MAP: Which B.C. cities are growing fastest
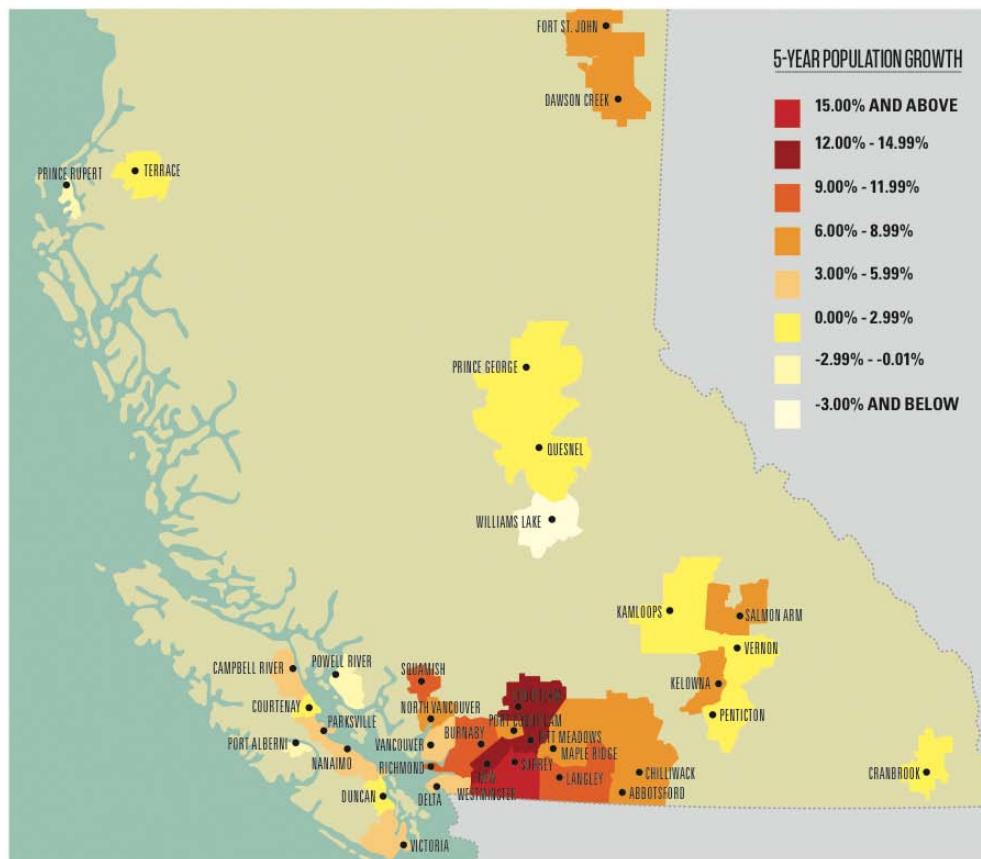
http://www.bcbusiness.ca/careers/map-which-bc-cities-are-growing-fastest

Trevor Melanson & Stesha Ho | Dec 18, 2014

B.C.'s population hotspots (and coldspots)

Accounting for 10 per cent of overall scores, population growth can be a good indicator of an attractive local job market—one that draws people in and keeps them around. That's why Fort St. John and Dawson Creek are expanding faster than other northern cities. Still, it's the urban gorilla Metro Vancouver that ultimately dominates our five-year population growth map, thanks in large part to immigration. Interestingly, the City of Vancouver itself lags far behind its suburbs, perhaps no surprise given its high real estate prices and geographical constraints. Sprawling Surrey, the biggest of those suburbs, takes B.C.'s top spot.

Click to expand >>

5-YEAR POPULATION GROWTH

15.00% AND ABOVE	
Surrey	15.36%

12.00% - 14.99%	
Coquitlam	12.83%
New Westminster	12.38%
Pitt Meadows	12.30%

9.00% - 11.99%	
Langley	11.83%
Squamish	11.28%

Burnaby	11.06%
Richmond	10.57%

6.00% - 8.99%	
Maple Ridge	8.88%
Chilliwack	8.32%
Port Coquitlam	7.94%
Abbotsford-Mission	7.57%
Dawson Creek	7.50%
North Vancouver	7.33%
Kelowna	7.05%

Salmon Arm	6.37%
Fort St. John	6.34%

3.00% - 5.99%	
Delta	5.74%
Parksville	5.58%
Vancouver	4.54%
Victoria	4.53%
Nanaimo	4.42%
Campbell River	4.19%

0.00% - 2.99%	
Courtenay	2.47%
Duncan	2.08%
Prince George	1.45%
Quesnel	1.06%
Kamloops	0.47%
Penticton	0.28%
Vernon	0.13%
Terrace	0.09%
Cranbrook	0.03%

-2.99% - -0.01%	
Port Alberni	-0.78%
Prince Rupert	-1.06%
Powell River	-2.34%

-3.00% AND BELOW	
Williams Lake	-4.87%

For a closer look at our Best Cities package, including analysis, heat maps and our methodology, click here >>

Methodology

To evaluate the Best Cities for Work in B.C., we looked at seven economic indicators, each weighted differently, that we believe reflect the health of a city's job market. Each statistic was divided or multiplied to come up with a score suitable to its weighting. For example, labour participation (the percentage of working-age people active in the job market), which accounts for 10 per cent of a city's score, was divided by 10; so Fort St. John, with a labour participation rate of 81.18%, received 8.118 points toward its total score. Cities were then ranked in order of these totals, from highest to lowest.

A note about exclusions: We only considered cities with more than 10,000 permanent residents. We excluded bedroom communities, such as West Vancouver, Port Moody and White Rock, which have high incomes but relatively small job markets. And for North Vancouver and Langley, we measured the districts, not the cities.

Finally, it should be mentioned that while we believe Environics' data is the best available, it is not without its limitations. Our income numbers, for example, are produced using Statistics Canada and Canada Revenue Agency data projected forward to 2014. Calculations were made in October 2013 and may miss recent economic shocks, particularly in smaller cities most sensitive to them (for example, a mine closure or, conversely, a sudden uptick in LNG-related activity).

How we calculated points: For **5-year income growth**, worth 30%, we multiplied the percentage increase by 150%. For **average household income**, worth 20%, we divided incomes by 10,000. For **5-year population growth**, worth 10%, we divided the percentage increase by two. Cities with a population decline received 0 points. For **unemployment**, worth 15%, we subtracted the rate from 15. So, a 10% unemployment rate equal 5 points, a 5% one, 10 points. For **labour participation**, worth 10%, we divided the rate by 10. For **people with degrees**, worth 10%, we multiplied the percentage by two then divided that number by 10. Finally, for **people using transit**, worth 5%, we divided the percentage by 10.