

## Census pegs Cloverdale as fastest-growing area

Number of 2006 residents a jump of nearly 900 per cent since 2001

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Vancouver Sun

*Wednesday, March 14, 2007*

LOWER MAINLAND - When Brenda Beck and her family moved into a new home in west Cloverdale four years ago, the neighbourhood seemed relatively quiet and peaceful, similar to the rural property in Langley they left behind.

Things didn't stay that way for long.

The forest of trees behind her home was cut down, she said, replaced by about 70 new homes. New condominium and townhouse developments have sprouted up every few months.

"The traffic in front of our house is a lot busier [and] the school is much more crowded," she said. "We were quite amazed that it grew so fast, in just the time that we've been here."

Things have become so crowded, said Beck, that her family is thinking of moving back to Langley to enjoy some peace and quiet again.

According to figures from the 2006 census, released Tuesday, the number of people living in Beck's neighbourhood -- bounded by 168th Street, 64th Avenue, 160th Street and 56th Avenue -- has grown faster than any other neighbourhood in Greater Vancouver.



CREDIT: Ian Lindsay, Vancouver Sun, Files  
 Port Moody's population growth has encouraged developers to build new homes there.



CREDIT: Mark Van Manen, Vancouver Sun

In 2001, according to the census, there were just 307 people living there.

In 2006, that figure was 3,059 -- an increase of nearly 900 per cent.

(In publishing its census data, Statistics Canada breaks information down into neighbourhoods -- what it calls census tracts -- to help measure changes over time.)

Gary Mifflin, who moved into a new home in west Cloverdale four years ago, said he too has been amazed at the pace of growth.

"They're just mowing down trees," he said. "The contractors want money and Surrey likes the taxes, so they're allowing the contractors to jam all these houses in."

Not everyone thinks the rapid growth is a bad idea, however.

Paramjit Gill, a home builder by trade, built his own house in the neighbourhood -- and one next door, which he plans to sell.

He said the area is popular among people who have been priced out of other areas of the Lower Mainland.

"It's affordable and central to everything," said Gill.

He said the growth "is good for property values."

At the time of the last census in 2001, much of the Lower Mainland's new growth was concentrated around the SkyTrain line -- in particular around Metrotown in Burnaby.

Areas near SkyTrain are still gaining new residents, but the 2006 census shows some of the most dramatic growth is now on the region's fringes -- such as along the Surrey-Langley border.

Indeed, of the five fastest-growing neighbourhoods in the Lower Mainland, four are in Surrey -- mainly areas that were once farms or forests and are now brand-new subdivisions.

But the suburbs aren't the only pockets of rapid growth.

A young mother holds her daughter outside their townhome in the new Foxridge housing development on 60th Avenue near 166th Street in Surrey. Four of the five fastest-growing neighbourhoods in the province are located in Surrey.



CREDIT: Ian Lindsay, Vancouver Sun  
UBC condominium construction, where new townhouses and condos mean population has increased by 39 per cent in five years.

Neighbourhoods in Yaletown and Coal Harbour -- where ultra-modern condos continue to go up -- have seen their populations grow by anywhere from 40 to 80 per cent over the past five years.

And the University of B.C. lands, where new townhouses and condos are being built, has seen its resident population increase by 39 per cent.

For the entire Greater Vancouver area, the population has gone up a whopping 6.5 per cent over the past five years, according to 2006 census results. That's about 130,000 more people, or an average of 69 people a day moving into the region.

A few neighbourhoods in the Lower Mainland have also seen modest declines in population -- though the reasons why are often more complex.

Over the past five years, a neighbourhood in Burnaby just east of Burnaby Lake lost 566 of its residents -- a drop of 9.5 per cent -- the biggest population drop of any neighbourhood in the whole region.

Maureen O'Hagan, who has lived in the neighbourhood for more than 20 years, was surprised when first told of the decline.

After all, a brand-new condo complex is going up just across the street from her.

"It's pretty upscale," said O'Hagan. "They've got apartments and a bunch of townhouses."

The new complex is replacing one of the worst leaky condos in B.C. history -- Glenrobin Place, which housed more than 200 families.

That complex was in such horrible shape that its owners eventually sold the land off to developers, who demolished it in 2005 -- one year before the census was taken.

There may be a different explanation for the 8.9-per-cent decline in the Mundy Creek neighbourhood of Coquitlam.

Val Urbaniak, who has lived in the area for more than a decade, said many of the teenagers who used to live there have grown up and moved out -- and there aren't many younger couples moving in.

"Young families can't afford this area any more," she said. "There aren't tons of kids running around."

## PORT MOODY TAKES OVER SURREY ROLE AS FASTEST-GROWING MUNICIPALITY

The Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley are experiencing a population boom -- but not every municipality is in on the action.

According to results of the 2006 census, released Tuesday, the population of Greater Vancouver has gone up a whopping 6.5 per cent over the past five years -- that's about 130,000 more people.

And growth is even faster in the Fraser Valley, with Abbotsford's population up 7.2 per cent and Chilliwack up 10.6 per cent.

But in some parts of the Lower Mainland, cities are experiencing stagnant -- or even declining -- populations.

Delta saw its population drop a marginal 0.2 per cent, from 96,950 in 2001 to 96,723 in 2006.

"It's hard to believe," said Delta Mayor Lois Jackson.

"I hope the census takers got everybody. I can't believe that it went down."

Jackson said she's skeptical of the census figures, because her municipality has seen some development on existing lots in places like Ladner and north Delta.

"We have been converting a lot of single-family homes in north Delta to double lots," she said. "Densification is something we're looking at very seriously."

But Jackson acknowledged Delta can't absorb as many new residents as places like Surrey or Langley -- because much of its land is protected by the Agricultural Land Reserve.

"Delta has been built out for quite a long period of time, probably the last 20 years really," she said.

And Delta isn't the only municipality with little or no population increase.

Langley City, Belcarra and Lions Bay all saw marginal drops in population over the past five years.

And a handful of cities -- such as North Vancouver District, Coquitlam and West Vancouver -- saw increases of less than two per cent.

Not surprisingly, Surrey was once again one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the Lower Mainland -- with a 13.6- per-cent jump in population over the past five years.

But it was beat out this time by Port Moody, which saw a 15.5-per-cent increase over that same period -- nearly 3,700 new residents.

Port Moody Mayor Joe Trasolini argued Tuesday that his city's growth hasn't come at the expense of its quality of life.

Several years ago Port Moody residents voted overwhelmingly against a plan to develop subdivisions on the city's north shore.

Ever since, said Trasolini, the city has focused on sustainable, high-density developments in places already serviced by utilities and schools -- such as Newport Village.

"Even though we are the fastest-growing community, we are doing it in a smart, sustainable way that the community accepts," he said.

The 2006 census also showed huge gains, relatively speaking, in two of the region's smallest municipalities: Anmore and Bowen Island.

Anmore's population went up from 1,344 to 1,785 -- an increase of 32.8 per cent.

And Bowen Island's population went up from 2,957 to 3,362 -- a 13.7-per-cent increase.

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