

- Want suggest  
extra -  
- Highway for trucks  
can off road

## CONSTRUCTION LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

JANUARY 18, 2002

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home. "

- Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977

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"640K ought to be enough for anybody. "

- Bill Gates (1955-), in 1981

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"The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C', the idea must be feasible. "

- A Yale University management professor in response to student Fred Smith's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service (Smith went on to found Federal Express Corp.)

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"Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?"

- H. M. Warner (1881-1958), founder of Warner Brothers, in 1927

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"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out.

"

- Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962

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"Everything that can be invented has been invented. "

- Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of  
Patents, 1899

EXAMPLES

THESE ARE JUST A FEW ~~QUOTES I FOUND~~ THAT I  
THINK MIGHT HELP ME TO SUPPORT THE  
CONTENTION THAT-- WHAT IS BELIEVED TO BE  
REAL AND POSSIBLE IS A FUNCTION OF ONE'S  
PERSPECTIVE. SOMETIMES IT TAKES ACCEPTING  
ON FAITH THAT SOME CHANGE ISN'T NECESSARILY  
BAD, UNWELCOME, OR IMPOSSIBLE.

COMMUNITY REVILATIZATION, I BELIEVE, MUST  
START BY REALIZING THAT WE CAN RECREATE THE

④

PAST VIABILITY OF OUR CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS.  
I KNOW FOR ME THE MEMORY OF GROWING UP IN A  
SMALL TOWN HAS A WARM AND FUZZY FEEL TO IT.  
BUT I AM SURE MY MEMORY IS LACED WITH  
NOSTOLGIA WHICH HAS PRODUCED A  
COMBINATION OF LIFE EXPERIENCES SIMILAR TO  
THAT OF FATHER KNOWS BEST & LEAVE TO  
BEAVER. SOME OF YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH TO  
REMEMBER ROBERT YOUNG COMING HOME EVERY  
NIGHT AT THE SAME TIME, TAKING OFF HIS SUIT  
JACKET AND PUTTING ON A SPORT COAT, WITH  
LEATHER ELBOW PATCHES, AND SITTING DOWN TO  
READ THE PAPER WHILE WAITING FOR DINNER;  
AND JUNE CLEAVER WAS KNOWN TO DO HER  
HOUSEKEEPER CHORES IN A COCKTAIL DRESS WITH  
HER STRING OF PEARLS THAT WAS THE PERFECT

FASHION STATEMENT WHEN VIEWED WITH THE  
UPRIGHT HOOVER.

SOMEONE ONCE SAID “HAPPINESS IS GOOD HEALTH  
AND A BAD MEMORY” SO I ACCEPT THAT IT MAY  
NOT HAVE BEEN EXACTLY HOW IT WAS. BUT ASIDE  
FROM THESE SILLY TV CREATIONS IT SURELY WAS  
ACCURATE IN TERMS OF SOME OF THOSE QUALITY  
OF LIFE ISSUES THAT WE ENJOYED AND TOOK FOR  
GRANTED; AND FOR SOME OF US, IF NOT ALL OF US  
AT SOME LEVEL, LONG FOR NOW.

THE BUSY MAIN STREET AND IT’S SURROUNDING  
ENVIRONS OF RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS THAT

(6)

WAS ALIVE AND VIBRANT. A GRID PATTERN OF STREET DESIGN THAT ALLOWED FOR EASY ACCESS REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU LIVED AND WHERE YOU WERE GOING. COMMUNITIES OF RETAIL, COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL AND YES SOME INDUSTRIAL ALL WITHIN CONFINES OF THE CITY <sup>BORDERS</sup> ~~BORDERS~~ WHICH IN MANY CASES WERE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE ONE FROM THE OTHER.

SIDEWALKS FILLED EVERYDAY AND AT LEAST TWO OR THREE EVENINGS A WEEK, EXCEPT FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON WHEN THE STORES STAYED OPEN EVERY NIGHT. SIDEWALKS SO FULL OF PEOPLE THAT ONE NEEDED TO STEP OFF THE CURB TO PASS ONE ANOTHER. THERE WERE SIDEWALK SALES AND PARK CONCERTS IN

THE SUMMER AND THE BRACE OF WINTER COLD  
EXITING THE DEPARTMENT STORE FOR THE  
PRARMACY IN THE WINTER.

ELECTRIC TROLLYS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WNO  
NEEDED THEM TO TAKE THEM TO THEIR  
NEIGHBORHOODS OR EVEN TO THE NEXT TOWN.

DAILY COMMUTER TRAIN SERVICE TO PITTSBURGH  
AND SURROUNDING AREAS WITH STATIONS IN ALL  
OF THE TOWNS ALONG THE PENN CENTRAL AND  
OTHER RAIL ROAD LINES.

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS BURSTING WITH TWO AND  
THREE PHARMACIES, THREE OR FOUR DEPARTMENT  
STORES, ANY NUMBER OF SPECIALITY SHOPS,  
WOMENS AND MENS CLOTHING, JEWERLY STORES

AND A PLETHORA OF RESTURANTS FROM FINE  
DINNING TO THE LOCAL DINNER, WHICH I THINK  
EVERY TOWN HAD ONE. CHURCHES AND TEMPLES  
DOTTING THE LANDSCAPE OF THIS

SETTING WHOSE NEED FOR SIDEWALKS  
OUTWEIGHED THEIR NEED FOR PARKING SPACES.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS OF TREE LINED  
STREETS, AND SMALL YARDS AND SET BACKS  
SERVICED BY ALLIES FOR GARAGES AND TRASH  
PICKUP. FRONT PORCHES AND SMALL TOWN  
AMENITIES OF PICKET FENCES AND



NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS WERE ALL PART OF THE  
AMBAINCE THAT MANY OF US REMEMBER FONDLY.

MIXED INCOME, MIXED USE WAS A HIGHLY  
SUCCESSFUL CONFLUENCE OF COMMERCE,  
RECREATIONAL AND HUMAN INTERACTION THAT  
HAS BEEN THE SETTING FOR OUR SPECIES SINCE WE  
CAME OUT OF THE FOREST THOUSANDS OF YEARS  
AGO.

THERE ARE SOME IN THIS ROOM, MAYBE MORE  
THAN A MAJORITY WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS  
POSSIBLE OR DESIRABLE TO EVEN ATTEMPT TO  
RECREATE THESE COMMUNITES IN THEIR ORIGINAL  
DESIGN. AND THE DEBATE ABOUT WHAT  
AMERICANS WANT IN THE WAY OF QUALITY OF

LIFE AND HOW THAT'S DEFINED I SUPPOSE COULD CONSUME OUR TIME TOGETHER TODAY. I DO NOT THINK THERE IS ANYONE WHO WOULD DISAGREE HOWEVER THAT OUR SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENTS, STRIP MALLS, AND OFFICE PARKS AND RESULTANT ABANDONMENT AND DECAY OF OUR CITIES WAS A RESULT OF AN UNEVEN PLAYING FIELD. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HIGHWAY AND HOUSING PROGRAMS, SUBURBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' NEED FOR GROWTH REVENUE AND AN APPROACH TO ZONING THAT WAS UNINSPIRING AT BEST AND THE EQUIVALENT TO A "LETHAL INJECTION" TO THE URBAN CORES AT ITS WORST. AND ALL OF THIS HAS HAPPENED AND CHANGED OUR CONCEPT OF

COMMUNITY OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS, REALLY NOT EVEN A BLINK IN THE HUMAN TIME LINE OF DEVELOPMENT.

CONSEQUENTLY, LET ME PROCEED ON THE BASIS THAT AT LEAST SOME OF US ACCEPT AS TRUE THAT QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES IN TERMS OF OUR MUTUAL CONSTITUENTS' DESIRES SHOULD CONTAIN AT LEAST A MENU OF OPTIONS THAT INCLUDE A CITY SETTING WITH IT'S UNIQUE AMENITIES. AND FURTHER LET ME SUGGEST THAT THESE KINDS OF URBAN OPTIONS ARE NOT IN LIEU OF BUT IN ADDITION TO THE MORE PREVALENT

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT AND CAN BE MADE TO BE JUST AS PROFITABLE FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DO THAT TYPE OF WORK.

THERE ARE THREE ITEMS OF PUBLIC POLICY THAT I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION WHICH COULD PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR THE CITY OPTION TO BE VIABLE FOR THE CONSUMER OF THOSE HOMES AND BUSINESSES IF THAT'S THEIR DESIRE.

FIRST, AND PERHAPS THE MOST OBVIOUS, IS TO CHANGE THE METHOD BY WHICH WE FUND OUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS, THE PROPERTY TAX. THE HEADLINES AND THE LEADING STORIES ON THE TV

NEWS IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS ABOUT THIS  
MATTER IS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THOSE OF  
YOU FROM ALLEGHENY COUNTY. BUT I CAN  
ASSURE YOU THAT ALL OF PENNSYLVANIA SUFFER  
FROM THE BURDEN OF THIS ANCRONISTIC, UNFAIR  
AND REGRESSIVE TAX; THE REASSESSMENT IS  
ALMOST AS PAINFUL IN ITS UNFAIRNESS WHEN

IT'S IMPOSSED AS WHEN IT'S ALLOWED TO REMAIN  
UNTOUCHED FOR THIRTY YEARS AS IT HAS BEEN IN  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY.

THE "CATCH 22" IS THE DIFFERENCES IN TERMS OF  
NEEDS FOR THE CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS FOR  
MORE AND MORE REVENUE BECAUSE OF AN  
INCREASE DEMAND FOR SERVICES RESULTING

FROM THE POPULATION DECLINE BUT WITH AN EXACERBATED LOSS OF THE TAX BASE. LESS JOBS, LESS PEOPLE, RESULTS IN MORE CRIME AND THE NEED TO PAY FOR ADDITIONAL POLICE SERVICES. THIS IS A VISCIOUS CYCLE OUR URBAN CENTERS. THIS SAME UNFORTUNATE SCENERIO APPLIES TO THE NEED FOR OTHER HUMAN SERVICES AS WELL.

RELUCTANTLY I CAN TELL YOU HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS THE HOT ISSUE WHEN I WENT TO THE LEGISLATURE 14 YEARS AGO. AND

AT THE RISK OF OVER KILL TO MAKE THE POINT EVEN MORE, A FRIEND OF MINE TOLD ME ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT IN JULY, AFTER 30 YEARS WORKING FOR THE HOUSE OF

REPRESENTATIVES STAFF, IT WAS THE FOCAL POINT OF THE LEGISLATURE WHEN HE STARTED.

THERE IS A SERIOUS BIPARTISAN EFFORT ON GOING PRESENTLY, IN WHICH WE MAY SEE THE START OF A USEFUL AND PERHAPS SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE IN THIS REGARD. BUT IT'S TOO EARLY TO TELL, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE BUDGET SHORTFALL PREDICTIONS. BUT SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT IT WILL TAKE ENORMOUS POLITICAL WILL AND MORE IMPORTANTLY LEADERSHIP FROM THE TOP FOR THIS BURDEN TO BE REFORMED. WITHOUT IT, AS YOU KNOW THE LOW TAX RATE AS A RESULT OF

CONTINUAL GROWTH (SPRAWL) AND LACK OF MANDATED SERVICES IN THE SUBURBS HAS PRODUCED AN IMBALANCE OF SIGNIFICANT PROPORTIONS.

A SECOND PUBLIC POLICY ITEM TO REINVIGORATE OUR CITIES IS THAT WE MUST HAVE A VIABLE, EFFICIENT, RELIABLE COST EFFECTIVE TRANSIT SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES THE KINDS INCENTIVES TO MAKE ITS USE A MATTER OF CHOICE FOR THOSE WHO DON'T NEED IT. BY THAT I MEAN I BELIEVE THAT FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO USE THE PUBLIC TRANSIT, WHERE IT IS AVAILABLE, ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE: SENIOR CITIZENS AND THE POOR FOR THE MOST PART.



THOSE WHO ARE LOCKED OUT OF THE AUTO  
CENTRIC WORLD BECAUSE THEY

CAN'T AFFORD OR UNABLE TO OPERATE AN  
INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE.

BUT I BELIVE WE CAN PROVIDE THAT TRANSIT  
SYSTEM BUT IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME MORE OF  
THAT HARD TO FIND POLITICAL WILL ~~THAT UP TO~~  
~~THIS POINT HAS BEEN MISSING.~~ AND BY TRANSIT  
SYSTEM I'M TALKING REGIONALLY—THE TEN  
COUNTY AREA. A SYSTEM THAT CONNECTS THE  
OUTLYING AREAS WITH THE URBAN CENTERS BUT  
ALSO ONE THAT WOULD PROVIDE SERVICE FROM  
PART OF THE REGION TO ANOTHER.

REGARDLESS THOUGH THERE ISN'T ANYONE WHO  
WOULDN'T DISAGREE THAT AUTO DEPENDENCY  
HAS CHANGED OUR ENVIRONMENT ON A NUMBER  
OF LEVELS; IT HAS CHANGED OUR INTERACTION  
WITH ONE ANOTHER, OR MORE TO THE POINT OUR  
LACK OF IT; AND IT HAS CHANGED OUR LIVING AND  
BUSINESS DECISIONS AND CONCOMITANTLY OUR  
EMPLOYMENT NEEDS IN TERMS OF TYPES OF JOBS  
AND WHERE THEY ARE.

TO HARKEN BACK TO A TIME WHEN COMMUNITIES  
COMPRISED OF MAIN STEET COMMERCE,  
RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS, RECREATIONAL  
OPPORTUNITIES, AND INDUSTRAIL EMPLOYMENT  
ALL BEING ACCESSED BY PUBLIC TRANSIT IS NOT  
UNREALISTIC.

PERHAPS AS ALLEN KAY SAID “THE BEST WAY TO  
PREDICT THE FUTURE IS TO INVENT IT”. AND IT’S  
NOT AS IF WE DON’T HAVE A TEMPLATE!

I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN’T MENTION MAG LEV  
IN THIS DISCUSSION. BUT I’M A REALIST. I’M AN  
ENTHUASTIC SUPPORTOR AND BELIEVE IT WOULD

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BE A TRULY REMARKABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY. BUT IN THE BEST CASE IT WILL BE FIVE TO SIX YEARS BEFORE IT REACHES THE HINTERLANDS. SHOULD WE WAIT OR SHOULD WE EXPLORE MORE CONVENTIONAL TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES AS AN ADJUNCT TO THE HIGH SPEED EAST-WEST SERVICE? I THINK THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUS.

THESE TWO PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVES ARE NOT NEW, NOR EASY. THEIR ACHIEVEMENT WILL BE LONG TERM AND PROBABLY INCREMENTAL. BUT THE THIRD ITEM I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT I THINK CAN MAKE AN ALMOST IMMEDIATE IMPACT IN OUR EFFORTS. WE MUST MAKE IT AS PROFITABLE FOR THE DEVELOPERS AND HOME

PURCHASES AND BUSINESS INVESTORS TO MAKE THEIR SELECTION FOR DOWNTOWN AREAS AS IT MAY BE FOR THE GREENFIELDS.

THERE ARE SOME WHO CAN MAKE THE ARGUMENT NOW WITHOUT EVEN VISITING THE KOZ'S AND BROWNFIELD DEVELOPMENTS BY CONSIDERING THE COST SAVINGS OF THE HIGHER DENSITIES, UTILIZING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE, SMALLER SET BACKS AND OTHER SUCH CONSIDERATIONS THAT ALREADY EXIST. AND FURTHER A CONSIDERABLE BABY BOOMER, EMPTY NESTER MARKET THAT IS JUST WAITING TO BE TAPPED ARE JUSTIFICATION FOR DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT.

I BELIEVE THOSE ARE TRUE. AND THERE ARE PROBABLY OTHER REASONS FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT THAT SOME OF YOU IN THE BUSINESS CAN MAKE. BUT I THINK THERE IS ONE OTHER; PROVEN A POLICY THAT NEEDS TO BE ENCOURAGED: THE PRESERVATION OF THE HERITAGE OF OUR CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS AND SYMULTANOUSLY USING THAT HERITAGE AS A REVITALIZING TOOL. THE GLORIFICATION, IF YOU'LL PERMIT, OF THE PRACTICAL REASONS FOR THE ORIGNINAL DEVELOPMENT OF EACH ONE OF OUR DOWNTOWN CENTERS IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE REESTABLISHING OF THAT SENSE OF COMMUNTIY THAT IS SO ELUSIVE IN THE SUBURBS.

TOWARD THAT END I HAVE DEVOTED A  
CONSIDERABLE PART OF MY LEGISLATIVE LIFE,  
DEVELOPING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD

PROVIDE TAX INCENTIVES TO HOME SELLERS,  
HOMEBUYERS, AND DEVELOPERS THAT WOULD  
MAKE HISTORIC PROPERTIES AND PROPERTIES IN  
HISTORIC DISTRICTS AN OPTION OF MAGNIFIED  
PROPORTIONS.

WITHOUT BORING YOU WITH THE ARCANE  
LEGISLATIVE HISTORY LET JUST SAY THESE BILLS  
HAVE PASSED THE HOUSE ON NUMEROUS  
OCCASIONS ONLY TO BE STALLED IN THE SENATE.

THE APPROACH IS SIMPLE. WE WOULD EXEMPT THE  
SALES, REALITY TRANSFER AND CAPITAL GAINS

TAXES AND PROVIDE A TWENTY PER CENT ON THE PERSONAL INCOME TAX TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IN THOSE HISTORIC DISTRICTS. (WE HAVE SINCE ADDED THE DEVELOPERS PIECE). THE BUYER WOULD COVENANT WITH PHMC TO REHABILITATE THAT PROPERTY

TO DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR STANDARDS AND TO AGREE TO LIVE IN THE PROPERTY FOR A MINIMUM OF FIVE YEARS.

AS ALL OF YOU KNOW WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, DEPT.



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OF REVENUE, BUDGET OFFICE ONE WOULD NOT BE  
ABLE TO BE REMOTELY SERIOUS ABOUT SUCH A  
CHANGE TO THE TAX CODE. CONSEQUENTLY OVER  
THE LAST SIX YEARS WE HAVE NEGOTIATED AND  
AMENDED OUR BILLS WHICH REALLY HAS  
WATERED DOWN THE IMPACT THAT THESE  
INCENTIVES WOULD HAVE. THE BEAN COUNTERS  
WERE AFRAID OF THE IMPACT TO THE REVENUE  
STREAM OF THE COMMONWEALTH  
NOTWITHSTANDING OUR ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE  
OFFSETTING BENEFITS TO THE CONTRARY. BUT WE  
ACCEPTED THE HALF A LOAF THEORY.

HOWEVER, AT THE LAST MINUTE IN THE BUDGET  
NEGOTIATIONS THE BUDGET OFFICE RENIGED AND  
WOULD ONLY AGREE TO A DEMONSTRATION PLAN

OF A \$500,000 GRANT PROGRAM IN LIEU OF ANY CHANGES TO THE TAX CODE. BUT EVEN THIS HAS STALLED BECAUSE OF THE BUDGET SHORTFALL. I STILL HOLD OUT HOPE BECAUSE OF THE OVERWELMING SUPPORT IN THE LEGISLATURE AND THE ADVOCACY COMMUNITY THAT WE STILL MIGHT GET SOMETHING DONE ON THIS GRANT PROGRAM BEFORE THIS SESSION ENDS. REGARDLESS THOUGH I HAVE REINTRODUCED THE LEGISLATION IN IT'S ORIGINAL FORM OF, ADDING THE DEVELOPERS PIECE, IN ANTICIPATION OF A NEW ADMINISTRATION AND PERHAPS A NEW PERSPECTIVE.

THIS IS A VERY TARGETED COMMUNITY  
REVITAIZATION EFFORT THAT HAS PROVEN  
SUCCESSFUL IN ALL TYPES OF CITIES AND TOWNS  
ACROSS THIS COUNTRY. EXAMPLES OF HISTORIC  
TOURISM SUCCESSES ARE LEGENDARY, AS WELL AS  
BEING A NATURAL DRAW FOR MANY DIVERSE  
GROUPS WHO PREFER THE LIVABILITY OF THIS  
ENVIRONMENT. WITH THIS STRATEGY  
COMMUNITIES CAN PLAY TO THEIR STRENGTHS TO  
REGAIN THEIR VIABILITY.

THE CULTURAL, HISTORIC AND ARCHTECTURAL  
STRENGHT OF WESTERN PENNSYVANIA IS RICH

AND DIVERSE AND SHOULD BE PERSERVED SO WE  
KNOW WHO WE ARE AND WHY WE ARE HERE AND  
HOW THAT MAY EFFECT OUR FUTURE AND MORE  
TO THE POINT OUR CHILDREN AND  
GRANDCHILDENS FUTURES. BUT ALSO

TO BE USED AS A VERY SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT TOOL.

WE CAN DO SO MANY THINGS TO HELP OUR  
REVITALIZE OUR DOWNTOWN AREAS. AND WE CAN  
DO IT SO THAT IT IS NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE  
FROM THOSE WHO PREFER ANOTHER LIFE STYLE.

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SOMEONE ONCE SAID" WE CANNOT DIRECT THE

WIND BUT WE CAN ADJUST THE SAILS" .

I SUBMIT MAYBE IN THIS CASE WE CAN DO BOTH.