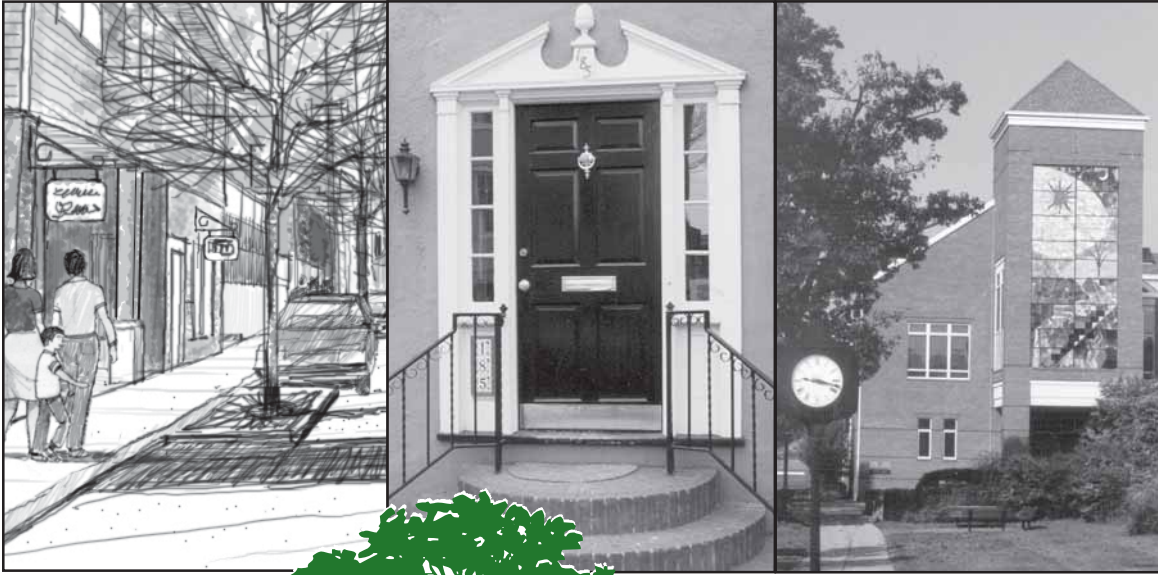


Quality of growth



SMART
GROWTH

Partnership of Westmoreland County

Helping build healthy, safe and livable communities since 2001

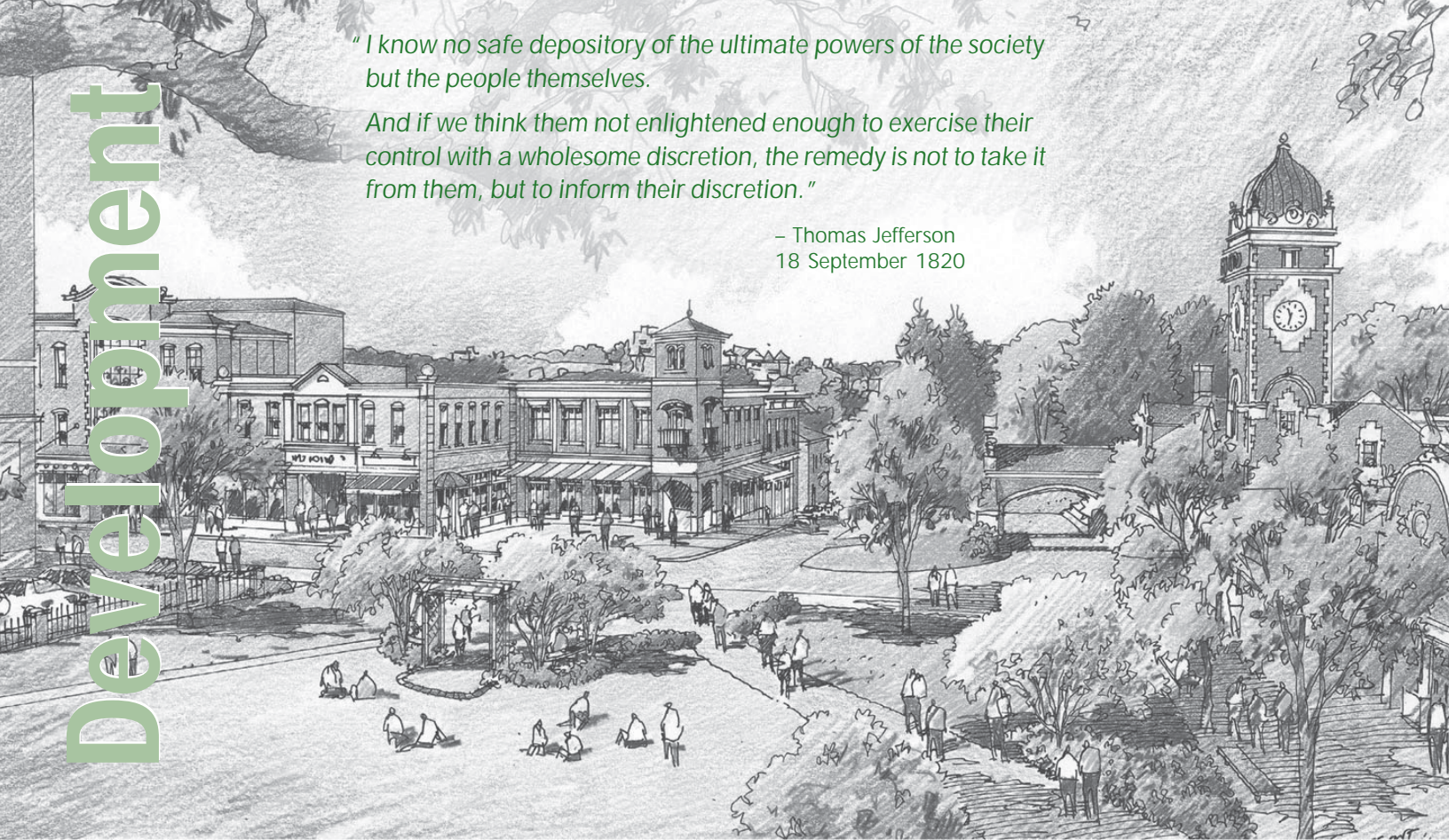
2 0 0 1 - 2 0 0 4 R E P O R T

Development

"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves.

And if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion."

– Thomas Jefferson
18 September 1820



Proposed Seton Hill University development near the train station, downtown Greensburg by Urban Design Associates



Mission

To work in partnership with communities in Westmoreland County who face challenges associated with economic growth and revitalization. Through educational opportunities and technical assistance, the Partnership is designed to promote cooperative land use strategies that will improve the quality of growth in Westmoreland County.

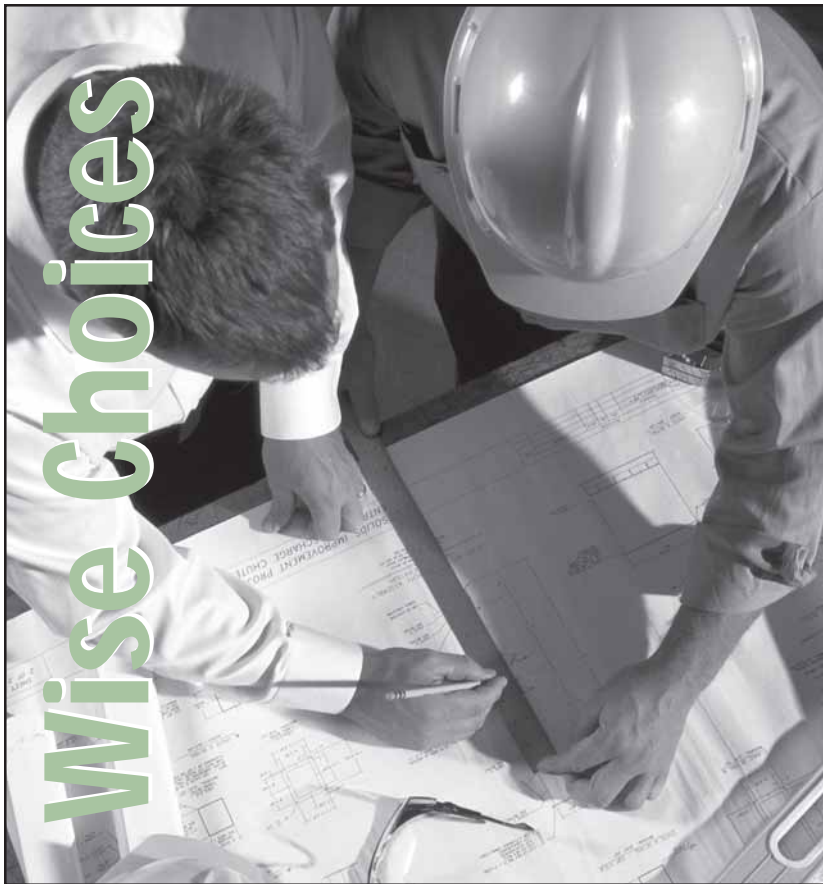
Thank you for taking the time to review this first summary report of the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County. This report covers developments from the summer of 2001 when over 150 leaders of Westmoreland County along with other leaders from southwestern Pennsylvania gathered on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg to mark the beginning of the Smart Growth Partnership.

The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County is a community-based, private non-profit organization with a mission to work in partnership with communities facing the challenges of growth and revitalization. We view Smart Growth as an economic development strategy aimed at preserving a high quality of life in Westmoreland County that helps attract employers to the area.

Since our founding in 2001, we have witnessed remarkable progress in public perceptions of the need for local governments to adopt a framework for growth that protects the environment, limits poorly planned growth, and attracts quality jobs. The Smart Growth Partnership has worked with the Westmoreland County commissioners to prepare the county's first comprehensive plan. Hundreds of local officials have attended Smart Growth training sessions to learn about implementing Smart Growth strategies. Numerous developers have taken advantage of our staff's expertise to plan better designed projects. We began a Smart Growth awards program several years ago to recognize developers, governments, and individuals who have made significant contributions to maintaining a high quality of life in Westmoreland County through sensible land use plans and policies. Please read on to learn more about how Smart Growth has progressed and how you can become more involved.



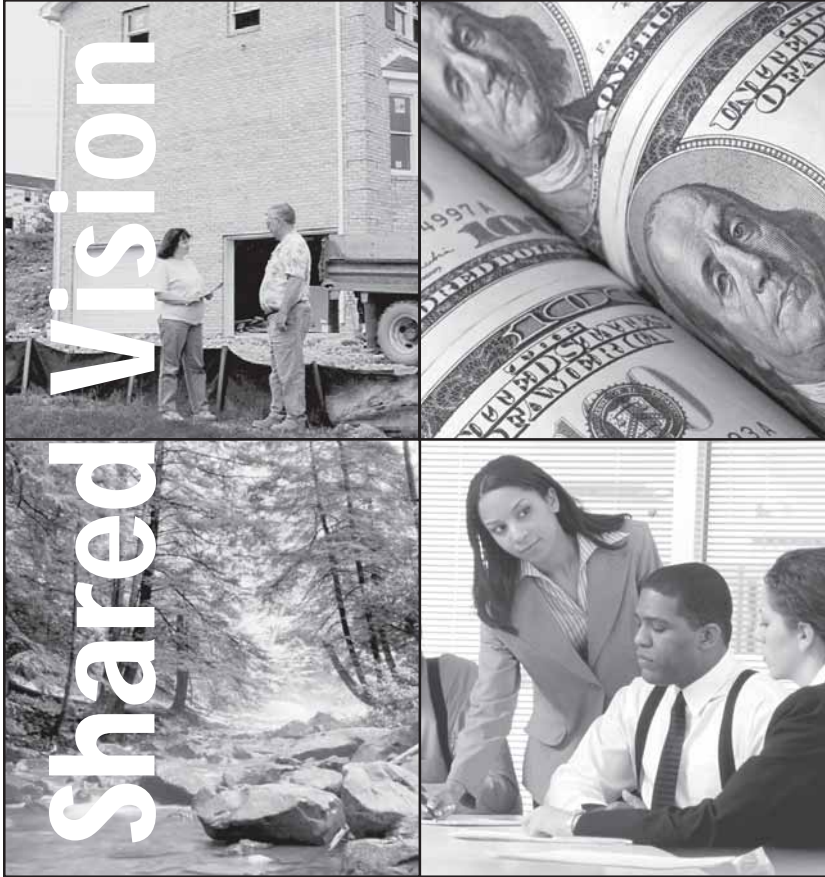
Frank A. Cassell, Ph.D.
President, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg



The Dawn of Smart Growth

Stemming from the common interests of enhancing Pennsylvania's economic growth and planning for a bright future, government, community and business leaders recognized the growing importance of land use during the mid-to-late 1990s. After careful study, the governor's office elevated the importance of sound land use planning in state policy as we prepared to enter the twenty-first century.

In the year 2000, the stage was set for the first meeting of the "Executive Committee" of the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County. With the financial support of key local foundations, the organization was poised in 2001 to carry on the work of helping others understand important quality-of-life issues as new growth and development plans come into focus.



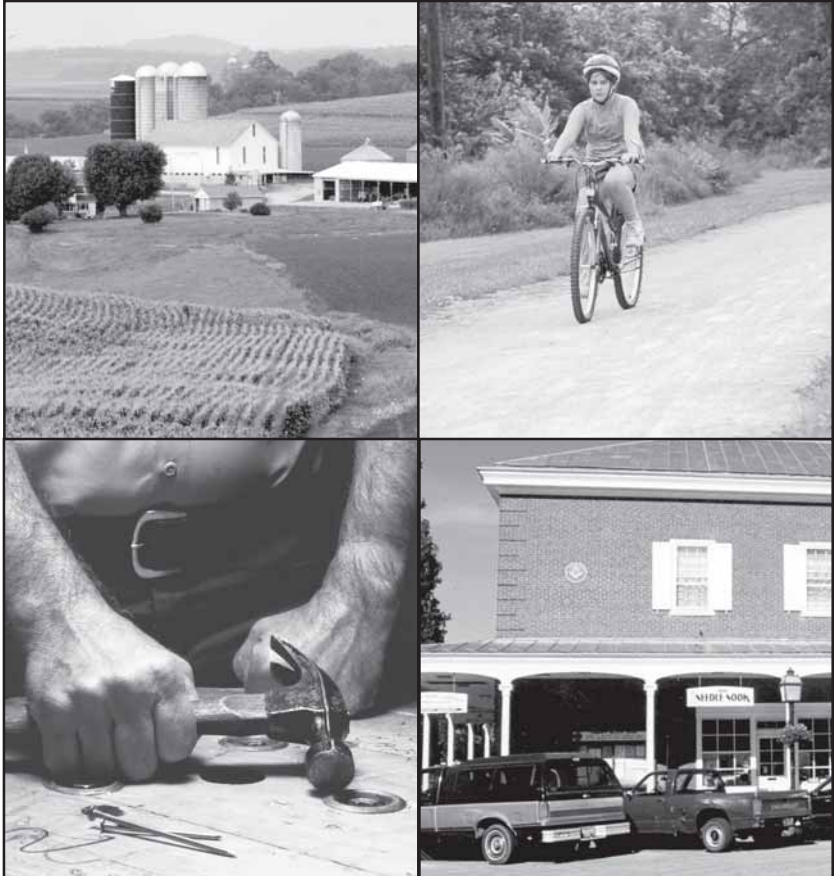
10 Smart Growth Principles

1. Mix land uses.
2. Take advantage of compact building design.
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods.
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.

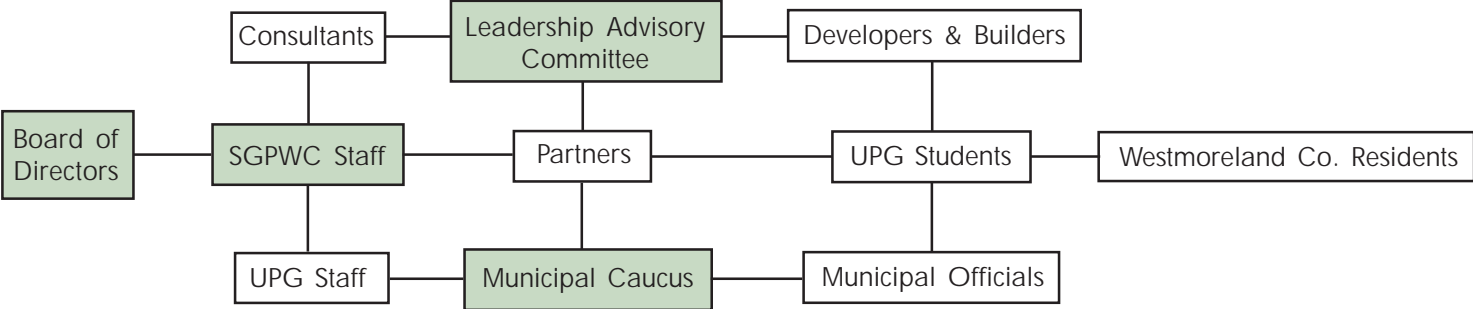
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
10. Encourage community and stake holder collaboration in development decisions.



Source: Smart Growth Network, 1996



Who We Serve



Working with Government



Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg

The Smart Growth Partnership is committed to working with local governments, helping them to make good long-term decisions.

SGPWC Accomplishments

- Conducted a Smart Growth audit for the City of Greensburg that resulted in the rejection of a zoning change request for a strip-commercial center and the preservation of a 13-acre woodlot.
- Worked with county government leaders to initiate the first ever Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan. Continued after its inception to attract funding, facilitate the hiring of a consultant, and contribute to the completion of the plan, which is proposed to be adopted in December of 2004.
- Facilitated a Multi-Municipal Planning Meeting inviting Murrysville, Unity, Penn, Hempfield, North Huntingdon, and Greensburg to discuss developing a Visual Interactive Code. This effort led to Export and Murrysville moving forward and agreeing to do multi-municipal planning.
- Worked closely with the Derry Area Comprehensive Plan effort, including drafting the work plan and Request for Proposals, participating in consultant interviews, and monitoring the plan development process. The result of the effort is that all three of the municipalities involved Derry Township, Derry Borough, and New Alexandria have adopted Westmoreland County's first multi-municipal plan since the 2000 Pennsylvania Municipality Planning Code amendments.

Working With Citizens

- Facilitated the Hempfield Township Visioning Meeting with 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania. This series of five workshops has led to the formation of a common vision for four municipalities, Hempfield Township, the City of Greensburg, Southwest Greensburg Borough, and South Greensburg Borough. Armed with a common vision, these four municipalities have embarked on a multi-municipal planning effort to develop a comprehensive plan for the heart of Westmoreland County.
- Worked closely in the formation of a committee in the borough of Vandergrift to revitalize the downtown. Also worked to introduce concepts of sustainability to the Vandergrift community by co-hosting the “Bringing Sustainable Change to Your Community Workshop: Bringing Sustainable Change to Your Community - What We Can Learn from the Eco-Municipalities of Sweden.” The committee, with the help of State Senator Ferlo, has hired a full-time staff person to work on their revitalization issues.



A public meeting in the borough of Export

The initial success of the Smart Growth Partnership is due to volunteer time of the leaders of Westmoreland County. Continued success of Smart Growth will be dependent on the continued support of Westmoreland County leaders with the efforts of ordinary citizens.

SGPWC Accomplishments

- Facilitated and led the Donegal Route 31 “Spring Fling Walk-About” in the gateway to the Laurel Highlands in the spring of 2002. Before the event, the KDKA’s Sunday morning news program featured the “walk-about” on their program. This targeted effort has resulted in numerous activities and projects including an annual clean-up day along the corridor and the re-configuration of a dangerous intersection between School Road and Route 31.
- With the assistance of the SGPWC, the local CBS affiliate television station KDKA, aired investigative reporter Andy Sheehan’s report on the SGPWC and development along US Route 30.
- Worked with the Greater Latrobe Area Smart Growth group whose work helped to result in the change of Wal-Mart’s plan to build at the Route 30 and 982 interchange in Unity Township.
- Since its unveiling at the September 26, 2002 Second Annual Summit, the Smart Growth Partnership website, www.smartgrowthpa.org has had over 541,000 hits. On average, it has had 595.6 unique visitors a month, and during the first six months of the calendar year 2004, it had more unique visitors than 2003.



Working With Developers

Developers are valued. At the Smart Growth Partnership, we believe that developers are very important to Smart Growth. The risks that developers and builders take are the framework on which community is built. They build community one development at a time. We endeavor to help developers be profitable at doing Smart Growth and therefore build better communities for our children.

SGPWC Accomplishments

- With the assistance of the Pennsylvania DCNR and the Natural Lands Trust, prepared *Growing Greener: Conservation by Design* sketch plans for seven developers on eleven sites, totaling over 1,300 acres. One of those sites has made it through the local government approval process with our design and will break ground in 2005. *Conservation by Design* subdivisions seek to wisely utilize the best natural features of a site creating great home sites while adding to the communities interconnected network of open space.
- Met with numerous landowners and developers beyond the *Conservation by Design* sites to share Smart Growth concepts and ideas. One of these efforts has resulted in THF Realty enhancing their design of the new Greengate Centre. This massive project reused the existing "greyfield" that was the Greengate Mall and is creating a new power center that will link-up with an existing shopping center with a road parallel to US Route 30.



Award winning in-fill housing in Monessen

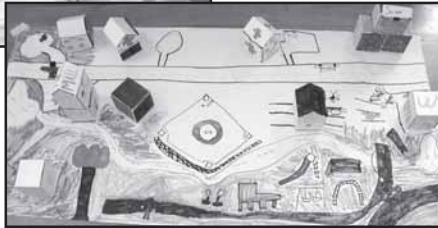


Working With Students



Anita Nichols, Smart Growth Staff, and educational display.

"Box City", a student project looks at Smart Growth principles.



Through a unique partnership with the Penn State Cooperative Extension in Westmoreland County, the Smart Growth Partnership shares an educational outreach position that provides educational programs to community members, municipal leaders, and students about community development, planning and smart growth practices.

In order to reach out to the student population, several lesson plans on community, land use, planning, community decision-making, and smart growth have been accumulated and created. These lessons are generally presented to social studies, civics, and geography classes. Presentations can be single or multi-day and can be adapted to any grade level.

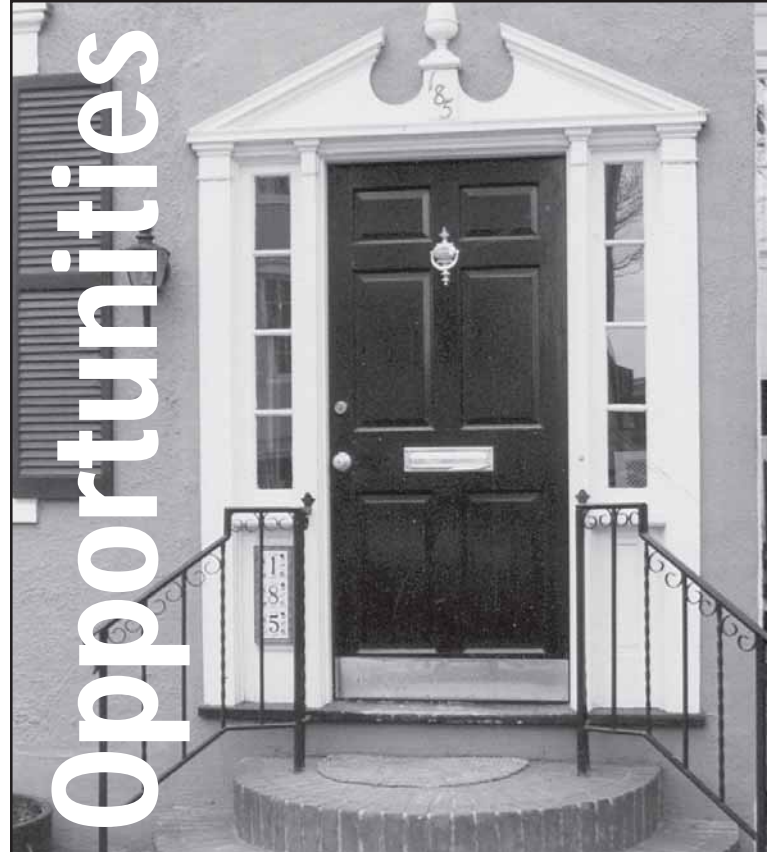
Lessons and presentations include hands-on activities, videos, PowerPoint presentations, Question & Answer sessions, and much student involvement to create a fun learning environment. These lessons can be presented as stand alone courses or used to supplement existing curriculum and materials.

K-12 programs have been presented in 9 School Districts, 11 schools, and 39 classes reaching more than 1,000 students. These students have a greater understanding of community development issues, land use planning concepts, and smart growth principles. They are able to recognize land use changes in their own communities, identify patterns that are undesirable, and identify their likely causes. It is our hope

that in the future, these students will be involved citizens who understand the importance of planning for a community's future.

SGPWC Accomplishments

- Participated in the Carnegie Mellon University Urban Lab planning efforts in both New Kensington and Monessen. The project in New Kensington led to some vibrant redevelopment concepts that have informed the City's "Weed and Seed" effort. This project was a winner of the 2004 Smart Growth Student Award.
- The Smart Growth Partnership was chosen as a topic for student John Guzowski for the UPG Capstone Course that is completed in the senior year. John says he chose the topic because "Smart Growth is an innovative approach to sustainable economic growth that helps support and educate governmental units responsible for land use policy in Westmoreland County." This project ultimately won a Smart Growth Award at the 2nd Annual Smart Growth Awards Dinner in May 2004.



Education & Training

Empowering others to make a difference in improving and maintaining our quality of growth.

SGPWC Accomplishments

- Established a partnership with the Local Government Academy, which has led to the provision of courses in Westmoreland County, and the first ever newly elected officials course offered exclusively to Westmoreland County Elected Officials. These courses have previously only been offered in Allegheny County.

Workshops Hosted

2001

- The Pennsylvania Planning Association Professional Development Retreat
- First Smart Growth Summit, featuring Randall Arendt of the Natural Lands Trust, a land-use planner, site designer, author, lecturer, and advocate of conservation planning

2002

- *Gateway Communities Key to Success* Interactive Television Workshop
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Water Resources Conference
- Second Annual Smart Growth Summit featuring Pulitzer-winning journalist, Thomas Hylton, author of *Save Our Land, Save Our Towns*



Left to right: Randall Arendt, Natural Lands Trust and Dom Scalise, developer discuss plans.

2003

- Third Annual Smart Growth Summit with reknowned journalist Neal Peirce focusing on the political and economic dynamics of metropolitan regions and their emerging national and global roles

2004

- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development faith-based grant writing workshop
- Young Preservationists Association workshop

Cooperative Workshops

2001

- In cooperation with PENNDOT, Westmoreland Geographic Information System (GIS) User Group formed

2002

- Facilitated a walking audit workshop, along with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, in the City of Greensburg at Lynch Field. After the walkability workshop, the city took action to enhance pedestrian safety at the entrances to Lynch Field along US Route 119 by adding signage and designated crosswalks
- GIS workshop with Penn State Cooperative Extension at Allegheny Township
- Developers' Conservation by Design Workshop "Lowering Costs Through Better Design" in cooperation with the Westmoreland Conservation District

2003

- Coordinated with the Westmoreland County Bar Association and Westmoreland Collegiums of Municipal Solicitors to present the first Local Public Officials Law Series workshop on zoning
- Series of five visioning workshops produced by 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania with Hempfield Township and the greater Greensburg Region
- Co-presented with Senator Allen Kukovich's office a Mobile workshop to Pittsburgh to view examples of Smart Growth
- Second Local Public Officials Law Series workshop on the Sunshine Act with Westmoreland Bar Association
- Smart Growth Mobile workshop exploring agribusiness in Westmoreland County coordinated with the Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Office

- Smart Growth workshop presented at Saint Vincent Small Business Development Center with Allen Cohen, Planning and Zoning Director, North Huntingdon Township; Fred Wilder, Community Development Director at Murrysville and State Senator Allen Kukovich

2004

- Facilitated six "self study" meetings for Mount Pleasant Township helping the community focus on challenges and opportunities facing the township
- Facilitated the Mid-Mon Valley River Towns meeting along with Carnegie Mellon University and California University of Pennsylvania

Technical Programs and Assistance

2002

- Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) three-week training for subdivision review
- First educational outreach program presented at Sustainable Communities Teacher's Workshop held by the Westmoreland Conservation District

2003

- PMPEI Basic Course for Planning Commissioners
- PMPEI course in Subdivision and Land Development
- Local Government Academy Newly Elected Officials two-part training

2004

- PMPEI Basic Course on Zoning
- Pennsylvania Act 45 Uniform Construction Code seminar with Westmoreland Bar Association
- Local Government Academy's PA Act 45 Uniform Construction Code, "Opt in or Opt Out" seminar





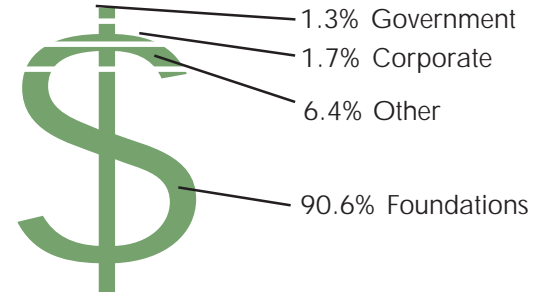
Members of the Smart Growth Board of Directors participate in the August 14, 2001 Launching. Left to right: Jack Robertshaw, Linda McKenna Boxx, Pennsylvania Senator Allen Kukovich, Ron Magnuson, and Dr. Frank Cassell.



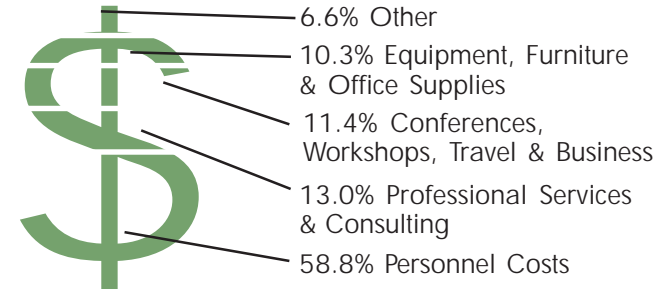
Those present at the Launching were asked to symbolically "sign on" to the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County. Our collection of signatures continues to grow.

FINANCES 2001-2004

Revenues



Expenses



Making Smart Growth Work...

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President, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

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Michael A. Walsh
Executive Assistant to the State Secretary of Administration

STAFF

Alexander J. Graziani, AICP
Executive Director

Carolyn Royse
Grant/Proposal Writer

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

Lisa Plesz
Office Coordinator



A concept for utilizing a vacant lot in historic Export (photo above, same area sketch below) Photo/sketch by Pashek Associates/VIC Group.

Thank You...

FUNDERS

Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation

John A. Robertshaw, Jr.

Allegheny Power

Richard King Mellon Foundation

Sarah Scaife Foundation

The Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation

Heinz Endowments

Community Foundation of Westmoreland County

PA Department of Economic
and Community Development

Robertshaw Charitable Foundation

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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

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Sustainable Pittsburgh

Allegheny Conference on Community Development

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania

Local Government Academy

PA Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

Partners Advocating Total Health (PATH)



What If...

- You could look out your office window and see flowers and trees?
- There was plenty of parking space, but no ocean of cars in front of the restaurant?
- There were opportunities for our young people and comfortable life-styles for our seniors?
- You could ride a bike or walk to school or work?
- You knew that the family farm was there to stay?
- The new housing development is going to have a community center with a pool and playground?
- You could drive by where granddad used to work and people still worked there?
- Your children could say to you, *"I'm so glad you raised us here. I'd like to raise my kids here someday!"*?



Photos by Lynn Johnson

Visit our website. Get the latest Smart Growth Partnership news and a schedule of upcoming seminars, workshops and events.

Enjoy "The Green Edge of Westmoreland" gallery of fine black and white photographs by nationally reknown photographer, Lynn Johnson.

www.smartgrowthpa.org

Planning



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



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