

News | updated: 5/25/2017 8:51 AM

# Population decline now reaching into suburbs



**Pingree Grove, as seen from this drone photo, saw a 61 percent population growth since 2010. But many suburbs recently have been losing population.**

*Jeff Knox | Staff Photographer*



**Jake Griffin**

After years of modest growth, Chicago and most suburbs have seen declining population in the last several years.

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That's according to the latest population estimates of Chicago and 90 suburbs from the U.S. Census Bureau released Thursday.

From 2010 to 2014, Chicago and 73 of the suburbs saw their populations increase.

But the trend reversed from 2014 to 2016. In that time, Chicago and 61 suburbs saw their populations shrink.

So far, the numbers are small. In 2015, the 91 communities lost 0.1 percent of their collective population, or nearly 3,700 residents. Last year, they lost an estimated 0.2 percent, which represents nearly 10,000 residents.



**Find your community's latest population estimate.** Click here to see an interactive map showing the change in population from 2010 through 2016 for Chicago-area municipalities, as well as a searchable, sortable list of population estimates from 2010 through 2016 for all Illinois communities included in the Census' latest estimates.

That's after collectively gaining almost 51,000 residents from 2010 to 2014, according to the census estimates. With those earlier gains outweighing the recent losses, the region showed an overall population increase over the full seven years.

Decreases were sharpest in the Cook County suburbs closest to the Chicago. Towns including Rosemont, Des Plaines, Elk Grove Village, Mount Prospect and even Hoffman Estates experienced declines of a full percent or more during the past two years.

The shift is consistent with statewide population trends. Illinois lost more residents in 2016 than any other state, census data released last year showed.

In the past, most suburbs were immune from population declines. Many suburbs grew thanks to Chicago residents moving out of the city in pursuit of good public schools and a growing suburban job market.

But now, both the city and its suburbs are losing population, which is troubling to researchers. "That's not really typical for us," said Elizabeth Schuh, principal policy analyst at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. "Many regions often tend to lose from the central city as residents migrate to the suburbs. When you're losing from both is when you see regional decline."

Schuh said the area's population is stagnant compared to what's happening around the country.

Cities in southern and western states are growing at a significantly faster clip, according to the census figures. The national average from 2015 to 2016 was a growth rate of 0.7 percent. Houston grew by 7.8 percent to lead all cities with populations above 50,000.

Schuh said Chicago and the suburbs need to market their well-trained workforce and well-developed infrastructure to attract and retain businesses. Meanwhile, she suggested municipalities work collaboratively rather than competitively to lure businesses to the area.

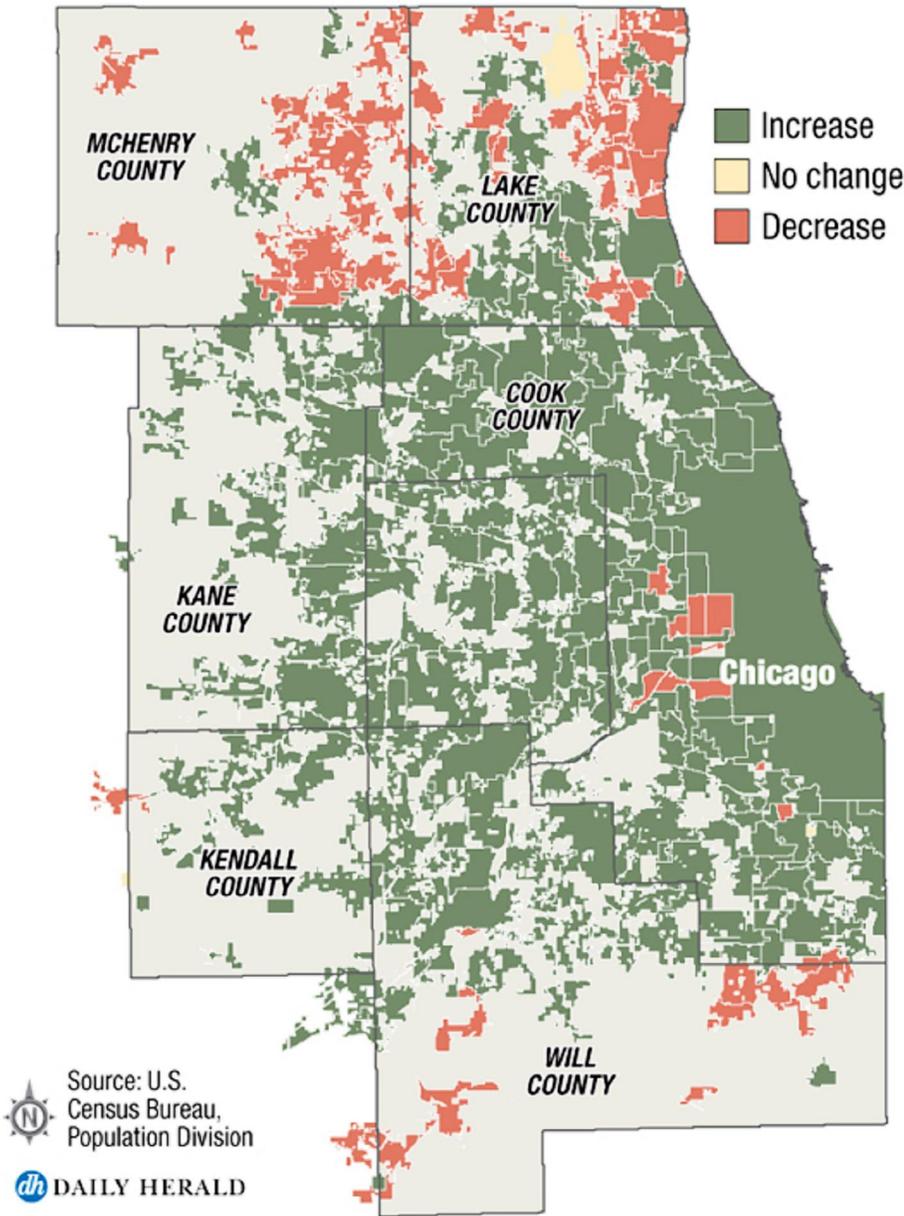
Some suburbs have seen population booms since 2010. East Dundee grew 11 percent, Hampshire grew 12 percent, Deer Park grew 17 percent, Volo grew 46 percent and Pingree Grove grew 61 percent. That's thanks to new residential construction, but local officials complain that hasn't spurred growth in other sectors.

"We've seen more people come here to live, and land for commercial development has been set aside, but unfortunately that hasn't transpired," said Pingree Grove Village Clerk Dawn Grivetti.

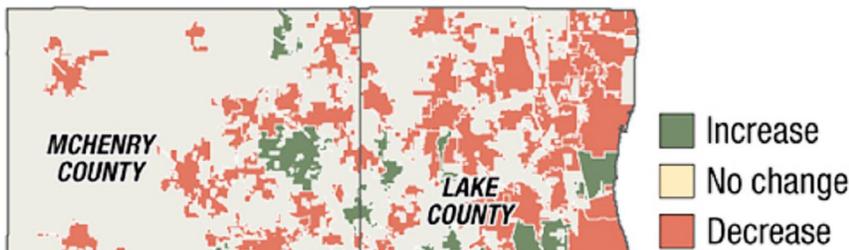
# Losing growth

From 2010 to 2014, most municipalities in the Chicago area saw some growth, according to yearly estimates from the U.S. Census. Starting in 2014, most started losing population.

## Estimated population change, 2010-2014



## Estimated population change, 2014-2016



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