Section 2. Livability

The Where We Stand (WWS) series produced by East-West Gateway (EWG) has compared the St. Louis region to other large metropolitan areas since 1992. WWS ranks St. Louis among the 50 most populous Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) in the United States (the peer regions) on a broad range of topics important to the region.

In November 2024, EWG published the ninth edition of WWS, with an accompanying suite of additional resources. This edition of WWS took a different approach than was used for past editions. The central motivation for changing the WWS formula was to contribute more directly to efforts to make St. Louis a *successful* region. WWS 9 is intended as an introduction to a larger conversation about where we as a region stand, where we are going, and how we plan to get there together.

WWS9 digs into 12 key topic areas grouped into three broad categories. The first group, Growth Metrics, includes population change, employment change, and unemployment. The second group, Livability Metrics, comprises racial disparity, homeownership, housing affordability, vacancy rates, crime, and infant mortality. The third group, Opportunity Metrics, consists of income and income inequality, education, poverty, and well-being.

This document is a portion of the full document. Access the additional chapters, entire eighth edition, additional data, updates, white papers, and past editions at www.ewgateway.org/wws.

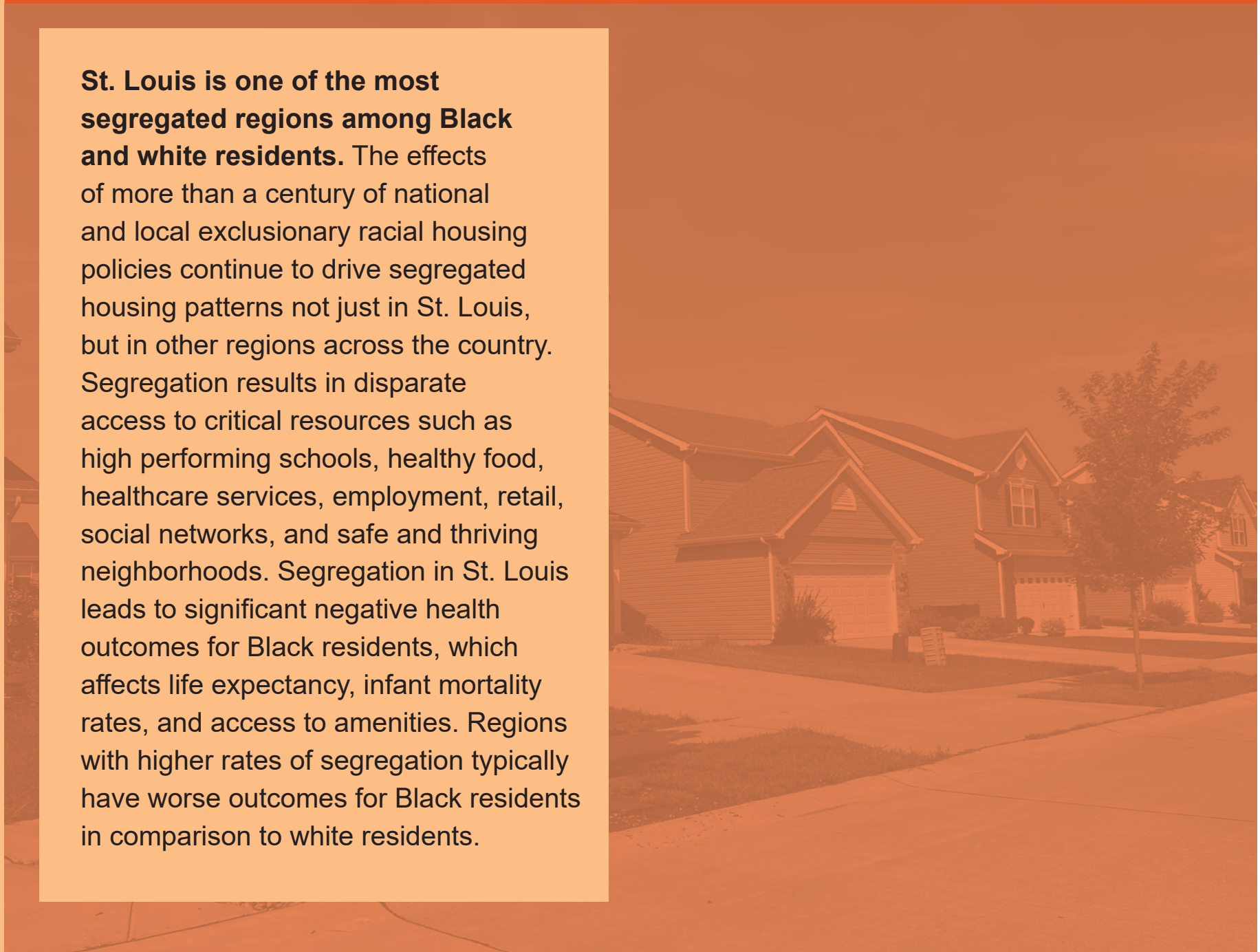
This publication was supported, in part, by a grant provided from the U.S. Department of Transportation through MoDOT and IDOT.

LIVABILITY

RACIAL SEGREGATION
HOMEOWNERSHIP
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
VACANCY
CRIME
INFANT MORTALITY

Racial Segregation

St. Louis is one of the most segregated regions among Black and white residents. The effects of more than a century of national and local exclusionary racial housing policies continue to drive segregated housing patterns not just in St. Louis, but in other regions across the country. Segregation results in disparate access to critical resources such as high performing schools, healthy food, healthcare services, employment, retail, social networks, and safe and thriving neighborhoods. Segregation in St. Louis leads to significant negative health outcomes for Black residents, which affects life expectancy, infant mortality rates, and access to amenities. Regions with higher rates of segregation typically have worse outcomes for Black residents in comparison to white residents.



Measuring Success: Racial Segregation

What is being measured? The dissimilarity index measures the segregation of two groups. An index score of 100 indicates complete segregation. A fully integrated community would have a score of 0.

A nuance of this index is that it can only measure segregation of two racial groups. For the St. Louis region, there is a rationale for focusing on white and Black residents because Black residents have historically experienced housing discrimination with lingering effects. Whites and Blacks are also the two largest racial groups in the region. However, other racial and ethnic groups make up a significant and growing proportion of the region's population and are important to consider as well.

What makes this a good measure of success? Segregation affects regional economies, communities, and individuals. Segregated communities tend to provide residents with different levels of service, resources, and access to amenities. This is evidenced by a strong association with disparities between Black and white population groups in the peer regions. Higher segregation is also associated with slower growth in per capita income.[3-01]

What is problematic about this measure? There are several ways in which reliance on a single metric can obscure nuances. First, the level of integration does not directly reflect quality of life in a community, or disparities in access to basic services and amenities. Second, regions can appear more integrated than others because they lack racial diversity. Third, conclusions can change depending on the level of geography that is used for analysis. A community may appear integrated when viewed as a whole, but a more granular analysis may reveal higher levels of segregation. This is particularly relevant to parts of the St. Louis region where communities may appear integrated, even though segregated housing patterns remain apparent at the block level.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"A successful region works across age/economic/race/gender demographics" –City of St. Louis Resident

"There should not be segregation, divides, and 'othering' of the community." –St. Charles County Resident

3-01 Li, Huiping, Harrison Campbell, and Steven Fernandez. 2013. Residential Segregation, Spatial Mismatch and Economic growth across US Metropolitan Areas. Urban Studies 50(13): 2642-2660.

Peer Region Analysis: Racial Segregation

The most racially segregated peer regions for Black and white residents are largely in the Midwest and the Northeast, including the **St. Louis** MSA. Los Angeles is among the 10 most segregated, but its high segregation is likely due, in part, to its relatively small Black population. **Las Vegas** is the least segregated and is among the most diverse of the peer regions with 17.5% of the population not in the three largest population groups (white, Black, and Hispanic).[3-02]

Many highly segregated peer regions share a similar history. They were destinations during the Great Migration of 1910 to 1970 when millions of Black residents left the South. During this period, exclusionary housing policies such as racially motivated deed covenants, local and federal lending policies including redlining, and zoning laws accelerated segregation. Beginning in the 1970s, these metropolitan regions were hit hard by a national decline in manufacturing employment and have experienced slow population growth for several decades.[3-03]

Regional ranks on segregation are associated with ranks on some other vitality metrics. Regions that are relatively less segregated tend to have lower rates of concentrated poverty, more population growth, and less disparity between the Black and white population groups.

Segregation has remained prevalent nationally, and in the **St. Louis** MSA, with modest decreases in recent years. From 2006-2010 to 2018-2022, segregation decreased by 2.3 points in the St. Louis MSA and by 1.9 points nationally. There was considerable variability among the peer regions. Just nine regions experienced increases in Black-white segregation with the largest occurring in **San Jose** (3.7 points), **Salt Lake City** (1.4 points), and **Jacksonville** (1.2 points). The largest decreases occurred in **Kansas City** (-6.6 points), **Tampa** (-6.1 points), and **Detroit** (-5.5 points).

3-02 Update 10: 2020 Decennial Census: Population, Race, and Ethnicity. Where We Stand: 8th Edition, January 2022. https://www.ewgateway.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/wws08_update10_2020_Decennial-Census_Population_Race_and_Ethnicity_2022-01_final.pdf

3-03 Wilson, William Julius. 1987. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. University of Chicago Press.

Racial Segregation

Black-white segregation scores based on the dissimilarity index, 2018-2022

1	**Milwaukee**	**78.7**
2	New York	75.3
3	Chicago	74.2
4	Cleveland	73.1
5	Detroit	72.1
6	**St. Louis**	**70.6**
7	Buffalo	69.3
8	Philadelphia	66.8
9	Cincinnati	66.4
10	Los Angeles	65.7
United States		**65.6**
11	Pittsburgh	64.8
12	Miami	64.6
13	Hartford	64.5
14	Boston	63.7
15	Indianapolis	63.6
16	Denver	63.3
17	Birmingham	62.9
18	Columbus	62.7
19	New Orleans	61.9
20	Baltimore	61.9
21	Washington, D.C.	61.1
22	Memphis	61.0
23	Atlanta	60.4
24	San Francisco	59.9
25	Houston	59.9
26	Louisville	57.8
27	Kansas City	57.7
28	Sacramento	57.7
29	Providence	56.2
30	Minneapolis	56.1
31	Salt Lake City	55.3
32	Dallas	54.8
33	Jacksonville	54.7
34	San Diego	54.2
35	Orlando	53.3
36	Tampa	53.2
37	Nashville	52.9
38	Seattle	52.6
39	Charlotte	52.6
40	Richmond	52.3
41	Oklahoma City	51.5
42	Portland	50.7
43	Phoenix	50.3
44	San Antonio	49.7
45	San Jose	49.7
46	Austin	48.5
47	Virginia Beach	48.2
48	Riverside	48.1
49	Raleigh	42.9
50	**Las Vegas**	**42.3**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B03002)

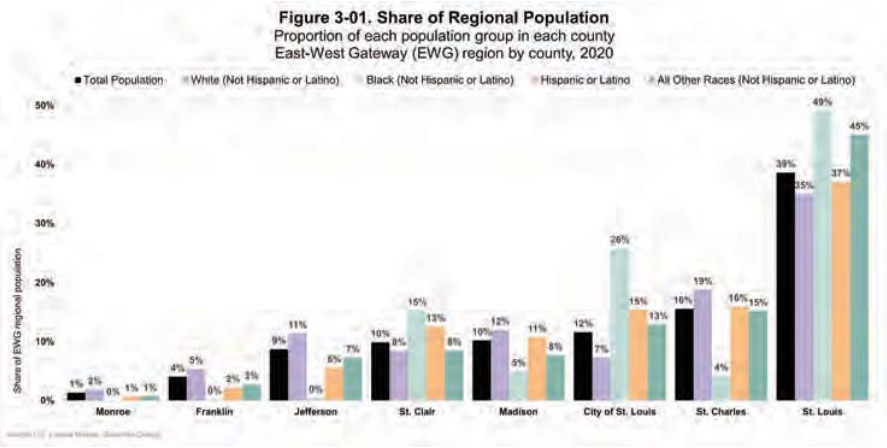
Change in Racial Segregation

Point difference in dissimilarity index, 2006-2010 to 2018-2022

1	**San Jose**	**3.7**
2	Salt Lake City	1.4
3	Jacksonville	1.2
4	Las Vegas	0.9
5	Atlanta	0.5
6	Phoenix	0.4
7	Riverside	0.3
8	Orlando	0.2
9	Raleigh	0.1
10	Sacramento	-0.1
11	Seattle	-0.4
12	Virginia Beach	-0.4
13	Minneapolis	-0.4
14	New Orleans	-0.5
15	Columbus	-0.8
16	Louisville	-1.1
17	Miami	-1.4
18	Charlotte	-1.5
United States		**-1.9**
19	San Diego	-2.0
20	Providence	-2.0
21	Nashville	-2.1
22	Washington, D.C.	-2.2
23	Philadelphia	-2.2
24	**St. Louis**	**-2.3**
25	Cleveland	-2.4
26	Denver	-2.5
27	Memphis	-2.6
28	Houston	-2.6
29	Milwaukee	-2.6
30	Pittsburgh	-2.9
31	San Antonio	-3.0
32	Boston	-3.2
33	Portland	-3.4
34	Dallas	-3.4
35	Richmond	-3.5
36	Indianapolis	-3.7
37	New York	-3.7
38	Chicago	-3.8
39	Oklahoma City	-3.9
40	San Francisco	-4.3
41	Birmingham	-4.4
42	Austin	-4.5
43	Cincinnati	-4.5
44	Los Angeles	-4.6
45	Baltimore	-4.7
46	Buffalo	-4.8
47	Detroit	-5.5
48	Tampa	-6.1
49	**Kansas City**	**-6.6**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B03002)

EWG Region Analysis: Racial Segregation

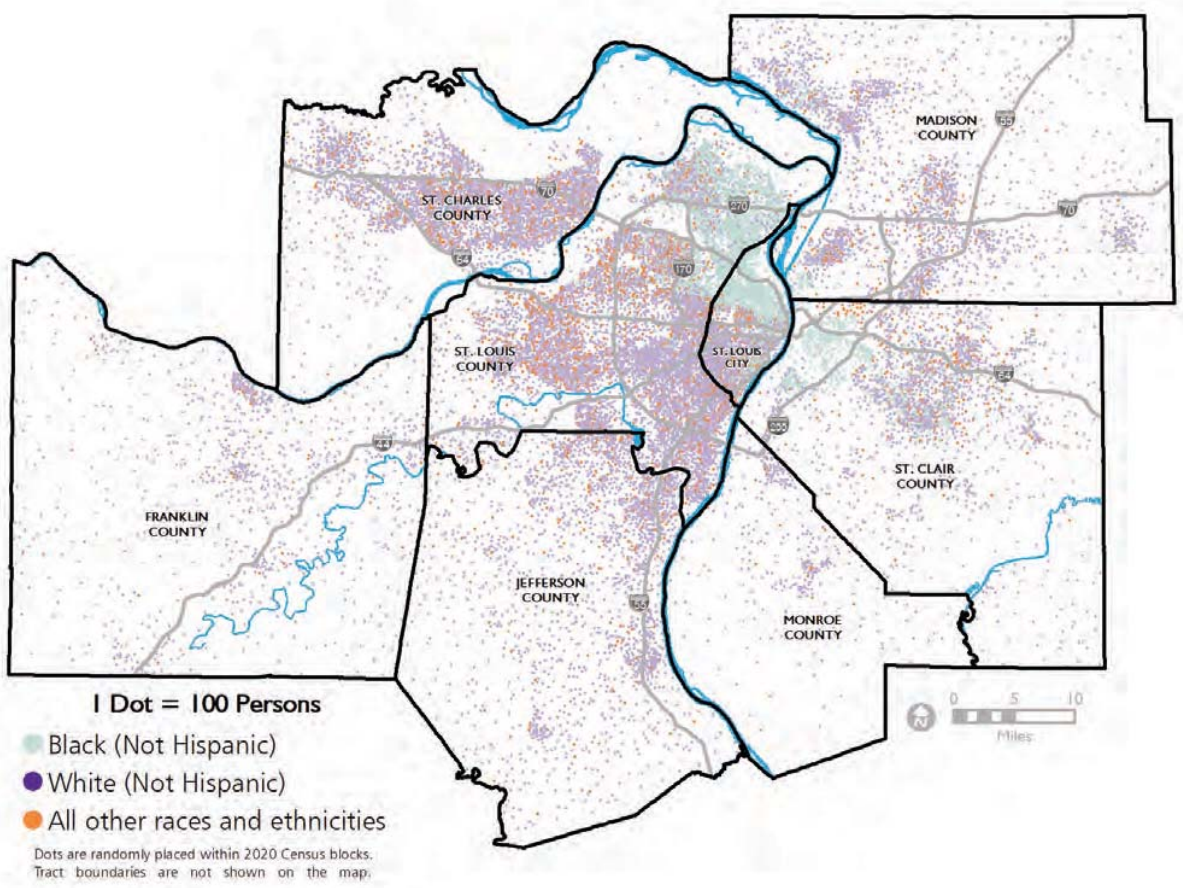


Despite a slight decrease in segregation at the regional level, the region remains highly sorted by race, as shown on Map 3-01. Black residents are highly concentrated in the northern parts of the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County and the western portion of St. Clair County. White residents make up large proportions of the population in the southern parts of the city of St. Louis and the south, central, and western parts of St. Louis County. Most communities in the other counties are predominately white, though pockets of diversity exist in every county.

Figure 3-01 shows the proportion of the total population and share of each racial and ethnic population group that resides in each county. This shows that the Black population is overrepresented in St. Louis County, the city of St. Louis, and St. Clair County while underrepresented in each of the other counties. Three-fourths of the Black population resides in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County while about half of the total regional population resides in these two jurisdictions.

The share of the Hispanic population in each county is similar to the share of total population in each county. The final group, which includes those who identify as Asian, multiracial, and other races, is also relatively equal to the share of total population with a slightly higher share in St. Louis County.

Map 3-01. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 State Resisting Data; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Measures of Racial and Ethnic Disparity

A Note on Measures of Racial and Ethnic Disparity

Since the first edition of WWS, EWG has been including measures of racial disparity, recognizing that the inequitable distribution of burdens and benefits among population groups is an important part of any assessment of regional competitiveness. EWG has been using the ratio of the Black to white value (the multiplicative rate) to measure racial disparity among the peer regions. This method provides useful information, but it is only a piece of the story. Additional data can provide a more complete picture by including other population groups that face disparities as well as more detail on the differences between population groups.

Leading up to this publication, EWG research staff reviewed the ratio method and nine alternate methods or ways of depicting racial and ethnic disparity. The purpose was to gain a better understanding of the different methods, their uses, and their results as well as to determine the best way of capturing racial disparity in St. Louis and the peer regions.

Based on this analysis, this report includes the following three methods of measuring racial disparity: mathematical ratios, mathematical differences, and an alternate measure known as excess burdens. Each of these methods is applied to two topic areas: homeownership and infant mortality. Using this approach allows us to continue to focus on disparities between Black and white residents, which remains the largest racial divide in the United States and in St. Louis. In addition, incorporating the excess burdens metric allows us to recognize disparities experienced by other racial and ethnic groups.

In this section, details are provided for the three methods as well as the benefits and challenges of each. The homeownership (see Page 28) and infant mortality sections (see Page 52), include a discussion of these metrics along with the data for the entire population.

Definitions/Methods

Method 1: Ratio in Black-White Rates.
Definition/Calculation: Ratio = Black Value/White Value (order of Black/white switches depending on metric). This measure can be expressed as saying that the rate (or value) for the Black population is x times greater than that of the white population.

Summary of benefits and drawbacks: This method is a simple calculation and is easy to understand. It provides the relative magnitude of disparity. However, it only considers two racial groups at a time and does not consider the size of the population groups or the absolute magnitude of the gap between population groups. Another drawback is that two peer regions are usually excluded from the rankings because the Black population is too small to be included.

Method 2: Difference in Values

Definition/Calculation:
Difference = White Population Metric Value - Black Population Metric Value (order of Black/white switches depending on metric).
And
Difference = White Population Metric Value - Hispanic or Latino Population Metric Value (order of Hispanic/white switches depending on metric).

Summary of benefits and drawbacks: This method is easy to understand. Like the ratio method, this method provides the relative magnitude of the difference between the two values. In addition, this method provides the absolute difference between the two values. Another benefit of this method is it is used by Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL) in measuring racial disparity in their north star metrics and targets.

Method 3: Excess People with Burdens (or Lacking Benefits) Compared to Most Well-Off Group

Definition/Calculation:

- Apply the rate of the most favorable population to the total population = hypothetical population
- Subtract the hypothetical from the actual = excess population
- Take the excess population as a percent of the total population of interest = the percent of the total population that is burdened (or lacking benefit) that would not be if all population groups had the same rate as the most well-off population group.

Summary of benefits and drawbacks: This method considers multiple population groups and the size of those groups. However, it is challenging to understand and communicate. It may be best used when the components can be discussed individually to see which population groups are most affected. Another drawback is that it may diminish the disparities faced by population groups that are small in number.

Why are these good measures of regional success?
In summary, each of these methods provides a reliable and valid measure of racial and ethnic differences. The ratio and difference methods provide comparisons between two racial groups and give easy-to-understand estimates expressing degrees of difference between groups. The excess method provides one estimate to compare overall racial and ethnic disparities in regions.

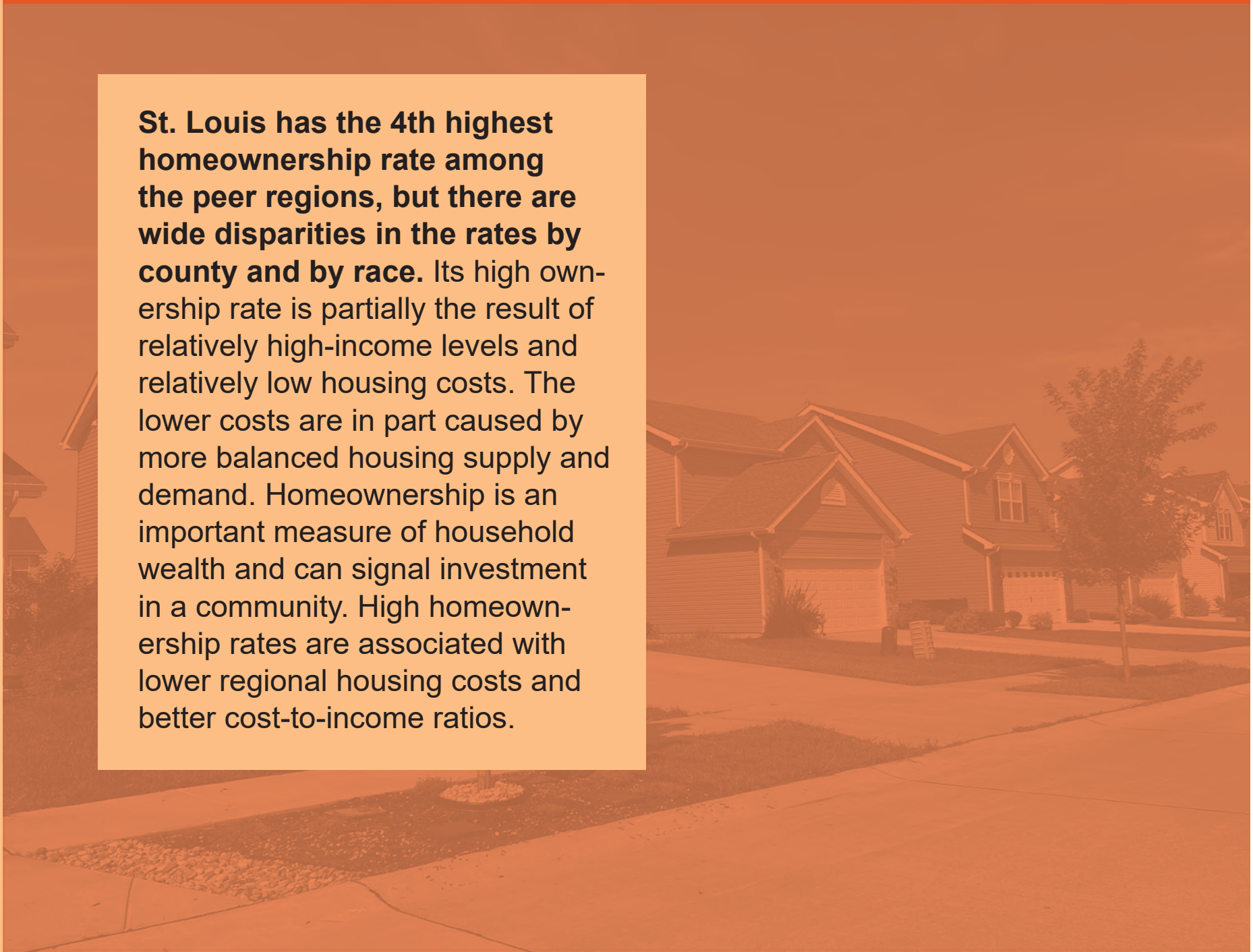
Why are these measures problematic or poor measures of regional success?
Two methods used, ratio and difference method, only take two population groups into account at once and they do not consider the size of the population groups. This results in an incomplete picture of disparity across regions.

The third method addresses these two challenges, but the excess measure has several problems as well. This method is complicated, it assumes that the highest rate of the best-off population group is the optimal rate, and it fails to show the degree of disparity for each group.

In addition, there are a few challenges that apply to all three of the methods used in this report.

1. Race is a social construct that cannot be verified. The categories of race and how people identify change over time. How people are grouped together can make a difference in the outcomes we see in the data.
2. It is important to consider the base values. For example, is the homeownership rate of the entire population what is desired? Similarly, is the rate of the best-off population group good or what is wanted?
3. Regions that lack diversity can show up as outliers, either high or low, or not be included at all.

Homeownership



St. Louis has the 4th highest homeownership rate among the peer regions, but there are wide disparities in the rates by county and by race. Its high ownership rate is partially the result of relatively high-income levels and relatively low housing costs. The lower costs are in part caused by more balanced housing supply and demand. Homeownership is an important measure of household wealth and can signal investment in a community. High homeownership rates are associated with lower regional housing costs and better cost-to-income ratios.

Measuring Success: Homeownership

What is being measured? The homeownership rate represents owner-occupied units as a percent of all occupied housing units. Racial and ethnic disparity in homeownership is the difference in rates between population groups. For more on the definitions and interpretations of the three disparity methods used here see Page 26. The main population groups discussed here are white (not Hispanic or Latino, referred to as "white"), Black (not Hispanic or Latino, referred to as "Black"), and Hispanic or Latino (referred to as "Hispanic").

What makes this a good measure of success? Homeownership is a key means for individuals and families to build wealth. It is sometimes used as a proxy for wealth. Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL) adopted homeownership as a north star metric with the goal of closing the racial homeownership disparity gap to enable "more St. Louisans to build equity."[4-01] There is also evidence that homeownership is conducive to civic participation and the formation of social capital in communities.[4-02] Further, homeownership typically requires people to have the ability to save funds for a down payment, which suggests that homeowners have a stable financial foundation.

At the regional level, a high ownership rate is an indication that housing is attainable for most households. Regions with high ranks on ownership generally have favorable ranks on measures of housing affordability.

Racial disparity in homeownership is important because of the long history of systemic racial housing segregation in the country and its detrimental effect on the ability of families to accumulate wealth.

What is problematic about this measure? At a regional level, a high homeownership rate does not clearly indicate broad success. Regions with the highest homeownership rates are generally below average on population and employment growth, although there are exceptions. Further, the overall rate does not consider racial disparities. The racial disparity metrics have their own set of challenges, which are discussed on Page 26.

On an individual level, homeownership as a measure of success may be misguided for a few reasons. A societal value on homeownership may encourage ownership at the expense of better wealth-building strategies, or it may place people in precarious financial positions due to housing costs and loan terms that they cannot truly afford. The rate also does not consider personal preferences on renting or other options beyond homeownership. Finally, the overall rate does not consider the quality of homes or communities in which ownership is available.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"It needs stable, safe, reasonably well-off multi-generational communities who own their own homes…"
–City of St. Louis Resident

"My daughter is a nurse…houses are so expensive that she doesn't know if she will be able to buy one."
–St. Charles County Resident

4-01 Greater St. Louis Inc. Measuring Growth - STL 2030 Progress. https://stl2030progress.com/measuring-growth/
4-02 Brian McCabe, 2013. Are homeowners better citizens? Homeownership and Community Participation in the United States. Social Forces 91(3): 929-954.

Peer Region Analysis: Homeownership

The regions with the highest homeownership rates are mostly those with moderate or slow population growth. However, some high-growth regions, including **Raleigh, Salt Lake City,** and **Jacksonville** also rank among the top 15 peer regions. The regional rankings on disparity metrics also vary and do not have strong relationships with regional rankings on other vitality metrics. The regional rankings on the three methods of calculating racial and ethnic disparity also vary from each other, indicating that one metric cannot adequality provide regional comparisons on racial disparity. Peer regions with relatively high homeownership rates generally have more affordable housing. The regional rankings for housing affordability strongly correlate with homeownership rankings as exemplified by **St. Louis, Raleigh, Birmingham, Pittsburgh,** and **Louisville** which all rank among the 10 most favorable on affordability and homeownership.

Regions with the lowest homeownership rates, including **Miami, San Francisco, San Jose,** and **Los Angeles** tend to have relatively unaffordable housing. They have experienced relatively low population growth in recent years (2019 to 2023) and tend to be unfavorable on net migration. However, they also tend to be among the most favorable when ranked by average wage per job and income per capita.

Rankings on homeownership rates are mixed for Midwestern regions. **Detroit, Minneapolis,** and **Cincinnati** join **St. Louis** at the top of the rankings with some of the highest rates. **Chicago** and **Kansas City** have about the same rate as the United States, and **Columbus** and **Milwaukee** are in the bottom third of regions.

Homeownership

Owner-occupied units as a percent of all occupied housing units, 2022

1	**Detroit**	**71.5**
2	Minneapolis	70.5
3	Pittsburgh	70.5
4	**St. Louis**	**69.7**
5	Birmingham	69.5
6	Louisville	69.2
7	Cincinnati	69.1
8	Raleigh	67.8
9	Salt Lake City	67.6
10	Richmond	67.6
11	Indianapolis	67.5
12	Baltimore	67.3
13	Jacksonville	67.2
14	Tampa	67.0
15	Philadelphia	66.9
16	Phoenix	66.7
17	Cleveland	66.6
18	Atlanta	66.5
19	Hartford	66.5
20	Buffalo	66.1
21	New Orleans	65.9
22	Charlotte	65.8
23	Riverside	65.8
24	Chicago	65.4
25	Kansas City	65.3
United States		**65.2**
26	Nashville	65.0
27	Denver	64.5
28	Virginia Beach	64.2
29	Washington, D.C.	63.9
30	San Antonio	63.5
31	Oklahoma City	63.3
32	Sacramento	62.8
33	Providence	62.8
34	Orlando	61.9
35	Portland	61.6
36	Boston	61.5
37	Columbus	61.2
38	Memphis	60.8
39	Houston	60.5
40	Dallas	60.2
41	Milwaukee	60.1
42	Miami	59.9
43	Seattle	59.8
44	Austin	58.8
45	Las Vegas	57.8
46	San Francisco	56.2
47	San Jose	54.9
48	San Diego	54.5
49	New York	51.7
50	**Los Angeles**	**47.9**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25003)

Racial Disparity in Homeownership Rates

While the peer region rankings on the three methods of calculating racial disparity vary, general conclusions can be made.

Disparities among population groups exist across the country, based on all three methods. This is true even in the following regions, which have the smallest disparities for each method:

- Ratio method: The most favorably ranked region was **Washington, D.C.**, where white households are 1.36 times more likely to own a home than Black households.
- Percentage point difference, Black and white: **Washington, D.C.** was again the most favorable, with a difference of 19 points.
- Percentage point difference, Hispanic and white: **Austin** was most favorable, with a difference of 10.9 points.
- Excess: In **Salt Lake City,** an additional 3% of households would own their homes if all population groups had the rate of the best-off group.

Further, the homeownership disparities faced by the Black populations across the country are substantial. Among the peer regions, the highest homeownership rate for a regional Black population was 54.2% in Richmond. The ownership rates for the white populations were higher than this in every region.

All of the Midwestern peer regions have disparities among Black and white households in homeownership that are greater than the national average. This is true whether using the difference method or the ratio method. In many of these regions, the Great Migration brought large numbers of African Americans into increasingly segregated communities between 1910 and 1970. Regions with similar histories, such as **Pittsburgh, Louisville,** and **Buffalo** are also above the national average on disparities. Three western regions, **Seattle, Portland,** and **Las Vegas,** also rank among the 10 most disparate regions for homeownership by either method. A fourth western region, **San Diego,** ranks 9th on the ratio of white to Black homeownership, but ranks 20th on the difference between white and Black homeownership rates. The difference is due to the relatively low overall rate of homeownership in **San Diego**.

Racial Disparity in Homeownership

Ratio of non-Hispanic Black to non-Hispanic white, owner-occupied units as a percent of all occupied units, 2022

1	**Milwaukee**	**2.69**
2	Minneapolis	2.50
3	Portland	2.35
4	Pittsburgh	2.16
5	Columbus	2.10
6	Seattle	2.09
7	Cincinnati	2.08
8	Las Vegas	2.06
9	San Diego	2.05
10	Louisville	1.97
11	New York	1.95
12	Cleveland	1.90
13	Oklahoma City	1.89
14	San Francisco	1.88
15	Kansas City	1.84
16	Buffalo	1.83
17	Phoenix	1.82
18	Chicago	1.81
19	Boston	1.81
20	Indianapolis	1.81
21	Los Angeles	1.80
22	Dallas	1.77
23	**St. Louis**	**1.75**
24	Detroit	1.73
25	Charlotte	1.71
26	Houston	1.68
27	Sacramento	1.68
28	Memphis	1.68
29	Hartford	1.67
30	Riverside	1.67
United States		**1.65**
31	Baltimore	1.64
32	Nashville	1.64
33	San Antonio	1.63
34	Denver	1.63
35	Providence	1.62
36	Tampa	1.58
37	Virginia Beach	1.58
38	Miami	1.57
39	Philadelphia	1.56
40	Jacksonville	1.55
41	Austin	1.55
42	Birmingham	1.54
43	Orlando	1.53
44	New Orleans	1.52
45	Raleigh	1.49
46	Atlanta	1.45
47	Richmond	1.40
48	**Washington, D.C.**	**1.36**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Racial Disparity in Homeownership

Percentage point difference, Black (Not Hispanic or Latino) and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2022

1	**Minneapolis**	**46.0**
2	Milwaukee	43.8
3	Pittsburgh	40.1
4	Cincinnati	39.3
5	Portland	37.9
6	Louisville	37.8
7	Columbus	36.1
8	Cleveland	35.8
9	Las Vegas	34.2
10	Seattle	34.1
11	Detroit	34.0
12	Oklahoma City	33.5
13	Chicago	33.4
14	Indianapolis	33.2
15	Phoenix	33.1
16	**St. Louis**	**32.8**
17	Buffalo	32.7
18	Kansas City	32.5
19	New York	32.4
20	San Diego	32.1
21	Charlotte	31.5
22	Memphis	31.2
23	Boston	30.8
24	Baltimore	30.7
25	Hartford	30.7
26	Dallas	30.2
27	Riverside	29.9
28	San Francisco	29.3
29	Houston	29.1
United States		**28.7**
30	Sacramento	28.1
31	San Antonio	28.0
32	Birmingham	27.9
33	Nashville	27.8
34	Virginia Beach	27.7
35	Miami	27.0
36	Philadelphia	26.9
37	Denver	26.9
38	Jacksonville	26.8
38	Tampa	26.8
40	New Orleans	26.2
41	Providence	26.2
42	Los Angeles	25.1
43	Raleigh	24.7
44	Orlando	24.6
45	Atlanta	24.2
46	Austin	22.5
47	Richmond	21.7
48	**Washington, D.C.**	**19.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Regions with the smallest disparities among Black and white households in homeownership rates are all in or near the South. **Washington, D.C.; Richmond; Atlanta; Raleigh; New Orleans;** and **Orlando** are among the 10 regions with narrower disparities using either the ratio or difference method.

While not as wide, the homeownership gaps for Hispanic and Latino populations are also sizable. St. Louis and Detroit have the highest ownership rates for the Hispanic and Latino populations, but the population group makes up a small proportion in each region. The regions with the next two largest ownership rates for Hispanic and Latino population groups are **Riverside** and **San Antonio**, which have the largest Hispanic populations among the peer regions. In each, the population group makes up more than 50% of the total population.

The five regions with the greatest disparity in homeownership between non-Hispanic white and Hispanic households are all in the Northeast: **Buffalo, Hartford, Boston, New York,** and **Providence. St. Louis** is among the five regions with the smallest disparities in white-Hispanic homeownership; the other four are all in the Southwest: **Austin, San Antonio, Dallas,** and **Riverside.**

Finally, when all race and ethnic groups are considered, the disparity rankings for the peer regions change. To account for the varying racial and ethnic compositions of the peer regions, the excess method considers the disparity faced by people of all races and ethnicities. Most of the regions with the largest disparities based on this metric do not rank at the top on the other metrics of disparity. The excess method is sensitive to the size of the population groups. Therefore, this method provides an estimation of the percent of the total population facing disparities. The regions with the highest disparities based on this metric are mixed with at least one peer region from each quadrant of the United States in the top 15 as well as some regions that are very diverse (based on the diffusion score) and some that are relatively not diverse. See Map 4-01.

Ethnic Disparity in Homeownership

Percentage point difference, Hispanic or Latino and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2022

1	**Buffalo**	**40.6**
2	Hartford	37.2
3	Boston	36.4
4	New York	36.3
5	Providence	33.8
6	Nashville	31.6
7	Memphis	30.4
8	Columbus	29.4
9	Richmond	29.0
10	Virginia Beach	28.7
11	San Jose	27.4
12	Milwaukee	26.9
13	Charlotte	26.7
14	Minneapolis	26.6
15	Cleveland	26.4
16	Baltimore	25.6
17	Portland	25.3
18	Louisville	25.2
19	Cincinnati	25.0
20	Seattle	24.5
21	Philadelphia	23.2
22	Atlanta	23.0
23	Jacksonville	23.0
24	Indianapolis	22.7
25	Oklahoma City	22.2
United States		**21.9**
26	New Orleans	21.4
27	San Diego	20.6
28	Miami	20.5
28	San Francisco	20.5
30	Raleigh	20.3
31	Sacramento	20.0
32	Detroit	19.2
33	Washington, D.C.	18.5
34	Orlando	18.1
34	Salt Lake City	18.1
36	Los Angeles	17.7
37	Houston	16.8
37	Kansas City	16.8
39	Phoenix	16.6
40	Denver	15.9
40	Las Vegas	15.9
42	Chicago	15.4
43	Tampa	15.3
44	**St. Louis**	**14.8**
45	Riverside	13.3
46	Dallas	13.2
47	San Antonio	12.4
48	**Austin**	**10.9**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

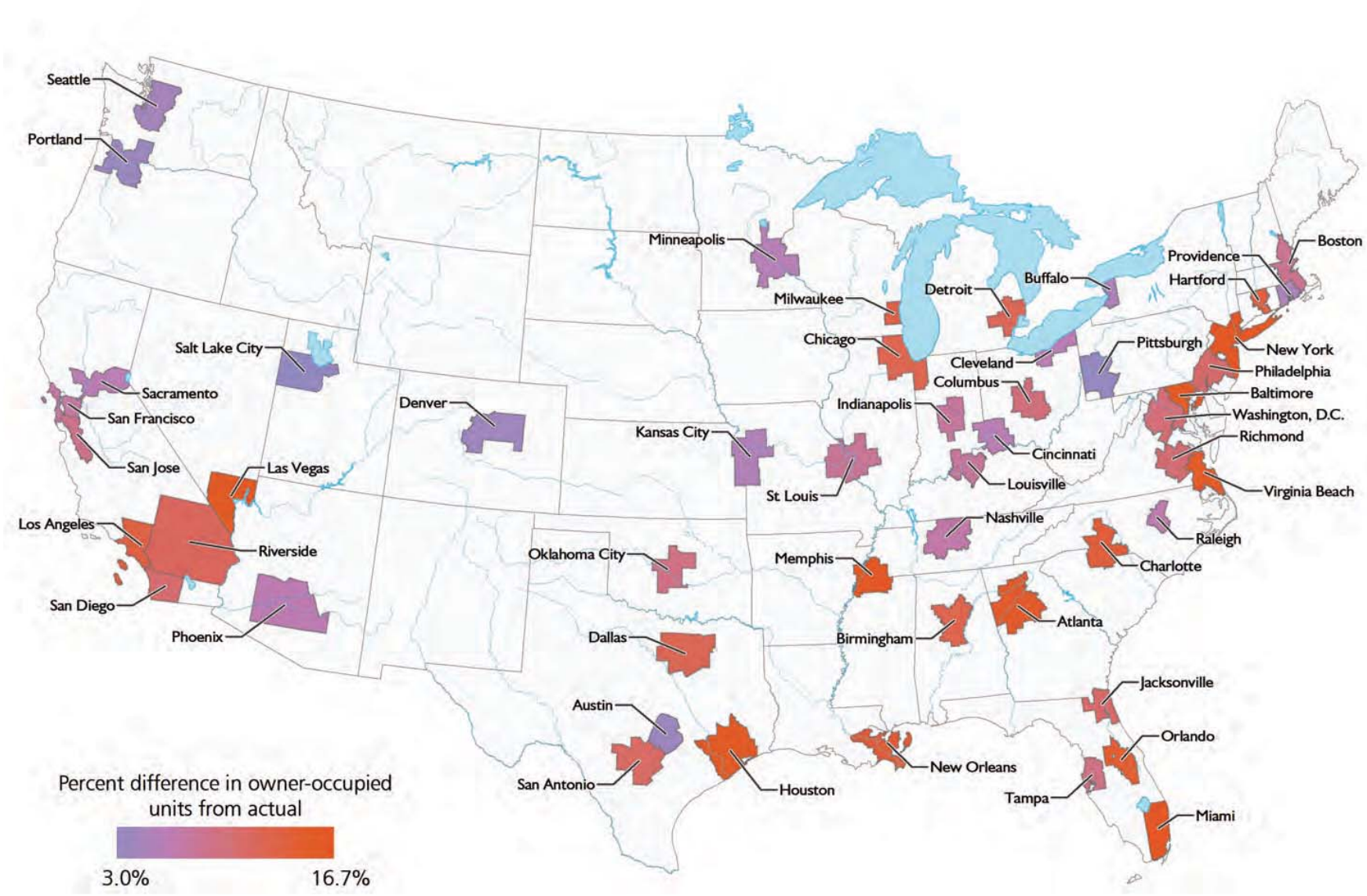
Racial & Ethnic Disparity in Homeownership

Excess percentage of households lacking homeownership due to disparities, 2022

1	**Memphis**	**16.7**
2	New York	14.6
3	Miami	14.2
4	Baltimore	11.6
5	Las Vegas	11.3
6	Houston	11.3
7	Virginia Beach	10.9
8	Atlanta	10.9
9	Orlando	10.6
10	New Orleans	10.4
11	Charlotte	10.2
12	Hartford	9.5
13	Los Angeles	9.5
14	Milwaukee	9.3
15	Birmingham	9.2
16	Chicago	9.2
17	Dallas	9.1
18	Detroit	9.1
19	Cleveland	9.0
20	Riverside	8.7
21	San Antonio	8.7
22	Jacksonville	8.3
23	Philadelphia	8.2
24	San Diego	8.2
25	Richmond	8.0
United States		**7.7**
26	Washington, D.C.	7.7
27	Columbus	7.7
28	Oklahoma City	7.5
29	Tampa	7.5
30	San Jose	7.3
31	Boston	7.2
32	**St. Louis**	**7.1**
33	Louisville	7.0
34	Indianapolis	6.9
35	San Francisco	6.8
36	Nashville	6.6
37	Raleigh	6.6
38	Phoenix	6.5
39	Sacramento	6.5
40	Cincinnati	6.5
41	Minneapolis	6.0
42	Kansas City	5.8
43	Buffalo	5.7
44	Providence	5.6
45	Seattle	5.2
46	Denver	5.0
47	Austin	4.9
48	Portland	4.7
49	Pittsburgh	3.5
50	**Salt Lake City**	**3.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Map 4-01 Racial and Ethnic Disparity in Homeownership, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

EWG Region Analysis: Homeownership

In the EWG region, the homeownership rate varies from county to county. In each county there is a range of ownership rates across tracts and by race. Map 4-02 provides the rates at the tract level. Most communities outside the central core have ownership rates over 55%. There are some tracts in each county where less than 55% of the homes are owner occupied, except Monroe County where the lowest rate for a tract is 70.3%.

There is substantial disparity in ownership rates by race in the region. For the region as a whole the rate for the white population is 77.1% compared to a rate of 41.2% for the Black population, a difference of 35.9 points. Table 4-01 provides the rates by county for race and ethnic population groups.

Table 4-01. Homeownership Rate by Race and Ethnicity

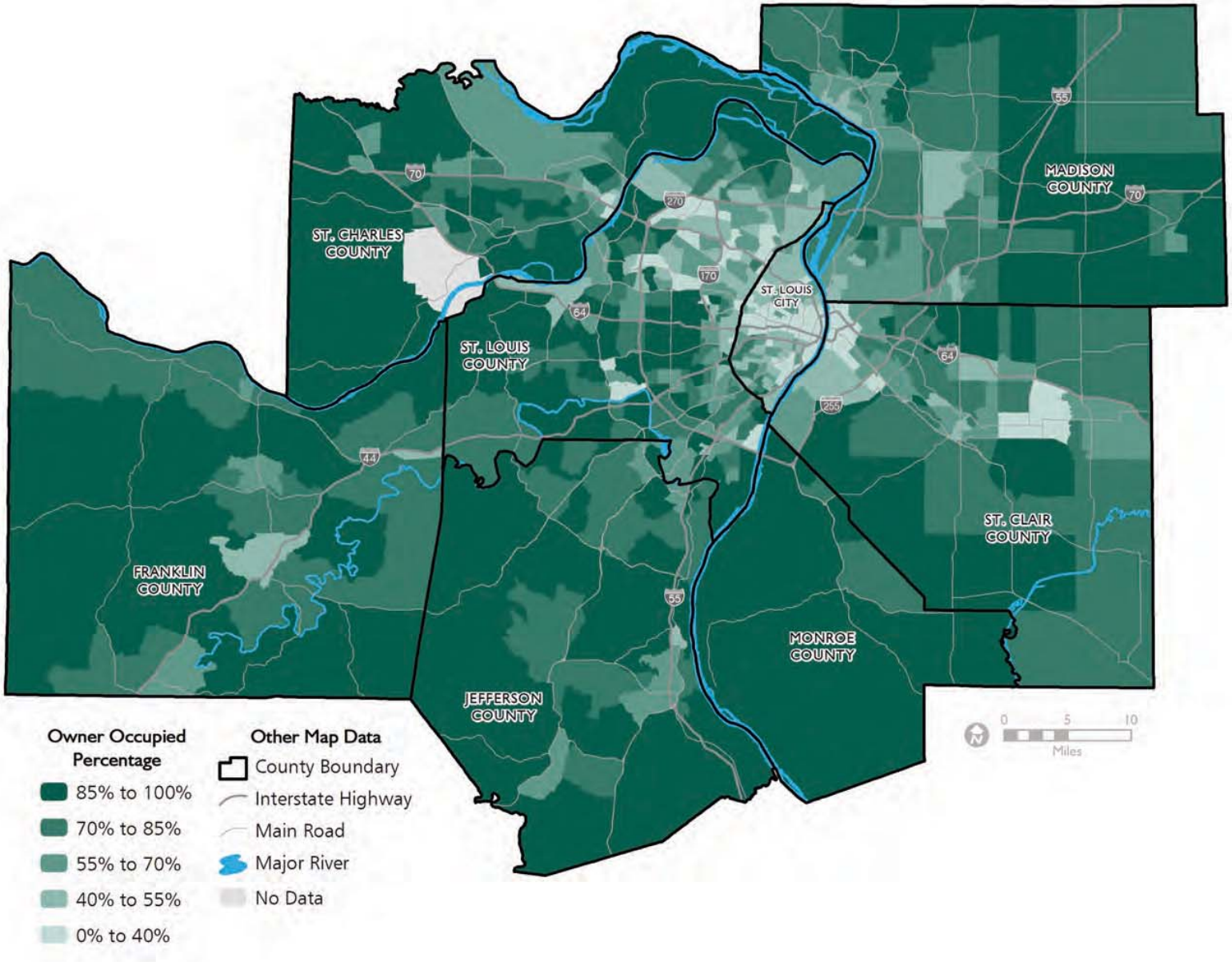
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022

	White	Black	Asian	Multiracial	Hispanic or Latino	Total population
Madison	77.6	30.8	63.1	61.9	65.4	73.1
Monroe	84.0	81.3	79.6	93.8	96.6	84.1
St. Clair	79.0	43.4	70.0	55.9	67.3	67.9
Franklin	78.5	45.8	78.2	64.8	70.9	77.6
Jefferson	81.7	43.0	88.2	69.5	61.5	80.7
St. Charles	82.8	56.1	66.1	74.2	70.8	80.7
St. Louis	77.2	45.9	58.7	65.6	56.3	68.5
City of St. Louis	56.5	32.1	31.1	37.6	40.3	44.9
EWG Region	77.1	41.2	56.6	61.8	58.8	67.6

Note: The race categories include Hispanic and Latino populations.

Source. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year (S2502)

Map 4-02. Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2018-2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25003), 2018-2022; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Housing Affordability

Among the peer regions, St. Louis ranks high in housing affordability. Despite this, housing is not affordable for everyone, including nearly half of renters who pay 30% or more of their income on housing. Among the peer regions, those that are relatively unaffordable are often fast-growing and have not been able to keep up with demand. Regions in the Midwest tend to be among the most affordable. These regions also have high homeownership rates.

Measuring Success: Housing Affordability

What is being measured? The metric used for housing affordability in this report is defined as housing costs as a percent of median household income. Those paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all homeowners are considered housing cost-burdened owners, while housing cost-burdened renters are those paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all renters.

What makes this a good measure of success? Housing is often the largest expenditure for households and therefore is an indication of the overall affordability of a region. Research indicates that housing cost-burdened households are likely to experience other forms of material hardship, including food and housing insecurity, difficulty paying bills, and lack of reliable access to medical care.[5-01] Housing cost burdens are linked to poor education outcomes for children and poor employment outcomes for adults.[5-02]

What is problematic about this measure? There are several issues with using housing affordability as a measure of success. First, it does not provide insight across the income distribution. While a region may be affordable to median income households, there may be a lack of housing that is affordable to those at the 25th percentile. Similarly, an increase in the average income of households in the upper half of the income distribution would lead to an improvement on this measure even if nothing changed for households in the lower half.

The metric also does not consider the quality of housing. This can include the adequacy of the unit for the health of the occupants, neighborhood stressors such as environmental risks and crime, and access to amenities such as quality schools, healthy groceries, and health care. Focusing exclusively on housing costs also ignores transportation costs, which are closely related to housing. Finally, a high level of affordability can result from a lack of demand.

Cost-burdened metrics do not consider the income of the household, and therefore may include some higher-income households that choose to devote a greater portion of income to housing. The 30% threshold is also somewhat arbitrary and may be too high for some households.

5-01 Shamsuddin, Shomon and Colin Campbell. 2021. Housing cost burden, material hardship, and well-being. Housing Policy Debate, DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2021.1882532.
5-02 Divringi, Eileen, 2017. Rental housing affordability impacts educational and employment opportunities. Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. Cascade: An online publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. https://www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/housing-and-neighborhoods/rental-housing-affordability-impacts-educational-and-employment-opportunities

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"A successful region has housing meeting the needs of the people" –Madison County Resident

"Welcoming, inclusive, safe, affordable housing." –St. Clair County Resident

Peer Region Analysis: Housing Affordability

Regions in Florida and California score poorly on all affordability metrics. Other regions with relatively unaffordable housing include **Las Vegas, New York,** and **Boston. Miami** is the least affordable region for all three methods. **Los Angeles** is the second least affordable on two methods and ranks relatively high on cost-burdened renters. These regions also tend to rank unfavorably on homeownership and unemployment.

The regions with the most affordable housing tend to be in the Midwest, South, and the Northeast. All the Midwest peer regions except **Chicago** are more affordable than the United States as a whole for all three methods. **Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis,** and **Raleigh** are among the most affordable on all three methods. These regions tend to also have the highest homeownership rates among the peer regions, yet also have high rates of concentrated poverty. In addition, regions in the Midwest and Northeast tend to have similar development patterns, with populations migrating from central cities to suburbs.

St. Louis is one of the most affordable regions on all three measures. However, even with the 4th most affordable housing for renters, almost half (46.6%) of renters pay 30% or more of their income on housing.

Regional ranks on housing affordability are strongly related to ranks on several metrics that may influence demand for housing. Regions with less affordable housing tend to have larger foreign-born populations, less developed land per capita, and a larger proportion of second homes. Additionally, regions with larger proportions of Hispanic or Latino residents, particularly in the Sunbelt, tend to have higher housing prices.

Housing Affordability

Median housing costs as a percent of median household income, 2022

1	**Miami**	**27.3**
2	Los Angeles	27.2
3	San Diego	26.1
4	Riverside	25.1
5	Orlando	24.7
6	Las Vegas	24.4
7	New York	24.4
8	Sacramento	23.6
9	San Francisco	23.2
10	Boston	23.1
11	Tampa	23.0
12	Virginia Beach	22.9
13	Dallas	22.3
14	Portland	22.3
15	New Orleans	22.1
16	Houston	22.0
17	Seattle	22.0
18	San Jose	22.0
19	Denver	21.8
20	San Antonio	21.8
21	Austin	21.5
22	Memphis	21.0
23	Jacksonville	20.9
24	Providence	20.9
25	Phoenix	20.9
26	Atlanta	20.8
27	Chicago	20.8
28	Nashville	20.6
29	Baltimore	20.6
30	Hartford	20.5
31	Philadelphia	20.4
United States		**20.4**
32	Washington, D.C.	20.3
33	Milwaukee	19.9
34	Charlotte	19.9
35	Columbus	19.7
36	Richmond	19.7
37	Minneapolis	19.7
38	Oklahoma City	19.4
39	Kansas City	19.4
40	Salt Lake City	19.4
41	Cleveland	19.1
42	Detroit	18.9
43	Raleigh	18.6
44	Louisville	18.5
45	Birmingham	18.4
46	Indianapolis	18.0
47	Buffalo	17.7
48	**St. Louis**	**17.7**
49	Cincinnati	17.6
50	**Pittsburgh**	**16.5**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25105, B19013)

Housing Cost-Burdened Owners

Owners paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all homeowners, 2022

1	**Miami**	**33.7**
2	Los Angeles	33.6
3	Riverside	32.4
4	San Diego	32.1
5	New York	31.9
6	San Francisco	28.8
7	Sacramento	27.7
8	Boston	26.5
9	Orlando	26.4
10	San Jose	26.0
11	Portland	25.7
12	Tampa	25.7
13	Las Vegas	25.7
14	Chicago	25.0
15	Virginia Beach	24.9
16	Seattle	24.9
17	Providence	24.8
18	New Orleans	24.7
19	San Antonio	24.7
20	Denver	24.2
21	Houston	23.8
22	Dallas	23.7
23	Philadelphia	23.2
24	Hartford	23.0
25	Baltimore	22.8
United States		**22.8**
26	Jacksonville	21.9
27	Washington, D.C.	21.9
28	Austin	21.9
29	Detroit	21.3
30	Memphis	21.0
31	Milwaukee	20.7
32	Phoenix	20.5
33	Kansas City	20.5
34	Atlanta	20.4
35	Minneapolis	20.1
36	Nashville	20.1
37	Cleveland	20.0
38	Oklahoma City	19.7
39	Salt Lake City	19.3
40	Richmond	19.3
41	Buffalo	19.1
42	Louisville	18.8
43	Columbus	18.4
44	Charlotte	18.3
45	Birmingham	17.7
46	**St. Louis**	**17.7**
47	Indianapolis	17.7
48	Cincinnati	17.6
49	Pittsburgh	17.2
50	**Raleigh**	**17.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25091)

Housing Cost-Burdened Renters

Renters paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all renters, 2022

1	**Miami**	**64.6**
2	Orlando	60.6
3	Riverside	60.2
4	Sacramento	59.1
5	Las Vegas	58.3
6	San Diego	58.3
7	Los Angeles	58.2
8	New Orleans	58.2
9	Tampa	57.6
10	Virginia Beach	55.7
11	San Antonio	55.4
12	Birmingham	54.2
13	Memphis	53.9
14	Phoenix	53.9
15	Richmond	53.7
16	Houston	53.5
17	Dallas	53.5
18	Boston	53.3
19	Jacksonville	53.2
20	Atlanta	53.2
21	Hartford	53.0
22	Baltimore	53.0
23	Portland	52.6
24	New York	52.6
25	Denver	52.0
United States		**51.9**
26	Philadelphia	51.8
27	Detroit	51.7
28	Nashville	51.2
29	Minneapolis	51.0
30	Indianapolis	50.5
31	Chicago	50.4
32	Cleveland	50.1
33	Oklahoma City	50.1
34	Seattle	50.0
35	Charlotte	49.9
36	Buffalo	49.7
37	Milwaukee	49.5
38	Salt Lake City	49.2
39	Louisville	49.1
40	San Francisco	48.9
41	Providence	48.6
42	Austin	48.5
43	Raleigh	48.3
44	Washington, D.C.	47.8
45	Columbus	47.3
46	Kansas City	46.7
47	**St. Louis**	**46.6**
48	Cincinnati	46.5
49	San Jose	45.7
50	**Pittsburgh**	**43.2**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25070)

EWG Region Analysis: Housing Affordability

Among the county-level jurisdictions in the EWG region, the city of St. Louis and Franklin County have the lowest median monthly housing costs. However, the city also has the highest proportion of cost-burdened homeowners, due to a high concentration of lower-income households, with 43.4% of households earning less than $45,000 in 2022. See Table 05-01 and Figure 05-01.

Franklin County is the most affordable, with the lowest median monthly housing cost and the third lowest rate of cost-burdened owners. From 2017 to 2022, it led the EWG counties in housing permit growth. Monroe County had the lowest rate of cost-burdened owners in the region.

St. Charles County had the highest median monthly housing cost in the region, but also had the second-lowest percentage of cost-burdened homeowners. This reflects the county's high-income levels, with 49.7% of households receiving over $100,000 in 2022.

The rate of cost-burdened renters is similar for most of the counties, around 44 to 45%. However, Jefferson, Franklin, and St. Charles counties have significantly lower rates, 39.4%, 39.8%, and 38.6%, respectively.

Table 5-01. Housing Costs and Affordability

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022

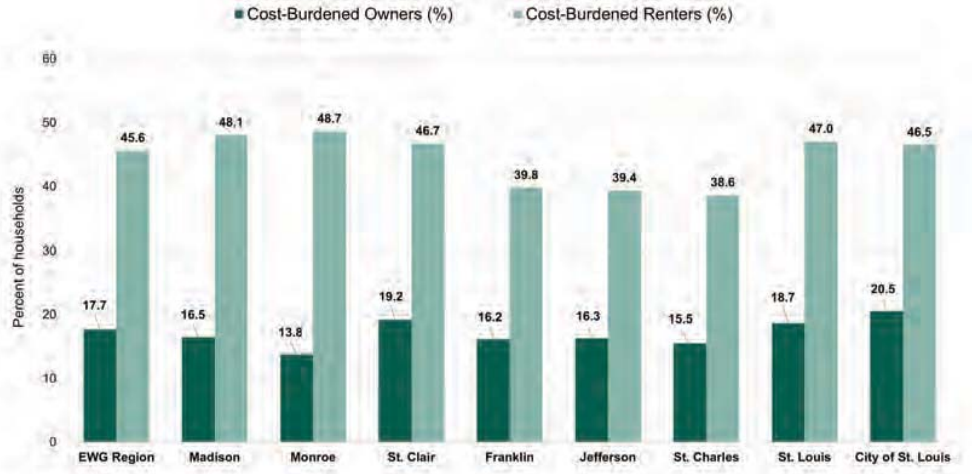
	Median Monthly Housing Costs ($)	Housing Costs as a Percent Median Household Income (%)
Madison	1,014	16.2
Monroe	1,241	19.8
St. Clair	1,065	17.0
Franklin	940	15.0
Jefferson	1,084	17.3
St. Charles	1,399	22.3
St. Louis	1,202	19.2
City of St. Louis	983	15.7
EWG Region	1,127	18.0

Note: Housing costs are a percent of the median household income for the St. Louis MSA.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25105,S1901); IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota

Figure 5-01. Cost-Burdened Households by Type

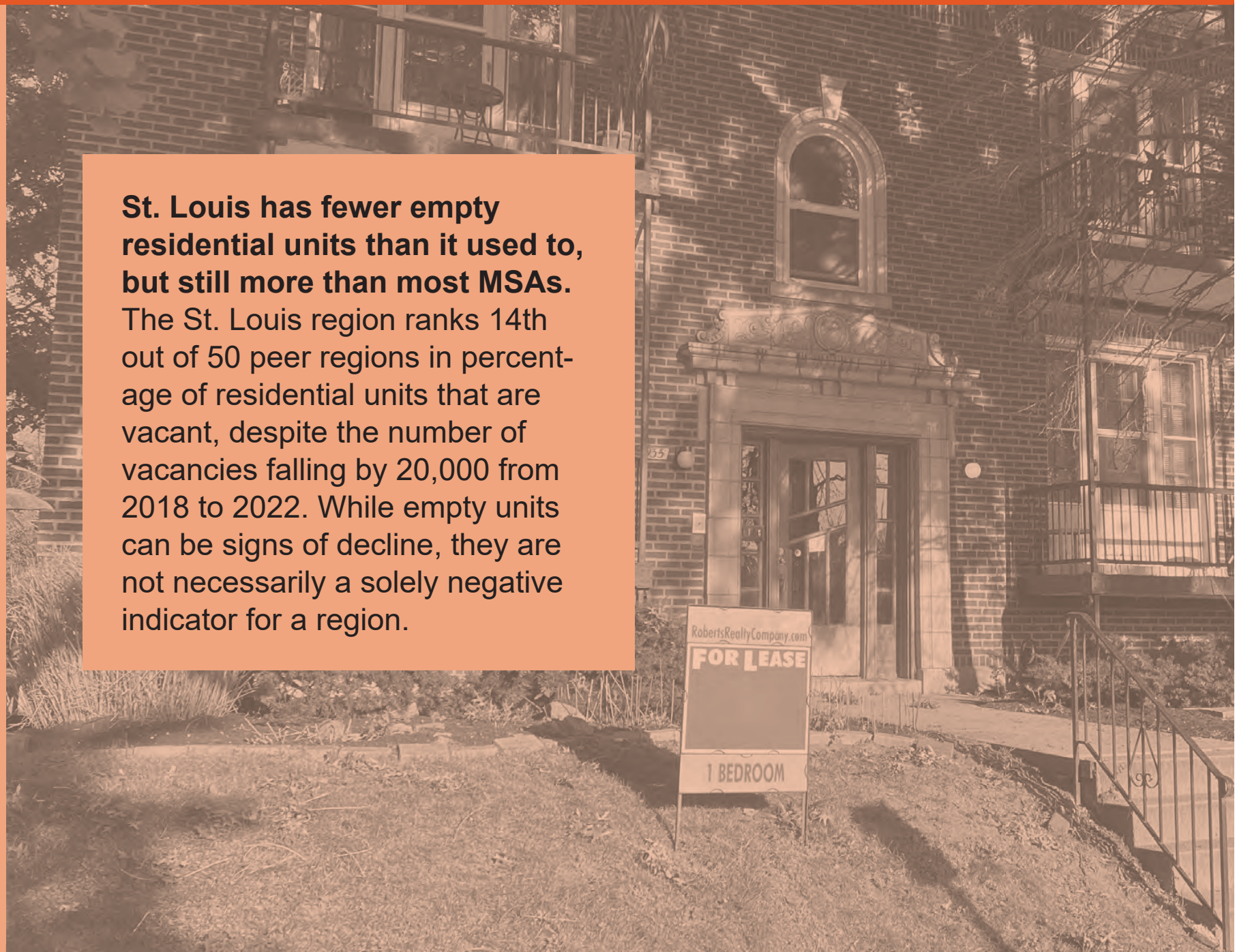
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022



Note: Cost-burdened refers to households paying more than 30% of their household income on housing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25091, B25070)

Vacancy



St. Louis has fewer empty residential units than it used to, but still more than most MSAs. The St. Louis region ranks 14th out of 50 peer regions in percentage of residential units that are vacant, despite the number of vacancies falling by 20,000 from 2018 to 2022. While empty units can be signs of decline, they are not necessarily a solely negative indicator for a region.

Measuring Success: Vacancy

What is being measured? Measuring vacancy rates is not as simple as finding how many homes or apartments are empty. The vacancy data comes from the Census Bureau's measurement of "vacant units," which includes homes that are temporarily unoccupied, vacation properties, or newly constructed units waiting for their first residents. It does not include housing that is uninhabitable, another important topic for which the term "vacancy" is also often used. Understanding these nuances is essential for accurately interpreting what vacancy rates reveal about the economic and social health of a region.

What makes this a good measure of success? In general, the vacancy rate can be a good indicator of the desirability of a community. A low vacancy rate for a community may indicate a tight housing market, where demand to live in the region is high relative to the supply of units. Austin is a good example of this, with high demand for housing outpacing development. Conversely, a high vacancy rate can be a symptom of economic decline and low neighborhood quality.

What is problematic about this measure? Communities with a large number of vacation homes tend to have higher vacancy rates. Vacancies can also be present in areas where rapid construction of housing is occurring, and data is collected in between construction and occupancy. Additionally, vacancy rates can decline in areas that are losing population as units become uninhabitable and/or demolished.

Vacancy rates can either be too high or too low. It is important to understand why a region has the vacancies that it does instead of drawing conclusions based solely on its ranking against peer regions. As noted earlier, the Census Bureau does not include housing that is unhabitable. These are often the most problematic vacancies for local communities.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"The majority of storefronts have businesses, the homes have occupants...and the residents have what they need to live fulfilled lives." –St. Charles County Resident

Vibrant communities and people [including]...low vacancies" –St. Louis County Resident

Peer Region Analysis: Vacancy

Most peer regions have lower vacancy rates than the United States as a whole. This indicates that vacancy rates tend to be higher in rural areas, which is in part due to a relatively large proportion of seasonal homes in these areas.

Eight peer regions have higher vacancy rates than the U.S. rate. They include a mix of high growth regions and regions that are not high growth.

The 10 regions with the lowest vacancy rates also rank favorably on measures of income, poverty, and well-being.

Only three regions had increases in vacancy rates from 2012 to 2022. Two of these, **San Jose** and **San Francisco**, experienced large out-migrations during the pandemic. The third, **Raleigh**, has experienced an increase in population. In Raleigh, more than half of vacant units are rental properties, compared to a peer region average of about a quarter of units.

Vacancy Rate

Vacant units as a percent of all housing units, 2022

1	**New Orleans**	**13.9**
2	Miami	12.6
3	Tampa	12.1
4	Birmingham	10.7
5	Riverside	10.3
6	Pittsburgh	9.9
7	Las Vegas	9.8
8	Memphis	9.7
United States		**9.7**
9	Raleigh	9.3
10	Oklahoma City	8.6
11	Phoenix	8.4
12	Cleveland	8.3
13	Jacksonville	8.2
14	**St. Louis**	**8.2**
15	Orlando	8.0
16	Detroit	8.0
17	San Antonio	8.0
18	Sacramento	7.4
19	San Francisco	7.4
20	New York	7.4
21	Virginia Beach	7.4
22	Houston	7.2
23	Indianapolis	7.1
24	Atlanta	7.1
25	Providence	7.0
26	Charlotte	6.9
27	Buffalo	6.7
28	Columbus	6.6
29	Kansas City	6.6
30	Nashville	6.5
31	Hartford	6.4
32	Baltimore	6.2
33	Milwaukee	6.2
34	Chicago	6.1
35	Dallas	6.1
36	San Diego	6.0
37	Los Angeles	6.0
38	Louisville	6.0
39	Salt Lake City	5.9
40	Cincinnati	5.8
41	San Jose	5.8
42	Seattle	5.7
43	Philadelphia	5.7
44	Boston	5.6
45	Richmond	5.6
46	Denver	5.2
47	Portland	5.0
48	Washington, D.C.	5.0
49	Austin	4.6
50	**Minneapolis**	**4.5**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25002)

Change in Vacancy Rate

Percentage point change in vacant units as a percent of all housing units, 2012-2022

1	**San Jose**	**2.2**
2	Raleigh	2.1
3	San Francisco	1.3
4	Pittsburgh	-0.2
5	New Orleans	-0.5
6	Minneapolis	-0.6
7	Milwaukee	-0.8
8	Denver	-0.8
9	Hartford	-1.1
10	Boston	-1.2
11	Portland	-1.2
12	Seattle	-1.3
13	New York	-1.7
14	San Diego	-1.7
15	San Antonio	-1.9
16	Washington, D.C.	-2.0
17	Dallas	-2.2
18	Birmingham	-2.2
19	**St. Louis**	**-2.4**
20	Nashville	-2.4
21	Oklahoma City	-2.4
22	Virginia Beach	-2.5
23	Sacramento	-2.5
24	Salt Lake City	-2.7
25	Memphis	-2.7
26	Charlotte	-2.8
United States		**-2.8**
27	Philadelphia	-2.9
28	Baltimore	-3.0
29	Kansas City	-3.0
30	Buffalo	-3.1
31	Providence	-3.2
32	Columbus	-3.3
33	Louisville	-3.4
34	Chicago	-3.6
35	Cleveland	-3.7
36	Austin	-3.8
37	Indianapolis	-3.8
38	Houston	-4.0
39	Riverside	-4.2
40	Atlanta	-4.5
41	Detroit	-4.6
42	Tampa	-4.6
43	Cincinnati	-4.6
44	Richmond	-5.3
45	Miami	-5.4
46	Las Vegas	-5.9
47	Phoenix	-6.3
48	Jacksonville	-7.4
49	**Orlando**	**-10.1**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25002)

In the St. Louis MSA, the number of vacancies fell by 20,000 (16.4%) from 2018 to 2022. The largest decrease was in for-sale properties. There were also reductions in the categories of vacancies for rent, sold-not occupied, seasonal, migrant workers, and the “other” category. There was an increase only in the small category of rented, not occupied. See Table 6-01.

Table 6-01. Vacancy by Type

St. Louis MSA and United States, 2018 and 2022

United States	2018	2022	Percent of Vacant Units 2018	Percent of Vacant Units 2022	Percent Change 2018-2022	Absolute Change 2018-2022
Total Vacant Units	**17,019,726**	**13,901,967**			**-18.3**	**-3,117,759**
For rent	2,908,916	2,439,877	17.1	17.6	-16.1	-469,039
Rented, not occupied	595,023	511,341	3.5	3.7	-14.1	-83,682
For sale only	1,206,192	723,726	7.1	5.2	-40.0	-482,466
Sold, not occupied	665,895	626,440	3.9	4.5	-5.9	-39,455
Seasonal, rec, or occasional use	5,435,399	4,546,733	31.9	32.7	-16.3	-888,666
For migrant workers	39,756	27,913	0.2	0.2	-29.8	-11,843
Other vacant	6,168,545	5,025,937	36.2	36.2	-18.5	-1,142,608
St. Louis MSA	**2018**	**2022**	**Percent of Vacant Units 2018**	**Percent of Vacant Units 2022**	**Percent Change 2018-2022**	**Absolute Change 2018-2022**
Total Vacant Units	**124,858**	**104,346**			**-16.4**	**-20,512**
For rent	26,200	19,727	21.0	18.9	-24.7	-6,473
Rented, not occupied	2,372	3,107	1.9	3.0	31.0	735
For sale only	15,685	6,384	12.6	6.1	-59.3	-9,301
Sold, not occupied	10,129	8,556	8.1	8.2	-15.5	-1,573
Seasonal, rec, or occasional use	11,150	9,358	8.9	9.0	-16.1	-1,792
For migrant workers	192	47	0.2	0.0	-75.5	-145
Other vacant	59,130	57,167	47.4	54.8	-3.3	-1,963

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25004)

EWG Region Analysis: Vacancy

Within the St. Louis region, vacancy is highest in parts of the urban core that have historically experienced out-migration and disinvestment. Since 2017, there has been an overall decrease in the number of vacant units and the vacancy rate for the region and in most of the county-level jurisdictions in the region. The exceptions were in Franklin and Monroe counties, the most rural in the region. The city of St. Louis and St. Louis County experienced the largest decreases in the number of vacant units. St. Charles County had the largest percentage decrease (24.9%) from 2017 to 2022. Table 6-02 provides the residential vacancy rates for the EWG region as a whole and each of the county-level jurisdictions for 2017 and 2022.

The vacancy rate for the EWG region and most of the counties either decreased or remained about the same for 2017 and 2022. This was coupled with an increase in the total number of units in most of the counties as well. The EWG region experienced a 13.4% decrease in vacant units while increasing the total number of units by 1.3%.

The total number of housing units increased in most of the counties. There was a slight decrease in Madison County and more substantial decreases in St. Clair County and the city of St. Louis. These decreases were accompanied by decreases in vacant units as well. St. Charles County experienced the largest growth in total housing, in both absolute and percentage terms, and also had the largest decrease in the percentage of homes that are vacant.

Map 6-01 provides the vacancy rates for the region for 2022, showing the higher rates in the city of St. Louis and St. Clair County.

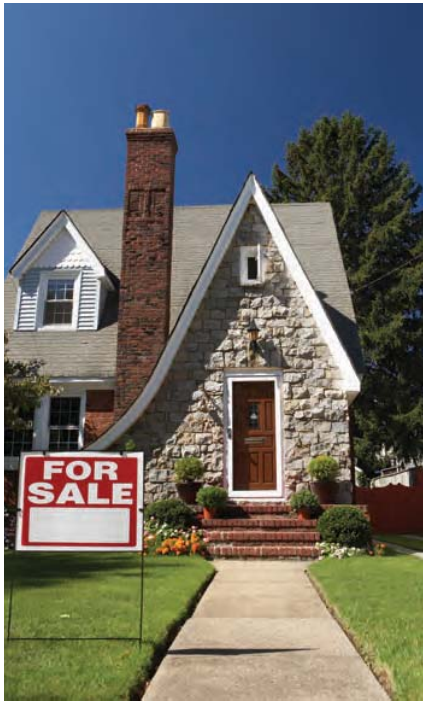


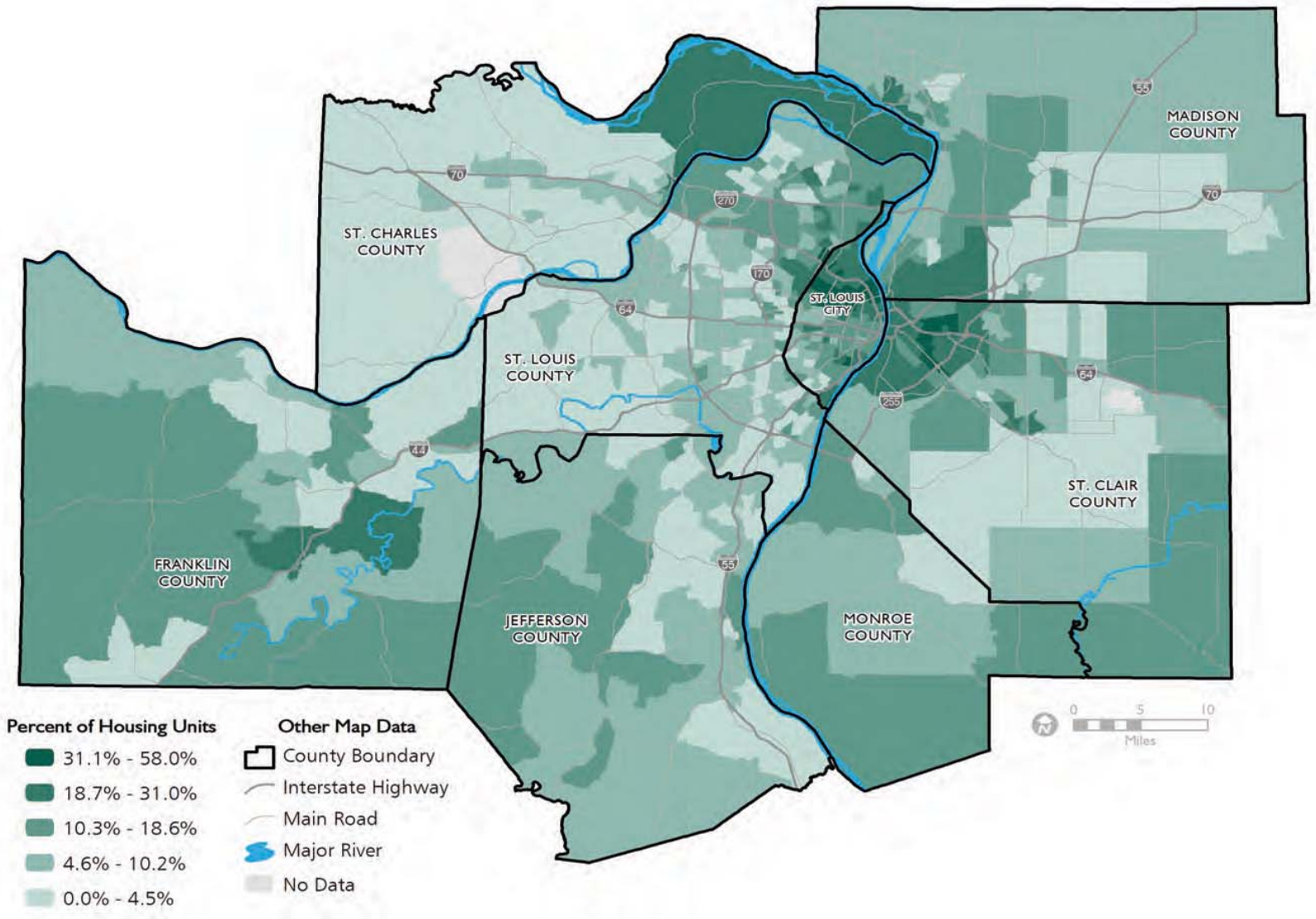
Table 6-02. Vacancy Rate

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2017 and 2022

	Vacant Units		Housing Units		Vacancy Rate			Vacant Units		Housing Units	
County	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	Percentage Point Change	Absolute Change	Percent Change	Absolute Change	Percent Change
Madison	11,565	9,801	118,806	118,715	9.7	8.3	-1.5	-1,764	-15.3	-91	-0.1
Monroe	704	995	13,931	14,560	5.1	6.8	1.8	291	41.3	629	4.5
St. Clair	16,230	14,464	119,355	115,165	13.6	12.6	-1.0	-1,766	-10.9	-4,190	-3.5
Franklin	3,850	3,908	44,462	45,420	8.7	8.6	-0.1	58	1.5	958	2.2
Jefferson	6,235	6,135	89,979	92,590	6.9	6.6	-0.3	-100	-1.6	2,611	2.9
St. Charles	7,459	5,598	150,013	161,979	5.0	3.5	-1.5	-1,861	-24.9	11,966	8.0
St. Louis	37,096	31,613	439,403	444,860	8.4	7.1	-1.3	-5,483	-14.8	5,457	1.2
City of St. Louis	36,418	30,733	176,159	173,792	20.7	17.7	-3.0	-5,685	-15.6	-2,367	-1.3
EWG Region	121,574	105,269	1,154,125	1,169,103	10.5	9.0	-1.5	-16,305	-13.4	14,978	1.3

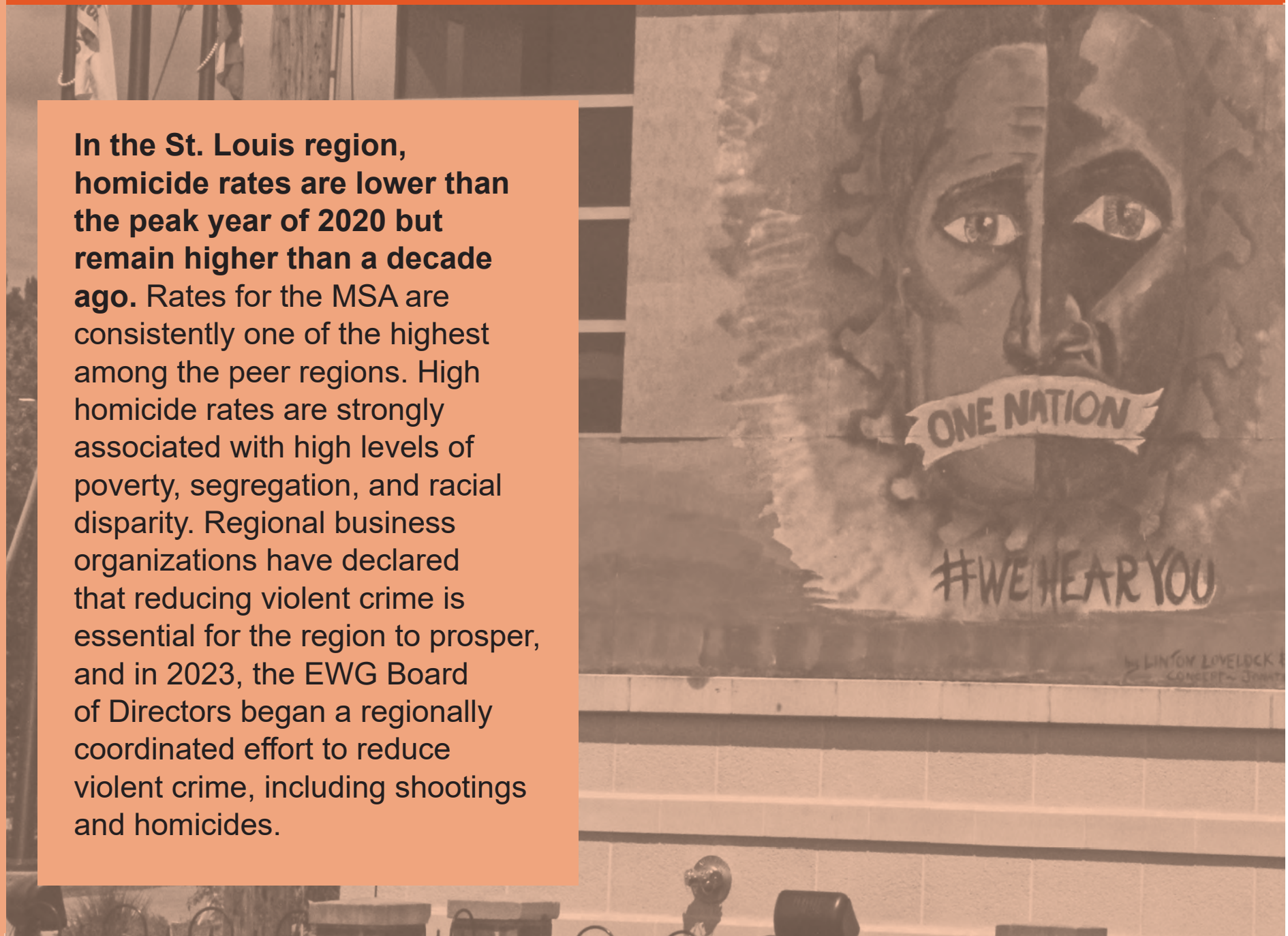
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022 (B25002)

Map 6-01. Vacancy Rate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25002), 2018-2022; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Crime



In the St. Louis region, homicide rates are lower than the peak year of 2020 but remain higher than a decade ago. Rates for the MSA are consistently one of the highest among the peer regions. High homicide rates are strongly associated with high levels of poverty, segregation, and racial disparity. Regional business organizations have declared that reducing violent crime is essential for the region to prosper, and in 2023, the EWG Board of Directors began a regionally coordinated effort to reduce violent crime, including shootings and homicides.

Measuring Success: Crime

What is being measured? This report primarily uses age-adjusted homicide rates compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which presents the most consistent time series in a form that is readily comparable across the peer regions. The CDC data are compiled from death certificates, reported at the county level.[7-01] Crime data from the FBI is more widely referenced by others but is not consistently available for the peer regions.

The CDC data differs from the FBI data in two important ways. First, deaths are categorized based on the place of residence of the homicide victim. This was chosen over place of occurrence data to be consistent with other CDC fatality data reported by WWS and to focus on deaths of residents of the St. Louis MSA. At the MSA level, there is not much difference between the rates for place of occurrence vs. place of residence. Second, the data reported here are age-adjusted rates. This enables both comparison over time and between the peer regions, which have differing age distributions.

Homicides and violent crime only account for a portion of crimes and public safety concerns. Therefore, motor vehicle theft crime was selected as a proxy for property crime. This data is from the FBI, by place of occurrence.

What makes these good measures of success? Public safety is an important aspect of individual and community well-being. Violent crime not only affects those who are directly involved but many more who are exposed. This trauma can increase risk for severe physical and mental health outcomes, including post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use, suicide, chronic physical health conditions, and anxiety. Exposure to violence also affects the ability of children to succeed in school.[7-02]

Property crime is another aspect of public safety that is important to residents of a region. Motor vehicle thefts are a good proxy for property crime for several reasons. They are much more likely to be reported than other property crimes,[7-03] data are readily available,[7-04] and stolen cars are found to often be used in the act of other crimes, making motor vehicle theft a "keystone crime."[7-05]

What is problematic about these measures? There are a few general challenges with crime data. The geography level used for reporting this data is particularly important. Across the country, urban cores of metro areas tend to have higher crime rates. In most regions, the central city is part of a surrounding county. In St. Louis, the city is not part of a surrounding county and constitutes its own county-level jurisdiction. As a result, reporting data at the county level exaggerates the extent to which the city differs from other large urban jurisdictions.

When considering comparable geographic levels across the country, the murder rate in St. Louis is relatively high, although usually it is not the highest.

Crime data are often reported inconsistently or incompletely, and can be skewed by an increase in reporting rather than an increase in actual crimes.

The CDC homicide rates are somewhat higher than those published by the FBI. This is due in part to more complete coverage by the CDC, but it may also be due in part to some deaths classified as a homicide on the death certificate but not classified by law enforcement in the same way or to comply with legal standards.

Finally, motor vehicle theft data are not available for all of the peer regions.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"For me, a region is successful if citizens can find employment and can feel safe in their daily lives" –Jefferson County Resident

"Two words: low crime – especially low violent crime. Tackle this, and the rest will fall much more easily into place." –City of St. Louis Resident

7-01 CDC generally publishes this data at the county level, but when a county has fewer than 10 homicides the data are suppressed. Counts from these counties are included in MSA-level queries. This report uses data aggregated to the MSA level.
7-02 Abt, Thomas. 2019. Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence—and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets. Basic Books.
7-03 U.S. Department of Justice. Criminal Victimization, 2022 US DOJ, September 2023. https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv22.pdf
7-04 Rosenfeld, Richard, et, al, Did Violent Crime go up or down? Accessed at https://counciloncj.org/did-violent-crime-go-up-or-down-last-year-yes-it-did/
7-05 Lopez, Ernesto, and Bobby Boxerman. Crime Trends in U.S. Cities Year-End 2023 Update, 2023 Update, January 2024. Council on Criminal Justice. https://counciloncj.org/crime-trends-in-u-s-cities-year-end-2023-update/

Peer Region Analysis: Crime

Homicide rates in the United States have generally decreased since the 1990s but spiked in 2020. Since then, the rates have decreased but remain elevated. There are large differences in rates among the peer regions. These differences are associated with regional levels of poverty, segregation, and racial disparity.

The age-adjusted homicide rates among the peer regions in 2023 ranged from 2.3 deaths per 100,000 population in **Boston** to a rate of 34 per 100,000 in **New Orleans.** The rate for the country was 7.1. Most of the Midwest peer regions, including St. Louis, are higher than the national average. The age-adjusted rate in **St. Louis** is more than twice as high as the national rate, and **St. Louis** has the 4th highest rate among the peer regions.[7-06]

There is an association between homicide rates and levels of segregation and racial disparity as seen in recent WWS data and as reported by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in an analysis of violence in St. Louis.

In the 2018-2022 American Community Survey, there were eight peer regions that met the following criteria: the percentage of Black residents living in tracts with concentrated poverty was at least four times the percentage of white residents living in concentrated poverty;[7-07] and the difference between Black and white rates of concentrated poverty was at least 16.7 points.

Seven of these regions with extreme racial disparities in concentrated poverty were the seven regions with the highest homicide rates in 2023: **Memphis, Birmingham, St. Louis, Louisville, Cleveland, Milwaukee,** and **New Orleans**. The eighth region was **Buffalo,** which has the lowest percentage of Black residents among these eight regions.

7-06 Hartford is not included.
7-07 Concentrated poverty is defined as a 40% poverty rate at the tract level.

Homicides

Per 100,000 population, age-adjusted, 2023

1	**Memphis**	**34.0**
2	New Orleans	28.5
3	Birmingham	19.0
4	**St. Louis**	**14.9**
5	Milwaukee	13.8
6	Cleveland	13.3
7	Louisville	13.2
8	Kansas City	12.6
9	Baltimore	12.5
10	Indianapolis	11.6
11	Chicago	11.2
11	Virginia Beach	11.2
13	Jacksonville	11.1
14	Richmond	10.4
15	Philadelphia	10.1
16	Atlanta	10.0
17	Detroit	9.5
18	Houston	9.1
18	Las Vegas	9.1
18	San Antonio	9.1
21	Washington, D.C.	8.5
22	Columbus	8.4
23	Phoenix	7.5
24	Miami	7.1
24	Nashville	7.1
United States		**7.1**
26	Buffalo	7.0
26	Dallas	7.0
28	Denver	6.7
29	Charlotte	6.5
29	Oklahoma City	6.5
31	Cincinnati	6.1
31	Orlando	6.1
33	Pittsburgh	6.0
34	San Francisco	5.8
35	Los Angeles	5.6
35	Seattle	5.6
37	Tampa	5.5
38	Portland	4.8
39	Riverside	4.7
40	Sacramento	4.5
41	Minneapolis	4.2
42	Raleigh	4.1
43	Austin	4.0
44	New York	3.4
45	Salt Lake City	2.8
46	Providence	2.7
47	San Diego	2.5
47	San Jose	2.5
49	**Boston**	**2.3**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*Data for 2023 is provisional.

Change in Homicides

Point difference in age-adjusted rate, 2019-2023

1	**Memphis**	**12.2**
2	New Orleans	7.1
3	Milwaukee	4.8
4	Louisville	4.2
5	Cleveland	3.9
6	Las Vegas	3.3
7	San Antonio	2.9
8	Virginia Beach	2.8
8	Washington, D.C.	2.8
10	Seattle	2.4
11	Columbus	2.2
12	Portland	2.0
13	Chicago	1.9
13	Indianapolis	1.9
15	Birmingham	1.8
15	Denver	1.8
17	San Francisco	1.7
18	Atlanta	1.6
18	Phoenix	1.6
20	Houston	1.5
21	Dallas	1.4
22	Kansas City	1.3
22	Philadelphia	1.3
24	Austin	1.2
24	Buffalo	1.2
24	Los Angeles	1.2
24	Minneapolis	1.2
28	Orlando	1.1
United States		**1.1**
29	Pittsburgh	0.8
29	Richmond	0.8
31	Boston	0.5
31	Raleigh	0.5
33	Tampa	0.4
34	New York	0.3
34	Providence	0.3
36	Cincinnati	0.2
36	Detroit	0.2
36	San Jose	0.2
36	**St. Louis**	**0.2**
40	Jacksonville	0.0
40	San Diego	0.0
42	Nashville	-0.1
42	Sacramento	-0.1
44	Salt Lake City	-0.4
45	Charlotte	-0.5
46	Miami	-0.6
47	Riverside	-1.4
48	Oklahoma City	-2.3
49	**Baltimore**	**-3.7**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*Data for 2023 is provisional.

A 2017 report by the DOJ found that homicides and gun assaults are concentrated in areas of the city with high rates of poverty, unemployment, and vacancy. The agency also identified the following as key challenges in St. Louis: racial and economic segregation, low levels of trust in law enforcement, and lack of intervention services.[7-08]

The homicide rate in the St. Louis MSA has been consistently higher than the national average from 1999 to 2023 except for 2003 when the rates were about the same. Figure 7-01 shows the age-adjusted homicide rate for the St. Louis MSA, the peer region average, and the United States. Homicides rose, both nationally and in most of the peer regions, including St. Louis, following 2013. This phenomenon is sometimes called the "Ferguson Effect," although there remain differing perspectives on whether there was a causal relationship between the events in Ferguson in 2014 and the increase in homicide rates. The rise in homicides after 2014 was much steeper in St. Louis than in the nation as a whole.

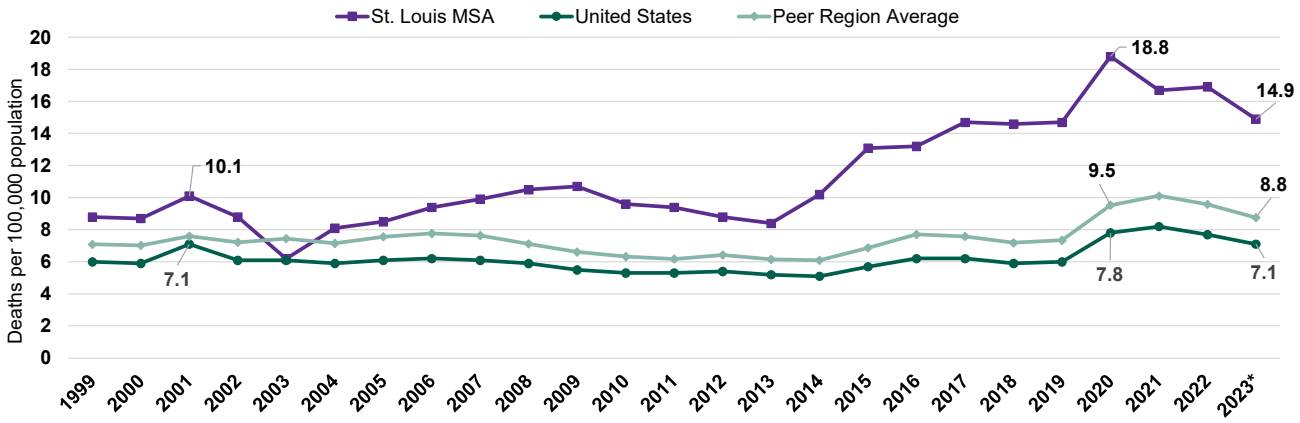
In 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic, homicide rates across the country increased again. Rates have dropped since but remain higher than a decade ago. Homicide rates increased from 2019 to 2021 in all of the peer regions except Jacksonville, which saw an increase the following year. In 2023, 39 of the peer regions and the nation had higher homicide rates than in 2019. The change for most (34) of these regions was larger than in **St. Louis.**

Motor vehicle theft rates are very strongly correlated with other crime rate measures, particularly total crime and property crime, as reported by the FBI. However, among the peer regions, there is not a relationship between the rates of homicides and motor vehicle thefts.

Only about half of the peer regions that have the lowest homicide rates also have the lowest auto theft rates. **Baltimore** and **Richmond** are two examples. They have relatively low auto theft rates but rank 6th and 13th, respectively, on homicide rates.

Denver, Seattle, Portland, Las Vegas, San Antonio, and San Jose have relatively high auto theft rates but rank in the mid to low range on homicide rates. One possibility is that these regions encourage residents to report thefts, increasing the crimes reported.

Figure 7-01. Homicide Rate (age-adjusted)
Deaths per 100,000 population
St. Louis MSA, Peer Region Average, and United States, 1999 to 2023*



*Data for 2023 is provisional.
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wonder Database

7-08 U.S. Department of Justice Office (DOJ) of the Justice Programs Diagnostic Center, Diagnostic Analysis of the City of St. Louis, Missouri, Executive Summary, March 2017, accessed at https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/ government/departments/mayor/initiatives/public-safety/upload/Diagnostic-Analysis-for-the-City-of-St-Louis-Full-Report.pdf.

Motor Vehicle Theft Crime Rate

Per 100,000 population, 2022

1	**Denver**	**1,198**
2	Memphis	967
3	Seattle	827
4	Portland	806
5	Milwaukee	715
6	Las Vegas	579
7	San Antonio	562
8	**St. Louis**	**542**
9	San Jose	493
10	New Orleans	469
11	Houston	418
12	Columbus	410
13	Riverside	409
14	Minneapolis	393
15	Detroit	392
16	San Diego	384
17	Salt Lake City	382
18	Dallas	373
19	Sacramento	355
20	Birmingham	311
21	Oklahoma City	304
22	Austin	303
23	Philadelphia	299
24	Indianapolis	294
25	Cleveland	284
United States		**283**
26	Virginia Beach	259
27	Charlotte	239
28	Buffalo	234
29	Atlanta	233
30	Nashville	232
31	Baltimore	225
32	Hartford	210
33	Washington, D.C.	174
34	Cincinnati	172
35	Richmond	163
36	Jacksonville	151
37	Raleigh	147
38	Providence	140
39	New York	130
40	**Boston**	**94**

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports (Tables 1, 6)

EWG Region Analysis: Crime

In the EWG region, homicide victims predominantly resided in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County. From 2018 through 2023, among the EWG region county-level jurisdictions, the largest number of homicide victims resided in St. Louis County. The highest rate was for the city of St. Louis.[7-09] See Table 7-01.

From 2018 through 2023, the number of homicides for all eight county-level jurisdictions in the EWG region was highest in 2020, when 483 residents of the EWG region were killed. In both 2019 and 2023, there were 28.8% fewer deaths than in 2020. See Table 7-02.

The National Network for Safe Communities issued a report on homicide incidents in the St. Louis region in 2023.[7-10] Key findings included:

- Homicides are strongly clustered in a few neighborhoods.[7-11]
- The risk of being involved in serious violence is clustered among a small group of victims and suspects.
- Victims and suspects tend to have significant prior contact with the criminal justice system, with an average of 6.5 previous felony cases and 13 prior arrests.

Table 7-01. Homicides

Total deaths and rate per 100,000 population

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county of residence, 2018-2023*

	Deaths	Crude Rate per 100,000
Madison	93	5.9
St. Clair	308	20.0
Franklin	27	4.3
Jefferson	59	4.3
St. Charles	70	2.9
St. Louis	1,027	17.2
City of St. Louis	881	49.8
EWG Region	2,468	15.9

*Data for 2023 are provisional

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Provisional Mortality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the final Multiple Cause of Death Files.

Table 7-02. Homicides

Total deaths and rate per 100,000 population by place of residence

East-West Gateway (EWG) region, 2018-2023*

	Deaths	Crude Rate per 100,000
2018	378	14.6
2019	375	14.5
2020	483	18.7
2021	425	16.4
2022	432	16.8
2023*	375	14.5
Total	2,468	15.9

*Data for 2023 are provisional

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Provisional Mortality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the final Multiple Cause of Death Files.

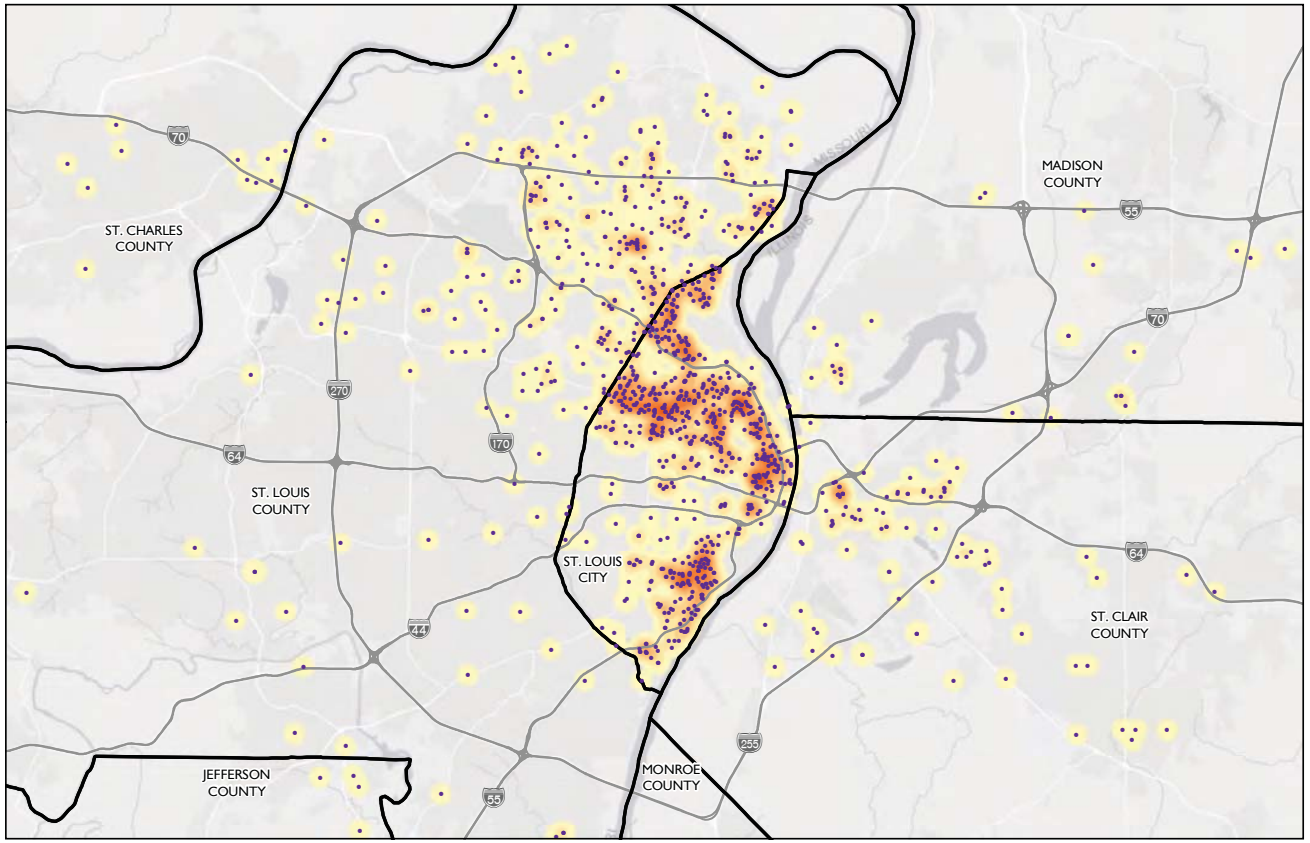
7-09 Data are not available for Monroe County due to fewer than 10 deaths in this time period.
7-10 National Network for Safe Communities. 2024. St. Louis Area Problem Analysis Summary.
7-11 In this respect, St. Louis resembles other large urban areas. Within metropolitan regions, a geographic clustering of homicides in a relatively small number of hot spots has been documented in national studies for decades. See Thomas Abt, 2019. Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence—and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets. Basic Books.

The clustering of homicides can be seen on Map 7-01, which shows homicides clustered in portions of the city of St. Louis and northern St. Louis County. This data is by place of occurrence.

"Reducing homicide and violence is essential for the health, vibrancy, and prosperity of the metro area. Regional governments, police, businesses,non-profits, and residents all have a role in reducing violence."

~ Greater St. Louis Inc. and Regional Business Council

Map 7-01. St. Louis Post-Dispatch Homicide Tracker



St. Louis Post-Dispatch Homicide Tracker

Jan 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024

Density of Homicides Per Square Mile
1 – 59.02

This map's crime density data was generated using ArcMap's Kernel Density tool. The analysis was conducted with a cell size of 30 meters and a search radius of half a mile to calculate the density of crime incidents in each area in square miles.

Other Map Data
- Homicide Location
- Interstate Highway
- County Boundary

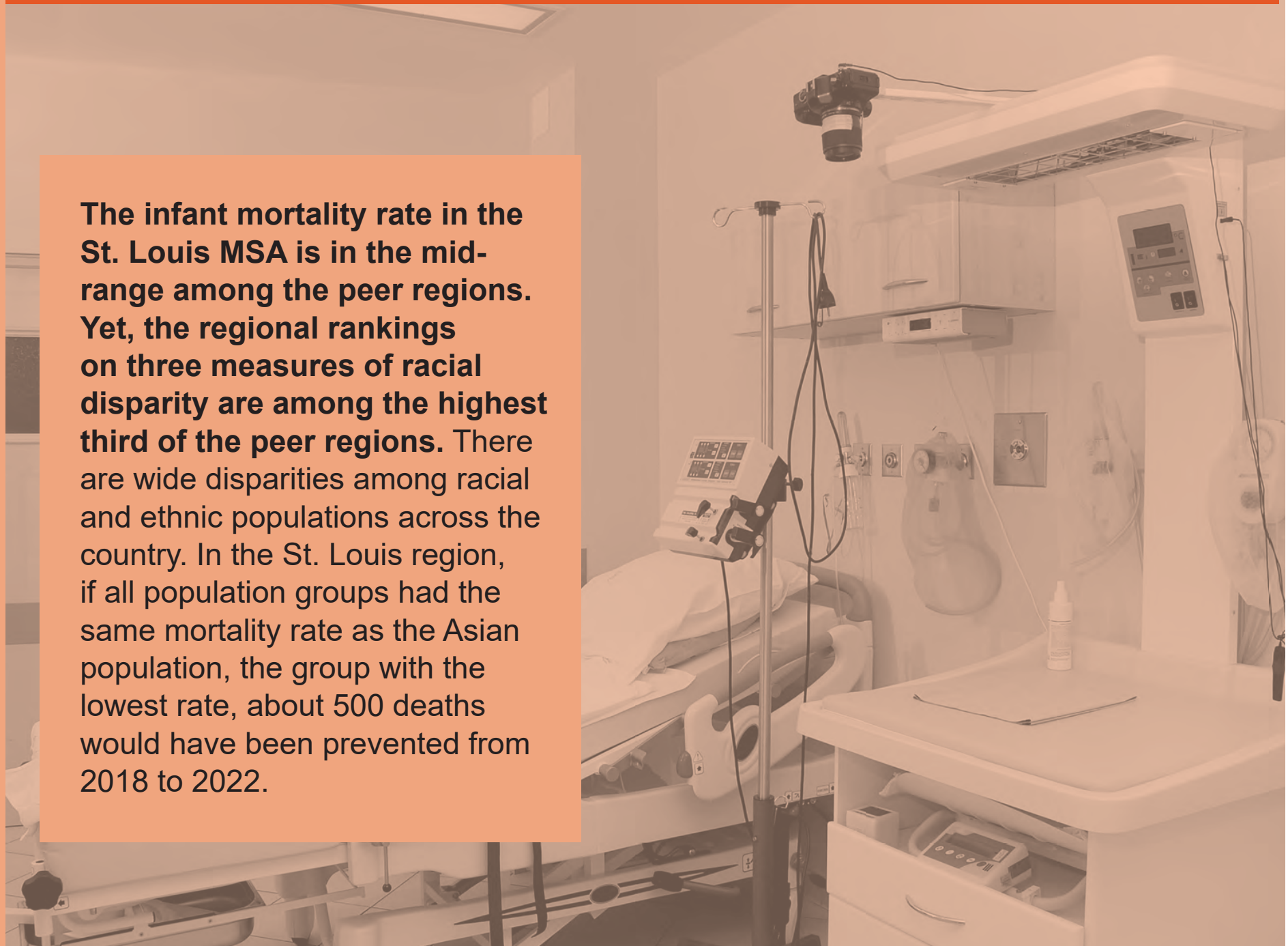
0 5 Miles

Sources: St. Louis Post-Dispatch; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

East-West Gateway Council of Governments

October 2024

Infant Mortality



The infant mortality rate in the St. Louis MSA is in the mid-range among the peer regions. Yet, the regional rankings on three measures of racial disparity are among the highest third of the peer regions. There are wide disparities among racial and ethnic populations across the country. In the St. Louis region, if all population groups had the same mortality rate as the Asian population, the group with the lowest rate, about 500 deaths would have been prevented from 2018 to 2022.

Measuring Success: Infant Mortality

What is being measured? Infant mortality rate is the number of deaths of infants less than one year old per 1,000 live births. The rates by race and ethnicity are reported per 1,000 population because the data are not available per live births. For more on the definitions and interpretations of the three disparity methods used in this section, see Page 26. The main population groups discussed here are white (not Hispanic or Latino), Black (not Hispanic or Latino), and Asian (not Hispanic or Latino) and Hispanic or Latino (referred to as "Hispanic").

What makes this a good measure of success? Infant mortality rates are an indication of the overall health of a community. Racial disparity in infant mortality is important because it is an indication of overall health disparities. In St. Louis, the For the Sake of All report provided detailed documentation of how health disparities are connected to racial segregation, preventable deaths, and associated economic costs in the region.[8-01]

What is problematic about this measure? The overall rate does not consider the outcomes of different population groups. The racial disparity metrics have their own set of challenges, which are discussed on Page 26.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"...resources and safety for families and children…"
–City of St. Louis Resident

"A region is successful when even the least wealthy and powerful in it can have a safe, healthy environment in which they can reach their fullest potential."
–St. Charles County Resident

8-01 For the Sake of All, 31 July 2015, accessed at https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/3/1454/files/2018/06/FSOA_report_2-17zd1xm.pdf

Peer Region Analysis: Infant Mortality

The range of infant mortality rates among the peer regions is large. In 2022, the rate in **Memphis,** was nearly triple that of **San Francisco.** The rate in St. Louis is 5.9, just above the national average of 5.6.

Regions in the Northeast and Northwest tend to have relatively low rates while the Midwest regions are generally above the U.S. average. However, the rates for **Minneapolis, Chicago,** and **Kansas City** were slightly under that of the country. Most of the other regions that have the highest rates are in the South.

Infant mortality rankings for the peer regions are closely tied to other health and community well-being indicators. High infant mortality rates are associated with high rates of homicide, youth mortality, cancer, smoking prevalence, heart disease, and concentrated poverty—especially among Black communities. These regions also tend to rank lower in median household income, immigrant population, racial disparity in concentrated poverty, and the proportion of high-wage jobs.

Racial and Ethnic Disparity
For the 2018 to 2022 time period, there were 102,406 infant deaths in the United States, an average of 20,481 per year. If all population groups had the same infant mortality rate as the group with the lowest rate (Asian population), about 41.9% of these infants would not have died. That is 42,900 people. The excess method indicates that racial and ethnic disparities are present in all of the peer regions with at least 13% of infant deaths in excess of the number of deaths that would have occurred if all population groups shared the lowest regional rate.

In the **St. Louis** MSA, there were nearly 1,000 infant deaths from 2018 to 2022, an average of 191 per year. As for the country as a whole, the population group with the lowest rate in the region is the Asian population. If all groups had the same rate (2.9 deaths per 1,000 infants), about 53.5% (511) of these infants would not have died. This is the 12th highest rate of excess infant deaths among the peer regions.

Infant Mortality Rate

Deaths of infants less than one year old per 1,000 live births, 2022

1	**Memphis**	**8.5**
2	Indianapolis	8.2
3	Birmingham	7.2
4	Columbus	7.1
5	Detroit	7.0
6	Richmond	6.9
7	Milwaukee	6.8
8	Cincinnati	6.6
9	Atlanta	6.5
9	Virginia Beach	6.5
11	Cleveland	6.4
12	Jacksonville	6.3
12	New Orleans	6.3
12	Oklahoma City	6.3
15	Baltimore	6.2
16	Dallas	6.0
16	Phoenix	6.0
18	San Antonio	5.9
18	**St. Louis**	**5.9**
18	Tampa	5.9
21	Nashville	5.8
22	Philadelphia	5.7
United States		**5.6**
23	Louisville	5.5
24	Kansas City	5.4
24	Miami	5.4
24	Pittsburgh	5.4
27	Charlotte	5.3
27	Chicago	5.3
27	Houston	5.3
30	Washington, D.C.	5.2
31	Orlando	5.1
32	Buffalo	5.0
32	Salt Lake City	5.0
34	Denver	4.8
34	Las Vegas	4.8
36	Raleigh	4.7
37	Minneapolis	4.6
37	Riverside	4.6
37	Sacramento	4.6
40	Austin	4.3
41	Seattle	3.9
42	Los Angeles	3.8
43	Portland	3.7
43	San Diego	3.7
45	Providence	3.6
46	New York	3.5
47	Boston	3.1
47	San Jose	3.1
49	**San Francisco**	**2.9**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Racial & Ethnic Disparity in Infant Mortality

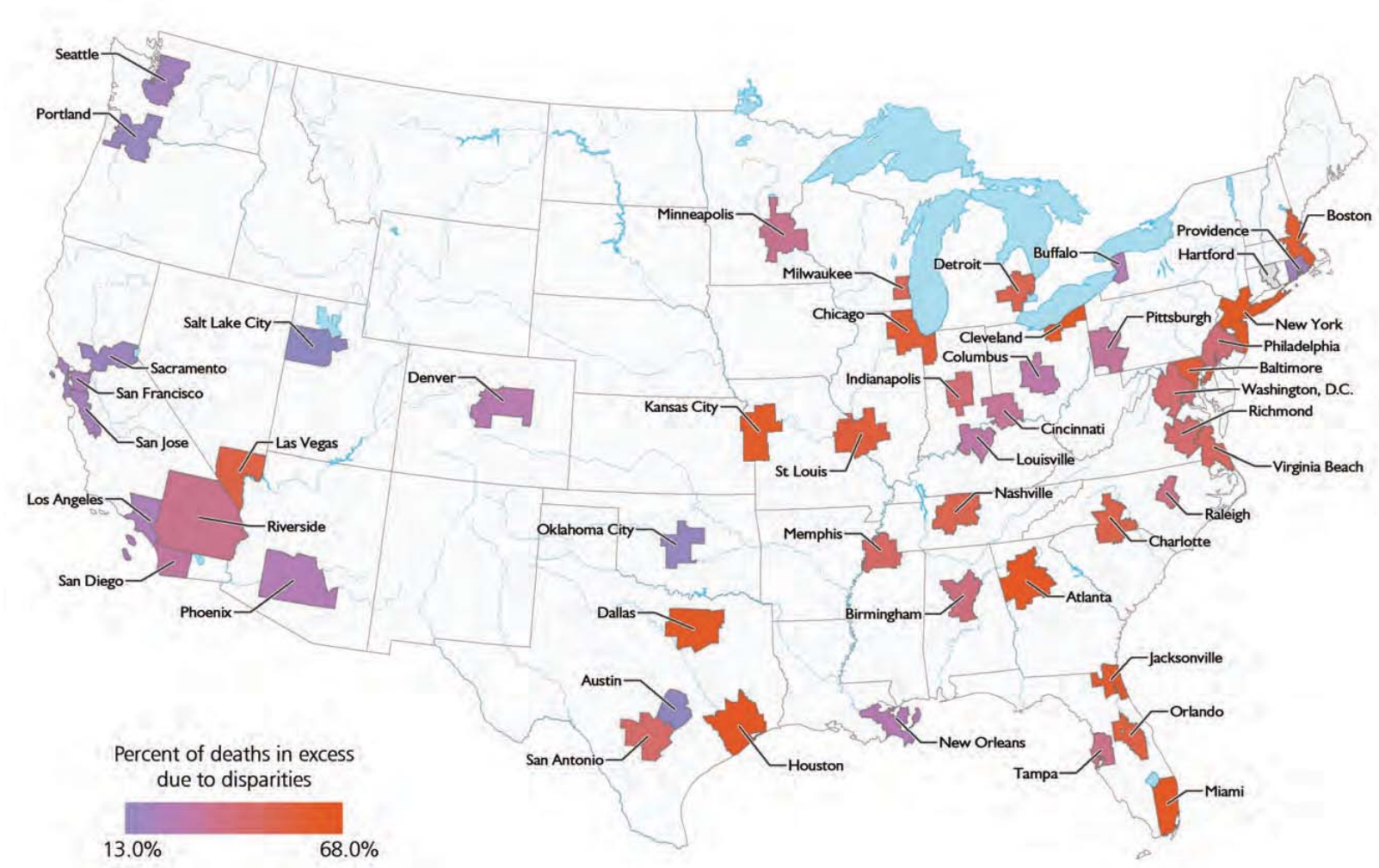
Percent of deaths in excess due to disparities, 2018-2022

1	**Houston**	**68.0**
2	Miami	65.3
3	Atlanta	63.2
4	New York	59.4
5	Dallas	59.4
6	Cleveland	58.8
7	Kansas City	57.0
8	Jacksonville	56.4
9	Boston	55.9
10	Chicago	54.6
11	Baltimore	53.6
12	**St. Louis**	**53.5**
13	Orlando	52.6
14	Las Vegas	51.3
15	Charlotte	50.2
16	Nashville	49.9
17	Detroit	47.7
18	Milwaukee	45.6
19	Virginia Beach	42.8
20	Memphis	42.5
21	San Antonio	42.4
United States		**41.9**
22	Richmond	41.4
23	Washington, D.C.	41.2
24	Indianapolis	40.6
25	Philadelphia	39.1
26	Birmingham	38.5
27	Raleigh	36.6
28	Tampa	35.7
29	Riverside	34.7
30	Minneapolis	34.4
31	Cincinnati	32.6
32	Pittsburgh	32.3
33	San Diego	31.5
34	Louisville	30.3
35	Columbus	30.0
36	Denver	29.7
37	New Orleans	29.7
38	Phoenix	29.6
39	Buffalo	29.1
40	Los Angeles	28.7
41	San Francisco	28.1
42	San Jose	28.0
43	Seattle	27.1
44	Providence	26.9
45	Sacramento	26.1
46	Portland	25.5
47	Oklahoma City	19.7
48	Austin	13.7
49	**Salt Lake City**	**13.0**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The excess method indicates that racial and ethnic disparities are present in all the peer regions. At least 13% of infant deaths would have been prevented if all population groups shared the lowest rate in each region. The regions with the largest percentages of excess deaths are mostly in the South, but also include regions in the Northeast and the Midwest. Some of these regions also have large disparities as measured by other methods.

Map 8-01. Racial & Ethnic Disparity in Infant Deaths, 2018-2022



Source: Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The disparities faced by Black populations in the peer regions are higher than those faced by the Hispanic and Latino populations. In some regions, including St. Louis, the rate for the Hispanic and Latino population is lower than that of the white population. For the country as a whole, the rate is about the same for the white and Hispanic population groups, 4.6 deaths per 1,000 infants. The regions with the largest gaps between the Hispanic and white populations are a mix of regions, with several in the South **(Richmond, Virginia Beach, Jacksonville, Tampa,** and **Nashville)** and one in the Northeast **(Buffalo)**. In most of the 10 regions with the greatest disparities between whites and Hispanics, Hispanics make up less than 10% of the population. Exceptions are **Denver, Tampa,** and **Jacksonville.**

For the Black population, infant mortality rates are much larger than for the white or Hispanic populations. The lowest rate for the Black population of any of the peer regions (6.1 in San Jose) is about the same as the highest rate for any of the white population groups in the peer regions (6.2 in San Antonio). Many of the Midwest peer regions are among those with the largest disparities, particularly based on the difference method. Three southern regions – **Tampa, Jacksonville**, and **Raleigh** - are also among the top 10 for the gap between Black and white rates.

Racial Disparity in Infant Mortality

Ratio of Black to white infant deaths* per 1,000 population, 2018-2022

1	**Milwaukee**	**4.10**
2	San Diego	3.96
3	Miami	3.92
4	Minneapolis	3.83
5	Cleveland	3.60
6	San Francisco	3.45
7	Tampa	3.40
8	Philadelphia	3.38
9	Raleigh	3.37
10	Pittsburgh	3.36
11	Seattle	3.27
12	Chicago	3.26
13	Detroit	3.19
14	Washington, D.C.	3.18
15	Boston	3.16
16	Columbus	3.15
17	Denver	3.12
18	Jacksonville	3.09
19	Cincinnati	3.08
20	Phoenix	3.08
21	Portland	3.06
22	Sacramento	3.06
23	Orlando	3.05
24	Baltimore	3.03
25	**St. Louis**	**3.00**
26	Las Vegas	2.90
27	Los Angeles	2.89
28	Nashville	2.79
29	Kansas City	2.77
30	Buffalo	2.75
31	Riverside	2.70
32	Virginia Beach	2.68
33	Richmond	2.68
34	Providence	2.62
35	Charlotte	2.49
36	San Jose	2.46
United States		**2.46**
37	Memphis	2.42
38	Indianapolis	2.42
39	Oklahoma City	2.42
40	Louisville	2.41
41	Austin	2.40
42	New York	2.38
43	Houston	2.31
44	Birmingham	2.30
45	Atlanta	2.23
46	Dallas	2.21
47	San Antonio	2.02
48	New Orleans	1.84
49	**Salt Lake City**	**1.65**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*Differs from the infant mortality rate, which is stated as per 1,000 live births.

Racial Disparity in Infant Mortality

Percentage point difference, Black (Not Hispanic or Latino) and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2018-2022

1	**Milwaukee**	**12.4**
2	Cleveland	11.2
3	Cincinnati	10.6
4	Pittsburgh	10.4
5	Columbus	10.1
6	Tampa	9.6
7	Detroit	9.4
8	Jacksonville	9.2
9	**St. Louis**	**8.6**
10	Raleigh	8.3
11	Minneapolis	8.2
11	Orlando	8.2
13	Philadelphia	8.1
13	Phoenix	8.1
15	Chicago	7.9
16	Indianapolis	7.8
17	Kansas City	7.8
18	Nashville	7.7
19	Buffalo	7.7
20	Las Vegas	7.6
21	Oklahoma City	7.5
22	Baltimore	7.3
23	Sacramento	7.2
24	Memphis	7.1
24	San Diego	7.1
26	Denver	7.0
27	Miami	7.0
27	Portland	7.0
29	Richmond	6.9
30	Birmingham	6.9
31	Seattle	6.8
United States		**6.7**
32	Louisville	6.5
33	Charlotte	6.4
33	Virginia Beach	6.4
35	Riverside	6.3
35	San Antonio	6.3
37	Washington, D.C.	6.1
38	Providence	6.0
39	Houston	5.9
40	Dallas	5.7
41	Atlanta	5.4
41	Boston	5.4
43	San Francisco	5.4
44	Los Angeles	5.1
45	Austin	4.9
46	New Orleans	4.3
47	San Jose	3.6
48	New York	3.6
49	**Salt Lake City**	**3.0**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Ethnic Disparity in Infant Mortality

Percentage point difference, Hispanic or Latino and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2018-2022

1	**Richmond**	**4.2**
2	Buffalo	3.2
3	Virginia Beach	3.1
4	Jacksonville	2.8
5	Detroit	2.4
6	Denver	2.2
6	Tampa	2.2
8	Nashville	1.9
9	Baltimore	1.7
9	Minneapolis	1.7
11	Milwaukee	1.6
12	Raleigh	1.5
12	Seattle	1.5
12	Washington, D.C.	1.5
15	Philadelphia	1.4
15	Phoenix	1.4
17	Miami	1.3
17	San Diego	1.3
19	Chicago	1.2
19	Oklahoma City	1.2
19	Salt Lake City	1.2
22	Kansas City	1.2
23	Cincinnati	1.1
24	Sacramento	1.1
25	Portland	1.0
26	Providence	1.0
26	San Francisco	1.0
28	Los Angeles	0.9
29	Columbus	0.9
29	Riverside	0.9
31	Cleveland	0.8
31	San Jose	0.8
33	Boston	0.7
34	Memphis	0.6
35	Indianapolis	0.5
36	Orlando	0.4
37	Austin	0.4
37	New York	0.4
39	Dallas	0.3
39	Las Vegas	0.3
41	Pittsburgh	0.2
42	Atlanta	0.0
United States		**0.0**
43	Houston	-0.2
44	New Orleans	-0.4
45	Charlotte	-0.4
45	**St. Louis**	**-0.4**
47	Birmingham	-0.7
48	Louisville	-0.8
48	San Antonio	-0.8

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

EWG Region Analysis: Infant Mortality

In the EWG region, the infant mortality rate differs by county and by race. The rate for the counties ranges from 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in Franklin County to 9 in the city of St. Louis. Table 8-01 provides the rate for the Black and white population groups for the St. Louis 15-County MSA from 2018 through 2022. The rates for each group have varied over the time period, but the rate for the Black population has been consistently three to four times higher than the white rate. If the Black population had the same rate as the white population over this five-year period, 303 lives would have been saved.

Table 8-01. Infant Mortality

Deaths per 1,000 population by race

St. Louis MSA, 2018 to 2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Black (not Hispanic or Latino)					
Deaths	89	104	94	84	83
Population	7,065	6,849	6,967	6,900	7,292
Rate	12.6	15.2	13.5	12.2	11.4
White (not Hispanic or Latino)					
Deaths	117	84	68	82	74
Population	21,123	20,809	20,369	18,825	18,216
Rate	5.5	4.0	3.3	4.4	4.1

Note: Rate is per 1,000 population rather than per 1,000 live births.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Livability

What are our goals and performance measures for livability? *The following are the goals and performance measures established in East-West Gateway's long-range transportation plan (LRP), 2030 Measuring Progress from Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL), and OneSTL's regional plan for sustainability.*

Homeownership is one of GSL's north star goals, with a target of increasing the rate to 71% through 2030 and reducing the Black-to-white gap by 30% (11 percentage points). The agency recognizes homeownership as a means for households to build wealth which can facilitate the ability to pay for education or to start a business. The agency tracks the Black-white homeownership gap, change in ownership rates, and ownership rates by other races and ethnicities.

GSL also tracks data related to vacancy and crime. GSL tracks the vacancy rate for office, industrial and retail, under its real estate section. Regarding homicides, GSL states, "Homicide is our top regional crime problem. Along with a tragic loss of life, violence impacts business and talent relocation decisions. Reducing violent crime is critical to save lives and advance inclusive economic growth."

The LRP includes residential vacancy rate and the affordability of the combined costs of housing and transportation (H+T) as performance measures under the guiding principle "thriving neighborhoods and communities." The agency recognizes that vacancies can have an effect on the vibrancy of a neighborhood. The H+T metric measures housing and transportation costs, two large household expenditures that are interrelated.

Like the LRP, OneSTL tracks H+T affordability and has historically tracked housing affordability, based on the percent of low-income households paying 30% or more of income on housing. OneSTL also tracks the combined violent and property crime rate.

What is St. Louis doing for livability? The following are a sampling of activities, programs, plans, and studies.

The Children of Metropolitan St. Louis (CMSL) data book by **Vision for Children at Risk (VCR)** provides data to inform community action to address the well-being of children in St. Louis. The section focusing on equity uses data on poverty, income, and unemployment to show that inequities are highly concentrated in certain zip codes. Residential vacancy is one indicator provided under the category safe neighborhoods and strong communities, noting that vacant properties reduce property values and property tax revenue, strain the resources of local governments, attract crime, and degrade the quality of life in a neighborhood.

Health Equity Works, a project that was led by Washington University and Saint Louis University, addressed health, poverty, and racial inequality in St. Louis. The project published a seminal report, For the Sake of All, that laid out key recommendations for reducing economic and health disparities in the region.

RISE undertakes a variety of work to revitalize communities, including developing affordable and market-rate housing in St. Louis, providing technical assistance to community development corporations, and using data to inform decision making. RISE finds that vacant properties perpetuate crime, disinvestment, and loss of tax revenue. The agency produced a guide to understanding vacant properties in St. Louis.

The **Fair Housing Equity Assessment**, produced by the Equal Housing Opportunity Commission (EHOC), documented racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs) and areas of opportunity, finding that RCAPs have higher vacancy rates, as well as disparities in infrastructure, services, and access to opportunities.

Segregation in St. Louis: Dismantling the Divide explores the history and ongoing effects of racial segregation in the St. Louis region. The report highlights how policies such as redlining, restrictive covenants, and urban renewal programs have created deep racial and economic divisions that persist today.

The **St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative** is a coalition of partners dedicated to reducing the negative impact of vacant properties in the city of St. Louis. The collaborative publishes an online vacancy explorer to help citizens track vacant parcels, and progress in reducing them.

Save Lives Now! Is a regional effort with the goal of reducing violent crime by 20% over the next three years. The effort is based on the recognition that 30% of violent crimes are committed by 0.16% of the population in the region. Three evidence-based strategies will be employed to meet the goal. They are focused deterrence, cognitive behavioral therapy, and street outreach.

The **St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission** works to reduce violent crime in the region by promoting and advocating for coordinated, well-resourced policies, support systems, and interventions among area governments, institutions, and agencies that serve individuals and families most at risk of violent crime.

Beyond Justice seeks to address the root problems of crime by working with people involved in the justice system. The organization provides alternatives to incarceration and aims to rehabilitate while allowing people to stay with their families.

ArchCity Defenders focuses on systemic inequality and engages in advocacy to reduce violence in marginalized communities. The civil rights organization addresses the connections between poverty, housing instability, and violence, pushing for policies that indirectly help reduce homicides by addressing social determinants of violence.

Washington University Institute for Public Health's Gun Violence Initiative uses a public health approach to address gun violence. Some of the key partnerships and programs are Life Outside of Violence (LOV), Stop the Bleed, and the St. Louis Suicide Prevention Coalition.

Generate Health is a nonprofit organization working to address health care access, prenatal care, and infant mortality. The agency is working to close the racial disparity gap in infant and maternal health through such programs as FLOURISH and providing data to understand the challenges, tell the story, and advocate for change.

In 2019, **Where We Stand (WWS)** documented the increase in homicides in the St. Louis and other metro regions since 2013. The report included a comparison of two data sources, county trends, and peer region comparisons. In 2017, a WWS publication documented the change in racial segregation from 1970 through 2011-2015.

What else is St. Louis doing? *Tell us what to add to the database of regional goals, performance measures, activities, plans, programs, and studies at www.ewgateway.org/wws*