FOCUS
Lawrence County

Comprehensive Plan Update

OCTOBER 2016

Acknowledgments

R-2016-237

WHEREAS, the Lawrence County Planning Commission (Planning Commission) prepared the current comprehensive plan for the County, which was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 2004; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, with assistance from staff of the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development, has the duty of preparing a new Comprehensive Plan for Lawrence County; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has prepared a new County Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Section 209.1 and 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, with said plan titled "Focus Lawrence County", dated 2016; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution on August 10, 2016 certifying that is has prepared a plan consistent with the requirements of the planning code, and has recommended that the Board of Commissioners begin the process stated in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to adopt Focus Lawrence County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that in accordance with the Section 302 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the Board of Commissioners of Lawrence County accept and adopt "Focus Lawrence County."

ADOPTED THIS 11TH DAY OF OCTOBER

YEAS   3   NAYS   0

CERTIFIED THIS 11TH day of OCTOBER 2016

Jim Gagliano, Jr., County Administrator/Chief Clerk

Contents

Companion Documents

A: Background Studies
B: Phase I: Market Study
C. Phase II: Build Out Analysis

Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

What's all this, anyway?

The Comprehensive Plan is an official statement setting forth basic policies concerning physical development and social and economic goals within Lawrence County, Pennsylvania. It is typically general in nature, with both short-term and long-range goals in its recommendations, and considers all factors affecting growth and development. While some view its function as a general guide or framework for the future growth and development of a community, the plan does include specific recommendations for the County to take that will implement the vision set forth. The Comprehensive Plan has several uses:

- **Policy determination:** the plan aids in the consideration and evaluation of alternatives for general, short-term and long-range development policies;

- **Policy effectuation:** the plan lends guidance to specific and immediate programs and problem areas;

- **Communication:** the plan informs individuals of the present and future growth and development policies of the community;

- **Conveyance of advice** to the governing body;

- **Education:** the plan helps everyone who uses it to understand the conditions, problems, and opportunities of the community by providing factual information.

In its essence, the Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan is a factual report that examines how the past has led to the present, as well as a tool that can be used to chart a Lawrence County's path into the future.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code,

(MPC) Act of 1968, P.L. 805, No. 247, as reenacted and amended, is an act "To empower...counties...to plan their development and to govern the same..." The Act requires that a Comprehensive Plan must include:

A plan for land use, which may include provisions for the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use proposed for various purposes

A housing plan to meet the needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the community

A transportation plan for the movement of people and goods using various modes of travel

A community facilities and public utilities plan that may cover education, recreation, public safety, municipal buildings, libraries, hospitals, water and sewer infrastructure and more

Planning in Lawrence County

A plan for the protection of natural resources and for historic preservation, providing for wetlands, steep slopes, flood plains, historic sites, etc.

A plan for the reliable supply of water that considers current and future availability, uses and limitations

In addition, a County Comprehensive Plan shall identify:

Land uses as they relate to important natural resources and appropriate utilization of existing minerals

Current and proposed land uses which have a regional impact and significance

A plan for the preservation and enhancement of prime agricultural land to encourage compatibility between regulations and operations

A plan for historic preservation

Visions for the way settlement would stretch across Lawrence County date back to 1798, when John Carlysle Stewart, a civil engineer, laid out a plan for a new town to be named New Castle on 50 acres located where the Shenango River meets Neshannock Creek. Surrounding communities emerged in subsequent decades, including the 13 original townships created when Lawrence County was organized in the mid-1800s followed by other communities that were carved out of them as population filled into the area.

All along, the authority to make land use decisions has resided principally at the local level, expressed by the municipalities incorporated across the County. This authority was codified in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code of 1968, which empowered communities to (among other powers) create planning commissions and/or departments, comprehensive plans and land use ordinances designed to protect and promote public interests. A majority of municipalities within Lawrence County utilize these powers, though not all have implemented zoning regulations.

At the county level, planning serves to advance regional issues and provide support to local municipalities. Lawrence County's Planning Commission has traditionally avoided intervening in local affairs, as its major roles have been to serve as a technical

Year

1900   **1910**   **1920**   **1930**   **1940**   **1950**

Population

| 57,042 | 70,032 | 85,545 | 97,258 | 96,877 | 105,120 |

April 5, 1849: Lawrence County Incorporated

1893: Zambelli Fireworks Co. is established in New Castle
1895: Ralph Stiefel establishes first seamless tube plant in Ellwood City

Early 1900s: New Castle known as the "Tin Plate Capital of the World"

1913: Shenango River floods causing worst flood in County history. Ellwood City Hospital began as 10-bed hospital.
1916: First "hard-top highway" built from New Castle to New Wilmington

1929: Jameson Memorial Hospital opens, replacing Shenango Valley

1934: Pymatuning Dam constructed to control the water levels along the Shenango River

1946: Suburban housing boom in County as a result of soldiers returning from war

review body for communities with local land use ordinances, to administer the County subdivision and land development ordinance for communities without a local ordinance and to provide professional assistance.

At the same time, the County has been involved with a variety of proactive planning efforts, both at the comprehensive level and targeted to single issues of importance to residents and local municipalities. For instance, environmental planning that took root decades ago, such as the creation of the Lawrence Conservation District in 1961 primarily to conserve and protect natural resources, actively continues today and has expanded to include system-wide greenways
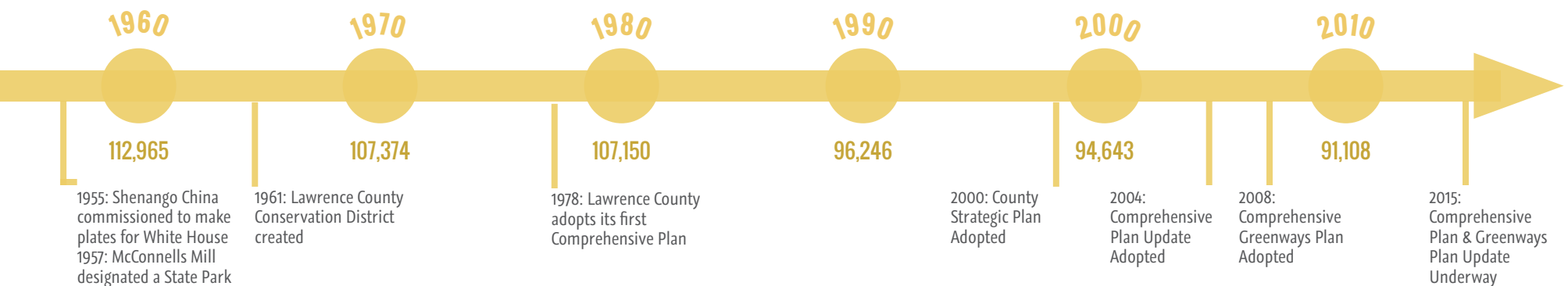
planning and conservation plans specific to individual waterways. The County's first Comprehensive Plan was developed in 1978 and then updated in the late 1990s, when the Chamber of Commerce worked with Planning Department staff to prepare the County Strategic Plan 2000. It was followed by the Comprehensive Development Plan of 2004 and a 2010 update focused on economic development and land use. The County developed and advanced locally focused transportation priorities until 2003, when it was incorporated into the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. The County now participates as a member of this 10-county regional body, which is the

federally designated metropolitan planning organization authorized to determine how available federal and other governmental transportation funds will be spent in the area.

Throughout the County's comprehensive planning history, Lawrence County leaders have focused on promoting sustainable growth patterns while protecting natural resources and fostering opportunities for economic prosperity, aims that will continue to underpin planning efforts for the foreseeable future.

1960

112,965

1955: Shenango China commissioned to make plates for White House
1957: McConnells Mill designated a State Park

1970

107,374

1961: Lawrence County Conservation District created

1980

107,150

1978: Lawrence County adopts its first Comprehensive Plan

1990

96,246

2000: County Strategic Plan Adopted

2000

94,643

2004: Comprehensive Plan Update Adopted

2008: Comprehensive Greenways Plan Adopted

2010

91,108

2015: Comprehensive Plan & Greenways Plan Update Underway

Planning Framework

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a community agenda that anticipates and prepares for the future based on issues, trends, needs and opportunities identified during the planning process. This information comes from not only new data collection and stakeholder outreach, but also from understanding the existing context of local planning. This document incorporates and updates the objectives, policies and land use recommendations of several previous studies, listed as follows among the elements that factored into the development of the Comprehensive Plan:
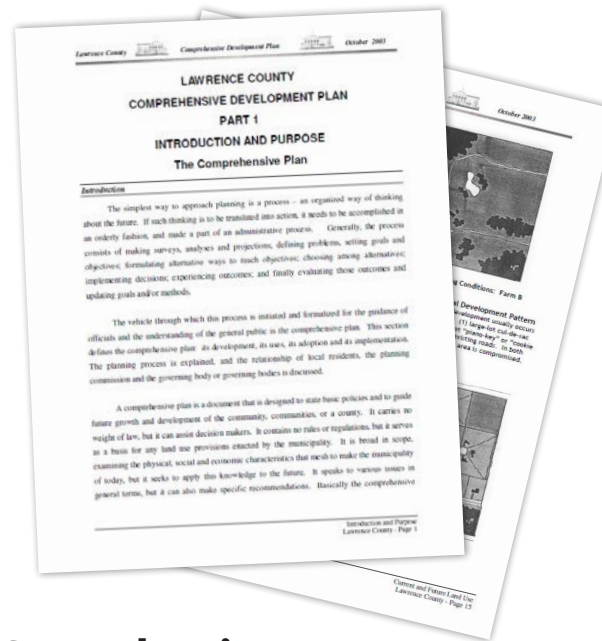
Comprehensive Development Plan, 2004

The County's 2004 Comprehensive Plan established recommendations both countywide and for nine sub-regions based on school district boundaries. Overall, these were driven by two planning philosophies: growing greener, which focuses on arranging development on parcels in a way that both preserves meaningful open space and encourages compact, efficient site plans; and smart growth, which involves human-scaled design, efficient land use, multi-modal connectivity and mixing complementary land uses within neighborhoods.
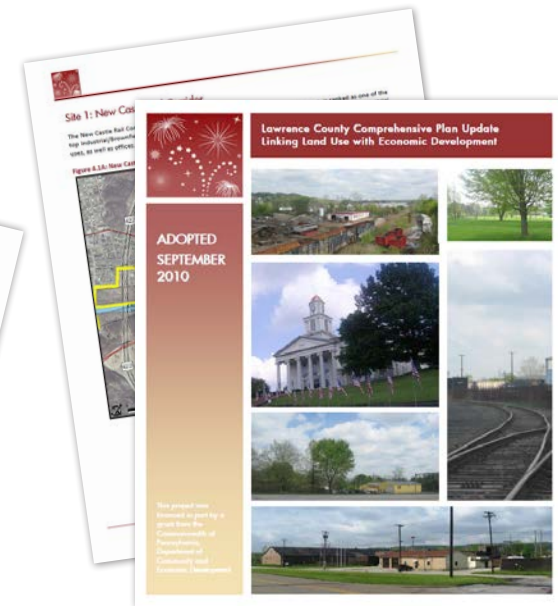
Comprehensive Plan Update, 2010

This document centered on linking land use with economic development, resulting in development strategies for existing and potential sites identified in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan with regard to available utilities, facilities, environmental limitations and overall development potential.

Connections: Linking Lawrence County's Resources through Greenways, 2008

The County's Greenways Plan inventoried and evaluated natural resources, existing recreational assets and historic sites in order to develop strategies to promote the preservation of special places and resources while supporting economic growth. Specifically, the plan identified eight conservation greenways and 15 recreation and transportation greenways and outlined a set of action steps for implementation.

Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2010

This document provides a blueprint for reducing property damage and saving lives from the effects of future natural and human-made disasters, following a standardized format developed by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management to cover a broad array of potential hazards. The study determined that all 27 municipalities within the County are subject to floods, severe weather, hazardous materials, pandemic, fire hazards, energy emergencies, terrorism, dam failure and/or a nuclear facility incident, and it concluded with action steps organized into a five-year mitigation strategy.

River Conservation Plans

Lawrence County's Planning and Community Development Department and other planning agencies have conducted a series of studies specific to the County's waterways in order to inventory and protect existing resources as well as leverage available natural assets. Each of these plans describes local conditions as well as relevant land, water, biological and cultural resources. Stakeholders helped to identify issues and concerns, such as water quality and quantity, waste cleanup, public education, protection of biodiversity and smart growth planning. Finally, each plan concludes with recommendations to address those issues, identifying potential partners and resources.

Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan, Phase I, 2007

The County's Act 167 Phase I study assessed the current and future runoff conditions within designated watersheds and developed stormwater standards, criteria and other ordinance provisions for adoption by municipalities within the County to minimize adverse impacts from stormwater runoff associated with new or future development. It includes a summary of watershed characteristics, an inventory of relevant problems and a proposed scope of study for Phase II of the project.

More generally, future land use within Lawrence County must fit within the context of local and regional priorities and controls and generally accepted principles of sound planning, such as the following:

Smart Growth

In June 2000, Pennsylvania adopted its own "smart growth" legislation uniquely tailored to the traditions, law and politics of Pennsylvania. Act 67 (House Bill 14) and Act 68 Senate Bill 300) both amend the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). These reforms provide additional power to counties and municipalities to control urban sprawl. Among other provisions, these coordinated amendments include extensive language related to the development of "traditional neighborhoods," to multi-municipal planning and to impact fees.

In a broader sense, smart growth principles center on human-scaled design, efficient land use, multi-modal connectivity and mixing complementary land uses within neighborhoods. The County's future growth will consider:

The efficient use of land resources
The County will support the preservation of land and natural resources and compact development patterns that shorten trips, lessen vehicle dependence and make infrastructure cost-effective.

The mixture of land uses
The County will continue to provide spaces where stores, offices, homes, schools and recreation can exist in relatively compact neighborhoods.

Transportation options
The County will seek ways to improve the convenience and safety of its travel network, including roads as well as routes for walking and cycling. Heavy traffic will be routed around residential neighborhoods to the greatest extent possible.

Detailed, human-scaled design
The County will promote privacy, safety and visual coherency through ensuring that development and redevelopment are compatible with existing or desired neighborhood character. This involves consideration of the massing of buildings, orientation to the street and access for bicycles, vehicles and pedestrians. Windows, porches, landscaping and similar architectural elements can create visual compatibility.

Keystone Principles

The Comprehensive Plan update was developed in accordance with the Keystone Principles and Criteria for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation (Keystone Principles), which were adopted in 2005 by the Pennsylvania Economic Development Cabinet and developed by the Interagency Land Use Team, a working group of the Cabinet. The Keystone Principles are designed to be a coordinated interagency approach to fostering sustainable economic development and conservation of resources through Pennsylvania's investments in diverse communities.

Redevelop First
This involves a funding preference to reuse and redevelop "brownfield" and previously developed sites in urban, suburban, and rural communities for economic activity that creates jobs, housing, mixed use development, and recreational assets.

Provide Efficient Infrastructure

"Fix it first" – use and improve existing infrastructure; require private and public expansions of service to be consistent with approved comprehensive plans and implementing ordinances.

Concentrate Development

Support infill and "greenfield" development that is compact, conserves land and is integrated with existing or planned transportation, water and sewer services and schools.

Increase Job Opportunities

Invest in businesses that offer well- paying, high-quality jobs and that are located near existing or planned water and sewer infrastructure, housing, existing workforce and transportation access (highway or transit).

Foster Sustainable Businesses

Strengthen natural-resource-based businesses that use sustainable practices in energy production and use, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, recreation and tourism.

Restore and Enhance the Environment

Conserve and restore environmentally sensitive lands and natural areas for ecological health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Enhance Recreational and Heritage Resources

Maintain and improve recreational and heritage assets and infrastructure.

Expand Housing Opportunities

Support the construction and rehabilitation of housing of all types to meet the needs of people of all incomes and abilities.

Plan Regionally; Implement Locally

Support multi-municipal, county and local government planning and implementation that has broad public input and support and is consistent with these principles.

Be Fair

Support equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development.

State Water Plan

In recognition of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, Section 301 (b), the Comprehensive Plan update includes recommendations to provide a reliable supply of water and recommends provisions aimed at adequately protecting water supply sources. These recommendations were developed in consideration of current and future water resources availability and its uses and limitations. The update is in conformance with the Pennsylvania State Water Plan and recognizes that lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities and that commercial agricultural production impact water supply sources.

Interrelationship

The synthesis of interrelated activities to resolve issues and problems is an important foundation to good community planning. In this regard, there are linkages among the elements, goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan update. All are related and should allow for complementary and orderly development while protecting and preserving the County's community character and natural features.

The Process

Planning is essentially an organized way of thinking about the future. Translating such thinking into action requires an orderly administrative process that generally involves collecting information, defining problems, setting goals and objectives, formulating possible courses of action, selecting preferred actions, implementing decisions, experiencing outcomes and then evaluating those outcomes to update goals and methods.

The Comprehensive Plan is the vehicle through which this process is initiated and formalized for the guidance of officials and the understanding of the general public. The plan is broad in scope, examining the physical, social and economic characteristics that have made Lawrence County what it is today while anticipating what conditions will impact the future. It is designed to establish basic policies and to guide future growth and development.

A steering committee comprised of community leaders and representatives of stakeholder organizations directed the planning process, participating in quarterly work sessions to review progress and provide input on specific policy topics. The Lawrence County Planning Commission and County Commissioners were also involved at various stages of the plan's development.

The planning process involved meetings with a wide variety of stakeholders to conduct and verify background research and collect input to guide the plan. These groups included, but were not limited to, the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, the New Castle Downtown Business Association, the County Department of Public Safety, the District Attorney's Office, the County Regional Council of Governments, the County Conservation District, the County Economic Development Corporation, the County Builders Association, the County Tourist Promotion Agency and school district superintendents and other educational providers, fire departments and members of the Amish community.

The County sought input on the plan's vision, needs assessment and recommendations from all 27 municipalities. Efforts included attending meetings and conducting mailings and surveys at key points of the planning process, designed to collect information on needs and opportunities specific to each community.

Additional public outreach took place via open house meetings, an online public survey and the publication of plan information on the County's website and Facebook page. Participants were encouraged to respond to preliminary findings and provide feedback on proposed visions, goals, objectives and strategies.

Comprehensive Plan outreach was coordinated with other community events, such as Summer 2015's Experience Lawrence County.

Kick-off

Review Previous Plans & Studies — Fall 2014

Stakeholder Meetings

Phase I: Market Study — Winter 2014/2015

Planning Commission Meeting

Background Studies Report — Spring 2015

Municipal Surveys & Planning Commission Meeting

Development of Visions and Guiding Principles — Summer 2015

Phase II: Build Out Analysis — Fall 2015

Public Open House & Regional COG Dinner
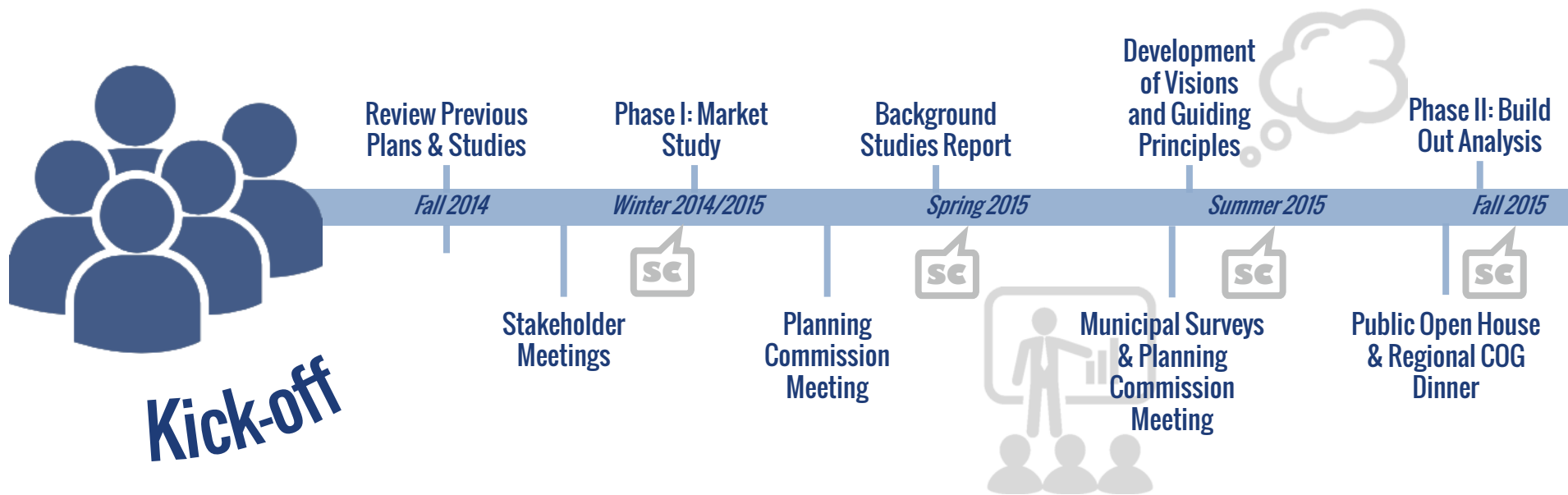
The Background Studies Report was completed early in the planning process to provide a fact base to inform the development of goals and objectives. This is a stand-alone document, which includes seven subject areas: Historic Context; Population and Housing; Land Use; Economic Development; Environment; Transportation; and Government, Facilities and Utilities. The snapshot sections within this document summarize the baseline data that was collected as part of the Background Studies Report.

The planning process also involved a Phase I: Market Study, which involved an assessment of the economic development and real estate climate and a Phase II: Build-Out Analysis to determine the implications of local zoning ordinances; a fiscal impact analysis to study the relationship between the costs and revenue associated with new development; economic modeling; and identification of sites having likely development opportunities.

Early on in the planning process, Lawrence County wanted to separate itself from traditional comprehensive plans, whereby each plan "element" has its own chapter. Recognizing that these elements are interrelated and the issues surrounding them cannot be separated out, the County identified four themes to address the issues and needs identified in the Background Studies Report. These themes were transformed into the Vision Areas and Guiding Principles.

Preparation of Recommendations

Winter 2015/2016

SC

Prioritization of Recommendations (public & municipal)

Finalize Draft Plan

Spring 2016

SC

Municipal Review of Future Land Use Plan

Develop Toolbox

Summer 2016

SC

Planning Commission Meeting

Fall 2016

Adoption

SC *indicates Steering Committee Meeting*
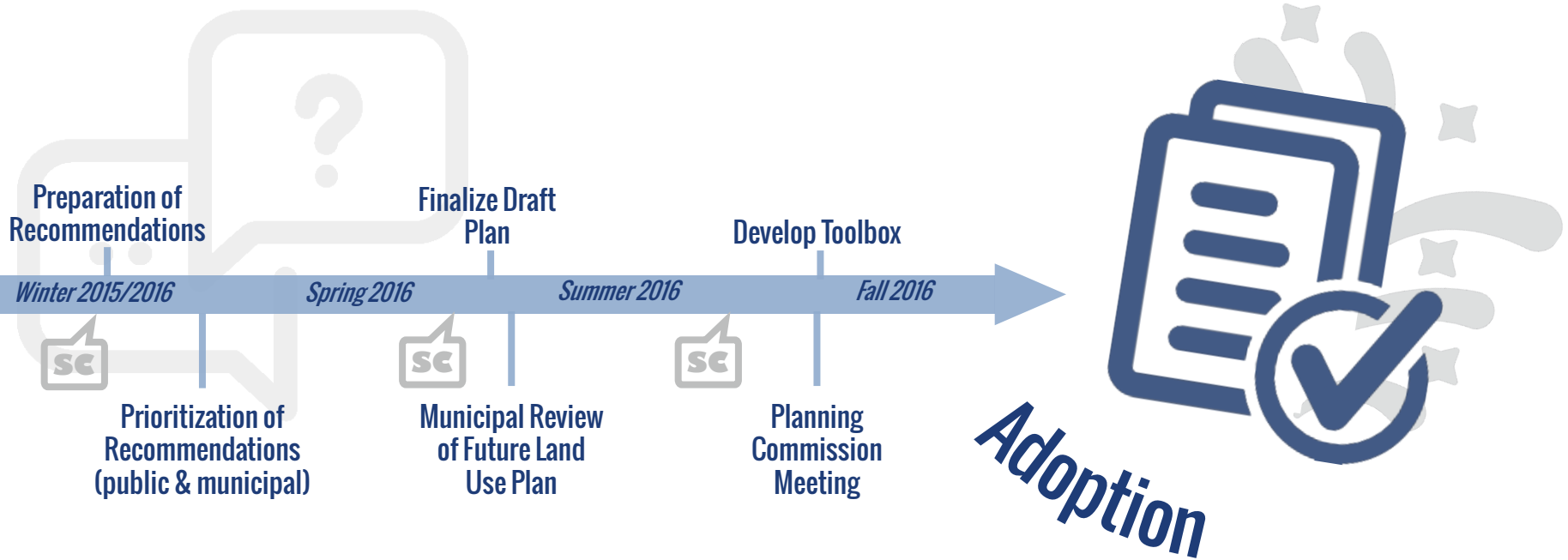
The Future Land Use Plan is a culminating element of the process, representing the context gained through previous studies, background research and a broad collection of stakeholder comments in illustrating the vision of what Lawrence County wishes to be.

The final and arguably most critical component of the Comprehensive Plan is the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan, which identifies six actions that should be taken by the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development to track implementation.

Additionally, the County developed a toolbox to be provided online and serve as a resource to municipalities and other organizations for plan implementation.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code contains the procedural requirements for adopting the Comprehensive Plan. The County held a public hearing and provided the draft plan to all 27 municipalities, adjacent counties and the public for review. The plan was adopted by resolution of the Lawrence County Board of Commissioners on October 11, 2016.

Using the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan not only sets a course for the future, but also establishes strategy and action steps to convert visions to reality. Its successful implementation relies on many individual actions on the part of service providers, local leaders and private decision-makers as well as County government. Thus, the plan provides a blueprint for the future that is relevant to different people in different ways. The following ideas describe what the Comprehensive Plan represents from various perspectives.

County Government	Lawrence County uses its Comprehensive Plan as a unifying context for policy and program design. The Plan will set an agenda for staff and officials, ensuring that the County's work reflects the collective vision of people living and doing business here. Land use and economic development recommendations, among others, will provide concrete direction for the allocation of resources and energy in achieving the County's goals.
Municipal Government	Local land use controls are the most powerful means by which the Comprehensive Plan can be implemented. The Future Land Use Map and related goals depend on local decisions regarding zoning and subdivision and land development approvals, as well as resource targeting by the County and other agencies. The Plan does not carry the force of law, but it does provide local leaders with critical regional context to form their own planning processes. The County will collaborate with its municipalities to advance common goals.
Local Organizations	The Comprehensive Plan forms the foundation for more specific planning initiatives, such as single-topic or areas-focused plans that local organizations may spearhead or partner with others to implement. The Plan signals to local nonprofit agencies, community groups and other organizations what priorities the County has established for its long term development and outlines strategies that represent potential partnership opportunities.
Residents and Business Owners	The vision and guiding principles contained in this plan are based on an outreach process designed to reflect the collective values of people who live and work in Lawrence County. In that way, these groups ultimately own the plan and have directed its priorities. Property owners will play an important role in the implementation of the Plan as they develop, redevelop or conserve land, and residents monitor implementation activities to ensure that they continue to contribute to desired future outcomes.

Vision and Principles

Overview

Vision Areas

The plan has four Vision Areas, each of which is accompanied by a set of Guiding Principles and subsequent recommendations.

Core Communities focuses on the urbanized town centers within the County that are faced with a unique set of issues that are not affecting most suburban and rural areas.

Connecting Communities is two-fold: the physical transportation connections and the social connections that cross political boundaries.

Healthy Communities examines the relationship between the built environment and the natural environment to the overall health of residents.

Complete Communities analyzes the impact of land use choices on the sustainability of communities.

Finally, the Future Land Use Plan compiles the recommendations from all four vision areas into a general guide for future development within the County.

Guiding Principles & Actions

Each of the Vision Areas contains a set of Guiding Principles, which reflect the core objectives of the County. Under the Guiding Principles are the recommendations.

Priority Level

Each recommendation was assigned a priority level, based upon input received from the municipalities, the Steering Committee and the general public.

High Priority = immediate action should be taken to begin implementation and is considered essential for plan success.

Medium Priority = action should be taken in the short-term to address implementation and is considered important for plan success.

Low Priority = action should be taken in the long-term as time and funding allows.

County's Role

For each of the recommendations, the County's role in implementation was identified.

Administer = action to be taken by the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development (LCDPCD) to lead implementation.

Assist = LCDPCD can provide technical and/or financial assistance to municipalities and/or organizations, who must take local action to implement the project.

Advise = LCDPCD can provide support to municipalities and/or organizations for implementation.

Benchmarks

At the conclusion of each Vision Area, a series of benchmarks are identified, which provide measurables for the County to gage implementation and plan success. The benchmarks are primarily outcome measures, whereby they measure whether services and/or programs initiated meet proposed standards and demonstrate impact and benefit related to the overall Plan Vision and Guiding Principles. In order to measure success of reaching the benchmarks, the LCDPCD will need to obtain information from municipalities and other organizations.

J. Marti, Lawrence County Conservation District Photo Contest

core

[kawr, kohr]

noun
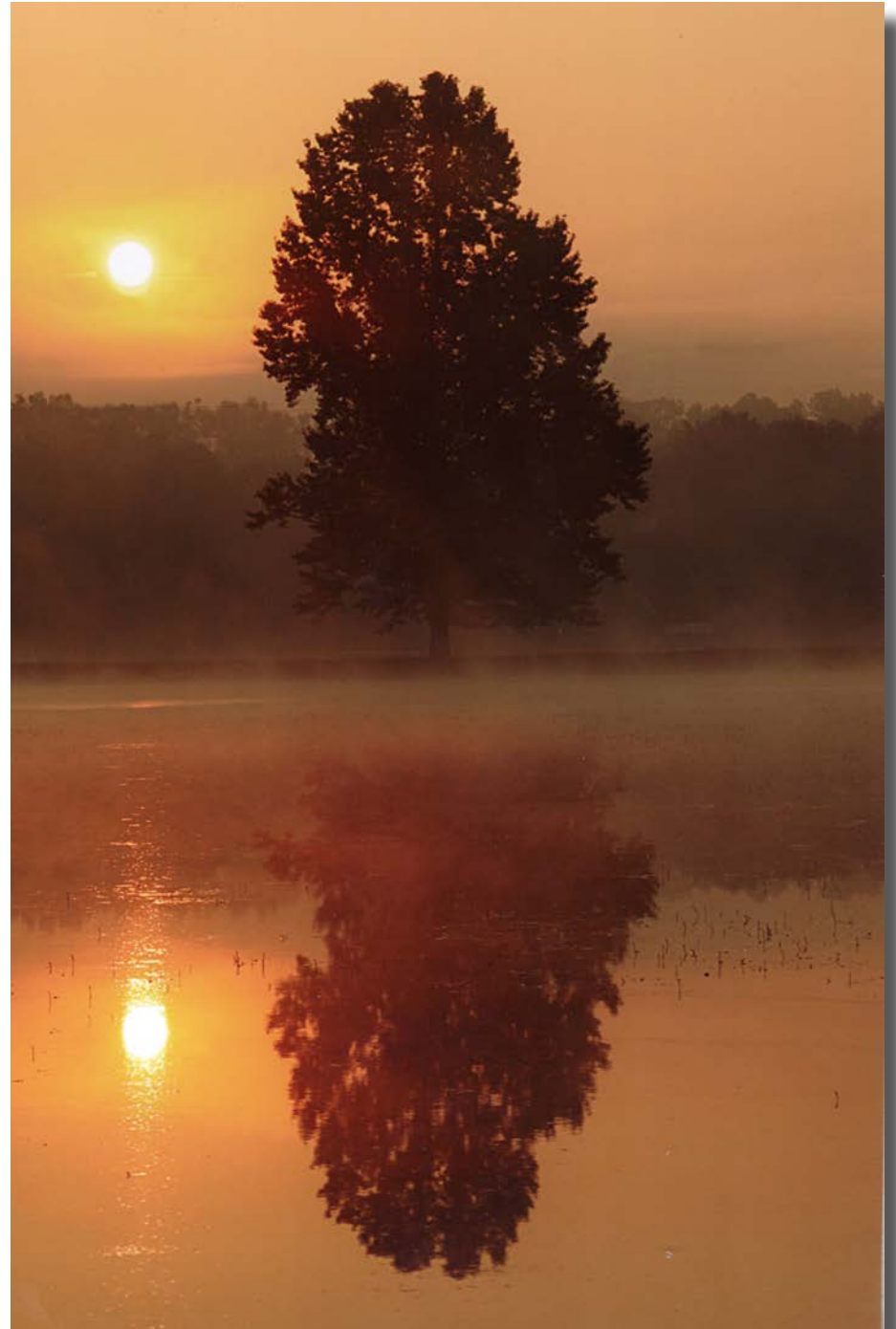
the central, innermost or most essential part of anything[1]

Lawrence County's communities are diverse in density, form and character, providing a broad range of environments for living and working. Rural landscapes stretch across a large extent of the county's land area, offering well-preserved natural conditions suited to agriculture and recreation. Homes sparsely scattered along country lanes represent a quiet and traditionally rural way of life. Town centers gather neighborhood amenities, situating homes within proximity of restaurants, shopping and services. And in the county's urban centers, historic structures line walkable streets where residents and visitors can find the greatest concentration of variety in housing, commercial offerings, industrial productivity and regional attractions.

The challenges these communities face are as different as they are. This section focuses on the issues common among core communities, defined during the visioning process as those that serve as destinations for employment and/or tourism, feature a Main Street / downtown, and are characterized as densely developed older municipalities where

1   "Core." Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary. reference.com/browse/core).

a long history means both a rich local character and the need for investment in revitalization. While the core communities in Lawrence County are vastly different in terms of size, population and other demographics, they function as town centers within their geographic locations and as such, all are in need of revitalization efforts to some degree.

As growth has extended into neighboring townships, the core communities have experienced diminished tax bases in recent decades, reflecting population losses and an increase in property vacancy. Portions of housing stock have become dilapidated and/or obsolete, and the spread of blight threatens cyclical neighborhood decline. Crime (or, at least the perception of it), lower-quality schools (compared statewide and to their neighboring districts) and the stagnation or decline of property values represent obstacles to attracting investment. As the tax base decreases, the cost of services only increases, particularly with regard to public safety (police, fire) and infrastructure (aging water and sewer lines). With declining population come questions about how to match the demand for public improvements

and services with what local governments can sustainably afford to provide.

The prosperity of Lawrence County as a whole is rooted in the ability of core communities to attract potential residents and business activity. These places are functional focal points, local hubs built with the capacity to accommodate industrial innovation and population expansion. Their full systems of existing public infrastructure represent an efficient alternative to the cost of laying new roads and pipes into currently undeveloped outlying areas. And their dense integration of different types of neighborhood elements along pedestrian-scale streets positions them to meet the lifestyle preferences of a new generation of households.

Restoring vitality to the county's core communities will require stabilizing tipping-point areas, re-energizing and empowering local stakeholders and elevating the appeal of public spaces. It will require addressing social problems far larger than local government has the capacity to solve. As challenging as these prospects are, core communities are uniquely positioned to

Core communities
were defined during the visioning process as those that serve as **destinations** for employment and/or tourism and feature a Main Street / downtown, and are **densely developed** older municipalities where a long history means both a **rich local character** and the need for investment in revitalization.

These characteristics appear in the greater New Castle area, Ellwood City, New Wilmington, Wampum and Volant, and also in smaller pockets elsewhere.

implement some of the strategies most important to ensuring that the county can meet the demands of demographic and social change, such as affordable housing options suited to smaller senior and millennial households, multi-modal transportation connections and access to a full range of recreational opportunities.

City of New Castle

Ellwood City Borough

New Wilmington Borough

Wampum Borough
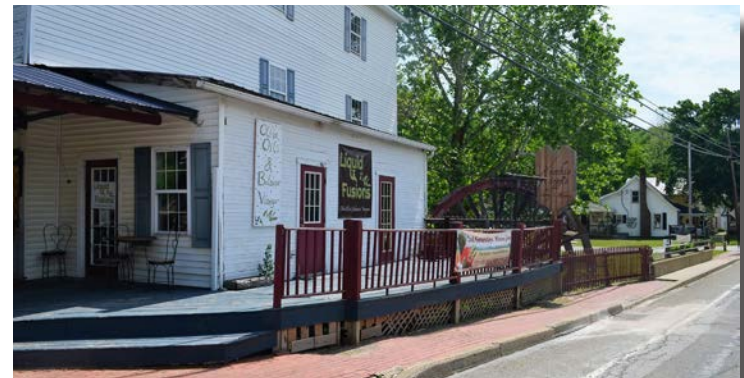
Volant Borough

Figure 1:   Core Communities (Population Density > 500 Persons Per Square Mile)
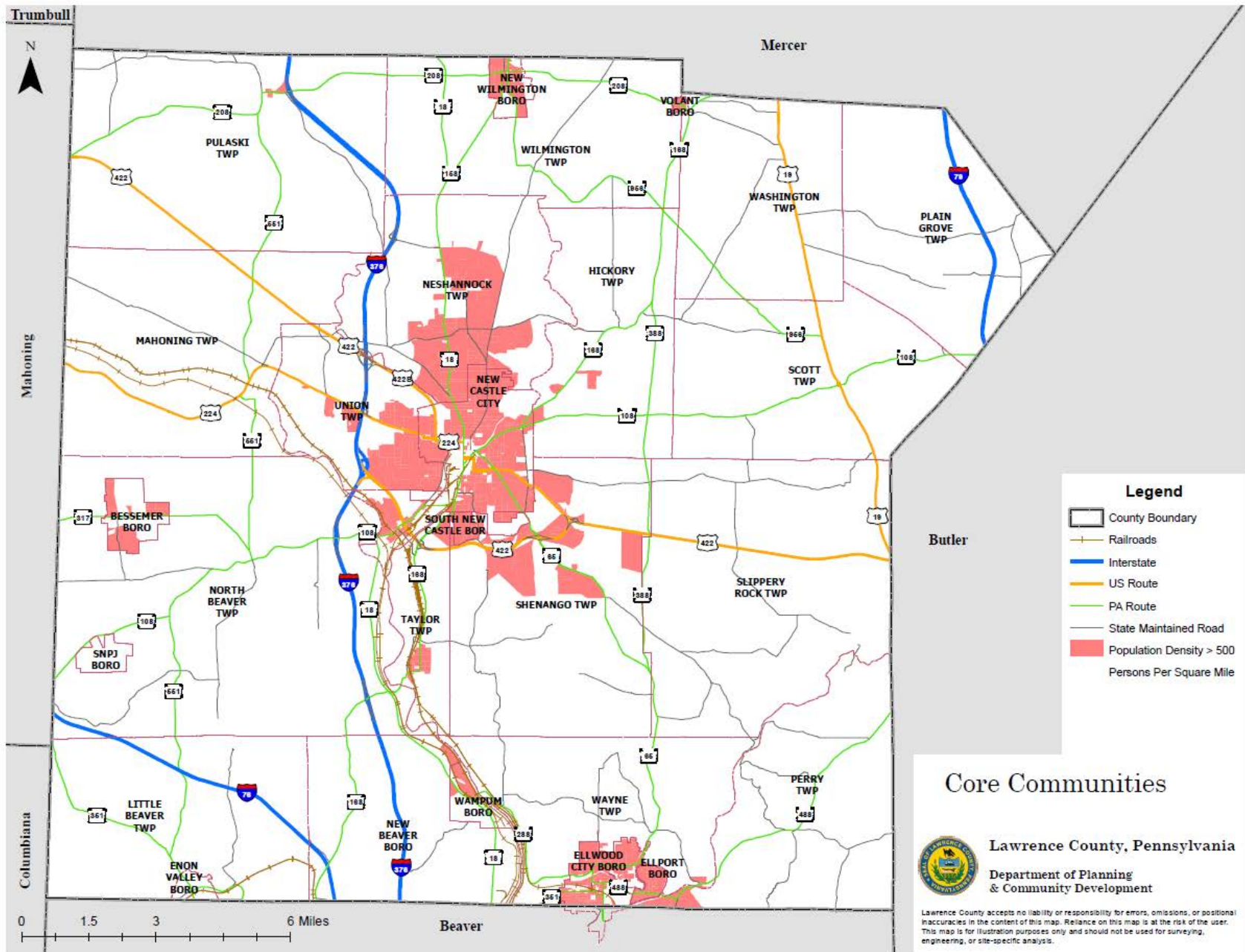
Zambelli fireworks over Downtown New Castle

SNAPSHOT

Population loss in the core communities is associated with abandoned housing and vacant storefronts. A lack of employment opportunities has been cited as an issue in retaining and attracting new residents.

- Population losses in New Castle drove the County's population loss of 4,269 (4.5%) between 2000 and 2013. While the city represented 25.5% of the County's total population in 2013, its population decline since 2000 is equivalent to 75.5% of the County's net loss. This is not to suggest that everyone moving from New Castle relocated out of the County, however: The Census does not indicate how many residents moved from the city to its suburbs, but it reports that 4,566 people in 2012 alone moved from one area of Lawrence County to another.

- While Lawrence County has recovered some employment losses resulting from the 2007-2009 recession, the County is still 10,000 jobs short of its pre-crisis total. Further, unemployment within the County, though trending downward, remains higher than levels across the surrounding region.

Figure 2: Core Communities
Population Change, 2000 to 2013

Ellwood City	-9.3%
New Castle	-12.3%
New Wilmington	4.1%
Wampum	5.5%
Volant	64.6%

U.S. Census Bureau

• As of 2011, twice as many employed workers commuted out of the County as commuted in. This represents an increase in outflow since 2007 related to overall job loss associated with the recession, as workers were forced to look beyond Lawrence County for employment, even at the cost of longer commutes.

• Employers in the County have expressed the following issues related to workforce:

  » **Having a trained workforce.** As technology changes, attracting and keeping a trained workforce is a challenge expressed by employers. There are job openings and a need for better employees to fill them; employees cannot pass the entrance test and/or drug test to fill them.

  » **Replacement workforce.** With the aging population, employers are having to replace educated and trained workers with those who do not have the same education or training. This is particularly a challenge in the manufacturing industry, which has a higher rate of employees at or nearing retirement age.

  » Housing is not an issue in attracting a suitable workforce, as housing is affordable compared to neighboring counties.

• Consistent with other counties across the region, Lawrence County added more housing units than households between 2000 and 2013. This indicates sprawling development patterns of new units being constructed at the suburban fringe as households empty out of older, more densely settled cities and boroughs.

Demographic patterns call for greater variety in housing development, particularly affordable, lower-maintenance and/or multi-family homes to meet the needs of seniors and non-family households - housing types well suited to core communities.

• The 55-64 age cohort is expected to experience the greatest growth in Lawrence County during coming years. People nearing retirement typically give greater consideration to downsizing their residence while remaining close to family, friends and amenities. As this group moves out of larger homes and households in younger cohorts continue to trend smaller in size, the County should expect an increase in single-family housing units for sale. The County already

Retirement Home in New Wilmington Borough

has a significant amount of vacant single-family housing stock, particularly in New Castle. An excess of properties for sale will keep home prices low.

- Within the core communities, the housing stock is predominantly older, single-family homes. Most of these communities have expressed a need to expand housing choices to include condominiums, triplexes / quads and upper story apartments in the downtown. Stakeholders reported that residential development in the County's core communities, particularly of multi-family units, will depend on the expansion of meaningful employment opportunities.

- Most of the housing stock in the core communities tends to be smaller in size and lack modern amenities such as multiple bathrooms, multiple car garages and eat-in kitchens. Thus, it can be difficult to compete with surrounding communities for potential homebuyers that can offer the larger, more modern single-family homes.

- Although residential rents and housing values have increased in recent years, the vacancy rate in Lawrence County remains

Older single family homes in Ellwood City

New townshouses in Shenango Township

high enough to qualify the local housing market as weak. The County was insulated from the economic recession, but it was also insulated from the prior housing bubble that drove up prices elsewhere in the state and nation. Prices are highest in Neshannock, Shenango and Wilmington Townships, while New Castle's high vacancy rate and lower property values reinforce a cycle of disinvestment.

- Inflation-adjusted housing costs have escalated more rapidly than household incomes in the County, which makes housing less affordable than it previously was. However, the County's relatively low home sales prices and rent rates contribute to a low cost of living that continues to make it competitive within the region.

The Core Communities have higher property tax rates than their suburban and rural counterparts, placing an increasing financial burden on an already lower-income population base.

- As of 2013, 45.5% of all people in Lawrence County with annual incomes below the poverty line lived in New Castle. About one-quarter of all city residents lived in poverty, compared to 10.6% across the balance of the county. Low household income makes it difficult for local retailers to thrive.

- Subsidized housing and public assistance programs are concentrated in New Castle, an Act 47 municipality that must apply increasing revenue pressure on an eroding tax base to continue to provide basic public services.

- To draw a sufficient level of revenue despite vacancies and lower assessed values, core communities tend to impose higher property tax millage rates than neighboring townships, which makes them less competitive. In 2015, municipal levies exceeded five mills in New Castle, Ellwood City, South New Castle Borough and Volant

Borough. New Castle has raised its millage from 9.916 in 2007 to more than 13 in 2015 to compensate for falling taxable values and to comply with its Act 47 financial recovery plan. Stakeholders have cited the high taxes in the City as a reason businesses have left the City and/or do not locate there.

Distressed economies and real estate markets leave the core communities without the demand nor the means to develop. The focus needs to be on developing strategies designed to assist these communities in realizing effective infill development.

- With little vacant land to develop, the core communities will need to focus on infill and redevelopment. "Infill development occurs in a built-up neighborhood, often using vacant land or rehabilitating existing properties. Infill development can bring many benefits, including financial savings for municipalities, increased property values for residents and businesses, easier travel, reduced pollution, and economic stabilization of distressed communities."[1]

---

1   www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/fresno_

- The County suffers from a lack of demand for retail space due to lower household incomes and lower-than-average consumer expenditures. Retail development activity has been concentrated in the suburban northwest portion of the County along Route 18 and Route 224. However, there will remain a need for retail that serves both residents and workers, such as restaurants, personal needs, grocery and corner stores.

- Most of the core communities reported vacant buildings in their downtowns as a priority concern. In particular, New Castle is faced with absentee landlords, out-of-state investors and local individuals with bankruptcy issues contributing to declining building conditions and overall blight. A 2014 City perception survey revealed that the two highest issues facing the City are a lack of diverse businesses and attractive storefronts. However, recent successes at Washington Center suggest that the right incentives and amenities can attract new tenants.

- Ellwood City has recently purchased a blighted property in their central business district and is evaluating options for redevelopment.

final_report_042215_508_final.pdf

- Infrastructure plays a prominent role in the ability of a community to employ effective infill development strategies. The County's access to major interstate road, rail, transit and air travel and the reasonable price of land position it well to attract new industrial prospects, especially given recent growth in local manufacturing and the potential for more secondary business supporting the energy sector. In addition, all of the core communities, with the exception of Wampum Borough, have indicated the ability to accommodate new development within their public water and sewage systems.

Rehabilitation and infill development in the core communities must be addressed within the context of preserving and enhancing the historic character of the built environment.

- More than 40% of all housing in Bessemer Borough, Ellwood City Borough, Enon Valley Borough, New Castle City, Wampum Borough and Volant Borough was built prior to 1940. The median age of homes in these communities is in the early 1940s, compared to the 1970s in the County's growing townships. The following existing and potential historic districts can be

found in the Core Communities:

- » Although Ellwood City does not have any listed historic districts, two potential districts have been previously nominated and evaluated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The eligibility of the Ellwood City Downtown Commercial Historic District was undetermined as of 2002 (insufficient information to evaluate) and the Pittsburgh Circle Historic District was deemed ineligible in 2010.

- » The City of New Castle features the North Hill Historic District, which is the third largest historic district in Pennsylvania. Just north of the central

Pittsburgh Circle -Ellwood City Borough

business district, the North Hill Historic District covers 91 blocks and 449.7 acres, including 1,888 buildings. The District was on the Preservation Pennsylvania At-Risk list in 2000, culminating in the demolition of the New Castle High School and the Reis House.

The New Castle Downtown Historic District was deemed ineligible in 2012; however, in 2009, the City enacted historic overlay districts as part of their zoning ordinance. City residents cited quality historic architecture as a strength of the City in a 2014 survey.

» The Westminster College Historic District in New Wilmington Borough was deemed eligible in 1999 but no further action has been taken.

» Neither Volant Borough nor Wampum Borough has a listed, eligible or otherwise undetermined historic district. Volant does feature the historic Volant Mill, a prominent feature in town.

From top (clockwise): Westminster College; Historic North Hill - New Castle ; New Castle Playhouse; Volant Mill

Stormwater management is an issue that every municipality must address, but urban communities must also comply with federal permitting procedures.

- Municipalities (cities, boroughs, and townships) that meet certain standards must obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit coverage for discharges of stormwater from their municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s). Lawrence County has three MS4 municipalities: Ellport Borough and Ellwood City Borough (Connoquenessing Creek / Beaver River Watershed) and the City of New Castle (Beaver River, Mahoning River, Neshannock Creek, Shenango River / Beaver, Mahoning and Shenango River Watersheds).

Neshannock Creek, City of New Castle

- Under the permit, the communities are required to institute a multi-faceted program to help to reduce the potential for continued pollution of area stormwater runoff. The six minimum controls include developing programs in the following:

  » Public Education and Outreach

  » Public Involvement/Participation

  » Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

  » Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control

  » Post-Construction Stormwater Runoff for New Development

  » Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping

- Of the three communities, Ellwood City is the only to offer information related to their MS4 permitting procedures and requirements online, as well as information for residents on how to address stormwater management on their properties.

While all of the Core Communities are served by public water and sewage infrastructure, there are limitations and financial concerns that need to be addressed.

- In terms of capacity, New Castle, Ellwood City and Ellport Borough stated that their public water and sewage systems can handle new development.

- New Castle cited the availability of infrastructure to support new development and significant investments made by utility companies in system upgrades.

- Ellwood City cited their aging infrastructure (electric, storm and sanitary sewers) as one of the biggest concerns facing their Borough. While their sewage plant can accommodate new development (it was operating at less than 50% capacity in 2014), the lines are old and in need of repairs/replacement. Gas and water lines have been updated recently and are adequate.

- New Wilmington is constructing a new sewage plant that will provide enough capacity for future growth. Their water system has capacity now.

- Volant cited the ability to expand its water and sewage system to accommodate new development.

- Wampum cited infrastructure as their top concern, with the need to expand their systems in order to accommodate new development.

Public safety is an issue that can be better addressed at a County and regional level.

- In terms of the Core Communities, the City of New Castle has a reputation of being a dangerous city. Neighborhood Scout provides crime rates for cities and towns throughout the country and gives New Castle a crime index of 10 (out of 100, which is the safest), meaning that it is safer than 10% of the cities in the United States.[1] It has a violent crime rate of 5.09 per 1,000 residents, compared to 3.14 in Pennsylvania and 3.8 in the U.S. New Castle has a property crime rate of 38.49 per 1,000 residents, compared to 19.32 in Pennsylvania and 26.0 in the U.S. The city center has the highest crime rate within the greater New Castle area. However,

City Police cited reductions in violent crimes between 2012 and 2014, including aggravated assaults and an increase in drug- and prostitution-related arrests as a result of more aggressive policing and implementation of its street crime unit.[2]

» Stakeholders cited the perception of crime as a reason for low foot traffic in New Castle and a reason why potential residents might hesitate to locate there. In a 2014 City survey, 61% of respondents cited safety as a priority issue.

› The City has been taking steps to address the safety concerns. In 2015, it was accredited as a Safe Community by the National Safety Council through its Safe Communities America Program. The third community in Pennsylvania to achieve such accreditation, the City has implemented key intervention strategies to identify and address the leading causes of death, including elderly fall-prevention programs, emergency preparedness services and crisis assistance. [3]

1   "Crime rates." Neighborhood Scout. Retrieved online March 2016. (www.neighborhoodscout.com/pa/new-castle/crime/). Crime statistics are from the FBI and the U.S. Justice Department and are currently based on the 2014 year total data, which was released in November 2015.

2   "Is New Castle really that dangerous?" New Castle News. October 8, 2014. Retrieved online March 2016. (http://goo.gl/9LluLj).
3   "First Student Supports National Safety Council Accreditation of New Castle, PA as a 'Safe Community.'" Retrieved online March 2016. (http://goo.gl/F46ZRZ).

How does a Safe Community work?

Safe Communities America, a recognition program of the National Safety Council, is a proven model to reduce injuries and deaths.

Brings together people who care about safety

Uses data to **identify leading causes** of injuries and deaths in the community

Measures success and continues to make improvements

Makes a plan to address the issues using proven methods

> › In 2014, New Castle also became a Pennsylvania Blueprint Community, which is a revitalization initiative for improving business climate and livability. Their five-year strategy includes objectives aimed at reducing blight; increasing walkability through the Riverwalk and other trail connections; increasing safety through increased lighting, police patrols and video surveillance; offering more programs to increase foot traffic in the downtown; rehabilitating neighborhoods to offer improved and safer housing choices; and increasing the green space within the City through improved parks, community gardens and trail connections.

The Lawrence County Department of Public Safety oversees the emergency management function in the County, operates the 911 center, coordinates readiness to hazardous materials incidents, and serves as the County's representative within the Pennsylvania Region 13 Counter Terrorism Task Force. Within the County, the following are first responders:

- There are 15 police departments: Bessemer Borough, Ellwood City Borough, Hickory Township, Little Beaver Township, Mahoning Township, Neshannock Township, New Beaver Borough, New Castle, New Wilmington Borough, North Beaver Township, Pulaski Township, Shenango Township, Union Township, Wampum Borough and Wayne Township. In addition, the State Police have an office in the City of New Castle along with the Lawrence County Sheriff's Office. Some of the local police departments do partner with surrounding municipalities to provide police protection while a few municipalities, such as Volant Borough, cited the lack of their own police force as a concern.

- There are 20 fire departments: Bessemer Borough VFD, Chewton VFD (Wampum Borough), Ellwood City Borough VFD, Enon Valley Borough VFD, Hickory Township VFD, Mahoning Township VFD, Neshannock Township VFD, New Beaver Borough VFD, New Castle Fire Department, New Wilmington Borough VFD, North Beaver Township VFD, Pulaski Township Fire Department, Scott Township VFD, Shenango Township VFD, Slippery Rock Township VFD, South New Castle Borough VFD, Taylor Township VFD, Union Township VFD, Wayne Township VFD and Wurtemburg – Perry VFD. The City of New Castle and Ellwood City Borough operate full-time professional fire departments.

Lawrence County Department of Public Safety

• The mission of the Lawrence County District Attorney's Office is to "pursue justice and protect the people of the County of Lawrence and the State of Pennsylvania by aggressively and fairly prosecuting those who violate the law." The D.A. serves as the public prosecutor and the chief law enforcement officer in the County and is responsible for investigating and prosecuting all cases alleging criminal conduct. The Department created a Drug Task Force, comprised of officers selected by member police agency chiefs, to intercept and prevent drug trafficking throughout the County. The Department is beginning a sex task force and would like to expand into homicidal and child investigations.

• Countywide public safety issues identified during the planning process include:

» There is a need for a regionalized Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) team as there is a two-hour wait time currently.

» There is a need to coordinate trainings for local police, fire and other emergency responders as it is cost-prohibitive to provide at the local level.

» Drugs, particularly heroin, continue to be a serious problem within the County, in terms of users and trafficking (the County serves as a meeting location between Pittsburgh and Youngstown and connections to Detroit). There is a need for a drug rehabilitation / inpatient facility in the County.

» Crime against the elderly is an issue.

ISSUES CONSIDERED

→ How can local leaders ensure that the County's housing stock matches the needs and preferences of the buyers and/or renters the County hopes to attract, many of whom live in smaller households? (If the answer is to develop a wider variety of unit types, what happens to the existing large homes we can expect will be left behind by aging households?)

→ Growing numbers of vacant housing units threaten neighborhood vitality, depress property values and strain public safety resources. What barriers exist to reintroduce these properties to the market, and what related strategies would be most effective?

→ Given a decline in population density and the rising costs of maintaining and extending public infrastructure, how can the County prioritize or incentivize development that takes advantage of existing assets and resources?

→ The municipalities with the oldest infrastructure systems and greatest maintenance demands tend to be those with the most diminished tax bases and least resources with which to address problems. Finding ways to fund improvements to public infrastructure represents a much larger concern in some communities than in others.

→ What barriers exist to connect County residents with jobs located here? What resources and/or programming would be required to ensure that the County's workforce is qualified for the types of local employment opportunities that are expected to develop?

→ How can the County increase opportunities for local residents to engage in entrepreneurship, especially entrepreneurial options that can utilize the County's educated population, such as business services or online startups?

→ Population decline in core communities weakens the tax base available to support the infrastructure and amenities the community provides as its functional and symbolic center of activity. How can municipalities alleviate an environment of competition to collectively promote their shared interests?

→ What opportunities exist at the County level to better address public safety concerns?

core communities
vision

" Targeted reinvestment in the county's core communities will reinforce their status as prosperous, inviting and livable activity hubs that offer a complete range of well-connected neighborhood elements, regional amenities and opportunities for business development. "

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS

1 Offer a variety of safe, decent and attractive housing alternatives in mixed-income neighborhoods well connected to local amenities such as retail, dining, education, recreation and health care.

		County Role		
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
Undertake a countywide housing plan.	**H**	**X**		
Preserve and promote the uniquely identifying characteristics of each core community in creating attractive spaces that will retain and attract residents.	**H**		**X**	
Promote property maintenance codes and provide technical assistance to assist their local adoption.	**H**			**X**
Develop model ordinances to promote landlord responsibility.	M (*NC)		X	
Build relationships with/among neighborhood groups to foster local capacity for implementation.	M		X	
Continue to administer the housing rehabilitation program in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.	M (*EC)	X		
Work with local lenders to create/promote a rehabilitation loan product that would appeal to would-be buyers of historic urban core homes.	M (*NC)	X	X	
Broaden the array of affordable rental housing options along with the development of new housing at a range of income levels.	M (*EC)		X	
Approach large local employers to promote establishing employer-assisted housing programs in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.	L	X		
Promote the acceptance of Section 8 vouchers in units throughout the County.	L (*NC)		X	

* = indicates that this recommendation was ranked as a high priority by New Castle (NC) or Ellwood City (EC)

2 Position core communities to meet the demands of a changing population by focusing local land use regulations more on the function and character of neighborhoods than the traditional separation of uses.

		County Role		
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
Work with municipal leaders and staff to ensure that local regulations promote design elements that reinforce urban character while allowing flexibility for mixed uses.	H		X	
Connect the efforts of agencies working on different projects to ensure that all public policies and agendas work in concert to advance shared goals.	H	X	X	
Determine and market the "return on investment" associated with living in core communities.	M *(*NC)*			X

3 Maintain adequate and environmentally sound public utility and infrastructure systems.

		County Role		
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
Prioritize water and sewer system investments that bring local infrastructure up to federal standards.	H			X
Coordinate efforts within MS4 municipalities to address stormwater management issues and public outreach efforts.	H			X
Provide model and green infrastructure solutions to municipalities to incorporate into subdivision and land development ordinances and promote on-lot best management practices.	H	X	X	

* = indicates that this recommendation was ranked as a high priority by New Castle (NC) or Ellwood City (EC)

4 Help core communities regain their status as regional economic drivers, affording an expanded and diverse employment base for residents.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Identify and empower an agency to assemble and prepare sites for large-scale investment.	H	X		
Compile a toolbox of strategies and funding sources that the county can provide as technical assistance to potential developers, investors or community groups.	H	X		
Promote new retail business that caters to commuters, such as restaurants and personal services, in addition to core neighborhood-based retail (pharmacy, grocery, corner stores).	H			X
Continue to promote workforce training programs that address a skills gap perceived by employers, such as the Chamber's School to Work program and workforce investment board partnerships with area colleges.	H			X
Evaluate the feasibility of land banking as a means of clearing title on problematic properties and returning them to the tax rolls.	M (*EC)	X	X	
Connect local residents to entrepreneurship opportunities, especially those that capitalize upon the county's educated population, such as business services or online startups.	M (*EC)		X	
More aggressively market existing tax incentive programs for commercial and industrial development in core communities.	M			X

∗ = indicates that this recommendation was ranked as a high priority by New Castle (NC) or Ellwood City (EC)

5

Promote intergovernmental cooperation to assist the efficient and effective delivery of public safety and other essential community services.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Support efforts to expand countywide authority to create a Sex Crime Task Force and Homicide and Child Investigations.	H	X		
Create a regionalized Community Emergency Response Team.	H	X		
Support efforts to offer regional training opportunities for local emergency responders.	H		X	
Offer expanded training for county employees, such as active shooter training.	M (*NC)	X		
Conduct a consolidation study for local emergency responders to reduce cost and improve efficiency.	M (*NC)		X	
Continue the Jails to Jobs Program.	M (*NC)	X		
Determine the feasibility of creating a new drug rehab/inpatient facility in the county.	M	X		

* = indicates that this recommendation was ranked as a high priority by New Castle (NC) or Ellwood City (EC)

Benchmarks

Increase the percentage of occupied commercial buildings in the downtowns.

A variety of housing choice and affordability is available.

Provide safer and more inviting neighborhoods.

Increase the equity and efficiency of service provision across municipalities.

connect

[k*uh*-nekt]

verb

1. to join, link or fasten together; unite or bind

2. to establish communication between; put in communication[1]

Communities are connected in the physical sense via the transportation and infrastructure network. As road connections improve and multi-modal alternatives grow, there are more and more ways to move into and around Lawrence County. Communities are also connected in the social sense where they cooperate to work towards a mutual goal. As many communities are faced with limited financial resources, partnerships with counties, municipalities and other public and private organizations are vital to providing the quality of life that residents want and need. The ever-expanding transportation network has made people much more transient and has expanded our concept of what we consider our community. We no longer tend to live, work and play within any one community (or in terms of this plan, one municipality or even county). As such, it is imperative for communities to form partnerships to address regional issues. Technological advances and creative approaches to problem-solving enable greater opportunity for community collaboration than ever before.

---

1   *"Connect." Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary. reference.com/browse/connect).*

The **future of the County's economic health** relates clearly to the ability of the transportation system to meet the needs of existing and future employers and workers.

The development and maintenance of the County's transportation network depends primarily on planning and investment from public agencies at the local, county, state and federal levels, predicated on established public goals and responsive to changes in local markets and land development patterns. Lawrence County has limited control over spending decisions in the hands of other agencies, such as municipal budgets or state and federal funds allocated via the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for which the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is responsible. However, the County plays an active role in determining

and advancing local system priorities that are consistent with its vision and future land use map. It can also locate and marshal additional resources, advance projects that expand bicycle/pedestrian options and promote land use decisions that make the County a better-connected community.

Across the region, resource limitations have created a backlog of deferred maintenance, which has translated to deficient conditions on certain roads and bridges. With this in mind, SPC's recently adopted Long Range Plan "Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan" emphasizes sustainability – preserving, restoring and improving the capacity and use of the existing network. SPC plans to strategically increase operational efficiency by more proactively managing the way traffic moves throughout the system, investment that should reduce the need to pave and maintain new miles of road. These concepts are consistent with other themes of Lawrence County's Comprehensive Plan, particularly the vision to concentrate future development

activity in areas already served or that are reasonably close to existing infrastructure.

Next to Allegheny County, Lawrence County is the region's most well-served county in terms of fixed-route public transit. The New Castle Area Transit Authority (NCATA) provides fixed-route service to the City of New Castle and its surrounding areas and to the City of Pittsburgh. It also provides service to New Wilmington, Volant and Ellwood City, although not daily, and Saturday service to the Grove City Outlets. NCATA offers three Park & Rides within Lawrence County (the Downtown Transfer Center and on Mahoning Avenue in New Castle along with the US 422 site in Shenango Township) and has agreements with the Butler Transit Authority to use two of PennDOT's Park N Rides in Portersville and Evans City. All of the buses are equipped with bike racks and they recently introduced hybrid buses into their fleet.

The future of the County's economic health relates clearly to the ability of the

transportation system to meet the needs of existing and future employers and workers. A less obvious, but equally important issue, is equity. The transportation system impacts the ability of residents and workers to access jobs, services and amenities. Suburban development patterns typically favor households with a vehicle, which causes access problems for senior citizens, lower-income households and others who may rely on transit, walking or other options. The County can advance equity in access by ensuring that development decisions respect alternatives to driving.

Improved equity is also a key outcome of collaboration across municipalities, as partnerships allow governments to address problems that transcend municipal borders. Whereas a single community may have limited resources or expertise to address issues such as stormwater management or affordable housing, communities working together can take advantage of economies of scale to jointly advance mutual goals.

In addition, the County and its municipalities will need to examine the equity of the cost to provide services that span municipal borders, such as public transit. While the City of New Castle currently funds the bulk of the local transit match, NCATA provides service to many residents who live in municipalities outside of the City and in some cases, even outside of the County (i.e. Butler).

Education is, arguably, as critical a component of the public infrastructure as any road or utility connection – not only the public education available to school-age children or skills-based opportunities that open up local job markets to would-be employees, but also the tools and background that the County can provide to help communities achieve their most prosperous future. The County can lay the groundwork for efficient, equitable and sensible development by continuing to serve as a resource on best practices and by reinforcing sound planning principles in everyday decision-making.

This chapter examines ways to improve the quality of connections among communities — both the physical infrastructure that moves people and goods and the social infrastructure that moves ideas.

New Castle Area Transit Authority

SNAPSHOT

The County's access to the regional transportation network makes it a desirable place to live and to locate a business.

- The County has access to nearly 20 collector and arterial roadways, in addition to interchanges with I-80 just north of the County line via I-79; I-76/ Pennsylvania Turnpike that crosses its southwest corner; I-376 running north and south, west of New Castle; and U.S. Route 422 crossing northwest to southeast through the center of the County. The County connects to regional, national and international destinations via access to rivers, heavy rail and air transportation, as well.

- As of 2013, Lawrence County residents had the shortest average commute of any Southwestern Pennsylvania county, at 22.4 minutes. This is lower than both the statewide average (25.9 minutes) and the national average (25.5 minutes).
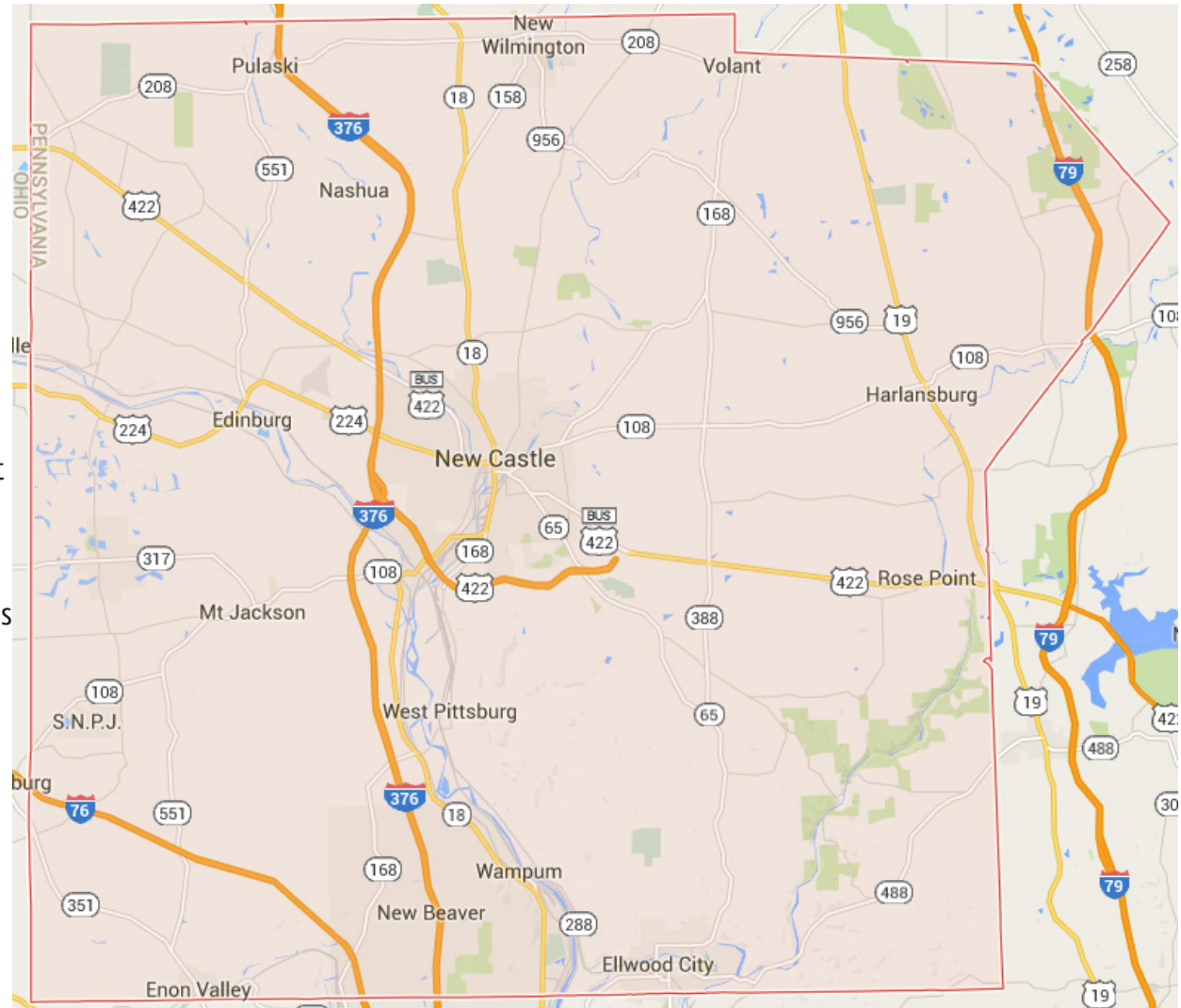
Source: Google Maps

The limited funds available to create and maintain infrastructure call for careful attention to systems planning, particularly the prioritization of investments that make the County's transportation network more sustainable in the long term.

• Federal legislation drives a regional transportation planning framework that is now more strongly driven by data and performance measures.

• SPC's congestion management toolbox prescribes strategies on both the supply and demand sides, such as promoting alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel, increasing access to carpooling and vanpooling, making operational improvements (intersection upgrades, access management, signal improvements, etc.) and supporting land use policies that reduce the need for automobile transportation.

• Traffic volumes on many arterial roads have fallen since 2000, reflecting changes to origins/destinations, travel preferences or the configuration of the road system.

• Lawrence County plays an active role in advancing its transportation improvements within the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) as follows:

» **SPC Board** – Lawrence County has five representatives on the SPC Board, representing the County's interest for the ten-county region with regards to SPC's role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Local Development District (LDD) and the Economic Development District (EDD).

» **Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)** – The TTC deals exclusively with technical issues related to transportation and makes recommendations to SPC and the Policy Committee regarding the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), transportation-related air quality plans and other transportation issues. The TTC meets monthly and includes the planning directors of the ten SPC counties.

» **Transit Operators Committee (TOC)** – the TOC is comprised of representatives from the ten (10) transit agencies and three (3) additional transportation management associations and is responsible for recommending the annual allocation of federal and state funding for transit operations and capital improvements in the Region; drafting the transit portion of the TIP; tracking the use of federal transit funds on the TIP; and addressing other common transit issues of regional interest.

» **Public Participation Panel (PPP)** – each County has a PPP, whose role is to provide public comment on major transportation decisions, including adopting or amending the Long Range Plan, TIP, Air Quality Conformity Determination and the Public Participation Plan. Members are appointed by the County Commissioners and are reflective of the diverse population within the County, with special attention to representing senior citizens, low-income and disabled populations and racial and ethnic minorities. All PPP meetings are open to the public.

M. Brzuz, Lawrence County Conservation District Photo Contest

SPC's Long Range Plan (LRP), adopted in June of 2015 identifies improvements for each County in the following Transportation Investment Categories:

- Capital Maintenance – the LRP states that the maintenance of the existing transportation system is a national and regional high priority.

  » **Interstate Maintenance (IM) Projects** – I-376 and I-79 capital maintenance have an estimated cost of $200 million, which is not currently programmed in the state's fiscally-constrained Interstate Maintenance Plan. SPC will seek to partner with PennDOT in advancing these projects as additional funding is required.

  » **Non-Interstate Highway and Bridges** – SR 18 Reconstruction (mid-term 2019-2026; $15.6 million); SR 168 Third Street Reconstruction (mid-term 2019-2026; $14.3 million); and US 422 Reconstruction (long-term 2027-2040; $25 million).

  » **Bridge Projects** – Mahoning Viaduct Rehabilitation (short-term 2015-2018; $11 million) and US 422 Eastbound Bridge Replacement (long-term 2027-2040; $7.5 million).

» **Public Transit** – Phase 1 (2015-18) projects for the NCATA include facility maintenance; garage and office equipment; maintenance and security equipment; the purchase of diesel/ electric hybrid buses; and traveler info system.

• The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission has plans for the overlay / resurfacing of I-76/PA Turnpike within Lawrence County from mile post 0–2.3. The project has an estimated cost of $3 million and an estimated completion date of 2019.

• Traffic Operations and Safety – the LRP divides improvements into projects that improve the efficiency and operations; travel demand management; and safety. While there are no projects identified within Lawrence County, there are line items and funding sources that are likely to lead to projects in the County.

• Multimodal Transportation for Community and Economic Development – the Neshannock Creek Trail North Street Bridge Extension project (short-term 2015-2018; $450,000)

• It should be noted that additional investment will be made in Lawrence County than just the identified projects

above. Funds are included in the region's long-range transportation plan for certain types of investments and projects are developed and drawn down from these line items every two years as the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is developed. Additionally, the LRP identifies potential projects that are not currently within reasonably expected funding and will need significant new resources to move forward. These projects include SR 224 transportation improvements; SR 65 corridor improvements; and I-376 and I-79 maintenance.

• SPC's Livability Through Smart Transportation Program was created in 2009 to advance smart transportation concepts through collaborative decision-making. The City of New Castle was one of ten projects awarded funding. The project covered the first phase of the Riverwalk project, which created a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment along North Croton Avenue and North Street Bridge by completing a missing link between the County's Neshannock Trail system and downtown New Castle. SMART is a key funding source for Lawrence County to utilize to implement priority projects from the Comprehensive Plan Update.

• In 2016, SPC approved nearly $3.5 million for projects through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which advances the LRP through projects designed to provide transportation alternatives, including, but not limited to, on and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities; recreational trail program projects; and safe routes to school projects. The New Castle Multimodal Regional Riverwalk Project was one of nine projects awarded through TAP, which will implement the second phase of the Riverwalk project and includes the construction of a continuous system of safe and secure multimodal connections through new sidewalks and curbs, crosswalks, ADA accessible ramps, public transportation stops and kiosks, bicycle racks, electrical upgrades, designated bicycle lanes, and gutters and driveway aprons per ADA standards. TAP projects are funded every two years; this program is another excellent opportunity for Lawrence County to utilize for implementing priority projects.

Market reports anticipate that transportation and material movement will be strong during the next 10 years.

• Lawrence County is well-positioned to attract heavy industrial development by virtue of its low land prices and its advantageous position among road, heavy rail and air transportation infrastructure; thus, maintenance of and potentially expansion to the local rail system will be important to future economic development.

• While Marcellus Shale activity has not impacted Lawrence County to the extent of that in Butler, Fayette and Washington counties, well permits within the County have been increasing in recent years, to a high of 89 permits in 2014.[1] The Utica Shale has the potential to become an even bigger natural gas resource in the County than Marcellus.

• Rail lines in Lawrence County connect some of the County's boroughs to the City of New Castle and to points outside the region. The main concentration of rail lines follows the Beaver and Mahoning river valleys through Ellwood City, Taylor Township and the west side of New Castle. Active lines as of 2015 are illustrated in Figure 3, including Class I operators (CSXT and Norfolk Southern) as well as local line haul/switching and terminal railroad (New Castle Industrial Railroad) and Amtrak.

• The 2010 Comprehensive Plan update, "Linking Land Use with Economic Development," identified rail corridors as two of its three priority sites. The New Castle Rail Corridor site consists of 224 acres within New Castle with public water/ sewer services, no major environmental issues and no steep slopes. The site is made especially ripe for development by its connections to Route 18, Route 422, I-376 and the New Castle Industrial Railroad.

• The Taylor Rail North / South Corridor includes two vacant industrial sites within Taylor Township that are in a Keystone Opportunity Expansion Zone and are also development priorities.

• SPC is preparing a Regional Freight Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania. The plan will identify the multimodal regional freight network, identify inefficiencies within the network and prepare a funding and implementation strategy for transportation enhancements for current and forecasted freight movements in the region. SPC hosts a Freight Forum to facilitate collaboration between the various freight modes – air, rail, waterways and trucking.

---

1   *"Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan." June 2015. Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. (www.spcregion.org/pdf/lrpdraft).*

Figure 3:   Pennsylvania Railroad Map, 2015
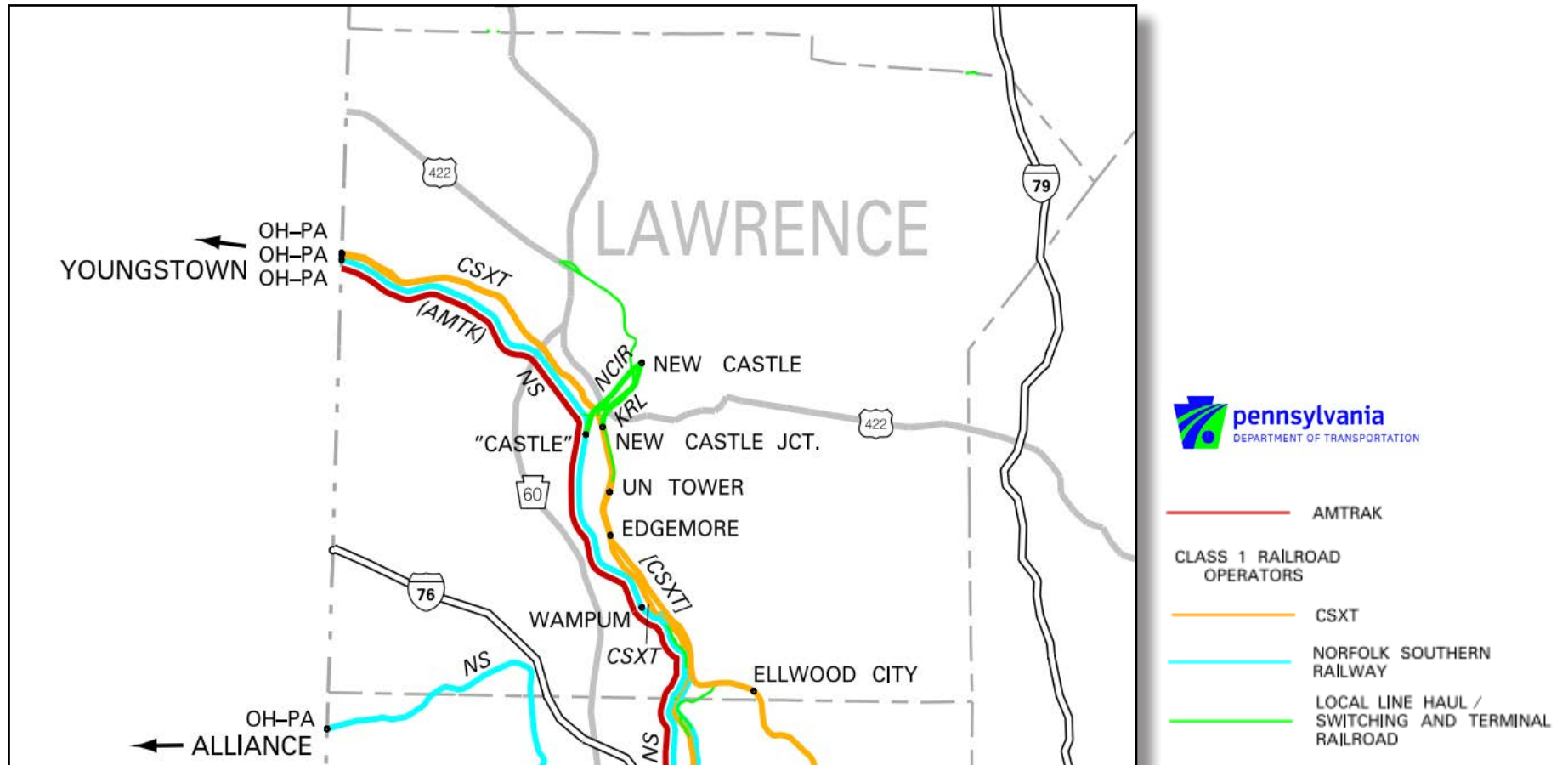
The County should encourage a complete streets approach to the design of roadways and corridors to make them safer for all users.

- "Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work." [1]

- By encouraging and promoting a complete streets policy, the County can commit to working with PennDOT, SPC and its municipalities to ensure that the design and operations of roadways take into account all potential users and improve safety for everyone. SPC has dedicated a portion of its Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding for a Livability Through Smart Transportation initiative to encourage projects that incorporate Complete Streets goals and strategies.

_____
1 Complete Streets definition. Smart Growth America. Retrieved online March 2016. (www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq).

- Many of the major corridors in Lawrence County are used by a variety of travelers, including public vehicles, transit (buses), Amish buggies and cyclists. The City of New Castle has recently added bike lanes on the North Street Bridge, to connect the Neshannock Trail with the downtown.

- Pedestrian and cycling connections to and within many areas of the County are limited. The feasibility of walking or biking to work depends not only on distance and weather, but also on the safety and comfort of the route, which varies drastically depending on origin and destination within the county. During the planning process, stakeholders representing the cycling and Amish communities raised concerns regarding narrow shoulders, poor sight distance and debris along the shoulders as threats to their safety. The recent paving and widening of SR 18 is a great example of a corridor improvement that addressed such concerns. With the Amish concentrated in the northern portion of the County, primarily around New Wilmington, the corridors connecting this region to the City of New Castle were identified as high priorities to develop

into multimodal corridors first, as shown in Figure 4. As some of these roadways are improved, the County can expand its attention to corridors in other areas.

- The Core Communities are prime locations to encourage a robust network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, because the density of development is more conducive to short trips. The County should encourage the Core Communities to develop their own municipal biking and walking plans.

Figure 4: Northern Multimodal Corridor Priorities
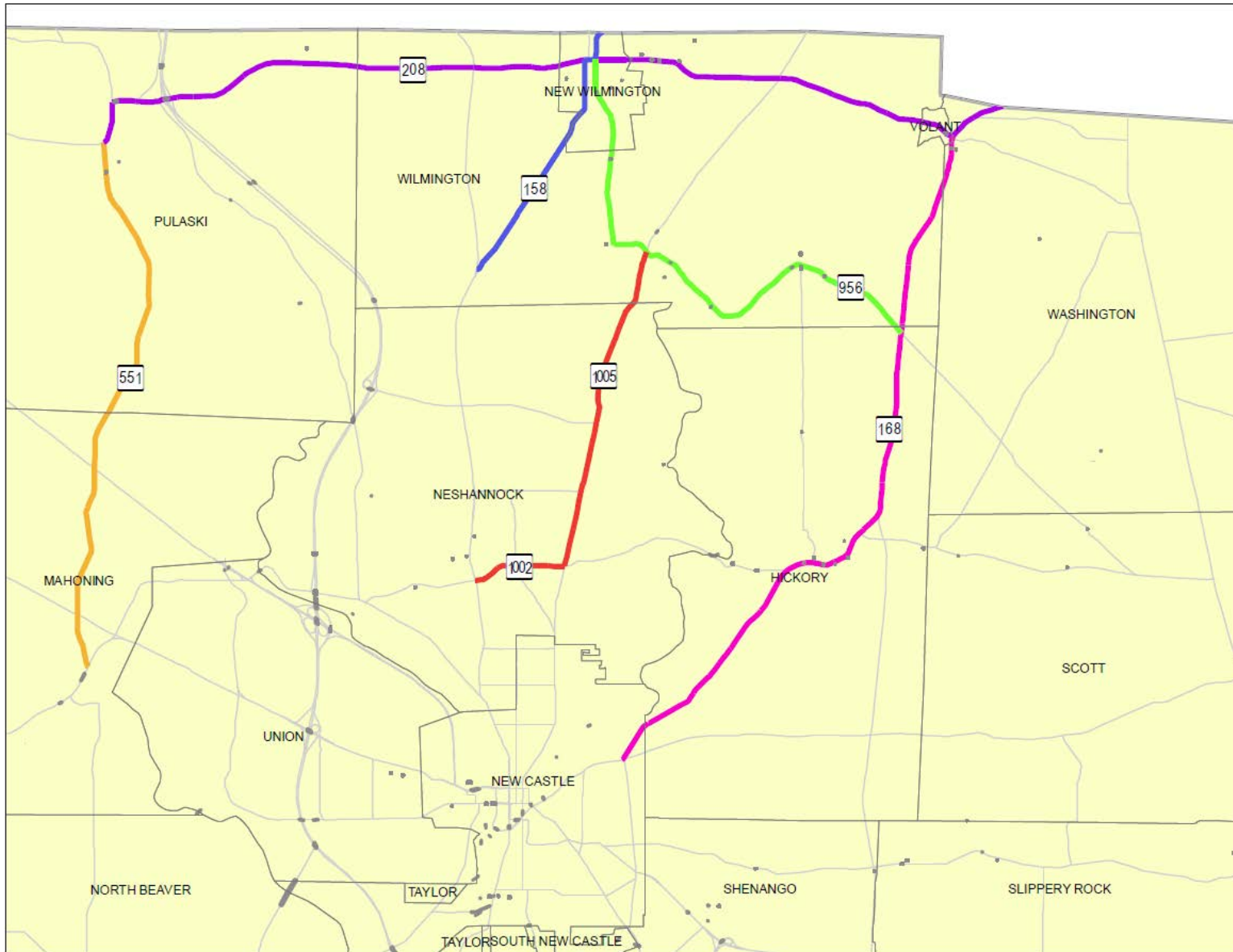
Source: Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development, 2016

Public transportation and other alternatives to driving alone are on the rise.

• While the vast majority (84%) of Lawrence County workers commuted in 2013 by driving alone, the number of workers using public transit has increased since 2000.

• The New Castle Area Transit Authority (NCATA) provides daily bus service within greater New Castle and to Pittsburgh and offers regular, though not daily, service to Ellwood City, New Wilmington, Volant

and the Grove City outlets as shown on Figure 5. The NCATA was incorporated in 1965 and financed in part by the City of New Castle, Shenango Township, Union Township and Neshannock Township.

• While the NCATA provides excellent service within the County, particularly for a rural county, several communities identified a need for new or improved transit service:

» Ellport Borough

» Ellwood City

» Enon Valley Borough

» South New Castle Borough

• However, these communities do not provide financial assistance for the NCATA. Funding public transit is an ongoing issue; costs are high and ridership fees do not cover the cost. While many communities often want better public transit, the cost to provide and/or extend routes to serve those communities can be prohibitive. One option may be for the County to work with the NCATA and its municipalities to study the feasibility of expanding the NCATA to become a countywide transit agency, with all municipalities who are served providing financial assistance.

• Allied Coordinated Transportation Services, Inc. (ACTS) provides door-to-door service, by reservation only, for people who cannot ride fixed-route service (NCATA buses) due to a disability or lack of fixed-route service in their area. Service is available Monday through Friday between 5:30am and 6:00pm. Senior Citizen Share-Ride is offered to residents who are over the age of 65, which provides reduced fare for all trips. The Shared-Ride Program for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) offers reduced fare for ACTS clients who are between the ages of 18 and 65 that have a documented disability.

Figure 5:   Lawrence County Transportation Network
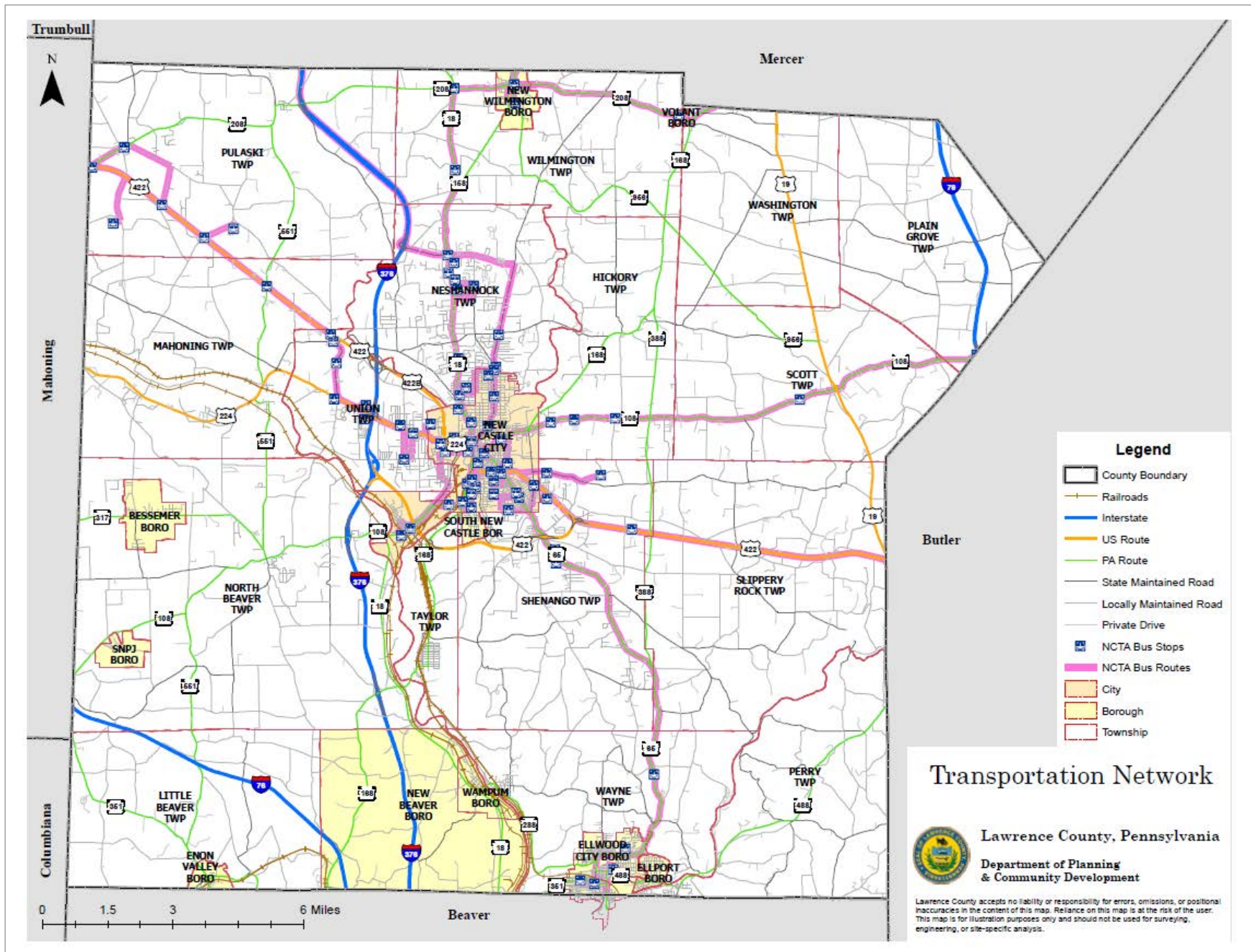
- SPC offers the CommuteInfo Program, a one-stop shop for ridesharing services.[1] The program provides information on ridesharing services for every county in the SPC region, such as:

    » Transit (public transit including bus service)

    » Carpooling (two or more people sharing a commute in a private vehicle)

    » Vanpooling (a group of 7 to 15 people sharing a commute in a leased commuter van)

    » Bikepooling (two or more bicycle commuters who agree to bike to work or school together)

    » Other options (walk to work, teleworking, flex time, compressed work week)

    » Map / locations of Park-n-Ride facilities

    » Commuting resources

- The 2015 comprehensive update to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit-Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) provides a five-year blueprint for

the implementation of public transit and human services transportation improvements described in the Long Range Plan "Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan."[2] The Coordinated Plan highlights the following for Lawrence County:

    » NCATA had 612,550 total trips in FY 2013-14, which is third in the region behind only Allegheny County (62,056,394 trips) and Beaver County (873,397 trips).

    » An obstacle noted during the plan's public outreach efforts is that Lawrence County does not provide transportation for after-school career and summer school programs, SAT test-taking, college tours or the area's "Fit for Life" wellness program.

    » The Plan identified geographic gaps in transit, including facilities/destinations that are not located within one-half mile of transit as well as Census block-groups where there are high concentrations of senior citizens and low income individuals related to the availability of transit. Industrial parks

that are not within a half-mile of transit include the RIDC Neshannock Business Park and the New Castle Development Industrial Park; the Crisci Business Park and the Millennium Technology Park are located within a half-mile, but not within one-quarter mile, of transit service. Identified attractions located more than a half-mile of transit include Hickory Speedway.

- As Lawrence County is located on the western border of Pennsylvania, it is important to look at the potential for connections to cities and other economic drivers in Ohio. The Western Reserve Transit Authority (WRTA) is a countywide public transit authority that was established by the City of Youngstown and the Mahoning County Commissioners and provides bus services throughout Mahoning County, Ohio.[3] There is not a connection between fixed route bus service in the two counties; however, there could be an opportunity via the US 422 route in Lawrence County with the WRTA routes to Youngstown. Figure 6 depicts a map of the WRTA bus routes.

1   "CommuteInfo homepage." (www.commuteinfo.org/index_current.shtml).

2   "Southwestern Pennsylvania Public Transit-Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan." Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. June 2015. (www.spcregion.org/pdf/lrpdraft/human/CTPReport.pdf).

3   "Western Reserve Transit Authority homepage." (www.wrtaonline.com/).

Figure 6:   Western Reserve Transit Authority Coverage
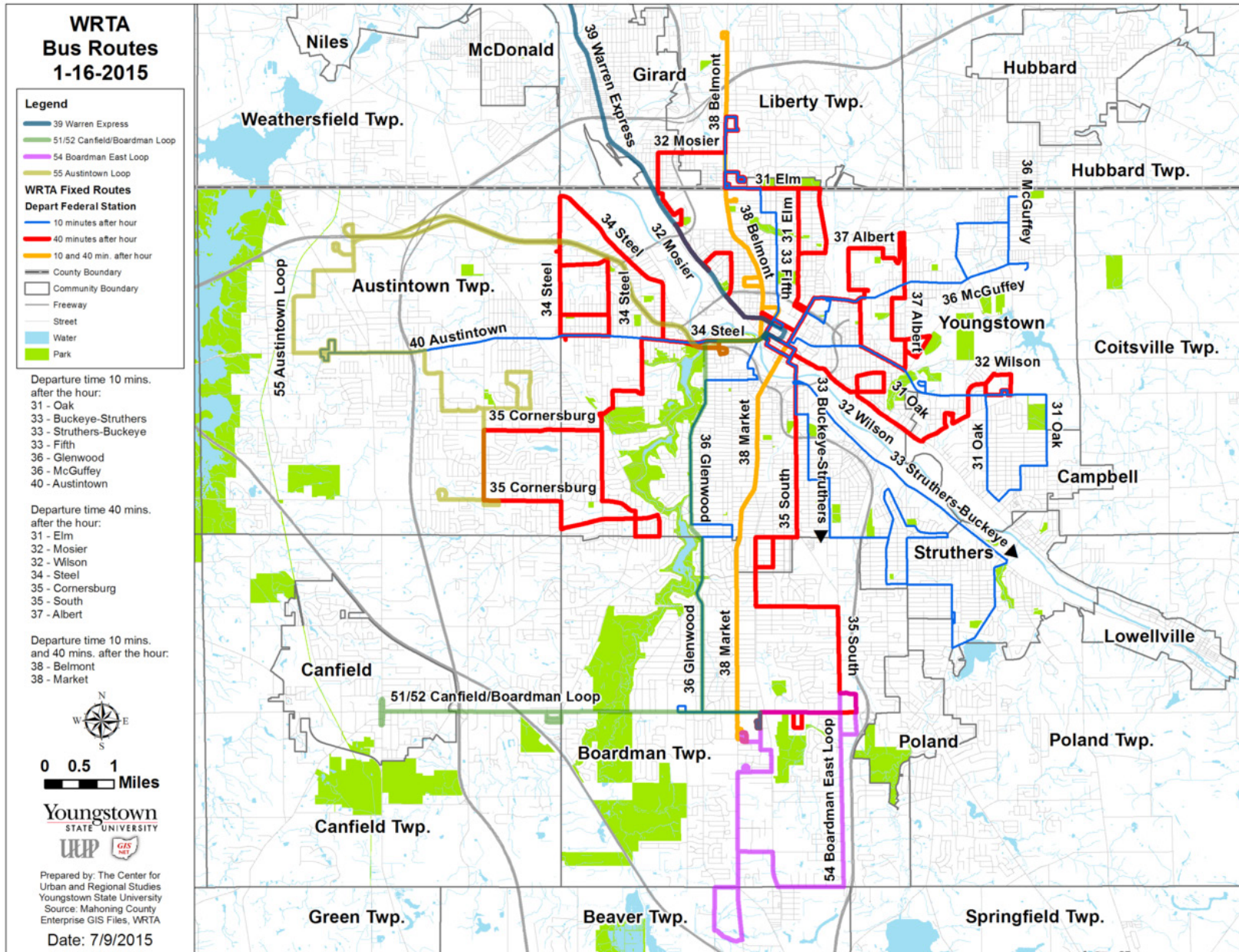
Source: WRTA website (2016)

Among traditional utility infrastructure that is needed to keep pace with industry demands, high-speed Internet access is increasingly a prerequisite for business development.

- Stakeholders identified high-speed Internet connectivity, such as fiber broadband networks, as an emerging need across the County, especially in light of its importance to technology-based industries the County wishes to attract. Investment in this infrastructure would better position Lawrence County's established businesses and industries to compete with commercial enterprises in more urban areas. In addition, it could attract new technology-based businesses.

- Figure 7 shows fiber broadband service coverage, as shown by Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) based on data directly from providers. The majority of the coverage area is in the southeastern portion of the County, as an extension of service out of Beaver and Butler Counties.

Figure 7:   Fiber Broadband Service Coverage
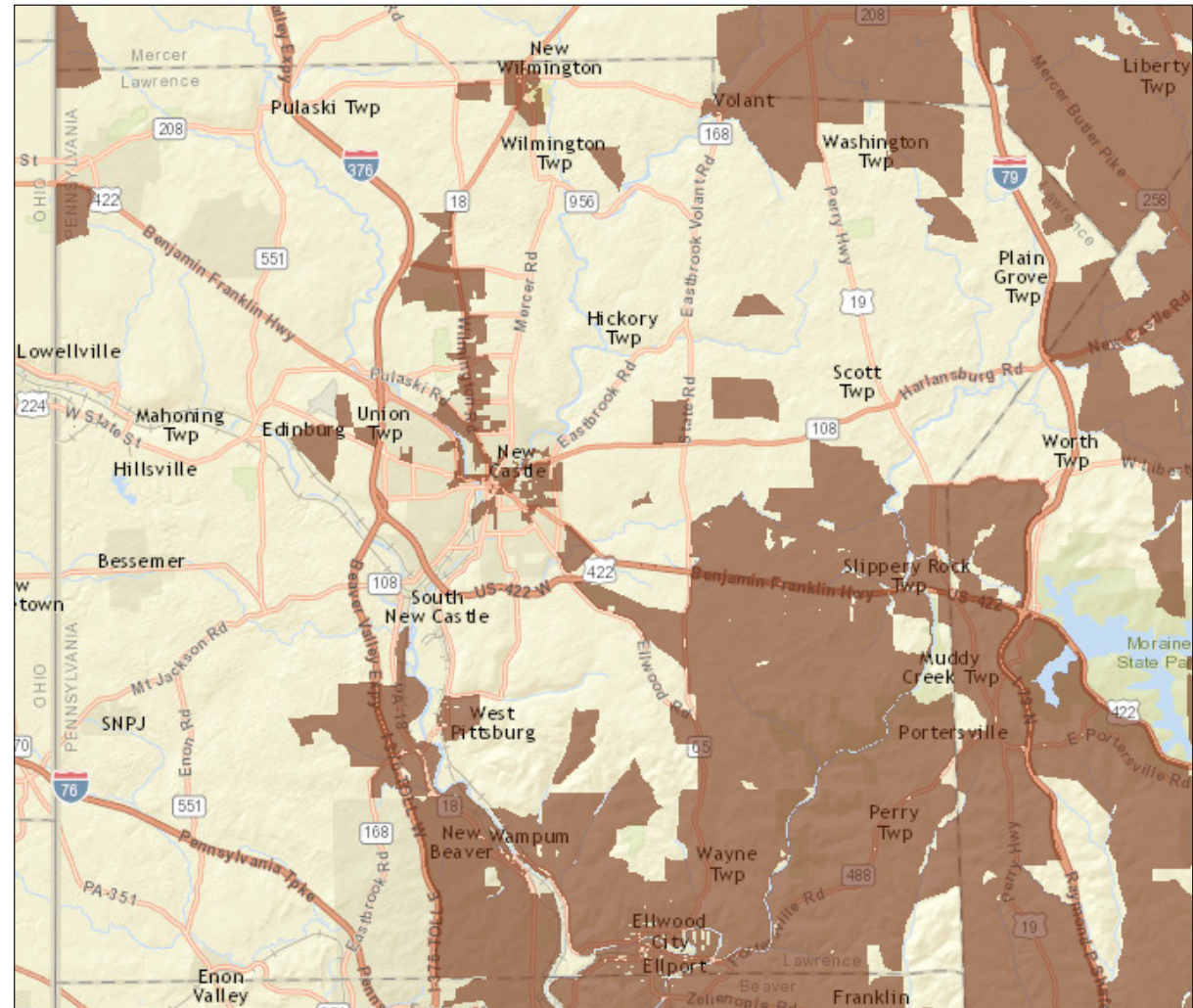
PA Broadband Mapping Viewer, December 2014

New technology developments will influence the future of mobility and innovate how transportation systems operate.

- The Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) is a coalition of public and private partners from the ten counties of Southwestern Pennsylvania and the City of Pittsburgh, including Lawrence County, that is facilitating an ongoing regional discussion to support the realization of transportation projects that will enhance regional connectivity, competitiveness and quality of life.

- The RTA provides a forum to evaulate if additional transportation projects will be valuable to the residents and businesses in Southwestern Pennsylvania; determine if there is community support for a shared vision to address these gaps; and if appropriate, help to develop an approach to obtain funding and support for those projects. The RTA held a Future of Mobility Forum[1] in July 2016, which offered the following messages:

» Transportation planners should be flexible, innovative and adaptive as they develop transportation recommendations for the future.

» Self-driving vehicles and ride-sharing services (such as Uber and Lyft) will continue to impact the transportation network. Potential impacts could be on street design; the location of housing and services closer to work areas; and the potential reuse of parking lots and garages if there are fewer vehicles to store.

---

1   *http://www.post-gazette.com/news/transportation/2016/07/12/ Transportation-planners-told-to-embrace-technology-changes/ stories/201607120077*

Countywide organizations offer opportunities to foster expanded municipal cooperation and partnerships.

- Limited resources (financial and technical) make it difficult for municipalities to address issues at a local level.

  » While municipal representatives interviewed during the planning process cited some cooperation and the accessibility of local officials as assets, they also identified the following concerns:

    › More municipal cooperation is needed. One opportunity to research is revenue sharing to pave roadways.

    › There is a need for local government training.

    › Better communication throughout the County is needed; not everyone is aware of the opportunities available.

» There are 363 municipal officials in the County, which is just 358 square miles in terms of land area (it is the 8th smallest county in Pennsylvania). With 27 municipalities and 9 school districts, stakeholders identified the high number of entities in such a small County as a barrier to cooperation and addressing issues at a regional level. For comparison purposes, Lebanon County is 361 square miles and has just 18 municipalities and six (6) school districts).

- Countywide organizations that provide services to municipalities include:

  » **Lawrence County Planning and Community Development:** provides planning and technical assistance to its municipalities, including comprehensive land use planning, ordinance development, land development reviews, training and education, transportation services (traffic volume/classification counts, speed study services) and grant assistance. It is also responsible for the community development block grant (CDBG) program, greenways and trails and fair housing.

  » **Lawrence County Conservation District:** offers programs to its municipalities on a variety of topics, including: abandoned mines; agricultural erosion and sedimentation control; agricultural conservation; agricultural land preservation; dirt, gravel and low volume roads; environmental education; erosion and sedimentation pollution control; forest management; nutrient management; stormwater management; and waterway protection.

  » **Lawrence County Regional Council of Governments (COG):** of the 27 municipalities in the County, 23 are members. Among other benefits, the COG assists its member municipalities with joint purchasing of materials and equipment.

  » **Penn State Extension in Lawrence County:** an educational network that provides Pennsylvania's counties with access to Penn State University's resources and expertise. Penn State Extension offers County programs, such 4-H and Master Gardener, and also hosts a variety of workshops and events, including a spring garden symposium on native plants and a wine marketing and research board symposium.

» **The Lawrence County Learning Center (LCLC)** is a nonprofit organization, funded by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, located in the City of New Castle and operates as part of the Learning Resource Council of Lawrence County (LRC). The LCLC provides access to post-secondary education opportunities and training by providing the use of their facility free of charge to various educational providers. Providers include the Lifelong Learning Choices of Lawrence County, Seniors for Safe Driving, LaRoche College, Penn State Shenango, BC3, Noga Ambulance Services and Clarion Venango. The LCLC also partners with local organizations such as the Lawrence County Career and Technical Center, the New Castle School of Trades, the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation and the Workforce Investment Board through West Central Job Partnership and Career Link to help close the gaps in training and education.[1]

Cooperation between educational institutions, County officials and large employers can help to address the gaps between education and the workforce.

• Lawrence County is home to nine school districts. In order of performance ranking by USA.com (rankings are out of the 500 public schools in Pennsylvania that have publicly available historical Math and English performance data):

  » Neshannock Township School District (#69)
  » Blackhawk School District (#96)
  » Shenango Area School District (#111)
  » Wilmington Area School District (#162)
  » Ellwood City Area School District (#234)
  » Mohawk Area School District (#272)
  » Union Area School District (#281)
  » Laurel School District (#301)
  » New Castle Area School District (#422)

Ellwood City High School

1   *Lawrence County Learning Center. Retrieved online in March 2016. (lawrencecountylearning.com/).*

- Other educational providers in the County include:

  » **Lawrence County Career and Technology Center (LCCTC)** is a technical educational institution, located in the City of New Castle. Its mission is to provide career-technical education programs for youth and adults and it offers 13 programs serving 400 secondary students.

  » **Butler County Community College (BC3) @ Lawrence Crossing** is a satellite campus of BC3. Located in Union Township on State Street (US 224), it offers 16 associate degree programs to its students. **Westminster College**, located in New Wilmington, is a four-year private college that offers 39 majors, 10 pre-professional programs and six (6) masters programs to its 1,300+ undergraduate and graduate students.

  » Many colleges and universities in Ohio provide tuition reduction to out-of-state residents in bordering counties, including Lawrence County.

- During the planning process, an educational forum was held with the superintendents of the County school districts as well as representatives from LCCTC, BC3, Westminster College and PA Careerlink Lawrence County. The following issues and opportunities were identified:

  » The Superintendents meet regularly. There is an opportunity to expand these meetings to include representatives from other educational providers and the workforce.

  » There are gaps between the students' educations and jobs available in the workforce. Many students are graduating with liberal arts degrees and have to find employment outside of the County. Representatives from Westminster College noted that they are considering revising some of their degrees offered to address this issue.

  » Employers have cited a lack of trained workforce to fill vocational jobs; while many are willing to provide training, one major obstacle in the County has been potential employees not passing drug tests.

  » The transition from school to work can be difficult. Expanded job shadowing programs and incorporating more companies could be a solution.

  » The school districts do try to work together to share or jointly purchase equipment, where feasible. Funding is always an issue; every district is operating at an annual loss.

  » Many districts are faced with a majority of students on free or reduced lunch program. Colleges are seeing an increase in Pell Grants (lower income level students) as well.

  » Local colleges have been developing innovative strategies to address financial concerns, such as:

    › BC3 partners with four-year colleges to allow students to take two years at BC3 and then transfer to a four-year institution, which reduces costs considerably.

    › Certification programs for college students, non-traditional students and high school students for college credits.

» There is an opportunity to develop a unique Countywide education curriculum to attract families and new students. The Franklin Center of Beaver County, in partnership with the Hoyt Center for the Arts, the City of New Castle and the New Castle Area School District's 21st Century Learning Centers grant, began offering a unique "STEM" program to the 7th and 8th grade students in October of 2015. The program, offered on Monday nights, is a combination of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) enrichment, maker skills and entrepreneurship. Students complete a series of project-based learning activities which will lead to the construction of way-finding signs for the City's downtown revitalization efforts. The students will be divided up into business teams who will each design and manufacture a series of signs which will be installed in the spring of 2016 in the downtown business district.[1]

» There are opportunities to develop and increase partnerships between the school districts, colleges and social services organizations.

» Lawrence County is one of five counties (along with Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull Counties in Ohio and Mercer County in Pennsylvania) in the Oh-Penn Interstate Region, which has a population of 764,722 people. The goal of the Oh-Penn initiative is to "enhance economic and workforce development of the five counties which share a common labor force, worker dislocations, current and emerging industries and a collective vision."[2] Major industries within the Region include advance materials and diversified manufacturing, bio medical and health care.

› Oh-Penn completed the "Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness: Skill Gap Analysis Report" in 2013 , which identifies several key initiatives to address the manufacturing skill shortage as a result of an aging workforce and an insufficient population of young people interested in pursuing jobs in such industries, including:[3]

› **Recommendation 1:** Align Curriculum to Employer's Needs

› **Recommendation #2:** Build upon the current pathway system in the region

› **Recommendation #3:** Update Curriculum

---

1 *"Unique STEM After School Program Underway in New Castle." December 10, 2015. The Franklin Center. Retrieved online in March 2016. (franklincenter.org/unique-stem-after-school-program-underway-in-new-castle/).*

2 *"Oh-Penn Interstate Region homepage." Retrieved online in April 2016. (www.ohpenn.com/).*

3 *"Oh-Penn Pathways to Competitiveness: Skill Gap Analysis Report." Educational Data Systems, Inc., 2013. (www.ohpenn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Oh-Penn-Report.pdf).*

ISSUES CONSIDERED

→ What transportation system improvements are necessary for the County to achieve its vision?

→ How can the County ensure that transportation considerations factor into the early stages of the land development process? Site selection should involve an analysis of how the development will fit into existing circulation patterns, with an eye on minimizing infrastructure sprawl and increasing accessibility.

→ Non-vehicular modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, offer health benefits as well as easing vehicular congestion. What changes are needed to improve the safety and viability of bike or pedestrian travel? Which communities would benefit most from multi-modal linkages?

→ What would further facilitate carpool/vanpool as an option for commuters?

→ How can the County increase its connection to neighboring counties in Ohio, including public transit, job training and other opportunities?

→ How can municipalities alleviate an environment of competition to collectively promote their shared interests?

→ What role does the County play in facilitating functional, financial or cooperative regionalism among local municipalities, particularly as it relates to increasing the quality and efficiency of service provision for residents?

connecting
communities
vision

" Develop a network that connects communities both physically via transportation corridors and abstractly via collaborations and partnerships. "

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS

1 Ensure that the regional transportation network meets the needs of business, industry and residents.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Maintain the existing transportation network, particularly bridges.	H	X	X	
Develop corridor plans for major thoroughfares to address multimodal improvements, access management, traffic signalization, aesthetics and signage.	H	X		
Expand broadband communications infrastructure to provide countywide access.	H		X	
Incorporate new technology and innovation into the transportation network to make it as efficient as possible.	M			X
Identify priority roadways to develop as multi-modal corridors to improve safety. Encourage core communities to implement Safe Routes to School programs.	M		X	
Encourage municipalities to update subdivision and land development ordinances to encourage pedestrian and bicycle networks where appropriate.	M		X	
Educate municipalities on the benefits of complete streets and encourage them to incorporate them into future planning initiatives. Core communities should develop bike lane plans for PennDOT to incorporate as part of future maintenance projects.	M	X		
Coordinate with transit authorities to research funding opportunities and partnerships to address future funding shortfalls.	M		X	
Conduct periodic ridership surveys to ensure that the transit network adequately meets the needs of residents and communities.	M		X	
Support the extension of rail lines in the County and expansion of service to accommodate growing industrial markets.	M		X	

2

Encourage the continued collaboration and partnerships at the regional level as well as the municipal level.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Encourage all municipalities to join the Lawrence County Council of Governments (COG).	**H**			**X**
Strengthen and enforce property maintenance codes countywide.	**H**		**X**	
Foster the relationships between the school districts, colleges and other educational resources with large employers to assess gaps in services.	**H**			**X**
Encourage municipalities with outdated land use ordinances to adopt the County subdivision and land development ordinance for consistency throughout the County.	**H**	**X**	**X**	
Support local efforts to conduct feasibility studies regarding merger/consolidation of municipalities and/or school districts.	M		X	X
Foster dialogue between Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation, Industrial Development Authority and the Transit Authority to ensure that transit can serve planned/future employment hubs.	M			X
Encourage municipalities to participate in their County organizations.	M	X		
Encourage regional participation and collaboration through the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission regional planning efforts, including public participation panels.	M	X		
Create a system of civic/community-based groups in schools to encourage students to be involved in local communities.	M		X	

3 Empower residents and community leaders to improve outcomes at all levels by providing connections to educational opportunities.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Provide an online "toolbox" that provides model ordinances and technical resources to municipalities to assist in plan implementation.	H	X		
Host annual workshops with municipal officials to discuss the County Comprehensive Plan, priorities and how to implement recommendations.	H	X		
Encourage municipal officials to attend educational workshops and sessions.	H		X	
Encourage municipalities to hire municipal solicitors with expertise in land use law.	M		X	

Benchmarks

Create and maintain a Countywide prioritized list of transportation improvement projects for implementation.

Expanded reach of broadband network.

Increase in commuting percentage by transit, walking, cycling and carpooling.

Increased municipal participation in countywide organizations and educational opportunities.

Increased mileage of Complete Streets (i.e. multimodal routes that accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, Amish buggies, etc.).

Establishment of an "online" toolbox to provide technical assistance to municipalities.
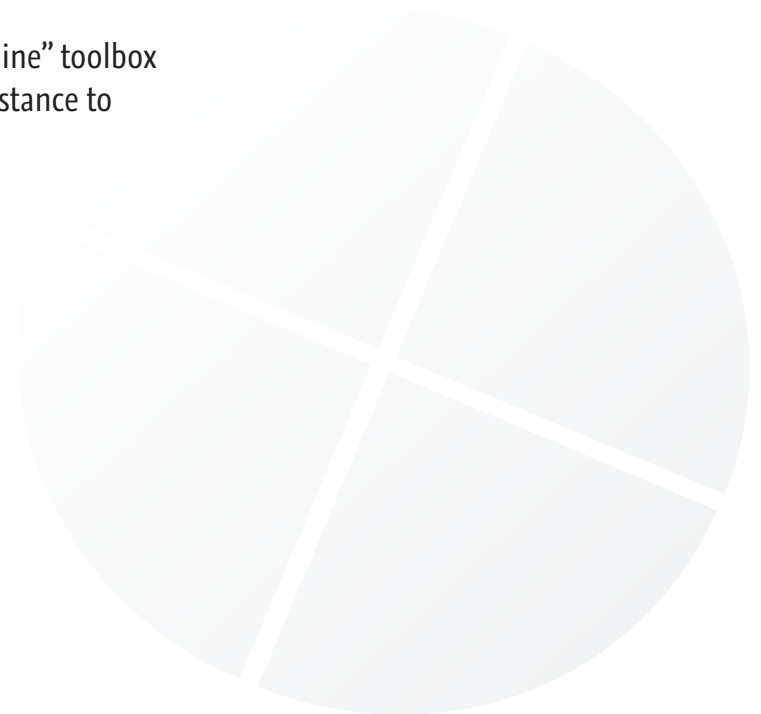
This page intentionally left blank.

healthy

[hel-thee]

adjective

1. possessing or enjoying good health or a sound and vigorous mentality

2. pertaining to or characteristic of good health, or a sound and vigorous mind

3. conducive to good health, healthful

4. prosperous or sound[1]

It has long been understood that the design and land development patterns of a community are directly tied to the overall health of its citizens. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines a healthy community as "one that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments, helping people to support one another in aspects of daily life and to develop to their fullest potential."[1] So what makes a community healthy? In the physical sense, a healthy community provides accessible parks, recreational facilities, active transportation options (pedestrian and bike access), healthy food systems, preserved agricultural lands, high air quality and safety. If a community is adequately providing these items, then its residents are more likely to lead longer, healthier and more productive lives.

---

1   *"Healthy." Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary. reference.com/browse/healthy).*

---

1   *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2010 report.*

"Your address can play an important role in **how long you live** and **how healthy you are**. The physical design of your community affects your health **every time you step out your front door**. Sometimes making healthy choices is *not easy* – being physically active is hard if you do not have access to sidewalks or parks, and eating right is hard if healthy foods are not available. Your input on land use decisions in your community can **help make everyone happier and healthier.**"

— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2016 (www. cdc.gov/features/ healthycommunities/)*

Lawrence County is known for its scenic countryside and farmland, abundance of natural resources and major outdoor recreation areas. Why then, did it rank among the worst in Pennsylvania in 2015 for Health Outcomes (61st out of 67 counties) and 50th in Health Factors?[1]

In terms of Health Outcomes, Lawrence County ranks particularly low (59th for length of life and 63rd for quality of life). According to the rankings, Lawrence County has a higher rate of premature deaths (before age 75) and lower rates of quality of life. Residents reported a higher number of poor physical health days and overall poor or fair health than other counties in Pennsylvania. Also contributing to its low ranking is a higher percentage of babies born with a low birthweight.

Figure 8:   County Health Ranking Metrics

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2016
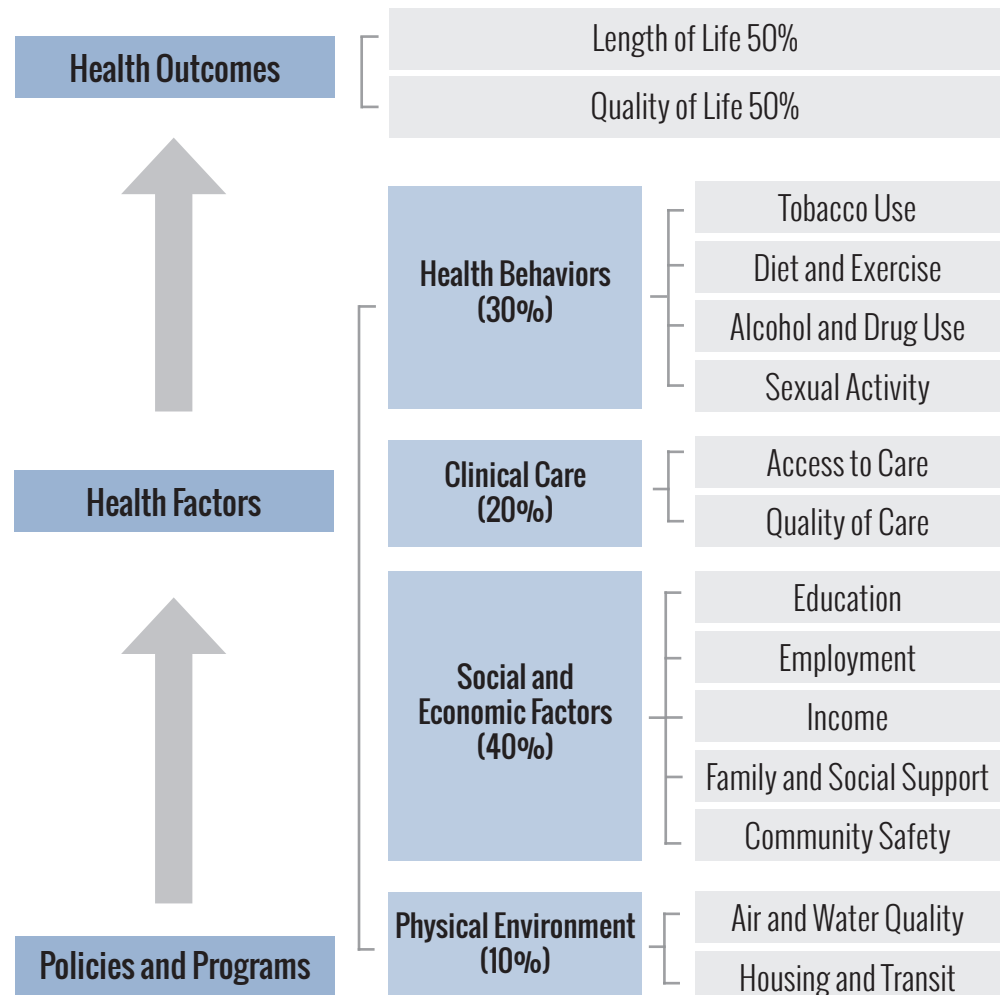
1   County Health Rankings and Roadmaps: Lawrence County. 2015. (www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/pennsylvania/2015/rankings/lawrence/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot).

2015 Health Rankings

Lawrence County, PA

Overall Health Outcomes Rank **»** **61st**
Overall Health Factors Rank **»** **50th**

Health Behaviors
➡ 37th
- Adult obesity = 33%
- Food environment index = 7.1
- Physical inactivity = 27%
- Access to exercise opportunities = 77%

Social & Economic
➡ 44th
- Unemployment = 7.7%
- Children in poverty = 21%
- Children in single-parent households = 37%
- Violent crime = 454

Clinical Care
➡ 58th
- Uninsured = 12%
- Primary care physicians = 2,090:1
- Preventable hospital stays = 91

Physical Environment
➡ 61st
- Air pollution = 14.1
- Severe housing problems = 14%
- Driving alone to work = 85%

Source: County Health Rankings 2015
Rankings are out of the 67 Pennsylvania counties

Looking at the Health Factors, Lawrence County ranks as follows, out of Pennsylvania's 67 counties:

- **Health Behaviors – 37th**. This is the measure in which the County ranks the highest. Factors contributing positively to this ranking include lower rates of excessive drinking, alcohol-impaired driving deaths and sexually transmitted diseases than other counties in Pennsylvania. Areas of concern include:

  » Adult obesity (33% compared to 29% in Pennsylvania)

  » Food environment index (limited access to healthy foods and food insecurity) – the County is in the bottom three in the state

  » Physical inactivity (27% compared to 24%)

  » Access to exercise opportunities (77% compared to 85%)

  » Sexually transmitted diseases (the rate for this measure is increasing)

- **Clinical Care – 58th**. Lawrence County ranks low compared to other Pennsylvania counties for the ratio of population to health care providers (physicians, dentists, mental health care providers).

- **Social and Economic Factors – 44th**. Areas where the County is doing comparably well include high school graduation rate (91% compared to 86% in Pennsylvania) and social associations, which is the number of membership associations per 10,000 population (17.2 compared to 12.3). Areas of concern include a higher rate of unemployment; income inequality; children in single-parent households; and violent crime.

- **Physical Environment – 61st**. Positive measures include: 0% drinking water violations (% of the population potentially exposed to water exceeding a violation limit during the past year); severe housing problems (overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen/plumbing facilities) is lower than Pennsylvania; and a lower percentage of residents with a long commute who drive alone to work (note: this is likely due to public transit, which provides service to Pittsburgh). Negative measures include a higher rate of air pollution-particulate matter than Pennsylvania (note: this is not specifically unique to Lawrence County but rather is indicative of the western region of Pennsylvania); and a higher percentage of residents who drive alone to work.

This chapter is focused on analyzing the relationship between the physical environment of Lawrence County as it relates to the overall physical health of its residents and identifying the means by which the County can influence positive outcomes. Specifically, this chapter analyzes the following relationships:

- The availability of and access to recreation areas and active transportation with adult obesity and physical health.

- The preservation of farmland and natural resources with reduced pollution an increased healthy environment.

- The availability of and access to healthcare and healthy food options with physical health.

The core issue to improving the health of Lawrence County involves improving access to and use of the resources that already exist to support sustainable lifestyles. This means continued attention to development of a green infrastructure network, coordinated investment in land protection, expansion of the reach of resources and empowering the public to live well.

SNAPSHOT

There is an abundance of outdoor recreational facilities within the County. The question is how connected to them are residents and how aware are they of what is offered.

- Per the 2015 County Health Rankings, 77% of the County population has adequate access to locations for physical activity. Locations are defined as parks (local, state and national) or recreational facilities (gyms, community centers, YMCAs, dance studios and pools). Adequate access is defined as living within a half-mile of a park or within one mile of a recreational facility in urban census tracts or three miles of a recreational facility in rural census tracts. Figure 9 depicts the half-mile service area for local parks within the County. Future efforts to develop new parks or recreation facilities should target underserved areas.

- Lawrence County is known for large, regional public recreation destinations such as McConnells Mill State Park and multiple state game lands.

- County-owned recreation facilities include:

  » West Park Nature Center, a 108-acre county-owned park, located in Union Township, that offers a mountain bike trail, walking trails, a 25-acre certified Audubon Society Wildlife Sanctuary, pavilions and picnic areas, restrooms and a variety of interpretive and educational areas.

  » Henry Bazzichi Park, a community playground located in and maintained by Wayne Township.

  » Two multi-purpose trails: Stavich Bike Trail, located in Union and Mahoning Townships and the Neshannock Rail-Trail, located in Neshannock Township (see page 82 for more information).

  » Multiple boat launches along the Shenango and Beaver Rivers.

- The County partners with its municipalities to obtain grants to develop and improve local parks. Most recently, the County partnered with the City of New Castle, Union Township and the Borough of Ellwood City to prepare master site plans to design improvements for six municipal parks.

- While the County appears to be well-served in terms of parks, its comparatively low statewide ranking for accessible recreation facilities is likely related to indoor facilities. Major indoor recreation facilities within the County include:

  » **New Castle Community YMCA**, located in downtown New Castle on West Washington Street, is home to two floors of fitness and exercise equipment, child development center, aquatic center, gymnasium, racquetball courts, spin center, aerobic studio, community room with WiFi, child drop-in services and a youth center.

  » **YMCA Y-ZONE**, located in Neshannock Township, is a sports and recreation center. Facilities include two basketball / volleyball courts, an indoor turf field, outdoor soccer fields, a batting cage and a fitness / wellness center.

  » **The Family Center** in Ellwood City has an indoor basketball court (also used for soccer and other activities) and a weight room.

  » **Hess Ice Rink**, owned by and located in Neshannock Township, is a single-sheet indoor rink open year-round and home to amateur programs as

Figure 9:   Population Density Near Parks

Population Density near Parks
Lawrence County, Pennsylvania
Department of Planning & Community Development
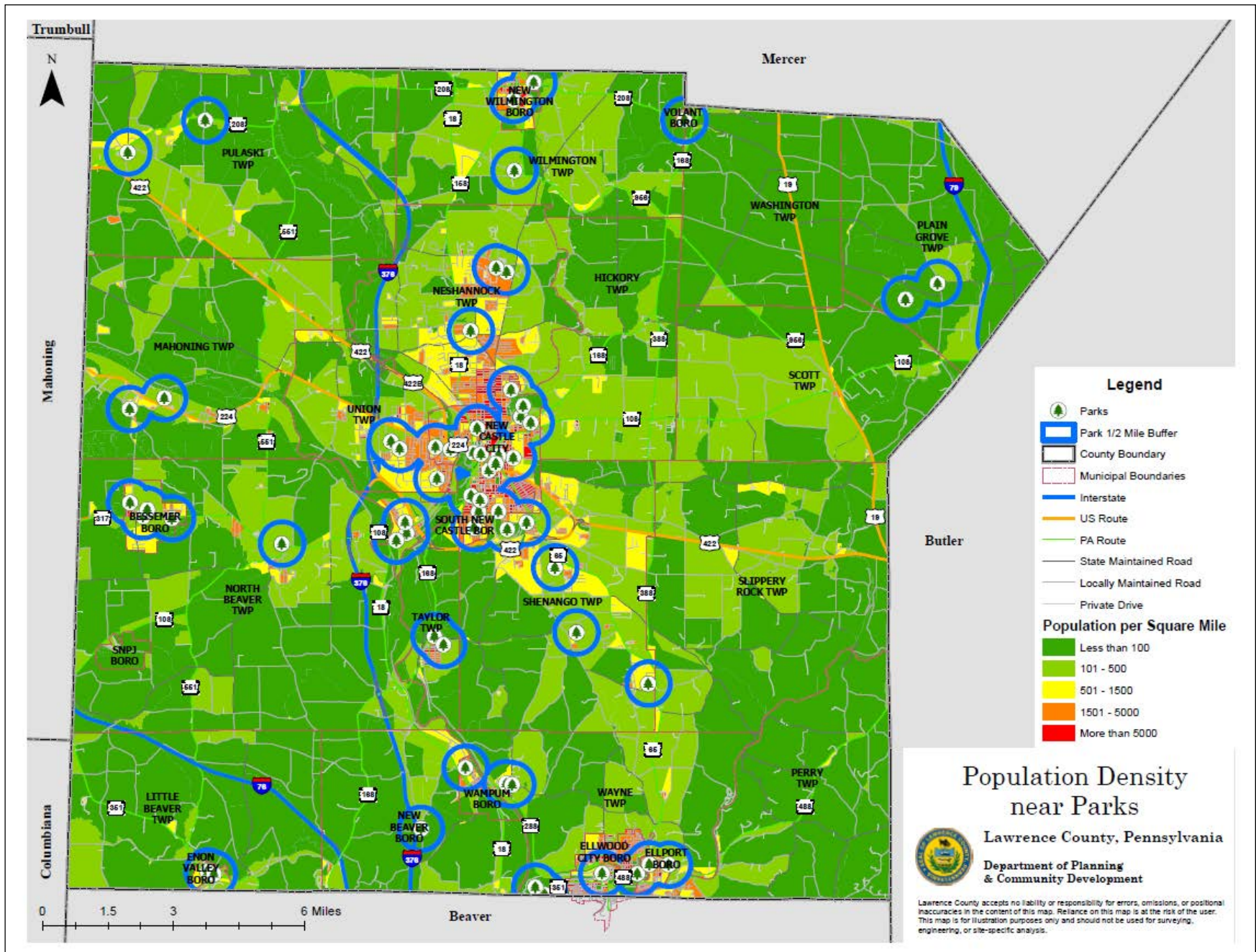
well as public open skates. The rink was upgraded in 2015 to meet USA Hockey standards.

» **Hitters, Hackers and Hoops (3H)** is located near the intersection of routes 422 and 388 in Shenango Township. This facility is a multi-sport, multi-function air-supported bubble of 50,000 square feet with turf playing fields and a playing court.

- Representatives from the YMCA reported a growing interest in walking and running clubs and are willing to partner with the County and other organizations to offer programs at other parks and/or facilities. There is a two-mile hiking trail near the Y-Zone in Neshannock Township.

- Even if recreational facilities are accessible in terms of location, often cost is a deterrent to lower-income residents. The YMCA does offer financial assistance, based on income, number of participants in the family and the amount of scholarship dollars available.

- While there seems to be a lot of outdoor recreation areas and activities, it's not evident how much these areas are known to the public. There is a lack of marketing and publicity of outdoor recreation within the County.

- One issue identified during the planning process was a lack of recreation activities for younger residents.

Active transportation is "any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling."[1] Although characterized as rural, the County continues to make the expansion of its active transportation network a priority.
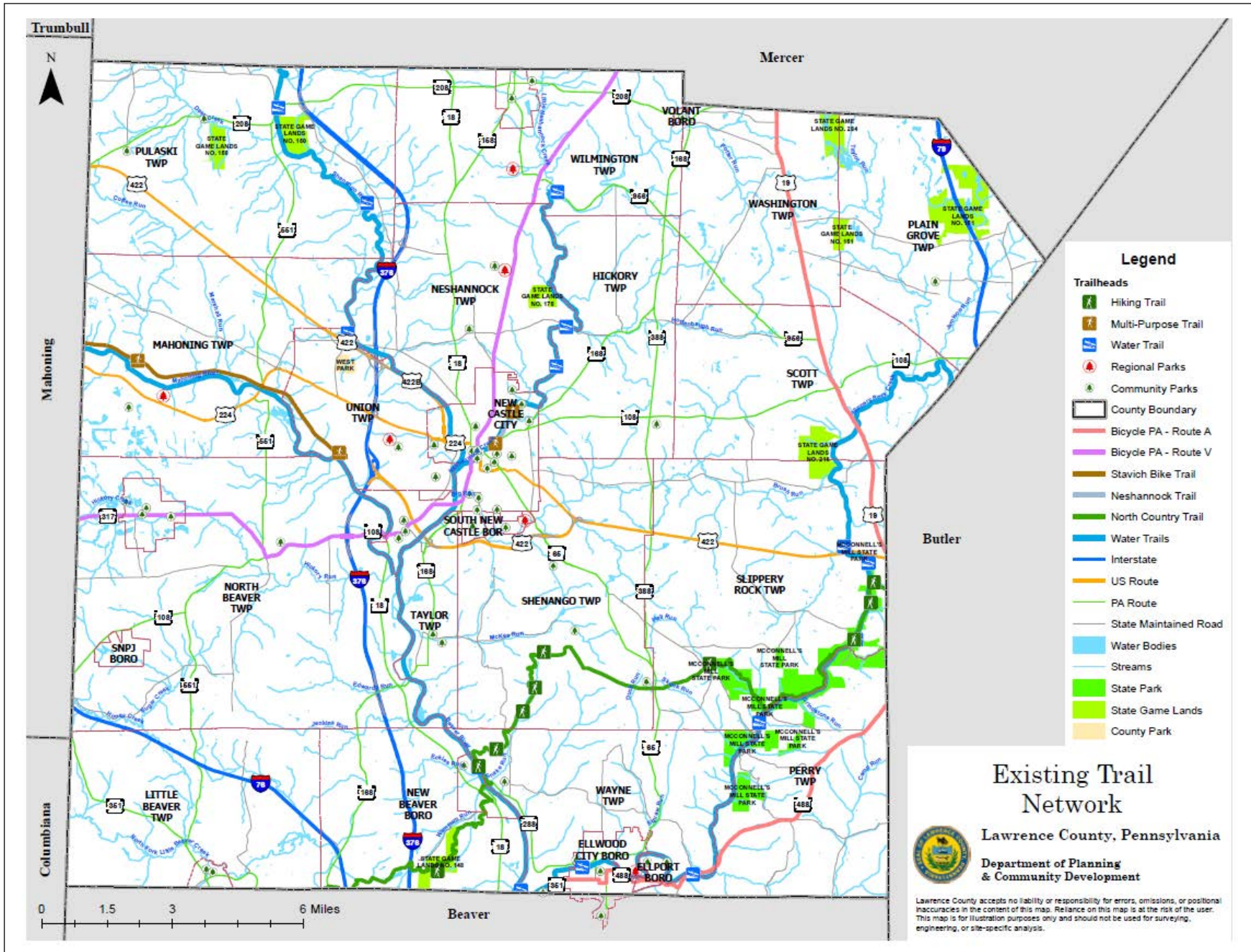
- The County adopted a countywide greenways plan in 2008, which led to the expansion and improvement of its trails and greenways network. It also led to the creation of a new staff position in the Planning Department of a shared greenways coordinator with Beaver County. The County is currently working on an update, which is the first countywide greenways plan update in Pennsylvania.

- Lawrence County is home to the following "land-based" active transportation corridors:

» **The North Country Trail**, the longest of 11 congressionally authorized National Scenic Trails, which stretches from northeast New York across northwestern Pennsylvania through Ohio and four additional states. The trail enters Lawrence County in the south from Beaver County and traverses northwest through New Beaver Borough, Wampum Borough, Shenango Township and Slippery Rock Township, at which point it enters Butler County. Wampum is a designated Trail Town, the first along the North Country Trail. There is a ten-mile section that is on-road and the local Chapter is currently looking at options to move the on-road sections to off-road trails. Recently, a feasibility

---

1   *"Transportation Health Impact Assessment Toolkit." Retrieved online in 2016. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/transportation/promote_strategy.htm).*
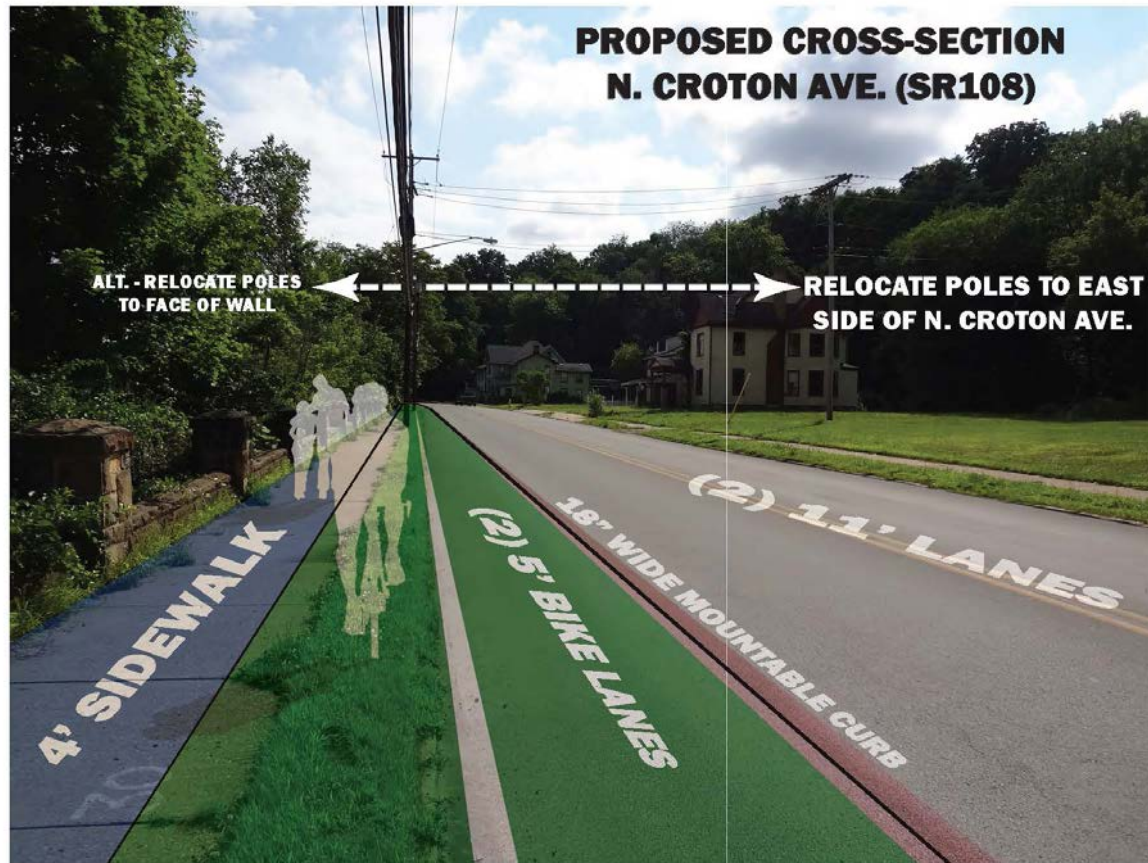
Figure 10: Lawrence County Existing Trail Network

study was completed with regard to connecting the trail off-road from McConnells Mill State Park in Lawrence County to Moraine State Park in Butler County, but due to landowner concerns, it is not a viable option at this time.

» **The Stavich Bike Trail** is an asphalt, ADA-compliant, designated National Recreation Trail that crosses three townships, two counties and two states from New Castle to Struthers, Ohio along the Mahoning River. The total length of the trail is 12 miles, with ten of it located in Lawrence County. The biggest needs for this trail include connecting to downtown New Castle to make it more accessible and increased signing and marketing of the trail. Long-term regional connections include Mercer County Trails Association to the north and the Ohio River Trail in Beaver County to the south. There is also an opportunity to offer a peddle-paddle as the Mahoning River water trail is developed.

» **The Neshannock Trail** opened in 2015 and is a 0.7-mile rail-trail located in the City of New Castle along Neshannock Creek. The County is working with the City of New Castle to connect the trail to the City's Riverwalk.

PROPOSED CROSS-SECTION
N. CROTON AVE. (SR108)

ALT. - RELOCATE POLES TO FACE OF WALL

RELOCATE POLES TO EAST SIDE OF N. CROTON AVE.

4' SIDEWALK

(2) 5' BIKE LANES

18" WIDE MOUNTABLE CURB

(2) 11' LANES

N. CROTON AVE. (SR108); ADT - 8,100; POSTED SPEED - 30MPH
ROADWAY WIDTH, CURB TO CURB - 30'; 6' WIDE CONCRETE SIDEWALKS (BOTH SIDES OF ROAD)
8' DISTANCE FROM STONE WALL TO FACE OF CURB, SOUTHBOUND

New Castle Riverwalk Project
Connection to Neshannock Trail

Mackin
Mackin Engineering Company
RIDC Park West
117 Industry Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275
(412) 788-0472
www.mackinengineering.com

» **The Riverwalk** is a linear park along Neshannock Creek in downtown New Castle. The park hosts a variety of events and festivals. City of New Castle completed a Riverwalk Plan in 2015, which proposes routes to connect the trail to the downtown. There is potential to develop a peddle-paddle with Neshannock Creek, as the trail is extended.

» The **Park-Harbor Trail** opened in 2010 as a two-mile biking and hiking trail at West Park Nature Center in Union Township. If connected to the Stavich Bike Trail, West Park could serve as a trailhead.

» **Designated on-road bikeways** include the BicyclePA routes. BicyclePA Route A follows SR 488 from the south, through Ellwood City and Perry Township, to the north along US 19 into Mercer County. BicyclePA Route V follows SR 317 from the Ohio Border northwest to SR 108, through New Castle and Wilmington Township into Mercer County. However, local cyclists report that these are seldom used. There is a need to improve the shoulders along state routes to better accommodate cyclists.

» The City of New Castle has added **bike lanes** to the North Street Bridge as part of ongoing efforts to implement the Riverwalk project, which will connect the Neshannock Trail to the downtown. There is an opportunity for the Core Communities to establish bike plans, which would allow PennDOT to incorporate as part of future maintenance work on designated routes.

• While Lawrence County does not contain any greenways recognized as part of Pennsylvania's developing statewide greenway system – the planned Erie to Pittsburgh Trail would run east of the County – the County may eventually connect with the Great Ohio Lake River Greenway (GOLRG), an asphalt shared-use bikeway between Lake Erie and the Ohio River.

• Over the past few years, the County's focus has included the development of water trails. Although there are no formally designated water trails, the County is home to six floatable waterways, which serve as "water-based" active transportation corridors. There are currently public launches located along the Beaver River, the Shenango River, Connoquenessing Creek, Neshannock Creek and Slippery Rock Creek.

• The County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance imposes sidewalk construction requirements on developers within new subdivisions and land development. However, many existing residential areas lack sidewalks and linkages to business districts and other neighborhoods. Access to adequate sidewalks promotes walking as a means of recreation as well as a means of reaching daily destinations. It should be noted that sidewalks were not included as locations for physical activity as part of the County Health Rankings. There are also additional, alternative options to requiring sidewalks as part of new subdivisions or land developments (such as trails) that the County and/or municipalities can include in their ordinances.

While in terms of recreation and tourism, the six major waterways located in the County are seen as an opportunity, municipalities are often faced with dealing with water-related issues, such as water quality, permits and flooding.

- Mining activities have impacted some streams in Lawrence County, but most are more impacted by agricultural runoff and nutrient enrichment from septic systems and sewage treatment plants. The County Conservation District and Penn State Extension host a variety of programs for the agricultural community, related to managing nutrients, grazing, grass fields and manure.

- Each of the major watersheds within the County have completed watershed conservation plans. With regard to local land-use planning, the plans generally recommend the promotion and acceptance of greater land use controls, such as designating growth and conservation areas and adopting zoning where it does not exist, enforcing existing land use ordinances, and encouraging municipalities to apply their regulatory powers to preserve and improve the quality of life for watershed residents.

- The State Department of Environmental Protection classifies Hell Run, a tributary to Slippery Rock Creek, as an "exceptional value" stream. Hell Run is also classified as a Class A Trout Stream and a Wilderness Trout Stream. Much of the Hell Run watershed is forested and within the McConnells Mill State Park. The North Fork of the Little Beaver Creek is designated as high quality. Hell Run and Skunk Run support natural reproducing populations of trout.

- In 2004, Connoquenessing Creek ranked as the country's second most polluted waterway; however, intervention by the EPA has since resulted in its cleanup. The Wild Waterways Conservancy, a nonprofit organization founded in 2004, offers a public canoe/kayak ramp at Rock Point along with paddling information on their website (www.wildwaterwaysconservancy.org).

- Flood hazard areas are shown on Figure 11. Among the countywide goals in the Hazard Mitigation Plan five-year strategy, goals related specifically to land use include:

  » Take measures that will reduce damage in specific hazard-prone areas

  » Acquire/relocate property in the floodplain, or create modifications such as a flood wall to help protect vulnerable property

  » Restore and manage stream banks/beds as a flood damage mitigation measure

  » Implement management recommendations from County's Act 167 storm water plan

Figure 11:   Flood Hazard Areas
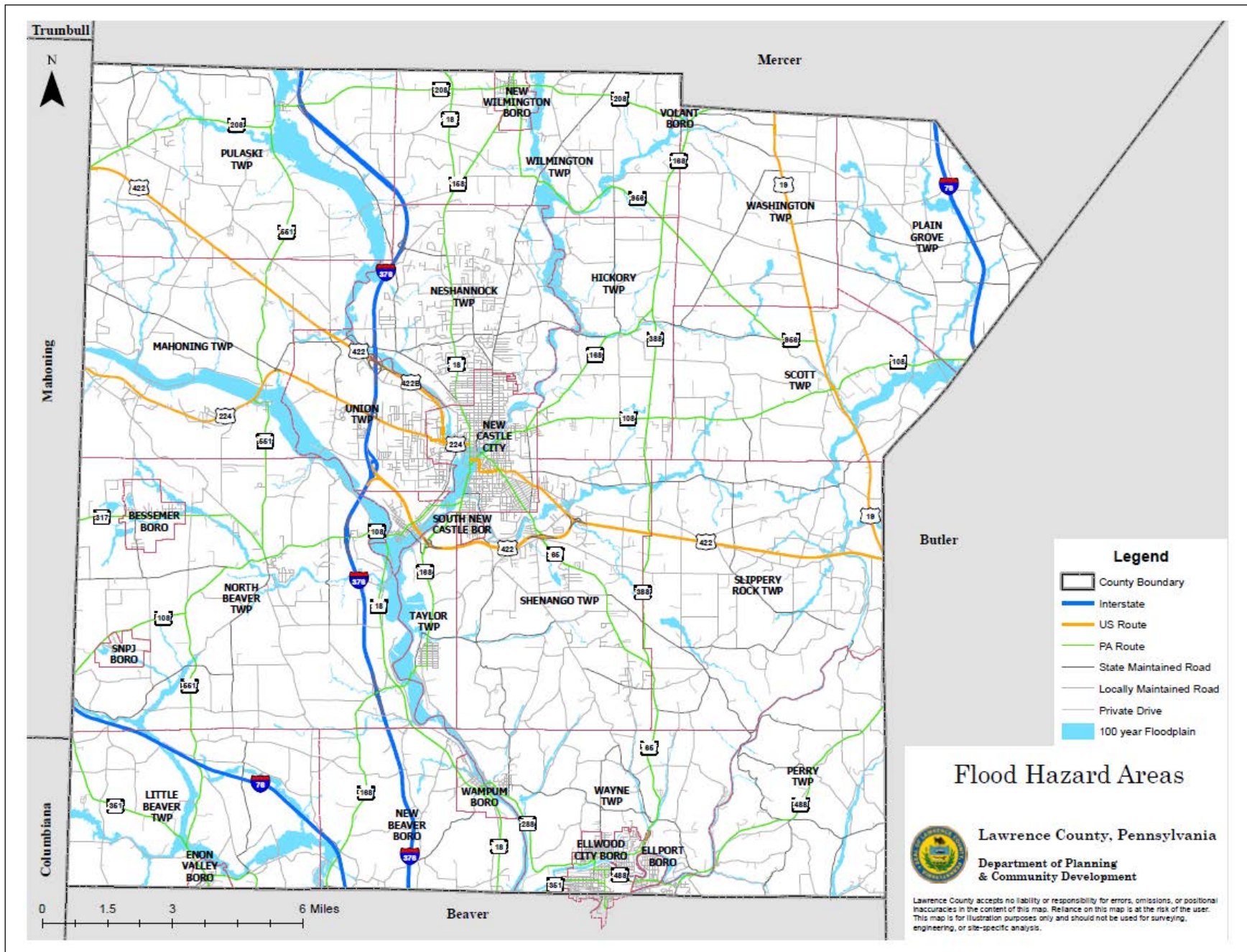
The preservation of significant natural areas and areas home to important ecological habitats should factor into local land use decisions.

- The County's latest Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) recognized 35 areas of significance, including 33 biological diversity areas and two landscape conservation areas. Natural heritage areas are located in 18 of the County's 27 municipalities. The inventory assigned "exceptional" significance to landscape conservation in Slippery Rock Gorge (Slippery Rock Township) as well biological diversity areas in Plain Grove, Slippery Rock, Shenango and Wayne Townships.

- Rock Point is an 87-acre forested area, formerly an amusement park, located in Wayne Township at the confluence of the Connoquenessing Creek and the Beaver River. Wild Waterways Conservancy (WWC) purchased the property in 2007 with funding from a Growing Greener 2 grant, Lawrence County and the Heinz Endowment. It is home to one of the most biologically diverse areas in the County's NHI; miles of permanently protected riparian corridors; habitat for the Indiana Bat (an endangered species);

scenic steep sandstone cliffs along the Connoquenessing Creek; white water rapids; and spring wildflowers (specifically large White Trillium).

- The Lawrence County Conservation District identified the prevalence of invasive species as a major concern, particularly with fracking trucks spreading invasive plant species throughout the County. There is a need for more educational workshops to address this issue and eliminate the spread.

- Steep slopes, as shown on Figure 12, are prevalent surrounding the Mahoning River, the Beaver River, the Connoquenessing Creek and Slippery Rock Creek. Specifically, the Beaver River Conservation and Management Plan recommended that steep slope ordinances be adopted by the municipalities to limit land disturbance.

Figure 12: Steep Slopes
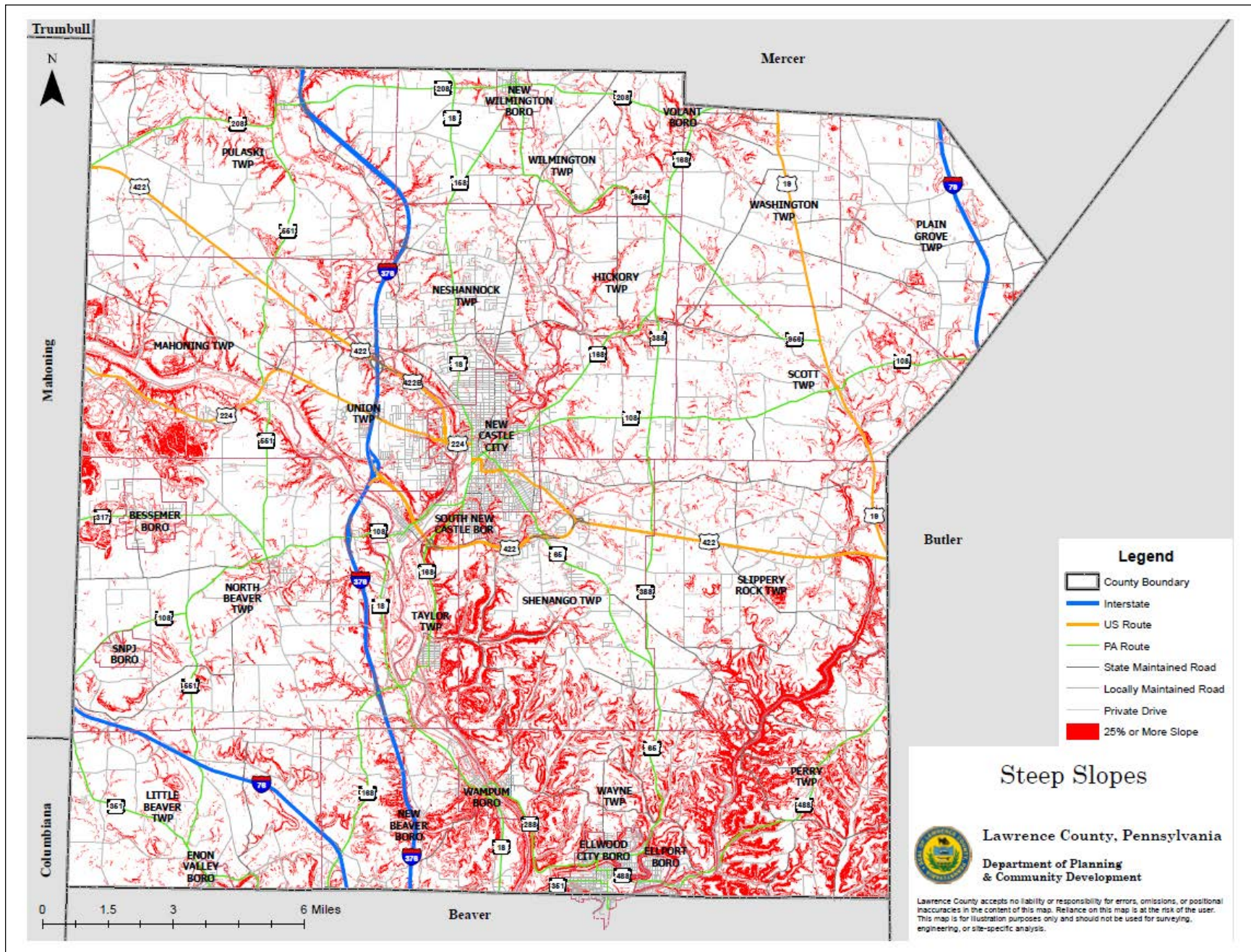
Steep Slopes

Lawrence County, Pennsylvania

Department of Planning
& Community Development

Lawrence County accepts no liability or responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Reliance on this map is at the risk of the user. This map is for illustration purposes only and should not be used for surveying, engineering, or site-specific analysis.

Legend

- ☐ County Boundary
- ━━ Interstate
- ━━ US Route
- ━━ PA Route
- ━━ State Maintained Road
- ━━ Locally Maintained Road
- ━━ Private Drive
- ■ 25% or More Slope

Because agriculture continues to be an important feature of the County's identity, landscape and local economy, protecting high-quality farmland from the encroachment of sprawling development will continue to be a concern.
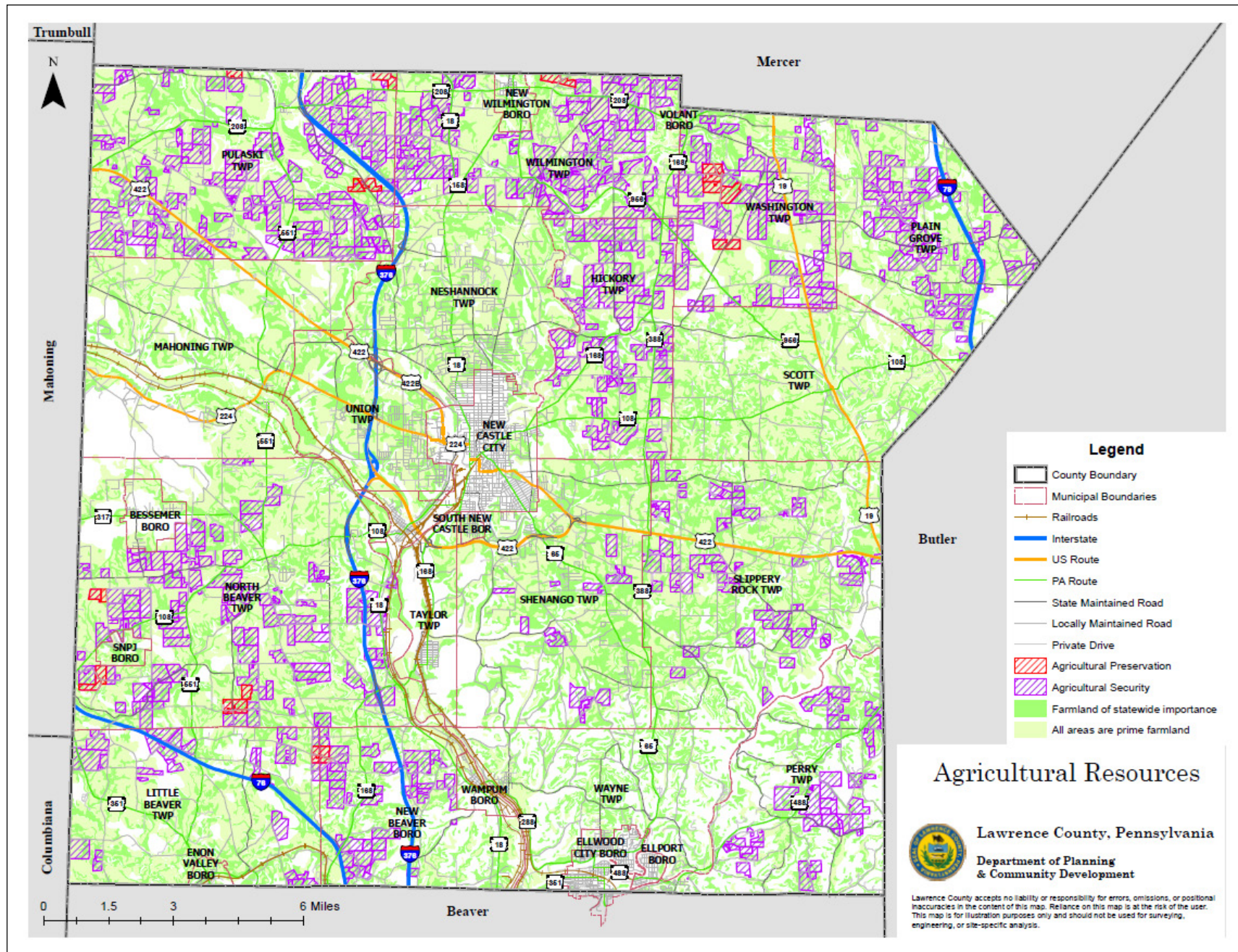
• As of 2012, the county had approximately 659 farms totaling 80,468 acres.

• The County has 37,010 acres enrolled in the Agricultural Security Area program, and 22 farms are preserved under a conservation easement. Lawrence County's high-quality farmland at risk of development is concentrated along the Ohio border. The land area at Lawrence County's northwest corner is characterized by more aggressive development, while land along the remainder of the western border has less development potential.

• Comprehensive Plan stakeholders cited the low price per acre of farmland as an obstacle to preserving more farmland. Without development pressure in much of the County, there is little financial incentive to encourage farmers to sell their development rights.

• Just as in most areas, there are financial concerns to landowners to maintaining their small, family farms. Often, families must turn to other sources of income to sustain their farms.

  » Agri-tourism is a growing industry in the County. Apple Castle is open year round with sweet cider, homemade donuts and other unique farm market items. Cheeseman Farm offers a Pumpkin Festival and Fright Farm, rental facilities for weddings and other special events and a campground.

Agri-tourism can strengthen the economic viability of farms and the communities in which they are located. However, some farm owners indicated that they are closed on Sundays, which limits their opportunities to expand their agri-tourism opportunities.

» The northern part of the County is home to the Old Order Amish community, comprised of approximately 1,500 persons. Discussions with several Amish families cited local zoning ordinances as barriers to continuing and growing their in-home businesses and other operations. Additionally, the Amish community cited transportation issues that are described fully in the Connecting Communities chapter.

Figure 13: Agricultural Resources

Agricultural Resources

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Railroads
- Interstate
- US Route
- PA Route
- State Maintained Road
- Locally Maintained Road
- Private Drive
- Agricultural Preservation
- Agricultural Security
- Farmland of statewide importance
- All areas are prime farmland

Lawrence County, Pennsylvania

Department of Planning
& Community Development

Lawrence County accepts no liability or responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional inaccuracies in the content of this map. Reliance on this map is at the risk of the user. This map is for illustration purposes only and should not be used for surveying, engineering, or site-specific analysis.

The availability of healthy food, particularly in lower income neighborhoods, is a concern that local land use policies and ordinances should consider.

- Lawrence County has the third worst score for all 67 Pennsylvania counties for the food environment index, behind only Philadelphia and Dauphin counties.[1]

- Per the 2015 County Health Rankings, 12% of residents had limited access to healthy foods, compared to 4% in Pennsylvania.[2] Lawrence County has nine grocery stores, not including convenience stores. In looking at low income areas, the most underserved locations in the County include the City of New Castle and Mahoning Township. 13% of Lawrence County residents reported food insecurity compared to 14% in Pennsylvania.[3]

---

[1] The food environment index ranges from 0 (worst) to 10 (best) and equally weights two indicators: food insecurity and limited access to healthy foods.

[2] Limited access to healthy foods is the percentage of the population who are low income and do not live close to a grocery store. In rural areas, it means living less than 10 miles from a grocery store; in nonrural areas, less than 1 mile. Low income is defined as having an annual family income of less than or equal to 200% percent of the federal poverty threshold for family size.

[3] Food insecurity is the percentage of the population who did not have access to a reliable source of food during the past year.

- LocalHarvest is an online tool that provides information regarding the availability of local food in an area. It provides information on farms, farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), restaurants, grocery/co-op, U-Pick, farm stand, wholesale and meat processors. It provides a "grassroots" directory of family farms, farmers markets and restaurants and grocery stores that feature local food; members create and maintain their own listings. It also provides weekly emails regarding local food and farm events, monthly newsletter and an online catalog of farm products available via mail order. According to Local Harvest (www.localharvest.org), there are 24 local farms listed near the City of New Castle.

- There are a variety of Farmer's Markets located throughout the County.

  » The City of New Castle offers a farmer's market on Saturdays from July through October. Stakeholder interviews revealed a desire to find space to offer this year round.

  » The Ellwood City Farmers' Market is also open on Saturdays from June through October and offers live musical performances.

  » The New Wilmington Farmers' Market is also on Saturdays from June through October and features local produce and artisans' crafts.

  » In addition, some local farms, such as Apple Castle, offer farmers markets year round.

- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a "farmer direct marketing enterprise that creates a cooperation-based relationship with consumers," where consumers purchase "shares" from a local farm at the beginning of each growing season. The CSA model is becoming increasingly popular in the growing local food movement and is touted as a "sustainable form of agriculture." A 2014 national survey of CSA farm operations revealed that most CSA operators tended to be committed to environmentally-friendly farming strategies, motivated by providing wholesome food to the community and providing supplemental income for the farm families. Obstacles to operating CSA include low profits, marketing/promoting the CSA and labor ability.[4] According to Local Harvest (www.localharvest.org) there are ten listings for CSA's near the City of New Castle, including the Northwest

---

[4] "Cooperation and Competition in the Local Food Movement: A Focus on Community Supported Agriculture," July 2015. Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs Policy Brief (www.IIRA.org).

PA Growers Cooperative, which is a farmer's co-op from 18 family farms in Butler, Mercer, Lawrence, Crawford and Venango counties. Four farms are located in Lawrence County, including the Villa Maria Farm.
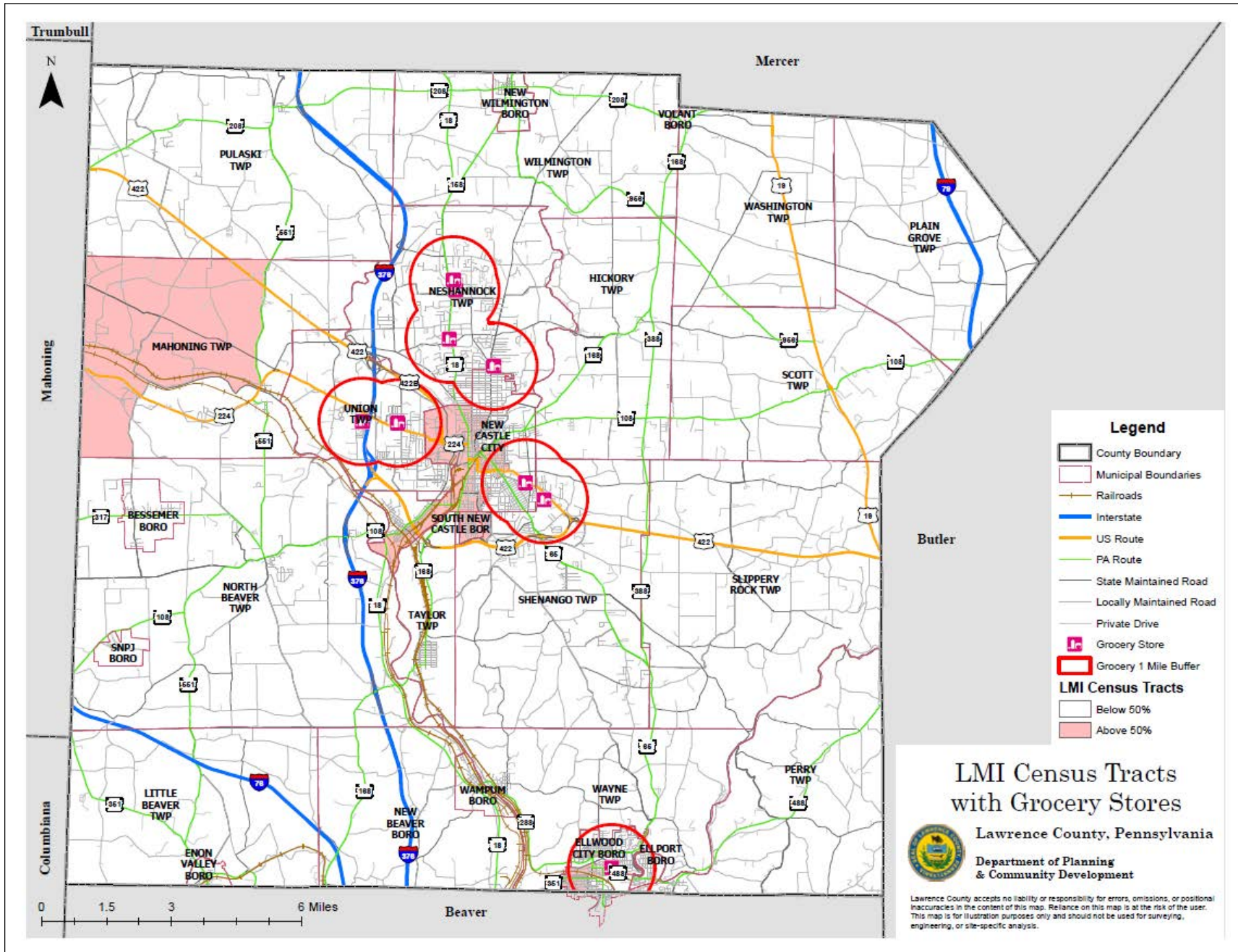
• One issue related to farmer's markets and CSA memberships as they pertain to providing access to healthy foods is that they can be prohibitively expensive for lower-income residents, even if they are located in such a neighborhood. Most do not accept Electronic Benefit Transfer cards as payment (i.e. food stamps) which exacerbates the issue.[5]   The farmer's markets in New Castle, Ellwood City and New Wilmington do accept food vouchers, which makes them more accessible to low income residents. This may be an area where more publicity is needed to ensure that these residents are aware of such opportunities.

• The County features two U-Pick farms: Apple Castle and Villa Maria Farm. Outreach conducted by the County Conservation District in recent years indicated some connections between local producers and restaurants (such as the Amish produce auction in New Wilmington), though there is further opportunity for restaurants and retailers to feature local fare. Working with grocery stores and restaurants to partner with local farmers could present more opportunities to provide healthy food as well as support County farms.

• The City of New Castle is looking to develop a business accelerator / incubator, maker-space and commercial-grade community kitchen as part of a larger Entrepreneurship Learning Campus in the City's Central Business District. Such an effort

Lawrence County Planning

---

5 *"Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia: Land Use and Policy Study." June 2010. Econsult Corporation. (http://penniur.upenn.edu/uploads/media/redevelopment%20authority%20 land%20use%20and%20policy%20study.pdf).*

Figure 14:   Locations of Grocery Store Service Areas and Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts

would provide an opportunity to expand the seasonal farmer's market, local farm-to-table efforts and urban community gardens as well as offer educational programs on healthy living, nutrition and agriculture, among others. As discussed in the Connecting Communities chapter, the City is currently implementing their Riverwalk Plan as part of its effort to create a more livable, walkable City, with a focus on attracting and retaining residents and entrepreneurs. The development of the Campus will not only provide amenities to encourage healthy living, but it will also provide space for industries such as technology, energy, advanced manufacturing / 3D printing, and other horizontal and vertical markets consistent with needs throughout the region.

Access to health care is an ongoing concern.

- One area where the County ranks poorly in terms of the County Health Rankings is access to healthcare. Lawrence County has a primary care physicians ratio of 2,090:1, compared to 1,249:1 in Pennsylvania.[6] It should be noted that this measure does not account for physicians that reside

and/or maintain practices outside of the County but serve County residents nor does it include alternative providers such as nurse practitioners or physician assistants.

- Private healthcare practices have offices in New Castle, Ellwood City and New Wilmington.[7]

- Lawrence County is home to the following major health systems:

  » **Jameson Health System**, which is comprised of North Campus (254-bed, not-for-profit hospital that is served by over 220 physicians) and South Campus (outpatient services, physician offices and other healthcare and social services). Both campuses are located in the City of New Castle. They do offer nutrition and wellness programs, including a diabetes management program, a weight loss program, medical nutrition therapy services, nutritional guidance and community yoga therapy.

    › As of May 1, 2016, Jameson has merged into the UPMC network and is now called UPMC Jameson. UPMC

will invest $75 million to develop services and facilities in Lawrence County and provide an additional $10 million dedicated to physician recruitment for expansion of clinical advancements in the region. The merger has ensured that UPMC Jameson will remain a vibrant acute care facility offering advanced services locally.

› Discussions with hospital executives noted plans include the renovation of the North Campus and focus on outpatient services in Shenango Township and the I-376 corridor in Union Township. The South Campus will become available and could pose an opportunity to serve as an anchor building for revitalization efforts in south New Castle.

› Discussions also noted their willingness to operate programs in partnership with other organizations. They are currently hosting a drug and alcohol program and would like to perhaps expand their nutrition outreach program.

---

6 *Primary Care Physicians is the ratio of the population to total primary care physicians within the County.*

7 *Provider Directory and Resource Guide for Lawrence County HealthChoices Members.*

» **The Ellwood City Hospital (TECH)**, which is a 46-bed, not-for-profit hospital that is served by about 100 physicians. Located in Ellwood City Borough, it offers an emergency room, medical surgical unit, six-bed coronary care unit and a 10-bed geriatric psychiatry unit as well as a variety of diagnostic, surgical, occupational and rehabilitation services. TECH offers yearly informational fairs, such as prenatal classes, national safety belt/safety week, breast cancer awareness week, prostate screenings and general health screenings.

› Additional services offered include the TECH Plus Program, which provides educational programs for senior citizens; the Behavioral Health Unit, which offers geriatric psychiatry and social programs (living wills, dementia, etc.); and the Tree of Life Wellness Center, which offers a public meeting room.

› TECH has been operating at a financial loss ($1.8 million in 2015) and has been using foundation money to keep the hospital running.

› Discussions with hospital executives noted that they hope to secure a partner and be finalized by the end of year 2016. They also noted that there is a need for educational and health programs for residents and would be willing to be a partner in providing such programs, but their current financial situation is an obstacle.

› The biggest health concerns identified include the need for programs to manage chronic illness; recruitment of physicians; and drug counseling / rehabilitation.

» The Affordable Care Act requires all charitable 501(c)(3) hospitals to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and adopt an implementation strategy at least once every three years.

› In 2013, Jameson Health Systems and the Ellwood City Hospital partnered to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment. [8] The report is a collection and analyses of data regarding health issues and needs with a summary of the top community health needs facing Lawrence County. Based on the findings, the report identified the following top health issues facing Lawrence County: supply of physicians and specialists; drug and alcohol abuse; mental and behavioral health; obesity and nutrition; and tobacco use.

› In response to the assessment, TECH established an implementation strategy in June of 2013 to enhance community benefit programs and hospital services.

» UPMC Jameson is currently updating their CHNA. Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development will be included as a stakeholder in the plan.

ISSUES CONSIDERED

→ What tools do local municipalities need to improve recreational access and health outcomes for their residents?

→ How can the County ensure that the public facilities available to residents are cost-effective, adequate and widely accessible?

→ The County's waterways will continue to be an important asset, particularly with regard to recreation and tourism. How can the County find the balance between improving the overall quality of the rivers and streambeds with promoting recreational activities on the waterways? What infrastructure is needed to increase access and appeal?

→ How can the County impact development patterns as they relate to flood hazard risk, in terms of incentive or disincentive relative to development in hazard-prone areas or by promoting policies that would slow the growth of impermeable surface area?

→ What aspects of the environment should factor into the County's long-range planning, both in terms of protecting natural resources and in promoting a healthy population?

→ What decisions can be made through this planning process to promote the sustainable use of limited natural resources?

→ How effective are County efforts to maximize the use of developed land and discourage or disallow the encroachment of non-agricultural development in farmland areas?

→ What opportunities exist for the county to expand the reach of healthy foods and accessible quality healthcare to its communities?

healthy communities

vision

" Provide the highest quality of life by preserving the agricultural and natural resources characteristic of Lawrence County and promoting a healthy lifestyle through recreation and local food source options. "

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS

1 Provide greenways and blueways to encourage healthy living and alternative modes of transportation.

	Priority Level	County Role Administer	Assist	Advise
Update the County Greenways Plan every ten years or as needed.	**H**	**X**		
Develop an online resource that includes a map of the waterways with locations of public access and descriptions of water (warnings, rapids, novice/expert, etc.)	**H**	**X**		
Dedicate funding to implementation of priority recommendations.	M	X		
Formally establish the blueways network within the County through designation as water trails and marketing/promotion.	M	X		
Market/promote accessible trails in the state game lands.	M		X	
Identify suitable areas for accessible fishing piers.	M		X	
Partner with school districts to establish Safe Routes to School programs.	M		X	
Determine eligibility to develop a WalkWorks route/group in Lawrence County.	L		X	
Determine the feasibility of creating a bike share program.	L		X	
Establish the Core Communities as walk/bike - friendly communities.	L		X	

2 Preserve farmland.

	County Role			
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
Provide model ordinances for agricultural preservation to municipalities and encourage to adopt as part of their zoning ordinances.	H		X	
Update County website to include maps of preserved farmland, application for farmland preservation program, eligibility guidelines, benefits of preservation and methods to control agricultural pollution.	H		X	
Encourage more landowners to participate in the agricultural security area program.	M			X
Encourage financial incentives and security – owner preservation.	M		X	

3

Provide public recreation areas throughout the county that serve all segments of the population.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Partner with school districts and libraries to utilize county parks and facilities for educational programs.	H		X	X
Market/promote the indoor/outdoor recreation opportunities and attractions throughout the County.	H		X	
Continue to partner with municipalities to write grants and provide technical assistance for park development/renovations.	H		X	
Develop a countywide parks, recreation and open space plan.	M	X		
Improve maintenance of County parks and recreation areas.	M	X		X
Work with local municipalities to provide regional parks that serve all areas of the County.	M		X	
Provide model mandatory and dedication/fee-in-lieu of recreation ordinances and encourage (growing) municipalities to adopt as part of their subdivision and land development ordinance.	L		X	

4 Protect and enhance natural resources.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Develop a countywide Environmental Advocacy Board (EAB).	**H**	**X**		
Host educational workshops throughout the County.	**H**	**X**		
Encourage communities to seek funds to implement stormwater best management practices.	**H**		**X**	
Update County Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI).	M	X		
Provide information to landowners regarding usage of native plants and trees, on lot stormwater management, and preservation of natural areas.	M		X	X
Develop programs to promote on lot stormwater management.	M		X	
Provide model ordinances regarding preservation of natural features, such as riparian buffers and steep slopes.	M		X	
Encourage communities to participate in TreeVitalize program and promote shade trees.	M		X	
Develop a plan to address invasive species	M		X	
Provide links to watershed groups on County website to encourage residents to become involved.	L	X		

5 Promote healthy living.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Support the expansion of an indoor, year-round farmers market.	**H**			**X**
Educate residents on the benefits of healthy living.	**H**			**X**
Take an active role in ensuring that county residents have continued access to local hospitals and healthcare.	**H**		**X**	
Assist communities in attracting local grocery stores for underserved populations.	M		X	
Develop countywide program to offer increased food vouchers for buying local at farmers markets.	M		X	
Provide assistance to communities to develop community garden program.	M		X	
Encourage the various farmers markets to coordinate and cross-market/promote.	M			X
Market existing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and encourage more farms to participate. Encourage CSA programs to work with local farmers markets as pick up locations.	M			X
Incorporate healthy communities as part of plan review (create checklist) and encourage communities to include as part of their planning processes.	L		X	

Benchmarks

Consistently improving scores for the following County Health Ranking measures:

- Adult obesity

- Food environment index

- Physical inactivity and access to exercise opportunities

- Ratio of population to health care providers

- Percentage of residents who drive alone to work.

Increased acres of preserved farmland and protected agricultural areas.

Partnership between County Planning and Community Development with the County's healthcare systems and providers to better address community health in a coordinated manner.

Increased online presence and increased marketing efforts of the recreation resources available in the County.

Updated land use ordinances that incorporate best management practices.
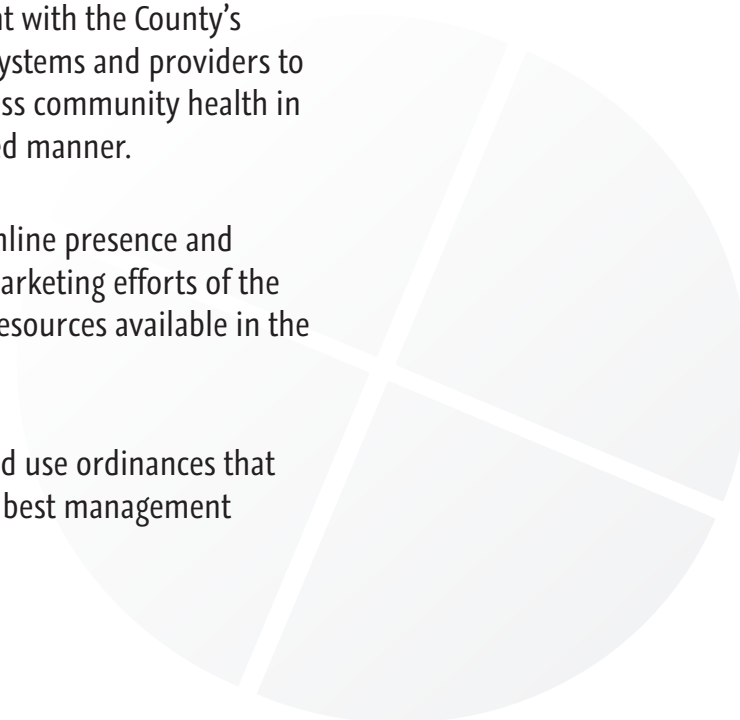
complete

[k*uh*m-**pleet**]

adjective

Having all parts or elements; lacking nothing; whole; entire; full[1]

A complete community is one that anticipates and efficiently accommodates the needs of all who live, work, relax or do business within its borders. Its infrastructure systems and development patterns maximize public value and support equal access to a high quality of life. Comprised of 27 municipalities, Lawrence County offers a diverse mix of urban, suburban and rural communities. The goal is for Lawrence County to be a complete community, where it offers a broad range of agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial development to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Within Lawrence County, the most populated municipalities include the City of New Castle (26,309), Neshannock Township (9,550), Shenango Township (7,436) and Ellwood City Borough (7,217). Development is primarily concentrated in the central part of the County surrounding New Castle, in the southern part around Ellwood City and to a lesser extent, in the northern part around New Wilmington.

---

1   *"Complete" Dictionary.com Retrieved online in 2016. (dictionary. reference.com/browse/complete).*

Settlement patterns have shifted since the collapse of the steel manufacturing industry in the 1980s, as the County (and the region) have experienced significant population decline. The urban centers of New Castle and Ellwood City have been hit the hardest. Of the 27 municipalities, only half have experienced at least a slight increase in population, while the other half have experienced a decline. Of those with a population increase, two are classified as urban communities (Volant and New Wilmington) and four are suburban communities; the remaining seven are rural. The rural townships experiencing the most growth include Wayne, Slippery Rock, Scott and Washington; located in the eastern portion of the County.

Land use regulation (or lack thereof) occurs at the local level in Pennsylvania. Municipal comprehensive plans serve to establish a community vision and identify growth

areas that support land use regulations, such as zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances. Only 14 of the County's 27 municipalities have adopted comprehensive plans. Zoning ordinances, which regulate how land can be developed, have been enacted in all but eight municipalities. However, of the four growing rural townships, only Wayne Township has a comprehensive plan and a zoning ordinance to regulate land use. The continued consumption of rural lands begins to raise questions of sustainability.

The 2004 Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan identified the following land use principles, which are supported by the Market Analysis and corresponding Build Out Analysis that were completed as part of this Comprehensive Plan Update:

1. **Public services should drive development** – not the other way around: The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas appropriate for new development. Decisions to extend water and sanitary sewer service should not be made after the fact in order to "catch-up" with unplanned development.

2. **"Fix what is broken"** before developing elsewhere: Many parts of the County are already developed and therefore are already provided with utilities and services (roads, sewers, water, electric, phone, etc.). Many of these areas are developed at low densities. Efforts should be made to develop these serviced areas first. Road networks should be improved, and connections for pedestrians and bicycles established in some areas.

3. **Siting of Public Buildings:** Public buildings such as schools, municipal offices, and libraries should be used to establish municipal centers – they should be located, where possible, in groupings with other public and private buildings, and connected by a network of roads and paths. These buildings should be designed and sited to create a "village" scale environment.

4. **Protect agricultural areas and the rural character of the County:** Rural character was identified as being an extremely important asset and therefore is an underlying principle.

5. **Open Space System:** In order to maintain rural character, and to increase connections between the various parts of the County, a comprehensive open space plan should be developed using a series of greenways, linear paths and parks.

Veltre, Lawrence County Conservation District Photo Contest

In a **complete county:**

The need to consider land use planning at a regional and County level is more important than ever. The overall goal of this County Comprehensive Plan Update is to provide broad goals and criteria for municipalities to use in the preparation of their comprehensive plan and land use regulations.

Many issues of planning and community development transcend municipal boundaries: transportation networks, environmental resources, housing market trends and the spread of poverty, among others. Communities that view themselves as partners in promoting the prosperity of the entire region are better positioned for long-term positive outcomes than communities that compete with their neighbors for investment. Making Lawrence County a more complete community will involve collaboration that allows communities to make smarter land use choices that promote long-term sustainability.

There is an appropriate balance and distribution of land uses.

Development happens where it makes sense, is efficient and reinforces traditional neighborhoods.

Efficient transportation networks provide safe means of travel for all users.

Regulations have the aggregate effect of advancing community goals and allow for creative ways to translate supply/demand into prosperity for both investors/developers and the community.

True housing choice provides an array of viable options in different neighborhood settings, at a variety of price points and offers amenities that meet the needs of all household types.

Adequate public facilities and services (such as public safety, recreation and schools) meet community goals.

Shared values and community identity strengthen marketing and create a sense of place.

Diversity in the built and natural environment exists within and across municipalities.

SNAPSHOT

Though market forces have slowed overall development across Lawrence County, land consumption continues to outpace growth in population and households, representing an unsustainable and inefficient development pattern.

- Between 2008 and 2013, Lawrence County municipalities issued permits for an average of only 72 housing units per year, compared to 124 in Mercer County, 219 in Beaver County and 660 in Butler County. Multi-family housing development was especially sluggish, as zero units in such structures were built during those years, despite a low vacancy rate across the county's existing multi-family housing.

- A large share of what development has occurred in recent years has taken the form of suburban sprawl, a pattern characterized by lower-density expansion into greenfields that typically requires the extension of public infrastructure, such as roads and water/sewer. As shown in Figure 15, more densely developed areas have been hollowed out by population loss to more sparsely developed areas.

- High vacancy rates within the detached single-family housing segment may signal the end of rising demand for the types of homes traditionally associated with family rearing, which comprises the vast majority of housing in the County's suburban and rural areas. Instead, the County should expect increasing demand for smaller and/or multi-family housing due to increasing non-family households, the aging population and the growing population ages 25-34. The latter group is less likely to purchase housing than previous generations, either as a matter of preference or inability to qualify for financing.

Figure 15: Population Change Across Highest-Population Municipalities, 2000-2013

	2013	% Change
New Castle	23,083	-12.3%
Neshannock Township	9,550	3.6%
Shenango Township	7,436	-2.6%
Ellwood City Borough	7,217	-9.3%
Union Township	5,132	0.6%
North Beaver Township	4,100	1.9%

U.S. Census Bureau

- Neshannock, Shenango and Wilmington Townships typically bear the highest home sales prices, while New Castle's high vacancy rate and lower property values reinforce a cycle of disinvestment. The County's most affordable housing stock is concentrated in its highest-poverty municipalities.

- Younger households are more likely to move into the older homes typical of the County's boroughs and cities, but there is a limited inventory of such homes that have been updated to contain modern amenities. At the same time, larger homes in exurban areas will likely become increasingly vacant as the larger Baby Boomer generation moves into smaller units with lower maintenance needs. This translates into a mismatch between housing supply and demand.

- The Phase II: Build-Out Analysis identified land in the County's rural, suburban and urban municipalities that is zoned and potentially suitable for residential, commercial or industrial development. While there is an ample supply of developable land, a lack of development pressure indicates that full build-out is unlikely to occur.

- Within the City of New Castle, a large portion is designated as a flood hazard area, subject to associated development restrictions and/or hazard insurance. However, the occurrence, and even threat of, flooding is reported as seldom. As such, the desgination of these lands as flood hazard areas poses a big obstacle to infill and redevelopment efforts.

The preservation of agricultural lands and other natural features characteristic of a rural way of life remains a high priority to municipal officials and citizens.

- Restricting development in areas with natural assets is consistent with other land use principles adopted in prior plans, such as growing greener and smart growth, which promote compact and sustainable development patterns that maximize existing resources.

- Because agriculture continues to be an important feature of the County's identity, landscape and local economy, protecting high-quality farmland from the encroachment of sprawling development will continue to be a concern.

J. Marti, Lawrence County Conservation District Photo Contest

- There is a need to balance preservation efforts with development in rural townships. Educating municipal officials and residents on methods to accommodate new development while limiting the impact on the natural environment can help to achieve the necessary balance.

- Several of the townships (Slippery Rock, Scott and Washington Townships) that are experiencing population growth are rural and do not have plans or land use regulations in place to promote sustainable development practices. In many instances, these communities do not have local planning commissions and are only subject to the County's subdivision and land use regulations.

- Flood hazard areas are a major concern to many municipalities, particularly Neshannock, Pulaski, Slippery Rock and Wilmington Townships. Large areas within their boundaries are designated floodplains and are in need of special attention.

Heavy industrial space generally represents the land development opportunity with the greatest current potential for economic development in the County.

- The County's greatest employment growth is expected to occur in industries that are not traditionally dependent on office space. Industries that heavily use office space have never had a large presence within the County, and such businesses are making deliberate cost-saving efforts to reduce their reliance on physical space. This is reflected in a high vacancy rate within the County's office real estate segment. The exception will be medical office space, which is expected to expand to serve the region's aging population.

- Relatively low household incomes and consumer spending, along with a large inventory of retail properties available for lease, indicate that there is currently little need for additional retail, other than specialty retail, personal services and small restaurants.

- Industrial space is available for rent and sale throughout the County. The industrial real estate market in New Castle has been stronger than other markets (e.g., retail and office). Marcellus Shale-related activities, in particular, have driven demand for light industrial space (distribution and warehousing).

- There is a minimal amount of vacant heavy industrial space, and even less zoned land for such uses in the southern part of County. Considering Lawrence County's strategic access to a major interstate, heavy rail and air transportation infrastructure, as well as the relatively low price of land, there is opportunity for enticing a large industrial user or users needing close proximity to the Ohio Valley market. Ellwood City has noted a need for additional industrial land to accommodate the growing market.

The impact of mineral extraction as well as developments of regional significance and impact need to be properly addressed within the context of land use planning.

- Unconventional drilling in Lawrence County has tapped primarily into the northern tier of the Utica Shale formation, focusing in the County's northwestern corner. As of March 2016, DEP had permitted 181 wells across the County located on 38 sites, 74 of which were drilled or being developed.

- Activity in this area has developed more slowly and steadily than in Marcellus-rich areas farther south and east across Pennsylvania, continuing despite a precipitous decline in oil and gas prices. Continued extraction is at least in part due to heavy investment on the part of Hilcorp Energy Co., based in Texas, which is the area's most active prospector. DEP data shows that more than 100 of the 181 permits issued for wells in the County belong to Hilcorp. Other activity has included an affiliate of Royal Dutch Shell, which has largely abandoned drilling in the County, and Rex Energy Corp., based in State College, which drilled its first dry gas Utica well in the County in late 2015.

- In 2014, Lawrence County became a proving ground for land use rights as they relate to oil and gas extraction. Hilcorp, which then held rights to more than 3,000 acres of property in what it called the "Pulaski Accumulation," sought access to frack 35 further acres without permission from the landowners. The owners filed a lawsuit fighting what they perceived would be an inappropriate use of state eminent domain to benefit private industry. Though Hilcorp later withdrew its application to DEP, which would have set a precedent for "forced pooling" across the state, the contentious incident highlighted land use issues that will become increasingly relevant to the County during the next 10 years.

- While Shell has retreated from drilling in Lawrence County, it confirmed in June 2016 that it will build a multimillion-dollar petrochemical plant in Potter Township, Beaver County. Located approximately 15 miles south of Lawrence County, it will have an incalculably-large local economic impact. Construction is expected to begin in approximately 2017-2018, with production beginning in the early 2020s. The plant will employ 600 full-time employees and 6,000 temporary construction jobs. The plant's construction could create more than 15,000 jobs in new industries and businesses within a 75-mile radius and could trigger strong development interest in the I-376 corridor in Lawrence County.[1]

---

1 "Shell to build cracker plant in Beaver County." June 7, 2016. Pittsburgh Business Times. Retrieved online June 2016. (http://goo.gl/Ms7JCZ).
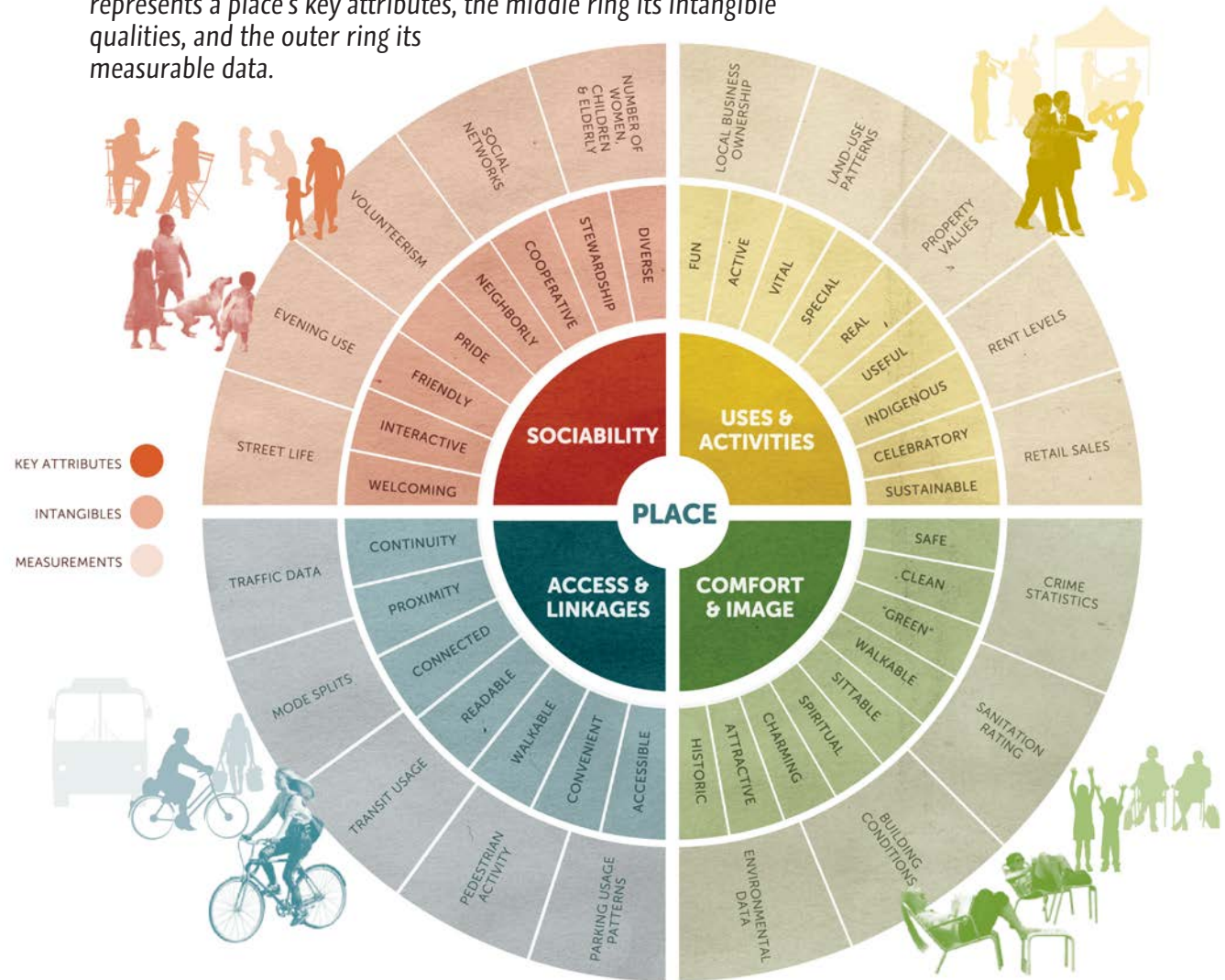
What makes a great place?

While each community is unique, a coordinated plan to develop and promote these amenities in a regional effort will strengthen the overall County.

The Place Diagram is one of the tools the Project for Public Spaces has developed to help communities evaluate places. The inner ring represents a place's key attributes, the middle ring its intangible qualities, and the outer ring its measurable data.

- Placemaking "facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution."[2] Project for Public Spaces provides online resources to launch a successful Placemaking program for planning great public spaces, public markets and transportation. This approach should be utilized within future planning initiatives.

KEY ATTRIBUTES

INTANGIBLES

MEASUREMENTS

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES

• Some of Lawrence County's unique assets repeatedly identified throughout the planning process include the history of the region; the Amish community and way of life; the agricultural community and active farms; major outdoor recreational attractions such as McConnells Mill State Park; miles of waterfront property; and trails, such as the North Country National Scenic Hiking Trail. The Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency (TPA) works to promote these (and many other) attractions. Potential identified opportunities to capitalize upon these assets include:

  » Continuing to brand the City of New Castle as the "Fireworks Capital of America" through marketing materials and potentially the development of a fireworks center / museum.

  » Expanding the concept of "trail town" to include "river town" and similar marketing concepts to encourage economic development in communities along established and proposed trails (water trails and multipurpose land trails). Wampum Borough is the first designated Trail Town along the North Country National Scenic Trail, designated in 2013.

» Preserving historic buildings and communities and encouraging compatible new development through the creation and promotion of design guidelines.

» Developing the "wine tour" along SR 208 and expanding agri-tourism businesses.

» Developing new hotels in order to host conventions.

• Gateways, defined as the entrance into a place, should welcome residents and visitors to a place and most often include signage.

  » The 2004 Comprehensive Plan identified several locations for new gateway signs to welcome people to Lawrence County. During this planning process, the lack of developed gateways with attractive signage into the County continued to be a priority concern.

  » Particularly, the aesthetics along some of the major corridors entering the County were noted as being unattractive and unwelcoming.

  » Although there are no exits in Lawrence County, approximately eight (8) miles of the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) travel through the County; however, there are no signs letting drivers know that they are in the County.

ISSUES CONSIDERED

→ Assuming general stability or modest growth in the County's future population, what local and/or County land use policies would facilitate more sustainable development patterns?

→ What type of development patterns and housing types will the County need to accommodate an aging population?

→ What is the County's vision for future development patterns, and how can it most effectively influence planning and decision-making at the local level?

→ To what degree has fragmented land-use planning affected the competitiveness of the County as a whole region, with regard to attracting desired development? Do regulatory barriers exist that impede the County and/or local communities from achieving goals?

→ Given a decline in population density and the rising costs of maintaining and extending public infrastructure, how can the County prioritize or incentivize development that takes advantage of existing assets and resources?

→ Has the County fully capitalized on the regulatory and other means it has available to protect natural assets?

→ Considering the higher unemployment and lower income levels of the workforce residing in Lawrence County compared to other areas of the region, what kinds of redevelopment opportunities could most effectively increase job opportunities for County residents?

→ How effective are County efforts to maximize the use of developed land and discourage or disallow the encroachment of non-agricultural development in farmland areas?

→ How can the County impact development patterns as they relate to flood hazard risk, in terms of incentive or disincentive relative to development in hazard-prone areas or by promoting policies that would slow the growth of impermeable surface area?

→ As land use drives transportation needs, how can the County influence the siting of origins and destinations to promote development and circulation within areas already served by infrastructure?

→ To what extent are guidelines in place to establish standards for signage, setbacks, utilities, landscaping and access points along key corridors where development is expected and/or prioritized?

complete communities

vision

" Offer "complete" urban, suburban and rural communities that provide a variety of housing choices, employment opportunities and transportation options to foster a healthy environment and lifestyle. "

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS

1 Encourage the revitalization of existing urban and suburban areas.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Encourage municipalities with zoning to incorporate Traditional Neighborhood Design principles for urban centers and fringe neighborhoods bordering urban areas.	H		X	X
Encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites.	H		X	X
Promote clustered residential development, minimize impervious surface coverage and right-size surface parking in suburban areas.	M			X
Promote in-fill development compatible in scale, style, and character to the surrounding land uses and infrastructure capabilities.	M			X
Create a forum for builders, realtors and county/municipal officials to discuss new laws, trends, needs and opportunities related to housing and combatting blight.	M		X	X
Work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to re-examine floodplain boundary designation in urban areas to reduce development constraints in areas that have historically not seen flooding.	M	X		

2 Preserve rural resource areas.

	Priority Level	County Role		
		Administer	Assist	Advise
Encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs) in rural resource areas during site plan review.	**H**			**X**
Promote the sustainable management and use of forest resources to ensure their long-term health and productivity.	**H**			**X**
Encourage innovative and affordable site designs by supporting community or alternative technology for sewage facilities.	**H**			**X**
Limit the expansion of public water and sewer to existing urban, suburban and surrounding areas, unless there is a demonstrated need (require impact studies).	M		X	
Encourage the use of sensitive-site design that preserves natural hydrologic conditions	M			X
Encourage municipalities to establish floodplain management programs.	M	X	X	
Support the relocation and/or acquisition of known flood-prone structures with repetitive losses to reduce hazard losses within floodplains.	M		X	

3   Promote sustainable development practices.

	Priority Level	County Role Administer	Assist	Advise
Work to attract development activities that complement healthy lifestyles, such as waterway development.	H			X
Encourage communities to enact/enforce property maintenance codes and fire/ building codes to address health, safety and welfare implications.	H		X	
Update road improvement, maintenance plans, bonding, etc. to ensure that they address impacts to local roads.	H		X	X
Review local land use ordinances to ensure that they are compatible with not only the proposed use, but also associated ancillary uses.	M	X		
Encourage developers to engage environmental agencies at the very outset of the process, before selecting a site.	M			X
Form a County Natural Gas Task Force: ad hoc committee to address public and private sector impacts and opportunities related to natural gas development.	M	X		
Develop a countywide official map and coordinate with mid-stream gas companies to plan for new gas and liquid pipelines and other facilities.	M	X		
Provide and promote pad-ready development sites.	M		X	
Ensure that the rental housing market can meet demand for workers.	L		X	
Support and encourage educational institutions to offer programs on job training related to the natural gas industry.	L		X	X

4 Promote "placemaking" to capitalize on the unique aspects of communities.

		County Role		
	Priority Level	Administer	Assist	Advise
Develop gateways into Lawrence County and core communities.	H	X	X	
Partner with Lawrence County Tourism Promotion Agency (LCTPA) and municipalities to develop consistent wayfinding signage throughout the County.	H	X	X	
Encourage a regional approach for marketing efforts.	H	X		
Encourage historic preservation efforts.	H			X
Prepare design guidelines to encourage new/re-development that is compatible with the historic and cultural aspects of the region.	M		X	
Connect communities to the waterfront.	M		X	
Encourage communities to become designated Trail Towns and/or River Towns to capitalize on the trail network and encourage economic development.	M		X	
Prioritize and promote unique urban features, such as the proposed trail systems, that have the strong potential to attract ancillary businesses.	M	X	X	
Encourage roundabouts to slow traffic and beautify entrances to core communities and improve safety.	M		X	

Benchmarks

Production of new housing units no longer outpaces growth in total households countywide.

Municipalities have adopted tools for sustainable development approaches, such as adaptive reuse, infill construction, brownfield redevelopment and low-impact approaches to using greenfields (conservation subdivision, right-size parking, etc.)

All municipalities have updated or adopted comprehensive plans that are consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan Update and incorporate Placemaking processes.

All municipalities have updated or adopted land use regulations consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan Update that encourage sustainable land use practices.

The County offers welcoming and attractive gateways.

Future
Land Use
Plan

Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan Components

Fitting Together the Pieces

While land use is regulated at the local (municipal) level, the MPC defines a County Comprehensive Plan as "...a land use and growth management plan...which establishes broad goals and criteria for municipalities to use in preparation of their comprehensive plan and land use regulations." The purpose of this section is to take the visions and guiding principles from all four plan components and the build out analysis to develop a Future Land Use Plan for Lawrence County that will generally establish an overall vision for how land should be developed over the next ten years.

Key words and phrases from each of the plan component's vision statements include:

- Complete urban, suburban and rural communities
- Housing choices
- Targeted reinvestment into the Core communities
- Connected communities
- Quality of life
- Preservation of agricultural and natural resources
- Healthy lifestyles

With the vision and guiding principles in mind, a Future Land Use Plan for Lawrence County was prepared that advances sustainable land use policies for municipalities to use as a guide. The MPC allows for comprehensive plans to identify designated growth areas, future growth areas and rural resource areas.

Growth Areas

The MPC defines two types of growth areas: designated growth areas and future growth areas.

A **designated growth area** is defined as "a region within a county...that preferably includes and surrounds a city, borough or village, and within which residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned for at densities of one unit to the acre or more, commercial, industrial and institutional uses are permitted or planned for and public infrastructure services are provided or planned."

As such, all areas within Lawrence County that are currently served by public water AND public sewer are classified as a designated growth area. The designated growth areas closely align with the plan's emphasis on Core Communities. These areas represent the most densely populated areas in the County (the majority of these areas have a population density of at least 500 persons per square mile).

With public infrastructure in place and most communities citing the available capacity to accommodate new development, the goal is to target infill and redevelopment within these areas. The areas within the County classified as Designated Growth Areas include, as shown on Figure 16:

- Greater New Castle Area (the City and surrounding suburban counterparts in portions of Neshannock Township, Hickory Township, Shenango Township, South New Castle Borough, Taylor Township and Union Township).

- New Wilmington Borough

- Volant Borough

- Village of Pulaski

- Bessemer Borough

- Ellwood City / Ellport Borough

- Wampum Borough

A **future growth area** is defined as "an area... outside of and adjacent to a designated growth area where residential, commercial industrial and institutional uses and development are permitted or planned at varying densities and public infrastructure services may or may not be provided, but future development at greater densities is planned to accompany the orderly extension and provision of public infrastructure services."

Areas classified as Future Growth Areas in Lawrence County include the following:

1. Areas that are served by public water OR sewer, but not both. The expansion of water or sewer to these areas is likely and makes sense in terms of accommodating new development.

2. Half mile buffers along major arterial roads that connect Core Communities, contain urban/suburban areas (Census tracts with a population density at least 500 persons per square mile) and/or are served by public transit.

The following corridors are identified as Future Growth Areas, as shown on Figure 16:

- **US 422 West of the City of New Castle to the Ohio border**. Much of this corridor is already served by either water (in Union Township) or sewer (in Pulaski Township); provides a connection to Youngstown, Ohio; is served by public transit; and the proposed location for the Lawrence Downs Casino and Racing Resort is located off of 422 in Mahoning Township.

- **US 422 East of the City of New Castle from Shenango Township to the County border**. 422 East connects to I-79; is home to the 422 Park N Ride in Shenango Township and a major transit route to Pittsburgh; and connects to Living Treasures Animal Park, Rosepoint Campground, McConnells Mill State Park and other tourist/recreation destinations.

- **US 224 from SR 551 to the Ohio border.** Much of the retail development in the County is located in Union Township near the US 224 / I-376 interchange. The 224 corridor has public sewer service and provides a connection to Poland / Boardman Ohio.

- **SR 18 North of the City of New Castle in Neshannock Township to SR 208 in New Wilmington Borough**. This corridor connects the City of New Castle to New Wilmington Borough, Volant Borough (via SR 208) and Mercer / Grove City in Mercer County and is served by public transit.

- **SR 18 South from South New Castle Borough to Wampum and the Beaver County border**. This corridor connects the City of New Castle to Wampum Borough (which is served by public water and sewer) and to the Beaver County border to accommodate potential development as a result of the proposed Ethane Cracker Plant in Beaver County.

- **SR 65 from Shenango Township to Ellwood City and Ellport Boroughs.** This corridor connects the City of New Castle with Ellwood City / Ellport Borough and is served by public transit.

- **SR 168 / New Beaver Borough** – while there is no public water or sewer service, there is potential for growth as a result of access to I-76/PA Turnpike and I-376.

Figure 16:   Future Land Use Plan
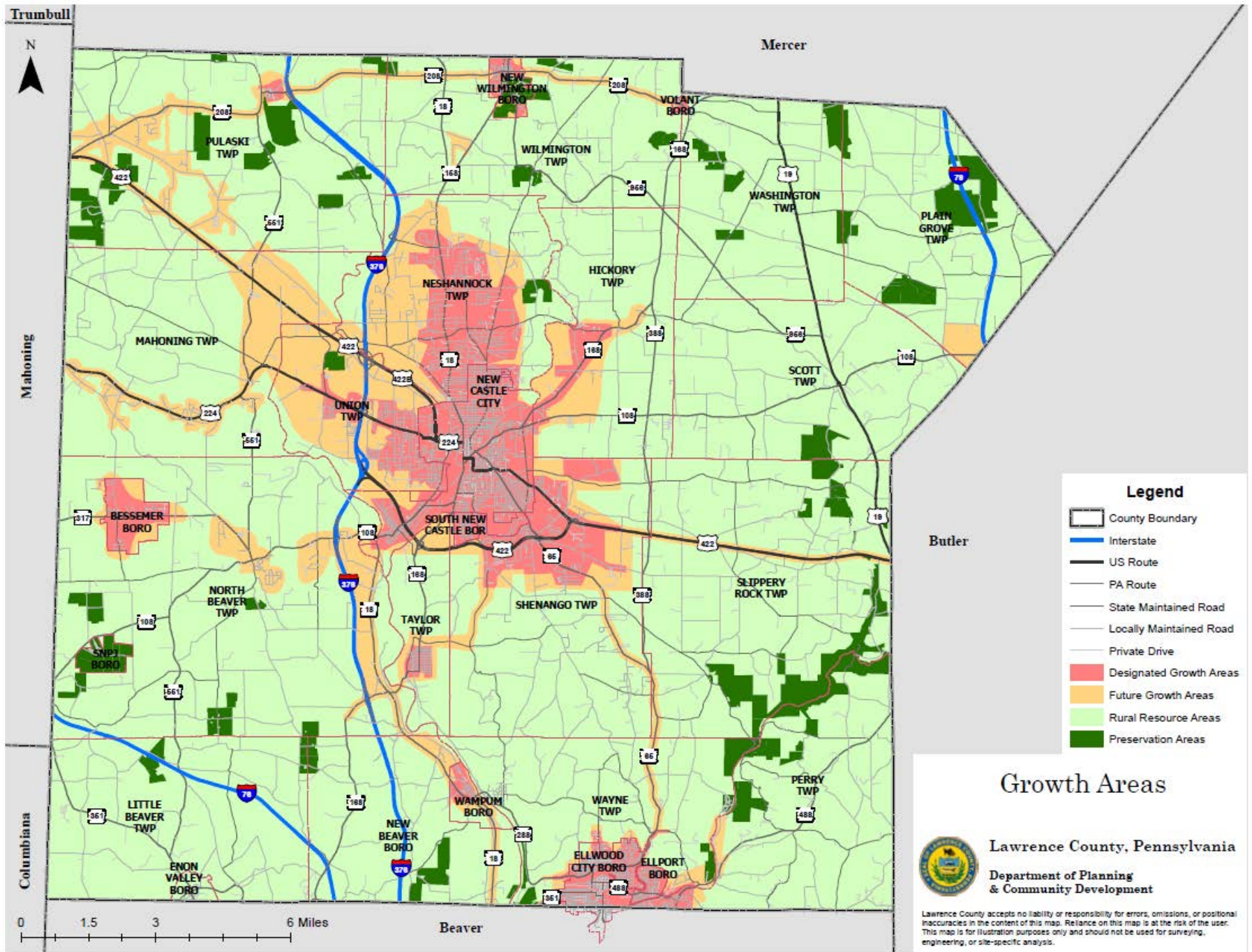
Residential Development

With little residential development in demand (see the Market Analysis and Build Out Analysis for more information), the majority of new residential development should occur in designated and future growth areas. In particular, the emphasis should be on multi-family and medium to high density residential development. Residential redevelopment is also important, as there is an opportunity to retrofit existing vacant commercial buildings within the downtown centers to accommodate such development.

Commercial Development

The majority of commercial development should also take place within designated and future growth areas. The Core Communities are rife with vacant commercial buildings and there are several vacant or underutilized shopping centers in the suburban communities. These spaces should be targeted for redevelopment before new greenfield development for commercial/retail purposes is pursued.

Industrial Development

In terms of industrial development, there are several brownfields that are a high priority for redevelopment. However, some of the Core Communities have identified a lack of available industrial land, causing new industrial development to occur outside of the Core Communities. Large regional projects, such as the proposed Cracker Plant in Beaver County may cause development pressure north along the Route 18 corridor into Lawrence County.

Development Principles within Growth Areas

The following policies were developed during the planning process based on the existing conditions analysis, build-out analysis, municipal and stakeholder outreach, committee discussions and generally accepted best practices in planning and community development. These principles apply to the urban and suburban areas captured within the plan's Growth Areas.

- Redevelop first. Provide incentives to redevelop vacant or underutilized sites rather than greenfield development.

- Encourage higher density residential uses in town centers.

- Streamline the approval process (zoning and subdivision/land development) for conversion of existing structures for adaptive reuse.

- Adopt mixed use zoning districts that encourage residential upper-story development in commercial downtowns.

- Consider requiring minimum densities rather than imposing maximum densities.

- Minimize setbacks in commercial and mixed use districts – set a "build-to line" rather than a minimum setback – to create more engaging streetscapes and walkable communities.

- Encourage ground-floor retail through tools such as density bonuses.

- Encourage transit-oriented development, particularly in Core Communities.

- Require amenities, such as bike racks and parking, to encourage cycling.

- Reduce parking requirements or unbundle parking from development to encourage more compact development at lower costs.

- Implement a land banking program to acquire and redevelop abandoned and vacant properties.

- Offer temporary property tax or one-time fee abatements to projects in desired areas.

- Identify publicly-owned land that could be used for affordable housing.

- Tailor development standards (for elements such as parking, open space, and landscaping regulations) to each zone. This entails increased density and intensity in centers, and lower density towards the edges of the communities.

- Conduct further market studies before development to make sure such development is needed and will be supported.

- Protect open space, historic sites, and environmental resources by encouraging innovative design techniques such as cluster development and conservation design.

Rural Resource Areas

The PA MPC defines a rural resource area as "an area described in a municipal or multi-municipal plan within which rural resource uses including, but not limited to, agriculture, timbering, mining, quarrying and other extractive industries, forest and game lands and recreation and tourism are encouraged and enhanced, development that is compatible with or supportive of such uses in permitted, and public infrastructure services are not provided except in villages."

Within the Rural Resource Areas, there are identified Preservation Areas where development is restricted, as shown on Figure 16. These areas include farms that are enrolled in the agricultural preservation program, public parks (state, county and municipal) and state game lands. All of the lands within these areas are permanently preserved. The remaining areas within the Rural Resource Areas are classified as such in order to encourage development that is supportive of the agricultural community found in much of the County as well as the rural lifestyle that residents cherish. Outside of villages, public infrastructure will not be provided.

Residential Development

These areas are not priorities for housing plan development. Where housing is added, its design should respect existing agricultural and open space uses, ideally on larger lots and at a low density. If near an existing village, it is recommended that a new subdivision be developed as an extension of the existing village or incorporate conservation subdivision principles to identify and protect especially valuable and/or sensitive existing features.

S. Seymour, Lawrence County Conservation District Photo Contest

Commercial Development

Medium- and large-scale commercial development is especially discouraged in these areas, due to the inefficiency of infrastructure extensions to serve these uses (the long-term maintenance of which would fall upon the municipality), the unsustainability of continued land consumption while vacancy grows in urbanized areas, and the need to preserve the greenfield spaces that represent an important part of the County's identity and economic base.

Smaller-scale commercial additions could be appropriate in places and ways that complement the existing area character, such as businesses that support agricultural operations, farm stands and agri-tourism enterprises.

Industrial Development

Within rural areas, industrial activity should take the form of resource extraction, vetted carefully to mitigate potential negative externalities for surrounding landowners and communities, and uses that support agricultural prosperity.

Development Principles within Rural Resource Areas

Similar to the development principles within Growth areas, additional development policies have been prepared to guide development within Rural Resource Areas (outside of the Preservation Areas).

- In environmentally sensitive areas, implement codes requiring new homes to meet certain standards (for example, for water efficiency, green infrastructure, stormwater management, etc.).

- Ensure that codes limit development in wetlands or flood plains.

- Prohibit development in environmentally sensitive areas.

- Implement open-space or recreation impact fees, open-space dedication, or set-aside requirements.

- Implement Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs between well-defined sending and receiving zones.

- Designate growth areas and preservation areas as defined by a municipal services area, municipal development area, or other designation.

- Form a community land trust to manage open space.

- Create programs to support fee simple acquisition of sensitive land.

- Protect existing farms from nuisance complaints through tools such as "Right to Farm."

- Consider zoning for commercial, light manufacturing, retail, or related uses on owner-occupied farms, allowing economic development activities such as agriculture-related industry, farmers markets and farm stands.

- Encourage cluster development through methods such as density bonuses.

- Limit capital improvements.

This page intentionally left blank.

Implementation Plan

What next?

Once the Lawrence County Comprehensive Plan is adopted...what does the County do next? The recommendations provided in the Plan include specific action steps that can be taken to implement the overall Plan Visions for Core, Connecting, Complete and Healthy Communities. But how can the County ensure that they are actively implementing the Plan? Here are some actions that should be taken by the Lawrence County Department of Planning and Community Development to track implementation:

1 Prepare an implementation update annually.

Plan implementation should be tracked and publicized to market the County's progress with realizing the established Vision and Guiding Principles of the Plan. The Update should be included on the County website and provided to the municipalities. The annual update should:

a. **Identify actions** taken by the County over the past year that helped to achieve the Vision and Guiding Principles set forth in the Plan.

b. **Survey municipalities and other County Departments** to include projects that have been completed by organizations outside of the LCDPCD that implement the Plan and gather data to measure benchmarks.

c. **Include a list** of priority transportation projects.

2 Provide an online toolkit.

A high priority recommendation, the online toolkit became an early implementation project. The online toolkit should:

a. **Provide model ordinances** that municipalities can use to implement the Plan's Vision. These ordinances should be reviewed and updated and/or added to as needed, particularly when new planning issues or concern arise.

b. **Include links** to technical resources and financial resources for municipalities and other organizations.

3 Coordinate, conduct and promote educational and public outreach.

Education was identified throughout the planning process as a critical component not only to Plan implementation, but also to realizing the County's Vision for a bright and sustainable future. As such, the County should:

a. **Develop a request form** that municipalities and other organizations can complete to request the County to speak at their meetings and/or events regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update and its Implementation. The County could also create materials to take to various events throughout the County to increase public awareness of the Plan and its purpose.

b. **Host municipal education workshops.** These should be designed for local elected officials, planning commission members, zoning and code enforcement officers and zoning hearing board members on land use regulations and tools, such as zoning, subdivision and land development, official map

and property maintenance codes. These tools are a key component to achieving the County's Vision and Future Land Use Plan and must be implemented at the local level. The County should also publicize and provide education on how to use the online toolkit to ensure that municipal officials understand the importance and benefits of utilizing these model ordinances.

c. **Host workshops on stormwater management.** Green infrastructure – water quality management techniques like green roofs, rain barrels, bioswales, tree plantings, rain gardens and permeable pavement – has been proven to help solve major urban stormwater problems and improve the health and livability of neighborhoods. Workshops can be geared towards municipalities on how to incorporate green infrastructure into public projects, such as parking lots, parks and recreation, etc. They can also be geared towards private property owners on the benefits to the owner, which include increased rents and property values; increased retail sales; energy savings; reduced infrastructure costs; reduced costs

associated with flooding; reduced water bills; increased mental health and worker productivity for office employees; and reduced crime.

d. **Partner with local hospitals and other organizations** to develop a public outreach campaign to educate residents and businesses on the benefits of healthy living. Developing healthy communities is a key component in the Plan and a high priority for the County moving forward. The County can encourage its municipalities to incorporate healthy initiatives in their planning efforts and promote sustainability programs, such as the Star Communities (Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating Communities); the Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Healthy Corner Store Program. Additional outreach efforts could include providing maps and information on public parks and recreation areas to local hospitals, doctors offices, etc. to encourage people to become more active.

4 Continue to provide technical assistance to municipalities to prepare and obtain funding for planning, development and implementation projects that are consistent with the County Plan.

5 Develop partnerships with other County departments and local community groups and organizations to implement high priority Plan recommendations.

Many of the Plan's recommendations are either not the responsibility of the County to take action or they will require additional partners. A list of potential partners is included on the following pages.

6 Prepare a checklist for reviewing municipal plans and ordinances, as well as subdivision and land development approvals.

To ensure that municipal plans and ordinances are implementing the County's Vision, they should be required to provide a statement about how they are consistent with the County's plan and will further its Implementation. To assist with review, the County should prepare a review checklist that identifies the methods to achieve consistency. A similar checklist should be prepared to assist the County Planning Commission with their review and approval process for subdivisions and land developments.

Potential Partners & Resources

Core Communities and Complete Communities

American Planning Association - Pennsylvania Chapter (www.planningpa.org/)

County Planning Directors Association of Pennsylvania (CPDAP) (www.cpdap.org/)

Ellwood City Revitalization (http://ellwoodcityrevitalization.org/)

New Visions for Lawrence County (http://www.newvisionslc.org/)

New Castle Department of Community Development (http://www.newcastlepa.org/Departments/Community_Develop_/community_develop_.html)

Ellwood City Area Chamber (http://ellwoodchamber.org/)

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (www.fema.gov/)

Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania (www.housingalliancepa.org)

Housing Authority of the County of Lawrence (www.lawrencecountyha.com)

Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce (http://www.lawrencecountychamber.org/)

Lawrence County Citizen Corps (https://www.citizencorps.fema.gov/cc/showCouncil.do?id=45748)

Lawrence County Community Action Partnership (LCCAP) (www.lccap.org/)

Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC) (www.lawrencecounty.com/)

Lawrence County Firefighters Association (https://www.facebook.com/lawcofire)

Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency (www.visitlawrencecounty.com/)

Live New Wilmington (www.livenewwilmington.com/)

New Wilmington Area Chamber of Commerce (http://www.newwilmington.biz/)

Northwest Commission (www.northwestpa.org/)

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) (http://www.newpa.com/)

Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) (www.phfa.org/)

Pennsylvania Blueprint Communities (www.padowntown.org)

Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSABS) (boroughs.org/)

Core Communities and Complete Communities (continued)

Pennsylvania State Association of Townships (PSATS) (www.psats.org/)

Pennsylvania State Police (www. www.psp.pa.gov/)

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (www.spcregion.org)

Trail Town Program (https://www.trailtowns.org/)

United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Pennsylvania (https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdpa)
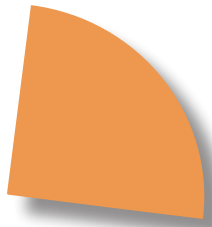
Local housing developers (for-profit and non-profit)

Local EMS providers

Local lenders

Local police departments

School districts

Connecting Communities

Butler County Community College (BC3) @ Lawrence Crossing (www.bc3.edu/campus/lawrence-crossing/)

Federal Highway Administration (www.fhwa.dot.gov/)

Lawrence County Career and Technology Center (LCCTC) (www.lcvt.tec.pa.us/)

Lawrence County Community Action Partnership (LCCAP) (www.lccap.org/)

Lawrence County Learning Center (www.lawrencecountylearning.com/)

New Castle Area Transit Authority (www.newcastletransit.org/)

Oh-Penn Interstate Region (www.ohpenn.com/)

PennDOT (www.penndot.gov/)

Penn State Extension – Lawrence County (http://extension.psu.edu/lawrence)

Smart Growth America – Complete Streets (www.smartgrowthamerica.org/)

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (www.spcregion.org)

Westminster College (https://www.westminster.edu/)

Young Professionals of Lawrence County (https://www.facebook.com/sparkYPLC/)

Lawrence County Regional Council of Governments (COG)

School districts
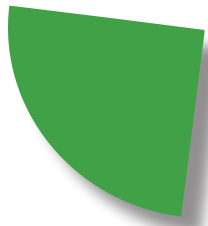
Healthy Communities

American Rivers
(www.americanrivers.org/)

Buy Fresh Buy Local Pennsylvania
(http://buylocalpa.org/)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
– Division of Community Health (CDC – DCH)
(http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/
index.htm)

Lawrence County Conservation District
(www.lawrencecd.org/)

Lawrence County Drug and Alcohol
Commission (http://lawsca.org/)

Lawrence County Mental / Behavioral Health
(http://lawrence.pa.networkofcare.org/mh/)

Lawrence County Recycling / Solid Waste
Department (http://co.lawrence.pa.us/
departments/recycling-and-solid-waste-
lawrence_county)

National Resources Defense Council
(www.nrdc.org)

Penn State Extension – Lawrence County
(http://extension.psu.edu/lawrence)

Pennsylvania Department of Community and
Economic Development (DCED)
(http://www.newpa.com/)

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources (DCNR)
(www.dcnr.state.ps.us/)

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental
Protection (DEP) (www.dep.pa.gov/)

Pennsylvania Department of Health – State
Improvement Health Plan (SHIP)
(http://www.health.pa.gov/)

Pennsylvania Environmental Council
(www.pecpa.org/)

STAR Communities
(http://www.starcommunities.org/)

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
(www.spcregion.org)

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania
(www.rural.palegislature.us/)

The Ellwood City Hospital
(www.theellwoodcityhospital.org/)

Tri-County Cleanways
(https://www.facebook.com/
TriCountyCleanWays/)

UPMC Jameson
(www.upmcjameson.com/)

United Way of Lawrence County
(http://www.uwlawcty.org/)

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
(https://www.epa.gov/)

School districts