

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**  
**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

Subject:		Land Use Planning		Number:	1999-1
Date:	January 7, 1999	Distribution:	B	By Direction Of:	 Thomas J. Ridge, Governor

- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's land is a precious, yet finite, resource; and
- WHEREAS, from 1960 to 1990, the population of Pennsylvania's largest metropolitan areas grew by 13 percent, but developed land area in these areas grew by 81 percent; and
- WHEREAS, between 1970 and 1997, Pennsylvania lost 24,000 farms and 25 percent of the total acreage of farms to other uses; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's present growth patterns have long term social, environmental, and economic health consequences to the Commonwealth; and
- WHEREAS, the role of Pennsylvania's local governments in land use planning is an important and vital part of our heritage; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's communities are the foundation of our Commonwealth and their social and economic viability are critical to the overall health of Pennsylvania; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's economy will continue to grow as the Commonwealth enters the next century as a leader among states and a competitor among nations; and
- WHEREAS, a healthy environment, a dynamic economy, and the well being of Pennsylvania's communities are directly linked; and
- WHEREAS, sound land use practices minimize urban sprawl, alleviate traffic congestion, promote efficiencies, reduce environmental degradation, and contribute to more efficient and effective long-term economic growth; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's historical, cultural, and educational resources are integral to sustaining viable communities, strengthening generational and cultural connections, and furthering tourism-based economic development objectives; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has created a Greenways Partnership Commission to promote a network of greenways across the state to contribute to environmentally sensitive growth strategies, provide intermodal transportation options, and improve the quality of life and livability of our neighborhoods and communities; and

WHEREAS, the 21st Century Environment Commission, created by *Executive Order 1997-4* identified land use to be the most pressing environmental priority facing the Commonwealth.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Thomas J. Ridge, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws, do hereby declare the following to be the policy of the Commonwealth to guide all Commonwealth agencies when making decisions that impact the use of land in Pennsylvania:

**1.** Soundly planned growth is in the best long term interest of the Commonwealth and should be encouraged at all levels of government.

**2.** Farmland and open space are valued Commonwealth natural resources and reasonable measures for their preservation should be promoted.

**3.** Development should be encouraged and supported in areas that have been previously developed or in locally designated growth areas.

**4.** Because land use decisions made at the local level have an impact that expands beyond municipal boundaries, regional cooperation among local governments should be encouraged.

**5.** The constitutional private property rights of Pennsylvanians must be preserved and respected.

**6.** The Commonwealth shall work to improve the understanding of the impact of land use decisions on the environmental, economic, and social health of communities.

**7.** Sustaining the economic and social vitality of Pennsylvania's communities must be a priority of state government.

**8.** Infrastructure maintenance and improvement plans should be consistent with sound land use practices.

To support the land use goals of the Commonwealth, the Governor's Center for Local Government Services is hereby designated as the principal state entity responsible for land use assistance and monitoring. The Center is hereby charged to:

**1.** Develop an inventory of sound land use practices and make the inventory available to interested local governments and developers.

**2.** Assist local governments seeking to implement the land use objectives of the Commonwealth.

3. Advise local governments of the existing tools available to manage growth within their communities.
4. Encourage local governments to cooperate with neighboring municipalities and the county when planning and zoning.
5. Assist, in conjunction with the Governor's Green Government Council, other state agencies in identifying laws, regulations, practices or policies, including the disbursement of public funds, that will advance the Commonwealth's land use objectives.
6. Partner with the Department of Education to identify opportunities for local education agencies to incorporate land use education into curricula.
7. Work in conjunction with the Governor's Greenway Commission to support the incorporation of the statewide Greenways Plan into local and regional land use planning strategies.
8. Form an advisory committee that will help the Center develop and disseminate the inventory of sound land use practices.
9. Report annually to the Governor on land use trends in Pennsylvania and make recommendations, if appropriate, regarding changes in law or policy to support the land use policy goals of the Commonwealth.

### **Community and Economic Development Enhancement Act.**

Consistent with *Chapter 5(c) of Act 58, the Community and Economic Development Enhancement Act*, the Center is hereby authorized to have access to the information, services, functions, and other resources in the possession of executive agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction deemed necessary to fulfill the responsibilities identified in this Executive Order.

### **Green Government Council.**

The Governor's Green Government Council, as the environmental performance manager of state government operations, shall work within its purview to ensure that state agencies are acting consistently with the land use objectives of the administration in their operations, acquisitions, and practices.

### **Geographic Information System.**

The Department of Environmental Protection shall establish a statewide geospatial data clearinghouse which would provide for the sharing of common geospatial data among state agencies and local governments. The department shall use this clearinghouse to provide information to local governments on how land use decisions may impact air quality, water quality and quantity, soil erosion, and other natural resources.

**Effective Date.** This Executive Order shall be effective immediately.