



May 15, 2014 Meeting Highlights

Attendees: Brett Blyshak, David Cohen, Michael DiVietro, David Gunther, James Hopkins, Morgan Hugo, Rhonda Wardlow Hurley, Dick Linderman, Elise Mannella, Aissia Richardson, Chuck Romick, Joyce Smith, Peter Yull, Theresa Ziegler (PPTF Members); Andy Sharpe, Amy Lempert, Leonard Bonarek, Andrew Blaisdell, Judith Robinson, Straso Jovanovich, Kevin Sand, Marlon Millner, Susan Dannenberg, Phil Pierdomenico, Chris Perks, Frances Conwell, Eddie Battle, Jim Jones, Dennis Winters, Margaret Stephens, Avery Martin (Guests); Barry Seymour, Jane Meconi, Patty Elkis, Mary Bell, Kwan Hui, Cary Bearn (Staff)

Welcome and Meeting Overview

Barry Seymour, DVRPC Executive Director, welcomed attendees to the meeting. Jim Hopkins, PPTF Chair, also welcomed members and guests and noted that this special meeting is the first of an ongoing series of talks hosted by the PPTF. Members hope to present topics that impact the region, invite speakers, and begin a dialogue around these issues. He went on to introduce Paul Jargowsky, Ph.D., the featured speaker.

Presentation

Cities, Suburbs, Neighborhoods, and Schools: How We Abandon Our Children

Paul Jargowsky, Ph.D., is a Professor of Public Policy at Rutgers—Camden and is the Director of the Center for Urban Research and Education. He presented an overview of poverty and its spatial context. Residents in the region are either connected or disconnected to services, opportunities, and resources as a result of income and where they live. Concentrations of poverty increased between 1970 and 1990, but then, in the 1990s, there was a stronger economy and changes in housing policies that positively impacted the issue. However, since the 1990s, poverty levels have been on the rise again, and gains that were made in the late 20th century are currently slipping.

A large cause of concentrated poverty historically has been rapid suburbanization, as the affluent moved to exclusive suburbs and the poor were left behind in central cities and older suburbs. Dr. Jargowsky presented the institutional context of U.S. suburban development and how it may impact poverty in a region: 1) major metropolitan areas have extensive political fragmentation, and individual municipalities develop without regard for the larger impact of their choices in the wider region; 2) central cities are surrounded by politically independent suburbs; 3) federal and state governments play only a secondary role in development decisions; 4) central cities are relatively poor and have greater minority populations; and 5) suburbs are mostly rich and white.

In recent years, the suburbs have expanded to the exurbs, with development happening further and further away from the central cities. Further, suburbs are developing at a rate that is faster than is needed to accommodate metropolitan population growth.

Dr. Jargowsky concluded his presentation by describing a current policy paradigm on how to address poverty: decision-makers focus either on “fixing” high poverty neighborhoods (with programs such as enterprise zones or Promise Neighborhoods) or helping residents to leave high poverty neighborhoods (Section 8 vouchers). While these types of programs may prove to be important in the short run, they do not necessarily address the underlying issues of why poverty exists in concentrated places in the first place. All future policy discussions should begin with the “Why?” question, and work towards policies of equity and inclusion.

Throughout the presentation, meeting participants discussed range of issues, such as:

- *Do current federal definitions of poverty accurately reflect how families are living? How come there are no cost of living factors that change the poverty rate based on where a family lives? What does the current “face” of poverty look like? Urban? Rural?*
- *What were the impacts of the Mt. Laurel decision on increasing economic diversity through affordable housing?*
- *Montgomery County, Md.’s inclusionary housing policies may act as an example of success for other counties and jurisdictions. Every city and town should have housing that reflects the income distribution of the metropolitan area as a whole.*
- *Housing and job mismatch (where people can afford to live vs. where they work) may also take a social toll on individuals with longer commutes as well as personal and environmental costs.*
- *What policies need to change, if concentrations of poverty are direct results of policy choices? How can funding policies support inclusion and desegregation? How can public will be built to support equity?*

Dr. Jargowsky’s presentation may be found at:

<http://www.dvrpc.org/ASP/committee/Presentations/PPTF/2014-05.pdf>.

Committee Business and Upcoming Outreach, Events, and News

- Jane Meconi announced some programs and events:
 - June 5, 2014 @ 9:30 AM. DVRPC and *Al Dia* are hosting the Improving Air Quality in Latino Communities Roundtable in DVRPC’s Conference Room.
 - The Pennsylvania Online Broadband and Technology Training program is a statewide Pennsylvania program funded through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. Designed for adult learners, OBTT offers a variety of free online training courses for individuals interested in sharpening their skills. Any resident of Pennsylvania is welcome to take advantage of free online training through OBTT. Course offerings include Microsoft Office Suite applications, basic graphics and graphic design, business and professional skills, project management, and more. For more information, contact Jane Meconi or visit <http://www.paobtt.com/>.

- The CyclePhilly app has recently been launched. CyclePhilly is a smartphone app for recording bicycle trips. Data from the app can be used by regional transportation planners in the Philadelphia area to make Philly a better place to ride. For more information, visit: www.cyclephilly.org.

One Minute Reports from PPTF Members

Peter Yull announced that representatives from Trenton will be presenting the city's master plan at the upcoming DVRPC Board meeting on May 22, 2014. Jeffrey Wilkerson, Principal Planner for the City of Trenton, and Adam Tecza, Planner of Group Melvin Design will present the recently-completed City Profile Report, the first step in the preparation of the City's Master Plan, as well as an overview of the Plan's elements and public engagement strategy.

Joyce Smith announced that the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation released an RFP for Strategic Planning and Analytical Services in support of Philadelphia's Land Bank.

David Cohen reported that he participated in the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) review; it was an enlightening process which included coordination among all Pennsylvania counties.

Public Comments and Questions

There were no formal public comments.

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