

Information Item

Metropolitan Council



Meeting date: July 17, 2024

Topic

Lessons from the 2023 Population Estimates

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	Minn. Stat. § 473.24
Staff prepared/presented:	Matt Schroeder (651-602-1513)
Division/department:	Community Development / Research

Background

Under Minn. Stat. § 473.24, the Metropolitan Council is responsible for preparing local population and household estimates for the cities and townships in the seven-county Twin Cities region. These are the official estimates used by other government agencies to determine local government aid and local street aid allocations. Estimates also assist planners across the region in evaluating the need for future investments in transportation, wastewater infrastructure, and housing. For additional background, see metro council.org/populationestimates.

Key Findings

Lessons from the population estimates for April 1, 2023 include:

- The region's population grew to 3.222 million residents, a 1.9% increase from 2020. This is a slower growth rate than the region experienced between 2010 and 2020. Drivers of slower growth include falling birth rates, rising death rates, and increased numbers of people moving out of the region.
- Despite slower *regional* growth, many suburban cities on the developing edge of the region as well as Minneapolis continue to add large numbers of people, driven by new housing developments.
- While several cities have lost population (among them Saint Paul and older suburbs), most have gained *households*; those households are simply smaller than they used to be as children leave their parents' homes.

Working with local governments

Cities and townships are key partners in the construction of population estimates. Local governments supply critical data on residential development, review preliminary estimates, and (if they wish) challenge the estimates. This year, 17 cities submitted questions about and/or challenges to the preliminary estimates. Comments for 16 cities were resolved by clarifying how estimates are calculated. The other city provided additional housing data, and the Council corrected an error for another city that did not comment; these revisions added a total of 225 people to the preliminary estimates.

At the Council meeting, staff will provide a more detailed analysis of 2023 population estimates and the process by which they are calculated.