

METROTRENDS

A DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SERVICE OF METROPLAN

SPECULATION ABOUT CHANGING LAND USE PATTERNS

(or Keep Your Eyes On The Donut and Not the Hole)

Like most urban areas in America today, the Little Rock/North Little Rock metropolitan area has seen a large migration of residency from the city center into suburban and exurban locations¹. Recent studies² examined the impact of suburban and exurban population growth on regional employment center location and thus, the migrations' impact on future regional land use and traffic patterns.

Transportation planners have confirmed a direct correlation between the migration of population into suburban and exurban areas and the eventual migration of employment. Indeed, for the past nearly forty years, the national average commute to work has remained unchanged at 20-22 minutes even as our cities have sprawled.

On a national level, jobs tend to follow middle and upper middle class housing out of the city. Center cities tend to be left with upper class and lower class housing without the buffer of the middle class. The "jobs/housing imbalance" is a term coined to describe both the imbalance caused to the transportation network during the lag between housing migration and job migration and also to the shortage of entry level workers in the suburbs because that workforce

has been left behind and unemployed in the center city.

Preliminary population and housing unit counts from the 1990 Decennial Census for the Little Rock/North Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) were released as part of the local review process this past August. The preliminary counts reflect a slight population increase of 1.9 percent for Pulaski County, while the three remaining metro counties of Saline, Faulkner and Lonoke experienced gains of 20.6 percent, 29.6 percent and 13.2 percent, respectively.

The preliminary counts show only the number of housing units per census tract. Examination of population shifts through the use of total population counts won't be possible until final data becomes available starting this spring. However, the housing unit counts have provided

the basis for this preliminary examination of regional population shifts within the Little Rock-North Little Rock area since 1960.

The 1990 preliminary housing unit counts for the MSA reflect a large increase in the number of housing units for all four counties (See Table #1). This increase was expected due to the overall population growth and the decreasing household sizes caused by delayed marriages and fewer children per household. Pulaski County gained the greatest number of units with an overall increase of 18,216 since 1980, followed by Faulkner County with the addition of 6,583 units, Saline County with 5,764 units and Lonoke with 2,560 units. Yet within this apparently healthy increase lie trends that will profoundly effect the future land use patterns within the metropolitan area.

Table #1
HOUSING UNIT COUNT
1960-1990

	1960	1970	1980	1990
PULASKI	76,449	98,180	132,810	151,026
SALINE	8,148	11,684	18,854	24,618
FAULKNER	7,902	10,196	16,814	23,397
LONOKE	7,597	8,910	12,442	15,002
MSA	100,096	128,970	180,920	214,043

Source: 1960, 1970, 1980 Decennial Census
1990 Preliminary Counts - Local Review

The 1960 Census reported a total of 76,449 housing units in Pulaski County or 76 percent of the housing units in the four county area. That percentage held steady at the 1970 Census, but dropped to 73 percent at 1980 and 70 percent at the 1990 Census. While Pulaski County is still recording a large number of new housing units, its percentage of metropolitan area housing is declining.

Within the county itself, the "core" and "central" areas of Little Rock and North Little Rock (See Map) contained 45,228, or 44.6 percent, of those units in 1960. Thirty years later, the number of housing units within Pulaski County had almost doubled to total 151,026. At the same time, the number of housing units in the older areas of the two cities declined 5,630 units to 18.5 percent of the counties units. Census tracts in the older areas which showed the greatest

Table #2
HOUSING UNIT BY AREA BY DECADE

	1960	1970	1980	1990
CORE	21,930	17,828	15,104	13,659
CENTRAL	23,298	24,756	25,323	25,939
SUBURBAN I	20,252	33,969	50,668	55,712
SUBURBAN II	10,969	21,627	41,715	55,716
EXURBAN	23,647	30,790	48,110	63,017

Source: 1960, 1970, 1980 Decennial Census
1990 Preliminary Counts - Local Review

numerical decrease during the period were tracts 1, 8, 9, 10, 25 and 26.

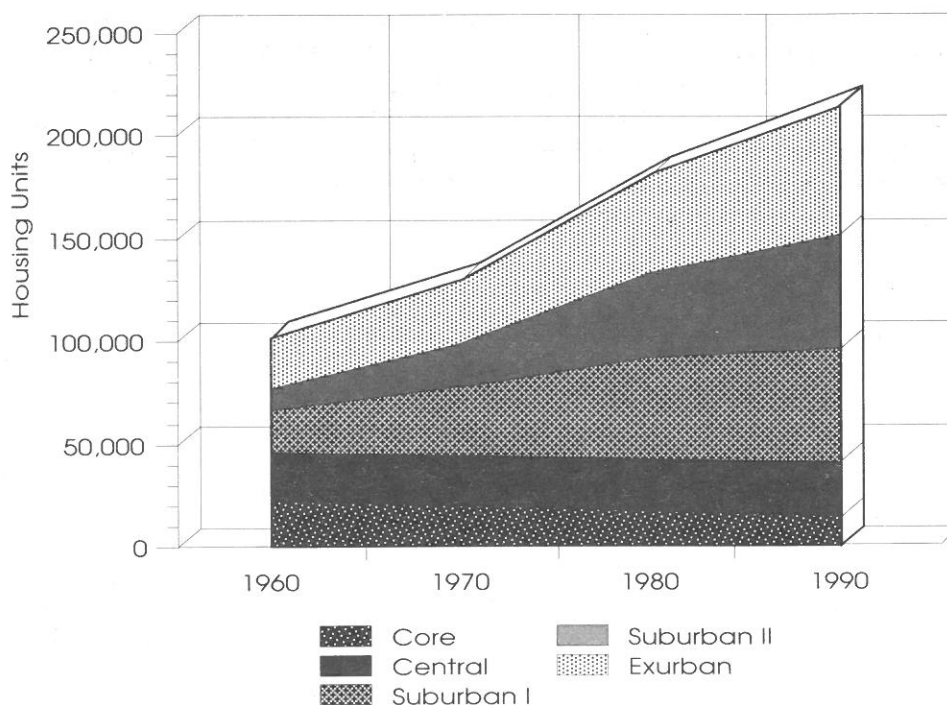
The number of housing units in suburban tracts increased greatly during this same thirty-year period. The resulting population growth in those tracts was followed by increased business development, particularly along the major arterials streets. Simultaneously, business activity in all categories except office

and banking decreased in the core area of Little Rock and North Little Rock. Suburban Area I added over 35,400 housing units while Suburban Area II, the current "growth" area of Pulaski County, added 44,747 units since 1960. The three exurban counties (Saline, Faulkner and Lonoke) experienced an increase of 39,370 housing units during this same period.

Graph #2 shows the addition of housing units by the five geographic areas distributed among the three decades. As noted earlier, the "core" of both Little Rock and North Little Rock has been losing housing units throughout the thirty-year period. However, as can be seen in Graph #2 and Table #3, the number and rate of housing unit loss has decreased each decade. The "central" areas of Little Rock and North Little Rock have been able to increase the number of housing units just slightly each decade.

During the 1960's, the greatest increase in the number of housing units occurred in Suburban Area I. This area witnessed the addition of 13,717 units, followed by the Suburban Area II with a 10,658 unit addition and the Exurban area with 7,143 new units. The 1970's recorded

Graph #1
LR-NLR MSA TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS
1960 — 1990



the fastest rate of growth for the MSA, and the number of housing units almost doubled over the previous decade. The geographic boundaries of the urbanizing area were expanding rapidly. Suburban Area II garnered the largest increase of housing units during the 1970's with the addition of over 20,000 units. Suburban Area I and the Exurban Area also grew rapidly adding approximately 17,000 units each.

Overall growth slowed in the MSA during the 1980's. Yet for the first time the Exurban Area attracted a greater share of new housing units than any other area within Pulaski County. The continuing outward shift of the population into the suburban areas of Pulaski County and the resulting migration of employment opportunities seem to be a firmly established trend in the Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA.

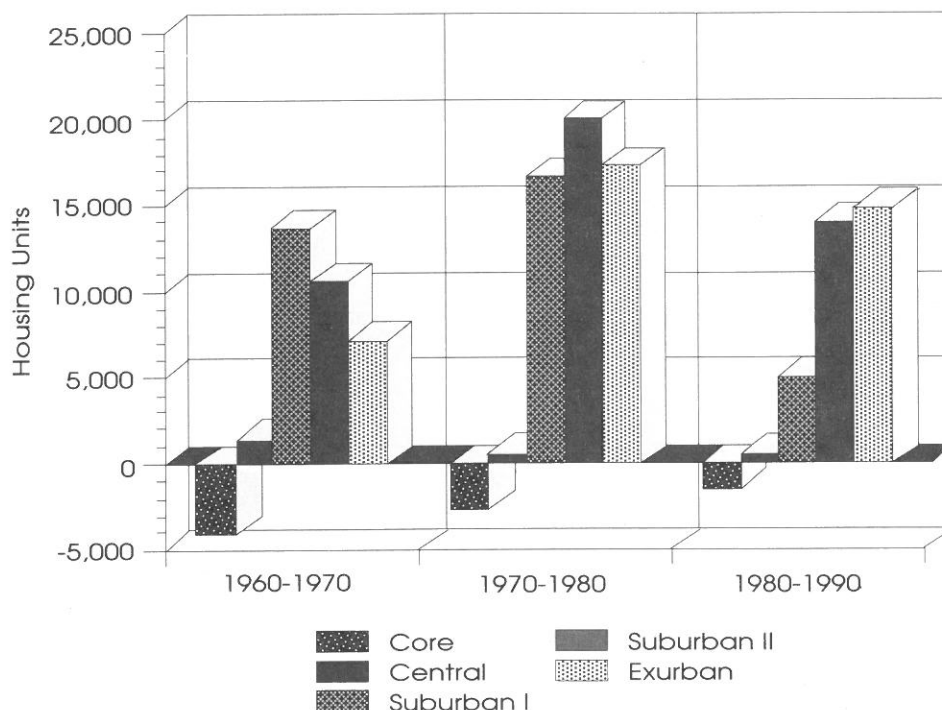
That trend is not without cost, however. The expanding suburban and exurban growth is at lower and lower densities. Consequently, costs per unit of public services (roads, utilities, fire and police protection, libraries and parks) increases. Lower density development gives over more land to the automobile for roads and parking, contributes to suburban gridlock, and causes us to burn more gasoline with all of the environmental and balance of payments costs associated with it. In other jurisdictions such migration patterns have resulted in the city emptying from the center leaving abandoned properties and a grossly underutilized public capital investment in the core infrastructure.

Studying the interrelated issues of land use, jobs/housing balance, transportation planning, and public infrastructure planning raises more questions than

we currently have answers for. What is clear nationally, as well as here in Central Arkansas, is that the problems and opportunities are multi-jurisdictional and multi-faceted. They involve a variety of public and private actors making incremental decisions, often in isolation from each other, that are shaping the way our city-region is built and will function. The ultimate questions are these: "Is the city we are building the one we would have designed had we had the opportunity? Does it look the way we would want it to look? Does it work the way we would want it to work?"

How do we answer those questions? Several areas of the country are attempting to address such issues and trends for their regions. We have explored two such efforts in the article on page 5.

Graph #2
CHANGE IN HOUSING UNITS
1960 — 1990



Footnotes:

1. Definitions — Suburban Areas — Areas of increasing population densities and urban characteristics located adjacent to the central cities. Two such suburban area developed locally during the thirty year period, 1960-1990, and were identified as Suburban Area I and Suburban Area II for purposes of this newsletter.

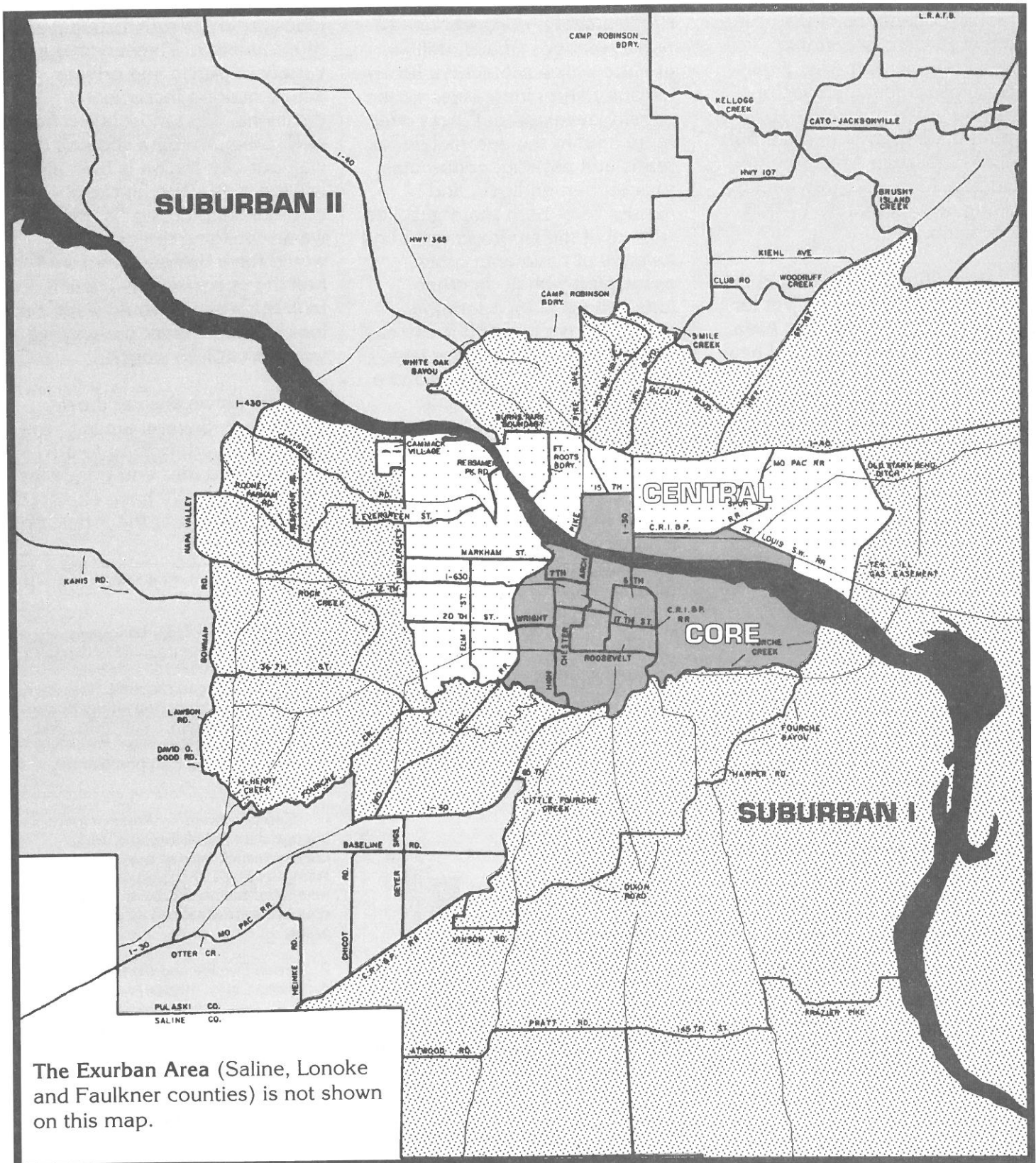
Exurban Areas — Areas of increasing population densities and urban characteristics located beyond the suburban areas. For purposes of this newsletter Saline, Faulkner and Lonoke counties were identified as exurban areas.

2. Urban Decline and the Future of American Cities: Katharine Brabury, Anthony Downs and Kenneth Small; The Brookings Institute; 1982, Washington, D.C.

Neighborhoods and Urban Development; Anthony Downs; The Brookings Institute; 1981, Washington, D.C.

Four Perspectives on Urban Hardship; Richard Nathan, Charles Adams, Jr.; Vol. 104, November 3, 1989; Political Science Quarterly.

Geographic Development Areas in Pulaski County



Laying the Groundwork for Regional Growth Planning

Businesses and local governments across the country are exploring public-private partnerships, increasingly on a regional scale, to meet their future economic development needs. Two organizations, the Baltimore Regional Council of Governments and the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council, have recently completed studies which they hope will lay the groundwork for future regional cooperation.

The **Baltimore Regional Council of Governments** kicked off its strategic planning process with the completion of "Preparing for Global and Regional Collaboration: A Strategic Assessment of the Baltimore Region for Improving the Quality of Life." The study looked at

how the Baltimore region's performance compares to 31 similar metro regions and how trends in the region compare with national trends.

Specifically, the study assessed the region on the basis of 68 indicators in 15 functional categories — human resources, transportation, cultural and recreational amenities, entrepreneurial energy, government resources, employment and population, economic competitiveness, health resources, social conditions, air quality, intra-regional disparities, financial resources, housing, earnings and job quality, and utility resources.

On the basis of this study, the Council will be meeting with business and government lead-

ers in an effort to build consensus on the issues that have to be addressed if the region is to grow and prosper.

The **Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)** recently completed "Metroplan 2000" — a regional development framework which addresses the imbalance between economic growth and the resources necessary to support it. The plan is based on the tenet that concentrated growth is economically and environmentally more desirable than scattered growth or sprawl. When implemented, the plan will be the basis on which local and regional policy decisions concerning future development will be made.

Construction Trends

For Cities in the Little Rock — North Little Rock Metropolitan Area

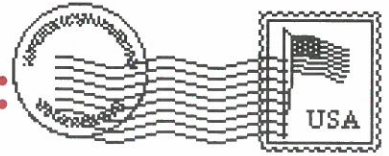
New Residential — Total						
	Housing Units			Value (\$)		
	1990	1989	Percent	1990	1989	Percent
1st Quarter	308	232	14.2	22,321,945	18,796,925	18.7
2nd Quarter	250	222	12.6	23,404,041	18,197,840	28.6
3rd Quarter	161	247	-34.8	17,153,362	20,059,850	-14.4
TOTAL	719	701		62,879,348	57,054,615	

New Residential — Single Family						
	Housing Units			Value (\$)		
	1990	1989	Percent	1990	1989	Percent
1st Quarter	213	222	-4.0	18,479,839	18,581,925	-1.0
2nd Quarter	234	222	5.4	23,184,041	18,197,840	27.4
3rd Quarter	157	245	-35.9	17,088,362	20,019,850	-14.6
TOTAL	604	689		58,752,242	56,799,615	

New Residential — Multi-Family						
	Housing Units			Value (\$)		
	1990	1989	Percent	1990	1989	Percent
1st Quarter	95	10	850	3,842,106	215,000	168.7
2nd Quarter	16	0	100	220,000	0	100.0
3rd Quarter	4	2	100	65,000	40,000	62.5
TOTAL	115	12		4,127,106	255,000	

Source: Monthly building permit reports from the Cities of Little Rock, North Little Rock, Jacksonville, Sherwood, Benton, and Bryant, compiled by Metroplan.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:



Due to rising production and mailing costs and reduced federal funding, the **METROTRENDS** newsletter will no longer be available on a cost free basis. **METROTRENDS** newsletters deal with development related issues within the four-county Little Rock - North Little Rock MSA and will be published bi-monthly beginning February 1991. If you are interested in remaining on the mailing list to receive **METROTRENDS** and other Metroplan notices, please check the appropriate box and return to the address below. The annual subscription fee is \$12.00. Surveys not returned by January 15, 1991 will be deleted from our mailing list.

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