



Parry Sound district a destination for secondary migrants?

Letter to the Editor

Opinion Apr 05, 2017 Parry Sound North Star

Dear Editor,

Northern Policy Institute, in partnership with the Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards, has released the sixth report of their joint effort; Northern Projections: Human Capital Series. The report, authored by James Cuddy and Bakhtiar Moazzami, focuses on the Parry Sound District, proposing secondary migration from the Greater Toronto Area as a solution to slow growth population numbers.

The population in Parry Sound is growing, but very slowly. According to the most recent 2016 Statistics Canada census numbers, the district grew from 33,828 to 42,824 — a 26.6 per cent increase from 1986 to 2016. The authors of the report project that the district's total population is expected to slightly increase by only 0.6 per cent from 2013 to 2041.

At the same time, the Parry Sound district has experienced positive intraprovincial migration for the past decade, as individuals from Ontario have moved into the region from other parts of the province. So, while the projected numbers may look dim, opportunities to increase the population can be found in marketing the district of Parry Sound as a desirable destination for secondary migrants who are looking to move north. Even more promising is the fact that the human capital indexes, level of knowledge, and skills that affect productivity for immigrants in the district are higher than the total working-age population across all jurisdictions.

“With significant numbers of unemployed and underemployed new Canadians in the Greater Toronto Area, and Parry Sound district's relative proximity to this part of the province, there is a real opportunity for the Parry Sound district to address its population challenges by playing to its demonstrated strength in supporting newcomer success,” stated Stacie Fiddler, executive director, The Labour Market Group.

On another positive note, authors found the human capital indexes of the francophone population in the district are higher than in Ontario and Canada, and notably higher than the total working-age population across all jurisdictions.

Based on these findings, the authors make several recommendations to promote the long-term sustainability of the district:

Work to build Parry Sound District as a centre for francophone success in Northern Ontario

Ontario wants to see its francophone population grow and prosper. Parry Sound district has a strong francophone population from which to build, and an enviable track record of educational achievement and employment success for francophones compared to other districts in the North. Indeed, francophones in the Parry Sound district have higher levels of education and educational achievement than francophones in other districts and across Ontario. The district could expand its role as a leader in this effort to attract and support northern francophones.

Market the district of Parry Sound as a desirable destination for secondary migration in Ontario

The Parry Sound district has experienced positive intraprovincial migration for the past decade, as more individuals from Ontario have moved into the region from other parts of the province. Meanwhile, the human capital indexes for immigrants in the district are higher than the total working-age population across all jurisdictions.

Continue to build on indigenous partnerships

The human capital indexes for the indigenous labour force in the district of Parry Sound, while below the rest of the population, are higher than in Canada as a whole. Given that the indigenous share of the population is increasing, and given that their human capital composition is lower than total working-age population in the Parry Sound district, future labour productivity will decrease if education levels do not rise among this segment of the population. There is strong evidence showing that higher skill levels increase the likelihood of participation in the workforce and reduce unemployment rates in the Parry Sound district, and addressing these issues for the indigenous population will have positive benefits for the entire region.

The full report, Northern Projections: Human Capital Series — Parry Sound District, is available on our websites:

Northern Policy Institute, northernpolicy.ca

Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation, awic.ca

Far Northeast Training Board, fnetb.com

The Labour Market Group — Nipissing Parry Sound, thelabourmarketgroup.ca

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board, ntab.on.ca

North Superior Workforce Planning Board, nswpb.ca

Sudbury and Manitoulin Workforce Planning Board, planningourworkforce.ca

Northern Projections: Human Capital Series highlights all of the 11 districts in Northern Ontario, and is part of an ongoing, collaborative effort between the Northern Policy Institute and Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Board to provide evidence-based analysis for effective decision-making in the region. Reports examine past and present characteristics and trends in each district's economy in order to forecast future challenges and opportunities.

Charles Cirtwill

Northern Policy Institute President and CEO

and Stacie Fiddler
Executive Director, The Labour Market Group