

## British Columbia Population Projections – P.E.O.P.L.E. 34

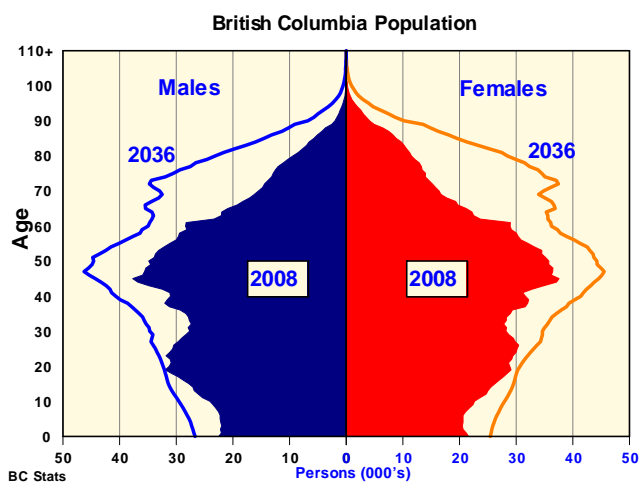
The increasing size and changing characteristics of our population creates shifting demands for public services, such as schools, medical and care facilities, and transportation systems. As well, marketing strategies of businesses are greatly influenced by the size and structure of the population. As a result, reliable population projections are an essential tool to provide reasonable scenarios of our future growth for planners in both the private and public sectors. However, it should be emphasized that, as with any projection or forecast, this projection represents only what could happen given the assumptions, not what absolutely will happen.

British Columbia faces unique challenges within Canada, as it increases its share of the national population. Some of the major issues emerging in our province include:

- managing population growth that is putting pressure on our urban communities from increasing densification, rural areas declining in population and aging rapidly, stresses on our environment and increasing demands on government resources;
- recognizing the changing ethnic make-up of the population and the need for better understanding of the values of cultural diversity;
- a health care system that must meet the needs of a growing and aging population; and
- economic and income disparities between our province's regions and people.

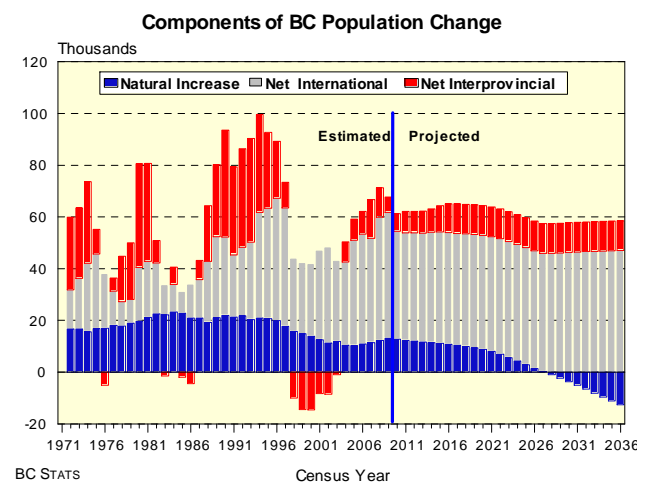
The following are some demographic highlights from PEOPLE Projection 34:

### Becoming an older population



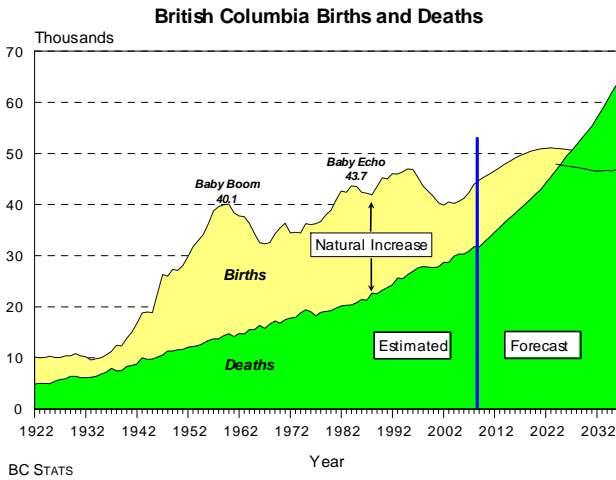
The British Columbia population is getting larger and older. Between 2008 and 2036, the population will have increased by about 38%. The median age of the population will have increased from 40.5 to 45.5 years.

### Migration the most important factor



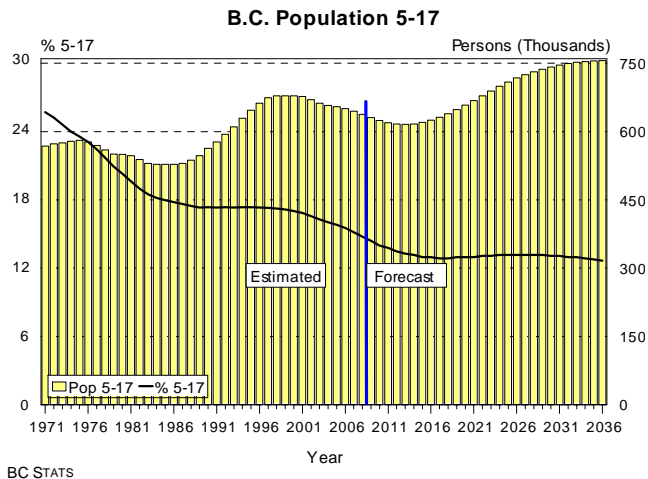
The major factor driving population growth over this period will be migration to British Columbia. International migration will account for 75.0% of the population gain, followed by interprovincial migration at 17.8%, and natural increase (births minus deaths) at about 7.2%.

## Deaths will surpass births



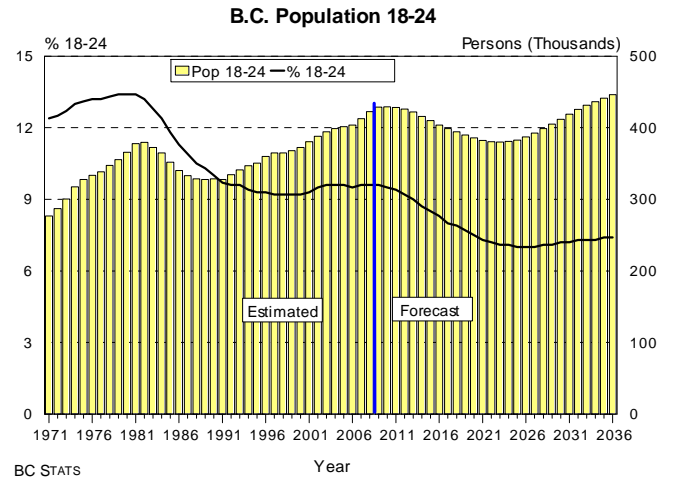
Even though the number of births in British Columbia will continue to rise, the contribution of natural increase to the overall population growth will decrease. In **2028** the number of deaths will exceed the number of births.

## Declining share of school age group



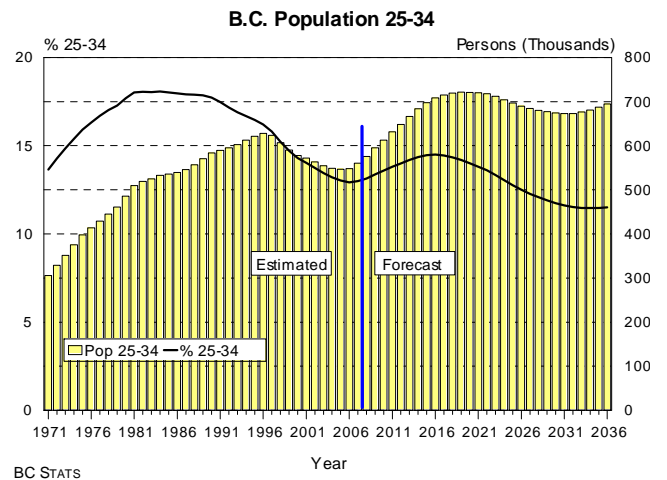
The population of school age (5-17 years) will decline slightly over the next 5 years, but will then begin a slow increase up to current levels by 2017. However, the share of total provincial population will still decline in the next 10 years, and never fully recovered to the current level until the end of the projection period.

## Post-secondary cohort dynamic



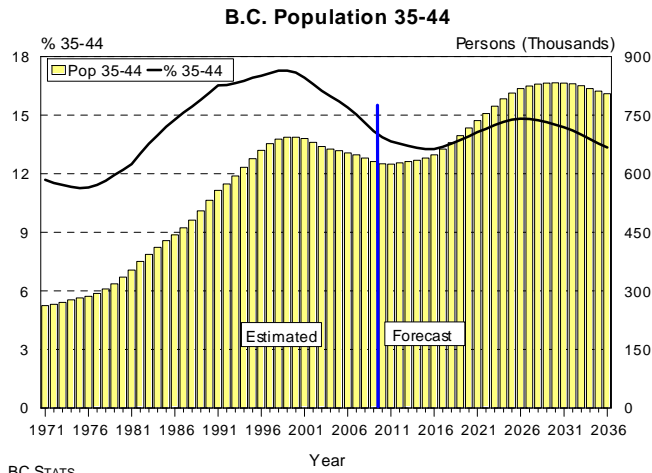
The population of post-secondary school age (18-24 years) will show declining numbers up to 2023, but then increase through the end of the projection. The age group share of total population will continue to decline until the last ten years of the projection period.

## Growth and decline



The population aged 25-34, which is generally associated with first time household formation, is expected to increase in absolute numbers and share until the mid of the projection, then decline in both measures until the last few years of the projection period.

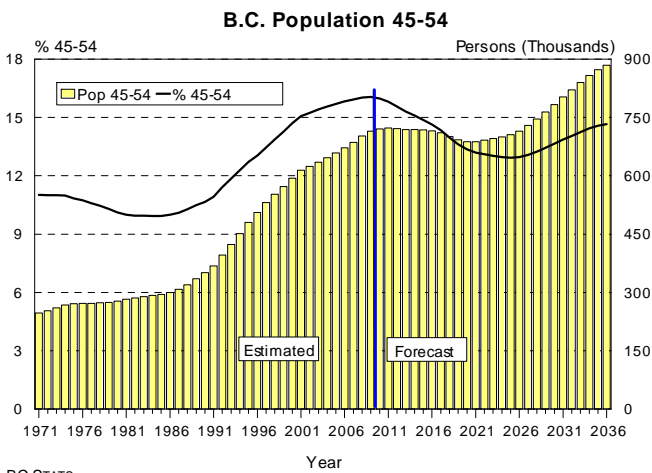
## Trailing edge of baby-boom cohort



BC STATS

The population currently aged 35-44 includes the youngest of the baby-boom cohort, now aged in their early 40's. The population in this age group is expected to fall slightly over the next three years, and then return to sturdy growth before another slow increase period towards the end of the projection.

## Competition for top positions

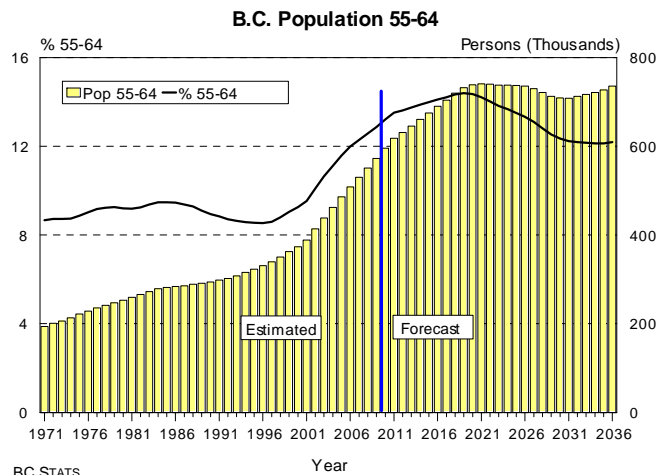


BC STATS

From the effects of the aging of the baby-boom and migration, the population of the mature labour force age (45-54 years) demonstrated high growth for the last couple of decades... As a result, the age group population has increased

significantly. This will have repercussions on the labour force, especially in terms of meeting career goals. Many people in this age group have competed for a limited number of higher level jobs, a situation that should decrease up to 2020/2021 with the declining absolute number and share of the group relative to the total population. In the last 15 years of the projection, the numbers in the age group will increase again, along with its share of the total population.

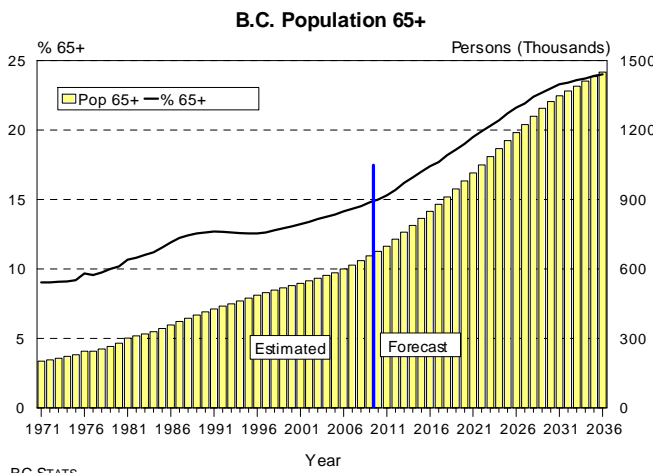
## Early retirement options



BC STATS

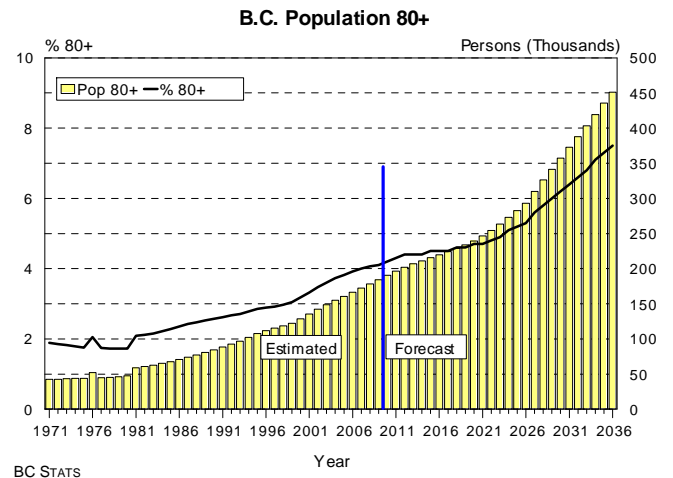
Both the share and size of those aged 55-64 will increase strongly until the mid of the projection. If greater numbers of this age group opt for early retirement (before 65) the impact may be felt by increased turnover in the labour market and greater demand for retirement housing and services.

## Senior age group becoming larger



Both the overall population count of retirement age (65+) and its' share of the total population will continue to increase significantly (from 14.5 per cent in 2008 to 24.0 per cent in 2036). This will result in a significant increase in regionally focused demand for community services for this age group.

## Health costs rise with longevity



The very senior population (80+) will also increase significantly, growing from 4.1 per cent of the population in 2008 to 7.5 per cent in 2036. This increase will have a significant impact on health care expenditures given the higher per capita health costs associated with people older than 80.

# British Columbia Regional Population Projections

## Regional District Population Growth

There are substantial disparities with respect to projected growth among the 29 British Columbia Regional Districts. The coastal regions of the province will likely see slower growth rates than most other regions in the province.

Figure 12  
PEOPLE 34 Regional District Population Growth  
2008-2036

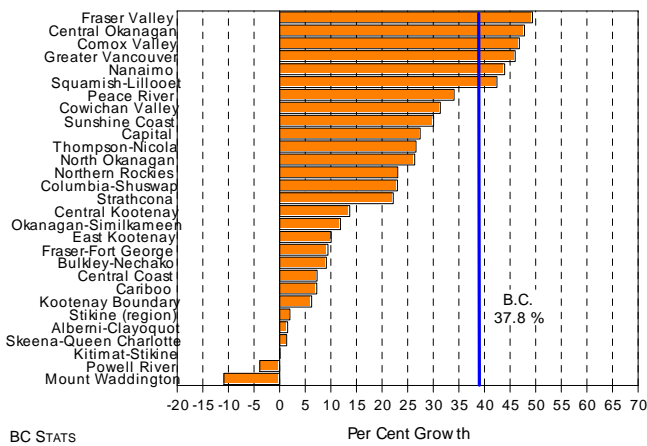
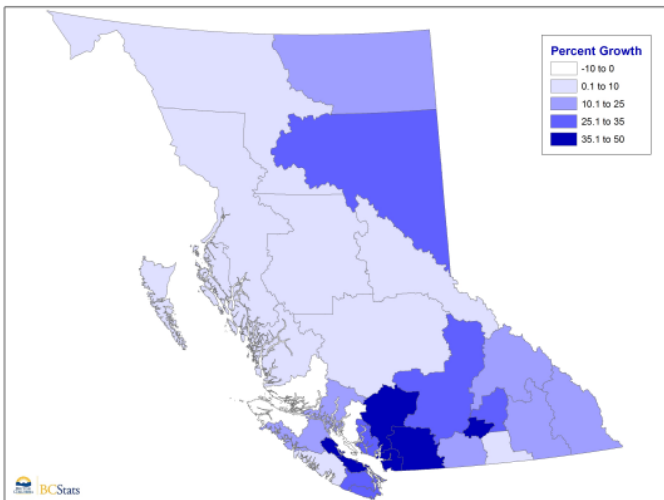


Figure 13

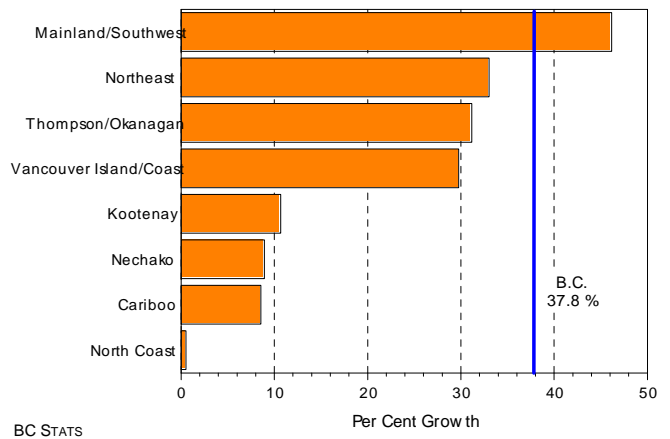
PEOPLE 34 Regional District Growth Rate Map  
2008-2036



## Development Region Population Growth

Figure 14, which depicts growth by Development Region, shows strong growth in the southwest. Both the Mainland-Southwest and Thompson-Okanagan regions are expected to experience healthy growth over the 2008 to 2036 period. The slower growth in the other regions is largely due to reductions in natural resource extraction and processing activity.

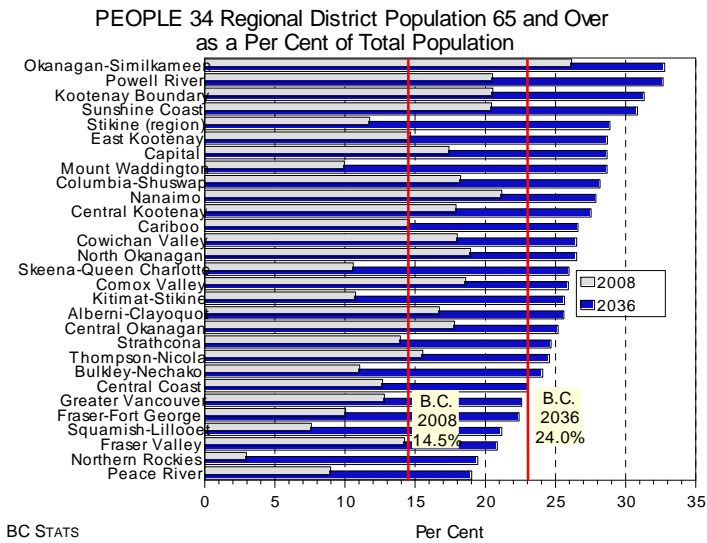
Figure 14  
PEOPLE 34 Development Region Population Growth  
2008-2036



### Regional District Population 65+

There are regional differences with respect to age as well. Currently, the population 65 and over (as a percent of total population) is much smaller in most of the remote areas, and greater in the more populous, southern regions of the province.

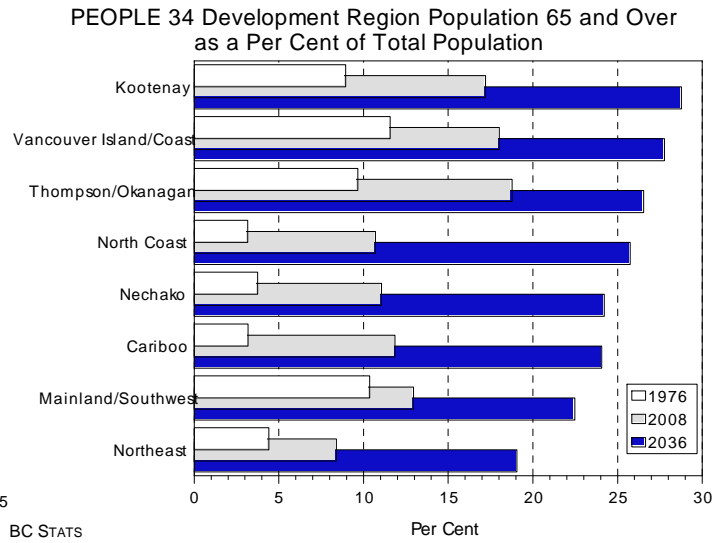
Figure 15



### Development Region Population 65+

On a larger scale, the Development Regions show a similar pattern of a more aged population in the south. However, the regions to the north will see proportionately larger increases in the proportion of the population over 65.

Figure 16



This is largely a combination of the greater access to services (particularly those related to health care) in the larger centres, and the more pleasant climate of the southern regions, which attracts the elderly looking for a place to retire.

The Regional District chart in Figure 15 indicates that some regions will experience proportionately larger increases in the per cent of population over 65. In many of these cases, this is the result of differential rates of migration to or from an area. Migrants tend to be younger than the population at large. Hence, in regions of high net inflows of population the aging process is slowed. Alternatively, where there is a net outflow, population aging accelerates.