



# MUNICIPAL CENSUS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
OF WOOD BUFFALO

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Census 2021 was conducted on Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) would like to extend its sincere thanks to the residents of the Municipality for their cooperation throughout Census 2021. The reporting of this statistical information could not be accomplished without the communities continued willingness to participate in enumeration. The Municipality is sincerely grateful to all members of our Municipality's business community, project accommodations, care facilities and social profit institutions, for their collaboration and commitment throughout the Census 2021 campaign. Further, the Municipality would like to thank all census enumerators, field coordinators and internal departments.

## CENSUS 2021 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Census 2021 was uniquely conducted during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, plans for a Census 2020 were halted just weeks prior to the originally intended launch date. The Census team was required to adapt and conduct the census in 2021.

The intention of Census 2021 was to understand population, demographic and dwelling inventory change since Census 2018. This executive summary aims to provide key information summarized from the full Census 2021 report. For a more detailed understanding of information highlighted in this summary please see the full Census 2021 report located ([insert link](#)).

Participation in Census 2021 by residents was voluntary. An extensive communications and advertising campaign was used to inform residents about the census, its timelines, and the benefits of enumeration. Four methods were used to capture enumeration during Census 2021: Door-to-door, Online self-enumeration, telephone enumeration and population estimation.



# POPULATION OVERVIEW

The total population for 2021 was 106,059. This reflects a 5% decrease from 111,687 in 2018. The decrease in population is attributed to a 17% decline in the Municipality's non-residential shadow population, located in Project Accommodations. The Urban Service Area's share of the total population was higher in 2021, accounting for 71.6% of the total population, compared to 67.7% in 2018. A breakdown of the total population in 2021 and 2018 is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1 - POPULATION AND DWELLING CHANGE 2018 - 2021

	POPULATION	
	2018	2021
Urban Service Area	75,615	76,006
Rural Communities	3,217	2,740
Project Accommodations	32,855	27,313
<b>Total</b>	<b>111,687</b>	<b>106,059</b>

As illustrated in Table 2, the Municipality's permanent population remained stable only increasing slightly by 0.72% from 75,009 in 2018 to 75,555 in 2021. The number of residential shadow population is higher in 2021 (2,358) compared to 2018 (2,085). Other shadow population are individuals who resided in hotels/motels and non-permanent dwellings<sup>1</sup> at the time of enumeration. The total shadow population count recorded for 2021 is 30,504.

TABLE 2 - POPULATION REPRESENTATIONS 2021/2018

	2018	2021	% Change
Permanent Population	75,009	75,555	0.72%
Project Accommodation Population	32,704	27,313	-16%
Residential Shadow Population	2,085	2,358	13%
Other Shadow Population	1,889	833	-56%

Some neighbourhoods saw large scale population growth in 2021. Abasand saw a population increase of 77%, Beacon Hill 41%, Waterways 18%, Parsons Creek 7%, and Timberlea 2%. The growth in these neighbourhoods can be attributed to continued rebuilding efforts since the 2016 Horse River Wildfire.

All other neighbourhoods in the USA saw a decline in their neighbourhood population. These include Gregoire (-14%), Lower Townsite (-3%) and Thickwood (-6%). Most rural communities also saw a decrease in population, which is consistent of trends observed in 2018.

Resident mobility within the Municipality was also assessed during Census 2021. The top four provinces of origin for the Municipality are: Alberta (55%), Newfoundland and Labrador (13%), British Columbia (9%) and Ontario (9%).

Information collected on individuals who have lived here before Census 2018, suggests the Municipality has been a long-term home for many throughout the years. Specifically, 17% of people have lived in the Municipality for more than 20 years, followed by 32% who have lived here for 11-20 years and 30% who have lived here 6-10 years.

The Municipality continues to have a young population, with slightly above 42% of the population between the ages of 20 and 44. The largest population cohort is the 35-39 age group which accounts for 11.2% of the total population.

Consistent with past trends, 60% of residents self-identify as Caucasian or Euro Canadian. The second largest ethnic group in the Municipality is South East Asian (7.2%), followed by South Asian (6.7%), First Nation (4%) and African (3.2). Indigenous Peoples, in general, represent 7% of the total population.

FIGURE 1 - AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION 2021

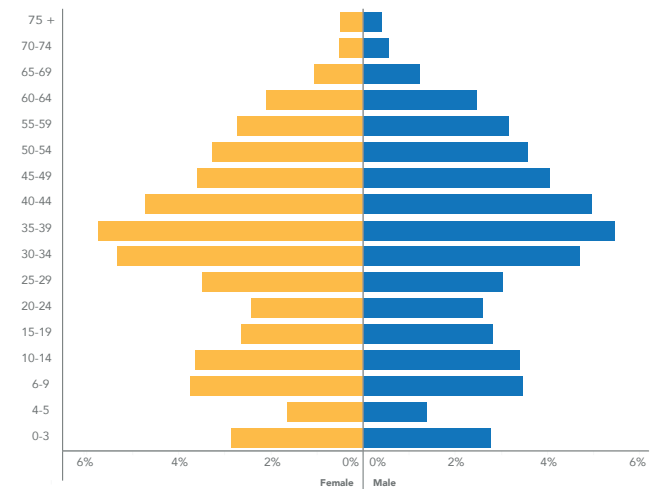
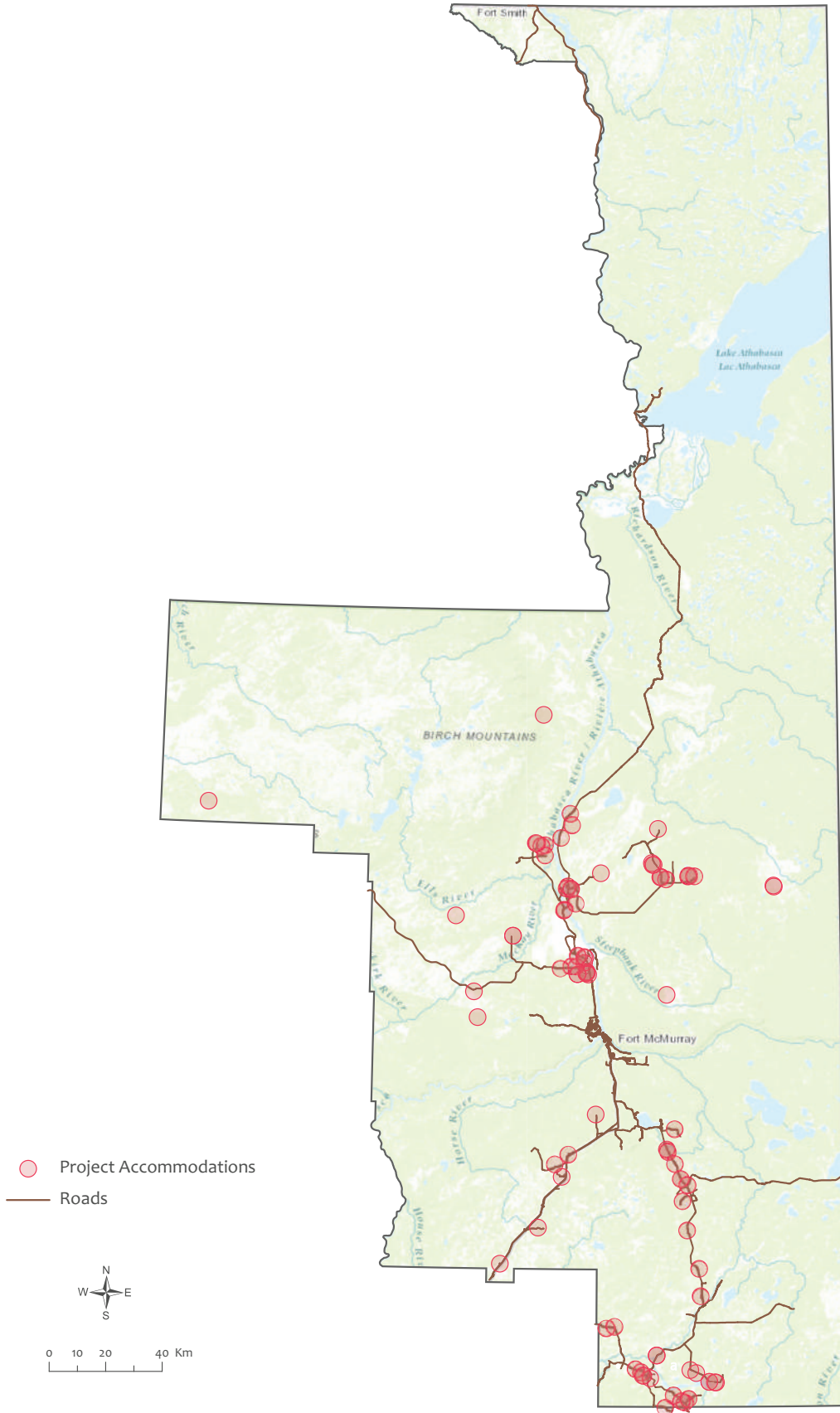


FIGURE 2- MAP OF PROJECT ACCOMMODATIONS WITHIN RMWB

1 Non-permanent dwellings are defined as Collective Dwellings which include lodging/rooming houses, hotels, motels, nursing homes, hospitals, staff residences, communal quarters of military camps, work camps, jails, missions, and group homes.





# DWELLING OVERVIEW

The total number of dwellings increased by 12%, from 28,281 in 2018 to 31,643 in 2021.<sup>2</sup> The total number of occupied dwelling units in 2021 is 28,499.<sup>3</sup> This represents a 12% increase from the Census 2018 where the total number of occupied dwelling units of 25,526. This increase can be attributed to the continued rebuild of dwellings since the 2016 Horse River Wildfire. Additional increase in the number of dwelling units can be ascribed to multifamily developments, constructed since Census 2018. The total number of Project Accommodations in the Municipality decreased from 2018 levels to a total of 68<sup>4</sup> active and enumerated Project Accommodation facilities.

The number of vacant dwellings recorded in 2021 has reduced 57% compared to 2018.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the number of non-contacted dwellings was also reduced by

22%. Information collected in Census 2021 notes that there was a large decrease in the total number of vacant dwellings within the USA of 63%. The reason for this decline is due to Population Estimation being used to determine a dwelling's occupancy status. Further, Census 2021 highlights an increase of vacant dwellings within the rural communities (16%).

Single-detached dwellings continue to be the dominant form of housing in the Municipality. They account for 41.86% of all dwellings. Apartments/condos are the second most common form of housing in the Municipality accounting for 26.13%. Town homes account for 10.3% of dwelling types. Manufactured homes accounts for 9.27% of all dwelling types. It should be noted that census staff continue to improve their identification of dwelling typology within the Municipality annually.

## OCCUPIED DWELLINGS COMPARISON 2021-2018

Dwellings <sup>6</sup>	USA		Rural Communities		Total		Total Change 2018-2021
	2018	2021	2018	2021	2018	2021	
Occupied Dwellings*	24,447	27,499	1,079	1,000	25,526	28,499	12%
Vacant Dwellings*	2,040	779	118	139	2,158	918	-57%
Non-contacted Dwellings*	585	430	12	33	597	463	-22%
Not-Enumerated* <sup>7</sup>	0	1,716	0	47	0	1,763	
<b>Total Count of Dwellings<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>27,072</b>	<b>30,424</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>28,281</b>	<b>31,643</b>	<b>12%</b>

# CONCLUSION

The RMWB continues to be a dynamic Municipality with an increase in its permanent population, and a notable decrease in the shadow population. Additionally, the Municipality continues to welcome new residents each year, while supporting strong neighbourhoods and

communities of residents who have remained here long term. Further, there has been an increase in dwellings since 2018. For more information and details on information and data highlighted within this summary. Please see the full Census 2021 report.

2 Total number of dwellings does not include Project Accommodation or Collective Dwelling facilities  
 3 Occupied dwellings include dwellings for which Population Estimation was used to collect information.  
 4 Project Accommodations not decommissioned as of the census 2021 reference date. See <https://www.rmwb.ca/en/permits-and-development/resources/Documents/Latest-Census-Report-2018.pdf> for details on census 2018 Project Accommodations count.  
 5 Vacant and non-contact dwellings include dwellings for which Population Estimation was used to collect information.  
 6 Dwellings with an asterisk include dwellings for which Population Estimation was used to capture information.  
 7 In 2021, there were a total of 1763 dwellings not enumerated. There were no non-enumerated dwellings in 2018. Therefore, the proportion of change in this figure is 100%.  
 8 The total number of dwellings does not include vacant lots and residential address where dwellings were under-construction at the time of enumeration



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