

January 26, 2009 PhillyStat Session: State of the City, Part I

As the City tackles an unprecedented financial challenge brought on by the national economic crisis, it is important to understand a little about Philadelphia and its current demographics; in other words, how do we stack up? What are the major obstacles facing our city and our residents? What are Philly's biggest assets?

This PhillyStat session was designed to talk about these real obstacles and real assets. Because as we make choices for the future, we need to understand where we stand today.

PhillyStat Overview and Highlights

Employment Rates and Economic Trends

Summary: Philadelphia historically goes into a recession earlier, dips down further, and recovers later than the rest of the United States.

Did you know the unemployment rate in Philadelphia is almost a full percentage point higher than the unemployment rate for the United States?

State of the City

City Demographics

Summary: Philadelphia's population is declining and getting older. A sufficient number of new residents are not moving in to mitigate population loss. Those that are left have a greater need for city services.

Did you know the Greater Philadelphia region has not grown as rapidly as comparative metropolitan regions? (Philadelphia region 8% growth, Chicago region 17% growth, Baltimore region 21% growth, Phoenix region 74% growth) Other cities have supplemented their population with growth from immigration; Philadelphia has been less successful in this regard.

Population loss means that ultimately, the tax base is decreasing. At the same time, the City has an infrastructure that was built to serve a population of 2 million people, though it currently serves approximately 1.4 million people.

Educational Attainment

Summary: Philadelphia's educational system is not producing a competitive workforce for a global economy. The City's low high school graduation rates actually cost the City money.

Did you know that converting a Philadelphia dropout to a high school graduate would produce a potential gain of \$580,000 over a working lifetime? Overwhelmingly, the City's dropouts live in the areas of highest crime.

Public Safety

Summary: Philadelphia continues to make progress in reaching its goals of lowering violent crimes and homicides, particularly in the 9 targeted police districts. However, Philadelphia's rate of gun related crime is high, leading to shootings and violent crimes. This leads to more people in a prison system which is currently over inmate capacity.

Philadelphia's prison population has dramatically increased since 2004. The Prison System is built to hold around 8,405 people - whereas 9,841 people are currently in the system.

Did you know that the average daily prison population has increased 18.73% over the last five years?

City's Primary Assets

Summary: Philadelphia has a series of competitive advantages that can be utilized to grow the city and leverage resources such as great amenities, thriving education and medical sectors and a solid transportation system.

Did you know Fairmount Park is largest urban park in U.S. with over 9,000 acres?

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City Presenters:

Dr. Camille Barnett (Chair) – Managing Director
Clarence Armbrister – Chief of Staff
Andrew Altman – Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
Rob Dubow – Finance Director
Steve Agostini – Budget Director
Alan Greenberger – Executive Director, City Planning Commission
Lori Shorr – Chief Education Officer
Patricia Giorgio-Fox – Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Police Department
James Dinubile – Deputy Warden, Philadelphia Prisons System

External Presenters:

Steven Wray - Executive Director of the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia
David Elesh - Principal, Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicators Project
Charles Dougherty - Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Director, Division of Technical Services

Did you know you can attend the next PhillyStat session on Wednesday January 28th at 1:30pm in Room 1450 of the Municipal Services Building? Phillystat sessions will also replay on channel 64 and can be seen on www.phila.gov.