

# Understanding “Place” in Census Bureau Data Products

New Jersey State Data Center Meeting  
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Michael Ratcliffe  
Geography Division  
U.S. Census Bureau

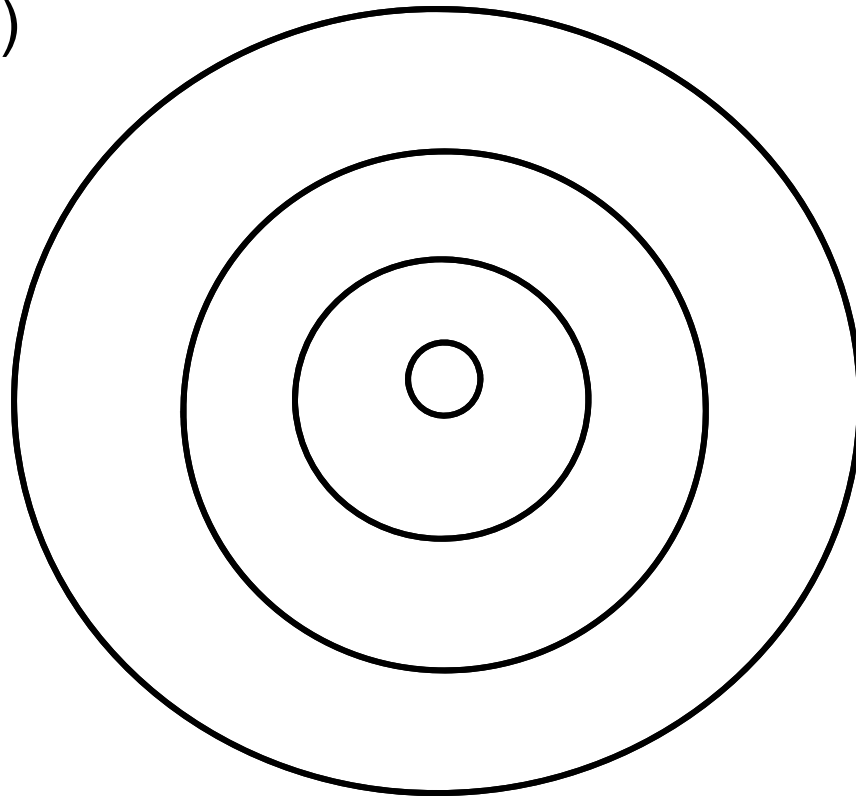
# What is a place?

## How is “place” perceived?

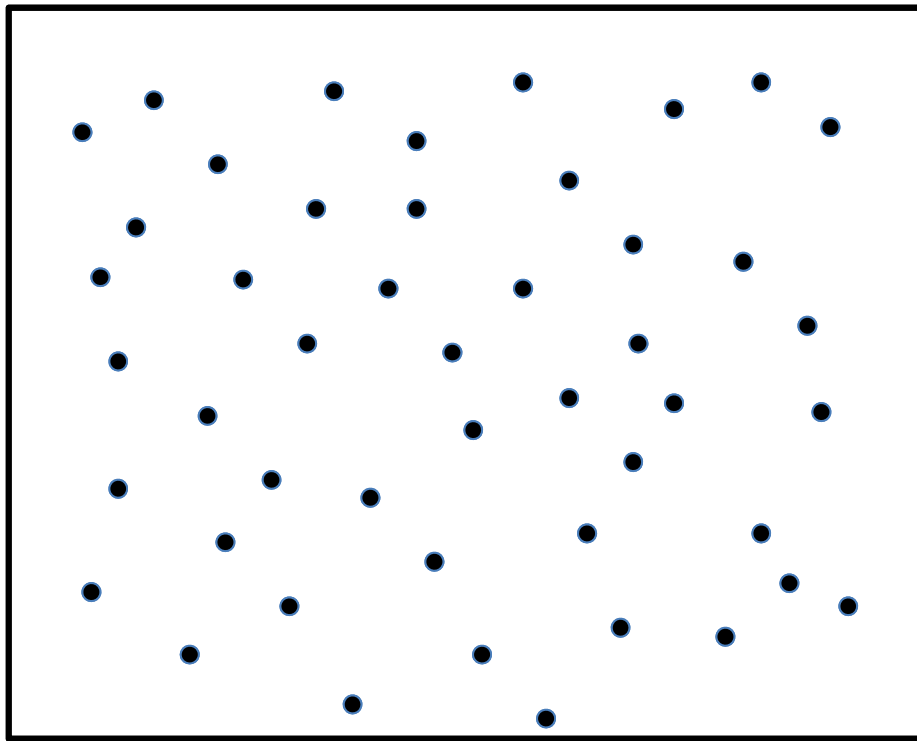
- Municipality, city, town, village, borough
- Town/township
- Community
- Neighborhood
- Postal place/ZIP Code
- Populated place
- Named locations that appear as points on maps
- Areas associated with a specific name

# Census Bureau Place Concept

- Places are “organic”— they expand (or contract) over time as population and commercial activity increases (or decreases)



Towns/townships are administrative areas;  
boundaries remain relatively constant as  
population changes.



# Census Bureau Places

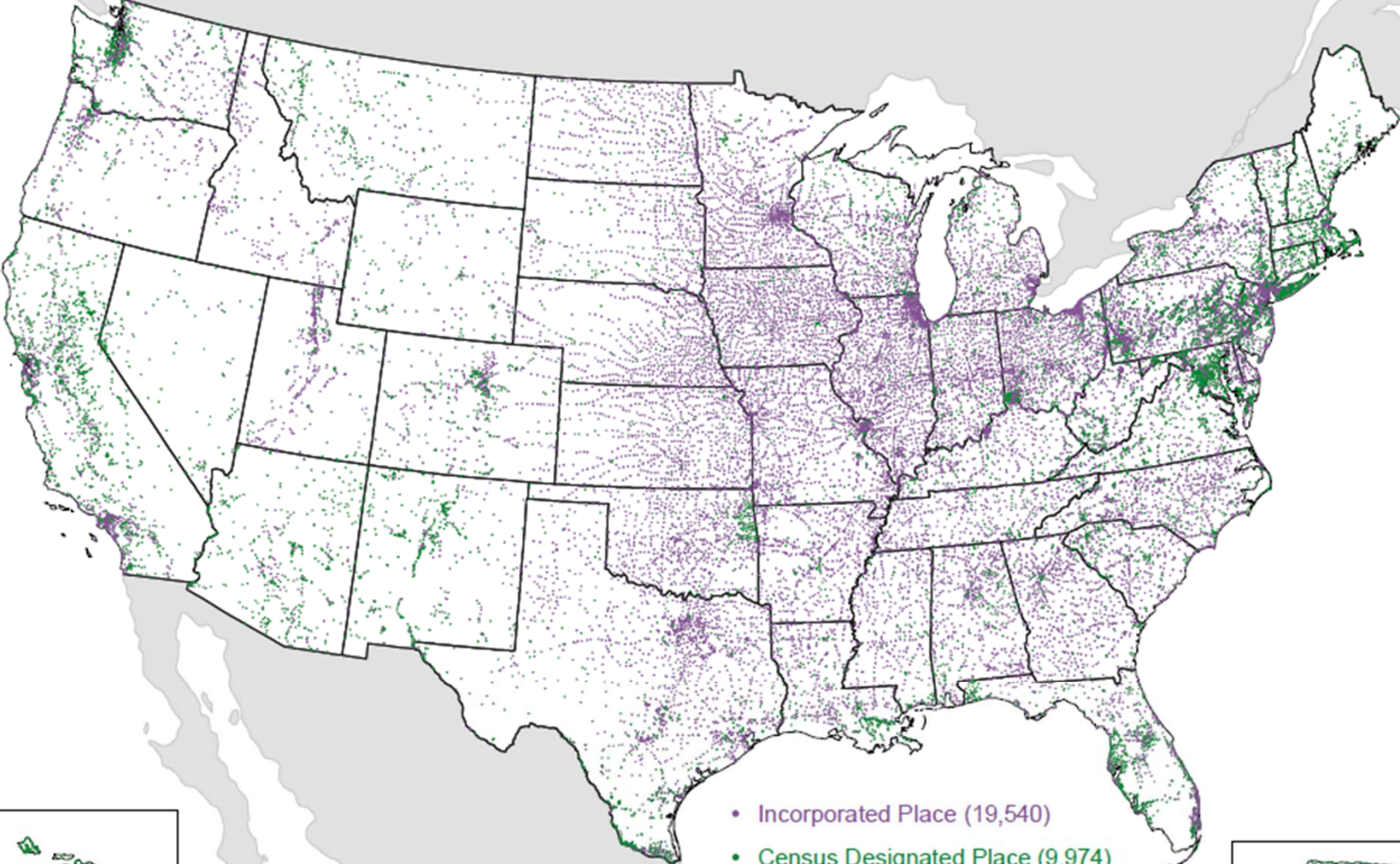
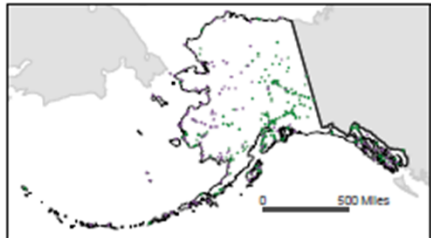
## Incorporated Places

- Legally bounded entity
- Cities, boroughs, towns, or villages, depending on the state
- Over 19,000 incorporated places

## Census Designated Places (CDPs)

- Statistical entity
- Unincorporated community, concentration of population, housing, and commercial structures, identifiable by name, but not within an incorporated place
- Nearly 10,000 CDPs for 2010 Census

# 2010 Census Distribution of Places



- Incorporated Place (19,540)
- Census Designated Place (9,974)



United States  
**Census**  
Bureau

0 100 Miles



# Incorporated Places

## Includes:

- Cities
- Towns (except in the six New England states, New York, and Wisconsin)
- Villages
- Boroughs (except in New York and Alaska)

## Does not include:

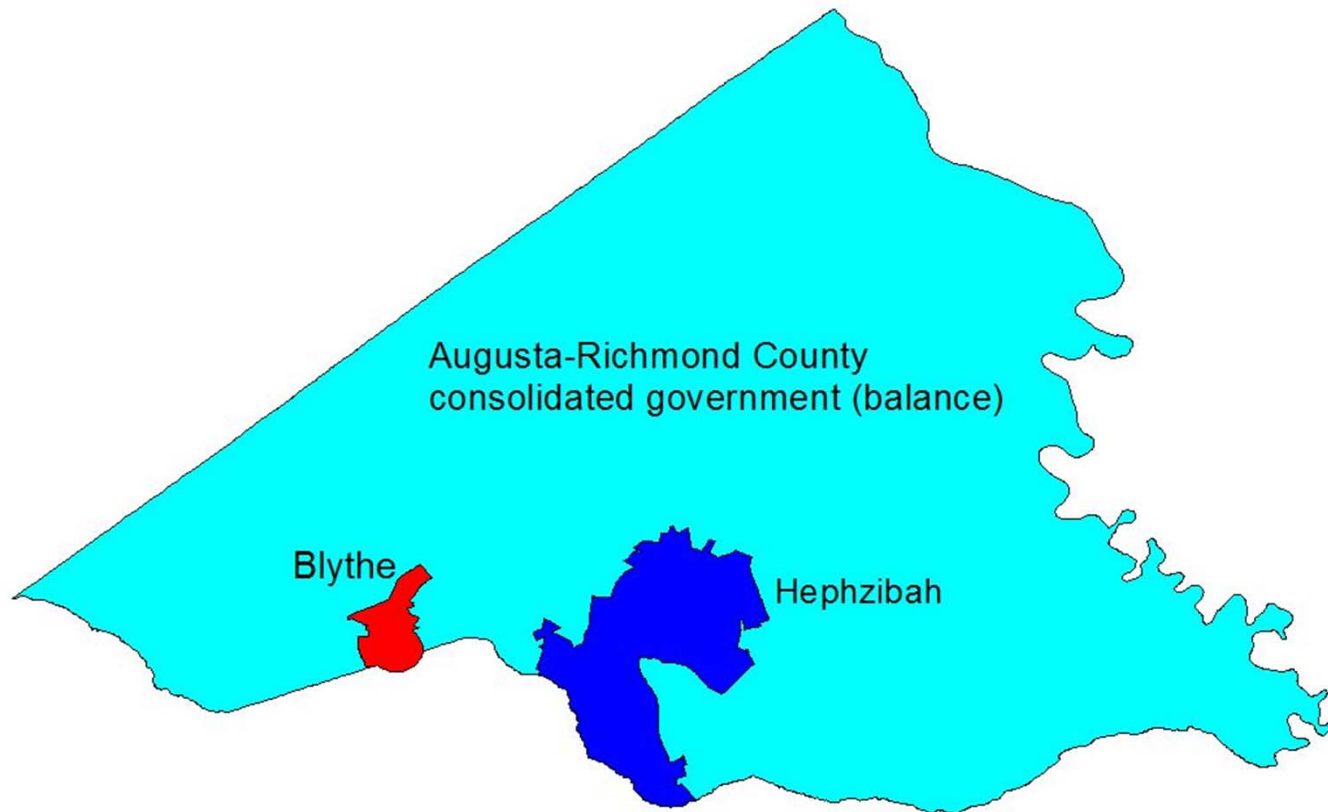
- Towns/townships in the Northeast and Midwest

# Consolidated Cities

- Within each consolidated city, a “balance” entity is defined, encompassing the area of the original city and the area outside the “dependent” incorporated places
- Augusta-Richmond County consolidated government
  - Augusta-Richmond County (balance)
  - Blythe city
  - Hephzibah city



# Augusta-Richmond County consolidated city



# CDPs encompass a variety of places:

- Places with same range of social and economic activities as incorporated places, but lack governments: Towson, MD; Tyson's Corner, VA; King of Prussia, PA
- Special taxation areas: Paradise, NV and other "unincorporated towns" in Nevada
- Towns/townships in the Northeast and Midwest that were defined as "whole town" CDPs: Framingham, MA; Westport, CT; Darien, CT
- Village centers within towns/townships: Cranbury CDP, NJ
- Administrative centers/county seats
- Communities with unique characteristics and needs for data: colonias in TX, NM, AZ, and CA

# Census Designated Places

- The distinction between “legal” and “statistical” as well as incorporated and unincorporated can be fuzzy for some CDPs:
  - Nevada’s unincorporated towns have legal status, legally defined boundaries, and have a mayor and town council
  - “Whole town” CDPs in the Northeast and Midwest are coextensive with towns/townships, which are recognized as municipalities, have legal boundaries and governments
  - Some CDPs (for example, Columbia, MD; Reston, VA) are defined around large associations, incorporated under state law.

# County Subdivisions

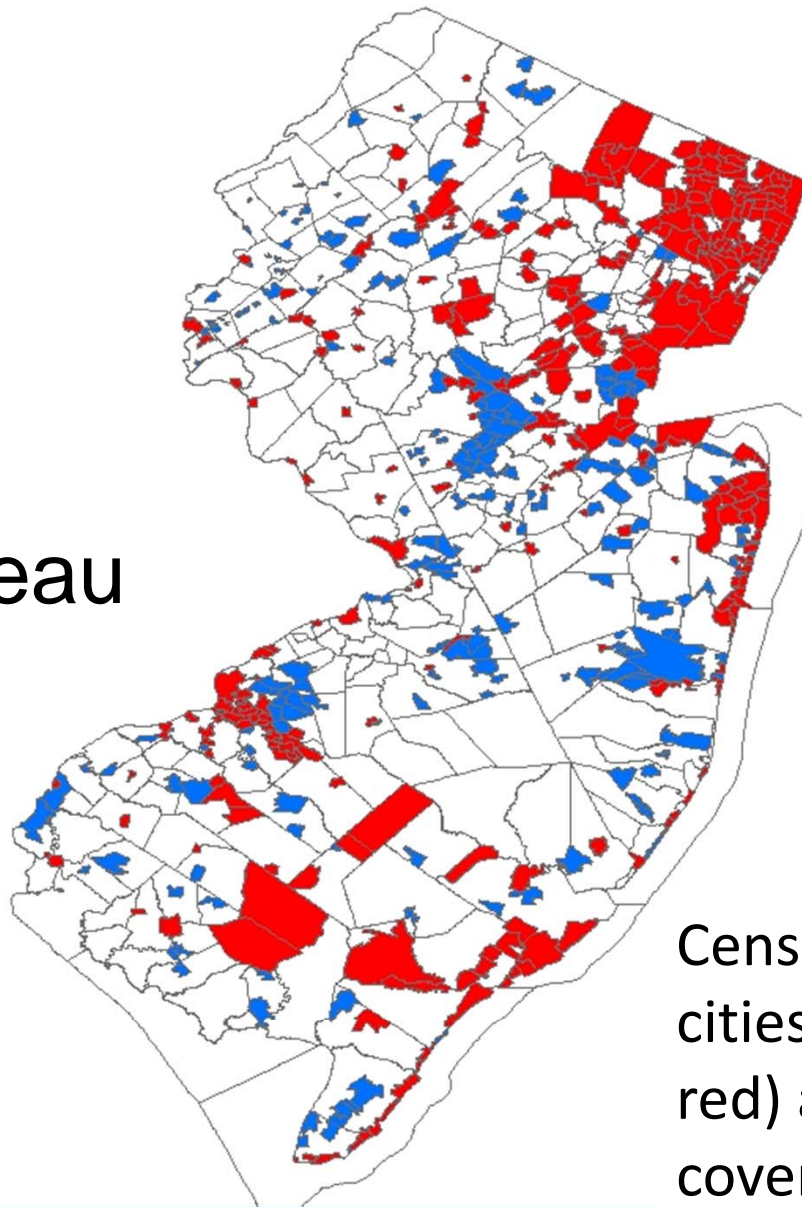
## Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs)

- Legal entity in 29 states, DC, and Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas
- May have a formal government with elected officials
- Over 30,000 MCDs for the 2010 Census

## Census County Divisions (CCDs)

- Statistical entity in 21 states
- Stable boundaries, recognizable names
- Over 5,200 CCDs for the 2010 Census

# New Jersey Places (Census Bureau definition)



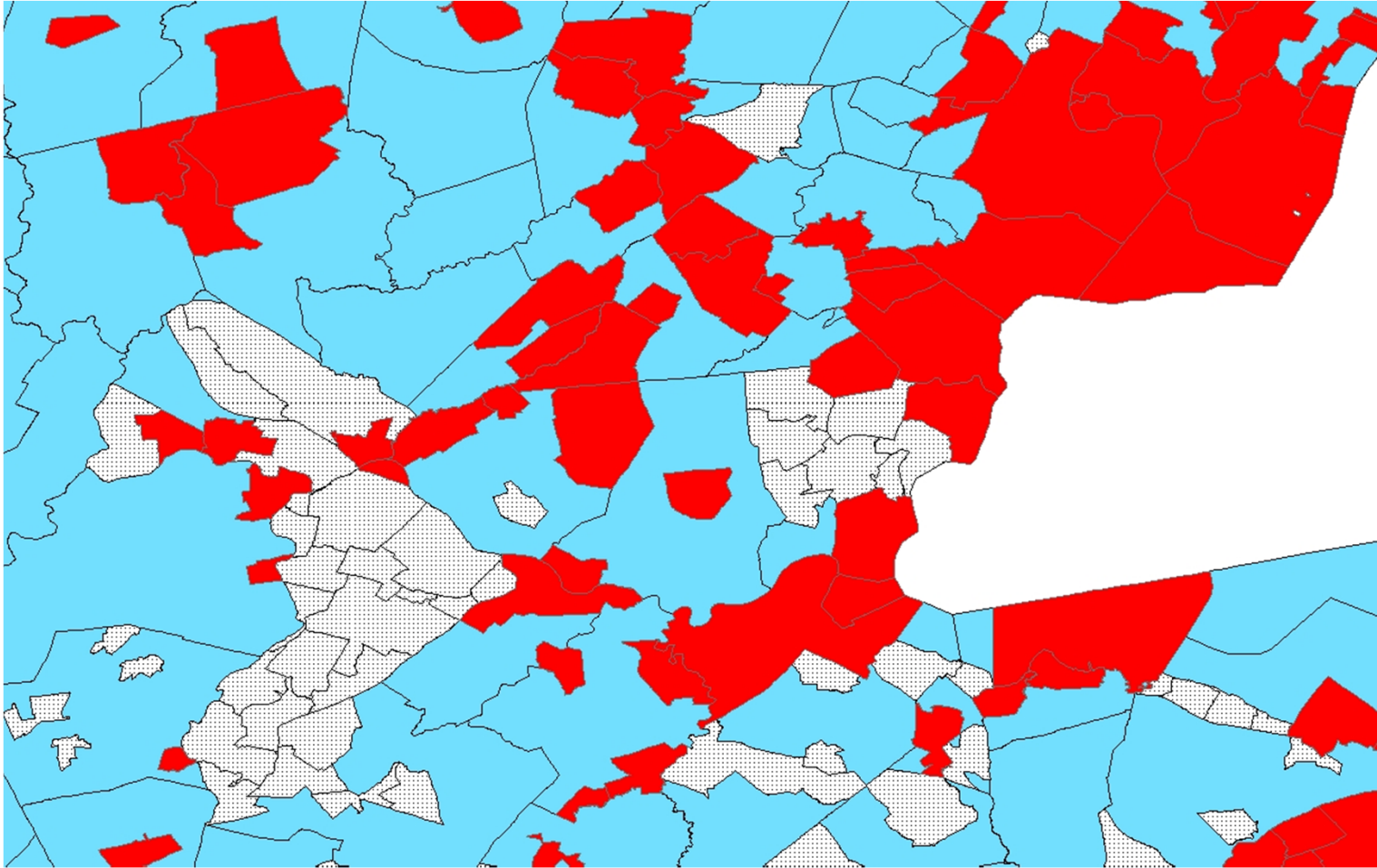
Census Bureau places—  
cities and boroughs (in  
red) and CDPs (in blue)—  
cover only a portion of  
New Jersey

# New Jersey County Subdivisions (Townships, Cities, and Boroughs)



Minor civil divisions, which include all townships, cities, and boroughs, more closely relate to the perception of “place” in New Jersey.

# New Jersey places and MCDs



Analyzing data for both places and MCDs, however, will result in duplication since cities and boroughs are represented as “false MCDs” and CDPs cover portions or the entirety of some towns.

# Economic Place Concept

Includes:

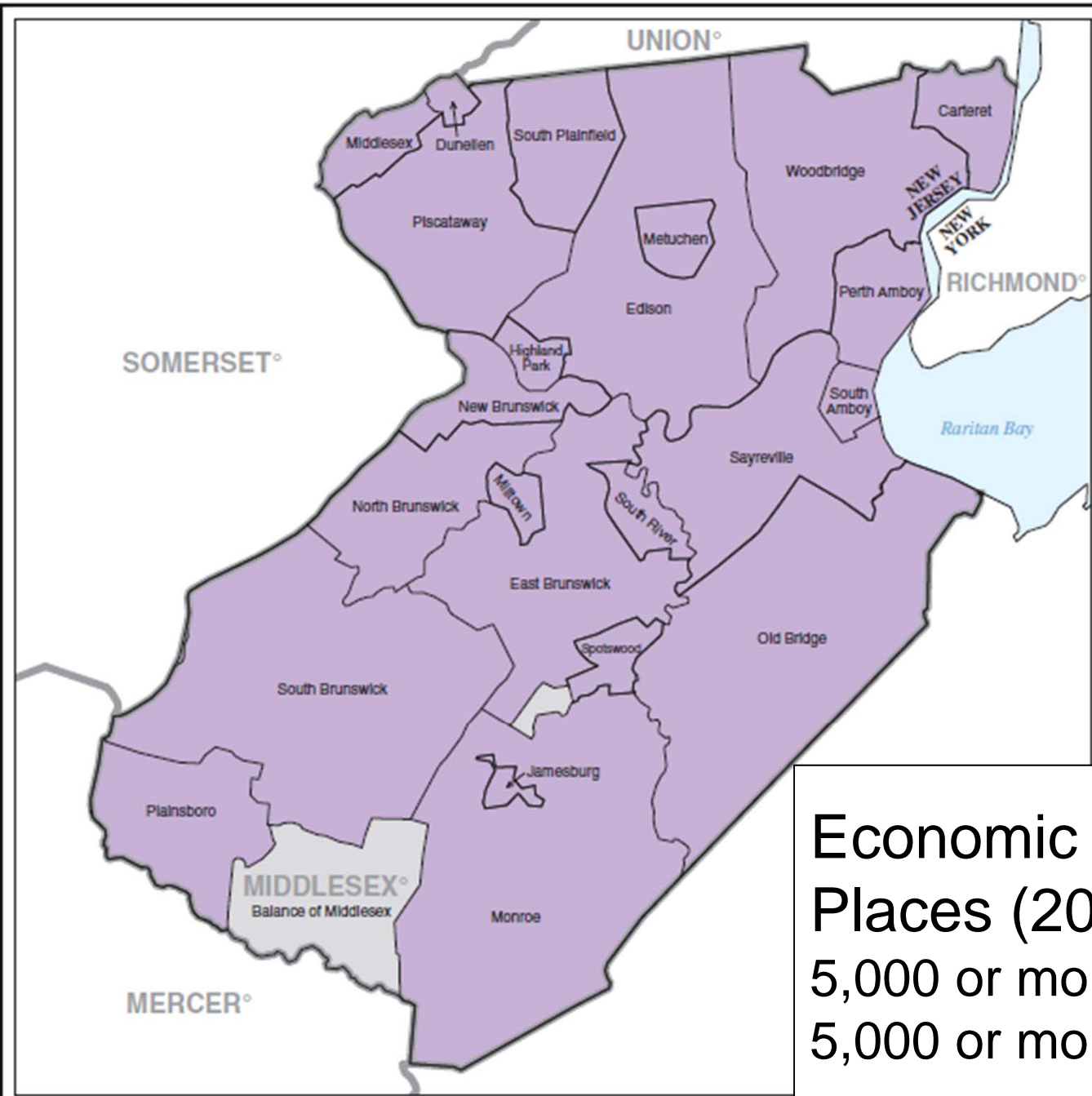
- Incorporated places
- Towns/townships in the Northeast as well as Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (the 12 “strong-MCD” states)
- Census designated places (except in the 12 “strong-MCD” states)
- Balance of county
- Balance of town

For the 2007 Economic Census, places encompass

- 5,000 or more people, or
- 5,000 or more jobs



Middlesex County, NJ – Economic Places



**Economic Census Places (2007):**  
5,000 or more people, or  
5,000 or more jobs

# Data for Places and County Subdivisions

	Decennial Census	American Community Survey	Population Estimates Program	Economic Census (2007)
Incorporated Places	All	All, in 5-year estimates	All	5,000 or more persons/jobs
Census Designated Places	All	All, in 5-year estimates	Not included	5,000 or more persons/jobs
MCDs	All	All, in 5-year estimates	20 states only	12 states only
CCDs	All	All, in 5-year estimates	Not included	Not included

# Two primary elements to the Census Bureau's place concept:

- Places are mutually exclusive; that is, a place cannot exist entirely or partially within another place.
- Places are “organic;” they expand (or contract) in spatial extent over time as population and commercial activity increases (or decreases).

# Where do we go from here?

- We know that “place” concepts and perceptions vary across the United States.
- The types of entities providing “municipal services” also varies.
  - Some are cities; some are towns/townships; and some are counties
- How do we reconcile place and municipality so that data users obtain the data they need for the places they expect?



# Questions? Comments?

Contact information:

Michael Ratcliffe

Geography Division

U.S. Census Bureau

301-763-8977

[Michael.r.ratcliffe@census.gov](mailto:Michael.r.ratcliffe@census.gov)