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

## Lessons From Elsewhere

### Steps to bridge divide pay off

Metro areas in other states try a variety of measures to integrate neighborhoods

By Gordon Trowbridge and Ron French / The Detroit News

The nation is integrating twice as fast as Detroit. Segregation of blacks and whites in the nation's 100 largest metro areas dropped an average of 6.3 percent in the 1990s, compared to 2.6 percent in Metro Detroit.

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Fast-growing Sun Belt cities with large Hispanic populations had bigger declines. But attitudes on black-white issues may also play a role: While polls show 70 percent nationally are concerned about separate living patterns, more than half of both blacks and whites in Metro Detroit think segregation is a good idea at least sometimes.

### Elsewhere in America, segregation declines

While segregation remains high in Northern metro areas such as Detroit, it is rapidly declining elsewhere. The 10 metro areas with the biggest decline in neighborhood segregation of blacks and whites, from 1990 to 2000:



METRO AREA	SEGREGATION INDEX		PERCENT CHANGE
	1990	2000	
1 Salt Lake City	50.4	37.0	-26.6%
2 Albuquerque	36.3	28.0	-22.9
3 Las Vegas	51.1	39.6	-22.5
4 Portland	65.0	50.7	-22.0
5 McAllen, Texas	49.5	39.4	-20.4
6 Phoenix	48.0	39.5	-17.7
7 Orange County, Calif.	37.4	31.5	-15.8
8 West Palm Beach, Fla.	74.2	63.0	-15.1
9 Scranton, Pa.	67.9	58.0	-14.6

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10 Bakersfield, Calif.	54.5	46.6	-14.5
Source: U.S. Census Bureau		The Detroit News	

Other metro areas are addressing segregated housing through a variety of efforts. They include:

\* Inclusive zoning. A policy forcing all new developments to include some housing affordable to owners or renters earning less than 50 percent of the area's median income. This has the direct effect of increasing the income diversity of residents, and has the indirect impact of increasing racial diversity because blacks on average earn less than whites.

Such policies have been in place since 1974 in Montgomery County, Md., a wealthy suburb of Washington, D.C.

\* A regional growth management policy that limits sprawl, such as is in place in Portland, Ore.

"Strong land-use laws would help recycle abandoned lands in the city of Detroit," said David Rusk, former mayor of Albuquerque, N.M., and a nationally known authority on sprawl. "Michigan subdivides farmland faster than any other state. When market demand isn't allowed to be met by plowing up the next 1,000 acres in Livingston County, they (home shoppers) are going to be channeled back into Detroit."

\* Regional tax sharing. Inner cities are stuck in a vicious cycle, in which middle-income residents move out, reducing the tax base, which in turn reduces the quality of city services, which leads still more middle-income residents to flee. Rusk recommends a small regional tax that could help revive Detroit, helping to draw whites back to the city.

\* Economic incentives for people to move back to Detroit. Joe Darden, urban affairs professor at Michigan State University, suggests urban homesteading -- offering vacant lots for free to people who promise to build new homes on them.

\* A renewed focus on the issue. Today, there is little agreement that segregation is a problem, let alone on how to address it.

"I think if we keep working at it we will find out that we can all live together and work together because our goals are basically the same," said Damon Keith, a lifelong Detroit resident and federal judge. "We want good jobs for ourselves, we want our children to have a good education, we want good schools, we want neighborhoods to be safe and free from crime. I want for myself and my wife and my children and grandchildren basically what white America wants for their children, no more and no less.

"I refuse to give up on integration."

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