

# Community Overview





## 2. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Pitt Meadows was incorporated as a municipality in 1914. Originally designated as a District, it officially became the City of Pitt Meadows on January 1, 2007.

Pitt Meadows became a member municipality of Metro Vancouver in 1995 and is one of 21 municipalities plus Electoral Area "A" that comprises the Regional District.

### 2.1 Location

Pitt Meadows is located in the Lower Fraser Valley, east of Vancouver (see Figure 1). It is primarily a low-lying agricultural area, situated on the north side of the Fraser River at its junction with the Pitt River. Two arms of the Alouette River run through the municipality, along with a number of other sloughs and waterways. Pitt Lake, on the City's northern boundary, is the largest tidal lake in North America. The Thompson Mountain Range rises spectacularly along the community's northeast edge.

*Figure 1: Location Map*





## 2.2 Land Area

Pitt Meadows consists primarily of lowlands and is bordered on two sides and bisected by rivers. Sixty-four kilometres of dikes protect the community from flooding. The dikes also provide a multi-use trail system alongside the farmland and marshes, and offer magnificent views of the mountains to the North.

Over eighty-six percent of Pitt Meadows is within the floodplain. The floodplain contains nourishing soil and is suitable for farming; eighty-six percent of Pitt Meadows is within the BC Agricultural Land Reserve as protected farmland. Most residents live in the urban town centre, which is located on a highland area.

The rest of Pitt Meadows presents several challenges to development, including deep peat and bog soil conditions that require considerable fill or pre-loading prior to development, adding to the cost of building.

## 2.3 History

The Municipality takes its name from the Pitt River and Pitt Lake, which were named after former British Prime Minister William Pitt.

The first inhabitants of Pitt Meadows were aboriginal people, and they have resided in this area for at least 1000 years. James McMillan explored the area in 1874 and Europeans followed by starting a settlement in the area in the 1870's. This settlement was originally known as Bonson's Landing.

The Municipality of Maple Ridge was first incorporated in 1874 and included Pitt Meadows to the west. However, residents of the Pitt Meadows area petitioned for their removal from the District of Maple Ridge in 1892. Pitt Meadows reverted to unorganized territory but was separately incorporated as the District of Pitt Meadows in 1914.

Pitt Meadows is naturally isolated from the rest of the Lower Mainland by the Pitt River and the Fraser River. Its first land-based transportation route came in 1885 with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway through to Port Moody. The highway bridge over the Pitt River was opened in 1957. In 1963 the Pitt Meadows Airport was opened. The Golden Ears Bridge is scheduled to open in 2009 and will provide a direct connection over the Fraser River.

## 2.4 Demographics

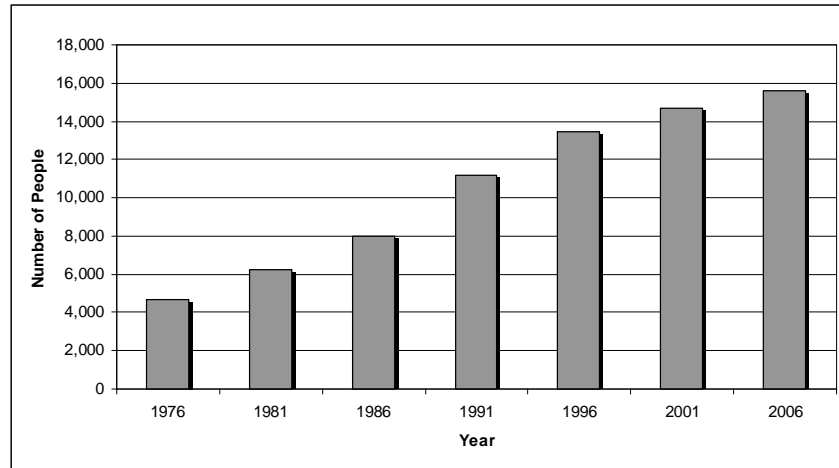
According to the Census, Pitt Meadows had a 2006 population of 15,623. Between the 2001 Census and the 2006 Census, the population has grown 6.5%, which is the same rate of growth as Metro Vancouver as a whole. The City is projected to have a population of as much as 21,000 by 2021, which is an additional 5,000 residents. This faster rate of growth is projected because of improved access to the community as a result of the new Golden Ears and Pitt River Bridge projects, as well as more development activity in general throughout the northeast sector of the Metro Vancouver region.



SOME OF THE FIRST RESIDENTS OF PITT MEADOWS



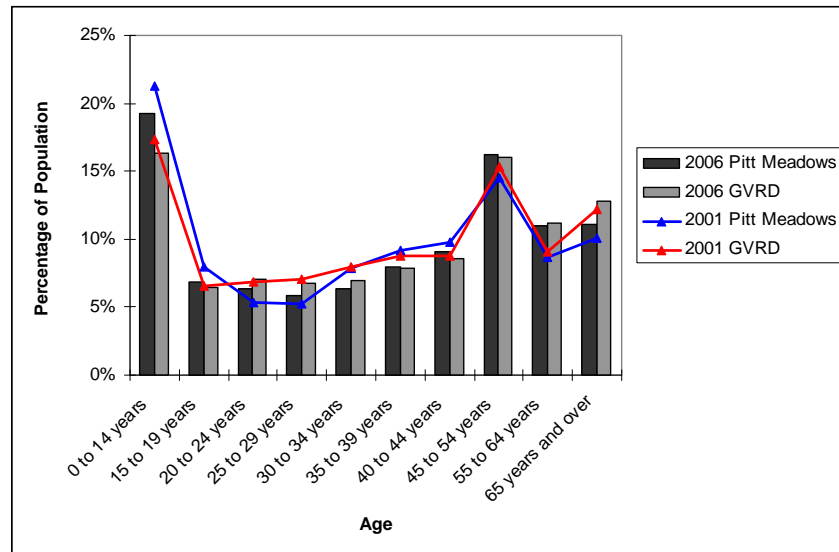
Figure 2: Population Growth in Pitt Meadows, 1976 - 2006



Source: Census Canada

Pitt Meadows has a higher portion of young people than Metro Vancouver as a whole. As shown in Figure 3, Pitt Meadows has a larger proportion of children under the age of 20, reflecting the family oriented nature of the City. However, if trends continue, the City is expected to experience a growing proportion of seniors and a decline in younger people over the next 20 years. One of the results will be smaller average household sizes. These smaller households may require alternatives to the traditional single-family house, such as townhouses or apartments.

Figure 3: Pitt Meadows and Metro Vancouver Age Profiles, 2001 and 2006



Source: Census Canada

About 85% of Pitt Meadows' resident labour force was employed outside the community in 2001. Agriculture was the largest employer in the City in that year, followed by education, health and social services. In 2004 there were 126 home-based businesses operating in Pitt Meadows. This number is doubling every two to three years and indicates the strong entrepreneurial spirit that is emerging among more residents.



## 2.5 Regional Role

Pitt Meadows is located between the rapidly developing communities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, and Maple Ridge. Surrey and Langley, which are also experiencing rapid population growth, are located directly south of Pitt Meadows, on the other side of the Fraser River.

Pitt Meadows is directly involved in regional transportation improvements, such as the Golden Ears Bridge and the new Pitt River Bridge, which will improve access to and from Pitt Meadows, thus enhancing the area's appeal to new residents and businesses. It is a major challenge of this Plan to recognize and support the rural and farm uses of Pitt Meadows in the face of demands for housing, commercial and industrial development.



RENDERING OF THE FUTURE GOLDEN EARS BRIDGE