

DEMOGRAPHIA

Functional v. Jurisdictional Analysis of Metropolitan Areas

(The Demographia City Sector Model)

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The City Sector Model is not dependent upon municipal boundaries (the term "city" is generic, and refers to cities in their functional sense, metropolitan areas, or in their physical sense, urban areas). Not being constrained by municipal boundaries is important because core municipalities vary substantially. For example, the core municipality represents less than 10 percent of the population of Atlanta, while the core municipality represents more than 60 percent of the population of San Antonio. The City Sector Model applies data available from the US Census Bureau to estimate the population and distribution of Pre-Auto Urban Cores in a consistent manner.

At the same time, the approach is materially different from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) classification of "principal cities." It also differs from the Brookings Institution "primary cities," which is based on the OMB approach. The OMB-based classifications classify municipalities using employment data, without regard to urban form, density or other variables that are associated with the urban core. These classifications are useful and acknowledge that the monocentric nature of US metropolitan areas has evolved to polycentricity. However, non-urban-core principal cities and primary cities are themselves, with few exceptions, functionally suburban.

The criteria in the City Sector Model are calibrated to the 2010 US Census and is applied to major metropolitan areas (Over 1,000,000 population in 2013).

[Introduction to the City Sector Model and 2010 Population Analysis](#)
[Population Trends from 1990 to 2010](#)
[Commuting Situation and Trends: 2000-2010](#)

City Sector Model Criteria: Below

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CITY SECTORS

PRE-AUTO URBAN CORE

Not auto exurban
7,500 + Density &
20%+ Transit, Walk,
Bike Market Share
& other areas with
median year house
built before 1946

AUTO SUBURBAN: EARLY

Not auto exurban
Median house built
1946 to 1979

AUTO SUBURBAN: LATER

Not auto exurban
Median house built
1980 & later

AUTO EXURBAN

Outside principal
urban area or
population density
under 250
regardless of
median year
structure built.

← PHYSICAL CITY (URBAN AREA) →

←-FUNCTIONAL CITY (METROPOLITAN AREA OR LABOR MARKET) →