

## Economic Prosperity Indicator: Population Growth

**Why:** Population Growth is seen as a key determinant of successful economic development. Areas that are successful in attracting employers with new jobs will see growth in population. Conversely, overpopulation can exceed the carrying capacity of the local job market, community resources or the environment.

**What:** The average annual percent change of the population within the selected geographic area over a five-year period.

**Where:** U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, archives.  
<http://www.census.gov/>

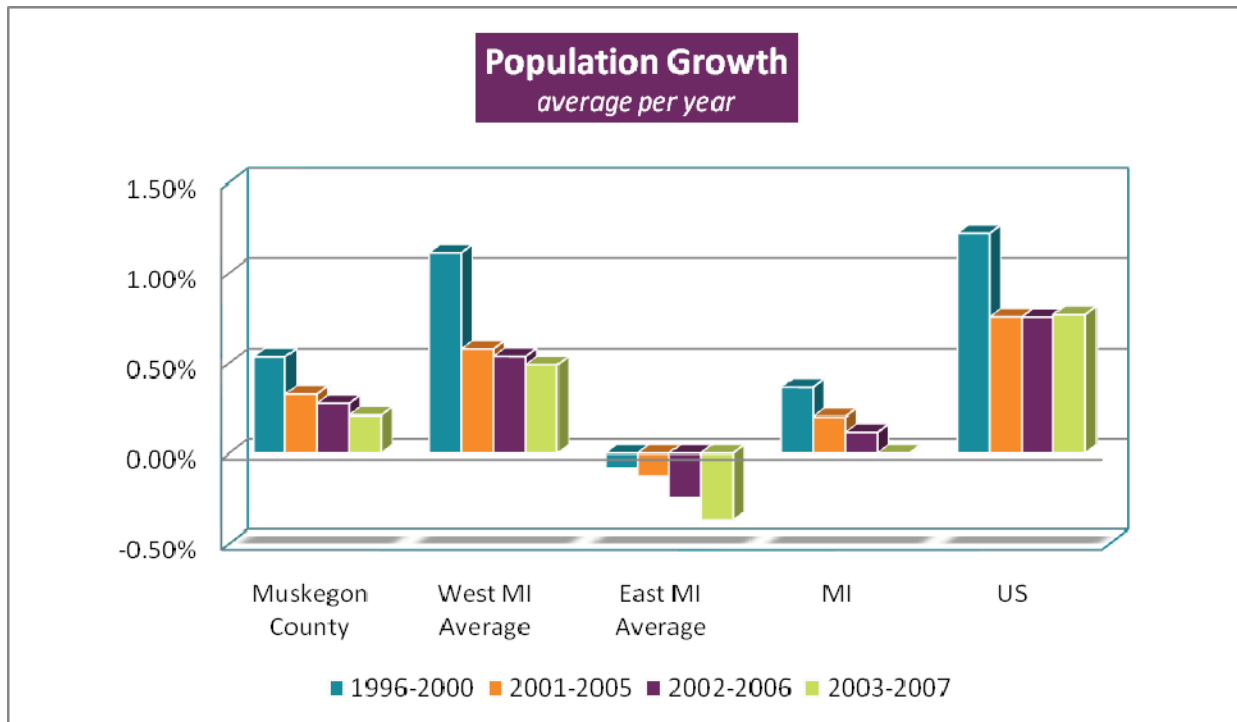
Population Growth average per year								
Geography	1996-2000		2001-2005		2002-2006		2003-2007	
	Avg. %	Index Score	Avg. %	Index Score	Avg. %	Index Score	Avg. %	Index Score
<b>Muskegon County</b>	0.54%	4.5	0.33%	4.7	0.28%	4.7	0.21%	4.8
Kent County	0.94%	4.1	0.50%	4.5	0.46%	4.5	0.47%	4.5
Ottawa County	1.85%	3.2	0.91%	4.1	0.88%	4.1	0.79%	4.2
<b>West MI Average</b>	1.11%	3.9	0.58%	4.4	0.54%	4.4	0.49%	4.5
Bay County	-0.19%	1.8	-0.19%	1.8	-0.28%	1.7	-0.30%	1.7
Genesee County	0.13%	4.9	0.07%	4.9	-0.04%	2	-0.23%	1.8
Saginaw County	-0.18%	1.8	-0.26%	1.8	-0.40%	1.6	-0.58%	1.4
<b>East MI Average</b>	-0.08%	1.9	-0.13%	1.9	-0.24%	1.8	-0.37%	1.6
Michigan	0.54%	4.5	0.20%	4.8	0.12%	4.9	-0.01%	2.0
U.S.	0.37%	4.6	0.76%	4.2	0.75%	4.2	0.77%	4.2

### Index Scores

**Rubric:** The rubric levels were set with an average annual percent population growth of 2.0% as the sustainable level. Based on population growth research, the higher scoring levels are assigned to more moderate rates of growth down to zero. The lower levels and scores are assigned where population growth falls below zero. In addition, the scale is bi-furcated at the lower index scores. That is, growth in excess of 2.0% will also result in lower scores. Faster rates of population growth create pressures on an area's resources and economy and would not contribute to overall sustainability.

**Scale:** From Sustainable to Target level, simple scale with 1.0% between levels. Higher scores for moderate population growth, with target at +.01. Lowest scores are assigned to 0% or negative population growth or to higher rates greater than 2.0%.

Rubric: Population Growth			
Level	Index	%	
Thriving	5	.01%	
Advancing	4	1.00%	
Sustainable	3	2.00%	
Needs Improvement	2	0% to -1%	3% to 4%
Failing	1	> -1%	<4%



- *Of the six economic prosperity indicators, Muskegon County achieved its highest score for population growth .*
- *Muskegon County's modest, manageable growth resulted in the best index score out of all geographic areas during the period from 2003 to 2007.*
- *Among all geographies reported, Bay and Saginaw Counties had the lowest index scores for population growth for each period.*