

The Sprawling City: Effects and Solutions

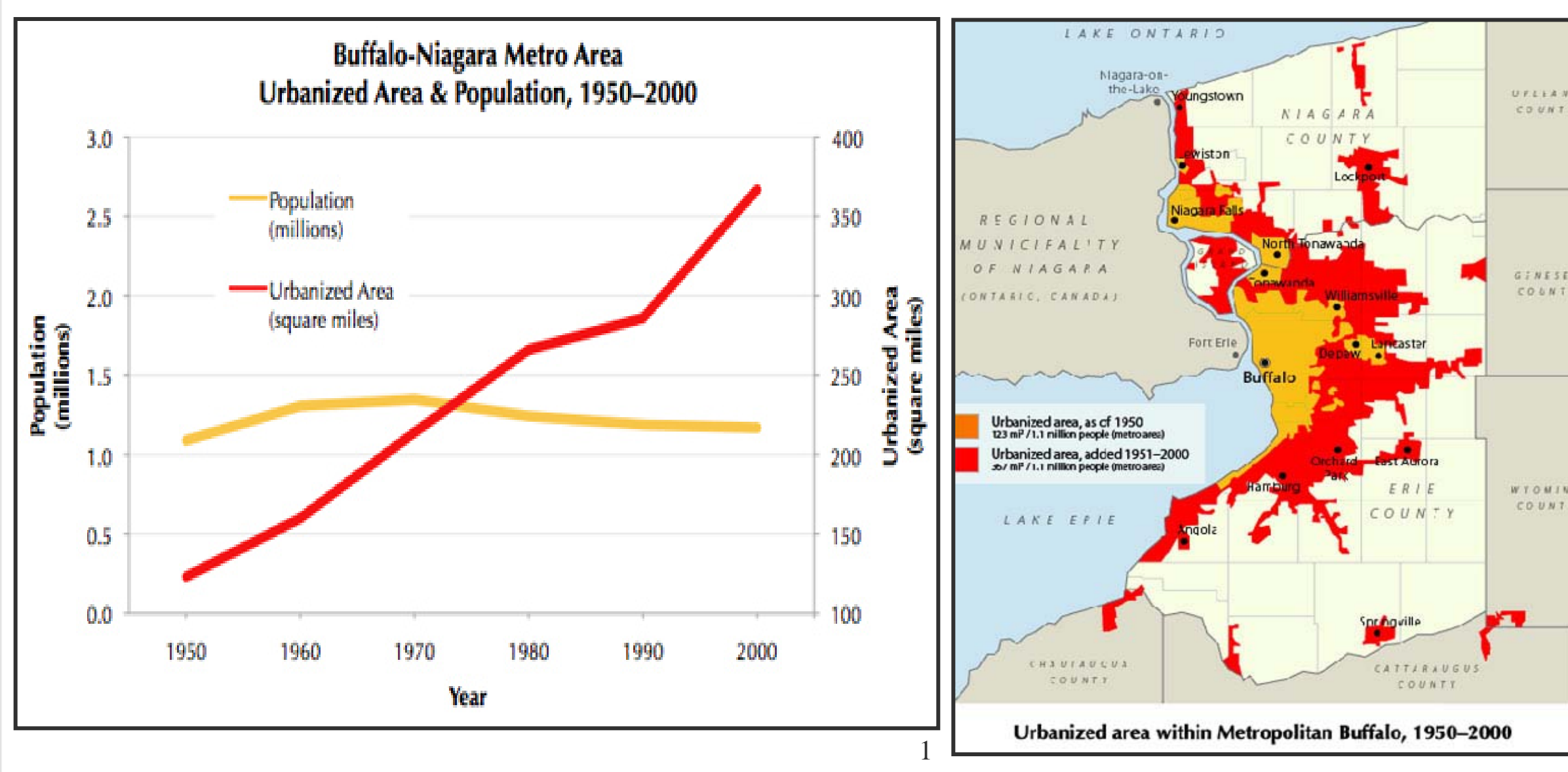
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Definition of Urban Sprawl-

Low-density expansion of urban centers generally into low density areas. Often accompanied by a lack of land development within the urban centers themselves.

Sprawl in Buffalo-



Major Causes of Sprawl in Buffalo-

- Loss of industry
- White flight and sunbelt flight
- American Dream
- Advancements in technology
- Government policies
- Lack of investment in public transportation
- Venture development by local industrial development agencies(IDAs)
- Poor planning

Negative Effects of Sprawl –

- Waste of taxpayer's money
- Higher fuel costs
- Loss of farmland
- Damages the environment
- Negative health effects
- Central City Shrinkage and Decline
 - Deteriorating public services
 - Drives out businesses
 - High unemployment
 - Rising poverty & crime

Positive Effects of Sprawl-

- Polycentric models demonstrate that sprawl can result in:
 - Lower transportation costs
 - Decreased average commute times
- Land is cheaper in the suburbs
- People like living in the suburbs
- Problems with dense cities
- The share of land consumed by development is relatively small
- Sprawl is a product of the free market economy's "invisible hand"

Despite it's benefits, I have found substantially more evidence of negative economic effects of sprawl on Buffalo.

Actions taken to reduce sprawl-

- State Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act
- Efforts by IDAs
- Regional Framework
- Buffalo's Comprehensive Plan
- Buffalo's Green Code
- The work of nonprofits:
 - PUSH Buffalo's Green Development Zone
 - Massachusetts Avenue Projects

Suggestions to further decrease sprawl-

- Creation of a regional planning organization
- Limiting the extension of water and sewer lines
- Investing in existing infrastructure
- Implementation of Smarth Growth Policies
- Smart Growth Audits

References-

1. Benfield, K. (2010, May 25). [Web log message]. Retrieved from http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/you_dont_really_need_growth_to.html

