

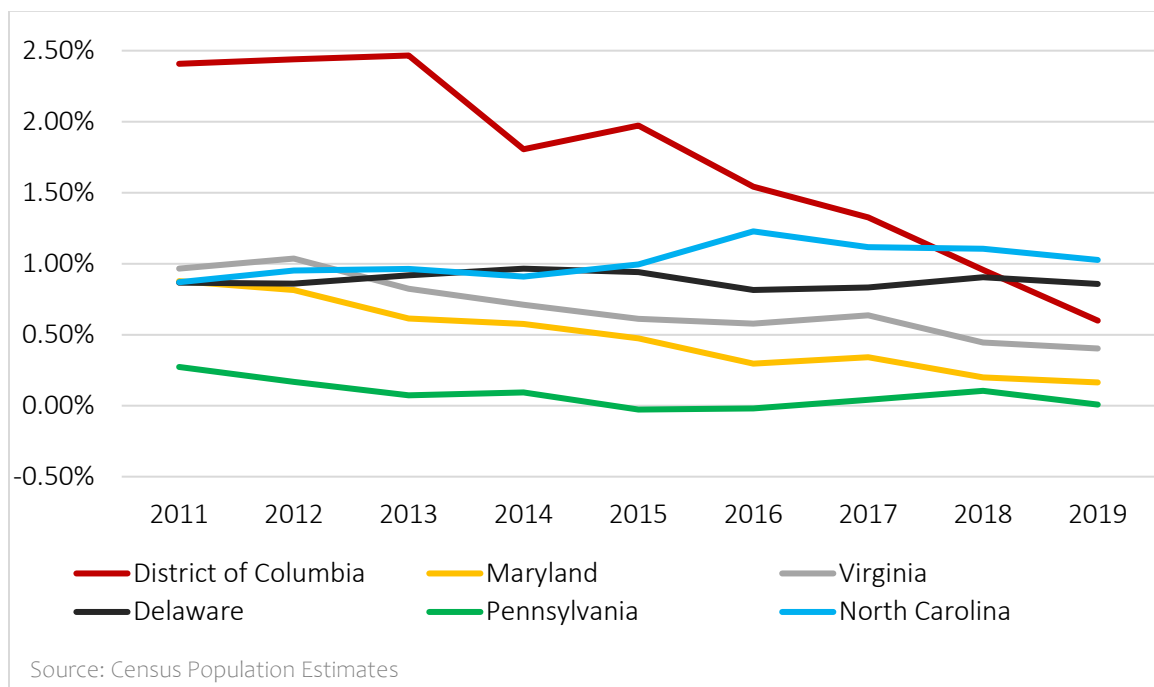
Population Change in the Greater Chesapeake Bay Region

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In a previous [post](#), I examined population changes in Maryland's urban economies. This post takes a broader view, examining the population of the State of Maryland and the states of the Greater Chesapeake Bay Region.¹ While Maryland's population growth has slowed, a development that is a cause for concern, there are states around the Chesapeake Bay that Maryland can look to for policy guidance.

While Maryland's population grew from 2010 to 2019, the growth rate steadily declined throughout the decade. Maryland's annual population growth rate declined gradually from 0.9% in 2011 to just 0.2% in 2019 (Figure 1). Over this period, the state's population grew from 5,788,645 in 2010 to 6,045,680 in 2019 (Appendix - Table A1). While the slowing growth rate is a cause for concern, it is consistent with a broader regional trend.

Figure 1. Population Growth Rates in the Greater Chesapeake Bay Region



¹ The states examined are Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. While North Carolina does not directly border the Chesapeake Bay, it borders Virginia and seems to be benefiting from regional population trends towards warmer climates.

Examining the Greater Chesapeake Bay Region reveals that the population growth rates of more northern and western states slowed during the decade. The annual population growth rate of the District of Columbia declined from 2.5% in 2013 to just 0.6% in 2019, the largest decline of any state.² Virginia's population growth rate trend mirrored Maryland's; the annual population growth rate declined from 1.0% in 2012 to just 0.4% in 2019. While Virginia's population grew marginally faster than Maryland's, the trends are the most similar out of the six states examined. Pennsylvania fared the worst among states examined throughout the 2010s. Pennsylvania's annual population growth rate hovered around zero from 2011 to 2019, gaining fewer than 100,000 people over the entire decade.

Population growth in the southern and eastern portions of the region was higher than in the northern and western portions of the region. The annual population growth rate of Delaware held up extremely well. Delaware's annual population growth rate ranged between 0.8% and 1.0% every year from 2011 to 2019. Among the states examined, North Carolina performed the best. North Carolina was the only state whose population growth rate trended upward over the period. The annual population growth rate of North Carolina increased from 0.9% in 2011 to 1.2% in 2016 before moderating slightly to 1.0% in 2019. From 2010 to 2019, North Carolina's population grew by 913,761 people, nearly the same amount as the other five states combined.

While the population growth rate of Maryland has slowed, it does not appear that Maryland is being notably outperformed by neighboring states. Generalizing, it appears that populations are trending towards southern and coastal states. Among the examined states, Maryland's growth rate was most closely mirrored by Virginia. This should not be surprising as the two states have similar geographies, ranging from ocean to mountains. Virginia's higher population growth rate is undoubtedly due to the fact that Northern Virginia's economy has recently outperformed Suburban Maryland; the result of Northern Virginia's increasing reliance on federal procurement spending for economic growth ([here](#)).

If Maryland chooses to grow larger and less federally dependent, the state should examine policies in North Carolina and Delaware, the two states that performed the best over this period. In fact, Maryland already has a lot in common with both states. North Carolina and Maryland both have economies centered on biotech and computer science. Montgomery County could focus attention on possible reasons for success seen in the Raleigh-Durham area, fostering similar conditions locally. Given that Delaware is almost entirely surrounded by Maryland, policies successful in Delaware are likely to translate well to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, which would undoubtedly gain considerably by cooperating with and building on Delaware's success on the Delmarva Peninsula.

² This is primarily due to the fact that the District of Columbia's growth rate in 2013 was the highest among examined states.

Appendix

Table A1. Annual Population and Annual Percent Change

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Population	Delaware	899,593	907,381	915,179	923,576	932,487	941,252	948,921	956,823	965,479	973,764
	D.C.	605,226	619,800	634,924	650,581	662,328	675,400	685,815	694,906	701,547	705,749
	Maryland	5,788,645	5,839,419	5,886,992	5,923,188	5,957,283	5,985,562	6,003,323	6,023,868	6,035,802	6,045,680
	North Carolina	9,574,323	9,657,592	9,749,476	9,843,336	9,932,887	10,031,646	10,154,788	10,268,233	10,381,615	10,488,084
	Pennsylvania	12,711,160	12,745,815	12,767,118	12,776,309	12,788,313	12,784,826	12,782,275	12,787,641	12,800,922	12,801,989
	Virginia	8,023,699	8,101,155	8,185,080	8,252,427	8,310,993	8,361,808	8,410,106	8,463,587	8,501,286	8,535,519
Annual % Change	Delaware		0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%
	D.C.		2.4%	2.4%	2.5%	1.8%	2.0%	1.5%	1.3%	1.0%	0.6%
	Maryland		0.9%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
	North Carolina		0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%
	Pennsylvania		0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
	Virginia		1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%

Source: Census Population Estimates (as of July 1)