

The Brookings Institution

Metropolitan Policy Program
Robert Puentes, Fellow



Good News and Bad News: Westchester County and America's First Suburbs

Not-For-Profit Leadership Summit IV
Rye, NY
May 15, 2006



I

What is the context for the discussion about first suburbs?

II

How were first suburbs selected for our study?

III

What are the major findings of this research?

IV

What kind of policy implications arise as a result?

Baltimore County, MD



Decentralization is still the prevailing trend in metropolitan America

Old demarcation lines between suburbs and cities are long gone; and suburbs are highly diverse

This range of experiences is often not reflected in the broad discussion of metropolitan growth

Hillsborough County, FL



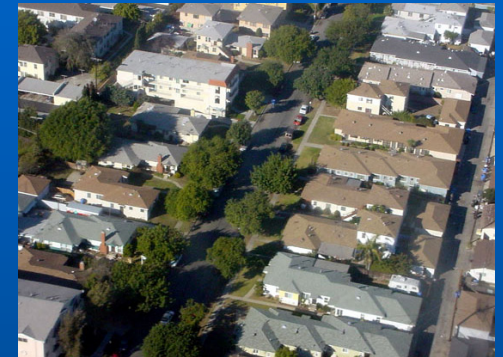
First suburbs can be thought of as older communities in the inner-ring outside central cities



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

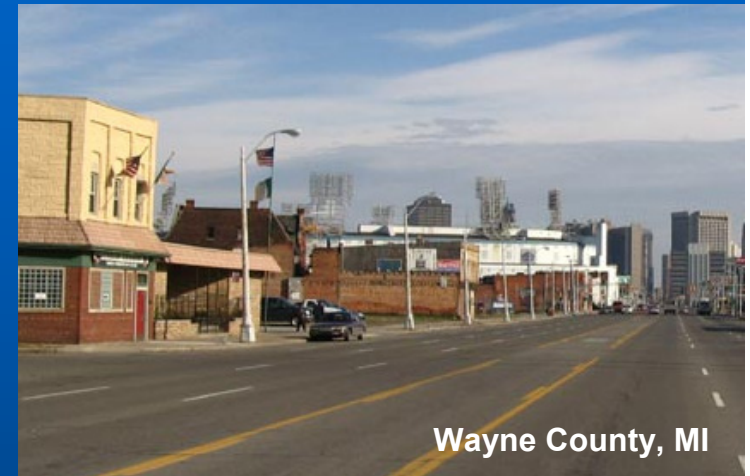
First suburbs are caught in a policy blindspot

Attention is frequently focused on center cities and on newer suburbs

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

Some policies undermine first suburbs



Wayne County, MI



Lehigh County, PA

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



San Diego County, CA

- ✓ **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
- ✓ **Locally:** Formal and informal coalitions



Milwaukee County, WI



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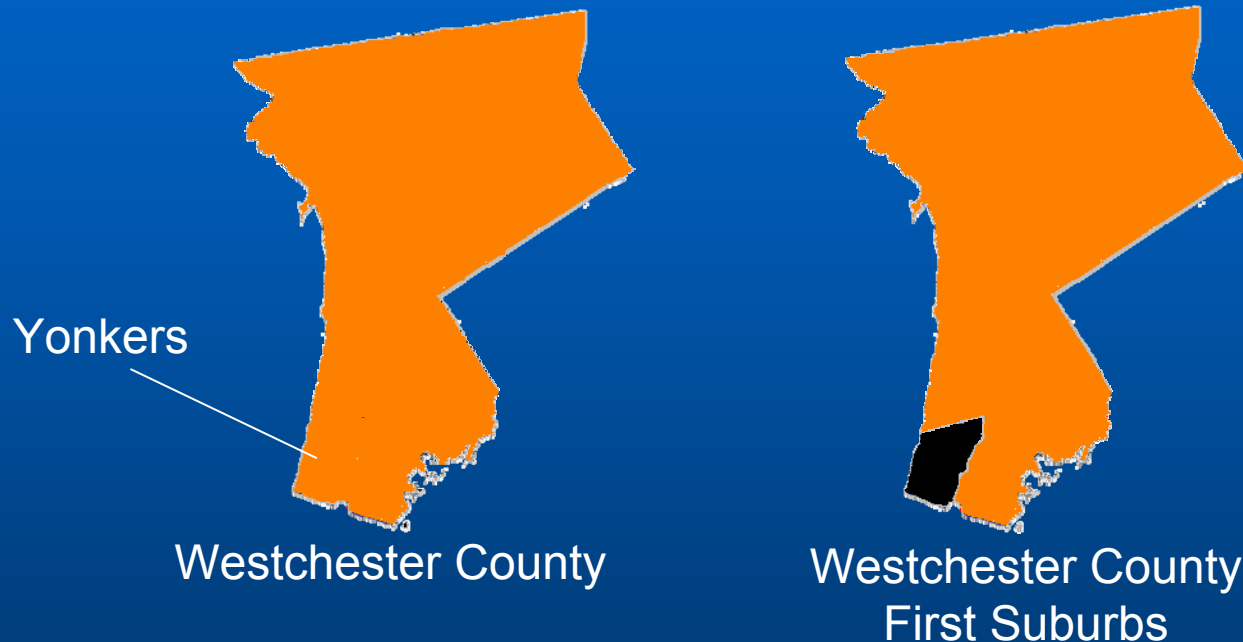
IV

What kind of policy implications arise as a result?

- Used county-level geography
- County had to be part of a 'standard metropolitan area' (SMA) in 1950
- 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



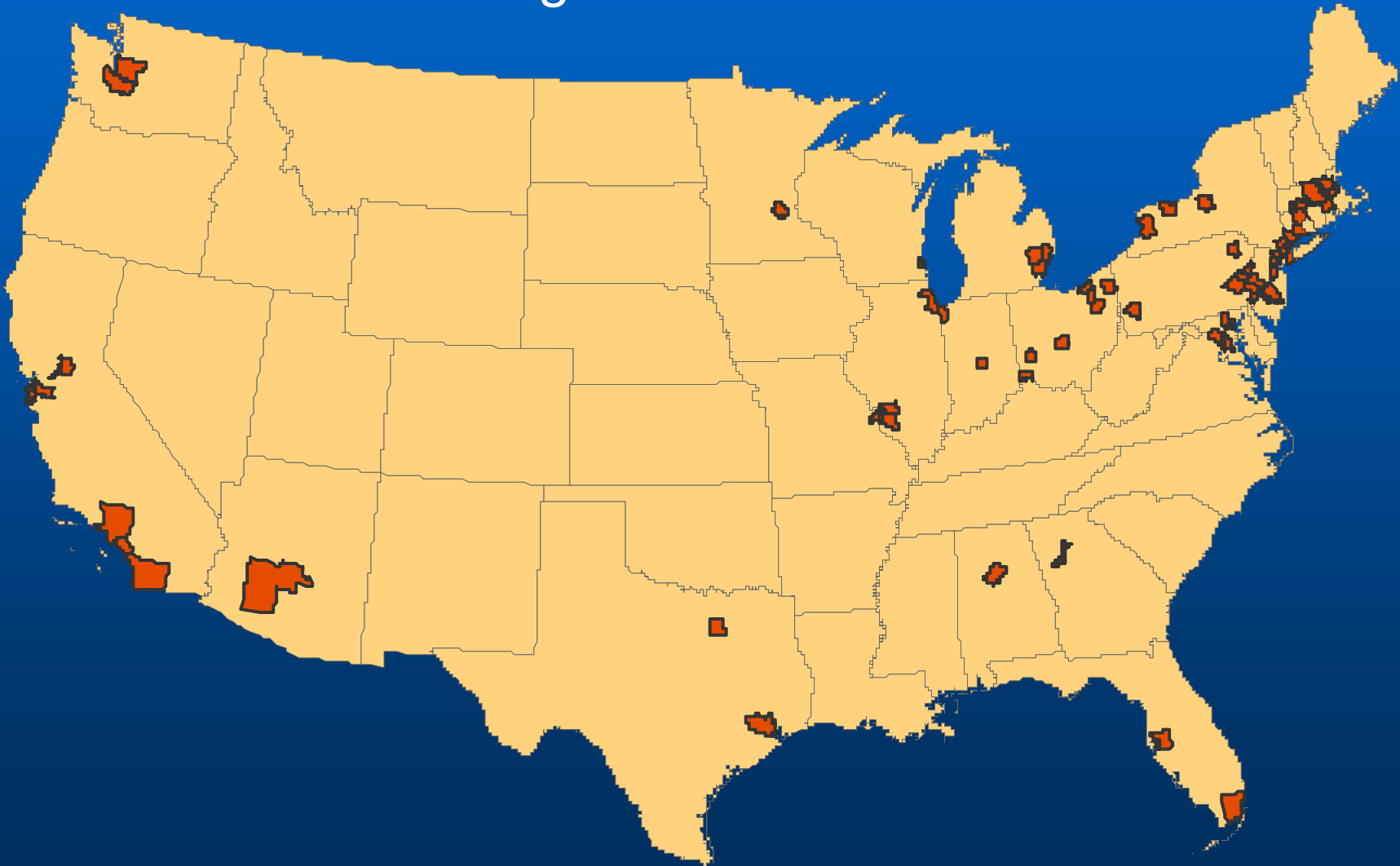
For example, in Westchester County the first suburbs are defined as those outside (or excluding) Yonkers



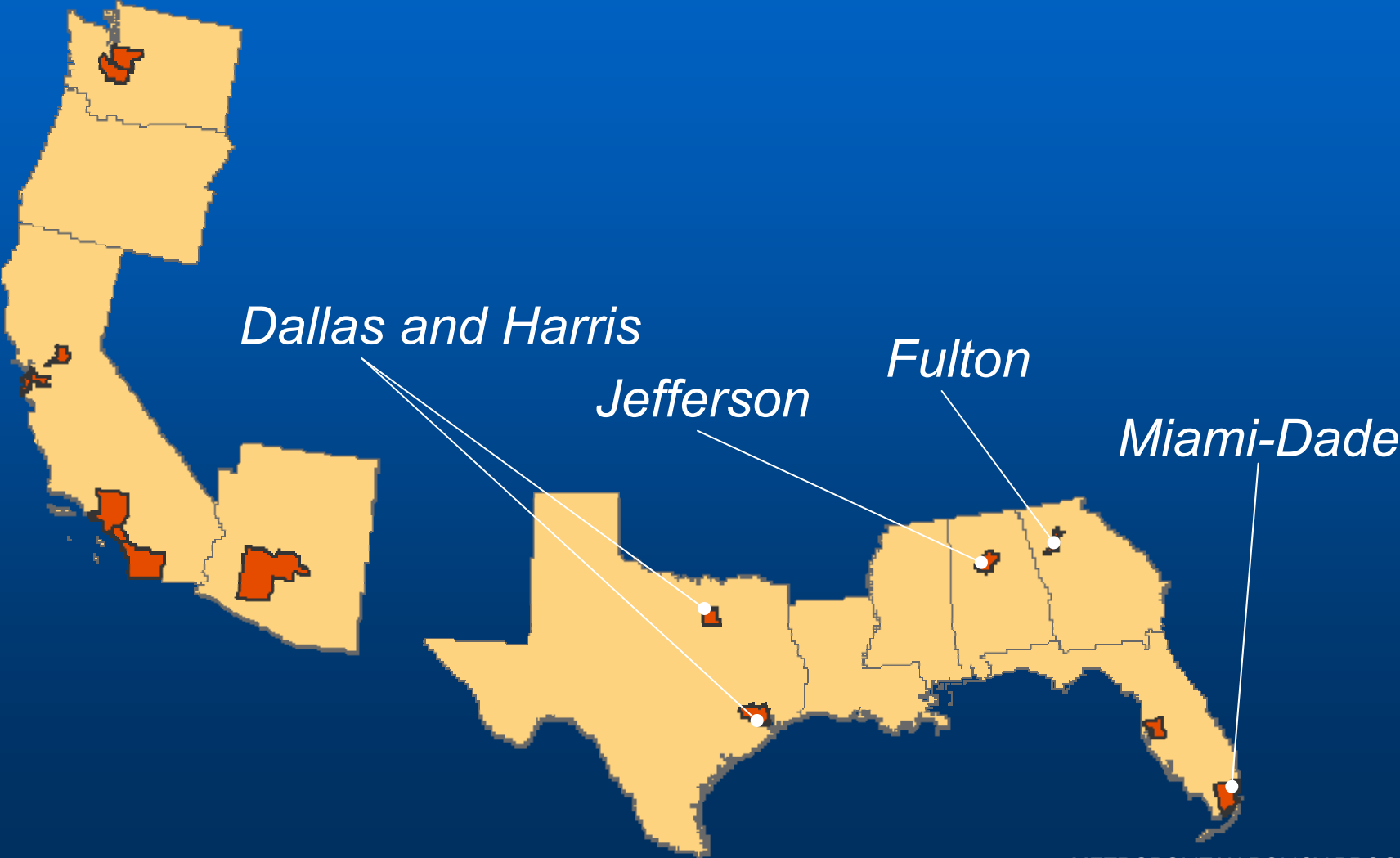
Example:

	2000 Population
Westchester County	923,459
Yonkers	196,086
Westchester First Suburbs	727,373

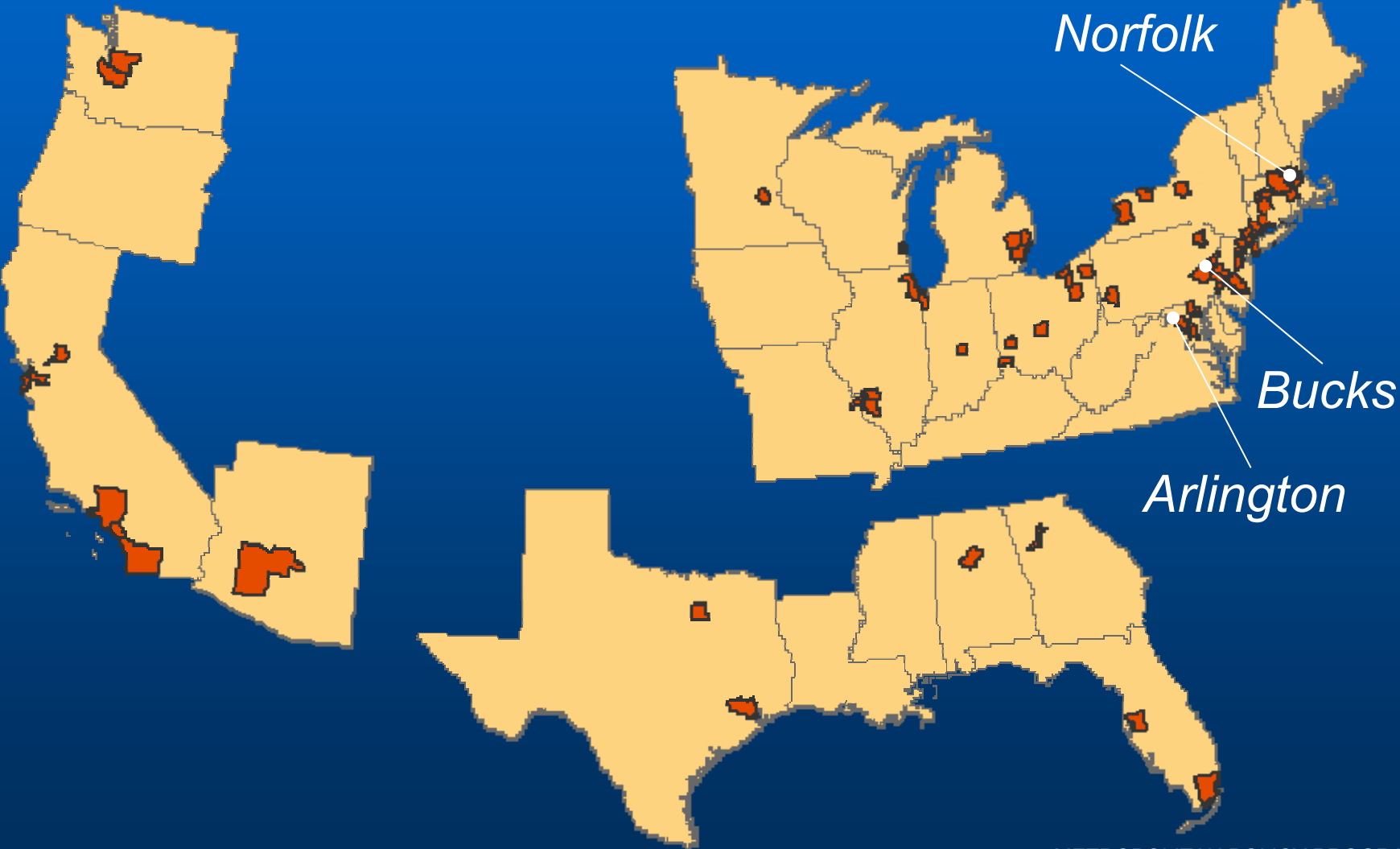
There are 64 first suburban counties found throughout the nation



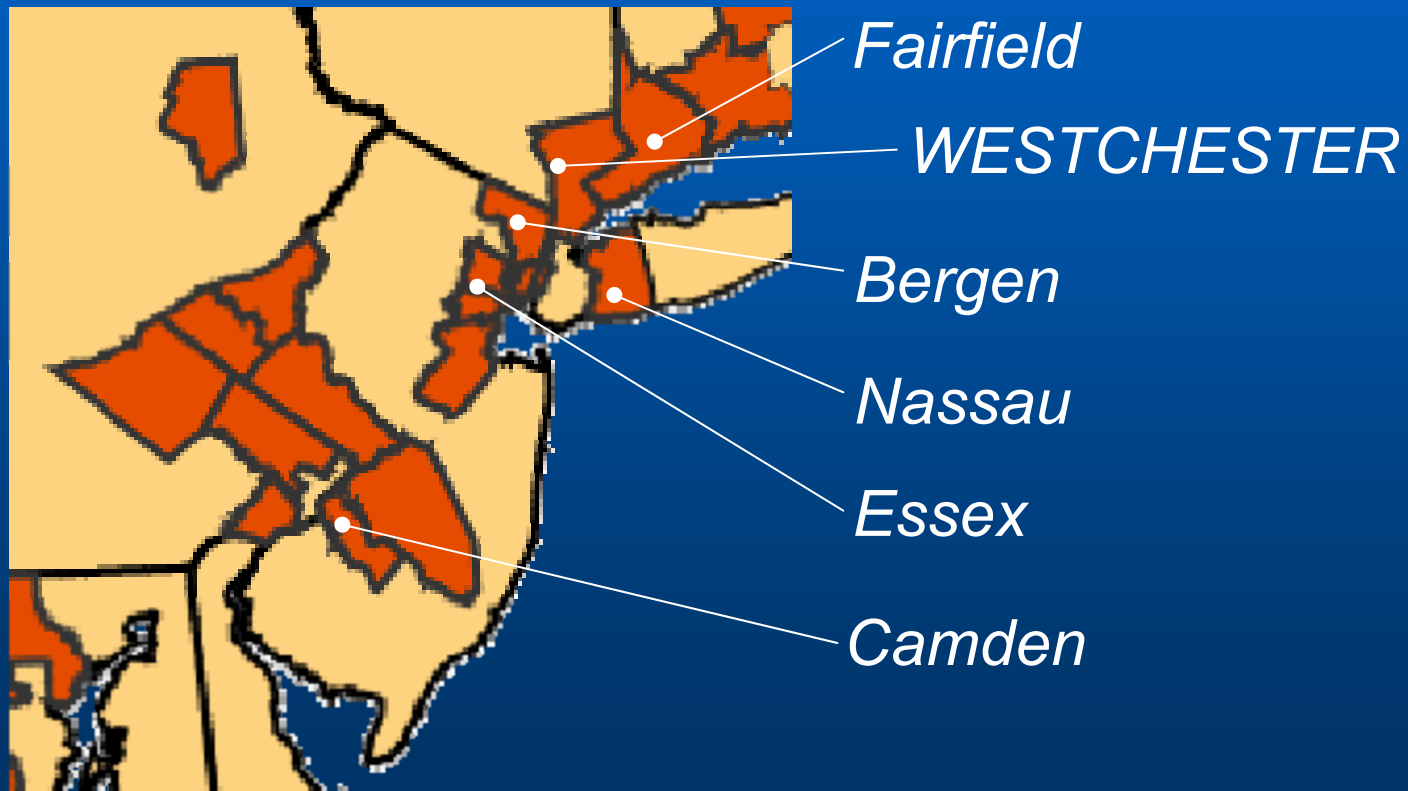




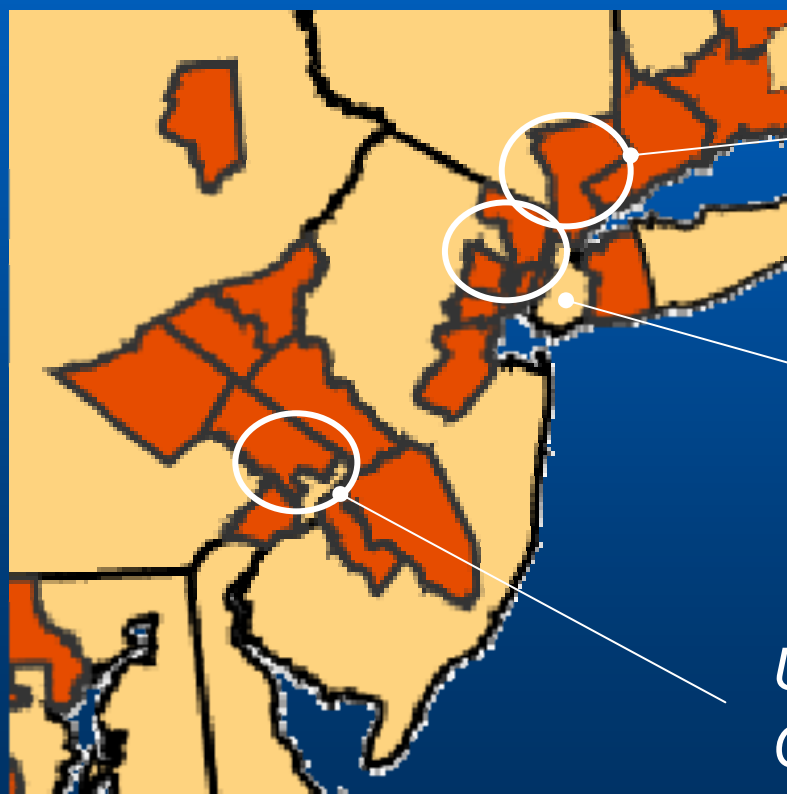




Most first suburbs are in the Northeast – especially in the New York metro area and along the I-95 Corridor



Though we use county level data, we recognize that many issues play out on the local level in most places



*New Rochelle, NY
Tarrytown, NY
Rye, NY*

*Teaneck, NJ
Secaucus, NJ*

*Upper Darby, PA
Conshohocken, PA
Bristol, PA*

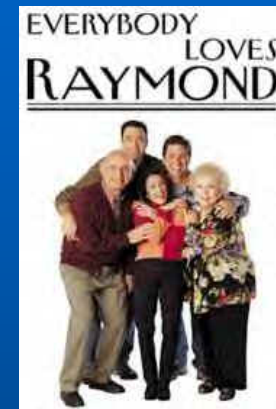
Having a TV sitcom is *not* a prerequisite for qualifying as a first suburb



Westchester County, NY



Los Angeles County, CA



Nassau County, NY



Cook County, IL

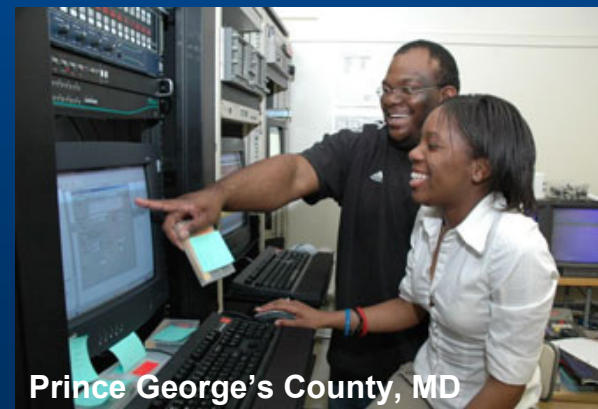


Orange County, CA

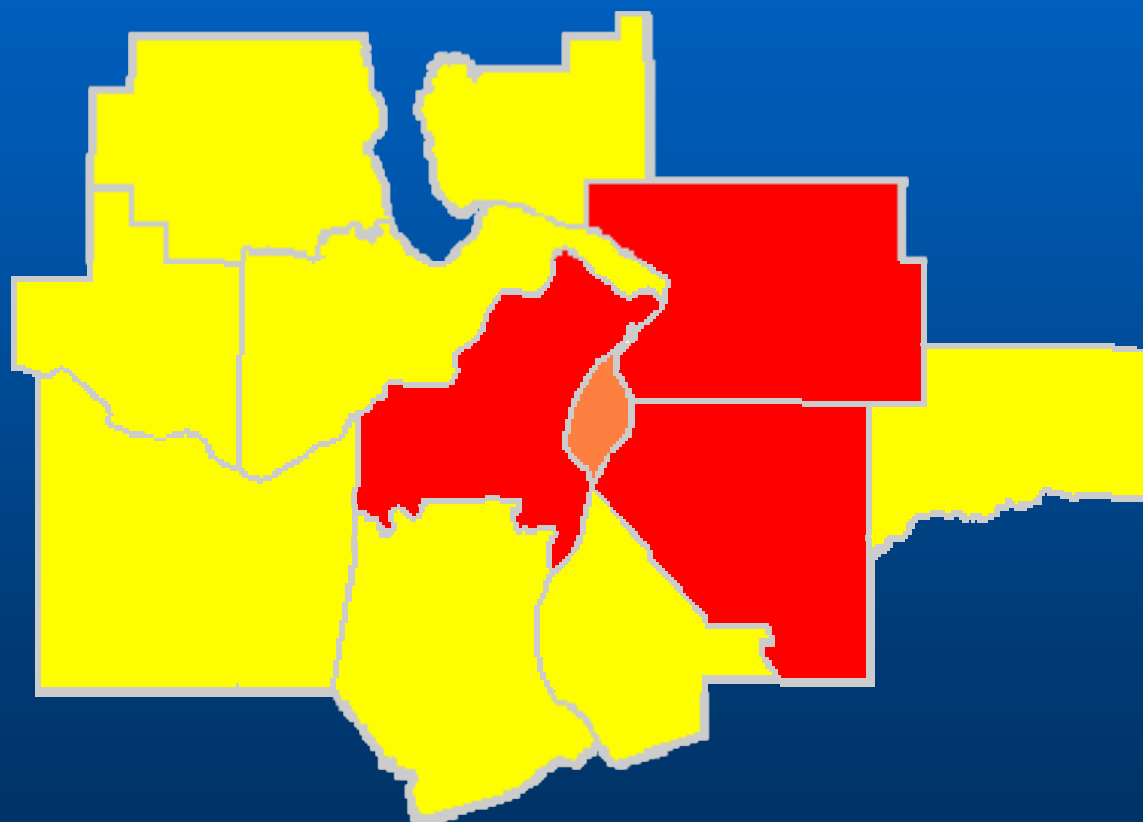
Our analysis examines the demographic, market, and economic trends for these 64 places

INDICATORS:

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



The geographic units of analysis discussed here are:



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

Primary City:
St. Louis city

Newer Suburbs:
Metro remainder

St. Louis Metropolitan Area



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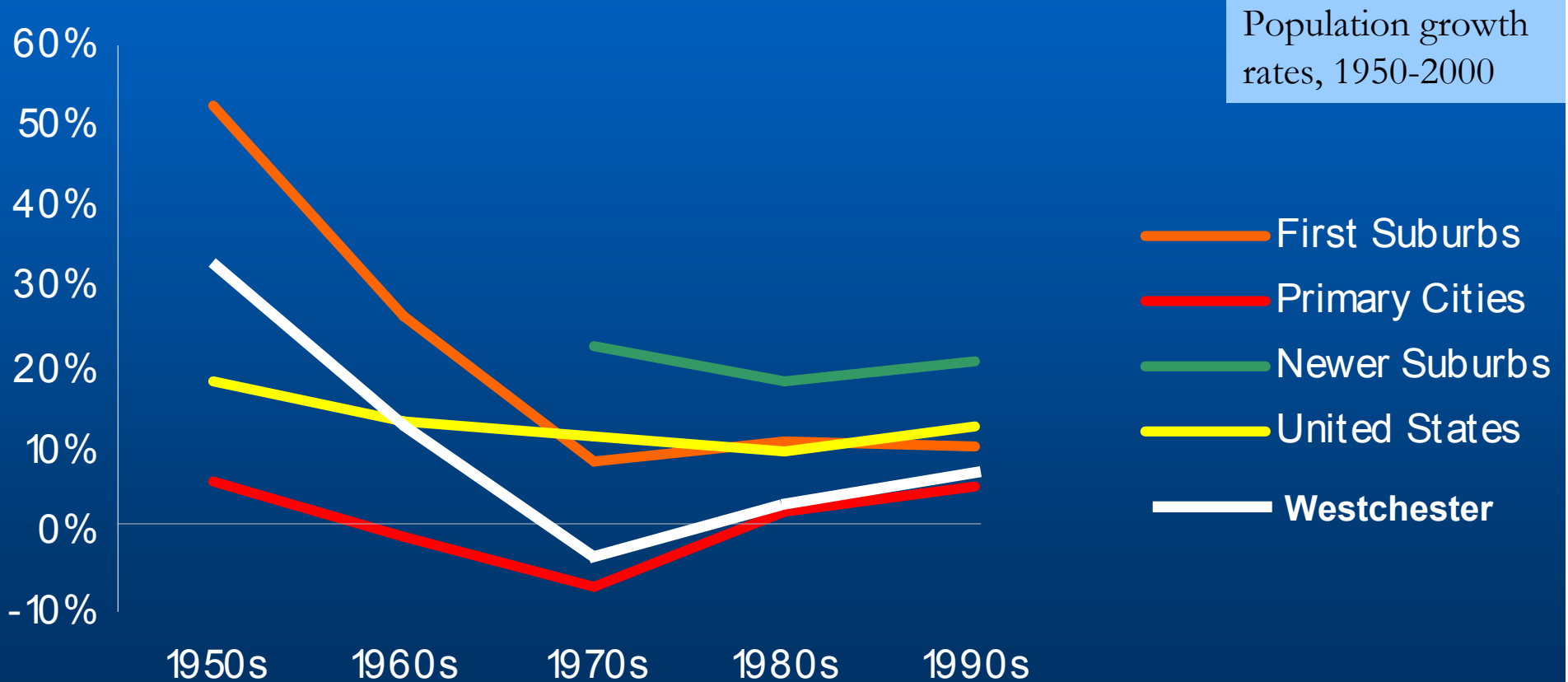
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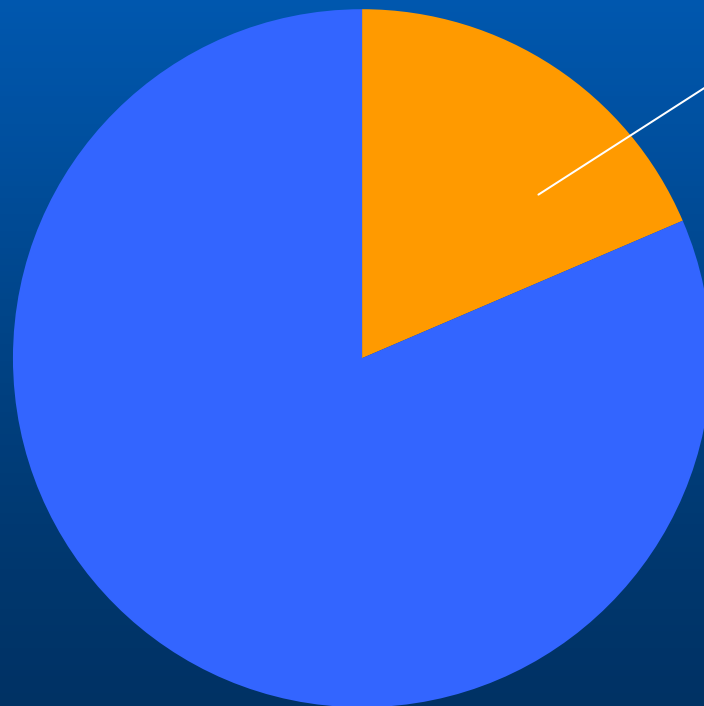
IV

What kind of policy implications arise as a result?

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

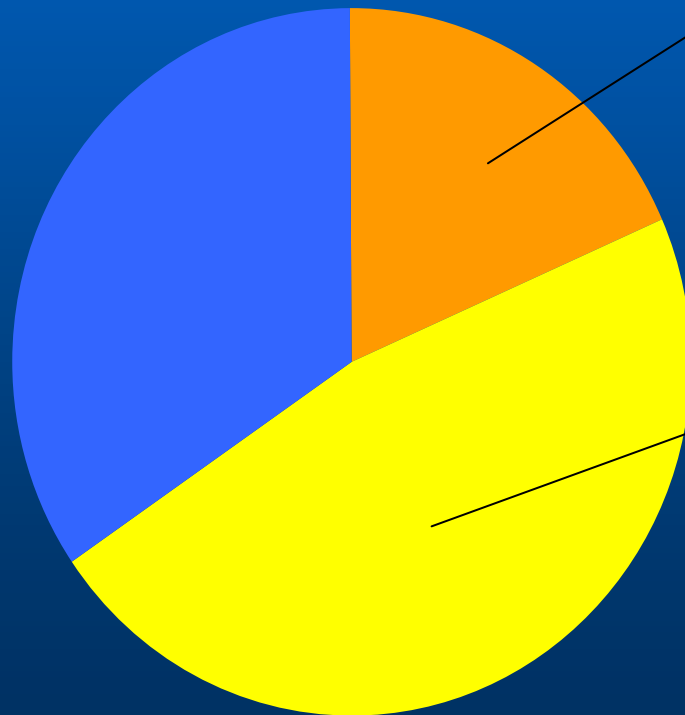


By 2000, about one-fifth of the nation's population lived in first suburbs



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

New York's first suburbs plus their primary cities make up nearly two-thirds of the state's population



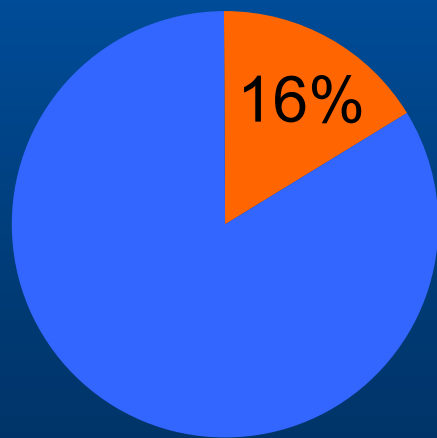
New York first suburbs
(Westchester, Nassau, Onondaga,
Monroe, Erie)
3,546,134 people
18.7% of the state

Cities within first suburban counties
(Yonkers, New York City, Syracuse,
Rochester, Buffalo)
8,864,091 people
46.7% of the state

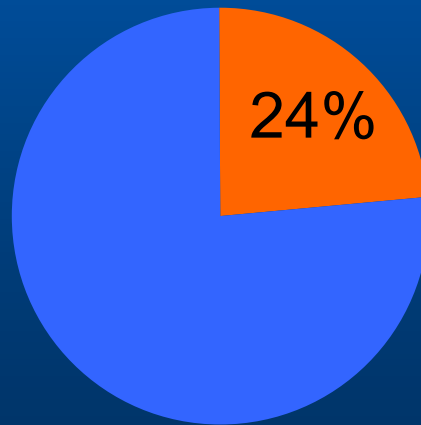
First suburbs went from being less diverse than the nation in 1980 to being more diverse by 2000

■ Racial/Ethnic Minorities ■ Non-Hispanic White

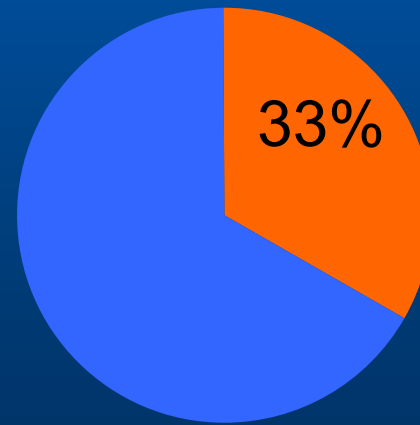
Percent of first suburban population other than non-Hispanic white, 1980-2000



1980



1990



2000

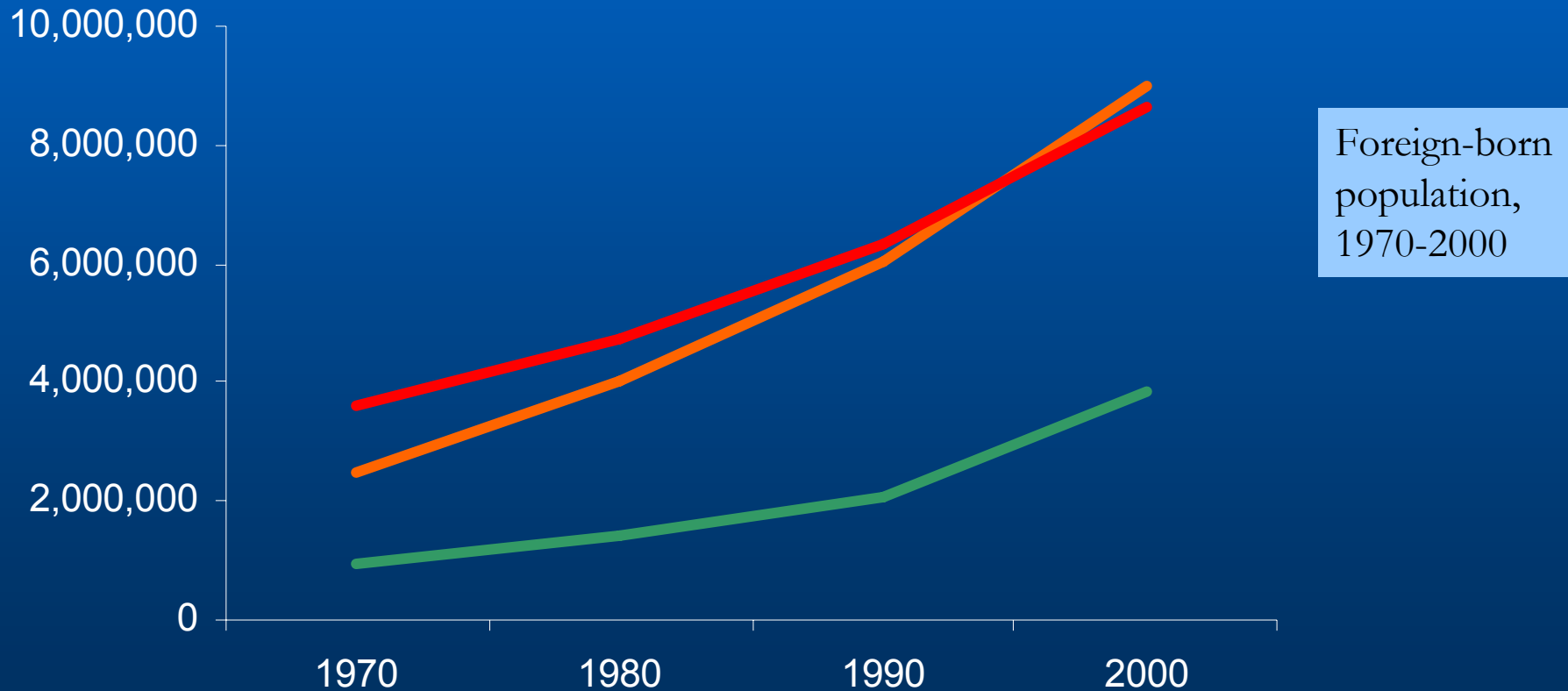
Rank	First Suburb	Population Other Than Non-Hispanic White
1	Dade County, FL	77.6%
2	Prince George's County, MD	75.7%
3	Los Angeles County, CA	68.2%
4	Hudson County, NJ	57.0%
5	Alameda County, CA	53.2%
...		
19	Westchester County, NY	32.3%
...		
60	Onondaga County, NY	6.2%
61	Summit County, OH	6.1%
62	Stark County, OH	6.0%
63	Lackawanna County, PA	5.1%
64	Berks County, PA	4.9%
	All First Suburbs	33.4%
	All Primary Cities	61.1%
	All Newer Suburbs	21.0%
	United States	31.9%

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

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 — New er Suburbs



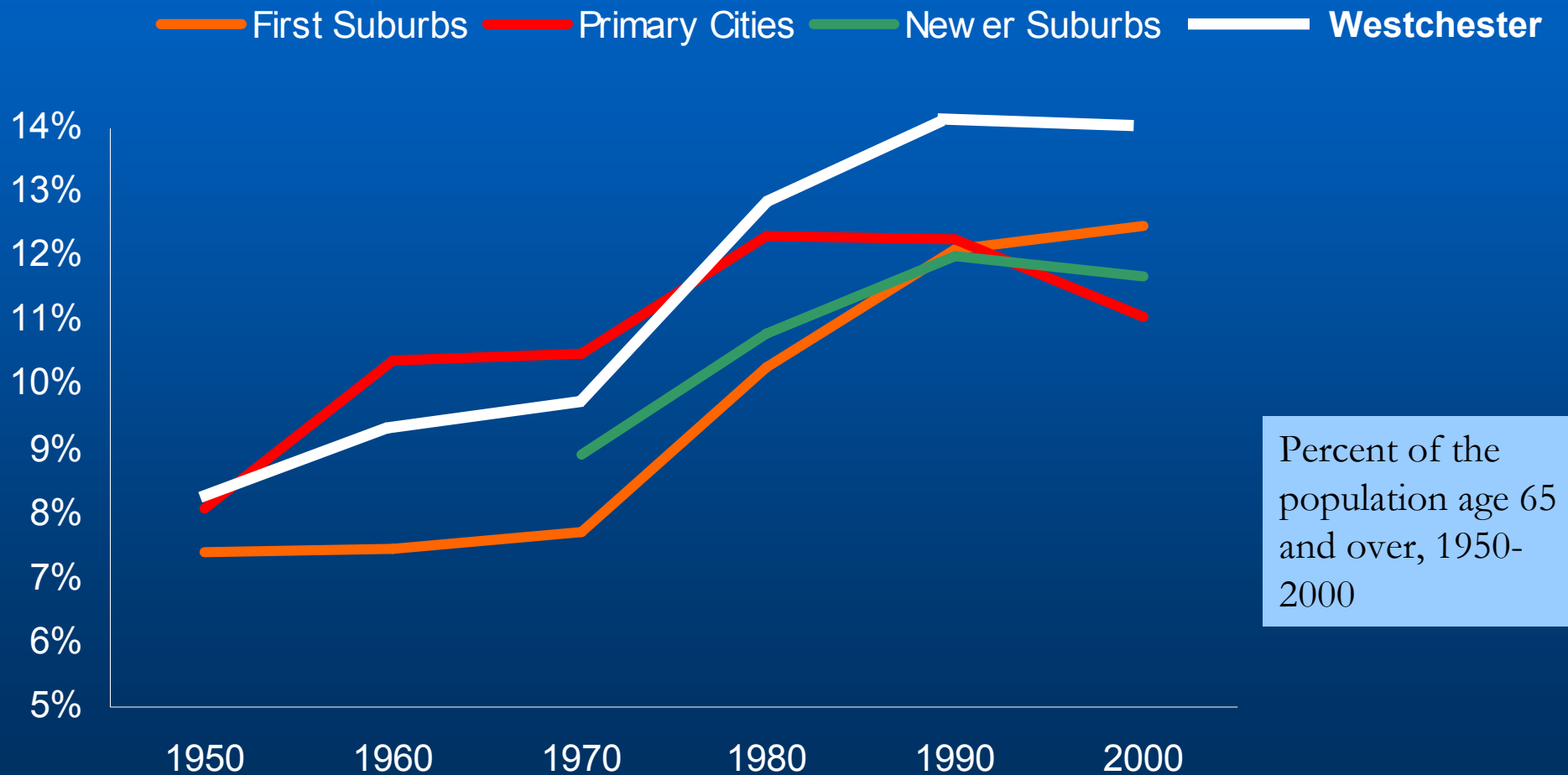
Foreign-born population, 1970-2000

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%
...		
11	Westchester County, NY	21.1%
...		
60	St. Clair County, IL	2.1%
61	Trumbull County, OH	1.8%
62	Lackawanna County, PA	1.8%
63	Stark County, OH	1.8%
64	Madison County, IL	1.3%
	All First Suburbs	17.1%
	All Primary Cities	23.8%
	All Newer Suburbs	16.7%
	United States	11.1%

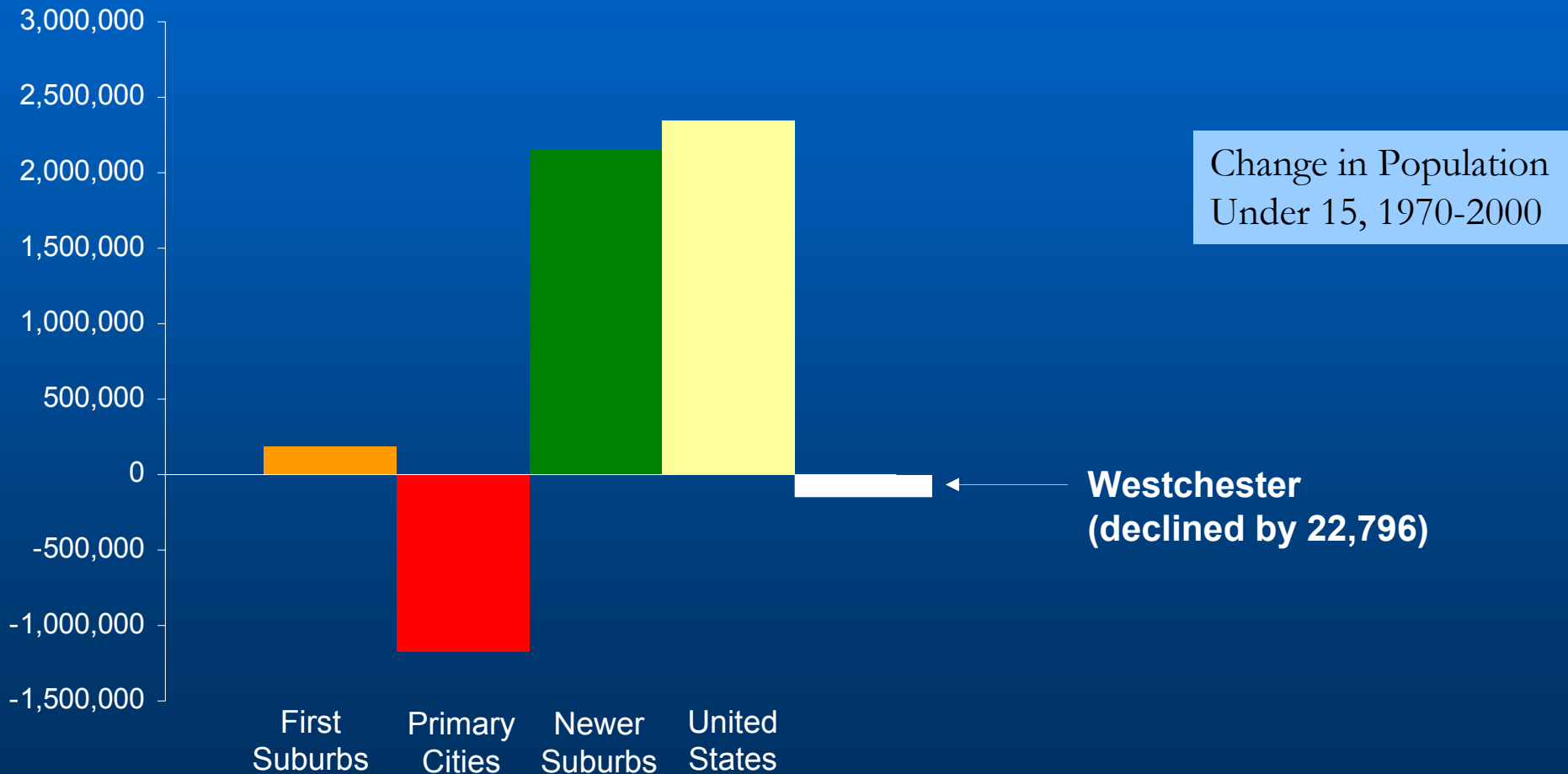
By 2000, over 17 percent of first suburban residents were foreign-born, compared to 11 percent nationally

Foreign-born population, 2000

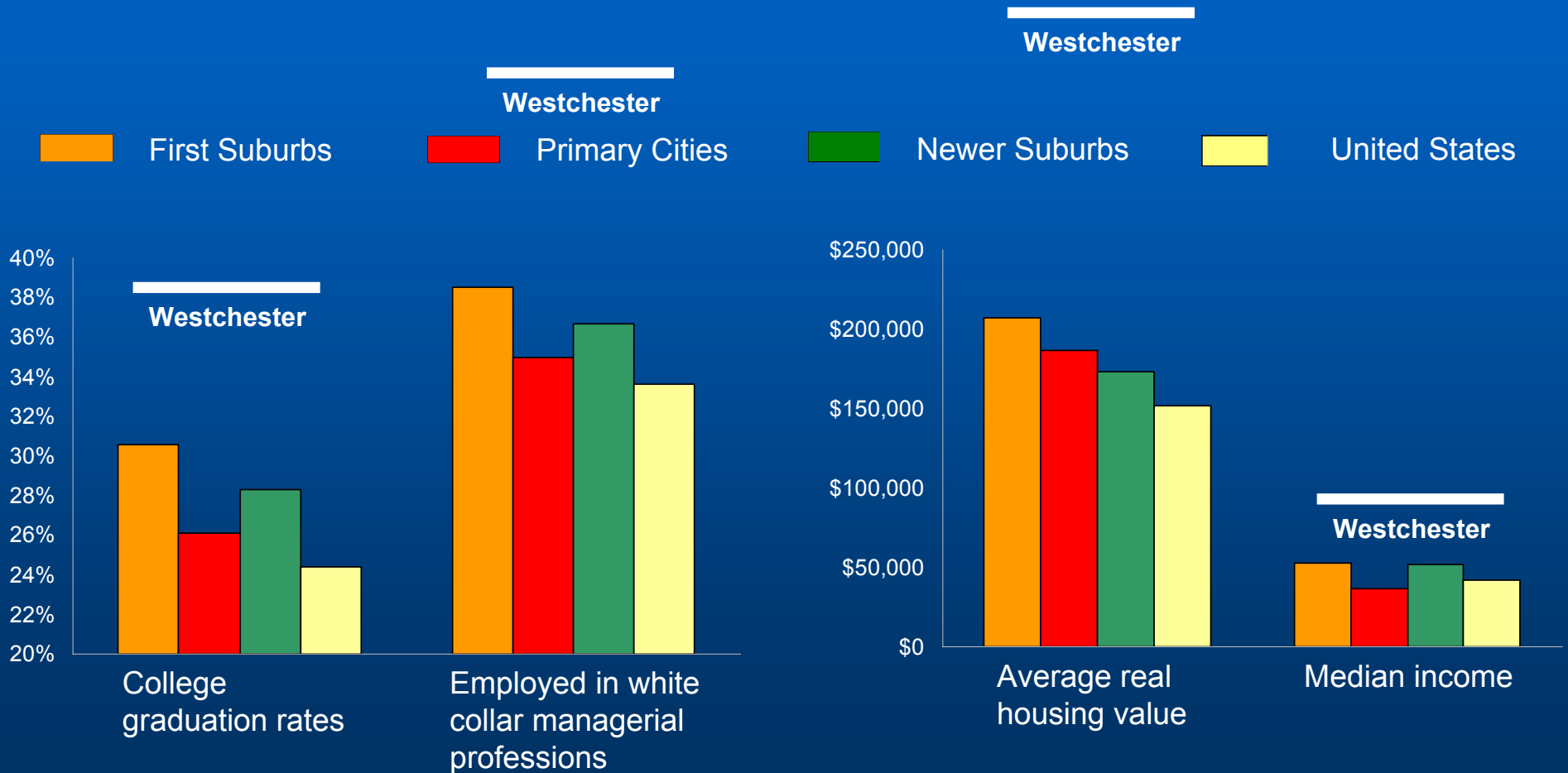
The percent of elderly in first suburbs is increasing very fast and is now higher than primary cities and newer suburbs



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

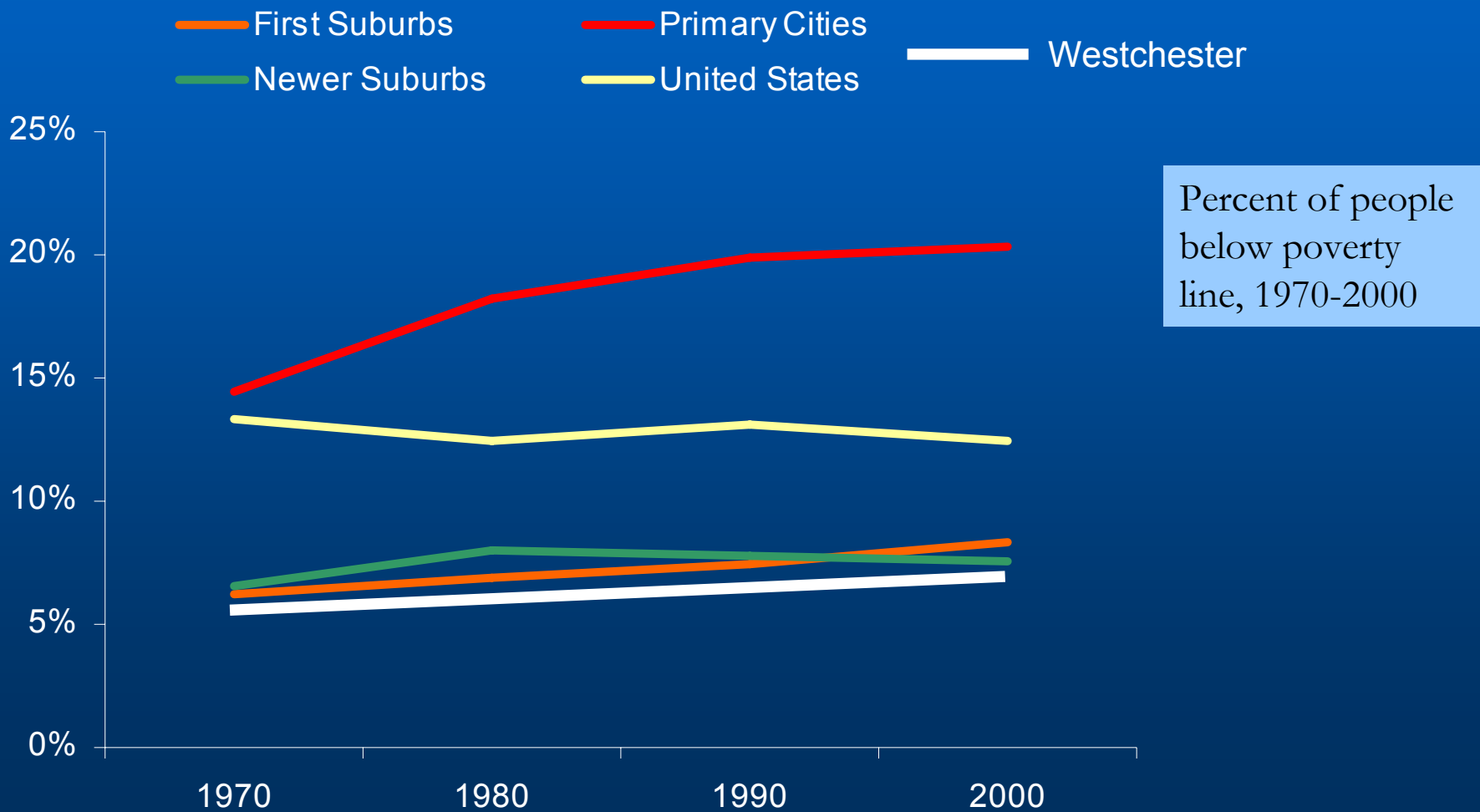


First suburbs are home to the most highly educated and wealthy residents with white collar jobs and high housing values



Select statistics, 2000

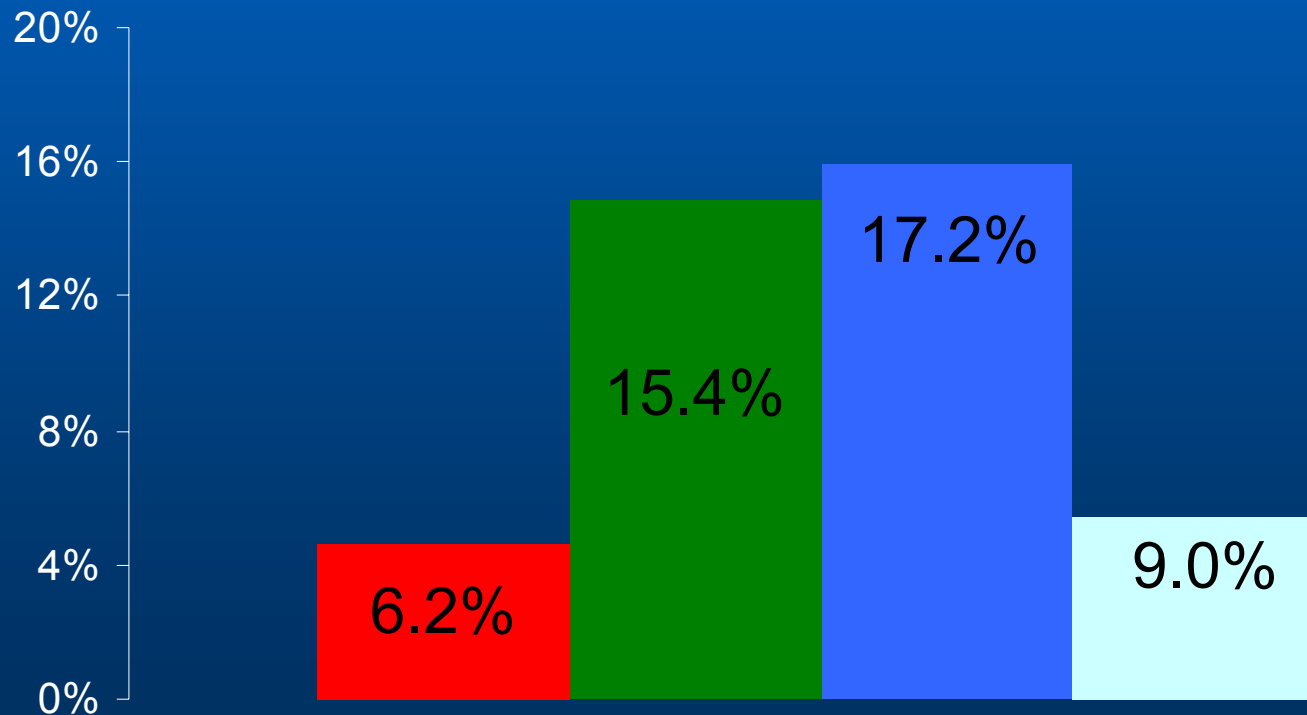
Contrary to larger trends, poverty rates in first suburbs have been steadily rising



Percent of people below poverty line, 1970-2000

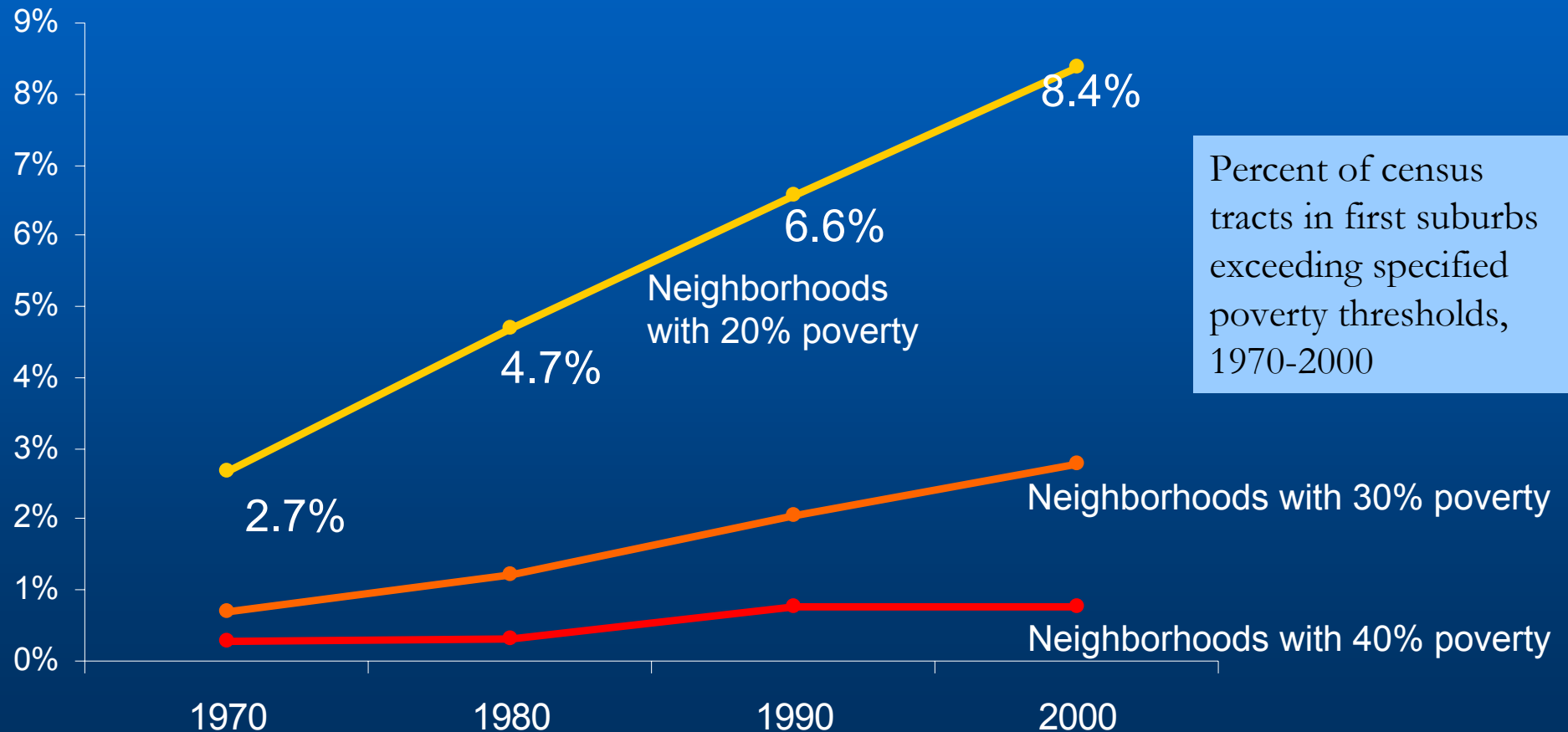
Poverty rates in first suburbs - like Westchester - vary by race and ethnicity; blacks and Hispanics are two and three times more likely to be poor than whites

White Black Hispanic Asian

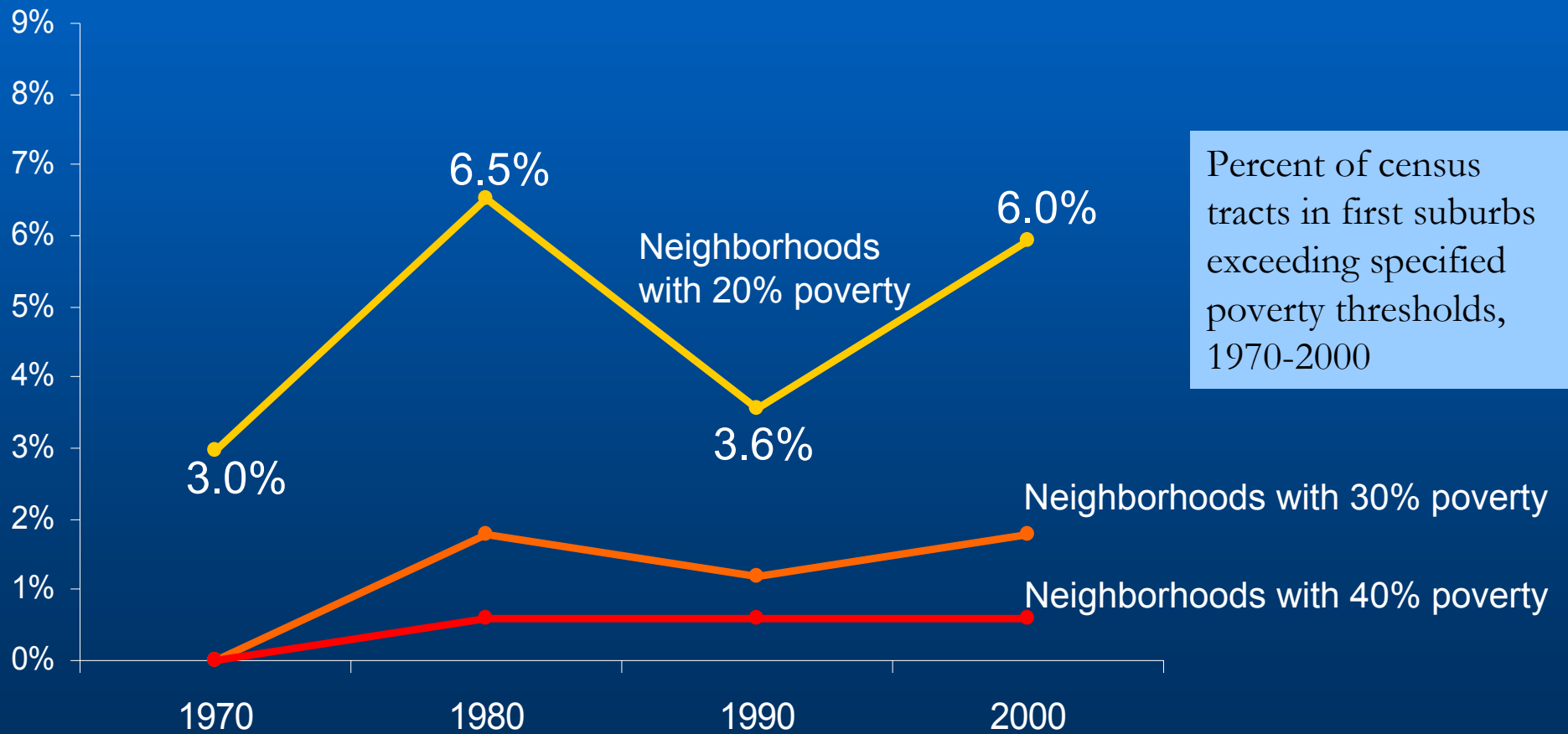


Poverty rate in Westchester's first suburbs, by race, 2000

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



The trend is generally reflected in Westchester, too.





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First suburbs possess many important assets

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



But in first suburbs like Westchester it is important to recognize and take seriously a number of critical challenges



1. Uneven population growth
2. Troubling poverty increases
3. Large percentage of household income spent on housing
4. Increasing number of elderly and foreign-born populations
5. High level of fragmentation and the “policy blindspot”

A policy framework for first suburbs

- ✓ Address the special challenges of an elderly population
- ✓ Meet the needs of the rising foreign-born population
- ✓ Create and sustain economically-integrated neighborhoods
- ✓ Remake and renew the economic and physical landscape
- ✓ Promote regional cohesion and collaboration



*"First suburbs—
containing nearly
20 percent of the
U.S. population
—are inimitable
and quite distinct
from the rest of
the nation and
other parts of
metropolitan
America."*



METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM
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One-Fifth of America: A Comprehensive Guide to America's First Suburbs

Robert Puentes and David Warren

Neither fully urban nor completely suburban, America's older, inner-ring, "first" suburbs have a unique set of challenges—such as concentrations of elderly and immigrant populations as well as outmoded housing and commercial buildings—very different from those of the center city and fast growing newer places. Yet first suburbs exist in a policy blindspot with little in the way of state or federal tools to help them adapt to their new realities and secure a role as competitive and quality communities. This paper defines first suburbs throughout the nation, examines their similarities and differences, and, finally, sets out a policy agenda tailored specifically to these distinctive places.

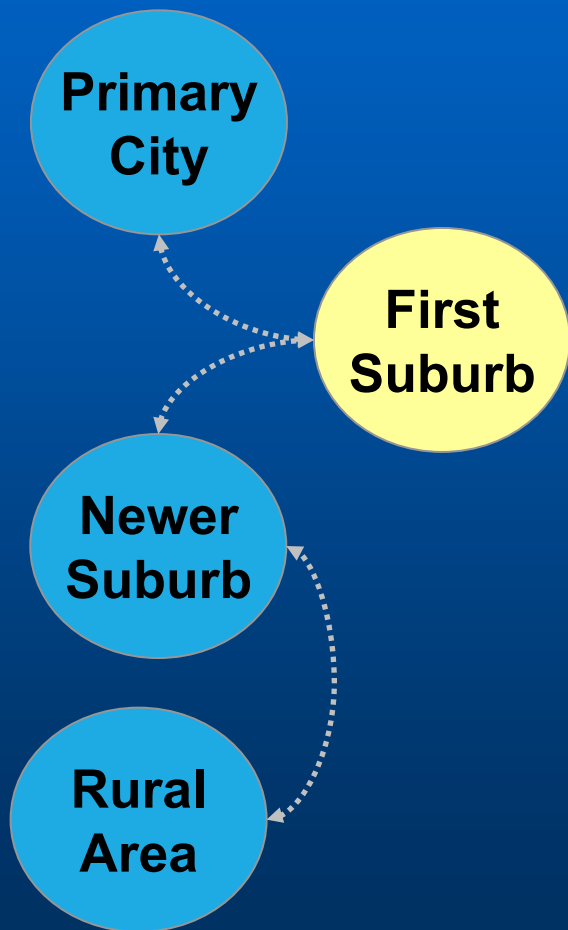
I. Introduction

One of the more encouraging metropolitan policy trends over the last several years is the increased attention on America's older, inner-ring, "first" suburbs. Beginning generally with Myron Orfield's *Metropolitics* in 1997, a slow but steady stream of research has started to shine a bright light on these places and begun to establish the notion that first suburbs have their own unique set of characteristics and challenges that set them apart from the rest of metropolitan America. Since then first suburbs in a few regions have assumed a small, but significant, role in advancing research and policy discussions about metropolitan growth and development.

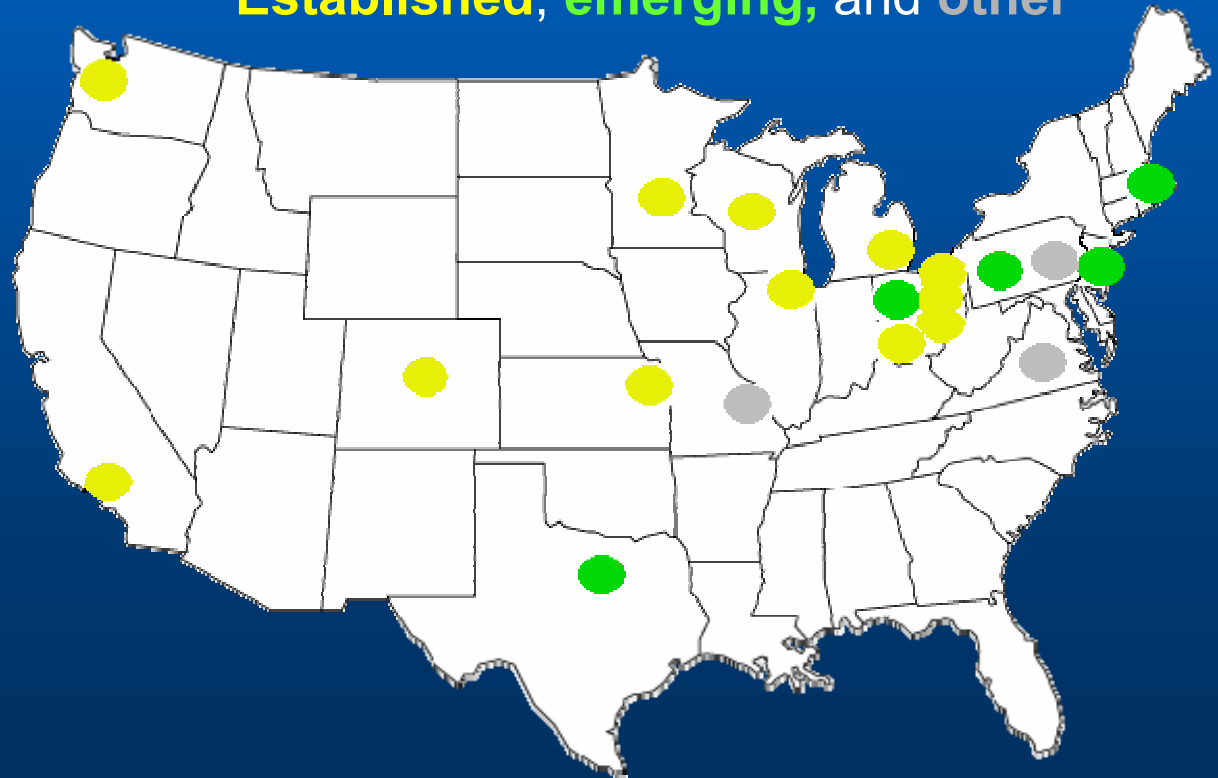
Home to nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population, first suburbs are, and have always been, important. They are generally defined as those places that developed first after their center city, before or during the rapid suburban expansion right after World War II, and before the newly developing suburbs of today. They are usually in the first ring of communities very close to the metropolitan core and often began as bedroom communities for professional, white, downtown commuters—think the Levittowns or, from television, Rob Petrie's New Rochelle, NY and even the Brady family's Studio City, CA home.

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Advancing a policy agenda for first suburbs will require new metropolitan political coalitions



First Suburban Coalitions
Established, **emerging**, and **other**



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Redefining the challenges facing metropolitan America and promoting innovative solutions to help communities grow in more inclusive, competitive, and sustainable ways.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Losing Ground: Income and Poverty in Upstate New York

In recent decades Upstate New York has transitioned from a stable middle-income region to one with serious income and economic problems. This paper, the fourth in a Metropolitan Policy Program series on the region, examines these trends in detail and proposes a number of policy responses.

- read the paper
- Special Series on the Health of Upstate New York

METROVIEW
Battleground State Demographics Diverge, by William Frey

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