

Demographic Documents: Defining Canada's Downtown Neighbourhoods: 2016 Boundaries

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Population growth and the characteristics of people living in the downtown cores of Canada's largest cities are increasingly relevant topics, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, Statistics Canada is releasing information to better define downtown neighbourhoods, including 41 maps representing the primary downtown neighbourhood of every census metropolitan area (CMA) and of some of the largest census agglomerations across Canada.

Downtown: The heart of Canadian cities

Downtown neighbourhoods are key employment centres across the country. For example, in 2016, downtown Toronto accounted for 0.3% of the CMA's total area but 18.1% of all its jobs.

Downtown neighbourhoods are also often home to vibrant communities and represent some of the most densely populated areas of the country. In 2016, downtown Vancouver was the most densely populated downtown neighbourhood, with a population density of 18,262 people per square kilometre. In comparison, the entire CMA of Vancouver had a population density of 854.6 people per square kilometre, while Canada as a whole had a population density of 3.9 people per square kilometre.

From 2011 to 2016, population growth in the downtown neighbourhoods of Canada's three largest CMAs—Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver—outpaced population growth in the respective CMAs. The population of downtown Toronto (+19.2%), for example, grew at over three times the pace of the entire CMA's population (+6.2%) over this period.

However, since the onset of the pandemic, teleworking has become much more prevalent, and the convenience of living downtown may no longer be as important after the pandemic.

The analytical documents to be released following the 2021 Census of Population will address these questions to better understand the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic on the vitality of Canada's downtown neighbourhoods.

Note to readers

This project is the result of extensive consultations with experts from the municipalities under study, as well as other urban planners. While this new custom geographical unit—downtown neighbourhoods—is not part of the Standard Geographical Classification (SGC), Statistics Canada will use it when releasing 2021 Census of Population data. This article presents the boundaries of downtowns based on the dissemination areas (DAs) of the 2016 SGC. The boundaries may be revised when the DAs from the 2021 SGC are finalized.

The article "[Defining Canada's Downtown Neighbourhoods: 2016 Boundaries](#)" is now available as part of the *Demographic Documents* series (91F0015).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).

