

Population Estimates of B.C. Regional District level and Outlook for 2046

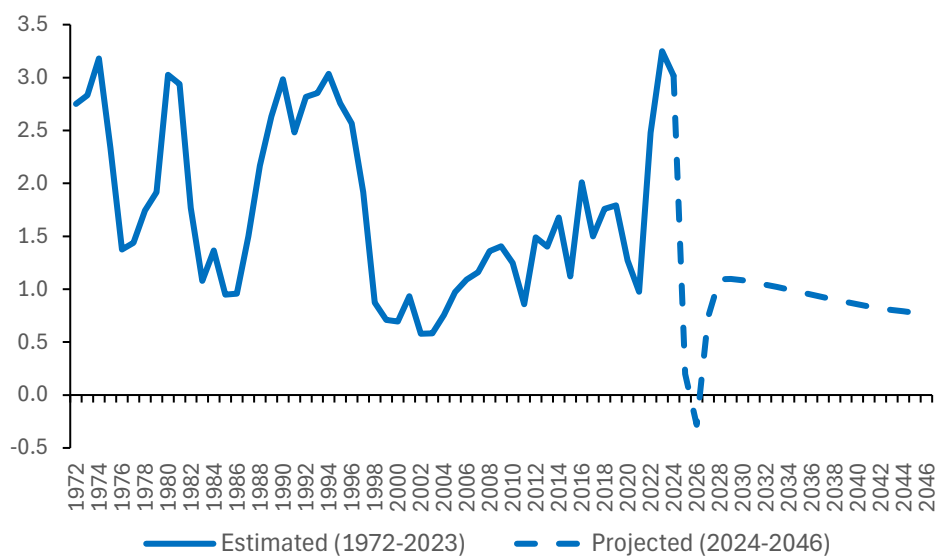
February 21, 2025

Overview

In 2023 B.C. experienced its strongest population growth in recent memory, growing 3.0% in the 12 months ending on July 1, 2023. The province added 162,729 people - the highest growth since 1971 - reaching a population of 5.5 million.

As shown in Figure 1 below, population growth in the province is expected to reduce sharply in the coming years as international migration to Canada slows down significantly under the policies announced in the [2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan](#). Population change in the province is also expected to return to its long-term trend after 2028.

Figure 1: B.C.'s Annual Population Growth Rate 1972-2046 (%)



Source: Statistics Canada (2024). Table 17-10-0005-01; BC Stats (2024). Population Projections.

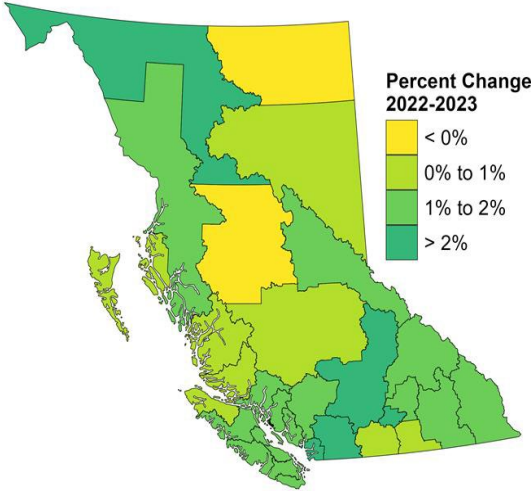
B.C.'s Population by Regional District in 2023

According to the latest estimates from Statistics Canada, the population of B.C. was 5,519,013 as of July 1, 2023, growing by 3.0% between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. The population increase was more pronounced in some of the most populous regional districts in the province. As shown in Table 1 below, the Metro Vancouver Regional District, which has over half of the province's population, saw the largest increase (4.2%), followed by

Central Okanagan (2.9%), the Fraser Valley (2.6%) and the Capital Regional District (1.8%). These regional districts accounted for 72.9% of the population of B.C. in 2023 and 88% of the population change in the whole province for that year.

Table 1: Estimated Population in B.C.’s Regional Districts, 2022-2023 (Thousands)

Regional District	2022	2023	% Change
Metro Vancouver	2,852	2,971	4.2
Capital	445	453	1.8
Fraser Valley	344	353	2.6
Central Okanagan	240	247	2.9
Nanaimo	180	183	1.7
Thompson-Nicola	153	156	2.0
Fraser-Fort George	102	104	2.0
North Okanagan	97	99	2.1
Cowichan Valley	94	95	1.1
Others	849	858	1.1
Total	5,356	5,519	3.0



Source: Statistics Canada (2024). Table 17-10-0152-01

The Northern Rockies (Census Division) and the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako were the only regions that had a population decline (-0.7% and -0.2%, respectively) between 2022 and 2023. In general, all the regional districts with less than 200,000 people each, which combined had a population of 1.5 million people in 2023, grew at a combined rate of 1.4%.

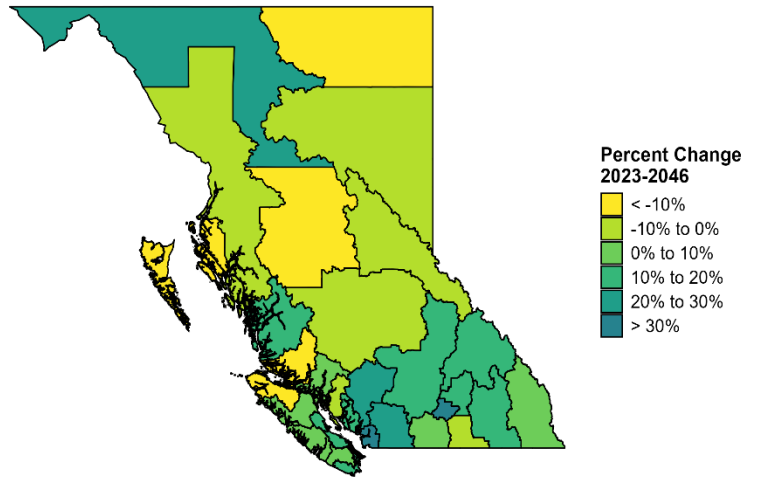
B.C.’s Population by Regional District in 2046

According to the latest population projections published by BC Stats on February 4, 2025, British Columbia’s population is expected to reach 6.8 million by July 1, 2046, an increase of 1.3 million (or 23.9%) in the next 23 years. This would represent an average annual population growth of 0.9% during this period.

The population change in the province is expected to spread unevenly across the province in the coming years. Table 2 below shows the projected population change between 2023 and 2024 for the regional districts with the highest populations, while all of B.C.’s regional districts are shown in the accompanying map. The projections are based on the current demographics of each region and the migration flows projected by BC Stats, which are derived from current economic trends, immigration policies, and historical trends.

Table 2: Projected Population in B.C.'s Regional Districts, 2023-2046 (Thousands)

Regional District	2023	2046	% Change
Metro Vancouver	2,971	3,896	31.1
Capital	453	537	18.6
Fraser Valley	353	446	26.4
Central Okanagan	247	335	35.7
Nanaimo	183	220	20.0
Thompson-Nicola	156	184	18.0
Fraser-Fort George	104	104	-0.4
North Okanagan	99	117	17.8
Cowichan Valley	95	104	9.3
Others	858	897	4.6
Total	5,519	6,839	23.9



Source: BC Stats (2025). Population projections.

The Central Okanagan is expected to be the fastest growing among the most populous regional districts, with a projected growth of 35.7% between 2023 and 2046 due to intra-provincial and international migration. The Metro Vancouver Regional District should reach 3.9 million people by 2046, increasing 31.1% from 2023, due to its large projected share of international migrants. The Regional District of Fraser Valley's population is also expected to increase significantly in this period, as intra-provincial and international migration should increase the population by 26.4%, reaching a population of 446,000 by 2046. Similarly, the Capital Regional District is expected to grow 18.6% during this period, reaching 540,000 people.

In contrast, the more rural regions, such as the northeast of the province and the north of Vancouver Island, are expected to receive low levels of international and intra-provincial migration and consist of an aging population, all leading to modest projected decreases in their population.

B.C. is one of the top three provinces that welcome the highest number of international migrants in the country. International migration has been the province's main driver of population growth in recent years and is expected to remain so for the foreseeable future. BC Stats will continue updating its population projections in response to new data and as Canada's international immigration policy evolves.

Using the Information

Visit the [Population](#) page on the BC Stats website for more information. Population estimates and projections for other regions are available in the [Population App](#).