ISSUES FOR LANCASTER:
A PREFACE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

JUNE 1992

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A PREFACE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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DEDICATION

For Stefan Groppel

1965-1992

The cover photo for the report was taken by Stefan Groppel in February 1992.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The members of the Columbia Urban Planning Studio would like to thank all of the residents of Lancaster who assisted in the creation of this report. During the course of our research we discussed the City's future with a wide range of individuals including neighborhood activists, church leaders, members of the business community, staff of nonprofit service organizations, politicians, academics, and other interested citizens. The report would not have been possible without their cooperation.

Numerous public officials provided essential information about the City, historical background, and commentary on current issues. Valuable assistance was provided by the City of Lancaster Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office of the Mayor, the Economic Development Department, the Public Works Department. and the School District of Lancaster. The staff of the Lancaster County Planning Commission also generously offered their time and expertise concerning conditions in the County.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The City of Lancaster is preparing a new comprehensive plan. As part of that process, the City invited the Urban Planning Program at Columbia University to conduct a planning studio in Lancaster. The task was to define and clarify the issues facing the City, and to affirm that these issues were indeed important to a broad range of residents. Lancaster faces many challenges as it adapts to economic transformations and population shifts. The new comprehensive plan is a positive response, and the purpose of Issues for Lancaster is to accurately frame the issues that the new plan must address.

A comprehensive plan provides information, images, and policies to guide the future evolution of the City. The plan should be a thoughtful, well-researched guide for public officials and other citizens as they make crucial decisions. A successful plan must address important and controversial issues. With that in mind, the Studio explored issues of politics, race, ethnicity, and economic equity, as well as the more traditional physical elements of comprehensive plans. We hope that our research spurs a vigorous and constructive debate on the future of the City, leading to policies that will ensure a high quality of life for all of Lancaster's citizens.

Summary of the Issues

The issues have been divided into four categories: Institutions and the Political Process, Economic Issues, Social Issues, and Physical Planning Issues. However, the issues are thoroughly intertwined, and these categories should not be viewed as separate domains. The task of comprehensive planning is precisely to see the connections between all of the forces shaping the city. An abbreviated list of the issues appears on the following pages.

INSTITUTIONS AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

The fragmented structure of government at City and County levels reduces overall political effectiveness and accountability. Coordination between the City and the County on a range of planning issues needs to be strengthened.

Broad citizen participation should be developed fully in the planning process.

City government structures must represent the changing demographics of Lancaster.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

The City must respond to the challenges to its position as the economic center of the County.

The City must continue its effort to retain its historic industrial base.

The vitality of downtown retail has been weakened by increasing mall development and other suburban retail expansion.

Both the City and the private sector need to promote entrepreneurial opportunities for the Hispanic, African-American, and other minority populations.

There is a growing disparity between the educational level and vocational training of workers and the needs of local employers.

SOCIAL ISSUES

The educational system must respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

There is not enough housing for low-income families, and the available low-income housing supply is overcrowded and unequally distributed throughout the City and County.

Home ownership opportunities for Lancaster's lower-income households need to be expanded.

Social service providers are overburdened, and the coordination between different agencies needs to be improved.

Needy populations, and the corresponding social service facilities, are concentrated within the City.

Segments of the population, particularly minority groups which lack resources and political representation, tend to fall through the cracks of the system and consequently are denied services.

Crime has increased and has resulted in escalating public fear.

PHYSICAL PLANNING ISSUES

The negative consequences of suburban sprawl are diminishing the quality of life in Lancaster City and County.

Land development regulations in Lancaster should be adapted to the City's changing economic and social conditions.

Lancaster City needs a comprehensive policy to manage the impacts of industrial waste, household garbage, and residential sewage, in order to preserve the City's environmental quality.

The incompleteness of the road network and existing traffic management have contributed to vehicular congestion. Furthermore, incompatible automobile use has detracted from the quality of the pedestrian-oriented environment.

The public transportation system does not adequately serve transit dependent people for work-generated trips to industrial areas and other job locations.

The excess supply of parking garage spaces in Lancaster is unsatisfactory due to the public perception that the facilities provided are unsafe, expensive, and inconvenient.

Lancaster's irreplaceable aesthetic qualities are threatened by insensitive, inappropriate incremental changes to the City's built form. There are no legally binding design guidelines or policies to prevent or slow this process except in the existing historic districts.

Lancaster faces the possibility of further losses of its valuable, nationally significant historic resources. In addition, the preservation movement, both locally and statewide, has been weakened.

Major demographic and economic shifts are transforming the community identity of Lancaster, and are provoking a rethinking of the City's character.

Conclusion

This list of issues seems large and complex. Indeed, it should be taken seriously. But we believe that the challenges facing Lancaster are manageable with effective governance and planning. Lancaster has considerable human and material assets including an exceptional cityscape, a diverse economy, and an involved citizenry. If the political will can be mobilized, with broad citizen participation, all of these issues can be mastered.

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout its history the City of Lancaster, Pennsylvania has experienced profound change. Perhaps at no time in its history, however, has change been more evident than today. The city's traditional economic structure has been affected by national and even international developments, including the loss of manufacturing jobs and the relocation of some retail and service functions to the suburbs. The minority population has increased significantly, and more prosperous adjacent suburbs and outlying areas have experienced unprecedented levels of growth.

These changes have affected all Lancastrians who think and care about their community. Some find it difficult to accept Lancaster's increasing ethnic and racial diversity. Others cherish the opportunities for housing, education, and quality of life they find, as have previous generations of newcomers to the community. But whatever their perspective, and whether they attribute change to macroeconomic forces or new social and demographic realities, many residents are concerned about the future of their city.

The following report was compiled by first year graduate students in urban planning at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. The study team is a diverse group, including students from all over the United States, and from countries such as Germany, India, Canada, and the Philippines. As student planners the team came together to research, analyze, and synthesize information on Lancaster. This report is their attempt to define the City's planning needs and its possibilities.

Purpose and Limitations of the Study

The Columbia Studio report is not a comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is a more ambitious document containing a thorough analysis of a city, an exploration of alternative futures, and carefully crafted policies for achieving the type of future desired by the city's residents. Such plans are typically divided into "elements" covering subjects such as land use, transportation, housing, environmental quality, historic preservation, economic development, and human services. Issues for Lancaster is a preliminary phase in the comprehensive planning process, an essential beginning of

the lengthy dialogue and analysis required to produce an effective plan. The report identifies and analyzes Lancaster's problems and opportunities, and will help residents to frame the issues that the comprehensive plan must address.

The Columbia Studio has been one of a series of steps that will help shape the City's comprehensive plan. While members of the Studio were working on this report, the City's Planning Bureau conducted a series of block and neighborhood meetings to learn residents' concerns about Lancaster. One consultant hired by the City also began preparation of a Community Conservation Plan to protect the stability and integrity of Lancaster's homes and neighborhoods, while another commenced a park and recreation plan. Collectively, these efforts should establish the outlines of the major issues the City must address in the coming years.

The City's new plan must be comprehensive in its analysis and recommendations, of course, but it must be comprehensive in another sense as well: it must represent, and address, the concerns of **all** residents of the City, **all** the constituent parts of the urban economy. Members of the Columbia Studio hope that this report helps make a truly comprehensive plan possible.

Process and Methodology

The Columbia Studio divided its exploration of the issues Lancaster will face in the twenty-first century into five phases:

- o background and historical research;
- o issue definition and clarification;
- o focused issue analysis;
- o creation of policy suggestions;
- o document production and presentation.

These phases required the collection and assessment of existing documents and data, as well as the establishment of contact with various cultural groups within the City, including those not normally part of the planning process. More than seventy interviews were conducted with a broad cross-section of residents, including significant numbers from the minority community. In analyzing a range of qualitative and quantitative data, students sought to look beneath the surface of current problems to comprehend their origins, to bring to bear on each issue the diversity of opinions expressed by residents, and to share their analysis and suggestions with the community.

Structure of the Report

This report begins with a brief historical survey of Lancaster's development. Then follow four sections that detail the findings and preliminary conclusions of the Columbia Studio. These parts are devoted to

- institutions and the political process;
- economic issues;
- physical planning issues;
- social issues.

For each sector, the most important issues have been identified. Each issue is stated concisely in one or two sentences. This is followed by a description and explanation of the issue, and a short summary of public perceptions.
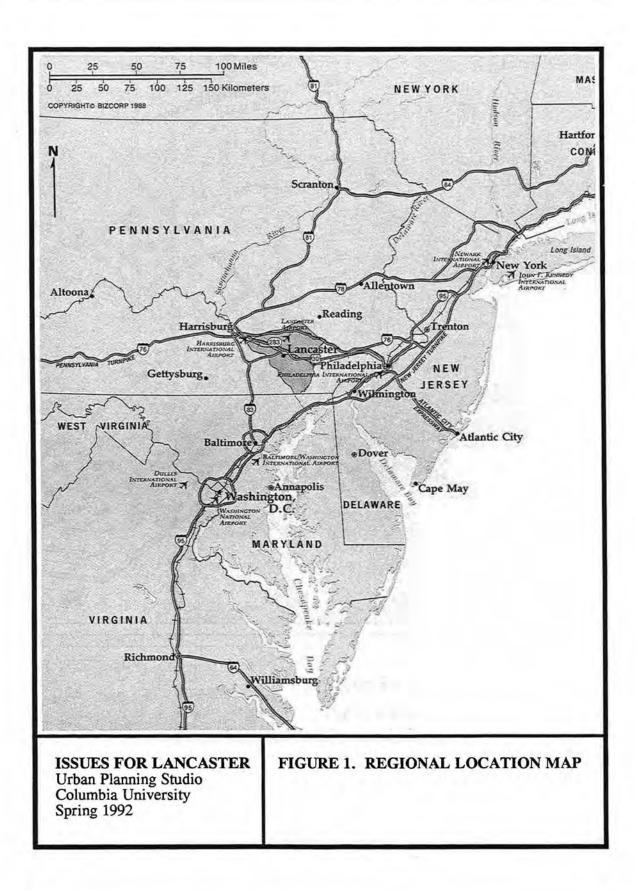
The Studio's policy suggestions have been collected in Chapter 7. Finally, the conclusion offers some final reflections on the Studio and its role in the City's comprehensive planning process.
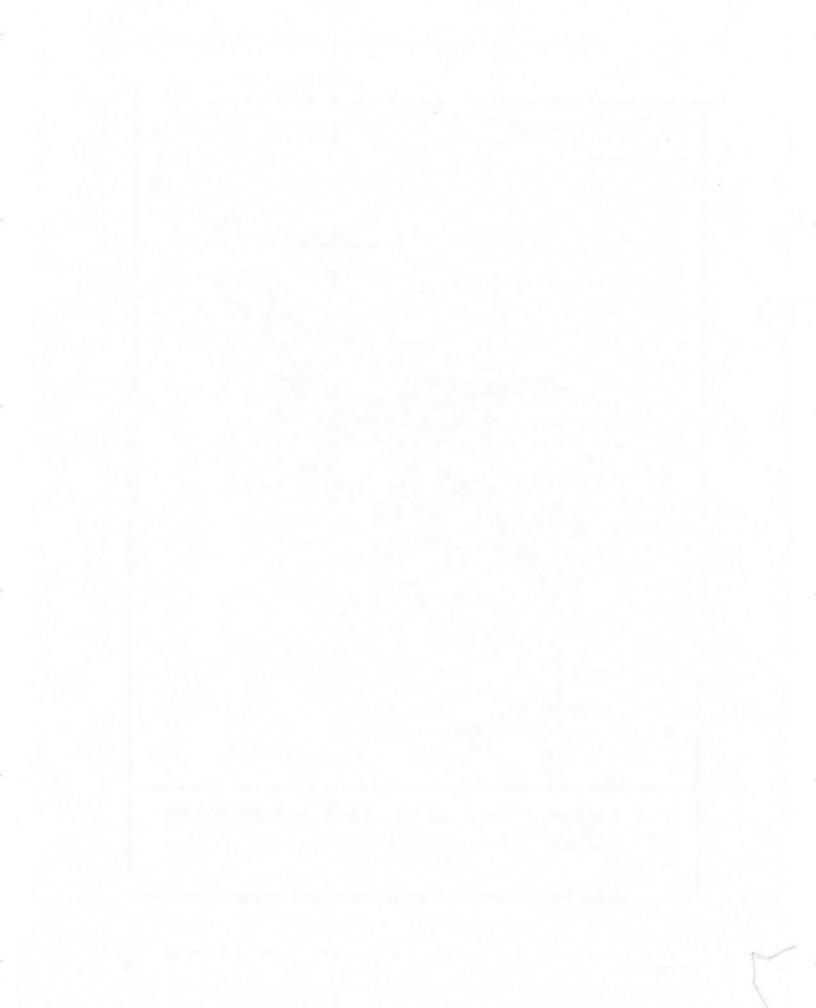
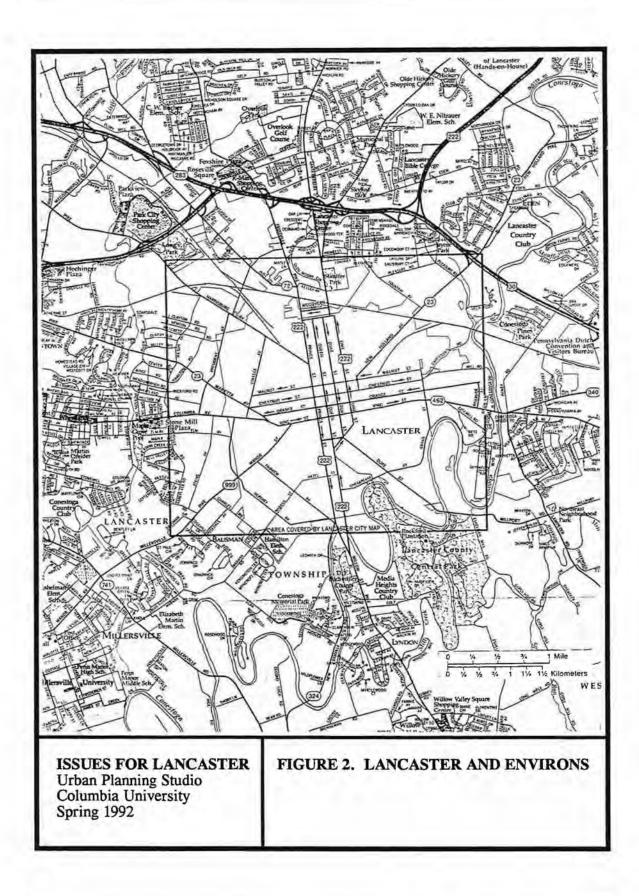## Toward the Twenty-first Century

As residents of Lancaster look toward the future, many feel a sense of uncertainty. Their community has changed and is continuing to change. Their concern is an expression of how much of their lives they have invested in the City, of how much they value their homes, neighborhoods, and fellow citizens.
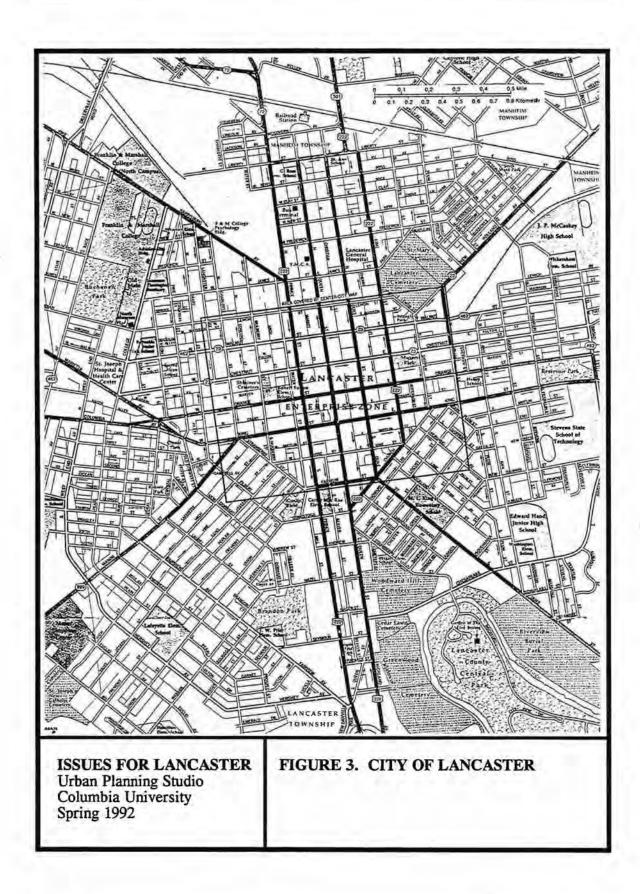
As the people of Lancaster ponder their City's future, they can draw upon the many assets that have contributed to its sense of place and its rich history. They can build upon the rich legacy of structures--residential, commercial, industrial--that grace the cityscape. They can strengthen the institutions that have helped newcomers adjust to a new city and a new nation. Collectively, they can create new institutions to address the problems and possibilities that have appeared in recent years.

No one, least of all the members of the Columbia Studio, wants to minimize the problems Lancaster faces. But if the community addresses these challenges resolutely, if it devotes its energies and resources to the issues the planning process identifies, the City will be well prepared to meet a changing future confidently. Lancaster is a successful city with a resourceful population. The problems outlined in this report are manageable ones, and identifying them is the first step toward finding solutions.

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FIGURE 1. REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

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FIGURE 2. LANCASTER AND ENVIRONS

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FIGURE 3. CITY OF LANCASTER

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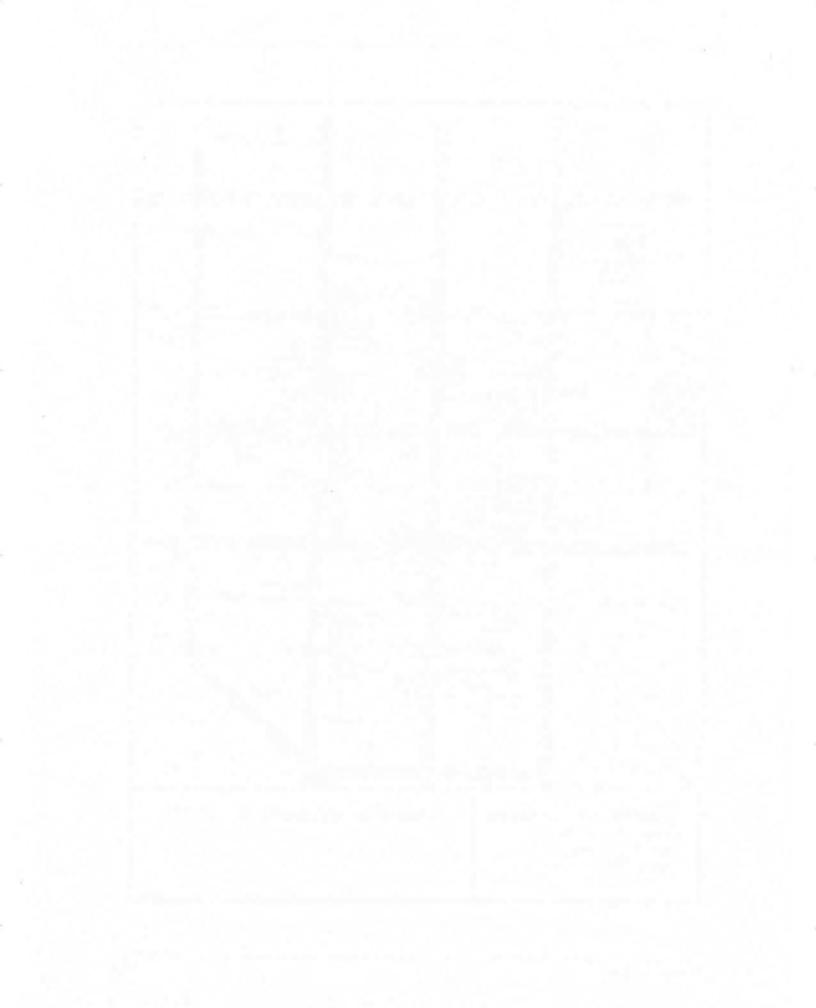Columbia University
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FIGURE 4. DOWNTOWN LANCASTER

2. HISTORY OF THE CITY

Introduction

Planning by its very nature is oriented to the future, yet knowledge of the past can enhance our ability to plan. This is true for Lancaster today. The City has had a long and eventful history, linked at all points to the history of the state, the nation, and the world. Knowledge of that history can improve the planning process by illuminating the City's inherited assets, exposing the underlying causes of current problems, and ensuring that planning initiatives respect the enduring historical traditions of the City and its people.

Native Period

The area now known as Lancaster County was inhabited by various indigenous peoples for roughly 20,000 years before any Europeans arrived. The major Native American groups that populated the area were the Susquehannocks, Conestogas, Pequeas and the Shawanese. Unfortunately, very little is known of these people since they have all but disappeared. Indeed, after twenty millennia it took less than 150 years, throughout the colonial period, to almost entirely eradicate the Native American presence in the Lancaster County area. Diseases and bloody inter-tribal rivalries took the lives of many Native peoples. Relocation farther west or to Canada and outright slaughter eliminated the others. Universal dominion over the land by settlers was achieved in Lancaster County in 1763, when the Conestogas and remaining Susquehannocks were massacred. Now nothing much remains except the names of these people who were the first to appreciate the moderate climate of the area and the richness of the land and its resources.

Exploration and the Colonial Period

The exploration of the New World began in earnest in the late sixteenth century. Colonization of the Americas proceeded rapidly; however, of the original thirteen colonies, Pennsylvania was one of the last to be settled. In the Pennsylvania area the Swedish were the first to arrive and establish themselves, doing so in 1638. Their

tenure was brief as the Dutch conquered their land in 1655. The Dutch Dominion on the Delaware had an even shorter life, as the British took control in 1664. The territory was claimed in the name of the Duke of York, but when his brother became King Charles II the land was deeded to William Penn in 1681, as payment for a debt owed to Penn's father, Admiral Sir William Penn. Under the stewardship of the younger Penn the Colony began to assume some of the character it has maintained until the present.

Penn had rejected Anglicanism and converted to the Society of Friends, or Quakers, and intended this land grant in the New World to become the Quakers' new home. In seventeenth-century England the Quakers were a persecuted sect, and they were seeking a land where they could live and worship as they wished. Pennsylvania became the Quakers' promised land, founded on the principles of liberty of conscience and religion, and the area soon began attracting other Europeans in search of these freedoms. Settlers also migrated to Pennsylvania in search of a chance to own land and pursue economic opportunity.

The Lancaster County area was initially settled by Mennonites who emigrated from the Palatinate area of southwestern Germany and Switzerland. They began arriving toward the end of the seventeenth century. The early Mennonite pattern of settlement was dispersed but quite dependent on proximity to the river and stream system where various mills were established. Some of the existing road network is still based on

these early settlers' trails. After several decades of toil and struggle many of the forests were cleared and the land tilled.
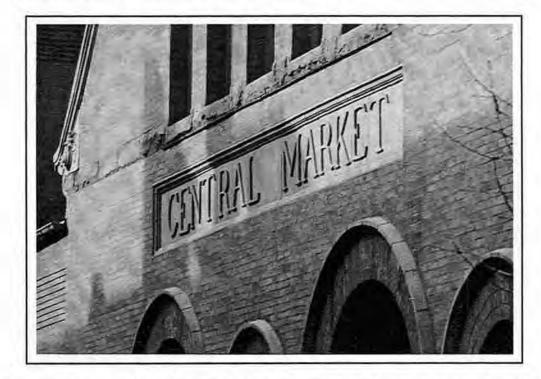
As this rural development continued its expansion farther west these "backsettlers" of the existing County, at that time Chester, petitioned to form their own County. In 1729 this request was approved and Lancaster County was formed. The residents then sought to create a County seat to serve as a political, economic, and social center. A 500 acre tract of land was chosen. The site, situated roughly one mile to the north of the Conestoga River, was a unique choice since at that time all other American urban centers aspired to be port cities.

In the platting of the City of Lancaster the proprietor, James Hamilton, followed the grid pattern laid out by Penn and Thomas Holme in Philadelphia. Also incorporated from the Philadelphia plan was the "diamond" or square placed at the intersection of the main east-west and north-south streets. In a modification of the Philadelphia example, however, Hamilton chose orthogonal square blocks instead of rectangular ones, and he also included back alleys, an aspect omitted in Philadelphia. The lots were deep yet fairly narrow (typical 64.5' x 245'). With transportation and accessibility poorly developed, efficient use of space was at a premium. Row houses of two and three stories became the standard built form. Thus, European style densities were emulated and Lancaster evolved as a compact city.

Lancaster established itself as the focal point of the County and as a thriving urban center, and was therefore incorporated as a Borough by Royal Charter in 1742. The farmland of Lancaster County yielded rich harvests and the City was beginning to produce the manufactured goods for which it would become famous, such as the Pennsylvania long rifle and the Conestoga wagon. This economic confidence in turn promoted further growth of the City and of new towns throughout the County. Lancaster's crossroads trading function was strengthened by the construction of a turnpike connection to Philadelphia in 1792. Lancaster became a major inland city; indeed, for a time it was the most populous inland city in the Colonies.

According to available population figures for this period, the colonial era was a time of steady growth. The English, German and Swiss settlers were joined by Scots-Irish as well. Furthermore, in 1726 the first African-Americans arrived in Lancaster County as slaves of white settlers. The African-American population also grew during this period and was employed as domestic help or in manufacturing or commercial laboring jobs. Lancaster County was situated just north of the Mason-Dixon line, and slavery became widespread. As a social institution, however, slavery never achieved the same level of entrenchment that it did in the South.

Following their participation in the War of Independence and the founding of the United States, Lancastrians continued to build their community. The economic backbone of the county, agriculture, continued to prosper as the soil proved to be some of the finest in the world. On the basis of this rich agricultural hinterland small, fledgling industries began to emerge. Also contributing to the growth of Lancaster was the growing importance of the city's central place functions. Since Lancaster was the center of government, administrative activities expanded with the growth of the County. Furthermore, as the social hub of the County, Lancaster was a bustling place that continued to attract outsiders. Significantly, the City also acted as an important location for servicing the expanding frontier. The central place functions increased greatly in 1799 when Lancaster became the state capital.

The City's fortunes suffered a severe setback, however, when the capital was relocated to Harrisburg in 1812. An economic slowdown also occurred during the 1820s and '30s. Facing stiff competition from British goods and hindered by unreliable and difficult access to larger markets, many of Lancaster's industries collapsed. In addition, Lancaster had lost its position as a gateway to the frontier. As the march westward continued, newer and larger towns, often with river access, developed to serve the frontier. In an attempt to bolster its economic condition during this period Lancaster built, at great expense, a canal to the Susquehanna River. Unfortunately, its poor design and lack of maintenance caused it to fail. Despite this economic setback the agricultural base saw Lancaster through these hard times.

Prosperity did eventually return as the Industrial Revolution took hold in Lancaster. The advent of steam-powered technology and the improvement it brought in overland transportation, the railroad, was the key to Lancaster's recovery. Steam provided the source of power for new industry and the railroad provided cheap transportation to distant markets.

Railroad lines came to Lancaster in 1834, and by the 1840s industrial development had begun in earnest. Textiles and other manufactured goods were produced within the City. This trend toward industrialization paralleled state and national trends. Pennsylvania, at this time, was also producing iron, steel, and ships. As the economy boomed the population soared, doubling in twenty years. Many of the new immigrants were Irish fleeing the Potato Famine.

The African-American population continued its steady growth as well. In 1780 Pennsylvania passed the Gradual Abolition Act, which allowed African-Americans freedom only after years of enslavement. As a result, however, there was a growing free black population in the County. Both slaves and free African-Americans were settled mainly in rural areas. An important event in this era for the black community was the formation in 1817 of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Lancaster. Many other African-American churches were formed elsewhere in the County throughout the nineteenth century.

During this period some material success was achieved by free African-Americans, but this was resisted every step of the way, sometimes violently, by much of the white population. Economic gains were negated by political setbacks. In the 1838 revision of the Pennsylvania State Constitution, for example, African-Americans were disenfranchised. Despite this, in the 1830s, '40s and early '50s the African-Americans of Lancaster County struggled against this adversity in numerous ways. They were active in the abolitionist movement through their participation in the Underground Railroad and in resistance efforts such as the Christiana Riot of 1851. In the final decade of this period the future appeared bleak for African-Americans with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act and the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision, both of which enforced the domination of blacks by whites.

In 1860, the Union collapsed and civil war ensued. Although only one major battle--Gettysburg--was fought on Pennsylvania soil, the prosecution of the war preoccupied Pennsylvanians for the next four years.

Reconstruction to World War II

Between the Civil War and World War II, the economy of the U.S. grew to be the strongest in the world. Despite several deep recessions, unprecedented levels of industrial production were achieved. Lancaster again mirrored this trend. With its stable agrarian base the city was further able to diversify economically. Industrial manufacturers such as Armstrong Corporation (1909) and Hamilton Watch Company were relocated to, or founded in, Lancaster. On the basis of this economic strength a tertiary service industry emerged. The construction of the Griest office tower in 1926 symbolized this increase in economic diversity. Lancaster, however, was not immune from the worldwide depression of the 1930s and the city's economic condition worsened accordingly during this period.

During this era, extension of the city's urban fringe was made possible first by horsecars, and then later, in the 1890s, by the electric trolley. Those who could afford to live outside of the city center often did so, in new suburbs or adjacent towns. For the first time, Lancaster's spatial centrality was challenged. Although all streetcar lines converged in Penn Square, thereby enforcing centrality, these same lines fostered decentralization by providing the means for people and industry to establish themselves in outlying areas. The planning studies commissioned at this time, in an attempt to deal with congestion, also tended to foster decentralization. The Nolen study of 1929, for example, proposed circumferential ring roads to ease movement on the City's periphery. In addition, the train station was relocated outside of the downtown.

For African-Americans, their active participation in the Civil War brought hope for substantial future advancement. Expectations were further heightened in 1870 with the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. Again, however, progress in certain areas came with setbacks in others. This time the economic situation of African-Americans collapsed. The level of skilled or semi-skilled black workers, for example, fell from 20% of the population in 1850 to 0.3% in 1950. The bitter reality for African-Americans was that the era in which the nation achieved its greatest economic gains was the same period in which they were denied opportunities for advancement.

With the realization that the end of slavery and legislated equality would not, by themselves, bring significant economic advancement, the hopes of African-Americans diminished. The black population declined from 3,600 in 1850 to only 1,500 in 1900. The population did increase slightly during the first decades of the twentieth century, as many African-Americans from the Southern states migrated northward.

The Post-World War II Era

After the Second World War Lancaster experienced many changes. Agriculture remained the foundation of the local economy but the process of diversification continued. Manufacturing boomed in the 1950s and '60s, and some corporations like Armstrong even became global concerns. However, as industry began to decline or relocate elsewhere in the 1970s and '80s a burgeoning service sector apparently filled the void. Again, these changes reflected the trends of the state and national economies. As primary and secondary industries declined in Pennsylvania, a tertiary economy emerged. While the four pillars of the state economy (coal, steel, oil and railroads) eroded, service industries grew. This expanding diversity has proven to be the strength of the Lancaster economy, although recent and seemingly permanent economic transformations away from manufacturing and toward service-oriented jobs have created a certain degree of vulnerability.

Much of the physical fabric of Lancaster also changed during this period as the pressure to decentralize increased. Again, the catalyst for the decentralizing forces came in the form of another innovation of transportation technology--the automobile--which enabled city residents to commute longer distances. Home ownership outside the City was encouraged by federal policies that encouraged highway construction and suburban development.

Across the United States, many of the people leaving for the suburbs were upper- and middle-income whites whose departure left the City with a reduced tax base and a declining downtown, since much of their shopping was now done in suburban malls. The specter of downtown decay prompted federal government intervention in the form of urban renewal. Renewal authorities often used a heavy hand, tearing down historic fabric in older city centers and replacing it with monolithic commercial and housing developments. In Lancaster, several urban renewal projects were completed in or near the downtown. The urban renewal projects of that era are now viewed with considerable skepticism due to their questionable aesthetic quality and the disruption they caused in established communities.

Other efforts were made to revitalize the city center. Hamilton Bank and Armstrong, for instance, decided to locate in the downtown. Individual citizens also took part in this revitalization through the formation of various organizations dedicated to the preservation of the historic fabric of the City. Thus, by the early 1980s Lancaster's downtown had rebounded to some degree.

The total population grew as Lancaster absorbed the postwar "baby boom" generation. Furthermore, the diversification of residents increased as many Hispanic people began to settle in the City. Arriving in the 1950s, Hispanics were employed as migrant workers and manual laborers. They perceived the economic opportunities and good quality of life in Lancaster, and many settled in the city. At first their presence was almost unnoticeable, but by 1990 Hispanics accounted for one out of every five residents of Lancaster. For many, Lancaster has offered opportunities for advancement, but for many others the struggle to survive continues.

During this period the situation for much of the African-American population within the City grew worse. The success of the Civil Rights Movement raised many hopes, but widespread economic advancement did not follow. Some of Lancaster's middle-class residents migrated to the suburbs, leaving the City and its problems behind. The worsening of the general economy in recent years has intensified competition for jobs. Thus, avenues for advancement have grown narrower for many minorities, whose social and economic marginalization continues.

Summary and Observations

Several themes emerge from a review of Lancaster's past. Blessed with some of the best soil in the world, Lancaster's economy has always had a solid foundation. Stemming from this, the economy has grown, strengthened, and diversified. There have also been periods of economic confusion and painful contraction. Each time, however, the citizens of Lancaster have responded to the challenge and rebuilt their economy. Whether or not the current uncertainty is merely a lull in growth or basic restructuring is a matter of debate. What is certain is that the current economic vulnerability represents a fresh challenge that the community of Lancaster must meet if prosperity is to continue.

Throughout its history Lancaster has proven to be an attractive location that draws people from all over the world. Immigrants continue to arrive seeking the same opportunity and quality of life as the groups before them. From its earliest days Lancaster was a multicultural community. It is clear, however, that some groups have had a more difficult time establishing themselves in the City than others. In particular, African-Americans and, more recently, Hispanics have faced considerable obstacles to advancement. Although conditions have gradually improved, much remains to be done to reduce political, economic, and social exclusion. Lancaster's minority communities have made great contributions to the City through their civic organizations, churches, and economic activities. Their history deserves sustained attention, and the new comprehensive plan should incorporate policies that help to rectify historical inequities.

In 1992, Lancaster is positioned far better than most cities to solve its emerging problems. The economy is still resilient, population figures remain steady, downtown improvement efforts have been launched, and the political system is becoming more responsive to the new economic and social realities. Lancaster is a successful city, but one that must avoid complacency. As in the past, the City must break old molds, and invent new institutions appropriate to the emerging twenty-first century world.

3. INSTITUTIONS AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Introduction

The social and economic changes affecting Lancaster require new political and administrative responses. Traditional ways of making decisions are no longer adequate. With public funds in short supply, renewed efforts must be made to distribute resources efficiently to the places where they are most needed. In addition, Lancaster displays a growing diversity of racial and ethnic groups. That diversity must be acknowledged as the starting point for changes in political processes and institutions. Channels must be created so that all of the city's residents can and will participate fully in the political process.

Effective planning and governance for Lancaster also depend upon the City's position within larger governmental units. The state of Pennsylvania has one of the most fragmented political structures in the nation. This creates many problems of jurisdictional conflict, fiscal imbalance, and lack of communication between various levels of government. Counties, townships, municipalities, and boroughs each have their own planning agendas which often fail to add up to a coherent whole.

ISSUE: The fragmented structure of government reduces overall political effectiveness and accountability. Coordination between the City and the County on a range of planning issues needs to be strengthened.

The United States has a long tradition of strong local government. This was desirable in an era when long-distance communication was difficult and most problems were local in scale. Today, however, many urban problems spill across local boundaries, and effective action is often frustrated by the proliferation of small political entities, each with a narrow view of the urban environment.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has one of the most fragmented land use regulatory systems in the United States. Nearly 2,580 municipalities have the power to

control land use, but according to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council more than a third of these municipalities do not have zoning, and more than half do not have comprehensive plans. In addition to municipal governments there are thousands of municipal authorities, special water and sewer districts, county, state, and federal agencies resulting in more than 5,000 decision-making bodies with responsibility for the regulation of land development. Theodore Hershberg of the University of Pennsylvania has labeled this "a crazy quilt of planning."

The Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, Draft Growth Management Plan (1992) offers the following description of the County's political landscape:

> ". . . the power of government in Lancaster County is not only divided among various levels of government, but it is also highly fragmented with different standards for development. There are 60 different zoning ordinances in Lancaster County and over 20 different subdivision and land development ordinances. The result is that the regulations governing the use and development of the land at one location may not apply or may be radically different a short distance away. Good or bad, the regulatory process in Lancaster County governing the development of private land is extremely complex and highly inconsistent" (page 41).

Lancaster City's position as the hub of the county presents both opportunities and burdens. The City embodies the cultural and architectural heritage of the region, and serves as the center of government. These are enduring attractions that help to sustain the economic and cultural centrality of the City, a centrality that has been affirmed in the Policy Plan of the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan (1991). This role also brings certain costs. The City contains 25% of the tax-exempt properties in the County. These include schools, churches, libraries, and other municipal buildings. Five homeless shelters are located within the City. The majority of City and County social services are located inside Lancaster City, as are the county criminal justice facilities and administrative offices. However, the County funds and administers most of the social service programs, such as public assistance. Public transportation is funded by a partnership between the County and Lancaster City.

In order to cover the costs of expensive urban services, the City has levied the highest property tax in the County. The tax has been raised to its ceiling and is a major concern for both the City administration and the community. The tax problem affects the City and its citizens in two specific ways. First, the high taxes are a disincentive for businesses to locate within the City. The suburbs sometimes present a more appealing option. Second, various public services have been reduced or eliminated because of budget constraints. The City's dilemma is that it cannot lower taxes to spur private investment without reducing funding for essential services, many of which benefit the whole County.

The property tax discrepancy among municipalities exists because local governments are able to avoid full responsibility for urban problems that are County-wide in nature. The City of Lancaster makes up the difference by absorbing fiscally and socially "undesirable" facilities. The archaic tax system at the State level contributes to the problem, and is in need of reform.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania bestows considerable powers on even the smallest local governing bodies. The Municipalities Planning Code authorizes municipalities to adopt land use regulations and comprehensive plans. However, when a municipality adopts its own ordinance, county regulations are automatically repealed within the boundaries of the municipal jurisdiction. Hence, there are sixty planning ordinances in Lancaster County, each taking precedence over County policies. By way of contrast, in states such as Maryland and Virginia, county plans, prepared by professional planning staffs, dominate the planning process and ensure that regional issues will be addressed. Also, Florida and Oregon have strong state-level planning.

Even if the City of Lancaster and the County had goals that were completely parallel, there are no means to ensure coordination between the County's many small, local governments. The Inter-Municipal Committee, consisting of officials from the City of Lancaster and its immediate neighboring municipalities, does meet to discuss various issues, but the Committee has avoided controversial topics and has no enforcement powers. In essence, the City of Lancaster is an entity bearing many regional-scale responsibilities, but without the legal and taxing power to address regional problems. The City has to rely on quasi-governmental authorities (e.g., water, sewer, transit) as levers to influence regional development.

State Act 42-1988 established a State Planning Board, but it is advisory only and does not have the authority to enforce plans and regulations. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is beginning to recognize the need for a regional structure of government. A new select committee on land use was created to continue and complete the findings of the 1990 House Select Committee on Land Use and Growth Management. However, these initiatives have not yet produced serious reform. The dominance of suburban and rural interests at the State level may frustrate the development of planning law that responds effectively to urban concerns.

Thus, there is a mismatch between the structure of government and the realities of daily life. People frequently live in one locality and work in another; they may do much of their shopping in still another and attend cultural events far from home. They need easy transportation throughout the area; they depend daily upon the same sources of water; and the quality of the air they breathe is affected by the automobiles, industries, housing, and other features of the regional landscape. The scattering of small local governments does not mesh well with the regional nature of emerging urban problems.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Officials in various levels of government think that the existing state planning legislation has flaws, including the optional or advisory status of plans and the lack of requirements for consistency. Some officials remarked that many small municipalities are ill-equipped to handle the increasingly sophisticated responsibilities of local government. At the state level, Lancaster County is viewed as a rural county; therefore, it is difficult to mobilize support to address the many "urban" problems that the City of Lancaster now faces.

The general citizenry is often barely aware of the planning process, taking an interest only when the process affects them directly. Many Lancastrians perceive, however, that the City is considered a depository for the County's low-income groups and "urban" problems, and they are troubled about the lack of tax dollars to deal with the growing burdens.

However, the appeal of local control remains strong in Lancaster County, and the boroughs and townships cling tenaciously to their autonomy. They fear the imposition of regulations and plans by bureaucrats who are unfamiliar with the details of local communities, and they are not eager to share resources with the larger, more urbanized areas.

ISSUE: Broad citizen participation should be developed fully in the planning process.

The existing planning process does not respond adequately to the needs of all members of the Lancaster community. As in most American cities, minority and low-income groups find it difficult to influence public policy.

The primary institutions involved in the planning process are the Planning Commission, City Council, and the Mayor's Office. In theory, policies are created through the joint efforts of elected officials, appointed officials, and the public. The elected officials are the council members, who make decisions, enact laws and ordinances, grant approvals, and are responsible for listening to their constituents. They use the City and County Planning Commissions as resources.

The appointed officials include members of the Planning Commission, the Zoning Hearing Board, and the zoning officers. The nine members of the Planning Commission act as advisors to elected officials, make recommendations, and respond to the demands of residents. Zoning officers administer the zoning ordinance and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and governing bodies on improving the ordinance. The Zoning Hearing Board decides on applications for special exceptions, variances, challenges to land use ordinances, and appeals.

In the planning process, residents have the right to air their views on plans, regulations, and development proposals. The Mayor's Office deals with the administration of adopted City policy through various specialized departments.

The seven members of the City Council are elected, but elected "at large" as representatives of the City as whole, not particular districts within it. The Mayor, Controller, and Treasurer are elected officials. Members of the Planning Commission are appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. Planning commissioners are appointed by planning region, so representation is linked to specific geographical areas.

Thus, only some of the key officials in government are elected directly by the people, and none are elected by specific neighborhoods within the City. This may encourage a broader, "citywide" view of urban issues, but it also makes it more difficult to elect officials who will speak forcefully for each neighborhood. The ability of City staff to understand and articulate the needs of particular communities is uncertain, and probably varies from individual to individual.

Also, there is limited scope for active public participation of Lancaster's minority communities in the various stages of the planning process. This lack of participation is not unique to Lancaster, but is common to many communities. The block meetings concerning the new comprehensive plan have attempted to solicit a wide range of community opinion but, especially in minority neighborhoods, such techniques may contact only those individuals with the time and interest to attend. Sometimes, citizen participation efforts fade out after the initial stages of the planning process, leaving few means to ensure that plans or regulations actually address pressing issues.
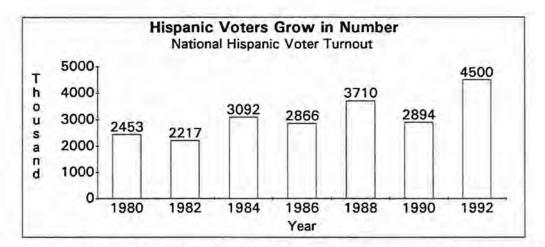
PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Many minority leaders believe that City government responds effectively only to certain sections of the population (e.g., the white middle and upper class) and has failed to address the problems of the City's minority neighborhoods. They feel that in certain instances where the government has tried to help, failure to understand the nature of the minority community has resulted in unsuccessful and incomplete efforts. The leaders also remarked that there is an increasing feeling of helplessness and dejection within the minority community; people feel that decisions are imposed from the "top" without significant input from them. This feeling of distance from City government is also shared by some blue-collar whites.

On the other hand, representatives of City government have expressed frustration at the inability to generate greater levels of participation among minorities. In their view, only some of the opportunities to influence City policies have been seized.

ISSUE: City government structures must represent the changing demographics of Lancaster.

Lancaster's population is changing, adding a new diversity to the community. Already, the majority of students in the school system are from minority groups (In 1991-92, 43.9% of the students were white). It is important that the electoral system and planning process respond to these changes, giving every group in the City fair representation in decision-making bodies. Historically, lower-income groups have felt excluded from the political process. The opportunity is now available to involve them fully in shaping the City's agenda for the future.

The seven-member City Council is the elected legislative body for the City, and is responsible for the drafting and passing of all City ordinances and legislation, including the comprehensive plan. Lancaster's City Council is elected by an at-large system of government. Since there are no districts linked to Council seats, it would be possible for all of the Council members to live on the same block of the City. It only takes four Council members with a common economic, cultural, racial, or educational background to form a majority in the municipal decision-making process.

Hispanic Voters Grow in Number
National Hispanic Voter Turnout

Source: National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials; New York Times, 4 April 1992.

Three African-Americans serve on the Lancaster City Council, so minorities are represented. One Hispanic was appointed to fill a vacancy in the Council, but was defeated in the November 1991 election. Currently, there are no Hispanics on the council, even though 20.6% Lancaster's citizens are Hispanic. This situation is not unique to Lancaster. Nationwide the Hispanic population increased by 53% between 1980 and 1990, but political representation has not increased proportionally. One reason is low voter turnout. In Lancaster, the southeast section of the city has a lower than average turnout. Another reason is low voter registration. According to the 1980 Census only 52% of the eligible voters in Lancaster County were registered. In elections, only voters count, not population figures from the Census. The potential exists for mobilization of the Hispanic vote, but this has been only partially achieved.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: The Hispanic and African-American communities still feel excluded from the political system. Some residents of the southeast area feel that their potential electoral power is not being cultivated by those running for office, and that the needs of their community have been neglected.

A dramatic improvement in voter turnout might change this pattern and generate a stronger sense of having a stake in the city and its government. However, mastering the art of electoral politics is not easy. Many Hispanics and other minority residents perceive the electoral process as a domain that requires extensive resources in order to succeed, resources that they do not yet have.

Some residents, both minority and white, are disillusioned with the political process because elected officials have produced few serious, long-range plans to improve conditions in economically-depressed neighborhoods. As they see it, only partial, piecemeal solutions have emerged.

A substantial portion of the minority community feels that people elected from within the community using a district system--not the current "at large" system--would assume greater responsibility for addressing pressing community needs. Many community leaders would also like to see a structure of consistent, regular meetings between City government and the minority community, with a vigorous campaign to inform the public of the results of the meetings. Such attempts to "take politics to the minority community" would contribute to a more accurate representation of the City's population in political affairs.

Conclusion

The fragmentation of government, limited scope of citizen participation, and inadequate representation in the electoral process all make it difficult for the City of Lancaster to plan effectively for the future. Yet opportunities for improvement exist, if the political

will can be found. New channels should be opened up to communities that have been excluded--or that have felt excluded--from the political process. Resources should be directed to those areas most in need. If the new comprehensive plan is to succeed, a sustained effort must be made to explain to residents that the plan is important and will have a significant impact on their lives. Many strong community leaders have already emerged and have laid the groundwork for more vigorous participation in the political process. The challenge is to make use of this community-based energy and expertise.

4. ECONOMIC ISSUES

Introduction

The City of Lancaster is fortunate to have social and economic diversity. This diversity provides a more interesting cultural mix and a more stable economic base. Economically the city is host to a broad range of jobs and products including manufacturing, services, distribution centers, financial institutions, real estate development, and assorted health care delivery systems. Because of this diversity of industry and development, which promotes a diversity of job types, the city has multiple economic opportunities. In order to maintain the current diversity and promote future economic development the city must engage in long range economic planning, which requires communication from all levels, from grass roots input to ideas from corporate heads.

Lancaster must also recognize that national and international economic competition have left the City's economy vulnerable. The City must adapt to a new and more demanding economic environment. Because our national economy is shifting from manufacturing to services, service industries will be important factors in Lancaster's economic vitality. These include personal, business, repair, amusement, recreation, health, legal, consulting, and educational services. Lancaster must make way for these types of businesses while maintaining its industrial base.

ISSUE: The City must respond to the challenges to its position as the economic center of the County.

Until World War II the City enjoyed a position of primacy within the County by being the center of industrial development and government functions, as well as the main node of population concentration. Today however, the City no longer dominates the County economically. Lancaster County has experienced substantial growth since 1950; this growth is evident in the fact that 50% of its housing units were built since that time. The County population, which gained 31% from 1970 to 1990, created a market that competed with the City for goods production and jobs. The Lancaster County Draft Growth Management Plan (1992) concludes that " . . . traditional City functions have been decentralized and spread throughout the suburban townships.

Although the City has endured this change and generally remains the hub of the County, it is no longer the center of commerce, culture, and other significant activities that it once was" (page 6).

City/County competition has intensified because of the disparity in buying power between residents of the City and of the rest of the County. The consumer market that supports the majority of the retail sales in the County is located outside of the City. The City/non-City differences in Effective Buying Income (EBI) illustrate the greater ability of non-City residents to make purchases. The majority of households with high EBI are located outside of Lancaster City. As a result, a significant disparity of $9,785 in EBI exists between non-City and City households (Non-City residents are defined as total County residents minus Lancaster City residents; i.e., people who live in suburbs and outlying towns). This difference means that City households have only 69% of the buying power of non-City families. If people with high EBIs and a potentially larger disposable income no longer live in the City, they may not shop there, or may shop there less often than before.

Effective Buying Income, 1990

	Household EBI
Total County	$30,466
City	$22,186
Non-City (County excluding the City)	$31,971

(Source: S&MM estimates, 12/31/90)

Interestingly, unlike other older urban centers in Pennsylvania which lost population in the 1980s, Lancaster City gained 1.5%. This increase occurred despite the County's more readily available and less expensive land, lower taxes, and abundant parking. Thus, although the County has increased its desirability as a site for residential and business location, it has not completely won out. For example, the City's supply of affordable housing units remains attractive and provides a counterbalance to the forces of decentralization.
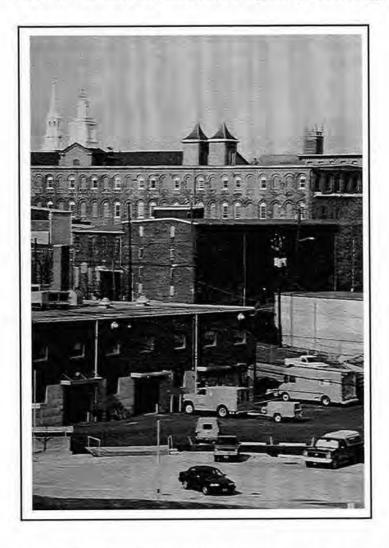
The cumbersome state taxation policy makes it difficult for both the City and outlying areas to attract business. In fact, a leading industrial executive listed state tax policy as the greatest disincentive for locating business in Lancaster. This disincentive was cited as a greater barrier than the high City and school district taxes. Thus, there is significant competition not only between the City and its periphery, but also between states. Since the City is currently at its tax ceiling it has limited options to raise revenues by increasing taxes. The difficulty in raising revenue restricts the city's ability to increase the services it provides, which may diminish its attractiveness to businesses. (Still, the City currently provides more services than most townships.) The City of Lancaster also carries a large burden of tax-exempt properties, and there are few remaining sites that can be developed in order to add to the tax base.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Many people in the City sense that the economic center of the County has already shifted to the suburbs and outlying townships, and that the City has been put in the position of providing unpopular but necessary services for the County. This view is certainly not universal. The Lancaster City government and local business leaders continue to pursue a variety of strategies to enhance the City's image as a place to do business.

ISSUE: The City must continue its efforts to retain its historic industrial base.

Lancaster City remains the manufacturing center of the county. The City has the greatest number of manufacturing establishments of any municipality or township in the County, with 137 out of the 821 manufacturing sites (Census of Manufacturing, 1987, page E1). Of the 100 largest employers in the County, 29 are located in the City. Of these 29, 12 are manufacturing firms, providing 12,249 jobs (Lancaster Guide to Employment, 1991).

The County's two largest employers, both manufacturing firms, are located in the city. Armstrong World Industries employs 5000 people, and R.R. Donnelley & Sons, situated in the City since 1959, employs 3000. Officials at both of these companies

affirmed that their companies are deeply tied to the City and want to remain there. Both these industries have expanded in the past; Armstrong made Lancaster its international headquarters in 1929. In addition to its headquarters, Armstrong operates a plant in the north part of the city and owns and occupies an office building in the downtown. R.R. Donnelley has also grown, expanding from a Pittsburgh-based printing business to a national and now international printing technology service.

A reputation for stability has contributed to Lancaster's ability to attract new businesses into the area. Admiration for the Pennsylvania Dutch ethos of hard work and craftsmanship was cited by officials at both Armstrong and R.R. Donnelley as a motivating factor for locating in Lancaster. Employers also valued Lancaster's potential as a distribution center. For example, Distinguished Brands of Long Island has relocated to Lancaster City, and Bulova Technologies has expanded its operations there.

The City has designated an Enterprise Zone which encompasses all of the City's business zones. The goal is to improve the entire City's economic base by attracting new "export" businesses (i.e., businesses that sell their products largely outside of the area, rather than just serving local needs) or assisting existing export businesses to expand. The purpose of the Enterprise Zone is to influence site decisions between the City and outlying areas; it is not designed to influence site decisions within the City.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Future industrial expansion within the city or even the County is increasingly precarious, due to the ongoing globalization of industry. Lancastrians are aware that foreign labor is often cheaper, land is less expensive, and environmental regulations are less demanding. This situation plagues most of the United States, not just Lancaster. In fact, between 1960 and 1980, the U.S. suffered a 29% decline in manufacturing firms. This decline in industry has affected Lancaster City directly. When R.R. Donnelley decided to expand its operations, instead of opening more facilities in the Lancaster area or elsewhere in the U.S., it opted to open two factories in Mexico. Residents of Lancaster hope that American industry can maintain its competitive edge, but they know that the economic landscape has changed. An atmosphere of economic insecurity is more pervasive than before.

ISSUE: The vitality of downtown retail has been weakened by increasing mall development and other suburban retail expansion.

The biggest generator of retail revenue in Lancaster City is the Park City Center, the only suburban-style mall within the City limits. In 1987, Lancaster City had 748 stores which produced $575,757,000 in retail sales. The County as a whole had 4713 retail establishments generating $2,806,817,000 worth of sales (Lancaster Marketplace, 1991, page C1).

Although the retail of the City as a whole is doing well, the downtown is threatened. Much of the city's retail is boosted by Park City Center. Once the figures from the mall are excluded, the City's retail picture looks less promising. Studies conducted in 1986 and 1989 for Lancaster Newspapers Inc. illuminated the retail disparities between the downtown, the City, and the County. Of the total number of shoppers in Lancaster County, 84% shopped at Park City Mall and 45% also shopped at K-Mart Plaza. Downtown Lancaster attracted only 30% of potential shoppers in the County, a decline of 7% from the 37% of potential shoppers attracted in 1986. No other retail area in the county suffered a loss of shoppers. (Note: the percentages cited here do not add up to 100% because individuals may shop at more than one location.) The recently approved Downtown Improvement District is a strategy targeted directly on this problem, and its efforts should be supported.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: A substantial portion of the upper end of the consumer market has moved out of the City to suburbs and outlying towns. Downtown retailers find it harder to attract people who do not live or work in the City. The ability to retain City residents as city shoppers has also been affected. Since there is little retailing in City residential neighborhoods, City residents must travel from where they live to another destination in order to shop. Since they have to make a trip anyway, and suburban retail stores are both attractive and accessible, many City residents choose to visit suburban stores rather than shopping downtown, as they might have in the past.

Suburban retailers present increasingly formidable competition. Traditional owner-staffed stores in the downtown find it hard to match the price and selection of professionally managed, national chain stores in suburban malls, although service is sometimes better in the traditional downtown establishments. One downtown store owner asserted that many downtown stores need to increase their efforts at being competitive in today's market, through the implementation of business plans, for instance. Small owner-staffed stores rarely have the time and resources needed to strengthen their sales through coordinated marketing. Also, a number of people stated that downtown retailing has difficulty competing with suburban shopping because parking is more difficult and expensive downtown.

ISSUE: Both the City and the private sector need to promote entrepreneurial opportunities for the Hispanic, African-American, and other minority populations.

Many programs have already been implemented to promote job opportunities for minorities through scholarships, job training, and support for entrepreneurs. Providing support for starting up minority businesses is especially important. Lancaster Enterprise, Inc. operates a program to start up minority businesses. The head of the program serves as a facilitator, referring minority entrepreneurs to other resources, such as support services and funding. The program serves as a liaison between state programs and individuals. An annual seminar provides information on starting businesses. In the last three years, the program has developed six new businesses in the County. It has also aided existing minority businesses. The Finance Action Group is another new program which will supply low-interest loans to City residents.

The City of Lancaster Business Planning and Mentorship, operated in conjunction with Franklin and Marshall College, is available to assist City residents with their business enterprises. They do not have to be minorities to qualify. The program provides free classes to help people create business plans.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Although Lancaster Enterprise, Inc. has set worthy goals and accomplished much, it does not have the staff it needs to be totally effective. It is not clear if the word is getting out that this service is available. Better advertising is needed. Also, annual seminars are not adequate. The minority community would like to see these and similar efforts strengthened.

ISSUE: There is a growing disparity between the educational level and vocational training of workers and the needs of employers.

Currently, the City and the County have a larger proportion of manufacturing labor and a smaller percentage of service labor than the state as a whole. In 1990, 37.9% of the Lancaster Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) employees worked in goods production, compared to 25.7% of the state employees. In the Lancaster MSA, 62% of employees worked in service industries, compared to 74.4% in the state (Lancaster Marketplace, page B1).

The Lancaster MSA is predicted to continue to shift its employment nucleus from manufacturing labor to service positions. This transformation is consistent with the restructuring of the labor force in many areas of the country. A study in the Lancaster Marketplace made comparisons between estimated employment trends in 1984 and projected trends for 1995. White collar jobs are expected to grow at a rate of 120%,
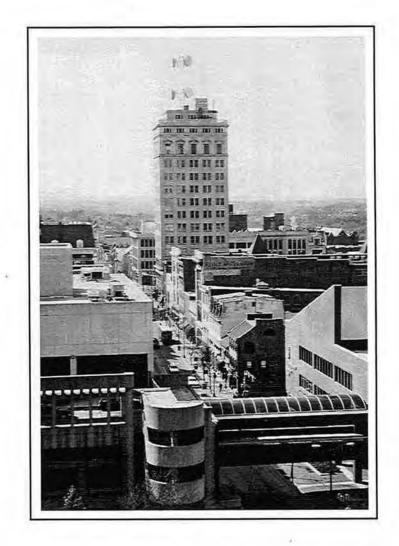
increasing from 75,793 in 1984 to 90,973 in 1995. Blue collar jobs are projected to grow at a slower pace of 107%, increasing from 67,607 in 1984 to 72,648 in 1995. Although overall blue-collar labor is expected to grow, it is the one sector in which some categories of jobs will decline. For instance, job opportunities for some types of machine operators, fabricators, and vehicle operators are expected to decrease. However, repair and precision craft jobs are predicted to increase.
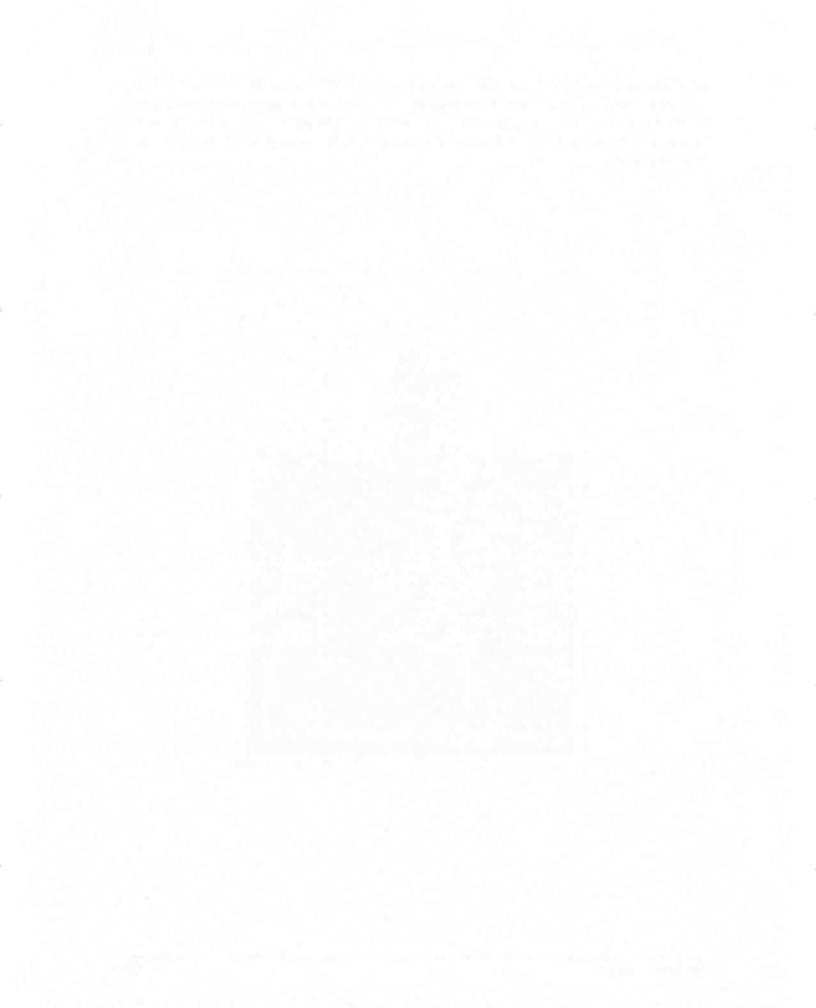
Service occupations are projected to grow the most, increasing at a rate of 128%, from 25,363 in 1984 to 32,449 in 1995. These service occupations are separate from either white-collar or blue-collar occupations. They include cleaning, food preparation, personal services, protective services, health support services other than diagnosis and treatment, and others. The largest increase in service jobs will be in personal services and health support (Lancaster Marketplace, pages B2, B3). The Annual Planning Information Report for 1991 predicts that service growth will occur in the following fields: social welfare aides, computer programmers and analysts, real estate agents, social workers, registered nurses, recreation workers, commercial artists, concrete finishers, restaurant cooks, cashiers, bartenders, and hairdressers.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Several industrial leaders reported that they expected their demand for unskilled labor to diminish as automation increases. In the future, the demand for skilled labor in industry is expected to increase. Skilled labor includes technicians but not managers. For instance, R.R. Donnelley will probably use more computer applications in the manufacturing process. Those computer operators would be considered skilled labor.

Given this situation, some industrial leaders are concerned about the future ability of the City's labor force to offer adequate levels of education and training. At present, even unskilled labor positions require a high school diploma or G.E.D. at some places of employment. The high school drop-out rate, although in decline, poses a serious problem regarding the ability of young Lancastrians to qualify for jobs. The 1989-90 drop-out rate was 6.8%, down from 8.3% in 1988-89 and 10.3% in 1987-88. It should be noted that 43% of the drop-outs were white, so this should not be construed as a problem of minorities only.

In addition, industry leaders expect an overall reduction in the work force. Managerial and white-collar positions will probably be reduced in an effort to cut down bureaucracy and save money. Armstrong is a good example of an industry that hires workers at many levels and is experiencing restructuring. Within the county, Armstrong employs around 4,600 people, 1,585 on the corporate staff, 2,250 workers at the Lancaster plant, and 550 at the Marietta plant. The corporate staff, which has

experienced some recent cutbacks, includes accounting, human resources, customer relations, administration, and management. Thus, as automation increases and the labor force is restructured in industrial sectors, white-collar and unskilled labor positions will decrease and skilled labor positions will increase as a proportion of the total employment.
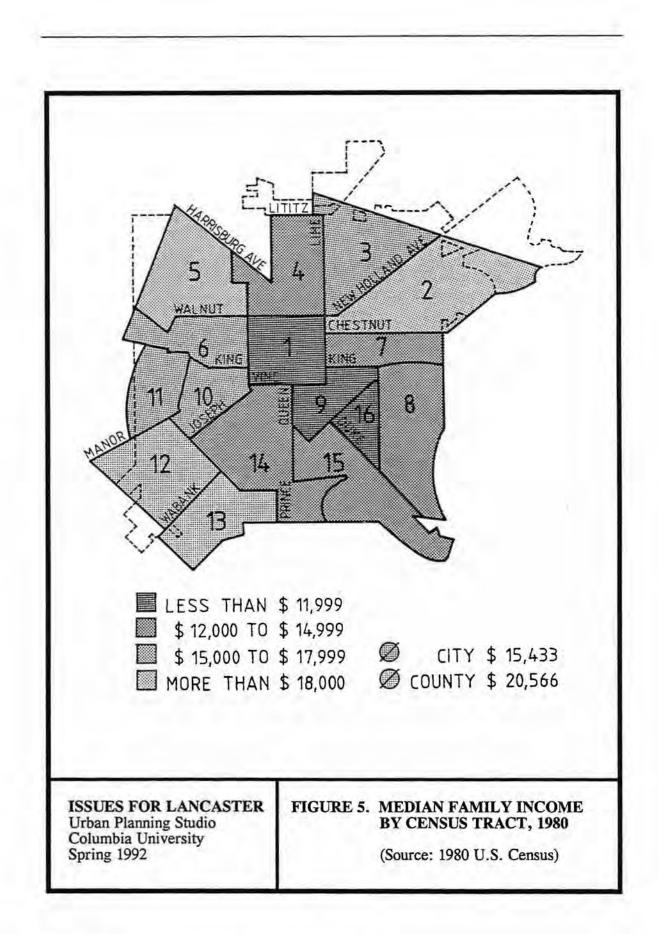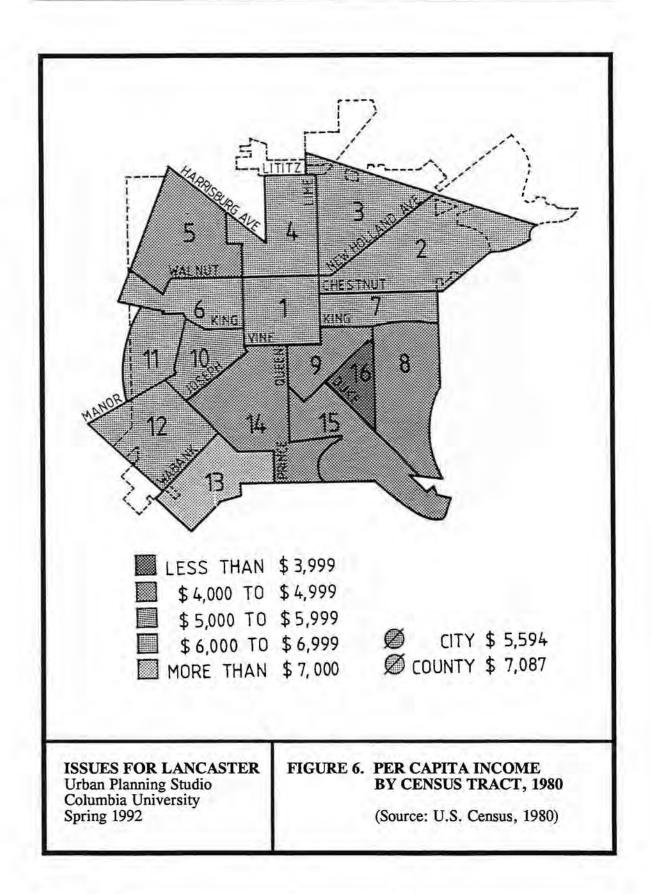
5. SOCIAL ISSUES

Introduction

In Lancaster today, social issues have assumed prominence, and the new comprehensive plan must confront them directly. For convenience, we have divided the social issues into four areas: education, housing, human services, and public safety, but all of these elements are connected. The social issues have deep roots in Lancaster's shifting patterns of income distribution and population change. This introductory section will outline these patterns and explore some of their implications.

Concerning income, two trends should be noted. First, between 1970 and 1990, income in Lancaster City declined in relation to the rest of the County. Second, within the City, lower-income households continue to be concentrated in the census tracts of the southeast area. The five lowest income tracts--8,9,14,15,and 16--have the highest minority population, the lowest median age, the highest number of female-headed households, and the highest density (per family). This spatial pattern based on income reinforces divisions between communities and contributes to the formation of physically deteriorating and economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Employment opportunities also have enormous consequences for the social conditions in Lancaster. Here, the city is striving to preserve its stock of high-quality jobs within a global economic climate which makes that task more difficult then ever before. While the unemployment rate in the city is just a few points higher than the rate of the County as a whole, the average income in the County is 25% higher than in the City. Clearly, the new comprehensive plan must address the complex connections between social conditions in the City and underlying economic circumstances.

The graphics on the following pages illustrate some of Lancaster City's social and economic patterns for 1980 and 1990.

LESS THAN $ 11,999
$ 12,000 TO $ 14,999
$ 15,000 TO $ 17,999
MORE THAN $ 18,000

CITY $ 15,433
COUNTY $ 20,566

ISSUES FOR LANCASTER
Urban Planning Studio
Columbia University
Spring 1992

**FIGURE 5. MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME
BY CENSUS TRACT, 1980**

(Source: 1980 U.S. Census)

LESS THAN $ 3,999
$ 4,000 TO $ 4,999
$ 5,000 TO $ 5,999
$ 6,000 TO $ 6,999
MORE THAN $ 7,000

CITY $ 5,594
COUNTY $ 7,087

ISSUES FOR LANCASTER	FIGURE 6. PER CAPITA INCOME
Urban Planning Studio	BY CENSUS TRACT, 1980
Columbia University	
Spring 1992	(Source: U.S. Census, 1980)

LESS THAN 5.9%
6.0% TO 11.9%
12.0% TO 17.9%
MORE THAN 18.0%

CITY 12.6%
COUNTY 6.0%

ISSUES FOR LANCASTER
Urban Planning Studio
Columbia University
Spring 1992

**FIGURE 7. PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES
BELOW POVERTY LEVEL
BY CENSUS TRACT, 1980**

(Source: U.S. Census, 1980)

LESS THAN 4.9 %

5.0 % TO 19.9 %

20.0 % TO 39.9 %

MORE THAN 40.0%

CITY 21.5 %

COUNTY 3.7 %

ISSUES FOR LANCASTER
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FIGURE 8. HISPANIC POPULATION
BY CENSUS TRACT, 1990

(Source: U.S. Census, 1990)

LESS THAN 4.9%
5.0% TO 9.9%
10.0% TO 19.9%
MORE THAN 20.0%

CITY 11.3%
COUNTY 2.2%

ISSUES FOR LANCASTER
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Spring 1992

**FIGURE 9. AFRICAN-AMERICAN
POPULATION BY
CENSUS TRACT, 1990**
(Source: U.S. Census, 1990)

HARRISBURG AVE

LITITZ

LIME

NEW HOLLAND AVE

5

4

3

2

WALNUT

6

1

7

KING

VINE

KING

11

10

9

16

8

QUEEN

DUKE

MANOR

12

14

15

WABANK

PRINCE

13

☐ LESS THAN 0.9 %

1.0 % TO 1.9 %

2.0 % TO 2.9 %   CITY 2.0 %

MORE THAN 3.0 %   COUNTY 1.1 %

ISSUES FOR LANCASTER
Urban Planning Studio
Columbia University
Spring 1992

FIGURE 10. ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION BY CENSUS TRACT, 1990
(Source: U.S. Census, 1990)

LESS THAN 29.9 %
30.0 % TO 59.9 %
60.0 % TO 89.9 %
MORE THAN 90.0 %

⊘ CITY 65.0 %
⊘ COUNTY 92.9 %

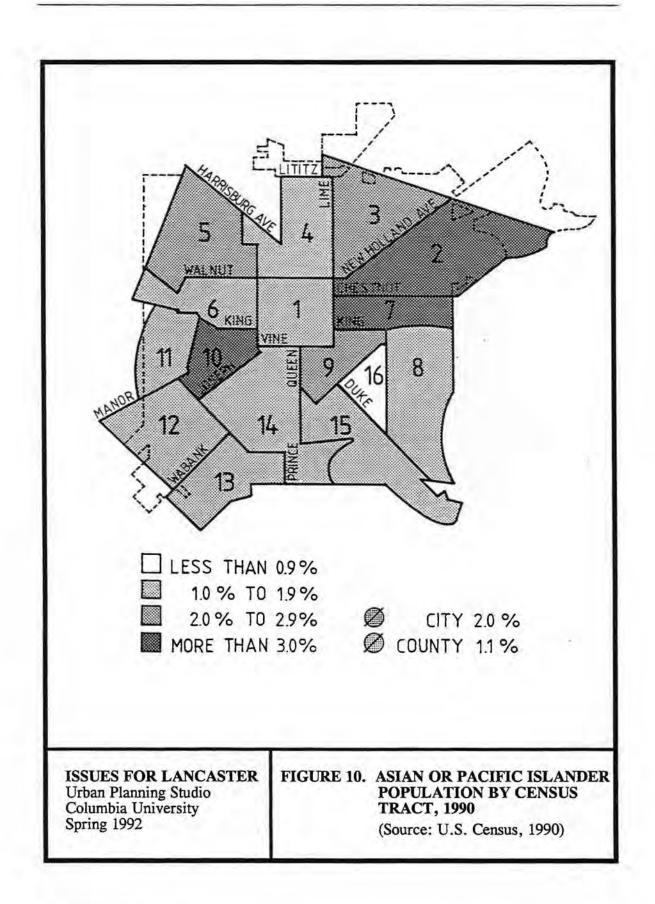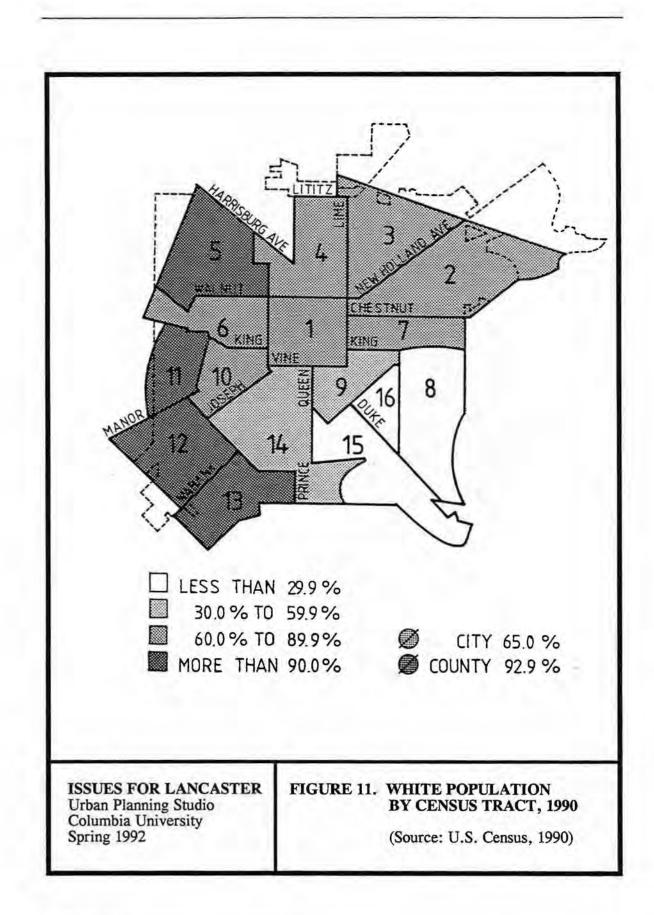| ISSUES FOR LANCASTER	FIGURE 11. WHITE POPULATION
Urban Planning Studio	BY CENSUS TRACT, 1990
Columbia University	
Spring 1992	(Source: U.S. Census, 1990)

EDUCATION

Lancaster's educational system will play a critical role in shaping the City's future. Students from different backgrounds must be educated for both citizenship and effective performance in a competitive economy. Schools will have to deal with a challenging array of languages and cultures. At the same time, high standards must be maintained, or families may choose to relocate outside the City in search of schools more to their liking. The task ahead is a formidable one.

Lancaster is experiencing rapid demographic change, and schools are among the first institutions that must adapt. Education for the acceptance of racial and cultural diversity must occur at an early age, while minds are still impressionable. The next generation of Lancastrians is in the schools today. A host of problems can be averted if that generation is prepared adequately for a society that is both increasingly multicultural and demanding of sophisticated skills.

Issue: The educational system must respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

During the past decade Lancaster has experienced a significant influx of low-income, minority groups, and this change is manifested in the makeup of the student population. The Hispanic population has grown most rapidly. Hispanics from Puerto Rico, South America, and Central America migrate to Lancaster because relatives are already established in the City. Others come from large American cities such as Philadelphia and New York. Like earlier generations of immigrants, all seek a more prosperous life for themselves and their families.

These new populations have special needs, which the schools are trying to address. Bilingual and "English as a Second Language" (E.S.L.) classes have been used to ease the transition to a new environment. While these classes are often essential for effective teaching, they can generate unintentional segregation. On the positive side, specialized clubs on the high school levels are extremely popular as an avenue of integration.

To a certain extent, the schools have been forced to take on responsibilities traditionally assumed by the family. Because of their limited resources, low-income families often experience financial and social stress. By default, the schools inherit problems of

single-parent families, substance abuse, delinquency, lack of role models, and teenage pregnancy. These problems complicate the educational task.

At present, the schools do not provide enough positive role models for minority children. For example, in 1985, there was one black teacher for every 60 black children, one Hispanic teacher for every 295 Hispanic children, and one white teacher for every 9 white children.

The schools must also adapt their curricula to a more competitive global economy. Well-educated workers will be essential if Lancaster is to remain a desirable location for business. Recently, the possibility of introducing the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) program, exclusively for sophomores, has been discussed. The plan uses cooperative learning and problem solving processes instead of more traditional teaching styles. The effectiveness of the program has been debated by school officials, educators, and parents. Opponents feel that CES has the potential to work against especially gifted students by slowing down their rate of learning. Supporters believe that CES will help equip students for the emerging economy of the 1990s.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: The new diversity in the student population presents both problems and opportunities. It gives students the opportunity to interact with persons from other cultures. But cultural differences can also seem threatening, and some students and parents may be contemplating a retreat into the more homogeneous school districts in the County.

For the most part, school officials and teachers in Lancaster feel that they are handling the issue effectively, with a diverse array of special programs tailored to the new demographic realities. The District has certainly endorsed a multicultural approach to education. However, some members of the Hispanic community are dissatisfied with the lack of Hispanic teachers and administrators. The School District asserts that it is hard to find minority professionals for their staff, since the competition with other school districts to hire them is intense. Some Lancastrians are unsympathetic to bilingual education and special programs for new arrivals, citing the experience of earlier waves of immigrants who negotiated an English-only school system. However, this debate is not peculiar to Lancaster. Schools throughout the nation are struggling to adapt to the new "salad bowl" demographics of the 1990s, as people from diverse cultures strive to carve a niche for themselves within America's cities.

HOUSING

Although the City of Lancaster has a reasonably sound housing stock, it still faces serious problems that require attention in the comprehensive plan. The City itself has a substantial supply of affordable housing for low-income families, but this is not true of the County as a whole. This puts undue pressure on the City to serve as the chief supplier of low-income housing. Overcrowding has emerged as a concern. Lancaster County needs to reassess the condition, location, and financing of public and other subsidized housing. Finally, the City has commissioned a Community Conservation Plan to develop strategies for maintaining the existing housing stock. The comprehensive plan should support those policies.

ISSUE: There is not enough housing for low-income families, and the available low-income housing supply is overcrowded and unequally distributed throughout the City and rest of the County.

Not surprisingly, low-income families face the most serious housing problems. Housing costs are significant burden for a growing number of people. Rents have risen, and poorer Lancastrians have to use a larger portion of their income for housing than their more affluent neighbors. Most of the City's new immigrants have modest incomes; this puts pressure on the lower end of the rental housing market, which is not growing fast enough to match demand. The majority of persons on the official waiting list for public housing are non-white, mostly of Hispanic origin. The waiting list is so long that, at least for the moment, it has been closed.

There are two types of subsidized housing within the City of Lancaster: "Section 8" housing and public housing. The largest component of subsidized housing is Section 8 housing. The official name for this federal government program is the "Section 8 Rent Assistance Program." The housing stock involved in this program is almost entirely privately owned; the government subsidy involves assisting needy persons by paying a certain amount of the rent. Federal monies are funnelled through the Lancaster City Housing Authority, which distributes them to individuals. All private owners or managers of rental property can apply for the Section 8 program, with approvals contingent upon various criteria.

At present, the City of Lancaster bears more than its fair share of subsidized housing. The only other municipality that maintains a significant number of subsidized housing units for low-income renters is Columbia. Although discrimination is hard to prove, it is likely that most of the municipalities in Lancaster County are unenthusiastic, at best, about providing housing for low-income groups.

Within the City of Lancaster, a pattern of housing differentiation by income, race, and ethnicity has emerged. The southeast area contains most of the City's public and subsidized housing.

The shortage of affordable rental units has led to some overcrowding among low-income households, especially among non-white immigrants whose housing options are extremely limited. Relatives of newcomers often assist their kin by putting them up

until they can find an apartment of their own. In tight rental markets during an economic recession, this "temporary" arrangement can last a long time.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Some landlords say that they have avoided the Section 8 program because of bureaucratic obstacles. Others have complained that Section 8 tenants cause excessive damage to their units. Lancaster's public housing stock elicits very different perceptions depending upon one's social location. Many middle- and upper-class people associate public housing with crime, vandalism, lowering of adjacent property values, high social service expenses, and aesthetic blight. Some see public housing construction as an "invitation" to more low-income immigrants. In contrast, many low-income people view public housing as a refuge from an over-priced private housing market, and as a stepping-stone on the journey out of poverty.

Issue: Home ownership opportunities for Lancaster's lower-income households need to be expanded.

Even though home prices in Lancaster County are moderate by national standards, home ownership is still out of reach for many working people. In today's market, many households cannot clear the financial threshold, which is determined by a combination of total purchase price, interest rates, down payment, and settlement costs. The growing population of Lancaster County has put pressure on housing markets while the incomes of many workers have stagnated. This problem affects not just Lancaster, but the nation as a whole.

In Lancaster County during 1990, median-priced single-family homes were often out of reach for median-income households. Expressed in terms of sales prices, the strongest demand for housing was in the price range from $75,000 to $99,999; however, the median sales price was above $100,000. The second highest housing demand was at an even lower price level: between $50,000 and $74,999.

The City of Lancaster is one of the ten municipalities in 1990 with the lowest median sales prices. This can be attributed to the older housing stock and higher densities. Therefore, housing within the City is still relatively affordable for the middle strata. The City is also one of the few alternatives for households with below-average incomes. An analysis of County housing patterns has revealed ". . . a pattern of housing segregation based on income, and de facto segregation by age, gender, family type, and race." (Lancaster County Planning Commission, "Single Family Housing Affordability in Lancaster County," January 1992) Lancaster City and the other "affordable municipalities" contain most of the County's affordable units.

Households with below-average incomes find it difficult to achieve home ownership even within Lancaster City. Excluded from home ownership, these households remain in the rental market, which adds to the pressure for rising rents.

HUMAN SERVICES

The provision of human services has a strong impact on the quality of life in the City of Lancaster. In Pennsylvania, outside of large cities such as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, human services have not traditionally been viewed as a city government responsibility. Fiscal constraints are largely responsible for this situation. Still, the City of Lancaster must decide what role to play in this area. Human services provide both immediate help to needy individuals and hope for the future. They often focus on the more vulnerable and underrepresented groups in the community: children, the elderly, the disabled, the poor and homeless, victims of discrimination and abuse. Such citizens may require short-term, emergency aid or long-term help. An adequate human services agenda for Lancaster must reconcile two tasks: responding to existing problems while helping to prevent or at least lessen future ones.

ISSUE: Social service providers are overburdened, and the coordination between different agencies needs to be improved.

The demand for human services continues to outpace the availability of funds from the City and the County. Agencies are struggling to cope, but they face the prospect of turning away clients, retreating to superficial fixes for increasingly complex social problems, and reducing or eliminating programs altogether. The funding system for human services is somewhat complicated, but it is clear that cuts in federal and state funding have made it difficult to meet an ever-growing demand for assistance.

Some agencies are very well organized and funded because of national lobbying efforts and supportive federal legislation: e.g., the Office of Aging and the County Department of Children and Youth. Certain agencies are more adept than others at applying for grants and winning them. Worthy organizations are not always the most sophisticated at winning additional grants or larger portions of existing ones; fund raising and service provision are two different activities. Fund raising competition among service agencies may be counterproductive, with both the agency and service recipients suffering.

Most human service agencies rely on mixed funding, with private monies very often outweighing public sources. Nationally, helping agencies have seen a decline in the availability of public funds over the last decade. The federal government has curtailed aid to the cities. The financial situation is also bleak at the State level. The Governor has called for budget cuts in social service agency funding, in Medicaid coverage, and a possible elimination of the Human Service Development Fund. (The HSDF provides state money which County Commissioners distribute to County programs and agencies). In this austere climate, public-private partnerships and the privatization of services have been put forth as alternatives to traditional public delivery systems.

The recession has also contributed to lower private contributions to service organizations such as the United Way. For the first time in twenty years, the United Way of Lancaster failed to meet its funding goal for 1992. (This year, the organization has $800,000 less to distribute than last year).

Neither the City of Lancaster nor the County has a centralized department of human services. The official coordinator or "link" for all County-wide services is the Lancaster Information Center (LINC), a telephone information and referral service run by the United Way of Lancaster County. The United Way is the largest private founder of health and human services in the County; it holds a unique position as a mediator between private and public institutions.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: A common perception is that human service agencies rely solely or mostly on public funds, unfairly taxing and burdening those who do not directly benefit. However, as noted above, agencies actually rely on a mixture of public and private funding.

Many service providers feel that the City and County should be viewed as a whole community, not as two governments in competition. As a United Way representative remarked, "If the City is not successful, then the County cannot be successful."

A few observers were concerned that a proliferation of nonprofit service agencies with overlapping responsibilities might create inefficiency in service delivery. However, some services may be so much in demand that overlap is necessary. Smaller agencies may arise in immediate response to their local community, regardless of the existence of larger organizations providing the same services. In all cases, if the potential recipients are unaware of services their needs will not be met.

Service providers believe that informal networking among agencies and human service workers is a valuable tool; vital information is shared on a word of mouth basis. But networking resources could be expanded if there were a more formalized or official way of exchanging knowledge. As caseloads increase and grow in complexity, agencies have no time to conduct referrals. The Department of Welfare, for example, whose caseload of over 17,000 people represents a 30% increase for the past year, is overburdened and unequipped to coordinate and refer clients to necessary services.

ISSUE: Needy populations, and the corresponding social service facilities, are concentrated within the city.

Any plan for human services must address the questions: What is the best way to deliver services to recipients? Should we concentrate more services in targeted neighborhoods, or disperse them while improving transportation access?

Human services clients are concentrated in certain areas. Within the County, they are concentrated in Lancaster City. Within the City, they are concentrated in the southeast area. Those with the fewest resources--income, education, job opportunities--and the highest demand for services reside in census tracts 8,9, 14, 15, and 16. Clustering services within areas with needy populations may promote a further concentration of at-risk groups, attract new clients, and put an unfair burden on already struggling neighborhoods. On the other hand, dispersed services might turn out to be inaccessible, forcing clients to undertake long, inconvenient trips on public transportation.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: The building that presently houses the Community Action Program and Southeast Lancaster Health Services was designed to function as a central human service center for the city. Although a host of programs, (Head Start, Child Development and Day Care, Elderly Care, W.I.C., etc.), serve city residents, it is not possible nor efficient to continually add new services to the same location. The alternative, however, requires CAP to run clients to various appointments and agencies from one end of the city to another. As a CAP representative notes: "Being poor is a full time job."

ISSUE: Segments of the population, particularly minority groups who lack resources and political representation, tend to fall through the cracks of the system and consequently are denied services.

From the income/poverty level data, we know that the majority of those needing assistance reside in the southeast area of the City. In particular, single mothers and their children often require multiple human services. In 1990, 31% of the City's total family households were headed by a female with no male head present. This represents a steady increase. In 1970, only 17% of the city's families were headed by a woman, and 24% in 1980. The average percentage of families headed by a single mother in the City in 1980, arranged in ascending order and categorized by race or ethnicity, is as follows: Asians, 11.5%; Whites, 19.2%; Hispanics, 33.9%; and African-Americans, 49.1%.

Despite the good intentions of most human service agencies, minorities needing assistance are sometimes left out of organized and established service systems. If the providers are out of touch with the needy population, in terms of physical presence as well as cultural understanding, then unmet needs increase.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: The existing system delivers quality services, but is under stress. With escalating needs and funding constraints, there is concern whether agencies can continue to do their jobs effectively. Minority groups perceive an imaginary dividing line, set at the diagonal crossing of Church Street, that separates and isolates the residents of the southeast area from the rest of the City, impeding the delivery of needed services to minority clients.

Some people see the increase in human service needs as a reflection of changing social attitudes, perhaps generational or cultural, by which no stigma is attached to having a child out of wedlock. Others attribute the emerging problems to an influx of outsiders. Welfare is typically associated with poor, minority groups, even though whites are

using service agencies in increasing numbers. The belief that minority groups are not receiving adequate services remains controversial.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety is a complex and controversial topic. In the absence of careful analysis, myths, stereotypes, and simplistic solutions proliferate. To achieve an adequate understanding, public safety must be situated within the larger urban context: specifically, the community's informal powers of social control, economic and cultural stability, and the security implications of the built environment.

In high crime areas, the social norms enforced by stable communities have often been weakened. Churches, neighborhood groups, and families are forced to struggle against the corrosive effects of economic deprivation. In the absence of traditional cultural restraints on criminal behavior, the responsibility for public safety falls more heavily on government: schools, courts, and the police. These are poor substitutes for strong community values anchored in a healthy economy and social structure.

Not surprisingly, the rapid economic and demographic changes experienced by Lancaster have increased neighborhood instability and generated public safety problems. The built environment also plays a role in controlling crime; the arrangement of sidewalks, streetlights, windows, retail stores, and public spaces influences safety, as does the level of building and infrastructure maintenance. Along these dimensions, poor neighborhoods sometimes fare poorly in comparison with more affluent districts.

ISSUE: Crime has increased, resulting in escalating public fear.

Crime is one index of a community's health. By national standards, Lancaster County continues to be a safe area. With a "serious crime" rate of 2,827 per 100,000 residents, the County was ranked as the twelfth safest place (Source: 1990 FBI report, Crime in the United States). The City of Lancaster has a crime rate that is 45% higher than that of the County as a whole, but one that is still modest compared with most urban areas.

Nevertheless, crime has been gradually increasing in the City, prompting concern on the part of many residents. Some elements of the drug trade have penetrated Lancaster from the outside. Another problem is the increase in criminal activity among youth, including violent crimes. Lancaster does not have a serious gang problem at present, but this might change if economic and social conditions were to worsen, and the potential for heightened local gang activity remains an issue facing the City.

The increase in crime is real, but is also easily exaggerated in the public mind through media coverage. Accurate dimensions should be assigned to the problem. In Lancaster City, the number of homicides increased from 2 in 1989 to 8 in 1991. Burglaries increased from 1,003 in 1989 to 1,120 in 1991, an 11.7% increase. Robberies increased by 6.6% from 1990 to 1991. Robberies, of course, affect the safety of the streets directly, and have a pronounced impact on residents' attitudes toward the City. Illegal drug violations continue to be a problem. The number of arrests for drug violations increased from 152 in 1987 to 527 in 1991, an increase of 247%.

Unfortunately, Lancaster has become known as a place where profits can be made selling drugs. At least two different types of organizations exist. The first type is connected to organized drug distribution operations run mainly by Cubans, Colombians, and Dominicans. The second type is more local and limited in scope. Lancaster's geographical location is a determining factor. The City lies in close proximity to large metropolises such as Washington, D.C., New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Access by car or by train is very easy.

According to the concept paper for The Lancaster City Community Policing Pilot Program, members of organized youth gangs from New York City have begun selling drugs in the streets on a daily basis. Individual drug dealers distribute the drugs to consumers. Drug consumption requires large amount of cash, and users frequently commit crimes to support their habit. The Lancaster Police Bureau believes that around 50% to 75% of crimes are caused or affected by drug use. Therefore, reductions in illegal drug activity would have a large impact on reducing crime and producing safe neighborhoods for future generations.

The Lancaster City Community Policing Program targets an area primarily in Tract 16. The population in this tract is more than one-half Hispanic, about one-third African-American, and around one-tenth White. Median income is low, as are housing values. The strategy of the policing program is to develop a drug-free neighborhood and foster close cooperation between residents and police. The primary mission is the apprehension and prosecution of drug offenders, but the underlying philosophy is to reduce citizen apathy about reporting crimes and working together with the police. Education of citizens about drug and crime-related problems as well as cooperation with social and government agencies are further goals. Pedestrian patrols and social cooperation are the methods used. If the program is successful in this small area, then the City and the federal sponsor should expand this program step by step to cover the most obvious drug markets and to increase the cooperation between citizen and police.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Many Lancastrians feel a sense of insecurity on the City's streets. The perception of danger exceeds the real likelihood of becoming a victim. Nevertheless, the increase in criminal activity has prompted some people to leave the city; others may be contemplating such a move. A more promising reaction has emerged from various groups that have organized resistance to crime in their neighborhoods.

In poor neighborhoods, many young people feel that they have no future. They see that large sums of money can be made through illegal activities. Segregation by race and income contributes to distrust and suspicion of the wider society. An environment is thus created that makes criminal activity appear to be a viable alternative to normal paths to economic advancement.

6. PHYSICAL PLANNING ISSUES

Introduction

The protection of our physical environment is an issue of the utmost importance. Human activities affect the air, water, and terrestrial features of the planet. These, in turn, shape our daily lives. In recognition of this, federal, state, and local laws have been passed to protect the physical environment. In its planning for the twenty-first century, Lancaster must give great weight to the prevention and repair of environmental damage, because without a healthy ecosystem the rest of the city's functions will be compromised.

Environmental problems transcend political jurisdictions. For example, suburban growth often spills over the boundaries of one unit of government into another. Therefore, the issues in this section necessarily apply not only to the City of Lancaster but to the County and State as well.

LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The anticipated growth in Lancaster County of approximately 122,000 inhabitants over the next twenty years requires an array of strategies to maintain a high quality of life. Although the City of Lancaster's population will increase by only 7%, as opposed to a growth rate of 29% countywide, new developments must still be subjected to careful review, both in terms of compatibility within existing neighborhoods and impact on infrastructure and services.

Lancaster County has selected the urban growth boundary as a primary growth management technique. Within the City of Lancaster, zoning regulations are the chief tool to influence the physical distribution of land uses. Other techniques such as development guidance systems, subdivision and land development ordinances, and

building and housing codes can support those regulations. Infrastructure availability is also a constraint on further urbanization, and the County can use the official Sewage Facilities Plan (according to Act 537) as a tool to phase growth.

With the introduction of urban growth boundaries (UGB), the County allocated three times the amount of land that would be needed to meet the expected growth. These lands were included based on locational reasons and include land beyond need which is effectively lost to long-term resource use because of past planning decisions. The UGB is a useful beginning, but the protection of the County's natural resources and landscape assets will eventually require additional growth management strategies.

ISSUE: The negative consequences of suburban sprawl are diminishing the quality of life in Lancaster City and County.

Unchecked low density sprawl in the suburbs surrounding Lancaster City poses a major threat to farmland preservation and the special character of the area. The area's unique mix of agriculture with urbanity has already been marred by the careless proliferation of shopping centers, office buildings, and scattered residential neighborhoods.

Although the County's Draft Growth Management Plan attempts to contain the direction and location of future growth, it does not promote "urban infill" and genuine "compact development" with the forcefulness that the City of Lancaster needs. The explicit goal of the County planners is to establish a minimum density of 8.5 units per acre in new residential developments in Lancaster City. However, rough calculations show that the existing density within Lancaster City is approximately 20 units per acre. Thus, the proposed urban growth boundaries allow for a form of development that is still essentially suburban in nature.

The maximum density proposed in the City of Lancaster's flexible single-family residential development zoning regulations is 24 units per acre; this density is a more appropriate match with Lancaster's historic urban fabric. The City should continue to promote high-density urban infill in order to make effective use of the City's remaining land and to maintain continuity with the existing cityscape.

Farmland prices have already reached a record high in the county (Lancaster Intelligencer-Journal, 4/8/92). In the Metropolitan Lancaster Area many farms have been sold to developers. These trends may contribute to the decline in the downtown, as those who can afford to buy land and houses outside of the city and within the UGB may move out of the center and leave the socially disadvantaged behind in the core.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council has pointed out the need to create a comprehensive state policy for land use to balance economic growth and environmental protection. Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Resources administers DER permits and enforces environmental regulations. It does not allow the sixty-seven counties to administer these permits. The growth in environmental legislation at the state and federal level has moved some land use decisions, traditionally made at the local level, to the state and federal systems, but the system has been plagued with disharmony and fragmentation.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Long-range land use issues are rarely at the top of the public's priority list. However, people respond promptly and vehemently to specific proposals that affect their property. Realistically, the call for farsighted changes in land use policies will receive limited attention until the harmful impacts of uncontrolled growth are evident for all to see. (For example, a panel discussion organized by the County Planning Commission on countywide land use issues drew only 11 out of 400,000 County inhabitants.) When interest does increase, upper-income groups with environmentalist leanings will probably be the first to mobilize. At present, citizen participation in the process of land use decision making is minimal.

Concerning housing type preferences, single-family detached houses still seem to be the most popular units in Lancaster County (as well as in the rest of the country). However, most of the older existing urban fabric in Lancaster City consists of semi-detached and attached structures. The marketability of higher-density "compact

development" remains open to debate. If designed properly, buyers will accept higher densities. Poor design, however, usually causes buyers to retreat to the traditional single-family home on a large lot.
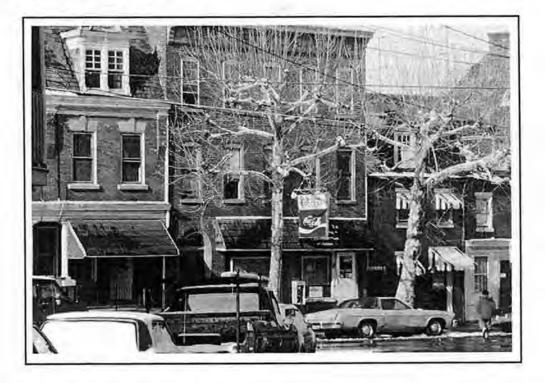

Several people identified poorly planned growth, low-density development patterns, suburban migration from urban centers, and lucrative bids by developers for prime farmland as major threats to farmland preservation. On the other hand, some people associate development with economic growth and prosperity; for them, sprawl is not a major problem.

ISSUE: Land development regulations in Lancaster should be adapted to the City's changing economic and social conditions.

Lancaster is, for the most part, a "built-up" city, with only limited amounts of undeveloped land. This makes the control of land development more complex, since regulations must address changes to an already intricate pattern of buildings and activities, not vacant fields. Controversies often involve proposed new uses for existing buildings, rather than the construction of new buildings on raw land. Lancaster's first zoning ordinance was adopted in 1942, when approximately 80 percent of the City was built upon. The result is the location of numerous "nonconforming uses" throughout the City, left over from an earlier time.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code does not require that local zoning ordinances be consistent with either local or county plans. Essentially, zoning takes precedence over planning. However, it should be emphasized that what gets built in Lancaster is not determined unilaterally by zoning. Real estate economics, politics, and building codes strongly influence the evolution of the City's built form. Although the zoning ordinance is important, it functions only as part of a larger city-building process.

The City's development regulations must be designed to accommodate the economic and social transformations of the coming decades. Steps have been taken in this direction; the point is to continue making necessary changes. Some significant issues are the encouragement of infill in the city center; the appropriate re-use of older buildings, including historic structures; maintenance of the City's "human scale" and pleasing streetscapes; and the accommodation of the business and cultural activities of a growing minority population.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Development regulations influence business decisions to invest in or avoid a city, and Lancaster's business community has urged City officials to develop "streamlined" regulations that minimize obstructions to new economic activity. It is unclear whether this view has been balanced by input from other residents who may favor strong regulations to minimize the negative impacts of development. Some minority residents, intent upon the pursuit of economic opportunities (e.g., small businesses), may look unfavorably upon zoning regulations

that prevent them from modifying their properties for business or cultural purposes. There is a tension between preserving the status quo and allowing for appropriate change. Some observers believe that too much is expected of zoning, and that problems attributed to zoning often derive from other sources, such as building codes or fire regulations.

ISSUE: Lancaster City needs a comprehensive policy to manage the impacts of industrial waste, household garbage, and residential sewage, in order to preserve the City's environmental quality.

Lancaster's environment is still of high quality. However, with continuous growth the production of wastes will increase. Treatment plants must be designed to handle both current and future capacity with an environmentally acceptable level of treatment. The landfill process uses up large amounts of land, and cannot be continued indefinitely. Incinerating garbage reduces landfill tonnage. In 1990 Lancaster County opened its new incineration plant. Garbage is being burned, using water to produce steam and, ultimately, electricity. The problem of incineration lies in controlling emissions, which can be reduced within certain limits but not eliminated entirely.

Lancaster's sewage treatment plant is an advanced system, superior to the systems found in most other cities. The plant meets all of the established standards for sewage effluent. (Visually, however, the large amounts of foam emerging from the plant do not present a reassuring image, and odors emanating from the plant have annoyed many citizens). The plant has excess capacity, and allocation of that capacity in the future will be one of the City's most effective growth management levers.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: At the national level, waste management is emerging as a more salient issue. More and more people are aware that landfill sites are becoming scarce, and that people cannot continue to use the environment as a sink. Presumably, this sentiment is present in Lancaster, and although waste management is not a glamorous issue, most people accept the benefits of recycling and will make reasonable changes in consumption patterns in order to reduce environmental damage.

TRANSPORTATION

In a pattern common to many American cities, Lancaster's downtown has suffered from intrusive automobile traffic. The new comprehensive plan should include policies for reclaiming the City from the automobile and creating a livable pedestrian environment. Transportation must also be integrated with the land use and growth management policies of the plan.

ISSUE: The incompleteness of the road network and existing traffic management have contributed to vehicular congestion. Furthermore, incompatible automobile use has detracted from the quality of the pedestrian-oriented environment.

Relief from traffic congestion is a perennial urban issue. As John Nolen pointed out in 1929, the causes are deep-seated; narrow streets planned for horse-drawn vehicles are not able to carry large volumes of motorized traffic. Three basic methods of traffic control have traditionally been used to alleviate congestion: street widening, decentralization of traffic by rerouting, and more stringent traffic control.

In the 1960s the completion of the US 30 Bypass removed some traffic from City streets that did not have local origins or destinations. Similar improvements for a north-south street system were never constructed. Although heavy trucks are not supposed to pass through the City in large numbers, apparently they do, and residents are annoyed by the resulting noise, pollution, and vibration. Thus, the City continues to look for alternative routes for car and heavy truck traffic in order to reduce congestion.

The "North-South Truck Route Alternative Study" of June 1991 indicated that truck trips beginning and terminating in external zones had little affect on downtown traffic delays. Truck traffic that entered the City from the north had the City itself as its main destination. For this reason, a single bypass around Lancaster City would not accommodate a significant number of trucks. Also, because the traffic is local, there would be no federal money available for building a new road. The study found that there is not a single truck traffic problem, but rather a number of problems throughout the area, such as poor geometry, insufficient traffic lanes, poor intersections, and lack of signals. Recently, PA 741 was designated as a traffic route to provide a continuous path around the west side of the city, but this route is too far west of the main route

and makes use of residential streets, which is not desirable. The study suggests an alternative, a southeast bypass, which would go along Chesapeake and Broad Street to the new PA 23 and from there to US 30.

The City of Lancaster is a place where both the car and the pedestrian need space. In many places it is common planning practice to separate pedestrians and cars. This makes the pedestrian environment more safe. However, cars and pedestrians also can coexist, and a great deal of urban life occurs at just the point where these two systems meet. If vehicular traffic is "calmed" (i.e., slowed down, in an environment where design elements make it clear to the driver that pedestrians take precedence), conflicts can be managed without eliminating auto access.
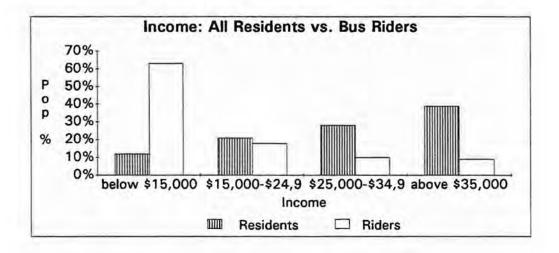
The traffic calming issue is linked to the attractiveness of downtown. Lancaster's downtown offers many interesting features for the pedestrian, such as the pattern of narrow sloping streets, diverse topography, and many interesting historic buildings and other features. A traffic calming strategy would enhance these features by improving the safety and appearance of the pedestrian environment.
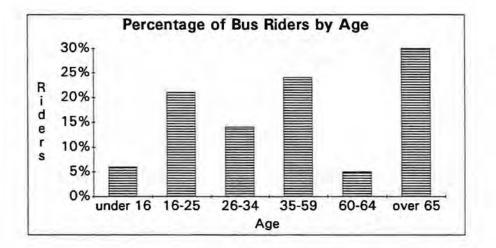

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Residents' major concerns with traffic were congestion, safety, noise, pavement damage due to overweight trucks, and excessive speed on local streets. These comments were made in connection with the truck study. Many people approached the problem from the viewpoint of environmental quality and energy use. People understand that simply expanding road capacity by building new highways or roads is no solution, unless access is restricted. The new capacity will simply attract more automobiles onto the street, which will become congested once again. The inhabitants of Lancaster would like to see their City as a safe, sheltering place with a unique historic character. People from the surrounded areas want a beautiful place with easy access for shopping and recreation. Still, people who own cars do not want to sacrifice the convenience and privacy that cars provide.

ISSUE: The public transportation system does not adequately serve transit dependent people for work-generated trips to industrial areas and other job locations.

The existing public transportation system meets the basic needs of some of the population, but needs certain types of expanded service. One out of every four households in the city is autoless, so the issue is not a minor one.

The RRTA ridership group has a much lower family income than the general public. The survey showed that 61% of the responding riders had no driver's license and that 78% had no vehicle available. This indicates that the RRTA riders are captive; that is,

they have no other means of reliable transportation to make their trip. Bus routes 1, 2, and 3 have the highest average weekly ridership. These three routes are used by low-income families and the elderly to go shopping at the Park City Mall.

Income: All Residents vs. Bus Riders

A bar chart comparing Residents and Riders by income bracket (Pop % on the y-axis from 0% to 70%). Income brackets on x-axis: below $15,000, $15,000-$24,9, $25,000-$34,9, above $35,000. Legend: Residents, Riders.

Percentage of Bus Riders by Age

A bar chart showing Riders (%) by age group (y-axis 0% to 30%). Age groups on x-axis: under 16, 16-25, 26-34, 35-59, 60-64, over 65.

Making the mall another hub of the system might have damaging effects on downtown Lancaster. The outer loop, a route that was designed in response to many comments regarding improved suburban to suburban RRTA services, could have similar effects. Because the outer loop runs along the periphery of Lancaster City, along thirteen different shopping malls, it would not be much faster to travel between different suburban centers than to transfer in downtown.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Surveys have indicated that many people agree:

- that more bus service will help to eliminate congestion on Lancaster County roads,
- that a good bus system is essential to the growth and prosperity of Lancaster County and City,
- that public transportation is essential for reducing air pollution, and
- that more public funds should be provided to improve bus service.

Most community leaders thought that the RRTA system was well run; only half of those interviewed felt that the current RRTA service should be improved.

Several interviewees noted that suburban growth is increasing, and that expanded service between the new destinations would be desirable. To some, the bus service appeared to be underutilized, but no one indicated that too much service was being provided.

ISSUE: **The excess supply of parking garage spaces in Lancaster is unsatisfactory due to the public perception that the facilities provided are unsafe, expensive, and inconvenient.**

The parking problems and issues in the City of Lancaster vary by area. Conflicts between residents and work-related parkers in the CBD core and downtown fringe area have been addressed through the residential parking permit program. There are still parking problems in residential areas which have an institution (hospital or college) in their vicinity. But the main parking problem is in the CBD (Central Business District) and adjoining areas. In the CBD the Lancaster Parking Authority offers 4,031 parking spaces. Furthermore there are around 4,300 parking spaces on commercial lots and private spaces.

Work-related parking accounts for most of the parking in the CBD core. Shopping is the second highest source of demand. The low number of shoppers using downtown garages indicates that driving to the downtown to shop has lost some of its appeal, The shopping malls surrounding the city are more convenient and parking is free. Work-related parking is, unlike shopping, a long-term demand and should therefore be seen differently than the short-term parking demands of patrons. After the introduction of the residential parking permit program, work-related parking brought new parkers into the municipal garages. However, the Lancaster Parking Authority does not earn enough revenue to cover the operating expenses and debt service incurred in the construction of the new garages.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Many people believe that parking in downtown Lancaster is inconvenient, too expensive, and unsafe at night. The safety issue appears to be one of perception only, because the garages are actually quite free of crime. However, many people feel uncomfortable within the cement-walled, enclosed, and isolated areas of the typical parking garage, which television shows frequently portray as traps for helpless victims. Convenience and cost are the other main reasons for using or not using the parking garages or lots.

AESTHETICS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Aesthetic conditions have a great impact on a city's quality of life. Lancaster is perceived by many as a beautiful city. The City's built form and aesthetic quality, however, are always changing, in a natural process of replacement and addition. In times of rapid economic and social change, the pressures to modify the urban fabric intensify. Without design controls at such critical moments the unchecked forces of the market can quickly destroy a city's centuries-old aesthetic qualities.

In 1992 the City of Lancaster celebrates its 250th anniversary. Lancaster finds itself in the fortunate position of possessing an attractive building stock, the bulk of which has been well cared for and passed on by generations of residents. Lancastrians value their heritage resources and have a long and active tradition of historic preservation. There are currently five historic districts established in the City, containing a total of 952 properties. There are also numerous organizations that support and practice historic preservation in the County and City. However, increasing economic and social pressures will challenge the City to combine historic preservation with other worthy objectives.

ISSUE: Lancaster's irreplaceable aesthetic qualities are threatened by insensitive, inappropriate incremental changes to the built form. There are no legally binding design guidelines or policies to prevent or slow this process except in the existing historic districts.

Lancaster's built form is one of its greatest resources. Residents and visitors alike admire Lancaster's beauty, and its erosion would be an irreplaceable loss. It is imperative that standards of aesthetic quality, based on local models, be codified and actively applied to all new development.

Economic conditions determine the pressure that will be brought to bear on the historic urban fabric. Fluctuations in real estate values reflect this pressure. An economic downturn can lead to reduced property values, abandonment, and decay, whereas an economic boom, with an increase in property values, can launch a period of ambitious redevelopment. The end result, however, is often the same: the deterioration of the City's physical fabric. It is exactly such economic uncertainty, with the potential for devastating consequences on the existing urban fabric, that Lancaster faces now.

The City does not now have effective legal mechanisms to ensure that when older structures are replaced or modified the changes will enhance, or at least not detract from, the City's appearance. Unfortunately, examples of unsuccessful design are all too evident. On a large scale, there have been developments such as the Lancaster Square urban renewal project, which is a classic 1960s example of contextually unsympathetic architecture. The Lancaster Newspapers production facility, a fairly recent addition, also offers little to the streetscape and is flanked by a large surface parking facility to the south. Even changes on a small scale, such as the formstone that covers many of the historic brick facades, contribute to the erosion of the aesthetic quality of Lancaster.

Basic control over proposed built form is achieved through zoning regulations such as the 35 foot height limit and the street setback requirement. Such controls govern the size, shape, and location of buildings. However, they have little to do with the design specifics of the structure. Currently the only design review is done by the Exterior Commercial Property Review Committee. This group acts as an advisory body working with property owners and their architects to find mutually satisfactory design solutions. If no agreement is reached the Mayor makes a final appeal. Ultimately, if no compromise is struck the developer can proceed without further delay. There is no legal requirement to comply with the Committee's recommendations. Lancaster's built form is therefore vulnerable to haphazard influences.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Urban design has implications for all people and groups of society. Realistically though, concern for quality design tends to be a higher priority for upper-income groups. While lower-income groups appreciate an attractive city as much as others, until basic needs such as affordable housing, decent employment, and good education are met, issues of design will continue to seem less important. Nevertheless, the appearance of a place often relates closely to how citizens as well as visitors and tourists experience a community.

While most residents appreciate living in an attractive city, there are conflicts over how aesthetic qualities should be maintained. Some argue that municipal design controls are the best way to achieve high design standards. Others argue that the government should not have the power to tell people how they can design, alter, or restore a structure on private property. In their view, this is a violation of property rights.

ISSUE: Lancaster faces the possibility of further losses of its valuable, nationally significant historic resources. In addition, the preservation movement, both locally and statewide, has been weakened.

Lancaster's historic building stock is threatened by economic pressures. The actors charged with saving this precious heritage are trying to respond. The reputation of historic preservation has suffered somewhat in recent years, at least in the eyes of those who view design regulations as unnecessary infringements on property rights. This has resulted in the rolling back of certain historic districts, especially Cabbage Hill, which shrank significantly in both 1983 and 1988 and now exists as a fraction of its former self. Interviews revealed that some of the problems stemmed from inadequate resident education by the City and by the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County concerning the advantages and responsibilities of being in an historic district.

In Pennsylvania as a whole the preservation movement is also being attacked. In July of 1991, the State Supreme Court re-opened the question of the legality of historic designation, which they interpreted as constituting a wrongful taking of property (United Artists Theater Circuit, Inc. v. Philadelphia Historical Commission). Unless overturned in federal courts, which have upheld preservation rights in the past, this ruling, if consistently applied, could be quite detrimental to preservation activity in Pennsylvania.

The conservation of the historic buildings and districts strengthens a community's concept of itself. Preservation of the physical past can create a tangible sense of place and belonging which provides a degree of stability in an everchanging world. The past, however, cannot be frozen in time. Cityscapes change in response to new social groups, economic uses, and cultural preferences. The challenge is to manage change so that the treasures of the past live on in a congenial and functional relationship with the modern city.

There are also very practical reasons for preserving Lancaster's historic built form. The beauty of a city attracts tourist dollars. (In the quest for a healthy tourist industry, however, an appropriate balance between tourism and livability for residents should be maintained.) An attractive city can also boost economic development by providing an extra incentive to draw new businesses and investment. Furthermore, rehabilitation and recycling of existing structures can increase the stock of affordable housing. Reusing existing buildings for residential, office, and commercial space can reduce some of the pressure for urban sprawl and save surrounding farmland. Ecologically, building reuse is far more environmentally sensitive than new construction.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Preservation is important to a wide cross-section of the community. However, this is an issue that seems to matter more to higher income groups, especially the established white population. Extreme caution must be exercised by the various preservation players in Lancaster in that their goals, attitudes, and approaches to their task must ensure the conservation of everyone's past. The preservation movement should avoid alienating the Hispanic and African-American population. Furthermore, the preservation actors must seek to win the support of the sizable portion of the public that is currently unsympathetic to the preservation cause.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The United States, along with a few other nations, has for centuries been a destination of the world's migration waves. For much of its history the United States depended on, and was built by, immigration. People continue to migrate to the U.S. in great numbers and Lancaster, like almost everywhere else in the country, has been a recipient of significant numbers of newcomers. It is difficult for established Lancastrians to grasp the sweeping pace and extent of this influx. This recent immigration boom and the shifting economic base have left many residents, both established and new, asking themselves, What is this place called Lancaster?

ISSUE: Major demographic and economic shifts are transforming the community identity of Lancaster, and are provoking a rethinking of the City's character.

Population growth, cultural diversification, and economic changes have begun to alter the community identity of Lancaster. These transformations of civic character and livelihood have contributed to the growing tension between the various cultural groups, and have fostered concern over Lancaster's future. The City of Lancaster is now attempting to face these challenges and grapple with its changing community identity.

The citizenry of Lancaster City is diversifying. During the last ten years (1980-1990) the Hispanic population has increased by roughly 75%. Since 1960, when there were only 545 Hispanics in Lancaster, the community has grown approximately twenty-one-fold to 11,420 in 1990. Fully 20% of Lancaster is now Hispanic. Also during the past decade, the African-American population increased by roughly 35% to 6,802, whereas the white population fell by close to 13% to 39,368. The combined growth of the Hispanic and African-American communities (6,630) over the last decade roughly compares with a corresponding drop in white population (5,005).

While it is difficult to accurately define the "identity" of a community, it is a crucial aspect of community life. The residents of Lancaster, both old and new, must ask themselves questions about who they once were, who they are now, and who they will become. The City's policies for the coming decades must emerge from this examination of historic legacies and recent transformations.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ISSUE: Lancaster's different cultural groups perceive the changes in the City's population differently. The Hispanic community was attracted to Lancaster because of its economic opportunity, safety, and overall quality of life. However, Hispanics have often felt unwelcome and alienated. They are frequently treated as outsiders and therefore withdraw into their own community.

Some of the white population believe that their jobs are threatened, the streets are becoming unsafe, and the quality of life has declined. They may feel that "their" city has been invaded by outsiders. Others have accepted the rise of a multicultural society and are trying to create the institutions to make it work.

The African-American community's reaction has been one of mixed emotions. On the one hand there is optimism because the Hispanic community represents a potentially powerful ally. On the other hand, if the Hispanic population remains withdrawn from the political and social mainstream, they might actually hinder the African-American

struggle for advancement. Some African-Americans may resent the swift growth of the Hispanic population because they have displaced African-Americans as the largest minority group. The influx of Hispanic newcomers also increases competition for local jobs and services.

7. POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Introduction

The main purpose of this report is to identify and discuss the issues facing the City of Lancaster. The report is not itself a "plan," but rather a preliminary step in the generation of a plan. With this in mind, the Studio devoted most of its energy to the identification of issues. In this chapter, however, the Studio has assembled some preliminary ideas for solving the problems outlined in the previous chapters. These take the form of "suggestions" or proposals, rather than thoroughly researched recommendations. As the actual elements of the comprehensive plan are produced, these and other policy options will undergo closer scrutiny as the City selects the policies and programs that will best respond to the problems and opportunities that it faces.

INSTITUTIONS AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS
POLICY SUGGESTIONS

ISSUE: The fragmented structure of government at City and County levels reduces overall political effectiveness and accountability. Coordination between the City and the County on a range of planning issues needs to be strengthened.

Policy Suggestions: The state, county, and municipalities need to coordinate their planning policies. In the short run, we recommend greater use of the Inter-Municipal Committee. Looking ahead, some kind of regional planning agency would be desirable, even if it lacked enforcement powers. Such an agency could prepare studies and plans, and provide a forum for discussion of regional issues by the various governments and non-governmental interests affected.

Tax base sharing is a possible solution to the discrepancy in budgets among municipalities, although its political feasibility is questionable. A County sales tax should also be considered, although it should be carefully evaluated for its effects on both equity and efficiency. An increase in the County income tax (currently 1%) might be less regressive.

At the state level, the State Planning Board should be given some powers of regulation and enforcement. The Board could establish a comprehensive plan for the Commonwealth which could serve as the framework for regional, county and local plans. Consistency between these plans could be mandated, with county plans having more than advisory powers. The State's Municipalities Planning Code needs to be examined to identify methods to improve coordination between municipalities, with reduced reliance on outdated zoning ordinances.

ISSUE: Broad citizen participation should be developed fully in the planning process.

Policy Suggestions: Public participation in the planning process should be strengthened. This would encourage people to become more actively involved in deciding Lancaster's future. Public outreach programs can increase involvement at the grassroots level. Information pertaining to Lancaster City government should be posted widely, and made available to all residents of the community. The perception of the Planning Bureau as an inaccessible governmental entity needs to be modified.

Lancaster needs new forums for the exchange of views between City government and local residents. The existing system places too much distance between government and average citizens, especially those in minority areas of the City. A system of "community boards" would begin to bridge this gap by providing citizens with a political forum closer to home. Each council district would have its own community board. It would be headed by the city council member and meetings would provide district residents with a chance to question their elected representatives and express their concerns. In turn, Council members would encounter their constituents face-to-face on a regular basis, in a setting conducive to spirited discussion. The block captains, who have already been involved in the block meetings for the new comprehensive plan, could also play an expanded role. Each captain would be in charge of keeping his or her neighborhood apprised of issues discussed at the community board meeting, either by having informal meetings or by posting information in well-frequented places throughout the neighborhood (e.g., churches, markets, schools, etc.). Several organizations have already offered to provide space and time for such community centers.

ISSUE: City government structures must represent the changing demographics of Lancaster.

Policy Suggestions: In the current environment of demographic change, special efforts should be made to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to elect representatives who will address their concerns. City Council elections by district should be considered. District elections are not a panacea for weak political participation, but they can increase the diversity of choices. Since candidates need only campaign within their district, costs can be contained. Minority candidates, who might not be able to garner enough votes Citywide, can attain office as representatives of their districts. Citizens would have a greater sense that someone speaks for them in city hall, perhaps even someone they know from informal contacts within their neighborhoods. Government would not seem so distant and intangible.

Participation in elections should be increased, but will be difficult to accomplish. Existing community organizations might serve as starting points for mobilizing stronger interest in the electoral process. However, eventually the "silent majority" of residents who now reject political involvement must be contacted.

ECONOMIC ISSUES
POLICY SUGGESTIONS

ISSUE: The City must respond to the challenges to its position as the economic center of the County.

Policy Suggestions: The City already has an array of economic development strategies to attract businesses to the City, and these should be pursued vigorously. The presence of retailing in city neighborhoods should be increased. In the southeast area of the City, for instance, lower-income residents need a full array of stores that service daily needs (e.g., a pharmacy).

An economic "zero sum game" between the City and the County should be avoided if possible (i.e., a situation where gains in retail sales in the County are obtained at the expense of declining retail sales in the City). County government should be involved in advancing an economic development strategy that does not penalize the City (City residents are, after all, also residents of the County). For instance, if a national chain of drugstores is thinking of expanding in Lancaster County, then government officials might try to induce them to locate in the southeast area of the City.

ISSUE: The City must continue its efforts to retain its historic industrial base.

Internationally, Lancaster is decreasingly price-competitive in industry, as is most of the country. However, interregionally and intraregionally, Lancaster offers several strong points upon which incentives could be based. These include the historical diversity of the City's economic base, a reputation for stability, and the Pennsylvania Dutch ethos (which has proven attractive to employers). It is up to City residents and officials to make these attributes well known in order to attract more businesses into the area.

The City has made some recent efforts to improve its attractiveness to incoming businesses by providing various job training programs at local high schools and vocational-technical schools. Furthermore, some of the local banks have negotiated, with the input of the City, advantageous finance packages within the industrial zone and the central business district.

The city needs a clear-cut and streamlined industrial development policy that works to strengthen existing businesses and attract new ones into the area. For instance, the City does not focus industrial development efforts on the packaging and shipment of agricultural services as much as the County does. Agriculture services are the largest revenue generator for the County. The City could further diversify its economic base beyond the traditional manufacturing and industry by actively working to attract new high-growth industries, such as biotechnology and health care providers (outpatient services and retirement care).

ISSUE: The vitality of downtown retail has been weakened by increasing mall development and other suburban retail expansion.

Policy Suggestions: Clearly, a disparity in retail trade exists between Lancaster's downtown and the rest of the City and the County. Retailing in the city must become more competitive with suburban retailing. Shop owners could coordinate individual resources to be more effective. The recently approved Downtown Investment District promises to be an excellent starting point. The DID would address three problem areas which will help improve the market position of downtown retailing: safety, appearance, and marketing. The DID should also work to improve the retail mix of downtown businesses. Downtown retail's competitors--suburban malls--do it; so should city retailers. With a more diverse and attractive selection of stores, more customers may shop in the City.

ISSUE: Both the City and the private sector need to promote increased entrepreneurial opportunities for the Hispanic, African-American, and other minority populations.

Policy Suggestions: The City should continue to pursue its incubator concept. New firms can share common costs, such as overhead and support services, in a common facility where each business rents partitioned space in a larger building. In addition, the incubator manager provides them with technical assistance, such as preparing business plans, budgeting, and supply networks. Start-up businesses are more productive if they do not have to devote excess time to problems such as adequate security, hiring secretaries, and locating manufacturing space. As a result, businesses nurtured in incubators enjoy a success rate that is four times that of nonincubator firms after two years.

Other policies that might bring results are improved access to government contracts for minority businesses and strengthened mentorship programs to enhance business skills.

ISSUE: There is a growing disparity between the educational level and vocational training of workers and the needs of local employers.

Policy Suggestions: The local labor pool must be equipped to fill the jobs of the future. Industries are increasingly automated and employment in the service sector is expanding. Workers need to acquire the skills and education for the corresponding job market. To this end, local government and the School District of Lancaster must work with the private sector to train City residents. Although many programs already exist, vocational training should be expanded and strengthened. Programs should be continually updated and redesigned to address the needs of existing and incoming businesses.

In addition to training, the City needs to increase job opportunities by making sure that transportation is available to centers of employment. Walking to industrial sites, even within the City's boundaries, is often an unpleasant experience. The bus lines provide a convenient way to get to the downtown and Park City Mall, but not enough lines connect homes to places of employment. This lack of transportation especially hurts those disadvantaged people who cannot afford cars and need jobs the most.

SOCIAL ISSUES:
POLICY SUGGESTIONS

EDUCATION

ISSUE: The educational system must respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse population.

Policy Suggestions: The School District of Lancaster has made a considerable effort to adapt to the new demographic realities. Existing programs need continued support and funding. Efforts should be made to recruit sufficient staff for the ESL and Bilingual programs. The programs to promote sensitivity to different ethnic groups and multicultural enrichment should also be continued. Dealing with a multicultural student population requires additional resources, but it is money well spent. Failure to allocate adequate funds will only lead to large remedial expenditures later.

Lancaster's schools face challenges that have usually been associated with larger cities. In adapting to the current changes, however, Lancaster has at least two advantages. First, the city can study and learn from the successes and failures of other cities and adapt accordingly. Second, since Lancaster is a medium-size city, the problems are much more manageable.

HOUSING

ISSUE: There is not enough housing for low-income families, and the available low-income housing supply is overcrowded and unequally distributed throughout the City and County.

Policy Suggestions: Subsidized housing should be distributed more equitably throughout the City and the County. Some version of a "fair share" system needs to be

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implemented. Subsidized housing should not be stigmatized by location near unpleasant industrial areas. Subsidized housing can be a good neighbor, as numerous experiments throughout the country have shown. It requires political support and an unwavering commitment to good planning, design, and management, including tenant screening where necessary.

Public housing construction was scaled back drastically by the Reagan and Bush administrations, so little relief can be expected from that quarter. If funding were ever to increase, Lancaster should build new units. However, the City must avoid the mistakes of the past. New public housing should be designed to blend in with surrounding neighborhoods. Large, monolithic projects should be avoided. Existing neighborhoods find it much easier to absorb a smaller number of units that are scattered throughout the private housing stock.

It might be possible to simplify or streamline the Section 8 program, in order to encompass more units, but this would not add new units to the physical housing stock, and the gains would most likely be modest.

ISSUE: **Home ownership opportunities for Lancaster's lower-income households need to be expanded.**

Policy Suggestions: Home ownership can give residents a tangible stake in a community, increasing neighborhood stability, and assistance for viable first-time homeowners should be increased. While increased home ownership may help to stabilize some neighborhoods, it will not increase the rental housing supply, and may actually take rental units off the market. Many low-income families cannot afford to own a home of any kind. Therefore, home ownership should not be viewed as a panacea for all of Lancaster County's housing deficiencies.

Any plan for improving housing conditions in Lancaster City must include assistance for rehabilitating and maintaining existing housing. Most of Lancaster's housing stock was constructed before 1929. These structures will decay unless they are maintained. According to some residents and officials of Lancaster City, it is difficult to obtain financing for home repairs. Therefore, policies should be devised to make it easier to repair and upgrade existing units, perhaps as part of coordinated neighborhood improvement plans. The City should work with federal and state officials, as well as banks and other financial institutions, to ensure an adequate supply of home improvement loans.

HUMAN SERVICES:

ISSUE: Social service providers are overburdened, and the coordination between different agencies needs to be improved.

Policy Suggestions: The first planning task to improve human services delivery should be a comprehensive needs assessment for the community. Needs have changed along with a changing population. Both community opinions and quantitative data must be gathered. Second, problems should be arranged by priority.

An efficient and comprehensive referral and outreach system should be created. Service providers and recipients need to understand which agencies are providing what services. To improve coordination, the benefits and disadvantages of creating a centralized department of human services should be considered. Some form of county-wide centralization is needed beyond a telephone referral system; several counties in the state already coordinate services through such an entity. However, if the City and County systems were to merge, the City's needs might get less attention or be overlooked.

The United Way is a potential candidate for the job. The United Way already collaborates with the County Planning Commission to write community needs assessments, the first step in the process of providing services. The existing service of LINC could be expanded into a reliable cross reference of agencies and users. All human service agencies would be required to register. In addition to submitting reports, an attempt at county-wide case management could be made if lists of all recipients and their addresses could be obtained. The problem of maintaining client confidentiality, however, might block such a system.

Funding remains a perennial problem, and the City's room for maneuver may be limited. Regardless, strategies should be devised to expand sources of funding through creative combinations of private, city, county, state and federal sources. Coordination between agencies might eliminate unnecessary competition and make fund raising more efficient.

ISSUE: Needy populations, and the corresponding social service facilities, are concentrated within the City.

Policy Suggestions: Locating human service facilities requires careful analysis of particular conditions; there is no simple solution that can be applied mechanically. In the short term, it might be best for providers to bring desperately needed services directly to the people, locating facilities in needy communities. Dispersed services might be inaccessible, given the lack of reliable and affordable public transportation. In the long run, though, consideration should be given to a "fair share" policy for equitable facility location. Such programs might face protests from "NIMBY" (Not-in-My-Back-Yard) proponents, who would resist the placement in their neighborhoods of facilities such as drug rehabilitation centers, halfway houses, and group homes. Nevertheless, the undue concentration of "undesirable" facilities in economically disadvantaged communities should be avoided. Improved public transportation would make scattered-site approaches more feasible.

ISSUE: Segments of the population, particularly minority groups who lack resources and political representation, tend to fall through the cracks of the system and consequently are denied services.

Policy Suggestions: Stronger efforts to discover and respond to the needs of clients, especially the minority population, should be made. This should occur at the neighborhood level, where face-to-face knowledge of client needs is possible, but also with the assistance and coordination of local government.

PUBLIC SAFETY

ISSUE: Crime has increased and has resulted in escalating public fear.

The crime problem must be approached from several different directions. The only long-term strategy for the reduction of crime is the removal of the economic and social conditions that spawn it. The City of Lancaster does not control many of these factors, e.g., national levels of unemployment, broken families, shifting cultural values, and so on. However, within limits, the City can increase economic opportunities and provide services to needy groups, hopefully deflecting residents from criminal alternatives.

At the level of street and neighborhood, community policing can reduce antagonisms between residents and the police. As recent events in Los Angeles have shown, the relationship between the populace and the police force, especially in minority neighborhoods, is a critical element in maintaining public order.

PHYSICAL PLANNING ISSUES:
POLICY SUGGESTIONS

LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

ISSUE: **The negative consequences of suburban sprawl are diminishing the quality of life in Lancaster City and County.**

Urban growth management involves both the City and the County, and a unified set of strategies for both must be developed. While the existing Urban Growth Boundary proposals from the County's Draft Growth Management Plan have merit, they should be tightened up even more to promote compact development. Compact developments should be integrated with a long-range transportation plan (as in Peter Calthorpe's "Pedestrian Pocket" proposals), so that dense, mixed-use clusters also serve as transit stops, placing all residents within a quarter-mile of efficient public transportation. Regional expansion must be accommodated within urban forms that consume less land, generate less traffic and pollution, reduce expensive infrastructure, and maintain an urban character without sacrificing the genuine amenities of suburban life.

On Lancaster City's fringe, the existing street patterns (checkerboard, gridiron, and radial) should be extended where possible in order to maintain the city's unique urban character. Extremely open site plans that waste land do not belong inside the City.

Some version of the well-known "Transfer of Development Rights" (TDR) strategy should be considered in order to protect open space and historic amenities, with development to be transferred away from farmland and into sites within the the Central Lancaster Urban Growth Boundary.

Land use and urban design proposals should emerge from Lancaster's neighborhoods, in a process that encourages consistency with larger City and regional objectives. Citizen participation will be especially important in the southeast area of the City, which has undergone such rapid demographic change. The appropriate technique could be the introduction of an "Area Plan" or neighborhood plan, providing policy guidelines for the improvement of the neighborhood. While tailored to the needs of

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each particular community, these plans should be consistent with Citywide and regional objectives.

County plans and state comprehensive plans should contain criteria for proposed land uses of regional impact and significance, such as large shopping centers and major industrial parks.

Like the State of Oregon, the State of Pennsylvania should create a Department of Land Conservation and Development to oversee the State's comprehensive planning process. The Department would contain the Land Conservation and Development Commission, which would serve as a liaison to the legislature and a joint legislative committee on land use. The Commission would be required to issue an order requiring a local government, state agency, or special district to bring its comprehensive plan or land use regulations into compliance with the Commission's goals. As part of such an order the Commission may withhold grant funds from the local government affected by the order.

ISSUE: The existing development regulations in Lancaster need to be revised to accommodate new economic and social conditions.

The City needs to formulate strong urban design controls based upon a careful analysis of Lancaster's physical assets and social needs. The regulations that will influence the cityscape during the coming decades must be based on a comprehensive foundation that includes social and economic factors as well as more conventional land use criteria.

Streetscape and traffic standards should be elaborated. Too many streets are dominated by fast traffic. Too many sidewalks and intersections provide an unpleasant pedestrian experience. The city must decide upon an appropriate balance between the pedestrian and the automobile, and then produce enforceable standards to make that streetscape come into being.

Rigid, traditional zoning standards might be replaced with more flexible "performance zoning" regulations. A performance zone is defined by a list of permitted impacts as opposed to a list of permitted uses. The advantages of such a zone would be a reduction in zoning districts and an increase in flexibility. However, performance zoning can be harder to administer because of the impact evaluations involved.

A regulation that would enable small lot zoning with bonuses for higher densities should be supported. This would encourage urban infill development. "Contextual zoning" strategies should also be considered. There are also possibilities for culturally sensitive zoning with regulations that would enable a variety of different ethnic and

social groups to express their cultural values architecturally, yet within commonly accepted rules to preserve the overall character of the cityscape.

ISSUE: **Lancaster City needs a comprehensive policy to manage the impacts of industrial waste, household garbage, and residential sewage, in order to preserve the City's environmental quality.**

Policy Suggestions: The most ecologically sound strategy with respect to wastes is the reduction of output. Ultimately, consumption habits must change and product-packaging must be reduced. With respect to the existing waste stream, recycling programs should be vigorously pursued to reduce the tonnage deposited in landfills or incinerated.

TRANSPORTATION

ISSUE: **The incompleteness of the road network and existing traffic management have contributed to vehicular congestion. Furthermore, incompatible automobile use has detracted from the quality of the pedestrian-oriented environment.**

Policy Suggestions: Lancaster City has too many busy arterial streets running through its downtown area. These streets make the downtown seem unfriendly, as vehicles race from stoplight to stoplight trying to make time. While some fast one-way streets may be necessary, they should be reduced to a minimum. The premier downtown streets most suitable for walking and sidewalk activities should not be used as highways. In fact, a number of downtown streets should be selected for "traffic calming" strategies, in which features such as paving, trees, bollards, and sidewalks are designed to slow down traffic and define the space as "belonging to pedestrians." Even the streets that must carry heavy traffic could be redesigned to buffer pedestrians and buildings from noise, danger, and pollution.

The whole traffic problem should be seen in relation to public transportation, non-motorized alternatives, and urban design. Traffic management cannot be a narrow engineering function. Building a few new roads may be justified, especially if such roads actually divert through traffic away from the downtown, but massive road

construction is no answer to the overall problem. Making city streets friendly for drivers will simply clog the streets with cars. Because of Lancaster's historic radial-concentric street pattern, some arterials may have to be "sacrificed" in order to move traffic through the City, but this should be minimized.

Traffic calming strategies have been used in European cities for decades to make streets feel safe and comfortable while discouraging fast automobile traffic. With 189 million registered cars, trucks, and buses in the United States, we are at a point where the balance should be shifted back to the pedestrian and transit rider. Especially in a city of Lancaster's size, bicycle paths and amenities should be developed to make bicycles a serious transportation option.

ISSUE: The public transportation system does not adequately serve transit dependent people for work-generated trips to industrial areas and other job locations.

Policy Suggestions: In general, public transportation should be given higher priority. This goes against current trends, which favor the automobile, but it remains essential nevertheless. Consideration should be given to expanding the bus system for work-related trips throughout the County.

Downtown Lancaster should remain the hub of the bus system, reinforcing the City's cultural and historic primacy. Special attention should be paid to ensure that boarding or transferring downtown is pleasant experience. Bus stops and interchanges are just as important as the quality of the buses. Connections between different transportation modes should also be simplified.

ISSUE: The excess supply of parking garage spaces in Lancaster is unsatisfactory due to the public perception that the facilities provided are unsafe, expensive, and inconvenient.

Policy Suggestions: Parking for the CBD should be viewed as part of the downtown's overall urban design and transportation system. Curb parking should be reassessed to match appropriate downtown street use priorities relating to pedestrian circulation, service requirements, transit vehicles, automobile movements, and curb access.

The elimination of surface parking lots should be considered; they might be better used as new building sites. Downtown surface parking lots, while convenient for drivers, create unpleasant holes in the streetscape that detract from the pedestrian experience.

Work related parking (long-term) should be channeled to the higher levels of the parking garages, leaving the lower levels for shoppers and visitors. In general, short-term parking in the CBD should be made as simple and convenient as possible, since obstacles will quickly deflect shoppers to the suburbs. In the long run, however, it would be preferable to replace automobile trips with transit trips.

The parking garages should be modified architecturally if their design and appearance are repelling users. Many garages seem dark, colorless, and threatening. This effect can be reduced somewhat through the application of better paint and lighting schemes. although the best solution is to design the facilities properly in the beginning.

Appropriate parking spaces for the handicapped should be included in any downtown parking plan.

AESTHETIC ISSUES

ISSUE: Lancaster's irreplaceable aesthetic qualities are threatened by insensitive, inappropriate incremental changes to the built form. There are no legally binding design guidelines or policies to prevent or slow this process except in the existing historic districts.

Policy Suggestions: The City should adopt simple, but comprehensive and mandatory, design regulations based on sensible aesthetic goals. A review committee to enforce these design guidelines should be created. These initiatives should be supported by a public education campaign explaining, in clear and practical terms, the benefits of urban design controls. (It should be noted, however, that the City's ability to implement design regulations will be limited by the legal status of such regulations in both the state and federal courts.)

Urban design regulations should cover elements such as:

- the arrangement of key urban elements (street grid, building stories, meaningful open space, relationship of people and vehicles);

- the correct balance of activities and spaces;
- ways to ensure that new buildings are historically sensitive and responsive to local features (integration of business areas, mixed use buildings, adaptive re-use, contextual design, scale relations);
- general rules for enhancing the quality of the streetscape (no blank walls, no parking lots, better on-street parking, "eyes on the street" design, street activity such as cafes and restaurants).

The above recommendations are taken from the Liveable Communities Forum, which also includes more detailed recommendations for specific ordinances.

ISSUE: Lancaster faces the possibility of further losses of its valuable, nationally significant historic resources. In addition, the preservation movement, both locally and statewide, has been weakened.

Policy Suggestions: The historic preservation agenda for the City of Lancaster needs to be re-evaluated and strengthened. This would include the definition of priorities, extending the application of historic preservation criteria, identifying historic and cultural resources, and connecting preservation with other important community goals (e.g. low income housing).

Community involvement in preservation activities should be broadened. Possible strategies include explicit efforts to contact a wide range of residents, including those from the minority community, and public education about the intrinsic value of historic preservation along with its connection to economic development (e.g., tourism). Where feasible, preservation should make use of voluntary acceptance and compliance, but in many cases this will have to be backed up with regulatory control.

These proposals are based on the "draft project description" for the pending Community Conservation Plan for Lancaster City.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

ISSUE: Major demographic and economic shifts are transforming the community identity of Lancaster, and are provoking a rethinking of the City's character.

Policy Suggestions: Community identity is a somewhat elusive notion that is often overlooked in the formation of public policy, yet its effects are powerful. As communities change, it is important that justice be done to both old and new images of the city. (Even the oldest and most entrenched community identities were new, and possibly perplexing, at some point in the past.) Lancaster has a very well-articulated image of itself based upon its European origins (frequently including a blind spot concerning the African-American population), but the City's recent arrivals, many with roots in Puerto Rico, are also now part of the City's emerging history. The challenge for Lancaster is to create the common ground where these different cultures can coexist and learn from one another. There are no simple recipes for such an outcome. A few tentative recommendations are the formation of a cultural advisory panel to monitor this issue, the implementation of a community awareness study to determine how different groups view the City, and the adoption of explicit policies to promote the acceptance of a multicultural society.

8. CONCLUSION

The Columbia University Urban Planning Studio spent approximately three months investigating the City of Lancaster. Based in New York City, Studio members made a concerted effort to understand Lancaster and its people, visiting the City on numerous occasions and contacting residents by phone. Many existing reports and articles on the City were reviewed. The Studio's research revealed that the City confronts challenges similar to those facing many other American cities as the result of economic restructuring and demographic change. The world is a more competitive place than ever before, as companies maneuver on a global field. Cities have become complex mosaics of racial and ethnic groups, each aspiring to full participation in economic, social, and political life. Under these circumstances, an openness to new approaches must be cultivated, and those who have been left out of the political process must be included. Lancaster is fortunate in having substantial resources with which to confront these challenges.

The responsibility for responding to the issues outlined in this report now passes to the citizens of Lancaster. They must find a way to agree upon policies and programs that make sense for the City's long-term future. The growing racial and ethnic diversity of the City may make the process of reaching agreement more difficult, but that diversity is also an asset. The ability to sustain and mix diverse cultures is a defining mark of successful urban life. Lancaster adapted to earlier waves of immigration, and it can do so now. The City served as a gateway for economic advancement in the past, and the doors can be kept open today.

The members of the Columbia University Urban Planning Studio look forward to the successful completion of the new comprehensive plan, and hope that this report makes a more valuable and sharply focused plan possible. If Issues for Lancaster launches an array of controversial issues into the public domain, where they can be discussed in a constructive manner, then the report will have served a useful purpose.

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