

# Teaneck councilwoman attends White House Conference

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Councilwoman Lizette Parker represented [Teaneck](#) at a White House half-day summit on July 18 that focused on issues of sustainability and economic growth in older metropolitan suburbs. The summit was sponsored by Building One America, a national organization founded in 2009 to address common issues facing these towns. Parker was among 140 White House guests from 12 states, including approximately 15 community leaders from New Jersey.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIZETTE PARKER

Councilwoman Lizette Parker attended a White House Forum, sponsored by the White House and Building One America, on July 18. The topic of the half-day summit was first suburbs, inclusion, sustainability and economic growth. 'It was an empowering experience to meet with members of President Obama's administration to discuss issues facing towns from around the country,' she said.

Parker was part of a delegation from the New Jersey branch of the national organization, the New Jersey Regional Coalition of Building One America.

"It is a grassroots group whose primary focus is helping New Jersey's first suburbs in investing in infrastructure, creating jobs and establishing a more sustainable society so that future generations will be able to live the same quality of life as we do," Parker said.

Paul Scully, strategic director for the New Jersey Regional Coalition, defined a first suburb as an older suburb in a metropolitan area, usually with a denser and more diverse population and lower tax base than more affluent suburbs.

In addition to Parker, other New Jersey representatives at the conference included South Orange Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, who was one of the panelists, the mayors of Maplewood, Lambertville and Hamilton and a school board member from Roselle.

Parker said that she did not know why she was chosen to represent [Teaneck](#) instead of the mayor or deputy mayor.

"When you are invited to the White House you don't question why you are chosen. I just graciously accepted," she said.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, who spoke about grants available to municipalities, was one of several representatives from the Obama administration. Parker noted that [Teaneck](#) is slated to receive a grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation to replace the Route 4 Bridge over the CSX tracks. However, some council members are not happy that the grant will not pay for widening the highway near the bottleneck at Belle Avenue.

"The grants that Secretary LaHood spoke about may enable us to expand that project," Parker said, noting that she would present information about the grant opportunities to Township Manager William Broughton.

Conference attendees also viewed "The New Metropolis," a film that focused the efforts of residents of Pennsauken to revitalize their community.

"[Teaneck](#) was chosen to be represented at the conference because it is a typical first suburb community with a diverse population," Parker said. "We serve as a model to other suburban communities, and the White House is very interested in hearing about a progressive diverse community that can help shape future policies. The President and his administration made a commitment to share with local communities how politics can be shaped to help small towns."

She noted that [Teaneck](#) recently became the first New Jersey town to receive bronze certification from Sustainable New Jersey.

"[Teaneck](#) is doing its part in contributing on keeping our environment green and sustainable for future generations," Parker said.

Scully said that the New Jersey Regional Division was instrumental in ending the Regional Contribution Agreement, a practice that allowed wealthy municipalities to pay poorer ones to take on their low-income housing obligations.

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