
4 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In planning for County facilities, it is important to take a long-term view and make decisions that have lasting viability. A number of factors affect the needs of the County over time, among them the impact of an expanding and changing population.

Growth in population is a fundamental factor underlying increased demand for county services and for resultant increases in county staff (and space) and attendant changes such as increases in court case filings. Thus, an understanding of what can be reasonably expected of the County population in the coming years is an important planning consideration. To make balanced assumptions about potential population growth, the most meaningful data is based on historical trends coupled with insight as to the factors present in the current situation.

In the Kansas City metropolitan area, demographic, economic, and other important statistical information is compiled, analyzed, and forecast by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), the metropolitan regional planning organization. The County has determined that MARC information related to demographic projections is the most appropriate data currently available and therefore is the basis of the projections utilized in this study.

MARC projections reflect a range of important demographic considerations including employment and income, economics, political and social implications, and regional geographic influences. Historical data is based upon 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 US Census information, with “baseline” projections beyond developed as extensions of that historical data. Final MARC “Policy Forecast” data is a modified version of the baseline intended to reflect the other influences related to growth and distribution of population in the Region noted above.

Historically, the growth in population in Johnson County has been relatively steady for a 30-year period. While somewhat more accelerated during a period in the 1980's, the rate of growth has generally been between 2 and 3 percent annually. Census Bureau estimates from 2000 through 2003 suggest that this trend is continuing at a similar rate of 2.6 percent annually. These rates of growth conservatively equate to the addition of roughly 12,000 individuals per year to the population of Johnson County. The magnitude of that growth will profoundly impact County government and its ability to adequately serve the citizens of the County.

On a comparative basis, the following graph illustrates the relative rates of growth in population for eight counties in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Johnson County is growing at a markedly more pronounced rate than its neighbors, and that comparison is also true at a statewide basis. The figure displays ten-year growth patterns in the 15



most populous Kansas counties and clearly shows that Johnson County is the largest Kansas county by population. As the states' most rapidly growing county, both in growth rate and population, Johnson County and its government are clearly faced with important decisions in order to meet the needs of its changing future.



A Rapidly Growing Population

Regional Population Trends and Projections (Data in Thousands of Individuals)

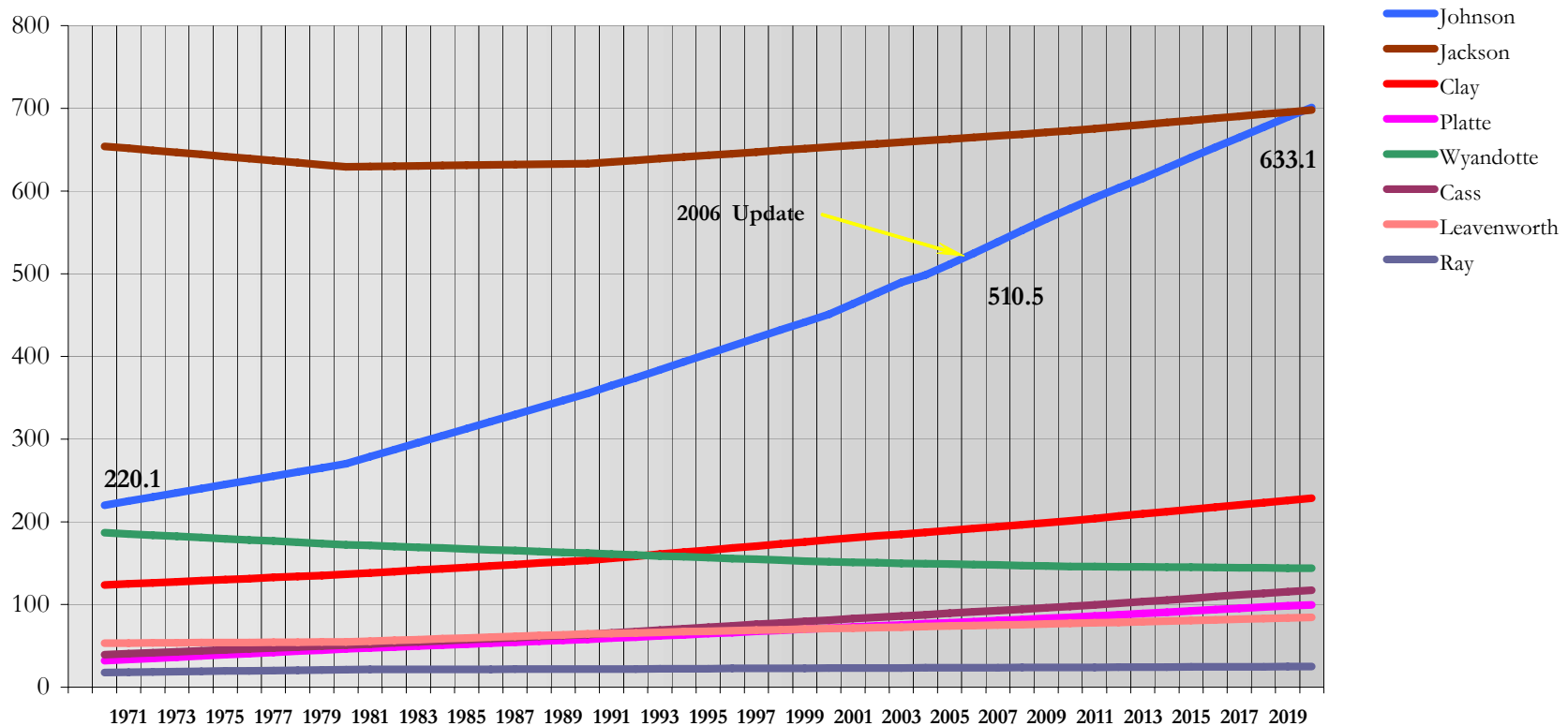


Figure 11: Regional Population Trends and Projections

Johnson County is by far the fastest growing County in the metro area and the region. A 30 percent growth is projected in the next 15 years that will cause a commensurate increase in service demands on County Government by sheer volume alone. Note that a few short years beyond the graph, perhaps by 2030, Johnson County will become the most populous county in the region.



JOHNSON FASTEST GROWING, MOST POPULOUS COUNTY IN KANSAS

Johnson and Sedgwick Counties are by far the two most populous within the State. Considering the growth projections, Johnson County will continue to be the most urban county in the state.

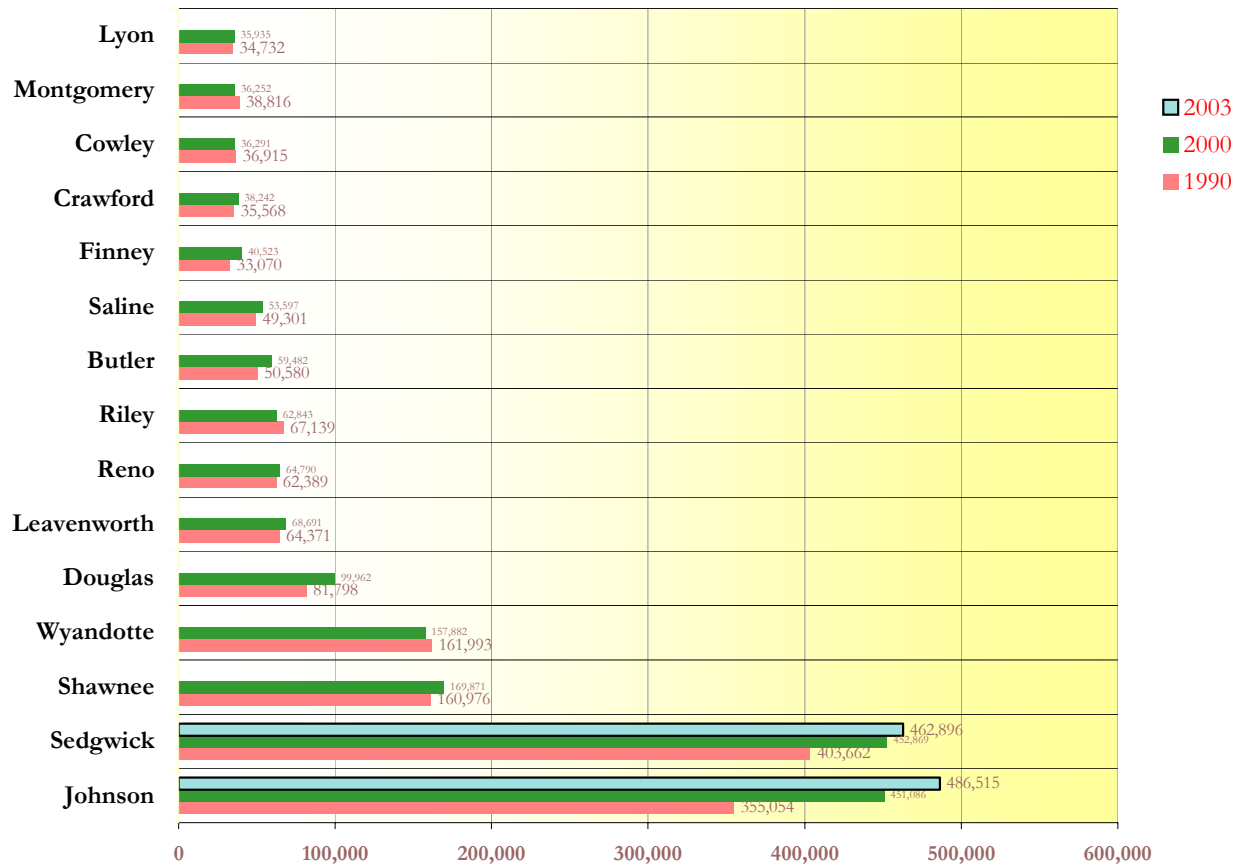


Figure 12: Population Growth in 15 Most Populous Counties, 1990-2003



AGE DISTRIBUTION

Census data in 1990 and 2000 confirms the perceptions of a number of County service providers who have observed that the population of the County is aging. While the overall population of the County has increased over 27 percent from 1990 to 2000 (all measured age groups show some growth), a number of older age groups have grown far faster than that rate of increase. Of note:

Johnson County citizens age 45 to 54 have increased more than 76 percent during the same period. Other age groups include:

- 55 to 59 more than 49 percent
- 75 to 84 more than 67 percent
- Over 85 more than 88 percent

The aggregate growth in the over 44 population amounts to almost 50 thousand individuals during the ten-year period, a rate of growth of about twice that of the overall County population during the same period. The 2000 census indicates that the portion of the Johnson County population over 65 years of age is currently more than 10 percent. There is no evidence to suggest this trend has abated since 2000.

The significance of an older population is an important planning factor, which has a direct influence upon demand for County services. Older individuals typically experience increasing needs for assistance with health concerns and often have need for a range of other County-sponsored programs. Human Services Departments are particularly affected by an aging citizenry and these groups will likely experience more pressing growth rates than that of the population at large:

- Emergency Medical Services (Average age of persons assisted is currently 55)
- Human Services and Aging
- Johnson County Developmental Supports
- Mental Health
- Nursing Center
- Public Health
- Transportation

The maturation of the Johnson County population is an ongoing process due in part to the overall pattern of changing national statistics (such as the often observed aging of the baby-boom generation), as well as certain social and economic patterns specific to the County. There is evidence that the evolution of the County toward increasing County based economic enterprise is changing the makeup of the population into a more diverse and wider-ranging age profile. It also appears that a growing awareness of the availability of County services is increasing demand for those services and may be a



factor in attracting certain segments of the population to the County. The trends toward an older populace in the County and a well-defined pattern of growth should be considered important factors in planning for County services and the facilities which support them.

While the general population trend is clearly aging there is also a marked increase in the portion of the population under the age of 20. This is a segment which may be seen as “at risk” and which also typically demands a higher than average proportion of County services.

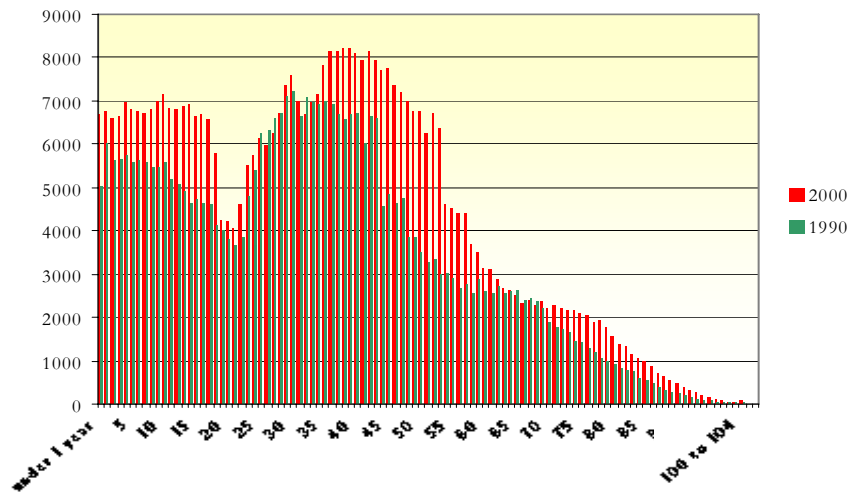


Figure 13: Johnson County Population by Age, 1990-2000 (US Census)

From 1990 to 2000, Johnson County citizens age 45 to 54 have increased more than 76 percent, 55 to 59 more than 40 percent, 75 to 84 more than 67 percent, and over 85 more than 88 percent. The rate of growth in the over 44 population was twice that of the general population. These figures generally track the national averages but are more pronounced. Changes in service delivery are expected to respond to the aging population. Also note the number of 5 to 17 year olds. This is a group that is a heavy user of various services from parks and recreation to law enforcement and detention.



THE POPULATION IN THE COUNTY IS AGING

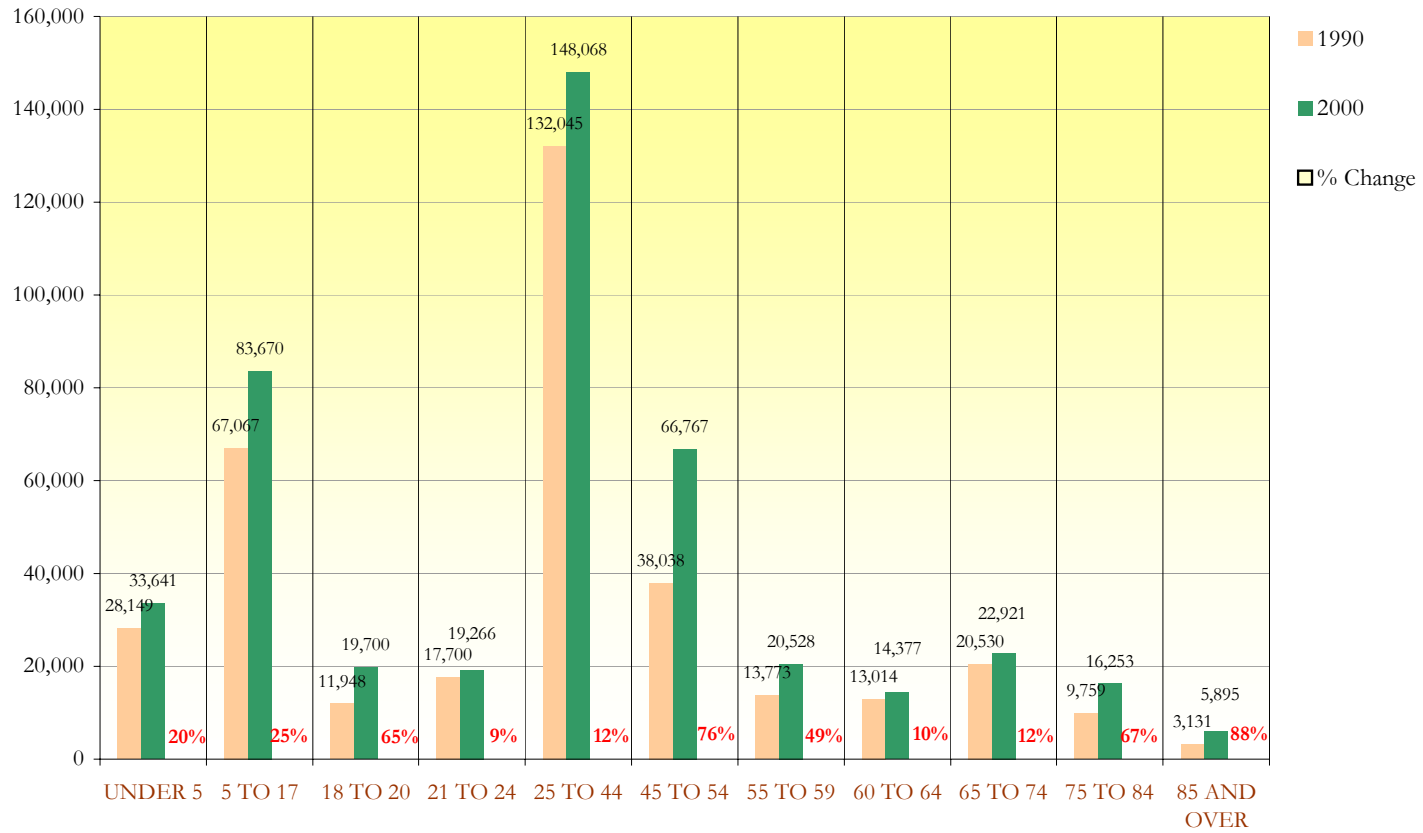


Figure 14: Age Distribution in Johnson County Population (1990-2000)



TRENDS IN INCOME LEVELS

Demographic data related to income levels in Johnson County reveals a pattern of change which may be important in planning for future County government facilities. The County has been gradually evolving from primarily functioning as a "Bedroom" community of suburban homes to that of a more economically diverse area supporting a substantial quantity of business enterprises and employment opportunities. Together with the County's broad array of available services, this evolution has brought with it a more economically, ethnically, and culturally diverse population. The significance of this phenomenon as a planning consideration is in the recognition of the impact to County government of increasing proportions of lower-income individuals in the population. Typically, lower income individuals and families are more dependent upon public-sector services, particularly Human Services, than are more affluent portions of the population. In Johnson County the increasing ratio of lower-income population also parallels growth in ethnic diversity, which may provide additional challenges to County provided services due to such factors as language diversity.

In comparison of the data gathered in both the 1990 and 2000 census, the overall population in Johnson County increased from 355,054 to 451,086 individuals, an increase of over 26 percent in the ten-year period. During the same period, the number of individuals in Johnson County living below the federal poverty threshold increased from 12,667 to 18,500. Some projections since 2000 now show 6 percent of the county's population below the poverty level. This is up from 3.4 percent. The Census also indicates that the growth rate in the most affluent of the federally defined income categories has begun to taper off and is projected to decline through the foreseeable future. At the same time, growth rates in the remaining federally defined categories are projected to increase particularly in the two lowest income categories.

Taken together, these statistics suggest a general broadening and enlargement of the need for County-provided services and the indications show increases in these trends.



POVERTY-LEVEL INDIVIDUALS BECOMING HIGHER PROPORTION OF POPULATION

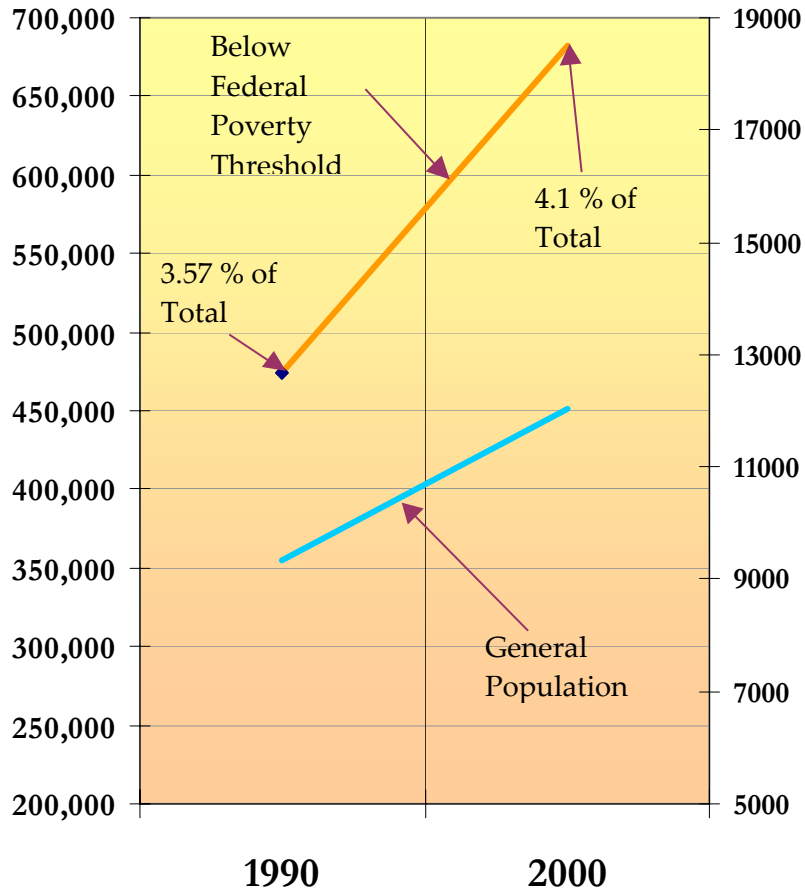


Figure 15: Individuals below Federal Poverty Threshold in Johnson County, 1990-2000

The number of persons below the poverty threshold increased from 1990 to 2000 at a much greater rate than the general population. Demands on County services for programs supporting these persons are increasing.



The increased number of lower income households is projected to increase in the future and become a larger portion of the general population. Just as demands on County services for those in greater needs have increased over the past 10 years, these projects indicate an accelerating need for services to support this group in the future.

LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS INCREASING IN JOHNSON COUNTY

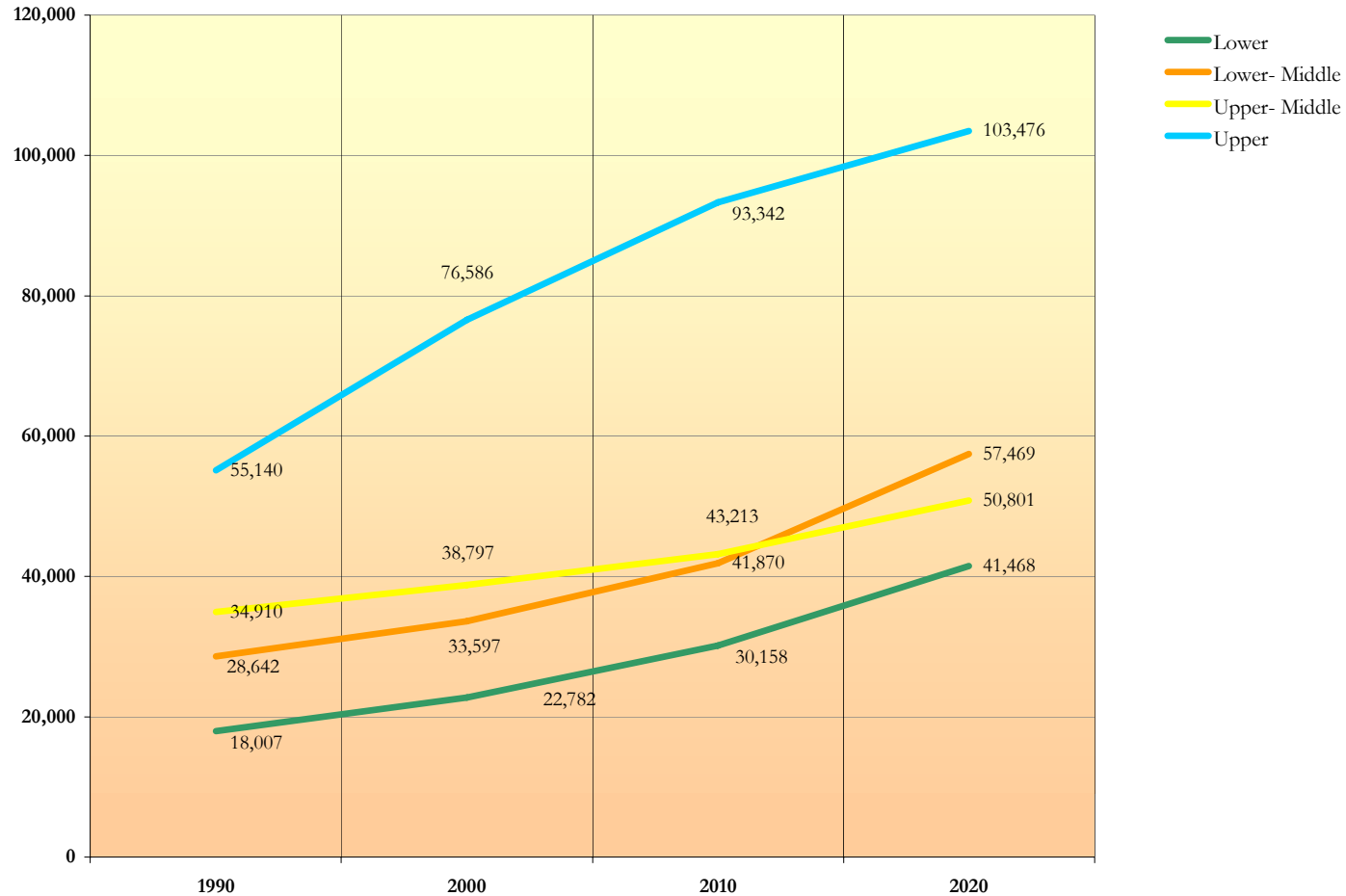


Figure 16: Households by Income Level (Projected) 1990-2020

