

The Brookings Institution

Metropolitan Policy Program
Robert Puentes, Fellow



Stuck in a Policy Blindspot: America's First Suburbs in Transition

American Planning Association Annual Meeting
San Antonio, Texas
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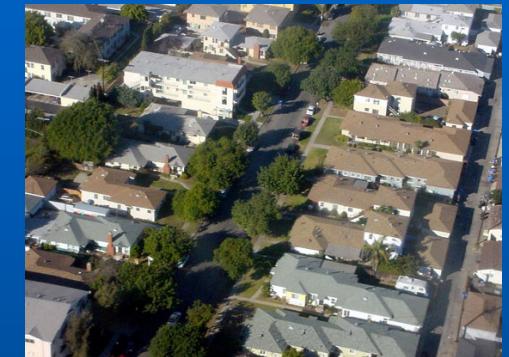
First suburbs can be thought of as older communities in the inner-ring outside central cities



Middlesex County, MA



Nassau County, NY



Los Angeles County, CA

Situated in close proximity to center cities

Developed mainly before the era of rapid suburbanization

Also known as close-in suburbs, older suburbs, first-tier communities, trolley car suburbs, industrial boroughs, mature suburbs, and working class suburbs

Context



Baltimore County, MD

Methods

Findings

Implications



Hillsborough County, FL

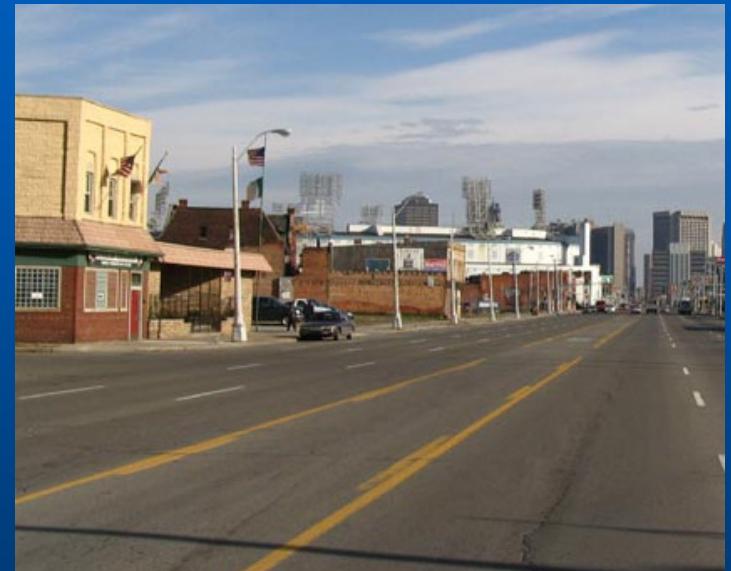
- Decentralization is still the prevailing trend in metropolitan America
- The old demarcation lines between suburbs and cities are long gone
- But suburbs are highly diverse
- That range of suburban experiences is often obscured in the broad discussion of metropolitan growth

First suburbs are caught in a policy blindspot

Attention is frequently focused on center cities, for long-established reasons, and on newer suburbs for current concerns about fast growth

First suburbs are sometimes too small or not distressed enough to qualify for assistance

Little in federal or state policy is focused on the maintenance and rehabilitation needs of first suburbs



Wayne County, MI

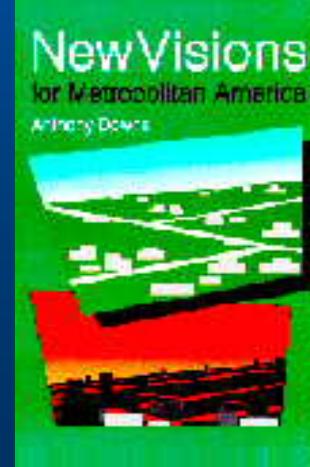
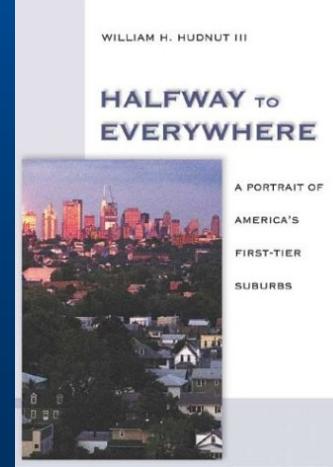
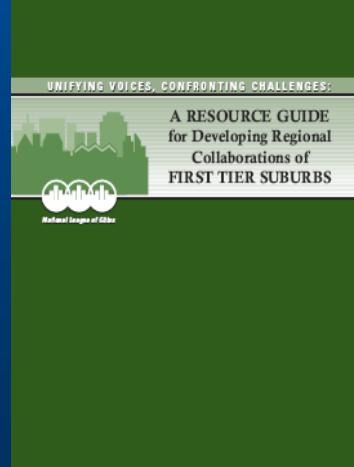
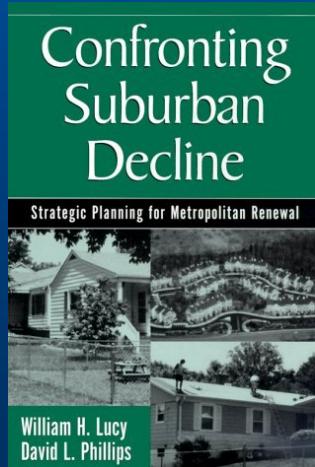
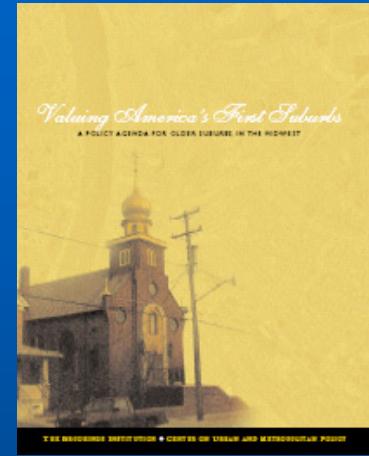
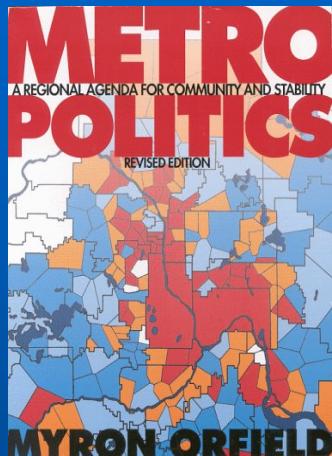
Context

Methods

Findings

Implications

And despite some important research, there remains a lack of consciousness about these places



Fortunately, several important initiatives provide the foundation for a serious discussion about first suburbs



- ✓ **Nationally:** Important pending legislation; National League of Cities' First-Tier Suburbs Council
- ✓ **States:** Growth management laws; fix-it-first policies
- ✓ **Metros:** Regionalism efforts; countywide visions
- ✓ **Local:** Formal and informal coalitions



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How were first suburbs selected for our study?

- Used county-level geography
- They existed in 1950 as counties that were part of 1950 ‘standard metropolitan areas’ (SMAs)
- County had to be contiguous with a center city that was ranked in the top 100 in 1950
- Data for the central city is not included if such existed within the county

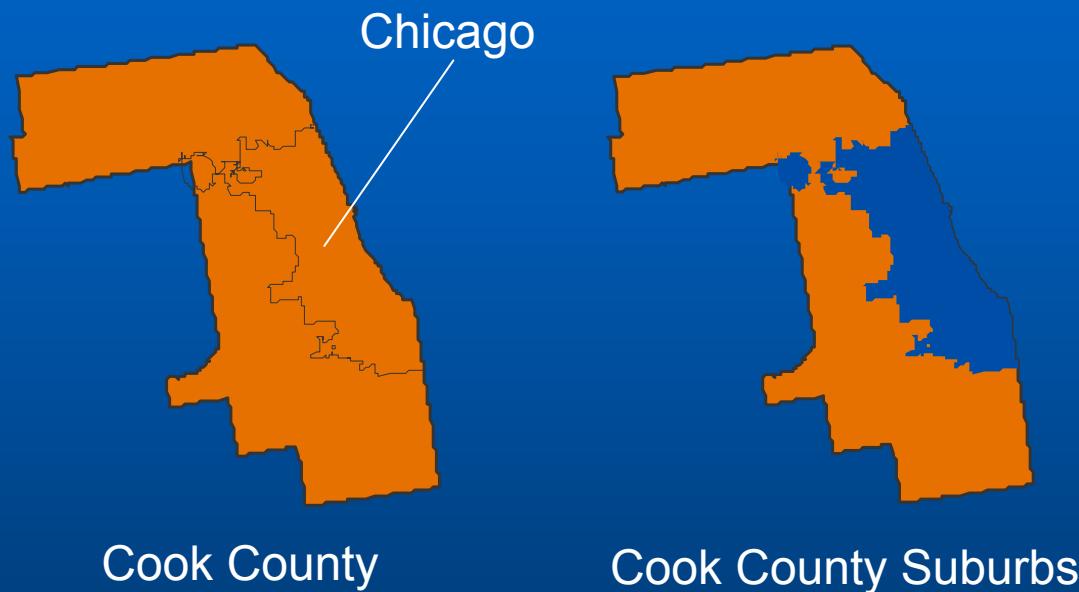


Fulton County, GA



Lake County, IN

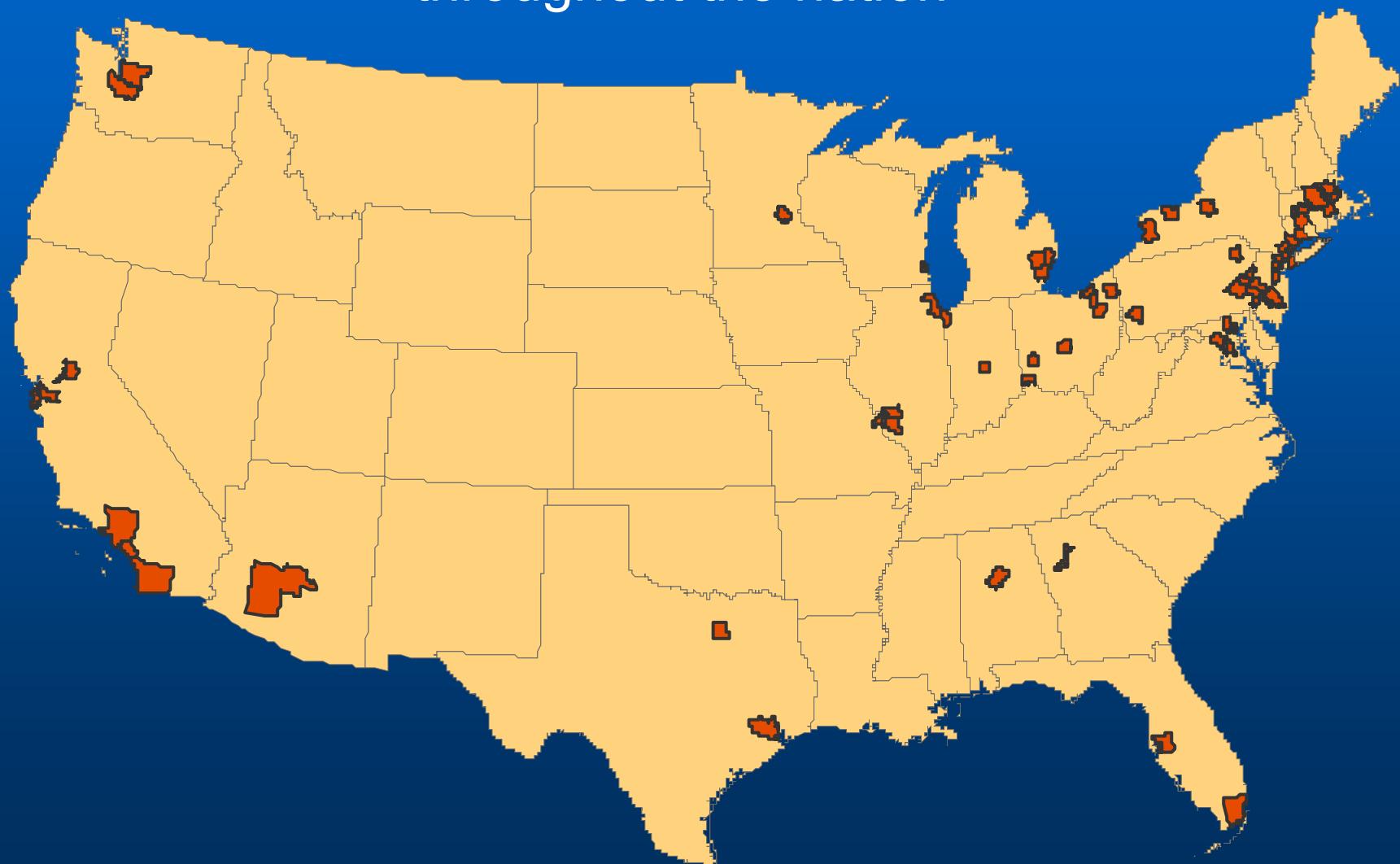
For example, in Cook County the first suburbs are defined as those outside (or excluding) Chicago



Example:

	2000 Population
Cook County	5,376,741
Chicago	2,896,016
Cook County First Suburbs	2,480,725

There are 64 first suburban counties found throughout the nation



Nine first suburban counties are located in the West and Southwest



Maricopa County, AZ

San Diego County, CA

Orange County, CA

Los Angeles County, CA

Alameda County, CA

Sacramento County, CA

San Mateo County, CA

King County, WA

Pierce County, WA

Six are found in the South and Southeast

Dallas County, TX

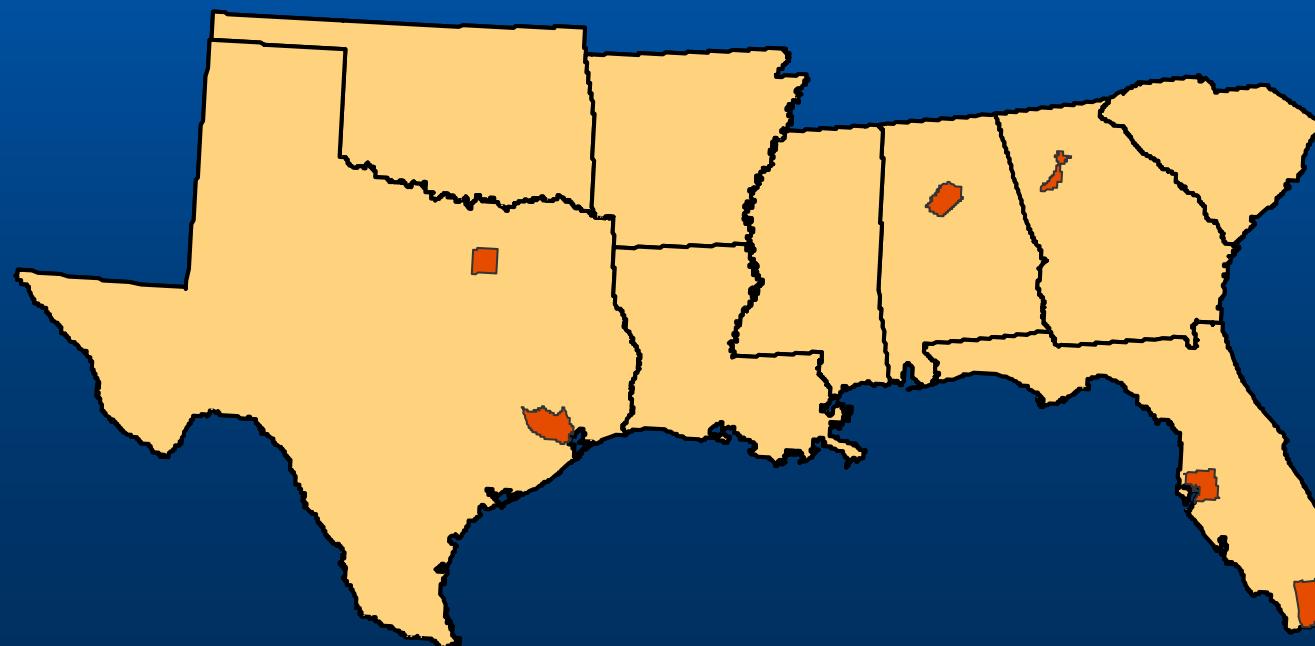
Fulton County, GA

Harris County, TX

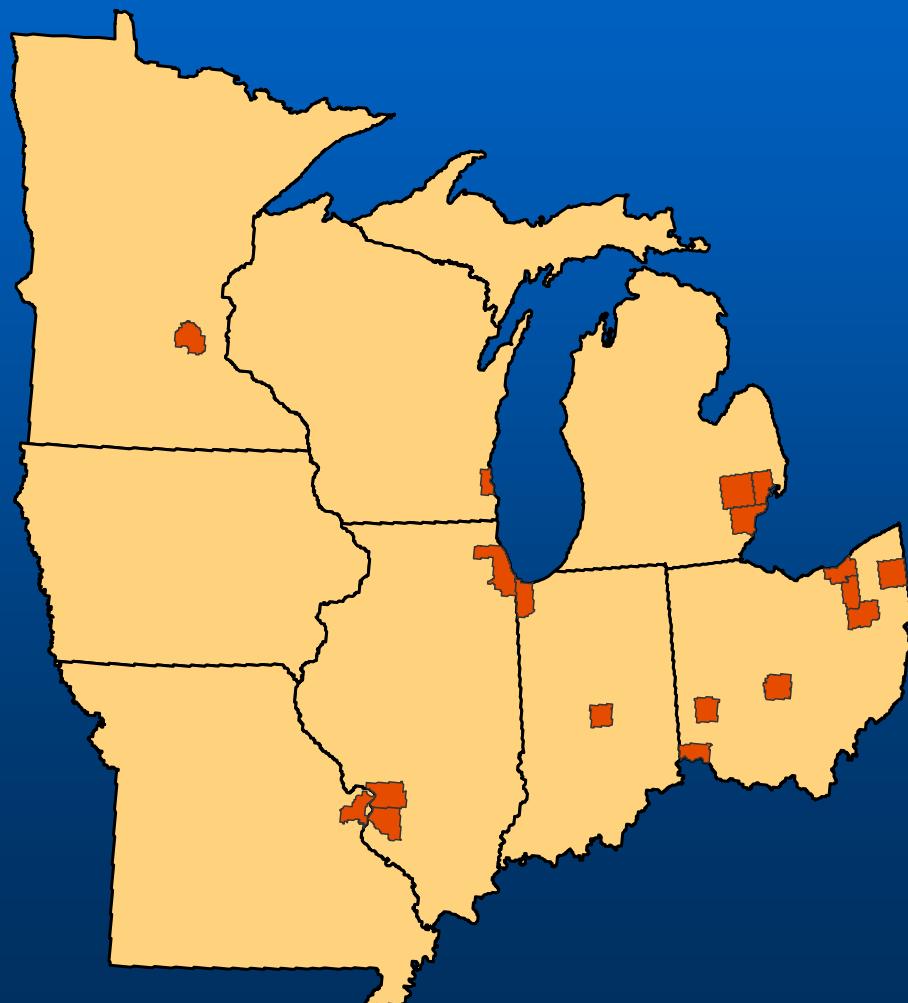
Hillsborough County, FL

Jefferson County, AL

Dade County, FL



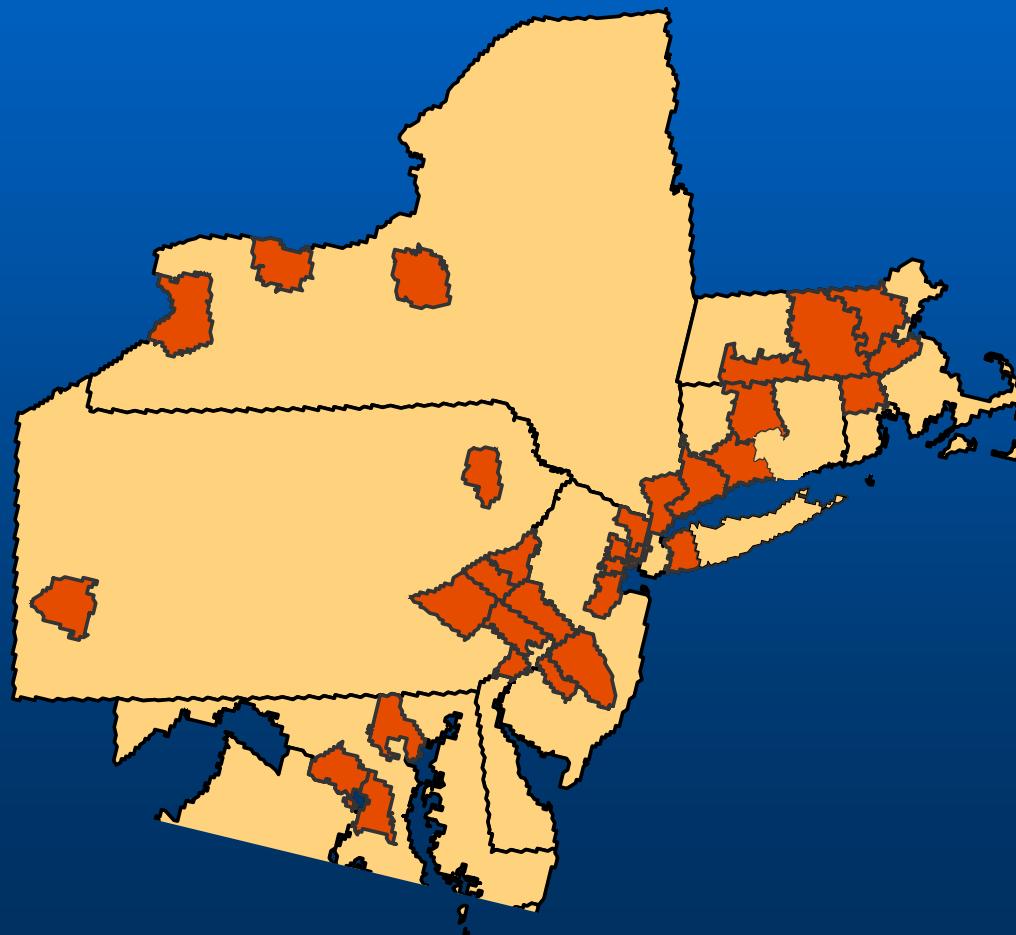
Most are found in the Midwest



Examples:

- Cuyahoga County, OH
- Franklin County, OH
- Wayne County, MI
- Oakland County, MI
- Lake County, IN
- Milwaukee County, WI
- Hennepin County, MN
- Cook County, IL
- St. Louis County, MO

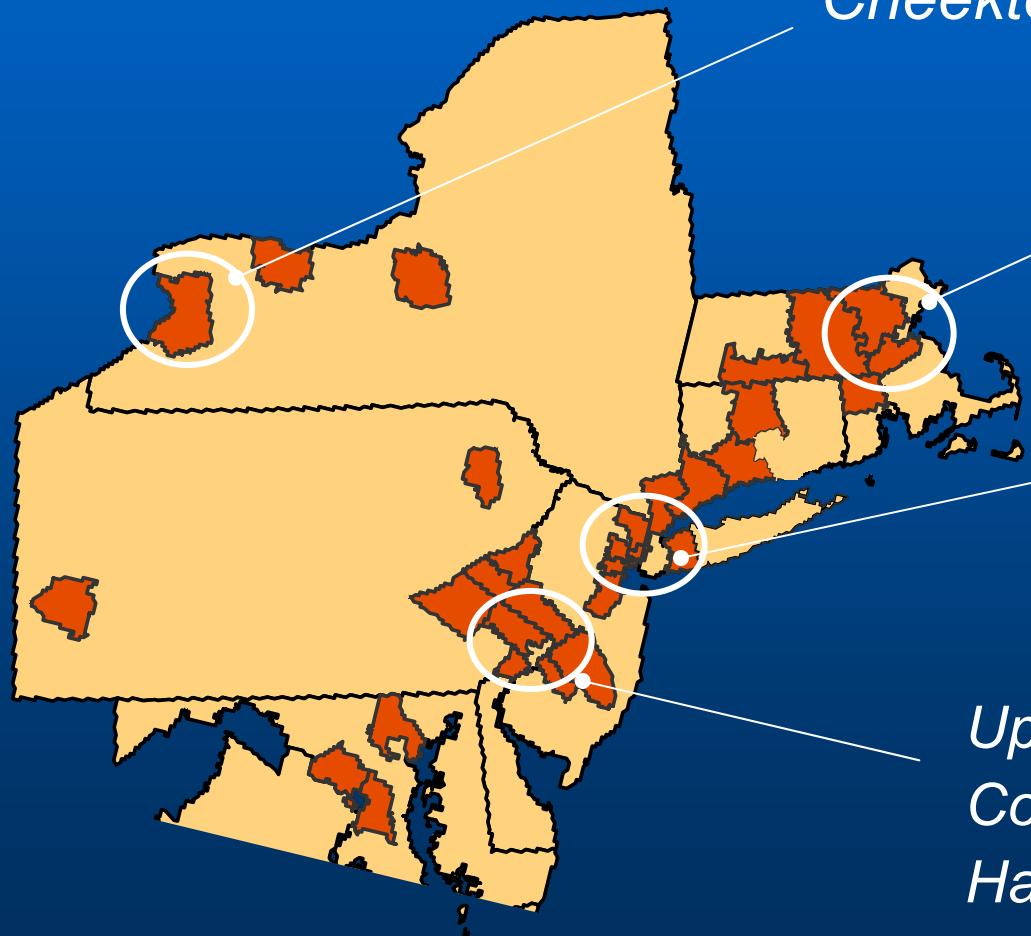
.... and the Northeast



Examples:

Allegheny County, PA
Lackawanna County, PA
Baltimore County, MD
Arlington County, VA
Middlesex County, MA
Providence County, RI
Onondaga County, NY
Bergen County, NJ
Nassau County, NY
Westchester County, NY
Fairfield County, CT

Though we use county level data, we recognize the importance of the local municipalities in these places



Cheektowaga, NY

Medford, MA
Quincy, MA

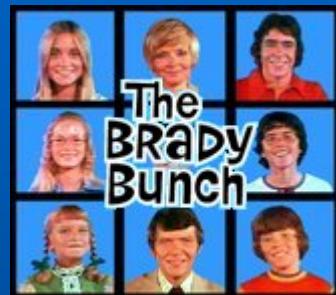
Teaneck, NJ
Secaucus, NJ
Hempstead, NY

Upper Darby, PA
Conshohocken, PA
Haddonfield, NJ

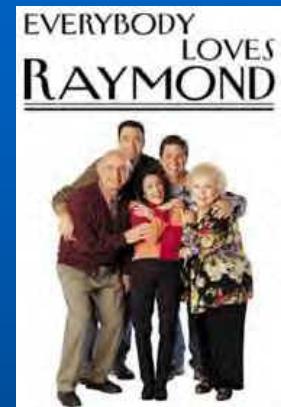
Having a TV show is not a prerequisite for qualifying as a first suburb



Westchester County, NY



Los Angeles County, CA



Nassau County, NY



Cook County, IL



Orange County, CA

Our analysis examines the demographic, market, and economic trends for these 64 places

INDICATORS:

- ✓ Population
- ✓ Race and ethnicity
- ✓ Immigration
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Household type and size
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Educational attainment
- ✓ Income and poverty
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Commuting
- ✓ Governance

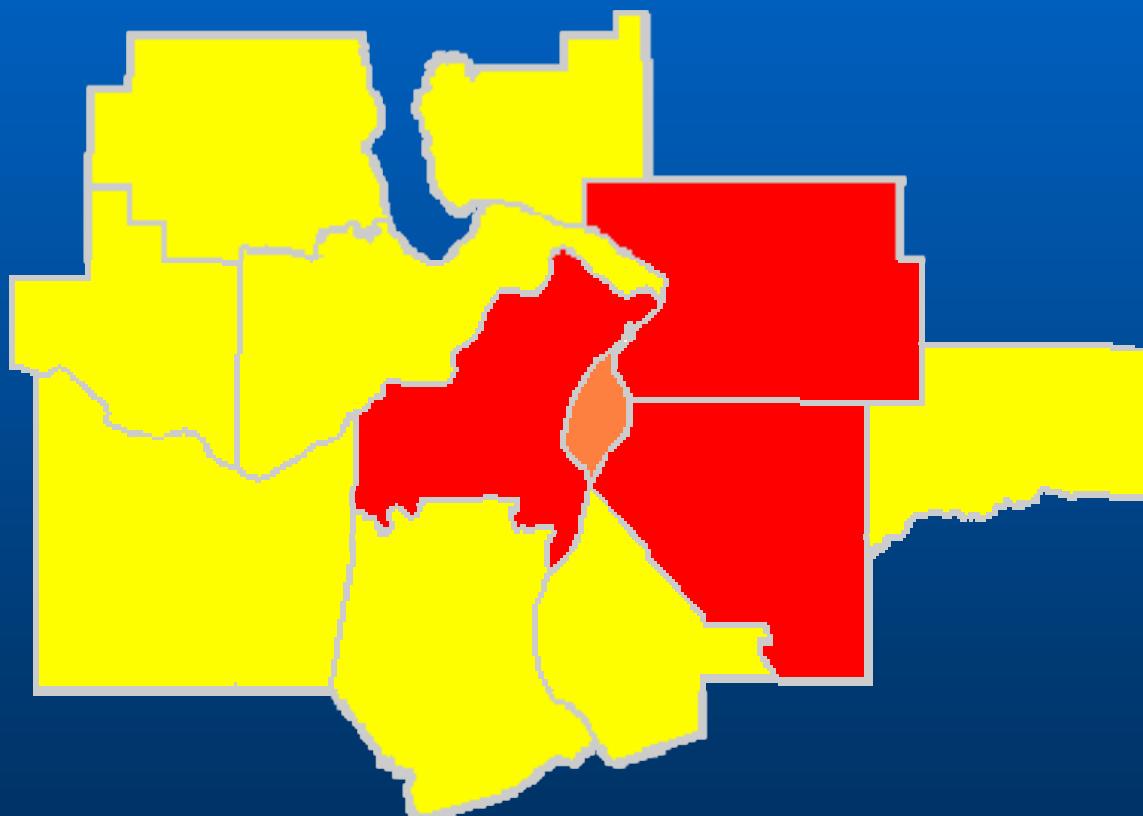


Dallas County, TX



Prince George's County, MD

The geographic units of analysis discussed here are:



St. Louis Metropolitan Area

First Suburbs:
St. Louis County
Madison County
St. Clair County

Primary City:
St. Louis city

Newer Suburbs:
Metro remainder



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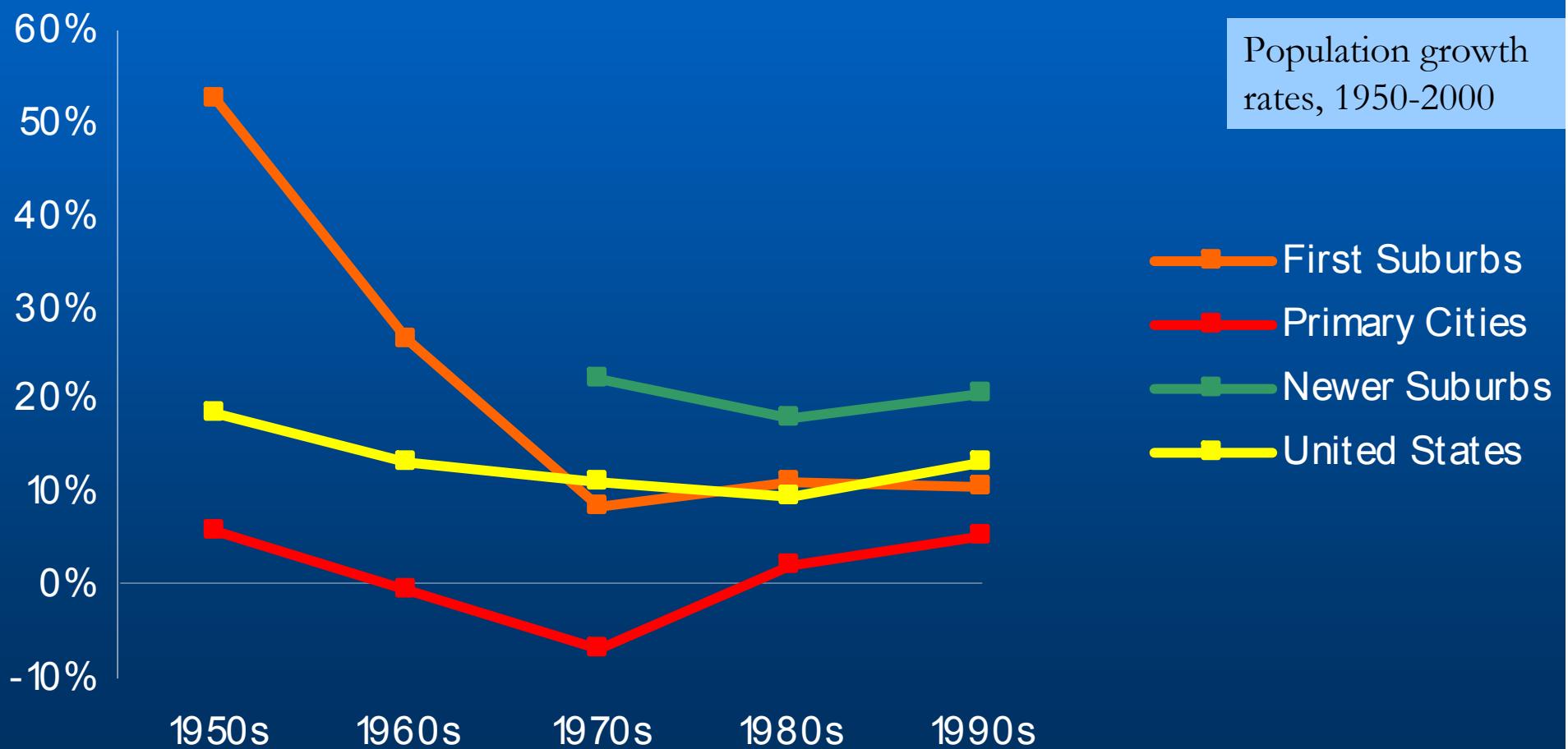
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First suburbs have evolved from being fast growing to moderately growing places by the end of the century



By 2000, about one-fifth of the nation's population – 19 percent – lived in first suburbs

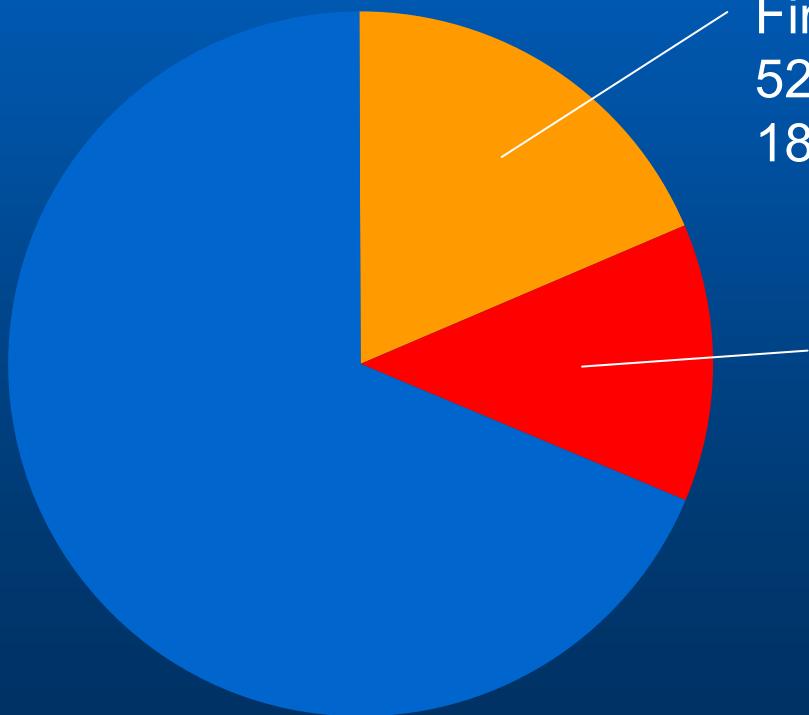
Over 50 million people live in first suburbs



First Suburbs
52,391,492 people
18.6% of United States

And over 31 percent of the nation lived either in a first suburb or primary city

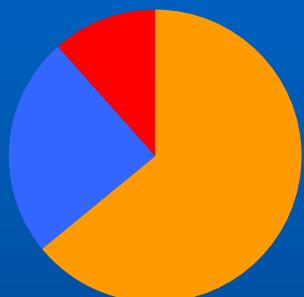
Almost 90 million people live either in first suburbs or the primary cities of first suburbs



First Suburbs
52,391,492 people
18.6% of United States

Primary Cities of First
Suburbs
36,300,693 people
12.9% of United States

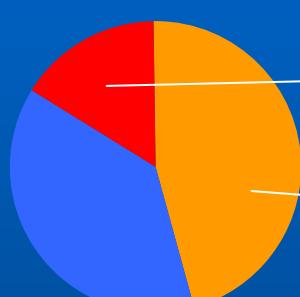
Within states, significant majorities of first suburbs and primary cities could form



Connecticut



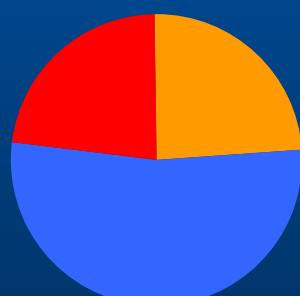
Maryland



Massachusetts



California



Illinois



New York

Primary Cities

First Suburbs

Percent of select state's population living in a first suburb or primary city, 2000

Like national trends, population growth in first suburbs is strongest in the West and South

Rank	First Suburb	Percent growth 1950 - 2000
1	Orange County, CA	1216.0%
2	Maricopa County, AZ	678.0%
3	Dade County, FL	669.0%
4	San Diego County, CA	615.0%
5	Harris County, TX	587.0%
60	St. Clair County, IL	24.3%
61	Allegheny County, PA	13.0%
62	Essex County, NJ	11.3%
63	Hudson County, NJ	5.9%
64	Lackawanna County, PA	3.8%
All First Suburbs		161.3%
All Primary Cities		5.3%
All Newer Suburbs		75.1%
United States		86.0%

Population growth,
1950-2000

And since 1980, several northeast and Midwestern first suburbs saw population decreases

Slow-Growth Rank	First Suburb	Percent Growth, 1980-2000
1	Allegheny County, PA	-7.7%
2	Trumbull County, OH	-6.9%
3	St. Clair County, IL	-4.3%
4	Wayne County, MI	-2.2%
5	Lackawanna County, PA	-2.1%
6	Cuyahoga County, OH	-1.0%
7	Delaware County, PA	-0.7%
8	Essex County, NJ	-0.3%
9	Erie County, NY	0.0%
10	Nassau County, NY	1.0%

Population growth,
1980-2000

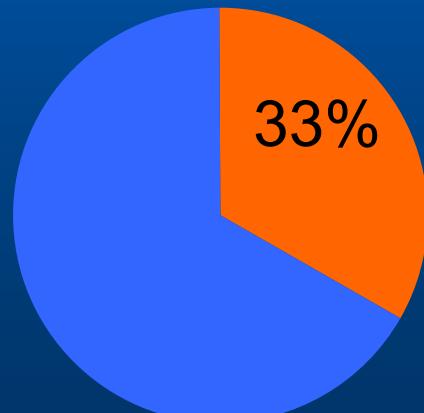
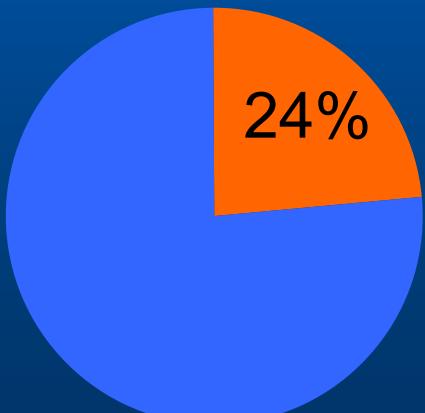
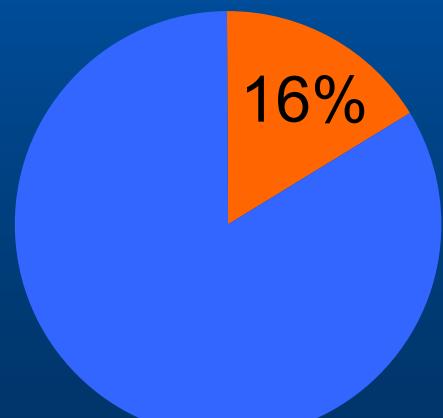
Only 1 of the 10 slowest growing first suburbs has experienced **positive** population growth since 1980



First suburbs went from being less diverse than the nation in 1980 to being more diverse by 2000

■ Racial/Ethnic Minorities ■ Non-Hispanic White

Percent of first
suburban population
other than non-
Hispanic white,
1980-2000



1980

1990

2000

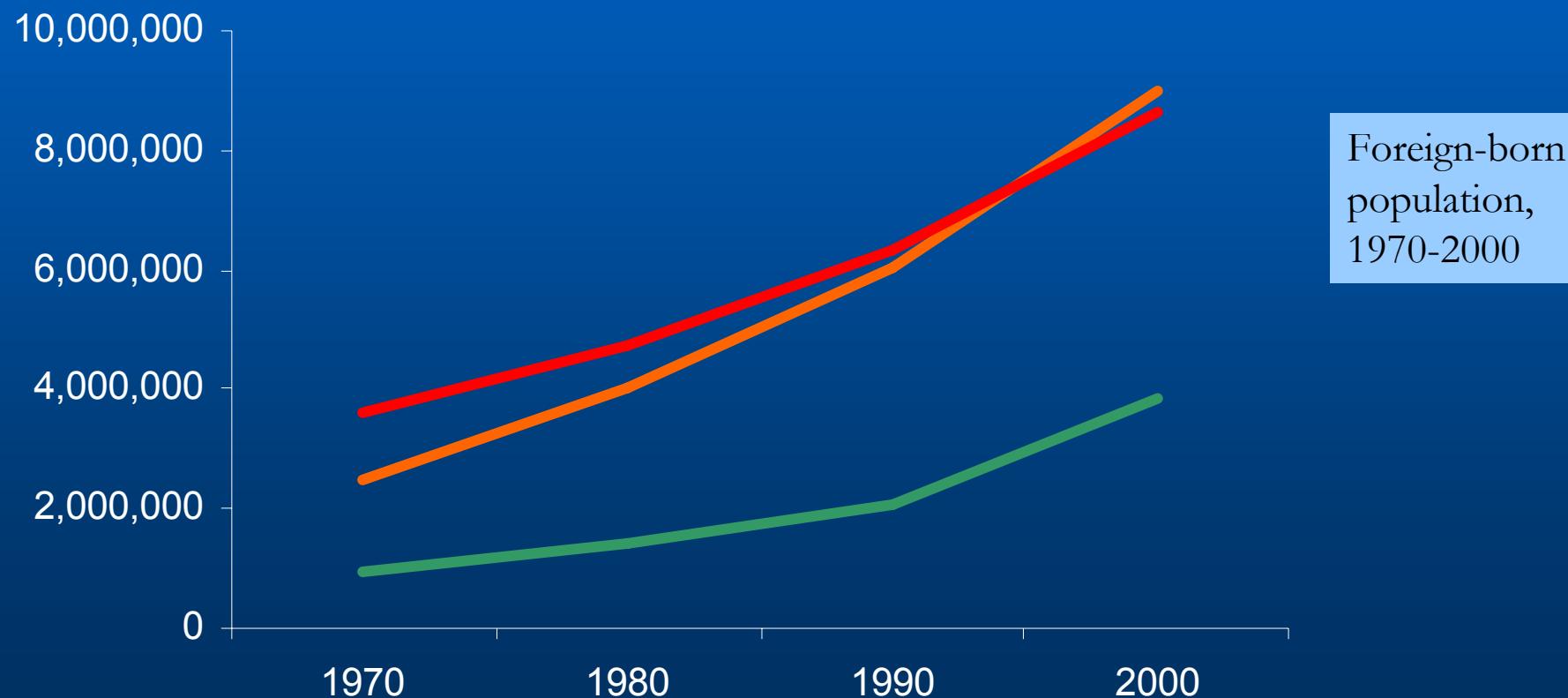
By 2000, one-third of first suburbanites were not white, but this varies significantly across the country

Rank	First Suburb	Population Other Than Non-Hispanic White
1	Dade County, FL	77.6%
2	Prince George's County, MD	75.7%
3	Los Angeles County, CA	68.2%
4	Hudson County, NJ	57.0%
5	Alameda County, CA	53.2%
61	Onondaga County, NY	6.2%
62	Summit County, OH	6.1%
63	Stark County, OH	6.0%
64	Lackawanna County, PA	5.1%
65	Berks County, PA	4.9%
	All First Suburbs	33.4%
	All Primary Cities	61.1%
	All Newer Suburbs	21.0%
	United States	31.9%

Percent of population other than non-Hispanic white, 2000

First suburbs are now home to a large and growing number of foreign-born residents

— First Suburbs — Primary Cities — Newer Suburbs



Foreign-born
population,
1970-2000

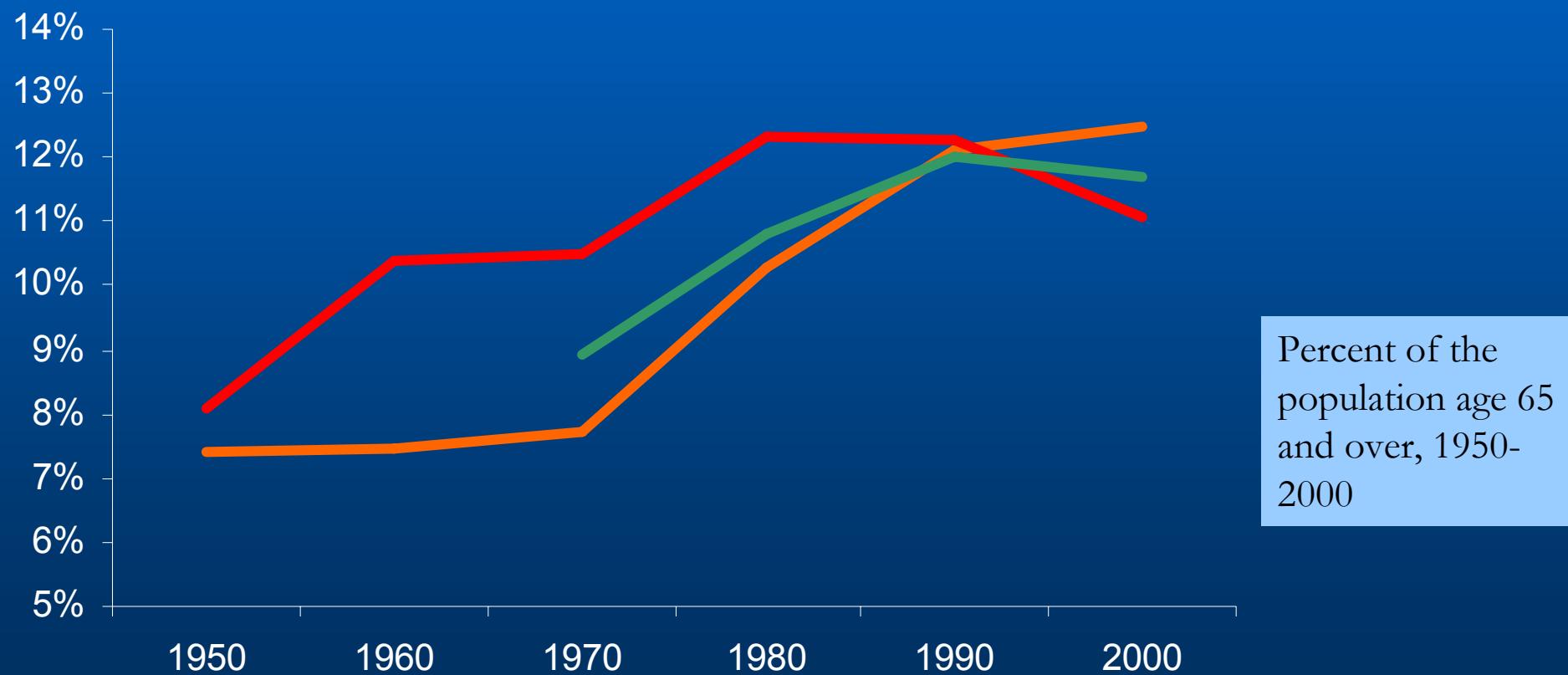
By 2000, over 17 percent of first suburban residents were foreign-born, compared to 11 percent nationally

Rank	First Suburb	Percent Foreign-Born
1	Dade County, FL	49.3%
2	Hudson County, NJ	41.5%
3	Los Angeles County, CA	33.6%
4	San Mateo County, CA	32.3%
5	Orange County, CA	29.9%
61	St. Clair County, IL	2.1%
62	Trumbull County, OH	1.8%
63	Lackawanna County, PA	1.8%
64	Stark County, OH	1.8%
65	Madison County, IL	1.3%
	All First Suburbs	17.1%
	All Primary Cities	23.8%
	All Newer Suburbs	16.7%
	United States	11.1%

Foreign-born population, 2000

The percent of elderly in first suburbs is increasing very fast and is now higher than primary cities and newer suburbs

— First Suburbs — Primary Cities — Newer Suburbs

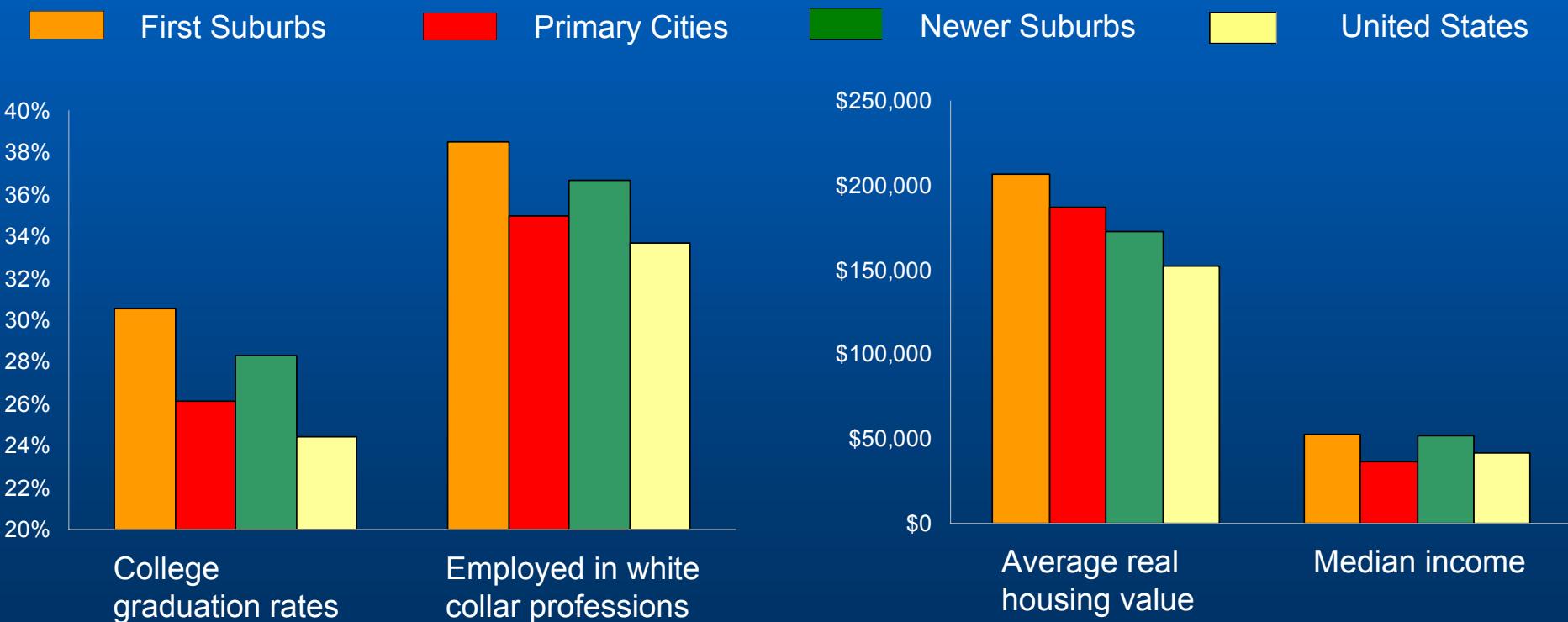


Percent of the population age 65 and over, 1950-2000

Since 1970, the total number of children barely grew – yet households are still large in first suburbs

- However, the population of children under 15 is growing very slowly. There are only 190,000 more children in first suburbs than there were 30 years ago
- Yet households are still larger in first suburbs than elsewhere
- Many first suburbs – Dallas, Nassau, King – still have a much higher percentage of their households that are married-with-children than the national average
- Yet the largest increase in household type was female-headed households with children. And the number of so-called “non-families” is greater than any household type

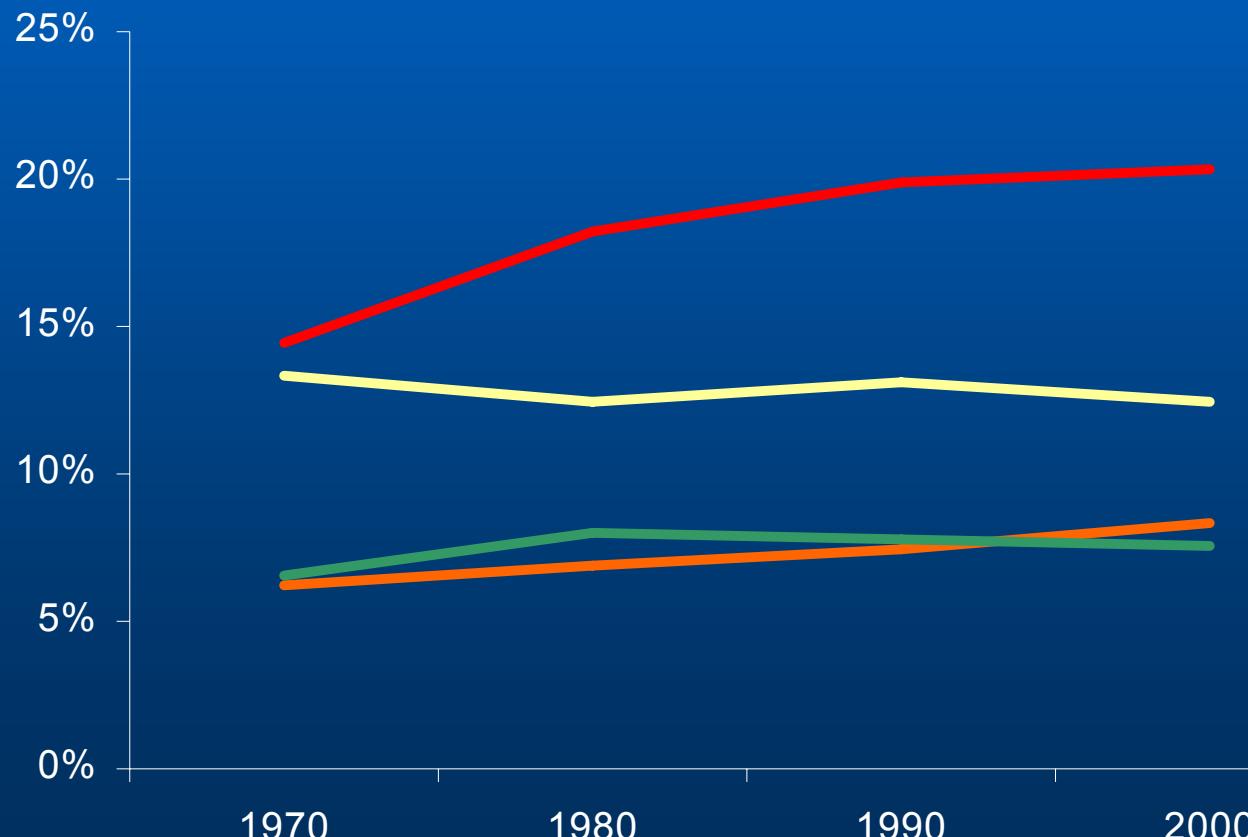
First suburbs as a whole have largely retained their position as home to some of the most highly educated and wealthy residents, those with white collar jobs, and highest housing values



Select statistics, 2000

Poverty rates in first suburbs have been steadily rising while the primary cities and the newer suburbs have leveled off or decreased their rates

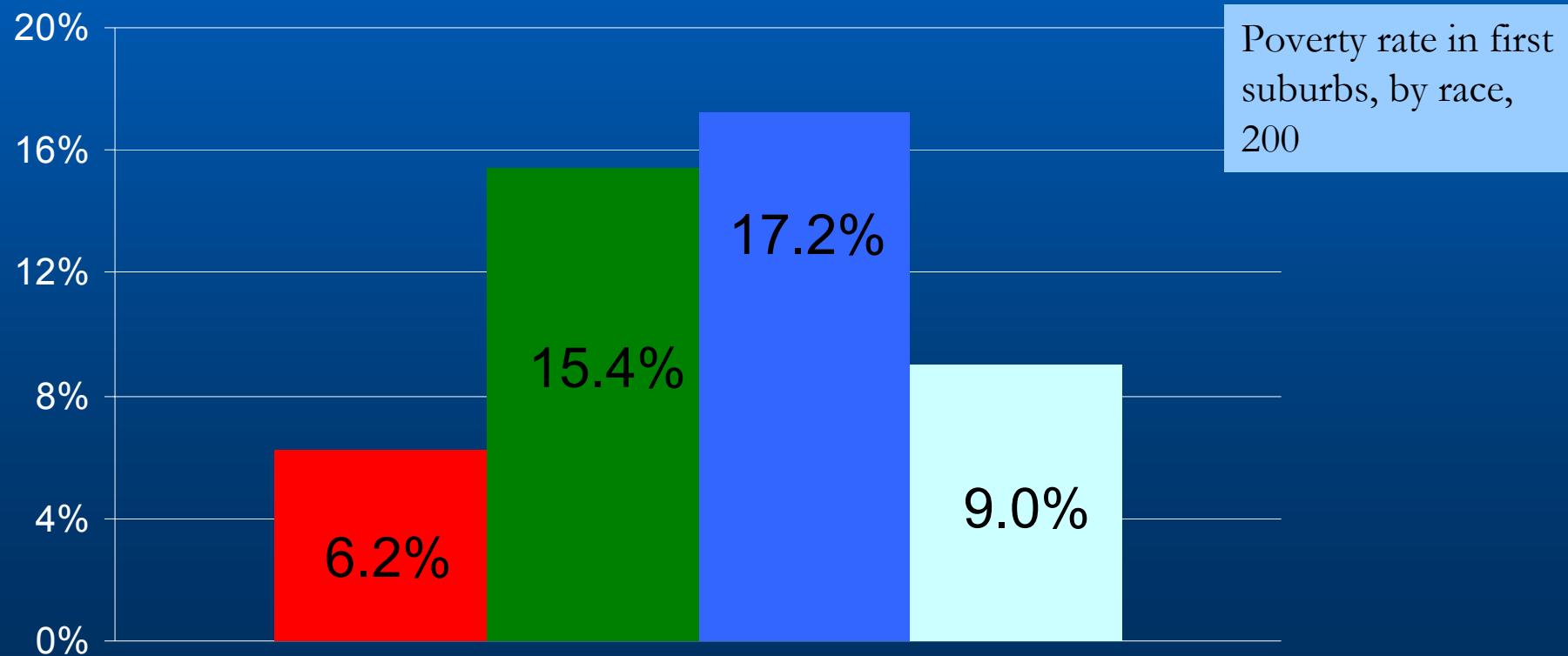
— First Suburbs — Primary Cities
— Newer Suburbs — United States



Percent of people
below poverty
line, 1970-2000

Poverty rates in first suburbs vary by race and ethnicity; blacks and Hispanics are two and three times more likely to be poor than whites

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ Asian



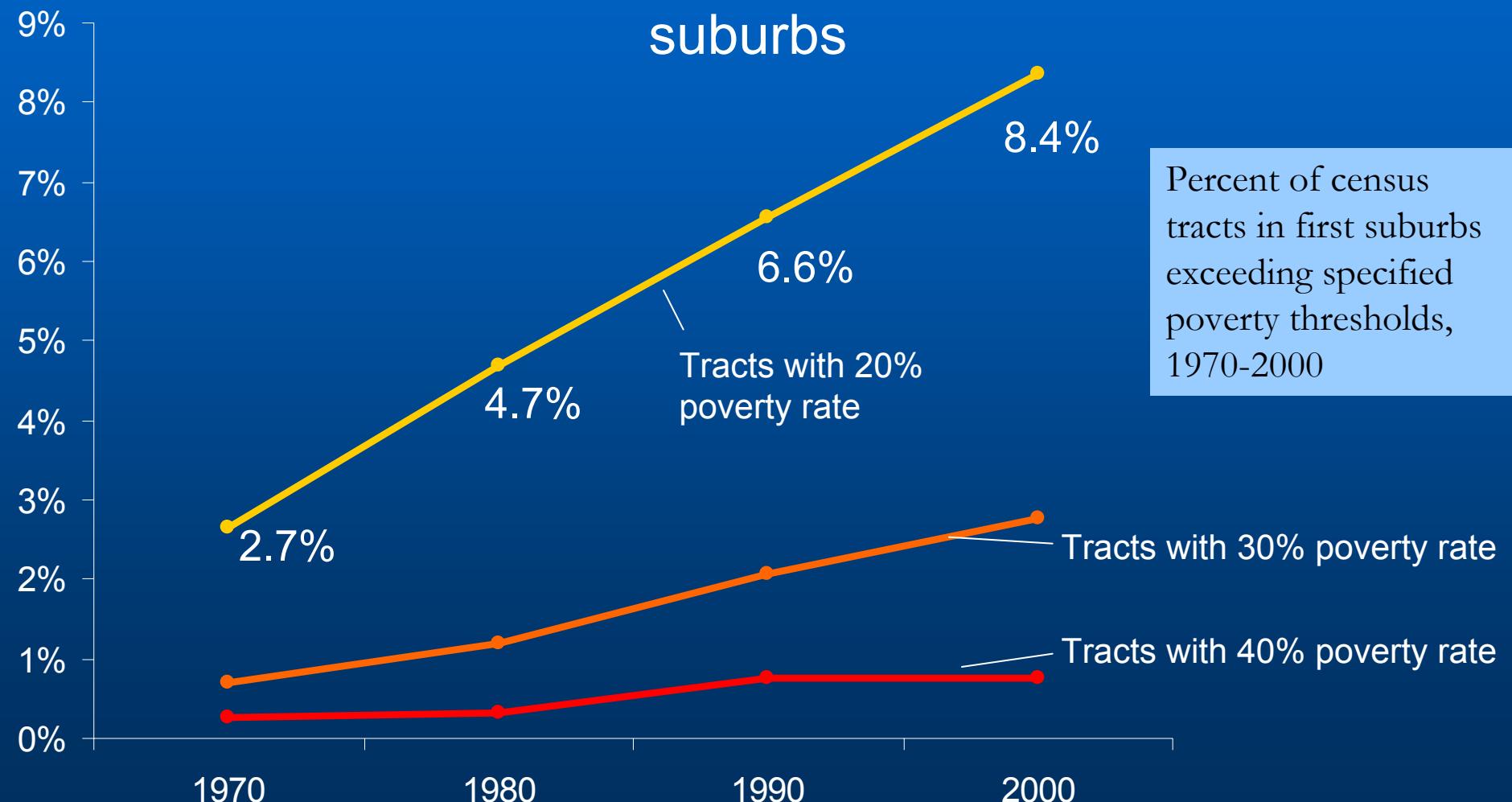
Context

Methods

Findings

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Equally disturbing is that while the number of high poverty neighborhoods is dropping sharply in urban areas throughout the country, it is increasing at an alarming rate in first suburbs



Percent of census tracts in first suburbs exceeding specified poverty thresholds, 1970-2000



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First suburbs possess many important assets

1. Home to a large share of the nation's population; likewise in many states
2. Residents are highly educated, wealthy, and employed
3. Convenience and central location
4. Established infrastructure: transportation, water, sewer, schools
5. Potential for collaboration



Monroe County, NY



Alameda County, CA

But it is important to recognize and take seriously a number of critical challenges

1. Uneven population growth
2. Troubling poverty increases
3. Older housing stock
4. Increasing number of elderly and foreign-born populations
5. High level of fragmentation and the “policy blindspot”



© Process Innovators

Franklin County, OH



Bergen County, NJ

A policy framework for first suburbs



ADDRESS THE SPECIAL CHALLENGES OF AN ELDERLY POPULATION: Requires a continuum of housing responses, as well as coordination between transportation, and health care sectors



MEET THE NEEDS OF THE RISING FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION: Pursue a set of policies that focus on short term solutions such as language, workforce, and education barriers, but also longer term integration strategies



CREATE AND SUSTAIN ECONOMICALLY-INTEGRATED NEIGHBORHOODS: Address the rise in concentrated poverty, develop inclusionary zoning programs; expand access to income supports

A policy framework for first suburbs (cont.)



REMAKE AND RENEW THE ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE: Promote private reinvestment; and focus on bold plans that rethink attitudes toward density, urbanity and diversity



PROMOTE REGIONAL COHESION AND COLLABORATION: Form coalitions to push for federal, state, and regional reforms. Collaborate, where possible, on redevelopment efforts

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The screenshot shows the Brookings Institution website's homepage with a focus on the Metropolitan Policy Program. The left sidebar includes links for Home, News & Events, Scholars, Research Topics, Programs (which is selected), Publications, Bookstore, Executive Education, and About Brookings. The main content area features a section titled "KNOW THE CONTEXT" with an article about downtown populations. Below this is a "HURRICANE KATRINA: ISSUES AND THE AFTERMATH" section with an article about housing families displaced by Katrina. The right sidebar contains a search bar, a "Metro Program" menu with links to Research by Topic, Publications, MetroViews, Presentations and Events, About Us, and Employment, and a "Metropolitan Policy Program" section. A yellow box highlights the "SUBSCRIBE TO Metro Program Listserv" form, which includes fields for E-mail Address and a "SIGN UP" button. An orange arrow points from the top right towards this highlighted area.

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November 18, 2005

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KNOW THE CONTEXT

Who Lives Downtown

Though downtown populations have remained stable over the past 30 years, as a new analysis of 44 cities by Eugenie L. Birch shows, the number of households has increased, demonstrating the rise of singles and childless couples there. Today, these households—increasingly homeowners—are ethnically and racially diverse, young, and educated. The paper also categorizes the downtowns by strength and compares their health to their surrounding cities. As no downtown is the same, understanding unique and changing downtown demographics is central to putting together a tailored and more effective plan for revitalization.

► read the report

► Living Cities Census Series

HURRICANE KATRINA: ISSUES AND THE AFTERMATH

Housing Families Displaced by Katrina

A new analysis of the storm recovery housing options currently made available by the federal government—along with the

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