

Future of Municipal Government What We Learned Report

Population Growth and Aging

Theme

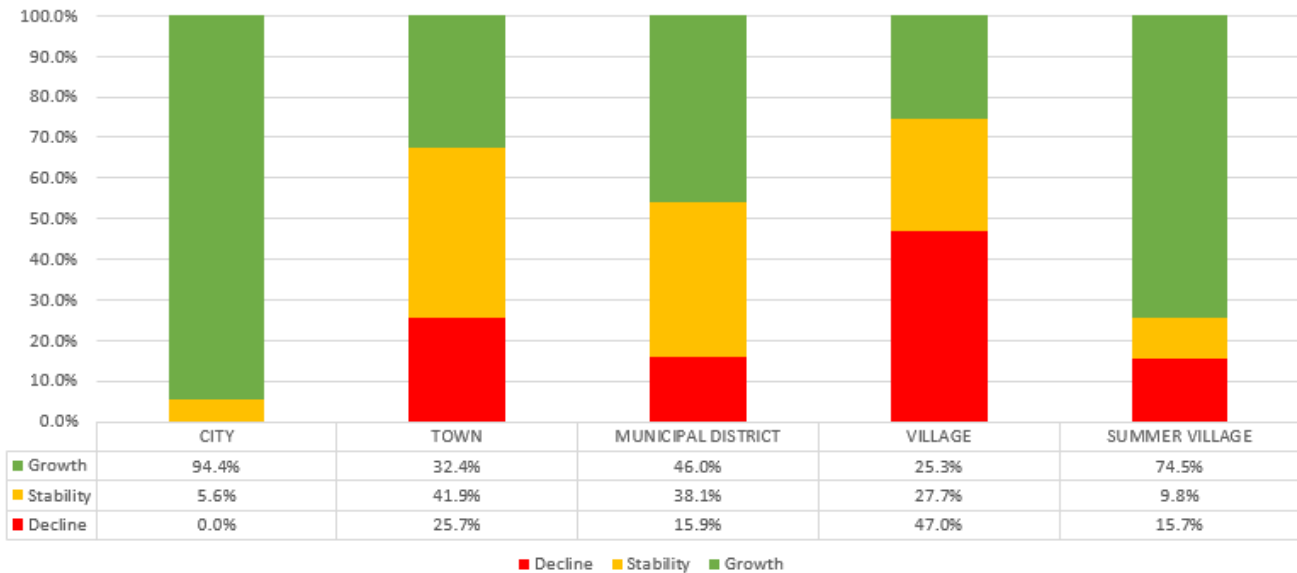
“Population Growth and Population Aging in Alberta Municipalities” by Kevin McQuillan and Michael Laszlo is the second paper released as part of the [Future of Municipal Government \(FOMG\)](#) project. It provides an overview of demographic trends in Alberta municipalities and the resulting social and economic impacts that are experienced. The goal of the paper is to provide demographic data that can inform planning efforts and shape a positive municipal future.

Key Findings

- **Two central demographic trends will shape the future:**
 - Increasingly low fertility rates and the negative impact on growth and aging
 - Central importance of increased immigration:
 - Where will newcomers settle? What skills will they bring?
- **New developments that may affect municipalities:**
 - Working from home and possibilities for migration to smaller communities
 - Fleeing high-cost housing in urban areas
 - Growth of retirement migration to villages and towns
- **Goals for municipalities large and small:**
 - Pursue new economic opportunities appropriate to the community
 - Create a welcoming community for newcomers
 - Explore areas of co-operation with nearby communities to improve services and reduce costs

To review the full copy of the paper visit: <https://www.abmunis.ca/advocacy-resources/governance/future-municipal-government>

Percent of Municipalities Whose Populations Declined, Stayed Stable or Grew 2011-2021



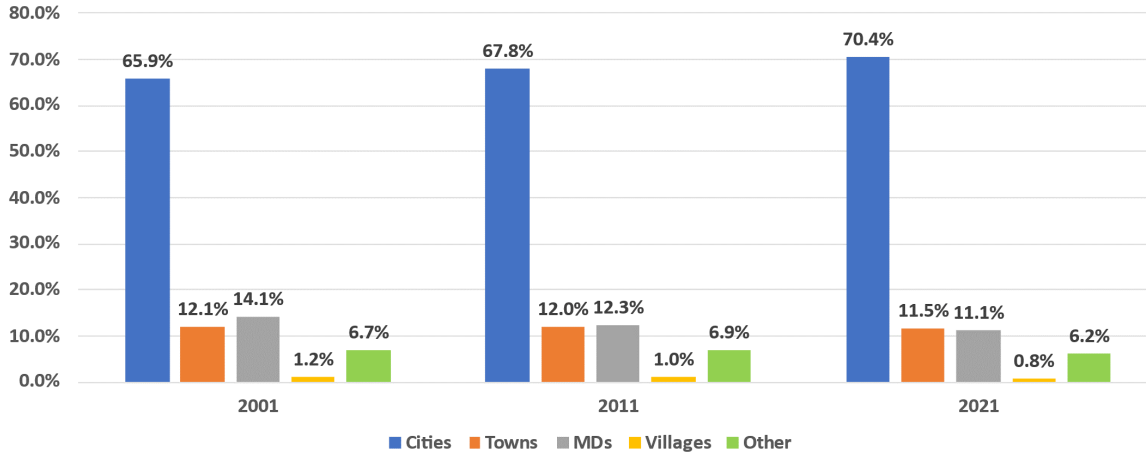
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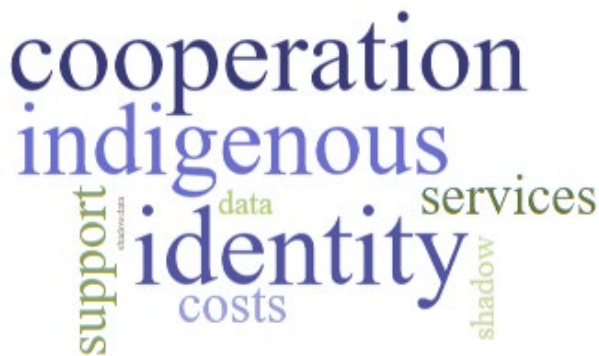
Population Growth and Aging

Distribution of Alberta Population by Municipal Type:
2001-2021



Member Engagement

The June 20th webinar on “Population Growth & Population Aging” offered an opportunity for participants to ask questions and share feedback on concepts presented in the paper. A follow-up survey focused on feedback related to the research paper was also sent to participants as an opportunity to share additional thoughts. A summary of feedback from the webinar and research paper survey is outlined on the following pages and the image below highlights key themes.



Future Direction

Based on the paper’s findings and feedback, further work will be done as part of the FOMG project and related Alberta Municipalities initiatives to:

- Seek collaboration with the Government of Alberta, Statistics Canada, and demographers to ensure timely and accurate information is available on municipal populations in an accessible format that municipalities can use to inform local planning.
- Strengthen Alberta Municipalities Welcoming and Inclusive Communities initiatives by working with Rural Municipalities of Alberta, the Government of Alberta, and other organizations to provide education and resources to help advance municipal leadership and collaboration related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).
- Advance advocacy and initiatives related to access to healthcare, broadband and other services essential to attracting and retaining population including exploration of how intermunicipal collaboration can enhance the capacity to provide those services.

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Feedback Summary

General Feedback

- Deeper analysis to highlight challenges and opportunities for differing types of communities would be beneficial. Provide clear translation of statistical data into opportunities that communities could assess to plan for the future.
- Issues pertaining to population change can feel insurmountable - many municipalities do not feel they have the knowledge, resources or tools needed to adequately respond to these changes and would benefit from increased support. For example, increasing knowledge of how other jurisdictions outside of Alberta or Canada have successfully resolved issues related to population growth and aging.
- Some communities may be more focused on municipal identity than on cooperating to improve services and financial position – demographic data could be used to create a more compelling case for collaboration.
- Ethics, challenges, and benefits related to attracting immigrants to solve population growth issues need to be evaluated and more openly discussed. Acquiring and analyzing more information from the Manitoba immigration model would be beneficial. A moderate and consistent approach to immigration over time is more desirable than shorter, sporadic bursts of effort to increase immigration.
- Alongside improved services and amenities, many communities require an increase in housing/affordable housing, transportation options and broadband to support population growth. Broadband is not only critical to the ability to work remotely, but for access to education, tele-health, etc.
- Census data and grant allocations should consider shadow populations, number of dwellings and number of visitors that a community services per year to provide adequate funding that supports population growth. The province is going to reintroduce ability for municipalities to do their own censuses – need to implement changes that ensure municipal census data better supplements national census data to increase accuracy of counts.
- Need to better understand movement of Indigenous people between Indigenous communities and other areas of the Province. There is often circulation over a year, with people spending part of their time in Indigenous communities, and part of the year often in cities. Indigenous population is growing, and it will be important to understand this movement to help ensure the right level of services are provided at the right time.
- Government of Alberta needs to evaluate whether balance of costs and responsibilities between the province and smaller communities is still working and whether it supports municipal population growth.

Future of Municipal Government Project

The purpose of FOMG project is to explore and assess options for government structures that will enable municipalities to build thriving communities into the future. Alberta Municipalities has partnered with the School of Public Policy (SPP) to engage municipal experts from Alberta and across Canada to conduct research on a wide variety of topics that serves as the foundation for dialogue.

Visit the Future of Municipal Government webpage to learn more:

<https://www.abmunis.ca/advocacy-resources/governance/future-municipal-government>



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