

Lancaster City Downtowners
Organization Meeting, September 27, 2004
Discussion Summary

1. Values related to living in downtown Lancaster

- Option to walk – market, library etc.
- Lower maintenance – more time to read, travel, be lazy
- Diverse community – age, ethnicity, economic; provides enrichment and volunteer opportunities
- Use fewer earth resources – space, energy needs, use of cars
- Strong neighborhoods provide safety net for city residents – there is awareness and caring for each other
- Proximity to D.C., New York and other major cities
- Beautiful
- Has European feel

2. What's missing in downtown Lancaster? What are some negatives? (Note: downtown residents were quick to rebut some suggestions made by the country folk! Rebuttals noted in parenthesis)

- Green space for children (*Walk to parks, visit museums; only ten minute ride to country if you need it.*)
- Star gazing, nature
- Night sounds (*Country like night sounds are actually present in many quieter neighborhoods. Of course, the city has some unique night sounds of its own!*)
- No natural running water – streams, rivers (The Conestoga does run through County Park.)
- Adequate public transportation
- Upscale department store(s) – have to go to Park City
- Much economic development is directed toward tourism rather than residential base.
- Multi-level housing (many homes 2 to 3 stories) may be challenge for older residents
- High taxes (*Depends on where you are making your comparisons*)
- Traffic and noise (*Lots of variation depending on street*)
- Air pollution

3. Questions/comments relating to ethnic/economic diversity

- Where can I locate to promote ethnic diversity?
- West side is essentially white; housing prices are going up
- Increased percentage of home ownership in an area generally improves neighborhood quality; apartment houses tend toward lower building quality
- Ethnic and economic diversity in southeast Lancaster, 7th Ward, South Ann Street area and the southwest.
- Hamilton Park (WGAL, Stone Mill Plaza area) is a nice neighborhood
- If you want economic diversity, you need to move to where the economic diversity exists.
- Reluctance of some people to locate in economically diverse areas because of particular challenges (safety, street noise), particularly if one's first experience of living in the city is in retirement years

4. Next Steps: Comments and ideas relating to usefulness and future direction of this group

- Community Registry – A place to share information, i.e. new houses coming on the market
- Network to provide information relative to accessing services – young persons available for yard work, shoveling snow; finding a reliable plumber or carpenter. (*This sort of information is already shared among residents of many neighborhoods.*)
- Interest in an intentional relationship among persons with well-defined goals and objectives for downtown living

- Interest in retrofitting an old warehouse into condominium style residences with amenities for handicap challenges
- Interest in a very loose network among persons with common understandings but lesser defined goals or commitments – easy in, easy out
- “One size does not fit all.”
- Intentional neighborhood or relationship does not need to be restricted to one area of the city
- Interest in exploring adaptation of cohousing model for city environment, particularly if it would include people of color and various ages (*This interest was suggested by a person who was not able to attend the meeting.*)
- Interest in “nursing home without walls” as a concept for providing special services for downtown residents. Downtown residents could explore relationship with existing nursing home facility such as Landis Homes or Mennonite Home. (*This suggestion came from Dr. Leon Kraybill who was not able to attend meeting. Leon is specializing in geriatric medicine.*)
- Implications of retro-fitting houses for persons with decreased mobility such as installation of chair lifts or ramps (*Nissley home*)
- “Walk –about open house of city homes and city services (market, library) as a follow up event for the group. (*Mimi Shapiro offered to host with her home as a starting place.*)
- Discussion on participation in the diversity that the city offers needs more time to address the concerns and ideas of this group.
- A city map with identification of different neighborhoods would be a helpful visual for a future meeting.
- What impact could the initiatives of this group have on the city of Lancaster? How can we reach out to the downtown community?
- A considerable number of young people are choosing to locate downtown. Can we include them in our discussions?
- There are many existing neighborhood groups (*Example: Lemon Street Neighborhood Group*). What can we learn from, how can we relate to these groups?