

# DISTRICT OF KENT

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

### POPULATION PROJECTIONS & FUTURE GROWTH

#### Overview

The District of Kent is reviewing and updating its Official Community Plan (OCP). The updated OCP – *Kent 2040* – will set a vision for the District and outline policies and guidelines to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity. This background paper provides a snapshot of Kent's population trends and projections over the next 27 years. This will help to assess the potential demands on land use, services and infrastructure within the District.

#### Introduction & Current Population

##### Local Context

Located on the fertile floodplain of the Fraser River, the District of Kent is defined by its natural boundaries – Harrison Lake and Green Mountain to the north, Harrison River on the west, the Fraser River on the South, and Hope and Fraser Canyon to the east.<sup>1</sup> A large portion of the District's approximately 20,000 hectares (49,400 acres) is comprised of agricultural land (part of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)), steep topography, and protected parkland. This leaves limited room to accommodate the District's current and future population as well as commercial and industrial development.



As of 2011, the District of Kent was home to approximately 4,969 residents.<sup>2</sup> Over the last 15 years, the District has experienced consistent, moderate growth, averaging approximately 0.63% annually. Looking at the last 10 and 5 years, this rate has increased slightly, to (0.76%) and (0.82%) respectively.<sup>3</sup>

##### Regional Context

The District of Kent is a member of the Fraser Valley Regional District – a local government authority comprised of six member municipalities (and seven unincorporated voting areas) with over 280,000

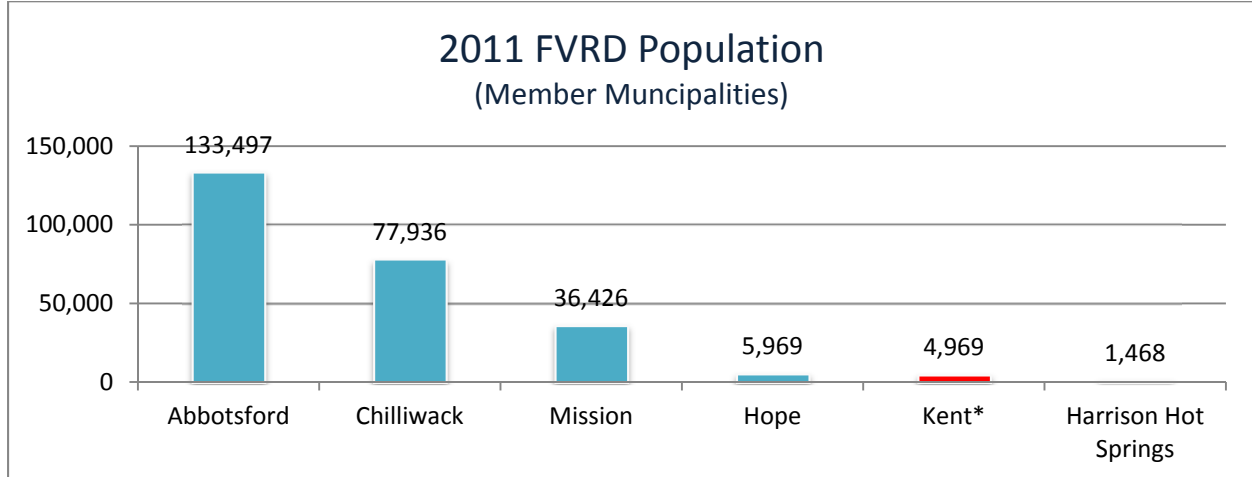
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.district.kent.bc.ca/>

<sup>2</sup> This number excludes the prison population living within municipal boundaries and does not include adjustments for the estimated Census undercount.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationEstimates.aspx>

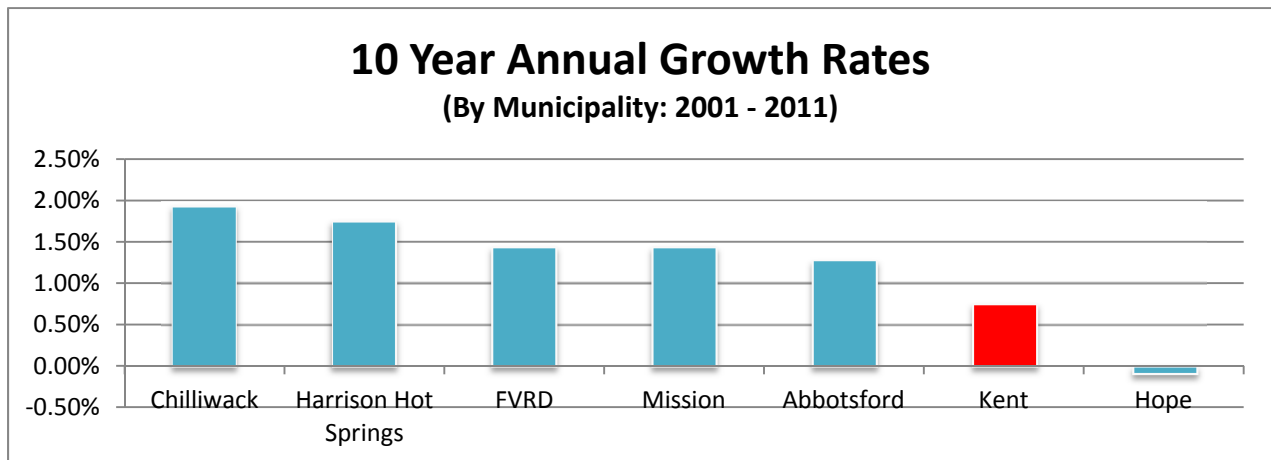
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residents in total.<sup>4</sup> Member municipalities include: the City of Abbotsford, City of Chilliwack, District of Hope, District of Kent, District of Mission, and the Village of Harrison Hot Springs. These municipalities comprise a diverse ecosystem that varies greatly in size and character, ranging from large cities to quiet, rural communities.



\*Excludes 2011 prison population living within municipal boundaries. Not adjusted for estimated Census undercount. Source: FVRD, *District Statistics*; Statistics Canada – 2011 Census.

Over the last decade, the Region has experienced strong population growth (approximately 1.5% annually), making it one of the fastest growing regions in British Columbia over that period of time.<sup>5</sup> However, that growth has been unevenly distributed among member municipalities, as demonstrated by the population growth rates between 2001 and 2011.<sup>6</sup>



Source: BC Stats, *Population Estimates*, 1996 -2005, 2006-2012

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fvrd.bc.ca/Pages/default.aspx>

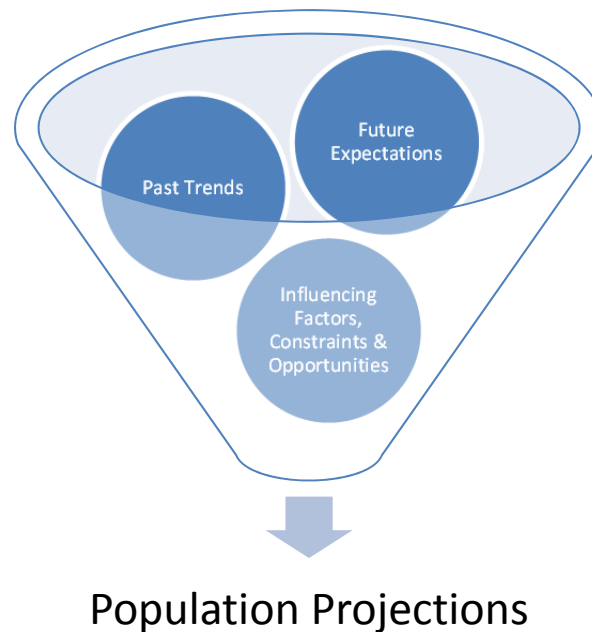
<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationProjections.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> Growth rates are compounded annually.

## Future Projections

### Overview

Projecting the District's population helps Council make decisions today that guide future growth and development tomorrow. Future projections must consider both past trends and future land use expectations related to residential, commercial, industrial and other sectors. A key component of this analysis is considering influencing factors (e.g. economic conditions), constraints (e.g. geographic limitations, policy limitations), and opportunities (e.g. untapped potential, policy adjustments).



### Background Data

As noted previously, the District has experienced moderate historic growth rates over the short, medium, and longer-terms, ranging from approximately 0.63% (1996-2011) to 0.83% (2006-2011).

Regarding future population, BC Stats' 30-year (2011-2041) P.E.O.P.L.E. projections for the Agassiz-Harrison Health Area anticipates average annual growth of 0.61%. However, this Health Area is comprised of a larger geographic area than the District and contains areas that are less developed (and less strategically located). The District, in comparison, is part of a more coherent (and concentrated) retail trade area. As a result, while it is important to take these projections into consideration, it is necessary to tailor population projections to the specific context of the District itself.

As noted previously, a key defining characteristic of the District is its land constraints, both due to the ALR and topography. Furthermore, other factors such as local economy and housing availability also impact future growth. Population projections must balance all of these variables.

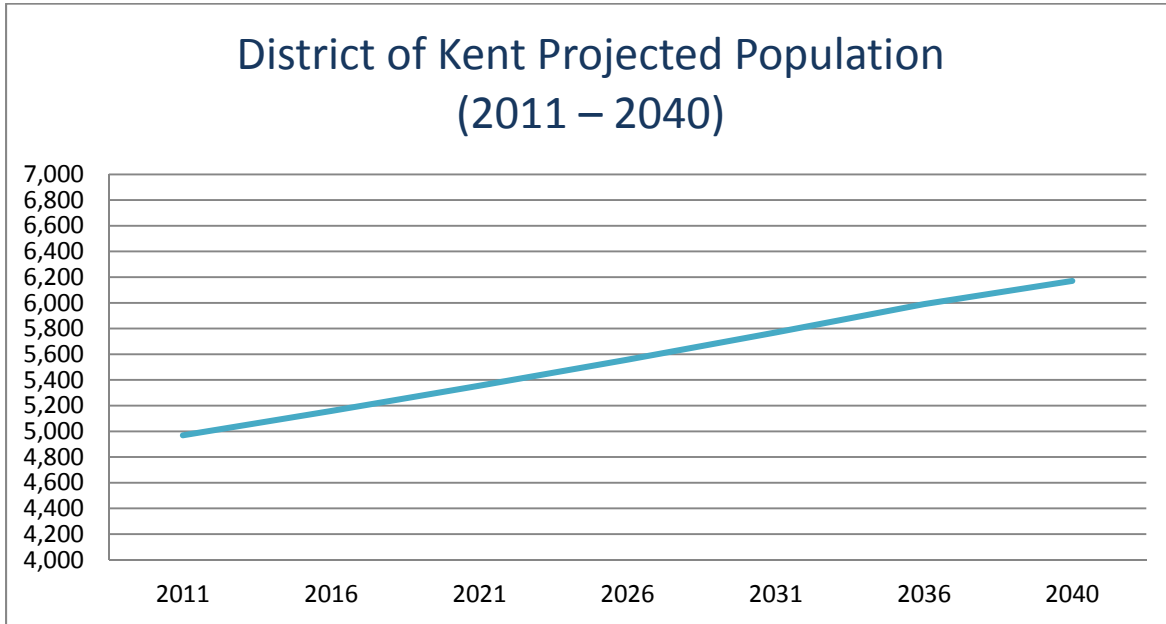
### Population Projections

Taking the above into consideration – past growth, Agassiz-Harrison Health Area projections, current



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constraints and opportunities, and other influencing factors – the estimated average annual population growth for the District over the next 27 years is 0.75%. This number falls on the upper end of past trends and broader projections. It balances current constraints with both the possibility of opening land for additional development, or intensifying the use of land and the recognition of the strong, ongoing growth of the Fraser Valley region as a whole.



Source: Urban Systems

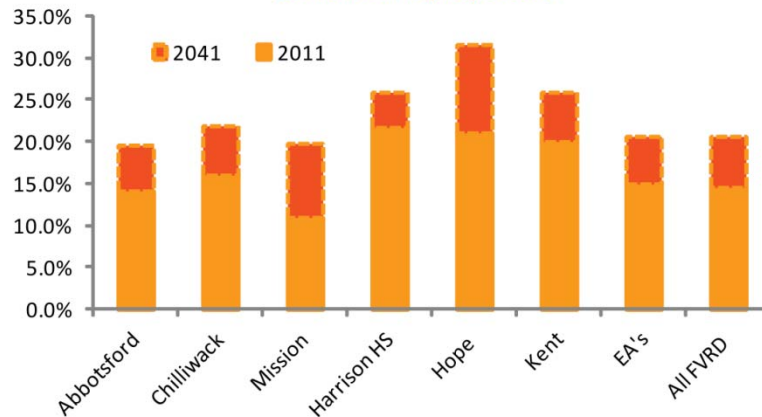


**Population Growth vs. Population Shift**

In addition to the expected addition of over 1,000 new residents over the next 27 years, the District is also expected to experience a shift within its existing population. In particular, it is expected to have an increasing share of seniors among its general population (seniors already comprise a relatively high percentage of the overall population compared to the District’s regional neighbours). It is important to therefore consider how this shift will impact the District and what the appropriate policy response may be.

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### Seniors as a percentage of each jurisdiction in the FVRD (current and projected)



Source: Fraser Valley Regional District, *Aging in the Fraser Valley*

## Directions to Explore and Consider

This population analysis identifies a number of key issues that the District may address during the OCP update and review process.

1. Where and how will Kent accommodate the new residents expected over the next 27 years?
2. Where will new commercial and industrial business and institutional uses be located?
3. How will an increase in population impact service and infrastructure delivery (both positively and negatively) and what new services and infrastructure will need to be provided?
4. What policy actions should the District take to limit, accommodate or encourage growth?
5. What policy actions should the District take to address anticipated demographic shifts within the existing/future population?

### 1. Goal Setting and Vision

Overall, population growth (or decline) is often subject to broader economic forces (e.g. regional, provincial or national). However, there are certain actions that municipalities can take that can influence population numbers, to a degree, within these broader trends. The OCP, for example, is a key tool that identifies the community's vision for growth and where and how such growth should occur. Growth also pertains to finding space for new commercial and industrial development as these land uses provide important employment and revenue opportunities.

### 2. Land Availability

Kent's geography, land and servicing constraints and community values and preferences together play a role in influencing where future growth will be accommodated. Possible locations for future residential, commercial or industrial growth may include:

- Site bounded by the Agassiz-Rosedale Highway, Highway 9 and McDonald Road (also referred to as the "Teacup" properties and designated in the existing OCP as Residential – Reserve, which includes commercial uses);
- Intensification on existing developed lands (e.g. within Agassiz);
- Mt. Woodside area;

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- Intensification adjacent to, or close to existing residential areas, which includes existing ALR lands; and
- Future light industrial / industrial at Tranmer & Johnson Rd, West Cameron Road, or at the existing gravel quarry on Sutherland Road.

These areas, however, each have unique trade-offs as possible locations for new or added development. These relate to political, geographic, economic or environmental aspects that would need to be considered moving forward.

### 3. Density, Housing Choice & Demographics

By increasing density in already developed areas (e.g. allowing townhouses in lower density residential areas) a community can accommodate growth without consuming open space and undeveloped land. Density is also closely tied to housing choices. Townhouses and apartment buildings can accommodate greater population density than detached, single-family homes. Housing choices, however, are closely tied with demographics given that certain housing types are suited to residents at different stages of their life. While a young couple or single may prefer an apartment, a young family may prefer a townhouse and an older family may prefer a detached home.

### 4. Services & Infrastructure

Growth is a key means for a municipality to pay for infrastructure and services through an increased tax base. At the same time, it can require additional services and infrastructure to accommodate an increase in residents. Balancing these two factors will be key to long-term success.

### 5. Economic Development, Amenities, Environment & More

Attracting residents is not just about housing. It also touches on many other factors such as the availability of good jobs and community amenities. By promoting certain priorities and policies over others in areas such as economic development, environmental management and others, the District can help shape future population growth.

## Next Steps

The District of Kent is in a strategic location within a vibrant, rapidly growing region. The OCP review and update provides a key opportunity for Kent to identify its vision for 2040 and to set goals and guidelines to address population growth. This will require a conversation among residents, business owners, neighbours and municipal leaders. Further assessment on the community's capacity to accommodate residential growth will also be required.

Please check PlaceSpeak ([www.PlaceSpeak.com](http://www.PlaceSpeak.com)) for up to date information or contact **Darcey Kohuch, Director of Development Services** at 604-796-2235 or [dkohuch@district.kent.bc.ca](mailto:dkohuch@district.kent.bc.ca)

