

2006 CENSUS HIGHLIGHTS

Population Counts: Urban and Rural Ontario

The Urbanization of Ontario

- In 2006, 85.1 per cent of Ontarians lived in urban areas,* up from 84.7 per cent in 2001. Ontario's urban population surpassed its rural population in 1911.

Growth of Urban Ontario

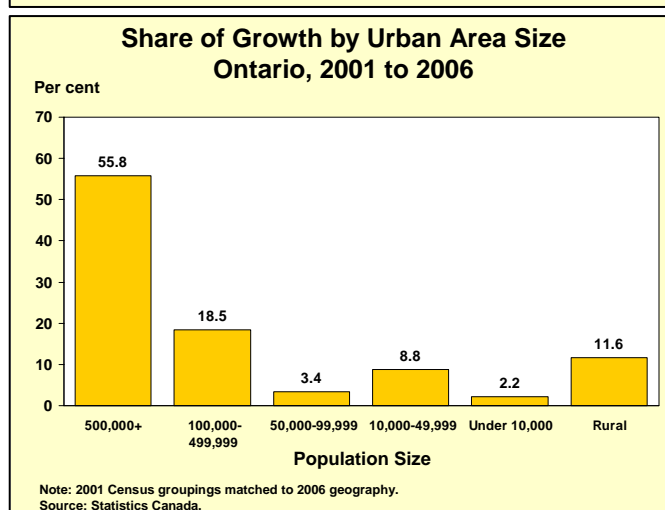
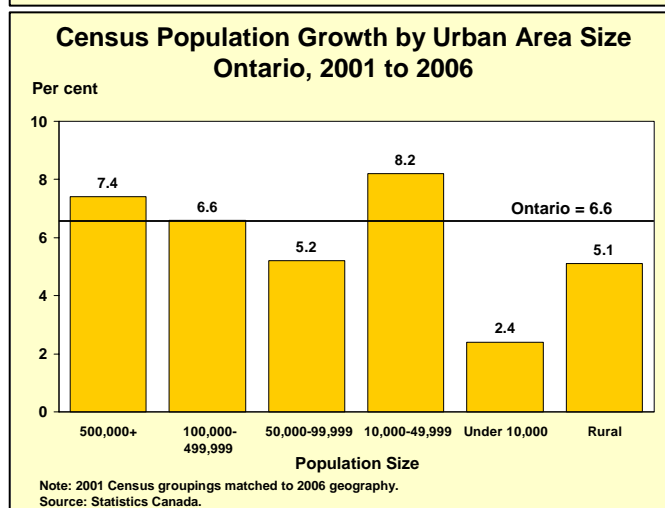
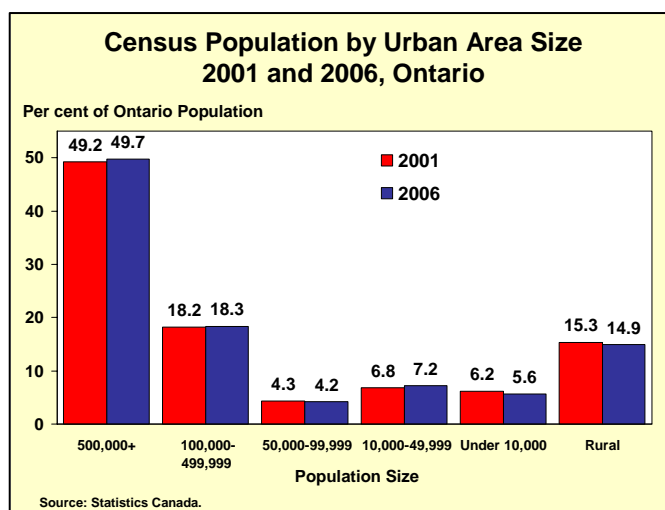
- Most of Ontario's population growth since 2001 has taken place in urban areas. However, not all urban areas of the province grew at the same rate.
- The fastest population growth occurred in cities of 10,000 to 49,999 people. These medium-sized cities grew 8.2 per cent as a group from 2001 to 2006, significantly faster than the provincial average (6.6 per cent).
- The most populous urban centres (500,000+ population), namely Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton, grew 7.4 per cent as a group between 2001 and 2006, faster than the provincial average. Together, these three urban areas accounted for 55.8 per cent of all growth in Ontario over this period.
- Urban areas of 100,000 to 499,999 people recorded growth at par with the provincial average of 6.6 per cent from 2001 to 2006. The 10 urban centres in this group accounted for almost one-fifth of provincial growth over this period (18.5 per cent).
- The smallest urban centres (less than 10,000 people) grew the slowest at only 2.4 per cent over this period.

Rural Ontario

- Rural areas accounted for 14.9 per cent of Ontario's population in 2006, down from 15.3 per cent in 2001. They recorded population growth of 5.1 per cent between 2001 and 2006, accounting for 11.6 per cent of total provincial growth.

* An urban area has a minimum population concentration of 1,000 persons and a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre, based on the 2006 Census count.

Note: The most appropriate population figures for Ontario and the rest of Canada are the current postcensal population estimates rather than the 2006 Census counts. See [Fact Sheet 1](#) for notes on Census counts and net undercoverage. This fact sheet looks largely at shares and growth rates between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses rather than population levels.



2006 CENSUS HIGHLIGHTS

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

- The GTA is highly urbanized. In 2006, almost nine out of 10 people in the GTA lived in urban areas of more than 500,000 people.
- Of the remaining GTA population, five per cent lived in urban areas of 100,000 to 499,999 people and 3.8 per cent in smaller urban areas.
- Only 2.9 per cent of the GTA population lived in rural areas in 2006, down from 3.2 per cent in 2001.

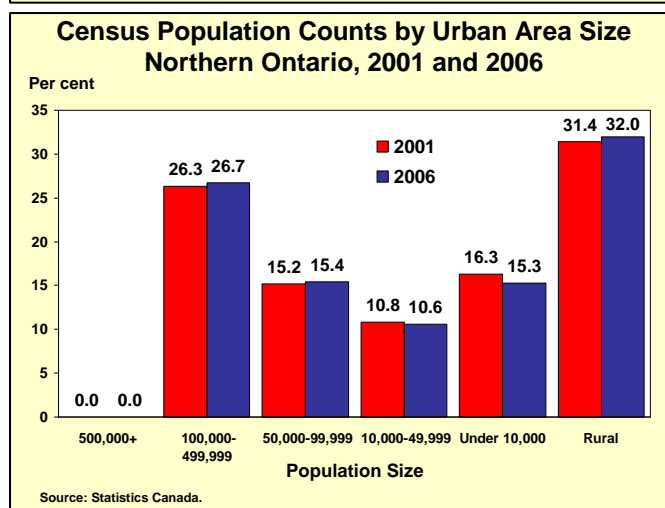
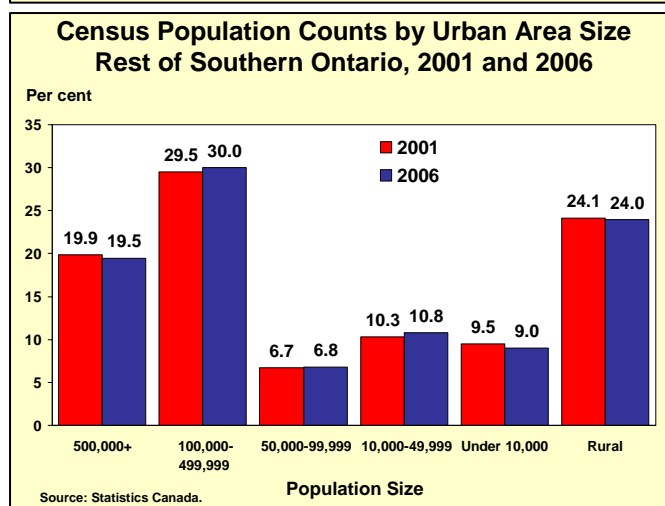
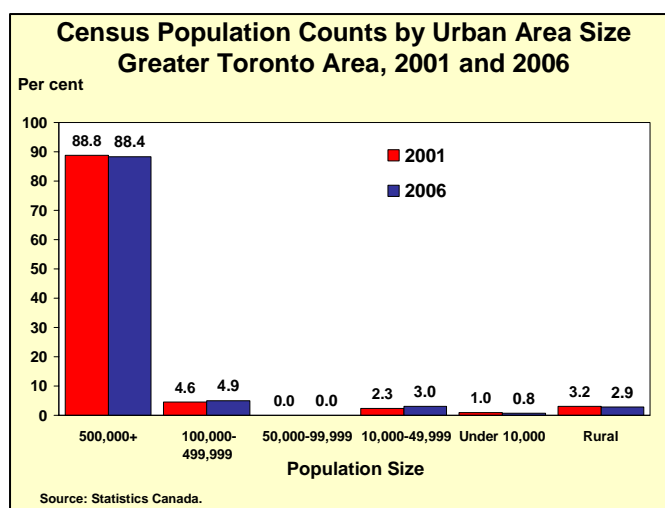
Rest of Southern Ontario

- Outside the GTA, almost half of southern Ontarians lived in urban areas of more than 100,000 people in 2006, practically unchanged from 2001.
- Smaller cities of more than 10,000 saw their share of Southern Ontario outside the GTA increase from 17 per cent to 17.6 per cent of population over the same period. However, towns of less than 10,000 people saw their share decline from 9.5 per cent to 9 per cent.
- Rural southern Ontario maintained a roughly constant share of about 24 per cent of population over this same period.

Northern Ontario

- A quarter of northern Ontarians lived in urban areas of 100,000 to 499,000 people, namely Greater Sudbury and Thunder Bay.
- The share of northern Ontario's population living in urban areas of more than 50,000 people increased between 2001 and 2006, from 41.5 per cent to 42.1 per cent.
- Conversely, smaller towns saw their share of northern population decline, from 27.1 per cent in 2001 to 25.9 per cent in 2006.
- Unlike what was observed in the rest of the province, the share of rural population in the north actually rose between 2001 and 2006, from 31.4 per cent to 32 per cent.

*Note: The 2001 and 2006 rural/urban areas do not correspond to exactly the same geographical units. As small geographical areas bordering urban centres see their population rise above the urban density threshold (see * on page 1), they become classified as urban. Conversely, some previously urban areas that lost population between 2001 and 2006 have switched to a rural designation.*



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