



Millennials *Still* Prefer the Kansas City Suburbs

Published on *Show-Me Institute* (<https://showmeinstitute.org>)



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For years, census data demonstrated that people are eschewing urban settings for the suburbs. Then, for a while, some urbanist pied pipers told us that if we [only subsidized amenities popular with the so-called creative class, the millennials would return](#) to the cities. In a twist, we paid the pipers handsomely and the children marched out of town anyway.

[We've argued this basic fact for years](#), and some of the better-known pipers have even [changed their tune](#) (but not without [charging the townspeople](#) nonetheless). According to [a recent study published by SmartAsset](#) based on Pew Research data, Kansas City, Missouri, is not in the top 25 destinations for millennials. Overland Park, Kansas, ranked 14th.

More noteworthy, SmartAsset previously [released a study](#) indicating that two Kansas City suburbs ranked in the top 25 places *in the United States* where millennials are buying homes. Olathe, KS ranked first (!) and Overland Park 11th in the entire country. Kansas City, Missouri—despite our entertainment district, Sprint Center, streetcar, and subsidized corporate headquarters and high-rise luxury apartment buildings—did not appear anywhere in the top 25.

None of this should be surprising. We know that [millennials are looking for exactly what previous generations](#) wanted: homes in the suburbs, cars, and good schools. Yet Kansas City leaders

persist in [telling us we're a millennial magnet](#) . We aren't.

There is no shortcut to growing a city; no magical policy that can reverse national demographic trends. A better investment, as Show-Me Institute analysts have argued for years, is for government's action to be broad and neutral: keep taxes low for everyone, maintain infrastructure, deliver necessary city services, and ensure quality education. Maybe those aren't as appealing as shiny new construction projects, but they are more successful.

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