CHAPTER 2

A PROFILE OF EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

This section examines demographic trends that will affect Excelsior Springs. The analysis examines population and demographic dynamics, including future population, and important regional issues that will affect the quality of the city's environment.

A PROFILE OF EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

POPULATION HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

This discussion presents important changes in the characteristics and dynamics of Excelsior Springs' population. Table 2.1 summarizes the historical population change in Excelsior Springs and includes comparisons with Maryville, Warrensburg, Kearney, and Platte City. Table 2.1 indicates:

» Excelsior Springs's most significant growth period was from 1960 to 1970.
» Despite the decline in the healing waters industry the city's population grew by 5% in the 1970s.
» Over the past 40 years Clay County has experienced significant growth related to the Kansas City metro area. Excelsior Springs' growth has not been as dramatic as places like Kearney and Platte City but the city's population has consistently stayed at 6 to 7 percent of the county's total population.

To better understand the city's future population dynamics it is important to look at the composition of the city's population divided into 5 year population increments or cohorts. Table 2.2 compares the actual 2000 population with a predicted population for 2000. Average birth and death rates are applied to cohort data from 1990 to determine the 2000 predicted population. The comparison between actual and predicted provides a sense of which cohorts experienced growth (or decline) beyond natural population change.

Table 2.1: Population Change for Excelsior Springs and Other Nebraska Cities, 1960-2004

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007 Estimate	% Change 1960-2000	% Change 2000-2007
Excelsior Springs	6,293	8,399	8,809	10,354	10,847	11,840	72.4%	9.2%
Maryville	7,807	9,970	9,558	10,663	10,581	10,830	35.5%	2.4%
Warrensburg	9,689	13,125	13,807	15,244	16,340	18,629	68.6%	14.0%
Kearney	678	984	1,433	1,790	5,472	8,214	707.1%	50.1%
Platte City	1,188	2,022	2,114	2,947	3,866	4,805	225.4%	24.3%
Clay County	87,474	123,702	136,488	153,411	184,006	211,952	110.4%	15.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

» Residents between the ages of 15 and 19 made up the largest cohort in 2000. This is a reflection of the Job Corp population in the city. Most communities experience a decline in this population as older teens and young adults leave their home towns to attend college and begin careers.
» Overall Excelsior Springs has a fairly young population. The city's median age in 2000 was 33.8 and 45% of the population was under the age of 30.
» Excelsior Springs' population under the age of five experienced an increase in over predicted while their parents cohorts (25-34) showed signs of out-migration. This would likely indicate a higher than average birthrate in the community.
» The growth among residents age 15 to 19 is related to Job Corp. This can effect projecting future populations for the city because these students do not remain in the city to marry and have families.

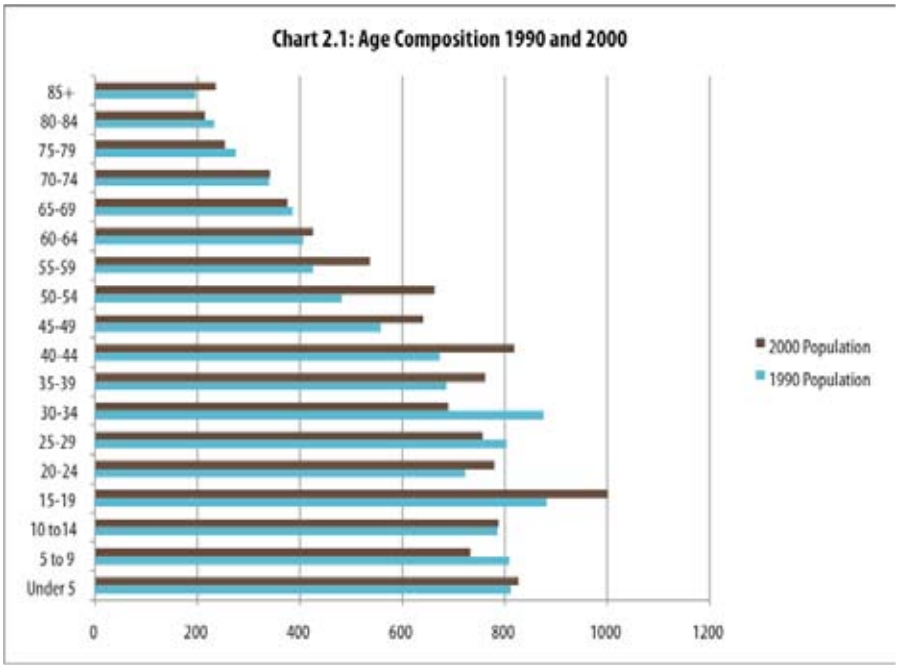
» The decline in population over the age of 75 could be caused by a higher than normal death rate, or older residents leaving the city for services and amenities in other communities.

Population Projections

Projecting Excelsior Springs's population helps one to understand the future demographic character of the community and the city's future land use and community services needs. Estimating future growth is a critical first step in the city's planning and policy decisions for future investments. By evaluating Excelsior Springs' historic population and economic trends, along with construction activity, a projected future population can be formulated. Tables 2.3 and Chart 2.2 provide insight into the city's natural population change, population scenarios, and recent construction activity.

Table 2.2: Predicted and Actual Age Cohort Change

Age Group	2000 Predicted	2000 Actual	Difference (Actual–Predicted)	% Variance 1990-2000
0-9	1390	1560	170	12%
10 to 19	1617	1789	172	11%
20-29	1656	1537	-119	-7%
30-39	1513	1452	-61	-4%
40-49	1539	1460	-79	-5%
50-59	1186	1200	14	1%
60-69	819	802	-17	-2%
70-79	618	596	-22	-4%
80+	492	451	-41	-8%
Total	10828	10847	19	0%



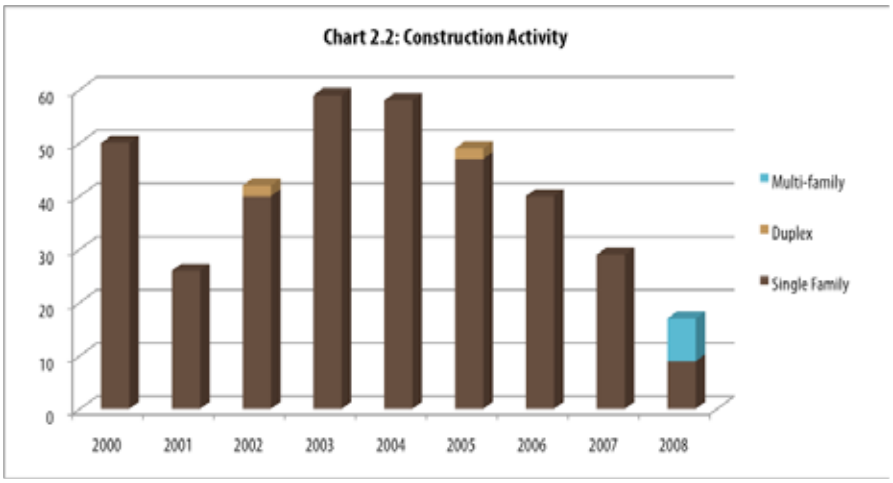


Table 2.3: Projected Population

	2000	2007	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Natural Pop Change	10,847	11,101	11,226	11,421	11,565	11,618	11,583
0.5% Annual Growth	10,847	11,206	11,363	11,631	11,905	12,185	12,471
1% Annual Growth	10,847	11,629	11,982	12,593	13,235	13,911	14,620
1.25% Annual Growth	10,847	11,840	12,293	13,087	13,932	14,831	15,789
1.37% Annual Growth	10,847	11,931	12,429	13,304	14,241	15,244	16,317

Source: City of Excelsior Springs, U.S. Census Bureau, RDG Planning & Design; 2008

» Based on natural population change, which calculates the number of births to deaths, the city's population would increase moderately. However, this could be slightly elevated because of the Job Corp students who will not remain in the community.

» During the 1990s the city's population only grew by 0.5% annually.

» Construction activity since 2000 would indicate that the city's population has grown at about 1.4% annually. During 2008 the residential housing market experienced a significant downturn across the country and likely slowed growth as people found it hard to sell their homes.

» Excelsior Springs' location and strong growth during the previous recession in the 1980s supports continued growth for the city.

» Although growth during the later part of this decade may not be as strong, the city goals should lay the ground work for continued population increases of 1.0% annually resulting in a 2030 population of 14,620. This would predict a more aggressive growth pattern then experienced in the 1990s but not as aggressive as the early part of this decade.

Table 2.4: Employment by Occupation, 2000

	Excelsior Springs	Clay County	Ray County
Management & Professional	19.6%	32.5%	22.5%
Service Occupations	18.2%	13.7%	14.8%
Sales	27.2%	30.6%	23.4%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0.5%	0.1%	0.8%
Construction & Maintenance	10.2%	9.2%	14.0%
Production & Transportation	24.3%	13.8%	24.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 2.5: Employment by Industry, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	48	28	-20
Construction	285	312	27
Manufacturing	972	934	-38
Wholesale Trade	178	216	38
Retail Trade	808	653	-155
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	381	291	-90
Information *		173	173
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental	308	277	-31
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste services	267	328	61
Educational, health, and social services	759	922	163
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	66	427	361
Other services	235	279	44
Public Administration	173	191	18
Total	4,480	5,031	551

*New category in 2000
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Historically Excelsior Springs' economy was independent from the Kansas City Metro Area but over the last 20 years an economic transition has occurred in the city with more residents commuting to jobs outside the city. The following section reviews the city's employment and income trends.

Table 2.6: Income Distribution for Households by Percentage

	Under $15,000	$15,000-24,999	$25,000-34,999	$35,000-49,999	$50,000-74,999	Over $75,000	2000 Median Income
Excelsior Springs	16.19	11.82	13.85	15.88	18.66	23.6	$42,689
Kearney	4.35	6.71	9.07	12.5	25.53	41.83	$66,991
Clay County	7.19	8.57	11.79	16.9	23.69	31.87	$55,855

Source: Claritas, Inc. 2007

Employment

Employment within a community can be assessed in two different ways. One is based on the resident's employment by occupation, while the other is based on a resident's employment by industry. Employment by occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job, as opposed to the type of industry an individual works in, which relates to the kind of business conducted by a person's employer. For example, a person might be an accountant (their occupation) for a major manufacturer (the industry).

Tables 2.4 and 2.5 examine Excelsior Springs' employment trends.

» Over 50% of Excelsior Springs' residents are employed in sales or production and transportation occupation, while 20% are employed in management/professional occupations.
» Like Ray County, Excelsior Springs has fewer people in management and professional occupations then Clay County.
» During the 1990s the city's population increased by 4.8%, while the number residents over the age of 16 in the workforce increased by 12.3%. This, despite a decrease in those 25 to 34, is a reflection of the strong regional economy of the late 1990s.
» The largest change occurred in what are often tourism dependent positions in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services. This industry accounted for over 65% of the city's job growth.

Income and Retail Sales

Table 2.6 describes the income distribution for Excelsior Springs, Kearney, and Clay County.

» With more residents employed in lower paying sales and services oriented occupations the city's household incomes lag behind Clay County and Kearney.
» Excelsior Springs' median household income is 76% of Clay County and 64% of

Table 2.7: Retail Analysis, 2008 (In Millions of $)

Total Retail Sales	Consumer Demand	Retail Sales	Gap/Surplus
Excelsior Springs	180.9	182.9	-1.9
Kearney	132.9	90.8	42.0
Liberty	519.1	312.2	206.9

Source: Claritas, Inc. 2009

Kearney.

» Over 41% of the city households earn less than 80% of the county median income, an important breaking point for some housing assistance and financing programs.

Table 2.7 compares the city's consumer expenditures with retail sales. The gap or surplus between these two identifies areas where the city is an importer or exporter of retail dollars. If sales are greater than consumer expenditures the city is an importer and vice versa.

» Many residents of Excelsior Springs think of the city as an exporter of dollars as residents jump in their cars and head further into the Kansas City area for goods and services. While this is true for Kearney and Liberty this is not always the case for Excelsior Springs.
» Excelsior Springs attracts retail spending in:
  › Motor vehicle and parts dealers
  › Gasoline stations
  › General merchandise stores (Wal-Mart)
  › Non-store retailers (electronic shopping & direct selling)
» Excelsior Springs is an exporter of consumer spending in:
  › Food and beverages stores (grocery stores)
  › Building materials
  › Clothing and accessories

Analysis of the city's retail spending brings to light opportunities for the city. Areas where the city exports dollars identify opportunities to tap into local consumer dollars. At the same time, markets that are importers of dollars are niche areas for the community that should be built upon in the future.

Housing Values

There is an interlocking connection between such demographic and economic factors as population trends, income, and employment. Table 2.8 presents a comparison of housing values in Excelsior Springs, Kearney, Platte City, and Warrensburg.

» The 2008 estimated home value in Excelsior Springs was lower than comparable cities.

Table 2.8: Comparative Housing Trends, Excelsior Springs and Other Communities, 2008

	% Owner-Occupied	Median Value	Average Length of Residency – All Occupied Units
Excelsior Springs	66%	$111,444	9
Kearney	75%	$144,521	5
Platte City	54%	$159,219	6
Warrensburg	43%	$125,042	6

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Table 2.9 Commuting Patterns for Excelsior Springs and Other Comparable Communities, 2008

	Average Travel Time to Work	% Who Walked to Work
Excelsior Springs	26.03	3.26%
Kearney	26.36	0%
Platte City	25.26	0.33%
Warrensburg	20.4	9.14%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

» Lower home values correspond to the city's lower median household income.
» More households own their homes than in Platte Center or Warrensburg and stay in their residents longer than any of the comparable communities.

Further analysis of Excelsior Springs's housing market can be found in Chapter 6 "Housing and Neighborhoods."

Commuting Patterns

In 2000 the average commute for an Excelsior Springs resident was 26 minutes, indicating that a large number of residents work outside the community likely in Liberty and North Kansas City. The older communities of Excelsior Springs and Warrens-