

Vancouver Centre of Excellence



Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis

Working Paper Series

No. 04-19

Size Matters: Attracting new Immigrants to Canadian Cities

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October 2004

RIIM

Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis

The Vancouver Centre is funded by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria. We also wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Metropolis partner agencies:

- Health Canada
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Department of the Solicitor General of Canada
- Status of Women Canada
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Correctional Service of Canada
- Immigration & Refugee Board

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**Size Matters:
Attracting New Immigrants to Canadian Cities¹**

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October 2004

A version of this report was submitted to the B.C. Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services in November 2003. It has been copyedited and formatted into a RIIM Working Paper by Sydney Preston of RIIM.

¹ We thank Rob Fiedler and Roy Chan for their research assistance.

Abstract: Many small and medium-sized cities in Canada are witnessing a decline in their populations. Accordingly, the idea of attracting new immigrants to such locations is a pressing political and policy issue. The research presented uses first wave findings from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) to construct an index that maps which cities new immigrants find most attractive. The study focuses on cities outside of Greater Vancouver in British Columbia.

Introduction

Immigrants to Canada select where they will settle on the basis of several factors, including the presence of family and friends, employment opportunities, lifestyle and climate. They tend to choose one of the three largest Canadian cities: Vancouver, Toronto, and Montréal. Federal and provincial governments, however, also have preferences as to where immigrants should settle. They may employ various policy tools to encourage settlement in smaller cities that are facing population decline or labour shortages. This paper attempts to walk a fine line between these two positions, recognizing the desirability of immigrant settlement in medium-sized BC cities on the part of these cities and other levels of government, while incorporating information about the actual settlement decisions that immigrants make when they come to Canada.

We explore the desirability of five medium-sized cities in British Columbia by ranking them on the basis of a statistical index, resulting in a specific ‘geography of desirability’ from an immigrant perspective. The index is based upon a number of factors, each weighted differently to reflect its importance in relation to immigrant decision-making as documented in the recent findings of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) (Statistics Canada 2003). It draws on the LSIC data as a measure of immigrant preferences, but does not reflect a definitive assessment of these locations for settlement purposes. It does, however, serve as a reliable indicator of relative desirability of the five cities, based on past immigrant choices as illustrated in LSIC data.

The federal policy of ‘regionalization’, or immigrant dispersion, to small and medium-sized cities outside ‘MTV’ (Montréal, Toronto, Vancouver) has been discussed for some time. In exploring the attractiveness of these five BC cities to immigrants, we do not endorse this policy or analyze its strengths and weaknesses in any detail (see instead Vatz-Laroussi and Walton-Roberts, forthcoming in *Canadian Ethnic Studies*). Rather, we develop a series of indices and examine them critically for salient factors for the five locations.

Immigration to Canada and British Columbia

The specific settlement patterns of immigrants to Canadian cities are related to the historical geographies of earlier immigration, contemporary geopolitics, distance from source countries, economic performance of urban economies, and climate (Hiebert 2000). In 2002, British Columbia attracted 15% of all immigrants to Canada, or 34,000 people (CIC 2003). Of those who came to BC that year, 87% chose to reside in the Greater Vancouver, 2.2% chose Victoria, and 9.8% opted to

settle in other locations across the province. This pattern reflects similar immigrant settlement preferences over the past decade, during which 17.7% of immigrants to Canada landed in Vancouver. Clearly, Vancouver is the immigrant city of choice in BC: 41.3% of immigrants to Vancouver said they settled there because of friends and family (Statistics Canada 2003). If the presence of a large foreign-born population defines cosmopolitanism, Vancouver is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world, with 37.5% of its population born outside of the country.

Toronto, Vancouver, and Montréal are in one sense Canada's economic engines of growth. While job growth continues to occur disproportionately in these urban centres, the paring back of the welfare state through neoliberal policies at the provincial and federal levels has reduced social and physical infrastructure in Canadian cities (Teeple 1995; Walton-Roberts 2004). Critics of federal immigration policy have even argued that immigrant concentration in Canadian cities will lead to social tensions or public outbreaks of violence (Collacot 2002), though these predictions have yet to materialize in the Canadian context.

As Walton-Roberts (2004) observes, this 'problem' of immigration concentration is largely framed by two perceptions: one is the demand for population growth and skilled workers in areas outside the large metropolitan centres; and the other is the perception that the metropolitan areas cannot manage rapid population growth combined with extensive ethno-linguistic and racial diversity. Walton-Roberts adds that a decline in immigrant economic integration, as measured through average immigrant earnings as a percentage of average Canadian-born earnings, has (too easily) been read off as a decline in social and political integration. More research on the decline in immigrant earnings in the 2001 census is required, but it is premature to argue that this is a sign of increased immigrant segregation or declining participation in Canadian society.

Policy Context

While still a relatively recent idea in Canada, plans to disperse immigrants geographically have been employed in the European context for some time (Robinson, Andersson, and Musterd 2003). European countries, however, tend to focus on asylum and refugee resettlement with respect to dispersion policies, as most do not have the large-scale immigration recruitment for economic purposes found in Canada and the US. Hence, European governments tend to perceive dispersion as a 'share the burden' proposition, rather than a 'share the wealth' opportunity. Asylum seekers and refugees are thought to be a humanitarian (and economic) responsibility, rather than part of an economic strategy to revitalize smaller cities that might be losing population. In Canada, former

Citizenship and Immigration Minister, Denis Coderre, argued that the government should admit one percent of the Canadian population — approximately 316,000 people) per year. This has been a consistent policy since the Liberal Party published its Red Book in 1993, and even before this time when the Conservative government espoused similar immigration targets. Moreover, the Canadian government has shown interest in increasing the numbers of immigrants who settle outside major Canadian cities.

To date efforts to encourage immigrants to settle in smaller urban centres have met with limited success. It will be important to further explore how to attract immigrants to smaller centres and persuade them to stay there in order to reduce the pressures on Canada's largest cities (CIC 2001a: 10).

The number of immigrants settling outside of the six largest CMAs has declined dramatically over three decades, from 30.4% during the 1970s to 22.3% during the 1980s to just 17.2% during the 1990s according to the Canadian censuses. Indeed, when Vancouver was included as a sixth city in the index ranking, it surpassed the score of each of the other cities no matter how the variables were ranked. This finding reinforces the thesis that immigrants prefer large urban areas over smaller ones. Insofar as immigration is seen as a 'share the wealth' proposition, where immigrants are perceived to 'add value' to particular locations through their skills, employment offerings, tax contributions, and community participation (CIC 2001b), the current settlement pattern of immigrants is seen to be unsatisfactory to many local governments and businesses in BC cities because they are not attracting a proportional share of new immigrants.

We selected five medium-sized BC cities for the study: Victoria, Kelowna, Prince George, Prince Rupert and Nanaimo. The cities represent a range of population sizes, coastal and inland locations, economic opportunities, as well as mild and more acute climatic conditions. Many are the largest ones outside Vancouver. Their selection does not reflect, however, a judgement that they are the best (or worst) for immigrant settlement. Our aim here is to develop a constructive assessment tool for all BC cities and for prospective immigrants that highlights immigrant preferences for specific locations, as documented in the first wave of the LSIC.

The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada

Our study weighs and displays different characteristics of cities to rank which centres outside the Greater Vancouver are most attractive to new immigrants. The variables employed are based on emerging research related to immigrants' preferred settlement location. In particular, we use the

recent findings from the first wave of data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, released in September 2003 (Statistics Canada 2003).²

The LSIC is used to anchor the index for two reasons. First, it represents a recent and reliable sampling of data that directly asks why immigrants choose the locations they do to settle. While other data may serve a similar purpose (i.e. the landed immigrant database, or LIDS), they do not attempt to ascertain motivation, per se. Second, the LSIC dataset opens up new avenues for comparison across provinces. Until now, such in-depth research at a national scale was beyond the funds and capacity of any one researcher or government department. Medium-sized cities in Ontario, for example, could be represented using the same ranking system as provided here.

We present our results with a note of caution: we have created a series of indices representing certain values and characteristics of places that make them attractive to immigrants. The indices are, by definition, incomplete indicators of selected factors affecting locational decision-making on the part of immigrants. They are by no means definitive and static over time. They do, however, attempt to create a policy-relevant basis for comparison across medium-sized centres in BC, and potentially Canada, for policy analysis and planning.

Missing from the study

In creating any index or ranking, a number of variables are excluded. Some are simply not characteristics of the cities themselves, but are more abstract qualities of a city's relationship, for example, to a larger centre like Vancouver. In this context, proximity to Vancouver is an important consideration that is not integrated into the index, but one we discuss below. We have assumed that some variables not mentioned in the LSIC are secondary, not primary, considerations in relation to choice of settlement location. We briefly discuss three such variables here to note their potential relevance to choice of settlement location.

Housing availability and affordability are not integrated into the index. The vast majority of immigrants know where they will be living upon landing in Canada (Ruddick 2004), which leads us to believe that housing needs are strongly tied to the presence of family and friends in a given place (Ley and Tutchener 1999). In the five study sites, average house prices varied from \$243,970 (in

² The LSIC data represent approximately 12,000 of 164,200 immigrants aged 15 and older who arrived in Canada between October 2000 and September 2001. Of those admitted to Canada, roughly 67% enter as economic class immigrants (including both principal applicants and their families), 27% enter as family class immigrants, and just 6% enter as refugees. For a specific study of the regionalization policy on government-assisted refugees, see Sherrell, Hyndman and Preniqi 2004.

Victoria) to \$118,995 (in Prince Rupert). Average house prices are positively correlated with the appeal of each city as reflected in the LSIC index outlined later in the paper. Kelowna, for example, has the second highest average house price at \$192,715 and is ranked the second most desirable city for immigrants (see Table 1). In this case, a variable not integrated into the index is nonetheless totally consistent with it, arguably reflecting the reliability of the index. A positive correlation between house prices and a city's desirability suggests that housing costs may not be a deterrent to potential immigrants.

Table 1: Average Dwelling Value (2001 census)

City	Average Dwelling Value
CA Prince Rupert	\$118,955
CMA Prince George	\$130,012
CMA Nanaimo	\$154,996
CMA Kelowna	\$192,715
CMA Victoria	\$243,970
CMA Vancouver	\$294,847

Related to real estate markets is the relative location of each study site to the province's largest 'economic engine of growth', in this case Greater Vancouver. Access to the Greater Vancouver as a potential market, client, service provider, and so on may well shape immigrants' choice of settlement location. We did not examine, for example, the integration of the five study sites vis-à-vis transportation and communications networks that 'annihilate space' by making distances easily traversable. Economic integration across geographical distance is facilitated by transportation corridors and communications technology (Dicken 2003). Three of our study sites—Victoria, Nanaimo, and Kelowna—are more integrated in this context than two others, Prince George and Prince Rupert. Victoria and Nanaimo are separated from Vancouver by water, but enjoy multiple links and convenient modes of transport to link them. For example, an informal survey of the number of daily float plane flights to Victoria and Nanaimo from Vancouver suggests a high-end mode (i.e. relatively expensive, for white collar workers) and high degree of integration: Victoria has 28 flights daily to Vancouver, and Nanaimo 9 flights. Kelowna, on the other hand, offers a good, not-as-weather-dependent ground link (four hours by vehicle) that is relatively cheap, especially if a business requires the transportation of cargo from Vancouver to Kelowna.

Potential for economic integration can be measured in a number of other ways that include the availability of business services, fibre optic telecommunications, and proximity of suppliers. The indices could include a weighting for connectivity that reflects economic integration with Vancouver, or whatever the largest city in the region may be. This would, however, require a more systematic and in-depth qualitative study of what linkages matter most and to whom. Such variables are likely to be far more relevant to entrepreneurs and business class immigrants than professionals, assuming that they find work in the occupation for which they are trained. Refugees who settle outside Vancouver, for example, are likely to be more concerned about employment prospects in a given location than a city's degree of economic integration with Vancouver and its road or air links.

Another dimension of settlement that has been largely ignored in the literature on immigration (for an exception, see Hiebert 2003) and is not included among the indices is the proclivity of a given city's population to welcome and accept new immigrants. Settlement services are likely to make a place more welcoming to new immigrants through counselling and interpretation services, host programs, and official language instruction at immigrant-specific agencies or as part of mainstream organizations such as schools, colleges, and hospitals.³ Many economic immigrants score highly on official language ability and do not necessarily avail themselves of as many settlement services as those who come in family and refugee classes (Statistics Canada 2003). The importance of such services will vary across immigrant classes and source countries.

Settlement is also facilitated in a better or worse fashion depending on the host cities' attitudes to 'outsiders.' This involves tolerance of ethnic/racial difference and the acceptance of different nationalities, as the vast majority of recent and current immigrants to Canada and BC are persons of colour from East and South Asia. While a city's Chamber of Commerce or municipal council may want to increase its labour force and population, it is unlikely to be successful at attracting immigrants if the attitudes of its residents and employers are not open to outsiders and their differences. Thus, a missing element in our index is a systematic measurement of attitudes towards prospective immigrants in these cities of potential settlement. Hiebert's (2003) Vancouver community study illustrates the generally high levels of support for immigrants to the city, with little variation across foreign-born and native-born respondents. Vancouver is, however, a major metropolis with a highly diverse and cosmopolitan population, as noted earlier. While we cannot address this gap in current research here, we highlight it as a weakness in our own analysis and endorse the idea of research to document this dimension of settlement potential.

³ This project did not examine the provision of settlement services in the five study sites. We did note, however, that Prince Rupert is the only city without 'stream one' settlement services, i.e. an immigrant-specific agency that provides counselling and interpretation in the early stages of settlement.

Attracting Newcomers: Quality of Life versus Quality of Livelihood

Economic immigrants to BC are selected on the basis of their official language abilities, skills, education, age, and experience. They tend to represent a relatively educated and privileged elite within the countries from which they come and have certain expectations about the quality of life they can expect when they arrive in Canada. People also immigrate to a new country to access employment opportunities and remuneration that exceed those in the countries they leave behind. We refer to the potential to develop better employment conditions as improved ‘quality of livelihood’.

Harald Bauder (forthcoming) argues that recent immigrants to British Columbia who settle in Victoria, Nanaimo, or Prince George tend to do better in the labour market than those in Greater Vancouver. He shows that immigrants’ average incomes are higher in smaller cities than in Vancouver. Recent immigrant men averaged well above \$22,000 per annum in places outside of Greater Vancouver, as opposed to only \$17,350 within it. Recent immigrant women in Victoria earned almost \$16,000 per year, while their counterparts in Vancouver made on average slightly more than \$12,000. This suggests that ‘quality of livelihood’, once established, may well be better in cities outside Vancouver for new immigrants.

Bauder’s study does not, however, include an analysis of labour force participation by immigration class, which might show that a disproportionate number of, for example, family class immigrants settle in Vancouver while economic immigrants are most likely to settle outside the province’s largest metropolis. Nor was his study able to avail itself of the LSIC data which show that immigrants’ choice of locations outside Vancouver has as much to do with the presence of family and friends (35.6% of immigrants cite this reason) as it does job (32.3%) and business prospects (5.5%). The study does not control for ‘visible minority’ status among immigrants, so the earnings of ‘whites’ in smaller cities are compared with those of non-whites in Greater Vancouver, rendering the analysis flawed. Bauder’s numbers do suggest that quality of livelihood is, on average, better outside of Vancouver than within it.

‘Quality of life’, we contend, is quite different from quality of livelihood. One can debate at length the indicators one should include under such a category. Certainly, the presence of family and/or friends in a given place, the quality of education available for one’s family (as well as the educational attainment of the community, on average), climate and the lifestyle associated with the city are all important considerations. Quality of life incorporates many other factors as well, but these are highly idiosyncratic. For example, Richard Florida and Meric Gertler (2003) argue that a thriving arts community (measured statistically as the number of artists, writers, and other ‘bohemians’) and a tolerant social character (measured in part by high numbers of immigrants) are the basis of a creative,

competitive, vibrant urban economy. Bauder's study potentially corroborates Richard Florida's analysis of the 'creative class'—that the significant presence of immigrants among other variables is correlated with that of highly-paid knowledge workers in the high-end service sector. According to Florida (2002), however, cities that rank highest in terms of creative economic strength, measured in part by large immigrant populations, also rank highest in income inequality. Florida's correlations are not based on any direct surveys or interviews with members of the 'creative class' themselves. Rather, aggregate data are modelled in a way that serves his argument. As Schuurman (2002) has argued, modelling is an iterative process in which the researcher tweaks the model until it is validated by external indicators (which s/he seeks to model).

We employ variables that are, according to LSIC, major factors for immigrants in deciding location. Where no data are available to measure these variables directly, we have created proxy measures as described in Appendix A. Settlement related to the presence of family and/or friends drives immigrants' decisions about settlement location throughout BC (Walton-Roberts 2004). Employment prospects are often tied to these kin connections, making it difficult to separate one criterion from one another. Immigrants also note that they are attracted to a city for its beauty and climate (Statistics Canada 2003; Henin and Bennett 2002). One's perception of affordable, quality housing might be another criterion, though we have not included it in our index. Prospective immigrants might be attracted to a particular place by the presence of a symphony orchestra, the availability of recreational facilities, or the number of parks it offers. Education is also a driving force behind parents' decisions to settle in a particular location (Waters 2001). Each of these variables is incorporated into the final indices using multi-criteria evaluation.

What is multi-criteria evaluation (MCE)?

The index is based on a technique from geographic information science (GIS) called multi-criteria evaluation (MCE). Multi-criteria evaluation is a tool that allows users to combine several criteria (attributes) in order to derive a suitability index for location of a spatial entity—or in this case to derive a choice of city to which to immigrate. The first step in MCE is to define the problem and relevant criteria. Then each criterion is weighted, depending on its relevance to the spatial solution.

The scoring remains a subjective process; its strength lies in the availability of scoring criteria commensurate with the goals of the analysis. High levels of relevance are associated with higher weights which are, in turn, used to enhance the impact of that particular factor in the suitability equation. The value of MCE is that it allows the user to weight numerous criteria in order to fine-tune the index. Moreover, contradictory criteria can be used, allowing the index to incorporate more than

one point of view and still provide results. MCE is often used to assess suitability of particular locations in relation to one another.

The list of factors included in this project, like many developed for MCE, is not associated with absolute, objective values. Rather MCE attempts to accommodate multiple perspectives, and the results of analysis vary depending on how factors and constraints are ranked in relation to each other. After the weighting is developed based on the relative importance of a factor, the final step is to combine all the information in order to develop a composite index of attraction to prospective immigrants. This index will identify which medium-sized cities in BC are most (and least) attractive potential sites of immigration based on the findings of ‘wave 1’ of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada.⁴

The index and its variations

We consider the index based on the LSIC findings to be the best indicator of immigrant decision-making in relation to settlement location. By calculating more than one index (we present 7 different weightings), our aim is to test the sensitivity of the LSIC index, that is, whether results change based on increased emphasis of 1) employment and business prospects; 2) presence of family and friends; 3) education (in the prospective place of settlement); and 4) lifestyle (taken here to refer broadly to climate and its implications for activities, based on Henin and Bennett 2002; Walton-Roberts 2004). Data analyzed to assess ‘employment and business prospects’ and the ‘presence of family and friends’ (factors one and two) refer not only to the five study cities, but to the ‘universe’ of all medium-sized cities in British Columbia (24 in total).⁵ We do this to avoid skewing the results for the five selected cities by contextualizing them within a more realistic range of values. This approach also allows one to assume that prospective immigrants choose not only from among the five study sites, but from all BC cities outside the Vancouver census metropolitan area (CMA).

The LSIC index

The first index, or ranking, is based on the LSIC (Statistics Canada 2003) findings that enumerate settlement factors for immigrants who establish themselves outside the census

⁴ Data for wave two of the LSIC were collected between December 2002 and January 2004, and will be collected for wave three between November 2004 and October 2005 (Ruddick 2004).

⁵ We have not included the statistical output for these 24 cities, but contact schuurman@sfu.ca for more information.

metropolitan areas of Vancouver, Montréal, and Toronto (see Appendix B). Immigrants to these cities noted the following motivations for moving there:

- a) job prospects (32.3%), and business prospects (5.5%)
- b) the presence of family and friends (35.6%);
- c) education prospects (12.1%);
- d) lifestyle (5.6%);

- The index combines **job and business prospects** (weighted at 37.8% of the total) to gauge employment-related prospects, and measures them through job growth and unemployment rates, as described in detail in Appendix A.
- The **presence of family and friends** (weighted at 35.6%) is measured by a proxy that combines equally a measure of all immigrants who have arrived since 1971 (at which time the census registers the introduction of the points system into Canadian immigration policy) with the city's ranking among as the destination for numbers of recent immigrants who arrived in BC between 1996 and 2001.
- The **education** variable is a measure of three data points, each weighted equally (at one-third) for a total of 12.1% of the index: the rank of proportion of population with university degrees; the rank of the city against the four others on standardized test scores for high school students in each city's secondary schools; and the presence and degree of post-secondary education available in the city (i.e. university, university college, college).
- **Lifestyle** is perhaps the most subjective to measure and indicate; we weight it at 5.6% as per the LSIC findings. We used climate as a proxy, based on information gleaned from qualitative academic research (Henin and Bennett 2002; Walton-Roberts 2004) and on our interpretation of available LSIC data (in which climate plays a major role (20%) in determining settlement to Vancouver). As before, 'quality of life' includes a range of variables, of which lifestyle is but one.

Indices for each factor, weighted at 100%

Four indices have been generated based solely on the data amassed for each of the variables (see appendices C, D, E, F). Each assumes that 'education', for example, is the only consideration in terms of immigrant's choice in settlement location. These show how cities rank based on each variable as if it were the only decision-making factor. For family class immigrants, the presence of

family and friends is likely to be the single greatest determining factor in selecting settlement locations, hence the index showing the presence of family and friends at 100% may be useful for analysis pertaining to this group.

Results and interpretation

The results of each of iteration of the index are illustrated in the accompanying maps. Several preliminary conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis:

- Significant population differences among the five study sites shape their ranking on each variable.⁶ Larger city size is correlated with attractiveness to immigrants, based on the LSIC findings.
- The Capital Regional District (CRD), including Victoria and its environs, remains the most attractive medium-sized centre regardless of weighting. Its larger population size is correlated with its attractiveness.
- Kelowna is the next most attractive city; again, its larger population correlates with its desirability.
- Nanaimo competes with Prince George for third place, but wins on all but one index: when job and business prospects are weighted at 100%.
- The index is not extremely sensitive to different weighting because variables that make a centre attractive tend to aggregate (e.g. high presence of family and friends is likely to correspond to higher likelihood of jobs and business prospects increase in larger centres, driving the likelihood of better educational prospects).
- Geography matters. The Capital Regional District around Victoria enjoys high levels of services and amenities for its size, including relative proximity to and integration with the province's largest urban agglomeration. Settlements such as Prince Rupert and Prince George are smaller, more geographically isolated (and climatically challenged), shaping their respective desirability to new immigrants. Variables that may be positively correlated with larger settlement are therefore less likely to accrue.

While the LSIC index is arguably the best index for assessing the appeal of smaller cities to prospective immigrants, the variation among the different indices is small. This strengthens the

⁶ Population in a given place is indicative of service and amenities to some extent. Victoria and the CRD have roughly 300,000 people compared to Kelowna's population of 96,000 (147,000 for the Central Okanagan RD), Nanaimo's 73,000, Prince George's 80,000, and Prince Rupert's 15,000.

analytical value of the index, and demonstrates its robust character. Nonetheless, we caution that co-factors which may also shape decisions of settlement location.

Limitations of the indices

An index provides a ranking based on research pointing to the importance of variables and on available data to approximate those variables. In this case, the Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Canada provides a basis for weighting factors identified as important to immigrants surveyed. These methods have limitations. Despite our quantitative calculations that suggest Kelowna is the second most attractive city to immigrants (outside the Greater Vancouver), qualitative research has shown that on-the-ground immigrant experience of Kelowna is quite different. Walton-Roberts (2004: 19) cites this interview excerpt:

F6: I have experienced a lot of racism in this town and even though I did experience racism in Edmonton when I came to Canada, but not so much as I have in the last 6 years in this town.

Q: What kinds of things make you feel that way?....

F6: I find that people are very paternalistic, condescending, and I think it's just the whole atmosphere. That's my personal opinion, I know some people think I'm crazy and that I'm overreacting, but I find this city very, the people are very different. (Non-European women's focus group, Kelowna, October 2002).

Likewise, Sherrell, Hyndman and Preniqi (2004) cite interviews that highlight the economic mismatch between (industrial) immigrant skill sets and the service sector jobs that dominate the Kelowna labour market:

[In] Gjakova we had ... seven or eight [factories]. It was a very industrial town... there were big factories: 5000 people in one [factory] (101 – Kosovar – Vancouver).

Kelowna is tourist place; it is not for engineers (Interview 109, Kosovar, Kelowna).

The promotion of Kelowna like 'Silicon Vineyard' is highly exaggerated. High tech companies usually are small. Very small. And they are able to employ up to ten people. And no industry, no big manufacturing companies ... Here, generally, I believe it's mainly hospitality industry ... [The] highly promoted bridges.com ... does do very well, but still not big enough to be big employer. Only manufacturer is Sunrype, food processing kind of company. But I'm afraid they don't need any high tech personnel so far (Interview 108, Kosovar, Kelowna).

There are clear discrepancies between the quantitative index derived here, and immigrant perceptions on the ground. This project cannot 'ground truth' – or test the veracity of – the indices we

have generated. We acknowledge, however, that they represent part of the picture; in no way do they account for the more subtle and subjective assessments of discrimination or employment suitability alluded to here. We use such indices as one step in a multi-methods approach to assessing the attractiveness of medium-sized cities in BC and elsewhere.

Conclusions

The most straightforward conclusion of this research is that the LSIC-based index is robust and reliable from a statistical viewpoint. A number of variables correlate with one another, especially family and friends and economic prospects. Two other variables – population and average housing prices – are strongly correlated with the results. Population size is a reliable surrogate because weighted factors measure increases in absolute numbers rather than proportions, ensuring that larger centres will fare better. Other Canadian research on the relationship of population size to immigrant retention also points to higher retention rates in larger cities (Abu-Laban et al. 1999; Krahn, Derwing and Abu-Laban 2003).

More broadly speaking, the study confirms that immigrants are attracted to cities with ‘friends and family’, or other immigrant populations. Large immigrant cities like Toronto or Vancouver are not accidental but accrue because immigrants consistently choose to settle in areas where they find the people, livelihoods, and quality of life they seek. The logic is clearly tautological: making a place attractive to immigrants requires an existing immigrant population. From a policy perspective, this circularity can only be overcome by strong incentives (i.e. future family unification options to build an immigrant base or perhaps tax credits/exemptions) for new immigrants to relocate in areas without dense immigrant populations.

Further studies might evaluate clusters of smaller cities (e.g. Trail-Castlegar-Nelson) that constitute functional medium-sized cities when coordinated as a unit. Results from such assessments may be more realistic and inclusive in appraising quality of life outside Canada’s largest cities. Moreover, assessment of functional centres or ‘corridors’ – rather than formal municipal bodies – could allow cities to better represent their assets and virtues in attracting immigrants. Such a strategy could enable a shift from the evaluation of existing appeal (as measured in this study) to a program that allowed communities to actively engage in programs to attract immigration. Variables in a subsequent study based on functional centres might include (i) degree of integration, including transportation and communication connectivity; (ii) housing and rental prices (allowing smaller centres to score better); (iii) proportion of immigrants in situ to total population, rather than a ratio of

absolute numbers; and (iv) recreational amenities and/or shopping opportunities (based on proxy variables such as presence/absence of key stores) in addition to the existing variables.

The indices presented is an indicator of the role that population and the extant number of immigrants in situ plays in determining appeal of smaller cities. From a policy perspective, if governments want to “spread the wealth” associated with immigration and an expanded labour force, a proactive policy stance that enumerates and communicates the appeal of less prominent communities is vital.

Appendix A: Immigration MCE: Methodology

Factors:

Factors were determined based on a Statistics Canada release the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (Statistics Canada 2003). The survey included data on the “five most important reasons principal applicants in the economic class choose to settle...” The multicriteria evaluation (MCE) used data from the results given for all other CMAs or non-CMAs (other than Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal).

Each factor was calculated as follows:

- Presence of Family or Friends (interpreted as presence of relatively recent immigrants)
 - 1) Total of all immigrants in each Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) or census area (CA) in BC who immigrated from 1971 (first census that points system took effect) to 2001 (50% weighting for this factor);
 - 2) Growth in recent immigrants from 1996 to 2001. (Census 2001 recent immigrants – Census 1996 recent immigrants) / Census 1996 recent immigrants * 100). Note: recent immigrants are defined as persons who have immigrated to Canada in the inter-census period, the 5 year period between censuses (50% weighting for this factor; total 100%).
- Job Prospects & Business Prospects (Economic factors)
 - 1) Measured as the growth in employment from 1996 to 2001. (Census 2001 employed – Census 1996) / Census 1996 employed * 100). Note: employed refers to the number of persons 15 years old and over who were in paid work (50% weighting);
 - 2) The unemployment rate (Census 2001 data) (50% weighting).
- Educational prospects
 - 1) The availability of Post-Secondary Educational Institutes in each CMA (University = 5, University-College = 4, Community College = 3) (33 1/3%).
 - 2) Population with College Diploma/Certificate or University Bachelor’s Degree or Higher (33 1/3%).
 - 3) Grade 12 Provincial Exam Scores (average determined from basic subjects) (33 1/3%).
- Lifestyle
 - 1) Subjective assessment of most and least desirable climate (100% weighting).

Scoring:

To create scores each factor was ranked into quintiles with 5 categories (20% of the data falls within each class). If the factor was comprised of sub-factors these were ranked using the same method and the average of the sub-factors was used as the factor score.

Weighting:

After scoring, each factor was multiplied by a weight. Several weights were used to test the sensitivity of the MCE, but the variables are based on LSIC factors.

Weights from LSIC 2003 – all other CMAs and non-CMAs: Family and Friends (35.6%), Employment Prospects (37.8%), Education Prospects (12.1%), and Lifestyle (5.6%)

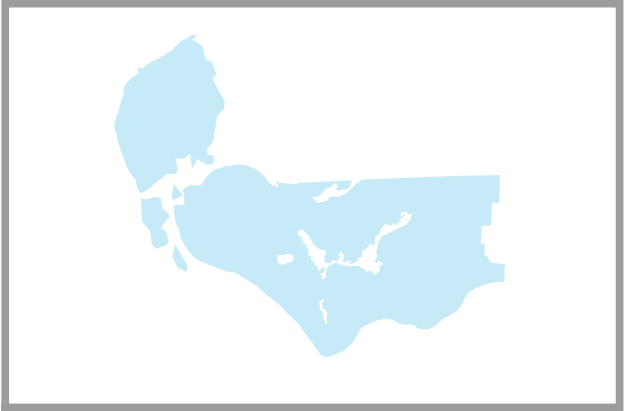
Note: Business and job prospects were combined as employment prospects.

Appendix B: Appeal of BC Cities to Immigrants – Score for all Variables:

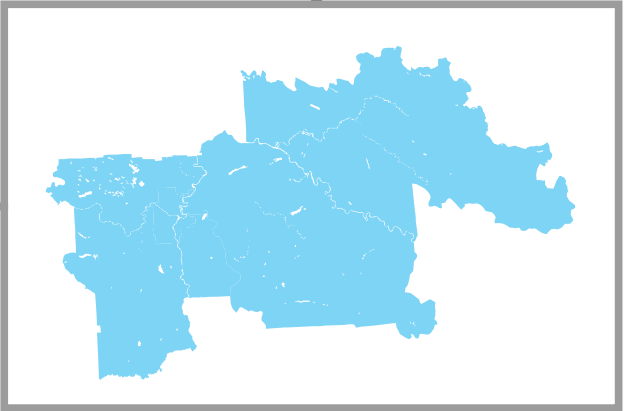
Family and Friends, Jobs and Business, Education and Lifestyle

Appeal of BC Cities to Immigrants - Score for All Variables

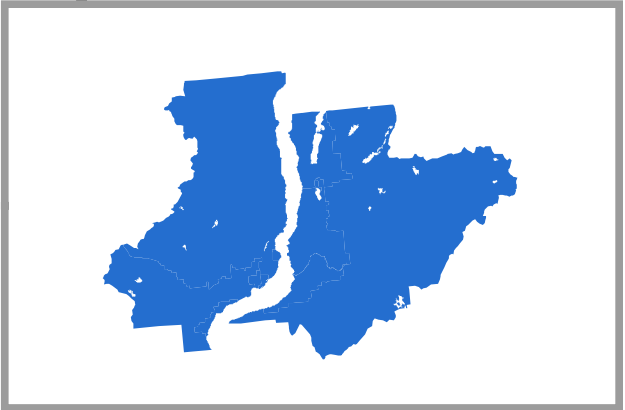
- family & friends, jobs & business, educational and lifestyle
(Score Based On LSIC Weightings)



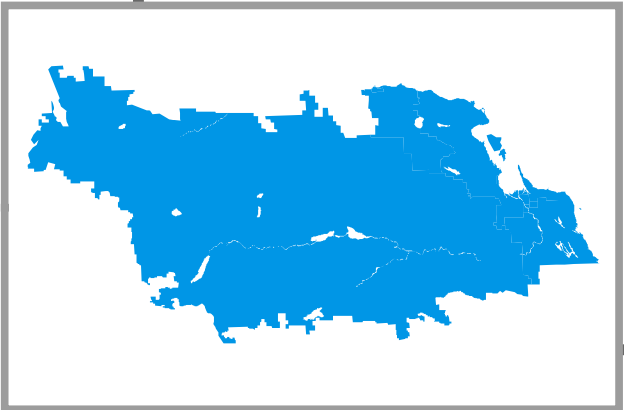
Prince Rupert
Score = 1.77 (38.85)



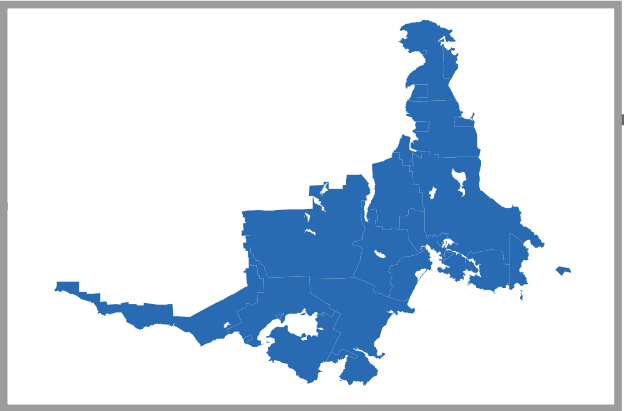
Prince George
Score = 2.57 (56.31)



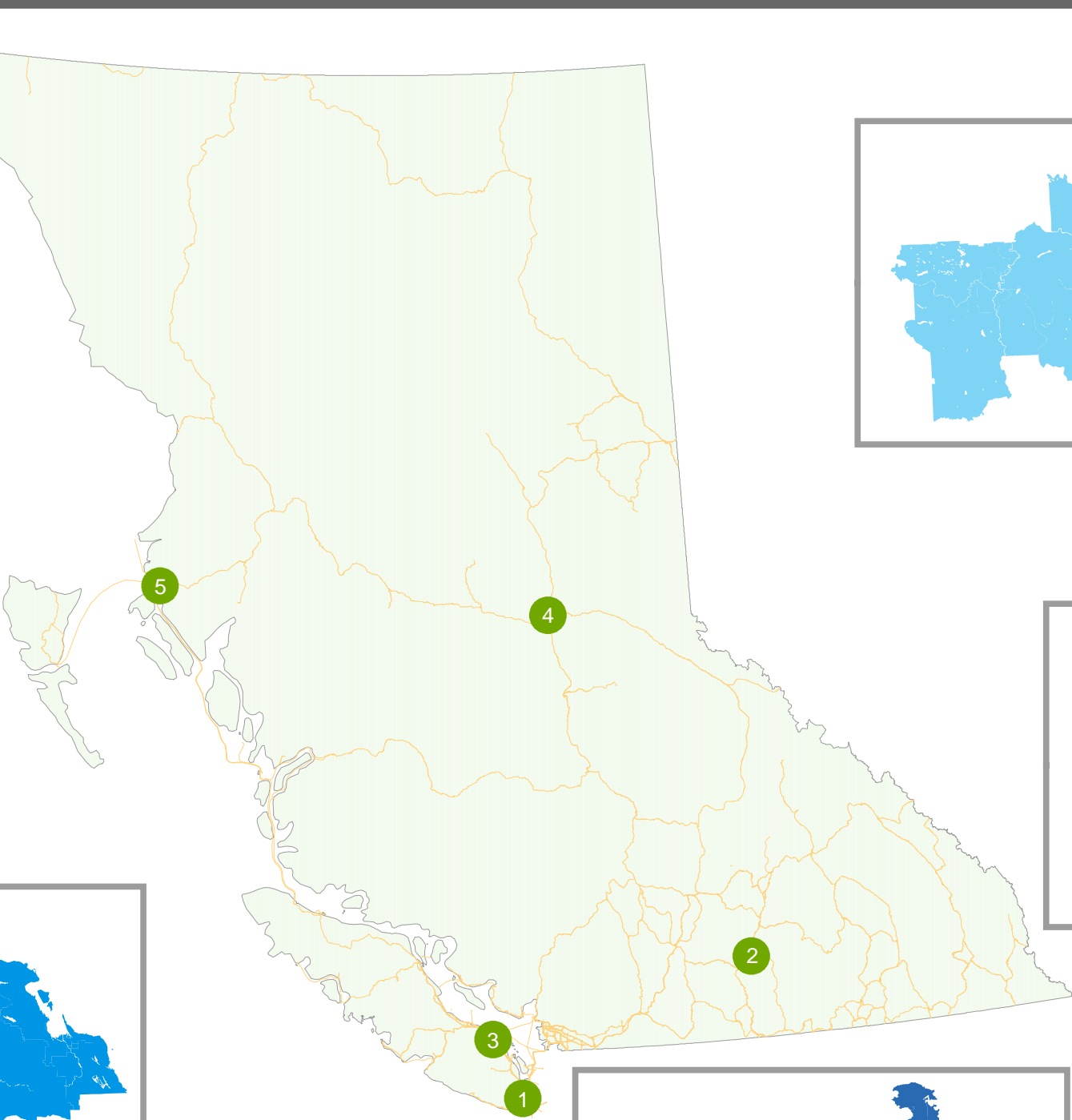
Kelowna
Score = 3.83 (84.02)



Nanaimo
Score = 2.91 (63.87)



Capital Regional District
Score = 3.96 (86.93)



Legend (Score Based On LSIC Weightings)

Score for All Variables

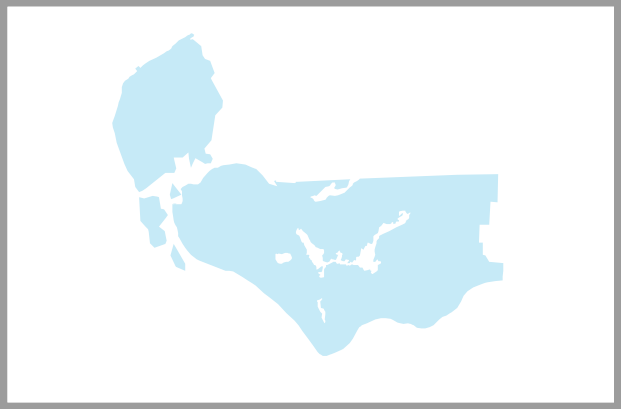
- Prince Rupert - 1.77 (38.85)
- Prince George - 2.57 (56.31)
- Nanaimo - 2.91 (63.87)
- Kelowna - 3.83 (84.03)
- CRD - 3.96 (86.93)
- Major Highways
- BC

*Note: Score in () = Total Score Out of 100

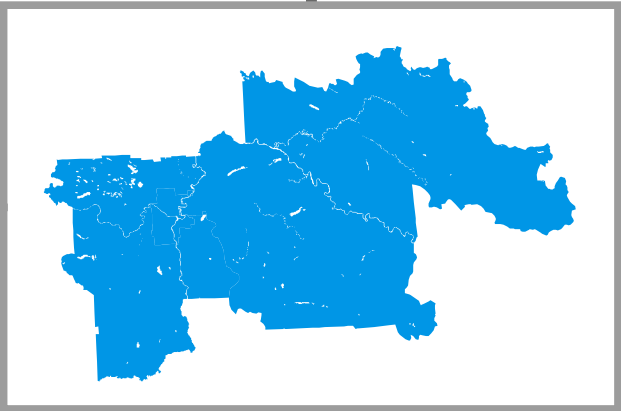
Appendix C: Job and Business Prospects

Appeal of BC Cities to Immigrants - Jobs & Business Prospects

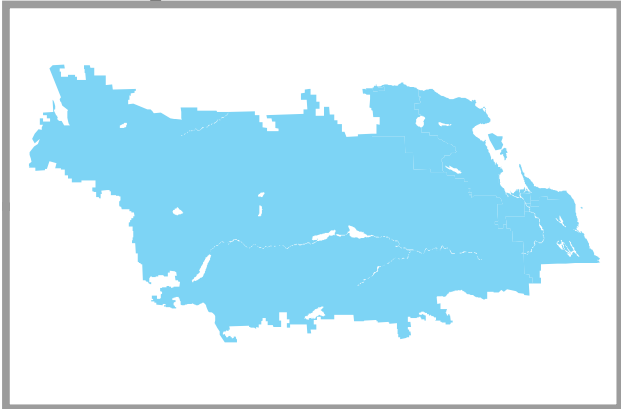
(individual factor score)



Prince Rupert
Score = 1.00 (20.00)



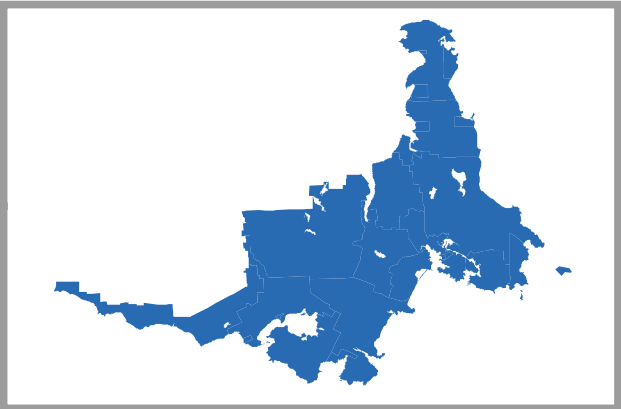
Prince George
Score = 3.50 (70.00)



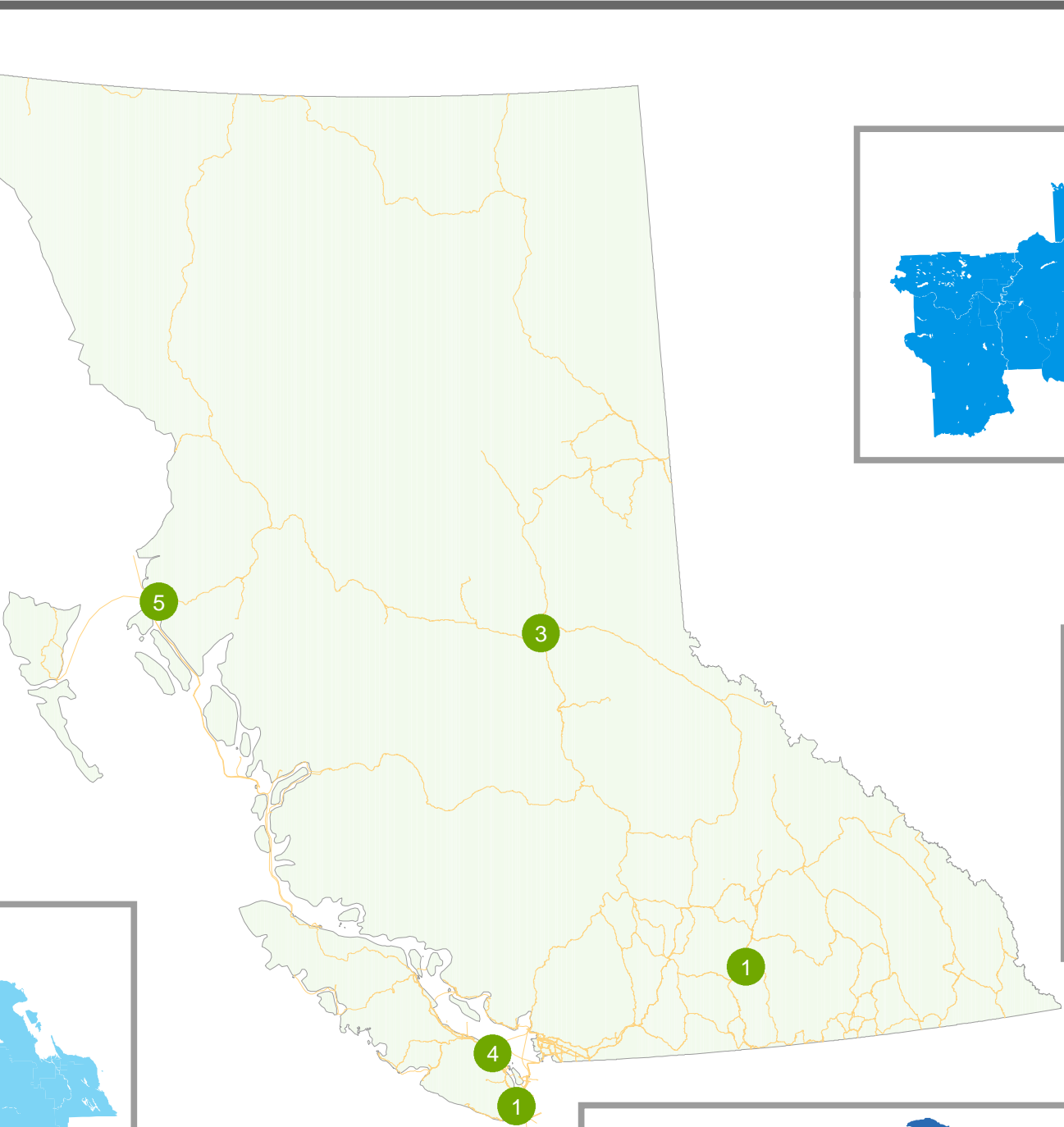
Nanaimo
Score = 2.50 (50.00)



Kelowna
Score = 4.50 (90.00)



Capital Regional District
Score = 4.50 (90.00)



Legend (individual factor score)

Jobs & Business Prospects Score

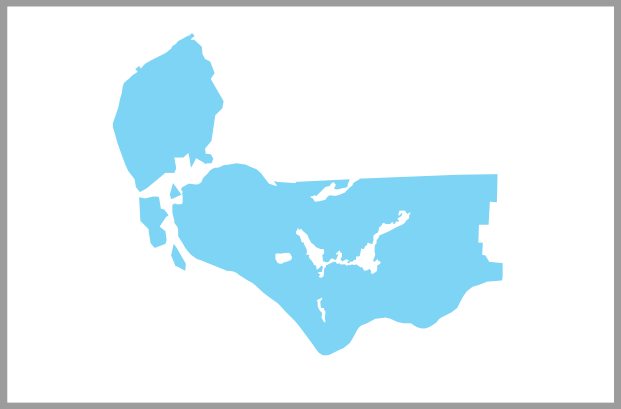
- Prince Rupert - 1.00 (20.00)
- Nanaimo - 2.50 (50.00)
- Prince George - 3.50 (70.00)
- Kelowna - 4.50 (90.00)
- CRD - 4.50 (90.00)
- Major Highways
- BC

*Note: Score in () = Total Score Out of 100

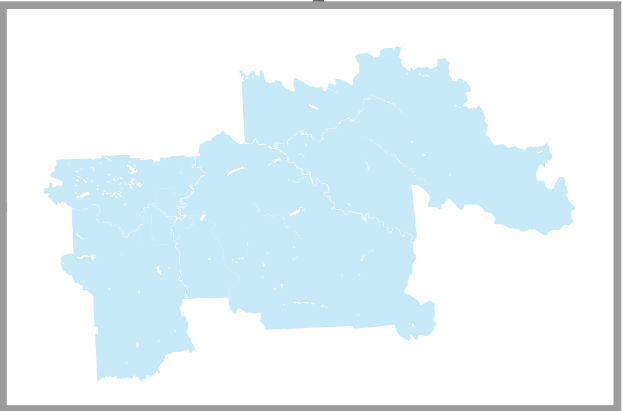
Appendix D: Presence of Family and Friends

Appeal to BC Cities to Immigrants - Presence of Family & Friends

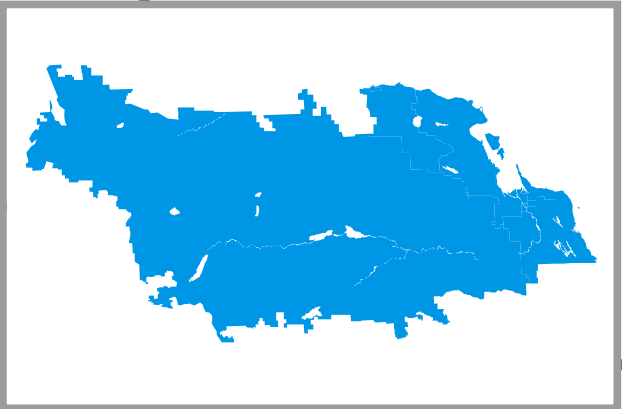
- using proxy immigration data
(individual factor score)



Prince Rupert
Score = 3.00 (60.00)



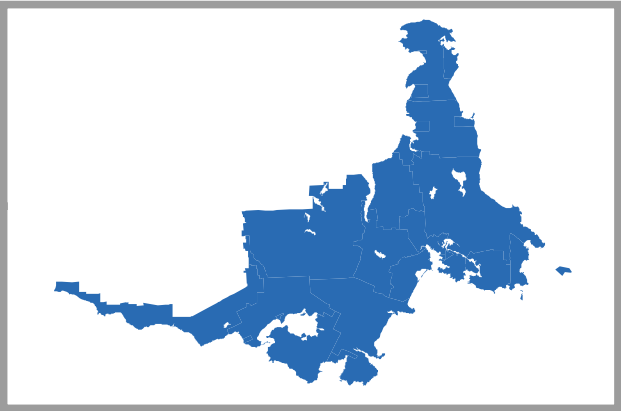
Prince George
Score = 2.00 (40.00)



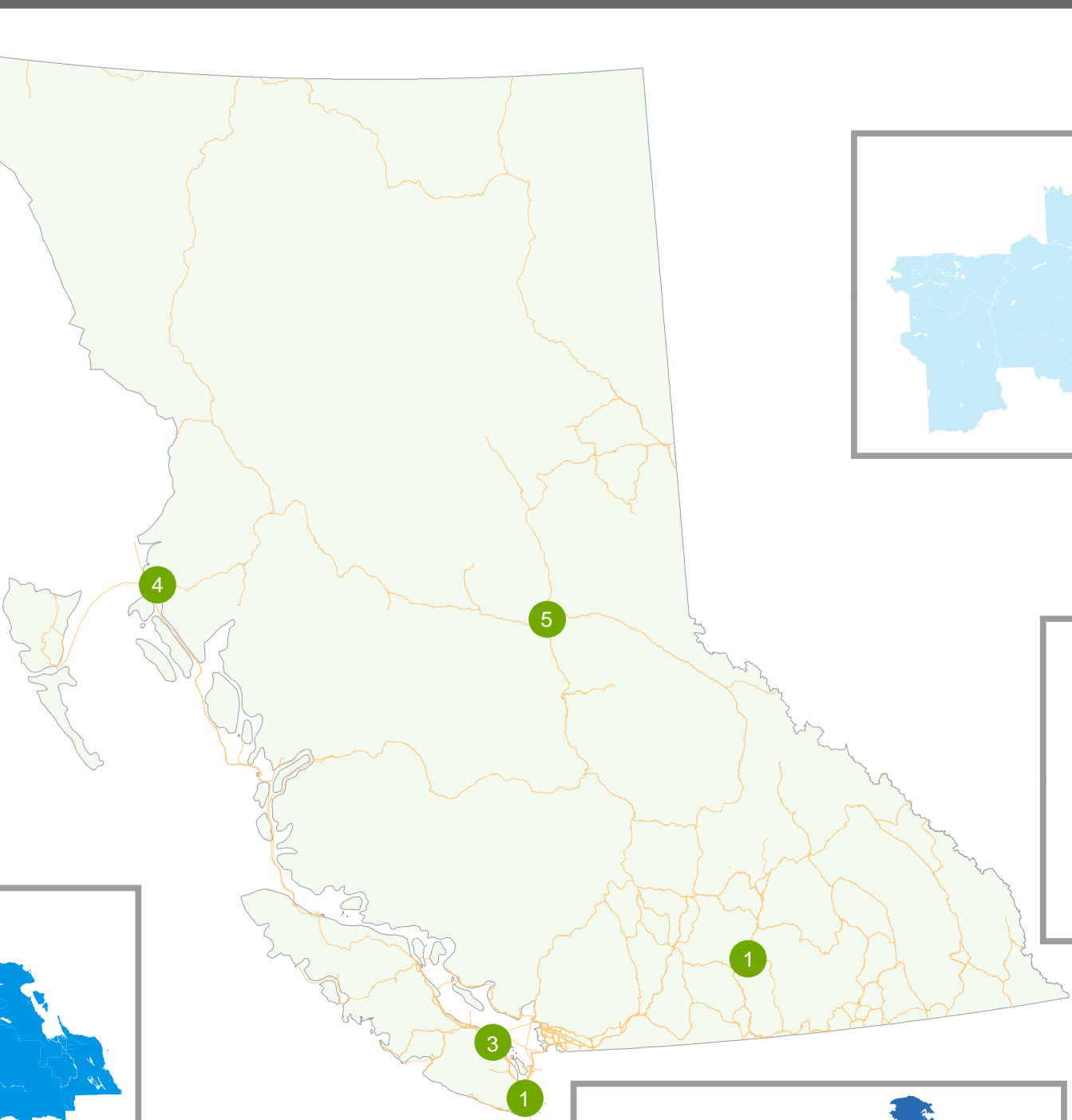
Nanaimo
Score = 3.50 (70.00)



Kelowna
Score = 4.00 (80.00)



Capital Regional District
Score = 4.00 (80.00)



Legend *(individual factor score)*

Presence of Family & Friends Score

- Prince George - 2.00 (40.00)
- Prince Rupert - 3.00 (60.00)
- Nanaimo - 3.50 (70.00)
- CRD - 4.00 (80.00)
- Kelowna - 4.00 (80.00)
- Major Highways
- BC

**Note: Score in () = Total Score Out of 100*

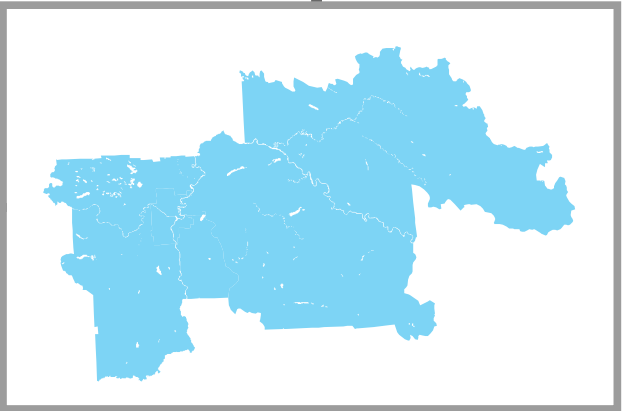
Appendix E: Education

Appeal of BC Cities to Immigrants - Educational Prospects

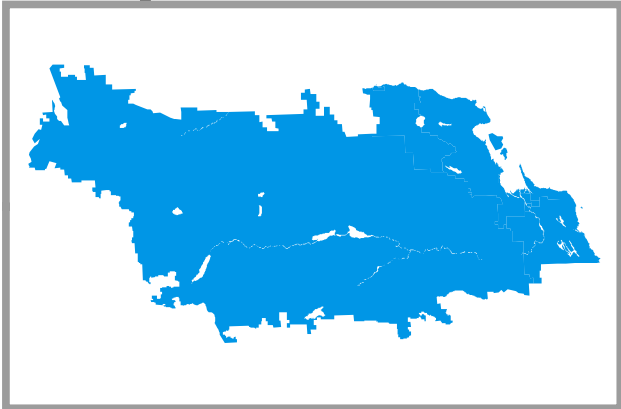
(individual factor score)



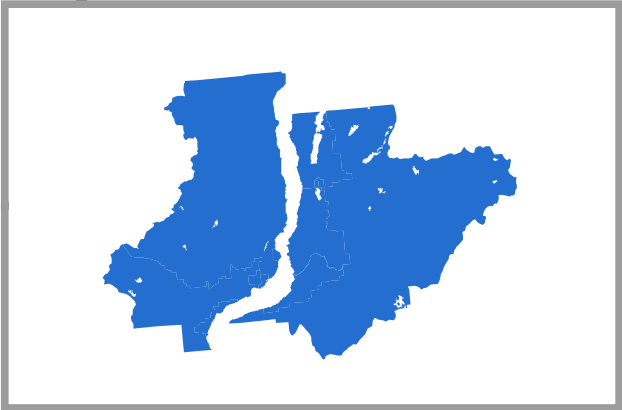
Prince Rupert
Score = 1.75 (35.00)



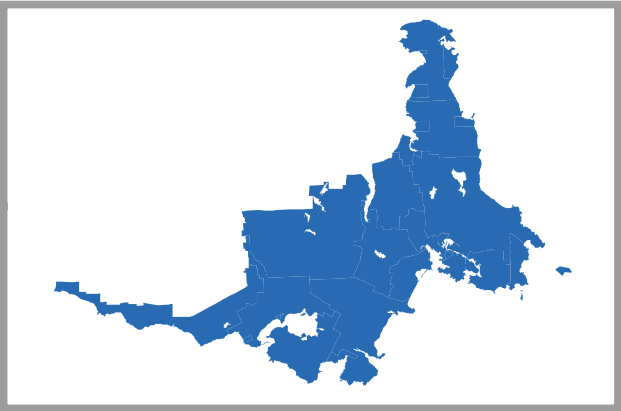
Prince George
Score = 3.92 (78.33)



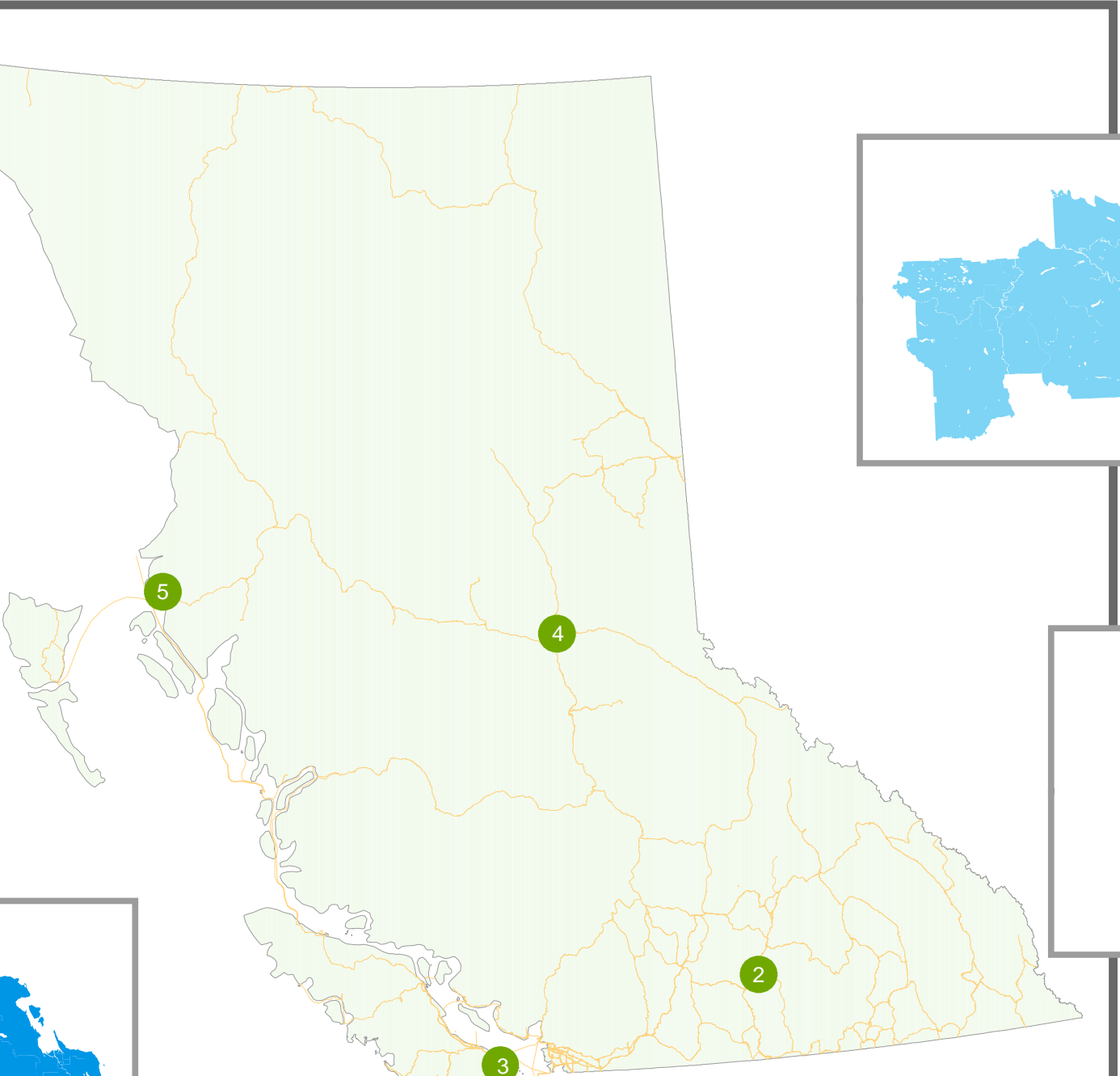
Nanaimo
Score = 4.08 (81.67)



Kelowna
Score = 4.42 (88.33)



Capital Regional District
Score = 4.58 (91.67)



Legend (individual factor score)

Educational Prospects Score

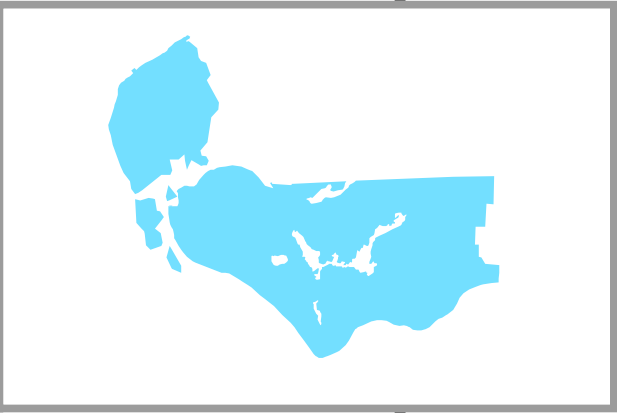
- Prince Rupert - 1.75 (35.00)
- Prince George - 3.92 (78.33)
- Nanaimo - 4.08 (81.67)
- Kelowna - 4.42 (88.33)
- CRD - 4.58 (91.67)
- Major Highways
- BC

*Note: Score in () = Total Score Out of 100

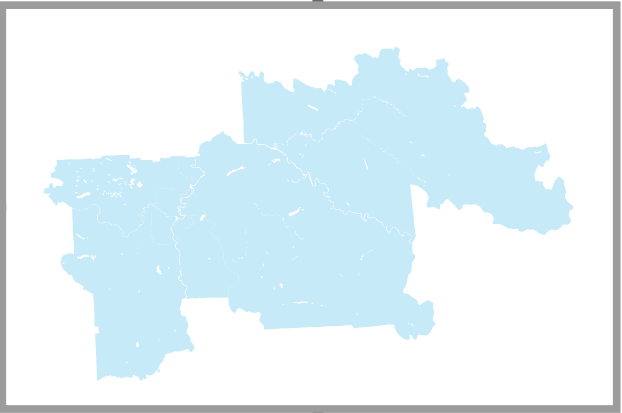
Appendix F: Lifestyle

Appeal of BC Cities to Immigrants - Lifestyle

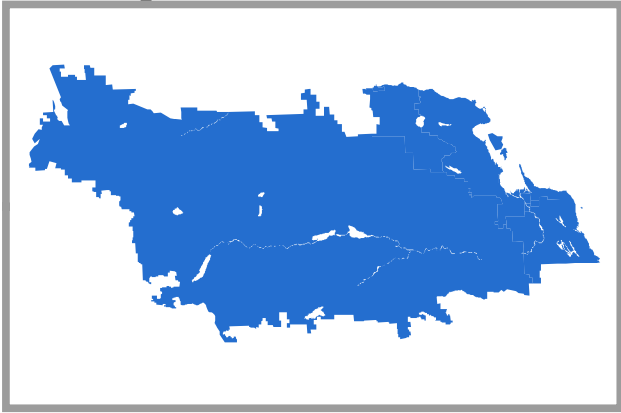
(individual factor score)



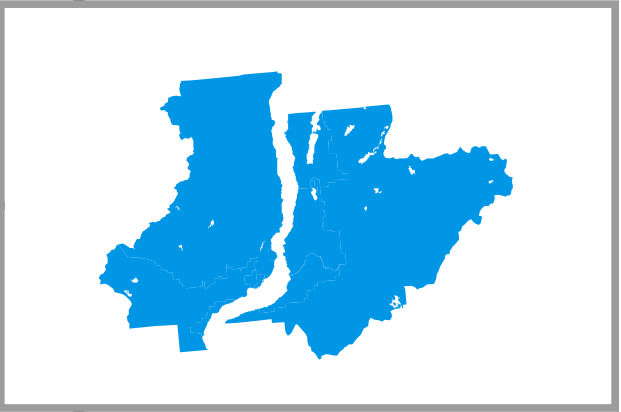
Prince Rupert
Score = 2.00 (40.00)



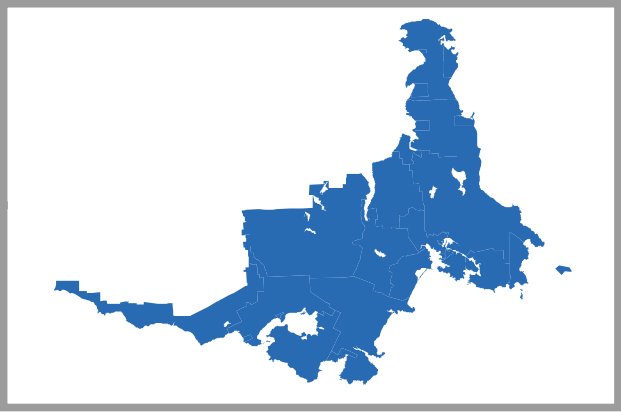
Prince George
Score = 1.00 (20.00)



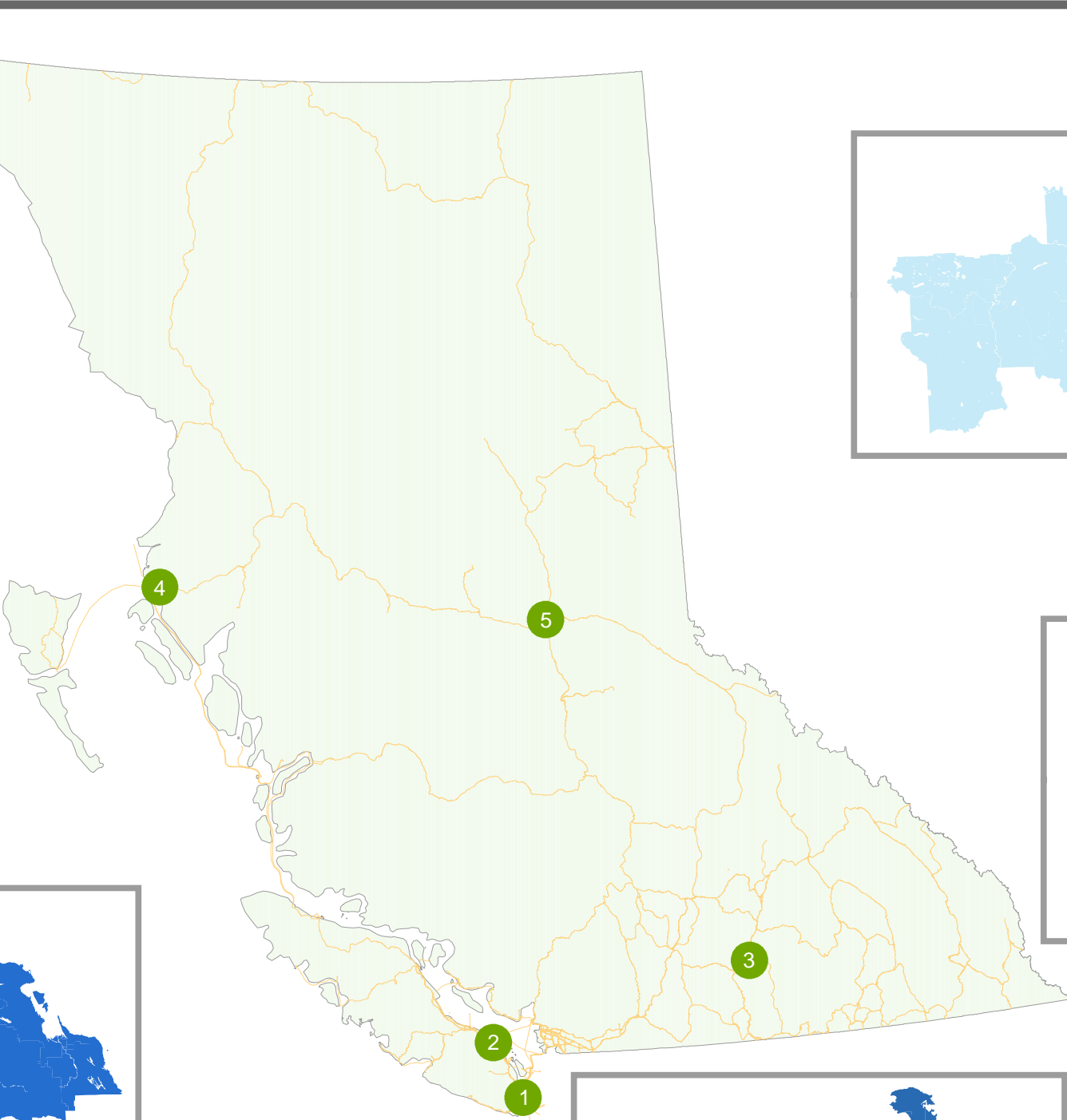
Nanaimo
Score = 4.00 (80.00)



Kelowna
Score = 3.00 (60.00)



Capital Regional District
Score = 5.00 (100.00)



Legend (individual factor score)

Lifestyle Score

- Prince George - 1.00 (20.00)
- Prince Rupert - 2.00 (40.00)
- Kelowna - 3.00 (60.00)
- Nanaimo - 4.00 (80.00)
- CRD - 5.00 (100.00)
- Major Highways
- BC

*Note: Score in () = Total Score Out of 100

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