



201823

HOURGLASS QUARTERLY

VOLUME 2



Stronger Lancaster Forum

The Future of Lancaster's Train Station Area

Lancaster City's Vision Zero Plan

Community Engagement for Local Democracy

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Hourglass community,

Lancaster County is changing right before our eyes.

When I make the 5 mile trip from my home in Lancaster City to where I grew up in the suburbs, I pass new gas stations and housing developments, strip malls, banks and retirement communities on lands that were once farm fields and open spaces.

Change is not something to be feared. But as Lancaster County grows and considers its future, **how we change is an important part of the conversation.**

In this issue of the Hourglass Quarterly, you'll learn that, according to Lancaster County Planning, **we're consuming more land than is necessary by building at low densities—threatening the farmland and natural lands that many of us cherish. But you'll also read about coordinated efforts to better use our community's resources.** You'll read about the Train Station Small Area plan, which proposes Transit-Oriented Development at this important gateway, about infill projects on Lancaster City's W. King Street, and about the efforts of the Little Conestoga Blue/Green Corridor Project to restore local streams while better connecting Lancaster's residents with jobs, parks, healthcare and shopping through multimodal transportation.

You'll read about the new Stevens & Smith Center for History and Democracy coming to downtown Lancaster, which is expected to add \$82 million in tourism revenue in its first 5 years—and you'll be reminded that, with **community coordination, Lancaster County can grow in ways that are socially, economically, and environmentally responsible.**

At Hourglass, we want to work alongside each of you to protect Lancaster County's unique character for generations to come. Thank you for your support and partnership.

Respectfully,

Diana Martin
Executive Director



Stronger Lancaster: Community Forum

with Chuck Marohn, President & Founder of Strong Towns

In April Hourglass hosted Chuck Marohn, President & Founder of Strong Towns, for our 2023 Community Forum. Strong Towns is a nationally-known organization that advocates for a pattern of development that is financially strong and resilient.

On the evening of April 12, in front of an audience of 250 people at the Ware Center, Chuck presented some of the most powerful stories from his book, “Strong Towns: A Bottom-Up Revolution to Rebuild American Prosperity.” The book challenges America’s post-World War II “Suburban Experiment,” arguing that extensive infrastructure projects and sprawl is financially unsustainable for local governments in the long run. The engineer and urban planner encouraged cities and towns like Lancaster to focus on incremental, bottom-up development that responds to the unique needs and characteristics of our community. He advocated for prioritizing investments in existing neighborhoods, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and promoting a mix of land uses.

Breaking Out of the Housing Trap

On the morning of April 13, at Southern Market Center, Chuck led a conversation on “Breaking Out of the Housing Trap,” focused on rational responses our community can take to combat the national housing crisis. Some of the solutions he emphasized included local municipalities making it easier to build starter homes, to allow in-home rentals and accessory dwelling units, to permit incremental development by



Pictured (left to right) Josh Druce, Coalition for Smart Growth; Diana Martin, Hourglass; Chuck Marohn, Strong Towns; Kate Zimmerman, Coalition for Sustainable Housing



right, and to give incentives to small entrepreneurs and not just large investors.

He also encouraged foundations and nonprofits to think creatively about providing financing for affordable housing—such as insuring loans on small mortgages that aren’t profitable for a bank.

Lancaster's Housing by the Numbers

Chuck was joined by local speakers who painted a clearer picture of Lancaster's housing landscape.

Rae Ann Miller, data analyst with the Economic Development Co. of Lancaster County's Center for Regional Analysis, presented findings from a county housing analysis that says Lancaster County needs 7,000 to 12,500 more housing units to bring its vacancy rate in line with national averages.

Currently
Below

National Vacancy Rate
by 7K-12K units

Lancaster Needs
18,500+

New Affordable Rental Units
to keep up with demand



Michaela Allwine, Director of Housing and Community Development at the Lancaster County Redevelopment Authority, shared that Lancaster County needs 18,500 new affordable rental units to keep up with demand. Currently Lancaster has about 4,350 affordable rental units.

Scott Standish, executive director of the Lancaster County Planning Department, said Lancaster County also needs to use its land for housing more efficiently to preserve farmland and natural lands. Places2040, Lancaster County's comprehensive plan, calls for an overall target of 7.5 residential units per acre in new development; in recent years, the average has been only 4.6.

Thanks to our Forum Sponsors

The Stronger Lancaster forums were generously sponsored by the Martin-Harnish Foundation, the Coalition for Smart Growth, the Coalition for Sustainable Housing, Lancaster County Community Foundation, Lapp Electric, Kinectiv, Monty & Molly Milner, Davison Associates, LLC, ELA Group, Garber Metrology, Members 1st Credit Union, Bob and Linda Groff, and Paul Mueller.



Full videos of each forum are available on our Youtube channel (@HourglassLancaster) or on our website at HourglassLancaster.org/resources/community-forums/.

The Future of Lancaster's Train Station Area

For our May First Friday Forum Hourglass was joined by Michael Domin, Principal Planner for Lancaster County Planning, and Ben Lesher, President & Founder of Parcel B Development Company, for a discussion on the future of the area surrounding the Lancaster train station. Lancaster County Planning recently released the Lancaster Train Station Small Area Plan which calls for putting the tools in place to redevelop the area as a gateway community with a combination of mixed land uses, high density housing, and bike and pedestrian friendly accommodations. Ben also spoke about his project the Yards, a proposed mixed-use development right across the tracks that will consist of 226 apartments, including 45 units of affordable housing, and retail space.

The Plan

At the forum Domin made it clear that the area surrounding the train station, the second busiest Amtrak station in Pennsylvania, was underutilized. The area, as a mobility hub where trains, cars, bikes, pedestrians and buses converge, is ideal for “transit-oriented development,” or less car dependent, higher density development—reducing sprawl in other parts of Lancaster County while helping Lancaster address its housing shortage. This is important as Lancaster County struggles to meet the density goals outlined in places2040, the county’s comprehensive plan.

The plan includes conceptual renderings of what the area could look like if it were redeveloped as 31 buildings of 3-5 stories, including primarily mixed-use buildings with commercial retail/office space on the first floor and up to 990 residential units, 3 new parking garages, bikeways, and green spaces. The concept plan also realigns the McGovern Ave./Prince St. and Keller



Diana Martin is pictured with Mike Domin, left, and Ben Lesher, right at Hourglass's May First Friday Forum

Ave./Fruitville Pike intersections for improved safety. However, the concept plan is not possible under today's zoning and land development rules for the area. The area around the train station is divided between Lancaster city and Manheim Township. The vision for the area is that the two municipalities harmonize their ordinances (for things like parking, allowed densities, setbacks and landscaping requirements), making the area more attractive to private developers who want to work across boundaries.

What's Next:

The Plan calls for both the City of Lancaster and Manheim Township to formally adopt the plan and to form an implementation committee. The committee would explore revising zoning codes to align regulations around height, lot size and parking. One way that could be done is by adopting a new Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning District. If such a district was formed, each municipality would be “wiping the slate clean,” and starting from scratch rather than negotiating each rule and regulation to bring the area into conformity.

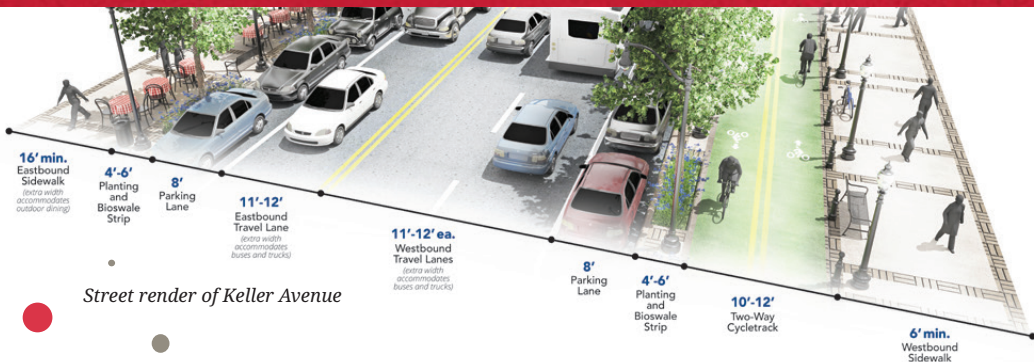
The plan encourages the zoning codes require a minimum residential density

of 19 units/acre and permit by-right residential densities between 19-30 units/acre, that municipalities consider parking maximums rather than minimums to manage the amount of land area dedicated to parking, and that municipalities consider height bonuses for moderate income housing, public gathering spaces, alternative energy, green roofs, public parking, transit improvements, off-site pedestrian improvements, public art, and other features contributing to the overall vision for the area.



Concept rendering of McGovern Ave looking NE to Train Station

Transit Oriented Development refers to mixed-use, pedestrian scale real estate development oriented around and to a rail or transit station, transit stop or transportation center (usually within a ¼ mile radius) that promotes transit ridership.



Street render of Keller Avenue

To watch the forum on the Future of the Lancaster Train Station Area, or view their powerpoint slides, please visit HourglassLancaster.org/resources/first-Friday-forums. To view the full Lancaster Train Station Small Area Plan please visit LancasterCountyPlanning.org/246/Lancaster-Train-Station-Small-Area-Plan.

Highlights From
Recent First
Friday Forums

February 2, 2023

***Lancaster City
Public Safety***



In addition to our First Friday Forum on the Future of Lancaster’s Train Station Area, detailed on the previous spread, other recent forums include:

Presenters: City of Lancaster Mayor Danene Sorace and Lancaster City Police Chief Richard Mendez

Richard Mendez was appointed as the first Hispanic Chief of Police for the Lancaster City Police Bureau in July 2022. A lifelong resident of Lancaster City, Chief Mendez shared that Lancaster’s public safety numbers are better than neighboring cities like York, which saw 62,000 calls for service and 21 homicides last year, versus 37,000 calls for service and 6 homicides in Lancaster City. However Chief Mendez is concerned about illegal firearms in Lancaster. Lancaster City police seized 115 illegal firearms last year, including 27 from juveniles 17 and under. Lancaster City police are continuing to pursue accreditation, which will enable Lancaster City to apply for Red Light Cameras, and all officers completed trauma-informed training through a partnership with Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health.

Presenters: Marshall Snively and Jeremy Young, Lancaster City Alliance; Evon Bergey and Elizabeth Soto, Landis Communities; and Kevin Ressler, United Way of Lancaster County

Since July 2015 Lancaster City’s W. King Street corridor has seen more than \$31 million of privately led investment, including new residential housing projects and the Bravo Supermarket. Lancaster City Alliance has been focused on the corridor, offering façade improvement grants, small business assistance, and recently expanded its Downtown Investment District, which includes the red-shirted “ambassadors” and blue-shirted “clean teams,” to the 200 block of W. King Street. This spring a new anchor project opened on the corridor, Landis Place on King, a \$28 million, 55+ community with 79 units, including 10 units of affordable housing. The mixed-use development includes a restaurant and the United Way of Lancaster County’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance office. Forum attendees had the opportunity to tour the project.

March 3, 2023

***Redevelopment
of W. King St.***



Watch previous forum recordings at **HourglassLancaster.org** or on our Youtube channel. To receive invitations to all of our events become an Hourglass member at **HourglassLancaster.org/membership**.

Presenters: John Cox, Consultant; Brent Good, ELA Group; and Cory Rathman, LandStudies

The \$18 million project, initiated by the Steinman Foundation, will rejuvenate 1.3 miles of the impaired Little Conestoga Creek in what will be one of the largest restorative efforts of its kind in Lancaster County. The project will also include 3 miles of trails that will link hikers and bicyclists to parks, entertainment venues, shopping, and essential services in Lancaster city and its immediate suburbs. The project involves 40 landowners, 4 municipalities and will connect Marietta Avenue with Franklin & Marshall College's Baker Campus, Noel Dorwart Park, The Crossings, Long's Park, Penn Medicine Lancaster General's Health Campus, Woodcrest Villa, and Park City Center.

Presenters: LancasterHistory President & CEO Tom Ryan and Vice President Robin Sarratt

Planning is well under way for the new Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History & Democracy, a state-of-the-art museum expected to open in downtown Lancaster in the spring of 2025. More than 20 years in the making, the \$24 million project will include the restoration of the home and law office of Stevens, exhibits exploring the Underground Railroad, galleries illuminating Stevens' role in amending the US Constitution, and an examination of Lydia Smith's path-breaking life and partnership with Stevens. The museum is expected to draw 55,000 visitors annually with the potential to add \$82 million in tourism revenue to the Lancaster economy over a five-year period.

Highlights From Recent First Friday Forums

April 7, 2023

Little Conestoga Blue/Green Corridor Project



June 2, 2023

Stevens & Smith Center for History and Democracy



Listening to Lancaster

For our most recent episode of Listening to Lancaster Hourglass sat down with Cindy McCormick, Deputy Director of Engineering for the City of Lancaster, to discuss the city's Vision Zero Plan. The City recently received a \$12.7 million Safe Streets for All Grant to implement its Vision Zero strategy, which is the City's goal to eliminate traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

Currently
77%

of Serious and Fatal
Crashes Occur on
6% of Roads

Lancaster
City is up there

For Serious and
Fatal Crashes



What We Learned:

- The City of Lancaster is **“up there,”** when it comes to crashes. **From 2014-2018 Lancaster City had 73 serious and fatal crashes**, while similarly-sized Hoboken, NJ only had 13.
- Crashes are not happening evenly throughout the City. **Serious crashes disproportionately impact bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists, and 77% of serious and fatal crashes are happening on only 6% of streets. These streets have been designated as the “High Injury Network.”**
- Some of the work that will be completed include capital projects—restoring one-way streets back to two-way, improving lighting, restricting parking near intersections to improve visibility, painting “piano key” crosswalks, and adding “No Turn on Red” signs. **But the Vision Zero plan also emphasizes public education, with a priority on safety around schools.**

“The hope is that we can eliminate all of our serious and fatal crashes,” said McCormick. “We still have a ways to go.”



Listen to the full interview, or other recent Listening to Lancaster interviews (including with the city's urban forester and city's green infrastructure asset coordinator) on our youtube channel or at HourglassLancaster.org/resources/listening-to-lancaster.

Community Engagement for Local Democracy

On June 6 Hourglass hosted a public forum on Community Engagement for Local Democracy in partnership with the City of Lancaster and the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation at Johns Hopkins University. The evening included a reception, a keynote address from Terrance Smith, one of the inaugural Bloomberg Public Innovation fellows at Johns Hopkins University, a presentation on the impact of the first year of the city's Department of Neighborhood Engagement, and a panel presentation moderated by City of Lancaster Mayor Danene Sorace.

Some of the programs that the Department of Neighborhood Engagement has implemented include Love your Block grants, which support community-led initiatives such as neighborhood cleanups and community gardens, Neighborhood Leaders Academy, which educates residents on local government, public art projects, and community trauma-informed training. The Department also oversees the city's Welcome Center, language access programs, police-community working group, and technology programs such as Fix It! Lancaster and Engage Lancaster.



Forum Panelists:

- **Terrance Smith**, Public Innovation Fellow, Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation
- **Laura Wood**, Leadership in Government Fellow, Open Society Foundations
- **Miriam Ortega Brown**, Literacy Specialist, School District of Lancaster
- **Milzy Carrasco**, Director of Neighborhood Engagement, City of Lancaster
- **Lancaster City Mayor Danene Sorace**





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