



## CHAPTER 1 SNAPSHOT

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### POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

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#### **Purpose:**

- Describes characteristics of Oakland County's population and households, including current conditions, recent trends, and projections of future changes.

#### **Content:**

- Population
  - Population change
    - Oakland County (1820-2004) w/comparisons to state and border counties
    - Local communities (1990-2000)
    - Projected population change in Oakland County and its local communities (2000-2030)
  - Births and deaths (1980-2003)
  - Migration (i.e. people moving into, and out of, the county)
    - Place of origin (including county and country)
    - Race / ethnicity and age
    - Age, income, education, household structure
  - Age of population (current, change since 1990, projections through 2030)
  - Race / Ethnicity of population
  - Education, occupation, and income of population
- Households
  - Change in households countywide and by community
  - Age of householders
  - Size of households
  - Presence of children
  - Race/Ethnicity
  - Income by tenure (e.g. owner / renter) and race/ethnicity
  - Length of residence.

#### **Major Findings:**

##### **Population and Household Change**

- *Oakland County grew rapidly in the 1990s, gaining more people than any county in the state.* Oakland County's 2000 population of 1,194,256 made it the 2<sup>nd</sup> most populous county in the region and state and the 30<sup>th</sup> most populous in the country. The increase of 110,564 people was the largest in the state. Its 10.2% growth rate was 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the region. Both the volume and rate of change in the 1990s exceeded the changes that occurred in the 1980s.
- *Growth rates varied considerably across communities.* Twenty-one communities—mostly older, built-out communities in the southeast—lost population, though the nature of

population changes varied considerably. In 15 communities—mostly at the northern and western fringes of the county—population grew by more than 25%. Two communities—Novi (14,431 more people) and West Bloomfield Twp (10,353 more people)—accounted for more than one-fifth of all population growth. Household growth followed a similar pattern. Population forecasts suggest *continued population losses in inner-ring communities and continued growth in outlying, rural townships*.

- ***Most of Oakland County’s population growth has come from county residents having children.*** The county gained about 7,800 people annually by births exceeding deaths (i.e. natural increase). This accounted for about 70% of population growth in the 90s.
- ***International immigration is also a significant factor underlying Oakland County’s population growth.*** The balance of the county’s population growth is accounted for by immigrants. Oakland County gained almost 3,000 foreign immigrants annually during the 1990s. The annual total has almost doubled since 2000.
- ***Oakland County loses more residents to other counties than it attracts from them.*** During the first half of the 1990s more U.S. residents moved into Oakland County than moved out of it. The opposite has been true since 1995-1996. Since 2000, the net number of residents moving out of the county each year has doubled the totals seen in the late 90s. The largest losses through domestic migration came from residents 35 and older moving from Oakland County to somewhere outside of southeast Michigan (21,854 people from 1995-2000). People 55 and older moving to other states account for the single largest category of losses (11,116 people from 1995 to 2000) over the period.
- ***Most people moving into the county from elsewhere in the U.S. come from Wayne County.*** Wayne County was a net exporter of residents to Oakland County – 26,000 between 1995 and 2000. The majority, approximately 17,000, came from Detroit.
- ***Oakland County is losing residents to other southeastern Michigan counties.*** All three counties were net importers of Oakland County residents from 1995 to 2000. Macomb County had a net gain of more than 6,000 Oakland County residents 25 and older from 1995 through 2000. Livingston gained more than 4,000. St. Clair and Lapeer Counties (combined) gained more than 3,000.
- ***Population growth rates are slowing to a rate not seen in a century.*** Since 2000, Oakland County’s rate of growth has decreased to approximately 0.4 percent per year, which, if continued, would yield the slowest decade of growth since the late 1800s. For the 30-year period from 2000 through 2030, Oakland County is projected to gain less than 20,000 more people than it gained during the 10-year period from 1990 to 2000.

### **Age of Population and Households**

- ***The county’s population is still relatively young, but it is aging.*** People under 30 years of age accounted for the largest share of the population in 1990, but 30-59 year olds held that honor in 2000. Whereas 25 to 34 year olds were the largest 10-year age group in 1990, 35 to 44 year olds were the largest in 2000. The largest growth occurred in the 40 and 59 year old age groups (increase of 91,995 people or 36 percent). This is attributable to the aging of the baby-boom generation, born between 1946 and 1964 (36 to 54 years old in 2000). In 2011, the first wave of boomers will reach 65 years of age, thus beginning the steep growth in the

county's elderly population. The number of 20 to 34 year-olds decreased substantially, due to the migration of 20 to 24 year olds to other parts of the county and the aging of the remaining population.

- ***Most people moving into the county are 25 to 34 years old. Most people moving out are under 25 or over 54.*** Almost 17,000 of the people moving into the county (domestically and internationally) from 1995-2000 were 25-34 years of age. This was the only age group for which the county saw gains through domestic migration. About 5,000 in-movers were 35-54. More people 24 and younger or 55 and older moved out of the county than moved in from 1995-2000.
- ***Relatively strong growth occurred in the young age cohorts.*** The 5 to 14 year old age cohort experienced a growth of 17% in the 1990s. This represents the “echo” of the baby boom as many women waited until their early 30s to have children. The under 5 age group grew by 3% and is projected to grow by 7% through 2030.
- ***Households with children increased, but their share of all households decreased.*** In 2000, 162,384 households had children—11.4% higher than the 1990s total. This group accounted for 34.5% of households—down 1% from 1990. Seventy-seven percent of households with children contained married-couple families. In fact, ***most of the families moving into Oakland County are married couples with children.*** The vast majority of those married households moving out did not have children while the vast majority of those moving in did.
- ***The elderly represent a relatively small, but increasingly significant share of Oakland County's population. This group's size and share of total population will grow significantly in the coming years.*** In 2000, less than 12% of the county's population was 65 or older. This is low compared to other counties in the region. However, age cohorts 70 and older experienced some of the largest growth in the 1990s. Moreover, the county is projected to experience an increase of 104% in people 65 or older by 2030. This is, by far, the group with the largest expected growth. By 2030, one of every five county residents is expected to be 65 or older.

### **Race / Ethnicity of Population and Households**

- ***The decade of the 1990s was one of great racial and ethnic change in Oakland County.*** The county's African-American population grew by 42,907 people in the 1990s. This 55.9% increase—the largest of any racial/ethnic group—raised African-Americans' share of the population from 7.1% to 10.0%. Growth in African-American households (71%) was even greater. In five communities—Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pontiac, Royal Oak Twp, and Southfield—the majority of residents are now of a minority race/ethnicity (mostly due to growth in African-American residents). Immigration brought large numbers of Asians to the county (129% increase in households), in addition to increasing the numbers of Hispanics (65% increase in households) living primarily in the Pontiac-Waterford area. The White, non-Hispanic population, grew at a very slow rate (1.4%). These trends have continued through the first half of this decade. Middle Eastern immigrant groups of Chaldean, Arab, Lebanese, and Iraqi also gained prominence in the 1990s.
- ***Most people moving out are white. Most people moving in are racial or ethnic minorities.*** The only racial group to experience a net loss in population through migration from 1995 to

2000 was “White Alone,” which lost over 26,000 people. “Black Alone” was the group with the largest gain—almost 14,000. Asians gained 11,000.

- ***Racial / ethnic minorities live in more communities across Oakland County than in the past.*** While African-Americans were highly concentrated in a few communities in 1990, they were able to expand more broadly across the county during the 1990s. The 1990s brought growth in the African-American population in Auburn Hills, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, and other communities that formerly had relatively few African-American households. The Asian population, which exhibited the greatest percentage increase, has its epicenter in Troy, followed by Farmington and Farmington Hills, Novi, Rochester Hills, West Bloomfield and Bloomfield Township. The Hispanic population is concentrated in Pontiac, Waterford Township, Rochester Hills, Farmington Hills, Troy and Southfield. The greatest concentration, 12.8 percent, is found in Pontiac.
- ***In spite of these changes, Oakland County still has one of the lowest shares of minority population among U.S. counties.*** Oakland County ranks 35<sup>th</sup> among the 37 U.S. counties with populations of one million or more in its share of minority population (20.7%). Twenty-four Oakland County communities have White, non-Hispanic population shares of 95 percent or more, led by Ortonville at 97.1 percent and Wolverine Lake at 97.0. Fully 83.5% of all households in the county are White, non-Hispanic households.

### **Education, Occupation, and Income**

- ***Oakland County residents are better-educated than they were in 1990.*** The share of persons 25 or older with less than a high school degree dropped from 15.4 percent to 10.7 percent. The share of persons with at least a bachelor’s degree increased from 30.1 percent to 38.2 percent. Shares of both bachelor’s degrees and graduate and professional degrees both experienced significant increases.
- ***Oakland County’s residents are better educated than residents in most counties in Michigan.*** Oakland County exceeds the state averages in all categories of educational attainment and is surpassed by only Washtenaw County in terms of college graduation rate. Other southeast Michigan counties have 10 to 20 percent lower college graduation rates. This makes the county well-suited for economic growth.
- ***Educational attainment levels vary greatly across the county.*** Twelve communities had college graduation rates surpassing 60 percent, while nine communities had rates below 20 percent. Such variations translate into highly divergent income levels, which have implications for housing affordability.
- ***Management and professional jobs dominate.*** Almost half of all county workers (45%) have occupations that are considered management, professional or technical in nature. Sales and office jobs account for almost 27% of jobs.
- ***People moving into Oakland County are better educated and earn more money than those moving out.*** From 1995 to 2000, the county gained 15,000 people with bachelors or graduate degrees through migration. It lost almost 6,000 people with only a high school education through migration. From 1995 to 2000, the county gained over 23,000 households earning \$60,000 or more through migration. Most of them worked in managerial,

professional, and related jobs. The county had a net loss of people earning less than \$60,000 through migration.

- ***Incomes in Oakland County grew in the 1990s and are higher than in most other counties.*** Median household income grew by almost 10% in Oakland County during the 1990s. In Michigan, Oakland County trails only Livingston County in household income. It is number one in both family income and per capita income. When compared to 20 benchmark counties identified by Oakland County leaders, Oakland County is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest in per capita income—one spot higher than where it was in 1990.
- ***Household income varied considerably by community, housing tenure, and race / ethnicity.*** Bloomfield Hills had the highest median household income at \$170,790, while Royal Oak Township had the lowest median household income at \$36,324. There was great variation between these extremes. Owner occupants had consistently higher average median household incomes than renter occupants. Asians had the highest median household income (\$76,949), followed by Whites (\$63,221), Native Americans (\$52,250), Blacks (\$50,871) and Hispanics/Latinos (\$48,057).
- ***A relatively small, but significant, share of Oakland County households earn very low incomes.*** Almost 5% of Oakland County households had incomes below \$10,000 in 2000; 12% (almost 57,000 households) earned less than \$20,000. Almost 21% (nearly 100,000) of households earned less than \$30,000. While these shares are lower than in many other counties in the state, they are still striking in their implications for housing affordability.
- ***Poverty is a problem for single-parent households.*** The county's overall poverty rate is low, but it is far more prevalent among single-parent families than married couple families. Single-parent, male-headed families with children are almost four times more likely to be in poverty than married-couple families with children. Single-parent, female-headed families with children are 8.7 times more likely to be in poverty.
- ***Poverty levels vary considerably by community. Poverty is particularly problematic in a few communities.*** The overall poverty rate ranged from a high of 23.5% to 2.2% or less. The lowest rate for any community was the 2.2% in Novi. On the high end of the scale was Royal Oak Township (23.5%), followed by Pontiac (22.1%) and Hazel Park (12.4%). No other community had a rate of 10 percent or above.

## **Conclusions:**

### **Growth Rates and Unevenness of Growth**

- ***Growth attests to the county's strengths in many of the areas that attract residents,*** such as economic opportunity, neighborhood quality, quality of services, tax burden, and public safety. The implication is that the county and its constituent communities should continue to do much of what they have done in the past to retain their status as communities of choice.
- ***Unevenness of growth presents challenges that must be addressed.*** The location of growth in communities along the northern and western edges of the county has already resulted in increased infrastructure and service needs. The high concentration of growth in a small number of communities in the county suggests that the needs in these areas are likely to be

particularly high. On the other hand, there is currently no evidence of substantial abandonment of older communities, but historical trends across the country suggest that without proactive efforts to ensure stability of older communities, abandonment and deterioration will result. Unequal access to jobs and housing are also a potential concern.

- ***Dramatic decrease in future growth demands attention from stakeholders.*** County leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors will also need to look to the dramatic drop in growth rates that has begun and is forecast to continue over the next few decades. A slowing of growth may have a calming effect on problems or needs created by high growth (e.g. affordability problems detailed in Chapter 4). Still, slow growth poses issues of concern. Forecasts for government revenue, service demands, and development opportunities need to reflect the new reality. Slow growth is particularly a concern when it comes from a loss of residents to other counties in the region, rather than simply a region-wide decrease in growth rates. This trend has already begun, and county stakeholders may need to take actions to minimize such losses and stimulate new in-movers. In-migration by foreigners has accounted for a considerable share of the county's growth, but the stability of immigration is unpredictable in the long-run.

### **Nature of Growth**

- ***Growth through natural increase (i.e. births exceeding deaths) and foreign immigration are positive indicators of community attractiveness.*** The fact that natural increase has accounted for the majority of growth suggests that families have decided that the county is a good place to live and they. Likewise, the growth that the county has experienced through foreign immigration is a positive sign. Increasingly, people from outside of the United States are attracted to Oakland County. It appears that much of what county stakeholders have done in the past to attract residents has worked well.
- ***Proactive steps to alter domestic migration patterns are warranted.*** The rate of natural increase in population has begun to slow and will likely continue on this path as baby boomers leave child-bearing years. Also, it is unclear how long the county will be able to maintain high levels of foreign immigration. Domestic migration is the only option for countering downturns in these two dimensions of population growth. Yet, the county has lost population through domestic migration, and the volume of loss has grown since 2000. Data presented later in this report suggest that housing cost is an important factor influencing domestic migration. Yet, many others are likely at play, particularly housing and lifestyle options for the elderly and young adults. The county has opportunities to address these factors.
- ***On-going observation of reactions to increasing racial and ethnic diversity are warranted.*** The diversity brought about by migration into the county presents wonderful opportunities for people and communities within the county. However, historical patterns of community reaction to racial and ethnic change suggest that the potential for tension is quite high. This is particularly true in a metropolitan area that has not historically adjusted well to such change. The fact racial/ethnic minorities now account for the majority of the population in several communities can be interpreted as a positive sign, but it also may indicate “white flight” that has posed challenges in other communities throughout the country. Actions may

be necessary to alleviate racial/ethnic tensions that arise as the county's population continues to change.

### **Age of the Population**

- ***County stakeholders must prepare for and adapt to the changing age structure in the county.*** The aging of the population suggests that great changes are in store for housing needs, service needs, and economic growth. For example, the number of persons with disabilities is likely to grow substantially in the coming decades. Also, the county's older population is likely to want smaller, more manageable housing with necessary services (e.g. medical, transportation, etc.), and appropriate lifestyle options readily available in their communities. Yet, because of their higher incomes than in the past, elderly households are likely to have greater opportunities to move to other parts of the state or country. Thus, the ability of the county and its communities to accommodate the demands of the elderly population will become increasingly important. We discuss several of the issues related to an aging population in more depth in subsequent chapters of this report.