Socio-Economic Profile
of
Williamston, Michigan

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Contents

Introduction

Socio-economic profiles are an important part of understanding a community. Four main categories are examined when creating a socio-economic profile. These categories are demographic, housing, education, and economics. In this socio-economic profile, data from the cities Williamston, Haslett, Webberville, and the larger surrounding Ingham County are be used to create a living picture of these communities. Data was collected at the Census Tract level for the years 2000, 2010, and 2019. With this data trends were created to illustrate how the community is behaving over time.

Williamston is located on the northeast corner of Ingham County. The land is mostly wetlands with the Red Cedar River running through the center of the town. The Red Cedar River provided water and opportunity with its fast-moving current. Most early development of Williamston was due to the ease of access provided by the river. Williamston was named after the William brothers who created the first watermill in the town. In the late 1800s the first railroad was created which led to a boom in the town's population. This railroad connected Detroit to Lansing. This railroad also led to the expansion of the touch town of Webberville. The railroad provided jobs and in combination with the Red Cedar River Williamston became a very accessible town for travelers in the early 1900s. Williamston is now a growing community with a strong focus on agriculture and an expanding school system.

1. Demographic

This section will discuss the varying demographic data from Williamston, Haslett, Webberville and Ingham County. Data collected for the demographic profile was total population, population density, median age, sex, race and ethnic origin, average household size, and average family size.

Table 1 shows total population and population density for Williamston, Haslett, and Webberville for years 2000, 2010, and 2019. Of the three towns, Haslett is the largest, Webberville is the smallest and Williamston is in between the two. This would be expected based on their proximity to the Lansing urban core. Figure 1 charts growth rates from 2000-2019 of the towns and Ingham County. Many conclusions can be drawn from this growth rate data. The first thing one might notice in this chart is the explosion of growth in Haslett. With Haslett growing 73.4% since 2000. This is much higher than Williamston which only grew 15.1% and Ingham County only growing 4% in total. Webberville's population trended downward with a rate of -12%.

	2000			2010			2019		
	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville
Total Population	3,441	11,283	1,503	3,854	19,220	1,272	3,959	19,565	1,322
Population Density	1,351.2	1,354.8	1,207.0	1,582.5	1,250.5	694.2	1,613.6	1,271.1	726.4

Table 1: Total Population and Population Density (per Sq. Mile), source: U.S. Census Bureau
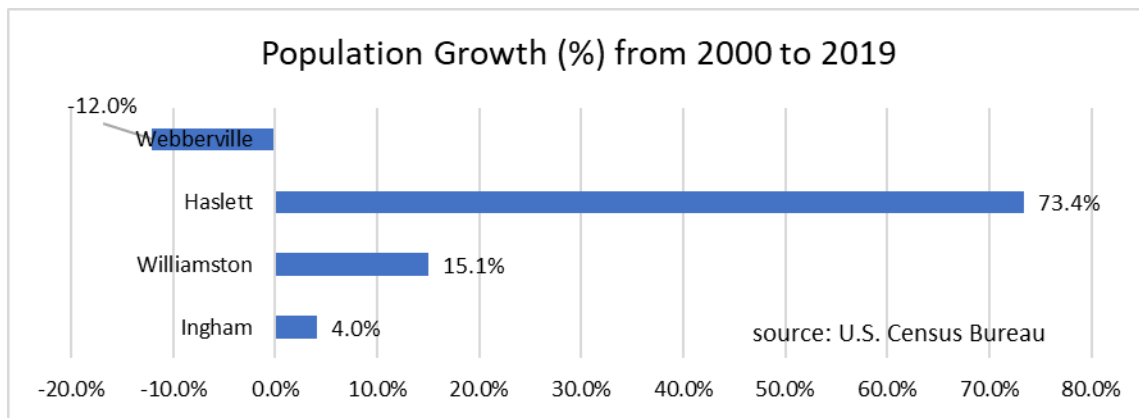

Figure 1: Population Growth Rate for Ingham County, Williamston, Haslett, and Webberville from 2000 to 2019

Race, age, and gender are also important data points to discuss in this section. Haslett has the oldest population with a mean age of 40, Williamston and Webberville are slightly lower at around age 37. All 4 places are trending towards an older median age along with most of the world. Gender skewed slightly towards the females for all 4 places with not a lot of change over time, about 52% female, 48% male. When it comes to race a conclusion can be

drawn that Ingham County is not a very diverse place. Ingham County has dropped from 80% to 74% White in the 2000-2019 period with the biggest increase in Asians and Others. Williamston is around 95% white, Haslett has made the largest gains in diversity going from 92% White to 80% White from 2000-2019 with the biggest gain in its Asian community. The Black community has remained steady. Average family and household sizes of Williamston are aligned with the county, about 2.4 average household size and about 3 average family size.

2. Housing

In this section data about housing will be discussed. Data collected for the housing profile was total housing units, median home value, median rent, occupied housing units, vacant housing units, vacancy rate, and year structure built.

In Table 2, data for total housing units, occupied housing units, and vacant housing units are shown. As expected, housing trends with the overall population, Williamston in between Haslett and Webberville, just like in almost every other variable collected for this study. Figure 2 charts the vacancy rate based on the values of Table 2. Haslett has the lowest vacancy rates. Williamston's vacancy rate has increased since 2000 perhaps due to the high amount of building going on as shown by the Year Structure Built data. In Figure 3 median home value is plotted against time. Williamston has the biggest increase in median home value increasing from around $150,000 to around $167,000 this is most likely due to a higher demand for the housing in this area. Webberville and Ingham have declining home values. As mentioned above Williamston saw a large amount of housing structures built from 1990 to 2009, in fact 50.3% of all housing in Williamston was built during this time. Haslett's boom was earlier in the 1970s and 80s. Webberville is more dispersed throughout all decades, as is Ingham County.

Rent prices have followed inflation closely in Williamston and Haslett. Webberville rent prices have taken a significant hit in 2019. This is most likely due to the decrease in overall population.

	2000			2010			2019		
	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville
Total Housing Units	1,528	5,355	612	1,789	9,557	573	1,867	9,407	559
Occupied Housing	1,470	5,132	561	1,605	8,918	508	1,685	8,910	506
Vacant Housing	58	223	51	184	639	65	182	497	53

Table 2: Total Housing Units, Occupied Housing, and Vacant Housing for Ingham County, Williamston, Haslett, and Webberville, source: U.S. Census data
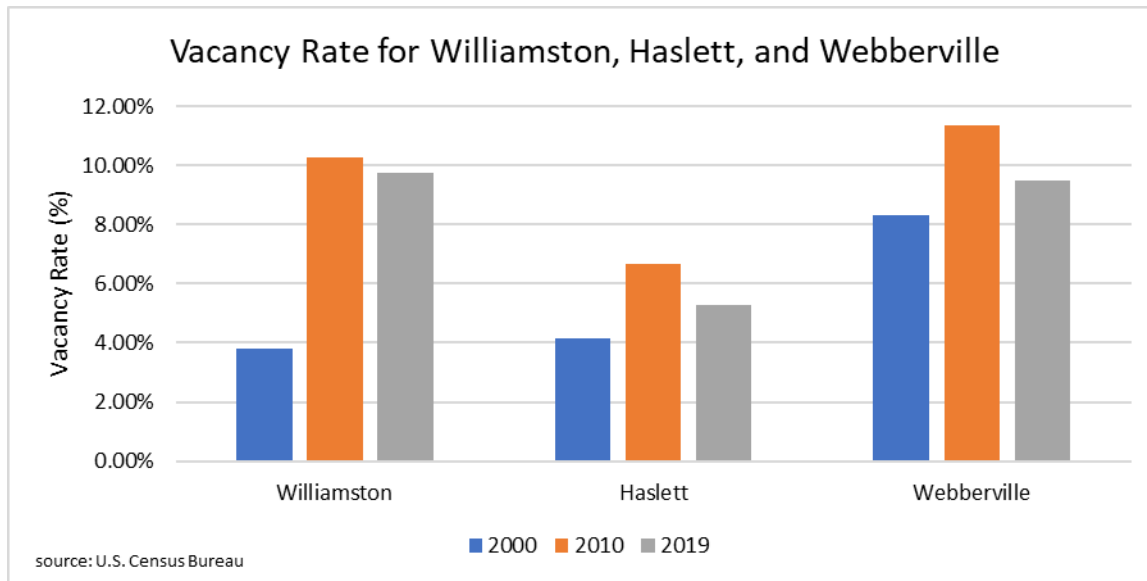

Figure 2: Vacancy Rate for Williamston, Haslett, and Webberville for 2000, 2010, and 2019
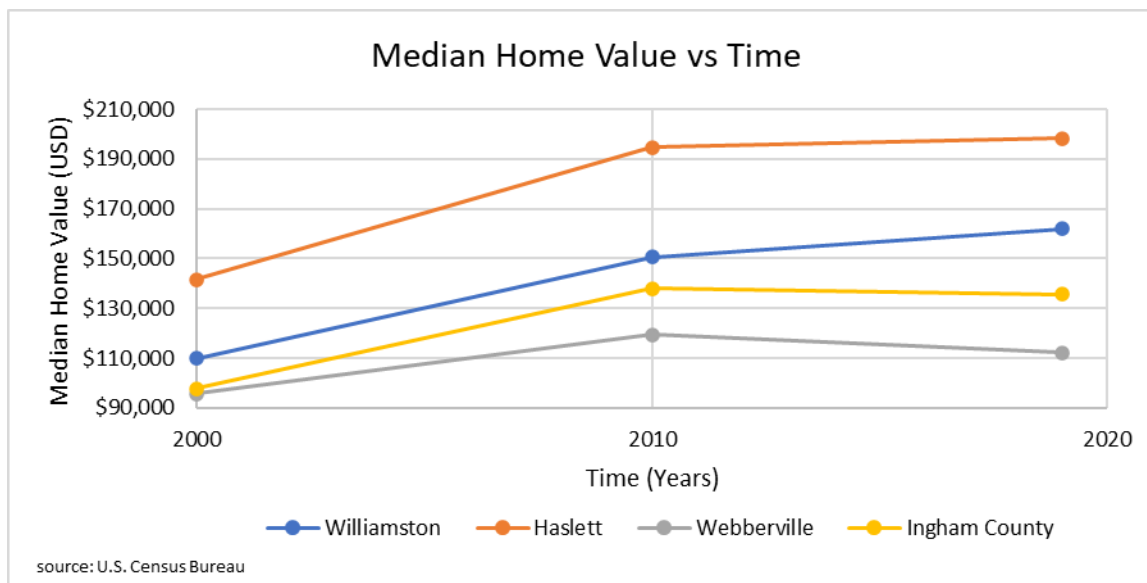

Figure 3: Median Home Value vs Time

3. Education

Data collected for the education profile was dropout rate, average teacher salary, student to teacher ratio, and educational attainment in the form of % of population over the age of 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher.

In Figure 4 we explore the different drop out rates of schools in Ingham County. Williamston leads with the lowest rate of 1.31%, Haslett is the second lowest with a rate of 2.55% and Webberville is slightly higher at 4.44%. The data also shows a drop out rate of 9.89% for all of Ingham County. It's obvious Williamston, Haslett and Webberville have a strong focus on education. This figure also pushes the narrative that Williamston has one of the best, if not the best, education system in Ingham County. It is also important to take note of Webberville's dropout rate. Webberville has a strong education system with a dropout rate of 4.4% it is still well below the county and state average. However, compared to Williamston and Haslett Webberville still has catching up to due or else it could fall behind further.

Another key metric is shown in Figure 5. Percent of Population 25 years or older holding a bachelor's degree or higher vs time. This data shows that between 2000-2020 Williamston has had a steady increase in bachelor's degrees passing Ingham County and jumping just over 20% in 20 years. Haslett boasts the highest of the 3 towns studied with nearly 60% of residents over 25 years old holding a bachelor's degree.

Other important variables are teacher salaries. Average teacher salaries for 2019 for Ingham, Haslett and Williamston are about $57,000. Webberville teacher salaries are significantly under this value at around $38,000. This could point to a weaker education system in Webberville or perhaps just indicative of a younger teaching staff.
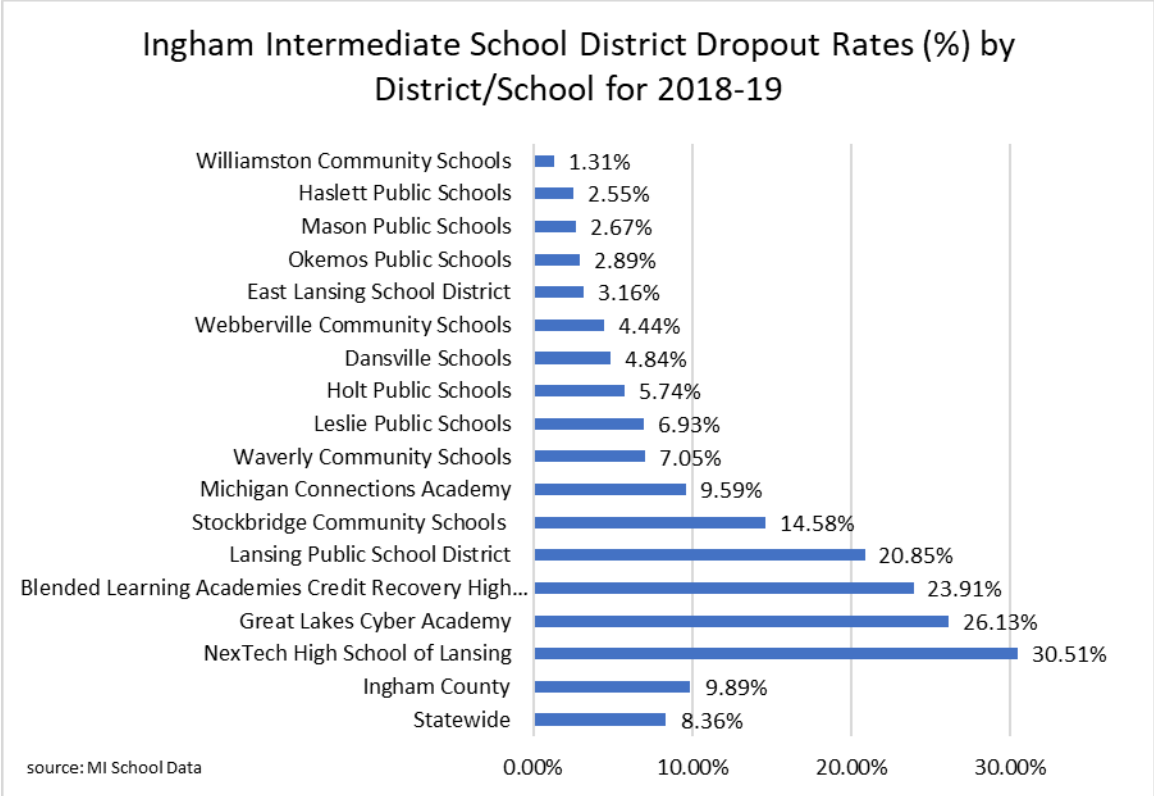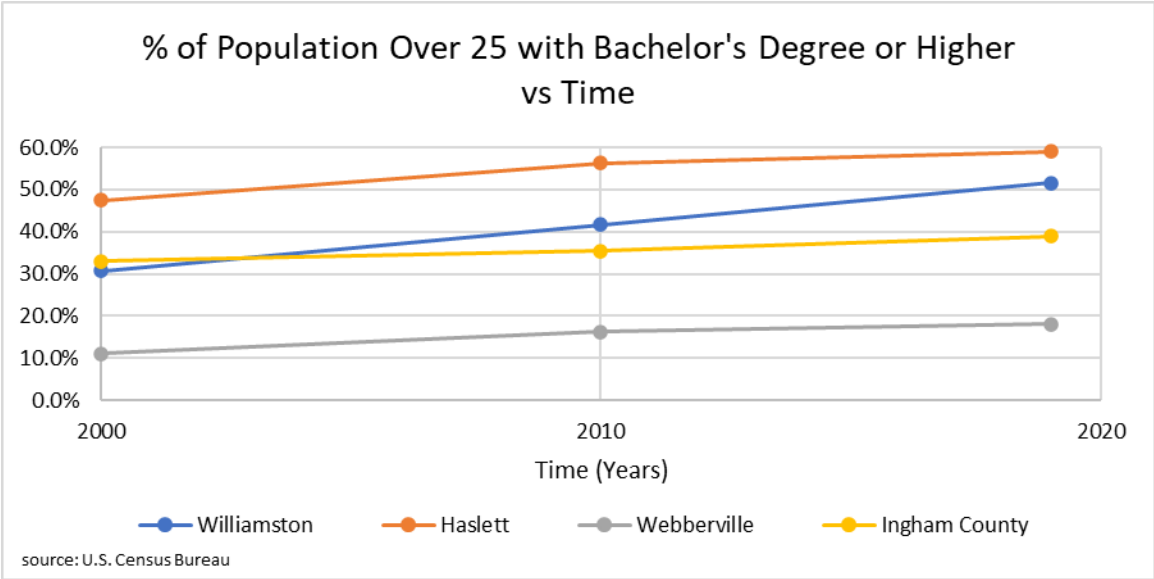
Figure 4: Dropout rates for Ingham ISD 2018-19

Figure 5: % of Population 25 years or older holding a bachelor's degree or higher vs time

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4. Economic

Data collected for the economic profile was civilian labor force population 16 years and older, % employed, % unemployed, average household income, average family income, per capita income, % of families below poverty level, % of children below poverty level, occupation, industry, average commute to work time, and mode of travel.

In Figure 6, Median Household Income, Median Family Income, and Per Capita Income for the study towns from 2000-2019 are plotted on a bar graph. According to usinflationcalculator.com, Ingham County incomes are falling short of inflation growth, Haslett and Webberville incomes are on par with inflation and Williamston's incomes are outpacing inflation. This along with the increase in educational attainment suggests the Williamston is seeing an increase in wealthier residents. Table 3 looks at the employment of the three towns. Williamston leads with the lowest unemployment numbers of 2.8% for 2019, Haslett in second with 3.3% and in last Webberville with 6.8%. Figure 7 shows the distribution of employment by Industry. The biggest employment sector was by far Education and Health Care, 25%-33% of the workforce, for all places except Webberville where Manufacturing was the largest. This is most likely due to the proximity of the towns to Michigan State University, a very large public university and home to 2 medical schools.

Occupation was divided into 5 categories: 1) Management, business, science, and arts, 2) Service, 3) Sales and office, 4) Natural resources, construction, and maintenance, and 5) Production, transportation, and material moving. Williamston, Haslett, and Ingham County have most people working in Management, business, science, and arts which correlates to the high rates of employment in Education and Healthcare. Webberville is more evenly distributed across all 5 categories. People in Williamston heavily rely on automobile transportation due to its location far from an urban center. Mean travel time to work in Williamston is on an increasing trend going from 24 minutes in 2000 to 31 minutes in 2019. Haslett, Webberville, and Ingham County have remained steady however averaging around 20 minutes.

Webberville's average commute time dropped in 2019, possibly due to decreased population and increased unemployment. For 2019 about 86% of workers from all 3 towns mostly drive alone by automobile, truck, or van to work. About 11.5% carpool and the remaining 2.5% either take public transport or some other means of transportation such as walking, biking.
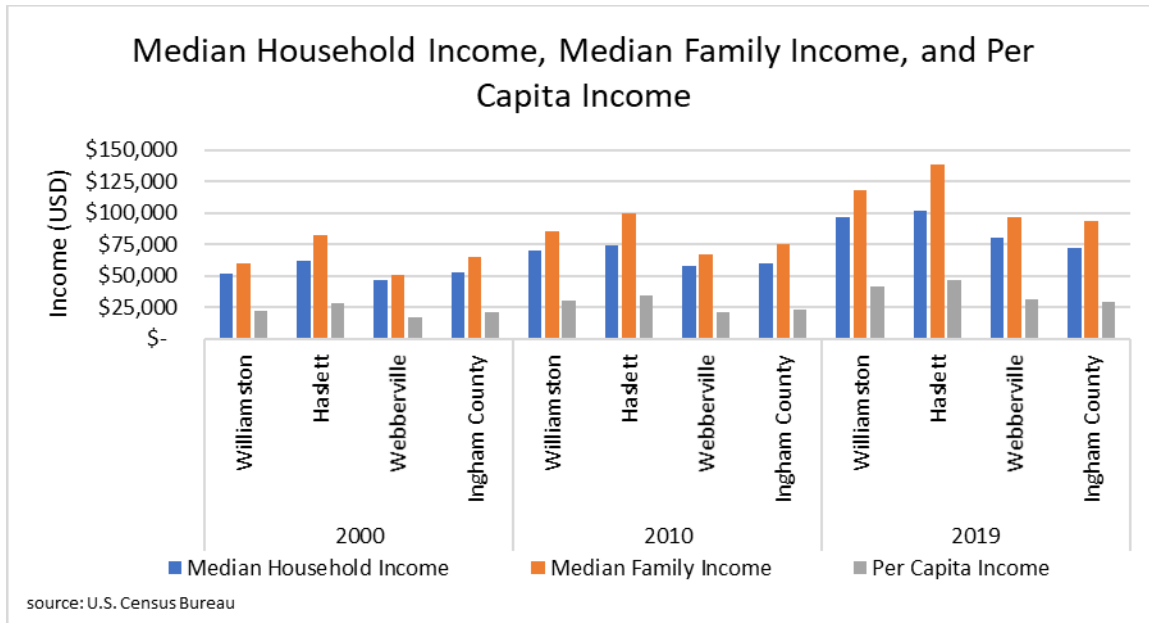

Figure 6: Median Household Income, Median Family Income, and Per Capita Income for the study towns over time

	2000			2010			2019		
	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville	Williamston	Haslett	Webberville
Civilian Labor Force	1,734	6,378	817	2,154	11,272	727	2,160	10,584	703
% Employed	96.9%	97.4%	96.0%	97.4%	94.3%	94.8%	97.1%	96.7%	93.2%
% Unemployed	3.1%	2.6%	4.0%	2.6%	5.4%	5.2%	2.8%	3.3%	6.8%

Table 3: Civilian labor force, % employed (employed/civilian labor force), and % unemployed (unemployed/civilian labor force), source: U.S. Census Bureau
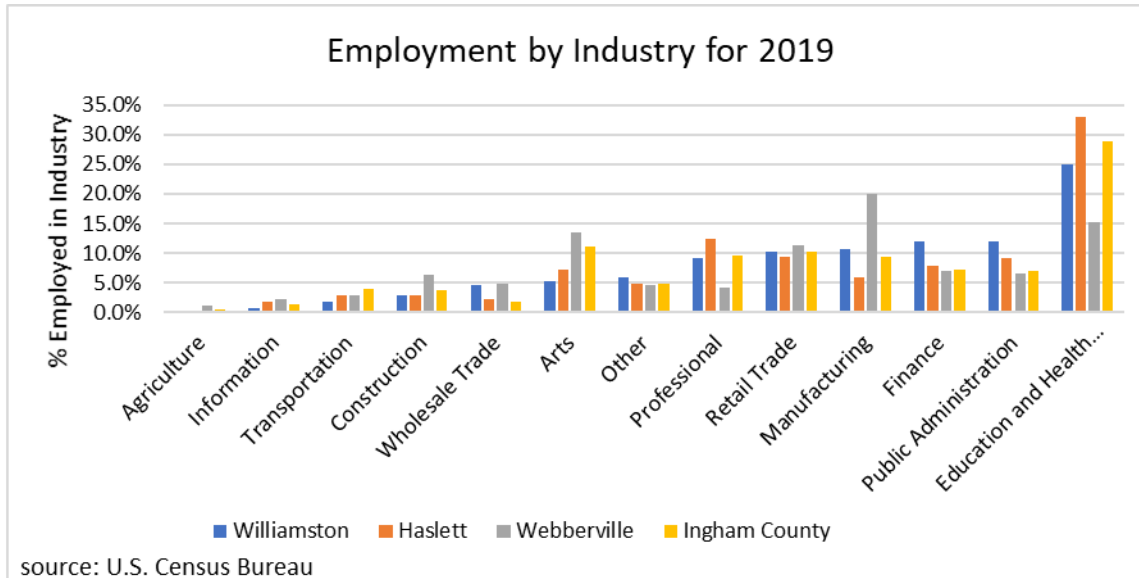
Figure 7: Employment by Industry for 2019

Conclusion

Demographic: The population of Williamston is on the rise climbing over 12% in the last three decades. Haslett has seen the biggest population boom in the last 30 years of any city in Ingham County. This sudden growth could be related to Urban sprawl or suburban sprawl originating from the Lansing to East Lansing area. Haslett is seen as a very desirable place to live with a combination of strong education, thriving athletics programs and many other attractions not seen in the Lansing area. Taking all this into account it makes sense why many families would take the opportunity to move farther out of the city to a place like Haslett.

Housing: Williamston housing has expanded greatly since 2000 with many more structures being built compared to the reference cities. With an increase in new housing an increase of vacant housing has also occurred. Housing prices rose about $16,000 over the last 30 years due to the increasing population and the higher demand for housing. Rent prices went up with inflation. Rent prices went down in Webberville significantly, it is safe to say this is due to the population decrease in the area. With new housing being built every year Williamston seems to be excelling in this category.

Education: Williamston has an exceptional education program. With the lowest dropout rates and high salaries for teachers it makes sense. Haslett is a close second to Williamston and could

pass Williamston in lowest dropout rate. Williamston has also seen a rise in higher level education over the last three decades. With an increase in bachelor's degrees of 20% since 2000 people in Williamston are getting educated at a college level more than ever.

Economic: Williamston is improving economically compared to the reference cities. Williamston has outpaced inflation over the last three decades. This could be due to residents getting higher level jobs or an overall increase of wealthier individuals moving to the area. Unemployment decreased slightly in Williamston while in the reference cities unemployment has risen. Many residents of Williamston work in education or health due to its proximity to MSU and the two hospitals in the area. Overall Williamston has thrived in the last 30 years. Now with a pandemic hitting Michigan it will be interesting to see which direction Williamston will go.

References

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https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/

Appendix

Links to the raw census data used in this SEP report

2000
Demographic https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C2000/R12743453
Housing https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C2000/R12743740
Education https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C2000/R12748848
Economic https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C2000/R12751239

2010
Demographic https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C2010/R12743490
Housing https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C2010/R12743765 and
https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2010_5yr/R12743771
Education https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2010_5yr/R12748854
Economic https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2010_5yr/R12751271
and
https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=commute&t=Commuting&g=0500000US26065_16000
00US2637100,2685080,2687420&y=2010&tid=ACSST5Y2010.S0801&hidePreview=false

2019
Demographic https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12743555
and
https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=households%20and%20families&g=0500000US26065_
1600000US2637100,2685080,2687420&y=2019&tid=ACSST5Y2019.S1101&hidePreview=false
Housing https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12748534
Education https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12748859 and
https://mdoe.state.mi.us/SAMSPublic/others/b1014_19Final.pdf and
https://www.mischooldata.org/graddropout-rate/
Economic https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/ACS2019_5yr/R12751266