

How Fast Are We Growing?

We all know the Washington region is going through explosive growth — we think about it while we're stuck in traffic, watch our woods get whacked for subdivisions, wait weeks for doctor appointments. Just how fast we're growing was crystalized in a recent comment by Virginia Transportation Secretary Pierce R. Homer. Northern Virginia adds a population the size of Manassas every year, he said. A whole city.

In fact, since 2000, the annual growth of Loudoun, Prince William and Fairfax counties together is more than Manassas's 2005 population,

estimated at 37,500. Maryland's growth is a little slower: Montgomery, Prince George's and Charles counties together have added an average of 23,000 residents annually over the past five years.

To help us grasp Northern Virginia's growth, consider the services of a city such as Manassas and what is needed to support it: 580 new city government telephones, 112 miles of new sewer mains, and so forth.

— Alec MacGillis

