

Southeastern Pennsylvania First Suburbs Project

Project Description

Statement of Purpose

The Southeastern Pennsylvania First Suburbs Project is a regional coalition of community leaders from developed suburbs that have joined together to harness their communities' power by directly engaging citizens to affect policies and practices that will lead to the stabilization and revitalization of their communities.

Project Origin

The Project emerged out of discussions by leaders from the older, developed suburbs of Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties, who recognize that their communities face common challenges: diminishing economic development, declining infrastructure, struggling school districts, and social services lagging behind the needs of their communities.

The Project's name is taken from a Brookings Institution study, "One-Fifth of America: A Comprehensive Guide to America's First Suburbs," which explains these common challenges nationwide.

Founding Co-Sponsors (Current as of March 20, 2008)

Delaware Valley Regional Planning
Commission
Good Schools Pennsylvania
Upper Darby Township
SEIU 32-BJ
Lansdowne Borough
10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania

Yeadon Borough
Ursinus College
SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania
Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work
and Social Policy
Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center of
Bryn Mawr College

Current Work

Since the December, 2007 "First Suburbs Summit," the Project has convened four Issue Action Groups, comprised of suburban leaders, to identify specific and winnable issues of importance to these communities in the areas of (1) Housing, (2) Infrastructure, (3) Education Finance, and (4) Social Services. The various participants in each group will reconvene at the end of April, 2008 to collectively review the work of all four groups. On May 31, 2008, the issues will be presented to a large gathering of suburban leaders for their endorsement.