

Appendix A: History of Changes to the Definition of “Urban Area” and “Rural Area”

Years	Main Criteria	Definitions	
		Urban Area	Rural Area
1931, 1941	legal status	Population residing <i>inside</i> boundaries of incorporated cities, towns and villages, regardless of size.	Remainder (i.e., population residing <i>outside</i> boundaries of incorporated cities, towns and villages, regardless of size).
1951	population size, CMA status	Population residing in cities, towns and villages of 1,000 and over, whether incorporated or unincorporated, as well as the population of <i>all parts of census metropolitan areas</i> (CMA - defined as groups of urban communities which are in close economic, geographic and social relationship).	Remainder (i.e., those residing in places with less than 1,000 people, whether incorporated or unincorporated, <i>outside</i> the boundaries of CMAs). Rural populations were further classified as either "farm" or "non-farm".
1956	population size, CMA status, other major urban areas status	Population residing in cities, towns and villages of 1,000 and over, whether incorporated or unincorporated, as well as the population of <i>all parts of census metropolitan areas</i> (CMA - defined as groups of urban communities which are in close economic, geographic and social relationship) and <i>all parts of "other major urban areas."</i> In general, "other major urban areas" included incorporated urban areas with some but not all of the characteristics of CMAs, although in most cases these communities were smaller in size.	Remainder (i.e., same as in 1951 except that non-urbanized parts of "other major urban areas," previously classified as rural, were classified as urban).
1961, 1966	population size	Population residing in cities, towns and villages of 1,000 and over, whether incorporated or unincorporated, as well as <i>urbanized fringes of</i> CMAs, other major urban areas and certain smaller cities if the city together with its urbanized fringe had a population of 10,000 or more. The main difference compared to 1956 is the exclusion from the urban population of any non-urbanized areas within CMAs and "other major urban areas" and the inclusion of urbanized areas adjoining smaller cities.	Remainder (i.e., same as in 1956 except that non-urbanized areas within CMAs and other major urban areas, previously classified as urban, were classified as rural and urbanized areas adjoining smaller cities were classified as urban).
1971	population size and density	Population living in (1) incorporated cities, towns and villages with a population of 1,000 or more, (2) unincorporated places of at least 1,000 having a population density of at least 1,000 per square mile (386 per square kilometre), (3) the urbanized or built-up fringes of (1) and (2) having a minimum population of 1,000 and a density of at least 1,000 per square mile (386 per square kilometre).	Remainder (i.e., population of any incorporated place with a population less than 1,000; any unincorporated place with a population less than 1,000 or with a population density less than 1,000 per square mile (386 per square kilometre); rural fringes of urban areas (1) and (2); urbanized or built-up fringes of urban areas (1) and (2) with populations less than 1,000 or with densities of less than 1,000 people per square mile (386 per square kilometre).

Appendix A: History of Changes to the Definition of “Urban Area” and “Rural Area” (continued)

Years	Main Criteria	Definitions	
		Urban Area	Rural Area
1976	population size and density	Persons living in areas with a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of 1,000 or more per square mile (386 per square kilometre).	Persons living outside urban areas (i.e., persons living outside places with a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of 1,000 or more per square mile (386 per square kilometre).
1981	population size and density	Persons living in areas with a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of 400 or more per square kilometre.	Persons living outside urban areas (i.e., persons living outside areas with a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of 400 or more per square kilometre).
1986, 1991, 1996	population size and density	Persons living in continuously build-up areas having a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of 400 or more per square kilometre, based on the previous census. To be considered as continuous, the built-up area must not have a discontinuity exceeding two kilometres. In addition, many other commercial, industrial and institutional land uses were considered urban even if they did not meet the population and density requirements, including commercial and industrial areas, railway yards, airports, parks, golf courses and cemeteries.	Persons living in sparsely populated lands lying outside urban areas (i.e., persons living outside places of 1,000 people or more, or outside places with population densities of 400 or more people per square kilometre).

Sources: Statistics Canada, census dictionary for each census year, 1931 to 1996.