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GROWING TENDENCIES TO LEAVE AMERICAN MEGALOPOLISES IN CORONAVIRUS REALITY

The coronavirus pandemic has been devastating to America's biggest cities, as the virus has found fertile ground in their density, creating a coronavirus moving phenomenon. People are leaving big, densely populated areas and spreading out to suburbs or smaller communities across the country.

The United States Postal Service change-of-address data from February to July 2020 shows that 15,974,826 address change requests were filled during that period, which means 2 % increase in permanent movers and 27 % increase in temporary ones. Overall, around one-in-five U.S. adults (22 %) say they either changed their residence due to the pandemic or know someone who did. The age group most likely to have had at least one of these things happen to them is the nation's young adults. According to USPS data, big cities lost the most movers during the first six months of the pandemic.

MYMOVE registration data shows that some residents moving from densely populated cities relocated to smaller nearby cities and suburbs. Among the cities that lost the most movers during the pandemic are New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Naples, Washington DC, Houston, Philadelphia and Fort Myers. Less populated cities that gained the most movers are Katy, Richmond, Frisco, East Hampton, Georgetown, Leander, Cypress, Cumming, Riverview, and Meridian.

According to the statistics, people move out of big cities every year, even before the pandemic. Major metropolitan areas with populations exceeding 1 million sustained the biggest growth slowdowns and, population losses over the last four years, as have the urban cores within them. Growth in the country's major metropolitan areas fell by nearly half over the course of the past decade. All of this occurred at a time when national population growth has reached historic lows. Among the reasons why the population decline can be observed is cost of living; unemployment rate which was increased during the coronavirus pandemic; rise of remote work and schooling; possibility of homeownership due the record-low interest rates; plenty of open space in smaller cities.

Now, in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic and economic standstill, it is difficult to assess how or if the recent demographic dispersion will continue. A long-term recession could very well put the brakes on this dispersion and, as was the case after the Great Recession, lead to renewed metropolitan gains. On the other hand, large metropolitan areas and cities – especially those at the center of the pandemic – could become less immediately attractive to movers than they were in the early 2010s. Despite recent demographic reversals, major metropolitan areas – home to 56 % of U.S. residents – will continue to be important anchors for the nation's population and economy in the decade ahead.