

Cluster Descriptions

Metropolitan City Clusters

1. Central Cities (2 Cities) (Minneapolis and St. Paul)

Minneapolis and St. Paul were predetermined as the “Central Cities” cluster. The two cities stand apart from others because of their role as the economic nucleus of the state. The population of both of [the] cities is more than 15 times of the metro average. This cluster has the lowest median household income, accounting for only 60 percent of the metro average. The two central cities also stand out in other descriptive variables. More than one third of the population in the central cities are racial/ethnic minorities. More than one-sixth of the population are in poverty, which more than triples the metro mean (4.3%). Only 53% of the households are owner-occupied, and the percent of housing built in the last decade is only 2.4 percent.

2. Large Cities (12 cities) (Examples: Burnsville, Plymouth)

All cities in this cluster have a population over 45,000. A majority of them have above average per capita commercial/industrial market value. The cluster averages in median household income and population growth rate are equal to the metro norm, though the scores for individual cities are mixed. The cluster profile’s scores in most of the descriptive variables are also around the metro average, except the population in “Large Cities” are more racially/ethnically diverse and better educated.

3. Old Cities (13 cities) (Examples: Brooklyn Center, Richfield)

The “Old Cities” cluster consists of 13 long-established cities with above average size. The cluster is characterized by comparatively low income and low population growth rate. The population growth rate is the lowest (1 percent) of all eight metro clusters. The median household income ranks the second lowest, following “Central Cities” cluster. “Old Cities” have relatively high proportion of elderly and racial/ethnic minority population. The home ownership and percent of housing built in the last decade are quite low.

4. Diversified Cities (15 cities) (Examples: Roseville, Wayzata)

“Diversified Cities” stand apart from other clusters by their high commercial/industrial market value per capita. The cluster profile scores in all the other three criteria variables are below the average. Two-fifths of the cities in this cluster lost population in the 1990s. The growth rates in the remaining cities, though positive, are all below the metro average. The cluster profile scores in descriptive variables show that “Diversified Cities” are relatively elderly communities with high proportion of people over 65 years old and higher median age. The percent of housing built in the last decade (10%) is far below the metro average level (20%).

5. High Growth Cities (35 cities) (Examples: Rogers, Chaska)

Cities classified as high growth show a mean population growth rate of x percent. The population sizes of the cities of this cluster are mixed, ranging from 332 (New Market) to 46,463 (Woodbury). Generally, cities in this cluster have above average median household income and less diversification in commercial/industrial property. Cities in this cluster are generally newer communities with a large proportion of young people. The cluster mean of median age is only x and less than x percent of the population are over 65 years old. x percent of the housing units were built in the last decade and x percent of the households are owner-occupied.

6. High Income Cities (20 cities) (Minnetonka Beach, North Oaks)

The predominant characteristic of “High Income Cities” is the extremely high median household income. The cluster profile scores are significantly below the metro city norm for all other three criteria variables: population, population growth and per capita commercial/industrial market value. All the cities are essentially small, high-income bedroom communities. The cluster profile scores are higher than average in median age and percentage of people with bachelor’s degree. The homeownership is the highest in the entire eight metro clusters (95%). The minority rate and poverty rate are the lowest.

7. Smaller Cities (41) (Hilltop, New Trier)

The outstanding characteristic of “Smaller Cities” is their population size. The cluster average population is just one-fifth of the metro mean. Although cities differ in growth rate, a majority of them have slower population growth rate than the metro average or have declining population. The typical cities in this cluster are smaller low-growth, low-income bedroom communities like Hilltop and New Trier. Cities in this cluster have relatively higher poverty rate (6.2%). The population is less educated and the percent of housing built in the last decade is relatively lower. The cluster profile scores in other descriptive variables are similar to the metro city norm.

Greater Minnesota City Clusters

1. Major Cities (3 cities) (Duluth, Rochester, St. Cloud)

Duluth, Rochester and St. Cloud stand apart from other nonmetro cities because of their large population size. The average population size of “Major Cities” cluster is more than 12 standard deviations over the nonmetro mean. All three cities are highly diverse in racial-ethnic composition and in commercial/industrial tax base. They have above average population growth rate, median household income, and percent of housing built in the last decade. Nearly one-third (32%) of their population have a bachelor’s degree, which nearly triples the nonmetro average level (12%). “Major Cities” have a below average median age, share of elderly population, and homeownership.

2. Regional Centers (22 cities) (Examples: Mankato, Marshall)

“Regional Centers” share a lot of characteristics with “Major Cities.” These cities have high scores in commercial/industrial market value per capita and racial/ethnic minority population. They are also younger, better-educated communities than the nonmetro city norm. The homeownership rate, like “Major Cities,” is also very low (67%). The population size, though incomparable to “Major Cities,” is 2.5 standard deviation above the nonmetro average. The population growth and median household income are similar to the nonmetro average level.

3. Sub-Regional Centers (27 cities) (Examples: Hinckley and Waite Park)

“Sub-Regional Centers” though significantly smaller in size, have more commerce and industry—with per capita commercial/industrial market value of \$12,400—than Regional Centers (\$7,100) and Major Cities (\$8,400). Many Sub-Regional Centers serve larger population bases in surrounding agricultural areas or lakes areas. In comparison with the nonmetro average, cities in this group have higher-than-average growth rate and lower-than-average median household income. Like “Regional Centers” and “Major Cities,” the population in “Sub-Regional Centers” have a higher proportion of minority population and people with bachelor’s degree. The homeownership rate is quite low.

4. Urban Fringe (10 cities) (Examples: Albertville and St. Michael)

Cities in “Urban Fringe” cluster are characterized by their extremely high growth and high income. Seven of the cities are within the eleven-county metro area, located in Chisago, Sherburne and Wright Counties; two of them (Pleasant Lake and Sartell) are located in Stearns County, in the St. Cloud growth corridor. Only Breezy Point (with population 979) stands in the Lakes Area. Most of the cities are medium sized; the cluster average growth rate is 174 percent; and the average median income is slightly higher than that of “High Income Cities” group. Their cluster profile scores in median age, percentage of people over 65 years old, minority rate, and poverty rate are much below the nonmetro average. Nearly half (48%) of the housing units were built in the last decade and the home ownership is relatively high.

5. High Income Cities (25 cities) (Hanover and Oronoco)

“High Income Cities” have similar median household income as “Urban Fringe” cities. Their population growth rate (36%) through positive compared to nonmetro average (8%), is only one-fifth of the “Urban Fringe” cities. They have above average commercial/industrial tax base, homeownership rate and percentage of people with bachelor’s degree, and a very high percent of housing built in the last decade (29%). They have low median age, low share of minority and elderly population, as well as low poverty rate.

6. Moderate Growth Cities (60 cities) (Examples: Cohasset and Lake Shore)

“Moderate Growth Cities” have higher than average population growth rate and median household income. The population size and the commercial/industrial market value per

capita are near the nonmetro norm. They have lower than average scores for median age, percentage of people over 65 years old, and poverty rate. The percent of housing built in the last decade is 20%, almost double the nonmetro average.

7. Established Cities (209 cities) (Examples: Arlington and Lakefield)

The profile scores of “Established Cities” on population size, per capita commercial/industrial market value, and population growth are near the regional norm. The cluster has below average median household income. Most of the cities in this cluster are old communities with a declining, stable or low-growth population. These cities have older populations, lower homeownership and less housing built in the last decade than the regional norm.

8. Small Rural Cities (359 cities) (Examples: Bluffton and Wykoff)

Cities with population less than 500 are predetermined as “Small Rural Cities.” The average population is 214, less than one-ninth of the regional mean. Although the cluster profile scores on median household income and per capita commercial/industrial market value are below the regional average, they are higher than “Low-Income Cities.” However, this cluster exhibits the lowest population growth. In comparison with the regional norm, percent of housing built in the last 10 years is lower in “Small Rural Cities” and fewer people have bachelor’s degrees.

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