In addition to growing at a faster rate when compared to the region as a whole, it should be noted that Smithers accounts for 14% of the total population in the Bulkley-Nechako Region.	●
<b>Children and youth (0 to 14 years old)</b> The total number of children and youth between the ages of 0 to 14 living in Smithers has continued to decrease, although children and youth between the ages of 0 to 14 account for 18% of the total population in Smithers.	○
<b>Younger adults (20 to 24)</b> The number of younger adults living in Smithers had continued to increase. This is different when compared to the region as a whole and represents a potential source of future demand.	●
<b>Seniors (65 years and older)</b> There is growing demand among seniors 65 years and older. In 2016, the total number of seniors 65 and older living in Smithers accounted for 16% of the population, or almost 1 in 7 individuals living in Smithers. As well, both Smithers and the Bulkley-Nechako region have continued to report an increase across this cohort.	●
<b>Older Seniors (85 years and older)</b> There is also increased demand from older seniors (85 and older) who account for 3% of the population living in Smithers (140 individuals). Additionally, between 2011 and 2016, both Smithers and the broader Bulkley-Nechako region reported an increase in this cohort with the number of older seniors in Smithers increasing by 35 individuals between 2011 and 2016 while the Bulkley-Nechako region reported an increase of 115 individuals in this age cohort during the same time period.	●

## 2.2 Total Population

There were 5,295 individuals living in Smithers at the time of the 2016 Census. This represents approximately 14% of the total population in the Bulkley-Nechako region.

**TABLE 2.2 TOTAL POPULATION**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	4,113,487	4,400,057	4,648,055
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	37,930	38,945	37,445
Town of Smithers	5,140	5,330	5,295
% of the Regional Population	13.6%	13.7%	14.1%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.3 Population Growth

Between 2006 and 2011 the population in Smithers increased by approximately 190 individuals and has remained relatively consistent between 2011 and 2016. At the same time, the population in the broader Bulkley-Nechako region reported a net decrease of 1,500 individuals.

**TABLE 2.3 CHANGE IN POPULATION (2006 TO 2016)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	4,113,487	4,400,057	4,648,055
Change in population (Province)	--	286,570	247,998
% change in the population	--	7.0%	5.6%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	37,930	38,945	37,445
Change in population (Region)	--	1,015	(1,500)
% change in the population	--	2.7%	(-3.9%)
Town of Smithers	5,140	5,330	5,295
Change in population (Community)	--	190	(35)
% change in the population	--	3.7%	(-0.7%)

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.4 Average Age

At the time of the 2016 Census, the average age of residents living in Smithers was 41 years, higher than the regional average age of 39.5 years but lower than the Provincial average which was 41.8 years.

**TABLE 2.4 AVERAGE AGE**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	39.2	40.7	41.8
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	35.9	37.8	39.5
Town of Smithers	37.1	39.1	41

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.5 Median Age

At the time of the 2016 Census, the median age of residents living in Smithers was 38.3 years, lower than the regional median age of 41 years and the Provincial median age which was 42.5 years.

**TABLE 2.5 MEDIAN AGE**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	40.5	41.6	42.5
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	37.1	39.1	41
Town of Smithers	35.9	37	38.3

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.6 Age Distribution

At the time of the 2016 Census, individuals between the ages of 0 and 14 accounted for 18% of the population in Smithers compared to 19% of the population in the Bulkley-Nechako region. This represents almost 1 in 5 individuals. At the same time, 7% of the population was between the ages of 15 and 19 while 7% were between the ages of 20 and 24. Approximately 53% of the population living in Smithers was between the ages of 25 and 64 while 13% of the population was between the ages of 65 and 84. There were also 140 individuals (3% of the population) who were 85 or older.

**TABLE 2.6 AGE DISTRIBUTION**

	0-14	15-19	20-24	25-64	65-84	85 +
British Columbia (#)	691,390	258,980	287,560	2,561,145	739,785	109,190
British Columbia (%)	14.9%	5.6%	6.2%	55.1%	15.9%	2.3%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	7,290	2,550	2,110	20,305	5,080	560
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	19.2%	6.7%	5.6%	53.6%	13.4%	1.5%
Town of Smithers (#)	975	370	350	2855	715	140
Town of Smithers (%)	18.0%	6.8%	6.5%	52.8%	13.2%	2.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.7 Population (0 to 14)

The population of children and youth between the ages of 0 to 14 living in Smithers is decreasing. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 975 children between the ages of 0 and 14 living in Smithers, down from 1,110 in 2011. Based on the most recent Census data, children account for 18% of individuals living in Smithers and 20% of the total population in the region.

**TABLE 2.7 TOTAL POPULATION CHILDREN AND YOUTH (0 TO 14)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	679,600	677,360	691,390
British Columbia (%)	16.5%	15.4%	14.9%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	8,385	8,125	7,290
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	22.1%	20.9%	19.5%
Town of Smithers (#)	1,165	1,110	975
Town of Smithers (%)	22.7%	20.8%	18.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016



## 2.8 % Change in Population (0 to 14)

Between 2011 and 2016 there was a decrease of 135 individuals between the ages of 0 to 14 living in Smithers. This represents a decrease of 12% when compared to 2011. The total number of individuals between the ages of 0 to 14 also decreased by 10% at the regional level (835 individuals).

**TABLE 2.8 % CHANGE IN POPULATION (0 TO 14)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	(2,240)	14,030
British Columbia (%)	--	-0.3%	2.1%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	(260)	(835)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	--	(3.1%)	(10.3%)
Town of Smithers (#)	--	(-55)	(135)
Town of Smithers (%)	--	(4.7%)	(12.2%)

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.9 Population (15 to 19)

The population between the ages of 15 to 19 in Smithers is decreasing. In 2016, there were 370 individuals between the ages of 15 and 19 in Smithers, 65 fewer than in 2011. There were 2,550 individuals between 15 and 19 in the Bulkley-Nechako region in 2016, 460 fewer than in 2011.

**TABLE 2.9 TOTAL POPULATION (15 TO 19)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	273,565	275,165	258,980
British Columbia (%)	6.7%	6.3%	5.6%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,070	3,010	2,550
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	8.1%	7.7%	6.8%
Town of Smithers (#)	415	435	370
Town of Smithers (%)	8.1%	8.2%	7.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.10 % Change in Population (15 to 19)

Between 2011 and 2016, individuals between the ages of 15 and 19 decreased by 15%, the same proportional decrease as occurred in the region.

**TABLE 2.10 % CHANGE IN POPULATION (15 TO 19)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	1,600	(16,185)
British Columbia (%)	--	0.6%	(5.9%)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	(60)	(460)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	--	(2.0%)	(15.3%)
Town of Smithers (#)	--	20	(65)
Town of Smithers (%)	--	4.8%	(14.9%)

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.11 Population (20 to 24)

There were 350 young adults between the ages of 20 and 24 living in Smithers in 2016, 5 more than in 2011. There were 2,110 young adults between the ages of 20 and 24 living in the Bulkley-Nechako region, 70 fewer than in 2011. These numbers represent only modest changes in the proportion of the population between the ages of 20 and 24. The Region experienced a decrease in young adults aged 20 to 24 of 0.2% between 2006 and 2016 while Smithers experienced a slight increase of 0.3%.

**TABLE 2.11 TOTAL POPULATION (20 TO 24)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	265,905	279,825	287,560
British Columbia (%)	6.5%	6.4%	6.2%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	2,180	2,180	2,110
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	5.7%	5.6%	5.6%
Town of Smithers (#)	315	345	350
Town of Smithers (%)	6.1%	6.5%	6.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.12 % Change in Population (20 to 24)

The population between the ages of 20 to 24 in Smithers showed a small increase between 2011 and 2016 (1%) while region-wide there was a decrease of 3%.

**TABLE 2.12 % CHANGE IN POPULATION (20 TO 24)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	13,920	7,735
British Columbia (%)	--	5.2%	2.8%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	0	(70)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	--	0.0%	(3.2%)
Town of Smithers (#)	--	30	5
Town of Smithers (%)	--	9.5%	1.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.13 Population (25 to 64)

There were 2,855 individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 living in Smithers in 2016, 45 more than in 2011. Region-wide there were 20,305 individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 765 fewer than in 2011.

**TABLE 2.13 TOTAL POPULATION (25 TO 64)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	2,294,600	2,478,985	2,561,145
British Columbia (%)	55.8%	56.3%	55.1%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	20,665	21,070	20,305
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	54.5%	54.1%	54.2%
Town of Smithers (#)	2,750	2,810	2,855
Town of Smithers (%)	53.5%	52.7%	53.9%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.14 % Change in Population (25 to 64)

While the region reported a net decrease of 765 individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 (4%), Smithers reported a net increase of 45 individuals (2%) in this age cohort.

**TABLE 2.14 % CHANGE IN POPULATION (25 TO 64)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	184,385	82,160
British Columbia (%)	--	8.0%	3.3%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	405	(765)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	--	2.0%	(3.6%)
Town of Smithers (#)	--	60	45
Town of Smithers (%)	--	2.2%	1.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.15 Population (65 to 84)

There were 715 seniors between the ages of 65 and 84 living in Smithers in 2016, 115 or 14% more than in 2011. There were 5,080 seniors between the ages of 65 and 84 living in the Bulkley-Nechako region in 2016, 700 or 14% more than in 2011.

**TABLE 2.15 TOTAL POPULATION (65 TO 84)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	523,760	596,040	739,785
British Columbia (%)	12.7%	13.5%	15.9%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,655	4,380	5,080
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	9.6%	11.2%	13.6%
Town of Smithers (#)	495	600	715
Town of Smithers (%)	9.6%	11.3%	13.5%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.16 % Change in Population (65 to 84)

Region-wide there was a net increase of 700 individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort which represents an increase of 16% when compared to 2011. Within Smithers, there was an increase of 115 individuals (19%) in the 65 to 84 age cohort.

**TABLE 2.16 % CHANGE IN POPULATION (65 TO 84)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	72,280	143,745
British Columbia (%)	--	13.8%	24.1%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	725	700
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	--	19.8%	16.0%
Town of Smithers (#)	--	105	115
Town of Smithers (%)	--	21.2%	19.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.17 Population (85 and older)

There were 140 seniors age 85 and older living in Smithers in 2016, 35 more than in 2011. There were 560 seniors age 85 and older living in the Bulkley-Nechako region in 2016, 115 or 2% more than in 2011. There was significant growth in the proportion of seniors age 85 and older, both across the region and in Smithers between 2006 and 2016. The proportion of seniors 85 or older increased to 1.5% of the regional population and to 2.6% of the population in Smithers.

**TABLE 2.17 TOTAL POPULATION (85 AND OLDER)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	76,050	92,675	109,190
British Columbia (%)	1.8%	2.1%	2.3%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	325	445	560
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	0.9%	1.1%	1.5%
Town of Smithers (#)	75	105	140
Town of Smithers (%)	1.5%	2.0%	2.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 2.18 % Change in Population (85 and older)

Region-wide there was an increase of 115 individuals 85 and older which represents a change of 26% when compared to 2011. In Smithers, there was an increase of 35 individuals 85 and older which represents an increase of 33% when compared to 2011.

**TABLE 2.18 % CHANGE IN POPULATION (85 AND OLDER)**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	16,625	16,515
British Columbia (%)	--	21.9%	17.8%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	120	115
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	--	36.9%	25.8%
Town of Smithers (#)	--	30	35
Town of Smithers (%)	--	40.0%	33.3%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

# HOUSEHOLDS

## 3.0 Household Data

This section provides information on the different family and household arrangements across households living in Smithers and includes comparative information for the Bulkley-Nechako region and the Province as a whole. Included in this section is information on the housing and tenure profile of households living in Smithers as well as information on the different types of family and household arrangements and the potential implications in terms of existing and future housing demand. While additional details can be found in this section, Table 3.1 below shows some of the key drivers of housing demand as it relates to households living in Smithers with the dark circles signifying a significant factor driving demand and the light circles signalling less of a concern in the Smithers context.

### 3.1 Household-Related Measures

TABLE 3.1 HOUSEHOLD-RELATED MEASURES

<b>Household growth</b> Between 2006 and 2016, Smithers grew by 210 households including an increase of 100 households between 2011 and 2016. At the same time, the Bulkley-Nechako region reported a decrease of 85 households.	●
<b>Ownership Rate</b> In 2016, owners accounted for 69% of all households in Smithers compared to 79% across the Bulkley-Nechako region.	○
<b>Owners with a mortgage</b> In 2016, 55% of all owners in Smithers had a mortgage compared to 49% of owners in the Bulkley-Nechako region. Those with a mortgage reported average housing costs of \$1,506 per month while those without a mortgage had average housing costs of \$438 per month.	●
<b>Rental housing demand</b> In 2016, 715 households in Smithers were renters. This number grew by 195 households between 2011 and 2016. The available data also suggests that Smithers is home to 23% of all renter households in the Bulkley-Nechako region.	●
<b>Smaller 1 person households</b> Smaller single person households accounted for 1 in 3 households or 33% of all households living in Smithers in 2016, higher than the region (26%) or the Province as a whole (29%).	●
<b>Larger 4 and 5 person households</b> Larger 4 and 5 person households accounted for 1 in 5 households or 20% of households in Smithers in 2016, lower than seen across the region (22%) or the Province as a whole (21%).	○
<b>Census family households</b> Family households accounted for 62% of all households living in Smithers with 60% of these households reporting that they have children living at home.	●
<b>Non-family households</b> Non-family households represent 37% of all households in Smithers with 89% being single person households. Region-wide non-family households accounted for 29% of the total.	●
<b>Unrelated persons sharing</b> There were 100 non-family households in Smithers in 2016 who were unrelated persons sharing their housing, a number which has remained relatively consistent over the years.	○



This section looks more closely at the different household related measures:

### 3.2 Total Households

There were 2,290 households living in Smithers at the time of the 2016 Census. This represents an increase of 100 households from 2011. The Bulkley-Nechako Region realized a modest decline of 85 households between 2011 to 2016 with 15,100 households recorded at the time of the 2016 Census.

**TABLE 3.2 TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	1,643,150	1,764,637	1,881,970
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	14,550	15,185	15,100
Town of Smithers	2,080	2,190	2,290
Smithers as % of the Regional Total	14.3%	14.4%	15.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.3 Change in Number of Households

There were 2,290 households living in Smithers at the time of the 2016 Census. This represents an increase of 100 households from 2011. The Bulkley-Nechako Region realized a modest decline of 85 households between 2011 to 2016 with 15,100 households recorded at the time of the 2016 Census.

**TABLE 3.3 CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS**

		2006 -2011	2011-2016
British Columbia (#)	--	121,487	117,333
British Columbia (% Change)		7.4%	6.6%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	635	(85)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (% Change)		4.4%	(0.6%)
Town of Smithers (#)	--	110	100
Town of Smithers (% Change)	--	5.3%	4.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.4 Total Owners

Of the 2,290 households in Smithers in 2016, 1,575 (69%) were owners, down from 1,675 (77%) in 2011. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, 11,580 households (77%) were owners.

**TABLE 3.4 TOTAL OWNERS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	1,145,050	1,234,710	1,279,025
% of all households	69.7%	70.0%	68.0%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	11,070	11,605	11,580
% of all households	76.1%	76.4%	76.7%
Town of Smithers	1,420	1,675	1,575
% of all households	68.3%	76.5%	68.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.5 Net Change in Owners

Smithers experienced a net decrease of 100 owner households (6%) between 2011 and 2016. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there was a modest decrease of 25 owner households (0.2%). However, the period from 2006 to 2011 had seen growth in the number of owner households in both Smithers (18%) and the Bulkley-Nechako region (5%).

**TABLE 3.5 NET CHANGE IN OWNERS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (# change)	--	89,660	44,315
British Columbia (% change)	--	7.8%	3.6%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (# change)	--	535	(25)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (% change)	--	4.8%	(0.2%)
Town of Smithers (# change)	--	255	(100)
Town of Smithers (% change)	--	18.0%	(6.0%)

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.6 Owners with a Mortgage

Of the 1,575 owner households in Smithers, 895 (57%) reported that they had a mortgage. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, of the 11,580 households who were owners 5,725 had a mortgage (49%). Province-wide, 727,680 households reported that they had a mortgage, 57% of all owner households.

**TABLE 3.6 OWNERS WITH A MORTGAGE**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	644,560	688,530	727,680
British Columbia (% owners)	56.3%	55.8%	56.9%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	5,670	5,730	5,725
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	51.2%	49.4%	49.4%
Town of Smithers (#)	865	945	895
Town of Smithers (% owners)	60.9%	56.4%	56.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.7 Total Renters

Of the 2,290 households living in Smithers in 2016, 715 (31%) were renters, representing almost 1 in 3 households (31%). Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, renter households accounted for 21% of all households. Province-wide, approximately 32% of all households were renters in 2016.

**TABLE 3.7 TOTAL RENTERS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	494,000	525,000	599,360
British Columbia (%)	30.1%	29.8%	31.8%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,000	3,085	3,100
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	20.6%	20.3%	20.5%
Town of Smithers (#)	665	520	715
Town of Smithers (%)	32.0%	23.7%	31.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.8 Renters in Subsidized Housing

Of the 715 renter households living in Smithers, 50 households (7%) were living in subsidized housing. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, 290 renter households (10%) were living in subsidized housing. Province-wide, approximately 13% of all renter households were living in subsidized housing.

**TABLE 3.8 RENTERS IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	69,995	73,830
British Columbia (% of renters)	--	13.5%	12.5%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	495	290
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (% of renters)	--	16.6%	9.9%
Town of Smithers (#)	--	70	50
Town of Smithers (% of renters)	--	13.5%	7.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.9 Change in Renters Living in Subsidized Housing

There was a net loss of 20 renter households living in subsidized housing in Smithers from 2011 to 2016, a decrease of 29% from 2011. The number of renter households living in subsidized housing in the Bulkley-Nechako region decreased by 59% (a loss of 205 households) from 2011 to 2016 while the rate across the Province grew by 13% or 3,835 households in the same time period.

**TABLE 3.9 CHANGE IN RENTERS LIVING IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	--	--	3,835
British Columbia (% change)	--	--	12.5%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	--	--	(205)
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (% change)	--	--	(58.6%)
Town of Smithers (#)	--	--	(20)
Town of Smithers (% change)	--	--	(28.6%)

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.10 Average Household Size

At the time of the 2016 Census, the average household size in Smithers was 2.5 persons which is consistent with the average household size for the region but slightly higher than the average household size for the Province. In general, from 2011 to 2016, the average household size decreased for the Province and the region while the average household size in Smithers has remained constant.

**TABLE 3.10 AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	2.5	2.5	2.4
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	2.6	2.6	2.5
Town of Smithers	2.5	2.5	2.5

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.11 Number of Persons Per Household

There were 760 1-person households living in Smithers (33%) in 2016. Similarly, there were 755 2-person households and 775 households of 3 or more persons. Smithers has a higher prevalence of single person households (33%) when compared to the Bulkley-Nechako region (26%) and the Province (29%).

**TABLE 3.11** NUMBER OF PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

	1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person	5-person
British Columbia (#)	541,910	663,770	277,690	243,125	155,470
British Columbia (%)	28.8%	35.3%	14.8%	12.9%	8.3%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,895	5,845	2,025	1,885	1,455
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	25.8%	38.7%	13.4%	12.5%	9.6%
Town of Smithers (#)	760	755	325	285	165
Town of Smithers (%)	33.2%	33.0%	14.2%	12.4%	7.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

### 3.12 One Person Households

Approximately one in 3 households (33% of all households) in Smithers in 2016 were single person households. At the same time, 26% of households in the Bulkley-Nechako region were 1-person households, while 29% of households across the Province were comprised of a single person.

**TABLE 3.12** NUMBER OF 1-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	460,575	497,215	541,925
British Columbia (%)	28.0%	28.2%	28.8%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,520	3,765	3,895
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	24.2%	24.8%	25.8%
Town of Smithers (#)	615	700	760
Town of Smithers (%)	29.6%	32.0%	33.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.13 Two Person Households

At the time of the 2016 Census, one in 3 households in Smithers (33%) was a 2-person household. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, 5,845 households (39%) were 2-person households while 35% of households across the Province were 2-person households.

**TABLE 3.13** NUMBER OF 2-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	562,225	612,380	663,780
British Columbia (%)	34.2%	34.7%	35.3%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	5,130	5,490	5,845
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	35.3%	36.2%	38.7%
Town of Smithers (#)	665	700	755
Town of Smithers (%)	32.0%	32.0%	33.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.14 Households of 3 or More Persons

Approximately one in 3 households in Smithers in 2016 was comprised of 3 or more persons (34%). Similarly, 36% of households in the Bulkley-Nechako region and across the Province were comprised of 3 or more persons.

**TABLE 3.14 NUMBER OF 3+-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	620,355	655,035	676,260
British Columbia (%)	37.8%	37.1%	35.9%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	5,900	5,930	5,365
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	40.5%	39.1%	35.5%
Town of Smithers (#)	805	785	775
Town of Smithers (%)	38.7%	35.8%	33.8%

### 3.15 Family and Household Type

Of the households living in Smithers in 2016, 1,415 (62%) were census families while 860 (38%) were non-census families. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, 70% of households were census families (10,555) while 29% (4,340) were non-census families. Across the Province as a whole, census families accounted for 64% of all households while non-census families accounted for 34% of the total.

**TABLE 3.15 FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD TYPE**

	Total Households	Census Families	Multi-Family Households	Non-Census Families
British Columbia (#)	1,881,970	1,196,165	55,465	630,340
British Columbia (%)	100.0%	63.6%	2.9%	33.5%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	15,100	10,555	200	4,340
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	100.0%	69.9%	1.3%	28.7%
Town of Smithers (#)	2,295	1,415	15	860
Town of Smithers (%)	100.0%	61.7%	0.7%	37.5%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

### 3.16 Census Family Households

Between 2011 and 2016, Smithers reported a small increase in the number of census family households while the Bulkley-Nechako region reported a small decrease. Across the Province, there were 1,196,165 census family households in 2016, an increase of more than 61,000 households compared to 2011. Approximately 62% of all households in Smithers are census family households, fewer than is the case in either the Bulkley-Nechako region (70%) or across the Province (64%).

**TABLE 3.16 CENSUS FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	1,074,850	1,134,700	1,196,165
British Columbia (%)	65.4%	64.3%	63.6%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	10,425	10,770	10,555
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	71.6%	70.9%	69.9%
Town of Smithers (#)	1,345	1,405	1,415
Town of Smithers (%)	64.7%	64.2%	61.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.17 Families with Children

Families with children accounted for 58% of all census family households in Smithers in 2016. This translates into 815 households. Between 2011 and 2016 there was a small decrease of 30 households with children. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, families with children account for 53% of all census families. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of families with children across the Bulkley-Nechako region decreased by 460 households. Province-wide, there was an increase of more than 17,000 families with children between 2011 and 2016 although the actual proportion of families with children fell from 57% to 56%.

**TABLE 3.17 FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	572,565	650,475	668,365
British Columbia (%)	53.3%	57.3%	55.9%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	5,625	6,035	5,575
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	54.0%	56.0%	52.8%
Town of Smithers (#)	805	845	815
Town of Smithers (%)	59.9%	60.1%	57.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.18 Families without Children

Families without children represent a growing demographic both in Smithers and the broader Bulkley-Nechako region. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 600 family households living in Smithers that did not have children living at home. This represents an increase of 45 households from the previous Census. Similarly, the Bulkley-Nechako region had 4,985 family households without children, an increase of 150 households between 2011 and 2016. Province-wide, the number of families without children increased by more than 43,000 households between 2011 and 2016. In Smithers, the proportion of families without children as a subset of census families increased from 40% to 42% from 2011 to 2016 while the increase across the Bulkley-Nechako region was from 44% to 47%.



**TABLE 3.18** FAMILIES WITHOUT CHILDREN

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	424,895	484,225	527,795
British Columbia (%)	39.5%	42.7%	44.1%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	4,195	4,735	4,985
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	40.2%	44.0%	47.2%
Town of Smithers (#)	485	555	600
Town of Smithers (%)	36.1%	39.5%	42.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.19 Non-Family Households

Non-family households include single person households as well as unrelated individuals sharing. In 2016, there were 860 non-family households living in Smithers, 38% of all households, an increase of 75 households between 2011 and 2016. The Bulkley-Nechako region had 4,340 non-family households, 29% of all households. The Province experienced an increase of more than 50,000 non-family households between 2011 and 2016 when 1 in 3 households (34%) was a non-family household.

**TABLE 3.19** NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	526,790	580,070	630,340
British Columbia (%)	32.1%	32.9%	33.5%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,940	4,220	4,340
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	27.1%	27.8%	28.7%
Town of Smithers (#)	715	785	860
Town of Smithers (%)	34.4%	35.8%	37.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.20 Single Person Households

In 2016, there were 765 single person households living in Smithers (33% of all households), an increase of 65 households when compared to the previous Census. The Bulkley-Nechako region had 3,890 single person households in 2016, 26% of all households and an increase of 125 households. The Province experienced an increase of more than 43,000 single person households. The proportion of single person households has been growing in Smithers, as well as across the region and the Province.

**TABLE 3.20** SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	460,580	497,215	541,925
British Columbia (%)	28.0%	28.2%	28.8%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,525	3,765	3,890
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	24.2%	24.8%	25.8%
Town of Smithers (#)	615	700	765
Town of Smithers (%)	29.6%	32.0%	33.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.21 Unrelated Persons Sharing

In 2016, there were 100 households living in Smithers which included two or more unrelated persons sharing, an increase of 20 households between 2011 and 2016. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 450 households which included two or more unrelated persons sharing, a decrease of 5 households between 2011 and 2016. During the same time period, the Province reported an increase of more than 5,000 households comprised of two or more unrelated persons sharing.

**TABLE 3.21 UNRELATED PERSONS SHARING**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	66,210	82,855	88,415
British Columbia (%)	4.0%	4.7%	4.7%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	415	455	450
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%
Town of Smithers (#)	100	80	100
Town of Smithers (%)	4.8%	3.7%	4.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

### 3.22 Single Household Maintainer

The term household maintainer refers to the number of persons in a household who are responsible for carrying the cost of the housing including paying the rent or mortgage and other expenses. Of the 2,290 households living in Smithers in 2016, 1,395 (61%) were maintained by a single household maintainer with the total number of single household maintainers in Smithers increasing by 100 households between 2011 and 2016. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region in 2016, 9,460 households had a single household maintainer (63%).

**TABLE 3.22 SINGLE HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	1,001,195	1,038,910	1,091,500
British Columbia (%)	60.9%	58.9%	58.0%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	9,205	9,585	9,460
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	63.3%	63.1%	62.6%
Town of Smithers (#)	1,295	1,295	1,395
Town of Smithers (%)	62.3%	59.1%	60.9%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

### 3.23 Two Household Maintainers

Of the 2,290 households in Smithers in 2016, 850 (37%) had 2 household maintainers while this was the case for 5,415 households (36%) in the Bulkley-Nechako region. Province-wide, 725,675 households (39%) had two household maintainers.

**TABLE 3.23** **TWO HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINERS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	603,520	673,940	725,675
British Columbia (%)	36.7%	38.2%	38.6%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	5,175	5,400	5,415
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	35.6%	35.6%	35.9%
Town of Smithers (#)	760	870	850
Town of Smithers (%)	36.5%	39.7%	37.1%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

### 3.24 Three Household Maintainers

There is a growing number of households with 3 or more household maintainers. Of the 2,290 households living in Smithers in 2016, 45 reported having 3 or more household maintainers, an increase of 20 households between 2011 and 2016. At the same time there were 230 households across the Bulkley-Nechako region which reported 3 or more household maintainers, an increase of 35 households. Province-wide, there were 64,795 households with 3 or more household maintainers, an increase of 13,015 households.

**TABLE 3.24** **THREE HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINERS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	38,430	51,780	64,795
British Columbia (%)	2.3%	2.9%	3.4%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	170	195	230
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	1.2%	1.3%	1.5%
Town of Smithers (#)	25	25	45
Town of Smithers (%)	1.2%	1.1%	2.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

### 3.25 Age of Household Maintainer

In 2016, there were 120 households in Smithers (5%) led by someone under the age of 25 and an additional 770 households (34%) led by someone between the ages of 25 and 44. There were also 830 households (36%) living in Smithers who were led by someone between the ages of 45 to 64 and 565 households (25%) where the primary household maintainer was 65 and older. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region there were 555 households led by someone under the age of 25 (4%) as well as an additional 4,335 households (29%) led by someone between the ages of 25 and 44. There were also 6,630 households across the Bulkley-Nechako region (44%) where the primary household maintainer was between the ages of 45 and 64, and 3,575 households (24%) where the primary household maintainer was 65 or older.

**TABLE 3.25** AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER

	Under 25	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 and older
British Columbia (#)	58,620	558,140	768,730	496,480
British Columbia (%)	3.1%	29.7%	40.8%	26.4%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	555	4,335	6,630	3,575
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	3.7%	28.7%	43.9%	23.7%
Town of Smithers (#)	120	770	830	565
Town of Smithers (%)	5.2%	33.6%	36.2%	24.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

### 3.26 Senior-Led Households

Smithers has a larger proportion of senior-led households when compared to the Bulkley-Nechako region. As of the 2016 Census, one in four households in Smithers (25%) was led by a senior. In 2016, there were 85 households living in Smithers where the primary household maintainer was 85 or older, representing 4% of all households. In the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 310 households where the primary household maintainer was 85 years old or older (2%). There were also 325 households in Smithers led by a senior between the ages of 65 and 74 (14%), and 155 households led by a senior between the ages of 75 to 84 (7%). Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 2,255 households led by someone between the ages of 65 and 74 (15%) and an additional 1,005 households led by someone between the ages of 75 and 84 (7%). Province-wide, 26% of all households were led by a senior including 288,165 households (15%) led by someone between the ages of 65 and 74. There were also 152,230 households (8%) led by someone between the ages of 75 and 84 as well as 56,085 households (3%) led by someone 85 and older.

**TABLE 3.26** SENIOR-LED HOUSEHOLDS (2016)

	Senior-Led Households	65 to 74	75 to 84	85 and older
British Columbia (#)	496,480	288,165	152,230	56,085
British Columbia (%)	26.4%	15.3%	8.1%	3.0%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,575	2,255	1,005	310
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	23.7%	14.9%	6.7%	2.1%
Town of Smithers (#)	565	325	155	85
Town of Smithers (%)	24.6%	14.2%	6.8%	3.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

# HOUSING CHOICES

## 4.0 Housing Choices

This section includes information on the housing choices available to households living in Smithers and includes comparative information for the Bulkley-Nechako region and the Province as a whole. This section includes information on the different types of housing available to rent and own as well as the different sources of rental supply. This section also includes considerations related to the age of the stock as well as the information on the different types of housing supports available through the different Provincial housing programs. While additional details can be found in this section, Table 4.1 below shows some of the specific considerations and factors related to the continuum of housing choices available in Smithers with the dark circles signifying a significant consideration within the local context and the light circles signalling less of a concern in the Smithers context.

### 4.1 Measures Related to Housing Choices in Smithers

TABLE 4.1 MEASURES RELATED TO THE HOUSING CHOICES IN SMITHERS

<b>Single detached family housing stock</b> Single detached housing accounted for approximately 66% of the housing stock in Smithers in 2016. This was also the case for 78% of the housing stock in the Bulkley-Nechako region. In looking at the changes between 2011 and 2016, it appears that the number of single detached housing units has continued to increase both in Smithers and across the Bulkley-Nechako region in response to on-going demand.	●
<b>Semi-detached, duplex, rowhouse and townhouse units</b> Semi-detached, duplex, rowhouse and townhouse units accounted for 11% of the housing stock in Smithers and 5% of the housing stock in the Bulkley-Nechako region. Between 2011 and 2016, there has continued to be a small increase in this form of housing both in Smithers and across the broader Bulkley-Nechako region.	○
<b>Apartment stock</b> In 2016, there were 390 apartment units in Smithers, representing 17% of the total housing stock in the region. Region-wide, apartment units accounted for 6% of the total stock with apartment units in Smithers accounting for almost 44% of the total apartment stock in the Bulkley-Nechako region.	●
<b>Moveable dwellings</b> There were 110 moveable dwelling units in Smithers in 2016 which accounted for 5% of the total stock. Region-wide, moveable dwellings accounted for 10% of the total housing stock in 2016.	○
<b>Purpose-built rental housing</b> Traditional purpose-built rental housing is typically in the form of apartment units. At the time of the 2016 Census, Smithers reported a total of 390 apartment units (375 which were rented) compared to 895 apartment units across the Bulkley-Nechako (840 of which were rented).	●
<b>The secondary rental market</b> Of the renter households living in Smithers, 375 were living in rented apartment units (52%) while 315 (44%) were living in rented single detached, semi-detached, rowhouse or townhouse units. There were also 15 households (2%) living in rented accessory units (garden or basement suites) and 10 households (1%) living in rented mobile home units.	●



<p><b>The age of the housing stock in Smithers</b></p> <p>A large proportion of the housing stock in Smithers is older stock. In 2016, there were 275 units built since 2001 including 100 rental and 175 ownership units. This represents 12% of the total housing stock in Smithers including 14% of the rental housing stock and 11% of the ownership stock.</p>	●
<p><b>Housing choices for households moving to the region</b></p> <p>Households moving to Smithers and the Bulkley-Nechako region tend to be renters. In 2016, there were 2,555 individuals who reported that they moved to the Bulkley-Nechako region in the year prior to the Census (2015) with 340 of those individuals (13%) living in Smithers. Of those who reported that they moved to the region in 2016, 2,095 (82%) were renters.</p>	●
<p><b>Subsidized housing choices in Smithers</b></p> <p>BC Housing produces an annual Unit Count Report which shows the total number of households living in subsidized housing or receiving housing assistance across the Province. In March 2020, BC Housing reported that 519 individuals in the Bulkley-Nechako region were receiving some form of housing assistance including 155 individuals living in Smithers.</p>	●
<p><b>Independent social housing</b></p> <p>Smithers has a total of 24 family housing units built under previous government housing supply programs, representing 15% of subsidized housing units in Smithers and 3% of all rental units. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there 150 units of family and seniors housing built under previous government housing supply programs accounting for 29% of subsidized housing units in the Bulkley-Nechako region and as well as 5% of the total rental housing stock.</p>	●
<p><b>Emergency shelter spaces and transitional housing</b></p> <p>In March 2020, there were 6 emergency shelter spaces in Smithers funded by the Province. This housing plays a central role in meeting the needs of those who are homeless. There were also 28 units of transitional and supportive housing in Smithers which represents almost 57% of all transitional and supportive housing units across the region.</p>	●
<p><b>Homeless rent supplements</b></p> <p>There were 10 individuals living in Smithers who were receiving assistance through the Province's homeless rent supplement program.</p>	●
<p><b>Assisted living and supportive housing for frail seniors</b></p> <p>Smithers has approximately 14 units of assisted or supportive housing for seniors. This is housing that includes integrated housing and supports and is designed to support seniors as they age.</p>	●
<p><b>Group home units or shared living arrangements for people with special needs</b></p> <p>Smithers has 27 units of special needs housing for individuals with disabilities including youth with cognitive or developmental challenges and which includes different types of group homes or shared living arrangements.</p>	●
<p><b>Transitional housing for women and children fleeing violence</b></p> <p>There are 10 units of transitional housing in Smithers for women and children fleeing violence. This represents approximately 25% of this type of housing in the region.</p>	●
<p><b>Rent assistance for households in the private market</b></p> <p>There were 46 households in Smithers receiving assistance through one of the Province's rent supplement programs including 23 seniors through SAFER, 13 families through RAP and 10 individuals through the Province's homeless rent supplement program.</p>	●

This section provides additional details about the different housing choices available in Smithers:

## 4.2 Single Detached Units

At the time of the 2016 Census, Smithers had 1,520 single detached housing units, an increase of 105 units between 2011 and 2016. At the same time, the Bulkley-Nechako region reported a net decrease of 70 single detached units between 2011 and 2016 while the Province reported a net decrease of more than 11,000 single detached units during the same period. In looking at the 2016 Census, 66% of the housing stock in Smithers was single-detached compared to 78% in the Bulkley-Nechako region.

**TABLE 4.2 SINGLE DETACHED HOUSING UNITS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	807,940	841,950	830,595
British Columbia (%)	49.2%	47.7%	44.1%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	11,685	11,820	11,750
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	80.3%	77.8%	77.8%
Town of Smithers (#)	1,380	1,415	1,520
Town of Smithers (%)	66.3%	64.6%	66.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.3 Semi-Detached, Duplex, Rowhouse and Townhouse Units

At the time of the 2016 Census, Smithers reported 250 semi-detached, duplex, rowhouse or townhouse units, an increase of 25 units between 2011 and 2016. At the same time, the Bulkley-Nechako region reported 815 units of this type of housing, an increase of 10 units between 2011 and 2016. Across the Province, there were 226,780 semi-detached, duplex, rowhouse or townhouse units, an increase of more than 46,000 units between 2011 and 2016. In looking at the 2016 Census, this form of housing accounts for 11% of the total housing stock in Smithers compared to 5% of the total stock in the Bulkley-Nechako region.

**TABLE 4.3 SEMI-DETACHED, DUPLEX, ROWHOUSE AND TOWNHOUSE UNITS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	167,085	180,520	226,780
British Columbia (%)	10.2%	10.2%	12.1%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	755	805	815
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	5.2%	5.3%	5.4%
Town of Smithers (#)	230	225	250
Town of Smithers (%)	11.1%	10.3%	10.9%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.4 Apartment Units

At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 390 apartment units in Smithers, an increase of 25 units between 2011 and 2016. In the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 895 apartment units, an increase of 5 units between 2011 and 2016. Across B.C., there were 562,635 apartment units, an increase of more than 58,000 units between 2011 and 2016. Across Smithers, apartment stock accounted for 17% of the total housing stock while this form of housing accounted for 6% of the total stock in the Bulkley-Nechako region as whole.

**TABLE 4.4** **APARTMENT UNITS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	461,130	504,040	562,635
British Columbia (%)	28.1%	28.6%	29.9%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	985	890	895
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	6.8%	5.9%	5.9%
Town of Smithers (#)	345	365	390
Town of Smithers (%)	16.6%	16.7%	17.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.5 Apartment Duplex Units – Garden and Basement Suites

Apartment duplex units include accessory units such as garden or basement suites. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were no apartment duplex units in Smithers. At the same time, in the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 150 apartment duplex units, an increase of 55 units between 2011 and 2016. Across B.C., there were 226,780 apartment duplex units, an increase of more than 46,000 units between 2011 and 2016. This form of housing represents only a small proportion of the total housing stock in Smithers and the Bulkley-Nechako region (1% of the stock) although it represents 12% of the housing stock across B.C.

**TABLE 4.5** **APARTMENT DUPLEX UNITS- GARDEN AND BASEMENT SUITES**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	163,730	180,520	226,780
British Columbia (%)	10.0%	10.2%	12.1%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	60	95	150
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%
Town of Smithers (#)	10	0	--
Town of Smithers (%)	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.6 Moveable Dwelling Units

At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 110 moveable dwellings in Smithers (5% of the housing stock), a decrease of 80 units between 2011 and 2016. In the Bulkley-Nechako region in 2016, there were 1,480 moveable dwellings (10% of the housing stock), a decrease of 90 units between 2011 and 2016. Across B.C., there were 49,585 moveable dwellings, an increase of more than 2,000 units.

**TABLE 4.6** **MOVEABLE DWELLING UNITS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	43,265	47,240	49,585
British Columbia (%)	2.6%	2.7%	2.6%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	1,050	1,570	1,480
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	7.2%	10.3%	9.8%
Town of Smithers (#)	115	190	110
Town of Smithers (%)	5.5%	8.7%	4.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.7 Housing Type by Tenure

The table below shows the breakdown of units by structure type across renters and owners. The majority of the rental units in Smithers are apartment units (52%). At the same time, rented single-detached, semi-detached, townhouse and rowhouse units account for 44% of the rental stock. A small number of renter households were living in rented accessory units such as garden or basement suites as well, or in manufactured homes/mobile dwellings. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, 63% of renter households were living in rented single-detached homes, semi-detached, duplex, townhouse or rowhouse units, while only 27% were living in apartments. In Smithers, 84% of owners were living in single-detached homes compared to 86% across the region.

**TABLE 4.7 HOUSING TYPE BY TENURE**

	Total	Single Detached	Semi-Detached & Row Housing	Apartment	Apartment Duplex	Moveable Dwelling
<b>British Columbia</b>						
Total Households	1,881,965	830,595	212,370	562,635	226,780	49,585
Owners	1,279,025	727,615	148,775	229,405	131,895	41,330
Renters	599,360	100,285	62,965	333,190	94,775	8,135
Owners	68.0%	87.6%	70.1%	40.8%	58.2%	83.4%
Renters	31.8%	12.1%	29.6%	59.2%	41.8%	16.4%
<b>Bulkley-Nechako Regional District</b>						
Total Households	15,100	11,750	815	895	150	1,480
Owners	11,580	9,945	270	60	50	1,260
Renters	3,100	1,415	545	840	90	215
Owners	76.7%	84.6%	33.1%	6.7%	33.3%	85.1%
Renters	20.5%	12.0%	66.9%	93.9%	60.0%	14.5%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>						
Total Households	2,290	1,520	250	390	25	110
Owners	1,575	1,320	120	15	10	100
Renters	715	195	120	375	15	10
Owners	68.8%	86.8%	48.0%	3.8%	40.0%	90.9%
Renters	31.2%	12.8%	48.0%	96.2%	60.0%	9.1%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

## 4.8 Number of Bedrooms

A large proportion of the housing stock in Smithers is in the form of larger 3- or 4- bedroom units while there is a limited supply of smaller 1-bedroom units. At the time of the 2016 Census, 3- and 4-bedroom units accounted for more than 60% of the stock while 1-bedroom units accounted for 12% of the stock. Two-bedroom units accounted for approximately 26% of the stock in Smithers while there were also a limited number of rooms or bachelor units reported (less than 1% of the stock). Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, 69% of the stock was in the form of larger 3- and 4- bedroom units while 1-bedroom units accounted for 8% of the total stock. There were also 3,380 2-bedroom units or 22% of the stock. Across the Province, 55% of the stock was in the form of larger 3- and 4- bedroom units while 1-bedroom units accounted for 17% of all units. There were also 514,015 2-bedroom units, representing 27% of the total stock province-wide.

TABLE 4.8

### NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

	<b>Total Households</b>	<b>No bedrooms</b>	<b>1- bedrooms</b>	<b>2- bedrooms</b>	<b>3- bedrooms</b>	<b>4+ bedroom</b>
<b>British Columbia</b>						
	Total Households	No bedrooms	1- bedrooms	2- bedrooms	3- bedrooms	4+ bedroom
Total Households	1,881,970	22,710	311,035	514,015	513,135	521,075
Owners (#)	1,279,020	2,575	84,665	305,485	413,750	472,550
Renters (#)	599,360	20,125	226,110	207,670	97,960	47,495
Owners (%)	68.0%	11.3%	27.2%	59.4%	80.6%	90.7%
Renters (%)	31.8%	88.6%	72.7%	40.4%	19.1%	9.1%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>						
	Total Households	No bedrooms	1- bedrooms	2- bedrooms	3- bedrooms	4+ bedroom
Total Households	15,100	40	1,265	3,380	5,350	5,065
Owners (#)	11,575	10	510	2,280	4,350	4,430
Renters (#)	3,100	25	730	1,010	840	490
Owners (%)	76.7%	25.0%	40.3%	67.5%	81.3%	87.5%
Renters (%)	20.5%	62.5%	57.7%	29.9%	15.7%	9.7%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>						
	Total Households	No bedrooms	1- bedrooms	2- bedrooms	3- bedrooms	4+ bedroom
Total Households	2,290	15	280	585	655	750
Owners (#)	1,580	10	40	340	535	655
Renters (#)	715	15	240	245	125	95
Owners (%)	69.0%	66.7%	14.3%	58.1%	81.7%	87.3%
Renters (%)	31.2%	100.0%	85.7%	41.9%	19.1%	12.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016



## 4.9 Units with No Bedrooms

There was a total of just 15 housing units in Smithers which had no bedroom (0.7% of the total housing stock). The Bulkley-Nechako region had only 40 units or 0.3% of the total stock. Across the Province, bachelor units comprise just over 1% of the total stock.

**TABLE 4.9 NO BEDROOMS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	64,355	31,900	22,710
British Columbia (%)	3.9%	1.8%	1.2%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	320	150	40
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	2.2%	1.0%	0.3%
Town of Smithers (#)	60	45	15
Town of Smithers (%)	2.9%	2.1%	0.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.10 1-Bedroom Units

There was a total of 280 1-bedroom housing units in Smithers (12% of the total housing stock). The Bulkley-Nechako region had 1,265 1-bedroom units (8% of the total stock). Across the Province, 1-bedroom units comprise 17% of the total stock.

**TABLE 4.10 1-BEDROOM UNITS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	258,220	281,675	311,035
British Columbia (%)	15.7%	16.0%	16.5%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	1,295	1,320	1,265
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	8.9%	8.7%	8.4%
Town of Smithers (#)	175	235	280
Town of Smithers (%)	8.4%	10.7%	12.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.11 2-Bedroom Units

There was a total of 585 2-bedroom housing units in Smithers (26% of the total housing stock). The Bulkley-Nechako region had 3,380 2-bedroom units (22% of the total stock). Across the Province, 2-bedroom units comprise 27% of the total stock.

**TABLE 4.11 2-BEDROOM UNITS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (#)	429,020	472,285	514,015
British Columbia (%)	26.1%	26.8%	27.3%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	3,580	3,440	3,380
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	24.6%	22.7%	22.4%
Town of Smithers (#)	565	530	585
Town of Smithers (%)	27.2%	24.1%	25.5%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.12 3-Bedroom Units

There was a total of 655 3-bedroom housing units in Smithers (29% of the total housing stock). The Bulkley-Nechako region had 5,350 3-bedroom units (35% of the total stock). Across the Province, 3-bedroom units comprise 27% of the total stock.

**TABLE 4.12 3-BEDROOM UNITS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	481,495	499,495	513,135
British Columbia (%)	29.3%	28.3%	27.3%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	4,915	4,975	5,350
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	33.8%	32.8%	35.4%
Town of Smithers (#)	655	580	655
Town of Smithers (%)	31.5%	26.4%	28.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.13 4+-Bedroom Units

There was a total of 750 units of 4 or more bedrooms in Smithers (33% of the total housing stock). The Bulkley-Nechako region had 5,065 units of 4 or more bedrooms (34% of the total stock). Across the Province, 4+-bedroom units comprise 28% of the total stock.

**TABLE 4.13 4+-BEDROOM UNITS**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
British Columbia (#)	410,065	479,280	521,075
British Columbia (%)	25.0%	27.2%	27.7%
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (#)	4,440	5,300	5,065
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (%)	30.5%	34.9%	33.5%
Town of Smithers (#)	615	805	750
Town of Smithers (%)	29.6%	36.7%	32.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.14 Period of Construction

More than half of the housing stock in Smithers was built before 1980 (1,270 units or 55% of the stock) while there were an additional 925 units (40%) built between 1981 and 2000. Since 2001, there have been 275 units built (12% of the total stock) including 90 units built between 2011 and 2016. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 7,825 units built before 1980 (52% of the total stock). There were an additional 5,525 units built between 1981 and 2000 (37% of the stock). Since 2000, there have been 1,755 units built across the Bulkley-Nechako region or 12% of the stock.

**TABLE 4.14 PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION BY TENURE (#)**

	Total Households	Before 1960	1961 to 1980	1981 to 2000	2001 to 2010	2011 to 2016
<b>British Columbia</b>						
	Total Households	Before 1960	1961 to 1980	1981 to 2000	2001 to 2010	2011 to 2016
Total Households	1,881,970	267,560	559,485	621,425	297,290	136,210
Owners (#)	1,279,025	167,340	340,675	458,365	215,915	96,730
Renters (#)	599,360	100,150	218,245	161,030	80,690	39,255
Owners (%)	68.0%	62.5%	60.9%	73.8%	72.6%	71.0%
Renters (%)	31.8%	37.4%	39.0%	25.9%	27.1%	28.8%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>						
	Total Households	Before 1960	1961 to 1980	1981 to 2000	2001 to 2010	2011 to 2016
Total Households	15,100	1,545	6,280	5,525	1,215	540
Owners (#)	11,575	1,115	4,845	4,270	920	425
Renters (#)	3,100	425	1,375	955	260	100
Owners (%)	76.7%	72.2%	77.1%	77.3%	75.7%	78.7%
Renters (%)	20.5%	27.5%	21.9%	17.3%	21.4%	18.5%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>						
	Total Households	Before 1960	1961 to 1980	1981 to 2000	2001 to 2010	2011 to 2016
Total Households	2,290	410	860	740	185	90
Owners (#)	1,575	295	530	575	125	50
Renters (#)	715	115	330	175	60	40
Owners (%)	68.8%	72.0%	61.6%	77.7%	67.6%	55.6%
Renters (%)	31.2%	28.0%	38.4%	23.6%	32.4%	44.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

## 4.15 Migration Patterns

In 2016, there were 820 individuals living in Smithers who reported that they moved in the year prior to the Census. Movers include people who have moved to Smithers or who have moved to another address within Smithers. Migrants include individuals who had moved to Smithers in the past year, while internal migrants are individuals who were living elsewhere in the Bulkley-Nechako region and who moved to Smithers in the year prior to the Census. Based on the 2016 Census, there were 340 individuals who moved to Smithers from elsewhere. Region-wide, there were 5,010 individuals who reported that they had moved in the year prior to the Census, including 2,555 individuals who reported that they had moved from elsewhere. Between 2006 and 2011, Smithers has consistently reported a net in-migration of 340 to 445 individuals with the majority coming from elsewhere in the Bulkley-Nechako region. Assuming an average household size of 2.5 individuals, this translates into an increase of between 136 and 178 households. At the same time, 84% of Smithers residents indicated they had not moved to a different address in the year prior to the Census.

**TABLE 4.15**                      **MIGRATION PATTERNS**

	2006	2011	2016
<b>British Columbia</b>			
Non-Movers (#)	3,334,745	3,665,455	3,811,370
Non-Movers (%)	83.1%	83.3%	84.4%
Movers (#)	680,295	616,645	705,445
Movers (%)	16.9%	14.0%	15.6%
Migrants (#)	307,850	268,810	318,825
Migrants (%)	7.5%	6.1%	6.9%
Internal Migrants (#)	247,315	212,385	249,965
Internal Migrants (%)	6.0%	4.8%	5.4%
<b>Bulkley-Nechako Regional District</b>			
Non-Movers (#)	31,875	33,740	32,025
Non-Movers (%)	85.0%	87.8%	86.5%
Movers (#)	5,620	4,680	5,010
Movers (%)	15.0%	12.2%	13.5%
Migrants (#)	2,615	2,180	2,555
Migrants (%)	6.9%	5.6%	6.8%
Internal Migrants (#)	2,510	2,105	2,425
Internal Migrants (%)	6.6%	5.4%	6.5%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
Non-Movers (#)	4,150	4,360	4,420
Non-Movers (%)	81.1%	81.8%	84.4%
Movers (#)	965	915	820
Movers (%)	18.9%	17.2%	15.6%
Migrants (#)	445	360	340
Migrants (%)	8.7%	6.8%	6.4%
Internal Migrants (#)	415	335	335
Internal Migrants (%)	8.1%	6.3%	6.3%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 4.16 Tenure Profile of Movers

Of those living in Smithers who reported that they had moved in the year prior to the 2016 Census, 35% were owners while the remaining 65% were renters. Across the broader Bulkley-Nechako region, of those who reported that they had moved, 56% were owners while 44% were renters.

**TABLE 4.16 TENURE PROFILE OF MOVERS**

<b>British Columbia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Movers	680,295	616,645	705,445
Mover Owners	355,920	300,600	348,475
Mover Renters	322,890	314,210	355,890
Mover Owners	52.3%	48.7%	49.4%
Mover Renters	47.5%	51.0%	50.4%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Movers	5,620	4,680	5,010
Mover Owners	3,210	2,370	2,825
Mover Renters	2,330	2,165	2,095
Mover Owners	57.1%	50.6%	56.4%
Mover Renters	41.5%	46.3%	41.8%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Movers	965	915	820
Mover Owners	510	560	285
Mover Renters	455	355	530
Mover Owners	52.8%	61.2%	34.8%
Mover Renters	47.2%	38.8%	64.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

## 4.17 Tenure Profile of Migrants

Migrants include individuals who have moved to a community from elsewhere with internal migrants representing individuals moving from elsewhere within the same region. Of those living in Smithers and who reported that they had moved to Smithers in the year prior to the 2016 Census, 140 (41%) were owners while 195 (59%) were renters. Across the broader Bulkley-Nechako region, 56% of those who reported that they had moved from elsewhere were owners while 42% were renters.

**TABLE 4.17 TENURE PROFILE OF MIGRANTS**

<b>British Columbia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Migrants	307,850	268,810	318,825
Migrant Owners	165,185	137,380	162,755
Migrant Renters	141,850	130,615	155,575
Migrant Owners	53.7%	51.1%	51.0%
Migrant Renters	46.1%	48.6%	48.8%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Migrants	2,615	2,180	2,555
Migrant Owners	1,645	1,155	1,435
Migrant Renters	935	950	1,065
Migrant Owners	62.9%	53.0%	56.2%
Migrant Renters	35.8%	43.6%	41.7%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Migrants	445	360	340
Migrant Owners	210	275	140
Migrant Renters	225	80	195
Migrant Owners	47.2%	76.4%	41.2%
Migrant Renters	50.6%	22.2%	57.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016



## 4.18 The Inventory of Subsidized Housing Units

This section includes information on the inventory of subsidized housing available to families and individuals in different economic circumstances and lifecycle stages including:

**Emergency shelter spaces:** Emergency shelter spaces include housing with varying levels of support for individuals who are homeless or in crisis. Based on the most recent Unit Count Report published by BC Housing (March 2020) there were 6 emergency shelter units in Smithers (down from 9 units in March 2019).

**Homeless rent supplements:** Homeless rent supplements include targeted housing assistance for individuals who are homeless. This assistance provides support for individuals who are homeless to access housing in the private market. Based on the most recent Unit Count Report published by BC Housing (March 2020) there were 10 individuals living in Smithers who were receiving homeless rent supplements (no change from 2019).

**Transitional and supported housing for individuals who are homeless:** Transitional and supportive housing for individuals who are homeless provides housing and supports for individuals who are in crisis and who have a history of homelessness. Based on the most recent Unit Count Report published by BC Housing (March 2020) there were 28 individuals living in Smithers who were housed through this model (a decrease of 2 units since 2019).

**Independent social housing:** Independent social housing includes family and seniors' housing funded under a mix of Federal, Federal/Provincial and Provincial housing supply programs. In Smithers there are 24 units of family housing built under previous government-funded housing supply programs while region-wide there were 150 units including 114 units for families and 36 units for seniors.

**Rent assistance for households living in the private market:** Rent assistance for households living in the private market includes financial assistance for eligible households to help cover the gap between the cost of their housing and the amount of rent that they can afford to pay based on the resources that they have available. Based on the most recent Unit Count Report published by BC Housing (March 2020) there were 23 seniors and 13 families receiving assistance under the SAFER and RAP program.

**Assisted living for seniors:** Assisted living for seniors includes housing that is available for seniors who require some level of support in order to maintain their independence. Across Smithers, BC Housing reported 14 units of assisted housing for seniors.

**Group homes and special needs housing:** Group homes and special needs housing includes different types of housing and shared living arrangements for persons with disabilities including housing for individuals with cognitive or developmental disabilities. BC Housing reported 27 units of this type of housing in Smithers.

**Transitional housing for women and children fleeing violence:** Transitional housing for women and children fleeing violence including housing that includes supports for women and children who need temporary accommodation and support. Across Smithers, BC Housing reported 10 units of this type of housing as well as a total of 41 units region-wide.

The following table indicates the type and number of different subsidized housing units in Smithers and the Bulkley-Nechako region. There were 155 subsidized housing units in Smithers and 519 subsidized housing units in the Bulkley-Nechako region.

	Province	Region	Smithers
Emergency shelter space	2,098	6	6
Homeless rent supplements	3,751	22	10
Transitional and supportive housing	11,204	49	28
<b>Service Allocation – Housing for the Homeless</b>	<b>17,053</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>44</b>
Housing for frail seniors	10,411	96	14
Group homes and special needs housing	6,048	38	27
Transitional housing for women and children fleeing violence	875	41	10
<b>Service Allocation- Transitional, Supported, Assisted</b>	<b>17,334</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>51</b>
Housing for low income families	20,005	114	24
Housing for low income seniors	20,095	36	0
<b>Service Allocation – Independent Social Housing</b>	<b>40,100</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>24</b>
Rental Assistance (RAP) for families <sup>1</sup>	9,423	28	13
Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) <sup>2</sup>	23,347	89	23
<b>Service Allocation- Private Market Rent Assistance</b>	<b>32,770</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>36</b>
Homeownership (BC HOME Partnership)	2,208	--	--
<b>Service Allocation – Homeownership</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Total Inventory of Subsidized Housing</b>	<b>110,465</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>155</b>

Source: BC Housing Research and Corporate Planning, Unit Count Reporting Model, March 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Households receiving assistance under the RAP program receive the difference between the cost of their housing and the amount of rent that they can afford to pay up to a maximum rent ceiling of \$1,067 for a family of 3 and \$1,117 for a family of 4.

<sup>2</sup> Households receiving assistance under the SAFER program receive the difference between the cost of their housing and the amount of rent that they can afford to pay up to a maximum rent ceiling of \$734.

# INCOME PROFILE AND HOUSING COSTS

## 5.0 Income and Housing Cost

Income plays a central role in determining the housing choices available to families and individuals. This section provides information on the housing cost income profile of households living in Smithers as well as the Bulkley-Nechako region and the Province as a whole. This section provides information on the average and median household incomes across the region as well as information on the average housing costs for both owners and renters. It also includes information on the current inventory of rental housing for different household incomes and rent ranges. While additional details can be found in this section, Table 5.1 below includes information related to some of the key considerations around the cost and affordability of housing in Smithers. The dark circles signify that the findings are a significant consideration when looking at existing and emerging housing needs across the community.

### 5.1 Indicators and Outcomes Related to Housing Costs

TABLE 5.1 KEY HOUSING INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES RELATED TO HOUSING COSTS

<b>Average and median household income</b> In 2016, the median household income in Smithers was \$74,725 (2015 incomes) while the average household income was \$84,461. In general, the average and median household income in Smithers is lower than the average and median household income for the region.	●
<b>The income profile of households in Smithers</b> In 2016, 1 in 5 households living in Smithers had an annual income of \$35,000 or less including 150 households with an income of \$20,000 or less. Based on an annual income of \$35,000 an affordable rent would be \$875 per month while a household with an annual income of \$20,000 would need a rent of \$500 per month.	●
<b>The affordability of ownership</b> The cost of ownership in Smithers is higher than the cost of ownership within the Bulkley-Nechako region. In 2016, the average housing cost across owners living in Smithers was \$1,043 per month compared to an average housing cost of \$905 per month for the region. The research also shows that there is a significant difference in the average housing cost for owners with a mortgage compared to those without a mortgage with owners with a mortgage living in Smithers reporting an average cost of \$1,506 per month compared to \$438 per month for those without a mortgage.	●
<b>Monthly rental housing costs</b> In 2016, the average cost of renting in Smithers was \$894 per month compared to \$812 across the Bulkley-Nechako region. The findings also show that the average cost of renting continues to increase with the average monthly rent in Smithers increasing by \$154 (21%) between 2011 and 2016.	●
<b>The affordability of renting</b> Based on the standard that to be affordable a household should not be spending more than 30% of their income on their housing costs, a household living in Smithers would need an annual income of \$35,760 per month to carry the cost of the average rent. The analysis shows an average rent of \$894 per month.	●

This section provides additional details related to the household incomes and housing costs in Smithers:

## 5.2 Income Distribution of All Households

At the time of the 2016 Census, 20% of households living in Smithers (455) had an annual income of less than \$35,000 including 7% of households (150) who had an annual income of less than \$20,000. An additional 12% of households (265) had an annual income between \$35,000 and \$50,000 while 495 households (22%) had an annual income of between \$50,000 and \$80,000. There were also 1,070 households (47%) with an annual income of \$80,000 or more. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there was a larger proportion of households with an annual income of less than \$20,000 (9%) when compared to Smithers.

**TABLE 5.2 INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS**

	Total	Under \$20K	\$20K to \$34,999K	\$35K to \$49,999K	\$50K to \$79,999	More than \$80K
All Households	1,881,975	202,945	230,370	230,920	399,475	818,265
All Owners	1,279,020	79,185	120,965	138,070	265,995	674,815
All Renters	599,360	122,650	108,695	92,350	132,835	142,825
Owners	68.0%	39.0%	52.5%	59.8%	66.6%	82.5%
Renters	31.8%	60.4%	47.2%	40.0%	33.3%	17.5%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>						
	Total	Under \$20K	\$20K to \$34,999K	\$35K to \$49,999K	\$50K to \$79,999	More than \$80K
All Households	15,095	1,295	1,840	1,730	3,040	7,190
All Owners	11,580	665	1,060	1,225	2,300	6,325
All Renters	3,100	485	690	460	680	780
Owners	76.7%	51.4%	57.6%	70.8%	75.7%	88.0%
Renters	20.5%	37.5%	37.5%	26.6%	22.4%	10.8%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>						
	Total	Under \$20K	\$20K to \$34,999K	\$35K to \$49,999K	\$50K to \$79,999	More than \$80K
All Households	2,285	150	305	265	495	1,070
All Owners	1,580	35	110	150	340	925
All Renters	715	100	195	110	160	135
Owners	69.1%	23.3%	36.1%	56.6%	68.7%	86.4%
Renters	31.3%	66.7%	63.9%	41.5%	32.3%	12.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

### 5.3 Average Household Income

At the time of the 2016 Census, the average annual household income of owners in Smithers was \$98,276 while the average household income of renters was \$53,967, which was 55% that of owners

**TABLE 5.3 AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY TENURE**

	2006	2011	2016
<b>British Columbia</b>			
Total	\$80,072	\$84,086	\$90,354
Owners	\$93,202	\$96,840	\$105,394
Renters	\$49,988	\$54,507	\$58,525
Renter income as proportion of owner income	53.6%	56.3%	55.5%
<b>Bulkley-Nechako Regional District</b>			
Total	\$75,010	\$79,881	\$86,862
Owners	\$82,865	\$89,840	\$95,710
Renters	\$52,606	\$48,592	\$59,085
Renter income as proportion of owner income	63.5%	54.1%	61.7%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
Total	\$70,042	\$75,937	\$84,461
Owners	\$81,939	\$86,512	\$98,276
Renters	\$44,561	\$41,812	\$53,967
Renter income as proportion of owner income	54.4%	48.3%	54.9%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016



## 5.4 Median Household Income

At the time of the 2016 Census, the median annual household income of owners in Smithers was \$90,279 while the median household income of renters was \$41,962, which was 47% that of owners.

TABLE 5.4 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY TENURE

	2006	2011	2016
<b>British Columbia</b>			
Total	\$62,372	\$65,555	\$69,979
Owners	\$75,243	\$78,302	\$84,333
Renters	\$39,548	\$41,975	\$45,848
Renter income as proportion of owner income	52.6%	53.6%	54.4%
<b>Bulkley-Nechako Regional District</b>			
Total	\$66,557	\$67,688	\$76,549
Owners	\$76,040	\$78,205	\$85,786
Renters	\$36,471	\$36,020	\$47,424
Renter income as proportion of owner income	48.0%	46.1%	55.3%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
Total	\$61,573	\$70,678	\$74,725
Owners	\$75,836	\$84,186	\$90,279
Renters	\$31,773	\$32,412	\$41,962
Renter income as proportion of owner income	41.9%	38.5%	46.5%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 5.5 Average Housing Cost (Owners)

In Smithers, the average cost of ownership has increased at a modest rate. Based on the 2016 Census, the average cost of ownership was \$1,043 per month compared to \$1,022 in 2011. This is higher than the average cost of ownership reported in the Bulkley-Nechako region (\$905 per month) but lower than the average cost of ownership for the Province as a whole (\$1,387).

TABLE 5.5 AVERAGE HOUSING COST - OWNERS

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	\$1,254	\$1,334	\$1,387
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	\$892	\$888	\$905
Town of Smithers	\$1,024	\$1,022	\$1,043

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 5.6 Average Housing Cost (Renters)

At the time of the 2016 Census, the average rental cost in Smithers was \$894 per month, representing an increase of \$154 or 21% over the rents reported in 2011. The average rent in Smithers was higher than those in the Bulkley-Nechako region but significantly lower than the rents across the Province.

**TABLE 5.6 AVERAGE HOUSING COST -RENTERS**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	\$980	\$1,075	\$1,149
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	\$663	\$716	\$812
Town of Smithers	\$671	\$740	\$894

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 5.7 Change in the Average Monthly Rent

Between 2011 and 2016, the average rent in Smithers increased from \$740 per month to \$894 per month, an increase of \$154 (21%) while the average rent within the Bulkley-Nechako region increased by \$96 per month (13%). Province-wide, the average rent went from \$1,075 per month to \$1,149 per month, an increase of \$74 per month or 7%. These findings suggest that rental housing costs in Smithers are increasing at a faster rate when compared to the region and the Province as a whole, largely related to on-going housing demand pressures.

**TABLE 5.7 CHANGE IN THE AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia (\$ change)	--	\$95	\$74
British Columbia (% change)	--	9.7%	6.9%
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District (\$ change)	--	\$53	\$96
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District (% change)	--	8.0%	13.4%
Town of Smithers (\$ change)	--	\$69	\$154
Town of Smithers (% change)	--	10.3%	20.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 5.8 The Affordability of Ownership

Using information available through BC Assessment (2019 and 2020), the table below looks at the affordability of ownership across different forms of housing including single detached family housing, duplex units (strata and non-strata) as well as manufactured home/mobile units. The calculations set out below include information on the down payment requirements, monthly mortgage payments as well as the qualifying income needed to purchase a home in Smithers. The information assumes a down payment of 10%, a 25-year amortization period and 5-year fixed term mortgage at 2.39% interest.

In looking at the information reported, a household would need an income of between \$45,000 and \$66,000 to purchase a single-family home in Smithers, assuming that a household could afford the down payment of between \$19,000 and \$38,000. For a duplex unit, a household would need an annual income of between \$50,000 and \$66,000 while they would need an income of between \$30,000 and \$35,000 to purchase a mobile home unit.

**TABLE 5.8 MONTHLY MORTGAGE PAYMENTS AND QUALIFYING INCOME**

	Assessed Value	Range Low/High	Mortgage Amount	Down payment Amount	Monthly Payments	Qualifying Income
Single Detached Home	\$190,300	Low	\$171,270	\$19,030	\$772	\$45,345
Single Detached	\$384,000	High	\$345,600	\$38,400	\$1,558	\$66,445
Duplex (Non-Strata)	\$232,600	Low	\$209,340	\$23,260	\$943	\$49,955
Duplex (Non-Strata)	\$232,900	High	\$209,610	\$23,290	\$945	\$49,985
Duplex (Strata)	\$248,000	Low	\$223,200	\$24,800	\$1,006	\$51,630
Duplex (Strata)	\$381,800	High	\$343,620	\$38,180	\$1,549	\$66,205
Mobile Home	\$56,000	Low	\$50,400	\$5,600	\$227	\$30,715
Mobile Home	\$100,550	High	\$90,495	\$10,055	\$407	\$35,570

*Assumptions: Calculation using the low and high range in the median price reported in BC Assessment Data for Smithers and based on an amortization period of 25 years and a 2.39% mortgage rate for 5 years. Calculations assume a 10% down payment*

# HOUSING NEED

## 6.0 Housing Need

This section includes information on the different measures related to housing need including considerations related to the adequacy of the stock (i.e. the condition of the housing) as well as suitability (i.e. the level of crowding). It also includes considerations related to affordability and the number of households spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs. This section also looks at the number of households in core housing need as well as those who are spending 50% or more of their income on their housing costs. While additional details can be found in this section, Table 6.1 below provides information on key aspects of housing need in Smithers with the dark shaded circles signifying those factors influencing housing needs in Smithers while the clear circles signal factors that are less of a concern in the Smithers context.

### 6.1 Key Measures Related to Housing Needs

TABLE 6.1 KEY MEASURES RELATED TO HOUSING NEEDS

<b>Households falling below suitability standards</b> At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 40 households in Smithers who were living in housing that falls below the established suitability standard, representing less than 1% of renter households in Smithers.	○
<b>Households falling below adequacy standards</b> At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 160 households in Smithers who were living in housing falling below the established adequacy standard, representing 7% of households. Region-wide there were 1,335 households living below this standard.	●
<b>Households in core housing need</b> At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 255 households living in Smithers who were in core housing need, accounting for 10% of all households. Of the 255 households in core housing need, 65 (25%) were owners and 190 (75%) were renters.	●
<b>Owners in core housing need</b> There were 65 owners in core housing need in Smithers compared to 625 owners in need within the broader Bulkley-Nechako region. Of the owners living in Smithers, only 4% were in core housing need compared to 5% of owners in the region.	○
<b>Renters in core housing need</b> There were 190 renters in core housing need in Smithers compared to 665 renters in need within the broader Bulkley-Nechako region, representing 27% of all renters in Smithers and 21% of renters in the Bulkley-Nechako region.	●
<b>Renters in extreme housing need (spending 50% or more on their housing)</b> Of the 190 households living in Smithers who were in core housing need, 15 (10%) were in extreme housing need and were spending 50% or more of their income on the housing costs. Region-wide there were 255 renter households in extreme housing need (19% of all households in core housing need in the region and 40% of all renter households in core need).	●
<b>Individuals experiencing homelessness</b> In 2018, as part of a Province-wide homeless count, there were 29 individuals living in Smithers who were identified as experiencing homelessness. This includes 11 individuals who were staying in an emergency shelter or other temporary or ad hoc arrangement as well as 18 individuals who were identified as unsheltered and who were living on the streets.	●

## 6.2 Households Falling Below Suitability Standards

Suitability applies to households that are unable to find housing that is suitable in size based on the needs of their household and Canada's National Occupancy standards. Households that are living below the suitability standard are typically households that are living in over-crowded conditions as a way of reducing their housing costs. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 40 households in Smithers (2%) who were living in housing that fell below the established suitability standard which was approximately half the number in the 2006 Census. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region there were 395 households (3%) who were living in housing that was not suitable based on their household needs.

**TABLE 6.2 HOUSEHOLDS FALLING BELOW SUITABILITY STANDARDS**

<b>British Columbia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	107,475	106,430	91,410
Total Owners	45,840	48,135	36,240
Total Renters	61,635	58,295	55,170
Owners	42.7%	45.2%	39.6%
Renters	57.3%	54.8%	60.4%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	625	455	395
Total Owners	355	270	255
Total Renters	270	135	135
Owners	56.8%	59.3%	64.6%
Renters	43.2%	29.7%	34.2%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	75	60	40
Total Owners	20	40	20
Total Renters	55	20	20
Owners	26.7%	66.7%	50.0%
Renters	73.3%	33.3%	50.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2016

## 6.3 Households Falling Below Adequacy Standards

Adequacy applies to households that are unable to find housing that is in good repair that they can afford with the resources that they have available. Households that are living below the adequacy standard are typically households living in older housing stock that is in poor condition and that requires significant repairs or improvements. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 160 households in Smithers who were living in housing falling below the established adequacy standard. This represents 7% of the total housing stock (ownership and rental). Region-wide, there were 1,335 households who were living in housing which fell below the adequacy standard, representing 9% of the total stock.

**TABLE 6.3 HOUSEHOLDS FALLING BELOW ADEQUACY STANDARDS**

<b>British Columbia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	105,965	110,945	105,410
Total Owners	63,990	70,140	64,040
Total Renters	41,975	40,810	41,370
Owners	60.4%	63.2%	60.8%
Renters	39.6%	36.8%	39.2%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	1,230	1,470	1,335
Total Owners	805	1,050	1,010
Total Renters	425	415	330
Owners	65.4%	71.4%	75.7%
Renters	34.6%	28.2%	24.7%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	105	100	160
Total Owners	35	60	110
Total Renters	70	45	55
Owners	33.3%	60.0%	68.8%
Renters	66.7%	45.0%	34.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016



## 6.4 Households Falling Below Affordability Standards

Affordability applies to households that are unable to find housing in their community that is affordable to their household without spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 390 households living in Smithers who were facing affordability challenges and who were spending more than 30% of their income on their housing costs (17% of all households). Region-wide there were 1,505 households facing affordability challenges, representing 10% of all households in the region.

**TABLE 6.4 HOUSEHOLDS FALLING BELOW AFFORDABILITY STANDARDS**

<b>British Columbia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	374,370	412,820	420,710
Total Owners	206,605	229,175	212,165
Total Renters	167,760	183,650	208,545
Owners	55.2%	55.5%	50.4%
Renters	44.8%	44.5%	49.6%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	1,630	1,895	1,505
Total Owners	860	985	740
Total Renters	770	905	765
Owners	52.8%	52.0%	49.2%
Renters	47.2%	47.8%	50.8%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	385	325	390
Total Owners	145	155	130
Total Renters	240	170	260
Owners	37.7%	47.7%	33.3%
Renters	62.3%	52.3%	66.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 6.5 Households in Core Housing Need

Households in core housing need are households who are unable to find housing that is suitable in size and in good repair without spending 30% or more of their income on their housing cost. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 255 households in Smithers who were in core housing need (11%). The total number of households in core housing need increasing by 90 households between 2011 and 2016. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 1,290 households in core housing need (9%) with the total number of households in core housing need decreasing by 345 between 2011 and 2016.

**TABLE 6.5 HOUSEHOLDS IN CORE HOUSING NEED**

<b>British Columbia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	221,470	247,280	260,225
Total Owners	88,330	101,080	97,355
Total Renters	133,140	146,200	162,870
Owners	39.9%	40.9%	37.4%
Renters	60.1%	59.1%	62.6%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	1,365	1,635	1,290
Total Owners	675	755	625
Total Renters	685	875	665
Owners	49.5%	46.2%	48.4%
Renters	50.2%	53.5%	51.6%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	245	165	255
Total Owners	45	30	65
Total Renters	195	135	190
Owners	18.4%	18.2%	25.5%
Renters	79.6%	81.8%	74.5%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 6.6 Households in Extreme Housing Need

Households in extreme housing need are households who are unable to find housing that is suitable in size and in good repair without spending 50% or more of their income on their housing cost. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were 90 households living in Smithers who were in extreme housing need with the total number of households in extreme housing need increasing by 45 households between 2011 and 2016. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, 445 households were in extreme housing need (3%) with the total number of households in need across the region decreasing by 90 between 2011 and 2016.

**TABLE 6.6 HOUSEHOLDS IN EXTREME HOUSING NEED**

<b>British Columbia</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	94,505	107,530	112,590
Total Owners	40,345	47,155	44,540
Total Renters	54,165	60,380	68,050
Owners	42.7%	43.9%	39.6%
Renters	57.3%	56.2%	60.4%
<b>Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	410	535	445
Total Owners	180	215	190
Total Renters	235	320	255
Owners	43.9%	40.2%	42.7%
Renters	57.3%	59.8%	57.3%
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total Households	85	45	90
Total Owners	25	0	30
Total Renters	55	40	60
Owners	29.4%	0.0%	33.3%
Renters	64.7%	88.9%	66.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 6.7 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness has developed a definition of homelessness that takes into consideration the different dimensions or aspects of homelessness and which includes the following:

*Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, permanent, or appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.*

The definition goes on to note that:

*Homelessness is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual or households' financial circumstances. Homelessness can also be the results of mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges or results from a history of racism and discrimination.*

*Most people do not choose to be homeless but it may be the best choice of the choices available. Most would also agree that the experience of homelessness is generally negative, unpleasant, unhealthy, unsafe, stressful and distressing.*

In looking at the different characteristics or aspects of homelessness, the Canadian Observatory of Homelessness has identified the following conditions or circumstances:

1. **Unsheltered homelessness:** Individuals who are absolutely homeless and who are living on the streets, or in places not meant for human habitation fit within the category of unsheltered homeless.
2. **Sheltered homeless:** Sheltered homeless are individuals who are staying in emergency shelters, overnight spaces or transitional housing for people who otherwise are without a permanent place to stay.
3. **Provisionally accommodated** refers to individuals who are staying in temporary or 'ad hoc' accommodation and who lack the security of tenure that comes with access to stable and predictable housing.
4. **Vulnerable and 'at risk' individuals** are individuals who are not homeless but whose current economic and housing situation is precarious and who are living in housing that is considered unsafe and that does not meet adequate public health or safety standards.

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness goes on to note that "for many people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness the situation is not a static state but that it is a fluid experience, one where one's shelter circumstances and options may shift and change quite dramatically and with some degree of frequency".

Research shows that people who are homeless in rural areas rarely fit the standard definition of homelessness. While some are literally homeless, the majority are living in extremely precarious housing situations and often find themselves moving from one overcrowded or barely affordable

housing situation to another. It is also the case that they often have to rely on family or friends to help them get by, or live in housing that is substandard or in poor quality condition because that is all that they can afford.

In 2018, the Province undertook a Province-wide count of individuals experiencing homelessness. At the time of the count there were 29 individuals living in Smithers who were homeless including 11 individuals who were identified as sheltered homeless and 18 individuals who were identified as unsheltered.

In terms of the general profile of those who were homeless:

- 14 were males (56%) while 10 were females (40%).
- 1 individual identified as another gender (4%).
- 2 (8%) were youth under the age of 25 while 19 (76%) were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- There were 4 individuals (14%) who were classified as seniors (55 and older).
- The majority of those who were homeless identified as Indigenous (72%).

In terms of their housing history:

- 46% (11 individuals) had been homeless for less than 1 year.
- Almost half had been homeless for between 1 and 5 years.
- One individual had been homeless for more than 10 years.

# LABOUR MARKET DATA

## 7.0 Labour Market Data

This section provides information on the local and regional economy including key labour market information about the number of individuals in the labour market, the employment and labour market participation rate as well as other information related to workforce housing demand. Table 7.1 highlights some of the labour market related information influencing housing demand in Smithers and the Bulkley-Nechako region with the dark shaded circles signifying labour market factors that require some attention while the clear circles indicate factors that are less of a concern in the Smithers context.

### 7.1 Key Economic Related Indicators and Measures

TABLE 7.1 KEY ECONOMIC RELATED INDICATORS AND MEASURES

<b>Increase in the workforce</b> Smithers reported an increase of 415 workers (16%) between 2011 and 2016 while the region reported a net decrease of workers in the same time period.	●
<b>Individuals who are employed</b> In 2016, there were 2,695 individuals living in Smithers who reported that they were employed. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of individuals living in Smithers who reported that they were employed decreased by 90 individuals. The decrease in the number of individuals employed is consistent with the Bulkley-Nechako region where the number of individuals who were employed decreased by 970 individuals between 2011 and 2016.	○
<b>Employment rate</b> The employment rate in Smithers in 2016 was 62.6% which was higher than the employment rate reported across the Bulkley-Nechako region (58.6%) and the Province as a whole (59.6%). The unemployment rate in Smithers was also lower (8.3%) when compared to the broader region (12.3%).	●
<b>Labour market participation rate</b> The labour market participation rate in Smithers in 2016 was 68.6% compared to 66.9% for the region. Across Smithers the number of individuals not in the labour force increased by 165 (14%) between 2011 and 2016 while region-wide there was only a small increase reported (70 individuals).	●
<b>Commuting patterns</b> Based on the 2016 Census, there were 1,740 individuals (65%) living in Smithers who reported that they work in Smithers while there were 435 individuals (16%) who live in Smithers and who work in another part of the Bulkley-Nechako region. There were 330 individuals (12%) living in Smithers who reported that they work in another region. In some cases, the commuting patterns can be shaped by individual preferences (i.e., a desire for acreage) while in other cases lack of access to suitable and appropriate housing may have a role to play.	○



## 7.2 Number of Workers

In 2016, Smithers reported a total of 2,960 workers up from 2,545 in 2011, an increase of 415 individuals or 16% over 2011. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 20,180 workers (down from 20,855 in 2011).

**TABLE 7.2** NUMBER OF WORKERS

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	2,217,080	2,354,245	2,471,665
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	20,540	20,855	20,180
Town of Smithers	2,830	2,545	2,960

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 7.3 Number of Individuals Employed

In 2016, Smithers reported that there were 2,695 individuals employed, down from 2,785 employed in 2011. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, there were 17,695 individuals who were employed, down from 18,665 in 2011.

**TABLE 7.3** NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	2,084,375	2,171,470	2,305,690
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	18,425	18,665	17,695
Town of Smithers	2,585	2,785	2,695

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 7.4 Employment Rate

In 2016, Smithers reported an employment rate of 62.6% compared to 58.6% across the region. Overall, the employment rate in Smithers was higher than the employment rate reported for both the Province (59.6%) and the Bulkley-Nechako region as a whole (58.6%).

**TABLE 7.4** EMPLOYMENT RATE

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	61.7%	59.5%	59.6%
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	62.3%	60.6%	58.6%
Town of Smithers	65.1%	66.2%	62.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 7.5 Unemployment Rate

In 2016, Smithers reported an unemployment rate of 8.8% compared to an unemployment rate of 12.3% across the Bulkley-Nechako region. Between 2011 and 2016, the unemployment rate in Smithers increased from 7.8% to 8.8%, an increase of 1%. Across the broader Bulkley-Nechako region, between 2011 and 2016, the unemployment rate increased from 10.5% to 12.3%, an increase of 1.8%.

**TABLE 7.5 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	6.0%	7.8%	6.7%
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	10.3%	10.5%	12.3%
Town of Smithers	8.5%	7.8%	8.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 7.6 Labour Market Participation Rate

In 2016, Smithers reported a labour market participation rate of 68.6% down from 71.8% in 2011. Across the Bulkley-Nechako region, the labour market participation rate was 66.9% down from 67.8% in 2011. In general, the findings suggest that the labour market participation rate in Smithers and the Bulkley-Nechako region was higher than the Province as a whole.

**TABLE 7.6 LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION**

	2006	2011	2016
British Columbia	65.7%	64.6%	63.9%
Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	69.5%	67.8%	66.9%
Town of Smithers	71.2%	71.8%	68.6%

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 7.7 Travel to Work

In 2016, there were 1,740 individuals who lived and worked in Smithers, representing 64% of the labour force. At the same time, there were 435 individuals who lived in Smithers but who traveled to another part of the Bulkley-Nechako region for work. Similarly, there were 330 individuals who were living in Smithers and who were working in a different region.

**TABLE 7.7 TRAVEL TO WORK**

	2006	2011	2016
<b>British Columbia</b>			
Live/work in the same community	784,685	824,245	864,415
Live/work in the same region	744,965	769,295	807,840
Travel to another region for work	578,005	594,820	599,115
<b>Bulkley-Nechako Regional District</b>			
Live/work in the same community	7,330	6,860	5,995
Live/work in the same region	6,260	6,830	6,845
Travel to another region for work	5,370	5,950	5,725
<b>Town of Smithers</b>			
Live/work in the same community	1,935	2,065	1,740
Live/work in the same region	150	75	435
Travel to another region for work	70	40	330

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

## 7.8 Number of Workers by Industry (NAICS)

The table below provides information on the general workforce in Smithers in 2006, 2011 and 2016 including changes in the general economic and employment profiles. Employment from construction, educational services, retail trade, transportation and warehousing and health care and social assistance were among some of the primary employment generators along with accommodation and food, public administration and professional, scientific and technical services.

**TABLE 7.8 WORKERS BY KEY INDUSTRY**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>
Total	2,825	3025	2,960
Not applicable	75	10	45
All Industry categories	2,750	3,015	2,920
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	115	125	120
Mining and oil and gas extraction	180	185	135
Utilities	25	0	10
Construction	125	290	185
Manufacturing	175	160	145
Wholesale trade	70	25	110
Retail trade	315	390	400
Transportation and warehousing	230	200	205
Information and cultural industries	25	35	20
Finance and insurance	60	95	45
Real estate and rental and leasing	85	60	35
Professional, scientific and technical services	160	155	210
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0
Admin/ support, waste management/remediation	55	90	60
Educational services	285	290	195
Health care and social assistance	235	265	300
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	65	35	55
Accommodation and food services	250	305	360
Other services (except public administration)	110	140	100
Public administration	200	180	220

Source: Statistics Canada. Census 2006, 2011 and 2016

# ESTIMATED FUTURE DEMAND

## 8.1 Current and Future Housing Needs

In preparing a *Housing Needs Report*, local governments are required to develop estimates related to:

- Anticipated population and household growth over a 5-year time frame
- Anticipated changes in average and median age
- Changes in the demographic profile of individuals and households
- Estimated future housing demand by housing type, tenure, and bedroom size
- Estimated future demand by affordability (market and non-market)

This report sets out the methodology used to prepare the population and household projections for the Town of Smithers and includes considerations related to:

- Historical trends and patterns of growth
- Expected growth locally and regionally
- Changes in the social and demographic profile of households living in the Town of Smithers

## 8.2 Methodology

Statistics Canada, through the Census, provides the most reliable and comprehensive source of baseline and trend data for population and housing demand projections. This includes considerations related to:

- Historical patterns of growth (regional and locally)
- Changes in the general population and age profile of households in the region
- Intra-and inter-provincial migration
- Patterns of housing consumption and current housing demand
- Current housing demand by housing size and type

The process used in preparing the proposed population and household growth projections for the Town of Smithers included the following steps:

- The creation of a baseline scenario using the 2016 Census data
- Analysis of historical and recent population and household trends
- Consultation with key stakeholders from across the community
- Analysis of expected employment related growth within the region
- An examination of changes in the general population and age profile for the region
- Comparison with the expected population and household growth projections using information available through B.C. Stats (P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020) at the Regional District and Local Health Area level

## 8.3 Estimated Population Growth

Like many other northern communities and regions, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and the Town of Smithers are subject to significant shifts in population resulting from broader social and economic forces. In 2016, the total population for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako was 37,445 individuals, while the population for the Town of Smithers was 5,295 individuals accounting for 14.1% of the total population in the region.

In looking at the historical patterns of growth, the Census shows that between 2006 and 2011 the population for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako grew by 1,015 individuals, representing a population growth rate of 2.7%. However, between 2011 and 2016, the population in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako decreased by 1,500 individuals, resulting in a negative population growth rate of 3.9%.

Population projections prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021 the population in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako will increase by 592 individuals or a growth rate of 1.6%. This expected rate of growth represents an average annual increase of 118 individuals, or a growth rate of 0.3%.

Between 2021 and 2026, the population in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is expected to increase by an additional 3,201 individuals or a growth rate of 1.6%. This expected rate of growth represents an average annual increase of 640 individuals, or a growth rate of 1.7%.

Historically, the population in the Town of Smithers has continued to grow at a faster rate than the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako as a whole. Between 2006 and 2011, the Town of Smithers reported an increase of 190 individuals, or a growth rate of 3.7%. This rate of growth represents an average annual increase of 38 individuals, or a growth rate of 0.7%.

Between 2011 and 2016 while the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako reported a net decrease in the population of 1,500 individuals, or a negative growth rate of 3.9%. The population in the Town of Smithers remained relatively unchanged, reporting a decrease of only 35 individuals (-0.7%).

While B.C. Stats does not prepare population projections at the community level, population projections at the Local Health Area can help to provide meaningful insights into differences across different geographic areas.

For 2016 to 2021, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population for the Town of Smithers is expected to increase by 530 individuals, or a growth rate of 8.7%. Annually, this represents an increase of 106 individuals, or a growth rate of 1.7%.

For 2021 to 2026, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population for the Town of Smithers is expected to increase by 557 individuals, or a growth rate of 9.4%. This translates into an average annual increase of 111 individuals, or a growth rate of 1.9%.

The analysis also shows that the expected population growth for the Town of Smithers between 2016 and 2026 is equal to 7 times the population growth reported in the Census for the Town of Smithers in the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016).

**TABLE 8.1: PROJECTED REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**

Years	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Population	Population Change	Rate of Growth	Population	Population Change	Rate of Growth
2016	37,445	--	--	5,295		
2017	36,931	(-514)	-2.2%	5,433	138	2.6%
2018	36,958	27	0.1%	5,575	142	0.9%
2019	37,241	283	0.8%	5,627	52	1.6%
2020	37,810	569	1.5%	5,717	90	1.9%
2021	38,337	527	1.4%	5,825	109	1.7%
2022	38,922	585	1.5%	5,924	99	1.8%
2023	39,560	638	1.6%	6,031	107	1.9%
2024	40,217	657	1.7%	6,145	114	1.9%
2025	40,876	659	1.6%	6,263	118	1.9%
2026	41,538	662	2.0%	6,382	119	1.9%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020



## 8.4 Estimated Household Growth

In 2016, there were 15,100 households living in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako including 2,290 households living in the Town of Smithers, with the households living in the Town of Smithers accounting for 15.2% of all households in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

In looking at the historical patterns of growth, the Census shows that between 2006 and 2011 the total number of households in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako increased by 635 households, or a growth rate of 4.4%. However, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of households in Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako decreased by 85 households, or a negative growth rate of 0.6%.

Population and household projections prepared by B.C. Stats under P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021 the total number of households in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako will increase by 1,613 households, or a growth rate of 10.7%. Annually this represents an average increase of 323 households, or a growth rate of 2.1%.

Between 2021 and 2026, B.C. Stats estimates that the total number of households in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako will increase by an additional 1,437 households, or a growth rate of 8.6%. This translates into an average annual increase of 287 households, or a growth rate of 1.7%.

Assuming that the Town of Smithers experiences a similar pattern of household growth to the expected growth within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako as a whole, it is likely that between 2016 and 2021, the total number of households in the Town of Smithers will increase by 258 households, representing a growth rate of 11.2%. This translates into an average annual increase of 52 households for the Town of Smithers, or a growth rate of 2.0%.

For 2021 to 2026, assuming that the pattern of household growth within the Town of Smithers continues to remain similar to the expected household growth for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako as a whole, the total number of households in the Town of Smithers is expected to increase by an additional 223 households, or a growth rate of 8.8%. This translates into an average annual increase of 45 households, or a growth rate of 1.7%.

In looking at the expected household growth for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako between 2016 and 2021, compared to the expected household growth for the Town of Smithers, the findings suggest that the expected household growth for the Town of Smithers is equal to 15.9% of the expected household growth for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. Similarly, from 2021 to 2026, the expected household growth for the Town of Smithers is equal to 15.5% of the expected household growth for region.

The analysis also shows that the expected household growth for the Town of Smithers between 2016 and 2026 is equal to 2.3 times the household growth reported in the Census for the Town of Smithers in the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016). Specifically, the Town of Smithers experienced an increase of 210 households between 2006 and 2016 compared to an expected increase of 482 households between 2016 and 2026.

**TABLE 8.2: ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD GROWTH (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**

Years	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Total Households	Increase/ Decrease	% Change	Total Households	Increase/ Decrease	% Change
2016	15,100			2,290		
2017	15,446	346	2.3%	2,342	52	2.3%
2018	15,792	346	2.2%	2,396	54	2.2%
2019	16,138	346	2.2%	2,450	54	2.2%
2020	16,428	290	1.8%	2,503	54	1.8%
2021	16,713	285	1.7%	2,548	45	1.7%
2022	16,979	266	1.6%	2,593	44	1.6%
2023	17,276	297	1.7%	2,634	41	1.7%
2024	17,575	299	1.7%	2,680	46	1.7%
2025	17,867	292	1.7%	2,726	46	1.7%
2026	18,150	283	1.6%	2,772	45	1.6%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020

## 8.5 Changing Demographics –0 to 14 years of age

In 2016, there were 7,290 individuals in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who were between the ages of 0 and 14 including 975 individuals living in the Town of Smithers.

Analysis of historical data for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako shows that between 2006 and 2011, the total number of individuals between the ages of 0 to 14 living in the RDBN decreased by 260, or a negative growth rate of 3.1%. Similarly, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of individuals between the ages of 0 to 14 living in the RDBN decreased by an additional 835, or a negative growth rate of 10.3%.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Town of Smithers reported a decrease of 55 individuals between the ages of 0 to 14, representing a negative growth rate of 4.7%. Between 2011 and 2016, the Town of Smithers reported a further decrease of 135 individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort, representing a negative growth rate of 12.2%.

Population projections prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021, the population in the 0 to 14 age cohort in the RDBN will decrease by 573 individuals, representing a negative growth rate 7.6%. This translates into an average annual decrease of 115 individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort, or a negative growth rate of 1.5%.

Between 2021 and 2026, B.C. Stats estimates that the population in the 0 to 14 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by 176 individuals, representing a growth rate of 2.6%. The expected increase in individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort translates into an average annual increase of 35, or a growth rate of 0.5%.

While B.C. Stats does not prepare population projections at the community level, population projections at the Local Health Area level can help to provide meaningful insights into differences across different geographic areas.

For 2016 to 2021, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected pattern of growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population in the Town of Smithers in the 0 to 14 age cohort is expected to increase by 108 individuals, or a growth rate of 11.1%. This translates into an average annual increase of 22 individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort, or a growth rate of 2.1% among those between the ages of 0 to 14. Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers for 2021 to 2026, it is likely that the population in 0 to 14 age cohort in the Town of Smithers will increase by an additional 29 individuals, or a growth rate of 2.7%. This translates into an average annual increase of 6 individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort, or a growth rate of 0.5% among those between the ages of 0 to 14.

In comparing the expected population growth between 2016 and 2026 for individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort in the RDBN to the expected population growth in the Town of Smithers, the findings suggest that, notwithstanding an expected increase of 137 individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort in the Town of Smithers, the RDBN will experience a net decrease of 397 individuals in this age cohort, representing a negative growth rate of 5.4%. The analysis also shows that the expected growth of 137 individuals in the 0 to 14 age cohort for the Town of Smithers represents positive growth in this age cohort compared to the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016) which reported negative growth.

**TABLE 8.3: PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN 0 TO 14 AGE COHORT (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**

	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Number	Increase	%	Number	Increase	%
2016	7,290			975		
2017	6,555	-735	-10.1%	1,003	28	2.9%
2018	6,539	-16	-0.2%	1,027	24	2.4%
2019	6,567	28	0.4%	1,057	29	2.9%
2020	6,644	77	1.2%	1,067	10	1.0%
2021	6,717	73	1.1%	1,083	16	1.5%
2022	6,770	53	0.8%	1,081	-2	-0.1%
2023	6,771	1	0.0%	1,083	2	0.1%
2024	6,809	38	0.6%	1,096	13	1.2%
2025	6,785	-24	-0.4%	1,098	2	0.2%
2026	6,893	108	2%	1,112	14	1.3%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020

## 8.6 Changing Demographics –15 to 19 years of age

In 2016, there were 2,550 individuals in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who were in the 15 to 19 age cohort including 370 individuals living in the Town of Smithers.

Analysis of historical data for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako shows that between 2006 and 2011, the total number of individuals between the ages of 15 to 19 living in the RDBN decreased by 60, or a negative growth rate of 2.0%. Similarly, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of individuals between the ages of 15 to 19 living in the RDBN decreased by an additional 460, or a negative growth rate of 15.3%.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Town of Smithers reported an increase of 20 individuals between the ages of 15 to 19, representing a growth rate of 4.8%. Between 2011 and 2016, the Town of Smithers reported a decrease of 65 individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort, representing a negative growth rate of 14.9%.

Population projections prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021, the population in the 15 to 19 age cohort in the RDBN will decrease by 350 individuals, representing a negative growth rate 13.7%. This translates into an average annual decrease of 70 individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort, or a negative growth rate of 2.6%.

Between 2021 and 2026, B.C. Stats estimates that the population in the 15 to 19 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by 90 individuals, representing a growth rate of 3.7%. The expected increase in individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort translates into an average annual increase of 18, or a growth rate of 0.7%.

While B.C. Stats does not prepare population projections at the community level, population projections at the Local Health Area level can help to provide meaningful insights into differences across different geographic areas.

For 2016 to 2021, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected pattern of growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population in the Town of Smithers in the 15 to 19 age cohort is expected to increase by 13 individuals, or a growth rate of 3.5%. This translates into an average annual increase of 3 individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort, or a growth rate of 0.7% among those between the ages of 15 to 19. Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers for 2021 to 2026, it is likely that the population in 15 to 19 age cohort will increase by an additional 19 individuals, or a growth rate of 5.0%. This translates into an average annual increase of 4 individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort, or a growth rate of 1.0% among those between the ages of 15 to 19.

In comparing the expected population growth between 2016 and 2026 for individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort in the RDBN to the expected population growth in the Town of Smithers, the findings suggest that, notwithstanding an expected increase of 33 individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort in the Town of Smithers, the RDBN will experience a net decrease of 51 individuals in this age cohort, representing a negative growth rate of 2.0%. The analysis also shows that the expected growth of 33 individuals in the 15 to 19 age cohort for the Town of Smithers represents positive growth in this age cohort compared to the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016) where the Town of Smithers experienced net negative growth in this age cohort.

**TABLE 8.4: PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN 15 TO 19 AGE COHORT (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**  
Town of Smithers Housing Needs Report

	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Number	Increase	%	Number	Increase	%
2016	2,550			370		
2017	2,476	-74	-2.9%	384	14	-0.2%
2018	2,471	-5	-0.2%	389	5	1.3%
2019	2,454	-17	-0.7%	387	-2	-0.5%
2020	2,468	14	0.6%	392	4	1.2%
2021	2,409	-59	-2.4%	383	-8	-2.1%
2022	2,376	-33	-1.4%	389	5	1.4%
2023	2,342	-34	-1.4%	378	-10	-2.7%
2024	2,381	39	1.7%	382	4	1.0%
2025	2,469	88	3.7%	398	16	4.2%
2026	2,499	30	1%	403	5	1.2%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020

## 8.7 Changing Demographics –20 to 24 years of age

In 2016, there were 2,110 individuals in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who were in the 20 to 24 age cohort including 350 individuals living in the Town of Smithers.

Analysis of historical data for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako shows that between 2006 and 2011, the total number of individuals between the ages of 20 to 24 living in the RDBN did not change. Similarly, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of individuals between the ages of 20 to 24 living in the RDBN decreased by 70, or a negative growth rate of 3.2%.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Town of Smithers reported an increase of 30 individuals between the ages of 20 to 24, representing a growth rate of 9.5%. Between 2011 and 2016, the Town of Smithers reported an additional increase of 5 individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort, representing a growth rate of 1.4%.

Population projections prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021, the population in the 20 to 24 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by 293 individuals, representing a growth rate 4.4%. This translates into an average annual increase of 59 individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort, or a growth rate of 0.9%.

Between 2021 and 2026, B.C. Stats estimates that the population in the 20 to 24 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by 175 individuals, representing a growth rate of 7.3%. The expected increase in individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort translates into an average annual increase of 35, or a growth rate of 1.5%.

While B.C. Stats does not prepare population projections at the community level, population projections at the Local Health Area level can help to provide meaningful insights into differences across different geographic areas.

For 2016 to 2021, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected pattern of growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population in the Town of Smithers in the 20 to 24 age cohort is expected to increase by 22 individuals, or a growth rate of 6.3%. This translates into an average annual increase of 4 individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort, or a growth rate of 1.3% among those between the ages of 20 to 24.

Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers for 2021 to 2026, it is likely that the population in 20 to 24 age cohort will increase by an additional 46 individuals, or a growth rate of 12.4%. This translates into an average annual increase of 9 individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort, or a growth rate of 2.5% among those between the ages of 20 to 24.

In comparing the expected population growth for individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort for the RDBN between 2016 and 2026, and the expected population growth for individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort for the Town of Smithers, the findings suggest that the expected population growth for individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort for the Town of Smithers is equal to 14.5% of the expected population growth in this age cohort for the RDBN. The analysis also shows that the expected population growth for individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort for the Town of Smithers between 2016 and 2026 is equal to almost 2 times the population growth for this age cohort reported in the Census for the Town of Smithers in the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016).



**TABLE 8.5: PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN 20 TO 24 AGE COHORT (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**

	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Number	Increase	%	Number	Increase	%
2016	2,110			350		
2017	2,394	284	13.5%	364	14	2.9%
2018	2,295	-99	-4.1%	348	-16	-4.5%
2019	2,316	21	0.9%	356	8	2.3%
2020	2,322	6	0.3%	363	7	2.1%
2021	2,403	81	3.5%	372	9	2.4%
2022	2,465	62	2.6%	390	18	4.9%
2023	2,596	131	5.3%	423	34	8.6%
2024	2,654	58	2.2%	428	4	1.0%
2025	2,636	-18	-0.7%	425	-3	-0.6%
2026	2,578	-58	-2%	418	-7	-1.7%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020

## 8.8 Changing Demographics –25 to 64 years of age

In 2016, there were 20,305 individuals in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who were in the 25 to 64 age cohort including 2,855 individuals living in the Town of Smithers.

Analysis of historical data for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako shows that between 2006 and 2011, the total number of individuals between the ages of 25 to 64 living in the RDBN increased by 405 individuals, a growth rate of 2.0%. However, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of individuals between the ages of 25 to 64 living in the RDBN decreased by 765, or a negative growth rate of 3.6%.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Town of Smithers reported an increase of 60 individuals between the ages of 25 to 64, representing a growth rate of 2.2%. Between 2011 and 2016, the Town of Smithers reported an additional increase of 45 individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort, representing a growth rate of 1.6%.

Population projections prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021, the population in the 25 to 64 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by 396 individuals, representing a growth rate 2.0%. This translates into an average annual increase of 79 individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort, or a growth rate of 0.4%.

Between 2021 and 2026, B.C. Stats estimates that the population in the 25 to 64 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by an additional 1,204 individuals, representing a growth rate of 5.8%. The expected increase in individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort translates into an average annual increase of 241, or a growth rate of 1.2%.

While B.C. Stats does not prepare population projections at the community level, population projections at the Local Health Area level can help to provide meaningful insights into differences across different geographic areas.

For 2016 to 2021, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected pattern of growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population in the Town of Smithers in the 25 to 64 age cohort is expected to increase by 96 individuals, or a growth rate of 3.4%. This translates into an average annual increase of 19 individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort, or a growth rate of 0.7% among those between the ages of 25 to 64.

Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers for 2021 to 2026, it is likely that the population in 25 to 64 age cohort will increase by an additional 233 individuals, or a growth rate of 7.9%. This translates into an average annual increase of 47 individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort, or a growth rate of 1.6% among those between the ages of 25 to 64.

In comparing the expected population growth for individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort for the RDBN between 2016 and 2026, and the expected population growth for individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort for the Town of Smithers, the findings suggest that the expected population growth for individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort for the Town of Smithers is equal to 20.6% of the expected population growth in this age cohort for the RDBN. The analysis also shows that the expected population growth for individuals in the 25 to 64 age cohort for the Town of Smithers between 2016 and 2026 is equal to almost 3 times the population growth for this age cohort reported in the Census for the Town of Smithers in the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016).

**TABLE 8.6: PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN 25 TO 64 AGE COHORT (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**

	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Number	Increase	%	Number	Increase	%
2016	20,305			2,855		
2017	20,420	115	0.6%	2,869	14	1.9%
2018	20,349	-71	-0.3%	2,870	1	0.0%
2019	20,346	-3	0.0%	2,895	25	0.9%
2020	20,554	208	1.0%	2,918	23	0.8%
2021	20,701	147	0.7%	2,951	33	1.1%
2022	20,847	146	0.7%	2,982	32	1.1%
2023	21,101	254	1.2%	3,032	50	1.7%
2024	21,245	144	0.7%	3,069	37	1.2%
2025	21,562	317	1.5%	3,120	51	1.7%
2026	21,905	343	2%	3,184	63	2.0%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020

## 8.9 Changing Demographics –65 to 84 years of age

In 2016, there were 700 individuals in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who were in the 65 to 84 age cohort including 115 individuals living in the Town of Smithers.

Analysis of historical data for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako shows that between 2006 and 2011, the total number of individuals between the ages of 65 to 84 living in the RDBN increased by 725 individuals, a growth rate of 19.8%. Similarly, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of individuals between the ages of 65 to 84 living in the RDBN increased by an additional 700, or a growth rate of 16.0%.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Town of Smithers reported an increase of 105 individuals between the ages of 65 to 84, representing a growth rate of 21.2%. Between 2011 and 2016, the Town of Smithers reported an additional increase of 115 individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort, representing a growth rate of 19.2%.

Population projections prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021, the population in the 65 to 84 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by 400 individuals, representing a growth rate 7.9%. This translates into an average annual increase of 80 individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort, or a growth rate of 1.6%.

Between 2021 and 2026, B.C. Stats estimates that the population in the 65 to 84 age cohort in the RDBN will increase by an additional 1,441 individuals, representing a growth rate of 26.3%. The expected increase in individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort translates into an average annual increase of 288, or a growth rate of 5.3%.

While B.C. Stats does not prepare population projections at the community level, population projections at the Local Health Area level can help to provide meaningful insights into differences across different geographic areas.

For 2016 to 2021, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected pattern of growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population in the Town of Smithers in the 65 to 84 age cohort is expected to increase by 207 individuals, or a growth rate of 29.0%. This translates into an average annual increase of 41 individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort, or a growth rate of 5.8% among those between the ages of 65 to 84.

Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers for 2021 to 2026, it is likely that the population in 65 to 84 age cohort will increase by an additional 238 individuals, or a growth rate of 25.8%. This translates into an average annual increase of 48 individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort, or a growth rate of 5.2% among those between the ages of 65 to 84.

In comparing the expected population growth for individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort for the RDBN between 2016 and 2026, and the expected population growth for individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort for the Town of Smithers, the findings suggest that the expected population growth for individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort for the Town of Smithers is equal to 24.1% of the expected population growth in this age cohort for the RDBN. The analysis also shows that the expected population growth for individuals in the 65 to 84 age cohort for the Town of Smithers between 2016 and 2026 is equal to almost 2 times the population growth for this age cohort reported in the Census for the Town of Smithers in the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016).

**TABLE 8.7: PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN 65 TO 84 AGE COHORT (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**

	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Number	Increase	%	Number	Increase	%
2016	5,080			715		
2017	4,449	-631	-12.4%	729	14	5.2%
2018	4,644	195	4.4%	770	41	5.6%
2019	4,908	264	5.7%	800	30	3.9%
2020	5,206	298	6.1%	875	75	9.3%
2021	5,480	274	5.3%	922	47	5.4%
2022	5,852	372	6.8%	975	54	5.8%
2023	6,080	228	3.9%	1,010	35	3.6%
2024	6,433	353	5.8%	1,071	61	6.0%
2025	6,712	279	4.3%	1,124	54	5.0%
2026	6,921	209	3%	1,159	35	3.1%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020

## 8.10 Changing Demographics –85 and older years of age

In 2016, there were 560 individuals in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who were 85 and older including 140 individuals living in the Town of Smithers.

Analysis of historical data for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako shows that between 2006 and 2011, the total number of individuals who were 85 and older living in the RDBN increased by 120 individuals, a growth rate of 36.9%. Similarly, between 2011 and 2016, the total number of individuals 85 and older living in the RDBN increased by an additional 115, or a growth rate of 25.8%.

Between 2006 and 2011, the Town of Smithers reported an increase of 30 individuals 85 and older, representing a growth rate of 40.0%. Between 2011 and 2016, the Town of Smithers reported an additional increase of 35 individuals 85 and older representing a growth rate of 33.3%.

Population projections prepared by B.C. Stats through P.E.O.P.L.E 2020 estimate that between 2016 and 2021, the population 85 and older in the RDBN will increase by 67 individuals, representing a growth rate of 12.0%. This translates into an average annual increase of 13 individuals 85 and older, or a growth rate of 2.4%.

Between 2021 and 2026, B.C. Stats estimates that the population 85 and older living in the RDBN will increase by an additional 115 individuals, representing a growth rate of 18.3%. The expected increase in individuals 85 and older translates into an average annual increase of 23, or a growth rate of 3.7%.

While B.C. Stats does not prepare population projections at the community level, population projections at the Local Health Area level can help to provide meaningful insights into differences across different geographic areas.

For 2016 to 2021, assuming that the pattern of growth within the Town of Smithers is similar to the expected pattern of growth for the Smithers Local Health Area, the population in the Town of Smithers 85 and older will increase by 26 individuals, or a growth rate of 15.7%. This translates into an average annual increase of 5 individuals 85 and older, or a growth rate of 3.1% among those 85 and older.

Assuming a similar pattern of growth for the Town of Smithers for 2021 to 2026, it is likely that the population 85 and older will increase by an additional 49 individuals, or a growth rate of 29.5%. This translates into an average annual increase of 10 individuals 85 and older, or a growth rate of 5.9% among those 85 and older.

In comparing the expected population growth for individuals 85 and older living in the RDBN between 2016 and 2026, and the expected population growth for individuals 85 and older in the Town of Smithers, the findings suggest that the expected population growth for individuals 85 and older in the Town of Smithers is equal to 41.2% of the expected population growth in this age cohort for the RDBN. The analysis also shows that the expected population growth for individuals in the 85 and older age cohort for the Town of Smithers between 2016 and 2026 is equal to 1.15 times the population growth for this age cohort reported in the Census for the Town of Smithers in the prior 10 year period (i.e. between 2006 and 2016).

**TABLE 8.8: PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN 85+ AGE COHORT (RDBN AND TOWN OF SMITHERS)**

	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako			Town of Smithers		
	Number	Increase	%	Number	Increase	%
2016	560			140		
2017	637	77	13.8%	154	14	24.9%
2018	660	23	3.6%	158	4	2.3%
2019	650	-10	-1.5%	159	1	0.7%
2020	616	-34	-5.2%	154	-5	-3.0%
2021	627	11	1.8%	166	12	8.0%
2022	612	-15	-2.4%	175	8	5.0%
2023	670	58	9.5%	186	11	6.4%
2024	695	25	3.7%	193	7	3.8%
2025	712	17	2.4%	198	5	2.4%
2026	742	30	4%	215	18	9.0%

Source: Calculated by SPARC BC based on Local Health Area Projections, B.C. Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020



# APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY & DEFINITIONS

**Affordability:** Affordability is determined by comparing the monthly cost of housing to the monthly household income and is reported as a percentage of shelter cost to income (shelter-cost-to-income). To be considered affordable a household should not be spending more than 30% of their gross annual income on the cost of their housing.

**Affordability Threshold:** The affordability threshold is calculated by taking the monthly household income and multiplying it by 30%. The affordability threshold shows the amount of the average monthly housing cost that is considered affordable relative to the households' average monthly income.

**Affordability Gap:** The affordability gap calculates the difference between the monthly housing costs and the amount considered to be affordable based on a households' monthly income.

**Apartment duplex:** Apartment duplex is a Census term that refers to an apartment or flat in a duplex or accessory dwelling unit in a building that has fewer than 5 storeys.

**Average household income:** Average household income refers to the income of a specified group that is calculated by dividing the aggregate income by the total number of individuals or households identified in the sample or Census universe.

**Band Housing:** Band housing is a Census term that is used for historical reasons to define the shelter occupancy of housing for First Nations people whose form of housing does not lend itself to the usual classification of tenure (ownership and rental).

**Census families:** Census families is a Census term that refers to households living in private households in various types of family and household arrangements. Census families can include spouses who are married as well as common-law spouses and can include households both with and without children.

**Core housing need:** A household is considered to be in core housing need if they are unable to find housing in their community that is suitable in size and in good repair without spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs.

**Employment income:** Employment income is the income received from wages, salaries, and commissions and is typically reported at the individual level.

**Extreme Housing Needs:** Households that are spending 50% or more of their income on their housing costs are precariously housed and in extreme housing need. These households are considered to be at increased risk of economic eviction with a change in their income or an increase in their rent having the potential to push them deeper into poverty and homelessness.

**Full-time employment:** Full-time employment is reported in the Census as a full-year and full-time worker that includes individuals aged 15 and older who worked more than 30 hours per week for a minimum of 49 weeks of the year.

**Household income:** Household income is a Census term that refers to the total household income received from all sources including employment income, investments, pensions, and other sources including government sources. Household income is reported at the household level.

**Household size:** Household size is a Census term that refers to the number of persons in a private household.

**Housing condition:** Housing condition is one of the dimensions of housing need under Canada's Core Housing Need Definition and includes considerations around the adequacy or condition of the housing including the number of units that are in need of major repairs. In particular, a household is considered to be in core housing need if they are unable to find housing that is suitable in size and in good repair without spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs.

**Household maintainer:** Household maintainer is a Census term that refers to the number of persons in a household responsible for paying the rent, or mortgage, or taxes and other utilities with the age of the primary household maintainer being defined by the first person in the household reported on the Census form and who has been identified as having the primary responsibility.

**Low income measures:** A household is considered to be in low-income if their income falls below one of a number of different measures established by Statistics Canada which include LIM (low income measure), and LICO (low income cut-off). Both can be measured both before and after tax.

**Low income measure (LIM):** LIM is one of the low-income measures established by Statistics Canada and refers to households falling below 50% of the median adjusted after-tax income of private households (LIM-AT) that is further adjusted to reflect differences in household sizes.

**Median household income:** Median household income refers to the income level of a specified group that is the exact midpoint of the income distribution (i.e. the point where the income distribution divides into two halves).

**Movable dwelling:** Moveable dwelling is a Census term that refers to manufactured or mobile homes that are either rented or owned.

**Movers:** Movers include households who have moved in the year prior to the Census. This can include individuals who have moved but remained in the same city, town or community and who are referred to as non-migrants as well as migrants who could include individuals who have moved from a different city, town, township, village, or First Nations reserve. External migrants would be individuals who have moved from outside of Canada.

**Non-census family households:** Non-census family households is a Census term and refers to individuals or single person households who live alone. Non-census family households can also include unrelated individuals living together.

**Number of bedrooms:** Number of bedrooms is a Census term that refers to the number of rooms in a private dwelling unit that are designated for sleeping purposes while number of rooms refer to additional living spaces within a private dwelling and include other living spaces such as the kitchen, basement, living/dining area.

**Private dwellings:** The term private dwellings is a Census term that refers to living quarters which have a private entrance. A private dwelling occupied by usual residents refers to a private dwelling where the individual or household permanently resides.

**Structure type:** The term structure type is a Census term that refers to the structural characteristics of the dwelling unit and could include different housing types including single detached, semi-detached, row house or apartment unit.

**Shelter cost:** Shelter costs refers to the average monthly total of all shelter expenses paid by households that own or rent their dwelling and that can include mortgage payments, property taxes and condominium fees, along with the costs of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services. For renter households, shelter costs include, where applicable, the rent and the costs of electricity, and heat.

**Shelter-cost-to-income ratio (STIR):** The term shelter-cost-to-income ratio refers to the proportion of monthly household income which is spent on shelter costs with the shelter-cost-to-income ratio being calculated for private households who reported a total household income of greater than zero. A household is considered to be experiencing housing affordability challenges if they are spending 30% or more of their income on their housing costs, or if they have a shelter-cost-to-income ratio of 30% or more.

**Subsidized housing:** Subsidized housing refers to housing where a household pays a rent that is geared to their income. Subsidized housing could refer to traditional social housing, public housing, and other forms of government-assisted housing including non-profit housing. This term can also include households that are receiving rent supplement assistance or some form of housing allowance.

**Suitability:** Suitability is one of the dimensions of housing need under Canada's Core Housing Need Definition and includes considerations where there are not enough rooms and living spaces to meet the basic standards requirements set out in the National Occupancy Standards (NOS). Measures of suitability refer to the degree of crowding.

**Tenure:** Tenure is a Census term that is used to determine whether a household rents or owns their housing.

*Statistics Canada. 2017. British Columbia. Census Profile. 2016. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017.*

# APPENDIX D:

## HOUSING CONTINUUM IN THE TOWN OF SMITHERS

## D.1 The Continuum of Housing Choices

This section looks at the housing choices that are available to families and individuals living in the Town of Smithers including the affordability of the ownership choices. The information set out in the table below is based on information reported by BC Assessment for 2019 and includes information related to the median assessed value of different housing forms and types in the Town of Smithers including:

- Single detached family housing
- Duplex units (strata and non-strata)
- Manufactured home/mobile units

In looking at the median assessed value, the calculations below include information on:

- The down payment requirements
- Monthly mortgage payments
- The qualifying income needed to purchase a home

The information assumes a down payment of 10%, a 25-year amortization period and 5-year fixed term mortgage at 2.39% interest.

**TABLE D.1 MONTHLY MORTGAGE PAYMENTS AND QUALIFYING INCOME**

	Assessed Value	Range Low/High	Mortgage Amount	Down payment Amount	Monthly Payments	Qualifying Income
Single Detached Home	\$190,300	Low	\$171,270	\$19,030	\$772	\$45,345
Single Detached	\$384,000	High	\$345,600	\$38,400	\$1,558	\$66,445
Duplex (Non-Strata)	\$232,600	Low	\$209,340	\$23,260	\$943	\$49,955
Duplex (Non-Strata)	\$232,900	High	\$209,610	\$23,290	\$945	\$49,985
Duplex (Strata)	\$248,000	Low	\$223,200	\$24,800	\$1,006	\$51,630
Duplex (Strata)	\$381,800	High	\$343,620	\$38,180	\$1,549	\$66,205
Mobile Home	\$56,000	Low	\$50,400	\$5,600	\$227	\$30,715
Mobile Home	\$100,550	High	\$90,495	\$10,055	\$407	\$35,570

*Assumptions: Calculation using the low and high range in the median price reported in BC Assessment Data for the Town of Smithers and based on an amortization period of 25 years and a 2.39% mortgage rate for 5 years. Calculations assume a 10% down payment.*

*In looking at the cost of owning, the analysis shows that fewer renter households are able to make the transition to ownership as housing costs increase.*

*While interest rates continue to remain low, there are additional requirements around the level of debt that households can assume. This has made it more difficult for some households (especially those with only minimal savings or higher levels of debt) to secure the financing that they need to purchase a home. As well, insurance costs have also increased, especially within the context of strata tenure developments, making this form of housing less affordable and less attainable for some. As the cost of housing in the Town of Smithers continues to increase it is likely that a greater number of owners will start to experience higher levels of housing stress.*

## D.2 Affordability by Housing Type

Based on the median assessed value of \$190,300 and \$384,000 for a single detached home in the Town of Smithers, a household would need an income of between \$45,000 and \$66,000 and a down payment of between \$19,000 and \$38,000 to purchase a single detached home.

The duplex units in the Town of Smithers typically have a higher median assessed value as they are newer stock. Based on the median assessed value of \$248,000 and \$381,800 for a duplex unit in the Town of Smithers, a household would need an annual income of between \$52,000 and \$66,000 and a down payment of between \$25,000 and \$38,000 saved to purchase a newer duplex unit.

Manufactured home stock also represents an important part of the continuum of housing choices in smaller, rural communities. Based on the median assessed values of the manufactured home units in the Town of Smithers, a household would need an annual income of between \$31,000 and \$36,000 to purchase a manufactured home unit. This would translate into monthly housing costs of between \$227 and \$407 per month not including the monthly pad rental cost.

The housing continuum graphic on the following page shows the mix of housing types (ownership and rental) in the Town of Smithers and provides information on both housing costs and incomes.

**Column 1 & 2:** Shows the income distribution of all households living in the Town of Smithers (owners and renters) and is based on the 2016 Census.

**Column 3:** Shows the median price for a single detached home in the Town of Smithers based on 2019 BC Assessment data. It also shows the qualifying income needed for a household to purchase a home at this price assuming a 10% down payment, a 25-year amortization period, and a 2.39% closed 5-year mortgage.

**Column 4:** Shows the median price for a newer duplex unit in the Town of Smithers based on 2019 BC Assessment data. It also shows the qualifying income needed for a household to purchase a home at this price assuming a 10% down payment, a 25-year amortization period, and a 2.39% closed 5-year mortgage.

**Column 5:** Shows the median price for a manufactured home in the Town of Smithers based on 2019 BC Assessment data. It also shows the qualifying income needed for a household to purchase a manufactured home in the Town of Smithers assuming a 10% down payment, a 25-year amortization period, and a 2.39% closed 5-year mortgage. The calculation also assumes a monthly pad rental cost of \$400 per month.



**Column 6:** Shows the reported average market rent based on information contained in the 2016 Census. However, key informant interviews suggest that the actual market rent in the Town of Smithers is considerably higher at \$1,200 per month. Based on an average monthly rent of \$1,200, a household would need an annual income of \$48,000 to carry the cost of this housing.

**Column 7:** Shows the average monthly rent for a household with an annual income of \$20,000 living in social housing where the monthly rent they pay is geared to their income and is based on the standard that to be affordable, a household should not be spending more than 30% of their gross annual income on their housing costs.

TABLE D.2 THE CONTINUUM OF OWNERSHIP AND RENTAL HOUSING CHOICES IN SMITHERS

Total Households: 2,295						
Total Owners: 1,545						Renters: 715
Income Distribution (\$)	Number of Households	Single Detached Housing	Duplex Units. (Older Stock)	Duplex Units. (Older Stock)	Market Rental	Non-Market Family Housing (24 units)
Total	2,295					
\$125K+	455					
\$100K to 124,999	275					
\$80K to 99,999	335					
\$60K to 79,999	325	\$66,445				
\$50K to 59,999	170		\$51,630			
\$40K to 49,999	150				\$48,000	
\$30K to 39,999	195			\$35,570	\$35,760	
\$20K to 29,999	225					\$20,000
\$15K to 19,999	50					
\$10K to 14,999	60					
Under \$10K	40					
Housing Cost		\$384,000 \$1,558/month	\$248,000 \$1,006/month	\$100,500 \$800 per month <sup>3</sup>	\$894 per month to \$1,200 per month	\$500 per month

<sup>3</sup> Including an estimated \$400 per month pad rental fee.