



METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM
THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

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

**Metro Profile: Pittsburgh
March 2007**

This profile provides key economic and demographic trend information on the Pittsburgh 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 Pittsburgh metropolitan area continues to lose population

Metropolitan Pittsburgh’s population decline accelerated between 2000 and 2005

In 2005, the Pittsburgh metropolitan area (consisting of Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland counties) had a population of 2,315,500—more than 43,200 fewer people than in 2000. This decline represents a sharp acceleration in population loss compared to the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, the metro’s population fell at an annualized rate of 0.15 percent per year; since 2000, that rate has more than doubled to a loss of 0.37 percent per year.

Despite overall loss, the Pittsburgh metro area’s population is becoming more diverse due to minority gains

Metropolitan Pittsburgh, like the rest of the state, saw its population become more diverse between 2000 and 2005. Even though the metro area lost population, it experienced a 5.4 percent increase (13,700) in its minority population. Nearly one-third of the increase in the Pittsburgh metro’s minority population was due to gains in the Latino population. However, the 18.2 percent increase in Hispanics was the second-lowest among the state’s metropolitan areas.

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%
Scrán./W.B./Haz.	-0.30%
Altoona	-0.37%
Pittsburgh	-0.37%
Johnstown	-0.49%
Pennsylvania	0.24%
United States	1.05%

Metropolitan Pittsburgh’s migration patterns show continued net out-migration

According to IRS county-to-county migration data, almost 80,800 more people moved out of the Pittsburgh metro area than moved in between 1994 and 2005.

The Trend: The Pittsburgh metro area is still spreading out—and hollowing out

Metropolitan Pittsburgh's older communities are still hollowing out

Between 1990 and 2000, metro Pittsburgh's cities, boroughs, and first-class townships lost population. The trend continued between 2000 and 2005, but at a much faster rate: the metro's cities went from an annualized decline of 0.68 percent per year to 0.99; the boroughs went from 0.52 percent to 0.83 percent losses; and the first-class townships tripled their pace of decline from 0.10 percent per year in the 1990s to 0.38 percent per year between 2000 and 2005. Only the metro area's second-class townships are growing, though the 0.54 percent annualized rate since 2000 is slower than the 0.65 percent mark recorded in the 1990s.

The majority of metropolitan Pittsburgh's housing permits are still issued in second-class townships

Housing data shows that the Pittsburgh metro's residential building activity continues to occur mainly in second-class townships, though the gap is slightly narrowing. Between 1995 and 1999, 12,347 permits were issued in the metro's cities, boroughs, and first-class townships while 16,904 were issued in second-class townships. Between 2000 and 2004, the number of permits issued in older places increased by 13.3 percent to 13,988, which actually was a higher percentage increase than in second-class townships. The number of permits issued to second-class townships rose 6.7 percent to 18,043.

Despite population losses in the 1990s, the Pittsburgh metropolitan area lost a large amount of rural land

Even with its population declines in the 1990s, metropolitan Pittsburgh still lost over 125,000 acres of rural land. And between 1980 and 2000, the loss was much greater: the Pittsburgh metro area lost 240,000 rural acres in this time, a 28 percent loss. Whereas the metro area's total developable land was 31 percent rural in 1980, by 2000 that share had fallen to just 22 percent.

The Trend: Metropolitan Pittsburgh's job growth lags behind the state

The Pittsburgh metro area matched the state on job growth in the 1990s but has lagged since 2000

Metropolitan Pittsburgh's 0.99 percent annualized rate of job growth in the 1990s virtually matched the 0.96 percent state rate during that time. Between 2000 and 2006, the Pittsburgh metro reversed course, shedding jobs at a rate of 0.14 percent per year as opposed to Pennsylvania's 0.18 percent rate of growth. However, between 2003 and 2006, metropolitan Pittsburgh added 3,400 jobs, increasing its employment by 0.17 percent annually.

Metropolitan Pittsburgh is losing manufacturing jobs faster than the state and is underperforming in many other industries

The Pittsburgh metro area continues to lose manufacturing jobs: its 22.8 percent loss between 2000 and 2006 slightly exceeded the state's 22.2 percent drop. Furthermore, metropolitan Pittsburgh lags the state in almost all other industries. Only in the educational and health services sector did the metro area approach the state's gains (a 12.9 percent increase since 2000 for Pittsburgh versus 14.9 percent for the state). However, the Pittsburgh metropolitan area still accounts for one-fifth of the state's total employment.¹

¹ The economic trends presented in the last two paragraphs utilize Bureau of Labor Statistics data that defines the Pittsburgh metropolitan area in a slightly different manner than in the rest of the analysis. In these paragraphs, the metro area includes Armstrong County.