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# The Cost of Segregation || Part III: Where We're Headed

## SITE INDEX

- Homepage
- Search
- CyberSurveys
- ▶ News Talk
- ▶ Autos Talk
- ▶ Sports Talk
- ▶ Lions Talk
- ▶ Pistons Talk
- ▶ Wings Talk
- ▶ Tiger Talk
- ▶ Tech Talk
- Horoscope
- Hot Sites
- Lottery
- Recommendations
- Weather
- Staff

## NEWS

- Autos
- ▶ Insider
- ▶ Auto Show
- ▶ Consumer
- ▶ Joyrides
- Business
- Careers
- Census
- Columnists
- Commuting
- Detroit History
- Editorials
- Health
- Metro / State
- ▶ Livingston
- ▶ Macomb
- ▶ Oakland
- ▶ Wayne
- ▶ On Detroit
- Nation / World
- Obituaries
- ▶ Death Notices
- Politics / Govt.
- Real Estate
- Religion
- Schools
- Special Reports
- Technology

## SPORTS

- Sports Home
- ▶ Lions/NFL
- ▶ Red Wings/NHL
- ▶ Pistons/NBA
- ▶ Shock/WNBA
- ▶ Tigers/Baseball
- ▶ MSU
- ▶ U-M
- More Colleges



Donna Terek / The Detroit News

Julian Avila, left, Pablo Tallo, center, and Elias Alvarez walk down Bagley in southwest Detroit. Metro's growing Hispanic population can be a catalyst for integration.

## Hispanic growth may aid integration

By Gordon Trowbridge / The Detroit News

Greater integration of Metro Detroit's blacks and whites may depend in part on a much smaller, but overlapping group: the area's small but growing Hispanic population.

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Southeast Michigan has not drawn Hispanic immigrants in numbers as large as immigration hubs such as New York, Chicago or Los Angeles. But the Hispanic population is growing -- about 50 percent in the 1990s, to more than 120,000 -- and where Hispanics live, blacks and whites are more likely to live together.

Many of the region's most integrated neighborhoods also have large Hispanic populations.

In the 74 most integrated neighborhoods in Metro Detroit, the Hispanic population averaged 7.4 percent, twice the Metro Detroit average.

Researchers have long said that while blacks and whites may be

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- [▶Casino Guide](#)
- [▶Movie Finder](#)
- [▶TV Listings](#)
- [Crossword](#)

**HOMESTYLE**

- [Homestyle home](#)
- [▶Decorating](#)
- [▶Food](#)
- [▶Gardening](#)
- [▶Home Improvement](#)
- [▶Home Life](#)
- [▶Home Tech](#)
- [▶Wine Report](#)

**PHOTOS**

- [Sports](#)
- [Red Wings](#)
- [Lions](#)
- [Autos](#)
- [Joyrides](#)
- [News](#)
- [History](#)

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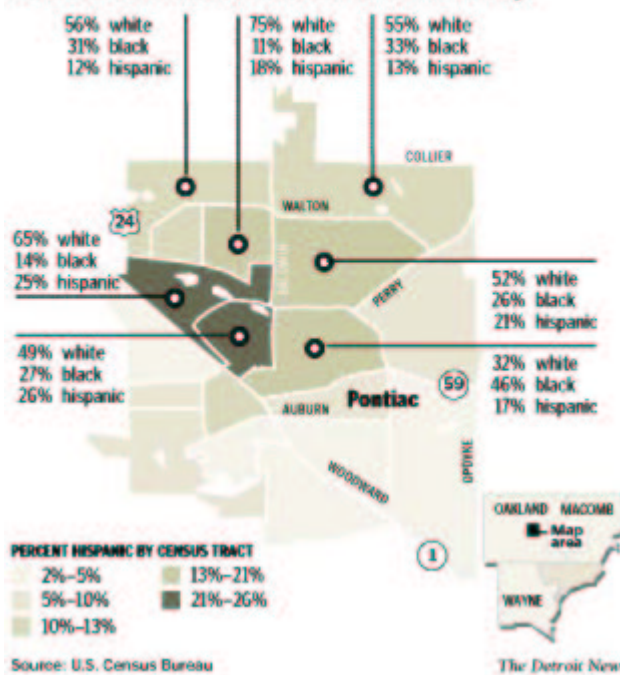
Researchers have long said that while blacks and whites may be reluctant to live with one another, racial mixing is more likely if Hispanics are present. It seems the ethnic identity, separate from racial character, can act as a buffer, making it more likely for blacks and whites to live together.

"I don't think that works as much in Detroit as in the big immigration metros like Los Angeles or San Francisco, where you have such huge numbers in those other groups," said University of Michigan demographer William Frey. "They defuse some of those segregation impulses."

Metro Detroit is not likely to see an explosion of Hispanic immigration any time soon. But another decade of growth like that in the '90s could mean a Hispanic community of around 200,000, centered in the Hispanic neighborhoods of Southwest Detroit -- which are also the area's most ethnically and racially diverse.

**Hispanic influence**

Neighborhoods in Pontiac with a high percentage of Hispanics are among Metro Detroit's most integrated, a pattern repeated in Southwest Detroit and in other cities across the country.



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