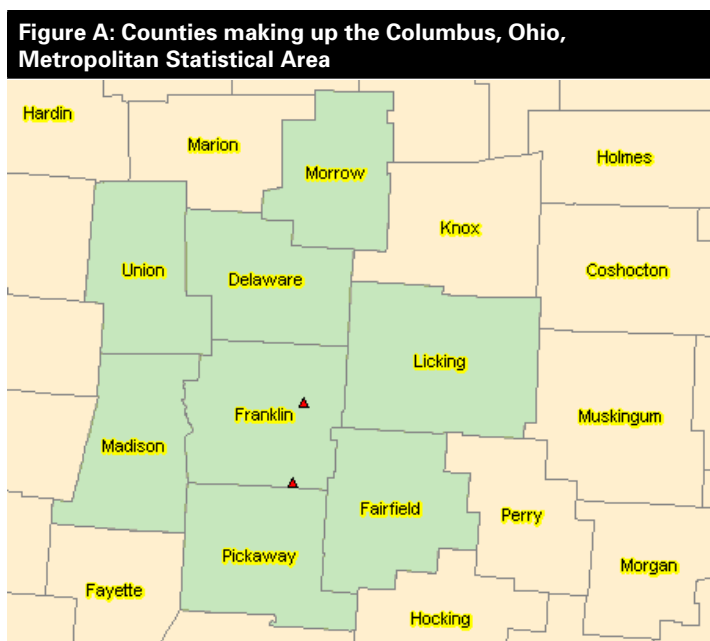


# COLUMBUS, OHIO

## Metropolitan Area Trends, Preferences, and Opportunities: 2010 to 2030 and to 2040

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The jurisdictions within the Columbus, Ohio, Metropolitan Statistical Area (Columbus MSA) are growing at about the national average. Between 2010 and 2040, the Columbus MSA will grow from 1.7 million to 2.2 million residents, or by about 26 percent, somewhat less than the nation’s projected growth rate of 31 percent for that period. About 171,000 households will be added. More than 400,000 space-occupying jobs will also be added, requiring more than 300 million square feet of net new enclosed space. With about 750 million square feet of space requiring replacement, there will be about 1 billion square feet of nonresidential development during this period, representing about 1.8 times the total enclosed nonresidential space supported in 2010.



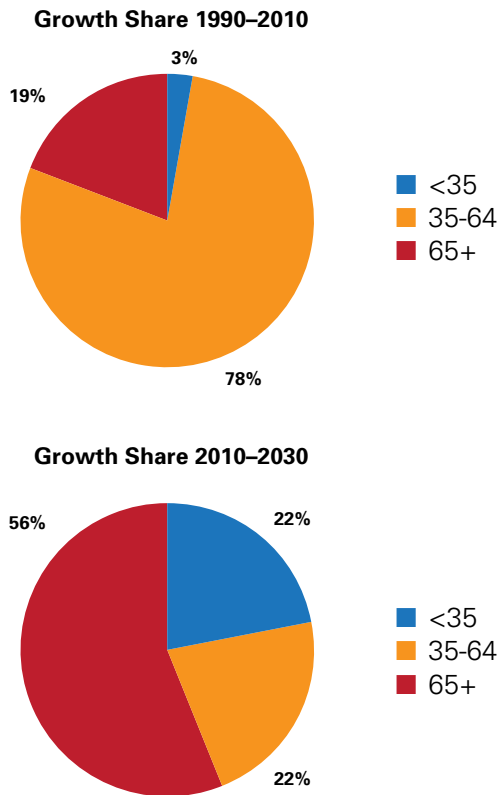
There will be important changes between 2010 and 2040:

- About one-third of the change in population between 2010 and 2040 will be attributable to seniors.
- The “new majority” (comprising all racial and ethnic minorities) will account for nearly all the growth.
- Between 2010 and 2040, households with children will make up about one-fourth of the total household change.
- Single-person households will account for more than half the total change.

As seen in Figure B:

- Between 1990 and 2010, households in their peak housing demand years (with residents between 35 and 64 who want larger homes on larger lots) accounted for about 78 percent of the growth in housing demand. But from 2010 to 2030, that same group will account for just 22 percent of the growth in housing demand.
- From 1990 to 2010, downsizing households (with residents 65 and older who want smaller homes on smaller lots or attached options) made up 19 percent of new housing demand, but over the next 20 years they will account for 56 percent of the demand share.

**Figure B: Growth share by householder age, 1990–2010 and projected for 2010–2030**



Source: Arthur C. Nelson.

The bottom line is that the most influential drivers of the form, location, and nature of the region’s development since the 1970s are undergoing fundamental changes. Understanding these new drivers and their implications for the built environment, and appropriately planning for and shaping the region’s growth in recognition of these new drivers, may be major factors in determining the region’s future economic competitiveness. Consider:

- The number of households in the peak housing demand period of their life cycle (householders 35–64) grew by about 150,000 between 1990 and 2010. These are the households with families, incomes, and the desire for more space on larger lots.
- That same peak housing demand group will grow by only 40,000 households between 2010 and 2030, about one-fourth as many as seen in the previous 20 years.

- The next wave of demand will be households with residents 65 and older. These householders have mostly empty-nested and are in the downsizing phase of their life cycle. Between 2010 and 2030, their number will grow by more than 120,000 households.
- About half of seniors who own homes become renters after they sell. Between 2010 and 2030, there may be tens of thousands more seniors trying to sell their homes than there are buyers for them.

For the past half-century, housing demand in the Columbus MSA was driven by baby boomers’ parents who wanted to raise their children in suburban, single-family, detached homes on larger lots, and then by boomers themselves as they became parents. Planning throughout metropolitan Columbus continues to be based on the baby boom “time warp.”

The next generation of demand for homes may be driven by different and emerging preferences. Analysis of the National Association of Realtors’ 2013 stated-preference survey indicates that:

- About 56 percent of Ohio respondents would prefer to live in a mixed-use community offering a variety of housing choices, walkable destinations, and other features. No more than one in five households has this option now.
- About 40 percent of Ohio respondents would choose to own or rent an apartment or townhouse if it had an easy walk to shops and restaurants and offered a shorter commute to work. About 60 percent of those preferring detached options would choose smaller lots if they had the same attributes. Given these parameters, respondents would seem to want the following options to 2040:
  - 40 percent attached homes (townhouses, condominiums, and apartments);
  - 35 percent smaller detached homes on smaller lots; and
  - 25 percent larger detached homes on all other lots.
- Yet, even if all new residential units built to 2040 were attached and small lots, there may be up to 24,000 more homes on all other lots than the market may demand. The reason is the dramatic shift in demographics illustrated in Figure B. Put differently, to meet housing demand by type in 2040 about 55 percent of all new residential units will need to be in attached options (apartment, townhouse, condominium) and the rest on small lots.

Moreover, the future of nonresidential development (in which jobs are housed) will be the redevelopment of existing structures and the parking lots on which they sit. The amount of nonresidential development may be nothing less than staggering.

- Nonresidential space will grow by more than 300 million square feet between 2010 and 2040.
- Nearly 750 million square feet of nonresidential space will be repurposed, redeveloped, and otherwise recycled between 2010 and 2040.
- More than 1 billion square feet will be constructed between 2010 and 2040, nearly equivalent to twice the volume of square feet supported in 2010.
- Nearly all the nonresidential recycling will occur on sites that are mostly parking lots.

In many respects the future of the Columbus MSA will be shaped by how policymakers guide the redevelopment of existing nonresidential spaces.

The built environment of the Columbus MSA will be reshaped through a combination of new drivers of housing demand and recycling of existing nonresidential spaces. To accommodate emerging market needs efficiently, effectively, and equitably, a series of actions are needed at the local, regional, and state levels. In summary, they include:

- Updating land use plans and codes to get ahead of the curve, mostly by getting beyond the baby boom time warp.
- Expanding housing choices.

- Rethinking infrastructure investments.
- Using existing public sector tools and inventing new ones to leverage private redevelopment.
- Engaging regional agencies to inform and educate local decision makers and citizens on the implications of the sweeping nature of demographic changes.
- Investing in modern regional transit systems that connect key centers and other nodes along existing commercial corridors.
- Adjusting state policies to address sweeping demographic changes.
- Requiring all communities in the state to plan for and implement policies that broaden housing choices based on sweeping demographic changes.

The challenge for the Columbus MSA is to create public-private-civil partnerships that can facilitate approaches to meet future housing needs and simultaneously reshape the massive commercial redevelopment that will occur. If such an effort is successful, perhaps all new attached housing and all new nonresidential development can occur in mixed-use configurations on existing built spaces, which today are mostly parking lots. This will make feasible modern transit options such as light rail and bus rapid transit. These partnerships are needed to leverage private resources that can unlock these opportunities. If successful, the future Columbus MSA will be more walkable, bikable, vital, and responsive to change than is currently the case.