

# ALLEGHENY PLACES

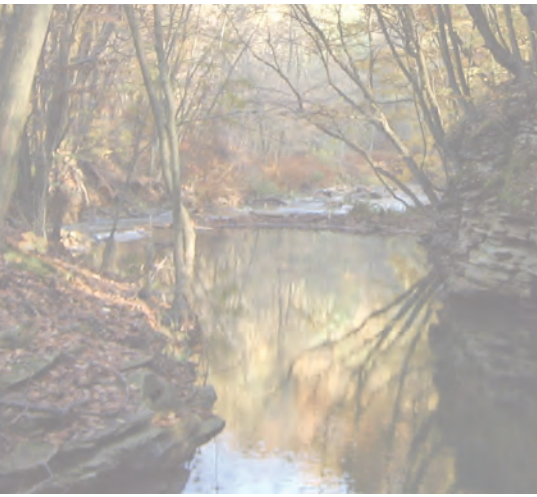
THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



DECEMBER 2008

Allegheny County, Pennsylvania



# THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

### THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT WAS FUNDED BY:

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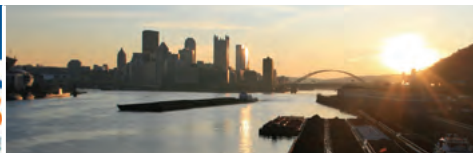
- Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Grant Program

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### ALLEGHENY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGN TEAM:

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- Planning Division

#### Allegheny County InterCOG Council

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#### John J. Clark & Associates

#### McCormick Taylor, Inc.

#### Mackin Engineering

#### Maguire Group

#### Michael Baker Jr., Inc.

#### Olszak Management Consulting

#### Resource Development Management

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#### URS Corporation

DECEMBER 2008



Photos for *Allegheny Places* are courtesy of Allegheny County, McCormick Taylor, Pittsburgh Zoo, Forrest Conroy, Bernadette E. Kazmarski, Roy Kraynyk, and Kevin Smay. We thank all of the photographers for their contributions.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the recommendations presented in *Allegheny Places*, the *Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in

November 2008 and published in December 2008. The full report, as well as other information about the project, is available on the project website [www.alleghenyplaces.com](http://www.alleghenyplaces.com).



Photo credit: Kevin Smay



## DEVELOPING A VISION FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY

*Allegheny Places* is Allegheny County's first comprehensive plan. It establishes an overall vision for our future and a roadmap to get there. The comprehensive plan provides the County with a framework for the strategic use of public resources to improve the quality of life for all residents. Over the period of the plan's development, thousands came together to discuss, consider and ultimately agree on a collective vision for Allegheny County's future, a future where:

- All residents have equitable access to opportunities and benefits of our ongoing economic revitalization
- Former brownfields are transformed into attractive destinations for residents, businesses and visitors
- Transit-oriented development stimulates economic activity and relieves congestion on area roadways
- A highly efficient transportation system links Oakland, Downtown and Pittsburgh International Airport, our major economic centers
- Extensive greenways connect our communities with parks, trails, riverfronts and other natural amenities
- Good, stable, well-paying jobs are available in a diversified economy
- High quality housing choices exist for all residents at every income level



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

Equity and Diversity is also a very important plan component. Throughout the main document Equity and Diversity issues are highlighted in each element.

**Favorite Places** There's a lot to like about Allegheny County. That's why 'Favorite Places' is the unifying theme of this comprehensive plan – it celebrates the established places that we value and imagines new places that build on the unique character of our County.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

Allegheny County has a variety of identifiable places that, together, give our region its distinctiveness. 'Places', as described in the comprehensive plan, are settings that will provide opportunities for development and redevelopment, new investment and businesses, and support for diverse housing and employment options. 'Places' will be a foundation for our County's ongoing economic revitalization.

**The Need for a Plan** Allegheny County has been changing over the years. While some of these changes were desirable, others were not. *Allegheny Places* will provide us with the means to manage the changes shaping the County so that we may achieve a brighter future for all our residents.

Today, every county in Pennsylvania is required to develop a plan. In the future when state agencies evaluate grant and permit applications, priority will be given to state, county and local municipal projects that are consistent with county comprehensive plans.

## **Allegheny Places has Widespread Support**

Throughout the process, thousands of people shared their knowledge and vision for the County to help set us on a course for the future. Allegheny County has a wealth of talented, energetic and diverse people who were engaged at every phase of plan development. Three committees were assembled to provide input and guidance:

- A Steering Committee with over 100 members
- An Advisory Committee of over 40 members
- A Sounding Board

Ten Resource Panels that served as technical workgroups for targeted subjects provided equally critical guidance. Hundreds of local experts served on these panels.

It was important that *Allegheny Places* reflect the desires of the people of Allegheny County so that they would embrace the plan. Therefore our public outreach sought diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, age, income and disability and in public, private and civic sector involvement. We also sought to strike a balance between the interests of the City of Pittsburgh and growing and declining urban, suburban and rural municipalities.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

**How to Use the Plan** County and municipal leaders can consult *Allegheny Places* when making important decisions that could affect the quality of life in Allegheny County. Since the County's role in planning is largely advisory, *Allegheny Places* will help the communities of Allegheny County to:

- Make important decisions concerning land use
- Set policies that will influence future development and conservation initiatives
- Ensure that decision-making is coordinated at local, County and regional levels



## PLANNING FOR OUR PLACES

These are the Guiding Principles that directed and formulated this plan:

- Direct development to existing urban areas
- Encourage mixed-use and concentrated development
- Target investments for maximum return
- Maximize use of existing highways, transit and utilities
- Respond quickly and appropriately to the market
- Provide options and choices
- Promote equitable and diverse development
- Help all people benefit from equal access to opportunity
- Protect environmental resources
- Coordinate consistency with local municipalities
- Plan for greenway connectivity throughout the County
- Optimize access to rivers
- Enhance recreational and cultural resources
- Preserve quality existing places, our historical legacy and community character
- Guide public investment to targeted areas through County development policies

*Allegheny Places*, we will strive to achieve a future where all residents benefit from equal access to:

- Decent, affordable housing
- Attractive neighborhoods
- Good paying jobs
- Public transit
- Amenities such as parks and trails, and
- High-performing schools.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

**Promoting Equity and Diversity** Many residents struggle with social and economic disadvantages. Equitable Development Principles were established to help address these problems and guide plan development. Through



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor



**Forecasting Trends** To further our understanding of demographic characteristics and trends, the University of Pittsburgh provided their expertise to the planning process. The data they developed was used to estimate the amount of new development that the County could reasonably expect over the next twenty years. By analyzing recent growth trends and development patterns, we were then able to forecast where future development was most likely to occur if recent development trends continued. That future possibility was called the 2025 Trend Scenario. This Scenario is merely an informed assumption as to what the County could be like in 20 years assuming a continuation of recent land development trends.

The resulting pattern showed the majority of development spreading out in the northern and western portions of the County.

**Considering Alternative Futures** Based on key themes that emerged through public outreach, four alternative scenarios for the future were developed: Good Old Places, Hot New Places, River Places and Transit Places.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

## Performance of the 2025 Composite Scenario

Once the various scenarios were analyzed and discussed, the 2025 Composite Scenario emerged. It combined the best characteristics of the alternative scenarios and served as the basis for the Future Land Use Plan. Compared with the 2025 Trend Scenario, the 2025 Composite Scenario:

- Used a third less land (or 12,000 acres)
- Targeted more opportunities for our neediest residents to live and work in the same community
- Targeted more housing and jobs in low performing school districts
- Used existing infrastructure more efficiently, including roads and utilities
- Directed almost 50% more acreage to brownfield sites
- Located more housing units closer to regional parks and trails
- Increased transit ridership by 25,000 passengers a day
- Resulted in 3 million fewer vehicle miles traveled on the roads per weekday

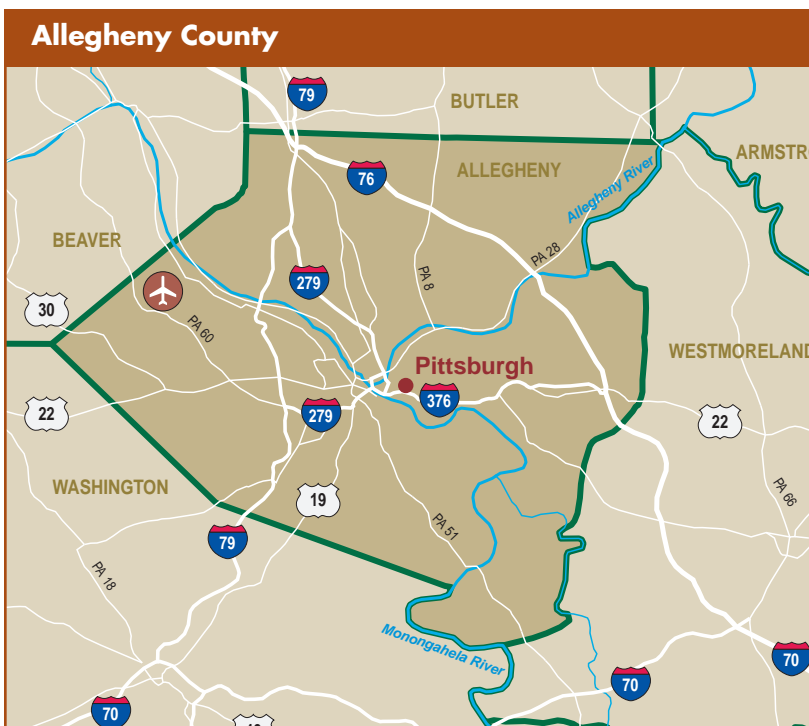


## OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S PLACES

The following summarizes the existing character of the County through a brief description of current demographics and emerging land use trends.

**A Snapshot of Allegheny County** Allegheny County is located in Southwestern Pennsylvania and encompasses the City of Pittsburgh and its suburbs, in addition to the river towns and rural villages outside of the urbanized area.

Allegheny County is the region's employment center and attracts a significant number of workers from adjacent counties and states to fill jobs within its borders. No longer reliant on heavy industry for jobs, Allegheny County has developed a more diversified, agile economy. Manufacturing remains an important sector of our economy, but today, our economy is led by the prominent and prestigious medical and educational institutions located here. Over the last year, we've experienced the largest growth in venture capital investment of any area in the country.



Source: McCormick Taylor

One of Allegheny County's greatest assets is Pittsburgh, our County seat and economic and cultural center. Once the city was the center of the nation's steel industry; today it embraces both high-tech corporations and charming old world neighborhoods. But certainly Allegheny County is more than just Pittsburgh. In fact, there are 130 municipalities within the County.

The County's population in 2006 totaled 1.22 million, making it the second most populous county in Pennsylvania.

Allegheny County consistently ranks high on lists of the nation's most livable areas. The cost of housing in the region ranks as the most affordable in the nation, according to the U.S. Census. Pittsburgh is also one of the safest cities of its size.

**A Demographic Profile** Slow decline has been a defining trend in Allegheny County for decades. For more than 75 years the County has lagged behind the nation's and state's growth rate. In each decade from 1970 to 2000, the County's population has decreased.

The population decline stems from the continued economic restructuring of the region. Between 1978 and 1983 alone, over 100,000 steel-related jobs were lost. Today, the Pittsburgh region's population remains stagnant largely because of low birth rate and low international immigration.

### **A Redistribution of Population**

Population grew in just 33 of the 130 municipalities during the 1990s. Most of the growing communities are along the County's outer borders on the north, west and southwest. The result is that the County is 'hollowing out', with more residents moving from the core communities to the outer perimeter. As residents move out of the core, the neediest people are left behind to bear the burden of increased costs for providing services.

**Racial Equity** There is a strong correlation between poverty and race in Allegheny County. Seventy-five percent

of the County's African American population lives in just four communities. This leads to a disparity with tax rates that falls along racial lines.



Photo credit: Bernadette E. Kazmarski

**A Welcome Trend** A number of prominent projects have been completed in recent years that typify another important development trend taking place in Allegheny County. New mixed-use developments are being created that incorporate residential, commercial, light industrial, and research and development uses into attractively landscaped settings. Vacant, underutilized industrial properties are being redeveloped, and riverfronts are being revitalized. New residential developments are beginning to offer a variety of housing options for all incomes.

**Political Fragmentation** The land use pattern seen in Allegheny County today is, in large part, the result of the mosaic of 130 municipalities that comprise the County. Historically, municipalities have had a large degree of autonomy, especially in land use planning and the approval of land development. In Pennsylvania, municipalities derive their right of government from the state and do not come under the jurisdiction of County government.

**Today's Land Use Pattern** Over the last two decades, development patterns in Allegheny County have taken the form of low-density sprawl. According to the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, from 1982 to 1997 metropolitan Pittsburgh developed an astonishing 8.5 acres of land for every new household. The national average for that same period of time was about 1.3 acres.

Many local governments simply can't afford to provide services by themselves and keep tax rates down. As a result, municipalities are looking for ways to cooperate with their neighbors to save money.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOMORROW'S PLACES

The following pages summarize the 12 elements of the comprehensive plan. The plan elements collectively serve as a guide for public and private sector actions related to future growth and resource preservation in Allegheny County.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

### FUTURE LAND USE

**GOAL** Land use, development and conservation are compatible with and enhanced by Allegheny County's unique physical characteristics, rich cultural and social heritage, and distinctive communities.

The Future Land Use Plan is a guide for development and redevelopment in Allegheny County through the year 2025. It is based on the modest rate of growth projected to occur over the planning period.

The Future Land Use Plan is built around the concept of 'Places' or locations targeted for major development. There are eight different types of Places, each of which has a unique identity:

- Airport-Industry
- The Core
- Corridors
- Urban Neighborhoods
- Community Downtowns
- Villages
- Rural Places
- Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs)

The intent of Places is to provide an efficient and economical way to allow for both new growth and revitalization, meet a diversity of needs, support transit, reduce consumption of

open space and protect environmentally sensitive resources. In addition to the eight types of Places, there are several other elements on the Future Land Use map:

- **Infill Areas** – locations for smaller-scale development
- **Conservation Areas** – areas where resources are protected and development is discouraged
- **Greenway Network** – an interconnected, county-wide network of natural resources and recreational amenities
- **River Network** – made up of the County's major water features
- **Transportation Network** – major roadways, transit, rail, air and water transportation corridors

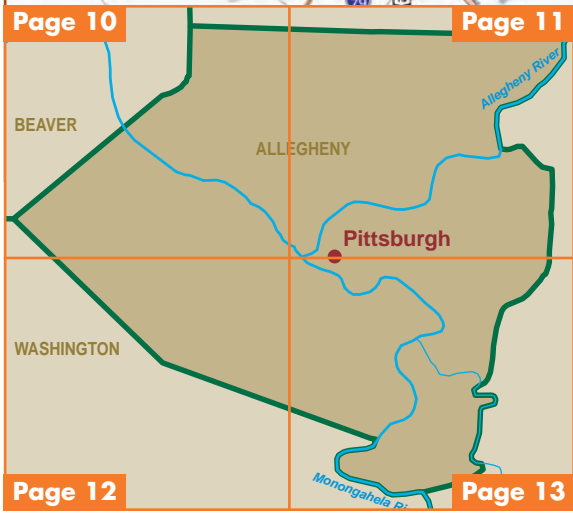
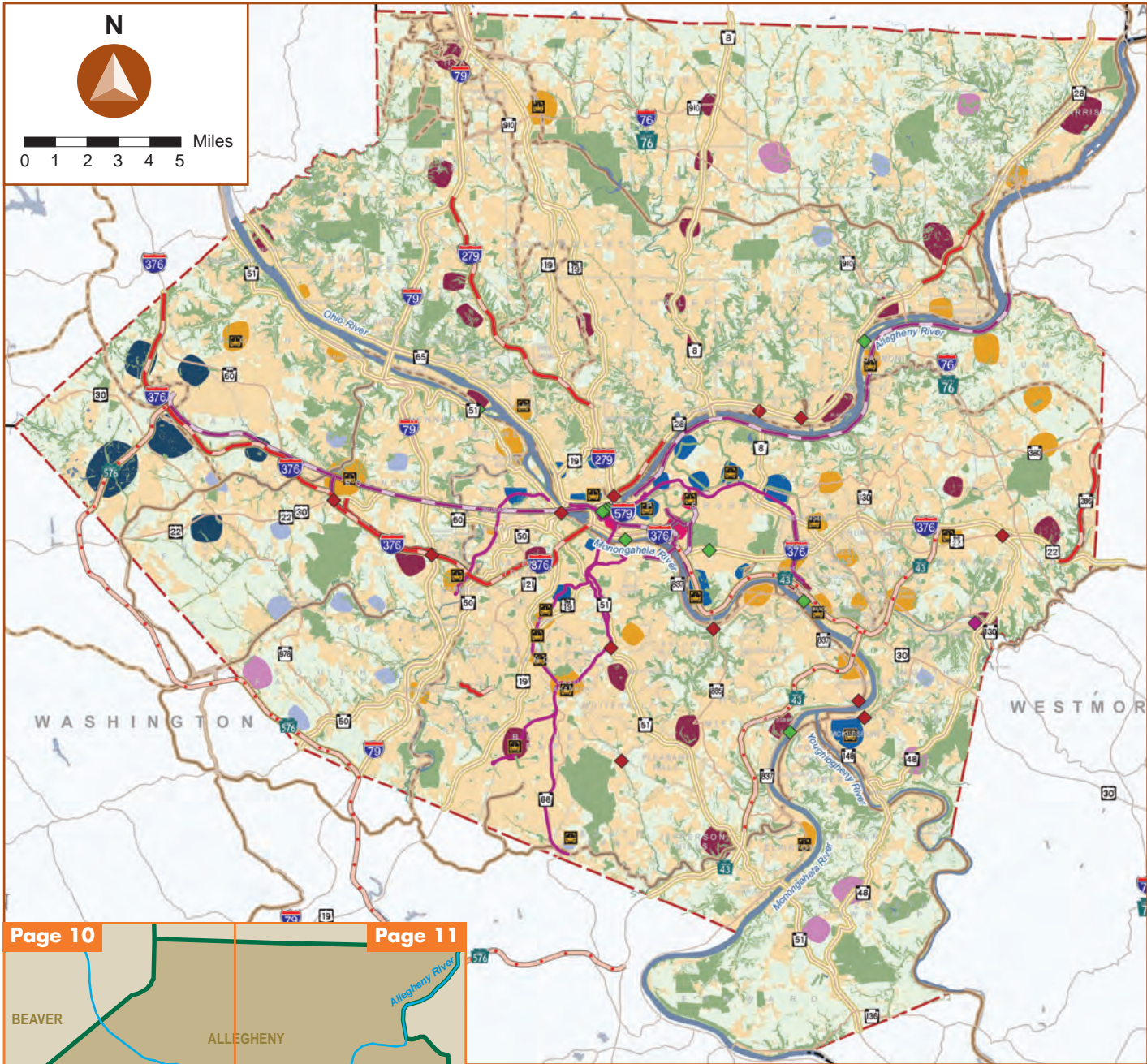
The Future Land Use Plan is the keystone of *Allegheny Places* – all the other elements of the comprehensive plan support its implementation.

### KEY FUTURE LAND USE CHALLENGES

- Sprawl in the northern and western portions of the County
- Declining population, especially in core areas
- Disinvestment in older communities
- Brownfields that have high clean-up costs and hinder river access
- A large number of local governments
- Poor condition of housing stock in older communities and the need for demolition



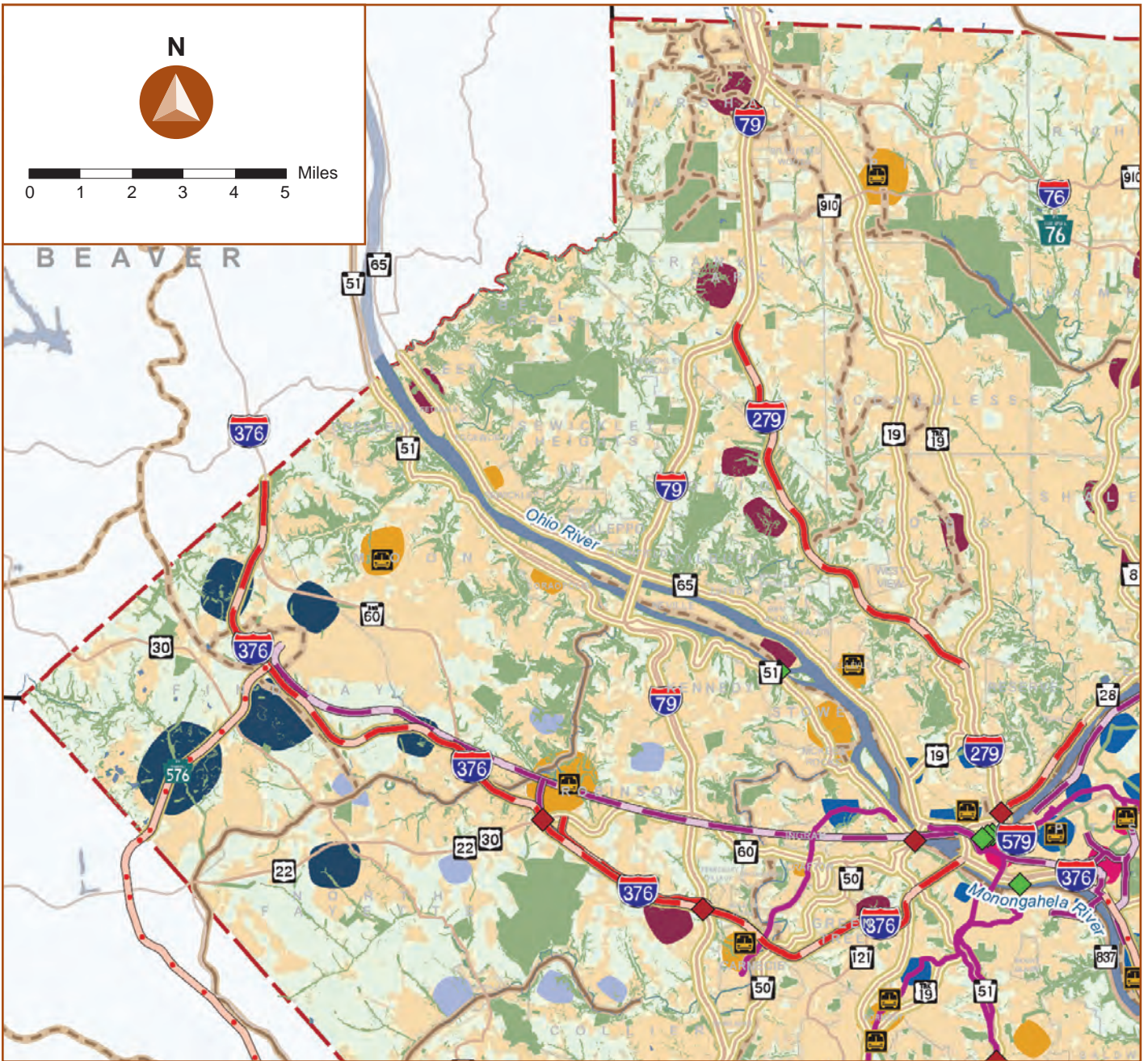
Photo credit: McCormick Taylor



**FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

For enlarged views of the above map, as well as a detailed legend, please see the following four pages.

Descriptions of the major land uses shown on the maps can be found on page 14.

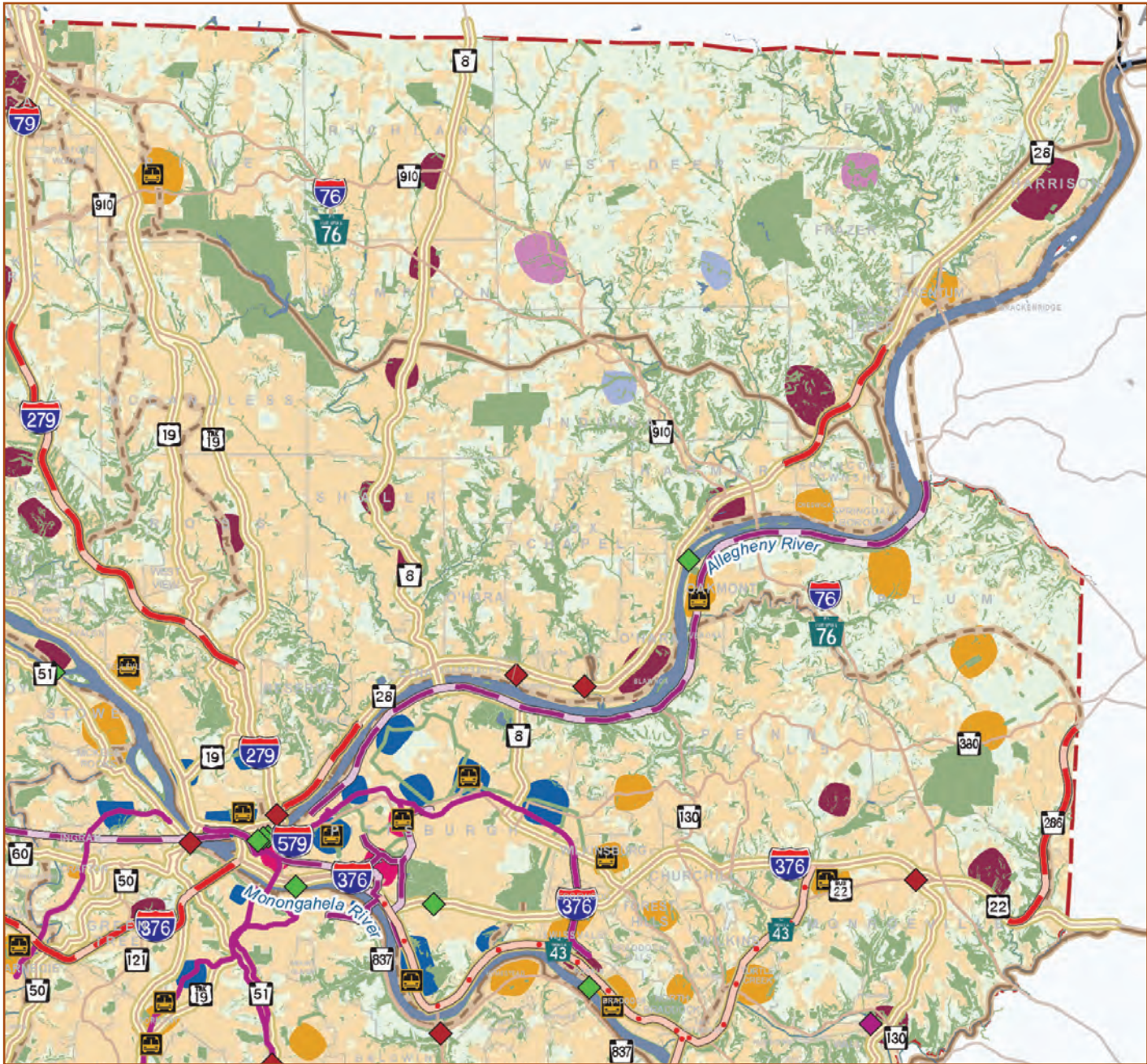


**PLACES**

- Airport
- Core
- Corridor
- Neighborhood
- Community Downtown
- Village
- Rural
- Transit-Oriented Development

**BASE MAP**





- Allegheny County
- Municipal Boundaries
- Hydrology
- Existing Transit System
- Major Roadways
- Infill Development
- Conservation Areas



### TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

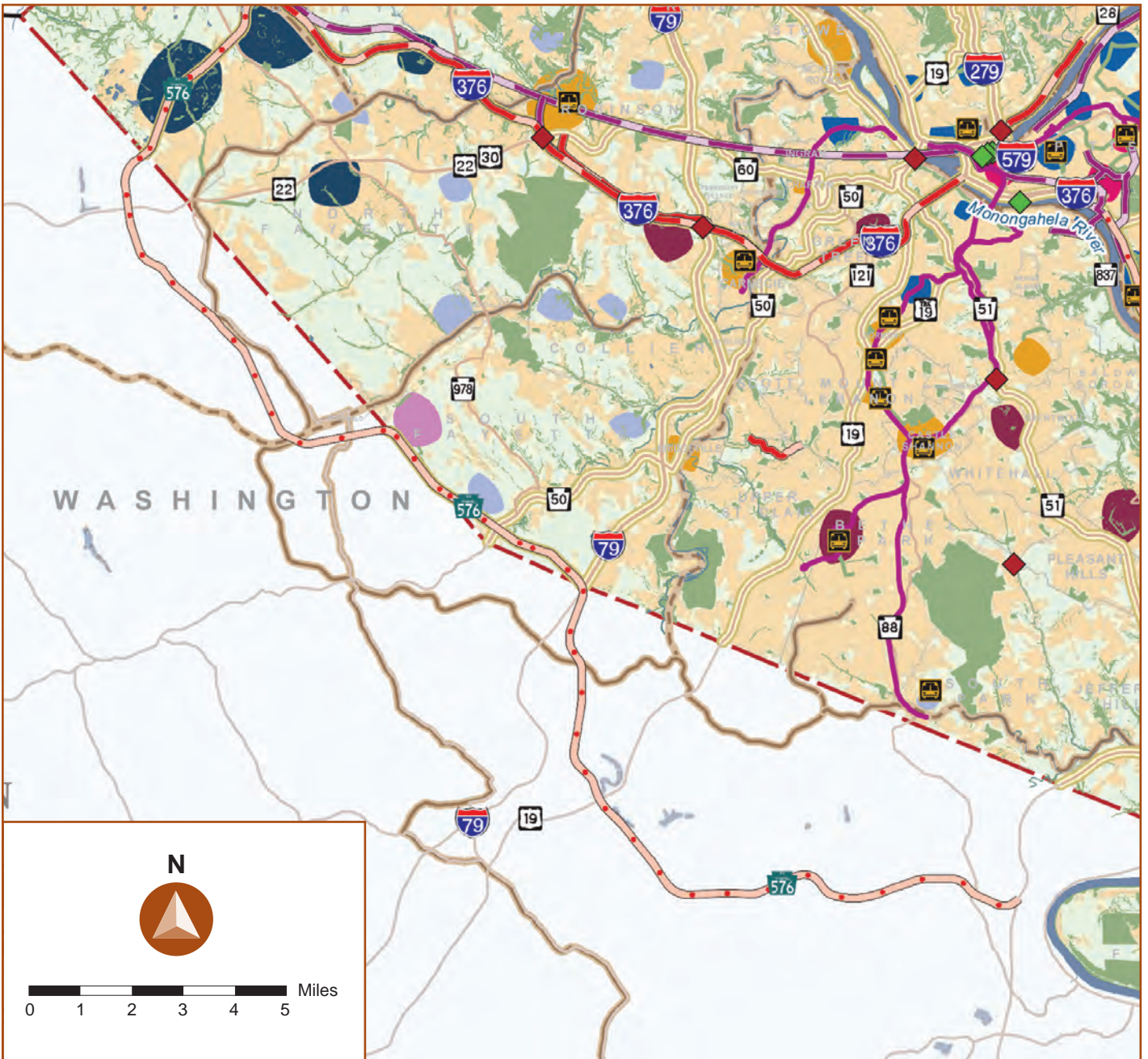
-  Proposed New Highways
-  Proposed Highway Improvements
-  Proposed Transit Projects \*
-  Bridge
-  Hub/Garage
-  Interchange
-  Intermodal Freight

### NETWORKS

-  Proposed Greenways
-  Road Corridors
-  Proposed/Under Construction Trails
-  Completed Trails

\* These alignments are conceptual, alternatives will be studied.





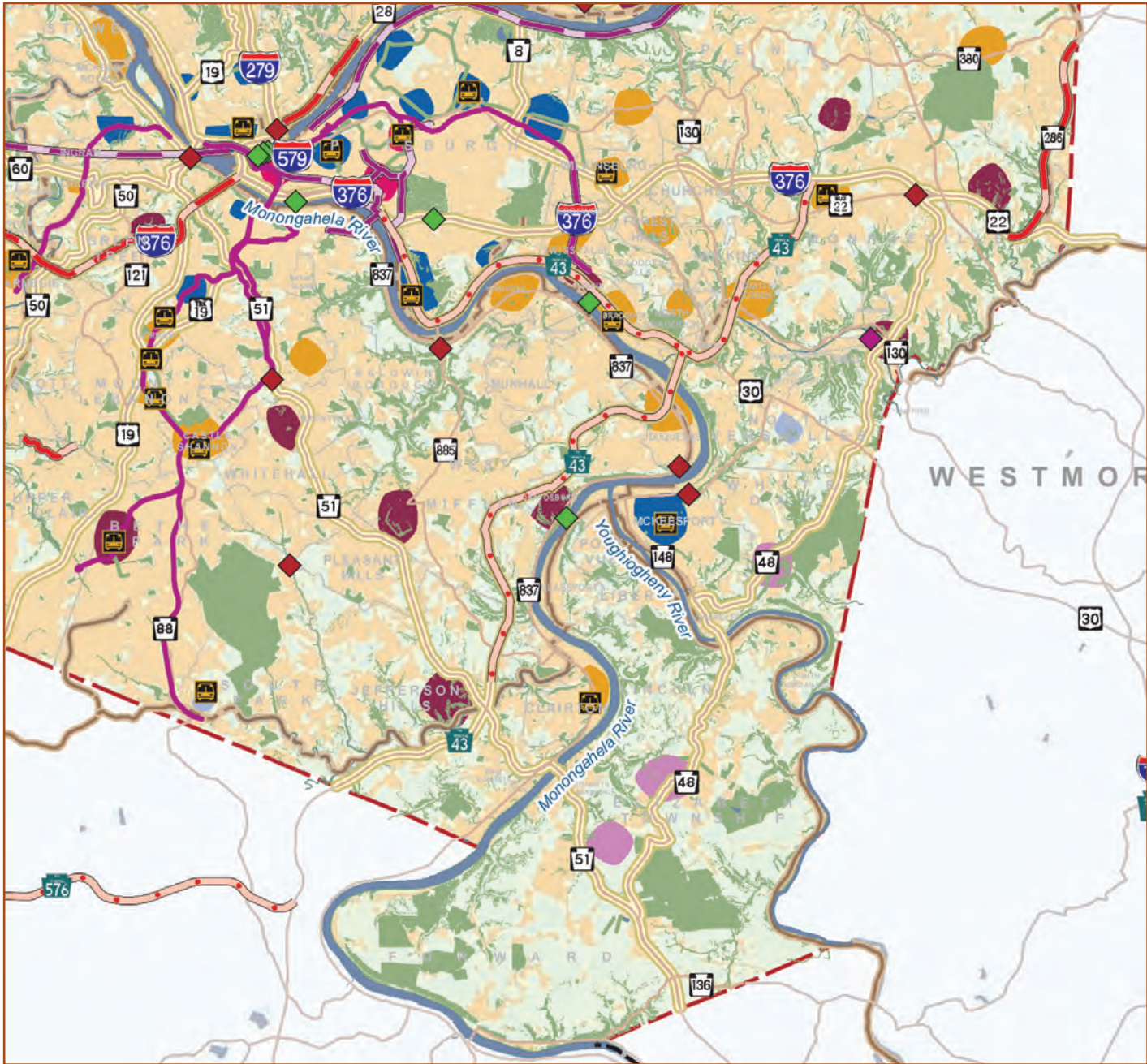
**PLACES**

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**BASE MAP**

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






**TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

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**NETWORKS**

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## FUTURE LAND USE MAP DESCRIPTIONS

(More information can be found in the Land Use Element of *Allegheny Places*)

**Infill Areas:** Provide opportunities for new development and redevelopment on vacant, abandoned or under-utilized properties.

**Conservation Areas:** Sensitive environmental features, scenic landscapes and cultural resources that are only meant for very limited or no development.

**Places:** Areas targeted for development.

- 1. Airport-Industry:** Located in close proximity to Pittsburgh International Airport, and mainly include sites that have been targeted by the County and developers for office and light industrial development.
- 2. The Core:** Located in downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland. Much new development in Core Places will be infill development, rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings, and adaptive reuse of former industrial or warehouse sites and structures.
- 3. Corridors:** Have good access to major transportation corridors and highway interchanges. They are relatively intense, mixed-use hubs of office, industrial, commercial and residential uses. Corridor Places can accommodate high-intensity land uses that require large amounts of land such as regional shopping centers, industrial parks, and business parks.
- 4. Urban Neighborhoods:** Located within urban areas like the cities of Pittsburgh and McKeesport. They build

on existing business districts and mixed-used areas in older, densely developed neighborhoods, and include more regionally-oriented services with a mix of housing types in a walkable setting.

- 5. Community Downtowns:** Similar in character to Urban Neighborhoods, but are less densely developed. Most, but not all, Community Downtowns build on the existing business districts and downtowns in older communities.
- 6. Villages:** Located in suburban communities throughout the County. Village Places are characterized by a mix of residences and small-scale, low-intensity businesses and services that primarily serve neighborhood needs. Non-residential development should neither generate, nor depend on, large volumes of vehicular traffic.
- 7. Rural Places:** Located along the “edges” of the County in municipalities that are less developed. Rural Places are the least densely developed of all the types of Places. They will be primarily residential in nature, with a focus on single-family detached housing. Non-residential development will be limited mainly to recreation and essential supporting services.
- 8. Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs):** A mix of relatively dense residential, office and retail uses at transit stations or transit stops, to maximize pedestrian access to transit. TOD is an overlay on selected Places that are located along the existing ‘T’ line and busways, and on proposed new transit lines. TOD Places will incorporate both infill development, and substantial new development on large parcels when available.

## DATA SOURCES FOR FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Allegheny County  
Allegheny County Municipalities  
City of Pittsburgh  
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
Individual Land Trusts  
AirPoto USA  
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission  
National Hydrography Dataset

**June 12, 2008**

This map is property of Allegheny County and should be used for reference purposes only.



This map was prepared for:  
Dan Onorato, Allegheny County Chief Executive  
Allegheny County Economic Development – Planning Division

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE LAND USE

- A. Create Places that Emphasize Community** – The Places envisioned by the Future Land Use Plan are compact, walkable communities that are transit-supportive. They offer a variety of housing options to meet a diversity of needs and respect market trends.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

- B. Direct Development, Redevelopment and Conservation to Places Identified on the Future Land Use Map** – The County will strategically target the use of public funds and support the use of economic development incentives to implement projects that are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
- C. Ensure that New Development Occurring Outside of Designated Places and Infill Areas is Beneficial and Necessary** – Some development is expected to occur outside of the designated Places and Infill Areas identified on the Future Land Use map. It is important that appropriate land development controls be in place to ensure that such development is appropriate and consistent with the conservation goals of *Allegheny Places*.
- D. Encourage Transit-Oriented Development** – Transit-oriented development is an important national land development trend that promotes compact, relatively dense development within walking distance of a transit station with a '24/7' mix of uses.
- E. Promote Municipal Consistency with *Allegheny Places*** – Implementing the goals and objectives of *Allegheny Places* will require consistency between the County comprehensive plan and municipal comprehensive plans.

## HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

**GOAL** The County's unique historic and cultural heritage is preserved, enhanced and celebrated by residents, communities and visitors.

The heritage of Allegheny County is reflected in its historic buildings, neighborhoods and landscapes. The County has over 220 properties listed in and nearly 500 additional properties currently eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The County's National Register properties include government buildings, schools, churches, theaters, retail buildings, locks and dams, tunnels and bridges, railroad stations, retail buildings, an experimental mine and industrial facilities.

### KEY HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGES

- Disinvestment in historic areas
- Threats to historic properties and lack of an up-to-date county-wide historic resource survey
- Loss of African American heritage sites
- Misperceptions regarding rehabilitating historic buildings
- Lack of understanding of the economic value of historic properties and resources



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- A. Promote and Protect the County's Historic and Cultural Resources** – The preservation of historic and cultural resources is a foundation for our future economic prosperity and livability. Development and redevelopment anywhere in the County should be done in a manner that respects the existing character of a community.



**B. Utilize Cultural Resources as a Tool to Stimulate Economic Development**

– Future economic development in the County should take place within the context of historic preservation. This is a powerful tool for economic revitalization to attract tourists and investors and generate jobs.

**C. Encourage Cooperation Between Historical and Cultural Organizations Throughout the County**

– There are many organizations currently working to preserve historic and cultural resources in Allegheny County. These organizations will have a sustaining and, in some cases perhaps, an expanded role in implementing the Historic and Cultural Resource Plan.

**D. Protect Historic Landscapes including Viewsheds and Corridors**

– The preservation of farmland can jointly protect historic landscapes. The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation’s Historic Rural Preservation Program can be further used to preserve significant landscapes. Pennsylvania’s Heritage Parks Program can also help to protect landscape resources.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

Over the past two decades, the County’s economy has become much more diversified.

**Employment Growth** In 2003, employment within Allegheny County reached almost 881,000, the highest employment in the County’s history. The primary reason that employment and workforce participation levels have been increasing in the County over the last 30 years is because more women have entered the workforce.

**Household Income** In 1990 and 2000, median household income in the County fell below the median for both the nation and state. Within the County, the lowest household incomes are found in Pittsburgh, the Mon Valley and nearby river communities. The highest median household incomes are found in Fox Chapel, Sewickley Heights, Ben Avon Heights and Marshall. Allegheny County maintains a concentration of relatively well-paying jobs and a moderately low poverty rate (11%), which contributes to it having a higher per capita income than the region, state or nation.

**Racial Disparities** As 84% of the region’s African American population lives in Allegheny County, issues of



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**GOAL**

The economy of the county and the region is strong, stable, equitable and diversified.

The County’s businesses and institutions form the core of southwestern Pennsylvania’s economy and have driven economic growth trends throughout the region. For nearly 150 years, the region had the luxury of a sizable core of well-paying manufacturing jobs. Within a short period of time in the early 1980s, the long-term slow decline in the region’s manufacturing industries became a massive freefall. Over 142,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in the region.

racial disparity are concentrated within its borders. Low workforce participation rates for African American men are one component leading to the low household income level for African Americans. While the Pittsburgh region experienced a slight increase in the unemployment rate since 2000, the increase was greater for African American females compared to any other group.

**Economic Sectors** Health care and social assistance is the largest job sector in Allegheny County. The County's largest employer is UPMC Health Systems. The County has diversified dramatically over the last two decades and now boasts industry clusters such as Environmental Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and Life Sciences, along with emerging clusters such as Cybersecurity, Specialty Metals and Robotics.

**Economic Development Zones** A number of tax-exempt districts have been specifically established to attract new business and new jobs. Keystone Innovation Zones (KIZs) are intended to foster innovation and create entrepreneurial opportunities to keep young, talented graduates in Pennsylvania. There are two KIZ areas in Allegheny County, both within the City of Pittsburgh. Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZs) are economic development districts, created under the terms of Pennsylvania's KOZ legislation. Allegheny County has 26 KOZ sites, 17 of which are in Pittsburgh.

**Research and Technology Development** Allegheny County's growing technology sector is a new and robust source of economic vitality. The County has been growing into one of the greatest research and development hubs in the country because it has the essential ingredients that make it possible: prestigious universities, prominent medical centers, companies in a number of technology clusters, national banking providing capital and highly educated employees.

## KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- Slow employment growth
- Increased tax burden in older communities
- Need for better access to jobs
- Lack of jobs to retain graduating students
- Complex development approval process
- Targeting subsidies

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- A. Prioritize Development and Redevelopment in Accordance with the County Development Policies** – The Economic Development Plan supports ongoing economic development initiatives in existing towns, urban centers, brownfields and major transportation corridors. The County also identified a number of projects as key to economic growth.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

- B. Target Investment to Increase Job Opportunities where Low- and Moderate-Income People Live** – The Comprehensive Plan seeks to provide better access to jobs for all County residents by decreasing the 'spatial mismatch' that exists today. A number of the designated Places correspond with existing centers for commerce in communities that have concentrations of low- and moderate-income residents.
- C. Match Development Types to Places Identified in the Future Land Use Plan** – The locations that have been recommended for employment centers and concentrations of commercial and industrial uses will,



to a large extent, guide where people work and shop in the future. Recommended development types have been developed for the types of Places in the Future Land Use Plan.

- D. Support and Recruit Industry Targets Identified in the Future Land Use Plan** – During the development of *Allegheny Places*, the Center for Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University identified several industry targets or ‘driver industries’, representing growing specialties, for the County. The County will retain professional experts to work with identified initiatives and programs, and to recruit industries to locate in the appropriate Places designated on the Future Land Use map.
- E. Work with the Educational System to Produce and Attract Skilled Workers** – With a changing economy, there is a need to provide training and retraining opportunities to ensure the availability of a workforce ready to meet the demands of the County’s businesses. By cross-marketing between workforce development and economic development, training programs can be marketed to businesses, and businesses can be marketed to students and other potential employees.
- F. Advance a Uniform, Streamlined Development Process throughout the County** – Competition is stiff across the country in terms of attracting businesses. The County will work with its municipalities to create a more receptive environment for business development.
- G. Require that New Developments Provide for Pedestrians and are Completely Accessible to Individuals with Disabilities** – A walkable community is the most affordable transportation system to design, build and maintain. Most Places in the Future Land Use Plan will be pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use centers.
- H. Promote an Efficient Transit System to Provide Access to Jobs** – More efficient transit service to outlying job centers will provide better access to more jobs for more workers. The concentrated, mixed-use development patterns envisioned by *Allegheny Places* are intended to support transit use and improve access to jobs and other opportunities.
- I. Target Incentives in Accordance with Preferred Development Scenarios** – Grants, loans, tax credits, and real estate tax abatements will be used to facilitate sustainable development patterns throughout the County.

- J. Attract Investment and Tourism by Enhancing our Cultural, Environmental, Educational and Historic Resources** – The County will support the work of local and state tourism promotion agencies to attract more visitors to Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh.

## HOUSING

### GOAL

Good quality existing, renovated and new housing meets the needs of diverse people.

Allegheny County’s housing stock is greatly diverse in style, type, age and condition. Single-family housing is the most common form of new residential construction in Allegheny County and remains the most widely available housing type overall.

Housing is relatively affordable in Allegheny County. In 2000 the median value of homes in the County was \$84,200. As a result, homeownership rates in many of Allegheny County’s municipalities are relatively high compared to the nation.

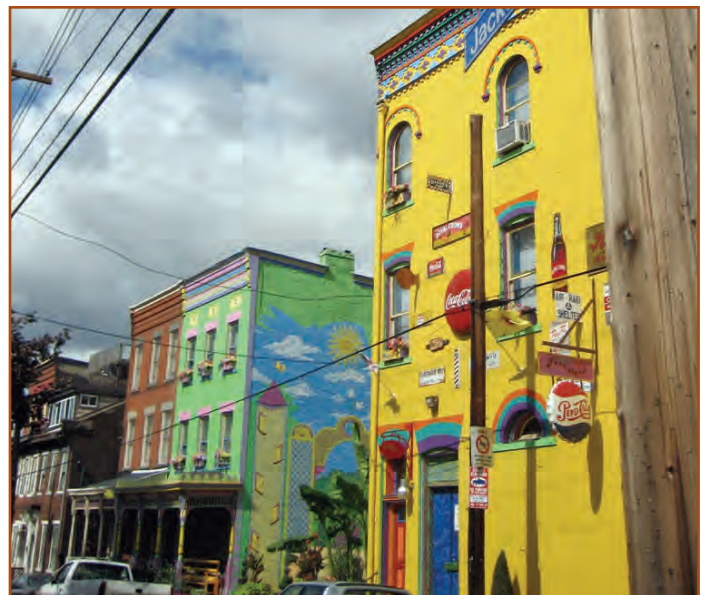


Photo credit: Kevin Smay

**Housing Vacancies** Despite the County’s relatively high homeownership rate, Mon Valley municipalities continue to have some of the highest vacancy rates not only in the County, but also in the region and state. Municipalities with the highest vacancy rates are typically also those with the greatest decreases in population and lowest household incomes.

**Age of Housing Stock** Concentrations of houses built before 1940 are concentrated in older communities along the rivers, and in and around the urban core. Newer housing stock is more common in the outer ring municipalities, and especially to the north and southwest.

**Public Housing** The Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) owns and manages approximately 3,200 low-income public housing units throughout the County. The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) provides publicly-assisted housing for more than 20,000 Pittsburghers and manages more than 7,000 public housing units. The McKeesport Housing Authority (MHA) owns and manages eight properties with over 1,000 federally assisted units.

Each of the three public housing authorities in the County also administers Housing Choice or Section 8 vouchers. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers the Project-Based Section 8 Program for subsidized housing.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

**Housing Affordability** Households whose median income is at or below 30% of the area median income face hardships finding adequate affordable housing.

**Housing Assistance** The Housing & Human Services Division of Allegheny County Economic Development (ACED) works to expand the County's affordable housing stock and assists residents with the acquisition and rehabilitation of homes.

## KEY HOUSING CHALLENGES

- Impact of high vacancy rates in core communities
- Lack of affordable, good quality housing for very low-income residents
- Lack of geographically-distributed mixed-income housing Impact of foreclosures and predatory lending practices
- Impact of deteriorating housing stock in core communities
- Increasing energy efficiency for new and existing housing
- Improving and promoting visitability

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOUSING

- A. Support Existing Fair Housing Practices** – In order to meet the needs of the County's diverse population, *Allegheny Places* supports and promotes actions and policies that ensure equitable access to safe, decent and affordable housing.
- B. Provide a Variety of Mixed-Income and Affordable Housing** – Designated mixed-use Places in the Future Land Use Plan have been strategically located throughout the County. They are targeted for mixed-income housing, including affordable housing.
- C. Target Infill Housing Where Needed** – To help revitalize declining communities, *Allegheny Places* supports future growth and redevelopment of existing infill areas.
- D. Promote Accessible and VISIBLE Housing in Communities with Desirable Amenities** – More accessible and visitable housing choices are needed in Allegheny County.
- E. Promote the Use of Green Building Techniques and Energy Efficient Housing Design** – The County supports energy and resource efficiency, waste reduction and pollution prevention practices, indoor air quality standards and other environmental initiatives for both new construction and existing buildings.
- F. Support Measures to Reduce Foreclosures** – The County supports outreach efforts to educate consumers about predatory loans and home ownership programs for low- and moderate-income persons.



## PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS

GOAL

A green network that provides a range of recreational opportunities, conserves sensitive and unique natural features, and is connected through parks, greenways and trails.

**Parks** Allegheny County is fortunate to have an extensive network of parks, open spaces, conservation areas, trails and greenways. There are two State-owned parks in the County: Point State Park and Allegheny Islands State Park. The Allegheny County Park system consists of nine parks comprising over 12,000 acres. The parks are enjoyed by more than 11 million visitors annually. In addition to numerous neighborhood and community parks, the City of Pittsburgh has four regional parks: Frick Park, Highland Park, Riverview Park and Schenley Park. Allegheny County's 130 municipalities provide local residents with a variety of recreational opportunities. Municipal parks range from larger parks that have both active and passive recreation and hold community events to small "tot lots" that act as the neighborhood back yard.



Photo credit: Allegheny County

**Mega Greenways** An interconnected network of open space along streams, rivers and ridge lines forms the backbone of the *Allegheny Places* Greenways Network.

Two of the state's mega greenways pass through Allegheny County: the Great *Allegheny Passage* and the Pittsburgh to Harrisburg Mainline Canal. The Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway also has a good chance of being included in this group due to its strategic location and the number of residents and communities it can join.

The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) is a 152-mile bicycle and walking trail connecting Cumberland, Maryland with Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The GAP is designated as a



Photo credit: Kevin Smay

National Recreation Trail and is a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

The Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Mainline Canal Greenway™ is a 320-mile long corridor that follows the path of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal. The section in Allegheny County runs from Pittsburgh to Freeport, along the Allegheny River.

The concept for the Erie to Pittsburgh Greenway emerged from local communities and trail organizations.

There are also other notable greenways in Allegheny County, with a renewed emphasis on riverfront projects, which are in various stages of development. These include the Allegheny County Riverfronts Projects, the Three Rivers Heritage Trail and Three Rivers Park.

**Trails and Bikeways** There are a number of active trail organizations within Allegheny County, and trail systems are continually growing. Notable recreation trails in Allegheny County in various stages of development are Rachel Carson Trail, Panhandle Trail and Montour Trail.

There are a number of major bikeways that run through the County. These include exclusive bike lanes on roads or shared pathways with pedestrians and other users.

**Water Trails** The Three Rivers Water Trail involves all four rivers. The project is being coordinated by Friends of the Riverfront in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat





Photo credit: McCormick Taylor



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

Commission, which has the authority to designate Official Pennsylvania Water Trails.

**Riverfront Access** Allegheny County has an abundance of river frontage – approximately 185 miles, including island frontage. Because of the region’s steel industry heritage, over 45% of all river frontage is currently zoned for industrial use.

- Inequities between municipal parks and the need for multi-municipal planning
- Lack of funding to expand the Greenways Network
- Lack of public access to riverfronts

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAYS



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

- A. Implement a Strategy to Establish Greenways that Provide Connections between People, Recreational Facilities, Cultural Facilities and other Significant Public Areas** – The County supports efforts by public and private agencies to expand and enhance the Greenways Network. County support may include such actions as providing financial assistance for open space and greenway planning efforts and working with land trusts and other conservation associations.
- B. Implement a Strategy to Establish Greenways that Encourage Protection of Bio-diverse Areas, Floodplains, Steep Slopes, Forested Areas, Landslide-Prone Areas, Riparian Corridors and Wildlife Corridors** – Various public and private entities will have a role in conserving lands that provide the greatest public benefit.
- C. Expand the Parks and Trails System to Serve Future Populations** – Allegheny County will continue to complete the recommendations of the 2002 Comprehensive Parks Master Plan. The Allegheny County Parks Action Plan will transform and enhance recreational opportunities at the County’s nine regional parks, the County riverfront trail system and other greenway initiatives.

## KEY PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND GREENWAY CHALLENGES

- Lack of access to regional parks for people dependent on public transportation
- Lack of funding to maintain and improve the County Park system



Park planning and implementation prototypes were developed to assist local municipalities in making decisions about the types of park facilities that will be needed in the future. The prototypes can be applied by the County and local municipalities to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and recreation facilities.

- D. Facilitate Public Access to Riverfronts** – Allegheny County has made a significant commitment to reclaiming, rejuvenating and conserving its riverfronts. The County is teaming together with the Friends of the Riverfront and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council to implement a strategic plan for the Allegheny County Riverfronts Project.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

- E. Ensure that Regionally Significant Parks are ADA Compliant and Transit Accessible** – Recommendations from the 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan for bringing existing park facilities up to ADA standards will be used as a guideline to establish priorities.
- F. Raise Public Awareness of the Benefits of Greenways and Open Space** – Implementation of the Greenways Network will require a solid base of community support that understands the benefits of trails and greenways.

## RESOURCE EXTRACTION

### GOAL

The negative effects of resource extraction are mitigated.

Allegheny County, particularly south of the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers, has been extensively deep and surface mined. There are no underground coal mines currently operating in the County; however, there are two active strip mines. The majority of mine operations have been abandoned, leaving dangerous pits, shafts, cropfalls (or areas of subsidence) and mine fires, which pose serious environmental and public safety hazards.

Abandoned mine drainage (AMD) is a serious problem in the County, as evidenced by the large number of orange-colored streams. AMD occurs when water from abandoned coal mines seeps into streams, disrupting the ecology and water quality of the stream.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

## KEY RESOURCE EXTRACTION CHALLENGES

- Impacts of resource extraction on water quality
- Subsidence prone areas due to previous mining operations
- Mine fires

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESOURCE EXTRACTION

- A. Mitigate the Negative Effects of Resource Extraction** – The County's role in mitigating the negative effects of mining activities is minimal. The

greater responsibility lies with State and federal agencies and the mining industry.

- B. Identify Areas of Potential Mine Subsidence** – PADEP’s website provides mapping by county and municipality that shows where mining has occurred.



Photo credit: Bernadette E. Kazmarski

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

**GOAL** Agriculture is a viable industry and sustainable land use in Allegheny County.

Agriculture is a minor economic activity in Allegheny County and comprises only 5% of the County’s total land area.

Since 2001, its first year of operation, 1,695 acres of the County’s farmland have been permanently protected by conservation easements through the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program. In addition, almost a quarter of Allegheny County’s farmland, or over 8,100 acres, is within an Agricultural Security Area (ASA).

## KEY AGRICULTURAL CHALLENGES

- Loss of active productive farmland to development
- Loss of prime farm soils
- Decreasing number of farm workers
- The economic and sustainable aspects of farming in an urban county

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

- A. Support Agriculture as a Viable Industry** – The challenges facing agricultural production in Allegheny County include market factors outside the purview of local governments. Nonetheless, conservation of agricultural lands can be addressed using an approach that includes local, county and State actions.
- B. Locate New Infrastructure Outside of Identified Agriculture Areas** – Local municipalities and authorities should make efforts to limit the expansion of utility services into agricultural areas. Municipalities and authorities should identify agriculturally significant areas in their communities and use the information when reviewing plans for utility expansions.
- C. Promote the Use of the County’s Agricultural Land Preservation Program** – This program enables the acquisition of conservation easements on farmland. Other municipalities within Allegheny County that have substantial agricultural areas are encouraged to apply for protection under the County’s Agricultural Land Preservation Program.
- D. Promote Sustainable Agricultural Practices** – Several local organizations are working toward the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices.



Photo credit: Kevin Smay



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL

Essential community facilities and public services are cost effective, adequate and accessible to all County citizens.

Community facilities provide basic services to ensure the health, safety, welfare and enrichment of residents. Very few of these facilities are under the ownership or direct control of Allegheny County. Most are owned and operated by local municipalities, authorities, nonprofit organizations or private corporations.



Photo credit: Kevin Smay

**Attractions** The Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens is one of the nation's oldest and largest Victorian 'glass houses'.

The Pittsburgh Cultural District in Downtown Pittsburgh is a center for the performing arts. The Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh is home to the Carnegie cultural complex, which consists of the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and Carnegie Music Hall.

The North Side of Pittsburgh has become a tourist destination focused on major sports venues. The Carnegie Science Center is also located on the North Shore.

Pittsburgh has facilities for three major league professional sport teams. Heinz Field is a state-of-the-art, 65,000-seat football stadium that is home to the National Football League Pittsburgh Steelers and the University of Pittsburgh Panthers. PNC Park is the home of the Pittsburgh Pirates Major League Baseball team. Mellon Arena has been home to the Pittsburgh

Penguins National Hockey League team and is located in the Hill District. The "Igloo" will be replaced by a new arena expected to open in 2009.

The Senator John Heinz History Center is located in the Strip District neighborhood in the City of Pittsburgh. The History Center is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute and is the largest history museum in Pennsylvania.

The 77-acre Pittsburgh Zoo has thousands of animals in naturalistic habitats. The National Aviary is the nation's only indoor nonprofit bird park.

**Schools** There are 43 public school districts in Allegheny County.

There are 35 post-secondary educational institutions in the County. The two most nationally prominent institutions are the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University.

The Community College of Allegheny County has four campuses and seven centers within the County. CCAC has nearly 70,000 enrolled students, making it the largest provider of educational services and the largest workforce training provider in western Pennsylvania.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

**Community Centers** There are over one hundred County-supported community centers scattered throughout Allegheny County. Various community organizations have entered into agreements with the County to operate the facilities and provide a range of services to qualified residents.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

**Medical and Emergency Services** The County is served by three major hospital networks with a combined total of 35 major facilities and branch medical facilities. The most prominent among the networks is the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), a leading health care provider and institution for medical research.

**Elder Care** Allegheny County has a large population of older residents. The County operates the John J. Kane Regional Centers, which provide residential skilled nursing care and rehabilitation for short-term and long-term needs.

**Emergency Services** The Allegheny County Department of Emergency Services provides training, investigation services and emergency management response to disasters, catastrophes and municipal needs. It also operates the 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Center in Pittsburgh.

**Fire Service** There are 246 fire stations serving Allegheny County. Thirty-nine of the stations are staffed by paid firefighters, 204 are staffed by volunteers, and three have a combination of paid and volunteer staff.

**Police Service** There are 126 municipal police departments in the County. The City of Pittsburgh's Bureau of Police has five police zones, each with a station and a special deployment division. The Pennsylvania State Police, the Allegheny County Police and the Allegheny County Sheriff's Office also provide policing functions in the County.

**Hazard Vulnerability** Through the efforts of the Allegheny County Emergency Management Division, five Hazmat units have been placed in strategic locations throughout the County. The teams are dispatched through the Allegheny County Emergency Management Division and Enhanced 9-1-1 Centers.

## KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES CHALLENGES

- Need for increased intergovernmental cooperation to eliminate cost-ineffective duplication of services and facilities
- Providing adequate police and fire services
- Lack of equal resources in all school districts

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- A. Encourage Multi-Municipal Cooperation in the Provision of Municipal Services** – With so many municipalities, governance in Allegheny County is fragmented. Fragmented local government impedes cooperation, hurts economic competitiveness and worsens unbalanced growth patterns.
- B. Provide Efficient Emergency Response Services** – To ensure that emergency response services are the most efficient and cost-effective, future service areas need to be based on boundaries determined by physical features that affect the ability of emergency responders to reach destinations quickly, not on political boundaries.
- C. Support and Promote High Quality Educational Opportunities for all County Citizens** – The quality of schools has a strong influence on the health of communities in terms of attracting business and residents and is extremely important in carrying out the goals of *Allegheny Places*.
- D. Support and Promote Equal Access to the Public Library System throughout the County** – In an effort to expand library services beyond their walls, public, university and corporate libraries have been linked together by high speed access.
- E. Promote Coordination among Hospitals to Ensure the Quality of Health Care** – In 2006, the County's Health and Human Services Department began use of a data-sharing technology that will enable the sharing of



data to better coordinate care services in Allegheny County. Use of the technology has wide application.

**F. Encourage the Development of Public and Private Facilities to Care for the County’s Aging Population**

– The County will continue to operate and maintain publicly offered centers, as well as work with private companies to continue to offer the best quality services for the County’s senior population.

**G. Provide Equal Access to Public Facilities – Allegheny Places** supports equal access to options and choices for people with disabilities from all cultural backgrounds.

access to growth opportunities, especially those associated with ‘Places’ designated on the Future Land Use Plan.

The County’s economic development policies for attracting new business as well as retaining existing businesses are dependent on efficiently moving people, goods and services. Therefore, it is critical that actions and recommendations promote a safe and dependable transportation infrastructure with maximized inter-connectivity for people as well as all types of freight movements.

## TRANSPORTATION

**GOAL** Maintain an effective multi-modal transportation network - Integrated with the Future Land Use Plan.

The goal of the Transportation Plan is to maintain an effective multi-modal transportation network – integrated with the Future Land Use Plan – that:

- Efficiently connects all people to jobs, schools and activities
- Supports mobility of existing communities
- Provides efficient access to proposed development
- Facilitates the movement of people, services and freight
- Is well maintained in a cost effective and rational manner, and
- Utilizes smart techniques and strategies to achieve goals while stretching available road and bridge funds.

### Transportation Planning for the Region

Transportation planning in Allegheny County is a cooperative effort between the County, PennDOT, the City of Pittsburgh and the Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAAC); all together they comprise the transportation Planning Partners. Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the regional organization where the 10-county Metropolitan Planning Organization’s planning partners come together to produce the official, funded Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Long Range Transportation and Development Plan (LRP). The most recent LRP is the 2035 LRP.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission also has a transportation planning role in Allegheny County; the agency is working to complete the Mon/Fayette Expressway and Southern Beltway Projects in Allegheny and Washington counties.

### ROADWAYS AND BRIDGES

**Future Traffic Volumes** For this plan, future highway use was projected to year 2025 by a traffic modeling methodology established to work in conjunction with SPC’s transportation model. Base year traffic volumes on key routes in Allegheny County were compared between the proposed land use scenarios. The largest increase in traffic volumes are near the Pittsburgh International Airport along PA 60 (I-376) due to targeted development in that area of the County, illustrated in the Future Land Use Plan. These volumes are expected to grow by 160%. Other corridors that grow significantly are Parkway West/I-376 near I-79, Route 28 and Route 65.

By 2025 the Parkway West Corridor/I-376 is expected to be backed-up continuously for the entire day. This road is the lifeline for economic development opportunities since it is the most heavily traveled highway in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Therefore, traffic relief for the Parkway West Corridor is vital.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

The purpose of the Transportation Plan is to maximize use of the existing transportation network, target new investment in the system for maximum return and provide all people equal

**Road Ownership** Of all the counties in Pennsylvania, Allegheny County has the highest number of roads owned by local municipalities. Local roads are maintained by approximately 130 public works departments. Allegheny County owns more lane miles of road than all other counties in the Commonwealth combined.

**Condition of Bridges** Within Allegheny County boundaries, there are 1,197 bridges which are 20 feet or greater in length. The condition of bridges is determined by inspections and summarized in a Sufficiency Rating. Bridges with low sufficiency ratings are eligible for more funds. In total, almost 64% of the bridges located in the County are eligible for some type of repair. This is an incredible number of bridges that will need work over the next decade.



Photo credit: Kevin Smay

## KEY ROADWAY AND BRIDGE CHALLENGES

- Overall transportation funding shortfall to adequately address needed maintenance
- Increasing congestion levels on corridors of concern
- Core areas such as Downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland have internal mobility problems that restrict movement and connectivity with other areas
- Cost-effective congestion reduction strategies, such as traffic signal retiming projects, are underutilized
- Lack of options for intermodal and multi-modal connectivity
- Lack of access management strategies on poorly functioning corridors
- Disjointed or fragmented local municipal, County and State roadway ownership
- Lack of attention to funding for ‘Complete Streets’

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROADWAYS AND BRIDGES

- A. Support the Future Land Use Plan through Strategic Prioritization of Transportation System Maintenance and Operations** – To provide good mobility and connectivity, the existing roadway system must be maintained and provide intermodal and multi-modal connections where feasible. New capacity projects would be generally limited to transit and private development of access roadways to new development. Similarly, upgrades to the system of limited-access highways should be undertaken.
- B. Target Transportation Investments to Support Job and Housing Growth** – Transportation investments should be targeted to support the job and housing growth identified on the Future Land Use map. SPC has set up three investment categories that can help guide where transportation funding is spent, based on desired development patterns and need for improvements within the County.
- C. Use Demand Management Strategies to Reduce Highway Congestion** – Demand Management Strategies can result in a more efficient use of the County’s transportation system and resources. *Allegheny Places* identifies several possible strategies to employ throughout the County to assist in reducing congestion as well as unsafe travel conditions.
- D. Coordinate Transportation Systems, Modes and Facilities to Increase Connectivity and Mobility** – Upgrading signalized intersections, along with an ongoing retiming and coordination program, will yield the most cost-effective results of any other type of transportation improvement.
- E. Protect and Enhance the Environment by Promoting Energy Conservation, Emissions Reduction and Use of Alternative Fuels** – The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program is a funding mechanism that provides funds for congestion mitigation transportation projects that provide air quality benefits by reducing emissions.
- F. Review County Road and Bridge Ownership to Identify Ways to Improve Operation and Maintenance Efficiencies** – Ownership patterns are disjointed and should be reviewed to determine the best way to rationalize the system. One option for defining



road ownership within the County is to use the Federal Functional Classification System as a guide.

- G. Use Efficient and Creative Funding Strategies** – Construction of new roadways for Places is likely to be completed by a number of different means. Roadways for new Places may be built by private developers in accordance with locally-adopted master plans, design guidelines and development codes, and then dedicated to a municipality.

## ■ PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Port Authority of Allegheny County** The Port Authority of Allegheny County provides public transportation services throughout the County. PAAC operates buses (including busways), light rail and the two inclines. In Fiscal Year 2006, Port Authority provided 70,036,244 passenger trips.

**Greyhound** A new intermodal facility includes access to Greyhound buses, parking, transit and the Amtrak train station and is adjacent to the PAAC East Busway. The Greyhound Terminal is in the new Grant Street Transportation Center located between Liberty and Penn Avenues at 11th Street in downtown Pittsburgh. Greyhound’s routes serving Pittsburgh include direct service to New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Harrisburg, State College, Wheeling, Erie, Indianapolis, Columbus, St. Louis, Cleveland and Chicago.

**Amtrak** From its station at Liberty and Grant Avenues in downtown Pittsburgh, Amtrak serves Allegheny County with two intercity train routes. The Pennsylvanian Route provides daily service between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, and onward to Philadelphia and New York City. The Capitol Limited provides daily service linking Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.

## KEY PUBLIC TRANSIT CHALLENGES

- Difficult circulation in and around Oakland
- Lack of direct fixed guideway connection between Downtown and Oakland
- Lack of direct fixed guideway transit connection between Downtown Pittsburgh and the Airport
- Insufficient transit funding

- Public attitude toward transit
- Missing intermodal connections
- Lack of efficient system to meet current county needs and population levels
- Transit farebox doesn’t pay for operating expenses



Photo credit: Port Authority of Allegheny County

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT

- A. Target Transportation Investments to Support Job and Housing Growth** – Transit is a focus of future investment, and while funds are now tight, plans will be made to prioritize and accommodate future transit improvements.
- B. Prioritize the Maintenance of Existing Transportation Infrastructure Within and Across All Modes** – Upgrading our existing, aging transit infrastructure, along with the importance of regular maintenance of newer transit facilities, is key to ensuring a dependable, attractive and efficient system. Fixing our valuable investments first is a top priority for transit.
- C. Provide Integrated Transportation Alternatives to Increase Mobility** – Multi-modal transportation alternatives consider the full range of approaches to solving the transportation problems plaguing Allegheny County’s roadways. Solutions can range from new rail lines, automated fixed-guideway transit and more bus routes to those that reduce demand by integrating modes and making it easier to use the system. Integrating park-and-ride facilities with transit stops, developing HOV lanes and ridesharing opportunities, providing sidewalks and bikeways to transit stops are all ways that can increase mobility.



- D. Promote Transit-Oriented Development Sites at Key Transit Stations and Along Major Transit Corridors** – Transit-oriented development (TOD) is an important national land development trend. TOD can be accomplished by targeting mixed-use development around existing and proposed transit stations. The existing ‘T’ line and busways and the new rapid transit lines envisioned for Allegheny County represent an ideal opportunity for TOD.
- E. Connect Pittsburgh International Airport to Downtown, Oakland and Major Population Centers via a Rapid Transit System** – The main recommended transportation feature for *Allegheny Places* is transit from downtown Pittsburgh “to and around the Oakland Area”, including a major intermodal hub in central Oakland and transit from Downtown Pittsburgh, via the new transit connection on the North Shore, to Pittsburgh International Airport.
- F. Improve Transit Into and Around Oakland** – Additional transit within the Oakland area is also a priority, since the hospitals and universities in Oakland comprise one of the largest employment and educational centers in the region.
- G. Use Efficient and Creative Funding Strategies such as Public/Private Partnerships, Privatization, and Leveraging Current and Future Assets** – The Port Authority, in partnership with SPC, Allegheny County and local governments, should explore options to address funding shortfalls and generate new revenues, including transportation to serve areas of new economic development. This may include TOD, TRID, creative financing strategies (such as permitting commercial use of busways) or public-private partnerships.

## ■ BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

In Allegheny County, roadway-based amenities for bicycles and pedestrians consist primarily of sidewalks for pedestrians, and for bicyclists, bike lanes, on-street bike routes, bicycle parking, and bike racks on transit buses. Most of these are located in Pittsburgh and the older suburbs.



Photo credit: Kevin Smay

Pennsylvania Bicycle Route ‘A’ passes through the western portion of Allegheny County as it extends from Erie to West Virginia. Pennsylvania Bike Route ‘S’ passes through the southern portion of Allegheny County along Route 136.

Through its “Rack ‘n Roll” program, the Port Authority provides bike racks on buses on 12 of its bus routes.

## KEY BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITY CHALLENGES

- Lack of comprehensive and predictable “Rack and Roll” system
- Unsafe and unattractive places to wait for transit
- Lack of available, safe bicycle parking facilities
- Lack of a Bicycle Route Signage Program



Photo credit: Port Authority of Allegheny County



- Lack of continuous sidewalk network in new developments
- Consistently incorporating bicycle and pedestrian facilities into roadway projects

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

- A. Provide Integrated Transportation Alternatives Including Bikeways, Sidewalks and Transit** – Bicyclists and pedestrians should be encouraged through incorporating bicycle lanes and sidewalks into both roadway and transit projects. In addition, street systems for designated Places will maximize connectivity, convenience, safety and efficiency for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- B. Coordinate Transportation Systems and Modes to Increase Mobility** – Increasingly, the need to integrate walking and bicycling with transit usage is being recognized. Another need of the roadway network is to provide ways to commute by bicycle. Roadway shoulders should be paved, routes suitable for bicycling should be identified and the routes signed accordingly.

## ■ AIRPORTS

Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) has the potential to be an economic generator for Southwestern Pennsylvania. Located 16 miles west of Pittsburgh, the airport is served by 13 air carriers, with nearly 200 non-stop flights per day. The airport encompasses almost 10,000 acres with four runways, five terminals with 100 gates, and has 13,000 parking spaces. More than 2,000 acres of PIT land are available for development.

There are intermodal facilities at PIT that connect passengers with private vehicles, limousines, taxis and transit, as well as freight facilities to support the air cargo.

The Allegheny County Airport, located in West Mifflin, is the fifth busiest airport in the state and the largest general aviation airport in western Pennsylvania. The County has two private airports, Pittsburgh-Monroeville Airport and Rock Airport.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

## KEY AIRPORT CHALLENGES

- Underutilized passenger and cargo facilities at PIT
- No direct fixed guideway transit connection between PIT and Downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AIRPORTS

- A. Support PIT Efforts to Retain and Increase Passenger and Air Cargo Connectivity to National and International Destinations** – If Allegheny County wants to compete with other cities in attracting national and international companies to locate in our region, it is very important to have non-stop flights to Europe and West Coast destinations. This is a key selling point in getting people to come to the region for business or tourism.
- B. Support Freight Movements Through Safe and Efficient Air Shipping Practices** – The Airport Authority has been marketing the airport to multiple airlines, as well as the all air cargo market. The airport's goal is to attract additional freight carriers, or combination passenger and freight carriers.
- C. Increase Connectivity to and from PIT to Downtown Pittsburgh, Oakland, and Major Population Centers via a Rapid Transit System and Other Modes and System Improvements** – Projected development in the airport corridor requires transportation investments for intermodal connections and congestion reduction measures. A direct rapid

transit connection from PIT to Downtown Pittsburgh, and on to Oakland, supports economic development plans, land use priorities and redevelopment opportunities along the corridor.

## ■ RAIL FREIGHT

More than 350 miles of rail lines cross Allegheny County. Historically, rail lines were built along the rivers and transported resources and finished products to and from the manufacturing facilities located there. The major freight railroad routes in the County today are owned by Norfolk Southern and CSX, which utilize the lines for their regional, national and international operations. The Norfolk Southern main line through the County is a link in its east-west line between Chicago and Baltimore, while CSX's line connects Chicago, Philadelphia and New York.

Over the past 20 years, rail activity has increased significantly in the U.S. and region. Rail companies are feeling pressure to increase capacity on rail lines and ensure maintenance in order to meet the continuously increasing demand. In many cases, the "last mile" of roadways connecting to rail freight terminals are in disrepair or deficient in ways that make them insufficient to handle the freight traffic traveling on them to be loaded onto rail cars.



Photo credit: Kevin Smay

## KEY RAIL FREIGHT CHALLENGES

- Lack of double-stack capacity
- Port Perry rail bridge capacity issues
- Increased volume of rail freight traffic impacts long-term transit expansion plans, such as potential for commuter rail on the Allegheny Valley Railroad right-of-way

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RAIL FREIGHT

- A. **Support Freight Movements Through Safe and Efficient Intermodal Connectivity and Systems as well as with Multi-Modal Facilities** – As congestion on the region's highways continues to increase, freight movement by rail can be a viable alternative to trucking. Improving existing intermodal centers and developing others in key locations are fundamental to efficient future freight movement.
- B. **Increase Rail Safety** – Eliminating at-grade crossings will result in improved safety and assist with making rail movements more efficient. Increasing pedestrian safety at rail crossings is also important.
- C. **Support Increased Movement of Goods by Rail** – Shipping via rail infrastructure can provide shippers with cost-effective and efficient transportation, especially for heavy and bulky commodities.

## ■ WATERWAYS

Allegheny County has significant water transportation resources for personal, commercial and recreational travel, and for freight shipment.

The Port of Pittsburgh continues to be a vital element in an expansive and expanding transportation network that provides Allegheny County businesses with access to regional and global markets. Based on 2005 data from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh is the second busiest inland port in the nation and the 19th busiest port, of any kind, in the nation.

Within Allegheny County, there are seven locks and dams that facilitate the movement of raw materials and goods to end users and there are intermodal facilities for transfer to other modes of transportation.



The Gateway Clipper is a private company offering excursion cruises on the Three Rivers, and has what is believed to be the largest inland riverboat fleet in the country.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

## KEY WATERWAY CHALLENGES

- Condition of existing lock and dam system
- ‘Last Mile’ of local roadways in freight corridors
- Underutilized river system for water taxis and transit
- Need more marinas and boat launches to facilitate access to rivers

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATERWAYS

- Support Freight Movements Through Safe and Efficient Water Systems** – The preservation of the rivers’ system of locks and dams that are managed by the Army Corps of Engineers is critical to keep freight moving. Funding is available at the federal level, but has not been appropriated.
- Access to the Rivers for Commercial and Recreational Uses** – Development of brownfields along the Three Rivers provides a new opportunity for mixed-use centers, office parks, retail centers, marinas, recreational centers and trails.

## UTILITIES

GOAL

**Water, energy, communications, sewage and stormwater services systems are adequate, well maintained, affordable and secure.**

As has been seen throughout the County’s history, the quality and adequacy of utility infrastructure can help or hinder growth.

In Allegheny County, water supplies for drinking water are obtained primarily from surface water sources; only 10% comes from groundwater. Public water service is provided to approximately 97% of County residents by 41 public water suppliers. Currently, all of the water suppliers are operating within established water allocations. In general, the water distribution systems operating within Allegheny County function acceptably under current demand conditions.

A total of 23 water treatment facilities are currently being operated by the water suppliers serving Allegheny County. Total treatment capacity well exceeds current average day and maximum day water demands.

There are 46 publicly owned sewage treatment facilities serving the County, ranging in capacity from less than ten thousand gallons per day to 200 mgd. The Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) is the largest sewage treatment agency in Allegheny County. ALCOSAN serves approximately 70% of County residents.

Wastewater collection services are provided by a number of different municipalities and authorities that operate collection systems, which eventually discharge to one or more wastewater treatment facilities.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

**Condition of Infrastructure** The region's deteriorated sewage infrastructure is polluting the County's streams and rivers. The ALCOSAN service area has at least 450 combined and separate sanitary sewer overflow structures from which untreated sewage is discharged into local streams during wet weather, more than any other authority in the country. Polluted stormwater runoff that often infiltrates into municipal storm sewer systems is also an issue. The polluted water is transported from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) into local rivers and streams without treatment.

**Stormwater Management** The regulatory basis for stormwater management in Pennsylvania is Act 167 of 1978, known as the Storm Water Management Act. Act 167 requires counties to prepare stormwater management plans for the designated watersheds in the county. Problems associated with inadequate and improper management of stormwater include flooding, soil erosion, and sedimentation of streams and other waterways.

## KEY UTILITY CHALLENGES

- Difficulty of Attaining Compliance with Regulations
- Protecting Source Water Supplies
- Lack of Funding for Infrastructure Improvements
- Inefficient and Inequitable Extension of Infrastructure
- Lack of Regional Watershed Management

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UTILITIES

- A. Protect and Enhance the Quality and Quantity of Water Resources** – Water supplies must be protected and drinking water conserved. The Allegheny County Health Department will explore opportunities for re-establishing and improving a pollutant early warning system on the Three Rivers. *Allegheny Places* supports increased use of best management practices (BMPs) to control stormwater.
- B. Support Planning and Funding for Utility Extensions and Improvements that are Consistent with the Future Land Use Plan** – New development will place demands upon water, wastewater and stormwater utility systems in the County. The intent of the Future Land Use Plan in regard to utility infrastructure is two-fold: to make use of the extensive infrastructure system that is already in place; and to help fund

needed infrastructure improvements by targeting future development to areas with existing infrastructure.

- C. Support Regionalization and the Shared Use of Utility Assets** – The complexity and cost associated with developing and implementing solutions to water resource issues suggest regional approaches to these issues. Regionalization can increase operational efficiencies, increase financial viability and improve the quality of service. Before regionalization is realized, however, greater intermunicipal cooperation may be a necessary interim step.

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

**GOAL** Natural resources are managed to conserve unique assets; provide recreational and visual enjoyment; maintain clean and abundant air, water and energy; and provide safety from natural hazards.

Land use patterns have a direct effect on the quality of the environment. This is as true today as it was a century ago.

Watercourses are a prominent feature of Allegheny County. Four large rivers flow through the County: the Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio, and Youghiogheny. The Allegheny and Monongahela rivers meet at the Point in the City of Pittsburgh to form the Ohio River, which is a principal tributary of the Mississippi River.



Photo credit: Bernadette E. Kazmarski



**Water Quality** Today the County's rivers are populated by a diversity and abundance of fish species, and a variety of waterfowl. Still, there are water quality problems that need to be addressed. The State Water Plan, currently being prepared by the Commonwealth, identified the following water quality issues for Allegheny County:

- Lower Allegheny River
  - Inadequately treated municipal and industrial waste causing acid mine drainage and nutrient enrichment
  
- Monongahela River
  - Mine drainage
  - Untreated and/or inadequately treated municipal and industrial discharge
  - Variety of non-point pollution sources
  - Thermal pollution
  - Landfill leachate
  - Excessive mineral constituent concentrations
  
- Ohio River
  - Mine drainage
  - Raw and inadequately treated sewage and industrial discharges

Past mining operations have polluted local streams and waterways with Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) through exposing acid producing rocks to rainfall and runoff. Mine drainage can also be alkaline, and pollute streams with metals such as iron, manganese and aluminum.

According to the National Research Council, in 2005, overflow of outdated combined stormwater and sanitary sewers directly into streams and rivers was the most serious water pollution problem affecting the County.

**Flooding and Stormwater Management** When a storm hits the region, 16 multi-purpose flood control reservoirs built and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the headwaters of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers retain excess water upstream of the dam. Controlled releases of this excess water help to prevent or reduce downstream flooding. However, flooding problems are still experienced throughout much of the County. Although there is no comprehensive, county-wide inventory of chronic flooding problems, the Allegheny County Emergency Service Department has designated 12 waterways as priority streams relative to flooding.

**Natural Heritage Areas** The Allegheny County Natural Heritage Inventory identifies and maps important biotic and ecological resources that make up the natural heritage of Allegheny County. These areas, which include Biological Diversity Areas, Landscape Conservation Areas and Other Heritage Areas, provide habitat for a great diversity of plants and animals, including rare, threatened and endangered species. Allegheny County has 30 listed Biological Diversity Areas, three Landscape Conservation Areas and six Other Heritage Areas.



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

## KEY ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE CHALLENGES

- Reducing sewer overflows
- Impacts of development on steep slopes
- Impacts of development on landslide-prone areas
- Loss of forest land
- Improving air quality
- Flood prevention and mitigation
- Protecting and improving ground and surface water quality
- Loss of natural heritage areas

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

- A. **Meet Air Quality Standards** –The Allegheny County Health Department's Air Quality Program is developing a plan to control fine particulates in the Liberty/Clairton area. The County will continue working to reduce congestion on roadways in the County, to reduce emissions from motorized vehicles. Transportation and

land use strategies to reduce automobile dependency are a cornerstone of the County's energy conservation and emissions reduction plans.

- B. Improve Quality of Surface and Groundwater Resources** – Since mining has the greatest influence on surface and groundwater quality of any single land use in the County, according to the National Water-Quality Assessment program, efforts to remediate the effects of mining activities will significantly improve water quality. Addressing the problem of untreated sewage and stormwater overflowing into waterways is also crucial to improving the quality of the region's surface waters.
- C. Identify and Protect Ecologically Sensitive Areas** – The Allegheny County Conservation Corridors Plan ranks 29 conservation corridors in order of priority and proposes that they be protected through the actions and partnerships of municipal governments, nonprofit organizations and community groups. The Future Land Use Plan includes recommendations to ensure that land development takes place in a responsible way. This includes the use of appropriate land development controls that lead to development that is high quality and contributes to the long-term conservation of environmental resources.
- D. Encourage Development In Places Identified in the Future Land Use Plan to Minimize Impacts to Greenfields** – *Allegheny Places* promotes the redevelopment of existing centers and brownfields to

reduce development pressures on greenfields. *Allegheny Places* defines greenfields as lands not previously developed at the edge of the urban area. Development in greenfields can require significantly more infrastructure than development in brownfields and in existing centers.

- E. Protect and Restore Critical Environmental Functions** – The County's objective is to protect and preserve the ability of wetlands and floodplains to carry and store flood waters safely, in order to protect human life and property from damage.
- F. Eliminate Pollution Runoff to Protect Streams and Watersheds** – Lands adjacent to streams, lakes or other surface water bodies that are adequately vegetated provide an important environmental protection and water resource management benefit. The County urges local municipalities and landowners to protect riparian zones of streams and rivers and adjacent wetlands with vegetated buffers.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

### GOAL

Development and redevelopment in the County occurs in a manner that supports sustainable and cost effective energy utilization

Our way of life is powered by energy. As energy costs continue to rise, more efficient use of energy will be essential for the continued economic health of the region. Energy conservation practices are also essential for improving and protecting the quality of the County's air and water, and so the health of its citizens. Energy conservation is, in many ways, the key to a truly sustainable future for the County.

In recent years, Allegheny County has installed energy efficient lights, upgraded HVAC, energy management and control systems, and reduced water use in dozens of County facilities. These relatively simple improvements have been projected to save the County over \$740,000 annually.

Pittsburgh has become one of the top five cities in the world in green building, with 17 structures LEED Certified by the U.S. Green Building Council.

**Methane Recovery** Methane is the major component of natural gas and a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. Methane that is generated by landfills can be captured, however, and used as a source of energy. The capture and use of landfill methane has substantial



Photo credit: Kevin Smay



economic and environmental benefits. There are currently two methane recovery facilities at landfills in the County.

**Alternative Energy Sources** The Pennsylvania legislature passed the Alternative Energy Bill in November 2004. The Bill requires a total of 18% of Pennsylvania's electricity to be generated by alternative energy sources by the year 2020. The Bill has increased interest in implementing alternative energy production systems statewide and in the County.



Photo credit: Kevin Smay

## KEY ENERGY CONSERVATION CHALLENGES

- Inefficient use of energy and its relation to global warming
- High reliance on automobiles

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

- Protect and Enhance the Environment and Public Health by Promoting Energy Conservation and Continuing to Improve the County's Air Quality** – Since the Pittsburgh region is in non-attainment for a criteria pollutant, Allegheny County is required to develop and implement a plan to reduce ozone and particulate matter (PM2.5) pollutant levels. The County's maintenance status for carbon monoxide (CO) indicates that it is nearing the goal of attainment, but will continue existing activities and pursue new opportunities to reduce CO levels. Because most emissions are from motorized vehicles in congested areas, the County will continue to work with and encourage PennDOT to develop plans to reduce congestion on State roadways.
- Establish Compact Mixed-Use Centers that Provide a Dense Population of Potential Transit Users, Both for Trips Within and Between Centers** – The Future Land Use Plan for Allegheny County directs land use to designated Places in the County in order to conserve energy. Most Places designated on the Future Land Use map will be more supportive of transit use. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a key element in the County's planned economic growth.
- Make Transportation Corridors Multi-Modal by Providing Vehicular, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycling Options** – Transportation and land use strategies to reduce the need to drive are a cornerstone of the County's energy conservation and emissions reduction plans. Street systems for designated Places will incorporate development patterns that maximize connectivity, convenience, safety and efficiency for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Provide Incentives to Develop Certified Green Buildings and Use Alternative Fuels and Renewable Energy** – Educating the public, including public officials, about the benefits of green building, energy conservation and sustainable development is essential for Plan implementation.



## PUTTING IT IN PLACES

*Allegheny Places* is a blueprint for the future for Allegheny County, showing how growth and redevelopment can be directed to existing and future Places to provide new economic opportunities, revitalize existing communities, protect natural features, and conserve open space and historic and cultural resources.

*Allegheny Places* is also a call to action. The comprehensive plan will be implemented through independent and collaborative actions – not through coercion – and through a desire to see its Places come to life for the benefit of all. *Allegheny Places* will be implemented cooperatively through regulations crafted and adopted by local municipalities, through the actions of State agencies in awarding grants and permits, and through strategic targeting of resources by the County and others. Developers and property owners are important partners in this future collaboration. As they work to develop, redevelop, and conserve their land in consistency with the Plan, they will be supported by and benefit from municipal, State, and County involvement.

**County Commitment and Leadership** *Allegheny Places* becomes the day-to-day policy document of the County regarding development and redevelopment. The decisions of Allegheny County and its Authorities will be consistent with *Allegheny Places*, including capital budget expenditures. Unequivocal support from County-level public officials will make it easier to persuade local officials, developers and others to take the Plan seriously.

Plan implementation depends upon a much more prominent County planning role in the coming years. Allegheny County will need a planning staff that is comparable in size and capabilities to other counties in Pennsylvania that are populous, diverse and committed to planning as a means to achieve economic growth and a high quality of life.

**County Outreach to Municipalities** The County will develop a formal planning assistance program with local governments and other planning partners. The program will include the delivery of specialized professional planning



Photo credit: Kevin Smay



Photo credit: McCormick Taylor

services to local governments under contractual terms and/or the distribution of small grants to municipalities to assist them in engaging their own professional planning expertise.

The County will publicize the Plan and provide information to its public and private planning partners so they can take actions necessary to support Plan implementation. The County looks to its constituent municipalities, including the City of Pittsburgh, to take actions in support of *Allegheny Places'* policies. Actions include adopting local comprehensive plans and ordinances that are generally consistent with *Allegheny Places* and providing planning and design support for the development of designated Places in the Plan. Cooperation, cross-acceptance, and consistency are the key guidelines toward establishing a solid relationship between municipalities and *Allegheny Places*.

Councils of Government (COGs) are organizations that bring neighboring municipalities together for common purpose and should be utilized in the implementation of *Allegheny Places*. The County understands the need for additional funding as the COGs take on new responsibilities.

**County Outreach to Other Groups** While the municipalities will be critical to the Plan's ultimate implementation, there are many other groups that will be equally important partners in Plan implementation. The County will provide outreach and education about the Plan to key groups for all levels of government and other institutions that have an interest in the Plan, and/or are important for implementation.

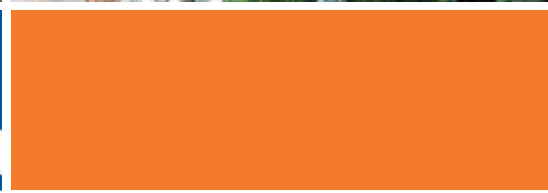
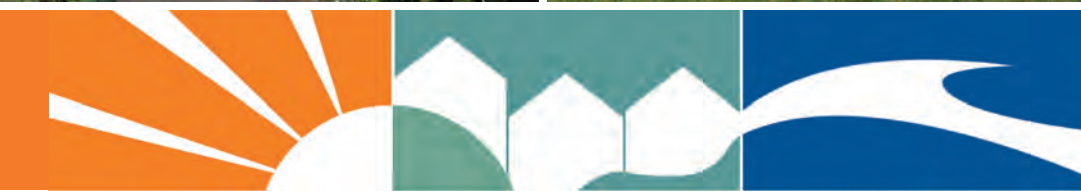
**Yearly Activities and Plan Updates** The chief mechanism for updating *Allegheny Places* will be the Annual Review. County planning staff will prepare an annual report to the County Executive and County Council summarizing development activities in the County and progress on Plan implementation. The approved Annual Plan will be completed in time to be considered in the preparation of the County Capital budget. Proposed capital budget items will be reviewed by County staff for consistency with the Plan.

**The *Allegheny Places* Fund** The County's resources, including funding available through the County's general taxing powers and its special Authorities and grants from State and Federal agencies, will be applied toward the implementation of *Allegheny Places*. Many of the required implementation actions are basic commitments that adoption of a County Plan implies, such as education and outreach, cross-acceptance with local communities, and reviews of local plans and ordinances for consistency with the Plan.

Adoption of *Allegheny Places* also implies a commitment to follow through with the establishment or revitalization of Places, as designated in the Plan. Through *Allegheny Places*, the County has targeted specific locations for development and redevelopment. Bonds issued by the County would provide funding for economic and community development and redevelopment projects in designated Places. The *Allegheny Places* Fund (APF) will support the mission of implementing *Allegheny Places*. The APF will provide no more than 75% of total project costs for any eligible project. The local match may come from a variety of sources.

**Action Plan for Implementation** *Allegheny Places* outlines the steps necessary to implement the Plan. The roles and responsibilities of the key 'actors' involved in the implementation of the Plan's recommendations are identified and an action plan to get the Plan off to a quick start toward realization is described. Model ordinances are also provided.





Allegheny County  
Pennsylvania