



## **Kansas City, MO-KS MSA**

*Regulatory Order/Family:* Traditional/Middle America

### *Summary*

Kansas City is a metropolitan area with two large cities and a half-dozen large suburbs at its core, all of which accommodate dense development and most of which use infrastructure-related growth management measures. However, it also has a large number of small exclusionary enclaves. Moreover, the nature of growth regulation differs between Kansas and Missouri, with stronger planning and growth management in Kansas than in Missouri, where jurisdictions run the gamut from exclusionary to accommodating.

Together, the maps of zoning and growth management in metropolitan Kansas City suggest that the region has a moderate form of urban containment. The cities at the center allow dense development. They are surrounded by counties that have either a containment program of some kind (two Missouri counties) or very low density zoning (another Missouri county and two Kansas counties). Two counties in the northwest corner of the region—Leavenworth, KS, and Platte, MO—lack these containment measures, but Leavenworth imposes impact fees and allows densities to attain over 30 dwellings per acre.

### *Governance Framework and Growth Trends*

The Kansas City MSA has 11 counties and 142 incorporated cities and villages. Four of the counties and 33 of the cities are on the Kansas side of the border, where 700,000 residents live; another million residents live on the Missouri side in 109 cities and villages and seven counties. About 90 percent of the residents in each state live in cities and villages, but the incorporated units on the Missouri side have less than half the population of those in Kansas on average (8,800 vs. nearly 20,000) and are half as large (6.7 square miles vs. 13.4 square miles). The Kansas City metropolitan area had low density in 1982—about 3.5 persons per urbanized acre—and lost density between then and 1997 as it urbanized nearly 125,000 acres of land, a 30 percent increase while its population grew only 16 percent. Density dropped much faster on the Missouri side (14 percent) than on the Kansas side (3 percent) of the metro area, so that now the Kansas side has a higher built density than the Missouri side. Kansas City, MO, grew modestly in the 1990s, while Kansas City, KS declined by a modest 2,000 residents. Only about 5 percent of the land in the metropolitan area is owned by the public sector, split roughly evenly among federal, state, and municipal governments.

### *Regulatory Environment*

The jurisdictions in metropolitan Kansas City are quite accommodating to growth, especially those in Kansas. In this regard, it can be argued that Kansas City is where the West begins and the Midwest ends. We estimate that all 33 cities on the Kansas side have zoning, but exclusionary zoning is practically unknown and none impose a maximum density below eight dwellings per acre. About three quarters of the cities allow densities to exceed 15 dwellings per acre, and none would completely disallow our hypothetical apartment development. Only about one quarter of cities on the



Missouri side allow densities to exceed 15 dwellings per acre. These cities are home to nearly 700,000 residents and occupy over 475 square miles of land. But about half of the total number of cities and villages on the Missouri side (with close to 100,000 residents) prohibit residential density to exceed 8 dwellings per acre. Over 40 percent of cities would bar the hypothetical apartment development entirely but most of these are small jurisdictions accounting for only about 60,000 residents and about 71 square miles of land area. About 12 percent of small incorporated Missouri municipalities lack zoning entirely. A larger share, 40 percent, lack comprehensive plans.

All four Kansas counties have zoning: three of them restrict densities to fewer than four units per acre. Two of those three would allow our hypothetical apartment development subject to a use permit. None of the Kansas counties reported having an urban containment program of any kind or an adequate public facilities ordinance and only one imposed impact fees. By contrast, on the Missouri side two of the counties had urban containment of some kind, two had adequate public facilities ordinances, and one had impact fees. At least six of the seven counties have zoning, but the zoning tends not to be exclusionary, with none of the counties barring the hypothetical apartment development and only one maintaining a zoning ordinance capping density below eight dwellings per acre.

Comprehensive planning also differs across the state line. Whereas all the cities in Kansas have comprehensive plans, only 60 percent of the Missouri cities do (many of the smaller cities and villages lack plans.) Our estimates suggest that all 11 of the counties in the metro area have comprehensive plans.

To the extent that local governments manage growth in the Kansas City metro area, they do so with measures to match it with infrastructure impacts. About 35 percent of cities use impact fees and account for nearly 1.2 million residents and 388 square miles. Two populous counties also use impact fees: Leavenworth in Kansas and Clay in Missouri. An estimated 25 cities with over 800,000 residents have adequate public facilities ordinances, as does Clay County; none of the other counties reports having an APFO. Most of the municipalities with APFOs have them in addition or complement to impact fees rather than as an alternative. Among cities, both fees and APFOs are more common on the Kansas side of the border, perhaps a function of the larger populations and the strength of planning among Kansas municipalities. Two Missouri counties have a containment program. Finally, only about 15 cities on either side of the border appear to offer any kind of regulatory incentive in exchange for a guarantee of affordable housing, but none offers a density bonus or imposes inclusionary zoning.