

Change in non-metro population, 2014

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Highlights

- As a whole, Ontario’s non-metro population grew up to 2006 but there has been virtually no change since that time.
- However, some parts of non-metro Ontario are growing. Since 2006, there has been population growth in one-third to one-half of non-metro census divisions, depending on the year.
- The non-metro share of Ontario’s population has dropped slowly from 25% in 1996 to the current proportion of 21%.

Why look at population size and growth?

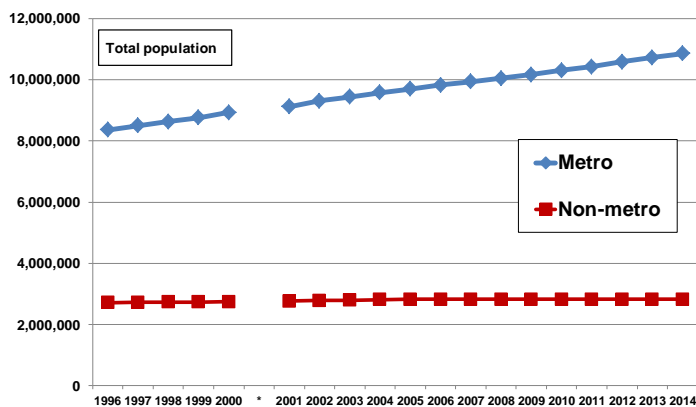
Population growth or decline impacts housing demand, labour markets, consumer spending levels and the need for public services such as hospitals and schools. Population growth is considered by many as an indicator of economic vitality – i.e. jobs are being created and/or that it is a desirable place to live.

Findings

In 2014, Ontario’s non-metro population was 2.8 million (Figure 1). Ontario’s non-metro population has remained virtually unchanged since 2006 – shown as the red bars in Figure 2 indicating essentially no growth and no decline during the 2006 to 2014 period. This is compared to metro population growth of 1% or more for each year since 1996.

Figure 1

Ontario’s non-metro population was 2.8 million in 2014



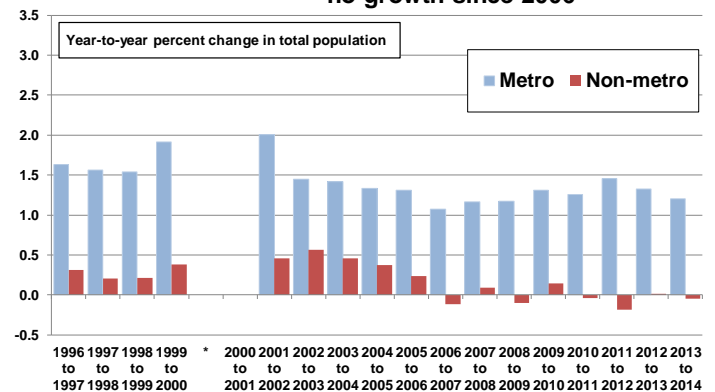
* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries. Source: Statistics Canada. Annual Demographic Statistics. CANSIM Table 051-0001 and 051-0056.

As a result of lower population growth in non-metro areas, Ontario’s non-metro population is now 21% of

Ontario’s total population, compared to 25% in 1996 (Figure 3).

Figure 2

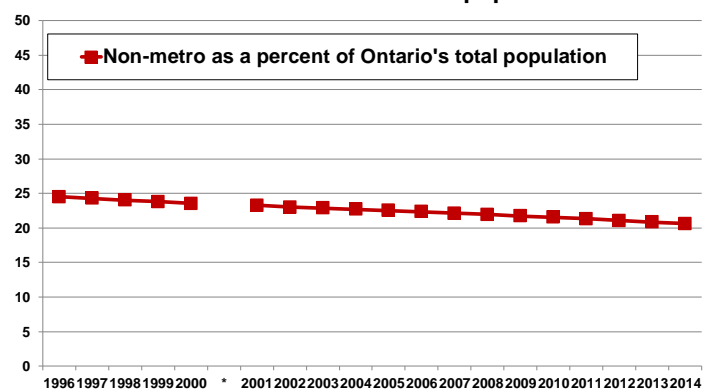
Ontario’s non-metro population has shown no growth since 2006



* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries. Source: Statistics Canada. Annual Demographic Statistics. CANSIM Table 051-0001 and 051-0056.

Figure 3

Non-metro areas represented 21% of Ontario’s population in 2014



* Data for 1996 to 2000 are classified according to the 2006 grid for CMA boundaries and data since 2001 are classified according to the 2011 grid for CMA boundaries. Source: Statistics Canada. Annual Demographic Statistics. CANSIM Tables 051-0001 and 051-0056.

Non-metro CDs had a population of 2 million in 2014 (Table 1, line 3 - see Appendix). Again though, across all non-metro CDs, there has been essentially no population change since 2006. Partially-non-metro CDs have grown, on average, throughout the 1996 to 2014 period but their growth rate has been about half the growth rate of metro CDs in recent years (Table 1, lines 5 & 6).

Importantly, there has always been a significant share of non-metro CDs with population growth. Over the 1996 to 2014 period, the share of non-metro CDs with population growth has ranged from a low of 30% of non-metro CDs (in 2007) up to a high share of 78% in 2003 and 2004 (Table 1, line 15). Although overall non-metro population has remained unchanged since 2006, about 1/3 to 1/2 of non-metro CDs have reported population growth.

In fact, from 2006 to 2014, 19% of non-metro CDs have grown their population in each of those eight years (Table 2). Although the average non-metro CD is not growing, some have generated population growth in each year since 2006.

Table 2

Percent of census divisions (CDs) with continuous population growth and with continuous population decline			
	Metro CDs	Partially-non-metro CDs	Non-metro CDs
Percent of CDs reporting continuous population growth			
.. 1996 to 2014	75	50	7
.. 2006 to 2014	88	57	19
Percent of CDs reporting continuous population decline			
.. 1996 to 2014	0	0	11
.. 2006 to 2014	0	7	22

Source: Statistics Canada. Annual Demographic Statistics, CANSIM Table 051-0063.

Table 1

Population size and population change in metro census divisions (CDs), partially-non-metro CDs and non-metro CDs, Ontario, 1996 to 2014																			
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total population (at July 1)																			
1 Metro CDs	5,810,155	5,909,431	6,005,910	6,100,570	6,222,260	6,377,235	6,512,905	6,604,720	6,694,556	6,783,918	6,880,907	6,971,001	7,070,115	7,171,458	7,279,078	7,380,455	7,491,848	7,602,886	7,704,803
2 Partially-non-metro CDs	3,258,306	3,302,593	3,345,496	3,390,489	3,446,724	3,502,040	3,556,026	3,605,824	3,655,668	3,698,903	3,732,603	3,748,549	3,769,160	3,785,709	3,814,544	3,841,310	3,876,858	3,907,039	3,934,307
3 Non-metro CDs	2,014,442	2,015,627	2,014,495	2,013,700	2,014,306	2,018,095	2,024,368	2,033,214	2,039,844	2,045,169	2,048,056	2,044,645	2,043,350	2,040,520	2,041,441	2,041,779	2,041,376	2,041,004	2,039,630
4 All CDs	11,082,903	11,227,651	11,365,901	11,504,759	11,683,290	11,897,370	12,093,299	12,243,758	12,390,068	12,527,990	12,661,566	12,764,195	12,882,625	12,997,687	13,135,063	13,263,544	13,410,082	13,550,929	13,678,740
Population change, June 30 to July 1																			
	1996 to 1997	1997 to 1998	1998 to 1999	1999 to 2000	2000 to 2001	2001 to 2002	2002 to 2003	2003 to 2004	2004 to 2005	2005 to 2006	2006 to 2007	2007 to 2008	2008 to 2009	2009 to 2010	2010 to 2011	2011 to 2012	2012 to 2013	2013 to 2014	
5 Metro CDs	1.7	1.6	1.6	2.0	2.5	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.3
6 Partially-non-metro CDs	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7
7 Non-metro CDs	0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1
8 All CDs	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.9
Number of CDs with population growth, June 30 to July 1																			
9 Metro CDs	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	8
10 Partially-non-metro CDs	13	12	13	13	12	13	14	13	13	13	10	11	10	12	12	13	12	12	12
11 Non-metro CDs	15	13	13	15	15	20	21	21	18	17	8	10	11	16	14	13	13	13	12
12 All CDs	35	32	33	35	34	40	42	41	39	38	26	29	29	35	34	33	33	32	32
Percent of CDs with population growth, June 30 to July 1																			
13 Metro CDs	88	88	88	88	88	88	88	88	100	100	100	100	100	88	100	100	100	100	100
14 Partially-non-metro CDs	93	86	93	93	86	93	100	93	93	93	71	79	71	86	86	93	86	86	86
15 Non-metro CDs	56	48	48	56	56	74	78	78	67	63	30	37	41	59	52	48	48	44	44
16 All CDs	71	65	67	71	69	82	86	84	80	78	53	59	59	71	69	69	67	65	65

Source: Statistics Canada. Annual Demographic Statistics, CANSIM Table 051-0062.

Since 2006, the non-metro CDs with continuous population growth are Haliburton, Muskoka, Manitoulin, Northumberland and Renfrew. The CDs with continuous population loss were Algoma, Cochrane, Huron, Rainy River, Sudbury and Timiskaming. A higher share of partially-non-metro CDs and metro CDs report consistent population growth.

Summary

Ontario's non-metro areas reported consistent population growth up to 2006 but there has been virtually no change since that time. In comparison, since 2006, there has been population growth in one-third or more of the non-metro CDs.

Since 2006, 19% of non-metro CDs have grown for eight consecutive years.

Appendix: Non-metro areas vs non-metro CDs

Please refer to the first issue of [Focus on Rural Ontario](#) in June, 2013 [Overview of Ontario's rural geography](#) where non-metro areas were defined as the population living outside the commuting zone of a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) (where an incorporated town or municipality (i.e. a census sub-division (CSD)) would be delineated as part of the CMA if 50% of the workforce commuted to the CMA). In addition, three groups of census divisions (CDs) were created where metro CDs had all their component CSDs delineated as part of a CMA, a partially-non-metro CD had some CSDs inside a CMA and some CSDs outside a CMA (see table below) and a non-metro CD had all of its component CSDs outside a CMA.

Population distribution in Ontario, 2011			
	Metro areas (CMAs)	Non-metro areas (Non-CMAs)	Total
Metro CDs	7,145,284	534	7,145,818
Partially-non-metro CDs	3,124,328	606,869	3,731,197
Non-metro CDs	394	1,974,412	1,974,806
Total	10,270,006	2,581,815	12,851,821

Source: Table 1 in [Focus on Rural Ontario](#) "Overview of Ontario's rural geography" (July, 2013).

Rural Ontario Institute gratefully acknowledges the work of Ray Bollman in preparing this edition of [Focus on Rural Ontario](#). Questions on data sources can be directed to RayD.Bollman@sasktel.net. Any comments or discussions can be directed to NRagelie@RuralOntarioInstitute.ca.