

Rural Demographic Opportunities: Insights for Planners

BRIEF SUMMARY

This article examines the rural demographic opportunities, particularly from the perspective of local planners. The publication reviews data from non-metro census divisions in Ontario. Key findings from the article include:

- ❑ If Ontario's rural population comprised a single province it would be the 5th most populous province in Canada.
- ❑ Rural Ontario is not a homogenous group, and no one definition will encapsulate all of what makes a place "rural."
- ❑ Rural Ontario tends to be older with a higher proportion of seniors. Some non-metro census divisions experienced a 28.5% increase in seniors aged 80+ years old.
- ❑ From 2011-2016 every non-metro census divisions experienced a net loss of individuals aged 18-24 years of age.
- ❑ Youth out-migrate from rural to pursue education and economic opportunities.
- ❑ The solution to retaining rural youth does not lie in preventing them from leaving, but rather providing supports for their return.
- ❑ Between 2011-2016 almost 8,000 immigrants moved to a rural community.
- ❑ Newcomer attraction represents an opportunity for economic development.

INSIGHTS FOR PLANNERS

- ❑ Age-in place or age-friendly strategies are needed to support individuals to live in their residences and communities for longer. Communities need to examine opportunities for walkability, active living, and housing affordability regarding age-in place/age-friendly strategies.
- ❑ An illustration is the [City of Temiskaming Shores' Age-Friendly Coffee Hour](#) initiative.
- ❑ Explore opportunities to enhance the sense of belonging of youth to rural communities to facilitate their return.
- ❑ An illustration is the [Prosper in Place](#) strategy from Perth County.
- ❑ Explore opportunities to attract and welcome new immigrants to rural communities by promoting quality of life, employment, housing, and service provisions.

Further Information

The article was written by Emily Sousa, Wayne Caldwell and Ryan Gibson. It was published in [Y Magazine: Ontario Professional Planners Institute](#).

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