

# Keeping LANCASTER Current

AN HOURGLASS PUBLICATION

Lancaster County Growth Management Issues May 17, 2005

FYI

**RESTORING NEIGHBORHOODS, REBUILDING MARKETS – NEW HOUSING DIRECTIONS FOR STRUGGLING CITIES** – This new [Report](#) from the [National Housing Institute](#) outlines comprehensive strategies necessary to attract investment in city housing.

The need for change in America’s distressed cities is beyond question. The changing housing policies that cities are beginning to explore involve new ways of thinking about the community, new ways of doing business, new skills and new partnerships.

**People pick neighborhoods**, not just houses. While they may trade off some present quality of life benefits for greater future potential, they are **unlikely to pick a neighborhood on the decline**, however attractive it may look today. This is as true for the family in the neighborhood deciding whether to stay or leave, or the family from outside choosing where it will settle.

Housing investments have a powerful effect on a neighborhood’s vitality, yet **historically, housing development and neighborhood improvement have rarely been linked** to one another.

While the **future of each city will ultimately be determined by the future of its neighborhoods**, neighborhoods themselves do not exist in a vacuum. The future of neighborhoods will not only be determined by their own efforts to improve, but also by how well the **city focuses on key citywide strategies for market change**.

### CITYWIDE STRATEGIES FOR MARKET CHANGE

- **Think strategically.** Make sure everyone – city government, CDC’s, local funder, other community organizations – is on board with **a strategy to rebuild the city and its neighborhoods.**
- **Build a positive investment climate at city hall.** Create user-friendly, predictable and fair processes to govern redevelopment. Rework the city’s codes to make sure that they reflect the city’s goals while **providing investors with maximum flexibility.**
- **Use public funds to fill market gaps.** Used strategically, these funds can **motivate the investments** that will help revitalize the community.
- **Capture the market.** Target housing markets as systematically and aggressively as businesses, visitors or conventions, carrying out a **sustained, targeted** marketing strategy.
- **Build on assets.** Identify the city’s competitive assets – a **historic** district, a major **university** or **medical** center, an **ethnic** neighborhood or an **entertainment** scene, market and **use them to anchor housing and neighborhoods.**

In their haste to attract outsiders, **cities must also be careful not to lose track of the people who already live there.** If cities fail to make themselves attractive to the local families, they will lose them. In addition to attracting middle- and upper-income families from outside, cities must treat their upwardly mobile households as a critical civic asset and **give them good reasons to stay and invest their resources in the city.**

**Cities need to plan for success.**

### Upcoming Events

**Cultivating A Greener Downtown – Pennsylvania’s Premier Conference for Downtown Revitalization**  
**June 5-8, 2005, State College**  
*Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.* For more information call (717) 233-4675 or write:  
[amylucas@padowntown.org](mailto:amylucas@padowntown.org)

**A Susquehanna Symposium: Riverfront Communities Flowing With Potential – June 8-10, 2005** – The [Susquehanna Greenway Partnership](#), along with other sponsors and partners from New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, is hosting a symposium for and about riverfront communities in the Susquehanna River Basin. For more information, contact Susan Obleski, SRBC, at (717) 238-0423, ext. 316 or by e-mail [sobleski@srbc.net](mailto:sobleski@srbc.net).

### Interesting Articles/Websites

The city of Baltimore and private funders have pooled resources to create the [Live Baltimore Home Center](#), a professionally staffed office that markets the city’s neighborhoods to middle- and upper-income homebuyers. One of their strategies is to target people working in Washington DC, and to show them how much more house they can get for their money in Baltimore.

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

Call our office (717) 295-0755, or visit <http://www.hourglassfoundation.org>

HOURGLASS  
  
FOUNDATION