

Reviewing the Standards for Defining Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas

**A Look at Committee Recommendations
to the Office of Management and Budget**

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This presentation is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion of work in progress. Any views expressed on technical issues are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

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Outline of Presentation

- Overview and review of statistical areas associated with the current Office of Management and Budget (OMB) metro and micro area standards
- Discussion of review process and proposed changes to the current OMB standards

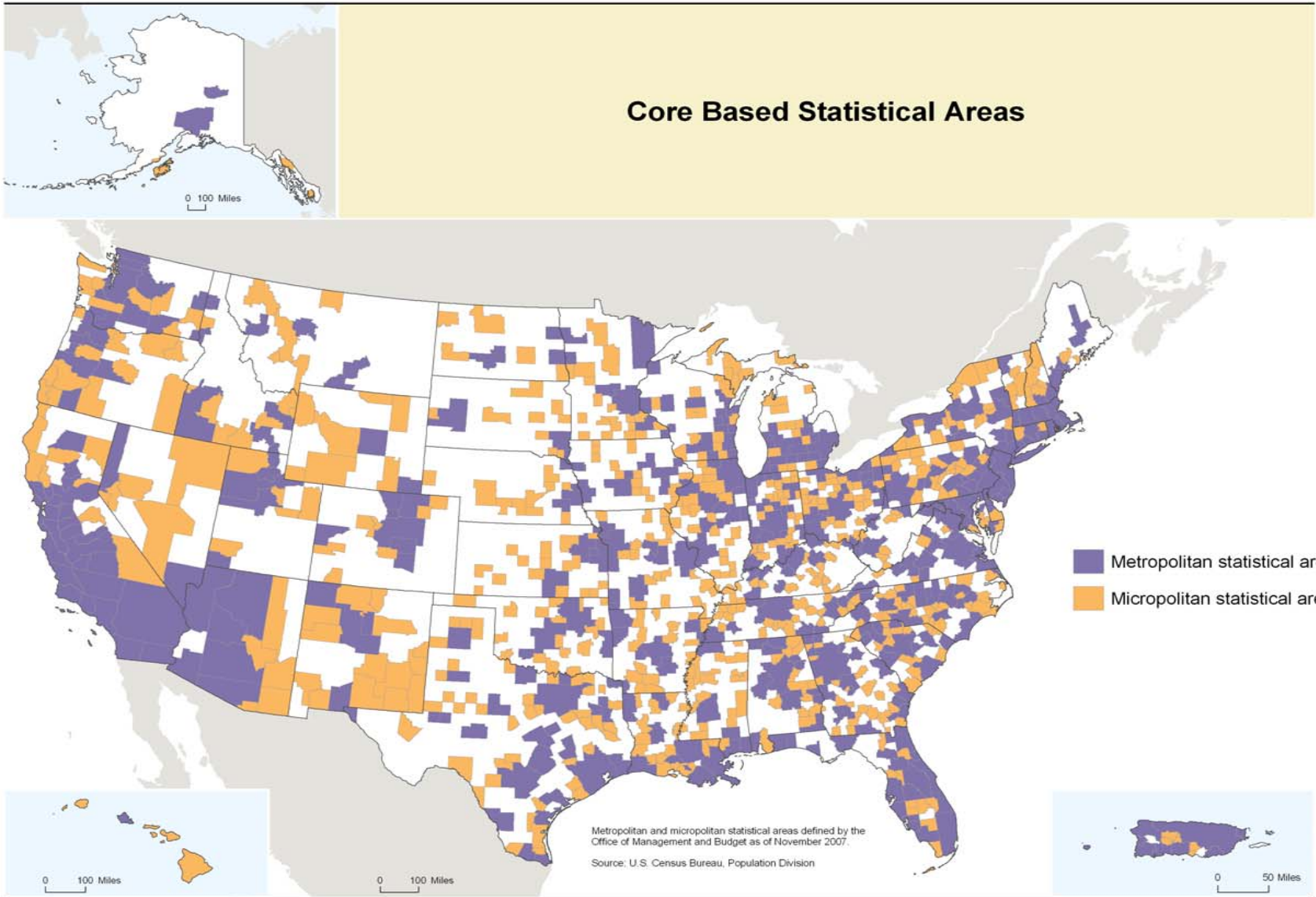
Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) Classification

A CBSA consists of the county or counties (or equivalents) associated with at least one core of 10,000 population or greater, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core(s) as measured by commuting ties.

<u>Core Based Statistical Areas</u>	<u>Population in a Core</u>
Metropolitan Statistical Areas	50,000 or more
Micropolitan Statistical Areas	10,000 to 49,999

Territory not included in a CBSA is designated as Outside Core Based Statistical Areas.

Core Based Statistical Areas



Metropolitan Divisions

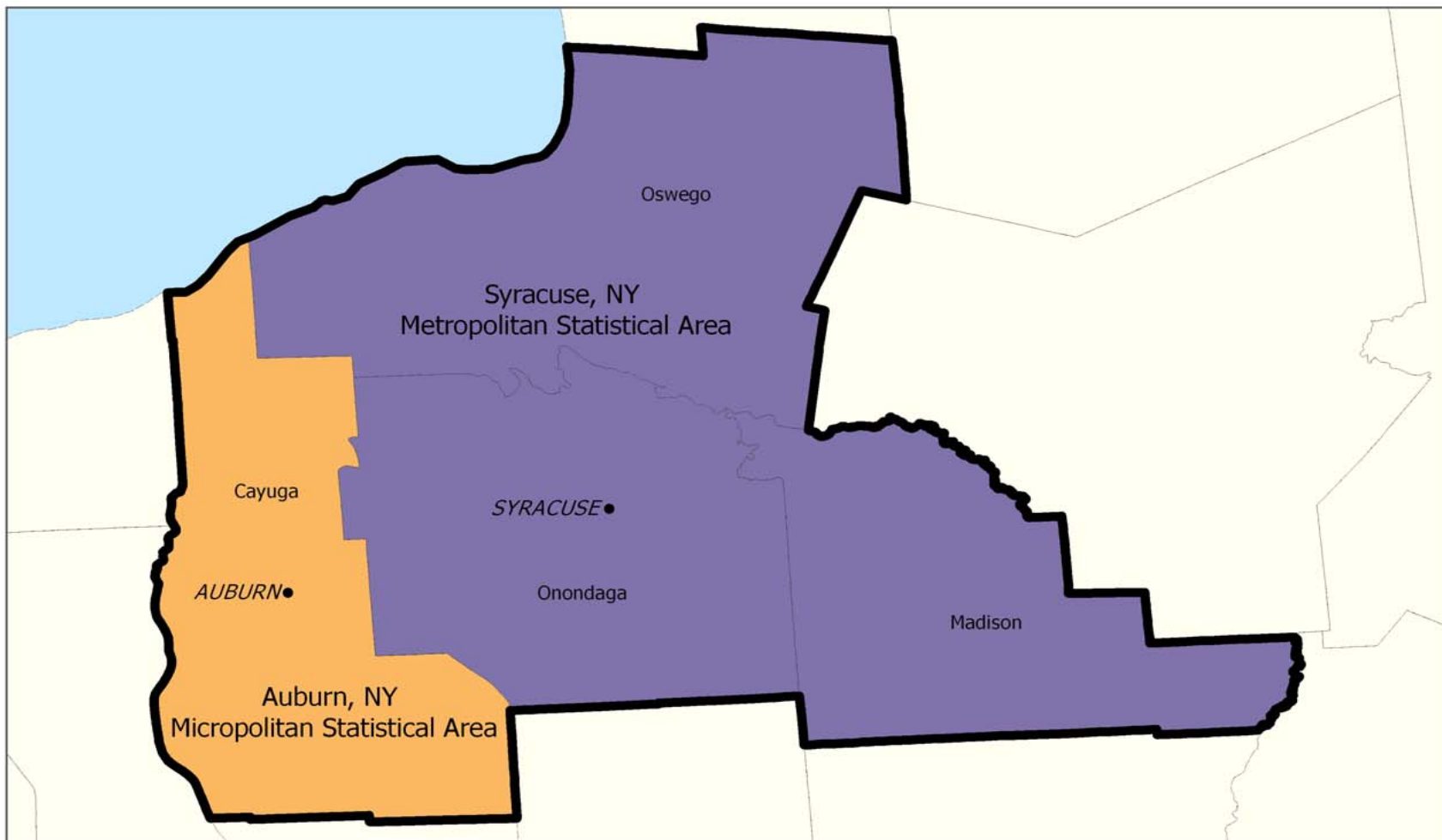
- Metropolitan statistical areas containing at least one core with a population of 2.5 million or greater may be subdivided to form metropolitan divisions.

Combined Statistical Areas

A **combination** reflects significant commuting ties between adjacent CBSAs that are less intense than ties required for merging (that is, for becoming single metropolitan or micropolitan statistical areas)

Adjacent CBSAs form a combined statistical area based on commuting ties between the entire areas.

CBSAs that combine retain separate identities as metropolitan statistical areas or micropolitan statistical areas within the larger combined statistical area.



Syracuse-Auburn, NY

Combined Statistical Area

Note: Combined statistical area defined by the Office of Management and Budget as of November 2007.

0 10 Miles

- Principal city
- Counties
- ▭ Combined Statistical Area
- Micropolitan Statistical Area
- Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Population Division

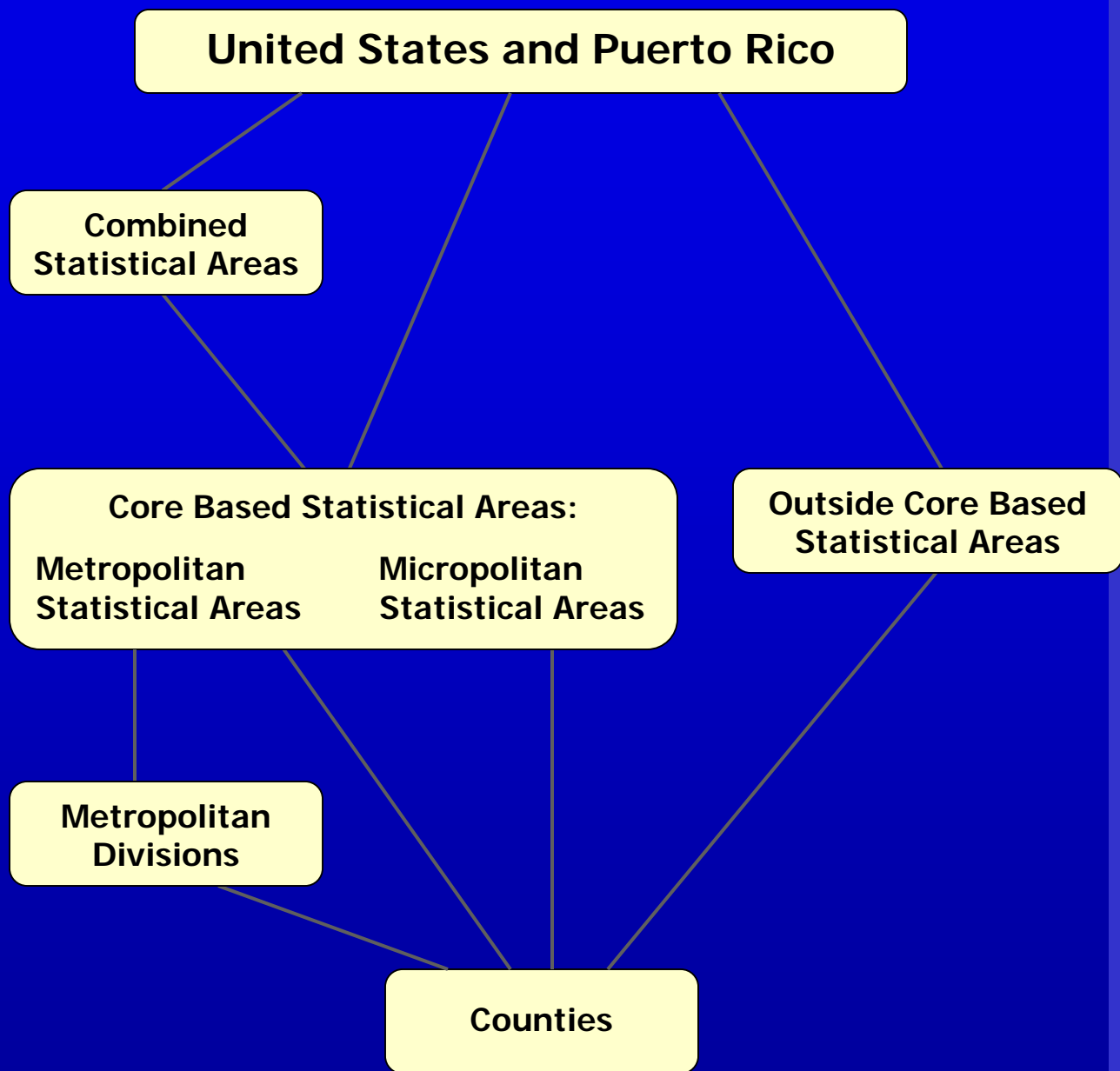
Principal Cities

- OMB's standards call for identifying one or more principal cities within each metropolitan and micropolitan statistical area.
- Principal cities are used for titling statistical areas as well as for analysis.

New England City and Town Areas (NECTAs)

- New England city and town areas (NECTAs) are composed of minor civil divisions rather than counties but are otherwise defined using the same criteria as metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas.
- These units are defined *in addition to* the county-based metro and micro areas in New England.

Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs)



Issues of Focus by the Review Committee

- Combined statistical area qualification and titling
- Scope of metro and micro area updates
- Replacement of the term “definition”

Combined Statistical Area Qualification

- In 2000, OMB provided for the qualification of combined statistical areas.
- Combined statistical areas can serve as an important geographic unit of analysis.

Combining Adjacent CBSAs: Criteria

Combinations currently are based on the employment interchange measure (EIM) between two CBSAs.

EIM = Sum of the percentage of commuting from the smaller area to the larger area and the percentage of employment in the smaller area accounted for by workers residing in the larger area

- EIM must be at least 15 for there to be a combination
- Combinations are automatic if EIM is 25 or more
- Local opinion is considered if EIM is at least 15 and less than 25

Combined Statistical Area Qualification

- Because of the use of local opinion, the universe of combined statistical areas is a mix of areas that qualify automatically and those that qualify with local opinion.
- This calls into question the comparability of the areas.

Combined Statistical Area Qualification (cont.)

- The committee determined that applying only statistical rules when delineating and titling areas minimizes ambiguity and maximizes the replicability, transparency, and integrity of the process.
- Other statistical areas delineated by OMB qualify and are titled under the current standards based only on the application of statistical rules.

Combined Statistical Area Qualification Recommendation

The review committee recommends that the use of local opinion in the qualification of combinations should be eliminated from the standards, and adjacent CBSAs should qualify for combination if they possess an EIM of 15 or higher.

Combined Statistical Area Titling

- Under current standards, local opinion is used for titling combined statistical areas.

Combined Statistical Area Titling Recommendation

- The committee recommends elimination of local opinion in combined statistical area titling.
- Instead of local opinion, the committee recommends that OMB title combined statistical areas based on the three most populous principal cities in the combined statistical area.

Extensive Updates During This Decade

- Qualification of new metro and micro areas
- Qualification of new principal cities as well as deletion of some principal cities
- Changes in the titles of areas due to addition/deletion of principal cities and changes in the relative population size rankings of principal cities

Scope of Updates

- Extensive yearly updates can present difficulties to producers and users of statistical area data, including considerable workload for maintaining large databases.

Scope of Updates Recommendation

The review committee recommends that OMB: (1) conduct yearly updates that only identify new micro and metro areas.

Scope of Updates Recommendation (cont.)

(2) conduct a 5-year update based on all aspects of the delineation process that can be conducted using total population estimates from the Population Estimates Program and 5-year commuting and employment estimates from the American Community Survey.

Replacing the Term “Definition”

- Currently, “definition” refers to the boundaries or geographic makeup of an area.
- Term not intuitive for those first encountering the program.

Replacing the Term “Definition” Recommendation

The committee recommends that OMB replace the word “definition” with the word “delineation” in the proposed 2010 standards.

Request for Comments

- OMB is seeking comments on the specific recommendations of the committee.
- In addition, OMB would welcome comments on the wording of the 2010 standards to help ensure their clarity and understandability.

Websites

- Much more information on metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas is available on the Census Bureau main metro/micro page, at:
www.census.gov/population/www/metroareas/metroarea.html
as well as the OMB website:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg_statpolicy/#ms