

Key Findings: Municipal Housing Needs Report: Fall 2023.

Housing Shortage

As of the end of 2022, there was a gap between housing demand and the available supply of about 60 units, including both market and non-market housing. It is estimated to increase to 70 units by 2027.

Shortage of Housing units 2022	Shortage of Housing units 2027
60	70

Population

As per Statistics Canada, over the last 5 years, the population of St. Mary's decreased by 3%, compared to the provincial growth rate of 5%.

Key Needs:

1.) Low Income:

When a household lives in a dwelling that requires more than 30% of its before-tax household income, is overcrowded, and needs major repairs – and no alternative exists – it is in **Core Housing Need**. In 2021, about 11% (115 total) of the municipality's households lived in Core Housing Need. Need is particularly prevalent among:

- 25% of renter households (25),
- 56% of lone-parent households (25),
- 19% of single persons / roommate households (75).

2.) Seniors:

The municipality grew across one of the defined age cohorts between 2016 and 2021, with **strong growth among 85+ year olds**. This follows the provincial trend of aging populations. This has led to an increased demand for smaller dwellings among older populations, owing perhaps, to downsizing after retirement.

Non-market Housing

As of January 2023, the District of St. Mary's had a public-housing inventory of 20 units, of which all were senior-specific.

Short-term Rentals (STRs)

Between 2018 and 2022, there has been an increase of 23 dwellings used as short-term rentals. In 2022, 82% were entire homes or apartments, of which 19 were potentially "commercial" units – meaning they were available or reserved more than half of the year (about 1% of the municipality's housing inventory).

Shelter Costs

The average rents reported by the Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) was \$539 in 2021.

Median municipality home prices increased significantly between 2019 and 2022. The rapid rise in prices is a combination of increased demand and low interest rates (until recently).

Median Sale Prices by Dwelling Type & Select Years (Source: Table 5-1 MODSM Housing Needs Report)

	Price				Percent Change		
	2010	2016	2019	2022	'10- '16	'16- '19	'19- '22
Total	\$75,750	\$78,500	\$47,900	\$235,000	+4%	-39%	+391%
Single	\$75,750	\$75,000	\$49,900	\$254,000	-1%	-33%	+409%

Affordability

In the municipality, affordability has fallen since 2016. At least 47% of all couples, 55% of all lone-parent households, and 92% of all single person households **earned below the estimated income required** to afford the 2022 median sale price of a local dwelling. For rentals, at least 18% of renting lone-parents and 55% of renting single persons earned below the estimated income required to afford the 2021 average local rents.

Building Permits

We are seeing solid numbers in building permits at approximately 14 permits for new builds over the last 5 years, up to the end of 2022.

The housing report indicates that the natural rate of building permit applications may be able to close the gap. There are good reasons to believe that current building permit activity is not sufficient to be a solution as follows:

- 1.) Most permits are for market value senior family housing. So no or minimal measurable action on lower income or smaller units (e.g., one-bedroom units are often suitable for seniors).
- 2.) Many new builds are seasonal recreational.
- 3.) Permit numbers are not net new. We experience demolition permits and replacements on the same property.