

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 969 Session of
1997

INTRODUCED BY ARGALL, HERMAN, SATHER, LEH, ITKIN, SCHRODER,
STABACK, BELARDI, BATTISTO, CAWLEY, C. WILLIAMS, REBER,
STERN, ROONEY, STURLA, TRAVAGLIO, CARONE, MASLAND, RAYMOND,
GEIST, VAN HORNE, CURRY, E. Z. TAYLOR, L. I. COHEN,
HENNESSEY, YOUNGBLOOD, FARGO, BENNINGHOFF, RAMOS, BOSCOLA,
STETLER, MCGEEHAN, STEELMAN, MANDERINO, McNAUGHTON, PETRONE,
ROSS, FICHTER, WALKO AND BROWNE, MARCH 25, 1997

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON URBAN AFFAIRS, MARCH 25, 1997

AN ACT

1 Encouraging State agencies to locate facilities in a downtown
2 area.

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

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Downtown
7 Location Law.

8 Section 2. Legislative findings and declaration of purpose.

9 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds that:

10 (1) This Commonwealth has lost over 4,000,000 acres of
11 farmland to development in the last 40 years.

12 (2) The phenomenon of urban flight has led to a decline
13 of central business districts throughout this Commonwealth.

14 (3) The decline of the central business district has a
15 clear linkage to many problems facing our communities: crime,

1 unemployment, shrinking tax bases and decaying
2 infrastructure.

3 (4) It is in the best interest of this Commonwealth to
4 facilitate the revitalization of central business districts
5 within our communities.

6 (5) Federal agencies already have established a policy
7 to use downtown locations.

8 (b) Purpose.--The purpose of this act is to encourage
9 agencies of the Commonwealth to be leaders in the movement to
10 end urban flight and sprawl and serve as examples of the
11 feasibility of returning to downtown areas.

12 Section 3. Definitions.

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

16 "Department." The Department of General Services of the
17 Commonwealth.

18 "Downtown." The central business district of a city, borough
19 or township, which has traditionally served as the retail,
20 service and communal focal point within a community of this
21 Commonwealth.

22 "Secretary." The Secretary of General Services of the
23 Commonwealth.

24 "State agencies." Includes all departments, agencies and
25 offices under the administrative control of the executive,
26 legislative and judicial branches of government of the
27 Commonwealth. The term shall include, but not be limited to,
28 State liquor stores, employment offices and health clinics.

29 Section 4. Powers and duties.

30 The department shall devise and promulgate guidelines to

1 encourage State agencies to locate their facilities in a
2 downtown area. These guidelines shall take into consideration
3 the following:

4 (1) Giving primary consideration to the restoration
5 and/or reuse of existing structures within the downtown area.
6 When using existing structures reasonable efforts shall be
7 made to:

8 (i) Restore or rebuild the structure's facade which
9 maintains the architectural integrity of the building and
10 streetscape according to the U.S. Secretary of the
11 Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (36 CFR 68).

12 (ii) Ensure that the structure meets the Americans
13 With Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336, 104
14 Stat. 327) requirements in an aesthetically pleasing
15 manner.

16 (2) Denying requests from State agencies to locate
17 outside a downtown area unless it is documented that no
18 reasonable alternative exists.

19 (3) Coordinating the location of State facilities with
20 existing public/private sector organizations committed to
21 community development, downtown revitalization and historic
22 preservation.

23 Section 5. Effective date.

24 This act shall take effect in 60 days.