

Destination Pittsburgh?

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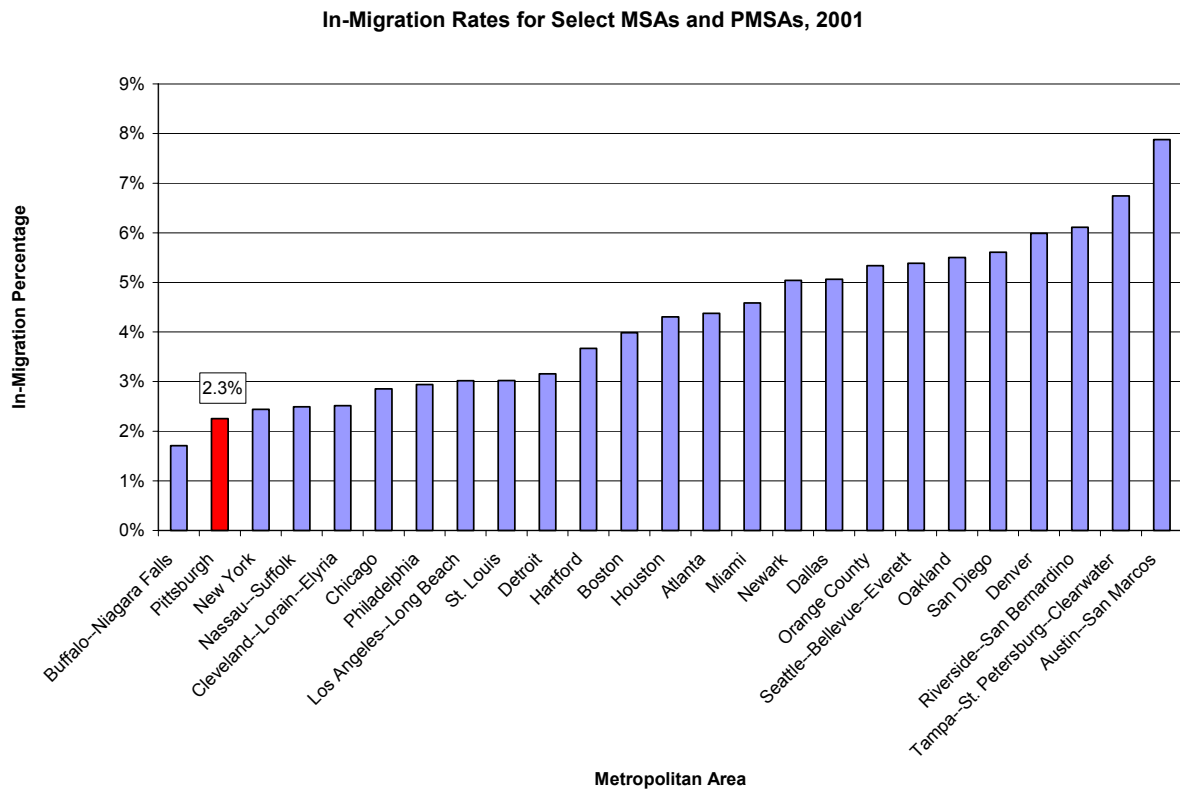
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Destination Pittsburgh?

By Lena Andrews

Pittsburgh has lost half of its population since 1950, and with an aging resident population, policymakers and residents worry that there will not be enough residents of working age to meet future labor demand. These concerns have brought retaining and attracting talent to the forefront as a key policy issue. In 2000, the Center for Economic Development issued a series of reports examining migration trends in the region. These reports found that contrary to popular belief, Pittsburgh was not losing people so much that it was not attracting people. In-migration and out-migration were *both* extremely low.¹ The difficulty of further reducing out-migration required a focus on in-migration. This report focuses on the in-migration half of the equation.

Figure 1



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, “Movers in Metro Areas in the Previous 12 Months”, May 20, 2003.

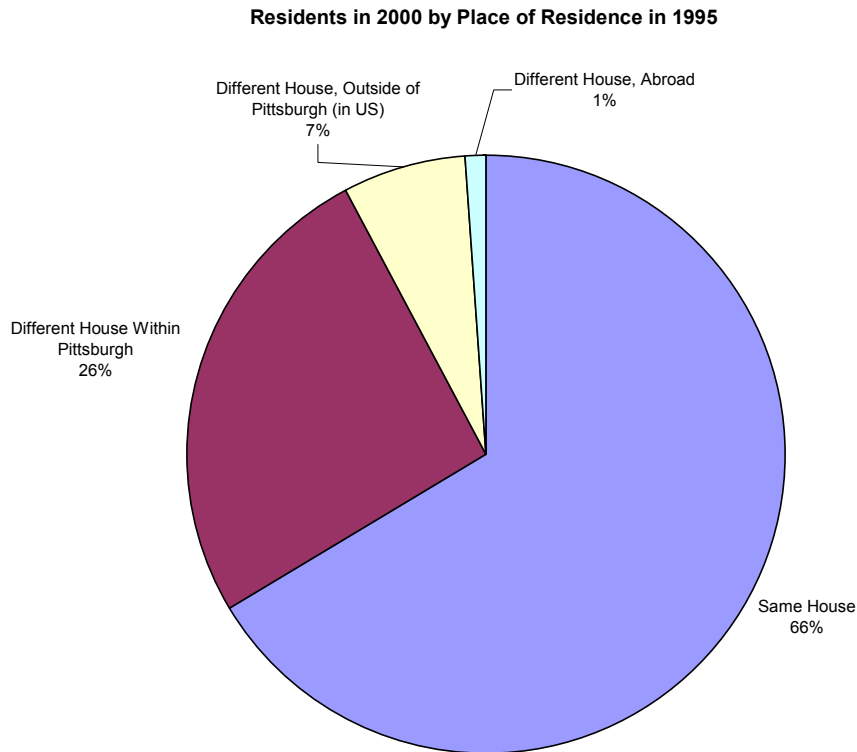
¹Gradeck, Bob, “Are Young People Really Fleeing Pittsburgh in Droves,” March 2000, <http://www.smartpolicy.org/pdf/pitmigration.pdf>.
 Gradeck, Bob and Jerry Paytas, “Migration and Regional Growth”, March 2000 <http://www.smartpolicy.org/pdf/miq&growth.pdf>.

According to recent data from the American Community Survey the situation has not improved. Pittsburgh has the second lowest in-migration rate of all metropolitan areas with more than one million residents. The chart above shows the in-migration rate (the ratio people moving to a city over the total population) for a peer group of cities. Pittsburgh's rate of 2.7% is lower than all cities except for Buffalo.

Setting down roots

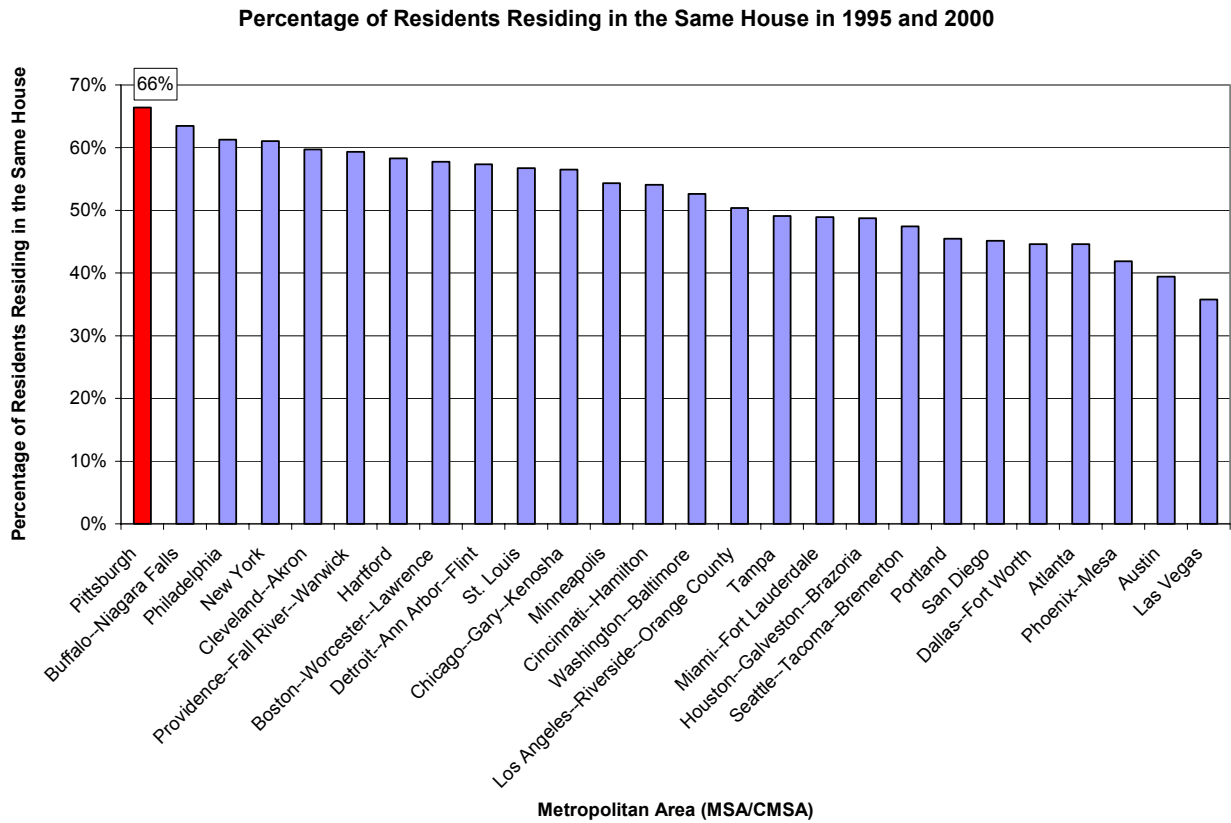
Pittsburghers tend to stay where they are; the trouble is getting them here. The 2000 Census examined place of residence in 1995 and place of residence in 2000. In total, only 8% of Pittsburgh MSA residents in 2000 were not living in the region in 1995. Seven percent had been living elsewhere in the United States, and 1% had been living abroad. Ninety-two percent of residents that lived in Pittsburgh in both 1995 and 2000; the majority (66% of all residents) were living in the same house, and the rest (26% of all residents) were living in a different house in the Pittsburgh MSA.

Figure 2



Source: *United States Census 2000. Table P25: Residence in 1995 for the Population 5 Years and Over – MSA/PMSA Level.*

Figure 3



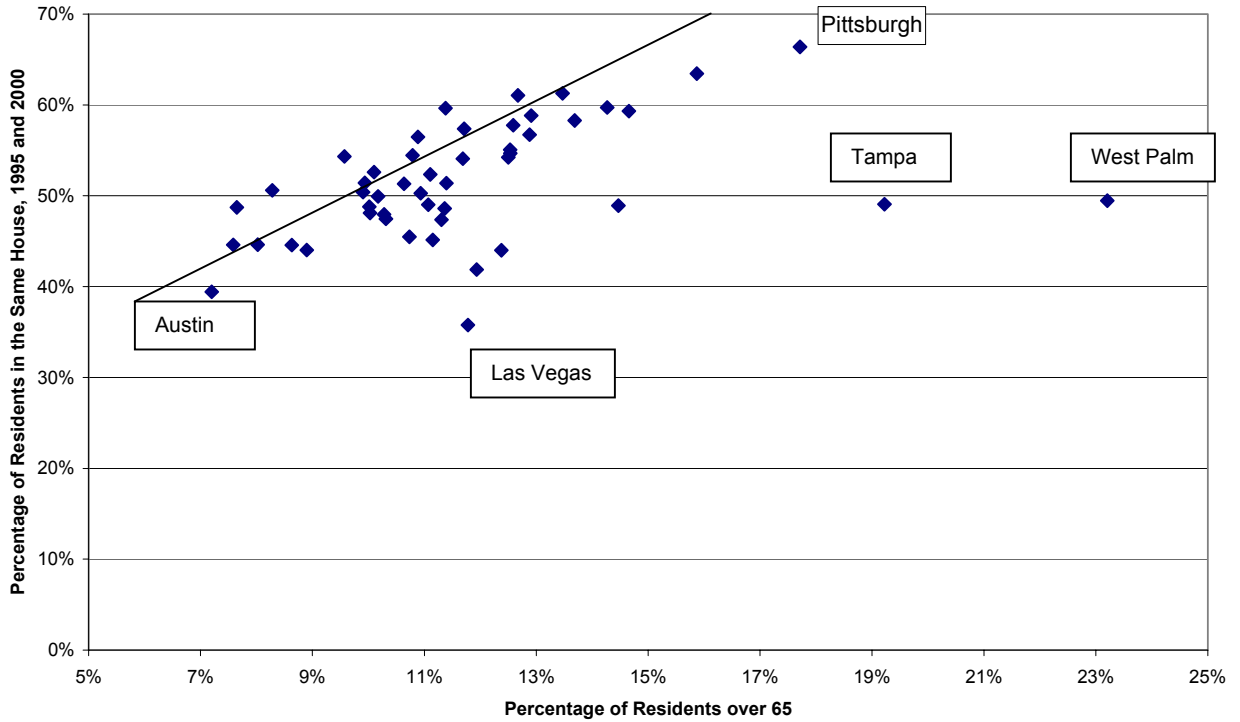
Source: United States Census 2000. Table P25: Residence in 1995 for the Population 5 Years and Over – MSA/PMSA Level.

In fact, more residents of Pittsburgh stayed in the same house between 1995 and 2000 than in any other large metropolitan area. Pittsburgh’s demographic make-up, with its large elderly population, contributes to this inertia. The percentage of population over sixty-five is correlated with staying put. The correlation between these two factors for the period 1995 to 2000 for the forty-eight largest metropolitan areas is 67%.² This means that places with high percentages of elderly residents tend to have high percentages of people that do not move. Figure 4 shows the relationship between percentage of population in the same house in 1995-2000 and the percentage of the population over age 65; discarding the two outliers, Pittsburgh has the highest rankings in both categories.

² Tampa and West Palm Beach were excluded from correlation calculations because they have substantial retirement communities, which consist of residents mainly over the age of 65 and transient. Both MSAs appear as outliers in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Correlation between Non-Moving Population and Population over 65 for 50 largest MSAs/CMSAs, 2000

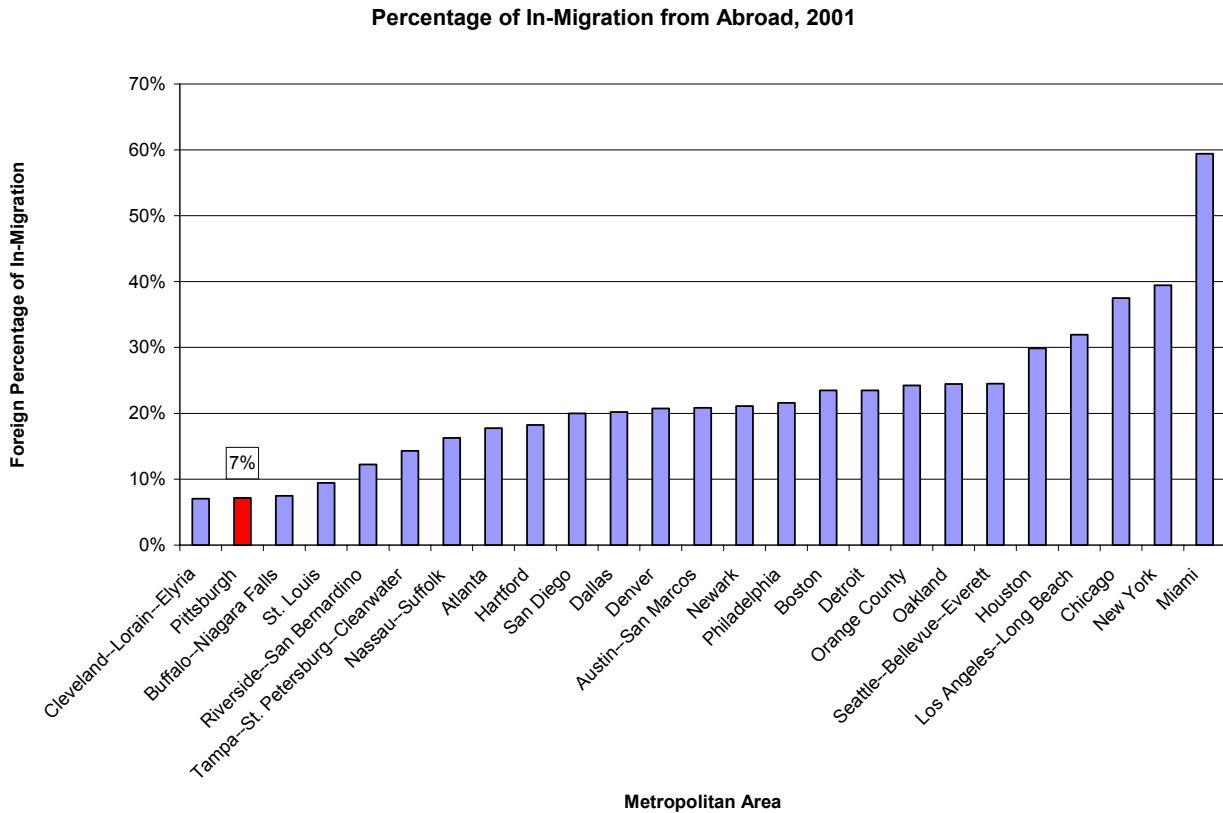


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, analysis by the Center for Economic Development.

The Chicken or the Egg

Immigration from abroad has provided the fuel for population growth across the country. How has Pittsburgh fared as a destination for foreigners moving to the United States compared to other metropolitan areas?

Figure 5



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, “Movers in Metro Areas in the Previous 12 Months”, May 20, 2003.

A 1-2 Punch

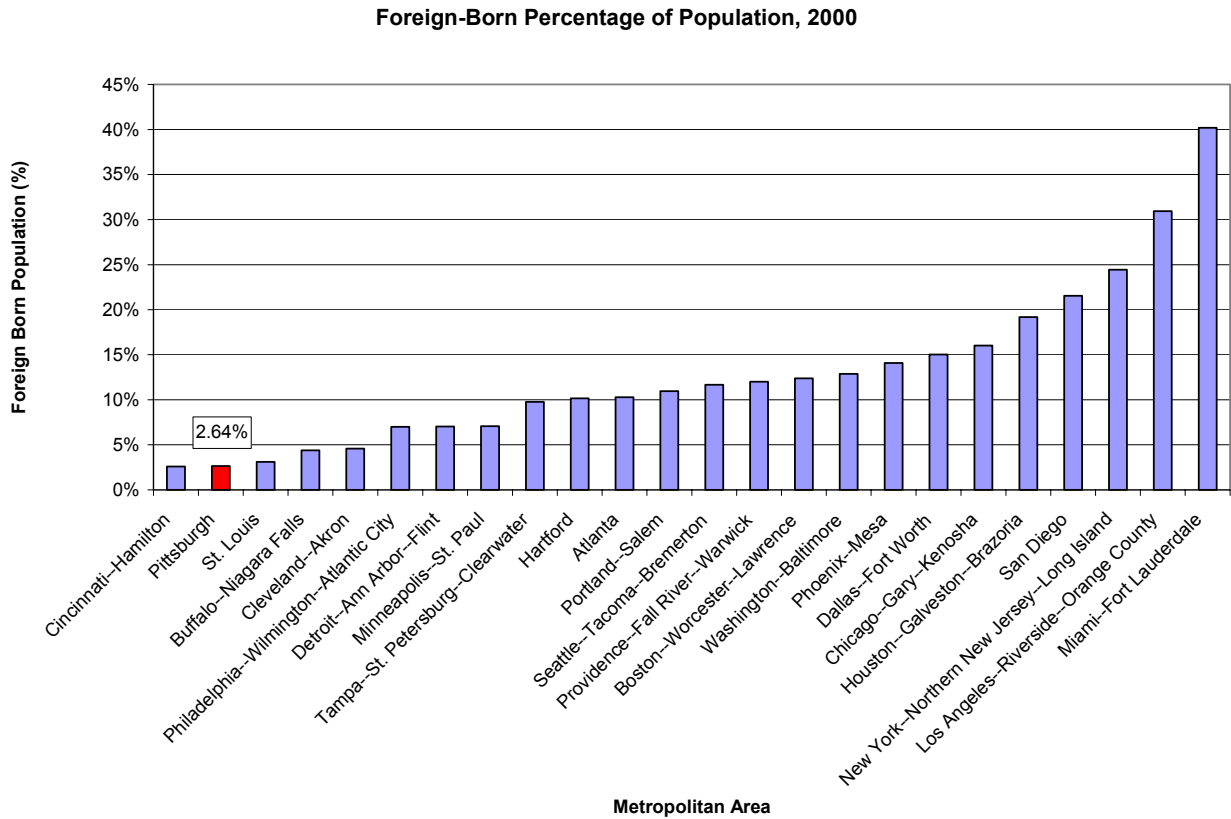
The Pittsburgh MSA, already one of America’s least diverse regions in terms of foreign population, is not an initial destination for foreign immigrants. Of the new residents from 2000-2001, only 7% came from abroad (Figure 5). Pittsburgh suffers a migration 1-2 punch – our rate of in-migration is very low and we have one of the smallest proportions that come from abroad. Many foreign residents move to coastal and border cities with better access to their home countries but other cities with geographic constraints similar to Pittsburgh, such as Detroit and Denver, were able to attract high numbers of foreign immigrants in 2001.

One reason that more immigrants do not move to Pittsburgh is because the region lacks a substantial immigrant population. Foreigners tend to move to cities where there are already established communities of people from their countries. Data from the American Community Survey shows that immigration in the United States tends to be concentrated in certain areas; the six states with the most immigrants are home to 68% of all foreign-born residents, despite having only 40% of the population.³ If someone is moving from

³ Camerota, Steven A., “Immigrants in the United States – 2002,” Center for Immigration Studies, November 2002.

Venezuela to the United States, they will feel much more comfortable moving to where they can find a familiar and supportive network that can help them to find housing, schools, Spanish language issues, immigration issues, etc. Unfortunately, Pittsburgh has a lower share of foreign residents than all metropolitan areas except for Cincinnati (Figure 6).

Figure 6



How can Pittsburgh encourage more migration? Research shows that people move for several reasons. The majority of moves from one county to another between 1999 and 2000 occurred for housing-related (32%) and work-related (31%) reasons⁴. People with higher levels of education are much more likely to undertake an inter-county move for work-related reasons than people with lower educational attainment; 42% of people with a bachelor’s degree and 47% of people with a Master’s or professional degree or doctorate who moved between counties between 1999-2000 relocated for work-related reasons, primarily because of a new job or job transfer.⁵

[Next Release](#)

The Center for Economic Development examines the region’s gateway neighborhoods that host the most foreign-born residents.

⁴ Center for Economic Development analysis of data from the Current Population Survey.
⁵ Schachter, Jason, “Why People Move: Exploring the March 2000 Current Population Survey,” U.S. Census Bureau, May 2001.