



# Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania



## *Ideas for Creating More Livable and Prosperous Communities*



By Edward T. McMahon and Shelley S. Mastran



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The Conservation Fund is a national, nonprofit land conservation organization with offices in Pennsylvania and other locations throughout the United States. Since 1985, The Conservation Fund has acquired and protected more than 4 million acres of open space, wildlife habitat and historic sites throughout the nation, including thousands of acres in Pennsylvania. The Fund also assists partners in business, government and the nonprofit sector with projects that integrate economic development with environmental protection.

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**by Edward T. McMahon  
and Shelley S. Mastran**

**THE CONSERVATION FUND  
in partnership with  
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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## Foreword

FROM ITS BIG CITY SKYLINES to its rural landscapes, Pennsylvania is a state rich in heritage, natural resources and beauty. These values have helped to define our image and our quality of life.

Pennsylvania has distinguished itself as a leader in natural resource protection and community revitalization. We have protected our lands, improved our waterways, and reclaimed areas scarred by our industrial past.

But trends in our growth and loss of our working farms and forestlands signal problems. Some of the choices we are making today are threatening the sustainability of our communities and the quality of our lives. According to the 2003 report issued by the Brookings Institution, *Back to Prosperity*, some of the state's richest, most productive soil is disappearing under a sea of macadam and concrete. Pennsylvania's population shift from cities and boroughs to suburbia, coupled with haphazard land-use planning, has had significant negative impacts on our communities and our natural and historic resources.

In an era when businesses and families can relocate across the country and around the world, location makes a big difference. Companies seek areas that offer the quality of life necessary to attract employees. Young people hunt for cities and towns that not only have the jobs, but also have attractive landscapes and opportunities for life outside work. Families look for homes near parks, recreation, shopping, and safe routes to school.



Building and maintaining sustainable and attractive communities are dependent upon thoughtful natural resource and economic development planning that is integrated into land use planning activities at all levels across the state. We must work hard to blend growth and prosperity with protection of our precious land, waters and wildlife.

Our programs and policies must help smaller communities capitalize on tourism, cultivate small business, and conserve their heritage.

We must encourage the redevelopment of towns and cities to take pressure off development of our open spaces.

We need to empower county governments and regional planning entities to conserve natural and heritage resources and promote recreational activities through cooperative planning.

We must advance projects and planning that demonstrate sustainable growth and green infrastructure and conservation.

This guide outlines many ways to accomplish these goals. It is a helpful tool for local government officials as they plan their communities' future. By creating attractive and sustainable communities, we are ensuring a more prosperous Pennsylvania and a brighter future for us all.

Edward G. Rendell  
GOVERNOR

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*The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this book are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders, The Conservation Fund or the State of Pennsylvania.*





## Purpose of *Better Models*

**“New Discount Retailer Threatens Downtown Businesses”**

**“Road Widening to Remove Historic Buildings”**

**“Residents Protest Shopping Center Re-Zoning”**

**“Neighbors Oppose High Density Project at Hearing”**

**H** EADLINES LIKE THESE are typical in many communities throughout Pennsylvania. People are concerned about changes in their way of life—decline in the character of their neighborhoods; increasing traffic congestion; encroaching commercial development; loss of farmland, open space and trees; deteriorating water quality; or other environmental problems. Community change doesn't have to be traumatic, but it often is. As a result, the debate over how to accommodate new development is frequently loud and acrimonious and is almost always cast in either-or terms—e.g., progress vs. preservation; growth vs. no growth.

This book was written with the belief that this kind of debate is unproductive. The truth is that development is inevitable, but the destruction of community character and natural resources that too often accompanies growth is not. Progress does not demand degraded surroundings. Pennsylvania communities can grow without losing their beauty, history, or livability. Instead of debating whether growth will occur, we should be discussing the patterns of development: where we put it, how we arrange it, and what it looks like. If we start from this premise, communities can more easily balance conservation with economic development. What's more, this book presents many ideas on how to make development more profitable and less costly for both the developer and the community.

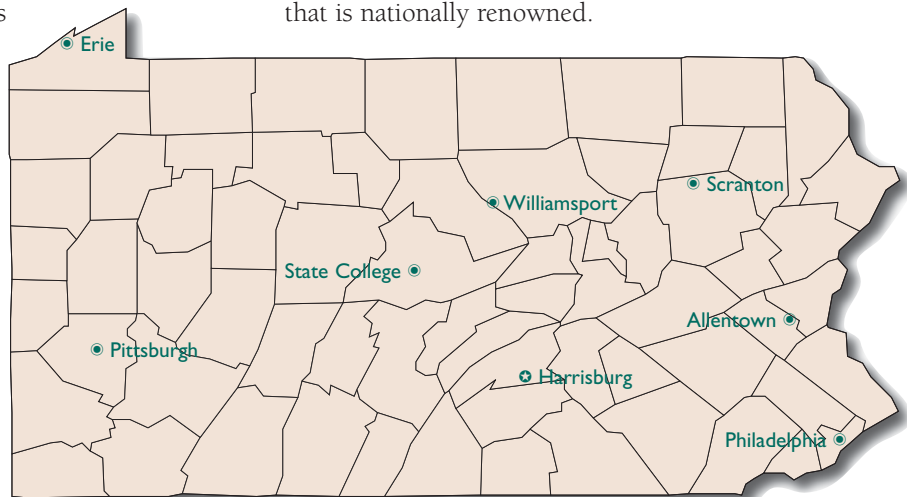
### **Pennsylvania is a Special Place**

Pennsylvania is known worldwide for its mountains and rivers, farms and forests, and cities and towns. It has productive agriculture, neighborly communities, a diverse ethnic and religious heritage, and rich natural beauty. The state's attractiveness, location, and natural resources have attracted settlers since early Colonial times.

Although Pennsylvania has not grown as fast as the national average over the last several decades, it is still expected to add nearly half a million people to its current population of more than 12 million by 2020.

Pennsylvanians are proud of their legacy. From Native Americans to early pioneers, from the signers of the Declaration of Independence to the steel workers of Pittsburgh, from coal miners to farm families, Pennsylvania residents have long recognized the Commonwealth's natural assets: magnificent mountains, fertile farms, abundant forests, and rolling rivers, like the Allegheny, Delaware, Monongahela, Schuylkill, and Susquehanna. Pennsylvania is also home to numerous national parks and historic sites, such as Independence Hall, Valley Forge, and Gettysburg Battlefield; the half-million-acre Allegheny National Forest; 2.4 million acres of state park and forest land, including America's third largest state park system; and a model system of state heritage regions and corridors that is nationally renowned.

## Background



**Smart growth is pro-growth. We know that developers, banks and the entire community rely on growth to fuel the economy. The goal is not to limit growth but to channel it to areas where infrastructure allows growth to be sustained over the long term.**

Hugh McCall, Jr.,  
Former Chairman, Bank of America

We should respect the land. It is our birthright, and almost every inch of it is densely layered with our history. For all sorts of economic, social, and psychological reasons, we should do more to protect the land, and we should recognize that the landscape is the setting for all our buildings. New residential, commercial, and institutional buildings can either intrude on the landscape, or they can be designed and sited so that they fit in. This book provides some ideas on how to do this.

### **We're Losing Ground**

Everyday in America people make decisions about where to live, where to invest, where to vacation, or where to retire based on what our communities look like. When people visit Pennsylvania, what do they expect to find? Beautiful mountains and valleys, unspoiled natural areas, quaint small towns, and a unique sense of place. This is the image of the Commonwealth—a reflection of its special character.



**Pennsylvania countryside**



**Skyline, Pittsburgh**

But is this really what they see? Pennsylvania is one of the slowest growing states, but it has one of the highest rates of per capita land consumption in America. Between 1982 and 1997, the state's population grew by only 1.4%, but development consumed 47% more land, with nearly 1.2 million acres of Pennsylvania farms, forest land and other open spaces lost to suburbanization. According to a 2003 report by the Brookings Institution, *Back to Prosperity*, Pennsylvania is undergoing "one of the nation's most radical patterns of sprawl and abandonment." Pennsylvania's rural areas are growing much faster than the cities, which indicates a high degree of sprawl. Development consumes 350 acres of Pennsylvania's open space every day. In addition, much of the new development in the Commonwealth is ill-planned and unattractive. Pennsylvania's traffic congestion continues to worsen even in small towns and rural areas, and haphazard new development, combined with a lagging economy, is rapidly eroding the very qualities that make Pennsylvania unique.

Southeastern Pennsylvania, for example, has experienced sprawling suburban growth for decades. However, in recent years, subdivisions, strip malls, office parks, and traffic congestion have spread from county to county. Sprawling development now threatens Adams, Franklin, Lancaster, York Counties and much of southeastern and south-central Pennsylvania. Between 1950 and 1990, the rate of land development in the Philadelphia region outpaced the rate of population growth by more than 6 to 1. In many cases,

despite spending billions on new schools and transportation projects, roads remain congested, schools overcrowded, local governments fiscally strained, natural resources threatened, and communities without a sense of place.

In many parts of Pennsylvania, farms are giving way to subdivisions. In the Poconos, beautiful views of the mountains are marred by giant signs touting fast food and gasoline. Even in economically distressed areas in northwestern Pennsylvania, the little growth that does occur often takes place on the strip outside of town. Add to this look-alike chain stores, big-box retailers, gaudy service stations, and soulless subdivisions. Too often the results are brash, monotonous, or so out of place that many citizens cringe at the prospect of more new development.

It is no wonder that national organizations have recognized parts of Pennsylvania as “endangered.” The American Farmland Trust has ranked part of Pennsylvania—including Adams, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Montgomery, and York Counties—as the nation’s second most threatened agricultural area. In 1999 the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed Lancaster County as one of America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places; in 2000, it listed the Valley Forge National Historical Park. And Scenic America named Cooks Creek Watershed in Bucks County one of its Last Chance Landscapes in 2000 because of the



Pennsylvania State Capitol, Harrisburg

***Smart growth is growth that is economically sound, environmentally friendly and supportive of community livability—growth that enhances our quality of life.***

J. Ronald Terwillinger,  
Former Chairman,  
Urban Land Institute

threat of sprawl development.

Most Pennsylvanians love the land and rivers and support measures to protect them. Public opinion surveys and local planning and visioning exercises demonstrate this. In 2001 a survey of southeast Pennsylvania residents by Millersville University’s Center for Opinion Research found that 91% of respondents support increased public funding to protect open space. And more than 80% support the use of government money to purchase land that protects open space from development. According to a recent poll in the Schuylkill watershed conducted by Global Strategy Group, more than 80% of respondents would pay more for a new home if it had parks and/or natural areas near by. And in fast-growing Lancaster County, a poll taken in 2004 found that 74% of respondents think their community is growing too fast and that steps should be taken to better manage growth.

### **Using Better Models**

This publication presents six principles for better development. Each principle is illustrated with numerous examples of alternatives to conventional development that are more attractive, more efficient, and more profitable. There are many such models throughout Pennsylvania and across the nation. Downtowns are being rejuvenated, open space is being preserved, historic buildings are being restored, and farmers are working to protect their way of life. Attractive new affordable, walkable, and mixed-use developments are being constructed, and new transit systems are gaining awards and growing support.

These real-life examples, in contrast to the image of standard development, are glimpses into one possible future—a future where development complements rather than conflicts with the state’s unique character. The coming decades will determine what subsequent generations experience here. Either Pennsylvania’s small towns, suburbs, and rural communities replicate

## Background



**Downtown, Lewisburg**

the unsatisfying building patterns of fast-growing areas in other parts of America, or we take action now.

Pennsylvania has 2,565 municipalities, 501 school districts, hundreds of agencies and thousands of authorities. This means that land use decision-making is widely dispersed among numerous small jurisdictions. All too often consumed with day-to-day opera-

tions, small jurisdictions have limited capacity to deal with growth and development issues. Furthermore, only about one half of all Pennsylvania municipalities have a comprehensive plan, and less than 60% of municipalities have a zoning ordinance.

*Better Models* is not a call for more regulation. Rather, it is a call for a more thoughtful approach to new development and redevelopment. Successful communities use education, incentives, and voluntary initiatives—not just regulation—to achieve desired outcomes. Many of the projects featured here were undertaken by individuals, businesses, and communities of their own accord. At the same time, it is clear that local governments need additional planning tools and resources to better manage growth. In the meantime, creative use of existing tools, including strong zoning, comprehensive plans, corridor overlays, design guidelines, development impact fees, multi-municipal and regional initiatives, and conservation easements, can result in better development.

## Six Principles for Better Development

### 1. Conserve Pennsylvania's Farmland, Natural Areas and Scenic Assets

The first principle of better development should be identifying where not to develop. Successful communities always identify the areas that are most important to protect, whether it is farmland, forests, greenway corridors, riparian buffers and groundwater recharge areas, natural areas, scenic views or wildlife habitat. Every community needs an open space protection plan and the resources to implement it. Communities that have a blueprint for conservation are more amenable to accommodating growth in the areas where it is most appropriate. On the other hand, when citizens think all land is up for grabs, they often oppose development everywhere. Conserving natural and scenic assets is also important because working farms, forests, and scenic landscapes contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.

### 2. Maintain a Clear Edge between Town and Countryside

Pennsylvania has many strong cities and towns as well as healthy rural landscapes. Safeguarding the rural character of Pennsylvania means maintaining a clear edge between cities, towns, and countryside. This can be done by protecting agricultural land and open space while encouraging more compact building design and walkable communities. It also means encouraging infill development in our older communities, on vacant, underused or overlooked land near transit and on reclaimed former industrial sites (brownfields). By working to maintain a clear edge between town and countryside, Pennsylvania can preserve its rural landscapes and at the same time enhance the vitality of its existing communities.

### 3. Build and Maintain Livable and Attractive Communities

Attractive and livable cities and towns are the flip side of protecting rural character. Livable communities have a balance of jobs, homes, services, and amenities and provide interconnections among these elements. Livable communities provide housing choices and are walkable and affordable. They're also well designed and attractive. Vibrant downtowns are especially important because they are the heart and soul of Pennsylvania communities, appeal to all ages, and provide the distinctive image that people take with them. We can even reshape the strip to make it more appealing and functional. Wherever new development or redevelopment occurs, location, scale, siting and design decisions should be carefully considered.

### 4. Preserve Historic Resources

Pennsylvania's rich history is evident in the wealth of historic buildings and archeological sites found in cities, small towns and rural areas throughout the state. Historic assets should be identified and protected, and developers should be encouraged to rehabilitate and reuse historic structures. Protecting historic resources such as small-town main streets is also important because historic preservation is a powerful tool for economic revitalization that generates jobs and attracts tourists and investors.

### 5. Respect Local Community Character in New Construction

Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built since the end of World War II, and much of it is cookie-cutter, off-the-shelf junk. New buildings can either complement the character of Pennsylvania communities, or they can turn the state into "Anyplace USA." Pennsylvania communities should do more to ensure that new construction—particularly chain stores, shopping centers, and franchises—respects local character. Pennsylvania's natural setting, historical development pattern, and architectural traditions make this a distinctive place. By identifying what makes each community unique, and what harms that uniqueness, localities can develop standards that foster distinctive, attractive communities with economic vitality and a strong sense of place.

### 6. Reduce the Impact of the Car and Promote Walkability

Reducing the impact of the automobile means providing more transportation choice. It also means designing transportation facilities that are beautiful as well as functional, that meet the needs of people as well as those of motor vehicles, and that respect and enhance local communities. Design standards for neighborhood streets, roads, bridges, parking lots and other transportation facilities should be reexamined to make them more human-scale and community friendly. Even minor design improvements can lessen the negative visual and environmental impacts of new roads and bridges. Transportation choice can be expanded by providing better public transportation and building more sidewalks, trails, and bike paths that can create a network of non-motorized transportation options within and between communities to allow citizens to increase their physical activity close to home. Communities can also foster healthy lifestyles by considering walkable, mixed-use development and traffic-calming measures like roundabouts, curb extensions, or narrowing streets to slow down traffic and make walking and biking more desirable.

## Economics and Environment Can Work Together

**D**EVELOPMENT does not have to mean destruction of the things that people love. The models presented in this book prove that economic development and environmental protection can be compatible. In fact, maintaining the natural and historical integrity of Pennsylvania is fundamentally important to the state's economic well-being. High quality of life increases the state's ability to attract and keep a skilled work force. Attractive, livable communities have more choices. To sell short our natural and cultural assets will cost more in the long run—socially, economically, and environmentally. Increasingly, communities across the country are recognizing this link.

### It's Our Choice

Pennsylvania communities have a choice about how they grow. The quality and design of new development and redevelopment can be significantly improved, but too often the debate over development is seen as an either/or contest: development versus no development, progress versus preservation. A more useful framing of the issue is to concentrate on how and where we develop. Once we define what is damaging or unsatisfying about conventional development patterns, we can address those concerns. The three most critical elements are the location, layout, and design of new development.

Progress does not demand degraded surroundings. Pennsylvania can have a strong economy and abundant open space. It can have new development and a healthy environment. It's a matter of choice. Each community can choose how it develops. Communities that accept the lowest common denominator in new development will usually get it. Communities that set higher standards achieve higher results. However, many communi-

ties believe that they must accept any and all development. These communities will compete to the bottom. On the other hand, communities that set standards compete to the top. This is because savvy communities know that if they say “no” to bad development, they will always get better development in its place. All of us—citizens, elected officials, business leaders, builders, environmentalists, and community leaders—can determine the future of Pennsylvania communities, if we put a high enough priority on identifying the things we really care about.

Sometimes builders argue that if people didn't like what they produced, consumers wouldn't buy it. This is, of course, a vastly oversimplified version of what's really going on. Many homebuyers buy homes in communities that they know are flawed. They buy because of location, the quality of local schools, or the price—even though they might prefer neighborhoods and commercial areas very different from what is offered. This book is based on the belief that there are better, more attractive, and more profitable ways to build.

*Conservation is a state of harmony between man and nature.*

Aldo Leopold



Successful communities identify key assets.

## Secrets of Successful Communities

Successful communities that follow the six principles always have a few things in common. They typically:

- Create a shared vision for the future
- Identify key natural, cultural, scenic, and economic assets
- Build all local plans—including economic development, tourism, and land use plans—around the preservation and enhancement of key assets
- Use education, incentives, and voluntary initiatives, not just regulations
- Pick and choose among development proposals
- Meet the needs of landowners, business interests, and the community
- Pay attention to community appearance as well as economics and ecology
- Assess the impacts of land use policies
- Recognize the link between land use and transportation planning
- Make Quality of Life a key organizing element of the community vision

### Creating a Shared Vision

No place will retain its special character by accident. Successful communities always have a “vision” for the future. And often the communities that have a shared vision are among the most desirable and economically sound in the nation. Working to maintain a distinctive local identity can pay off.

A well-articulated vision will benefit everyone. Once clear expectations are set, builders know what the rules are and can plan accordingly. Similarly, time-consuming reviews can be expedited for projects meeting these standards. This will free staff time for other important matters and help reduce opposition to new development.

The key is for each community to develop its own shared vision for the future and raise expectations throughout the region. This sense of shared future throughout Pennsylvania is especially critical for regional issues like transportation, landscape protection, recreation, heritage tourism, and affordable hous-

ing. Only with widespread recognition of what makes the state special do we have a chance to safeguard the treasure that is Pennsylvania.

## Background

### Who Can Help

- Individual residents
- Builders and developers
- Local business, labor, and citizen groups
- Local governments
- Nonprofit conservation and preservation organizations
- State agencies

The protection of Pennsylvania’s sense of place depends on all of us. With a widespread ethic that this issue is important, the state can remain not just a special place that reflects what was given to us, but also a special place where new development adds to this legacy.

### Identifying Key Assets

Location ... location .... location. Successful communities know where their assets lie. If a community’s character, as expressed through its natural, scenic, and historic assets, is to be safeguarded, the first step is identifying the location and significance of particularly important features. Among these might be historic buildings, sites, and neighborhoods, or natural resources such as riparian areas, special habitats, prime agricultural soils, large blocks of contiguous forest land, steep slopes, and scenic views. In Pennsylvania, assets can be identified and protected through up-to-date county, municipal, or multi-municipal comprehensive plans.

Recognizing what is worth preserving is the first step toward better development. Once citizens clarify what they care about, it is easier to find strategies to protect special places or irreplaceable resources. A clear public consensus on conservation can also give direction to elected officials and offer builders and developers more certainty and predictability about development.

The key to protecting the natural environment is

first to protect our rivers, streams, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, critical habitats, steep slopes and other environmental areas, then to protect the working landscapes: the farms and forests that automatically enhance rural economies and protect natural habitat. Keeping large expanses of land in productive use is also essential to assure the critical mass needed to support a resource-based economy. The “rural heritage” of Pennsylvania has meaning and relevance for all state residents, whether you live in a city, suburb, or rural area.

The key to enhancing the built environment is first, to do no harm. This means protecting historic places—buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes—and second, ensuring that new construction respects community character. New buildings, whether stores, homes, offices, or government buildings, should be good neighbors and respect the landscape. The historic fabric of Pennsylvania’s towns and cities is one of the most important characteristics of our state, and it is vital to the health of our tourism industry.

### **Build on Local Assets**

Successful communities craft land use and economic development policies around their distinctive assets: river corridors or waterfronts, stunning views or historic buildings, a local college or university, a particular crop or manufactured product, a blue-ribbon trout stream or a unique species of vegetation or wildlife.

Building on distinctive local assets is important for several reasons. First, these assets provide a competi-

tive advantage by building on a community’s strengths rather than its weaknesses. Second, these assets provide a “sense of place,” a quality for which more and more Americans are searching. In an increasingly homogenous world, a community with its own feel and flavor stands out.

### **Pick and Choose among Development Proposals**

Successful communities pick and choose among development proposals because they know that “all development is not created equal.” They also know that when they say no to development that is contrary to their comprehensive plan or bad for the community, they will almost always get better development in its place.

Successful communities have the courage to reject development that doesn’t enhance local values. Yet, too many local officials are simply afraid to say “no” to poor quality development. It has been shown time and again that communities that set higher standards get better results. On the other hand, communities that set no standards will compete to the bottom. At the same time, they should realize that they can’t deal with the challenge of growth simply by resisting all change.

### **Use Education, Incentives and Voluntary Initiatives, Not Just Regulations**

We need regulations. They set minimum environmental standards and help prevent bad things from happening, but successful communities use the carrot as well as the stick. Successful communities use incentives and voluntary initiatives, like conservation easements, density bonuses, transfer of development rights, expedited permit review, stormwater credits and differential taxation to encourage higher quality development. Successful communities also understand the importance of community education. People won’t preserve what they do not understand. Education about the economic, social and environmental benefits of historic preservation, conservation development, walkable communities, and other better development concepts goes a long way toward reducing opposition to sensible land use regulations.



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Small towns are one of Pennsylvania’s biggest assets.



### Meet the Needs of Both Landowners and Community

In most communities, problems don't result from development itself, but from the patterns of development: Where it takes place, how it's laid out and what it looks like. Successful communities court reputable developers who are willing to do more than meet legal mandates and who work closely with the community throughout the development process.

Conversely, communities that expect landowners and developers to produce a responsible product must also recognize that developers have legitimate expectations as well. Developers who are willing to build environmentally sensitive projects have a right to expect flexible communities willing to modify standard zoning and engineering requirements.

### Pay Attention to Community Appearance

Successful communities know that community appear-

ance is fundamentally important to economic well being. Every single day in America, people make decisions about where to live, where to vacation and where to retire based on what our communities look like. Travel teaches you many things, not the least of which is that new development doesn't have to be ugly, but all too often it is. How a city or town looks to new businesses is important to whether or not a business decides to locate in your community.

Community appearance is especially important to communities seeking to attract tourists and their dollars. The more Pennsylvania communities come to resemble everyplace else in America, the less reason there is to visit. On the other hand, successful communities know that the more they do to protect their unique characteristics, whether natural or man-made, the more people will want to visit.

## Background

## Tools to Use

**Resource Inventories** - Specific resources, including natural areas, rare and endangered species, historic sites, open space, scenic views, prime farmland, and so on, should be identified, described, and mapped. The process of inventorying key resources can be undertaken by citizen groups, private organizations, or public agencies—or a coalition of such groups. These inventories can be indispensable for building community awareness and consensus and for planning the future. This kind of inventory is also an important foundation for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources County Greenway and Open Space Network Planning Program.

**Visual Assessments** - Numerous visual assessment techniques can help local citizens and officials in understanding and evaluating their communities. These include mapping special places in the community, whether through geographic information systems (GIS) or some other means, designing a tour for visitors, taking photographs of typical scenes in the com-

munity, or studying aerial photographs. All enhance residents' awareness of how their community is laid out and how it looks—with an eye toward planning how it might look like in the future.

**Surveys of Visual Preferences** - This widely used technique allows residents to view images of various types of local development and then to rate the images on a scale from negative to positive. Discussion of the results clarifies what makes a development project desirable or disappointing and helps pinpoint what citizens care most about. These surveys can be professionally conducted or they can be done simply by having people photograph what they like most and what they like least in their community, and then comparing the results in a community forum.

**Community Visioning** - Successful communities always have a vision for the future. Community visioning allows residents and local leaders to go through a series of exercises that helps them identify community

assets as well as community weaknesses or opportunities, in order to articulate what they think the community should be like in the future. This “vision” can then be established as a goal for policy making, and various strategies can be developed to achieve that goal.

**Design Charrettes** - Through a community workshop, residents assisted by professional designers, including landscape architects, urban designers, architects, transportation engineers, or planners, can work to develop solutions to community design problems. For example, a charrette might focus on streetscape design, gateways, a community park, or new residential development.

**Visual Simulations** - New technologies allow communities to see what proposed development will look like before it occurs. Alternative designs for shopping centers, road corridors, or subdivisions can be simulated so that residents can evaluate the pros and cons of future development. Such simulations can be accomplished through drawings, models, or computer graphics. The most realistic simulations are usually achieved through computers and video technology.

**Buildout Studies** - Predicting future development in the community, based on physical constraints, market demand, and current zoning and other regulations, can help residents evaluate existing development con-

trols. Communities are often surprised to see the extent of development allowed, by right, in their ordinances—and such realization can be the impetus for revising them.

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*O, Say Can You See? A Visual Awareness Toolkit for Communities.* Scenic America, School of Landscape Architecture, SUNY Syracuse, and Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, National Park Service; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

PennSCAPEs (Pennsylvania Strategies, Codes and People Environments), CD-ROM, Pennsylvania State University, College of Arts and Architecture, Department of Landscape Architecture; (814) 865-9511, [www.pennscapes.psu.edu](http://www.pennscapes.psu.edu).

*Pennsylvania Blueprints: Best Land Use Principles and Results, Interactively Shown,* Pennsylvania State University, College of Arts and Architecture, Department of Landscape Architecture; (814) 865-9511, [www.larch.psu.edu](http://www.larch.psu.edu).

*Planning for the Future: A Handbook on Community Visioning,* Second Edition. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania; (717) 787-9555, [www.ruralpa.org](http://www.ruralpa.org).

# Barriers to Better Development

## Background

**A**LL DEVELOPMENT is not created equal. Better development approaches can be more profitable, more attractive, and more convenient than conventional sprawl-type development. It makes more efficient use of land, provides more transportation choice, reduces costs for new infrastructure, and is more respectful of Pennsylvania's beauty, history, and environment. However, despite these benefits, smart growth represents only a small portion of recent development in Pennsylvania. This is because applying the better development principles is often more difficult than conventional development for several reasons. The key impediments to better development are:

### Inflexible Local Regulations

Local regulations are often an impediment to smart growth. Most local zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations make it easier and faster to build conventional, single-use suburban-type development. For example, local regulations frequently mandate a separation of housing, shopping, and offices and provide little flexibility in lot size or street width. Local officials should make zoning and subdivision regulations more flexible so as to encourage conservation development, traditional neighborhood developments (TNDs), mixed uses, narrower streets, and other better development concepts.

### Outdated Market Perceptions

Better development is an unfamiliar market to many developers and, as such, it is perceived as risky. Outdated assumptions often inform current market and demographic analyses. This prevents developers from building projects for significant groups of consumers with specific needs, tastes, and preferences. Today more than 70% of American households do not have school-age children. As a result, empty nesters, retirees, unrelated singles and younger couples are all growing market segments that crave more walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. Yet the market provides them with few choices.

### High Development and Process Costs

Local fees and costs for development, including construction impact fees, which fail to factor in the benefits of better development can increase land and construction costs. Also, a shortage of suitable infill sites make smart growth more expensive and complicated. Local and state governments need to provide incentives for the reuse of historic structures, brownfield development, downtown revitalization, transit-oriented development, and other infill projects.

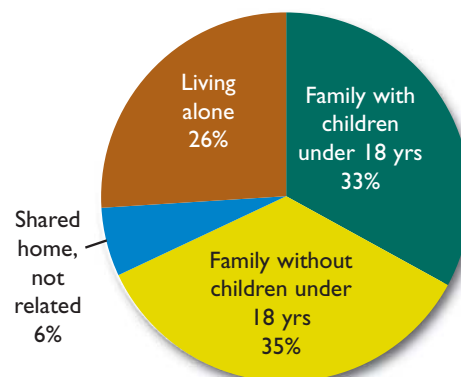
### Financing by Formula

A lack of comparables, the secondary financing market, and bank structures and procedures can make securing financing for better development projects difficult. In general, bankers fund projects in a formulaic way, so that only standard types of developments, with predictable outcomes, receive financing. In addition, excessive parking requirements that are often imposed by lenders add expense and may conflict with the goals of both the developer and the community.

### Proposing High Density Without Amenity

Many worthy projects, including both infill development and greenfield development on the edge of town, have met with community opposition. The public may

### U.S. Household Types (2002 Census)



Only about a third of all households have school-aged children.

## Consumer Preferences for Neighborhoods and Amenities

	Percentage of Respondents		
	For	Neutral	Against
<b>Town Center</b>			
A. Town center has a village green surrounded by shops, civic buildings, churches, etc., and is the focal point for residential neighborhoods clustered around it.	86	8	6
B. No single community center: shopping and civic buildings are distributed along commercial strips and in malls.	23	20	57
<b>Street patterns</b>			
A. Narrow streets are centered on the town square and in a city block grid to encourage walking and discourage in-town driving. Traffic flows through all residential and commercial streets.	55	17	28
B. Streets are wide to make it convenient to drive in town. Shopping areas are farther apart so that walking is not practical. Neighborhoods have cul-de-sacs and courts that are linked by higher-speed major streets.	46	20	34
<b>Parking and cars in town</b>			
A. Town is less automobile oriented. Town center has parking structures instead of large lots. Higher-density development with walking and biking paths encourages people to get around town without a car.	69	16	15
B. Auto-oriented suburbs have acres of parking around commercial and public areas. Things are far enough apart that you need to drive to most places, especially for shopping.	25	21	54
<b>Density of residential areas</b>			
A. Lots are smaller, with houses closer to the street and smaller front yards in the style of small-town neighborhoods. Sidewalks are on both sides of narrower streets. The focus is on shared community recreation areas instead of larger private yards.	33	19	48
B. Larger lots and wider streets make lower-density neighborhoods. Houses are set farther back from the streets with larger yards. There is less space for shared community recreation.	73	14	13
<b>Mix of housing types and ages of residents</b>			
A. There is a wide range of housing types—single-family detached, row houses, duplexes, and apartments—in neighborhoods. Town center also has apartments above shops. Neighborhood is designed to attract a wide range of ages, including seniors and young singles.	44	17	39
B. Strict zoning separates single-family areas from neighborhoods with higher-density housing. Narrow age range and fewer family types are found within neighborhood.	50	21	29

Source: Brooke H. Warrick, conference report at "Techniques in Traditional Neighborhood Development," 1997.

perceive compact development as a bad thing, but the problem is that in many projects density comes without any compensating amenity. Density with amenity will sell. Two of the most important amenities are high quality design and green space. For most people, the character of the neighborhood is far more important than the size of the lot.



Infrastructure investments can either encourage or discourage sprawl.

#### **Public Infrastructure Subsidies**

The willingness of state and local government to pay for new roads, utilities, and schools which service far-flung greenfield development encourages sprawl while increasing the cost of government services. Smart capital investments can encourage revitalization

of existing communities and facilitate new development on vacant or underutilized land already served by roads and other public services.

## Background

#### **Low Expectations**

All development is not created equal. Communities that set higher standards get higher results, but some local officials are afraid to say “no” to poor quality development. Successful communities know that if they reject poor quality development, they will almost always get better development in its place. This is because most businesses will readily meet higher standards to be in an economically profitable location.

Adapted from *Principles of Smart Development*, American Planning Association, 1998.

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#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

*Principles of Smart Development*, PAS Report #479, American Planning Association, 1998; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Smart Growth: Myth and Fact*, by the Urban Land Institute, 1999; (800) 321-5011, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

*Principle 1:*      **CONSERVE FARMLAND, NATURAL  
AREAS AND SCENIC ASSETS**



**PRINCIPLE I:****Conserve Farmland, Natural Areas and Scenic Assets**

The first principle of better development should be identifying where not to develop. Successful communities always identify the areas that are most important to protect, whether it is farmland, forests, greenway corridors, riparian buffers and groundwater recharge areas, natural areas, scenic views, or wildlife habitat. Every community needs an open space protection plan and the resources to implement it. Every community needs an open space protection plan and the resources to implement it. Communities that have a blueprint for conservation are more amenable to accommodating growth in the areas where it is most appropriate. On the other hand, when citizens think all land is up for grabs, they often oppose development everywhere. Conserving natural and scenic assets is also important because farmland, forests, and scenic landscapes contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.

**Protect Open Space**

**Would you rather see crops or concrete on Pennsylvania farmland?**

**P**ENNSYLVANIA is the leading agricultural state in the northeastern United States, generating nearly \$5 billion in annual revenues from farming. Pennsylvania's chief agricultural commodities include dairy products, cattle and calves, mushrooms, greenhouse and nursery crops, and eggs. Likewise, the forest products industry contributes substantially to the wealth of the Commonwealth. But both farming and forestry face many challenges. One of the greatest of these is encroaching suburbanization.

Farmland and forests are critical to Pennsylvania's economic health not just because of the value of the products they generate, but also because they contribute to the state's economy as scenic and environmental assets. Pennsylvania's working landscapes of

farms and forests attract new businesses and wealth to communities, increase property values throughout the state, and support the tourism economy. Properly managed farmland and forests ensure viable long-term production and play a key role in sustaining healthy natural systems by providing plant and wildlife habitat and migration corridors, watershed protection, and other benefits.

Today, nearly 60% of Pennsylvania's land area—some 17 million acres—remains in forest, a renewable resource that sustains the rural economy while providing aesthetic, recreational, tourism, and environmental benefits. These forests support 10% of the state's manufacturing work force. Residents and visitors are attracted to state forests and gamelands for their recre-

ational and scenic value. They provide habitat for more than 40% of the state's endangered and threatened species and support a wildlife and outdoor recreation industry that brings billions of dollars to the state. Although most of the Commonwealth's forested land is privately owned, Pennsylvania's public forest system is one of the largest in the eastern U.S. More than 70 species, including red oak, hickory, walnut, poplar, birch, and maple, make up the vast resource.

Despite the vital contribution that farms and forests make to local economies, farmers and forest landowners currently receive inadequate financial return for their contribution to local quality of life, and thousands of acres of Pennsylvania's prime farmland in the southeastern and south central parts of the state have been converted to development. Even the most profitable farms are sometimes less lucrative than selling land for subdivisions. Pennsylvania's forests are threatened by unsustainable forest management practices, air pollution, and sprawling new development.

If agriculture and forestry are to remain vital elements of Pennsylvania's economy, state, regional, and local leaders will have to take full advantage of the opportunities available to ensure the long-term economic viability and productivity of the state's agricultural and forest lands. We can identify a number of ways to make it possible and desirable for private landowners to keep their land part of the working landscape.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- The total value of Pennsylvania's agriculture industry in 2002 was nearly \$5 billion.
- One out of every five Pennsylvanians is employed in agriculture or related industries.
- Approximately 5 million acres of land are in active agricultural production statewide.
- Between 1982 and 1997, nearly 1.2 million acres of



**Agriculture is a leading industry in Pennsylvania.**

Pennsylvania farmland, forests and other open space land were lost to suburbanization.

- According to the American Farmland Trust, south central Pennsylvania is part of the second most threatened agricultural landscape in America.
- Numerous studies across the nation show that farms generate more taxes than the cost to service them.
- Pennsylvania is the nation's leading producer of hardwood lumber, with sawmills producing more than 1 billion board feet of lumber a year.
- Pennsylvania leads the nation in exporting hardwood lumber and wood products, with sales of \$261 million in 2001.
- More than 3,000 forest product companies are located in Pennsylvania, employing nearly 92,000 workers.
- Pennsylvania has more than 3.5 million acres of State Forest and Game lands. These lands encompass wilderness areas, rivers, streams, lakes, and mountains. Much of this land is open to the public for hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, birding, and biking.



- More than 1.6 million Pennsylvania residents hunt and/or fish, and nearly 3.5 million participate in wildlife watching.

### TOOLS TO PROTECT FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE

Protecting farmland, forests, and open space requires not only protecting a productive and sufficient land base but also addressing the many financial and legal stresses on the rural way of life. Without resource-based industries, there is little chance of retaining the rural landscape that distinguishes large parts of Pennsylvania. The key to long-term farmland and open space preservation is to reduce development pressure, while appropriately protecting property rights.

An effective strategy must be two-pronged. It should include both compensation and regulation. It must limit the potential for non-agricultural uses in rural areas. At the same time, it must provide the stability and financial resources to help farmers stay in business. Farmers need a critical mass of farmland, but they also need to maintain the value of their primary asset—their land.

Much of Pennsylvania's character, beauty, and groundwater recharge areas also derive from privately owned nonagricultural open space. Such land may be valuable as wetland, wildlife habitat, historic landscape, scenic vista, park land, or biological preserve. The key to protecting this land is to provide private landowners with incentives for protecting it. This will



Pennsylvania is losing farmland at a rapid pace.

help to ensure that its value is recognized—both in planning documents and by the public at large—so that it will not be developed or destroyed.

## Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

### Planning and Regulatory Tools

Prior to World War II, most of Pennsylvania was farmland or forest, and there was little rural development pressure. For the last 50 years, however, residential and commercial development has made it increasingly important for the state and local jurisdictions to work with farmers to preserve agricultural land. The following are planning and regulatory tools that communities can use.

■ **Municipalities Planning Code** - The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code specifies that a comprehensive plan shall include a plan for protecting natural resources including prime agricultural land and require the compatibility of land use regulation with existing agricultural operations.

■ **Effective Agricultural Zoning** - Agricultural zoning limits the number of dwellings permitted to a rural density—for example, one dwelling per 30, 50, or more acres. This type of zoning requires the support of the agricultural community for its adoption and implementation.

■ **Sliding Scale Zoning** - Sliding scale zoning attempts to concentrate development by placing restrictions on land based on the size of the parcel. As the size of the parcel increases, the number of dwelling units allowed in relation to the total area decreases. This protects the right to add dwelling units to smaller parcels while forestalling large-scale, dense development on rural tracts.

■ **Preferential Taxation** - Pennsylvania's Clean and Green Law allows owners of agricultural or forest land to apply for preferential assessment of their land. If approved, the land receives an assessment based on use value, rather than market value. Lower tax rates

help keep farming and forest products industries viable.

■ **Agricultural Security Areas** - Voluntarily formed with local government, Agricultural Security Areas provide protection from nuisance ordinances and require extra levels of review for projects involving land condemnation. With at least 250 acres of viable agricultural land, an Agricultural Security Area designation helps ensure that active farming can continue. Currently more than 2.5 million acres are enrolled in Agricultural Security Areas in Pennsylvania.

■ **Mandatory Open Space Requirements** - Mandatory open space requirements are specified percentages of land parcels that must be kept undeveloped. For example, Columbia, Lancaster, Lehigh, Montour, Northampton, Potter, and Susquehanna Counties all have mandatory open space requirements. However, such requirements for open space may not pertain to municipalities, since their Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances do not mandate open space setbacks.

■ **Greenways and Open Space Network Planning**

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources encourages all counties to work with their municipalities to develop county-wide greenway plans by 2007. Such plans identify a greenways network of natural resources and open space to be linked. In some areas of the state, counties are taking a regional approach to greenway and non-motorized transportation planning.

■ **Compensatory Tools**

■ **Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program** - The Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation

Program, administered by the Bureau of Farmland Preservation, encourages long-term private stewardship of agricultural lands. The program provides funding for the state, county, and local governments to purchase conservation easements from farmland owners. Fifty three of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have agricultural land preservation boards that participate in the Farmland Preservation Program.

■ **Land Trust Grant Program** - Qualified land trusts registered with the State Agricultural Land Preservation

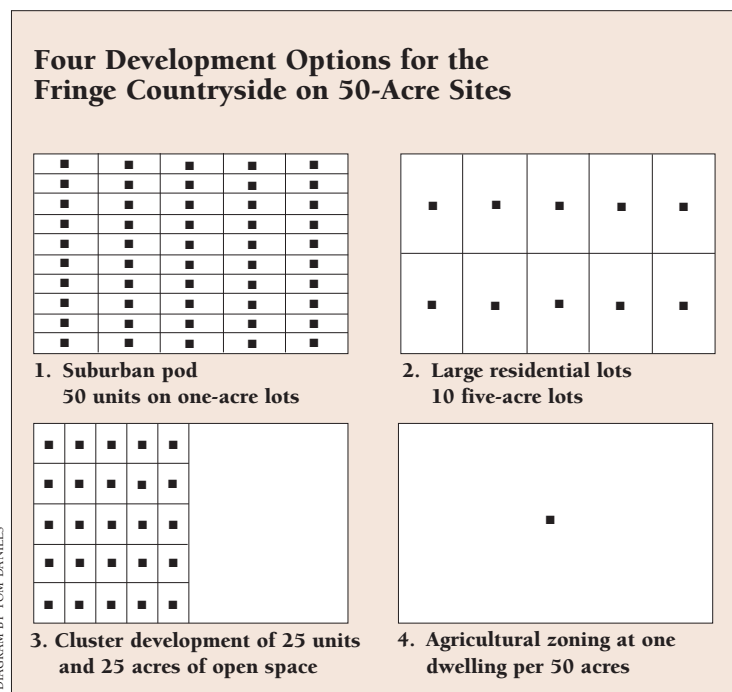
Board can receive reimbursement grants for expenses incurred in the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements. Such expenses include appraisal costs, legal services, title searches, document preparation, closing costs, and the like.

■ **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)**

TDR programs allow landowners to transfer the right to develop a parcel of land to another parcel of land. In the context of farmland preservation, TDRs are used to shift development from agricultural areas to designated growth zones closer to urban services. TDR is a technique used primarily by counties and municipalities but it involves the private marketplace. TDR programs differ from the purchase of development rights in that transactions are between private

*You don't know what you got 'til it's gone.*

Joni Mitchell





**Pennsylvania has protected more than 292,000 acres of farmland.**

landowners and developers. Local governments in Pennsylvania have successfully used TDR programs, including Lower Chanceford Township in York County and Manheim Township in Lancaster County. TDRs can also be used across municipal boundaries as part of a multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

■ **Local Funding Sources** - Throughout America communities use a variety of dedicated funding sources to pay for farmland protection, land conservation, or parkland acquisition. Some of these include: sales taxes, real-estate transfer taxes, lottery proceeds, license plate sales, parking garage revenues, and general obligation bonds. For example, numerous townships in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties have raised money to save open space through real estate or earned income taxes. Berks, Chester, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties, among others, have passed bonds for land conservation.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

#### **Organizations**

American Farmland Trust, 1200 18th Street, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 331-7300, [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org).

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Farmland Preservation, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110; (717) 787-4737.

#### **Publications**

*The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space*, by Steve Lerner and William Poole, Trust for Public Land, 1999; (800) 714-LAND; [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org).

*Growing with Green Infrastructure*, by Karen S. Williamson, Heritage Conservancy; (215) 345-7020, [www.heritageconservancy.org](http://www.heritageconservancy.org).

*Opportunity Knocks—Open Space is a Community Investment*, by Michael Frank, 2002, Heritage Conservancy, Doylestown, PA 18901; (215) 345-7020, [www.heritageconservancy.org](http://www.heritageconservancy.org).

*Planning for Agriculture*, Governor's Center for Local Government Services, Department of Community Economic Development, February 2003; (888) 223-6837, [www.inventpa.com](http://www.inventpa.com).

*Public Finance for Open Space: A Guide for Pennsylvania's Municipalities*, by Gary Gordon, n.d., Heritage Conservancy, Doylestown, PA 18901; (215) 345-7020, [www.heritageconservancy.org](http://www.heritageconservancy.org).

*Saved By Development: Preserving Environmental Areas, Farmland, and Historic Landmarks with Transfer of Development Rights*, by Rick Pruetz, Arje Press, 1997.

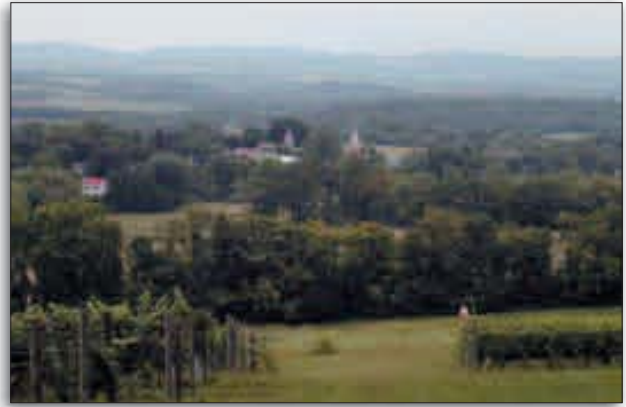
*Saving American Farmland: What Works*, by the American Farmland Trust, Washington, D.C.; (202) 659-5170, [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org).

*Saving America's Countryside*, 2nd Edition, by Samuel N. Stokes, A. Elizabeth Watson and Shelley S. Mastran, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 1997; (800) 537-5487.

*When City and Country Collide: Managing Growth in the Metropolitan Fringe*, by Tom Daniels, Island Press, 1999; (800) 828-1302.

**Conserve  
Natural and  
Scenic Assets**

## Use Conservation Easements



As a landowner, what legacy would you like to leave? You can develop your land, or you can choose to shield it from development. The land on the right has been voluntarily protected.

**C**ONSERVATION EASEMENTS, widely used in Bucks, Chester, Lancaster, and Montgomery Counties, for example, have become popular throughout Pennsylvania. For a variety of reasons, many Pennsylvania landowners have chosen this legal tool to protect farmland, forests, riparian zones, trail and greenway corridors, natural areas and historic sites.

One solution to reducing the pressure on Pennsylvania's open space is to increase the use of conservation easements to protect farmland, forests and other resources. The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (CREP) was established in 1988 to encourage long-term private stewardship of agricultural lands. The program provides funding for the state, county, and local governments to purchase conservation easements from farmland owners.

### What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that provides the landowner with continued agricultural or open-space use of the land while permanently protecting its conservation values. It allows the landowner to continue to own and use the land, to sell it or pass it on to

heirs. The sale of an agricultural easement can provide much needed income for farm operations. Most conservation easements restrict development and other land uses that harm natural, scenic or historic resources while continuing to allow traditional uses such as farming and forestry.

**Conservation easements are a way to save your view and get a tax break too.**

Jean Hocker,  
Land Trust Alliance

### What is a Land Trust?

Land trusts are local, regional or statewide private, nonprofit organizations that hold and monitor easements. Land trusts also work to protect important natural and cultural resources through education and acquisition. The land trust or easement holder monitors the easement over time and is responsible for ensuring that the conditions of the easement are upheld by future owners of the land. There are more than 87 land trusts in Pennsylvania. Of these, seventeen are registered with the State Agricultural Land Preservation Board, which allows them to be reimbursed by the state for expenses incurred in the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements up to \$5,000 per easement.

### How Do Easements Work?

Placing an easement on land does not mean that the land cannot be developed at all. The landowner

decides the types of development he wants to prohibit. For example, an easement on a farm would typically allow continued farming and might allow the construction of a new house or additional agricultural structures, or the easement might apply to just a portion of the property. A property subject to an easement can still be sold, rented, bequeathed or otherwise transferred but the conservation easement is recorded with the deed and is passed on to future owners of the land.

### What Are the Benefits of Conservation Easements?

■ **Permanent Protection** - Easements ensure current owners that their property will remain largely undeveloped in perpetuity. There are few things one can control after death. However, with an easement, landowners can protect the things they value most about their property, both now and in the future.

■ **Continued Private Ownership** - Land protected by a conservation easement is still private property. Most easements do not change the way private land is used. Land under easement can continue to play a role in the local economy through agriculture, forestry or other activities. An easement does not require public access to the property, and the land is protected from trespass just as any other private property.

■ **Each Easement is Unique** - Conservation easements meet the specific requirements of landowners and fit the property they protect. An easement for a small property, such as a family camp, might be quite different from one designed for a large working farm. Some owners want to prohibit all new construction or subdivisions, others reserve the right to subdivide and sell some parcels for financial reasons or for one or more new home sites for their children.

■ **Lower Taxes** - Conservation easements provide financial benefits to landowners who protect their land. Donated easements reduce federal and state income taxes, as well as estate taxes and capital gains taxes. The federal tax code considers the donation of a

permanent conservation easement to be a charitable contribution, the value of which is tax deductible. In addition, property under conservation easements must be given reduced rates for real property taxes.

## Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Nationwide more than 7 million acres of land are protected by local and regional land trusts. In Pennsylvania, land trusts own and manage 35,000 acres of land, hold easements on 88,000 acres of land, and have protected more than 209,000 additional acres of land that have been transferred to state or local government.



Conservation easements protect thousands of acres of farmland in Lancaster County.



Conservation easements protect land around Gettysburg battlefield and other historic sites.

- According to the American Farmland Trust, Pennsylvania has protected more farms and farmland than any other state in the nation.
- Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program has permanently protected more than 2,500 farms and nearly 292,000 acres of farmland through December 2004.
- There are more than 87 local and regional land trusts in Pennsylvania. Some examples include the Allegheny Land Trust, Berks County Conservancy, Natural Lands Trust, Pocono Heritage Land Trust, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.
- Lancaster County leads the nation in the number of acres preserved in easement. The county has preserved more than 500 farms, totaling approximately 44,000 acres. Another 300 farms, totaling approximately 20,000 acres, are on the Agricultural Preserve Board's waiting list. The Lancaster Farmland Trust has played a key role in preserving farmland in the county.
- The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has protected more than 204,000 acres of land since 1932.
- The Wildlands Conservancy has a Trust Fund that finances acquisition of land in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Since 1981, it has worked in 16 counties on more than 150 projects to protect 25,000 acres of land in eastern Pennsylvania.
- The Natural Lands Trust has protected more than 64,000 acres of land in the greater Philadelphia region. The Trust also owns and manages approximately 12,000 acres of nature preserves.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### Organizations

Land Trust Alliance, 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 638-4725, [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, 105 Locust Street, Suite 300, Harrisburg, PA 17101; (717) 230-8560, [www.conserveland.org](http://www.conserveland.org).

### Publications

*Conservation Easement Handbook*, by Janet Diehl and Thomas Barrett, Land Trust Alliance, 1988, revised 1996; (202) 638-4725, [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

*Land Conservation Financing*, by Michael McQueen and Edward McMahon, Island Press, 2004; (800) 828-1302.

*Land Conservation Strategies: a Guide for Landowners*, Heritage Conservancy, Doylestown, PA 18901; (215) 345-4328, [www.heritageconservancy.org](http://www.heritageconservancy.org).

*Local Land Use Controls in Pennsylvania*, Planning Series #1, available on-line from Governor's Center for Local Government Services, May 2001; (888) 223-6837, [www.invent-pa.com/docs](http://www.invent-pa.com/docs).

*Protecting the Land: Conservation Easements, Past, Present and Future*, by Julie Ann Gustanski and Roderick Squires, Island Press, 2000; (800) 828-1302.

*Using Conservation Easements to Preserve Open Space: A Guide for Pennsylvania's Municipalities*, by Debra Wolf Goldstein. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Heritage Conservancy; (215) 345-7020, [www.heritageconservancy.org](http://www.heritageconservancy.org).

## The Economic Value of Open Space

MANY COMMUNITIES RECOGNIZE the value of open space for recreation and natural beauty. Open space also generates important economic benefits. No longer is open space seen as just a community extra or a “frill.” Open space brings clear and strong benefits to a community’s bottom line.

### Open space is a net benefit to community coffers.

Numerous fiscal impact analyses have demonstrated that the cost of residential development exceeds its tax benefits while open space provides a net gain. For example, a recent American Farmland Trust study in Shrewsbury Township, York County, found that farms required just 17 cents in services for every tax dollar; whereas, residential development cost taxpayers \$1.22 per tax dollar collected. Protecting open space can result in lower infrastructure and service delivery costs and lower taxes.

### Open space increases nearby property values.

Numerous studies conclude that open space—including parks, greenways, forests, and natural areas—have a positive effect on the value of property. For example, a study in Amherst and Concord, Massachusetts, found that clustered housing with open space appreciated at a higher rate than homes in more conventional subdivisions without open space. This translated into a difference in average selling price of \$17,000 between the two developments.

### Open Space Conversion

Population Growth versus Land Development: 1962-1997

U.S. Regions	Change in Population	Change in Urbanized Land
Midwest	7.06%	32.23%
Northeast	6.91%	39.10%
South	22.23%	59.61%
West	32.21%	48.98%
United States	17.02%	47.14%

Source: The Brookings Institution, July 2001

## Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

### Open space is a key factor in corporate location decisions.

The Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress reports that a city’s quality of life is more important than purely business-related factors when it comes to attracting new businesses, particularly in the rapidly growing high-tech and service industries. Corporate CEOs say quality of life for employees is the third most important factor in locating a business, behind only access to domestic markets and availability of skilled labor. Owners of small companies ranked recreation/parks/open space as the highest priority in choosing a new location for their businesses.

### Open space protection is smart growth.

Open space protection is a critical component of smart growth: once a community defines what’s worth protecting, it can then direct development to areas best suited for growth. In addition, clustering houses and development with protected open space consumes less land and requires less infrastructure, including shorter roads and utility lines.

### Open space energizes economic development and neighborhood revitalization.

Pueblo, Colorado, once known mainly as an industrial city, made an early decision in its highly successful revitalization effort: to improve its appearance and amenities in order to attract new businesses. The resulting investment in trails and parks along the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek is now credited by city leaders as one of the most important components in turning around economic decline.

### Open space preservation protects the future of working lands.

Farming provides economic stability to a community through jobs and revenues from sales of agricultural products. A 1998 report by the Growth Alternatives Alliance valued land in Fresno County, California: each acre of agricultural land was equivalent to a factory that produced \$6,000 to \$12,000 per

year for the local economy. A loss of 1,000 acres could remove as much as \$152 million from its local economy.

**Open space can generate spending from managing agencies.** Open space managing agencies—like the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Fish and Game Commission, or private land conservancies—support the local and regional economy by providing jobs and purchasing supplies and services to develop, operate, and maintain greenways and related improvements. The local community can further benefit if supplies and services are purchased from local businesses.

**Open space can protect against natural disasters.** Floods, earthquakes, landslides, wildfires, and hurricanes can cause property damage and loss of life. Protecting people and development from natural hazards

### DCNR Community Conservation and Partnership Grant Program

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation administers a grant program for planning, land acquisition, and development of parks, recreation, rivers conservation, trails, greenways, and protection of open space and critical natural areas. Approximately \$30 million are awarded to municipalities annually, with an application period each fall. Grants require a 50-50 match in cash or in-kind services.

It may be helpful to partner with neighboring municipalities, other public agencies, counties, non-profit organizations, or the private sector in applying for a grant. A project coordinator should be designated to oversee the grant from beginning to end. DCNR provides pre-application workshops to assist first-time applicants.

For more information, see *A Guide to Funding Recreation and Conservation Projects*, DCNR; [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/fundingbrc.pdf](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/fundingbrc.pdf).

can prevent disasters from happening. Environmentally sensitive areas can be used for open space—providing recreational or natural areas that help lessen the risk from natural hazards.

Johnson County, Kansas, expected to spend \$120 million on stormwater control projects. Instead, voters passed a \$600,000 levy to develop a countywide streambed park system. Development of a greenways network along streambeds has addressed many of the County's flooding problems and has provided a valuable recreational resource.

**Open space protects natural systems.** Natural systems are our "green infrastructure," a companion to the gray infrastructure of air, water, and wastewater treatment systems. Trees, wetlands, and waterways all help process pollutants as well as provide habitat for wildlife and mitigate global warming. It's typically cheaper to let Mother Nature's systems keep water and air clean rather than trying to craft a technological solution. New York City saved almost \$4 billion by preserving upstate watershed lands in place of building new water filtration plants that would have been required if the watershed lands were developed. Forests and open space filter drinking water supplies and the air we breathe, as well as stabilize soil.

**Open space promotes healthy lifestyles.** Regular exercise improves health and reduces medical claims and hospital stays and leads to lower health care costs. In Pennsylvania alone, annual obesity-attributable medical expenditures exceed \$4 billion, and more than 22,000 deaths each year are related to inactivity and poor diet. Open space helps promote better health by providing outlets for exercise and recreation as well as renewal.

**Open space attracts tourism dollars.** Open space helps support recreation-oriented businesses and employment, as well as other businesses that are patronized by open space users. Open space can generate new business opportunities and locations for commercial activities like bed and breakfast establishments, and bike and canoe rental shops. Open space





© COMMONWEALTH MEDIA SERVICES

Outdoor recreation is a big industry in Pennsylvania.

often offers major tourist attractions that generate expenditures on lodging, food, and recreation-oriented services.

## Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

A recent Delaware Bay study showed that shorebird migration annually generates between \$7.8 and \$11.8 million in economic benefits to the immediate bayshore area. The typical bird watcher spends \$522 per visit for lodging, dinners, food, and gasoline. Many come back at other times of the year, generating as much as \$25 million in the immediate area, another \$2.5 million elsewhere in New Jersey, and another \$6.2 million elsewhere in the U.S.—a total of \$34 million a year.

### Pennsylvania Wilds and Outdoor Recreation Mean Revenue for Communities

- In Pennsylvania, expenditures for outdoor recreation-based travel statewide accounted for \$4 billion in 1997, or a full one-third of all leisure spending in the state.

- Wildlife watching is one of the most rapidly growing activities in outdoor recreation. Pennsylvania is home



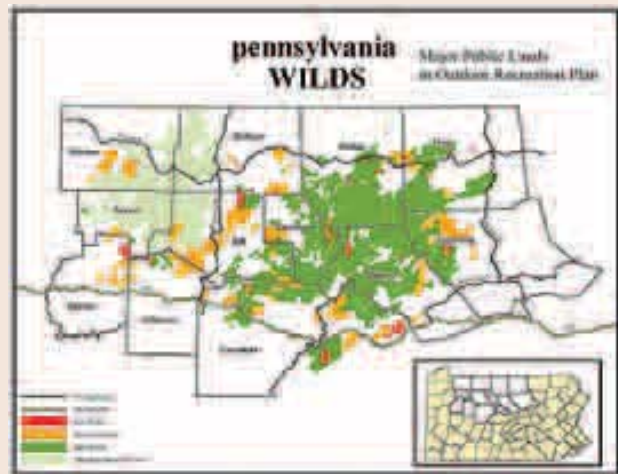
to the largest elk herd in the northeastern United States, and elk watching and nature tourism are becoming of particular interest to the small cities and towns in north-central Pennsylvania. A 1999 Penn State study estimated that elk tourists in the Benezette/Winslow Hill

area contributed approximately \$1 million to the region, a figure that some believe represents a significant under-valuation of the potential.

- In a 12-county region in north-central Pennsylvania, referred to as the Pennsylvania Wilds, the DCNR is working with DCED and other state and local partners on a strategy to encourage the growth of tourism and outdoor recreation-related business. Towns such as Renovo, Ridgeway, Wellsboro and many others are realizing direct economic benefits as

they become destinations and gateways for those seeking outdoor experiences in the Pennsylvania Wilds region.

- Once-declining Pennsylvania mill and mining towns such as McKeesport, Confluence and Meyersdale are being transformed into “trail town” destinations for cyclists, kayakers, birdwatchers and other outdoor enthusiasts. An economic impact study of the Great Allegheny Passage trail system in southwestern Pennsylvania estimates receipts from those visiting the trail and its adjacent communities at \$7.9 million annually. When the project's final trail link is made to the C&O Canal towpath and Washington, D.C., this number is projected to increase threefold.



## Preserve Scenic Areas, Views and Vistas



Would you prefer to see views that look like this?

**S**UCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES always strive for development that is not only fiscally and environmentally sound, but visually pleasing as well. Protecting scenic landscapes, views, and vistas is an increasingly important goal and not just for aesthetic reasons. From coast to coast, successful communities recognize that visual resources are an integral part of their economic well being. In fact, you can put a dollar value on a view. Scenic landscapes are an asset not just because you or I think they are nice but because other people are willing to pay to see the view and to experience the unique character of a place.

Scenic landscapes and attractive small towns can be found throughout Pennsylvania. Many are national, even international in renown, such as Lancaster County's Amish countryside or the Pocono Mountains. Others are important only to local residents. All contribute to the economic vitality and outstanding scenic quality of the state.

Unfortunately, sign clutter, cellular communications towers, and other insensitive development projects are eroding the scenic beauty of much of Pennsylvania. Some projects are so large scale, such as highways, power plants or interstate transmission lines, that major decisions about their siting and design are made at the federal and state level. However, local officials

***Nothing except love  
is so universally  
appealing as a view.***

Historian Kenneth Clark



Or views that look like this?

can influence the design and siting of these facilities through local land use controls as well as participation in state and federal review procedures.

Unquestionably, though, for the bulk of new development proposed throughout Pennsylvania—signs, communication towers, housing projects, shopping centers, office parks, truck stops and the like—decisions about their design and siting rest almost exclusively with local government. Here cities, towns and counties can take positive action to protect community character and the scenic views and vistas that are a source of community pride and which enhance local economies. What is scenic today will not stay scenic tomorrow by accident.

This publication describes many measures that can be taken to protect community appearance and visual resources. These include:

- Controlling the proliferation of sprawling, big-box retail development
- Developing design guidelines for chain stores and franchises
- Controlling the size, height and number of outdoor signs
- Regulating the construction of new off-premise billboards
- Co-locating or disguising cellular communication towers

- Discouraging development on ridge tops and steep slopes
- Undergrounding utility wires
- Placing conservation easements on scenic properties
- Maximizing infill development
- Planting street trees and landscaping parking lots and commercial areas
- Designating roads as Pennsylvania Scenic Byways

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Numerous studies show that housing, hotels, and offices with scenic views command premium prices. The better the view, the higher the price.
- The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors found that, next to walking, driving for pleasure and sightseeing were Americans' favorite outdoor recreation activities.
- The President's Commission also found that "natural beauty" was the single most important factor in American's choice of places to visit for outdoor recreation.
- An analysis of two proposed scenic routes in New Hampshire found that designation of the routes would substantially increase tourism. The U.S. Travel Data Center estimates that scenic byways generate \$32,500 per mile in increased consumer spending yearly.



Pennsylvania's natural beauty is under siege.

- In Vermont, where billboards have been prohibited since 1975, the tourism industry has benefited tremendously. In fact, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce says, "Although there was some initial sensitivity that removing billboards might hurt tourism, it has had the opposite effect. Tourism is up for all businesses big and small."

### Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets



© POCONO MOUNTAINS VACATION BUREAU

### Pennsylvania is a beautiful state.

- Likewise, the Maine Department of Tourism says, "We have no commercial signs on Interstates. People say they can see the state now. Our mail shows that there is a great deal of appreciation for the fact that we've removed billboards. The initial concern that business would be hurt has been completely unfounded."
- A study by the National Association of Homebuilders found that the surrounding environment was the single-most important factor affecting the value of a home.
- Dozens of communities and two states—North Carolina and South Carolina—have enacted laws to restrict the height of buildings constructed on mountain ridges. Known as Mountain Protection Acts, the state laws preserve views of the Appalachian Mountains. Local officials and legislators supported this legislation because they realized that both tourism and second-home construction would

benefit from preserving the visual integrity of mountains and ridge lines.

- In Pennsylvania, a number of local jurisdictions have passed ordinances to protect sensitive hillsides from the negative environmental and aesthetic impacts of development. These include Kennett and Honeybrook Townships in Chester County; Cone-maugh Township in Cambria County; and Upper Providence Township in Delaware County.
- Pennsylvania ranks fifth in the nation in the number of billboard structures on Federal Aid highways that violate the Highway Beautification Act. A traveler on Pennsylvania's highways sees, on average, about 63 billboard structures per hour—a much higher rate than New York with 23 or Virginia with 28.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

#### Organizations

Scenic America, 1634 I Street, N.W., Suite 510, Washington, D.C. 20006; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

#### Publications

*Aesthetics and Land Use Controls*, PAS Report #399, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

"The Dollars and \$ense of Preserving Community Character" (video), The Conservation Fund; (703) 525-6300, [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org).

*The Legal Landscape: Guidelines for Regulating Environmental and Aesthetic Quality*, by Richard Smardon and James Karp, Van Nostrand Reinbold, New York, NY, 1993.

*O, Say, Can You See: A Visual Awareness Tool Kit for Communities*, by Scenic America, Washington, DC, 1999; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

*Power to the People: Strategies for Reducing the Visual Impact of Overhead Utilities*, by Scenic America, Washington, DC, 2001; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

## Fit Rural Buildings to Their Context

### Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

SINGLE-LOT DEVELOPMENT in rural areas will always be part of the new construction that occurs in Pennsylvania. In rural areas, however, a wide-open landscape can be irreparably changed for the worse by the jarring intrusion of a single poorly sited, highly visible and obviously non-farm building.

Here are some approaches to consider ensuring that new houses or other rural buildings do not diminish the state's natural assets:

- Protect the primary natural and cultural features of the site
- Keep new buildings below the ridge or tree line
- Use traditional materials, architectural styles, and roof lines
- Use muted colors
- Maintain existing natural vegetation
- Preserve historic landscape features

- Site driveway unobtrusively
- Hide the garage
- Consider building in town or other close-in location



New house blends with the landscape.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Design with Nature*, by Ian McHarg, available from American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Rural by Design*, by Randall Arendt, available from American Planning Association; (312) 786- 6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

"Using Vernacular Architecture in New Home Design," by James W. Wentling, *Land Development Magazine*, Vol. 8, No. 2, National Association of Home Builders, Fall 1995; (202) 822-0200, [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org).

## Protect Riparian Areas and Special Habitats



© VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY



Which stream is more likely to have healthy aquatic habitat?

**L**AND ALONG RIVERS, streams, and lakes is important for many reasons. Protecting these fragile riparian areas offers multiple benefits for people, wildlife, water quality, and the economy. Rivers and streams form the basis for some of the state's major greenway corridors, contributing significantly to the network of green infrastructure across the Commonwealth.

All across Pennsylvania, watercourses are abundant. Small, swift creeks flow from the mountains, ridges, and highlands. The Susquehanna River is more than 500 miles long and its watershed comprises nearly 21,000 square miles. It is the largest source of fresh water to the Chesapeake Bay. The Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers come together to form the Ohio, with a watershed that covers one third of the state. Likewise, the Delaware River provides abundant natural, scenic, and recreational resources. And Pennsylvania has a stretch of Lake Erie coastline, where Presque Isle, a National Natural Landmark, extends its sandy beaches.

Riparian areas include floodplains, wetlands, and stream banks. Trees, shrubs, and grasses growing along water courses are important because they stabilize stream banks and reduce floodwater velocity. Vegetated

riparian areas also help intercept pollutants and sediment that otherwise would be carried into the stream.

Erosion and stormwater runoff cost money in flood damage, lost soil and pollution clean-up. Protection of

***A river is more than an amenity. It is a treasure. It offers a necessity of life that must be rationed among those who have power over it.***

Oliver Wendell Holmes

riparian vegetation is a simple, cost-effective way to save money and protect water quality in the long run.

Ideally, subdivision lines should be drawn so that stream banks are buffered with dedicated open space that protects water quality, wildlife habitat, and other riparian resources while also enhancing property values and reducing the likelihood of flood damage.

Look at the before and after pictures on this page. Clearly the stream on the left, which is typical of the streambeds in many parts of the state, will have healthier aquatic habitat, less soil erosion, and clearer water.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Pennsylvania has lost approximately 318,000 acres of wetlands since the 1780s.
- Water covers more than 739,000 acres in Pennsylvania and, aside from its obvious environmental bene-

fits, it attracts outdoor enthusiasts—contributing substantially to the state’s tourist economy.

- Pennsylvania’s Growing Greener Initiative supports the largest watershed restoration program in the U.S., controlling pollution from agricultural and urban stormwater runoff, abandoned mine lands, and oil and gas wells. By late 2002, nearly 180 restoration projects had been completed statewide with more than \$13.8 million in Growing Greener funding.



- County Greenways Planning **Watershed awareness** includes an evaluation of opportunities for conservation greenways—those greenways with riparian buffers designed primarily for water quality and wildlife habitat protection.
- Pennsylvania’s Rivers Conservation Program provides grant funding to develop river conservation plans and river resource studies.

- Pennsylvania has 326 active watershed organizations, including the Lititz Run Watershed Association, Franklin County Watershed

Association, Greene County Watershed Alliance, Ridge & Valley Streamkeepers, and the Watershed Alliance of Adams County.

- Forested areas next to rivers and streams provide a buffer that protects water quality and aquatic habitat.

- Forested riparian buffers can remove 95% of sediment, 80% of nitrogen, and 78% of phosphorus from surface runoff.

- Efforts to return American shad and other migrating fish species to the Susquehanna River reached a major milestone when two fish lifts at the Holtwood and Safe Harbor dams were dedicated in 1997.

## Conserve Natural and Scenic Assets

### The Pennsylvania Growing Greener Program

**G**rowing Greener is a billion-dollar, multi-purpose funding program that aims to restore and protect Pennsylvania’s environment. Growing Greener funds programs in four state agencies: the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Agriculture, and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority. These programs seek to preserve farmland and open space; build greenways; eliminate the state park maintenance backlog; build community parks and playgrounds; clean up abandoned mines and plug oil and gas wells; restore wetlands, streams, and streamside buffers; and provide new and upgraded water and sewer systems.

#### For More Information:

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Community Conservation and Partnerships Program, P.O. Box 8552, Harrisburg, PA 17105; (717) 787-2703, [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us).

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Management, Office of Water Management, P.O. Box 2063, Harrisburg, PA 17105; (717) 787-4686; [www.state.pa.us/growgreen](http://www.state.pa.us/growgreen).

- 287 species of bird can be found in Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth's forests, rivers, wetlands, and meadows contain 74 Important Bird Areas—specially designated sites that provide essential habitat for birds.
- Pennsylvania's nutrient reduction strategies have helped reduce phosphates going to the Chesapeake Bay by more than 53% and nitrogen by 18%, compared to 1985 levels.
- USDA's Conservation Reserve Program will make annual payments to farmers who protect riparian areas.
- Fishing generates more than \$800 million in expenditures in Pennsylvania annually. This creates more than \$1.6 billion in economic impact.
- There are more than 355,000 boats registered in Pennsylvania, and the annual revenue from the sale of fishing licenses is more than \$532,000.
- Excess runoff can cause stream sedimentation, which threatens the habitat of endangered species like the southern steelhead trout.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

#### Organizations

Center for Watershed Protection, 8391 Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043; (410) 461-8323, [www.cwp.org](http://www.cwp.org).

Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers, 610 North Third Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; (717) 234-7910, [www.pawatersheds.org](http://www.pawatersheds.org).

Rivers Conservation Program, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; (717) 787-2316, [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/rivers/riversconservation](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/rivers/riversconservation).

Stroud Water Research Center, 970 Spencer Road, Avondale, PA 19311; (610) 268-2153, [www.stroudcenter.org](http://www.stroudcenter.org).

#### Publications

*Non-Point Source Pollution: A Handbook for Local Governments*, PAS Report #476, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

"Pennsylvania Stream Releaf: A Plan for Restoring and Conserving Buffers Along Pennsylvania Streams," Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Watershed Conservation, 1998; (717) 787-5259, [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us).

"The Pennsylvania Stream Releaf Forest Buffer Toolkit," Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay; (717) 787-5259, [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us).

*Site Planning for Urban Stream Protection*, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, 1995; (202) 289-0683.

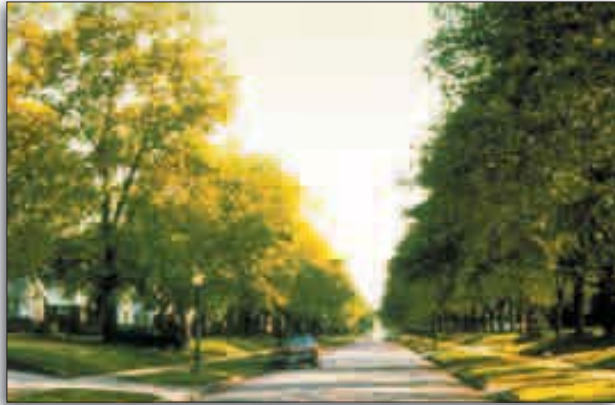
*Stream Stewardship: A Guide for Planners and Developers*, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, 555 W. Hastings, Vancouver, B.C., V6I3 563.

"A Watershed Primer for Pennsylvania: A Collection of Essays on Watershed Issues," Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and Allegheny Watershed Network; available online at [www.pecpa.org](http://www.pecpa.org).



## Plant and Preserve Trees

Conserve  
Natural and  
Scenic Assets



Which street would you rather live on? Which street has higher property values?  
Which street has lower utility bills?

**M**ANY PARTS OF PENNSYLVANIA are still green, forested places. However, the trees and woodlands that help give the state its special sense of place are disappearing. Air pollution, careless cutting, utility companies, highway widening, and sprawling development are all combining to rob Pennsylvania of its age-old trees.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Trees are good for business. According to the National Association of Home Builders, developed lots with trees sell for an average of 20-30% more than similar lots without trees. Mature trees that are preserved during development add more value to a lot than post-construction landscaping. Tree plant-

*In my travels throughout the country, I see so many new suburbs utterly denuded of trees; ironic since the new owners' first instinct is to plant as many trees as possible. My advice, leave the original trees. It's good for business and very good for the environment.*

Former President George H.W. Bush

ing and preservation pay off not only on upscale properties, but also on small, inexpensive lots.

- Trees are also good for the environment. Trees lower building cooling costs. As a homeowner, your utility bills will go up when trees go down. In addition, electrical plants will burn more fuel, adding to air pollution.
- The Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council is a nonprofit organization that provides technical and financial assistance for communities and volunteer groups to manage trees and green spaces.
- Trees play a major role in slowing soil erosion and stormwater runoff. A study of Atlanta by American Forests found a 20% increase in stormwater runoff in areas where trees were replaced with development.

### What Pennsylvania communities can do:

- Plant more new trees, especially shade trees along streets, roads, and in parking lots and riparian areas.



Cutting down trees can reduce property values and increase energy costs.



Retaining trees along commercial corridors greatly reduces the visual impact of new development.



Majestic trees, carefully preserved during construction, now shade the swimming pool of a new motel.

- Promote the protection of existing trees, particularly during the development process.
- Plant native species appropriate to the local climate and water availability.
- Encourage or require the landscaping of parking lots and commercial areas.
- Enact a local tree preservation ordinance.
- Recognize, honor, and reward individuals and companies who take the lead in planting and protecting trees.
- Build new streets with an ample landscaping strip between the roadway and the sidewalk to provide shade and a buffer for pedestrians.
- Apply to the National Arbor Day Foundation for a Tree City USA Designation, as have Bethlehem, Eagles Mere, Harrisburg, Reading, State College, and more than 75 other Pennsylvania communities.

### **Pennsylvania's "TreeVitalize" Partnership**

"TreeVitalize" is an aggressive four-year, \$8 million partnership to plant more than 20,000 shade trees and 2,000 acres of forested riparian buffers to restore tree cover in southeastern Pennsylvania. The five-county Philadelphia region has lost more than 5 million trees over the last 15 years. In addition to coordinating resources to support tree plantings, TreeVitalize aims to train 2,000 volunteers in proper tree care techniques. The State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is leading the regional partnership in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Protection.

For more information on TreeVitalize, log on to [www.treevitalize.net](http://www.treevitalize.net).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Organizations**

American Forests, 910 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006; (202) 955-4500, [www.amfor.org](http://www.amfor.org).

National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410; (402) 474-5655, [www.arbor-day.org](http://www.arbor-day.org).

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Forestry, P.O. Box 8552, Harrisburg, PA 17105; (717) 787-2703, [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry).

Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council, 56 Main Street, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055; (717) 766-5371, [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/index.html](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/index.html).



Street trees are part of a community's green infrastructure.

**Publications**

*Building Greener Neighborhoods:*

*Trees As Part of the Plan*, by American Forests and the National Association of Home Builders, Washington, DC, 1995; (202) 822-0200, [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org).

*Tree Conservation Ordinances*, by Christopher Duerksen, PAS Report #446, 1993, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

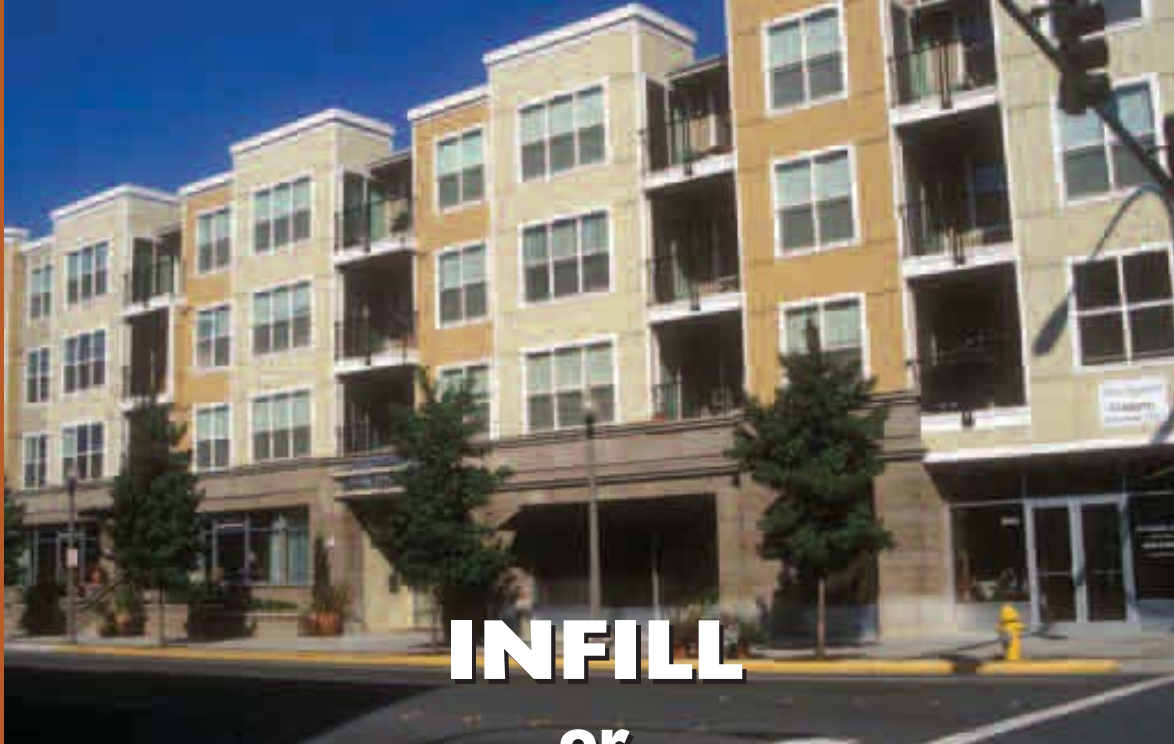
*Trees Are Treasure: Sustaining the Community Forest*, 1993 (video), Scenic America, Washington, DC; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).



In many areas, the urban forest is disappearing.

**Conserve  
Natural and  
Scenic Assets**

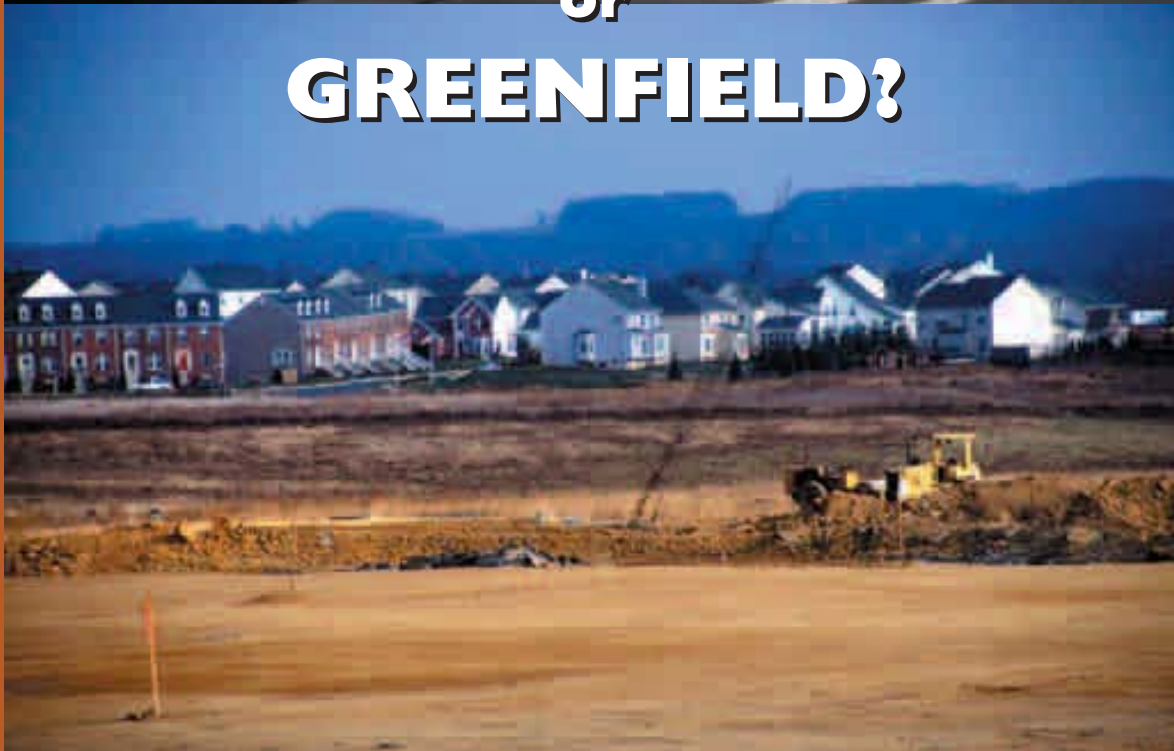
*Principle 2:*      **MAINTAIN A CLEAR EDGE  
BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRYSIDE**



**INFILL**

**or**

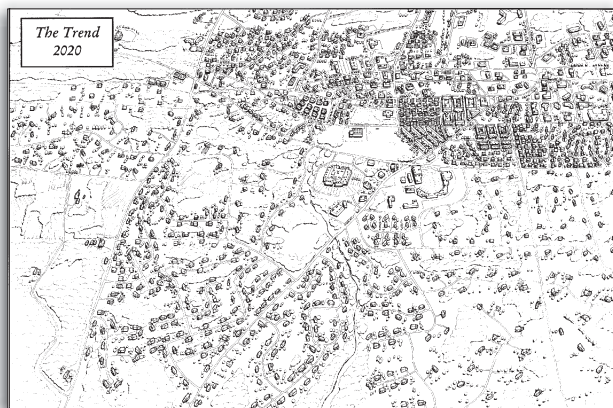
**GREENFIELD?**



## PRINCIPLE 2:

**Maintain a Clear Edge Between Town and Countryside**

Pennsylvania has many strong cities and towns as well as healthy rural landscapes. Safeguarding the rural character of Pennsylvania means maintaining a clear edge between cities, towns, and countryside. This can be done by protecting agricultural land and open space while encouraging more compact building design and walkable communities. It also means encouraging infill development in our older communities, on vacant, underused or overlooked land near transit and on reclaimed former industrial sites (brownfields). By working to maintain a clear edge between town and countryside, Pennsylvania can preserve its rural landscapes and at the same time enhance the vitality of its existing communities.

**Grow In, Not Out**

What will the Pennsylvania countryside look like in 2020? Like the illustration on the left, if current development trends continue. The alternative pattern (right) accommodates the same amount of growth while preserving the countryside.

**R**URAL AND SMALL TOWN Pennsylvania is going to continue to grow; the only real question is where and how this growth will occur. Maintaining the character and livability of Pennsylvania communities will require keeping rural areas rural while encouraging new development in existing towns, cities, and older suburbs. In other words—grow in, not out.

Pennsylvania can expect many more new homes and businesses in the coming years. How we accommodate these new homes and businesses will help determine the quality of life for all of us and for future generations.

The illustrations above make the choice clear. Left

unchecked, current patterns of sprawling, leapfrog development will make this beautiful state a featureless blur that is neither town nor country.

The alternative is to encourage growth in cohesive, walkable communities, small and large, and to shape and design growth in rural areas so that it fits the rural setting. A more compact development pattern can accommodate the same amount of growth while benefiting both town and countryside.

There is growing recognition that compact development has many advantages over scattered low-density development in the countryside. This is because scatter-shot development has a profound impact on issues as diverse as local taxes, education, water quality, traf-

## Techniques for Maintaining a Clear Edge

COMMUNITIES around Pennsylvania and throughout the country are using a variety of techniques to maintain a clear edge between town and countryside. Here are some of the most common techniques:

### Urban Growth Boundaries

An urban growth boundary is a planning tool that establishes a dividing line between areas appropriate for urban development and areas appropriate for rural or agricultural uses. Every city and town in Oregon has established an urban growth boundary. So have dozens of communities in Pennsylvania, including Lancaster County. Urban growth boundaries, also referred to as “designated growth areas” by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, are more likely to be successful in the long term when they are coordinated on a regional level to prevent leapfrog development and constriction of housing opportunities for the local workforce. Urban growth boundaries should be large enough to accommodate new growth in the next 20-30 years.

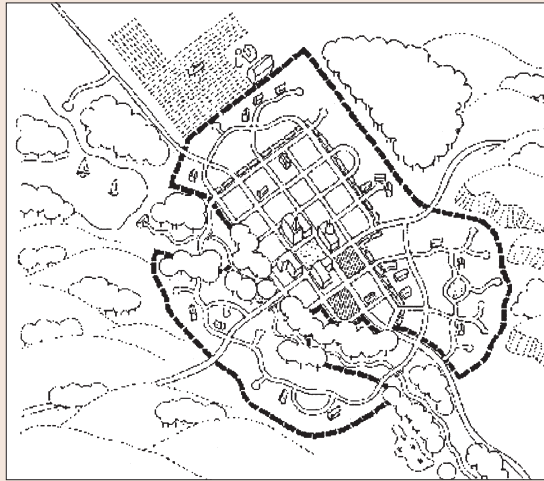
### Development Service Districts

Many communities across America have established the equivalent of urban growth boundaries by designating “development service districts,” which map in advance

those areas where a county will accept responsibility for providing infrastructure. For example, Baltimore County, Md., has had an urban service boundary for more than 30 years.

### Greenbelts

Some Pennsylvania communities have invested in open space to create greenbelts—continuous bands of open space or resource land around towns and cities. Greenbelts can serve as parkland and wildlife habitat as well as provide agricultural buffers between communities. For example, the Capital Area Greenbelt around Harrisburg, originally started 100 years ago, protects 20 linear miles around the city and surrounding municipalities. Much of the greenbelt is along the Susquehanna River and includes a bike and pedestrian trail.



© GREENBELT ALLIANCE  
Urban growth boundary

### Smart Growth Laws

Smart growth laws use the state or local government budget process to encourage growth in areas already served by existing infrastructure. For example, the state of Maryland's smart growth program does not prohibit development in the countryside, but the state will not pay for roads, schools, or other public improvements outside designated “smart growth areas.”

fic congestion, economic development, and open space preservation. By channeling growth to existing older communities, we can reduce our footprint on the landscape, preserve agricultural, and forest land—and save money on public facilities.

Almost without exception, county comprehensive plans throughout Pennsylvania express a desire to

maintain rural character and to channel growth into planned service areas. At the same time, cities and towns are trying to encourage growth within their borders.

Accomplishing this goal, however, is one of the state's toughest planning challenges. Unfortunately, current public policies often make it easier and cheap-

er to develop in the countryside, and local governments have limited resources and inadequate tools for addressing the issue. Yet no rural protection effort can succeed unless people find attractive and desirable places to live in the areas designated for growth.

### Designated Growth Areas in Pennsylvania

Lancaster County has had 13 urban growth boundaries in place for more than 10 years. These boundaries were drawn around existing urban centers so that new houses and businesses would be built in or beside them and irreplaceable farmland would be saved. Between 1994 and 2001, some 30,000 acres of farmland were preserved, while more than 10,000 acres were developed for homes and businesses. Unfortunately, approximately 60% of newly developed acreage lies outside the urban growth boundaries. Still, since 1994 the overall pace of development in Lancaster County has slowed by more than 60%, in no small part because of the urban growth boundary designations.

### The Grow In, Grow Out Quiz

For each major new development in your community, the following questions should be asked:

### Maintain a Clear Edge

- Is the location appropriate?
- Does the development make the most efficient and environmentally sensitive use of the land?
- Does the siting respect the landscape context?
- Does the development direct growth away from important farmland and habitat areas?
- Does the layout maintain a clear edge between urban and rural?
- Do building designs reflect local character and traditions, or are they otherwise appropriate to the site?
- Are there costs to the community—subsidies, infrastructure, roads, public services, environmental or social costs?
- Do the benefits to the community outweigh the costs?

***There is a direct connection between suburban sprawl and the spiraling costs of government.***

James Howard Kunstler,  
Geography of Nowhere

### What is Sprawl?

Sprawl is characterized by:

- Low-density housing and strip commercial development
- Unlimited outward expansion from the city center
- Leapfrog development
- Fragmented government control over land use
- Dominance of the car for transportation
- Segregation of land uses
- Disappearing open space on the urban fringe
- Loss of community character

Adapted from: Anthony Downs,  
*New Visions for Metropolitan America*



**Traffic jam: Is this the future we want for all of Pennsylvania?**

## “Growing Smarter”

In 2000, the Pennsylvania legislature amended the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to encourage municipalities within a county, or counties, municipalities, authorities, and special districts, to enter into inter-governmental cooperative agreements to develop, adopt, and implement comprehensive plans. These changes provide counties and municipalities with new authority and the tools necessary to plan for healthy economic growth and development and to conserve urban and rural resources while protecting private property rights. This initiative is known as “Growing Smarter.”

Growing Smarter legislation clarifies the authority of counties and municipalities to create Locally Designated

Growth Areas as part of their land use plans and encourages the use of Transferable Development Rights to preserve open space and farmland.

The Downtown Location Law, also passed in 2000, requires the Pennsylvania Department of General Services to set guidelines for locating state agencies in central business districts, considering such factors as transit availability, local character, public safety, and economic impact.

In addition, the legislature provided performance-based loans to businesses and communities for remediation and cleanup of non-hazardous wastes at brownfield sites.

### Economic Advantages of Growing In, Not Out:

- Lower public service costs
- Full use of the investment in existing water, sewer, roads, and other infrastructure
- Potential to plan efficient expansion of services
- Delay or avoidance of new infrastructure investment
- Lower per unit costs
- Less money spent on fuel and transportation by citizens and school districts
- Less time spent in cars
- Less money spent on roads
- Lower school construction and bussing costs
- Opportunity for heritage and nature-based tourism
- Potential to attract higher-caliber employers

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

“The Ahwahnee Principles for More Livable Communities,” Local Government Commission, 1991; (916) 448-1198; [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org).

*The Costs of Sprawl in Pennsylvania*, prepared for 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, January 2000; (877) 568-2225, [www.10000friends.org](http://www.10000friends.org).

*Local Tools for Smart Growth: Practical Strategies and Techniques to Improve Our Communities*, National Association of Counties, The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities and Smart Growth Network; (202) 393-6226, [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).

*Making Smart Growth Work*, by Douglas R. Porter, Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC 20007; (202) 624-7000, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

*Once There Were Greenfields: How Urban Sprawl is Undermining America's Environment, Economy and Social Fabric*, by Kaid Benfield et al., Natural Resources Defense Council, Washington, DC, 20005, 1999; (202) 289-6868.

*Planning Beyond Boundaries*, by Joanne R. Denworth, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, 2002; (215) 568-2225, [www.10000friends.org](http://www.10000friends.org).

*Save Our Land, Save Our Towns*, by Thomas Hylton, RB Books, Harrisburg, PA, 17102; (717) 232-7944.



## Understand the Costs of Sprawl

Maintain  
a Clear  
Edge



Which will generate more in net income for a community: a working farm or a new residential subdivision far from town?

**A**LTHOUGH MOST PENNSYLVANIANS “know it when they see it,” sprawl is often difficult to define. However, sprawl is typically characterized by low densities, a segregation of uses and housing types (i.e., houses in one place, apartments in another place, stores and offices somewhere else), travel dominated by motor vehicles, disappearing farmland and open space, and continuous commercial strip development dominated by big signs and ugly asphalt parking lots. While there’s no denying that some aspects of sprawl—for example, large yards or convenient parking—are valued by many Pennsylvanians, there’s also no denying that sprawl imposes many costs on state residents.

At least 500 cost-of-sprawl studies have been completed nationwide, including statewide studies in California, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and other states. These studies confirm that sprawl imposes costs on taxpayers, citizens, and local governments in at least five different ways.

**First, these studies show that sprawl typically increases the costs to build and maintain roads and schools.** For example, at least three major research investigations have concluded that planned

growth scenarios that avoid sprawl can lower construction costs for roads, utilities, and schools by up to 25%.

**Second, sprawl diminishes quality of life by increasing the concentration of poorer citizens in urban areas** and by creating a lack of affordable housing in the suburbs where job growth is greatest.

**Third, sprawl consumes farmland, natural areas, and open space, particularly at the suburban fringe.** According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the state lost nearly 1.2 million acres of

land to urbanization between 1992 and 1997. This land loss was particularly acute in the southeastern and south-central part of the Commonwealth. Between 1970 and 1990 the Philadelphia region consumed, on average, one new acre of land every hour of every day.

**Fourth, sprawl leads to increased air and water pollution.** Pennsylvania has the fourth worst air quality in the nation, and it is estimated that more than half of all air pollution emissions are traceable to cars and trucks.

Finally, studies say sprawl contributes to greater personal stress because it forces people to spend more and more time in their cars and less time with their fami-

*There are alternatives to sprawl that are more attractive, efficient and profitable.*

Ed McMahon,  
Urban Land Institute

lies or on other more fulfilling endeavors. A 1990 study found that traffic congestion had a statistically significant effect on job satisfaction, work absences due to illness, and overall incidence of colds and flu. The study also found stress to be strongly associated with freeway travel and road rage, both of which increase with long-distance commutes caused by dispersed development patterns of sprawl.

### **THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SPRAWL:**

#### ***Fiscal Costs***

- Research shows that planned growth scenarios in Pennsylvania that avoid sprawling development can lower construction costs for roads, utilities, and schools up to 25%.
- Sprawling development raises private housing costs between 2% and 8% above what they would be under a planned growth scenario.
- The average suburban Pennsylvania household spends about \$1,500 more per year on vehicle-related expenses than a comparable household in an urban location, and the average rural household spends about \$4,600 more per year.

#### ***Social Costs***

- Americans spend an average of 443 hours behind the wheel each year—more time than we spend cooking or eating and more than twice as much as average parents spend with their children.
- Pennsylvanians are spending more and more time behind the wheel of a car. Studies show that the average vehicle miles traveled in urban Pennsylvania have increased 20% in the last decade. The average commute is getting longer, and sprawling development patterns force people to drive everywhere for everything.
- Many Pennsylvanians are spending an hour or more each day in their cars. The average Philadelphia-area

driver wastes nearly two thirds of a work week (26 hours) each year sitting in traffic.

- More suburban teenagers now die from auto accidents than inner city teenagers die from gunshot wounds.
- Fewer and fewer children can walk to school in Pennsylvania because new suburban schools are increasingly located in far-flung locations accessible only by school bus or car.
- The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) says, “the overwhelming number of older persons desire to remain in their current homes and communities,” but this is becoming harder to accomplish because many older people are unable to drive.
- The Surgeon General has listed obesity as a leading cause of death, in large part because of the lack of welcoming and comfortable places to walk and bike.

#### ***Environmental Costs***

- Sprawl-induced ozone pollution alone can reduce agricultural crop yields by as much as 30%.
- An American Lung Association report on discouraging sprawl stated, “land use policy is crucial to controlling air pollution.”
- Air pollution has dramatically reduced visibility in urbanized Pennsylvania. All of the state’s major metropolitan areas are classified as non-attainment areas for air pollutants.
- An acre of parking lot generates 16 times more runoff than an acre of meadow.
- Pennsylvania has 38 Endangered species, 28 Threatened species, and 9 species At Risk.

## Encourage Infill Development and Brownfield Redevelopment

Maintain  
a Clear  
Edge



Does it make more sense to build on greenfield sites or to encourage development on vacant lots, overlooked parcels or abandoned properties in existing communities?

PENNSYLVANIA IS DEVELOPING LAND at a much faster rate than its population growth. While development on the urban fringe represents new investment, it also accounts for substantial long-term public costs. According to a report by the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment, a single home built on the urban fringe requires \$10,000 more in public services than one built in the urban core.

One alternative to land consumptive suburban sprawl is to encourage more infill development. This makes more efficient use of public and private infrastructure by putting additional people where roads, schools, sewers, and water lines already exist.

This does not mean overcrowding; in fact, many of Pennsylvania's cities, towns, and older suburbs have lost population in recent decades—so there are many opportunities for infill development on vacant lots, underutilized parcels, or abandoned properties, including former industrial sites (brownfields).

There are at least half a million brownfield sites in the United States, including many in Pennsylvania. While liability concerns have long been a deterrent to brownfield redevelopment, many states have adopted voluntary clean-up programs that are generating renewed interest in the redevelopment of lightly contaminated property. Many developers know that it is

now possible to reap substantial profits from these contaminated lands—turning brownfields into greenbacks.

Pennsylvania's award-winning Land Recycling Program sets up uniform cleanup standards and review procedures for brownfield sites, releases developers from cleanup liability once standards are met, and protects banks and funding agencies from cleanup liability. It also provides opportunities for the integration of greenways and open space in redevelopment projects, many of which are along riverfronts that make ideal recreational trails and tourist destinations. A good example is the Southside Works in Pittsburgh along



Infill development in Reading

the Monongahela River. This 34-acre site of the former LTV Steel plant integrates office, retail, and residential space with a park, public square, and Riverfront Trails along the river. Another example is the Wharf at Rivertown in Chester—a former electricity generating plant rehabilitated for office space, with a public riverwalk along the Delaware River. Since 1995, Pennsylvania has cleaned up more than 1,100 brownfield sites, on which more than 30,000 people are now working.

### Advantages of Infill Development:

- Uses existing roads and utilities
- Convenient location
- Certainty of development pattern
- Proximity to cultural facilities, parks, and other amenities
- Cost savings for developers and residents
- Can make communities more walkable
- Helps make transit a viable option by increasing concentration of people near stops

The financial benefits of infill development can be great. Using existing utilities and infrastructure can reduce costs. There are also a variety of federal and state tax incentives for rehabilitating historic buildings. Local enterprise zones and other programs also can provide incentives for investment. An often overlooked advantage of investing in an infill site is the certainty provided by a mature development pattern and known neighbors.

Successful and attractive infill projects can be found throughout Pennsylvania. One example is the Susque-

hanna Commerce Center in York, a 7-acre brownfield site now occupied by 250,000 square feet of new office and retail space. Similarly, Summerset at Frick Park in Pittsburgh, a former 238-acre slag dump, now contains more than 700 homes and retail space. Another award-winning project is the Front Street Complex on Presque Isle Bay in Erie. This former coal-fired power plant is being transformed into Bayfront Centre, a mixed-use development including the Erie Maritime Museum, the Erie County Library and Civic Auditorium, a hotel, commercial space, a marina, and residential area.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- To encourage development near transit stops, Fannie Mae has started a pilot program offering “location-efficient mortgages.” The program enables buyers who purchase homes near transit lines to qualify for larger mortgages, since they no longer have to spend as much on personal transportation.
- Inner-city residents have far more money to spend than stores in which to spend it, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 48 cities studied, retail sales were \$8.7 billion less than inner-city residents’ buying power.
- Downtowns across America are reporting a strong increase in people choosing to live in inner-city neighborhoods, townhouses, and loft apartments. The prime reasons for this are that crime is down,



York Square condominiums in Philadelphia, before



York Square condominiums in Philadelphia, after

traffic congestion is severe in the suburbs, and there are more amenities closer in.

- The National Association of Homebuilders, in partnership with HUD and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, has announced the goal of constructing one million additional market-rate housing units in the nation's cities and inner-ring suburbs by 2010.
- Toys-R-Us invested in downtown Santa Monica, designing a pedestrian-oriented two-story building, and Target recycled an abandoned department store near downtown Pasadena.
- The growth in the over-65 senior population—which will more than double in the next 20 years—is already starting to increase the demand for infill housing close to activity centers. At the other end of



Hanover Shoe Factory, before

the spectrum, young adults often want to live closer to the action.

- In February 2004, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection unveiled its Brownfields Action Team (BAT), a one-stop shop for all permitting issues associated with the redevelopment process. The BAT targets brownfields located specifically within the corporate boundaries of a city or borough to facilitate infill development.
- In January 2002, President Bush signed into law the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act which more than doubles the annual funding to redevelop brownfield sites in urban areas and infill locations.

**Maintain  
a Clear  
Edge**



Hanover Shoe Factory, after conversion to apartments

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Building Livable Communities: A Policymaker's Guide to Infill Development*, LGC Center for Livable Communities, 1414 K Street, Suite 600, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 448-1198, [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org).

*Developing Infill Housing in Inner-City Neighborhoods*, by Diane Suchman, Urban Land Institute, 1997; (800) 321-5011, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

*Programs, Incentives and Initiatives for the Pennsylvania Land Recycling Program*, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 2004; (717) 783-7816, [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us).

*Successful Infill Development*, Congress for the New Urbanism, September 2000; (312) 5517300, [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org).

*Turning Brownfields into Greenbacks*, by Robert A. Simons, Urban Land Institute, 1998; (800) 321-5011, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

## Use Conservation Design Techniques



Suppose you were a developer with 200 acres. Which do you think would be more profitable: a development with 200 one-acre lots and no open space, or a development with 200 half-acre lots and 100 acres of open space?

**P**ENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITIES facing growth can use the development process to their advantage to protect open space: natural areas, greenways, trails, agricultural and recreational lands. Simply stated, conservation subdivision design arranges the development on half or less of the developable ground, leaving the remainder as open space. Without controversial “down-zoning”, the same number of homes can be built in a less land-consumptive manner, allowing the balance of the property to be permanently protected and added to an inter-connected open space network. This “density neutral” approach provides a fair

and equitable way to balance development and conservation objectives.

This approach to conserving land through the development process has been embraced by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in the state-wide program *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design*. A December 2003 survey of eight townships that have adopted rigorous versions of the model regulations showed that they had reduced land consumption by 63%. In three years, the township officials had collectively approved conservation subdivision plans that set aside over 1,300 acres of permanently preserved open space.



A conservation development in Chester County

### Conservation Subdivision Design versus Cluster

The conservation design standards advocated under the Growing Greener program build upon cluster regulations, performance zoning and other environmental protection techniques. Conservation subdivision design differs from older cluster development as dramatically as a typewriter differs from a modern laptop computer. Both use the basic principle of lot size reduction to create open space, but that is where the similarities end. Among the most significant differences:

- The word “cluster” makes people think of older planned unit developments that really did not conserve much at all. Conservation subdivision design strives to add land to an interconnected open space network each time a property is developed.
- Further, the required open space is 50 to 70% of the buildable area of the development tract plus all of the land constrained by wetlands, floodplain or steep slopes.
- Coupled with zoning requirements for high percentages of open space and compact lots, the subdivision and land development code greatly strengthens the typical plan review process with open space locational and design standards.

### Making Conservation Subdivision Design Happen

In his book *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Plans and Ordinances*, author and site designer Randall Arendt explains how communities can implement straightforward changes to comprehensive plans and land use regulations. One of the most critical steps that a community can take to ensure that its special places are conserved, even as development occurs, is to follow a Four-Step Design process to laying out subdivisions. Says Arendt, “The primary purpose of this design approach is to provide landowners and developers with their full legal density in a way that conserves not only the special features of the proposed development site, but that also helps protect an interconnected network of conservation lands extending across the community.”

### What are the Advantages of Conservation Design?

- **Reduces Infrastructure Costs** - Developers save money by not having to build as many streets, gutters, drains, or sidewalks.
- **Increases Property Values** - Numerous studies show that people will pay more for houses that are bordered by open space. A recent poll conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California revealed that

## Open Space Site Design

Maintain a Clear Edge



DIAGRAMS BY RANDALL ARENDT

Pennsylvania farm before development



Pennsylvania farm after conventional development



Pennsylvania farm after conservation design

many home buyers would choose an attached house near green space over a detached house not near public parks.

- **Saves Open Spaces** - Many people prefer open space design because such developments provide access to nature and outdoor recreation, enhance property values, and reduce the time and expense of maintaining extra-large yards. The public benefits from open space design because it means less concrete and asphalt, less polluted runoff, more wildlife habitat, and more trees and green space.

## The Conservation Design Concept

In his book *Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Codes and Ordinances*, Arendt explains how open space design works.

Designing subdivisions around the central organizing principle of land conservation is not difficult. However, it is essential that ordinances contain clear standards to guide the conservation design process. The four-step approach described below has proven to be effective in laying out new full-density developments where all the significant natural and cultural features have been preserved.

**Step One** consists of identifying the land that should be permanently protected. The developer performs a detailed site analysis in order to precisely



New development clusters homes to preserve natural areas.

locate features to be conserved. The developer first identifies all the legally constrained areas, such as wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes, called Primary Conservation Area. The developer then identifies Secondary Conservation Areas, which comprise noteworthy features of the property that are typically unprotected under current codes: mature woodlands, greenways and trails, river and stream corridors, prime farmland, hedgerows and individual free-standing trees or tree groups, wildlife habitat and travel corridors, historic sites and structures, scenic viewsheds, etc. After “greenlining” these conservation elements, the remaining part of the property becomes the Potential Development Area.

**Step Two** involves locating sites of individual houses within the Potential Development Area so that their views of the open space are maximized. The number of houses is a function of the density permitted within the zoning district.

**Step Three** simply involves “connecting the dots” with streets and informal trails, while **Step Four** consists of drawing in the lot lines.

This approach reverses the sequence of steps used to lay out conventional subdivisions, where the street system is the first thing to be identified, followed by lot lines fanning out to encompass every square foot of ground into house lots. When municipalities require nothing more than “house lots and streets,” that is all they receive. But by setting community standards higher and requiring significant open space as a precondition for achieving full density, officials can effectively encourage conservation subdivision design. The protected land in each new subdivision would then become building blocks that add new acreage to community-wide networks of interconnected open space each time a property is developed.

### Examples in Pennsylvania

- **Eagleview in Uwchlan Township in Chester County** - This model community started with 80 houses built to resemble the farmhouses that once dotted the Chester County countryside. The community has an extensive sidewalk network and a central square for gathering. When fully built out,



Eagleview will contain townhouses and apartments in addition to single-family homes, a small hotel, shops, and hundreds of acres of open space.

- **Farmview in Lower Makefield Township, Bucks County** - Located on a 418-acre site, Farmview is a 322-lot subdivision, the layout of which conserves 213 acres of land, including 145 acres of cropland and 68 acres of mature woods.
- **Garnet Oaks in Bethel Township, Delaware County** - This 58-acre property contains a 24-acre conservation area with a wooded trail. Its quarter-acre lots were designed to preserve the woodland as well as an existing farm lane, stone wall, and springhouse.
- **Ringfield in Chadds Ford, Delaware County** - Approximately 55 acres of this 64-acre site have been preserved as open meadow and natural woodlands. With meadowland, dogwood trees, and a pond occupying the public viewshed, the layout of the neighborhood helps to preserve the township's rural character. The original stone farmhouse is located on an outparcel.

### Conservation Zoning: A "Menu" of Choices

Zoning regulations for conservation subdivisions are based on the principle that the only way a developer achieves the maximum number of homes is by setting aside at least 50% of the buildable land as permanently protected, undivided open space, and that substantial density losses are incurred by developers who do not conserve a significant percentage of open space. Full density matches a site's "yield" using conventional zoning. A series of development options can be written into the zoning ordinance that match, increase or decrease the basic yield.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- The majority of homeowners in golf course communities do not play golf. They say they just like to live next to open space.
- The open space in a conservation subdivision usually consists of at least 50% of the buildable land, plus floodplain, wetlands and steep slopes.
- As of December 2003, eight Chester County communities that had adopted rigorous versions of the Growing Greener model ordinances had saved 1,330 acres of open space (63% of gross tract area) in approved conservation subdivision applications.
- A 2002 survey by the National Association of Realtors ranks parks and natural areas as highly desirable features in new home developments. Parks and natural areas rank well above golf courses, which cost more to build and are harder to maintain.
- A 1995 nationwide survey of prospective home buyers conducted for a group of large-volume home builders found that consumers rated "lots of natural open space" as an "extremely important" feature in new residential development. In fact, open space rated second overall out of 40 possible features.
- Many zoning ordinances allow for more residential and commercial development than can be supported, thus encouraging sprawling development patterns.
- A National Association of Home Builders' comparison of a conventional subdivision layout versus a clustered layout with 20% preserved open space found that the open space design cut development costs by one third.
- A Massachusetts study of home values in two subdivisions that are nearly identical—except that one reserved 50% of the site as open space—found that the clustered homes appreciated 12.7% more than those in the conventional subdivision, despite having smaller lots.

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Edge**

## Conservation Subdivisions in Pennsylvania



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**Winfield, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.** Meadow or stormwater management basin? In this case, the beautiful conservation meadow serves both purposes, illustrating that in a relatively small, six-lot development a conservation meadow can also function as a stormwater management system. This Bucks County subdivision illustrates a creative alternative to the usual deep, “bomb crater” basins forced into many subdivisions.

**The Ponds at Woodward, Kennett Township, Chester County.** This subdivision, designed by staff at the Brandywine Conservancy’s Environmental Management Center in Chadds Ford, represents the finest in conservation design. Careful attention to detail allowed a working orchard and woodlands to be preserved while still meeting the landowners’ financial need to develop the balance of the property. Notable design features include a mixture of single-family homes and



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townhouses, where, unexpectedly, the townhouses commanded nearly the same prices as the single-family homes. One reason—most of the townhouses face the orchard across a “single-loaded” street with units on one side of the road. Allowing adaptive reuse of the farmhouse, in this case as a gallery and nursery school, is another innovative feature too often prohibited in conventional developments.

Visit [www.brandywineconservancy.org](http://www.brandywineconservancy.org).



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**Weatherstone<sup>SM</sup> West Vincent Township, Chester County.** A greener new urbanism? In this example, the Hankin Group of Exton combines land conservation with a compact, walkable, Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND). The Township guided the developer to those areas of the site most appropriate for development. The resulting TND design fits like a hand in a glove within a framework of conservation lands with 65% of the site protected as open space.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Conservation Design for Subdivisions*, by Randall Arendt, Island Press, 1996; (800) 828-1302.

*Crossroads, Hamlet, Village, Town: Design Characteristics of Traditional Neighborhoods, Old and New*, 2nd edition, by Randall Arendt, Planning Advisory Report No. 523/524. Chicago:

American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Growing Greener: Conservation by Design Program*, Booklet and Design Studies Portfolio, Natural Lands Trust; (610) 353-5587, [www.natlands.org](http://www.natlands.org).



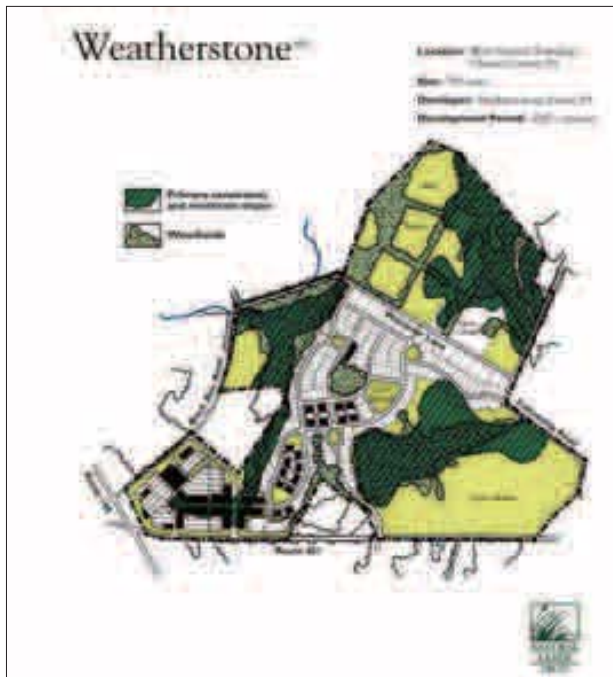
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**Traditional Neighborhood Design, Weatherstone**



*Growing Greener: Putting Conservation Into Local Plans and Ordinances*, by Randall Arendt, Island Press, 1999; (800) 828-1302.

*PennSCAPEs (Pennsylvania Strategies, Codes and People Environments)*, CD-ROM, Pennsylvania State University, College of Arts and Architecture, Department of Landscape Architecture; (814) 865-5300, [www.pennscapes.psu.edu](http://www.pennscapes.psu.edu).



## Delineate Gateways



Which gateway makes a better first impression? Which community looks like one in which you would rather spend time and money?

**F**IRST IMPRESSIONS are important to communities. Just as with meeting a person, a good first impression can make a difference. A bad first impression is hard to change. The gateway into a community is like its “front door.” It provides the introduction to a community. It can either express a community’s pride and sense of place or it can give a community a poor public image.

Compare the photos of the community gateways found throughout this section. Then ask yourself the following questions:

- Which gateway makes a better first impression?
- Which one looks like a community with a sense of pride?
- Which community looks like one in which you would rather spend time and money?
- Which one looks more like the gateway into your own community?

Many parts of a town or community have boundaries drawn around them. These boundaries usually exist in people’s minds. They mark the end of one kind of activity or one kind of place and the beginning of another. In many cases, a community can be made more memorable, more vivid, more alive if the boundary that exists in people’s minds also exists physically on the ground. In rural areas, gateways provide an area

of transition between town and countryside; in urban areas they help mark the boundaries between one community or neighborhood and another.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- A community’s image is fundamentally important to its economic well being.
- Gateways can provide information to tourists by directing them to areas of interest and by providing clues to the historical, cultural, and economic foundation of an area.
- Major gateways to Pennsylvania include Interstate highway corridors and other major highways such as I-70, I-76, I-81, I-83, I-95, and Route 6. Tourists, new residents, and potential investors all form their first impressions of Pennsylvania along these corridors, and the highway interchange areas are the front door to many of our communities.
- How we plan and build along highway corridors is critically important to the character of Pennsylvania communities and the image and economic health of our state.

- As anyone can see, the exceptional beauty and visual quality along Pennsylvania's Interstate corridors has deteriorated over the years. Truck stops, giant signs, gaudy billboards, and look-alike fast food restaurants now dominate most of the interchange areas along major highways, and this affects how people perceive the state.
- Green space can act as a community separator, delineating where one community begins and another ends. Douglas County, Colorado, for example, has been purchasing land along Interstate 25 to create a permanent buffer between the suburbs of Denver and those of Colorado Springs.
- The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has been working to acquire conservation easements along portions of the Laurel Highlands Scenic Byway (Route 711) that serves as a gateway to Fallingwater and nearby communities.

- A number of Pennsylvania communities have created scenic corridor overlay districts to protect key entrances into town. For example, North Coventry Township in Chester County has a Scenic Protection Overlay that preserves the scenic approaches to the township, promotes and preserves historic structures along the corridors, and encourages the preservation of open space.
- Billboards are prohibited along the Blue Route (I-476) and the Vine Street Expressway in Philadelphia.
- The Radnor Gateway Project in Delaware County incorporates public art, roadside-scale design, historic monuments, and symbols on sound barrier panels to enhance a new highway corridor into town.

**Maintain  
a Clear  
Edge**

Now look at the photos that follow and think about the messages they convey.



Welcome to Pennsylvania



Gateway to Gettysburg



26th Street gateway to Philadelphia, before



26th Street gateway to Philadelphia, after

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

*Designing Urban Corridors*, PAS Report #418, by Kirk R. Bishop, 1990, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

"Gateways: Creating a Civic Identity," Suzanne Sutro Rhees, *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 21, Winter 1996; (802) 864-9083.

"Planning Basics for Gateway Design," by Michael Barrett, *Zoning News*, American Planning Association; (312) 431-9100, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).



Gateway to Oxford, Adams County

## *Choices for Pennsylvania Communities*

### **Rural Development**



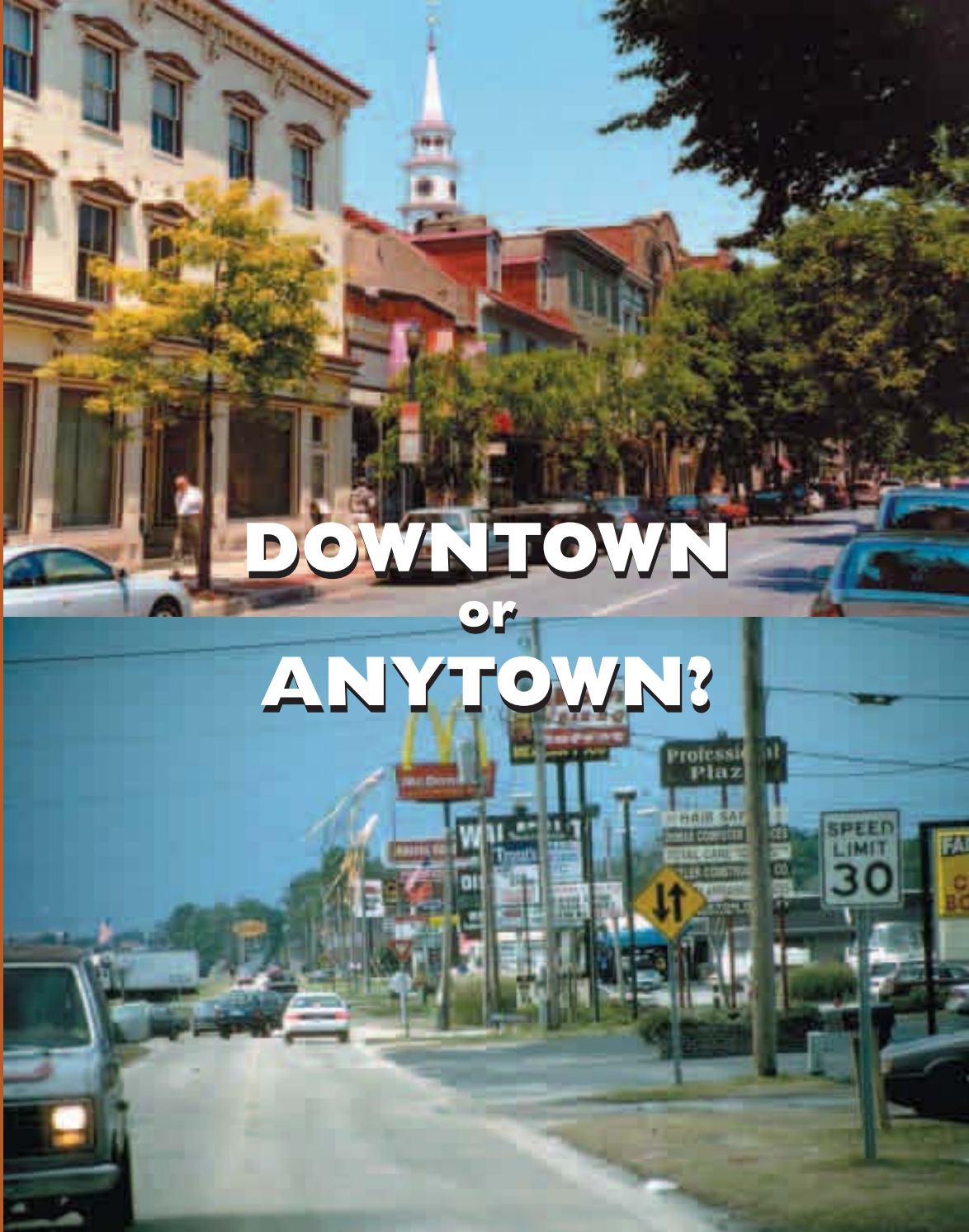
### **Tree Preservation**



### **Parking Lot Landscaping**



*Principle 3:*      **BUILD AND MAINTAIN LIVABLE AND  
ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES**





## PRINCIPLE 3:

**Build and Maintain Livable and Attractive Communities**

Attractive and livable cities and towns are the flip side of protecting rural character. Livable communities have a balance of jobs, homes, services, and amenities and provide interconnections among these elements. Livable communities provide housing choices and are walkable and affordable. They're also well designed and attractive. Vibrant downtowns are especially important because they are the heart and soul of Pennsylvania communities, appeal to all ages, and provide the distinctive image that people take with them. We can even reshape the strip to make it more appealing and functional. Wherever new development or redevelopment occurs, location, scale, siting and design decisions should be carefully considered.

**Enhance Cities, Towns and Villages**

If you had a choice, would you rather live in a small town or in suburbia?

**T**HE FLIP SIDE of not developing in the countryside is building attractive places to live in the areas where growth is desired and can be accommodated. This means emphasizing quality, not just quantity.

People crave a sense of community. Pennsylvania's small towns and rural communities come in many different sizes and shapes, but all offer a sense of place, a compact settlement pattern, and proximity to services. They are places where you know your neighbor and can walk to school or the store.

Many of Pennsylvania's cities, small towns, and older suburbs retain a high degree of historic integrity.

They are vibrant places to live and work. Some also retain a small-town atmosphere. All of these communities have room to grow from within. They also can be extended in a compatible pattern. It is even appropriate in some areas to create new towns or villages.

***It is within our power to create places worthy of our affection.***

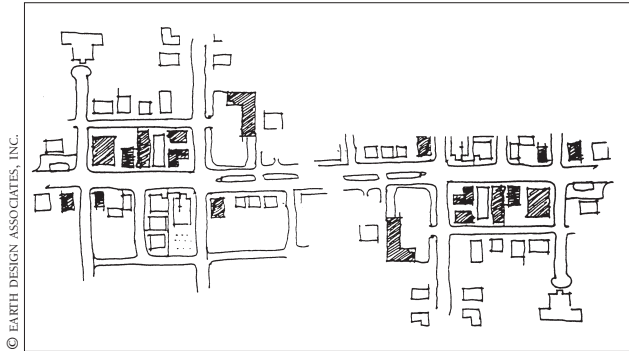
James Howard Kunstler,  
*Geography of Nowhere*

While most Americans live in suburbs, surveys reveal a strong preference for the "small town" as the ideal place to live. The small towns sprinkled throughout Pennsylvania are not just charming anachronisms; rather they are models for how we could build in the future. In fact, functional human settlements are almost always made up of a balance of jobs, homes, services, and amenities. Small towns and walkable urban neighbor-

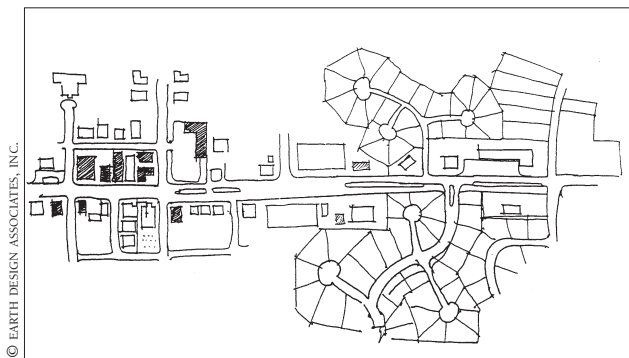
hoods provide opportunities for revitalization while offering the conveniences and social advantages of a real community.

One way to bring about compatible growth of small towns and cities is to prepare a plan based on a vision for a more livable, socially inclusive and environmentally sound community. With local community input, residents can set locations for roads and general uses

in the core boundaries and in adjoining areas. This planning gives developers more confidence of project approval and assures neighbors that new development will be of compatible character. A plan means greater likelihood that the community vision will be achieved. For the locality, this means less potential for conflict and lawsuits and greater confidence in planning for population growth and needed services.



Natural extension of connected streets



Disconnected "pod" growth



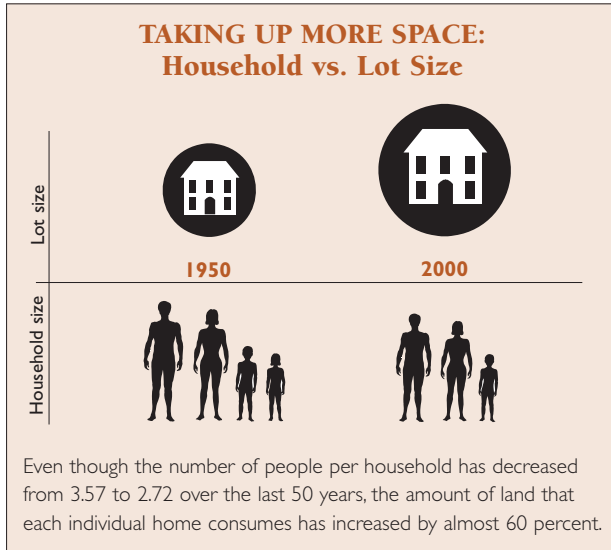
In traditional neighborhoods, houses face the street.

**THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:**

- In Oakdale in Allegheny County, a general plan was adopted requiring mixed use, walkable development. The new Burchell Hill Development has been designed to include residential units with a central green, perimeter of open space, multi-use trails, and a corridor leading to a riverside plaza.
- In Downington in Chester County, a contaminated former electric motor facility was demolished to create "Main Street Village," a walkable community of 140 townhouses and accompanying retail.
- Fairsted in Lancaster County is a development with nearly 1,500 residential units, 200,000 feet of retail and commercial space, and civic amenities—with 30% of the land dedicated to open space.
- In Montgomery County, Woodmont is a new development of single-family homes mixed with professional offices and small retail spaces.



Subdivision houses often turn their backs to the street.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*A Landscape of Choice: Strategies for Improving Patterns of Community Growth*, Growth Alternatives Alliance, Fresno, April 1998; (208) 627-3708.

*Reinventing the Village*, by Suzanne Sutro, PAS Report 4430, American Planning Association, 1990; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Rural By Design*, by Randall Arendt with Elizabeth Brabec, Harry Dodson, Christine Reid, and Robert Yaro, 1994, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

**Build  
Livable  
Communities**

## Design Real Neighborhoods



If you were in the market for a new house, what would be more important to you—the size of the lot or the character of the house and neighborhood?

**A** BIG REASON WHY PENNSYLVANIA has been consuming land at such a fast pace is because the average size of a residential lot has been going up at the same time that average family size has been going down.

Building appealing communities involves more than designing large-lot subdivisions. It also means ensuring a convenient mix of the things that meet people's daily needs, including homes, schools, services, sidewalks, parks, and amenities. Traditional neighborhoods historically have offered a place to live for people of all ages, incomes and life stages.

Ideally, residential neighborhoods should be attrac-

### What's the difference between a subdivision and a neighborhood?

- Quality of the public space
- Variety of uses and building types
- Connections to people and to daily needs
- Places to walk and ride bicycles

***Human settlement patterns—the pattern and density of land use—have profound, in fact controlling, impact on current and longer term economic prosperity, social stability and environmental sustainability.***

Ed Risse, Synergy Planning

tive, walkable, and satisfying—places people enjoy. Well-designed communities are not just a collection of individual houses. Unlike conventional subdivisions, neighborhood quality is not based solely on lot size

and square footage. Equal attention is paid to creating an inviting public realm conducive to walking, casual socializing, and community function.

Open space is vital to human well-being, yet many post-World War II subdivisions do not provide any parks or usable open space.

Children have few places to play except the cul-de-sac, and parents are forced to drive their children everywhere for everything, from soccer games to birthday parties.

As communities grow, it is increasingly important to provide parks and open spaces. New developments have the opportunity to include wonderful outdoor places. On a small scale, play areas and greens can serve surrounding residences. Greenways can turn undevelopable stream corridors into peaceful areas that maintain natural habitat. These open spaces can be the places of the heart and important community landmarks for the future.

A development trend that holds great hope for building better communities is “traditional neighborhood development” (TND), also known as “new urbanism.” More than 500 such projects are underway throughout the nation, including more than 30 in Pennsylvania.

### Common Elements of Traditional Neighborhood Developments:

- Compact form that encourages walking
- Streetscape designed for pedestrians
- Buildings set close to the sidewalk
- Narrow, connected streets
- Neighborhood parks and open spaces
- Mix of housing types and price ranges
- Architecture that reflects the community or region
- Compatible non-residential uses, including schools and neighborhood retail

### Standard Features of Conventional Development:

- Isolated “pods” of look-alike, single-price-range houses
- Separation from other uses
- Not pedestrian friendly
- Lack of parks or open space
- Overly wide streets
- Car-dominated public realm
- No way to get around without a car

Look at the examples on the following pages. Compare these to the features of most modern subdivisions. Which are more attractive?

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- 72% of consumers say they would prefer to shop in a village center with a mix of stores and civic buildings rather than in a strip shopping center.
- Today, almost 70% of American households do not have school-aged children. As a result, there is a great need for housing for retirees, empty nesters, single parents, unrelated singles, and other niche markets.

- In 2000, the Pennsylvania legislature specifically enabled TNDs through amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Article VIIA).
- Interviews with residents of traditional neighborhood developments have found an even greater sense of community than anticipated. Residents speak of knowing everyone within several blocks.
- Traditional neighborhood developments can outsell conventional developments. For example, Northwest Landing in Dupont, Washington, is the hottest development in its market, outselling its competition by a margin of nearly two to one.
- The Ponds at Woodward in Chester County, Pennsylvania, features a preserved apple orchard, single-family homes, townhouses, a day-care center, community center, and retail facilities.
- Crawford Square in Pittsburgh is an 18-acre infill neighborhood with half the residential units in affordable housing. Within walking distance of downtown, the development includes three parks, a fitness center, playground equipment, and a swimming pool.
- In Minneapolis, every home is within six blocks of a well-kept park.

## Build Livable Communities



Main Street, West Chester

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### Organizations

Congress for the New Urbanism, 140 S. Dearborn, Suite 310, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 551-7300, [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org).

### Publications

*A Better Place to Live: Reshaping the American Suburb*, by Philip Langdon, Harper-Collins, New York, NY, 1994.

*New Community Design to the Rescue*, by Joel S. Hirschhorn and Paul Souza, National Governors Association, Washington, DC; (202) 624-5300, [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org).

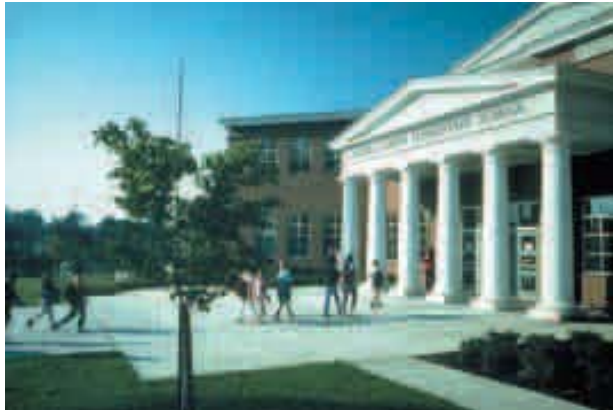
"New Urban News," a bi-monthly newsletter, P.O. Box 6515, Ithaca, NY 14851; (607) 275-3087.

*The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community*, by Peter Katz, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, NY, 1994.

*Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code*, Article VIIA, Governor's Center for Local Government Services, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, 2000; (717) 720-7317, (888) 223-6837, [www.invent-pa.com](http://www.invent-pa.com).

## Mix Uses and Building Types in New Developments

Build  
Livable  
Communities



If you had a choice, would you prefer to live in a neighborhood where children can walk to school or in a neighborhood where they must be driven to school?



A new mixed-use development in Virginia



A new mixed-use development in Wisconsin



Eagleview, a traditional neighborhood development in Chester County



Housing project in Maryland mixes old houses with new.

## *Hide the Car*



If you had a choice, would you prefer to live in a house with the garage in front or with the garage hidden from view?



Front yard garage



Garage is set back from the street.



Garage with apartment above



Rear lane with garages behind houses



## *Provide Parks and Open Space*

**Build  
Livable  
Communities**



If you had a choice, would you rather live in a townhouse facing a parking lot or in one facing a park?

### **More good examples:**



Community open space in Easton



Multi-purpose trail in western Pennsylvania



Community park in a new apartment complex



Village green in a new housing development

## Use Good Design

**Good design is attractive:**



Tract housing often all looks the same.



New houses can be colorful and attractive.

**Good design can ease conflicts:**



© CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PLANNING DEPT.

New office in residential area



New shopping center

**Good design is attractive:**



New single-family houses



New townhouses

## Strengthen Downtowns and Older Communities

Build  
Livable  
Communities



Do you want the heart and soul of your community to be a downtown or a shopping mall?

**A**LL TRUE COMMUNITIES, whether small town or big city, have downtowns that every citizen knows and comes to. Downtowns often are the clearest expression of a community, the mental image people take with them. Almost written off in the 1970s, many downtowns are experiencing revitalization. What is the “picture” that occurs to you when you think of your community? Is it a strip shopping center? An enclosed mall? Or the downtown?

A downtown serves many functions. Typically the most significant public buildings are located here, such as government offices, museums, the courthouse, the library, or the post office. Stores, shops, offices, and apartments increase the reasons for frequenting the area. Each use reinforces the others.

Downtowns are typically human scale, meant for people of all ages and walks of life. People come here during the day for business and on evenings and weekends for restaurants, concerts, or parades. This is the place where you “run into” old acquaintances and feel part of a distinctive community. Downtowns often include parks, museums, libraries, post offices, and other public buildings.

Public commitment to downtown encourages pri-

ivate investment. Local government facilities are often the backbone of the downtown, while a well-developed public realm lets people gather informally. It is

this complex intermingling of public and private, interior and exterior that cannot be replaced by far-flung shopping malls and separate government offices.

Economic and social vitality in the core has a positive impact on the entire community. Ongoing reinvestment in the core area raises property values and uses

infrastructure efficiently. Conversely, the stakes are high, because the alternative is a hollow core. All of the older communities in Pennsylvania have distinctive traditional core areas and there are many examples throughout the state of successful and vibrant downtowns, such as Doylestown, Lewisburg, Tamaqua, West Chester, and Franklin.

***The successful city of the future will have a vibrant central city, limit bad sprawl and promote smart growth.***

William Hudnutt, ULI

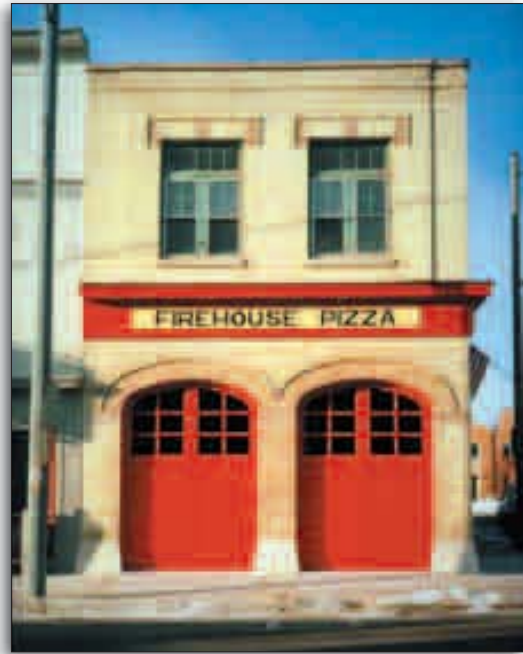
### Tools for Downtown Revitalization:

- Use the Main Street Approach
- Encourage Infill Development
- Provide Incentives for Downtown Housing
- Keep Government Offices Downtown
- Develop Fairs, Festivals and Farmers Markets
- Create an Attractive Streetscape

## Use the Main Street Approach



Do your historic downtown buildings look like this?



© NATIONAL MAIN STREET CENTER

Or like this?

**T**HE MAIN STREET PROGRAM, established by the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is alive and well in Pennsylvania. This highly successful community revitalization strategy not only helps preserve the heritage of a community's downtown but also strengthens its economy. Main Street currently provides intensive services and technical support to 26 active, certified Pennsylvania communities, shown on the map below.

The Main Street program uses a four-point approach:

- Design
- Organization
- Promotion
- Economic Restructuring

### Design

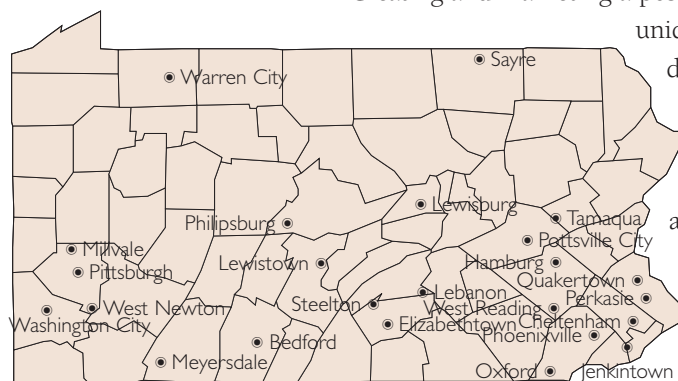
Enhancing the unique visual quality of downtown by addressing all design elements to create

an appealing environment. First impressions count. Decades of neglect, demolition, and misguided improvement have taken a toll on the appearance of many downtowns and their economic potential. Sensitive infill, renovated facades, creative merchandising displays, appropriate landscaping, and public improvements are all part of downtown's long-lasting visual appeal and a well functioning physical environment.

### Promotion

Creating and marketing a positive image based on the unique attributes of the

downtown district. After decades of neglect, visitors and investors may perceive downtown as dead, with little chance of recovery. Using a comprehensive promotions calendar with special events, retail promo-



tions, and on-going public relations, downtown can reverse old perceptions.

### **Economic Restructuring**

Strengthening downtown's existing economic assets and fulfilling its broadest market potential. The retail environment has changed profoundly. To become competitive, the downtown district must reposition itself. With a thorough understanding of today's market, downtown can develop strategies to enhance the competitiveness of existing merchants, recruit new businesses, create new anchors, and convert tired space into new uses.

### **Organization**

Establishing consensus and cooperation by building effective partnerships among all downtown stakeholders. The downtown constituency is unique and not always well served by traditional economic and business development groups. An on-going management and advocacy organization dedicated to downtown fosters revitalization, progress and sustainability.

Through the Main Street approach, thousands of communities across the nation have revitalized their downtowns. While this approach takes effort and commitment, the results prove that downtowns still have what it takes. Any community can apply the principles of the Main Street model. In fact, using these time-tested strategies, particularly building broad-based commitment to the downtown, can only add to other initiatives.

### **THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:**

- Between 1997 and December 2003, Pennsylvania's Main Street communities gained 1,803 net new businesses, added 7,961 net new jobs to downtown payrolls, and sparked 2,593 improvement projects valued at more than \$141 million and private investments of more than \$155 million.
- Designated Main Street communities receive technical assistance directed at individual community needs.
- East Carson Street in Pittsburgh, one of the National Main Street Center's first Urban Demonstration Projects, has attracted more than \$5 million in public funds, which have leveraged more than \$30 million in private investment in the business district.
- The Corridor Market Town Initiative in the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor is a pilot project involving six small communities in an assessment of visitor readiness. The Main Street program helps fund a Heritage Park employee who acts as the Market Town Coordinator.
- The Main Street concept is also being applied to "trail towns" along the Great Allegheny Passage corridor in western Pennsylvania to promote downtown revitalization through trail-based tourism.
- The Pottsville Area Development Corporation (PADCO) has worked since 1987 to revitalize Pottsville's downtown. Its revolving loan fund has financed more than 70 facade renovations and other physical improvements. It is currently working to renovate the former Majestic Theater as a performing arts center that should increase regional tourism and revenues for downtown businesses.

## **Build Livable Communities**



**Renovated historic hotel in downtown Gettysburg**

- For more than 20 years Jim Thorpe, a picturesque, historic coal-mining village, has undertaken a thorough downtown revitalization geared toward heritage tourism. The Old Mauch Chunk Historic District features a museum and cultural center, jail, opera house, and railroad station, as well as several mansions open to the public. The Inn at Jim Thorpe was rehabilitated in 1988 and serves as a focus of attraction.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Organizations

National Main Street Center, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036; (202) 588-6219, [www.mainst.org](http://www.mainst.org).

Pennsylvania Main Street Program, Pennsylvania Downtown Center; (717) 233-4675, [www.padowntown.org](http://www.padowntown.org).

### Publications

*Back to Prosperity, A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania*, The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2003; (202) 797-6139, [www.brookings.edu/urban](http://www.brookings.edu/urban).

*Getting Ready for Downtown Revitalization*, Pennsylvania Downtown Center; (717) 233-4675, [www.padowntown.org](http://www.padowntown.org).

The Main Street Movie (video), National Main Street Center; (202) 588-6219, [www.mainst.org](http://www.mainst.org).

*Main Street Success Stories*, National Main Street Center; (202) 588-6219, [www.mainst.org](http://www.mainst.org).

*Revitalizing Downtown*; National Main Street Center; (202) 588-6219, [www.mainst.org](http://www.mainst.org).

*Welcome Back Downtown: A Guide to Revitalizing Pennsylvania's Small Towns*, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania; (717) 787-9555, [www.ruralpa.org](http://www.ruralpa.org).

## Pennsylvania Main Street Program - Annual Statistics 1998-2003

Year	Net New Businesses	Net New Jobs	Number of Improvements	Private Investment	Public Investment
1998	212	800	265	\$10.6 million	\$10 million
1999	459	1,882	437	\$25 million	\$52 million
2000	252	1,528	413	\$28.6 million	\$12.6 million
2001	300	1,809	613	\$22 million	\$25 million
2002	254	832	427	\$9.3 million	\$38 million
2003	326	1,110	438	\$45.6 million	\$18.3 million

## Create an Inviting Streetscape

STREETSCAPE CONSISTS OF street paving, sidewalks, streetlights, traffic lights, public signs, street “furniture” such as benches and trash cans, landscaping, and public art. In downtowns and neighborhood commercial areas, a pleasing streetscape can repay its cost in increased tourism and shopping revenue, increased citizen use of public spaces, enhanced civic pride, and new investment by the private sector.

The most effective streetscapes are a rich mosaic of individual elements that create interest and provide comfort for pedestrians and reflect the historic character of the area. The interplay between public and private efforts reinforces the vitality of the streetscape.

Communities should consider putting utilities underground or moving them to the rear of buildings. Ephrata, Elizabethtown, and Washington, for example, have placed the utilities underground in their downtown districts. These communities recognize that overhead poles and wires detract from the character of their historic commercial cores.

PennDOT’s Context Sensitive Solutions program promotes streets that balance transportation needs with scenic, aesthetic, historic, cultural, environmental, and community values. Such solutions include new bridges designed to be compatible with historic community architecture, street plazas, and various design features that slow traffic and promote walkability.



Outdoor sculpture in Gettysburg

### EXAMPLES FROM ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA:

- Downtown Ardmore in Montgomery County has installed new benches and trash receptacles, as well as a new community bulletin board, historic district sign, and gateway banners as part of a streetscape improvement program.
- In Bucks County, Doylestown, named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2001 as one of America’s “dozen distinctive destinations,” installed Victorian street lamps, landscaped gardens, brick paver sidewalks, flower baskets, and new benches to enhance the town’s historic charm.
- The commercial district of Keswick in Montgomery County was revitalized with a variety of streetscape improvements, including pedestrian crosswalks, a traffic circle, unified signage and lighting, landscaping, and a cohesive street tree program.
- In the last several years downtown Stroudsburg in Monroe County has installed new decorative streetlights, benches, trashcans, signs, and colorful seasonal posters. Most recently, perennial plants and tree well guards have been installed on Main Street.



Revitalized streetscape, Keswick

**Build  
Livable  
Communities**



Riverwalk, Harrisburg



Public art, Phoenixville



Germantown Avenue Bridge, Philadelphia

Downtown Stroudsburg also administers a facade and signage grant program.

- Oxford, in Chester County, introduced a planter program whereby each downtown merchant was given the opportunity to purchase a planter for the store entryway. The plantings are changed seasonally by a crew of volunteer gardeners. The planter comes with a watering can, so the merchant is charged with watering each day. The program has been a big success, with more than 30 installed.
- The historic Germantown Avenue Bridge in Philadelphia was replaced with a beautifully designed, context-sensitive structure that preserves the historicity of the circa-1786 piers and complements the character of the Fairmount Park and Chestnut Hill National Register historic districts.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

*Pennsylvania's Guide to Context Sensitive Solutions*, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; (717) 787-0456, <http://65.207.30.22/css/www>.

*Power to the People: Strategies for Reducing the Visual Impact of Overhead Utilities*, by Scenic America, Washington, DC; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

"Public Improvements Program" (slide show and monograph), National Main Street Center, Washington, DC, (202) 588-6219, or borrow from the Pennsylvania Main Street Program, (804) 371-7030.



## Choices for Pennsylvania Communities

Build  
Livable  
Communities



If you had a choice, would you prefer to have your local movie theater outside of town on a strip or downtown?



If you had a choice, would you prefer to shop in a shopping area dominated by cars or in one oriented to pedestrians?



If you had a choice, would you prefer to live near a golf course or near a park with a walking trail?

## Reshape the Strip



If you had a choice, would you prefer shopping in a strip center or in a town center?

**P**EOPLE LIKE THE CONVENIENCE and low prices of discount stores, supermarkets, chain stores, and franchise restaurants, but the same people often complain about the ugliness and traffic congestion associated with commercial strip development. Progress does not require turning every major road corridor into an endless parade of parking lots, pole signs, and bland strip shopping centers. Commercial strips can be redesigned to make them more attractive, less congested, and more convenient for shoppers and pedestrians.

### What Are the Characteristics of the Strip?

- A reliance on cars to go everywhere
- Traffic congestion
- Lots of big signs, traffic lights, and driveways
- Streetscape dominated by asphalt parking lots
- Little or no landscaping
- Cheap looking, cookie-cutter architecture
- Nothing unique so that every town's strip looks just like every other

Communities all over America and throughout Pennsylvania are starting to reshape the strip, and savvy developers are leading the way. New walkable town centers are becoming more common throughout the state. Communities are placing limits on the length of commercial districts, pole signs are being replaced

with monument signs, street trees and landscaped parking lots are being required in more locations, and cluttered strips are even being turned into attractive boulevards.

### Eight Steps to Reshaping the Strip

Communities can begin the process of improving existing commercial strips by agreeing to a long-term design program that gradually transforms strips into mixed-use town centers. These steps can help:

- 1. Put a firm limit on the length of any commercial district;** instead of a longer strip, allow commercial expansion in greater depth. This concentrates commercial uses and encourages shared parking and walking between stores.
- 2. Limit curb cuts and consolidate entrances** along the road to a few main driveways with internal service streets based on a block system to connect businesses. This relieves traffic back-ups, accidents, and the need for expensive road widening.
- 3. Help unify the streetscape** with continuous street trees, high quality parking-lot landscaping and, where possible, planted medians in the main roadway to prevent unlimited left-hand turns.

4. **Build sidewalks and crosswalks** throughout the area to encourage shared parking, public transportation, and walking between stores and to nearby homes and offices.
5. **Build a street frontage** by filling in the front of large parking lots with small, closely spaced storefronts with parking behind or on the side.
6. **Provide incentives** for the use of attractive place-responsive architecture, smaller signs, and multistory buildings.
7. **Encourage a mix of other uses**, including housing, to begin to build a walkable neighborhood rather than a driving-only strip district.
8. **Eradicate the ugliness** by controlling signs, undergrounding utility wires, planting street trees, and improving the design of new buildings.

Adapted from *Greenway Connections*, Dutchess County (N.Y.) Department of Planning and Development, 2000.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Designing Urban Corridors*, PAS Report #418, by Kirk R. Bishop, 1990, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

"Grayfields Into Goldfields: From Failing Shopping Centers to Great Neighborhoods," Congress for the New Urbanism, May 2001; (312) 551-7300, [www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org).

*Shared Parking*, Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC, 1987; (800) 321-5011, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

#### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- A national survey found that 72% of consumers would prefer to shop in a town center with a mix of stores and civic buildings rather than a strip shopping center.
- The Urban Land Institute says that the distinguishing characteristic of suburban strips is their undisguised ugliness, with traffic congestion as a close second. This ugliness must be eradicated if suburban strips are to remain competitive in the future.
- In Lower Paxton Township in Dauphin County, an abandoned Weis supermarket was retrofitted and redesigned as a new Best Buy store. Similarly, an old Ames department store in a strip mall was reconfigured and redesigned as a Gander Mountain store.
- Cambridge Square in West Chester is a successful shopping center that was rehabilitated and retrofitted after years of vacancy.

**Build  
Livable  
Communities**

## Alternatives to the Strip



Commercial strips are often ugly and congested.



Town centers are more attractive and less congested.



Typical chain store, set within a sea of asphalt.



Another chain store, built right up to the sidewalk.

Which do you think is more profitable?



Mixed-use town centers are being constructed because they are popular and profitable.

*The distinguishing characteristic of suburban strips...is their undisguised ugliness. This ugliness must be eradicated if suburban strips are to remain competitive and be successful in the future.*

Urban Land Institute

## What Developers Can Do to Alleviate Public Opposition to Development

### Build Livable Communities

- 1. Support open space protection efforts** - The loss of natural areas and green spaces is one of the major reasons for growing anti-development sentiment. Open space plans give citizens the assurance that special places will be preserved and make it less likely they will fight development everywhere.
- 2. Stop building look-alike houses** - Consumers are turned off by cookie-cutter subdivisions and the homogeneous look of many new houses. Visual preference surveys show that citizens prefer designs that reflect vernacular architecture, are compatible with their surroundings, and are located within traditional style neighborhoods.
- 3. Save the trees** - Few things upset people more than cutting down large trees. Studies show consumers prefer, and will pay more for, homes with trees. Mature trees that are preserved during development add more value to a lot than post-construction landscaping.
- 4. Hide the garages** - The most prominent feature of most new houses is a gaping front-yard garage. More popular, traditionally styled houses hide garages in the rear, on the side, or in a lane at the back of the property. When this is not possible, garages should be set back from the front facade.
- 5. Provide public plazas and places to walk** - Walking is the single most popular form of outdoor recreation in America. Yet new suburbs provide few places to walk and almost no place to mingle except the mall. Consumers rank walking and bicycle paths as one of the top features they desire in new communities.
- 6. Build town centers, not strip centers** - People like convenient parking, but more than 80% of consumers say they "like the idea of an old fashioned Southern or New England town" with small shops and green space. Two-thirds say small stores in a town center are likely to offer "better service as well as opportunities for socializing with your neighbors."
- 7. Recognize that design is more important than density** - The impact of development and its profitability for landowners are not just a "numbers game." Attractive, well planned, conservation developments can be more profitable than conventional subdivisions, especially in rural areas. On the other hand, well designed, compact village development fits better with historic town or neighborhood character than low-density sprawl.
- 8. Involve residents in your planning process.** Local residents can derail even the best projects. Work closely with them from the start to better understand how your project can enhance the neighborhood, and win allies at the same time.
- 9. Cooperate with environmentalists for mutual benefit** - Developers and environmentalists actually have much in common. What's good for business can also be good for the environment and the community as a whole. Relaxing residential street standards, allowing natural stormwater systems, reducing the size of parking lots, and other measures can reduce the costs of housing while improving environmental protection.

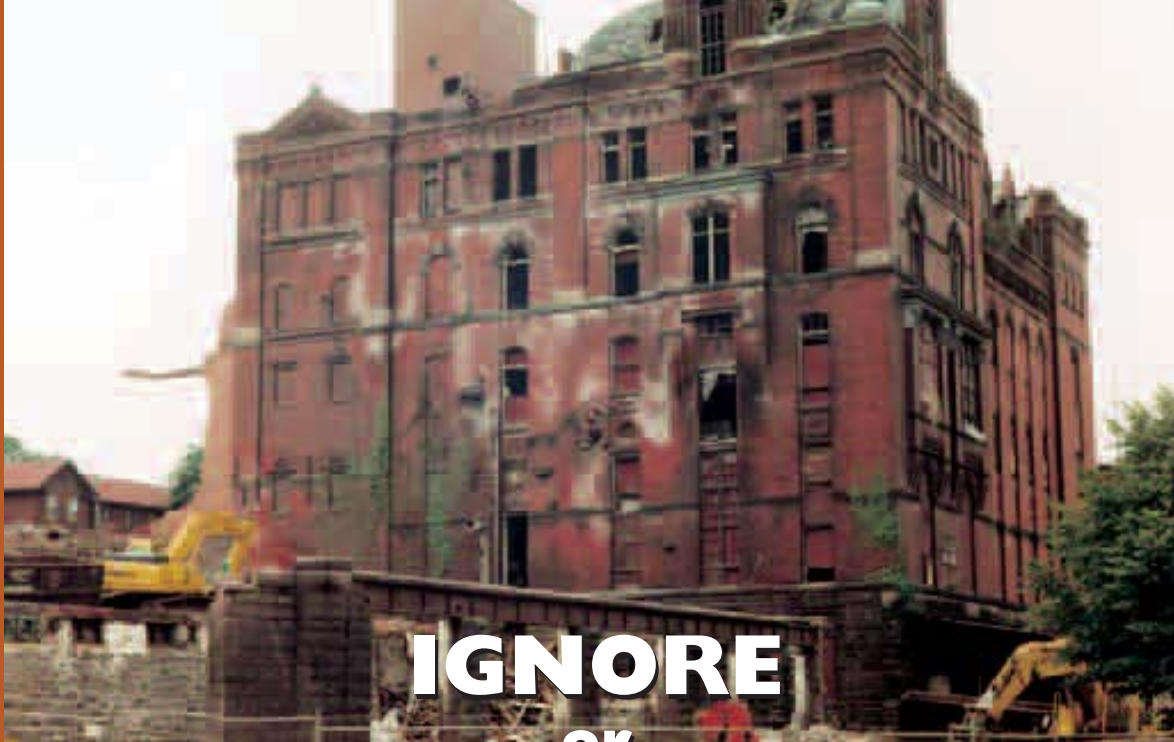
#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

"Alleviating Opposition to Development: An Environmentalist's Perspective," *Land Development Magazine*, National Association of Home Builders, Spring/Summer 1999; (202) 822-0200, [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org).

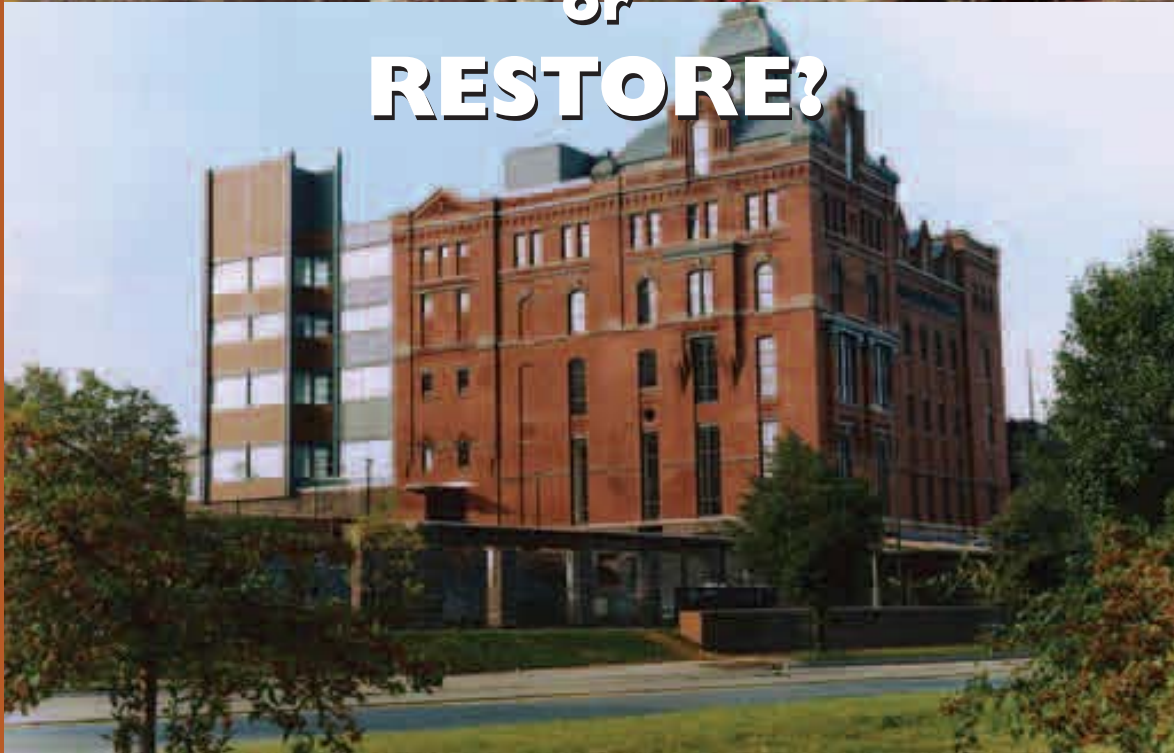
*Best Development Practices: Doing the Right Thing and Making Money at the Same Time*, by Reid Ewing, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Trends and Innovations in Master Planned Communities*, by Urban Land Institute, 1998; (800) 321-5011, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

*Principle 4:*      **PRESERVE HISTORIC RESOURCES**



**IGNORE**  
*or*  
**RESTORE?**



PHOTOS © BOHLIN, CYWINSKI, JACKSON

## PRINCIPLE 4:

**Preserve Historic Resources**

Pennsylvania's rich history is evident in the wealth of historic buildings and archeological sites found in cities, small towns and rural areas throughout the state. Historic assets should be identified and protected, and developers should be encouraged to rehabilitate and reuse historic structures. Protecting historic resources such as small-town main streets is also important because historic preservation is a powerful tool for economic revitalization that generates jobs and attracts tourists and investors.

**Know the Value of Historic Preservation**

Do you think more tourists visit George Washington's home at Mount Vernon, Virginia, or his boyhood home near Fredericksburg, Virginia?

**T**HE HUMAN FORCES that shaped Pennsylvania for more than 300 years are evident today in the many historic buildings and sites that dot the Commonwealth's landscape. Native American settlement sites, utopian communities, battlefields from three wars and one rebellion, rural villages, industrial cities, designed suburbs and company towns, abandoned mines, stone barns and Century farms all tell distinct stories about each region of the state.

Pennsylvania's strategic location made it a political and military crossroads, and its rich economy made it an important place in the colonial and early American period. Pennsylvania was the pivotal battleground in the French and Indian War, and George Washington began his military career in the ill-starred campaign at Fort Mifflin. The Revolutionary War battlefields of

Brandywine, Germantown, and Valley Forge remind us of the struggles of the early patriots. The first serious challenge to the new democratic government came from western Pennsylvania, and George Washington ended his military career after suppressing the Whiskey Rebellion. And, of course, the turning point of the Civil War was the battle of Gettysburg.

Philadelphia, the colonial capital, was the second largest city in the 18th century British empire and the home of the Declaration of Independence; and Pittsburgh, located at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, was the gateway to westward migration and the heart of the industrial revolution. Between these two cities, smaller towns and villages knitted the economy together with diverse small industries—food processing, textiles, machine tools,



Restored train station, Phoenixville

chemicals and pharmaceuticals—while the rich farmlands provided grains, livestock, and dairy goods that fed Pennsylvania and the nation.

Since its founding, Pennsylvania has given refuge to people from all over the world. Religious refugees sought to create utopian societies in the state, from the Moravian communities in Ephrata and Bethlehem, to the French political refugees who created “French Azilum” at the northern edge of the state, to the early 19th century Harmonists who built their utopian community in Old Economy Village and Harmony near Pittsburgh. In the 18th century Germans settled in the rich limestone valleys of the southeast, creating a distinctive building style. Their Amish and Mennonite descendants still maintain their distinctive lifestyle in central Pennsylvania. Scots-Irish fled past the settled regions to push the frontier into the farthest parts of



Historic building in Sayre before restoration



Historic building in Sayre after restoration

*The man who feels no sentiment or veneration for the memory of his forefathers is himself unworthy of kindred regard and remembrance.*

Daniel Webster

the colony. In the 19th century, Irish, Italians, Greeks, Russians, and the dozens of nationalities from the Austro-Hungarian Empire poured into the state to fill the mines and mills and seek a better life.

Pennsylvania’s rich heritage is reflected in its historic buildings, neighborhoods, and landscape. These resources are tremendous assets to the state. They physically and emotionally connect us to the past. They provide a special sense of identity. They provide a rich resource for education and they provide an inviting, appealing attraction to visitors from around the world.

Although Pennsylvania offers many fine examples of downtown and neighborhood rehabilitation, much of its urban heritage is threatened by abandonment and demolition. Historic schools, post offices, and other historic structures are disappearing at a rapid rate. Likewise, road construction, insensitive infill development and suburban sprawl threaten Pennsylvania’s historic resources. As with our natural resources, we must identify what is important and develop strategies to maintain our historic resources.



## Historic Preservation Is Good for Business

### Preserve Historic Resources

HISTORIC PRESERVATION is a viable economic strategy. Communities across the country are learning the positive social and economic impact of preservation. Preservation brings new jobs and businesses, enhances quality of life, and attracts tourists and retirees to Pennsylvania communities.

The Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program offers a regional heritage tourism approach that is a multi-county collaboration linked by a region's common history—steel, lumber, oil, waterways, and transportation routes. Since 1989, an initial investment of \$34.5 million in Pennsylvania's Heritage Parks has leveraged \$250 million from multi-disciplinary public-private partnerships. Within the last ten years, the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area has received nearly \$4 million, and these funds have been used to leverage \$23.5 million in other public-private funding. Its 840,000 annual visitors have generated revenues of nearly \$60 million per year.

A \$10.3 million public-private investment in the rehabilitation of the former Orr's Department Store in downtown Easton now houses the Crayola Museum, the National Canal Museum, and the visitors' center for the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. Since 2001, more than 2 million visitors have visited Easton. Increased visitation has led to 426 new or expanded businesses—restaurants, entertainment and specialty shops. Building permits are up 48% and tax revenues are at their highest in ten years.

#### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Tourism is Pennsylvania's second largest industry. In 2001, tourists spent \$ 20.5 billion in Pennsylvania with a total economic impact of \$37.2 billion in sales that supported 618,000 jobs and \$13.3 billion in compensation.
- In 2003-4, the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission's Trail of History, which includes its 26

historic sites, received 1,236,085 visitors.

- Heritage travelers comprise 22% of domestic leisure visitors, yet they deliver 40% of the expenditures.
- The Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Commission has identified "history" as Philadelphia's main attraction for visitors. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, visitors to historic sites stay longer, shop more, and generally spend more than the average U.S. traveler.
- Philadelphia is now competing with New York and Hollywood for film locations and, according to the Greater Philadelphia Film Office, half of the films shot in Philadelphia area came because of its historic locations.



Interpretive signs along Schuylkill River Greenway

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*The Economic Benefits of Preservation: Making the Case*, by Donovan D. Rypkema, National Trust for Historic Preservation; (202) 588-6000, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

*The Economics Benefits of Preserving Philadelphia's Past*, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia; (215) 546-1146.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Organizations**

Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, 400 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120; (717) 783-8946, [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us).

National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; (202) 588-6000, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

Preservation Pennsylvania, 257 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17107 (717) 234-2310, [www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org). (Also a contact for information about local historic preservation organizations across the Commonwealth)

**Publications**

*Crisis Handbook: A Guide to Community Action*, by Preservation Pennsylvania; (717) 234-2310, [www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org).

*The Economics Benefits of Preserving Philadelphia's Past*, Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia; (215) 546-1146.

*The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*, by Donovan D. Rypkema, National Trust for Historic Preservation; (202) 588-6000, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

*New Uses of Obsolete Buildings*, Urban Land Institute, Washington D.C.; (202) 624-7000, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

*Rebuilding Community: A Best Practices Toolkit for Historic Preservation and Redevelopment*, National Trust for Historic Preservation; (800) 944-NTHP, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

*Save Our Lands, Save Our Towns*, by Thomas Hylton, Preservation Pennsylvania; (717) 234-2310, [www.preservepa.org](http://www.preservepa.org).

## Identify and Designate Historic Sites

Preserve  
Historic  
Resources



Thomas Wolfe can't go home again; his birthplace is now a parking lot.

**T**HE COMMONWEALTH of Pennsylvania has more than 100,000 historic resources identified by the National Register of Historic Places. Thousands more could be identified across the state, in cities, towns and villages, and rural areas. This rich heritage is under threat—from abandonment and demolition of decaying urban building stock, destruction of rural landscapes and prime farmland for housing and business, and highway construction to accommodate the tidal wave of trucking and passenger traffic. As with our natural resources, we must strengthen our values and develop strategies to maintain our historic resources.

Historic resources are worth saving. Without these resources, communities would lose their integrity, identity, and their attractiveness to newcomers. The goal is to strike a balance between development and saving what's important to the community's past.

Established in 1966, the National Register of Historic Places recognizes districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant to American his-

tory, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Properties can be significant on the local, state, or national level and they can be listed either individually, as part of historic districts, or as part of thematic resources. Achieving National Register status has several benefits—most importantly, it lends a sense of place, a sense of history, and a sense of worth to communities.

The National Register listing process in Pennsylvania includes the following steps:

- Identify a historic property.
- Complete a Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey form.
- The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) evaluates the property to see if it meets National Register criteria.
- Explore the availability of funds to prepare a nomination.
- Prepare the nomination form.
- Make suggested revisions.

**Preservation brings new jobs, new businesses, good wages, significant tourist traffic, and economic benefit.**

*Economics of  
Historic Preservation*

- Submit the corrected form to the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board.
- Celebrate the listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



Restored movie theater, Annville



Left Bank apartment building, Philadelphia



Restored market building, Harrisburg

As a planning tool, the National Register informs local, state, and federal governments of historic resources within a community. National Register property owners are also eligible to apply for federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits if the building is used for income-producing purposes.

There are two primary avenues for protecting historic resources. First, property owners can permanently protect their property through easements. Across Pennsylvania there are a number of non-profit organizations that accept easements—the Berks County Conservancy, Historic York, Inc., the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to name a few. Second, communities that want to protect their historic resources can enact a local ordinance. In Pennsylvania this can be undertaken through Historic District Act 167 of 1961 (Act 167) or under the Municipalities Planning Code.

#### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- In Pennsylvania, more than 105,000 resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This includes 3,098 individually listed properties, 501 historic districts, and 154 National Historic Landmarks. The largest district with contributing resources in Pennsylvania is Lancaster City Historic District with 13,411 contributing resources.
- In Pennsylvania there are 84 municipalities that administer historic district ordinances protecting 106 historic districts. These municipalities include Bethlehem, Cheltenham Township, Gettysburg, and Lancaster. This total does not include the 14 locally regulated districts in Pittsburgh, 9 districts in

***The economic benefits of historic preservation are enormous. The knowledge of the economic benefits of preservation is minuscule.***

Don Rypkema,  
*Economics of Historic Preservation*



**Berks County Conservancy in restored mill building**

Philadelphia, and one district in Scranton (all home-rule cities).

- Pennsylvania has 154 National Historic Landmarks, including the Allegheny Portage Railroad in Blair County, Drake Oil Well in Venango County, and Eisenhower Farmstead in Adams County.
- The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission operates 26 sites across the Commonwealth,

including the Cornwall Iron Furnace, Ephrata Cloister, and Washington Crossing.

## Preserve Historic Resources

- There are also 50 municipalities that regulate designated historic areas utilizing overlay zoning through the Municipalities Planning Code.
- Studies show that property values increase more in historic areas than non-historic areas. For example, in Hollidaysburg, Blair County, property values increased 32% between 1984 and 1994 and 68% between 1994 and 1996, compared to a decrease in values outside of the district of 18% between 1984 and 1994 and 27% between 1994 and 1996.
- Designating historic districts in rural areas can help protect communities against ill-advised highway “improvement” projects and can be a catalyst for stronger protective measures such as zoning and easements.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*The Effects of a Historic District on Property Values*, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, Borough of Hollidaysburg; (814) 695-7543.

*Historic District Designation in Pennsylvania*, by Michel Lefevre, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission; (717) 787-0771, [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us).

*Preparing a Historic Preservation Plan*, PAS Report #450, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

## Find New Uses for Old Buildings



Historic building, before and after: Which do you think adds more to the local economy?

PENNSYLVANIA'S CITIES and countryside both are threatened by sprawl. The flight of urbanites to rural areas has left significant parts of our cities vacant and deteriorating from lack of maintenance. New construction in rural areas affects infrastructure, location of schools, and new transportation routes. Reuse of our historic structures and new infill construction within our urban cores will maintain the existing tax base, stabilize traditional downtowns and neighborhoods, and maintain the fabric and scale of each community. Local resources will have easy access to services—shopping, hospitals, and banking, for example, will all be within walking distance to public transportation routes.

Revitalizing entire districts and providing new uses for old buildings through adaptive reuse can provide a major boom for the local economy. The rehabilitation of the John Dehaven Tobacco Warehouses in Lancaster City and numerous other industrial and commercial buildings in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Pottsville, and York have brought new life to downtowns. On a smaller scale, the restoration of the Coffee Pot on the Lincoln Highway in Bedford has maintained the historic character along this historic transportation route.

The Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) program is the most widely used incentive program in Pennsylvania to promote the preservation of historic

resources. Tax credits are available to owners of, and certain long-term leases of, income-producing properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Properties can either be individually listed or contributing to a historic district. There are two credits: a 20% credit for historic buildings and a 10% credit for non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936. Certain expenses incurred during the rehabilitation of the historic building are eligible for this credit.

One frequently cited obstacle to adaptive reuse is the cost of bringing old structures up to modern construction code standards. Act 45 of 1999, which established Pennsylvania's new statewide Uniform Construction Code, excludes existing non-residential buildings classified as historic by federal, state or local authorities from new code requirements when judged by the local code official to be safe and in the best interest of health, safety and welfare. Non-structural alterations to residential buildings are also exempted so long as ingress and egress are not altered.

Undertaking preservation, restoration or rehabilitation projects is labor intensive. Matching the distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques costs money. In return, laborers' paychecks are used to purchase necessary living items, creating jobs beyond the initial rehabilitation project itself. This domino

effect increases property taxes, stabilizes neighborhoods, and maintains the tax base. More importantly, it maintains a sense of place for our next generation.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Historic rehabilitation has been responsible for restoring economic health to many well-known Pennsylvania landmarks such as the Fulton Building in Pittsburgh and the PSFS Building in Philadelphia. Less well-known but equally important landmarks like Erie Trust Company in Erie, Dimeling Hotel in Clearfield, The Wilbur Hotel in Sayre, Orr's Department Store in Bethlehem, the Park Home in Williamsport, and dozens of other buildings have provided economic boosts to communities throughout the Commonwealth.
- Since 1978, more than 2,000 properties were approved by the National Park Service as "Certified Rehabilitations" as part of the 20% RITC program. Since this program's inception, a total of \$3.2 billion of private capital has been reinvested into Pennsylvania's communities.
- Every \$1 million spent on the rehabilitation of a historic building creates 15.6 construction jobs and 14.2 jobs elsewhere in the economy and adds \$779,800 to household incomes.
- In the last 20 years, over \$1.5 billion has been invested in the rehabilitation of commercial buildings in Philadelphia, creating 55,000 jobs and generating \$1.3 billion in household income.

## Preserve Historic Resources

### Saving "White Elephants"

**P**reservation is part of making a community grow the way you want it to. But in some cases, saving a historic structure—for instance, the "white elephants" that are found in many communities—can be a monumental task. If these significant buildings become threatened, there is a process that can provide a clear understanding of how and if a building can be saved.

**Know the building** – Who is the owner? What is its zoning? Has the physical condition been assessed? What is accessibility?

**Identify the threat** – Demolition is always a clear threat, but work from adjacent projects may endanger a historic building. What monies are being used for demolition? Are these federal or state funds?

**Determine reality** – Who are your allies? Is there a neighborhood preservation organization or community support for the "cause?" Are their time limits for review and permit processes?

**Know your goal** – Can you influence design and planning in your community? Can you create awareness within the community?

**Explore alternatives** – Can you negotiate? Research economics. Where can additional funds come from? Who will do the negotiating? Listen to all sides and be flexible and creative.

**Question further action** – Is this the right time for a skirmish or is there a bigger battle over the horizon?

**Prepare for conflict** – Gain support within the community. Do funds need to be raised and by whom? Who are your allies?

**And plan to win OR what if you don't?** Develop a case for your cause. Prepare well-researched testimony and generate positive media coverage. Involve the politicians.

- Preservation Pennsylvania's revolving fund, a part loan and part grant program is available to buyers who are willing to restore and maintain threatened properties. Preservation Pennsylvania also makes low-interest loans directly to organizations and government agencies for the restoration or rehabilitation of such specific historic properties as the Peter Herdic House in Williamsport and the Wright House in Erie.
- In Wilkes Barre, the Stegmaier Brewery was rescued from deterioration and disrepair and rehabilitated as a federal office building. The Brewery serves as a landmark and gateway into Wilkes Barre.
- The rehabilitated New Freedom train station in York County now houses a snack shop and restroom facility for users of the York Heritage Trail.
- In Media Borough, a Trader Joe's will occupy the oldest Armory Building in Pennsylvania, providing an example of preservation, adaptive reuse, and revitalization.
- In Phoenixville in Chester County, a rehabilitated historic theater has become the catalyst for an arts and entertainment district in downtown that will include open-air cafes, art studios, restaurants, and live music venues.



New Freedom train station before rehabilitation

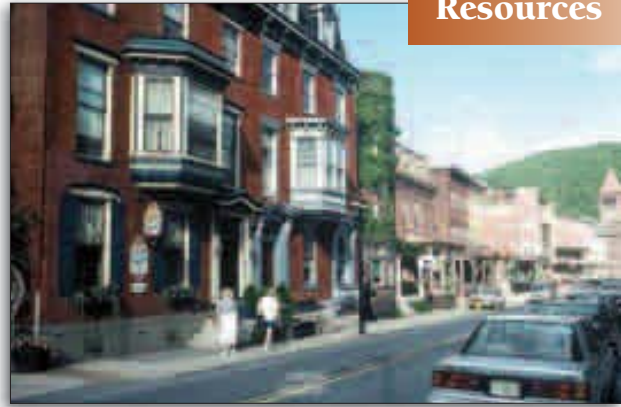


New Freedom train station after rehabilitation



## Designate and Develop Heritage Areas

Preserve  
Historic  
Resources



Pennsylvania's Heritage Areas can be found all across the state.

**S**INCE 1989, Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has administered a Heritage Parks Program. This multi-tiered program aims to conserve, develop, and promote Pennsylvania's heritage, especially its industrial heritage. Its six interrelated goals are economic development, unique partnerships, cultural conservation, recreation, open space protection, and education and interpretation.

The Heritage Parks Program provides funding for public and private entities in a region to work together on strategies to protect and promote their heritage. Grants are available for planning, and once a region is designated a Heritage Park, funding is available for project implementation. Since 1989 the General Assembly has appropriated more than \$34 million to fund the program.

Pennsylvania currently has eleven formally designated State Heritage Parks. These are:

- **Allegheny Ridge State Heritage Area** - interprets the iron and steel, coal and coke, railroad and canal heritage of Blair, Cambria, Huntington and Somerset counties.
- **Delaware and Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor** - follows the historic railroad and canal corridor through Bucks, Carbon, Lehigh, Luzerne, and Northampton counties.
- **Endless Mountains Heritage Region** - celebrates the legacy of people living with the land. It includes Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties.
- **Lackawanna Heritage Valley** - encompasses the Lackawanna River watershed area in Lackawanna, Luzerne, and Susquehanna counties and includes the Steamtown National Historic Site.
- **Lancaster-York Heritage Region** - illustrates the importance of long-held religious beliefs and cultural traditions and the innovative spirit that helped the U.S. become a world leader.
- **Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor** - promotes the transportation heritage of the first transcontinental highway—Route 30—through Bedford, Franklin, Adams, Fulton, Somerset, and Westmoreland counties.
- **Lumber Heritage Region** - tells the story of Pennsylvania's lumber industry in all or parts of 15 North Central counties and promotes the natural, recreational, and cultural features of the region.

- **National Road Heritage Corridor** - celebrates the history, culture, and scenery of one of America's oldest highways—U.S. Route 40—through Fayette, Somerset, and Washington counties.
- **Oil Heritage Region** - interprets the nationally significant story of the oil industry in Crawford and Venango counties.
- **Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area** - focuses on the iron, steel, coal, and coke heritage of Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.
- **Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor** - promotes the industrial legacy of the Schuylkill River valley in Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Schuylkill counties and the city of Philadelphia.

**Some Heritage Parks Accomplishments:**

- The Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor has installed nearly 160 Lincoln Highway signs to replace the historic 1928 concrete markers. In addition, 23 painted vintage gas pump reproductions have been installed next to interpretive waysides along the highway.

- In the Endless Mountains Heritage Region, the 1871 county jail in Towanda was rehabilitated for use as the Bradford County Historical Society's research library, archives, and museum. The rehabilitation was financed with federal and state grant funds and locally raised money.
- The Endless Mountains Heritage Region also helped raise funds to rehabilitate Laporte House at French Azilum along the Suquehanna River; Laporte Community Hall (a former church) in Sullivan County; the Dietrich Theater in Tunkhannock; a former bank in Montrose, now housing the Center for Anti-Slavery Studies; and the former San Hill school building in Tunkhannock, now the Wyoming County Historical Society.
- The Lumber Heritage Region has installed interpretive signs at public access areas along the Susquehanna River.
- In the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, the No. 9 Mine and Wash Shanty Museum in Lansford recently opened. This museum, at the wash shanty of an abandoned anthracite mine, opened for tours in 2002.
- The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor recently developed a 152-page heritage traveler guide called Stone Coal Way. With numerous color



Historic preservation generates jobs and attracts tourists.



Two Rivers Landing in Easton houses the Delaware & Lehigh Heritage Corridor Visitor Center

© DELAWARE & LEHIGH NATURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

photos and fold-out maps, it guides visitors through the region's trails, towns, and culture.

- In the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, the Bost Building in Homestead, a key site in the Homestead lockout and strike, has been rehabilitated as a heritage area visitors' center and exhibit hall interpreting the steel industry and the lives of its workers.
- The Peter H. Yarnell Landing in the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor includes a variety of recreational features, including a canoe launch that is used for the annual Schuylkill River Sojourn. In addition to the launch, a pavilion and picnic tables invite recreationists to enjoy the river scenery.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Alliance of National Heritage Areas, c/o Ohio and Erie Canal Corridor Coalition, 520 South Main Street, Akron, OH 44311; (330) 434-5657, [www.ohio-eriecanal.org](http://www.ohio-eriecanal.org).

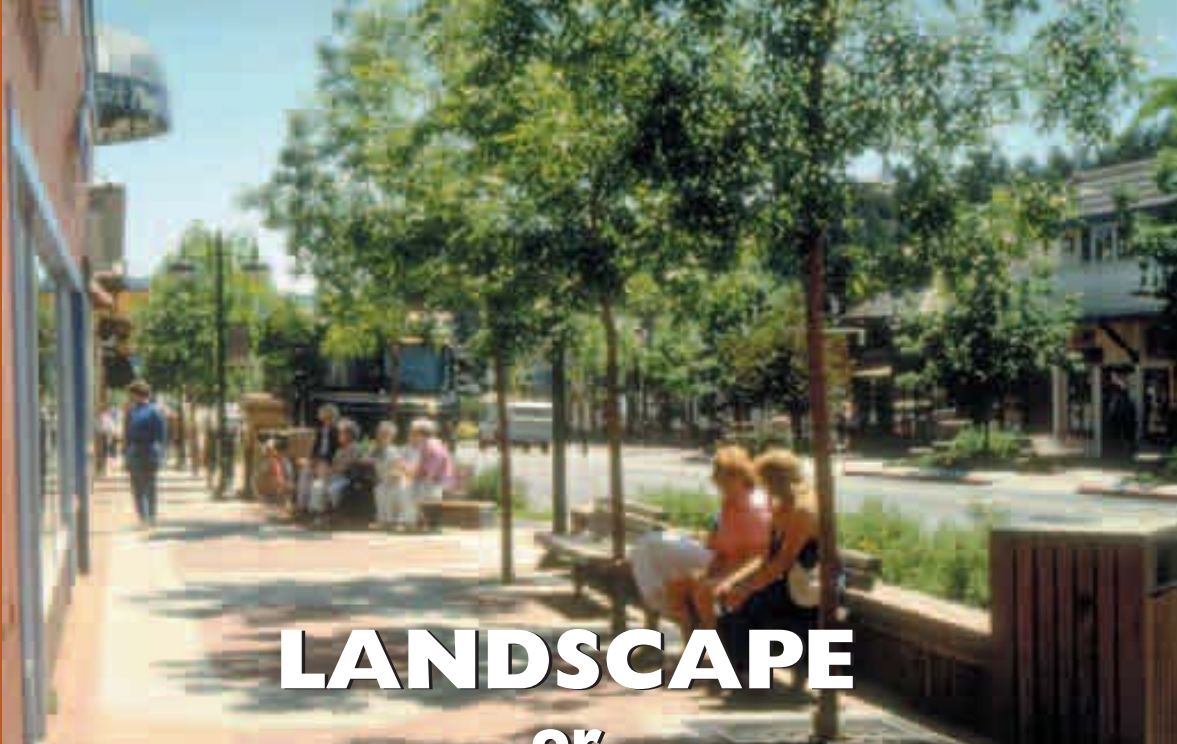
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, P.O. Box 8475, Harrisburg, PA 17105; (717) 783-0988, [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/bcr/heritage\\_parks](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/bcr/heritage_parks).

**Preserve  
Historic  
Resources**

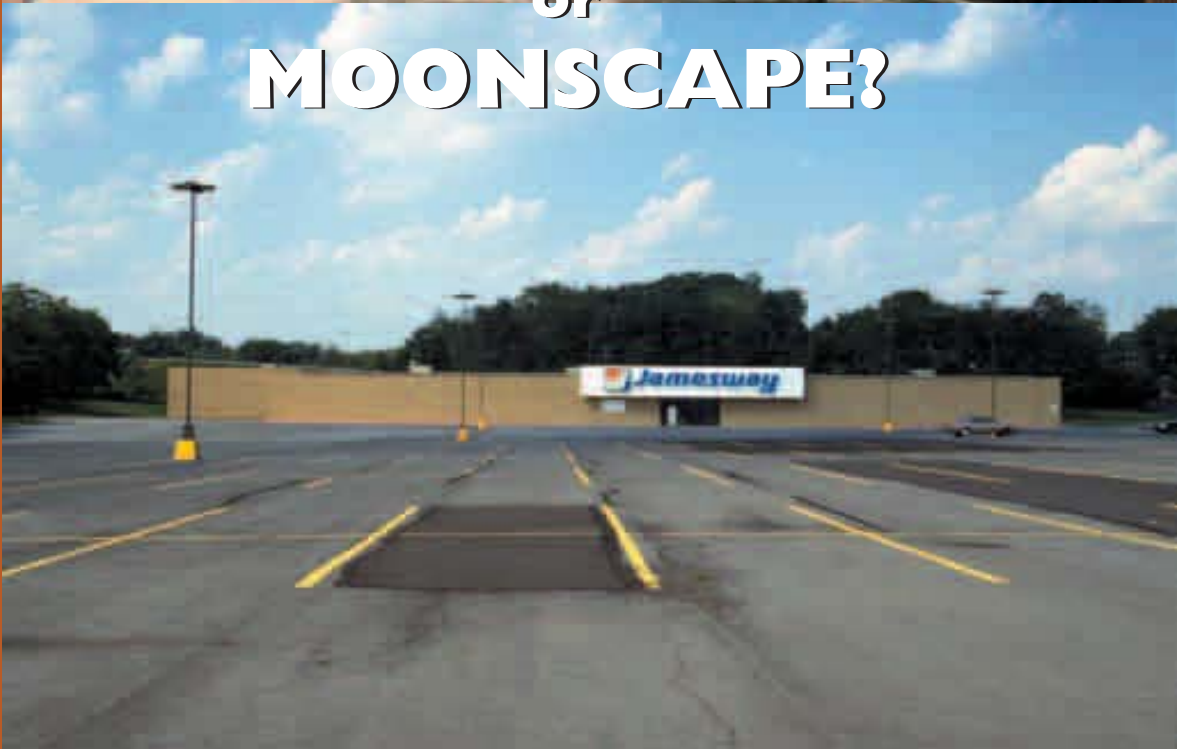


Lincoln Highway coffee pot, before and after restoration

**Principle 5: RESPECT LOCAL COMMUNITY  
CHARACTER IN NEW CONSTRUCTION**



**LANDSCAPE**  
or  
**MOONSCAPE?**



## PRINCIPLE 5:

## Respect Local Community Character In New Construction

Eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built since the end of World War II, and much of it is cookie-cutter, off-the-shelf junk. New buildings can either complement the character of Pennsylvania communities, or they can turn the state into “Anyplace USA.” Pennsylvania communities should do more to ensure that new construction—particularly chain stores, shopping centers, and franchises—respect local character. Pennsylvania’s natural setting, historical development pattern, and architectural traditions make this a distinctive place. By identifying what makes each community unique, and what harms that uniqueness, localities can develop standards that foster distinctive, attractive communities with economic vitality and a strong sense of place.

## Set the Standard with Public Buildings



Which of these public buildings better expresses the dignity, permanence and importance of civic institutions?

PEOPLE HAVE LONG UNDERSTOOD that public buildings can help nurture feelings of heritage and community that enrich a nation and its people. Public buildings and spaces create identity and sense of place. They give communities something to remember and admire. The challenge facing public architecture is to provide every generation with structures that link them with their past, fill them with pride, and reinforce their sense of belonging.

Public buildings should set the standard in a community. Public buildings with civic stature, quality materials, and

prominent settings project a sense of permanence and human scale that expresses the dignity and importance of public institutions.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, public buildings in Pennsylvania such as city halls, courthouses, post offices, and public schools were always the community’s most beautiful and important buildings. In the last half of the 20th century, however, public buildings were often designed as little more than utilitarian boxes. We sometimes have built schools and libraries that resemble correctional facilities. We have constructed

***Public buildings  
in size, form and  
elegance must look  
beyond the  
present day.***

George Washington

## Public Buildings with Civic Stature



© LUZERNE COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Courthouse, Luzerne County



New town hall, East Town



© BUTLER COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU

Courthouse, Butler County



City hall, Pottstown

fire stations and post offices that look like warehouses, and we have moved many of our public buildings from downtown to new locations on the highway strip outside of town.

People appreciate public buildings that express the dignity, permanence, and importance of civic institutions and which harmonize with their surroundings. There are a number of instances in Pennsylvania where communities have demanded higher quality in the design of new public buildings and resisted efforts to move post offices, city halls, and other civic institutions to out-of-the-way locations.

The buildings above reflect different approaches to public architecture in Pennsylvania. On the next page

are examples of handsome public buildings in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

***The mayor is the chief architect of the city, who must understand how public design policies can influence, for better or worse, the urban built environment.***

Joe Riley, Mayor of Charleston, S.C.

## Post Offices

Respect  
Local  
Character



Typical small-town post office



Stowe, Vt., post office



West Chester post office



Chadds Ford post office

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Design Review*, PAS Report #454, American Planning Association, 1995; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Designing the City: A Guide for Advocates and Public Officials*, by Adele Fleet Bacow, Island Press, 1995; (800) 828-1302.

"Keeping the Post Office Downtown," by Kennedy Smith and Laura Skaggs, *Forum News*, National Trust for Historic Preservation, July/August, 1997; (202) 588-6000, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

*Schools for Cities: Urban Strategies*, by Sharon Haar (ed.), National Endowment for the Arts, 2002; (800) 722-6657, [www.papress.com](http://www.papress.com).

## Ask Franchises and Chain Stores to Fit In



Which of these fast food franchises made an attempt to fit in with the local community?

**D**O FRANCHISES AND CHAIN STORES in Pennsylvania have to be in the same style building as those in North Carolina, North Dakota, or New Jersey? The answer is “of course not.”

National franchises and chain stores can and do change their standard building designs to “fit in” with the local character of the surrounding community. But they only do this in communities savvy enough to insist on something better than “off-the-shelf, “cookie-cutter” architecture.

Experience shows that if you accept standard look-alike corporate design, that is what you’ll get. On the other hand, if your community insists on a customized, site-specific design, that is what you will get. To understand how, see the tips on page 101.

The bottom line for most chain stores and franchises is securing access to profitable trade areas. They evaluate locations based on their economic potential. If they are asked to address local historic preservation, site planning, or architectural concerns, they will usually do so.

Fast-food restaurants, gas stations, convenience stores, and chain drug stores are some of the most prominent buildings in our auto-oriented society, and their look-alike architecture contributes to the homog-

*We shape our buildings and afterwards, our buildings shape us.*

Winston Churchill

enization of Pennsylvania communities. Chain drugstores, for example, are proliferating across the state. Dozens of large, single-story featureless buildings surrounded by parking are being con-

structed on downtown corners—often after historic buildings have been razed. Likewise, massive “big box” retailers have overwhelmed many smaller communities, physically as well as economically. But as more communities have recognized the economic value of preserving their sense of place, there increasingly are examples of where these huge companies have adapted their designs or even their locations to meet local standards. Today, communities all across America, including many in Pennsylvania, are working successfully with franchises, chain stores, and big-box retailers to get buildings that fit in. See the photos that follow.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Design review is one means of ensuring the compatibility of franchise design with local community character.
- More than 3,000 cities, towns, and counties nationwide exercise some type of design review, including many in Pennsylvania.



- Even without a design review ordinance, a community can develop voluntary design guidelines. These can help to foster new buildings in harmony with their surroundings, especially if combined with public education and incentives.
- At a minimum, Pennsylvania communities could establish a program of “voluntary compliance, mandatory review.” The mere act of talking about the architectural design of new commercial buildings will often improve their design.
- Bryn Mawr, Doylestown, and West Chester have done a particularly good job of developing design standards that require franchises and chain stores to fit in with the character of the community.
- In the borough of Narberth in Montgomery County, a Rite Aid Pharmacy was built under design guidelines to be compatible with existing historic buildings and with ample buffering. The development site won a 1999 Merit Award from the county planning commission.
- Chain stores and franchise restaurants that respect community character can be found in Hershey, Lancaster, Lewisburg, Johnstown, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and many other Pennsylvania communities.
- In Lower Merion Township, an old Wanamakers department store was converted into a Bed, Bath and Beyond on the top floor and a Genuardi's supermarket on the bottom floor.
- Many fast-food restaurants in Europe are in restored historic buildings.
- Some communities in Maryland, Virginia, and other states have placed limits on the size of retail stores.
- Other communities limit the amount of land covered by the building, in effect allowing more square footage in additional stories. Gaithersburg, Maryland, for example, limits commercial buildings to 70,000

square feet per floor, thus encouraging multistory buildings. (A typical Wal-Mart store is between 120,000 and 140,000 square feet.)

## Respect Local Character

- There is a new two-story Target in Springfield Township, Delaware County. Target has dozens of two-story buildings in other parts of the country.
- “Big boxes” have located in downtowns or in existing buildings. Toys-R-Us has two-story downtown buildings in several communities, including Chicago, Santa Monica and San Francisco. Target has built two-story stores in Pasadena, Calif., Gaithersburg, Md., Seattle, Wash., and 60 other communities. There is even a new two-story Home Depot in Chicago.
- In Pennsylvania, Best Buy used an abandoned Weis store in Lower Paxton Township, Dauphin County. In the same township, Gander Mountain reused an abandoned Ames store. In Swatara Township in Dauphin County, Bass Pro Shops moved into an old Lord & Taylor and brought life back to the Harrisburg East Mall.
- In Media Borough, a Trader Joe's grocery store will occupy the oldest Armory building in Pennsylvania.
- In East Hempfield Township, Lancaster County, a 150,000 square foot Lowe's Home Center was constructed on the site of a long-vacant retail facility rather than on a greenfield site.



Wawa, Philadelphia

## Chain Drugstores



Typical chain drugstore



New Rite Aid, Hershey



New CVS, Alexandria, Virginia



New CVS, Lancaster

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Better Models for Chain Drugstores*, by Anne Stillman, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1999; (202) 588-6000, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

*Better Models for Commercial Development: Ideas for Improving the Design and Siting of Chain Stores and Franchises*, by Edward T. McMahon, The Conservation Fund, 2004; (703) 525-6300, [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org).

*Better Models for Superstores: Alternatives to Big-Box Sprawl*, by Constance E. Beaumont, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997; (202) 588-6000, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).

*The Home Town Advantage: How to Defend Your Main Street Against Chain Stores and Why It Matters*, by Stacy Mitchell, Institute for Local Self Reliance, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 379-3815, [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org).

*Saving Face: How Corporate Franchise Design Can Respect Community Identity*, PAS Report 503/504, 2002, by Ronald Lee Fleming, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

## Fast-Food Restaurants that Fit In

Respect  
Local  
Character



McDonald's in Maryland is in an older building on a busy city street.



McDonald's in Arizona reflects its southwestern setting.



Burger King, Chesterfield County, Virginia



McDonald's, Philadelphia



Burger King, Key West, Florida



McDonald's, St. Louis, Missouri

## *Gas Stations and Big Box Retailers*



Typical new service station



New service station in Virginia has a standing seam metal roof like other nearby buildings.



Chevron station in Vermont looks like country store because it's in the country.



BP station in North Carolina shows that gas station canopies can come in all sizes and shapes.



Typical big box retailer



Lowe's in Maryland shows how the design of big box retailers can be greatly improved.

■ **Scrutinize the signs.** Garish, oversized signs are one of the more objectionable aspects of franchises and chains. Left unchecked, the “copy-cat” logic of corporate competition often results in an unsightly clutter of portable signs, pole signs, plastic pennants, flapping flags, and twirling streamers all shouting for attention. Experience shows that sign clutter is ugly, costly, and ineffective. Experience also shows that when signs are controlled, franchises do a better job of selling at less cost, because shoppers can now find what they are looking for. When it comes to signage, businesses want a level playing field. They can compete for attention with 100-foot-tall signs or 10-foot-tall signs. Either way, the burgers taste the same.

■ **The keys to success.** National corporations and their local franchises are more likely to agree to design modifications when:

- Design objectives are clearly stated. The developer and architects should know in advance what criteria will be applied to the proposed project.
- The local government offers pre-application meetings. Misunderstandings can be avoided if the national company is given a chance to meet informally with staff and commission members prior to submitting a formal application.
- Visual design guidelines are available. Many communities, such as Manheim Township in Lancaster County, no longer rely solely on written design standards. They have adopted visual design guides that graphically depict what constitutes a compatible design.
- Local groups know when to compromise. Chain stores and franchises care a lot more about some things than others. For example, they are much more adamant about having a drive-thru than they are about architectural styles or sign heights.
- There is organized community support for historic preservation or urban design standards.



McDonald's, Philadelphia



Subway, Lewisburg



McDonald's, Richmond, Va.

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McDonald's, Philadelphia



Subway, Lewisburg



McDonald's, Richmond, Va.

## Landscape Commercial Areas

Respect  
Local  
Character



Would you prefer to shop at a shopping center heavily landscaped with trees and bushes?



Or at one with no trees and landscaping?

**T**HERE IS NO DOUBT that trees add economic value to residential areas, but what about commercial or institutional property? Here, too, trees and landscaping make dollars and sense. All over the country, in survey after survey, people say they prefer commercial areas with trees and landscaping.

In 1995, the Urban Land Institute conducted a study to determine the impact of trees and landscaping on the value of retail, office, and residential developments. This study found that landscaping and preservation of mature trees “positively affect value for the developers, the users, and the community in many ways.” Specifically, the study found that trees and landscaping have these effects:

- Translate into increased financial returns of 5 to 15% for project developers
- Give developers a competitive edge and increase the rate of project absorption
- Help developers win support for proposed projects, especially in contentious situations
- Establish an image, identity, and sense of community for development projects
- Influence decisions to buy or rent in both residential and commercial projects
- Contribute substantially to the market’s perception of security, privacy, and sense of place

- Reduce the need for publicly funded improvements on site and off site
- Contribute to employee productivity, morale, and job satisfaction
- By example, cause other developers to adopt a higher standard of design

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- In a national survey of real estate appraisers, 95% of respondents felt that landscaping added to the dollar value of real estate.
- Many Pennsylvania communities have developed landscaping ordinances, including Pottstown, which includes guidelines on shade trees for all areas of the town built before 1950.
- Trees can reduce urban runoff by 17%, decreasing stormwater management costs.
- Views of trees and landscape plantings can reduce hospital convalescent stays by up to 8%.
- Forest land produces about 50 tons of sediment per square mile per year. Land stripped for construction

produces between 25,000 and 50,000 tons of sediment.

- A one-acre parking lot generates 16 times more polluted runoff than a one-acre meadow.
- 30% of water pollution is generated from parking lot runoff.
- Up to 25% of commercial development costs can be spent on engineered stormwater controls such as detention ponds, concrete culverts, and silt fencing.
- Air conditioning and utility bills can be reduced in well-landscaped commercial areas.
- People are more likely to walk in a well-landscaped,

shaded commercial area. This reduces traffic congestion, promotes good health and the prevention of chronic diseases like obesity, and is good for business.

***Trees increase property values, reduce energy costs, and are a key indicator of community attractiveness.***

American Forests



Shopping center with no landscaping



Shopping center with landscaping



Commercial district with no landscaping



Commercial district with landscaping



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Organizations:**

Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council, 56 East Main Street, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055, (717) 766-5371, [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/index.html](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/index.html).

Urban Forestry Program, School of Forest Resources, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802; (814) 863-7941.

**Publications:**

*Aesthetics of Parking: An Illustrated Guide*, by Thomas P. Smith, PAS Report 411, 1988, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Preparing a Landscaping Ordinance*, by Wendelyn A. Martz with Marya Morris, PAS Report 431, 1990, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Shading Our Cities: A Resource Guide for Urban and Community Forests*, by American Forestry Association, Island Press, 1989; (202) 955-4500.

*Trees Make Sense*, by Elizabeth Brabec, Scenic America, Technical Information Series, Vol. I, No. 1, 1992; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

*Value by Design: Landscaping, Site Planning and Amenities*, Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC, 1994; (202) 624-7000, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

**Respect  
Local  
Character**

## Control Signs



Which street is more attractive? On which street are the signs easier to read?  
Which street would you prefer to see in your community?

**S**IGN CONTROL is one of the most important and powerful actions a community can take to make an immediate visible improvement in its physical environment. This is because almost nothing will destroy the distinctive character of a community or region faster than uncontrolled signs and billboards. This doesn't mean we don't need signs. We do. Signs provide us with direction and needed information. As a planned architectural feature, a business sign can be colorful, decorative, even distinguished.

So why do Pennsylvania communities need to control signs? The answer is obvious: too often signs are oversized, poorly planned, badly located, and altogether too numerous. What's more, sign clutter is ugly, costly, and ineffective. And it degrades one of Pennsylvania's greatest economic assets—its scenic landscape.

Driving down a street cluttered with signs is often an unpleasant experience, not just because it is ugly but because it is fatiguing. Sign clutter overloads drivers with more information than is possible to manage. It requires great effort by the driver either to read it all or to block it all out, while attempting to drive safely.

A good sign code is pro-business, since an attractive business district will attract more customers than an ugly one. Moreover, when signs are controlled, businesses will do a better job of selling at less cost

because when clutter is reduced, consumers actually have an easier time finding what they are looking for.

A community should consider guidelines for both public and private signs. The careful design and placement of traffic signs and other public signs can improve community appearance and aid drivers. A profusion of signs is as confusing as a lack of them.

Sign control is especially important to the health of Pennsylvania's tourist-oriented communities. This is because the more Pennsylvania communities come to look like every place else in America, the less reason there is to visit. On the other hand, the more Pennsylvania communities do to enhance their unique assets—including their visual character—the more people will want to visit.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- A good sign communicates its message clearly and quickly, is compatible with its surroundings, and enhances the visual image of the community.
- A good sign ordinance is clear and unambiguous, easy to understand, and easy to administer and enforce.

**Willy nilly clutter  
and placement of signs can  
cause information overload  
and confusion.**

Daniel Mandelker,  
*Street Graphics & The Law*

- When the streetscape becomes overloaded with signs, the cumulative effect is negative. The viewer actually sees less, not more.
- Some of Pennsylvania's top tourist destinations—for example, Gettysburg and Hershey—have strong on-premise sign ordinances.

- In Monroe County in the Poconos, where municipalities work together on comprehensive planning, the preservation of roadside character is an important part of the “Monroe 2020” plan.

**Respect  
Local  
Character**



Sign clutter is ugly, ineffective, and expensive.



A good sign communicates simply and clearly.



A pole sign dominates the landscape.



A good sign is compatible with its surroundings.



An attractive shopping center sign



This restaurant sign on Interstate 95 is over 200 feet high.



A much smaller sign for the same company in another community.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### Organizations

Pennsylvania Resources Council, 3606 Providence Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073; (610) 353-1555, [www.prc.org](http://www.prc.org).

Scenic America, 1634 I Street, N.W., Suite 510, Washington, DC 20006; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB), 1314 Chestnut Street, Suite 750, Philadelphia, PA 19107; 215-731-1796, [www.urbanblight.org](http://www.urbanblight.org).

### Publications

"Sign Regulation," by Edward T. McMahon, *Planning Commissioners Journal*, Number 25, Winter 1996-1997; (802) 864-9083.

*Sign Regulations for Small and Midsize Communities*, by Eric Damien Kelly and Gary Raso, PAS Report 419, 1989, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

"Signs, Signs: A Video on the Economic and Environmental Benefits of Sign Control," 1992, Scenic America, Washington, DC; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

*Street Graphics and the Law*, by Daniel Mandelker and William Ewald, American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

## Restrict Billboards

Respect  
Local  
Character



Which is a better, more effective, less environmentally harmful way to provide motorist information?

**C**OME SEE AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL, if you can. In some places, a drive in the country is more like a ride through the Yellow Pages—a windshield vista of 50-foot beer cans and towering gas station ads. Today thousands of billboards line the major highways throughout Pennsylvania, and in recent years Pennsylvania billboards have gotten bigger, taller, and more intrusive than ever. What follows are eight reasons why Pennsylvania communities should act to halt the proliferation of new billboards and work to reduce the number already in place.

### 1. Billboards are out of place in most locations.

Pennsylvania's landscape is one of our greatest resources. Its value is economic as well as aesthetic; psychological as well as recreational. Each kind of landscape—farmland, mountains, forest, even urban—has its own kind of beauty, character, and uniqueness. In every kind of landscape, billboards are a disturbing, alien intrusion that mars scenic views, commercializes the countryside, and erodes local community identity.

**2. Billboards are a form of pollution—visual pollution.** Regulating billboards is no different than regulating noxious fumes or sewage discharges. The U.S. Supreme Court has said, "Pollution is not limited to the air we breathe and the water we drink, it can

equally offend the eye and ear." While the messages on billboards can be attractive, ugly, or just ordinary, when enlarged to 700 square feet, placed on poles 50-100 feet high, and randomly strewn along major highways, they become a form of pollution—visual pollution.

**3. Billboards are the only form of advertisement you can't turn off or avoid.** There is a vast difference between seeing an ad on a billboard versus seeing an ad, even the same one, in a magazine, newspaper, or on the television. When you buy a magazine or turn on the television, you exercise freedom of choice. You can easily close the magazine or shut off the television. In contrast, you have no power to turn off or throw away a billboard. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, billboards force advertising on individuals and communities whether they want to see it or not.

**4. Billboard companies are selling something they don't own—our field of vision.** Courts have long held that billboards do not derive their value from the private land they stand on, but from the public roads they stand next to. Courts call this the "parasite principle" because billboards feed like parasites off roads they pay nothing to build, use, or maintain. To understand this, imagine that every billboard in Pennsylva-

nia was turned around so that the message could not be seen from the road. They would suddenly be worthless. Their only value comes from being seen from public roadways.

**5. Billboard companies exercise little restraint in the placement of outdoor ads.** Throughout America, billboard companies put billboards anywhere and everywhere they can. In urban areas, billboards can be found next to homes, schools, churches, parks, playgrounds, hospitals, even in cemeteries and historic districts. In the countryside, there is no area sufficiently rural or scenic to be safe from billboards.

**6. Billboards are both a cause and a symptom of community blight.** A cause, because billboards degrade the local environment, lower property values, and foster contempt for the public realm. A symptom, because one form of blight breeds another. Graffiti, trash, junk cars, billboards—where you find one, you’ll often find the others.

**7. Billboard companies often cut down and destroy trees on public land.** They do this to ensure that motorists see their signs instead of our scenery. The billboard industry calls this practice “vegetation management,” but it is actually the destruction of public property for private gain. In addition to chain-sawing trees, billboard companies often spray herbicides to kill existing plants and to guarantee that nothing grows in their place. The destruction of trees and the



Billboard in cemetery, northeast Pennsylvania

use of herbicides contribute to groundwater pollution, soil erosion, and wildlife habitat destruction.

**8. Billboards are ineffective and unnecessary.**

There are alternatives to billboards that provide the same information at less cost without degrading our landscape. What’s more, billboards are one of the least effective forms of advertising. Most billboards simply advertise products or services that have nothing to do with motorist information—beer, shoes, TV shows, etc. They are a secondary form of advertising that is used to reinforce ads in other media. Consumer spending is not any lower in those communities where billboards are controlled. On the contrary, the cities and states that totally prohibit billboards—such as Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, and Vermont—are among America’s leading tourist destinations.

**THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:**

- Pennsylvania has thousands of billboard structures on federal aid highways—many of which are non-conforming under current law.
- Philadelphia alone has nearly 3,000 billboards.
- For 75% of Pennsylvania’s roadways, billboard controls are set by local municipalities.
- Pennsylvania law permits the environmentally destructive practice of allowing trees on public property to be destroyed to enhance the view of billboards on privately owned property.
- The most effective Pennsylvania billboard regulations are those, which are enacted locally. The most effective technique is to permanently prohibit the construction of all new billboards.
- Another effective technique is to allow the construction of a new billboard only when one or more non-conforming billboards of equal or greater size are removed.



Billboards mar the gateway to downtown Harrisburg



Billboard commercializes the rural landscape

## Respect Local Character

- Transportation Enhancements funding provided through the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) may be used to remove non-conforming billboards.
- Some Pennsylvania cities and counties have successfully limited billboards, among them Radnor Township in Delaware County and Newtown, Northampton, and Warminster Townships in Bucks County.
- Billboards have been prohibited adjacent to the right-of-way of I-476, the Blue Route through Chester and Montgomery Counties, and along the Vine Street Expressway and Ben Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia; along Route 30, the Exton Bypass in Chester County; and other roads.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Fighting Billboard Blight: An Action Guide for Citizens and Public Officials*, by Frank Vespe, Scenic America, 1999; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

*Visual Pollution and Sign Control: A Legal Handbook*, by Kay Slaughter, Southern Environmental Law Center; (804) 977-4090.

## Disguise Communication Towers



Did you know that cell towers can be disguised as flagpoles, silos, church steeples, or even trees?

**T**HE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION means that cellular telephone towers are proliferating. In some parts of the country, communication towers now loom above every hillside and more are coming. Fortunately, there are a number of legal and politically acceptable alternatives to cell tower proliferation. Wireless communication companies can share cell sites, and cell sites can be hidden, disguised, or otherwise made less obtrusive. See the examples on the next page.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Thousands of cellular telephone towers will be built in Pennsylvania in the coming decade. Just 15 years ago, mobile phones were a novelty item. But by 1990, 10 million people were using cellular phones and over the past decade, the number of cell phone subscribers has skyrocketed to more than 100 million.
- The Wall Street Journal reports that 22,000 cellular communications sites have been built in the U.S. over the past 15 years, and they predict that another 100,000 will be built in the coming years.
- Sites on ridge lines and mountaintops, unfortunately, offer maximum “coverage.” In fact, many of the most efficient locations for cell phone towers are the most visually conspicuous. In these locations, towers can be hundreds of feet tall.
- In 1996, Congress passed the Federal Telecommunications Act, portions of which prevent municipalities from banning cellular phone towers outright, assuring that the industry will eventually be able to provide a maximum standard of mobile phone coverage in most places. But the 1996 Act also allows municipalities to regulate cell tower construction through local laws in order to minimize visual and other impacts.
- Since wireless communications technology is so new and has grown so fast, many local governments are not adequately prepared to regulate tower siting and construction.
- The courts have ruled that wireless communications companies should be classified as “public utilities,” and that as such they are entitled to preferential treatment with regards to zoning regulations and the issuance of use variances.
- Forward-thinking communities need to adopt a separate test for use variances that would apply speci-



cally to any public utility proposing to build a cell tower. Possible tests might, for example, include the need for companies to prove that the tower is truly needed to meet their required standards for service, and that no alternative sites are suitable for that purpose or that no other existing towers can be used.

- A local law that allows the presence of towers by special temporary use permit is a good first step. The temporary special use permit can be renewable every five years. This can help ensure that towers will be removed if they are abandoned or become obsolete.
- Local governments also are permitted to adopt land-use regulations that require towers to meet aesthetic standards through the special permit or the site plan approval process. The most standard technique is to require that towers be disguised as flagpoles, silos, or even trees. Or they can be required to be placed on existing structures such as water towers, electricity transmission towers, tall buildings, even inside church steeples. Municipal regulations can also require the co-location of transmitters on existing towers, whenever feasible co-location precludes the need for additional towers.
- Many cellular communication towers along New Jersey's Garden State Parkway are disguised as trees.
- Several Pennsylvania communities, including Warrington Township and Upper Makefield Township, have cell tower ordinances that require using "stealth" technology to the greatest extent possible, so that towers might be disguised as trees or silos, for example.
- In Damascus, township supervisors rejected a proposed cell tower because it would be located within the Upper Delaware River district, protected through the township zoning ordinance.

## Respect Local Character

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

*Implementing the New Telecommunications Law*, American Planning Association, 1996; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Locating Telecommunications Towers in Historic Buildings*, by Nancy E. Boone et al., National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2000; (202) 588-6000, [www.nthp.org](http://www.nthp.org).



Cell tower on electric lines



Combined cell/water tower



Cell tower disguised as tree

*Siting Cellular Towers*, by the National League of Cities, 1997, available from American Planning Association; (312) 786-6344, [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

*Taming Wireless Telecommunications Towers*, by Ray Foote and Scenic America Staff, Scenic America, 2000; (202) 638-0550, [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org).

## *Choices for Pennsylvania Communities*

### **Walkable Neighborhoods**



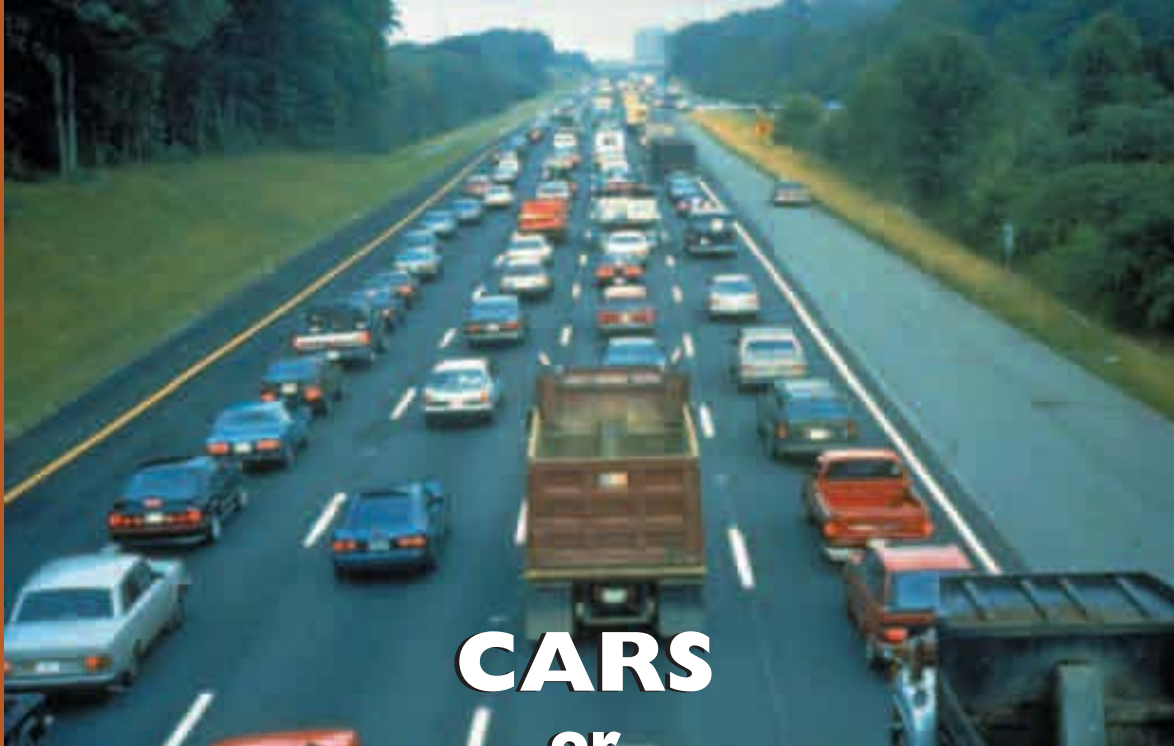
### **Franchise Signs**



### **Highway Bridges**

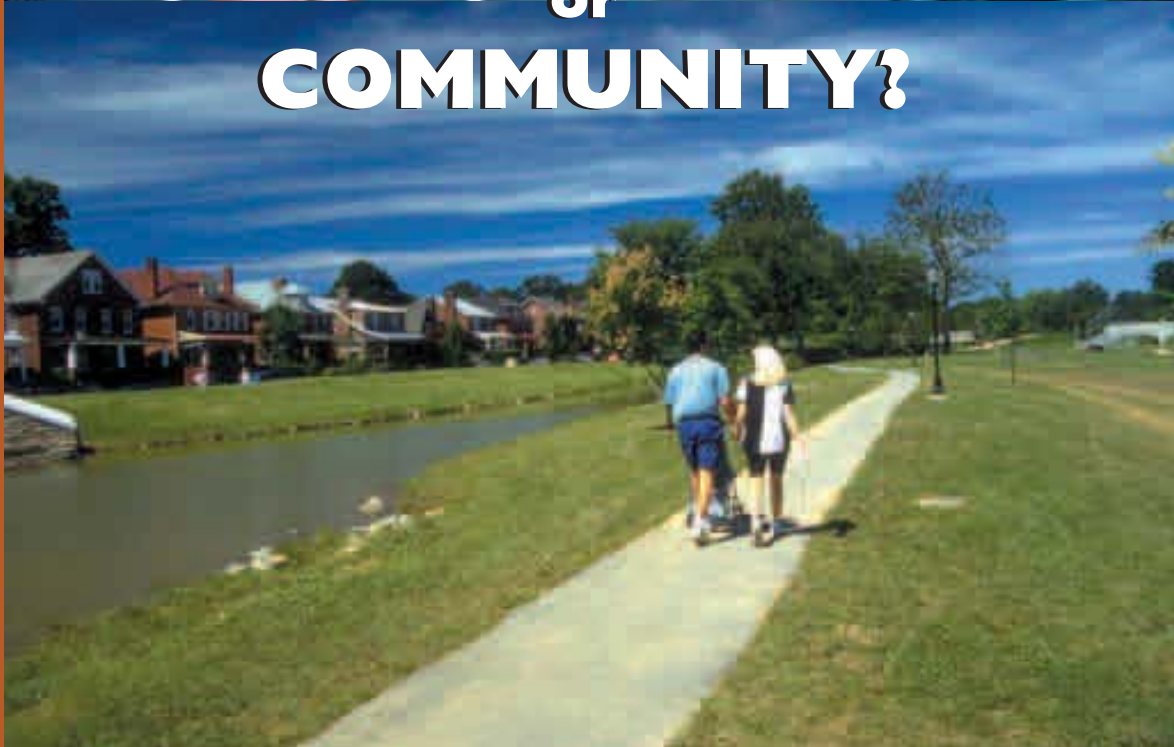


*Principle 6:*      **REDUCE THE IMPACT OF THE CAR  
AND PROMOTE WALKABILITY**



**CARS**  
or

**COMMUNITY?**



## PRINCIPLE 6:

**Reduce the Impact of the Car and Promote Walkability**

Reducing the impact of the automobile means providing more transportation choice. It also means designing transportation facilities that are beautiful as well as functional, that meet the needs of people as well as those of motor vehicles, and that respect and enhance local communities. Design standards for neighborhood streets, roads, bridges, parking lots and other transportation facilities should be reexamined to make them more human-scale and community friendly. Even minor design improvements can lessen the negative visual, physical and environmental impacts of new roads and bridges. Transportation choice can be expanded by providing better public transportation and building more sidewalks, trails, and bike paths that can create a network of non-motorized transportation options within and between communities and allow citizens to increase their physical activity close to home. Communities can also foster healthy lifestyles by considering walkable, mixed-use development and traffic-calming measures like roundabouts, curb extensions, or narrowing streets to slow down traffic and make walking and biking more desirable.

**Design Streets for Healthy Neighborhoods**

Which street is better for the environment? Safer for children? More affordable to construct?

**O**VERLY WIDE neighborhood streets encourage speeding, generate stormwater run-off and non-point-source pollution, and increase the cost of new houses along the street. Traditional streets, on the other hand, provide for healthy neighborhoods and livable communities. Traditional streets, which were the norm before World War II, are designed to be used by people, not just motor vehicles. Such streets are designed for low speed (15-25

mph) and typically provide on-street parking, shade trees, and other community amenities. They provide

***Our most valued places are often sites which lack our most valued possession: cars.***

*David Sucher, City of Comforts*

interconnectedness and walkability with a network of narrow streets, alleyways, and sidewalks, and thus foster a healthier lifestyle through walking, biking, and less use of the automobile. A network of traditional streets promotes a sense of community, with easy access among neighbors and increased opportunities for social interaction.

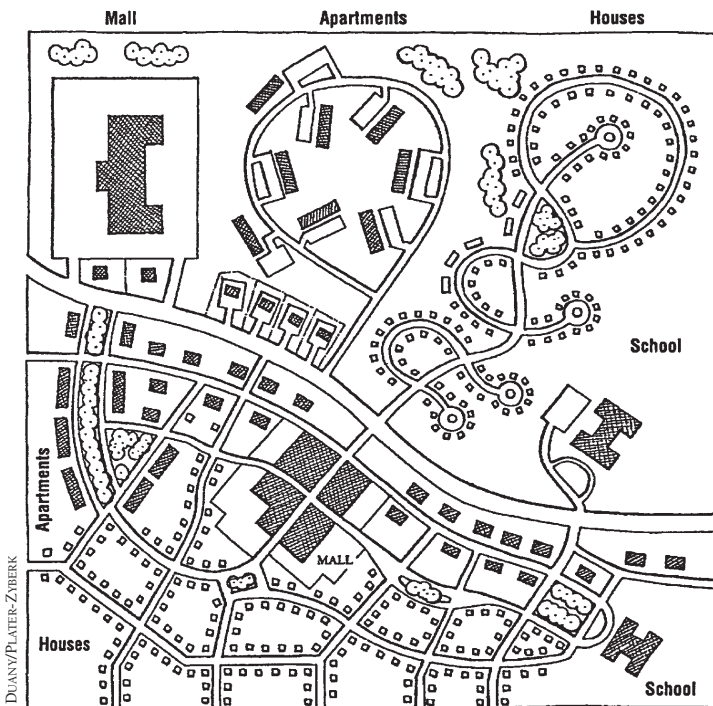
Traditional streets are narrower than conventional streets, and they are well connected to distribute motor vehicle traffic and to provide a variety of places to walk, such as schools, libraries, and other community amenities. Traditional streets have blocks no longer than 300-450 feet, and intersections have turning radii that require low speeds, yet allow access by emergency and service vehicles. Traditional streets are safer for children because traffic volume and speed are reduced. Traditional streets are also better for the environment because less pavement means less run-off, less soil erosion, and less non-point-source pollution. Traditional streets are also less expensive to construct and provide developers and realtors with a marketing advantage over subdivisions with conventional wide streets.



**Overly wide streets encourage speeding, generate run-off, and increase the cost of housing.**

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- The conventional approach to street design aims to move more traffic faster at the expense of everything



**Top: Conventional development with poor connectivity causes congestion and discourages pedestrians and cyclists. Bottom: Better development with interconnected street system allows more transportation options and shorter trips.**

else. However, accommodating cars and trucks is only one of a street's functions.

- Since there are so few destinations or amenities within conventional subdivisions, residents must typically make 10 to 12 car trips per household per day. Children must be driven or take the bus to school and parents must spend the weekend chauffeuring their children everywhere.

- People living in sprawling, auto-dependent areas walk less for exercise than people in more compact communities, yet more than 55% of Americans would like to walk more instead of driving.

- Conventional street design encourages motorists to speed through neighborhoods at 35 or even 45 mph. Typically, the wider the street, the faster the cars go.

- Commercial or arterial avenues are more efficient and can carry more cars at speeds of 30-35 mph. At faster speeds cars need more space between them, and the number of hourly vehicles per lane decreases.

- When pedestrians are hit by cars going 40 to

45 mph, they die 83% of the time. On the other hand, if a pedestrian is hit by a car going 20 mph or less, the fatality rate falls to 3-5%.

- Pennsylvania spends less than one half of one percent of its federal transportation funds on pedestrian safety; whereas, more than 11% of all traffic deaths are pedestrians.
- Pennsylvania spends only 22 cents per person on pedestrian projects compared with \$58 per person spent on highway projects.
- Traditional streets are really like outdoor rooms; cars are slowed and pedestrian comfort is increased by adding street trees, on-street parking, sidewalks and placing buildings closer to the street.
- Traditional neighborhoods often have neighborhood schools, parks, churches, small stores and other attractions to which people can walk.
- However, since only a small percentage of new development is designed to replicate older traditional patterns, a major demand for neighborhoods that retain small-town living styles goes unfulfilled.
- Bucks County developed a guide book for municipalities to use in designing residential streets. The purpose is to build streets that provide an appropriate and attractive neighborhood setting as well as move traffic efficiently.
- Pennsylvania has a new “Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School” Program to enhance community revitalization efforts and provide safe walking and biking routes to schools. Projects may include sidewalk improvements, planters, benches, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, transit bus shelters, traffic calming, bicycle amenities, kiosks, signage and other visual elements.
- Before Walt Disney Corporation built Celebration, its new traditional town in Florida, it conducted an extensive market study of what homebuyers wanted. Their study found that 50% of Americans wanted to live in a village-style community or a traditional neighborhood.

## Reduce the Impact of the Car

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

PennSCAPEs (Pennsylvania Strategies, Codes and People Environments), CD-ROM, Pennsylvania State University, College of Arts and Architecture, Department of Landscape Architecture; (814) 865-5300, [www.pennscapes.psu.edu](http://www.pennscapes.psu.edu).

*Pennsylvania's Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School Program*, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; [www.dot.state.pa.us/PennDOT/Bureaus/CPDMI/Prod/Saferoute.nsf](http://www.dot.state.pa.us/PennDOT/Bureaus/CPDMI/Prod/Saferoute.nsf).

*Residential Streets*, Urban Land Institute, National Association of Homebuilders, and American Society of Civil Engineers, 2001; (202) 624-7000, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org).

*Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods*, Dan Burden, LGC Center for Livable Communities, 1999; (800) 290-8202, [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org).

*Take Back Your Streets: How to Protect Communities from Asphalt and Traffic*, Conservation Law Foundation, 1998; (617) 350-0990.

“Walkable Streets and the Fire Department,” (video), LGC Center for Livable Communities; (916) 448-1198, [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org).

## Build Greenway Networks for Non-motorized Transportation



Would you rather live in a community where you have to drive everywhere for everything, or in a community where you can walk, ride a bicycle, or drive to where you want to go?

**W**ALKING FOR PLEASURE is the single most popular form of outdoor recreation in America today. Yet, in many Pennsylvania communities, there are few places to walk, except on neighborhood streets or at the local high school track. As a result, the popularity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities has risen tremendously in recent years. Many Pennsylvania communities are finding that greenways that include hiking paths, walking trails, and bike routes are popular, safe, and cost-effective ways to provide opportunities for popular outdoor activities as



In many Pennsylvania communities, there is no place to walk except on the road.

well as additional options for non-motorized transportation.

Pennsylvania's Greenways Action Plan (2001) establishes the goal of creating a statewide network of greenways—green infrastructure comparable in scope to the Interstate Highway System. The network will connect the Commonwealth's open space, natural landscape features, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational sites, providing a system of pathways for humans and wildlife.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Since 1980 national obesity rates in children and adolescents have more than doubled. In Pennsylvania, 21% of children and adolescents were found to be overweight in 2003.
- Walking and bicycling improve personal health and fitness.
- A brisk, 30-minute walk five days a week meets the Surgeon General's recommended level of physical activity to maintain good health.



- Healthy land-use choices help decrease the risk of obesity, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and asthma.
- Today only 10% of children walk to school versus 80% in their parents' generation.
- Bicycling for transportation removes cars from the roads and eases traffic congestion.
- Bicycling means there are fewer cars emitting pollution, which improves air quality. It also saves money since less is spent on car maintenance and gasoline.
- Walking and bicycling create a sense of community by promoting social interaction with neighbors, co-workers, and other local citizens.
- Many studies demonstrate that greenways increase nearby property values. In turn, increased property values can increase local tax revenues.
- Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of rail-trails, with 116 trails and more than 1,100 miles of trail.
- Spending by local residents on trail-related activities helps support recreation-oriented businesses and employment, like bicycle shops and sporting goods stores.
- Evidence shows that the quality of life of a community is an increasingly important factor in corporate

relocation decisions. Greenways that include trails are often cited as important contributors to quality of life.

## Reduce the Impact of the Car

- Greenways often provide new business opportunities and locations for commercial activities such as bed and breakfasts, recreation equipment rentals and sales, and other related businesses.

### EXAMPLES FROM ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH:

- The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), spanning five counties and two states, is visited by more than 500,000 people per year. A 2002 survey of visitors to the GAP in Allegheny, Fayette, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties found that the average person spent nearly \$9 per trip in trailside



Allegheny River Trail in northwest Pennsylvania



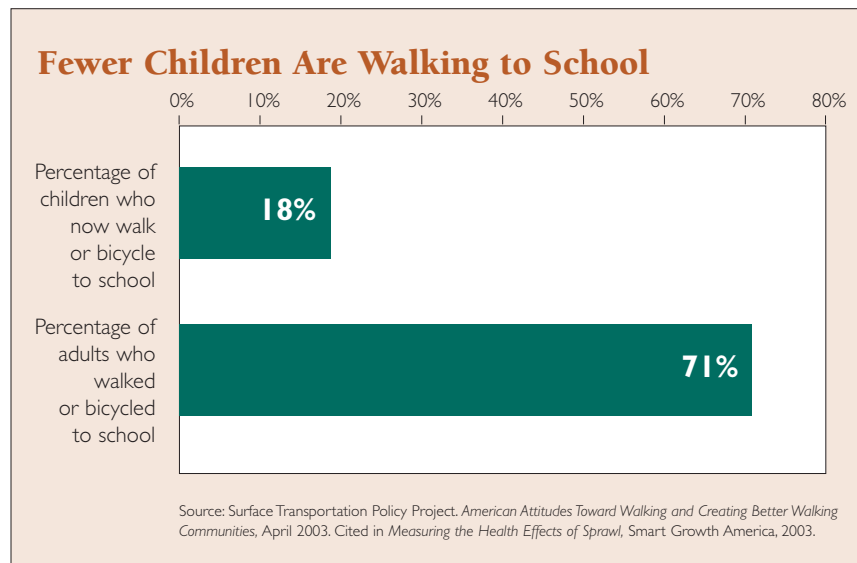
Schuylkill River Trail in Philadelphia



Linear Park in Lancaster

communities, with a total annual spending of more than \$3 million. The total annual economic impact of the trail is estimated at \$8 million.

- The Schuylkill River Trail extends from downtown Philadelphia to Oaks in Montgomery County. As the spine of the Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor, it will eventually be 100 miles long.
- The Heritage Rail Trail in York County is a 21-mile-long trail-with-rail. The trail and adjacent train tracks run through 11 municipalities, across bridges, and through Howard Tunnel, the oldest continuously operational railroad tunnel in the U.S. Three times a week a dinner train rolls down the tracks next to people on the trail. In 1999, 65% of trail users said the trail had influenced a purchase(s) within the last year, with an average purchase price of nearly \$350 (mostly bicycles and bicycle supplies). New businesses have opened along the trail (bed and breakfasts, food establishments, bike shops), and these have experienced increased revenues with increased trail use. The annual economic benefits of the trail are estimated at \$2 million.
- The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a pedestrian trail and greenway in Pittsburgh running 37 miles along both sides of the Monongahela, Allegheny, and Ohio Rivers.
- In Venango County, trail use is growing exponentially. In 2002, it is estimated that more than 88,000 recreationists used the Allegheny River Trail, Justus Trail, and Sandy Creek Trail.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

#### Organizations

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Northeast Regional Office,  
2133 Market Street, Suite 222, Camp Hill, PA 17011; (717)  
238-1717, [www.railtrails.org](http://www.railtrails.org).

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural  
Resources, State Greenways Program, P.O. Box 8767, Har-  
risburg, PA 17055; (717) 705-8533, [www.pagreenways.org](http://www.pagreenways.org).

Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity, 717-  
948-6315, [www.panaonline.org](http://www.panaonline.org).

#### Publications

*Creating Connections: The Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails  
How-To Manual*, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, 1998;  
(717) 230-8044, [www.pecpa.org](http://www.pecpa.org) or accessible at  
[www.pagreenways.org](http://www.pagreenways.org).

*Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors*, by the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program, 1994. Available through the Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse; (877) GRN-WAYS.

*Greenways: A Guide to Planning, Design, and Development*, by Chuck Flink, Loring Schwartz, and Robert Searns, Island Press, 1995. Available through The Conservation Fund; (703) 525-6300, [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org).

*Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design*, National Center for Bicycling and Walking, May 2002; [www.bikewalk.org](http://www.bikewalk.org).

*Pennsylvania Greenways: An Action Plan for Creating Connections*, Pennsylvania Greenways Partnership Commission

and Greenways Partnership Advisory Committee, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, June 2001; (717) 783-2658, [www.dcnr.pa.state.us](http://www.dcnr.pa.state.us).

"Pennsylvania Greenways Are Making Connections," by Meredith Hill and Annette Schultz, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, Third Quarter 2003; (814) 234-4272.

*Thinking Green, A Guide to the Benefits and Costs of Greenways and Trails*, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 1998. Available from Office of Greenways and Trails, 2600 Blirstone Road, MS 795, Tallahassee, FL 32399; (850) 488-3701.

**Reduce the  
Impact of  
the Car**

## Reassess Road Standards



Shouldn't new highways protect neighborhoods and quality of life in the communities they traverse?

**E**ACH YEAR Pennsylvania communities are presented with plans to expand streets and roads. Whether the community is urban or rural, in eastern or western Pennsylvania, the explanation is almost always the same. A road that local people are accustomed to is said to be deficient. It does not conform to the latest standards. It is not wide enough or it has too many curves. Unless something is done, motorists will experience delays that highway engineers consider excessive.

Plans are presented that call for a road that is straighter, flatter, and above all wider than before. The highway department calls the project a road "improvement," but many local people are opposed to the project. Why? Because conventional road widening projects often damage scenery, historic integrity, livability and community character for little or no real benefit.

The conventional approach to road design aims to move more traffic faster at the expense of everything else. In her book *The Living City*, author Roberta Gratz tells the story of a small town that seeks help with repairs to an aging bridge, only to be told that repairing the bridge is "not cost efficient." Only by widening the two-lane bridge to four lanes would federal funds be available. Adding two lanes, however, will require widening and straightening the road that provides access to the bridge. This will require condemning

adjacent private land, cutting down a row of 100-year-old trees, and demolishing several historic buildings. When local residents oppose the out-of-scale solution, they are accused of opposing progress and they are told federal rules "require" the new wider bridge.

Does this sound familiar? Well, it should because this scenario, in one form or another, is being repeated throughout America. Overscaled, overpriced highway projects are imposed where smaller, less expensive, equally useful, and more environmentally benign solutions would do.

While ugly, overscaled highway projects are familiar to us all, the good news is that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has issued a context sensitive solutions policy to become more sensitive to community needs, and new federal transportation legislation now gives states the flexibility to use their own design standards in sensitive locations. What's more, federal law also makes it clear that highway projects should be designed with social, environmental, and cultural resources in mind.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Many transportation experts say the key to eliminating traffic congestion is planning transportation systems in concert with land uses.

- A *Policy on Geometric Design of Streets and Highways*, also known as the AASHTO Green Book, is a publication that sets out recommended design standards for all federal aid highway projects.
- Controversy over design standards often arises when state DOTs take the Green Book standards for arterials and large roadways and apply them in a rigid and unyielding fashion without regard for community or environmental impacts.
- Federal law says these standards “can be applied flexibly,” and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has produced an easy-to-read manual that thoroughly discusses the issues of design flexibility in federally funded highway or road projects. This publication, *Flexibility in Highway Design*, can be obtained from the FHWA (for ordering details, see the “For More Information” section).



New roundabout, Keswick



Newly constructed covered bridge



## Reduce the Impact of the Car

### Bike lanes and traffic calming on suburban road

- The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), recognize the importance of pedestrians as well as social, environmental and visual resources and provide million of dollars in grant funding for alternative transit and transportation design.
- Reducing the speed limit on a road through a small town can be just as effective in reducing accidents as widening the shoulder by ten feet.
- Vermont has developed road design standards that are more flexible than AASHTO's. The standards stress the importance of considering a road's context and setting in all design decisions so that highway facilities complement Vermont's built and natural environment.
- Five other states—Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, and Utah—are working on a FHWA-sponsored pilot project to institutionalize context-sensitive highway design practices.
- The Keswick commercial district in Montgomery County was revitalized with public streetscape improvements that included traffic-calming techniques. The first roundabout to meet state traffic-calming standards was installed with a brick circle area, central clock tower, and ornamental plantings to direct and slow vehicular traffic. Red brick cross-

walks clearly designate pedestrian crossings while adding color and texture to the asphalt roadway. Landscaping within the roundabout is provided by the local Rotary Club.

- Several traffic-calming measures are being introduced in Pottstown. High Street, the town's main thoroughfare, will have back-in angle parking, narrower travel lanes, bicycle lanes, and new pedestrian crossings.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### Organizations

The Pennsylvania Local Roads Program (LTAP), sponsored by PennDOT, FHWA, and Penn State in cooperation with the Governor's Center for Local Government Services; (800) FOR-LTAP; [www.ltap.psu.edu/aboutltap.cfm](http://www.ltap.psu.edu/aboutltap.cfm).

Pennsylvania's Context Sensitive Solutions Program, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; <http://65.207.30.22/css/www/>.

Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1100 17th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; (202) 466-2636, [www.transact.org/stpp.htm](http://www.transact.org/stpp.htm).

### Publications

*Emergency Response, Traffic Calming and Traditional Neighborhood Streets*, by Dan Burden. LGC Center for Livable Communities, 2000; (916) 448-1198, [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org).

*Flexibility in Highway Design*, Federal Highway Administration, FHWA-PD-97-062, 1997. Available free from the Scenic Byways Clearinghouse, (800) 4BYWAYS.

*Pennsylvania's Traffic Calming Handbook*, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, 2001; (717) 787-2838, [www.dot.state.pa.us](http://www.dot.state.pa.us).

*A State Highway Project in Your Town? Your Role and Rights: A Primer for Citizens and Public Officials*, by Jim Wick, Preservation Trust of Vermont, 1995. Available for \$13 from the Preservation Trust of Vermont, 104 Church Street, Burlington, VT 05401; (802) 658-6647.

*Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars: A Citizens' Guide to Traffic Calming*, by Dan Burden, Local Government Commission Center for Livable Communities, 2000; (916) 448-1198, [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org).

*Traffic Calming: The Solution to Urban Traffic and a New Vision for Neighborhood Livability*, Available from Citizens for Sensible Transportation, (503) 225-0003.

## Designate Scenic Byways

Reduce the  
Impact of  
the Car



Would you prefer a scenic drive with views like this?



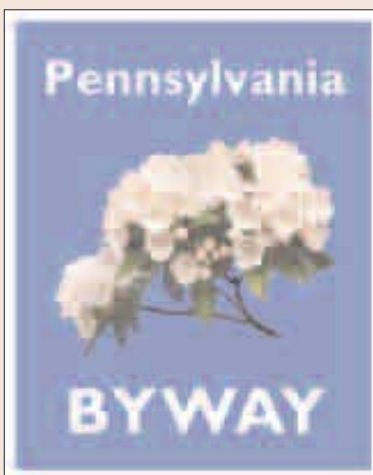
Or like this?

**S**CENIC BYWAYS are “the roads less traveled”—the roads that provide leisurely driving through areas rich in history and natural beauty. Driving for pleasure and sightseeing are two of the most popular recreational activities in America (after walking), and scenic byways are the avenues that foster these activities. They open up vistas and introduce us to places we might otherwise pass by.

Scenic byways promote tourism and resource protection simultaneously. They are a framework for regional planning and a way to link communities along a byway corridor to enhance community well-being.

In 1991, ISTEA established the National Scenic Byways Program that provides for the designation of National Scenic Byways and All American Roads (the best of the best). Nominations come from grassroots communities through the states to the Federal Highway Administration. Each road nominated must have a corridor management plan prepared through local citizens participation and consensus.

As of 2003, 20 All American Roads and 75 National Scenic Byways had been designated nationwide. Pennsylvania has one All American Road—the Historic National Road (U.S. Route 40), the nation’s first federally funded road project.



### Pennsylvania's Scenic Byways

- Governor Casey Byway in northeastern Pennsylvania
- The Blue Route (Interstate 476) in the Philadelphia region
- The Route 30 Bypass in Exton, Chester County
- The Laurel Highlands Scenic Byway in Westmoreland and Fayette counties
- The National Road in southcentral Pennsylvania
- Route 144 through the Sprout State Forest and Lumber Heritage Region in Clinton and Centre counties
- Kinzua Bridge Byway just off Route 6 in McKean County
- Bucktail Trail on Route 120 through Elk, Cameron, and Clinton counties
- Seaway Trail along the Lake Erie coastline
- Grand View Byway atop Mt. Washington in Pittsburgh

Pennsylvania's Scenic Byway Program supports local planning efforts to enhance the visual impact of designated routes, maintain the natural resources and intrinsic qualities of those routes, and educate residents and visitors on the history and culture of the Commonwealth. There are ten scenic byways in Pennsylvania, including both state and federally designated corridors.

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- According to a study by the U.S. Travel Data Center, travelers spent almost \$48 million annually while traveling on 1,600 miles of designated National Scenic Byways around the country.
- America's Byways Resource Center estimates that scenic byway designation results in up to 20% more visitors to the corridor annually.
- A recent study of 3 New Mexico scenic byways found that travel parties spent between \$325 and \$576 per trip along the byway.

- A survey of Blue Ridge Parkway users showed that in 1995 nonresident Parkway visitors spent about \$264 per trip in Virginia counties along the Parkway. This amounts to more than \$904 million in direct and indirect expenditures per year.
- A study found an estimated 10% increase in sales for tourism-related businesses after scenic byway designation in Colorado.



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Fallingwater is one of the attractions along the Laurel Highlands Scenic Byway.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

#### Organizations

America's Byways Resource Center, 227 West First Street, Suite 610, Duluth, MN 55802; 1-800-4BYWAYS, [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org).

Pennsylvania Byways Program, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, 400 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120; (717) 787-0782, [www.dot.state.pa.us](http://www.dot.state.pa.us).

#### Publications

*Community Guide to Planning & Managing a Scenic Byway*, Federal Highway Administration. To order, call the America's Byways Resource Center; (800) 4BYWAYS.

*Design Guide for Rural Roads*, Dutchess Land Conservancy, 1998, (914) 677-3002.

*Saving Historic Roads*, by Paul Daniel Marriott, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998, (800) 225-5945.



## Appendix: ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

### PENNSYLVANIA STATE AGENCIES

#### Center for Rural Pennsylvania

200 North Third Street, Suite 600  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 787-9555

[www.ruralpa.org](http://www.ruralpa.org)

*The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that serves as a resource for rural policy research within the General Assembly. The Center promotes and sustains the vitality of Pennsylvania's rural and small communities through grants, publications, forums, and other media.*

#### Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Bureau of Farmland Preservation  
2301 North Cameron Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
(717) 787-4737

[www.pda.state.pa.us](http://www.pda.state.pa.us)

*The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture encourages, protects and promotes agriculture and related industries throughout the Commonwealth.*

#### Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Governor's Center for Local Government Services  
Keystone Building, 4th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
(717) 720-7317

[www.dced.state.pa.us](http://www.dced.state.pa.us)

*The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development fosters opportunities for business and communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy, enabling Pennsylvania to achieve a superior quality of life. The Governor's Center for Local Government Services is the principal state agency for land use monitoring and technical assistance.*

#### Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

P.O. Box 8475  
Harrisburg, PA 17105  
(717) 787-7672  
[www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us)

*The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources maintains and preserves 116 state parks, manages 2.4 million acres of state park and forest land, provides information on ecological and geological resources of the Commonwealth, and establishes community partnerships to benefit rivers, trails, greenways, local parks, and open space.*

#### Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
(717) 787-2838  
[www.dot.state.pa.us](http://www.dot.state.pa.us)

*The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation works to provide a transportation system that exceeds customer expectations. Its focus areas include highway maintenance, sound environmental practices, safety, efficient mobility and access, and quality of life.*

#### Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

300 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
(717) 787-2891  
[www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us)

*The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission preserves the Commonwealth's past through leadership, stewardship, and service. It manages historic sites and museums, oversees the historic preservation program, conducts historic research, and offers public programs.*

## **PENNSYLVANIA ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Association for the New Urbanism in Pennsylvania**

P.O. Box 83  
Lancaster, PA 17608  
717-295-3632  
www.anupa.org

*The Association for the New Urbanism in Pennsylvania works to promote New Urbanism in the Commonwealth and to educate the public about New Urbanism in planning, design, and development.*

### **Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture**

114 West Main Street  
Millheim, PA 16854  
(814) 349-9856  
www.pasafarming.org

*The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture is a statewide, member-based, organization promoting the sustainability of farming and supporting efforts to build bridges between various participants in the food system.*

### **Pennsylvania Downtown Center**

130 Locust Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 233-4675  
www.padowntown.org

*The Pennsylvania Downtown Center is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to downtown issues and the revitalization of central business districts across the Commonwealth, large and small. The organization provides technical assistance and training to communities utilizing the Main Street Approach.*

### **Pennsylvania Environmental Council**

130 Locust Street, Suite 200  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 230-8044  
www.pecpa.org

*The Pennsylvania Environmental Council works to improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians by enhancing the Commonwealth's natural and built environments through advocacy, education, and the implementation of projects.*

### **Pennsylvania Land Trust Association**

105 Locust Street, Suite 300  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
717-230-8560  
www.conserveland.org

*The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association promotes voluntary land conservation by building a positive climate for conservation in Pennsylvania. The organization works to raise public awareness of land trusts, deepen communications within the conservation community, and improve governmental policy on land and water conservation.*

### **Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds & Rivers**

610 North Third Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 234-7910  
www.pawatersheds.org

*POWR is dedicated to the protection, sound management, and enhancement of the Commonwealth's rivers and watersheds and to the empowerment of local organizations with the same commitment.*

### **Pennsylvania Resources Council**

3606 Providence Road  
Newtown Square, PA 19073  
(610) 353-1555  
www.prc.org

*The Pennsylvania Resources Council is a nonprofit citizens' action organization that links industry, government, and grassroots organizations to seek solutions to environmental problems. It promotes waste reduction, recycling, and the protection of scenic beauty.*

### **Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council**

56 East Main Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
(717) 766-5371

[www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc)

*The Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council is a nonprofit organization to improve community forests and green spaces. It guides a statewide program of technical and financial assistance for communities and volunteer groups.*

### **Preservation Pennsylvania**

257 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 234-2310

[www.preservationpa.org](http://www.preservationpa.org)

*Preservation Pennsylvania, through creative partnerships, targeted educational and advocacy programs, advisory assistance, and special projects, assists Pennsylvania communities to protect and utilize historic resources for the future.*

### **Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB)**

1314 Chestnut Street, Suite 750  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
215-731-1796

[www.urbanblight.org](http://www.urbanblight.org)

*The Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight is a nonprofit organization based in Philadelphia working to protect and improve the region's visual environment and quality of life through education and technical assistance and to control outdoor advertising.*

### **10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania**

117 South 17th Street, Suite 2300  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-5022  
(877) 568-2225

[www.10000friends.org](http://www.10000friends.org)

*10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania is an alliance of organizations and individuals committed to enhancing the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians. The alliance promotes policies and actions to revitalize and sustain the Commonwealth's diverse communities, foster responsible land use, and conserve natural, heritage, and fiscal resources.*

## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **American Farmland Trust**

1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036

(202) 331-7300

[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

*The leading conservation organization dedicated to protecting America agricultural resources, American Farmland Trust provides a variety of information resources and services.*

### **American Forests**

910 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

(202) 955-4500

[www.amfor.org](http://www.amfor.org)

*The oldest citizen's conservation organization in the U.S., American Forests provides information on urban forestry, tree preservation, and reforestation.*

### **American Planning Association**

122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600  
Chicago, IL 60603

(312) 431-9100 (general) (312) 786-6344 (Planning Advisory Service and Planners Book Service)

[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

*The American Planning Association provides informational services, education, and research on all aspects of city and regional planning.*

### **America's Byways Resource Center**

227 West First Street, Suite 610  
Duluth, MN 55802

(800) 429-9297

[www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org)

*Sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), it provides information on all aspects of scenic byways.*

**Congress for the New Urbanism**

140 S. Dearborn Street, Suite 310  
Chicago, IL 60603  
(312) 551-7300  
www.cnu.org

*The Congress for the New Urbanism advocates restructuring public policy and development practices to support the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions.*

**The Conservation Fund**

1800 North Kent Street, Suite 1120  
Arlington, VA 22209-2156  
(703) 525-6300  
www.conservationfund.org

*The Conservation Fund works to preserve America's land legacy by acquiring and protecting open space, wildlife habitat, and historic sites throughout America. The Fund also assists business, government, and the nonprofit sector with projects that integrate economic development with environmental protection.*

PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE:  
105 North Front Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(717) 230-8166

**Joint Center for Sustainable Communities**

c/o U.S. Conference of Mayors  
1620 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
www.usmayors.org/USCM/sustainable

*The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities provides a forum for cities and counties to work together to develop long-term policies and programs that will lead to job growth, environmental stewardship and social equity.*

**Land Trust Alliance**

1331 H St., NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 638-4725  
www.lta.org

*The Land Trust Alliance provides services and programs for local and regional land trusts. It also provides information*

*on all aspects of private land conservation, including easements and fee acquisition.*

**National Arbor Day Foundation**

100 Arbor Avenue  
Nebraska City, NE 68410  
(402) 474-5655  
www.arborday.org

*The National Arbor Day Foundation sponsors programs and publishes information encouraging the conservation of trees.*

**National Main Street Center**

c/o National Trust for Historic Preservation  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 588-6219  
www.mainst.org

*The National Main Street Center works with communities across the nation to revitalize their traditional downtowns and neighborhood commercial areas. It provides information on downtown revitalization.*

**National Trust for Historic Preservation**

1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 588-6000  
www.nthp.org

*The National Trust for Historic Preservation works to protect the irreplaceable. It fights to save historic buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes. It provides information on all aspects of historic preservation.*

PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE:  
6401 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19144  
(215) 848-8033.

**The Nature Conservancy**

4245 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 100  
Arlington, VA 22203  
(703) 841-5300  
www.tnc.org

*The Nature Conservancy works to preserve plants, ani-*

mals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting lands and waters they need to survive.

**Pennsylvania office:**

1100 East Hector Street  
Conshohocken, PA 19428  
(610) 834-1323

**Rails-to-Trails Conservancy**

1100 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 331-9696  
www.railtrails.org

*The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy works with local groups to convert former railroad rights-of-way into multi-purpose trails.*

PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE:

2133 Market Street, #222  
Camp Hill, PA 17011  
(717) 238-1717

**Scenic America**

1634 I Street, N.W., Suite 510  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 638-0550  
www.scenic.org

*Scenic America works to preserve and enhance the scenic character of America's communities and countryside. It provides information on sign control, tree preservation and other forms of landscape protection.*

**Smart Growth America**

1707 L Street, N.W., Suite 1050  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 207-3355  
www.smartgrowthamerica.com

*Smart Growth America is a coalition of nearly 100 advocacy organizations working to support citizen-driven planning that coordinates development, transportation, revitalization of older areas and preservation of open space and the environment.*

**Surface Transportation Policy Project**

1100 17th Street, N.W., 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 466-2636  
www.transact.org/stpp.htm

*The Surface Transportation Policy Project works to ensure that transportation policy and investments help conserve energy, protect environmental and aesthetic quality, strengthen the economy, promote social equity, and make communities more livable.*

**Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse**

1100 17th Street, N.W. 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
(877) GRNWAYS (toll-free)  
www.trailsandgreenways.org

*The Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse provides technical assistance, information resources and referrals to trail and greenway advocates and developers across the nation.*

**Trust for Public Land**

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office  
666 Broadway  
New York, NY 10012  
(212) 677-7171  
www.tpl.org

*The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to improve the quality of life for our communities.*

**Urban Land Institute**

1025 Thomas Jefferson Street. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 624-7000  
www.uli.org

*The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land to enhance the total environment. ULI offers a wide variety of books and materials on land use and development issues.*

## Useful Websites

Organization/Agency/Community	Web Address	Telephone No.
American Farmland Trust	<a href="http://www.farmland.org">www.farmland.org</a>	(203) 331-7300
American Institute of Architects	<a href="http://www.aia.org">www.aia.org</a>	(202) 626-7406
American Planning Association	<a href="http://www.planning.org">www.planning.org</a>	(312) 431-9100
America's Byways Clearinghouse	<a href="http://www.byways.org">www.byways.org</a>	(800) 4BYWAYS
Congress for the New Urbanism	<a href="http://www.cnu.org">www.cnu.org</a>	(415) 495-2255
The Conservation Fund	<a href="http://www.conservationfund.org">www.conservationfund.org</a>	(703) 525-6300
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<a href="http://www.epa.gov">www.epa.gov</a>	(202) 260-4048
International City/County Management Association	<a href="http://www.icma.org">www.icma.org</a>	(202) 289-4262
Land Trust Alliance	<a href="http://www.lta.org">www.lta.org</a>	(202) 638-4725
National Association of Homebuilders	<a href="http://www.nahb.org">www.nahb.org</a>	(800) 368-5242
National League of Cities	<a href="http://www.nlc.org">www.nlc.org</a>	(202) 626-3000
National Trust for Historic Preservation	<a href="http://www.nthp.org">www.nthp.org</a>	(202) 588-6000
Planning Commissioners Journal	<a href="http://www.plannersweb.com">www.plannersweb.com</a>	(802) 864-9083
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	<a href="http://www.railtrails.org">www.railtrails.org</a>	(202) 331-9696
Scenic America	<a href="http://www.scenic.org">www.scenic.org</a>	(202) 638-0550
Smart Growth America	<a href="http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org">www.smartgrowthamerica.org</a>	(202) 207-3355
Surface Transportation Policy Project	<a href="http://www.transact.org">www.transact.org</a>	(202) 466-2636
Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse	<a href="http://www.trailsandgreenways.org">www.trailsandgreenways.org</a>	(877) GRNWAYS
Trust for Public Land	<a href="http://www.tpl.org">www.tpl.org</a>	(415) 495-4014
U.S. Conference of Mayors and National Association of Counties Joint Center for Sustainable Communities	<a href="http://www.usmayors.org/USCM/sustainable">www.usmayors.org/USCM/sustainable</a>	(202) 861-6773
Urban Land Institute	<a href="http://www.uli.org">www.uli.org</a>	(202) 624-7000

## About the Authors

**Edward T. McMahon** is the Charles Fraser Senior Resident Fellow on Sustainable Development at the Urban Land Institute. Before joining ULI in 2004, he spent 14 years as Vice President and Director of Land Use Programs for The Conservation Fund. He is nationally known as a leading authority on land conservation, growth management, and sustainable development. He is the author of ten books and more than 150 articles. He has a Master of Arts from the University of Alabama and a Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University Law School.

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**Sue Dodge** is a graphic designer specializing in publications for nonprofit organizations. She is based in Alexandria, Virginia, and can be reached at [suedodge@aol.com](mailto:suedodge@aol.com).

## BETTER MODELS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA

By Edward T. McMahon and Shelley S. Mastran

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This is a one-of-a-kind guide to creating, maintaining, and enhancing livable communities in Pennsylvania. Written for public officials, professional planners, developers, and interested citizens, *Better Models* shows how new development can be made more attractive, more efficient, more profitable, and more environmentally sensitive. The book provides balanced and practical advice on key issues facing communities throughout Pennsylvania, such as: how to protect the countryside, how to strengthen downtowns, and how to improve the suburbs.

Key features include:

- Hundreds of photos and illustrations in full color
- Ideas for balancing conservation with economic return
- Techniques for protecting farmland, forests, and scenic areas
- Case studies of environmentally sensitive development
- Examples of chain stores and franchises that “fit in”
- Suggestions for reducing opposition to development
- Useful websites and resources

### THE CONSERVATION FUND

1800 N. Kent Street  
Arlington, VA 22209  
(703) 525-6300  
[www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org)

### PENNSYLVANIA DCNR

P.O. Box 8475  
Harrisburg, PA 17105  
(717) 787-7672  
[www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us)

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