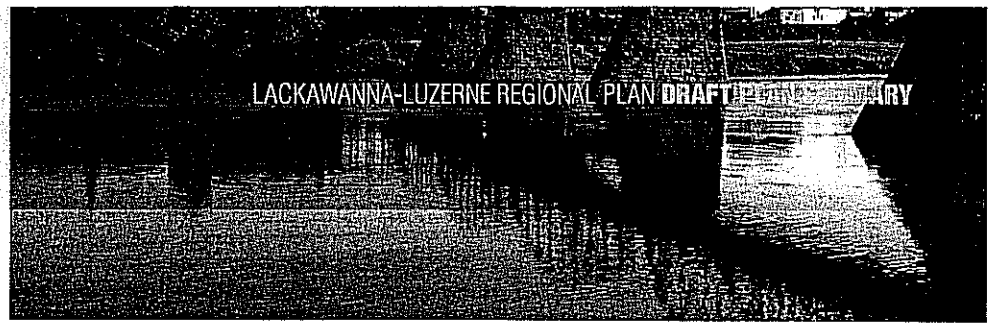


INTRODUCTION



Located in northeastern Pennsylvania, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are comprised of 116 municipalities and home to over a half-million people. Over the years, these two counties have demonstrated a strong history of governmental cooperation and regional collaboration such as the joint Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) shared for transportation planning in the two counties and the 2004 *Open Space, Greenways, and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan*. In addition, the two counties jointly operate the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport.

This association represents a shared vision for collaborative planning and decision-making on a wide range of challenges and opportunities affecting the future of both counties. Chief among these are land use, economic development, transportation, and sustainable environmental quality.

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties have now joined together to prepare a two-county comprehensive and long range transportation plan, as well as a hazard mitigation plan. The Lackawanna-Luzerne Regional Plan is comprised of two critical and related planning elements, as follows:

- A Comprehensive Plan focused on providing an overall planning guide for the two counties and their municipalities. It establishes a framework for future growth,

conservation, and preservation that strengthens existing communities and responsibly stewards natural, agricultural, and cultural resources.

- A Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to develop, maintain, and manage an adequate, safe, accessible, and environmentally-sound transportation system. This system will support communities and provide for the reasonably efficient movement of people and goods within and through Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.

PURPOSE OF THE **NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The preparation of a comprehensive plan serves four purposes:

- Establishes a common planning database for Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties

- Identifies the basic direction and structure recommended for the future of the two-county region

- Specifies the goals, policies, and individual elements that will form the basis for development, conservation, redevelopment, and preservation

- Provides a specific implementation strategy and program to help achieve the goals of the Plan

This comprehensive plan is fully responsive to the needs of the residents of Lackawanna and

Luzerne County communities. It contains both long-range and short-range programs, balances local needs and perceptions with regional requirements and perspectives, and has its own logic and strategy for implementation.

PURPOSE OF THE **NEW LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The long-range transportation plan has been developed as a long-range (20+ years) planning strategy and capital improvement program and serves as a guide for coordinated transportation planning throughout Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. The LRTP identifies the location, size, function, and type of new or improved transportation infrastructure, focusing on a multimodal approach to transportation planning. It includes projects for highways, streets, sidewalks, trails, rail, and airports, and for various modes of public transportation.

The LRTP serves as a resource to guide the wise use of public funds in the investment of a transportation system, so that cost-effective infrastructure that will efficiently move people and goods throughout the region will result.

This Plan Summary provides an overview of the Lackawanna-Luzerne Regional Plan. The full Plan provides much more detail.

THE SETTING: A SNAPSHOT OF BOTH COUNTIES

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are centrally located in Pennsylvania's Northeast Region (Figure 1). The area includes the region's largest city, Scranton, with additional population centers in Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, Carbondale and Pittston. To the east are Wayne and Monroe Counties; to the south, Carbon and Schuylkill Counties; to the west, Columbia and Sullivan Counties; and to the north, Wyoming and Susquehanna Counties.

The combined physical area of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties is 1,350 square miles, or approximately 864,000 acres, and includes roughly 22 square miles of water bodies.

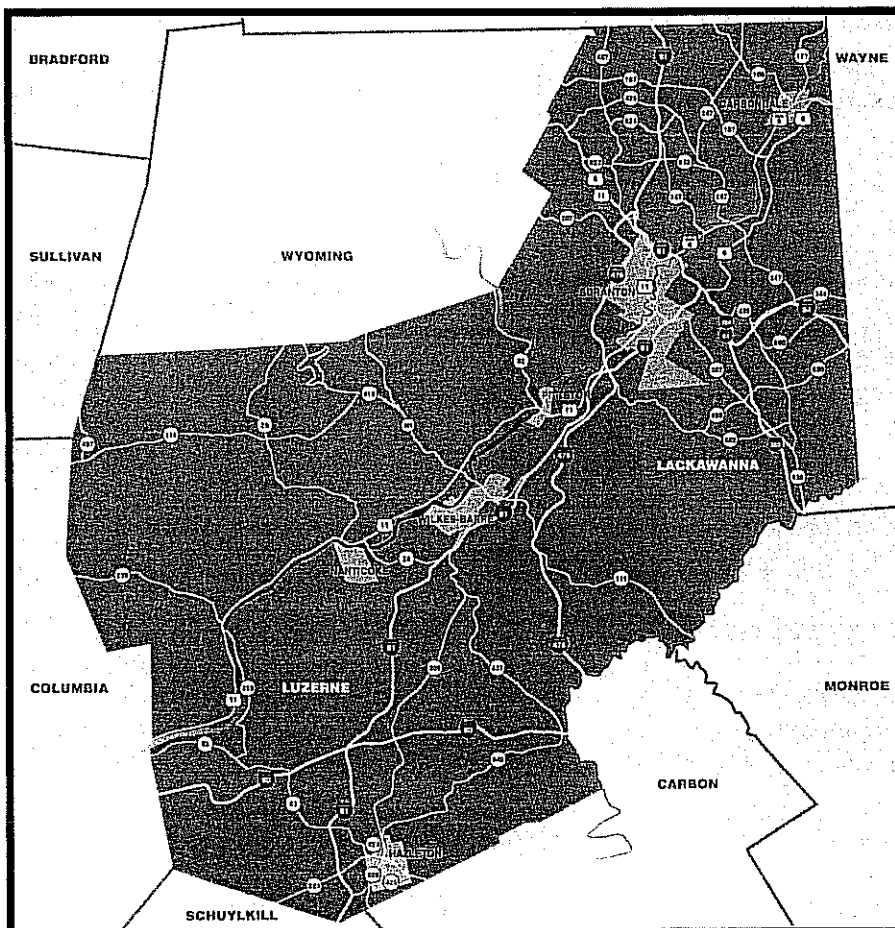
The landscape of the central portion of both counties is dominated by two major river valleys, the Wyoming and Lackawanna. Both valleys are bordered by a series of mountain ridges and upland areas on

either side. This geography has elevations exceeding over 2,000 feet above sea level in some areas.

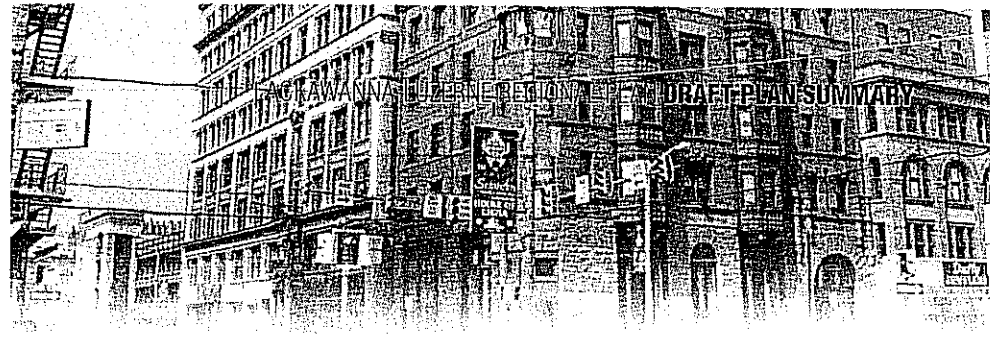
Interstate highway access plays an important role in more recent changes in development patterns, as well as regional mobility. Interstate 80 along the southern third of Luzerne County and Interstate 380 in southeastern Lackawanna County provide a link to the nearby New York City Metropolitan area. From Philadelphia, Interstate 476 (PA Turnpike NE Extension) follows the eastern edge of Luzerne County and terminates north of Scranton in western Lackawanna County. Interstate 81 bisects the two counties while connecting the cities of Hazleton, Wilkes-Barre, and Scranton to each other en route from Harrisburg and points south northward to New York State. Interstate 84 crosses the southeastern corner of Lackawanna County, providing access to New England.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the combined total population for both counties is 525,295 persons. Lackawanna County has 40 municipalities, including 2 cities, 17 boroughs, and 21 townships. Luzerne County has 76 municipalities, including 4 cities, 36 boroughs, and 36 townships.

Figure 1



THE VISION



The Lackawanna-Luzerne Counties Joint Comprehensive Plan and Long-Range Transportation Plan are being prepared as a single, precedent-setting, two-county Regional Plan that satisfies both the Comprehensive Plan requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code as well as the Long-Range Transportation Plan requirements of the Federal Highway Administration. This innovative Plan takes full advantage of new and evolving planning tools and strategic guidance on sustainability, sound land use, economic revitalization, and smart transportation to maximize transportation investment dollars and multimodal opportunities.

The following interrelated plan elements provide a vision for the future of the two-county area. They serve as a guide for public and private sector actions regarding future growth, development, and preservation in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. These plan elements also incorporate a comprehensive set of goals, objectives, and actions developed to embody the needs and aspirations of the people of both counties.

LAND USE PLAN

As the principal expression of the future direction for the region and the interrelationships among plan elements, the Land Use Plan ties together all the other components that make up this Regional Plan. In the Land Use Plan, the recommended distribution and desired character of future land uses are described. In particular, the Land Use Plan proposes that development and redevelopment be largely directed to specific locations in the form of relatively-concentrated mixed-use settings, providing opportunities for people to live, work, and play in close proximity. The actions recommended build on strengths while addressing weaknesses apparent in the two-county area. In doing so, the Plan provides opportunities for each county's places to prosper.

GOAL

The goal of the Land Use Plan is to achieve an overall future pattern of development that is responsive to existing and future economic, social, and cultural needs of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, promoting revitalization in the area's urban centers while conserving and preserving natural and agricultural resources.

OBJECTIVES

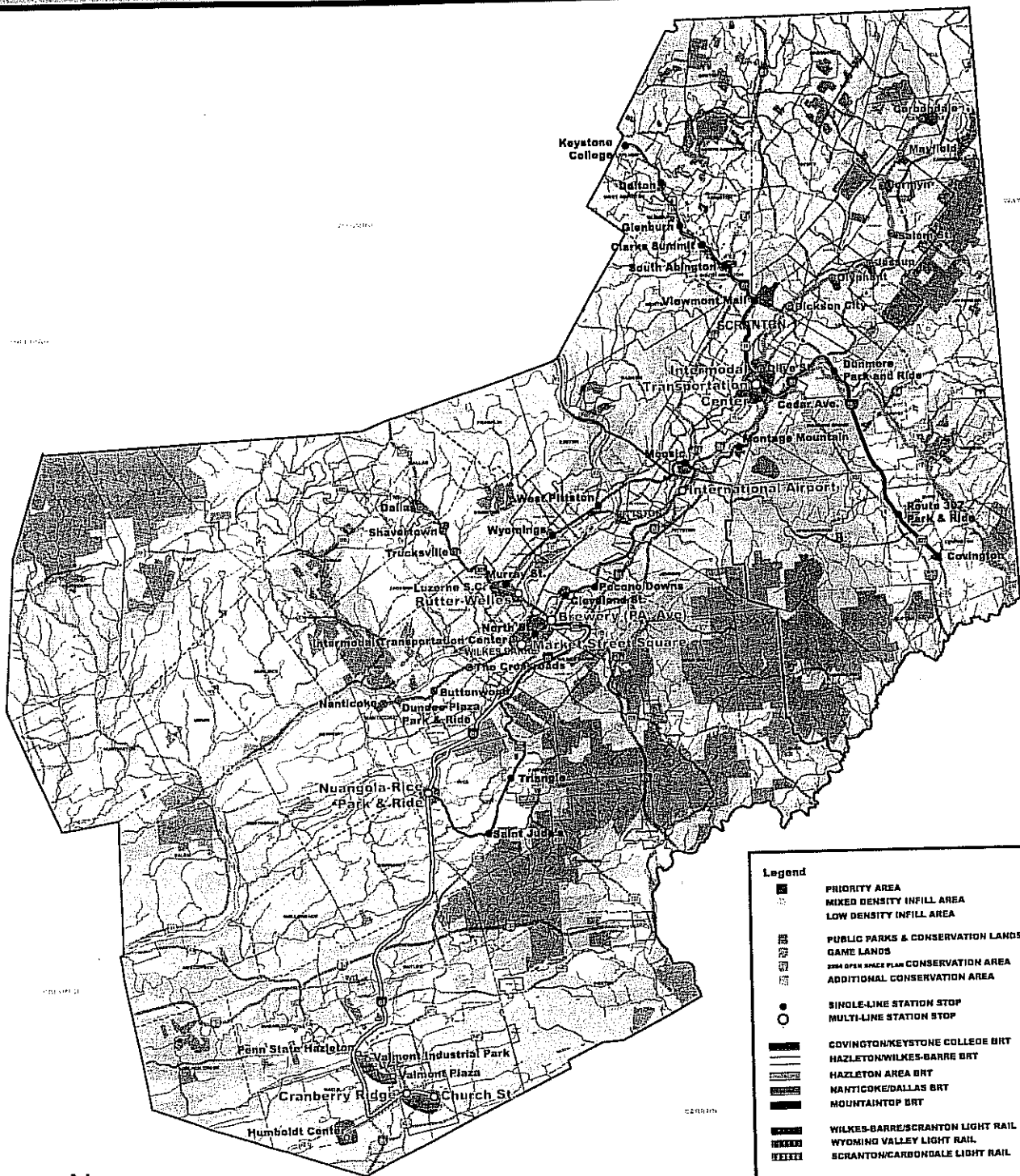
The objectives to be achieved by the Land Use Plan are as follows:

- A. Promote municipal consistency with the Lackawanna-Luzerne Regional Plan.
- B. Direct development and redevelopment to Priority Areas as identified in the Land Use Plan.
- C. Establish Priority Areas as compact, intensive mixed-use centers for living, working, and playing.

The intent of the Land Use Plan (**Figure 2**) is to provide an efficient and economical way to allow for both new growth and revitalization, meet a diversity of needs, support transit, reduce consumption of open space, promote energy conservation and protect environmentally-sensitive resources. The Land Use Plan is a guide for development and redevelopment in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties through the year 2035. It is based on the moderate rate of growth projected to occur over the planning period, including an additional increase in population of approximately 35,000 people (568,000 total) and a net gain of 24,000 housing units. Recognizing current development trends and the importance of reinvestment along the Lackawanna and

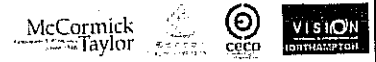
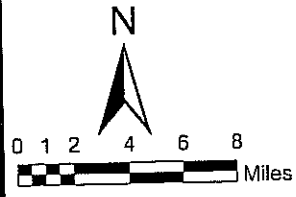
DRAFT LAND USE PLAN, April 2011

Figure 2



Legend

- PRIORITY AREA
- MIXED DENSITY INFILL AREA
- LOW DENSITY INFILL AREA
- PUBLIC PARKS & CONSERVATION LANDS
- GAME LANDS
- 2004 OPEN SPACE PLAN CONSERVATION AREA
- ADDITIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
- SINGLE-LINE STATION STOP
- MULTI-LINE STATION STOP
- COVINGTON/KEYSTONE COLLEGE BRT
- HAZLETON AREA BRT
- NANTICOKE/DALLAS BRT
- MOUNTAIN TOP BRT
- WILKES-BARRE/SCRANTON LIGHT RAIL
- WYOMING VALLEY LIGHT RAIL
- SCRANTON/CARBONDALE LIGHT RAIL
- LACKAWANNA CUT-OFF
- MAJOR ROADWAY
- WATER BODIES
- JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARY



Luzerne County valleys and in urban centers, the Land Use Plan is built around 'smart growth' principles.

MAJOR PLANNING CONCEPTS

The Land Use Plan is structured on a framework of Priority Areas for targeted growth and revitalization, Infill Areas for additional growth, and Conservation Areas for agricultural, recreation, and open space uses. It is through this framework that both counties may support their existing centers, minimize sprawl, and promote the conservation of natural resources. The Land Use Plan builds upon existing infrastructure such as roads, water, and sewer systems, and adds missing features to ensure appropriate access and servicing in all parts of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.

The Land Use Plan also contains a network of rapid transit routes to promote accessibility throughout the region. A strong component of this Plan, multimodal accessibility offers many advantages to residents and business operators and provides solid support for mobility in a high-fuel-cost future.

CONCEPT 1 – PRIORITY AREAS

Priority Areas include the existing settings of City Centers (such as Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, and Hazleton) as well as Borough and Township Centers (such as West Pittston Borough and South Abington Township) and a limited number of proposed Transit Villages (such as Montage Mountain and Nuangola-Rice). The Land Use Plan proposes a combination of housing, shopping, employment, community facilities, and public open space by incorporating existing buildings, adaptively reused structures, and new construction.

Priority Areas are intended to provide a density of population sufficient to support new retail uses and community facilities, and attract employment. Concentrating jobs and residences in identified Priority Areas will increase transit ridership potential. As the demand for transit emerges, local transit authorities can offer new routes or extend existing ones.



CONCEPT 2 – INFILL AREAS

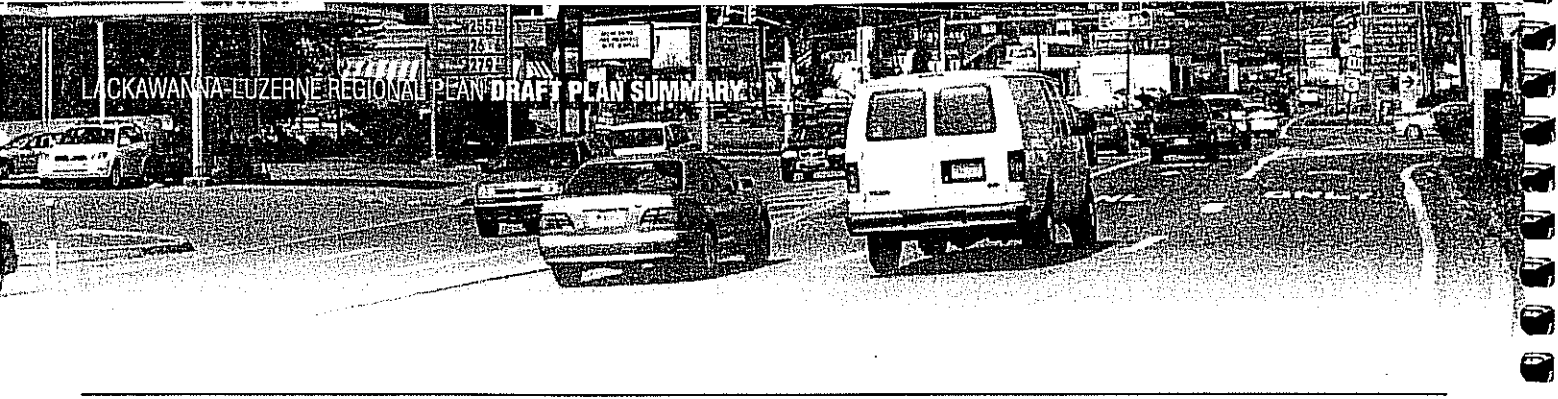
Infill Areas occur at various locations in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, and provide opportunities for new development and redevelopment on properties that are vacant or underutilized. While these are not expected to be targeted locations for public investment, they will continue to be locations where people live, work, and play.

An important aspect of Infill Areas is their proximity to Priority Areas. Future growth and development in Infill Areas will support multimodal linkages to nearby Priority Areas, including bicycle and pedestrian access.

CONCEPT 3 – CONSERVATION AREAS

Conservation Areas include sensitive environmental features, scenic landscapes, agricultural lands, as well as recreational sites and other cultural resources. Except for agricultural, recreational, and resource-based enterprises, there should be no new commercial or industrial uses in these areas.





TRANSPORTATION PLAN

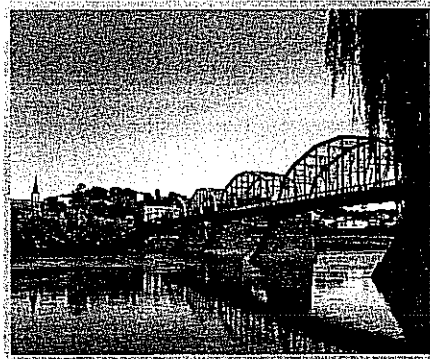
GOAL

The Transportation Plan is intended to achieve a safe and efficient transportation system that is compatible with the natural, agricultural, and developed areas of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties and that provides viable transportation alternatives, including driving, biking, walking, and public transportation.

The following goals incorporate Federal goals for transportation and take into account the statewide emphasis on asset management that addresses the condition of existing infrastructure, such as the accelerated bridge program currently underway within the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT):

1. Support the economic vitality of the region, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency by increasing the accessibility and mobility options available to people and goods;
2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;

3. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and two-county area planned growth and economic development patterns;
4. Enhance integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes, for people and freight, in an effort to promote efficiency in system management and operation;
5. Emphasize preservation and connectivity of the existing transportation system (all modes);
6. Ensure consistency with the fundamental principles of Federal Title VI and Environmental Justice programs.



OBJECTIVES

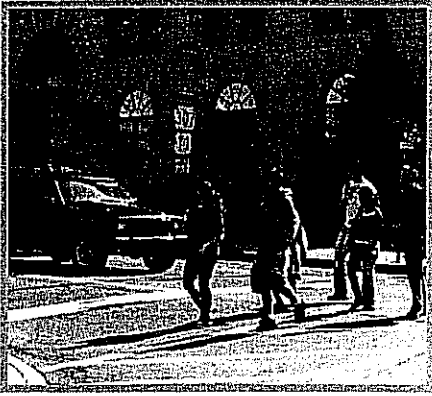
The objectives of the Transportation Plan are as follows:

- A. Maintain an asset management focus and redevelopment of critical assets to promote beneficial land use densities;
- B. Promote new capacity that supports the Priority Areas identified in the Plan;
- C. Use a performance-based measurement and analysis system for identifying and implementing transportation projects.

TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY, AND MAJOR PLANNING CONCEPTS

The Transportation Plan contains a GIS-based evaluation process for project ranking to determine whether potential projects are consistent with system preservation goals, land use objectives, and investment priority areas. Potential projects receiving high scores will be advanced for implementation on the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Looking out twenty years, as this Regional Plan does, reveals the prospect of much higher energy costs than exist at present, with potential sharp declines in Vehicle



Miles Traveled (VMT), changes in behavior, and people asking for increased transit services. It is therefore reasonable and prudent to have in place an approach to transportation for Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties that fits with a high energy cost future. Focusing development and redevelopment at locations where residents can get services close at hand and where commuters have some choices concerning how they get to and from work makes sense. The Plan seeks to improve mobility in support of focused development and redevelopment, including upgrades to the system of roadways, sidewalks, and multi-use pathways.

The Transportation Plan proposes to upgrade the safety, connectivity, convenience, and efficiency of each county's transportation network in a way that is compatible with the Land Use Plan's identified Priority Areas (City Centers, Borough and Township Centers, and Transit Vilages) and abutting

Infill Areas, and connections to those locations from other parts of the two counties. This includes maintaining and improving access and mobility for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit patrons.

This Plan encourages further investment in added frequency and capacity for the two counties' five key local transit agencies, and the plan for future transit service includes both new passenger rail and new Bus Rapid Transit modes. The Plan also recognizes the importance of potential linkages to the New York metropolitan area, as well as rail extensions for freight movement and improved freight transportation service.

The provision for safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and bicyclists is an important element of this Plan. Multi-purpose trails for walking, biking, and hiking will frequently be part of greenways that will also provide appropriate buffers between high-volume traffic arteries and residential areas. Development of trails in conjunction with roadway improvement projects will be encouraged.

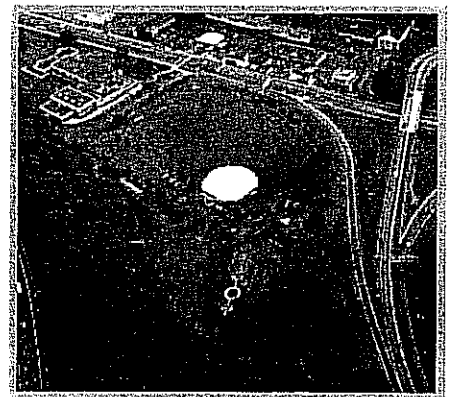
PRIORITY AREAS TRANSPORTATION

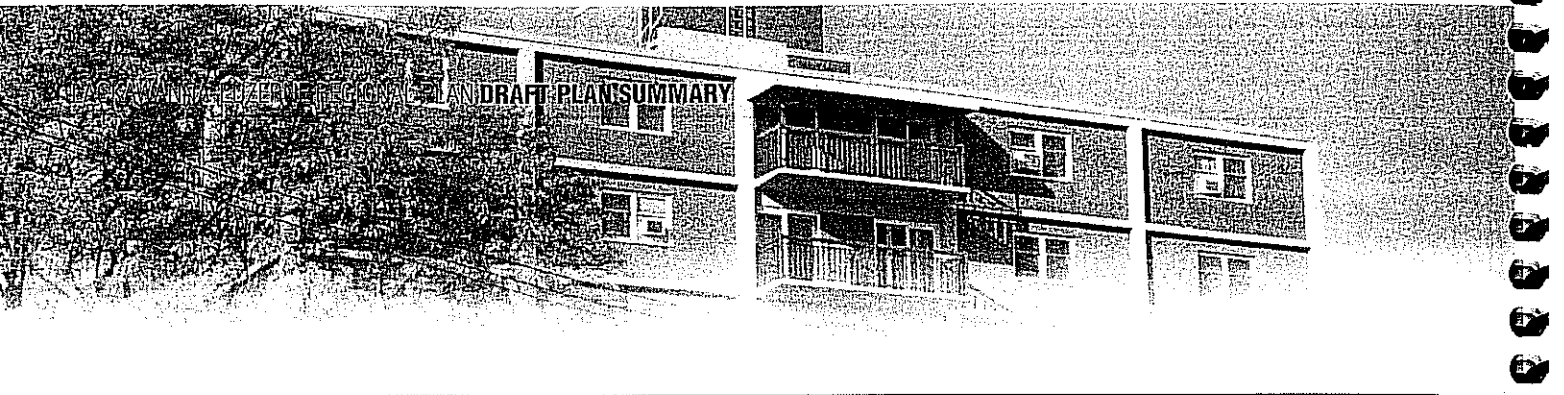
While the Transportation Plan describes transportation infrastructure improvements to support mobility throughout the Lackawanna and Luzerne County areas, the Plan stresses

support for Priority Area settings, as anticipated development or redevelopment in these areas should be seen as an opportunity to improve the transportation network. This objective can be accomplished by promoting improved rapid transportation linkages that are designed and constructed in concert with planned development and redevelopment.

INFILL AREAS TRANSPORTATION

The majority of Mixed Density Infill Areas and several adjoining Low Density Infill Areas either overlap with catchment areas for public transit or fall in close proximity to their service. Integration of Infill Areas with transit and neighboring Priority Areas is important. The emergence of multi-modal corridors with characteristics of "complete streets" – corridors with sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, transit shelters, and pedestrian-oriented lighting and amenities (and perhaps even transit lanes) – will promote this integration.





HOUSING PLAN

GOAL

The goal of the Housing Plan is to provide for a diversity of housing opportunities in harmony with existing development and the historical and natural environments.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Housing Plan are as follows:

- A. Support a variety of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, in the Priority Areas identified in the Land Use Plan.
- B. Encourage infill housing and improve the quality of the existing housing stock in established communities in Priority and Mixed Density Infill Areas.
- C. Promote the use of green building techniques and energy efficient housing design.

HOUSING AND MAJOR PLANNING CONCEPTS

The Housing element of the Regional Plan explicitly recognizes the division of each county into Priority and Mixed Density Infill Areas for housing growth and Conservation Areas as the non-growth portion of the region. Conservation Areas include most of the land area of Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties, and are proposed primarily for agriculture, resource conservation, environmental protection, and recreation, with housing having only a very minor role. Priority and Mixed Density Infill Areas are designated as the primary locations for housing development and redevelopment.

PRIORITY AREA HOUSING

Priority Areas represent significant opportunities to develop and redevelop properties for mixed

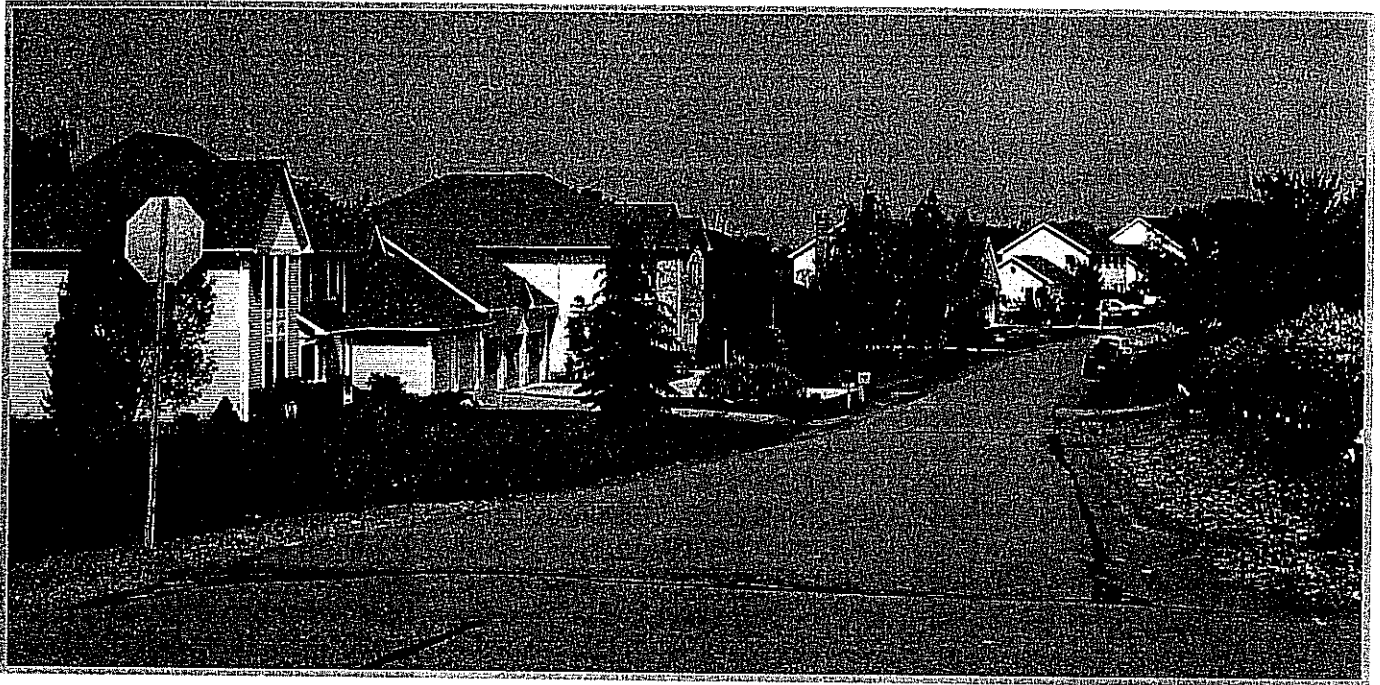
uses, including residential components. Parcels in these areas are suitable for higher-density residential uses, such as multi-family (apartment) and single-family attached (townhouse) units, and perhaps specialized residential uses such as life-care facilities. These areas include City Center Priority Areas, Borough and Township Center Priority Areas, and Transit Villages.

With a mix of commercial services, restaurants, and community functions, as well as advantages with respect to proximity to transportation and employment, these areas should be well-positioned to gain attractive, market-rate dwelling units at these locations, while also providing opportunities for the addition of smaller, moderately-priced units.

INFILL AREA HOUSING

Infill Areas provide opportunities for new development and redevelopment on properties that are vacant or underutilized. New development or redevelopment of these areas will provide opportunities for new or rehabilitated housing stock to be built using green building principles and both counties will encourage





environmentally-friendly housing construction.

Mixed Density Infill Areas include existing single-family detached and attached dwelling units adjacent to transit stations and Priority Areas. Low Density Infill Areas are predominantly located in townships that are not very built up, and are characterized by existing single-family detached dwelling units located on large lots of one or more acres in size.

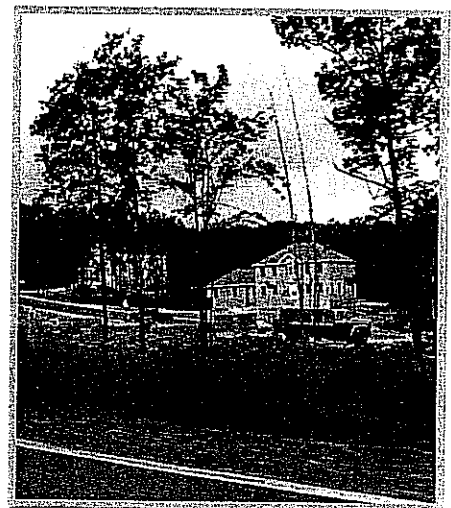
In general, cluster development is preferred, as it reduces the amount of land consumed for residences when compared with conventional development methods, while

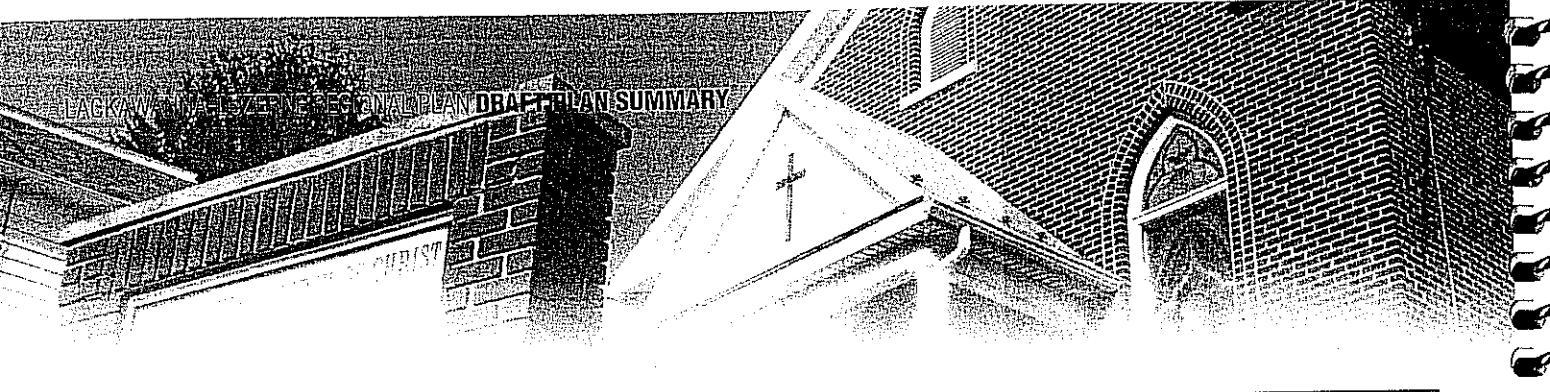
at the same time preserving a portion of development tracts for permanent open space uses.

This form of development design technique concentrates buildings in specific areas on a site to allow the remaining land to be used for agriculture, preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas, permanent buffers, open space, or recreational uses.

The Housing element permits realistic opportunities for land development, to be implemented through the Regional Plan, local plans, and county and municipal zoning regulations. Changes in future residential development patterns are a key ingredient

toward ensuring a higher quality of life and a more sustainable future for the two counties.





COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

GOAL

The goal of the Community Facilities Plan is to provide public services and facilities in the most cost-effective and environmentally-sensitive manner, taking into account the existing and future residential and non-residential needs of the two-county area.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Community Facilities Plan are as follows:

- A. Provide new and expanded public and private facilities close to transportation hubs to maximize accessibility for patrons by a variety of modes.
- B. Encourage intermunicipal cooperation in the provision of local services.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MAJOR PLANNING CONCEPTS

Community facilities provide basic services to ensure the health, safety, welfare, and enrichment of residents. Examples include public libraries, educational institutions, hospitals and other health care services, and emergency services such as police, fire companies, and ambulance corps. The number, type, and adequacy of the facilities influence the quality and general livability of communities. Additionally, these facilities increase each county's ability to retain and attract new residents and businesses.

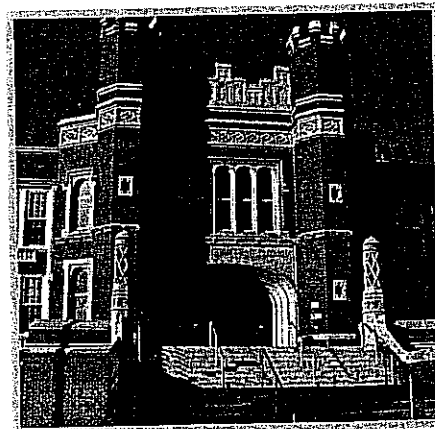
Priority Areas are the places targeted for future residential, retail, and employment growth. It makes sense for community facilities to locate here, where concentrations of people are and where accessibility is good.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Each of the two-county area's 116 municipalities has traditionally been responsible for providing its citizens with basic public services and facilities. Over time, the combination of the high number of municipalities and tradition of municipal self-sufficiency has produced much duplication of services and facilities. Greater intergovernmental cooperation is needed so that services and facilities can be provided more efficiently and economically.

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Community-based emergency medical service providers, such as fire companies and ambulance corps, must compete with a variety



of other private operators seeking support from residents. Police stations throughout Pennsylvania compete for the same funds. Consolidation of police, fire, and ambulance services could achieve an economy of scale that would reduce municipal expenses.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The quality of education has a strong influence on the health of communities in terms of attracting business and residents. Furthermore, all high school graduates need opportunities for advanced education in order to compete in the workplace.

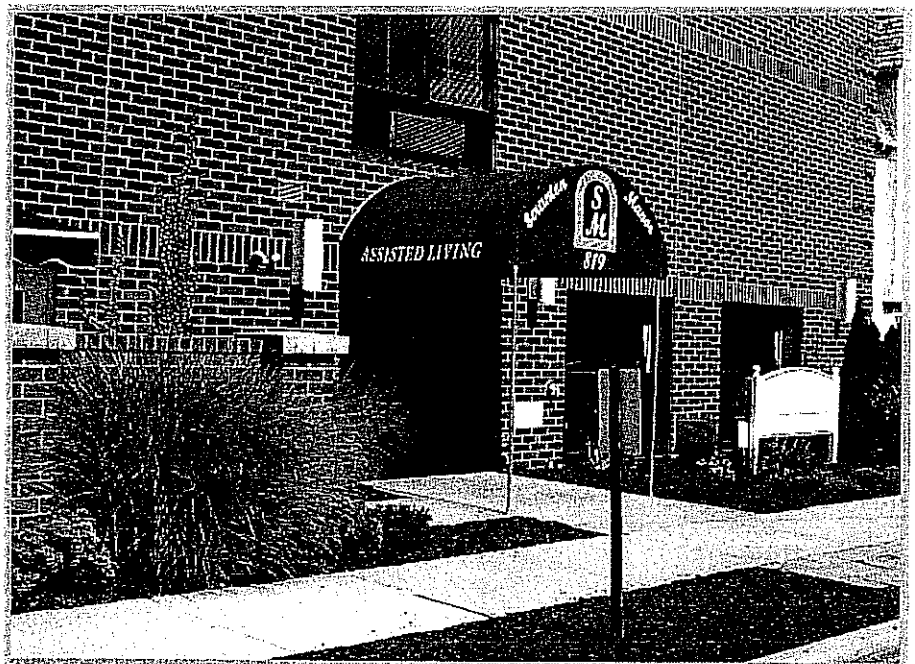
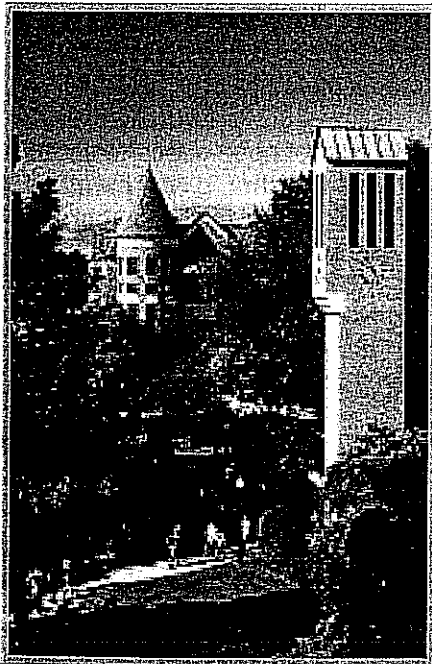
The provision of skilled labor for high productivity industries and increasingly skilled processes is required. The human resources in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties are only potential resources unless that potential can be realized through workforce education and skills development.

Each county should also consider developing recommendations and strategies to promote a safe route for students to walk to school without using private property or unsafe road crossings. The plan should include how to install or improve sidewalk networks adjacent to the elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as

adding traffic calming elements to surrounding streets.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

As new health care facilities are planned, efforts will be taken to ensure that they will provide equitable access for all residents. New or expanded health care services should be located at or near Priority Areas with easy access via transit, automobile, and walking. Each County Human Services Department will advocate and encourage equitable access to medical service for residents within the two-county area.



PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND GREENWAYS PLAN

GOAL

The goal of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenways Plan is to develop a system of linked recreation resources, providing a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities while protecting and preserving important natural features and environmentally-sensitive areas.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenways Plan are as follows:

- A. Conserve open space.
- B. Establish trails & greenways that provide connections between people, recreational facilities, and cultural facilities and other significant public areas.
- C. Expand the parks and system to serve future populations, particularly in Priority Areas.
- D. Raise public awareness of the benefits of greenways and open space.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, & GREENWAYS AND MAJOR PLANNING CONCEPTS

In 2004, an *Open Space, Greenways, and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan* was adopted, providing a vision for the two-county area and providing a framework for a regional system of open space and greenways that should be expanded upon at the local level through subsequent planning and implementation efforts.



PRIORITY AREAS AND INFILL AREAS

Reinvestment and new development within Priority Areas and Infill Areas should also include access to green space, including public spaces such as civic squares and pocket parks as well as neighborhood parks.

CONSERVATION AREAS

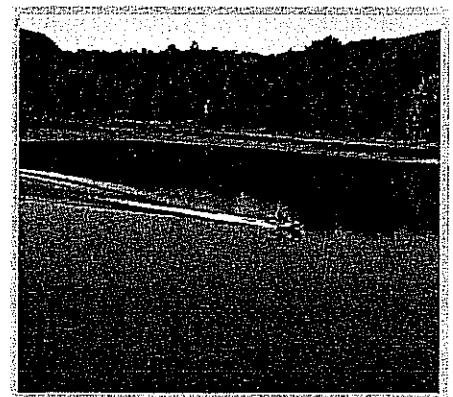
The widespread pattern of protected natural areas, permanent open space, sensitive natural features, existing and proposed trail network, and other areas to be preserved in Conservation Areas in the Land Use Plan forms the backbone of a two-countywide open space system. The overall objectives are to logically extend corridors of open space to tie the system together, give it permanent protection, and facilitate improved public access, where appropriate.



and selective development of the region-wide permanent open space system.

Natural feature corridors are proposed to be combined with existing protected areas, such as state forests, game lands, parks, and reserved areas, and with projected linear buffers to form a permanent interconnected open space system. This system is a critical component of the Land Use Plan, and is seen as the primary mechanism to simultaneously protect county resources and to offer long term opportunities to meet open space and recreational needs.

Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties should facilitate the development of appropriate park and recreational facilities within the framework of the overall open space system through a variety of lobbying, planning, and funding functions. These will need to be efforts undertaken in cooperation with other levels of government, with public and private interest groups, and with property owners.



PARKS

Parks provide spaces for outdoor recreation, consisting of both passive activities, which have minimal impact on natural resources, and active recreation, which has a larger impact. New parkland for public use should offer places for athletic fields, passive open space, trails, and playground equipment, and can come into being in a variety of ways:

- Outright purchase by municipality or county or by a private, not-for-profit organization among whose purposes is the conservation of open space land and/or operation of park and recreational facilities;

- Dedication of property to a municipality or county through the land development process;

- Acquisition of an easement for open space and/or park and recreation uses by the municipality or county or by a private, not-for-profit organization; or

- Donation of property or easements to the municipality or county or to a private, not-for-profit organization.

OPEN SPACE

Open space refers to natural landscapes undeveloped for intensive human uses and can be publicly or privately owned. Open space includes land, as well as water features, and establishes the setting for outdoor recreation. A key role for the two-county area in future parks and recreation development will be in promoting the establishment, protection,