



CHAPTER 3. POPULATION, HOUSING AND LAND USE

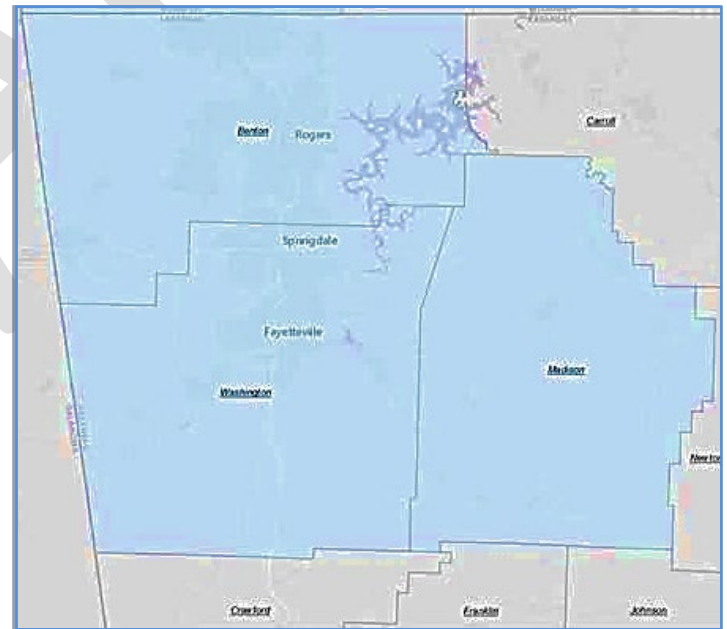
OVERVIEW OF EXISTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The NWARPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Benton and Washington Counties, Arkansas and a portion of McDonald County, Missouri.

The Urbanized Area for this region, as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau includes Benton and Washington Counties and a portion of McDonald County.

The U.S. Census Bureau designated Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Benton County, Washington County and Madison County, Arkansas (three-county area).

For the purpose of this chapter, “Northwest Arkansas” will refer to the two-county area of Benton and Washington Counties in Arkansas, and, when specified, will include the portion of McDonald County, Missouri.



Fayetteville- Springdale-Rogers, AR -MSA Area

Geographic Profile

The Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area currently encompasses three counties including Benton, Madison, and Washington Counties in Arkansas. The Northwest Arkansas Transportation Study Area (NARTS) consists of Benton and Washington County and a small portion of McDonald County in Missouri.

Benton County

- Covers 880 square miles.
- Has 846 square miles of land.
- Has 43 square miles of water.
- 153,406 in Census 2000 population.
- 221,339 in Census 2010 population.
- This represents a 43.3 percent increase and an annual growth rate of 3.73 percent.
- On average there were 6,793 people per year moving to Benton County since Census day, April 1, 2000.
- There are nineteen incorporated cities in Benton County.
- All or part of nine Benton County cities fell within the Census defined Urbanized Area in Census 2010, including the cities of Bella Vista, Bethel Heights (incorporated into Springdale, 2020), Bentonville, Cave Springs, Centerton, Little Flock, Lowell, Pea Ridge, and Rogers.
- Siloam Springs meets the Census definition of an Urban Cluster.
- Most of the population of Benton County is located along the I-49 corridor.
- The 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates the total population to be at 258,980.

Washington County

- Covers 956 square miles.
- Has 950 square miles of land.
- Has 6 square miles of water.
- 153,406 in Census 2000 population.
- 203,065 in Census 2010 population.
- This represents a 28.8 percent increase and an annual growth rate of 2.56 percent.
- On average there were 4,535 people per year moving to Washington County since Census day, April 1, 2000.
- There are thirteen incorporated cities Washington County.
- Nine of these cities fall within the urbanized area criteria. These cities include Elkins, Elm Springs, Farmington, Fayetteville, Greenland, Johnson, Springdale, Prairie Grove, and Tontitown.
- The majority of residents live near the I-49 corridor.
- The 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates the total population to be at 228,529.

Portion of McDonald County

The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) in McDonald County, Missouri is approximately 30.7 square miles. This portion of the county is mainly traversed by US Highway 71 and is largely rural in nature.

- The portion of the MPA in McDonald County, Missouri had approximately 2,089 population and approximately 751 housing units (2010 Census).
- Has approximately 751 housing units recorded during the 2010 Census.
- The Elk River is formed at Pineville, Missouri by the confluence of Big Sugar Creek and Little Sugar Creek.
- Pineville (the county seat for McDonald County), has a total area of 3.11 square miles. It had a recorded population of 791 and 287 households by the 2010 Census Bureau. The 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates the total population of Pineville City to be 811.
- Jane is a small community of 301 people in 2010 and is situated on Route 90 at the intersection with US Highway 71. The 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates the total population to be 445.

Households and Families

In 2015-2019, there were 190,853 households in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area. The average household size was 2.64 people.

Married-couple households made up 53.2 percent of the households in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area while cohabiting couple households made up 6.2 percent of households. Female householder families with no spouse or partner present and own children under 18 years were 4.7 percent of all households, while 1.6 percent of households were male householder families with no spouse or partner present and own children under 18 years. Of people living alone, 11.5 percent were male householders, and 13.1 percent were female householders, for a total of 24.6 percent of all households.

In Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area, 35.5 percent of all households have one or more people under the age of 18; 23.4 percent of all households have one or more people 65 years and over.

Population Growth

In 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the two-county (Benton and Washington) population was 424,404. The Northwest Arkansas regional population has grown annually at a 3.15 percent rate from Census 2000 to 2010. This represents, on average, an annual population increase of about 11,328 in Northwest Arkansas. By July 2019, the American Community Survey (ACS) one-year population estimate of the two counties was 518,328 (279,141 for Benton County and 239,187 for Washington County). Between the July 2015 ACS and 2019 ACS period of four years, there was an increase of 55,215 people in the two counties.

Population by Age

In 2015-2019, Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area had a total population of 514,259 – 258,310 (50.2 percent) females and 255,949 (49.8 percent) males. The median age was 34.0 years. An estimated 25.5 percent of the population was under 18 years, 39.5 percent was 18 to 44 years, 22.4 percent was 45 to 64 years, and 12.6 percent was 65 years and older. Figure 3.1 illustrates the population by age group as a percentage of the total population in the MSA.

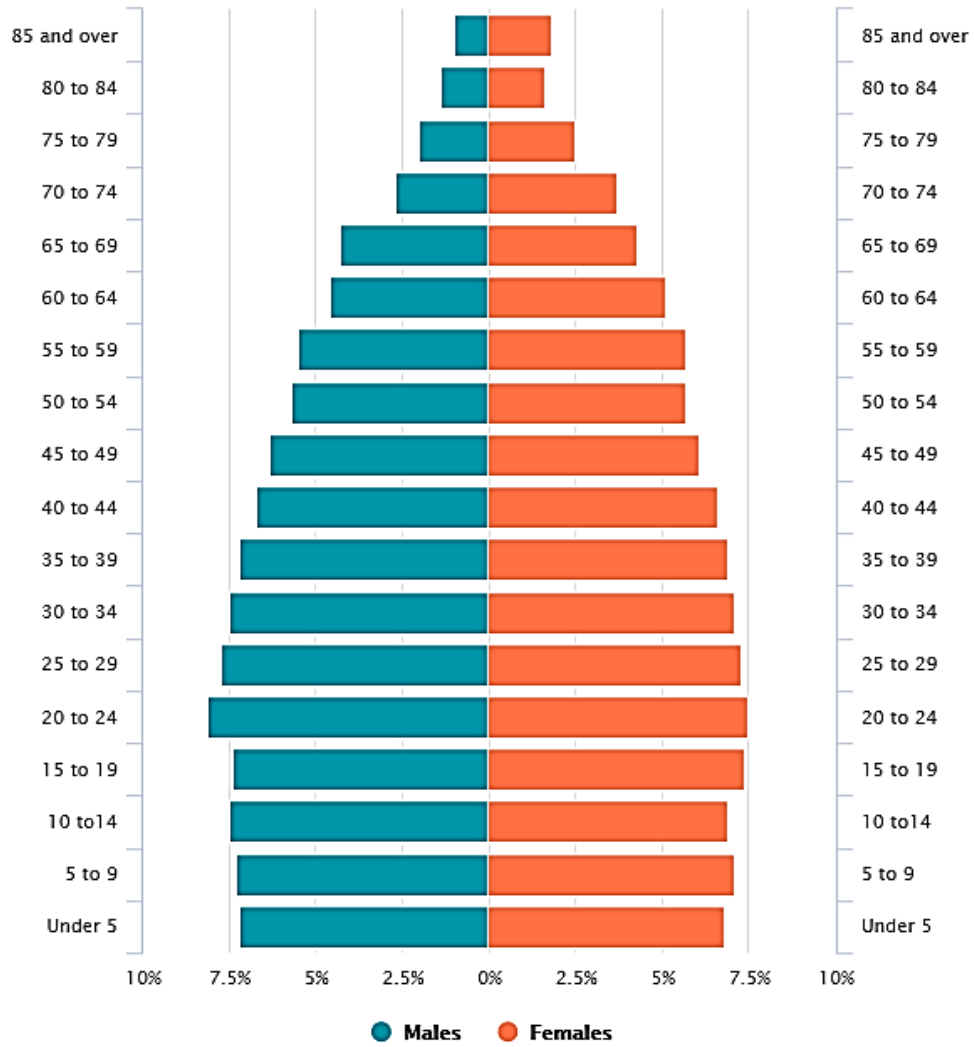
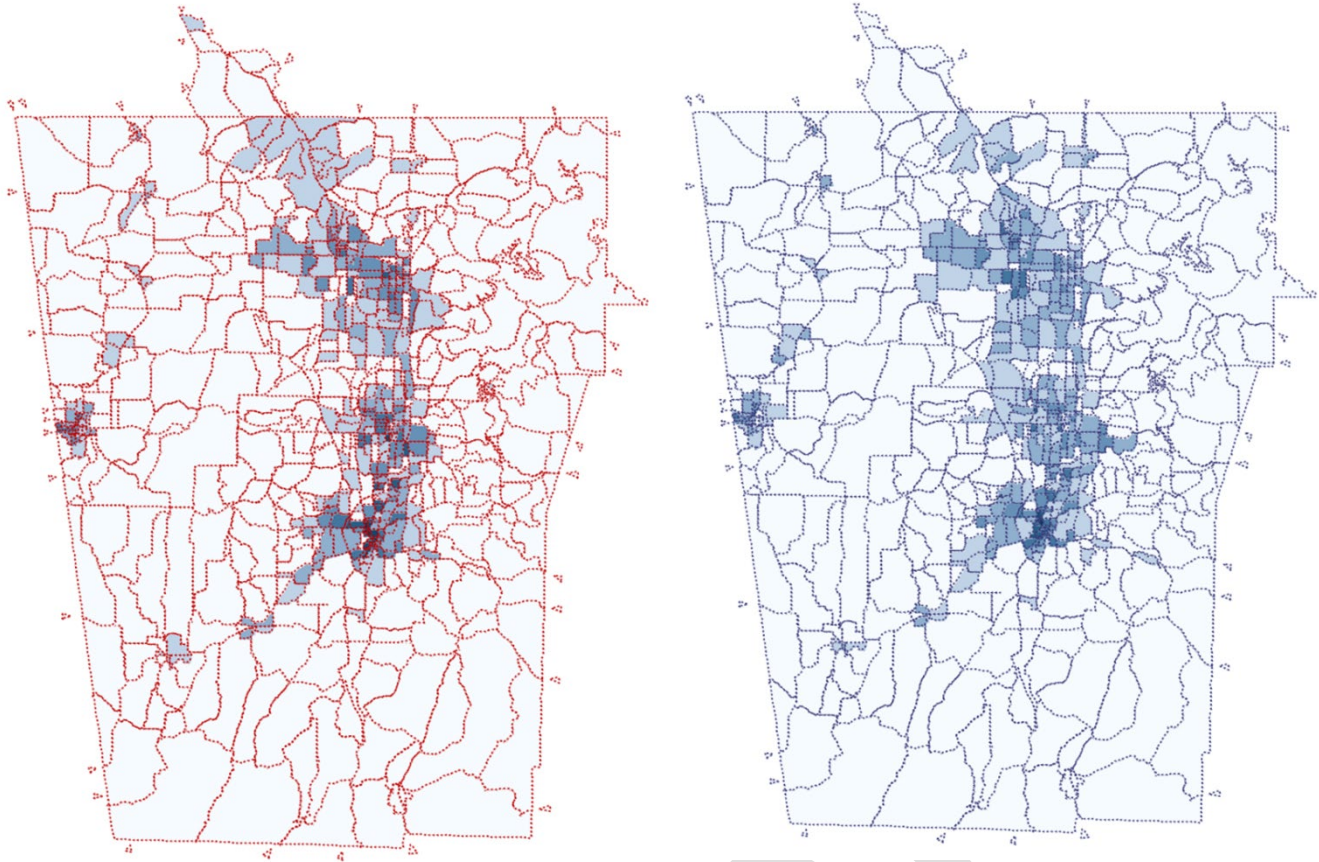


Figure 3.1 - Population by Age in the Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, AR MSA



Map 3.1 - Population Density by Traffic Analysis Zones in 2018 (left) and projected to 2045 (right)

Population Projections

In summer of 2019, the Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) developed detailed demographic population projections for Benton and Washington Counties by using an age, gender, births, deaths and migration cohort methodology. The population projection graphics illustrated here used the 2019 AEDI projections for the two counties in Northwest Arkansas. Based on this methodology, AEDI projected that by 2045 the population of Benton and Washington Counties will reach 974,275 people (with 545,893 people in Benton County and 428,382 people in Washington County). See Table 3.1.

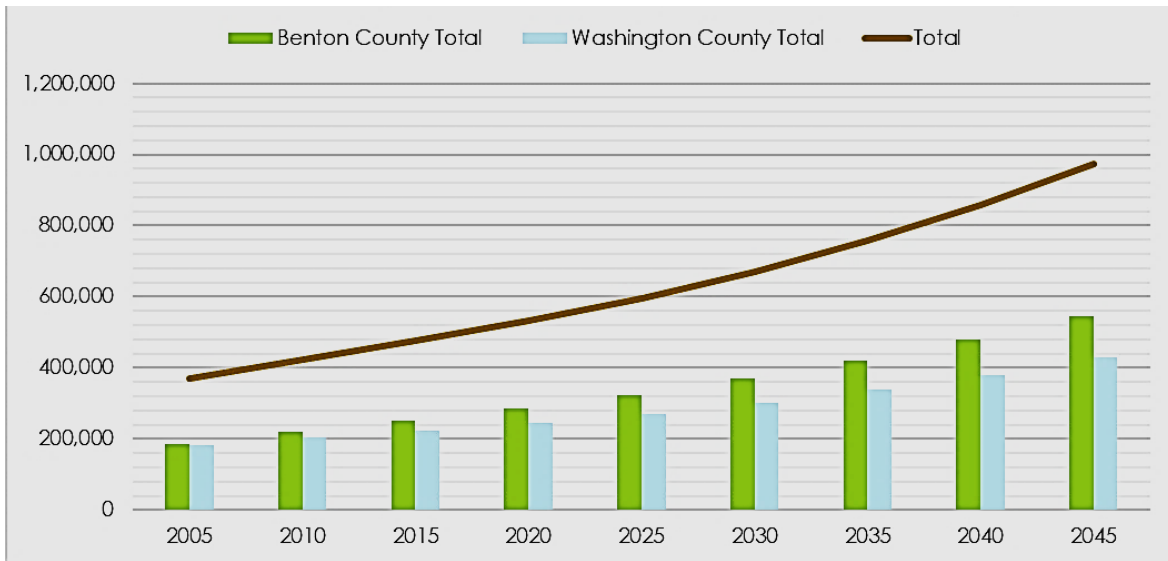


Figure 3.2 - Population Projections – Source Arkansas Economic Development Institute 2019

Geography	Population
2 Counties Total	974,275
Benton	545,893
Washington	428,382

City Population Projections

The estimated and projected populations for 2045 is shown in Table 3.1 for all the cities and incorporated Benton and Washington Counties area. These projections were based on the allocation of households to the traffic analysis zones in each city as part of the NWA Travel Demand Model. The total projected population of all incorporated and unincorporated areas are tied back to the projected population totals for each county. In both counties, many jurisdictions had an overall percent growth over 100 percent between 2020 NWARPC population estimates and NWARPC projected 2045 population. Numerous small cities have projected percent population increases of over 150 percent (Tontitown, Highfill, Greenland or Elm Springs). All cities are projected to have higher than 1 percent annual average growth rates, with the smaller communities of Tontitown, Highfill and Cave Springs growth rates higher than 5 percent. The highest total population is projected for Springdale at 154,352, an 81 percent increase from 2020 at a 2.4 percent annual average growth rate. Fayetteville will have a projected growth of 69.1 percent to reach 150,977 people by 2045. In Benton County the highest population number is projected in Rogers at 124,307, an increase of 77 percent from 2020. Bentonville is projected to have the highest percent population increase projected to grow by approximately 97.1 percent reaching 113,658 people in 2045. These population projections reflect the dramatic growth that the region has experienced in the past 30 years and are meant to help guide city planning departments and regional planners to assess future infrastructure needs for the region. These projections are also used in forecasting traffic as part of the Northwest Arkansas travel demand model.

The four largest cities in the two-county area are continuing to add population in their jurisdictions, with Fayetteville, Springdale and Rogers continuing to be the most populated cities in the area. Bentonville projected to grow at a faster rate than previous projections estimated as illustrated in the Figure 3.3 below.

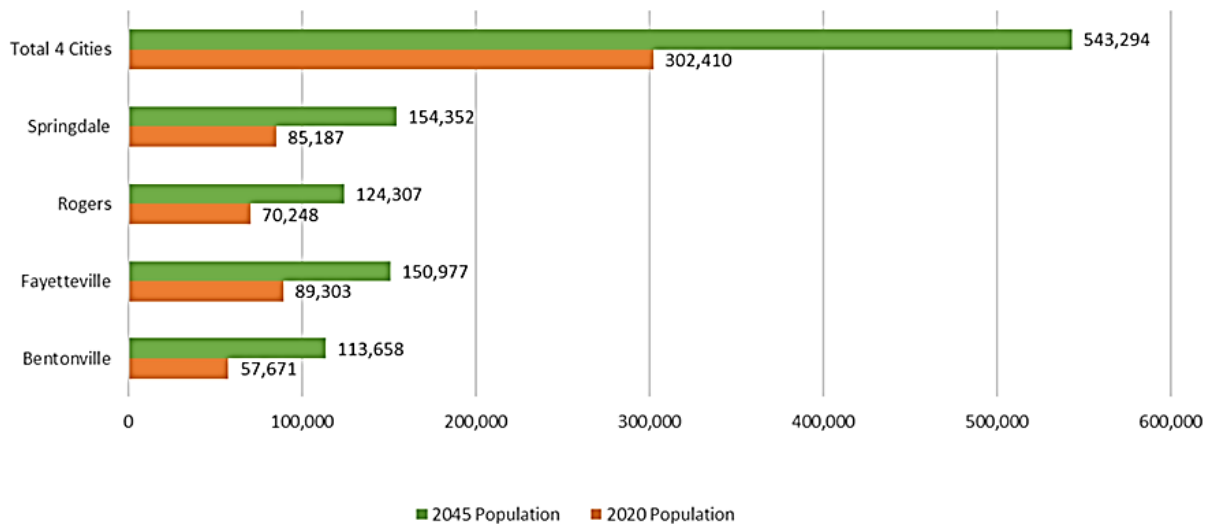


Figure 3.3 - Population Projections for the Four Largest Cities in Northwest Arkansas

City Name	2020 Population Estimate NWARPC	2045 Population Projection NWARPC	2020 to 2045 Difference	Percent Change 2020 to 2045	Annual Average Growth Rate 2020 to 2045
Avoca	520	740	220	42.3%	1.4%
Bella Vista	29,145	48,089	18,944	65.0%	2.0%
Bentonville	57,671	113,658	55,987	97.1%	2.8%
Cave Springs	5,899	14,668	8,769	148.6%	3.7%
Centerton	17,239	38,412	21,173	122.8%	3.3%
Decatur	1,800	2,681	881	48.9%	1.6%
Elkins	3,595	7,431	3,836	106.7%	2.9%
Elm Springs	2,546	6,365	3,819	150.0%	3.7%
Farmington	7,578	15,531	7,953	104.9%	2.9%
Fayetteville	89,303	150,977	61,674	69.1%	2.1%
Garfield	587	790	203	34.5%	1.2%
Gateway	486	987	501	103.2%	2.9%
Gentry	4,093	9,126	5,033	123.0%	3.3%
Goshen	2,074	3,569	1,495	72.1%	2.2%
Gravette	3,564	8,331	4,767	133.8%	3.5%
Greenland	1,416	5,522	4,106	290.1%	5.6%
Highfill	641	3,228	2,587	403.6%	6.7%
Johnson	3,788	6,254	2,466	65.1%	2.0%
Lincoln	2,508	4,007	1,499	59.8%	1.9%
Little Flock	2,809	7,072	4,263	151.7%	3.8%
Lowell	9,828	24,646	14,818	150.8%	3.7%
Pea Ridge	6,392	13,284	6,892	107.8%	3.0%
Prairie Grove	7,062	10,668	3,606	51.1%	1.7%
Rogers	70,248	124,307	54,059	77.0%	2.3%
Siloam Springs	17,347	24,788	7,441	42.9%	1.4%
Springdale*	85,187	154,352	69,165	81.2%	2.4%
Springtown	98	211	113	114.9%	3.1%
Sulphur Springs	531	847	316	59.6%	1.9%
Tontitown	4,644	15,548	10,904	234.8%	5.0%
West Fork	2,695	6,867	4,172	154.8%	3.8%
Winslow	428	565	137	32.1%	1.1%
Total Cities	441,725	808,522	366,797	83.0%	2.5%
Benton County Population	279,141	545,893	266,752	95.6%	2.7%
Washington County Population	239,187	428,382	189,195	79.1%	2.4%
Unincorporated Areas Population 2045 MTP	76,603	150,753	74,150	96.8%	2.7%
Total Two Counties Population	518,328	974,275	455,947	88.0%	2.6%

Table 3.1 - NWARPC Population Projections for the two-county region municipalities

Notes:

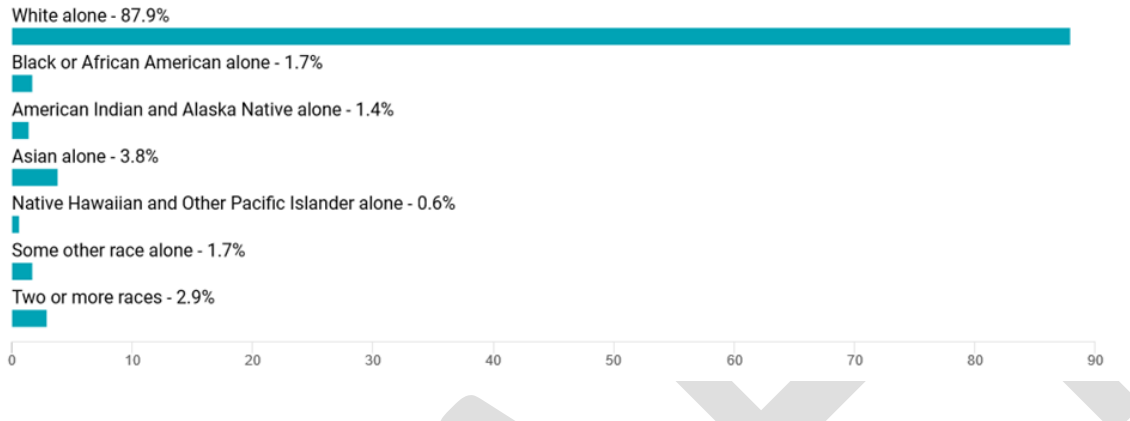
*Springdale includes the population of Bethel Heights in 2045. 2020 Census Population shows Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places in Arkansas: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. Forecasted population to 2020 is using city AAGR between 2010 to 2019.

2045 MTP Projection Population Source: State Cohort Component Model, Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI), 2019.

Demographic Estimates - Race

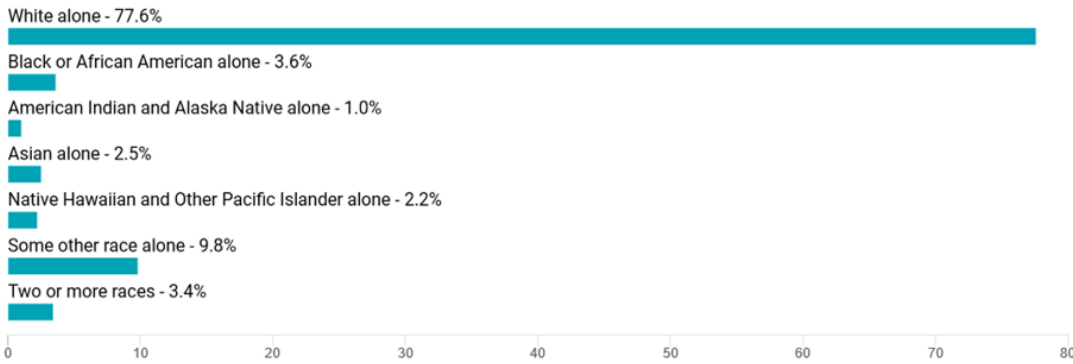
In Benton County, 87.9 percent is white alone and about 12.2 percent other race than white; in Washington County 77.6 percent is white only and 22.4 percent other race than white; and in McDonald County 87.5 percent is white only and 12.5 percent is race other than white. The break-down demographics below show the percentage for each race and ethnic group by county.

Population by Race in Benton County, Arkansas



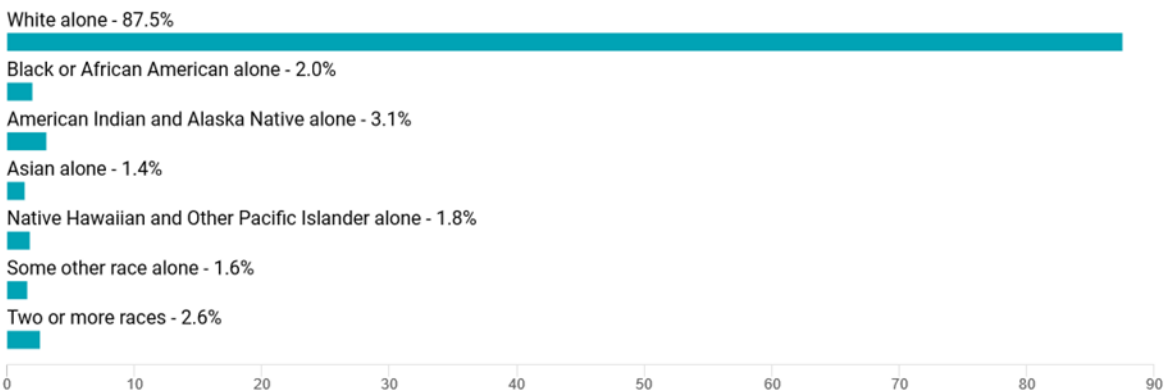
Benton County race estimates – ACS 2018 – 5-Year Estimates

Population by Race in Washington County, Arkansas



Washington County race estimates – ACS 2018 – 5-Year Estimates

Population by Race in McDonald County, Missouri



McDonald County race estimates – ACS 2018 – 5-Year Estimates

Minority Population Trends

The illustrations below show the percent of Latino or Hispanic population in Benton, Washington and McDonald Counties based on the most recent ACS data of 2018 5-year estimates.

Benton County had 49,379 Hispanic population, which represents 17.39 percent of the total county population. Of this percent, the Figures 3.4 illustrates the composition of the Hispanic population by race and ethnicity.

Washington County had 42,263 Hispanic population, which represents 17.79 percent of the total population. Of this percent, Figure 3.5 illustrates the composition of the Hispanic population by race and ethnicity.

McDonald County had 3,091 Hispanic population, which represents 11.99 percent of the total population. Of this percent, Figure 3.6 illustrates the composition of the Hispanic population by race and ethnicity.

In the McDonald County portion of the MPA, most of the population (1,007 in 2010) is white followed by people of Hispanic origin (about 292 in 2010) and Native American (about 35 people in 2010).

Between the past two published decennial Census Bureau's data (2000 and 2010) the two-county regions' (Benton and Washington) total population grew by 36.4 percent while the Hispanic population grew from 26,401 to 65,741 or by 149.0 percent. This data suggests that the Hispanic population continues to increase at a faster rate than the general population. The Census 2010 Hispanic population figure of 65,741 makes up 15.5 percent of the 424,404 two-county total population. This Hispanic total population ratio is higher in the cities of Northwest Arkansas with an 18.4 percent and 26.7 percent ratio for Washington and Benton County Cities respectively.

Another increasing minority group in Benton and Washington Counties is the Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, which would include Marshallese Island immigrants. This population grew from 969 in Census 2000 to 4,799 in 2010. This was a significant 395.25 percent increase for one decade.

The graphics below illustrate the racial and minority population mix as estimated by the 2018 American Census Survey 5-year estimates by county.

Based on the most recent data from the 2010 Census and 2018 ACS we can conclude that while the diversity of the region's population is increasing rapidly, especially in the Hispanic or Latino population group, the total population in absolute numerical terms is still predominantly white.

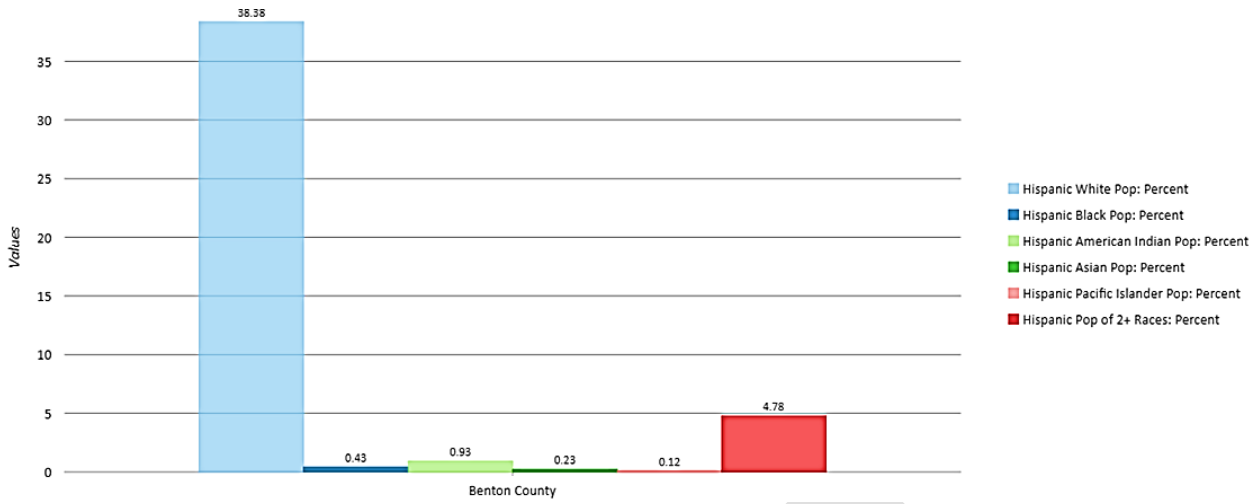


Figure 3.4 - Benton County Hispanic or Latino ethnicity and race estimates 2018 5-Year Estimates

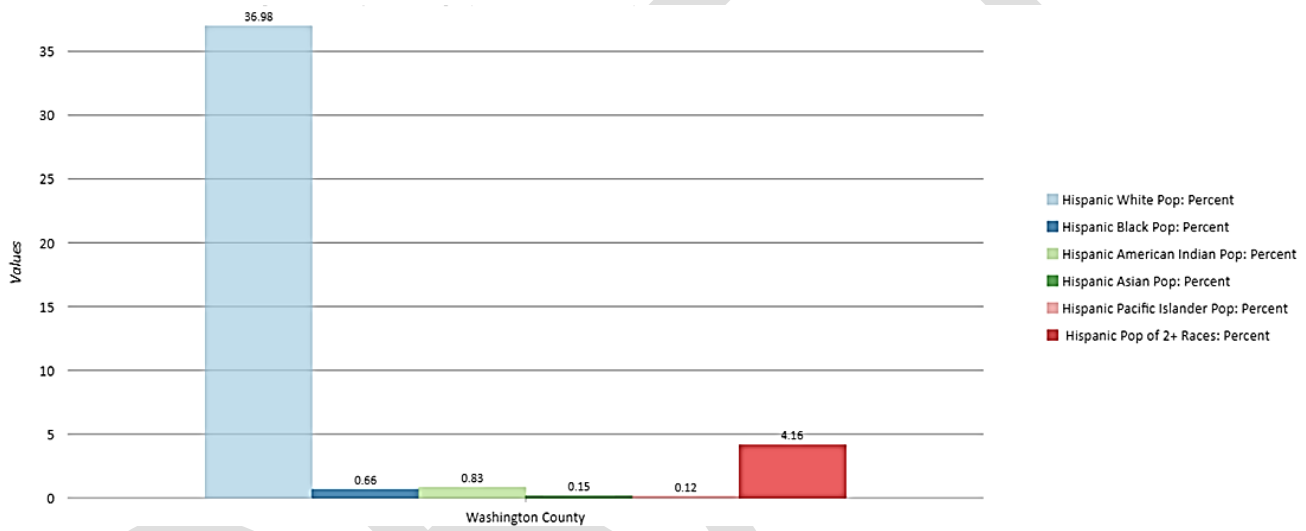


Figure 3.5 - Washington County Hispanic or Latino ethnicity and race estimates 2018 5-Year Estimates

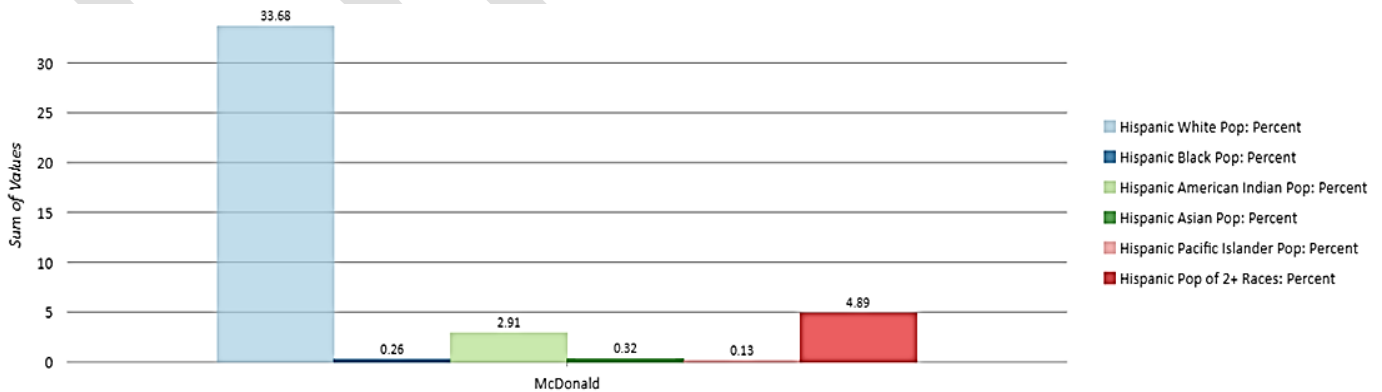


Figure 3.6 - McDonald County Hispanic or Latino ethnicity and race estimates 2018 5-Year Estimates

Nativity and Foreign Born

In 2015-2019, an estimated 88.9 percent of the people living in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area were U.S. natives. 45.7 percent of the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area population were living in the state where they were born.

Approximately 11.1 percent of Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area residents in 2015-2019 were foreign-born. 28.8 percent of foreign born were naturalized U.S. citizens and an estimated 74.9 percent entered the country before the year 2010.

Foreign-born residents of Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area come from different parts of the world. The bar graph below displays the percentage of foreign born from each world region of birth in 2015-2019 for Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area.

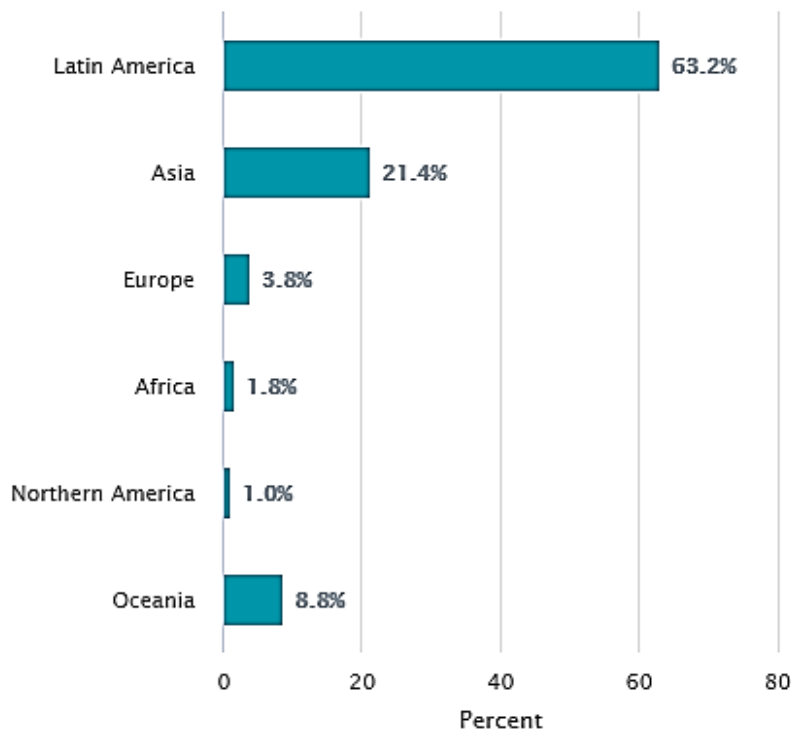


Figure 3.7 - Region of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area

Language

Among people at least five years old living in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019, 15.3 percent spoke a language other than English at home. Spanish was spoken by 11.3 percent of people at least five years old; 7.2 percent reported that they did not speak English "very well."

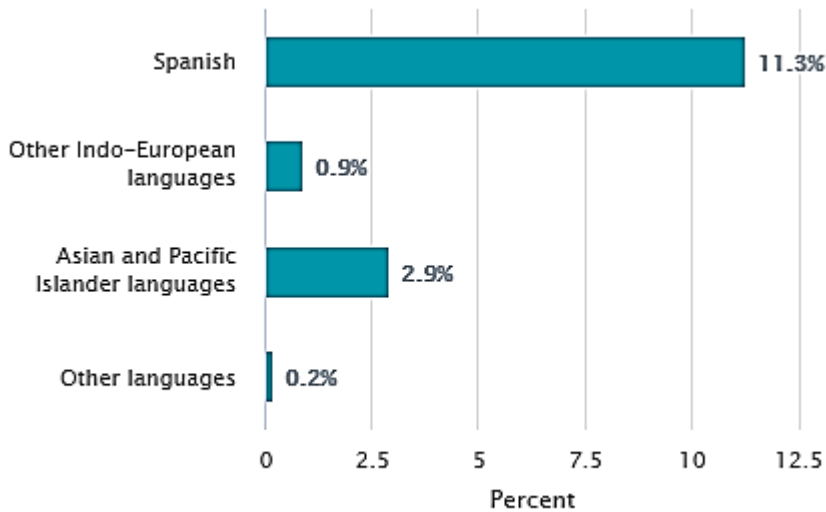


Figure 3.8 - Percent of the Population 5 years and over who Speak a Language other than English in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

Housing Inventory Characteristics

In 2015-2019, Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area had a total of 206,826 housing units. Of these housing units, 73.0 percent were single-family houses either not attached to any other structure or attached to one or more structures (commonly referred to as “townhouses” or “row houses”). 21.5 percent of the housing units were in multi-unit structures, or those buildings that contained two or more apartments. 5.4 percent were mobile homes, while any remaining housing units were classified as “other,” which included boats, recreational vehicles, vans, etc.

10.3 percent of the housing inventory was comprised of houses built since 2010, while 3.4 percent of the houses were first built in 1939 or earlier. The median number of rooms in all housing units in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area was 5.5 rooms, and of these housing units, 65.5 percent had three or more bedrooms.

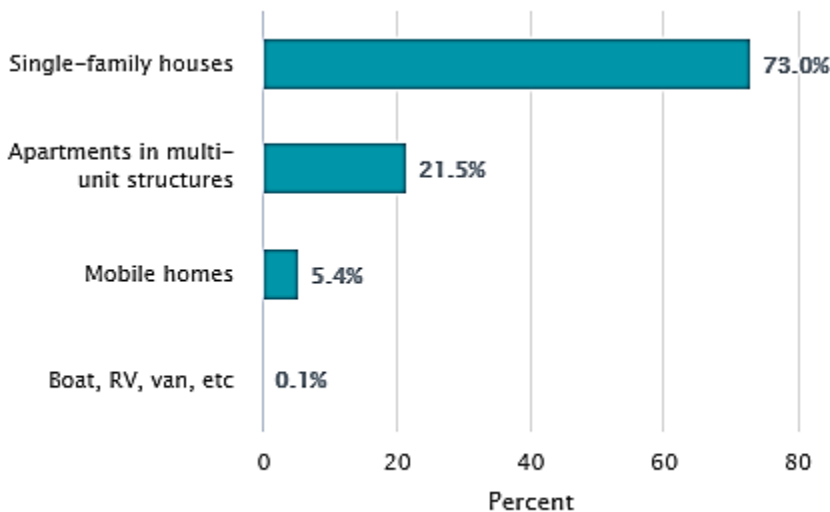


Figure 3.9 - Types of Housing Units in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

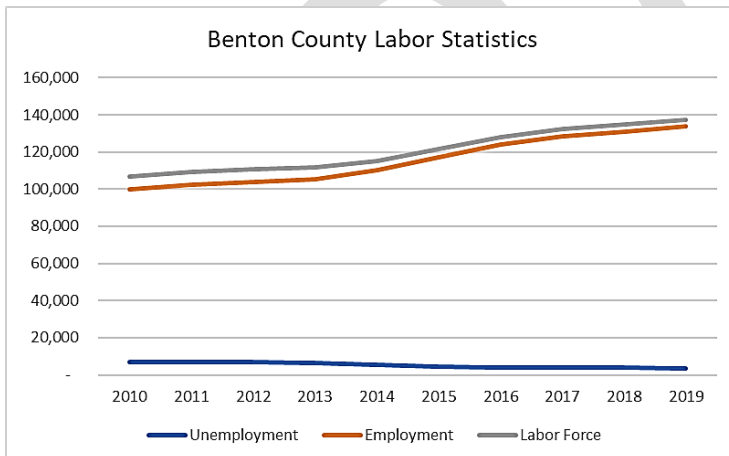
Employment Data and Trends

Given the fact that most jobs require commuting, employment trends are important in helping to predict transportation needs into the future. Employment predictions and commuting patterns are a major part of travel demand modeling. Table 3. shows the region’s labor force growing trend in the nine years and the unemployment rate continuing to decrease after the recession. As can be seen in Table 3. the annual unemployment continuously decreased since 2010 in both Washington and Benton counties. This unemployment rate was lower than other MSA in Arkansas as well as the Arkansas State rate of 6.1 percent and 6.2 percent in the United States in 2014. A historically low unemployment rate may have been a major factor in attracting population into Northwest Arkansas and a relatively low rate should continue to attract migration into the area.

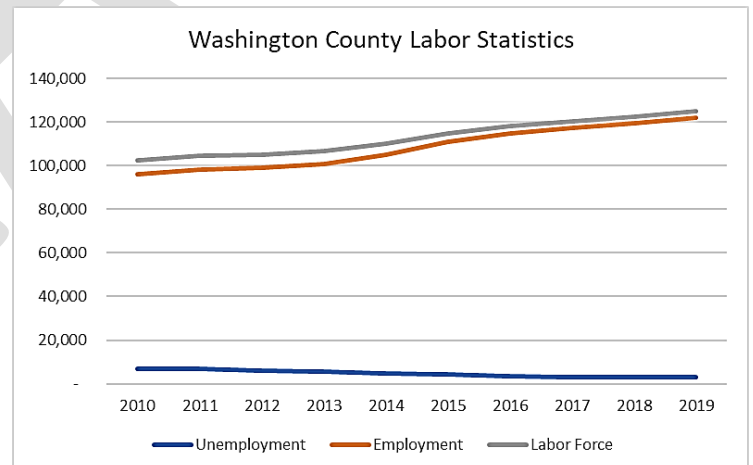
Year	Unemployment	Employment	Labor Force
2010	7,122	99,853	106,975
2011	7,133	102,286	109,419
2012	6,659	103,974	110,633
2013	6,290	105,443	111,733
2014	5,306	109,992	115,298
2015	4,572	117,035	121,607
2016	3,713	124,007	127,720
2017	3,908	128,439	132,347
2018	3,872	130,888	134,760
2019	3,601	133,610	137,211

Year	Unemployment	Employment	Labor Force
2010	6,703	96,021	102,724
2011	6,607	98,067	104,674
2012	5,920	99,336	105,256
2013	5,714	101,019	106,733
2014	4,803	105,238	110,041
2015	4,054	110,974	115,028
2016	3,251	114,945	118,196
2017	3,119	117,465	120,584
2018	3,186	119,442	122,628
2019	3,053	121,914	124,967

Benton County



Washington County



Data Source: Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Figure 3.10 - Employment Trend in Benton and Washington Counties

To compare, the data in Figure 3.11 are based on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages – Annual – Place of Work.

* Note, this graph only includes Benton and Washington County, AR

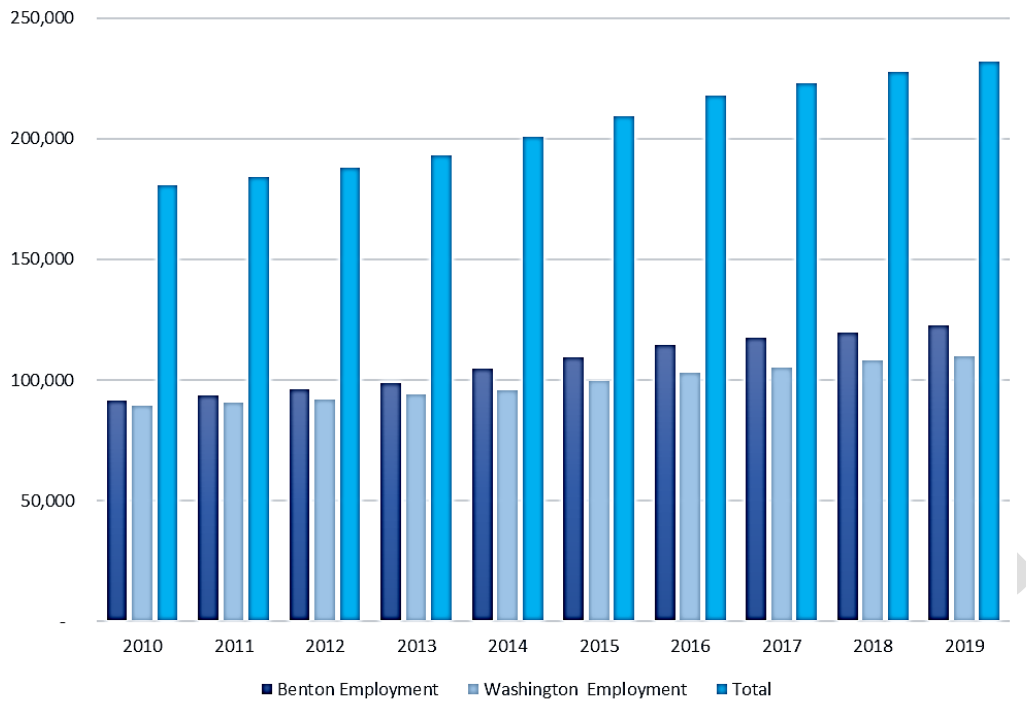
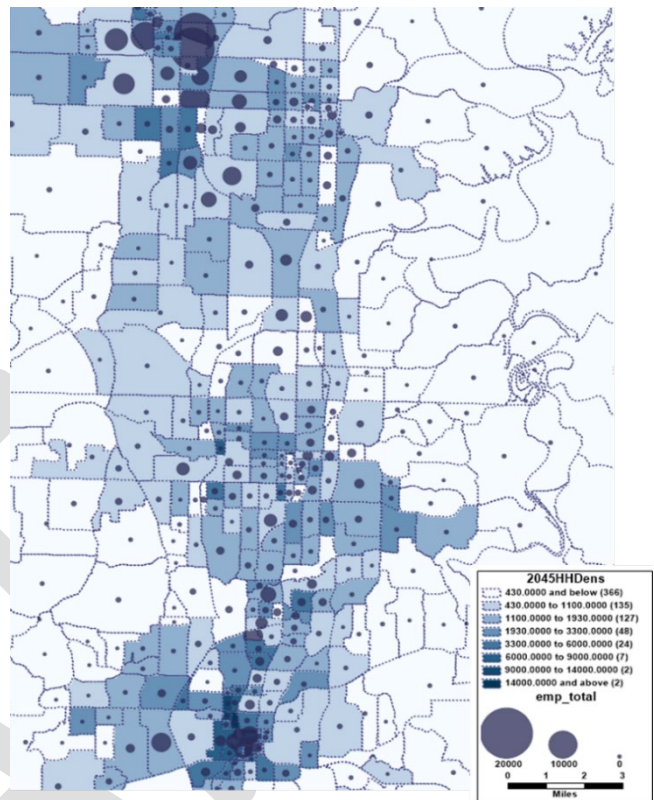
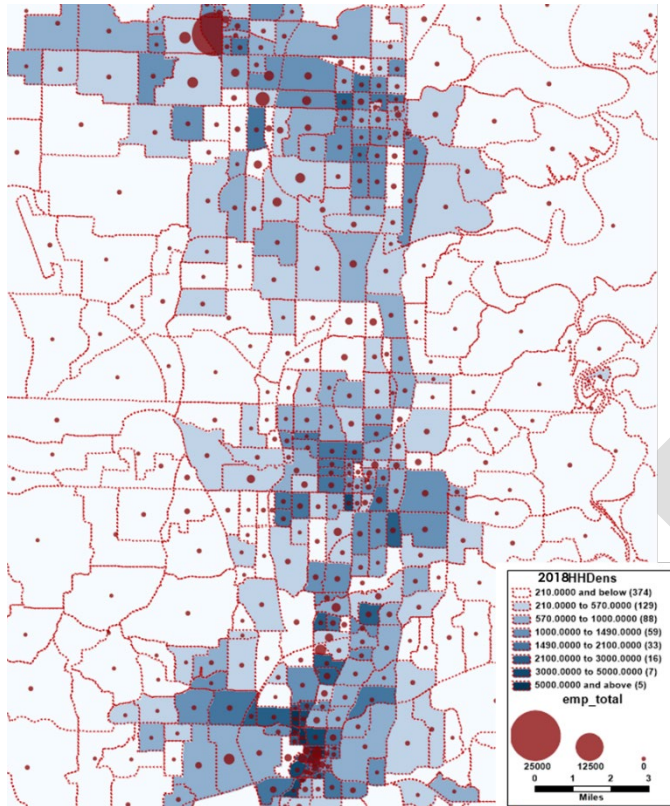


Figure 3.11 - Employment trend based on the 2010-2019 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

As Figure 3.11 illustrates, employment numbers have consistently increased since 2010 in both Benton and Washington Counties, with Benton county numbers higher than Washington county.

Maps 3.2 show employment density developed for the 2018 and 2045 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) for the Northwest Arkansas Travel Demand Model. The density of the employment and the largest number of employees in the region are in the urban corridor, along I-49 between south Fayetteville and Bentonville. The largest employers in Northwest Arkansas include the Walmart Stores, Inc. in Bentonville; JB Hunt Transport SVC Inc., in Lowell; Tyson Foods, Inc., in Springdale; and the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. The urban corridor continues to have the highest density and not surprisingly most of the trips are to be expected to take place between these TAZs and the higher employment and economic activity TAZs.



Maps 3.2 - Employment density by Traffic Analysis Zones in 2018 and forecasted 2045 per the Northwest Arkansas Travel Demand Model

Employment Status and Type of Employment

In Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area, 62.4 percent of the population 16 and over were employed; 35.3 percent were not currently in the labor force.

An estimated 82.7 percent of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 11.2 percent were federal, state, or local government workers; and 6.0 percent were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business.

Class of worker	Number	Percent
Private wage and salary workers	204,825	82.7
Federal, state, or local government workers	27,823	11.2
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	14,900	6.0

In 2015-2019, the civilian employed population 16 years and older in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area worked in the following industries:

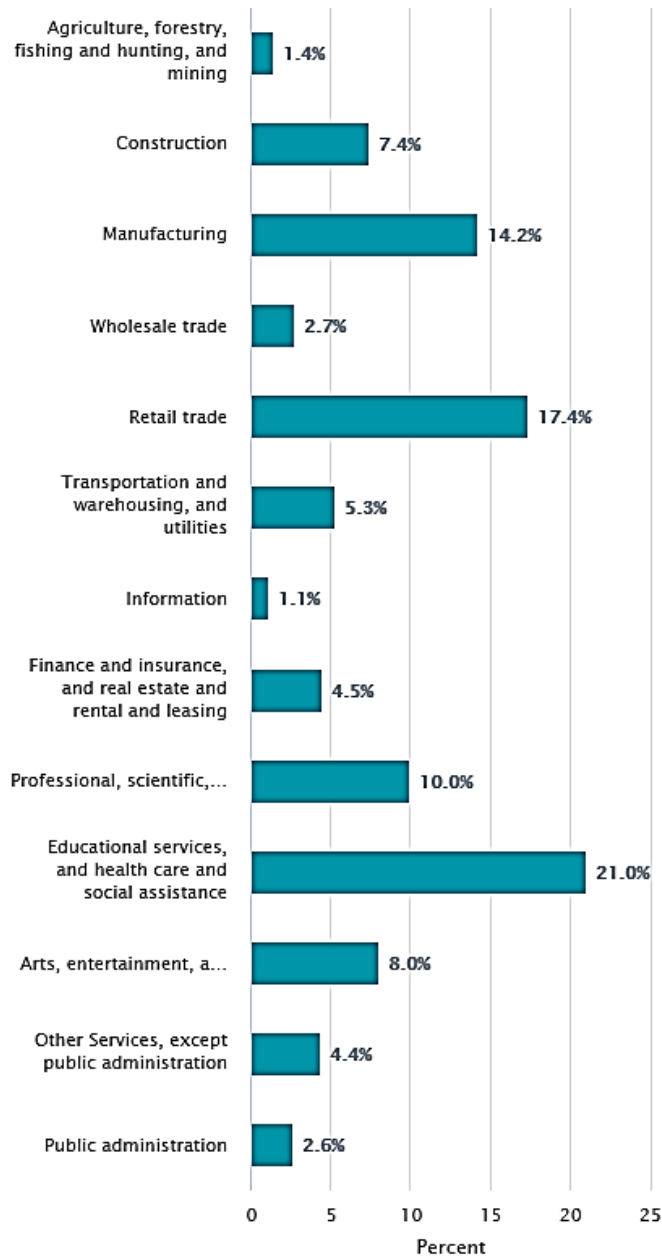


Figure 3.12 - Industries in the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

Figure 3.12 illustrates the wide variety of industries present in the MSA region, with the educational services, health care and social assistance being the highest (at 21 percent) followed by the retail trade (17.4 percent) and the manufacturing sector at 14.2 percent. The sectors with the smallest percent are information and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining.

Occupations

In terms of occupations of civilian population in the MSA, the highest percent of employed population 16 years and over are in management, business, sciences and arts occupations (38.1 percent) and sales and office occupations (22.1 percent) as illustrated in the table below.

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	Number	Percent
Management, business, sciences, and arts occupations	94,302	38.1
Service occupations	36,824	14.9
Sales and office occupations	54,656	22.1
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	22,839	9.2
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	39,201	15.8

Vehicles Available

According to the ACS 2019 one-year estimate there were 253,953 workers 16 years and over in households in the MSA. Of these only 1.7% had no vehicle available while approximately 80 percent of workers had 2 or more vehicles available while. Figure 3.13 illustrates vehicles available in the MSA.

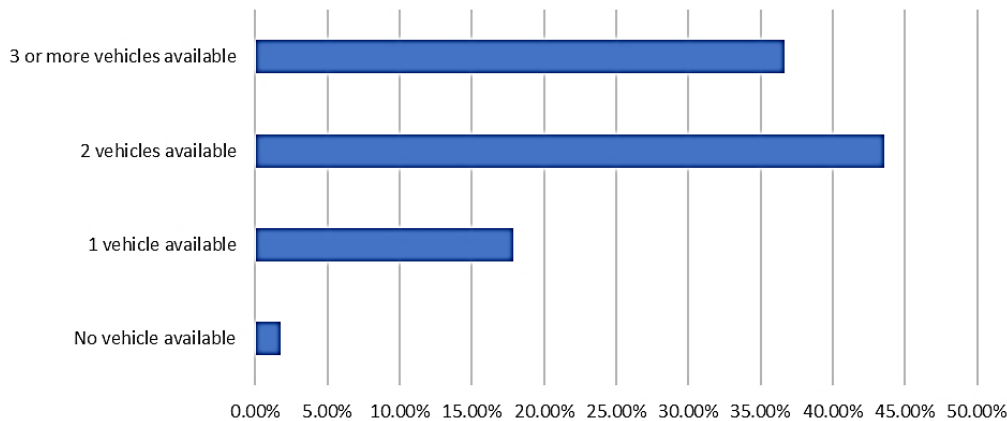


Figure 3.13 - Vehicles available by Occupied Household Units

Commuting to Work – Means of Transportation

An estimated 82.0 percent of Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area workers drove to work alone in 2015-2019, and 10.9 percent carpooled. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 20.9 minutes to get to work.

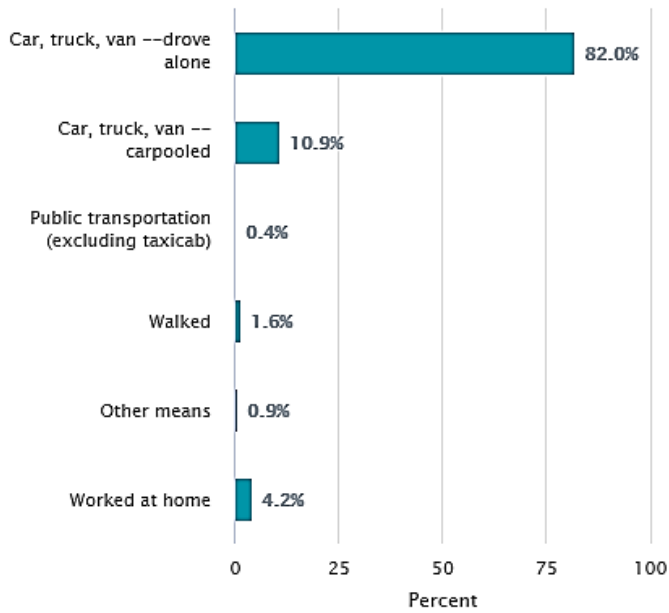


Figure 3.14 - Percent of Workers 16 and over Commuting by Mode in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

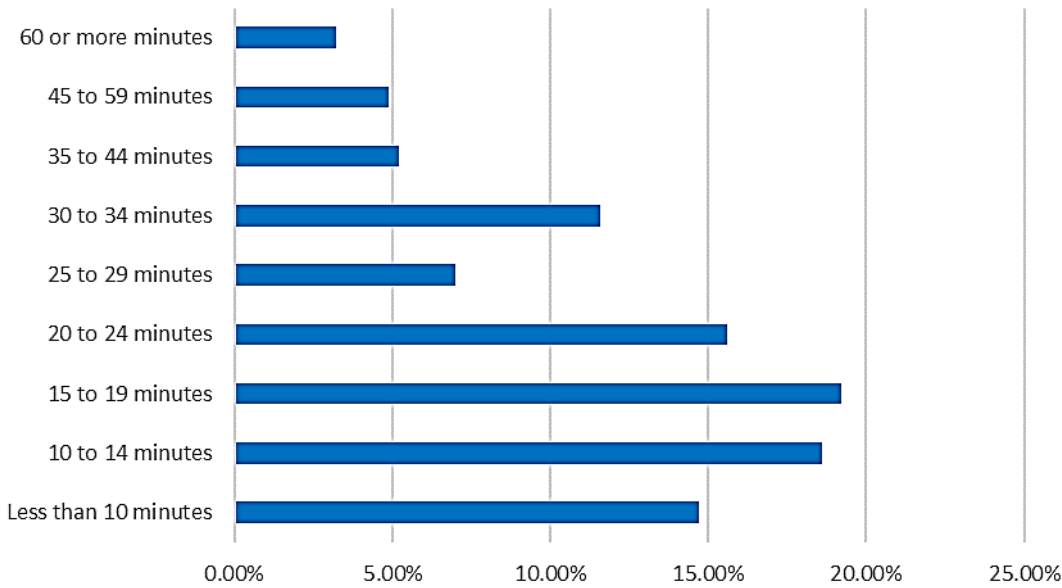


Figure 3.15 - Percent of Workers 16 and over Travel Time to work in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

In the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR MSA Figure 3.15 shows the travel time to work for workers 16 years and over who did not work at home based on the 2015-2019 ACS data. As it can be observed from the graphic above, almost 40 percent of the workers spend 10-19 minutes to get to work followed by the group of workers who spend 20-24 minutes to reach their workplace, a little more than 15 percent. Only about 3 percent spent 60 or more minutes commuting to work. The mean travel time to work was 20.9 minutes.

Income

The median income of households in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area was \$57,603. An estimated 5.8 percent of households had income below \$10,000 a year and 6.6 percent had income over \$200,000 or more.

Household Income in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

Median earnings for full-time year-round workers was \$42,410. Male full-time year-round workers had median earnings of \$46,525. Female full-time year-round workers had median earnings of \$37,627.

An estimated 80.8 percent of households received earnings. An estimated 26.9 percent of households received Social Security and an estimated 14.3 percent of households received retirement income other than Social Security. The average income from Social Security was \$20,037. These income sources are not mutually exclusive; that is, some households received income from more than one source.

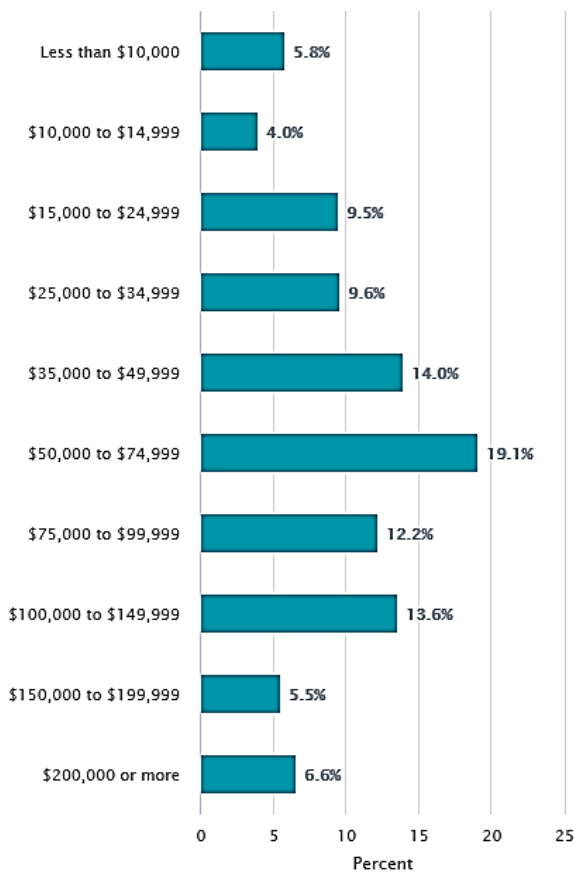


Figure 3.16 – Household Income in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

Poverty and Participation in Government Programs

In 2015-2019, 12.8 percent of people were in poverty. An estimated 15.6 percent of children under 18 were below the poverty level, compared with 8.0 percent of people 65 years old and over. An estimated 12.6 percent of people 18 to 64 years were below the poverty level.

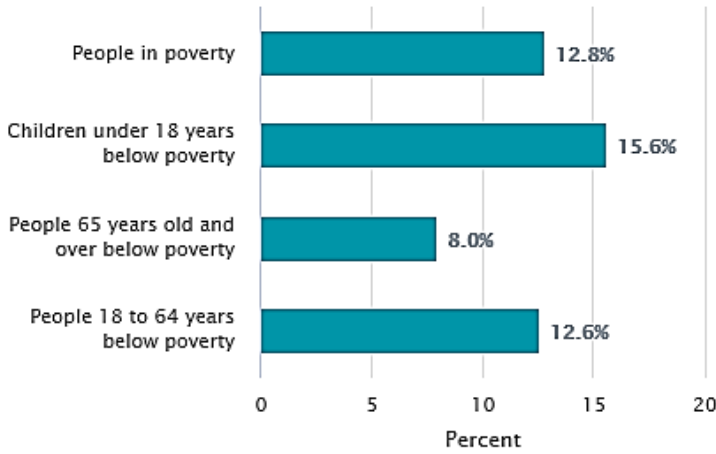


Figure 3.17 – Poverty Rates in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

In 2015-2019, 6.2 percent of households received SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). An estimated 57.2 percent of households that received SNAP had children under 18, and 24.9 percent of households that received SNAP had one or more people 60 years and over. An estimated 32.2 percent of all households receiving SNAP were families with a female householder and no husband present. An estimated 28.3 percent of households receiving SNAP had two or more workers in the past 12 months.

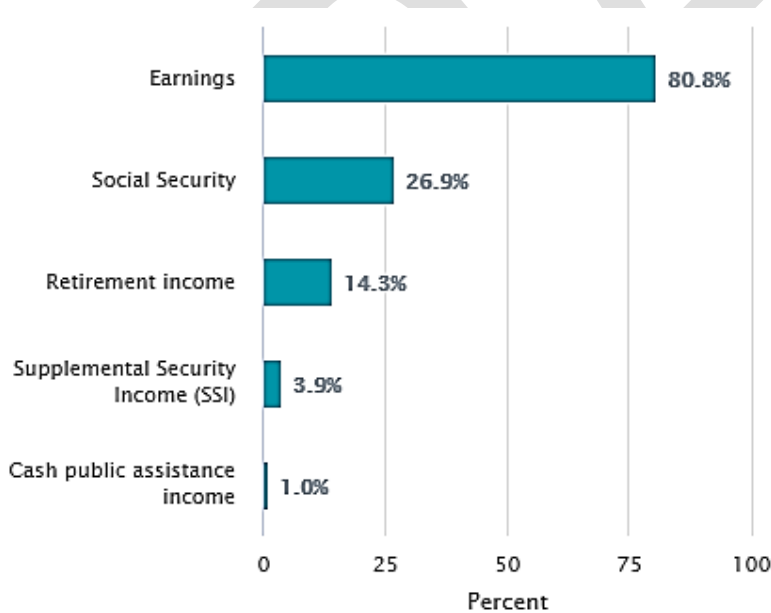


Figure 3.18 – Proportion of Households with Various Income Sources in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019

Health Insurance

Among the civilian noninstitutionalized population in Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR Metro Area in 2015-2019, 89.8 percent had health insurance coverage and 10.2 percent did not have health insurance coverage. Private coverage was 68.7 percent and government coverage was 30.8 percent, respectively. The percentage of children under the age of 19 with no health insurance coverage was 6.5 percent.

Summary of Demographic Factors

The population information and data analysis in this chapter indicate three major regional growth trends:

First, the population in Northwest Arkansas continues to steadily increase. For over 30 years, the region sustained the highest population growth rate of any two-county region in Arkansas. Population projections through the year 2045 are based upon the region's demonstrated growth from 1990 through 2010 as recorded by the Decennial Census data and by the Census American Community Survey data. There are several factors, such as relocation of major employers, which could very possibly prevent a repeat of the exceptional growth that took place in the past. However, there are no indications that such occurrences should happen soon. Having said that, regional governments and institutions must be prepared for the possibility of even more growth in the future. Should the rate of growth significantly change, new projections will reflect these changes.

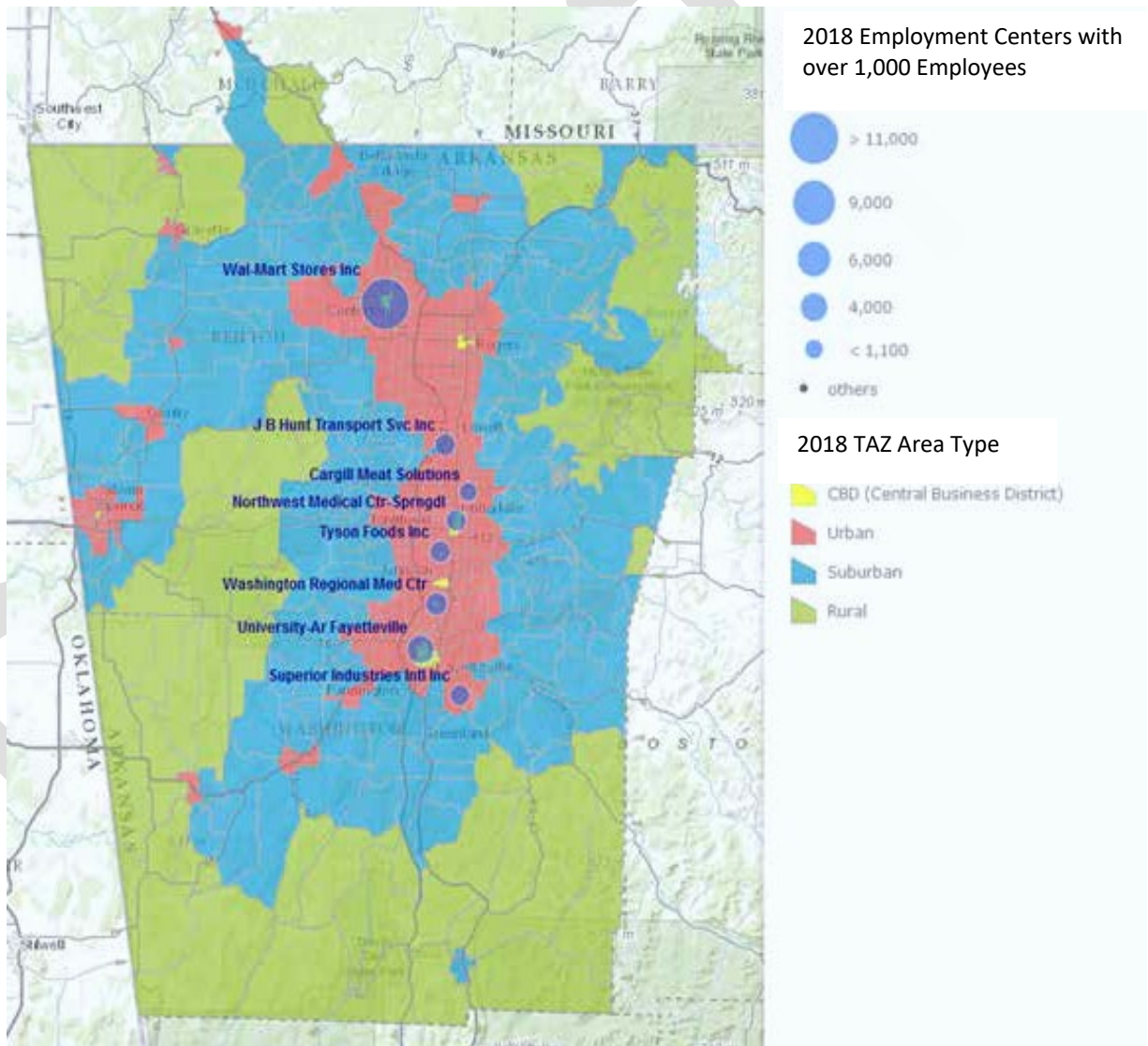
Secondly, the building permit figures as translated to a population density map show that there is a significant western growth pattern in the two-county area. The city boundary change map reveals that cities such as Bentonville, Centerton, Highfill, Springdale, Fayetteville and Tontitown continue to annex land to the west. These annexations, along with the development of water and sewer capacity in these areas, suggest that the western urban development will continue. This rapid growth of population to the west creates demand regarding local finances, infrastructure facilities, and the environment. The region will need to meet these challenges by implementing conventional road improvements as well as planning for alternative transportation. Future growth will likely require a more connected, reliable and efficient transportation system through the development of alternate modes of transportation, the use of new developments in ITS, and by employing a strategy to address congestion and efficiently use travel demand management.

A third factor is the changing demographic makeup of the Northwest Arkansas population. Aging population may have a growing need for public transit or other forms of transportation to maintain mobility. Another changing demographic is the growing Hispanic and Marshallese Islander populations. These populations may also have different mobility needs, as well as environmental justice concerns.

LANDUSE

As part of the Northwest Arkansas Travel Demand Model upgrade, the area type for the MPA was calculated utilizing an algorithm that considered population and employment density thresholds. The area type classifications resulting from this analysis include the following: Central Business Districts (CBD), Urban, Suburban and Rural Areas.

Map 3.3 illustrates this classification along with locations of the largest employers in the MPA. It is noticeable from the map that the development still occurs to the western part of the urban corridor with more defined expansions as fringes to northwest as well as to the southwest. If the existing major employment centers continue to be concentrated within the urban corridor and along I-49, planners need to concentrate their efforts in analyzing what the transportation demands could be in the near- and long-term future.



Map 3.3 - Employment Centers with over 1,000 Employees in the MPA and Area Type by TAZ

Map of Northwest Arkansas City Boundary Changes

The change in city boundaries shown in Figure 3.19 and Map 3.4 were based on the Census Bureau’s ACS 2015-2019 5-year average data estimates. The data shows generally a continuous growth of the incorporated cities area, with a notable increase from 2015 for several cities including Bentonville, Rogers, Springdale, as well as Centeron, and Gravette (from the smaller size cities category). Data also shows that a relatively larger portion of Benton County rural area has been annexed over the same time period than in Washington County.

Northwest Arkansas has experienced increasing economic growth in the past 30 years as can be observed from the series of maps in Figure 3.20. The maps illustrate land cover change from 1992 to 2016 based on the National Land Cover Database (NLCD). The developed land can be easily depicted as it continues to expand in the urban corridor as well as other communities out in the western portion of the two-county area. As the region continues to grow with new residential and commercial development, it is important to ensure that this growth does not impact key natural cultural and historic resources that make the region unique and attractive.

DRAFT

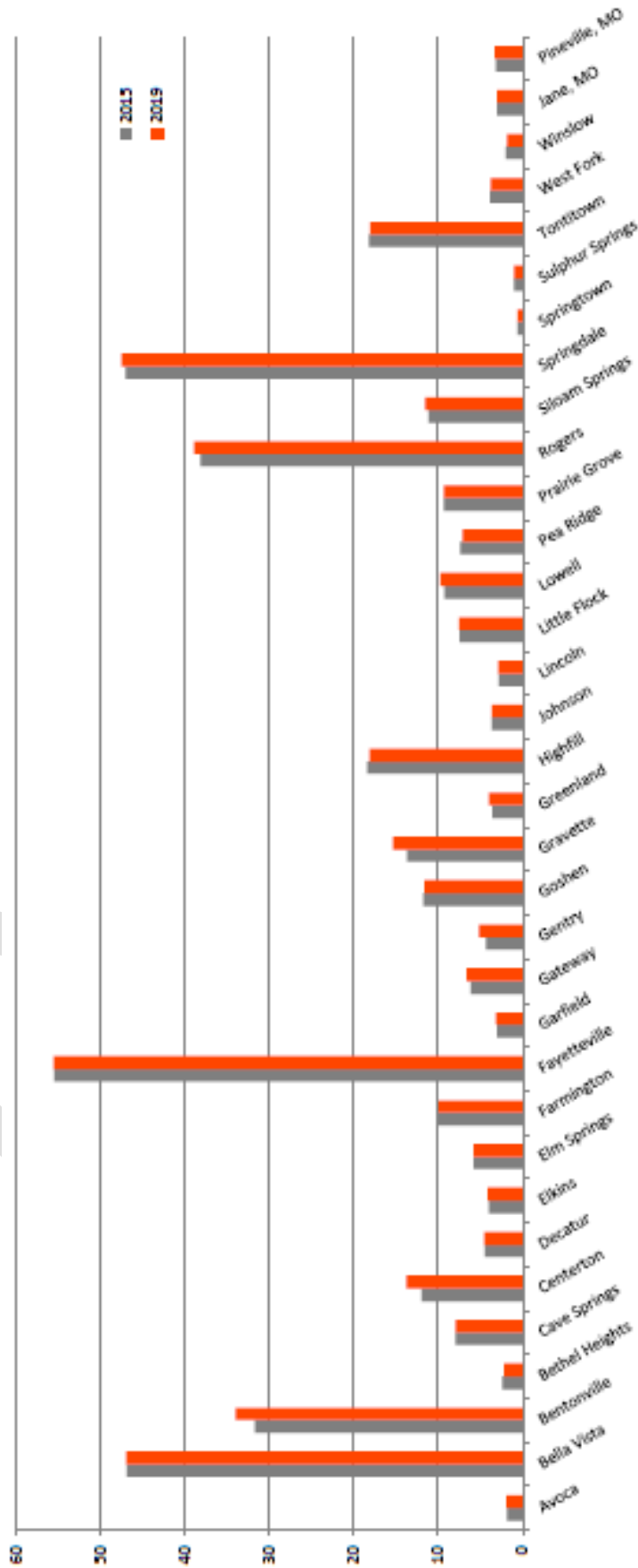
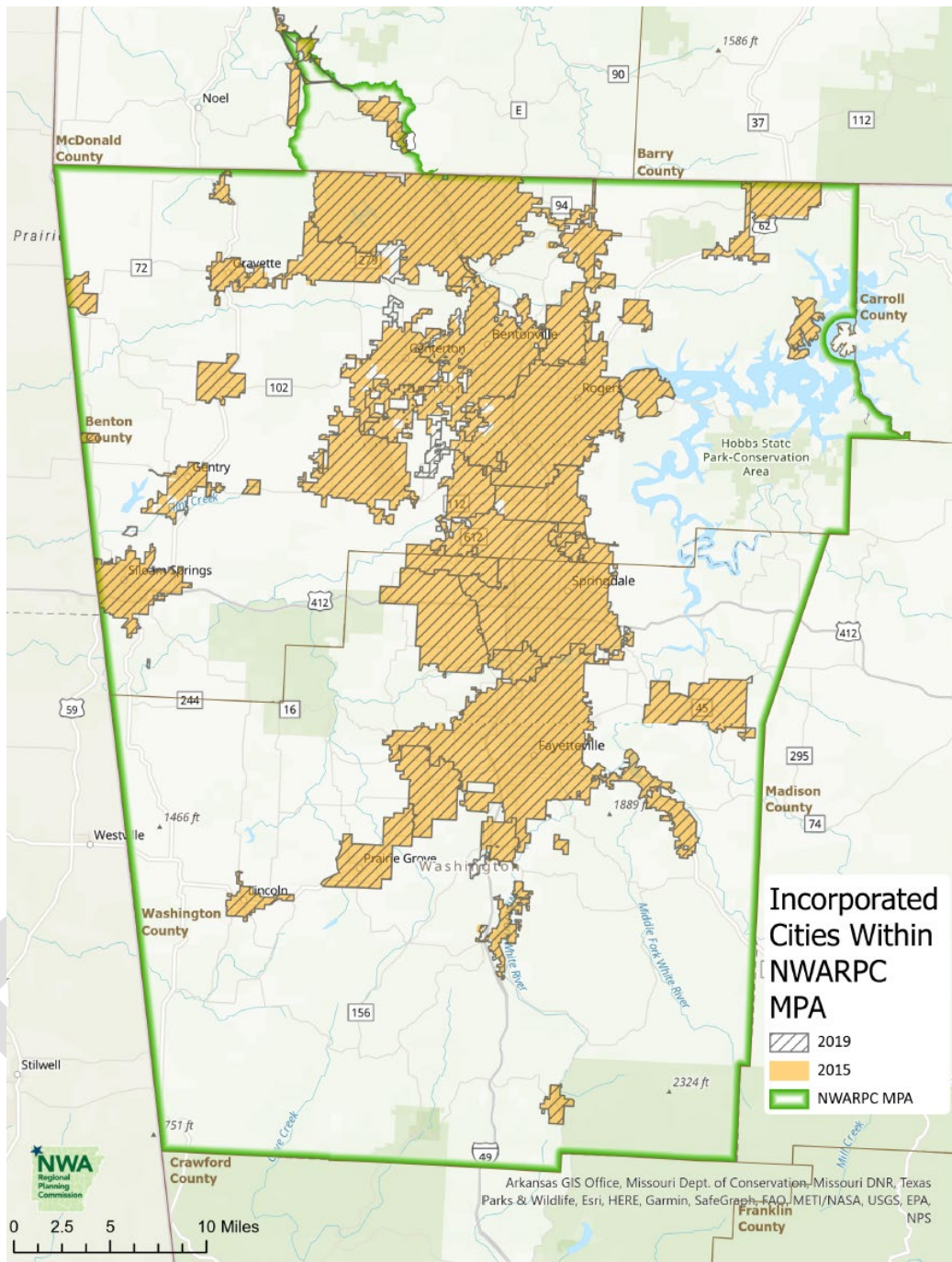


Figure 3.19 - City Limits Change in square miles in the MPA based on the ACS Data 2015-2019



Map 3.4 - Incorporated City Limits for the MPA – Data source: ACS 2015-2019

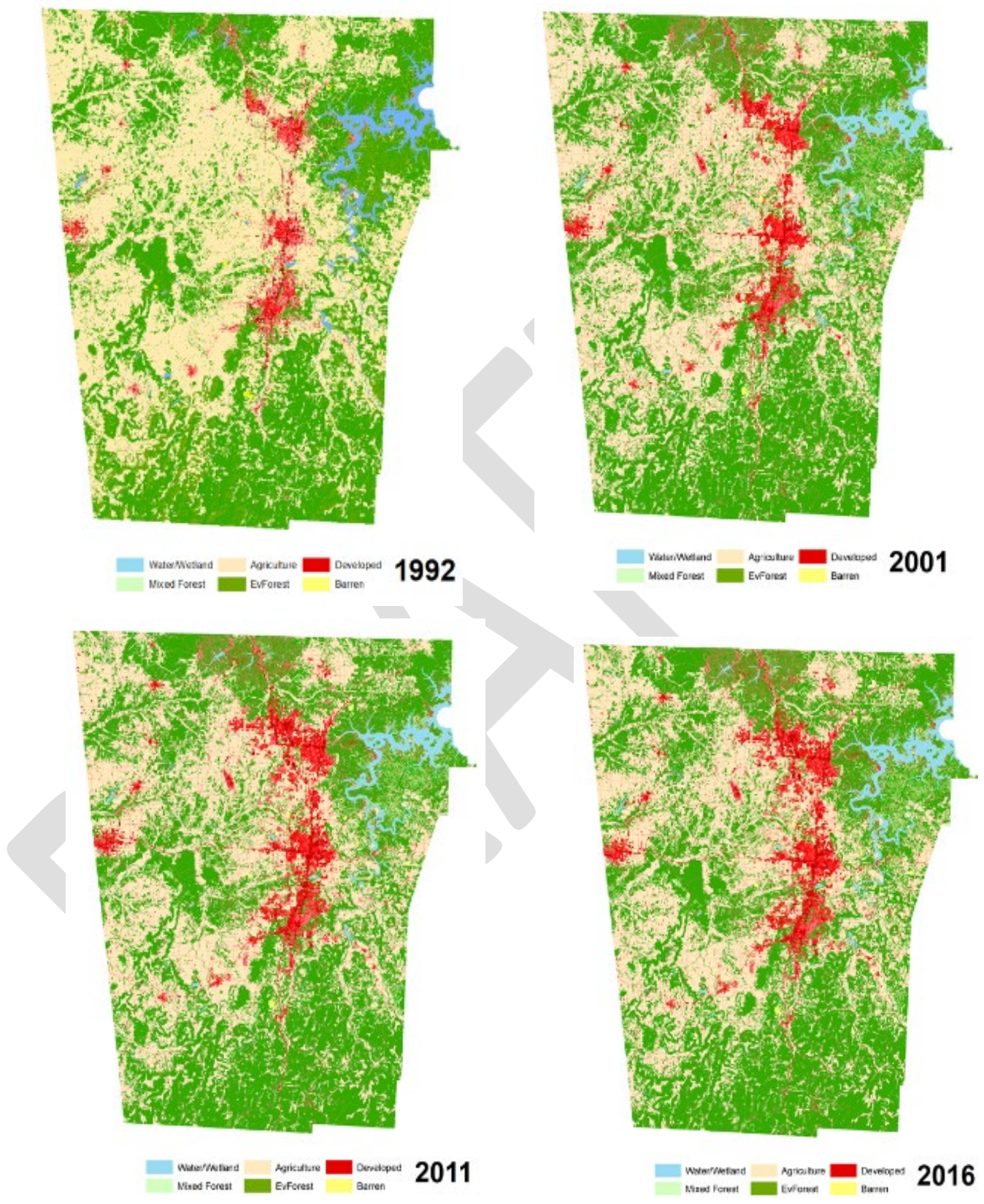


Figure 3.20 - Land Cover Change in Benton and Washington Counties – Data Source: National Land Cover Database (NLCD) 1992-2016