

Conference Proceedings

# Building

THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2006 / RADISSON HOTEL  
TREVOSE, PENNSYLVANIA

# from Strength II

MORE STRATEGIES FOR OLDER  
SUBURBS AND BOROUGHS



Delaware Valley  
Regional Planning  
Commission

FUNDING SUPPORT FROM THE WILLIAM PENN FOUNDATION



***Building from Strength II: More Strategies for Older Suburbs and Boroughs***  
**Radisson Hotel, Trevoise, Pennsylvania**  
**May 18, 2006**

**PROCEEDINGS**

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**Introduction**

On May 18, 2006, almost 200 municipal officials, community organization members, and business people gathered at the Radisson Hotel in Trevoise, Pennsylvania for a full-day conference entitled *Building from Strength II: More Strategies for Older Suburbs and Boroughs*. This was the second conference hosted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to focus public and private sector attention on the older suburban communities in its service area. The first conference was held in April 2002 in West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

Through presentations and workshops, participants heard about the common challenges older suburbs face – declining tax bases, aging infrastructure, state and federal indifference – and ways to revitalize these important, and often historic, communities. The morning keynote speaker began with a remarkable regional success story. Mayor Thomas Adams of the Village of Green Oaks, Illinois also chairs the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus for greater Chicago. The Chicago region faces many of the same challenges as the Delaware Valley, most notably governmental fragmentation. Among other things, Mayor Adams discussed how the formation of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus has helped to foster multi-municipal cooperation across northeastern Illinois. The second morning panel, entitled “Meet the Mayors,” included elected officials from older suburbs in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The four panelists discussed some of the innovative tools and techniques they have utilized in their communities to stabilize neighborhoods and encourage new investment. In the afternoon, participants chose from among eight workshops on a variety of topics, including “New Markets for Older Communities,” “Streets and Parking,” “Zoning and Planning,” “Design and Development,” and “State Resources for Redevelopment in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.”

*Building from Strength II* was part of continuing efforts by DVRPC and the William Penn Foundation to support redevelopment and revitalization in the region’s core cities and older suburbs. Founded in 1945, the William Penn Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the greater Philadelphia region through efforts that foster rich cultural expression, strengthen children’s futures, and deepen connections to nature and community. More information about the William Penn Foundation is available at [www.williampennfoundation.org](http://www.williampennfoundation.org).

DVRPC was created in 1965 to plan for the orderly growth and development of the nine-county Philadelphia-Camden-Trenton metropolitan area. In recent years, the organization has undertaken a number of initiatives to encourage the revitalization of the Delaware Valley’s older suburbs and cities, including a regional-scale analysis of problems and policy directions, and a series of detailed local case studies. In 2002, DVRPC initiated a new planning grant program to support reinvestment in the region’s older communities. This program, the Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI), has so far funded over 100 projects and leveraged more than \$2 billion dollars in additional private and public investment. More information about TCDI is available on DVRPC’s website, [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).

**Overview: Challenges Facing Older Suburbs: Barry J. Seymour, Executive Director, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission**

Good morning, and welcome to the conference. For those of you who don't know us, we are the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the greater Philadelphia area. Under federal law, we have the mandate and responsibility to prepare the long-range transportation plan, and the short-term capital improvement program for highway and transit investments in a nine-county, two-state area, including Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania, and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey.

This charge for transportation planning could have been taken narrowly and literally, where we went off by ourselves and prepared a transportation plan. And, in fact, there was a time when this is how transportation planning was done. But we now know that successful planning cannot take place in a vacuum. In order to develop the right approach with the right results, we need to work with many partners, and we need to think comprehensively. Today, our planning partners include federal, state, county and local government agencies, the business and development community, and the wide variety of non-profit and citizen groups that increasingly take a strong interest in our plans. And transportation planning is no longer a narrow and specialized field, but is done in the full context of land use, economic, social and environmental conditions. Our goal is to help both the leadership and individuals within the region to "think regionally while acting locally."

About ten years ago, we conducted a comprehensive assessment of the region, examining conditions in each of the 352 municipalities in the nine-county area. We examined demographic trends, such as population change. We examined economic trends, such as employment levels and wages. We looked at social trends, including racial and ethnic changes. And we looked at fiscal conditions, including property tax rates and school districts.

What we found was that a number of municipalities that were typically identified as suburban were actually facing urban challenges. These communities were either developed as boroughs in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, or grew rapidly as suburbs soon after World War II. And in the past few decades, they may actually have lost population and jobs. The housing stock and infrastructure were fully developed, although now they were getting old, and were perhaps inadequate to serve or attract new residents and businesses. Populations were changing, becoming both older and more racially diverse, and requiring more and different kinds of services. And property taxes were increasing faster than income levels at a time of both a shrinking tax base and a greater demand for services.

We called this group of municipalities "First Generation Suburbs," which included the traditional inner ring suburbs surrounding Philadelphia, Camden and Trenton; the post World War II bedroom communities adjoining them; and the older industrial boroughs scattered throughout the region. What we found were that these communities were facing very different management challenges than the communities that are now undergoing rapid new development and suburbanization.

One challenge was in your commercial areas, which may be traditional Main Streets or older strip commercial centers. The newer shopping malls were pulling the stores and

shoppers further out, leaving struggling downtowns and shrinking commercial tax bases. Second, your residential areas, while in many cases consisting of very attractive older homes, were being bypassed by potential homeowners for larger or newer homes farther out. This resulted in vacancies or the conversion to a higher number of apartments and renters. Third, the infrastructure of your communities, in some cases developed nearly one hundred years ago, was now old and in need of upgrades or replacement. Repairing streets, bridges, schools, or water and sewer systems is expensive, and we all know funds are limited. Fourth, the changing residential population of your communities and the changing commercial base was creating a shrinking tax base and declining income at a time when you actually have a higher demand and need for services and investment. Unlike growing suburbs which can count on more revenue through new development, or even the cites, which have access to a wider variety of federal and state funding programs, there were no resources available to support your needs. And fifth and finally, the nature of local government in Pennsylvania and New Jersey tended to mean that each of you were on your own, left to rely on your own budgets, creativity and initiative to address these challenges.

Fortunately, since the time of that study almost a decade ago, there has been an increasing recognition of the unique needs of older suburbs. I am pleased to be able to say that you are no longer alone. At the national level, the Brookings Institution in Washington has done a tremendous job identifying and analyzing the needs of what they call "America's First Suburbs". Their recent report, called *One Fifth of America*, identifies 64 counties across the country, including in this region Bucks, Burlington, Camden, Delaware and Montgomery counties, together with a set of policy recommendations. Recently, New York Senator Clinton introduced legislation in Congress to create a \$250 million reinvestment fund to provide grants to older suburban communities, noting "It's time for the federal government to do more to help our First Suburbs."

At the state level, both Governors Rendell and Corzine have created – or at least are maintaining – programs to assist older suburban communities, including in Pennsylvania the Main Street program, the Elm Street program, and the Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School programs. In New Jersey, Smart Growth planning grants, the Transit Village initiative and the Brownfields Task Force provide both policy support and financial assistance. Many of the counties in our region have also established their own programs to provide support to their older communities. These efforts range from planning and infrastructure grants to assistance with multi-municipal cooperation.

And of course your friends at DVRPC continue to stand ready to help in any way we can, from our regional land use and transportation plan that identifies the unique needs of older developed communities, to our investment policy of giving priority to maintaining and restoring existing infrastructure over building new facilities. We also manage and administer state and federal funding programs such as the Home Town Streets and the Transportation Enhancement program, and oversee our own planning grant program – the Transportation and Community Development Initiative, or TCDI – that targets resources to the cities and older suburbs of our region. DVRPC also completes multi-municipal area plans and corridor studies, and provides opportunities for technical assistance, education and networking, such as this conference.

This is actually our second *Building from Strength* conference. The first event, held in 2002 in Conshohocken, brought together a diverse mix of local elected officials, appointed representatives, non-profit organizations and private developers. Many people told us it

was the first conference of its kind in the region, and asked us to do it again. I would like to thank our friends at the William Penn Foundation, who also recognize the unique needs of the older suburbs in the region, and provided financial assistance to allow us to subsidize the costs of today.

We have a great event lined up, with expert speakers from near and far. I hope you use this opportunity to pick up some advice to help you address issues in your own community, but also take the time to meet someone new from a different community, to share perspectives and war stories.

At the conference four years ago, I quoted the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who said *"There are many ways of going forward, but only one way of standing still."* He also said *"Be sincere, be brief, and be seated."* We have gone forward in many ways over the past four years, so let's now move forward with the conference.

## Section I: Morning Sessions

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### 1. ***“Many Voices, One Vision”*: Thomas Adams, Mayor of the Village of Green Oaks, Illinois**

Joanne Denworth opened this session with an introduction of Mayor Adams. Ms. Denworth is a Senior Policy Manager in Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell’s Office of Policy and the current Vice Chair of DVRPC. Previously, Ms. Denworth held the position of President at 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, an organization she helped found.

Thomas Adams has served as Mayor of the Village of Green Oaks, Illinois, since 1993. In addition, he is Chair of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus for greater Chicago, a Director of the National Association of Regional Councils, and President of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. The Village of Green Oaks is located in Lake County, which is the third most populous county in Illinois with nearly 700,000 residents.

Mayor Adams began his talk by referencing the overarching goal of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, which is captured in its slogan, “Many Voices, One Vision.” Like the Delaware Valley region, greater Chicago is particularly challenged by local government fragmentation. Mayor Adams defined a unit of government as any ‘taxing body,’ and explained that, using this definition, the Chicago region has over 1,200 units of government – more than any other metro area in the United States. In addition, the region’s population is expected to nearly double, from 8.5 million to 15 million, by 2030.

Mayor Adams then discussed some of the other similarities between the Chicago and Delaware Valley regions, noting that they are racially and economically similar, and share a common tradition of home rule. Greater Chicago also retains an agricultural base at its western edge that is analogous to the Delaware Valley. Given these similarities, Mayor Adams suggested that the successes of the Chicago Mayors Caucus might be replicable in this region. Greater Chicago differs from greater Philadelphia in that much of the political power is held by counties. In unincorporated areas where there is no municipal government, counties control land use, zoning, and associated powers. Thus, there is often competition between counties and municipalities that is similar to the competition in our region between municipal governments.

In 1997, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley formed the Economic Development Forum, which was the precursor to the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. According to Mayor Adams, Mayor Daley provided the vision for a cooperative regional forum to address regional issues. In 1999, the Commercial Club of Chicago released their Chicago 2020 plan, which called for greater regional planning to be led by county governments. There was significant resistance to this idea from the mayors, and they united behind Daley in an attempt to implement regional planning without county control. This effort became the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

Legally, the Caucus is a not-for-profit organization and maintains a minimal structure that, in addition to participating mayors, includes only three full-time staff members: an Executive Director and two assistants. Mayor Adams emphasized that the simple and informal structure of the organization helps it remain innovative and able to respond quickly to challenges. Members of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus reach common decisions by consensus, which enables the group to present a unified front when working with other political bodies and groups, including the Illinois General Assembly.

The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus maintains an Executive Board and represents over 250 municipal governments. The policy areas commonly addressed by the Caucus include housing, transportation, the environment, and economic development. While the entire Caucus meets quarterly, the Executive Board meets bi-monthly. The 10-member Board is made up of the Mayor of Chicago and one representative from each of the region's nine Councils of Government (COGS). The Caucus also has a Steering Committee that is made up of the Executive Directors of the nine COGS. The Caucus is primarily funded by grants from private foundations. Other sources of support include the Federal and Illinois State governments.

Mayor Adams concluded his presentation by summarizing some of the recent successes of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. These include the passage of regional affordable housing legislation and progress toward the Chicago area's goal of complying with the EPA's clean air standards within five years.

## II. ***“Meet the Mayors”*: A Panel Discussion**

***Moderator: Thomas J. Gurick, Camden County Freeholder and DVRPC Board Chair***

Thomas Gurick is the current Chair of DVRPC and a liaison to Camden County's Department of Public Works. He also serves as Freeholder Chair of the Camden County Planning Board and is a member of the Executive Board for the New Jersey Association of Counties. He previously served as President of the Southern New Jersey Freeholders Association.

Mr. Gurick opened the session by introducing each of the mayors, who then proceeded to give brief presentations about their respective communities. Following the presentations, Mr. Gurick engaged the panelists in a structured question and answer session, which was followed by an open discussion between the mayors and the audience.

(Note: Mayor John Burzichelli of Paulsboro Borough, Gloucester County, was invited to take part in the panel but was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.)

***Joseph DiGirolamo, Mayor of Bensalem Township, Bucks County***

Joseph DiGirolamo serves as Mayor of Bensalem Township. He also founded the Bensalem Economic Development Corporation to facilitate the development of new businesses and provide employment opportunities for Bensalem residents. Mayor DiGirolamo serves on the Bensalem Township Water and Sewer Authority Board, and the Bucks County Land Preservation Board.

Mayor DiGirolamo began the panel with a presentation about the recent challenges and successes experienced by Bensalem, a community of nearly 60,000 residents and the location of the *Building from Strength II* conference. The Township is located along the I-95 corridor and is approximately equidistant from Center City Philadelphia and Trenton, New Jersey.

Like other communities in the Delaware Valley region, Mayor DiGirolamo noted that Bensalem struggles with an over-reliance on property taxes to fund municipal services. This includes a four-year, \$14.5 million roadway improvement program. (The Township's annual budget hovers around \$60 million.) In order to reduce the costs of maintaining its aging infrastructure, Bensalem sold its water and sewer facilities and used the proceeds to fund redevelopment projects. Mayor DiGirolamo remarked that the success of these efforts has so far enabled him to lower property taxes on three separate occasions. Current redevelopment proposals in Bensalem include the creation of a slots parlor/casino at Philadelphia Park Race Track, and the creation of a new, mixed-use development with residential and commercial components on a former industrial site along the Delaware River.

Mayor DiGirolamo also described the Township's role in various intergovernmental initiatives. These include Towns Against Graffiti, which involves nine municipalities in Bucks County; Towns Against Litter, which engages the same nine jurisdictions in partnership with non-violent offenders from the corrections system; and the Bucks County Consortium, which, among other things, collectively purchases goods that may be shared among member municipalities (e.g. salt for roadways).

***Raymond F. Shay, Mayor of Upper Darby Township, Delaware County***

Since January 2000, Raymond Shay has served as Mayor of Upper Darby Township. His accomplishments include spearheading the development of a new comprehensive plan for Upper Darby that was adopted by the Township Council in 2004.

Mayor Shay began his presentation by providing a general overview of Upper Darby Township, which is 7.8 square miles in size and has a population of 81,821. Although, the population of Upper Darby has grown increasingly diverse over time, residents are still primarily Caucasian. To many in greater Philadelphia, Upper Darby is known as a major transportation crossroads. SEPTA's 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal is located in the Township and provides area residents with access to the Market-Frankford Line, the Route 100 High Speed Rail, and the Route 101 and 102 trolleys. Recognizing the importance of its role as a regional transportation hub, Upper Darby has worked cooperatively with neighboring jurisdictions to revitalize the area around the 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal. Mayor Shay cited the Market Street Gateway Project as an example of such an initiative. Through this multi-municipal effort, the Township is helping to encourage the revitalization of the section of Market Street that extends from 63rd Street in Philadelphia to Upper Darby's Terminal Square.

***M. James Maley Jr., Mayor of Collingswood Borough, Camden County***

Since 1996, Jim Maley has served as Mayor of the Borough of Collingswood. He has held elected office in the Borough since 1989. During his tenure as mayor, a series of successful redevelopment efforts, including commercial and residential projects, have been completed in Collingswood.

The Borough is home to more than 14,000 residents and shares a municipal boundary with the City of Camden, one of the most dangerous municipalities in the nation. Although this certainly presents Collingswood with some challenges, Mayor Maley stated that the community is thriving overall. Housing prices in the Borough have doubled over the past four years and Haddon Avenue, the primary commercial corridor that extends through downtown Collingswood, has evolved into a successful shopping and entertainment district that draws customers from throughout the region. The Collingswood station on PATCO's High-Speed Line is located just south of Haddon Avenue and provides local residents with easy transit access to Center City Philadelphia and elsewhere in New Jersey. In addition, NJ Transit designated Collingswood as a Transit Village in 2002 and the Borough is currently engaged in an extensive transit-oriented development initiative that includes the construction of new condominiums and retail properties on a site adjacent to the rail line.

Mayor Maley noted that Collingswood's assorted housing stock helps make it an attractive residential option for a variety of household types. As a result, the community is racially and socially diverse, and is becoming more so over time.

***Peter Williamson, Councilmember in Media Borough, Delaware County***

Peter Williamson was recently appointed to Media's Borough Council. He serves as Chair of the Community Development Committee, which is responsible for working with the Planning Commission, Code Enforcement staff, and the Zoning Hearing Board. Prior to his appointment, he served on the Borough's Planning Commission.

Mr. Williamson began his presentation by discussing the geography and demographics of Media. The tiny borough is less than one square mile in size and is home to about 6,000 residents. Media is the Delaware County Seat and also benefits from its proximity to Center City Philadelphia, Route 476, and the Philadelphia International Airport. SEPTA rail service, which includes the R3 Regional Rail line and the Route 101 Trolley, links Media to the 69<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal in Upper Darby Township, 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station in Philadelphia, and dozens of other regional destinations. During the week, the Borough is a large employment destination for Delaware County staff, and has also grown a thriving small business community along State Street, a pedestrian-scale retail corridor. Mr. Williamson noted that Media has helped to cultivate an attractive downtown environment by investing in streetscape improvements along this road. As new restaurants and retail establishments continue to open and succeed along State Street, the demand for increased residential densities around the Borough's downtown area and transit facilities has begun to grow.

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After the panelists had the opportunity to introduce the audience to their respective communities, Mr. Gurick posed a series of questions. The first question addressed the role private interests play in public redevelopment plans. Mayor Shay replied that his community tends to take matters into its own hands, including the recent design and implementation of a streetscape plan. He also mentioned efforts to bring a Korean supermarket to Upper Darby to serve the Township's growing Korean population. Mayor Maley from Collingswood remarked that cooperative efforts between the private and public sectors were key to his community's redevelopment successes.

Mr. Gurick then introduced the topic of property taxes and the role they play in New Jersey and Pennsylvania municipalities. Mr. Williamson responded that Media collects both a property tax and a local income tax. Of these, the Borough is primarily dependent on the property tax, which is a key source of funding for the local public schools. Mayor Maley noted that the situation in New Jersey is similar, with municipalities growing increasingly dependent on property taxes to fund schools and other local public services. As a result, many New Jersey communities are developing interests in multi-municipal shared services initiatives.

Mr. Gurick then opened the discussion to questions from the audience. The first question addressed the role of local government in attracting new businesses to their communities. The panelists discussed how business recruitment efforts centered on the need for "anchors" such as new restaurants, commercial development and even conference/hotel facilities. Mr. Williamson discussed how the Old Media Hall was retained by the town and leased to a restaurant. This helped to attract other commercial uses and the revitalization of State Street has continued to move forward at a steady pace.

The next audience question addressed the incentive and assistance programs available to support new and existing businesses at the local level. The panelists responded to this question by discussing the use of abatement programs. Collingswood Mayor Jim Maley said that relying on abatements to stimulate new growth can be difficult. (Collingswood only offers a standard tax abatement for building improvements, which is limited and administered by Camden County.) Because tax abatements are relatively limited in New Jersey, it is often the character of the town that helps to bring in new business. In

Collingswood specifically, absentee landlords once managed a tremendous number of rental units. The property owners did not keep up on maintenance and sent a number of residences into a state of disrepair. This led to declining assessed values that impacted entire neighborhoods. To address the problem, the Borough implemented a landlord registration program that conducts annual inspections of properties to make sure they are kept to code. Additionally, Collingswood established a rental conversion program. Through this initiative, the Borough partners with local banks that agree to provide low-interest loans to homeowners who wish to buy rental properties (must include a minimum of two apartments) and convert them into single-family units. Mayor DiGirolomo added that, in Pennsylvania, the school board and the county have to agree on the abatements. He noted that Bensalem does not have a tax abatement program; however, it does have an economic development corporation that works to expand and strengthen the Township's business community.

Another audience question addressed the role county governments can play in the community revitalization and economic development efforts of individual municipalities. The panelists agreed that, while counties may offer some help in the forms of technical or grant assistance, community and business development tend to be local issues. Delaware County's Renaissance Program was cited as an exception. The program, which provides \$1 million a year to assist municipalities with redevelopment and revitalization initiatives, has helped several of the County's older communities to implement façade enhancements, streetscape improvements, and other efforts to attract and retain businesses and residents.

## Section II: Afternoon Sessions

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### I. Concurrent Session “A-1”: New Markets for Older Communities

***Moderator: John E. Pickett, Delaware County Planning Department***

John Pickett is the Director of Planning and Community Development for Delaware County. In this capacity, he manages both the Planning Department and the Office of Housing and Community Development. Included among his duties is oversight of the Renaissance Program, the Delaware County Council's initiative to revitalize first-generation suburbs. Mr. Pickett opened the session by introducing the concept of marketing older communities to private interests, and subsequently utilizing public funds to complement the resulting investments.

***Dennis R. Mincieli, AKRF, Inc.***

Dennis Mincieli is a Vice President at AKRF, Inc., a real estate, planning, and environmental services firm. His presentation focused on the redevelopment of a section of the Baltimore Avenue corridor that extends from West Philadelphia to the western edge of Upper Darby Township.

AKRF's study of Baltimore Avenue identifies seven high-impact development areas. These sites were selected because they offer available and developable properties, transportation-oriented design possibilities, and good downtown fabric. Mr. Mincieli identified young achievers and affluent empty-nesters as two groups that have the potential to help drive a revitalized residential market along Baltimore Avenue. Among the new housing forms the corridor has the potential to support are town homes, flats, and rentals – all of which support the creation of an affordable, mixed-use area with easy access to employment centers and transit. In summarizing the development process for this project, Mr. Mincieli commented on the importance of identifying problems, assets, and strengths; creating a broad vision for the study area; determining market demand; maintaining momentum; and facilitating cooperation among various government entities.

Mr. Mincieli then compared the Baltimore Avenue study area to New Cassel, New York. New Cassel is located on Long Island, in Nassau County, and faced many of the same challenges as the Baltimore Avenue corridor when it began to implement a series of redevelopment and revitalization initiatives. Like the communities located along Baltimore Avenue, New Cassel benefited from good housing stock and strong anchor institutions. However, incompatible existing uses and a poor pedestrian environment hindered the town's ability to attract and retain new investment. Mr. Mincieli then detailed the redevelopment steps taken in New Cassel that could also be applied along Baltimore Avenue. These include preserving and improving gateways; assembling sites; and implementing elements such as mixed-use construction, façade requirements, and senior housing. He also noted that achieving local consensus on a vision for the community is an important step in any redevelopment process of this scale.

***James E. Hartling, Urban Partners***

James Hartling is a Principal at Urban Partners, a Philadelphia-based economic development consulting firm. He began his presentation by describing the opportunities and challenges associated with redevelopment efforts in three types of Delaware Valley

communities: cities and towns, villages, and older roadways. According to Mr. Hartling, cities and towns tend to have larger former industrial sites and more extensive transportation access. Villages tend to have smaller redevelopment sites, a dense fabric of buildings, and, in some cases, commuter rail facilities. Older roadways often feature obsolete shopping centers (greyfields) and auto-oriented uses, and are often controlled by multiple jurisdictions.

In cities and towns, opportunities often exist for market-driven housing, mixed-use, and freestanding commercial development. However, market drivers are sometimes in conflict with the community's visions for the area that is targeted for reuse. As a result, Mr. Hartling stated, negotiations and trade-offs are often a requisite part of the redevelopment process. In villages, opportunities for new development are generally on a small-scale, with new, mixed-use development being driven by entrepreneurs. Mr. Hartling also noted the important role visionary property owners can play in revitalizing smaller communities. He then went on to discuss the redevelopment potential of older roadways. Among the strategies he discussed were repositioning older shopping centers, reusing sites for new housing, modernizing highway-oriented retailing, and converting strip retail complexes into community nodes.

### ***Stephen P. Mullin, Econsult***

Stephen Mullin is a Senior Vice President and Principal at Econsult Corporation. His consulting practice concentrates on state and public finance and policy analysis, economic and real estate development and impact analysis, business strategies utilizing government incentive programs, and e-commerce applications. His presentation focused on the older suburbs that immediately surround central cities.

Mr. Mullin noted that "main street" development, such as that found in Manayunk, is not the only option available to older areas. Rather than trying to change supply and demand, communities could try to work with and enhance their existing market dynamics. Mr. Mullin also observed that when a community creates a vision for an area, there are always trade-offs. No one-size-fits-all proposal will work for every area.

Additionally, Mr. Mullin discussed how changing levels of personal wealth can affect the residential decisions of individual households. For example, as their income levels increase, some households will choose to move out of their current neighborhoods and into wealthier areas. That said, it can take significant effort to draw middle- and upper-income households to attractive and well-located places if they are home to lower-wealth populations. Municipalities should be mindful of this because the income level of a community rises in two key ways: (1) current residents increase their wealth; and (2) wealthier residents move in the area. Although a resident's pride in their neighborhood is certainly important, people can – and do – move.

## II. Concurrent Session “A-2”: Streets & Parking: Myth & Realities

### ***Moderator: Mark Remsa, Burlington County Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning***

Mark Remsa is Director of the Burlington County, New Jersey, Department of Economic Development and Regional Planning. He opened the session by introducing each of the panelists.

### ***Patrice Carroll, TreeVitalize***

Patrice Carroll serves as Project Director for TreeVitalize, a public/private partnership initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to restore tree cover in southeastern Pennsylvania. Ms. Carroll began her presentation with an explanation of the goals and motivation behind the TreeVitalize program. Over the last 15 years, southeastern Pennsylvania has lost 8 percent of its tree cover. This loss is primarily due to development and has reduced the region's current tree coverage to 27 percent. (American Forests, Inc. recommends that urbanized areas maintain coverage ratios of approximately 40 percent.) TreeVitalize was formed in April 2005 to address these issues, and seeks to raise \$8 million by 2009 to plant 20,000 shade trees, restore 1,000 acres of riparian buffers, and launch a citizen education program.

During her talk, Ms. Carroll highlighted some of the benefits that shade trees provide. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### Environmental benefits

- Improve air quality
- Reduce storm water runoff
- Reduce heat and provide shaded areas
- Conserve energy and reduce energy costs

#### Economic benefits

- Increase property values
- Increase rents
- Increase shopping times
- Decrease road maintenance

#### Social benefits

- Reduce stress levels
- Improve attitudes
- Enhance wellness
- Increase sense of safety

According to noted planner and author Allan Jacobs, given a limited budget, the single most effective expenditure for street improvement is trees. Ms. Carroll highlighted three studies that provided data for these benefits. The first was conducted at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business and showed that the presence of a street tree improves the property value of every house within 50 feet by at least 10 percent. The second and third studies were conducted by the Center for Urban Forestry (CUF) at the University of California, Davis. Their results showed that the installation of street trees

can slow traffic by 10 to 15 miles per hour, and reduce road maintenance costs by about 58 percent.

Although planting trees can be expensive, Ms. Carroll recommended reducing up-front costs by using volunteer labor to install the trees and setting aside funds for maintenance costs. According to CUF, the long term economic benefit of planting a tree ranges from \$1,500 for a small tree to \$5,000 for a large tree.

***Christina Ortwein, Newtown Main Streets, Bucks County***

Christina Ortwein manages the Main Streets program in Newtown, Pennsylvania, which is recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She began her talk with a brief overview of the four principal areas of the National Trust's "Main Street Approach": organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring.

In her presentation, Ms. Ortwein focused the specific challenges related to parking in downtown areas, and discussed Newtown's experience in responding to these issues. She stated that the overarching goal of Newtown's program is to maintain a system that serves the needs of both cars and pedestrians. More specifically, Newtown takes a proactive approach to parking management that seeks to minimize conflict and set priorities for both types of users.

Newtown's parking policy emphasizes the following guidelines:

- Meet every user's needs;
- Encourage turnover of spaces;
- Ensure access to handicapped parking;
- Ensure access to shops for both cars and pedestrians; and
- Discourage the availability of long-term parking.

Newtown assumes the following underlying philosophies with regard to parking: (1) parking is a privilege, not a right; and (2) parking is scarce. According to Ms. Ortwein, the first is a management issue, while the second is a capacity issue. To address the issue of parking management, Newtown uses permit parking and tickets violators. Other potential means of managing parking include coin and electronic meters, and cash boxes in off-street parking lots.

In order to determine whether a downtown faces management or capacity issues with regard to its supply of parking spaces, Ms. Ortwein outlined a step-by-step process for assessing resources:

- Define the parking study area;
- Count and map all available parking spaces, and note any pertinent restrictions or access issues;
- Check parking usage at predetermined times throughout the day;
- Count occupied spaces; and
- Calculate average occupancy rates, and determine where and when parking is most restricted.

Employing this technique allows a downtown to develop a targeted parking management policy rather than creating a response plan that is based on resident or customer complaints.

Ms. Ortwein concluded her presentation with some incentives and disincentives for effectively managing short- and long-term parking facilities. These include employee bonuses, transit vouchers, and adequate parking fines for abusers. She also noted that such incentive and enforcement policies must be evaluated for effectiveness before a final management strategy is put into effect.

### ***David B. Fields, Nelson\Nygaard***

David Fields is a Senior Associate Transportation Planner at Nelson\Nygaard, a transportation consulting firm. He also chairs the Transportation Committee of the American Planning Association's New York Metro chapter.

Mr. Fields presented a parking case study on Center City, Philadelphia. In addition to looking at Center City as a whole, the study also included a more focused assessment of the area surrounding the Philadelphia Art Museum and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Although Philadelphia is a large city, its downtown area faces many of the same parking challenges experienced by older suburbs.

The Center City study looked at the availability and cost of parking. According to Mr. Fields, the pervasive belief that parking in Philadelphia is both scarce and expensive is, in fact, a myth. Current parking occupancy in Center City generally hovers around 80 percent, which is not high for a downtown area. Mr. Fields also remarked that parking costs in Philadelphia tend to be 'front-loaded.' This means that the fee charged for the first hour a space is occupied is larger than what is charged for subsequent hours of use. In many Center City garages, the cost of the first hour of parking is approximately 50 percent of the all-day rate. This discourages turnover and makes parking less available to shoppers and other short-term users.

Mr. Fields also presented several case studies to illustrate the techniques other cities have used to address parking issues.

### ***San Francisco, CA***

In San Francisco, private parking is discouraged in the downtown area. The San Francisco Parking Authority currently controls a 25 percent market share of the downtown parking, which generates \$32 million annually for a dedicated transportation fund. The proceeds of this fund are used to finance all modes of transit. Downtown parking fees are increased over time to encourage the turnover of spaces.

### ***Chicago, IL***

Chicago utilizes several parking management techniques. In addition, the downtown zoning code includes parking design guidelines, introduces parking maximums, and outlines bicycle parking requirements. A \$1.50 flat tax on parking fees also generates revenue for the city's general fund.

### ***Arlington, VA***

Arlington has instituted parking maximums for federal government buildings and concentrates new parking facilities around transit stops. Arlington also requires site plan

review of all proposed parking structures, and uses financial incentives to encourage carpooling and the use of other modes of transit.

*Boston, MA*

The Environmental Protection Agency capped Boston's parking capacity in response to the city's high level of air pollution. Since then, Boston has reduced by-right parking regulations in the downtown area, and now permits private developers to build at increased densities if they agree to allow public parking in their buildings.

*Portland, OR*

Portland utilizes a 'park once' system called SmartPark. Seven city-owned SmartPark garages containing a total of 4,000 parking spaces are located near shopping and public transit facilities throughout the downtown area. These garages charge significantly lower rates than private garages and provide two hours of free parking to shoppers who spend \$25 or more.

Mr. Fields concluded his talk with an overview of his firm's key recommendations for Center City. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Prioritize the preservation of the dense and growing residential environment over the maintenance of low parking prices and a ubiquitous supply of spaces;
- Assess parking issues in terms of management rather than just increasing capacity;
- Anticipate and address problems proactively, rather than taking a reactive approach;
- Implement design standards for parking garages;
- Minimize surface parking;
- Promote transit in the downtown area; and
- Remove parking subsidies and incorporate user fees.

**III. Concurrent Session “A-3 / B-3”:** ***New Jersey State Resources for Redevelopment***

***Moderator: Barry J. Seymour, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission***

Barry Seymour is the Executive Director of DVRPC. He previously served as the Commission’s Assistant Executive Director for Regional Planning. He began the workshop by introducing each of the panelists.

***Eileen Swan, New Jersey Office of Smart Growth***

Eileen Swan is Executive Director of the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) in the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Prior to her appointment to her current position, Ms. Swan served as a consultant to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, where she assisted municipalities with land preservation activities and collaborated with the Department of Environmental Protection.

Ms. Swan spoke about OSG’s ongoing efforts to promote sustainable development and discussed OSG grant programs that are available to assist older communities, including those administered under the Smart Futures program. Ms. Swan also discussed OSG’s efforts to partner with other state agencies to ease the redevelopment approval processes for New Jersey municipalities. Such interagency efforts include the brownfield and greyfield redevelopment task forces that are managed by DCA. Last year, the Greyfield Development Pilot Program awarded four planning grants for mixed-use redevelopment projects, three of which are located in the Delaware Valley region.

Other statewide, interagency efforts in which OSG is a partner include the Transit Village Initiative, which is administered through NJ Transit and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), and a host of programs housed at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA), the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the Main Street New Jersey Program, and other state offices.

***James D. Simmons, New Jersey Department of Commerce***

James Simmons is the Brownfields Coordinator at the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission (Commerce). He also serves on the State’s Brownfield Redevelopment Task Force, which coordinates the remediation and reuse of contaminated sites across New Jersey.

Mr. Simmons discussed the key role brownfield redevelopment can play in revitalizing communities throughout the state. In the Delaware Valley, Mr. Simmons noted that Commerce has recently allocated over \$20 million for brownfield reuse projects along the Route 130 corridor, and over \$1 million for waterfront clean-up and redevelopment initiatives in Gloucester City. Mr. Simmons also discussed the lending programs administered by Commerce. In general, the Commission administers loans that range in size from \$200,000 to \$3 million dollars, and can offer favorable terms to municipal borrowers.

***Margie Piliere, New Jersey Economic Development Authority***

Margie Piliere is the Assistant Director of Business and Community Development for Central New Jersey at EDA. In this capacity, she helps connect municipalities, community development organizations, and businesses with the financial and technical assistance resources administered by EDA.

During her presentation, Ms. Piliere discussed EDA's role as a self-supporting agency with three primary goals: 1) creating jobs; 2) growing the state's economy; and 3) revitalizing communities. She also described the financing tools EDA makes available to New Jersey municipalities, including loans and bonds to support redevelopment activities. Ms. Piliere noted that EDA generally lends at below market rate and can offer flexible and unique terms to borrowing municipalities. In addition, because EDA often partners with other New Jersey State offices on redevelopment initiatives, they can help to structure interagency assistance packages. As examples, Ms. Piliere referenced EDA's work with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection on land recycling programs, and collaborations with Mr. Simmons and the New Jersey Commerce and Economic Growth Commission.

***Mark Stout, New Jersey Department of Transportation***

Mark Stout is the Assistant Commissioner of Planning and Development at NJDOT. In this position, he is responsible for NJDOT's planning, project development, capital programming, and local aid units. Mr. Stout previously served as NJDOT's Director of Capital Investment Planning and Development.

Mr. Stout began his presentation by stating that, under Governor Corzine's direction, NJDOT is "charging ahead" and working with communities on a range of transportation and land use issues. Because of the limited financial resources available to NJDOT, the Department is working with other agencies and communities through collaborative programs such as New Jersey Future in Transportation (NJFIT). NJFIT is a pilot program that will assess 13 corridors throughout the state to identify sustainable solutions to congestion and other traffic management challenges without proposing the widening of existing roads.

Mr. Stout also discussed the Transit Village Initiative, Safe Streets to School, Transportation Enhancements grants, and other programs at NJDOT that seek to enhance the funding resources available to municipalities. Additionally, as indicated in the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, NJDOT provides transportation planning assistance through Local Aid for Center of Place, which invests in key redevelopment projects and core areas across the state. Mr. Stout also noted that under the new federal SAFETEA-LU transportation law, additional funds will soon be available for a wide range of projects.

#### **IV. Concurrent Session “A-4 / B-4”:** **Pennsylvania State Resources for Redevelopment**

**Moderator: Richard G. Bickel, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission**

Richard Bickel is Director of DVRPC’s Division of Planning. He manages the comprehensive planning section; co-managed development of the region’s adopted long-range plan, *Direction 2030*; and directs job access, environmental justice and land use/transportation studies. He began the workshop session by introducing each of the speakers.

**Jackie Z. Parker, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development**

Jackie Parker is Executive Director of the Community Action Team (CAT) at the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). In this capacity, she oversees CAT’s efforts to direct technical and financial interagency assistance to communities across the Commonwealth.

Ms. Parker spoke about CAT’s work to identify and coordinate funding for “impact projects” – community-changing revitalization initiatives that include a mix of uses and are supported by a range of public and private investment sources. CAT staff serve as local officials’ direct points of contact at DCED and work with communities to implement high priority development initiatives. Among CAT’s key functions is the assembly of customized packages of multi-agency, state-level funding that are specifically tailored to individual projects. This coordinated approach has a distinct advantage over the traditional, piece-meal, and unpredictable process of individually applying for separate sources of funding.

Ms. Parker then discussed several towns where CAT is playing a central role in assembling Commonwealth assistance packages to implement key projects. One such place is New Castle, where the revitalization of an old theatre, plaza, and Days Inn are currently underway. Other locations where revitalization is taking place as a result of CAT include Pottsville, Warren, Meadville, and Canonsburg.

**Kevin Gallagher, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**

Kevin Gallagher is the Local Government Liaison for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Southeast Regional Office. In this role, he assists local government officials, economic development corporations, redevelopment agencies, associations, and businesses with DEP permitting procedures and other related issues.

The focus of Mr. Gallagher’s presentation was DEP’s Brownfield Action Team (BAT) program, which helps communities facilitate the revitalization, remediation, reclamation, and reuse of brownfield sites. Much like their counterparts in the CAT program, BAT staff serve to streamline interaction between the DEP and local officials by creating a single point of contact within the Department for priority brownfields redevelopment projects. Among other things, BAT staff help communities determine the regulatory requirements for their project, and assist with the identification of appropriate sources of funding. DEP’s commitment to these communities and projects is then carried through the remediation and redevelopment process until the site is ready for reuse.

Mr. Gallagher also spoke about several current BAT projects. Included among these was a site in Bensalem (location of the conference) where an old chemical plant is being converted into a riverfront community.

***Timothy Keptner, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources***

Tim Keptner is Chief of the Regional Services Division at the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, an office of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). In this role, he oversees the Bureau's six regional offices, which manage a variety of grant and technical assistance programs concerned with community recreation, heritage areas, river conservation, greenways and trails, and natural areas and open space.

Mr. Keptner spoke about DCNR's "Blueprint for Action," which outlines the Department's established goals and action priorities. Some of these goals include improving the management of state parks and forests, promoting statewide land conservation, building sustainable communities, and creating outdoor connections for residents and visitors.

Mr. Keptner then discussed the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation's role in providing grant funding, and technical assistance and training services for planning, acquisition, rehabilitation, and development activities. The types of projects the Department supports include, but are not limited to, park, open space, and trail plans; greenway acquisitions; and river conservation initiatives. Mr. Keptner also provided overviews of specific projects, including River Place in Reading and the North Delaware Greenway in Philadelphia.

***Larry S. Shifflet, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation***

Larry Shifflet is Manager of PennDOT's Center for Program Development and Management. Among the Center's key responsibilities is the development and administration of Pennsylvania's statewide, twelve-year program plan for highways, mass transit systems, bridges, airports, and rail freight.

Mr. Shifflet spoke about PennDOT's Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School programs. Home Town Streets is a reimbursement initiative that supports streetscape improvements as a means of encouraging new business development and other forms of revitalization in downtowns and commercial areas. Projects eligible for funding may include the installation of sidewalk enhancements, street lighting, pedestrian crossings, and signage. Safe Routes to School, which also functions as a reimbursement program, provides for physical improvements that promote safe walking and bike paths to schools. Examples of the types of projects that may be funded under this initiative include the installation of sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb extensions.

Mr. Shifflet then spoke about some of the locations in Pennsylvania where elements of these various programs have been implemented, including Annville, Bethlehem, Greensburg, and Indiana. To date, the program has funded 79 Home Town Streets projects and 35 Safe Routes to School initiatives.

V. **Concurrent Session “B-1”:** Workshop Session III: **Zoning and Planning: Tools and Techniques**

**Moderator: Lynn T. Bush, Bucks County Planning Commission**

Lynn Bush currently serves as Executive Director of the Bucks County Planning Commission and as Bucks County’s Community Services Division Leader. Prior to accepting her current positions, Ms. Bush worked for fifteen years as a planning consultant. She began the workshop session by introducing each of the speakers.

**Angela N. Murray, Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County**

Angela Murray is Assistant Director of Building and Planning for Lower Merion Township. In this role, she is responsible for economic development, community development, and long range planning.

Ms. Murray spoke about Lower Merion’s Mixed Use Special Transit (MUST) overlay ordinance. MUST was designed to help achieve the following goals:

- Encourage pedestrian-oriented development;
- Expand and diversify economic development opportunities that support transit station areas;
- Promote the vitality and identity of transit station areas;
- Encourage the renovation and construction of buildings that provide direct pedestrian connections to the street;
- Implement design standards to preserve and maintain the character, scale, and architecture of traditional main streets;
- Reduce auto-dependency, and promote public transportation and alternative transportation methods; and
- Encourage development and shared use of off-street parking facilities.

MUST was adopted by the Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners in April 2006 and will first be implemented in Ardmore, where the zoning overlay will apply to commercially zoned properties within 1,500 feet of the SEPTA R5 Regional Rail station. Future MUST applications are planned for other SEPTA rail stations in Lower Merion, including Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Bala, and Cynwyd.

The dimensional and design standards of the ordinance are designed to be pedestrian-oriented. There are also building height incentives and density bonuses for the inclusion of moderate-income housing units. Developers that incorporate at least 500 square feet of public gathering space into their construction plans may also qualify for a density bonus.

**Gary J. Passanante, Mayor of Somerdale Borough, Camden County**

Gary Passanante is Mayor of Somerdale Borough, New Jersey, and also serves on the boards of the New Jersey Conference of Mayors and the New Jersey League of Municipalities. The focus of Mayor Passanante’s talk was Somerdale’s revitalization of an underutilized shopping center, Lion’s Head Plaza, which had been in decline since 1988. The Borough was able to secure a redevelopment grant and gain public support for the

project by engaging residents in the planning process. After convening community forums to determine the type of development residents wanted at the site, the decision was made to construct a retail center with nearby housing.

Somerdale then hired an economic consulting company and architectural/planning firm to contribute to the project. Together, they developed a plan for a retail center that has the appearance of a small village. Attractive facades will give the shopping complex a “main street” appearance and encourage its becoming a focal point for the community. The decision was also made to recruit Wal-Mart to the shopping center, provided the company agrees to comply with exterior design standards. The Borough estimates that the shopping center and housing units will generate approximately \$1.2 million in new tax revenues and create almost 500 new jobs.

***Bryan T. Havir, Cheltenham Township, Montgomery County***

Bryan Havir is the Assistant Township Manager of Cheltenham Township and has twenty years of local government and land use planning experience in greater Philadelphia. This includes work in New Jersey as well as in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Havir spoke about the Cheltenham Avenue Revitalization Plan. Cheltenham Avenue faces many challenges but also presents a number of opportunities. Some challenges include inconsistent aesthetics, differences in retail and residential zoning, a confusing array of property ownership, and inconsistent maintenance of sidewalks and streets. Nonetheless, Cheltenham Avenue remains an important regional through-route with significant opportunities for infill construction and other forms of development. The Cheltenham Avenue Revitalization Plan, which received some of its funding under DCED’s Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP), was created to address some of these issues.

While the Revitalization Plan includes redevelopment proposals for five sites along Cheltenham Avenue, Mr. Havir spoke primarily about the Cheltenham Mall area. Here, Cheltenham Township is working with a local community development corporation to acquire properties on the opposite corner of the mall intersection. At this site they hope to construct buildings with ground floor retail and offices above. The Township is also looking to initiate transit-oriented development and a place-making gateway near the SEPTA bus transfer station on Cheltenham Avenue.

**VI. Concurrent Session “B-2”:** **Managing Change: Design and Development**

**Moderator: Edward Fox, Camden County Improvement Authority**

Edward Fox is the Director of Planning at the Camden County Improvement Authority, where he coordinates land use planning functions and manages the activities of the countywide Brownfields and Redevelopment Center. He opened the session by introducing the panelists.

**Andrew Johnson, Haddonfield Borough, Camden County**

Andrew Johnson is the Program Officer for the Environment and Communities program at the William Penn Foundation. He also chairs the planning board in Haddonfield Borough. Mr. Johnson spoke about development in the Borough, which has gone through three phases and is entering a fourth. Haddonfield began as a colonial settlement, grew into a market town, and then became a twentieth century suburb. The “fourth Haddonfield” began to evolve in the 1990’s as tear-downs accelerated, housing prices skyrocketed, and some areas experienced wholesale neighborhood change. Mr. Johnson noted that common misconceptions among Haddonfield residents are that the community has not changed, that change is bad, and that change can be stopped. However, the reality is that Haddonfield has changed a lot in its 300 year history.

Mr. Johnson presented four key subjects that should be addressed in any productive discussion about community change:

1. The changes the community wants;
2. The changes the community does not want;
3. The changes that are inevitable; and
4. How to cause the desired change, avoid the undesired change, and manage the inevitable change.

He also highlighted specific agents of change in Haddonfield, most notably its active business community. A Business District Task Force was established in 2000, followed by the completion of a retail recruitment strategy in 2003, and the formation of a business improvement district (BID) in 2004. The BID currently employs a retail coordinator and has an annual budget of \$300,000; however, unlike many BIDs, it does not collect an assessment on real estate in its service area.

Mr. Johnson then discussed problems with the current zoning for downtown Haddonfield. According to Mr. Johnson, the Borough’s existing zoning ordinance applies a one-size-fits-all classification to the area that offers little design guidance. In an effort to better manage change in this area, the Borough has hired consultants to coordinate a community visioning process. Mr. Johnson also mentioned two significant drivers of local change in Haddonfield that remain outside the Borough’s control: PATCO’s plans for transit-oriented development near the rail station, and future community and state actions related to the construction of affordable housing.

### **Gary F. LaVenía, Riverside Township, Burlington County**

Gary LaVenía is Director of Improvement Authority Operations at the Burlington County Bridge Commission, and also serves as the County's Shared Services Coordinator. His presentation centered on redevelopment in Riverside Borough, an older community in western Burlington County that has a significant share of low- and moderate-income households.

Early in its planning process, the Improvement Authority began promoting the idea of redevelopment to Riverside residents and stakeholders, including the school district, emergency services personnel, members of the clergy, and senior citizens groups, among others. The implementation of design standards was also an important step in fostering community support. In his presentation, Mr. LaVenía provided an overview of the design standards for the planned redevelopment of Riverside's Taubel's Mill. These include provisions for sidewalks, lighting, directional signage, street furniture, landscaping, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation. The size, mass, and architectural style of the proposed buildings are also addressed.

In closing, Mr. LaVenía remarked that communities should develop visions and plans for their future that reflect the history, physical composition, and development patterns of their local area. Once these plans are in place, communities should remain focused on their overall goals, objectives, and principles as they move forward with implementation.

### **Thomas Hylton, Pottstown Borough, Montgomery County**

For 22 years, Thomas Hylton wrote for Pottstown's daily newspaper, *The Mercury*. His editorials advocating the preservation of farmland and open space in southeastern Pennsylvania were recognized with a Pulitzer Prize in 1990. He also authored *Save Our Land, Save Our Towns* (1995). Mr. Hylton currently chairs the Pottstown Planning Commission and the Pottstown Shade Tree Commission. He is also a co-founder of Preservation Pottstown.

Mr. Hylton's presentation focused on design and development in Pottstown. He noted that "smart growth" is the antidote to sprawl, and detailed how towns can enhance the attractiveness of their built environments through the application of smart growth techniques. The following were among the examples he presented:

- Streetscapes can be improved through the removal or revitalization of dilapidated buildings;
- Enhanced street and landscape design can be effective tools upgrading the look of strip malls and other highway-oriented retail uses; and
- Chain stores, such as McDonald's, are often willing to replace their standard building design with plans that better fit the context of the local environment.

Additionally, Mr. Hylton discussed Pottstown's positive experience with the implementation of back-in angle parking, which requires less road width than front-in angle parking. He also presented "before" and "after" photos that highlighted the importance of planting trees in a community.

Before concluding his presentation, Mr. Hylton gave an overview of the new, illustrated zoning ordinance Pottstown adopted in 2003. Among other things, the ordinance

recognizes two historic districts formed in the 1980s, and includes a large conservation district featuring design guidelines, tree requirements, and other features. In areas outside these special districts, the Borough encourages businesses and developers to create attractive built environments, and municipal staff are available to offer advice on how to achieve such results.





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