

Rural-Urban Interdependence: Bridging the Rural-Urban Divide

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Important!

1. Bridging the Rural-Urban Divide

- Unnecessary tension in that rural and urban communities feel that they are each being taken advantage of by the other.
- Real story is interdependence and the gains from leveraging this natural evolution between rural and urban (did not exist in 1950)
- Governance disconnect is the main problem
 - Urban has little say in environmental protection, green space, water, etc.
 - Rural has little say in infrastructure, urban-part of economic development, tax sharing and cost sharing (both ways)—what I stressed today.

Rural Depends on Urban for:

Urban Depends on Rural for:

Employment

Private and Public Services

Urban Amenities

Market for recreation activities

Market for agriculture products

Demand for Environmental Stewardship

Property taxes/land market

Labor Force

Market for Private and Public Goods and Services

Market for Urban Amenities

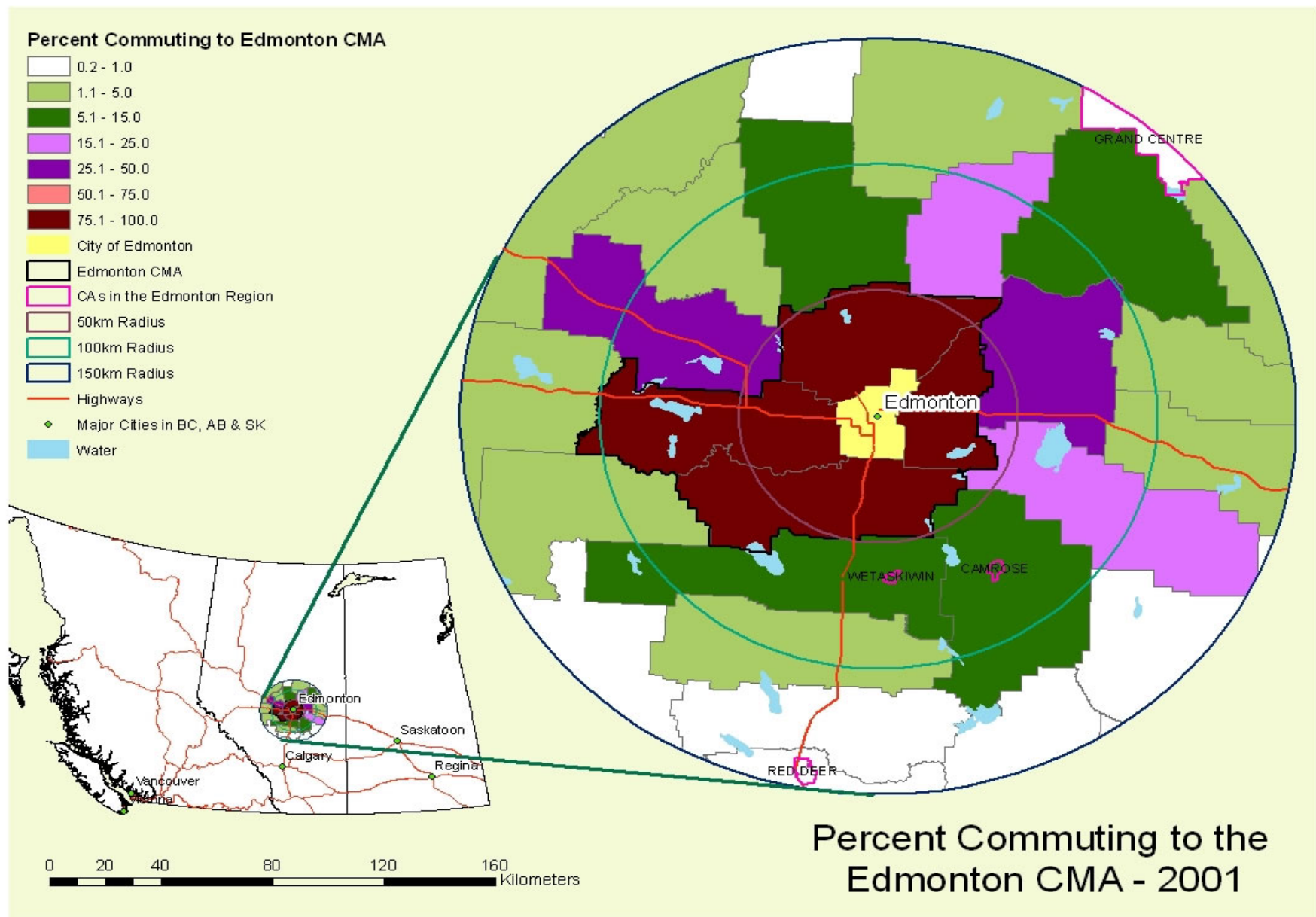
Recreation

Food Safety and Security

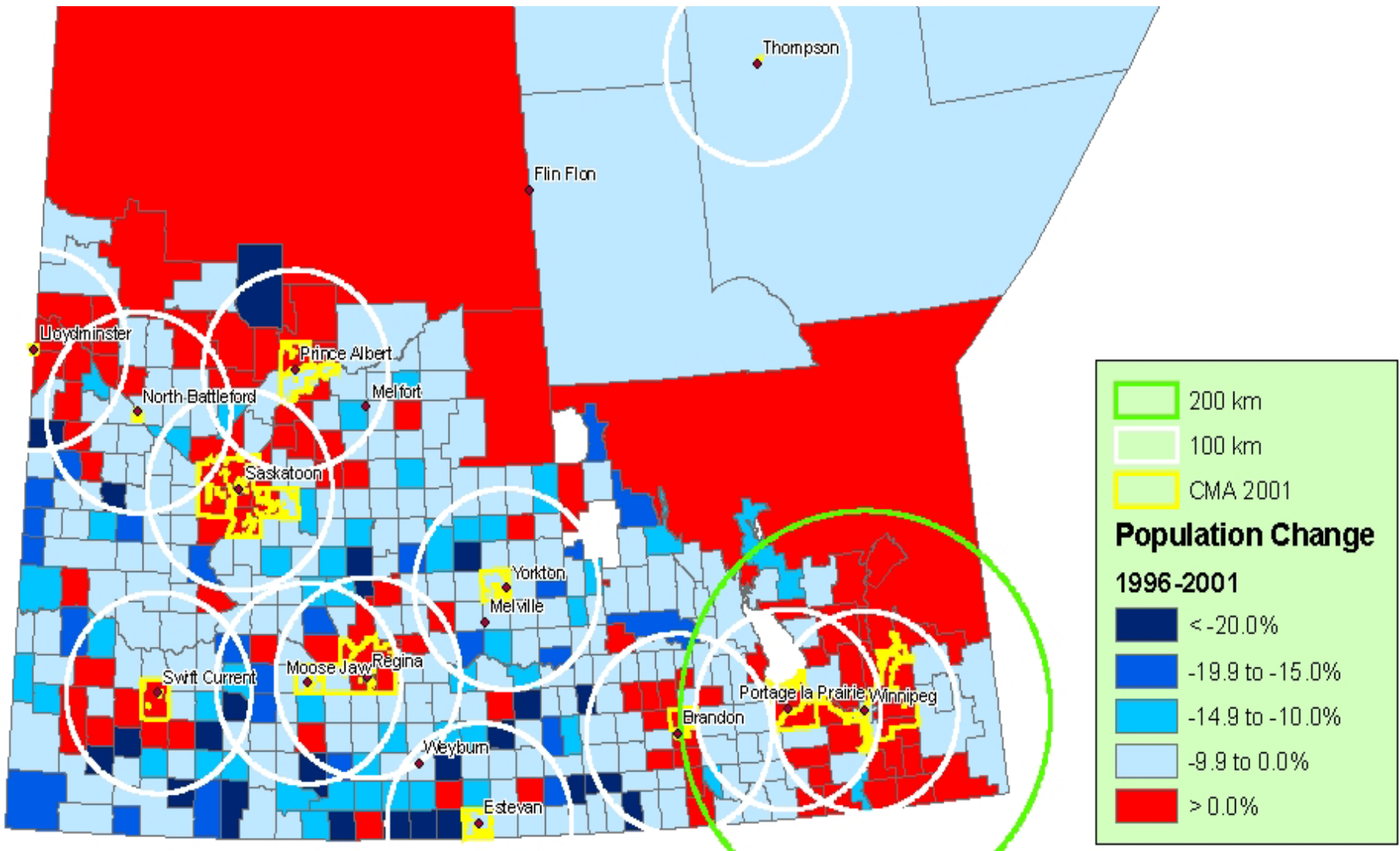
Natural Environmental

Land for Residential and Industrial Expansion

The Capital Region: Percent of Local Labour Force Commuting to Edmonton CMA—CCS Level Data



1996-2001 Population in Manitoba and Saskatchewan at the CCS level: With 100 km rings around CAs and CMAs



Source: Statistics Canada—1996 CCS Boundaries

Source: See notes to the slide

Use Regional Cooperation

- Further regional needs for “neighbors”:
 - Increase rural-urban voice in joint matters.
 - Economic development
 - Transport people/access to services and amenities
 - Provide public services at a lower cost.
 - Environment/Land use
 - Education/health
 - Quality of life initiatives such as recreation and cultural venues, or **broadband service.**
 - **Increased political clout for common interests: lobby Ottawa and be heard in Toronto and elsewhere.**

What is good strategy?

- Need to build regional identity.
 - Despite the interdependence of communities, too many towns think as if they are an island.
 - My “favorite” is how nearby towns compete for each other’s business—destroying everyone’s tax base.
 - E.g., the Capital region—not Edmonton or Sherwood Park or Camrose squabbling
- Cooperate & Build Trust:
 - Realize everyone benefits, but not always equally

Examples of Cooperation

- Action Southwest centered around Swift Current, Saskatchewan is proactive.
- Outlook, SK is a good example of 1st Nations participating in a regional plan.
 - 1 hour away, Saskatoon reflects an opportunity
 - This is an opportunity in this larger region.
- Ft. McMurray/Wood Buffalo (growing pains).
- Gander, NFLD and surrounding villages

Conclusions:

What have we learned?

- The rural-urban divide is not helpful
- Rural-urban interdependence means that the gains from working together outweigh the costs.
- BUT, both rural and urban communities have to compromise to bridge the divide.

Thank you

Presentation will be posted at The Ohio State University, AED Economics, Swank Program website:

<http://aede.osu.edu/programs/Swank/>

(under presentations)

- For commuting maps for all Canadian urban areas & details of Infrastructure Canada project:
- *Canada Rural Economy Research Lab (CRERL) Mapping the Rural Urban Interface Project.*
<http://www.crerl.usask.ca/infra.php>