

ALBERTA
SOUTHWEST

FORT MACLEOD

Accommodation and Food Services

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Executive Summary

Fort Macleod's accommodation and food services sector presents a smaller and narrower profile than it did earlier in the decade. The local resident labour force tied to the sector fell sharply between 2016 and 2021, dropping from 110 to 70, while total sector employment in 2025 stood slightly below its 2020 level after a decline, partial recovery, and recent easing. The business base also settled below earlier levels, with 21 establishments in 2025 compared with 27 in 2018. Rather than a steady slide, the pattern is one of contraction followed by a period of relative stability at a reduced scale.

Within that smaller footprint, activity is concentrated heavily in restaurants, which remain by far the largest source of employment in the sector. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places employed 87 people in 2025, far ahead of special food services and traveller accommodation. Yet even this leading segment shows a mixed picture: it rose modestly over the latest year but remained below its level five years earlier. Special food services is much smaller in employment terms, but it stands out as Fort Macleod's one clear area of specialization, with a location quotient above 1.0 and little recent change. Traveller accommodation shows the weakest performance in the sector, with very low employment and steep declines over both the past year and the past five years. This leaves Fort Macleod with a sector that is not broad-based, but instead anchored by restaurants, supported by a niche concentration in special food services, and marked by substantial weakness in accommodation.

The structure of the sector reinforces that restrained picture. Establishments are concentrated in the smallest size classes, especially businesses without employees and those with only one to four employees, while larger operators are present in limited numbers. At the same time, the 2021 labour market gap ratio indicates that sector jobs exceeded the number of resident workers, pointing to a degree of reliance on workers from outside the resident labour force. Fort Macleod's accommodation and food services sector therefore appears modest in scale, uneven in performance, and stable mainly in the sense that it has levelled off after earlier losses rather than regained a broader base.

Resident Labour Force in Sector

Fort Macleod had 70 resident workers in this sector in 2021, down 36.4% from 110 in 2016. The decline left the local labour force smaller over the five-year period.

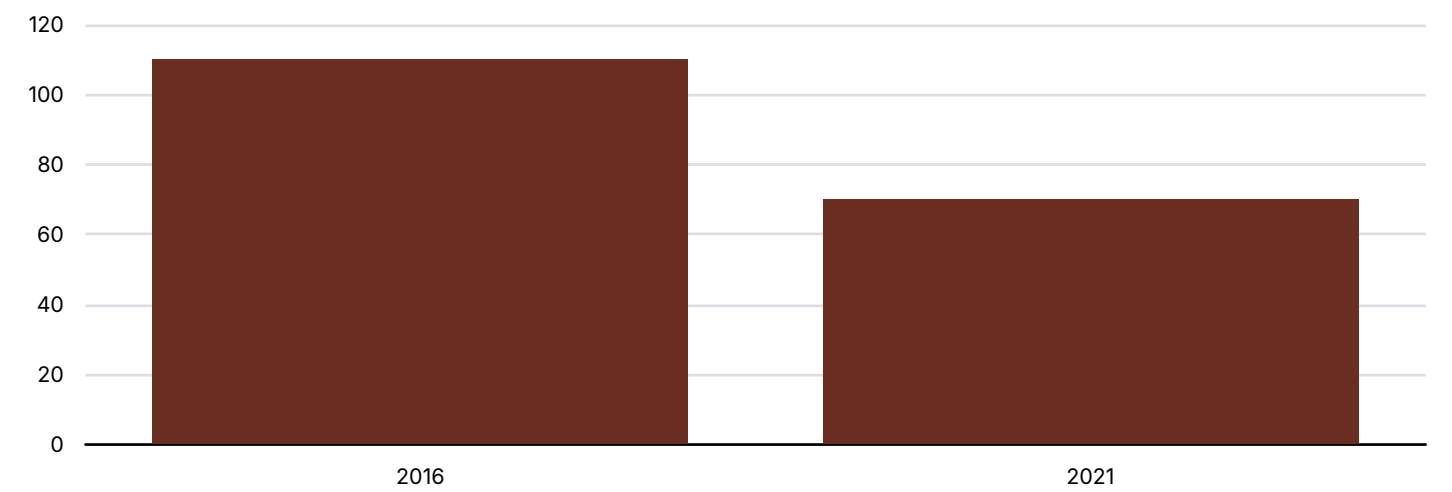
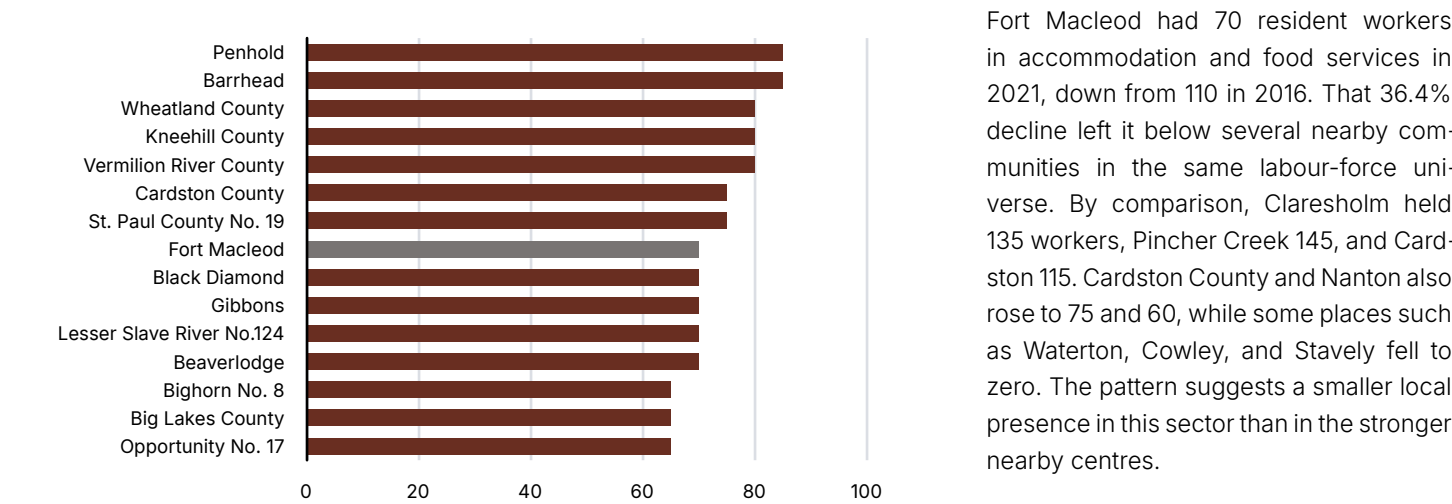


Figure 1.1: Shows the number of resident workers in a specific sector. It helps indicate how many local residents are employed in that part of the economy. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, the resident labour force in accommodation and food services was smaller in 2021 than it was in 2016. The count fell from 110 people to 70 people over the five-year period, a decline of 36.4%. Within the labour force aged 15 years and over, that points to a notable contraction in the number of residents tied to this sector. The dataset does not provide a benchmark for comparison, so the main signal is the size of the drop itself. Taken together, the figures show a clear downward shift between the two census years, rather than stable participation.



Fort Macleod had 70 resident workers in accommodation and food services in 2021, down from 110 in 2016. That 36.4% decline left it below several nearby communities in the same labour-force universe. By comparison, Claresholm held 135 workers, Pincher Creek 145, and Cardston 115. Cardston County and Nanton also rose to 75 and 60, while some places such as Waterton, Cowley, and Stavely fell to zero. The pattern suggests a smaller local presence in this sector than in the stronger nearby centres.

Figure 1.2: Comparison of Resident Labour Force in Sector with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Largest Industries in Sector

Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places employed 87 people in Fort Macleod in 2025, the largest industry group. Special food services followed with 20, while traveller accommodation had 7, down 46.2% year over year.

In 2025, Fort Macleod’s accommodation and food services employment was concentrated in one clear lead category: full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places. That industry accounted for 87 people, making it the largest component of the sector by a wide margin. The next largest category was special food services, with 20 people, while traveller accommodation employed 7. The contrast is sharp: restaurants had more than four times the employment of special food services and well over ten times the employment of traveller

accommodation. The time trend points in different directions. Restaurant employment rose by 4.8% over the past year, but remained 18.7% below its level five years earlier. Special food services was unchanged from a year ago. Traveller accommodation fell 46.1% over one year and 58.8% over five years. Taken together, the sector’s current profile is dominated by restaurant employment, while the other two industries are much smaller and have shown weaker recent momentum.

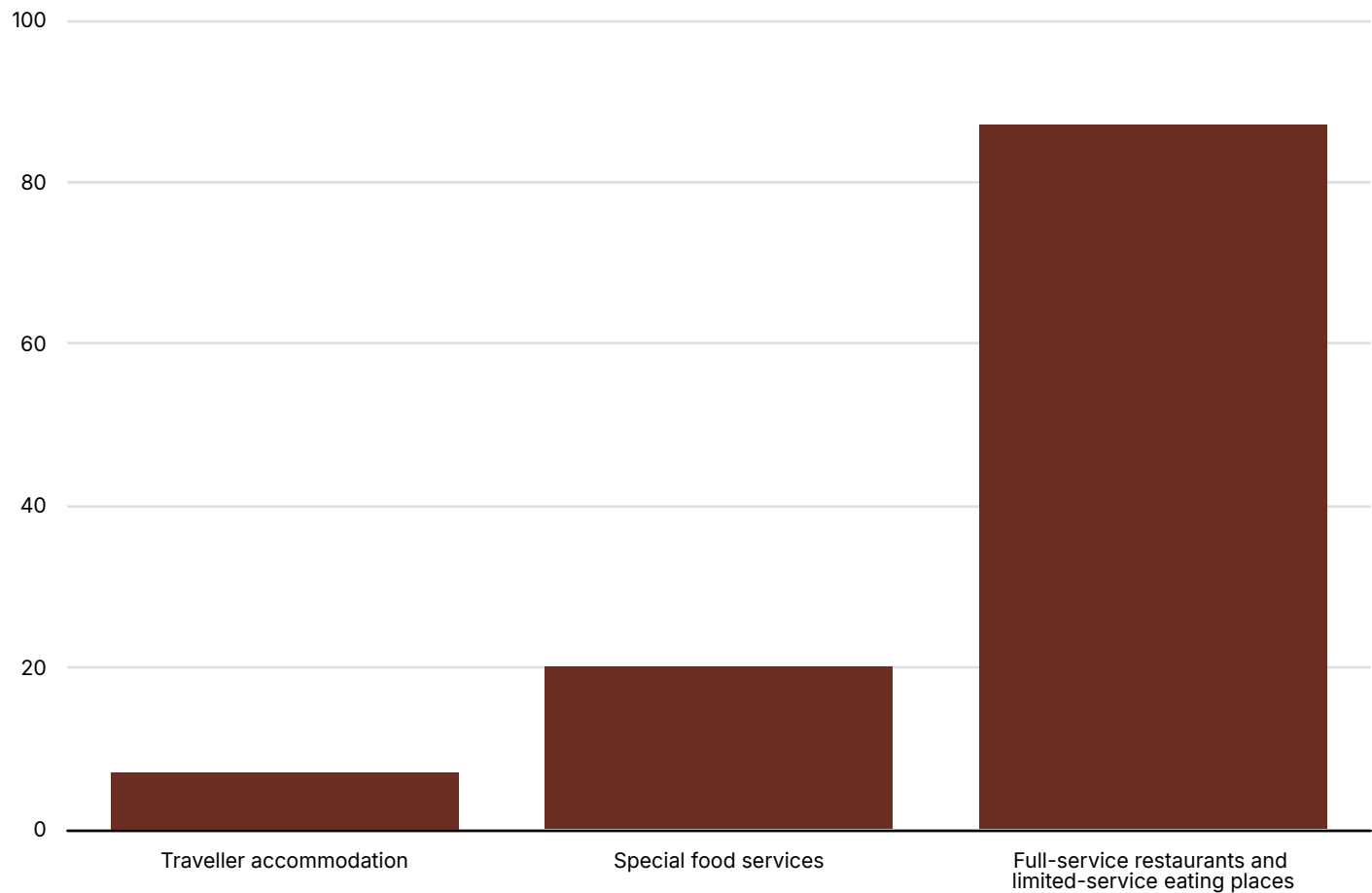


Figure 2.1: Shows the industries within this sector with the highest employment. It helps identify the biggest components of the sector. (Fort Macleod, 2025)²

Declining Industries in Sector

In Fort Macleod’s declining industries, full-service and limited-service eating places employed 87 people in 2025, up 4.8% from a year earlier but down 18.7% over five years. Traveller accommodation had 7 people.

In Fort Macleod’s accommodation and food services sector, the clearest decline is in traveller accommodation. Employment in this industry stood at 7 people in 2025, down 46.1% over one year and 58.8% over five years. That makes it the sharpest contraction in the sector’s recent industry mix. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places remained the largest employer among the industries shown, with 87 people in 2025, but employment was still lower than five years earlier, with a 18.7% decline. Over the latest year, however, it rose by 4.8%,

suggesting a short-term uptick after a longer period of weakness. Special food services employed 20 people and showed no change over one year. With no five-year change reported, it provides a steadier point of reference beside the more volatile industries. The pattern points to uneven movement within the sector: accommodation has contracted markedly, restaurants have fallen over time but improved recently, and special food services has been comparatively stable.

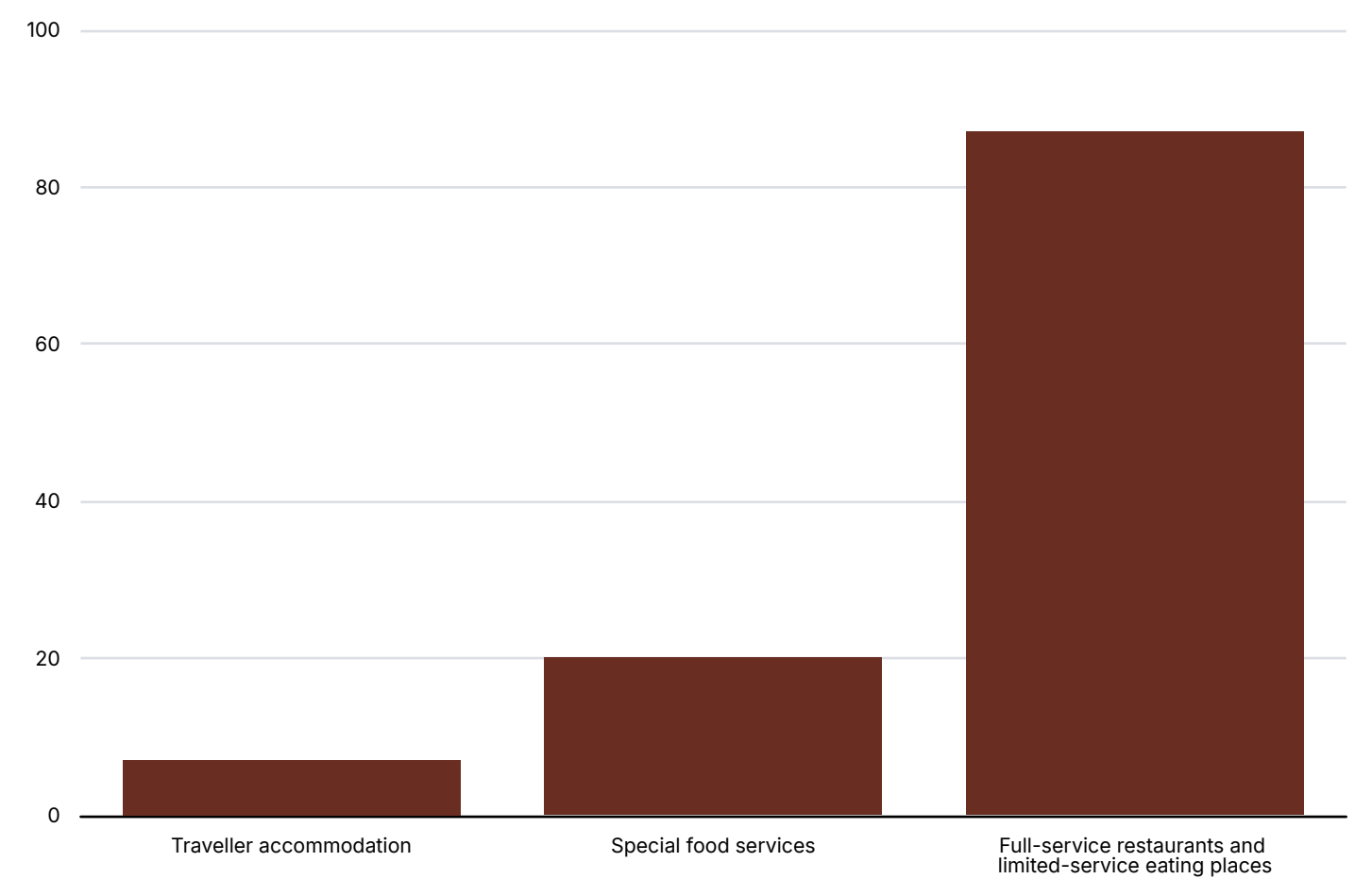


Figure 3.1: Shows industries within this sector where employment has decreased the most over the selected time period. It helps identify segments of the sector that are losing jobs. (Fort Macleod, 2025)²

Establishments in Sector

Fort Macleod had 21 business establishments in 2025, unchanged from 2024. That is 16.0% below 2020 and 7 fewer than 2018, with a brief rebound to 24 in 2023.

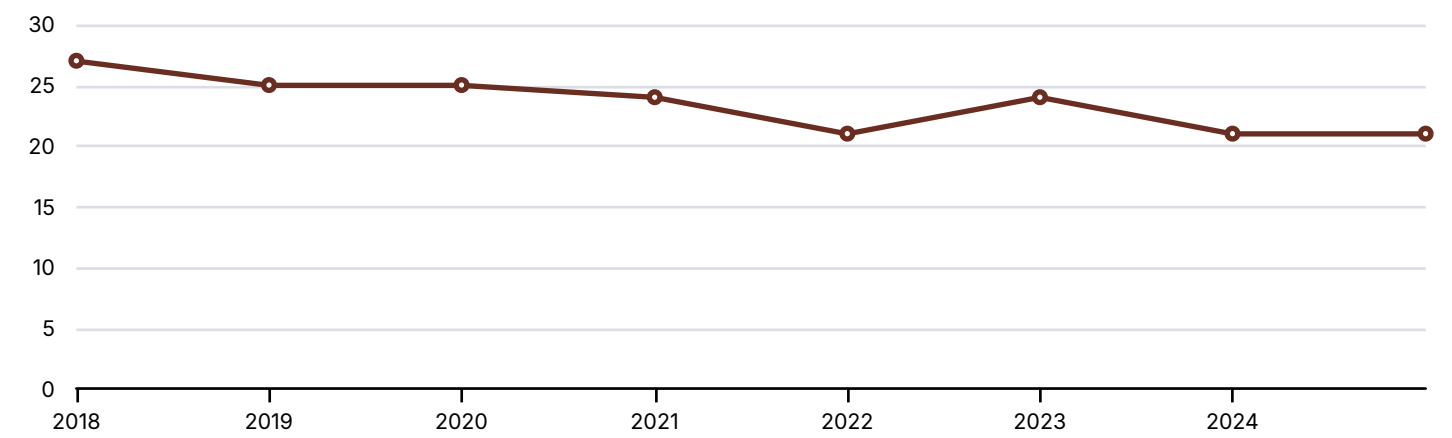


Figure 4.1: Shows the number of business establishments in a specific sector. It helps indicate the scale of business activity in that sector. (Fort Macleod, 2018-2025)³

Fort Macleod had 21 business establishments in accommodation and food services in 2025. The series shows a modest but uneven decline from 27 in 2018, with brief stability in 2020 and a short rebound to 24 in 2023. The count fell to 21 in 2022, rose to 24 in 2023, then returned to 21 in 2024 and 2025. This pattern points to a smaller sector than at the start of the period, but not a steady slide. By 2025, the number of establishments had settled below earlier levels, suggesting a reduced but stable footprint.

Fort Macleod had 21 accommodation and food services establishments in 2025. That was unchanged from 2024, after a rise to 24 in 2023 and a low point of 21 in 2022. In the same period, nearby Pincher Creek had 43 establishments, while Claresholm and Nanton had 18 and 19, placing Fort Macleod in the middle of the local range. The pattern suggests a stable business base with some recent fluctuation.

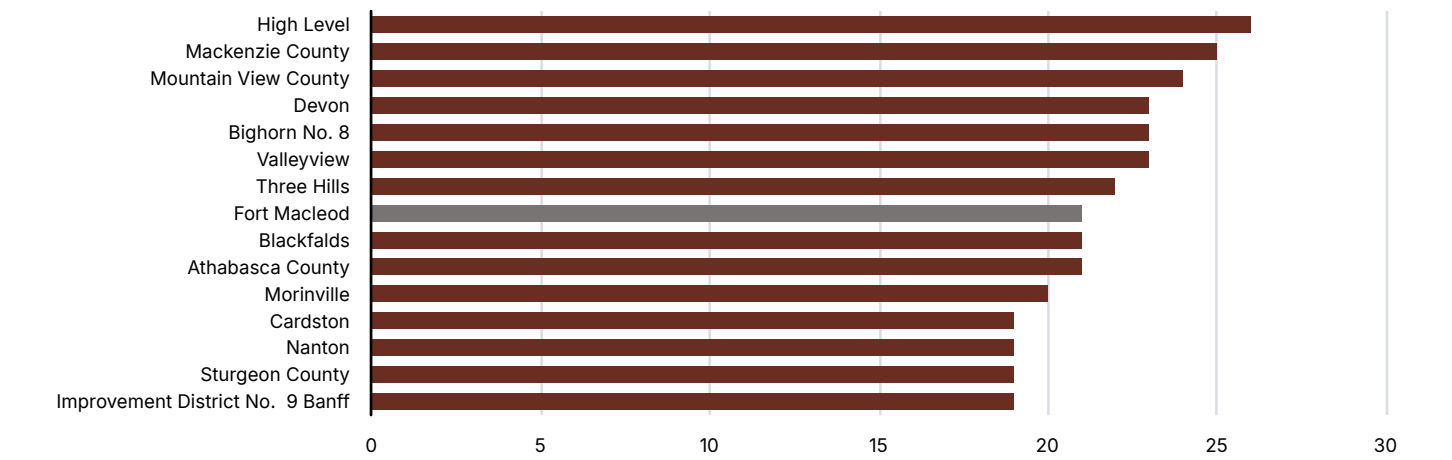


Figure 4.2: Comparison of Establishments in Sector with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2025)³

Specialist Industries in Sector

Fort Macleod’s most specialized industry is special food services at 1.4834, while full-service and limited-service eating places rank second at 0.4687. Traveller accommodation is far lower at 0.2224 and fell 41.1% year over year, 62.4% over five years.

Fort Macleod’s accommodation and food services sector shows one clear specialization: special food services. In 2025, this industry recorded a location quotient of 1.48, the only one above 1.0 in the dataset, suggesting a higher employment concentration than the broader benchmark used for the measure. The other two industries were less concentrated. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places posted an LQ of 0.47, while traveller accommodation stood at 0.22. Recent change also differed sharply: special food services was essentially flat over the past year at 0.3%, whereas restaurants

rose 14.3% and traveller accommodation fell 41.1%. The longer trend adds context. Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places declined 20.4% over five years, and traveller accommodation fell 62.4% over the same period. Only special food services lacks a five-year change figure, so its broader trend cannot be assessed from the dataset. Taken together, the data points to a sector that is concentrated in one niche industry, while the other major parts of the sector are smaller and have generally weakened.

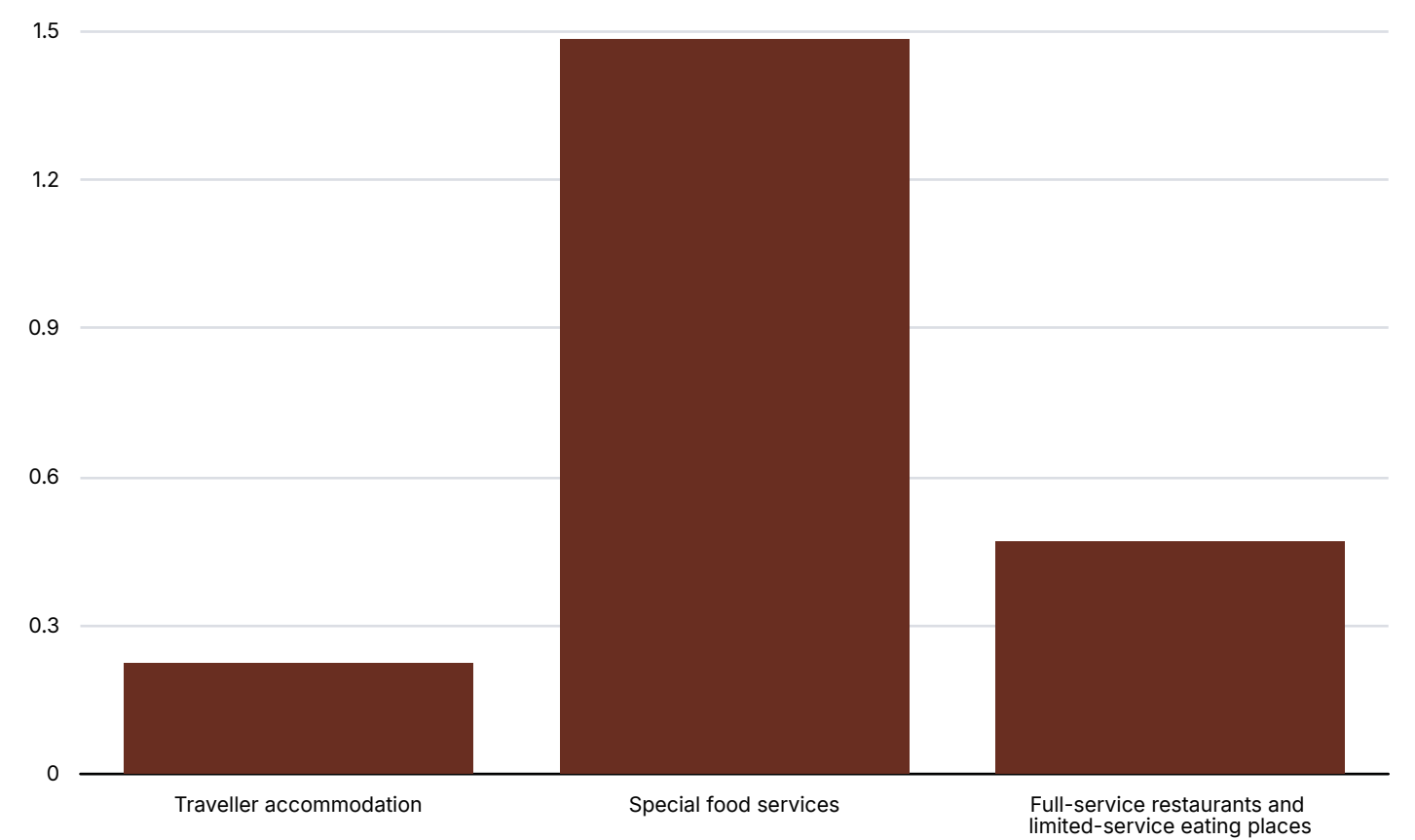


Figure 5.1: Shows industries within this sector where the local economy has the highest level of specialization based on employment concentration. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Fort Macleod, 2025)⁴

Star Industries in Sector

Fort Macleod’s most specialized star industry in 2025 was special food services, with a location quotient of 1.4834. Traveller accommodation was the prior leader, rising from 1.0902 in 2022 to 1.2013 in 2023.

Fort Macleod’s accommodation and food services profile in 2025 shows a clear specialization in special food services. The industry posted a Location Quotient of 1.5, meaning it was more concentrated locally than in the wider reference area, while its 1-year change was 0.3. Within the sector, that combination points to a star industry with both an established local presence and recent strengthening in concentration. The single industry identified in the dataset is special food services, so the local

picture is concentrated rather than broad-based. The 1.5 Location Quotient places it above a neutral benchmark of 1.0, and the positive annual change suggests the industry became modestly more specialized over the latest year. For Fort Macleod, the result is a focused signal rather than a large portfolio of standout industries. The data support a reading of gradual upward momentum in a niche part of accommodation and food services, without indicating broader sector-wide gains.

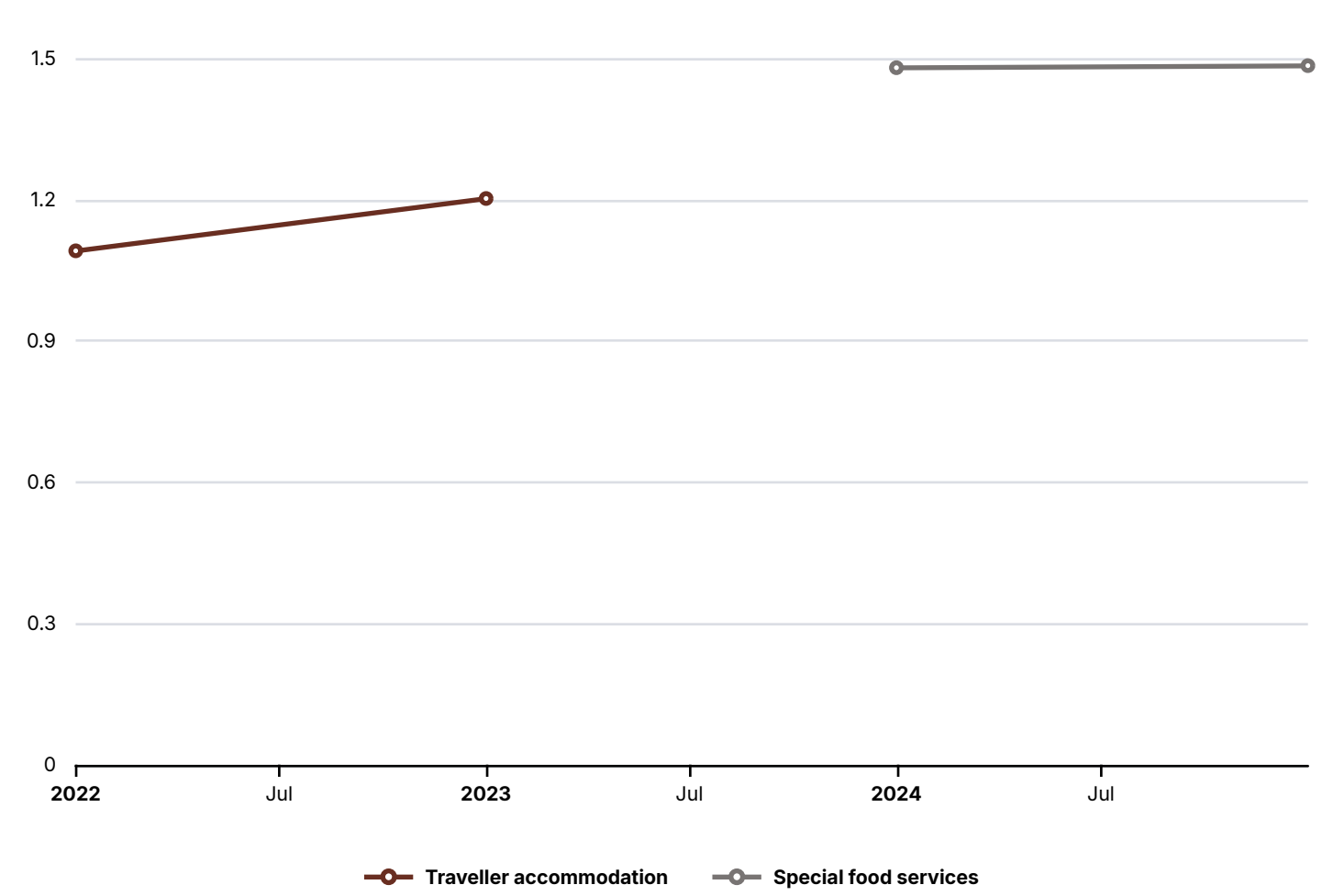


Figure 6.1: Shows industries within this sector where the local economy has strong specialization and increasing concentration or strong growth. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Fort Macleod, 2022-2025)⁴

Transitioning Industries in Sector

Fort Macleod’s transitioning industries remain weakly specialized, with traveller accommodation at 0.2224 in 2025. It fell 41.1% in one year and 62.4% over five years, while restaurants also declined to 0.3059 in 2023.

Fort Macleod’s accommodation and food services profile shows one clearly transitioning industry: traveller accommodation. In 2025, the industry’s location quotient was 0.22, which points to a low degree of specialization in the local economy. The recent movement is also negative, with employment down 41.1% over the past year and 62.4% over five years. Within the sector, that combination of a low benchmark and sharp declines suggests that traveller accommodation is not a concentrated part of Fort

Macleod’s employment base. The shorter-term drop is steep, and it follows an even larger five-year decrease, so the longer trend and recent momentum point in the same direction. The data does not provide additional accommodation and food services industries for comparison, so the main signal is the sustained weakening of this one industry rather than a broader sector profile.

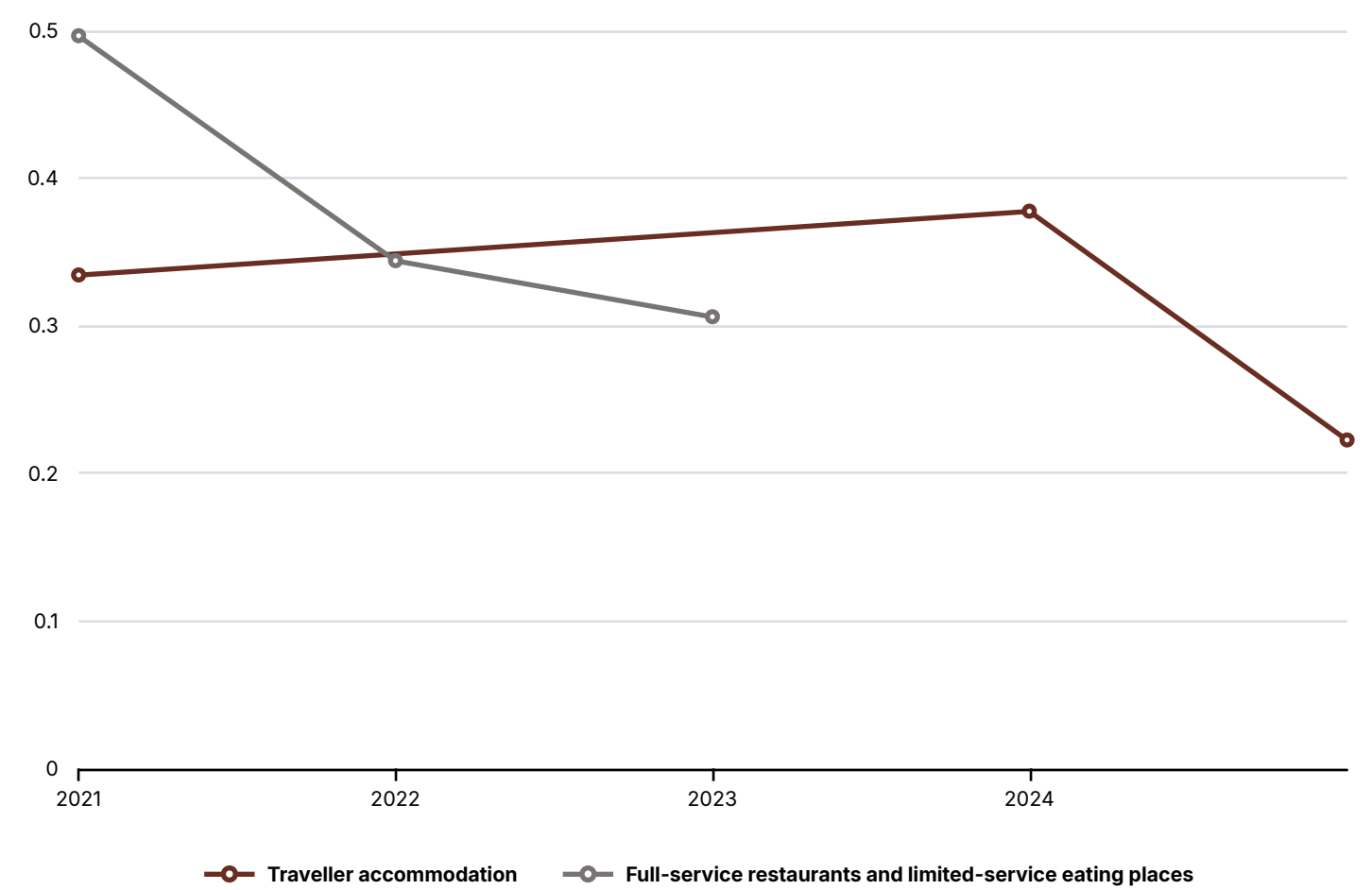


Figure 7.1: Shows industries within this sector that have relatively low specialization in the local economy and limited or declining concentration. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Fort Macleod, 2021-2025)⁴

Emerging Industries in Sector

Fort Macleod’s largest and most changed emerging industry is full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places, with a location quotient of 0.4687 in 2025. It rose 14.3% year over year, after 34.1% growth in 2024.

In Fort Macleod, the emerging segment identified in accommodation and food services is full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places. In 2025, the industry’s location quotient was 0.47, which points to low local specialization rather than a concentrated presence. Even so, the recent change measures suggest movement: the 1-year change was 14.3%, while the 5-year change was -20.4%. That combination suggests a short-term improvement against a longer-term de-

cline in concentration. Because the location quotient remains below 1.0, the industry is still less specialized locally than the broader benchmark used in the data, but the recent increase is notable within that context. For Fort Macleod, the main story is not current dominance but changing momentum. The industry appears to be gaining relative ground in the near term after a weaker longer-term pattern. The data support a sector that is still underrepresented, but no longer static.

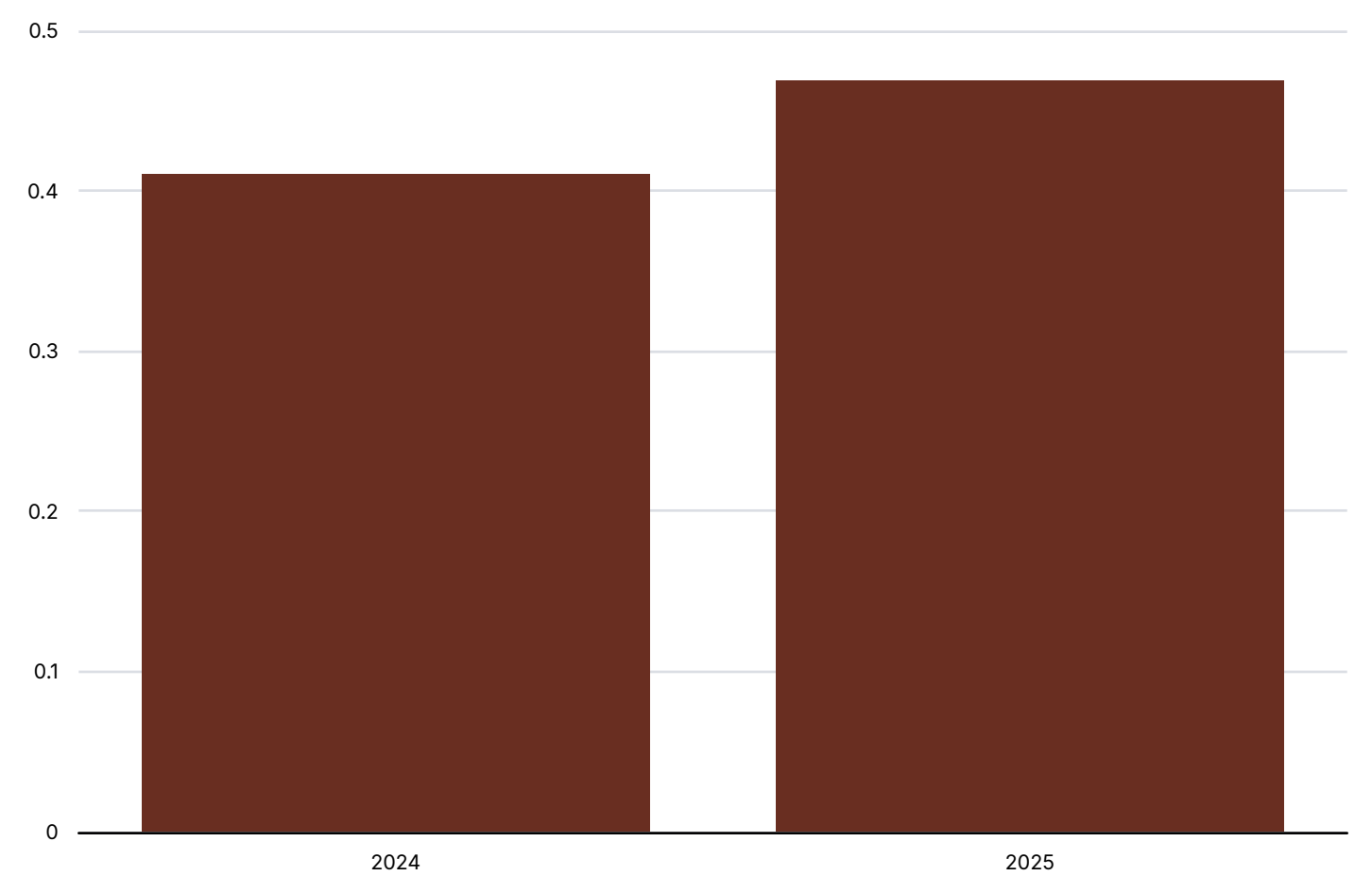


Figure 8.1: Shows industries within this sector that currently have low specialization in the local economy but are experiencing increasing concentration or strong growth. Industries are categorized based on specialization (location quotient) and recent employment growth or change in concentration. (Fort Macleod, 2024-2025)⁴

Employment in Sector

Fort Macleod had 114 industry jobs in 2025, down 1.7% from 2024 and 8.1% from 2020. Employment recovered to 116 in 2023 and 2024 after dipping to 106 in 2022.

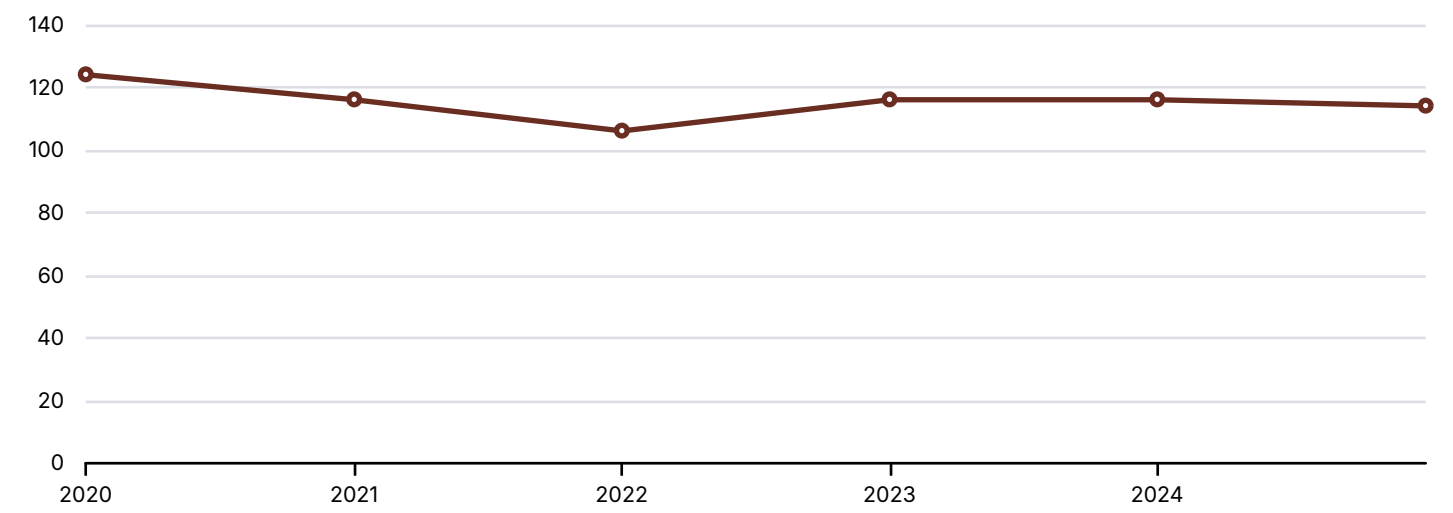
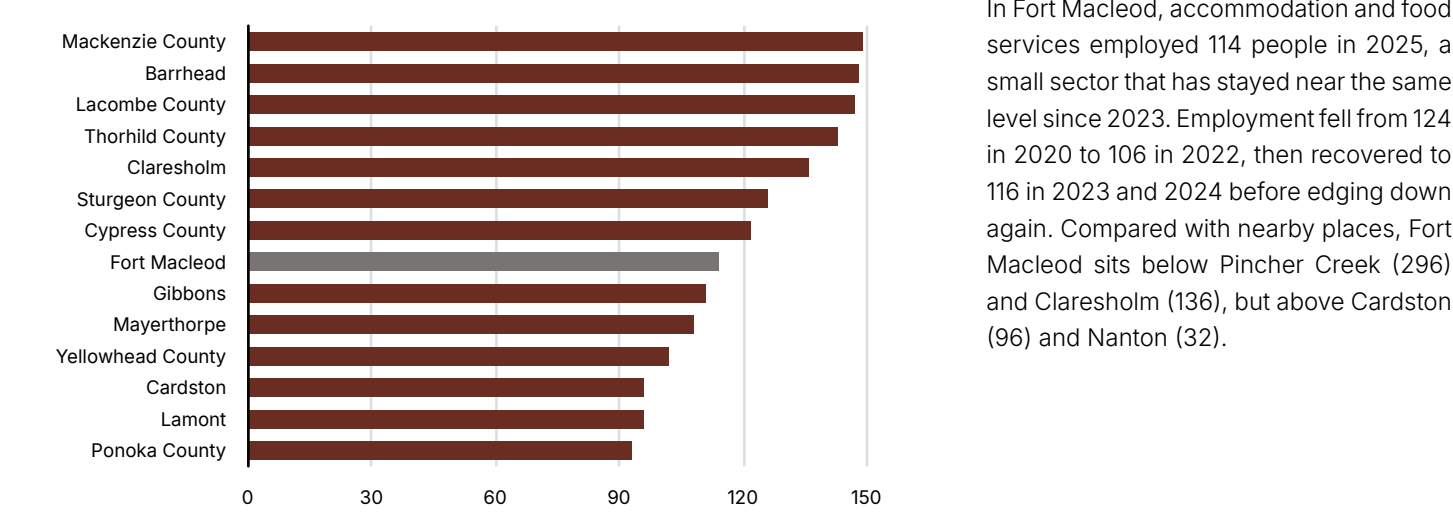


Figure 9.1: Shows the number of jobs in a specific industry sector. It helps indicate the scale of that sector within the local economy. (Fort Macleod, 2020-2025)²

Fort Macleod’s employment in accommodation and food services was fairly stable in the middle of the decade, but the latest reading points to a modest downturn. The sector had 124 jobs in 2020, fell to 116 in 2021, and reached 106 in 2022 before rebounding to 116 in 2023 and holding there in 2024. In 2025, employment edged down to 114. That is 1.7% below 2024 and 8.1% below 2020. The pattern shows a drop, partial recovery, and then a slight easing, leaving the sector near its recent average.



In Fort Macleod, accommodation and food services employed 114 people in 2025, a small sector that has stayed near the same level since 2023. Employment fell from 124 in 2020 to 106 in 2022, then recovered to 116 in 2023 and 2024 before edging down again. Compared with nearby places, Fort Macleod sits below Pincher Creek (296) and Claresholm (136), but above Cardston (96) and Nanton (32).

Figure 9.2: Comparison of Employment in Sector with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2025)²

Establishments in Sector by Number of Employees

Fort Macleod's largest group remained establishments without employees at 8 in 2025, down 11.1% from 2024 but up 14.3% over five years. The 1 to 4 employee group rose to 7, up 16.7% year over year.

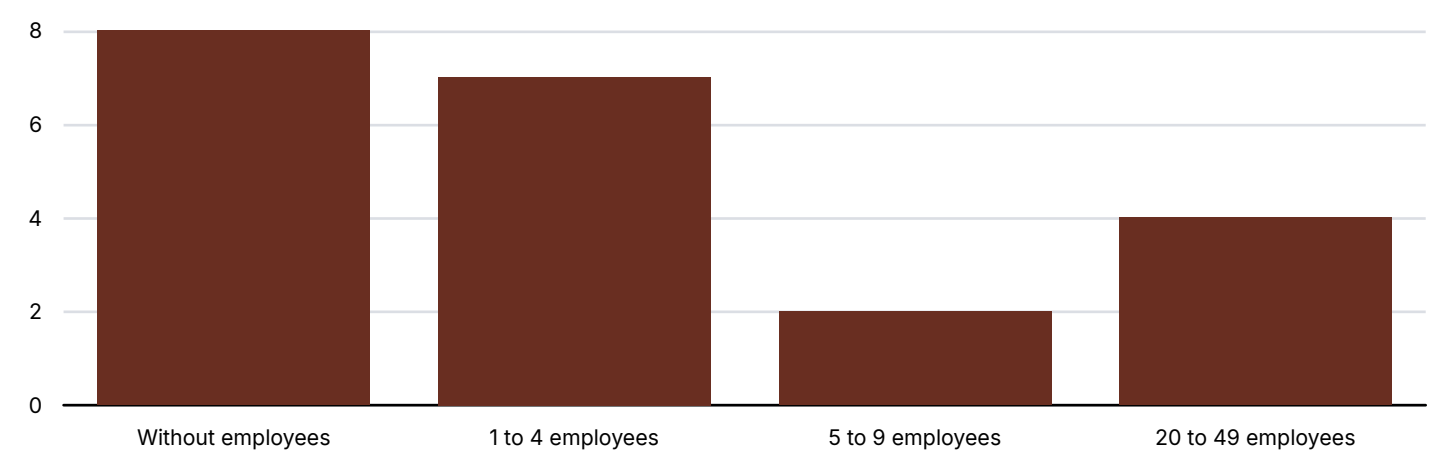


Figure 10.1: Shows the number of business establishments in a sector by employee size class. It helps indicate whether that sector is made up mostly of small or larger firms. (Fort Macleod, 2025)³

In 2025, Fort Macleod's accommodation and food services sector was dominated by very small establishments. Businesses without employees were the largest group at 8, followed by firms with 1 to 4 employees at 7. Larger small-business categories were much thinner, with 5 to 9 employees at 2 and 20 to 49 employees at 4. The year-to-year pattern was mixed. Establishments without employees fell 11.1%, while the 1 to 4 employee category rose 16.7%. The 5 to 9 employee group was unchanged, and the 20 to 49 employee group also showed no change. Taken together, the data points to a sector structure weighted toward microbusinesses, with limited movement in the larger size classes.



In Fort Macleod's accommodation and food services sector, establishments are concentrated in the smallest size classes. In 2025, there were 8 without employees and 7 with 1 to 4 employees, compared with 4 in the 20 to 49 employee range and 2 in the 5 to 9 range. The smallest group fell 11.1% from a year earlier but was still up 14.3% over five years. Larger firms remain present, but in limited numbers.

Figure 10.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Business Establishment Size - Without employees (Fort Macleod)³

Sector Labour Market Gap

In Fort Macleod, accommodation and food services had a labour market gap ratio of 1.66 in 2021, meaning jobs outnumbered resident workers by 66%, pointing to a reliance on in-commuters for staffing.

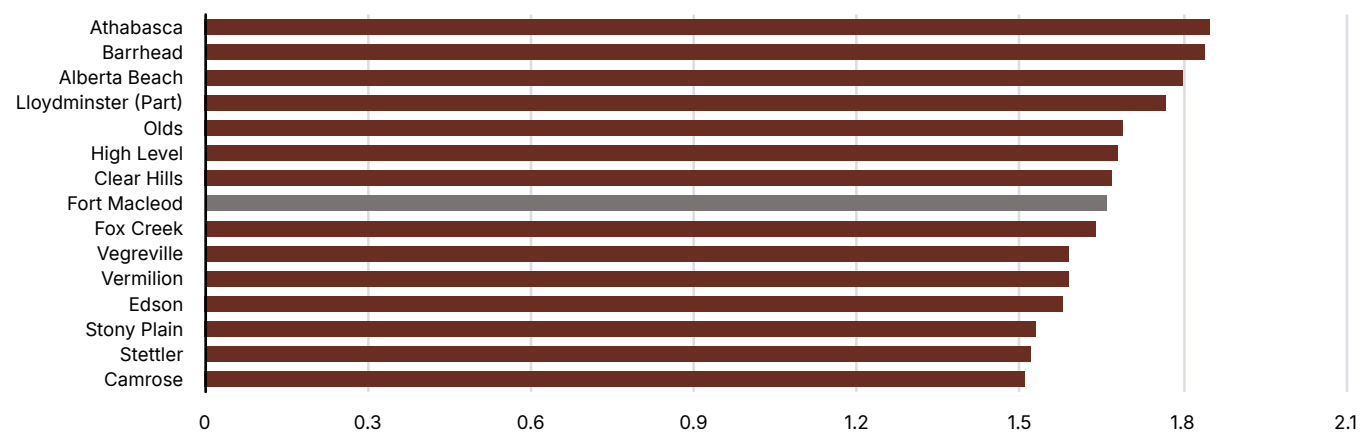


Figure 11.1: Comparison of Sector Labour Market Gap with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)⁵

In Fort Macleod, the accommodation and food services sector shows a labour market gap of 1.66 in 2021. That places the town above several nearby comparators, including Claresholm at 1.39, Cardston at 1.13, and Nanton at 0.9. It is below Pincher Creek, which stands out at 2.23, but well above locations such as Blood 148 at 0.4, Pincher Creek No. 9 at 0.28, and Cardston County at 0.03. The pattern suggests a sector that likely relies on imported labour more than some neighbours do.

In 2021, Fort Macleod had a labour market gap ratio of 1.7 in accommodation and food services, within the labour force aged 15 years and over. That points to a modest mismatch between local jobs in the sector and resident workers. A descendant area shows a much larger ratio of 7.7, suggesting sharper local imbalance in part of the broader area. The contrast implies that conditions can vary within the subdivision, even in the same sector.



Figure 11.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Industry Sector - Accommodation and food services (Fort Macleod)⁵

Data Sources

1. Statistics Canada, Census Profile. Published in Dec 15, 2022.
2. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
3. Statistics Canada, Business Register. Published in Jun 1, 2025.
4. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Employment Location Quotient by Industry Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.
5. Statistics Canada, Business Register; Statistics Canada, Census Profile; Localintel, Labour Market Gap Estimates of Census Areas. Published in Mar 13, 2026.

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