

Comment Compilation Census 2011 Consultation

Joint submission by members of:

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Community Social Data Strategy (CSDS), Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD)
Regional Information Systems Working Group (RISWG), Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario (RPCO)

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I. Process

1. Release Dates

Overall, the release schedule should be faster, and closer to census day.

- Statistics Canada explained that block/blockface data was released earlier for the 2006 Census than the previous census, but that the trade-off was that there was less coding to the blockface and more data associated with each block point. This has created some difficulties in creating custom geographies for several municipalities. As such, most municipalities would like to indicate our preference for coding census forms to the blockface, even if there is a trade-off of several months.
- Move ethnic origin & visible minorities to earlier date (e.g. Dec 4) to be released
- Critical topics such as income need to be released sooner
- Population Challenge: Municipalities should have a say and be able to request revisions to their populations prior to release of the data. Preliminary population counts should be shared with municipalities, not necessarily the Provincial Focal Point only.
- Municipalities would like a review of the focal point as a method for disseminating information and data to municipalities. In at least one province, the focal point views its role as a liaison with the provincial ministries, often leaving the municipalities uninformed.
- Census Definitions should be pre-released for comment prior to finalizing the 2011 Census questions.
- Having analytical documents available on high level (federal) trends on day of release in order to compare one's municipality to the general trends; in-depth analysis not as important as having local data as soon as possible
- Release data at all levels of geography at the same time.
- Income:
 - Income data always reflects what happened in the year prior to the Census year (so the 2006 Census contains income data from 2005). The income data from the 2006 Census were part of the last release, and it didn't appear until May 2008. Therefore, when the data came out the numbers were already 2.5 years old. Wherever possible, time lags like this should be minimized.
 - It would be ideal if basic income data to be available earlier, at least at a high level.
 - Release income, shelter and dwelling characteristics closer together and schedule these for an earlier time.

2. Press Release

- Release of Census should include municipalities so that we may avoid responding to newspapers on the "day of release".
 - Municipal representatives should have as early access to the data as the press in order to be able to respond to inquiries from the press, politicians and the public about the local aspect of the census results.
 - Local and regional government officials feel disadvantaged in being able to comment as they receive the data about 24 hours after the press.
 - It would be better for press if municipalities were better prepared to provide local comments;

- Several cities would be willing to send a municipal staff person to the Ottawa press lock-down if the StatCan opened it to municipal staff.

3. Census Consultation versus Participation

The Census Consultation process, while valuable, has its limitations and is not the same as participation. Municipalities would very much appreciate a better dialogue with Statistics Canada through enhanced participation and testing of proposed design changes to future Censuses. Municipalities would like to be considered partners in creating/modifying data that can be used for all levels of planning from the Federal, Provincial and Municipal perspectives.

4. Place of Residence (POR) and Place of Work (POW) Geocoding

In 2006, POR geocoding was conducted one year prior to POW geocoding. POR geocoding was performed prior to the release of blockface data points and, as such, was geocoded to Census Block (CB) points. By the time POW geocoding was initiated, blockface data points had become available and were used in the geocoding process.

As a result of this difference in geocoding methodology, 2006 POW data has a much higher degree of spatial accuracy. This introduces several difficulties. For example, Traffic Zone (TZ) boundaries are not necessarily defined with respect to standard Census geographic boundaries. If a TZ boundary splits a CB, the POR data which has been geocoded to the CB centroid will be allocated entirely to one TZ, whereas, the POW data in that same area will be divided between TZ boundaries where blockface points are split by the TZ extent resulting in a mismatch between the POR and POW allocation among TZs in the area.

It is recommended that the 2011 POR and POW geocoding exercises be performed only when detailed blockface points become available. RIWG members agree that it is imperative for POR and POW data to be synchronized and geocoded using the same methodology. Municipalities realize that this may require a small delay in data production but the added accuracy of the resulting data is well worth any delay that might result.

5. Other

- There are many parts of the Census that will be released at later dates. The same alerts that are sent through the Daily should be sent when those releases are made.
- It would be useful to know head of time what variables will be included in each release (e.g. if additional cross-tabs are included, by age, sex, etc) – esp. for highlight tables and topic based tables.
- Variables provided in the Community Profiles are not always consistent with previous release – makes difficult to compare.
- Downloading tables with multiple variables (e.g. by age groups) is difficult when you have to download 10 tables to get the information you are looking for.
- Notify users when additional cross-tabulations have been added to the website.

6. Problems with collection methods

There have been issues across several municipalities regarding the counts of Temporary and Foreign Residents (TFR) and Vacant units. As an example, in Toronto the count of units

occupied by TFRs has doubled over the level of 2001 and 1996 and the count of vacant units has tripled. As an example, if these classes of units were in fact occupied at the levels they were in 2001, the net population growth for Toronto would be 4.3% instead of the reported 0.9%. We suspect that, among other things, the change in enumeration methods and the switch to a mail-out survey are factors in the increased reporting of vacant units, as the Auditor General's recent report concludes.

7. Verify addresses with municipalities to maximise responses.

In some urban neighbourhoods, the 2006 Census results have indicated large decreases in the number of dwellings where no demolitions were recorded. In these same areas, some residents reported that they did not receive Census forms, even after requesting them from Statistics Canada.

To improve this situation, we recommend that addresses for the 2011 Census be verified with municipalities before they are assigned to enumerators. This verification may only be necessary in large urban centres that reported data quality issues after the 2006 Census.

8. Data suppression

Data suppression at the national level does not take into account diverse municipal populations in such places as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Some language and ethnicity groups are arbitrarily excluded from our final tables, making comparisons and analysis very difficult. It is our understanding that the inclusion policy is based on national rankings and not local ones. This creates problems for certain groups that may not make it to the national rankings but are a significant proportion of local populations.

a) Suppression of Household and Dwelling Unit Counts

There are Census geographical areas within the City of Toronto for which a population count is reported but the dwelling units are reported as 0. This appears to occur because of the differential impact of the two respective sets of data suppression rules. The consequence is that analyses of the demographic conditions are frustrated and projections complicated due to the inconsistent reporting of data. It is recommended that if the population in a Census geographical area is above its respective suppression thresholds and is reported, the corresponding household and dwelling unit counts are also reported, irrespective of the dwelling unit suppression rules.

II. Geographies

1. Standard Geographic Areas

Note: This is a response to Discussion Point 6, as outlined on page 13 of the 2011 Census Consultation Guide.

a) Collaborate with municipalities regarding all boundary changes. We welcome the improvement in the collaboration sought by Statistics Canada to improve both Census Tracts and Dissemination Areas. Open collaboration regarding boundaries for all levels of geography would enable us to understand and support Statistics Canada's rationale behind boundary delineation choices. This would also lessen instances of staff members being unhappily surprised by unexpected boundary changes (as was the case when Dissemination Area (DA) boundaries were altered between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses). We may wish to alter DA boundaries in at least two situations: where the DA needs to be split due to growth, and where the existing boundary relates poorly to the land use or planning features of the areas. We appreciate that the latter reason may not be a priority for Statistics Canada but it is very important for municipal planning. We would appreciate if a limited number of DA boundaries could be adjusted on this basis, in consultation with the affected municipalities.

b) Provide a way to separate the rural population from the population living in small towns. Several regions, such as Halton and Peel have both urban and rural areas. The rural areas consist of farmland interspersed with small towns. In these areas, the sub-municipal boundaries are delineated in a way that makes it difficult (if not impossible) to separate the population living in towns with the population living outside of these towns. CTs and DAs either carve the town into multiple parts, or enclose the town and large portions of farmland as well. In rural areas, blocks can be very long and often straddle town boundaries. New growth policies outlined in Growth Plans enabled by the Province of Ontario's Places to Grow Act may necessitate the need to measure and track the populations in some of these towns. Many of these towns could become Designated Places built from blocks, but in order for the data to be accurate, the blocks (and the data associated with blocks) would have to be split at the town boundaries.

c) Ensure population rules are not being broken. Before amalgamating Dissemination Areas (DA's) for the 2011 Census, StatCan could make sure the population rules are not being broken. For example in Sault Ste. Marie, a few DA's get joined together which now have populations well over 1,000 persons. This makes analysis of data more difficult and less accurate. There should be some process in place to check and make sure amalgamated DA's still have the standard population.

d) Block face points. Bring back population and dwelling counts to block face points. Also, split blocks at the boundaries of towns / villages / hamlets / other settlements as identified in municipal official plans – we need this to be able to compare the characteristics of settlements with the surrounding rural areas.

e) Federal and Provincial required geographies. Geographies that Provincial/Territorial or Federal governments require other governments / government bodies to use for data monitoring purposes (such as the "Built Boundary" mandated by the Growth Plan for the

Greater Golden Horseshoe through the Places to Grow Act) should be provided to the “monitors” free of charge

2. Dissemination Areas and Block Face Points/Geocoding

The creation algorithm for DAs was never made public, and DAs do not line up with municipal geography properly. Municipalities should have input into the creation of DAs, as they do with CTs. Orthoimagery should be used to make sure StatCan geographic lines do not go through buildings, among other problems.

When comparing 2006 Census geography with 2001 geography, it appears that:

- (a) DAs were merged to eliminate DAs inside other DAs, and
- (b) 2001 Block Face points were collapsed into a single 2006 point in some instances. Staff of the Toronto Regional Office suggested this might have occurred when the Ontario Road Network was integrated into the 2006 Census geography. In the cases of the Toronto and Durham CDs, this resulted in large drops in population and household counts in the corresponding DAs that can not be explained by demolitions in those areas. It would appear that the population and household counts associated with some of the block face points and DAs were lost in the process. We offer to identify to Statistics Canada 2006 DAs for which a reconciliation of DA, block and unit address information may be required.

The new process for block face geocoding creates a poor placement of points and should be reverted to the previous process.

3. Dissolved CSDs

We would like data showing flows between subareas within large CSDs such as Toronto (which had 661,000 movers within the CSD between 2001 and 2006.) There are only a few such CSDs (Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Hamilton, Calgary, Edmonton, maybe Mississauga). We would suggest that the dissolved CSDs of Toronto and Hamilton be restored as the first, best alternative. The RISWG membership has long and frequently requested this course of action. We were told by senior Statistics Canada staff that this occurred at the request of the Provincial Government in concert with the amalgamations. The amalgamations are completed and the governing party has changed, yet the need for data about smaller populations has not.

In order to implement the Growth Plan for the GGH we must understand the local demographic condition as well as inter- and intra-municipal mobility and commuting patterns. This requires a consistent set of geography below the level of CSDs on the order of 2.5 million people at which CSD level information is regularly reported through the wide range of Census profiles and standard tabulations. The most effective solution is the restoration of the dissolved CSDs of Toronto and Hamilton CDs. The dissolved CSDs should become part of the collection of standard Census geographic boundaries. This would build upon the existing long time series of Census data.

4. Standard geographic areas could be improved

Note: This is a response to Discussion Point 6, as outlined on page 13 of the 2011 Census Consultation Guide.

RISWG members are appreciative of the decision to retain the geocoding programme which provides superior data for municipal analysis. In addition, we propose three distinct ideas regarding the ways in which standard geographic areas could be improved. The ideas are outlined below.

4a. Collaborate with municipalities regarding all boundary changes

Currently, municipalities are invited to submit proposed Census Tract (CT) splits to Statistics Canada for review. However, municipalities are not given any indication as to whether their proposed splits have been accepted until they can purchase the CT boundary file from Statistics Canada and compare it with their submission (refer to additional comments on Section II, Item 1a of this report).

4b. Create CTs for CDs that are only partially included in CMAs

Several RISWG municipalities are only partially divided into CTs because they are only partially included in the local CMA. The lack of CTs in some areas affects service planning. In areas where CTs have been delineated, the locations of services can be planned using the wealth CT level data that are available from the Census. However, this in-depth analysis is not available in areas outside of the CMA. As more municipalities acquire and use Geographic Information Systems, the need for consistent sub-municipal levels of geography increases.

The delineation criteria used to create CMAs (including the convention that CMAs are built using Census Subdivisions (CSDs) not CDs, as building blocks) is sound and should not be changed. Municipalities should also have access to a consistent level of geography for their entire jurisdiction. Given these viewpoints, we recommend that CTs be created for CDs that are only partially included in CMAs.

4c. Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)

The majority of municipalities feel that CMAs are not a useful geography for data analysis. Albeit the fact that CMAs parameters are defined to meet and ensure international comparison, the interpretation of some of these parameters and additional input should be sought from municipalities. Refer to Section IV, Item 2 (Census Products).

5. Geographic Products and Services

Question 5. Based on the 2006 Census geography products and services line, what are your suggestions for the 2011 Census a) geographic reference products? b) geographic data products? c) spatial information products? d) attribute information products? e) custom geographic services? Which geographic products or services are most and least important to you? Why? What improvements would you recommend?

- We would encourage StatCan to complete the transition to the National Road Network base as soon as possible. Currently there is a discrepancy between the road network used as a base for census geographies, and the road network used by provinces and municipalities. This causes on-going duplication of effort when dealing with the spatial extent of census geographies.

- Road Network File – no differentiation among road classifications. Add municipal fields so that, eg: “Main Street” is defined between two towns
- Very pleased that CSD information is available for free, more information would be appreciated at this level; multiple CTs need to be available.
- Statistics Canada could recognize and proactively anticipate the challenges and reconcile/harmonize the various geographies and/or planning areas that intersect eg: Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) boundaries in Ontario differ from the CMA and CD boundaries

III. Census Variables

General Comments – Forthcoming Changes

Any changes to the variables should be made known in advance (e.g., changes to country of birth. Similarly, any changes should keep historic continuity (e.g. LICO before and after tax).

1. Aging Population Variables

Provide access to data on people with activity limitations, disabilities and mental health issues at the CD level of geography.

As population ages, there will be an increased need for data on senility, mobility limitations and other complications of aging so that municipalities can provide adequate services to this growing cohort. There are two questions on the Census questionnaire that ask about activity limitations. Responses from these questions are used to screen for participants in the post-censal Participation and Activity Limitations Survey (PALS), which is not currently available at the CD level of geography. If detailed questions on activity limitations, disabilities and mental health issues can not be asked on the Census questionnaire, we would ask that the sample size for PALS be increased so that data from this important survey could be reported at the CD level of geography.

2. 2011 Census Consultation Guide

Note: This is a response to Discussion Point 1, as outlined on page 13 of the 2011 Census Consultation Guide.
We do have some suggestions with regard to the “Relationship to Person 1”, “Place of work” and “Dwelling characteristics” topics as outlined, by topic, below:

a) Relationship to Person 1:

Gather data on same-sex couples the same way that data on opposite-sex couples are collected. Same-sex couples were largely under-reported in the 2006 Census. This may have been due to use of write-in boxes on the 2006 Census questionnaire. Both Census questionnaires collect information on the sex of all people in a household. Therefore, same-sex couples could be directed to use the same “Husband or wife of Person 1” check box that opposite-sex married couples use. We understand that Statistics Canada has been advised that there is some specific sensitivity to the language around this question. Perhaps the language “Husband or wife or spouse of Person 1” might be considered for this check box.

b) Place of work:

Collect information on multiple and seasonal modes of transportation to work. We fully support the inclusion of questions related to travel time and vehicle occupancy. We are also interested in knowing how many people commute using multiple modes of transportation. **We are also interested in the number of vehicles per household.**

c) Dwelling characteristics:

Track all evolving dwelling structures We agree that the prevalence and changing nature of residences for seniors warrants examination. Private apartments within structures that also

contain accommodations for the ill or chronically ill should be classified as private dwellings. Attention must also be paid to new structure types emerging in cities. Increasingly, development in Peel's urban areas is becoming a complex mix of structure types with mixed uses that are home to varying demographic groups. Newly observed dwelling types should be consistently classified into existing structure types to preserve historical comparability.

d) Family Structure.

There is concern that within family structure, step children and blended, shared custody families may be undercounted or counted twice. There should be clearer instructions in the census about who counts these children.

e) Education

"Journeyman" is a new term not well known to some sectors. Definitions in the census need to be the same as in previous years. If more than one term is being used to describe one educational attainment or one job (eg: journeyman, tradesman), these terms need to be clear so that comparisons may be made between census years

3. Religion every five years

Note: This is a response to Discussion Point 5, as outlined on page 13 of the 2011 Census Consultation Guide.

Religion is an important ethno-cultural variable. Certain places of worship may require amendments to zoning by-laws, religious ceremonies may have an impact on the ways that land is used and the ways in which many services are delivered may be influenced by religious preferences or taboos. We support the inclusion of this question in the 2011 Census, and the majority of municipalities would like to see it asked quinquennially.

4. Relevant Age Groups

It would be very valuable, even if it's only as a semi-custom tab, to have an age-group breakdown that includes a 0-6 age category. This is the target age group for all Best Start and Success By 6 purposes. A few tables provide data for single years, which permits us to aggregate to the age groups we prefer. But generally, we have to either use 0-4 or 0-4 plus some estimated part of 5-9. If this age group could be provided as a standard feature when age groups are provided, that would be wonderful.

5. National Occupation Classification

For some reason there are two versions of the National Occupational Classification, the NOC proper, used by HRSDC, and the NOC-S, used by StatCan. What the rationale is remains unclear, but there is a direct consequence of relevance to Census dissemination. HRSDC's NOC Matrix divides occupations into Management Occupations and four Skill Levels (A to D) that neatly map onto the gradient professional / skilled / semi-skilled / unskilled, which is very useful for examining neighbourhood composition and SES. But the NOC-S is not reported (at the CT level) in a way that makes it possible to separate these Skill Levels. It would be very valuable to either properly align the NOC-S with the NOC Matrix, so that Skill Level counts and proportions can be determined, OR to report the Skill Level counts directly at all levels of geography.

6. Community Profiles

Adding ethnic origins and language to the community profiles would be useful. There would need to be a way to address the challenge to customize for different regions since the most common languages would vary regionally.

7. Include Temporary and Foreign Residents

We are concerned that the 2006 Census changed definitions used by the 2001 Census such that dwellings occupied by temporary and foreign residents were excluded. In large cosmopolitan cities this has a profound impact, particularly in central and inner areas. We are concerned not only with the change, but that there was no clear communication at the time of the initial release of the population and dwelling data that there had been any change to the definition.

In addition, it would be very useful to have data collected on temporary and foreign residents since they comprise a growing proportion of the population in Canada's large cities. Somewhat ironically, "temporary" residents are becoming a permanent feature of large cities, and it is important for both physical and social planning to have some notion of how many there are and who they are in terms of their socio-economic characteristics.

We suggest that the Temporary and Foreign Resident (TRFR) population and the units they occupy be included in occupied private dwellings counts, since i) the TRFRs are included in the total population count; and ii) the dwellings are part of the City's stock, and are not eligible only for occupancy by TRFRs.

9. Additional Travel Data

We would like three additional questions related to travel be added for 2011:

- **Travel time to work.** This would be a valuable addition to the current question on distance travelled;
- **Vehicle occupancy (number of persons).** This is a critical variable for measuring how the transportation system is used, and in the absence of Census data is difficult and expensive to measure.
- **Mode(s) of travel.** Many people use more than one mode of transportation, for example those using "park and ride" facilities. The current question provides for only one mode to be reported.

10. Senior Residences

We support the notion, suggested in the Consultation Guide, that better data be collected on seniors residences. As noted, seniors are a major part of our future population growth and the types of housing they occupy is an increasingly important subject. Specifically, some municipalities noted that the change in data collection methodology in 2006 in which seniors in collectives were enumerated individually (instead of by an administrator of the facility) resulted in anomalous data in senior's homes.

11. Low Income Measure

Include Low Income Measure (LIM) variables as a standard 2011 variable (this does not mean replacing LIM with LICO, but adding the LIM to the list of standard variables for Census profiles). With attention shifting towards equity and combating poverty across Canada (as first addressed by Québec and British Columbia, and Ontario in late 2008), it is crucial that access to low income data is accessible. Moreover, Ontario is using LIM to monitor its Antipoverty Strategy. As such, the following variables should be included:

Low Income Measures (5)

1. Number of Persons by LIM
2. Number of Persons with LIM less than 50%
3. Number of persons with LIM 0 to 40%
4. Number of persons with LIM 40 to 50%
5. Number of persons with LIM 50% and over

12. Income Ranges

- **Deflator.** Income ranges don't have the deflator applied to them. (I know this can be ordered but the point of the consistent income ranges should be temporal comparison, so this should be in the basic profiles).
- **High income brackets:** Income range over \$100,000 should be split up to reflect the shift in income patterns due to inflation and growing wealth.

IV. Supporting Data

1. Census undercounts

A related issue is that there appears to have been a significant degree of undercounting in the 2006 Census across several municipalities. The areas of most severe undercount are typically those with large numbers of rental apartment buildings. There is a shared concern that this will produce under-reporting of the numbers of immigrants, visible minorities and lower income households in the 2006 Census.

It may be that many residents fell into the “temporary and foreign” category. It may also be that people whose mother tongue is neither English nor French had a lower response rate in the 2006 Census, perhaps related to the mailing of the questionnaire in 2006, rather than a direct contact as was the practice in previous Censuses. We ask that steps be taken in the 2011 Census to ensure a higher response rate, especially among allophones.

Currently, Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) are the smallest areas for which an undercount can be obtained. Municipalities within CMAs are encouraged to use the undercount figure for their CMA, while municipalities outside of CMAs must use provincial figures. According to Bulletin 92-394-XIE, the Reverse Record Check uses a national sample of about 60,000 observations.

The Census undercount figure is an integral part of planning these services because it, along with Census counts, enables planners to calculate the most accurate estimate of population possible. Variations in the Census undercount can have significant effects on long-term population forecasts. Planners require local, timely Census undercounts in order to provide necessary services to their residents. While the overall response rate of the 2006 Census may be similar to that of previous years, the changes in enumeration and survey methodology implemented for the 2006 Census may have affected the distribution of the undercount within CMAs. Given the potential variation in undercoverage within CMAs, we recommend that the sample size of the Undercoverage Study be increased to support sub-provincial estimates, particularly for CDs within the largest CMAs.

2. Census Products

Question: Based on the 2006 Census products and services line, what are your suggestions for the 2011 Census a) standard data products, b) analysis products, c) reference products and d) custom services? Which census products or services are most and least important to you? Why? What improvements would you recommend?

Analysis Series

- Continue this series because it helps to put the data into context. Use lower level geography where possible

Reference Products

- Overall, the dictionary is helpful but could use some improvement.
 - The Census dictionary was inconsistent with previous editions and did not always explain when the methodology had changed from previous Census periods.

- Use plain language, or use examples to explain eg: definitions for “census” versus “economic families”. The more information is added, the less intuitive and understandable it becomes. A simple, basic guide is needed
- Not all terms seem to be available, or they may be difficult to find
- Some people prefer hard copies of materials eg: the Census Dictionary. It is difficult to navigate several definitions for several different variables at the same time while working on line

Custom Services

- Some municipalities feel that the production of custom orders takes too long and cost too much.
- If the data purchase is found to be unuseful, it cannot be returned or shared. Sometimes the product provides more data than is required, or the variables are available for some geographies, not all. The data needs to be described more clearly so that purchasers can buy what is needed. A catalogue of purchases from other buyers would also be helpful. Purchasers could view the products and decide whether to purchase something similar.
- The target group profiles should have the same number of variables as are found in the basic profiles in order for comparisons

Products/Services

- It is useful, and is wonderful community outreach, to have more information available on the web to encourage involvement, but because the site and products are daunting for some, there is more work required to ease access, show information in different formats, and guide people through the range of available information
- A marketing vision adopted by Statistics Canada would help to identify target users and the kinds of products required
- The topic based tabulations were difficult to navigate.
- Add page that explains changes made/difference in methodology
- Community Profiles helpful to finding data quickly
- The single most important improvement would be to get all of the standard products out faster. There is a lot of opposition to using data that are 3-5 years old when they are released.
- Publish release dates on the main 2011 Census page for all data products as soon as possible after the Census follow-up has been completed (if possible).
- Improve Browser/Excel compatibility
- Data products are more detailed at the CMA level, so fewer products are available for free at the CD level. The CMA detail should be provided at the CSD level
- Recommend increasing information for community profiles in 2011, and for comparability, 2001 and 2006 profiles need to be appropriately and consistently populated to match any new data

3. Census Product Attributes

Do the 2006 Census product attributes (i.e., variables, stubsets, output media, and geographic detail) meet your needs? Please explain.

- The product attributes were fine. It was however, difficult to find which CD or CSD made up a CMA - very tricky to find.

- Variables and data is not consistent over time – we need to be informed when variables and methodologies have changed – e.g. home language is calculated differently from 2001, the use of median and average – not consistent over time, etc
- Reporting of same variables in the Community profiles over time (for comparison)
- All complete area profiles should include the spatial files for the geography that the data was acquired for (including non-Census geographies such as Forward Sortation Areas and Federal Electoral Districts).

4. Census Tract Profiles, Special Interest Profiles and Census Trends

Question: Three new products have been introduced for 2006: Census tract profiles, Special interest profiles and Census trends. What do you think of these products? How would you enhance them?

More data is always better, these products are welcome additions. A possible enhancement would be to make all tables available at the same level of geography and, if feasible, make the data products available as soon as the data are released.

V. Definitions

1. Clarify the definition of “bedrooms”

The 2006 Census Dictionary defines bedrooms as “...all rooms designed and furnished as bedrooms and used mainly for sleeping purposes, even though the use may be occasional (e.g., spare bedroom).” The related Remarks observe that “[r]ooms used for one purpose during the day and as bedrooms at night (for example, a living room used as bedroom during the night) are not included as bedrooms”. It was learnt during the RISWG 2011 Census Consultation meeting that this interpretation has been extended in 2006 such that bedrooms that have been converted to dens or home offices are excluded from this definition.

Overcrowding due to a lack of affordable housing is an emerging social issue in across Canada. We require quantitative data in order to measure this trend. One way to measure overcrowding is to calculate the average number of people per bedroom. This statistic will lose historical comparability if the definition, or the interpretation of the definition changes. Therefore, we recommend that the interpretation of the definition of “bedrooms” as a statistical concept for the 2006 and 2011 Censuses be kept consistent with the interpretation used for the 1996 and 2001 Censuses.

2. Timely and more frequent communication

Communicate information regarding definition and classification changes more frequently.

Note: This is a response to Discussion Point 7, as outlined on page 13 of the 2011 Census Consultation Guide.

Dwelling concepts changed from the 1996 Census to the 2001 Census, and the interpretation of dwelling definitions changed from the 2001 Census to the 2006 Census. We feel that the change in interpretation from the 2001 to the 2006 Census (notably, the exclusion of dwellings occupied by foreign or temporary residents from the counts released on March 13, 2007) was not adequately publicised or communicated to end users.

To further complicate the issue, 2006 Census households data released on September 12, 2007 contain the same variable names as data released from the 2001 Census, even though the concepts are being interpreted in different ways. Thus in localities where temporary or foreign residents make up a significant proportion of the population, the change in the interpretation of the dwelling concepts resulted in a lower count of occupied private dwellings in 2006 for reasons not at all transparent to end users of the data. When a Peel staff member asked Statistics Canada a question regarding changes to dwelling definitions, Statistics Canada took 30 business days to respond.

As well, there appears to have been changes implemented for the 2006 Census that have altered, to dramatic effect, the counts and classification of dwellings by structural type in some Census Subdivisions (CSDs). It is essential that municipalities be made aware of any changes to the relevant questions on the Census questionnaires, to the interpretation of the responses, or to the classification of those responses by structural type. Further, in established areas, enumerators should be provided with the structural class of the dwellings in their jurisdiction according to the previous Census. This will help ensure that unchanged dwellings are

classified the same way from one Census to the next and will allow municipalities to track changes to existing housing stock over time.

To preserve historical comparability, changes to concepts and their interpretations should be avoided wherever possible. If changes to concepts or definition interpretations are necessary, the Census Dictionary should contain a detailed explanation of the new concept or interpretation, and a summary of all the differences between the concepts or definitions used in the current and previous Censuses. These explanations should be included with every data release that includes variables that are affected by the altered concept or interpretation. If changes to classifications are necessary, municipalities should be made aware of any relevant changes to the questionnaires and the new methodology used in classification. Where possible, Statistics Canada should automatically provide users with data that will enable historical comparisons to be made. These steps will help to minimize instances where data are accidentally used incorrectly due to a lack of knowledge about a definition or classification change.

3. Dwelling units.

The types of housing being built in large cities are changing, and in the City of Ottawa, for example, “stacked townhouses” are becoming increasingly popular. Stacked townhouses involve row housing that has two levels of dwelling units, one above the other. The Census currently classifies these as apartments, but their character is more similar to row housing. It would be beneficial for municipal planning and forecasting purposes to have stacked townhouses identified as a distinct structural type so that the characteristics of the occupants and average household size can be specifically identified.

Another dwelling type apparently gaining in popularity is the bungalow, in both detached and row form, which the homebuilding industry reports is frequently purchased by seniors. Currently, Census definitions of structural type do identify this dwelling type and consequently it is not possible to analyze the extent to which the aging population may be increasing their propensity for this housing form. Given that much of our future population growth will be comprised of seniors, the addition of a question on dwelling height (number of storeys) would serve to identify this structural type and allow analysis and forecasting of the characteristics of its occupants.

4. Changes to Structural Type of Dwelling Data

The “Housing and Dwelling Characteristics Reference Guide, 2006 Census” contains a section titled “Data comparability – Structural type of dwelling”. In this section of the report, Statistics Canada states that the concepts and definitions of dwelling variables have not changed from the 2001 Census, but changes in the instructions given to enumerators have changed. These changes included specific instructions with regard to enumerating single and semi-detached dwellings with basement apartments. In 2006, enumerators were asked to pay particular attention to cases in which a basement apartment may be present in single and semi-detached dwellings, even if no sign is present which indicated the presence of an apartment unit. If such cases were discovered, enumerators were instructed to classify the dwelling as either a duplex or an apartment in a building with fewer than five storeys. Statistics Canada states that these changes served to provide better and more clear instructions in 2006; thus, creating a more “accurate” dataset.

These changes have had a dramatic affect on the reported structural type of dwelling data. In the City of Toronto alone, some 57,000 single and semi-detached dwellings were re-classified in 2006, in most cases to apartments in dwellings with fewer than five storeys. As a consequence, it is now virtually impossible to perform historical comparisons which attempt to analyse the change in dwelling stock within the City of Toronto. This situation holds true for other municipalities across the country where ancillary residential units may be present in ground-related dwellings. To compound the problem, historical comparability will be adversely affected in future Censuses if the current enumeration methodology continues.

We would prefer that dwellings be enumerated primarily based on their built form as the Private Dwelling Type Codes and Definitions illustrate. Single and semi-detached house forms are quite different from purpose built low-rise apartment structures, however, with the changes that have been made to the enumeration methodology these physical differences are lost making it impossible to distinguish between these very different dwelling types.

We do believe that recording the presence of ancillary residential units in ground-related dwellings would be a very useful addition. For example, a basement apartment in a single-detached dwelling could be enumerated as a secondary unit in single, semi or row dwelling. In so doing, the ground-related nature of the original dwelling is maintained while at the same time, it would be possible to track the changes in the secondary suite market over time. The following suggested classification of dwellings would provide the ability to identify and track the existence of secondary apartment units in ground-related structures while at the same time allowing for a distinction between ground-related and purpose-built low-rise apartment structures.

Canadian municipalities would like to further discuss a common classification for dwelling types. As an example, and possible starting point for this process, we can cite the City of Toronto's suggestion:

- single detached
- semi-detached
- rowhouse
- accessory unit in single
- accessory unit in semi
- accessory unit in row
- unit in a triplex or duplex
- unit in a building with less the 5 storeys
- unit in a building with 5 or more storeys
- unit attached to a nonresidential structure
- movable dwelling
- other

VI. Other Items

1. Census Web Page

Question: What aspects of the 2006 Census web pages do you find most and least valuable? Are you able to find the information you need? Please explain. What improvements would you recommend?

The location of the web pages within the Census web site continuously changes. It is difficult to always remember how to navigate to data.

- There is not a link to community profiles once in the Census part of the website (on the left side bar)
- Highlight tables are good for sorting
- Would be helpful to have more highlight tables – esp. for comparing to other areas, Regions, CSD, etc.
- Organizing topic based tables by geography so you're not searching through whole list to find what you need
- The Census Dictionary is very helpful. Usually able to find the data I need (or determine if data isn't free) within a reasonable timeframe. It would be great if there were more tables that compared variables from different releases, especially at the CD/CSD and CT or DA levels. On the whole, the 2006 Census section of the web page is quite good.
- Attempts to use GeoSearch usually end in frustration –site keeps giving error messages or it takes too long to load.
- The search function on the general Statistics Canada website is somewhat lacking – often there are many irrelevant responses to look through.
- Users are able to see one Census Tract at a time, and this is not useful for analyses. The page should allow viewing for multiple CTs
- The site changes often, and this causes confusion and navigational issues. While it is good to have so much more information available for free, certain key elements of the site need to be decided and not changed. If changes do occur, a message alerting the change could appear on the page, or a “what's new” tab. Having a short, electronic tutorial, with arrows and other prompts would ease navigation. This could be activated upon request.
- Since some variables and/or definitions change between census years, comparability is difficult. Data from the 2001 Census should be retrieved so that it shows the same data as 2006. If definitions change, or if a variable is new, this should be noted on the page eg: “new in 2011”; “journeyman certificate same as trades certificate”
- Link the data to Browser and allow on-line access
- Use more graphs and maps; numerical data is not easy to understand or informative for many users
- Provide more cross-tabulations
- Highlight tables are very good. These could provide more detailed information (such as the data detail offered at the CMA level) for CSDs

2. Geo Suite

Question: If the data contained within GeoSuite were available in other formats, would you object to eliminating the GeoSuite product? Please explain.

There would be no objection to eliminating GeoSuite if the data were available in other formats, preferably other GIS-based formats.

3. Alternate Distribution Methods

Question: In 2011, print and CD-ROM formats for all standard census and geography products will be discontinued. What alternate ways to distribute web-based content would you suggest?

Perhaps a password protected FTP site and/or e-mail might be pertinent.