

Toronto Third Fastest Growing Among U.S. and Canadian Metropolitan Areas in 2020, Down from First Place in 2019

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The Census Bureau in the United States released new population estimates earlier this month for U.S. metropolitan areas. These population estimates are for the period ending July 1, 2020 and are comparable to the estimates for Canadian metropolitan areas that were released by Statistics Canada in February. This blog focuses on the growth in population in the 12 months ending July 1, 2020.¹

This blog compares population growth in metropolitan areas in Canada in 2020 with those south of the border. For the sake of brevity, we shorten the full names of metropolitan areas in the text.

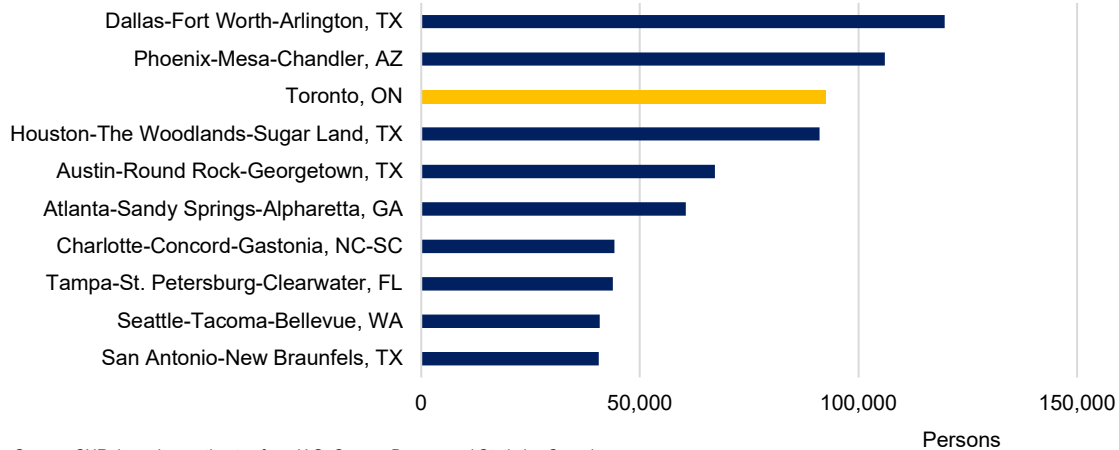
The estimates show that Toronto's ranking slipped to the third fastest-growing metropolitan area in Canada and the U.S. in 2020, after being the top growing metro area in 2019. In 2018, Toronto was second in terms of absolute growth, coming in behind Dallas.

Toronto was the only Canadian metro area in the top ten in terms of growth

Toronto was the fastest growing metro area in Canada and the U.S. when we wrote a similar blog last year. Figure 1 shows that in 2020, Toronto (+92,000 persons) was overtaken by Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington (+120,000) and Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler (+106,000) and moved down the list to number three. Toronto's growth was stellar, but just not enough to have it ranked number one.

Toronto was the only Canadian metropolitan area to make the top ten list, unlike the previous year (2019) when Montreal was sixth in terms of growth.

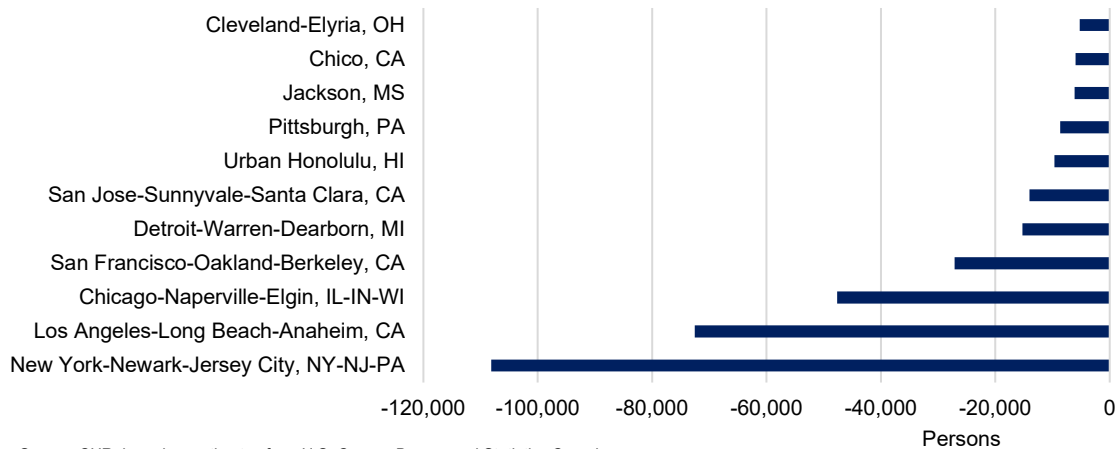
Figure 1: Top Ten Metropolitan Areas by Population Change, U.S. and Canada, 12 Months Ending July 1, 2020



No Canadian metro area was among the top ten decliners

Figure 2 shows that New York (-108,000) was the fastest contracting metro area in the U.S. and Canada by a wide margin, followed by Los Angeles (-73,000), Chicago (-48,000), San Francisco (-27,000), Detroit (-15,000) and San Jose (-14,000).

Figure 2: Bottom Ten Metropolitan Areas by Population Change, U.S. and Canada, 12 Months Ending July 1, 2020

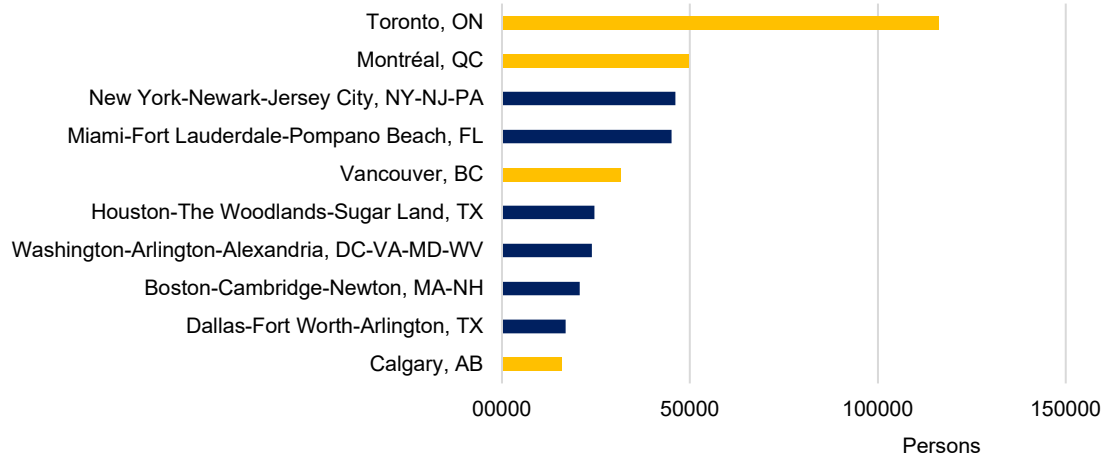


In contrast, none of Canada's 37 metropolitan areas experienced a decline during the 12 months ending July 1, 2020.

Toronto holds its top ranking as the destination for international migration

Figure 3 shows Toronto remained the top destination for net international immigration. Its growth in net immigrants (+116,000) was more than double that of the next fastest growing Canadian metro area (Montreal with 50,000) and the two U.S. metro areas with the most net immigration (New York and Miami, with about 46,000 each).

Figure 3: Top Ten Metropolitan Areas by Net International Migration, U.S. and Canada, 12 Months Ending July 1, 2020



Source: CUR, based on estimates from U.S. Census Bureau and Statistics Canada

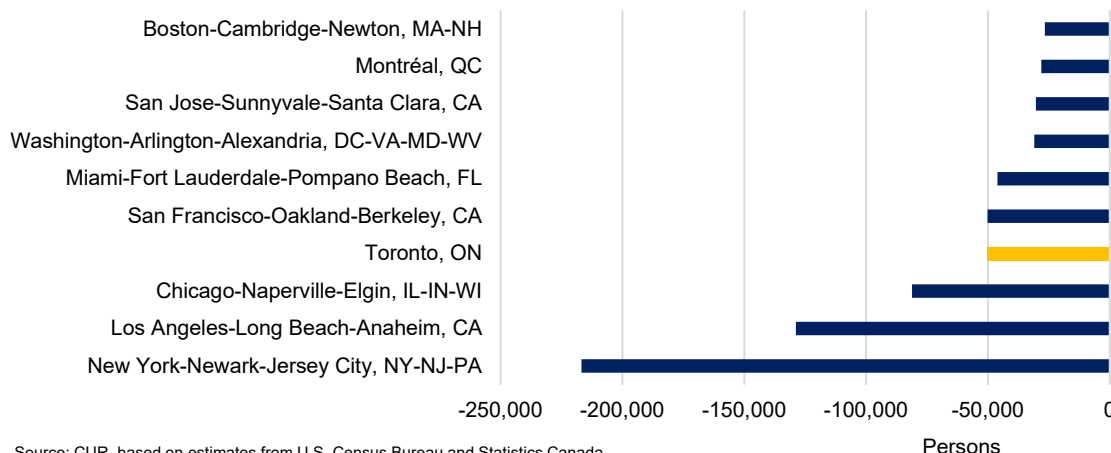
Four of the top ten metro areas attracting immigration in the U.S. and Canada were Canadian, with Vancouver and Calgary joining Toronto and Montreal.

Toronto's growth was dragged down by the loss of its resident population, as was New York, Los Angeles and Chicago

Many major metro areas in Canada and the U.S. have lost residents to other parts of their respective countries.

Figure 4 shows that Toronto (-50,000) made the list of ten metro areas with the most net loss of resident population, coming in at number four behind New York City (-217,000), Los Angeles (-129,000) and Chicago (-81,000). The net outflow of residents from Toronto is primarily a response to the escalating cost and shortages of ground-related housing, which is driving residents to locations beyond its metropolitan boundaries.

Figure 4: Top Ten Metropolitan Areas by Net Domestic Migration Losses, U.S. and Canada, 12 Months Ending July 1, 2020



Source: CUR, based on estimates from U.S. Census Bureau and Statistics Canada

In contrast, the top fastest growing metro areas, Dallas and Phoenix, experienced the most significant inflow of domestic residents in 2020 – Phoenix (+82,000) and Dallas (+58,000).

Sources:

¹ Metropolitan areas refer to the official statistical definitions of metropolitan areas used by the U.S. Census Bureau (Metropolitan Statistical Area - MSA) and by Statistics Canada (Census Metropolitan Area – CMA), respectively. The appendix includes the two definitions.

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Appendix: Defining a Canadian Census Metropolitan Area and a U.S. Metropolitan Area

A **Canadian Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)** is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the core.

- 1) The adjacent areas to the urban core are included in the CMA if:
- 2) 50% of the resident population commute into the core for work; and
- 3) 25% of the jobs are filled by commuters from the core; OR
- 4) The municipality directly touches or is partly within the urban core.

A **US Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes a central county that has at least 50% of its population living in an urban core with a population of 50,000 or more. Surrounding counties are included in the MSA if:

- 1) 25% of the resident population commute into the central county(ies) for work; and
- 2) 25% of the jobs are filled by commuters from the central county(ies).

Because of the varying definition, U.S. MSAs tend to be larger in geography and population than Canadian CMAs.