

Comments on Population Projections and Realized Population Growth in Brandon Following the Arrival of Maple Leaf

Population projections for the City of Brandon were made using the Microcomputer Economic Development Assessment Model from North Dakota State University. The original population projection for the first shift impacts included 821 persons at Maple leaf and 2332 more relating to secondary (induced) development, for a total of 3,262.

These projections were originally made in 1998 when the first shift was ramping up at Maple Leaf. The 1996 Census placed Brandon's population at 39,175. The 2006 Census places Brandon's population at 41,511. This represents an increase of 2,336.

The difference in the realized and projected populations is 926 persons (over-estimate), or about 28%. This may be accurate. It, however, also could be partially accounted for by a higher than expected proportion of the new population growth residing in the Brandon region as opposed to the City. In addition, original projections for first shift saw the plant's labour force needs being met through the Canadian labour market. An ever-tightening Canadian labour market has meant that a significant portion of Maple Leaf's 1st shift labour force is comprised of immigrant workers. As a result, the timelines associated with immigrant workers being eligible to bring their families to Brandon has delayed the projected population increase. Some first shift related population increase will occur during 2007-2008, as Maple Leaf employees begin to bring their families to the City (estimated at 1,400 dependents). If these dependents had arrived by 2005 as anticipated, and if they resided in the City, the original population projection would have been on the low side, as anticipated in original projections.

On the conservative side, if the realized second shift projection also is over-estimated by 28%, the projected second shift population impact will be reduced from 5,525 to 3,978 by 2010 onward.

The first projections were made for 2002 onward. The fact that the numbers were not met until 2005 suggests that growth in the induced employment population has been slower than anticipated. It has, however, now occurred. A similar delay may occur in the second shift projections, hence the wording from "2010 onward".

Alternatively, if one uses Brandon Regional Health Authority population figures for comparison, the original population projections made in 1998 were overstated by 536 persons or 16%. The Brandon RHA population number for the City of Brandon in 1998 was 41,603. The BRHA population number for Brandon in 2005 was 44,329. This represents an increase of 2,726. 2006 BRHA population figures are not yet available. On the conservative side, if the realized second shift projection also is over-estimated by 16%, the projected second shift population impact will be reduced from 5,525 to 4,641 by 2010 onward.