LAND USE PLANNING AND “SPRAWL”: PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES CONCERNING LACKAWANNA AND LUZERNE COUNTIES

JOINT URBAN STUDIES CENTER
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since World War II, American developers have implemented a new form of land usage, which sprung from the creation of new neighborhoods in rural areas just outside of cities. Such development didn’t stop at homes and neighborhoods. As new areas increased in population, additional development occurred to accommodate growth. Developers utilized more rural lands to build shopping centers, malls, and industrial parks. By the 1980’s this kind of development was occurring at a rapid pace and soon cities really felt population losses in their residential and commercial sectors. Concerned environmentalists and urban planners call this phenomenon “sprawl.” The Vermont Forum on Sprawl defines it as “dispersed auto-dependant development outside of compact urban and village centers along highways and in rural countryside.”

This brief discusses the history of land use planning, the beginnings of sprawl and government policy. In addition, it summarizes a number of land use theories for better planning that focus on zones and central business districts. The paper provides information on and sites examples of New Urbanism (also known as Traditional Neighborhood Development – TND) and how this popular strategy is relevant in our region. The paper also discusses cases of communities in Washington and Florida, which have developed senior-friendly communities as part of overall land use planning. Finally, examples of communities undergoing revitalization and transit oriented development strategies round out the case studies presented. This paper is designed to create dialogue about options, to encourage regional thinking and planning, and to have the foresight to plan ahead as our region undergoes change.

The development of the U.S. highway system served as the main catalyst of sprawl, as it facilitated development of the suburbs. With faster and easier access made available through the highway system, more affluent residents moved from cities to suburbs to own larger houses on expansive pieces of land. To garner more space for expansion, many employers also moved facilities to the suburbs. With declining city populations, the remaining residents were often the middle class and poor. Further, federal government housing policies (through the Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration) encouraged people to buy homes in the suburbs and other policies seemingly restricted development of low-income housing within cities, and primarily in downtown areas.

As a whole, Pennsylvania has numerous land use issues. From 1982 – 1997, while the Commonwealth’s population increased by 2.5 percent, its urbanized footprint increased by a whopping 47 percent. Less than 5 percent of state farmland is protected and there have been a significant number of bond-funded projects in the state’s major cities. As a result, conservation is limited, dependency on cars increasing, and downtowns become ghost towns after 5 p.m.

Sprawl is the primary cause of population loss in our two county seats - Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. Suburban housing and commercial developments through construction of malls, shopping centers, and industrials parks have led to our regional sprawl. While the area’s sprawl score is only slightly above average, without mixed use, high density, reuse plans for our major cities [with adequate transportation infrastructure] — the region has potential to worsen.
Based on migration patterns over the past ten years, it is reasonable to expect population growth in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. Such growth will come from two distinct demographic groups coming to the area for the same reasons from the same geographical areas — the low-moderate income group (ethically diverse population) and the middle to upper-middle income group, which are both leaving larger metropolitan areas (Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey and soon the Lehigh Valley) for more affordable housing. The low to moderate income group will seek blue-collar employment locally and the middle to upper-middle income group will continue to commute to the major metropolitan areas until congestion forces them to look for more local employment.

Such expected population growth suggests the need for an economic development plan to attract new businesses that match the skill set of the middle to upper-middle income base. This also requires changes in our thought processes and planning activities. Land-use and transportation planning for this change on a regional level should begin immediately.

Further, Pennsylvania’s Transportation Funding and Reform Commission was established by Governor Rendell to evaluate transit agency operations; recommended levels and sources of funding for transportation projects and maintenance; evaluate growth and development patterns; and establishment of best practices. The report, available at www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/pdCommissCommitt.nsf, identifies a number of recommendations for managing transportation concerns across the Commonwealth.

II. HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF SPRAWL

In order to understand sprawl and its affects on land use planning, particularly in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, one must understand several key concepts, including history, evolution, and outcomes sprawl creates.

From the dawn of civilization to World War II, land use development followed certain criterion, which defined cities and towns. First, they were compact. People living in the outskirts of the city were only five miles away. Without modern transportation, that equated to a 90-minute walk. A clear boundary existed between the city and countryside. Between the fringes of the city and the nearest town was just countryside. No further development existed. Within the city, planning was of mixed use. Homes, stores, restaurants, schools, parks, and office space were combined. Certain functions were not present in all sectors. Lastly, upscale housing was located closest to the center. The wealthiest people lived at the heart of the city,
churches and the best stores were also located. These areas were known as “traditional communities” because they possessed a mixed-use commercial district, an interconnected street network, and had high residential densities.

After World War II, however, land use planning changed dramatically. With the increasing availability of automobiles, massive highway projects were launched. Highways enabled developers to build anything anywhere, and, with that, sprawl began to unfold. Sprawl’s first phases began with the “spreading-out” of development. Homes, stores, restaurants, schools, and offices set up shop on large parcels of land far from each other. Then, organizations were grouped together. Homes were located in residential villages. Shops were in either plazas or shopping malls. Offices were located in commercial parks. Lastly, people moved to different neighborhoods based on income levels – referred to “standard suburban” neighborhoods – that had segregated land use, random street patterns, little to no transit service and low residential density. The wealthy moved outside of the cities to newly created suburbs, where they were isolated from the middle class. The poor remained in older neighborhoods and in public housing developments within the city.

With standard suburban planning, modes of transportation changed too. Since the early 1900’s, four primary modes of transportation exist - walking, bicycling, public transportation, and driving. Prior to WWII primary modes of transportation included walking, public transportation, and bicycling. Since that time, the automobile has become the most dominate type of transportation. The chart shown below provides a glimpse of several nations and their primary modes of transportation.

**Chart 1.1**

With usage around 80%, car transportation has clearly dominated the U.S. and Canadian landscape. Sweden and France are the complete opposite. The French use the automobile approximately 50% of the time, while the Swedish use the automobile less than 40% of the time.

There is also a difference in the transportation habits between traditional and standard suburban communities. In terms of pedestrian activity, people living in traditional areas are more likely to walk to work and while performing errands than those in standard suburban neighborhoods. People in standard suburban settings are more apt to walk for recreational purposes.

A 1997 survey of walkers, conducted by Shriver, of Austin, Texas, found that personal factors like income, age, number of cars, and household size were a major influence on pedestrian travel. The survey also found that walkers in traditional communities were likely to be younger, own fewer cars, earn less income, and have smaller household sizes than walkers in standard suburban areas.
III. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND PROBLEMS

Since WWII, land use planning has evolved from a traditional community, which possessed mixed-use development and interconnect street networks to standard suburban, whose attributes include segregated land use and random street patterns. This has contributed to an assortment of issues nationwide.

The first and apparent problem that sprawl has created is population loss in America’s cities - especially Pennsylvania’s cities. The chart shown below is from Youngstown State University and highlights Pennsylvania cities with decreasing populations since 1950.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1950 Population</th>
<th>2000 Population</th>
<th>Percent Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>676,806</td>
<td>334,563</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scranton</td>
<td>125,536</td>
<td>76,415</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>2,071,605</td>
<td>1,517,500</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>109,320</td>
<td>81,207</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>130,803</td>
<td>103,717</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>63,774</td>
<td>56,348</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cities of Pittsburgh and Scranton have suffered the most, with losses of 50% and nearly 40%, respectively. Although both cities lost vital industries like steel and coal, Philadelphia, Reading, and Erie, which did not lose essential industries, also experienced population losses over 20% each. Therefore, it is safe to assume that Pittsburgh and Scranton’s population would still have declined - even if they did not lose the steel and coal industries.

The mass exodus of people from cities may be somewhat attributed to “job sprawl”. Job sprawl is the extent to which employers are located near the cities central business district (CBD). Employers located further away from a city’s CBD move jobs and people from traditional communities to standard suburban areas. In fact, the largest 100 metropolitan areas have only 22% of their respective populations working within three miles of their city’s CBD. The following is a chart from the Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, which highlights Pennsylvania’s six metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) on employment within certain miles of the cities’ CBDs.
The Pittsburgh, Harrisburg/Lebanon/Carlisle and Lancaster MSA’s have a three-mile employment ring statistic of over 25%. These areas are considered dense employment metros. The Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton MSA is a centralized employment metro—meaning ten to 20% of the population is within the three-mile employment ring and more than 60% is within the 10-mile employment ring. The MSA’s of Philadelphia and Scranton-Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton have three-mile employment ring percentage of less than 25%, and a 10-mile employment ring of fewer than 60%. Hence, there are decentralized employment metros, which are employment metros that have identifiable city centers with large workforces. However, tax rates in suburban areas of Philadelphia and Scranton are significantly less than downtown—giving companies incentives to locate outside the CBD. This results in new employment generation in “standard suburban” areas and an emigration from downtown areas. Scranton has suffered the most from “job sprawl,” with over 60% of the metropolitan population working ten miles outside of the city limits.

Another obstacle facilitating decreasing city populations is annexation laws. For the past 50 years, annexation laws have allowed cities to expand their borders by annexing bordering areas. States in the nation’s south and west use this device to allow cities, such as Charlotte, Houston, and San Jose, to grow in population and in land area. Unfortunately, state laws in New England and in the Mid-Atlantic U.S. make it nearly impossible to allow cities to expand their borders. Pennsylvania had no municipal annexations for a period of thirty-eight years. In Pennsylvania, Article III, section 32 of the state’s Constitution states:

The General Assembly shall pass no local or special law in any case which has been or can be provided for by general law and specifically the General Assembly shall not pass any local or special law.

1. Regulating the affairs of counties, cities, townships, wards, boroughs, or school districts.
2. Locating or changing county seats, erecting new counties or changing county lines.
3. Erecting new townships or boroughs, changing township lines, borough limits or school districts.

This section of the state constitution essentially allows the Pennsylvania General Assembly to wash its hands of annexation issues. Therefore, any city that wishes to annex surrounding areas must go through a selective process. Article IX, section 8 of the constitution, states, “…The electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge and change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body.” Consequently, if the City of Wilkes-Barre wishes to annex Wilkes-Barre Township, both areas must have a referendum on the issue. Then, if a majority of voters in BOTH areas approve the referendums Wilkes-Barre City and Wilkes-Barre Township become one. If either town votes down the referendum, the issue dies. However, of the nineteen mergers/consolidations that either succeeded or failed at the polls, twelve occurred in non-metropolitan counties. Only two (Muhlenberg Township and Wyomissing Borough) involved immediate suburbs of central cities.

Certain governmental policies are another contributor to the continuation of sprawl. In the past, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Veterans’ Administration (VA) encouraged people to build or purchase new houses in the suburbs rather than existing homes within the cities. In addition, the FHA and VA influenced banks, savings, and loan companies to do the same since they established housing appraisal standards. They then began to establish minimum requirements for lot sizes, distances from streets and adjacent edifices. Lastly, the FHA forbade loans for the use of multi-purpose facilities—like stores or offices.

Another policy involved federal and state governments helping in the construction of low-income housing projects in cities. Suburban areas were allowed to prevent this construction because of restrictive zoning laws. In certain projects, the government restricted residence to those with the lowest income, which hastened the concentration of the poor and sizeable crime into
cities. As such, governments then financed the construction of water and sewer systems in the suburbs, rather than maintaining the cities. This opened up vast areas of development in standard suburban communities.15

An additional way federal and state governments contribute to the evolution of sprawl is through the measurement of transportation analyses. Currently, transportation planning is biased towards automobile travel. Increased road and parking capacities are considered an improvement, while effects on other modes of transportation are ignored. Additionally, transportation impacts are measured in a variety of ways. Below are five measurements that analyze transportation effectiveness, including:

- **Vehicle-mile units**: a traffic perspective that gives high value to automobile travel;
- **Passenger-mile units**: a mobility perspective that values automobile and transit travel, but gives less value to non-motorized modes because they tend to be used for short trips;
- **Per-trips units**: an access perspective that gives equal value to automobile, transit, cycling, walking and telecommuting;
- **Travel time units**: an access perspective that gives higher priority to walking, cycling, and transit travel, because they represent a relative large portion of travel time;
- **Exposure time units**: the amount of time that a particular person or group uses a particular facility or is exposed to a specific impact.16

For example, consider a corporation doing research on the location of its newest office. If the corporation does a traffic-based perspective (vehicle-mile units), then the best location could be neighboring a major roadway in a standard suburban community (where land is cheap) in order to provide abundant parking for employees. If the company employs mobility-based research (passenger-mile units), then the best location could be on an urban street with sufficient parking and frequent public transportation. If it uses accessibility-based research (travel time units), then the best location might be in a residential area with limited parking. This would assume most employees would walk or bicycle to work. In this analysis, there are many ways the company can determine transportation issues. However, the tool of choice is the traffic-based perspective, which favors the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. Therefore, cars will continue to be the most utilized form of transportation since analysis favors and acquiesces to the automobile.17

State government always had the power to regulate land usage. However, since the turn of the twentieth century, such authority has been allocated to local municipalities. This leads to another contributing factor of sprawl — zoning laws. There are over 35,000 local governments in the U.S. – the zoning laws of which vary from no zoning to very complex zoning that regulates land use, building size, and environmental impacts.

Scranton’s zoning ordinance is an example of this complexity. It contains eight articles and is 178 pages long.18 Throughout Pennsylvania, there is heavy reliance on property taxes. This has created strong incentives for municipalities to take on “fiscal zoning.” Fiscal zoning is “zoning that tries to attract commercial and large-lot residential development in an effort to enhance their tax bases.”19

In order to attract these types of developments, there are many financial incentive programs. The following financial incentive programs can be found in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties.

- **The Pennsylvania Economic Development Authority’s Tax Exempt Bond Financing Program** offers loans ranging from $400,000 to $10,000,000 for manufacturers, charitable organizations, and other facilities. Such loans may be used to acquire and prepare land for construction, acquisition, and renovation of buildings.
The Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority Program (PIDA) arranges low-interest loans to help manufacturing, industry, and large office companies purchase, renovate, and/or construct new buildings. PIDA finances up to 40% of the cost of these projects, as long as the cost does not exceed the $2,000,000 limit.

The SIDco Façade Improvement Loan Program provides area businesses with loans up to $25,000 to renovate the building exteriors. Businesses can also apply for a $25,000 grant to improve the condition of historical properties.

The Grow Scranton Fund, through Scranton’s Office of Economic and Community Development, offers eligible businesses (any business located within the city of Scranton) loans ranging from $25,000 to $1,000,000, with one loan term set up to 25 years for real-estate.

The KOZ/KOEZ Program is the largest of the incentive programs. The Keystone Opportunity Zone/Keystone Opportunity Expansion Zone Program exempts eligible companies from most Pennsylvania state and local taxes if they locate or build within specified KOZ areas. KOZ participants enjoy tax exemption until 2010; while KOEZ participants enjoy tax exemption until 2014. Those located within KOZ areas may be exempt from the following taxes:

- Real estate taxes
- Local business privilege or mercantile taxes
- PA capital stock and franchise tax
- PA corporate net income tax
- PA sales tax on the purchase of taxable property or services used within the zone
- PA sales tax on telephone and electrical service used within the zone
- PA sales tax on the purchase of building machinery and equipment by a contractor to construct within the zone

If a company based in Pennsylvania relocates from a non-KOZ/KOEZ area into a KOZ/KOEZ area, then the company must do one of two things. Either it must increase its full-time employment by 20% in the first full year of operation, or it must make a capital investment in the zone equal to or at least 10% of its gross revenues in the preceding calendar year. An example would be the Jacobson Hat Co. located in downtown Scranton, close to the University of Scranton. If it were to relocate to the KOZ/KOEZ location near Wilkes-Barre Blvd. and Coal Street in Wilkes-Barre, then it must increase its full-time employment from 80 to at least 96 or make a capital investment of at least $100,000 (which equates to 10% of its revenues in the preceding year).

If a non-Pennsylvania-based company relocates to a KOZ/KOEZ property, it must simply own or lease property in the zone, where it will actively conduct business. The chart below illustrates different scenarios on the annual savings KOZs give to companies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Estimated Annual KOZ Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail Distribution Center</td>
<td>$550,000 – $1.14 mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 million sq. ft. – 500 employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Company</td>
<td>$690,000 – $1.18 mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 sq. ft. – 300 employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastics Company</td>
<td>$140,000 – $300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200,000 sq. ft. – 300 employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Fabrication Company</td>
<td>$70,000 - $150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 sq. ft. – 150 employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics Company</td>
<td>$420,000 - $580,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200,000 sq. ft. – 300 employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical Company</td>
<td>$2.0 mil – $2.4 mil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200,000 sq. ft. – 500 employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

America has always been fixated on size and performance. Bigger and faster is better. This attitude has resulted in another contributing factor to the creation of sprawl - office/retail size. Since the 1950s, larger buildings have dominated the office/retail landscape. After WWII, the average supermarket had a size of 2,000 square feet. This evolved to 22,000 square foot facilities in the 1970’s to those with over 50,000 square feet today.

Offices facilities have also increased in size by at similar rate. Small offices that took a portion of a floor in a skyscraper have now spread to several floors. In addition to companies’ demands for larger office space, offices complexes are increasingly oriented towards the needs of automobiles. These commercial complexes have linear designs, featureless facades, and large distances between buildings devoted for parking. Such complexes are often uninviting to pedestrians and create long trips from the parking lot to the building for those working in such facilities.

Sprawl has affected populations of major cities, distribution of jobs, and sizes of office and retail space - all attributable to nearly impossible annexation laws, various governmental policies, and zoning laws. Nevertheless, such influences are reversible and their damages repairable. However, one area that is nearly irreversible is sprawl’s affect on the environment.

Sprawl inevitably leads to the destruction of farmland, meadows, forests, and wetlands. This annihilation results in the disruption of ecological cycles. Forests, meadows, and wetlands soak up rainwater; replenish underwater supplies and limit sediment entering rivers and streams. However, sprawl lands are being paved over, which allows the water to run directly into rivers and streams without being absorbed, thus increasing both flooding and droughts. For example, a one-acre parking lot produces sixteen times more runoff than a one-acre meadow.

When dealing with sprawl’s destructive nature, farmland is at the top of the list. Every year, the U.S. loses more than one million acres of farmland to sprawl, and since 1945, the country has lost 20% of its arable land. Over a five-year period between 1992 and 1997, Pennsylvania lost 545,000 acres of undeveloped land to sprawl. This was the fifth largest amount of land lost to development in the nation. Only Texas, Georgia, Florida, and California experienced more land lost. It has been calculated that Pennsylvania loses one to six acres of arable land for each new edifice created.

Land loss to sprawl is prevalent in York County, where over the last 30 years nearly 30% of farmland has been developed. Susquehanna and Lancaster Counties, both known for their agriculture prowess, are also very susceptible to development. Lancaster County was listed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) and the World Monuments Fund (WMF) among the most threatened places in the nation. A threat also exists in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties. With a geographic location within a two-hour commute to New York City, Philadelphia and other metropolitan areas, the Pocono region’s pristine forests are under immense pressure from developers for retirees and owners of second homes.

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Since developers have the upper hand over farmers, who can only sit back and watch, this trend will likely continue. The leading threats developers pose to farmers include:

- The bid-up prices proposed by developers are beyond what farmers can afford.
- Complaints about manure odors, chemical sprays, and other farming techniques are increasingly leading towns to create laws restricting agriculture.
- As the population increases, real estate taxes increase to pay for schools, police, and other essentials, which farmers cannot afford.
- Crops and livestock are damaged or lost due to trespassing, vandalism, and increased road traffic.\(^{30}\)

An additional environmental hazard linked to sprawl is Brownfields. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) defines Brownfields as, “abandoned, idle, or under-used industrial or commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.” Since the 1970’s, thousands of factories and other industrial facilities across the country have closed. Most, if not all, of these sites were in operation at a time when environmental concerns were not an issue. As a result, many building sites had forms of contamination like asbestos, leaky underground tanks, spilled chemicals, and other hazardous wastes. In the 1980’s, legislation was passed that established a legal process to determine who polluted these sites and force these individuals or companies to remedy the situation. This lead to abandonment of such sites, which number between 130,000 to 500,000 across the country. Such sites are located in areas where there are highways, water and sewer lines, and other infrastructures. Unfortunately, these sites are not being redeveloped, since it is cheaper and less complicated to build on undeveloped land - such as farmland, forests, meadows, and wetlands.\(^{31}\)

During the 1950’s, when land use developers implemented a new strategy, people believed it was the wave of the future . . . a revolution. Unfortunately, no one believed that the standard suburban lifestyle would drastically influence transportation habits, the populations of major cities, employment habits, the environment, and especially the swift death of the traditional community. The only way to combat this is for people to come together and implement strong and new strategies that emphasize traditional communities. Such progress is slowly taking place.
IV. THE MAGNITUDE OF LAND USE PLANNING

Sprawl has afflicted numerous routines in everyday life, like the location of homes and jobs, transportation to those jobs, and the environment. If sprawl is continually permitted and reinforced in land use planning, then its affects could be felt worldwide and its results less than welcome. Therefore, to keep sprawl under control, land usage should be planned effectively.

Importance

In order to turn the tide and return traditional communities to the forefront, effective planning must be enacted. This is called smart growth, which, as defined by David Crossley of the Gulf Coast Institute, is “growth that balances economic, social, and environmental interests to make fair, efficient use of public resources and bring services and amenities closer to people in order to reduce travel time and miles.” Smart growth’s main goal is not to halt sprawl and standard suburban communities, but instead to bring back traditional communities - which were compact, had established boundaries between city and countryside and contained mixed-use planning. Andres Duany, of the Duany Plater-Zyberk Associates, establishes several core principles of smart growth, including:

- Encourages development that is compact, diverse, and walkable;
- Protects open space that is ecologically sensitive, and culturally viable;
- Assures a range of housing types and costs;
- Encouraged by incentives, rather than by prohibition of conventional development;
- Encourages partnership of public, private, and non-profit interests;
- Supports alternate transportation options, like public transportation, bicycling, and walking;
- Allocates the cost of infrastructure equitably between existing and incoming residents.32

Theories

While sprawl has been around for more than 60 years, land use plans have existed for a much longer time. Land and city planners have developed theories for over 100 years on how best to use land. The earliest example, the Von Thunen’s Regional Land Use Model, was developed in the early nineteenth century (1826). Its primary purpose was analysis of agricultural land use in Germany. The basic premise of the model is that agricultural land use is patterned in the form of concentric circles around a particular market.33

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**VON THUNEN’S REGIONAL LAND USE MODEL**

Another theory, developed by social reformer Ebenezer Howard at the turn of the twentieth century, was included in his 1902 book entitled *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. In the book, Howard stated several key ideas for his proposed “garden cities.” The first was how new cities should be created in the countryside since they were free from pollutants and hazardous waste. Second, each new city should contain around 30,000 people, which would allow cities to have mixed-use of stores, schools, homes, and offices, while still being small enough to enjoy the countryside surroundings. To make this possible, Howard proposed that “garden cities” have 1,000 acres designated for homes and businesses, which would be surrounded by a greenbelt. The greenbelt would be comprised of 5,000 acres of farmland owned and operated by the city. In the book, Howard includes his “three magnets diagram,” which combines the advantages of cities and the countryside while eliminating disadvantages.

Howard’s vision became reality when the town of Letchworth was built in 1903 - the world’s first garden city. By the beginning of World War II, Letchworth’s population grew to 15,000, with 150 shops and 60 industries. Currently, Letchworth Garden City has more than 30,000 residents.

In 1925, a sociologist named E.W. Burgess investigated urban level spatial patterns. He formulated a theory that recognized the important contributions of transportation and mobility to urban organization. The model begins with establishing a city’s Central Business District (CBD). Concentric circles then form around the CBD and represent a detailed socioeconomic setting. The diagram at left contains six zones. Zone I (the Loop) is the CBD, where primary stores and offices are located. Zone II (Factory Zone) is an area where many industrial factories, ports and rail terminals are located. Zone III (Zone of Transition) is used for expanding manufacturing and commercial industries; it also contains the poorest region of the city and includes low-income housing. Zone IV (Working Class Zone) is a residential zone inhabited by working and middle class populations. Zone V (Residential Zone) is similar to zone IV, but includes higher middle class populations and higher-end homes. Finally, Zone VI (Commuter Zone) contains the wealthiest class in a standard suburban setting with the highest transportation costs.

A theory developed by a group of architects who tried to amass a series of notions based on neo-traditional design is known as the Ahwahnee Principals. The first concept is that all planning for communities should have mixed-use properties with homes, offices, schools, parks, and shops within walking distance of each other and public transportation. Next, the community should contain a public center that combines commercial, recreational, cultural, and civic uses. Third, the community should have a sufficient amount of open green space that encourages use throughout the day. Fourth, transportation design should promote bicycle and pedestrian use by making paths small and separated by buildings, trees, and lighting. Lastly, materials and processes of construction should be specific to the particular region; this helps to exhibit permanence of history and culture and encourage further development of the community’s character and identity.
The final theory is the vision of Thomas Hylton. In his book, *Save Our Land, Save Our Towns*, Hylton establishes ten rules for a quality community, as follows:

- Communities should establish a sense of place, where the borders of town are clearly defined as to where development ends and countryside begins.
- Communities should contain a human scale, based on the accessibility of people and not automobiles; this creates a neighborhood with an abundance of sidewalks, trees, and mixed-use development.
- Communities should be self-contained, whereas stores, schools, homes, and offices are blended together; this increases public safety since areas remain active throughout the day.
- Communities should be diverse. Neighborhoods should reflect the various ethnic groups of the area where they are located.
- To facilitate diversity, communities should include an assortment of small apartments, row houses, small lot houses, large homes, and penthouse suites mixed into its neighborhoods.
- Communities should be transit friendly - where the majority of the people have access to public transportation.
- Communities should locate parking facilities, waste receptacles, and other items at the rear of buildings to maintain cleanliness on streets, sidewalks and building facades.
- Communities should convey a sense of closure, whereas outdoor spaces are created by aligning homes close together so that streets are like outdoor rooms (i.e., Georgetown).
- Communities should promote maintenance and safety by instituting regular inspections of all mixed-used properties, issue citations to violators, and place liens on properties for those who do not comply.

**Solutions to Current Problems**
Land use theories have been discussed and debated for well over a century. Yet, theories are only good if they are implemented in the real world. One theory implemented throughout the world is neo-traditionalism or new urbanism. Neo-traditionalism is a new design of planning that encourages reverting to the ways of the “traditional community.” Homes, schools, shops, and offices are within walking distance to each other, connected by pedestrian friendly corridors, and lined with trees.

The largest and newest neo-traditionalist development in the U.S. is Celebration, Florida. Developed by the Walt Disney Corporation, the cost to build Celebration was around $2.5 billion. Celebration includes a small downtown area, with stores on the ground floors and offices and apartments on the upper floors. Surrounded downtown are neighborhoods with homes of all types, including apartments, row houses, bungalows, townhouses, and mansions. Other attractions include an eighteen-hole golf course at the northern part of town, a college and a K-12 school. Following is an artisan view of Celebration.
Neo-traditionalism reduces sprawl and drastically influences transportation patterns. To highlight this, we look to an office development study performed by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). The study found that a 100,000 square foot office building could expect to generate 1,230 daily trips by car. ITE calculated that if the same space is divided into 25,000 square feet devoted to office space, 25,000 square feet to research and development space, 40,000 square feet for to multi-family apartments, and 10,000 square feet for retail, volume would fall to 1,000 daily trips by car - a decrease of 18.7%. In addition, ITE found that under the divided space, the use of parking garages and parking lots significantly increases. Offices sites generally peak between 9 a.m. to 5p.m. on weekdays. Restaurants, retail areas, and movie theaters tend to peak in the evenings and on weekends. By putting these in the same vicinity, the same parking facilities may be used for more hours of the day, which decreases the aggregate number of parking spots and number of hours that a parking facility is vacant.41 

Unfortunately, sprawl cannot be halted by just the creation of neo-traditionalist communities. Solutions to these sprawl problems are in fixing the current system - not just in the creation of new communities. Good examples may be found in Oregon and Washington. These states require their cities to employ a growth boundary, which is the limit at which development is and is not permitted. All of Oregon’s cities and counties must draw a growth boundary around their respective borders to accommodate any possible development for the next 20 years. It is only legal to develop inside these boundaries, which are adjusted every ten years or so.42 

Pennsylvania has taken many steps to find solutions to fix the current system, including Brownfield development. In May of 1995, Governor Tom Ridge signed three bills that created the Pennsylvania Land Recycling Program (PLRP). PLRP promotes the redevelopment of old industrial sites by establishing consistent cleanup standards, providing liability protection to owners and renters of newly cleaned sites, and providing financial assistance to those parties who wish to conduct voluntary cleanup and help communities address their Brownfield issues. In 1999, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved “Growing Greener,” Which provided $645.9 million for various environmental purposes over a five-year period. Most Growing Greener funds are earmarked towards acid mine drainage abatement, watershed restoration, and state park maintenance. 

Pennsylvania developed another solution in June of 2000, when the state passed a municipalities planning code known as “Growing Smarter,” which helps local governments develop comprehensive land use plans without having to provide one within their own jurisdiction. Growing Smarter was implemented in Lancaster County, which has the state’s most active farmland preservation program; Chester County, which has established planning regions in the county’s thirteen school districts and vows to give upward of $70,000 to cooperation communities; Mercer County, which is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan; as well as Lackawanna County, in which the Scranton-Abington Planning Association (SAPA) is bringing together ten county-wide communities to develop a single land use plan. SAPA will be discussed further later on in this report.43
Across the country, there are numerous examples of people finding solutions to current sprawl problems. Yet, there is work to do—especially in Pennsylvania. The Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities suggests a few solutions/opportunities that Pennsylvania could utilize to remedy statewide sprawl, including:

- **Strengthen land use planning.** This could be accomplished by allowing advocacy groups, like 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, to help implement “Growing Smarter” reforms.

- **Educate and train local government officials.** Many communities lack resources in dealing with land use reforms and training could be a helpful start.

- **Create strong financial incentives for comprehensive land use plans.** Of Pennsylvania’s $4.6 million land use budget, only a small amount of dollars are currently allocated for comprehensive planning efforts.

- **Seek counsel where needed to move forward.** Encourage privately funded legal experts to provide resources to local governments engaged in legal battles.

- **Target public investments toward smart growth.** This can be done by sharpening focus on incentives. Subsidies and taxes often persuade private industries to use land more efficiently and, in turn, help the community. The establishment of growth boundaries determine lines to which development may be extended; the Pennsylvania Legislature could prioritize funding to projects located within growth boundaries. Smart growth may also be accomplished through reinvestment in old, run-down communities and acceleration of the land-recycling program, which allows the state to purchase Brownfields and offer private investors incentives for development.

- **Tax reform.** Pennsylvania’s public schools rely heavily on property taxes, which could be reduced if the state drastically increases its share of school funding, which, in 2001, was at thirty-eight cents on the dollar spent. This would not only ease school dependence on property taxes, but would also decrease financial inequities among different area schools. Tax reform could also be accomplished through tax based sharing. Under this system, a certain portion of each municipality’s tax base would be collected into a regional or county pool – then redistributed to participating communities. The winners would be communities that contain designated growth areas, while the losers would be the communities that allow sprawl to continue. Tax based sharing could also balance the differences between the winners and the losers. This reduces incentives to spread development equally among participating communities, allowing urban areas to remain urban and rural areas to remain rural.44

The magnitude of land use planning is imperative in the fight against sprawl. Since the mid-nineteenth century, planning theorists have devised ways of best using land, whether it be Thunen’s Regional Land Use Model, Ebenezer Howard’s “Garden Cities,” E.W. Burgess’ concentric model, or the neo-traditionalist movement occurring today. In addition, lawmakers and lobbyists have worked to implement programs that aim to solve today’s sprawl related issues. Therefore, it is safe to assume that old “standard suburban” problems are being resolved and there is nothing to fear. Yet, is there really nothing to fear, especially in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties?
V. Land Use Case Studies in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties

Sprawl has had devastating effects on Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. Scranton’s population has dropped nearly 40% since 1950 and more than 60% of its employment population works ten or more miles outside its CBD’s of Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton. However, there have been numerous movements and legislation to curb sprawl, the question remains as to whether Lackawanna and Luzerne counties have reaped any benefits. In order to determine the answer, we must look at completed projects, those under construction, and future/possible projects.

Completed Projects
In Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, over the past five years, numerous developments have occurred. One type of development that has revitalized the area involves major community endeavors. Community endeavors help bring communities together and, in some cases, reduce sprawl. One example is the Toyota Pavilion at Montage Mountain, in Lackawanna County. This amphitheatre has seating capacity of 18,000, which includes 5,000 covered seating spaces. Artists who have performed at this venue include Aerosmith, Tom Petty, Tim McGraw, Dave Matthews Band, Rod Stewart, and Eminem. Another example in Luzerne County is the Wachovia Arena at Casey Plaza - a $44 million, 9,000-seat facility. The venue is home to the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Penguins, an American League Hockey team. The arena also hosts various conventions, ice-skating events, concerts, and regional sporting competitions. A third example is the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center, located in downtown Scranton. This facility includes 26,000 square feet of meeting and conference space, nineteen meeting rooms, a 74-seat amphitheatre and a 7,000 square foot ballroom. A final example is the Scranton Enterprise Center. This 64,000+ square foot facility offers space for technology, service, and office clients. A portion of the center is a business incubator for start-up and expanding businesses.

After WWII, a new type of development, business/industrial parks, was established in order to promote growth and stability. Over time, such development has evolved into a sprawl contributor. Benefitting from the creation of such parks is the Scranton Lackawanna Industrial Building Company (SLIBCO) - the Scranton Chamber of Commerce’s development corporation. SLIBCO has constructed nine industrial parks totaling almost 3,000 acres. The first and oldest of these is the Keystone Industrial Park, which broke ground in 1962. This 320-acre site is located in the boroughs of Dunmore and Throop. Notable tenants include Harper-Collins Publishers, Gertrude Hawk Chocolates, and the National Book Company. Scott Technology Park is a 198-acre facility located in Scott Township. It has facilities available for advanced technologies, pharmaceuticals, research and development. The next example is the Glenmaura Corporate Center – a joint venture between SLIBCO, Lackawanna County, and the Hemingway Development Corporation. This 353-acre site is located on Montage Mountain between Scranton and Moosic. Notable tenants include Bank of America, Prudential, Metropolitan Life, Cinemark Theaters, and Geisinger. The largest park is the Valley View Business Park/Jessup Small Business Center.

Current Projects
Projects underway in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties include the Rocky Glen Road Bridge Deck Emergency Replacement. This includes the replacement of a bridge deck on Rocky Glen Road and construction of a temporary road to maintain two lanes of traffic for I-81S. The estimated cost of this project is $2.5 - $3 million. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is currently performing a research study on the possibility of widening Interstate 81 to three lanes from Nanticoke (Exit 164) to Waverly (Exit 197). Another possibility is to divert traffic flow to Interstate 476 (Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike) by improving the interchange or removal of tolls. Early cost estimates of the project range from $800 million - $1 billion.
Another project underway is Scranton’s Courthouse Square. The noticeable difference is that the Linden Street Annex, which was built in 1964, is being razed and replaced with the Four Seasons Courtyard. Several reasons for the removal of the annex include non-compliance with current building codes, needed repairs and insufficient space. Other features include a Veterans Memorial Plaza on the North Washington Avenue side; Roman architecture called “Piazza Del Arti” are on the Spruce Street side; and, on Adams Avenue, a sally port where judges can get in and out safely. Lackawanna County’s investment in this project could exceed $48.5 million.

Also in Scranton, construction is underway to house a multi-million dollar technology center at the old North Scranton Junior High School. Plans for the four-acre site purchased by Goodwill Industries include converting a 500-seat auditorium into a technology hub where groups can make presentations and conduct teleconferences. Goodwill and Scranton’s city officials expect the facility will raise millions once its Keystone Opportunity Expansion Zone (KOEZ) status expires in 2013.

In downtown Wilkes-Barre, construction is ongoing at the Northampton and Main Streets redevelopment site. The site will include a 145,000 square foot mixed-use entertainment and residential facility. In July 2006, a 60,000 square foot movie complex opened to the public to much fanfare. Located directly next to the theatre will be 28 residential loft units and parking for up to 85 below the theatre. In terms of financing this project, $9.164 million came from banks such as Wachovia, Citizens Bank, PNC, and PennStar. Approximately $7.87 million was provided through state funding, $2.5 million came from Luzerne County and $695,000 from the City of Wilkes-Barre.

In October 2005, the Scranton Times reported that several Lackawanna County boroughs and townships were joining to develop a comprehensive land use plan. Scranton City Planner Don King stated, “At this point it’s really only expressing interest in it.” This interest soon became a reality in the summer 2006, when eleven boroughs, townships and the City of Scranton created SAPA (Scranton-Abingtons Planning Association).

SAPA consists of Abington Township; Clarks Green Borough; Clarks Summit Borough; Dalton Borough; Dunmore Borough; Glenburn Township; Newtown Township; North Abington Township; City of Scranton; South Abington and West Abington Township. SAPA’s main goal is to develop a comprehensive land use plan that meets the requirements of Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). SAPA will conduct information gathering and analysis, identification of pertinent issues, and participation and development of short- and long-term strategies. The plan will allow these municipalities, via mutual zoning, to allocate land uses to the most appropriate areas, rather than providing all types of scenarios in each municipality.
VI. TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT, MIXED LAND USE, AND NEW URBANISM

Traditional Neighborhood development (TND), also known as “New Urbanism,” refers to a style of development that was popular and considered normal before WWII. TND’s were neighborhoods usually with a town center and houses within close proximity that encouraged walking and a sense of community. These neighborhoods began to lose their popularity as the automobile became more affordable and the growth of highways increased throughout the U.S.52 This has led to “Urban Sprawl,” which is residential and commercial areas becoming more and more spread apart leading to the over use of the automobile. Urban sprawl leads to increased traffic, more pollution and unsafe streets for parents and children. All of these problems have in turn made developers and citizens look for alternatives to “Suburbanization”53 – launching increased research in TND and Mixed Land Use. Smart Growth describes Mixed Land Use as, “Smart growth supports the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live. By putting uses in close proximity to one another, alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking, once again become viable.”54

These developments have increased in popularity over the last few years. More than 200 developments either are completed or are awaiting completion in different places all over the country. This growing trend is only expected to grow, as speculators show by 2010 that one-quarter of Americans will want homes like these because of walkable neighborhoods and worsening traffic conditions.55 “According to a University of Southern California study, two of the most important signals picked up by developers are the aging of a wealthier and healthier generation of approaching retirees and the advance of young adults interested in an alternative to conventional suburbs.”56 As the “baby boomer generation” grows older and nears retirement, it has shown a desire for walkable communities, which include shopping, health care, community centers, and public transportation - all within walking distance.57 Such growing trends indicate that many local communities are looking into mixed land use.

TND and mixed land use neighborhoods have seen a great deal of popularity because of the benefits of these new communities. The top reason most residents choose these neighborhoods is for walk-ability and public transportation. The fact that most needs are only a ten-minute walk from home or from public transportation has brought people back to the old neighborhood. These neighborhoods generally have large sidewalks for pedestrians, streets are safe and not as busy with traffic, and neighborhoods are lined with trees and enjoyable to walk through.58 Another benefit of these neighborhoods is the sense of community. Neighborhoods are interconnected and bring people out to the streets, which in turn leads to better relationships among neighbors.
Suburbanization spreads people out and isolates them, while New Urbanism brings them closer. In addition, parks, recreational areas, shops, community centers, and other public places allow for more interaction among a community’s residents. New neighborhoods foster friendships and allow for a much safer, close-knit community. The third major benefit of new neighborhoods is that they have mixed residential and commercial areas. Housing is available in a wide range of types, sizes, and prices, which brings a diverse population that help build dynamics within a community. In addition, the selection of shops and residential buildings allow for easy neighborhood shopping within walking distance from home. All of these benefits and several others have led more areas to adopt community lifestyles.

A major problem standing in the way of new communities are zoning laws enacted by local governments that prohibit mixed land usage. Smart Growth and other projects are finding it hard to build under current zoning enforcement laws, known as Euclidian zoning laws. This type of zoning “calls for the separation of different land uses and prescriptive densities - is blamed for creating sprawl and bland monochromatic neighborhoods.” Communities across the country are unhappy with this zoning and many cities have reformed codes in order to try mixed land use. Pioneer cities like Milwaukee, Louisville, and Nashville have shown that rezoning brings both more livable spaces and economic growth. So citizens and developers are calling for code reforms to allow new TND ordinances and transit oriented-districts (TOD) to revitalize old neighborhoods and start building new livable communities. Other governments are attempting to reform, re-write, and consolidate current zoning codes into a unified code that is more accepting of these new communities. Another reform is form-based coding, which focuses on designing mixed-use neighborhoods and different styles of housing rather than land usage and density. All of the new code reforms passed in pioneer cities have acted as guides for other cities to reform existing codes. This has led to many other cities to follow by example – leading to easier attainable permits and less difficult review processes. Such code reforms make it possible for New Urbanism neighborhoods to increase across the country.

Local governments are also addressing current zoning codes because of land reforms that are bringing about changes to barren lands and eyesores. Most developers have three types of land to choose from when constructing any type of TND – Greenfield developments, Brownfield developments, and redevelopment of existing structures. Greenfield developments are untouched lands free from manmade obstacles, which develop rather easily without much excavation. Brownfield developments are on former industrial sites that go through a cleaning process before development. Redevelopment transforms current communities into new urbanism. A few state governments have also been passing rehabilitation building codes to make it easier to repair old buildings in order to restructure them toward a TND. In addition, a number of “infill projects” are taking place, through which developers build houses in vacant spots within neighborhoods that are spread further apart. These projects have worked to clean up local cities and towns and reinstate a sense of community.

Examples of TND and New Urbanism Across the U.S.
Some of the best examples of new TND neighborhoods are in Northwest Michigan, where quite a number have flourished, due to a Brownfield redevelopment program. Midtown of Traverse City has replaced the site of an old abandoned factory. This neighborhood sits on five acres with 70 residential units and includes 30,000 square feet of commercial space. Midtown is located next to the Boardman River and includes a river walk that connects to the downtown so that pedestrians can walk or ride bikes to town. Another planned community for Traverse City will far exceed the size of Midtown. The Village at Grand Traverse Commons sits on a 29-acre lot and is currently under construction. It is proposed to have 200-300 living spaces with 200,000 to 300,000 square feet of commercial and retail space when completed within the next ten years. Many old houses and an old hospital have been refurbished on this site. Both developments transformed barren and underdeveloped land into attractive and livable communities. Approximately 36 luxury condominiums and town homes within Midtown sold within the first year. Barb Cooper, of Classic Realty, who represented the Midtown development, had this to offer:

“Even as the housing market cools after a 13-year, nationwide boom, the demand for homes in walkable neighborhoods remains strong. New approaches to development are so popular simply because they meet the needs of so many different people. Children walk to parks and schools along safe, tree-lined sidewalks. Teenagers get around without pleading for rides or buying their own cars. Singles and couples dine out, go to concerts, or bar-hop without constantly searching for parking or jumping in and out of their cars. Professionals trade in stressful commutes for pleasant walks or bike rides. The elderly buy groceries, visit the doctor, and go to church without needing a ride.”
This exhibits the popularity and demand for these new neighborhoods. For Northwest Michigan, such neighborhoods have brought a great deal of growth and lists seven new urbanization developments with more to come in the near future.

Another city that has grown with a number of new urban neighborhoods is Memphis Tennessee. Harbor Town - a development in Memphis, built in 1989. Memphis Tennessee Harbor Town includes 950 homes built with community in mind. The houses are close together, have front porches, and small yards. This encourages the use of parks, ponds, river walks, and gazebos located throughout neighborhoods. “This has been hailed as one of the best examples of a planned community in the United States.” There are four other developments like this in the area – with some more focused toward residential use rather than retail or commercial.

Another new style of development is occurring in Kansas City, Missouri. A recent development known as Zona Rosa uses the new neighborhood style along with even more commercial space than most TOD’s. Zona Rosa combines residential, loft-style living with a great deal of retail and commercial sites on the streets below. There are a number of affordable lofts with the conveniences of everyday life just a walk away in a traditional style community. The area includes a number of shops, restaurants, parking areas, and places for kids to play. The area has gained a great deal of popularity with young adults, retired adults, and young families. The lofts are above commercial areas, which are located on the ground floor of each building. There are 24 different units with nine floor plans. Lofts range in size from 518 square feet to 1,415 square feet and prices range from $600 to $1,830/month. Tenants choose the style and layout that best fits their needs. The neighborhood, as they call the commercial and retail area, puts everything within walking distance of the residents, including 20 restaurants, over 50 places to shop, a spa, a dentist, a comedy club, and Grantham University. The area also includes 12 hotels, many of which provide shuttle services to Zona Rosa so that visitors may spend time shopping there and walking the streets of the neighborhood. This neighborhood offers a glimpse at a more commercialized TOD. Zona Rosa serves as an excellent example for cities considering this style of development.

Victoria Gardens is another type of commercialized development located in Rancho Cucamonga, California. This one-stop shopping center contains various shops and restaurants, known as an “open air lifestyle community.” There are 20 acres of multi-family housing along with 1.3 million square feet of retail and office space. The site’s developers have attempted to combine all shopping aspects into a single area where everyone comes. The development includes plenty of parking and other conveniences, including a new movie theatre and many entertainment venues. This style of development has combined shopping with dense multi-family housing units in the same area in order to stop urban sprawl.

**Housing for Older Adults**

A study published by national mortgage lender Fannie Mae found that middle-aged and older people have a high demand for walkable communities that include affordable housing. Barrington, New Hampshire, is a small town comprised of about 7,500 residents, 7% of which are over age 65. In an effort to establish affordable housing for senior citizens and increase interaction within the community, the town has developed a plan to build senior housing around a village center at its middle. This will increase walking around town and put seniors closer to the grocery store, community center, library and an elementary school. Barrington has changed zoning laws in order to maximize space for senior housing and further development. There is a desire to maintain the town’s quaint, rural feel, while increasing community interaction and bringing seniors new and affordable housing.

Seattle has also pushed for mixed land use and more affordable senior housing. The city cleaned up a heavily polluted Brownfield site and obtained proper permits to show that it is ready for such development. The city then reformed its master zoning laws to allow for this type of housing, which qualified as “Urban Village” and “Distressed District” for more funding. Southeast Effective Development (SEED) joined with Seattle’s local government to develop this much-needed housing community, which had suffered from high crime rates. Courtland, a new five-story senior housing building finished in 2004, contains 208 affordable senior
hiring rental units and a rooftop garden. It also includes ground floor space for retail and commercial units. This mixed land use has revitalized the area and provided more seniors affordable housing.\textsuperscript{74}

Naples, Florida, 50\% of whose population includes residents that are 65 and older, aimed to increase community, safety, and environmental awareness. As such, the town installed sidewalks throughout the town to increase exercise and reduce traffic. This measure is being funded by a tax on gasoline and local officials hope it will improve the town’s sense of community.\textsuperscript{75}

**Examples of Revitalizing Communities**

Old Town, in Lansing, Michigan, is home to one of the oldest buildings in Lansing and which used to be a thriving shopping center. With the emergence of cars and shopping malls, the city slowly entered an economic depression. The 1970’s and 1980’s brought about the abandonment of many dilapidated buildings and a resulting need for reform. By the 1990’s Old Town launched TND’s and mixed land use developments. It received funding from the Main Street program, state and city development offices, and the state economic development corporation. The city worked with individual property owners on what they could do to enhance this project, and cleaned up the cityscape around Old Town. Over the past five years, Old Town has witnessed about $10 million in improvements from private investors and 100 new jobs. It also boasts many new attractions, including a park with a fishpond, cafes, restaurants, houses, and condominiums, and converted an old warehouse into its Convention Bureau. All these mixed land use reforms have successfully revitalized this downtown area.\textsuperscript{76}

Peterborough, New Hampshire, was a community with a failing downtown region that, in the 1980’s, many businesses and residents had abandoned for malls outside of town in the 1980’s. By the mid-90’s there was little business or interest left in the downtown area. A group called “Downtown 2000” began raising money to bring back the downtown. Starting out as an advocate, Downtown 2000 soon moved on to develop as a non-profit corporation. Its first project was to create a downtown area park. This river park served as a focal point and destination point for a river walk from the other side of town into the downtown. Downtown 2000 has since brought in sidewalk reforms and beautified downtown streetscapes. Commercial space and businesses have been buying abandoned buildings and making repairs to facilitate commercial use. The town has successfully revitalized its image and drawn businesses and people back to the area.\textsuperscript{77}

Many projects are focusing on development of an open space or a park project as a focal point of the downtown area. This is an easy way to redevelop eyesores, Brownfields, and abandoned sites that may lead to further downtown revitalizations. New parks draw many people out of offices to explore downtown areas. Pedestrians walk the park and visit local businesses, which increases a city’s foot traffic. The parks are often host to numerous cultural events. Parks are usually cost effective projects that are an easy way to bring life back into cities. Housing and apartments surrounding the park tend to be very popular and have successfully accompanied numerous city revitalization efforts.\textsuperscript{78}

There are many examples of new parks revitalizing downtown areas in cities all over the U.S. East Boston is planning a 6.5-acre park to replace abandoned piers that have been a community eyesore. The project will cost $17 million and should boost the economy of the surrounding area while providing for a recreational waterfront. The park will include playgrounds, gazebos, and a great view of Downtown Boston. Another example is Santa Fe, New Mexico, where the Trust for Public Land helped the city acquire a 50-acre abandoned rail yard. This is the last large piece of downtown land that remains undeveloped and will serve as a park and community guided project. These developments result in vast economic growth and further development in suffering downtown areas.\textsuperscript{79}
VII. Transit Oriented Development

Until recently, the transportation system primarily supported sprawl. The almost single-minded focus on highway development from the 1950s through the 1980s encouraged spread-out housing, and made it easy for businesses to locate in remote office parks, far from traditional, walkable downtowns. As a result, the automobile became almost the only way to travel, and traffic increased exponentially, bringing with it congestion and frustration. Sixty-nine percent of the increase in traffic can be attributed to factors associated with sprawl.80

The growing problem of sprawl and the increased number of cars on roads have led communities to look for new modes of transportation. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) can be defined as surrounding dense housing developments, retail, commercial, and other mixed land use close to a public regional transit hub that could take pedestrians to any destination that they could not walk. This would develop walkable Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) communities around a central public transportation hub that would allow for many to walk or use public transportation to go anywhere they needed.81

There are many benefits to building a community with TOD. The first benefit is that TOD communities are much safer and reduce car traffic. With less traffic on the road, people are encouraged to walk or bike from place to place. Also with rising gas and car prices, public transportation saves commuters a great deal of money. Reduced automotive traffic also results in lower emissions and a cleaner environment. Usually, the center of a TOD development becomes a very busy place with many different retail and housing opportunities. This increases quality of life in these areas.82

New communities should be facilitated by the transportation network that surrounds the community. There should be a strategic plan for how a community plans to work and travel. A decision on the type of transportation and the layout of the community should be constructed to determine the best available transportation policies for the new community. Many cities are trying out new communities based on TOD’s like Dallas, Denver, and Salt Lake City. They include a strategic road design and layout and easily accommodate and encourage biking and walking. TOD’s include narrow streets to slow car traffic and to protect pedestrian traffic. These communities have witnessed a great deal of success thus far, and are expanding all over the country.83

The Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group (SVMG), which includes 190 employers and over 275,000 workers, is located in California along some of the state’s most congested highways. These highways become filled with traffic and can make for a two hour commute each way for some employees. As such, a number of employees have left SVMC to pursue opportunities closer to home and it has been difficult to recruit new employees. The SVMG has opened up funds and helped the community fight for new more affordable housing opportunities around the business area. However it has also been one of the biggest proponents in a fight for TOD. SVMG wants to help build livable and walkable communities that surround a transportation hub to create for workers an easier and friendlier commute. SVMG has given a great deal of money to research and begin these projects in California.84

An example of a TOD influenced town that has developed quickly over the past five years is Carrollton, Texas. The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), which is a light rail transit that provides transportation to Dallas and Fort Worth, is opening a station in the suburb town of Carrollton. The town intersects three major rail lines and will have a four-platform station that will commute to stops all over Dallas and Fort Worth. This will be the largest train station located in a suburb. DART is currently working on a new zoning and tax plan to take advantage of the new rail station. It hopes to create a Union Station type atmosphere at the center of the community. DART has big plans for its future growing community, that will flourish around new transit-oriented projects.85

Denver, Colorado, is another city benefiting from TOD. New light rail stations to the north and south of Denver have been the center of many new communities. Developers have started turning these areas into high-density communities that include apartment complexes, stores, and restaurants. Developers have used this transportation hub as a center of their communities, which provide commuters with a short walk and a great deal of savings. Many people are excited about commuting opportunities and it has made new communities around Denver very popular.86
VIII. CONCLUSION

Land use planning is significant throughout the Commonwealth. As a result of growth and development, Pennsylvania needs approximately $3 billion annually for transportation maintenance and improvement and another $2 billion annually for school construction and busing. Rethinking how we plan communities and build new residential and commercial developments that force a change of habit (walking or mass transit instead of driving) will impact the state, local government and even an individual’s bottom line.

Lackawanna and Luzerne County have taken steps to enhance land use planning. The counties are collaborating in a process of preparing a bi-county comprehensive plan. Eleven communities in Lackawanna County have also banded together to prepare a regional comprehensive plan. For measurable results to occur, this kind of cooperation must occur in all communities throughout the region. Northeastern Pennsylvania has great potential for growth and economic prosperity; the way to maximize this, is through partnerships.

JUSC encourages communities to begin the process of collaboration and long-term planning on several levels. From policing and municipal services to comprehensive planning, the only way to ensure economic stability of local government, an increased standard of living for residents, and a desirable quality of life, is to remember that our communities are not islands. As an economically interdependent region, we must look beyond our political and jurisdictional borders to make informed decisions and plans for the good of the entire northeastern Pennsylvania region.

JUSC encourages the review of other studies such as “Regionalism: A Primer,” “Why Aren’t We Average,” and “Bond Rating Methodologies” for additional background on why regionalism is so important and how other communities across the country have had successful experiences.

Photo courtesy of: http://mongabay.org/images/grandcanyon/?D=D
ENDNOTES

32. “What is Smart Growth?” http://www.10000friends.org/downloads/What_is_Smart_Growth_definitions.doc
