

The background of the slide features a faded, teal-tinted photograph of a two-story suburban house with a gabled roof and a front porch. A large tree trunk is visible on the left side of the frame. The overall aesthetic is clean and academic.

SMART GROWTH AND
COMMUNITY INVESTMENT:

*Confronting Suburban Decline in
Metropolitan Baltimore*

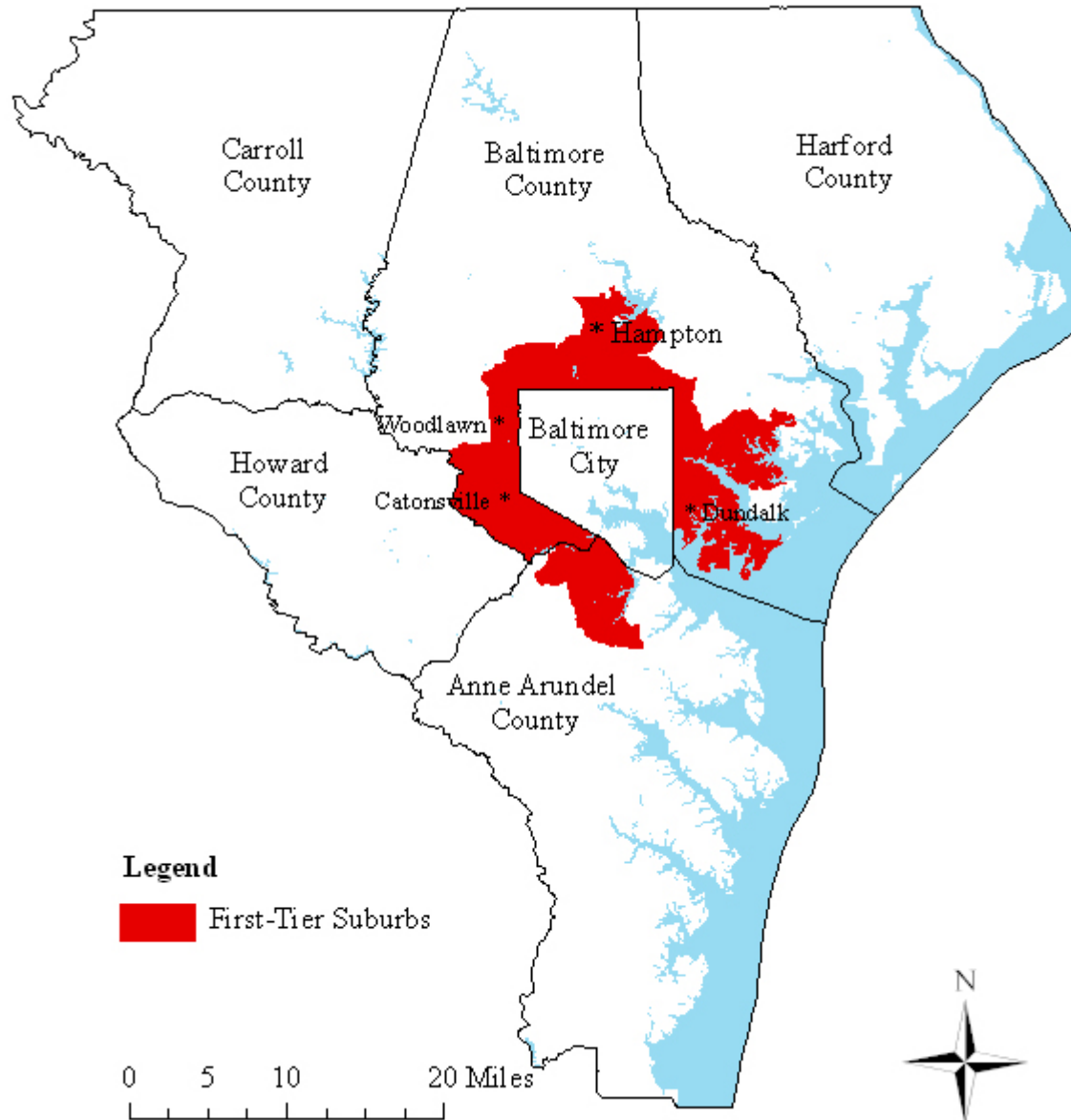
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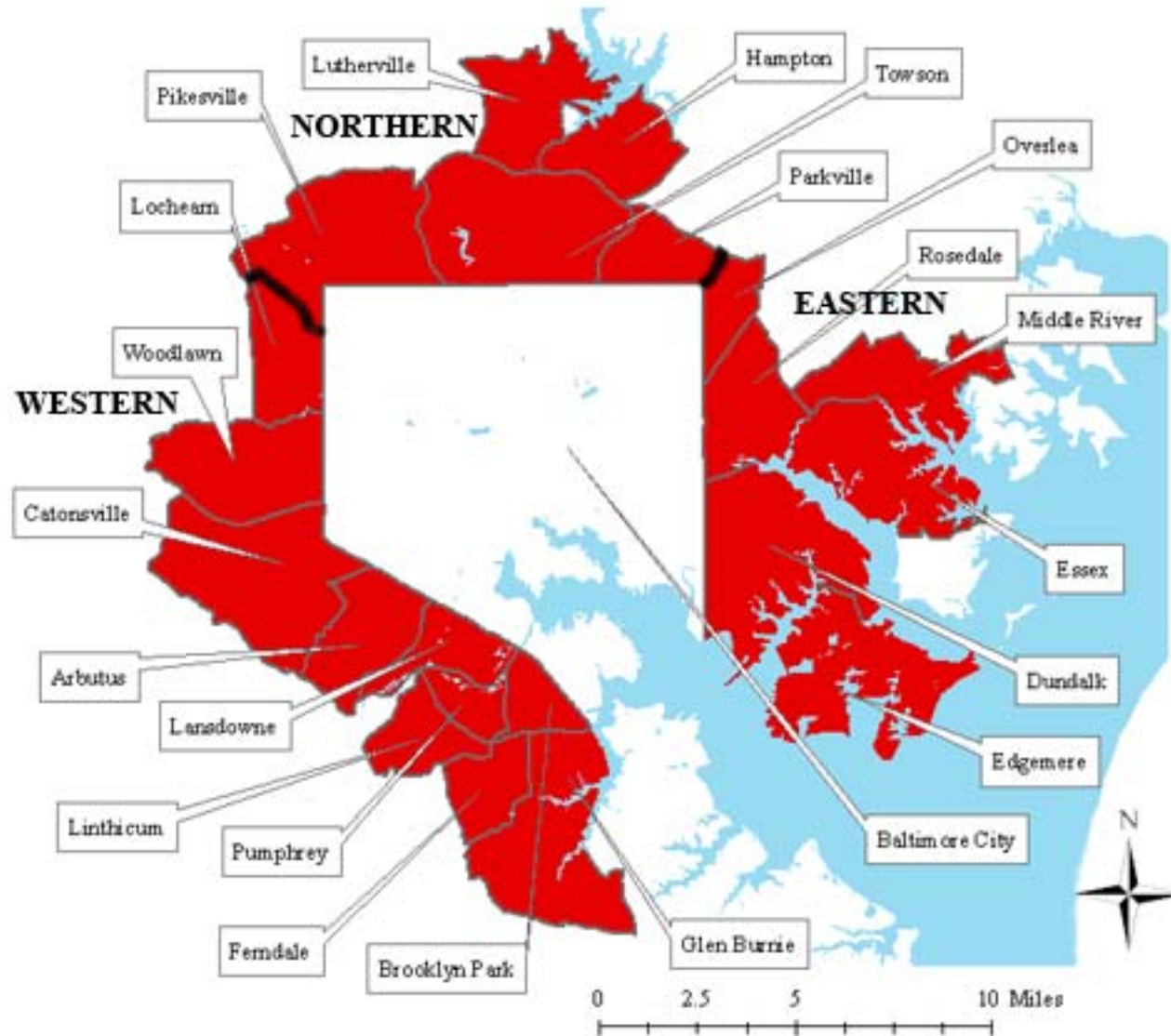
University of Texas at Arlington

October 5, 2007

METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE



FIRST-TIER SUBURBS



SUBURBAN TRANSITIONS: 1970 to 2000

1. Population Characteristics
2. Income Dynamics
3. Nature of the Housing Stock
4. Labor Force Structure



DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

Place	Population		
	1970	2000	Change
Dundalk	85,267	62,306	-27%
Essex	38,112	39,078	3%
Middle River	19,917	23,958	20%
Baltimore PMSA	2,069,595	2,552,994	23%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Place	Income		
	1970	2000	Change
Dundalk	\$45,450	\$39,789	-12%
Essex	\$41,473	\$34,978	-16%
Middle River	\$43,618	\$37,900	-13%
Baltimore PMSA	\$39,289	\$49,938	27%

POVERTY

Place	Poverty Rate		
	1970	2000	Change
Dundalk	5%	9%	4%
Essex	6%	12%	6%
Middle River	5%	9%	4%
Baltimore PMSA	12%	12%	0%

AGE STRUCTURE

Place	Age Over 65		
	1970	2000	Change
Dundalk	5%	19%	14%
Essex	6%	14%	8%
Middle River	4%	13%	9%
Baltimore PMSA	8%	11%	3%

SUBURBAN DECLINE

- “Midlife crisis” in aging first-tier suburbs
- Older housing stock; no longer marketable
- Older, aging infrastructure
- First-tier suburbs are caught between two strong forces: booming outer suburbs and downtown rebound
- Often called a “policy blindspot”



SMART GROWTH

- Growing smarter means investing in communities that *already* exist in suburban core
- Office of Community Conservation (1995)
- Evidence of suburban revitalization is well documented, particularly in Dundalk, Essex, and Middle River--the “triage” approach



POLITICAL REALITIES

1. Strong county government
 - Strong executive authority (budget)
 - Mandate for *Renaissance Initiative*
 - Large tax base and redistribution

2. Lack of political fragmentation
 - No municipalities
 - Cooperation vs. competition
 - Planning and zoning authority

LESSONS LEARNED

- Local governments are able to confront suburban decline, but the ability to carry out and sustain revitalization depends on political actors.
- Suburban renewal and community investment requires the political willingness to confront the confront and define it as a “public” problem.
- When a local government has control over its tax base, it has a broader range of options for addressing suburban decline.



NOT JUST A LOCAL ISSUE

- Suburban decline does not stop at political boundaries
- State and federal roles should be considered as a vehicle to mitigate political issues across boundaries
- S.C.O.R.E. Act is an example



Acknowledgments

UMBC Center for Urban Environmental
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U.S. EPA

*Suburban Crossroads: The Transformation of
Class and Race in Metropolitan Baltimore*

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

A faded, teal-tinted photograph of a two-story house with a porch and a large tree in the foreground. The house has a gabled roof, a front porch with columns, and several windows with shutters. A large tree is on the left side of the frame. The word "Questions" is overlaid in the center.

Questions