

ACTING AS ONE –
Not
BECOMING ONE
(that is, city-county merger)

**A presentation to the
Pittsburgh Interfaith
Impact Network (PIIN)
Pittsburgh, PA
March 25, 2004**

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**In addition to
region's economic trauma
(loss of steel industry, etc.),
decline and fiscal crisis of
city of Pittsburgh
and many boroughs
are the result of
sprawl, racial segregation,
and concentrated poverty.**

**Pittsburgh and boroughs
are "inelastic cities"
within "little boxes" region
in Age of Sprawl.**

PITTSBURGH'S SPRAWL: ‘No-Growth Growth’

1950 to 2000

growth of urbanized population = 14%
growth of urbanized land = 236%
land-to-population growth ratio = 17 to 1
(national average = 3 to 1)

**fixed boundary cities & boroughs
= steady population loss:**

Pittsburgh (from 1950) -51%
Pittsburgh (from 1980) -21%
Wilkinsburg (from 1980) -19%
Braddock (from 1980) -48%

= steady household loss:

Pittsburgh (from 1970) -19%
Wilkinsburg (from 1970) -9%
Braddock (from 1980) -50%

Racial segregation leads to economic isolation

Metro Pittsburgh

(segregation index: 100 = total apartheid)

1970	75
2000	67

Median family income as pct of county median

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>2000</u>
Pittsburgh	96%	87%	78%
Wilksburg	111%	92%	67%
Braddock	80%	na	42%

Family poverty rate as pct of county rate

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Pittsburgh	156%	191%	190%
Wilksburg	113%	164%	201%
Braddock	na	218%	435%

CITY-COUNTY MERGER CANNOT WORK HERE

1. Only central cities and their counties actually consolidate. Not one smaller city or town has *ever* joined city-county merger *anywhere*.

2. Allegheny County is totally divided into 130 cities, boroughs, and townships. Allegheny County has no unincorporated areas (new tax base, undeveloped land) as “dowry” to bring to marriage with Pittsburgh.

CITY-COUNTY MERGERS

By how much did city’s land area and population grow after merger (“dowry”)?

community	non-merged cities & <u>towns</u>	post-merger land <u>“dowry”</u>	post-merger population <u>“dowry”</u>
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“Big Box” (unincorporated land)

ANCHORAGE, AK	0	10,377%	185%
LEXINGTON, KY	0	1,137%	125%
COLUMBUS, GA	1	211%	18%
ATHENS, GA	2	610%	96%
AUGUSTA, GA	2	1,424%	317%
JACKSONVILLE, FL	4	2,409%	246%
NASHVILLE, TN	7	1,532%	196%
INDIANAPOLIS, IN	14	408%	55%
LOUISVILLE, KY	92	300%	108%

“little boxes” (no unincorporated land)

KANSAS CITY, KS	2	0%	-7%
<i>PITTSBURGH, PA*</i>	<i>129</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>BUFFALO, NY*</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>
<i>ROCHESTER, NY*</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>0%</i>

**consolidation under discussion*

**WORKABLE ALTERNATIVE:
USE ALLEGHENY COUNTY
(ONLY “BIG BOX”)**

- 1. TO MERGE CERTAIN SERVICES
FOR COST SAVINGS
 (“service efficiency”),
AND**
- 2. TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR
KEY ISSUES THAT CROSS
MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES
 (“social effectiveness”).**

**MODERNIZATION OF
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
THROUGH CONVERSION FROM
THREE COMMISSIONERS
TO ELECTED CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AND NINE-MEMBER COUNCIL
WAS UNDERTAKEN
PRECISELY FOR THIS PURPOSE.**

SERVICE EFFICIENCY

**Recent example: Unified 911 service
between city and county**

**Possibility: Have Pittsburgh contract with
County for homicide investigations
(County does so now for 128 municipalities.)**

**Possibility: Have Pittsburgh contract with
County for other investigative services
(County does so now for many municipalities.)**

**NOTE: All municipalities maintain
their own police patrol services.**

SOCIAL EFFECTIVENESS

Successful example:

Allegheny Regional Asset District

Under special state law,

County passed 1% sales tax (1994).

**In FY 2004, District distributes
\$75 million to civic, cultural and
recreational entities, libraries,
parks and sports facilities.**

**Another \$75 million goes to County and
130 municipal governments
for services or property tax cuts.**

Key County-Wide Issues:

- **land use/transportation planning**
 - **fair share affordable housing**
 - **further tax base sharing**
 - **economic development**
- (with local non-aggression pacts)**

CHALLENGE TO PIIN: ALLEGHENY COUNTY COMPACT

- 1. Get special state law giving County authority to designate “issues of common concern.”**
- 2. With municipal and citizen input, County develops plan for**
 - a) merged services (e.g. waste disposal, rescue squads), or**
 - b) county-wide policy (e.g. land use plan, fair share housing)**
- 3. County plan goes into effect for all upon ratification either by**
 - a) approval by city and borough councils and township boards representing 2/3 of county’s population; or**
 - b) majority vote of citizens in county-held referendum.**

**REGIONAL CHALLENGE
TO ALLEGHENY COUNTY:
GROWTH AND WEALTH MOVING
BEYOND
COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY'S
SHARE OF METRO AREA
NEW HOUSING STARTS**

1960s	58%
1970s	48%
1980s	47%
1990s	38%

**MEDIAN HOME VALUE
AS PERCENT OF
METRO MEDIAN IN 2000**

BUTLER	133%
WESTMORELAND	105%
WASHINGTON	102%
BEAVER	99%
ALLEGHENY	98%
FAYETTE	74%

**SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION**

**[a] is federally-designated
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
that allocates \$33 billion in federal and state
transportation funds (by 2030);
[b] controls federal funds from
Appalachian Regional Commission; and
[c] controls federal funds from
Economic Development Administration**

Members (5 votes each)

**Allegheny County
City of Pittsburgh
Armstrong County
Beaver County
Butler County
Fayette County
Greene County
Indiana County
Lawrence County
Washington County
Westmoreland County**

SPC VIOLATES FAIR REPRESENTATION

**PITTSBURGH-
ALLEGHENY COUNTY
HAS 48% OF SPC'S
POPULATION,
BUT ONLY
18% OF VOTES
AND ONLY TWO MEMBERS ON
INFLUENTIAL 16-MEMBER
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

**NO WONDER
FEDERAL DOLLARS
FAVOR SPRAWL OVER
“FIX IT FIRST!”**

**CHALLENGE TO PIIN:
FAIR SPC REPRESENTATION**