The 1990s witnessed a significant decline in crime rates; for both serious and non-serious, violent and non-violent crime, the decline was the same. The trend was not limited to Megalopolis, but was also a national change. A number of reasons have been put forward; including the sustained economic growth of the 1990s that reduced unemployment lines and welfare rolls. More people were picked up by a general rising tide of affluence and increased economic opportunity. Better policing, the decline of the crack epidemic, less unwanted children from the 1970s in the wake of legalized abortion and a host of other reasons have all been suggested.

The decline is evident across Megalopolis with the largest declines recorded in the main urban centers. The New York City area saw a significant and marked reduction the crime rate. And here we come to a paradox. While crime rates went down, the fear of crime increased. The reality and perception diverged as crime continues to play a role in political rhetoric while it is becoming less significant on the streets.

The few areas of increase in crime rates were in the more peripheral less populated parts of the region where small absolute numbers translated into significant percentage increases, such as King George County, VA (109%) and Caroline County, MD (55%). Across the region, however the crime rates showed a marked and welcomed decline from 1990 to 2000.