METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

How we estimate population

Each year, the Metropolitan Council estimates the population of every city and township in the Twin Cities region.

We do this by tracking each community's gains and losses of housing units in detail. We then use American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau to estimate how many of these housing units have people living in them (households), and how many people live in them.

We also track the number of people living in group quarters (places like nursing homes and college dormitories). The total population is the sum of people living in housing units and people living in group quarters.

Generally, a community's population increases if:
- housing units are added;
- more of those housing units are occupied; and/or
- more people live in the typical housing unit.

A more detailed explanation of how we estimate population is available at http://metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps/Data/Census-Forecasts-Estimates/Population-Estimates-Methodology.aspx
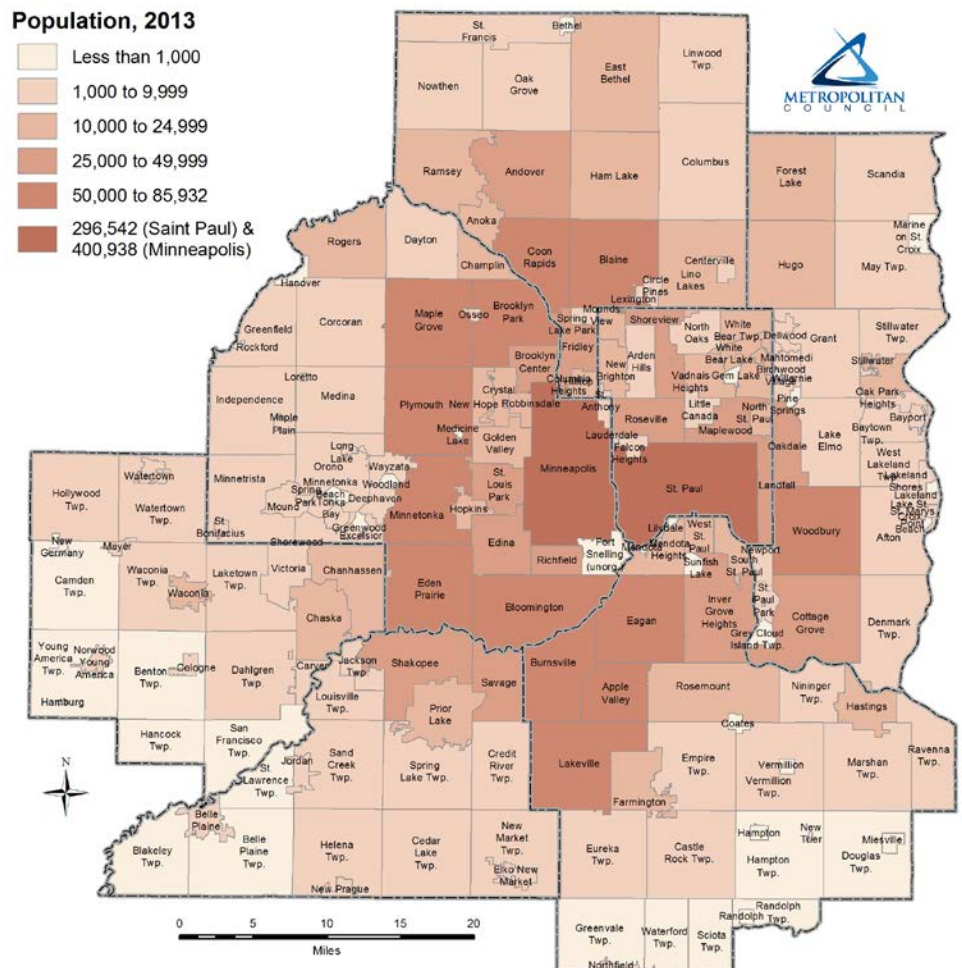
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This MetroStats discusses population growth and related trends in the seven-county Twin Cities region (Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties).

Key Findings

- The region's population topped 2.95 million in 2013. The area has added 101,000 people since 2010, a 3.6% increase.
- Nearly 30% of this growth occurred in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Minneapolis's population is above 400,000 for the first time since the 1970s.
- Suburban Edge communities such as Blaine and Woodbury have also grown considerably since 2010, with growth rates over 6%.
- The region has grown more quickly than New York and Chicago but less quickly than peer regions like Denver, Portland, and Seattle.

Population, 2013
- Less than 1,000
- 1,000 to 9,999
- 10,000 to 24,999
- 25,000 to 49,999
- 50,000 to 85,932
- 296,542 (Saint Paul) & 400,938 (Minneapolis)

Regional Overview

The Metropolitan Council estimates that the Twin Cities region's population on April 1, 2013 was 2,951,000. This is an increase of more than 101,000 people from 2010. About two-thirds of this population increase was "natural growth"—more people were being born than were dying—while about one-third was from migration.

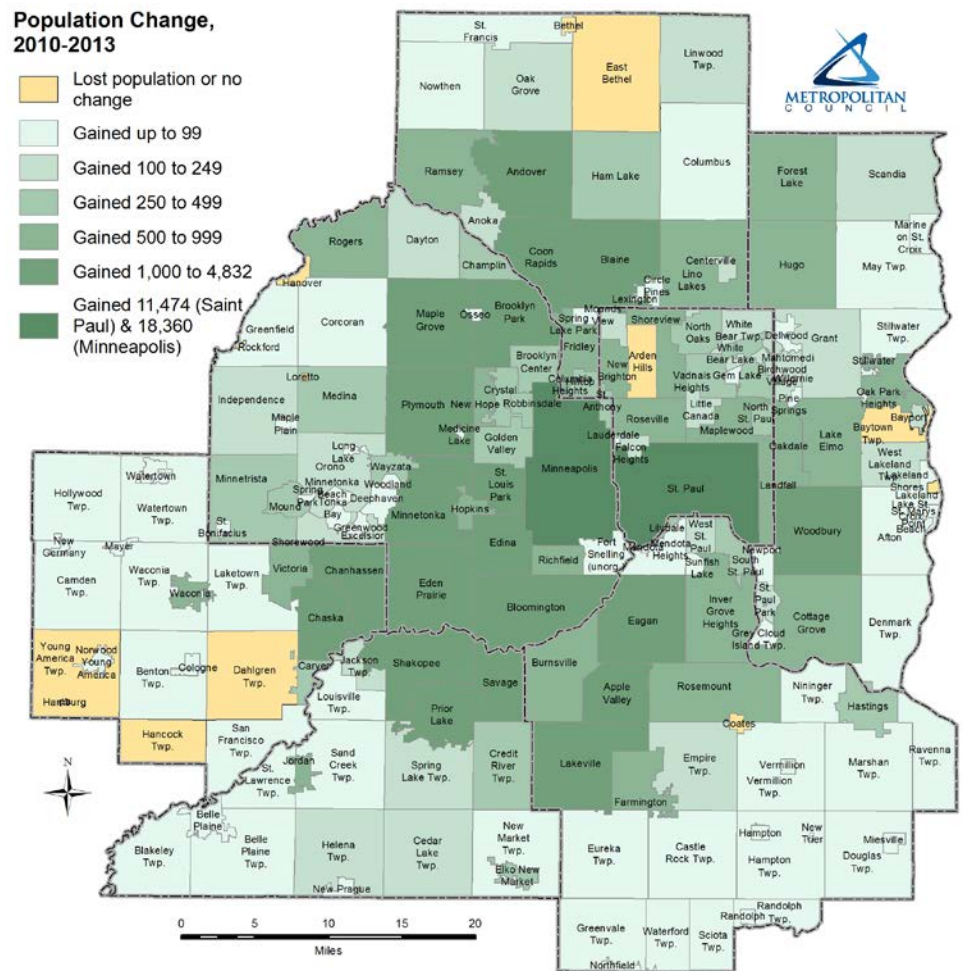**Population and Housing Change, 2010-2013**

	Census April 1, 2010	Estimated April 1, 2013	Change 2010–2013	Percent Change 2010–2013
Population	2,849,567	2,950,885	101,318	3.6%
Households	1,117,749	1,153,538	35,789	3.2%
Housing units	1,186,986	1,207,903	20,917	1.8%

As the table above shows, the region had 1,153,500 households in 2013, up almost 36,000 since 2010. During the same three years, however, new development added units for just 21,000 new households. The remaining 15,000 new households occupied existing housing, drawing down vacancy rates of the existing housing supply. The increased demand for new and existing housing is good news for home sellers and the real estate industry, but worse news for home buyers and renters as low vacancy rates push up housing costs.

Where Growth Is Occurring

Minneapolis and Saint Paul led the region in population growth since 2010. Minneapolis's population increased by more than 18,000 in three years to nearly 401,000, the highest it has been since the 1970s. Saint Paul added 11,500 people, and its population is about 296,500—also the highest since the 1970s. The growing population in the two central cities reflects increased preferences for walkable, amenity-rich neighborhoods and new residential construction along the Green Line (the recently opened light rail route connecting Minneapolis and Saint Paul).

In percentage terms, other cities had a larger increase. For example, Blaine's population increased by 8.4% between 2010 and 2013, while Woodbury's population increased by 6.1%.

Population Change, 2010-2013

Together, Minneapolis and Saint Paul accounted for 29% of the region's population growth since 2010. Other Urban Center cities (generally older suburbs that are mostly developed) accounted for 5% of growth since 2010. Leading growth in the Urban Center is St. Louis Park with an increase of 2,071. Among Urban cities, which saw 10% of the region's growth, Bloomington (+3,042) and Edina (+1,275) added the most new residents.
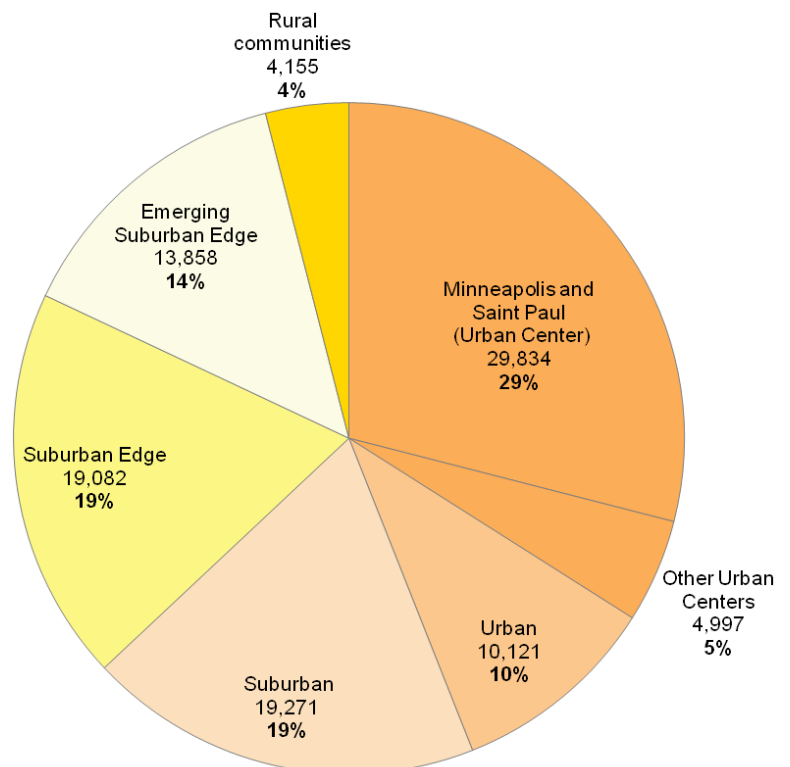
Population Growth Leaders, 2010-2013

	Population April 1, 2010	Population April 1, 2013	Change 2010–2013	Percent Change 2010–2013
Minneapolis	382,578	400,938	18,360	4.8%
Saint Paul	285,068	296,542	11,474	4.0%
Blaine	57,186	62,018	4,832	8.4%
Woodbury	61,961	65,746	3,785	6.1%
Bloomington	82,893	85,935	3,042	3.7%
Plymouth	70,576	72,969	2,393	3.4%
Brooklyn Park	75,781	77,989	2,208	2.9%
Maple Grove	61,567	63,746	2,179	3.5%
Eagan	64,206	66,301	2,095	3.3%
St. Louis Park	45,250	47,321	2,071	4.6%
Subtotal, 10 cities	1,187,066	1,239,505	52,439	4.4%
Region total	**2,849,567**	**2,950,885**	**101,318**	**3.6%**

Suburban cities—generally suburbs that saw their peak development years in the 1980s and early 1990s—constituted 19% of the region's growth. Growth leaders in this category are Brooklyn Park (+2,208), Eagan (+2,095), and Eden Prairie (+1,932).

Suburban Edge communities—those with more developable land—accounted for 19% of the region's population increase. Cities in this category include Blaine (+4,832), Woodbury (+3,785), and Plymouth (+2,393). Among Emerging Suburban Edge communities, which contributed 14% of the region's growth, growth leaders were Prior Lake (+1,427), Chanhassen (+1,203), and Andover (+1,094).

As a group, cities and townships in the Rural area, including Rural Centers, accounted for only 4% of the region's growth since 2010. Jordan (+802), Ham Lake (+354), and Credit River Township (+336) added the most new residents.

Share of Population Growth by Community Designations, 2010-2013

Rural communities 4,155 4%

Emerging Suburban Edge 13,858 14%

Minneapolis and Saint Paul (Urban Center) 29,834 29%

Suburban Edge 19,082 19%

Other Urban Centers 4,997 5%

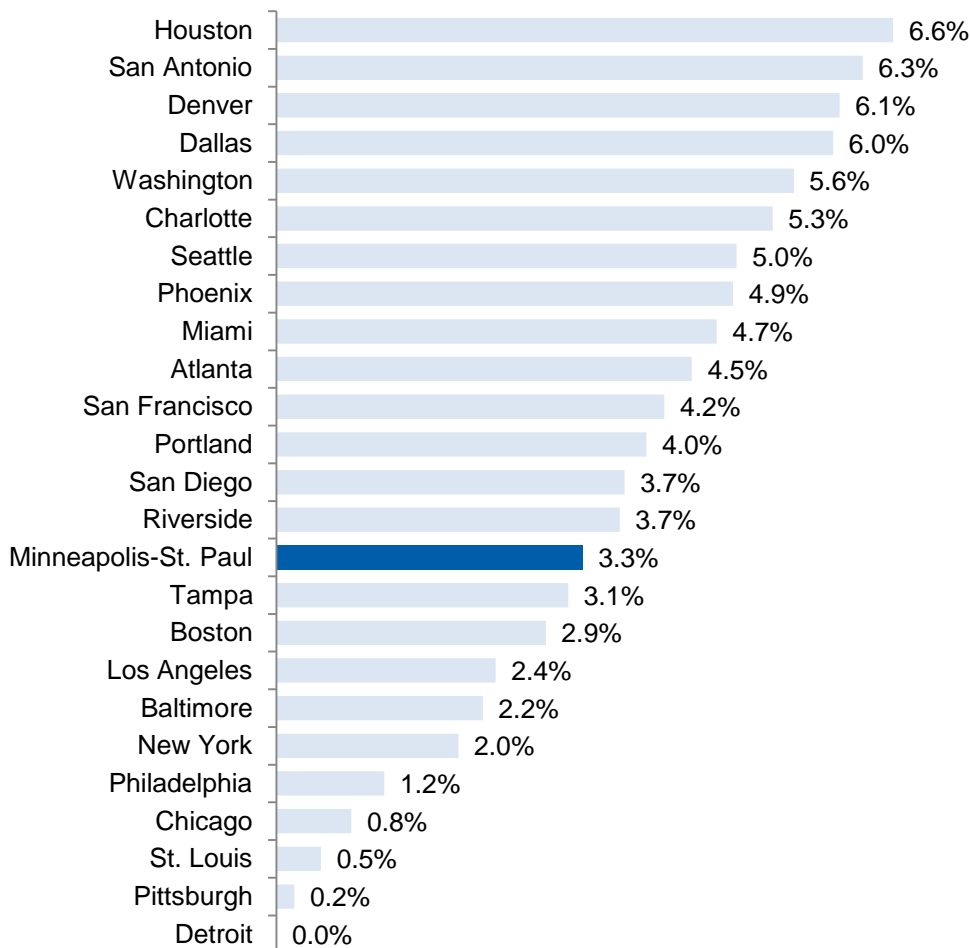Suburban 19,271 19%

Urban 10,121 10%

The Twin Cities Region in Context

While the Metropolitan Council calculates estimates for the seven-county Twin Cities region alone, the U.S. Census Bureau provides estimates for all counties and metropolitan statistical areas in the country. According to Census Bureau estimates:

- The United States as a whole added 7.38 million people between 2010 and 2013 (2.4% growth).
- A slight majority of this population increase was located in the nation's largest 25 metropolitan areas, which added 4.15 million people (3.2% growth) between 2010 and 2013.
- The Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington metropolitan statistical area added 110,000 people between 2010 and 2013, an increase of 3.3%.[1] This growth rate is higher than the national rate but about average for the nation's 25 largest metropolitan areas.
- Our metropolitan area grew more quickly than older, more established metropolitan areas like Chicago (+0.8%) and New York (+2.0%), but less quickly than peer regions like Denver (+6.1%), Portland (+4.0%), and Seattle (+5.0%).

Population Growth in Large Metropolitan Areas, 2010-2013

Metropolitan Area	Growth
Houston	6.6%
San Antonio	6.3%
Denver	6.1%
Dallas	6.0%
Washington	5.6%
Charlotte	5.3%
Seattle	5.0%
Phoenix	4.9%
Miami	4.7%
Atlanta	4.5%
San Francisco	4.2%
Portland	4.0%
San Diego	3.7%
Riverside	3.7%
Minneapolis-St. Paul	3.3%
Tampa	3.1%
Boston	2.9%
Los Angeles	2.4%
Baltimore	2.2%
New York	2.0%
Philadelphia	1.2%
Chicago	0.8%
St. Louis	0.5%
Pittsburgh	0.2%
Detroit	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 Population Estimates.

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[1] As defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget, the 16-county Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington metropolitan statistical area adds nine counties to the seven counties of the Twin Cities region: Chisago, Isanti, Le Sueur, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Sibley, and Wright Counties in Minnesota and Pierce and St. Croix Counties in Wisconsin. According to 2013 Census Bureau estimates, the seven counties of the Twin Cities region make up 85.4% of the population of the 16-county metropolitan area.