



COMMUNITY PROFILE:
Williams Lake/Central Cariboo
and Chilcotin Regions

Fall 2017

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Population	4
Age Profile	5
Income	9
Educational Attainment	13
Employment and Labour Force	17
Housing	20
Business and Industry	25
Endnotes	26

Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Population: Williams Lake, 1981-2016	4
Figure 1.2 Population: Electoral Areas and Regional District, 2001-2016	4
Figure 2.1 Median Age, 2016	5
Figure 2.2 Population Pyramid Williams Lake, 1981.....	7
Figure 2.3 Population Pyramid Williams Lake, 2016.....	7
Figure 2.4 Population Pyramid British Columbia, 2016	8
Figure 2.5 Population Pyramid Electoral Areas Cariboo D, E, F, J, and K Combined, 2016	8
Figure 3.1 Median Total Income, 2015	9
Figure 3.2 Composition of Total Income, 2015.....	10
Figure 3.3 Median Total Income of Economic Families, 2015	11
Figure 3.4 Prevalence of Low Income (after tax), 2015	12

Figure 4.1 Educational Attainment Population Aged 25-64, 2006 and 2011	14
Figure 4.2 Six-Year Completion Rate School District 27 Cariboo-Chilcotin, 2009-2014	15
Figure 4.3 K-12 Headcount Williams Lake, 1991-2016	16
Figure 5.1 Labour Force Participation Williams Lake, 1991-2011	17
Figure 5.2 Labour Force Participation, 2011.....	17
Figure 5.3 Unemployment Rate Williams Lake, 1991-2011.....	18
Figure 5.4 Unemployment Rates, 2011	18
Figure 5.5 Labour Force by Industry Williams Lake, 2001-2011	19
Figure 6.1 Household Size in Williams Lake, 1991-2016.....	20
Figure 6.2 Occupied Private Dwellings in Williams Lake, 1991-2016	21
Figure 6.3 Number of Bedrooms in the Cariboo Regional District, 2011	22
Figure 6.4 Average Value of Owned Dwellings, 1991-2011.....	22
Figure 6.5 Average Value of Owned Dwellings, 2011	23
Figure 6.6 Average Shelter Costs, 2011	23
Figure 6.7 Households Spending 30% or more of their Income on Shelter Costs, 2011	24
Figure 7.1 Business Counts in Williams Lake, 2007-2016	25

Introduction

The Central Cariboo and Chilcotin regions are economically dependent on the natural resource sector, which has traditionally been dominated by the forest industry; however, other dominant industries include mining, agriculture, and tourism. The region's economy and its communities are facing a significant challenge due to many factors including increasing frequency of natural disturbances and the continued volatility in the global market for natural resources.

These factors have the ability to cause wide scale impacts to individuals and communities of the Central Cariboo and Chilcotin as they will impact jobs, businesses, and services in the community.

To support the community in working toward a long-term goal of building a more diverse economy and resilient community for Williams Lake and Central Cariboo and Chilcotin regions, the Community Development Institute (CDI) at University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) partnered with the City of Williams Lake and Cariboo Regional District (CRD) to deliver an economic development project that would engage the community to identify and build on community and regional assets and strengths to diversify the economy that would result in economic change and transformation.

To build an understanding of the assets, opportunities, and challenges in the community, the first step that needs to be taken is completing research to compile a community profile to provide useful insights on the residents and local economy, as well as on the opportunities and challenges for the community moving forward.

The data that has been collected for this Community Profile is the most recent that can be found for the region. However, due to schedules and methodologies for data collection, such as suppression of data sets due to low response, some of the data presented may appear outdated.

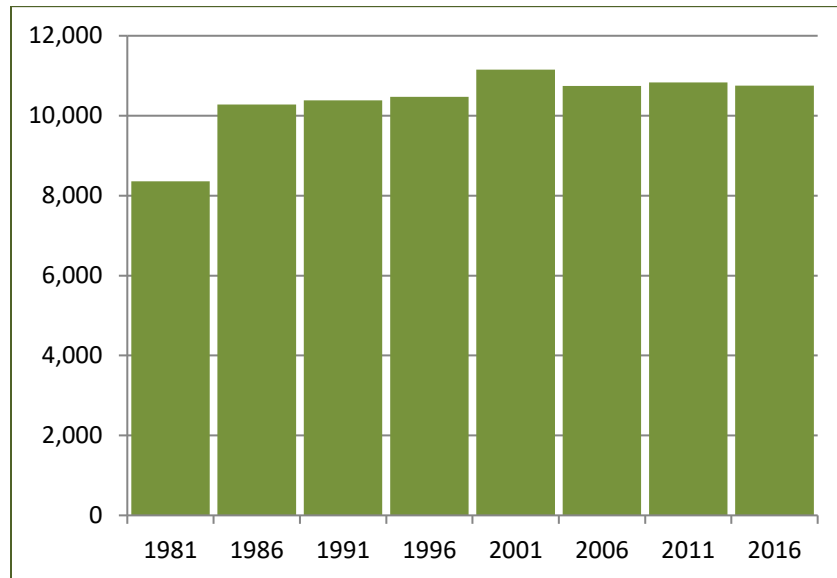
This Community Profile provides a snapshot of the community that can be used as a baseline and reference point for future planning and actions.

Population

Population data is included in this report because it provides information about the size of the community and its change over time. In combination with other data, population information shows how events and regional trends influence the community.

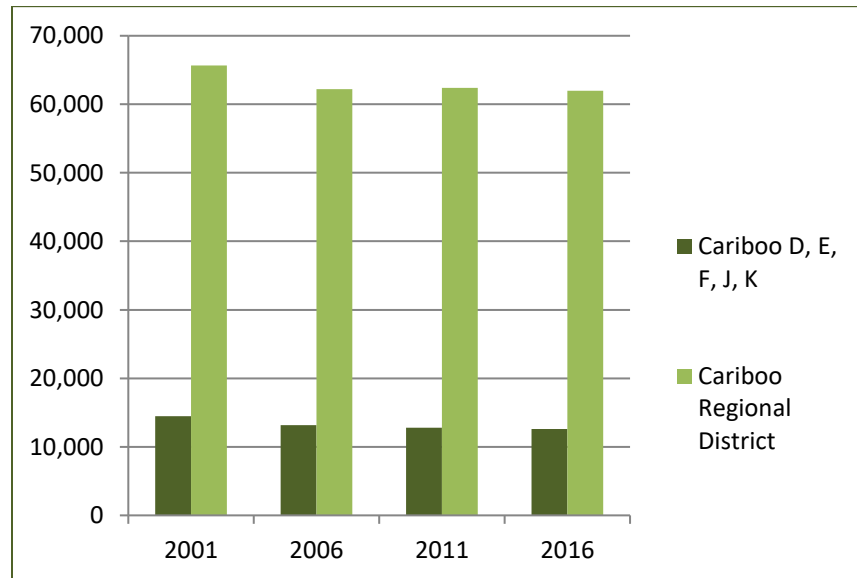
Williams Lake has maintained a steady population throughout the last three decades. The biggest population growth occurred between 1981 and 1986. As Figure 1.1 shows, the highest population recorded, 11,153, occurred in 2001. By 2016, the population was at 10,753. This represents a decrease of around 1% over 2011 and a decrease of almost 4% over 2001. Compared to the provincial population growth rates, which constituted increases of 6% and 19% respectivelyⁱ, Williams Lake lags behind the province in terms of population growth. Figure 1.2 demonstrates that population change since 2001 in Williams Lake mirrors those of the surrounding electoral areas and the Cariboo Regional District.

Figure 1.1 Population: Williams Lake, 1981-2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 1981 -2016. Census Program.

Figure 1.2 Population: Electoral Areas and Regional District, 2001-2016



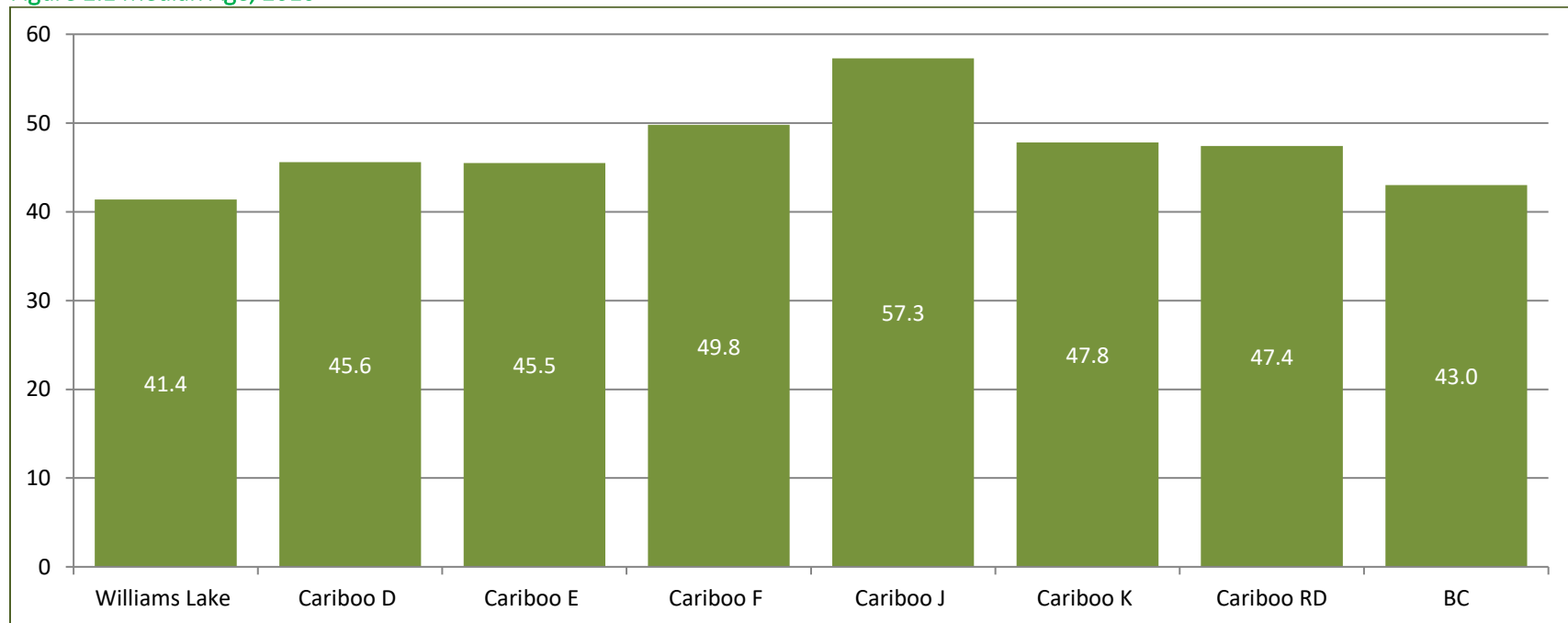
Source: Statistics Canada. 2001-2016. Census Program.

Age Profile

The age profile of a community provides information about the age composition of the population and how it has changed over time. This information can be used, for example, to learn about community structure and determine service needs.

Median age is defined as the exact age where half the population is older and half is younger.ⁱⁱ As of 2016, median age in Williams Lake was 41 years of age, which was younger than the provincial median age of 43. Compared to the surrounding electoral areas, which include Cariboo D, E, F, J, and K, Williams Lake has a younger population. As shown in Figure 2.1, median age in the electoral areas is consistently above that in Williams Lake and goes as high as 57 years in Cariboo J.

Figure 2.1 Median Age, 2016



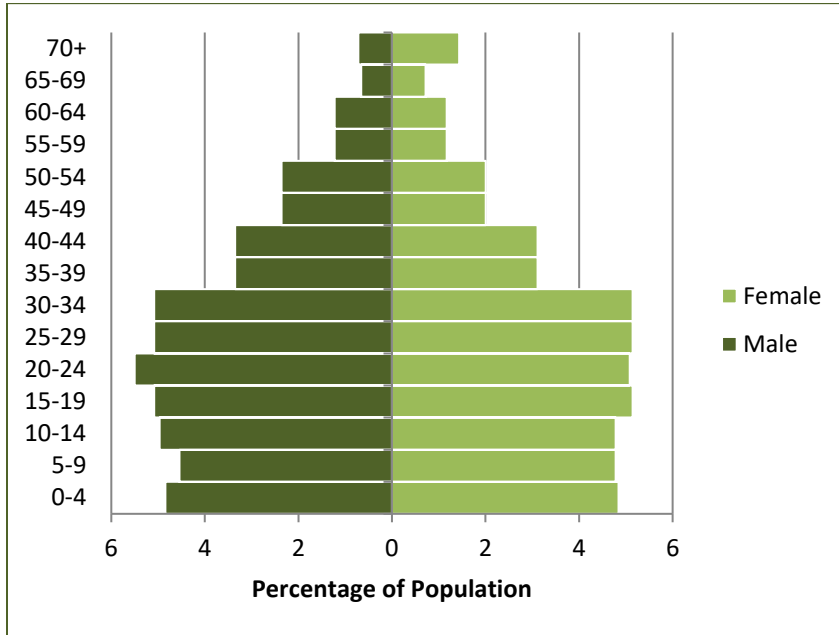
Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

The population pyramid for Williams Lake for 1981 (Figure 2.2) shows that men and women aged 25-34 made up the largest age group. Significant numbers of children and youth further indicate the strong representation of young families in the community. As presented in Figure 2.3, by 2016, the population pyramid shows that Williams Lake has undergone change. The largest age groups are now men and women aged 55-69. Older seniors' age groups, especially women, have become more strongly represented in Williams Lake in 2016, while youth representation has decreased. The percentage of the population in the family formation years of 20-44 has fallen from 44% of the population in the 1980s to less than one-third in 2016.

The 2016 population pyramid of the Province of British Columbia (Figure 2.4) paints a similar picture of an aging population where the largest age groups are in their fifties, followed by those who are in their thirties and forties. The share of seniors aged 65 and over is around 18% in the province-wide population and around 19% in Williams Lake.

The electoral areas surrounding Williams Lake show an even larger population group aged 50 to 70 years, as shown in Figure 2.5, while seniors in their late seventies and older are fewer than in Williams Lake. The population pyramids for the electoral areas, furthermore, show youth outmigration with an abrupt drop off in representation between 15 to 19-year-olds and 20 to 24-year-olds.

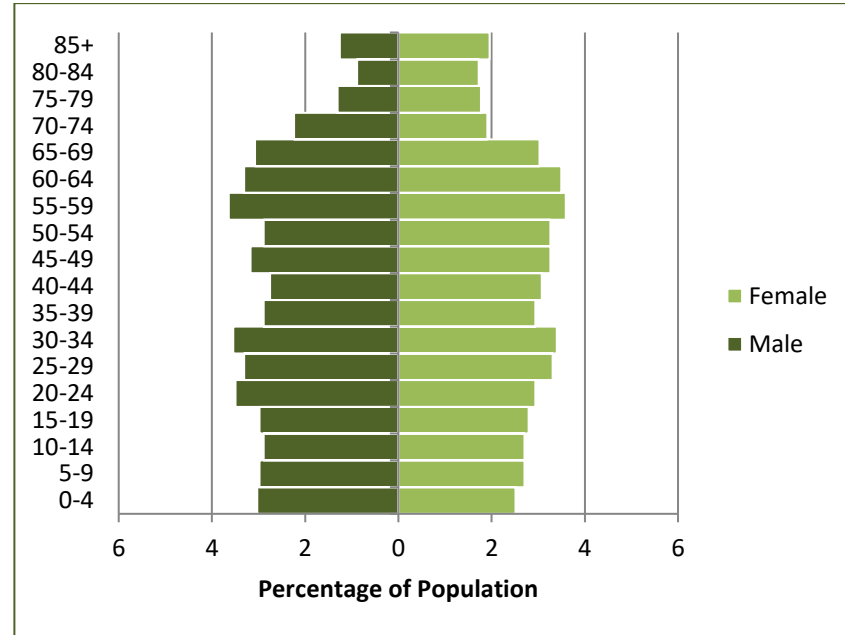
Figure 2.2 Population Pyramid Williams Lake, 1981



Source: Statistics Canada. 1981. Census Program.

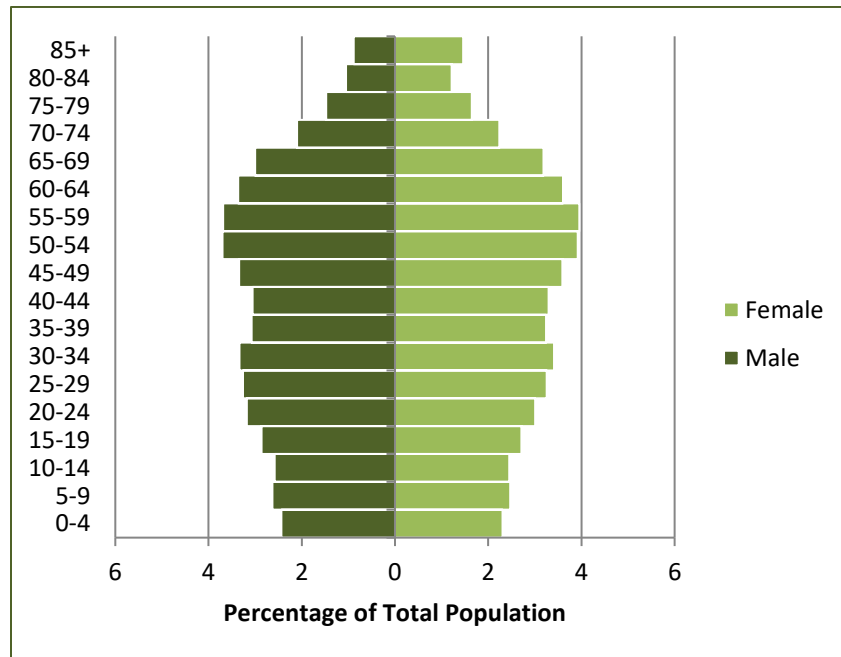
Note: To make age intervals comparable, totals for the age groups 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55-64 have been divided in half.

Figure 2.3 Population Pyramid Williams Lake, 2016



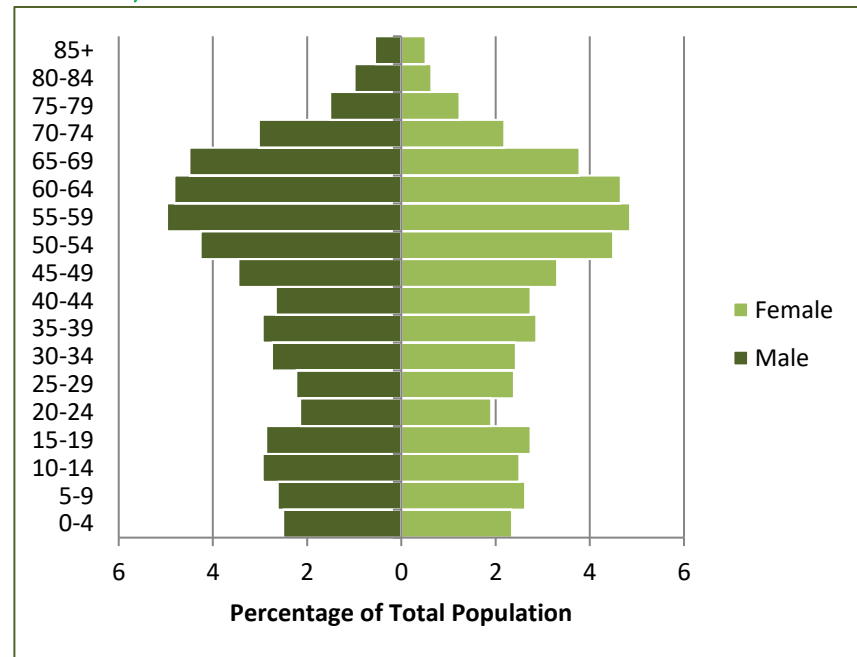
Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

Figure 2.4 Population Pyramid British Columbia, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

Figure 2.5 Population Pyramid Electoral Areas Cariboo D, E, F, J, and K Combined, 2016



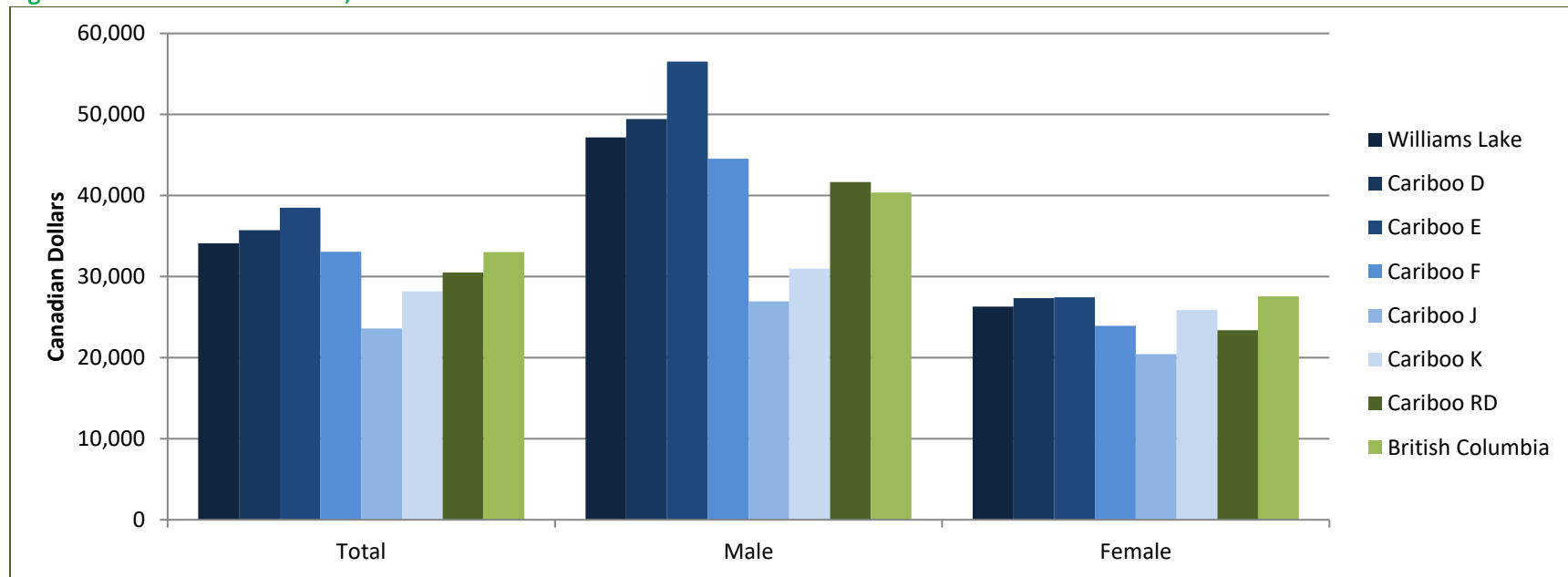
Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

Income

Income data serves to inform not only about wealth in a community but also about the availability of high paying jobs, service needs for certain income groups, and expected spending habits. Exactly half of the reported incomes are below and the other half above the median income. This measure is used because it is less likely than average income to be skewed by extremes.

Median total income in Williams Lake in 2015, as shown in Figure 3.1, was \$34,093. Female median income was less than 56% of male median income. Median income in the surrounding electoral areas varies, where the highest is recorded in Cariboo E with \$38,490 and the lowest in Cariboo J with \$23,616. Compared to the Cariboo Regional District and the Province of British Columbia, income in Williams Lake and some of the surrounding electoral areas was higher. Median income in Williams Lake was around 12% higher than the regional district and around 3% higher than provincial median income. Those areas with the highest median income also register the largest gender gaps.

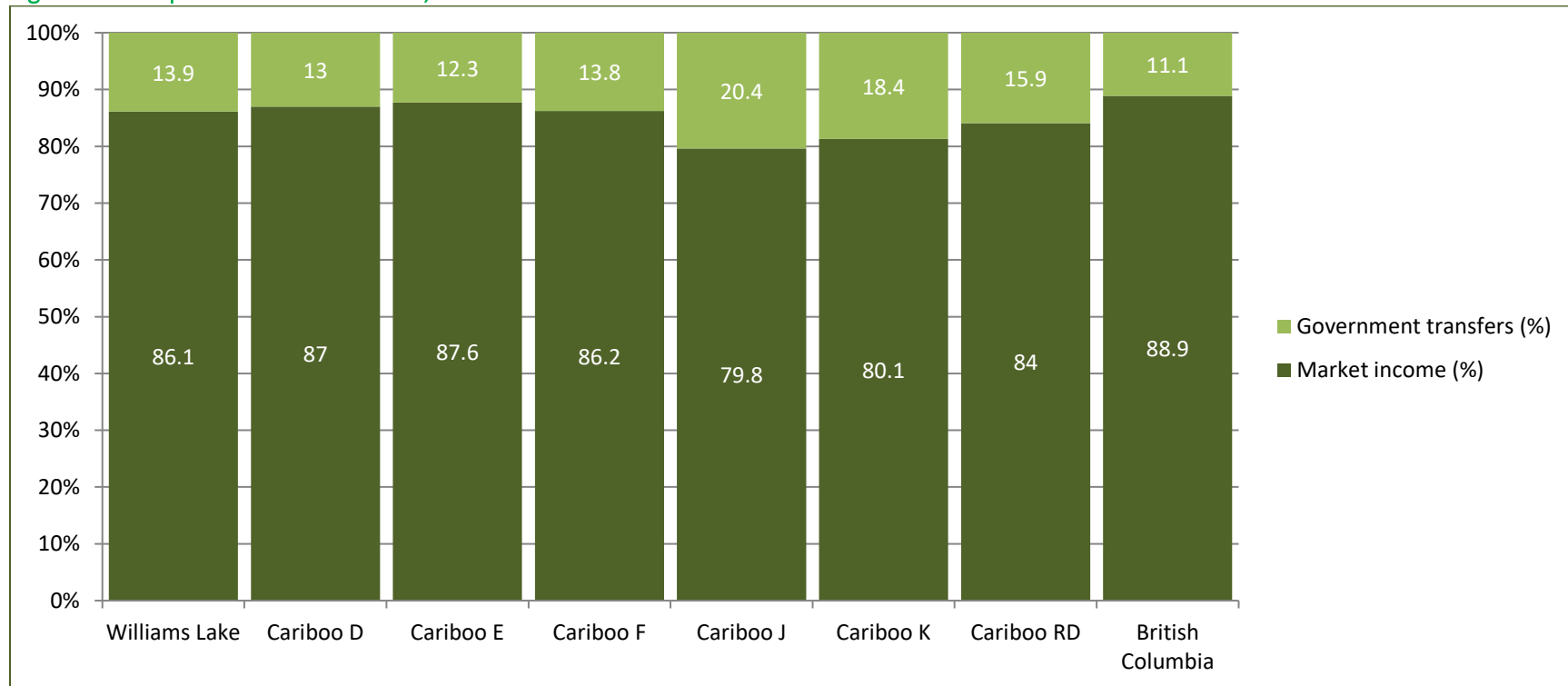
Figure 3.1 Median Total Income, 2015



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

The income data also reveals a lower dependency on government transfers in Williams Lake than in the regional district (see Figure 3.2). While province-wide 11% of income consists of government transfers, 16% rely on it in the Cariboo Regional District and 14% in Williams Lake. One reason government transfer dependence is highest in Cariboo J, with over 20%, could be that the community has a high median age and, consequently, many seniors who will be receiving a pension.

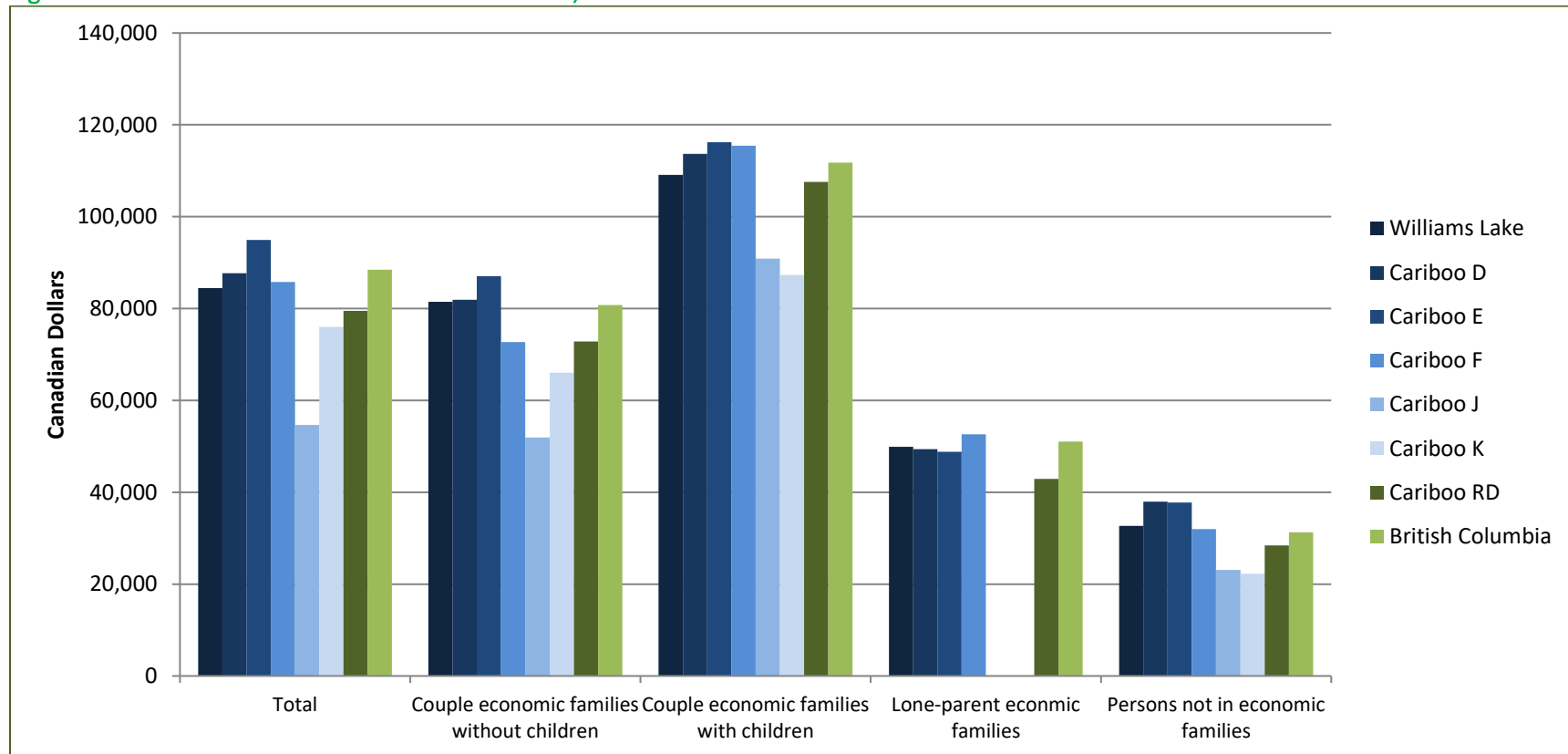
Figure 3.2 Composition of Total Income, 2015



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

An economic family, according to Statistics Canada, “refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law, adoption, or a foster relationship.”ⁱⁱⁱ A look at economic family income confirms a pattern where Williams Lake income is comparable to provincial income and regional income data for different types of economic families. The only exception are lone-parent families; they not only have low median income compared to other types of economic families of more than one person but the gap is even bigger in those areas recording the highest total median incomes (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Median Total Income of Economic Families, 2015



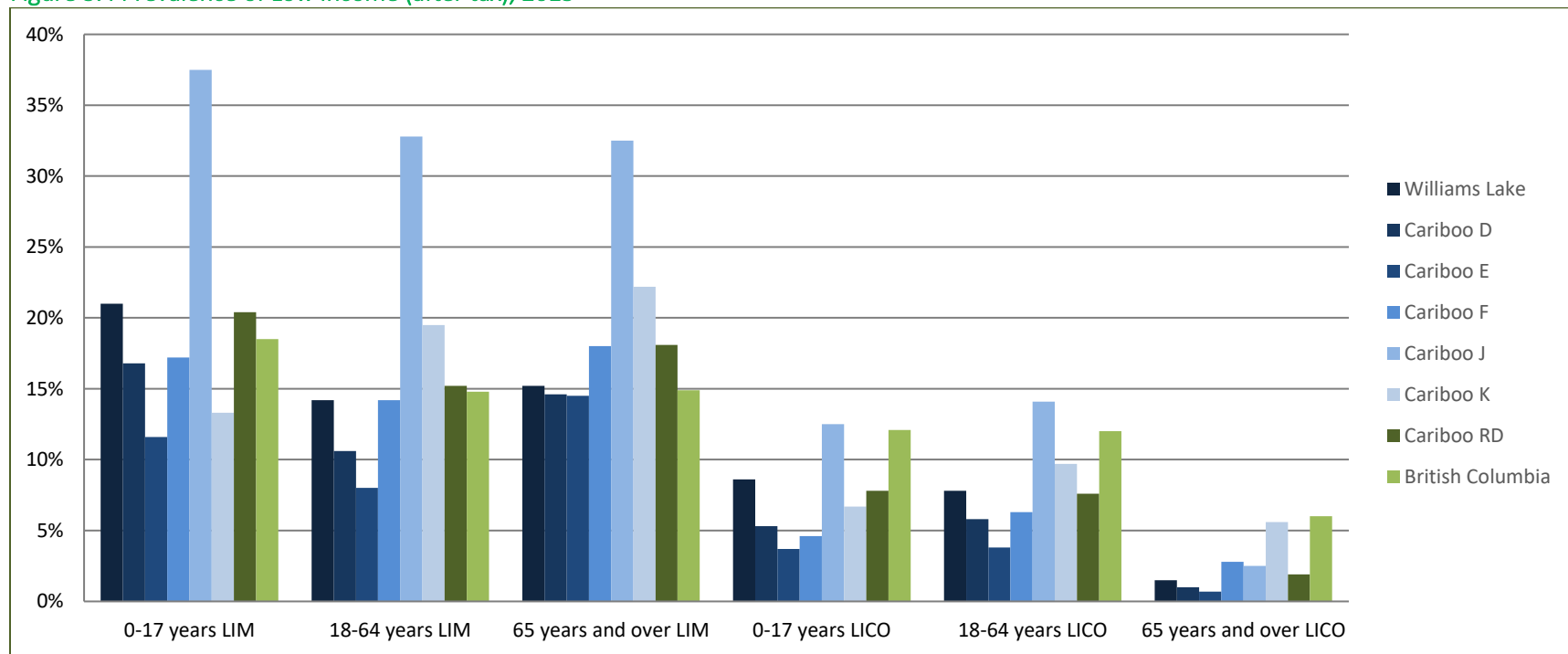
Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

Note: Data for lone-parent economic families in Cariboo J and K was not available.

The prevalence of low income for Williams Lake, the surrounding electoral areas, the regional district, and the province mirror median income findings in that those areas with the highest median incomes have the lowest prevalence of low income. Statistics Canada has adopted several definitions of low income, including the low income measure (LIM) and low income cut-offs (LICO). The LIM constitutes 50% of the median household income after adjustments to household needs. The LICOs are thresholds below which a family spends at least 20% percent more of their income on necessities than the average family.^{iv} Data in this profile refers to after tax income.

As Figure 3.4 demonstrates, both measures indicate that youth aged 0 to 17 years are the most vulnerable group in Williams Lake. When looking at LICO as an indicator of low-income, seniors appear to be the least vulnerable in all regions.

Figure 3.4 Prevalence of Low Income (after tax), 2015



Source: Statistics Canada. 2016. Census Program.

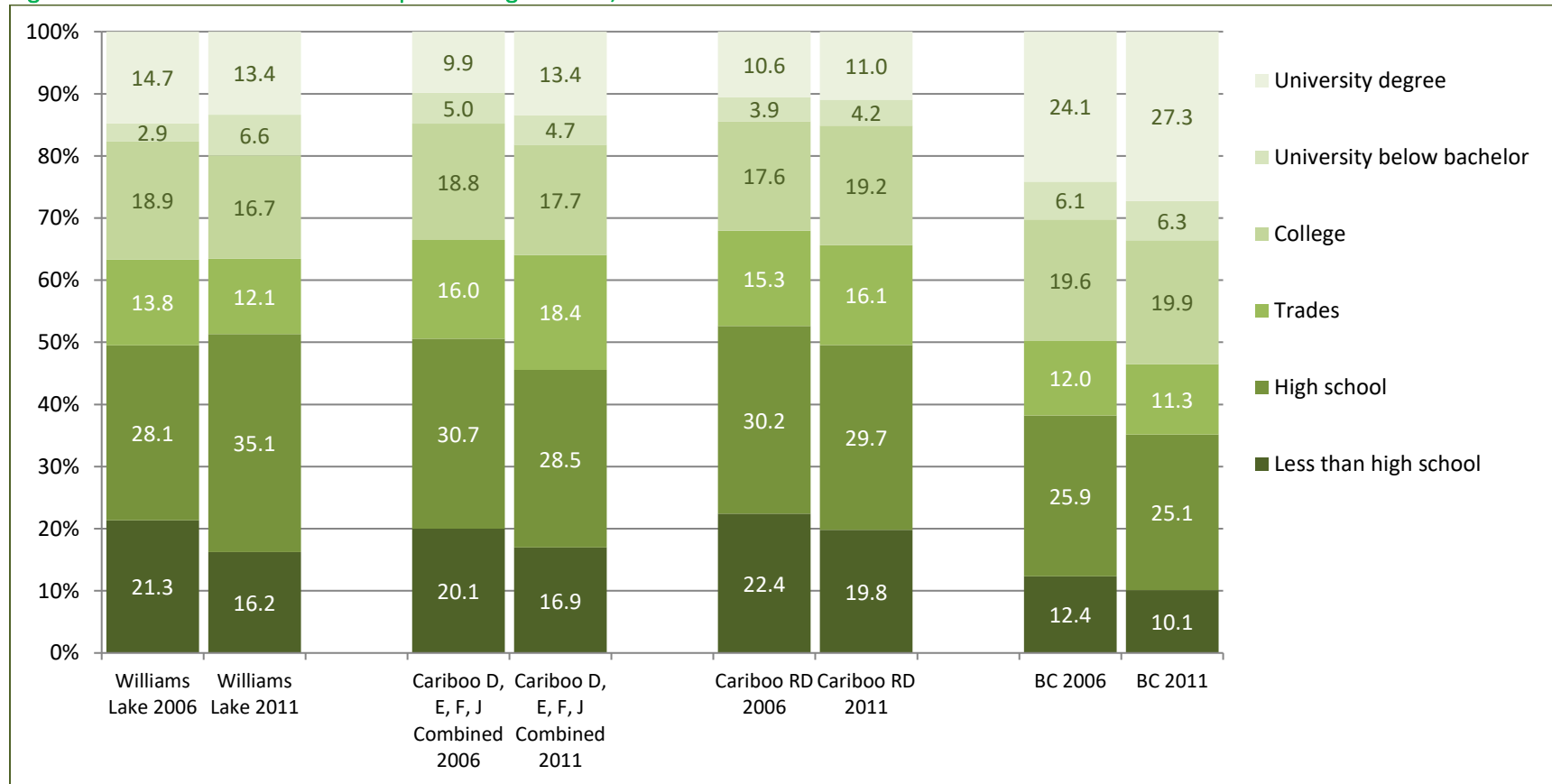
Educational Attainment

Education is linked to many aspects of a community's well-being, including employment, community capacity, income, and health.^v Therefore, education data provides insight not only into the level of educational attainment in the community but also informs about possible root causes of challenges in other areas of community well-being.

In order to present education data in Williams Lake, and track its change over time, this profile includes data on the highest level of education among the population aged 25 to 64 years. This represents the working age population, for whom level of education is most relevant, without including the younger population who are most likely to still be in the process of completing their education. Educational attainment data for 2006 and 2011 shows that around half of the population of Williams Lake have either not graduated from high school or have a high school certificate as their highest educational attainment. As presented in Figure 4.1, the regional district has similar outcomes, while province-wide, only a little over one-third of the working age population have no post-secondary qualifications.

Williams Lake improved its high school graduation rate between 2006 and 2011, but the percentage of the working age population without post-secondary education has increased slightly at the same time. Trades certificates are less represented in Williams Lake than in the surrounding electoral areas and the regional district but slightly more common than in the province. Meanwhile, the prevalence of university degrees in Williams Lake, while slightly higher than region-wide, is only around 50% of university degrees province-wide.

Figure 4.1 Educational Attainment Population Aged 25-64, 2006 and 2011



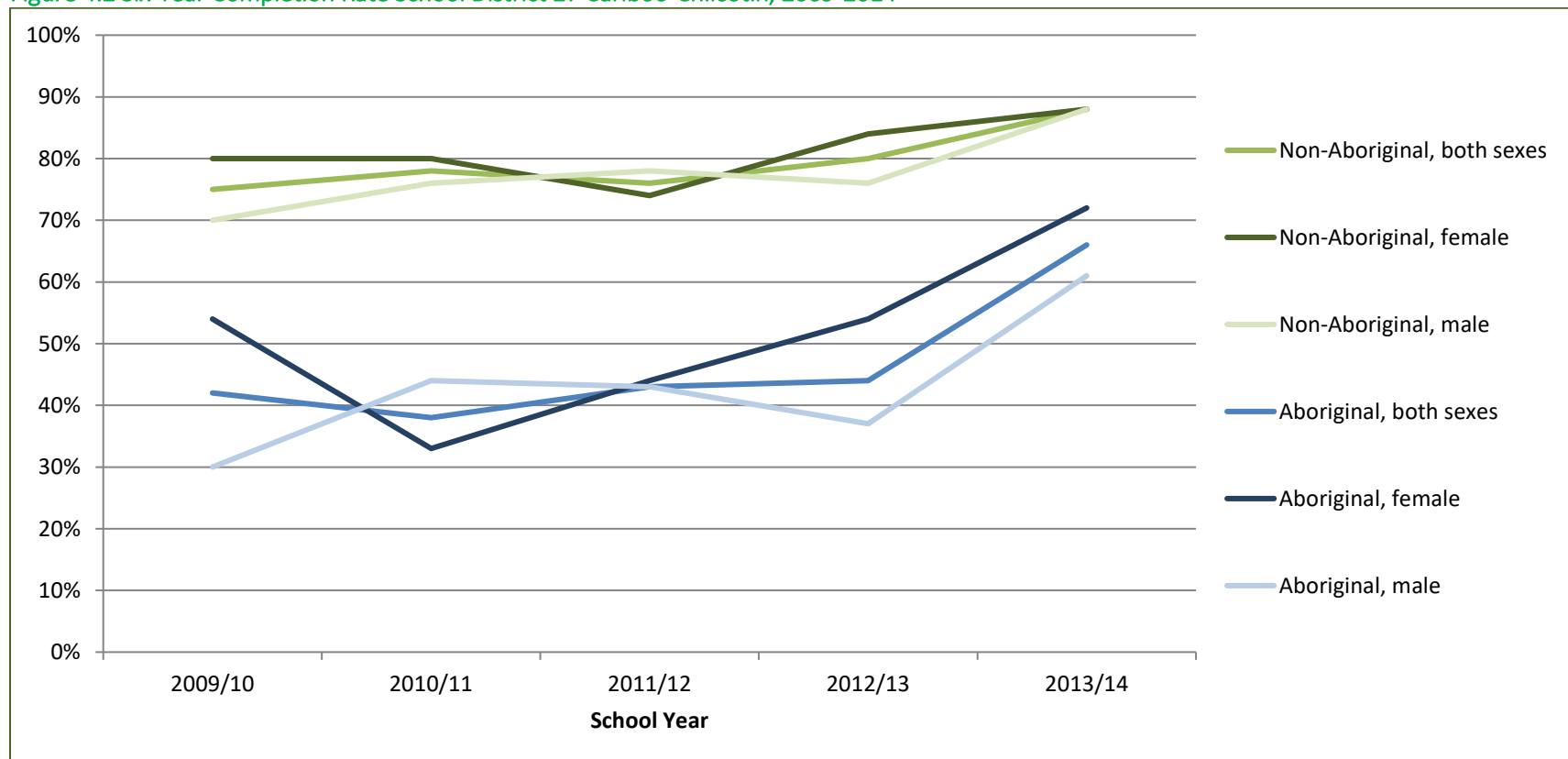
Source: Statistics Canada. 2006. Census Program.

Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

Note: 2011 National Household Survey data was not available for Cariboo K.

The six-year completion rate, a benchmark measure for student success, has increased over time in School District 27, which includes Williams Lake. According to the BC Ministry of Education, “[the] Six-Year Completion Rate is the proportion of students who graduate with a B.C. Certificate of Graduation (‘Dogwood’) or B.C. Adult Graduation Diploma (‘Adult Dogwood’) within six years from the first time they enroll in Grade 8.”^{vi} Between 2009/2010 and 2013/2014 the rate of Indigenous students graduating within six years of entering grade eight went up by 57%; the non-Indigenous rate increased by 17% (see Figure 4.2). While there is still a gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, as well as a gender gap among Indigenous students, the overall trend has been a decrease in gaps.

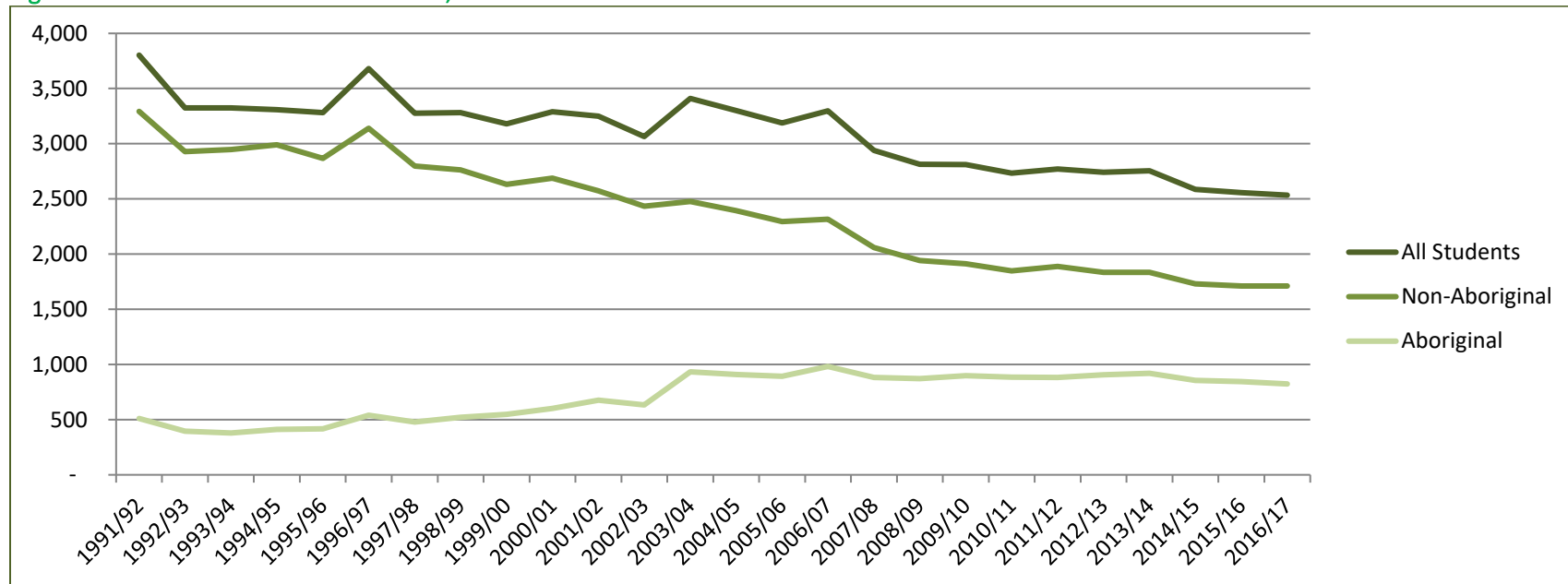
Figure 4.2 Six-Year Completion Rate School District 27 Cariboo-Chilcotin, 2009-2014



Source: BC Ministry of Education. 2014. Aboriginal Report 2009/10 - 2013/14: How Are We Doing? School District 027 Cariboo-Chilcotin.

As the population pyramids indicate (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2), Williams Lake has a proportionately decreasing share of children and youth in the population. It is, therefore, not unexpected that the K-12 headcount has undergone fluctuations and has overall seen a decrease since 1991; numbers have decreased from 3,803 students in 1991/1992 to 2,534 students in 2016/2017. It should be noted that Indigenous student numbers show a somewhat opposite trend with increases from 1991 to 2003 and mostly stable numbers since then, as shown in Figure 4.3. This indicates a comparatively young Indigenous population for Williams Lake.

Figure 4.3 K-12 Headcount Williams Lake, 1991-2016



Source: BC Ministry of Education. 2014-2016. Student Headcounts by Grade.

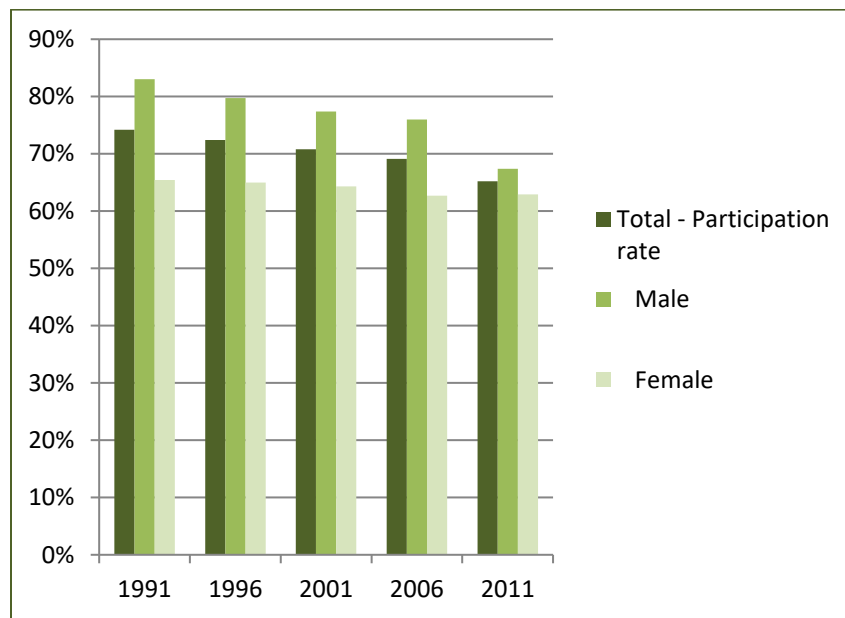
The Early Development Instrument is a questionnaire that is completed by Kindergarten teachers and measures children’s individual developmental progress in five areas, including physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge. As such, it is a tool to assess the students’ vulnerability in areas that are known to affect their adult lives.^{vii} In terms of early childhood development, the Cariboo Regional District falls into the most vulnerable one-quarter of all regions in the province.^{viii}

Employment and Labour Force

The employment situation in a community can be expressed through a number of indicators; including measures of employment opportunities, community members’ participation in the labour force, and economic diversification.

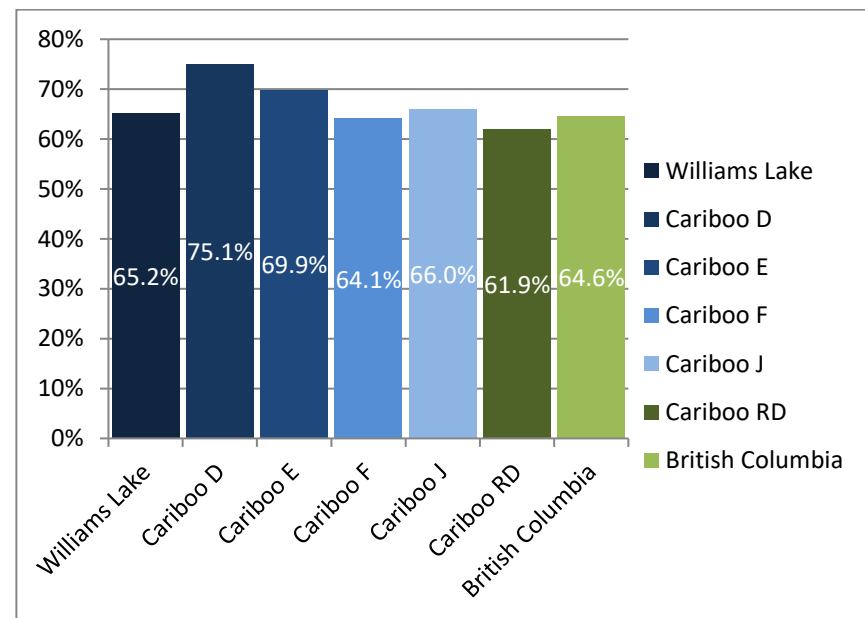
The labour force participation rate in Williams Lake, which is the labour force expressed as a percentage of the total population aged 15 years and older, has decreased steadily from 74% in 1991 to 65% in 2011 (Figure 5.1). The most significant decrease happened in the male population. It should be noted that the total participation rate in Williams Lake was slightly above British Columbia and regional district participation rates of just under 65% and 62% respectively in 2011, while it was below participation rates in most of the surrounding electoral areas (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1 Labour Force Participation Williams Lake, 1991-2011



Source: Statistics Canada. 1991-2006. Census Program.
 Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

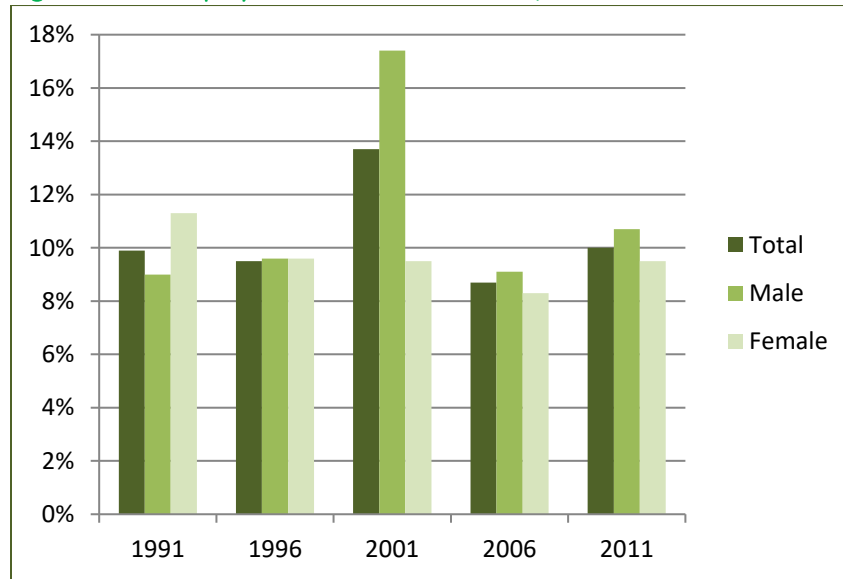
Figure 5.2 Labour Force Participation, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.
 Note: 2011 National Household Survey data was not available for Cariboo K.

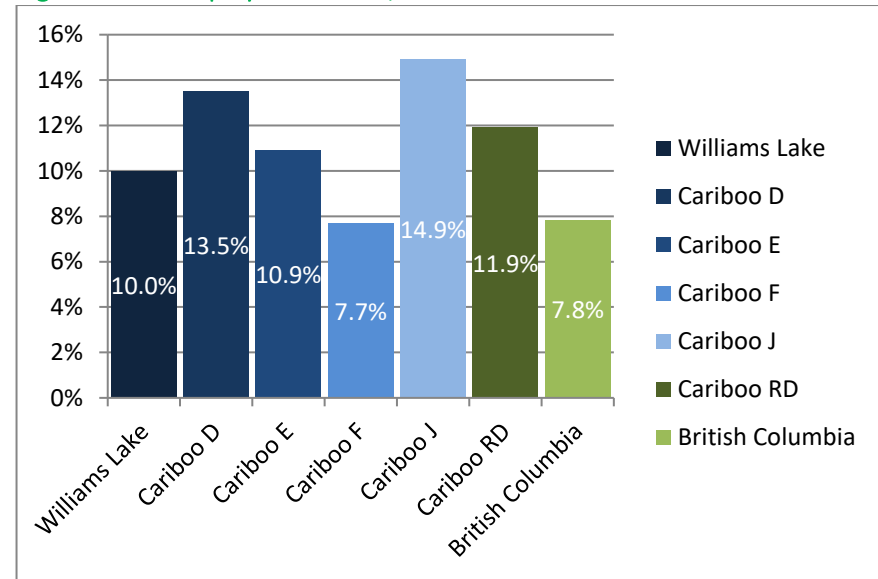
As depicted in Figure 5.3, unemployment has been mostly steady below 10% in Williams Lake with the exception of 2001, when it reached a high of almost 14%. Unemployment in the electoral areas surrounding Williams Lake in 2011 ranges from below 8% in Cariboo F to almost 15% in Cariboo J. With 10% unemployment in 2011, Williams Lake is situated between the Cariboo Regional District with almost 12% and the Province of British Columbia with below 8% (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.3 Unemployment Rate Williams Lake, 1991-2011



Source: Statistics Canada. 1991-2006. Census Program.
 Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

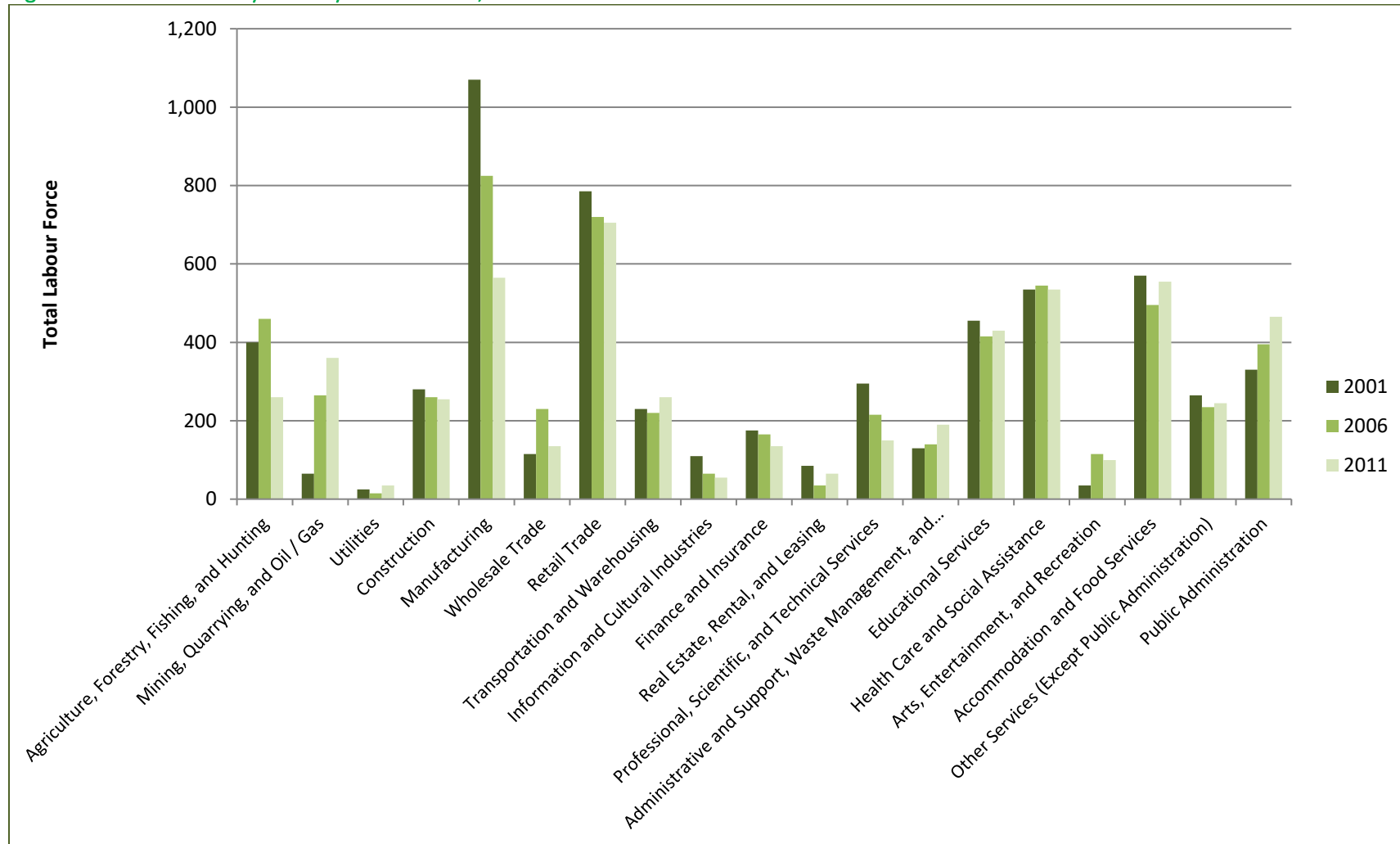
Figure 5.4 Unemployment Rates, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada. 2006. Census Program.

In 2001, Williams Lake was mainly dependent on manufacturing, which employed 18% of the labour force, followed by retail trade, which employed 13%. Figure 5.5 illustrates that, by 2011, the local economy had somewhat diversified. Retail trade had become the industry that employed the largest share of the labour force of almost 13%. Manufacturing and accommodation and food services each put over 10% of the labour force to work.

Figure 5.5 Labour Force by Industry Williams Lake, 2001-2011



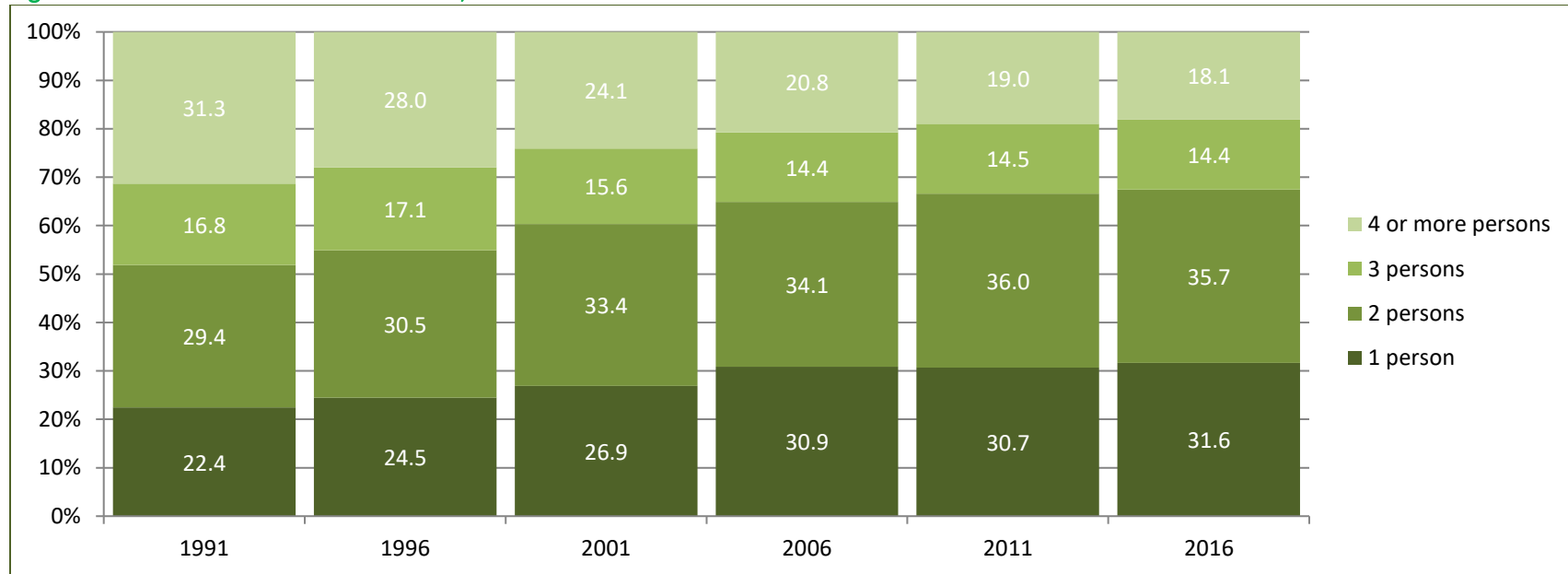
Source: Statistics Canada. 2001-2006. Census Program.
 Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

Housing

Several types of information are of interest in the context of housing. These include the characteristics and condition of the existing housing stock as well as information about the community that allows for conclusions about housing needs. The housing profile for Williams Lake includes information on household size as well as information on the housing stock.

Population projections for the Cariboo-Chilcotin Local Health Area suggest that the seniors’ population will continue to see strong growth while especially the age groups of children and the middle-aged working population between 45 and 64 years of age will decline further.^{ix} The implications for the housing stock include smaller households of young adults and seniors with increased accessibility needs. Data on household size and the trends since 1991, as depicted in Figure 6.1, show that one- and two-person households are the dominant household size, while larger households have become progressively less represented in the community.

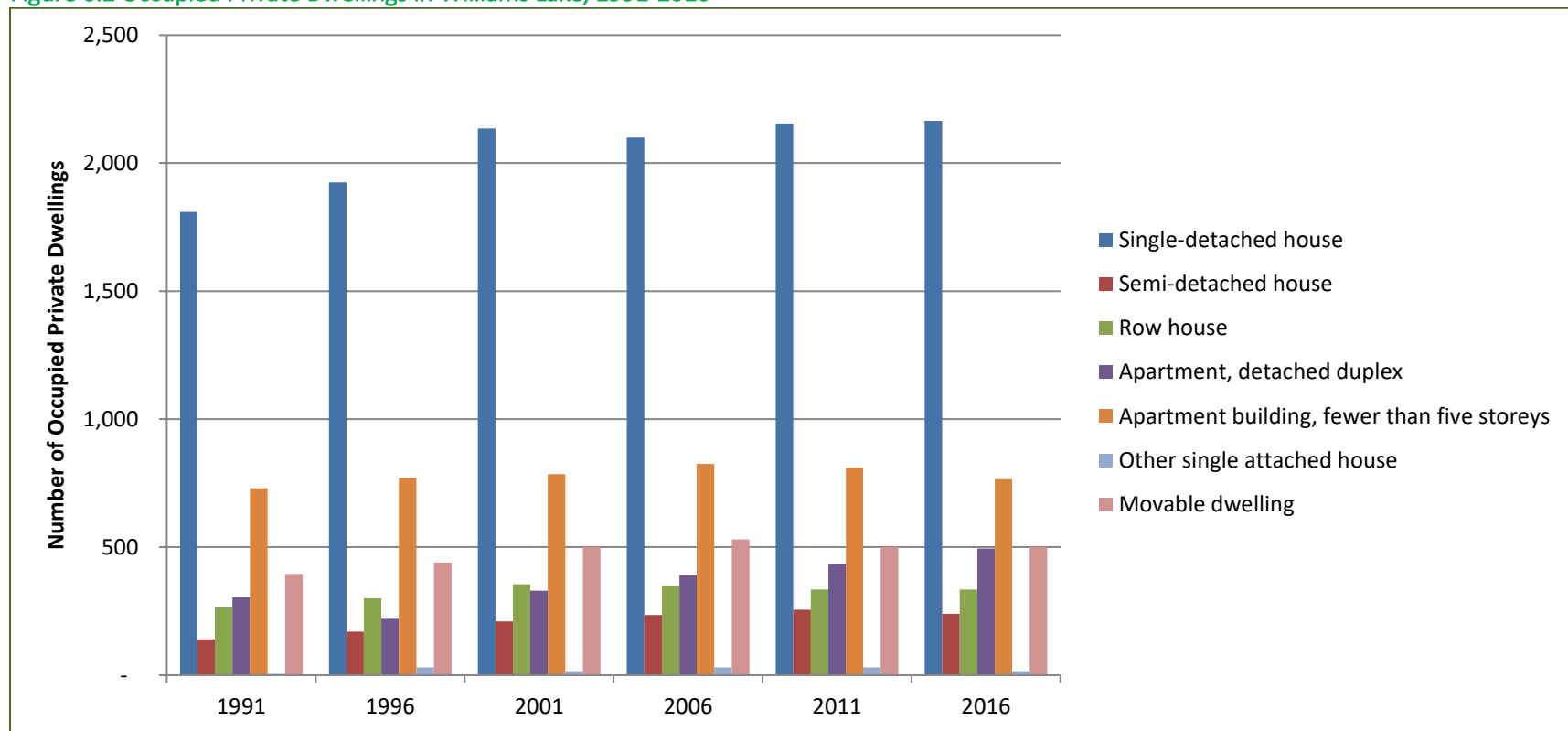
Figure 6.1 Household Size in Williams Lake, 1991-2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 1991-2016. Census Program.

In combination with information about the predominant household size, information about the characteristics of the housing stock is an important tool in determining whether the structural housing needs are met. Constituting close to 50% of the housing stock, single detached houses have been the most common type of dwelling for several decades, followed by apartment buildings and movable dwellings. Occupied detached duplex apartments and semi-detached houses have seen a steady increase since 1996 (Figure 6.2). Data for the surrounding electoral areas indicates that, in the rural areas outside of Williams Lake in 2016, 82% of occupied dwellings are single detached dwellings and a further 16% are movable dwellings.

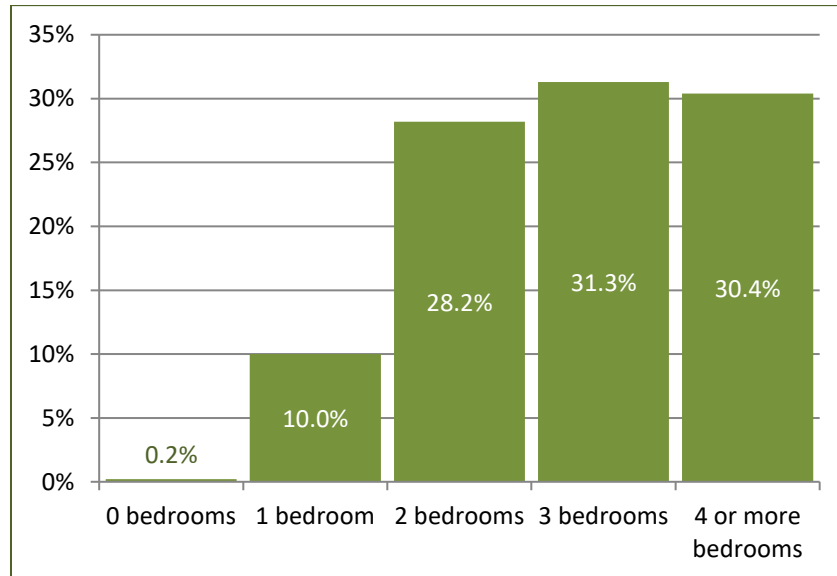
Figure 6.2 Occupied Private Dwellings in Williams Lake, 1991-2016



Source: Statistics Canada. 1991-2016. Census Program.
 Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

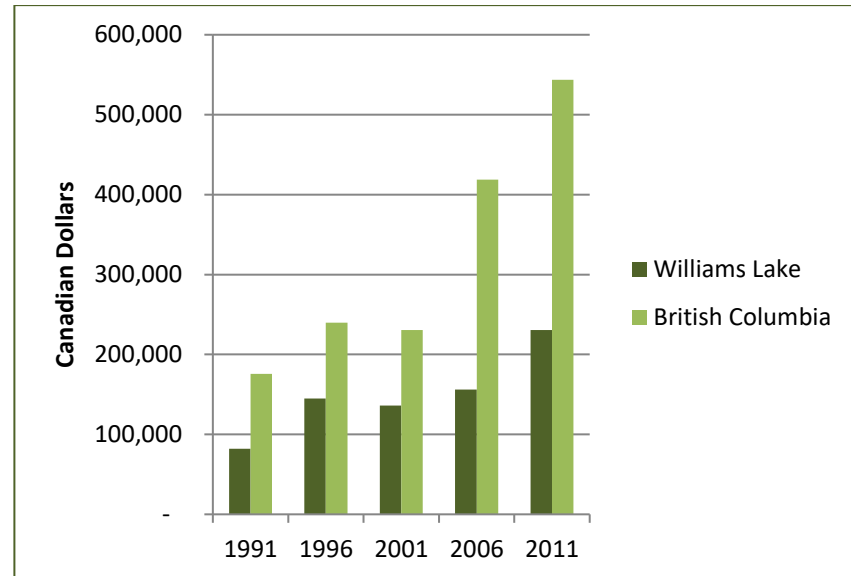
Figure 6.3 shows that two-thirds of dwellings in the Cariboo Regional District had at least three bedrooms in 2011. The average number of rooms per occupied private dwelling in the regional district in 2011 was 6.8 compared to 6.6 in Williams Lake, which has been a slight increase over 6.4 in 1991^x.

Figure 6.3 Number of Bedrooms in the Cariboo Regional District, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

Figure 6.4 Average Value of Owned Dwellings, 1991-2011

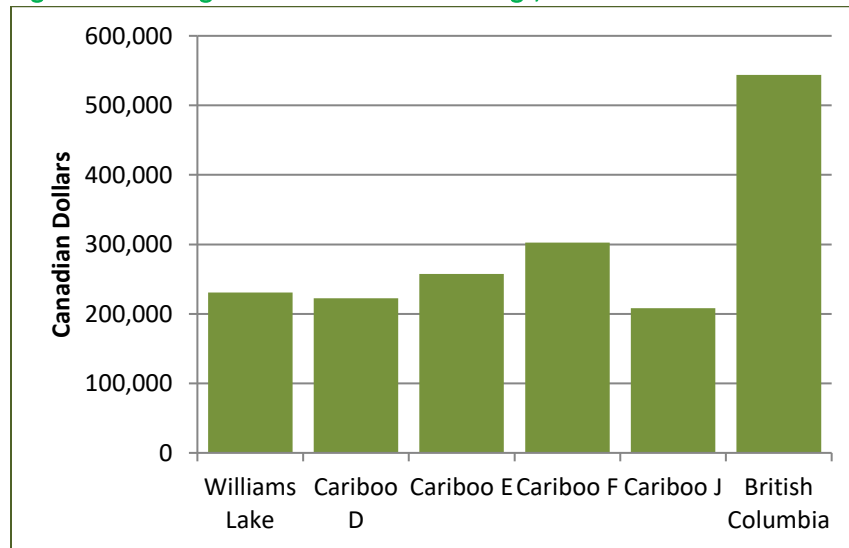


Source: Statistics Canada. 1991-2006. Census Program.
 Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

Roughly three-quarters of the housing stock in the Cariboo Regional District in 2011 consisted of dwellings that were at least 20 years old. In terms of the condition of the housing stock, 89% only needed minor repairs or regular maintenance, while 11% required major repairs. The housing stock in Williams Lake mirrors the condition of the housing stock in the regional district; close to 77% of the housing stock in Williams Lake in 2011 was at least 20 years old, 91% required only minor repairs and maintenance, and 9% were in need of major repairs.^{xi} Besides expected repair and maintenance needs, the age of a dwelling may hold information about accessibility; older housing stock is less likely to meet present day accessibility standards, which is of particular interest to seniors.

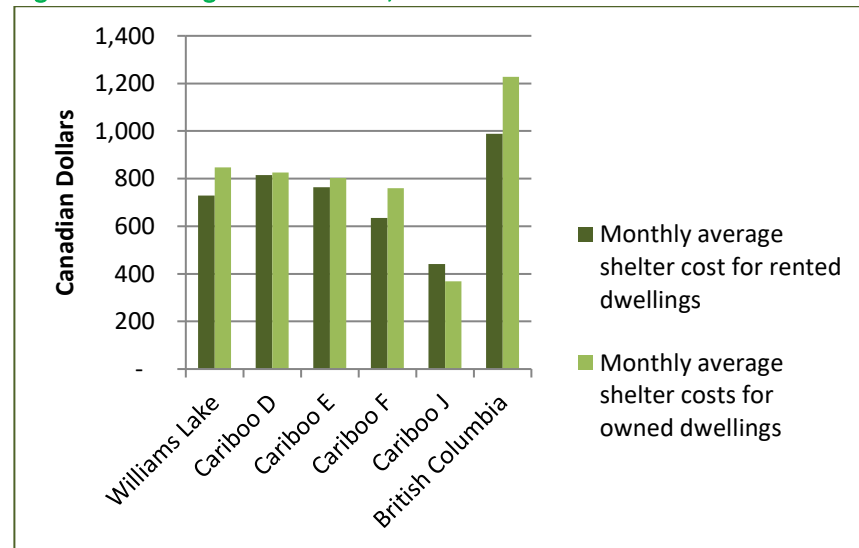
The average value of owned dwellings has seen an overall increase in Williams Lake, and in 2011, the last currently available number, it was \$230,719. This constituted 42% of the average house value for all of British Columbia. While the development of housing values in Williams Lake mirrors that of throughout the province, including a decrease in 2001, Figure 6.4 depicts a slower growth for Williams Lake compared to real estate prices province-wide. As Figure 6.5 demonstrates, real estate values in Williams Lake are situated above some of the surrounding electoral areas and below others.

Figure 6.5 Average Value of Owned Dwellings, 2011



Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

Figure 6.6 Average Shelter Costs, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

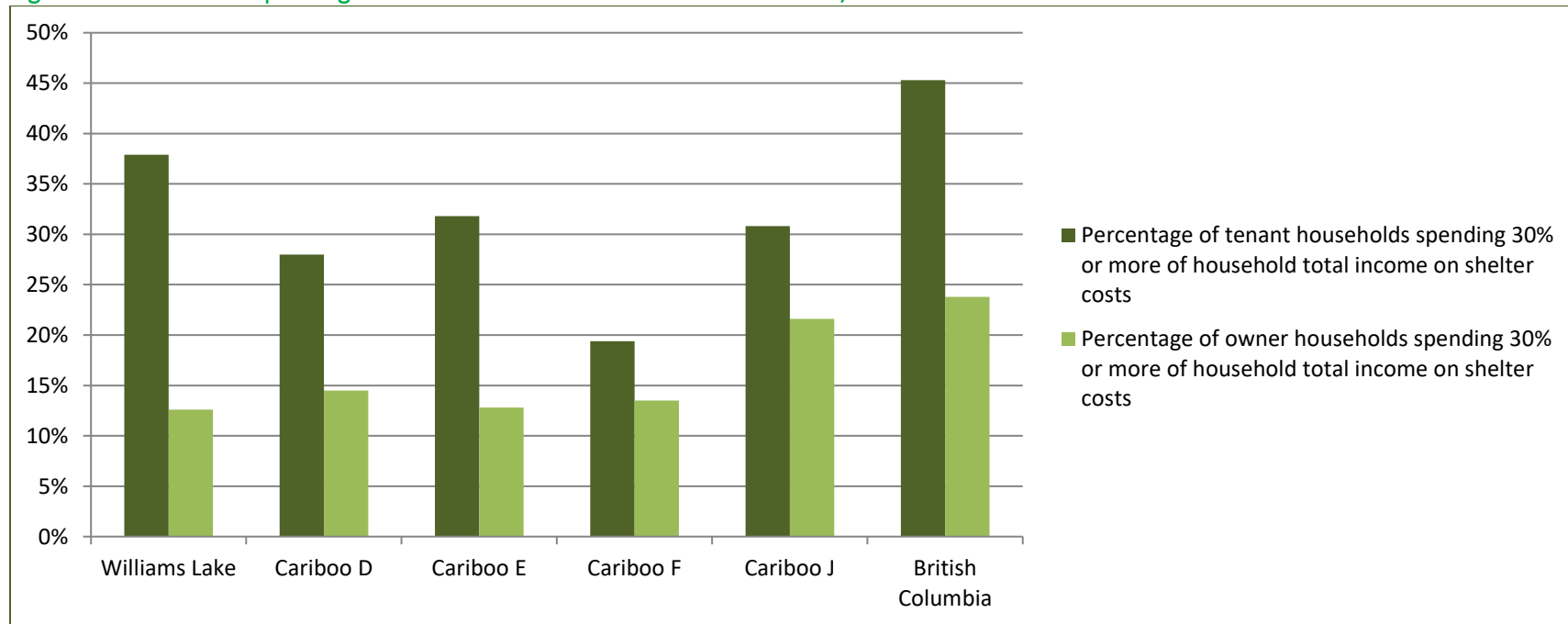
Note: 2011 National Household Survey data was not available for Cariboo K.

In 2011, 63% of respondents reported owning their accommodation, while 37% reported that they rented their accommodation in Williams Lake. This ratio has been fairly steady over the past decades.^{xii} Owner major payments in Williams Lake are higher than in the surrounding electoral areas. As in most of the surrounding areas and the province, Figure 6.6 shows that, in 2011, average monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings in Williams Lake and of the surrounding areas, which is defined as monthly rent and the costs of electricity, heat, and municipal services, is below monthly average shelter costs for owned dwellings, which include all shelter payments like mortgage payment and the costs of

electricity, heat, and municipal services.^{xiii} Gross rent in Williams Lake and its surrounding electoral areas ranges between 45% and 82% of gross rent province-wide; owner major payments in Williams Lake and surrounding area range from 30% to 69% of owner major payments province-wide.

Tenant households are more likely to spend a larger share of their income on housing than home owners. In 2011, 38% of tenants in Williams Lake spent 30% or more of their income on shelter costs, while only 13% of home owners spent 30% or more of their income on their shelter costs. Figure 6.7 shows that the gap between tenants and owners in Williams Lake is larger than in other areas. It also demonstrates that owner households are less vulnerable than in any of the surrounding electoral areas and in British Columbia.

Figure 6.7 Households Spending 30% or more of their Income on Shelter Costs, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada. 2011. National Household Survey.

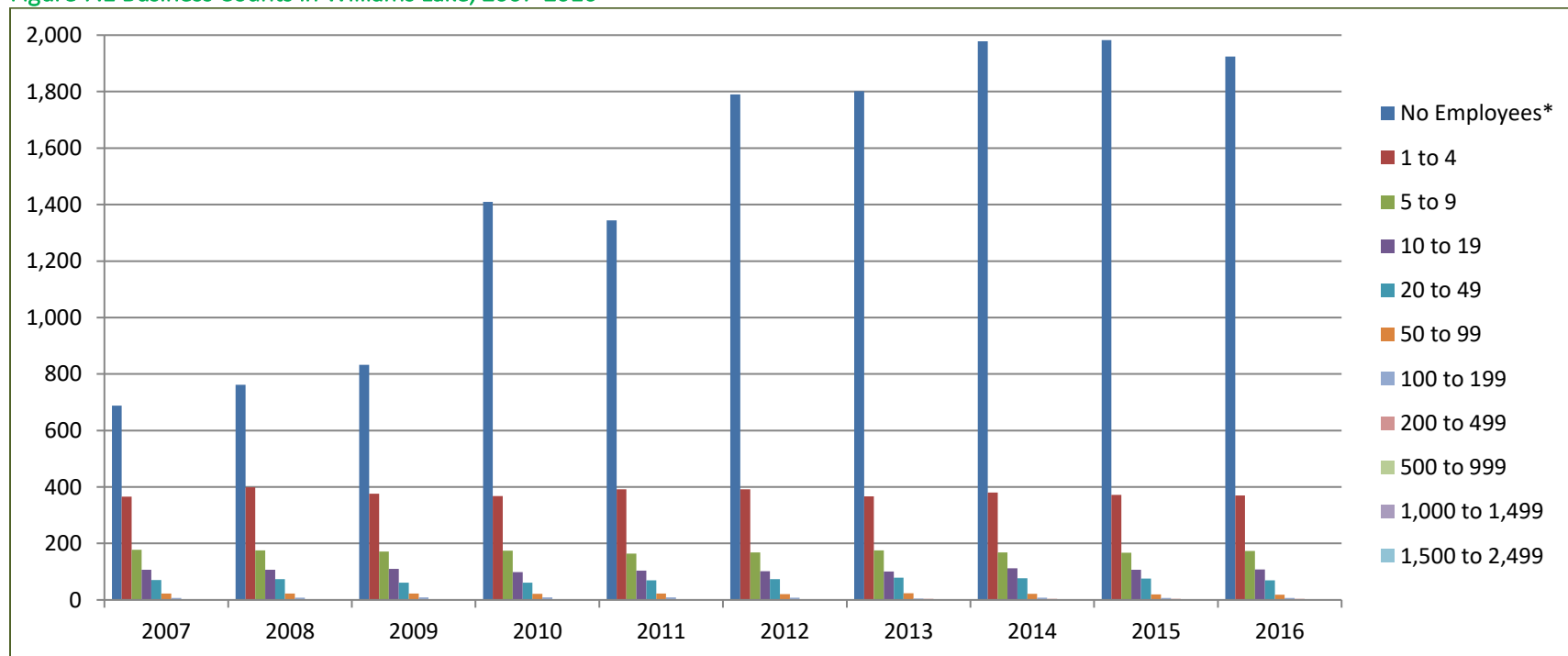
Note: 2011 National Household Survey data was not available for Cariboo K.

Business and Industry

Business registrations are an indication of employers and sources of income in an area. Information about the size of businesses further describes the business situation.

The number of businesses registered in Williams Lake has seen steady growth between 2007 and 2014 and a slight decrease in the last two years. Gains and losses of businesses have mainly happened with businesses with no employees (see Figure 7.1). In 2016, BC Statistics records a total of 2,674 businesses registered in Williams Lake. Of those, 1,924, or 72%, have no employees, and all but 12 businesses range in the small to medium enterprise category of under 100 employees.

Figure 7.1 Business Counts in Williams Lake, 2007-2016



Source: BC Statistics. 2016. Number of Businesses & Employment by Industry.

Endnotes

ⁱ Statistics Canada. 2001, 2011, 2016. Census Program.

ⁱⁱ Statistics Canada. Publications: Aboriginal Statistics at a Glance. Median Age. Available at <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-645-x/2010001/median-age-eng.htm>. Accessed 21 October 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Statistics Canada. Census Dictionary. Available at <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/dict/fam011-eng.cfm>. Accessed 12 October 2017.

^{iv} Statistics Canada. 2010. Publications: Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. Low Income Definitions. Available at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0011x/2012001/notes/low-faible-eng.htm>. Accessed 21 October 2017.

^v Statistics Canada. 2013. What Makes Canadians Healthy or Unhealthy? Available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health/what-makes-canadians-healthy-unhealthy.html>. Accessed on 29 September 2017.

^{vi} BC Ministry of Education. 2014. Completion Rate Field Definitions. Available at <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/bc-schools-six-year-completion-rate/resource/1affe149-d58b-4f31-a052-90fd3b1c492f>. Accessed 29 September 2017.

^{vii} Early Development Instrument. <https://edi.offordcentre.com/about/what-is-the-edi/> Accessed on 7 September 2017.

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