

Dear clients,

I found this article in the Calgary Herald and thought most of you would find it very interesting and comforting.

Calgary has kept its spot as Canada's fastest-growing city, while Alberta's booming suburbs are set to have a larger sway in the province's 2019 election, according to [census data released Wednesday](#).

Statistics Canada says Calgary's growth is persisting through the economic downturn that was in full swing during the May 2016 survey. Calgary's metropolitan area grew 14.6 per cent between 2011 and 2016, following a 12.6 per cent growth rate 2006 to 2011. That area spans three satellite communities that report even stronger growth: Cochrane (47.1 per cent), Airdrie (42.3 per cent) and Chestermere (34.2 per cent).

Calgary has now passed the Ottawa-Gatineau area as Canada's fourth most populous urban zone.

The Edmonton metropolitan area is Canada's second-fastest growing. The area, including Wabamun, Leduc and Fort Saskatchewan, grew 13.9 per cent this census period, compared with 12.1 per cent last time.

Both cities saw breakneck growth, especially in the suburbs, outpacing rural areas and some inner-city neighbourhoods.

"There's kind of a doughnut effect," said Laurent Martel, a Statistics Canada demography director. "The suburbs are growing much faster than the core."

In Calgary, established neighbourhoods like Sundance, Signal Hill and Scenic Acres are slowly seeing their population decline. Meanwhile, new communities in the city's deep south such as Auburn Bay and Chaparral have doubled their populations, as has Evanston on Stoney Trail's north flank.

Calgary's metropolitan area — defined as communities where half of residents commute into the city — excludes Okotoks, which is also growing.



CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA GROWTH

A look at the population growth rates for Canada's census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in 2016:

CMA	% GROWTH	CMA	% GROWTH
Calgary	14.6	St. John's, N.L.	4.6
Edmonton	13.9	Montréal	4.2
Saskatoon	12.5	London	4.1
Regina	11.8	Québec*	4.0
Lethbridge	10.8	Moncton	4.0
Kelowna	8.4	Brantford*	3.8
Guelph	7.7	Hamilton	3.7
Victoria	6.7	St. Catharines–Niagara	3.5
Oshawa	6.6	Halifax	3.3
Winnipeg	6.6	Windsor	3.1
Vancouver	6.5	Trois-Rivières	2.8
Toronto	6.2	Peterborough	2.3
Abbotsford	6.1	Belleville	1.8
Kitchener	5.5	Saguenay	1.5
Ottawa–Gatineau	5.5	Kingston	1.0
Barrie	5.4	Greater Sudbury	1.0
Canada	5.0	Thunder Bay	0.0
Sherbrooke	4.9	Saint John, N.B.	-2.2

* Incompletely enumerated Indian reserves and Indian settlements located within CMAs were excluded from this chart.

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

THE CANADIAN PRESS

That contrasts with declines from Drumheller east to the Saskatchewan border, and the areas surrounding Rocky Mountain House and Pincher Creek.

Divvying the province into three zones, Calgary has the highest population, followed by residents outside the two major cities, and then Edmonton. Trends suggest Edmonton will outgrow the rest of the province by the 2021 census.

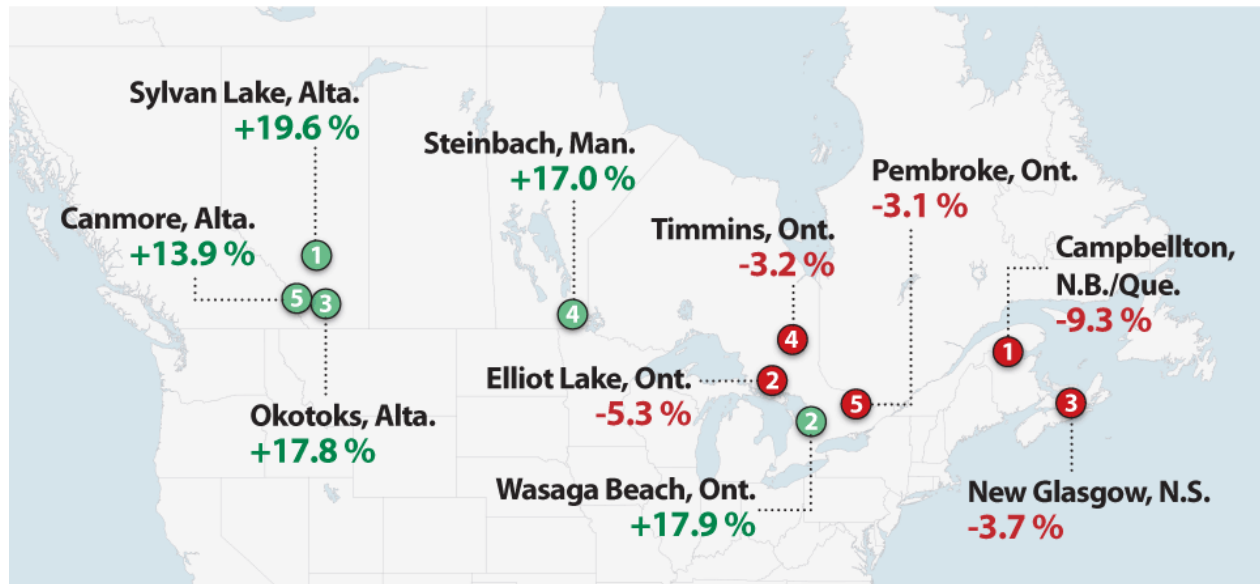
These findings are expected to inform the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission, as it redistributes provincial ridings ahead of the 2019 election. The commission could fix a discrepancy where a resident in Calgary's southeast corner counts for just a third as much as someone in Fort McMurray.



But rural representatives are worried about losing sway at the legislature, if their ridings dissolve or amalgamate to make room for Calgary and Edmonton.

LARGEST GAINS AND LOSSES

A look at the census agglomerations with the largest percentage gains and losses in population between 2011 and 2016, according to census data from Statistics Canada:



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

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Mount Royal University political science professor Duane Bratt said that's exactly what will probably happen.

"That's going to cause a political firestorm, even if the data supports it," said Bratt.

He believes Wildrose voters will be skeptical of a panel that is mostly NDP-appointed suggesting they lose their voter base, following residents' vocal opposition to the government's farm regulations and coal phase-out.

"Rural Alberta, for decades, was over-represented politically," Bratt said. "It was protected by the government in power."

Bratt sees Calgary's suburbs becoming a vote-rich area with little political allegiance, making it a key battleground for the 2019 election. That would replicate the new, swing ridings around Toronto that played a key role in the 2015 federal election.

The commission is holding ongoing public hearings, including one in Calgary Feb. 21 to 22, before releasing an interim report this May.



PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

A look at the population of the provinces and territories in 2016, with the change from 2011:

2016 POPULATION		% GROWTH SINCE 2011
N.L.	519,716	1.0
P.E.I.	142,907	1.9
N.S.	923,598	0.2
N.B.	747,101	-0.5
QUE.	8,164,361	3.3
ONT.	13,448,494	4.6
MAN.	1,278,365	5.8
SASK.	1,098,352	6.3
ALTA.	4,067,175	11.6
B.C.	4,648,055	5.6
YUKON	35,874	5.8
N.W.T.	41,786	0.8
NVT.	35,944	12.7
CANADA	35,151,728	5.0

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

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Alberta's population growth is more than double the national average. Martel said that's driven by a young population with sturdy fertility rates and an ongoing mix of domestic and international migration to the province.

Western Canada as a whole is seeing booming population growth, compared with sluggish increases in Maritime cities and outright declines in towns and predominantly English-speaking parts of Quebec.

For the third census in a row, Canada led the G7 industrial nations in population growth at roughly one per cent per year. Nationwide, immigration counted for two-thirds of Canada's population growth since 2011, while the remaining third resulted from births outweighing deaths, especially in the territories.

Wednesday's release was the first of six 2016 census disclosures, with age, income and diversity data to come throughout the year.





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