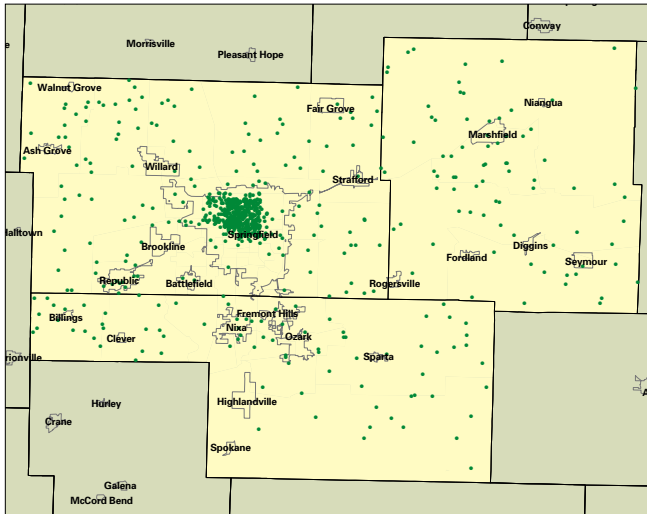
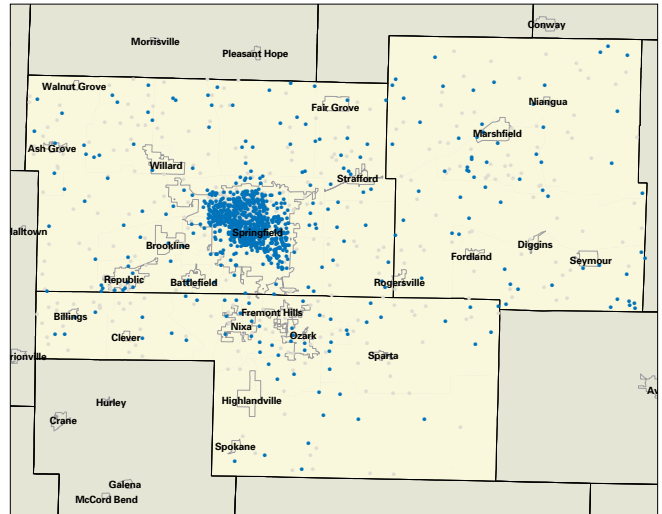


Housing in the Springfield area has dispersed far beyond the city limits over the years

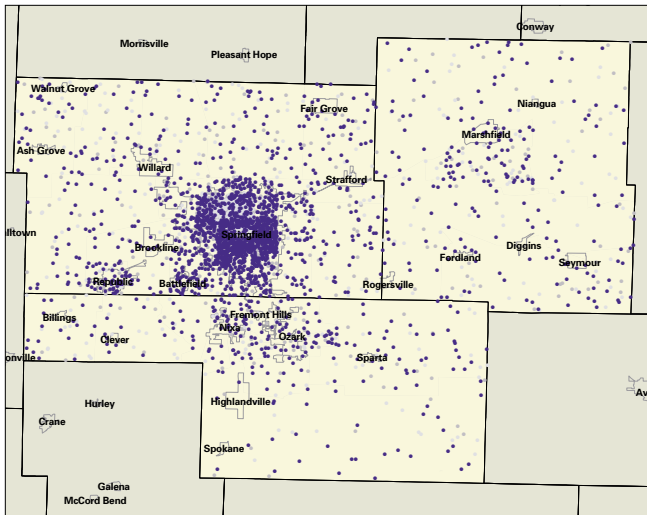
Housing Units Built Before 1939



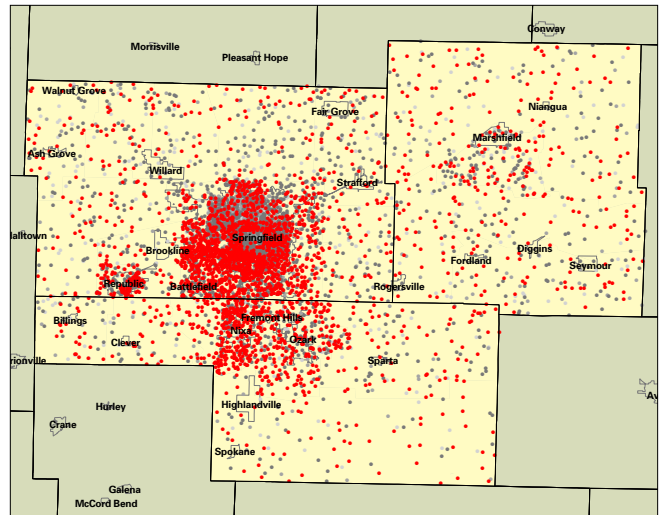
Housing Units Built Between 1940–1959



Housing Units Built Between 1960–1979



Housing Units Built Between 1980–2000



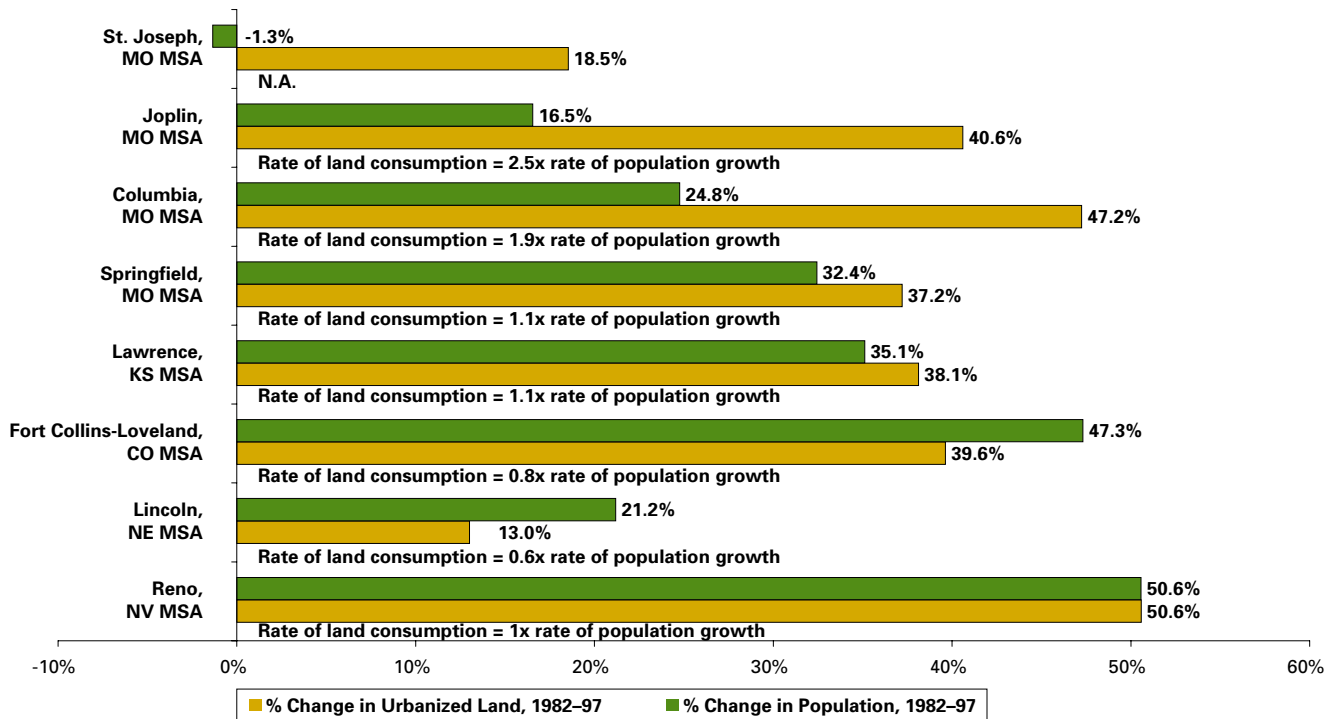
● = 20 Housing Units

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Not surprisingly, significant land development has accompanied the growth and spread of population in the four smaller regions; in two metro areas, land was consumed at twice the rate of population growth. The Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) provides estimates of urbanized and developed land in the country. While this data has a higher statistical error when used to estimate land consumption in small areas like a single county, NRI figures offer a general indication of the land consumption associated with development. For instance, according to NRI, the **Columbia** region's growth converted an estimated 14,600 acres, or 23 square miles, of land to urban use between 1982 and 1997.²⁹ This 47-percent growth in the region's developed land accompanied a far-more-modest 25-percent growth in the region's population. **Joplin**, for its part, developed land at more than twice the rate of its population growth. Altogether, an estimated 14,900 acres, or 23 square miles, of field, forest, and plain moved to urban uses between 1982 and 1997. During that period, the urbanized

area grew by 40 percent but the regional population increased by just 16.5 percent. In raw acreage terms, meanwhile, growth in the **Springfield** area consumed the most open space, with the region's population surge driving an estimated 25,900 acres—40 square miles—of previously undisturbed land into urban uses between 1982 and 1997. This urbanization amounts to a 37-percent expansion of the region's footprint, while the area added 32.4 percent more people. The **St. Joseph** area, finally, demonstrates that regions can urbanize significant amounts of land even if they do not grow much. The total urban "footprint" of the St. Joseph region widened by an estimated 4,800 acres, or more than 7.5 square miles, between 1982 and 1997. That implies an 18.5 percent expansion of developed land over that period even though the region's population stayed essentially flat. Interestingly, much of the region's land conversion³⁰ occurred in the 1980s, when population was shrinking. Land consumption proceeded even though population growth had ceased.

Missouri's smaller metropolitan areas urbanized land much faster than they added population over the last two decades, consuming land less efficiently than other medium-sized metros



Source: Fulton et al., "Who Sprawls Most?"

With land being developed faster than population growth, densities in most of these metros were declining, signaling a declining efficiency of land use. By the 1990s, it was requiring some 0.82 acres of land in the **Columbia** region to accommodate each new resident—about double the amount it took between 1982 and 1992. Those numbers imply the lessening efficiency of local land use and explain why the county’s density declined 15.3 percent between 1982 and 1997 to reach a low 2.82 persons per urbanized acre in 1997.³¹ Population density also dropped

17 percent in **Joplin** during the last two decades. **St. Joseph’s** slow population growth, combined with an expanded urban area, ensured that densities declined in that area in similar fashion. There, the overall density of the region’s urbanized area slipped 16.8 percent over the 15 years to an average of 2.77 persons per acre. The exception to these trends, meanwhile, is the **Springfield** area where densities in the region did not drop as precipitously as elsewhere around the state. In the greater Springfield region, densities sagged just 3.5 percent to 2.92 persons per acre between 1982 to 1997 period.³²

Density, or the number of persons per urbanized acre, declined in Missouri’s smaller metropolitan areas during the 1980s and 1990s

	Density 1982	Density 1997	% Change in Density	% Change in Population 1982–1997	% Change in Urbanized Land Area, 1982–1997
Springfield, MO	3.02	2.92	-3.5%	32.4%	37.2%
Joplin, MO	3.52	2.92	-17.1%	16.5%	40.6%
Columbia, MO	3.33	2.82	-15.3%	24.8%	47.2%
St. Joseph, MO	3.33	2.77	-16.8%	-1.3%	18.5%

Fulton et al., “Who Sprawls Most?” and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Inventory

The data above and in the urbanized land chart on page 27 were generated from the Natural Resources Inventory conducted in 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997. The NRI is a statistically based sample of land use and natural resource conditions and trends on U.S. nonfederal lands. The data has high sampling errors when it is used to estimate the characteristics of land in small areas such as a single county or small metropolitan area. The inclusion of the data in this report is to serve as guide or reference but it is not meant to imply a precise or an exact count of urbanized acres. For further information about urbanized land and the Natural Resources Inventory, please see William Fulton, et al., “Who Sprawls Most?” Brookings Institution, 2001 or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/.

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Decentralization swept across Missouri’s four medium-sized metropolitan areas (and extended into open country) in the 1990s, driving the bulk of their rapid growth toward and beyond the cities’ boundaries and into the regions’ outskirts.

Springfield, Joplin, and St. Joseph all saw their share of the region’s population shrink in the 1990s as a result of the faster population growth in the surrounding counties. **Springfield** proper, in particular, saw its center city slip from a 53.1-percent share of the regional population in 1990 to a 46.5-percent share by 2000. **Columbia’s** strong growth, driven in part by the increasing size of MU, made that city an exception to the trend to center-city slippage. Columbia actually strengthened its position as the region’s center, notching up its share of the regional population by one percentage point in the 1990s to 62.4 percent in 2000. But decentralization of residential life did not escape Columbia or the relatively compact St. Joseph. Columbia captured the largest share of new population growth in its metro area over the past decade, but unincorporated Boone County snagged the majority of the region’s new housing permits. As new homes

went up in the countryside, the amount of land lost to development increased at twice the rate of population growth. And the pattern repeated in slow-to-grow **St. Joseph**, albeit within its city limits. There, too, population shifted outward as land consumption increased over the last two decades, proving that in Missouri as elsewhere, decentralization can occur without major growth.

These regions’ decentralized pattern of growth has begun to strain their environmental, quality-of-life, and fiscal wellbeing.

Population and job growth certainly brought much-needed benefits to the four metro areas in the 1990s. But the decentralized nature of that growth also introduced a set of challenges. In Columbia, for example, the rapid growth was beginning to encroach upon the tranquil environs of Philips Farm at the southernmost boundary of the city and approach the region’s signature natural attraction, Rock Bridge Memorial State Park. But beyond the loss of traditional natural areas, growth in the countryside can lead to other negative effects. Dispersed open-country homes situated beyond the reach of municipal sewers may taint a region’s lakes

and streams when septic tanks leak. Outside of Springfield, far-flung urbanization in once-bucolic country places represents a genuine threat to the very Ozark scenery that attracted growth in the first place. Growing populations spread out in low-density fashion also increase the demand in the smaller metro-

politan areas for expensive infrastructure and government services, such as schools, parks, and police. For small cities like Joplin and St. Joseph as well as the state, this radical dispersal of population taxes local budgets and erodes the tranquil, traditional character of once-compact Missouri towns.

The Kansas City region grew solidly in the 1990s, but most of that growth flowed toward the metropolitan edge.

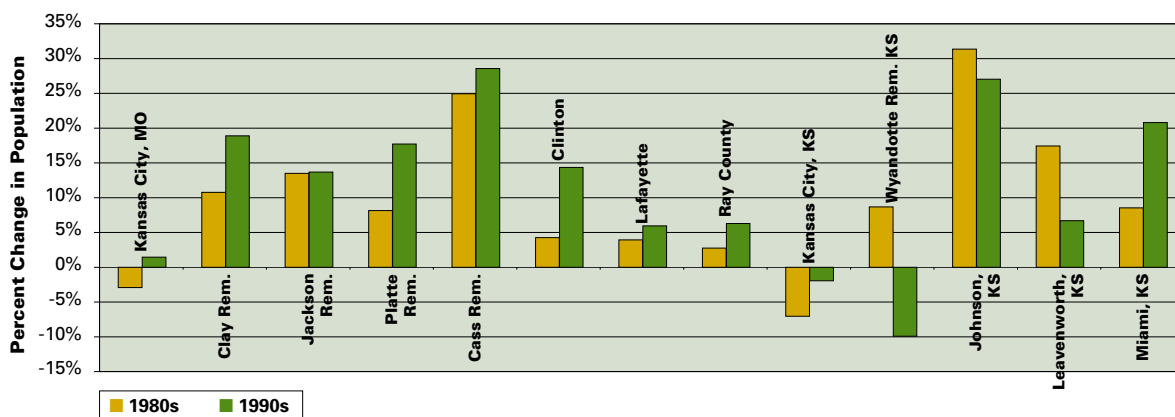
The population of the Kansas City metropolitan area grew solidly in the 1990s. During the decade, the two-state region added 193,187 new residents to grow 12.2 percent. That growth brought its total population to 1,776,062 in 2000, making the region the 28th largest metro area in the country. All of the region's Missouri counties and all but one of the entire metro's counties grew in the 1990s. The rates of growth ranged from 3.4 percent in Jackson County, MO to 27 percent in suburban Johnson County, KS to 28.6 percent in Cass County, MO. Only Wyandotte County, KS, slumped in the decade as it lost 4,111 people, or 2.5 percent of its population.

The region's economy also surged in the last decade. The region generated 222,223 new jobs in the 1990s to reach a total employment of 1.2 million. This 23-percent growth in the region's job base more than doubled the region's population growth over the decade. However, since 2000 the economy has faltered as the national economic slowdown hit home. Unemployment jumped from 2.9 percent to 5.3 percent between January 2000 and July 2002, as the regional economy shed some 20,000 jobs between July 2001 and July 2002.³³

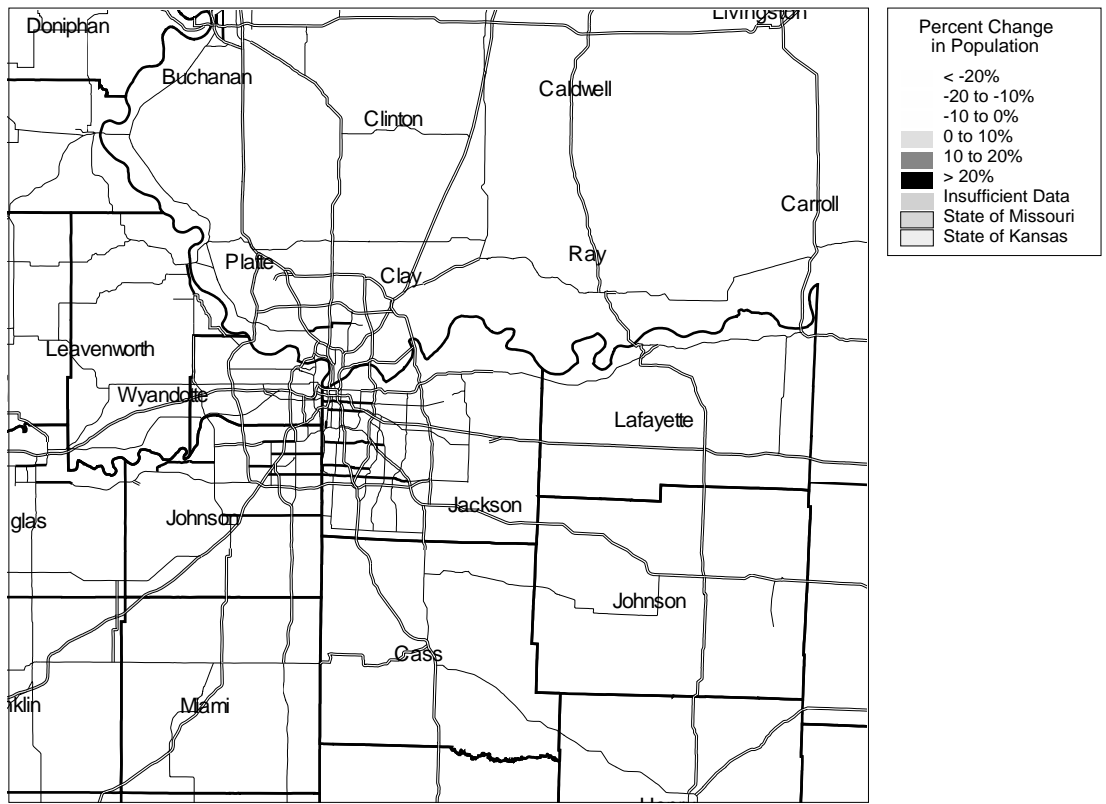
Fortunes improved somewhat for the region's core cities. The City of Kansas City, MO, the 36th largest city in the nation with a 2000 population of 441,545, rebounded from substantial population losses during the 1980s and grew slightly during the 1990s. The city lost 13,013 residents during the 1980s but gained 6,399 during the 1990s, to grow 1.47 percent. Across the state line, Kansas City, KS, at least slowed its precipitous earlier decline. In the 1980s the city lost 11,320 residents, roughly 7 percent of its population, but in the 1990s the loss narrowed to 2,901 people, or just 2 percent. Together, the central cities were also able to add 12 percent more jobs to its base in the 1990s.³⁴ Employment growth, however, has slowed this decade.

However, suburban population growth continues to dominate the drift outwards. On the whole, 98 percent of the region's new population growth occurred outside of the center cities. Most of the region's new residents either settled in, moved to, or were born in the rapidly growing outer counties. While the two urban counties, Jackson and Wyandotte, barely grew or shrunk, the suburban counties of Clay, Platte, and Cass grew by 20, 27.5, and 29 percent respectively. Meanwhile, half of the entire region's growth in the 1990s took place in big and fast-growing Johnson County, KS, which added 96,000 new residents during the decade to grow 27 percent. Population is still moving to the suburbs in earnest.

Kansas City's suburban counties grew strongly in the last two decades



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Rem. = Remaining population of the county not including the population of the central city.



Source: Brookings analysis of U.S. Census Bureau tract data, 1990 and 2000