

First suburbs are communities where a majority of the housing was built shortly after World War II and limited amounts of undeveloped land exist within the city's boundaries.

The principal issue facing first suburbs is the age of public and private infrastructure — the homes, businesses and utilities that make up the physical base of the community. Not only does aging infrastructure present maintenance problems, but even well-maintained buildings are often obsolete in terms of modern standards.

The First Suburbs Coalition was formed in 2002. After a period of study coalition members decided that they could more effectively address the issues they faced by working together, sharing information, and forging a larger partnership between the public and private sector. The coalition consists of 19 cities or portions of cities (see reverse).

In order to continue to attract and retain families and businesses, first suburbs need to find ways not only to maintain their housing, business structures and utilities, but also to renew and revitalize these facilities. The First Suburbs Coalition has identified three key issues that form the basis of the organization's agenda:

- **Modernizing the housing stock**, which was principally built in the years following World War II. This housing stock often does not include modern features such as ample closet space, master suites, open floor plans, and two-car garages.
- **Attracting and retaining businesses** that serve the communities. Retail businesses in particular have moved to more modern suburban locations, stripping first suburbs of services and revenue.
- **Maintaining and upgrading an aging public infrastructure**. This task is especially difficult when revenue is stagnant or declining

Recent accomplishments include:

- Production of a post-WW II home remodeling Idea Book. Over 3,000 copies have been distributed or sold.
- Completion, with partners Fannie Mae and the Housing Choices Coalition, of the remodeling of a post-WW II home in Raytown and its display during the Parade of Homes.
- Hosted coordination meeting and survey of residential rental regulation policies and practices.
- Updated Creating Quality Places Web site with first suburbs innovative planning and zoning practices.
- Developed a marketing media kit

Current projects include:

- Development of a home remodeling loan fund
- Package incentives and programs to encourage remodeling of post-WW II homes
- Develop a retail research and developer forum series to explore retail development practices
- Convene a meeting of developers to discuss first suburb development practices
- Expand joint marketing program for first suburbs.

An important element of the First Suburb Coalition is that it has actively reached out to include a wide range of stakeholders in first suburbs including the Home Builders Association, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, Fannie Mae, the Kansas City Regional Association of Realtors, design professionals, chambers of commerce, and developers.

First Suburbs Coalition Members

Kansas

Fairway
Kansas City, Kan. (part)
Merriam
Mission
Mission Hills
Mission Woods
Overland Park (part)
Prairie Village
Roeland Park
Westwood
Westwood Hills

Missouri

Gladstone
Grandview
Independence (part)
Kansas City, Mo. (part)
North Kansas City
Raytown
Riverside
Sugar Creek

<http://www.marc.org/firstsuburbs/>

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