

Prepared by:



Department of Community  
and Economic Development

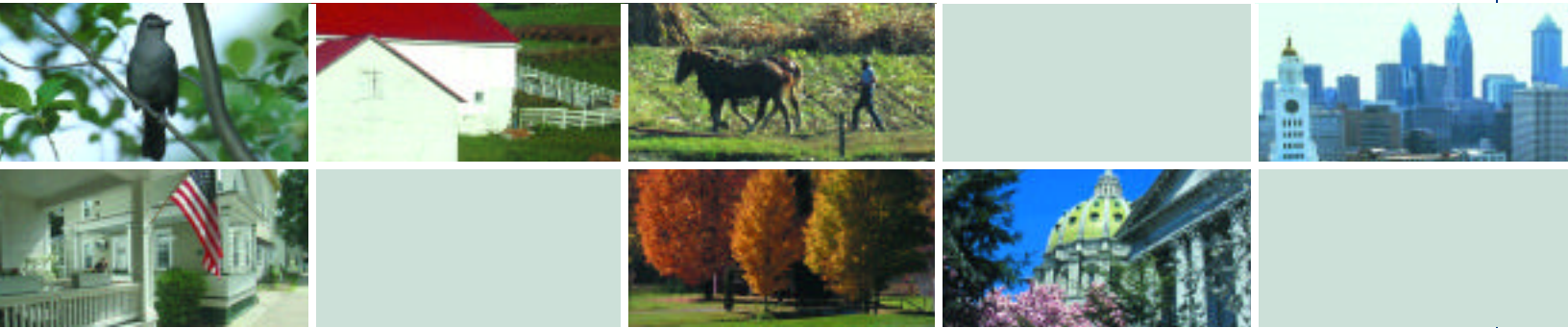
February 2001

# 2000 ANNUAL REPORT on Land Use

Presented to  
The Honorable Tom Ridge, Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



# Annual Report on Land Use



Prepared by:  
Governor's Center for  
Local Government Services

Department of Community  
and Economic Development

February 2001

Produced by:

**MTA**  
McCormick, Taylor & Associates, Inc.



Land Use Legislation Bill Signing, June 2000.

Front Row (Left to Right): Senator James W. Gerlach, 44th District, Governor Tom Ridge, Representative David J. Steil, 31st District.

Second Row (Left to Right): R. Keith Hite, Executive Director, PSATS; John A. Haiko, Chairman of Board of Supervisors, West Bradford Township, Chester County; Joanne Denworth, President, 10,000 Friends; Jack M. Hines, Jr., Manager, West Bradford Township, Chester County; Lieutenant Governor Mark S. Schweiker; Elam M. Herr, Assistant Executive Director for Legislative Services, PSATS; Representative Robert L. Freeman, 136th District; Louis J. Biacchi, Director, Governmental Affairs; Pennsylvania Builders Association; Kim Coon, Deputy Secretary for Community Development and Affairs, DCED.

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# Executive Summary

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services (the Center) in this second *Annual Report on Land Use* reflects upon the achievements of the past year and maps a positive course for the future. Since Executive Order 1999-1 on Land Use Planning was issued in January 1999, Pennsylvania has directly faced the challenge to pursue responsible land use planning at all levels of government and preserve continued economic growth without compromising quality of life.

The strong foundation provided by the Governor's Growing Smarter Initiative allowed the Center to develop the Growing Smarter Action Plan (the Action Plan). The Action Plan is designed to support responsible land use planning and provide all Center stakeholders with the tools and resources to manage growth. The Action Plan contains five components: outreach, education and training, technical assistance and support, financial assistance and agency coordination.

This second *Annual Report* begins where the first ended. An important look back at the Center's efforts suggests that each year we have implemented more aggressive programs that have yielded stronger, more impressive results. This past year was punctuated by the adoption of amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968; enhanced land use education and training programs; and increased funding for technical and planning assistance. The result of the Center's efforts can be seen in the

Center's Progress Report (Figure 2) and List of Accomplishments (Appendix A).

The Center continues to call upon the resources of the Interagency Land Use Team (the Interagency Team). Its effort to identify and improve programs and policies that can impact the way land planning choices are made plays an important role in the Center's 2001 agenda.



The guiding principles established in 1999 continue to be the focus of the Center's work. The Center continues to stress the advantages of multimunicipal planning and intergovernmental cooperation, while preserving flexibility and local government control. These principles are the basis for the Center's Action Plan.

The Center's Land Use Agenda for 2001 (the Agenda) charts a course aimed at outreach, communication, and coordination. This agenda supports the Action Plan and is designed to further implement it by enhancing initiatives in these three areas.

First, the Agenda looks to enhance our outreach, assistance and training

programs. In order to do so, the Center will seek the resources to provide the statewide land use education and training initiative we are developing. The Center will continue to be responsive to the increased demand for technical and financial assistance, and to fulfill our new statutory duties under the recently enacted amendments to the MPC.

Second, the Agenda acknowledges the importance of strengthened partnerships with county planning agencies. Through improved partnerships the Center will be able to be more responsive to county and local government needs, but also share resources and expertise to extend the Center's technical arm to all municipalities in need of assistance.

And finally, the Agenda emphasizes the importance of the continued work of the Interagency Team. The Team is moving toward better communication regarding land use activities and developing a coordinated state approach for consideration of local planning and zoning in state agency decision-making.

Since 1999, the Center's land use role has evolved and expanded. The Center operates today not only as the principle entity for state land use monitoring and assistance, but as a consultant, advisor, trainer, guide, promoter, coordinator and mediator. The Center strongly believes that successful land use strategies are best developed and initiated at the local level. There, local control and flexibility can tailor sound land use practices to

meet community needs. The Agenda provides support to allow municipalities to plan for their future.

At the state level, the Center is proud to lead efforts responsive to the Governor's Growing Smarter Initiative. We are expanding our involvement from collecting information to taking coordinated, positive action that will result in a more streamlined decision-making process.

The Center will continue to support municipalities that plan for the future, especially when the planning is a multimunicipal endeavor. The Center will continue to educate and to train and to provide enhanced technical and financial assistance for planning activities. In our new statutory role, the Center will act as an intermediary when called to do so, in the support of the principles in Executive Order 1999-1.

There is great promise in the number of individuals and communities working together to support and promote land use planning. By working with state agencies and strengthening the communication between state agencies, counties and municipalities, the Center believes coordination in planning and decision-making can be achieved. ■

## I. Introduction



# I. Introduction

*Land use is about communities, the environment and future growth. It's about giving municipalities the tools they need. It's about preserving open space and the quality of life we enjoy. And it's about respecting private property rights and allowing for the growth we need.*

*Governor Ridge on the passing of Growing Smarter Land Use Legislation, June 2000*

Since the first *Annual Report on Land Use* was issued in January 2000 by the Center, Pennsylvania has taken its first, important steps in meeting the challenges to planning responsibly for land use. The Center does not have to look far to be reminded of how we value quality of life and predictability. Citizens and businesses alike have reported that they seek communities that are clear about their future direction, preserve natural and cultural resources, address transportation and environmental issues and plan for growth. To continue to promote responsible land use planning in our communities, we challenge ourselves to pursue continued economic growth and a higher quality of life without compromising our Commonwealth's natural, cultural, historical and social resources.

Pennsylvania has faced this challenge directly. Between 1999 and 2000, Governor Ridge initiated programs that promote growing smarter and a higher quality of life in our Commonwealth. Growing Greener became law in 1999 committing nearly \$650 million to the

environment, farmland preservation and sound land use. Pennsylvania's long-standing Land Recycling program has helped to restore nearly 700 brownfield sites to productive use. The Keystone Opportunities Zone (KOZ) program has created more than 5,700 new jobs and helped retain 3,100 more in distressed areas throughout the Commonwealth.

During 2000, Pennsylvania became the nation's leader in farmland preservation with 1,476 farms and 180,916 acres of the Commonwealth's farmland preserved. This would not have been possible without the combined efforts of state and county leaders, farmland preservation officials, local government officials and farmers. Furthermore, the Pennsylvania Legislature validated the ideas of growing smarter and planning by passing amendments to Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968.

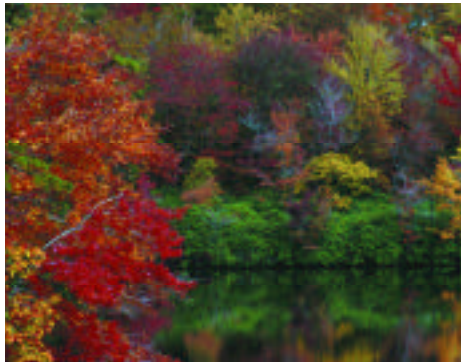
**Figure 1**

### **Governor's Growing Smarter Initiative**

- Doubled investment in land use planning and technical assistance.
- Significant amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 of 1968.
- Top to bottom review of state agencies.

Unveiled by Governor Ridge, February 2000

Pennsylvania is Growing Smarter. The Governor's Growing Smarter Initiative announced in February 2000 includes three components that support responsible land use planning and provide Pennsylvanians with the tools needed to plan for and manage growth (Figure 1). First, the Governor more than doubled the Commonwealth's investment in land use planning and technical assistance. Second, significant amendments were passed to the MPC and signed into law in June 2000. These changes included a variety of new tools available to local government officials for municipal planning. Finally, the Ridge Administration has initiated a top-to-bottom review of state government programs and policies to make sure agency programming and decision-making support local land use planning.



As 2000 came to a close, the Center moved forward with the Growing Smarter Action Plan – a plan based on the Governor's Growing Smarter Initiative that is evolving to meet our growing smarter challenges. This plan, when fully implemented, will provide Pennsylvanians the support, programming, and technical and financial assistance needed to plan

responsibly for the future and for generations to come.

### The Year in Review

For the Center, 1999 was primarily a year for gathering information and laying the foundation to fulfill the Center's role as the principle state entity for land use monitoring and technical assistance. In the first *Annual Report* published in January 2000, the Center made important recommendations to reflect the concerns of citizens and the needs of local governments while responding to Pennsylvania's stakeholders who asked us to address growth management issues. These recommendations were thoughtfully developed after a full and productive year.

With the support of the Interagency Team, the Center's efforts in 2000 have been more aggressive, yielding stronger, more impressive results. We began 2000 by delivering the Center's three land use reports to Governor Ridge. *Pennsylvanians Speak: Sound Land Use Forums Report*; *Land Use in Pennsylvania: Practices and Tools - An Inventory*; and the first *Annual Report on Land Use* have also been delivered to Pennsylvania's local governments, as well as thousands of citizens, including business people, educators, developers and environmentalists.

In August, the Center delivered the *Interagency Land Use Team Supplementary Report to the Annual Report on Land Use* to the Governor.

In that report, the Center made policy recommendations to state agencies regarding the management of state-owned property, land use education programs for agency personnel and stakeholders, and the consideration of local land use plans and ordinances in agency decision-making activities.

Throughout the Summer and Fall 2000, public outreach topped the Center's agenda. Educational workshops on the newly enacted amendments to the MPC were sponsored by the Center. In addition, a new round of Growing Smarter Forums held in 53 counties allowed the Center to report to the citizens the progress the Commonwealth has made since 1999.

The Legislature worked cooperatively to enact Acts 67, 68 and 127 of 2000, amending the MPC. The Legislature incorporated the concepts of multimunicipal planning and consistency into the Acts, and found support for doing so in the recommendations contained in the Center's first *Annual Report*. As a result, municipalities now have the strength of law to support comprehensive planning based on those planning concepts. Also in 2000, the Downtown Relocation Law (Act 32) took effect, and the Keystone Opportunity Zone (Act 119) program was expanded.

Planning is an on-going process. It crosses municipal boundaries and requires communication and cooperation at every level. The Center has not wavered from our guiding principles identified in the first *Annual Report*, and

continues to stress the advantages of multimunicipal and intergovernmental cooperation while preserving flexibility for local control.

The Center believes a one-size-fits-all sound land use strategy is not realistic in this diverse Commonwealth. The Center also stresses that successful sound land use strategies are best developed and initiated at the local level. This is the foundation from which we will work to strengthen communication and cooperation on land use issues between state agencies, local government and Pennsylvania's stakeholders. To do so, the Center will build on our Action Plan described in this report. In 2001, the Center will expand our outreach and education and training programs, and prepare to meet the anticipated increase in demand for technical and financial assistance. Though much has been accomplished, the Center's work is only beginning. ■

*Governor Ridge and I strongly believe that a sound land use policy should not, and can not, be dictated out of Harrisburg. A one-size-fits-all model will not work in a state as large as Pennsylvania.*

*Lt. Governor Mark Schweiker at the 1999 Land Use Forums*

