
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1935

Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY LEWIS, FREEMAN, ARGALL, KENNEY, PETRONE, M. BAKER,
CAPPELLI, GEIST, HERMAN, HENNESSEY, PIPPY, SAYLOR, SCHRODER,
STEELMAN, McILHATTAN, ZUG, HUTCHINSON, HARPER, M. WRIGHT,
SATHER, MICHLOVIC, CALTAGIRONE AND SAMUELSON,
SEPTEMBER 26, 2001

AS AMENDED ON THIRD CONSIDERATION, IN SENATE, APRIL 17, 2002

AN ACT

1 Providing for a commercial downtown enhancement program to be
2 administered by the Department of Community and Economic
3 Development.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Main Street
8 Act.

9 ~~Section 2. Legislative findings and purpose.~~

<—

10 ~~(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds as follows:~~

11 ~~(1) The viability and desirability of established~~
12 ~~commercial downtowns in this Commonwealth's urban areas have~~
13 ~~been in a state of decline for more than 50 years.~~

14 ~~(2) Suburban sprawl has lured businesses away from~~
15 ~~established commercial downtowns.~~

16 ~~(3) Suburban sprawl has led to great losses of valuable~~

1 ~~farmland and open space throughout this Commonwealth.~~

2 ~~(4) Many established commercial downtowns suffer from~~
3 ~~deteriorating infrastructures and structural decline.~~

4 ~~(5) Many established commercial downtowns suffer from~~
5 ~~the adverse effects of criminal activity.~~

6 ~~(b) Purpose. The purpose of this act is to establish the~~
7 ~~program to enhance the desirability and viability of established~~
8 ~~commercial downtowns through a comprehensive plan to do all of~~
9 ~~the following:~~

10 ~~(1) Address the issues of infrastructure and structural~~
11 ~~decline in established commercial downtowns.~~

12 ~~(2) Address the adverse effects of criminal activity in~~
13 ~~established commercial downtowns.~~

14 ~~(3) Improve the public image of established commercial~~
15 ~~downtowns.~~

16 ~~(4) Enhance the economic and social aspects of operating~~
17 ~~a business in an established commercial downtown.~~

18 ~~(5) Complement adjacent residential corridors.~~

19 Section 3 2. Definitions. <—

20 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
21 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
22 context clearly indicates otherwise:

23 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
24 Development of the Commonwealth.

25 "Established commercial downtown." A defined geographic area
26 which has:

27 (1) historically consisted of buildings and structures
28 constituting the community core; and

29 (2) existed as a commercial downtown for at least 40
30 years.

1 "Main Street area." The established commercial downtown of a
2 municipality.

3 "Manager." A full-time, professional downtown coordinator.

4 "Municipality." A city, borough, township, county or home
5 rule municipality.

6 "Program." The Main Street Program established in section 4 <—
7 3.

8 Section 4 3. Program. <—

9 (a) Establishment.--There is established a Main Street
10 Program IN THE DEPARTMENT. The department shall administer the <—
11 program to help a community's downtown economic development
12 effort through the establishment of a local organization
13 dedicated to downtown revitalization and management of downtown
14 revitalization.

15 (b) ~~Guidelines~~ REQUIREMENTS.--The program shall, at a <—
16 minimum, include the following components:

17 ~~(1) Five year maximum Commonwealth financial assistance.~~ <—

18 ~~(2)~~ (1) Basic grants, FOR UP TO FIVE YEARS, for <—
19 administrative costs associated with the hiring of a manager.

20 ~~(3) Basic grants~~ (2) COMMERCIAL DOWNTOWN REINVESTMENT <—
21 GRANTS for infrastructure and structural improvements,
22 including streets, street lights, trees, housing, COMMERCIAL <—
23 facades and sidewalks or other pedestrian-oriented features.

24 ~~(4)~~ (3) Plans for marketing and promoting the <—
25 established commercial downtown within the Main Street area.

26 ~~(5)~~ (4) Plans to leverage additional private and public <—
27 investment in the Main Street area.

28 ~~(6)~~ (5) Plans to address social or economic concerns <—
29 within the Main Street area.

30 ~~(7)~~ (6) Plans, to the greatest extent possible, to <—

1 achieve consistency with existing revitalization efforts.

2 ~~(8)~~ (7) An assessment of the potential need for the <—
3 following components:

4 (i) The establishment of a ~~downtown~~ NEIGHBORHOOD <—
5 improvement district as defined in the act of December
6 20, 2000 (P.L.949, No.130), known as the Neighborhood
7 Improvement District Act.

8 (ii) A review of local comprehensive plans and
9 zoning and other land use ordinances to foster the
10 viability of the Main Street area.

11 (c) Eligibility.--Municipalities or their designated
12 agencies must meet the following criteria to participate in the
13 program:

14 (1) Have a clearly defined established commercial
15 downtown in need of a manager.

16 (2) Have demonstrated support by local residents,
17 merchants and government officials.

18 (3) Have ability to provide up to a 50% match for
19 department grants in financial or in-kind support from other
20 public or private sources based upon departmental guidelines.
21 The department may waive matching requirements if it
22 determines that the requirements would constitute an unusual
23 hardship upon the municipality or its designated agency.

24 (d) ~~Limits.~~— LIMITATIONS.--IN NO CASE SHALL THE AGGREGATE <—
25 AMOUNT OF GRANTS IN ANY FISCAL YEAR EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF THE
26 APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE PROGRAM IN THAT FISCAL
27 YEAR. THE PROVISION OF GRANTS UNDER THIS ACT SHALL IN NO WAY
28 CONSTITUTE AN ENTITLEMENT DERIVED FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OR A
29 CLAIM ON ANY OTHER FUNDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH. The department
30 shall establish limits on the amount of money available to each

1 applicant so as to distribute the available funds as fairly as
2 possible throughout this Commonwealth.

3 Section ~~30~~ 4. Effective date.

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4 This act shall take effect immediately.