

# Preliminary Estimates of Saskatoon's Population, July 1, 2023

## ISSUE

As of June 30, 2023, both Canada and Saskatchewan saw record population growth according to population estimates released by Statistics Canada.<sup>1</sup> From July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, Canada added an estimated 1.16 million new persons, including an estimated 30,685 in Saskatchewan, bringing its population to just over 1.2 million. Although population estimates for sub-provincial areas, meaning metropolitan areas and municipalities, have yet to be released, the City Administration is providing preliminary population estimates for Saskatoon as of July 1, 2023. Based on the various components contributing to overall population growth in Saskatchewan, preliminary estimates indicate that Saskatoon's municipal population eclipsed 300,000 as of July 1, 2023. We estimate it grew by between 12,500 and 15,300 persons, with a midpoint estimate of approximately 14,100 persons, from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. This growth was entirely due to net international immigration.

## BACKGROUND

Outside of the Census of the Population, conducted once every five years, Statistics Canada releases population estimates for Canada and the provinces and territories for each quarter, four times per year. They release annual demographic estimates for Canada, the provinces and territories, and various geographies at the sub-provincial level once per year. The population year means the period beginning July 1 of a given year and ending June 30 of the following year.<sup>2</sup> That is, the annual population change for 2023, is the difference between the population on July 1, 2022, and July 1, 2023.

These estimates are referred to as "Postcensal" estimates, which are produced by using data from the 2021 census adjusted for census net under coverage and the components of demographic growth since that last census.<sup>3</sup> To estimate the population change over a period, Statistics Canada uses the "component" method, meaning it estimates the population by two main components: (1) natural increase (i.e., births minus deaths) and (2) net migration (which nationally includes only international immigration).<sup>4</sup> It adds up the net differences between them to obtain the total annual population estimate.

At the provincial level, net migration is divided into two sub-components: (a) net international migration and (b) net interprovincial migration. The first estimates the difference in people moving from other countries (including permanent and non-permanent residents) versus those moving to other countries. The second estimates the difference in people moving to a particular province versus those moving to another province. More details on these can be found in the Appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, see <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-215-x/91-215-x2023001-eng.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> See note 1.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-528-x/2011001/app-ann-eng.htm> for definitions of this and other related terms.

<sup>4</sup> See note 1, methodology section.

At the sub-provincial level, these components and sub-components are used to estimate population change, but an additional sub-component is added: net intraprovincial migration. This refers to the difference of people moving into a given region versus those moving out to a different region inside a province. In this context, a region can be referred to as a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). Thus, to estimate the annual population in the Saskatoon CMA, Statistics Canada's methodology produces the following equation:

$$\text{Total Population} = \text{Natural increase} + \text{Net International Immigration} + \text{Net Interprovincial migration} + \text{Net Intraprovincial migration}$$

Each year, Statistics Canada publishes the estimated population components for each CMA.<sup>5</sup> The Saskatoon CMA is a broader geographic area that includes the city of Saskatoon and a collection of neighbouring cities, towns, villages, and rural municipalities. The incorporated city of Saskatoon is referred to as a Census Subdivision (CSD) and it accounts for about 83% of the CMAs population. The components of population growth are not published at the CSD level, as Statistics Canada relies exclusively on fiscal data (e.g., tax returns and benefits) to estimate population at this level. Thus, only total population is reported at this level.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

In September 2023, Statistics Canada published its Annual Demographic Estimates for 2023 for Canada and the provinces. It, did not, nor has not, published its estimates for the sub-provincial areas including the CMA or CSD. These are expected to be released in late May 2024. Nonetheless, given the record population growth reported in Canada and Saskatchewan, the Administration has applied Statistics Canada's component method to estimate the 2023 population growth, first in the Saskatoon CMA and then extended the analysis to the Saskatoon CSD. These are preliminary estimates and subject to revisions as more data becomes available.

As of July 1, 2023, our model estimates that the Saskatoon CMA population was slightly above 364,500 growing by about 17,000 persons, a growth rate of 4.9% over the period. Based on the CMA results, we estimate that the Saskatoon CSD population was slightly above 302,000 as of July 1, 2023, growing by an estimated 14,100 persons. This report and the appendix provide more details on these preliminary estimates.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### ***Provincial Population Data and Components***

Before discussing the preliminary population estimates for the Saskatoon CMA and CSD, we turn our attention to the provincial estimates. These estimates set important context to base local and regional estimates on because the Saskatoon region typically accounts for over half of all net new population growth in Saskatchewan, while the Saskatoon CSD typically accounts for 45% of new population growth in the province.

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-214-x/91-214-x2023001-eng.htm>

As noted, from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, Saskatchewan added 30,685 net new residents, with an annual growth rate of 2.6%. Table 1 breaks down the annual population growth by component and subcomponent. As the table shows the net population growth was due entirely to net international immigration, accounting for 114% of the total population growth over the period. It also shows that Saskatchewan took in an estimated 9,600 net non-permanent residents in 2023, accounting for 31% of the net population change. This is the highest level of non-permanent residents admitted to the province and 4.6 times larger than those admitted in 2022.<sup>6</sup>

<b>Population Components and Subcomponents</b>	<b>Persons</b>
Births	13,343
Deaths (minus)	11,219
<b>Natural Increase</b>	<b>2,124</b>
Immigrants	26,124
Net Non-Permanent Residents	9,594
Net Emigration (minus)	769
<b>Net International Immigration</b>	<b>34,949</b>
Provincial In-migrants	15,510
Provincial out-migrants (minus)	21,898
<b>Net Interprovincial Migration</b>	<b>(6,388)</b>
<b>Total Population Change</b>	<b>30,685</b>

Conversely, the table reveals that Saskatchewan lost almost 6,400 persons to other provinces (net interprovincial migration). This is lower than trend, as since 2014, Saskatchewan has lost on average 6,800 persons per year to other provinces. The natural increase generated an estimated net 2,100 persons, the lowest level since 2006/07, accounting for 0.7% of the net population growth. This is primarily due to falling birth rates.<sup>7</sup>

### **Saskatoon CMA Population and Components**

Based on the provincial population estimates and their components, we apply various statistical techniques to estimate the population growth for the Saskatoon CMA and the CSD. As noted, our results indicate that the Saskatoon CMA grew by just over 17,000 persons over the period, accounting for about 55% of the net population growth in Saskatchewan. From 2011 to 2022, the Saskatoon CMA has accounted for approximately 62% of the net population growth in Saskatchewan. Our 2023 estimate produces a slightly lower share to account for uncertainty for some variables in the data.

<sup>6</sup> Non-permanent residents are temporary foreign workers, temporary foreign students, and asylum seekers. See <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-214-x/2023001/app-ann-a-eng.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Fertility rates in Canada reached record lows in 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-214-x/91-214-x2023001-eng.htm>

Like Table 1, Table 2 breaks down the Saskatoon CMA population estimates by component and sub-component. The difference from Table 1 is that Table 2 adds the net intraprovincial component, adding an estimated 1,120 net new persons to the CMA. Despite that, the CMA’s net population growth comes exclusively from net international immigration, accounting for 99.6% of the estimated growth (16,983 new persons).

In our estimates, the net non-permanent resident component accounts for a larger relative share of the CMA population growth (34%) compared to the province (31%). This is because Saskatoon accounts for a larger share of the foreign student population. The remaining components are estimated by their relative share of historical provincial population growth.

<b>Table 2: Saskatoon CMA Components of Population Change July 1, 2023 over July 1, 2022</b>	
<i>Source: Calculations from Statistics Canada Tables 17-10-0008-01 and 17-10-0136-01</i>	
<b>Population Components and Subcomponents</b>	<b>Persons</b>
Births	3,603
Deaths (minus)	2,356
<b>Natural Increase</b>	<b>1,247</b>
Immigrants	11,495
Net Non-Permanent Residents	5,756
Net Emigration (minus)	268
<b>Net International Immigration</b>	<b>16,983</b>
Provincial In-migrants	5,584
Provincial out-migrants (minus)	7,883
<b>Net Interprovincial Migration</b>	<b>(2,299)</b>
<b>Net Intraprovincial Migration</b>	<b>1,120</b>
<b>Total Population Change</b>	<b>17,051</b>

Finally, and most importantly to the City of Saskatoon, our midpoint estimate indicates that the Saskatoon CSD grew by about 14,100 persons over the period. This accounts for about 83% of the CMA’s population growth and about 46% of the provincial population growth over the period. Since 2011, the Saskatoon CSD has accounted for approximately 48% of the provincial population growth on average so this result is in-line with historical estimates. For more details, please consult the Appendix.

The population growth estimates for 2023 are certainly outliers relative to trend, with growth rates double the historical trend. Due to federal policy changes on immigration, we anticipate that population growth rates for 2024 will moderate and be more in-line with historical trends.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2024-2026.html> and <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/01/canada-to-stabilize-growth-and-decrease-number-of-new-international-student-permits-issued-to-approximately-360000-for-2024.html>.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the information in this report.

## **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Rapid and unplanned population growth can generate substantial policy implications for governments, producing both positive and negative impacts.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, a growing working age population increases labour supply and can help address real and perceived labour and skill shortages in the economy. It can lead to an increase in economic activity as there are more people to consume goods and services and contribute to economic productivity.

On the other hand, rapid population growth can create challenges to existing infrastructure and the delivery or consumption of public services, such as education, health care, and emergency services. It can also place upward pressure on housing demand, prices, and affordability all things equal, as housing supply cannot keep pace.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Administration will continue monitoring, analyzing, and reporting on provincial, regional, and local demographic and related economic data to help inform City Council in making policy, program, planning, and investment decisions.

## **APPENDICES**

1. Provincial, Regional, and Local Population Estimates, Trends and Analysis

### Report Approval

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-no-130-why-population-growth-matters-for-sustainable-development/>