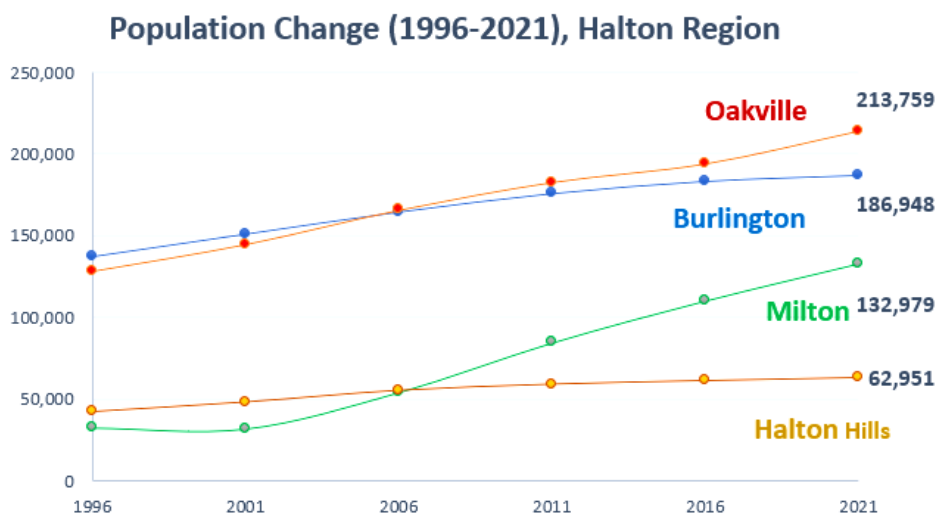


First 2021 Census Data Release

The first of seven 2021 Census data releases in 2022 arrived on February 9th. This first data release covers population and dwelling counts for “various levels of geography, including provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas, communities and census tracts”.¹ Data releases will be more detailed across the year; the next release, on “Canada’s shifting demographic profile,” will be on April 27, 2022.²

In 2021, Canada’s population stood at 36,991,981, an increase of almost two million (5.2%) from 2016. Ontario’s population was 14,223,942 in 2021, a 5.8% increase from 2016. In 2021, Halton’s population was 596,637, an increase of 48,202 or 8.8%. Only 9 – out of 49 - other Census Divisions³ in Ontario had larger population growth than Halton Region in this same period.⁴



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996-2021 Censuses

As the graph above shows, modest increases in population were experienced in Halton Hills and Burlington between 2016 and 2021. In this five-year period, Burlington’s population went from 183,314 in 2016 to 186,948 in 2021, an increase of 2%. Likewise, Halton Hills experienced small growth during this period, increasing by 2.9% to 62,951 in 2021. Population growth was more pronounced in Halton’s two other towns, Oakville and Milton. In 2021 Oakville’s population was 213,759, an increase of 10.3%.

¹Statistics Canada, [Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population](#)

²Statistics Canada, [Census 2021, Release Schedule](#)

³A Census Division is a group of neighbouring municipalities joined together for the purposes of regional planning and managing common services (such as police or ambulance services). These groupings are established under laws in effect in certain provinces of Canada. Census Division (CD) is the general term for provincially legislated areas (such as county and regional district) or their equivalents. Census Divisions are intermediate geographic areas between the province/territory level and the municipality (census subdivision).

⁴See, for more info, this [Community Development Halton chart](#)

The most dramatic population growth, however, came in Milton. In 2021 it had a population of 132,979, a 20.1% increase of 22,851 people.

Looking further back in the Census data, Halton's population was 339,875 in 1996, growing to 596,637 in 2021, an increase of 256,762 or 76%. Within Halton itself, the population growth rates between 1996 and 2021 are as follows: Burlington's population increased from 136,976 to 186,948 (36%); Halton Hills increased from 42,390 to 62,951 (49%); Oakville's population grew from 128,405 to 213,759 (66%); and the most dramatic population growth was seen in Milton, where the population grew from 32,104 in 1996 to 132,979 in 2021, a growth explosion of 314%.

Analyzing other Ontario Census Division data makes for interesting reading. The growth in Toronto, for example, was only 2.3% between 2016 and 2021, which is perhaps in keeping with the exodus from the city witnessed during the pandemic, when people were taking the opportunity to relocate to more affordable rural locations across the province.⁵

Places such as Greater Sudbury (2.8% increase), Niagara (6.7% increase), and Parry Sound (9.5% increase) all experienced proportionality higher population growth than Toronto. In fact, out of 49 Census Divisions, Toronto placed 39th for population growth. Six Census Divisions below Toronto experienced population growth, while four experienced population contractions.

From 2016 to 2021, only 4 out of 49 Census Divisions in Ontario experienced falls in their populations: Algoma (-0.3%); Cochrane (-2.2%); Timiskaming District (-2.6%); and Rainy River (-3.3%). Haliburton County had the largest population growth rate between the two Census periods, growing from 18,062 in 2016 to 20,571 in 2021, a 13.9% increase.

This is Community Development Halton's first 2021 Census analysis. Over the coming year we will continue to analyse these data, to keep you informed of findings and highlights. These data will inform our social policy research direction and priorities not only in 2022, but in the years ahead.

As always, if you have any questions or feedback about this *Community Lens* or any of Community Development Halton's other social policy and planning work, you can email data@cdhalton.ca.

⁵ *The Globe and Mail*, ['Many Canadians are leaving cities for smaller settings, but the idyllic life isn't always a smooth transition'](#), April 29, 2021

Community Lens is prepared by Community Development Halton to disseminate and interpret important community data as it becomes available. For more information please contact us at data@cdhalton.ca or 905-632-1975



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