23
24

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

State of the Island

Introducing the State of the Island Report

This *State of the Island Report* is the first official step in creating a provincial, Island-wide Land Use Plan.

Land use planning requires a series of inputs to create policies that support thriving and vibrant Island communities. This *State of the Island (SOTI) Report* satisfies the local data component for the upcoming land use plan. With this report's completion, the Province can use this information to support the upcoming public components of the land use planning process.

The main outcomes for the *SOTI Report* are to:

- Provide an overview of the natural environment, built environment, economic and social conditions across the Island that need to be considered for land use and/or land ownership; and
- Identify land use trends that are cause for concern, and which may require land use intervention.

Thematic Areas

Four interdependent, overarching thematic areas contribute to the long-term sustainability of communities: **community, society and quality of life, natural environment, built environment, and the economy.** Each area contributes uniquely to the resilience and vibrancy of communities, ensuring that they are well-equipped to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. The *SOTI Report* uses these four systems of sustainability as a sorting mechanism for investigations, with the thematic areas identified below.

Community, society and quality of life

- **Population and Demographic Growth:** Population growth, urban and rural growth, and population growth factors.
- **Demographics at a Glance:** Age, gender, people with disabilities, language, visible minorities, and Indigenous peoples.
- **Cost of Living:** Income, shelter costs, housing access and affordability, goods and service cost, and food security.

Natural Environment

- Land use and conservation trends
- Forests
- Wetlands
- Wildlife
- Air quality
- Water resources
- PEI's coastline and coastal hazards
- Climate change: impacts and response
- Climate change and vulnerable populations

Built Environment

- **Municipalities:** Settlement within municipalities, previous studies, Special Planning Areas (SPAs), settlement patterns, sprawl, strip development, leapfrog development, building on private roadways, subdivisions, and vacant parcels.
- **Housing:** Residential development, housing starts, housing completes, housing retrofits, Indigenous participation in land use planning, and heritage preservation.
- **Ownership:** Housing investment, housing tenure, and taxation.

Executive Summary

- **Infrastructure and transportation:** Transportation, interprovincial transportation, infrastructure, energy and electricity, high-speed internet availability, waste management, and water and wastewater services.

- **Social Services:** Community facilities, healthcare, schools, and emergency services.

Economy:

- Employment workforce
- Gross Domestic Product
- Agriculture
- Aquaculture and fisheries
- Food economy sector
- Tourism
- Non-profit sector

Key Findings

While each of the four thematic areas will influence or be influenced by land use planning and sustainable development principles, some variables and existing trends have been more influential than others. The following highlights some of the key findings from the current investigation.

- As a province, PEI is growing at its fastest rate in history, with a growth rate that has exceeded the Canadian average since 2016.

- PEI's inconsistent local governance (municipal) framework provides challenges for growth management.

- PEI experienced higher rates of relative cost increases from May 2021 to January 2023 compared to the rest of Canada.

- PEI has experienced a loss in agricultural lands over time, and is at risk of losing up to 50% of its current agricultural land by 2050.

- PEI has lost significant forest lands.

- Income and associated living costs are not equally distributed across the Island.

- There is a visible social and economic divide between urban and rural residents of PEI.

- The majority of the Island's subdivision development has been happening in unincorporated areas.

- PEI has a disproportionately high number of secondary houses ('investment properties') (27%) in comparison to other provinces.

- PEI's seasonal economy puts pressure on workers in times of crisis.

- PEI has the highest proportion of private land ownership (88%) of any province in Canada.

- There is inherent vulnerability in being an Island during climate change.

- PEI spends a substantial amount of money per capita maintaining public roadways.

The *SOTI Report* provides rationale for each of these key findings, and includes an initial series of policy factors for consideration (Section 4).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Prince Edward Island is the ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq and the Government of Prince Edward Island respects the Mi'kmaq as the Indigenous People of PEI.

State of the Island

CONTENTS

Prepared Winter 2024

STATE OF THE ISLAND REPORT

Spring 2024

The State of the Island Report was developed with significant support and input from multiple departments within the Government of Prince Edward Island.

Prepared by

intelligent futures

DV8 Consulting

The **State of the Island Report** was commissioned by the Province of Prince Edward Island's Land Division of the Department of Housing, Land and Communities in 2023. The creation of the report was undertaken by a consulting project team of Intelligent Futures and DV8 Consulting.

In collaboration with multiple staff from the Department of Housing, Land and Communities, the team worked to gather, summarize, and analyze data provided across various PEI departments. Special thanks to the Department of Housing, Land and Communities staff for data collection, analysis and writing support, in particular:

- Aaron Bautista
- Henry Liao, DA
- Frank MacEachern, BEP
- Glenda MacKinnon-Peters, FEC, PEng.
- Alex O'Hara, MRTPI, MIPI, AssocRICS, CAHP-intern, EpT, MSci
- Megan Williams, BCD, MCIP, RPP
- Robert Zilke, MCIP, RPP, MPlan

The Interdepartmental Committee on Land use (lighted right) includes representatives from multiple departments within the Government of Prince Edward Island, and provided the project team with valuable data and context.

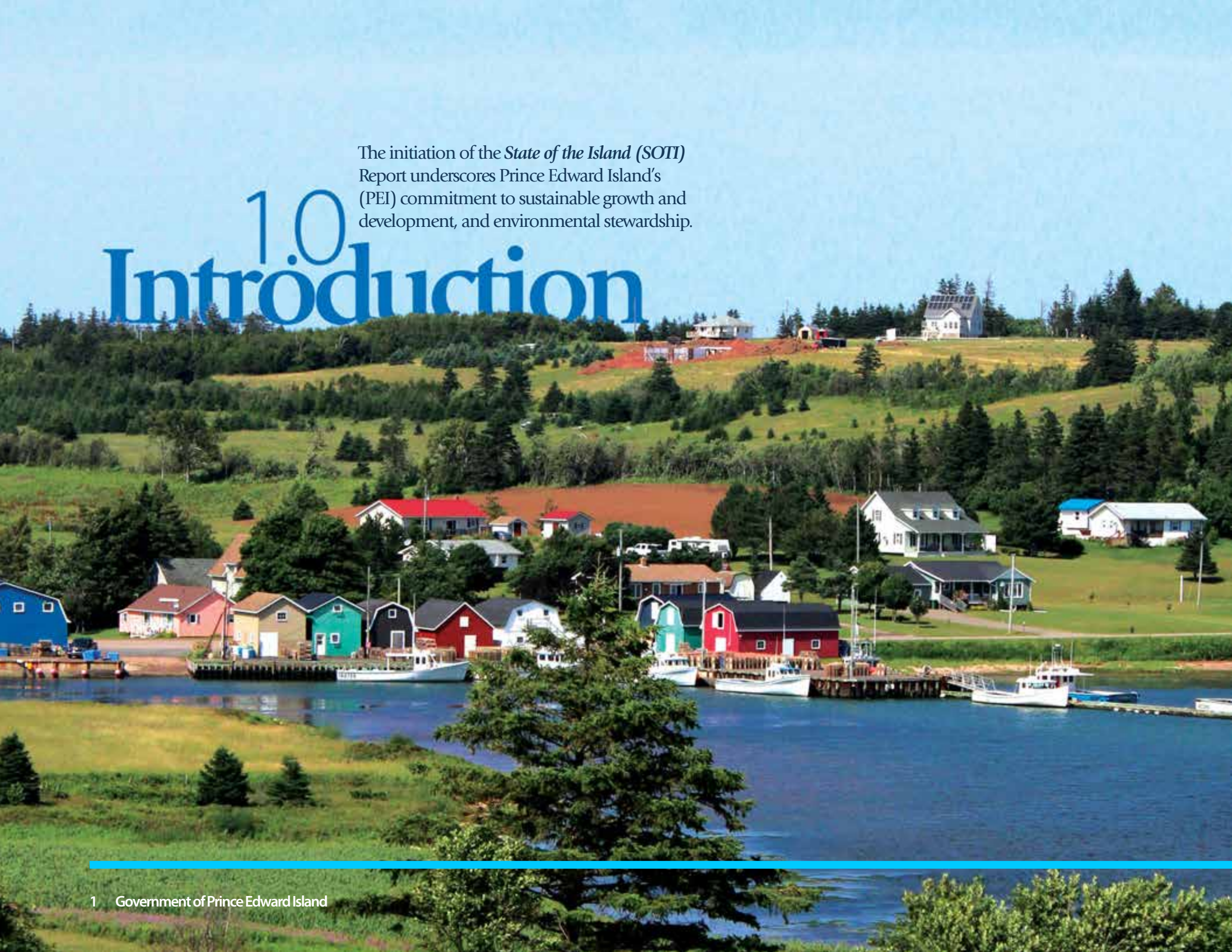
The writers of this report extend their gratitude to all contributors for their valuable expertise and dedicated time. It is important to clarify that their involvement does not constitute an endorsement of this Report, nor does the information presented necessarily align with the perspectives of the participants or the departments they represent.

- Nancy Costa, Executive Council Office
- Boyce Costello, Finance
- John Cummings, Education and Early Years
- Patrick Davis, Housing, Land and Communities
- Mark DeMone, Health and Wellness
- Jason Doyle, Housing, Land and Communities
- Todd Dupuis, Environment, Energy, and Climate Action
- Vernon MacIntyre, Social Development and Seniors
- Kate MacQuarrie, Environment, Energy, and Climate Action
- Spencer Matheson, Executive Council Office
- Nick Policelli, Justice and Public Safety
- Jeff Ready, Economic Development, Innovation and Trade
- Amie Swallow Macdonald, Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture
- Andrea Triolo, Agriculture
- Kal Whitnell, Workforce, Advanced Learning and Population
- Stephen Yeo, Transportation and Infrastructure

In addition to this group, the project team would like to thank the additional 40+ staff and members of supporting organizations who helped to review, and circulate data for inclusion in the *SOTI Report*. This input, in addition to the various work done to date, made the creation of the *SOTI Report* possible.

1.0 Introduction

The initiation of the ***State of the Island (SOTI)*** Report underscores Prince Edward Island's (PEI) commitment to sustainable growth and development, and environmental stewardship.



The Province of Prince Edward Island commissioned Intelligent Futures and DV8 Consulting in the summer of 2023 to prepare the *SOTI Report*, a compilation and analysis of existing datasets from across government departments. The project was borne from the recognition of the intrinsic relationship between land use planning and the broader objectives of government's policies.

The *SOTI Report* explores current conditions and trends in the natural and built environments, as well as the economic and social conditions necessary to identify underlying issues. It also explores the implications these factors may have on current land use patterns and future land use planning policies. While largely focused on land-based findings from the natural and built environments, the *SOTI Report* also includes information on people, economic trends that may impact future development, retention, and Island diversity and inclusion.

Welcome to the *State of the Island (SOTI) Report* 2023 - 2024.

1.1 Background and Planning Context

Land use planning is not a new topic for PEI, in fact, the issue has been studied for over 50 years. There has been an extensive body of work completed prior to this *SOTI report*, including:

- The *Royal Commission on Land Ownership and Land Use* (1973, the "Raymond Report"),
- The *Royal Commission on the Land* (1990, the "Boylan Report"),
- The *Round Table on Resource Land Use and Stewardship* (1997),
- The *Commission on Land and Local Governance* (2009, the "Thompson Report"),
- The *Commission on the Lands Protection Act* (2013, the "Carver Report"),
- The *Task Force on Land Use Policy* (2014), and
- The *Land Matters Advisory Committee* (2021).

These studies, conducted by teams of experts and advisory commissions, included in-depth research, public consultations, and stakeholder engagement. While they tackled different issues relating to land ownership and land use on PEI, a consistent thread throughout all these documents is the recognition that current land use and development trends are unsustainable. Each report identified key actions, made recommendations, and provided advice, emphasizing the importance of a province-wide planning framework and policies to address the specific issues identified.

Currently, the Land Division of the Department of Housing, Land and Communities has direct planning authority for 82% of the land area within the province (with the exception of First Nation or Federal land). This includes both unincorporated lands and incorporated municipalities that do not have Official Plans or planning and development bylaws. The remaining 18% of land consists of 29 municipalities each with their own municipal land use planning authority. Under the *Planning Act*, the Province also retains the responsibility to review the municipal official plans, land use bylaws, and related amendments for municipalities that have planning authority. To ensure that all lands are developed responsibly as the province continues to grow and change, the province has committed to the development of an Island-wide *Land Use Plan* (LUP).

1.2 Land Use Planning Influence

A review of policy documents and reports from across government departments, reveals a consistent call for the adoption of a provincial land use planning framework. These reports note that planning is deemed essential for addressing the interconnected issues relating to sustainable transportation, environmental conservation and wildlife management, coastal hazards and the impacts of climate change, and population growth and the housing affordability crisis.

The *Sustainable Transportation Action Plan* and the *Active Transportation Strategy* are key policy documents that highlight the connections between land use planning and transportation infrastructure development.

These documents emphasize the need for an holistic approach to planning that integrates the development of homes, businesses, and public spaces with transportation options that are efficient, eco-friendly, and conducive to reducing reliance on personal vehicles. This approach not only aims to decrease greenhouse gas emissions but also underscores the importance of land use planning in achieving sustainability and climate mitigation goals, as well as promoting health and wellness by supporting Islanders in making active, cleaner, and healthier transportation choices.

Land use planning in PEI is also a critical component for environmental conservation and wildlife management. It is essential to mitigate the adverse effects of development on wildlife and to ensure a balance between growth and conservation. The *State of the Forest Report* provides insights on the importance of maintaining forest ecosystems for their ecological services, including wildlife habitat. The *State of the Coast Report* emphasizes the vulnerability of coastal ecosystems and the need for policies that manage the intersection of natural coastal processes and development, which is crucial for the protection of diverse shore types and the species which inhabit them. The *PEI Wildlife Policy* underscores the province-wide responsibility to conserve wildlife and habitats, recognizing the interconnectedness of natural resource sectors and the socio-economic benefits derived from wildlife. Without coordinated land use planning, unregulated development can lead to habitat destruction and environmental degradation. This complicates conservation efforts and undermines the sustainability of wildlife and environmental resources.

The *State of the Coast Report* and the *Coastal Policy Interim Recommendations Report* recently noted that strategic land use decisions, especially for coastal floodplains, are necessary for climate change adaptation and the growth and development of resilient coastal communities. The *Climate Change Risk Assessment* identifies key climate-related risks, emphasizing the need for a coordinated response to mitigate impacts. The absence of integrated planning makes it more difficult to balance priorities between growth and development with the urgent need to safeguard PEI's coastal environments against the threats of climate change and coastal hazards.

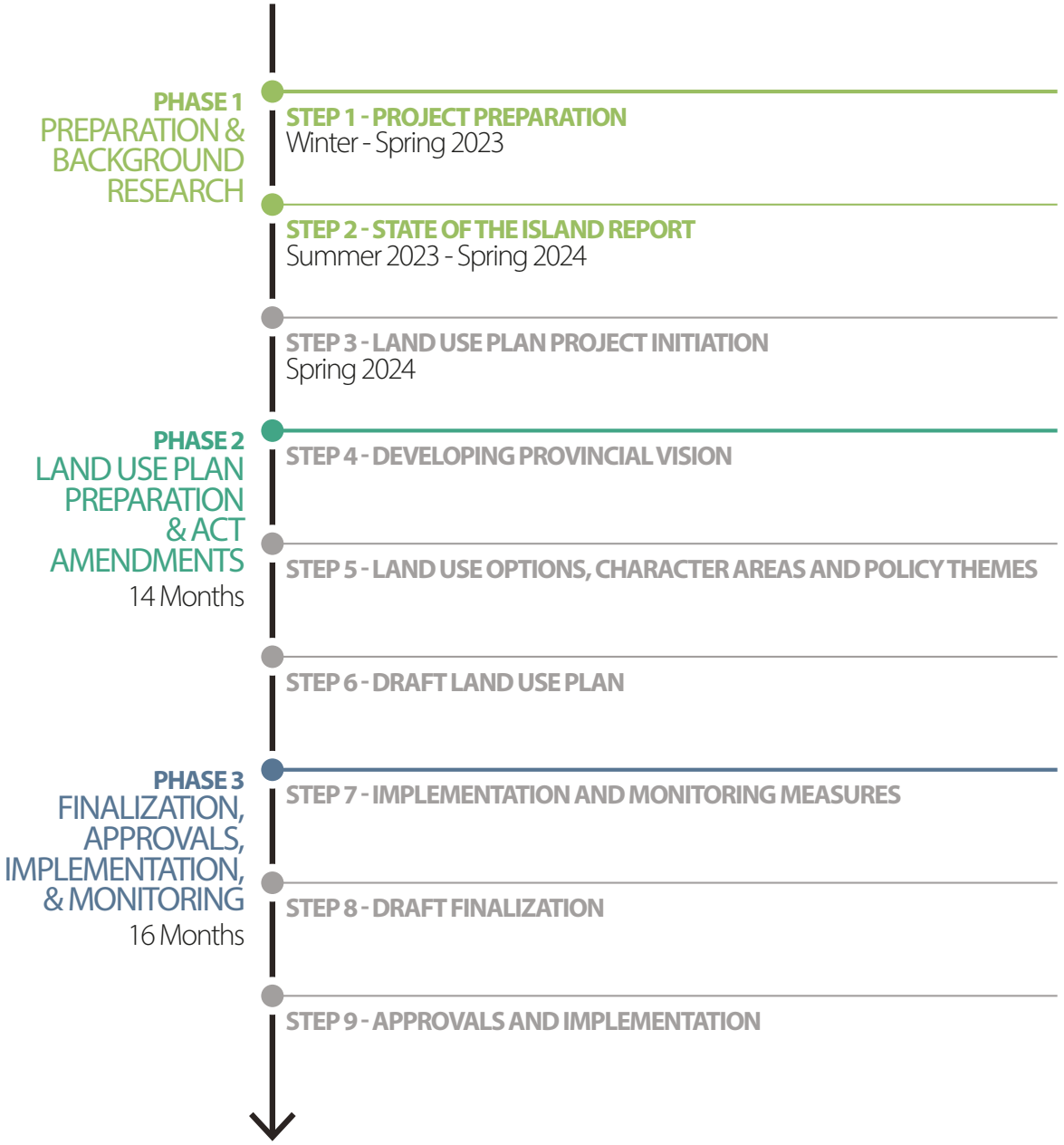
In addressing the housing crisis and accommodating projected population growth, PEI has recognized the indispensable role of land use planning in shaping the future of its communities. The newly released *Building Together Prince Edward Island Housing Strategy 2024-2029* outlines a comprehensive approach to address challenges with housing and permitting, and to work closely with municipalities.

The *Building Together* strategy emphasizes the importance of land use planning in supporting the government's policies on growth and the development of housing. It focuses on the efficient use of land, promoting higher-density developments, and ensuring that new housing developments are integrated with existing infrastructure and services. By guiding where and how development occurs, land use planning can help PEI meet its housing needs while preserving the character of communities and protecting the environment.

These policy documents and reports from government departments are an example of approaches that underscore the significance of land use planning in achieving sustainable development, environmental conservation, and the effective management of natural and built environments. The repeated calls from various government departments for the development of a comprehensive land use planning framework in PEI highlights a critical gap in policy and governance. This gap currently poses a challenge to sustainable development, environmental integrity, and the welfare of the Island's communities and natural ecosystems.

Step One: The SOTI Report

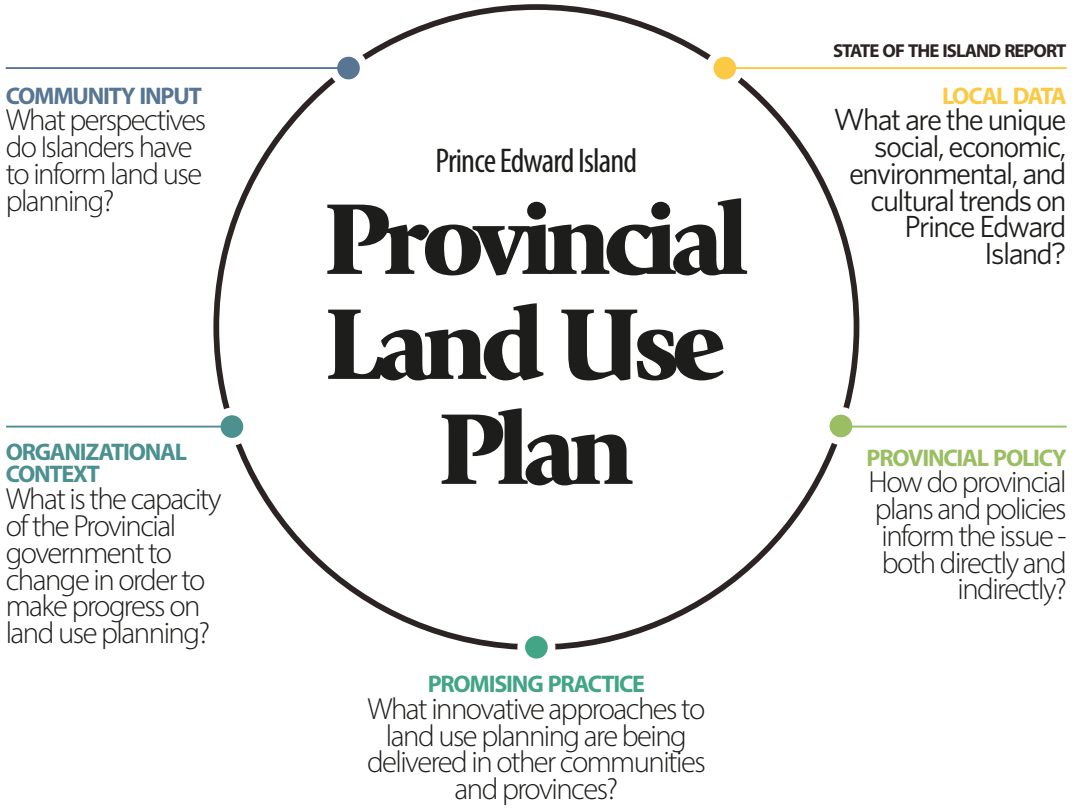
It is important to note that the *SOTI Report* is only the first step in the larger process of creating an Island-wide LUP. The intention for this stage of the process is to provide the most up-to-date information possible to support the development of the LUP.



Land use planning requires a series of inputs to create policies to support thriving and vibrant Island communities, including community feedback, local data, plans and policies, organizational context, and promising practices. This *SOTI Report* satisfies the local data component for the upcoming land use plan. With this report's completion, the province can use this information to support the public components of the land use planning process.

The main outcomes for the *SOTI Report* are to:

- Provide an overview of the natural environment, built environment, economic and social conditions across the Island that need to be considered in the creation of new policies relating to land use and land ownership; and
- Identify land use trends that are a cause for concern and which may require revision.



1.3 Guiding Framework

To ensure the long-term resilience and sustainability of communities in PEI, it is important to implement informed and thoughtful solutions that serve the needs of today's populations without jeopardizing the capacity and opportunities for future residents. By prioritizing the well-being of both current and future generations, and the natural environment upon which they depend, it is possible to pave the way for the creation of communities that are not only more resilient, but also more vibrant and inclusive for all.

There are four interdependent, overarching thematic areas which contribute to the sustainability of Island communities. Understanding the significance of each area is essential for effective land use planning.

1. **Community, society and quality of life:** Supporting and enhancing diversity and inclusion is essential for creating communities where everyone can live their best lives. This thematic area focuses on the creation of inclusive environments where all individuals have equal opportunities to contribute to (and benefit from) societal progress. Land use planning plays a crucial role in this by ensuring that community spaces are accessible, safe, and designed to meet the diverse needs of its residents. More specifically, land use policies may address affordable housing, accessible public services, and spaces that encourage social interaction and cultural expression. Planning also contributes to building a cohesive society that values and protects its cultural and heritage features.

2. **The natural environment:** Protecting our natural resources and effectively managing and planning for climate change is foundational to sustainable development. The natural environment provides essential elements, like clean air and water, which are critical for human health and biodiversity. In land use planning, recognizing the value of ecosystem services is vital for developing strategies that minimize environmental degradation, preserve ecosystems, and ensure that natural resources are available for future generations.

Figure 1: Diagram showing the four systems of the *State of the Island Report.*

3. **The built environment:** The built environment encompasses our homes, workplaces, public buildings, and infrastructure, all of which play a significant role in determining our quality of life. Designing and building our communities to meet the current and future needs of residents is a key aspect of sustainability. Effective land use planning must consider the integration of sustainable building practices and energy efficiency, as well as accessibility to create spaces that promote social interaction, economic activity, and environmental responsibility.

4. **The economy:** Building a resilient and supportive economic environment is crucial for the well-being of society. A sustainable economy is one that can withstand local and global challenges, adapt to change, and provide opportunities for all members of the community. In the context of land use planning, this involves creating spaces that support a variety of industries and which encourage innovation, as well as fostering environments where businesses can thrive while being ecologically responsible. It must also ensure that economic growth does not come at the expense of environmental degradation or social inequality.

Understanding and integrating these four thematic areas into the future LUP will be essential in order to achieve sustainable development goals. Each area contributes uniquely to the resilience and vibrancy of communities, ensuring that they are well-equipped to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. The *SOTI Report* uses these four systems of sustainability as a sorting mechanism for investigations. By focusing on the interdependencies of these areas, PEI can create holistic and inclusive land use strategies which promote the well-being of all community members as well as the natural environment on which all Islanders depend.

2.0 Key Findings

While each of the four thematic areas will influence or be influenced by land use planning and sustainable development principles, some variables and existing trends have been more influential than others. The following highlights some of the key findings from the current investigation. More information for each area's respective application to planning can be found in Section 4.0: Thematic Implications for Land Use Planning.

1. **As a province, PEI is growing at its fastest rate in history,** with a growth rate that has exceeded the Canadian average since 2016.[1] As of October 1, 2023, PEI's population is estimated at 175,853 people. With an increase of 4.0% over October 1, 2022, the most recent addition of 6,707 people is the largest year-over-year population increase for PEI since 1951.[1] Immigration and interprovincial migration are the leading factors for PEI's population increase. That said, the Island has a high proportion of transient immigrants, with the lowest immigrant retention rate of any province, which indicates more can be done to retain residents.[2]

2. **PEI's inconsistent local governance (municipal) framework provides challenges for growth management.** The lack of province-wide municipal governance has significantly influenced land use planning and sustainable development in PEI. Currently, the Land Division of the Department of Housing, Land and Communities has direct planning authority for 82% of the land area within the province (with the exception of First Nation or Federal land). This includes both unincorporated lands and incorporated municipalities that do not have Official Plans or bylaws. The remaining 18% of land consists of 29 municipalities, each with their own municipal land use planning authority. Most small municipalities on the Island do not have the capacity to own and/or maintain infrastructure, or to undertake local land use planning. The resulting regulatory framework provides inconsistencies for how growth and development is managed across the Island.

3. **PEI experienced higher rates of relative cost increases from May 2021 to January 2023** compared to the rest of Canada. [3] When looking at historic Consumer Price Index rates, in times of inflation PEI residents appear to be impacted more than other Canadians. With shelter, food, and service costs increasing across the country, PEI has Canada's highest rates of child food insecurity, and a benchmark home price that far outpaces the Island's average

increase in household income since 2017.[4,5] Recent nation-wide increases in interest rates have also impacted the housing market through an increased cost of materials.[6] With the highest inflation rates in PEI seen in the costs of basic life necessities, inflation disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations. These individuals cannot absorb the increases, particularly those who are already food insecure or who are in precarious housing situations.

4. **PEI has experienced a loss in agricultural lands over time, and is at risk of losing up to 50% of its current agricultural land by 2050.** Since 1921, the number of farms on PEI has decreased by 91%.[8] The gradual shift away from small family farms has resulted in fewer but significantly larger, more intensive farming operations. In 2021, there were just 1,195 farms, but the average size of each farm had increased 374%, from a modest 89 acres to an average of 422 acres.[8] In 2023, the PEI Federation of Agriculture noted that based on the rate of loss of agricultural land between 2016 and 2021, the Island will lose 50% of its farmland by 2050 unless more action is taken to preserve it.[7] Agriculture and its related economic sectors of agri-tourism, manufacturing, and distribution make up a large portion of PEI's economic profile. Continued farmland loss will significantly impact the Island's economy.

5. **PEI has lost significant forest lands.** Sprawling development, paired with the impacts of climate change, have contributed to the perpetual loss of PEI's forestry lands. Covering approximately 43.2% of the Island in 2020, PEI's forests have seen a net decrease in area since 2010.[9] Estimates show that 5,350 ha of forest have been created, but concurrently, 9,350 ha have been lost.[9] In reality, the Island's forested land area has been decreasing since the 1990s, indicating a consistent trend.[9] Factors contributing to this decline include land conversion for agriculture and development. Without proper land use strategies that prioritize ecological conservation alongside development needs, the Island may continue to lose these ecologically and economically valuable landscapes.[7]

6. **Income and associated living costs are not equally distributed across the Island.** PEI's highest median income is found outside of urban areas. The greatest inequality exists in urban areas and Kings County.[10] The urban areas of Charlottetown, Summerside and Stratford have more households spending 30% or more of their total income on shelter costs than rural areas, with 33% of urban area households consisting of people living alone.[10] Social supports as well as a variety of housing forms across the Island are important from a land use perspective, but must be concentrated in those areas that best support populations experiencing inequalties.

7. **A significant urban-rural divide has land use implications for PEI.** Compared to the rest of Canada, where more than 80% of Canadians live in urban areas, fewer than half of Islanders live in urban areas.[11] While long-term trends have led to urbanization in communities like Charlottetown, Stratford, and Summerside, a visible social and economic urban-rural divide has lead to significant land use impacts. For example, taxation is higher per acre and per property for urban and municipal planning municipalities when compared to unincorporated areas, or municipalities without planning jurisdictions.[12] Combined with PEI's high frequency of leapfrog development, this reality poses challenges for those centres providing services which are used by residents from areas with lower taxes.

8. **The majority of the Island's subdivision development has been happening in unincorporated areas.** Over the past 10 years, the Province and the municipal planning authorities have approved in excess of 4,000 subdivision requests for more than 6,500 new lots, primarily for residential purposes.[13] In the same time period, 70% of subdivision applications were for the future development of rural lands in unincorporated areas. Only 30% of the applications were for lands in municipalities, half of which were located within municipal planning authorities.[13] Uncoordinated growth and development can deter the creation of vibrant and accessible spaces, and often inhibits small municipalities from providing local services for their residents.

9. **PEI has a disproportionately high proportion of secondary houses ('investment properties') (27%) in comparison to other provinces.** This is particularly true for out-of-province (6.4%) and non-residents (5.5%). [14] Many of these secondary homes are cottages existing on private or seasonal roads and are not accessible year-round for housing. There are a series of policies in place to limit off-Island ownership in the *Lands Protection Act,* and differential rates are used in property taxation. Secondary housing investment must remain appropriate to the services available to an area, to ensure emergency and other services are not strained by development on seasonal or private roads.

10. **PEI's seasonal economy puts pressure on workers in times of crisis.** PEI has a substantial seasonal economy in the tourism, aquaculture, fishing, and agriculture sectors. The Island experiences year-over-year changes that are more dramatic than the Canadian average, leading to increased vulnerability in times of inflation.[3] The furthest eastern and western points on the Island, as well as the area surrounding Borden-Carleton, have a labour force that is more than 26.9% casual or seasonal.[11] Those employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (9% of labour force), retail (11%), or accommodation and food services (11%) are among the most vulnerable to seasonal economic pressures.[11] Planning will need to consider the housing and economic accommodations necessary to support those in the seasonal workforce, as well as ways to support a four-seasons economy.

11. **PEI has the highest proportion of private land ownership (88%) of any province in Canada.** This is particularly significant considering only 11% of Canada is privately owned.[15] As a result, the Island also has the lowest proportion of protected lands of any Canadian province or territory. The land use plan is necessary to ensure the Island-wide protection of natural resources on private lands.[16] Stewardship strategies will need to be considered in tandem with land protection policies to effectively preserve PEI's natural viewscapes and heritage.

12. **There is inherent vulnerability in being an Island during climate change.** PEI's natural vulnerabilities stem from its geographical and environmental characteristics. The coastline is susceptible to coastal erosion and flooding, which is exacerbated by rising sea levels and storm surges. PEI's sole reliance on groundwater for its fresh water puts significant pressure on water resources, making them vulnerable to contamination and over-extraction. The land use plan will need to ensure the protection of the Island's coastlines, with increased resilience measures and socioeconomic supports, as well as policy protection for future servicing and groundwater.

13. **PEI spends a substantial amount of money per capita maintaining public roadways.** PEI has 4,411 km of paved public roadways, the highest per capita of all Canadian provinces.[17] The public cost of maintaining and upgrading PEI's roads is significant, and continues to rise each year. The Province spends approximately $445 per capita / per year to maintain the Island's road network.[18]

    Car travel is the primary form of commuting for 92.4% of Islanders. In 2021, only 1.4% of Islanders used public transit as their main mode of commuting, compared to 7.7% nationally.[11] With nearly half of these individuals commuting for less than 15 minutes, there is a significant opportunity to encourage more active forms of transportation.

Endnotes

1. Prince Edward Island Statistics Bureau (2023, December 19). "PEI Population Report Quarterly: Population Report, Third Quarter 2023", https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/finance/pei-population-report-quarterly.

2.Yarr, K. (2023, January 2). "P.E.I. immigrant retention improves but still Canada's worst by far." CBC News, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-immigrant-retention-2020-1.6696405.

3. Statistics Canada. Table 18-10-0004-01 Consumer Price Index, monthly, not seasonally adjusted.

4. Statistics Canada (2023). Table 11-10-0012-01 Distribution of total income by census family type and age of older partner, parent or individual.

5. Yarr, K. (2023, October 18). "Home prices on PEI back on the rise after 6-month dip in 2022." CBC News, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-house-prices-september-2023-1.6999763.

6. Prince Edward Island Housing Corporation (n.d.) 2022 - 2025 Action Plan. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/dpcec-3827_cmhc-pei_national_housing_strategy_action_plan_-_web.pdf.

7. Federation of Agriculture (2023) Farmland Loss. Presentation to the Government of PEI Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability. September 21, 2023. Available at: https://www.assembly.pe.ca/committee-archive

8. Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0153-01 Land use, Census of Agriculture historical data

9. Prince Edward Island (2020) State of the Forest Report. Province of Prince Edward Island.

10. Statistics Canada. (2022a, July 13). Map 1 after-tax income grew in all provinces and territories, except in Alberta and in Newfoundland and Labrador. After-tax income grew in all provinces and territories, except in Alberta and in Newfoundland and Labrador.

11. Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023.; https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed December 20, 2023)

12. Department of Finance, Government of PEI (2023, December 13). (rep.). Taxation Control Report.

13. Province of Prince Edward Island. (2023, October). Approved Subdivisions 2013 - 2023. Prince Edward Island.

14. Statistics Canada. (2023, October 18). Canadian Housing Statistics Program: Real estate investors, 2021. The Daily. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231018/dq231018b-eng.htm

15. Government of PEI (2019, December 10). "Public Lands", https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-water-and-climate-change/public-lands.

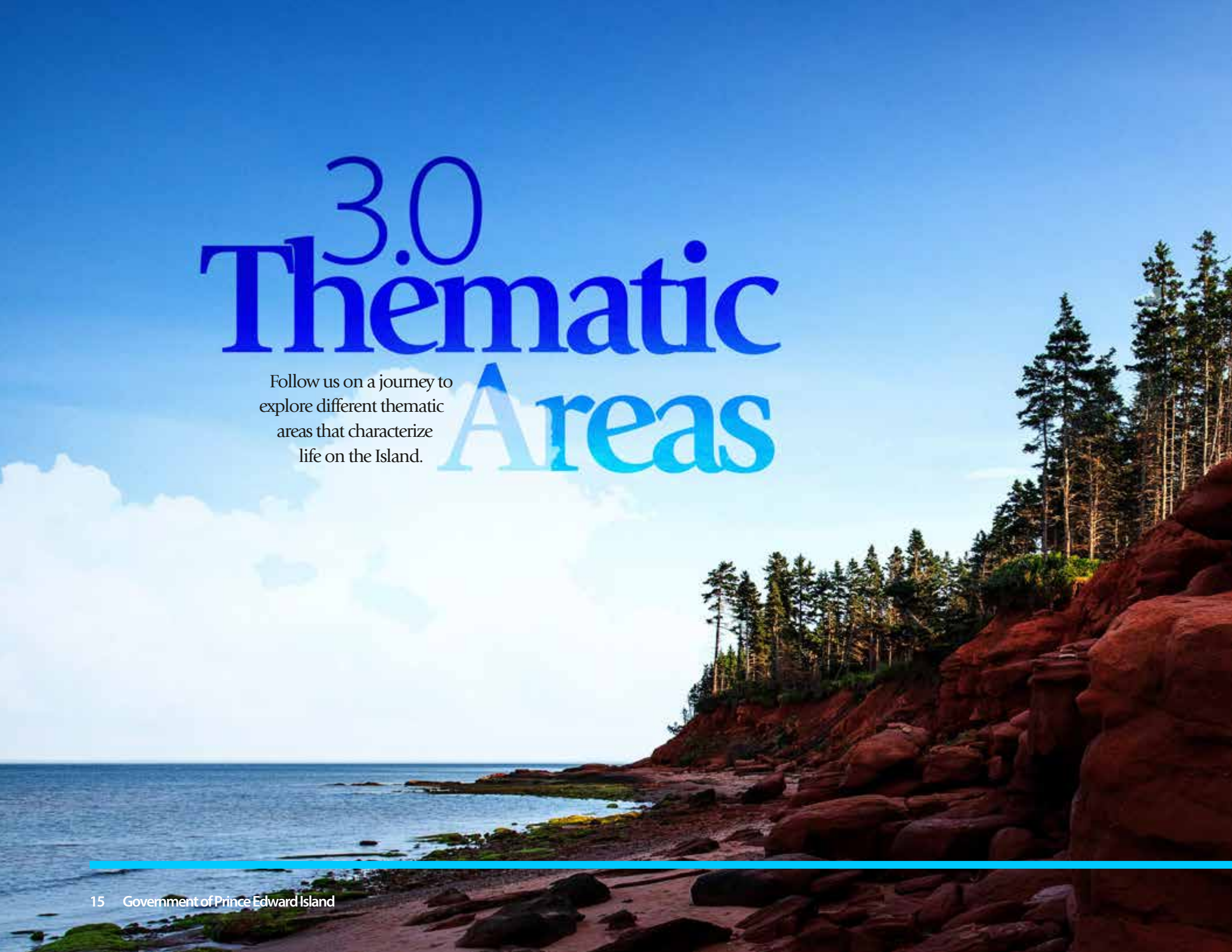
16. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (June 2021). "The Grades are In: A Report Card on Canada's Progress in Protecting its Land and Ocean". https://cpaws.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/cpaws-reportcard2021-web.pdf.

17. National Road Network. (2024, January 19). NRN - GeoBase Series - NRN Prince Edward Island SHAPE

18. Prince Edward Island, Canada (2023). Estimated Maintenance Costs Per year/Per Km Based on Road Classification.

3.0 Thematic Areas

Follow us on a journey to explore different thematic areas that characterize life on the Island.

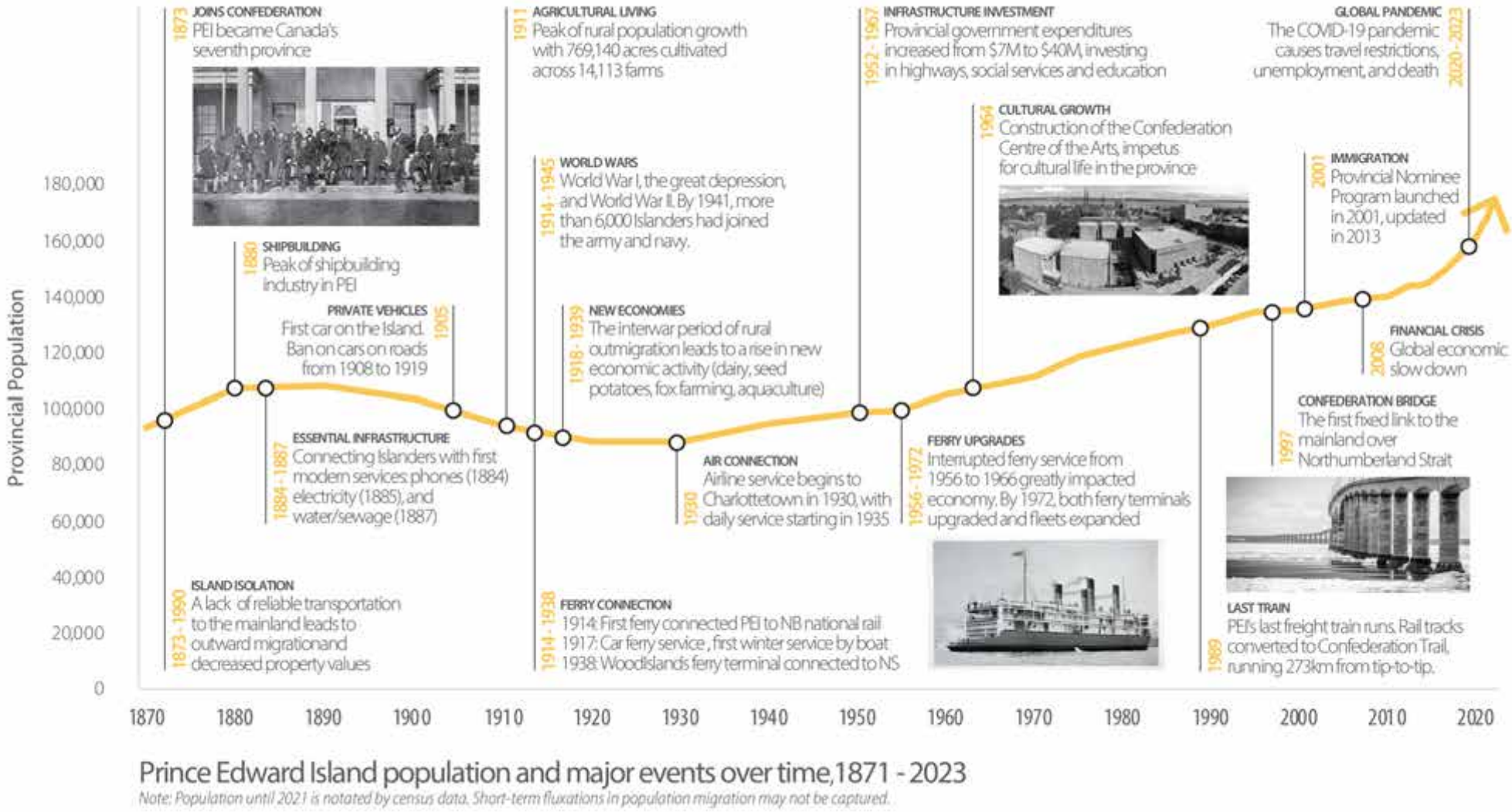


Community, society and quality of life

3.1.1 Population and Demographic Growth

PEI, or Epekwitk, as it is known by the Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq, is Canada's smallest and most densely populated province. With just 5,656 square kilometers (km^2) of land, it is host to a range of both rural and urban areas. PEI is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The Epekwitnewaq Mi'kmaq have stewarded the lands and waters of Epekwitk for centuries.

Today, PEI is home to an estimated 175,853 people.[1] Since becoming Canada's seventh province in 1873, the demography of PEI has continued to be shaped by a number of historical factors that have alternatively attracted migration to the province or seen residents leave in search of economic opportunities (see **Figure 2**). In the late 19th century, PEI saw the peak of its shipbuilding industry and a boom in agricultural exports. At the same time, a lack of reliable transportation options to the mainland limited the extent of growth. In the 20th century, the global impacts of war and depression led to economic challenges and limited growth on the Island, in spite of a diversifying agricultural sector.



Prince Edward Island population and major events over time,1871 - 2023

Note: Population until 2021 is notated by census data. Short-term fluxations in population migration may not be captured.

Figure 2: Timeline of population with major events overtime.[2,3,4,5]

Post-war government spending focused on a process of modernization, prompting improvements to provincial transportation infrastructure, social services, education, and cultural offerings across the province.

In the last 30 years, a more connected PEI has seen the arrival of new opportunities and challenges. In 1997, the inauguration of the Confederation Bridge provided a new link for travel to the mainland from the Island, via New Brunswick. Emphasis on connectivity has also taken the form of increased access to telecommunications in rural areas, allowing for new remote work opportunities. Meanwhile, the joint federal-provincial implementation of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) in 2001 has led to an increase in international migration.

While this focus on connectivity has brought these opportunities to the Island, it is not without challenges. Like much of the world, PEI saw the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and with it, social distancing and multiple layoffs within affected businesses. Since reopening the Island, the province continues to experience rapid growth, with a substantial increase in interprovincial migration.

The most notable growth and demographic trends of the past 10 years are detailed below.

Population Growth

Since 2016, the population of PEI has grown at the fastest rate in the province's history, eclipsing the Canadian average. In 2017, the Province released *Recruit, Retain and Repatriate: A Population Action Plan for Prince Edward Island*. The plan set a population target of 160,000 residents by 2022 in order to support the province's aging population and mitigate an outward migration trend.[6] According to the province's quarterly population reporting, PEI surpassed its target in 2021, and by the end of the year, the population had reached 163,775 (see **Figure 3**).[7]

PEI's population was estimated to be 175,853 people on October 1, 2023. This represented a 4.0% increase over October 1, 2022, reflecting the addition of 6,707 people and the largest year-over-year increase PEI's population since 1951.[1]

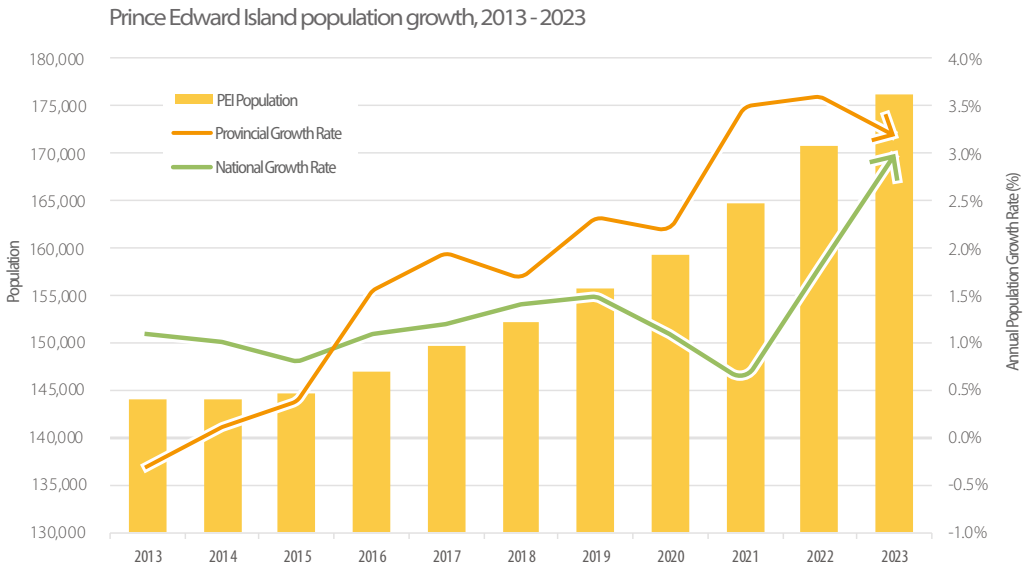
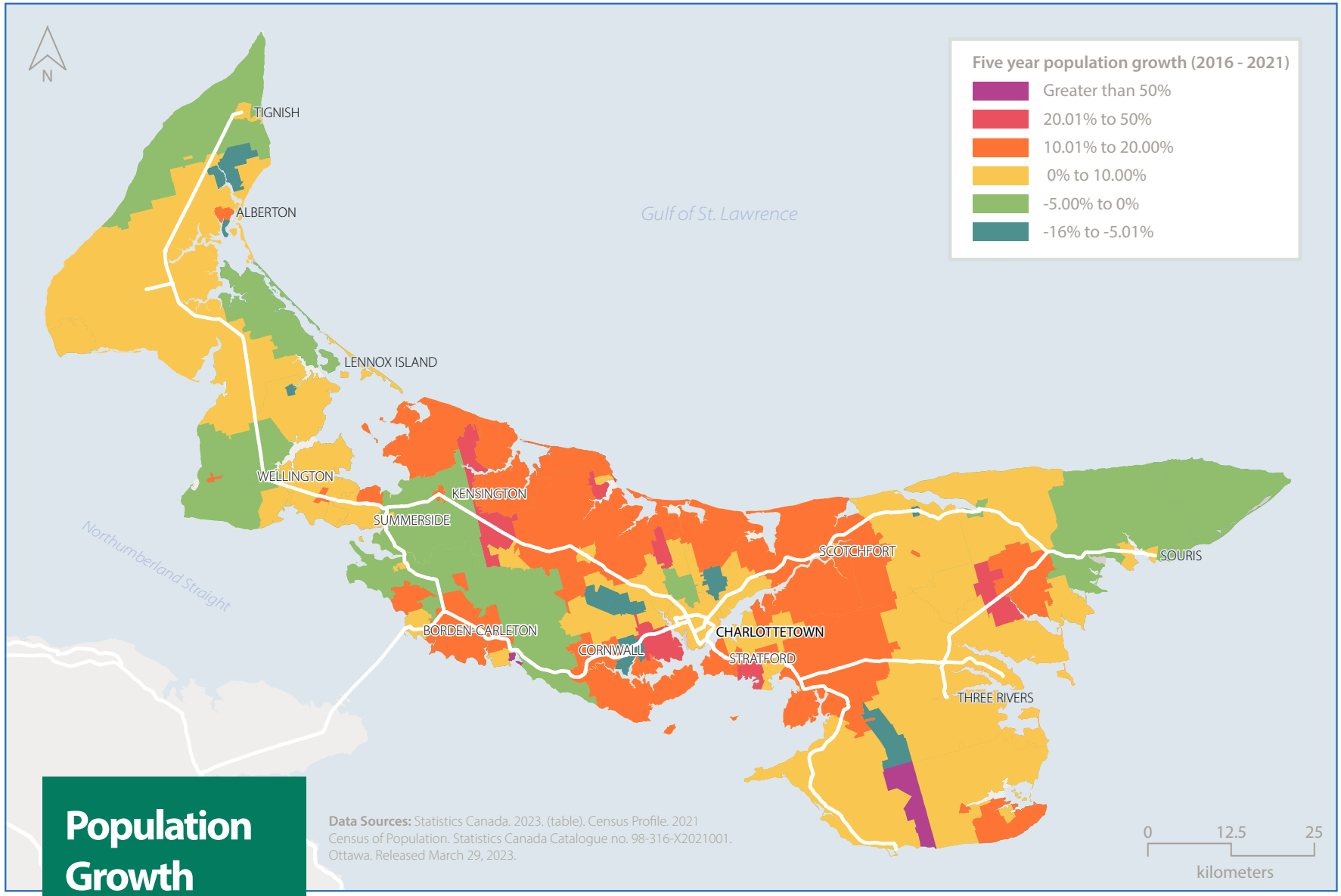


Figure 3: Island annual growth rate over the past 10 years.[1]



Population Growth 2016-2021

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays population change for PEI over a five year period from 2016 to 2021. Note: Map areas are deliniated by Census Sub Divisions (CSD). Some CSDs include islands with no population - in this case, the data is representative of the greater CSD.

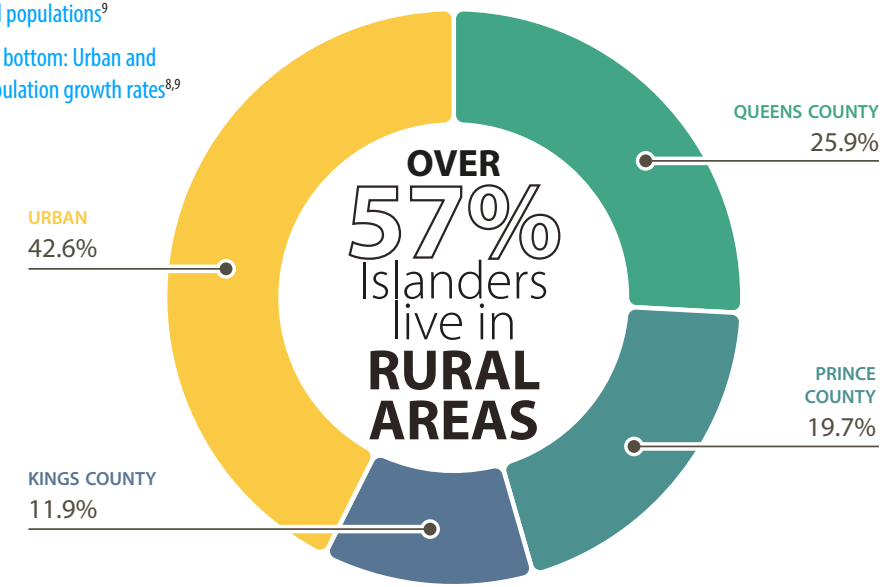
This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

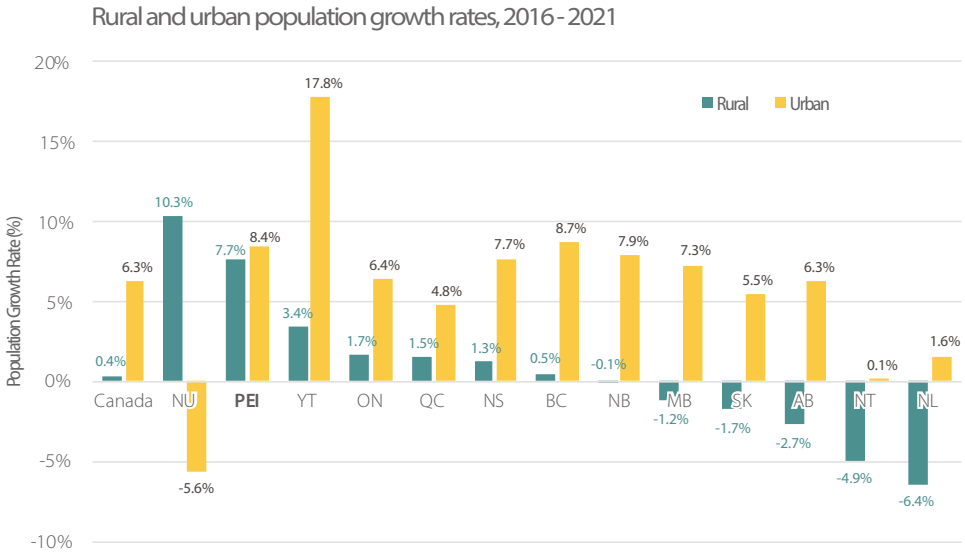
Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

Figure 4, top: PEI's urban and rural populations[9]

Figure 5, bottom: Urban and rural population growth rates[8,9]





As stated in the *PEI Population Framework*, PEI, like other regions, is now grappling with pressures such as housing availability and affordability, access to primary care, early learning and child care, and pressures on educational infrastructure and programming. However, it's essential to acknowledge that population growth also brings about positive impacts. A growing population can contribute to economic development, cultural diversity, and a broader talent pool.

The map on the prior page displays those areas within PEI which have undergone population growth or loss between 2016 and 2021. The largest net increase in population is found in the municipalities of Charlottetown, Summerside, Stratford, Cornwall, and Three Rivers. Other areas exhibiting moderate-to-high net population growth include the Rural Municipalities of West River and North Shore, as well as the unincorporated area found on the north shore of central Queens County.

Urban and Rural Growth

Population growth across the Island has not been distributed uniformly. While more than 80% of Canadians live in urban areas, less than 43% of Islanders live in the urban areas of Charlottetown, Stratford, and Summerside.[8,9] Over time, Island residents have moved away from farms and in rural areas to live in suburban and urban communities, with urban populations continuing to grow at a faster rate than their rural counterparts.

From 2016 to 2021, PEI's urban population increased 8.4%, compared to a 7.7% increase in rural populations. Rural and urban populations reflected the second and third highest growth rate in Canada during this period.[8]

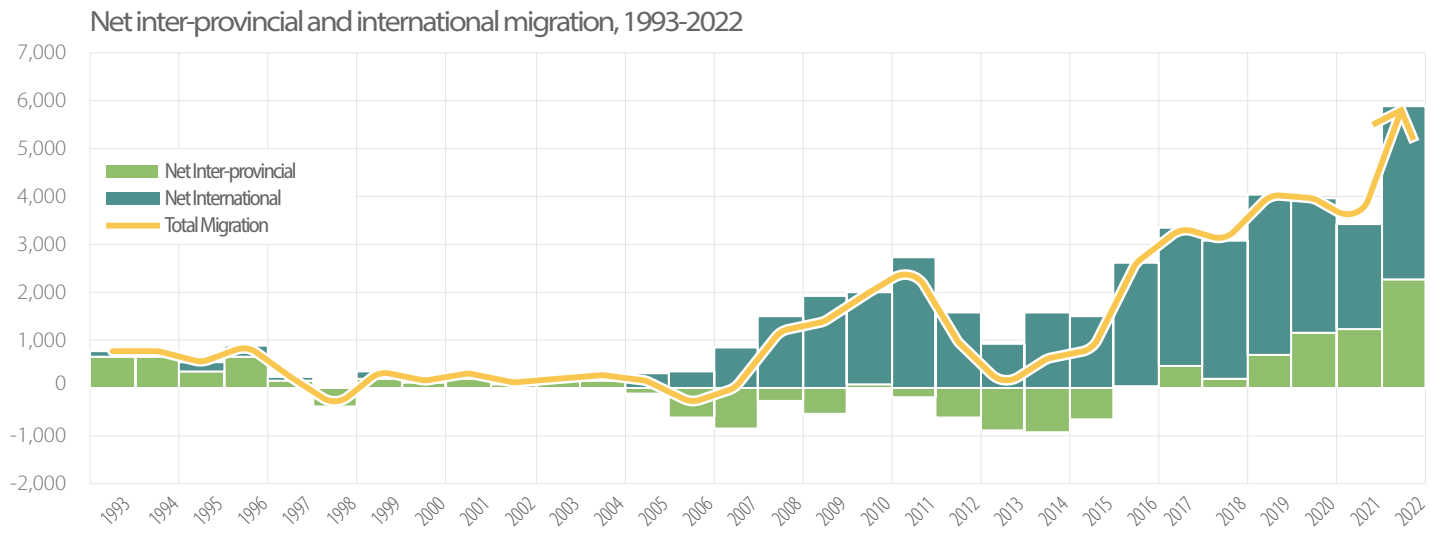


Figure 6: Graph showing net international and interprovincial migration over time[10]

In examining population growth patterns, it is clear that immigration and interprovincial migration are necessary to ensure PEI can continue to support its aging population. The Island's natural growth rate (the number of annual births and deaths) has been low-to-negative in the last 20 years. This natural growth rate has contributed fewer than 300 gains or losses in net population in any respective year.

In the five years preceding 2021, 6% of the population of the Island had moved to PEI from another country. Most of these newcomers settled in urban areas (see **map: International Migration**).

Net immigration in 2021-2022 was estimated to be 5,187 persons; of this group, 3,116 were international immigrants, 2,098 were net non-permanent residents (NPRs), with 233 Canadians abroad returning to the province and 260 immigrants leaving the province.

International Immigration

Immigration rates in PEI have been growing since 2004, following the 2001 adoption of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) as well as other factors that have made PEI an attractive location for new residents.[11] In 2021 and 2022, more than 3,000 people moved to PEI from other countries. With a rate of 18.3 immigrants per thousand people, PEI has the second-highest immigration rate among Canada's provinces, compared to the national average of 11.9 immigrants per thousand.[1] More detailed information on population growth can be found in the *Population Framework*.

The settlement patterns of international immigrants (see **map: International Migration**) indicate that people who have immigrated to PEI in the past five years make up more than 10% of the population in urban areas, and 2.2% or less across rural regions.

Net immigration in 2021-2022 was estimated to be 5,187 persons; of this group, 3,116 were international immigrants, 2,098 were net non-permanent residents (NPRs), with 233 Canadians abroad returning to the province and 260 immigrants leaving the province.[1]

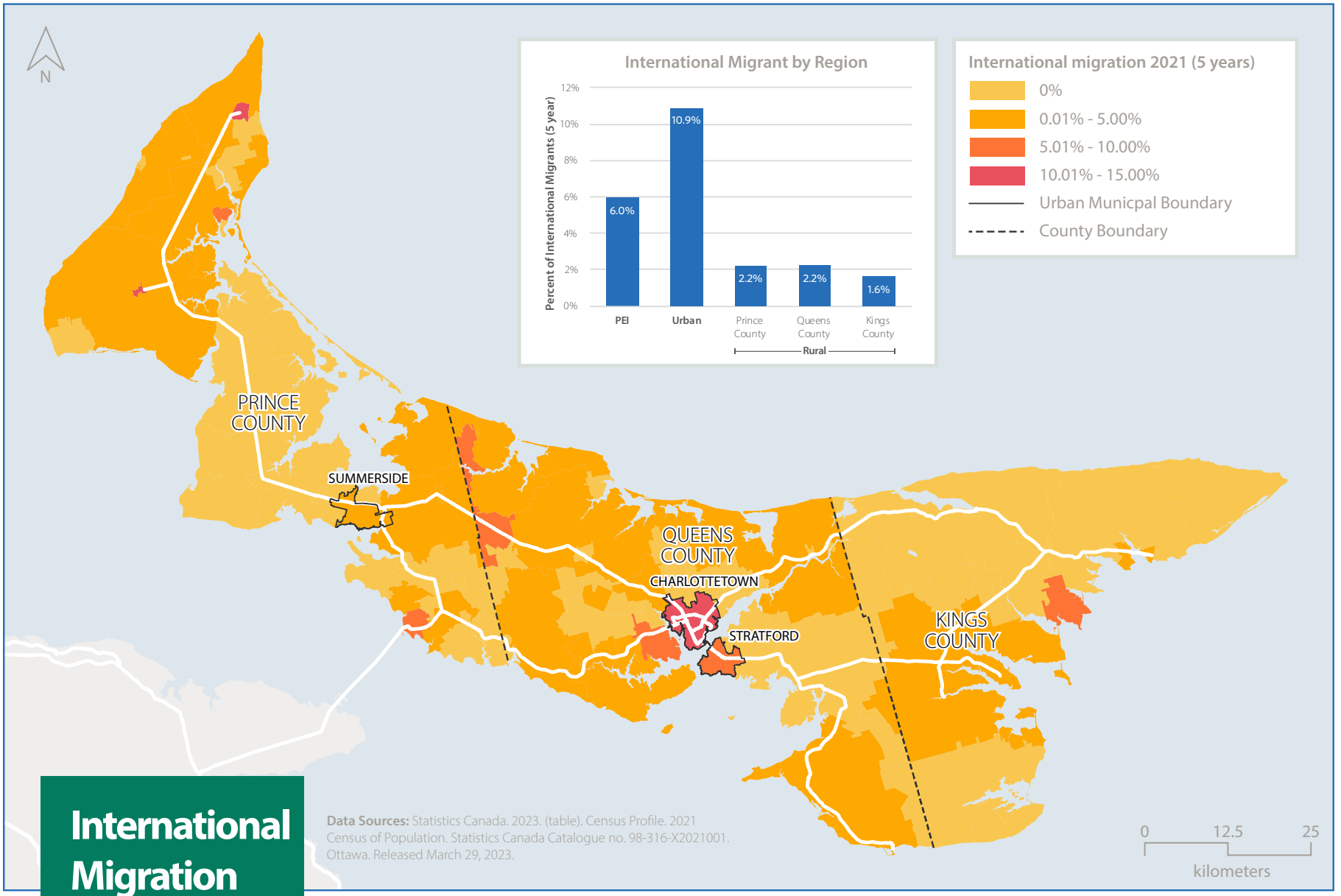
Study and Employment

Non-permanent residents with work permits made up 52.2% of all NPRs in PEI in 2022-2023. Some 37.2% held study permits, 7.5% had both work and study permits, 2.9% held other permits, and asylum seekers were 0.3%.[1] Because of Canada's rules for study permits (requiring employment nomination within a certain amount of time), immigrants with study permits are more likely to move elsewhere after completing a degree than immigrants nominated by family.

An estimated 36.6% of immigrants who first came to Canada after 2016 temporarily on work or study permits or as asylum claimants are ultimately admitted as permanent residents."[12]

On January 24, 2024, The Government of Canada announced it would limit the number of international student permits issued to approximately 360,000 for 2024, a decrease of 35% from the previous year.[13] This was implemented as a response to increased intakes to drive revenues in some institutions, with more students arriving in Canada without the proper supports necessary to succeed. The announcement highlighted "rapid increases in the number of international students arriving in Canada also puts pressure on housing, health care and other services."[13]

> **Takeaway:** The volume of international study permits will largely influence the number of units necessary in urban centres to house these populations.



International Migration

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays the percentage of international migrants during the past 5 years prior to 2021, as a proportion of the total population. Urban areas are defined in PEI as the the City of Charlottetown, City of Summerside, and Town of Stratford.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

Retention

The retention of immigrants has historically proven challenging for PEI, and indeed, the Atlantic provinces at large. A report on immigration patterns from 2010 to 2019 showed that PEI performed poorly relative to other provinces in retaining immigrants arriving through the PNP.[14] After a one-year period, PEI retained 75.8% of provincial nominee program immigrants aged 20 to 54; after a five-year interval, only 38.5% remained in the province.[14] The five-year retention rate is considerably lower than that of the next lowest province, at 60.6%.[14]

Looking at the settlement patterns of international immigrants (see **map: International Migration**) we see that people who have immigrated to PEI in the past five years make up more than 10% of the population in urban areas, and 2.2% or less across rural regions. This is a stark contrast to Interprovincial migrants who have migrated to PEI in the past five years (see **map: Interprovincial Migration**), which make up over 10% of Kings County's rural population, and only 8.6% of the Province's urban population.

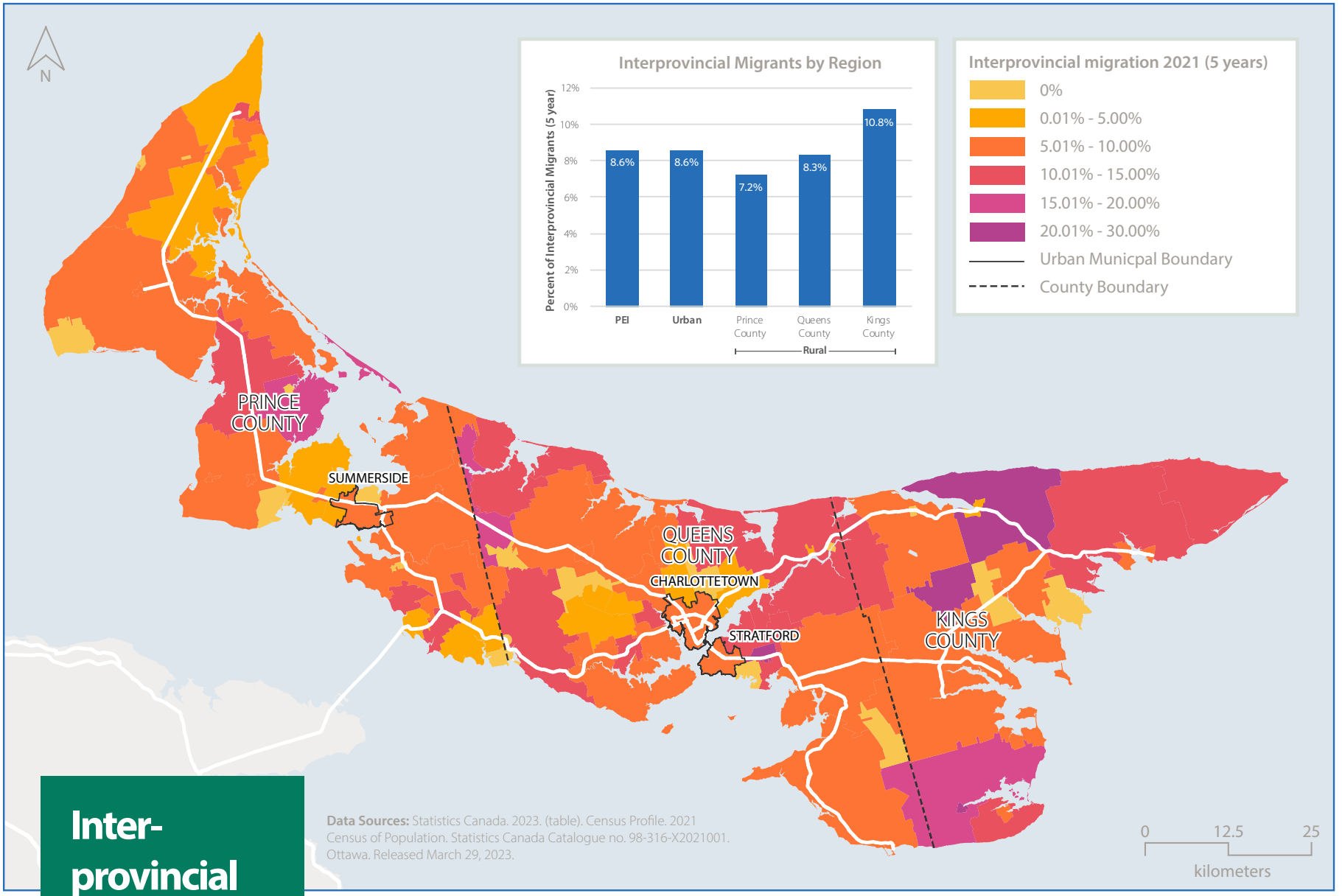
Benefits of International Immigration

Immigration from other countries provides many benefits to the Island, including supporting the working-age labour force, advancing economic innovation and bringing new ideas through a diversified workforce (see Economy). The increase in international immigration also reflects PEI's recent progress in addressing racism and supporting equity, diversity and inclusion actions.

International immigrants are indeed vital to supporting PEI's labour force, and help to support the cultural richness vital to the development of vibrant and inclusive communities. Factors that Statistics Canada and the 2022 results from the Canadian Social Survey found for why immigrants settle in specific cities include the city's support for them to:

- Join existing immigrant communities already established
- Be in close proximity to family or friends in the area
- Have access to jobs, businesses and education prospects
- Be able to access spaces supportive of chosen lifestyle
- Have appropriate forms, locations and costs of housing[12]

Takeaway: To ensure PEI remains attractive to immigrants in the long term, the LUP should ensure that land use policies positively incentivize the creation of diverse and inclusive spaces that support cultural diversity. In addition, the land use plan should continue to incentivize housing and employment access in urban centres.



Inter-provincial Migration

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays the percentage of interprovincial migrants during the past 5 years prior to 2021, as a proportion of the total population. Urban areas are defined in PEI as the the City of Charlottetown, City of Summerside, and Town of Stratford.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

Interprovincial Migration

Interprovincial migration has also seen net records of in-migration over the past 30 years, with the highest net provincial in-migration happening in 2022.[10] Between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, PEI had an estimated net interprovincial migration of +1,587 people, making it the eighth consecutive year of positive net interprovincial migration for the province.[5]

With the majority of interprovincial migrants coming from Ontario, followed by Nova Scotia, Alberta, and New Brunswick from July 2022 to June 2023, there are a series of causes that may be leading to this increase in interprovincial migration.[5]

In terms of settlement patterns, interprovincial migrants who have migrated to PEI in the past five years (see **map: Interprovincial Migration**), make up over 10% of Kings County's rural population, and only 8.6% of the Province's urban population.

The Importance of Demographics to Guide Land Use

A complex relationship exists between land ownership and land use and various demographic factors. While some common socioeconomic factors like age, income and accessibility are commonly considered, other demographic factors have more nuanced connections to land and land management.

Some recent examples of planning practices that intersect with different demographic identities include the following, all of which have been reviewed and considered in the preparation of this State of the Island report:

- Cities Alive: Designing Cities That Work for Women
- Voices of the land : Indigenous design and planning from the prairies
- Ontario Provincial Planning Institute: Urban Planning and Anti-black Racism in Canada

There has already been a push to include intersectional demographic approaches to land management and planning in PEI. In July 2020, PEI initiated a consultation to inform the Land Matters Report. As a part of this consultation, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PEIACSW) submitted feedback on land use in relation to inequality on the Island.[15]

PEIACSW identified that some groups have experienced long-standing inequalities in relationship to land on the Island. "Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous people, women, and children, have faced enforced legal and colonial limits on their ability to own property; while other groups have faced socioeconomic barriers to land ownership (BIPOC, people with disabilities, people with low income, some newcomers to Canada who are less likely to have inherited local land)."[15]

To begin considering the intersectionalities of demographics and land use planning, it is important to establish an understanding of who is on the Island.

Demographics in Prince Edward Island

As PEI has emerged as a regional and national leader in population growth, it is important to understand who Islanders are, across urban areas (Charlottetown, Summerside, Stratford), rural areas (Prince, Queens, and Kings counties), and province wide. Please note that urban areas have been subtracted from counties in the graphics below, to accurately represent rural areas.

5 Year Population Change [9]

Total population growth from 2016 to 2021

In the last five years, all areas of the Island have experienced growth, with urban areas and Queens County experiencing the greatest rates of growth.

20 Year Population Change [9]

Total population growth from 2001 to 2021

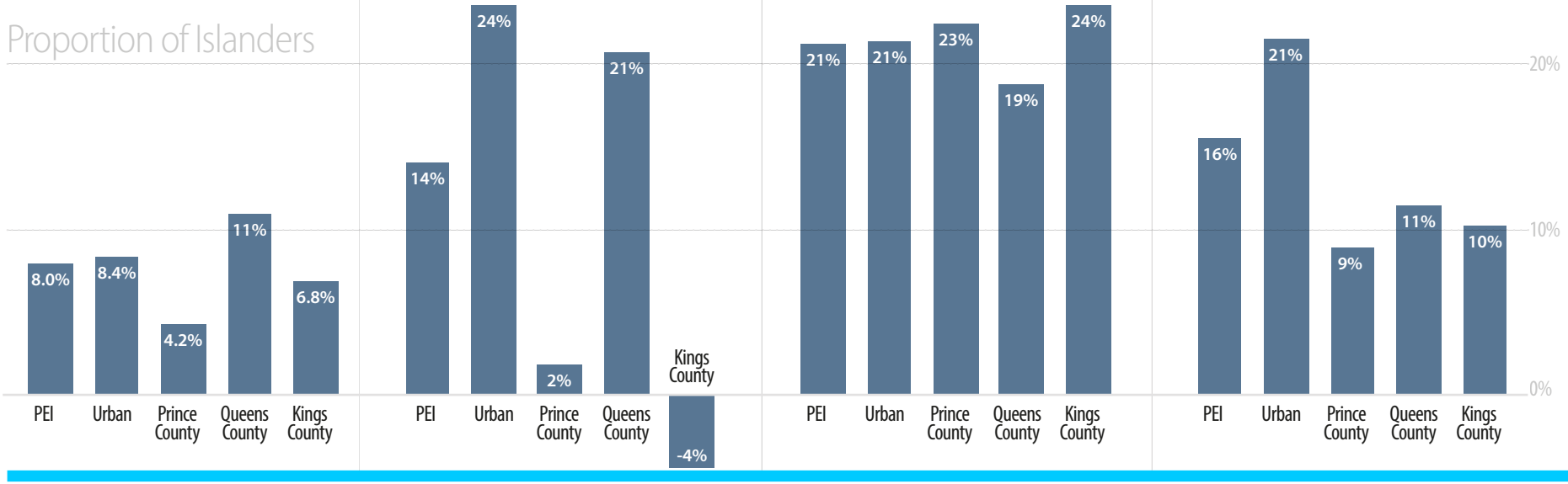
Urban areas and Queens County have experienced the greatest growth, while Prince County and Kings County have seen limited growth and decline respectively.

Older Adults [9]

Like the rest of Canada, PEI's population is aging. There is a higher prevalence of older adults (those 65 years of age and older) in Prince County and Kings County.

Housing Affordability [9]

The percentage of Islanders who paid 30% or more of total household income towards shelter costs. Those in urban areas are experiencing the greatest rates of unaffordable housing.



Living Alone [9]

One-person households are one of the most predominant household types on PEI, representing 29% of all households. The greatest proportion of one-person households are in urban areas and Kings County.

Unemployment Rate [9]

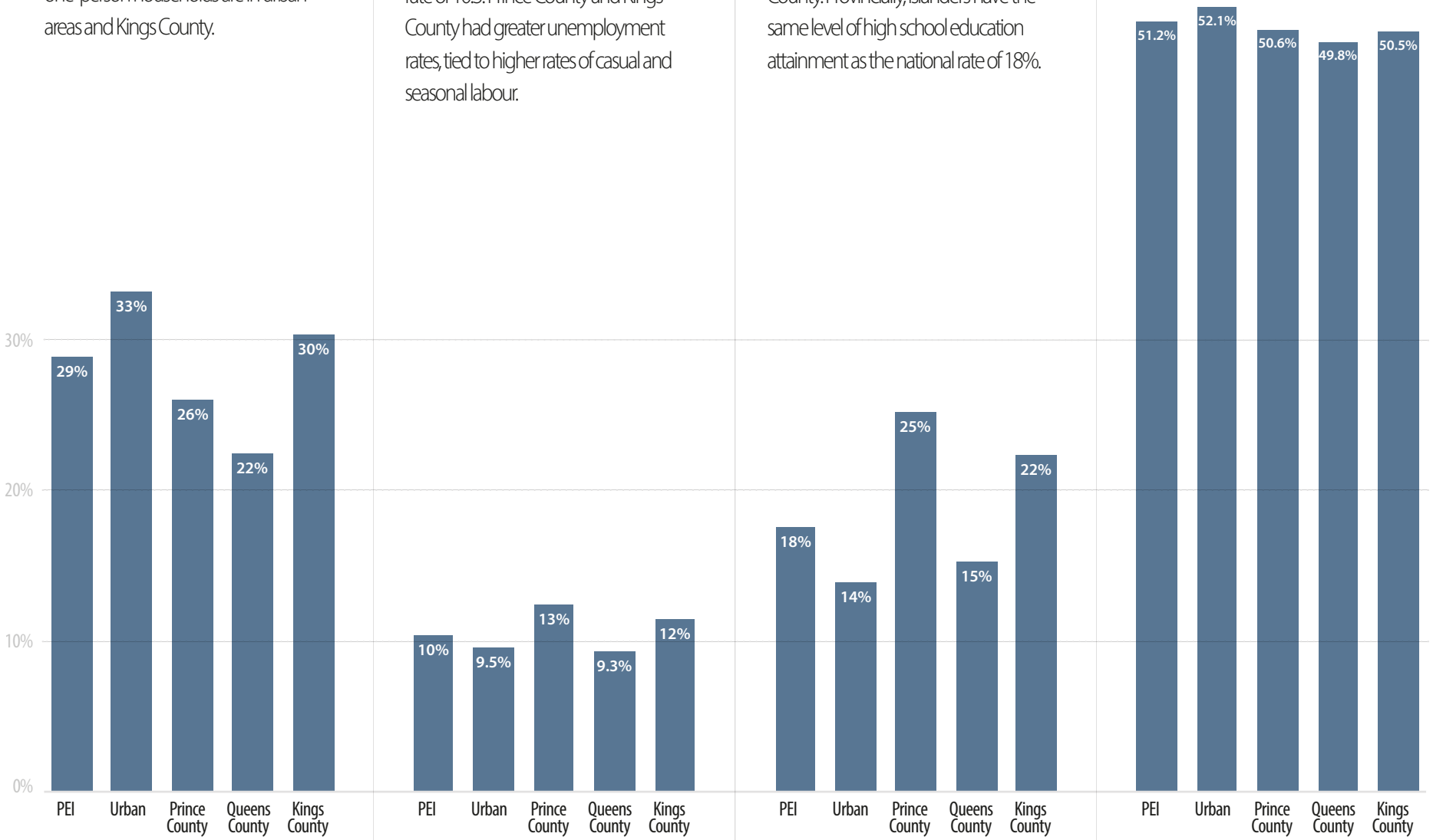
The share of the labor force that is without work, but available for and seeking employment in 2021 was similar to the national unemployment rate of 10.3. Prince County and Kings County had greater unemployment rates, tied to higher rates of casual and seasonal labour.

High School Education [9]

The proportion of Islanders aged 15 years and over with no high school diploma or equivalency certificate is greatest in Prince County and Kings County. Provincially, Islanders have the same level of high school education attainment as the national rate of 18%.

Women + [9]

Women+ accounted for 51.2% of PEI's total population. 'Women+' includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons.



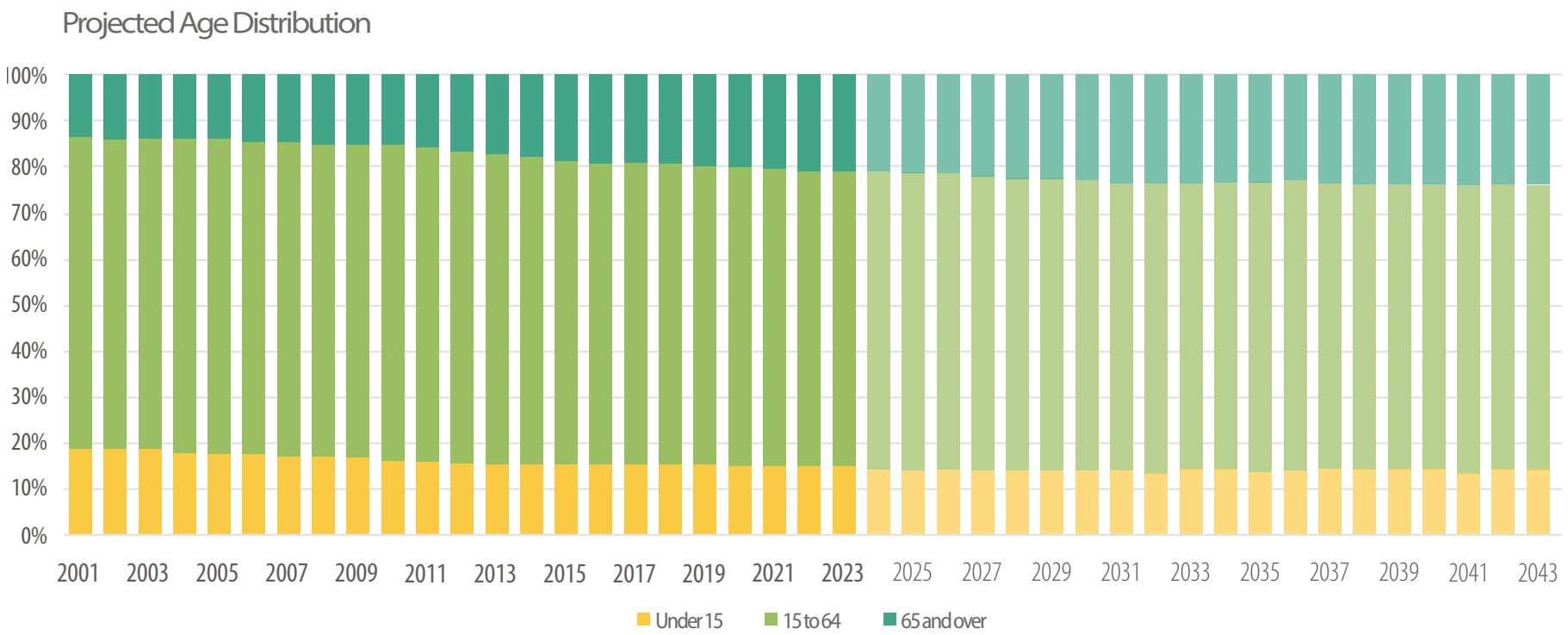
Age

The median age of the Island's population is 41.8, with the largest age groups being 20 to 24 (8.06%) and 25 to 29 (7.80%), respectively.

In 2021, 20% (31,957) of Islanders were aged 65 and older. According to the *Prince Edward Island Housing Corporation 2023 - 2025 Action Plan*, the "number of Islanders over the age of 65 will increase by 23% by 2030 and by 22.4% by 2040."[16] Among seniors looking to downsize, there is a continuing trend of rural to urban migration.[16] The demand for seniors housing is expected to continue to increase for the foreseeable future.

Over the past 10 years, interprovincial migration has seen the biggest increases in those aged 20 - 29, and those 65 years and older (see **Figure 8, right**). While there has been a consistent annual out-migration of roughly 500 people aged 20 - 24 years old over the past decade, there has been a substantial increase of in-migration of this age group from other provinces since 2018.

Figure 7: Projected population age distribution, based on Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis [54]



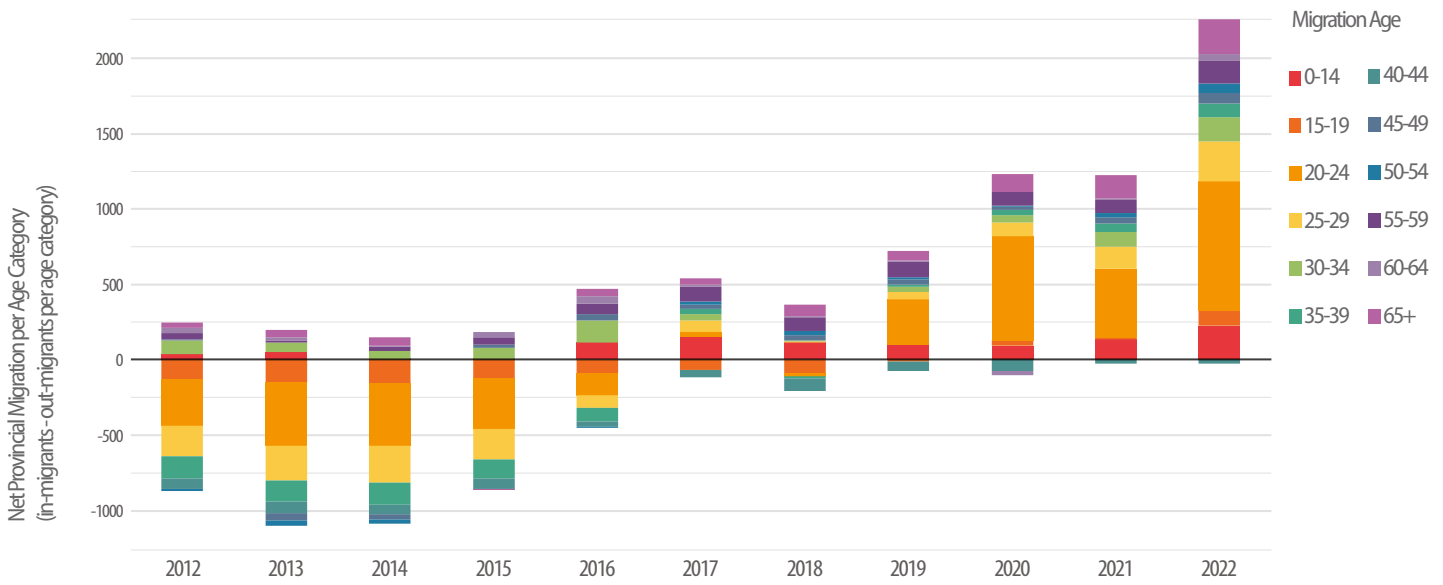


Figure 8: Graph showing the changing patterns of interprovincial migration over time by age category[17]

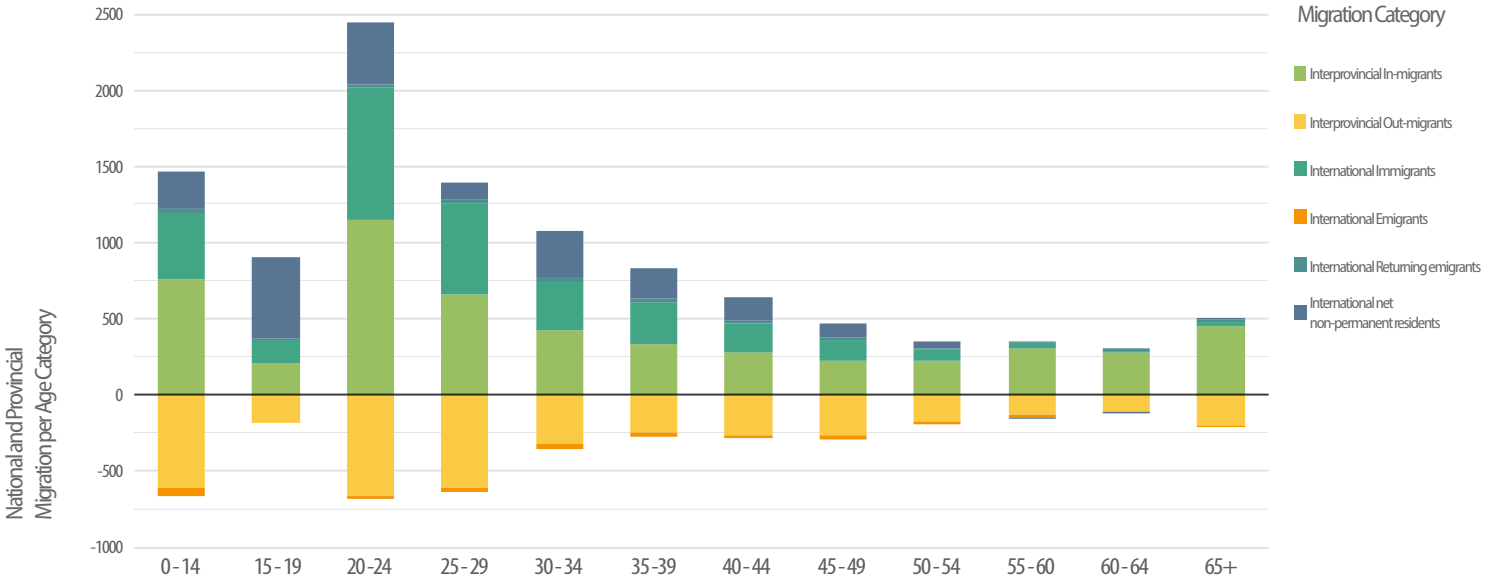


Figure 9: Graph showing international and interprovincial migration by age for 2022/2023[17,18]

The trend of increased migration of those aged 20-29 can also be seen among international migrants from 2021 - 2022 (see **Figure 9, previous**). According to the *Island Investment Development Inc. Annual Report 2022-2023*, 62% of permanent residents are between the ages of 20 and 29, demonstrating that this immigration is not solely attributable to those with student visas. Unlike interprovincial in-migrants, there has been no significant increase in international immigration from those 65 years of age and older.

The age of the population directly impacts the forms of housing, infrastructure and service supports which are necessary to support a community. For example, ensuring that communities are walkable and accessible is particularly important for young families and seniors. Smaller units and houses are often preferred for those just entering the housing market, as well as those needing student or seasonal accommodation, or seniors looking to downsize.

Takeaway: PEI will need to create neighbourhoods, towns and cities that support residents through all life stages. The LUP will need to support age-friendly spaces that ensure all residents are able to maintain their health, security and wellbeing. This entails prioritizing development that supports aging in place, and ensuring the adaptability of dwellings and neighbourhoods to accommodate people's evolving needs and preferences.

Gender

The most recent information on the Island's age and gender distribution (July 2022) showed 49.6% of the population identifying as men and 50.3%of the population identifying as women.[19] With the relatively equal distribution of gender across the Island, land use planning will need to consider the unique ways gender and sexual identities intersect with land policies.

The following examples highlight situations in which women are disproportionately (<40% or >60%) represented in the population of PEI:

- As of 2021, PEI had the lowest proportion (20%) of female farm operators of any province or territory in Canada[20]
- Females made up the majority (78.8%) of lone-parent families in PEI in 2016[21]
- In 2016, 28% of females in PEI had a disability, and women of all ages were more likely to have a disability than men[21]
- 71% of new referrals to Victim Services in 2019-2020 were female[21]

The Province's *Women in Prince Edward Island Statistical Review* was last released in 2020, and contains additional information about gender considerations on the Island.

Takeaway: The LUP should consider planning principles that empower people of all genders in the spaces they occupy on the Island . Consideration should be given to how spaces can be made safe, accessible, and affordable while ensuring that various forms of transportation patterns as well as housing options are available across PEI.

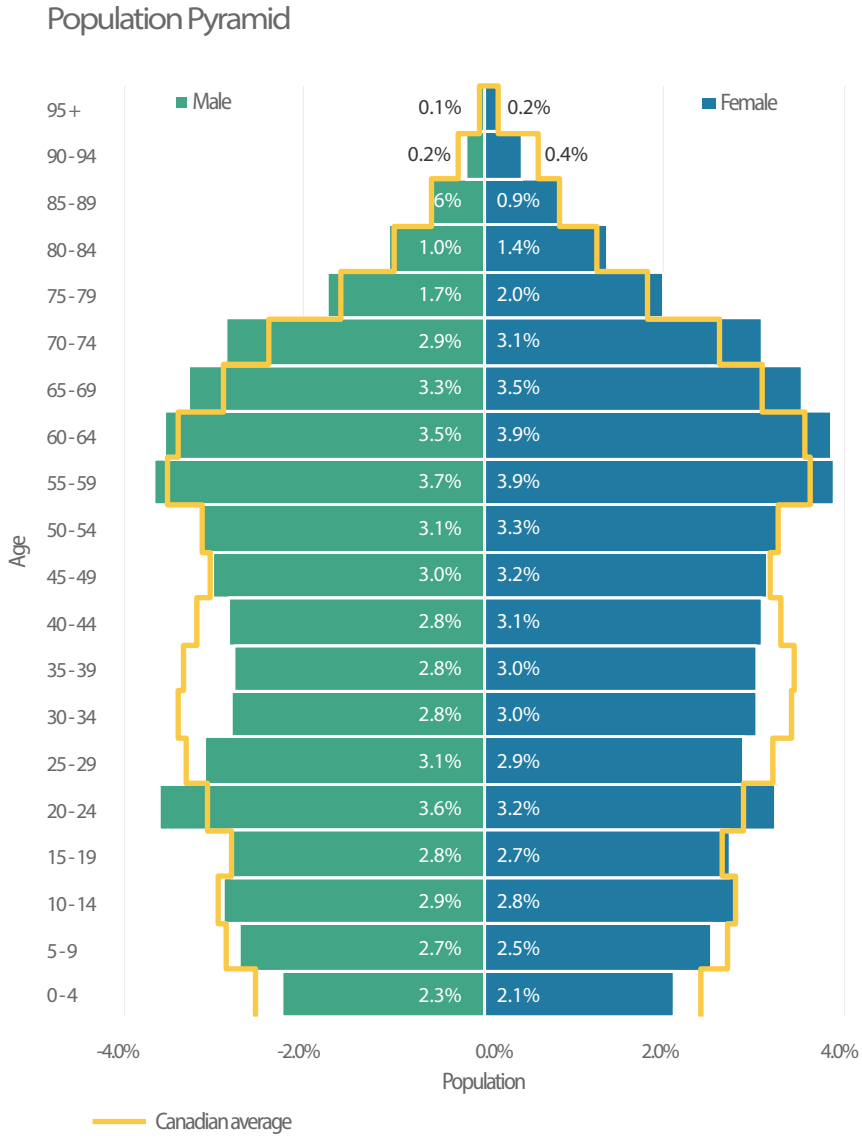


Figure 10: Gender and age distribution in Prince Edward Island [9]

Language

PEI's growing population of international and interprovincial migrants underscores the importance of language diversity. The use of French on the Island is increasing, with the number of bilingual speakers in PEI growing from 12,950 in 1991 to 19,385 in 2021.[22]

Language usage has also seen increased diversity, with a growing proportion of residents speaking non-official languages (including Mandarin or Punjabi) as their first language (see **Figure 11**).[9]

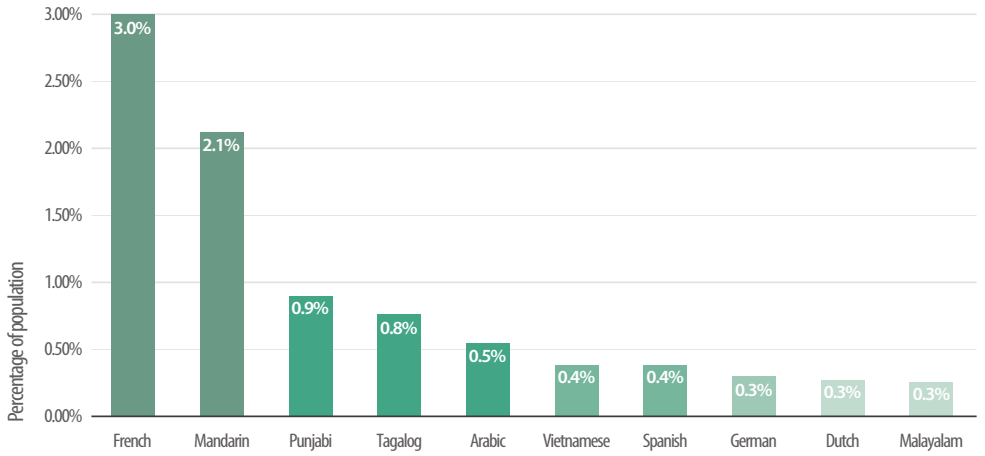
It is important to note that PEI's Indigenous people contribute significantly to the Island's language diversity. Some 4% of Indigenous People note an Indigenous language as their first language, with Mi'kmaq most commonly reported.[23]

> **Takeaway:** With the increasing diversity in language, planning practices may soon need to consider using multiple languages when communicating with people across the Island.

People with Disabilities

In 2022, 31.8% of PEI residents identified as disabled, a 5.8% increase over 2017. For comparison, the Canada-wide disability rate in 2022 was 27%.[24]

Figure 11: Graph of the 10 most frequent mother tongue languages of PEI residents, 2021 census[9]



In 2017's Canadian Survey on Disability, it was found that the three most prevalent disabilities in PEI's labour force included: Pain-related, physical and mental health disabilities. [52]

Table 1: Table of Disabilitiy Types in PEI [52]

Disability Type	Number of Persons PEI
Total population with disabilities	17,950
Sensory disability	5,870
Physical disability	9,400
Pain-related disability	11,580
Mental health-related disability	7,020
Cognitive disability	4,520
Unknown disability	490*
*Unknown disability numbers should be used with caution	

> **Takeaway:** With a growing population of people with disabilities, the LUP should ensure that communities are built to be inclusive of everyone, regardless of ability.

Visible Minorities

With the increase in interprovincial and international migration, corresponding trends are being seen in the representation of racialized or "visible minority" populations across the Island, as seen in **Figure 12**.

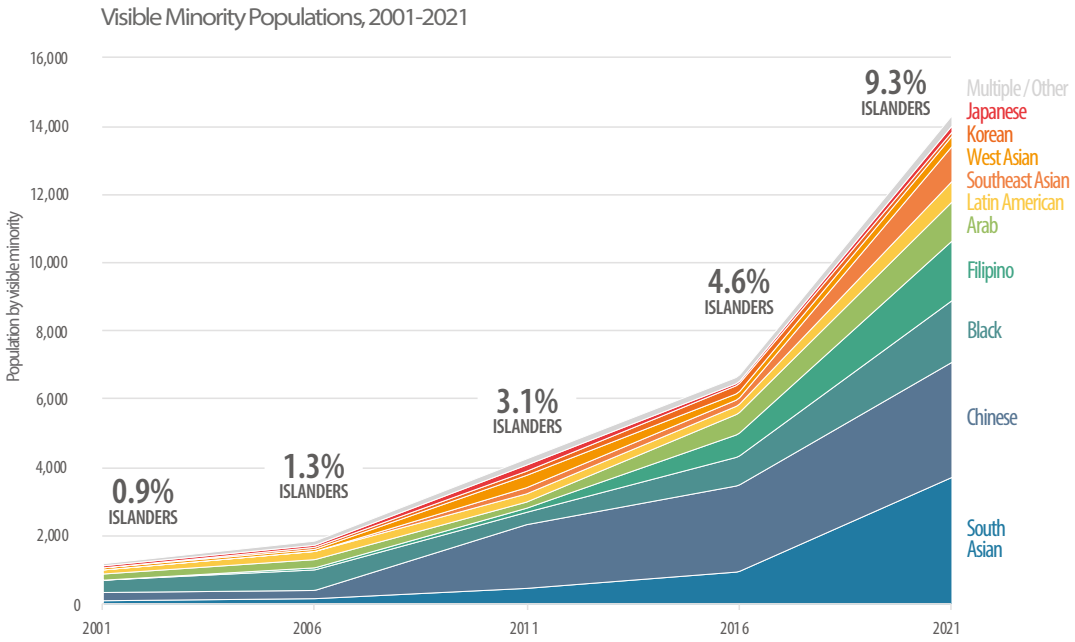
Figure 12: Visible Minority Populations 2001 to 2021[9]

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous history, language, and culture are an integral part of the Island's identity. The Mi'kmaq, the traditional people of Epekwitk ("land cradled in the waves"), have been the stewards of the land and surrounding waters for centuries.

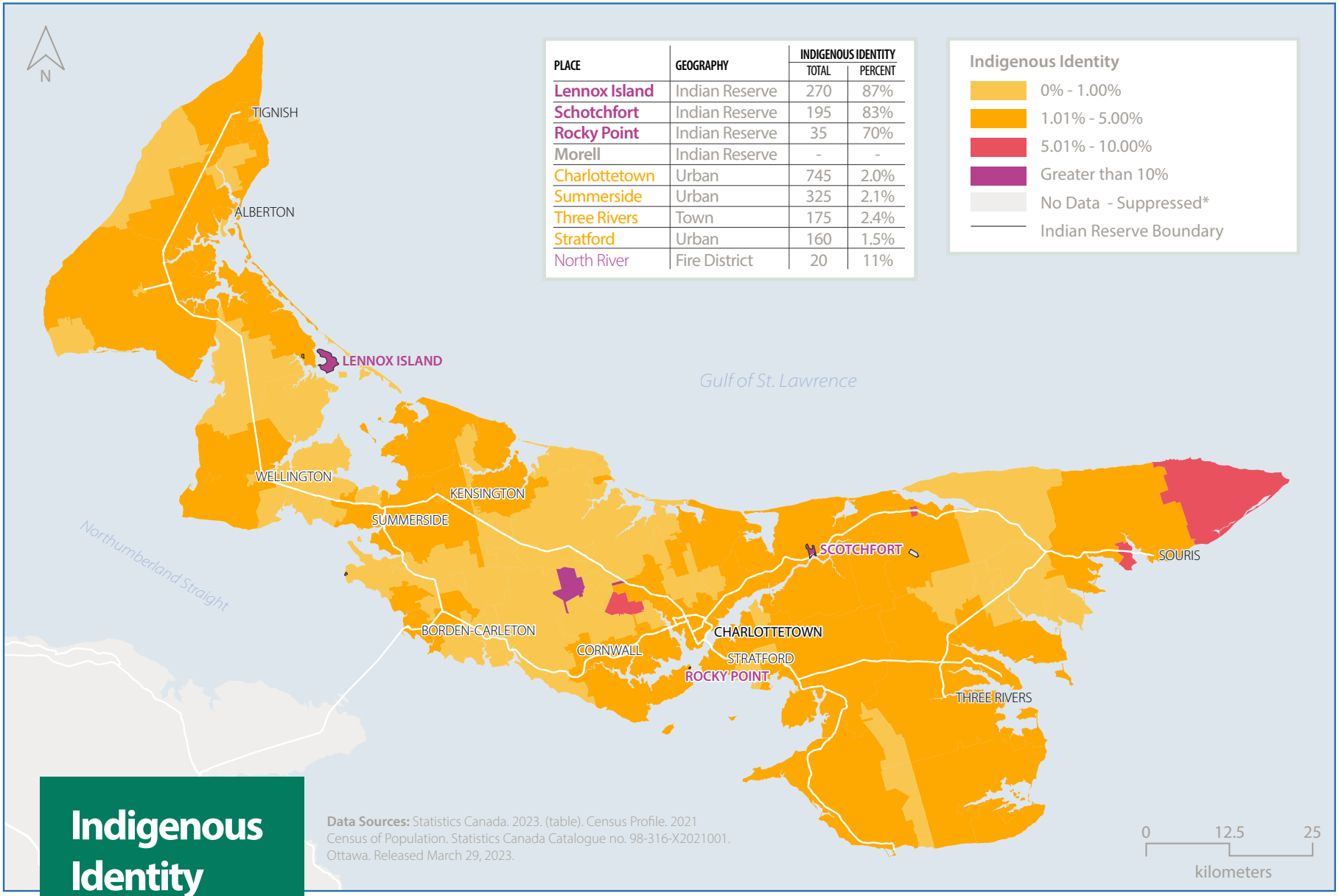
PEI has two First Nations, Abegweit First Nation and Lennox Island First Nation. Abegweit First Nation has a registered population of approximately 400[9] members and three reserves - Scotchfort, Rocky Point and Morell with a population of 230, 47 and 25 people respectfully.[53] Lennox Island has a registered population of approximately 1,094 members,[9] with 308 people living on the Lennox Island Reserve.[53] Each First Nation is governed by their own elected chief and councilors.

Recent years have seen a gradual increase in the Indigenous population on the Island. Between 2016 and 2021, the total Indigenous population grew from 2,735 to 3,385, accounting for 2.25% of the provincial population. Individuals identified as First Nations (64%), Métis (25%), and Inuk (Inuit) (5%).[9]



	PEI	Charlottetown total, % of total Indigenous pop	Summerside total, % of total Indigenous pop	Stratford total, % of total Indigenous pop
Indigenous identity	3,385	745 (22%)	325 (10%)	160 (5%)
First Nations	2,165	505 (23%)	135 (6%)	105 (5%)
Métis	845	170 (20%)	105 (12%)	45 (5%)
Inuk (Inuit)	180	35 (19%)	50 (2%)	10 (6%)
Multiple Indigenous responses	30	0 (0%)	10 (33%)	0 (0%)
Indigenous responses not included elsewhere	165	30 (18%)	20 (12%)	0 (0%)

Table 2: Table of Indigenous population in PEI[9]



PLACE	GEOGRAPHY	INDIGENOUS IDENTITY	
		TOTAL	PERCENT
Lennox Island	Indian Reserve	270	87%
Schotchfort	Indian Reserve	195	83%
Rocky Point	Indian Reserve	35	70%
Morell	Indian Reserve	-	-
Charlottetown	Urban	745	2.0%
Summerside	Urban	325	2.1%
Three Rivers	Town	175	2.4%
Stratford	Urban	160	1.5%
North River	Fire District	20	11%

Indigenous Identity

- 0% - 1.00%
- 1.01% - 5.00%
- 5.01% - 10.00%
- Greater than 10%
- No Data - Suppressed*
- Indian Reserve Boundary

Indigenous Identity
2021 Census

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays the percentage of individuals self-identifying as 'First Nations people, Métis or Inuit' per census sub division. *Data indicated here with gray was suppressed by Statistics Canada.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

An estimated 37% of PEI's Indigenous population resides in Charlottetown, Summerside or Stratford, representing 2% of the total population of these urban areas.

> **Takeaway:** This statistic underscores the urban presence of Indigenous peoples within PEI, their contribution to the cultural diversity of the province's capital, and the necessity for Truth and Reconciliation in decision-making.

Using a Equity and Diversity Lens for Land Use Planning

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PEIACSW) has identified the following priority areas and concerns when considering demographics and land management in PEI:

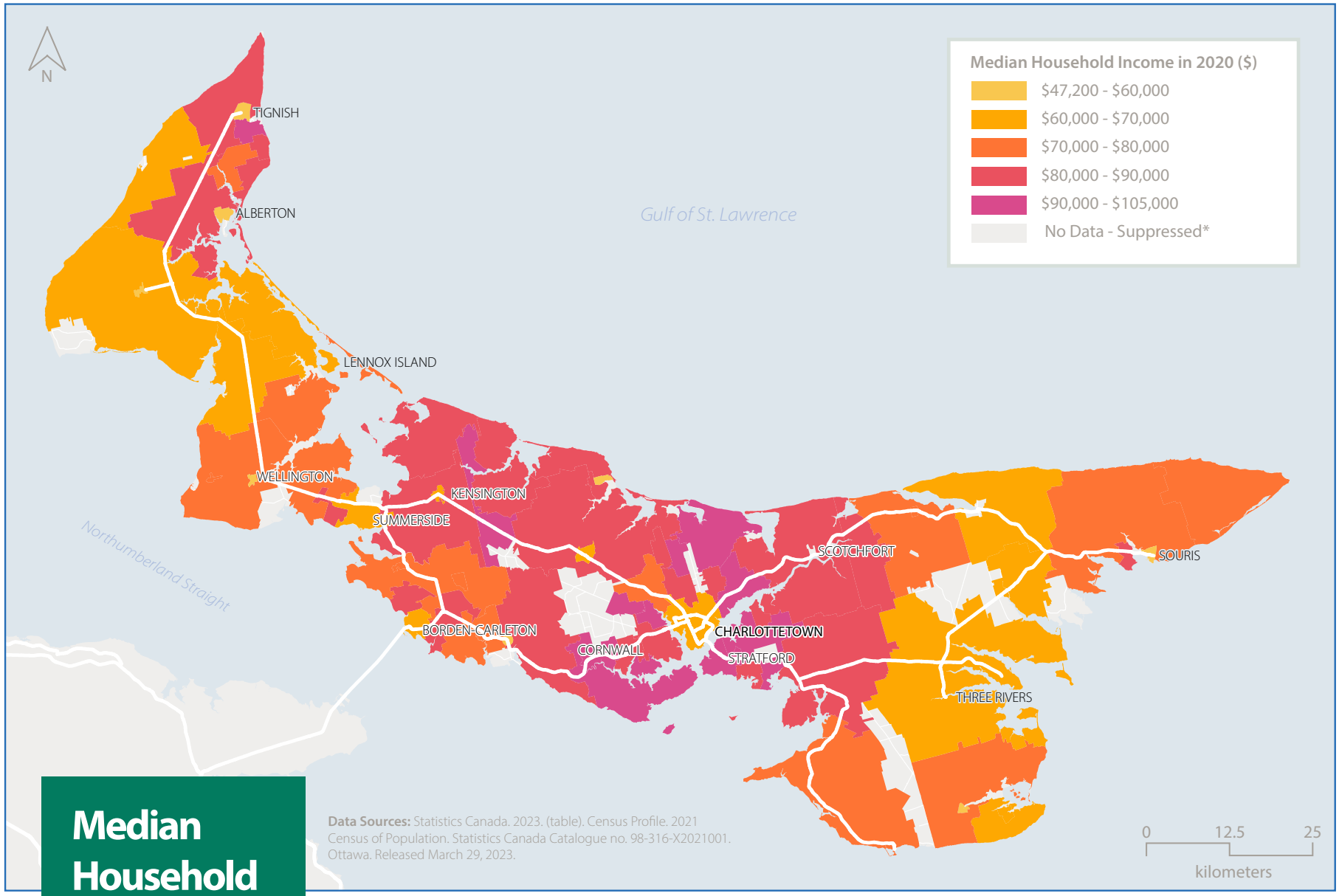
- Public land should be used as a way to support a variety of purposes, and should include gender and diversity analysis
- All requirements of the duty to consult Mi'kmaw rights holders should be met
- Local and traditional knowledge should inform land practices, including Mi'kmaq knowledge
- Public participation should be encouraged in land use policy creation around social infrastructure, including adequate basic income, access to affordable transportation/transit, and support for caregiving
- Increase the diversity of voices in decision-making by " examining and reducing barriers to gender parity on decision-making bodies, advancing equity and inclusion to bring in other under-represented voices, and [using] an intersectional lens to ensure that women and gender minorities who also belong to underrepresented groups are systematically included."[15]

3.1.3 Cost of Living

Inflation and deflation, which impact the cost of living, disproportionately impact residents of the Province of PEI. For example, in 2022, inflation for the cost of consumer goods (including food, shelter, transportation among others described in Goods and Service) across PEI increased by 8.9% over 2021 values.[27] This is a higher overall inflation rate than Canada's increase of 6.8% in the same period. During the national inflation slow down in 2023, however, PEI's inflation rate slowed to 2.9%, which was lower than Canada's 3.9% increase over 2022.[28]

There are a series of ways cost increases affect the needs and settlement patterns of PEI residents. Those with a disproportionate cost of living compared to income are the most impacted by land use development patterns, and the spatial accessibility to affordable, essential services, employment, and amenities in close proximity to their homes. Well-designed communities can create efficient, mixed-use developments that reduce transportation costs, enhance resource allocation, and contribute to a more sustainable and affordable living environment.

To understand the current state of Island affordability, this section looks at income, shelter costs, housing access and affordability, goods and services, and food security.



Median Household Income
2021 Census

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays the median total income of household in 2020 ($) by census sub division. *Note: household income indicated here with gray was removed by Statistics Canada due to data being suppressed or too small for certain geographies.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

Income

The Island had a median total household income of $73,500 as of 2020.[29] This was the highest among all Atlantic provinces, yet still below the national average of $84,000.[9,29] This average has increased 10% since 2015. Despite this improvement, income disparities are still evident, with 7.4% of Islanders living below the poverty line.[30] Residents in urban areas, specifically Charlottetown and Summerside, have lower median incomes at $66,000 and $63,200 respectively. Rural and semi-urban areas in Queens County have a higher median income than the provincial average.[9]

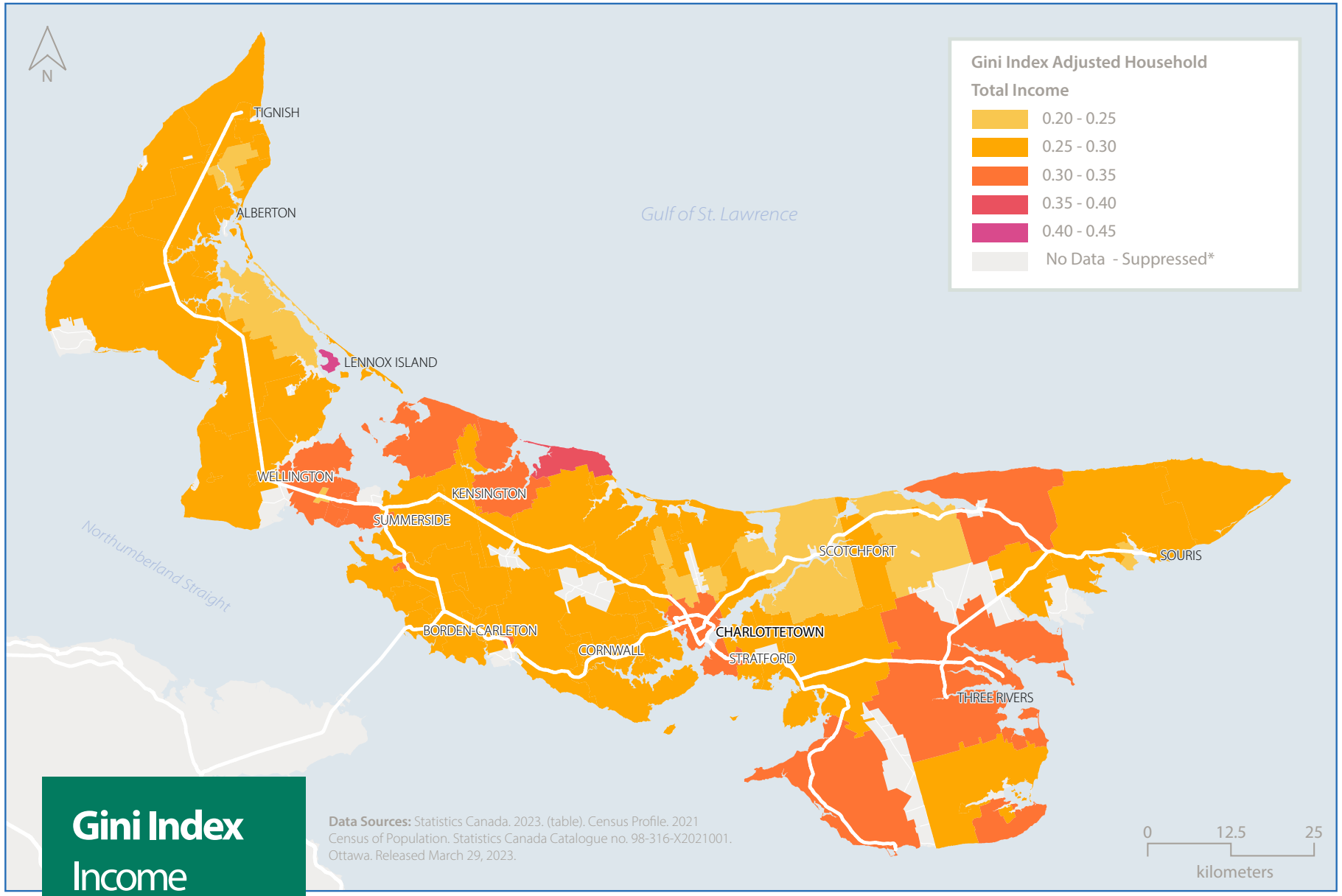
Historically, household incomes across Canada have been higher in urban centres than rural areas.[31] However, studies suggest that wealth surrounding municipal centres has been redistributed as an outcome of the COVID-19 Pandemic, when white-collar workers relocated to fringe outlying communities in greater numbers.[32, 33] This increased concentration of exurban wealth is reflected in the wealth distribution surrounding Charlottetown, and can have implications for transportation, access, and taxation for these areas as residents utilize neighboring city amenities with minimal charge.

Income inequality refers to the disproportionate distribution of assets, wealth, or income among households in a population. In areas with high income inequality, poverty reduction may be slowed, and growth may be hindered. Government processes may be disproportionately represented by high income groups with time and affluence, leading to policies which further disenfranchise low income populations and inhibit collective decision-making.[34] Income inequality influences the distribution of resources, shaping infrastructure development, and affecting the accessibility of essential services. The disparities in income levels can contribute to spatial segregation, impacting land use patterns and influencing the planning decisions that either exacerbate or mitigate the social and economic divides within a community.

The Gini coefficient is a tool used to measure income inequality within a community. It measures the relative degree of inequality in the distribution of income for a given area.

The map below shows the Gini coefficient or level of inequality within each census subdivision. Those areas closer to 1 have the maximum inequality, and those closer to 0 have the least inequality internally. For PEI, the Gini Index Map highlights areas of significant wealth inequality, including Resort Municipality of Stanley Bridge, Hope River, Bayview, Cavendish and North Rustico, Charlottetown and Summerside, and municipalities in Kings County.

It should be noted that the data has been suppressed by Statistics Canada in areas with low population numbers for confidentiality reasons, and therefore appear as 'no data' in the map on the following page.



Gini Index
Income Inequality

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays the Gini index of income for PEI. The Gini Index is a number between zero and one that measures the relative degree of inequality in the distribution of income.
*Data indicated here with gray was suppressed by Statistics Canada.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

Shelter Costs

The proportion of income spent on shelter costs can greatly impact the financial well-being of families and individuals, influencing their ability to afford other necessities. Populations that are living in housing that is unaffordable and/or falls below acceptable housing standards are often called 'households in core housing need'. The PEI Housing Strategy describes households in core housing need in relationship to adequate, affordable and suitable housing.

Adequate housing refers to the condition of the dwelling in terms of the need for major repairs such as defective plumbing, electrical wiring and structural repairs to walls, floors and ceilings.[35]

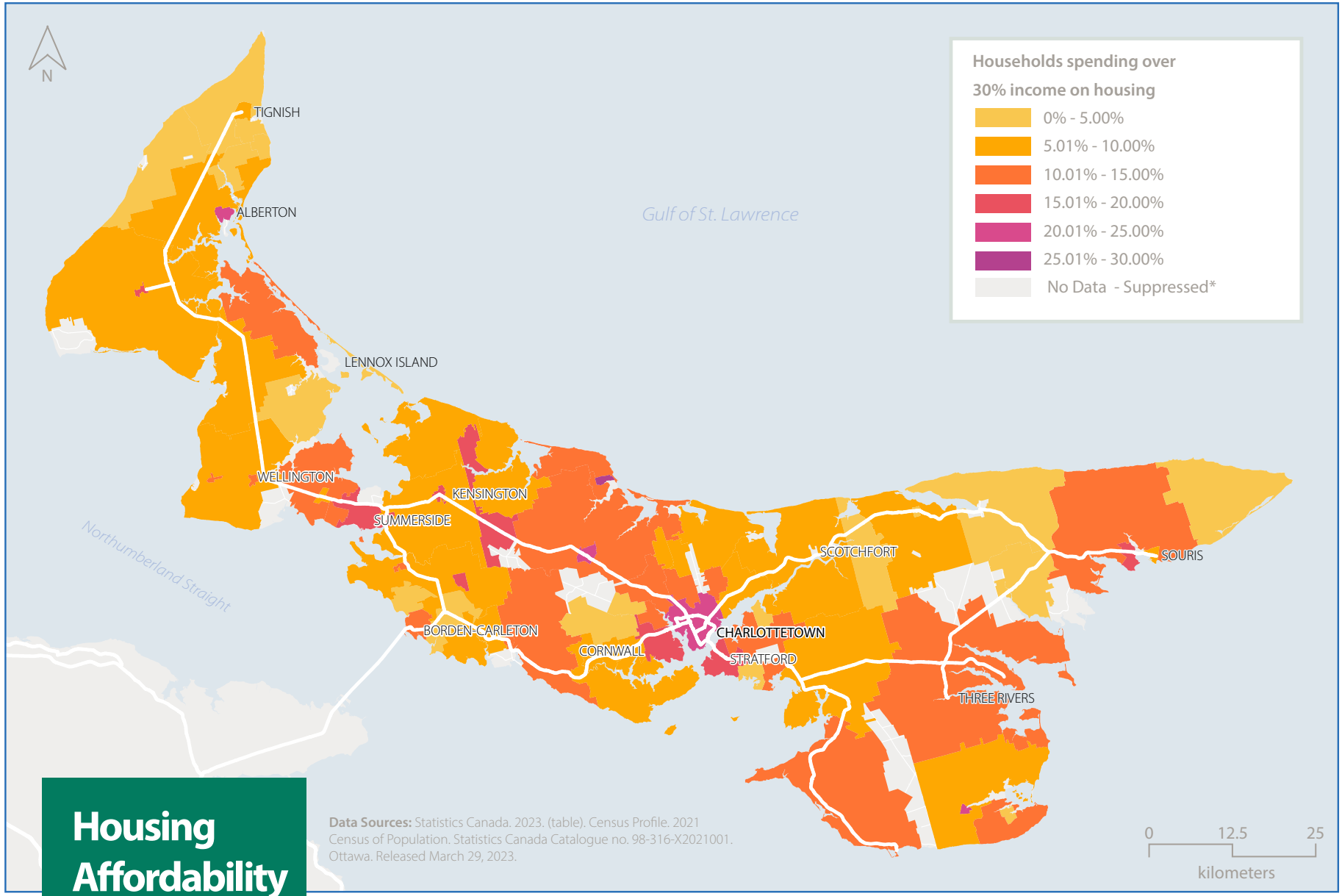
Housing affordability refers to what people can afford relative to their income. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) states: "for housing to be affordable, a household should not spend more than 30% of their gross income before tax on shelter costs." (In terms of home ownership, shelter costs include mortgage payments, property fees, and the costs of electricity, heat and water.)

Housing suitability refers to whether the home has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household (considering age, gender identity, relationships between residents).

It is important that households with low to moderate incomes are able to afford to access a suitable home while meeting other essential living costs. A household is in core housing need if:

- It is below one or more of the adequacy, affordability, and suitability standards, and
- It has to spend more than 30% of its pre-tax income to pay the median rent of acceptable, local, alternative housing.

The *2024-2029 Housing Strategy* identified that 7.0% of PEI residents were in core housing need in 2021.[35]



Housing Affordability 2021

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays the percent of households that spent 30% or more of income on shelter costs, Canada's measure of housing affordability.
*Data indicated here with gray was suppressed by Statistics Canada.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

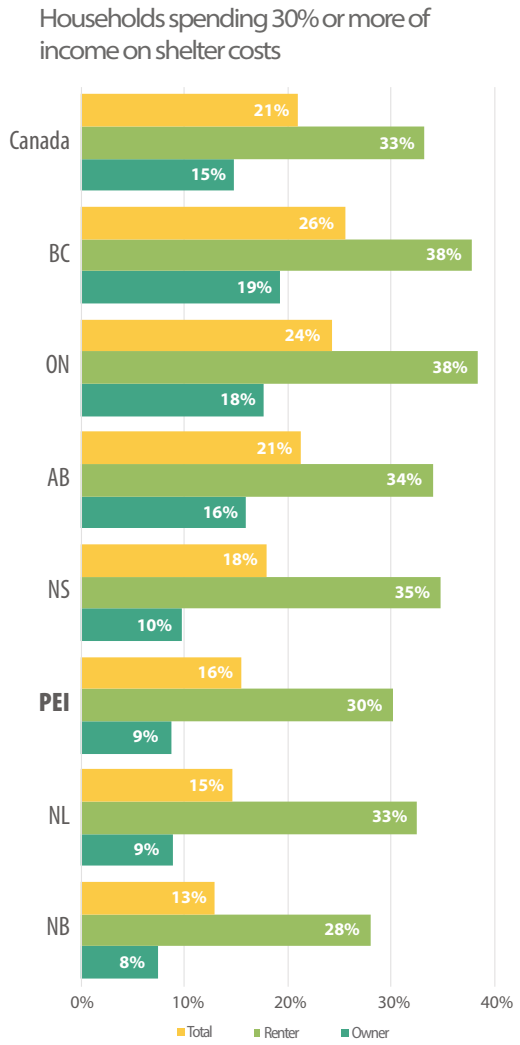


Figure 13: Chart showing percentage of households spending 30% or more on housing by province[36]

While there has been a national decrease in the percent of people spending 30% or more on shelter costs since 2016, in 2021, 15.5% of Island households spent more than 30% of their monthly income on shelter.[36] This includes a notable difference between renters and homeowners (see **Figure 13**). The distribution of households spending a significant portion of their income on shelter varies, with urban areas experiencing higher proportions of unaffordable housing than rural areas (see **Map: Housing Affordability**), and renters experiencing higher proportions of unaffordable housing than owners (see **Figure 13**).

With increasing inflation costs (see Goods and Service Cost), including those associated with housing (fuel, mortgage rates, goods and services, etc.), there is a greater need for affordable housing, particularly for renters and those in core need. To ensure that new housing developments can respond to the unique needs of the population, it will be important for the land use plan to promote housing at a variety of scales, values, and tenures within close proximity to services (see housing continuum).

For more information on shelter costs, look to Building Together - Prince Edward Island Housing Strategy 2024 - 2029.

Housing Access and Affordability

Since 2017, rising benchmark housing values have outpaced increases in median household income, contributing to housing affordability issues. PEI faces challenges in homelessness, as highlighted by the 2021 Point-In-Time-Count that identified 147 people experiencing unsheltered and sheltered homelessness. Within this population, there are significant proportions of people in transitional housing, emergency shelters, systems like hospitals or jails, and those considered to be the 'hidden homeless' (i.e., staying with friends).[37]

By October 2023, the utilization rate of the five emergency shelters on the Island (Blooming House, Lifehouse, Bedford MacDonald House, Winter Street, and Park Street) hit 98%, indicating an overwhelming demand for such facilities.[38] Similarly, there has been substantial growth in demand for services at the Community Outreach Centre, from 91 monthly clients in January 2021 to 366 per month by September 2023.[38] In addition, there have been consistently high utilization rates for Anderson House and Chief Mary Bernard Shelter, the shelters specialized for women and children on the Island.[39]

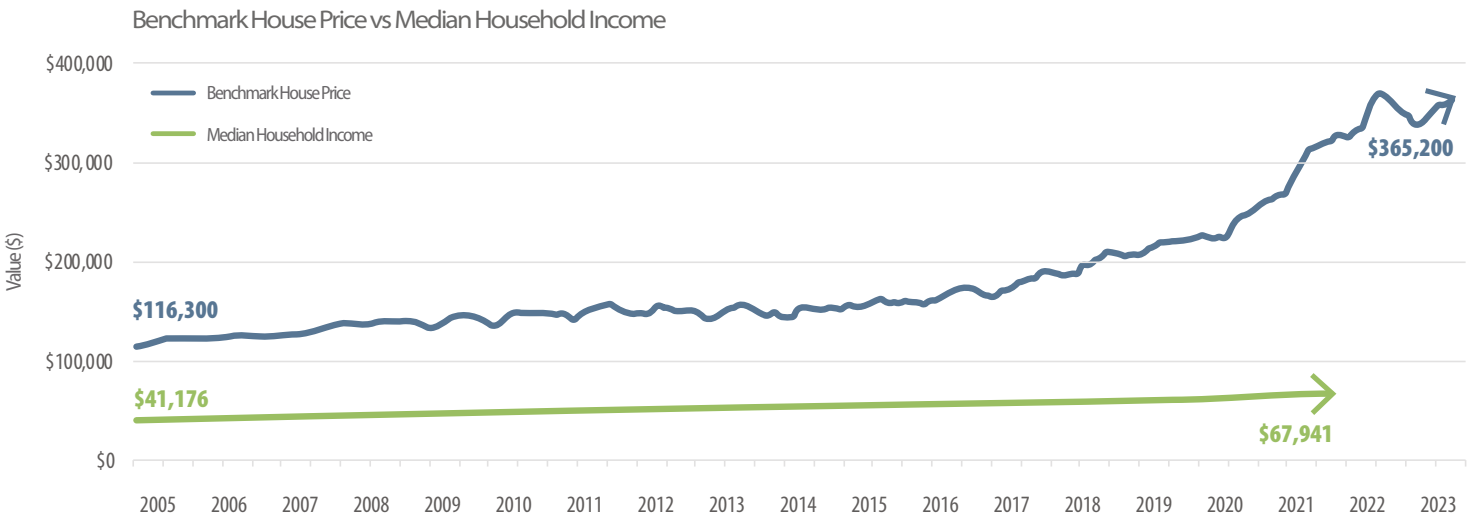


Figure 14: Benchmark housing price vs income[44,45]

Housing affordability in PEI is strongly influenced by population growth and the financialization of the housing market. The Housing Action Plan and other studies note attributing factors that affect housing affordability, including: gentrification, short-term rentals, settlement and development patterns, an aging population, increasing demand from international students, and variations in housing supply.[37, 40, 41] With PEI's continued growth and low vacancy rate, affordability has been largely attributed to population growth outpacing housing supply, with long-term implications from the previously noted factors.

Takeaway: To fill this gap, PEI needs to build more housing overall, with thoughtful consideration given to settlement patterns and housing for different demographics in settlement type, as well as placement for further affordability considerations.

From 2019 to 2022, the cost of constructing residential buildings rose by 25%.[16] In 2022, despite a 4.6% increase in housing starts and 18.6% increase in investment in multi-unit dwellings, there was a 21% decrease in total residential investment for single-detached housing.[9]

According to the Department of Finance's growth projections, PEI needs to build more than 2,000 housing units annually just to keep pace with demand.[42] In the past five years, the closest the Island has come to this was constructing 1,484 units in 2020 (see Housing Starts).[42, 43] As of the most recent year recorded, the number of total constructed units dropped to 1,266 by 2022.[42, 43] This does not account for the existing shortage.[42]

These trends underscore the critical need for strategic housing solutions to address both homelessness and the broader housing affordability crisis on the Island. For more information on housing, look to *Building Together - Prince Edward Island Housing Strategy 2024 - 2029*.

Goods and Service Cost

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the price of everyday goods and services for Canadian consumers. In PEI, the CPI reflects the cost of various categories like food, shelter, transportation, health and personal care, as well as recreational purchases, like alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis products.[46] PEI experienced an 8.8% increase in CPI in 2022, the highest since 1981.[46]

Inflation has significantly impacted different sectors in the area, with notable increases in the costs of transportation (13.6%), shelter (12.8%) and food (9.7%).[10] PEI's highest inflation rates were seen for basic life necessities. This disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations who cannot absorb the increases, particularly those who are already food insecure or in precarious housing situations.

Figure 15: Consumer Price Index for PEI and Canada[46]

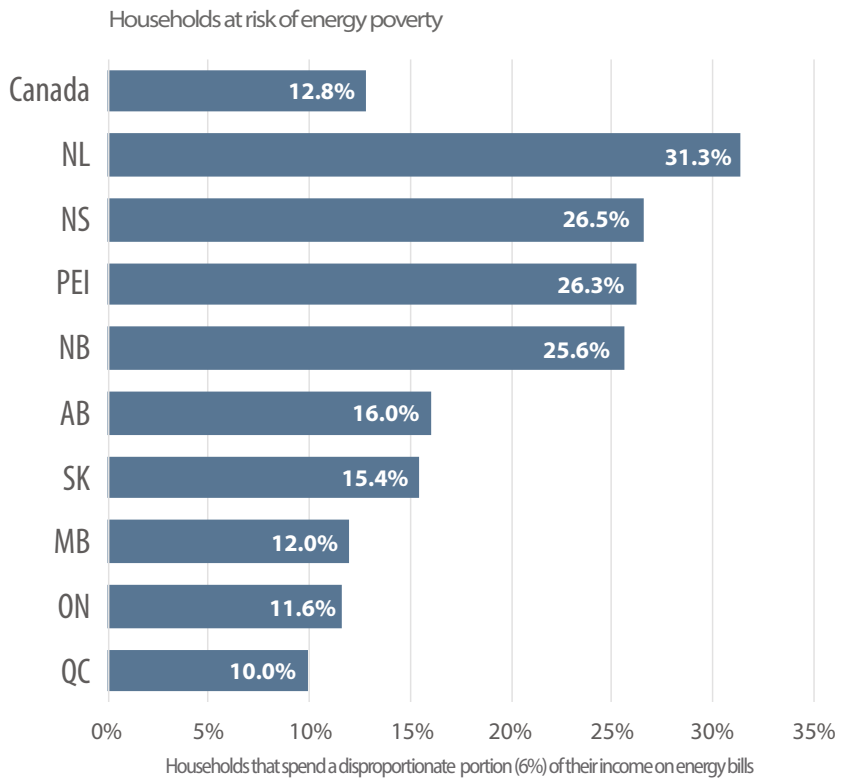


Figure 16, left: Percentage of households at risk of energy poverty.[47]

Energy costs in the Atlantic provinces have also risen in recent years, so much so that many households are experiencing energy poverty (see **Figure 15**). Energy Poverty refers to those spending a disproportionate portion (6%) of their income on energy bills. This is three times the median Canadian home spends (2%) on energy. PEI's Median Household Annual Energy bill is $3000 as of 2021, and roughly 26% of households are experiencing energy poverty. This equals 26,895 households in PEI.[47]

Food Security

In 2022, every province in Canada experienced an increase in food insecurity due to record inflation.[48] This trend was particularly pronounced in the Atlantic provinces, with PEI having the country's highest percentage of people living in food-insecure households at 23.6%.[48] PEI also had the highest percentage of children living in food insecure households of the provinces, at 35.1% (see **Figure 17**).[48]

Compared to other provinces, PEI's uniquely small agricultural land mass (see Land Use and Conservation) and its reliance on imports for land-intensive uses make it more susceptible to changes in the financial market (see Goods and Service Cost). This includes being more susceptible to food insecurity.

PEI's *Poverty Elimination Strategy Act*, passed in April 2021, sets explicit targets for food insecurity reduction. It aims to cut the provincial rate for food security in half by 2025, and to eliminate food insecurity completely by 2030.[49] At the time it was passed, the legislation was significant in that no other Canadian provinces had declared food insecurity reduction targets or committed to fully eliminate poverty.[50]

Figure 17: Food insecurity by severity for each province [48]

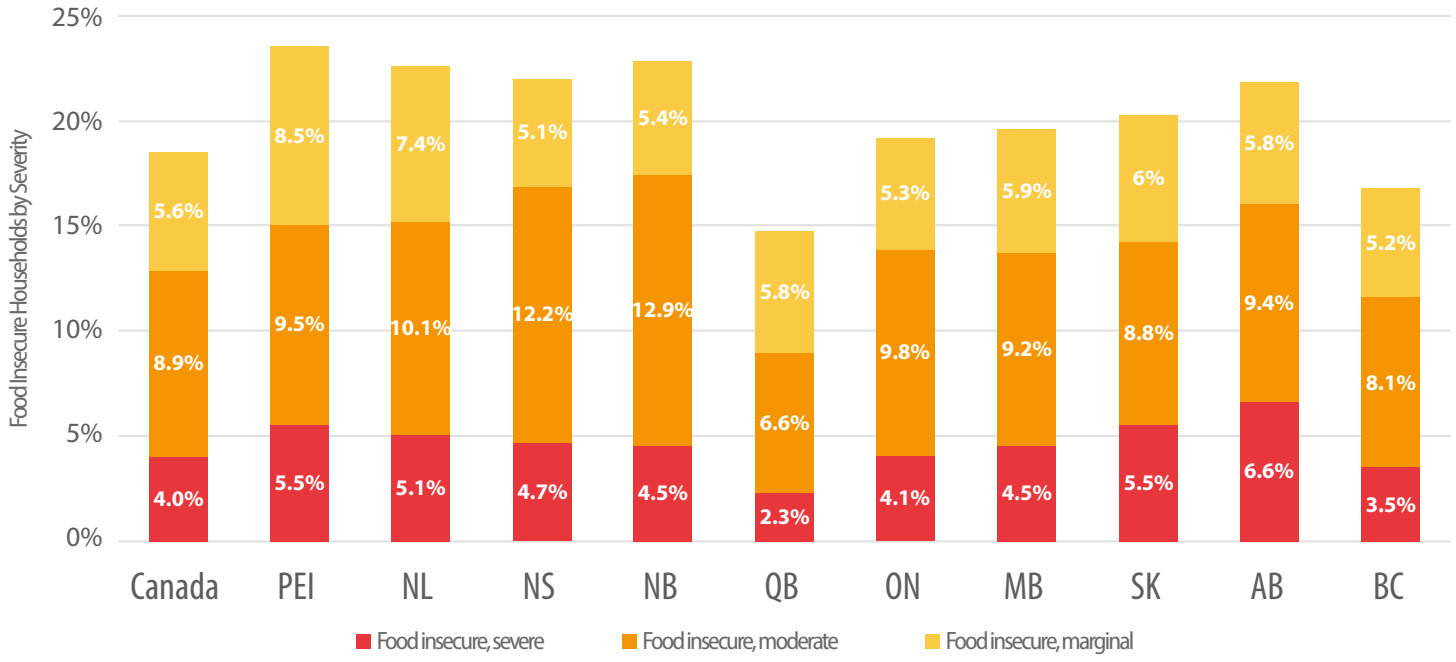


Figure 18: Children living in food insecure households graph [48]

The Island Food Security Program supports these goals through initiatives that increase access to affordable local food, and which improve health and food safety. Other Island initiatives that combat the effects of Food Insecurity include the Summer Food Program, School Food Program, expanded community fridge locations, and support for food banks and soup kitchens.

Locally, PEI had approximately 213,908 hectares of agricultural land in 2020, and a population of 175,853 people as of October 2023.[1, 51] With a growing population, and a decrease in productive agricultural land (see Agriculture), the ability to provide local food at a manageable cost is falling across the province. This has been compounded in recent years with increasing costs across all sectors.

Supports to food security in a land use capacity may include land uses that encourage soil improvements, mitigate erosion, reduce encroachment on agricultural land, and which create more opportunities for productive agricultural production. These efforts could include urban agriculture, aquaponics, hydroponics, aeroponics, and other productive agricultural land uses across the Island.

Takeaway: There is link between food security and the preservation of adequate agricultural land for domestic consumption. Ensuring the island retains productive and healthy farmland will need to be a prioirity of the land use plan.

Endnotes

1. Prince Edward Island Statistics Bureau (2023, December 19). "PEI Population Report Quarterly: Population Report, Third Quarter 2023", https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/finance/pei-population-report-quarterly.

2. MacFadyen, J. (2023). *Time Flies: An Environmental History of Prince Edward Island from the Air.* Charlottetown: Island Studies Press.

3. Bolger, F.W.P. (1991). *Canada's Smallest Province: A History of Prince Edward Island.* Halifax: Nimbus Publishing.

4. Reilly & Co. Printers. (1871). Abstract of the Census of the Population, and Other Statistical Returns of Prince Edward Island Taken In The Year 1871.

5. Prince Edward Island Statistics Bureau. (2023, September 27). "Prince Edward Island Population Report." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pt_pop_rep_0.pdf.

6. Prince Edward Island, Canada (2017). "Recruit, Retain, Repatriate: A population Action Plan for Prince Edward Island." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_population-action-plan_2017.pdf.

7. Statistics Canada (2023, December 19). "Population estimates, quarterly." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1710000901.

8. Statistics Canada (2022). "Population growth in Canada's rural areas, 2016 to 2021." https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-x/2021002/98-200-x2021002-eng.cfm.

9. Statistics Canada. (2023). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Released November 15, 2023. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E.

10. Prince Edward Island Statistics Review. (2023, July). "Prince Edward Island 49th Annual Statistical Review 2022." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/web_asr.pdf.

11. Prince Edward Island provincial nominee program (PNP). Canadavisa.com. (2023, March 14). https://www.canadavisa.com/prince-edward-Island-provincial-nominee-program.html

12. Statistics Canada. (2022, October 26). "Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians." The Daily. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026a-eng.htm

13. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024, January 24). "Canada to stabilize growth and decrease number of new international student permits issued to approximately 360,000 for 2024." Government of Canada website.

14. Picot, G., Crossman, E., and Hou, F. (2023, November 22). "The Provincial Nominee Program: Retention in province of landing." Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2023011/article/00002-eng.htm.

15. PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women. (2020, August 27). "PEIACSW response to the Land Matters Project Survey." PEIACSW. https://peistatusofwomen.ca/2020/08/27/response-to-the-land-matters-project-survey/.

16. Prince Edward Island Housing Corporation. (n.d.). 2023 - 2025 Action Plan. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/dpcec-3827_cmhc-pei_national_housing_strategy_action_plan_-_web.pdf.

17. Statistics Canada. "Table 17-10-0015-01 Estimates of the components of interprovincial migration, by age and sex, annual."

18. Statistics Canada. "Table 17-10-0014-01 Estimates of the components of international migration, by age and sex, annual."

19. Statistics Canada. (2022, December 21). "Population estimates on July 1st, by age and sex: Canada, province and territories." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/.

20. Aclan, S. and Chen, Z.J. (2022, November 23). "Canadian Agriculture at a Glance: Female farm operator numbers increase for the first time in 30 years." Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/96-325-x/2021001/article/00013-eng.htm.

21. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2020). "Women in Prince Edward Island: Statistical Review, Fourth Edition", https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/women_in_pei_a_statistical_review_2020.pdf

22. Auclair, N., Frigon, C., & St-Amant, G. (2023, March 16). "Key facts on the French language in Prince Edward Island in 2021." Ethnicity, Language and Immigration Thematic Series. Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2023005-eng.htm.

23. Statistics Canada. (2016, March 14). "Aboriginal Peoples: Fact Sheet for Prince Edward Island." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2016003-eng.htm.

24. Rabinowitz, T., & Wallace, S. (2023, December 1). "New data on disability in Canada, 2022." Statistics Canada. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023063-eng.htm.

25. Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI. 2024. Our Communities. https://mcpei.ca/our-communities/.

26. Statistics Canada. "Census of Population 2021. Geographic Summary." https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm.

27. Statistics Canada. "Table 18-10-0004-01: Consumer Price Index, monthly, not seasonally adjusted".

28. Statistics Canada. (2024, February 16). "Prices increase at a slower pace in every province." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data.

29. Statistics Canada. (2022a, July 13). "Map 1: After-tax income grew in all provinces and territories, except in Alberta and in Newfoundland and Labrador." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220713/mc-d001-eng.htm.

30. Social Development and Seniors. (2023, November). Data Acquisition.

31. Beckstead, D., Brown, W. M., Guo, Y., & Newbold, K. B. (2010). "Cities and growth: Earnings levels across urban and rural areas: The role of Human Capital." Statistics Canada. The Canadian Economy in Transition Series. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1600333.

32. Whitaker, S. (2021). "Did the COVID-19 Pandemic Cause an Urban Exodus?" Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. https://doi.org/10.26509/frbc-ddb-20210205

33. Irwin, N. (2023). How the pandemic shifted America's geography of income. Axios Macro. https://www.axios.com/2023/08/08/income-geography-pandemic.

34. Birdsall, N. (2001). "Why inequality matters: Some economic issues." Ethics & International Affairs, 15(2), 3–28. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7093.2001.tb00356.x.

35. Prince Edward Island, Canada. "Building Together: Prince Edward Island Housing Strategy 2024-2029". https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_housing_strategy_2024-2029.pdf.

36. Statistics Canada. (2022, November 21). "Table 4: Percent of households spending 30% or more of income on shelter cost by tenure, 2016 and 2021." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220921/t004b-eng.htm.

37. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2019, March 8). 2018-2023 Housing Action Plan for Prince Edward Island. Prince Edward Island, Canada. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei-housing-action-plan_2018-2023.pdf.

38. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, November 23). "Shelter Usage Monthly Reporting." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/information/housing-land-and-communities/shelter-useage-monthly-reporting.

39. Munro-Bernard, M. (2024, February 5). Commentary in Shelter Costs, State of the Island Review.

40. Wachsmuth, D., Basalaev-Binder, R., Belot, C., Bolt, A., & Seltz, L. (2020). "Short-term rentals in Charlottetown Market overview, housing impacts, and regulatory modelling." Report prepared for City of Charlottetown by School of Urban Planning, McGill Unviersity.

41. Petramala, D. (2023, December 7)." The impact of short-term rentals on housing affordability in high-demand markets." Altus Group. https://www.altusgroup.com/insights/the-impact-of-short-term-rentals-on-housing-affordability/.

42. Yarr, K. (2023, July 12). "Expect 'change to our urban landscape,' P.E.I. minister says at housing announcement." CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-Island/pei-charlottetown-housing-announcement-1.6904266.

43. Statistics Canada. "Table 34-10-0135-01: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts, under construction and completions, all areas, quarterly."

44. Statistics Canada (2023). "Table 11-10-0012-01: Distribution of total income by census family type and age of older partner, parent or individual."

45. P.E.I. Real Estate Association (2023). "P.E.I. benchmark house price".

46. Statistics Canada. "Table 18-10-0004-01: Consumer Price Index, monthly, not seasonally adjusted".

47. Efficiency Canada. (2021). Energy Poverty Data Hub 2021. https://www.efficiencycanada.org/energy-poverty-in-canada/.

48. Proof, University of Toronto. (2023, May 2). "New data on household food insecurity in 2022." https://proof.utoronto.ca/2023/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2022/.

49. PEI Legislative Assembly. (2021, April). "Poverty Elimination Strategy Act." Bill 107. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/p-14-1-poverty_elimination_strategy_act.pdf.

50. Proof, University of Toronto. (2021, April 21). "Prince Edward Island: The first jurisdiction to set explicit targets for reducing food insecurity." https://proof.utoronto.ca/2021/prince-edward-Island-the-first-jurisdiction-to-set-explicit-targets-for-reducing-food-insecurity.

51. Prince Edward Island, Canada (2020). "State of the Forest Report".

52. Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0730-01 Labour force status for persons with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years, by disability type (grouped)

53. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. (2021, June 17). First Nation Profiles. Canada.ca. https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-northern-affairs.html

54. Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) (2023). "Modelling Projections of Population & Age Distribution".

Natural Environment

PEI's landscape is a mosaic of natural beauty and ecological diversity. The Island is 5,656 km^2 in size, stretching 230 km in length with a width that varies from 6.5 to 64 km. Separated from the mainland by the Northumberland Strait, the Island's geography features rising sea levels and a dynamic coastline. PEI is characterized by a cool, humid maritime climate, receiving about 1,100 mm of annual precipitation that is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year.

The Island's soil is described as a thin layer of glacial till surficial deposits and weathered red sandstone cliffs and bluffs.[1] Close to 6,000 years ago, rising sea levels flooded the land bridge connecting to the mainland, submerging former river valleys, and creating the many bays and estuaries that delineate the coastline.[2] The Island's topography is characterized by its rolling hills and iron-rich red sandstone cliffs, remnants of ancient geological history. The hills in the central and eastern regions contrast with the lower coastal and western regions. The peak elevation is 142 metres above sea level.

3.2.1 Land Use and Conservation

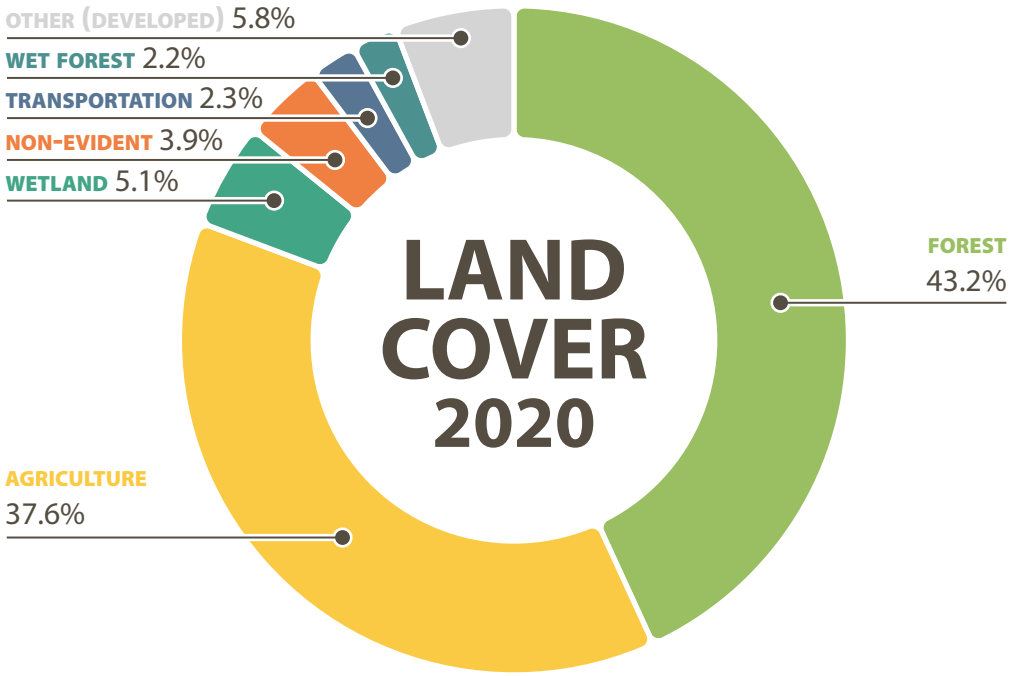
Over the past decade, land use patterns have changed, reflecting the evolving interplay between development, land use, and the conservation of natural and built heritage. These changes not only impact the environment, but also influence the future of both the economy and Island communities themselves.

The most recent land cover analysis was completed by the Provincial Government in 2023. An analysis based on data collected on land cover conditions in 2020 found that the Island's landscape is predominantly forests and agricultural lands.[3] However, both the forested land area and agricultural lands have been decreasing in size in recent decades. The ongoing transition of forest and agricultural lands to developed spaces—particularly for low-density residential purposes—poses challenges for sustainable land use management and necessitates careful land use planning to minimize environmental impacts.

Left, from top:

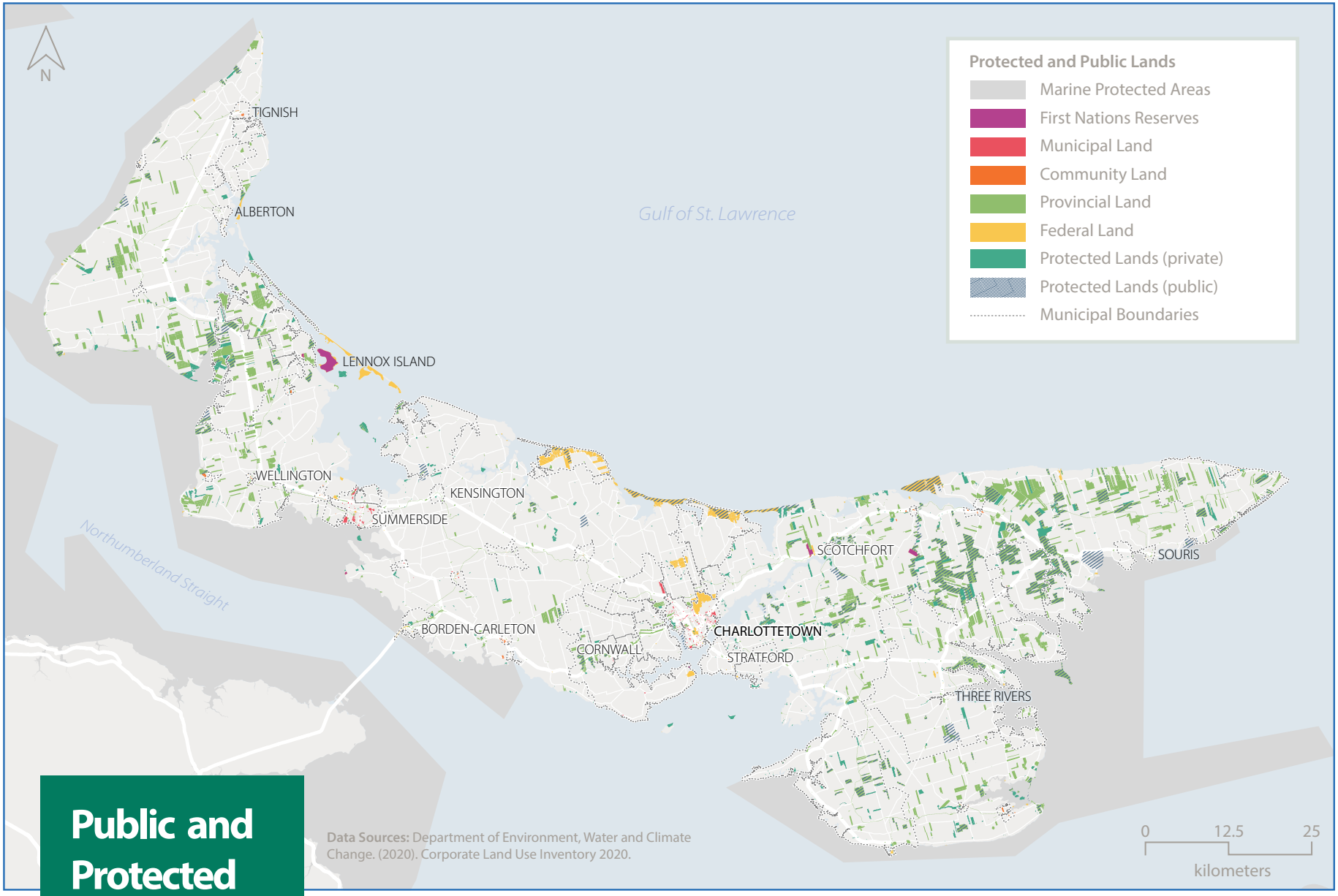
Figure 19: Proportional land cover for PEI, 2020 [3]

Table 3: Provincial land cover change from 2010 to 2020[3]



Land Use	2020 Area (ha)	2020 Area (%)	Change 2010 to 2020 (% points)
Forest	245,919	43.2	-0.71
Agriculture	213,908	37.6	-0.18
Non-evident / abandoned	21,943	3.9	-0.06
Wetland / sand dunes *	28,788	5.1	0.36
Wet forest	12,492	2.2	-0.02
Transportation	12,991	2.3	0.03
Other (developed)	32,978	5.8	0.58
Total	**569,019**		

* While wetland / sand dune area in PEI has increased from 2010 to 2020, the way Wet forests are measured has changed in the past ten years, so those have been listed seperately. As per the State of the Forest report, "strict comparison of current data to what is included in past reports is always challenging. For example, new wetlands are continually being added to the land use inventory... based on site inspections and field work."



Public and Protected Lands

Data Sources: Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change. (2020). Corporate Land Use Inventory 2020.

This map displays publicly owned lands (federal, provincial, municipal, and community owned), as well as protected lands (public and private).

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

PEI's environmental conservation efforts are key to safeguarding its natural heritage. Currently, 5% of the land area in the province is included in the Protected and Conserved Areas Network, the lowest percentage of any province or territory in Canada. Efforts to increase protected lands have seen progress in recent years, with an increase of 8,200 ha since 2010. However, more action is needed to achieve the province's current conservation goal of 7%.[4] This is lower than the national average due to PEI's high proportion of private land and lack of large wilderness areas.

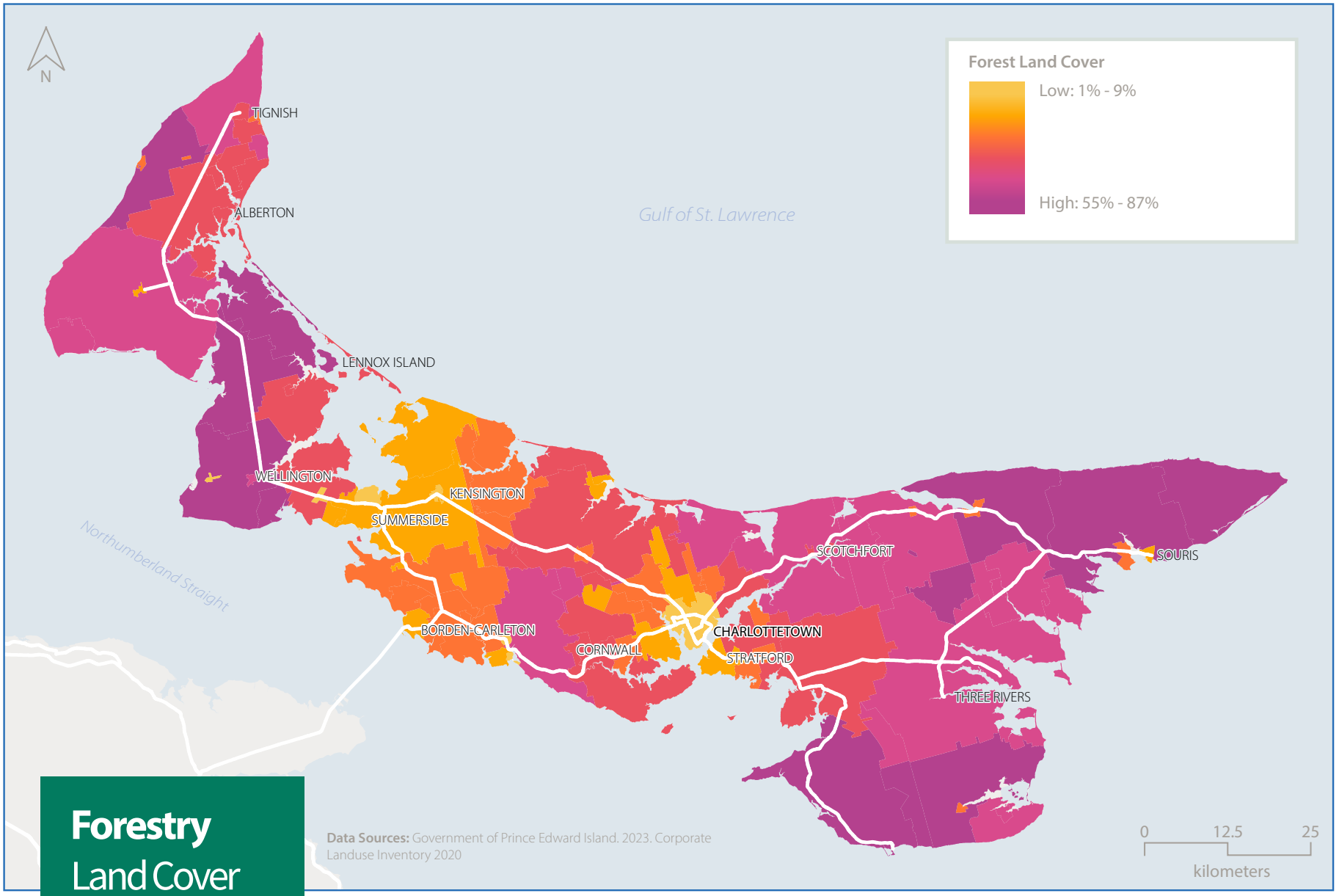
The primary challenge to increasing the protected land area in the province is the high percentage of land that is privately owned (see ownership). This underscores the need for innovative conservation strategies. Partnerships and private land stewardship are key elements in advancing these efforts, ensuring the Island's landscapes and ecosystems are preserved for future generations.

3.2.2 Forests

The Wabanaki forest covers the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqiyik people,[5] though it is more commonly known as the Acadian forest, the name given to it by settlers in eastern Canada. PEI's forests are a dynamic and vital component of the natural environment, playing a significant role in the Island's ecology and economic framework. These forests are a mix of hardwood-dominated (60%) and softwood-dominated (40%) trees, with an intolerant hardwood comprising more than one-third of the forests.[3] This blend of northern boreal and temperate hardwood trees contributes to the Island's unique biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Covering approximately 43.2% of the Island in 2020, PEI's forests have seen a net decrease in area since 2010. Estimates show 5,350 ha of forest created, but concurrently 9,350 ha has been lost.[3] In fact, the Island's forested land area has been decreasing since the 1990s, indicating a consistent trend. Factors contributing to this decline include land conversion for agriculture and development.

Takeaway: The trend of converting forests to other land uses highlights the need for effective forest management and conservation practices, and the importance of encouraging private landowners to participate in these initiatives.



Forestry
Land Cover

Data Sources: Government of Prince Edward Island. 2023. Corporate Landuse Inventory 2020

This map displays the percentage of land cover attributed to forests per census sub division, based on the 2020 Corporate Land Use Inventory.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

PEI's forests are crucial for carbon sequestration. The Province recently completed an analysis of carbon storage and sequestration using the Carbon Budget Model of the Canadian Forest Service (CFS). The results indicated that the Island's forests contain 59 Mt (megatonnes) of carbon in its soil, live plants, and dead matter,[3] equivalent to 217 Mt of carbon dioxide (CO2e) . For comparison, the province-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2020 were only 1.6 Mt CO2e.[6] More details on the carbon budget are available in the *Provincial State of the Forest Report*.

The forestry industry, including wood harvesting and residential fuelwood production, remains a vital part of the Island's economy. The estimated volume of wood harvested annually in PEI from 2010 to 2020 ranged from a low of 342,000 m^3 to a high of 449,000 m^3. Overall, live wood volume increased slightly during this period, from 135 m^3/ha to 137 m^3/ha.[3]

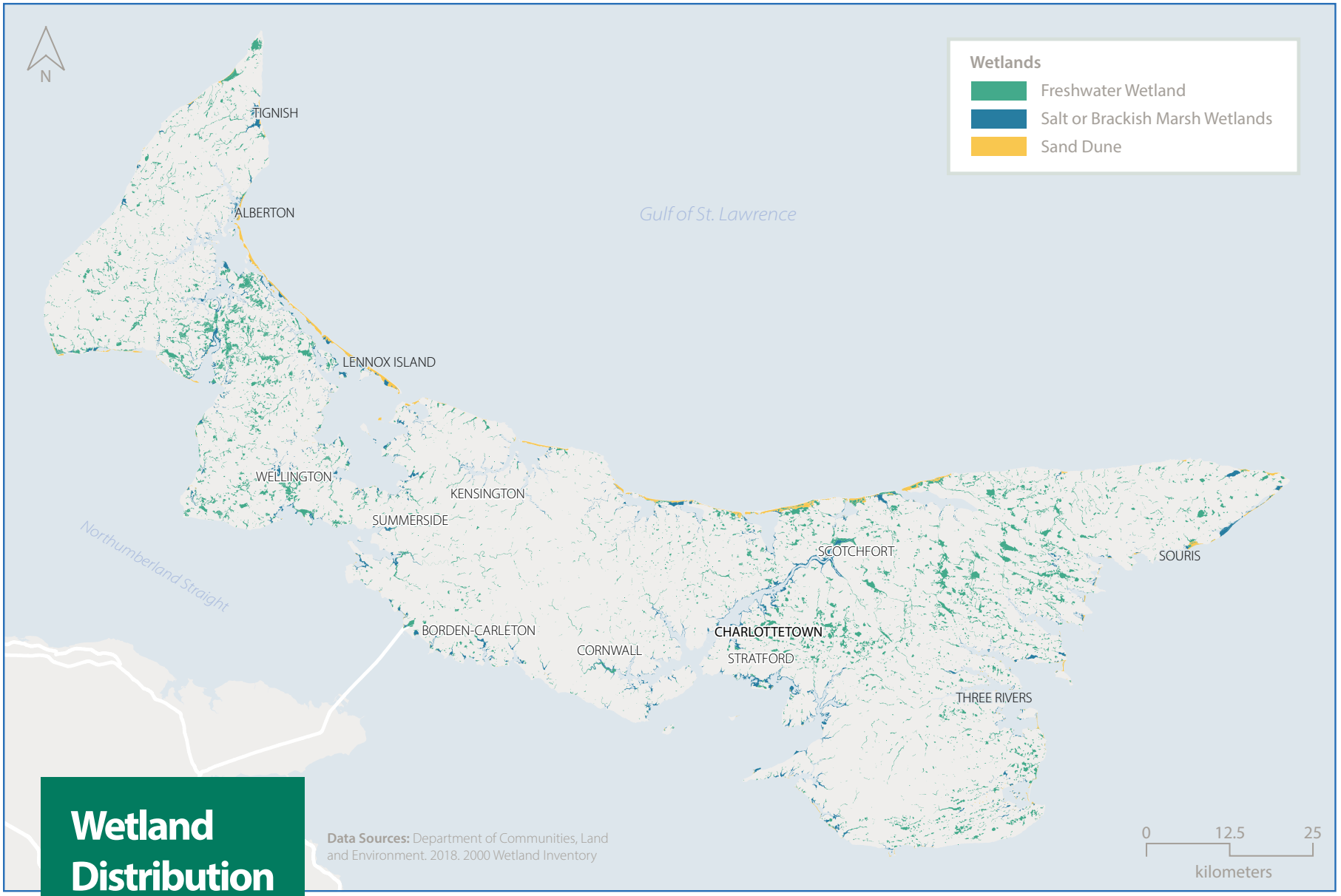
The forestry sector is vulnerable to climate change and the impacts of extreme weather events. Following post-tropical Storm Fiona, 13% of the Island's forested area was affected, of which at least 70% of the trees were blown down.[7] It will be essential to factor climate change into future forest management planning.

3.2.3 Wetlands

Natural wetlands cover approximately 5.1% of the Island. These ecosystems, consisting of a mix of freshwater, wetlands, and coastal salt marshes, play a vital role in supporting biodiversity. They serve as habitats for numerous species, including migratory birds, amphibians, and unique plant life.

Freshwater wetlands constitute around 79% of the total wetland area. The freshwater wetlands are diverse, including open ponds, black spruce bogs, wooded and shrub swamps, and alder swales.[8] Coastal wetlands, or salt marshes, are increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as sea-level rise and coastal erosion, when coastal development has occurred. Coastal development may cause a phenomenon known as 'coastal squeeze' where the development prevents a salt marsh from migrating inland and thus from naturally adapting to sea-level rise. More than 1,300 km (54%) of PEI's estuary coastlines are classified as wetlands, in contrast to only 5% of the exposed coastline.[9]

Wetlands are crucial ecosystems that provide a wide array of benefits. In addition to being among the most productive and biologically diverse ecosystems, their importance spans ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. They are essential for the sustainability of natural systems, and human and community well-being.



Wetland Distribution

Data Sources: Department of Communities, Land and Environment. 2018. 2000 Wetland Inventory

Wetlands cover 5.6% of the surface area of Prince Edward Island. This map displays freshwater wetlands (~80%), salt or tidal marshes (20%), and sand dunes. Salt and tidal marshes are considered to be among the most productive ecosystems on earth.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

More specifically, wetlands contribute to water purification processes and flood mitigation. They function as natural sponges, trapping and slowly releasing surface water, rain, snowmelt, groundwater, and floodwaters. They also help maintain surface water flow during dry periods. Commercial peat moss mining occurs in PEI's largest bogs, highlighting the economic as well as ecological importance of these areas. Protecting wetlands is essential in order to preserve their ecological functions, biodiversity, and the benefits they provide to Islanders.

Wetlands (and the land within 15 m of a wetland boundary, known as the buffer zone) are protected from disturbance and development under the Environmental Protection Act's Watercourse and Wetland Protection Regulations. However, improved coordination is necessary between land use planning and development authorities (both provincial and municipal) and the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, the organization responsible for the issuance of Buffer Zone Activity Permits. The importance of cooperation between these groups is highlighted in the recently released *PEI State of the Coast Report*.[10]

3.2.4 Wildlife

The federal government, under the Species at Risk Act (SARA), oversees the designation and recovery of at-risk species on federal lands. Similarly, the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) safeguards migratory birds and their habitats province-wide. In PEI, species at risk—including endangered species (14), threatened (10), and those of special concern (20)—include plants, animals, and other organisms.

The Province of PEI, in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), has recognized PEI's forested areas as one of Canada's eleven Priority Places for Species at Risk. This designation reflects the region's rich biodiversity, high concentration of at-risk species, and significant conservation opportunities.[11]

PEI wildlife and habitat management is guided by several Provincial acts including the *Wildlife Conservation Act*, *Natural Areas Protection Act*, and the *Environmental Protection Act*. These acts reflect the Island's commitment to preserving its rich biodiversity and ecological integrity. Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) include both public and private lands, and are dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and habitat. The WMAs cover about 5,430 ha, demonstrating PEI's strategic approach to wildlife habitat preservation.[12]

In addition to the environmental protection legislation, the *Planning Act* enables the creation of conservation zones for the purpose of *"preserving any unusual combination of elements of the natural environment having educational, historic or scientific interest" [Planning Act, Section 8(1)(iii)]*. Under this provision, the Morell River Conservation Zone has been established to maintain the recreational value of the Morell River, retain its unspoiled state, and to protect it from encroachment of undesireable and incompatible land uses *[Planning Act Subdivision and Development Regulations, Part IV - Special Regulations, Section G]*.

The Species At Risk Act in Prince Edward Island

Bank Swallow

The federal government is responsible for the designation, protection, and recovery of species on federal lands under its Species at Risk Act (SARA), an act to prevent wildlife specifies from becoming extinct and to secure the necessary actions for their recovery. Similarly, the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) protects migratory birds and their habitat across provinces. Species at risk with habitat in PEI include plants, animals or other organisms that are endangered (14), threatened (10) or of special concern (20) because of sensitivity to human activities or natural events.

Endangered: A species that is at immediate risk of extirpation or extinction.

Threatened: A species likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed..

Special Concern: A species that is particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events.

Canada Warbler

Common Nighthawk

Eastern Whip-poor-will

Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee

Leatherback Sea Turtle

Little Brown Myotis

Red-necked Phalarope

Rusty Blackbird

Short-eared Owl

Barn Swallow

Barrow's Goldeneye

Beach Pinweed

Blue Felt Lichen

Bobolink

Eastern Wood-pewee

Eskimo Curlew

Evening Grosbeak

Frosted Glass-whiskers

Gulf of St. Lawrence Aster

Monarch

Northern Myotis

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Piping Plover melodus subspecies

Red Knot rufa subspecies

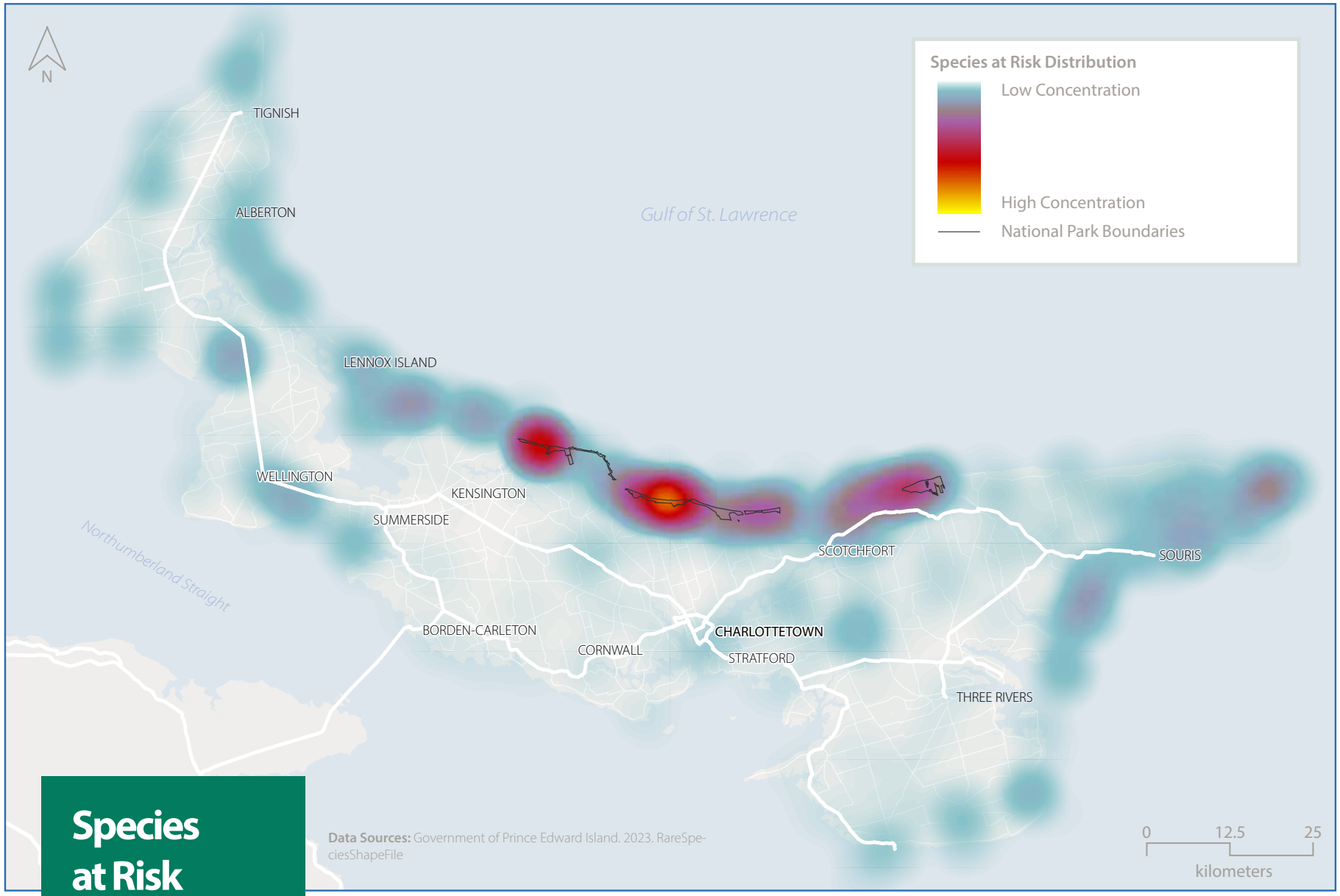
Tierra del Fuego / Patagonia wintering population

Transverse Lady Beetle

Wrinked Shingle Lichen

Yellow-banded Bumble Bee

Reference: Species at Risk Act (S.C. 2002, c. 29)
List of Wildlife Species at Risk



Species at Risk Distribution

This map displays where the highest concentrations of species that have been designated as "at risk" or "may be at risk" are found across the island.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

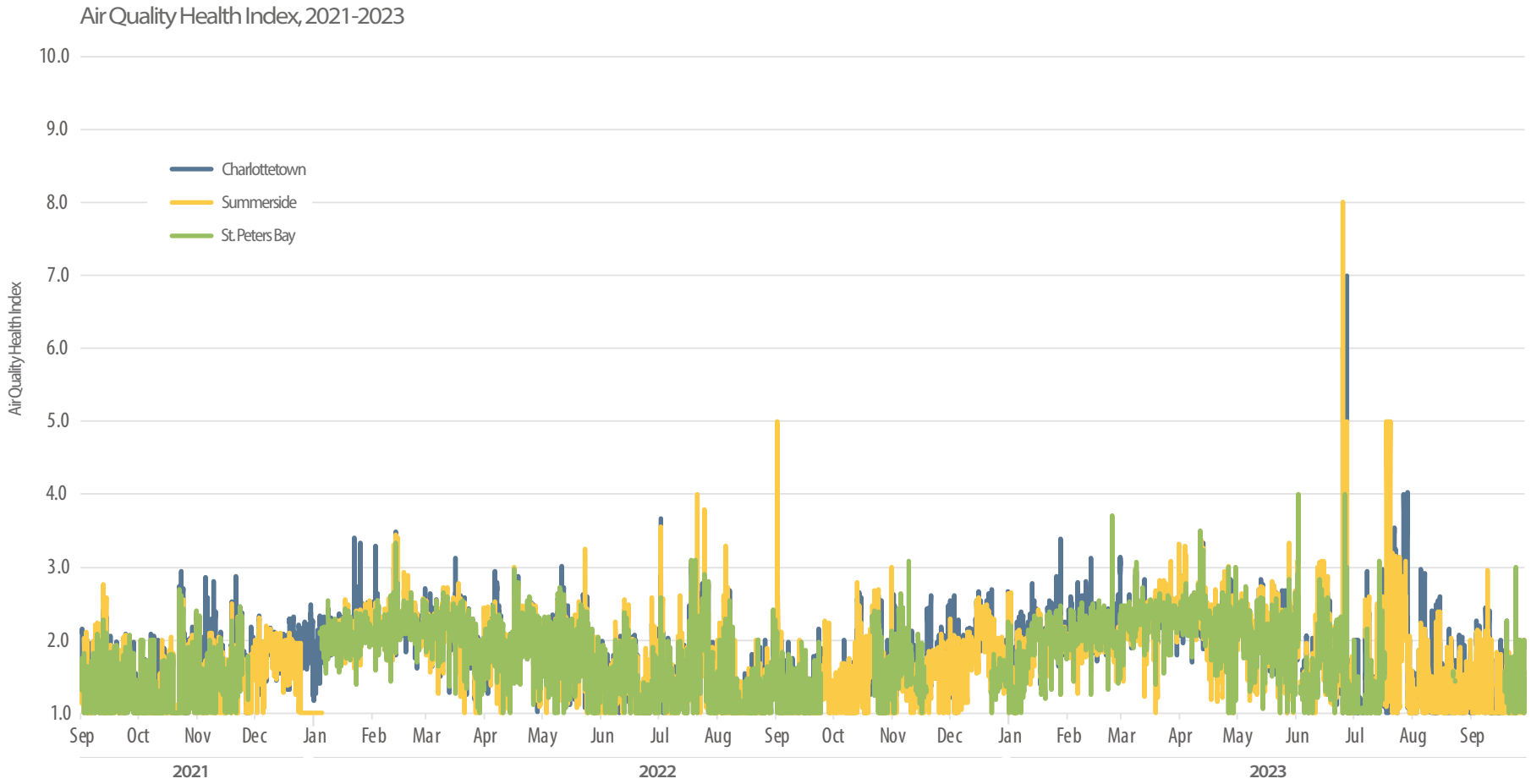


Figure 20: Graph showing air quality health index ratings for the three air monitoring stations on the Island [13]

3.2.5 Air Quality

PEI falls within the Southern Atlantic Airshed, one of Canada's six designated airsheds. The Island's air quality is influenced by a combination of local emissions and transboundary pollutants. The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is a key tool for assessing air quality, providing a scale from 1 to 10 to indicate health risks associated with air pollution.

PEI's average AQHI value for 2022 was 1.7, indicating generally good air quality.[13] The Island's air quality can fluctuate due to external factors such as industrial emissions or forest fires in other regions, as indicated by the spike in the AQHI value in June of 2023.[14]

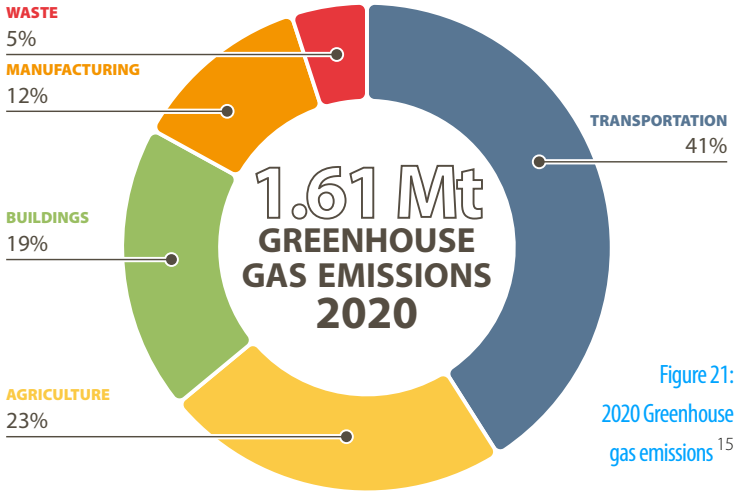


Figure 21: 2020 Greenhouse gas emissions [15]

The primary sources of GHG emissions in PEI are transportation, agriculture, buildings, manufacturing, and waste. The transportation sector, primarily passenger cars and trucks, is the largest contributor, accounting for 41% of emissions.[15]

The high dependance on personal vehicles highlights the need for PEI to implement sustainable transportation initiatives, to design walkable communities, to encourage sustainable development patterns across the Island, and to adopt cleaner technologies to maintain air quality and reach GHG reduction goals.

3.2.6 Water Resources

Surface water resources are characterized by a network of approximately 260 watersheds and more than 5,072 km of streams.[16] The health and management of the watersheds is critical to preserving the health of ecosystems and meeting the water demands of the Island's growing population and industries. What happens on the land directly correlates with surface and ground water quality.

The PEI Watershed Report Cards provide valuable insights into the health of freshwater systems through a regular assessment of 115 watersheds across the Island.[17] The report card score is calculated using five criteria including: nitrate concentration in streams; anoxic events in estuaries; fish kills related to run-off; siltation events; and other concerns, such as blue-green algae blooms, high temperature, high nitrate in drinking water, etc.[18] The 2022 report card revealed that most of the Island's watersheds are in good condition. However, challenges remain, particularly in Queens County and portions of Prince County where watershed health lags noticeably when compared to the rest of the province.[18]

Groundwater serves as the sole source of drinking water for the entire province. This renewable resource is primarily stored in the bedrock aquifer system. The water is renowned for its high quantity and stability, thanks to a high groundwater recharge rate and aquifer storage volume. The groundwater not only supplies residential needs but is also essential for agriculture and other industries, such as aquaculture's land-based finfish aquaculture facilities. Groundwater is a cornerstone of the Island's daily life and economy.

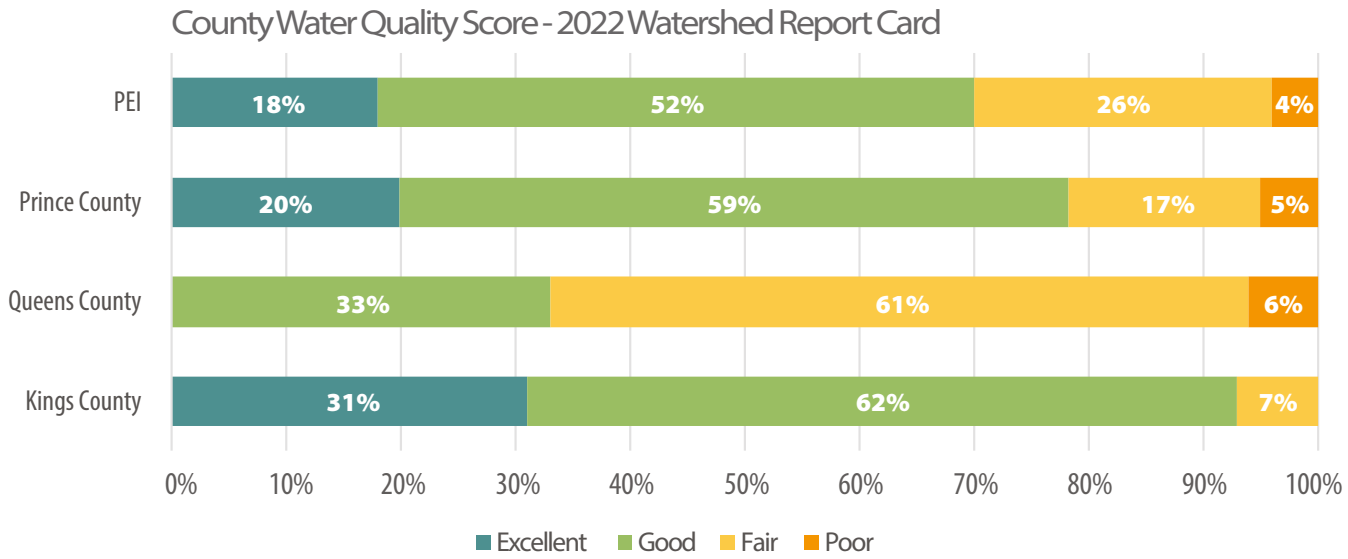


Figure 22: Chart showing 2022 Watershed Report Card scores for water quality by County.[17]

Interaction between groundwater and surface water is strong in PEI. More than two-thirds of the volume of the Island's streams are sourced from groundwater.[16] This interaction stabilizes stream flows and temperatures, creating ideal conditions for various species, particularly cold-water fish. This also presents unique challenges, particularly in urban settings where municipal water is extracted, leading to a reduction in the groundwater table. This decrease in groundwater flow contributes to a diminished discharge into streams, ultimately affecting the flow of streams and the habitat within the streams.[18]

Saltwater intrusion occurs when seawater infiltrates coastal groundwater aquifers. It can take place naturally or can be induced by groundwater pumping in coastal areas.

Localized saltwater intrusion events near the coast have occurred in Summerside, Eliot River, York Point, Souris West, and Stanhope. Some domestic and municipal wells in the regions have also experienced saltwater intrusion. This highlights the need for the vigilant management of groundwater withdrawal and land use in coastal areas.[19]

Salt groundwater is a critical resource for the aquaculture industry in PEI due to its relatively stable water temperature and superior water quality compared to using saltwater directly from the ocean. Saltwater wells and aquaculture facilities on the Island rarely induce saltwater intrusion problems.

Takeaway: The LUP should consider approaches to protecting municipal water supplies and well fields from chemical and biological contamination, particularly in areas outside of Municipal Planning Authority. There are significant environmental and economic costs and logistics associated with the replacement of these well fields if they are contaminated.

3.2.7 Coastline and Coastal Hazards

Extending more than 3,280 km, PEI's coastline is integral to its ecology, economy, and culture. It provides habitats for diverse species and supports recreational and commercial activities and industries.

The coastline's exposure varies significantly over its length, with more than 75% sheltered within large bays and estuaries, and shore types varying between red sandstone cliffs and bluffs (31%), low plains (11.5%), salt marshes (43%), and sand dunes (14.5%).[20] Each shore type contributes uniquely to the Island's natural heritage, supporting an array of wildlife while providing critical nesting, feeding, and resting areas for shorebirds and marine life.

Coastal flooding is a significant concern in PEI, with approximately 3% of the Island's total land area located within the coastal floodplain.[20] This area, and the buildings and infrastructure within it, are vulnerable to flooding from storm surges. The risk is compounded by the anticipated impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise.

While studies have shown that vulnerable populations are more likely to live on inland floodplains due to the lower cost of land and housing, more affluent residents are more likely to live in coastal areas where waterfront properties have higher property values.[21] PEI's coastline is characterized by a large number of waterfront homes with higher-than-average property values and seasonal secondary residences, including cottages. More research is required to identify vulnerable populations within PEI's coastal floodplain.

Coastal erosion is another major challenge on the Island, particularly for exposed sandstone cliffs and bluffs. Frost wedging and other natural processes combine with impacts from extreme storm events to affect coastal erosion.

The rate of coastline change (erosion or accretion) has been a subject of ongoing study. Historical data shows fluctuating rates of change, with an average erosion rate of 28 cm/year between 1968 and 2010 and an increased rate of 40 cm/year between 2000 and 2010.[20] More recent assessments indicate a decrease in these rates for certain shore types, suggesting a dynamic and evolving coastal landscape. The *PEI State of the Coast Report* includes more information on trends in coastal erosion monitoring.

Understanding the coastal processes unique to PEI is a critical element in planning and safeguarding coastal communities, ecosystems, and the Island's natural and built heritage. Environmental protection policies that aim to protect the natural environment from human activity cannot be relied upon to protect the built environment from coastal hazards.

Proactive land use policies and development regulations that are informed by scientific research and community engagement are needed to protect coastal properties and infrastructure from environmental challenges.[20] The importance of land use planning in coastal zone management is explored further in the *PEI Interim Coastal Policy Recommendations Report*.

3.2.8 Climate Change: Impacts and Response

Climate change presents multifaceted challenges for PEI, affecting the Island's natural environment, built heritage, cultural landscapes, communities, and residents. PEI is particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including:

Extreme weather events: The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (including post-tropical storms and heat waves) are expected to increase. Extreme weather events can lead to significant infrastructure damage, as evidenced by post-tropical Storm Fiona in 2022, during which trees were toppled, homes, wharves, roads, and other infrastructure were damaged, and more than 82,000 customers were left without power.[22] On the other hand, heat waves can result in direct impacts to human health and community infrastructure, especially when demands for cooling exceed infrastructure capacity.

Coastal hazards: Increased risks from coastal erosion and flooding due to storm surge events during extreme weather events are also anticipated. A projected sea-level rise of approximately 30-35 cm by 2050 and 75-80 cm by 2100 will increase these risks, threatening coastal communities and ecosystems.[23]

Environmental impacts: Gradual shifts in climate norms, seasonal temperatures, and precipitation frequency and quantity can have significant impacts on the natural environment. These interconnected elements face risks to biodiversity, increased prevalence of pests and diseases, and challenges in water resource management.

Socioeconomic effects: Climate change impacts on human systems are interconnected. All residents of PEI are likely to be affected in some way. Those people who are most vulnerable today are already disproportionately impacted by climate change.[24] Vulnerable populations, including low-income households, do not have access to additional resources when weather disruptions impact their ability to get to work, when they result in unplanned but necessary repairs to homes after an extreme event, or when prolonged power outages result in food spoilage. Vulnerable populations are also more susceptible to the physical and mental health impacts of climate change.[25]

Economic impacts: Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns will not only affect the Island's residents and built environment, but will also impact the agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry sectors.

PEI's Climate Adaptation Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the Island and its residents to the impacts of climate change.[26] Key themes in the Plan include:

- **Disaster resilience and response:** Enhancing emergency preparedness and response capabilities to better manage the impacts of extreme weather events
- **Resilient communities:** Supporting community-led initiatives to adapt to climate change, focusing on vulnerable populations and areas
- **Climate-ready industries:** Assisting key industries, such as agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, heritage, and culture, to adapt to changing climatic conditions
- **Physical and mental well-being:** Addressing the health impacts of climate change, including heat-related illnesses and mental health challenges
- **Natural habitat and biodiversity:** Implementing measures to protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity in the face of climate change
- **Knowledge and capacity building:** Investing in research, education, and knowledge sharing to enhance the Island's capacity to adapt to climate change

Effective land use planning for PEI must support these adaptation policies. Land use planning underpins efforts to enhance disaster resilience, build resilient communities, protect natural habitats, and support climate-ready industries. By strategically managing land use, PEI can address the multifaceted challenges of climate change, safeguarding both the environment and the well-being of residents.

In addition to adaptation policies, PEI is actively pursuing mitigation strategies to reduce GHG emissions and transition toward a more sustainable future. The provincial government has set ambitious targets, aiming for a 40% reduction in GHG emissions below 2005 levels by 2030, and achieving net zero emissions by 2040.[27]

Key pillars of the *Net Zero Framework*[27] include:

- **Transforming transportation:** Promoting the adoption of electric vehicles, improving public transit, and investing in active transportation infrastructure
- **Transitioning to efficient and cleaner buildings:** Implementing programs for energy-efficient equipment and insulation in homes and businesses, and encouraging the use of renewable energy sources
- **Shaping agriculture for net zero:** Supporting sustainable agricultural practices, including research initiatives on fertilizer use and soil health
- **Removing carbon through forestry and emerging technologies:** Enhancing carbon capture through tree planting and the exploration of new technologies for carbon sequestration

- **Creating a clean industry and waste advantage:** Encouraging clean technology in industrial processes and improving waste management practices

- **Inspiring transformational change:** Fostering a culture of sustainability through leadership, community engagement, and educational initiatives

Land use planning is also key to achieving PEI's mitigation goals. It will support progress by seamlessly integrating with strategies to lower GHG emissions and transition to sustainability. By aligning land use policies with the *Net Zero Framework*, PEI can more effectively manage resources, promote clean transportation, enhance energy efficiency, encourage sustainable agriculture, and support carbon sequestration.

This strategic approach ensures that every initiative contributes to the overarching aim of reducing emissions. It embodies a comprehensive effort towards a resilient and sustainable future for the Island.

3.2.9 Climate Change and Vulnerable Populations

The *Climate Adaptation Plan* also identifies how climate change disproportionately affects PEI's vulnerable populations, particularly regarding health, amenity, and mobility consideration. Populations vulnerable to climate change can include: seniors, youth and children, Indigenous Peoples, racialized populations, people with disabilities, people who are pregnant, frontline emergency responders, individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged, and people who are immunocompromised and those living with pre-existing illness.[28]

Some ways that climate change can disproportionately impact these groups include:

- Those with an existing health condition like diabetes can be disproportionately affected by extreme heat effects.
- Some populations will have more exposure to a hazard, like those who work outside during heat waves.
- Access to protective measures is not universal across the Island, as some populations, including those with a disability, may have greater difficulty accessing care and emergency assistance.
- Vulnerable populations residing in low-lying coastal areas or regions prone to droughts and floods are more susceptible to displacement, loss of livelihoods, and inadequate access to resources.
- Limited access to healthcare, education, and social services further compounds the challenges vulnerable communities face in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Land use planning and adaptation must ensure that policies are created to support vulnerable demographics, particularly as the Island experiences increased severity with weather events. The Climate Adaptation Plan sets out a series of remediation approaches as well as funding suggestions for housing upgrades. Additional measures like ensuring greenspaces are available to residents in times of extreme heat, and creating accessible public spaces and infrastructure, are ways planning efforts can support vulnerable populations in extreme climate situations.

Endnotes

1. Van de Poll, H.W. (1983). "Geology of Prince Edward Island." Department of Energy and Forestry, Energy and Minerals Branch.

2. Shaw, J. (2005). Geomorphic Evidence of Postglacial Terrestrial Environments on Atlantic Canadian Continental Shelves. Géographie physique et Quaternaire, 59(2-3), 141–154. https://doi.org/10.7202/014752ar.

3. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2020). "State of the Forest Report."

4. The Grades Are In - A Report Card On Canada's Progress In Protecting Its Land And Ocean. CPAWS. (2021, June). https://cpaws.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/cpaws-reportcard2021-web.pdf.

5. Nashawaak Watershed Association. What is the Wabanaki Forest? https://www.nashwaakwatershed.ca/what-is-acadian-forest/.

6. Canada Energy Regulator. (n.d.). "Provincial and Territorial Energy Profiles – Prince Edward Island GHG Emissions." https://www.cer-rec.gc.ca/en/data-analysis/energy-markets/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles/provincial-territorial-energy-profiles-prince-edward-island.html.

7. CBC. (2023, October). "Satellite images tell the tale of where Fiona took biggest toll on PEI forests." https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-Island/pei-environment-forestry-plan-committee-1.7001377.

8. Prince Edward Island, Environment Energy and Forestry. (2007). "A Wetland Conservation Policy For Prince Edward Island." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_wetland_policy_2007_0.pdf.

9. Coldwater Consulting Ltd. (2012, March). "Geomorphic Shoreline Classification of Prince Edward Island." Prepared for the Atlantic Climate Adaptation Solutions Association.

10. Parnham, H., Jardine, D., Kennedy, C., Weatherbie, C., Keefe, G., Pang, T., Kinay, P., Wang. X. and Farooque, A. (2023) Prince Edward Island State of the Coast Report 2023. Canadian Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation, St. Peters Bay, Canada. Report submitted to the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, Government of Prince Edward Island.

11. Prince Edward Island, Canada. 2023 Forested Landscape Priority Place for Species at Risk. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/pei-forested-landscape-priority-place-for-species.

12. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (n.d.). Wildlife Management Areas. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/information/communities-land-and-environment/wildlife-management-areas.

13. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (n.d.). Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) Dashboard https://peigov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/b2bd8126ee6f4fcc8c832b728bc716d9.

14. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2022). Air Quality Report, Covering the Years 2020-2022. https://air.princeedwardIsland.ca/documents/9a760b20622d4ac28e5028dafe40728c/explore.

15. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023). Greenhouse Gas Emissions. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/greenhouse-gas-emissions.

16. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2007). "State of Wildlife Report."

17. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023). "2022 Watershed Water Quality Report Cards." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/prince_edward_Island_watershed_water_quality_report_cards_2022.pdf.

18. Be Water Friendly. (n.d.). "Watersheds." https://bewaterfriendly.com/our-water/watersheds/.

19. Somers, G. and Nishimura P. (eds.). (2012). "Managing Groundwater Resources – Assessing the impact of climate change on salt-water intrusion of coastal aquifers in Atlantic Canada." Report to Atlantic Regional Adaptation Collaborative (RAC) Climate Change Program, Natural Resources Canada, 86 pages.

20. Parnham, H., Jardine, D., Kennedy, C., Weatherbie, C., Keefe, G., Pang, T., Kinay, P., Wang. X. and Farooque, A. (2023) "Prince Edward Island State of the Coast Report 2023." Canadian Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation, St. Peters Bay, Canada. Report submitted to the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, Government of Prince Edward Island.

21. Lieberknecht, K., & Mueller, E. J. (2023). "Planning for Equitable Climate Relocation: Gaps in Knowledge and a Proposal for Future Directions." Journal of Planning Literature, 38(2), 229-244.

22. Lavigne, S. (2023, September 28) "Post-Tropical Storm Fiona: After Action Report." Prepared by Calian Group on behalf of Emergency Measures Organization, Government of Prince Edward Island.

23. Climatedata.ca. (2023). "Climate Data for a Resilient Canada: Prince Edward Island. Projections of Relative Sea-Level Change" (developed by Natural Resources Canada). From: James, T.S., Robin, C., Henton, J.A., and Craymer, M., 2021. Relative Sea-level Projections for Canada based on the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report and the NAD83v70VG National Crustal Velocity Model; Geological Survey of Canada, Open File 8764, 1 .zip file, https://doi.org/10.4095/327878.

24. ICF. (2021) Prince Edward Island (PEI) Climate Change Risk Assessment. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_ccra_2021.pdf.

25. Minister of Health, Canada. (2022). "Health of Canadians in a Changing Climate." https://changingclimate.ca/site/assets/uploads/sites/5/2022/02/CCHA-REPORT-EN.pdf.

26. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2022). "Building Resilience: Climate Adaptation Plan." https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/building-resilience-climate-adaptation-plan.

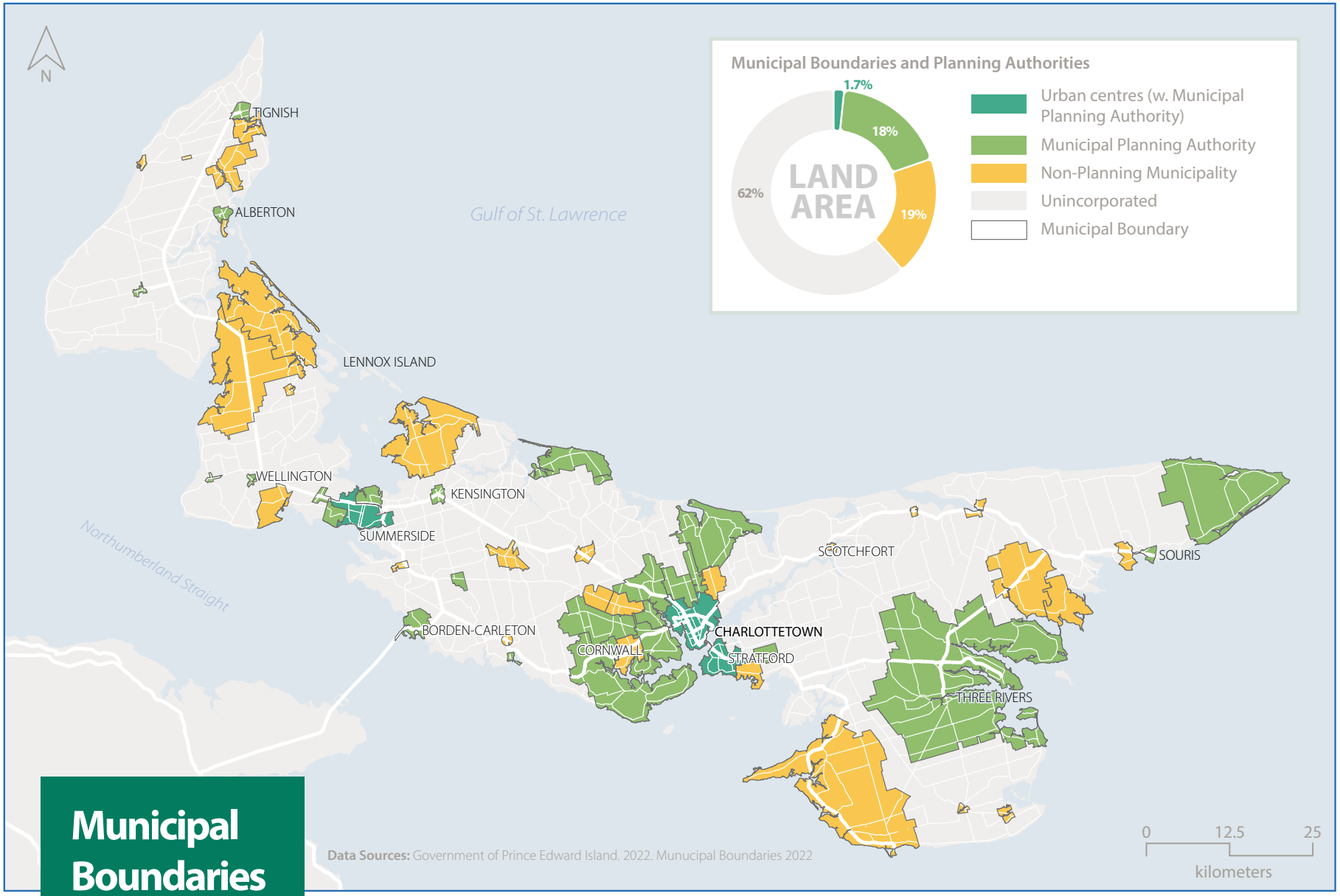
27. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2022). "2040 Net Zero Framework: Accelerating Our Transition to a Clean, Sustainable Economy". https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2040_net_zero_framework_for_feb_23_2022.pdf.

28. Canada. (2022, November 7). "Health and the Environment: Who is most impacted by climate change." https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/climate-change-health/populations-risk.html

Built Environment

The built environment encompasses the physical spaces where Islanders live, learn, work, and play - our cities, buildings, homes, infrastructure, streets and sidewalks, transportation options, and more. The environments and spaces Islanders encounter on a day to day basis can significantly affect individual behaviours, mood, and overall community health and well-being. At the same time, the lifecycle impacts of the building and construction industries make up nearly 30% of Canadian greenhouse gas emissions, with significant contributions to material extraction, water consumption, and waste generation.[1]

There is a vast diversity of built environments on PEI - from the dense streetscapes and small city character of Charlottetown, to the cottage communities and summer residences along the coast and north shore, to the many small towns, communities, and rural areas across the Island. How these environments are planned and built can not only be part of a critical solution to climate change, they can contribute to creating resilient, thriving communities, and driving economic growth.



Municipal Boundaries Planning Authorities

Data Sources: Government of Prince Edward Island. 2022. Munucipal Boundaries 2022

This map displays the geographic area of PEI's 59 municipalities, highlighting the 32 municipalities with planning authorities, official plans, and land-use bylaws.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

The Built Environment in Prince Edward Island

Single-detached Homes [20]

The housing landscape in PEI is predominantly made up of single-detached homes.

Multi-plexes and Townhomes [20]

There is a lack of medium density housing across the Island. Rural areas in particular provide limited housing options beyond single-detached homes.

Apartments (less than five stories) [20]

Apartments in buildings that have fewer than five storeys make up almost a third of housing in urban areas, but are significantly less common outside of Charlottetown, Stratford, and Summerside.

Dwellings Built Before1960 [20]

Rural areas have a greater share of dwellings originally constructed before 1960 compared to the rest of the Island. This is indicative of slower development, and re-development rates.

Density [20]

The population density of PEI was 27.2 people per square kilometre in 2021. Higher density urban areas offer more walkable communities, housing opportunities, and access to amenities and services.

To understand the role of land use planning on PEI, it is important to identify how building and development happens across urban areas (Charlottetown, Summerside, Stratford), municipalities responsible for planning, and rural areas (non-municipal planning municipalities, and unincorporated areas). Note: Urban areas have been subtracted from Municipal Planning areas in the graphics below.

Dwelling Value [20]

The market estimated average value of dwellings, including the land they are on, was $313,200 in PEI in 2021.

Renters [20]

Renter households refers to households where no member of the household owns their dwelling. Adequate rental supply is key to providing secure and affordable housing for all Islanders.

Usual Residents [20]

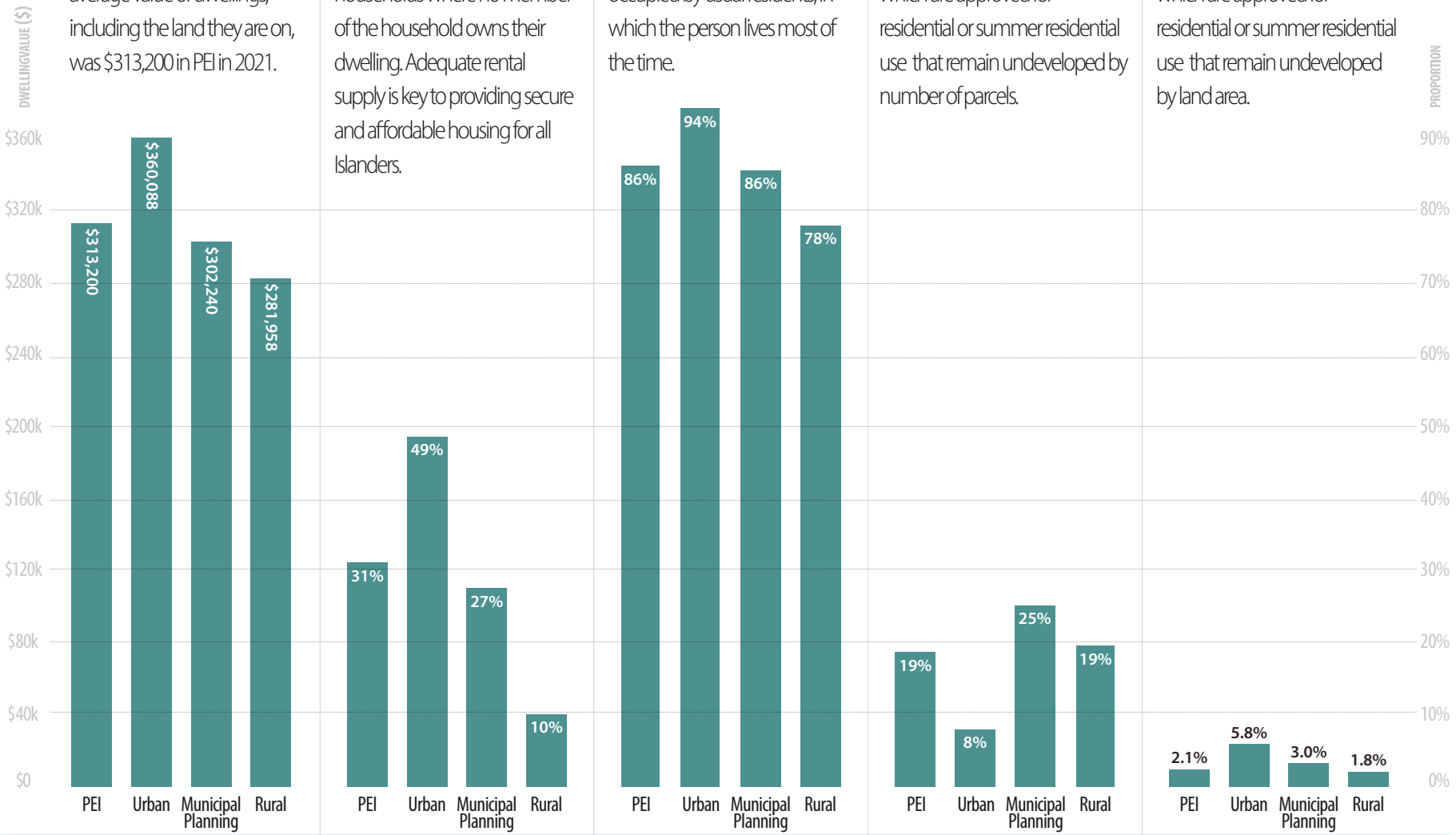
The number of dwellings occupied by usual residents, in which the person lives most of the time.

Vacant Lots (Number) [18]

The proportion of properties which are approved for residential or summer residential use that remain undeveloped by number of parcels.

Vacant Lots (Area) [18]

The proportion of properties which are approved for residential or summer residential use that remain undeveloped by land area.



3.3.1 Municipalities

Prince Edward Island's 58 municipalities are responsible and accountable local governments that play a significant role in the province's economic, environmental, and social prosperity. Municipalities are authorized under the *Municipal Government Act* and represent 72% of the province's total population, and 34% of the total land area.

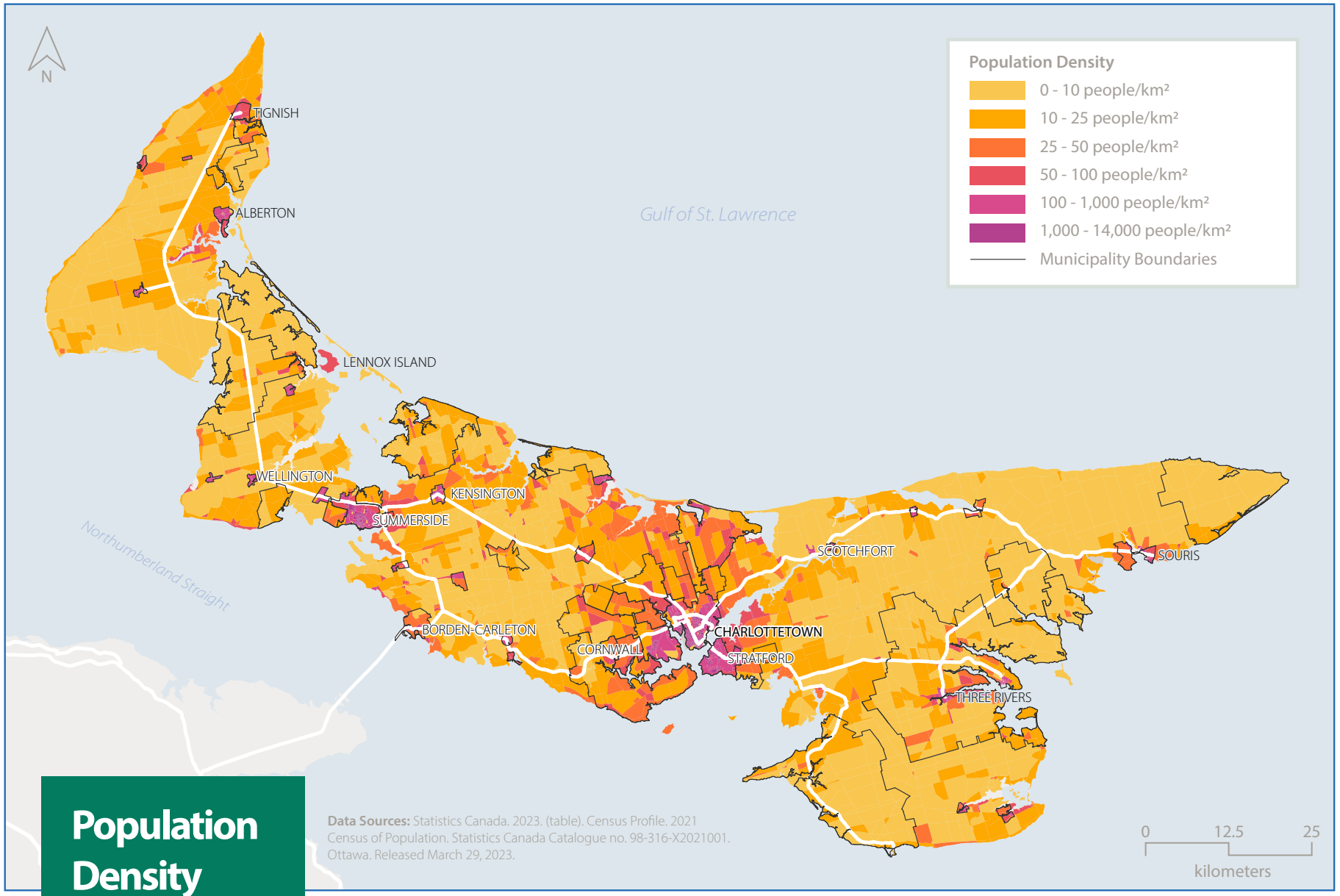
The *Planning Act* provides the overall framework, authority, powers, and processes for both municipalities and the Province to provide land use planning services. Under the Planning Act, 29 municipalities, covering 18% of PEI's land area, have been delegated responsibility for planning. They have adopted an official plan and implemented bylaws which are submitted to the Minister for formal approval. These 29 municipal planning authorities are fully responsible for developing, implementing, and administering their planning documents, including zoning bylaws.

The provincial government is the planning authority for the rest of the land area, which includes municipalities that do not currently provide land use planning services, as well as areas that are not represented by a municipal government (unincorporated areas). Development in these areas is guided by the *Planning Act Subdivision and Development Regulations*, in which the Special Planning Areas section apply to applicable municipalities with official plans and bylaws.[79] In these areas, permits are only issued if the proposed development complies with the regulations established for that special planning area.[80] There is no land use zoning in the current provincial development control framework.

Municipal planning authorities must meet the requirements of the *Planning Act* and *Subdivision and Development Regulations*. As appropriate, they may also provide further restrictions in their official plan and bylaws.

Takeaway: Development within Municipal Planning Authorities provide thoughtfully planned growth areas that utilize existing services. Without an Island-wide land use plan, there is a high likelihood of the continuation of unsustainable development patterns, and the subsequent inefficient use and unnecessary consumption of valuable resource lands that will continue to occur outside of these Municipal Planning Authorities.

Figure 23: Built form types shown in the Municipal Boundaries Map (page 70).



Population Density 2021

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays population density for Prince Edward Island, based on 2021 census dissemination blocks. Note: Some census dissemination blocks include islands with no population - in this case, the data is representative of the greater dissemination block.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

Settlement within Municipalities

The highest density population centres continue to be found within the Island's municipalities, particularly in Queens County. These centres offer more walkable communities, rental housing opportunities, and access to amenities and services.

While municipal development is more sustainable in PEI, it is not without its challenges. The Canadian Municipal Land Use and Regulation Survey is designed to capture information on land use planning and related regulations that have the potential to impact housing supply and affordability, as well as permit processing times. In 2022, the survey was completed by approximately 400 Canadian municipalities including five located in PEI.[2] The Municipal Land Use and Regulation Index (MLURI) combines each of these sub-indexes to give an overall measure of restrictions and regulations by jurisdiction. High scores indicate more restriction.[2]

Results have indicated that PEI has the highest overall MLURI score in Canada. This means that PEI municipalities reported having higher overall restrictions and regulations for development when compared to other Canadian municipalities. This may influence the choice of development location for land developers, with higher requirements in municipal units compared to areas outside of municipalities.

PEI also had the highest provincial score in three of the individual categories: Affordable Housing Index (AHI), the requirements for affordable housing approvals; Municipal Zoning Approval Index (MZAI), the requirements necessary to approve residential land use changes; and the Municipal Project Approval Index (MPAI), the requirements necessary to approve non-residential land use changes. PEI also had the second highest score on the Density Restriction Index (DRI), reflecting the fact that PEI had the second largest minimum lot size requirements on average of any province."[2]

In contrast, PEI scored on the lower end of the Approval Delay Index (ADI) and Other Involvement Index (OII), which refer to the number of weeks municipalities take to complete an application review. It also captures the degree of involvement that the provincial government and/or courts have in municipal residential applications.

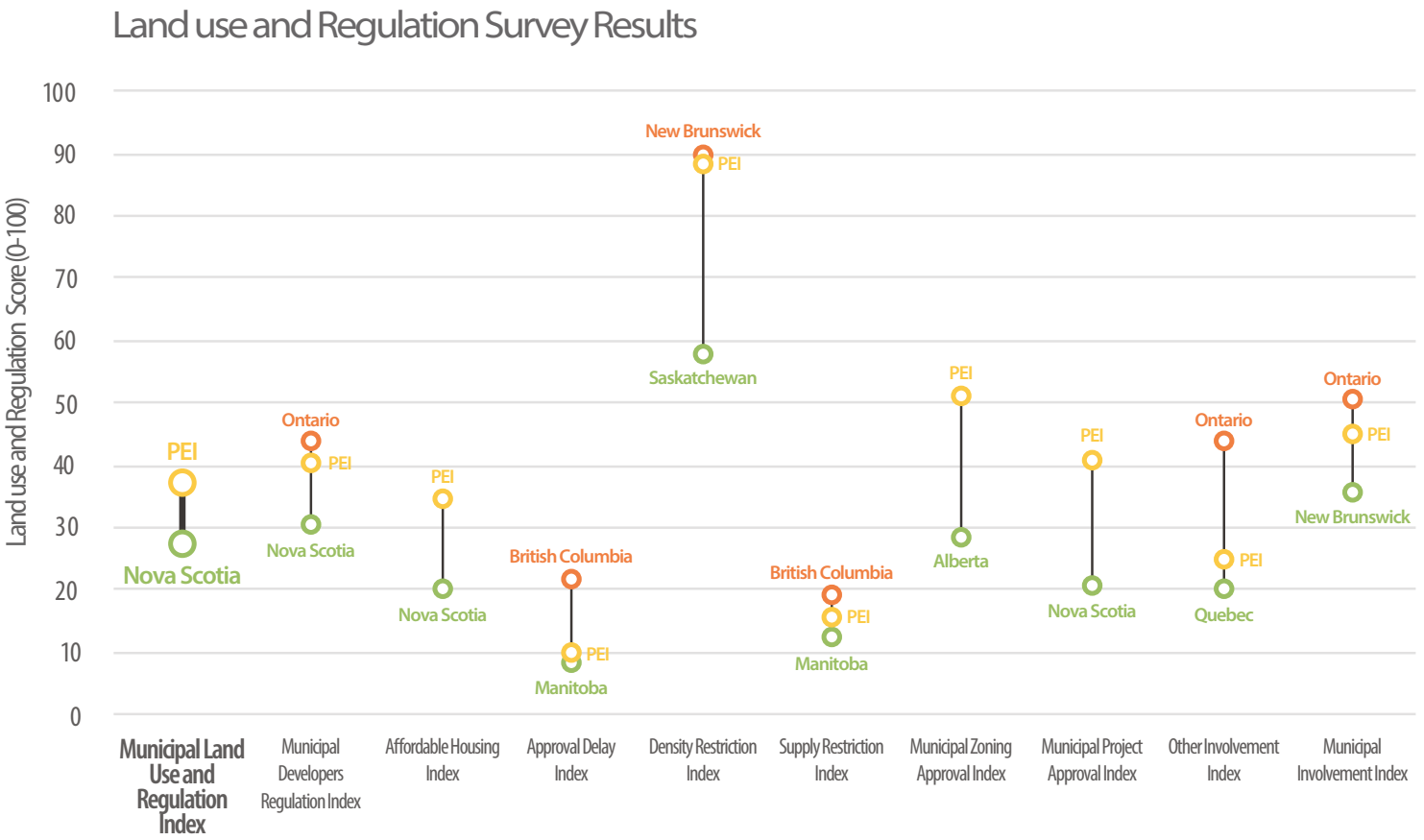


Figure 24: Municipal land use and regulation survey results, 2022. More information on the MLURI Survey, as well as the definitions for each index category, can be found on Statistics Canada's website.[5]

Nationally, the survey results demonstrate that higher numbers of residential land use regulations seems to be associated with improved housing affordability.[2,3] Regulation also helps to ensure that a development is built to remove long-term cost implications from a safety, energy efficiency, and infrastructure perspective.

A study done for the Halifax Regional Municipality in 2013 indicated that there are substantial cost savings to transportation services, water and wastewater services, utilities, and other public services in scenarios where the majority of density is concentrated in municipal centres.[4] The implications of up-front development costs and the long-term cost of development support the need for a balanced approach to land use planning that considers both regulatory requirements and the impacts on community life.

Previous Studies

PEI's approach to land development and municipal governance has been documented in several previous studies. *The Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance*, published in 2009, is significant for its comprehensive analysis and recommendations. The report made 40 recommendations for land use and local governance for PEI. This report highlighted notable advancements in the protection of natural areas, as well as identifying areas of concern including public health, safety, issues with water and soil quality, and resource conservation.[6] The document emphasized the evolving dynamics of municipal governance, suggesting a potential need to reevaluate the provincial relationship with municipalities.[6] One of the report's most significant elements was the recognition that more than 15 years of conversations had already taken place around the need for a new land use plan.[6]

The *Report of the Task Force on Land Use Policy (2014)* presented detailed recommendations for land use policies designed to guide both municipal and provincial planning processes. The task force also suggested regional land use plans and acknowledged the lack of municipal capacity.

More recently, the Land Matters Advisory Committee[7] has further clarified land use and policy in PEI. The committee's report, published in 2021, underscored the connections between land use and ownership, highlighting their collective impact on land policy and legislation. It also reinforced the need for a provincial land use planning framework, echoing recommendations from past task forces, commissions, and other reports.

Special Planning Areas (SPAs)

Special Planning Areas (SPAs) are regulated under the *Planning Act Subdivision and Development Regulations*. These regulations provide location-specific direction on land use within specific areas. Initially introduced for cities during municipal amalgamation in 1995 to limit development outside city boundaries, the SPAs aimed to manage and control land development in a way that respects environmental sensitivities, scenic viewscapes, and the need for structured urban growth. [84]

The SPAs include:

1. Charlottetown Region
2. Stratford Region
3. Cornwall Region
4. Summerside Region
5. Borden Region
6. Princetown Point – Stanley Bridge
7. Greenwich

Additionally, the Morell River Conservation Zone, established in the late 1980s, is an SPA that focuses on preserving the natural and recreational value of the Morell River area by imposing restrictions on land use along the river. [84] Each SPA has its distinct purpose and applicable regulations. While the SPAs have been successful in preventing major developments immediately outside the cities and towns and in protecting environmentally sensitive areas, they have created a leapfrog development effect encouraging development to move further into rural areas. Moreover, some of the regulations are considered outdated, too restrictive, and create confusion and delays in application processing.[84]

Opportunities for improvement include adopting the main objectives of SPAs across all of PEI, emphasizing sustainable development, and reducing land use conflicts. By adopting provisions from the SPAs such as lot coverage, building height, and comprehensive development agreements, a more unified and effective land management strategy could be developed for rural PEI.

3.3.2 Settlement Patterns

Due to its small size, PEI stands out as the most densely populated province in Canada, with 27.2 people per square kilometre. This density, significantly higher than Nova Scotia's 18.4 and Ontario's 15.9 people per square kilometre, has direct implications on the Island's land use and development patterns.[8]

As of 2021, Canada has the lowest number of housing units per 1,000 residents of any G7 country.[9] The settlement patterns seen in the province fall into two contrasting approaches: development within municipalities, which often follows more planned and condensed formats, and sprawl, which is characterized by leapfrog and strip development patterns, as well as developing on private lanes.

Sprawl

The predominance of single-detached housing, especially when developed in an unplanned manner, can lead to sprawl communities. These communities are car-dependent, resulting in increased carbon emissions, higher transportation costs, and reduced physical activity. Allowing development that is auto-centric and in direct contrast to PEI's goal to become net zero by 2040.[10]

The non-compact nature of these developments also consumes excessive amounts of agricultural and natural land area, often increasing land use conflicts.[11] Livestock operations become unable to expand due to their proximity to unplanned residential areas, and tensions between farmers and new residents unfamiliar with farm practices arise. This was reported as an area in need of improvement in the *Public Engagement Survey for the Next Policy Framework for Agriculture (2023-2028)*, (see Agriculture).

> **Takeaway:** Despite its known negative impacts, sprawl continues to be prevalent in PEI due to the reduced upfront planning and construction costs for developers. However, sprawl incurs disproportionately high costs for infrastructure servicing after construction, which ultimately places a greater financial burden on PEI tax payers and government coffers compared to development that occurs in municipalities where infrastructure already exists or that can be feasibly extended.[12,4]

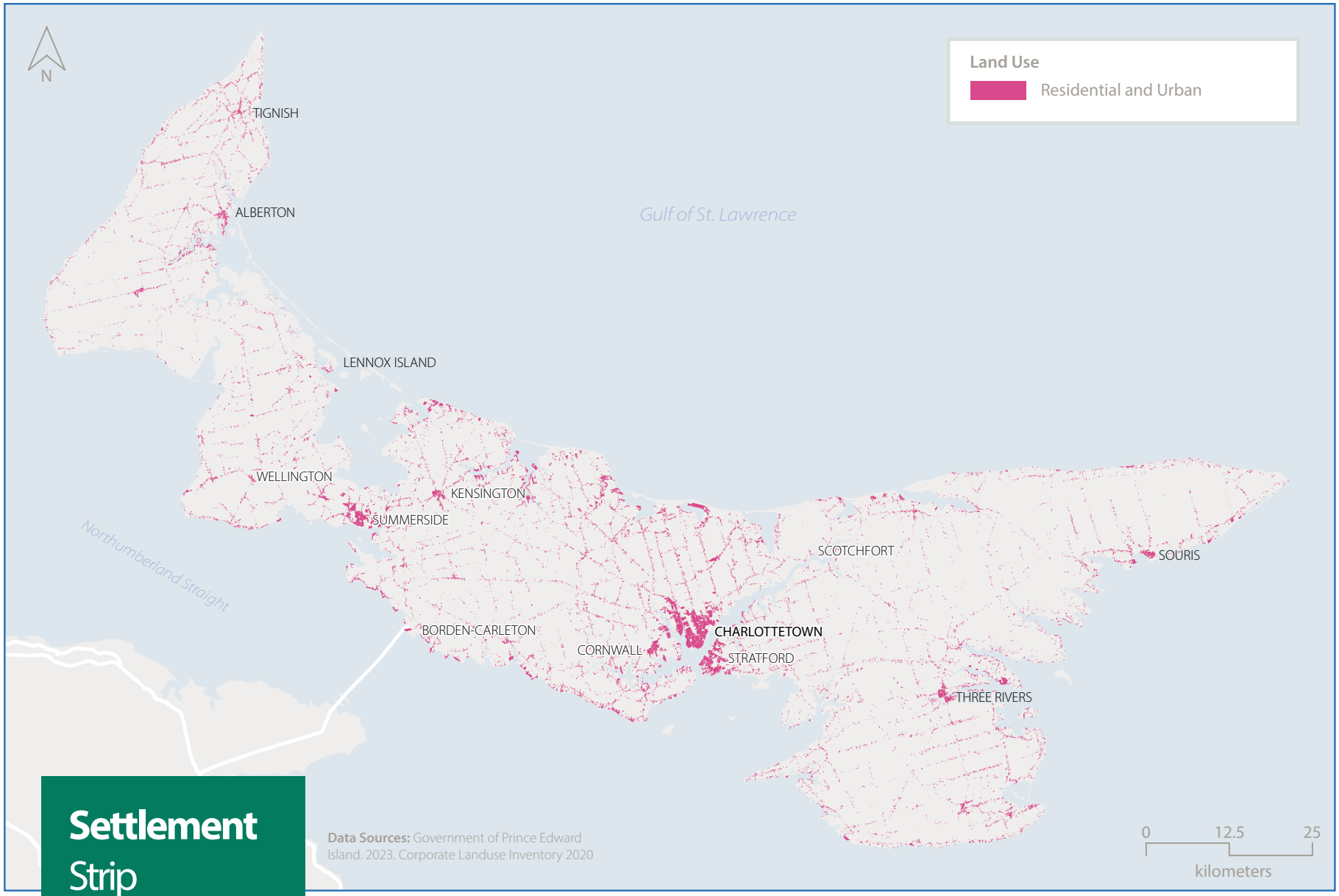
In comparison to sprawl areas, thoughtfully located residential density in municipal centres is directly linked to infrastructure costs: higher density results in lower per-capita length of roads, water distribution lines, or sewer collection lines.[12] When density and settlement happens in an unplanned sprawling manner, there is an increased cost per household for distribution of services, and infrastructure efficiencies are often lost.

Strip Development

Strip development refers to linear residential and commercial development along rural highways, characterized by low-rise buildings on broad lots designed with automotive transportation in mind.[13] This form of development often leads to the fragmentation of valuable forest and agricultural land, increased household transportation costs, and greenhouse gas emissions. Due to the increased number of driveways and individual turn off locations along provincial highways, strip development is also often associated with increased congestion, and reduced safety and efficiency.[13]

PEI also experiences strip development along its coastline, where the waterfront portion of agricultural fields and forests have been subdivided for waterfront residential developments, often used exclusively as seasonal cottages. Due to lower standards for development for seasonal uses, many of these properties are undersized for on-site water and sewerage services and have no direct access or frontage on a public road, but rather rely on the owner of a private lane to maintain access to their property. As seen in the map below, much of PEI's residential and urban land uses are built as strip developments.

Figure 25: Diagram of Strip Development



Settlement Strip Development

This map displays all parcels with residential or urban land uses in the province, highlighting the nature of development around roads, and coastlines.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

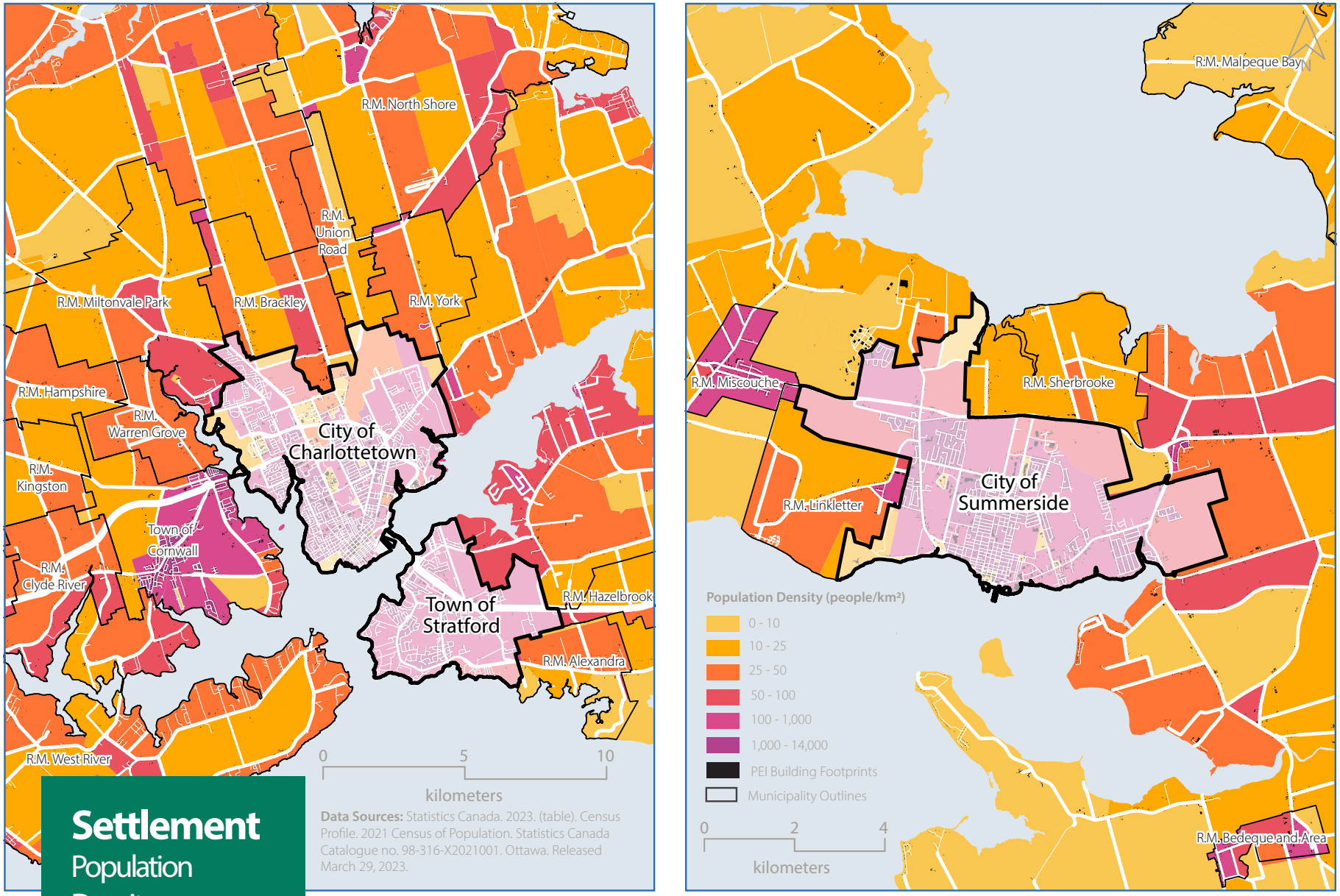
Created: September 2023

Leapfrog Development

Leapfrog development involves residential projects built around the periphery of municipal centres. These developments are often just outside of a municipality's boundary, in surrounding areas which feature lower property taxes. These developments encourage auto-centric lifestyles and place increased infrastructure stresses on the outskirts of urban communities. Leapfrog patterns of development often result in rural residential sprawl with no supporting commercial or social services.[14, 15]

In PEI's context, leapfrog developments occur outside of municipalities for a few reasons. Under provincial planning authority, development in these areas is permitted with less policy guidance. The residents in leapfrog developments can access services in the adjacent municipality but do not contribute to the municipality's taxbase.

Figure 26: Diagram of Leapfrog Development.



Settlement
Population Density Surrounding Urban Areas

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays population density (displayed using census dissemination blocks) to identify areas of population density outside of urban areas and municipal boundaries.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

Building on Private Roadways

PEI grapples with challenges stemming from a legacy of an extensive private road network, with approximately 12% (by length) of all roadways in the province being privately owned. Historically, most private roads were approved for seasonal cottages, evidenced by over 80% of them being located within the coastal zone (500 meters of the coastline). However, many of these older subdivisions and seasonal developments have since transitioned into year-round residences, despite the road access not meeting current standards for new developments.

The ongoing maintenance requirements of private roads—addressing issues like potholes and seasonal snow removal—can impose significant burdens on the community residents. Additionally, essential services, such as school bus stops are likely to be unavailable within these communities and services such as garbage collection may only be available on a seasonal basis. Residents have expressed concerns about the high taxation rates, especially of waterfront properties, on private roads without the receipt of any corresponding government services.[73] While some communities have implemented registered neighborhood associations to collect annual fees for road expenses, most private road developments in PEI lack maintenance agreements.

The responsibility for maintenance—whether it falls to the government, the original subdivision developer, or the property owners—raises numerous questions and concerns. The process for converting a private road to a public one requires meeting specific criteria like road width and adequate drainage, which imposes a considerable financial burden on developers and/or landowners to upgrade roads to provincial standards before it can be deeded to the provincial government.[73]

Takeaway: The intensification of use of private roads, through new development and the conversion from seasonal to year-round residences necessitates a re-evaluation of policies and regulations to tackle the resulting challenges. This includes the impact on government services, financial implications for property owners, the overall effect on property values, and the increased taxation covered by the general taxpayer across the province. Moving towards a comprehensive approach in managing private roads could alleviate these issues, ensuring adequate support for both the infrastructure and the needs of the residents.

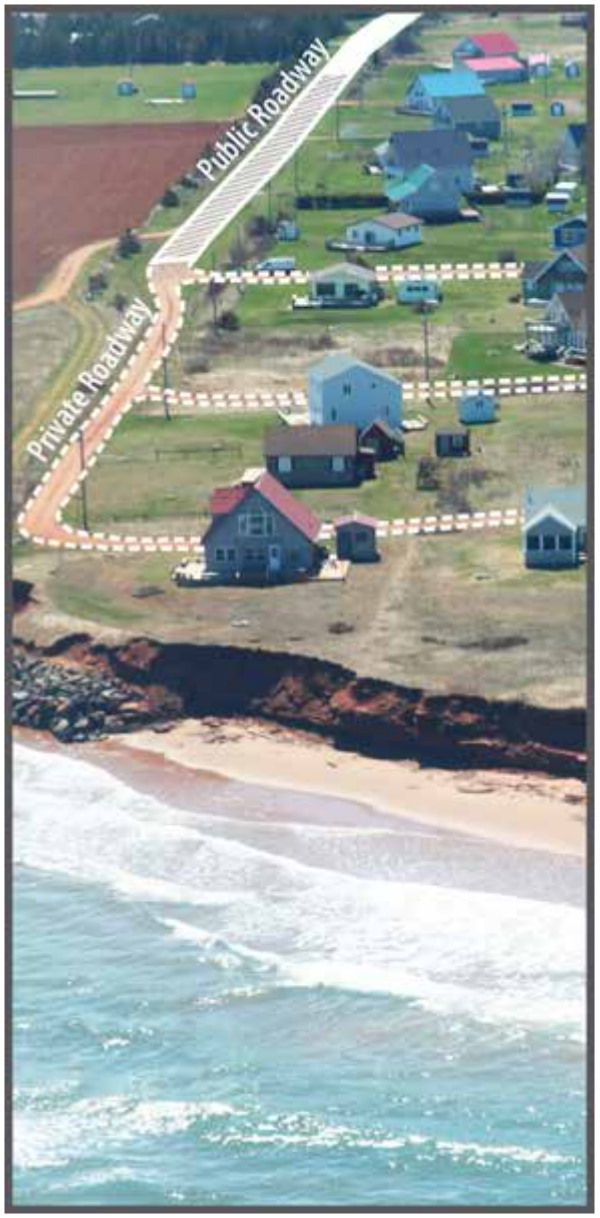
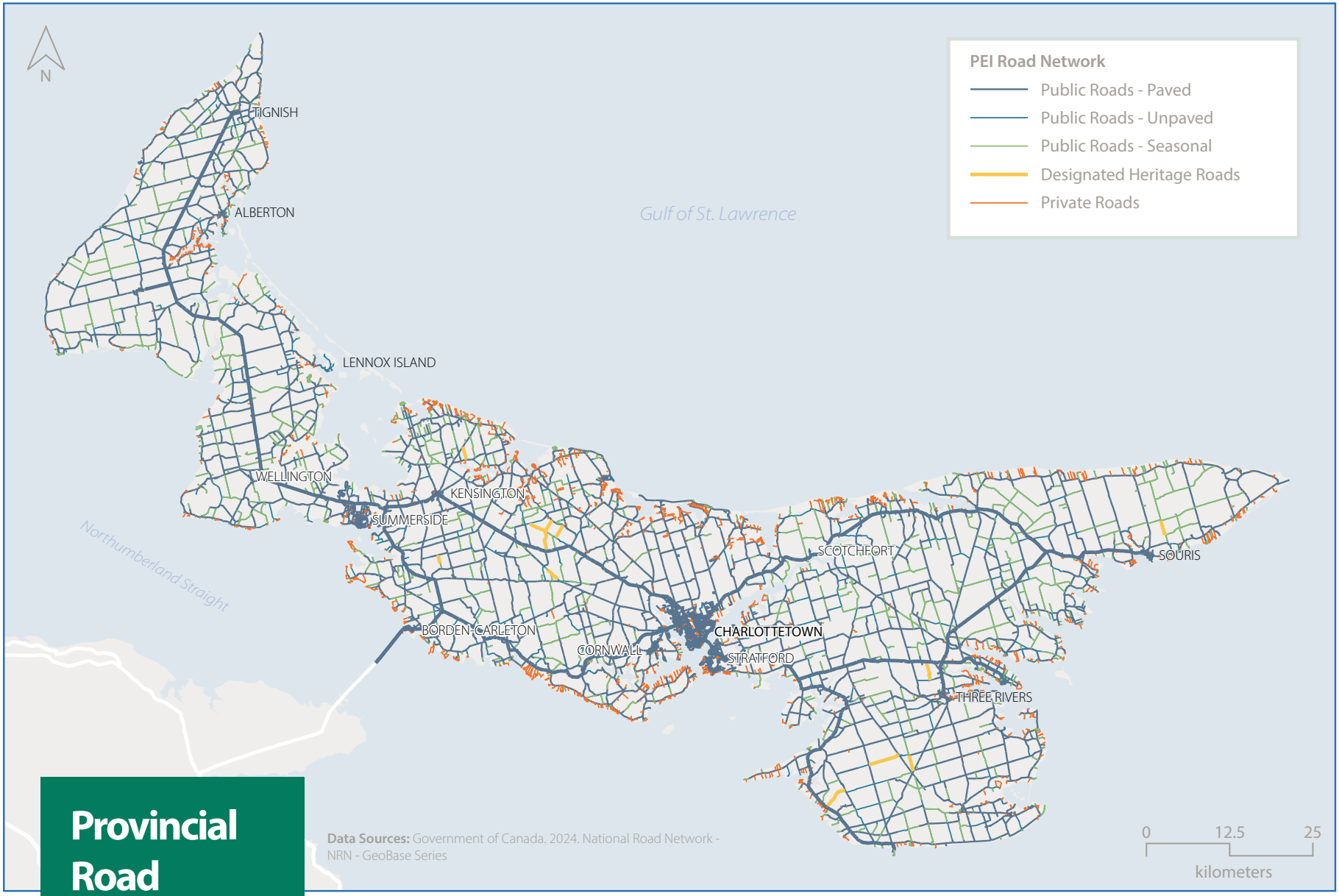


Figure 27: Example of a cottage subdivision with private roads.



Provincial Road Network

Data Sources: Government of Canada. 2024. National Road Network - NRN - GeoBase Series

This map displays the provincial road network. There are over 6,900km of roads on the Island, with a mix of public (federal, provincial, municipal) and private ownership. There are over 1,200 km of public seasonal roads, considered open from May 1 to October 31.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: February 2024

Subdivisions

Applications to subdivide land into smaller parcels for future development are among the most common planning requests in PEI. Over the past 10 years, the Province and the municipal planning authorities have approved more than 4,000 subdivision requests for in excess of 6,500 new lots, primarily for single-unit residential purposes.[70] In lands located outside municipal planning authorities, the Province acts as the authority for subdivision applications. In PEI, more than 90% of subdivision applications were approved annually in the past 10 years.[70] The following graph shows the number of subdivision applications received compared with the percentage of applications rejected.

It is difficult to compare PEI's approval rate with other jurisdictions, as most approvals are managed municipally. Many municipalities of similar geographies and populations to PEI report that they either do not track 'rejections,' or instead coordinate with the developing group to improve proposals. Most jurisdictions have guiding documents to direct planning, so applicants are able to reference and comply early in the development process. The LUP would work to save applicant and provincial processing time, creating an easily accessible resource that guides all development on the Island.

The map on the following page displays the percentage of land area occupied by approved subdivisions. In the last 10 years, 70% of subdivision applications were for the future development of rural lands in unincorporated areas. Only 30% of the applications were for lands in municipalities, half of which were located within municipal planning authorities.[17]

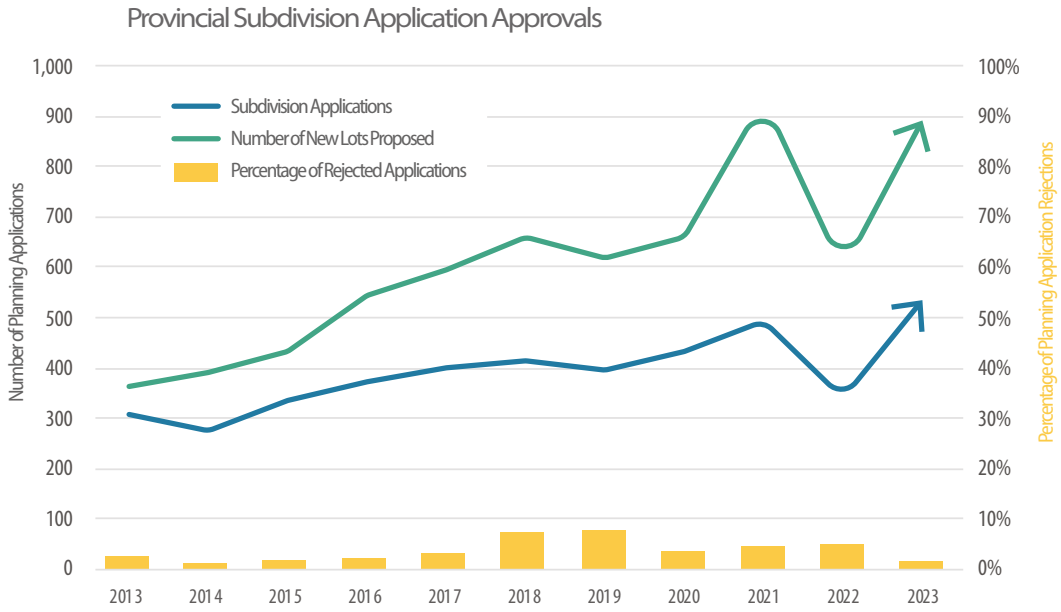
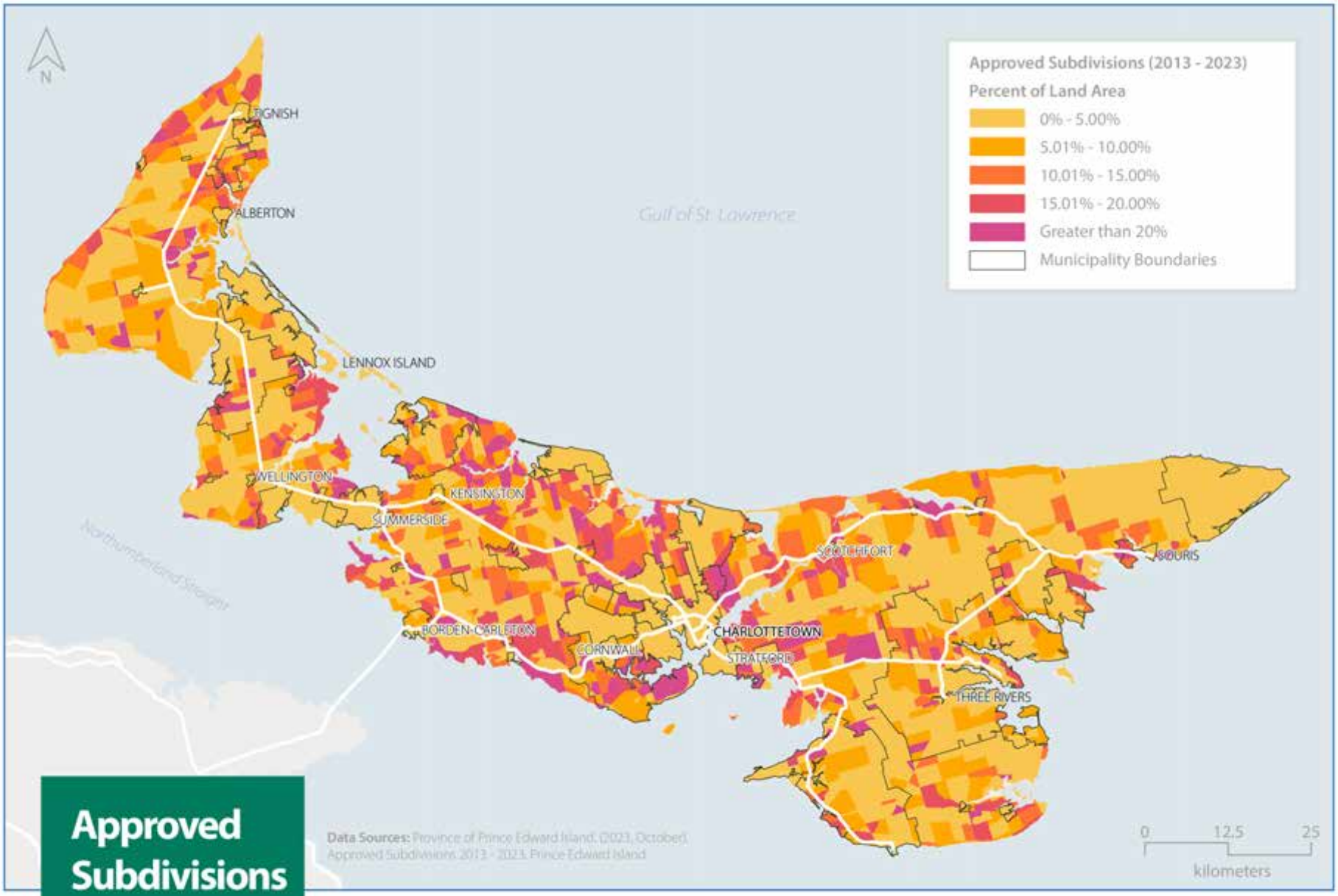


Figure 28: Provincial subdivision application approvals graph[70]

Takeaway: Subdivision development has been happening across the Island, with a high percentage of applications outside of Municipal Planning Authority boundaries. Previous land management reports and plans have proposed a temporary moratorium on further subdivision development in unincorporated areas until the adoption of the PEI Land Use Plan to slow the depletion of valuable agricultural lands. Subdivision for residential purposes should be primarily encouraged and directed to areas with Official Plans and the necessary infrastructure to support them.



Approved Subdivisions

Data Sources: Province of Prince Edward Island. (2023, October). Approved Subdivisions 2013 - 2023. Prince Edward Island.

This map displays the percentage of land area occupied by approved subdivisions. From 2013 - 2023, only 30% of subdivided properties were within Municipal Boundaries, with only 15% of within planning authority municipalities.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

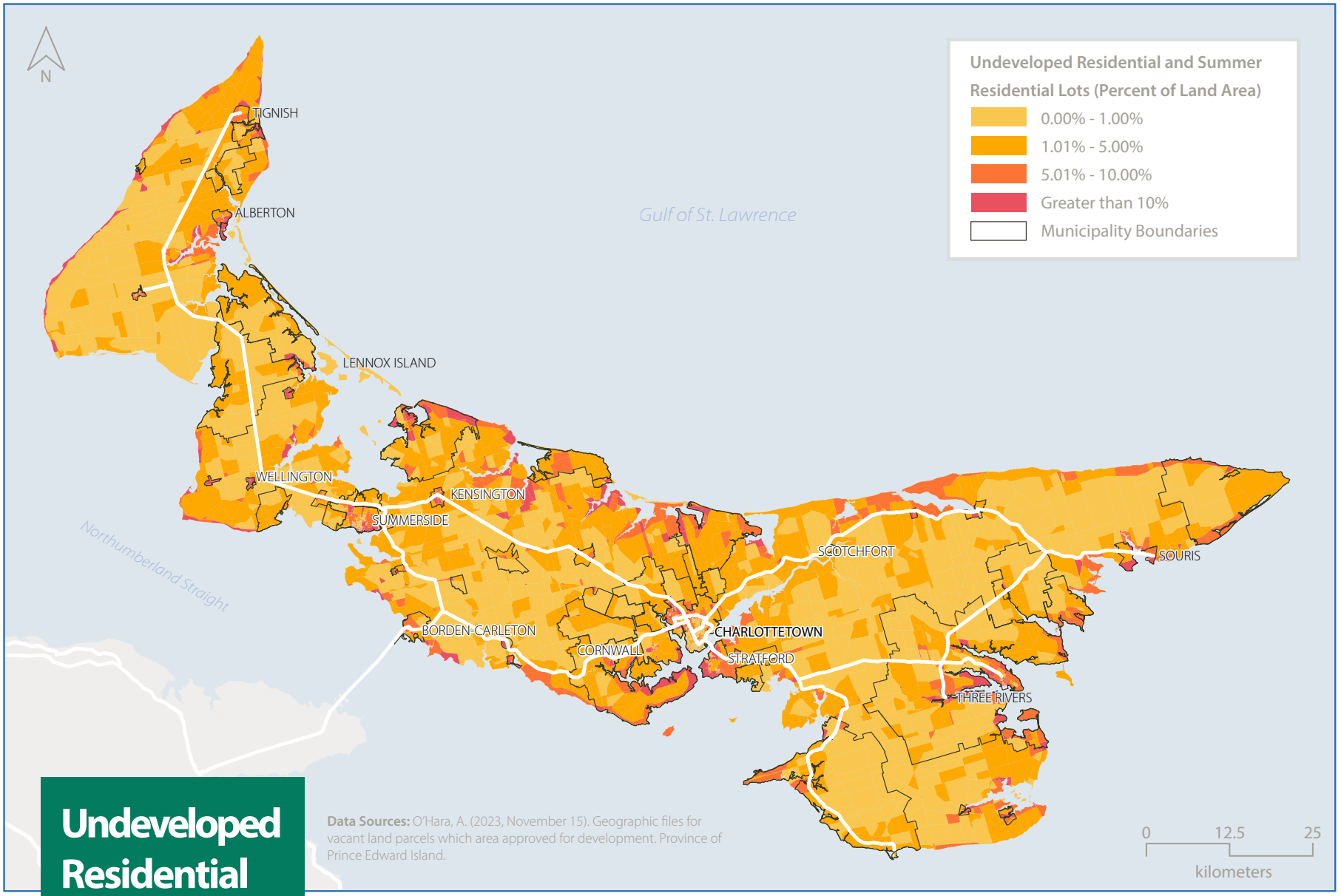
Vacant Parcels

Within the province, there are a series of parcels that remain vacant despite having been approved for development. As of fall 2023, there are 24,818 parcels which are approved vacant lots, representing 118 km^2 of current developable lands (approximately 2.1% of the province).[18] Of these vacant parcels, 39% have ownership that resides outside of PEI.

Higher proportions of vacant lands exist around the coast of PEI, with much of the land approved for subdivision but not currently under development.[18] Of the 24,818 vacant land parcels, 5,222 intersect with the 2100 floodplain, 1,930 parcels are more than 50% covered by the 2100 floodplain, and 291 are entirely within the 2100 floodplain.[18] With their proximity to the coastline, not all of these approved parcels are suitable for sustainable development. Further analysis on a lot-by-lot basis will be required. It is also important to note that only 3% (194 sq km) of PEI's total land area is within the coastal floodplain (see the *State of the Coast Report*).[19]

Of the current 24,818 vacant lots, 8,928 fall within the 29 municipalities with official plans. The remaining 15,890 vacant lots are within unincorporated areas under provincial jurisdiction, with 5,179 below the current minimum size of 0.58 acres for development.[18]

Takeaway: If vacant lots are within a feasable distance to connect to infrastructure and outside of coastal and inland floodplains, they may be beneficial for further housing development. These vacant lots warrant further investigation to determine their potential to be of benefit.



Undeveloped Residential Land

Data Sources: O'Hara, A. (2023, November 15). Geographic files for vacant land parcels which area approved for development. Province of Prince Edward Island.

This map displays vacant lots (undevelopped properties which are approved for residential or summer residential use) as a percentage of total adjacent land area. Of the total 133,605 land parcels in PEI (as of 2023), 24,818 (118 km²) of the parcels are vacant.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

3.3.3 Housing

Residential Development

The housing landscape in PEI is characterized by a predominance of single-detached housing, which made up 68% of dwellings in 2021. This reflected a slight decrease of 4%, from 72% of dwellings in 2001.[20] This trend places PEI above the national average in terms of single-detached housing and aligns with other Atlantic provinces (see **Figure 29**). Notably, PEI also has a significant proportion of movable dwellings, a unique feature in the Maritimes.

Since 2010, the area of developed land in PEI has increased by 0.6% (net 3,400 hectares), with a significant portion (65%) directed towards single dwelling residential land use.[21] Many of these dwelling units are in lands outside of incorporated areas, in spaces without local official plans.

This development pattern has led to the conversion of approximately 650 ha of forest, 1,950 ha of agricultural land, 735 ha of abandoned land, and 30 ha of wetlands.[21] This transformation has significant implications for the Island's environmental and social landscapes.

Takeaways: The combination of development outside of urban centres with PEI's population density, the highest in Canada in 2021 at 27.2 people per square kilometre, necessitates a reevaluation of housing strategies to address the challenges of sprawl and land use efficiency.

Particularly when done in an unplanned or unregulated context, single-detached housing can lead to long-term increases in costs for infrastructure and services.[4] The LUP will need to consider policies which incentivize a variety of housing types and forms that better utilize existing infrastructure.

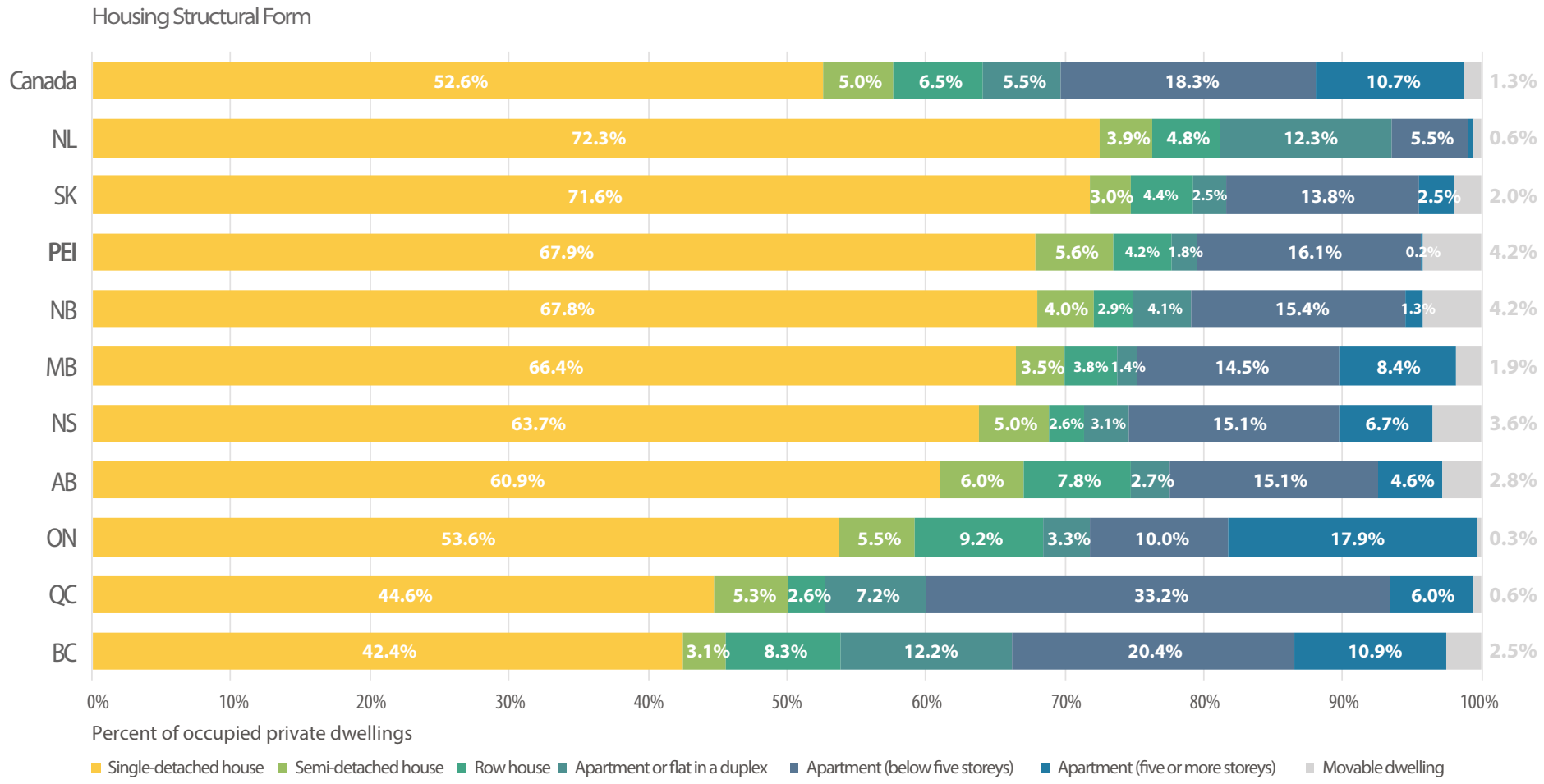


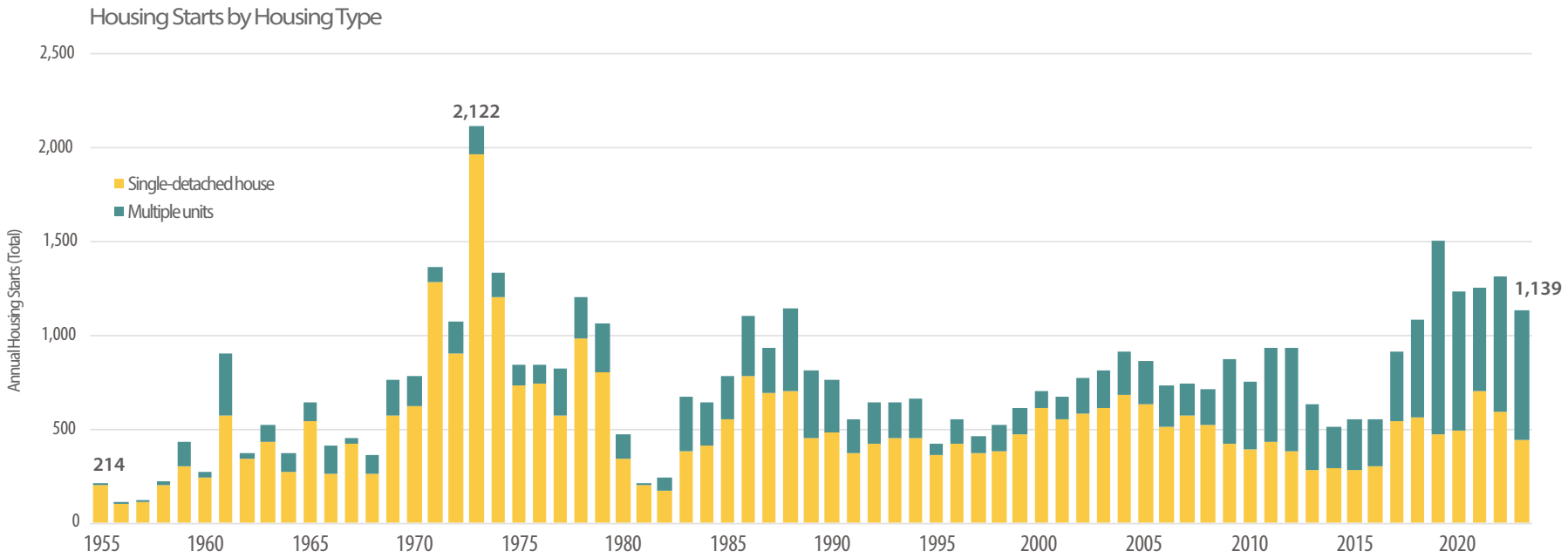
Figure 29: Structural dwelling by type, province[20]

Housing Starts

Housing is recognized as a human right. It is necessary for personal well-being, economic strength, and strong communities. Along with the rest of Canada, PEI is facing a housing crisis. The prolonged population growth over the last 10 years has not been met with a corresponding increase in housing. Information on the entire housing continuum—forms of housing ranging from emergency shelters and transition housing to subsidized and market housing—is addressed in detail in the February 2024 *Building Together* provincial housing strategy.[22] The Island's housing data and trends are summarized here as they relate to past and current housing development patterns.

There has been a positive growth trend for housing starts over the past 10 years, with a slight decrease in 2021 and 2022 (see **Figure 30**), as well as an upward trend in multi-unit dwellings in recent years. *Building Together* identifies several factors that may be contributing to this upward trend, including: a growing emphasis on meeting density requirements and a rise in rental property construction, as well as changes in immigration patterns influencing the demand for diverse types of housing.[22]

Figure 30: Housing starts by housing type[23]



Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) releases information on housing starts by community within census subdivisions surrounding Charlottetown and Summerside. While this data does not encompass the entire Island, it shows a higher proportion of housing starts are single-unit detached in provincial jurisdictions, as opposed to development in the planning authority area encompassing Charlottetown.[22]

For more information on housing, look to *Building Together - Prince Edward Island Housing Strategy 2024 - 2029*.

Housing Completed

Housing construction on the Island peaked in 2020, with 1,484 units completed. It has since continued at a slower rate, largely due to high interest rates and high material costs.[24] The past 10 years have seen an increase across all housing types, with a larger proportional increase in multi-residential dwelling units compared to historical housing booms like those seen in the 1970s (see **Figure 30**). Today, the increase in housing completions continues to be more prevalent in the single-unit (detached) category compared to the multi-unit (apartments) and semi-detached (duplexes) categories.[25]

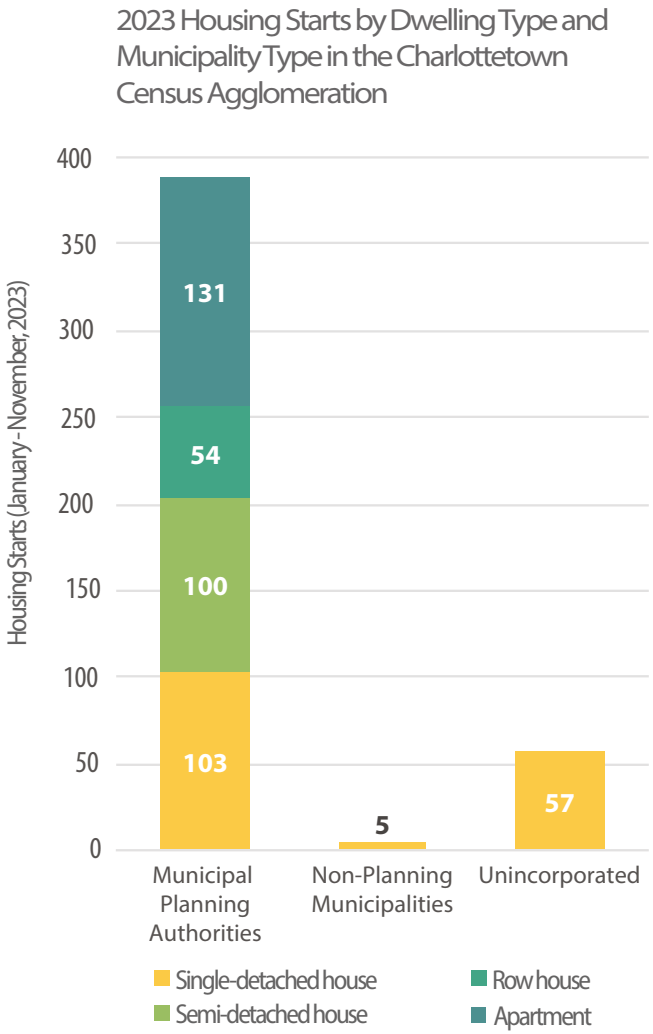


Figure 31: Charlottetown area housing starts[22]

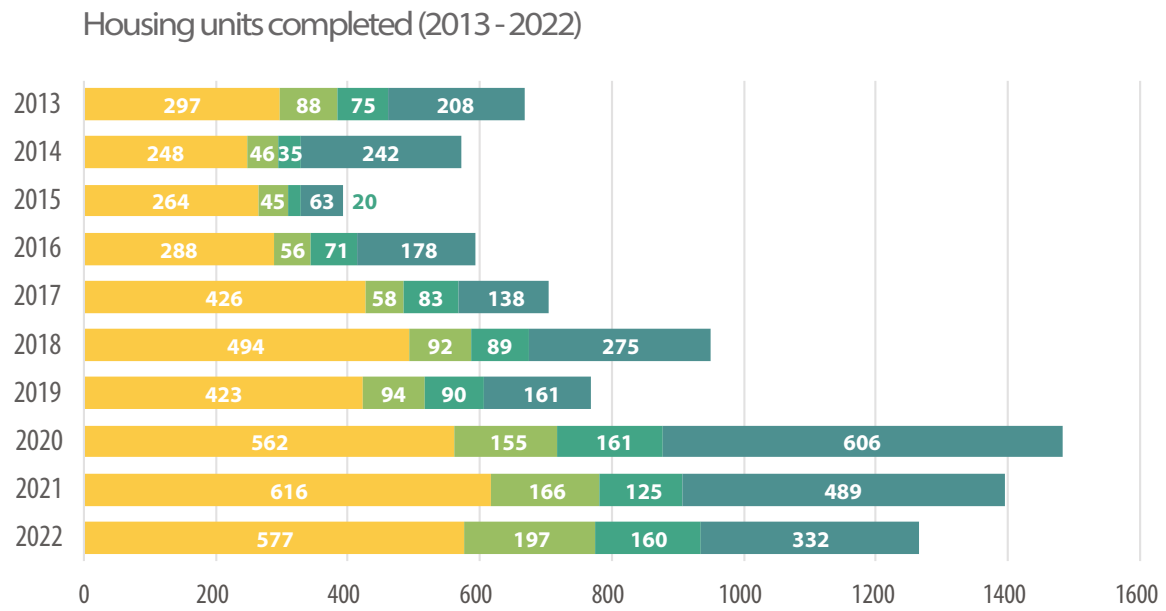


Figure 32: Annual housing completes by housing type.[23]

Housing Retrofits

Housing retrofits are another way to support the long-term liveability of the Island, particularly to enable aging in place. As a way to incentivize retrofits, the Province has a Home Renovation Program meant to provide financial assistance to principal home owners who make an annual household income of $50,000 or less.[26]

The intention of the program is to support low-income homeowners to bring their properties up to current health and safety standards, with the ultimate goal of supporting seniors who wish to age in place. There are four primary programs currently available: PEI Home Renovation Program, Seniors Home Repair Program, Seniors Safe @ Home Program, and the Home Renovation Program for Persons with Disabilities.

The programs have seen increased uptake and grant funding since 2018, with trends shown in **Figure 33**. Each year, the average applicant has been 65 years of age, or older.[26]

Takeaway: With additional efforts being put towards senior residents aging in place across the Island, the land use plan should consider the distribution of services that are required by this demographic.

Indigenous Participation in Land Use Planning

An essential aspect of sustainable land use planning involves the participation of Indigenous peoples. Land planning must reflect sharing and cooperation, mutual respect for (and recognition of) municipal and Indigenous rights and obligations, and mutual responsibilities to each other, the land, and future generations.[27]

The advisory committee for Land Matters PEI "heard that the Mi'kmaq of PEI ('Epekwitk') have a unique relationship with the land, and value resource sustainability ('netukulimk').

The Committee notes that the Mi'kmaq of Epekwitk have constitutionally recognized and affirmed Aboriginal Rights and Treaty Rights, as per the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Peace and Friendship Treaties. The Committee has heard that the Mi'kmaq of Epekwitk are seeking greater inclusion in land related matters."[28]

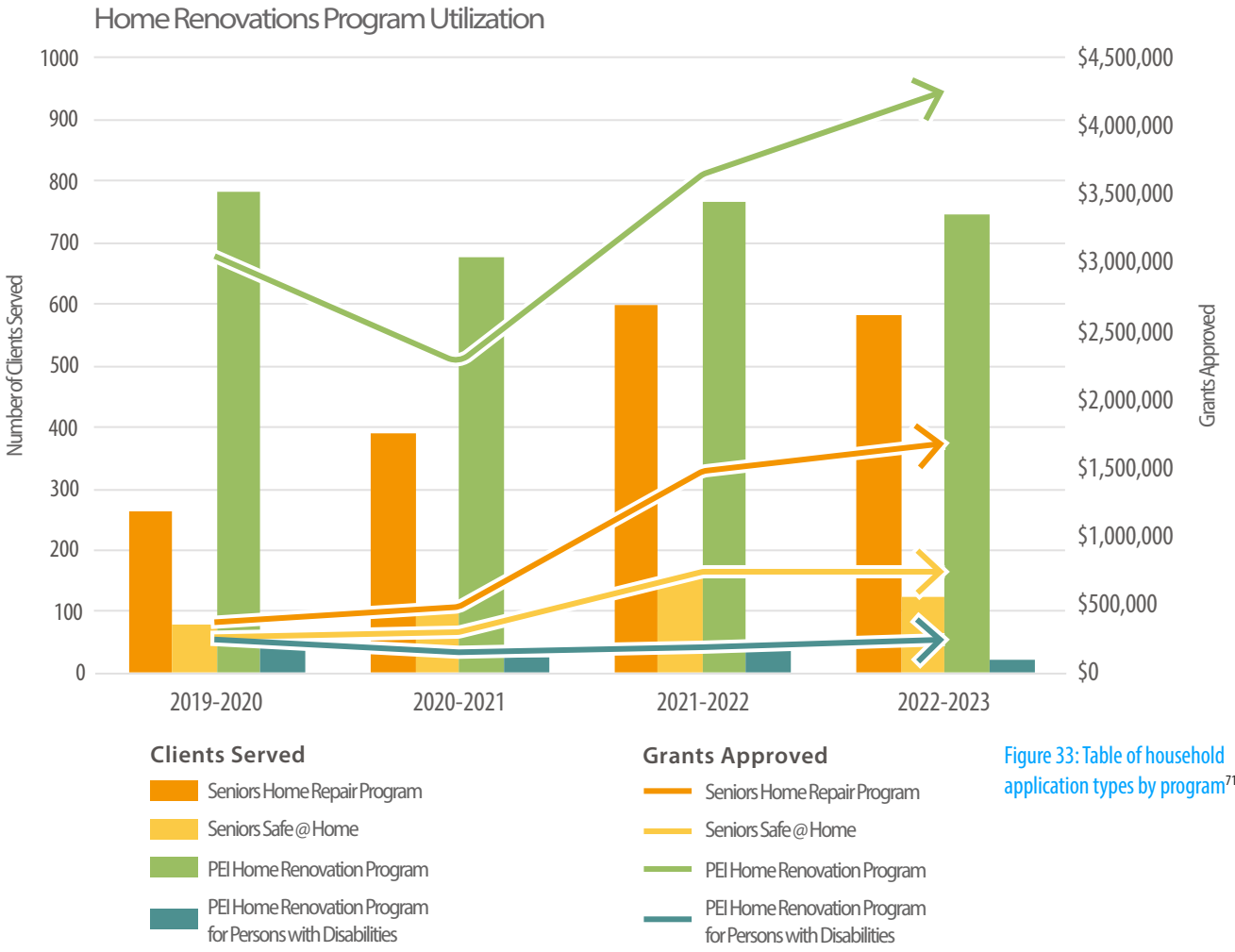


Figure 33: Table of household application types by program[71]

With this relationship in mind, the report recommended the following for future land use planning in the province:

"Based on Mi'kmaq constitutionally protected rights and their deep interest in land sustainability, it is recommended that the Mi'kmaq be offered a substantive role in the development and shaping of land policies and land management on Prince Edward Island."[28]

> **Takeaway:** The development of the land use plan should ensure that the Indigenous communities of PEI are included throughout the plan's creation and implementation.

Heritage Preservation

The Island is home to 69 designated heritage places, and a further 499 places registered under the provincial *Heritage Places Protection Act*.[29] Heritage places can include: buildings, roads, cultural landscapes, pioneer cemeteries, archaeological sites, and more. Properties of heritage value and historic significance are also identified by Charlottetown and Summerside, with Charlottetown having 346 properties designated and protected under their Heritage Preservation Bylaw.

PEI also has a series of archaeologically significant areas, and is home to 330 identified archeological sites on the Island that range in dates from 9000 B.P. to the 19th and 20th centuries.

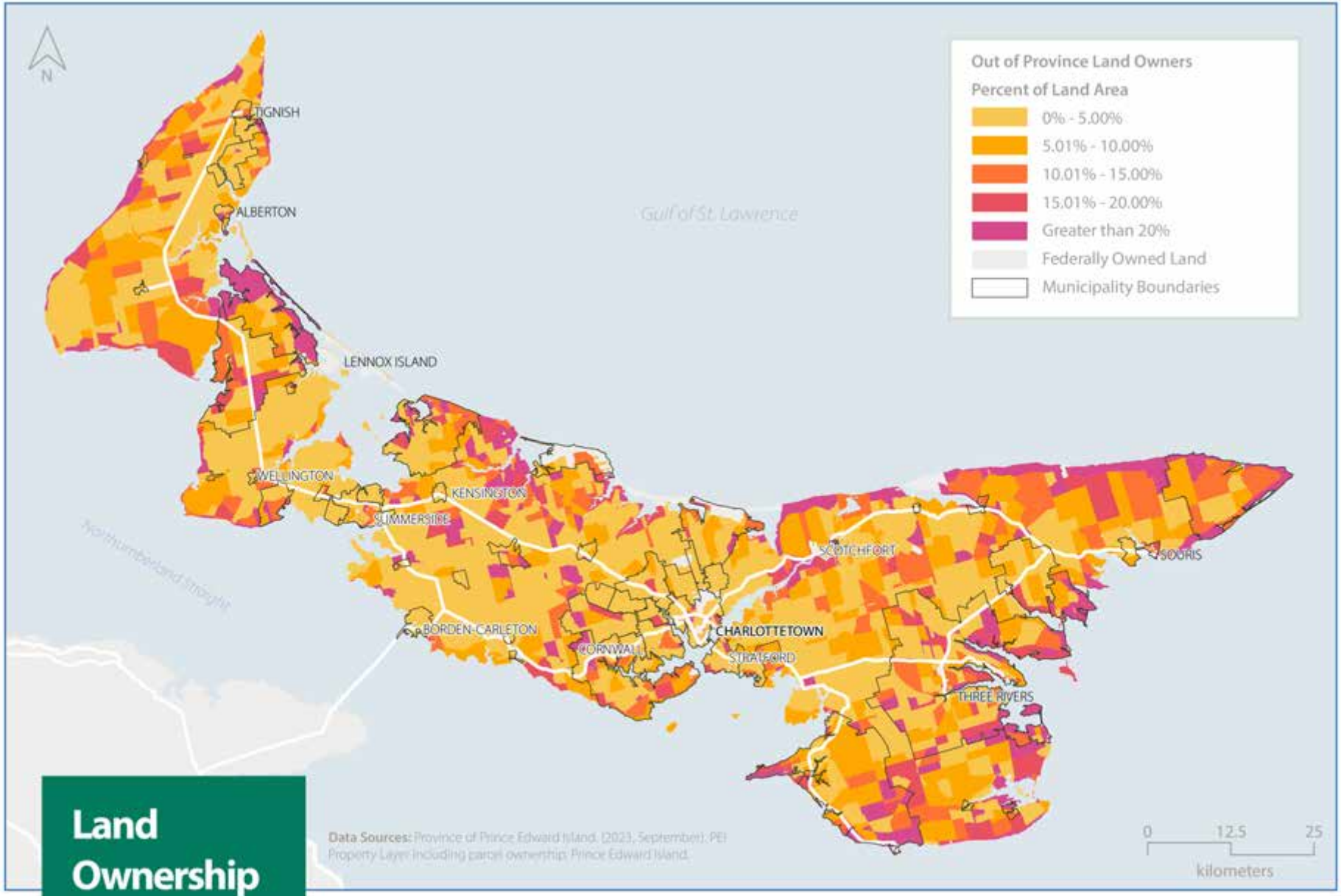
There are 59.3km of Scenic Heritage Roads (narrow, red clay lanes) on the Island, accounting for 1% of all public roads.[16, 30]

To see a map of where these roadways are located, look to the Building on Private Roadways Section. When creating the LUP, identifying the location and preservation of heritage spaces and any required buffer areas should be considered.

3.3.4 Ownership

Understanding property ownership can help to identify the source of off-Island investment. Compared to other Canadian provinces, PEI has some unique rules for land ownership. Under the *Lands Protection Act*, an individual cannot own more than 1,000 acres of land in PEI, while a corporation cannot own more than 3,000 acres of land.[31] In addition, non-residents and non-resident corporations are required to apply to the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission if buying more than five acres of land, or if the parcel has more than 165 feet of shore frontage.[32] In a review of large land parcels held by non-residents, there were more than 800 out-of-province land owners who had properties larger than five acres with a civic address as of October 2023.[33]

Non-resident property ownership has changed over time. In 2009, non-resident ownership accounted for 13% of land parcels (15,698 of 121,675 total), and covered an area of 571 km^2. By 2023, parcels owned by non-resident had decreased to 461 km^2 in area, and 11% by parcel number. Parcel owners with an out-of-province address (not including the national government) account for approximately 8% of the Island's total land area (5660 km^2). Off-Island owners also account for 39% of vacant land parcel ownership across the province.



Land Ownership Out of Province

This map displays the percentage of land area occupied by properties with an ownership address that is not located on the island of PEI.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

Housing Investment

In 2021, PEI had the highest proportion of houses used as investment properties (27.0%) among Canadian provinces investigated (see **Figure 34**).[34] An investment property in the data referenced is defined as any property that is not the owner's primary residence. In particular, PEI had a high proportion of out-of-province and non-resident investment property owners when compared to other provinces. It is important to note, that many secondary dwellings on PEI can not be defined as a "residence", as they are inaccessible during the winter and are on private roads, unlike some other provinces. It's anticipated that many of these 'investment properties' are temporary unoccupied dwellings on seasonal or private roads, including cottages.

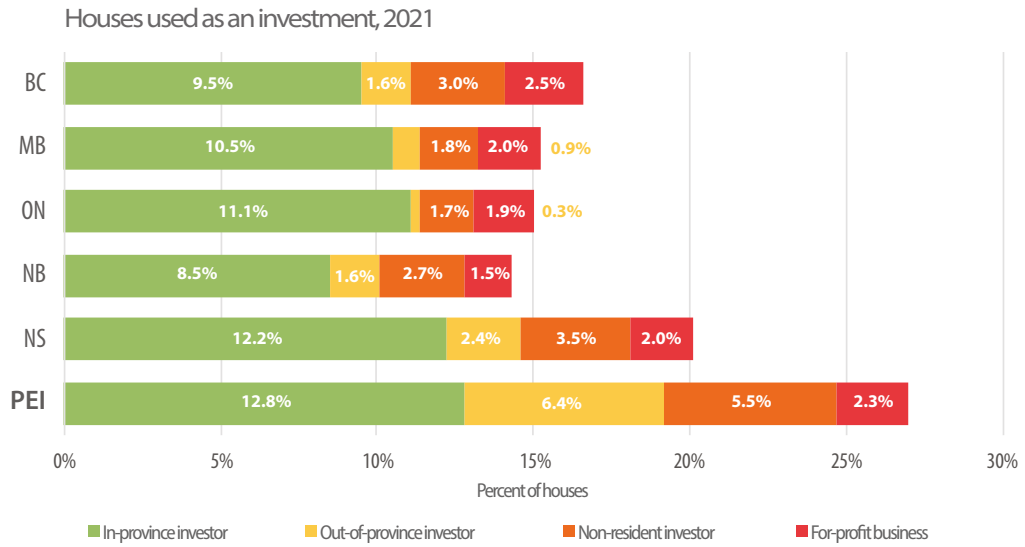


Figure 34: Graph depicting the proportion of houses used as an investment by type of investor. [34]

A common type of investment housing in Canada is rental housing. However, PEI has a relatively similar proportion of rental housing to Nova Scotia and Canada, suggesting that the higher proportion of investment properties may be used for other purposes. Other purposes may include a secondary or seasonal residence or tourism short-term accommodations.

PEI has a large number of second homeowners from out of province that stay seasonally. A study conducted by the Tourism Research Centre at UPEI in collaboration with the Taxation and Property Records Division of PEI's Department of Finance and Municipal Affairs found that in 2010 there were 4,266 second homes on PEI. When asked to categorize their property, 57.0% were considered to be cottages, 26.2% were houses, 7.1% were farm houses, and only 4.7% were rental properties.[35]

In 2022, the provincial government demonstrated a strong commitment to community housing projects through significant investments. Projects that received support in the past year include 29 homes built by Habitat for Humanity; a new women's shelter in Summerside and funding support for the Blooming House Emergency Shelter for women; a 20-unit apartment, $3M for the Community Housing Fund, and support for 10 units of transitional housing with CMHA PEI; further support for the men's shelters and Community Outreach Centre; and support for a 32-unit senior's complex led by the Parkdale Sherwood Lions Club.

These investments collectively underscore PEI's dedication to addressing diverse housing needs and supporting vulnerable populations in the community.[36]

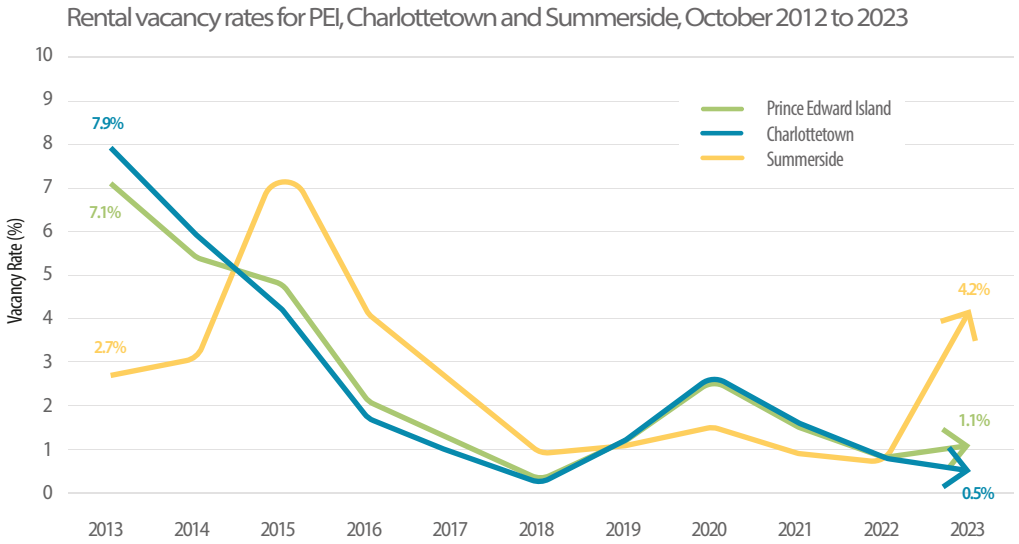


Figure 35: Vacancy Rate [72]

There are significant implications for populations that rely on rental housing with this continued increase in rental prices, and decrease in vacancy rates. In particular, low income populations, and youth have increased vulnerability in times of inflation and decreased vacancy rates.

Takeaway: The land use plan will need to consider how to incentivise a mix of rental and owned units, and to ensure that there is still room for new developments to help in the supply necessary for these markets.

Housing Tenure

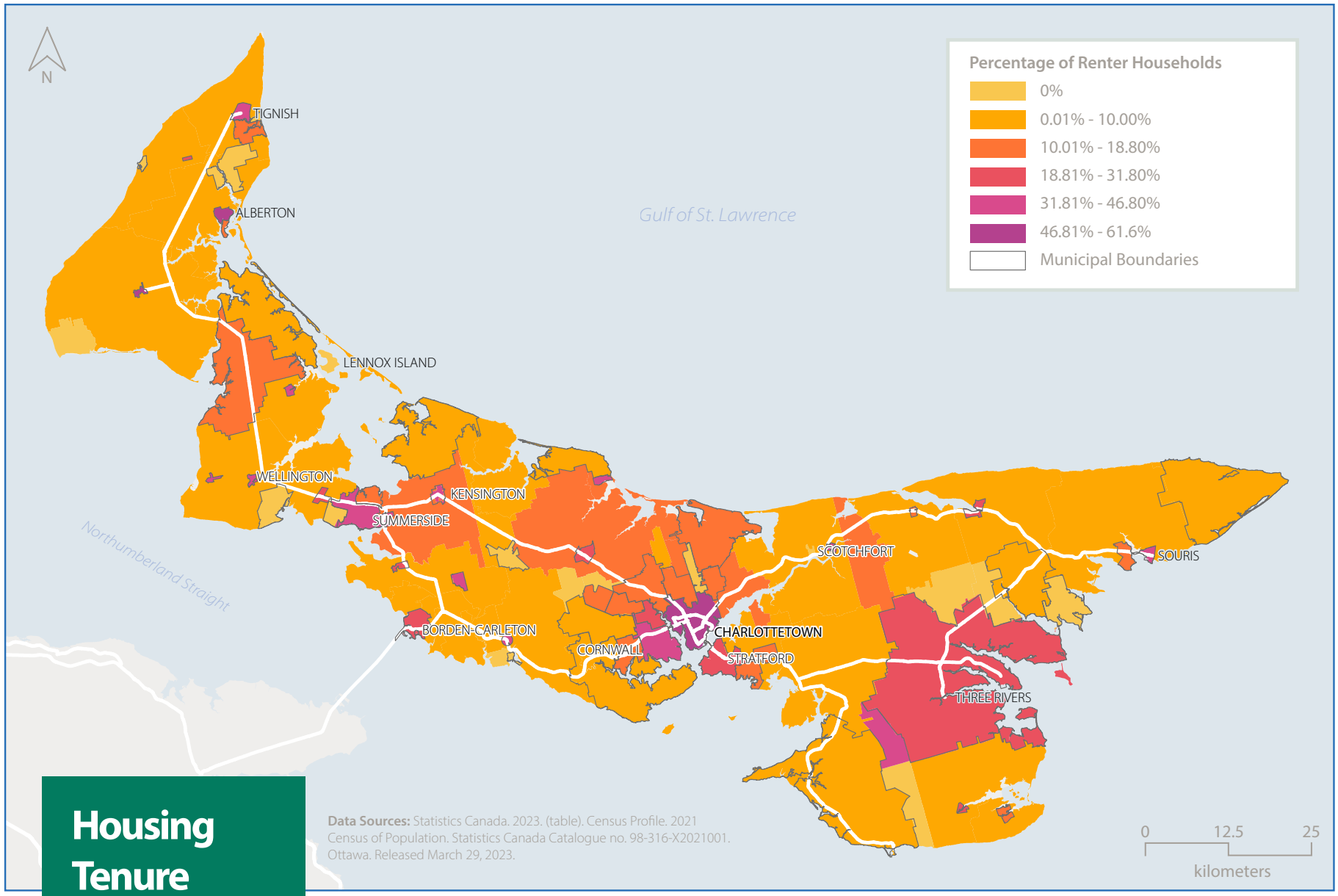
As of 2021, roughly 31% of PEI's households were occupied by renters, only slightly lower than Canada's and Nova Scotia's proportion of rented households.[20] It was identified that housing renters were spending disproportionately higher percentages of their income on housing as opposed to homeowners (see Shelter Costs to read more).

Across PEI, vacancy rates increased from 0.8% from 2022 to 1.1% in 2023. [72] In the same period, the apartment vacancy decreased in Charlottetown to 0.5% and increased in Summerside to 4.2% over the same period.[72] In addition to historically low vacancy rates, PEI renters have also experienced increase in costs, with the median rent for a 2-bedroom unit increasing 12% over the last 5 years.[25]

Taxation

Taxes are collected at the provincial, municipal (Incorporated areas) and fire district (un-incorporated areas) levels within PEI.

Within these levels, there are three primary types of taxation: commercial, non-commercial, and flat rate taxes. Provincial tax rates (Commercial and Non-Commercial) are applied equally across the island with an additional flat rate tax for the collection of fees (seasonal or year-round) related to Island Waste Management Corporation. Provincial tax revenue is used to cover all major services across Prince Edward Island (Health, Education, Infrastructure, etc..). Municipal taxes are used by municipalities to cover local services.



Housing Tenure
Rentals

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

Housing tenure is identified according to whether a principal residence is owned, with or without a mortgage, or rented. This map displays percentage of renter households in PEI.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

The provincial property tax rate remains consistent across the island at $1.50 per $100 of assessment on both commercial and non-commercial property. For non-commercial property, property owners who reside on Prince Edward Island for at least 183 calendar days per year may be eligible for a provincial tax credit of $0.50 per $100, which reduces their provincial tax rate to $1.00 per $100.

While this provincial property tax rate applies equally in both incorporated and non-incorporated areas, specified municipalities are eligible for a municipal tax credit which serves to reallocate a portion of the provincial property taxes collected within the municipality on non-commercial properties to the municipality themselves. This effectively shifts a portion of tax room to the municipality, although to the taxpayer it appears the taxes are being collected by the province. The portion of the taxes reallocated can range from $0.012 to $0.592 per $100 (representing 1.2 to 59.2% of the provincial tax collected) depending on the services offered in the municipality.

At the municipal and fire district level, property tax rates vary significantly. It is difficult to cross-compare municipal tax rates due to differing rates and categorization across the province. To illustrate the difference in taxation across the province, the following two maps display taxation using different exploratory criteria.

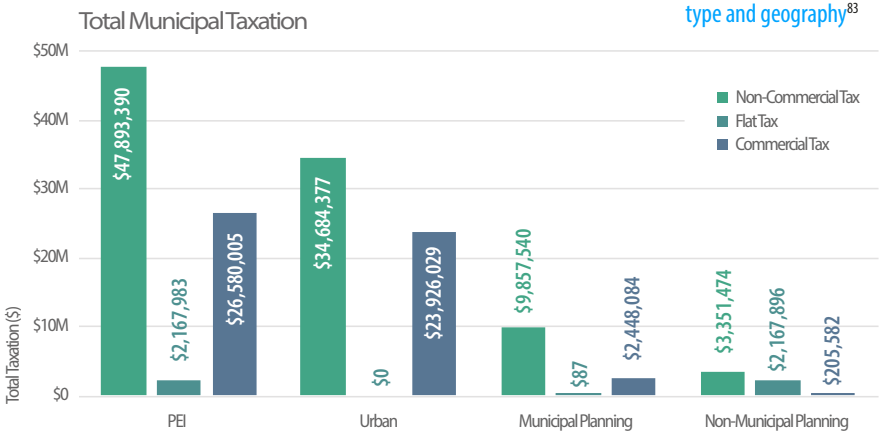
In **Map: Taxation Total Municipal and Provincial Tax per Acre,** we see that taxes are generally higher per acre in urban areas and areas with Municipal Planning than in areas outside of municipal planning authority boundaries.

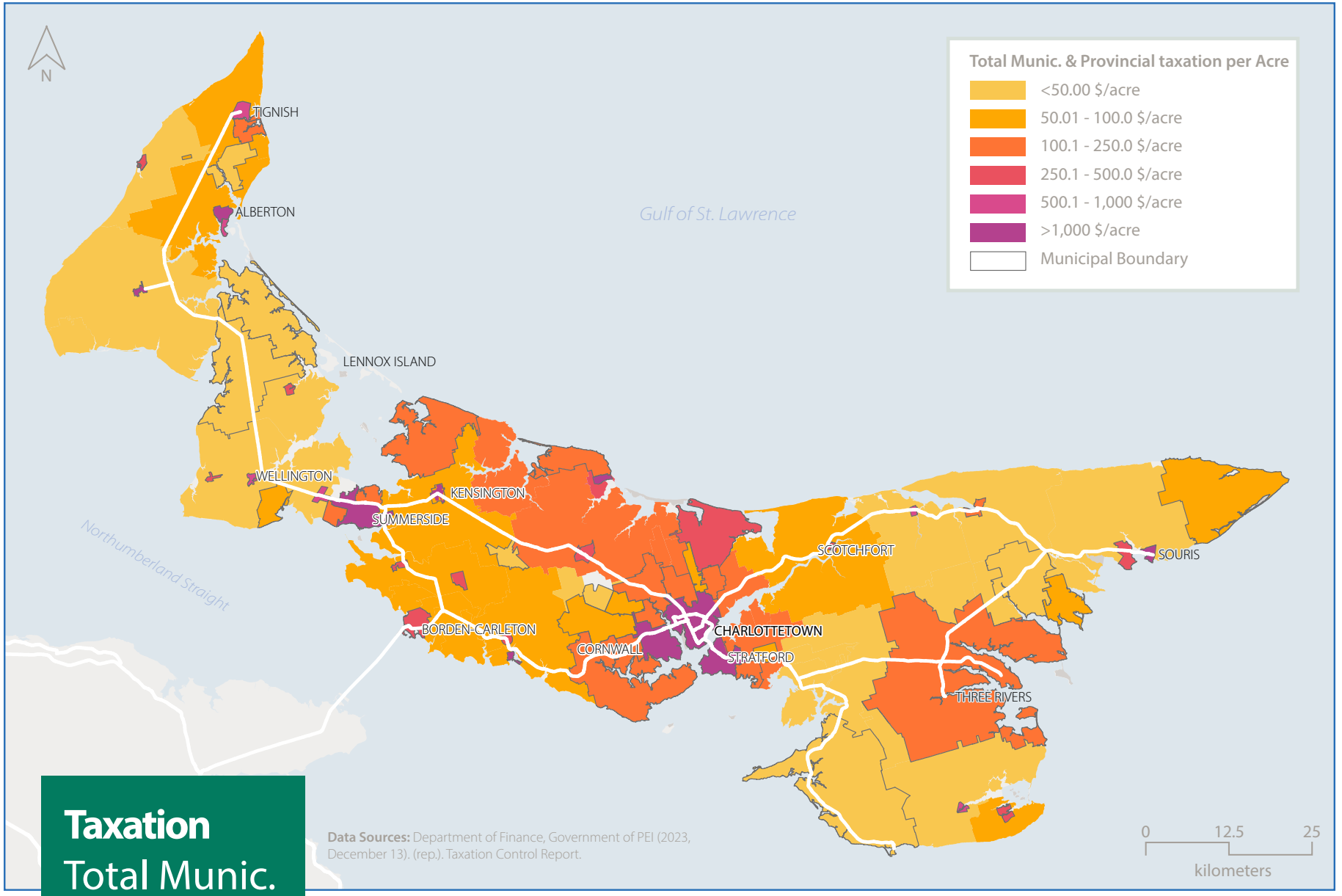
Map: Taxation Non-commercial and Flat Rate Tax per Parcel shows provincial and municipal taxes for non commercial properties normalized by the total number of parcels in each area. When normalizing for larger parcels of land often used in agriculture, there is a more even distribution of taxation across the Island. Commercial tax was removed from the second map due to its high rate and variability on the Island due to PEI's system taxing on an operational basis, not by highest and best use.

Taxation has been a long-considered issue related to the development of land on PEI. The *Report on Land and Local Governance* describes a series of considerations that have influenced land use and taxation over time, largely describing the aspiration to: curb off-Island land speculation and reduce leapfrog development occurring outside of municipal taxation areas. This has been further elaborated in *The Royal Commission on the Land (1990)* with a recommendation to "apply property tax measures to influence land use and land ownership decisions."[37] When considering Island-wide incorporation, the *Report on Land and Local Governance* reported that agricultural groups perceived such a move to "increase the property tax burden on farmers and further exacerbate the urban-rural split".[38]

Takeaway: Taxation however is a tool that can affect land use patterns and practices, with the current tax regimes playing a role in shaping PEI's current land use patterns. Taxation is not within the scope of the *SOTI* or the land use plan, and the investigations here are intended only as an exploratory excercise to discuss taxation as it relates to land.

Figure 36: Total Municipal Taxation by type and geography[83]





Taxation
Total Munic. & Provincial Tax per Acre

Data Sources: Department of Finance, Government of PEI (2023, December 13). (rep.). Taxation Control Report.

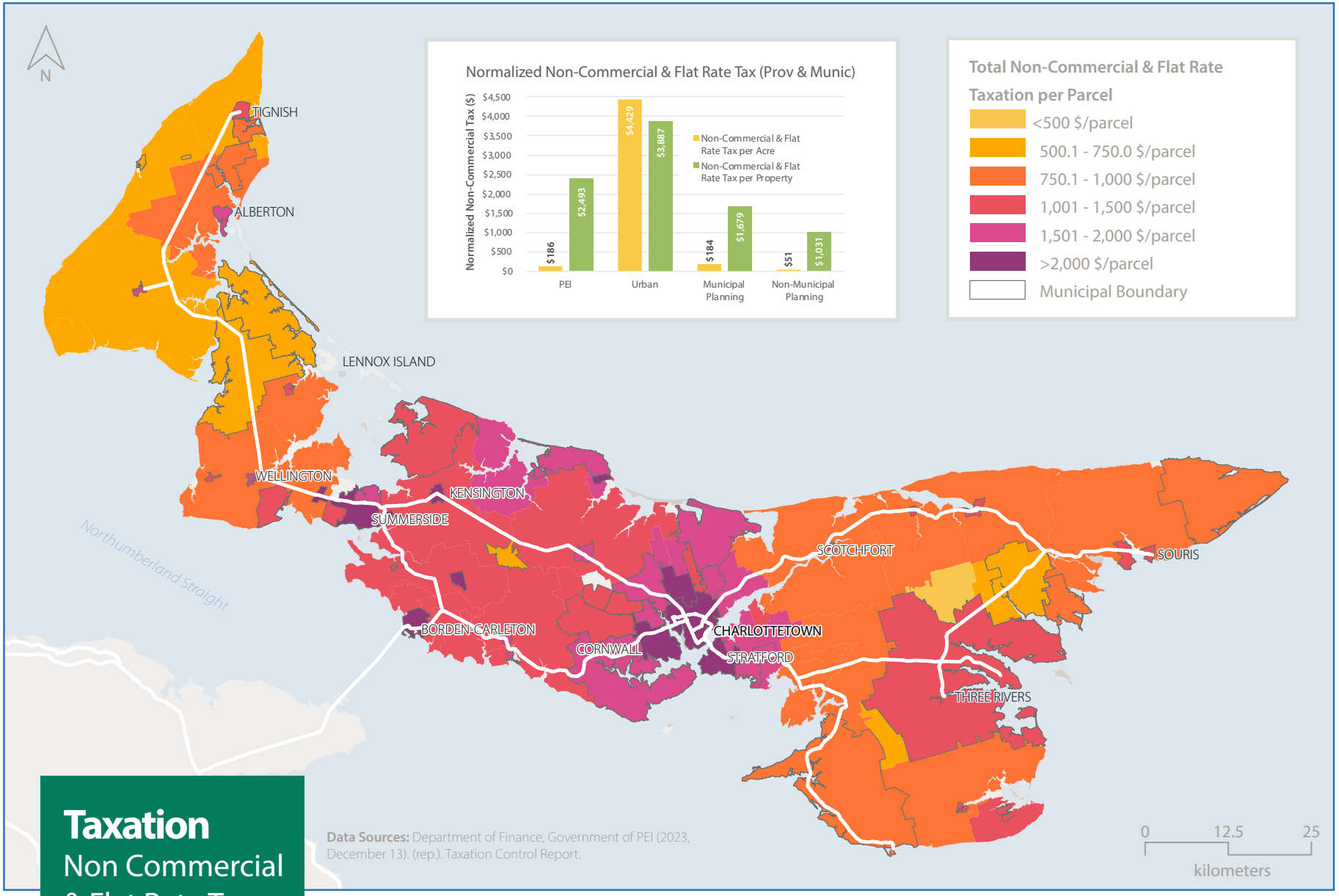
This map displays total taxation (all municipal and provincial taxes for: commercial, flat rate, and non-commercial uses) as of December 13, 2023, divided by the total land area in acres. Please note that taxation varies on a use and parcel to parcel basis, and numbers indicated here do not indicate individual taxation charges.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: February 2024



Taxation

Non Commercial & Flat Rate Tax per Parcel

Data Sources: Department of Finance, Government of PEI (2023, December 13). (rep.). Taxation Control Report.

This map displays total non-commercial taxation (non-commercial and flat rate taxes for province and municipality) for Prince Edward Island as of December 13, 2023, divided by total land parcels. Please note that taxation varies on a use and parcel to parcel basis, and numbers indicated here do not indicate individual taxation charges.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: February 2024

3.3.5 Infrastructure and Transportation

Population growth will impact various forms of infrastructure like transportation, waste management, water and sewer systems, emergency response, courts, correctional facilities and community correctional demands, and energy systems. Addressing the additional demand on our infrastructure will require all levels of government to coordinate and build for our changing population.

Transportation

Transportation plays a pivotal role in development and land use in PEI, which in turn influences the province's environmental footprint and community health.

PEI has 4,411 km of paved public roadways, the highest number per capita of all Canadian provinces.[16] PEI's roads are in better condition than many other provinces, with only 23% of publicly owned rural highways rated below 'good' condition compared to the national average of 41%.[39]

The public cost of maintaining and upgrading PEI's roads is significant, and continues to rise year-after-year. It is estimated that the Province spends $445 per capita / per year to maintain the Island's road network.[40]

In PEI, there are more than three registered vehicles for every four islanders (0.76 vehicles per capita), which is higher than the national average of 0.71 vehicles per capita.[41] Since 2014, Islanders have also been buying larger, less fuel-efficient vehicles, such as trucks, sport utility vehicles (SUVs).[42]

The extensive reliance on road transportation is a leading contributor of provincial GHG emissions, with transportation accounting for 41% of total emissions, predominantly from passenger cars and trucks.[43]

Table 3: Road Classifications and Maintenance Costs[78]

Road Type	Length (km)	Maintenance Cost ($/year/km)*	Annual Cost ($/year)
Public Paved Roads	4,411	$15,800	$69.7 million
Public Unpaved Roads	464	$12,300	$5.7 million
Public Seasonal Roads	1,262	$2,300	$2.9 million

* Estimated maintenance costs include construction costs, patching, plowing and maintenance, painting, and other. These costs likely understimate the true cost of maintaining the provincial road network.

Car travel is the primary form of commuting for 92.4% of Islanders. However, with nearly half of these individuals commuting for less than 15 minutes, there is a significant opportunity to encourage more active forms of transportation. This is particularly pertinent given the health statistics indicating that the percentage of Islanders who self-identified as overweight from 2007 to 2021 has remained consistently higher than the Canadian average. Fortunately, physical activity levels in PEI show a considerable segment of the population is engaging in the recommended amounts of weekly exercise. Still, there is potential for growth compared to national statistics. In 2016, only 6.5% of commuters reported using active transportation (walking and/or biking) and 1.9% regularly use transit.[42]

The *PEI Active Transportation Strategy* aims to leverage this potential by promoting healthier, more sustainable transportation alternatives.[42] The Island is fortunate to have the 470 km Confederation Trail network in place as the backbone for a province-wide active transportation network. Improving active transportation and the connectivity of routes within and among communities and between key destinations across the province will be key to integrating active transportation more deeply into Islanders' daily routines. These objectives will not only help address environmental concerns associated with emissions from vehicle transportation, but will also enhance overall community health.

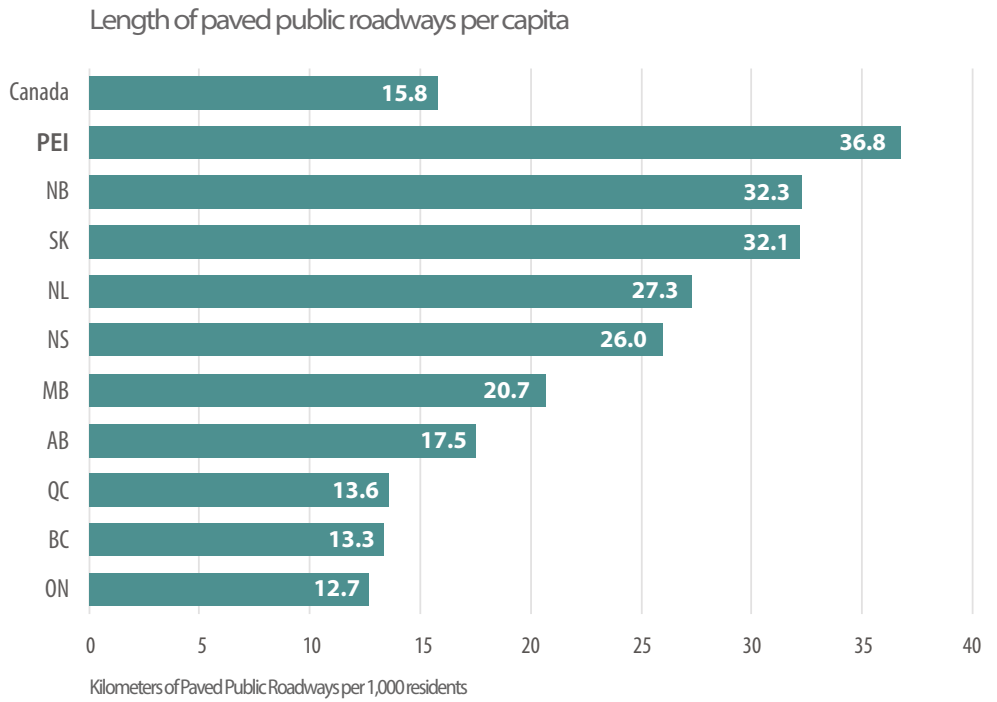
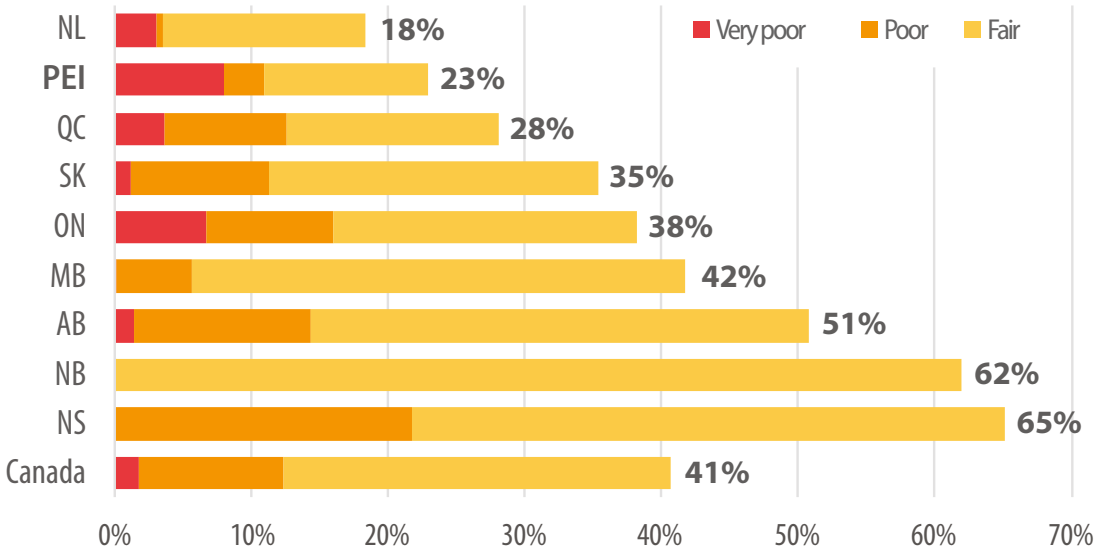


Figure 37: Kilometers of paved public roadways per capita[16]

Public transit is another key opportunity to reduce GHG emissions while increasing mobility and the affordability of transportation. T3 City Transit currently serves the four largest urban municipalities of Charlottetown, Stratford, Cornwall and Summerside. Rural transit offers connections from Tignish to Souris and communities on provincial highways in between, including Cavendish. PEI's public transit network consists of 22 buses traveling 6,000 km daily, servicing more than 1.5 million annual passenger fares.[43] For $2 per trip, Islanders can travel the entire Island, tip-to-tip.

In 2021, only 1.4% of Islanders used public transit as their main mode of commuting, compared to 7.7% nationally.[20] The frequency and connectivity of public transit services could be expanded to make transit a more attractive and convenient option, shifting reliance away from personal vehicles.

This holistic approach to transportation planning, geared towards active lifestyles and supported by community health data, could lead to a more sustainable and healthier future for all Islanders.



Distribution of Publicly Owned Rural Highway Kilometers Rated Below "Good" Condition

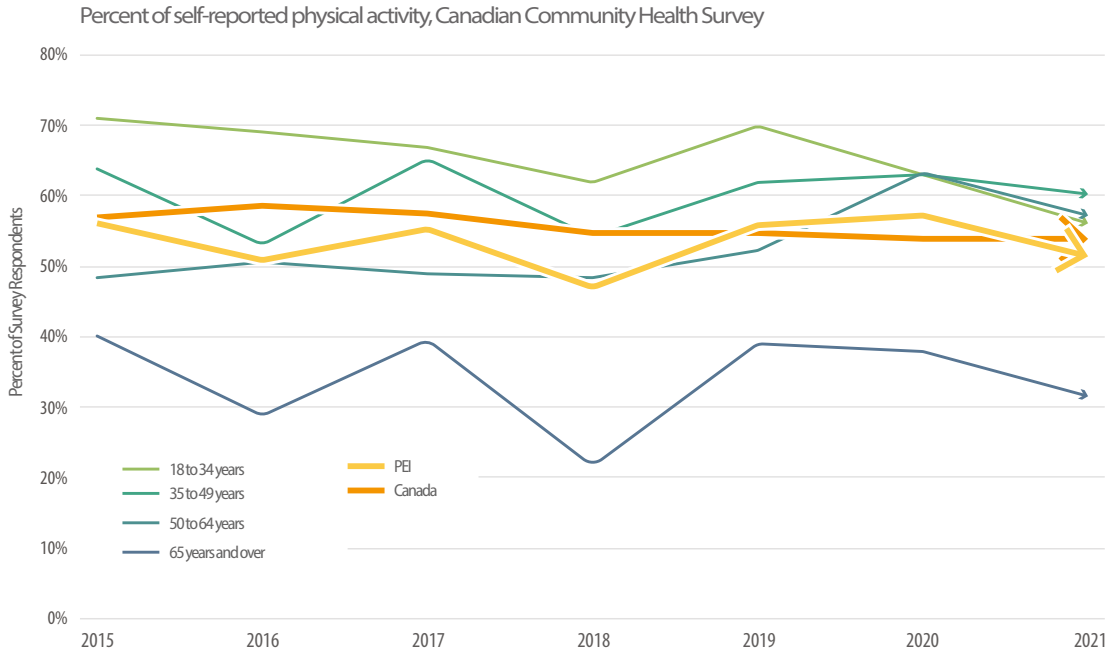
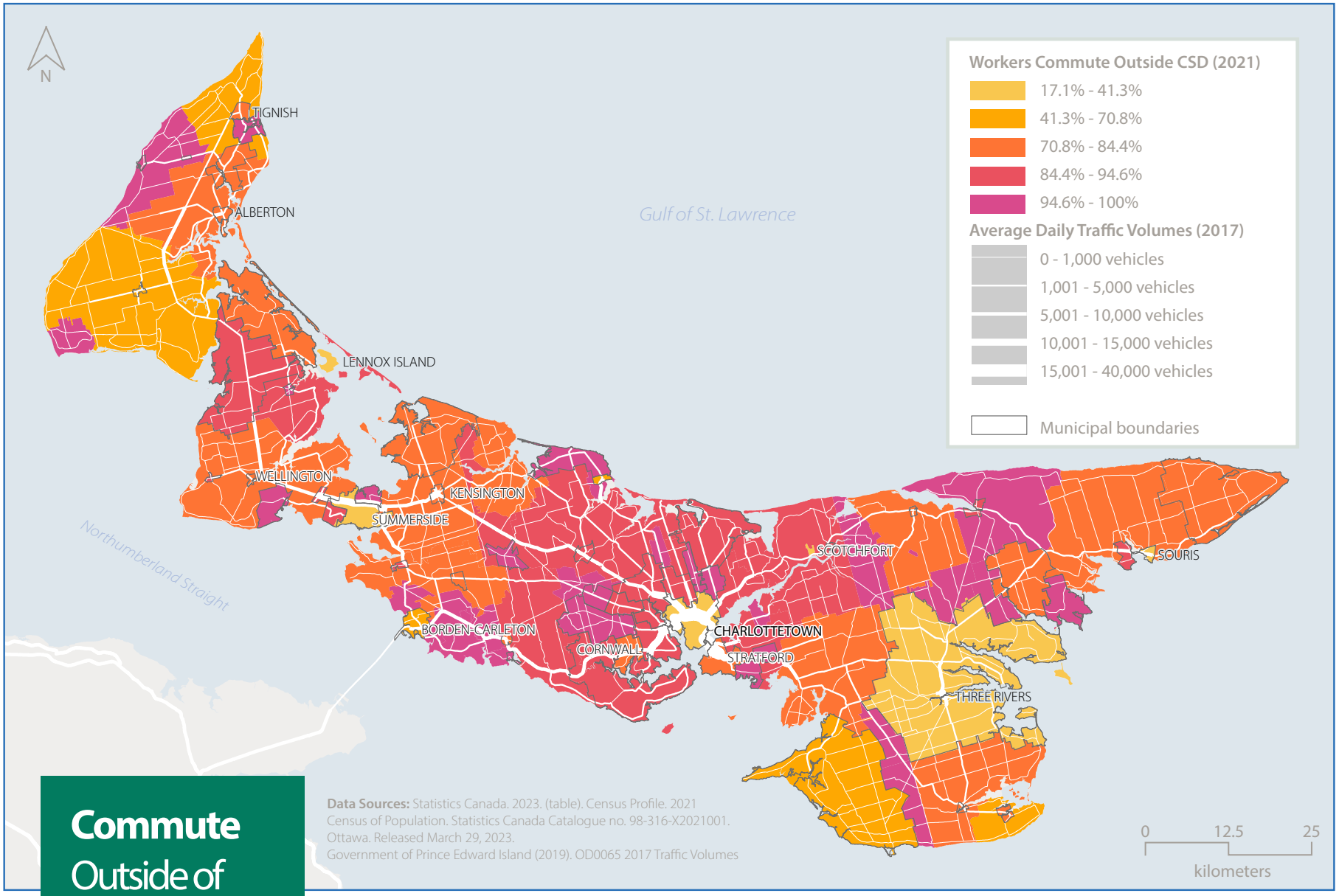


Figure 38, top: Distribution of publicly owned rural highway kilometers rated below "good" condition[39]

Figure 39, bottom: Percent of self-reported physical activity, Canadian Community Health Survey[44]



Commute Outside of Census Sub Division

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.
Government of Prince Edward Island (2019). OD0065 2017 Traffic Volumes

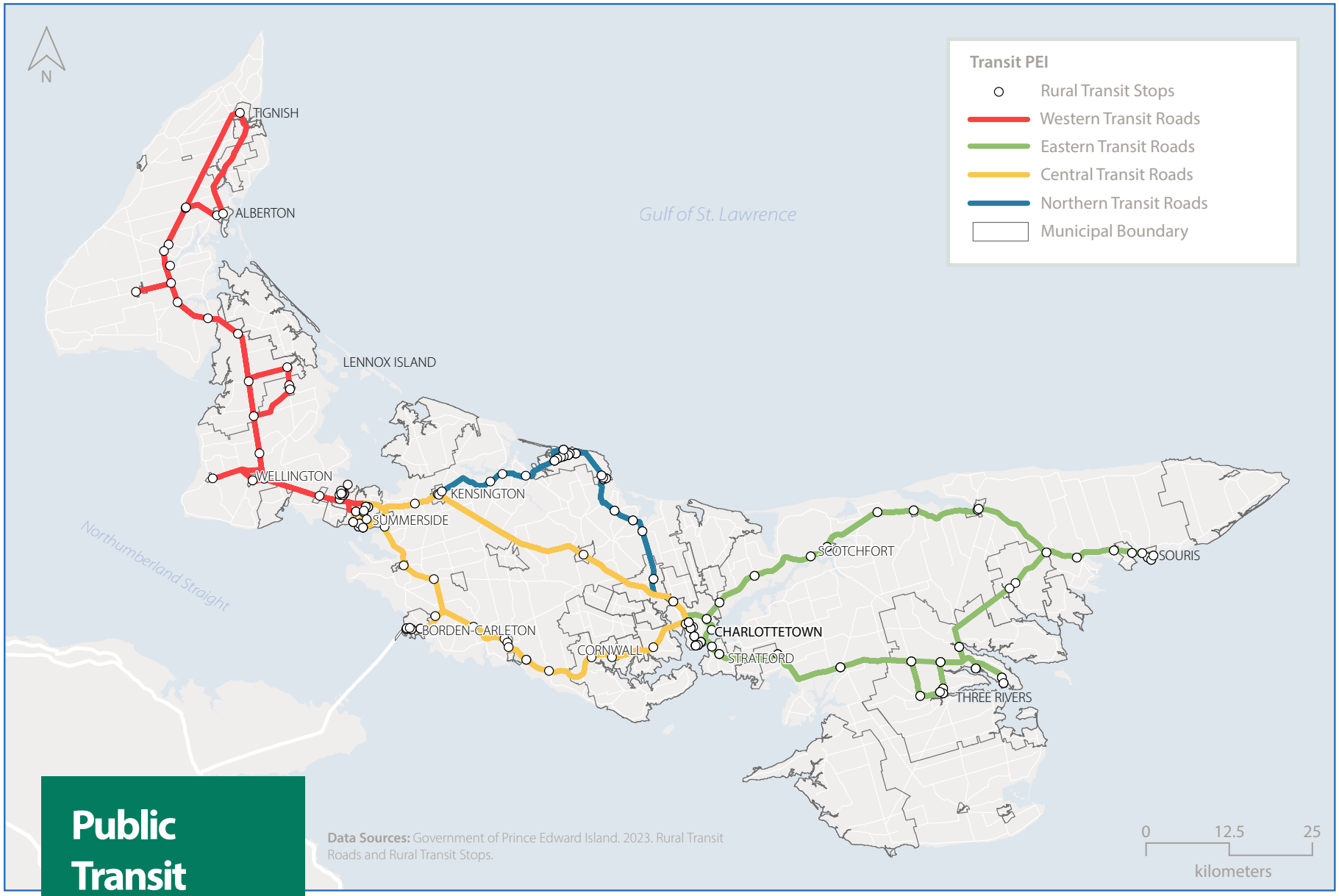
This map displays the percentage of PEI residents who commute outside of their census subdivision, to another census subdivision, census division or another province or territory for work in 2021, layered with Annual Average Daily Traffic volumes from 2017.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023



Public Transit System

Data Sources: Government of Prince Edward Island. 2023. Rural Transit Roads and Rural Transit Stops.

This map displays the Island wide rural transit system, which operates Monday to Friday on Provincial Highways. Public transit services the entire Island, as well local service in the four urban municipalities of Charlottetown, Stratford, Cornwall and Summerside.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: February 2024

Interprovincial Transportation Infrastructure

Interprovincial transportation to PEI from mainland Canada is largely limited to four key points of arrival: the Confederation Bridge, two ferry terminals, and the Charlottetown Airport (YYG).

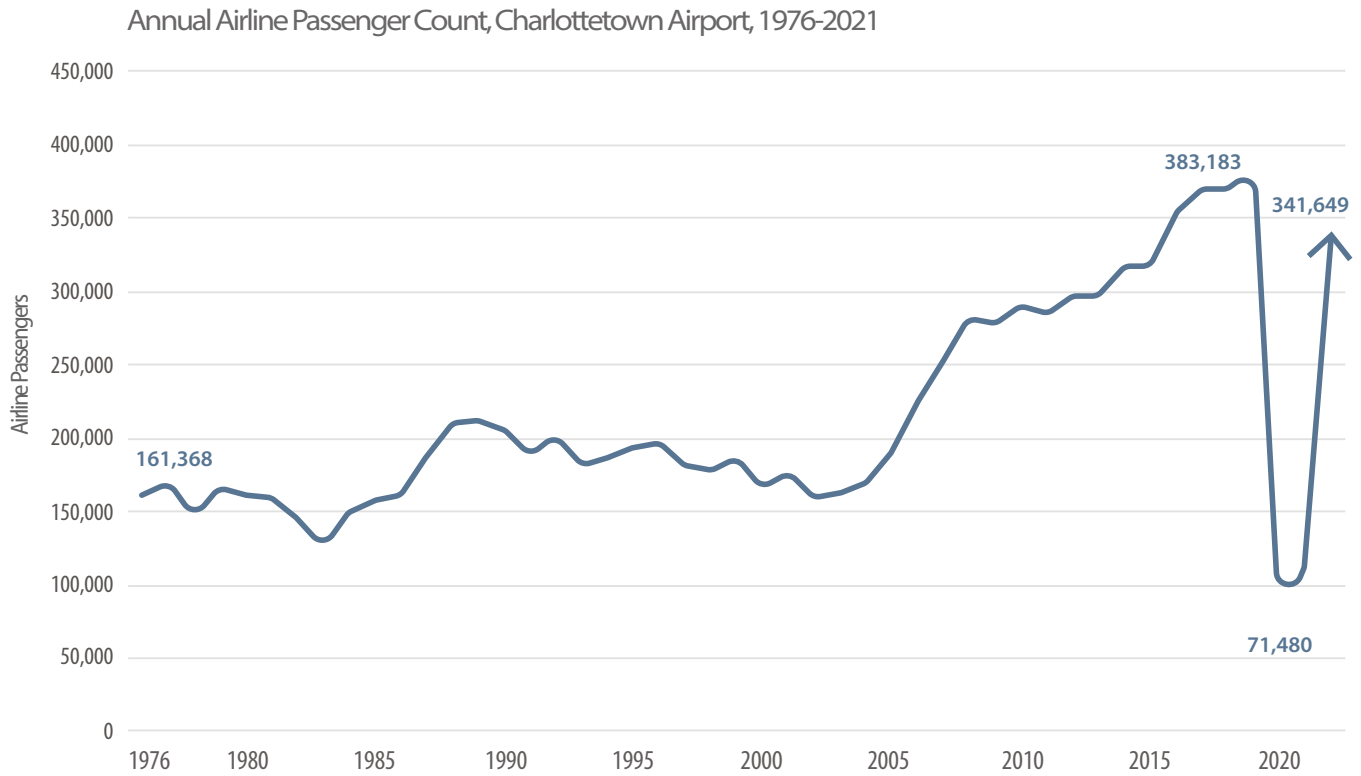
The Confederation Bridge opened in 1997, providing the first year-round fixed link to the mainland from PEI. Spanning 12.9 km, the Confederation Bridge is the world's longest bridge crossing ice-covered water.[45]

While the federal government owns the bridge, it is currently operated by Strait Crossing Bridge Limited through an agreement that expires in 2032. The current toll for crossing the bridge is $50.25 for two-axle vehicles, a rate that has been frozen for the past two years through federal government subsidies.[46]

The two operational ferry terminals are both owned by Transport Canada. The Souris Terminal is privately operated by Coopérative de Transport Maritime et Aérien (CTMA) Traversier. It provides year-round service between Souris, PEI and Cap-aux-Meules, Quebec on the Îles de-la-Madeleine, accommodating 132,859 passengers in 2022.[47] The Wood Islands Ferry Terminal is operated by Northumberland Ferries Limited, facilitating travel from May to December between Wood Islands, PEI and Caribou, NS.[48]

The Charlottetown Airport has experienced a steady increase in passenger numbers over the past 20 years, despite a dramatic drop due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. The airport serves as a crucial hub for PEI, connecting the Island to major Canadian cities and generating more than $103 million in total economic activity annually.[49] The number of passengers peaked in 2019 at 383,183 and by 2022 had recovered to 90% of pre-pandemic numbers.[82]

Figure 40: Annual number of passengers visiting Charlottetown Airport, 1976-2022[82]



Energy and Electricity

PEI's approach to energy and electricity is marked by sustainability efforts, with less than 1% of the Island's carbon emissions coming from the electricity sector. Nearly 80% of the electricity used on the Island is imported from New Brunswick Power, generally due to historically lower electricity costs compared to what on-Island utilities can generate. This is due to New Brunswick's diverse mix of electricity generation.[50] PEI is able to import and export electricity to mainland Canada across the Northumberland Strait through four submarine cables with a total physical capacity of 560MW.

In 2016, the province developed a 10-year strategy to reduce energy use, establish cleaner and locally produced energy sources, and moderate future energy price increases. Renewable energy, predominantly in the forms of wind and solar, plays a key role in PEI's energy portfolio. A new energy strategy that aligns with the province's environmental and social priorities is expected to be released in 2024.

In 2016, on-Island wind energy accounted for more than a quarter of the Island's electricity mix.[50] Across the Island, there are seven renewable-energy-generation zones where facilities that utilize wind power with a capacity greater than 100kW are permissible. These are predominantly located along the north shore and western PEI.

The existing eight wind farms on PEI are capable of generating 203MW. Three proposed wind projects intended to increase renewable energy generation on the Island include an additional seven turbines for Eastern Kings (+30 MW), Skinners Pond (up to 99 MW), and Albany/Kinkora (12 to 18 MW).

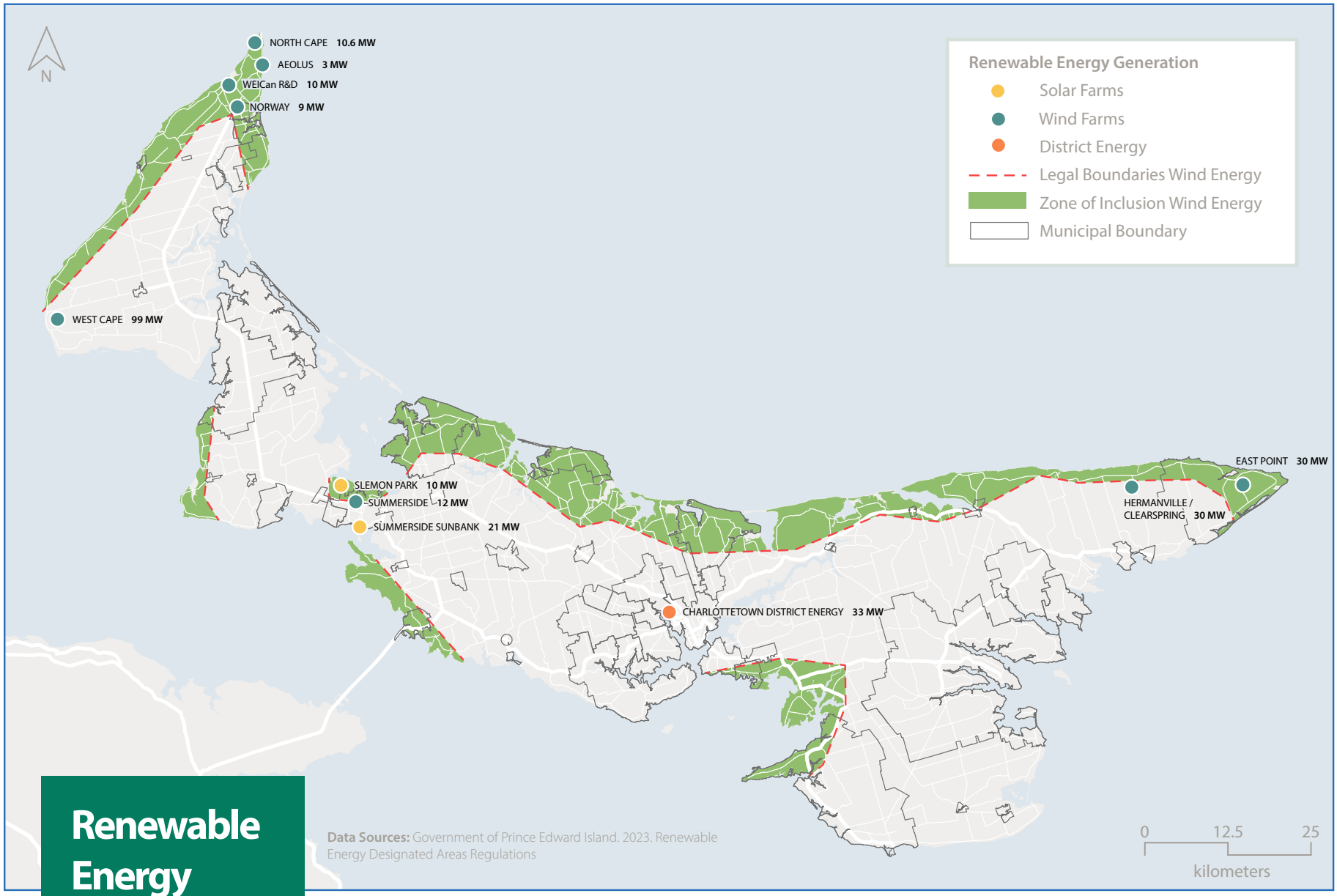
With increasing government incentives for solar generation, residential solar has expanded dramatically across the Island over the last five years. Between 20 and 30MW of net-metred solar have been installed. In 2023, Summerside's Sunbank Project (21MW) and PEI Energy Corporation's Slemon Park Microgrid Project (10MW) were commissioned, increasing the share of solar production into the electric grid. Both projects also incorporate utility-scale energy storage.

Takeaway: The zone of incusion for wind energy overlaps with many natural features including forests, wetlands, sand dunes, and species at risk areas. The LUP should ensure that there are protection considerations built into it's policies for further development of energy generation facilities.

Name	Year	Capacity (MW)	Turbine Size (MW)	Owner
Aeolus Wind	2003	3	3	PEI Energy Corporation
Eastern Kings Wind	2007	30	3	PEI Energy Corporation
Hermanville/Clear Springs Wind	2014	30	3	PEI Energy Corporation
North Cape Wind	2003	10.6	0.667	PEI Energy Corporation
Norway Wind	2007	9	3	ENGIE
Summerside Wind	2009	12	3	City of Summerside
West Cape Wind	2009	99	1.8	ENGIE
WEICan Wind R&D	2013	10	2.5	WEICan

Table 4: Wind Farms on PEI[81]

Figure 41: Summerside Wind Farm (foreground), in close proximity to the City of Summerside (background)



Renewable Energy Generation

Data Sources: Government of Prince Edward Island. 2023. Renewable Energy Designated Areas Regulations

This map displays the areas of the Island where it is permissible to operate a renewable energy generation facilities that utilizes wind power (capacity greater than 100kW), as well as the existing large scale solar and wind energy infrastructure.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: February 2024

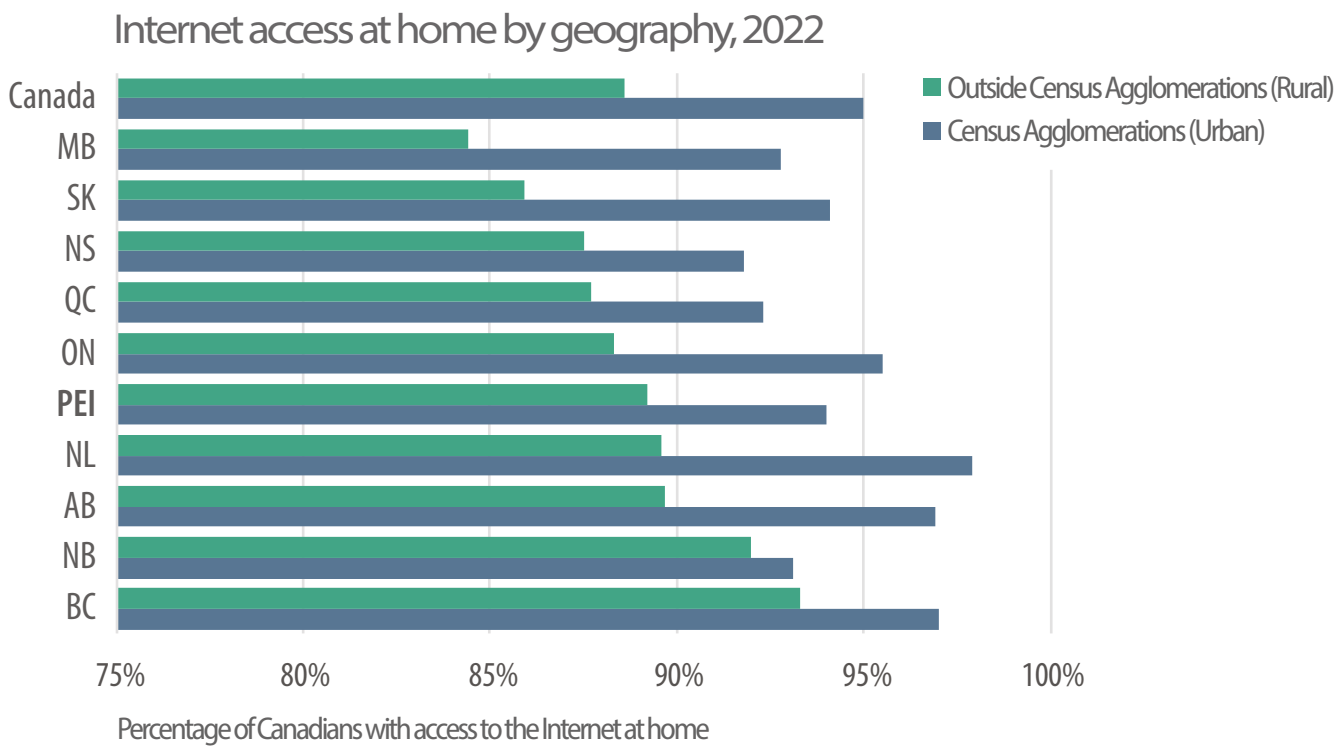
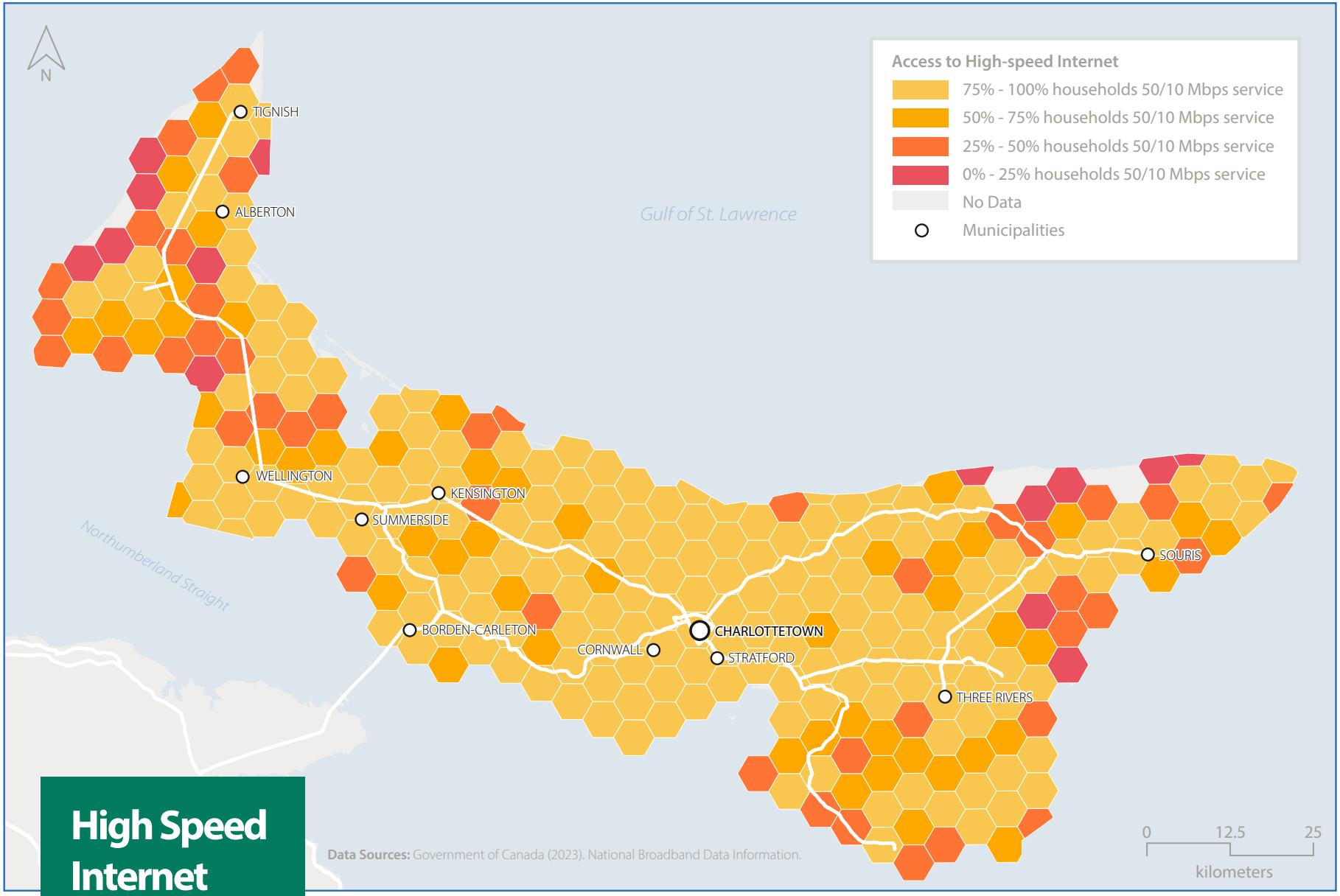


Figure 42: Internet access at home by geography (2022)[40]

High-Speed Internet Availability

Access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet is essential to all Islanders, both at home and at work. PEI's 2021-2025 Broadband Connectivity Strategy aims to provide high-speed internet across the Island. High-speed internet is measured by minimum download speeds of 50 megabits per second (Mbps) and minimum upload speeds of 10 Mbps. As of December 2022, 96% of civic addresses were already connected, with ongoing efforts to reach the 2,350 civic addresses that remained without high-speed internet by 2025.[51]

From an individual perspective, 92.2% of Islanders have access to high-speed internet at home, with a greater proportion of residents in the Charlottetown and Summerside census areas having access (94.0%), compared to the rest of the Island (89.2%).[52] Upgrades and expansions to the existing broadband network reflect the province's commitment to enhancing digital infrastructure and accessibility to reach underserved communities.



High Speed Internet Availability

Data Sources: Government of Canada (2023). National Broadband Data Information.

This map displays a hexagonal approximation of areas for which households have access to broadband services offering High-speed internet (50/10 Mbps or greater).

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

Waste Management

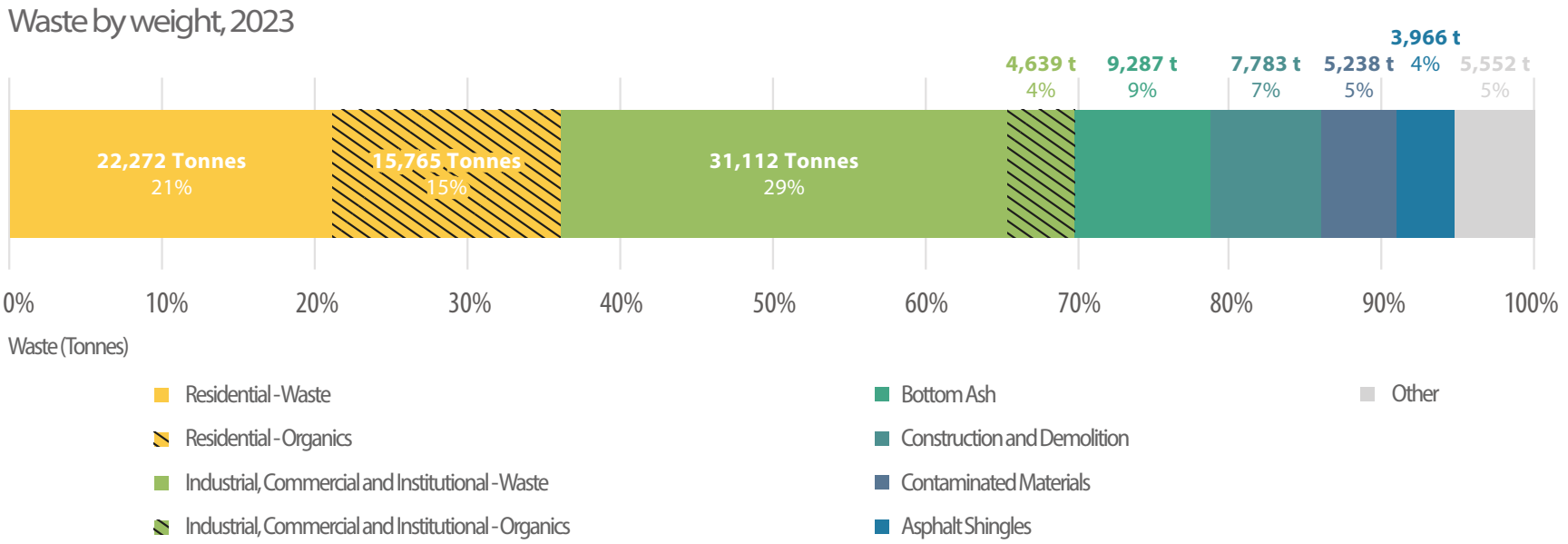
In PEI, waste management involves a mix of public and private initiatives. The Island Waste Management Corporation plays a central role, with a compost facility and one active municipal waste landfill (East Prince Waste Management Facility) in operation. The Enwave district heating solid waste incinerator system in Charlottetown provides heat for 125 buildings in the city, and is a notable feature of the Island's waste management strategy.[54] Construction and demolition waste, recycling and scrap metal are primarily managed by private entities.[55] PEI's stewardship programs cover a wide range of materials, from electronics to agricultural plastics, emphasizing the Island's focus on environmental sustainability.

Water and Wastewater Services

In PEI, central water supply and wastewater systems are regulated by the Water Act. About half of the residents and businesses are served by these shared systems.[75] Recent investments by the federal and provincial government aim to enhance existing systems by replacing aging water mains, valves, hydrants, and services to improve water quality and wastewater treatment.[76] Challenges to expanding these services in PEI include population fluctuations affecting revenue bases for smaller rural systems, the need for upgrades to enhance existing system performance, and ensuring infrastructure resiliency against natural disasters and extreme weather events.[77]

Map, previous: Provincial high-speed internet availability[53]

Figure 43: Provincial waste (2023)[55]



3.3.6 Social Services

Social infrastructure is essential for communities and quality of life on the Island, providing healthcare, education, and opportunities for social connection. The majority of services are concentrated in the population centres of Charlottetown and Summerside. In rural and remote areas, a variety of social services (including schools, libraries, and community facilities) are distributed across the Island, clustered around local communities to serve multiple purposes. Due to the geographic factors impacting rural areas, few of these facilities would be considered walkable, but they are within a short driving distance to most communities.

> **Takeaways:** Limited public transportation options outside of urban centres creates further barriers for many people with age, income, and mobility considerations.

Community Facilities

There are over 200 community facilities located across PEI which offer a variety of spaces to the public, including arenas, fitness centres, gyms, libraries, municipal offices, and schools, often in combination.[56] They are owned and run by a variety of groups, including the Province, local municipalities, legions, community boards, churches, special interest groups and non-profit organizations.

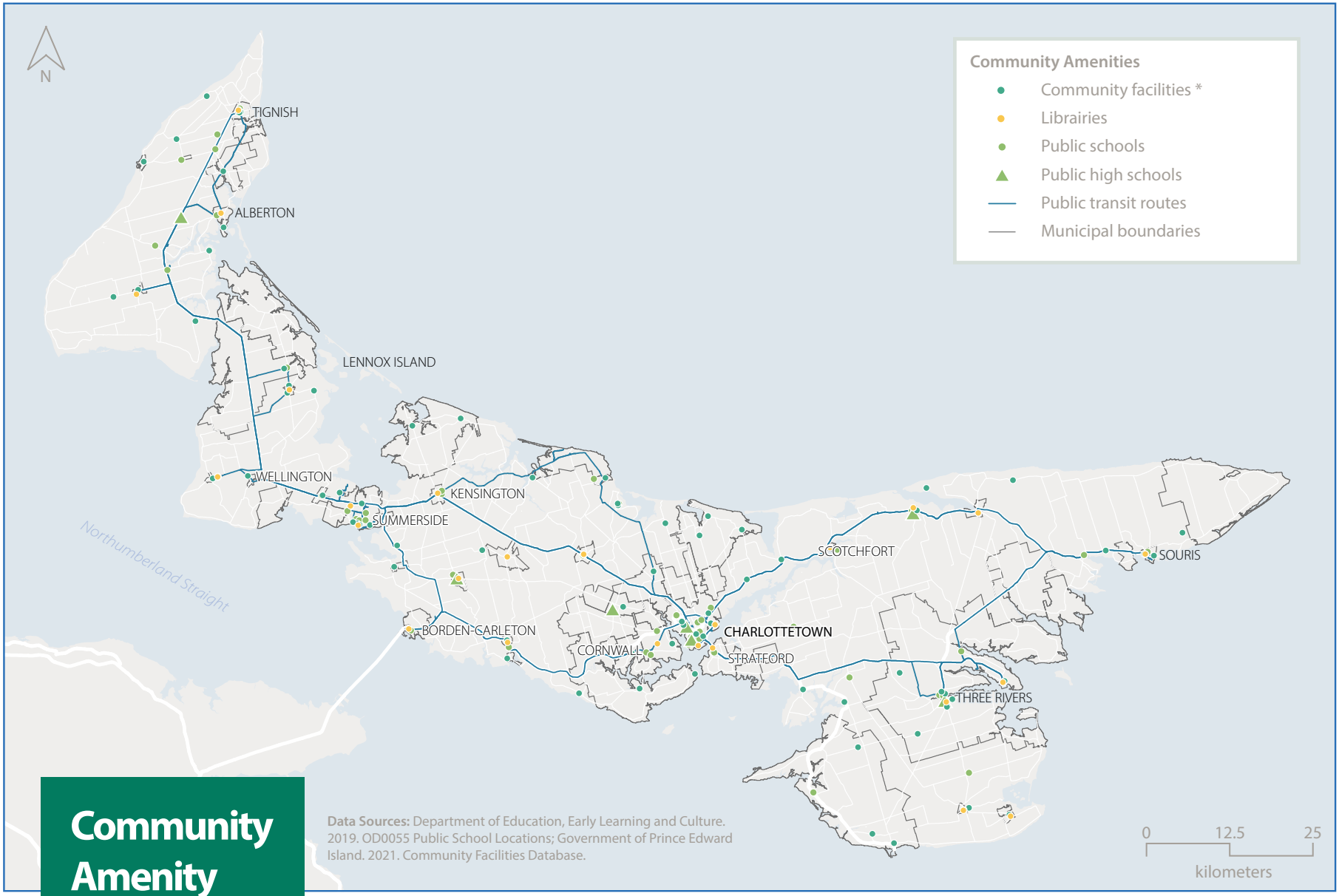
Community facilities are dispersed across the Island, with multiple facilities hosting various types of events such as meetings, receptions, election polls, concerts, childrens events and more.

Healthcare

Publicly funded healthcare services are provided by the Island's single health authority, Health PEI. The Island's two primary hospitals are located in Charlottetown and Summerside. They provide the greatest variety of services including but not limited to emergency, acute care to all Islanders, and a variety of inpatient, outpatient, community and specialty services.[83]

There are also four community hospitals located in Souris, Montague, O'Leary, and Alberton. They provide services including emergency, acute in-patient, ambulatory, convalescent/rehabilitative, palliative, and respite care.[83] Acute mental health services are delivered at the two primary hospitals, and at Hillsborough Hospital in Charlottetown, a psychiatric hospital providing specialized care, long-term treatment, and rehabilitation.

At the community scale, the first point of contact with the healthcare system is often through the five primary care networks. They provide diagnosis, treatment, education, disease prevention, and screening through community-based health services.



Community Amenity

Data Sources: Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture. 2019. OD0055 Public School Locations; Government of Prince Edward Island. 2021. Community Facilities Database.

This map displays social infrastructure and community amenities on PEI, including public schools, community facilities, and libraries. These services are largely concentrated in Charlottetown and Summerside, with rural facilities often serving multiple purposes.

*Note: The community facilities dataset is incomplete, and is comprised of 85 facilities with fixed adresses, of the over 200 facilities found on PEI.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

Long-term care is provided through nine public nursing facilities which are operated by Health PEI, in addition to 10 subsidized, private long-term care facilities.

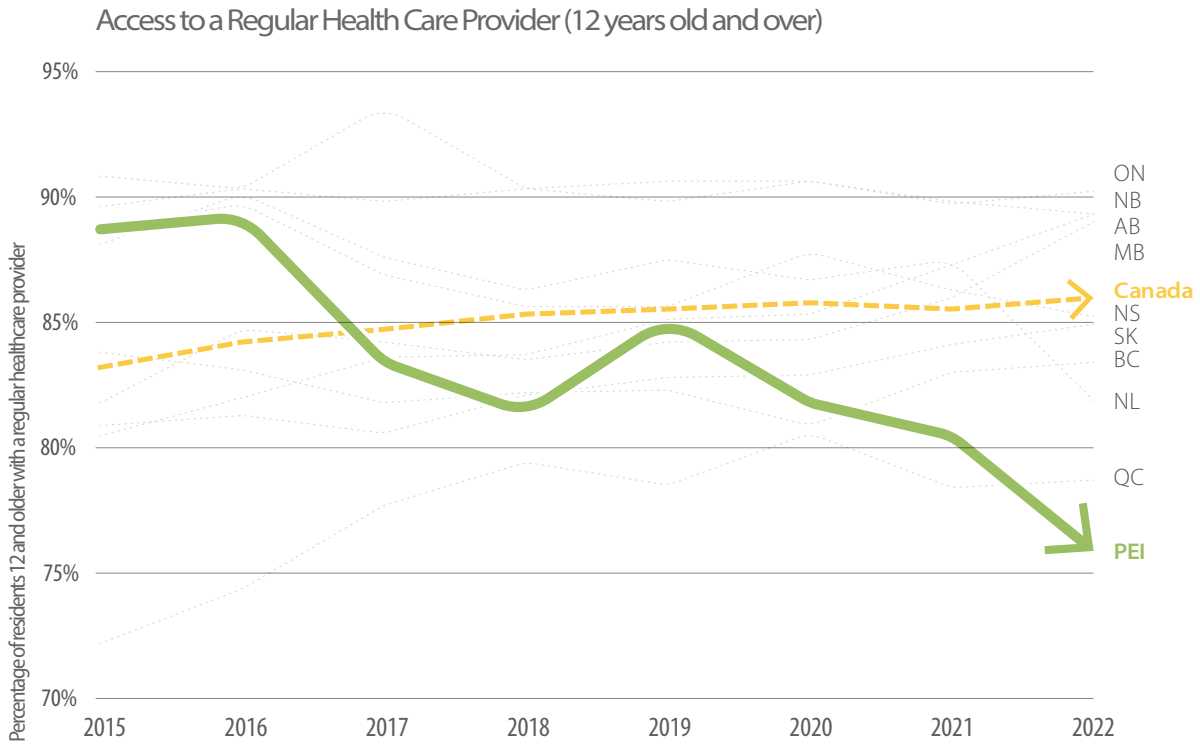
While a diversity of healthcare services are provided across the Island, the system depends on the primary hospitals in Charlottetown and Summerside. This has impacted the ability for Health PEI to provide timely access to high-quality family health services in rural and remote areas. Healthcare access is an area where there are clear inequities between urban and rural areas due to the necessary centralization of services.

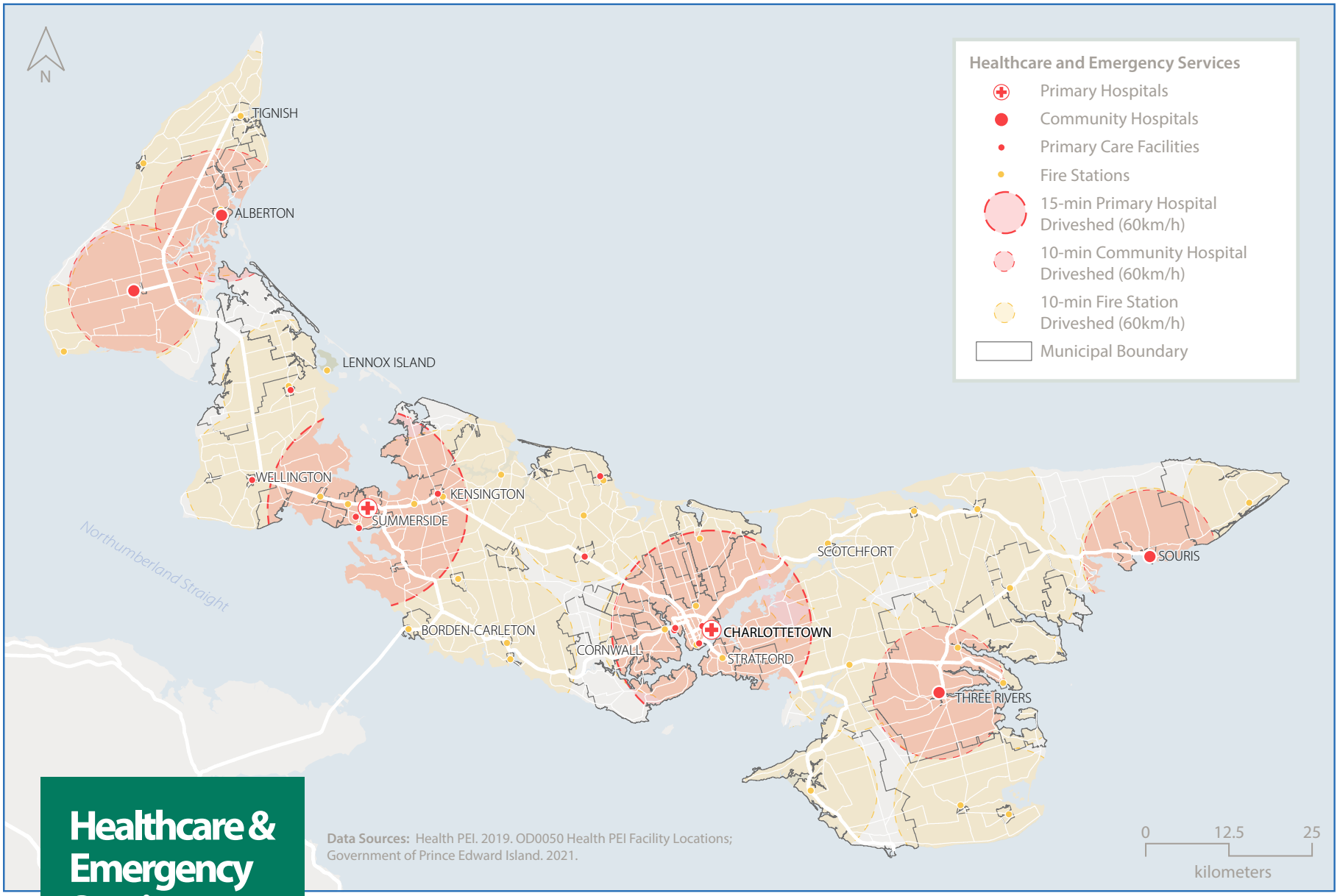
In 2022, nearly a quarter of PEI residents (24%) did not have a regular healthcare provider. This was the highest percentage among Canadian provinces. In the last eight years, this number has more than doubled.

At the same time, the national average has remained relatively constant, at 14% in 2022.[57] As of January 2024, there were more than 36,000 Islanders on the Patient Registry waiting for a family doctor.[58] A lack of access to family doctors can lead to residents being admitted to hospitals with more advanced illnesses that have gone untreated or unidentified, further increasing the strain on limited healthcare resources.

There are seven primary ground ambulance cover zones across the Island, with Summerside, Charlottetown and Stratford having the highest call volume and quickest response times. The Souris and Alberton regions have the lowest call volume and slowest response times. Correspondingly, as of winter 2023/2024, the Island's average ambulance response time was 14:06 minutes. The quickest average response time was 12:03 minutes in Summerside, with the slowest average response time of 26:35 in Souris.[59]

Figure 44: Access to a regular health care provider[57]





Healthcare & Emergency Services

Data Sources: Health PEI. 2019. OD0050 Health PEI Facility Locations; Government of Prince Edward Island. 2021.

This map displays healthcare and emergency services on PEI, including primary hospitals (15 minute driveshed) community hospitals (10 minute driveshed), primary care facilities, and fire stations (0 minute driveshed).

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: January 2024

Schools

There are 62 public schools on PEI, offering education from kindergarten to Grade 12. Combined with five private schools, they provided primary education to more than 22,000 students in 2023.[60, 61] Six of the public schools are operated by la Commission Scolaire de Langue Française (CSLF) in French, and 30 schools offer French immersion programming. Since 1999, school enrollment has decreased by 9.4%, and four public schools have either closed or been consolidated.[62] In 2023, the smallest public school had 67 students, and the largest was Charlottetown Rural High School with nearly 1,200 students.[60]

Schools are a critical piece of social infrastructure, and a central building block to most communities. The proximity of schools to population centres reduces student bus times, promotes walkability, and provides numerous direct and indirect benefits to the community. School catchments have pre-set boundaries determined by the school board. Locations for new schools are selected with the assistance of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. Many factors are taken into account when choosing a school site, including the communities served by the school, projected population, size of land needed, and the suitability of the land for construction.

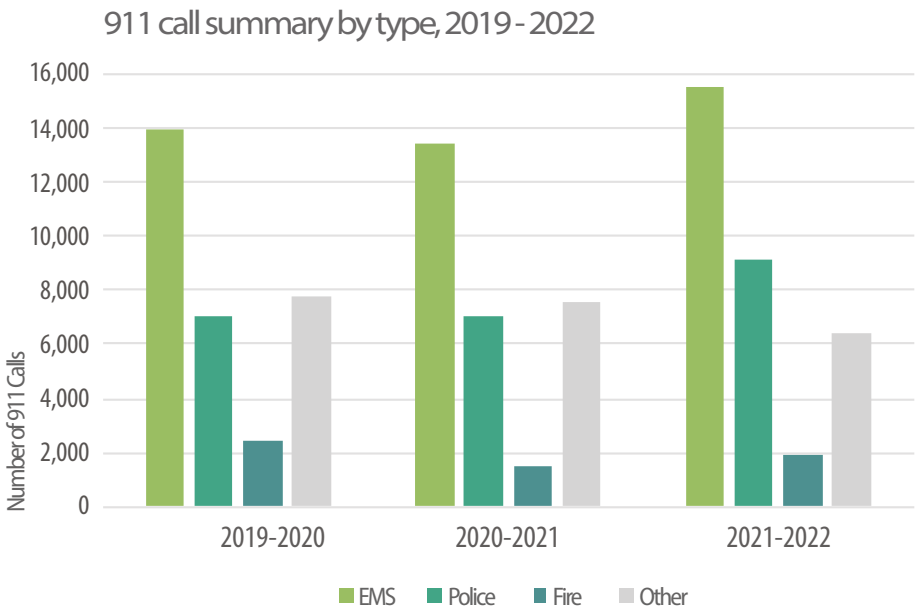
Access to schools often determines the viability of rural areas, particular for families with young children who prefer close proximity to educational facilities.

Emergency Services

Emergency services in PEI are a crucial aspect of maintaining safety and security. Municipal police departments, including Charlottetown Police Service, Summerside Police Service, and Kensington Police Department, work in collaboration with the RCMP as necessary. This factor contributes to PEI's high citizen satisfaction levels with police services, which have been rated the best in the country.[63]

In the absence of municipal servicing, the RCMP are responsible for the remaining 95% of the Island's land area. They cover the unincorporated areas and all other Island municipalities. Some municipalities pay a population-based fee for this service.[64] The RCMP also provide federal policing across the Island, including services for First Nation communities and for the Confederation Bridge.

Figure 45: Trend for 911 calls by emergency type[68]



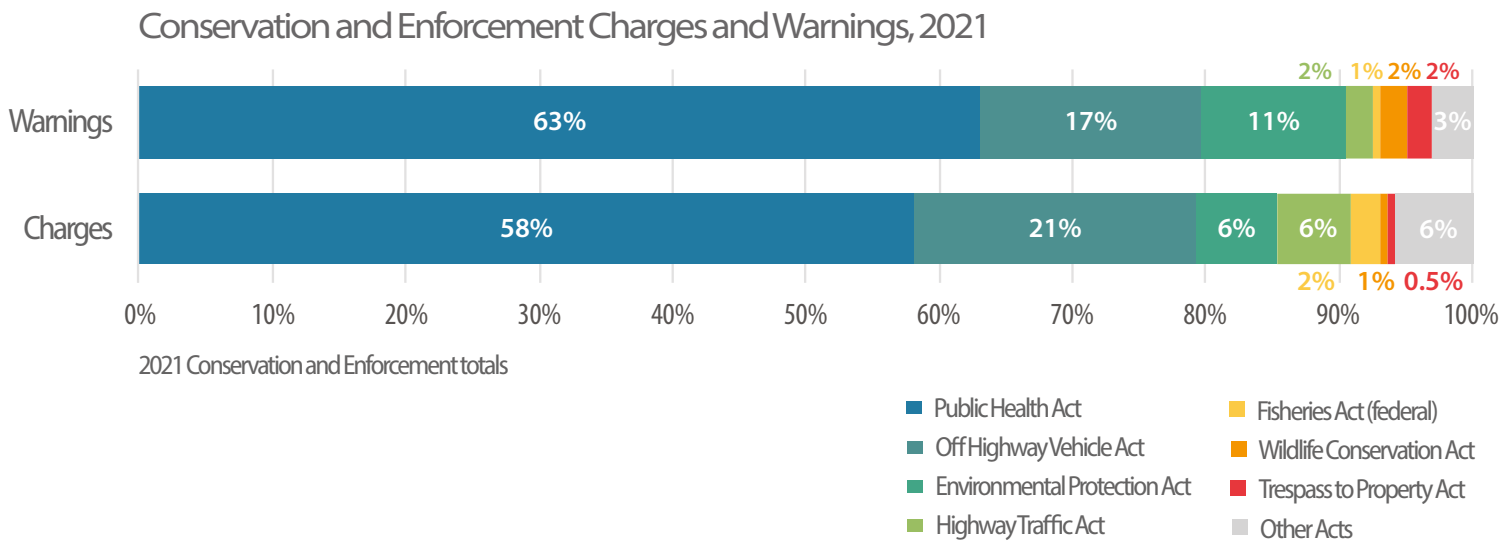


Figure 46: 2021 charges and warnings by provincial Act.[69]

Fire protection services are provided across PEI by 35 fire departments (22 municipal and 14 private).[65] Municipalities determine their departments' service scope, level, and budget. The majority of municipalities (68%) and all unincorporated areas contract fire protection services from neighbouring municipalities with fire departments, or from private fire departments.[66] More than 1,100 of the Island's firefighters are volunteers, with only 13 paid full-time positions in the urban centres of Charlottetown and Summerside. While volunteer firefighters provide the same services as those who have paid, full-time positions, many departments face challenges recruiting new firefighters to protect rural areas.[67]

Since 2006, Island EMS has provided comprehensive EMS and 911 services throughout PEI. This includes ground ambulance service, 911 emergency dispatch, mobile mental health, mobile integrated health, and additional support to the Island Health System.[68]

The way communities are built impacts community safety and accessibility in times of emergency.[13] In recent years, PEI has experienced an increase in 911 calls, up from 36,852 for 2020 to 2021 to 42,083 for 2021 to 2022 (see **Figure 45**). To respond to this increase in call volume, most municipalities rely on provincial RCMP, with Charlottetown, Summerside and Kensington having their own police departments.

Endnotes

1. Canada Green Building Council. (2023). Building climate solutions. https://www.cagbc.org/why-green-building/building-climate-solutions.

2. Department of Finance, & MacLeod, R. (2023). "Briefing note: Municipal Land Use and Regulation Survey - 2022 Results." Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

3. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2023). "Approval delays linked with lower housing affordability." https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/blog/2023/approval-delays-linked-lower-housing-affordability.

4. Stantec. (2013, April). "Quantifying the Costs and Benefits of Alternative Growth Scenarios." Report for Halifax Regional Municipality. https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/regional-community-planning/HRMGrowthScenariosFinalReportJuly82013.pdf.

5. Statistics Canada. "Municipal Land Use and Regulations (MLUR)". https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5382.

6. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2009). "New Foundation: Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance."

7. Land Matters Advisory Committee, Prince Edward Island. (2021). "Now is the Time: Final Report." https://www.landmatterspei.ca.

8. Statistics Canada. (2022, February 9). "Population and dwelling counts: Canada, Provinces and Territories." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810000101.

9. Perrault, J.-F. (2021, May 12). "Estimating the structural housing shortage in Canada: Are we 100 thousand or nearly 2 million units short?" https://www.scotiabank.com/ca/en/about/economics/economics-publications/post.other-publications.housing.housing-note.housing-note--may-12-2021-.html.

10. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2024, January 11). "Path to net zero." https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/path-to-net-zero.

11. Prince Edward Island, Canada. Department of Agriculture. (2024, January 31). "State of the Island Draft Report."

12. Siedentop, S., & Fina, S. (2010). "Urban sprawl beyond growth: The effect of demographic change on infrastructure costs." Flux, 79-80(1), 90–100. https://doi.org/10.3917/flux.079.0090.

13. Vermont Natural Resources Council. (n.d.). "Community planning toolbox: Strip Development." https://vnrc.org/community-planning-toolbox/issues/strip-development/#:~:text=The%20most%20often%2Drecognized%20form,separate%20driveway%20and%20parking%20area.

14. Heim, C. E. (2001). "Leapfrogging, urban sprawl, and Growth Management: Phoenix, 1950–2000." The American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 60(1), 245–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/1536-7150.00063.

15. MacPhearson, K. (2011, August 11). "Council Communications: Inside and Out: Sustaining Ontario's Greenbelt." Toronto, Ontario; Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

16. Canada. (2024). "National Road Network - NRN - GeoBase Series" (spatial data).

17. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, October). Approved Subdivisions 2013 - 2023.

18. O'Hara, A. (2023, November 15). Geographic files for vacant land parcels which area approved for development. Prince Edward Island, Canada.

19. Parnham, H., Jardine, D., Kennedy, C., Weatherbie, C., Keefe, G., Pang, T., Kinay, P., Wang. X. and Farooque, A. (2023) "Prince Edward Island State of the Coast Report 2023." Canadian Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation, St. Peters Bay, Canada. Report submitted to the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, Government of Prince Edward Island.

20. Statistics Canada. (2023). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Released November 15, 2023. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E.

21. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2020). "State of the Forest Report."

22. Prince Edward Island, Canada. "Building Together: Prince Edward Island Housing Strategy 2024-2029". https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_housing_strategy_2024-2029.pdf.

23. Statistics Canada. "Table 34-10-0135-01: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts, under construction and completions, all areas, quarterly."

24. Yarr, K. (2023, July 12). "Expect 'change to our urban landscape,' P.E.I. minister says at housing announcement." CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-Island/pei-charlottetown-housing-announcement-1.6904266.

25. Prince Edward Island, Canada (2018). Housing Action Plan for Prince Edward Island. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei-housing-action-plan_2018-2023.pdf.

26. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, December 21). Home renovation programs. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/service/pei-home-renovation-programs.

27. CEDI. (n.d.). "First Nation-Municipal Land Use Planning Tool." https://fcm.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/tool/land-use-planning-tool-cedi.pdf.

28. Land Matters Advisory Committee. (2021, July). "Now is the time: Final Report of the Land Matters Advisory Committee." https://www.landmatterspei.ca/sites/www.landmatterspei.ca/files/LandMatters/af_Land%20Matters_What%20We%20Heard_Final%20Report.pdf.

29. Stewart, C., & Theriault, C. (2023, November 6). RE: State of the Island (email).

30.Tourism PEI (2024). "Scenic Heritage Roads in Prince Edward Island." https://www.tourismpei.com/what-to-do/attractions-sightseeing/scenic-heritage-roads?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA8YyuBhBSEiwA5R3-E_oQ_AiBJJgsW5uGoMp48YLuglZbfzFhvIT6yUAaIPBntCC7jRcM_BoCDDsQAvD_BwE.

31. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2022). Lands Protection Act. PEI, 2022, L-5.

32. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, December 11). "Buying real estate in PEI." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/buying-real-estate-in-pei.

33. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, September). "Property layer" (spatial data).

34. Statistics Canada. (2023, October 18). "Canadian Housing Statistics Program: Real estate investors, 2021." The Daily. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231018/dq231018b-eng.htm.

35. Hansen, K. (2024, January 29). 20240129_State of the Island Tourism (email).

36. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2022, October 25). "Build affordable housing." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/information/social-development-and-housing/build-affordable-housing.

37. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (1990, October). "Recommendations Of The Royal Commission On The Land." http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/cca_royal_com90.pdf.

38. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2009). "Report on Land and Local Governance."

39. Statistics Canada. "Table 34-10-0070-01: Inventory distribution of publicly owned road assets by physical condition rating, Infrastructure Canada."

40. Prince Edward Island, Canada (2023). "Estimated Maintenance Costs Per Year/Per Km Based on Road Classification."

41. Statistics Canada. (2023). "Table 23-10-0308-01: Vehicle registrations, by type of vehicle and fuel type."

42. Prince Edward Island, Canada (2022). Active Transportation Strategy. Province of Prince Edward Island. princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/active_transportation_strategy.pdf.

43. T3 Transit. (2023). "About T3 Transit". https://www.t3transit.ca/covid-19.

44. Statistics Canada. "Table 13-10-0096-13: Physical activity, self reported, adult, by age group."

45. Confederation Bridge. "About". https://www.confederationbridge.com/site/about.

46. Transport Canada. (2023). "Government of Canada freezes toll rates for 2024 for the Confederation Bridge."

47. Prince Edward Island Statistics Review. (2023, July). "Prince Edward Island 49th Annual Statistical Review 2022." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/web_asr.pdf.

48. Northumberland Ferries Limited. (n.d.). "Overview". https://www.ferries.ca/ns-pei-ferry/overview/.

49. YYG Charlottetown Airport. (n.d.). "Corporate." https://flyyyg.com/corporate/.

50. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2016). "2016 Provincial Energy Strategy". https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/pei-energy-strategy.

51. Prince Edward Island, Canada. Economic Development, Innovation and Trade. (2022, December). "Broadband Strategy Progress Report October 2021-December 2022." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/broadband_strategy_progress_report_2022_v3_0.pdf.

52. Statistics Canada. (2023). "Table 22-10-0134-01: Access to the Internet at home by geography".

53. Government of Canada. (2023). "National Broadband Data Information." https://ised-isde.canada.ca/app/scr/sittibc/web/bbmap#!/map.

54. Island Waste Management Corporation.(2021). "Annual Report 2020-2021: IWMC Island Waste Management Corporation." https://iwmc.pe.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2021-Annual-Report-LARGE-FINAL-compressed.pdf.

55. Island Waste Management Corporation. (2023, November). "Resource and Waste Recovery Data." Internal Circulation.

56. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2021, March 29). "Community Facilities Database."

57. Statistics Canada. "Table 13-10-0096-01: Health characteristics, annual estimates."

58. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2024). "Find a Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner." https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/find-a-family-doctor-or-nurse-practitioner.

59. Island EMS. (2023). "Ground Ambulance Cover Zones. Ambulance Response Times." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/ambulance_response_times_q1-q2_22-23.pdf.

60. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023). "Student Enrolment, K-12, 2023-2024".

61. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023). "PEI Public School Locations."

62. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023). "Chart of Official School Enrolment from 1999."

63. RCMP. (n.d.). "About the RCMP in Prince Edward Island." https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/pe/about-division.

64. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (n.d.). "Policing Services". www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/policing-services.

65. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (n.d.). "Fire Services Throughout PEI". https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/fire-services-throughout-pei.

66. Prince Edward Island, Canada. Municipal Elections. (n.d.). "Population Facts." https://peimunicipalelections.ca/smallest-to-largest-municipalities-on-PEI-what-do-they-do.

67. Sinclair, J. (2018, January 2). "It takes a certain breed': What drives P.E.I.'s volunteer firefighters." CBC News: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-volunteer-firefighters-1.4439238.

68. Island EMS. (n.d.). "Island EMS / Medacom Atlantic History." Island EMS. Island EMS/Medacom Atlantic History. https://Islandems.ca/history.

69. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2022). "Emergency Services 2021 - 2022 Annual Report."

70. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, October). "Approved Subdivisions 2013 - 2023."

71. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023). "PEI Home Renovation Brief."

72. Work PEI. (2024, January 31). Vacancy Rate. https://workpei.ca/vacancy-rate/

73. The Schurman's Point Property Owners' Committee. (2009). (rep.). Legacy Communities in Transition. Government of Prince Edward Island. Retrieved from https://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/clg_schurmn_09.pdf.

74. Says, D. J., Jones, D., says, B. T., & Brad Trivers. (2016, March 29). How do private roads become public?. Brad Trivers. https://bradtrivers.com/issue/how-do-private-roads-become-public/

75. Government of PEI. (2024, February 5). Central Water and wastewater systems. Government of Prince Edward Island. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/central-water-and-wastewater-systems

76. Infrastructure Canada. (2022, April 22). Canada and Prince Edward Island Invest in New Water and wastewater infrastructure for three communities in Prince County. Cision Canada. https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/canada-and-prince-edward-island-invest-in-new-water-and-wastewater-infrastructure-for-three-communities-in-prince-county-855521207.html

77. Government of PEI. (2018). (rep.). Taking Action: A Climate Change Action Plan for Prince Edward Island. Retrieved from https://research.fit.edu/media/site-specific/researchfitedu/coast-climate-adaptation-library/canada-amp-arctic/canada---atlantic/2018.--CC-Action-Plan-for-Prince-Edward-Islands.pdf.

78. National Road Network. (2024, January 19). NRN - GeoBase Series - NRN Prince Edward Island SHAPE

79. Planning Act Subdivision and Development Regulations (2024, Februrary 10), Part III - Standards, Section 8.1 (e)

80. Planning Act Subdivision and Development Regulations (2024, Februrary 10), Part II - Application of Regulations, Section 2 (2)

81. Atlantica Energy (2023). "Prince Edward Island's Energy Resources". https://www.atlanticaenergy.org/energy-knowledge-centre/energy-maps/prince-edward-islands-energy-resources/

82. Charlottetown Airport Authority Inc (2023). "Passenger Trand Statistics 1976 - 2022"

83. Department of Finance, Government of PEI (2023, December 13). (rep.). Taxation Control Report.

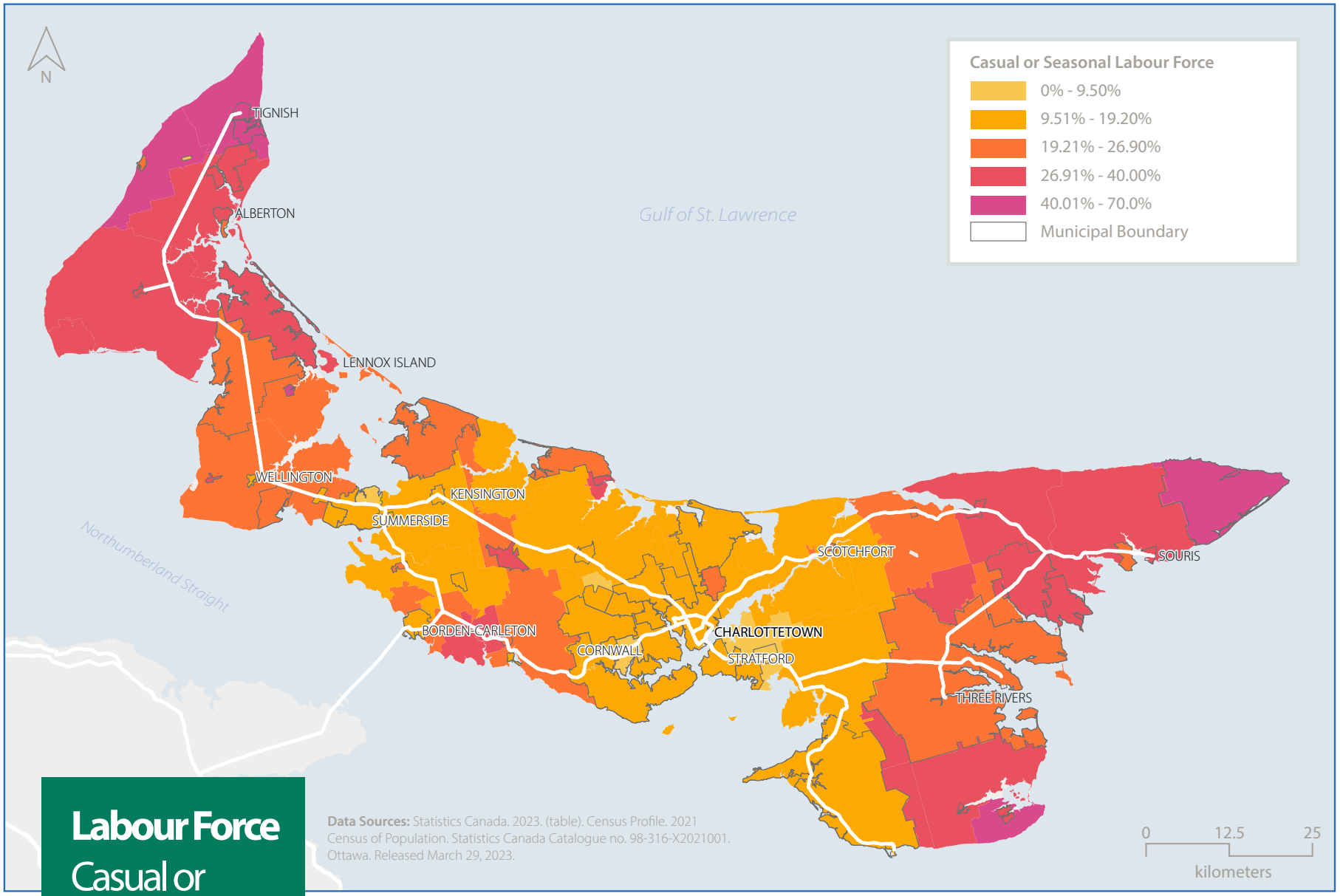
83. Government of Canada (2023). "Canada-Prince Edward Island Agreement to Work Together to Improve Health Care for Canadians (2023-24 to 2025-26)"

84. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2020). "Special Planning Areas (SPAs): What are they and how do they work?". Presentation to the Land Matters Advisory Committee, November 24, 2020.

Economy

PEI's economy features a mix of traditional resource sectors—agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and tourism—as well as new industry sectors including bioscience and advanced manufacturing. The employment profile is very similar to other Atlantic provinces, with one notable difference. An estimated 9% of Islanders are employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, compared to 4% in other Atlantic provinces. These classifications are defined by the North American Industry Classification System (**Figure 47**), and the results are a reflection of PEI's agriculture, fishing, and aquaculture industries. This underscores the importance of PEI's land practices and protections to its economy when compared to other Atlantic provinces.

Because of the impacts of these resource industries, PEI has historically been a province of seasonal employment. Today, West Prince and Kings Counties show the highest proportion of casual and seasonal labour on the Island, compared to Queens County and the Summerside area, which have the highest median household incomes.



Labour Force
Casual or Seasonal Labour

Data Sources: Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023.

This map displays the percentage of the labour force whos employment is either casual or seasonal, or those in positions with a specified contract length of less than one year from their start date.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

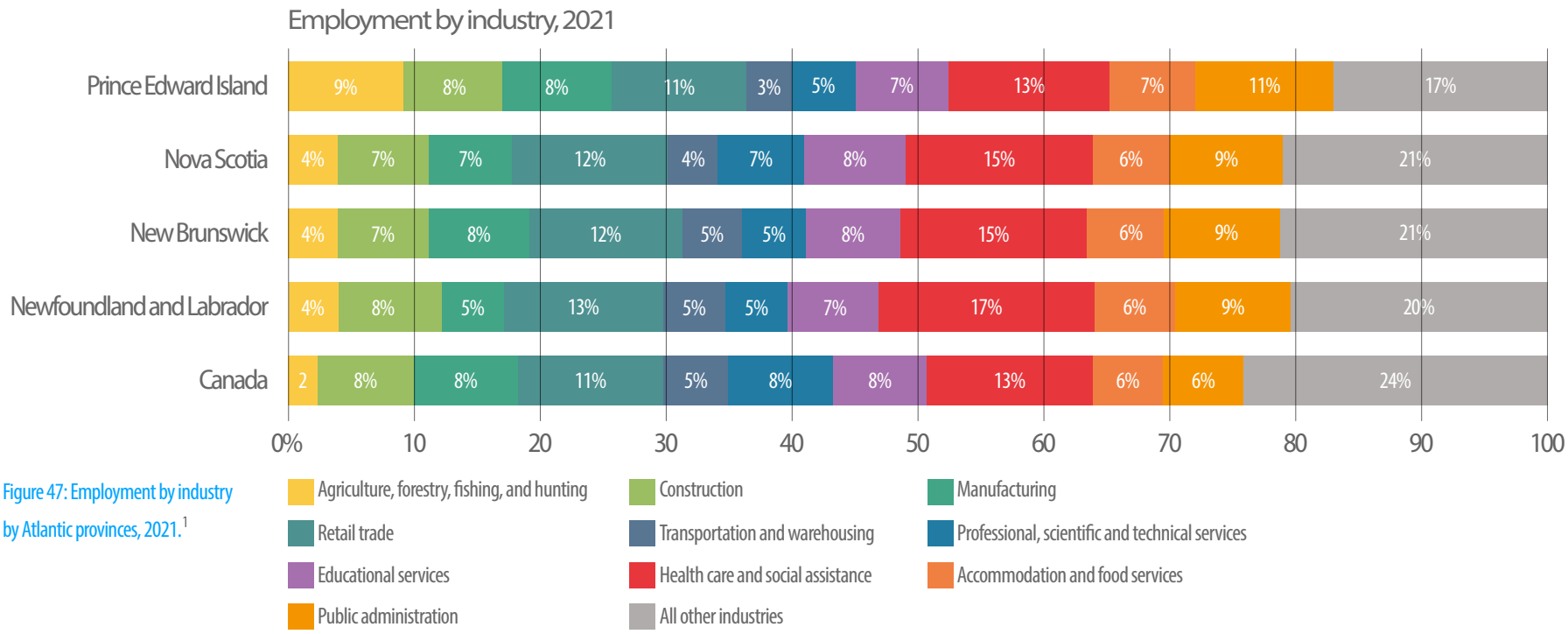


Figure 47: Employment by industry by Atlantic provinces, 2021.[1]

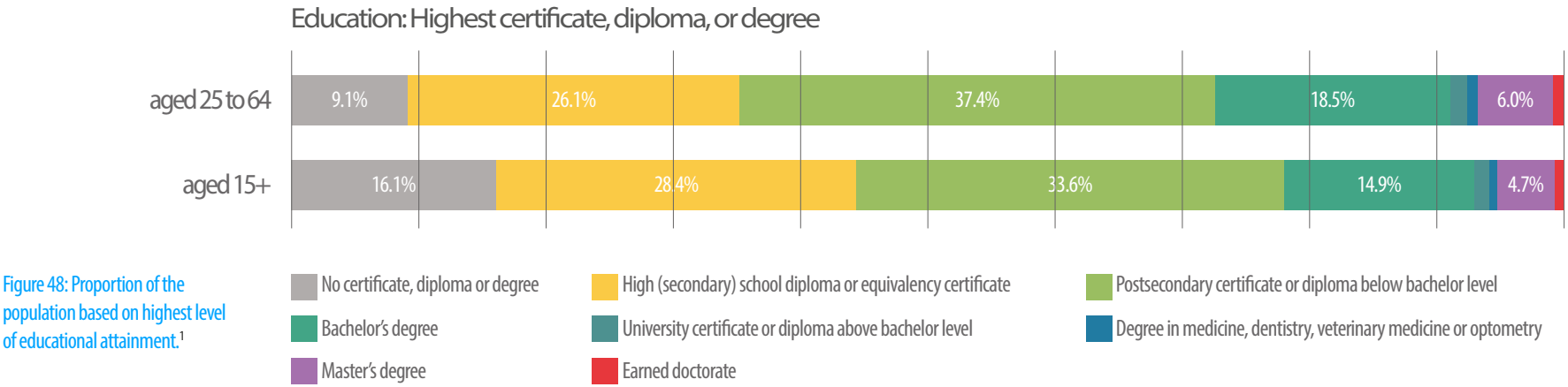


Figure 48: Proportion of the population based on highest level of educational attainment.[1]

In 2017, the provincial government released *Recruit, Retain and Repatriate: A Population Action Plan for Prince Edward Island*. In the plan, the province set a goal to continue to exceed Canada's national average for workforce participation. As of December 2023, PEI's workforce participation rate was 67.4%, two percentage points above the national average of 65.4%.[2]

Educational trends in PEI are comparable to the Canadian average, with 65% of the core working population (aged 25-64) having received a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree. This compares to a national average of 67%. In addition, the majority of permanent resident nomination certificates from 2018 to 2023 also hold a certificate or diploma (see **Figure 49**).[3]

Takeaway: In considering land use planning, ensuring that housing and services are available for seasonal employment in agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and tourism will be necessary.

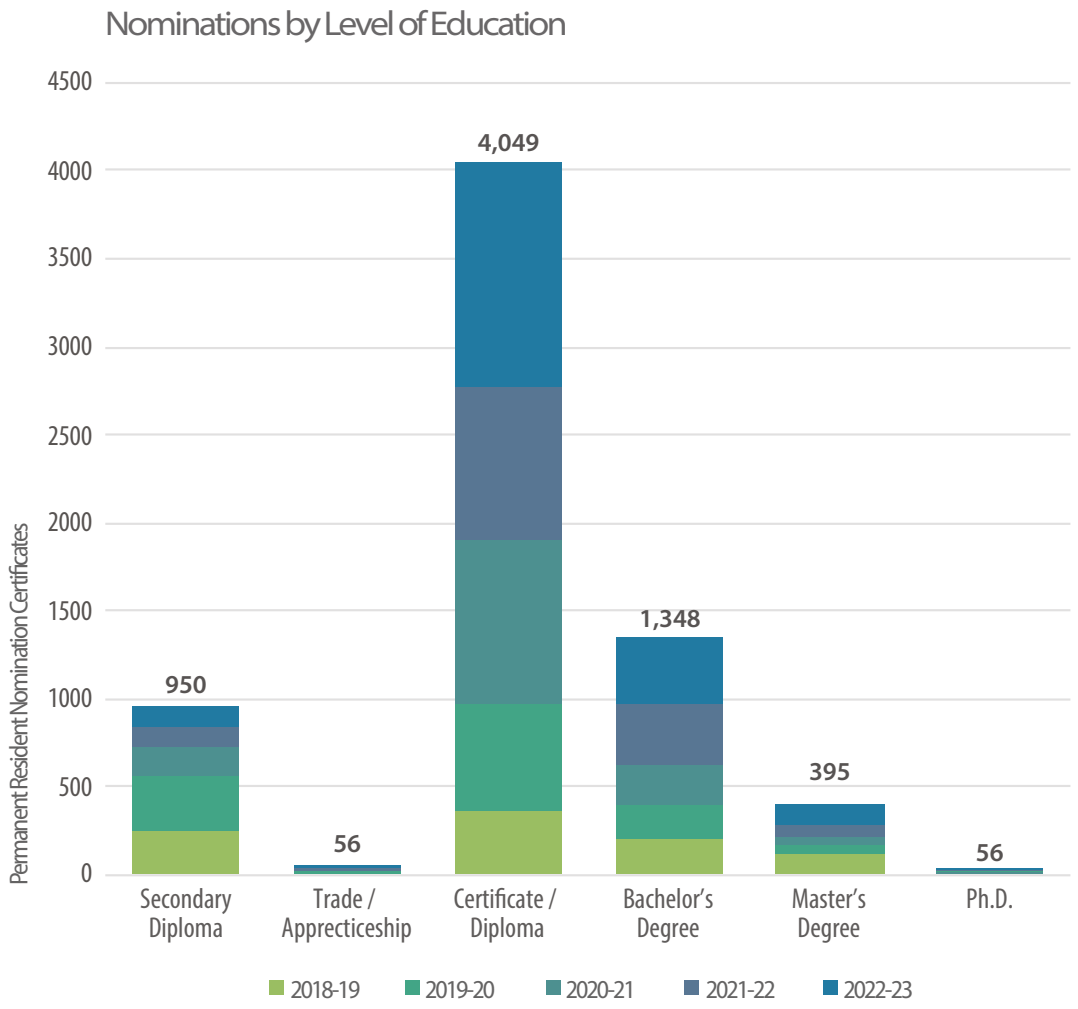


Figure 49: Permanent resident nomination certificates – nominations by education type [3]

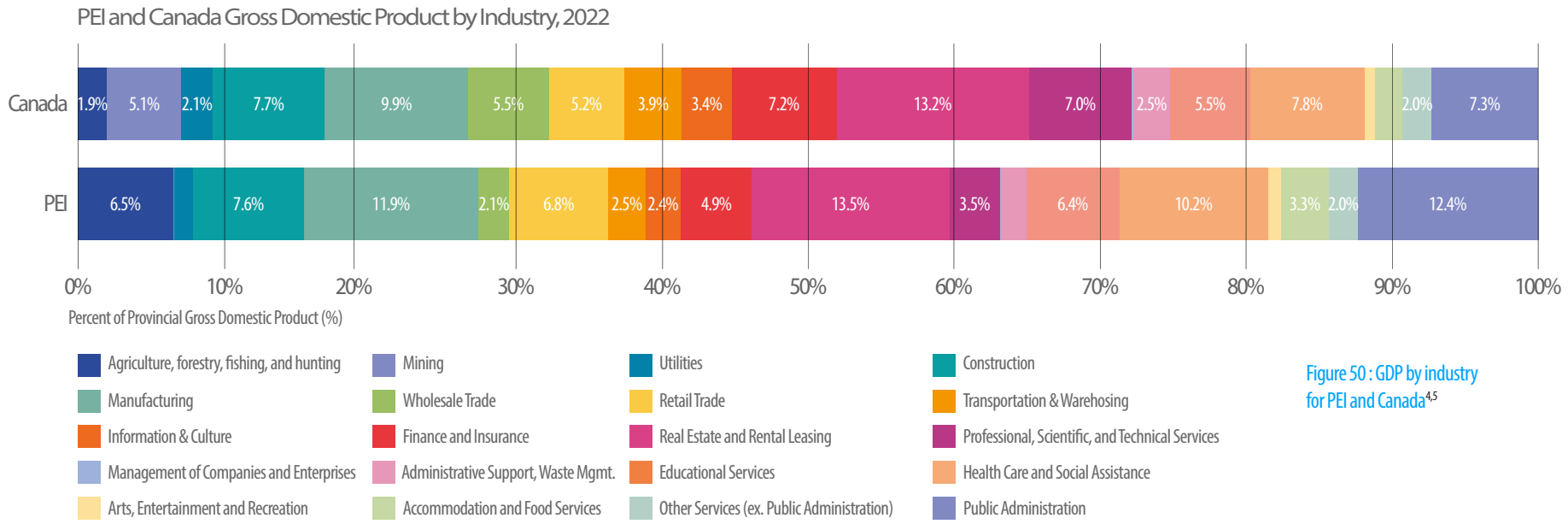


Figure 50 : GDP by industry for PEI and Canada[4,5]

3.4.1 Gross Domestic Product

In *Recruit, Retain and Repatriate: A Population Action Plan for Prince Edward Island*, the Province established a goal to perform at or above the Canadian national average for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. Despite a drop in 2020 due to the global pandemic, by 2022 PEI's GDP for all industries had increased 3% from 2021 figures. The provincial GDP was valued at $7.1 billion in 2022, or $46,696 per capita in comparison to the national GDP of $55,987 per capita.[4,5]

GDP trends can indicate the economic health and growth potential for the province, and land use planning must consider these trends to allocate land efficiently.

This is particularly important for sectors that contribute significantly to the GDP, such as agriculture, tourism, and services. If GDP growth is expected from certain industries, land use planning policies can be used to prioritize infrastructure development, such as roads and utilities, in areas that support these industries. While GDP provides a measure of economic activity, it does not account for environmental degradation.

Takeaway: Land use planning must balance economic goals with the conservation of natural resources.

3.4.2 Agriculture

The Island's agricultural sector has experienced profound transformations over time. As early as the 1720s, Acadian settlers were engaged in exporting agricultural products, and by the early 1800s, much of the Island's forest cover had been cleared to allow for agricultural activity.[6] Early settlers engaged in mixed farming practices, concentrating on raising livestock that required less manpower compared to growing crops. The land area dedicated to agricultural uses peaked in the early 1920s, with approximately 13,700 farms occupying more than 1.2 million acres of land. At this time, agriculture was the primary way of life in the province, with more than 80% of the population living and working on farms.

Over the last century, the nature of agriculture on the Island has changed significantly, due largely to mechanization, farm-size expansion, and the establishment of food processing plants. Since 1921, the number of farms on PEI has decreased by 91%. The gradual shift away from small family farms has resulted in fewer but significantly larger-scale, more intensive operations. There were just 1,195 farms in 2021, though, the average size of each farm has increased 374%, from a modest 89 acres to an average of 422 acres.[7] This trend mirrors broader national shifts in agricultural practices, where economies of scale and technological advancements have driven a consolidation of farm lands.

This transition has several implications for land use planning, including:

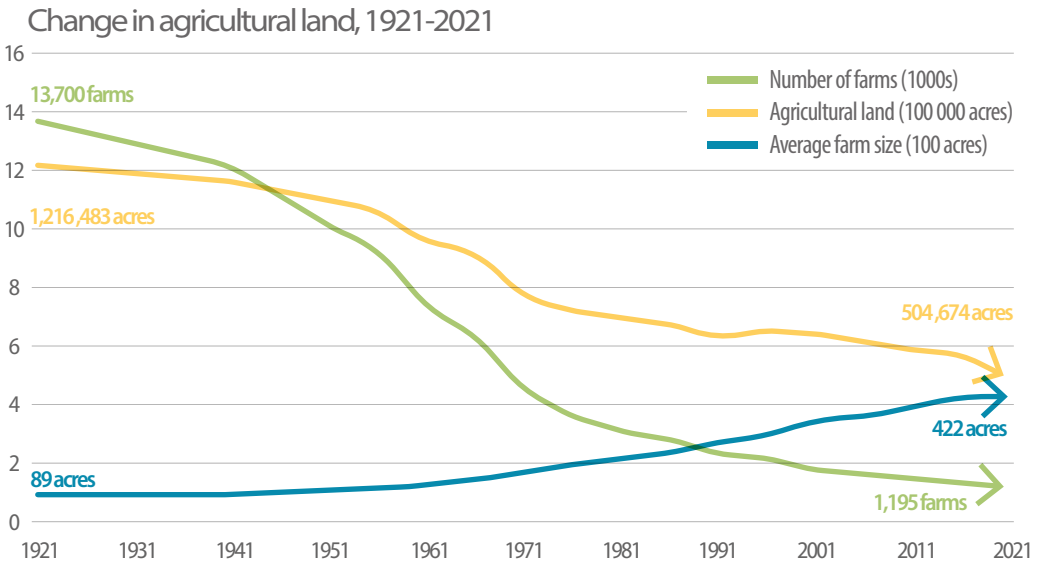
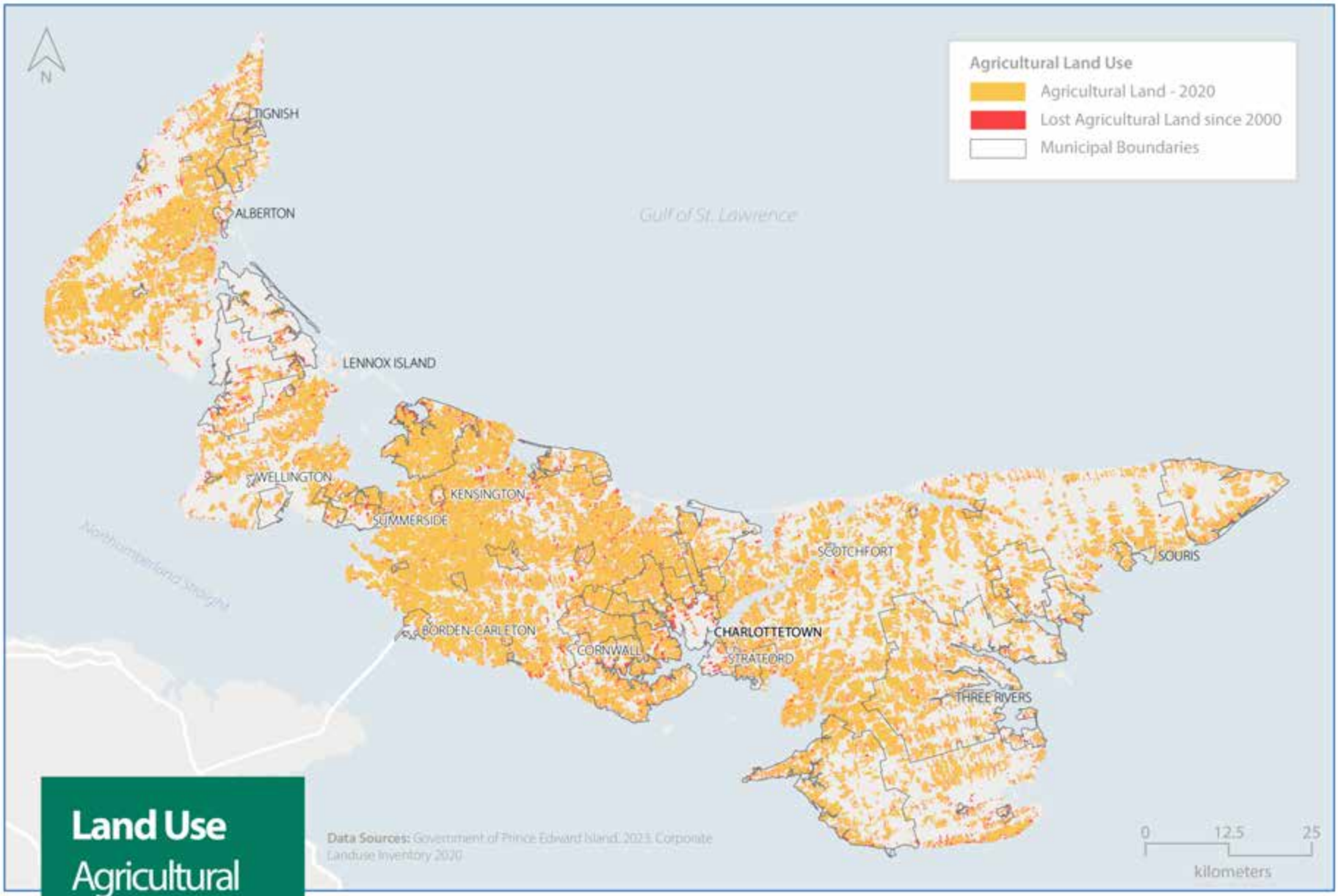


Figure 51: Change in agricultural land from 1921 to 2021[7]

- **Environmental concerns** relating to increased or concentrated inputs of fertilizers and chemicals that are used to boost productivity;
- **Land ownership and land use conflicts** due to the province's limited land base and competition for land among farmers, and between agricultural and non-agricultural uses;
- **Implications for the province's economic development strategies** where land use planning must support the sector's growth and sustainability, while encouraging both large-scale and smaller, diversified farming operations; and
- The **community cohesion and the viability of small rural towns** is impacted, as farms become larger and fewer , changing the dynamics of rural life.



Land Use
Agricultural Land

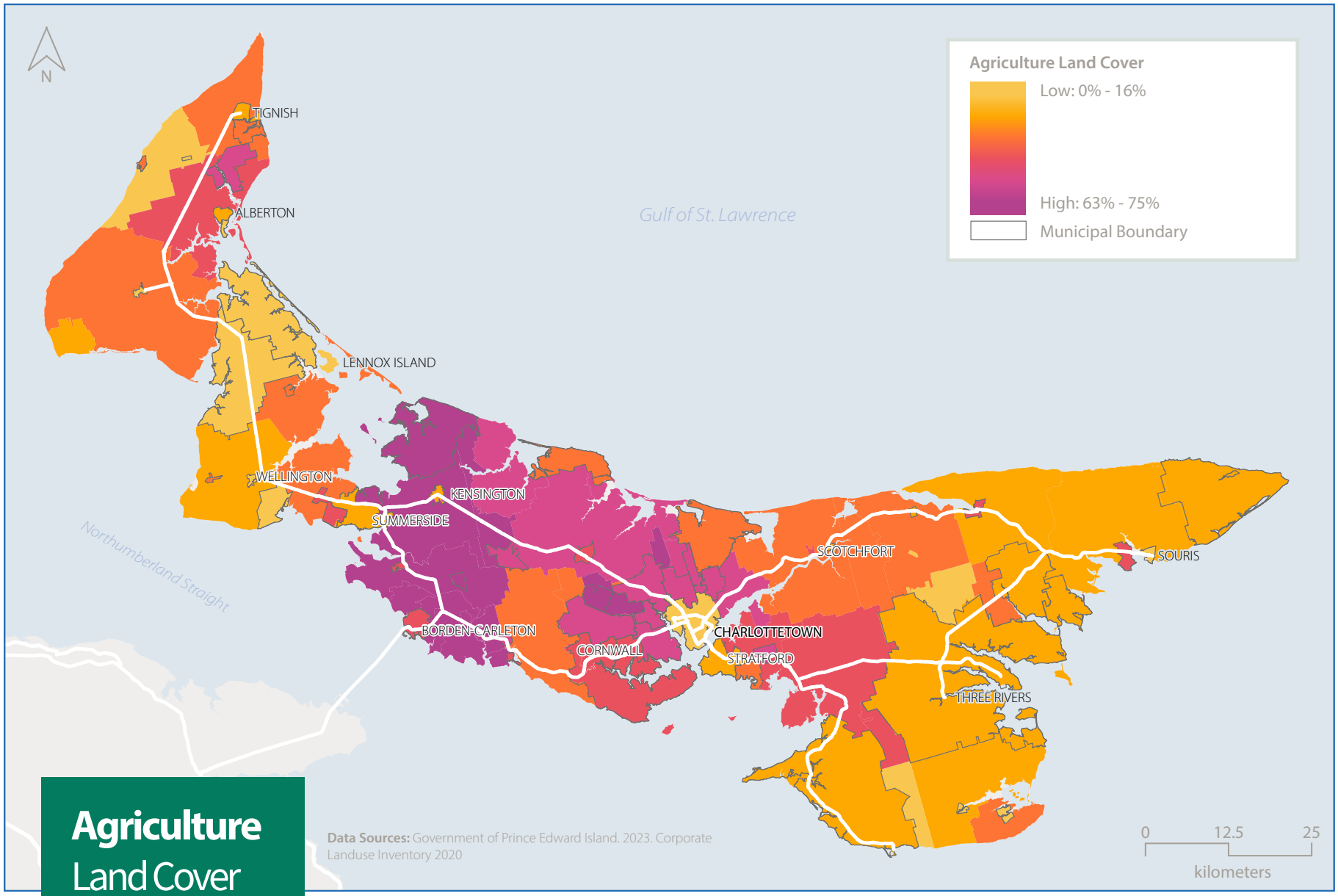
This map displays the distribution of agricultral parcels of land in PEI, including land that has been converted from agriculture to other uses in the last 20 years.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023



Agriculture
Land Cover

This map displays the percentage of land cover attributed to agriculture per census sub division, based on the 2020 Corporate Land Use Inventory.

This product is for informational purposes only, and is not to be used for legal descriptions, or to calculate exact dimensions or areas.

Prince Edward Island
State of the Island Report

Created: September 2023

The changing dynamic of the agricultural landscape has also impacted the total land area dedicated to the sector. Land cover analysis shows a 54% reduction in agricultural land since the 1950s, with 37.6% (528,578 acres) of the Island's total land area currently in use for agricultural purposes.[8] Central Queens County maintains the highest percentage of land area dedicated to agricultural use, with eastern Kings having the lowest percentage.

The continued loss of agricultural land is of particular concern in the context of the province's projected population growth for the coming decades. A strategic approach to protect agricultural land in the face of growing demographic and development pressures is required.

Changes in agricultural practices, combined with a transition to larger-scale operations, have supported a shift towards increased crop production. As of 2020, there were 481 Island establishments with employees working in agriculture and related support services.[9] Of these farms, 46% were involved in raising livestock, with 23% focused on beef, 13% in dairy, and 10% on other animal production. The remaining 54% of farms, which occupy 60% of the province's agricultural lands, vegetables, grains, fruits and other crops. All told, 43% of total farmland area is in potato production, which takes place in rotation with other crops.[10]

PEI's agricultural workforce reveals a similar trend over the past half-century, with a 26% decrease in agricultural employment.[28] Further adding to the complexity is the fact that more than a third of PEI farmers are currently over the age of 55, indicating an aging demographic at the helm of the sector.[28]

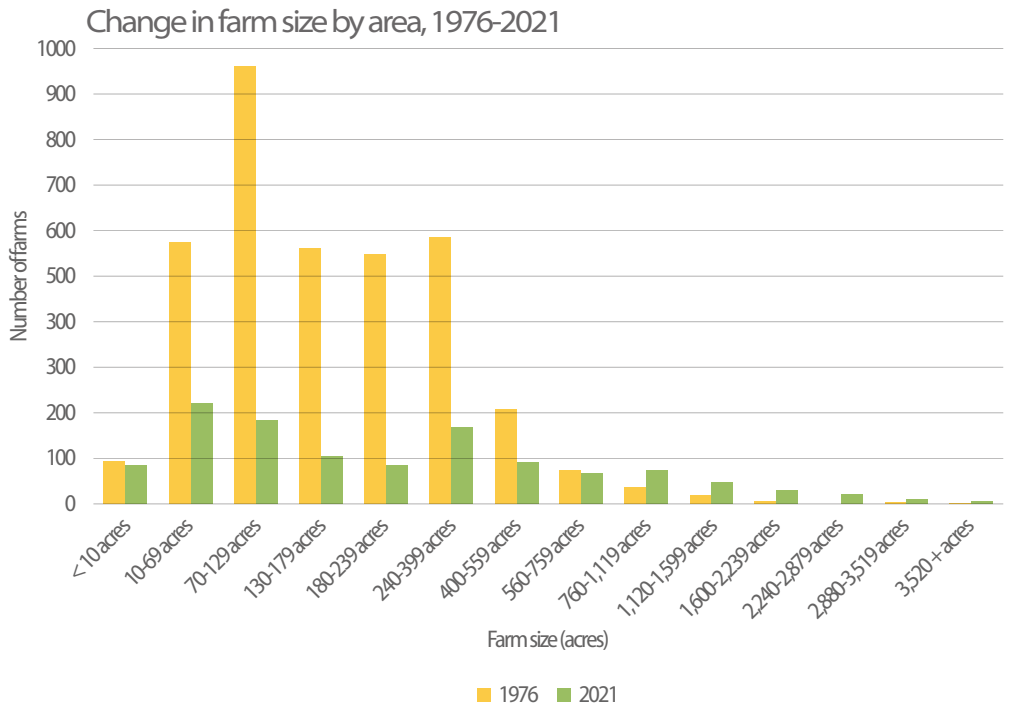


Figure 52: Change in farm size by area, 1976-2021 [27]

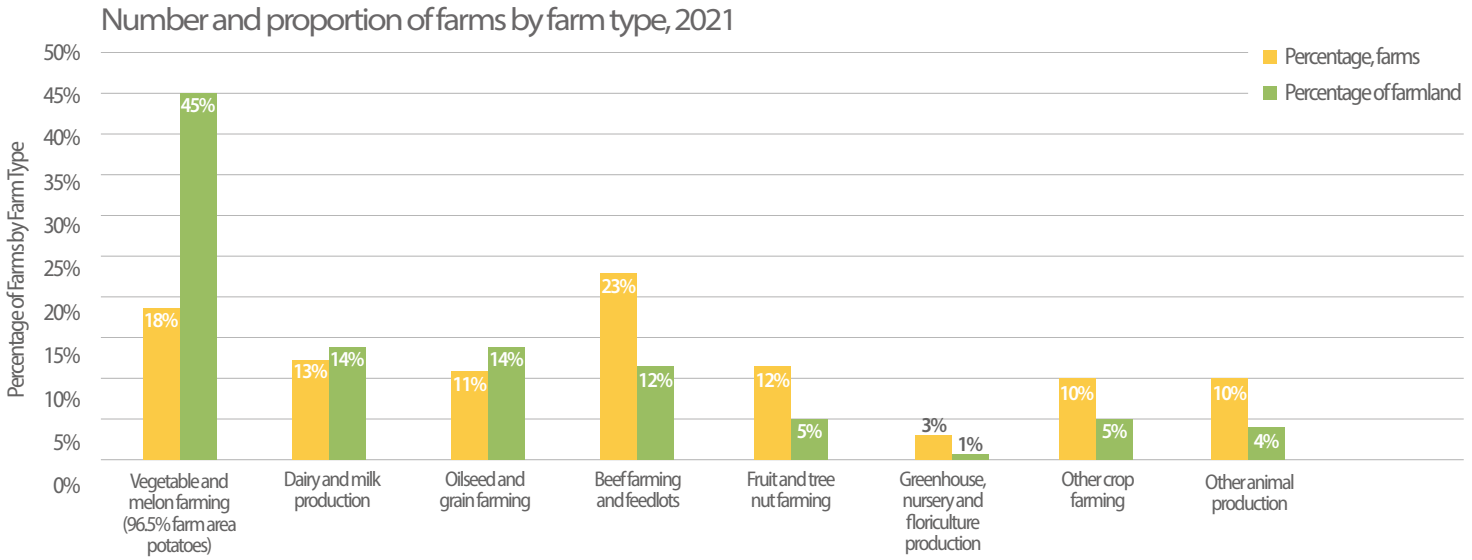


Figure 53: Number and proportion of farms by farm type 2021[11]

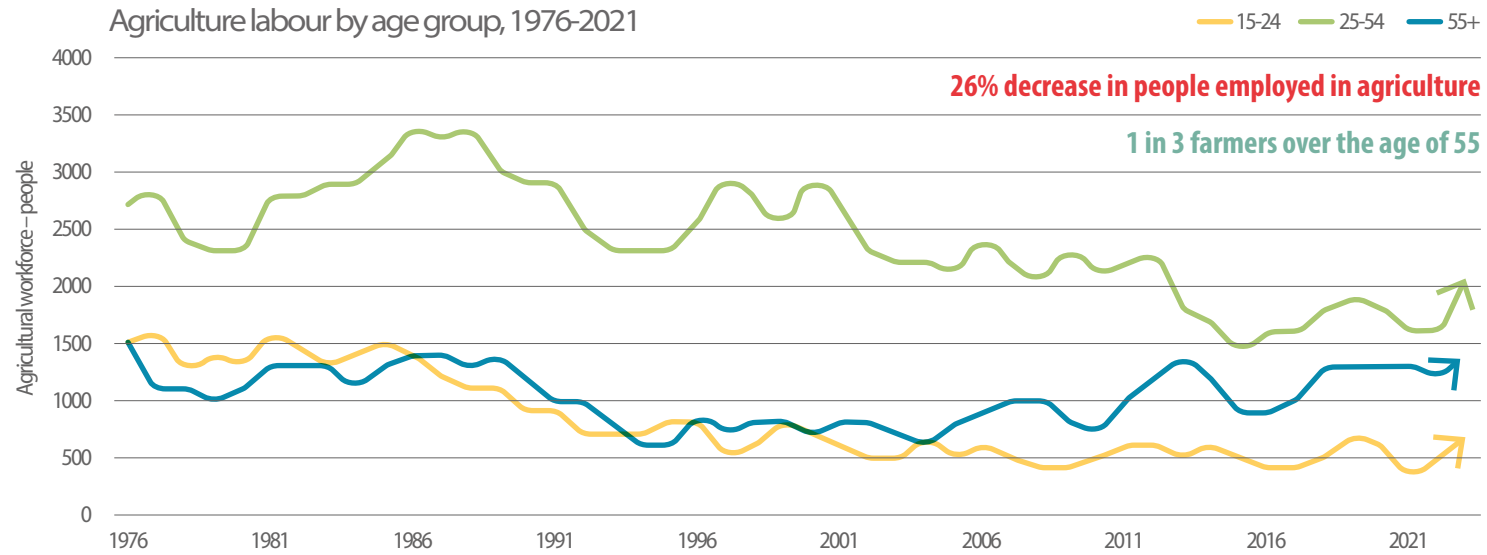


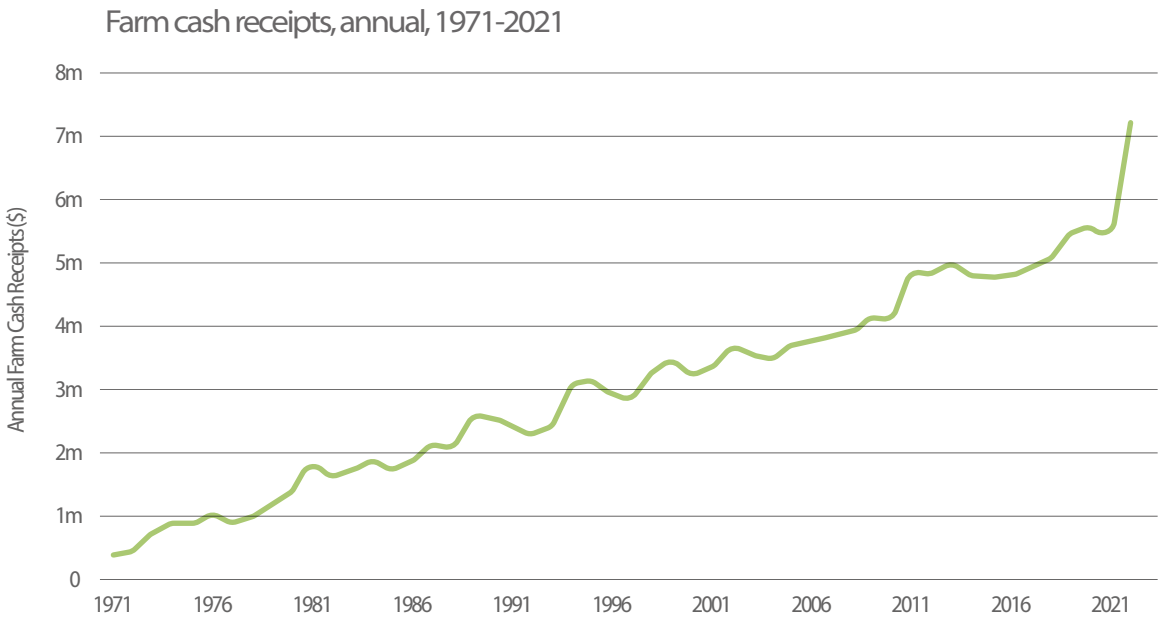
Figure 54: Agriculture labourers by age group 1976-2021[28]

While farm area has decreased, farm cash receipts have increased steadily since 1971 to reach an annual total of $730 million in 2022.[29] These farm cash receipts reflect the gross revenue of farms from the sale of products (livestock and crops), and from direct program payments to producers.

Takeaway: When considering the future of agriculture in the province, land use plans should be aligned with policies emerging from the *Next Policy Framework (NPF) for Agriculture 2023 to 2028* planning document.

The NPF for Agriculture includes a series of priorities which were identified in the public survey for related land use, including:

- environmental sustainability/targeted actions related to climate change (see Natural Environment)
- community food security/local food networks (see Food Security)
- innovation in agriculture
- organic industry development
- animal health/welfare
- emergency preparedness and natural disasters (see Natural Environment)[12]



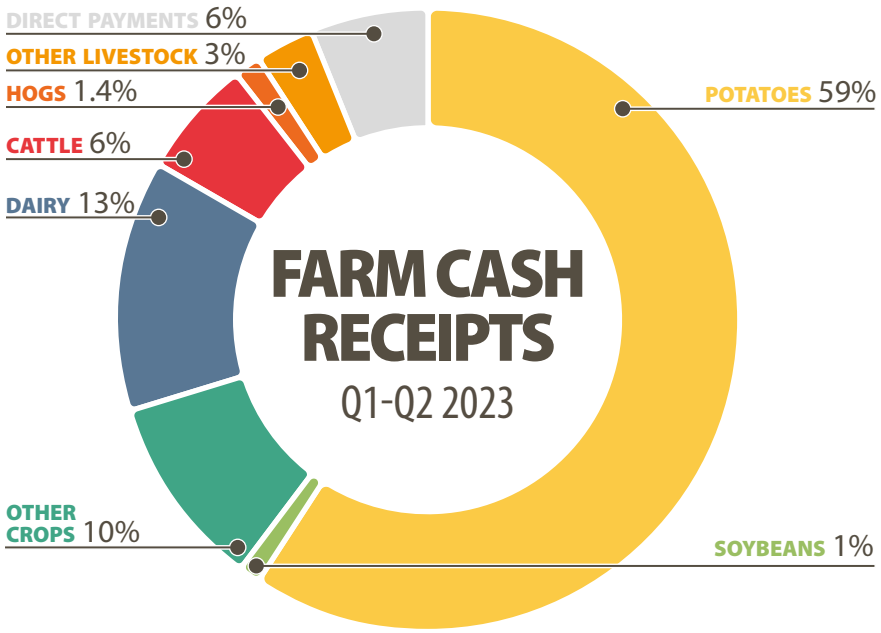


Figure 55: Farm cash receipts, annual, 1971-2021[29]

Figure 56: Farm cash receipts, Q1-Q2 2023[30]

3.4.3 Aquaculture and Fisheries

The aquaculture industry in PEI has seen remarkable growth and development, emerging as a key contributor to the Island's economy and a major player in Canadian seafood production. Characterized by its diversity and innovation, the sector has flourished in shellfish cultivation in particular. In the 1990s, an almost fourfold increase in shellfish production took place over the decade. This level has largely been maintained since the early 2000s, save a brief but notable decline in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022, there were 788 oyster and clam leases (bottom), 357 floating oyster leases (off-bottom), and 323 mussel leases in PEI.[31] Despite the comparatively lower number of individual leases, mussel production spans more than 11,200 surface acres, accounting for 77% of aquaculture production in the province and nearly 80% of the Canadian market.[13,14] Comparatively, oyster and clam bottom leases accounted for over 5,300 acres, and off bottom oyster leases accounted for over 2,700 acres.[31] Mussels are Canada's number one shellfish export, and PEI produced more than four times the number of mussels compared to the next highest-producing province.[15] Lobsters have also been a traditional catch for more than 150 years, with 1,200 operations located at 45 ports in 2022.[16] Oysters are harvested by both licensed operations on commercial beds as well as being farmed by oyster producers on leases.[17] While British Columbia produces more oysters by weight, PEI's production per capita is approximately 20 times that of British Columbia.[14]

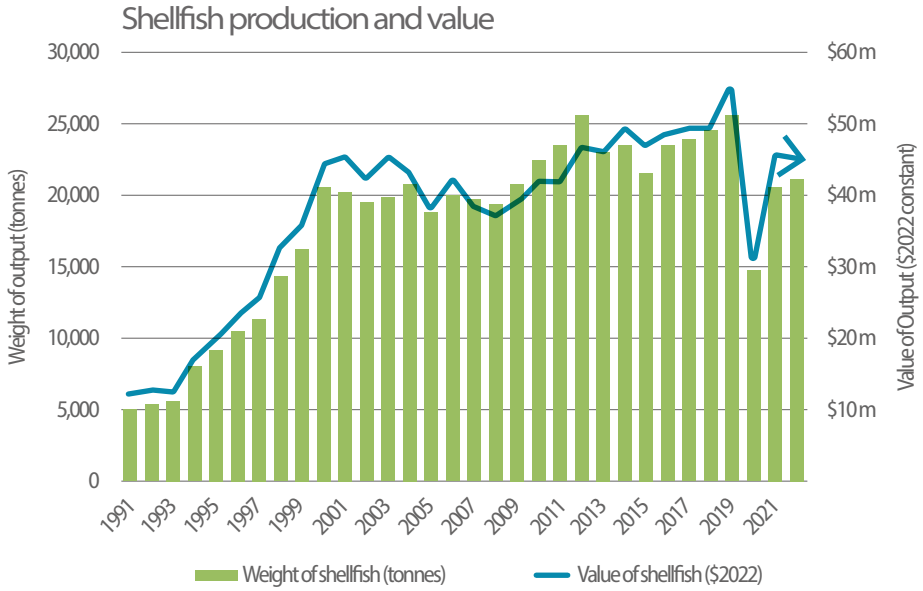


Figure 57: PEI shellfish production and value 1991-2022[13]

Figure 58: Off-bottom aquaculture leases on PEI

In 2020, 84% of the aquaculture and fisheries sectors were comprised of self-employed, owner-operator establishments. Most of the remaining 16% of operations had less than five employees.[9] The total number of fishing establishments or businesses was 1,945, while aquaculture had 104 operations. This structure reflects the predominantly small-scale and family-run nature of these industries on the Island, despite the fact that the economic contribution of PEI's fisheries and aquaculture industry is substantial.

In 2019, PEI's aquaculture and fisheries sectors contributed $495 million in national GDP, generated $214 million in labour income, sustained 4,849 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, and generated $32 million in tax revenue. Provincially, these figures stood at $377 million in GDP, $151 million in labour income, 3,708 FTEs, and $21 million in tax revenue.[14] In 2021, PEI was responsible for 13% of the volume and 4% of the value to Canada's aquaculture industry, second only to British Columbia and New Brunswick, the country's major salmon-producing provinces.

Takeaway: The heath of the aquaculture industry is influenced by land use pratices and policies as it requires waters free of pollutants and excess nutrients in local estuaries. Livestock operations, sewage treatment facilities, construction pratices, farming techniques and other uses can impact small operators, which contribute to the Island's economy.

Sector	Total Establishments	Self-employed Owner Operator	Establishments with Employees
Fishing	1,945	1,668	277
Aquaculture	104	58	46
Total Establishments:	**2,049**	**1,726**	**323**

Table 5: Fishing and Aquaculture establishments, 2020[9]

3.4.4 Food Economy Sector

In addition to the contributions of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture businesses, PEI's food economy is diverse and thriving, marked by significant growth in various subsectors. Between 2015 and 2020, the Island saw an addition of 36 specialty food stores, 21 restaurants, 13 food manufacturers, 12 grocery stores, and 12 beverage manufacturing firms, reflecting a vibrant and growing food industry.[9] Another notable subsector is the expanding biosciences cluster. This sector consists of more than 60 firms and organizations that play a crucial role in advancing agri-food and seafood technology, as well as food processing methods.[9]

In 2019, the food economy contributed 16% of the total provincial GDP, demonstrating its vital role in PEI's economic landscape. On a per capita basis for GDP contribution, the Island ranks as Canada's leader for six export-focused food economy sectors, and PEI places second or third for most others. In 2017, food-related exports contributed 28% of the total provincial GDP, the highest proportion in all 10 provinces.[9] This substantial contribution is bolstered by having the United States as the dominant export market, accounting for 83% of the value of the Island's exports in 2019.

The food economy is a major employment sector for the Island. It supported 14,215 jobs in 2019, which is equivalent to 18.5% of the total employment on the Island.[9] PEI has 21% more people employed in this sector than any other province.

PEI's private sector investment in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture represented 16% of all capital and repair expenditures across all industries in 2022, the highest proportion in Canada.[9] This investment is indicative of the importance of these sectors in the overall economic fabric of the Island and includes initiatives like sustainable farming practices, fisheries and aquaculture management, and food processing infrastructure.

3.4.5 Tourism

PEI offers a rich selection of unique tourist attractions that blend historical significance, culinary excellence, and natural beauty. In addition to historical European cultural heritage, the Island's connection to the Mi'kmaq culture enriches tourism with authentic and meaningful experiences, offering insights into the history and traditions of the Indigenous people of the province.

PEI's 20 Provincial Parks and National Park showcase the province's stunning beaches, national historic sites and more than 480 km of extensive trails.[18] These natural attractions combine with the enduring legacy of Lucy Maud Montgomery's "Anne of Green Gables" to paint the picture of an Island that is as much a haven for nature lovers as it is for literary enthusiasts.

Often known as Canada's Food Island, PEI is deeply intertwined with its agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture industries. These elements combine to support unique dining experiences that celebrate fresh, local ingredients. The Island's vibrant festivals and events and breweries, wineries, and distilleries contribute to an enriching tourist experience that spans all seasons and a wide range of interests.

Tourism PEI promotes 427 tourism operations on its visitor website. These are categorized into outdoor activities, attractions and sightseeing, and authentic experiences, all spread across six distinct tourism regions: Charlottetown, Green Gables Shore, Points East Coastal Drive, North Cape Coastal Drive, Red Sand Shore, and Summerside.[19] These operations are summarized in the following table.

Outdoor Activities	**142**
Day use parks	17
Campgrounds	10
Public gardens	9
Scenic heritage roads	16
Paddling and water sports	16
Road cycling routes	5
Bike rental providers	9
Mountain bike trails and parks	6
Deep-sea ans sport fishing	13
Golf courses	19
Harness racing	3
Boating and sailing tours	6
Trail riding (ATV, horseback)	4
Attractions and sightseeing	**189**
Antiques and art galleries	13
Museums, cultural and historical sites	41
Amusement and theme parks	43
Lighthouses	8
Craft and gift shops	54
Theaters	11
Breweries, wineries and distilleries	19
Authentic Experiences	**64**
Cuisine and taste	18
Nature and outdoors	23
Arts and crafts	20
Authentic Indigenous experiences	3

Table 6: Tourism draws unique to PEI[19]

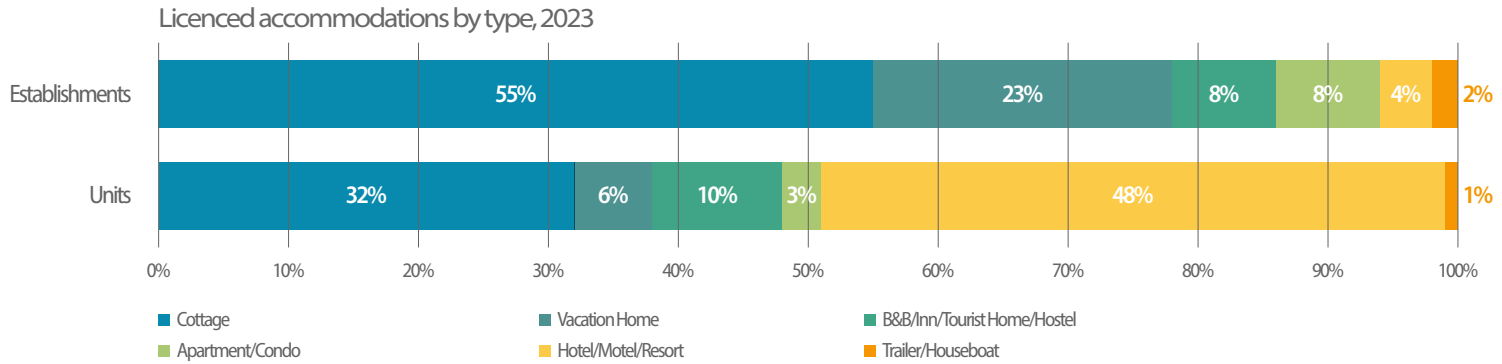


Figure 59: 2023 Licensed Accommodations by Type[22]

The tourism sector in PEI has demonstrated significant growth and resilience. In 2019, the sector's contribution to the provincial GDP was almost $420.3 million, representing 5.59% of PEI's total GDP.[20] Despite the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, tourism activity has mostly recovered to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, tourism contributed $466.5M to the provincial GDP.[20] In 2017 through 2019, and 2022, the Island hosted more than one million overnight stays, with peak occupancy taking place from June - September.[21]

In 2023, PEI had a total of 1,699 licensed fixed-roof accommodations across PEI. In 2023, cottages comprised 55% of the total accommodation properties, and 32% of the total units. Hotels comprised only 4% of the accommodation properties, but 48% of the units (see **Figure 59**).[22]

Charlottetown accommodations only make up 14% of total accommodation parcels, but make up 34% of the Island's accommodation units.[22] Inversely, Red Sands Shore and Points East Coastal Drive make up 13% and 23% of accommodation properties, yet only 5% and 14% of accommodation units (see **Figure 60**).[22]

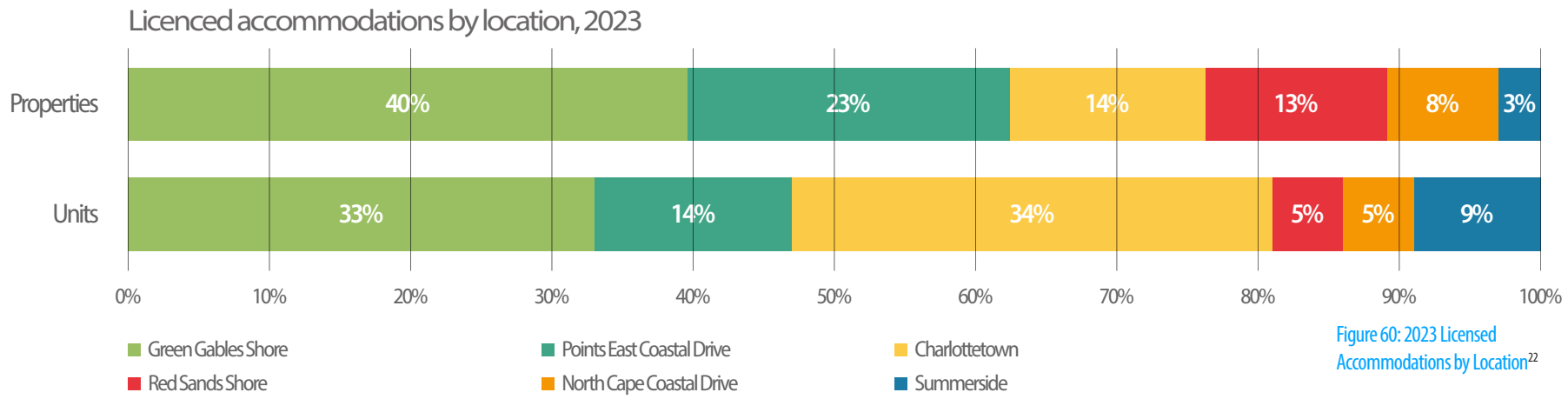


Figure 60: 2023 Licensed Accommodations by Location[22]

Following the pandemic disruption, the 2022 occupancy rates reached 49.0%, surpassing the pre-pandemic rate of 45.6% in 2019.[23] Campgrounds also continued to increase in popularity, with occupancy rates reaching 52.1% in 2022, surpassing the previous record of 47.9% in 2019.[23]

The pandemic recovery was also evident in the total number of passengers traveling through Charlottetown Airport. This traffic increased to 341,649 passengers in 2022, from the previous high of 383,183 passengers in 2019.[23] Interprovincial transportation to and from the Island is covered in greater detail in the Transportation Section of this document.

The province's 2021 tourism strategy highlights opportunities to leverage government support to drive tourism revenue across the Island. These approaches include enhancing trails, supporting bids for meetings and conventions, travel, and developing experiential tourism products.[24]

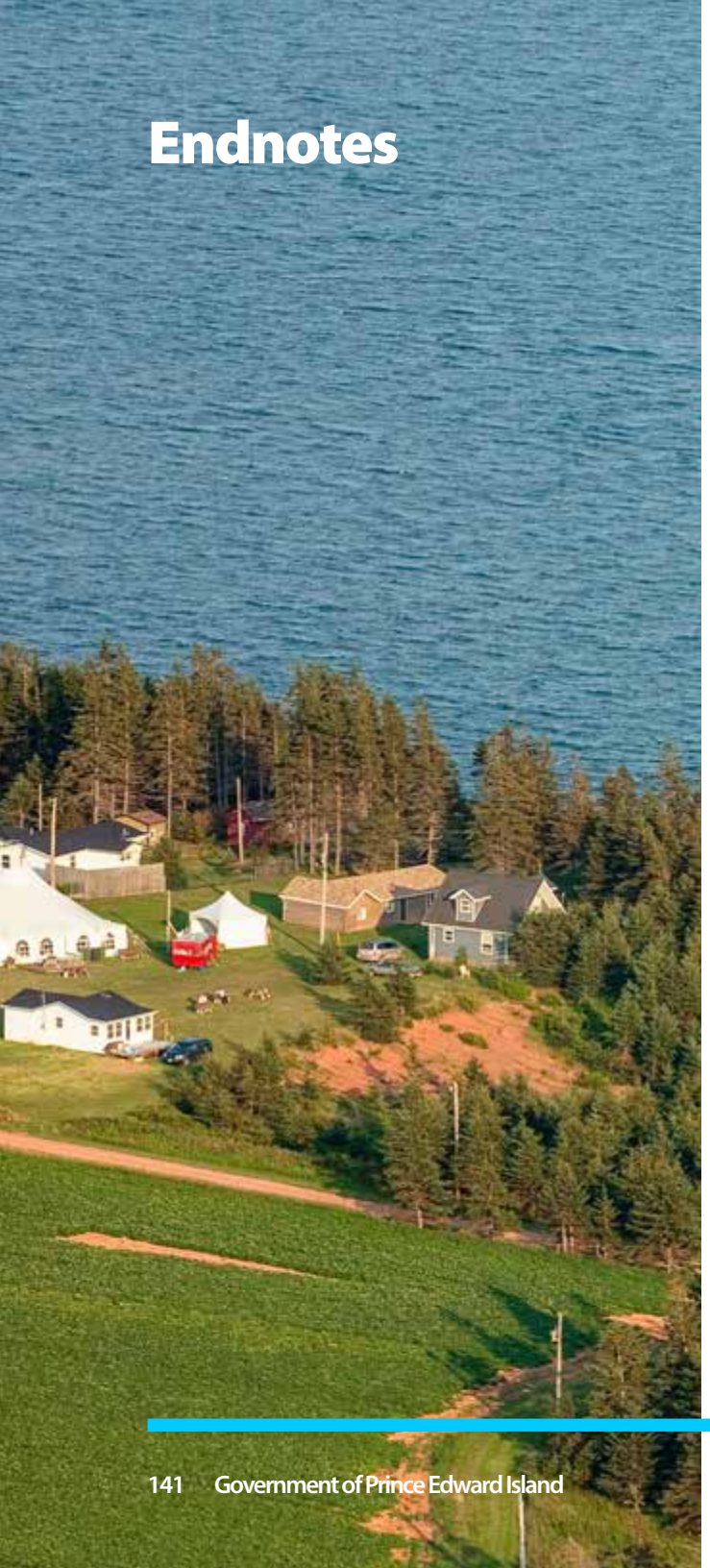
Takeaway: The new provincial LUP will need to protect land-dependent features and uses that make Canada's Food Island and ecotourism industry possible. The intersection of tourism and housing supply will also need to be considered, particularly given the seasonal nature of the Island's tourism economy and the popularity of seasonal vacation homes.

3.4.6 Non-Profit Sector

The nonprofit sector plays a significant role in the Island's local economy and community. With more than 1,700 organizations, the sector contributes 10.4% to PEI's GDP.[25] The sector employs approximately 3,350 individuals, accounting for about 4.3% of the province's employment, with a noted trend of more diverse staff teams compared to the overall economy.[25] The geographic distribution of nonprofits in PEI generally mirrors the population distribution.

A breakdown of PEI nonprofits by activity area (based on a sample of 210) shows that groups with a culture and recreation focus are the most common at 34%, followed by social services (20%) and business associations/ unions (11%). The remaining groups are in various sectors including religion, health, environment, education and research, and development and housing. Despite a high rate of volunteerism among the population compared to the rest of Canada, there has been a decline over the last decade in the number of volunteers and the value of financial contributions to charities in Atlantic Canada.[26]

Takeaway: Land use planning policies can have a direct impact on the non-profit sector by influencing the availability and cost of operating spaces, shaping funding opportunities, affecting service demand, influencing access to necessary infrastructure, imposing regulatory compliance costs, providing opportunities for participation in planning processes, and fostering collaboration with municipalities. Nonprofits will need to stay informed and engaged in ongoing land use planning discussions to ensure their interests (and those of the communities they serve) are adequately represented.



Endnotes

1. Statistics Canada. (2023). Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Released November 15, 2023. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E.

2. Statistics Canada. "Table 14-10-0287-03: Labour force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted."

3. Island Investment Development Inc. (2023). "Island Investment Development Inc. Annual Report 2022-2023." https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2022-2023_iidi_annual_report.pdf.

4. Statistics Canada. "Table 36-10-0434-03: Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices, by industry, annual average (x 1,000,000)". https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3610043403.

5. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, November 8). "Gross domestic product (GDP) by industry." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/en/information/finance/gross-domestic-product-gdp-by-industry

6. Kensington. (n.d.). "Agriculture History of PEI." https://kensington.ca/wp-content/themes/ktown/Island/agriculture.htm.

7. Statistics Canada. "Table 32-10-0153-01: Land Use, Census of Agriculture Historical Data."

8. Prince Edward Island, Canada (2020). "State of the Forest Report".

9. Jupia Consultants Inc. (2021). "Canada's Food Island: An Economic Impact Assessment." Prince Edward Island.

10. Statistics Canada. (2023). "Prince Edward Island leads the way in potato production." https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/96-325-x/2021001/article/00002-eng.htm.

11. Statistics Canada. (2021). "Census of Agriculture."

12. Prince Edward Island, Canada. Strategic Policy and Evaluation Division – Department of Agriculture and Land. (2021, August). "Results of a Public Engagement Survey for the Next Policy Framework for Agriculture (2023-2028): Final Report." https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publications.

13. Statistics Canada. "Table 32-10-0107-01: Aquaculture, production and value".

14. Ernst & Young LLP. (2021). "Economic Contributions of the Seafood Sector in Prince Edward Island." Submitted to Prince Edward Island, Department of Fisheries and Communities.

15. Canada. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). (2023, Jan 16). "Aquaculture Production and Value. Government of Canada." https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/stats/aqua/aqua21-eng.htm.

16. Food Island Partnership. (2022). "Your Food Story Starts Here. PEI Lobster. [Infographic]." https://foodIslandpei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Lobster.png.

17. Food Island Partnership. (2022). "Your Food Story Starts Here. PEI Oysters. [Infographic]." https://foodIslandpei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Oyster_Infographic-scaled.jpg.

18. Island Trails. (2024). "Our Island Trails." https://islandtrails.ca/trails/our-island-trails.

19. Tourism PEI. (2024). "What to Do in Prince Edward Island." https://www.tourismpei.com/what-to-do.

20. Tourism PEI. (2024). "Visitor Value Model – Tourism Revenues 2022." https://www.tourismpei.com/industry/research/tourism-indicator-dashboards/visitor-volume-value.

21. Tourism PEI. (n.d.). "Accommodation occupancy dashboards." https://www.tourismpei.com/industry/research/tourism-indicator-dashboards/accommodation-occupancy.

22. Prince Edward Island, Canada. (2023, October 30). Licensed Accommodation.

23. Prince Edward Island Statistics Review. (2023, July). "Prince Edward Island 49th Annual Statistical Review 2022." https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/web_asr.pdf.

24. Twenty 31. (2022). "Charting the Course of Tourism in PEI for the Next Two Years Tourism Strategy." Prepared for Tourism Prince Edward Island. https://www.princeedwardIsland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/tourism_strategy_2022-23_web.pdf.

25. Atlantic Provinces Economic Council. (2021, June). "The Nonprofit Sector in Prince Edward Island." Community Sector Network of PEI.

26. Narrative Research. (2023, September). "Financial contributions to charities in Atlantic Canada are down twenty points in the last decade, signalling broader socioeconomic factors may be having an impact on charitable giving." https://narrativeresearch.ca/financial-contributions-to-charities-in-atlantic-canada-are-down-twenty-points-in-the-last-decade-signalling-broader-socioeconomic-factors-may-be-having-an-impact-on-charitable-giving.

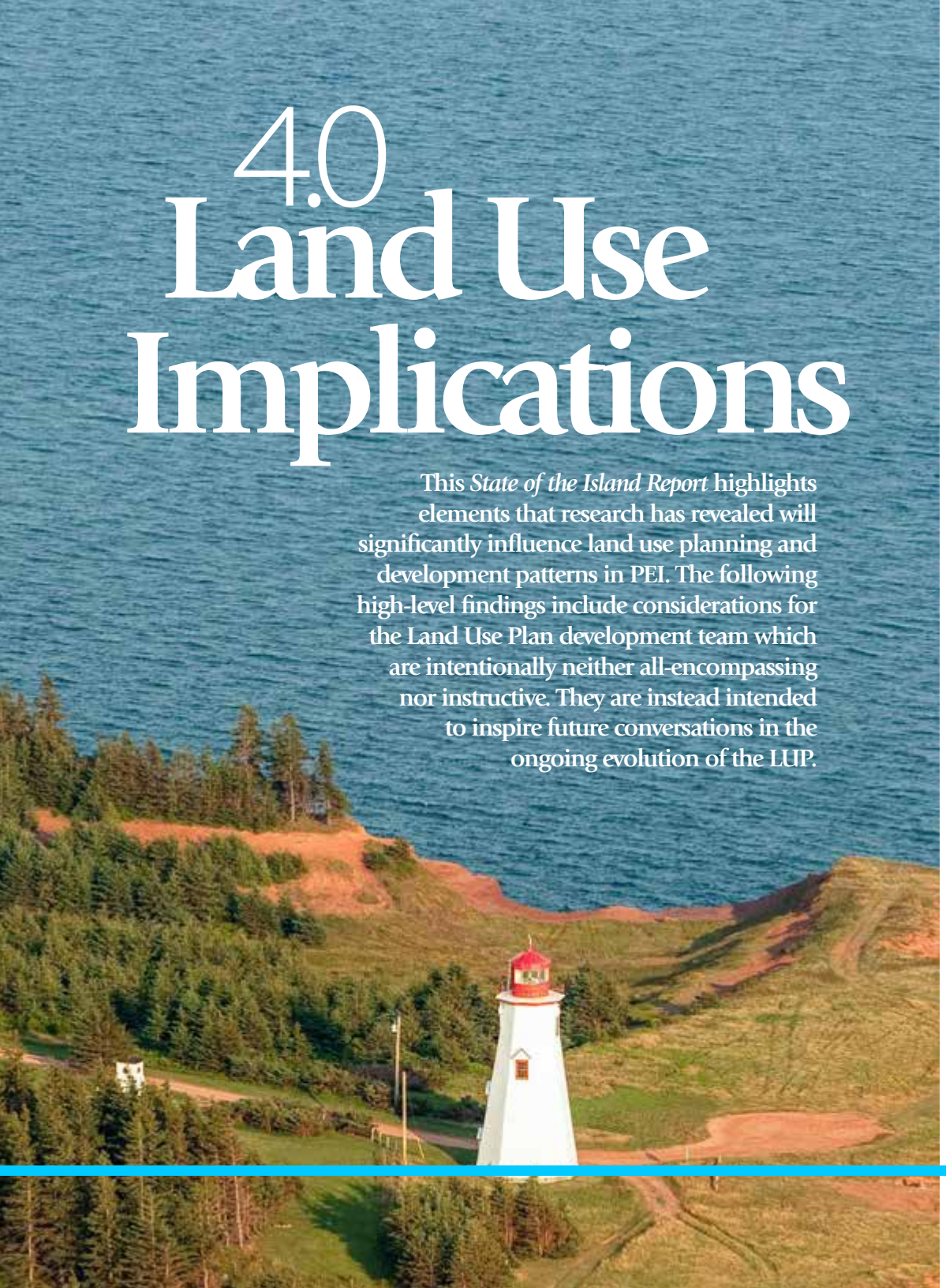
27. Table 32-10-0156-01 Farms classified by total farm area, Census of Agriculture historical data

28. Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0023-01 Labour force characteristics by industry, annual (x 1,000)

29. Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0046-01 Farm cash receipts, quarterly (x 1,000)

30. Department of Finance (2023). "Statistics Canada Releases 2nd Quarter 2023 Farm Cash Receipts Data". https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/fin_farmcash_quarter.pdf

31. Department of Fisheries and Communities. (2022). 2022 Fishery Statistics. Landed Volume and Value. Prince Edward Island. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/stats_for_2022_fishery.pdf



4.0 Land Use Implications

This *State of the Island Report* highlights elements that research has revealed will significantly influence land use planning and development patterns in PEI. The following high-level findings include considerations for the Land Use Plan development team which are intentionally neither all-encompassing nor instructive. They are instead intended to inspire future conversations in the ongoing evolution of the LUP.

1. **PEI's inconsistent local governance (municipal) framework provides obstacles for effective growth management.** The lack of province-wide municipal governance has significantly influenced land use planning and sustainable development in PEI. Currently, only 18% of land is located within municipalities with their own municipal land use planning authority. The remainder of the Island (with the exception of First Nation communities and National Government properties) is planned by the Province.

   Dozens of plans and reports (detailed in Section 1.1. and 1.2) have emphasized the need for a land use plan to direct responsible growth and development across the Island. In the recent engagement conducted for the *Population Framework*, the lack of Island-wide land management planning guidelines was raised consistently as a significant barrier to sustainable growth. Participants stressed the urgent need for the Province to act, noting the urgency will only increase as the population continues to grow. Providing better protection for agriculture and forested lands, coastal areas, and environmentally sensitive areas while focusing on sustainable and safe growth for the province is of vital importance.

   A variety of approaches to municipal governance can be considered when implementing a new approach to land use planning.

Some examples to consider include:

a. Thoroughly engaging with Island residents, businesses, utility companies, and other impacted groups in the creation of customized Land Use Plan policies, objectives, and vision;

b. Creating an Island-wide land use document to govern provincial interests affecting land use planning matters with particular regard to non-planning authority municipalities of the province, providing broad policy objectives for planning authority municipalities;

c. Creating policies that are compatible with existing local, provincial and national protections and directions for land and built form on the Island;

d. Developing localized plans in areas of environmental, economic, or cultural significance where specialized criteria may be necessary;

e. Supporting the alignment of planning authority documents with the objectives of the Province-wide land use plan, and participating in the approval process of planning authority land use plans;

f. Reviewing and updating the policies kept within the land use plan every 5-10 years to adapt to the changing social, demographic, economic, health, or environmental conditions reflected in the plan;

g. Considering the amendment process for review in between update cycles, and determining the timeline and process under which amendments will need to take place;

h. Monitoring changes in population, demographic, economic, natural environment and built environment trends across the Island on an ongoing basis to inform further policy development and refinement;

i. Considering alternative approaches to approval and consent granting, such as through a Committee of Adjustment; and

j. Determining approaches and policies under the land use plan for: grandfathering or removal of non-confirming uses, temporary use permissions, the use of holding zones, site plan control, plans of subdivision and condominium, development charges, maintenance and occupancy standards, and permit applications.

2. **PEI's population is growing at the second-fastest rate of all Canadian provinces** (+8.0% from 2016 to 2021). Increased growth brings increased diversity and service delivery, but also a need for coordinated planning and development.

   On February 22, 2024, the province released the *Population Framework* document, with five main priorities:

a. Expanding critical infrastructure and public services;
b. Building and retain PEI's workforce;
c. Supporting land use planning and environmental sustainability;
d. Enhancing community connectedness and a sense of belonging; and
e. Creating long-term planning and reporting processes.

   The report also includes issues such as housing, health, education, public safety, transportation, and social development. Planning for the forecasted population increase will be key to fostering a sustainable and inclusive society and enhancing the quality of life for all Islanders.

   From a planning lens, there are many tactics to consider when thoughtfully implementing housing into new and existing communities.

Examples to consider include:

a. Building complete communities where residents are able to access healthcare, essential services, public supports, and critical infrastructure in close walking distance to their homes;

b. Supporting infill development that utilizes existing infrastructure, services and resources within an existing community, and which encourages improved infrastructure services in communities;

c. Supporting development in spaces that collect taxes and/or development charges to support critical infrastructure in new areas;

d. Encouraging development on year-round public right-of-ways that are easily accessible to public and emergency services, rather than seasonal and private roadways;

e. Considering gentle densification options for existing residences with approaches including secondary suites, garden suites, supportive suites, and laneway housing; and

f. Encouraging more dense forms of new development in existing municipal centres, including duplexes, townhouses, condominiums, cohousing, apartment buildings, and tiny home villages, as opposed to single-unit detached housing.

3. **PEI experienced higher rates of relative cost increases from May 2021 to January 2023** compared to the rest of Canada. Managing the long-term affordability of Island living requires support for both servicing and long-term planning.

Building Together – Prince Edward Island Housing Strategy 2024-2029 was released on February 23, 2024, with the following vision: "All Islanders have access to adequate, affordable, and suitable housing." The Strategy includes three strategic pillars: acceleration, affordability, and vulnerability. The LUP influences all three of these strategic pillars, but in particular the acceleration and affordability of housing forms.

It is important to note that PEI also has high rates of energy poverty and food insecurity compared to the Canadian average.

For land use planning, efforts to ensure residents can afford housing and services may be supported in many ways.

Examples to consider include:

a. Reviewing and modernizing regulations to support housing supply increases, as well as a variety of housing forms and densities (see previous Section);

b. Implementing approaches to streamline processes and sharing services to support efficient and effective planning, permitting and inspection approvals;

c. Reducing routine building permit wait times to 30 days for home construction on recently approved lots, and prioritizing housing developments based on density and geographic areas;

d. Supporting effective and timely building methods including modular or prefabricated housing, 3D printed housing, and smaller units with minimum footprints determined by a building code rather than the LUP;

e. Incorporating inclusionary zoning as a planning tool that provides incentives or requirements for a specific percentage of affordable housing units for people with low-to-moderate incomes;

f. Encouraging energy efficiency and onsite generation for residential, industrial, and commercial properties through geothermal, solar and other renewable energies;

g. Allowing for a range of affordable development along the housing continuum throughout Island communities, including factors like affordable housing units proximity to cultural hubs, municipal centres, goods and services, healthy food retailers, commercial areas, employment, medical and health facilities, recreation, transit and recreation;

h. Considering alternative approaches to funding housing developments, including through bonusing, community benefits charges, and land-banking and/or housing-first dispersal of surplus provincial or municipal lands;

i. Encouraging localized food production and distribution in urban and rural centres by allowing urban agriculture, potentially including urban hens, bees, community gardens, rooftop gardens, fruit forests, and biodiverse public park plantings; and

j. Undertaking attainable housing pilot projects that demonstrate building approaches to walkable and sustainable communities in communities with existing services.

4. **PEI has experienced a loss in agricultural lands over time, and is at risk of losing up to 50% of its current agricultural land by 2050.** Agriculture and related sectors including agri-tourism, manufacturing, and distribution make up a large portion of PEI's economic profile. Continued land loss is anticipated to greatly impact the Island's economy.

The Province is currently developing the *Next Policy Framework (NPF) for Agriculture (2023 to 2028)*. As a part of this Framework, there have been a series of public engagements, some of which are documented in the Agriculture Section. In meetings held with industry and community groups, the following agriculture priorities were identified: productivity and profitability, value-added and agri-food processing, markets and trade, research and innovation, labour, environmental sustainability, business risk management programs, financial sustainability and new entrants, public trust and awareness, gender, diversity, and inclusion and land administration.

There is much overlap between land use planning, and the identified priorities highlighted in the NPF for Agriculture engagement.

Some examples to consider include:

a. Identifying and creating protection policies for prime agriculture areas using Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) or other agricultural land identification tools;

b. Implementing protections for prime agricultural land potentially including first parcel out policies, greenbelt protection areas, agricultural land reserves, urban-rural buffer zones, or minimum and maximum density requirements;

c. Applying Smart Growth principles to the consideration of new developments to manage urban growth with limited loss of prime agricultural lands;

d. Ensuring existing agricultural operations continue to have access to land, including sufficient local roads to accommodate agricultural machinery;

e. Encouraging the incorporation of communal gardening spaces and edible landscaping into multifamily developments and new neighbourhood design;

f. Prioritizing soil management, including its reuse and recycling, as a part of specialized planning areas, as well as agricultural subdivisions;

g. Prioritizing reclaimed lands as a benefit to the agricultural system with consideration for the environment, land, water resources and surrounding agricultural operations;

h. Identifying water access needs and requirements for new agriculture initiatives, and propositions going through development processes;

i. Supporting and providing opportunities for value-added agriculture (agri-innovation) throughout Prince Edward Island;

j. Allowing for temporary farm labour-dwelling units;

k. Allowing for alternative forms of agriculture such as aquaponics, aeroponics, and warehouse farming; and

l. Prioritizing agricultural and coverage opportunities that work to: protect and restore local biodiversity, improve healthy riparian areas and wetlands, encourage local food production, promote ecological resilience to climate change and improve or maintain air quality.

5. **PEI has experienced a loss in forest lands.** Sprawling development paired with the impacts of climate change have led PEI to perpetually lost forestry lands. Without proper land use strategies that prioritize ecological conservation alongside development needs, the Island faces continual loss of these ecologically and economically valuable landscapes. The State of the Forest Report emphasizes the importance of protecting the Island's forests from agriculture and development.

   There are a series of approaches that land use planning can pursue to protect valuable forested and ecological lands.

   Some examples to consider include:

a. Identification and evaluation of significant woodlands and other naturally significant environmental areas using public criteria, potentially including: woodlot age, size, site quality, diversity of biological communities and associated species, open space amenity needs, habitat for species at risk, or distinctive, unusual or high-quality natural communities or landforms;

b. Preparing a forest management bylaw to dictate the size of trees considered appropriate to cut, as well as appropriate forestry practices for differing sizes of forest lots;

c. Discouraging development and site alteration in significant woodlands unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions, such as through a Environmental Impact Assessment;

d. Attributing a natural asset replacement value to natural features across the province, including wetlands and trees;

e. Encouraging proper forestry management practices through watershed or conservation authorities;

f. Incentivizing reforestation practices in new neighbourhoods, or encouraging environmental design through Green Development Standards;

g. Promoting continued visitor access to natural areas, with specified ecotourism regulations;

h. Emphasizing Indigenous land rights and conservation agreements; and

i. Protecting core natural areas, including carbon sinks and wildlife pathways, using greenbelts, conservation zones, riparian buffer areas surrounding sensitive land uses, or protected forestry size allotments.

6. **Income and associated living costs are not equally distributed across the Island,** and it is important to consider support from a land use perspective. Social supports, and a variety of housing forms across the Island, must be widely available, particularly in populations experiencing inequality. The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Women in Prince Edward Island Statistical Review, and the Climate Adaptation Plan discuss approaches to include a diversity of historically marginalized and vulnerable populations in land use conversations

   There are a variety of approaches to ensuring the LUP process and policy aligns with the needs of vulnerable populations. Some examples to consider include:

   a. Ensuring that public land allocations include gender and diversity analysis;

   b. Meaningfully consulting with Indigenous Nations through partnership and inserting traditional knowledge, including Mi'kmaw knowledge, into the creation of land policies;

   c. Co-creating policies with a diverse group of Island representatives, including those with various intersectional identities for gender, race, ability, and income, and removing barriers for these groups to participate in decision-making;

   d. Building spaces that are accessible to everyone, including those with physical, sensory, mental, or developmental disabilities. This includes the creation of barrier-free buildings, entrances, sidewalks, loading areas, recreational spaces, emergency services, transportation, social services and parks;

   e. Providing a variety of affordable public amenities in spaces with high concentrations of vulnerable populations, or low-income populations; and

   f. Supporting resilient design that discourages building in floodplain areas, areas of higher risk of extreme weather events, or areas with periodic limited access, in order to remove the risk of future displacement.

7. **There is a significant urban-rural divide which has land use implications for PEI.** Differences in taxation, paired with PEI's high frequency of leapfrog development, have created challenges for centres that must provide services for residents from unincorporated areas. The equalization taxation structure of the Island helps to mitigate some of this divide, yet much can be done to better support the balance of development and servicing.

The Report of the Task Force on Land Use Policy (2014), the Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance (2009), and Now is the Time (2021) all speak to methods which provide guidance on unifying direction for land use across the Island.

To create a unified land use plan for provincial direction, the *Report of the Task Force on Land Use Policy* identified 10 policy areas for the Island, under sections Protect the Natural and Built Landscape, Protect Resource Industries, and Encourage Safe, Healthy, Viable and Sustainable Communities. These policy areas are in addition to the report's 10 primary recommendations. The Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance, and the Now is the Time strategy, have 40 and 13 recommendations respectively. Many of the recommendations are in relation to taxation and participation, but the documents also identify specific recommendations for the Land Use Plan and should be considered in the Plan's development.

There are a variety of considerations for how land use planning could help lessen the strain on infrastructure that is often a part of the urban / rural divide.

Some examples to consider include:

a. Leveraging 50 years of study on land use to adopt a province-wide land use planning framework, prioritizing resource land and coastal land;

b. Creating a Land Use Vision Map and broad planning "zones" to be applied Island-wide;

c. Establishing the preservation of agricultural land as a priority, and including an agricultural reserve zone, where appropriate, in all municipal and provincial land use plans;

d. Protecting vital water areas and natural resources across the Island using buffer zones, watershed boundaries and other strategies to protect surface and groundwater resources; and

e. Encouraging all municipalities with an existing official plan and a zoning and development bylaw to adopt conditions on subdivision development which are similar to those in effect in Summerside, Cornwall, Charlottetown and Stratford.

8. **The majority of subdivision development has taken place in unincorporated areas of the Island.** Uncoordinated growth and development can challenge efforts to create spaces that are vibrant and accessible. Development outside of municipal areas that already have servicing and amenities can undermine the ability of small municipalities to provide appropriate services for their own residents.

   Many of the previously mentioned Sections identify considerations for reducing development outside of municipalities.

   Some new examples to consider include:

a. Implementing province-wide interim regulations to further regulate subdivision and development in areas without an official plan until a province-wide land use planning framework is adopted;

b. Restricting the conversion of agricultural parcels larger than 100 acres and natural land uses to subdivision land;

c. Identifying targeted growth areas to incentivize future development; and

d. Reclassifying municipal zones which are ideal for development with more building unit allowances.

9. **PEI has a disproportionately high number of secondary houses (investment properties) in comparison to other provinces, at 27%, particularly for out-of-province (6.4%) and non-resident ownership (5.5%).** The Lands Protection Act documents a series of policies in place to limit off-Island ownership, as well as differential rates for property taxation. Encouraging secondary housing investment that remains appropriate to the services available in an area is essential to ensure that emergency and other services are not strained by demands from properties on seasonal or private roads.

   There are a variety of ways to ensure the safe delivery of secondary houses, particularly those which may be classified as "cottages" existing around PEI's water resources.

   Some examples to consider include:

a. Establishing a logical development pattern in areas outside of planning authority boundaries, potentially involving clustering development in secondary home ownership areas as identifiable communities;

b. Phasing development in ecologically sensitive areas (such as surrounding a water feature) to monitor potential impact to the water body;

c. Requiring a feasibility study of municipal services, and the potential impact on surrounding environmental areas (if appropriate);

d. Addressing servicing to the site, and limiting the density of the development if taking place on a private or seasonal road; and

e. Developing fronting policies for secondary units occurring around waterbody features to ensure public access to PEI's waterfront.

10. **PEI's seasonal economy puts pressure on workers in times of increased challenges.** Planning will need to consider the housing and economic allowances necessary to support those in the seasonal workforce, as well as ways to support a diversified economy. The Prince Edward Island Economic Action Plan 2021-2026 sets out five key priorities, including:

a. Create an outstanding environment where businesses and communities can thrive
b. Develop a growing, diverse and skilled workforce necessary for PEI's economic future
c. Stimulate innovation and sector-by-sector growth in a changing global environment
d. Drive entrepreneurship to power PEI's economic success
e. Build PEI's reputation as innovative and clean

There are a series of land use policies which could positively influence the development of a diversified economy, and which also support the continued success of the Island's seasonal industries.

Some examples to consider include:

a. Continuing the allowance of temporary, seasonal residences for labour support;

b. Providing services and amenities in proximity to areas with seasonally employed residents;

c. Accelerating secure high-speed internet access across the Island;

d. Creating vibrant community hubs that revitalize and grow communities and attract people and businesses;

e. Promoting integrated community planning that incorporates economic, social, and environmental criteria and identifies linkages and shared services with surrounding urban and rural areas;

f. Accessing support for innovative business and community-led solutions to address affordable housing, transportation, and childcare needs in rural and urban communities;

g. Promoting the creation of winter city infrastructure in the 'off-season';

h. Enabling value-added food programming and value-added agriculture; and

i. Permitting innovative development approaches that support the Island's economy and retention.

11. **PEI has the highest proportion of private land (88%) of any province in Canada,** especially when considering that only 11% of Canada is privately owned. As a result, the Island also has the lowest proportion of protected lands of any province or territory. The land use plan is necessary to ensure Island-wide protection of natural resources on these private lands. Stewardship strategies will need to be considered in tandem with land protection policies to effectively retain PEI's natural viewscapes and heritage.

In considering protection of resources unique to PEI, there are a variety of approaches that land use can support, including the creation of the LUP itself.

Some examples could include:

a. Cataloging significant natural, heritage, or economic areas of significance in the land use plan using a public set of criteria;

b. Continuing to retain the current buffer zone legislation which requires that landowners restrict activities within a specified distance adjacent to all watercourses;

c. Identifying and managing the removal of significant woodlands;

d. Protecting cultural and natural heritage buildings, views, assets and districts of significance to the Island's economy, history, and culture; and

e. Implementing protections for prime agricultural land potentially including first parcel out policies, greenbelt protection areas, agricultural land reserves, urban-rural buffer zones, or minimum and maximum density requirements.

12. **There is inherent vulnerability in being an Island during climate change.** PEI's natural vulnerabilities stem from its geographical and environmental characteristics. The coastline is susceptible to coastal erosion and flooding, exacerbated by rising sea levels and storm surges. Its sole reliance on groundwater for all its fresh water needs places significant pressure on water resources, making them vulnerable to contamination and over-extraction. The land use plan must ensure the protection of its coastlines, increased resilience measures and socioeconomic supports, and will need to be developed with future servicing and groundwater protection within its policies.

    The *PEI Interim Coastal Policy Recommendations Report (2023)*, *PEI's Climate Action Plan (2022)*, and the *Net Zero Framework (2022)* identify a series of policy considerations in relation to land use and its connection to changing coastal and climate-related vulnerabilities. Some examples for consideration include:

    a. Adopting an interim planning policy for coastal development;

    b. Creating shoreline management plans for developed coastlines with established land use planning policies to restrict new shoreline alterations;

    c. Expanding the environmental buffer zone and updating the regulations to reflect current working policies;

    d. Developing a public beaches access policy and/or legislation;

    e. Supporting municipalities to address coastal hazards and environmental protection;

    f. Enhancing emergency preparedness and response capabilities to better manage the impacts of extreme weather events;

    g. Assisting key industries, such as agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, heritage, and culture, to adapt to changing climatic conditions;

    h. Implementing measures to protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity in the face of climate change;

    i. Promoting the adoption of electric vehicles, improving public transit, and investing in active transportation infrastructure;

    j. Implementing programs for energy-efficient equipment and insulation in homes and businesses, and encouraging the use of renewable energy sources;

    k. Supporting sustainable agricultural practices, including research initiatives on fertilizer use and soil health;

    l. Enhancing carbon capture through tree planting and the exploration of new technologies for carbon sequestration; and

    m. Encouraging clean technology in industrial processes and improving waste management practices.

13. **PEI spends a substantial amount of money per capita maintaining public roadways.** PEI has 4,411 km of paved public roadways, the highest number per capita of all Canadian provinces. The public cost of maintaining and upgrading PEI's roads is significant, and it is estimated that the Province spends $445 per capita / per year to maintain the Island's road network. Car travel is the primary form of commuting for 92.4% of Islanders. With nearly half of these individuals commuting for less than 15 minutes, there is a significant opportunity to encourage more active forms of transportation. In 2021, only 1.4% of Islanders used public transit as their main mode of commuting, compared to 7.7% nationally.

    The *Active Transportation Strategy (2021)* and the *Sustainable Transportation Action Plan (2021)* identify actions that relate to land use planning improvements.

    Land use planning can improve safety and the improvement of route connectivity for active transportation. It can influence development patterns to be more amenable to active transportation, transit, and alternatives to automotive vehicles. Some policy examples to consider include:

a. Encouraging development patterns that support active transportation and public transit by identifying areas suitable for future growth and by establishing standards for subdivision and development design;

b. Improving road infrastructure (such as cycling lanes, wider shoulders, and roundabouts) to construct and protect right-of-ways for active transportation and public transit corridors;

c. Encouraging the development of complete streets;

d. Providing dedicated and priority space for active transportation and transit corridors;

e. Providing compatible transportation options for loading and drop-off locations for people with disabilities;

f. Encouraging new developments to use existing gridded roadways rather than creating new private roadways or cul-de-sac developments;

g. Prioritizing public safety and accessibility in the creation or new roadways and transportation infrastructure;

h. Ensuring planning authorities consider the full range of transportation needs within their areas of jurisdiction; and

i. Requiring active transportation and alternative transportation-supportive infrastructure onsite with new developments including bike racks, electric vehicle charging stations, and bike lockers.

This section is intentionally limited to policy considerations related to the key findings found within the *SOTI Report*. There are numerous elements within this Report that will require additional policy consideration that are not specifically identified here. The policies and approaches listed within this section are merely provided as examples to demonstrate how these learnings may apply to land use planning. For additional policy considerations, please see the recommendations in the policies listed in Sections 1.1 and 1.2.

5.0 Moving Forward

With the completion of the *SOTI Report*, the Province of PEI has now finished the first step in creating an Island-wide *Land Use Plan*. Continued connections with other Island-wide reports, including the *State of the Coast Report*, and the *State of the Forest Report*, will guide conversations and policy development. In combination, they will arm the Province with an informed overview of the trends, themes and impacts for both PEI residents and the lands upon which they reside.

The creation of an Island-wide Land Use Plan will include the following phases:

- **Phase 3:** Main project initiation for Land Use Plan and modernization of the planning system
- **Phase 4:** Developing a provincial vision for land use
- **Phase 5:** Land use options, character areas and policy themes
- **Phase 6:** Developing draft land use plan and act/regulations amendments
- **Phase 7:** Developing implementation and monitoring measures
- **Phase 8:** Finalizing drafts
- **Phase 9:** Approvals and implementation

This *SOTI Report* satisfies the local data component for the upcoming Land Use Plan, and the province can use this information to support the public components of the land use planning process. Through each of these subsequent phases, the province will consider additional community input, local data, plans and policies, organizational context, and promising practices.

With ongoing collaboration, the Province has an opportunity to shape the future of PEI communities, supporting them to be more sustainable and resilient to ongoing changes. Now, it's time to get to work making this vision for the future a reality for all residents of Prince Edward Island.

Benchmark Home Price: MLS® estimate of the value of a "typical" home in a community, based on the most popular combination of features, e.g., age, size, number of bedrooms and bathrooms.

Complete Communities: communities – or areas within a community – which provide a diversity of housing to meet identified community needs and accommodate people at all stages of life, and provide a wider range of employment opportunities, amenities, and services within a 15-20 minute walk.

Data Suppression: Area and data suppression has been adopted to further protect the confidentiality of individual respondents' personal information. Area and data suppression results in the deletion of all information for geographic areas with populations below a specified size. For example, areas with a population of less than 40 persons are suppressed. If the community searched has a population of less than 40 persons, only the total population counts will be available. Suppression of data can be due to poor data quality or to other technical reasons.

Employment Rate: The number of employed persons, expressed as a percentage of the total population.

Food insecurity: Data within this report uses the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) to define food insecurity. The HFSSM is Canada's primary validated measure of food insecurity. It contains 18 questions designed to measure food insecurity resulting from limited financial resources. Based on a household's experience, food insecurity can be categorized into 3 categories:

- **Marginal food insecurity:** Worry about running out of food and/ or limited food selection due to a lack of money for food.
- **Moderate food insecurity:** Compromise in quality and/ or quantity of food due to a lack of money for food.
- **Severe food insecurity:** Miss meals, reduce food intake and, at the most extreme, go day(s) without food.

In this report, "food insecurity" refers to moderate or severe food insecurity.

Food security: when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. There are four dimensions of food security: physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, food utilization, and stability of the other three dimensions over time.

Gentrification: the process of displacing lower income inhabitants of an area through wealthier populations moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, making it unaffordable to existing residents.

Gini coefficient: a number between zero and one that measures the relative degree of inequality in the distribution of income. The coefficient would register zero (minimum inequality) for a population in which each person received exactly the same adjusted household income and it would register a coefficient of one (maximum inequality) if one person received all the adjusted household income and the rest received none. Even though a single Gini coefficient value has no simple interpretation, comparisons of the level over time or between populations are very straightforward: the higher the coefficient, the higher the inequality of the distribution.

Housing continuum: According to the 2024-2019 housing strategy, a housing continuum is the broad range of housing options available in a community to support individuals and families seen in the graphic below.

Definitions

a.

The housing continuum recognizes that people's housing needs can change over time, and it seeks to provide a comprehensive framework that ensures everyone has access to adequate, affordable, and suitable housing options based on their unique circumstances and requirements. Within the continuum, there is a range of housing options based on unique population needs including economic and mental well-being as well as demographics and other factors.

Immigrant: A person who does not have Canadian citizenship at birth but was granted the right by immigration authorities to live in Canada on a permanent basis. Children born in other countries to parents who are Canadian citizens that reside temporarily in another country are not included in the category.

Investment properties: The properties owned by investors that are not the primary residence of one of the owners.

Investors: In this report, an investor is defined as an owner who owns at least one residential property that is not used as their primary place of residence. This category can include secondary residence owners, residents of other provinces or countries, short- or long-term rental owners, for-profit businesses and speculators.

Migrants include internal migrants and external migrants.

- **Internal migrants:** include migrants who lived in Canada 1 year or 5 years ago. This includes persons who moved to a different city, town, township, village, municipality or Indian reserve within Canada. Greater detail can be provided for internal migrants by identifying whether they crossed a provincial boundary or the limits of a large municipality, specifically a census metropolitan area (CMA) or census agglomeration (CA).
- **External migrants:** include migrants who did not live in Canada 1 year or 5 years ago.

Moveable Dwelling: A Statistics Canada classification of residential structures which includes mobile homes and other movable dwellings such as houseboats and railroad cars.

Net international migration: Obtained according to the following formula: Immigrants + returning emigrants + net non-permanent residents – (emigrants + net temporary emigration).

Net interprovincial migration: The difference between in-migrants and out-migrants for a given province or territory.

Net non-permanent residents: The variation in the number of non-permanent residents between two dates.

Overnight Stays: The total combined number of room-nights (fixed-roof) and site-nights (campground) sold in each month. These numbers come from occupancy reports submitted by licensed accommodations and include motorcoach figures.

Participation Rate: Refers to the labour force expressed as a percentage of the total population aged 15 years and over.

Single-Detached housing: Also known as single-family housing, or single-unit housing, single-detached housing is a Statistics Canada classification of residential structures for a single dwelling not attached to any other dwelling or structure (except its own garage or shed). A single-detached house has open space on all sides, and has no dwellings either above it or below it. A mobile home fixed permanently to a foundation is also classified as a single-detached house.

Urban areas: Urban areas are defined in PEI as the following three municipalities: City of Charlottetown, City of Summerside, and the Town of Stratford. This is largely consistent with Statistics Canada definitions when comparing urban and rural population trends, where urban areas are defined based on the population (greater than 1,000 inhabitants), and density (greater than 400 people per square kilometre). This definition has been refined for PEI based on urban development patterns, where a small number of municipalities met the population and density patterns, but were not representative of the scale and intensity of development of urban areas (i.e., the Town of Kensington).

Usual residents: The usual place of residence in Canada refers to the main dwelling in which the person lives most of the time, to ensure that residents of Canada are counted once and only once. For persons with only one residence, that residence is their usual place of residence. Usual residence can often be an indicator for vacation properties / persons with more than one residence in Canada.

Visible minority: refers to whether a person is a visible minority or not, as defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.

The *SOTI Report* was created to inform the local data component of the upcoming Island-wide land use plan.

The *SOTI Report* process was designed to answer the following "how might we" question:

How might we understand the current economic, environmental, and social conditions across PEI, and how have our existing planning practices influenced the development, protection, and growth of the Island to date?

To answer this question, the project team worked through two phases of work: acquiring, analyzing and now reporting on the information contained within this *SOTI Report*.

Phase 1: Project Foundations

Phase 1 consisted of a series of information gathering and analysis activities. From August to October 2023, information was retrieved from the Interdepartmental Committee on Land Use, as well as from a series of municipal, provincial, federal and academic sources to inform the initial analysis for the *SOTI Report*.

From November 2023 to January 2024, the information was analyzed using three primary focus areas:

- plans, policies and documents review
- asset and trend analysis
- benchmarking across key performance indicators

Project highlights were reported to the internal project team throughout using a series of interactive online sessions, in preparation for Phase 2.

Phase 2: Insight and Report Development

Phase 2 took place through January and February 2024, and was focussed on a datawalks workshop as well as report creation and review.

The datawalks workshop was held on January 11, 2024, and included a variety of Provincial departments and consultants. Participants reflected on a series of thematic datasets to identify trends, implications and gaps in the data presented.

The *SOTI Report* is based on the findings from Phase 1, as well as insights gathered from participants in the datawalks workshop. It is important to note that this process did not include public engagement (see Limitations). The initial report was circulated with provincial staff for review at the end of January 2024. Revisions were implemented in preparation for the spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island.

Methodology

b.

Limitations

To stay within the scope of the original RFP, upcoming steps of engagement, organizational context, local policy, and best practices were intentionally excluded from this analysis, and instead will be included in the upcoming development of the land use plan.

The *SOTI Report* was developed using data that was collected between June and October 31, 2023, with some supplementary information released prior to February 2024. Due to the timeline of data release, some recent datasets may not have been available to the consulting team, particularly those which were not publicly released, or those which were released in early 2024. In addition, all property-related data is current as of October 2023, due to the collection timeline of parcel data.

The data included in this report was primarily collected and distributed to the consultant team by the Committee on Land Use. . All analysis was reliant upon the understanding that the provided data was the most up-to-date and relevant material available to this internal provincial body. Some datasets did not include adequate context, and are therefore referenced with the providing group where possible.

The data selected for this report has been presented at a scale that would be useful to inform policies at a provincial level. They are often broad in context to manage readability. Each investigation has the potential to have further analysis, and could be divided into smaller or large geographies. The consultants responsible for the creation of this report encourage policy creators to conduct further investigations where necessary to inform detailed and site-specific policies.

For reference on project phasing and inputs, see 'Developing the Provincial Land Use Plan' and 'Inputs to Strategy Development' in Section 1.

State of the Island

Prince Edward Island
CANADA