

Ontario's non-metro population

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Highlights

- 2.6 million Ontario residents (20%) live in non-metro areas.
- The non-metro population has grown in each five-year period since 1986.

Why look at non-metro population?

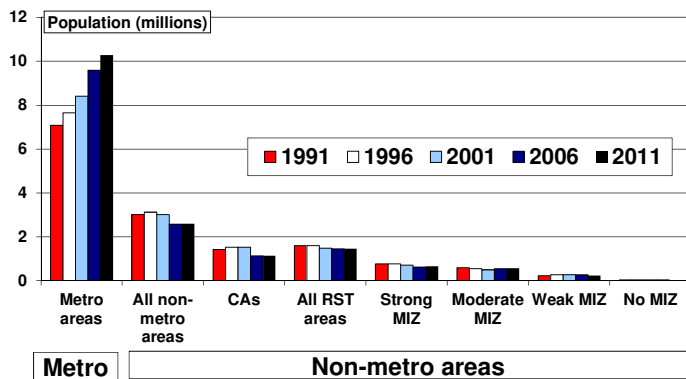
Often the first question in a policy discussion is: How big is non-metro Ontario? This is closely followed by: Is it growing or declining?

Findings

In 2011, Ontario's non-metro population was 2.6 million (Figure 1 and Table 1). This consisted of 1.1 million living in smaller cities (CAs) and 1.4 million residing in rural and small town (RST) areas. Within the RST areas, about ½ are residing in strong metropolitan influenced zones (MIZ) - where over 30% of the employed residents commute to a CMA or CA and are classified as "strongly" influenced by a CMA or CA. See the footnotes in Table 1 for definitions.

Figure 1

Ontario's non-metro population was 2.6 million in 2011



Note: Data are tabulated within boundaries applicable at the time of the given census.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1991 to 2011.

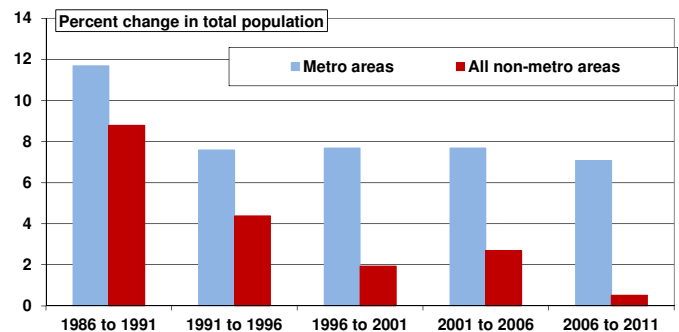
Ontario's non-metro population has grown in every inter-censal period since 1986 (Figure 2). The growth over the five-year period from 2006 to 2011 was 0.5% but the growth has been as large as 8.8% in the 1986 to 1991 period.

The non-metro population has grown in each period from 1986 to 2011 but Figure 1 shows fewer residents in non-metro Ontario in 2012 than in 1996. The reason is population growth or urbanization of non-metro areas to levels where they become metro.

During each census period, the non-metro population grows. Then, some non-metro centres may be re-classified as metro. In addition, when commuting patterns change, some localities on the fringe of a metro centre may become classified as part of the metro centre. These two types of re-classification are why, at the start of an inter-censal period, there may be fewer non-metro residents than at the end of the previous period. A detailed explanation is presented in the text below Table 1.

Figure 2

Ontario's non-metro population has grown in each intercensal period since 1986, but metro areas have grown faster



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1986 - 2011. Data are tabulated within constant boundaries.

Summary

Ontario's non-metro population was 2.6 million in 2011. The non-metro population has grown in each period since 1986. However, re-classification from non-metro to metro means that we find fewer non-metro residents now than in 1996.

Table 1

Population structure and change in metro and non-metro areas, Ontario, 1986 to 2011																									
	Population										Percent distribution of population						Percent change								
	within 1991 boundaries		within 1996 boundaries		within 2001 boundaries		within 2006 boundaries		within 2011 boundaries		within 1991 boundaries		within 1996 boundaries		within 2001 boundaries		within 2006 boundaries		within 2011 boundaries		1986 to 1991	1991 to 1996	1996 to 2001	2001 to 2006	2006 to 2011
	1986	1991	1991	1996	1996	2001	2001	2006	2006	2011	1986	1991	1991	1996	1996	2001	2001	2006	2006	2011					
Metro areas (CMAs)	6,333,439	7,073,420	7,100,762	7,639,013	7,804,030	8,403,738	8,901,673	9,584,840	9,591,529	10,270,006	70	70	70	71	73	74	78	79	79	80	11.7	7.6	7.7	7.7	7.1
Non-metro areas (non-CMAs)	2,768,255	3,011,465	2,984,123	3,114,560	2,949,543	3,006,308	2,508,373	2,575,442	2,568,753	2,581,815	30	30	30	29	27	26	22	21	21	20	8.8	4.4	1.9	2.7	0.5
. Census agglomerations	1,314,637	1,422,183	1,458,964	1,518,422	1,487,301	1,522,211	1,094,168	1,127,437	1,128,614	1,133,127	14	14	14	14	14	13	10	9	9	9	8.2	4.1	2.3	3.0	0.4
. Rural and small town (RST)	1,453,618	1,589,282	1,525,159	1,596,138	1,462,242	1,484,097	1,414,205	1,448,005	1,440,139	1,448,688	16	16	15	15	14	13	12	12	12	11	9.3	4.7	1.5	2.4	0.6
. Strong MIZ	670,192	756,056	710,094	756,992	668,346	695,979	594,823	615,909	631,410	644,299	7	7	7	7	6	6	5	5	5	5	12.8	6.6	4.1	3.5	2.0
. Moderate MIZ	545,276	587,096	520,565	539,257	489,985	489,378	526,565	535,477	554,062	555,931	6	6	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	7.7	3.6	-0.1	1.7	0.3
. Weak MIZ	205,430	218,108	266,562	269,132	278,623	270,527	266,116	263,137	232,107	225,197	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	6.2	1.0	-2.9	-1.1	-3.0
. No MIZ	32,720	28,022	27,938	30,757	25,288	28,213	26,701	33,482	22,560	23,261	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-14.4	10.1	11.6	25.4	3.1
Total	9,101,694	10,084,885	10,084,885	10,753,573	10,753,573	11,410,046	11,410,046	12,160,282	12,160,282	12,851,821	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	10.8	6.6	6.1	6.6	5.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1986 to 2011.

Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) have 50,000 or more in the built-up core (100,000 or more prior to 2006) and includes all neighbouring towns and municipalities where 50 percent or more of the workforce commutes to the built-up core.

Census Agglomerations (CAs) in 2006 and 2011 have a built-up core of 10,000 or more with a total population of less than 100,000 and includes all neighbouring towns and municipalities where 50 percent or more of the workforce commutes to the built-up core (prior to 2006, a few CAs had a total population over 100,000 if they had less than 100,000 in the built-up core – due to the different definition of a CMA prior to 2006).

Metropolitan Influenced Zones (MIZ) are assigned on the basis of the share of the workforce that commutes to any CMA or CA (Strong MIZ: 30 to 49 percent; Moderate MIZ: 5 to 29 percent; Weak MIZ: 1 to 5 percent; No MIZ: no commuters).

The data for the 1991 and 1996 MIZ have been adjusted to be consistent with the 2001 protocol whereby non-CMA/CA towns and municipalities in the Territories were not allocated to a MIZ classification.

The designation of MIZ for 1991 and 1996 were obtained from Sheila Rambeau and Kathleen Todd. (2000) **Census Metropolitan Area and Census Agglomeration Influenced Zones (MIZ) with census data** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Geography Working Paper Series No. 2000-1, Catalogue No. 92F0138MIE) (www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/listpub.cgi?catno=92F0138MIE). Note that the Rambeau and Todd designation of MIZ for 1991 used the preliminary 1996 CMA/CA delineations, but still using 1991 boundaries. For this table, we have re-imposed the 1991 CMA/CA delineation and we have assigned "strong MIZ" in 1991 for towns or municipalities that had been coded into a CMA/CA for 1996.

The designation of MIZ for 2001 was obtained from Statistics Canada, **GeoSuite, 2001 Census** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 92F0085XCB).

Note on the impact of the re-classification of population from non-metro to metro

The size of the re-classification is seen in the second line of data in Table 1. When the 1996 classification was applied to the 1991 data, the size of the non-metro population in 1991 was reduced from 3,011,465 to 2,984,123. This reclassification of 27,342 individuals from non-metro to metro was due to growth of the non-metro population which caused their re-classification as metro. Note the large re-classification when the 2006 classification was applied to the 2001 data. The non-metro population in 2001 changed from 3,006,308 according to the 2001 classification to a population of 2,508,373 according to the 2006 classification. At this time, each of Peterborough, Barrie, Brantford and Guelph were re-classified as metro.

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