

## Feature Article – Regional Migration

*Migration, both between provinces and within the province, is a major factor driving population change within British Columbia. In addition to affecting the total population, the age of the migrants also influences the types of goods and services required to meet the needs of people.*

### Interprovincial Migration

Unlike international migration, which is largely concentrated in the lower mainland, *interprovincial* migration (between other provinces) and *intraprovincial* migration (between regions within BC ) have a more wide spread impact across the province. Revised information on regional migration is now available for the period July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003. During this period, the province experienced negative net migration, an out-flow of 1,037 people to other provinces. This resulted from a relatively small in-flow of 48,078 people from other parts of the country, accompanied by marginally higher out-flows

of 49,115 people. Net interprovincial migration was less negative than in 2001/2002 when approximately 8,500 more people moved out of the province than moved in.

The following table shows the regional districts ordered from highest total net interprovincial migration for all ages to the lowest. Across the province, 11 regions had positive net migration, in-flows, from other provinces. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Capital Region had the highest in-flow with 6,473 people moving in, while 5,045 people moved out for a population increase of 1,374 people. The other large core area in the province, the Greater Vancouver Regional District, on the other hand, had the largest negative net interprovincial migration with 18,119 people moving in but 19,585 people moving out to other provinces resulting in a net out-flow of 1,466 people. Other high negative out-flows occurred in the interior of the province; from Fraser-Fort George and Thompson-Nicola.

Interprovincial Migration for Regional Districts, 2002 to 2003

REGIONAL DISTRICT	18 TO 24			25 TO 44			45 TO 64			65 PLUS			TOTAL (ALL AGES)		
	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET
Capital	1,133	828	305	1,953	1,727	226	984	530	454	438	239	199	5,684	4,310	1,374
Central Okanagan	439	489	-50	1,039	807	232	740	354	386	330	237	93	3,364	2,537	827
Nanaimo	272	286	-14	580	411	169	682	200	482	237	133	104	2,234	1,446	788
Cowichan Valley	99	124	-25	288	205	83	264	87	177	74	53	21	970	653	317
Squamish-Lillooet	305	134	171	259	231	28	45	38	7	9	11	-2	757	554	203
Comox-Strathcona	222	267	-45	605	517	88	287	171	116	99	53	46	1,666	1,499	167
Okanagan-Similkameen	161	207	-46	353	331	22	342	175	167	142	118	24	1,288	1,151	137
Sunshine Coast	32	29	3	98	66	32	83	36	47	31	19	12	325	230	95
North Okanagan	176	234	-58	369	352	17	295	174	121	101	88	13	1,274	1,202	72
Columbia-Shuswap	167	202	-35	326	266	60	216	116	100	72	74	-2	1,003	935	68
Alberni-Clayoquot	48	46	2	109	89	20	43	33	10	18	7	11	301	238	63
Powell River	21	31	-10	57	64	-7	46	21	25	14	8	6	184	189	-5
Central Coast	3	2	1	7	16	-9	2	3	-1	1	1	0	17	33	-16
Stikine Region	2	3	-1	10	20	-10	12	6	6	0	3	-3	32	62	-30
Northern Rockies	33	38	-5	86	99	-13	30	38	-8	2	6	-4	237	278	-41
Mount Waddington	13	23	-10	25	58	-33	7	17	-10	3	2	1	66	162	-96
Kootenay-Boundary	59	103	-44	111	142	-31	59	61	-2	23	21	2	339	458	-119
Skeena-Queen Charlotte	20	32	-12	60	118	-58	25	55	-30	3	6	-3	160	304	-144
Central Kootenay	170	286	-116	329	335	-6	222	146	76	74	79	-5	1,025	1,172	-147
Fraser Valley	377	402	-25	798	847	-49	363	339	24	167	179	-12	2,489	2,700	-211
East Kootenay	267	387	-120	442	427	15	238	227	11	51	71	-20	1,320	1,535	-215
Bulkley-Nechako	58	127	-69	126	188	-62	42	76	-34	16	13	3	361	606	-245
Peace River	274	281	-7	493	651	-158	188	206	-18	59	51	8	1,505	1,759	-254
Kitimat-Stikine	47	144	-97	111	200	-89	27	99	-72	13	17	-4	305	683	-378
Cariboo	91	159	-68	146	243	-97	71	129	-58	22	38	-16	464	855	-391
Thompson-Nicola	283	497	-214	463	648	-185	238	219	19	81	70	11	1,504	2,027	-523
Fraser-Fort George	197	434	-237	357	683	-326	158	199	-41	46	33	13	1,085	1,952	-867
Greater Vancouver	3,174	2,727	447	7,633	8,916	-1,283	2,389	2,509	-120	940	727	213	18,119	19,585	-1,466
BC	8,143	8,522	-379	17,233	18,657	-1,424	8,098	6,264	1,834	3,066	2,357	709	48,078	49,115	-1,037

## Intraprovincial Migration

*Intraprovincial* migration refers to the number of people moving from one area in the province to another within the province. Over the 2002 to 2003 time period, only 90,155 people migrated between Regional Districts, a relatively low figure. There tends to be a relationship between interprovincial migration and intraprovincial migration. Periods when there are more people moving into BC from other parts of the country also have more people moving within the province. For example, in 1989/1990, 82,200 people migrated to BC from other provinces and another 140,800 people relocated to other regions within the province. Mobility tends to increase with an increase in economic activity.

In the 2002/2003 time period, the Central Okanagan had the highest net in-flow of people from within the province, followed by the Nanaimo Regional District with estimates of 2,243 and 1,424 respectively. Again, as was the case for interprovincial migration, Greater Vancouver and Fraser-Fort George had the highest net

intraprovincial out-flows with estimates of -3,646 and -1,166 respectively.

The following table shows the regional districts ordered from highest total net intraprovincial migration for all ages to the lowest. Greater Vancouver has experienced a reduction in net out-flows to both other provinces and other regions during the last several years from highs of over -8,700 people per year in 1998/1999 to -5,112 in 2002/2003. This is due in large part to a decline in out-migration to other parts of the country from highs of over 23,600 people in 1998/1999 to approximately 19,580 people in 2002/2003. However, losses of population from the GVRD to other parts of BC and Canada were more than off-set by gains from international migration.

## International Migration

Approximately 90% of the people coming to the province from other countries move to the Greater Vancouver Regional District. In 2002/2003, over 28,000 international migrants moved to the GVRD.

### Intraprovincial Migration for Regional Districts, 2002 to 2003

REGIONAL DISTRICT	18 TO 24			25 TO 44			45 TO 64			65 PLUS			TOTAL (ALL AGES)		
	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET	IN	OUT	NET
Central Okanagan	796	688	108	2,245	1,402	843	1,355	794	561	702	503	199	6,636	4,393	2,243
Nanaimo	647	682	-35	1,778	1,446	332	1,540	817	723	726	493	233	6,042	4,618	1,424
Fraser Valley	1,000	1,117	-117	3,562	3,066	496	1,931	1,555	376	852	863	-11	10,093	9,080	1,013
North Okanagan	319	395	-76	1,151	913	238	817	545	272	430	277	153	3,652	2,848	804
Okanagan-Similkameen	339	349	-10	943	855	88	1,000	528	472	484	450	34	3,514	2,793	721
Cowichan Valley	303	407	-104	1,194	937	257	825	564	261	295	297	-2	3,485	2,887	598
Comox-Strathcona	396	555	-159	1,261	1,092	169	827	608	219	365	246	119	3,778	3,361	417
Thompson-Nicola	586	705	-119	1,568	1,549	19	1,015	748	267	432	308	124	4,874	4,485	389
Capital	1,481	1,106	375	2,969	2,958	11	1,520	1,560	-40	682	802	-120	8,395	8,027	368
Sunshine Coast	92	158	-66	461	329	132	408	246	162	151	156	-5	1,387	1,131	256
Columbia-Shuswap	266	290	-24	750	656	94	494	397	97	207	234	-27	2,277	2,136	141
Peace River	272	215	57	591	561	30	275	296	-21	54	73	-19	1,757	1,655	102
Northern Rockies	55	39	16	139	86	53	28	39	-11	5	4	1	322	245	77
Alberni-Clayoquot	140	215	-75	409	409	0	234	230	4	85	77	8	1,229	1,241	-12
Stikine Region	7	10	-3	16	32	-16	10	17	-7	1	0	1	54	92	-38
Powell River	77	148	-71	232	208	24	129	145	-16	72	59	13	668	762	-94
Kootenay-Boundary	95	177	-82	321	329	-8	222	229	-7	105	111	-6	985	1,088	-103
East Kootenay	192	250	-58	494	472	22	227	269	-42	86	116	-30	1,371	1,486	-115
Central Coast	8	30	-22	49	114	-65	26	32	-6	3	8	-5	140	303	-163
Central Kootenay	215	321	-106	613	662	-49	346	405	-59	128	196	-68	1,762	2,078	-316
Mount Waddington	58	121	-63	191	283	-92	71	153	-82	25	36	-11	500	865	-365
Bulkley-Nechako	184	264	-80	502	607	-105	181	292	-111	60	88	-28	1,367	1,761	-394
Squamish-Lillooet	279	265	14	682	831	-149	273	351	-78	60	91	-31	1,675	2,081	-406
Cariboo	288	455	-167	774	877	-103	443	549	-106	173	180	-7	2,359	2,888	-529
Skeena-Queen Charlotte	85	160	-75	234	396	-162	91	200	-109	23	46	-23	634	1,185	-551
Kitimat-Stikine	146	290	-144	395	613	-218	141	306	-165	54	60	-6	1,192	1,847	-655
Fraser-Fort George	452	607	-155	1,116	1,442	-326	427	777	-350	143	152	-9	3,045	4,211	-1,166
Greater Vancouver	3,578	2,337	1,241	7,318	8,833	-1,515	3,235	5,439	-2,204	1,725	2,202	-477	20,390	24,036	-3,646
BC	12,356	12,356	0	31,958	31,958	0	18,091	18,091	0	8,128	8,128	0	93,583	93,583	0

Other regions of the province receive much lower international migration. In 2002/2003, the Fraser Valley had the second highest number of immigrants at approximately 1,100 people while the Capital Region received 686 people from outside of Canada.

### **Age of Migrants**

Migrants are most often people in their late teens to mid-twenties, usually moving away from their childhood home, seeking education and or employment. Thereafter, often those between 25 and 44 move again to start families of their own, for work and to improve their housing. Between 45 and 64, people may move as children leave home and in some cases, as proximity to work is no longer required. After 65, people may move due to retirement, sometimes moving away from high density areas to places outside of congested commuter flows or they may move to be closer to amenities. In the 2002/2003 time period, approximately 38% of population loss as a result of net **interprovincial** migration was between the ages of 25 and 44. Persons in this age group tend to move for economic reasons, often aimed at meeting commitments to the nuclear family. Although, the 18 to 24 year old age group only includes six years, or less than a third of the 25 to 44 age group, they accounted for close to 20% of the population loss in 2002/2003. Persons in this age group tend to have fewer commitments, both in terms of family and assets, than those in the older age groups, resulting in relatively lower social and economic costs from migration.

**Intraprovincial** migration is more evenly distributed by age. In many cases the social and economic costs of moving to another part of the province are much lower than for moving between BC and another province, especially if the move is to a neighbouring region.

Although the proportion of **interprovincial** migration attributable to seniors is relatively small, it is increasing as more people reach retirement. As well, their migration is less likely to be affected by the relative

economic conditions in different provinces. Nonetheless, interprovincial migration for people in this age group is far less likely than is intraprovincial migration. In 2002/2003, only 3,066 people 65 and over moved into the province while approximately 8,000 elderly moved within the province. One of the main reasons for moving long distances is to be closer to family.

While the GVRD and the Capital Region had opposite migration flow totals, they had similar flows for those over 65. Both regions had more interprovincial in-migrants than out-migrants while they also had more intraprovincial out-migrants than in-migrants.

Perhaps, one of the reasons that the Central Okanagan has such a high positive net intraprovincial migration is that it attracts people of working age as well as those who no longer need to live in close proximity to work, e.g. retirees. This region gained over 2,200 people in 2002/2003 from intraprovincial migration and also gained approximately 830 people from other provinces. However, there was a net loss of approximately 50 people to other provinces for those 18 to 24, with 439 moving in but 489 moving out.

This tendency for negative net migration, whether intra or inter provincial, for youths between 18 to 24, was not uncommon as only six regions had positive figures. The Capital Region and the GVRD had more youths move in than out, perhaps due to educational opportunities as well as other economic and social reasons. Squamish-Lillooet also had positive flows, likely due to the attractiveness of the Whistler resort for work and play. The only other regions with positive flows for youths were the Peace River and Northern Rockies regions which have been particularly attractive to males who can earn relatively high wages while living in wide open spaces.

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