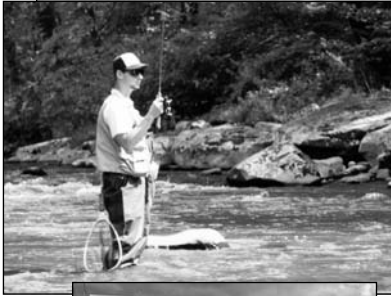


What Kind Of Place Should Westmoreland County Be?



Partnership of Westmoreland County

**Improved Growth Strategies
For Westmoreland County**

2004 - 2005 Annual Report





Mission

*Through education and technical assistance,
improve the quality of growth through cooperative
land use strategies in Westmoreland County.
Our efforts enable communities to meet the challenges
associated with growth and revitalization.*

Dear Friends of the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County:

SGPWC has completed its fourth year of service to the citizens and governmental institutions of Westmoreland County. The small group of community leaders who conceived and established the organization began with a vision. They believed that the county was drifting in the wrong direction in terms of effective land use development. The evidence was everywhere. Sprawl, traffic jams, and architectural ugliness were coming to dominate large areas. The wonderful life style and natural beauty of Westmoreland County appeared to be in jeopardy.

Since 2001, the privately funded SGPWC has made tremendous progress in articulating a body of values that promote both sensible land use and strong economic development. SGPWC has helped many local governments confront difficult development issues. Through its education programs many local officials have received training in implementing proper land-use policies. Each year SGPWC hands out annual awards to individuals, organizations, and government units whose projects have best exemplified Smart Growth principles.

The past year has been very exciting for our organization. First and foremost, SGPWC played a key role in working with County government to prepare the first-ever Comprehensive Plan for Westmoreland County. But, as the following pages show, there were many other significant accomplishments.

I hope you enjoy reviewing the work of the SGPWC over this past year. Much has been accomplished, but much still remains to be done. Partnership is the key concept in our organization. We know that these very big challenges require the coordinated commitment of many groups and individuals. We hope you will join with us in securing a bright future for Westmoreland County.

Sincerely,
Frank A. Cassell, Ph.D.
President

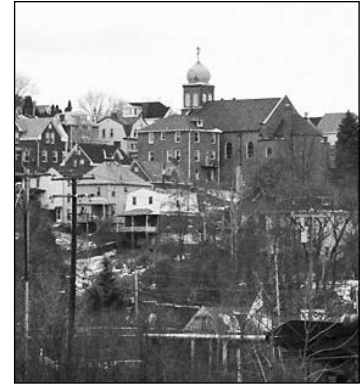


10 Smart Growth Principles

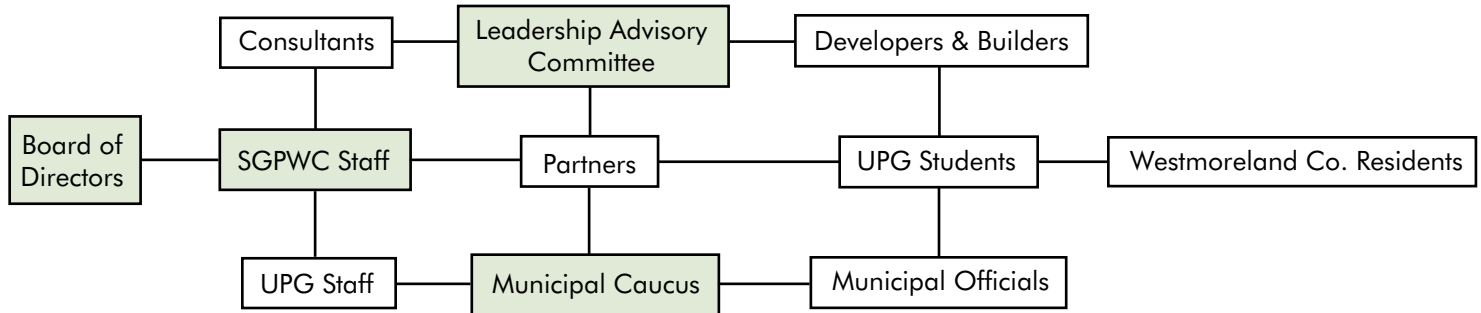


Recent aerial photo of Route 30 from Mountain View Inn (left) looking east towards Beauty Crossroads and Latrobe

- Mix land uses.
- Take advantage of compact building design.
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices.
- Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.
- Encourage community and stake holder collaboration in development decisions.



Who We Serve



Education

Objective: To increase the understanding and use of sustainable concepts of community planning amongst elected officials, planners, lawyers, developers, students and the general public.

4th Annual Smart Growth Summit Saturday, September 25, 2004

The focus of this year's Summit was on The Future of Agriculture in Westmoreland County. Our keynote speaker was Tom Daniels, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and author of "When City and County Collide." His latest book is "The Environmental Planning Handbook for Sustainable Communities and Regions." For nine years, Daniels managed the nationally-recognized farmland preservation program in Lancaster County.

Another feature of this year's summit was a workshop that was conducted by the American Farmland Trust (AFT), with Bob Wagner and Kevin Schmidt as facilitators. AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Bob Wagner has been with AFT since 1985 and has worked in the field of farmland protection since 1981. In his current position, Wagner oversees the organization's regional offices, staff and



activities, nationwide. Kevin Schmidt is director of AFT's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. His leadership responsibilities include educating communities, landowners and farmers in Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia about farmland protection.

Betty Reefer provided information on the county's Agricultural Land Preservation Program. Anita Nichols gave an update on the Future of Westmoreland Agriculture initiative.

A special thank you to our sponsors for this event...

Westmoreland Conservation District

Kim Miller

A. Richard Kacin, Inc.

Southwest Section, PPA

John A. Robertshaw, Jr.

Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation

3rd Annual Smart Growth Awards Dinner Thursday, May 5, 2005



Photo courtesy of Latrobe Bulletin

Smart Growth Awardees, left to right: Smart Growth Board of Directors President, Dr. Frank Cassell; Westmoreland County Commissioner, Tom Balya; Eugene A. DePasquale, deputy secretary for community revitalization of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; Barbara Hinkle, vice president of enrollment services and registrar of Seton Hill University; Jack Savinni, president of Greensburg Salem School Board; Emil Peterninelli, Greensburg City Council and Judy Harvey, Downtown West Newton, Inc.

This year's awards dinner was attended by over 150 people. Our featured speaker was Eugene A. DePasquale, Deputy Secretary for Community Revitalization of the PA Department of Environmental Protection. In one way or another, each award winner has implemented a plan that has enhanced or will enhance the value of their community.

— 2005 AWARDS —

Proposed Revitalization

The West Newton Downtown Area Plan
for "The Bridge to Tomorrow" Plan

Proposed Development

Seton Hill's University Center In the City of Greensburg
for their work in developing a plan that implements Smart Growth principles

Proposed Development Strategy

Murrysville Economic & Community Development Corporation
for their work in developing a plan that seeks to implement Smart Growth principles

Student Project

Penn State University New Kensington Applied Psychology Class
Foundation for Strategic Plan - City of Lower Burrell
for their outstanding Student Project

Outstanding Plan

Westmoreland County Commissioners
for their work in implementing the
Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan

A special thank you to our Smart Growth Awards Dinner Sponsors



Members of the Penn State University New Kensington Applied Psychology Class and their instructor are recognized with a Smart Growth Award. Left to right they are: Nathan Ford; Kristen Guy; Brandon Crawford; Josh Karelitz and instructor Richard J. Harnish, Ph.D.

Allegheny Energy
First Commonwealth Bank
First National Bank of Pennsylvania
Irwin Bank & Trust Co.
A. Richard Kacin
City of Greensburg
Economic Growth Connection
John A. Robertshaw, Jr.
Nemacolin Woodlands Resort
Pashek Associates, Ltd.
Senator Bob Regola
Skelly & Loy
University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

Workshops Hosted:

- APA Audio Conference on “Economic Development for Small Towns” on October 6.
- APA Audio Conference on “New Technologies for Planning and Public Participation” on November 3.
- APA Audio Conference on “Planning and Public Health” on December 1.
- APA Audio Conference on “Project Management” on January 19.
- APA Audio Conference on “Zoning” on February 16.
- APA Audio Conference “Planning for Safe Growth” on April 20.
- APA Audio Conference on “Development Finance and Pro Formas” on May 25.
- APA Audio Conference on “Planning, Environmental and Land Use Law” on June 29.

Cooperative Workshops:

- Hosted workshop along with SPC and PennDOT on Governor Rendell’s Hometown Streets and Safe Routes to School Program on July 7.
- Westmoreland County Bar Association - Local Public Officials Workshop on October 28.

- PSATS Sensible Development Workshop on March 10.
- Co-sponsored the UPG Westmoreland Forum on March 17 to introduce the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan.
- WREN Protecting Public Drinking Water on April 13.
- Regional Conference on Transportation & Land Use for Economic Development on June 7.
- Hosted PMPEI Zoning Course on October 12, 19 & 26.

“Smart Growth’s Training and Principles have been instrumental and beneficial to MECDC’s ability to attract and maintain a strong community. The principles have been readily acceptable by the development community, which has resulted in a more livable environment.”

– John Cardwell,
Murrysville Economic
Development Corporation



Alex Graziani, Executive Director, Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County, emphasizes Smart Growth principles at the Governor's Institute for Environment and Ecology, for teachers K - 12 held at Seven Springs, summer, 2005.

Technical Assistance

Objective: Enhance the vitality of communities by assisting municipalities and developers in the use and adoption of smart growth practices

A Developer's Agreement

The Partnership realized the goal of working with a developer to get plan approval of a conservation-based residential development. Beginning July 2003 the Partnership, with the assistance of Randall Arendt of the Natural Lands Trust, began to provide technical assistance and sketch plan concepts to Miller Penn Development, Inc. for a parcel of ground in Unity Township. A "Developer's Agreement" was signed with Unity Township on the 31st of January, 2005 for the 101 lot development known as Foxfield Knoll. The first phase includes 115 acres and will include dedicated green/open space of approximately 49 acres. Additionally, the existing farm buildings will be sold with nine acres, and seven of those acres are in pasture. The project broke ground on May 1, 2005 with house construction in August, 2005.

Community Revitalization

Irwin Borough



“The Smart Growth Partnership, through the experts that they have brought to Westmoreland County, opened my eyes to conservation design and sustainable development. This education has completely changed my approach to development.”



– Kim Miller,
Miller Penn Development, Inc.

The SGPWC staff has played an invaluable role in the Irwin Project by providing both technical planning support and education to insure a quality planning project. Smart Growth provided technical assistance to Irwin Borough during the year through assistance with writing and submitting multiple grant applications. One of the outcomes of this role resulted in Irwin becoming a recipient of a \$50,000 planning grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

As a member of the Irwin Project team, our executive director has played a key role in aiding in the facilitation of a training session for the Irwin Borough Council. We have assisted with the development of a Request For Proposal (RFP) for a qualified consultant team to develop a comprehensive plan and will assist in consultant selection. Irwin

Borough was selected by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh as one of its “Blueprint Communities.” This neighborhood revitalization initiative will serve as a catalyst for creating sustainable neighborhoods. This training, along with their recently awarded \$50,000 planning grant from the state, will aid Irwin in the completion of a quality comprehensive plan.



“The guidance and support provided by the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County was essential in providing us with a road map to get our planning process underway with much early success and progress.”

– Bob Michaud,
Vice President of Marketing,
Irwin Bank & Trust Co.

Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

Hempfield Township

City of Greensburg

Southwest Greensburg Borough

South Greensburg Borough

“The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County introduced the new PA Legislation Transportation Revitalization Improvement District (TRID) to the Steering Committee which enabled the inclusion of a TRID area in the Future Land Use Plan. The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County staff was available to our consultants, Pashek Associates, on a regular basis during the development of our Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Planning effort. They are always willing to lend a hand and simultaneously forge ahead to educate everyone in Westmoreland County about the importance of using Smart Growth Principles.”

– Barbara J. Ciampini,
Planning Director,
City of Greensburg



The Future of Agriculture

The Future of Westmoreland Agriculture (FWA) is a community-wide effort to help strengthen agriculture in the county. This initiative has been moving forward since the Spring of 2004 when the extension program was introduced by our Educational Outreach Coordinator. Last summer, an all-volunteer Leadership Team of farmers and non-farmers was assembled to head the process. Additional community members were recruited to serve on a Task Force to help run



The Future of Westmoreland Agriculture got a well-deserved congratulation from Pennsylvania’s Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff during his November visit to the Carr Farm. Shown with him are some of the members of the FWA Leadership Team, from left: Don Scott, Anita Foriska, Bob Graham, Secretary Wolff, John Turack, Naomi Costello and Conrad Donovan. Other members of the FWA Leadership Team, not pictured, are Bob Ambrose, Harriet Ellenberger, Dirk Kalp & Facilitator Anita Nichols.

the program. More than 50 volunteers have signed on to date and the recruiting of additional help is ongoing.

In order to gather farmer input, a series of Farmer “Let’s Talk” meetings were held in the fall at various locations across the county. At these meetings, more than 150 farmers were asked to share their concerns as well as their ideas pertaining to the future of agriculture. Based on the farmers’ input, the Penn State Cooperative Extension developed a survey to gather more detailed information. The Leadership Team and Task Force enlisted more volunteers to administer the questionnaires. Surveys were completed at 62 randomly selected farms during the winter months.

The survey results provide highly useable data offering valuable insight into the kind of farming taking place in the county, and the outlook farmers have for the future of their operations.

Based on this newly acquired data, the FWA Task Force is in the process of developing action plans and projects focusing on the following topics: Farmer Education, Consumer/Public Education, Marketing, Government/Legislative Issues and Value-Added Processing. Teams of volunteers are currently working on each of these areas to address current needs as well as future opportunities. The FWA program is an ongoing process that will continue to help strengthen the future of agriculture in Westmoreland County.

What kind of place should Westmoreland County be?

Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan



“Sound planning is key to maintaining all the good that Westmoreland County has to offer, while also enhancing areas we need to improve upon. Transportation upgrades, economic development and community revitalization are all improvements that government can help facilitate. This plan gives the county, municipal governments, and most importantly our residents, the tools to do so.”

– Tom Balya
Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners,
Chairman

Culminating over two years of meetings, along with significant citizen input, the Westmoreland County Commissioners unanimously adopted their first comprehensive plan on December 30, 2004. For the Partnership, the adoption of the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan represents a goal achieved. From its beginning, the major priority has been the adoption of the plan.

The county’s primary concerns and aspirations can be summarized in ten basic guiding principles:

1. Maintain the county’s predominant rural character, conserve key natural resources, and preserve agricultural areas.
2. Accommodate future development primarily within the urban/suburban development triangle, but also preserve contiguous tracts of unimproved open space within this area. In terms of public policy and public investment, do not encourage upscale development outside of the designated urban/suburban development area.



3. Prioritize transportation improvements that reduce travel time from key areas of the county, thus reducing congestion on local highways.
4. Implement planning techniques and enforce development standards that cluster commercial development and discourage the proliferation of curb cuts on commercial highways.
5. Provide more options and fewer roadblocks to varieties of housing types and residential neighborhoods, encourage mixed use development, utilize design techniques that instill a sense of place, and reduce travel time for every day purchases.
6. Revitalize cities, downtown areas, and urban neighborhoods and restore their status as attractive and convenient places to live.
7. Promote new and enhance existing economic employment centers that are accessible to various areas of the county, thereby minimizing adverse traffic impacts on local neighborhoods and communities.
8. Elevate architectural and landscaping standards to achieve a higher quality of land and building development that improves the visual appearance of the county.
9. Preserve and expand the county's moderately priced housing stock.
10. Maintain and enhance the basic attributes that make the county an attractive place to live, work, and play: i.e., low taxes, low crime rate, quality schools, career opportunities, housing and neighborhood variety, and abundant leisure and recreation opportunities.

Municipal Projects or Communities Served

- Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan
- Unity Township - Priority Attention Area (Route 30 from Mountain View Inn east to Route 981) Visualization Project consisting of developing build-out scenarios and producing visual alternative development scenarios to graphically portray development choices
- The Irwin Project
- Hempfield, Greensburg, Southwest Greensburg, South Greensburg Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Planning effort
- Ligonier Area Planning Initiative with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council
- Mount Pleasant Self-Study Committee
- Murrysville Economic and Community Development Corporation Route 22 Development Plan
- Vandergrift Improvement Program
- New Kensington - Arnold area planning effort
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Route 51 Land Use Initiative - Perry Township in Fayette County, Rostraver Township in Westmoreland County and Elizabeth Township in Allegheny Township
- Mon-Valley Initiative to form a Council of Governments
- City of Latrobe Main Street
- Donegal Area Route 31 Improvement Committee
- Derry Area Comprehensive Plan



The Casino Theater, Vandergrift, PA

Making Smart Growth Work

Board of Directors

Dr. Frank A. Cassell, President of the Board
President, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

Linda McKenna Boxx, Vice President
Chairman, Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation, Inc.

John A. Robertshaw, Jr, Secretary
Chairman, Robertshaw Management, Inc.

Jennings F. Womack, Treasurer
President, Westmoreland Health System Foundation

Allen G. Kukovich
Director, Governor's Southwest Regional Office

Larry J. Larese
*Director, Westmoreland County Department of
Planning & Development*

Ronald A. Magnuson
Vice President of Customer Affairs, Allegheny Energy

William E. Mitchell II
*Assistant Director, Westmoreland County Department of
Planning & Development*

Michael J. O'Barto
Chairman, Unity Township Board of Supervisors

Gregory M. Phillips
Manager/CEO, Westmoreland Conservation District

Gary L. Sheppard
*Extension Director, Penn State Cooperative Extension
in Westmoreland County*

John A. Skiavo
*President and CEO, Economic Growth Connection of
Westmoreland County*

Michael A. Walsh
Director of Administration, Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board

Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County Staff



Pictured left to right:

Anita Nichols

*Extension Educator, Penn State Cooperative Extension
Westmoreland County, A Partnership Position*

Lisa Plesz

Office Coordinator

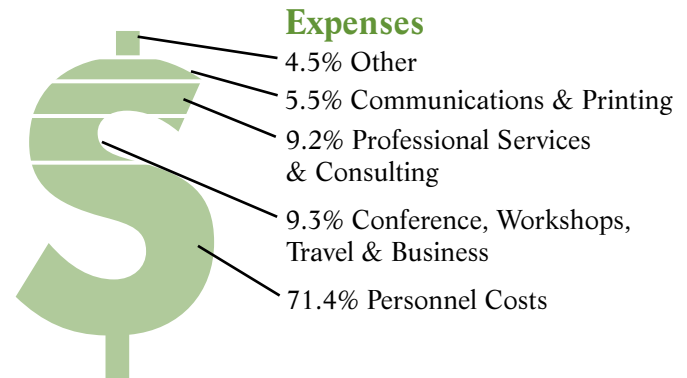
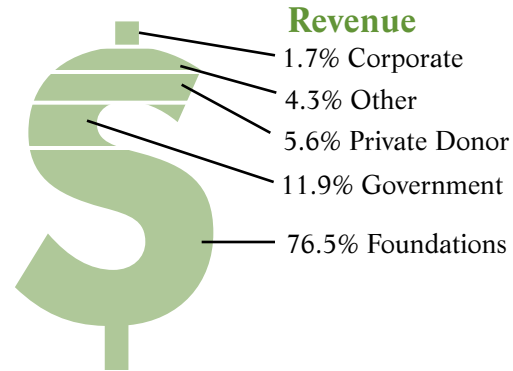
Alexander J. Graziani, AICP

Executive Director

Carolyn Royse

Grant/Proposal Writer

Finances



Thank You...

Funders

Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation

John A. Robertshaw, Jr.

Richard King Mellon Foundation

Sarah Scaife Foundation

Heinz Endowments

PA Department of Economic and Community
Development

Arnold W. & Winifred D. Palmer Foundation

Unity Township Supervisors

Sony

Laurel Foundation

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Partners

University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

Penn State Cooperative Extension in Westmoreland County

Westmoreland County Department of Planning
and Development

Westmoreland Conservation District

Economic Growth Connection

Westmoreland Collegium of Municipal Solicitors

Natural Lands Trust

Local Government Academy

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Pennsylvania Environmental Council

Vision

Through the efforts of the SGPWC, smart growth principles and practices have been instilled into the governance and development of Westmoreland County. The SGPWC is recognized by the communities of Westmoreland County as a quality community resource for land use education and technical assistance.



Partnership of Westmoreland County

University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg
166 Millstein Library
1150 Mount Pleasant Road
Greensburg, PA 15601

Phone: 724-836-7048 • Fax 724-836-7812

Email: contact@smartgrowthpa.org • www.smartgrowthpa.org



In partnership with the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg