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Chapter 8  
Livable Communities

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## Introduction

Most of the open space strategies found in *Land Partnerships* focus upon those municipalities that have substantial amounts of undeveloped land that could serve an important farmland preservation, parks and recreation or natural resource protection function. However, significant open space preservation opportunities can also be found in the fully developed communities in the county and the future communities that have yet to be constructed.

Maintaining and enhancing Cumberland County's boroughs and adjoining older townships are an important goal of *Land Partnerships*. By making these "existing communities" attractive places to live, work, and shop, we can decrease growth pressures on outlying areas while maximizing the use and maintenance of our existing infrastructure.

Similarly, smart planning for the "communities of tomorrow" provides the opportunity to integrate open space preservation techniques into municipal planning processes. In doing so, we protect critical natural resources and provide new park and recreation facilities through the normal development process. Preserving open space through the municipal planning process is the cheapest and most efficient way to preserve open space and decreases the need for robust land acquisition programs that are funded using public tax dollars.

*"People are hungering to live in communities that are safe, clean and affordable, and that have a sense of place and the kinds of amenities that enrich their lives."*

Mayor Randy Kelly,  
St Paul Minnesota,  
One of America's Most  
Livable Communities as  
awarded by Partners for  
Livable Places, 2004.

<http://www.mostlivable.org/award.html>. Accessed August 2005.

## Characteristics of Livable Communities

Livable communities are those places that through their design and function are attractive for all types of commercial, industrial and residential development. These well-planned communities balance preservation and economic development to secure their sustainable future.

Whether located in Cumberland County, PA or Boston, MA, livable communities generally exhibit the following characteristics<sup>1</sup>:

**Design** - Feels safe and comfortable for people, respects history and culture, enhances beauty, and provides for pedestrian safety.

**Central downtown area** - Healthy downtown center with commercial, recreational, cultural and civic uses.

**Public Spaces** - Open space that serves the whole community with parks, squares and greens. Pathways and streets are designed to be beautiful pleasant places. Focus is on day and evening use.

**Balanced Transportation** - Provides for pedestrian, public transit and auto access to reduce dependence on private cars while offering mobility to all citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.southbaycities.com/docs/livable/handbookCh1/htm>. Accessed August 2005.

**Diversity** - Offers a mix of housing and employment opportunities for people of all ages, incomes and ethnicity.

**Environmental Sustainability** - Conserves natural habitat, natural resources, air and water quality for citizens today and for future generations.

**Public Safety** - Good quality design for streets, buildings and public spaces that assure pedestrian safety and helps people feel safe. Safe neighborhoods and quality schools improve the quality of life, add to the attractiveness of the community and create a sense of identity and place.

**Full Community Participation**- Includes the residents, neighborhood organizations and the business community. Educational efforts about land use planning and policies are made available to promote public involvement in decision-making.

Land Partnerships defines two types of Livable Communities found in Cumberland County: “Existing Communities” and “Communities of Tomorrow.”

## Existing Communities

The “Existing Communities” include the 12 boroughs and the four townships of the first class in Cumberland County that are built out or are rapidly moving toward build-out. In Cumberland County, the average borough covers about 1.6 square miles and has an average population of 5,788. The boroughs include: Camp Hill, Carlisle, Lemoyne, Mechanicsburg, Mount Holly Springs, Newburg, New Cumberland, Newburg, Newville, Shippensburg, Shiremanstown, and Wormleysburg. The townships of the first class cover an average of 13.05 square miles with a population of 18,791. Clustered around urban centers, these older townships are “urbanized” and have established suburban populations. They include: East Pennsboro, Hampden, Lower Allen, and Upper Allen Townships.

### Existing Communities Population Trends

Statewide, boroughs and first-class townships have seen considerable decreases in population. Recent statewide reports such as **Back to Prosperity**<sup>2</sup> and its response **Forward to Prosperity**<sup>3</sup> have debated the causes for and solutions to such decline. Regardless of the specific cause, these communities at some point lost one or several of the characteristics of livable communities, and thus, the residents chose to live somewhere else.

<sup>2</sup> The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. 2003. *Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania*. Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Young Strategic Group. 2005. *Forward to Prosperity: Removing Obstacles to Pennsylvania's Economic Performance*. Pennsylvania Prosperity Coalition: [www.paprosperity.org](http://www.paprosperity.org).

The experience of Cumberland County's existing communities differs from the statewide example and speaks to the success of these communities in maintaining their livable traits.

Between 1970 and 2000, Cumberland County's boroughs lost population (11.6%) as people moved to the surrounding townships and region. This is a similar trend found across Pennsylvania during that time period in which the population decline for boroughs statewide was 9.8 percent.

While older first ring townships elsewhere in the state experienced similar population losses in the 1970-2000 time frames, the four first class townships in Cumberland County gained 35 percent in their population. Table 8-1 presents the population changes for the boroughs and first class townships from 1970 to 2000.

From 2000 to 2005, Cumberland County's existing communities are projected to grow despite statewide trends in the opposite direction. Table 8-2 presents the projected population gains for 2005 as well as projections for these municipalities through 2015.

Cumberland County boroughs are projected to experience a turn-around from previous population losses by increasing their collective population by 5.1 percent: All 11 boroughs are projected to experience growth with a range of 2.3 percent in New Cumberland to 9.9 percent in Newburg.

The first class townships are projected to continue their steady growth by growing at a collective rate of 13.4 percent. All 4 first-class townships are projected to experience growth with a range of a low of 9.4 percent in Lower Allen Township and a high of 16.4 percent in Hampden Township.

Projections over the next ten years estimate population gains in all the boroughs and continued substantial gains in the first class townships.

The growth and investment in Cumberland County's existing communities demonstrates that these communities have several, if not all, of the defining traits of a livable community. Reinvestment, maintenance and enhancement of these communities will be vital to preserving their livable characteristics that make them attractive places to live, work, and shop. By investing in these communities we direct portions of future residential, commercial, and industrial growth in previously developed areas and decrease pressures on outlying, undeveloped areas.

<b>Table 8-1</b> <b>Cumberland County Population and Changes</b> <b>Boroughs and First Class Townships</b> <b>1970 - 2000</b>					
	1970	1990	2000	1970-2000 Change	1990-2000 Change
<b>CUMBERLAND COUNTY</b>					
<b>Boroughs</b>					
CAMP HILL BOROUGH	9,931	7,831	7,636	-23%	-2.3%
CARLISLE BOROUGH	18,079	18,419	17,970	-.6%	-2.4%
LEMOYNE BOROUGH	4,625	3,959	3,995	-13.6%	.9%
MECHANICSBURG BOROUGH	9,385	9,452	9,042	-3.6%	-4.3%
MT HOLLY SPRINGS BOROUGH	2,009	1,925	1,925	-4.1%	-
NEWBURG BOROUGH	320	312	372	16.2%	19.2%
NEW CUMBERLAND BOROUGH	9,803	7,665	7,349	-25%	-4.1%
NEWVILLE BOROUGH	1,631	1,349	1,367	-16.2%	1.3%
SHIPPENSBURG BOROUGH	5,172	4,328	4,467	-13.6%	3.2%
SHIREMANSTOWN BOROUGH	1,773	1,567	1,521	-14.2%	-2.9%
WORMLEYSBURG BOROUGH	3,192	2,847	2,607	-18.3%	-8.4%
<b>Total: Cumberland County Boroughs</b>	65,920	59,654	58,251	-11.6%	-2.3%
<b>Total: Pennsylvania's Older Communities<sup>4</sup></b>				-9.8%^	<-2%^^^
<b>First Class Townships</b>					
EAST PENNSBORO TOWNSHIP*	12,440	16,588	18,254	46.7%	10%
HAMPDEN TOWNSHIP	11,847	20,384	24,135	103.7%	18.4%
LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP	13,690	15,254	17,437	27.3%	14.3%
UPPER ALLEN TOWNSHIP	7,325	13,347	15,338	109.3%	14.9%
<b>TOTAL - CUMBERLAND</b>	<b>158,177</b>	<b>195,257</b>	<b>213,674</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>

\* Including annexed West Fairview

^ includes boroughs only

^^ includes cities, boroughs and first class townships

<sup>4</sup> Brookings Institution. 2004. **Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania.** Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

<b>Table 8-2</b> <b>Cumberland County Population Trends and Projections</b> <b>Boroughs and First Class Townships</b> <b>2000 – 2015</b>						
	2000	2005	2000-2005 Change	2010	2015	2005-2015 Change
<b>CUMBERLAND COUNTY</b>						
<b>Boroughs</b>						
CAMP HILL BOROUGH	7,636	7,819	2.4%	7,904	7,980	2.1%
CARLISLE BOROUGH	17,970	19,134	6.5%	19,675	20,162	5.4%
LEMOYNE BOROUGH	3,995	4,189	4.8%	4,279	4,360	4.1%
MECHANICSBURG BOROUGH	9,042	9,538	5.4%	9,769	9,977	4.6%
MT HOLLY SPRINGS BOROUGH	1,925	2,089	8.5%	2,165	2,234	6.9%
NEWBURG BOROUGH	372	409	9.9%	426	441	7.8%
NEW CUMBERLAND BOROUGH	7,349	7,522	2.3%	7,603	7,675	2.0%
NEWVILLE BOROUGH	1,367	1,440	5.3%	1,475	1,505	4.5%
SHIPPENSBURG BOROUGH	4,467	4,804	7.5%	4,960	5,101	6.2%
SHIREMANSTOWN BOROUGH	1,521	1,577	3.7%	1,603	1,626	3.1%
WORMLEYSBURG BOROUGH	2,607	2,694	3.3%	2,735	2,771	2.9%
<b>Total: Boroughs</b>	<b>58,251</b>	<b>61,215</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>62,594</b>	<b>63,832</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>First Class Townships</b>						
EAST PENNSBORO TOWNSHIP	18,254	20,460	12.0%	21,485	22,408	22.8%
HAMPDEN TOWNSHIP	24,135	28,098	16.4%	29,940	31,599	30.9%
LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP	17,437	19,085	9.4%	19,851	20,542	17.8%
UPPER ALLEN TOWNSHIP	15,338	17,584	14.6%	18,628	19,568	27.6%
<b>Total: First Class Townships</b>	<b>75,164</b>	<b>85,227</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>89,904</b>	<b>94,117</b>	<b>25.2%</b>
<b>TOTAL - CUMBERLAND</b>	<b>213,674</b>	<b>238,347</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>249,813</b>	<b>260,144</b>	<b>21.7%</b>

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## Communities of Tomorrow

The “Communities of Tomorrow” include those undeveloped areas in the county’s second class townships in Cumberland County. Given the highly developed nature of the existing communities, the communities of tomorrow are poised to support the majority of the future industrial, commercial, and residential growth in the county.

Townships of the second class cover large geographic areas with an average of 27.47 square miles but a population average of only 4,459. They are larger geographically but less populated than the boroughs and first class townships of the existing communities.

Cumberland County’s Communities of Tomorrow, include: Cooke, Dickinson, Hopewell, Lower Frankford, Lower Mifflin, Middlesex, Monroe, North Middleton, North Newton, Penn, Silver Spring, Shippensburg Township, South Middleton, South Newton, Southampton, Upper Frankford, Upper Mifflin, and West Pennsboro.

### Communities of Tomorrow Population Trends

Statewide second class townships have supported the majority of recent growth with an 11.8 percent increase in population since 1990. Cumberland County’s second class township mirror the statewide example with a 14.5 percent growth rate from 1990-2000. Table 8-3 shows the growth of the county’s second class townships from 1970-2000.

Looking to the future, the second class townships are projected to grow by 11.2 percent from 2005-2015 and accommodate over 20,000 new residents. Table 8-4 shows future population projections for the second class townships.

The communities of tomorrow will experience varying levels of growth in the future. Some municipalities such as Cooke Township will experience little if any future growth due to their location and lack of infrastructure. Conversely, South Middleton and Silver Spring Township with their prime locations and available infrastructure capacities will likely experience substantial residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

Whether expecting growth measured in the 10’s or measured in the 1000’s, balancing land conservation with future economic growth should be goal of both types of communities. Sound planning and design should precede the construction of the communities of tomorrow preservation and economic development can be mutually supportive and not mutually exclusive future goals.

<b>Table 8-3</b> <b>Cumberland County Population and Changes</b> <b>Second Class Townships</b> <b>1970 - 2000</b>					
	<b>1970</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1970-2000 Change</b>	<b>1990-2000 Change</b>
<b>CUMBERLAND COUNTY</b>					
<b>Second Class Townships</b>					
COOKE TOWNSHIP	71	90	117	64.8%	30.0%
DICKINSON TOWNSHIP	2,416	3,870	4,702	94.6%	21.5%
HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP	1,026	1,913	2,096	104.3%	9.6%
LOWER FRANKFORD TOWNSHIP	813	1,491	1,823	124.2%	22.3%
LOWER MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP	746	1,700	1,620	117.2%	-4.7%
MIDDLESEX TOWNSHIP	2,857	5,780	6,669	133.4%	15.4%
MONROE TOWNSHIP	3,326	5,468	5,530	66.3%	1.1%
NORTH MIDDLETON TOWNSHIP	6,572	9,833	10,197	55.2%	3.7%
NORTH NEWTON TOWNSHIP	1,365	1,779	2,169	58.9%	21.9%
PENN TOWNSHIP	1,441	2,425	2,807	94.8%	15.8%
SHIPPENSBURG TOWNSHIP	3,198	4,606	4,504	40.8%	-2.2%
SILVER SPRING TOWNSHIP	6,324	8,369	10,592	67.5%	26.6%
SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP	2,451	3,552	4,787	95.3%	34.8%
SOUTH MIDDLETON TOWNSHIP	7,521	10,340	12,939	72.0%	25.1%
SOUTH NEWTON TOWNSHIP	874	1,153	1,290	47.6%	11.9%
UPPER FRANKFORD TOWNSHIP	991	1,703	1,807	82.3%	6.1%
UPPER MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP	638	1,013	1,347	111.1%	33.0%
WEST PENNSBORO TOWNSHIP	2,937	4,945	5,263	79.2%	6.4%
<b>Total: Second Class Townships</b>	<b>45,567</b>	<b>70,030</b>	<b>80,259</b>	<b>76.1%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>
<b>TOTAL – CUMBERLAND</b>	<b>158,177</b>	<b>195,257</b>	<b>213,674</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>



**Table 8-4  
Cumberland County Population and Projected Changes  
Second Class Townships  
2000-2015**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2000-2005 Change</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2005-2015 Chang</b>
<b>CUMBERLAND COUNTY</b>						
<b>Second Class Townships</b>						
COOKE TOWNSHIP	117	150	28.2%	166	180	20.0%
DICKINSON TOWNSHIP	4,702	5470	16.3%	5827	6148	12.4%
HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP	2,096	2424	15.6%	2576	2714	12.0%
LOWER FRANKFORD TOWNSHIP	1,823	2099	15.1%	2227	2343	11.6%
LOWER MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP	1,620	1836	13.3%	1936	2026	10.3%
MIDDLESEX TOWNSHIP	6,669	7605	14.0%	8039	8431	10.9%
MONROE TOWNSHIP	5,530	6157	11.3%	6449	6712	9.0%
NORTH MIDDLETON TOWNSHIP	10,197	11301	10.8%	11815	12277	8.6%
NORTH NEWTON TOWNSHIP	2,169	2480	14.3%	2625	2755	11.1%
PENN TOWNSHIP	2,807	3223	14.8%	3416	3590	11.4%
SHIPPENSBURG TOWNSHIP	4,504	4931	9.5%	5129	5308	7.6%
SILVER SPRING TOWNSHIP	10,592	12,375	16.8%	13204	13,951	12.7%
SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP	4,787	5,662	18.3%	6069	6436	13.7%
SOUTH MIDDLETON TOWNSHIP	12,939	14,871	14.9%	15,769	16,578	11.5%
SOUTH NEWTON TOWNSHIP	1,290	1,701	31.9%	1901	2076	22.0%
UPPER FRANKFORD TOWNSHIP	1,807	2063	14.2%	2182	2289	11.0%
UPPER MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP	1,347	1571	16.6%	1675	1769	12.6%
WEST PENNSBORO TOWNSHIP	5,263	5978	13.6%	6311	6610	10.6%
<b>Total: Second Class Townships</b>	<b>80,259</b>	<b>91,897</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>97,316</b>	<b>102,193</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
<b>TOTAL - CUMBERLAND</b>	<b>213,674</b>	<b>238,347</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>249,813</b>	<b>260,144</b>	<b>21.7%</b>

## Livable Communities and Open Space Preservation

Unlike the other core elements of *Land Partnerships*, land acquisition is not the central mechanism for land preservation for the Livable Communities element. Open space preservation for Livable Communities occurs as an ancillary benefit to the implementation of other projects or activities in our existing communities and from the initial sound planning of our communities that have yet to be built. Thus, open space preservation is an important ancillary benefit to reinvestment in our existing communities and a guiding principle for the success the communities of tomorrow.

### Open Space Preservation in Existing Communities

From an open space preservation perspective, the existing communities have reached or are nearing buildout of their land area. They have open space needs that are unique from their counterparts in lesser developed areas. Existing communities generally do not have large, vacant land resources to conserve or develop as parks nor do they have access to untapped natural resources that will fuel their future growth.

Thus, existing neighborhoods practice land conservation through both direct investments via limited parkland acquisition projects and through other revitalization efforts where open space preservation is an indirect outcome.

Farmland preservation opportunities are very limited in the existing communities and if available, should not be pursued due to the presence of sewer and water infrastructure and decreased opportunities for farm clustering. Farmland preservation efforts should focus on working farms in agricultural communities. The existing communities of Cumberland County are suburban or urban environments where agriculture is a dying or extinct industry and should not be a target for major farmland preservation efforts.

*"Anything we can do to help our urban areas will help us to conserve our country side."*

**Thomas Gettings, Director  
Wildlands Conservancy**

Existing communities generally have park and recreation facilities for their residents. Some of these facilities may be aging and in need of repair. Conversely, some existing communities, particularly the first-class townships, may need new park and recreation facilities to support their growing populations. Given their constrained land resources, new park and recreation facilities may be smaller in size and scale and could take the form of pocket parks in urban areas or greenway connections between neighborhoods. Together the rehabilitation of existing parks and recreation facilities and the development of new facilities to support future growth help to keep existing communities attractive places to live.

Given their dense populations, existing communities have been afforded the natural resources to support their past and presumable future growth. However, the existing communities should continue to plan for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources that have supported their growth.

Investments and upgrades to aging sewer, water, and transportation infrastructure are critical to the ongoing success of the county's existing communities. Without these investments, environmental pollution or traffic congestion could ruin the attractiveness of our existing communities and the surrounding areas.

Revitalization efforts in our existing communities serve to preserve open space elsewhere in the county. By redeveloping abandoned or blighted sites in our existing communities we are creating an environment conducive to future residential, commercial, or industrial growth. The growth that occurs in these locations decreases demands on lands in outlying areas that may not be as appropriate for growth. A recent study by the Environmental Protection Agency indicates that for every acre of brownfields that is redeveloped, 4 and 1/2 acres of green space is saved<sup>5</sup>.

Growth in existing communities also takes advantage of existing infrastructure such as sewer, water, roads, schools and transit which in turn decreases costs for developers and consumers. The local tax base also serves to benefit when undervalued properties are converted to a productive, viable use.

### Open Space Preservation in the Communities of Tomorrow

Much like the existing communities, land acquisition is a secondary open space preservation technique for the communities of tomorrow. Much of the communities of tomorrow have yet to be built or planned and hence significant opportunity exists to equip these communities with smart growth tools that allow them to preserve the most important elements of the community while developing the remainder to secure their future economic vitality.

Sound planning is the most important and most efficient open space preservation tool for the communities of tomorrow. Before any public funds are spent on open space preservation acquisition projects, communities should integrate open space planning tools directly into their comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations. These planning tools will provide the blueprint of the communities of tomorrow by identifying the critically important lands that need to be conserved and identifying those lands that are best suited for future development.

With sound planning, important lands can be protected and not negatively impacted through development projects. Furthermore, lands protected as part of a development project often do not require major investments of taxpayer funds characteristic of large acquisition projects.

#### **Brownfield Redevelopment**

A recent study by the Environmental Protection Agency indicates that for every 1 acre of brownfields that is redeveloped, 4 and 1/2 acres of green space is saved.

<sup>5</sup> Choosing Greenspace as a Brownfields Reuse, Brownfields Success Story, Environmental Protection Agency, October 2003.  
[http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/success/Green\\_Space.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/success/Green_Space.pdf) Accessed December 2005.

## Livable Communities (LC) Strategies

To achieve Cumberland County's livable communities goals, a variety of types of strategies are needed. *Land Partnerships* includes strategies for acquisition and development, planning, promotion and education; together they offer a multi-faceted approach to smart growth:

### Acquisition and Development

- LC1. Cumberland County should encourage municipalities to identify and acquire public open space for parks and recreation and natural resource protection. Land use planning documents should serve as the blueprint for future open space acquisition projects that cannot be achieved through the municipal land development process.
- LC2. Cumberland County should support upgrades to municipal park and recreation facilities and other public open spaces. The County should make strategic investments in public open spaces that are critical to insuring the long-term attractiveness of our existing communities.
- LC3. Cumberland County should support municipal upgrades and investments in aged infrastructure such as sewers and water systems, highways, and public transit. Cumberland County should assist municipalities in identifying and leveraging public and private sources of funding for infrastructure upgrades. County funding for upgrades to municipal sewer and water infrastructure should be considered in the future, especially in light of the funding shortfall anticipated with the upcoming Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy.
- LC4. Cumberland County should support transportation enhancements that add to the attractiveness, connectivity, and safety of a given community. Projects such as street trees, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike paths, and transit linkages should be considered to increase the curb appeal and safety of Cumberland County's communities.

**Myth:** A county Open Space Preservation Program will have a chilling effect on economic development and growth!

**Truth:** The counties in Pennsylvania with the fastest growth rates also have very strong open space programs. These include the counties of Monroe, Bucks, Chester, Montgomery and Lancaster.

### Planning

- LC5. Cumberland County should provide funding and technical assistance to local municipalities to update local planning documents including comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances.

- LC6. Cumberland County should develop and launch a countywide brownfield reuse and redevelopment strategy.
- LC7. Cumberland County should encourage infill development. Infill refers to the redirection of new development – housing or commercial – towards existing developed infrastructure, including roads, sewers, schools, etc. This reduces the overall costs to the community of accommodating new growth, assuming the capacity of the existing infrastructure is large enough to handle the growth. Infill development includes development projects on vacant lots or empty parcels within existing developed areas.
- LC8. Cumberland County should update the Historic Preservation element of the Cumberland County Comprehensive Plan. The existing communities of the county have a rich history whose preservation attracts residents, businesses, and visitors. The update of the county’s historic preservation plan can establish an inventory of the key historic resources in the county and identify protection strategies.

#### Promotion

- LC9. Cumberland County should support and partner with local stakeholders to promote livable communities through the County, including, but not limited to the following organizations:
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
  - Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
  - Cumberland County Redevelopment Authority
  - Cumberland County Economic Development Office

#### Education

- LC10. Cumberland County should conduct educational workshops on smart growth techniques for both the general public and municipal officials in partnership with public and private stakeholders.