

Beyond the Limits: Significant Population Gains Occur Outside Cities and Towns

Is living close to the city, but not actually in the city, the wave of Indiana's future? Analysis of the latest population estimates for Indiana's cities, towns and the unincorporated parts of our counties lead to that tantalizing question.

Between 2000 and 2004, the unincorporated areas of our counties gained more people (111,000) than our cities and towns (43,000). People are making a distinct choice, a choice that allows them to be in close proximity to cities and towns in their counties, but not living within the city or town limits (see **Figure 1**).

One of Indiana's historical advantages has been its proximity to the majority of the U.S. population, a benefit to businesses and residents alike. Planes, trains and automobiles can take Hoosiers to any number of large metropolitan areas within 250

miles. Such advantages now seem to apply to lifestyle choices of people opting to live close to Fort Wayne, Evansville or Terre Haute, but not actually in those cities. Notably, of the 20 counties experiencing the greatest percentage growth in population outside cities and towns, all are either part of a metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area (see **Table 1**).

Before we think our cities and towns will disappear, it is important to note the significant increases in population that have occurred over the past four years, most notably in the up-and-coming cities and towns near our larger metro areas. More findings for the Hoosier State:

- Indiana now has one fewer city in the 100,000+ category, as Gary dipped below that mark with an estimated population of 99,516.
- None of Indiana's four remaining cities with more than 100,000 people (Indianapolis, Evansville, South Bend and Fort Wayne) saw a population gain from 2003 to 2004.
- Population has decreased over the four-and-one-quarter years since Census 2000 in three of those four cities. Indianapolis saw a gain of only 0.3 percent over this period, while Evansville, South Bend and

FIGURE 1: SOURCE OF POPULATION CHANGE, 2000 TO 2004



Source: IBRC, using U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2004 estimates

TABLE 1: POPULATION TRENDS*, 2000–2004

County	Growth Rate		Percent within City Limits		Direction of Change
	Outside	Inside	2000	2004	
Hamilton	34.4	24.3	75	73	↓
Hendricks	19.3	17.9	50	49	↓
Hancock	12.2	7.2	44	43	↓
Allen	12.2	-0.2	73	71	↓
Clark	11.9	0.7	67	65	↓
Boone	11.7	9.2	58	57	↓
Vanderburgh	11.3	-3.5	71	68	↓
Elkhart	9.4	0.8	52	50	↓
Johnson	9.3	9.2	63	63	↔
Ohio	8.3	-1.4	44	42	↓
Tippecanoe	7.7	-1.2	63	61	↓
Warrick	7.7	1.3	28	27	↓
Switzerland	7.4	-4.5	21	19	↓
Dearborn	7.2	1.8	34	33	↓
Porter	6.7	4.7	58	58	↔
Harrison	6.6	1.9	14	14	↔
Warren	6.6	-0.2	37	36	↓
Owen	6.3	3.8	15	14	↓
Monroe	5.9	-2.8	63	61	↓
Scott	5.8	-0.5	47	45	↓

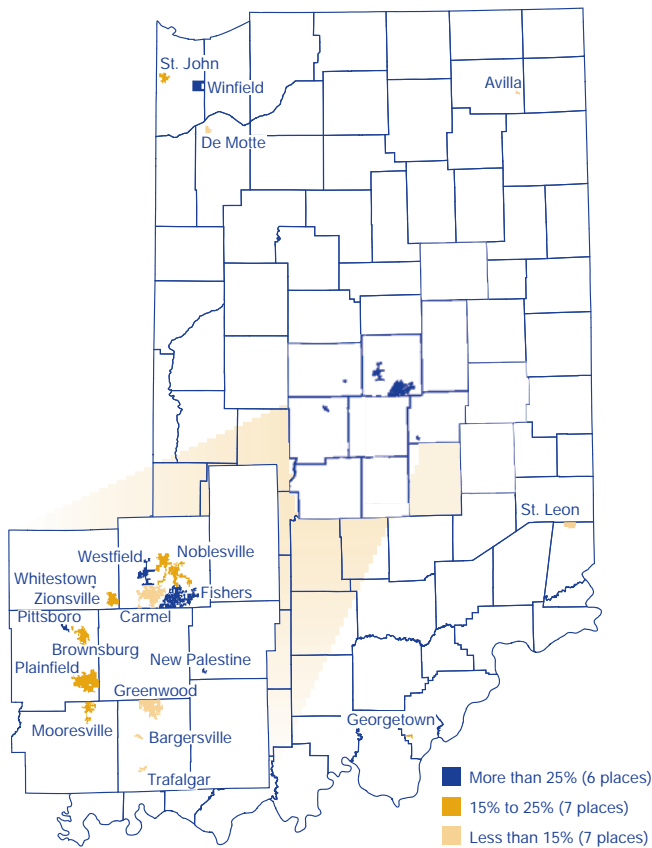
*Population growth outside cities and towns dominated these counties. The percent of population living within city limits declined in most of these counties.

Source: IBRC, using U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2004 estimates

Fort Wayne sustained losses of 3.6 percent, 2.3 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively. (However, Fort Wayne would show a gain of 6.6 percent if growth due to boundary annexations was included.)

- Of Indiana's cities with populations greater than 50,000, Fishers had the fastest "true" growth since Census 2000; **Table 2** shows an increase from about 38,000 to more than 54,000 residents (43 percent). If you

FIGURE 2: FASTEST GROWING CITIES AND TOWNS,* 2000 TO 2004



*Based on Percent Change
Source: IBRC

TABLE 2: INDIANA'S FASTEST GROWING CITIES AND TOWNS, 2000 TO 2004

Place	Rank	Estimate Base	Population Estimate	Percent Change
		April 1, 2000	July 1, 2004	April 2000 - July 2004
Winfield	1	2,028	3,330	64.2%
Whitestown	2	478	688	43.9 %
Fishers	3	38,029	54,330	42.9 %
Pittsboro	4	1,588	2,180	37.3 %
Westfield	5	9,344	11,911	27.5 %
New Palestine	6	1,264	1,593	26.0 %
Noblesville	7	28,846	35,438	22.9 %
Plainfield	8	18,523	22,564	21.8 %
Zionsville	9	8,814	10,650	20.8 %
Brownsburg	10	14,631	17,622	20.4 %
St. John	11	8,493	9,975	17.4 %
Mooresville	12	9,275	10,826	16.7 %
Georgetown	13	2,227	2,561	15.0 %
De Motte	14	3,234	3,710	14.7 %
Carmel	15	50,952	58,198	14.2 %
Trafalgar	16	798	908	13.8 %
Greenwood	17	36,350	40,813	12.3 %
Bargserville	18	2,120	2,369	11.7 %
Avilla	19	2,049	2,284	11.5 %
St. Leon	20	458	509	11.1 %

Source: IBRC

consider growth due to post-2000 boundary annexations, Carmel's gains exceeded Fishers', surging from about 38,000 to more than 58,000 (54 percent).

- Among the largest 25 Hoosier cities and towns, Noblesville (ranked 22nd) experienced the next fastest growth since the last census with an increase of about 23 percent. Greenwood also turned in a double-digit increase at 12 percent and ranks 18th in estimated population. Other top 25 cities showing some growth are Lawrence (17th) and Portage (23rd), each posting a gain of about 5 percent. Also, Mishawaka (15th) increased 3.8 percent, Merrillville (25th) saw a 2.3 percent gain, while Columbus (19th) picked up a meager 0.5 percent.

- The town of Winfield (Lake County) experienced the highest percentage increase since Census 2000 at 64 percent (see **Figure 2**). The town's 2004 population is estimated to be 3,330. Whitestown edges out Fishers for second fastest growth at 44 percent, but has an estimated population of only 688 residents. Other places showing growth greater than 25 percent are Pittsboro at about 37 percent, as well as Westfield at 27.5 percent and New Palestine at 26 percent (see **Table 2**).
- Indianapolis' status as the 12th largest city in the nation will likely change soon, as 13th-ranked Jacksonville, Fla. is on a trajectory to eclipse Indy before the end of 2005. Fort Wayne ranks 84th nationally, while Evansville and

South Bend place at 201st and 225th, respectively.

When U.S. cities from the 100,000+ group are ranked by the estimated percent change in population since Census 2000, Indiana's four largest cities can be found at the bottom third of the list. Among all 251 cities in that group, Indianapolis ranks 175th, Fort Wayne ranks 193rd, South Bend ranks 222nd and Evansville ranks 244th. Only time and the next decennial census will show if the trend in population growth outside of cities will continue. More information on this topic can be found on STATS Indiana at www.stats.indiana.edu.

—Carol O. Rogers, Executive Editor, and Vincent Thompson, Economic Analyst, Indiana Business Research Center, Kelley School of Business, Indiana University