



## Sustainability

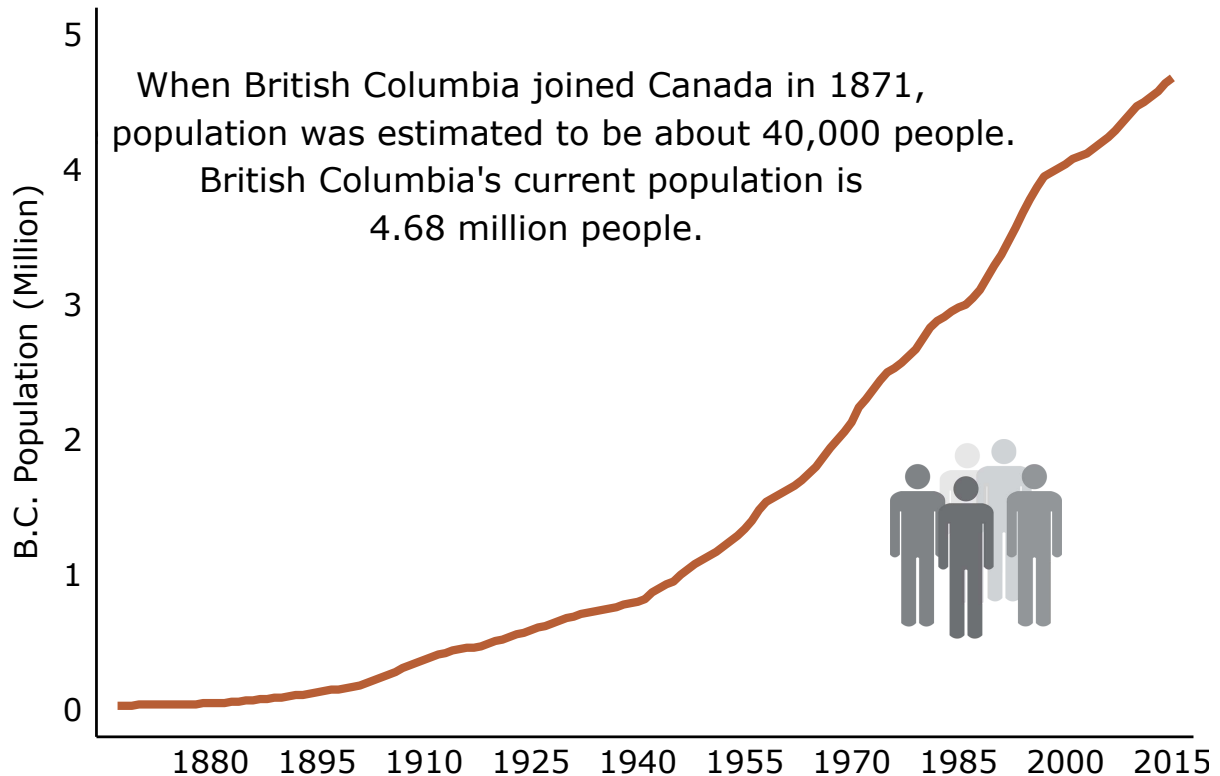
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### Trends in British Columbia's Population Size and Distribution

Population growth in British Columbia is among the fastest in Canada.<sup>1</sup> As the number of people living in the province increases so does pressure on the environment – for example, through land use changes, increasing water demand, waste production, or emissions of pollutants. This indicator reports on the status and trends in British Columbia's population size and distribution for the province and among regional districts.

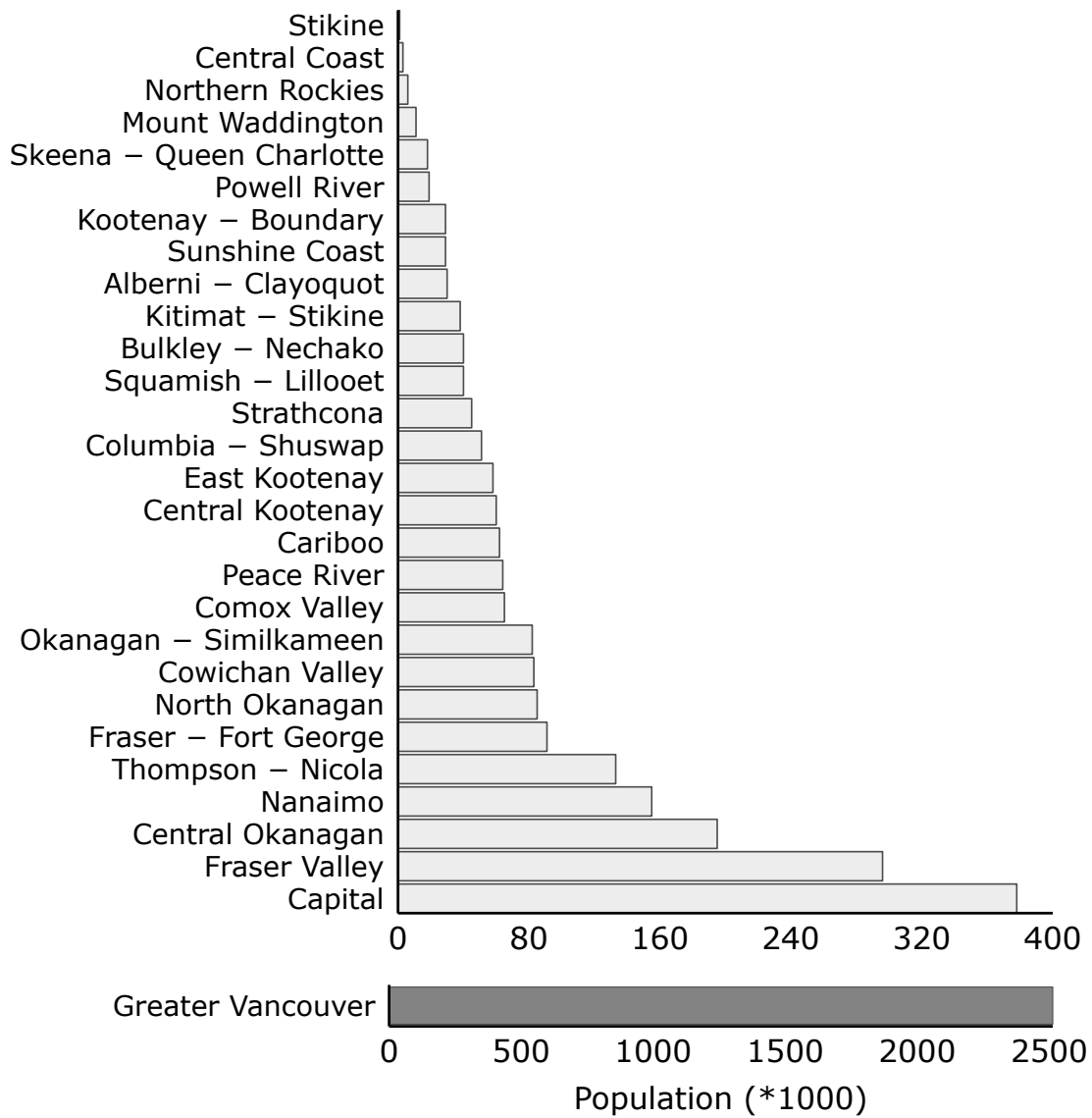
- **British Columbia's population has increased continuously in the last century.** There were an estimated 4.7 million people living in British Columbia as of 2015.
- **The majority of British Columbians live in the Greater Vancouver Regional District.** The 2015 estimated population size for Greater Vancouver is more than 2.5 million people. The second largest population, at around 400,000 people, falls within the Capital Regional District. The third and fourth largest populations in B.C. are in the Fraser Valley and the Central Okanagan Regional Districts.
- **Regional population sizes have increased in southern B.C.** The Central Okanagan has seen the largest recent increase in population size – the population more than doubled from 1986 to 2015.
- **Regional population sizes have decreased in the northwestern B.C.** The Stikine has seen the largest recent decrease in population size, with the 2015 population approximately half what it was in 1986. Population sizes in regional districts in central British Columbia, including Cariboo and Fraser-Fort George, experienced almost no change in estimated population size since 1986.

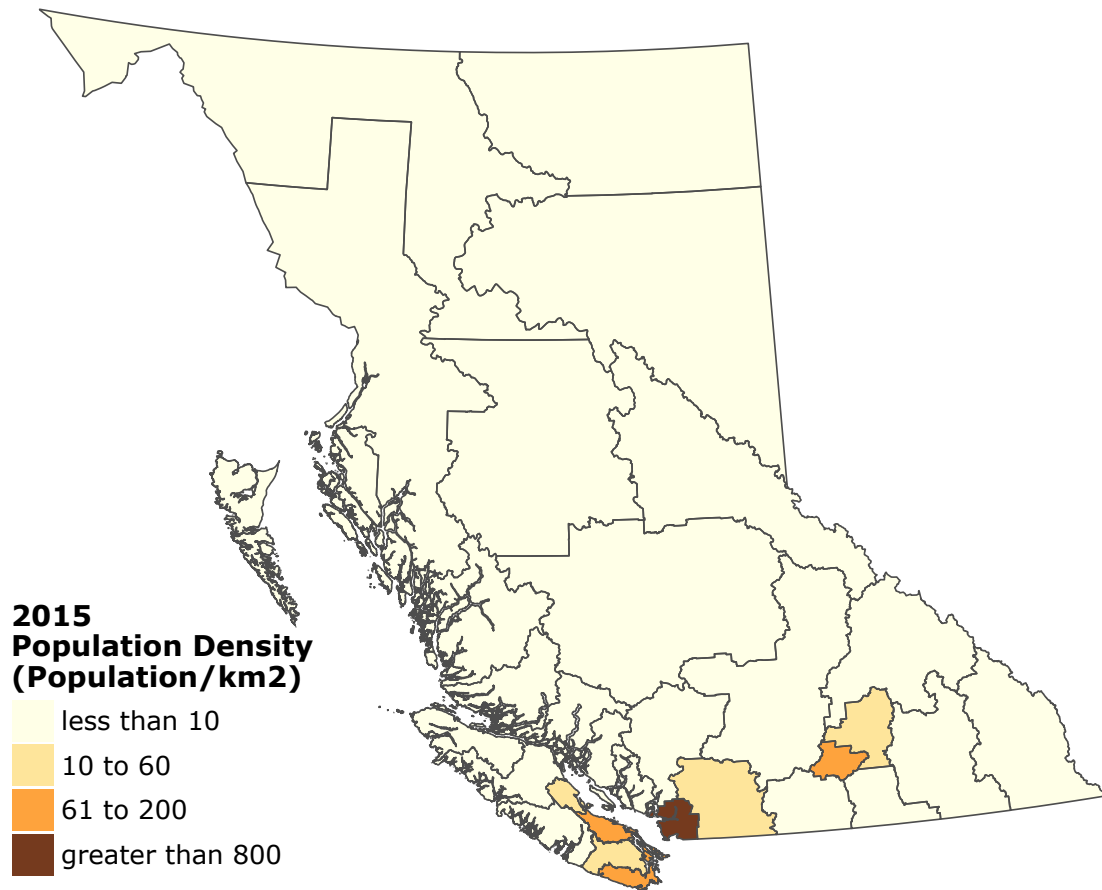
## Long-term Change in British Columbia's Population Size (1867-2015)



## B.C. Population Size and Density by Regional District (2015)

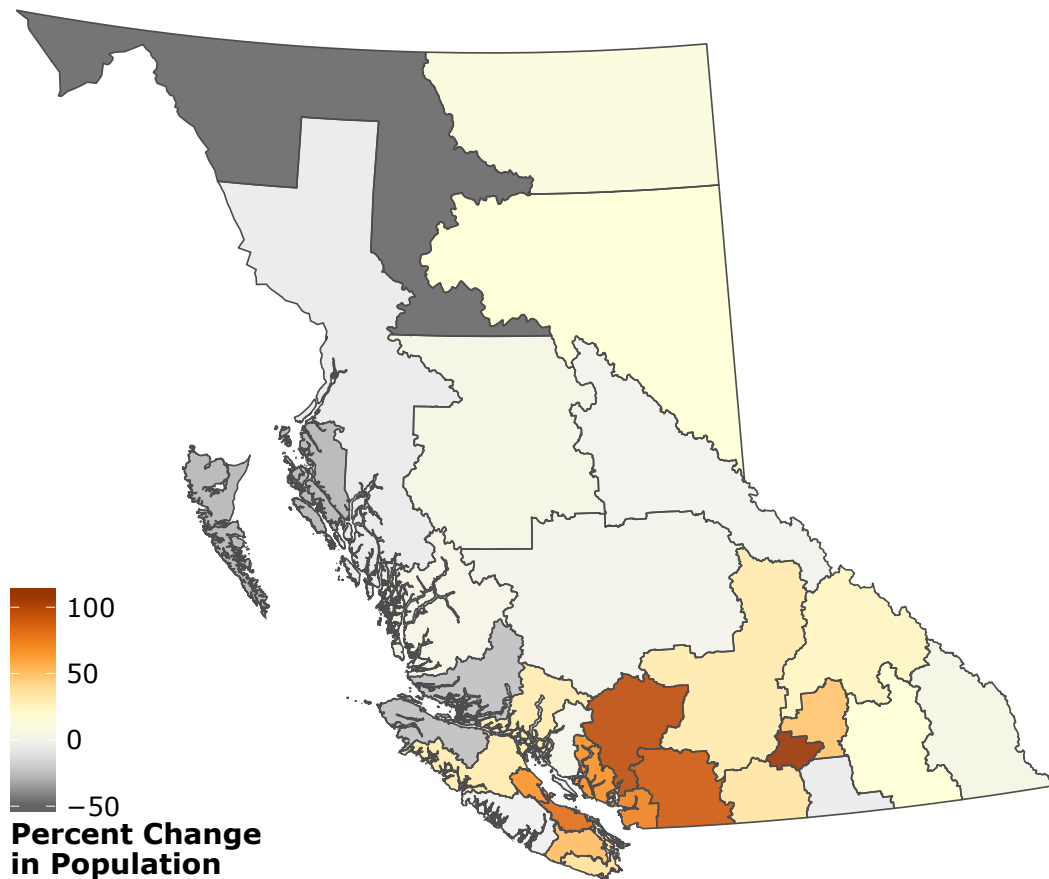
- British Columbia's population is not evenly distributed throughout the province.
- The Greater Vancouver Regional District is home to 54% of British Columbian's – it is B.C.'s largest and most dense population. The Capital and Fraser Valley Regional Districts each have more than 200,000 people. The Stikine and Central Coast Regional Districts have the smallest regional populations in the province.
- Greater Vancouver has the highest population density with greater than 800 people per square kilometer, followed by the Capital Regional District with 160 people per square kilometer. Population density in most of B.C.'s regional districts is fewer than 10 people per square kilometer.





### B.C. Population Change by Regional District (1986-2015)

- British Columbia's population increased by 56% from 1986 to 2015; this was higher than Canada's 37% increase over the same period.<sup>1</sup>
- The Central Okanagan has seen the largest population increase – +110% since 1986. Squamish-Lillooet, Fraser Valley, and Nanaimo Regional District have all experienced large increases in population size (greater than 80%).
- The Stikine has seen the largest decrease in population size, a 49% decline, since 1986. The Skeena-Queen Charlotte and Mount Waddington Regional Districts have also experienced recent declines in population size.



## Methods

This indicator is based on data sourced from [BC Stats](#), the central statistical agency of the Province of British Columbia. The **R** code for repeating the analyses presented on this page is [available on GitHub](#).

## References and Other Useful Links

[BC Stats: Population Estimates](#)

[Statistics Canada: Population and Demography](#)

<sup>1</sup>Annual Estimates of Population for Canada, Provinces and Territories, from July 1, 1971 to July 1, 2015. Newfoundland & Labrador Statistics Agency (published 09/29/15)(pdf): [http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/population/PDF/Annual\\_Pop\\_Prov.PDF](http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/statistics/population/PDF/Annual_Pop_Prov.PDF)

## Data

\*By accessing these datasets, you agree to the license associated with each file, as indicated in parentheses below.

- British Columbia Annual Population Estimates (1867-2015): <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationEstimates.aspx>
  - License: B.C. Crown Copyright: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home/copyright>
- Total Population by Regional Districts in B.C. (1986-2015): <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationEstimates.aspx>
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