

Where Are All the Canadian Millennials Moving To?

Hint: It's Not the City of Toronto.

By: Diana Petramala and Dmytro Kharena

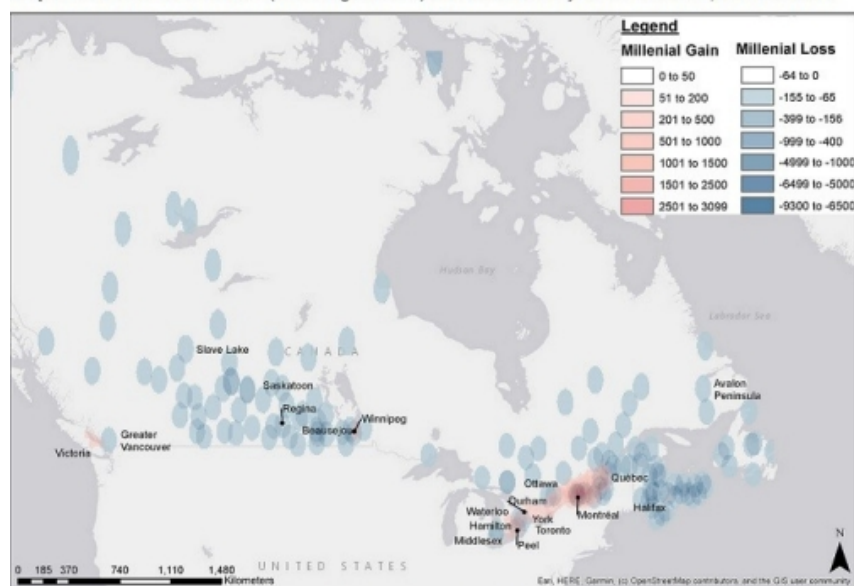
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We often hear about how the immigration of Millennials is boosting population and growth in Canada's major cities, especially in Toronto. But, what's going on with the more than 9 million Millennials already living in Canada? Where are they moving to and from within the country?

Millennials (defined here as those aged 23 to 38 as of mid-2019) are now the biggest demographic cohort in Canada. The majority of Millennials are finishing school, starting their careers and are at an age where they are leaving their parental home and entering the rental or homeownership markets.

So, where are they going? It looks like resident Millennials are giving up big cities like Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto for places with more affordable homeownership options like Ottawa, Simcoe County and Waterloo – to name just a few (see Map 1 and Figure 1a and b).

Map 1: Net Flows* of Millennials (Those Aged 23-38) Across Canada by Census Division, 2018 and 2019**



The Population moves within Canada through:

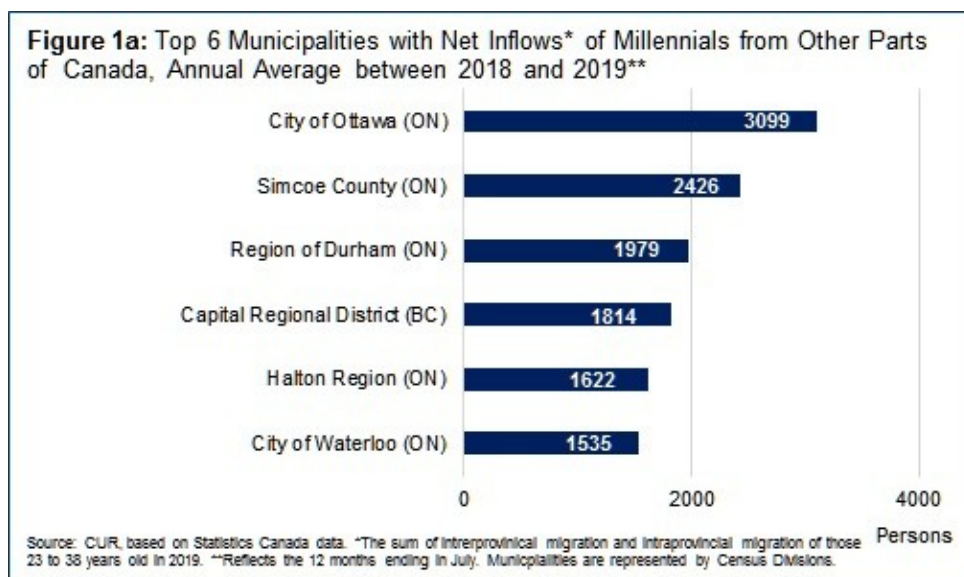
- **Net intraprovincial migration:** Moving to another municipality in the same province; or
- **Net interprovincial migration:** Moving from one province to another.
- **“Net”** refers to these estimates being is calculated as the number of people moving in less the number of people moving out.

The average annual net flow of Millennials across Canadian cities is measured here as the sum of these two components of population change as estimated by Statistics Canada for the 12 months ending July 1, 2018 and 2019.^[1]

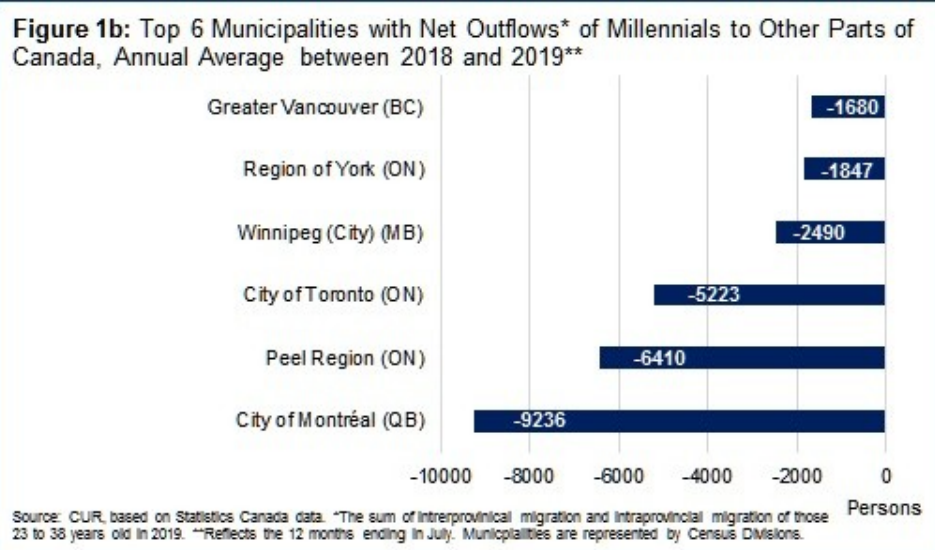
Five of the top six destinations for Millennials moving within the country are in Ontario, but Toronto is not one of them

Ottawa is the top destination for Millennials moving within Canada, attracting a net 3,100 Millennials per year between July 1 2017 and July 1, 2018, largely driven by interprovincial migration.

Other Ontario municipalities to make the top 6 list of Millennial destinations include Simcoe county (+2,400) (includes Barrie, Innisfil, Alliston, and Bradford), Region of Durham (+2,000), Halton Region (1,600) and Waterloo (1,500).



Meanwhile, the city of Toronto (-5,000), York Region (-1,800) and Peel Region (-6,400) are among the bottom 6 municipalities, losing the most Millennials on a net basis.



Conclusion

The population estimates presented in this blog should be kept in perspective. While municipalities in the Toronto CMA lost Millennials on net between 2017 and 2019, these flows still represent a small share of its overall Millennial population. The region is still the fastest growing region across the country, owing to immigration.

The data shows that there are many Millennials to go around, and many municipalities are busting at the seams as this generation comes of age. However, the evidence suggests that Millennials are likely to trade in more compact, walkable locations in major cities for areas with more affordable homeownership options, even if these come with longer commutes.

[1] The annual intercensal population estimates are for census divisions. In Ontario, the largest single-tier municipalities and regional municipalities are separate census divisions (e.g., the cities of Toronto and Hamilton and the regional municipalities of Peel, Halton, York and Durham).

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