



## CHAPTER 3: OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S PLACES

### INTRODUCTION

While life is good in Allegheny County, it is not without its challenges.

In this chapter, we examine the conditions affecting our quality of life today along with the changes and trends that will shape tomorrow's places. Understanding how today's settings came to be is important in predicting how they may change in the future. This analysis is central to *Allegheny Places* and its vision for the County's future. We are planning now so that we may direct and manage these changes, ensuring that today's places will continue to enrich the lives of residents and visitors tomorrow.

Not only should our places prosper, but so should the people that make these the treasured places that they are. We will continue to work to ensure that everyone is afforded equal opportunity to our future prosperity. We address important diversity and equity issues throughout *Allegheny Places*.

Additional supporting documents, including maps and tables, are found in the compact disc that accompanies this report. This material is based on information compiled and maintained by state, regional and County government agencies, as well as analyses produced specifically for *Allegheny Places*.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor



## A SNAPSHOT OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Allegheny County encompasses the City of Pittsburgh and its suburbs, in addition to the river towns and rural villages outside of the urbanized area. Located in southwestern Pennsylvania, Allegheny County is 730 square miles, or roughly half a million acres in size. The County is bordered by Butler, Armstrong, Westmoreland, Washington and Beaver counties (see Figure 3.1).

The County retains a strong ethnic character. Its first significant wave of immigration was from Great Britain, Ireland and Germany. Later Poles, Hungarians, Serbs, Croats, Italians and Russian Jews settled here. African-Americans came to the area in large numbers in the first half of the 20th century, largely through migration from the South.

Within our borders may be found world class architecture, medical centers, educational institutions, parks, museums, a zoo, aviary and major league sports facilities. More than 10 million people visit our attractions annually. Travel is a \$3 billion industry that provides more than 50,000 full-time equivalent jobs in Allegheny County. In 2007, *American Style* magazine ranked Pittsburgh the number one arts destination nationally among mid-sized cities. ShermansTravel.com named the region one of its ten most underrated travel destinations in the U.S.



**Figure 3.1 – Allegheny County**

Source: McCormick Taylor

One of Allegheny County's greatest assets is Pittsburgh, our County seat and economic and cultural center. Once the city was the center of the nation's steel industry; today it embraces both high-tech corporations and charming old world neighborhoods. But certainly Allegheny County is more than just Pittsburgh. In fact, there are 130 municipalities within the County.

The County's population in 2006 totaled 1.22 million, making it the second most populous county in Pennsylvania. The population of the County's municipalities ranges from 335,000 in the City of Pittsburgh, to 75 in Haysville Borough.

We have an extensive transportation network of air, water, highway, railroad and transit systems. The Port Authority of Allegheny County operates one of the nation's largest public transportation service networks.

Allegheny County is the region's employment center and attracts a significant number of workers from adjacent counties and states to fill jobs within its borders. The County is home to the headquarters of several Fortune 500 companies.

No longer reliant on heavy industry for jobs, Allegheny County has developed a more diversified, agile economy. Manufacturing remains an important sector of our economy, but it is no longer the most significant generator of regional income.

Today, our economy is led by the 'meds and eds'; that is, the prominent and prestigious medical and educational institutions located here. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) is a leading American health care provider and institution for medical research. Much important medical research takes place within our borders; the region ranked seventh in National Institutes of Health funding. A lot of high-tech research and development also happens here. Research at Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh has spurred a number of high-tech start-up companies. Over the

last year, we've experienced the largest growth in venture capital investment of any area in the country.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

In 2007, Pittsburgh was named one of "America's 50 Hottest Cities" for expanding and relocating companies by *Expansion Management* magazine. The designation was based on such factors as business environment, work force quality, operating costs, incentive programs, work force training programs and the ease of working with the local political and economic development community.

Workers are attracted to our County by career opportunities within various job sectors such as health care, finance, manufacturing, primary metals and educational services. Our largest employer is the University of Pittsburgh, primarily because of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Education is vitally important to Allegheny County for many reasons. We have a highly-educated working age population. According to the 2000 census, over 28% of those over 25 years old have at least a Bachelor's Degree, higher than the national average of 24%. This number rose to nearly 33% in 2005, as reported by the American Community Survey.

***Allegheny County consistently ranks high on lists of the nation's most livable areas.***

One of our greatest competitive advantages is our livability, which is a combination of our many strengths. *Places Rated Almanac* ranked Pittsburgh as "America's Most Livable City" in 2007. The region was ranked one of the smartest places to live in the nation by Kiplinger's *Personal Finance* magazine.

In 2006, *Reader's Digest* named the region one of the best places to raise a family. These assessments were based on factors such as our affordability, employment opportunity, quality of health care, cultural and leisure activities, education options, crime rates, commuting times and quality and cost of housing.

The cost of housing in the region ranks as the most affordable in the nation, according to the U.S. Census, and is well below the national median. Pittsburgh is also one of the safest cities of its size. According to recent Uniform Crime Reports, the City enjoys the seventh-lowest crime rate among 44 major U.S. cities.

Our County is stunningly beautiful. The area is known for scenic vistas created by steep-sided hills and winding river valleys. We have a number of sizable County parks that offer a variety of activities and extensive greenways and trail systems. Not to pile it on, but Pittsburgh was also named one of the best places to live by National Geographic *Adventure* magazine, which described our area as an "action-packed locale" for outdoor adventure.



Photo credit: Bernadette E. Kazmarski

***The secret is out. The nation is learning now what so many of us have long known: Allegheny County has special places in which to live, learn, work, invest and play.***

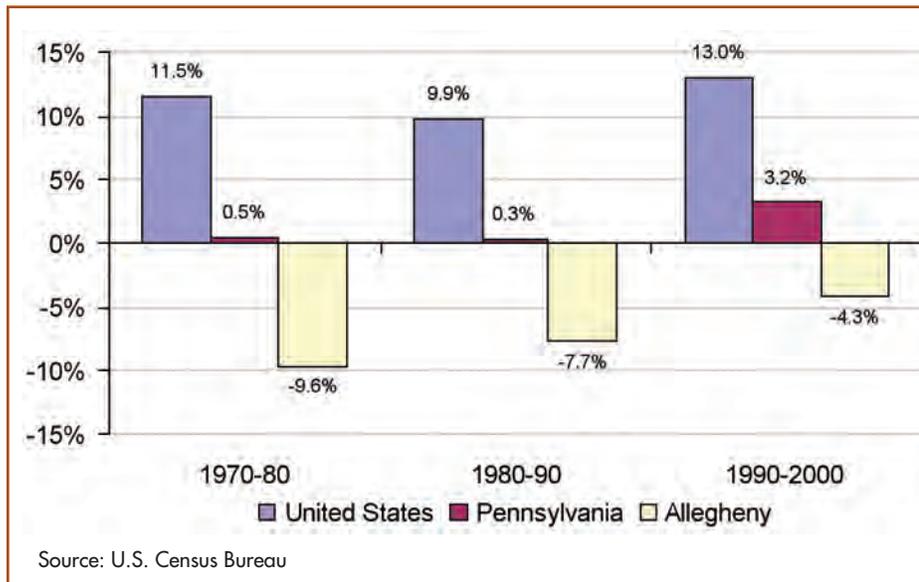


## A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Slow decline has been a defining trend in Allegheny County for decades. For more than 75 years the County has lagged behind the nation's and state's growth rate. In 2000, Allegheny County had a population of approximately 1.28 million. The population in 2006 was estimated to be 1.22 million. In each decade from 1970 to 2000, the County's population has decreased.

The population drain continues in the region, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures released in June 2007. Estimates of 2006 population show about 70% of the region's communities lost two percent or more of their residents since the 2000 estimate. Allegheny County, the urban core of Southwestern Pennsylvania, lost 4.3% of its population during that time.

In each decade from 1960 to 2000, the County's population has decreased. However, the rate of population loss is lessening, as shown in Figure 3.2. According to the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Social and Urban Research, this trend is projected to continue to 2010, with a slight increase through 2025 to 1.35 million.



**Figure 3.2 – Comparative Population Growth by Decade, 1970-2000**

The population decline stems from the continued economic restructuring of the region. Between 1978 and 1983 alone,

over 100,000 steel-related jobs were lost. This resulted in many young and working age people leaving the County in search of jobs.

There are further explanations for the County's population decline:

- Increased suburbanization has allowed people to live farther from their jobs. This means that while Allegheny County remains the job center for the region, many workers are living in counties surrounding Allegheny.
- The County has had more people leaving than moving in. The largest exodus was during the 1970s and 1980s, a trend that abated in the 1990s. Today, the Pittsburgh region has one of the lowest rates of domestic out-migration of any major metropolitan region in the country. But unfortunately, the Pittsburgh region also has one of the lowest rates of domestic in-migration in the country.
- Since the mid-1990s, Allegheny County has seen more deaths than births, an unusual occurrence in an urban county. Figure 3.3 shows recent trends in natural change, the difference between births and deaths.

In short, the Pittsburgh region's population remains stagnant largely because of low birth rate and low international immigration and not because of a continuing out-migration of young people. The low birth rate today is due to the out-migration of young people 20 years ago following the collapse of the steel industry – when they left the region, they took their future children and grandchildren with them.

Additionally, many local officials believe that high taxes are causing people to leave the County. The thinking is that working families are abandoning

core communities for lower taxes in outlying counties (as evidenced by the increasing number of commuters from these counties), while retirees are heading to regions of the country with lower taxes (as evidenced by the declining elderly population). Certainly, local income and property

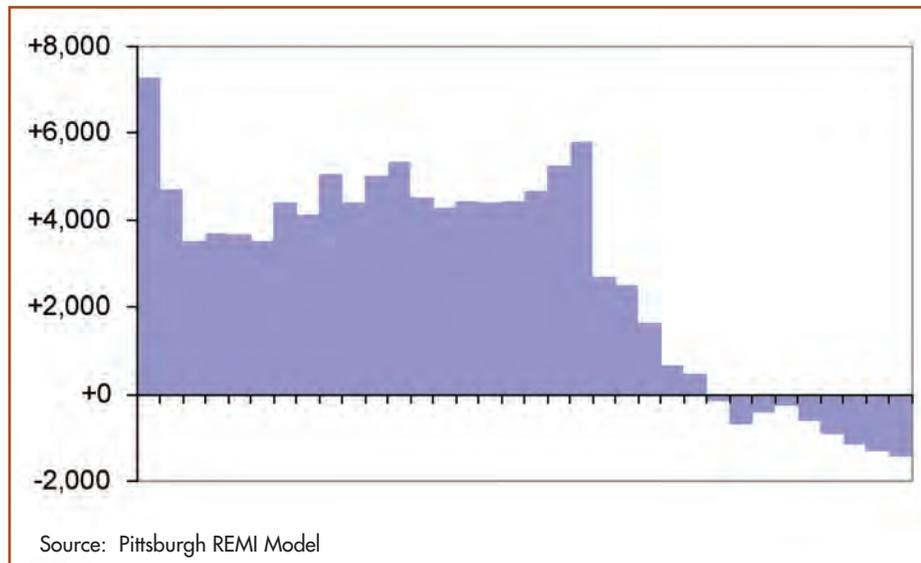
taxes are an important consideration for people when choosing where to live.

While Allegheny County's population has declined over the past several decades, the six surrounding counties have remained fairly stable (see Figure 3.4).

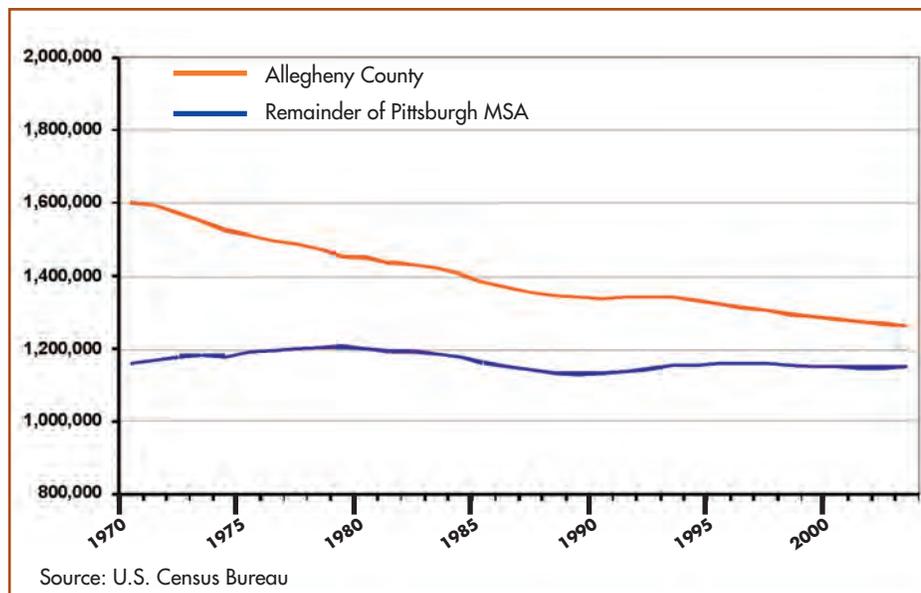
**AGE TRENDS**

An examination of population by age cohort can better provide an understanding of County demographics. With about 22% of the population comprised of individuals under the age of 18, the County can be described as having a medium-low percent of children. People 65 and older make up nearly 18% of the total population base. Compared to other counties throughout the nation, this represents a medium-high elderly proportion of the population.

Due to out-migration in the past three decades, people 65 and older increased as a proportion of the County's total population, as shown in Figure 3.5. This trend is reversing, however, with the elderly population peaking in 1994 and decreasing through 2000. For over a decade, the elderly population has been decreasing at rates higher than the rest of the County's population.



**Figure 3.3 – Natural Population Change (Annual Births minus Deaths)**



**Figure 3.4 – Population Change: 1970-2004 Allegheny County vs. Remainder of Pittsburgh MSA**

**DISABLED POPULATIONS**

The 2000 Census categorized six types of disabilities:

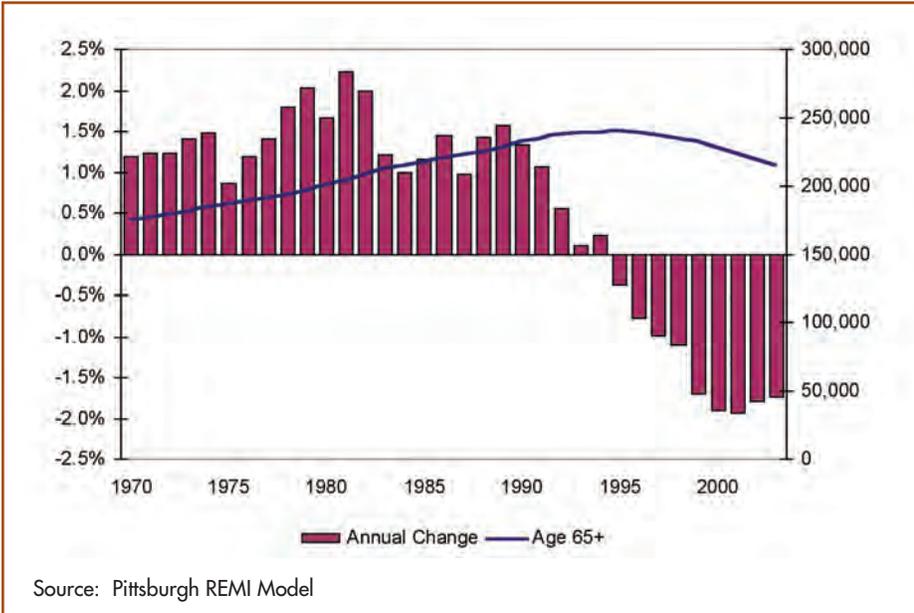
- **Sensory disability** – blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment
- **Physical disability** – limited in one or more basic physical activities, such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying
- **Mental disability** – learning, remembering, or concentrating
- **Self-care disability** – dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home
- **Going outside the home disability** – going out alone to shop or visit a doctor's office
- **Employment disability** – working at a job or business

The County's disabled population totaled 387,000 persons, according to the 2000 Census. This is approximately 30%



of the County's population, a rate similar to the rates of the nation (32%) and state (31%). The elderly (65 and over) comprise 42% of the County's disabled population.

southwest. The result is that the County is 'hollowing out', with more residents moving from the core communities to the outer perimeter. Figure 3.6 shows the municipalities in the outer areas of the County that are growing and those within the core that are losing residents.



**Figure 3.5 – Population Age 65 and Over, Allegheny County, 1970-2000**

Seventy-five municipalities in the County have a median age over 40. In nine communities, over one quarter of the population is age 65 and over. Many of these municipalities, along with neighborhoods in other communities, have become what are sometimes referred to as 'naturally occurring retirement communities'. In these communities, the elderly are not newly situated, as in traditional retirement communities. Instead, they have 'aged in place'.

***As residents move out of the core, the neediest people are left behind to bear the burden of increased costs for providing services.***

## A REDISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

Within Allegheny County, 97 of 130 municipalities lost population in the 1990s. Population decline was concentrated in the urban core and extended outward along the County's Three Rivers. The City of Pittsburgh suffered the largest population decline, with a loss of over 35,000 residents in the 1990s. The largest percentage of population decline in the 1990s occurred in Braddock Borough, which lost nearly 38% of its population.

***Relatively high proportions of elderly residents, coupled with little population growth projected over the next 20 years, means even greater population loss for many municipalities.***

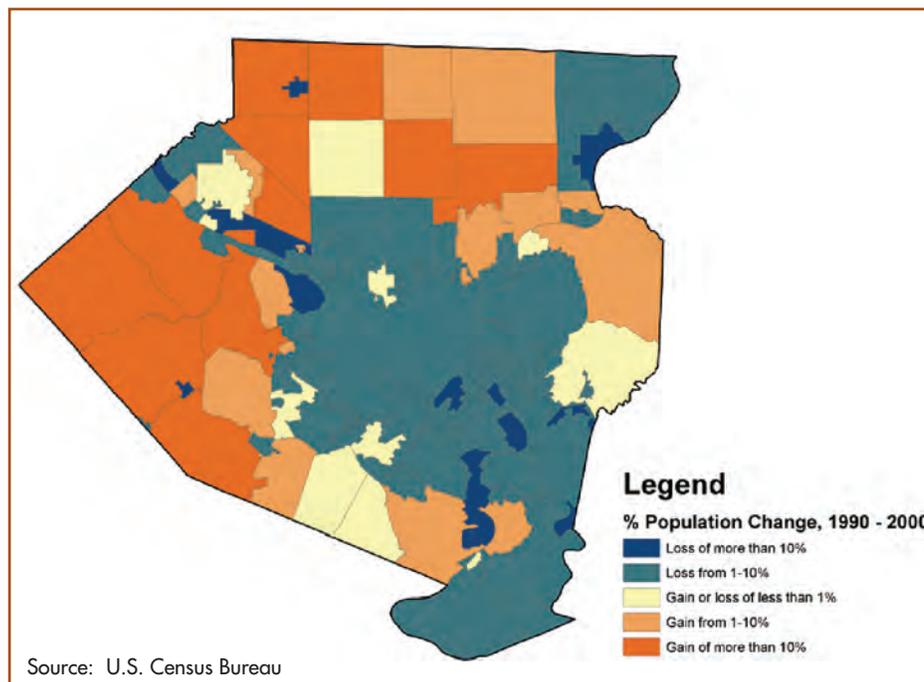
Population grew in just 33 municipalities during the 1990s. Only 16 municipalities increased their population by 5% or more during that time. Most of the growing communities are along the County's outer borders on the north, west and

Without population growth to replace natural population loss, older communities face increased tax burdens that threaten the provision of services and residents' quality of life, sending those areas into further decline.

With the decline of population also comes a decline in population density. In 1960, Allegheny County had 2,200 people per square mile. This figure dropped to 1,750 persons by 2000. Population density by municipality differs significantly across the County.

## MINORITY POPULATIONS

Allegheny County's minority population was 15.5% in 2000. African Americans make up nearly 12.5% of the population, while Asians are less than 2% and Hispanics less than 1% of the County's residents. African Americans and other minorities were concentrated in relatively few municipalities (see Figure 3.7). Seventy-five percent of the County's African American population lives in just four communities: the City of Pittsburgh, Wilkinsburg Borough, the Municipality of Penn Hills and the City of McKeesport.



**Figure 3.6 – Population Change 1990-2000**

## RACIAL EQUITY

A June 2007 report of the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems found that African Americans are highly segregated from Whites in the City of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh region while Asians and Hispanics are only moderately segregated from Whites.

The report, *Pittsburgh's Racial Demographics: Differences and Disparities* further revealed that in the City, County and region, less than a third of African American children are being raised in families with both of their parents, compared to more than half of Hispanic children, two-thirds of White children, and more than four out of five Asian children. Further, the percentage of African American two-parent families among African American families with children is much lower in the Pittsburgh area than in the nation.

In terms of education, the average African American student attends a school with a poverty rate of 65%, while this figure is only 28% for Whites. Additionally, 73% of the region's African American students would have to change schools in order to desegregate the region's elementary schools.

There is a strong correlation between poverty and race in Allegheny County. This leads to a disparity with tax rates that

falls along racial lines. On average, African Americans in the County pay a local income tax rate that is 49% higher than what Whites pay, a 2004 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette computer analysis determined. African American homeowners also pay higher millage rates than their White counterparts. This is due to the high tax rates in poor urban communities, as impoverished municipalities and school districts try to squeeze what revenue they can out of their meager tax base. The vast majority of African Americans have the burden of high tax rates in distressed municipalities, while most higher income Whites living in the suburbs on average pay taxes at a lower rate.

## INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION

Immigrant population is very low in Allegheny County. Most immigration to the area halted at the outbreak of World War I. Since then, relatively few people have come here from other countries, even though the nation as a whole has seen large increases in Hispanic and Asian immigration. In 2000 the foreign-born population was less than 4%, compared to 11% nationally. The 16,000 foreign-born residents represent the fewest number among the 25 largest American metropolitan regions. However, the County did experience a 15% increase in immigrant population between 1990 and 2000.

During the 1990s, more immigrants came to Allegheny County from Asia than from any other continent, according to the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy. The top two countries represented in the County's 2000 foreign-born population are Italy and India.

***The population of the Pittsburgh region is far less diverse than that of the nation primarily because the region has small Asian and Hispanic populations.***

There are various reasons why Pittsburgh has not been a part of the recent wave of Latino immigration. One reason may be that, contrary to popular perception, Pittsburgh is now one of the least 'blue-collar' regions in the country. Furthermore, there are not a lot of growth-related jobs in the County. Recent



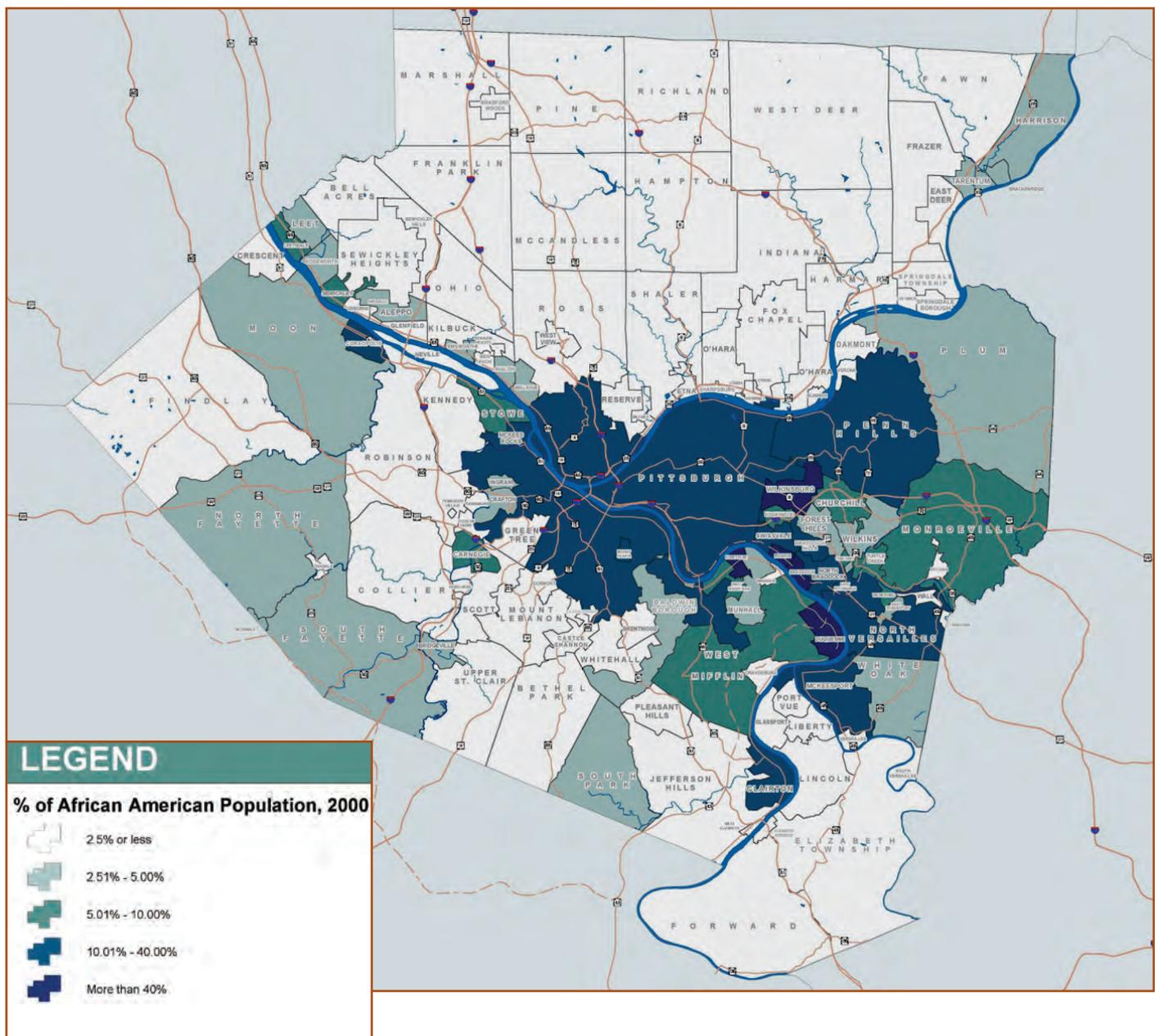
immigrants from Mexico or Central America tend to work in construction and other blue-collar jobs that depend on growth.

hospitals, universities and high-tech companies. Consequently, the region's population of immigrants is highly educated.

Immigrants are very sensitive to labor conditions and are more likely to move to those areas that offer the most economic opportunities. Skilled workers have come here from Europe, India, Asia and other regions to work at Pittsburgh's

***Growth will bring prosperity. By keeping the best and brightest here – and enticing others to come – the County can ensure continued innovation and revitalization of the economy.***

**Figure 3.7 – African American Population, 2000**



## LAND USE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Perhaps no Pennsylvania county has had its land use shaped more by geologic and natural features than Allegheny County. The flow of four major rivers – the Ohio, Allegheny, Monongahela, and Youghiogheny – created flat uplands and steep, V-shaped valleys that characterize the County. Flowing east to west, the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers merged to form the Ohio River in the center of the County, which today is the City of Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh's downtown core is clustered on a wedge of level ground framed by the rivers. The County lies on hills surrounding this historic river junction.

### HISTORIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Through the centuries, transportation gave shape to Allegheny County's growth. As new transportation routes were laid, development moved outward from Pittsburgh. Settlement patterns were influenced by the predominant transportation mode of the time.

#### Pedestrian Villages

Walking was the only form of transportation for most people until the early 1800s. Therefore, Allegheny County's 19th-century neighborhoods and villages were fairly small, generally no larger than a person could walk in a half-hour. Most people lived their entire lives within such an area.

#### Industrial Towns

From the mid-1800s through the mid-1900s, new towns sprung up outside of Pittsburgh, largely due to a transformation of industry. Small, craft-organized factories were being replaced by large industrial complexes in which mass production took place. Steel and coke productions were being integrated within a single mill. Manufacturers were building on extensive sites along the rivers with access to railroads.

Often, housing was built nearby for the workers who labored within those factories.

In the early 20th century, small cities, mill towns and hundreds of mining towns were scattered in the region

surrounding Pittsburgh. This pattern of old river towns is still very much in evidence today, despite the urbanization and suburbanization that has taken place around them.

#### Inclined Plane Neighborhoods

The County's neighborhoods were confined by hills, valleys and rivers. Industry occupied most of the flat land along the rivers and in the valleys. Only the hillsides and hilltops provided sufficient land for housing. Stairs up the steep slope led to the neighborhoods of Duquesne Heights and Mount Washington. Inclined planes were built in the latter half of the 19th century to make commuting easier.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

The first inclines were built to hoist coal down Coal Hill, later renamed Mount Washington. The passenger inclines, the rapid transit of their era, were built to move not only foot passengers, but freight and even horse and wagons. At one time, Pittsburgh had at least 17 inclines in operation.

The many inclines opened up the South Hills to early development. The Monongahela Incline led to the establishment of the Pittsburgh and Castle Shannon Railroad, which it tied into.

#### Railroad Suburbs

While the rivers influenced early land use patterns, the railroads and transit lines affected latter development. The railroad allowed the upper and upper-middle class to move out of the city and ride the train to work.



### ***Homewood, Shadyside and Oakland were railroad suburbs for wealthy factory owners and bankers.***

Early railroad suburbs generally followed the Pennsylvania Railroad to the east of Pittsburgh: Shadyside, East Liberty and Wilksburg. Several other railroad lines were built and converged in Downtown Pittsburgh. Stations became the focal points of villages that developed along the lines, including Avalon, Ben Avon, Crafton, Homewood, Rosslyn Farms, Sewickly, Shadyside and Thornburg.

### **Trolley Suburbs**

In the 1890s, the electric trolley, or streetcar, provided the region's first extensive public transportation. The trolley provided cheap, reliable short-distance transportation, allowing people to travel in 10 minutes what would otherwise take 30 minutes to walk. The trolley enabled middle-class people to live outside the city and commute to their jobs in the city.

Unlike much larger trains, trolleys were seemingly everywhere and took you wherever you wanted to go. Thus, the electric trolley made modern urban growth possible. Development occurred in outlying rural villages and along new residential and commercial corridors created along the routes. This growth took place in a predominantly fingerlike settlement pattern.

Through the latter part of the 19th century, the City of Pittsburgh grew rapidly to the east, the north and on the South Side. The County's trolley suburbs include Aspinwall, Bellevue, Brentwood, Brookline, Castle Shannon, Dormont, East Liberty, Mt. Lebanon, Oakmont, Whitehall and Wilksburg. Construction of a trolley tunnel through the base of Mount Washington in the early 1900s led to further development in the South Hills.

Trolley lines were built primarily to handle the rush hour crowds of workers going to and from their jobs. So that cars would not be idle on evenings and weekends, trolley owners developed attractions at the end of many lines. Kennywood was founded by the Monongahela Street Railway Company as a trolley park.

During its peak, Pittsburgh Railways, the dominant transit agency, had over 600 miles of track on nearly 100 trolley routes.

### **Automobile Suburbs**

In the early 1900s, new roads for automobiles led to development over a wider area than was stimulated by the trolley. The automobile was new, affordable and convenient. As their economic circumstances improved, people opted for private, rather than public transportation. Trolley ridership began to decline.

Development became more dispersed as workers were able to commute longer distances to work and as businesses moved away from the urban core. With commuters no longer needing to live within walking distance of a trolley line, residential suburbs could be built at lower densities that afforded more privacy. The car influenced both the physical layout of developments and the daily lives of residents.

Mount Washington presented a formidable barrier to southern expansion. However, once the Liberty Tunnels were constructed, the automobile accelerated suburbanization in the South Hills and neighborhoods filled in the areas between trolley suburbs.

The Lincoln Highway, the nation's first coast-to-coast highway, was constructed through Pittsburgh in the 1930s.

The Great Depression and World War II slowed housing construction, resulting in a severe housing shortage. When prosperity returned after the war, a strong housing demand, along with favorable public policies, helped create the suburban explosions of the late 1950s-1970s. Suburban housing developments spread across the landscape on a scale never before imagined.

Large residential subdivisions were connected to the city by arterials and freeways. Allison Park, Bethel Park, Churchill, Monroeville, Mount Lebanon, North Hills, Penn Hills, Pleasant Hills, West Mifflin, West View and Upper St. Clair are among the communities that developed as automobile suburbs.

In the 1950s and 60s, drive-in restaurants and strip shopping centers developed along major roadways. In the 1980s, suburbanization extended further outward to Cranberry and Moon townships. Generally, residents of the outer suburbs don't commute into Pittsburgh at all, but rather to a suburban office or industrial park.

Today, regional shopping centers, particularly the mega-retail complexes that have been newly built, are located along the County's major roadways, such as the parkways, Route 28, and Interstates 79 and 279. Some are part of mixed-use

developments occupying lands once used by steel mills. Business parks and large industrial districts are located throughout the County along the major roadways as well.

### TODAY'S LAND USE PATTERN

Over the last two decades, development patterns in Allegheny County have taken the form of low-density sprawl (see Map 3.1). According to the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, metropolitan Pittsburgh converted nearly 202,000 acres of land to urban uses from 1982 to 1997, an increase of almost 43%. However, the number of households grew by less than 24,000 during that time, an increase of only 2.5%. This means the region developed an astonishing 8.5 acres of land for every added household. The national average for that same period of time was about 1.3 acres.

***There has not been enough growth in Allegheny County to sustain growth in both core and outer communities.***

Low-density suburban sprawl has led to a declining urban core. A decline in core areas depresses property values and reduces older communities' ability to raise tax revenues. Reinvestment in older areas is needed to prevent further declines.

### A WELCOME TREND

A number of prominent projects have been completed in recent years that typify another important development trend taking place in Allegheny County.



Photo credit: Allegheny County

New mixed-use developments are being created that incorporate residential, commercial, light industrial, and research and development uses into attractively landscaped settings. Vacant, underutilized industrial properties are being redeveloped, and riverfronts are being revitalized. Notable examples include:

- **Carrie Furnace** – Allegheny County has purchased the former Carrie Furnace site on the banks of the Monongahela in Swissvale, Rankin and Braddock and is proceeding with plans to redevelop the site. The development is expected to include housing, a hotel, a conference center, offices and light industry, a transportation center and, possibly, a steel industry heritage park and museum.
- **Duquesne City Center** – The former U.S. Steel Duquesne Works is a 150-acre brownfield being redeveloped into an industrial business park. The construction of the Duquesne/McKeesport fly-over ramps will provide needed transportation access to this site.
- **Leetsdale Industrial Park** – a 40-acre brownfield site along PA Route 65 has been redeveloped into a business park.
- **McKeesport** – the site of the old U.S. Steel National Tube Works in a 25-acre brownfield that is being redeveloped into an industrial park. The construction of the Duquesne/McKeesport fly-over ramps will also provide improved transportation access to this site.
- **Pittsburgh Technology Center** – originally the site was occupied by the Pittsburgh and Boston Copper Smelting works. The last company to have operations on the site was the Pittsburgh Works of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, which closed in 1979. The site now incorporates high-tech buildings and generous open spaces, representing Pittsburgh's evolution from a town founded on heavy industry to a city on the cutting edge of innovative research and technology.
- **South Side Works** – a mixed-use development encompassing office space, a sports medicine complex and practice fields, housing and retail at the former LTV Steel South Side Works in Pittsburgh.
- **Summerset at Frick Park** – a former riverside slag dump is being transformed into Pittsburgh's largest residential development since World War II. The



238-acre site will include 336 single-family homes, 121 townhouses and 256 apartment units.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

- **The Waterfront** – built on the site of the former Homestead Steel Mill, the development provides 260 acres of shopping, entertainment and dining. A towering line of smoke stacks remains, the legacy of the former steel mill, where the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 took place, a labor riot between the military and the steelworkers of Andrew Carnegie.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

- **Washington's Landing** – a mixed-use development on the 42-acre Herr's Island in the Allegheny River. The once blighted area now encompasses a full service marina, market-rate housing, office/research and development/light industrial uses, a rowing center and a public park.

But not all notable developments are on former brownfields, nor are they mixed-use:

- **Airside Business Park** – a state-of-the-art office and flex park located in Moon Township along Route 60. The business park is made up of five buildings on 20 acres of land that used to be the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport's parking lot.
- **Tech 21 Research Park** – Allegheny County established this \$200 million complex in Marshall Township to be a magnet for technology firms. Tech 21 can accommodate 16 building parcels averaging 800,000 square feet. The research park will provide pad-ready sites as well as a number of 'green' features – conservation areas, forested and landscaped buffer zones and open spaces. Long-term plans for Tech 21 include development of a hotel, two restaurants and a 120-unit multifamily residential community. At full development, Tech 21 is expected to create more than 4,000 jobs.
- **Crawford Square** – an 18-acre residential development providing mixed-income housing to residents in a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood. Crawford Square has 426 rental units, half of which are subsidized, as well as for-sale housing in a neotraditional neighborhood.

New residential developments are beginning to offer a variety of housing options for all incomes.

## POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION

The land use pattern seen in Allegheny County today is, in large part, the result of the mosaic of municipalities that comprise the County. Historically, municipalities have had a large degree of autonomy, especially in land use planning and the approval of land development.

When Allegheny County was established in 1788, it had only seven townships. Today, the County has 130 municipalities. These municipalities derive their right of government from

the state and do not come under the jurisdiction of County government.

***According to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, more than one-third of the County's municipalities – or 46 – have less than one square mile of land and 14 have a population less than 1,000 people.***

Through the centuries, communities developed and new local governments were established. Many were company towns. In 1857, a change in state law made it easier to form new municipalities, prompting citizen action. One hundred new governments were established in Allegheny County since that time. These municipalities were typically formed because people living in more densely settled communities wanted improved services, such as quality schools, better road maintenance and sanitary sewer systems. The new governments gave residents more local control over the future of their communities. Allegheny government is rooted in this parochialism, which remains strong today.

Many local government experts believe that Allegheny County has too many municipalities, and that taxes could be reduced and services improved if some of them merged. However, the Commonwealth's constitution currently requires a majority of voters in each municipality to approve the merger of two or more municipalities. This is unlikely, considering the deep-seated loyalties that residents and officials have for their local identity.

Yet, the realities are such that the County's large number of municipalities cannot continue to exist independently. Many local governments simply can't afford to provide services by themselves and keep tax rates down. As a result, municipalities are looking for ways to cooperate with their neighbors to save money. Some smaller municipalities are contracting with the larger townships that surround them for police services. It is becoming increasingly common, according to the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, for municipalities to coordinate purchasing departments and rely on intermunicipal bodies, especially Councils of Government, to administer billing and personnel management in order to create economies of scale that result in cost savings.

New levels of cooperation among governments, multi-municipal planning and public-private partnerships are leading to exciting developments in our future, ensuring that Allegheny County will remain a great place to live, work, invest, learn and play.

***This chapter gave you a general understanding of Allegheny County. In the next chapter, we examine conditions, analyze issues, discuss goals, objectives and policies, and provide recommendations for each of the twelve elements of the comprehensive plan.***

