

2025

Community Safety & Well-being



Through Vital Signs data, this presentation shows why keeping Prince Edward County strong will require **welcoming new residents**, removing barriers that make it difficult to **attract and retain workers**, and **supporting young families** who want to put down roots.



YouTube

View the presentation at
<https://youtu.be/GY3yZGTnhvl>

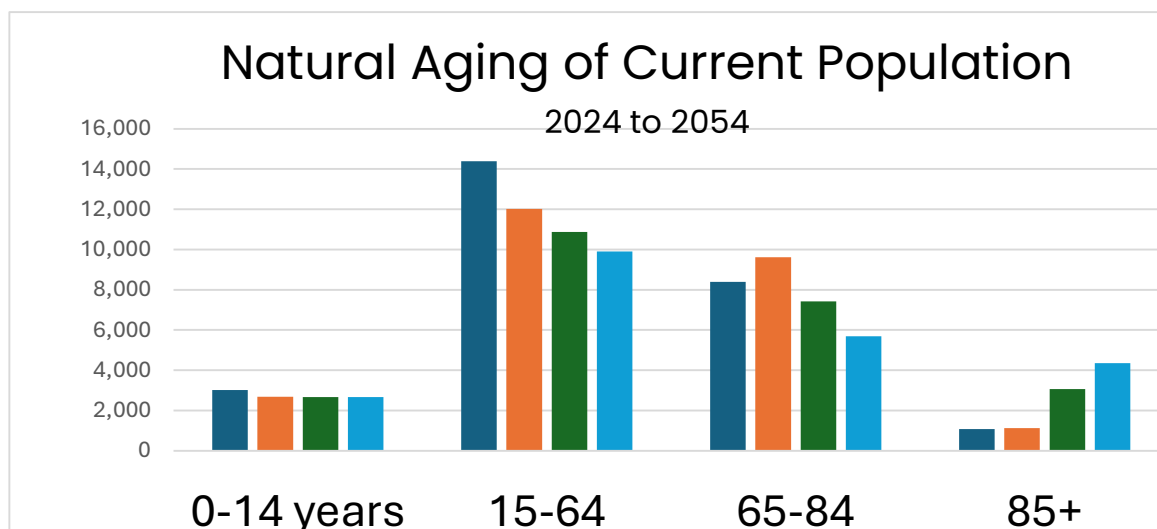
Prince Edward County

Community Safety & Well-being / Vital Signs workshop

“See What’s Changing. Plan What’s Next” - November 20/25

A summary of the Vital Signs presentation on data-informed planning, with emphasis on demographic change, population shifts, and the broader impacts on the community

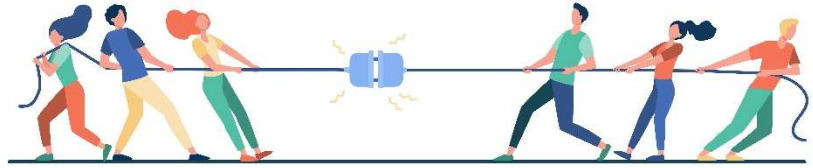
- Prince Edward County’s population is no longer sustaining itself.
- Deaths now outnumber births ([Statistics Canada Components of Population Change](#)), and although the pandemic brought a short-term boost of new residents and young families, the underlying trend continues. Already, the number of children aged 0–4 has dropped by about 10% (nearly 100 children) since 2022. ([Statistics Canada Population Estimates](#))
- Without ongoing in-migration (new residents), natural aging alone would shift the population sharply older by 2054 — with 44% aged 65+ and nearly 20% aged 85+ — increasing pressure on healthcare systems.



- A shrinking working-age population would also mean fewer workers, fewer taxpayers to support local services, and fewer young families contributing to future growth. Only 53.5% of Prince Edward County’s population in 2024 is of working age (15 to 64), compared to 67% across Ontario. This is among the lowest proportion of working-age residents in Ontario. ([Ontario Population Projections](#)). Labour shortages are worsened by the high out-migration rate of working-age residents. ([Statistics Canada: Annual Tax Filer Migration Estimates by Census Division](#))

To keep PEC strong and thriving — to be able to support essential services such as education, healthcare, and programs — it’s essential to **welcome new residents, attract and retain workers, and support families**

Change can be hard, and some may resist it, but embracing new people and new ideas is key to sustaining a vibrant, resilient community.



Key Barriers Identified in community discussions:

- Limited access to affordable housing
- Low wages and limited full-time employment opportunities
- Seasonal or unstable work
- Insufficient programs for children and youth
- Limited childcare capacity
- Distance and transportation challenges

Guest speakers provided updates on these key sectors: Affordable Housing, Primary Healthcare and Public Transit.



Affordable Housing updates

- **Affordability** in Prince Edward County is now defined as housing that costs no more than 30% of household income or is priced at least 20% below the median market rent. This is for rental housing only.
- **CMHC Rental Market Recognition** – CMHC has agreed to recognize PEC’s local rental market rates, strengthening the County’s competitiveness for affordable housing funding.
- **Affordable Housing Developments Approved for Construction** – Approved developments include 5 sites for 390 units.
- **Provincial Infrastructure Investment** – The Ontario government is investing up to \$18.3 million in PEC infrastructure to support the construction of 3,895 new homes, including funding for drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems.
- **Real-Time Rental Housing Database** – Residents can list and search rental housing stock and rates for free via the [Housing Options portal](#) (Prince Edward County Municipal Services).

- **Affordable Housing Application System** – Supports applications for rental housing with rents at least 20% below median market rates through the [AHC Tenant Application system](#). Currently at 330 applications.
- **An Emphasis on Preventing Homelessness** – PEC is actively working to prevent homelessness through various initiatives and programs. The [2023–28 Housing Plan Update](#) outlines a strategic roadmap to address housing and homelessness across the region. This will dovetail with PELASS's update to its homelessness plan.

Exploring New Approaches to Affordable Housing

- **Public/Private Partnerships (P3s)** – The Housing Corporation is working with P3 arrangements to manage affordable housing units within private residential developments.
- **Revitalizing Vacant Properties** – Transforming unused buildings such as schools and a retirement home into housing opportunities.
- **Alternative Housing Models** that maximize existing resources – Exploring home-sharing and co-housing initiatives. PEC has over 14,000 unused bedrooms that may have some capacity for home-sharing. ([Census Mapper](#))
- **Land Trusts for Housing Preservation** – Nonprofits hold land or property to benefit the community, ensuring long-term affordable housing.
- **Community Bonds** – Enabling community financing to support housing initiatives.
- **Forgivable Loans for Affordable Rental Units** – The municipality provided forgivable loans to support the creation of long-term affordable rental units on residential properties, resulting in seven completed secondary suites.
- **Zoning Bylaw Improvements** – Updates are being explored to allow more units on existing lots, including additional dwelling units (ADUs), “granny houses,” and small homes.
- **Community Benefits Framework** – An initiative through Thrive PEC, this provides guidance for public and private sector investments that benefit all residents, including local employment and procurement and allocations of affordable housing units.



Primary Healthcare updates – see princeedwardfht.com for details

- **Team-Based Primary Healthcare** – Doctors and other healthcare professionals are shifting more a collaborative team-based approach, streamlining resources and sharing responsibility for patient care.
- **Doctor Attraction and Retention** – Since 2022, PEC has successfully attracted seven new doctors, competing effectively with communities across Canada. [CountyDocs.ca](#)
- **Health Care Connect Update** – Ontario plans to connect all residents on the [Health Care Connect](#) (HCC) waitlist as of January 1, 2025, to a family doctor or nurse practitioner by Spring 2026. Residents can remain with their current doctor while on the HCC waitlist.
- **PEFHT Community Clinic** – Available to PEC residents without a primary care provider or whose provider is more than 120 km away. [Appointments are required](#).



Public Transit updates – see [CountyTransit.ca](https://www.countytransit.ca) for details

- **Ridership continues to increase.**
 - **Scheduled Routes** – Picton ⇄ Bloomfield ⇄ Belleville, five trips per weekday. Service is expanding to offer more options.
 - **Ride on Demand** – Book a ride anywhere in the County or transfer to Belleville for just \$5. Available on weekdays, subject to seat availability.
 - **Specialized Service** for people 55+ and people with disabilities.
 - **Navigate with Google Maps** – County Transit routes are on Google Maps, making it easier to plan trips and connect to trains or buses outside PEC.
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Sustaining Our Future: Innovation Through Demographic Change

The group discussions focused on the questions below, and their responses beyond the main barriers are summarized in the following sections.

- **Young Family Attraction & Retention** – How do we draw young families in and help them build lasting roots?
- **Engaging & Retaining Youth** – What would make young people choose to stay, return, or thrive here?
- **Economic & Workforce Innovation** – How can our unique demographics become a driver of creativity and new opportunities?
- **Age as an Asset** – How can we better recognize and leverage the skills, experience, and strengths of older adults?

Young Family Attraction & Retention

- Welcoming, inclusive and safe community
- Seeing population change as an opportunity to welcome greater cultural and racial diversity.
- Childcare including outside 9-5 hours
- Help schools make students safe
- Simpler school registration
- Better systems navigation ie. how to find resources, events etc. – a community calendar is coming soon
- More ways to know neighbours
- Social Opportunities and Connection – Women often find it easier to create social networks, while men may face more challenges. A local example is a group of men, including several doctors, who regularly gather in a shed to sing sea shanties, showing creative ways to build camaraderie. Repair cafés were also mentioned as an opportunity for cross-generational socialization and skill-building.

Engaging & Retaining Youth

- Limited transit is a major barrier, especially for youth in rural areas. Previously, late buses after school enabled these students to participate in after-school activities.
- Living classrooms – an educational approach that uses real-world environments as a hands-on learning space
- Post-secondary placements and volunteering opportunities
- Volunteer opportunities that are relevant, attractive and accessible for youth – options in trades, art, healthcare etc.
- Include Youth in community planning – Initiatives like the Delhi Hackathon were inclusive, engaging, and successful, bringing diverse perspectives to the table.
- Entrance-level jobs with professional development opportunities ie. summer jobs at the municipality for high school age youth
- Community donation programs for instruments, supplies etc.
- Youth facilities and third spaces
- Trauma informed supports, starting from a young age
- Better/more youth services (recreation, educational support, music etc.)
- Hosting bigger events together – a mix of demographics ie. Blue Jays game at the Crystal Palace

Economic & Workforce Innovation

- Maximize participation of people already in the community who are not currently in the workforce—particularly those who need skills development, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and parents needing childcare or respite—focusing on opportunities in healthcare and trades.
- Encourage more local employers to pay Living Wages. [Ontario Living Wage Network](#)
- Help with employee housing.
- Help employers acquire talent and participants to “hit the ground running.”
- Subsidize apprenticeships, trades in particular.
- Provide mentorship.
- The “Earn and Learn” program at Community Living Prince Edward not only builds a talent pipeline but also provides financial support, enabling mature students to pursue training.
- Loyalist College healthcare students can travel to work placements at the PECM Hospital and H.J. McFarland Home via a HealthPULSE shuttle.
- The provincial funding structure has led to the loss of roughly 600 college programs, with smaller campuses being hit hardest. As a result, students must travel to larger towns or cities to access many of these programs. For example, culinary programs have been reduced or discontinued at Loyalist College, St. Lawrence College, and George Brown College.
- In a competitive landscape for skilled workers, what unique strengths can PEC highlight?

Age as an Asset

- Mentorship programs, volunteer networks, intergenerational projects such as repair cafés, cultivating purpose
 - Human Library
 - The Human Library lets people “borrow” others for one-on-one conversations to hear their life stories. Senior adults bring valuable experience, wisdom, and perspective, helping break down stereotypes. The program benefits all ages: younger participants gain insight and mentorship, while older adults feel valued and connected, fostering empathy and cross-generational understanding.
 - Support age-inclusive workplaces
 - **Why:** Experience matters. Older workers bring a wealth of knowledge, practical skills, and institutional memory, and they can provide mentorship that helps teams grow and succeed.
 - People are living longer, healthier lives. While this is positive, it also means retirement savings must stretch over a longer period — sometimes 25–30 years or more.
 - Including older workers benefits everyone: it eases labour shortages, expands access to talent, helps businesses serve an aging market, and could add \$56 billion to Canada’s GDP if employment rates for those over 55 matched top-performing countries (eg. Iceland, Japan, Germany).
 - **How:** Encourage flexible hours, phased-retirement options, and anti-ageism policies.
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If you would like to contribute ideas or energy to any of these initiatives, please contact:

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If you have any questions about the data, or would like a presentation tailored for your community group, please contact:

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