

Keeping LANCASTER Current

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Lancaster County Growth Management Issues December 14, 2004

FYI

PENNSYLVANIA'S WATER-RELATED RESEARCH: 2004 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH NEEDS

The Pennsylvania Water Resource Research Center recently conducted a survey of environmental professionals and advocates in a variety of fields across the state. They were asked to describe up to three water-related issues and discuss what they felt the associated research needs were to address those issues. Read the [summary](#) of their responses. *“Unknown limits on groundwater resources, lack of coordinated statewide water use, unchecked water withdrawals and unregulated private well construction were mentioned as important issues.”*

SEARCH FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING CREATES NEW CLASS OF “EXTREME COMMUTERS”

USA Today reports that years ago, few Americans would take a work commute longer than 45 minutes one way, but today some 19 million are doing just that, with a recent Census [Journey to Work](#) study identifying 3.4 million "extreme commuters" -- the fastest-growing group -- who endure at least 90-minute trips each way, more than triple the national average of 25.5 minutes. *“Extreme commuters and housing developers who lure people to the fringes of sprawling metropolitan areas can quickly swamp local roads and government budgets. 2.6% of Pennsylvania commuters drive 90 minutes or more to their place of work—Pennsylvania ranks 16th in the nation.”*

TOWARD A NEW METROPOLIS: THE OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD AMERICA-

From the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, a new [report](#) by Arthur C. Nelson estimates the amount of built space the nation will require over the next 25 years and provides some staggering numbers. Nelson's study concludes that in 2030 about *half* of the buildings in which Americans live, work, and shop will have been built after 2000. More specifically, Nelson says the nation will need to replace about 82 billion square feet of built space, and construct another 131 billion square feet. The upshot: The current generation will vastly alter the American landscape, and therefore has a single opportunity to create the right market and regulatory climate in which to accommodate new growth in more sustainable ways. So how should states, regions, and the federal government prepare themselves? One thing is clear: Communities and governments of all sorts need to consider a wider array of tools than they usually do to help curb sprawl, promote reinvestment, and use land more efficiently. Accordingly, Metropolitan Policy Program research has in recent years been describing both the [need for innovation](#) and specific policy options. On the matter of channeling growth, for example, recent metro program reports have examined a number of key tools for the tool box, including [growth boundaries](#), [transfers of development rights](#), [open space protection](#), and [impact fees](#). Likewise, program reports have tried to quantify the large volume of [vacant land](#) available in cities, identified [ten steps to speed urban land redevelopment](#), and suggested needed reforms of relevant [state laws](#) to ease land re-use. Other reports have built the case for [transit-oriented development](#), described the smartest practices in locating [affordable housing](#), and described the [fiscal and economic benefits of smarter growth development patterns](#). *“Although growth will not be as dramatic in the Northeast and Midwest, these places are not off the hook in needing to rethink its development future. The modest growth in the Northeast, if left unchecked, will likely disrupt the small town tranquility and abundant outdoors that define much of the quality of life, tourism, and natural resource industries of that region.*

From a reader for clarification -

I have to disagree with your description below of HB 796 – which is now Act 99 of 2004 that was contained in the November 30, 2004 edition of Keeping Lancaster Current.

Below is the language from the act, which really redefines a “multi-municipal plan” to permit municipalities within the same school district but who are not contiguous with one another to develop and adopt a multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

“Multi-municipal plan,” a plan developed and adopted by any number of contiguous municipalities, including a joint municipal plan as authorized by this act[.], except that all of the municipalities participating in the plan need not be contiguous, if all of them are within the same school district.

Neil Kinsey

[Governor's Center for Local Government Services](#)

Upcoming Events

Thursday, January 6, 2005
“Growing Together” Steering Committee Meeting of the Lancaster Inter-Municipal Committee (LIMC) 7:00 p.m. at the Maple Grove Community Building in Lancaster Township. For more information contact limc@verizon.net

Interesting Websites/Reports

[Michigan Land Use Institute](#)
[PA Environment Digest](#)
[Pennsylvania Growing Smarter](#)

*Enabling informed growth management
decision-making for Lancaster County*

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