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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 439 Session of  
2003

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INTRODUCED BY CONTI, KITCHEN, KUKOVICH, MOWERY, LOGAN, LEMMOND,  
WAUGH, TARTAGLIONE, COSTA, ROBBINS, O'PAKE, ERICKSON AND  
WONDERLING, MARCH 13, 2003

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REFERRED TO COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, MARCH 13, 2003

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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  
17 farmland and open space throughout this Commonwealth.

18 (4) Many established commercial downtowns suffer from

deteriorating infrastructures and structural decline.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5) Complement adjacent residential corridors.

### Section 3. Definitions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 "Municipality." A city, borough, township, county or home  
3 rule municipality.

4 "Program." The Main Street Program established in section 4.  
5 Section 4. Program.

6 (a) Establishment.--There is established a Main Street  
7 Program. The department shall administer the program to help a  
8 community's downtown economic development effort through the  
9 establishment of a local organization dedicated to downtown  
10 revitalization and management of downtown revitalization.

11 (b) Guidelines.--The program shall, at a minimum, include  
12 the following components:

13 (1) Five-year maximum Commonwealth financial assistance.

14 (2) Basic grants for administrative costs associated  
15 with the hiring of a manager.

16 (3) Basic grants for infrastructure and structural  
17 improvements, including streets, street lights, trees,  
18 housing facades and sidewalks or other pedestrian-oriented  
19 features.

20 (4) Plans for marketing and promoting the established  
21 commercial downtown within the Main Street area.

22 (5) Plans to leverage additional private and public  
23 investment in the Main Street area.

24 (6) Plans to address social or economic concerns within  
25 the Main Street area.

26 (7) Plans, to the greatest extent possible, to achieve  
27 consistency with existing revitalization efforts.

28 (8) An assessment of the potential need for the  
29 following components:

30 (i) The establishment of a downtown improvement

1 district as defined in the act of December 20, 2000  
2 (P.L.949, No.130), known as the Neighborhood Improvement  
3 District Act.

4 (ii) A review of local comprehensive plans and  
5 zoning and other land use ordinances to foster the  
6 viability of the Main Street area.

7 (c) Eligibility.--Municipalities or their designated  
8 agencies must meet the following criteria to participate in the  
9 program:

10 (1) Have a clearly defined established commercial  
11 downtown in need of a manager.

12 (2) Have demonstrated support by local residents,  
13 merchants and government officials.

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

20 (d) Limits.--The department shall establish limits on the  
21 amount of money available to each applicant so as to distribute  
22 the available funds as fairly as possible throughout this  
23 Commonwealth.

24 Section 30. Effective date.

25 This act shall take effect immediately.