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## **Small metro areas reflect major metro trend: cities outpace suburbs in population growth**

*New analysis of U.S. Census data reveal small cities  
are attracting new residents as investments in downtown pay off*

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WASHINGTON — City population growth is now outpacing suburban population growth even in small metro areas, according to a new analysis of U.S. Census data from Smart Growth America.

“Previous research has shown that the country’s 51 largest metropolitan areas were, on average, growing faster in their cities than in their suburbs,” says Smart Growth America President and CEO Geoffrey Anderson. “We wondered whether this trend held true as well for smaller metro areas, and this new analysis backs up that hypothesis.”

“What we’re seeing is that even in the country’s smaller metro areas, the population growth is increasingly happening in the city,” Anderson says. “More and more people are moving to walkable neighborhoods closer to jobs, shops and schools, and the investments these cities are making are paying off.”

Smart Growth America calculated population growth between 2010 and 2011 in 171 of the nation’s smaller metropolitan areas based on 2010 Census figures and 2011 Census estimates. Overall, 22% of the U.S. population lives in these small metro areas – more than 69 million people. Of these, 39.7%, or 27 million people, lived in the cities of the small metro areas in 2011.

Between 2010 and 2011, 86.5% of small metro areas saw an increase in the number of people living in the city. El Paso, TX saw the largest growth in the city population, gaining a total of by 13,687 residents. Overall, cities in the smallest metro areas (150,000-250,000 people) saw the largest increase in people within their boundaries.

Perhaps more noteworthy is the fact that small metro city population growth is now outpacing the rate of growth in the suburbs. Between 2010 and 2011 small metro area cities as a whole grew in population by 0.89%. In comparison, their suburban counterparts grew by 0.67%. Overall, 55.0% of cities in small metro areas grew at a faster rate than their suburban counterparts between 2010 and 2011. Comparatively, 52.9% of cities in large metros added population at a greater rate than their suburbs.

The top ten small metro areas where cities added population at a greater rate than their suburbs did were:

1. Clarksville, TN-KY
2. Lexington-Fayette, KY
6. Lincoln, NE
7. Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3. Fort Smith, AR-OK        | 8. Greensboro-High Point, NC |
| 4. Lynchburg, VA            | 9. Bloomington, IN           |
| 5. Athens-Clarke County, GA | 10. Durham-Chapel Hill, NC   |

All of the cities in this top ten list grew at least 60% faster than their suburbs. In the case of Clarksville and Lexington, the city population grew at more than double the rate of the suburban population.

Download a full copy of the report, including additional information and methodology, at <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/small-metro-growth-2012>.

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**Smart Growth America** is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information visit [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org).