

A faint, light-colored map of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, showing streets and landmarks, serves as the background for the top section of the cover.

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H O U R G L A S S Q U A R T E R L Y

VOLUME 1



Lancaster Speaks On Housing Policy

Lancaster County Hunger Mapping

The Future of Local News

Willow Valley Memory Care Center, and More!

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Hourglass Community,

In this issue of the Hourglass Quarterly you will read about some of Lancaster County's struggles.

Like most of the nation, Lancaster County is grappling with providing enough housing for our residents, including affordable housing. In this issue you'll also read about neighbors who are struggling with food insecurity and poverty.

However, **Lancaster County is full of creative problem solvers who are developing new models, right here in our backyard, for issues being experienced nationwide.**

In August, in partnership with the Franklin & Marshall College Center for Politics and Public Affairs, we hosted a deliberative forum—an innovative way of getting public input on housing policy. In this issue you'll also read about Willow Valley's new Memory Care Center—the first of its kind in the nation—that will add valuable new health resources to our community, and a new model for local news that is being explored right here in Lancaster County.

In my work at Hourglass, every time I hear about local struggles, I'm encouraged by the nonprofit, business, and local government leaders who are stepping up to the plate and investing in our community to solve them. **I'm reminded that our community is at its best when we can check our differences at the door and come together for the good of Lancaster County.**

I hope you find this issue, highlighting some of our recent programming, to be informative. And I hope to see you at an event soon.

Respectfully,

Diana Martin
Executive Director



Lancaster In One Room: a Deliberative Forum on Housing

It's no secret that Lancaster County, like most of the nation, is facing housing challenges. A housing analysis conducted by the Lancaster County Economic Development Corporation found that 95% of metropolitan areas in the U.S. have a higher vacancy rate than Lancaster County, meaning that our available (or unoccupied) housing stock is very limited.

Lancaster County struggles with affordable housing. Forty-one percent of renter households in the county pay more than 30 percent of their household income on housing costs, and the Lancaster County Housing & Redevelopment Authority has calculated that Lancaster County would need 18,500 additional affordable housing units just to ensure that all very low-income households (or those making 50% Area Median Income or less) were no longer housing cost-burdened.

And then there's the matter of how and where we grow. Lancaster County Planning is encouraging development in our Urban Growth Areas (parts of the county that already have infrastructure to accommodate housing) to reduce sprawl that threatens our farmland and natural lands. However, the density of new development in these growth areas from 2015-2019 was only 4.6 dwelling units per acre, rather than the target of 7.5.

So where do we go from here? How would Lancaster County residents tackle these challenges if they were well informed about housing issues? We set to find out through a process called a Deliberative Forum.



The Deliberative Forum

On August 19, 2023, Hourglass and the Center for Politics and Public Affairs at Franklin & Marshall College partnered to host a deliberative forum, or “mini-public,” on housing in Lancaster County. A deliberative forum is an innovative way of getting public input on policy issues.

To assemble the forum we randomly selected 48 residents who are

representative of Lancaster County's demographics (including place of residence, age, gender, race, and education level), and we provided them with briefing documents on Lancaster County housing issues so that they could become better informed on the issue.

Participants then came together for a full day of small group deliberations with trained facilitators and subject matter experts in an attempt to arrive at recommendations on the issue. In an effort to remove barriers to participation, participants were paid a stipend of \$250, and transportation, childcare, and language interpretation services were provided upon request.



What Did We Learn?

In the first small group deliberation, participants were asked about the current state of county housing. The most commonly raised issue with housing in Lancaster County – by a considerable margin – was the lack of affordable housing. The concern about affordability arose not just in calls for more affordable housing but in anxiety about displacement (i.e., people being forced out of their homes or even out of the county). When it came to growth in the county, many were concerned with increasing traffic and with the possibility that the identity of Lancaster County could change. Participants expressed a desire for managed growth.

In the second session of the day, participants grappled with ways to increase the housing supply in Lancaster County. A number of participants recognized that regional housing goals and countywide housing plans would be beneficial but they also thought that differences between communities meant that localities had to have ultimate decision-making authority. Participants recognized that housing regulations are beneficial but many thought current regulations were excessive. They called for streamlining and simplifying approval processes and generally supported more flexibility with respect to housing regulations.

To achieve greater housing in the community, participants favored infill development and adaptive reuse. They also were attracted to the development

of more mixed-use multifamily buildings in our Urban Growth Areas, though there was concern about the size of such buildings. Participants felt strongly about the importance of putting more housing near activity centers (stores, schools, and jobs) in communities. They liked the idea of transit-oriented development and many of them called for more (and/or better) transportation options.

In the third deliberative session, participants considered affordable housing. There was widespread agreement that the need for affordable housing in the county was urgent. In discussing options to create affordable housing, “developer incentives” (e.g., faster approval of building permits for affordable housing, parking requirement reductions, or density bonuses, etc.) garnered significant support. With respect to funding strategies for addressing this issue, many participants favored increased government subsidies (though others opposed this approach) and there was widespread agreement on the use of tax and other incentives for developers.

In the final session of the day, each of the ten tables was asked to generate their top housing priorities for Lancaster County, three to five strategies or policies for addressing housing challenges, and three benchmarks for tracking progress by 2040. In their final determinations, affordable housing was, by far, the

• *Additional Resources*

Find the full forum report, briefing documents provided to participants, a video recording of our October 2023 First Friday Forum on the forum results, and the full list of final recommendations from participants at:

HourglassLancaster.org/housing.



top priority mentioned by participants, followed by “safe, accessible, and fair” housing and the development of housing near jobs, schools, etc. There was less agreement on the strategies and policies participants favored for increasing housing in Lancaster County. The two most commonly mentioned were infill development/adaptive reuse and mixed-use multifamily buildings in our Urban Growth Areas. Participants identified a wide range of potential benchmarks for measuring success such as increasing our vacancy rate, reducing the number of cost-burdened renters, increasing density in our Urban Growth Areas, and increasing the number of affordable units.

Pre- and Post-Forum Survey

Participants were asked to complete a survey before the forum and the same survey immediately after the forum. The survey showed that the forum shifted participants’ views on both housing and how they felt about other members of the Lancaster community. Following the forum, more participants believed that people in Lancaster County are alike in more ways than they differ.

The Lancaster In One Room deliberative forum was generously funded by the Lancaster County Community Foundation, the High Foundation, and the Steinman Foundation. Learn more at HourglassLancaster.org/housing.



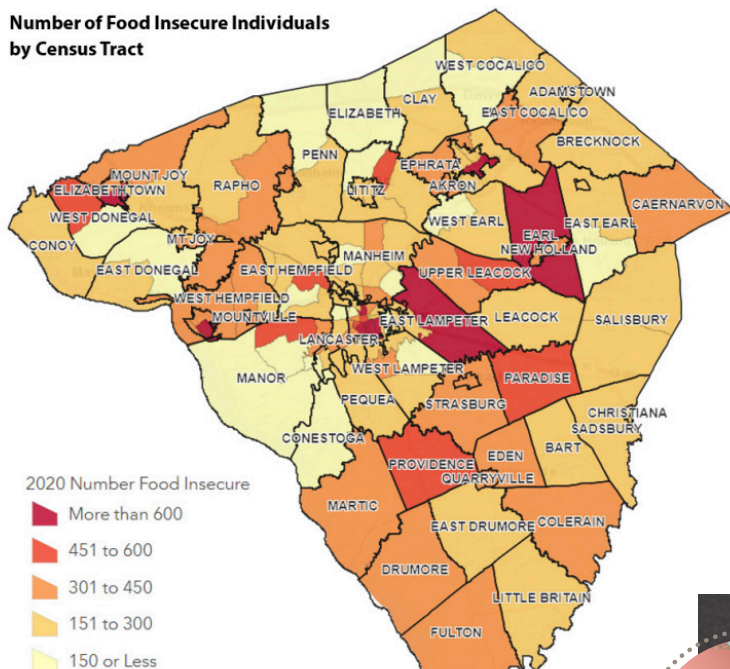
• YIMBY Case Study: E. Lampeter Township

At our September First Friday Forum Hourglass was joined by John Blowers and Tara Hitchens from E. Lampeter Township, and Tony Seitz from High Associates, to hear what lessons Lancaster County can learn about growth and development from a municipality that has seen a 30% population increase in the past 20 years. The speakers outlined strategies they’ve used to create more than 1,000 housing units in the pipeline, including redevelopment, infill, and accessory dwelling units, and updated us on current projects such as the Walnut Street Extension and Greenfield North.

Find a recording of this forum at HourglassLancaster.org.

Lancaster County Hunger Mapping

Number of Food Insecure Individuals
by Census Tract



For our August First Friday Forum Hourglass was joined by Zach Zook and Dawn Watson from the Policy Research Team at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to learn about their new report on food insecurity in Lancaster County.

The report found that nearly 50,000 Lancaster County residents are food insecure (or 8.7% of the county). This compares with a national food insecurity rate of 10.5%. Areas of high food insecurity are concentrated along the Route 30, 222, and 283 corridor, as well as in Lancaster City. The report also found that children are the most likely to be food insecure, with nearly one in eight children in Lancaster County facing food insecurity.



**Nearly
50,000**
Lancaster County residents
(or 8.7% of the county)
are food insecure

The report identified that “upstream” issues faced by those experiencing food insecurity in our community include eviction and housing insecurity, lack of access to financial services, and low pay.

A total of 11% of surveyed households at food pantries experienced a forced move in the last year, and 22% of households are worried about being forced to move in the coming year. Access to banking is severely limited among food pantry visitor households, with nearly a third of visitors unbanked or underbanked (for example, without access to a checking or savings account). Additionally, the report states that more than 70% of pantry visitors are working full time, are on Social Security, or are receiving disability benefits, however, nearly half of those working full time reporting earning less than \$24,000 a year.



Recommendations

A few of the recommendations from the report include:

- Support and expand programs targeted specifically to children and families such as federally funded meal programs
- Expand access to charitable food programs in Southern and Southeastern Lancaster County, where there is currently little access to a pantry within a 15-minute drive
- Expand local food pantry hours, as currently 1 in 3 food insecure individuals in Lancaster County does not have access to weekend distributions, and 1 in 4 does not have access to evening distributions.



Find the full “Lancaster County Hunger Mapping Report” at CentralPaFoodbank.org/take-action/policy-research/ or watch their First Friday Forum presentation at HourglassLancaster.org.

Recommendations

Highlights From Recent First Friday Forums

November 3, 2023

The Future of Local News with LNP/WITF



In addition to the First Friday Forums profiled in this Quarterly, other recent forums include:

Presenters: Bob Krasne, Chairman & CEO of Steinman Communications, Ron Hetrick, President & CEO of WITF, and Jess King, Executive Director at The Steinman Institute for Civic Engagement

In July, 2023 LNP became a subsidiary of WITF after being donated by the Steinman family, who have owned and operated Lancaster's daily newspaper for over 150 years. This comes amidst a changing media landscape nationally—2 out of 3 counties in the United States no longer have a daily newspaper and the U.S. has lost 2,500 local newspapers since the mid-2000s. WITF is based in Harrisburg and serves 19 counties. Lancaster is the largest county they serve in terms of audience and number of members. In conjunction with the gift the Steinman Foundation provided a seed grant to create the Steinman Institute of Civic Engagement at WITF. The institute will focus on both the supply and demand for local news through initiatives such as professional development for journalists, promoting media literacy, and hosting deliberative forums.

December 1, 2023

Willow Valley Communities Memory Care Center



Presenters: Lauren Renehan and Mary Schreiber, Willow Valley Communities

Lancaster County has an aging population. Today nearly 20% of Lancaster's population is 65+, and Lancaster is a retirement destination with 32 continuing care communities. Willow Valley is planning a new \$50 million Memory Care Center that will open at their Lakes Campus in Willow Street by the end of 2025. As Lancaster County ages, the Center will be a community resource and hub for exploring and understanding brain health. The Center will allow 140 residents living with dementia to freely roam the campus enjoying facilities like a greenhouse, performance stage, and grocery store, and will also have amenities for the wider community such as an adult day center, a Brain Institute, assessment and resource centers, and a brain cafe.

Watch forum recordings and Listening to Lancaster interviews at HourglassLancaster.org or on our Youtube channel – @HourglassLancaster. To receive invitations to all of our events become an Hourglass member at HourglassLancaster.org/membership.

Presenters: Lancaster County Commissioners Ray D'Agostino, Josh Parsons, and Alice Yoder

The Lancaster County commissioners took the opportunity to review their accomplishments from 2023, discuss their priorities and concerns for 2024, and to go into more detail on what will be the county's largest capital project to date—the new Lancaster County Correctional Facility. The commissioners covered a number of subjects including the deployment of ARPA funds, the county budget and new salary structure for employees, public health, local news, and election administration.

Listening to Lancaster Interviews:

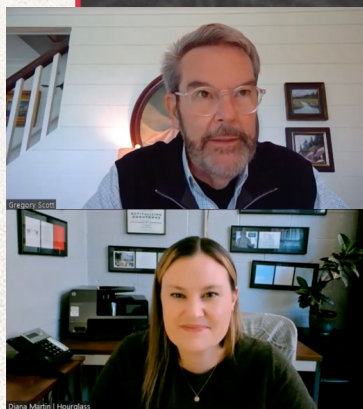
Through our Listening to Lancaster interview series Hourglass recently sat down with local leaders including:

- Gregory Scott, local architect, to discuss his new book on Lancaster's most notable architect C. Emlen Urban
- Melissa Ressler, Executive Director at Lancaster Downtowners, to learn about Lancaster City's Age-Friendly initiative
- John Gerdy, founder and executive director of Music for Everyone, to discuss his new book "Lights on Lancaster: How One American City Harnesses the Power of the Arts to Transform its Communities"
- Bianca Cordova, Phoebe Radcliffe, and Alex Rohrer, Community School Directors in the School District of Lancaster, to learn about the Community Schools model

Highlights From Recent First Friday Forums

January 5, 2024

Ask the Commissioners





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