

TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA  
GEOGRAPHIC DEFINITIONS

When people refer to the Twin Cities or Twin Cities Metro Area there are a number of possible definitions. Decades ago, when people used the term Twin Cities, they usually meant Minneapolis and St. Paul. As the cities filled and growth expanded into the suburbs, the term Twin Cities more often referred to the two central cities and their suburbs, without any specific boundaries in mind. There are, however, a number of very specific metro area geographic definitions. They have originated from a variety of places and serve many purposes. They are summarized below in an extensive, but not exhaustive, list.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL AREAS

Area Covered	Origin/Purpose
<p><b><u>Seven-County Metro Area</u></b> Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties.</p> <p>2000 population: 2,642,056—53.7% of state 1990 population: 2,288,729—52.3% of state</p>	<p>The legislatively defined area of Metropolitan Council authority. The Council was created by the legislature in 1967 to plan for growth and coordinate the delivery of regional systems. In 1994 the legislature made the Council responsible for operating metropolitan wastewater treatment facilities and metropolitan transit services.</p>
<p><b><u>Metro Planning Organization (MPO) Area</u></b> 7-County Area (see above)</p>	<p>A planning area established for transportation planning and to administer Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grants. The Metro Council is the designated agency along with representatives of local units of government.</p>
<p><b><u>Collar or ring counties, 12 counties</u></b> Chisago, Goodhue, Isanti, LeSueur, McLeod, Rice, Sherburne, Sibley and Wright Counties and Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties in Wisconsin.</p> <p>2000 population: 544,541 1990 population: 444,394</p>	<p>An analysis area designed to track development in the 12 counties adjacent to the 7-county metro area. The Council has been tracking growth trends in these counties since the 1980s.</p>
<p><b><u>Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) Study Area, 20 counties (conducted in 2001)</u></b> Seven-county metro area, 12 collar (adjacent) counties (see above) and Mille Lacs Co. (part of metro area 5% commuter shed in 1990).</p>	<p>Data collection and analysis area for the Council’s Travel Behavior Inventory, conducted by the Council at about the same time as the decennial census.</p> <p>Recently released 2000 census data revealed two more counties, Pine and Kanabec, with 5% of residents commuting to the 7-county area. They will be included in subsequent TBI’s and other analysis of our commuter shed.</p>
<p><b><u>Census Urbanized Area</u></b> Developed portion of the 7-County Area (see Census section below).</p>	<p>For certain federally required planning activities the urbanized area or a somewhat expanded version of this area is used to represent the eligible portion of the metro area.</p>
<p><b><u>Census Metropolitan Statistical Area</u></b> (see Census section below).</p>	<p>Used by the Metro Council for comparison with other U. S. metro areas.</p>

DEFINITIONS USED BY THE U. S. CENSUS BUREAU

Area Covered	Origin/Purpose
<p><b><u>Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI 13-county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)</u></b>                      Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott, Sherburne, Washington and Wright Counties in Minnesota and Pierce and St. Croix Counties in Wisconsin.</p> <p>2000 population: 2,968,806                      1990 population: 2,538,834</p> <p>13<sup>th</sup> in population size in 2000 among MSAs (boundaries based on 1990 census data). Using post-2000 boundary definitions our rank dropped to 16<sup>th</sup> because PMSAs (see below) were combined to redefine several MSAs in 2000.</p>	<p>-Our MSA boundary remained the same after the 2000 census, although a number of other areas changed, which changed our population rank. Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) are groupings of whole counties meeting various criteria related to population size of the central city(s), contiguity of development, density and commuting links. MSA's have been defined after each census since 1950 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These areas are intended for statistical analysis only, although they are widely used for various administrative purposes with financial ramifications.</p> <p>For statistical comparisons the Metropolitan Council usually uses the combined CMSA/MSA list of metro areas (see CMSA definition below).</p> <p>-Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin and Ramsey were designated as the first SMSA (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area) in 1950.                      -Washington was added in 1958.                      -Carver, Chisago, Scott and Wright (MN) and St. Croix County (WI) were added in 1973.                      -Isanti was added in 1983.                      -Sherburne (MN) and Pierce (WI) were added in 1992.                      -Our MSA boundary remained the same after the 2000 census, although a number of other areas changed, which changed our population rank.</p>
<p><b><u>Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA)</u></b>                      The Twin Cities did not fit the CMSA criteria, however, in most comparisons, the CMSAs and MSAs (where there is not a CMSA) are combined in a single list for analysis.</p> <p>15<sup>th</sup> in size in 2000 among the combined CMSA/MSA list (1990 area definitions; there is no 2000 definition (see box at right).</p>	<p>This OMB definition combines adjacent MSAs meeting certain contiguity and commuting criteria. MSAs that have been combined to form a CMSA are referred to as PMSAs (Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas).</p> <p>Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and a number of other metro areas are CMSAs. Many CMSAs are smaller than the Twin Cities MSA in population, for example, Cincinnati-Hamilton, while some larger metro areas, Atlanta and Phoenix, for example, are only MSAs, like the Twin Cities.</p> <p>The CMSA has been "replaced" by a newly defined Combined Statistical Area (CSA, see below), although it will probably not be very widely used for comparison as was the CMSA.</p>
<p><b><u>NEW--Minneapolis-St.Paul-St. Cloud Combined Statistical Area (CSA)</u></b>                      13-county Minneapolis-St. Paul MSA, the St. Cloud MSA (Stearns and Benton Counties) and three newly formed Micropolitan Areas (Goodhue, McLeod and Rice Counties).</p> <p>2000 population: 3,271,888</p> <p>14th in population size among the combined CSA/MSA list of metro areas (which is not likely to be widely used for statistical comparisons).</p>	<p>Combines MSAs and newly defined Micropolitan Areas (see below) meeting specified commuting criteria. Commuting criteria for the St. Cloud MSA did not require mandatory inclusion, but allowed for local choice. St. Cloud wanted to be included, and with the mandatory inclusion of Goodhue, McLeod and Rice Counties, it made sense to also add the St. Cloud MSA.</p> <p>The Census Bureau will not be providing data in a list that combines the CSAs with MSAs (where no CSA has been defined) and is suggesting that this not be done. Therefore it is likely that the MSA will become the general standard for metropolitan comparison. This will not have that great an impact since many MSAs have been expanded and now encompass all or most of what had been their CMSA (additional discussion below).</p>

Covered	Origin/Purpose															
<p><b><u>NEW--Micropolitan Areas</u></b>            Counties with a city of 10,000 people but not large enough (50,000) to be an MSA; or, that are already part of an MSA.</p>	<p>Micropolitan areas were devised to give “metropolitan” status to more places. The qualifying counties adjacent to the metro area were Goodhue (Red Wing), McLeod (Hutchinson) and Rice (Faribault and Northfield). These three micropolitan areas met commuting criteria for mandatory inclusion in the Minneapolis-St. Paul-St. Cloud CSA.</p>															
<p><b><u>Urbanized Area</u></b>            Defined by the Census Bureau based on density and contiguity criteria. This area covers the “developed” portions of metropolitan areas. For the Twin Cities the area is very similar to the Metropolitan Urban Service Area (MUSA).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Population</th> <th>Area sq. mi.</th> <th>Pop. /sq mi</th> <th>Density Rank</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2000</td> <td>2,388,593</td> <td>894</td> <td>2,671</td> <td>17<sup>th</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1990</td> <td>2,079,676</td> <td>1,063</td> <td>1,956</td> <td>23<sup>rd</sup></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*among urbanized area within the 25 largest MSAs</p>	Year	Population	Area sq. mi.	Pop. /sq mi	Density Rank	2000	2,388,593	894	2,671	17 <sup>th</sup>	1990	2,079,676	1,063	1,956	23 <sup>rd</sup>	<p>This definition provides the only consistently defined national data to compare the “urbanized” parts of metropolitan areas. It is particularly useful in looking at density, because MSAs are comprised of whole counties and may include vast areas of sparse population which distort their urban density calculation.</p> <p>In 2000, density at the block level was used to define these areas, which allowed for a much more accurate picture of the urban area than in the past, where municipal boundaries were heavily relied on. The result was a smaller urbanized area being defined for the Twin Cities, which significantly raised our density and rank among the 25 largest metro areas (additional discussion below).</p>
Year	Population	Area sq. mi.	Pop. /sq mi	Density Rank												
2000	2,388,593	894	2,671	17 <sup>th</sup>												
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EXAMPLES OF METRO AREA DEFINITIONS USED BY STATE AGENCIES AND OTHERS

<p><b><u>Seven-County Metro Region</u></b>            Also known as Region 11</p>	<p>Used for analysis by Minnesota Planning (within the Department of Administration). A number of other state agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources use it for administrative purposes.</p>
<p><b><u>8-County Metro Region</u></b>            7-County Metro Area plus Chisago County</p>	<p>Minnesota Dept of Transportation (MNDOT) administrative unit.</p>
<p><b><u>10-County Metro Region</u></b>            7-County Metro Area plus Chisago, Isanti and Wright Counties.</p>	<p>Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA) administrative unit. Other areas are defined for various informational and program purposes by the PCA.</p>
<p><b><u>11-County Area (Minnesota counties in Census-defined MSA, see above)</u></b></p>	<p>An area used by the Department of Employment and Economic Development (formerly Economic Security) for tabulating and analyzing Covered Employment Statistics (CES). They also provide much of their data by county so it can be aggregated to any grouping of counties.</p>
<p><b><u>13-County MSA (see Census Bureau definitions above)</u></b></p>	<p>Minnesota Health and Housing Services Alliance is one of a number of non-profits that use regional breakdowns for administration of their programs.</p>

Area Covered	Origin/Purpose
<p><b>Judicial Districts</b> Four different areas make up a large Twin Cities metro region. The area includes the the 7 metro counties, Chisago, Goodhue, Isanti, Kanabec, LeSueur, McLeod, Pine, Sherburne, Sibley and Wright Counties.</p>	<p>These districts are the administrative units used by the U. S. federal court system.</p>
<p><b>Metro Planning Organization (MPO)</b> <b>Metro Area</b> An expanded version of the Census-defined urbanized area (see above) that is wholly contained within the 7-County Metro Area</p>	<p>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) transportation planning and administration unit. Determined by the FHWA with local input.</p>

#### ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION OF METRO AREA POPULATION RANKINGS

The Census Bureau has released tabulations of the 2000 Census data based on the old MSA/CMSA definitions. For the new areas, they are planning to provide only total population counts. The new areas will be used for their next population estimates (for release in fall 2003). They will also be used to aggregate the next census results, which will be sooner than 2010 since the annual American Community Survey (ACS) will replace the decennial census long form and the first data should be available in 2005.

#### POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF NEW METRO AREA DEFINITIONS

Historically the Metro Council has used our ranking among CMSAs/MSAs for comparing ourselves to other metro areas whenever that data is available. Our 1990 population ranked 15<sup>th</sup> using the metro area definitions following the 1990 census (13-county MSA).

-Our 2000 population also ranked 15<sup>th</sup> using these same metro area definitions; we passed Cleveland but fell behind Phoenix.

-The Twin Cities' 2000 population ranked higher (13<sup>th</sup>) if based on a list of all MSAs/PMSAs. The jump is because none of the PMSA parts of several large CMSAs were as large as the Twin Cities MSA. None of the PMSAs that made up the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, Miami-Fort Lauderdale and Seattle-Tacoma CMSAs were as large as the Twin Cities. On the other hand, the Riverside-San Bernardino PMSA, part of the Los Angeles CMSA, was larger than the Twin Cities MSA. The Twin Cities' 1990 population also ranked 13<sup>th</sup> among MSAs/PMSAs.

-Using the new post-2000 census MSA definitions, the Twin Cities' 2000 population rank dropped to 16<sup>th</sup>, mostly because PMSAs were no longer defined. Some areas were defined as separate MSAs (Riverside-San Bernardino) but some were combined with other MSAs into a larger area—including the San Francisco, Miami and Seattle metro areas, which thus increased their populations above that of the Twin Cities MSA.

-If one were to construct a merged 25-area list of the largest Combined Statistical Areas or MSAs that weren't CSAs, the Twin Cities' 18-county CSA would rank 14<sup>th</sup> in population in 2000. Its ranking becomes higher than Phoenix (not a CSA), and Riverside-San Bernardino (defined as part of the Los Angeles CSA). However, the Census Bureau is suggesting that the CSA list not be merged with the MSA list for comparisons, and it will not be producing any data in which the two are integrated. Miami is the only MSA that was larger than the Twin Cities that was not a CSA.

#### ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION OF URBANIZED AREA DENSITY RANKINGS

The Twin Cities has long been categorized as one of the least dense (or most sprawled) metropolitan areas in the country. Census data for 1970, 1980 and 1990 showed that the Twin Cities Urbanized Area ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> in density among the urbanized areas within the 25 largest MSA/CMSAs. The low rank was attributed to having two central cities located on a generally unimpeded area that included a fair amount of wetlands and floodplains. Furthermore, since municipal boundaries were used extensively to define urbanized areas, and the Twin Cities is made up of many large cities (former townships), it made our urbanized area relatively large and lowered our density. But the new and more accurate 2000 census data, based on block level criteria applied nationwide, has changed our ranking in terms of density. While we are still not a high-density area, we are now ranked 17<sup>th</sup> in density among the 25 largest metro areas (MSA/CMSA)--close to our population rank. (The density was calculated by combining separate urbanized areas within CMSAs, which moved us past Cleveland combined with Akron which makes up the Cleveland--Akron CMSA).

The urbanized area is also used in determining the "core counties" for each MSA. Commuting statistics to core counties are a major determinant of which counties are included in an area's MSA. Sherburne County would have been designated as part of the St. Cloud MSA (where it had been located in the 1980s), if the Twin Cities urbanized area had not been extended into it.

If you have questions about this material please contact Michael Munson at (651) 602-1331.