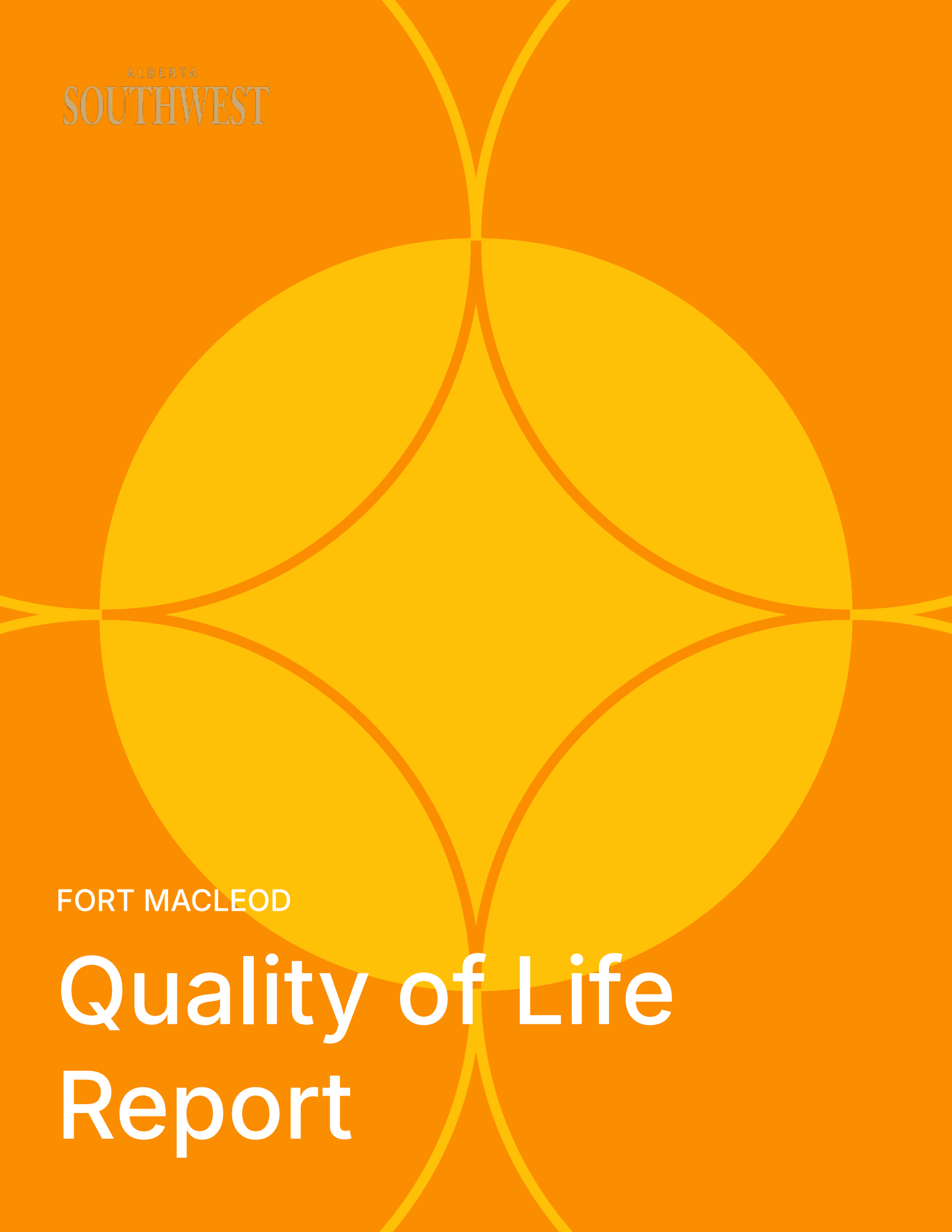




ALBERTA
SOUTHWEST

FORT MACLEOD

Quality of Life Report

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Executive Summary

Fort Macleod in 2021 appears as a small town with a largely established social profile, but one that is also showing some notable internal change. Its population remained predominantly non-immigrant and strongly English-speaking, with Christianity the largest religious affiliation and a substantial share reporting no religion. Median age moved down from 2016 to 42.4 years, suggesting a somewhat younger midpoint after an earlier increase, while population density also turned upward after a prior dip. Across these measures, the town looks stable in its basic composition, with change occurring more through shifts within the existing population than through a broad reshaping of its identity.

That pattern is especially visible in households, families, and housing. Fort Macleod remained ownership-heavy, with owner households far outnumbering renters, yet both tenure groups increased and average shelter costs rose at a similar pace for each. Housing stress appears limited at the town level, with only a small share of households in core housing need. At the same time, household structure shifted toward smaller living arrangements. One-person households were the largest household type and increased over five years, while couple-family households with children declined and multiple-family households became rarer. Family data points in the same direction: married couples still formed the main family base, but both married couples with and without children declined, while one-parent families grew strongly. Income patterns were spread across middle and upper-middle bands rather than concentrated at either end, though recent changes were mixed across brackets.

The town's education and ancestry profiles reinforce the sense of continuity combined with gradual change. High school completion and non-university postsecondary credentials formed the centre of the education profile, while residents with bachelor's and graduate degrees were fewer. English, Dutch, Scottish, German, Canadian, and Irish origins remained among the largest reported ancestries, though several of these declined over five years even as Norwegian increased sharply. English overwhelmingly dominated mother tongue, with a small but varied multilingual presence in languages such as Tagalog, Dutch, Blackfoot, German, and Korean. Fort Macleod's overall picture is of a community with strong local continuity, modest demographic renewal, and a clear shift toward smaller households and a more mixed social makeup within a still familiar civic structure.

Religion

Christian residents were the largest group in Fort Macleod in 2021, at 1,760 people. No religion and secular perspectives followed with 1,310, while traditional Indigenous spirituality accounted for 65 and other religions for 35.

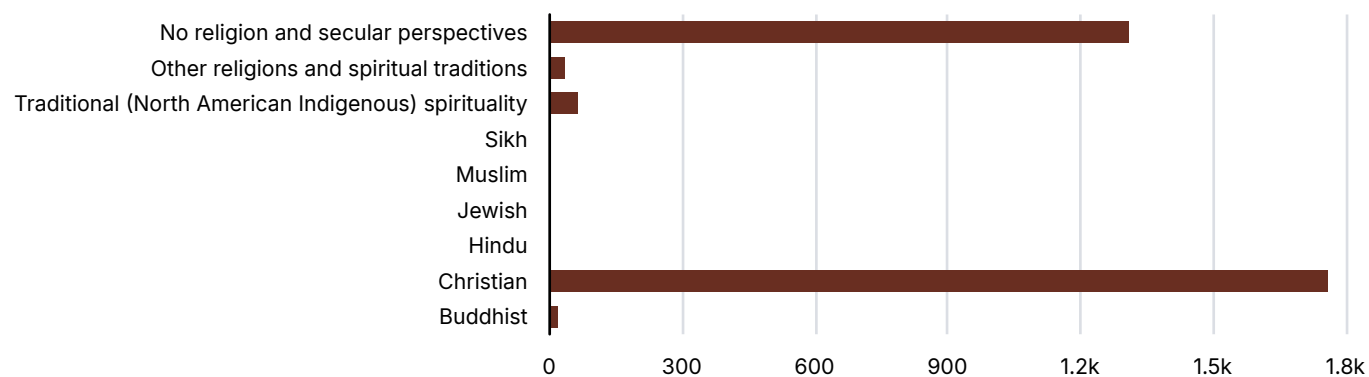


Figure 1.1: Shows residents' religious affiliation. It helps indicate the spiritual and faith-based diversity of the community. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, religion in 2021 was marked by a large Christian population and a substantial group with no religion or secular perspectives. Christians numbered 1,760 people, while 1,310 reported no religion. Smaller groups included 65 people with Traditional North American Indigenous spirituality, 35 with other religions and spiritual traditions, and 20 Buddhists. Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh counts were each zero. With only one census year available, the data shows the community's religious makeup at a single point in time.

In 2021, Fort Macleod's religious profile was led by Christianity, with 1,760 people, followed by 1,310 people reporting no religion and secular perspectives. Smaller groups included 65 people with Traditional (North American Indigenous) spirituality, 35 with other religions and spiritual traditions, and 20 Buddhists. Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh counts were reported as zero. The pattern shows a community where Christian affiliation and no religion make up most reported affiliation, while other traditions appear in much smaller numbers.



Figure 1.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Religion - Christian (Fort Macleod)¹

Family Type

Fort Macleod’s largest family type in 2021 was married couples without children at 345 people, down 11.5% from 2016. One-parent families rose to 155, up 34.8% over five years.

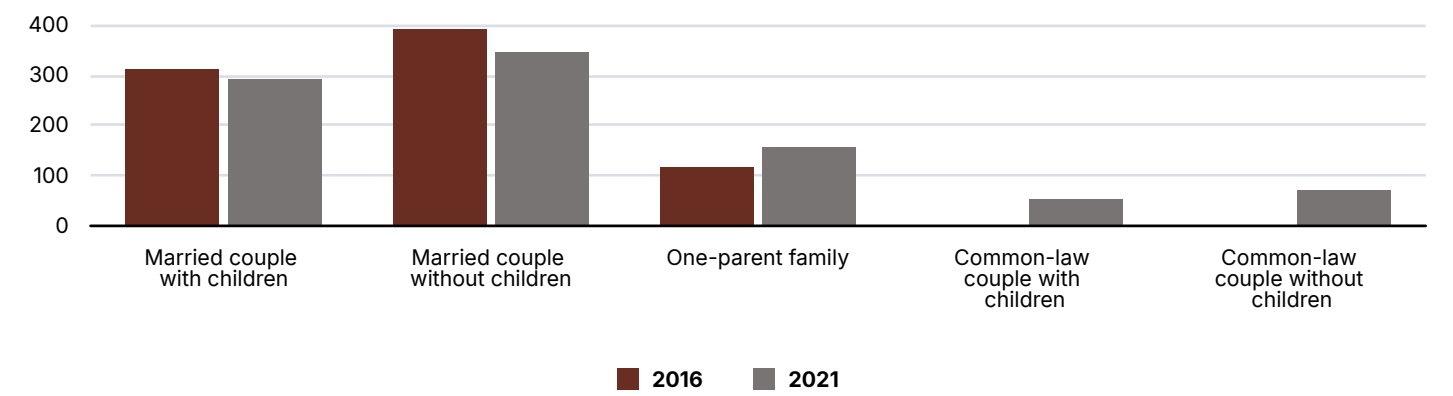


Figure 2.1: Shows the mix of family types, such as couple families and lone-parent families. It helps indicate the structure of family life in the community. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, census families in private households in 2021 were led by couple families, with fewer one-parent families. The mix points to a family structure weighted toward married couples. Married couples without children numbered 345, compared with 290 married couples with children. Common-law couples were smaller groups, with 70 without children and 50 with children. One-parent families numbered 155. Over five years, married couples with children fell 6.5%, and married couples without children declined 11.5%. One-parent families rose 34.8%. The pattern suggests a shrinking couple-family base alongside growth in one-parent families.

In Fort Macleod in 2021, census families in private households were most often married couples without children, at 345 people, followed by married couples with children, at 290. One-parent families numbered 155 and posted the strongest five-year growth, up 34.8%. Common-law couple families were smaller, with 70 without children and 50 with children, and no change figures were reported for those categories. The mix points to a family structure still led by married couples, with some growth in lone-parent households.



Figure 2.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Family Type - Married couple without children (Fort Macleod)¹

Ethnic Origin

English ancestry was the largest group in Fort Macleod at 630 people, down 26.3% over five years. Norwegian rose to 155 people, the fastest increase among listed groups, up 93.8%.

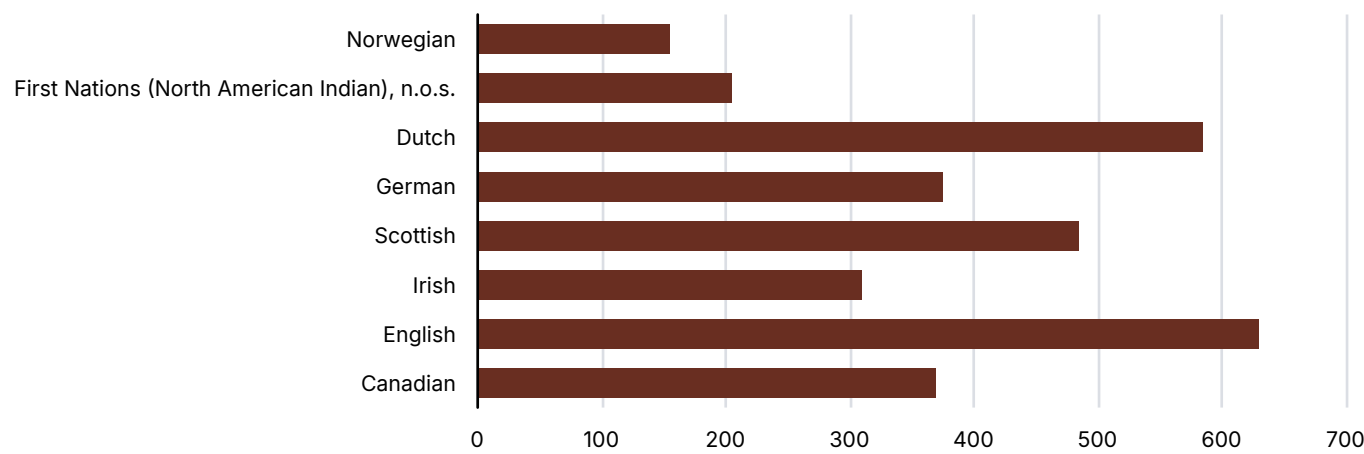
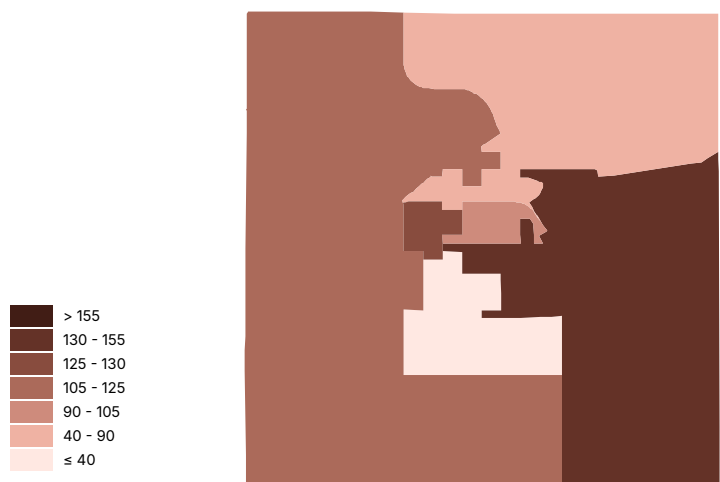


Figure 3.1: Shows the ethnic or cultural origins reported by residents. It helps indicate ancestry patterns and the community's cultural makeup. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Fort Macleod's 2021 ethnic origin profile shows a mix of long-established and changing ancestry patterns among people in private households. The largest counts reported were English at 630 people, Dutch at 585, Scottish at 485, German at 375, Canadian at 370, and Irish at 310. First Nations (North American Indian), n.o.s. was reported by 205 people, while Norwegian was listed by 155. The five-year changes point to decline in several origins, including Canadian at -49.7%, English at -26.3%, Irish at -24.4%, German at -19.4%, and Scottish at -10.2%. Dutch rose 5.4%, and Norwegian increased 93.8%.



In 2021, Fort Macleod's ethnic origin profile was led by English, at 630 people, followed by Scottish at 485, Dutch at 585, German at 375 and Canadian at 370. Several origins declined over five years, including Canadian (-49.7%), English (-26.3%) and Irish (-24.4%), while Dutch rose 5.4% and Norwegian surged 93.8%. The pattern suggests a mix of established and shifting ancestry ties.

Figure 3.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Ethnic Origin - English (Fort Macleod)¹

Mother Tongue

English remained the largest mother tongue in Fort Macleod at 2,775 people, up 13.0% over five years. Korean grew fastest among listed groups, doubling to 30, while French fell to 20.

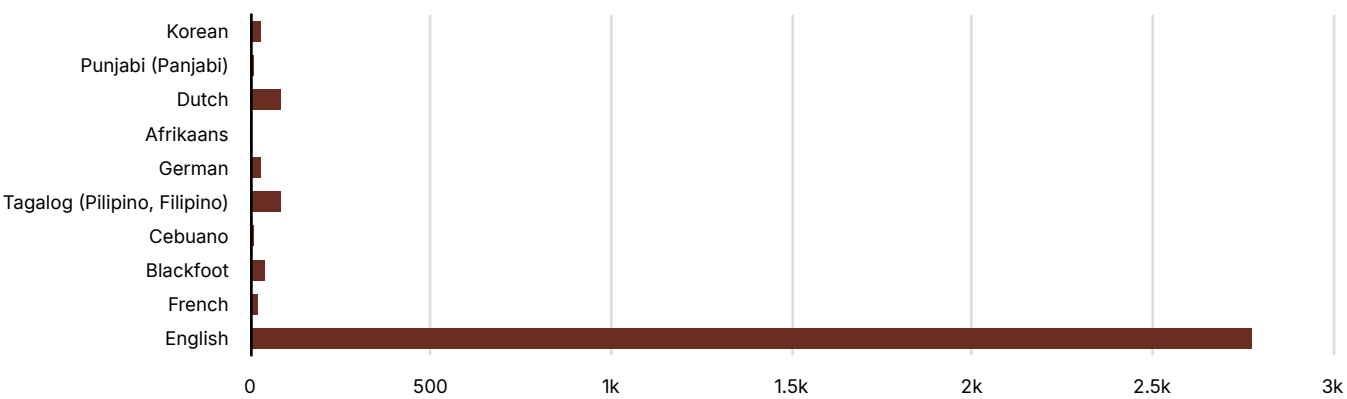


Figure 4.1: Shows the first language learned and still understood by residents. It helps indicate the linguistic roots of the population. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, mother tongue in 2021 was dominated by English, with 2,775 people reporting it as their first language and still understood. A smaller set of languages followed, including Tagalog at 85 people, Dutch at 85, Blackfoot at 40, and German at 30. Over five years, English grew by 13.0%, while French fell 20% and Dutch declined 26.1%. The mix suggests a stable English base with modest change in several smaller language groups.

In 2021, English was the clear mother tongue in Fort Macleod, with 2,775 people reporting it. Much smaller counts followed for Tagalog at 85, Dutch at 85, Blackfoot at 40, and German at 30, and Korean at 30. French stood at 20. The pattern suggests a strongly English-speaking community with a small but varied multilingual mix. Several languages changed over five years, including English up 13.0% and Blackfoot up 14.3%, while Dutch fell 26.1% and German fell 45.5%.



Figure 4.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Language - English (Fort Macleod)¹

Population Density

Fort Macleod's population density reached 146.2 people per square kilometre in 2021, up 15.3% over five years. It had been 126.8 in 2016 and 133.5 in 2011.

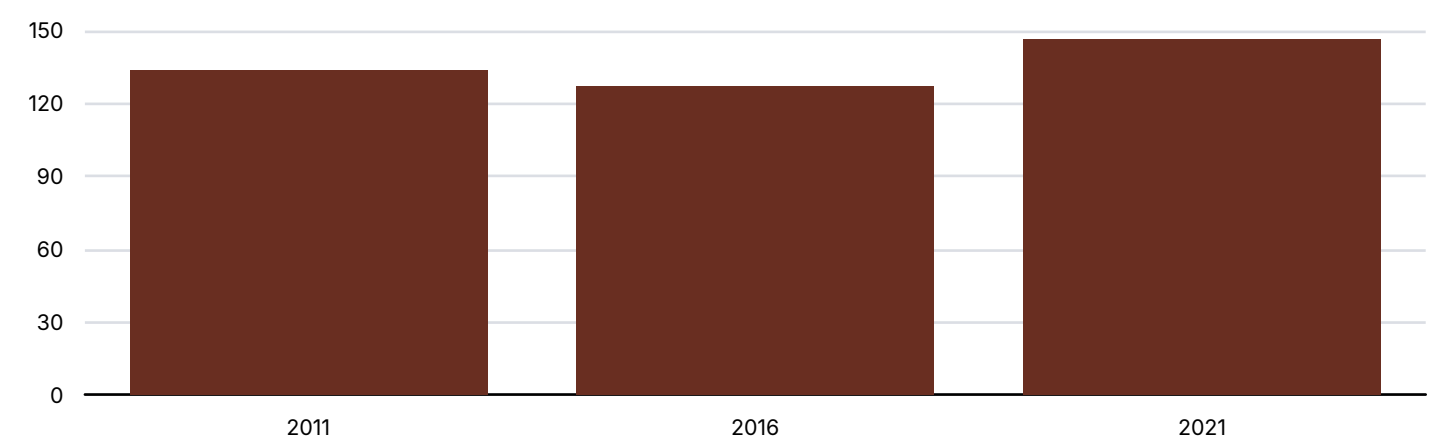


Figure 5.1: Shows how many people live per unit of land area. It helps indicate how compact or spread out the population is. (Fort Macleod, 2011-2021)¹

Fort Macleod's population density has shifted over time within the total population context. It was 133.5 people per km² in 2011, fell to 126.8 in 2016, then rose to 146.2 in 2021. That means the town moved from a modest decline to a stronger rebound, with the 2021 level above both earlier points. The 5-year change was -5.0% in 2016 and 15.3% in 2021, showing a clear change in direction.

Fort Macleod's population density was 146.2 people per km² in 2021, making it less dense than several nearby places in southern Alberta. It sits below Hill Spring at 174.8, Pincher Creek at 367.1, Claresholm at 362.1, and Cardston at 434.1 people per km². The town's density fell 5.0% between 2011 and 2016, then rose 15.3% by 2021. That pattern shows a recent rebound, but Fort Macleod remained in the middle-to-lower range of the local comparison set.

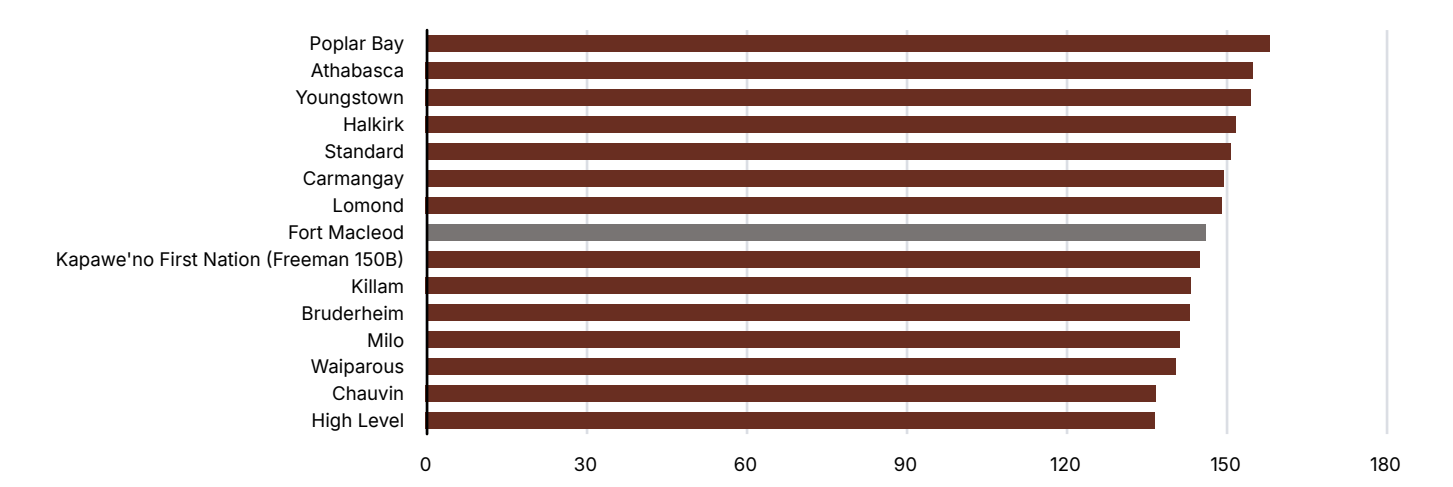


Figure 5.2: Comparison of Population Density with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Highest Education Level

In Fort Macleod, high school diploma or equivalency was the largest credential group in 2021 at 805 people, up 80.9% from 2016. College certificates followed at 525, while bachelor’s degrees reached 160.

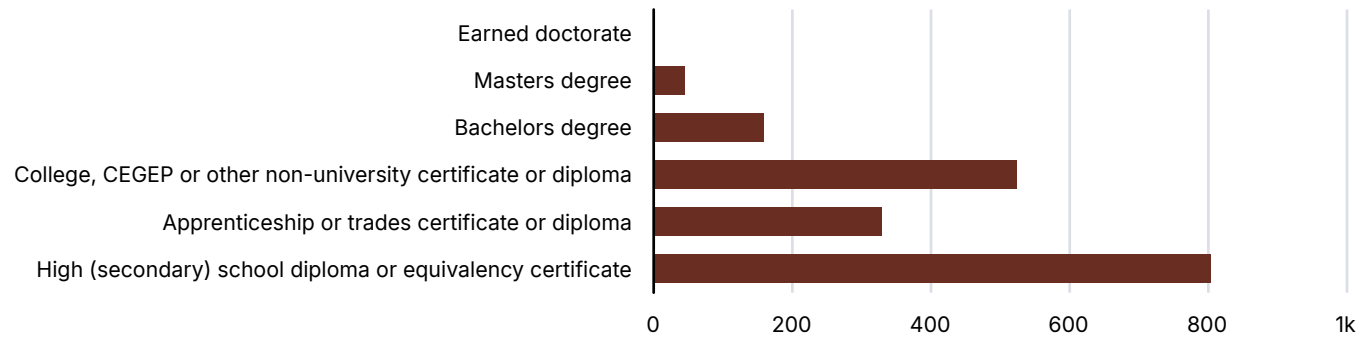


Figure 6.1: Shows the highest level of education completed by residents. It helps indicate the overall educational profile of the population. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s education profile for residents aged 15 and over in private households was led by high school completion and postsecondary certificates. The largest group had a high (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate, at 805 people, followed by college, CEGEP or other non-university certificates or diplomas at 525, and apprenticeship or trades certificates or diplomas at 330. Smaller numbers held a bachelor’s degree, 160, or a master’s degree, 45. No earned doctorates were reported. The 5-year changes were strongest for high school diplomas, up 80.9%, and college certificates, up 69.3%.

In Fort Macleod, the 2021 education profile for residents aged 15 and over is led by high school completion, with 805 people holding a secondary diploma or equivalent. College and other non-university credentials follow at 525, while 330 have an apprenticeship or trades certificate and 160 hold a bachelor’s degree. Only 45 residents have a master’s degree and none report a doctorate, pointing to a profile concentrated in mid-level credentials.



Figure 6.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Education Credential Ca - High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate (Fort Macleod)¹

Household Type

One-person households were the largest group in Fort Macleod in 2021 at 415, up 10.7% from 2016. Couple-family households without children followed at 390, while multiple-census-family households fell to 5, down 50.0%.

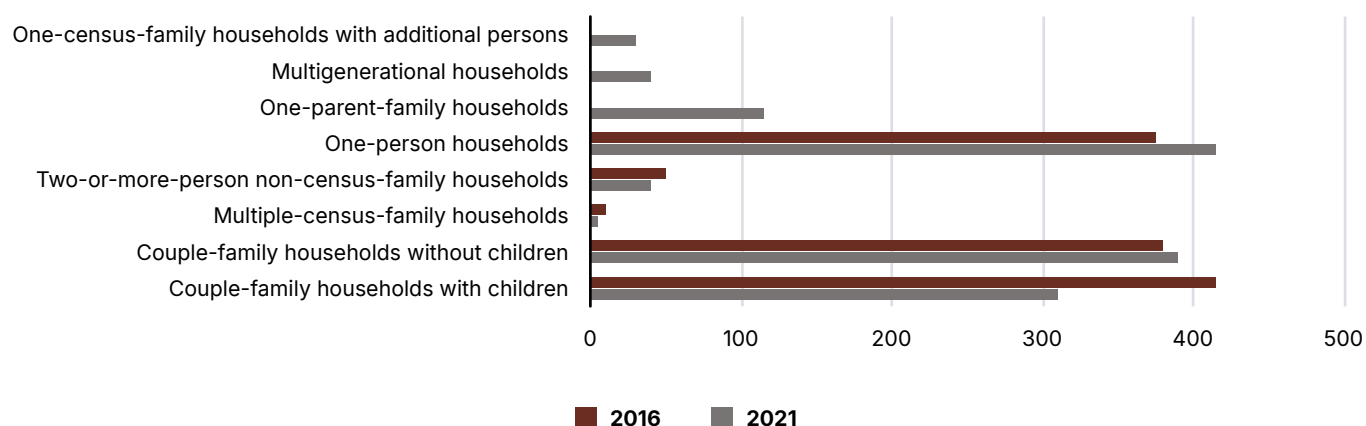


Figure 7.1: Shows the mix of household types, including one-person, family, and non-family households. It helps indicate how residents are organized across living arrangements. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

Fort Macleod's household mix in 2021 was led by one-person households and two main family forms. One-person households numbered 415, while couple-family households without children reached 390 and couple-family households with children 310. The profile also included 115 one-parent-family households and smaller non-family or mixed arrangements. The clearest time trend is not uniform. One-person households rose 10.7% over five years, and couple-family households without children increased 2.6%. By contrast, couple-family households with children fell 25.3%, two-or-more-person non-census-family households declined 20.0%, and multiple-census-family households dropped 50.0%. That pattern points to a shift toward smaller household forms, with growth in single-person living and weaker counts in larger or more complex households. Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile.

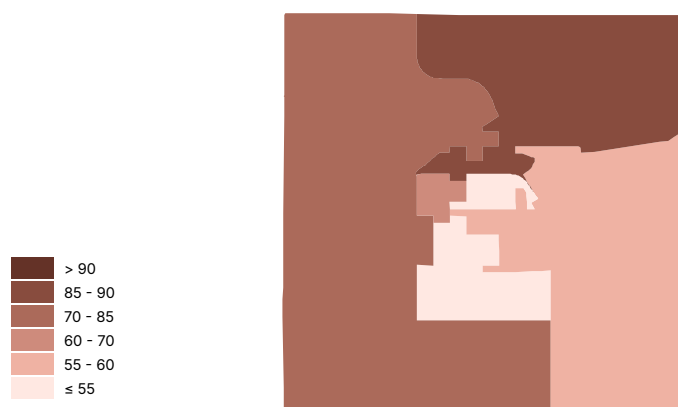


Figure 7.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Household Type - One-person households (Fort Macleod)¹

Fort Macleod's private households in 2021 were led by one-person households, with 415, followed by couple-family households without children at 390 and with children at 310. Smaller categories included one-parent-family households at 115, multigenerational households at 40, and two-or-more-person non-census-family households at 40. The mix leans toward smaller and family-based living arrangements, while multiple-census-family households were minimal at 5. Recent change was uneven: one-person households rose 10.7%, while couple-family households with children fell 25.3% and multiple-census-family households dropped 50%.

Average Shelter Costs

Fort Macleod’s owner shelter costs were \$1,074 in 2021, up 12.7% from 2016. Renter costs were nearly the same at \$1,070, rising 11.0% over the same period.

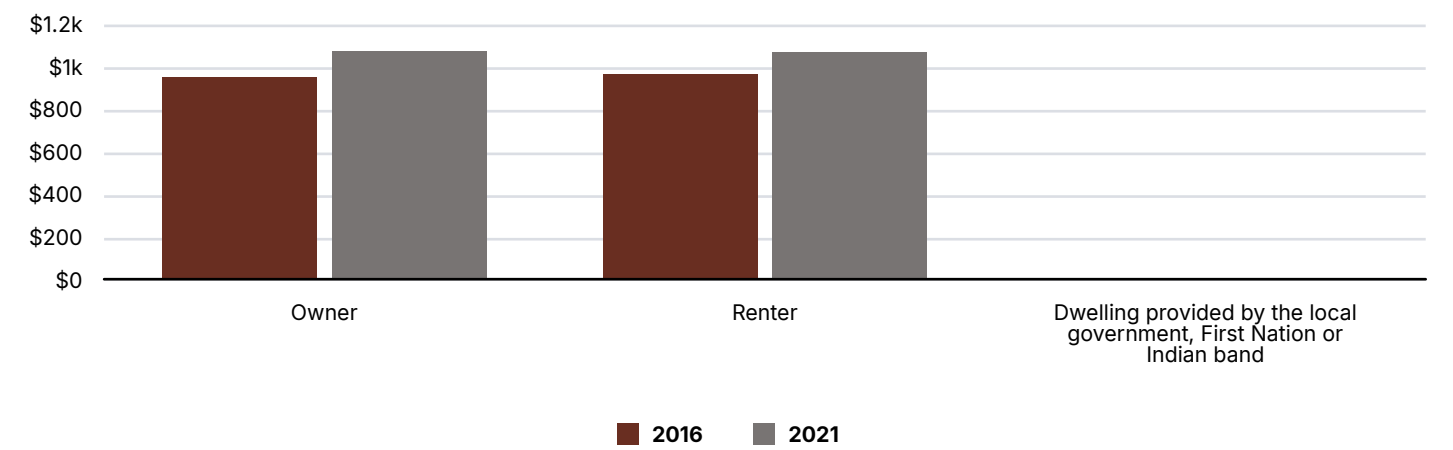


Figure 8.1: Shows the average monthly shelter costs paid by households. It helps indicate typical housing expenses faced by owners and renters. (Fort Macleod, 2016-2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, average shelter costs were nearly the same for owners and renters in 2021. Owner households paid \$1,074 per month, while renter households paid \$1,070. Both were higher than five years earlier, with owner costs up 12.7% and renter costs up 11.0%. The data also shows no monthly shelter cost for dwellings provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. The pattern points to modest, parallel growth in housing costs over the period.

In Fort Macleod, average monthly shelter costs in 2021 were nearly the same for owners and renters, suggesting a tight local housing-cost profile. Owners paid \$1,074 a month, while renters paid \$1,070. Both were above zero-cost subsidized dwellings, which were not reported for this town. Across nearby areas, costs varied more sharply, especially for renters. The pattern points to a fairly balanced local average rather than a large tenure gap.



Figure 8.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Housing Tenure - Renter (Fort Macleod)¹

Housing Tenure

Owner households remained the largest tenure group in Fort Macleod in 2021 at 1,025, up 6.8% from 2016. Renter households also increased, from 275 to 300, a 9.1% rise.

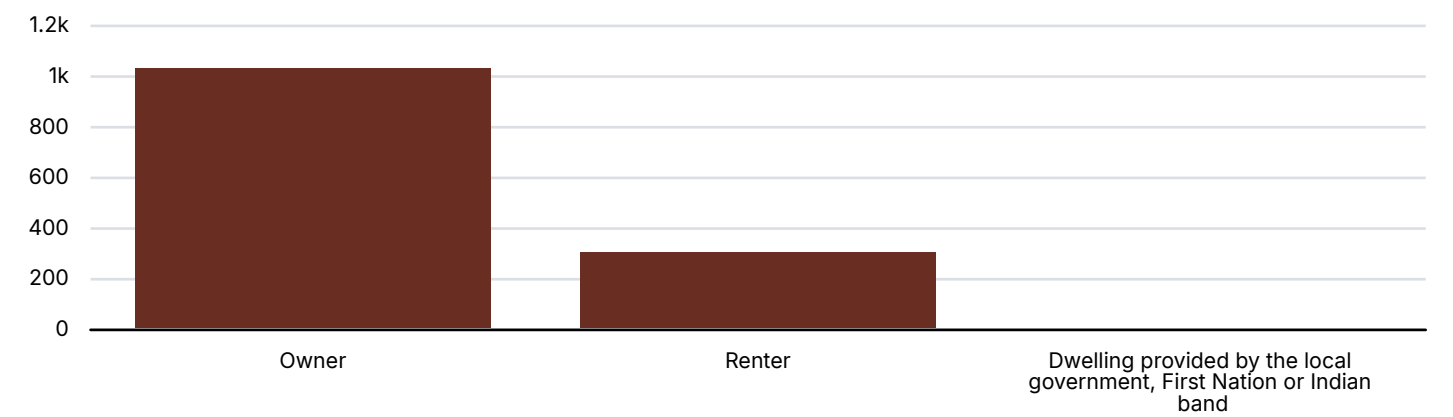


Figure 9.1: Shows whether households own or rent their homes. It helps indicate the balance between ownership and rental housing in the community. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, housing tenure in 2021 was dominated by owner households, with 1,025 owners compared with 300 renters among private households. The owner count was up 6.8% over five years, while renter households rose 9.1% over the same period. The tenure mix remained clearly ownership-heavy, but both segments grew. The faster increase in renter households suggests a modest shift in the rental side of the housing stock, even as ownership continued to account for most households.

In 2021, Fort Macleod's private households were predominantly owner-occupied. The town had 1,025 owner households and 300 renter households, while no dwellings were listed as provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band. The balance points to a strongly ownership-based housing profile. Within the town, tenure patterns varied across dissemination areas, with some areas showing rising renter counts and others showing declines in ownership over five years.



Figure 9.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Housing Tenure - Owner (Fort Macleod)¹

Household Total Income Groups

Fort Macleod’s largest household income group in 2021 was \$60,000 to \$69,999 at 105 households, unchanged from 2016. The fastest-growing group was \$25,000 to \$29,999, rising 88.9% to 85 households.

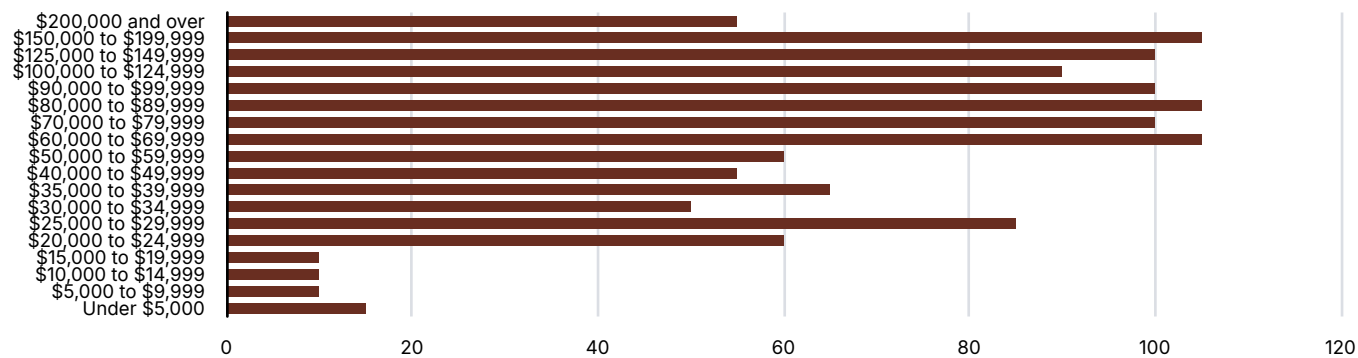


Figure 10.1: Shows households across total income groups. It helps indicate how household incomes are distributed from lower- to higher-income ranges. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s private households were spread across income groups, with the largest counts clustered in the middle and upper-middle ranges. The biggest groups were \$60,000 to \$69,999 and \$80,000 to \$89,999, at 105 households each, while \$70,000 to \$79,999 and \$90,000 to \$99,999 each had 100. Recent change was mixed. The \$25,000 to \$29,999 group rose 88.9% over five years, and \$200,000 and over increased 83.3%, while several lower-income brackets declined sharply. This points to a shifting income mix rather than a single clear pattern.

Fort Macleod’s household income profile in 2021 was spread across the middle and upper ranges, with the largest counts in the \$60,000 to \$69,999, \$80,000 to \$89,999, \$125,000 to \$149,999 and \$150,000 to \$199,999 bands, at 100 to 105 households each. The lower-income bands were smaller, while \$25,000 to \$29,999 rose to 85 households after a 88.9% five-year increase. Higher bands also expanded, including \$100,000 to \$124,999, up 50%, and \$200,000 and over, up 83.3%.



Figure 10.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Income Group Household - \$80,000 to \$89,999 (Fort Macleod)¹

High School Completion

In Fort Macleod, the largest education group in 2021 had a high school diploma or equivalent, with 1,855 people. Another 740 people had no certificate, diploma or degree, leaving diploma holders as the larger group.

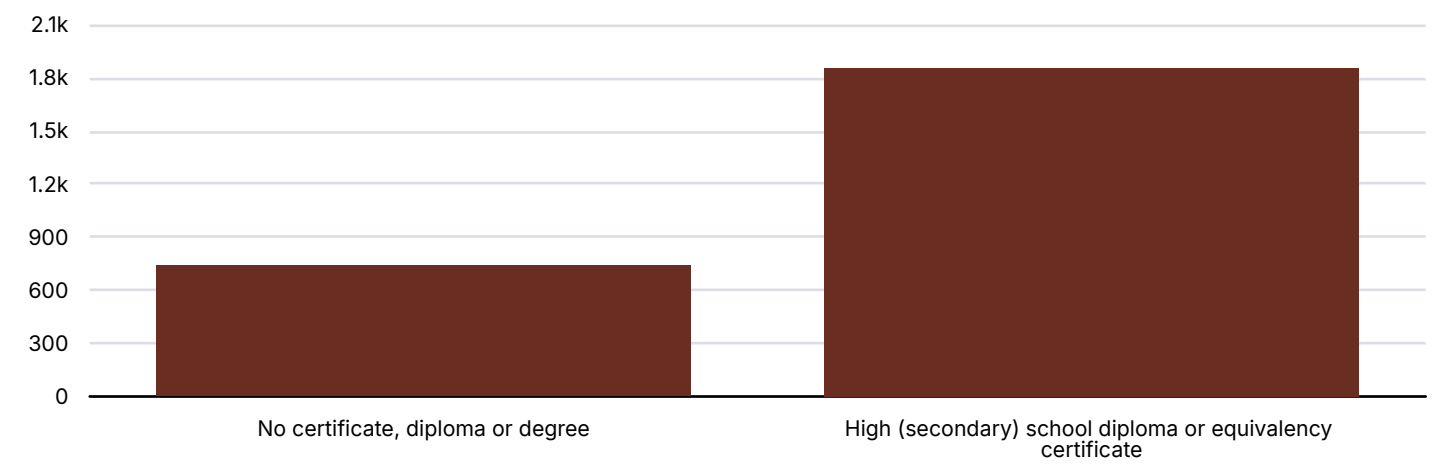


Figure 11.1: Shows whether residents have completed high school or an equivalent credential. It helps indicate a basic foundation for workforce participation and further study. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod's high school completion profile among residents aged 15 and over in private households shows a larger count with a secondary credential than without one. The town recorded 1,855 people with a high school diploma or equivalent, compared with 740 who had no certificate, diploma or degree. The data points to a clear tilt toward completed secondary education, though it does not provide percentages or a broader time series. With only one year available, the pattern can be described, but not as a trend over time. Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile.

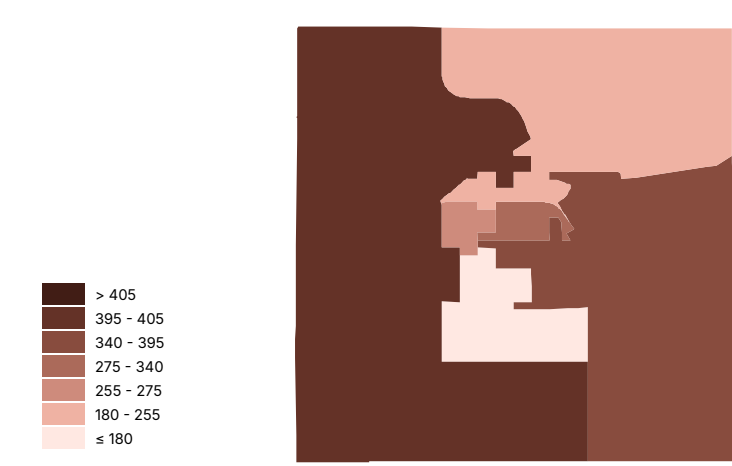


Figure 11.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Education Credential Ca - High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate (Fort Macleod)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod's population aged 15 and over in private households showed more residents with a high school credential than without one. There were 1,855 people with a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, compared with 740 with no certificate, diploma or degree. The same pattern appears in several dissemination areas, where diploma counts also exceed those without credentials. That distribution suggests a relatively strong basic education base within the community, while still leaving a notable group without formal schooling completion.

Core Housing Need

Fort Macleod had most households not in core housing need in 2021, with 1,230 households outside core need compared with 75 in core need. That means 94.3% were not in core need.

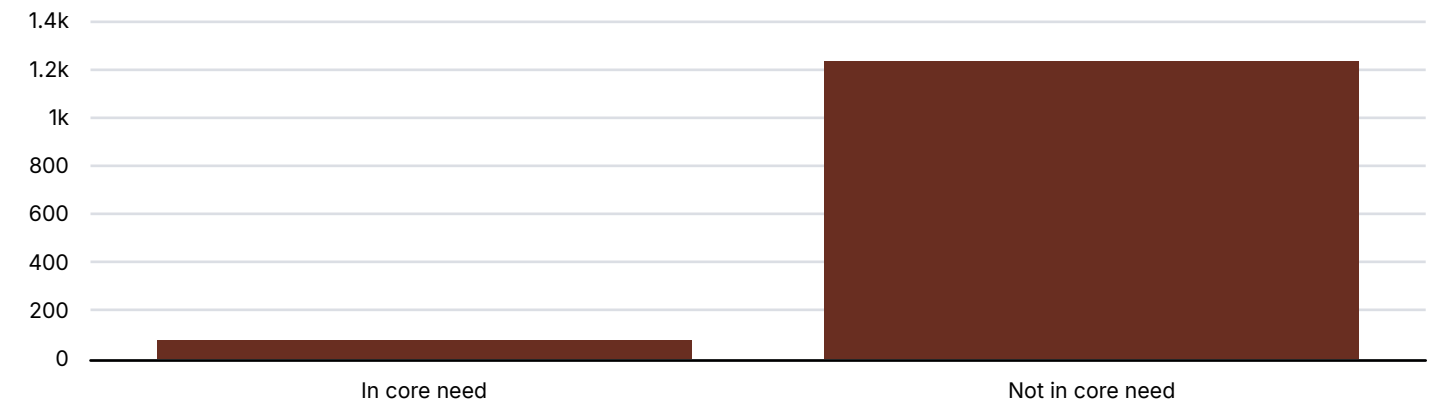


Figure 12.1: Shows the share of households living in housing that is unaffordable, unsuitable, or in need of major repairs. It helps indicate overall housing stress in the community. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod had 75 households in core housing need, while 1,230 were not in core need. The data shows a much larger number of households outside core need than inside it. Because only one year is provided, this dataset does not show a time trend for the town. It offers a snapshot of housing stress rather than a change over time.

In 2021, core housing need affected a small share of households in Fort Macleod. The town had 75 households in core need, compared with 1,230 not in core need, out of 1,305 households in scope. That equals about 5.7% of households. The pattern is uneven within the town: two dissemination areas reported households in core need, including 20 households in one area and 20 in another. This points to localized housing stress rather than a townwide concentration.



Figure 12.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Core Housing Need - Not in core need (Fort Macleod)¹

Median Age

Fort Macleod's median age was 42.4 years in 2021, down 6.19% from 2016. It had risen from 43.5 years in 2011 to 45.2 years in 2016 before declining.

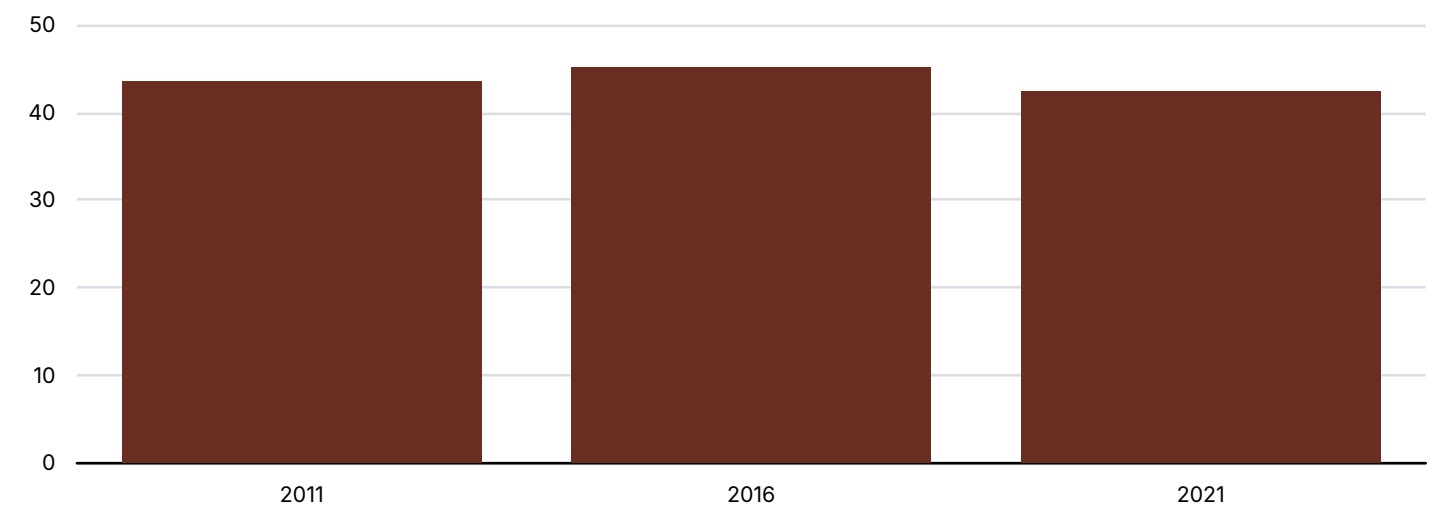
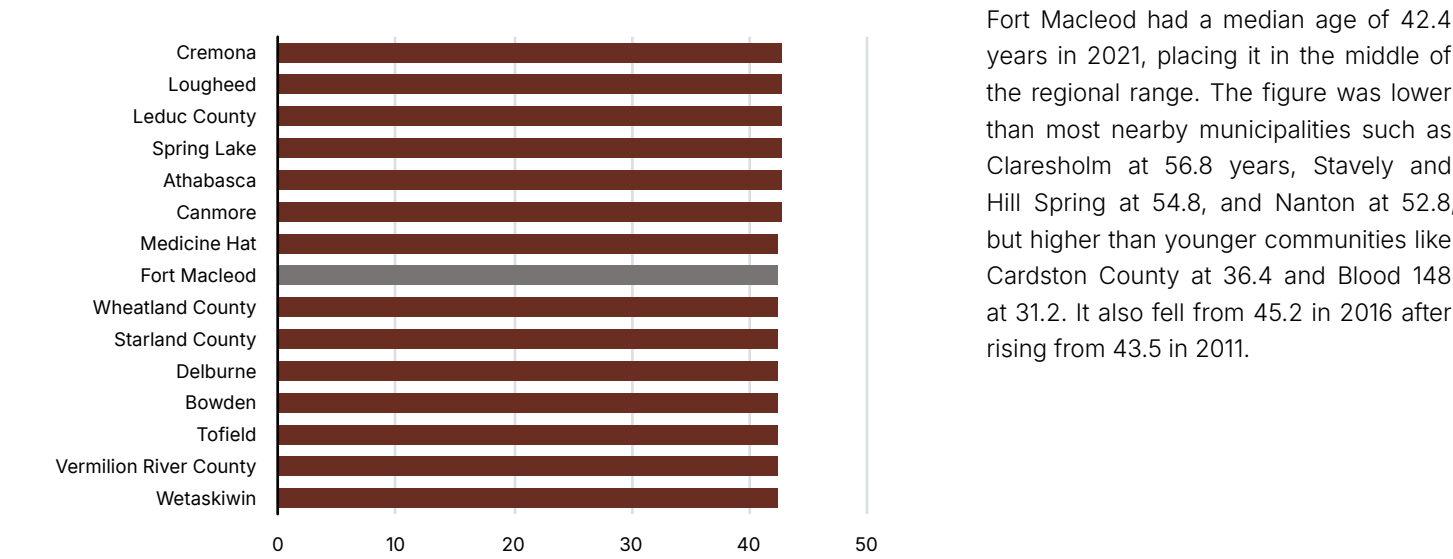


Figure 13.1: Shows the median age of residents. It helps indicate whether the population skews younger or older at the midpoint of the age distribution. (Fort Macleod, 2011-2021)¹

Fort Macleod's median age has moved in a fairly narrow band over the last three census points, suggesting a population that remains relatively mature. In 2011, the median age was 43.5 years. It rose to 45.2 years in 2016, a 3.9% increase, before easing to 42.4 years in 2021, a 6.2% decline. The 2021 figure is lower than both earlier readings, but only modestly so compared with the 2016 peak. For the total population, the pattern points to a recent shift toward a somewhat younger midpoint after a brief increase in age.



Fort Macleod had a median age of 42.4 years in 2021, placing it in the middle of the regional range. The figure was lower than most nearby municipalities such as Claresholm at 56.8 years, Stavely and Hill Spring at 54.8, and Nanton at 52.8, but higher than younger communities like Cardston County at 36.4 and Blood 148 at 31.2. It also fell from 45.2 in 2016 after rising from 43.5 in 2011.

Figure 13.2: Comparison of Median Age with other locations (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

Age at Immigration

In Fort Macleod, the 25 to 44 years group was largest in 2021 at 140 people, up 16.7% from 2016. The under 5 years group fell to 25, while 45 years and over rose to 40.

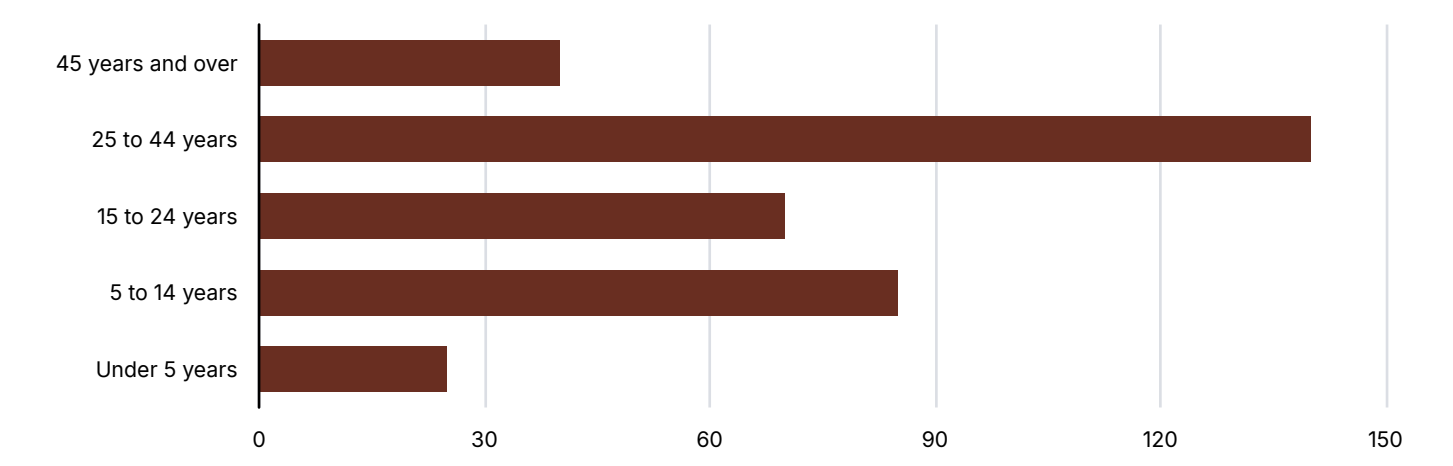


Figure 14.1: Shows the age at which immigrants first arrived in the country. It helps explain whether newcomers arrived mainly as children, working-age adults, or older adults. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In Fort Macleod, the immigrant population in private households was concentrated in working-age arrival ages in 2021. The largest group arrived at ages 25 to 44, with 140 people, and that group grew 16.7% over five years. Arrivals at ages 5 to 14 totaled 85, while 15 to 24 years accounted for 70 and did not change. Under 5 years fell to 25, and 45 years and over remained smaller at 40.

In Fort Macleod, the immigrant population in private households is concentrated in working-age arrivals. In 2021, 140 people first arrived at ages 25 to 44, compared with 85 at ages 5 to 14, 70 at ages 15 to 24, 40 at age 45 and over, and 25 under age 5. Over five years, the 25 to 44 group rose 16.7%, while the under-5 group fell 37.5% and the 5 to 14 group declined 15%.

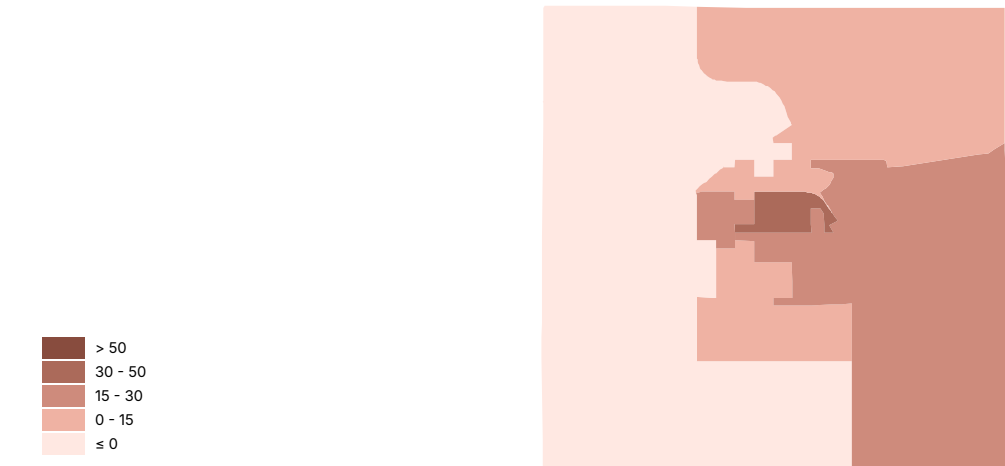


Figure 14.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Age At Immigration - 25 to 44 years (Fort Macleod)¹

Immigrant Status

Fort Macleod’s largest group was non-immigrants at 2,785 people in 2021, up 10.7% from 2016. Immigrants numbered 360, and non-permanent residents rose to 40, the fastest five-year increase at 14.3%.

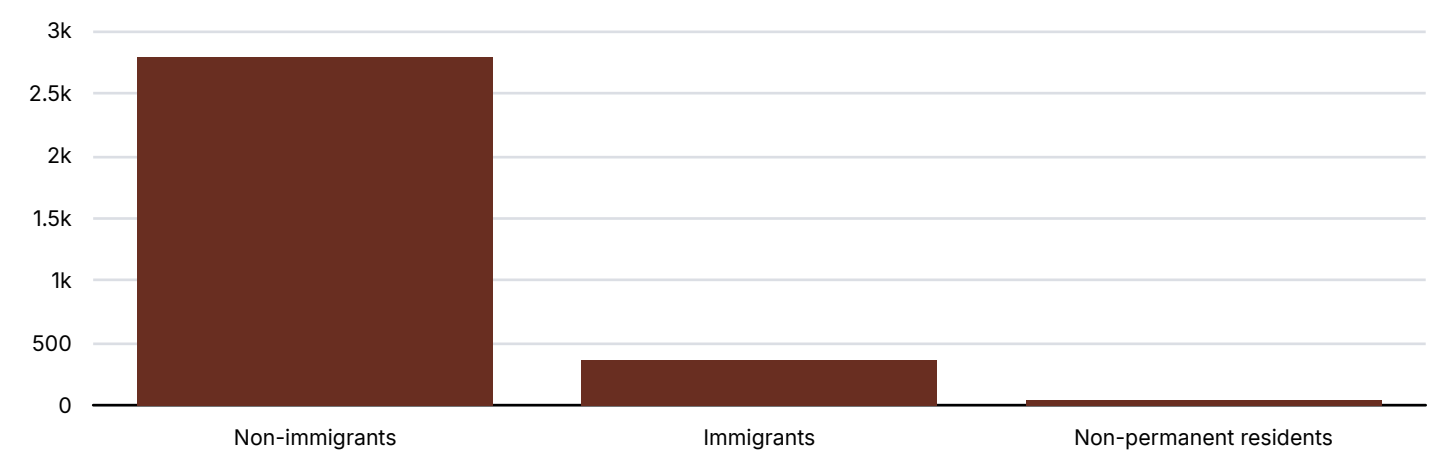


Figure 15.1: Shows whether residents are immigrants, non-permanent residents, or non-immigrants. It helps indicate the role of immigration in community growth and composition. (Fort Macleod, 2021)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s immigrant-status profile was dominated by non-immigrants, with 2,785 people in that group. Immigrants numbered 360, and non-permanent residents accounted for 40 people. The five-year change points to growth across all three categories: non-immigrants rose 10.7%, immigrants increased 9.1%, and non-permanent residents grew 14.3%. The pattern suggests a community where non-immigrants remain the clear majority, while immigration-related groups also expanded over the five-year period. The largest proportional increase was among non-permanent residents, though they remained a small share in absolute terms.

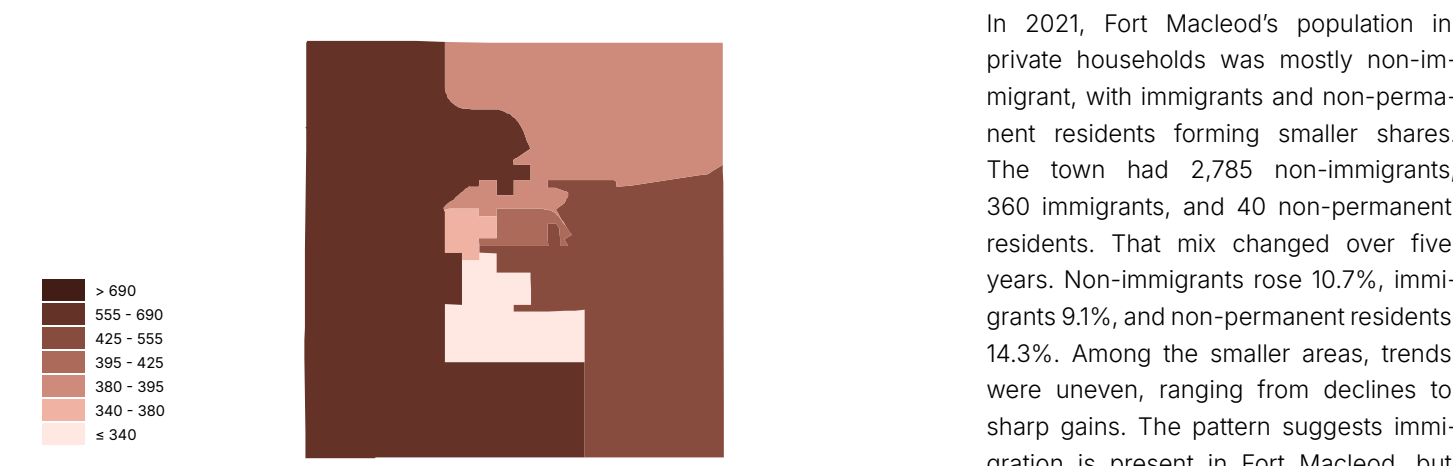


Figure 15.2: Distribution of Largest Group: Immigrant Status - Non-immigrants (Fort Macleod)¹

In 2021, Fort Macleod’s population in private households was mostly non-immigrant, with immigrants and non-permanent residents forming smaller shares. The town had 2,785 non-immigrants, 360 immigrants, and 40 non-permanent residents. That mix changed over five years. Non-immigrants rose 10.7%, immigrants 9.1%, and non-permanent residents 14.3%. Among the smaller areas, trends were uneven, ranging from declines to sharp gains. The pattern suggests immigration is present in Fort Macleod, but non-immigrants remain the clear base of the local population.

Data Sources

1. Statistics Canada, Census Profile. Published in Dec 15, 2022.

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