



NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION ON
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
EFFICIENCY &
COMPETITIVENESS

21ST CENTURY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Commission Recommendations

April 2008



“We cannot achieve real, sustainable property tax relief without addressing local government efficiency”

- Governor David Paterson

“People are demanding change at all levels of government. They are frustrated by a local tax burden that is the highest in the nation. They value their communities, but want modern, efficient services at an affordable price”

- Stan Lundine, Commission Chair



Background on Commission

- **Created by Executive Order on April 23, 2007**
- **15 Members**
 - **Former Lt. Governor Stan Lundine, Chair**
- **Reported April 30, 2008**



Background on Commission

The Commission was launched with the conviction that New Yorkers are living under a very outdated local government structure:

- ★ Majority of our municipalities established during the horse-and-buggy era
- ★ There are outdated laws and offices for which no modern rationale exists
- ★ Over the years we have added to this outdated system, but rarely simplified



NYS Local Government Complex

General Purpose Local Governments 1,607

Counties 57

Cities 62

Towns 932

Villages 556

Special Purpose Local Governments 1,811

School Districts 685

Fire Districts 867

Library Districts 181

Commissioner-run Special Districts 78

Other Governmental Entities 1,302

Special Purpose Units of Local Government 311

Local Public Authorities 993

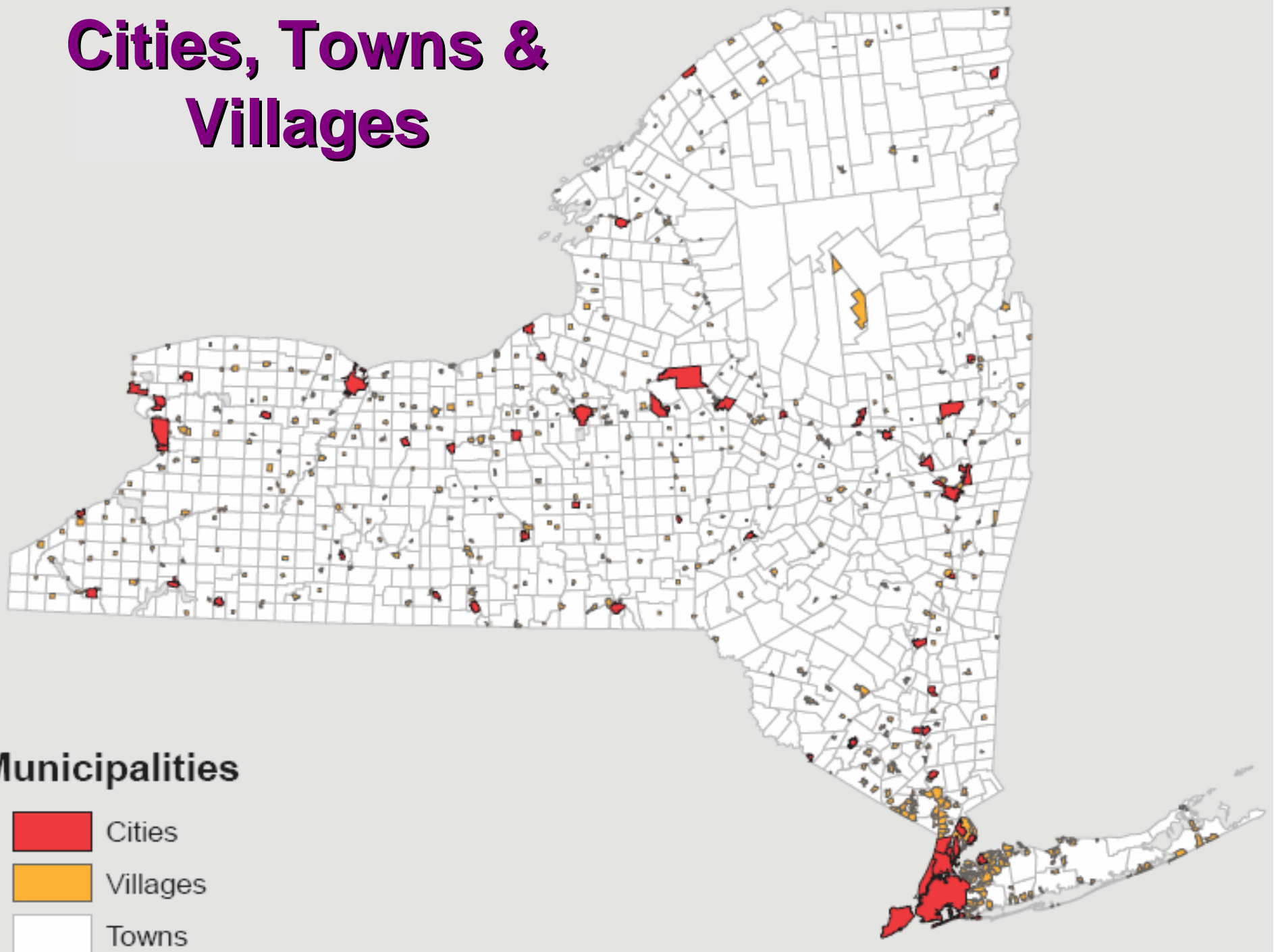
TOTAL Local Government Entities

4,720

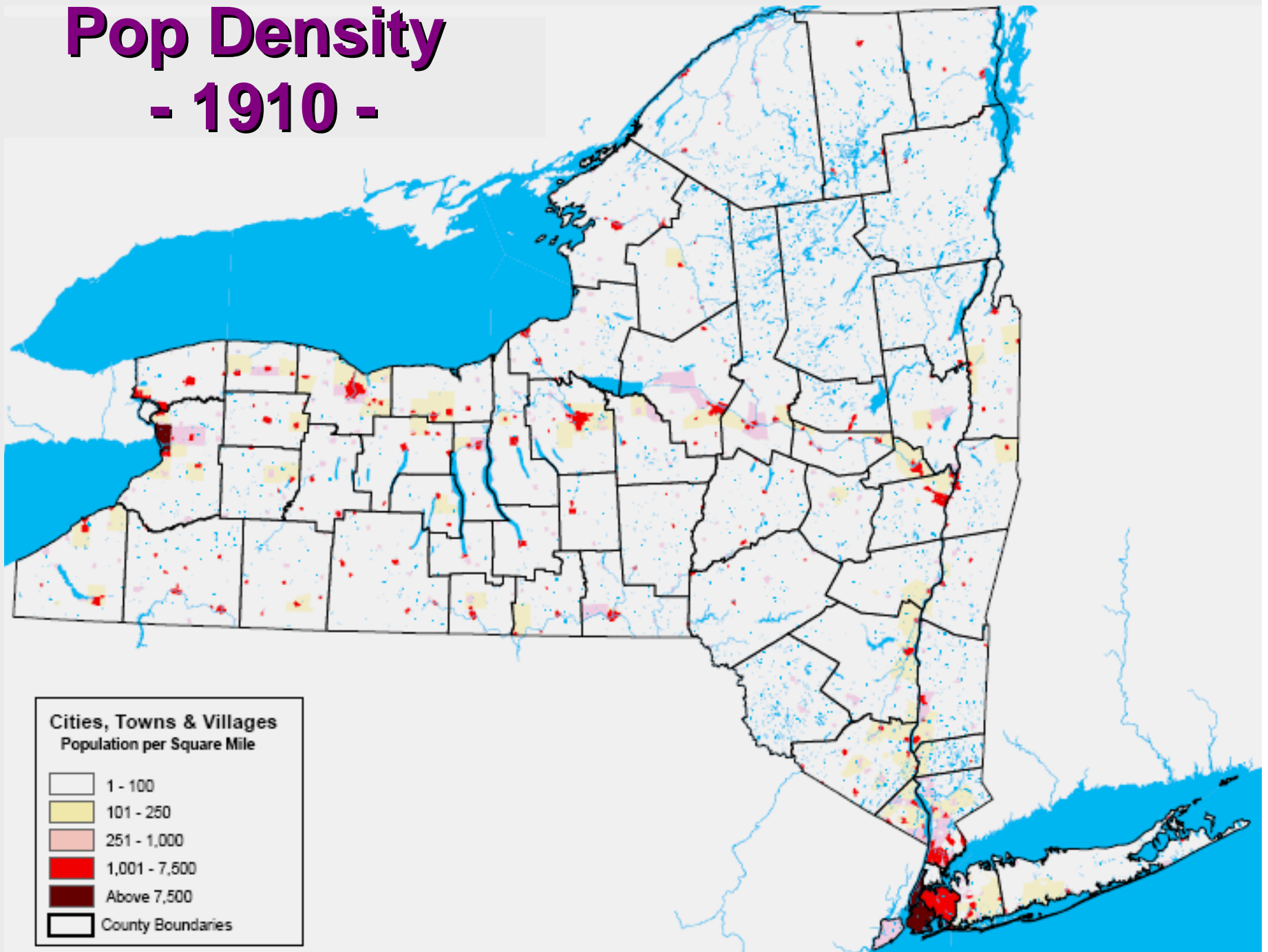


Syracuse Post Standard, *May 2008*

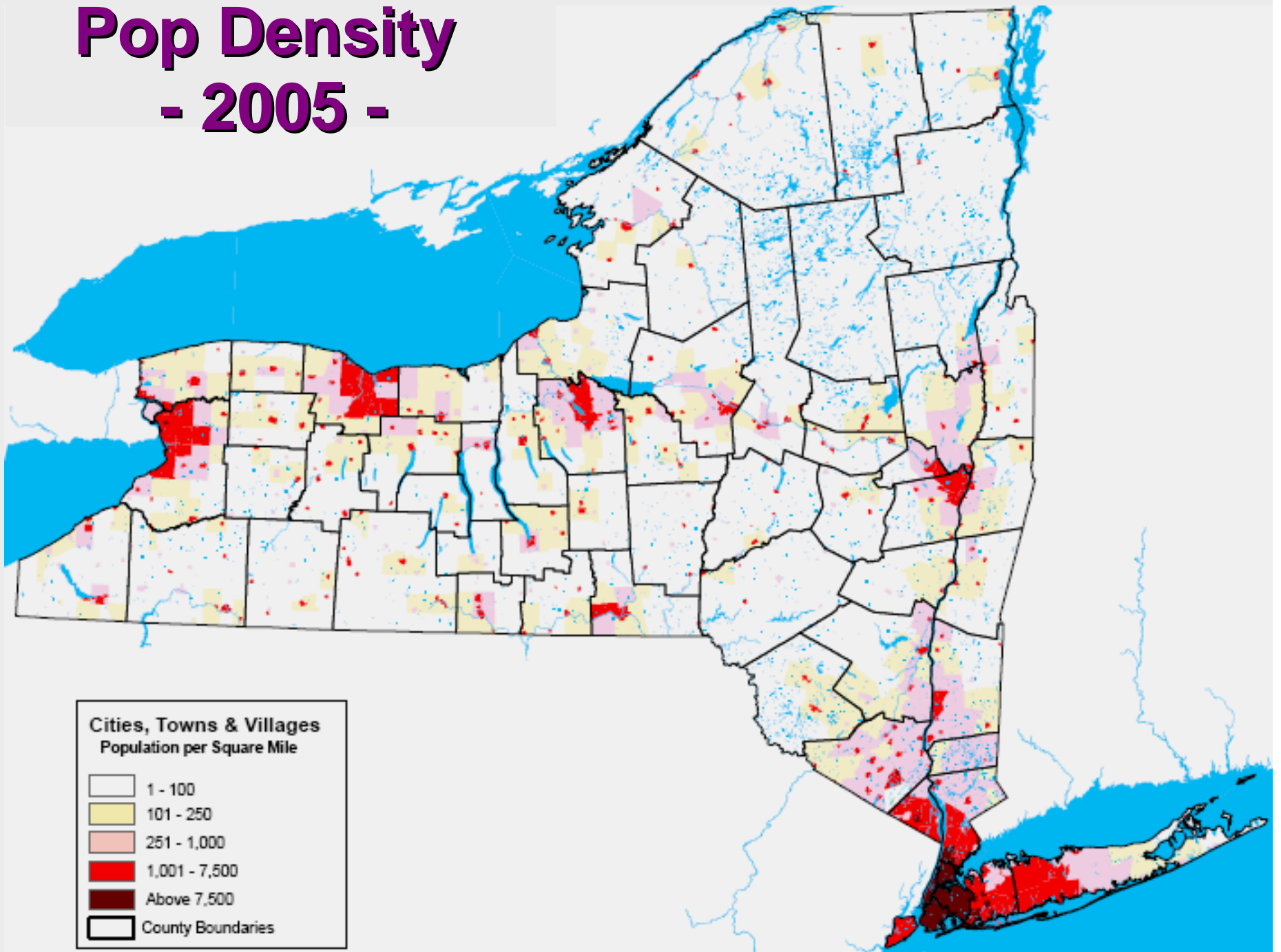
Cities, Towns & Villages



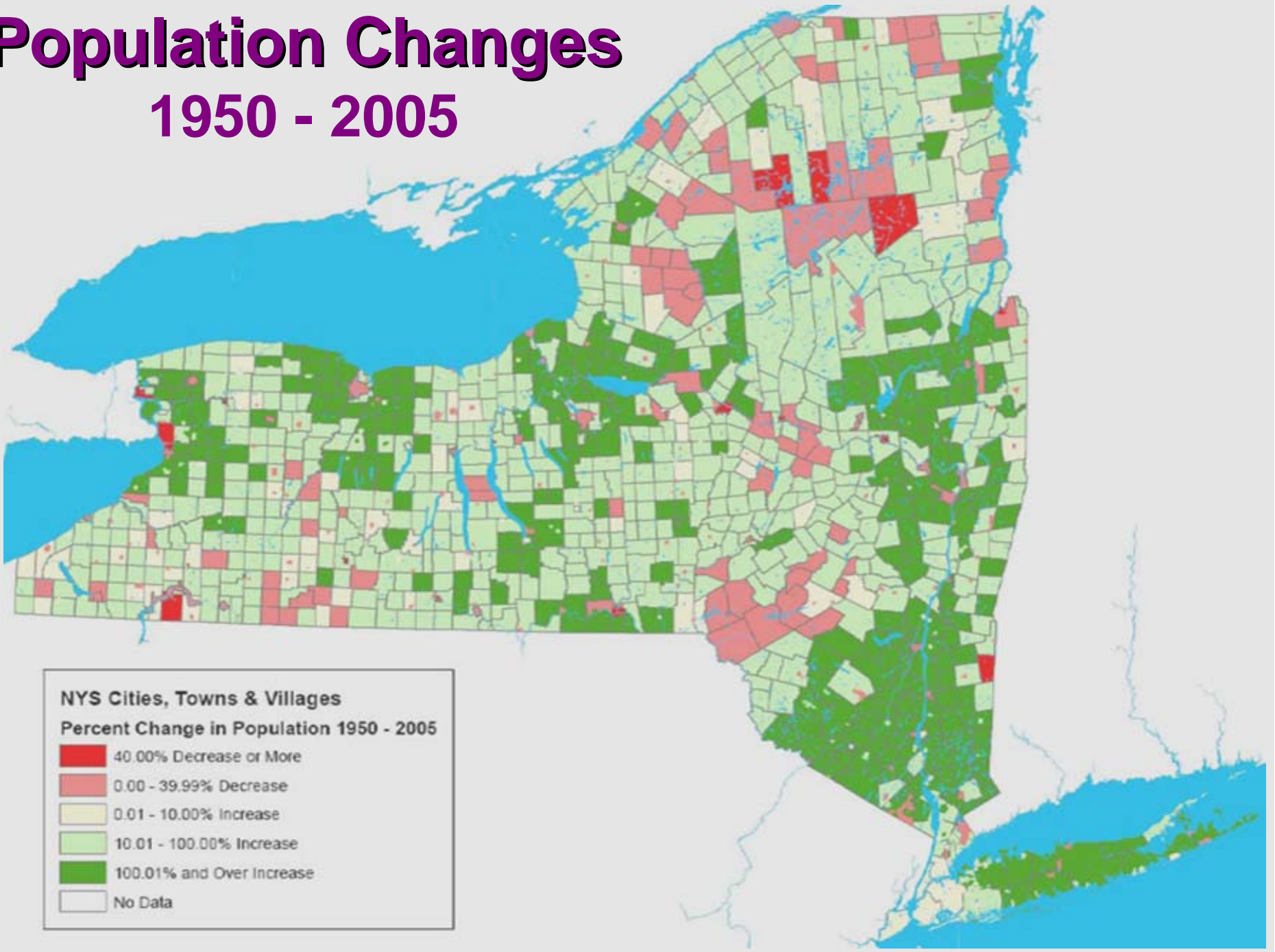
Pop Density - 1910 -



Pop Density - 2005 -



Population Changes 1950 - 2005



NYS Cities, Towns & Villages	
Percent Change in Population 1950 - 2005	
Dark Red	40.00% Decrease or More
Light Red	0.00 - 39.99% Decrease
Yellow	0.01 - 10.00% Increase
Light Green	10.01 - 100.00% Increase
Dark Green	100.01% and Over Increase
White	No Data



Gathering Input

- **200 Local Initiatives**
 - Received from 55 counties in over 25 project categories
- **Public Hearings**
- **Municipal Association Meetings**
- **Citizen Participation**
- **Prior Commissions**
- **Activities in Other States**
(IN, ME, PA, NJ, etc)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- ★ **Regional Services**
- ★ **Modern Municipal Structures**
- ★ **School District Restructuring**
- ★ **Informed and Active Voters**
- ★ **Aid & Incentives**
- ★ **Addressing Cost Drivers**
- ★ **Sustaining Local Efficiency**



Regional Services

- ★ **Centralize certain services at the county level**
- ★ **Flexibility for counties to share jail facilities and manage populations and move towards a State managed jails system**
- ★ **Encourage justice court consolidation**
- ★ **Consolidate IDAs at the county or regional level**
- ★ **Allow renegotiation of collective bargaining agreements when consolidations occur**



Modern Municipal Structures

- ★ **Require town-wide approval for new villages and local reconsideration of small villages**
- ★ **Ease procedures for consolidation, citizen petitions, and coterminous town-villages**
- ★ **Require local consideration of county-level management of fire protection**
- ★ **End compensation for special district commissioners, turn over management of sanitation districts to towns, & require local reconsideration of all commissioner-run districts**
- ★ **Allow property tax sharing agreements among local govts.**
- ★ **Examine reclassifying some cities, towns and villages, and reconsider powers for each class**



School District Restructuring

- ★ Empower the Commissioner of Education to order consolidation
- ★ Set up local schools restructuring committees to examine service sharing and consolidation
- ★ Authorize regional collective bargaining contracts for new hires (phased in at local option)
- ★ Facilitate consolidation of back office services and regional high schools



Informed and Active Voters

- ★ Hold all local elections on November or May dates
- ★ Reduce number of elective offices by converting certain positions to appointive
- ★ Provide better information for voters
- ★ Improve local financial data for benchmarking



Aid & Incentives

- ★ **Local Government Efficiency Grants and 21st Century Demonstration Projects**
- ★ **Increase aid for efficient assessing using modern professional standards**
- ★ **Encourage regional solutions, cooperative services and consolidation**



Addressing Cost Drivers

- ★ **Require minimum employee contributions for health insurance**
- ★ **Ease municipal cooperative health plan rules**
- ★ **Review public employee pension benefit options (Tier 5)**
- ★ **Reform Wicks and other procurement rules**



Sustaining Local Efficiency

- ★ **Creation of a Center for Local Government Efficiency that will support local initiatives, promote cost-savings and follow through on Commission recommendations**



Questions

www.nyslocalgov.org

**Commission on Local Government
Efficiency and Competitiveness**

30 South Pearl St.

Albany, NY 12245

518-292-5139

localgov@empire.state.ny.us