

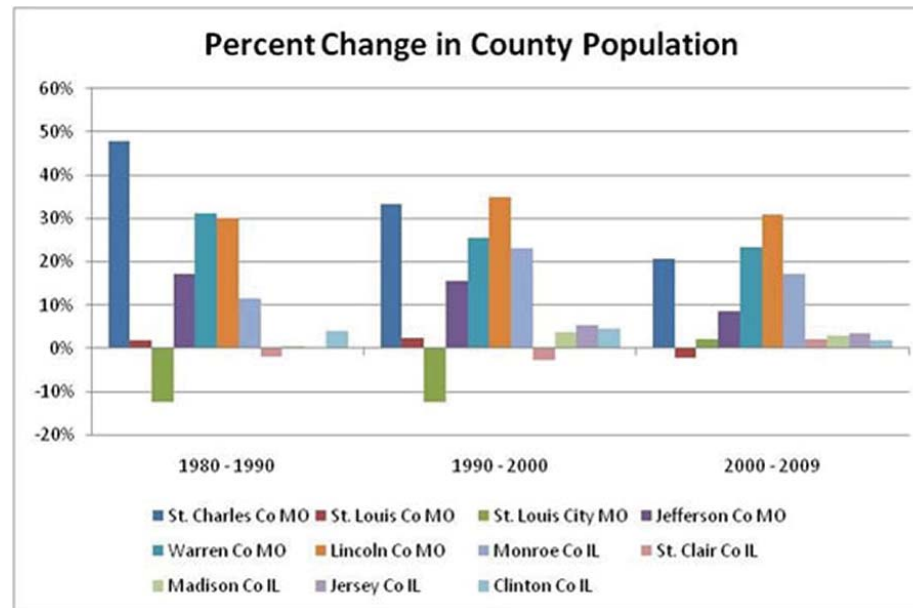
Metropolitan Mirror: Facts and Trends Reflecting the St. Louis Region

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Population Change in St. Louis City and St. Louis County

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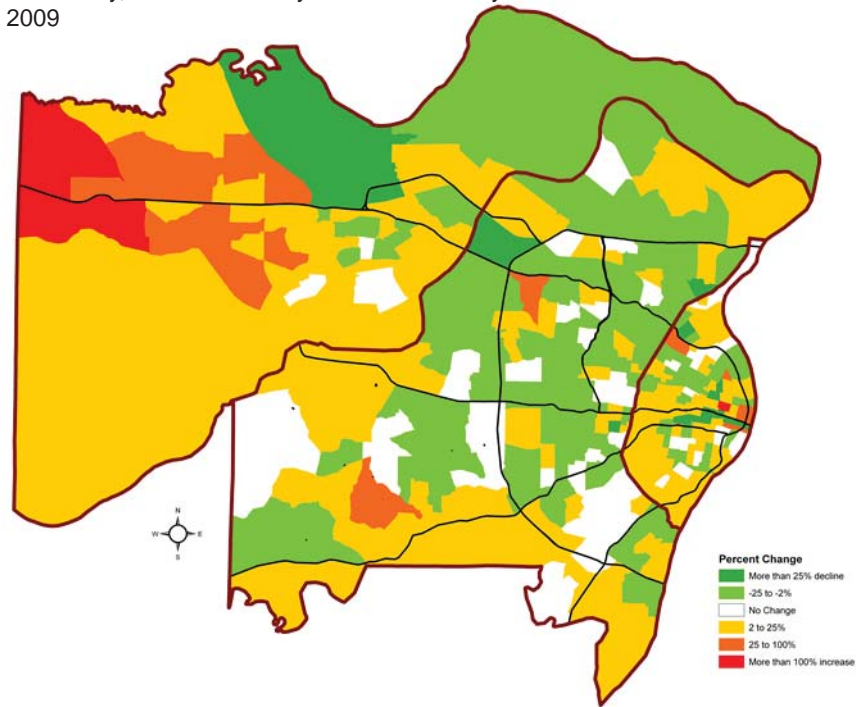


The end of the half-century trend of decline in central city population is evidence of the increasing appeal of urban living. The map below shows the change in population by census tract for St. Louis City, St. Louis County, and St. Charles County.^[1] According to these figures, between 2000 and 2009, the City of St. Louis actually gained population and the population of St. Louis County fell slightly, reversing historical trends. As the map shows, inside I-270 and north of I-44 most census tracts in St. Louis County lost population. But overall trends mask considerable variety, with some parts of the County still gaining population. Even though St. Louis City gained population, for the first time in fifty years, large swaths of the city still lost population, as indicated by the many census tracts in green.

Recent population trends suggest that urban revival is occurring in St. Louis. The question is not whether the city and inner suburbs will experience reinvestment and repopulation but whether the rebirth of urbanism will occur in “islands” of revival located in seas of decline or whether the benefits will be spread more broadly across

different income classes and races. As the map suggests, not all parts of the County and County will experience revival. Many areas will continue to suffer from population decline and weak housing demand. One of the dangers of community development in a weak market area is that development in one area poaches on development in other areas. A new housing unit in one place may only lead to the vacancy of a unit in some other place. Building successful mixed-income, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods will require a comprehensive community development strategy in the City and the County. Limited community development resources will need to be targeted on “transitional” areas that are threatened by decline but which possess assets that can be leveraged to population and investment. [\[ii\]](#) Distressed areas will be better suited for land banking, community gardens, and social services.[\[iii\]](#)

Pattern of Population Change
St. Charles County, St. Louis County and St. Louis City
2000 to 2009



[\[ii\]](#) The map is based on the ACS which by combining samples from the years 2005-2009 can provide estimates at the census-tract level. The 2010 census population counts will be released in a few months, giving us a more accurate picture of population trends.

[\[iii\]](#) Asset-based community development is an approach championed in Kretzmann and McKnight 1993.

[\[iiii\]](#) For a strategic community development approach in the wake of foreclosures, see Goldstein2008 and Mallach 2008.

