

# ***2009 Cochrane Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update***



prepared for the

**Town of Cochrane  
Cochrane Family and Community Support  
Services (FCSS)**

and the

**Cochrane Society for Housing Options**

prepared by

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# *Table of Contents*

## **Table of Contents**

### **Acknowledgements**

### **Executive Summary**

<b>Chapter 1:</b> Introduction to the 2009 Cochrane Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update.....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2:</b> Population and Household Income Analysis for the Town of Cochrane.....	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 3:</b> Housing Supply Analysis for the Town of Cochrane .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Chapter 4:</b> Housing Needs Analysis for the Town of Cochrane.....	<b>43</b>

### **Appendix A: Data Sources and Limitations**





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# *Executive Summary*

## **Executive Summary**

### **1.0 Purpose and Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to update the original Affordable Housing Needs Assessment conducted for the Town of Cochrane and Cochrane FCSS in 2001-2002. The findings from this updated Housing Needs Assessment will help provide direction to the Town, FCSS, the Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) and other interested stakeholders in terms of housing needs, priorities and potential annual housing targets.

The methodology used in this study combined quantitative (statistical) data analysis with targeted key person interviews in order to identify and explore:

- Population and demographic trends;
- Household characteristics (household composition and income trends);
- Housing availability (housing supply, form and tenure of market, near-market and non-market housing);
- Housing issues related to adequacy, suitability, affordability and accessibility; and
- Other indicators of housing/economic hardship where data was available.

### **2.0 General Findings**

#### **2.1 Population**

- Between 1991 and 2006 (approx. the last 15 years), the Town's population grew by an average annual rate of 10.7%.
- Between 1996 and 2006 (approx. the last 10 years), Town's population grew by an average annual rate of 8.5%.
- Between 2001 and 2006 (approx. the last 5 years), Town's population grew by an average annual rate of 2.9%.
- Since 2006, the Town's population appears to be maintaining an average annual increase similar to that experienced between 2001 and 2006 (approximately 3%).

#### **Demographics:**

- Cochrane appears to be experiencing a slight shift in its population towards an increasing percentage of older adults (including seniors) and a decreasing percentage of children and youth even though the real population for each age group has increased.



- The cost of housing in Cochrane is one plausible explanation for these observed trends. Younger adults with or without children tend to be less established in their careers and tend (on average) to earn lower incomes than older, more established adults. Younger adults are also less likely to have been able to purchase a home in the community prior to the province's latest economic and housing boom.
- Despite the declining relative percentage of children and youth in the community and relative increase in seniors, Cochrane has an overall higher percentage of children and lower percentage of seniors than the province as a whole.
- Cochrane also has a higher percentage of couple households and a lower percentage of both one-person households and "other households" (e.g., roommates, more than one family living together, etc.) than the province as a whole. The community continues to be predominantly family-oriented.

### **Household Incomes:**

- Cochrane remains an affluent community. Median incomes (the income level at which 50% of households earn above that amount and 50% earn below that amount) for couples, lone-parents and single individuals alike exceeded provincial averages in 2006.
- Despite these high incomes, there continues to be a number of households earning lower incomes.
- In 2006:
  - More than two thirds (68.7%) of couple households were earning \$75,000 or more and 52.6% were earning incomes over \$100,000.
  - 39.7% of all lone-parent families and 56.1% of all single individuals were earning incomes below \$35,000.
  - Median incomes for two-parent families in Cochrane were more than twice that of lone-parent families (\$103,600 compared to \$43,100) and more than three times that of single individuals (\$103,600 compared to \$30,600).
- Poverty rates in Cochrane appear to be either remaining stable or declining slightly.
  - The percentage of households receiving Social Assistance remained stable between 2001 and 2006 (between 6.6% and 6.9% depending on the data used).
  - The percentage of households with incomes at or below the before-tax Low-Income Measure (LIM) declined between 2001 and 2006 (from 11.8% to 9.8% or 9.9% depending on the data used).
  - The percentage of Cochrane residents receiving Food Bank assistance has also declined since 2001.





## 2.2 Housing Supply

- The range of available housing types in a community can be defined in three ways:
  - *Market housing* includes rental and ownership housing available on the open market.
  - *Near-market housing* includes rental and ownership housing targeted specifically to low- and moderate-income households in the community and often made more affordable through the combined efforts of and partnerships between local non-profits, the private sector and government.
  - *Non-market housing* includes supportive/transitional housing and emergency shelters in which residents' rents are fully subsidized through government and social programs.
- The majority of homes within the Town of Cochrane are owner-occupied. In 2006, an estimated 85.3% of homes were owned (up from 79.9% in 1996) while 14.7% of homes were rented (down from 20.1% in 1996).
- The majority of homes in Cochrane are also single detached houses (70.8% or approximately 3,425 homes). Semi-detached homes are the next most prevalent dwelling type with 15.2% (approximately 735 homes). Apartment-style buildings (including both condominiums and rental apartments) make up an estimated 8.1% of dwellings in the community.

### **Market Homeownership:**

- Between 2001 and 2008 (June 30th), average sale prices of homes in Cochrane have more than doubled (i.e., increased by 127.1%).
- A household with a 5% downpayment and entering the housing market in Cochrane for the first time would have to earn a minimum annual income of \$101,000 in order to purchase the average-priced home and \$96,000 in order to purchase the median-priced home sold in Cochrane between January 1 and June 30, 2008. These income figures are based on the following assumptions:
  - Amortization: 35 years
  - Term: 5-year fixed
  - Interest Rate: 5.79% (RBC 5-Year Fixed-Rate Mortgage until August 31, 2008)
  - Downpayment: 5%
  - Mortgage Insurance: Yes
  - Mortgage Payments: Monthly
  - Monthly Condo Fees (where applicable): \$220
  - Monthly Heat: \$150
  - Annual Property Taxes: 0.5% of market value



- Other monthly expenses (e.g., credit car and car loan): \$450 max.
- A first-time homebuyer with a 5% downpayment would have to earn between \$51,000 and \$84,000 in order to purchase an entry-level home available for purchase within the Town of Cochrane during the first half of 2008.
- First-time homebuyers earning less than \$50,000 would not likely be able to afford even an entry-level-priced home without a sizeable downpayment or few other monthly loan payments (e.g., little to no credit card debt, car loans, student loans, etc.).

### **Market Rental Housing:**

- Between 2000 and 2007:
  - The average rent for a bachelor unit increased from \$432 to \$523 (or 21.1%);
  - The average rent for a one-bedroom increased from \$506 to \$620 (or 22.5%);
  - The average rent for a two-bedroom unit increased from \$585 to \$685 (or 17.1%); and
  - The average rent for a three-bedroom unit increased from \$644 to \$843 (or 30.9%).
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that these figures may actually be low.

### **Near- and Non-Market Housing:**

- There are currently no limited/shared equity homeownership opportunities in Cochrane either in the form of a housing co-op, co-housing or perpetually affordable/resale restricted homeownership.
- There are 21 near-market rental apartment units in the community owned by the Cochrane Society for Housing Options, and four (4) near-market 4-plex condo rental units recently acquired by the Town of Cochrane.
- There are currently no Community Housing units in Cochrane (i.e., subsidized, rent-geared-to-income units for families with children).
- There are two (2) households receiving rent supplements through the Calgary Housing Company's Direct Tenant Subsidy program.
- Some employers in Cochrane may be offering incentives such as staff-oriented rental housing to some of their employees.
- There are currently no emergency shelters (e.g., homeless shelters, youth shelters, family violence shelters or safe houses) within the Town of Cochrane. Nor are there any second stage/transitional housing units in the community.



- According to the Town's 2008 Municipal Census there may be as many as 14 Group Home/Collective Dwellings in the community. However, limited information is available about these group homes.

## 2.3 Housing Needs

### Housing Adequacy:

- Housing adequacy refers to the physical safety of an individual dwelling. Housing is considered inadequate if it requires major repairs and/or is lacking necessary services and basic facilities. Major repairs refer to plumbing, electrical, ventilation systems, disposal systems, and the structural components of a house that might warrant it being unsafe. Basic facilities refer to potable hot and cold running water, and full bathroom facilities including an indoor toilet and a bathtub or shower. Additionally, housing is not adequate if it is infested with vermin or black mould.
- Overall housing adequacy appears to be good in Cochrane, although estimates suggest that the number of homes in need of major repairs has increased from 3.1% in 1996 to 3.6% in 2006.
- Based on available data, there may be as many as 175 homes in Cochrane in need of major repairs and, therefore, could be considered inadequate.

### Housing Suitability:

- Housing suitability refers to the size of the home in terms of bedrooms compared to the size of the family living in that home. National Occupancy Standards set minimum criteria for number of persons per bedroom and level of privacy for members of a household. These standards require:
  - A maximum of two persons per bedroom;
  - That the parent(s)'s bedroom be separate from that of the children(s)'s;
  - That family members over the age of 17 not share a bedroom; and
  - That family members over four years of age and of the opposite gender not share a bedroom.
- Households that are unable to meet these occupancy standards are said to be living in overcrowded or unsuitable housing conditions.
- There are currently no published data by Statistics Canada directly related to housing suitability in the Cochrane area. However, the limited data that is available suggests that there may be as few as 10 and as many as 60 households in Cochrane living in overcrowded conditions that would be considered unsuitable based on National Occupancy Standards.



## Housing Accessibility:

- Housing accessibility relates to ability of individuals with health, mobility and/or stamina limitations to easily get into and out of their home, and to move around freely while inside their home. Accessibility is particularly problematic for persons with physical disabilities including people confined to wheelchairs and people needing the use of walkers to get around their home. Those households with accessibility issues may require a number of improvements to their homes including wheelchair ramps and/or elevators; larger doors and hallways; lowered counter tops, sinks and cabinets; and reconfigured rooms including larger bathrooms and specialty bathtubs.
- The 2006 *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* (PALS) conducted nation-wide by Statistics Canada indicates that:
  - An estimated 0.4% of children ages 0-14 have a mobility-related disability ranging from mild to very severe;
  - An estimated 6.5% of youth and adults ages 15-64 have a mobility-related disability ranging from mild to very severe; and
  - An estimated 34.4% of seniors ages 65 and over have a mobility-related disability ranging from mild to very severe.
- If these percentages hold true for Cochrane, as many as 1,060 residents in Cochrane (based on 2006 Census data) may have a mobility-related disability ranging from mild to very severe.
- Statistics Canada also estimates (based on findings from the 2006 *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey*) that 7.9% of Canadian adults with disabilities “reported using specialized features either to enter or leave their residence or inside their residence”<sup>1</sup> and that “4.6% of adults with disabilities reported that the design and layout of their home made it difficult to participate in activities that they wanted or needed to do.”<sup>2</sup> If these percentages hold true for Cochrane, there may be as many as 150 individuals in Cochrane currently using specialized features to enter and exit their homes and 85 individuals in Cochrane potentially in need of more accessible housing (i.e., for whom the design and layout of their home makes it difficult for them to participate in daily activities).
- The Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) currently has six (6) housing units that could potentially be adapted for wheelchair accessibility.

## Housing Affordability:

- Housing affordability relates to the ability of individual households to meet their monthly rent or mortgage payments within a reasonable

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Tables* (December 2007), Catalogue No. 89-628-XIE – No. 003, page 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



threshold of their income. CMHC has determined that housing is affordable if it costs no more than 30% of a household's before-tax monthly income for rent or mortgage payments.

- Based on 2006 Taxfiler and Census data:
  - There may be between 425 and 490 census households (10.1%) living in Cochrane whose incomes fall at or below the Statistics Canada 2006 Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs) and, therefore, may be in need of more affordable housing.
  - There may be between 1,020 and 1,145 census households (23.7%) living in Cochrane whose incomes fall at or below the 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds (CNITs) and, therefore, may be in need of more affordable housing.
  - There may be between 465 and 525 census households (10.9%) living in Cochrane paying 50% or more of their income on housing and, therefore, may be in need of more affordable housing.
- Using 2006 Census data, Statistics Canada estimates that between 795 and 880 census households in the Town of Cochrane (16.5% - 18.3%) were paying 30% or more of their income on housing in 2006. This included:
  - Between 275 and 305 tenant households
  - Between 485 and 520 homeowners (carrying a mortgage); and
  - Between 35 and 55 homeowners (no longer carrying a mortgage).
- In 2001, between 19.4% and 21.7% of Cochrane households were estimated to be paying 30% or more of their income on housing according to Statistics Canada. By 2006, that percentage had dropped to between 16.5% and 18.3% suggesting that housing affordability in Cochrane may be improving.
- However, most of that improvement is being experienced by homeowners. In 2001, it was estimated that between 17.0% and 19.2% of homeowners were paying 30% or more of their income on housing. By 2006, those estimates had dropped to between 12.7% and 14.0%. Conversely, the percentage of renters estimated to be paying 30% or more of their income on housing increased from between 35.0% and 37.9% in 2001 to between 38.7% and 43.0% in 2006.

## 2.4 Proposed Housing Targets

- Two target groups for affordable housing in Cochrane are proposed as follows:
  - The high-needs target group consisting of approximately 10% of Cochrane's households estimated to be earning incomes at or below the community's 2006 before-tax LICOs. These



households are likely paying 50% or more of their income on housing; and

- The medium-needs target group consisting of approximately 6.5% of Cochrane's households estimated to be paying 30% or more of their before-tax household income on housing per Statistics Canada's 2006 housing costs analysis but not more than 49% of their before-tax income on housing (e.g., the difference between the estimated 16.5% of households paying 30% or more minus the 10% of households earning incomes at or below the 2006 LICO).
- The high-needs target group will likely require a combination of heavily subsidized housing (rent-geared-to-income) for singles and families with children and various types of supportive housing (e.g., group homes) for persons with severe disabilities. An estimated 480 households could potentially fall within the high-needs target group based on 2006 Census data (4,830 census households x 10%).
- The medium-needs target group will likely benefit from a combination of moderately-subsidized rental housing and below-market/non-profit ownership housing (e.g., limited or shared equity homeownership). It is unlikely that any of the households identified in either the high-needs or medium-needs target groups would be able to afford homeownership without a combination of public subsidies (e.g., housing grants), municipal regulations and incentives, and resale restrictions applied to higher density developments such as stacked condominiums and townhouses. An estimated 315 households could potentially fall within the medium-needs target group based on 2006 Census data (4,830 census households x 6.5%).
- In addition to the two proposed *target groups*, two *housing targets* are also proposed for Cochrane:
  - Option #1: Base the annual target for the number of new affordable rental housing units on the estimated percentage of households in the high-needs group and the annual target for affordable homeownership housing units on the estimated percentage of households in the medium-needs group.
    - A solution based on this formula could specify that 10% of all new housing units built in Cochrane be affordable rental units and 6.5% of all new housing units built in Cochrane be affordable homeownership (entry-level or near-market).
    - Applying this formula to an average of 200 – 300 new housing units built per year in Cochrane would see the creation of 20-30 new affordable rental units per year (200 – 300 units per year x 10%) and 15-20 new affordable homeownership units per year (200 – 300 units per year x 6.5%).
    - If these targets were maintained annually, over the course of five years, the Town could see the creation of 175 – 250 new affordable housing units, including 100 – 150 affordable rental units (approximately 50% of the 275 tenant households



identified as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada) and 75-100 affordable homeownership units (approximately 20% of the 520 owner households identified as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada).

- Option #2: Base the annual target for affordable rental housing units on the percentage of tenant households spending 30% - 99% of their income on housing in 2006 according to Statistics Canada and the annual target for affordable homeownership housing units on the percentage of owner households spending 30% - 99% of their income on housing in 2006 according to Statistics Canada.
  - A solution based on this formula could specify that 10% of all new housing units built in Cochrane annually were affordable, of which 35% would be affordable rental units and 65% would be affordable homeownership (entry-level or near-market).
  - Applying this formula to an average of 200-300 new housing units built per year in Cochrane would see the creation of 20-30 new affordable units including 5-10 new affordable rental units per year (20 – 30 units per year x 35%) and 15-20 new affordable homeownership units per year (20 – 30 units per year x 65%).
  - If these targets were maintained annually, over the course of five years, the Town could see the creation of 100 – 150 new affordable housing units, including 25 – 50 affordable rental units (approximately 20% of the 275 tenant households identified as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada) and 75-100 affordable homeownership units (approximately 20% of the 520 owner households identified as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada).
- Determining who would be responsible for building these units and what mechanisms could be used to encourage or assist in their creation will require further research and work with the community (i.e., engaging the range of stakeholders including the Town, the development industry, the business community and the non-profit sector).







# Chapter 1

## **Introduction to the 2009 Cochrane Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update**

### **1.1 Purpose of This Study**

Like many communities throughout Alberta, the Town of Cochrane has been experiencing significant increases in housing development and costs over the past ten years. Increased housing costs have led to issues around housing affordability and choice for low- and modest-income households and, increasingly, even some middle-income households.

In order to gain a better understanding of current affordable housing needs in Cochrane, the Town of Cochrane, Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and the Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) have engaged Housing Strategies Inc. of Calgary, Alberta to update the original Affordable Housing Needs Assessment conducted in 2001-2002. The findings from this updated Housing Needs Assessment will help provide direction to the Town, FCSS, CSHO and other interested stakeholders in terms of housing needs, priorities and potential annual housing targets.

### **1.2 Project Methodology**

The methodology used to develop the *2009 Cochrane Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Update* combined quantitative (statistical) data analysis with targeted key person interviews in order to identify and explore:

- Population and demographic trends;
- Household characteristics (household composition and income trends);



- Housing availability (housing supply, form and tenure of market, near-market and non-market housing);
- Housing issues related to adequacy, suitability, affordability and accessibility; and
- Other indicators of housing/economic hardship where data was available.

### 1.3 Quantitative Data Sources

The primary quantitative data used to conduct this analysis was derived from a combination of the following sources:

- Population data from Statistics Canada (1996, 2001 and 2006 Federal Census; 2001-2006 Taxfiler data; and 2006 Low-Income Cutoffs);
- 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds from Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs;
- Rental market data from Canada Mortgage and Housing;
- Multiple List Service (MLS) sales data (summary data provided by the Calgary Real Estate Board and primary data provided by Patti Gryzko of Royal LePage Allstar);
- Housing and development statistics from the Town of Cochrane;
- Rental housing data provided by individual housing providers; and
- Data collected by local health, community service and social service providers (where that data is both available and permitted to be released to the public).

*Appendix A: Data Sources and Limitations* provides a brief discussion on the challenges inherent to some of these data sources.

### 1.4 Format of this Report

This report is organized into the following chapters:

- *Chapter 2: Population and Household Income Analysis for the Town of Cochrane* provides a summary of population, demographic and incomes statistics in order to gain a better understanding of the current nature of Cochrane's population and level of affluence;
- *Chapter 3: Housing Supply Analysis for the Town of Cochrane* provides a summary of the community's current housing supply – both rental and homeownership – in terms of market, near-market and non-market housing in order to assess the range of affordable housing options available to residents; and
- *Chapter 4: Housing Needs Analysis for the Town of Cochrane* provides a summary of housing issues affecting residents and an estimate of the number of households likely to be experiencing affordability challenges.



# *Chapter 2*

## **Population and Household Income Analysis for the Town of Cochrane**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines population and income statistics for the Town of Cochrane in order to gain an understanding of the community's changing demographics and income profiles and how these changes may relate to housing.

### **2.2 Population Characteristics**

The following summary of Cochrane's population is based primarily on Statistics Canada Census data for 1996, 2001 and 2006. Statistics Canada collects Census data every five years. Every household in Canada is included in the Census. As a result, the national census provides one of the most comprehensive population data sets available.

#### **2.2.1 Population Growth**

Table 1 (next page) shows population changes for the Town of Cochrane, the Province of Alberta and the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) between 1991 and 2006 based on Statistics Canada Census data. According to this data, the Town has consistently grown at a much faster rate than the Province and the Calgary CMA over the past fifteen years. Between 1991 and 1996, the Town's official population grew by 41.0% (or approximately 2,160 individuals) compared to the Province which grew by 5.9% and the Calgary CMA which grew by 9.0%. Between 1996 and 2001, the Town's population continued to grow but at an even faster pace (62.2%) with the addition of over 4,600 residents (in part due to the Town annexing



additional land between the 2001 and 2006 Census years) compared to a growth rate of 10.3% for the Province and 15.8% for the Calgary CMA. Since 2001, the Town has continued to grow but at much slower rate of 14.3% (an increase of approximately 1,700 residents). However, it is still growing faster than the provincial average of 10.6% and the Calgary CMA (13.4%). This suggests that while Cochrane remains an attractive location for both existing Calgary residents and new residents to the area, increasing housing costs may be serving as a deterrent to prospective homebuyers and tenants wishing to move to the community.

**Table 1: Official Populations for the Town of Cochrane and the Province of Alberta  
(1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006 Statistics Canada Census Data)**

Characteristics	Town of Cochrane	Calgary CMA	Province of Alberta
<b>Total Population in 1991</b>	5,267	754,033	2,545,553
<b>Total Population in 1996</b>	7,424	821,628	2,696,826
<b>Total Population in 2001</b>	12,041	951,494	2,974,807
<b>Total Population in 2006</b>	13,760	1,079,310	3,290,350
<b>1991 to 1996 Total Population Change (%)</b>	41.0%	9.0%	5.9%
<b>1996 to 2001 Total Population Change (%)</b>	62.2%	15.8%	10.3%
<b>2001 to 2006 Total Population Change (%)</b>	14.3%	13.4%	10.6%
<b>1991 to 2006 Total Population Change (%)</b>	161.2%	43.1%	29.3%
<b>1996 to 2006 Total Population Change (%)</b>	85.3%	31.4%	22.0%
<b>Avg. Annual Total Pop. Change 1991-2006 (%)</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Avg. Annual Total Pop. Change 1996-2006 (%)</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>Avg. Annual Total Pop. Change 2001-2006 (%)</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population  
NOTE: Data may be subject to rounding and suppression

During the 15-year period between 1991 and 2006, the Town's population almost tripled, growing by an overall rate of 161.2% (approximately 8,495 individuals). Over the past 10 years, the Town grew by 85.3% (approximately 6,335 individuals). In terms of average *annual* growth over the past 15 years (i.e., between 1991 and 2006), the Town has grown more than five times faster than the Province and more than three times faster than the Calgary CMA (10.7% compared to 2.0% and 2.9% respectively). Over the past 10 years (i.e., between 1996 and 2006), the Town has grown almost four times faster than the Province and almost three times faster than the Calgary CMA (8.5% compared to 2.2% and 3.1% respectively). Rapid population growth can create housing supply and demand imbalances if the Town and the development industry are unable to bring enough new housing developments onto the market to keep pace with that growth. These imbalances can lead to rapidly escalating housing prices – which have been a dominant factor in housing markets not only in the Calgary area but throughout Alberta over the past ten years.

In addition to net population growth, the Town has also experienced population turnover. Table 2 (next page) summarizes data on the mobility status of Cochrane residents between 2001 and 2006 as published by Statistics Canada.



**Table 2: Mobility Status for the Town of Cochrane  
(2006 Statistics Canada Census Data)**

Mobility Characteristics	Total	Percentage
Lived at the Same Address 5 Years Ago	6,095	48.1%
Lived at a Different Address but Within the Same Municipality 5 Years Ago	2,520	19.9%
Lived in a Different Municipality 5 Years Ago	2,535	20.0%
Lived in a Different Province or Territory 5 Years Ago	1,060	8.4%
Lived in a Different Country 5 Years Ago	460	3.6%
<b>Published Total Population 5 Years and Over</b>	<b>12,680</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Published Total Pop. Living in Cochrane 5 Years Ago	8,615	68.0%
Published Total Pop. Not Living in Cochrane 5 Years Ago	4,055	32.0%
<b>Total Population (2006)</b>	<b>13,760</b>	
Estimated Total Pop. Living in Cochrane 5 Years Ago	9,355	68.0%
Estimated Total Pop. Not Living in Cochrane 5 Years Ago	4,405	32.0%
<b>Net Growth Between 2001 and 2006</b>	<b>1,719</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>Estimated Total No. of Residents Leaving Cochrane (2001–2006)</b>	<b>2,336–2,686</b>	<b>17.0%–19.5%</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population*

*NOTE: Data are subject to rounding and suppression*

According to this data, between 4,055 and 4,405<sup>3</sup> Cochrane residents who lived in the community in 2006 were not living in the community in 2001. These residents were either living in another municipality within Alberta, in another province, or in another country. If the Town grew by a total of 1,719 residents between 2001 and 2006 yet between 4,055 and 4,405 residents did not live in the community in 2001, then it is reasonable to assume that between 2,336 and 2,686 residents may have left the community during that five-year period.

A number of factors could explain why people left the community, including:

- A change in one's job that requires relocation;
- Family needs or obligations (e.g., the need to move closer to ageing parents);
- Opportunities to upgrade one's home (e.g., purchase a larger home on an acreage lot outside the community or elsewhere in the region);
- Lifestyle choices (e.g., the desire to move closer to work in order to avoid lengthy commutes); or
- The need to move to another community in order find more affordable housing

Anecdotal evidence from Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) indicates that a number of low- and modest-income households have had to leave the community in order to find more affordable housing. This includes long-time residents (including young families) who have grown up in Cochrane and now have to leave the community because they cannot find an affordable home to rent or purchase. It also includes older residents who, as long-standing citizens, actively contributed to building the community.

<sup>3</sup> Data published by Statistics Canada indicates a total of 4,055 Cochrane residents did not live in the community five years prior to the 2006 Census. However, that number is based on a total of 12,680 resident responses (4,055 represents 32.0% of 12,680). The official 2006 population of Cochrane is 13,760 and 32.0% of 13,760 equals 4,405. Therefore "between 4,055 and 4,405 Cochrane residents" represents the range between the published data and 32.0% of Cochrane's official 2006 population.



The loss of a significant number of low- and modest-income households can have an impact on the local service economy as these households are more likely to be working in retail, hospitality and community service jobs.

## 2.2.2 Population Projections

Population projections are made possible based on the observed changes over the past five to fifteen years in the Census data. As mentioned above, over the past *ten* years (1996 – 2006), the Town’s permanent population grew by an average rate of 8.5% per year and by an average rate of 10.7% per year over the past *fifteen* years (1991 – 2006). Over the past *five* years (2001 – 2006), the Town’s permanent population grew by an average rate of 2.9% per year. Table 3 presents three possible population projections for the Town based on the community’s five- ten- and fifteen-year average growth rates.

**Table 3: Population Projections (2007 – 2020) for the Town of Cochrane Based on 1991 - 2006 Statistics Canada Census Data (10- and 15-Year Average Population Change)**

Year	Population	Percent (%) Change		
1991	5,267	N/A		
1996	7,424	41.0%		
2001	12,041	62.2%		
2006	13,760	14.3%		
	<b>5-Year Average</b>	<b>10-Year Average</b>	<b>15 Year Average</b>	
	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	
2007	14,159	14,930	15,232	
2008	14,570	16,199	16,862	
2009	14,992	17,575	18,666	
2010	15,427	19,069	20,664	
2011	15,874	20,690	22,875	
2012	16,335	22,449	25,322	
2013	16,808	24,357	28,032	
2014	17,296	26,428	31,031	
2015	17,797	28,674	34,352	
2016	18,314	31,111	38,027	
2017	18,845	33,756	42,096	
2018	19,391	36,625	46,600	
2019	19,953	39,738	51,587	
2020	20,532	43,116	57,106	

**Primary Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population*

If either of these three average annual growth rates is maintained into the future, the Town of Cochrane could potentially see its population increase to between 17,800 and 34,350 residents by 2015 and between 20,530 and 57,100 residents by 2020 depending on whether future growth rates return to either the 10- or 15-year growth rates or follow the more modest 5-year growth



rate. According to the Town's recent Municipal Census, the 2008 population is 14,653<sup>4</sup> and suggests that the community continues to maintain the more modest 5-year growth rate.

Factors that could influence the community's continued population growth include the continued strength of the Alberta economy, the supply of developable residential land, and the overall affordability (and diversity) of the community's housing stock (i.e., whether or not there is a supply of housing available to meet the needs of a growing and/or changing population).

### 2.2.3 Demographic Changes

Table 4 shows the breakdown of the Town's population by age based on the 1996, 2001 and 2006 Statistics Canada Census data showing the degree to which age profiles have changed in the community over the last ten years.

**Table 4: Age Characteristics for the Town of Cochrane  
(1996, 2001 and 2006 Census Data)**

Age Cohorts	1996 Total	% of Total	2001 Total	% of Total	2006 Total	% of Total	Actual Change (1996 – 2006)	Relative Change (1996 – 2006)
Age 0-4	590	8.0%	835	7.1%	915	6.6%	55.1%	-16.4%
Age 5-14	1,445	19.5%	2,165	18.3%	2,160	15.7%	49.5%	-19.5%
Age 15-19	545	7.3%	950	8.0%	1,185	8.6%	117.4%	17.2%
Age 20-24	345	4.6%	550	4.7%	705	5.1%	104.3%	10.1%
Age 25-54	3,540	47.7%	5,605	47.5%	6,095	44.3%	72.2%	-7.2%
Age 55-64	375	5.1%	840	7.1%	1,435	10.4%	282.7%	106.2%
Age 65-74	260	3.5%	465	3.9%	715	5.2%	175.0%	48.2%
Age 75+	320	4.3%	395	3.3%	560	4.1%	75.0%	-5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11,805</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,770</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)

NOTE: Age cohort ranges are determined by limitations in the 1996 Census data.

According to this data, the most significant demographic changes in the Town occurred among older adults (empty nesters ages 55-64 and retirees ages 65-74) and young children (14 years of age and under). While in real numbers, the total population of each age cohort has increased between 1996 and 2006 – in some cases doubling and even tripling, some age cohorts have experienced a decline in terms of their relative proportion of the community as a whole. For example, the number of children ages 0-4 grew by an estimated 325 children (55.1%) between 1996 and 2006 in real terms. However, as a percentage of the total population, they declined by 16.4% (from 8.0% in 1996 to 6.6% in 2006). Similarly, children ages 5-14 increased in real numbers by 715 children (49.5%) between 1996 and 2006 but declined as a percentage of the population from 19.5% in 1996 to 15.7% in 2006 (a relative decline of 19.5%). The same pattern (albeit less dramatic) exists for adults ages 25-54. Between 1996 and 2006, the number of adults in this age cohort increased by 2,555 residents yet declined as a percentage of the whole population from 47.7% to 44.3% (a 7.2% decline). This suggests that, as time moves forward, Cochrane may be becoming somewhat less attractive to families with children – especially young families.

<sup>4</sup> Town of Cochrane, 2008 Municipal Census Summary Report (August 2008), page 3 of 3.



Conversely, the number of adults ages 55-64 (empty nesters) increased by a total of 1,060 residents between 1996 and 2006 (a 282.7% change in real numbers) and moved from representing 5.1% of the total population in 1996 to 10.4% in 2006 (a 106.2% relative increase). Similarly, the total number of retirees ages 65-74 increased by 455 residents between 1996 and 2006 (a 175.0% increase in real terms) and moved from representing 3.5% of the population in 1996 to 5.2% in 2006 (a 48.2% increase in relative terms). The same pattern can be seen with teens (ages 15-19) and young adults (ages 20-24) in the community. In real terms, the number of residents in both of these age cohorts more than doubled between 1996 and 2006. In relative terms, the percentage of teens increased from 7.3% to 8.6% (a 17.2% increase in relative terms) and the percentage of young adults increased from 4.6% to 5.1% (a 10.1% increase in relative terms). These patterns suggests that Cochrane may be becoming more attractive to older adults, empty nesters and established families (e.g., a combination of existing families with children aging in place and established families moving into the community).

The cost of housing in Cochrane is one plausible explanation for these observed trends. Younger adults with or without children tend to be less established in their careers and tend (on average) to earn lower incomes than older, more established adults. Younger adults are also less likely to have been able to purchase a home in the community prior to the province's latest economic and housing boom.

Table 5 collapses the age cohort data shown in Table 4 above to show the changes in the Town's population based on three categories: 1) *children and youth* ages 0-19; 2) *adults* ages 20-64; and 3) *seniors* ages 65 and over. According to this table, the Town appears to be experiencing a slight shift in its population towards an increasing percentage of older adults and a decreasing percentage of children and youth even though the real population for each age group has increased.

**Table 5: Age Characteristics for the Town of Cochrane (1996, 2001 and 2006 Census Data)**

Age Cohorts	1996 Total	% of Total	2001 Total	% of Total	2006 Total	% of Total	Actual Change (1996 – 2006)	Relative Change (1996 – 2006)
Age 0-19	2,580	34.8%	3,950	33.5%	4,260	30.9%	65.1%	-11.0%
Age 20-64	4,260	57.4%	6,995	59.3%	8,235	59.8%	93.3%	4.2%
Age 65+	580	7.8%	860	7.3%	1,275	9.3%	119.8%	18.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,420</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11,805</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,770</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

Despite the declining relative percentage of children and youth in the community and relative increase in seniors, Cochrane has an overall higher percentage of children and lower percentage of seniors than the province as a whole. Figure 1 (next page) compares age cohorts in Cochrane to provincial averages based on 2006 Federal Census data. This figure shows Cochrane having a higher percentage of children ages 0-19 and adults ages 40-64 yet a lower percentage of adults ages 20-39 and seniors ages 65 and over.

A possible explanation for the higher percentage of children and adults over the age of 40 could be that the Town is home to larger-than-average families (i.e., more children per family) and/or a higher percentage of professional/career-oriented families who started having children later in life. However, based on Statistics Canada Census data for 1996, 2001 and 2006, average

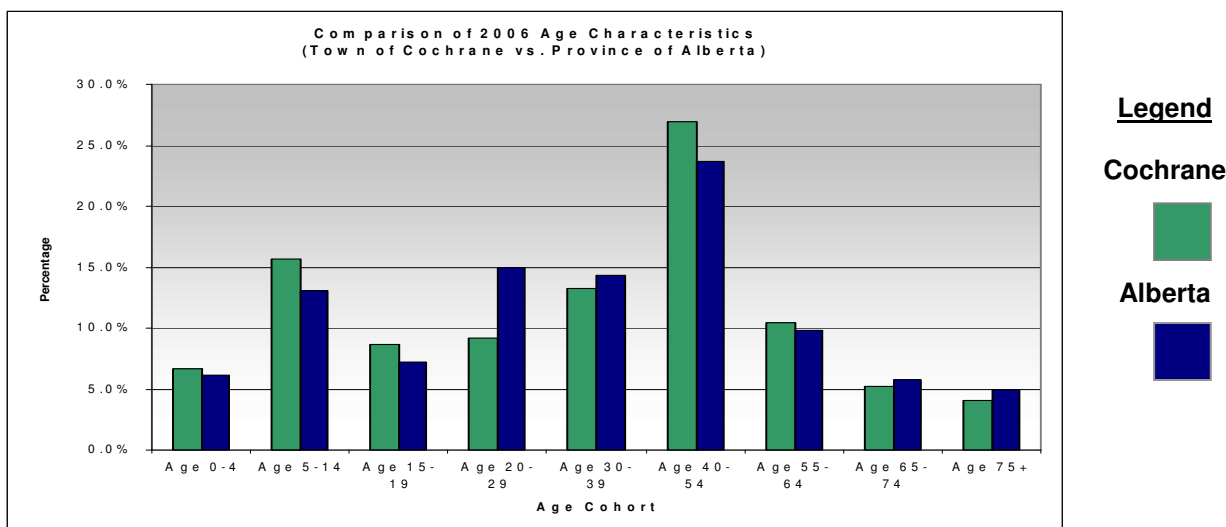




household sizes appear to be remaining stable. For example, the average size of lone parent families has remained 2.6 persons per household (p.p.h.) from 1996 through to 2006. The average size of married and common-law families was 3.3 p.p.h. in 1996, was 3.3 persons p.p.h. among married couples and 2.5 p.p.h. among common-law couples in 2001, and was 3.2 p.p.h. among married couples and 2.7 p.p.h. among common-law couples in 2006.

The high cost of housing and a limited number of more affordable options in the community could explain the lower percentage of younger adults (ages 20-39) and seniors ages 65 and over.

**Figure 1: Comparison of the Demographic Profiles of the Town of Cochrane and the Province of Alberta (2006 Census Data)**



**Data Source:**  
Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population

## 2.3 Household Characteristics

Table 6 shows the distribution of households by family type in the Town of Cochrane for the years 1996, 2001 and 2006 based on Statistics Canada Census data.

**Table 6: Household Characteristics Within the Town of Cochrane By Family Type (1996, 2001 and 2006)**

Household Characteristics	1996 Total	1996 %	2001 Total	2001 %	2006 Total	2006 %	Actual Change (1996 – 2006)	Relative Change (1996 – 2006)
<b>Couple Households</b>	1,840	76.3%	2,905	74.9%	3,520	72.9%	21.17%	-2.66%
<b>Lone-Parent Households</b>	180	7.5%	395	10.2%	495	10.2%	25.32%	0.67%
<b>One-Person Households</b>	N/A*	N/A*	480	12.4%	725	15.0%	51.04%	21.33%
<b>Other Households<sup>†</sup></b>	N/A*	N/A*	100	2.6%	90	1.9%	-10.00%	-27.70%
<b>Total All Households</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,880</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,830</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>24.48%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)

<sup>†</sup> "Other Households" includes multiple-family households and non-family households other than one-person households (e.g., two or more singles rooming together).

\* Data not available from the 1996 Federal Census.

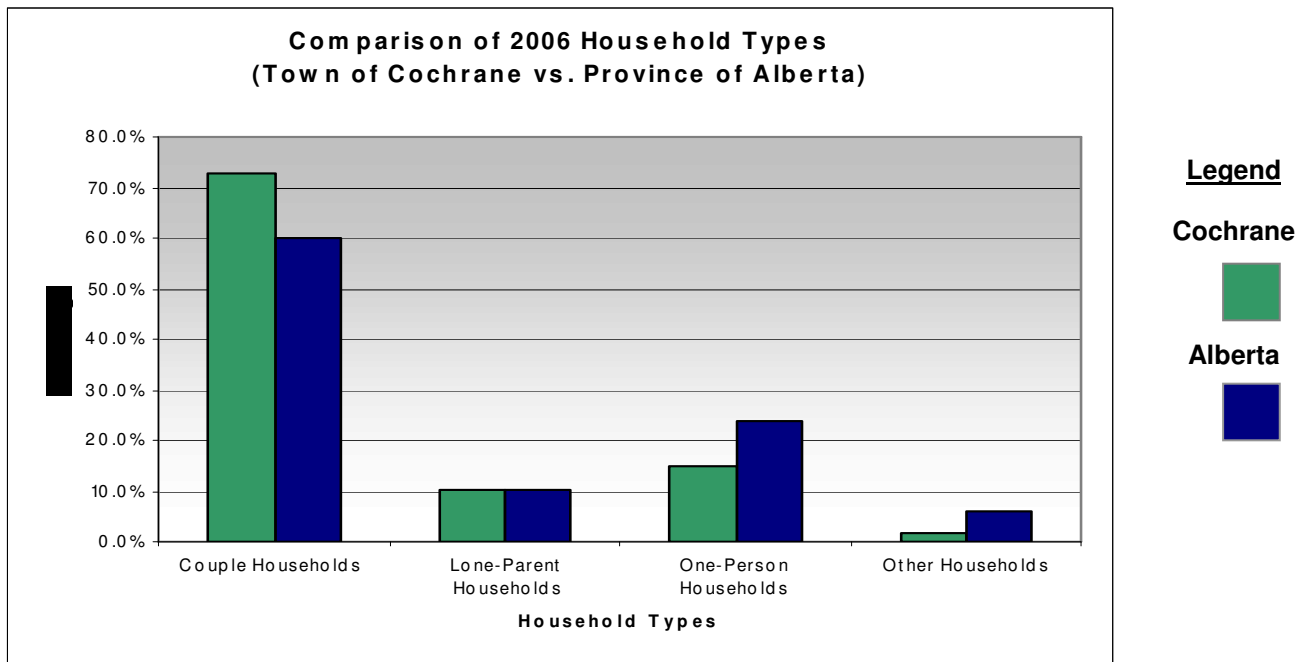


As with most communities in Canada, couple (two-adult) households with and without children consistently make up the largest proportion of households in the Town. This is followed by single individuals (one-person households) and then by lone-parent families. “Other households” consist of single individuals sharing housing (e.g., roommates) and multiple families sharing housing (e.g., multi-generational families, families renting out space in their home to boarders, and two or more families sharing accommodations possibly out of choice but more likely due to housing affordability issues). In 2006, 74.9% of all households in the Town consisted of couple families (with or without children), 15.0% of all households consisted of single individuals, 10.2% of all households consisted of lone-parent families, and 1.9% of all households consisted of households of various types and sizes sharing accommodations.

While the actual number of households in each category has increased since 1996 coinciding with the increase in the Town’s population, the relative percentage of couple households and one-person households is changing. Between 1996 and 2006, the percentage of couple households declined from 76.3% to 72.9% and between 2001 and 2006 the percentage of one-person households increased from 12.4% to 15.0%. While the actual number of lone-parent households increased since 1996, the relative percentage between 2001 and 2006 has remained stable at 10.2%.

Figure 2 compares household types in Cochrane to province-wide averages. According to this figure, Cochrane has a significantly higher percentage of couple households and a lower percentage of both one-person households and “other households” than the province as a whole. As with the age cohort data, even though Cochrane is experiencing shifts in the relative percentage of different household types, the community continues to be predominantly family-oriented.

**Figure 2: Comparison of 2006 Household Types for the Town of Cochrane vs. The Province of Alberta**



**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)



The higher percentage of couple households and lower percentage of one-person households in the community could be a reflection of higher housing prices in Cochrane (i.e., single-income households are more likely to have difficulty affording housing in Cochrane and, therefore, may be choosing to locate in other communities in the Calgary area). Alternatively, higher housing prices in Cochrane may be a reflection of the community's household composition (i.e., a higher percentage of dual-income, couple households earning above-average incomes driving the housing market towards higher-end homes). Both factors are likely involved and may be reinforcing one another.

Table 7 shows the breakdown of lone-parent families in Cochrane based on whether they are led by single fathers or by single mothers.

**Table 7: Lone-Parent Households Within the Town of Cochrane & Area (1996, 2001 and 2006)**

Year	Total	Female-Led	% Female-Led	Male-Led	% Male-Led
1996	180	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2001	395	300	75.9%	95	24.1%
2006	495	375	75.8%	120	24.2%

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

As with most communities across Alberta and Canada, single *mothers* vastly outnumber single *fathers* in Cochrane. In both 2001 and 2006, the number of single mothers was more than three times that of single fathers. However, at the provincial level (Table 8), the ratio of single mothers to single fathers is closer to 4:1.

**Table 8: Lone-Parent Households Within the Province of Alberta (1996, 2001 and 2006)**

Year	Total	Female-Led	% Female-Led	Male-Led	% Male-Led
1996	92,485	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2001	116,520	92,945	79.8%	23,575	20.2%
2006	130,265	102,555	78.7%	27,710	21.3%

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

This discrepancy suggests that higher housing prices in Cochrane are making it more difficult for single mothers to establish themselves in the community since women (and, therefore, single mothers) on average tend to earn less than men (and, therefore, single fathers).

## 2.4 Household Income

The following summary of household incomes in Cochrane is based on a combination of Statistics Canada Census data from 2001 and 2006 and Taxfiler data for the years 2001-2006 (the most recent data available). Taxfiler data is compiled by the *Small Area and Data Division* of



Statistics Canada through information provided on all personal income tax returns filed within a given year. The data combines information on levels and sources of income from taxfilers and demographic indicators derived from both the taxfilers and their non-filing dependents. Taxfiler data is typically two years behind in being published (hence the most recent data being 2006).

It is important to note that the physical boundaries used to delineate Taxfiler data do not always coincide with those boundaries used to delineate Federal Census data (Taxfiler data is organized according to postal codes whereas Census data adheres to municipal boundaries). In areas where postal codes overlap between municipal boundaries – as may be the case for residents living just outside of Town boundaries and receiving mail via Rural Route or through Post Office Boxes located within the Town – households on both sides of the Town boundary may share similar postal codes and therefore be included as residents of the Town. As a result, discrepancies between the two data sets can arise.

Another important distinction between Census data and Taxfiler data is how the two data sets define households. Census data identifies households based primarily on where they live (i.e., a household is a group of people living within a single dwelling), whereas Taxfiler data identifies households based on economic relationships (i.e., a household is a group of people economically interdependent based on tax laws). For example, two single people sharing accommodations as roommates would be considered as a single household in the Census data but as two separate *economic households* in the Taxfiler data unless they filed their taxes as a common-law or married couple.

In the case of Cochrane these discrepancies are *significant*. According to the Census data, there were 4,840 census households in Cochrane in 2006. Conversely, according to Taxfiler data, there were 7,340 economic households in Cochrane in 2006.

Anecdotal evidence from Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) indicates that some of the discrepancies between the number of economic households in the Taxfiler data compared to the actual number census households may be a reflection of low- and modest-income households having to share accommodations in order to make ends meet. For example, it is estimated that approximately 50% of the households applying for units at the Homestead are either bunking with friends, living with extended family or multiple families renting a single dwelling together.

**The significance of these data discrepancies makes the figures presented below approximations at best.**

Table 9 (next page) shows changing median family and household incomes in Cochrane between 2001 and 2006 based on Census data. This table shows that overall median *household* incomes increased by 17.5% and overall median *family* incomes increased by 26.1% between 2001 and 2006. During the same period, median incomes for lone-parent families also increased by 19.1% but median incomes for one-person households declined by 11.2%.

Declining median incomes for one-person households may offer an explanation for the lower percentage of one-person households living in Cochrane in 2006 compared to the province as a whole (see Figure 2 on page 10 above). Increasing median incomes for lone-parent families may be a reflection of the higher relative percentage of single fathers in Cochrane compared to provincial averages (see Tables 7 and 8 on page 11 above).



**Table 9: Median Household Income Among Census Households by Household Size for the Town of Cochrane (2001 and 2006 Statistics Canada Census Data)**

Household Type and Characteristics	2001 Income (2000)	2006 Income (2005)	% Change
<b>Median Household Income – All Households</b>	\$70,629	\$83,003	17.5%
<b>Median Household Income – One-Person Households</b>	\$38,589	\$34,248	-11.2%
<b>Median Household Income – Two-or-More Person Households</b>	\$74,856	N/A	N/A
<b>Median Family Income – All Census Families</b>	\$72,599	\$91,575	26.1%
<b>Median Family Income – Couple Families</b>	\$75,511	N/A	N/A
<b>Median Family Income – Lone-Parent Families</b>	\$40,063	\$47,714	19.1%

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

Table 10 shows changing median household incomes in Cochrane between 2001 and 2006 based on Taxfiler data – and provides different results than the Census data.<sup>5</sup> According to this data, the median income for couple families living in Cochrane increased by 30.6% between 2001 and 2006 (from \$79,300 to \$103,600) while the median income for lone-parent families increased by 27.9% (from \$33,700 to \$43,100). Contrary to the Census data, Taxfiler data shows an *increase* of 22.9% in the median income for non-family persons (from \$24,900 to \$30,600) between 2001 and 2006. This may be due to different definitions between the two data sets (“one-person households” vs. “non-family persons”), a greater degree of accuracy among Taxfiler data, and/or different geographic boundaries for the two data sets (likely a combination of the three).

Table 10 also shows that median household incomes in Cochrane are higher than provincial averages for all three household types. Median incomes for couple families are an estimated 20.5% higher in Cochrane than the province as a whole while median incomes for lone-parent families are 14.9% higher and 4.4% higher among non-family persons.

**Table 10: Changing Median Incomes Among Economic Households for the Town of Cochrane & Area vs. Province of Alberta by Household Type (2001-2006)**

Household Characteristics	2001 (\$) Cochrane	2006 (\$) Cochrane	% Change (2001-06)	2001 (\$) Alberta	2006 (\$) Alberta	% Change (2001-06)
<b>Couple Families</b>	\$79,300	\$103,600	30.6%	\$66,300	\$86,000	29.7%
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	\$33,700	\$43,100	27.9%	\$28,600	\$37,500	31.1%
<b>Non-Family Persons</b>	\$24,900	\$30,600	22.9%	\$23,000	\$29,300	27.4%

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)*

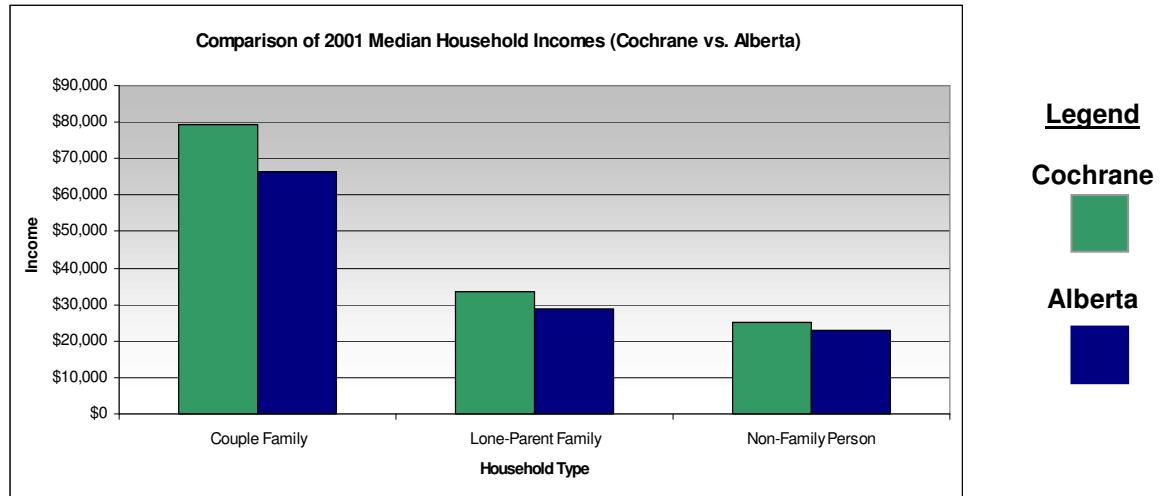
*NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.*

<sup>5</sup> One reason for this discrepancy may be the primary source of data for each data set. Incomes depicted in the Taxfiler data are derived from the sum of all filed tax returns whereas incomes depicted in the Census data are derived from individual household statements made by the 20% of households who completed the long questionnaire. Taxfiler data is deemed more accurate.



Figure 3 compares median household incomes by household type in 2001 for Cochrane and Alberta based on Taxfiler data and Figure 4 compares median household incomes in 2006. Based on this data, median household incomes for all household types are consistently higher in Cochrane than in the province as a whole, with median incomes for couple families in Cochrane maintaining a more significant lead over their provincial counterparts. Non-family households, however, appear to be “losing ground” leading their provincial counterparts in 2001 but moving closer to their provincial counterparts by 2006.

**Figure 3: Comparison of 2001 Median Household Incomes by Household Type for the Town of Cochrane & Area vs. the Province of Alberta**

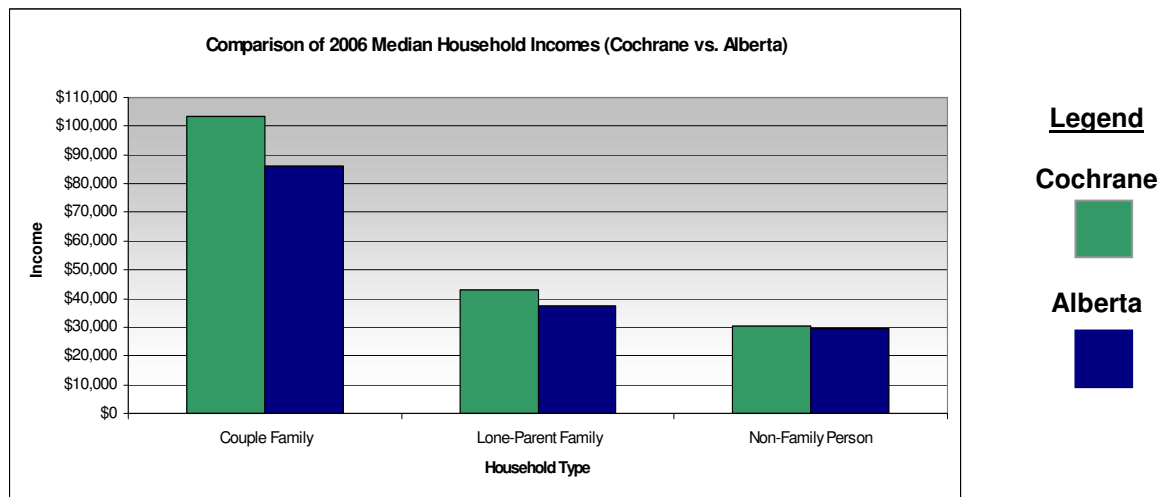


**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

**Figure 4: Comparison of 2006 Median Household Incomes by Household Type for the Town of Cochrane & Area vs. the Province of Alberta**



**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.



Table 11 shows the distribution of household incomes by type in 2001 based on Taxfiler data. This table shows that there is a wide spread of incomes among two-parent families, one-parent families and single individuals alike.

**Table 11: 2001 Household Incomes in the Town of Cochrane & Area By Household Type**

Family Income	Couple		Lone-Parent		Non-Family		Total	
<b>\$0 - \$9,999</b>	90	2.1%	70	13.5%	230	14.6%	<b>390</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
<b>\$10,000 - \$14,999</b>	50	1.2%	30	5.8%	190	12.0%	<b>270</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>\$15,000 - \$19,999</b>	60	1.4%	50	9.6%	230	14.6%	<b>340</b>	<b>5.4%</b>
<b>\$20,000 - \$24,999</b>	90	2.1%	30	5.8%	140	8.9%	<b>260</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>\$25,000 - \$29,999</b>	110	2.6%	50	9.6%	120	7.6%	<b>280</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
<b>\$30,000 - \$34,999</b>	130	3.1%	40	7.7%	120	7.6%	<b>290</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
<b>\$35,000 - \$39,999</b>	140	3.3%	40	7.7%	90	5.7%	<b>270</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>\$40,000 - \$44,999</b>	160	3.8%	30	5.8%	70	4.4%	<b>260</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>\$45,000 - \$49,999</b>	170	4.0%	20	3.8%	60	3.8%	<b>250</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>\$50,000 - \$59,999</b>	390	9.2%	50	9.6%	100	6.3%	<b>540</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
<b>\$60,000 - \$74,999</b>	580	13.7%	40	7.7%	110	7.0%	<b>730</b>	<b>11.5%</b>
<b>\$75,000 - \$99,999</b>	810	19.1%	40	7.7%	70	4.4%	<b>920</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
<b>\$100,000+</b>	1,460	34.4%	30	5.8%	50	3.2%	<b>1,540</b>	<b>24.3%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,230</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,340</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Median Income</b>	<b>\$79,300</b>		<b>\$33,700</b>		<b>\$24,900</b>			

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)*

*NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.*

In 2001, more than half of all couple families (53.5%) identified within the Taxfiler data were earning annual household incomes at or above \$75,000. Approximately 76.4% (more than three-quarters) of couple families with and without children were earning annual household incomes at or above \$50,000. Conversely, just over half (52.0%) of all lone-parent families and almost two thirds (65.3%) of single individuals were earning incomes below \$35,000. There are, however, a number of lone-parent families and single individuals earning incomes at or above \$50,000 and even \$100,000 and above. There are also a number of two-parent families with and without children earning incomes below \$30,000.

In terms of median incomes (the income levels at which 50% of households earn above those amounts and 50% of households earn below those amounts), two-parent families were earning more than twice that of lone-parent families (\$79,300 compared to \$33,700) and more than three times that of single individuals (\$79,300 compared to \$24,900). It is reasonable to expect a twofold difference in the median incomes of couple families compared to lone-parent families and single individuals based on couple families having a greater likelihood of two income earners compared to single parents and single individuals. However, according to the Taxfiler data, in 2001, 18.2% of couple families reported single incomes.<sup>6</sup> A threefold difference between the incomes of couple families compared to single individuals suggests the involvement of other

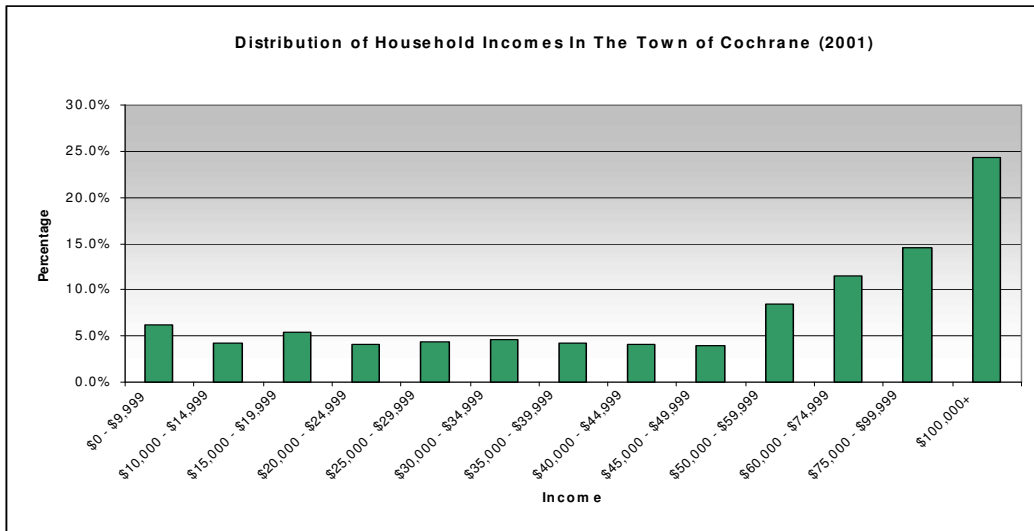
<sup>6</sup> The Taxfiler data specifically excludes those households in which a spouse or parent reported negative employment income and those households in which neither spouse or parent reported employment income.



dynamics including a large percentage of single individuals (and possibly some single parents) working on a part-time/ casual basis or receiving income supports (e.g., Social Assistance).

Figure 5 shows the distribution of incomes in 2001 for all households in Cochrane and the surrounding area according to published Taxfiler data. Based on the observed peaks and valleys shown in the figure, Cochrane appears to have a large percentage of affluent households earning \$60,000 and above.

**Figure 5: 2001 Distribution of Household Incomes in the Town of Cochrane & Area**

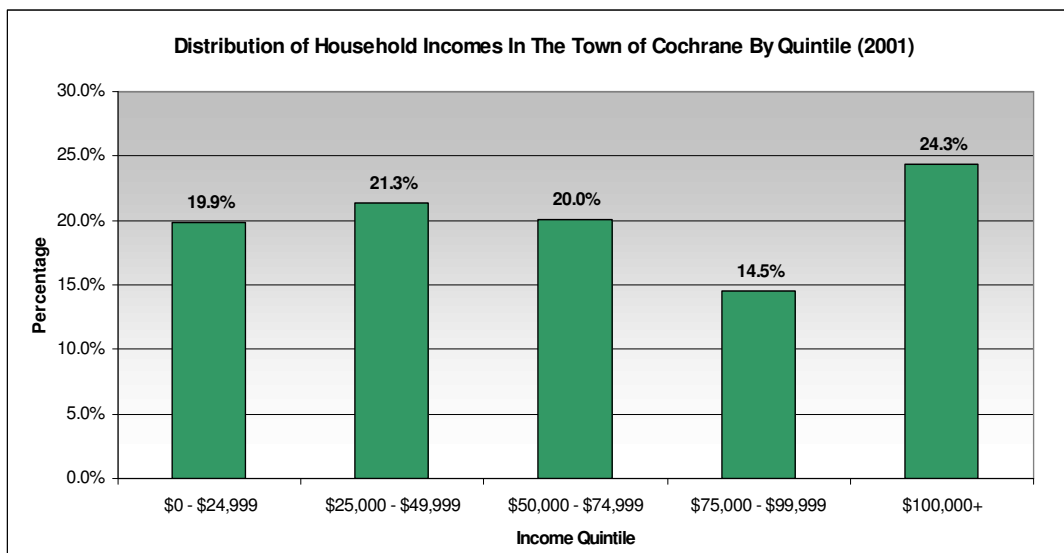


**Data Source:**  
 Statistics Canada  
 Small Area and  
 Data Division  
 (Taxfiler Data)

**NOTE:** numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

However, this income information may be somewhat deceiving. In Figure 5 above, the lower income ranges are arranged around a \$5,000 spread (e.g., the difference between \$25,000 and \$25,999) whereas the higher income ranges are arranged around larger spreads (e.g., \$75,000 to \$99,999 and \$100,000+). Figure 6 shows the same data as presented in Figure 5 above but organized into income quintiles of \$25,000.

**Figure 6: 2001 Household Incomes by Quintile in the Town of Cochrane & Area**



**Data Source:**  
 Statistics Canada  
 Small Area and  
 Data Division  
 (Taxfiler Data)

**NOTE:** numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

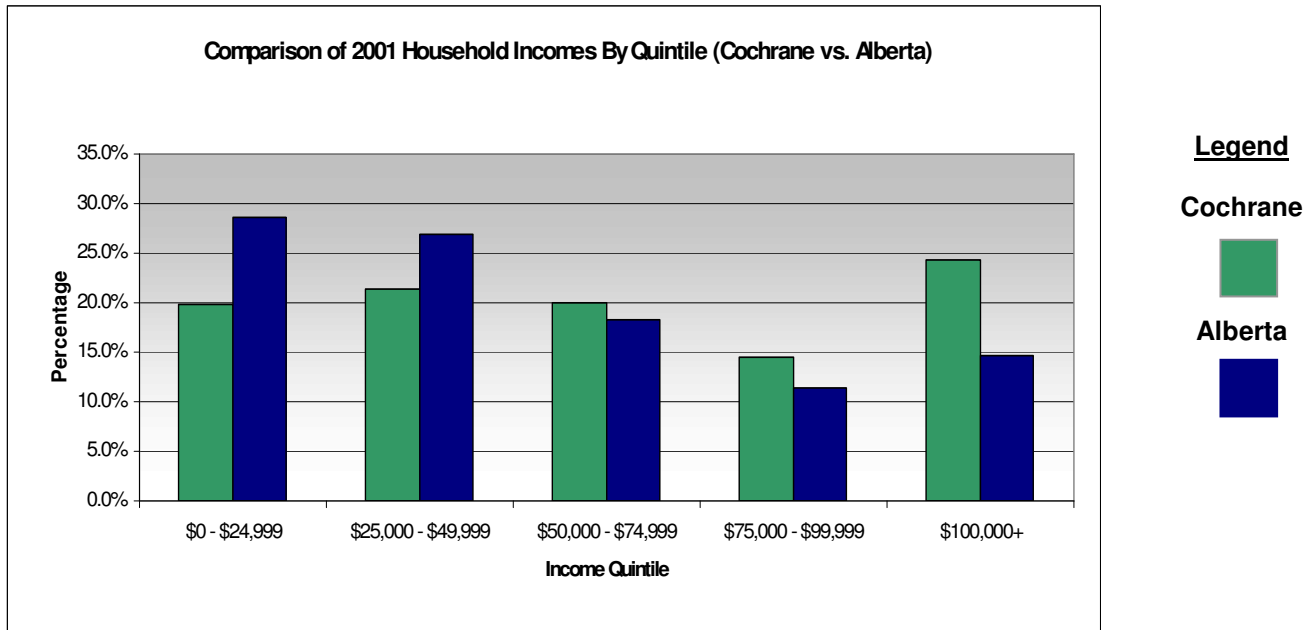




According to this figure, the highest percentage of income earners in the Cochrane area in 2001 continued to be households earning incomes over \$100,000. However, there is a more even overall distribution of incomes in Cochrane (including a significant percentage – approximately 20% – of households earning incomes less than \$25,000) than what is suggested in Figure 5.

Figure 7 compares the distribution of incomes in Cochrane to those of the province as a whole and shows significantly higher percentages of Cochrane households earning incomes over \$75,000 and significantly lower percentages of Cochrane households earning less than \$50,000.

**Figure 7: Comparison of 2001 Household Incomes by Quintile for the Town of Cochrane & Area vs. the Province of Alberta**



**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

Table 12 (next page) shows the distribution of household incomes by type in 2006 based on Taxfiler data. While in 2001, 53.5% of couple households identified within the Taxfiler data were earning annual household incomes at or above \$75,000; by 2006, more than two thirds (68.7%) of couple households were earning \$75,000 or more and 52.6% were earning incomes over \$100,000<sup>7</sup>. In 2001, approximately 76.4% of couple families were earning annual household incomes at or above \$50,000. By 2006, that percentage had increased to 84.8%. Conversely, 52.0% of all lone-parent families were earning incomes below \$35,000 in 2001. However, by 2006, that percentage had declined to 39.7%. In terms of single individuals, 65.3% were earning incomes below \$35,000 in 2001 while 56.1% were earning similar incomes in 2006. This data confirms the overall increase in incomes for all household types in Cochrane between 2001 and 2006, especially among couple households.

<sup>7</sup> Based on 2006 Taxfiler data, an estimated 25.7% of couples earned incomes between \$100,000 and \$149,999; 13.5% of couples earned incomes between \$150,000 and \$199,999; 4.6% of couples earned incomes between \$200,000 and \$249,999; and 8.9% of couples earned incomes of \$250,000 or more. Data is not available for lone-parents or single individuals earning incomes of \$150,000 or more.



In terms of median incomes (the income level where 50% of households earn above that amount and 50% earn below that amount), two-parent families continued to earning more than twice that of lone-parent families (\$103,600 compared to \$43,100) and more than three times that of single individuals (\$103,600 compared to \$30,600).

**Table 12: 2006 Household Incomes in the Town of Cochrane & Area By Household Type**

Family Income	Couple		Lone-Parent		Non-Family		Total	
\$0 - \$9,999	90	1.9%	70	12.1%	220	11.3%	380	5.2%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	30	0.6%	20	3.4%	120	6.2%	170	2.3%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	30	0.6%	30	5.2%	240	12.4%	300	4.1%
\$20,000 - \$24,999	60	1.2%	40	6.9%	220	11.3%	320	4.4%
\$25,000 - \$29,999	60	1.2%	30	5.2%	150	7.7%	240	3.3%
\$30,000 - \$34,999	90	1.9%	40	6.9%	140	7.2%	270	3.7%
\$35,000 - \$39,999	130	2.7%	40	6.9%	120	6.2%	290	3.9%
\$40,000 - \$44,999	100	2.1%	40	6.9%	100	5.2%	240	3.3%
\$45,000 - \$49,999	140	2.9%	40	6.9%	70	3.6%	250	3.4%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	320	6.6%	40	6.9%	120	6.2%	480	6.5%
\$60,000 - \$74,999	460	9.5%	60	10.3%	150	7.7%	670	9.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	780	16.1%	50	8.6%	140	7.2%	970	13.2%
\$100,000+	2,540	52.6%	80	13.8%	150	7.7%	2,770	37.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,830</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,940</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,340</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Median Income</b>	<b>\$103,600</b>		<b>\$43,100</b>		<b>\$30,600</b>			

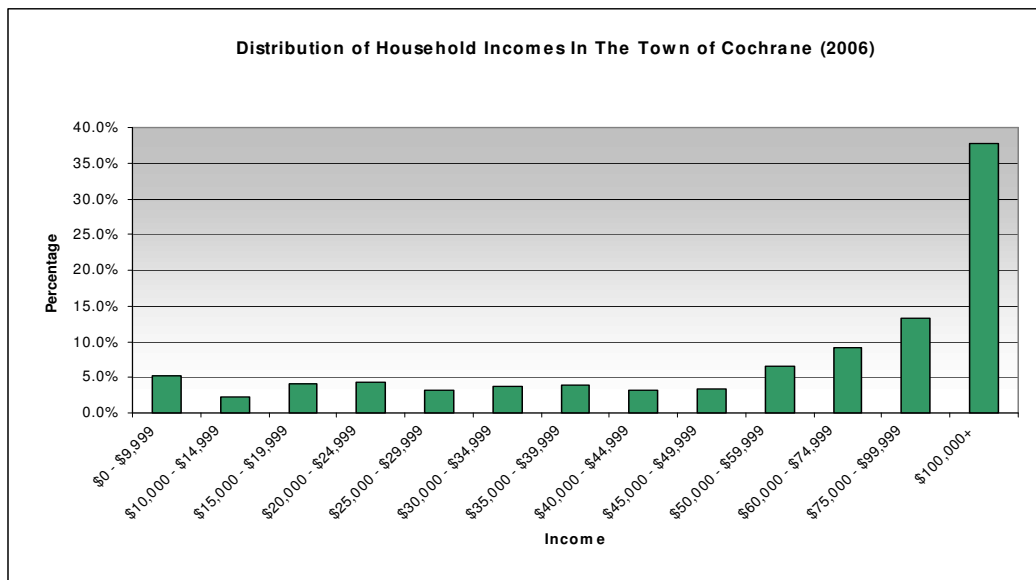
**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of incomes in 2006 for all households in Cochrane and the surrounding area according to published Taxfiler data.

**Figure 8: 2006 Distribution of Household Incomes in the Town of Cochrane & Area**



**Data Source:**  
Statistics Canada  
Small Area and  
Data Division  
(Taxfiler Data)

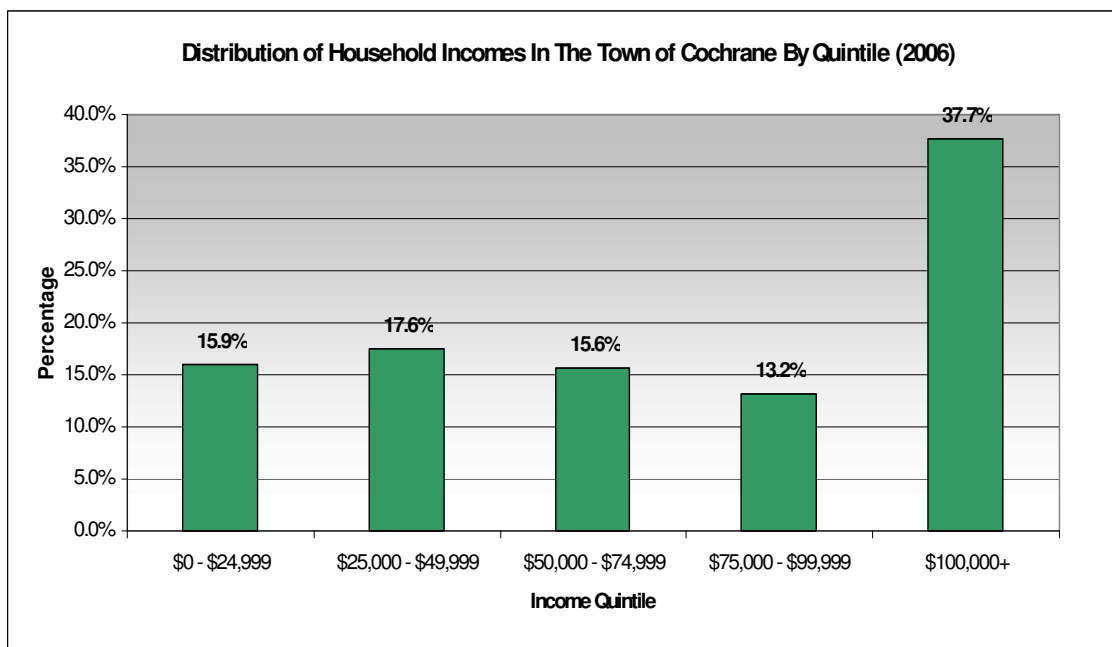
NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.



Based on the observed peaks and valleys shown in the figure, Cochrane continues to have a large percentage of affluent households earning \$60,000 and above. However, the percentage of households earning incomes of \$100,000 or more has increased from an estimated 24.3% in 2001 to an estimated 37.7% in 2006.

Figure 9 shows the same data as presented in Figure 8 above organized into income quintiles of \$25,000. Unlike in 2001 where there appeared to be a more even distribution of incomes, by 2006 the percentage of households earning incomes of \$100,000 or more has become more pronounced.

**Figure 9: 2006 Household Incomes by Quintile in the Town of Cochrane & Area**



**Data Source:**

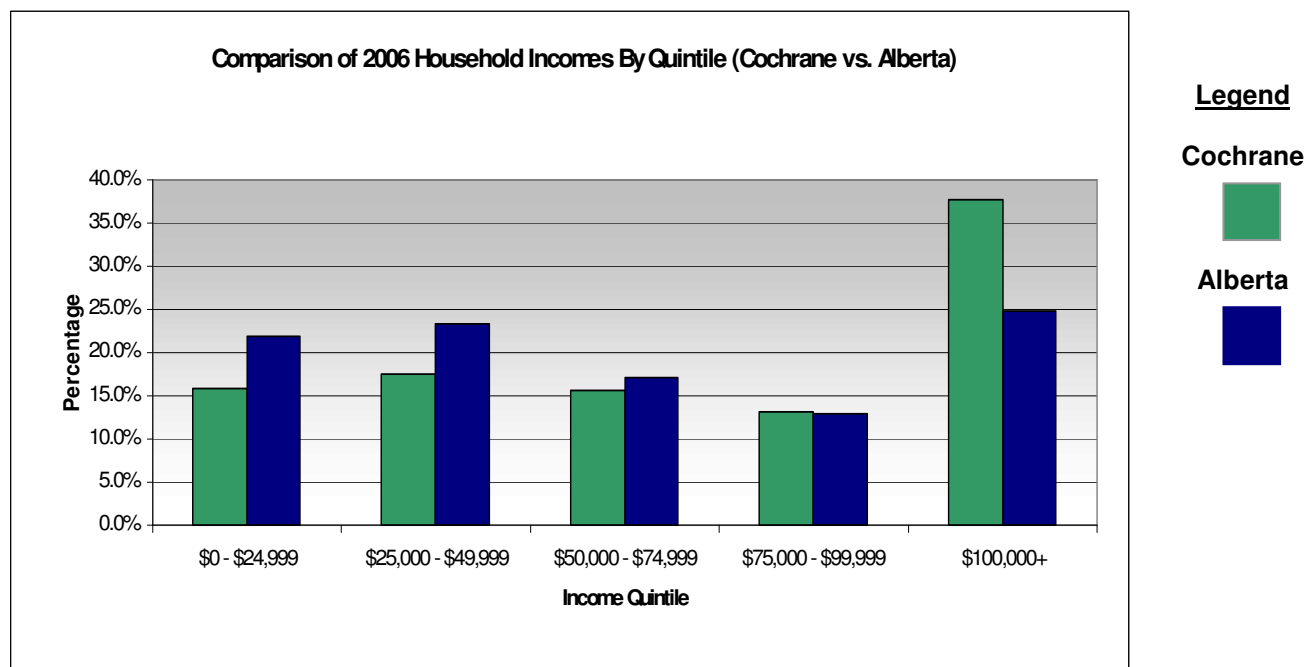
*Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)*

*NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.*

When incomes in Cochrane are compared to those of the province as a whole, (Figure 10, next page), the community’s shifting incomes are further demonstrated. In 2001, Cochrane had a higher percentage of households earning incomes in each of three categories (\$50,000 to \$74,999; \$75,000 to \$99,999; and \$100,000 and above). However, by 2006, the percentage of Cochrane households earning \$100,000 and above greatly exceed the percentage of Alberta households earning similar incomes, the percentage of households earning \$75,000 to \$99,999 only slightly exceed the percentage of Alberta households earning similar incomes, and the percentage of households earning \$50,000 to \$74,999 was lower in Cochrane than in Alberta. Cochrane continues to have a lower percentage of households earning incomes below \$50,000 than the province as a whole.



**Figure 10: Comparison of 2006 Household Incomes by Quintile for the Town of Cochrane & Area vs. the Province of Alberta**



**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

## 2.5 Incidents of Poverty

Taxfiler data also provides a look at incidents of poverty within the Cochrane area with data on the number of households receiving Social Assistance as well as the number of households earning incomes at or below the Before-Tax Low Income Measures (LIMs). Table 13 shows the percentage of households by type receiving Social Assistance in 2001 and 2006.

**Table 13: Households by Type in the Town of Cochrane & Area Receiving Social Assistance (2001-2006)**

Household Characteristics	2001		2006		% Change (2001-06)	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Couple Families</b>	120	2.8%	160	3.3%	33.3%	16.8%
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	60	11.5%	60	10.5%	0.0%	-8.8%
<b>Non-Family Persons</b>	240	15.1%	270	13.9%	12.5%	-7.8%
<b>Total All Households (Est.)</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Total All Households (Published)</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.



Based on this data, while the actual number of households in the community receiving Social Assistance has increased between 2001 and 2006, the relative percentage has remained fairly stable. In 2001, between 6.6% and 6.9% of all households in the community were receiving Social Assistance (between 420 and 440 households depending on whether the calculated sum of 420 households or the sum of 440 households published in the Taxfiler data is used). By 2006, the number of households had increased to between 490 and 510, yet the percentage of all households remained between 6.7% and 6.9%. While the actual number of couple families and non-family persons receiving Social Assistance increased between 2001 and 2006 (by 33.3% and 12.5% respectively), the actual number of lone-parent families remained the same.

Table 14 shows the percentage of households by type in the Cochrane area earning incomes at or below the Before-Tax Low Income Measures (LIMs). According to Statistics Canada:

*“...the LIM is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted family income, where “adjusted” indicates that family needs are taken into account. Adjustment for family sizes reflects the fact that a family’s needs increase as the number of members increases. Most would agree that a family of five has greater needs than a family of two. Similarly, the LIM allows for the fact that it costs more to feed a family of five adults than a family of two adults and three children.”<sup>8</sup>*

**Table 14: Households by Type in the Town of Cochrane & Area Earning Incomes at or Below the Before-Tax Low Income Measures (LIMs) (2001-2006)**

Household Characteristics	2001		2006		% Change (2001-06)	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Couple Families</b>	220	5.2%	200	4.1%	-9.1%	-20.4%
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	170	32.7%	160	28.1%	-5.9%	-14.1%
<b>Non-Family Persons</b>	360	22.6%	370	19.1%	2.8%	-15.8%
<b>Total All Households (Est.)</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>-2.7%</b>	<b>-15.9%</b>
<b>Total All Households (Published)</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>-4.0%</b>	<b>-16.9%</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)*

*NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding and suppression along with discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.*

This data shows an overall decline in both the number and percentage of households earning incomes at or below the Before-Tax LIMs from approximately 12% in 2001 to approximately 10% in 2006, suggesting that poverty rates in Cochrane have improved slightly since 2001.

Food Bank usage rates also provide an indicator of changing poverty rates in Cochrane. Table 15 (next page) provides statistics from July 2001 to June 2008 on the annual number of food hampers distributed, the number of households receiving food hampers and the number of Cochrane residents (living within the Town) receiving food hampers through the Cochrane Activettes Food Hamper Program. According to this data, numbers have fluctuated from year to year since 2001. While the total number of families receiving food hampers and the total number of food hampers distributed has increased since 2001, the total number of Town residents

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada Income Statistics Division (May 2007) *Low Income Cut-offs for 2006 and Low Income Measures for 2005*, Catalogue no. 75F0002MIE — No. 004, page 11.



receiving food hampers has declined – again suggesting that poverty rates in Cochrane may be declining.

**Table 15: 2001 – 2008 Food Hamper Usage in the Town of Cochrane**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Total Families</b>	<b>Town Residents</b>	<b>Total Hampers</b>	<b>Regular Hampers</b>	<b>Best Beginnings</b>	<b>Emergency Hampers</b>	<b>4+ Hampers</b>	<b>5+ Hampers</b>
July 2001 – June 2002	121	N/A	224	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	4
July 2002 – June 2003	151	288	317	304	13	0	24	6
July 2003 – June 2004	175	150	356	341	15	0	31	10
July 2004 – June 2005	176	146	389	380	9	0	26	19
July 2005 – June 2006	210	160	415	380	10	25	27	20
July 2006 – June 2007	151	117	311	291	0	20	21	11
July 2007 – June 2008	150	112	327	299	0	28	26	10
<b>Average</b>	162	162	334	333	8	12	25	11
<b>Median</b>	151	148	327	323	10	10	26	10
<b>High</b>	210	288	415	380	15	28	31	20
<b>Low</b>	121	112	224	291	0	0	20	4

**Data Source:**  
Cochrane Activettes Food Hamper Program



# Chapter 3

## Housing Supply Analysis For the Town of Cochrane

### 3.1 Introduction

The following analysis of Cochrane's current housing supply is designed to determine how closely the existing supply of housing meets the needs of the current population. The range of available housing types in a community can be defined in three ways:

1. **Market housing:** rental and ownership housing available on the open market;
2. **Near-market housing:** rental and ownership housing targeted specifically to low- and moderate-income households in the community and often made more affordable through the combined efforts of and partnerships between local non-profits, the private sector and government; and
3. **Non-market housing:** supportive/transitional housing and emergency shelters in which residents' rents are fully subsidized through government and social programs.

This chapter looks at the existing supply of housing in all three categories currently available in Cochrane based on a combination of data sources, including:

- Development statistics from the Town of Cochrane;
- A rental market survey conducted by the Cochrane FCSS;
- Statistics Canada Census data;
- CMHC rental market survey data;
- Housing and development statistics published by AlbertaFirst.com; and
- Multiple List Service (MLS) housing sales data.



### 3.2 General Characteristics of Cochrane Current Housing Supply

Statistics Canada Census data currently provides an account of the total number of private occupied dwellings – both rental and ownership – within the Town of Cochrane for the years 1996, 2001 and 2006 (Table 16).

**Table 16: Private Occupied Dwelling Characteristics for the Town of Cochrane (1996, 2001 and 2006 Statistics Canada Census Data)**

Type of Dwellings	1996		2001		2006		% Change	
	N <sup>o</sup>	%	N <sup>o</sup>	%	N <sup>o</sup>	%	N <sup>o</sup>	%
<b>Total Owned</b>	1,925	79.9%	3,360	86.6%	4,130	85.3%	114.5%	6.8%
<b>Total Rented</b>	485	20.1%	520	13.4%	710	14.7%	46.4%	-26.9%
<b>Total Dwellings</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,880</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,840</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.8%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

According to this data, the majority of homes within the Town of Cochrane are owner-occupied. In 2006, an estimated 85.3% of homes were owned (up from 79.9% in 1996) while 14.7% of homes were rented (down from 20.1% in 1996). Between 1996 and 2006, the actual number of homes in the community doubled (almost exactly – 100.8%), while the total population of the community increased by 85.3%. This suggests that the average household size in Cochrane may be declining – which it has. In 1996, the average household size was 3.1 persons per household. In 2006, the average household size had declined to 2.8 persons per household.

In addition to both rental and owner-occupied homes, Cochrane offers a moderately diversified housing supply in terms of housing types. Table 17 presents 2006 housing data for the Town of Cochrane based on the 2006 Federal Census.

**Table 17: 2006 Dwelling Characteristics for the Town of Cochrane (Total Private Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents per 2006 Federal Census Data)**

Dwelling Type	% Dwellings	Est. No. Dwellings
<b>Single-Detached Houses</b>	70.8%	3,427
<b>Semi-Detached Houses</b>	15.2%	736
<b>Row Houses (e.g., Townhouse)</b>	4.4%	213
<b>Apartments, Duplex</b>	0.7%	34
<b>Apartments in Buildings &lt; 5 Storeys</b>	8.1%	392
<b>Apartments in Buildings ≥ 5 Storeys</b>	0%	0
<b>Other Dwellings</b>	0.7%	34
<b>Total Private Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents</b>	<b>99.9%</b>	<b>4,840</b>

**Data Source:**

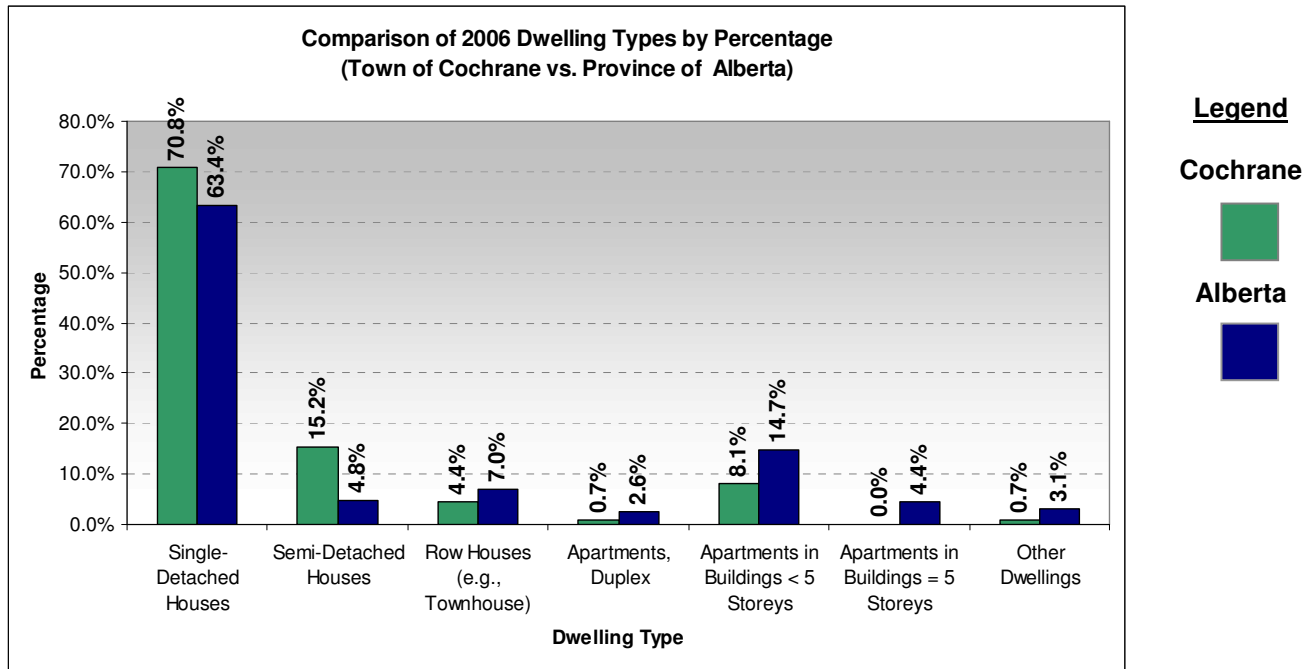
*Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*





According to this data, the vast majority of homes in Cochrane are single detached houses (70.8% or approximately 3,425 homes). Semi-detached homes are the next most prevalent dwelling type with 15.2% (approximately 735 homes). Apartment-style buildings (including both condominiums and rental apartments) make up an estimated 8.1% of dwellings in the community (approximately 390 homes). Figure 11 presents this same data in graphic form and with a comparison of provincial averages. This data shows Cochrane having a higher percentage of both single-detached and semi-detached (e.g., duplexes) dwellings and a lower percentage of apartment-style and townhouse dwellings than the province as a whole.

**Figure 11: Comparison of 2006 Dwelling Types for the Town of Cochrane vs. The Province of Alberta**



**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

The distribution of dwelling types in Cochrane may be a reflection of the higher-than-average percentage of families living in the community (or vice versa). Higher density homes such as apartments and townhouses tend, on average, to be more affordable<sup>9</sup> and can provide more opportunities for smaller and more modest-income households. The relatively low percentage of such homes in Cochrane may be an important factor affecting overall housing affordability and choice in the community. The lack of housing choice could have a long-term negative impact on the community as households age in place and seek to downsize but cannot due to the lack of opportunities in the community. These households (regardless of economic status) may be left with no other choice but to leave the community.

<sup>9</sup> This is not always the case. Higher construction costs, land values, and higher quality interior amenities can lead to the purchase price of new townhouse and condominium developments exceeding those of older single detached homes in a community.



### 3.3 General Housing Costs in Cochrane

Table 18 presents data from the 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census depicting average dwelling values<sup>10</sup> in both Cochrane and Alberta. This data indicates that average housing prices have more than doubled both in Cochrane and province-wide between 1996 and 2006, with housing prices in Cochrane increasing at a faster pace (144.0%) than provincially (131.4%).

**Table 18: Average Dwelling Values in the Town of Cochrane and the Province of Alberta (1996, 2001 and 2006)**

Characteristics	Cochrane	Alberta
<b>Average Dwelling Value (1996)</b>	\$151,699	\$126,979
<b>Average Dwelling Value (2001)</b>	\$208,885	\$159,698
<b>Average Dwelling Value (2006)</b>	\$370,160	\$293,811
<b>Percent Change (1996 – 2006)</b>	<b>144.0%</b>	<b>131.4%</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

Housing costs (rent and mortgage payments) have also increased in Cochrane. Table 19 shows that monthly payments for owner-occupied dwellings have increased from an average of \$1,141 in 2001 to a median of \$1,313 in 2006. Similarly, average monthly rents in 2001 were \$841 according to Federal Census data while median rents in 2006 were \$851. Caution should be exercised when comparing average housing costs (the arithmetic mean) to median housing costs (the midpoint between the highest and lowest value) as they are not directly comparable in most cases. Generally, however, average values tend to be higher than median values when large sets of data are evaluated – in which case the actual increase in housing costs between 2001 and 2006 may be higher than what is shown in Table 19.

**Table 19: Average Housing Costs in the Town of Cochrane (2001 and 2006) Based on Statistics Canada Census Data**

Housing Costs	2001 (Average)	2006 (Median)	% Change
<b>Number of Owner-Occupied Dwellings</b>	3,365	4,130	22.7%
<b>Monthly Payments (Owner-Occupied Dwellings)</b>	\$1,141	\$1,313	15.1%*
<b>Number of Rented Dwellings</b>	515	710	37.9%
<b>Monthly Payments (Rental Dwellings)</b>	\$841	\$851	1.2%*

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 2001 and 2006 Census of Population (Data are subject to rounding and suppression resulting in discrepancies between the total population presented here compared to other data tables)*

*\* Median and Average incomes are not directly comparable*

<sup>10</sup> These values are based on the 20% sample of households answering the long Census questionnaire on which households are asked to estimate what they believe to be the current market value of their home.



### 3.4 Market Housing – Ownership

As mentioned above, an estimated 85.3% of homes in Cochrane are owner-occupied according to Statistics Canada 2006 Census data.

Table 20 provides a summary of the average and median selling prices of homes in Cochrane between 2001 and the second quarter of 2008 (i.e., up to and including June 30, 2008) from data published by the Calgary Real Estate Board. Based on this information, the average selling price of homes in Cochrane increased by 127.1% between 2001 and 2008. Since 2003, the average selling price of homes in Cochrane increased by 98.6% while median selling prices increased by 94.7%. By the end of the second quarter of 2008, the average selling price of a home in Cochrane was \$432,184 while the median selling price was \$405,000 – almost double what they were in 2003.

**Table 20: Average and Median Home Sale Prices in the Town of Cochrane (2001-2008 Year to Date) Based on MLS Sales Data and Calgary Real Estate Board Annual Sales Data Summaries**

Year	Total Sales	Average Sale Price	Median Sale Price	Avg. Days on the Market
2001 <sup>1</sup>	346	\$194,161	N/A	N/A
2002 <sup>1</sup>	400	\$206,383	N/A	N/A
2003 <sup>1</sup>	393	\$221,963	\$215,000	61
2004 <sup>1</sup>	395	\$238,019	N/A	N/A
2005 <sup>1</sup>	535	\$263,160	\$242,900	64
2006 <sup>1</sup>	405	\$364,499	\$329,900	28
2007 <sup>1</sup>	394	\$426,887	\$405,000	47
2008 (Year to Date: June 30, 2008) <sup>2</sup>	161	\$440,920	\$418,500	N/A
<b>Percent Change (2001-2008 Year to Date)</b>		<b>127.1%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Percent Change (2003-2008 Year to Date)</b>		<b>98.6%</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Calgary Real Estate Board

<sup>2</sup> MLS Sales Data, with Special Thanks to Patti Gryzko, Royal LePage Allstar

A household entering the housing market for the first time would have to earn a minimum annual income of \$101,000 in order to purchase the average-priced home and \$96,000 in order to purchase the median-priced home sold in Cochrane between January 1 and June 30, 2008. These income figures are based on the following assumptions:

- Amortization: 35 years
- Term: 5-year fixed
- Interest Rate: 5.79% (RBC 5-Year Fixed-Rate Mortgage until August 31, 2008)
- Downpayment: 5%
- Mortgage Insurance: Yes
- Mortgage Payments: Monthly
- Monthly Condo Fees (where applicable): \$220
- Monthly Heat: \$150
- Annual Property Taxes: 0.5% of market value
- Other monthly expenses (e.g., credit car and car loan): \$450 max.



Higher debt loads (e.g., credit card debt, car payments, etc.) would increase a household's monthly payments and, therefore, potentially lower the maximum mortgage the household could afford.

A survey of Multiple List Service (MLS) home sales in Cochrane between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 (Table 21) provides a more detailed assessment of recent changes in housing prices in Cochrane.

**Table 21: Average and Median Home Sale Prices in the Town of Cochrane (2007 and 2008 to Date)  
Based on MLS Sales Data**

	Dwelling Characteristics	N <sup>o</sup> . Sales	Median	Average	High	Low
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2007	Single Detached	64	\$447,000	\$472,960	\$750,000	\$319,000
	Duplex	15	\$327,500	\$342,680	\$500,000	\$255,000
	Townhouse/FourPlex	8	\$296,000	\$303,190	\$365,000	\$275,000
	Apartment-Style Condominiums	17	\$249,000	\$250,540	\$380,000	\$175,000
	<b>Total Average (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2007)</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>\$396,500</b>	<b>\$404,750</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2007	Single Detached	69	\$458,000	\$501,970	\$1,175,000	\$315,000
	Duplex	9	\$340,000	\$352,110	\$475,000	\$295,000
	Townhouse/FourPlex	9	\$283,000	\$285,430	\$349,900	\$254,000
	Apartment-Style Condominiums	19	\$254,500	\$255,360	\$300,000	\$195,000
	<b>Total Average (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2007)</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>\$395,750</b>	<b>\$426,660</b>	<b>\$1,175,000</b>	<b>\$195,000</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2007	Single Detached	74	\$484,000	\$499,770	\$788,000	\$355,000
	Duplex	16	\$359,250	\$370,560	\$537,000	\$298,000
	Townhouse/FourPlex	6	\$295,000	\$301,000	\$358,000	\$257,000
	Apartment-Style Condominiums	19	\$255,000	\$250,520	\$308,000	\$165,000
	<b>Total Average (3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2007)</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>\$420,000</b>	<b>\$430,240</b>	<b>\$788,000</b>	<b>\$165,000</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007	Single Detached	46	\$489,500	\$537,610	\$1,045,000	\$368,000
	Duplex	4	\$323,500	\$324,660	\$355,000	\$296,650
	Townhouse/FourPlex	7	\$292,000	\$290,510	\$358,500	\$231,000
	Apartment-Style Condominiums	8	\$263,250	\$263,610	\$280,000	\$227,000
	<b>Total Average (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007)</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>\$425,000</b>	<b>\$464,170</b>	<b>\$1,045,000</b>	<b>\$227,000</b>
<b>Total Average 2007</b>		<b>390</b>	<b>\$407,250</b>	<b>\$428,125</b>	<b>\$1,175,000</b>	<b>\$165,000</b>

	Dwelling Characteristics	N <sup>o</sup> . Sales	Median	Average	High	Low
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008	Single Detached	45	\$459,000	\$498,560	\$870,000	\$348,500
	Duplex	5	\$355,000	\$349,980	\$382,000	\$320,000
	Townhouse/FourPlex	3	\$299,000	\$286,970	\$299,900	\$262,000
	Apartment-Style Condominiums	6	\$252,500	\$270,980	\$385,000	\$216,000
	<b>Total Average (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008)</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>\$440,000</b>	<b>\$452,065</b>	<b>\$870,000</b>	<b>\$216,000</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008	Single Detached	65	\$435,000	\$498,240	\$2,500,000	\$333,000
	Duplex	9	\$329,900	\$336,310	\$395,000	\$255,000
	Townhouse/FourPlex	12	\$310,250	\$345,870	\$503,606	\$222,900
	Apartment-Style Condominiums	16	\$254,750	\$297,075	\$502,080	\$170,000
	<b>Total Average (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008)</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>\$407,875</b>	<b>\$434,470</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>
<b>Total Average 2008 (Year to Date)</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>\$418,500</b>	<b>\$440,920</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>

**Data Source:**

MLS Sales Data, with Special Thanks to Patti Gryzko, Royal LePage Allstar



According to this data, the average home price has increased by 7.3% (from \$404,750 at the end of March 2007 to \$434,470 at the end of June 2008) while the median home price has increased by 2.9% (from \$396,500 at the end of March 2007 to \$407,875 at the end of June 2008).

Also according to this data, average and median housing prices have dropped slightly since the beginning of 2008. At the end of March 2008, the *average* home sale price in Cochrane was \$452,065. By the end of June 2008, that average sale price had dropped by 3.9% to \$434,470. Similarly, the *median* home sale price in Cochrane was \$440,000 at the end of March 2008 and, by the end of June 2008, had dropped by 7.3% to \$407,875. This drop is despite a home being sold in the community for a record \$2.5 million. This data suggests that housing prices may be dropping in Cochrane. Whether that drop represents a short-term dip in the market or longer-term trend is yet to be determined.

Table 22 shows the average and median selling prices of homes in Cochrane by type between January 1 and June 30, 2008 along with the incomes required in order to purchase these units.

**Table 22: Incomes Required to Purchase Average- and Median-Priced Homes in the Town of Cochrane (2007 and 2008 to Date) Based on MLS Sales Data**

January 1 to June 30, 2008 Sales by Dwelling Type	Average <sup>1</sup> Selling Price	Income <sup>2</sup> Required	Median <sup>1</sup> Selling Price	Income <sup>2</sup> Required
<b>Condo-Apartment</b>	\$289,960	\$73,000*	\$254,750	\$65,000*
<b>Townhouse</b>	\$334,085	\$82,000*	\$299,900	\$75,000*
<b>Duplex</b>	\$341,195	\$79,500	\$342,450	\$80,000
<b>Single-Detached</b>	\$498,370	\$114,000	\$443,250	\$102,000

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> MLS Sales Data, with Special Thanks to Patti Gryzko, Royal LePage Allstar

<sup>2</sup>RBC, with Special Thanks to Scott Grattidge, Mortgage Specialist

\* Income required includes condo fees

Based on this information, a household with a 5% downpayment would have to earn an annual income of \$73,000 in order to purchase the average-priced condo-apartment in Cochrane including condo fees (or \$65,000 in order to purchase the median-priced condo-apartment). That household would have to earn an annual income of \$82,000 in order to purchase the average-priced townhouse including condo fees (or \$75,000 in order to purchase the median-priced townhouse). Duplexes are slightly more affordable as the purchase traditionally does not include an ongoing obligation to pay condo fees. A household with a 5% downpayment would have to earn an annual income of \$79,500 in order to purchase the current average-priced duplex in Cochrane (or \$80,000 in order to purchase the median-priced duplex). Single detached dwellings are, on average, the most expensive housing type in Cochrane. A household with a 5% downpayment would have to earn an annual income of \$114,000 in order to purchase the current average-priced single detached home in Cochrane (or \$102,000 in order to purchase the median-priced duplex).

### 3.4.1 Market Housing – Ownership (Entry-Level)

One standard measure of relative housing affordability in a community is the “entry-level” housing market. Entry-level housing is defined as the lowest 25% (lowest quartile) of the housing market.



Of the 390 homes sold in Cochrane during 2007, the lowest 25% of sale prices (98 homes) ranged between \$165,000 and \$318,000 (Table 23). Of the 161 homes sold in Cochrane between January 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> 2008, the lowest 25% of sale prices (40 homes) ranged between \$170,000 and \$355,000.

**Table 23: Entry Level Housing Market in the Town of Cochrane  
(2007 and 2008 to Date) Based on MLS Sales Data**

Characteristics	2007 <sup>1</sup>	Income Required <sup>2</sup>	2008 <sup>1</sup> (Year to Date)	Income Required <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Sales</b>	390	N/A	161	N/A
<b>No. Entry Level Sales (Lowest 25%)</b>	98	N/A	40	N/A
<b>Entry Level Low</b>	\$165,000	\$50,000	\$170,000	\$51,000
<b>Entry Level High</b>	\$318,000	\$75,000	\$355,000	\$84,000

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> MLS Sales Data, with Special Thanks to Patti Gryzko, Royal LePage Allstar

<sup>2</sup>RBC, with Special Thanks to Scott Grattidge, Mortgage Specialist

Based on these entry-level price figures, a first-time homebuyer would have to earn between \$51,000 and \$84,000 in order to purchase an entry-level home available for sale within the Town of Cochrane during the first half of 2008 (based on the mortgage assumptions presented on page 27 above). These figures suggest that homeownership in Cochrane for *first-time* homebuyers is only affordable to dual income households, professional households and households already established in their careers. First-time homebuyers earning less than \$50,000 would not likely be able to afford even an entry-level-priced home without a sizeable downpayment or few other monthly loan payments (e.g., little to no credit card debt, car loans, student loans, etc.). Alternatively, a modest-income household would have to have already owned a home and be able to contribute substantial equity in order to purchase a home in Cochrane. Entry-level homeownership does not appear to be affordable to many single individuals, people working in the retail and service industry, people on income assistance, or people starting their careers in entry-level professional positions attempting to enter the housing market for the first time.

The entry-level housing market in Cochrane consists mainly of apartment-style condominiums (see Table 24 – next page). In 2007, 63.3% of homes sold within the entry-level price range were apartment-style condominiums followed by townhouses and fourplexes (25.5%) and then duplexes (10.2%). Only 1.0% of homes in the 2007 entry-level market were single detached homes (one dwelling out of the 98 dwellings sold). By the end of the first half of 2008, apartment-style condominiums made up 45.0% of entry-level homes followed by duplexes (25.0%), townhouses and fourplexes (20.0%) and then single detached homes (10.0%). Another indicator of a possible lowering of housing prices in Cochrane is the increased number of single detached dwellings available within the entry-level market. A total of four (4) single detached homes (10.0%) had sold within the entry-level market by the end of June 2008. However, this is more likely a reflection of the higher price range of the 2008 entry-level market (up to \$355,000 in 2008 compared to \$318,000 in 2007). For example, a total of fourteen (14) single detached homes sold for less than \$355,000 in 2007, of which thirteen (13) had sold by the end of June (more than three times the number of single detached homes selling for under \$355,000 to date in 2008).





**Table 24: Dwelling Units by Type in the Entry Level Housing Market for the Town of Cochrane (2007 and 2008 to Date) Based on MLS Sales Data**

Dwelling Type	2007 Total	2007 (%)	2008 Total	2008 (%)
Single Detached	1	1.0%	4	10.0%
Townhouse/FourPlex	25	25.5%	10	20.0%
Duplex	10	10.2%	8	25.0%
Apartment-Style Condominiums	62	63.3%	18	45.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Data Source:**

MLS Sales Data, with Special Thanks to Patti Gryzko, Royal LePage Allstar

### 3.5 Market Housing – Rental

As mentioned in Section 3.2 above, 14.7% of homes within the Town of Cochrane are rented according to Statistics Canada 2006 Census data. This represents a slight increase from 2001 where 13.3% of homes within the community were rented (see Table 25). However, the percentage of rental units in the community has declined since 1996 when 20.1% of all home were rented according to Statistics Canada Census data.

Despite the decline of rental units (either informally rented units such as single detached homes, townhouses and condo units or formal rental apartment blocks) as a percentage of all homes in the community, the actual number of rental units has increased since 1996 from 485 units to 710 units. However, depending on which data is used (Statistics Canada *Federal Census* data or the Town of Cochrane's *Municipal Census* data), both the number and percentage of rental units in the community has fluctuated from year to year since 1996. For example, in 1999, there were 487 rented dwellings in the community according to the Town's *Municipal Census*. The following year (2000), the total number of rented dwellings in the community had declined to 430 (again, according to the Town's *Municipal Census*) – representing a loss of 57 rented dwellings over the course of a single year. One year later, however (2001), the Federal Census identified 515 rented dwellings in the community – representing an increase of 85 rented dwellings over the course of a single year.

**Table 25: Cochrane Tenancy Status (1996 – 2006)**

Tenancy Status	N <sup>o.</sup> <sup>1</sup> (1996)	% <sup>1</sup> (1996)	N <sup>o.</sup> <sup>2</sup> (1999)	% <sup>2</sup> (1999)	N <sup>o.</sup> <sup>2</sup> (2000)	% <sup>2</sup> (2000)	N <sup>o.</sup> <sup>1</sup> (2001)	% <sup>1</sup> (2001)	N <sup>o.</sup> <sup>1</sup> (2006)	% <sup>1</sup> (2006)
Owned	1,925	79.9%	2,804	85.0%	2,928	86.9%	3,365	86.7%	4,130	85.3%
Rented	485	20.1%	487	14.8%	430	12.8%	515	13.3%	710	14.7%
Other	0	0.0%	9	0.3%	11	0.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,369</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,880</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,840</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Data Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada 1996, 2001 and 2006 Census of Population

<sup>2</sup> 1999 and 2000 Cochrane Municipal Censuses

Factors that might explain these year-to-year variations include:



- Condominium conversions (e.g., apartment blocks being converted into condominiums resulting in them being rental units in one year and then ownership units the following year);
- The construction of new rental units being completed (e.g., rental units not being included in the Census data until the year in which the units actually came onto the market); and/or
- Reporting discrepancies (e.g., individual households stating that they owned their home on one Census and then stating that they rented their homes on another Census).

Along with fluctuating numbers of rental units, vacancy rates have also fluctuated from year to year since 2000. According to CMHC (Table 26), vacancy rates increased from 0.0% in 2000 to 4.4% in 2003, then declined to 1.3% in 2004, 0.6% in 2005 and then 0.0% in 2006. By 2007, vacancy rates had increased again, but only to 0.7%. Generally, a healthy rental market exhibits vacancy rates approximating 3%.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 26: Cochrane Apartment Vacancy Rates (2000 – 2007) (CMHC)**

Year	Bachelor		1-Bedroom		2-Bedroom		3+ Bedroom		Total	
	No.	Vacancy	No.	Vacancy	No.	Vacancy	No.	Vacancy	No.	Vacancy
2000	25	0.0%	39	0.0%	46	0.0%	42	0.0%	152	0.0%
2001	24	0.0%	39	0.0%	44	0.0%	42	2.4%	149	1.3%
2002	24	8.7%	40	2.5%	46	2.5%	42	5.3%	152	3.5%
2003	23	0.0%	45	2.2%	48	2.2%	44	2.3%	160	4.4%
2004	23	0.0%	45	2.5%	52	2.5%	40	0.0%	160	1.3%
2005	23	0.0%	42	0.0%	55	0.0%	40	2.5%	160	0.6%
2006	23	0.0%	43	0.0%	50	0.0%	40	0.0%	156	0.0%
2007	23	0.0%	45	0.0%	46	0.0%	34	2.9%	148	0.7%

**Data Source:**

CMHC, Market Analysis Centre, Rental Market Survey, 2000-2007

While the number of rental units and vacancy rates in Cochrane appear to have fluctuated over the last eight years, rental *rates* have shown a steady increase. Table 27 (next page) shows average rents by unit size in Cochrane between 2000 and 2007. According to this data, average rents for all unit types combined increased by 22.2% (from \$554 in 2000 to \$677 in 2007). Specifically, between 2000 and 2007:

- The average rent for a bachelor unit increased from \$432 to \$523 (or 21.1%);
- The average rent for a one-bedroom increased from \$506 to \$620 (or 22.5%);
- The average rent for a two-bedroom unit increased from \$585 to \$685 (or 17.1%); and
- The average rent for a three-bedroom unit increased from \$644 to \$843 (or 30.9%).

<sup>11</sup> “New Ontario Rental Housing Statistics and Their Meaning: Average Rents and Vacancy Rates”, Ontario Tenants Rights, released December 2, 2003 (<http://www.ontariotenants.ca/research/rents-vacancy.phtml>) (accessed August 5, 2008).





**Table 27: Cochrane Apartment Average Rents (2000 – 2007) (CMHC)**

Year	Bachelor		1-Bedroom		2-Bedroom		3+ Bedroom		Total	
	No.	Avg. Rent	No.	Avg. Rent	No.	Avg. Rent	No.	Avg. Rent	No.	Avg. Rent
2000	25	\$432	39	\$506	46	\$585	42	\$644	152	\$554
2001	24	\$450	39	\$551	44	\$621	42	\$673	149	\$591
2002	24	\$451	40	\$545	46	\$621	42	\$702	152	\$595
2003	23	**	45	\$542	48	\$616	44	\$705	160	\$605
2004	23	\$493	45	\$569	52	\$637	40	\$697	160	\$607
2005	23	\$477	42	\$575	55	\$631	40	\$711	160	\$608
2006	23	\$493	43	\$596	50	\$666	40	\$740	156	\$628
2007	23	\$523	45	\$620	46	\$685	34	\$843	148	\$677
<b>% Change</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>22.2%</b>

**Data Source:**

CMHC, Market Analysis Centre, Rental Market Survey, 2000-2007  
 \*\* Data suppressed to protect confidentiality or data is not statistically reliable

Table 28 shows the incomes required to afford average rental units in Cochrane based on the rental market data provided above by CMHC. Determining the incomes required to afford average rental housing in the community is based on CMHC's standard measure of 30% gross income for housing.

**Table 28: Average Rents and Incomes Required for Rental Units in Cochrane (2007)**

Unit Type	2007 Average Rents <sup>1</sup>	Income Required (30% of Before-Tax Income) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Bachelor</b>	\$523	\$20,920
<b>One-Bedroom</b>	\$620	\$24,800
<b>Two-Bedrooms</b>	\$685	\$27,400
<b>Three-Bedrooms</b>	\$843	\$33,720
<b>All Units</b>	<b>\$677</b>	<b>\$27,080</b>

**Data Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs  
<sup>2</sup> Calculations based on rental data provided by CMHC  
 Note: numbers are subject to rounding

Based on this data, households in Cochrane renting an *average-priced rental unit* within the formal rental market require a minimum annual income of \$20,920 in order to afford the average-priced bachelor unit, \$24,800 in order to afford an average-priced one-bedroom unit, \$27,400 in order to afford an average-priced two-bedroom unit, and \$33,720 in order to afford an average-priced three-bedroom unit. Thus, a single parent (requiring at minimum a two-bedroom unit to meet National Occupancy Standards) receiving no other income assistance would have to earn \$14.05 per hour (based on a 37.5-hour work week and two weeks paid holiday) in order to afford an average-priced two-bedroom rental unit in Cochrane without exceeding CMHC's 30% affordability threshold. Alternatively, if a single parent was working for minimum wage (currently \$8.40 in Alberta) that parent would have to hold down multiple jobs (i.e., he or she would have to work a total of 62.5 hours per week) in order to be able to afford an average-priced two-bedroom



unit in the community. Households (including families with children) earning less than \$20,000 and renting their homes likely have limited options in Cochrane, including:

1. Living “unaffordably” by paying more than the CMHC standard of 30% on rental housing to obtain a suitable sized unit;
2. Renting units that are too small for the size of the household (e.g., a one-bedroom unit where the parent(s) and child (or children) either share a single bedroom or family members are required to “sleep on the couch” – both of which are contrary to National Occupancy Standards);
3. Finding shared accommodations (e.g., living with extended family or friends); and/or
4. Living in unsafe or substandard accommodations.

Table 29 shows the range of rents being charged in 2008 based on an informal survey of market rental apartment blocks in Cochrane (i.e., Cochrane House Apartments, Valley View Manor, Wild Rose Apartments and Ducks On The Roof).

**Table 29: Rental Rates for Market Units in Cochrane (2008)**

<b>Cochrane House Apartments</b>	<b>Nº. of Units</b>	<b>Rents</b>
Bachelor	12	\$500-\$600
1-Bedroom	18	\$560-\$700
2-Bedroom	12	\$675-\$800
Other	--	--
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>\$500-\$800</b>
<b>Valley View Manor</b>	<b>Nº. of Units</b>	<b>Rents</b>
Bachelor	4	\$505-\$560
1-Bedroom	13	\$560-\$650
2-Bedroom	5	\$700-\$750
Other	--	--
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>\$505-\$750</b>
<b>Wild Rose Apartments</b>	<b>Nº. of Units</b>	<b>Rents</b>
Unable to obtain data	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Total Units</b>		
<b>Ducks on the Roof</b>	<b>Nº. of Units</b>	<b>Rents</b>
2-Bedroom	3	\$900
3-Bedroom	1	\$1,050
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$900-\$1,050</b>

**Data Source:**

*Cochrane Family and Community Support Services*

Based on this survey,

- Current market rental rates for bachelor units in Cochrane range in price from \$500 to \$600 per month;
- Current market rental rates for one-bedroom units in Cochrane range in price from \$560 to \$700 per month;



- Current market rental rates for two-bedroom units in Cochrane range in price from \$675 to \$900 per month; and
- Current market rental rates for three-bedroom units in Cochrane are \$1,050 per month.

It should also be noted that there may be a number of units in Cochrane that are rented out informally and therefore do not show up on any rental market surveys. This includes individual homes and accessory suites (e.g., basement suites and suites above garages) that are rented out – usually through word of mouth or through ads placed in local newspapers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that rents for these units may actually be much higher than what is indicated above.

According to the Town, there are approximately 20 legally conforming accessory suites. The number of illegal suites in the community is currently unknown as the Town does not track enforcement. According to Town staff, the presence of illegal suites is not a rare occurrence, nor is it problematic. In cases where illegal suites are identified, property owners are required either to bring the units up to code and obtain a permit or remove the units as accessory suites can prove dangerous (safety issues, lack of adequate insurance, etc.) if not up to code. The actual number of individual homes that are rented out informally is not currently known.

A review of classified ads posted in both the Cochrane Eagle and Cochrane times during April and May 2008 revealed that rents for basements suites ranged from a low of \$650 per month plus utilities to a high of \$950 per month (utilities included). Rooms for rent ranged from \$400 per month to \$550 per month plus utilities. Other informal rental units included a one-bedroom unit renting for \$950 per month (including utilities) and a two-bedroom condo renting for \$1,150 per month plus utilities. Information given by applicants looking for rental housing owned and operated by the Cochrane Society for Housing Options suggests that a large number of informal rental units in the community may be renting for significantly higher prices. For example, a recent applicant was paying \$1,250 per month *plus* utilities for a two-bedroom condo unit elsewhere in the community.

### **3.6 Near-Market, Non-Market and Seniors Housing in Cochrane**

**Near-market** housing consists of rental and ownership housing targeted specifically to low- and moderate-income households and are often made more affordable through the combined efforts of and partnerships between local non-profits, the private sector and government. **Non-market** housing consists of supportive/transitional housing and emergency shelters in which residents' rents are fully subsidized through government and social programs. **Seniors' housing** is a broad category that can include both near- and non-market options and, therefore, warrants its own section.

#### **3.6.1 Near-Market Housing in Cochrane**

*Near-market* housing generally consists of the following:

- Limited/shared equity homeownership options such as:
  - Housing Co-operatives
  - Co-housing
  - Perpetually affordable/resale restricted housing
- Subsidized/social rental housing:
  - Rent-geared-to-income rental units (Community Housing)



- Rent supplements
  - Staff-oriented rental accommodations
  - Near-market and below-market rental

There are currently no limited/shared equity homeownership opportunities in Cochrane either in the form of a housing co-op, co-housing or perpetually affordable/resale restricted homeownership. There are, however, 21 near-market rental apartment units in the community owned by the Cochrane Society for Housing Options, and four (4) near-market 4-plex condo rental units recently acquired by the Town of Cochrane (see Table 30). There are also two (2) households receiving rent supplements through the Calgary Housing Company's *Direct Tenant Subsidy* program (funded through the Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs *Direct Rent Supplement Program* (DRSP)). There are currently no Community Housing units in Cochrane (i.e., subsidized, rent-geared-to-income units for families with children).

**Table 30: Rental Rates for Near-Market Units in Cochrane (2008)**

<b>The Homestead</b>	<b>N<sup>o</sup>. of Units</b>	<b>Rents</b>
<b>Bachelor</b>	3	\$495
<b>1-Bedroom</b>	9	\$595
<b>2-Bedroom</b>	3	\$695
<b>3-Bedroom</b>	6	\$850
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>\$495-\$850</b>
<b>Town-Owned 4-Plex Condos</b>	<b>N<sup>o</sup>. of Units</b>	<b>Rents</b>
<b>2-Bedroom</b>	2	\$750-\$775
<b>3-Bedroom</b>	2	\$900-\$925
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$750-\$925</b>

**Data Source:**  
*Cochrane Family and Community Support Services*

In terms of employee housing, feedback gathered from Key Person Interviews indicates that some employers in Cochrane may be offering incentives such as staff-oriented rental housing to some of their employees.

### **3.6.2 Non-Market Housing in Cochrane**

*Non-market* housing consists of emergency shelters (e.g., homeless shelters, youth shelters, family violence shelters and safe houses) and supportive housing (e.g., group homes and second stage/transitional housing).

There are currently no emergency shelters (e.g., homeless shelters, youth shelters, family violence shelters or safe houses) within the Town of Cochrane. Nor are there any second stage/transitional housing units in the community. In cases where singles or families find themselves homelessness or when families flee a domestic violence situation, the only option available for them is either to continue being homeless or leave the community. Often, individuals or families in these situations are provided with assistance in relocating to Calgary or another appropriate centre from local organizations such as Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) or Cochrane & Area Victim Services.



According to the Town's 2008 Municipal Census there may be as many as 14 Group Home/Collective Dwellings in the community. However, limited information is available about these group homes. Community Living Alternative Services (CLAS) operates one (1) home for persons with developmental disabilities within the Town. This home contains one (1) individual receiving 24-hour staff support. CLAS also operates three homes outside the community in the surrounding rural areas. These homes also follow the 24-hour staff support model and are designed for adults with developmental disabilities.

### 3.6.3 Seniors' Housing in Cochrane

Seniors' housing includes a range of near- and non-market options, including:

- Seniors' Independent Living/Self-Contained units
- Seniors' Supportive Living/Assisted Living units
- Seniors' Continuing Care beds

#### 3.6.3.1 Seniors' Independent Living/Self-Contained Units

Seniors' Independent Living/Self-Contained units provide self-contained suites (e.g., bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and sitting area) along with common facilities for seniors who are functionally independent yet wish to live in a congregate setting. Limited services are provided other than basic housekeeping and Home Care where required. There are currently 22 seniors' independent living units (Evergreen Manor) within the Town of Cochrane which are owned by the Province and operated by the Legion West Heritage Society (see Table 31). All 22 units are self-contained, one-bedroom units with a living room, bathroom and kitchen. Rents are geared to income, based on 30% of a seniors' income. At the time of this study, there are no vacancies at Evergreen Manor and a wait list is in place (which varies from year to year).

**Table 31: Seniors' Independent Living in Cochrane (2008)**

Evergreen Manor	N <sup>o</sup> . of Units	Rents
1-Bedroom	22	RGI
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>RGI</b>

#### 3.6.3.2 Seniors' Supportive/Assisted Living

Seniors' Supportive/Assisted Living provides a combination of housing, board, and supportive services/personal care assistance. Units may be self-contained apartments or shared rooms for seniors or people with disabilities who need some support services to continue living independently, but do not need 24-hour facility care. Services typically provided include daily meals, housekeeping, transportation, social and recreational opportunities, personal care as required through Home Care, assistance with medications as required through Home Care, and a 24-hour monitoring and emergency response system.

Senior Citizen Lodges are a form of Supportive Living. Core services provided within Lodges typically include basic room furnishings, meals, housekeeping services, linen services, building security, 24-hour non-medical staffing and life enrichment services. Some lodges may also provide personal care, medication assistance and contracted home care services.



Assisted Living involves a higher level of personal and health care services. It is a residential long-term care alternative that involves the managed delivery of prescribed health and personal services within a residential (i.e., non-institutional) setting. In some Health Areas, the difference between Supportive Living and Assisted Living focuses on the particular qualifications of the health care providers. For example, in Supportive Living facilities (including Lodges), unscheduled personal care is provided by Health Care Aides while professional services such as nursing and rehabilitation services are provided by Home Care Nurses. However, in Assisted Living, health care services are provided by Licensed Practical Nurses along with Health Care Aides. There are currently no Assisted Living units in Cochrane.

The Bethany Care Society currently owns and operates 38 Supportive Living units in Cochrane, including Elk Point Lodge and Lochend Lodge (see Table 32 – next page). Elk Point Lodge contains 26 units of which 24 units are semi-private adjoining suites and two (2) units are private (i.e., non-adjoining) rooms – along with a central dining facility. The private rooms include a bedroom and private bathroom and currently rent for \$50.10 per day (up to \$1,553.10 per month) but rents are scheduled to increase to \$52.61 per day (up to \$1,630.91 per month) effective September 1, 2008. The adjoining suites include two separate bedrooms joined by a shared bathroom and currently rent for \$46.77 per person per day (up to \$1,449.87 per person per month). These suites offer some flexibility, including opportunities for:

- Two unrelated individuals to have their own private bedrooms and share a bathroom;
- A couple (i.e., two related individuals) to each have his/her own private bedroom and share a bathroom; or
- A couple to share a bedroom and use the other bedroom as a living room.

Effective September 1, 2008, rents for the adjoining suites will increase to \$49.11 per person per day (up to \$1,522.41 per person per month). Lochend Lodge consists of 12 one-bedroom units; each containing a bedroom, a living room and a private bathroom (no kitchen facilities) along with a central dining facility. Rates at Lochend Lodge are currently \$60.14 per day for a single individual (up to \$1,864.34 per month) or \$50.10 per person per day for couples (\$100.20 per day or up to \$3,106.20 per month) and include meals and housekeeping with cable and laundry service available (optional) for an additional charge. Effective September 1, 2008, rents will increase to \$63.15 per day for a single individual occupying a room (up to \$1,957.65 per month) or and \$52.61 per person per day for couples occupying a room (\$105.22 per couple per day or up to \$3,261.82 per month). These rental rates include meals and housekeeping with cable and laundry service available (optional) for an additional charge. Limited subsidies may be available to low-income residents. At the time of this study, there are no vacancies either at Elk Point Lodge or at Lochend Lodge and a wait list is in place.

The Rocky View Foundation also owns and operates another 74 Supportive Living units at Big Hill Lodge (see Table 32 – next page). All 74 units are single bed-sitting rooms with private bathrooms (i.e., a bedroom/sitting area that can accommodate a bed, dresser and additional personal furniture such as a chair or small sofa). A central dining facility provides meals to residents and additional services such as bathing assistance and medication assistance is provided through Home Care as needed. Rates at Big Hill Lodge are fully subsidized with two levels of payment based on the previous year's taxes. At the time of this study, there are no vacancies at Big Hill Lodge and a wait list is in place.



**Table 32: Seniors' Supportive Living in Cochrane (2008)**

<b>Elk Point Lodge (Bethany Care Society)</b>	<b>N<sup>o</sup>. of Units</b>	<b>Rents (Effective 09/01/2008)</b>
Private Rooms: 1-Bed/Private Bathroom @ \$52.61/day	2	Up to \$1,630.91/month
Adjoining Suites: 2-Bed/Shared Bathroom @ \$49.11/day	24	Up to \$1,522.41/month
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>\$1,449.87 - \$1,553.10/month</b>
<b>Lochend Lodge (Bethany Care Society)</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>	<b>Rents (Effective 09/01/2008)</b>
Single Rooms: 1-Bed Single Occupant @ \$63.15/day	11	Up to \$1,957.65/month
Single Rooms: 1-Bed Double Occupant @ \$52.61/pers/day	1	Up to \$3,261.82/month
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$1,864.34 - \$3,106.20/month</b>
<b>Big Hill Lodge (Rocky View Foundation)</b>	<b>No. of Units</b>	<b>Rents</b>
Single Bed-Sitting Rooms	74	RGI
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>RGI</b>

### 3.6.3.3 Seniors' Continuing Care/Long-Term Care

Seniors' Continuing Care/Long-Term Care beds offer a wide range of services within a facility setting (e.g., nursing home, auxiliary hospital, long-term care facility) to seniors and persons with disabilities whose needs exceed those services provided in either a Supportive Living or Assisted Living environment (i.e., for seniors and persons with disabilities who require ongoing, unscheduled health care and/or emergency medical assistance).

Services typically provided by the operator in a Continuing Care/Long-Term Care facility include:<sup>12</sup>

- Nursing care (e.g., Registered Nurses);
- Pharmacy services;
- Nutrition service;
- Physical therapy;
- Housekeeping services, and laundry for bedding and linens;
- Supplies for recreation programs;
- Dressing and wound care supplies;
- Incontinent products and bladder care equipment;
- Transportation (including ambulance transport) for prescribed services; and
- Trust account services

Residents living in a Continuing Care/Long-Term Care facility are often responsible for the following:<sup>13</sup>

- Accommodation charges
- Personal laundry services
- Hair care
- Personal goods and services

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.health.alberta.ca/regions/RHA\\_long-term-care.html](http://www.health.alberta.ca/regions/RHA_long-term-care.html) (accessed January 29, 2008)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*



- Transportation for recreational purposes
- Services not covered by Alberta Aids to Daily Living and other benefit programs

Cochrane currently has 78 Continuing Care units (Bethany Cochrane) that are owned and operated by the Bethany Care Society (Table 33). Bethany Cochrane also includes a specialized unit for those in the middle to late stages of dementia. Of the 78 residents currently living at Bethany Cochrane, only one (1) resident is non-senior (i.e., under the age of 65).

**Table 33: Continuing Care Beds in Cochrane (2008)**

Bethany Cochrane	N <sup>o</sup> . of Beds	Rents
<b>Semi-Private Rooms (14 Total) (2 Beds Per Room)</b>	28 Beds	\$44/day (\$1,364/month) Increasing to \$47/day (\$1,457/month) in 2008
<b>Private Rooms (50 Total) (1 Bed per Room)</b>	50 Beds	\$50.75/day (\$1,573.25/month) Increasing to \$52.25/day (\$1,619.75/month) in 2008
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>78 Beds</b>	<b>\$1,364 - \$1,573.25/month Increasing to \$1,457- \$1,619.75/month in 2008</b>

**Data Source:**

*Cochrane Family and Community Support Services*

There are currently no vacancies at Bethany Cochrane and a considerable wait list is in place.

### 3.6.3.4 Summary of Seniors' Housing In Cochrane

Table 34 provides a summary of the seniors' housing currently available in Cochrane.

**Table 34: Seniors' Housing In Cochrane (2008)**

Housing Type	Location	N <sup>o</sup> . of Units
<b>Independent Living:</b>	Evergreen Manor	22
<b>Supportive Living:</b>	Elk Point Lodge	26
	Lochend Lodge	12
	Big Hill Lodge	74
<b>Assisted Living:</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Continuing Care:</b>	Bethany Cochrane	78
<b>Total Seniors' Housing Units/Care Beds</b>		<b>212</b>

Currently, there are 212 seniors' housing units in Cochrane, including 22 independent living units, 112 supportive living units and 78 continuing care beds.

The lack of seniors housing can have significant and rippling effects in the community. Seniors who require assisted living but are unable to find suitable housing in the community may end up remaining in their own home longer than appropriate. These seniors may be at greater risk of injury due to falls or other health issues as a result of poor nutrition or poor hygiene. This can greatly affect not only their quality of life but that of their caregivers – often extended family who, in the absence of suitable supports, are required to provide additional supports to their aging family members.





The lack of seniors' supportive housing can also place a burden on the broader health care system. For example, seniors who become severely injured may end up being placed in acute care (i.e., hospital beds) where they may remain until a suitable Long-Term/Continuing Care bed becomes available. Until that occurs, those hospital beds are not available to other people requiring operations or other acute medical care.

### 3.7 Planned Future Housing Developments

If past trends are the best predictor of future trends, housing will likely continue to become less affordable over time. Table 35 (next page) shows the total and average values of residential development permits issued by the Town of Cochrane between 2002 and 2008 (as of August 31, 2008). Based on this information, the value of homes in the Town has increased from an average of \$157,010 in 2001 to \$437,480 in 2008 (January to August). This represents a 178.6% increase. While the total number of single-detached dwelling permits issued each year by the Town has fluctuated (from a low of 100 permits in 2005 to a high of 272 permits in 2007), the Town averages approximately 200 new dwellings each year.

**Table 35: Average New Residential Permit Values (2001-2008) in the Town of Cochrane**

Year	Total Value of Residential Building Permits Issued	Total Housing Starts	Average Per-Unit Building Permit Value
2001 <sup>1</sup>	\$34,699,000	221	\$157,010
2002 <sup>1</sup>	\$42,739,000	244	\$175,160
2003 <sup>1</sup>	\$27,292,000	146	\$186,930
2004 <sup>1</sup>	\$32,266,000	181	\$178,265
2005 <sup>2</sup>	\$31,136,000	100	\$311,360
2006 <sup>2</sup>	\$60,175,000	227	\$265,090
2007 <sup>2</sup>	\$90,087,100	272	\$331,205
2008 (to Date) <sup>2</sup>	\$69,559,000	159	\$437,480
<b>Percent Change (%)</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>178.6%</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> AlbertaFirst.com (Original Data Source: Statistics Canada 2002-2004 Building Permits)

<sup>2</sup> Town of Cochrane

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding

The Town currently does not collect information on the proposed selling price of homes as part of its review and processing of development permit applications. Nor, in many cases, do developers know exactly how much their homes are going to sell for once they are built due to the fluctuating nature of development and construction costs and market forces. For these reasons, the anticipated affordability levels of planned future housing developments cannot be evaluated at this time.





# *Chapter 4*

## **Housing Needs Analysis For the Town of Cochrane**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter estimates the number of households within the Cochrane area that may be facing housing challenges and/or hardships in either of three standard categories:

1. Housing adequacy (physical safety and maintenance of the home);
2. Housing suitability (proper size of the home given the size of the household); and
3. Housing affordability (the cost of the home related to the household's income).

Housing accessibility is also analyzed as a fourth potential area of need.

Housing affordability is typically the dominant issue for the majority of households experiencing difficulty. However, it also tends to affect the other two. For example, households unable to afford the average price of market housing (either rental or homeowners) may find themselves choosing (or being limited to) housing that is too small to meet their needs. Alternatively, homeowners that find themselves paying an excessive amount of their before-tax income on their mortgage payments and may not be able to commit to the ongoing upkeep and maintenance required to keep their home in good condition. Similarly, renters may find themselves with few housing choices available to them other than those rental properties poorly maintained by their owners.



## 4.2 Housing Adequacy

Housing adequacy refers to the physical safety of an individual dwelling. Housing is considered inadequate if it requires major repairs and/or is lacking necessary services and basic facilities. Major repairs refer to plumbing, electrical, ventilation systems, disposal systems, and the structural components of a house that might warrant it being unsafe. Basic facilities refer to potable hot and cold running water, and full bathroom facilities including an indoor toilet and a bathtub or shower. Additionally, housing is not adequate if it is infested with vermin or black mould.

Table 36 shows the degree to which dwellings in Cochrane are in need of major repairs compared to the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), Alberta and Canada based on Statistics Canada Census data for 1996 and 2006 (data for 2001 is not available).

**Table 36: Comparison of Dwellings in Need of Major Repairs  
(Local, Provincial and National: 1996 vs. 2006 Census Data)**

Location	1996 N <sup>o</sup> of Dwellings	1996 Est. % of Dwellings	2006 Est. No. of Dwellings	2006 % of Dwellings
Canada	266,705	8.1%	932,810	7.5%
Alberta	16,110	6.9%	84,165	6.7%
Calgary CMA	6,430	7.3%	19,950	4.8%
Cochrane	75	3.1%	175	3.6%

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996 and 2006 Census of Population*

According to this data, Cochrane has a significantly lower percentage of homes in need of major repairs compared to the Calgary CMA, the province as a whole and Canada as a whole. However, while the total percentage of homes in need of major repairs is declining in each of the other geographical areas, the percentage of homes in need of major repairs in Cochrane is actually increasing (from 3.1% in 1996 to 3.6% in 2006). Furthermore, based this data, there may be as many as 175 homes in Cochrane in need of major repairs and, therefore, *could* be considered inadequate.

Table 37 shows a more detailed look at the number and percentage of homes in Cochrane in need of repairs in each of three categories: 1) homes requiring “regular maintenance only”; 2) homes requiring “minor repairs”; and 3) homes requiring “major repairs”.

**Table 37: Repair Status of Cochrane Homes (1996 vs. 2006 Census Data)**

Repairs	1996 N <sup>o</sup> of Dwellings	1996 % of Dwellings	2006 N <sup>o</sup> of Dwellings	2006 % of Dwellings	% Change
Regular Maintenance Only	1,895	78.8%	3,660	75.6%	-4.0%
Minor Repairs	435	18.1%	1,005	20.8%	14.8%
Major Repairs	75	3.1%	175	3.6%	15.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,405</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,840</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996 and 2001 Census of Population*



According to this data, the percentage of homes in Cochrane needing “regular maintenance only” declined by 4.0% over the last ten years (from 78.8% in 1996 to 75.6% in 2006) while the number of homes needing “minor repairs” increased by 14.8% (from 18.1% to 20.8%) and the number of homes needing “major repairs” increased by 15.9% (from 3.1% to 3.6%). This could be an indication of increasing issues with housing affordability whereby homeowners (including informal landlords) may be finding it more difficult to keep up with the regular maintenance of their homes (with regular maintenance issues leading to the need for both minor or major repairs). It could also be an indication of the ageing of the housing stock in the community.

Table 38 shows the percentage of homes in Cochrane by the period in which they were constructed based on both the 1996 and the 2006 Federal Census data. According to this data, just over half of the homes in the community (50.5%) were built since 1996 and are therefore less than fifteen (15) years old. The data also shows that both the number and percentage of homes in the community built prior to 1960 declined between 1996 and 2006 with the removal of an estimated 30 dwelling units. This suggests that these properties may have been redeveloped (i.e., torn down and replaced by a new dwelling). These two factors combined would tend to suggest that the percentage of homes in the community in need of major repairs should be declining (e.g., through the removal of older homes which tend to have a greater chance of needing major repairs and the large percentage of newer homes which tend to have a lower chance of needing major repairs). Once again, housing affordability may be a factor. Alternatively, there may be differences in perceptions among the 20% of Cochrane residents who filled out the 2006 Federal Census long questionnaire as to what constitutes a “major repair”.

**Table 38: Period of Construction for Homes in Cochrane (1996 vs. 2006 Census Data)**

Period of Construction	1996 N <sup>o</sup> of Dwellings	1996 % of Dwellings	2006 % of Dwellings	2006 % of Dwellings	Total Change
<b>Before 1946</b>	65	2.7%	60	1.2%	-5
<b>1946-1960</b>	75	3.1%	50	1.0%	-25
<b>1961-1970</b>	135	5.6%	135	2.8%	0
<b>1971-1980</b>	680	28.0%	800	16.5%	120
<b>1981-1990</b>	635	26.2%	585	12.1%	-50
<b>1991-1996</b>	835	34.4%	760	15.7%	-75
<b>1996-2000</b>	--	--	1,520	31.4%	1,520
<b>2001-2006</b>	--	--	925	19.1%	925
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,425</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4,835</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,410</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996 and 2001 Census of Population*

Another interesting pattern shown in the above table is the decline between 1996 and 2006 in the number of homes built between 1981 and 1990 and between 1991 and 1996. The decline in the number of homes built between 1991 and 1996 could easily be explained as data overlap (i.e., those homes built in 1996 were included in the 1991 to 1996 category for the 1996 Federal Census but then moved into the 1996 to 2000 category for the 2006 Federal Census). However, there is currently no explanation for the decline in the number of homes built between 1981 and 1990 other than people’s misperception of the actual age of their home.



The Calgary Health Region also maintains statistics on the number of complaints against property owners that are investigated by Public Health Inspectors<sup>14</sup>. The number of complaints received by the Calgary Health Region varies from year to year and has ranged from a year-end low of two (2) complaints received both in 2003 and 2006 to a year-end high of six (6) complaints received both in 2005 and 2007. Between January 1, 2001 and June 1, 2008 the Calgary Health Region invested a total of 40 homes in Cochrane, including apartments, condominiums/townhouses, duplexes and single family homes. Table 39 shows a breakdown of the number of complaints invested by dwelling type and nature of complaint in Cochrane during that period.

**Table 39: Cochrane Housing Complaints Investigated by the Calgary Health Region  
By Dwelling Type and Nature of Complaint (January 1, 2001 to June 1, 2008)**

<b>Dwelling Type</b>	<b>Infraction Class</b>	<b>N<sup>o</sup> of Investigations</b>
<b>Apartment</b>	Construction	2
	Nuisance	2
	Safe and Secure	1
	Weatherproofing	3
	Odours	1
<b>Total Apartment:</b>		<b>9</b>
<b>Condo/Townhouse</b>	Hot Water Supply	1
	Plumbing	1
<b>Total Condo/Townhouse:</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Duplex</b>	Construction	1
	Electrical Service	1
	Plumbing	1
	Smoke Alarms	1
	General Nuisance	1
<b>Total Duplex:</b>		<b>5</b>
<b>Single Dwelling</b>	Construction	6
	Food Facilities	1
	Nuisance	5
	Vermin	1
	Water Supply	1
	Weatherproofing	5
	General Nuisance	1
	Odours	1
<b>Total Single Dwelling:</b>		<b>21</b>
<b>Home Business (Grow Ops)</b>	General Nuisance:	3
<b>Total Home Business (Grow Op):</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Total Investigations</b>		<b>40</b>

**Data Source:**  
Calgary Health Region

<sup>14</sup> The Calgary Health Region encourages complainants to attempt first to resolve issues with other property owners themselves. If those attempts are unsuccessful, the Calgary Health Region will open an investigation to determine whether or not the complaint is warranted and whether or not intervention is required.



Feedback from Calgary Health Region staff indicate that number of complaints received against homes in Cochrane is relatively low indicating an overall high quality of housing in Cochrane and low incidence of adequacy issues.

### 4.3 Housing Suitability

Housing suitability refers to the size of the home in terms of bedrooms compared to the size of the family living in that home. National Occupancy Standards set minimum criteria for number of persons per bedroom and level of privacy for members of a household. These standards require:

- A maximum of two persons per bedroom;
- That the parent(s)'s bedroom be separate from that of the children(s)'s;
- That family members over the age of 17 not share a bedroom; and
- That family members over four years of age and of the opposite gender not share a bedroom.

Households that are unable to meet these occupancy standards are said to be living in overcrowded or unsuitable housing conditions.

There are currently no published data by Statistics Canada directly related to housing suitability in the Cochrane area. However, Statistics Canada has identified that, in 2006, homes within the Town had on average 7.7 rooms per dwelling (up from 7.4 in 1996) and that 0.0% of homes in the Town have more than one person per room (see Table 40). Statistics Canada defines a room as follows:

*“A 'room' is an enclosed area within a dwelling which is finished and suitable for year-round living (e.g., kitchen, dining-room, or bedroom). Not counted as rooms are bathrooms, halls, vestibules and rooms used solely for business purposes.”<sup>15</sup>*

In comparison, Alberta has on average 6.8 rooms per dwelling and 1.3% of homes in the province have more than one person per room. While this data suggests that Cochrane may not have any suitability issues, these figures do not relate directly to the number or percentage of households with two or more people sharing a *bedroom*.

**Table 40: Average Rooms per Dwelling vs. Average No. Persons per Dwelling  
In Cochrane vs. Alberta (1996 vs. 2006 Census Data)**

Characteristics	1996 Average	2006 Average	Alberta (2006)
<b>N<sup>o</sup> of Rooms per Dwelling</b>	7.4	7.7	6.8
<b>N<sup>o</sup> of Bedrooms per Dwelling</b>	3.175	N/A	N/A
<b>N<sup>o</sup> of Persons in Private Households</b>	3.1	2.8	2.6
<b>% of Dwellings &gt; One Persons Per Room</b>	N/A	0.0%	1.3%

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 1996 and 2006 Census of Population*

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada, 2007. *Cochrane, Alberta (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.*  
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/profiles/community/Index.cfm?Lang=E>  
 (accessed June 20, 2007).



Statistics Canada also publishes data for Cochrane comparing the number of people per household to the number of rooms per dwelling based on the 2006 Federal Census (see Table 41). Again, this data does not directly indicate the number or percentage of households in Cochrane with two or more people sharing a bedroom. However, it does indicate the number of households that could potentially be in a situation where two or more people have to share a bedroom. As mentioned above, Statistics Canada includes kitchens, dining rooms, living rooms and bedroom within its definition of a “room” but excludes bathrooms, halls, vestibules and rooms used solely for business purposes. Based on these distinctions, it is reasonable to assume that a one-room dwelling would most likely consist of a bachelor suite or similar unit. It is also reasonable to assume that a two-room unit would most likely consist of a combined living area and kitchen (e.g., an open-concept kitchen and living room) along with one bedroom. A three-room unit would most likely consist of a kitchen/breakfast nook, a living room and one bedroom, while a four-room unit would likely consist of a kitchen/breakfast nook, a living room and two bedrooms. Larger units would most likely contain more bedrooms and/or more specialized rooms (e.g., separate kitchen and dining room).

Based on these assumptions, a one-person household could most likely live comfortably in either a one-room dwelling (assuming that dwelling was a bachelor suite) or a two-room dwelling (assuming that dwelling was a one-bedroom apartment with an open-concept kitchen and living room) while still meeting National Occupancy Standards. Similarly, a two-person household could most likely live comfortably in a similar two-room dwelling or in a three-room dwelling (assuming that dwelling consisted of a kitchen/breakfast nook, a living room and one bedroom) but only if that household consisted of a married, common-law or similar couple.

**Table 41: Estimated Number of Households Living in Unsuitable Dwellings (2006 Census Data)**

Household Size	Total Households	1 Room	2 Rooms	3 Rooms	4 Rooms	5 Rooms	6 Rooms	7 Rooms	8 Rooms	9 Rooms	10+ Rooms
<b>1 Person</b>	725	10	55	45	100	145	110	110	60	35	55
<b>2 Persons</b>	1,695	0	0	30	135	215	385	240	300	170	215
<b>3 Persons</b>	845	0	0	0	25	70	95	140	205	120	185
<b>4 Persons</b>	1,040	0	0	0	15	30	100	145	235	205	305
<b>5 Persons</b>	415	0	0	10	0	35	20	55	45	35	220
<b>6+ Persons</b>	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	45
<b>All Households</b>	<b>4,835</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>1,030</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada - 2006 Census. Catalogue Number 97-554-XCB2006016.*

Table 41, therefore shows the number of households in Cochrane based on 2006 Federal Census data where the number of people compared to the number of rooms suggests that overcrowding could potentially exist. For example, a four-person household would need a minimum of two bedrooms if that household consisted of two parents and two children of the same gender both of which were under the age of 17 and therefore a home with a minimum of four rooms (e.g., a kitchen/breakfast nook, a living room and two separate bedrooms). More than likely, the majority of four-person households will need three bedrooms and, therefore, a home with at least five rooms





(e.g., a kitchen/breakfast nook, a living room and three separate bedrooms). Any number of the 15 four-person households who were identified in the 2006 Federal Census data as living in a dwelling with only four rooms could potentially be living in unsuitable accommodations. Similarly, any number of the 35 five-person households who were identified in the 2006 Federal Census data as living in a dwelling with only five rooms could also potentially be living in unsuitable accommodations. However, it is unlikely that the 10 five-person households identified in the 2006 Federal Census data as living in a dwelling with only three rooms would *not* be living in unsuitable accommodations. Therefore, according to the 2006 Federal Census data, there may be between 10 and 60 households in Cochrane potentially living in overcrowded conditions that would be considered unsuitable based on National Occupancy Standards. Recent anecdotal reports indicate the number of households living in overcrowded conditions may actually be higher.

#### **4.4 Housing Accessibility**

Housing accessibility relates to ability of individuals with health, mobility and/or stamina limitations to easily get into and out of their home, and to move around freely while inside their home. Accessibility is particularly problematic for persons with physical disabilities including people confined to wheelchairs and people needing the use of walkers to get around their home. Those households with accessibility issues may require a number of improvements to their homes including wheelchair ramps and/or elevators; larger doors and hallways; lowered counter tops, sinks and cabinets; and reconfigured rooms including larger bathrooms and specialty bathtubs.

Statistics Canada estimates that 13.6% of Albertans (an estimated 435,820 children, adults and seniors) had disabilities in 2006<sup>16</sup> based on findings from the *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* (PALS) conducted following the 2006 Statistics Canada Census. While this figure represents an increase from 12.5% of Albertans in 2001 (and partly due to the general ageing of the population<sup>17</sup>), it remains slightly lower than the national average of 14.3%. These statistics include people with mild or moderate disabilities to those with severe or very severe disabilities. These statistics also include a range of disability types, including:

- Hearing;
- Seeing;
- Speech;
- Mobility;
- Agility/Dexterity;
- Pain;
- Developmental Delay;
- Developmental Disability or Disorder;
- Learning;
- Memory;
- Psychological;

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<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Analytical Report* (December 2007), Catalogue No. 89-628-XIE – No. 002, page 16.

<sup>17</sup> Government of Canada, *2008 Federal Disability Report* (2008), Catalogue No. HS61-1/2008E, page 2.



- Chronic Conditions; and
- Unknown/Undeclared Disabilities.

Based on this estimate, there may be as many as 1,875 Cochrane residents (13.6% of the estimated 2006 population of 13,770 residents) with one or more of the above-mentioned disabilities.

In terms of Albertans with identified mobility challenges, Statistics Canada estimates that, in 2006, 0.4% of children ages 0 to 14, 6.5% of individuals ages 15 to 64, and 34.4% of seniors ages 65 and over had one or more disabilities that affect their mobility<sup>18</sup>. Table 42 applies those percentages to the 2006 Census population for the Town of Cochrane to estimate the potential number of local residents who may have mobility-related disabilities.

**Table 42: Identified Percentage of Albertans and Estimated Number of Cochrane Residents by Age Group with Mild to Very Severe Mobility-Related Disabilities (2006 Census Data)**

Age Cohort	Alberta % 2006 <sup>1</sup>	Cochrane Pop. by Age 2006 <sup>2</sup>	Estimated Cochrane Pop. With Mobility-Related Disabilities
<b>0-14 Years</b>	0.4%	3,075	10
<b>15-64 Years</b>	6.5%	9,420	610
<b>65+ Years</b>	34.4%	1,275	440
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>13,770</b>	<b>1,060</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006 (PALS)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population

NOTE: Data may be subject to rounding

This data suggests that as many as 1,060 Cochrane residents (7.7% of the population) may have one or more disabilities that affect their mobility. However, this figure may over-exaggerate the need for accessible housing in the community because the presence of a disability that affects one's mobility does not automatically indicate the need for more accessible housing. As mentioned above, the statistics used to derive this figure include people with mild or moderate disabilities as well as those with severe or very severe disabilities.

A more detailed analysis from the 2006 *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* (PALS), conducted nation-wide by Statistics Canada suggests that the potential need for accessible housing in Cochrane may be significantly lower. Based on the nation-wide survey, an estimated 7.9% of Canadian adults with disabilities "reported using specialized features either to enter or leave their residence or inside their residence."<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, "4.6% of adults with disabilities reported that the design and layout of their home made it difficult to participate in activities that they wanted or needed to do."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Tables* (December 2007), Catalogue No. 89-628-XIE – No. 003, page 100.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, page 26.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



Table 43 provides an estimate of the number of residents living in Cochrane who may require accessible housing based on these figures.

Based on this analysis, there may be as many as 150 individuals in Cochrane currently using specialized features to enter and exit their homes and 85 individuals in Cochrane potentially in need of more accessible housing (i.e., for whom the design and layout of their home makes it difficult for them to participate in daily activities).

Factors that might affect these estimates include a higher percentage of persons with disabilities in Cochrane compared to provincial averages and/or a higher percentage of persons needing accessible housing in Cochrane compared to national averages.

**Table 43: Estimated Number of Cochrane Residents Potentially Requiring More Accessible Housing (2006 Census and 2006 PALS Data)**

Characteristics	Est. Percentage (%)	Estimated Total
<b>2006 Cochrane Population</b>	100.0%	<b>13,770</b> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Est. Cochrane Population (2006) with Disabilities</b>	13.6% <sup>1</sup>	<b>1,875</b>
<b>Est. Pop. w/ Disabilities Using Specialized Features (2006)</b>	7.9% <sup>1</sup>	<b>150</b>
<b>Est. Pop. w/ Disabilities w/ Design/Layout Constraints (2006)</b>	4.6% <sup>1</sup>	<b>85</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006 (PALS)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population

NOTE: Data may be subject to rounding

According to staff from the Alberta Ministry for Children and Youth Services, there are currently 46 families in the Cochrane area currently receiving assistance through Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD). This represents a fraction of the total number of families in Cochrane that have one or more children with a disability. The Ministry does not have data on the total number of Cochrane residents who may have a disability or who may be in need out-of-home placement (i.e., assistance with finding an accessible home) in the community.

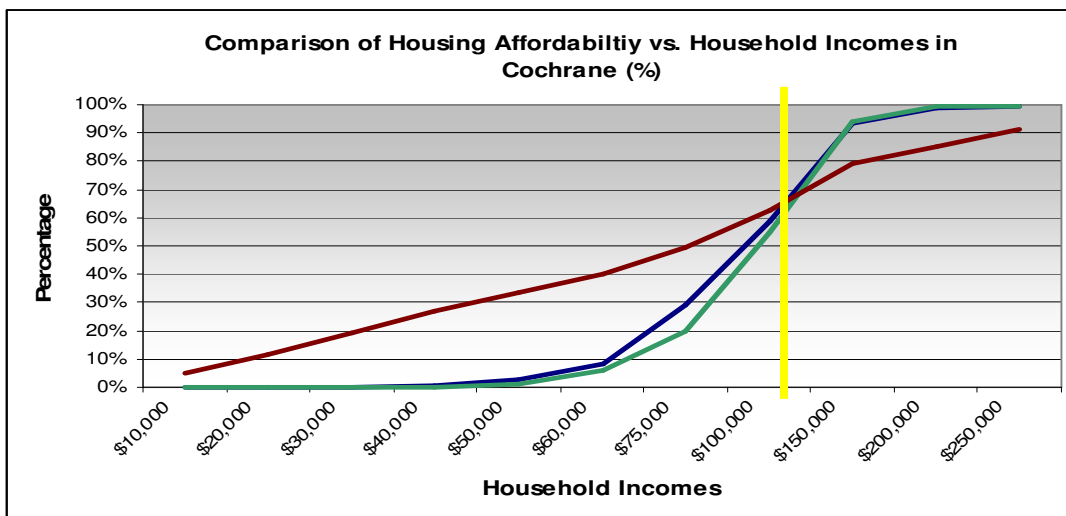
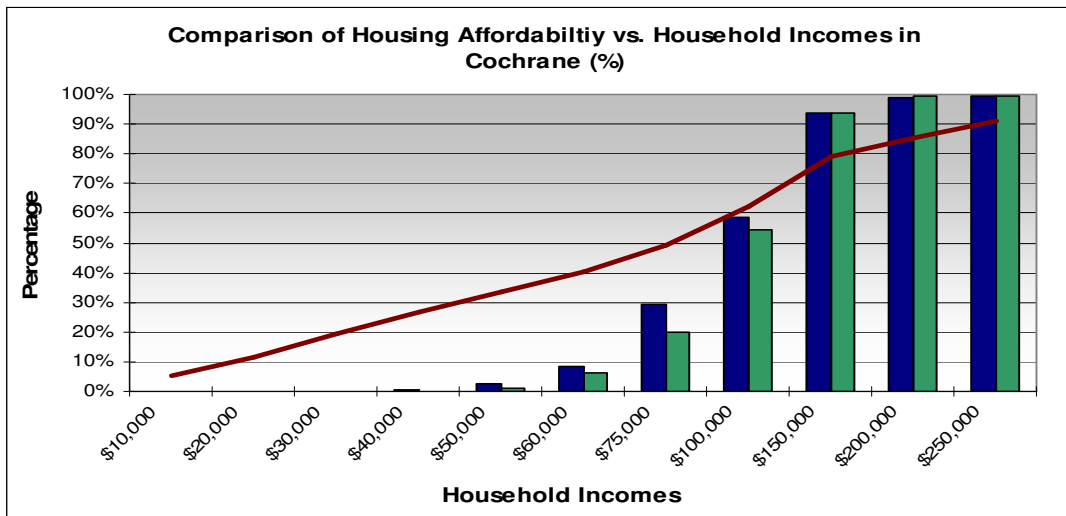
The Cochrane Society for Housing Options (CSHO) currently has six (6) housing units that could potentially be adapted for wheelchair accessibility.

#### **4.5 Housing Affordability**

Housing affordability relates to the ability of individual households to meet their monthly rent or mortgage payments within a reasonable threshold of their income. CMHC has determined that housing is affordable if it costs no more than 30% of a household's before-tax monthly income for rent or mortgage payments. As a preliminary indicator of housing affordability in Cochrane, Figure 12 (next page) compares the percentage of households within each of a range of income levels to the percentage of homes in the community estimated to be affordable at those income ranges.



**Figure 12: Comparison of Cochrane Households by Income vs. Cochrane Housing Affordability by Income)**



**Data Source:**  
 Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)  
 2008 MLS Sales Data for January 1 – June 30, 2008  
 Town of Cochrane 2007 Tax Assessment

According to these figures, there is a larger percentage of households in Cochrane earning incomes of \$100,000 or less than there are homes that are affordable to first-time purchasers earning incomes of \$100,000 or less (i.e., the point where the percentage of households intersects with the percentage of homes available presented by the yellow line). This means that for households earning incomes less than \$100,000 there may be fewer housing choices than there are households whereas for households earning more than \$100,000, there are more housing choices than there are households. Caution should be taken in terms of conclusions drawn from these figures. Not everyone in the community is a first-time homebuyer. It is expected that a large and significant portion of homeowners either bought their home in Cochrane several years



ago at much lower selling prices than are currently achievable and/or had previously owned a home elsewhere and were able to purchase their home with a sizeable downpayment using the equity they had built in their previous home. Also, not everyone in the community is looking for a home to purchase at the same time. These figures should not be interpreted to mean that there are fewer housing units available to purchase in Cochrane than there are homebuyers looking to purchase in Cochrane.

#### **4.5.1 Estimating Housing Affordability Needs In Cochrane**

In order to estimate the number of households within the Cochrane area that are potentially facing housing hardships due to the cost of market housing, two standard measures are used:

1. The 2006 *Low Income Cut-offs* (LICOs) as published by Statistics Canada; and
2. The 2008 *Core Need Income Thresholds* (CNITs) as published by Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs.

These measures are compared to income data derived from Statistics Canada Taxfiler data for 2006 (the most recent data currently published). Another analysis prepared by Statistics Canada using 2001 and 2006 Census data and identifying the number of households paying 30% or more of their income on housing is also used to complement the analysis.

Estimating housing need can be tricky. While LICO and CNIT are the standard measures used to determine affordability needs, neither the LICOs nor the CNITs are able to take into consideration individual lifestyle choices or particular external needs. In other words, a household may be deemed to be low-income and in need of more affordable housing according to LICO or CNIT, yet because they purchased their home several years ago when housing prices in the community were lower and/or with a sizeable downpayment, the household's *actual* mortgage payments may be within the 30% affordability range. Conversely, a household may be deemed to have an adequate income to afford average market housing, yet have particular health needs (e.g., special medications not covered under existing health plan(s), specialized diets, treatment by non-government-subsidized specialists, etc.) or supports (e.g., special assistance for a disabled child not covered under existing health plans or government programs) whose costs reduce the household's disposable income to the point where their actual housing costs do pose a challenge. Despite these limitations, LICOs and CNITs are the standards used for assessing affordable housing needs in a community.

Another challenge with estimating housing need is differentiating between “need” and “want.” It is often the case that what people seek in terms of more “affordable” housing are opportunities that bring the purchase price of the traditional single-family home down to a level that is affordable to a household earning \$40,000 or less (as it may have been 10-20 years ago). Neither the LICOs nor the CNITs take into consideration households' expectations of what housing looks like or where it is located. Rather, these measures are used to assess what is needed to provide for a household's minimum requirements based on national standards and who may be unable to achieve those minimum standards based on their income.



A third challenge is the different definitions of “households” used by Statistics Canada in the Taxfiler data compared to the Census data. Taxfiler data collects and organizes information based on *economic households* (i.e., persons living together as a single interdependent economic unit – or family) whereas Census data collects and organizes information based on *census households* (i.e., persons living together within a single housing unit regardless of economic relationship or interdependency). Thus Census data would record two single individuals living as roommates in a single apartment as one household, while the Taxfiler data would record these individuals as two separate households (unless the two individuals filed their income tax returns as either a married or common-law couple).

Furthermore, some of the data used in this study may be outdated. For example, the Taxfiler data used in this study is based on the 2006 tax year (the most recent data available). Household incomes have likely increased since then. For example, minimum wage increased from \$7.00 per hour to \$8.40 per hour on April 1, 2008 (an increase of 20.0%). This increase, while significant for some low-income households, would not have been reflected in the 2006 Taxfiler data. Primary household data used in this study is from the 2006 Statistics Canada Federal Census. Changes have likely occurred in the community since 2006 as a result of continued population growth and significant increases in housing costs.

*These various challenges make the following estimates of housing affordability levels in Cochrane approximations at best*

#### **4.5.2 Statistics Canada 2006 Low Income Cut-offs**

The *Low Income Cut-off* (LICO) is a measure developed by Statistics Canada to estimate the number of households who could be considered “low-income” (as the name implies). LICO looks at what an average household spends on basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter) to determine at what income level households may be unable to meet their basic needs. While the measure is not designed specifically to assess “poverty”<sup>21</sup>, the LICO is often used as such. Rather, Statistics Canada uses the LICO to estimate the number of households likely to be living under what it calls “straitened [*sic.*] circumstances.”

It should be noted that LICO may not necessarily take into consideration the cost of utilities. Rising utility costs can have a *significant* impact on affordability and housing stability. For some households, rising utilities costs can further erode already limited disposable income and put them “over the edge” in terms of their financial and housing stability. Nor does LICO take into consideration regional variations (LICOs are nation-wide measures). For example, a community such as Cochrane shares the same LICO with other similarly-sized communities across the country. However, the combined cost of food, clothing and shelter in Cochrane may not be the same in other similarly-sized communities of Alberta or in similarly-sized communities in other provinces (e.g., Saskatchewan, Ontario, Newfoundland, etc.) but they will all share the same LICO.

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<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada makes it very clear that the LICO is not a measure of actual poverty. However, it is one of several standard measures accepted across the country as just that.



Table 44 shows the 2006 *before-tax* LICOs for Canadian communities such as Cochrane with populations less than 30,000.

**Table 44: 2006 *Before-Tax* Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs) for Communities with Populations Less than 30,000 (e.g., Cochrane)**

Household Size	Before-Tax LICO (< 30,000)
One-Person	\$16,605
Two-Person	\$20,671
Three-Person	\$25,412
Four-Person	\$30,855
Five- Person	\$34,995
Six-Person	\$39,469
Seven+- Person	\$43,943

**Data Source:**

Statistics Canada Income Statistics Division

Table 45 uses the 2006 before-tax LICOs to estimate the *approximate* number of households within the Cochrane area whose incomes fall at or below the 2006 LICO according to the 2006 Taxfiler data. Note that Taxfiler data does not provide sufficient detail in terms of household size (i.e., the number of family households with four or more children) to estimate households whose income meets the six- or seven-plus-person LICOs.

**Table 45: Number and Percentage of Economic Households within the Town of Cochrane & Area Whose Incomes are Estimated to Fall At or Below the 2006 *Before-Tax* Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs) for Communities With Populations Less Than 30,000 (Based on 2006 Taxfiler Data)**

Size of Household	2006 LICO <sup>1</sup>	Max. Affordable Rents (30%)	Couple Families <sup>2</sup>	Lone Parent Families <sup>2</sup>	Single Individuals <sup>2</sup>	Total <sup>2</sup>
One-person	\$16,605	\$415	--	--	415	415
Two-persons	\$20,671	\$515	85	85	--	170
Three-persons	\$25,412	\$635	30	30	--	60
Four-persons	\$30,855	\$770	40	20	--	60
Five-persons	\$34,995	\$875	20	0	--	20
Unknown Size	<\$20,000	\$500	10	10	--	20
<b>Subtotal</b>		--	<b>185</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>745</b>
<b>Total 2006 Economic Households</b>		--	<b>4,830</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>1,940</b>	<b>7,350</b>
<b>% of 2006 Economic Households</b>		--	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>

**Data Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Income Statistics Division

<sup>2</sup> Base Data Derived from Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding, suppression and discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.



Based on these estimates, there may be as many as 745 *economic* households (10.1%) in the Cochrane area whose incomes fall at or below the Statistics Canada 2006 Low Income Cut-offs and, therefore, may be in need of more affordable housing. In terms of percentage of the total, lone-parent families are the most affected with an estimated 25.0% living under “straitened circumstances” followed by single individuals (21.4%) and then couples (3.8%). In terms of actual numbers, single individuals greatly outnumber other households with an estimated 415 single *economic* households earning incomes at or below the 2006 LICO compared to 185 couple economic families and 145 lone-parent economic families.

These figures may be over-representative of the actual number of households living *within the municipal boundaries* of the Town of Cochrane. The 2006 Taxfiler data records a total of 7,350 economic families living in the Cochrane area. However, the 2006 Federal Census data records a total of 4,830 census households living within the Town boundaries. Thus, the Taxfiler data records approximately 2,500 more economic households than census households – a significant difference that cannot be easily explained. One explanation could be that the Taxfiler data may include a number of households living immediately adjacent to the Town boundaries and/or who collect their mail using a Town of Cochrane post office box. Another explanation could be that the Taxfiler data does not accurately reflect the number of single individuals and “other households” living in the area who share accommodations either out of choice (the desire to live together) or out of necessity (the need to share the cost of housing) or couples who file their taxes as single individuals even though they may technically and legally be common law.

Table 46, therefore, provides revised estimates of the number of census households potentially earning incomes at or below the 2006 *before-tax* LICO for communities such as Cochrane with populations less than 30,000.

**Table 46: Estimated Number of Households within the Town of Cochrane Whose Incomes Fall At or Below the 2006 *Before-Tax* LICO for Communities With Populations Less Than 30,000 (Based on 2006 Taxfiler Data)**

Household Type	Estimated %	2006 Census <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Total
<b>Couple Families</b>	3.8%	3,520	135
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	25.0%	495	125
<b>Non-Family Persons</b>	21.4%	725	155
<b>Other Households</b>	Est. 10.1%	90	10
<b>Total All Households</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>4,830</b>	<b>425 – 490</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Census of Population

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding, suppression and discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.





According to these revised estimates, there may be between 425 and 490<sup>22</sup> census households in the Town of Cochrane whose incomes fall at or below the 2006 *before-tax* LICO and, therefore, may be in need of more affordable housing. This amounts to an estimated 135 couple families, 125 lone-parent families, 155 single individuals and 10 “other households”.

### 4.5.3 Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds

*Core Need Income Thresholds* (CNITs – pronounced “snits”) are established on an annual basis by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs. Core housing need is a measure used to determine the number of households who must pay in excess of 30% of their gross (i.e., before-tax) income in order to acquire safe, adequate and suitable median-rental housing. Therefore, CNITs are often used to determine eligibility for subsidized housing/rent subsidies.

Table 47 shows the published 2008 CNITs for the Town of Cochrane.

**Table 47: 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds (CNITs) for the Town of Cochrane**

Dwelling Size	2008 CNIT
<b>Bachelor</b>	\$28,000
<b>1-Bedroom</b>	\$36,500
<b>2-Bedroom</b>	\$46,000
<b>3-Bedroom</b>	\$51,500
<b>4-Bedroom</b>	\$55,000
<b>5+-Bedroom</b>	\$58,000

**Data Source:**

*Source: Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs*

CNITs are based on 30% of the identified median market rents within a particular community. Households with annual incomes equal to or less than CNIT are said to have insufficient incomes to afford the on-going costs of suitable and adequate rental units in their area. The cost of rental housing is used because of the difficulty tracking individual household mortgage payments – which vary greatly according a variety of factors, including:

1. When the home was purchased (which affects the original purchase price of the home);
2. The size of the initial downpayment (which affects the total size of the original mortgage);

<sup>22</sup> The range of 425 to 485 census households is based on two calculations: 1) the calculated sum of the estimated number of households within each category totals 425 households (135 + 125 + 155 + 10 = 425); yet 2) 10.1% of the 4,830 households recorded in the 2006 Federal Census data totals 490 rounded to the nearest “10” (4,830 x 10.1% = 487.83).



3. The particular interest rate and mortgage term (both of which affect the actual mortgage payments); and
4. Whether or not the household sought to refinance the mortgage (which may result in multiple mortgages with different terms and interest rates).

Calculating core housing need is based on *National Occupancy Standards*, which (as described above) set minimum criteria for the number of persons per bedroom in a home and the level of privacy for members of a household. Based on these Occupancy Standards and for the purpose of this analysis, the following assumptions are made:

- All one-person households (defined as non-family persons in the Taxfiler data) will require a bachelor unit;
- All two-person households (defined as couple families in the Taxfiler data) without children will require a one-bedroom unit;
- All couple families with one child and 50% of couple families with two children will require a two-bedroom unit;
- All lone-parent families with one child and 50% of lone-parent families with two children will require a two-bedroom unit;
- 50% of lone-parent families with two or three children and 50% of couple families with two or three children will require a three-bedroom unit; and
- 50% of lone-parent families and 50% of couple families with three or more children will require a four-bedroom unit.

Table 48 estimates the number of households within the Cochrane area that may be in Core Housing Need (i.e., paying more than 30% of their before-tax income on housing) according to the published 2008 CNIT data for the Town of Cochrane.

**Table 48: Number and Percentage of Economic Households within the Town of Cochrane & Area Whose Incomes are Estimated to Fall At or Below the 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds (CNITs) (Based on 2006 Taxfiler Data)**

Size of Unit (N <sup>o</sup> of Bedrooms)	2008 CNIT <sup>1</sup>	Max. Affordable Rents (30%)	Couple Families <sup>2</sup>	Lone Parents <sup>2</sup>	Singles <sup>2</sup>	Total <sup>2</sup>
Bachelor	\$28,000	\$700	--	--	890	890
1-Bedroom	\$36,500	\$915	255	--	--	255
2-Bedroom	\$46,000	\$1,150	130	235	--	365
3-Bedroom	\$51,500	\$1,290	90	65	--	155
4-Bedroom	\$55,000	\$1,375	30	20	--	50
Unknown Size	<\$35,000	\$875	10	20	--	30
<b>Subtotal</b>		--	<b>515</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>1,745</b>
<b>Total 2006 Economic Households</b>		--	<b>4,830</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>1,940</b>	<b>7,350</b>
<b>% of 2006 Economic Households</b>		--	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>45.9%</b>	<b>23.7%</b>

**Data Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs

<sup>2</sup> Base Data Derived from Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding, suppression and discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic



Based on this analysis, there may be as many as 1,745 economic households (23.7%) in the Cochrane area whose incomes fall at or below the 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds. According to this data, lone-parent families are more likely to be affected with an estimated 58.6% earning incomes at or below CNIT, followed by single individuals (45.9%) and then couples (10.7%). In terms of actual numbers, an estimated 890 single-person *economic* households earn incomes at or below the 2008 CNIT compared to 515 couple economic families and 340 lone-parent economic families.

As with the LICO figures presented above, these CNIT figures may be over-representative of the actual number of households living *within the municipal boundaries* of the Town of Cochrane based on the observed discrepancies between the 2006 Taxfiler data (7,350 economic families living in the Cochrane area) and the 2006 Federal Census data (4,830 census households living within the Town boundaries). Table 49, therefore, provides revised estimates of the number of census households potentially earning incomes at or below the 2008 CNITS for the Town of Cochrane.

**Table 49: Estimated Number of Households within the Town of Cochrane Whose Incomes Fall At or Below the 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds (CNITs)**

Household Type	Estimated %	2006 Census <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Total
<b>Couple Families</b>	10.7%	3,520	375
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	58.6%	495	290
<b>Non-Family Persons</b>	45.9%	725	335
<b>Other Households</b>	23.7%	90	20
<b>Total All Households</b>	<b>23.7%</b>	<b>4,830</b>	<b>1,020 – 1,145</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Census of Population

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding, suppression and discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

According to these revised estimates, there may be between 1,020 and 1,145<sup>23</sup> census households in the Town of Cochrane whose incomes fall at or below the 2008 CNITs and, therefore, may be in need of more affordable housing. This amounts to an estimated 375 couple families, 290 lone-parent families, 335 single individuals and 20 “other households”.

#### **4.5.4 Cochrane Households Estimated to be Paying 50% or More of Their Before-Tax Income on Housing**

Based on the published 2008 CNITs, it is possible to derive an estimate of the number of Cochrane area households paying 50% or more of their income on shelter. These

<sup>23</sup> The range of 1,020 to 1,145 census households is based on two calculations: 1) the calculated sum of the estimated number of households within each category totals 1,020 households (375 + 290 + 335 + 20 = 1,020); yet 2) 23.7% of the 4,830 households recorded in the 2006 Federal Census data totals 1,145 rounded to the nearest “10” (4,830 x 23.7% = 1,114.71).



households might be considered in “dire” housing need<sup>24</sup> and therefore a high-priority target group. Table 50 shows how “dire” housing need has been calculated.

**Table 50: 2008 Estimated “Dire” Housing Need Income Levels (“DNIL”)  
For the Town of Cochrane**

Size of Unit	2008 CNIT <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Affordable Rent (30% of Income)	Income at Which Estimated Affordable Rent Consumes 50% (“DNIL”)
Bachelor	\$28,000	\$700	\$16,800
1-Bedroom	\$36,500	\$915	\$21,900
2-Bedroom	\$46,000	\$1,150	\$27,600
3-Bedroom	\$51,500	\$1,290	\$30,900
4-Bedroom	\$55,000	\$1,375	\$33,000

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs

Table 51 takes the dire housing need income levels above and estimates the number of households in the Cochrane and area that are potentially in this category.

**Table 51: Number and Percentage of Households within the Town of Cochrane & Area  
Estimated to be in Dire Housing Need (Based on 2006 Taxfiler Data)**

Size of Unit (N <sup>o</sup> of Bedrooms)	2008 “DNILs” <sup>1</sup>	Max. Affordable Rents (30%)	Couple Families <sup>2</sup>	Lone Parents <sup>2</sup>	Singles <sup>2</sup>	Total <sup>2</sup>
Bachelor	\$16,800	\$420	--	--	425	425
1-Bedroom	\$21,900	\$550	95	--	--	95
2-Bedroom	\$27,600	\$690	55	130	--	185
3-Bedroom	\$30,900	\$775	25	30	--	55
4-Bedroom	\$33,000	\$825	10	10	--	20
Unknown Size	<\$20,000	\$500	10	10	--	20
<b>Subtotal</b>		--	<b>195</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>800</b>
<b>Total 2006 Economic Households</b>		--	<b>4,830</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>1,940</b>	<b>7,350</b>
<b>% of 2006 Economic Households</b>		--	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Base Data Derived from Statistics Canada Small Area and Data Division (Taxfiler Data)

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding, suppression and discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

Based on this analysis, there may be as many as 800 economic households (10.9%) in the Cochrane area paying 50% or more of their income on housing. According to this data, lone-parent families are more likely to be affected with an estimated 31.0% earning incomes at or below the calculated DNIL followed by single individuals (21.9%) and then

<sup>24</sup> CMHC refers to households in this category as being **INALH** – “In Need and paying At Least Half” of their income on shelter.



couples (4.0%). In terms of actual numbers, an estimated 425 single-person *economic* households earn incomes at or below the calculated DNIL compared to 195 couple economic families and 180 lone-parent economic families.

As with the LICO and CNIT figures presented above, these DNIL figures may be over-representative of the actual number of households living *within the municipal boundaries* of the Town of Cochrane based on the observed discrepancies between the 2006 Taxfiler data (7,350 economic families living in the Cochrane area) and the 2006 Federal Census data (4,830 census households living within the Town boundaries). Table 52, therefore, provides revised estimates of the number of census households within the Town of Cochrane potentially paying 50% or more of their income on housing.

**Table 52: Estimated Number of Households within the Town of Cochrane Potentially Paying 50% or More of Their Income on Housing**

Household Type	Estimated %	2006 Census <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Total
<b>Couple Families</b>	4.0%	3,520	140
<b>Lone-Parent Families</b>	31.0%	495	155
<b>Non-Family Persons</b>	21.9%	725	160
<b>Other Households</b>	10.9%	90	10
<b>Total All Households</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>4,830</b>	<b>465 – 525</b>

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Census of Population

NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding, suppression and discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.

According to these revised estimates, there may be between 465 and 525<sup>25</sup> census households in the Town of Cochrane paying 50% or more of their income on housing. This amounts to an estimated 140 couple families, 155 lone-parent families, 160 single individuals and 10 “other households”.

#### 4.5.5 Statistics Canada 2001 and 2006 Housing Cost Analyses

Another analysis of affordable housing need within the Town of Cochrane shows somewhat different – yet potentially more accurate – figures. Using 2001 and 2006 Census Data from the 20% of Cochrane households who filled out the long questionnaire, Statistics Canada has estimated the number of households living within the Town of Cochrane paying more than 30% of their income on housing. Included in the total estimated housing costs are:

- Rent or mortgage payments;
- Condominium fees (if applicable);
- Property taxes (if applicable);

<sup>25</sup> The range of 465 to 525 census households is based on two calculations: 1) the calculated sum of the estimated number of households within each category totals 465 households (140 + 155 + 160 + 10 = 465); yet 2) 10.9% of the 4,830 households recorded in the 2006 Federal Census data totals 525 (4,830 x 10.9% = 526.47).



- Electricity costs;
- Oil, gas, wood or other fuel costs; and
- Water and other municipal service costs.

Table 53 shows two estimates for the Town of Cochrane based on 2001 Census data: 1) the estimated number of households spending 30% or more of their income on housing in 2001; and 2) the estimated number of households spending 30%-99% of their income on housing.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 53: 2001 Statistics Canada Estimates of Household Payments for the Town of Cochrane**

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
<b>Tenant households</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter	195	37.9%
Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter	180	35.0%
<b>Owner households</b>	<b>3,360</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter	645	19.2%
Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter	570	17.0%
<b>Total households (Tenants and Owners)</b>	<b>3,875</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
<b>Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>19.4%</b>

**Data Source:**

Source: Statistics Canada 2001 Census of Population  
 Note: numbers may be subject to rounding and suppression

Based on these figures, Statistics Canada estimated that between 750 and 840 census households in the Town of Cochrane (19.4% - 21.7%) were paying 30% or more of their income on housing in 2001. This included between 180 and 195 tenant households and between 570 and 645 homeowners.

Table 54 (next page) shows similar estimates for the Town of Cochrane but based on the 2006 Census data and with more detail.

<sup>26</sup> The 30%-99% measure is preferred by CMHC since, with various sources of credit (lines of credit, credit cards, etc.), it is possible, albeit rare, for a household to spend more than 100% of its income on housing within any given year (personal communication with Statistics Canada staff).



**Table 54: 2006 Statistics Canada Estimates of Household Payments for the Town of Cochrane**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Tenant Households</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter	305	43.0%
Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter	275	38.7%
<b>Owner Households with a Mortgage</b>	<b>2,835</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter	520	18.3%
Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter	485	17.1%
<b>Owner Households without a Mortgage</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter	55	4.3%
Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter	35	2.8%
<b>All Owner Households</b>	<b>4,105</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter	575	14.0%
Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter	520	12.7%
<b>Total households (Tenants and Owners)</b>	<b>4,815</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>18.3%</b>
<b>Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

**Data Source:**

*Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Population*

*Note: numbers may be subject to rounding and suppression*

Based on these figures, Statistics Canada estimated that between 795 and 880 census households in the Town of Cochrane (16.5% - 18.3%) were paying 30% or more of their income on housing in 2006. This included:

- 275 – 305 tenant households
- 485 – 520 homeowners (carrying a mortgage); and
- 35 – 55 homeowners (no longer carrying a mortgage).

On the surface, a decline between 2001 and 2006 in the overall percentage of households estimated to be paying 30% or more of their income on housing suggests that the housing situation in Cochrane is improving (in 2001, between 19.4% and 21.7% of Cochrane households were estimated to be paying 30% or more of their income on housing but by 2006, that percentage had dropped to between 16.5% and 18.3%). However, most of that improvement is being experienced by homeowners. In 2001, it was estimated that between 17.0% and 19.2% of homeowners were paying 30% or more of their income on housing. By 2006, those estimates had dropped to between 12.7% and 14.0%. Conversely, the percentage of renters estimated to be paying 30% or more of their income on housing increased from between 35.0% and 37.9% in 2001 to between 38.7% and 43.0% in 2006.

Anecdotal information suggests that, among homeowners, housing affordability is more likely to be an issue for new homeowners and for seniors – even those seniors who have paid off their mortgages. According to Town staff, there has been a large increase over the past five years in the number of overdue notices for utilities being sent out every





month. In previous years, it was common to send out 50-60 notices per month. More recently, it is common to see 150 or more notices sent out each month. This increase is not just due to an increase in the number of households living in Cochrane. According to Town staff, many of the notices are being sent either to seniors on fixed, limited incomes or to homes in the newer neighbourhoods. This may be an indication of newer/younger homeowners having overextended themselves in order to purchase a home and therefore less able to manage their monthly expenses – particularly in situations where injuries or short-term job loss has occurred.

#### 4.5.6 Summary and Conclusions

Table 55 provides a summary of the estimated percentage and number of households within the Cochrane area potentially experiencing housing difficulties based on 2006 Taxfiler and Census data per the four analyses presented above.

**Table 55: Estimates of the Number and Percentage of Households in the Town of Cochrane That May Be Experiencing Housing Hardships**

Characteristics	Est. Number of Households	Est. Percentage of Households
<b>2008 Core Need Income Thresholds:</b>		
Economic Households (Cochrane & Area)	1,745	23.7%
Census Households (Town of Cochrane)	1,020-1,145	23.7%
<b>2006 Statistics Canada Housing Costs Analysis:</b>		
Census Households Spending 30% or More of Income on Shelter	880	18.3%
Census Households Spending 30%-99% of Income on Shelter	795	16.5%
<b>Range (Cochrane Census Households)</b>	<b>795-1,145</b>	<b>16.5% - 23.7%</b>
<b>2006 Before-Tax Low-Income Cutoffs:</b>		
Economic Households (Cochrane & Area)	745	10.1%
Census Households (Town of Cochrane)	425-490	10.1%
<b>Dire Need Income Levels (based on 2008 CNITs):</b>		
Economic Households (Cochrane & Area)	800	10.9%
Census Households (Town of Cochrane)	465-525	10.9%
<b>Range (Cochrane Census Households)</b>	<b>425-525</b>	<b>10.1% - 10.9%</b>

*Calculations based on Statistics Canada data including 2006 Taxfiler data and data derived from the 2006 Census of Population*

*NOTE: numbers are subject to rounding, suppression and discrepancies associated with the nature of the geographic boundaries use to define the data region.*

Based on these estimates, two housing targets for Cochrane can be defined as follows:

1. The **high-needs** group consisting of approximately 10% of Cochrane's households estimated to be earning incomes at or below the community's 2006 *before-tax* LICOs. These households are likely paying 50% or more of their income on housing; and





2. The **medium-needs** group consisting of approximately 6.5% of Cochrane's households estimated to be paying 30% or more of their before-tax household income on housing per Statistics Canada's 2006 housing costs analysis but not more than 49% of their before-tax income on housing (e.g., the difference between the estimated 16.5% of households paying 30% or more minus the 10% of households earning incomes at or below the 2006 LICO).

The *high-needs* target group will likely require a combination of heavily subsidized housing (rent-geared-to-income) for singles and families with children and various types of supportive housing (e.g., group homes) for persons with severe disabilities. An estimated 480 households could potentially fall within the *high-needs* target group based on 2006 Census data (4,830 census households x 10%).

Table 56 shows the estimated maximum monthly rents households within the high-needs target group could likely afford to pay based on family/unit size and income using Cochrane's 2006 Low-Income Cutoffs as a base.

**Table 56: Maximum Affordable Rents by Unit Size for Households in the High-Needs Target Group**

Size of Unit (Max. Household Size)	Max. Income	Max. Affordable Rents
1-Bedroom (Up to 2 Persons Max.)	\$20,671	\$515
2-Bedroom (Up to 3 Persons Max.)	\$25,412	\$635
3-Bedroom (Up to 5 Persons Max.)	\$34,995	\$875
4-Bedroom (Up to 7 Persons Max.)	\$43,943	\$1,100

The *medium-needs* target group will likely benefit from a combination of moderately-subsidized rental housing and below-market/non-profit ownership housing (e.g., limited or shared equity homeownership and perpetually affordable homeownership). It is unlikely that any of the households identified in either the high-needs or medium-needs target groups would be able to afford homeownership without a combination of public subsidies (e.g., housing grants), municipal regulations and incentives, and resale restrictions applied to higher density developments such as stacked condominiums and townhouses. An estimated 315 households could potentially fall within the *medium-needs* target group based on 2006 Census data (4,830 census households x 6.5%).

Table 57 (next page) shows the estimated maximum monthly housing payments (rent or mortgage payments) households within the *medium-needs* target group could likely afford to pay based on family/unit size and income using Cochrane's 2008 Core Need Income Thresholds as a base.



**Table 57: Maximum Affordable Rents or Mortgage Payments by Unit/Household Size for Households in the *Medium-Needs* Target Group**

Size of Unit (Max. Household Size)	Max. Income	Max. Affordable Monthly Payments
<b>1-Bedroom (Up to 2 Persons Max.)</b>	\$32,000	\$800
<b>2-Bedroom (Up to 3 Persons Max.)</b>	\$40,000	\$1,000
<b>3-Bedroom (Up to 5 Persons Max.)</b>	\$45,000	\$1,125
<b>4-Bedroom (Up to 7 Persons Max.)</b>	\$52,000	\$1,300

Based on these figures, affordable homeownership for households within the *medium-needs* target group ranges in price from approximately \$80,000 for a one-bedroom unit (suitable for singles and childless couples earning \$32,000) to approximately \$200,000 for a four-bedroom unit (suitable for larger households earning \$52,000). These income figures are based on the following assumptions:

- Amortization: 35 years
- Term: 5-year fixed
- Interest Rate: 5.79% (RBC 5-Year Fixed-Rate Mortgage until August 31, 2008)
- Downpayment: 5%
- Mortgage Insurance: Yes
- Mortgage Payments: Monthly
- Monthly Condo Fees (where applicable): \$220
- Monthly Heat: \$150
- Annual Property Taxes: 0.5% of market value
- Other monthly expenses (e.g., credit car and car loan): \$450 max.

Different interest rates, downpayment amounts, annual property taxes, and other monthly expenses will have a strong influence on these affordability estimates.

#### **4.5.7 Proposed Housing Targets**

While housing affordability may only be affecting a limited number of Cochrane households directly, other segments of the community may also be affected either directly or indirectly. Anecdotal information from the Cochrane Chamber of Commerce indicates that a significant number of the Chamber’s members are being affected by increasing housing costs. A number of local businesses are having difficulty attracting minimum- to medium-wage employees because of a lack of affordable places for them to live. High housing costs are also reducing the number of people willing to work for minimum- to medium-wages. Small businesses, especially, in Cochrane are having difficulty finding a motivated workforce of people seeking an entry-level job that would allow them to work their way up over time.

As a result, Chamber Members want to see more starter homes in Cochrane (e.g., homes selling for under \$250,000) and a larger, more diverse rental market (e.g., rental



townhouses and single family homes as opposed to just condos, apartment buildings and basement suites).

Below are two potential options, in terms of annual housing targets, for the Town to consider as a means of increasing the supply of affordable housing (rental and ownership) in Cochrane.

**Option #1: Base the Annual Target for Affordable Rental Housing Units on the Estimated Percentage of Households in the High-Needs Group and the Annual Target for Affordable Homeownership Housing Units on the Estimated Percentage of Households in the Medium-Needs Group**

If the *high-needs* and *medium-needs* percentage estimates presented above represent an accurate need of affordable housing in the community, then it is reasonable to expect that 10% of all new housing units built in the community should be targeted to very-low-income renters and that 6.5% of all new housing units built in the community should be targeted to modest-income homeowners.

A solution based on this formula could specify that:

- 10% of all new housing units built in Cochrane be affordable rental units; and
- 6.5% of all new housing units built in Cochrane be affordable homeownership (entry-level or near-market/perpetually affordable homeownership at prices that are affordable to the incomes presented in Table 57 on page 65 above).

According to Statistics Canada Census data (see Table 16 on page 24), there were:

- 4,840 residential dwellings in Cochrane in 2006;
- 3,880 residential dwellings in Cochrane in 2001; and
- 2,410 residential dwellings in Cochrane in 1996.

Between 1996 and 2001, the total number of residential units increased by 1,470 units (an average of 295 units per year). Between 2001 and 2006, the total number of residential units increased by 960 units (an average of 190 units per year). Applying the 10% affordable rental and 6.5% affordable homeownership formula to an average of 200 – 300 units per year would see the creation of:

- **20-30 new affordable rental units per year** (200 – 300 units per year x 10%); and
- **15-20 new affordable homeownership units per year** (200 – 300 units per year x 6.5%).

If these targets were maintained annually, over the course of five years, the Town could see the creation of 175 – 250 new affordable housing units, including:

- **100 – 150 affordable rental units** (approximately 50% of the 275 tenant households identified in Table 54 on page 62 as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada); and



- **75-100 affordable homeownership units** (approximately 20% of the 520 owner households identified in Table 54 on page 62 as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada).

**Option #2: Base the Annual Target for Affordable Rental Housing Units on the Percentage of Tenant Households Spending 30% - 99% of their Income on Housing in 2006 According to Statistics Canada and the Annual Target for Affordable Homeownership Housing Units on the Percentage of Owner Households Spending 30% - 99% of their Income On Housing in 2006 According to Statistics Canada**

If Statistics Canada's 2006 housing costs analysis presents the most accurate figures in terms of total households spending 30% - 99% of their before-tax income on housing, then it is reasonable to assume that a minimum of 795 households living within the Town of Cochrane are in need of more affordable housing options. This total would include an estimated 520 owner households (65%) and an estimated 275 tenant households (35%).

A solution based on this formula could specify that 10% of all new housing units built in Cochrane annually were affordable, of which:

- 35% would be affordable rental units; and
- 65% would be affordable homeownership (entry-level or near-market/perpetually affordable homeownership at prices that are affordable to the incomes presented in Table 57 on page 65 above).

With an average of 200 – 300 units being built in Cochrane per year, 20-30 of those units would be affordable. Applying the 35% affordable rental and 65% affordable homeownership formula to these units would see the creation of:

- **5-10 new affordable rental units per year** (20 – 30 units per year x 35%); and
- **15-20 new affordable homeownership units per year** (20 – 30 units per year x 65%).

If these targets were maintained annually, over the course of five years, the Town could see the creation of 100 – 150 new affordable housing units, including:

- **25 – 50 affordable rental units** (approximately 20% of the 275 tenant households identified in Table 54 on page 62 as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada); and
- **75-100 affordable homeownership units** (approximately 20% of the 520 owner households identified in Table 54 on page 62 as spending 30%-99% of their before-tax income on shelter in 2006 according to Statistics Canada).

Determining who would be responsible for building these units and what mechanisms could be used to encourage or assist in their creation will require further research and



work with the community (i.e., engaging the range of stakeholders including the Town, the development industry, the business community and the non-profit sector).





# *Appendix A*

## ***Data Sources and Limitations***





# Appendix A: Data Sources and Limitations

## 1.0 Sources of Data Used in This Study

The key statistical data on Cochrane's population and income attributes used to develop this Housing Needs Assessment come from Statistics Canada through the following:

- 1996, 2001 and 2006 Canada Census data; and
- 2001-2006 Taxfiler data.

## 1.1 Statistics Canada Census Data

Statistics Canada Census Data is collected every five years. Every household in Canada is included in the Census using either of two questionnaires. While 80% of all households receive a short form of the Census questionnaire (containing eight questions), more detailed information is collected from the other 20% of households using a longer questionnaire consisting of the same eight questions in the short questionnaire along with 53 additional questions. Data collected from the long questionnaire is then used to derive aggregate measures for the population as a whole. The data provided for each reference year is based on data collected during the second week (usually the Tuesday) of May in that year. For example, data for the 1996 Census was collected on May 14, 1996; data for the 2001 Census was collected on May 15, 2001; and data for the 2006 Census was collected on May 16, 2006.

## 1.2 Statistics Canada Taxfiler Data

Taxfiler data is compiled by the *Small Area and Administrative Data Division* of Statistics Canada based on information provided on all personal income tax returns filed within a given year. The data combines information on levels and sources of income from taxfilers and demographic indicators derived from both the taxfilers and their non-filing dependents.

Taxfiler data is collected only for those individuals/families who filed a tax return within a given year. Individuals or families who did not file a tax return are excluded from the data. Thus, the information used to derive family units represents approximately two-thirds of the Canadian population<sup>27</sup>. Taxfilers from the same family, including children, are matched using common links (spousal social insurance number, same surname, same address). Non-filer children are added to the family using the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) file, provincial birth files, and Taxfiler data collected from previous years<sup>28</sup>. The remaining taxfilers who have not been matched with a family are labeled non-family persons. Non-family persons are not living with a spouse, child, or parent. They may be living with extended family (grandparent, cousin, etc.), with unrelated persons (lodger, roommate), alone, or cohabiting with another non-family person<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Small Area and Administrative Data Division, Statistics Canada, 2001.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*



## 2.0 Limitations Inherent in the Data

Significant discrepancies in the data may exist between that derived by Statistics Canada through its Canada Census and that derived from taxfiler sources, leading to limitations in the combined use of these data sources.

All Statistics Canada data are subject to rounding. Census data is rounded to a base of 5. Thus a count of 4 and a count of 7 would both be rounded to 5. Data rounding may lead to certain inaccuracies and/or inconsistencies both within the Census database and between data summary tables. In terms of Taxfiler data, all data on number of persons is rounded to a base of 10. For example, a count of 15 would be rounded to 20 and a count of 14 would be rounded to 10. Data on income levels is aggregated to the nearest thousand dollars and rounded to the nearest five thousand dollars. This rounding can affect the results obtained from calculations, including calculating percentages. Results may be distorted, especially when dealing with small numbers.

For confidentiality reasons, Taxfiler data is also subject to suppression whenever data collection areas comprise less than 100 taxfilers or when individual data represents less than 15 taxfilers. Furthermore, when one category in a two-category data cell is suppressed, the second category must also be suppressed to avoid disclosure of confidential data by subtraction (called residual disclosure)<sup>30</sup>. This includes data on income, gender, age and area. It is expected that both data suppression and data rounding may be significant, especially given the relatively small permanent population within the Town of Cochrane – making it difficult to present accurate calculations for the number of households that may be experiencing challenges with housing affordability.

Taxfiler data collects and organizes information based on *economic households* (i.e., persons living together as a single interdependent economic unit – or family) whereas Census data collects and organizes information based on *census households* (i.e., persons living together within a single housing unit regardless of economic relationship or interdependency). Thus Census data would record two single individuals living as roommates in a single apartment as one household, while the Taxfiler data would record these individuals as two separate households (unless the two individuals filed their income tax returns as either a married or common-law couple).

Taxfiler data also differs from Census data in that Taxfiler data collects and organizes information based on postal codes whereas Census data collects and organizes information based on municipal boundaries. Therefore, the physical boundaries used to delineate Taxfiler data do not always coincide with those boundaries used to delineate Federal Census data. In areas where postal codes overlap between municipal boundaries – as may be the case for residents living just outside of Town boundaries and receiving mail via Rural Route – households on both sides of the Town boundary will share a similar postal code and therefore be included as residents of the Town. Similarly, Taxfiler data for Cochrane may include households living outside the Town boundaries but who collect their mail using a Town of Cochrane post office box.

It should also be noted that some of the data used in this study may be outdated. For example, the Taxfiler data used in this study is from the 2006 tax year (the most recent data available). Household incomes have likely increased in Cochrane over the past two

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*



years. For example, minimum wage increased from \$7.00 per hour to \$8.40 per hour on April 1, 2008 (an increase of 20.0%). This increase, while very significant for some low-income households, would not have been reflected in the 2006 Taxfiler data. Other household data used in this study is also from 2006 – the 2006 Statistics Canada Federal Census. Changes have likely occurred in the community since 2006 as a result of continued population growth and significant increases in housing costs.

### **3.0 Expected Impacts of Data Limitations**

For the reasons described in Section 2.0 above, Taxfiler figures used in this study may be over-representative of the actual number of households living *within the municipal boundaries* of the Town of Cochrane. For example, the 2006 Taxfiler data records a total of 7,350 economic households living in the Cochrane area. However, the 2006 Federal Census data records a total of 4,830 census households living within the Town boundaries. Thus, the Taxfiler data records approximately 2,500 more economic households than census households – a significant difference.

*These various challenges make the following estimates of housing affordability levels in Cochrane approximations at best*



