

Philadelphia: A Big American City on The Verge of Booming

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Abstract. The City of Philadelphia has a checkered past, both economically and socially. Twentieth century history depicts Philadelphia as a city very much on the decline in almost all measured socioeconomic categories. Entering the Great Recession of 2007-2009, Philadelphia was in one of its worst declines with high crime rates, widespread poverty, a collapsing housing market, and an almost nonexistent job market. Since the end of the Great Recession, Philadelphia has started a major turnaround. The city has developed and promoted great leadership (through both elected officials, and community volunteers), initiated social, cultural and economic development programs, become visible on the world stage, and continues to find ways to remake itself into a notable American city. Philadelphia is poised to move into the top ranks in all socioeconomic growth and development categories and be a major contributor to the future of The United States of America .

Introduction

Philadelphia: commonly known by nicknames like The Birthplace of America, and The City of Brotherly Love. American history books cannot be written without significant mention of Philadelphia's place in the creation of The United States of America. However, Philadelphia, like most American cities, has experienced an up-and-down history; recently seeming to know far fewer ups than downs.

The Great Recession of 2007-2009 took a major toll across all of America; cities and rural areas were all affected. The recession did not spare any industry, race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Philadelphia is rebounding from the recession, but the city is not content to just get back to business as usual per the pre-recession status and statistics. This research project aims to show how The City of Philadelphia is making and executing plans to become The Next Great American City.

The report will examine areas including:

- Economic growth, in terms of industry, jobs, and real estate
- Social growth and improvement; education, equal opportunity, diversity
- Cultural impact; in the arts, and with a national and global presence
- Consistent impact; in particular, are the trends impacting all population segments (income, gender, race) in the same way?

This report will show how Philadelphia is doing compared to:

- National indicators
- Regional indicators

- Other cities with similar demographics (population, geography, ethnicity)
- The Philadelphia suburban area
- History and expectations

Background and Related Work

Philadelphia: An Incomplete Revival [ccd] provides a historical perspective into how Philadelphia got to where it is. It provides growth rates and projections, providing a generally positive outlook. Metro Economic Outlook: Philadelphia [shrm] also provides valuable insight and outlook, with some inadequate visualizations which are aimed to be improved upon.

News stories published in local, regional, and national media -- Philadelphia Magazine [phillymag], The Philadelphia Inquirer [inquirer], The Philadelphia Citizen [citizen], NewsWorks [newsworks], and NPR [npr-twoway, state-impact] -- provide the city's "heartbeat" and some perspective into the current perception of progress (or lack thereof).

The Census Bureau and other US Government agencies [usa-data, usa-stats], The Bureau of Labor Statistics [bls], and Brookings Institute [brookings] provide foundational data which will be analyzed and will be the source of key visualizations. The City of Philadelphia [opendata, philadata] and The Philadelphia Business Journal [philabusj] provide some local and regional data.

Working Hypothesis

The key indicators in some reports show that Philadelphia has been growing at a pace which lags comparative cities and regions. However, these cannot take into account intangibles like construction and growth which are underway or just completing. These more recent developments and the prevailing trend will show Philadelphia approaching or consistent with traditionally recognized "great cities." The to-be-realized growth rate will continue an upward trend, and it will become more significant in the future American economy and society. Philadelphia will become a destination for diverse industries (not just those traditionally associated with the city), and the city will become a model for rebuilding cities with a tumultuous past.

The key indicators:

- Jobs / Unemployment Rates (diversity and equality)
- Real Estate (housing market: prices / values, availability, gentrification)
- Commercial and Residential construction
- Education (at all levels)
- Population trends (growth or decline)
- Social programs

References

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