

# Growth Disrupted

Lessons from 2021 Population Estimates



August 2022

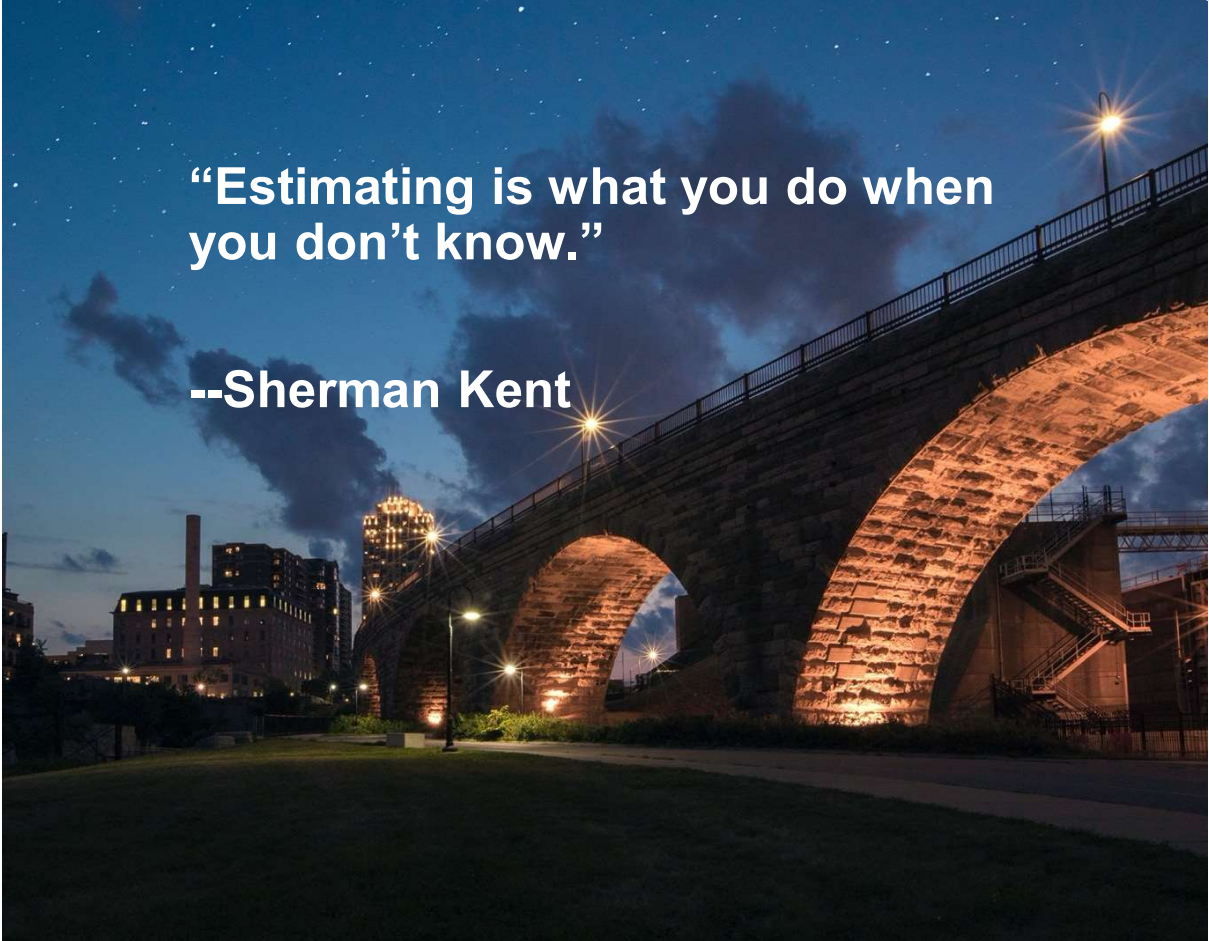
Matt Schroeder

[metro council.org](https://metro council.org)

# Today's plan

## Outline

- About population estimates
- Slower, less balanced growth
- Why is population growth slower?
- Metropolitan Council vs Census Bureau estimates
- Looking ahead



**“Estimating is what you do when you don’t know.”**

**--Sherman Kent**

# What estimates are (and are not)

## Decennial Census

- Complete count of people
- Every 10 years
- Limited characteristics

## American Community Survey (ACS)

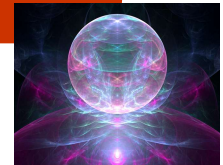
- Sample of people
- Every year
- Detailed characteristics

## Population Estimates

- Best approximation of population for past year
- Every year
- No characteristics



Forecasts  
(Future decades)



# Who's involved?

- Population estimates for seven-county region

Metropolitan Council



- Population estimates for Greater Minnesota (outside 7-county region)

State Demographic Center



- Supply data
- Review preliminary estimates
- Comment if desired

Local governments



Population estimates are governed by Minnesota Statutes [4A.02](#) and [473.24](#).



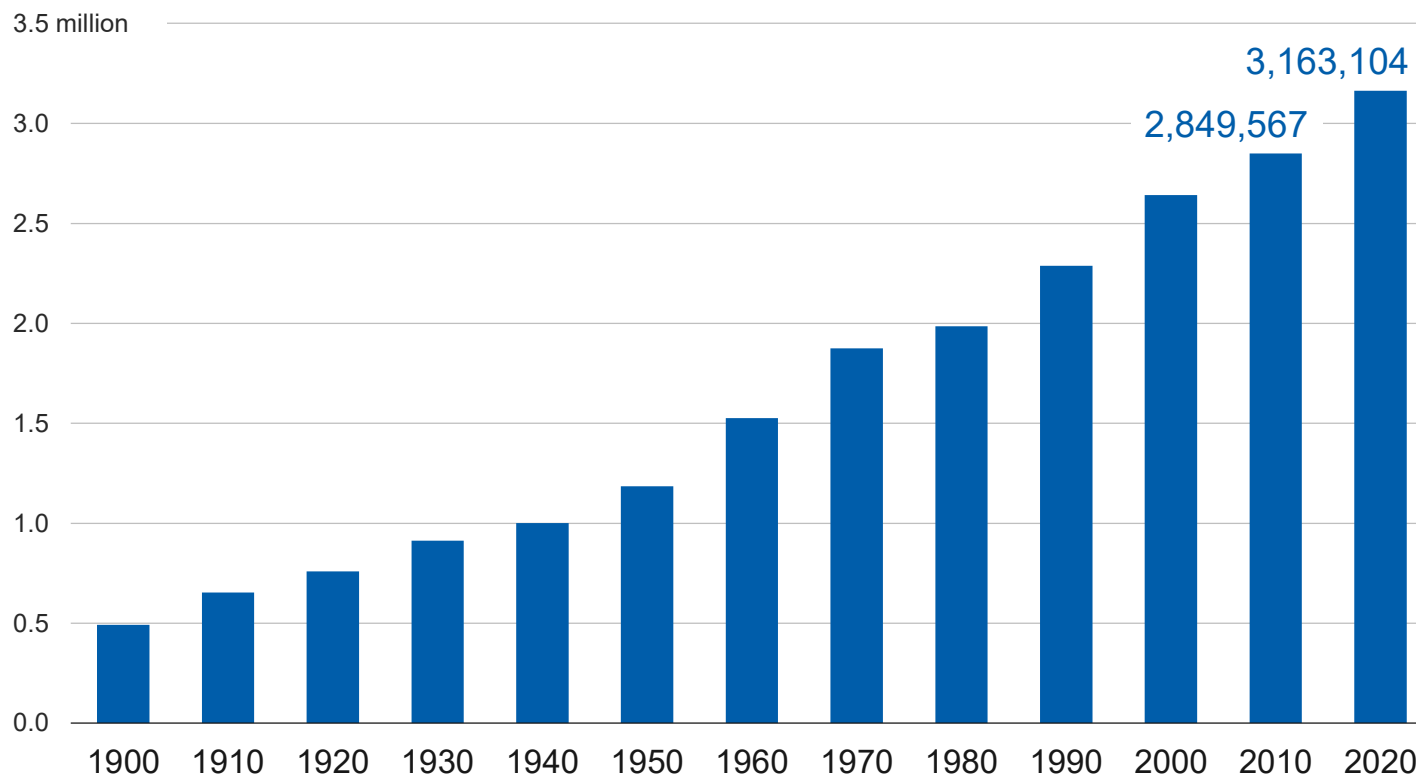
# Local government comments



## For the 2021 estimates cycle:

- Six cities submitted comments resulting in revisions
  - Housing stock
  - Occupancy rates
- Eight cities submitted comments resolved by clarifying how estimates are calculated
- Council initiated revisions for ten cities and townships in order to include manufactured homes outside of parks

# 2010-2020: Steady population growth in the region



Between 2010 & 2020, the Twin Cities region's population grew:

**+313,537**  
**+11.0%**

Source: Metropolitan Council staff analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data

"Twin Cities region" represents all seven counties in the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council ([Minn. Stat. § 473.121, subd. 2](#))

# 2021 estimates



As of April 1, 2021, the Twin Cities region had:

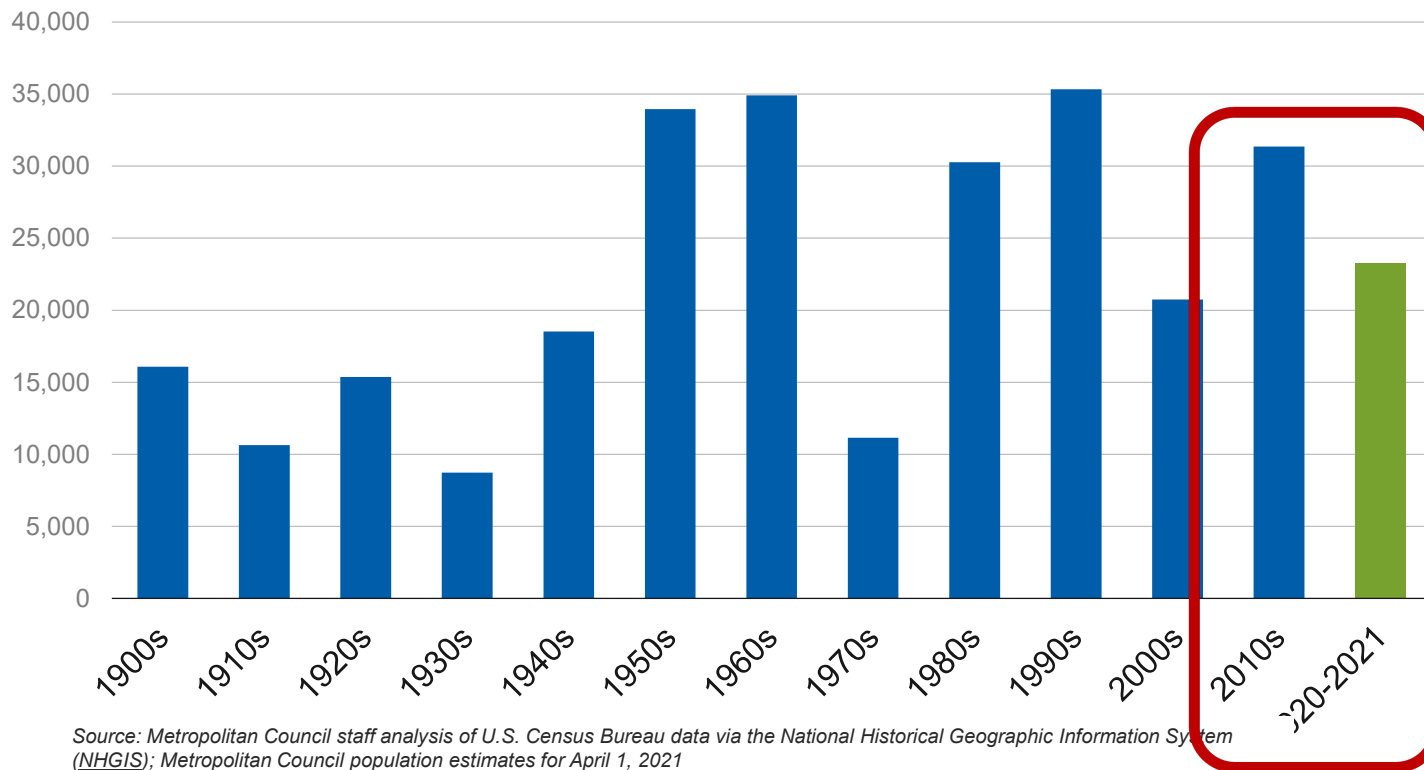
	Estimate for April 1, 2021	Change since 2020 Census	Percent change since 2020 Census
Housing units	1,316,073	+21,210	+1.6%
Households	1,254,804	+15,244	+1.2%
People	3,186,349	+23,245	+0.7%

Source: Metropolitan Council population estimates for April 1, 2021

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# Region is still growing, but not as much

## Annual population growth is off to a slow start



Less growth than the previous decade

Source: Metropolitan Council staff analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data via the National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS); Metropolitan Council population estimates for April 1, 2021

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# Growth rates, 2010-2020

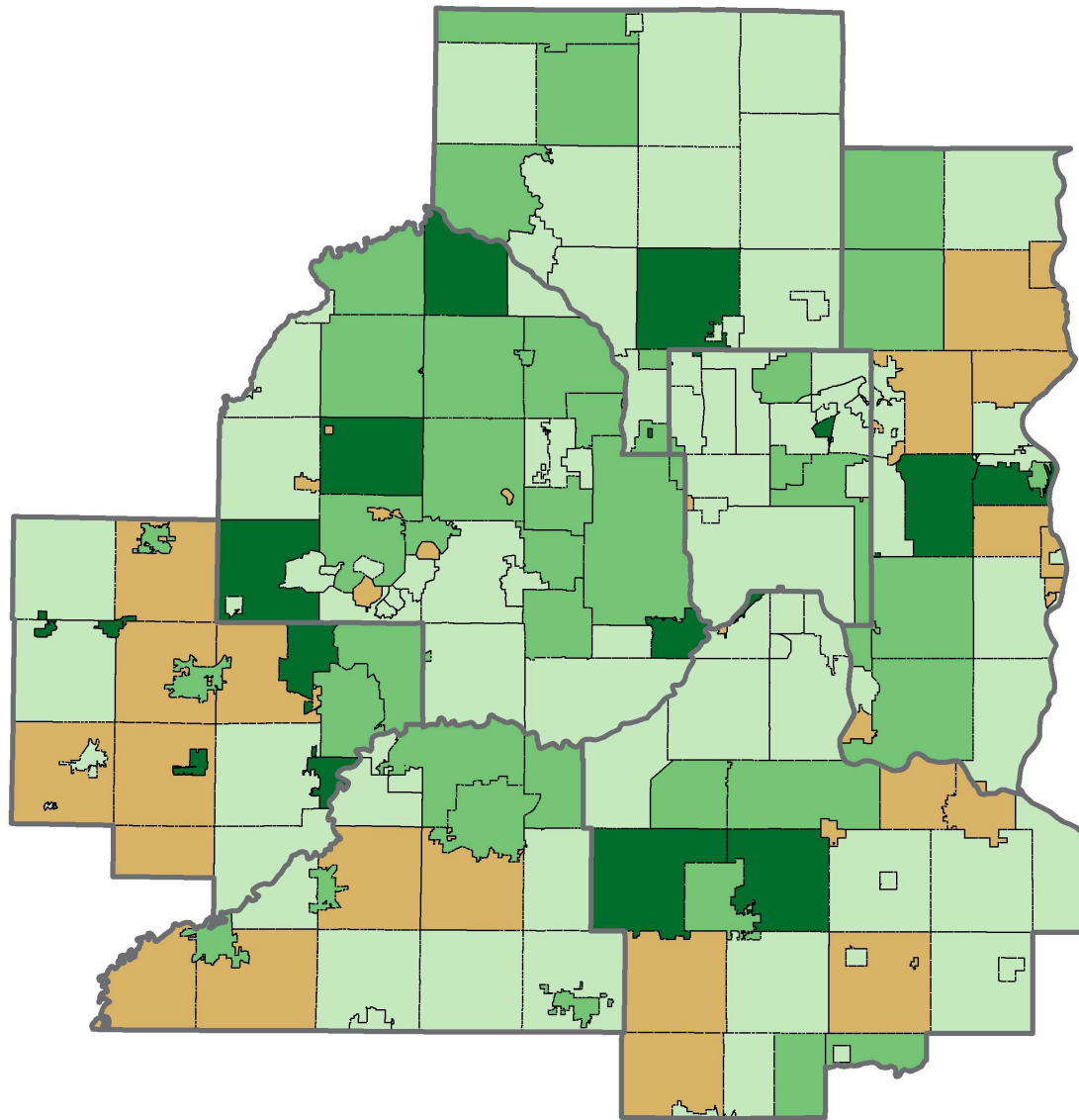
*Rapid growth (2% or more)*

*Moderate growth (1%-2%)*

*Slow growth (under 1%)*

*Population loss*

Source: Metropolitan Council staff analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data



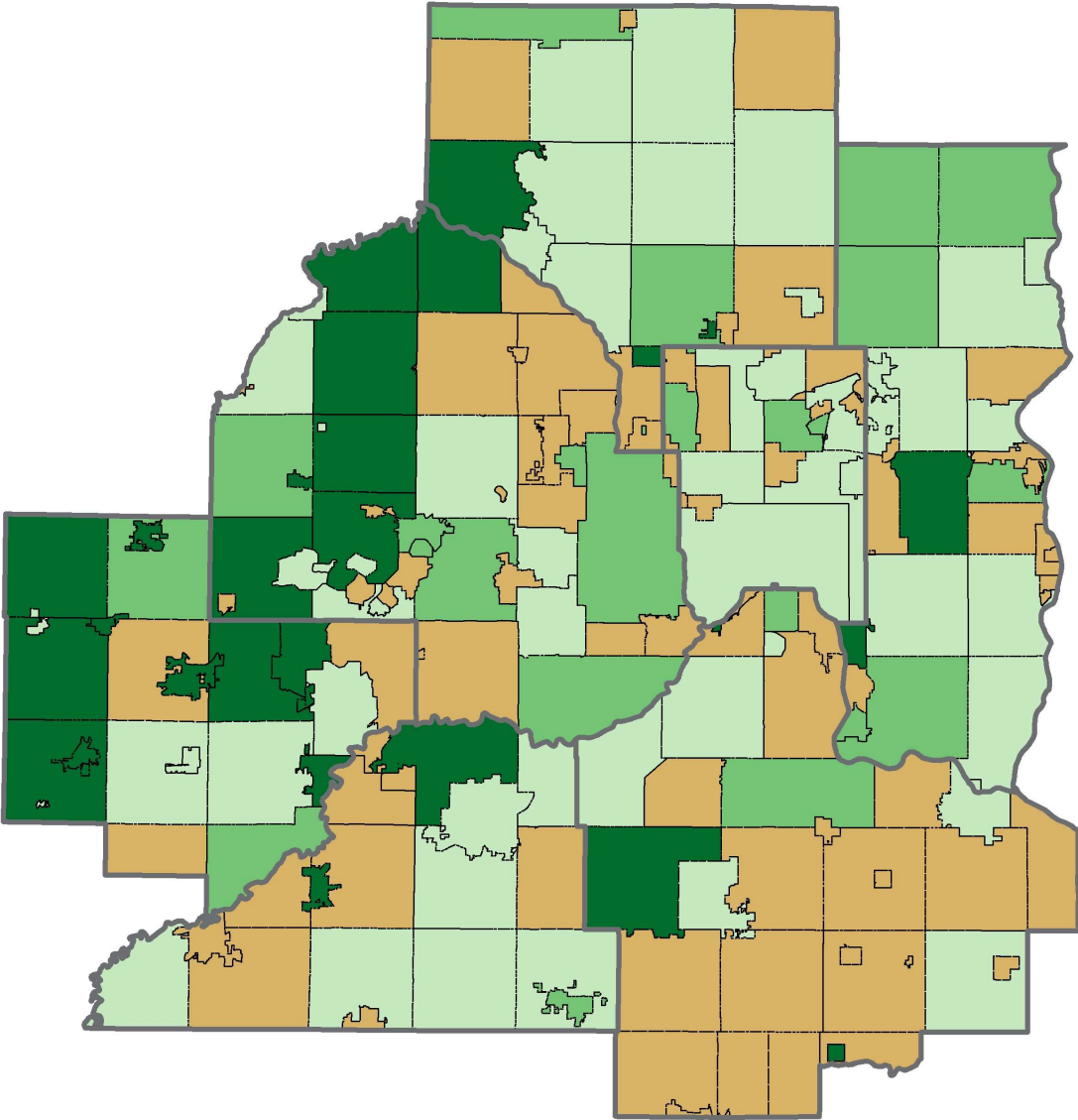
# Growth rates, 2020-2021

*Rapid growth (2% or more)*

*Moderate growth (1%-2%)*

*Slow growth (under 1%)*

*Population loss*

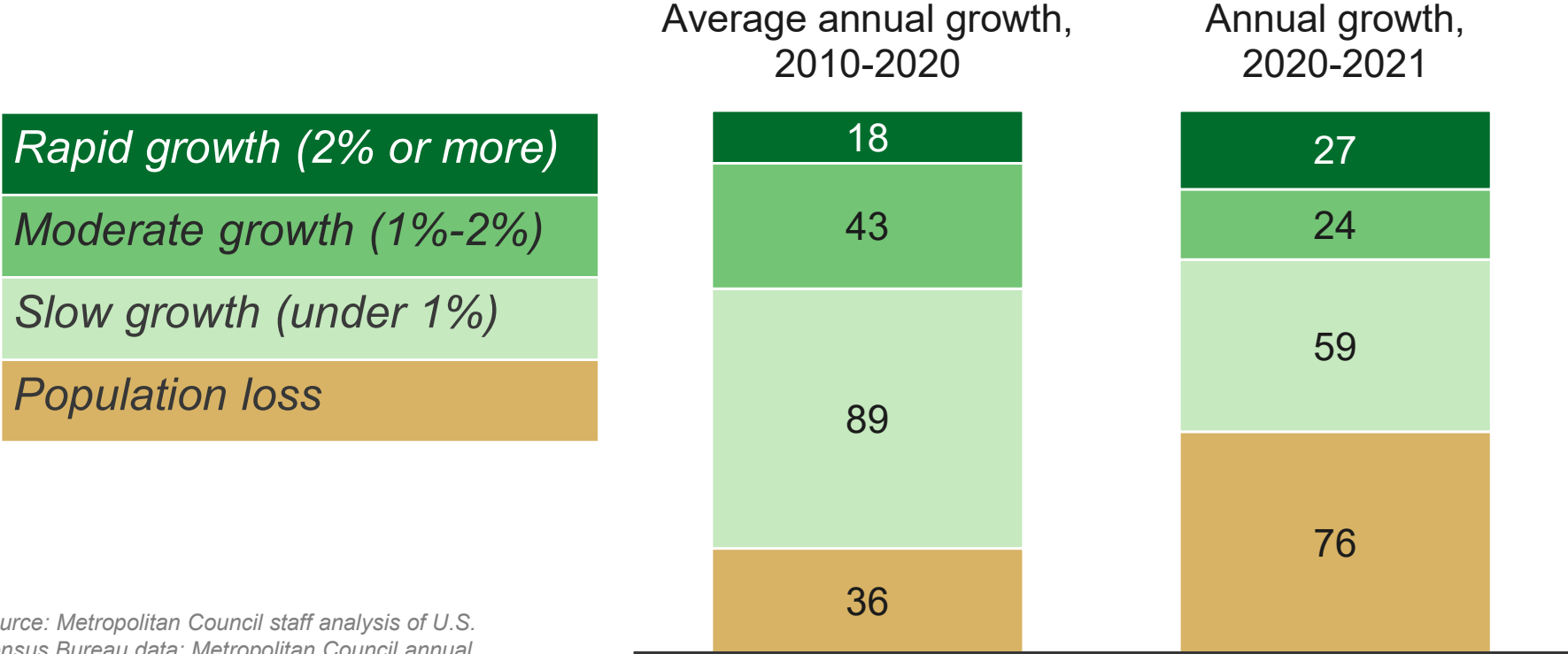


Source: Metropolitan Council staff analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data; Metropolitan Council annual population estimates for April 1, 2021



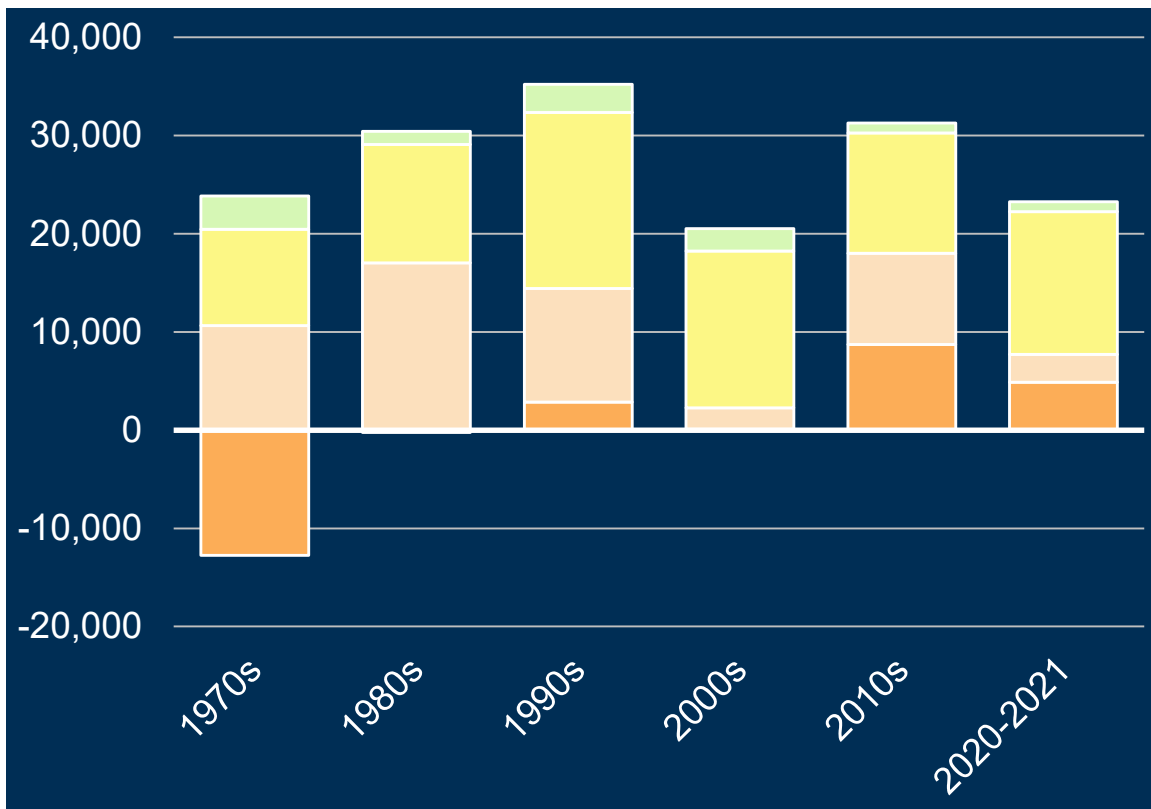
# More extreme population changes

Number of communities with rapid population growth or population loss has increased



Source: Metropolitan Council staff analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data; Metropolitan Council annual population estimates for April 1, 2021

# 2020-2021: Growth less spatially balanced



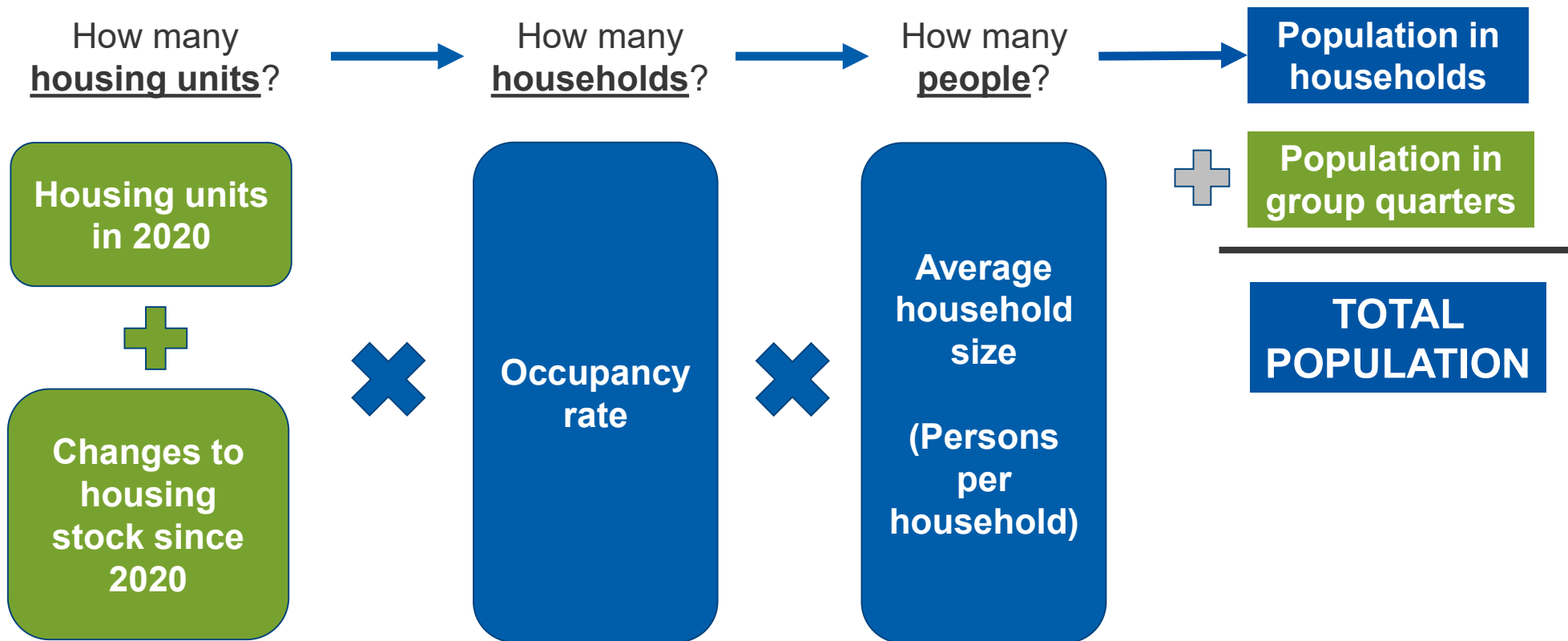
Rural Service Area  
Emerging Suburban Edge  
& Suburban Edge  
Urban & Suburban  
Urban Center

[Click here](#) for a map of Thrive  
Community Designations

Source: Metropolitan Council staff analysis of U.S. Census Bureau  
data; Metropolitan Council population estimates for April 1, 2021



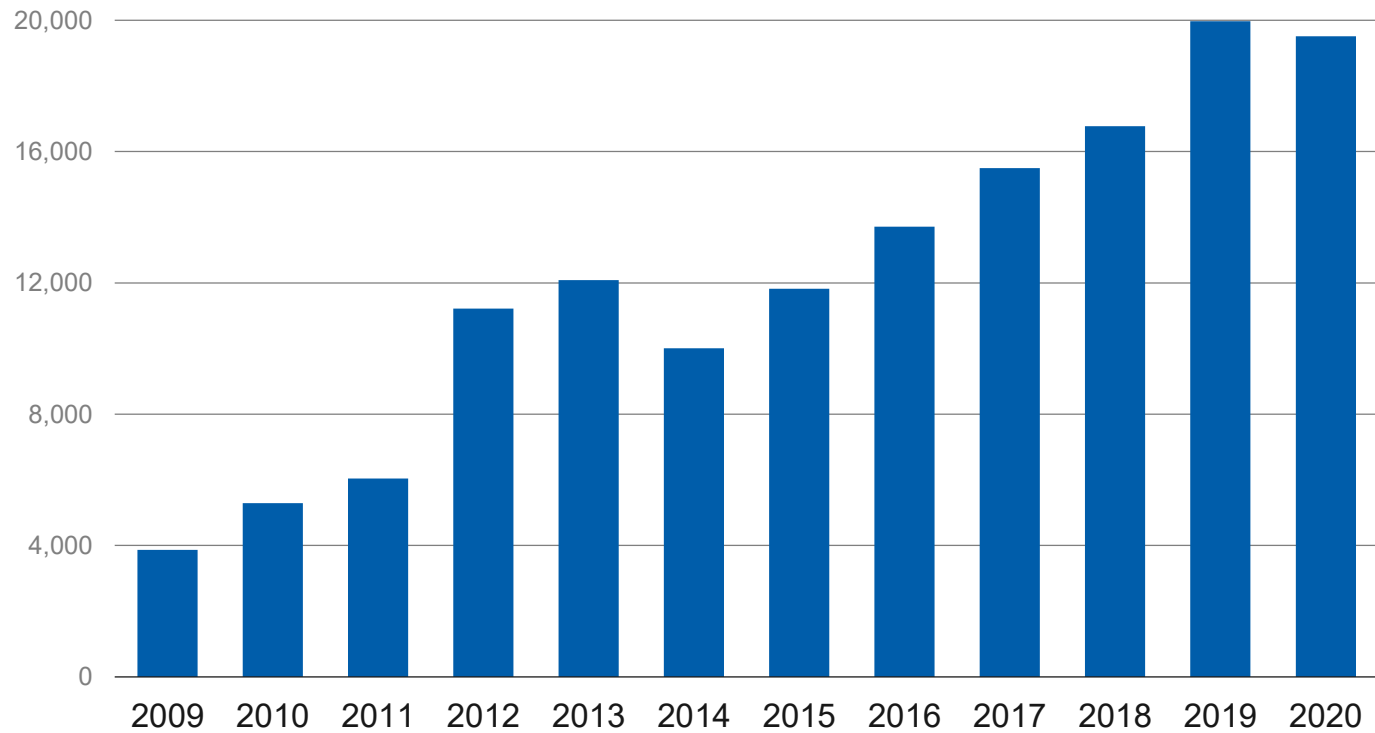
# How estimates are calculated



# Housing construction remains strong



## Number of housing units permitted almost at 2019 levels



Source: Metropolitan Council Residential Building Permit Survey

# Occupancy rates down



As of April 1, 2021, the Twin Cities region had:

	Estimate for April 1, 2021	Change since 2020 Census	% change since 2020 Census
Housing units	1,316,073	+21,210	+1.6%
Households	1,254,804	+15,244	+1.2%
People	3,186,349	+23,245	+0.7%

Occupancy rate fell from 95.7% to 95.3%

Source: Metropolitan Council population estimates for April 1, 2021

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# Household sizes down

## COVID effect: births down, deaths up

	2016-2020 average	2021	
Births	38,900	36,200	2,700 fewer births
Deaths	(21,200)	(26,200)	5,000 more deaths
Net population change	17,700	10,000	<b>“Natural increase” declined by 7,700</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Resident Population Estimates, Estimated Components of Resident Population Change, and Rates of the Components of Resident Population Change for States and Counties: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2020 and April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021



# Group quarters population down

## COVID effect: fewer people living in dormitories and prisons

College/university	2020-2021 change
University of Minnesota	-3,499
St. Catherine University	-364
Bethel University	-202
Hamline University	-202

State prison	2020-2021 change
Lino Lakes	-297
Stillwater (Bayport)	-213
Shakopee	-163

Source: Metropolitan Council Group Quarters Survey

# Census Bureau: Population loss?

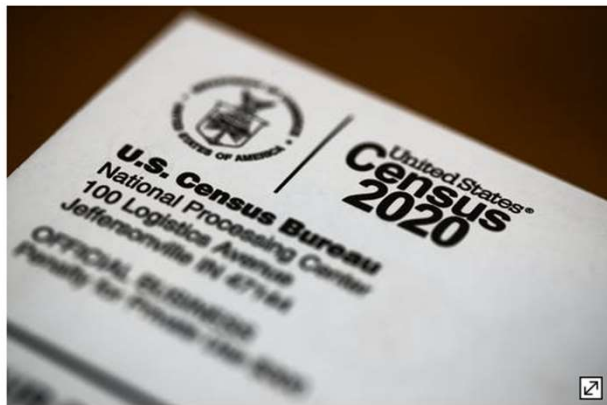
★ StarTribune

## Population declines in Hennepin, Ramsey counties in 2021

State demographer says early retirements and college disruptions due to COVID-19 played a role.

By Shannon Prather and MaryJo Webster Star Tribune | MARCH 24, 2022 — 12:00AM

[Listen with Speechify](#)



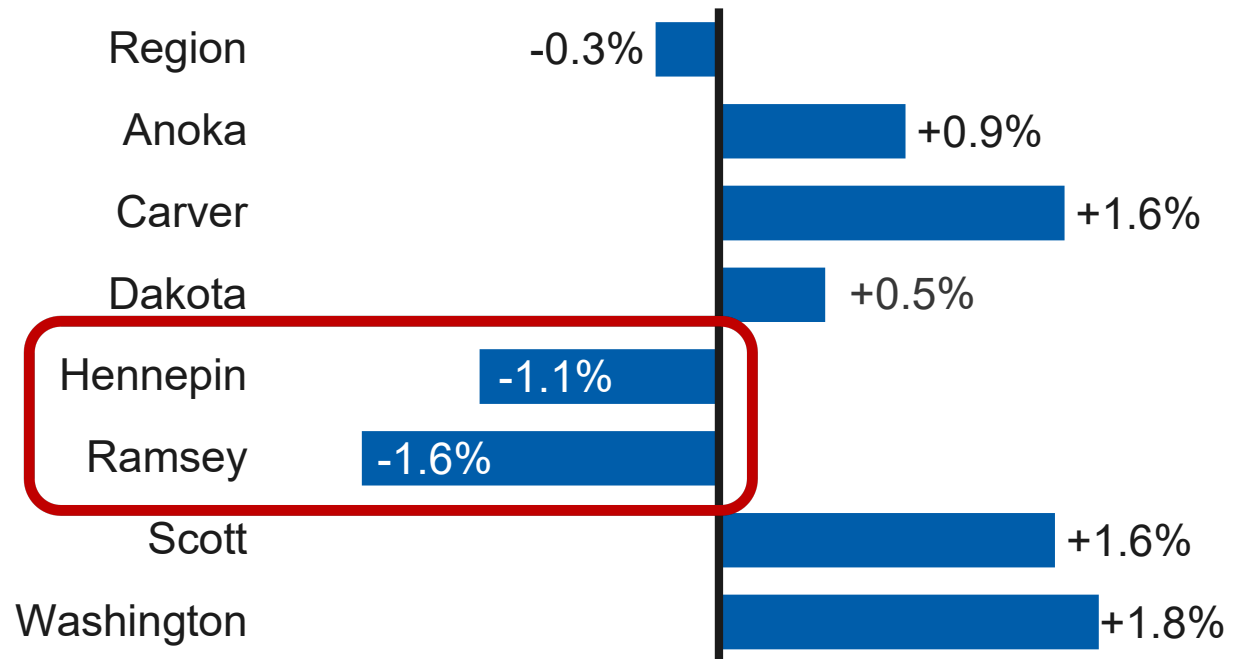
MATT ROURKE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A 2020 census letter mailed to a U.S. resident.

Minnesota's two largest urban counties saw striking population declines in 2021 after a decade of growth, according to new U.S. census data, likely due to COVID-19 pandemic disruptions which upended college plans and accelerated retirements.

Hennepin County's population, which includes Minneapolis, dropped by nearly 13,900 last year and Ramsey County, which includes St. Paul, declined by 8,200 people, according to new census estimates released

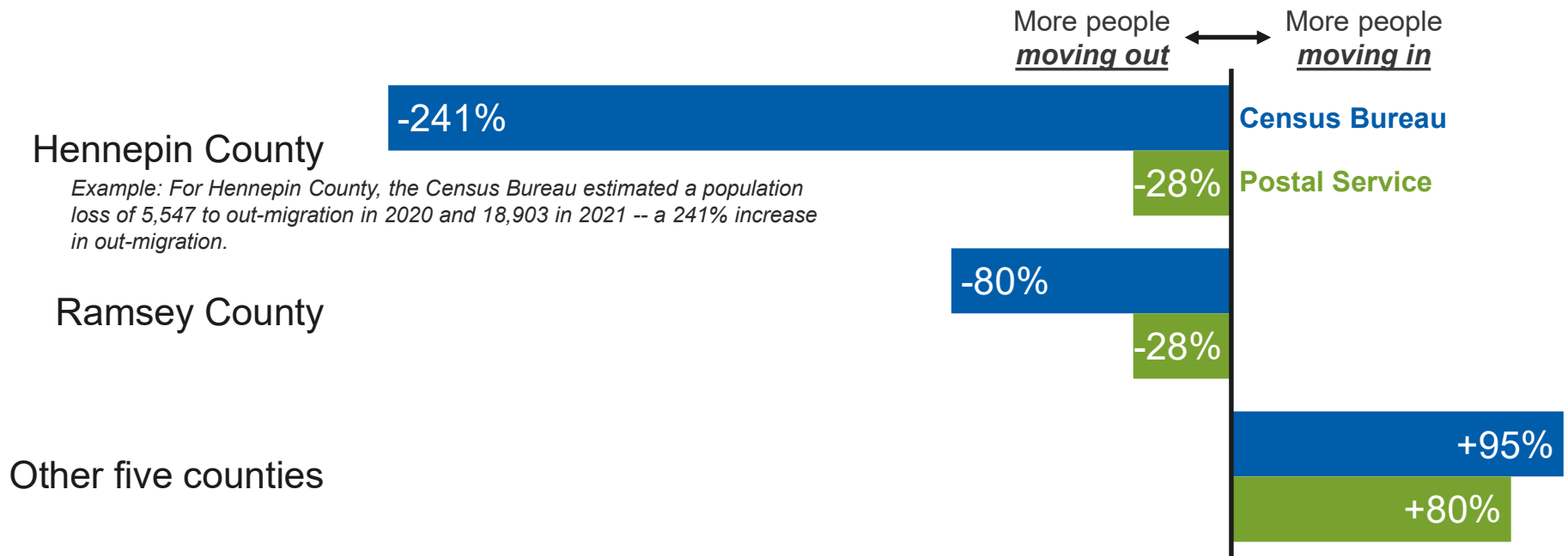
## Census Bureau estimates: Hennepin and Ramsey Counties lost population 2020-2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Resident Population Estimates, Estimated Components of Resident Population Change, and Rates of the Components of Resident Population Change for States and Counties: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021

# Census Bureau: Losses are due to migration

But Postal Service data shows much smaller changes in out-migration than the Census Bureau estimated:

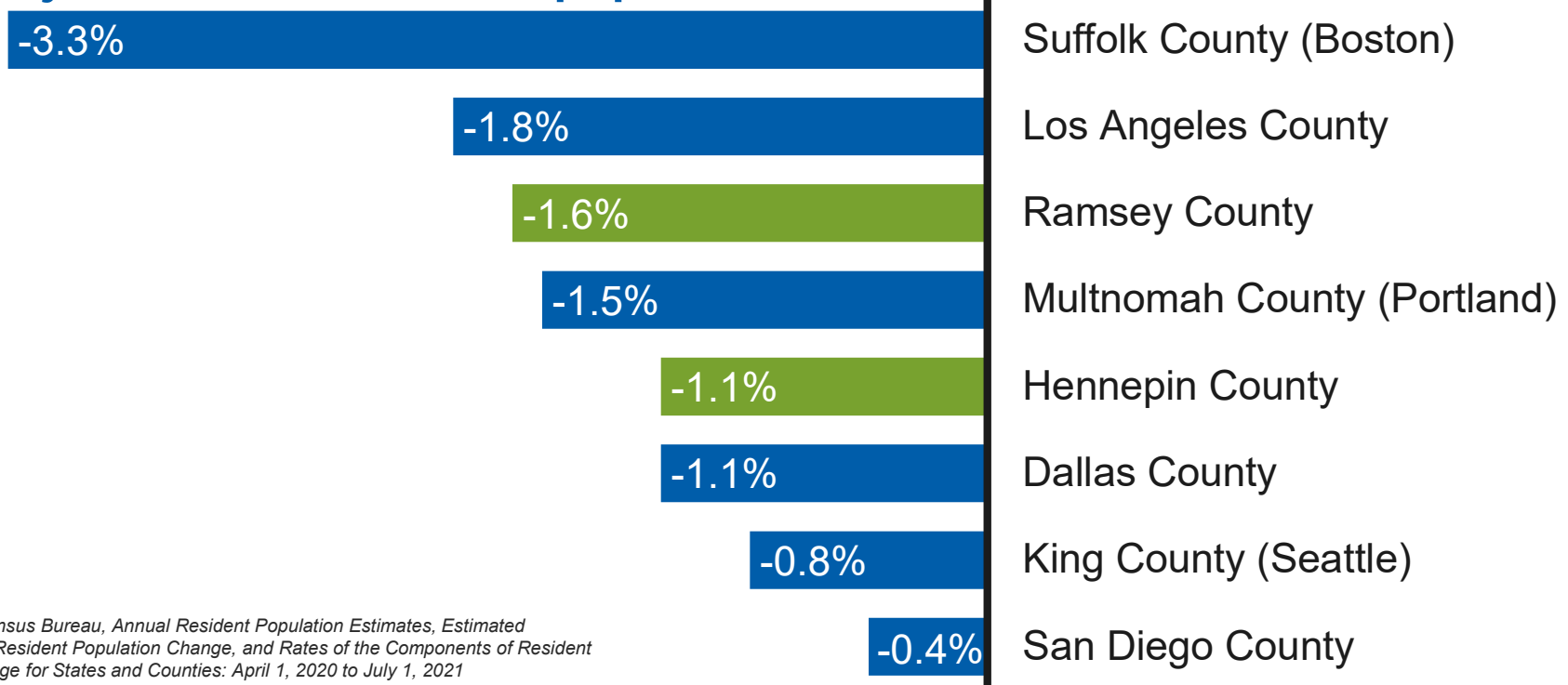


Example: For Hennepin County, the Census Bureau estimated a population loss of 5,547 to out-migration in 2020 and 18,903 in 2021 -- a 241% increase in out-migration.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Resident Population Estimates, Estimated Components of Resident Population Change, and Rates of the Components of Resident Population Change for States and Counties: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2020 and April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021; U.S. Postal Service, Change of Address Stats, 2019-2021

# National context for Census Bureau estimates

## Census Bureau estimates: Many “core counties” lost population between 2020 and 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Resident Population Estimates, Estimated Components of Resident Population Change, and Rates of the Components of Resident Population Change for States and Counties: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021



# What might next year's estimates look like?

Faster growth?

- Record housing construction in 2021
- Occupancy rates trending higher
- More births, (slightly) fewer deaths
- U of M dorms at pre-pandemic levels

Slower growth?

- Evidence of increased out-migration (but not Hennepin/Ramsey)
- Some group quarters facilities continue to lose population
- Possible recession and cooling homeownership market

Who knows?

- Developers' responses to housing policy shifts?
- Coronavirus mutations?
- Effects of climate change?



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