

APPENDIX B: THE CENSUS BUREAU'S URBANIZED AREA DEFINITION

The major objective of the Census Bureau in delineating urbanized areas is to provide a better separation of urban and rural population and housing in the vicinity of large cities. An urbanized area consists of a central city or cities and surrounding closely settled territory or "urban fringe."

There are 366 urbanized areas delineated in the United States for the 1980 census. There are seven urbanized areas delineated in Puerto Rico.

The following criteria are used in determining the eligibility and definition of the 1980 urbanized areas.¹

An urbanized area comprises an incorporated place² and adjacent densely settled surrounding area that together have a minimum population of 50,000.³ The densely settled surrounding area consists of:

1. Contiguous incorporated places or census-designated places having:
 - a population of 2,500 or more; or
 - a population of fewer than 2,500 but having either a population density of 1,000 persons per square mile, closely settled area containing a minimum of 50 percent of the population, or a cluster of at least 100 housing units.
2. Contiguous unincorporated area which is connected by road and has a popula-

tion density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile.⁴

3. Other contiguous unincorporated area with a density of less than 1,000 persons per square mile, provided that it:
 - eliminates an enclave of less than 5 square miles which is surrounded by built-up area;
 - closes an indentation in the boundary of the densely settled area that is no more than 1 mile across the open end and encompasses no more than 5 square miles; and
 - links an outlying area of qualifying density, provided that the outlying area is:
 - connected by road to, and is not more than 1½ miles from, the main body of the urbanized area; and
 - separated from the main body of the urbanized area by water or other undevelopable area, is connected by road to the main body of the urbanized area, and is not more than 5 miles from the main body of the urbanized area.
4. Large concentrations of nonresidential urban area (e.g., industrial parks, office areas, and major airports), which have at least one-quarter of their boundary contiguous to an urbanized area.

¹All references to population counts and densities relate to data from the 1980 census.

²In Hawaii, incorporated places do not exist in the sense of functioning local governmental units. Instead, census-designated places are used in defining a central city and for applying urbanized area criteria.

³The rural portions of extended cities, as defined in the Census Bureau's extended city criteria, are excluded from the urbanized area. In addition, for an urbanized area to be recognized, it must include a population of at least 25,000 that does not reside on a military base.

⁴Any area of extensive nonresidential urban land use, (e.g., railroad yards, airports, factories, parks, golf courses, and cemeteries) is excluded in computing the population density.

Note: The Census Bureau is reviewing the urbanized area rules and will publish them with some revisions by 1990.

SOURCE: Excerpt from 1980 *Census of Population Vol. 1, Characteristics of the Population*, Appendix A. Area Classifications.