

Information Item

Metropolitan Council



Meeting Date: August 10, 2022

Topic

Growth Disrupted: Lessons from the 2021 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, 2021, include:

- The region's population grew to 3.186 million residents, a 0.7% increase from 2020. This is a slower growth rate than the region enjoyed between 2010 and 2020. Drivers of slower growth include rising death rates, increased numbers of people moving out of the region, and losses of residents in college dormitories and state prisons.
- While Minneapolis and Saint Paul are still adding people, growth has shifted toward suburban cities on the edge of the region.
- Despite headlines about large population losses in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties (according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates), we find these losses to be implausible.

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, 14 cities submitted questions about and/or challenges to the preliminary estimates. Comments for eight cities were resolved by clarifying how estimates are calculated. The Council revised estimates for the other six cities, which corrected Council estimates of the housing stock and/or provided additional data, adding a total of 900 people to the preliminary estimates. During the review period, the Council also adjusted estimates for an additional ten cities and townships to correct a small calculation error.

At the Council meeting, staff will provide a more detailed analysis of 2021 population estimates.