

## ATB Financial – January 30, 2025

# New heights: Over 6 million Albertans by 2048

Siddhartha Bhattacharya || January 30, 2025

On Tuesday, we talked about Alberta's recent population surge, and how growth is widespread across the province. Last year, Canada's population\* surpassed 41 million (up 3.0% from 2023) with Alberta leading the country at 4.1% growth to reach almost 4.9 million.

Today we take a closer look at the latest long-term population projections recently released by Statistics Canada.

Canada's population is set to surpass 48 million by 2048, as per their medium-growth scenarios, despite a slowdown in 2025 to 2026 owing to decreasing numbers of net non-permanent residents (NPRs).

Closer to home, Alberta's population is set to far surpass 6 million by 2048 under all scenarios (including the low-growth one). In the medium-growth scenarios, Alberta's population is between 6-7 million by 2048. In their high-growth scenario, the province's population comes in at a touch under 7.5 million.

Alberta's demographic weight is expected to increase over this timeframe. From an 11.8% share of the national population last year, the share of Albertans is set to rise between 12.5% to 14.5% by 2048 under the medium-growth scenarios. In fact, Alberta's population surpasses B.C.'s by 2045 in three of the six medium-growth scenarios.

These medium-growth scenarios by Statistics Canada assume substantial pull backs in temporary residents due to the latest NPR targets announced at a federal level. As a result, Alberta's average population growth is pegged at around 1.1% for this year, 0.7% in 2026 and an average of 1.4% between 2027-48. This is a sharp deceleration from the annual growth of 3.9% and 4.4% experienced in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Our view is that Alberta's population growth will slow over the next two years, but not by as much as projected by Statistics Canada. Our December forecast calls for a cooldown of 1.9%

this year and 1.8% in 2026. However, recent quarterly data suggests that population growth could be even stronger than we forecast for this year. Alberta's share of NPRs is already close to the Federal targets, and we see continued inflows of interprovincial migrants. This will keep Alberta's population growing much faster than the national average.

Small differences in growth assumptions in the near term can have major impacts on long-term projections due to compounding. For example, if Alberta's annual population growth slows more modestly towards 2.5% this year and 2.0% in 2026 before averaging 1.1-1.4%\*\* after, it surpasses 6 million people by 2038 (10 years faster than Statistics Canada's medium-growth projections) and almost 7 million by 2049.

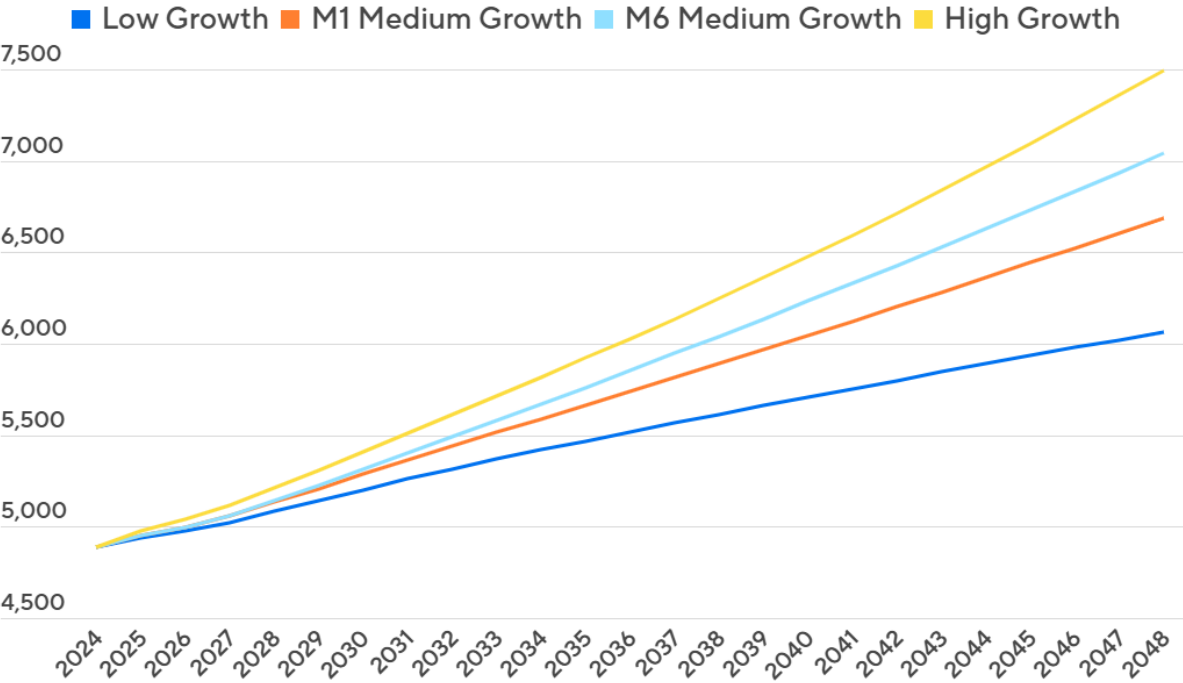
*\*All population data in today's report is July 1 of a certain year to July 1 of the following year. For example, 2024 refers to the period from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2024.*

*\*\*Derived by averaging growth rates for each year in the six medium-term scenarios. As a result, Alberta's population is expected to grow by 1.1% in 2027, 1.4% from 2028-42 and 1.3% from 2043-48.*

# Alberta's population projections

ATB Economics

As of July 1, thousands



Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0058-01 and ATB Economics