

Regional Landscapes of the United States and Canada

MEGALOPOLIS

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MEGALOPOLIS

- Term used to describe any large urban area created by the **growth toward each other** and **eventual merging of two or more cities**.
- The French geographer **Jean Gottman** adopted the term in 1961 for the title of his book, *"Megalopolis: The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States."*

Megalopolis

When used with a capital **"M"**, the term denotes the almost unbroken urban development that extends from north of Boston, MA to counties south of Washington, DC (from Portsmouth, NH approaching Richmond, VA).

With a lower case **"m"** the term is applied to any string of adjoining very large cities.



Megalopolis at Night

Megalopolis extends over 500 miles from the northern fringe of the Boston metro area (in NH) to Washington, DC metro area.

Some people have it extending to Richmond, VA.



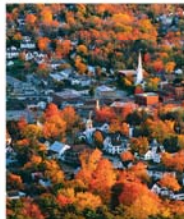
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LANDSCAPES of Megalopolis



Includes large cities, small towns and rural areas where most of the people reside in an urban place.

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From the beginning: SETTLEMENT

A place where one person or a group of people live.



Settlements are differentiated on the basis of

- size** = number of people present
- spacing** = distance from each other
- function** = reason for people grouping there

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HIERARCHY of SETTLEMENT

As the number of settlers (people) increase from the single **dwelling** (house) to **hamlet** (group of houses) to **village** to **town** to **city**, a **hierarchy of form and function** is created.

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HIERARCHY of SETTLEMENT

The **smallest settlements** are greatest in number and located relatively close to each other. They provide residents with **basic necessities**.

The **larger settlements** (cities) are more complicated, offer **variety of goods and services** and are located at greater distances from each other.

People will travel to get the goods and services they need.

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URBAN SETTING

What is an urban area? How is it characterized?

Has a **large number** of people.

Has a **high concentration** (density) of people and buildings (usually in tall buildings).

Has **numerous functions** (activities/services) for the people to offer, use and be a part of.

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URBAN SETTING

An **URBAN** area (city) is surrounded by a **SUBURB** (less than urban) that is **dependent** on the urban area and an

EXURB (beyond the city and suburb) where residents live in a rural setting but are **city oriented**.

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URBANIZATION

Urbanization is tied to changes in economic activities **away** from agriculture.

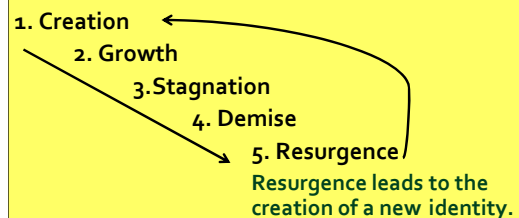
It allows people to develop a **social order with a division of labor** – specialists, craftsmen, merchants, etc. – that supports the activities of other people.

Service sector of economy grows.

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Urban Landscape Development

The development of an urbanized area takes on a life cycle.



URBANIZED AREA

- ✓ Exhibits unique activities or “functions” that draw people to it.
- ✓ Spatial organization (intense and complex)
- ✓ Site/situation advantages (reasons for location).
- ✓ Pull factors (reasons to concentrate people).
- ✓ Economic advantages associated with accessibility and movement (as both a collection and distribution point).

Historic Unique FUNCTIONS

(remember these when we look at other regions)

Activities that draw people include:

- Defense (fort)
- Government (administration)
- Transportation conveniences (ford, crossroads, fork)
- Commerce and trade (market)
- Manufacturing (raw materials to finished product)
- Recreation (resorts)
- Culture (education/religion/the arts)
- Special activity (mining/forestry/fishing)

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SITE & SITUATION

The original location aspects of an urban place's physical and cultural environments are related to function (reason for being; why there?), accessibility to resources, and growth pattern.

BUT

The quality of location changes with time.

The rise and fall of urban places can be documented by the changing quality of their location.

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Historic Favored SITE Factors

(remember these when we look at other regions)

- Fertile river valley
- Freshwater source
- ✓ Island
- ✓ Hilltop
- ❖ River crossing
- ❖ Crossroads
- ❖ Confluence of two rivers
- ❖ Portage point
- Sheltered bay
- Head of navigation
- Source of waterpower
- Mineral location
- ❑ Strategic overlook
- ❑ Area near entrance to a mountain pass

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ECONOMIC BASE

A city can only survive if it has an economic base.

Economic base of a city is a mix of manufacturing and service activities that satisfy the needs of the city and earn income for the city.

The economic base consists of a **BASIC sector** and a **NON-BASIC sector**.

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Economic Base

The **basic sector** **earns money** from outside the city by selling products.

The **non-basic sector** **services the resident workers** with grocery stores, retail shops, repair shops, schools, local transit, health care, etc.

Multiplier Effect: On average, 2 non-basic workers are needed for every 1 basic worker. Non-basic workers are needed to support other non-basic workers. (But the reverse happens, too.)

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Megalopolis Today

- **Urban landscape is the dominant.**
- Urbanization has expanded into the surrounding farmland.
- **Rural areas persist but are getting smaller.**
- 10 major metropolitan areas of over 1 million people, plus numerous smaller cities with large populations.
- Has **17%** of the total U.S. population but only **1.5%** of the total land area
- **17%** of all U.S. export trade moves through its six major ports.
- It is a **region** of international significance.
- Higher than average proportion of white-collar employment.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS of Megalopolis

- **Coastal location** allowed for regional trade and interaction with the world, esp. Europe.
- **Numerous estuaries** (drowned river mouths) which form good harbors.
- **Moderate climate**; cold winters.
- **Variable soils** that provided enough food for residents but tend to be less productive. (*Better in the area south of Philadelphia*).
- Relatively **flat to gently rolling terrain**.
- Straddles **2 physiographic regions** and includes the **Fall Line**.

SITE FACTOR: The Fall Line

- Marks the border between the **Piedmont** and the **Atlantic Coastal Plain**.
- **Rapids and waterfalls are present.** Rivers flow from the Piedmont's (hard rock) higher elevation onto the soft rock coastal plain.
- **These were the sites for the first water mills** that were the catalyst for urban development.



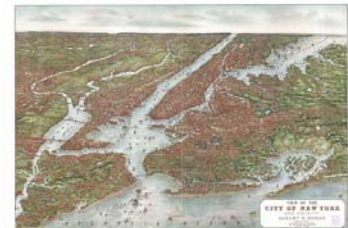
Boston



Boston



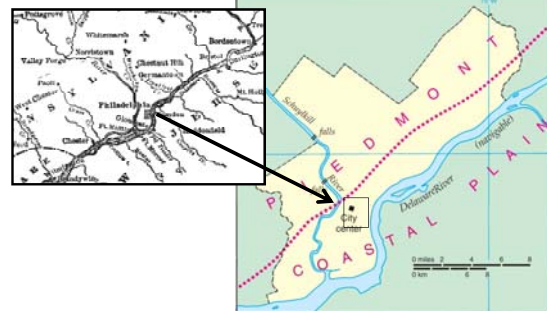
New York City



New York City



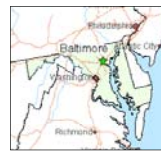
Site and Situation of Philadelphia



Philadelphia



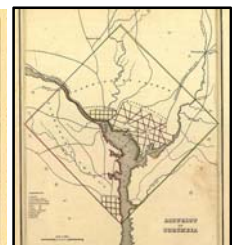
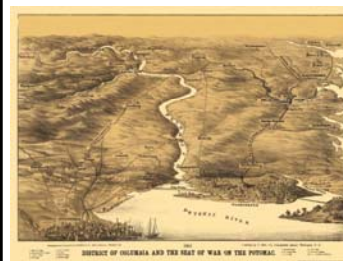
Baltimore



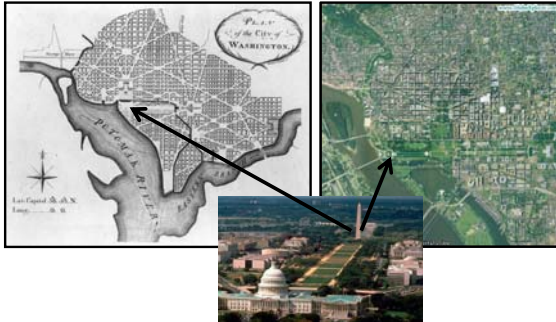
Baltimore



Washington, DC



Plan of Washington, DC

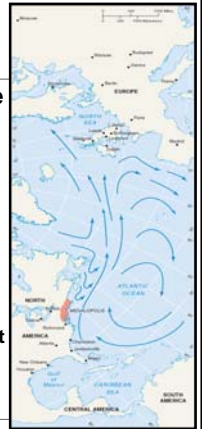


Regional SITUATION of Megalopolis

Good location relative to Europe for trade and immigration.

Accessible.

- Along the trade routes to Europe, Caribbean and South America.
- Good harbors.
- Routes to the interior (hinterland). Natural and man-made, esp. Hudson-Mohawk corridor and the Erie Canal)
- Convenient stop-off/service point for ships sailing the North Atlantic route.



HINTERLAND

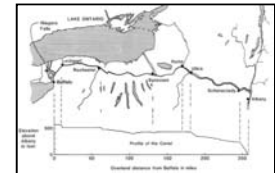
A **tributary or service** area defined as:

1. The inland area lying beyond a coastal district.
2. The land surrounding a city that
 - a) gets goods and services from that city.
 - b) supplies the city with goods, resources and labor.

Access to the Interior (hinterland)

Only NYC had direct access to the interior of North America. The **Hudson-Mohawk Corridor** provided an easy and fast route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes.

The **Erie Canal** enhanced this route. It led to the rapid growth of NYC and NYS.



Urban Landscape GENERALIZATIONS

- **Visible characteristics**
 - Tall buildings
 - Many people
 - Busy streets
 - Industrial plants
 - Cultural institutions
- **Metropolitan expansion**
 - First, merging of nearby urbanized areas into metropolitan centers
 - Then, a process of *channeled* growth along lines of transportation

NEEDS of the Urban Landscape

- **Public services**
 - Water, sewage, garbage pickup
 - Public safety
 - Welfare
- **Accessibility/mobility**
 - Early cities less concerned with accessibility
 - Demand increased by high level of interaction
 - Shaped by spatial arrangement of land uses
 - Highways, parkways, beltways, expressways, mass transit created to move people and goods quickly.

CHANGING Urban Landscape

- Dynamic nature of the urban landscape; seems to be always changing; evolving.
- Things are done on a large scale.
- **Vertical use replaces horizontal use** as space runs out
- Seems to be less “natural” and more of an artificial environment.

Agriculture and Megalopolis

- **Changes related to land availability:** shift to table or specialty crops:
 - High value, perishable: dairy products, fruits, and vegetables; horticulture; floriculture
 - Require considerably less land
- **Changes in land value**
 - Valued for more intense uses
 - Rise in property taxes
 - Greatest impact along lines of interurban access

Changes in Megalopolis's Population: **Composition**

An urban area needs workers.

- **Original Immigration from Europe now worldwide.**
 - Establishment of ethnic neighborhoods.
- **Internal migration from other regions**
 - Increased African American migration to northern cities for jobs.
 - Job-related settlement created high-density neighborhoods.
 - From 1960s: Dispersal away from job locations to residential neighborhoods and suburbs.

Changes in Megalopolis's Population: **Redistribution over 50 years**

- Growth of suburbs (1950s).
- Migration of urbanites to small, distant towns between cities (1980s).
- High-rise office and residential clusters in the central business districts “CBD” (1990s).
- Slowing of movement out of central cities.
- Movement back to cities “*gentrification*” (2000s).
 - Attraction of jobs and amenities to higher-income workers.
 - Displacement of low-income residents.
 - Ethnic neighborhoods change.

GENTRIFICATION

The process of socio-economic and cultural change that occurs when wealthier people (the “gentry”) buy and move into housing property in urban areas where the existing population is less prosperous.

Includes the conversion of other properties (as warehouses and factories) **into other upscale uses** – stores, residential rentals, co-ops and condos.

Characteristics of neighborhoods change.

PROBLEMS of Megalopolis and its cities

- ✓ **Congestion:** large numbers of people, local transportation, housing
- ✓ **Health Issues:** food, water supply, waste management, controlling disease, dealing with dying and dead people
- ✓ **Quality of Life Issues:** crowding, crime, poverty, health care, pollution
- ✓ **Pollution:** air, water, land, noise
- ✓ **Hazards:** storms, earthquakes, flooding, fire, terrorism

THE SUBURBS

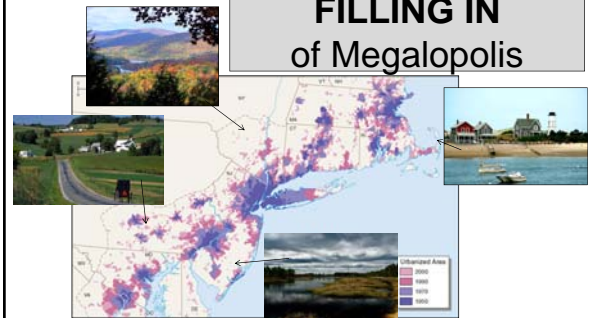
Suburbanization began in Nassau County, NY, as people wanted a better life while still working in NYC.

60 yrs later all suburbs have problems:

- Aging infrastructure.
- Political fragmentation/service fragmentation.
- Sprawl.
- Need for more commuter and mass transit connections.
- Need for municipal and social services.



FILLING IN of Megalopolis



Expansion in spatial extent, vertical development and density of land use. **Rural gaps are quickly being filled** (suburbanization and exurbanization).