BROOKINGS

1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
telephone 202.797.6139
fax 202.797.2965
web brookings.edu

Metropolitan
Policy
Program

Embargoed For Release
12:01 a.m. eastern time
Monday, April 6, 2009

CONTACTS: Carrie Collins, 301-664-9000 x18, ccollins@bcc-associates.com
Susan Kellam, 202-797-6310, skellam@brookings.edu

"Job Sprawl" Undermines Long-Term Regional, National Prosperity

Brookings Ranks Largest Urban Centers for Decentralization of Employment

(Washington, DC) – Since 1998, almost every major American metro area has seen a drop in the share of employment located downtown as jobs have increasingly moved into farther-out suburbs, exacerbating "job sprawl" – a phenomenon that threatens to undermine the long-term prosperity of the nation's vital economic engines, according to a report released today by the Brookings Institution.

Entitled "Job Sprawl Revisited: The Changing Geography of Metropolitan Employment," the report analyzes trends in the spatial distribution of jobs in large metro regions and how these trends differ across major industries. The report also presents a unique ranking of metro areas by the amount of "job sprawl" in their regions, charting the continued shift outward of employment away from their urban cores.

"'People sprawl' has long been known for its effect on the environment, infrastructure, tax base, quality of life, and more. Now, we must recognize what 'job sprawl' means for the economic health of the nation," stated Elizabeth Kneebone, author of the report and senior research analyst at the Metropolitan Policy Program.

"The location of jobs is also important to the larger discussion about growing the number of jobs," said Robert Puentes, a Brookings senior fellow. "Allowing jobs to shift away from city centers hurts economic productivity, creates unsustainable and energy inefficient development, and limits access to underemployed workers."

Only 21 percent of employees work within three miles of downtown, while over twice that number, 45 percent, work more than 10 miles away from the city center. In almost every major industry, jobs shifted away from the city center. Between 1998 and 2006, 95 out of 98 metro areas analyzed in this report saw a decrease in the share of jobs located within three miles of downtown, even though the number of jobs in all 98 metros rose during that period.

"These trends have persisted over periods of both economic expansion and decline. This suggests that, while the current recession may temporarily slow the rate of job sprawl, rising unemployment will not on its own reverse the long-run trend," added Kneebone.

According to the report, the decentralization of employment can undermine the economic health of cities and regions in many ways. It can boost energy consumption, add to the costs of building infrastructure for businesses that locate far from the urban core, increase commuting times, reduce innovation by lessening opportunities for firms to interact and exchange ideas, and isolate low-income and minority workers in the urban core from employment opportunities in outlying areas.

"The new stimulus package has spurred billions of dollars in spending to create or save millions of jobs, but it is unclear where those jobs will be created," added Puentes. "We have an opportunity to be strategic in planning more compact development that will result in more productive, sustainable, and inclusive metropolitan growth moving forward. In this environment, we must be aware of every policy option we have available to us to reverse these job sprawl patterns."

The large regions (over 500,000 jobs) with the most decentralized employment patterns are Detroit, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. Detroit is especially notable with 77 percent of its jobs located more than 10 miles outside its core, reflecting shifts in population and businesses dating back several decades. The small metro areas (165,000 to 500,000 jobs) that have the most job sprawl are Poughkeepsie, Scranton, Youngstown, and Worcester.

Metro Areas with Most Job Sprawl ***Large Employment Center***	**Share of Jobs – More Than 10 Miles Away From City Center***
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	77.4 percent
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	68.7 percent
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	66.9 percent
Los Angeles-Long Beach, Santa Ana, CA	65.6 percent
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE	63.7 percent
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	63.2 percent
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	62.6 percent
St. Louis, MO-IL	60.9 percent
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	57.3 percent
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	56.0 percent

Metro Areas with Most Job Sprawl	**Share of Jobs – More Than 10**

Small Employment Center	**Miles Away From City Center***
Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	67.4 percent
Scranton-Wilkes-Barre, PA	52.0 percent
Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	45.6 percent
Worcester, MA	44.8 percent
Knoxville, TN	44.3 percent
Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME	42.7 percent
New Haven-Milford, CT	42.3 percent
Greensboro-High Point, NC	39.9 percent
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	37.1 percent
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	36.2 percent

More centralized metro areas include Honolulu and Lexington. They lead the list for the share of their jobs within three miles of downtown, with each containing more than twice the average share of jobs in the urban core. Both of these regions were early adapters of policies that contained urban sprawl in the late 1950's. Virginia Beach, New York City, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, and Boston have the highest inner-ring job share among the large metro areas.

Most Centralized Metro Areas ***Large Employment Center***	**Share of Jobs – Within 3 Miles of City Center***
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	36.4 percent
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	34.8 percent
Salt Lake City, UT	32.8 percent
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	29.9 percent
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	28.0 percent
Louisville, KY-IN	27.8 percent
Pittsburgh, PA	25.9 percent
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	25.8 percent
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	24.9 percent
Nashville-Davidson—Murfreesboro, TN	24.8 percent

Most Centralized Metro Areas ***Small Employment Center***	**Share of Jobs – Within 3 Miles of City Center***
Honolulu, HI	55.6 percent
Lexington-Fayette, KY	48.0 percent
Bakersfield, CA	43.0 percent
Boise City-Nampa, ID	42.6 percent
Des Moines, IA	40.2 percent
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	39.4 percent
Lansing-East Lansing, MI	39.0 percent
Syracuse, NY	37.7 percent

Wichita, KS	36.9 percent
Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME	36.1 percent

***All numbers as of 2006**

For the complete report and statistics for all 98 metro areas, visit www. www.brookings.edu/metro.

More than half of the major metro areas examined in this study (53) experienced *rapid* job sprawl between 1998 and 2006, gaining a higher than average share of jobs beyond 10 miles of their urban cores and losing jobs in both their city centers and the rings 3-10 miles outside their centers. For some metro areas, like Atlanta and Washington, D.C., this outward shift came amidst net job gains shared across the region. Topping the list of metros that had the largest increase in jobs more than 10 miles from the central business district are Phoenix, Memphis, Jacksonville, Orlando, and Austin.

The types of industries in which a metro area specializes influence its spatial pattern of employment. For instance, areas with manufacturing, such as Detroit and Chicago, show higher than average levels of job sprawl while areas that specialize in information, such as Boston and New York, locate more jobs downtown. More than 30 percent of jobs in utilities, finance and insurance, and educational services locate within three miles of downtowns, while at least half of the jobs in manufacturing, construction, and retail are more than 10 miles away from central business districts.

The construction industry went through a boom in recent years in the South and West as many metros in these regions added population, helping to fuel the increase in jobs located in the metropolitan fringe. The South saw the most significant change: a 2.8 percent decrease in urban core job share coupled with a 4.8 percent increase in jobs moving to the outer ring. In the West, the share of jobs in the inner ring dipped by 2.1 percent and rose in the outer ring by 1.9 percent.

The Brookings report underscores how state and regional leaders must coordinate economic development and land-use strategies to promote more robust, inclusive, and sustainable future growth. The current economic crisis and implementation of the $787 billion federal stimulus package offer new opportunities to reorient traditional metropolitan job growth patterns in smarter ways.

About the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings
Created in 1996, the Metropolitan Policy Program (MPP) provides decision makers with cutting edge research and policy ideas for improving the health and prosperity of metropolitan areas including their component cities, suburbs, and rural areas. To learn more visit: **www.brookings.edu/metro.**

-END-