



*Implementing*  
**Better Models  
for Development  
in Pennsylvania**



*A Toolkit for  
Local Government*

**Based on the publication by  
Edward T. McMahon and Shelley S. Mastran**





# IMPLEMENTING BETTER MODELS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA

## *A TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS*

Beta Version 1.1

Based on

*Better Models for Development:  
Ideas for Creating More Livable and Prosperous Communities*

Written by Edward T. McMahon and Shelley S. Mastran

*Prepared by*

**THE CONSERVATION FUND**

in partnership with the

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES**

and the

**GOVERNOR'S CENTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

©2008 The Conservation Fund

This publication was financed jointly by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, under the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Environmental Stewardship Fund, and by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor's Center for Local Government Services.

### **Using the *Implementing Better Models Toolkit***

This toolkit is a companion to the *Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania: Ideas for Creating More Livable and Prosperous Communities*. The tools are organized by the Better Models principles and techniques, providing tools to implement each principle. So, for example, if you want to strengthen your downtown, see Principle 3: Build and Maintain Livable and Attractive Communities, and the action titled "Strengthen Downtowns and Older Communities". Under that heading is a list of tools with online links. You can enter the link in a Web browser or go to <http://www.conservationfund.org/node/496> and use the toolkit online.

You can review the list of resources for publications, statutes, funding sources, and ordinances. Frequently, the resources themselves include multiple types of tools, allowing the user to reach a wealth of information. Finally, not each action includes every kind of tool, as the action might be best implemented through other means. We also hope to identify additional resources to fill any gaps.

### **NOTE to USER:**

This toolkit is available as a hard copy in its beta form. You may also go to this link: <http://www.conservationfund.org/node/496> and use the toolkit online. There all the resource links are "live" and you may download the slide show, script, and toolkit of resources to adapt for your community and purposes. Following additional testing, we will create an online Web site formatted for easier use. We invite your comments, suggested resources, and design input as we refine this toolkit to make it most useful and useable for you, the local leader forging better development for Pennsylvania's treasured landscape, towns and cities.

### **Send comments to:**

Kendra Briechle  
Manager, Center for Conservation and Development,  
The Conservation Fund  
703-525-6300

[kbriechle@conservationfund.org](mailto:kbriechle@conservationfund.org)

**About The Conservation Fund**

The Conservation Fund is a national, nonprofit land conservation organization with offices in Pennsylvania and other locations throughout the United States. Since 1985, The Conservation Fund has acquired and protected more than 6 million acres of open space, wildlife habitat, working lands, and historic sites throughout the nation, including thousands of acres in Pennsylvania. The Fund also assists partners in business, government, and the nonprofit sector with projects that integrate economic development with environmental protection.

The Conservation Fund, National  
1655 North Fort Myer Drive, Suite 1300  
Arlington, VA 22209  
703-525-6300  
www.conservationfund.org

The Conservation Fund, Penna. Office  
105 North Front Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
717-230-8166  
www.conservationfund.org

### **About the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**

As chief advocate for the natural resources of the state, The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) maintains and preserves 116 state parks, manages 2.4 million acres of state park and forest land, provides information on ecological and geological resources of the Commonwealth, and establishes community partnerships to benefit rivers, trails, greenways, local parks, and open space. The agency is also creating outdoor connections for citizens and visitors through stewardship education and recreational programming and helping local leaders build and sustain more attractive and prosperous communities through green infrastructure development.

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 8475  
Harrisburg, PA 17105  
717-787-7672  
www.dcnr.state.pa.us

### **About the Governor's Center for Local Government Services**

As the one-stop shop for all of Pennsylvania's local governments, the Governor's Center for Local Government Services provides a full range of technical and financial services. The Center's mission is to be the principal advocate for local governments; to provide vital programs and efficient and effective services to local officials and municipal employees; and to cut problems at the local level. Local government officials are encouraged to call the toll-free number of their regional office if they need any assistance in completing grant and loan applications or need information on any program, service or assistance provided by the Center or other state agencies.

#### **Governor's Center Regional Offices:**

Southeast Regional Office:	(215) 560-2374 or (610) 530-8223
Northeast Regional Office:	(570) 963-4166
South Central Regional Office:	(888) 223-6837
North Central Regional Office:	(814) 689-8102 or (570) 742-2107
Southwest Regional Office:	(412) 565-5199
Northwest Regional Office:	(814) 871-4189



## Introduction

This Toolkit serves as a companion guide to the publication, “*Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania: Ideas for Creating More Livable and Prosperous Communities*”, written by Edward T. McMahon and Shelley Mastran and published in 2005 by The Conservation Fund. The Toolkit is designed to help local leaders spring from ideas to action, moving the Better Models principles into practice within Pennsylvania’s cities and towns.

*Better Models* includes six main land use principles that communities may use to plan and design for the future, including:

1. Conserve farmland, natural areas and scenic assets
2. Maintain a clear edge between town and countryside
3. Build and maintain livable and attractive communities
4. Preserve historic resources
5. Respect local community character in new construction
6. Reduce the impact of the car and promote walkability

*Better Models’* principles for Pennsylvania are associated with conservation and smart growth planning techniques, funding strategies, and program support geared toward protecting the countryside, strengthening downtowns, and improving the suburbs.

This Toolkit follows the six principles of better models for development in Pennsylvania and provides users with additional information and tools for implementing Better Models, including:

- real-world examples of municipalities and the techniques they used as they applied the principles in their own communities
- valuable reference materials that provide in-depth information on strategies contained within each principle
- easy access to resources on funding, programs, and ordinances to help implement Better Models
- helpful websites and links to even more tools for Pennsylvania municipalities
- an adaptable Powerpoint slide show to help local leaders present the concepts and the rationale for better development in Pennsylvania in a compelling way.
- *Community of Choices*, a DVD that addresses the connection between community appearance, design, and economic development.

Changing long-standing municipal land use practices can be challenging. The Toolkit can help Pennsylvanians create a better future for Pennsylvania with the tools to preserve its natural, heritage, and cultural resources that improve local economies and enhance cities and towns. Local governments in Pennsylvania have the authority under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to put into place comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances and other tools that will result in the type of community choices contained in this Toolkit and within the Better Models book. *Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania* and its companion Toolkit are designed and organized to make the transition easier to understand and undertake for municipal officials and residents.

*Principle 1:* **CONSERVE FARMLAND, NATURAL AREAS, AND SCENIC ASSETS**

Includes tools for the following actions:

Protect Open Space

Use Conservation Easements

Preserve Scenic Views and Vistas

Protect Riparian Areas and Special Habitats

Plant and Preserve Trees

*Principle 2:* **MAINTAIN A CLEAR EDGE BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRYSIDE**

Includes tools for the following actions:

Grow In, Not Out

Understand the Costs of Sprawl

Encourage Infill Development and Brownfield Redevelopment

Use Conservation Design Techniques

Delineate Gateways

*Principle 3:* **BUILD AND MAINTAIN LIVABLE AND ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES**

Includes tools for the following actions:

Enhance Cities, Towns, and Villages

Design Real Neighborhood

Strengthen Downtowns and Older Communities

Use the Main Street Approach

Reshape the Strip

*Principle 4:* **PRESERVE HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Includes tools for the following actions:

Know the Value of Historic Preservation

Identify and Designate Historic Sites

Find New Uses for Old Buildings

Designate and Develop Heritage Areas

*Principle 5:* **RESPECT LOCAL COMMUNITY  
CHARACTER IN NEW CONSTRUCTION**

Includes tools for the following actions:

Set the Standard with Public Buildings  
Ask Franchises and Chain Stores to Fit In  
Landscape Commercial Areas  
Control Signs  
Restrict Billboards  
Disguise Communication Towers

*Principle 6:* **REDUCE THE IMPACT OF THE CAR  
AND PROMOTE WALKABILITY**

Includes tools for the following actions:

Design Streets for Healthy Neighborhoods

Build Greenway Networks for Non-Motorized Transportation

Reassess Road Standards

Designate Scenic Byways