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# chapter two: plan development process



## vision and goals

In order to develop a *comprehensive* parks and recreation plan which provides direction for all aspects of Little Rock's park system for the next ten to twenty years, the development of a unified vision statement and set of goals and objectives were necessary to ensure that all individual aspects of the parks plan work toward a common end result. The following vision statement and goals were developed with Little Rock Parks and Recreation staff and reviewed and approved by the Vision Little Rock Parks and Recreation work group.

### *Vision Statement*

*"To create a CITY IN A PARK".*

To create a "city in a park" means to make Little Rock a more desirable place to live by embracing the natural setting, to recognize what makes Little Rock a beautiful place, and to create a park-like atmosphere throughout the city with trees and open spaces. Mitigating the effects of urban sprawl by offering green oases, providing an alternate system of transportation, and decreasing noise and air pollution are all benefits resulting from the creation of an exceptional park and open space system.

### *Goals and Objectives*

After several meetings with the public, the Vision Little Rock Parks and Recreation work group, and Little Rock Parks and Recreation staff, the following condensed goals were developed to support the "city in a park" vision:

- **CREATE A CITYWIDE SYSTEM OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL AREAS** that provides recreational, educational, ecological, and aesthetic benefits to enhance the livability of Little Rock.
- **PROVIDE FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS TO SERVE ALL USER GROUPS, COMMUNITIES AND AGE GROUPS.**
- **ADVOCATE, BUILD AND MAINTAIN a CITY IN A PARK** through partnerships, creative financing and education.



*Parks offer a variety of recreational types.*



## p a r k s   p l a n n i n g d i s t r i c t s

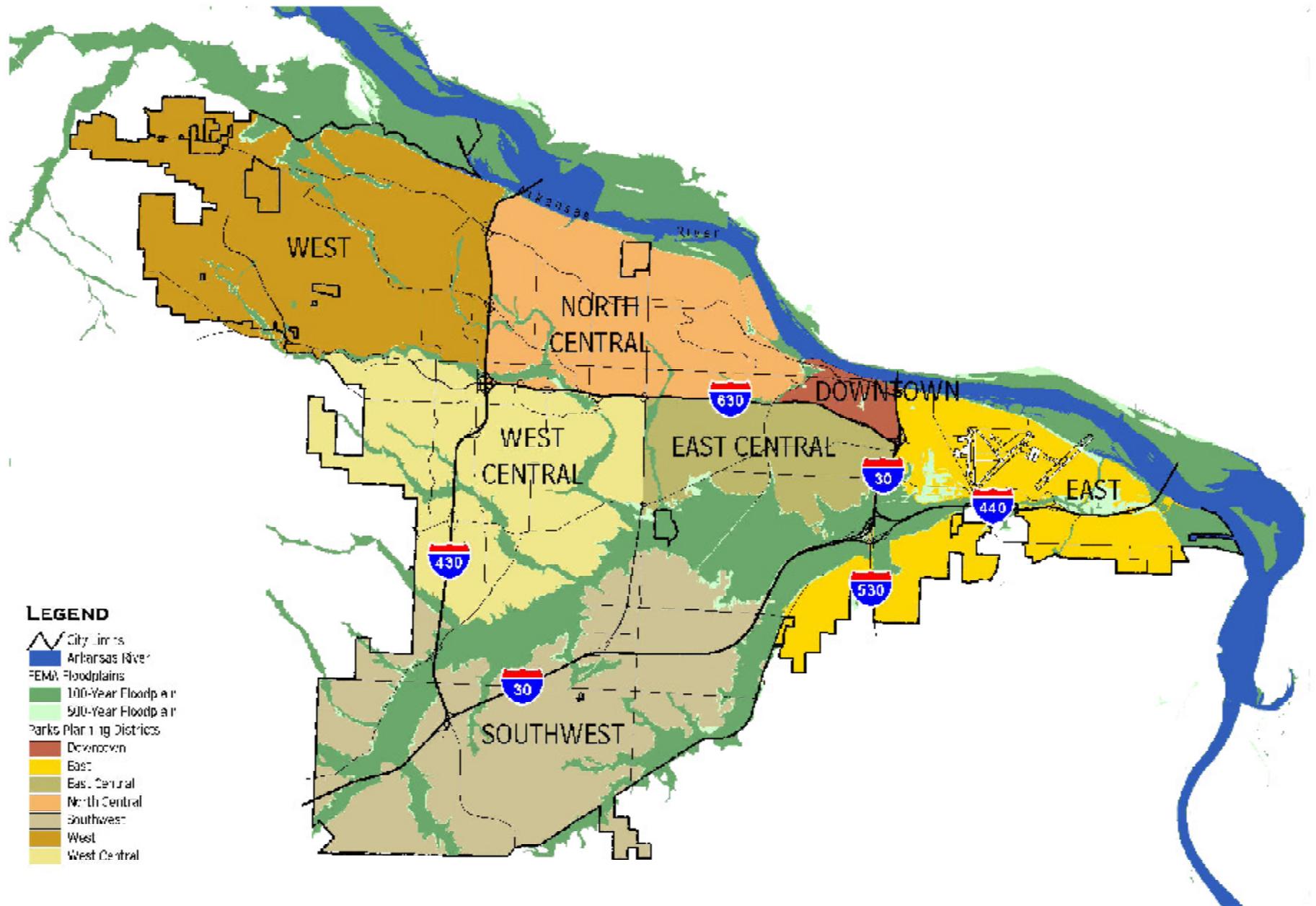
The City has been divided into seven park planning districts to assist in the analysis of recreational parks and open space needs and opportunities within different parts of the city, see Figure 2.1. These district boundaries have been determined according to several factors, including the perception of neighborhood areas, planning districts, physical manmade barriers (such as major roadways), and natural features, such as topography and floodplains.

The following districts were established:

- Downtown: Bounded by the Arkansas River to the north, I-30 to the east, I-630 to the south, and the floodplain to the west.
- East: Everything east of I-30, plus the area east of the floodplain that extends along the southern city limits line.
- East Central: South of downtown; bound by I-630 to the north, I-30 to the east, the Fourche Creek floodplain to the south, and University Ave. to the west.
- North Central: Directly west of downtown, bound by the Arkansas River to the north, the floodplain to the east, I-630 to the south, and I-430 to the west.

- West: Directly west of “North Central”, bound to the east by I-430, to the north and west by the city limits, and to the south by the Rock Creek floodplain and Chenal Parkway.
- West Central: West of “East Central”, bound to the north by the Rock Creek floodplain/Chenal Parkway, to the east by University Ave., to the south by the Fourche Creek floodplain, and to the west by the city limits line.
- Southwest: Everything south of the Fourche Creek floodplain and the “West Central” district, bound to the south and west by the city limits, and to the east by the floodplain which continues along the southern city limits line.

Figure 2.1: Parks Planning Districts





*Downtown District*



*East District*

## ***District Descriptions***

### ***Downtown District***

Existing conditions: The Downtown District consists mainly of the Central Business District with a limited number of residences, mostly renovated historic homes or older apartment buildings. Residents include upper middle class in the renovated neighborhoods to upper lower-class areas on the fringes. Recently, loft apartment construction and rental has begun which is expected to attract a young and professional population. Riverfront Park serves as a major urban park, which offers passive recreation and performance opportunities. In addition, the River Market houses the Farmers Market. Terry Mansion and MacArthur Park are also located in downtown, offering cultural opportunities. Bound to the north by the Arkansas River, this district has begun to take advantage of the river as a recreational opportunity.

Recreational Issues and Opportunities: Additional small urban pocket parks, cultural centers, and/or streetscape connections to state capitol grounds and/or other historic sites, etc. are all possibilities within this district. The riverfront has the potential to provide diverse recreational opportunities.

### ***East District***

Existing Conditions: Predominately lower middle class, African American neighborhoods are situated in this district between industrial areas and the airport. Government subsidized housing are probably the only new residential communities to be built in this region. With plans for westward expansion, the airport will displace many residences in the near future. The William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Park project is planned to occur along the river in the north west end of this district. The East District includes part of the Fourche Creek floodplain as well as a number of smaller parks. Some parks within the district are in dire need of repair. Gillam Park, the largest park in this district, is home to unique geological formations.

Recreational Issues and Opportunities: Safety and the existing condition of parks and facilities within the area are the main issues in the East District. The two greatest recreational opportunities are associated with the enhancement of the two natural areas, along Fourche Creek and within Gillam Park to make them useable to the public for recreational and educational purposes. Interpretive trails with ecologically sensitive design for circulation within these areas are appropriate. The development of the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Park and potential linkages via the riverfront offer future recreational opportunities.

### ***East Central District***

Existing conditions: The East Central District consists of some upper middle-class in the renovated neighborhoods but contains mostly lower class areas. The Central High Historic District area is predominately African American. Recent tornado damage to many homes and loss of mature trees in this area has changed the aesthetics of the area. Older parks are predominant, some are declining, and many are perceived as unsafe. There is a scattering of smaller-scale parks with few key larger parks.

Recreational Issues and Opportunities: Maintaining and enhancing existing parks is a major issue in this district. The major opportunity for additional recreation is along Fourche Creek, which runs along the south edge of the district. Enhancement of streetscape and trails to link cultural and natural resources is also an opportunity.

### ***North Central District***

Existing Conditions: The Hillcrest & Pulaski Heights areas contain predominately affluent Caucasian neighborhoods of renovated historic homes. Numerous small neighborhood village shopping areas are dotted along Kavanaugh Road, which is a primary corridor through most of the north central area. This district of stable mature neighborhoods is well-served by large and small parks alike.

Recreational Issues and Opportunities: Maintenance of existing parks and the lack of land for

new parks are both issues. The opportunity for an open space greenway along the floodplain in the southwest corner of the district exists. The land along the Arkansas River provides additional recreational opportunities. In this area, there are no community centers or programs.

### ***West District***

Existing Conditions: The West District consists predominately of affluent Caucasians who are moving to new neighborhoods for the amenities these areas offer. The hilly terrain gives the residential areas a unique character. Many multi-family complexes are located in this area. This area is the push of new development and outward expansion of the city. Few parks exist; all are privately-built to serve the needs of individual neighborhood communities.

Recreational Issues and Opportunities: This district's main issue is its lack of public parks. Additionally, some neighborhood associations would like to "give" their parks to the City, placing the burden of maintenance of the parks which aren't programmed to meet the City's objectives on Little Rock Parks and Recreation. Opportunities for greenways and trails exist along the Rock Creek floodplain. Trails and streetscape can enable more flexible movement of residents and overcome diverse roadways for more pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. The Two Rivers tract offers recreational opportunities associated with Maumelle Creek and the Arkansas River.



*East Central District*



*North Central District*



*West District*



*West Central District*



*Southwest District*

### ***West Central District***

**Existing Conditions:** Predominately middle class to upper middle class Caucasian residences with a mix of multi-family complexes have followed the retail growth along the Chenal Parkway corridor. The intersection of I-630 (east-west) and I-430 (north-south) allows for easy access to downtown and other parts of Central Arkansas. Numerous office parks have located in this area. The district is served by two large parks: Boyle and Hindman. In addition, it contains three smaller parks.

**Recreational Issues and Opportunities:** Extensive floodplains run through this district, creating many opportunities for recreation, including trails, bikeways, or passive recreation and open space. The majority of existing parks in this area are located along or in the floodplains, creating an easy opportunity for linkages among parks in this district as well as to parks in the West, West Central, North Central, East Central, and Southwest districts, since this area is bounded by the Fourche Creek flood plain.

### ***Southwest District***

**Existing Conditions:** A mix of middle-class Caucasian and African American neighborhoods, with a recent migration of a Hispanic population, that has changed due to westward growth trends. Otter Creek development is the only new residential development to occur in this area in decades. 1960's-style shopping strip developments are the common commercial centers along Baseline Road and Geyer Springs Drive. The Southwest district is predominately mature neighborhoods, moderately served by small parks and a few key large parks.

**Recreational Issues and Opportunities:** The Fourche Creek floodplain offers opportunities for linkages to the West Central, South Central, and East Districts. Level topography within the district offers opportunities for additional active recreation facilities.

## District Demographics

### Methodology

When the master plan process began in early 2000, the census information for that year had not yet been released. Therefore, this data was provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and Claritas Inc., a national firm specializing in population projections and market trends reports. The most recent data available included 1999 population estimates, and five-year projections to year 2004.

For this project, the areas analyzed are the City of Little Rock and seven (7) parks planning areas. The planning areas are categorized by West, North Central, Downtown, East, West Central, East Central and Southwest, see page 47. The raw data is supplied by Claritas. It is then put into tables, charts and graphs to clarify the market segments and recognize shifts.

Understanding the demographic environment is important for the following reasons:

1. To understand the market area being served and distinguish customer groups.
2. To determine changes that are occurring in the area and make proactive decisions to accommodate these shifts. People's wants and needs change with age.
3. To consider the Little Rock Parks and Recreation's own objectives and resources in relationship to the demographic makeup.

### Findings

- The City of Little Rock 1990 population was at 175,795 and is estimated at 173,496 in 1999 and is projected to decrease to 170,784 by the year 2004. This is a decrease of approximately -2.9% from 1990 and -1.6% from 1999 in the population, which is estimated to be 2,712 persons over the next 5-year period.
- All but two of the Planning Areas are projected to decrease in population. The West and West Central planning areas are projected to increase 8.2% and 0.7% respectively. The largest decreases in population are projected to occur in the East and East Central with population losses of -8.6% and -8.0% respectively.
- The highest concentrations of population are located in the North Central and West planning areas. The combined population projections in these areas will represent 44% of the total Little Rock population by the year 2004.
- The West planning area of Little Rock is projected to have the highest concentration of households with \$100,000+ incomes.
- The highest percentage of the population is made up of the age group 40-49 (16%) followed by the 30-39 (14.7%) and thirdly

### *Did you know ?*

The highest concentrations of population are located in the North Central and West planning areas. The combined population projections in these areas will represent 44% of the total Little Rock population by the year 2004.

### *Did you know ?*

The highest percentage of the population is made up of the age group 40-49 (16%) followed by the 30-39 (14.7%)

by the 5-14 years of age (14.4%). The age group of 50-59 years of age indicates the higher growth percentage at 18.7% from 1999 to 2004.

- The Southwest and West Central planning areas indicate a higher concentration of children under the age of 10. By 2004, it is anticipated that these areas will represent 41% of this population age segment.
- The Southwest and West Central planning areas also indicate a higher concentration of the teenaged youth ages 15-17. By 2004 it is anticipated that these areas will represent approximately 40% of this population age segment.
- The West and North Central planning areas indicate a high concentration of 40-49 year olds, the largest age segment in Little Rock. By 2004, it is anticipated that these areas will represent 49% of this population age segment.
- The North Central planning area indicates a higher concentration of senior citizens aged 65 or older. By 2004, it is anticipated that this area will represent 34% of this population age segment.
- The median age of the area is increasing from 35.6 (1999 Estimate) to 36.9 (2004

projection). The Little Rock area indicates decreases in the 25-34 year old age group that may account for the median age increase.

- The median household income is increasing in Little Rock. By 2004, the age group of 45 - 54 is the group with the highest median household income followed by the 35 - 44.
- The three highest income levels will stay fairly consistent for the next 5 years. The \$50-74,999 income level is mostly comprised of the 35-44 and the 45-54 age groups. The \$35-49,999 is mostly comprised of the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups and the \$15-24,999 is largely the 25-34 year old age group.
- The Little Rock population is comprised mostly of two races, Caucasians and African Americans. Caucasians have been decreasing from 59.6% in 1999 to 57.1% by 2004. African Americans (as depicted by the U.S. Census) are increasing at 37.2% in 1999 to 38.9% by the year 2004. Hispanics have been slightly increasing from 1.8% in 1999 to 2.4% by the year 2004. The rest of the community is comprised of other races, which will remain about the same by the year 2004.
- Overall, the city of Little Rock is becoming evenly diverse between African Americans and

Caucasians, but when analyzing the seven planning areas, some areas are predominately more of one race than any of the others. The East and East Central planning areas are projected to be predominately comprised of African Americans at 82% and 87% respectively. The North Central and West planning areas are projected to be predominately Caucasian with 83% and 85% respectively.

- The size of households is decreasing. Little Rock has household sizes decreasing from 2.37 in 1990, to 2.33 in 1999 and projected to decrease slightly to 2.32 by the year 2004.
- The number of households is decreasing. Little Rock is projected to have the number of households decrease from 1999 estimate of 72,809 to 72,173 by the year 2004. This is an decrease of about 0.9%.

During the preparation of the draft report, information for the 2000 census was slowly being released. The population of Little Rock, according to the 2000 census, was 183,000. This number is considerably higher than the 1999 estimate.

For purposes of this document, however, population distributions remain relatively similar, indicating higher rates of growth to the west than in other areas of the city. The 2004 population

projections have been used for purposes of determining future park and recreation demands, which should be re-evaluated every few years to reflect more accurate population projections.

At the time of this report, the 2004 population projections were the most recent available. Implications of the higher 2000 census population are minor, but may slightly affect the number of certain recreation facilities needed (such as baseball and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts) by one or two additional facilities in each case. The projections of needs for future facilities, located in Chapter Four, are for use as a guide and are not definite. These standards present a formula for addressing the number of parks and facilities needed, and should be re-evaluated as necessary.

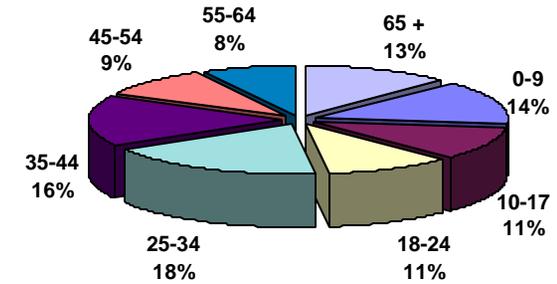
For complete demographic inventories by park planning district, see Appendix C.

*City of Little Rock Population 1990 Census - 1999 Estimate - 2004 Projected*

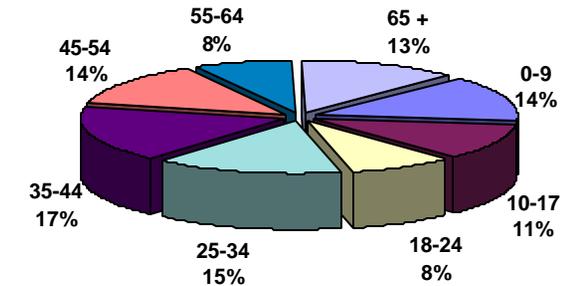
Ages	1990 Census	1999 Estimate	2004 Projected	% Change 99-04
Under 5 years	13,032	11,909	11,106	- 6.7
Age 5 - 9	12,173	12,813	11,965	- 6.6
Ages 10 - 14	11,676	12,665	12,645	- 0.2
Ages 15 - 17	7,115	6,798	7,330	7.8
Ages 18 - 20	7,408	6,164	6,195	0.5
Ages 21 - 24	11,138	8,413	8,536	1.5
Ages 25 - 29	16,570	12,827	10,513	- 18.0
Ages 30 - 34	16,238	13,281	12,315	- 7.3
Ages 35 - 39	15,120	14,667	12,849	- 12.4
Ages 40 - 44	12,900	14,633	13,760	- 6.0
Ages 45 - 49	9,259	12,901	13,543	5.0
Ages 50 - 54	7,420	10,564	12,214	15.6
Ages 55 - 59	6,775	7,790	9,577	22.9
Ages 60 - 64	6,867	6,034	6,929	14.8
Ages 65 - 69	6,830	5,459	5,369	- 1.6
Ages 70 - 74	5,369	5,270	4,590	- 12.9
Ages 75 +	9,905	11,308	11,348	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>175,795</b>	<b>173,496</b>	<b>170,784</b>	<b>- 1.6</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>36.9</b>	

*Little Rock Population by Age Groups*

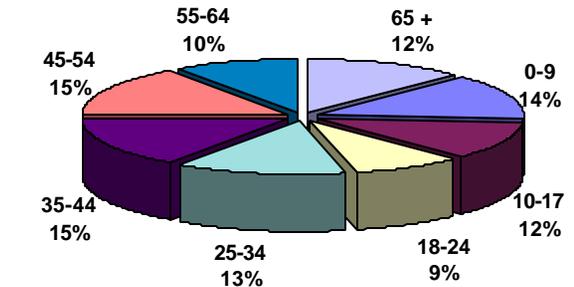
1990 Population



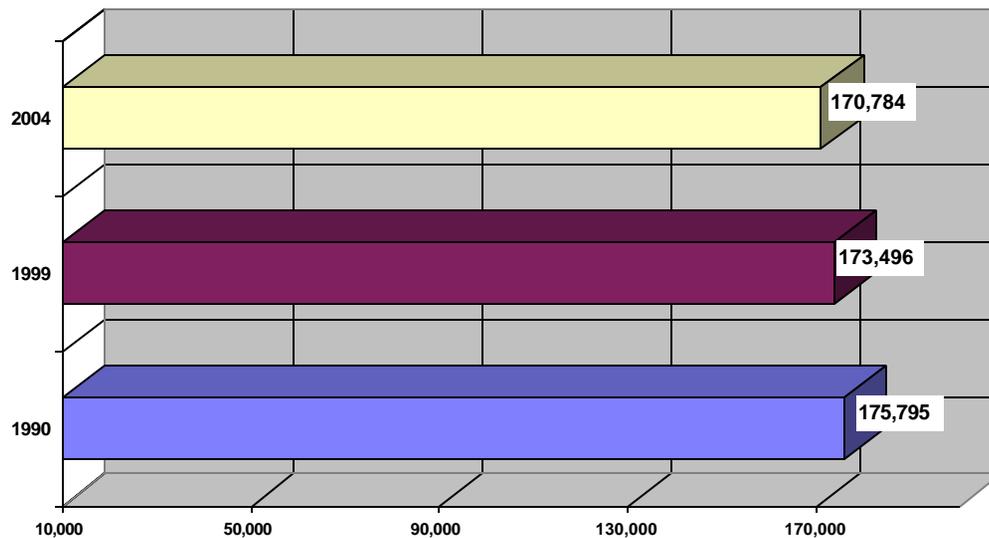
1999 Estimate



2004 Projected

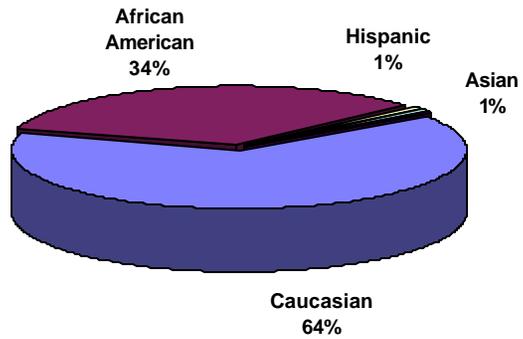


*Total Population 1990 Census - 1999 Estimate - 2004 Projected*

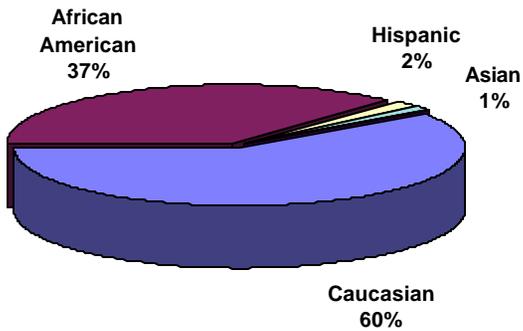


*Little Rock Population by Race*

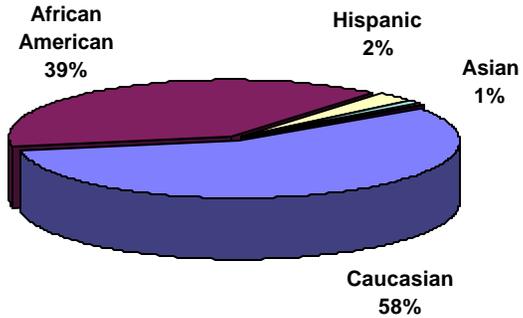
1990 Population



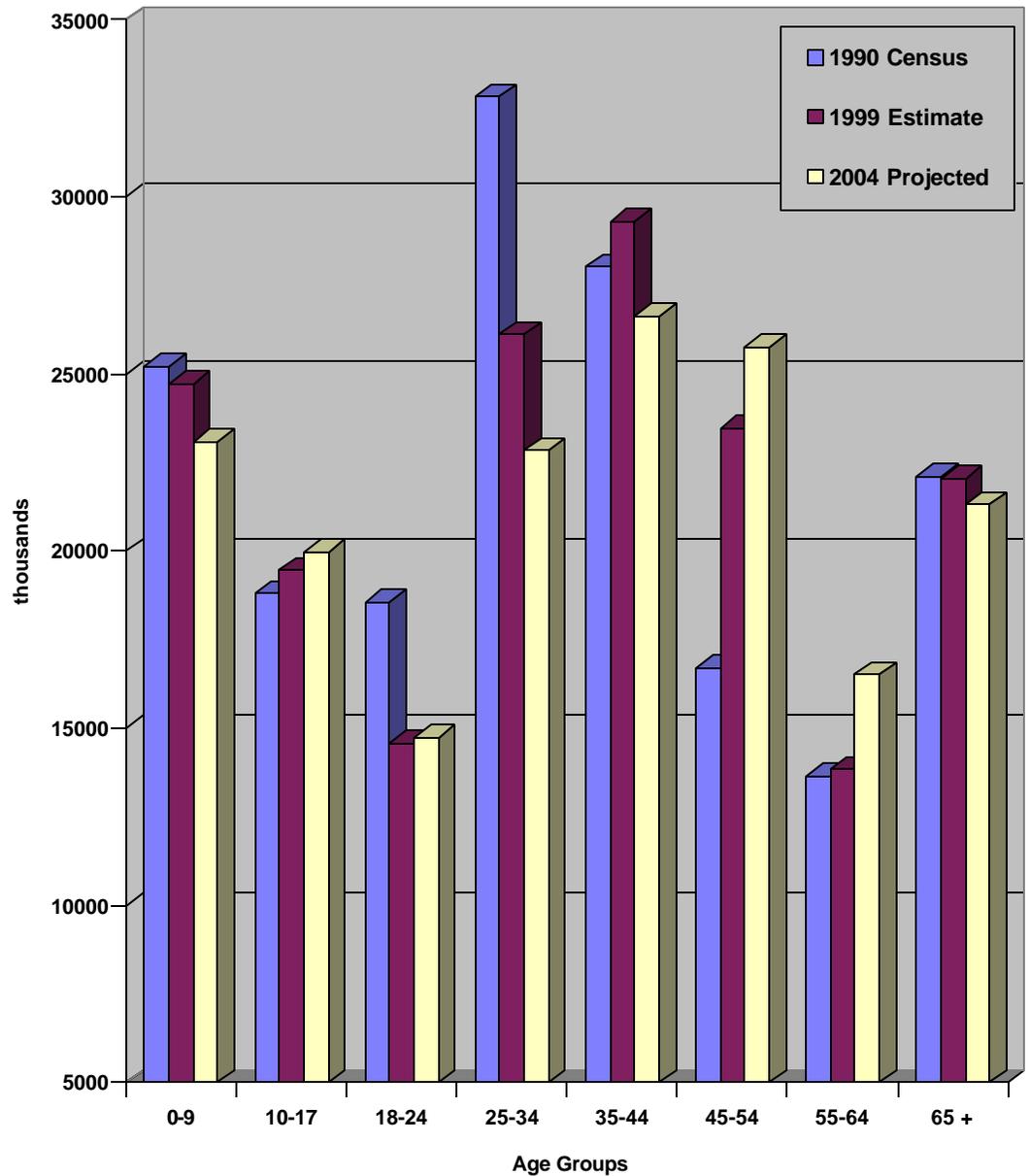
1999 Estimate



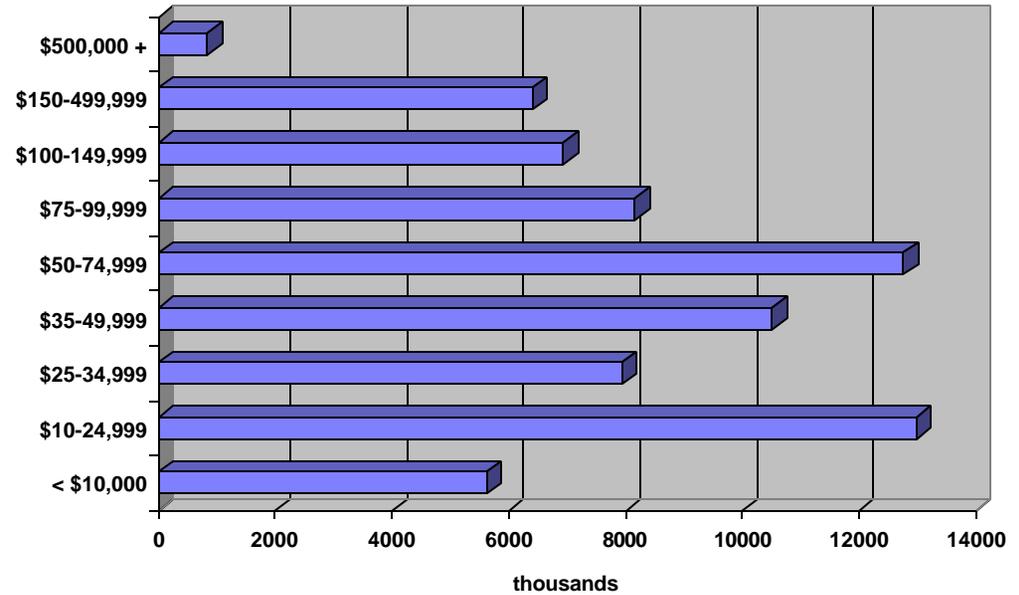
2004 Projected



*Population by Ages 1990 Census - 1999 Estimate - 2004 Projected*



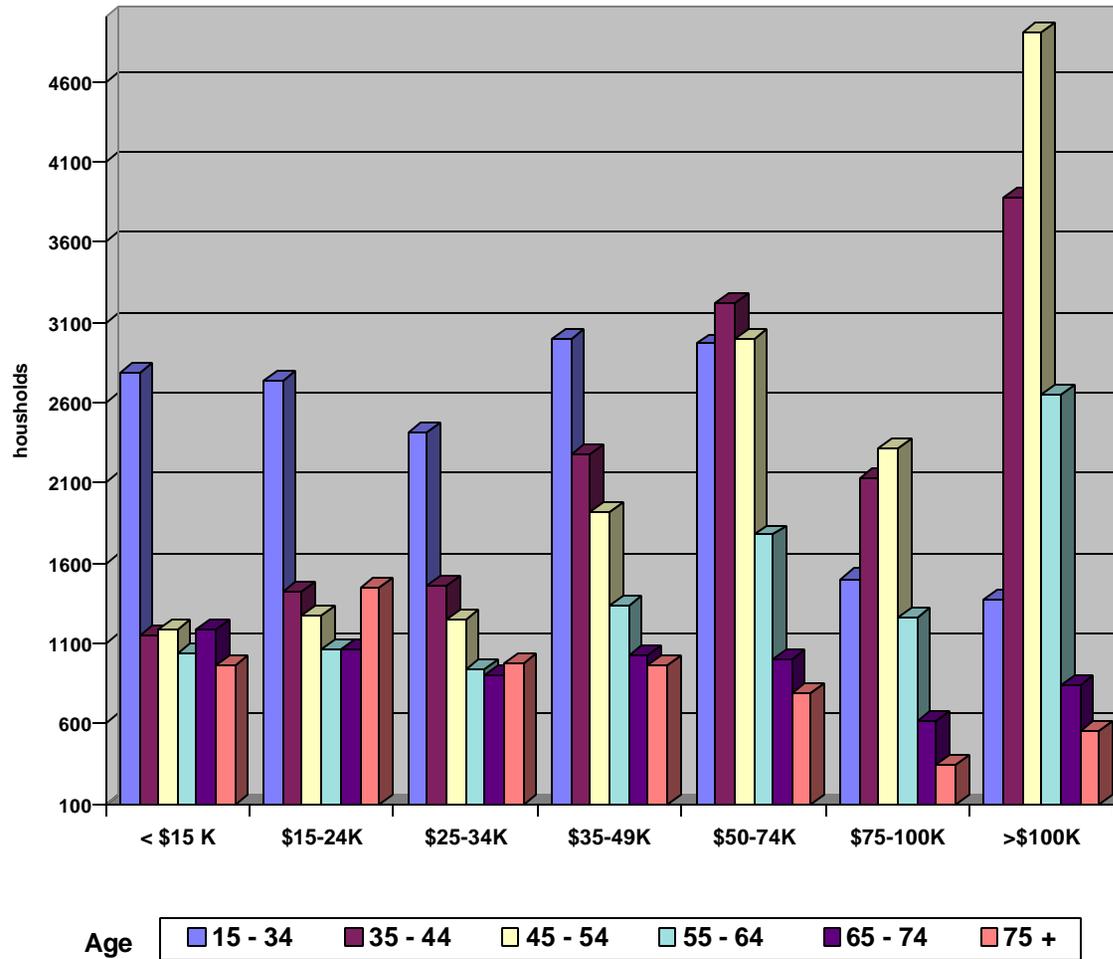
2004 Projected Number of Households by Income



Income Data by Households 1990 Census - 1999 Estimate - 2004 Projected

Income	1990	%	1999	%	2004	%
Under \$10,000	12,088	16.7	7,047	9.7	5,618	7.8
\$10,000 - \$14,999	7,287	10.0	4,784	6.6	3,983	5.5
\$15,000 - \$24,999	14,008	19.3	10,055	13.8	9,006	12.5
\$25,000 - \$34,999	11,614	16.0	9,298	12.8	7,945	11.0
\$35,000 - \$49,999	11,386	15.7	11,687	16.1	10,507	14.6
\$50,000 - \$74,999	9,976	13.7	13,202	18.1	12,752	17.7
\$75,000 - \$99,999	2,963	4.1	7,372	10.1	8,165	11.3
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1,944	2.7	4,951	6.8	6,941	9.6
\$150,000 - \$499,999	1,150	1.6	3,947	5.4	6,404	8.9
\$500,000 or more	157	0.2	466	0.6	852	1.2
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>72,573</b>		<b>72,809</b>		<b>72,173</b>	

2004 Projected Household Income by Age of Householder



2004	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	2004 Projected Population
Little Rock	72,173	\$47,820	\$32,650	170,784
Downtown Tracts			\$15,738	664
1.00	459	\$11,973	11,328	356
3.00*	1,017	15,917	17,555	1,795
9.00	151	21,412		
East Tracts			\$13,885	1,996
2.00	680	\$29,196	17,555	1,795
3.00*	1,017	21,412	12,491	938
4.00*	269	25,764	14,962	2,904
5.00*	1,061	25,530	14,118	1,379
40.01	464	24,487	18,944	1,032
40.03	371	39,981		
East Central Tracts			\$12,491	938
4.00*	269	\$25,764	14,962	2,904
5.00*	1,061	25,530	26,358	2,730
6.00	1,140	27,589	14,102	1,576
7.00	638	21,726	9,497	448
8.00	142	22,515	13,400	2,260
10.00	803	22,064	13,523	2,690
11.00	922	26,818	13,586	1,830
12.00	446	34,038	12,981	2,721
13.00	938	24,387	18,519	4,538
18.00	1,700	36,833	16,415	4,082
19.00	1,535	32,679		
North Central Tracts			\$20,942	2,449
14.00	1,205	\$31,080	33,048	7,228
15.00	4,006	41,671	64,257	5,390
16.00	2,826	66,143	41,475	610
17.00	140	134,375	34,783	6,928
21.01	3,371	56,288	49,427	4,958
22.01	2,303	57,565	37,064	5,137
22.03	2,536	46,311	52,485	7,581
22.04*	3,254	85,714	30,491	9,030
22.05*	4,636	47,672	30,491	9,030

2004	Number of Households	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	2004 Projected Population
<b>West Tracts</b>				
22.04*	3,254	\$85,714	\$52,485	7,581
22.05*	4,636	47,672	30,491	9,030
42.03	46	48,500	23,384	113
42.05	732	66,646	41,191	1,882
42.06	9,917	96,111	59,284	23,777
<b>West Central Tracts</b>				
21.02	1,652	\$42,161	\$25,990	3,538
24.02	6	4,999	30,059	15
24.03	1,347	45,285	21,437	3,741
24.04	3,996	50,888	27,341	9,784
24.05	1,361	\$47,348	\$23,914	3,598
24.06	1,265	52,608	24,361	3,209
42.07	350	56,423	30,439	866
<b>Southwest Tracts</b>				
20.01	1,949	\$42,286	\$21,653	4,554
20.02	1,847	31,914	16,493	4,518
41.03	1,515	38,487	22,258	3,570
41.04	617	68,014	32,254	1,577
41.05	1,944	50,696	23,301	5,530
41.06	1,886	43,952	22,920	5,152
41.07	1,236	28,362	16,766	3,025
41.08	2,148	31,962	16,677	5,744
42.08	1,314	92,486	44,136	3,488

**Median Household Income: Average** of the total money received in the stated calendar year by all household members that are 15 years of age or older.

**Per Capita Income: Average** amount of income per person in a population, regardless of age.

\* These tracts overlapped into other planning areas.

