



METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM
THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

**Committing to Prosperity:
Moving Forward on the Agenda to Renew Pennsylvania**

**Metro Profile: Harrisburg
March 2007**

This profile provides key economic and demographic trend information about the Harrisburg metropolitan area relating to "Committing to Prosperity," an update of the 2003 Brookings Institution report, "Back to Prosperity." To read the entire report, other regional summaries, and a rural policy brief, see www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/committingtoprosperity.htm. For any questions or comments, please contact Rebecca Sohmer at the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program (rsohmer@brookings.edu / 202-797-6085).

The Trend: The Harrisburg metropolitan area continues to grow faster than the state as a whole

Harrisburg experienced a gain in population between 2000 and 2005

In 2005, metropolitan Harrisburg (consisting of Cumberland, Dauphin, Lebanon, and Perry counties) had a population of 647,000. Between 2000 and 2005, metropolitan Harrisburg grew by 2.9 percent—an increase of about 18,000 people. This is a larger percentage increase than the state’s 1.2 percent growth during the same time period. The post-2000 growth represents a continuation of metro Harrisburg’s growth trends in the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, metropolitan Harrisburg grew 0.68 percent a year. Between 2000 and 2005, metropolitan Harrisburg grew 0.57 percent annually.

Harrisburg’s population is becoming more diverse due to minority gains

Metropolitan Harrisburg, like the rest of the state, saw its population become more diverse. While metro Harrisburg’s overall population grew by 2.9 percent, it experienced a 13.7 percent increase (11,500) in its minority population. The Latino population in particular had big increases in metro Harrisburg growing 25.5 percent between 2000 and 2005.

Metro Area	Annualized population growth rate, 2000–2005
York	1.38%
Reading	1.33%
Allentown	1.29%
Lancaster	0.83%
State College	0.70%
Harrisburg	0.57%
Philadelphia	0.21%
Erie	-0.03%
Sharon	-0.12%
Williamsport	-0.28%
Scran./W.B./Haz.	-0.30%
Altoona	-0.37%
Pittsburgh	-0.37%
Johnstown	-0.49%
Pennsylvania	0.24%
United States	1.05%

Harrisburg’s migration patterns show an up-tick of people moving into the region after 2000

According to IRS county-to-county migration data, the post-2000 years saw more people moving in to Harrisburg than moving out of it. Before 2000, metro Harrisburg some years had a

small net out-migration, while other years saw a small net in-migration. But since 2000, the metro area has had four successive years of a net in-migration of about 1,700 people per year. The total net in-migration for the entire 1994 to 2005 time frame was 3,400.

The Trend: Harrisburg is still spreading out—and hollowing out

Harrisburg's older communities are still hollowing out

Between 1990 and 2000, metro Harrisburg's cities and boroughs lost population. The trend continued between 2000 and 2005. Metro Harrisburg's cities (Harrisburg and Lebanon) lost 2.7 percent, and its boroughs lost 1.6 percent. Moreover, the rate of loss is increasing: between 1990 and 2000, the cities lost 0.50 percent per year and boroughs lost 0.06 percent per year. But between 2000 and 2005, the cities lost 0.54 percent per year and the boroughs lost 0.33 percent per year.

Meanwhile, the first and second-class townships in metro Harrisburg continued to grow. The region's first-class townships grew by 0.15 percent per year in the 1990s and 0.96 percent per year between 2000 and 2005. Second-class townships were the biggest gainers, although they did see a slow down in rate of growth. In the 1990s, metro Harrisburg's second-class townships grew 1.52 percent per year, which slowed to 1.01 per year between 2000 and 2005.

The vast majority of housing permits are still issued in second-class townships

Housing data shows that residential building activity continues to occur mainly in second-class townships. Between 1995 and 1999, 5,567 permits were issued in the metro's cities, boroughs, and first-class townships and 7,728 were issued in second-class townships. This pattern stayed basically the same in the post-2000 period. Between 2000 and 2004, 4,498 permits were issued in cities, boroughs, and first-class townships while 8,075 were issued in second-class townships.

A large share of the Harrisburg region's rural land has been developed

The Harrisburg region's growth in the 1990s corresponded with a decrease in rural land—a loss of 55,000 acres. Between 1980 and 2000, rural land in metropolitan Harrisburg saw a 31 percent decrease (142,000 acres). In 1980, 44 percent of metro Harrisburg's developable land was rural. By 2000, only 30 percent of metro Harrisburg's land was rural.

The Trend: Harrisburg's job growth outpaces the state's

Harrisburg surpassed the state's employment growth in the 1990s, and has continued to do so

Harrisburg actually had a higher annual job growth rate than the state in the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of Pennsylvania jobs grew 0.96 percent per year, while Harrisburg added 1.48 percent annually. And between 2000 and 2006, Pennsylvania added 0.18 percent per year while Harrisburg gained 0.67 percent per year. Of the 15,000 jobs created in metropolitan Harrisburg since 2000, 13,300 were added between 2003 and 2006.

Harrisburg continues to lose manufacturing jobs, but has seen gains in almost every other sector

Like the rest of the state, metropolitan Harrisburg continues to lose manufacturing jobs, though the area's 16 percent loss of manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2006 was lower than the state's 22 percent loss. The Harrisburg metropolitan area experienced gains in many sectors, including educational and health services and government.