



# FAYETTE COUNTY

A COMPREHENSIVE  
STRATEGY

Final Plan: September 2019





This plan was prepared by:

**Mackin Engineering Company**



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# RESOLUTION

THIS PAGE IS RESERVED FOR THE RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE PLAN BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS





# I. INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION



Located in Southwest Pennsylvania, Fayette County is bordered by Greene County and Washington County to the west, Westmoreland County to the north, Somerset County to the east and West Virginia and Maryland to the south. Fayette County, as a region, is within an hour commute of two major metropolitan centers; the City of Pittsburgh and Morgantown, West Virginia. Comprising approximately 794 square miles of land, the County is home to an estimated 137,000 people (as of the official 2010 Census) in its 42 municipalities (two cities, 24 townships, 17 boroughs, along with numerous villages and unincorporated settlements).

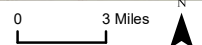
Rich in history, what is now Fayette County developed as a result of two major factors: its geographic location and an abundance of natural resources. Prior to the construction of Braddock Road and the National Road, rivers were the main transportation route. The construction of these major roads brought prosperity, commerce and settlers to the west, through Fayette County. Communities began sprouting up along these routes, namely Uniontown, Connellsville, Brownsville and Masontown.

Then in the 1800's, Fayette County spurred what became known as the Coal and Coke era. While bituminous coal was already being mined, the discovery of the coke-making process allowed the soft coal to be transported long distances and revolutionized the steel industry, thanks in no small part to Connellsville Coking Coal. Coal patch towns sprang up all over the County and landscapes were littered with coke beehive ovens (28,000 in the County at their height). Immigrants came from all over to work in the mines, bringing the County's population to its height of 200,000 in 1940.

Since the end of the industrial revolution and the Coal and Coke era in the 1950s, the County's population has steadily declined. However, the tourism industry has boomed. Home to Ohiopyle State Park, Nemacolin Woodlands Resort, Fallingwater and Kentuck Knob, among others, Fayette County is part of the Laurel Highlands Tourism Region. The County attracts millions of people a year who come to enjoy its rural quality of living, rich history, natural resources and world-class outdoor recreation.

The question now is, what is in store for the next 10-20 years?





# The Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

## *A Comprehensive Plan is...*

Fundamentally, a comprehensive plan is a long-range plan that guides the growth and physical development of a place. The purpose is to establish a vision for the next 10 years and use knowledge of past and current trends to plan ahead and ensure that growth is fostered in a way that maintains a high quality of life.

Comprehensive plans set forth a long-term vision regarding future development and land use, public facilities, efficient services and infrastructure, a strong economic base, a sound housing stock, and an efficient transportation network.

## *A County Comprehensive Plan is...*

Specifically in Pennsylvania, a County Comprehensive Plan is “a land use and growth management plan prepared by the county planning commission and adopted by the county commissioners which establishes broad goals and criteria for municipalities to use in preparation of their comprehensive plan and land use regulation.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247 as reenacted and amended. Section 107. Definitions “County Comprehensive Plan.”

The county plan also provides guidance on issues that transcend local boundaries, such as highways, public transportation, flooding, trails, growth trends, redevelopment trends, shopping needs, impact of large developments, overall housing needs, natural systems, economic growth, etc. The county plan is an advisory document used to guide county and local municipal policies and should be used as support for public and private entities seeking grant funding for projects that align with the Comprehensive Plan’s vision and goals.

## *The Fayette County Comprehensive Strategy is...*

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that counties update their Comprehensive Plans at least every 10 years. Fayette County’s last comprehensive plan included several key recommendations focused on the impacts of the Mon-Fayette Expressway, housing diversity and infrastructure needs. While a lot has changed in since the last plan, particularly the completion of the Mon-Fayette Expressway within Fayette County, many of the recommendations have not yet been completed. This plan strives to evaluate the changes and determine what the priorities are for the next 10 years.



# The Process

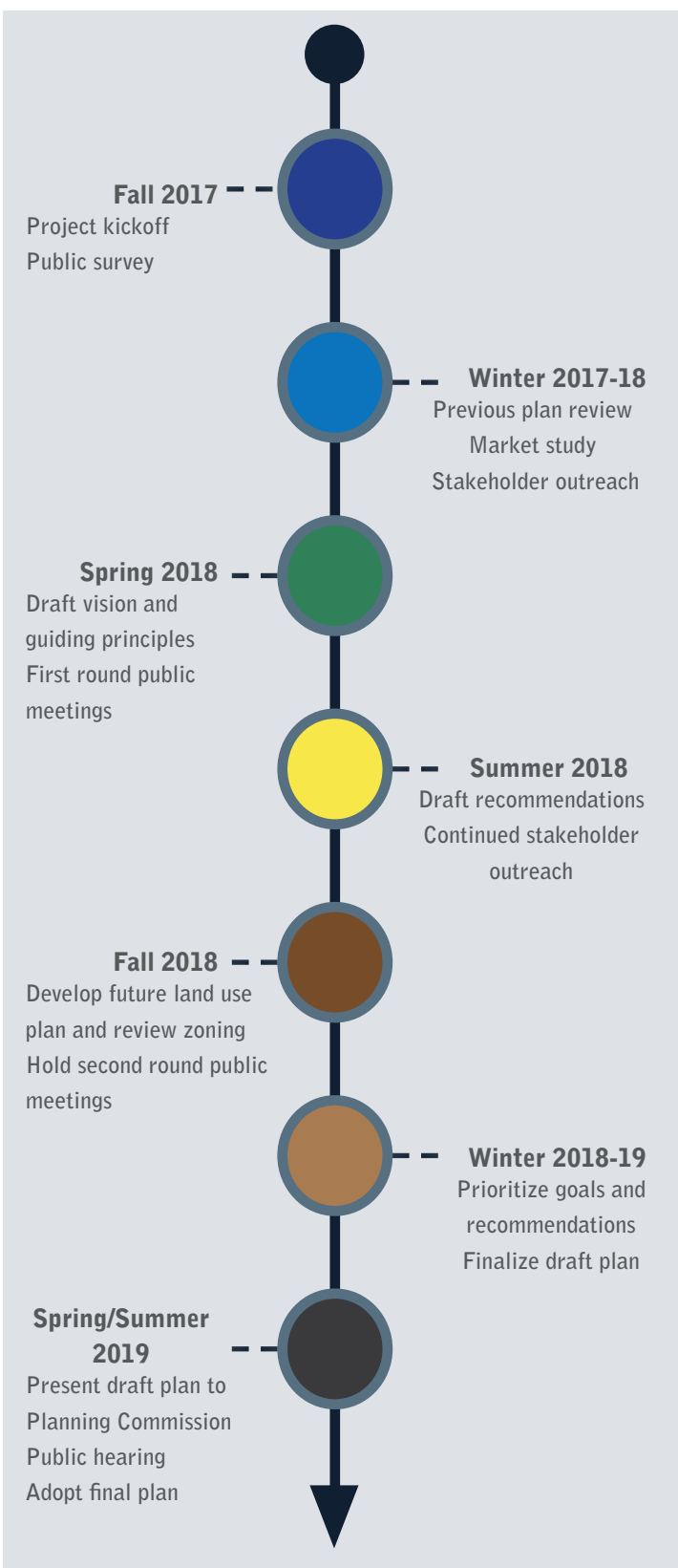
The Comprehensive Plan Update began with a visioning process to see where the County wants to go. A review of previous plans and a background of the county's past was gathered to determine where the county has been. The initial public survey and stakeholder outreach was used to determine the county's current condition and what direction the county wants to take in the upcoming years.

After the vision was established, public opinions were gathered through public open house meetings and existing events. The background information was compared with the vision statement to determine what recommendations would help to achieve the vision. A second round of meetings were held with the public to get input on the strategies and a draft plan was developed based off all the information provided. The process concluded with a public hearing to solicit any final recommendations and the adoption of the plan by the County Commissioners.

The vision is the backbone of the Comprehensive Plan as it guides the direction of the county for the next 10 years. It has three components:

1. A place with a healthy economy, growing new opportunities and reinforcing strong connections with existing business and industry.
2. A beautiful place to live, offering healthy and sustainable neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices
3. A fun and exciting place to visit where tourism supports and drives community and economic development.

## Project Timeline



# Summary of Public Input

Public input was a primary driver in the development of research and recommendations for this plan. The County designed outreach to solicit input from a variety of geographies and perspectives, including such efforts as public meetings in scattered locations, interviews, focus groups and surveys.

## *Public Open Houses*

The first of two rounds of public open house events focused on providing background information on what a comprehensive plan is and gathering input on the vision, assets and challenges that the Plan should address. Open house meetings were held in June 2018 in five locations throughout the County: Uniontown, Perryopolis, Brownsville, Ohiopyle and Bullskin.

Feedback at these events revealed common themes centered around the economy, housing and recreation / tourism. People felt that the County's most important assets are natural resources, historical sites and recreational areas. The biggest challenges are the availability of infrastructure, workforce quality, drug addiction and the housing stock. Top priorities included increased access to multimodal transportation options, improved parks and trails and better promotion of County assets.

The second round of meetings were held to present draft goals and gather input as to where/how the County should make future investments. Attendees were provided "money" to spend on the goals that they felt should be highest priority. These open houses took place in November 2018 in three locations: Uniontown, Perryopolis and Ohiopyle. The information was made available online and in survey format to allow people to participate that



*Members of the public provide input into the planning process at one of the public open house meetings in Uniontown.*

were unable to attend the meetings.

The results of this outreach suggest that existing cities, towns and employment centers would be the best place to target investments. Listed below are the most important aspects for each part of the vision:

- “A Healthy Economy” - attracting businesses and industry, promoting redevelopment and revitalization and supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- “A Beautiful Place to Live” - eliminating blight, support educational institutions to better prepare the workforce and encourage high quality public recreation amenities.
- “A Fun and Exciting Place to Visit” - expanding the land and water trail network, supporting various tourism programs and promoting and protecting natural resources and rural character.

### *High School Focus Groups*

Members of the planning team conducted student focus groups at many of the high schools and vo-tech schools in Fayette County. These youth outreach efforts provided unique perspectives for retaining the County’s young population and identified needs for families with school-aged children. At each event, students mapped out places of interest in relation to their homes and provided their visions for Fayette County. The youth identified priorities that they felt were important to focus on in order to make the County an attractive place to live after graduation: a safer place to live, cleaner communities, more shopping opportunities and more restaurants.



*Members of the Principal's Advisory Committee at Brownsville High School collaborate to provide input for the Comprehensive Plan.*

## Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to input from members of the Advisory Committee, stakeholder interviews provided further context and information for the plan from groups who represent particular areas of expertise and experience. Stakeholders included the National Road Heritage Corridor, Fayette County Chamber of Commerce, Fayette County Young Professional Network, and Fayette County Conservation District.

## Municipal Input

To ensure that the County's comprehensive plan is taking into account municipal plans and priorities, surveys and information were mailed to each municipality as well as a meeting with Township supervisors. In addition, all municipalities were invited to participate in the public outreach efforts.

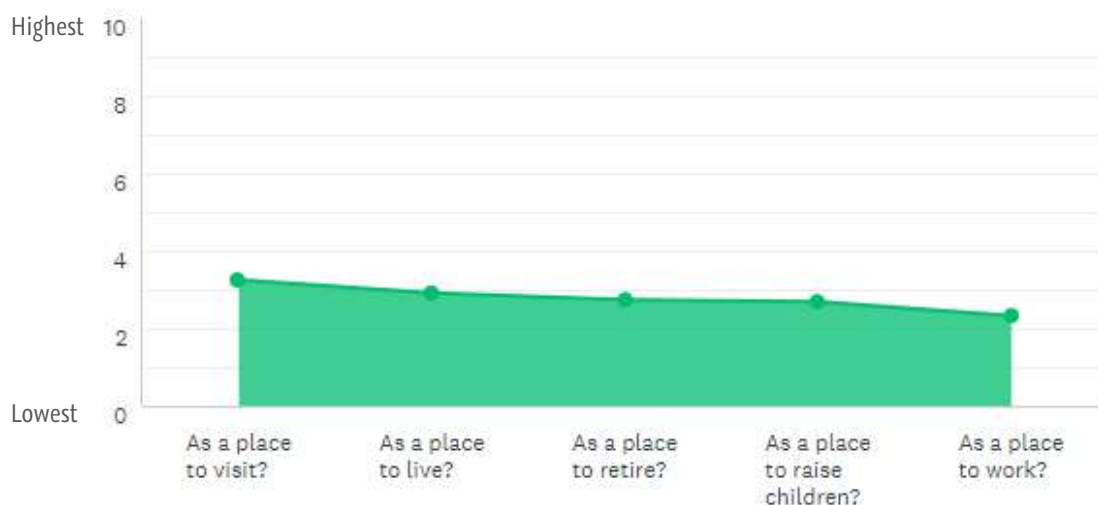
## Public Survey

At the beginning of the planning process, a public survey was conducted online. The survey was advertised via e-mail distribution lists, the newspaper and survey cards were distributed at public events including the Fayette County Fair.

In total 437 people completed the survey; of which 398 live in Fayette County (91%). Respondents represented all areas of the County: 37% in the Uniontown region; 31% in the Connellsville/Dunbar region; 12% in the Mountain region and 5% in the Mon Valley region. The remaining 14% were from outer regions.

## How would you rate Fayette County in the following categories?

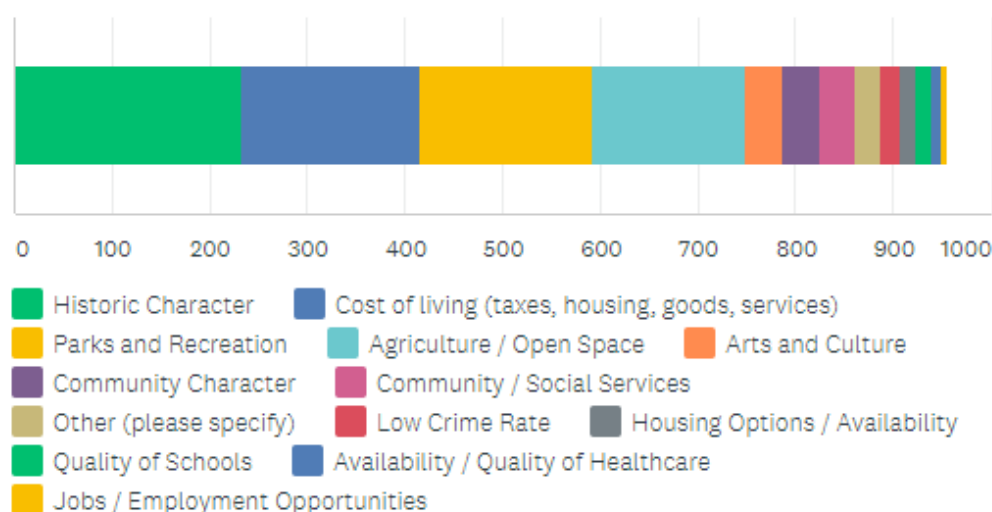
Answered: 406 Skipped: 31





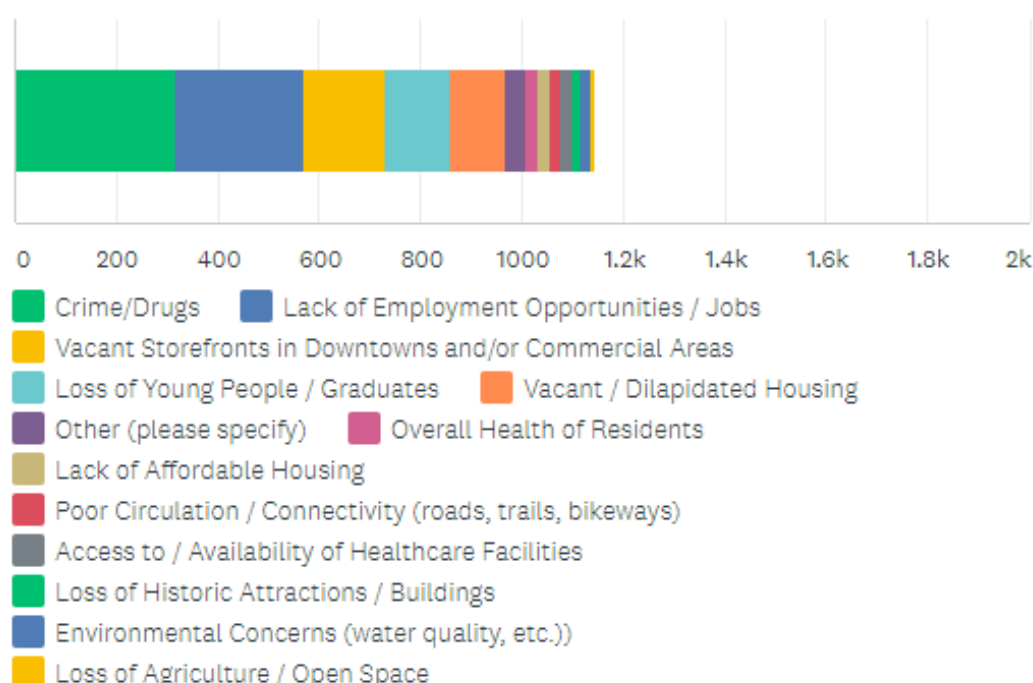
## What are the best qualities of Fayette County? Choose no more than three (3).

Answered: 402 Skipped: 35



## What are the biggest issues facing Fayette County? (please choose up to 3)

Answered: 397 Skipped: 40



# Planning Framework

The Fayette Comprehensive Strategy is the County's new comprehensive plan, providing an overview of the county's vision and objectives. It reflects the input of the citizens, county officials and a steering committee comprised of various stakeholders. The plan was adopted by the County Commissioners and prepared with input from an Advisory Committee, appointed by the County Commissioners, and the county planning commission. This plan provides goals and implementation steps for managing the county's built environment. It is structured around the following four main themes. In addition, demographic and socio-economic data can be found in the companion document "Fayette County Evaluation of Market Drivers".



## A Place with a Healthy Economy

Growing new opportunities and reinforcing strong connections with existing businesses and industry. Guiding principles include:

- Attract new businesses and industry
- Revitalize existing downtowns and commerce centers
- Develop workforce and job training initiatives
- Promote small business development and entrepreneurial success
- Support the agricultural industry
- Expand broadband and cellular infrastructure

- Expand public water and sewer service



## A Beautiful Place to Live

Offering healthy and sustainable neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices. Guiding principles include:

- Eliminate blight
- Encourage infill development
- Improve school districts
- Provide high quality parks and recreation
- Improve overall health of communities and residents
- Promote development, while reducing negative impacts on the environment
- Improve public transportation options
- Expand marketing efforts



## **A Fun and Exciting Place to Visit**

Where tourism supports and drives community and economic development. Guiding principles include:

- Expand trail and river town programs
- Protect and promote natural resources and rural character
- Support recreation-, heritage- and agri-tourism programs
- Assist communities with coping with impacts of tourism
- Preserve historic resources
- Improve transportation infrastructure to support tourism



## **Future Land Use Plan**

This section provides a vision for the future of the county and includes an overall growth and development strategy.

## *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 character and natural features.

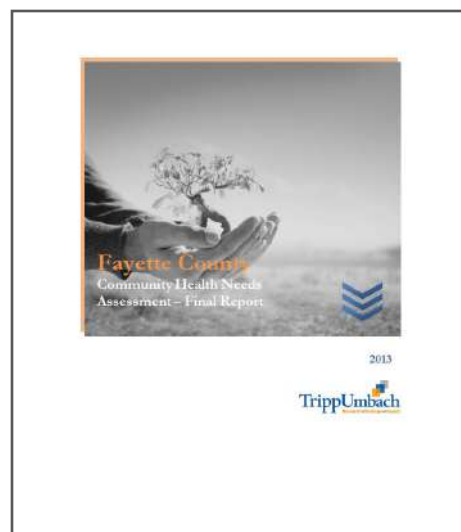
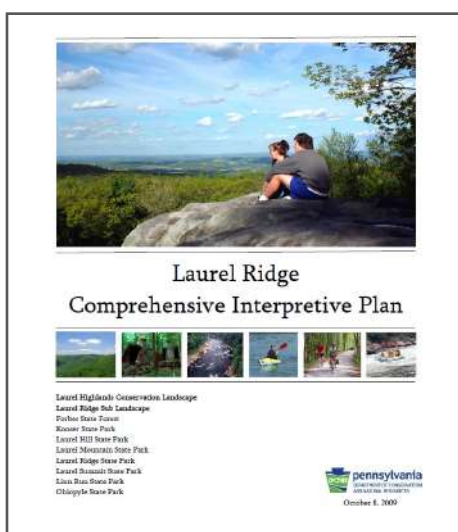
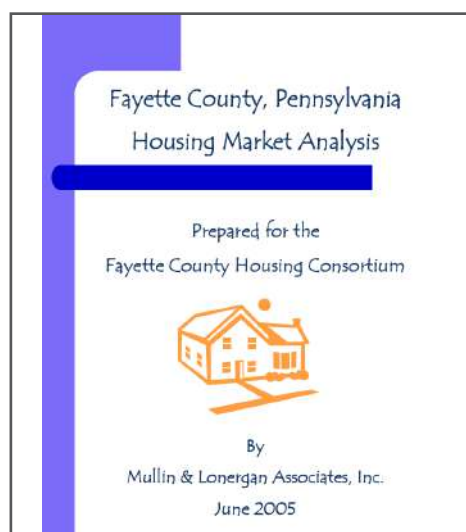
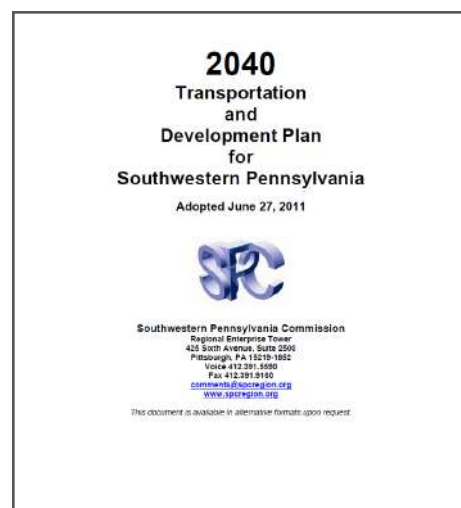
## *State Water Plan*

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.

## How to Use the Plan

The Fayette County Comprehensive Strategy not only sets a course for the future, but also provides strategies that the County can implement in order to convert the vision into reality. Its successful implementation relies on many individual actions on the part of not only County government, but also municipal government, service providers, local leaders and private decision-makers. Thus, the plan provides a blueprint for the future that is relevant to different people in different ways.

Also, the Comprehensive Strategy is not a stand alone document. There are many other plans that have been completed for the County, or parts thereof, and Region that are relevant to achieving the established vision. The plans shown below are a sample and not an all inclusive list of studies being used by agencies and organizations within the County and region.



*The above plans have been reviewed as part of the Comprehensive Strategy, in addition to many other plans and studies that have been completed within the County and region. These plans are meant to be complimentary to the overall comprehensive plan and provide more information as to the specific areas or topics covered.*



<b>County Government</b>	Fayette 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.
<b>Municipal Government</b>	The Future Land Use Map and related goals normally depend on local decisions regarding zoning and subdivision and land development approvals, as well as resource targeting by the County and other agencies. This is slightly different in Fayette County, however since the County administers zoning for a majority of the municipalities. 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.
<b>Community Organizations</b>	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.
<b>Residents and Business Owners</b>	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 Fayette 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.





## II. A PLACE WITH A HEALTHY ECONOMY





## A PLACE WITH A HEALTHY ECONOMY

*Growing new opportunities and reinforcing strong connections with business and industry*



Economic vitality will be an integral component of Fayette County's future growth. Accordingly, a strategy for future prosperity must build upon the business and employment opportunities available here now and projected trends. The County's plan to provide a healthy economy is centered around the following concepts:

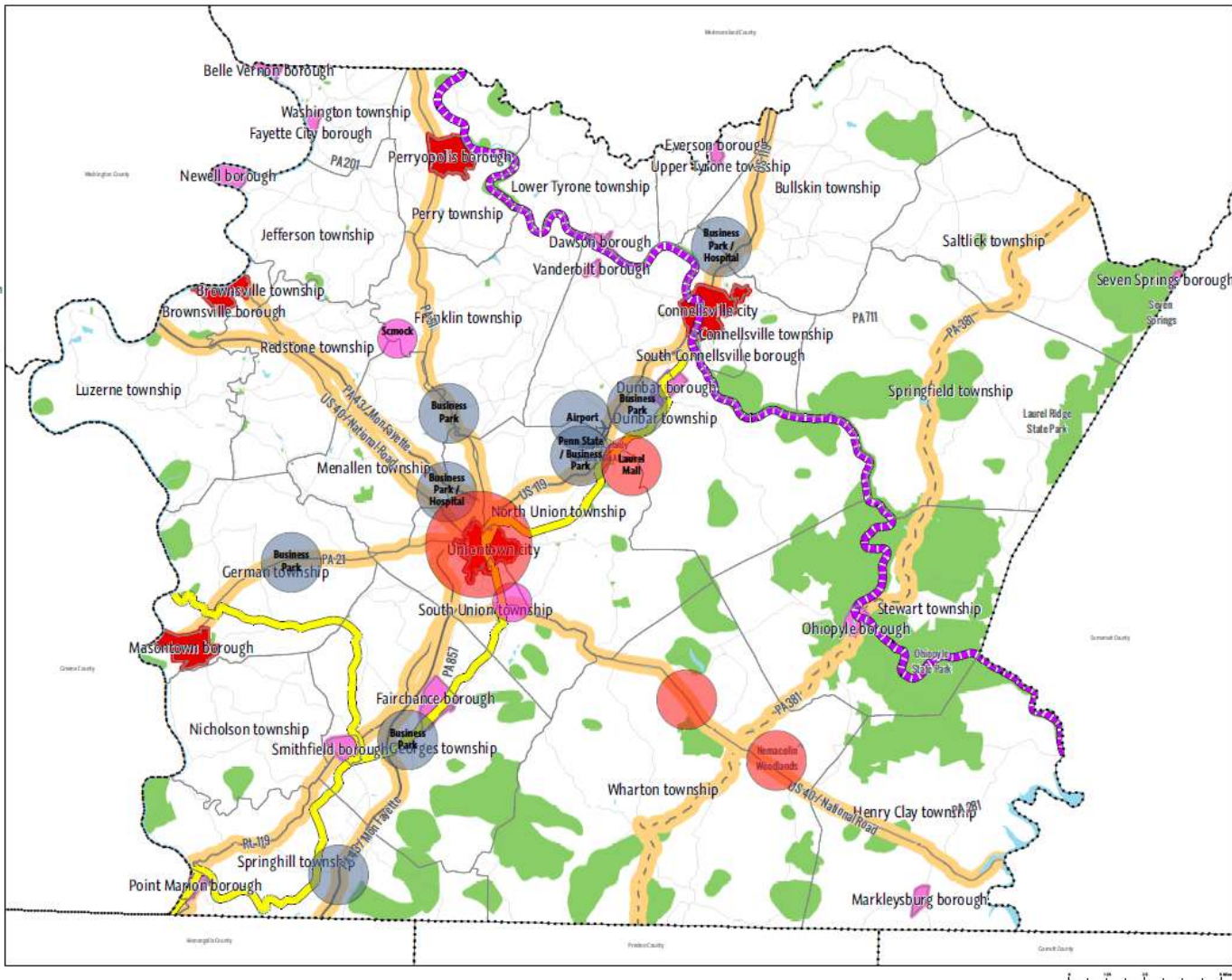
- Attracting new business and industry into the County to provide increased employment opportunities and raise the median household / per capita income.
- Providing comprehensive workforce development and job training to equip students/workers to increase the overall workforce participation rate and reduce the unemployment rate.
- Support tourism efforts as it represents a large part of Fayette County's economy. Ranging from Nemaquin Woodlands Inc., which is the number three employer in the County, to many small mom and pop stores, tourism is a critical element of the County's economic vitality.
- Expanding the availability of broadband internet and cellular service throughout the County.
- Developing a plan to capitalize on alternative energy and the technology sector will help the County to diversify its economy and reduce its dependence on the mining industry as well as the declining employment in the manufacturing industry.
- Ensuring that transportation infrastructure meets the needs of businesses and industry. The continued expansion and improvement of the County Airport is one of the highest priorities for the County Commissioners. In addition, rail, highway and public transportation upgrades are important in expanding economic and job opportunities.
- Supporting the County's agricultural businesses.



## Investment Areas Map

### Fayette County Comprehensive Strategy

- County Boundary
- Waterway
- Downtown Center
- Village Center
- Open Space Preservation
- Investment Corridor
- Gap Trail Corridor
- Sheepskin Trail Corridor
- Downtown / Commercial Center
- Village Center
- Employment Center (existing & proposed)



Major employment centers include:

- The City of Uniontown and the surrounding areas in North and South Union Township, including Uniontown Hospital, Penn State Eberly Campus, University Business Park, Mount Braddock Industrial Park, Greater Uniontown Business Park, Fayette County Business Park (home to the UPMC Cancer Center).
- Connellsville Industrial Park
- (Connellsville Township), home to Ebtech, Pleasant Trucking, Shallenberger Construction and Packaging Services Inc.
- Dunbar Township Business Park, which opened in 2016, (Dunbar Township).
- Fayette Business Park (Smithfield Township), home to Boeing, Berkley Medical Resources, Calfrac and others.
- Franklin Township), home to JD & D Enterprises, which recently expanded.
- Nemacolin Woodlands Resort, Fayette County's third largest employer and one of the few large employment centers located on the eastern side of the county.

# E1: Attract new business and industry corporations to locate within Fayette County.



## Target Areas:

- Downtown Centers: Uniontown, Connellsville, Perryopolis, Brownsville and Point Marion
- Employment Centers: existing business and industrial parks
- Major corridors including US 119; US 40; PA 51
- Interchange areas along PA 43 / Mon-Fayette Expressway
- Vacant and underutilized sites including the National Envelope Site (119 - Bullskin Township); Laurel Mall
- Near the Joseph A. Hardy / Connellsville Airport



## Why this is important:

- The County's workforce is being affected by an aging population and out-migration. The number of deaths is higher than the number of births, resulting in net negative natural population increases. In addition, many residents are moving to neighboring counties (Westmoreland County, PA and Monongalia County, WV).
- Employment remains below pre-recessions levels. Both Fayette County and the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) experienced sharp drops in total employment during the 2008-2009 recession. While total employment in the MSA has rebounded, total employment in the County remains lower than in 2009 (2,210 fewer jobs).
- The County saw a net increase of over 100 jobs in each of the following industries between 2010-2016: mining, quarrying and oil/gas extraction; accommodation/food services; arts, entertainment and recreation; public administration; transportation and warehousing; management of companies/enterprises; and administration/support, waste management and remediation. The mining industry added 290 relatively high-wage jobs (average median wage of \$71,850).

- The largest job losses occurred in the manufacturing industry (nearly 730 jobs) between 2010-2016. The manufacturing industry lost 730 relatively mid-wage jobs (average median wage of \$48,180). Other industries with over 100 net job losses include educational services; health care and social assistance; construction; information; professional/scientific/technical services; and wholesale trade.
- Unemployment is still higher than before. Although current average unemployment rates in the County have declined significantly since 2010, they are two points higher than the MSA and remain significantly higher than post-recession levels (7.6% today compared to 5.7% in 2009). There has also been a 5.6% decline in the labor participation rate since 2007.
- The top three industries by employment (4,000-8,000 jobs each) provide low annual wages. These include health care and social assistance (\$20,000); retail trade (<\$30,000); and accommodation and food services (<\$40,000).
- The top two industries by annual wage (\$70,000-\$80,000) represent only a small share of total employment. These include utilities and mining, quarrying and oil/gas extraction; each of which employ less than 1,000 people.
- There has been an increase of net outflow of workers - an indication that workers are seeking better employment prospects outside of Fayette County. Of 50,583 workers living in the County, only 45% have jobs here. The remaining 55% commute to areas outside the County borders each day, mostly to Westmoreland, Washington and Allegheny counties.
- The County is expected to see a net increase of 870 office workers by 2027, primarily in the health care and social assistance sector.
- Absent population growth, retail demand is more likely to take the form of specialized or experiential smaller establishments. As of 2017, there was approximately 893,350 square feet of retail space available for lease or sale in the County not all of which is occupied. By comparison with office space, expected demand for new retail space by 2027 is small — 53,320 square feet. This likely reflects a regional retrenchment, as big-box “category killer” stores have hit a saturation point that will not be sustained by a population increasingly likely to shop online.



## **What the County should do:**

### **1. Market the availability and assets of existing downtown and employment centers.**

- Develop a marketing plan that includes:
  - » Information on incentive funding opportunities and other programs for business and industry looking to locate in Fayette County.
  - » A checklist for potential developers and businesses consisting of demographics, socioeconomics, site amenities, permitting, utilities, communication, tax rates and zoning.
  - » A map identifying potential growth areas within County Growth Areas, including infrastructure and potential sites.

### **2. Support the expansion of pad-ready development sites.**

- The County's leaders believe in the advantages of attracting additional investment through existing and expanded business parks. In fact, this ranked as the highest long-term priority among the majority of County Commissioners during the planning process.
- Several business parks have pad-ready sites awaiting new development.
- To further expand business park capacity, the County has pursued funds for land acquisition and development through the state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Fund to expand the Fayette County Business Park.

There are also additional opportunities to develop similar sites in Menallen Township, Washington Township, Redstone Township, Masontown Borough and near the Point Marion interchange along PA 43 / Mon/Fayette Expressway.

### **3. Digitize the official zoning maps, update zoning regulations for the Mon/Fayette Expressway interchange areas and include the boundaries of the Airport Hazard Overlay on the Zoning Map.**

- Fayette County is one of the few counties in Pennsylvania that has countywide zoning. The County administers zoning regulations for 32 of its municipalities. Currently the zoning maps are all in paper form at the County Courthouse. In order to be more efficient and accurate, the county should hire a consultant to digitize all the zoning maps in a geographic information system (GIS) format that can be updated as needed and made available online.
- The County adopted a Mon/Fayette Expressway Overlay district for the northern section between Brownsville and Uniontown. Now that the Expressway is complete, the County should update the ordinance to expand the overlay to include the additional interchanges between Uniontown and Point Marion.
- The County's Zoning Ordinance has regulatory language for the Airport Hazard Overlay, but currently the boundaries of this overlay are not on the Zoning Map.

### **4. Work collaboratively with municipalities and other organizations to encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites.**



- The National Envelope site is located on US 119 in Bullskin Township. Currently vacant, the site has been identified as a major opportunity for redevelopment.
- Plan for the reuse of retail centers as they become vacant and are no longer viable retail centers. With major retail closures all around the country, it is likely that the County will experience an increase in vacant shopping centers. Case studies for reuse of retail centers can be found in the Adaptive Reuse companion document.

## **5. Create a one-stop shop for economic development.**

- Identify a single point of responsibility / leadership for potential business and industry looking to locate in the County – A “Business Concierge”. This person would also be responsible for coordinating among the various Economic Development / Business Agencies in the County.
- Case Study: Montgomery County created a Commerce Department that includes the Redevelopment Authority, Industrial Development Authority and Economic Development Corporation. The Commerce Department has four primary focus areas:
  - » Business Solution - loan programs, employee recruitment services and site location assistance.
  - » Redevelopment Areas - redevelopment planning, brownfields, tax increment financing, affordable housing support and enterprise zone administration.
  - » Jobs and Training - on the job training, customized job training and CareerLink.

- » Youth Programs - job readiness, life skills, internships and GED and employability classes.

## **6. Support the expansion of public water and sewer coverage to encourage economic development in priority areas.**

- The lack of infrastructure has been cited as the top issue that limits economic development in the County.
  - » The southeast quadrant of Fayette County is the only portion with a large lapse of water service. Other areas of the county have minimal lapses in coverage area. Certain municipalities listed upgrades that will be needed over the next 10 years: Mountain Water Association- Replacing plastic service lines and meter sets, Pleasant Valley Water Authority- A few service lines may need to be replaced, National Pike Water Association also will need some upgrades. Most water authorities mentioned that they have capacity for continued expansion and new development although Mountain Water Association and National Pike Water Association’s capacity is limited.
  - » Sewage service in Fayette County is limited to areas around Connellsville, Perryopolis, Masontown, Brownsville and Uniontown. Very small areas of coverage exist in other areas of the county as well. The sewage authorities expressed no upgrades needed over the next 10 years, and have continued capacity for expansion and new development.

- The Fayette County Board of Commissioners and County Planning Commission along with Economic Development Organizations in the County should annually review and prioritize public infrastructure projects to expand coverage to future growth areas (see the Future Land Use map on page 93). This review should include input from the municipalities and municipal authorities/utility companies. The County Commissioners have expressed their desire to extend infrastructure, particularly public sewer, to underserved areas. Currently, priority areas include the interchanges along the Mon/Fayette Expressway, US 119 and US Route 40. Infrastructure expansion into the southern portion of the County is of extreme importance as well due to the proximity of Morgantown in West Virginia.
- Update and maintain the countywide geographic information system (GIS) maps showing coverage areas for public water and public sewer service to assist with marketing efforts of development sites. Ensure that the map is updated annually and provided to municipalities and other organizations for their review.
- The county should support a regional or countywide approach that aggregates infrastructure projects so larger funding sources can be pursued.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Regional competition. Surrounding counties, such as Westmoreland County in PA and Monongalia County in WV have a competitive advantage in terms of population, available workforce, housing and access to infrastructure (water, sewer, broadband, etc.).
- Cost. The cost to expand infrastructure is high and there is limited financing available.

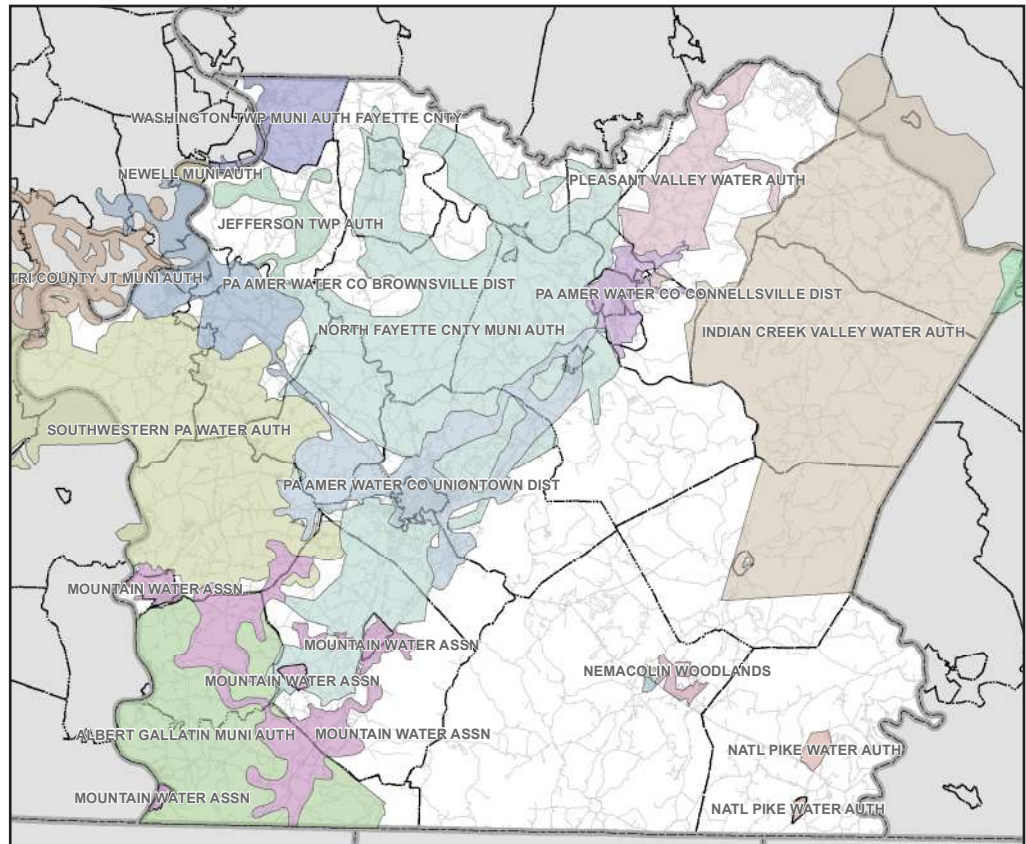


### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Decreased unemployment rate.
- Increased occupancy rates in business parks.
- Increased net jobs in target sectors.
- Increased median household income.
- Reduction in energy costs due to the installation of alternative energy systems.
- Increased labor participation rate.

## Water Service Coverage Areas

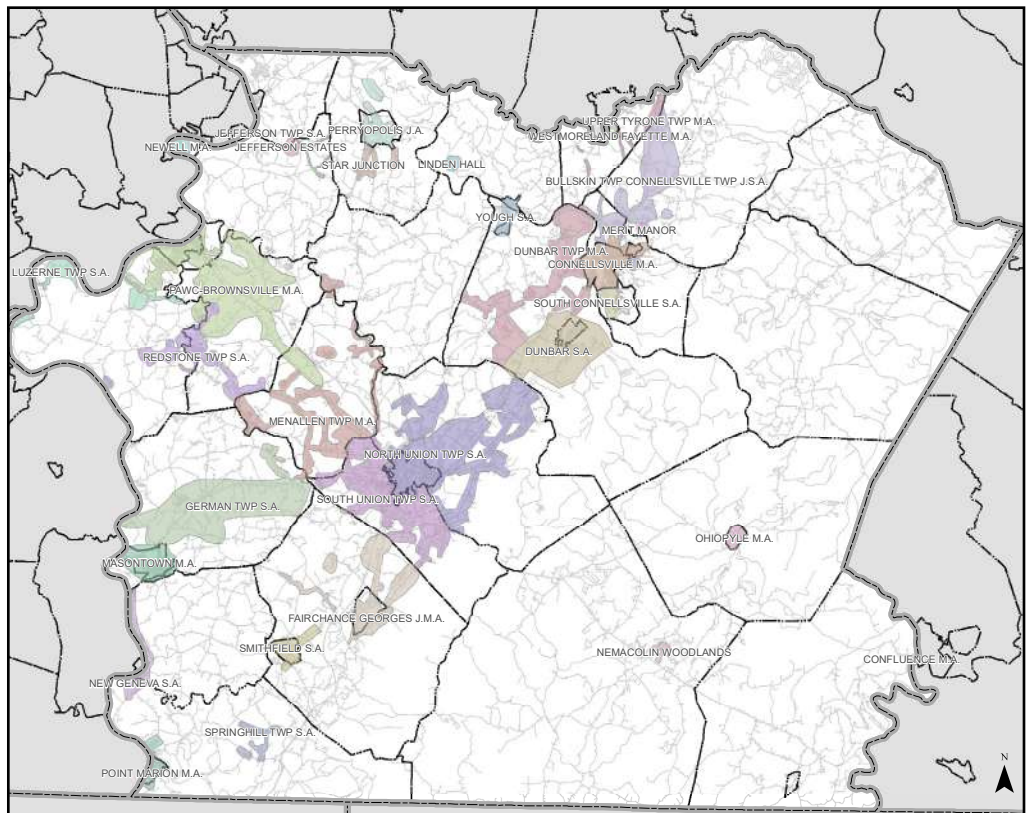
Fayette County  
Comprehensive Strategy



## Sewage Service Coverage Areas

Fayette County  
Comprehensive Strategy

0 1 2 3 4 Miles  
Mackin  
9/13/2018





## E2: Improve workforce development and job training.



### Key Resources / Partners:

- School Districts & Vo-Tech Schools
- Penn State University - Fayette & Westmoreland County Community College
- Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board & Private Industry Council of Westmoreland-Fayette\
- Foundations that support education
- PA CareerLink
- Goodwill
- County Libraries (Uniontown and Connellsville)
- The median household income in the County is \$41,632, which is also the lowest among the 10-county Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) region and other surrounding counties. It's also lower than the state at \$56,951.
- The County is projected to see a net 1,160 additional office workers by 2027. Most of these office workers are expected to work in the health care and social assistance sector and will be low to mid-wage.
- There is an expected population growth for persons between the ages of 60 and 80. As the baby boomer generation retires, there are concerns over who will fill the workforce gap. Reports show that generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980) cannot fill the void. There are less numbers and many will not continue to work full-time. The millennials (those born between 1981 and 1997) bring a growing skills gap and are less likely to have college degrees. A focus on employee training, and early management programs may help to address concerns.<sup>1</sup>



### Why this is important:

- There is a separation between vacant employment opportunities and workforce readiness. Whether it be through lack of awareness, lack of skills, or lack of will, employment rates in Fayette County are the lowest among the counties in its region.
- The County's labor force participation rate is only 53%, compared to about 63% in the state and across the U.S.
- The County offers the following workforce development / job training resources:
  - » The Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board has a mission of helping people gain necessary skills for viable employment and encourage more competitive employers. They establish CareerLink performance measures

<sup>1</sup> <http://bit.ly/WhoWillFillHiringGap>



and are responsible for coordinating activities with economic development agencies and employers.

- » Spherion located in Connellsville is a staffing agency connecting job seekers and employers.
- » Career Concepts Staffing Services is a staffing agency providing employment connections in the healthcare, industrial and professional industries.
- » The Private Industry Council of Westmoreland-Fayette is a nonprofit organization that administers employment/training programs in the Westmoreland/Fayette area to provide youth, adults, dislocated workers, and economically disadvantaged with the tools they need to get training and employment.



## **What the County should do:**

### **1. Coordinate with organizations such as the Fayette Business and Education Partnership (through the Fayette County Chamber) and the Private Industry Council (PIC) of Westmoreland/Fayette on workforce development and job training programs.**

- The Partnership has established a coalition for training providers in the area. Working with this organization to create a “communiversity” of all training providers would be extremely useful to assist with outreach and training.
- PIC assists youth, adults, dislocated workers and the economically disadvantaged in reaching their educational goals, supporting their family growth and obtaining training

and employment. They provide on-the job training, classroom training and vocational training; administers the State Customized Job Training (CJT) Program; offers multiple certificate-bearing training programs; and is the operator/manager of the Alle-Kiski, Fayette and Westmoreland PA CareerLinks.<sup>2</sup>

### **2. Develop a marketing campaign for available jobs.**

- Public input indicated residents who are in the market for higher-skilled positions are not aware of all available opportunities. Addressing this could be a matter of improving advertising and outreach. The Fayette County Chamber of Commerce does provide information regarding job availability so working with them to broaden the outreach and provide additional training on “how to look for a job” would be beneficial.
- The marketing campaign should be aimed at low-wage service workers to provide training opportunities as well as college and high school students. Work with the Westmoreland and Fayette Counties Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) as well as post-secondary training organizations in the region.
- County libraries in Uniontown and Connellsville can be further utilized as a resource to help job seekers by providing a place where people can use the internet to search for jobs.

### **3. Work with local school districts, the WIBs, post-secondary institutions that offer health care options and health organizations in the county to develop healthcare profession curriculum for junior and high school**

<sup>2</sup> <http://privateindustrycouncil.com/>

### students (in addition to vocational schools).

- The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides data that supports all the theories about the future of medicine. Employment of healthcare occupations is “projected to grow 18 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations, adding about 2.4 million new jobs. This growth is expected due to an aging population and because federal health insurance reform should increase the number of individuals who have access to health insurance.”<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. Encourage the public and private sector to work cooperatively to address the impacts of the opioid crisis.

- Studies have shown that the opioid epidemic has created a financial burden and competitive strain on employers, in the form of a diminished workforce, compromised productivity and higher health care costs. Approximately 70% of injured workers treated through workers’ compensation reportedly are prescribed an opioid.<sup>4</sup>
- Fayette County Drug and Alcohol Commission and Fayette EMS partnered to establish a program to encourage those with addictions to take small steps toward recovery.
- Highlands Hospital has an opioid addiction recovery program that is recognized as a Center of Excellence (COE).
- Schools and healthcare organizations can offer educational and support programs on the dangers and realities of opioid addiction.
- Employers can take steps to remove the

<sup>3</sup> <http://bit.ly/CareersInMedicalField>

<sup>4</sup> <http://bit.ly/USNewsHealthiestCommunities>

stigma of addiction, educate workers on the dangers of opioids through wellness programs and offer employee assistance programs to help ensure that those suffering from addiction.



#### Issues/Obstacles:

- Lack of interest to participate in workforce.
- Opioid epidemic is affecting the workforce. Many employers stated there are jobs available but people cannot pass a drug test.
- Regional competition. Other counties may have established employment opportunities taking away from the county’s efforts.
- Educational attainment. As mentioned earlier in this plan, Fayette County’s Bachelor’s Degree attainment is half of the rate for Pennsylvania.
- School District ratings are low which impacts current and prospective residents.



#### Benchmarks for Success:

- Increased employment in a variety of industries.
- Increased enrollment in job training.
- Increased availability of workforce.
- Increased educational attainment
- Higher ranking of school districts



## E3: Promote the redevelopment and revitalization of existing centers.



### Target Areas:

- Downtown Centers and Village Centers
- Employment Centers



### Why this is important:

- Supports smart growth concepts. Smart growth is an approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing and transportation options, development within existing neighborhoods and community engagement.
- Available capital and resources. Downtown Centers have existing infrastructure in place (public water, sewer, cellular and broadband coverage). They also have an existing housing stock to accommodate workers and an available pool of potential workforce.
- Although limited, there is public transportation available in most of the Downtown Centers, along with dense, walkable neighborhoods where residents can walk and/or bike to work.
  - » 2.6% of households don't have a vehicle, 85.8% drive alone Average travel time in the county is 26.2 minutes.



### What the County should do:

1. **Redevelop first. Focus on infill development before expanding greenfield development.**
  - Based on the 130,920 square feet of new office space demand, Fayette County's 161,370 square feet of office space provides sufficient capacity for redevelopment/new development in the county. As such, the County should prioritize the redevelopment of existing vacant and/or underutilized commercial and office space.
  - Develop direct mail collateral and associated information on the County's webpage targeted to light industrial users outside of, but within a 150-mile radius of, Fayette County. The recipients should be medium to large size companies located in areas with higher land and tax costs.
  - Prepare a quarterly e-mail blast to commercial and industrial real estate brokers with the Pittsburgh MSA to provide updated information concerning availability, lease and land purchase pricing and incentives associated with available light industrial/business park space in Fayette County.

## **2. Encourage downtown centers to reduce barriers to infill development by offering faster approval process and/or reduced impact fees.**

- Developers and real estate agents like to work in communities in which the regulations are clear, concise and streamlined. Time is money. There are some ways that the development process could be streamlined to make it easier such as defining and regulating minor subdivisions and land developments to reduce the approval process and/or allowing for exemptions from the land development approval process for minor expansions.

## **3. Assist the Downtown Centers with establishing/updating their vision and goals to encourage private investment that supports those visions.**

- Coordinate through the local Redevelopment Authorities (Connellsville and Uniontown) to identify catalytic projects (large scale redevelopment/development projects) in each city that can assist with increasing additional private sector real estate and business investments.
- Uniontown's 2002 plan made some specific recommendations to encourage revitalization in its downtown. These recommendations include: improving the alleys, market Uniontown assets on the Mon-Fayette expressway and relieving traffic congestion and parking issues. The plan's recommendations would encourage a friendlier environment for users of all modes and help improve the historical aesthetic of the City.
- Connellsville adopted their Comprehensive Plan in April 2019. The recommendations from this plan focus on continuing downtown revitalization of historic buildings, capitalizing on the GAP Trail and hotel, redeveloping Dutch Bottom for parks and recreation and expanding access to public transportation to increase tourism efforts.
- Brownsville Borough completed a comprehensive plan with Brownsville Township in the early 2000's. The Borough faces unique challenges with a vast majority of their downtown historic buildings vacant and falling into continued decline. Brownsville saw several long-running projects come to fruition in 2017. The Cast Iron Amphitheater at Snowden Square opened, a project led by a group of Brownsville Area High School students known as Students In Action (SIA) in partnership with the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority and Brownsville Borough Council. The Iron Bridge Crossings senior housing development on Market Street opened in 2018, a major housing renovation project by Trek Development.
- Masontown's comprehensive plan adopted in 1979 recommended revitalization for three areas: the southeastern section (the highest concentration of deficient structures); the eastern section (the central business district area); and the western section (River Ave Target Area).
- Perryopolis' plan last adopted in 1957 has an implementation section that highlighted relocation housing, expansion of job opportunities and financing. Perryopolis experienced an economic decline as mining activity slowed down in the County.





Recent downtown renovation projects include, clockwise from left: Uniontown - the City improved the streetscape on Main Street (landscaping, painted light poles, energy efficient LED lights, benches) in 2017; Brownsville - the new Cast Iron Amphitheater at Snowden Square opened in 2017; Connellsville - the Cobblestone Hotel opened along the GAP Trail on First Street in 2017; Ohiopyle - the Laurel Highlands (Ohiopyle State Park) Visitors Center opened in 2014; Point Marion - groundbreaking on the Sheepskin Trail on a 1.7 mile extension of the trail from Point Marion to the West Virginia border began in 2018.



#### 4. Review and update the County zoning ordinance annually to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

- Since many of the urban and developed areas of the County have their own zoning ordinances (i.e. Connellsville, Uniontown, Perryopolis, Ohiopyle, Connellsville Twp, South Union Twp, Wharton Twp) the County should review the County ordinance to ensure that it complements the urban centers. The ordinance should encourage higher density near urban centers and accommodate new growth through compact and contiguous development and make it easier for developers to build compact, walkable mixed-use places.

#### 5. Work with the Downtown Centers to offer incentive packages to developers for smart growth projects.

- Smart growth projects may have higher up front costs due to increased land value and/or added costs of site clearance, remediation and/or restoration. Incentive packages to relieve these costs can take the form of fee incentives, loans or grants, financing incentives, tax incentives, regulatory reductions or exemption/procedural relief, workforce development/business advocacy or technical assistance.

#### 6. Encourage more integration between Penn State Fayette and downtown Uniontown.

- Penn State Fayette, the Eberly Campus, is located in North Union Township off of US 119 approximately five (5) miles north of downtown Uniontown. Typically about 700 students are enrolled at the campus. Integrating the campus with more activities in downtown Uniontown could allow for local businesses to benefit economically.



#### Issues/Obstacles:

- Sprawl development threatens the vitality of urban centers.
- Decreasing population base in cities/towns.
  - » Uniontown, Perryopolis, North Union, South Union, Connellsville City and Brownsville have suffered steady population decline. This is expected to continue up until 2020, at which point populations are projected to stabilize.
- Poverty. Percent below poverty level:
  - » North Union - 18.1%
  - » South Union - 12.9%
  - » Brownsville - 34.5%
  - » Connellsville - 24%
  - » Perryopolis - 9.1%
  - » Uniontown - 29.9%
  - » Fayette County - 18.8%



#### Benchmarks for Success:

- Population stabilizes or increases.
- New job creation.
- Major redevelopment projects.



## E4: Encourage and support small business development and entrepreneurs.



### Target Areas:

- Downtown Centers and Village Centers
- Employment Centers



### Why this is important:

- Small business development is vital to successful community development. Pennsylvania's small businesses (500 or fewer employees) are key to the state's well-being. They account for a significant share of the state's economic production and hiring. There are 999,591 small businesses in Pennsylvania, employing 2.4 million workers (47.3% of the private sector labor force). In Fayette County alone, there were 8,820 small businesses in 2013 that employed 35,252 workers.<sup>1</sup>
- Entrepreneurs over the age of fifty, also known as encore entrepreneurs, are one of the fastest-growing groups of entrepreneurs in the United States. With an aging population, Fayette County should encourage its residents to pursue entrepreneurial activities.



### What the County should do:

- 1. Ensure that zoning ordinances are supportive of small businesses/entrepreneurs.**
  - To encourage entrepreneurs, zoning ordinances should permit small scale neighborhood commercial development/redevelopment in appropriate areas/corridors; allow for home businesses and live/work units; and accommodate mixed use development.
- 2. Reduce barriers to small scale business development by offering faster approval process and/or reduced impact fees.**
  - Subdivision and land development ordinances can be revised to include a provision that would allow for a one-time exemption from the land development review process for any addition to or structural enlargement of a nonresidential structure which results in a minimal increase in the gross floor area of the principal building (i.e. 500 square feet or less).

<sup>1</sup> <http://pasbdc.org/resources/small-biz-stats>

**3. Host meetings with the Fayette Young Professionals Network on a regular basis to identify needs/opportunities and potential barriers to young entrepreneurs.**

- The Fayette Young Professionals Network (FYPN) is the premiere organization for connecting, supporting and growing Fayette County's young professional population and is affiliated with the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce. They host regular meetings and professional networking and enrichment events.<sup>2</sup>

**4. Partner with the Chamber of Commerce and others to continue to promote locally grown, small successful businesses.**

- The Fayette Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)6 not-for-profit membership association. Founded as the Uniontown Chamber of Commerce and accredited in 1925, the Fayette Chamber has grown from a local city chamber to a county-wide organization now representing approximately 17,000 employees.<sup>3</sup>
- Work with the Chamber to continue to develop a well-defined, organized and sustained public education campaign to "buy local." The Herald Standard newspaper promotes a "Be Local" campaign that is supported by The Fayette and Connellsville Chamber of Commerces. These efforts have proven their ability to shift local culture and spending. The American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA) offers free resources to organizations looking to start such a campaign.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ypfayette.com/#about-us>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fayettechamber.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.amiba.net/buy-local-campaigns/>

**5. Support efforts to encourage/expand new start up businesses, business incubators and nontraditional work spaces within the County.**

- LaunchBox is a no-cost business accelerator designed to connect early-stage startups with the resources and support necessary for growth. Penn State Fayette has partnered with the Fay-Penn Economic Development Council to introduce this unique resource to the five-county service area. LaunchBox is a premiere service available to Penn State faculty, staff, students and alumni—as well as unaffiliated residents of Fayette, Greene, Washington, Westmoreland, and Somerset counties.<sup>5</sup>
- Masontown Matters is a nonprofit organization consisting of volunteers in Masontown. They have converted a vacant department store in Masontown into an incubator, which provides office space for entrepreneurs wanting to start a business. The facility is offered rent free and provides space for up to 10 businesses.
- Coworking spaces are increasing in popularity, not just for freelancers, but also for start-up businesses, entrepreneurs and major corporations. For some, coworking space is a better alternative to working from home. For others, it is a way to afford to start a company or just to encourage community and collaboration.
- Makerspaces can be used to foster entrepreneurship and are being utilized as incubators and accelerators for business startups.<sup>6</sup> A makerspace is a collaborative

<sup>5</sup> <https://fayette.psu.edu/launchbox>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.makerspaces.com/what-is-a-makerspace/>



work space inside a school, library or separate public/private facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing that uses high tech to no tech tools. These spaces are open to kids, adults, and entrepreneurs and have a variety of maker equipment including (but not required) 3D printers, laser cutters, cnc machines, soldering irons and even sewing machines. These spaces are also helping to prepare those who need critical skills in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

- The Small Business Development Center at St. Vincent College offers several free online courses serving residents in Fayette and Westmoreland Counties. In addition to courses on general business topics like accounting and marketing, there are the Encore Entrepreneurs and Encore Entrepreneurship for Women courses that are designed specifically for the Encore Entrepreneur.
- The American Association of Retired Persons offers a wide range of work-related webinars, including a series on small businesses and encore entrepreneurship.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.pasbdc.org/resources/business-owners/older-adults>



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- County doesn't control zoning in all municipalities.
- Defeatist attitude in Fayette County: "that won't work here." While this may exist in a small minority of those living and working in Fayette County, it can still be a deterrent if the voices are loud enough.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increased number of successful small businesses.
- New businesses taking advantage of the incubator space available through LaunchBox and Masontown Matters.
- Updated zoning regulations that remove barriers to small businesses & entrepreneurs.
- Co-working spaces available in the County.
- At least one maker space created in the County (Uniontown and Connellsville would be ideal locations).



## E5: Support the agricultural industry as a vital component to the County's economy.



### Target Areas:

- Rural resource areas
- Preservation areas



### Why this is important:

- Rural towns and villages are integrally linked with their surrounding landscapes. Maintaining and promoting the rural character of the County was a top priority for residents and supporting the agricultural industry is a vital component to not only preserving the rural way of life, but to the overall County economy.
- Preserving agricultural lands and active agricultural production is important to economies from the local, regional, and state to the national level. Agriculture is the number one industry in Pennsylvania.
- Land development and population growth are at odds with working farms; encouraging farms and agricultural businesses to thrive and prosper, will lessen pressure to convert land to other uses.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. **Ensure that the County Zoning Ordinance (and encourage municipal ordinances to be) is supportive of the agricultural industry and rural culture through:**

- Agricultural zoning – effective agricultural zoning, also known as agricultural preservation zoning, is a land management tool that encourages farming while discouraging non-agricultural land uses that are incompatible with farm operations.
- Rural home clustering – conservation subdivisions. Conservation subdivisions arrange homes so only half or less of buildable land is used for homes. The same number of homes can be built around an interconnected community-wide network of protected meadows, woodlands, streams and lakes. In some cases, non-common open space can be used to accommodate preserving active farmland as part of a development.
- Agritourism and ecotourism - agritourism and ecotourism can help keep lands in active agriculture and sustain farmers by generating additional income. Zoning ordinances should be reviewed and updated (if necessary) to support these concepts. Examples can vary by municipality, but may include: farmers markets, farm-stays, farm visits, roadside markets or stands,

U-Pick operations, community supported agriculture, farm museums, corn mazes, cider mills, pumpkin patches, petting farms, on-farm retail such as dairies, creameries, woolen goods, flowers, herbs and spices stores, maple syrup farms, wineries, Christmas tree farms, on-farm bakeries, and on-farm restaurants or cafes.

- Renewable energy development
  - » Some lands are suitable for wind energy development, and landowners may be able to capitalize on the opportunity to enter the energy market while still maintaining the traditional use of the land. Federal investment tax credits for wind farm development, including the Production Tax Credit, can provide an economic incentive to landowners.
  - » Biomass production from trees, crops, or livestock manure, which can be processed by a methane digester to generate electricity for the farm or for sale to the grid, provides another avenue for generating additional revenue from the land.
  - » Production of solar energy on solar farms has potential for rural use in many parts of the county as well. Land actively being used for agriculture should be preserved as such and not be used for solar farms, however. In addition, solar panels on individual buildings can also benefit the County in regards to production of solar energy.

## **2. Develop and enhance local food markets.**

- Support efforts to expand programs at the Republic Food Enterprise. In 2005, Fayette

County Community Action established the Republic Food Enterprise Center as an incubator for start-up businesses and farmers to cook, package and distribute food to communities that may not have access to nutritious food and address food security issues. The Enterprise offers farmers markets, provides produce to schools, runs a community supported agriculture program, supports entrepreneurs with resources to run food businesses and provides produce to downtown Pittsburgh buildings.<sup>1</sup> They would like to expand to more schools, businesses, and residents in addition to growing their lunch programs, online purchasing program and mobile poultry processing.

## **3. Encourage schools to expand/enhance agricultural programs.**

- Partner with the Republic Food Enterprise and others such as the Penn State Cooperative Extension to enhance education related to nutrition, agriculture as a business, etc. Encourage school districts to include/increase ag-related curriculum to encourage students to pursue ag-related fields, including secondary fields like agricultural economics and commodity trading.

## **4. Improve broadband in agricultural areas to help farmers compete.**

- Farmers and ranchers depend on broadband just as they do highways, railways and waterways to ship food, fuel and fiber across the country and around the world. Many of the latest yield maximizing farming techniques require broadband connections for data collection and analysis performed

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.republicfoodenterprisecenter.org>

both on the farm and in remote data centers. However, 29 percent of U.S. farms have no access to the Internet according to the USDA report, “Farm Computer Usage and Ownership, 2017.” Today’s farmers and ranchers are using precision agricultural techniques to make decisions that impact the amount of fertilizer a farmer needs to purchase and apply to the field, the amount of water needed to sustain the crop and the amount and type of herbicides or pesticides the farmer may need to apply. Access to broadband is essential for farmers and ranchers to follow commodity markets, communicate with their customers, gain access to new markets around the world and, increasingly, for regulatory compliance.<sup>2</sup>

- See Goal E6 on page 45 for more information.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Sprawl development threatens rural landscape, particularly with a lack of population growth.
- Lack of development pressure makes it a harder choice to spend public dollars to preserve land.
- Lack of community support for agricultural zoning, landowners may not want to limit future subdivisions.
- Cost may be prohibitive to expand broadband to many rural areas.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Stable number of working farms.
- Expanded agricultural education programs.
- Increased purchase/use of local goods in County institutions.
- Increase in number of farmsteads that have access to broadband.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fb.org/issues/technology/broadband/>





## E6: Expand broadband and cellular infrastructure.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide



### Why this is important:

- The Internet is an essential service, similar to electric and phone service. However, an estimated 6,000 people in Fayette County do not have access to any wired Internet and approximately 14,000 people (about 10% of the population) do not have access to broadband.<sup>1</sup>
- Need to lessen the digital divide between urban and rural areas. A study in U.S. News & World Report showed that adoption of high-speed Internet service in rural areas would help increase income, lower unemployment rates and create jobs in these underserved markets. Residents without broadband can't search for jobs online, work from home or start home-based businesses. Students can't complete homework assignments. People can't take online continuing education classes. Seniors lose access to potential lifesaving online health services. Farmers don't have access to state of the art technology, information and equipment.

<sup>1</sup> <https://broadbandnow.com/Pennsylvania/Uniontown>



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Work with the Commonwealth to support the rural broadband initiative.

- The Governor of Pennsylvania has stated that the Commonwealth's goal is to "close the digital divide ensuring every citizen and business has the access it needs to connect to the ever-expanding digital world in which we live and work." As such, in early 2018, the Governor established the Office of Broadband Initiatives to spearhead the Commonwealth's move toward expanding its service and access to all residents. Currently over 800,000 Pennsylvanians do not have access to reliable high-speed internet, roughly 65 percent of which live in rural areas. As part of its new broadband initiative, Pennsylvania has established the Broadband Investment Incentive Program. The program provides \$35 million in financial incentives to private providers to expand services into unserved or underserved areas in the Commonwealth.
- Work with State Legislators and wireless companies to provide access to White Space technology to provide broadband Internet throughout Fayette County. TV White Space refers to the unused TV channels between the active ones in the VHF and UHF spectrum. This unused spectrum can be used to provide broadband Internet access while operating harmoniously with

surrounding TV channels. In 2010, the FCC made this highly effective yet underutilized spectrum available for unlicensed public use. With the use of a database manager and a White Space radio, these channels can be used to access broadband Internet connectivity.

## **2. Continue to monitor and pursue funding opportunities for broadband initiatives.**

- Pursue grant funding, loans and/or bonds, such as the Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program (Broadband Program), which furnish loans and loan guarantees to provide funds for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide service at the broadband lending speed in eligible rural areas.
- The Appalachian Regional Commission's POWER initiative is a federally funded program that directs funding and resources to regions that have experienced job and population losses due to the changing economics in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries. This initiative funds many types of projects including expanding broadband and cellular technology.
- Direct Local Share Account (LSA) funding to priority projects.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Private enterprise. Currently, there is little incentive to private utility companies to extend to more rural areas
- Cost. In some areas, broadband may be available, but is cost prohibitive to individual consumers to pay to extend the lines for residential service.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increased access for broadband/cellular coverage throughout Fayette County.



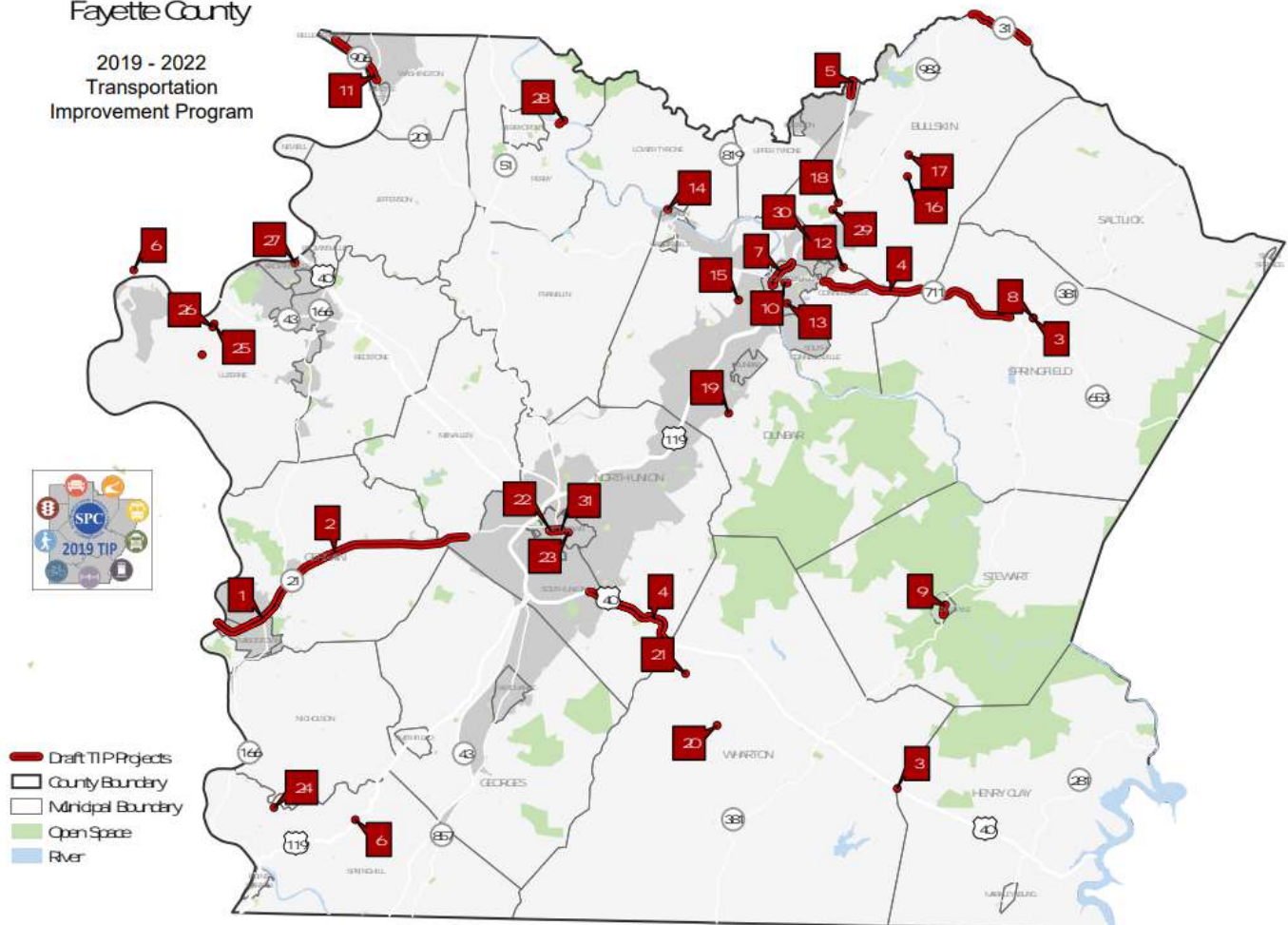
## E7: Ensure transportation projects align with smart and sustainable growth.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide
- Upcoming significant transportation improvement projects that are included on the PennDOT District 12 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2019-2022 include:
  - » US 119 & McClure Road / Kingview Road Interchanges - project to eliminate two signalized intersections on US 119 with a new full-access interchange in Bullskin and Upper Tyrone Townships
  - » PA 711 Crawford Ave Bridge - the rehabilitation/replacement of the structure carrying PA 711 over the Youghiogheny River, SR 1037 and CSX Railroad in the City of Connellsville

Fayette County  
2019 - 2022  
Transportation  
Improvement Program



- » PA 906 Slide and Realignment - the slide repair and roadway realignment of PA 906 in Washington Township between Fayette City and Belle Vernon
- » Cast Iron Bridge - the rehabilitation of the Cast Iron Bridge (State Route 4003 Market Street) over Dunlap Creek in Brownsville Borough
- » Layton Bridge - the improvement of the Layton Bridge (SR 4038, Layton Street) over the Youghiogheny River and Trail in Perry Township
- » PA 21 over PA 166 Bridge Reconstruction - the rehabilitation/replacement of the structure carrying PA 21 over PA 166
- » Ohiopyle Multimodal Gateway - a study to determine the safest way to get pedestrians/kayakers from the parking areas to the visitor's center and boat launches
- » SR 2040 over Coal Lick Run - the replacement of the structure carrying SR 2040 (Main Street) over Coal Lick Run in the City of Uniontown
- » SR 2040 over Redstone Creek - the replacement of the structure carrying SR 2040 (Main Street) over Redstone Creek in the City of Uniontown

counties in southwestern Pennsylvania including Fayette County. SPC just released a draft of their updated transportation and development plan called SmartMoves for a Changing Region. SmartMoves is the long range plan that identifies the region's priority roadway, transit and multimodal transportation improvements planned for advancement over the next 25-30 years. It addresses a wide breadth of community and economic development topics that are interrelated with the transportation system, as it directly supports and enables communities and the economy to prosper.

- An effective and efficient transportation network is vital to community revitalization and sustainable growth and development. PennDOT Connects is a program, launched in 2016, that aims to better transportation system and communities through collaborative planning. This program allows for the community to provide input into the project scopes earlier in the process, provides better understanding of local contextual issues and avoids delays later in project delivery.



### Why this is important:

- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) covering the ten



### What the County should do:

1. **Continue to promote participation in the Public Participation Panel (PPP) events for SPC's transportation planning efforts.**
  - Involving the public in the regional planning processes is a high priority and so SPC maintains Public Participation Panels (PPPs) for each county. PPPs are a bit like focus groups: members are appointed to represent the population of their respective



counties in regards to age, income, ethnicity, special needs and special interests. PPPs meet on an as-needed basis, generally when a major document (such as the long-range plan, the TIP, or the Air Quality Report) is under public review.

## **2. Support the expansion of the Joseph A. Hardy Connellsville Airport.**

- In 2018, the Fayette County Airport Authority completed a Runway Extension Feasibility Study, which determined that an increase in critical aircraft operations warrants an extension of Runway 5-23 to 5,500 feet. The study recommends that the County undertake a master plan update (completed in 2015), benefit cost analysis and environmental assessment as the next steps to pursue the runway extension. In addition there are four identified, shovel ready locations for additional T-hangars, which would contain six units each.
- With even minimal improvements to the runway costing upwards of \$5 million, the County will need to aggressively pursue funding for the expansion.

## **3. Encourage communities to adopt Complete Streets ordinances.**

- Complete Streets 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 policies formalize a community's intent to plan, design and maintain streets so they are safe for all users.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition>



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

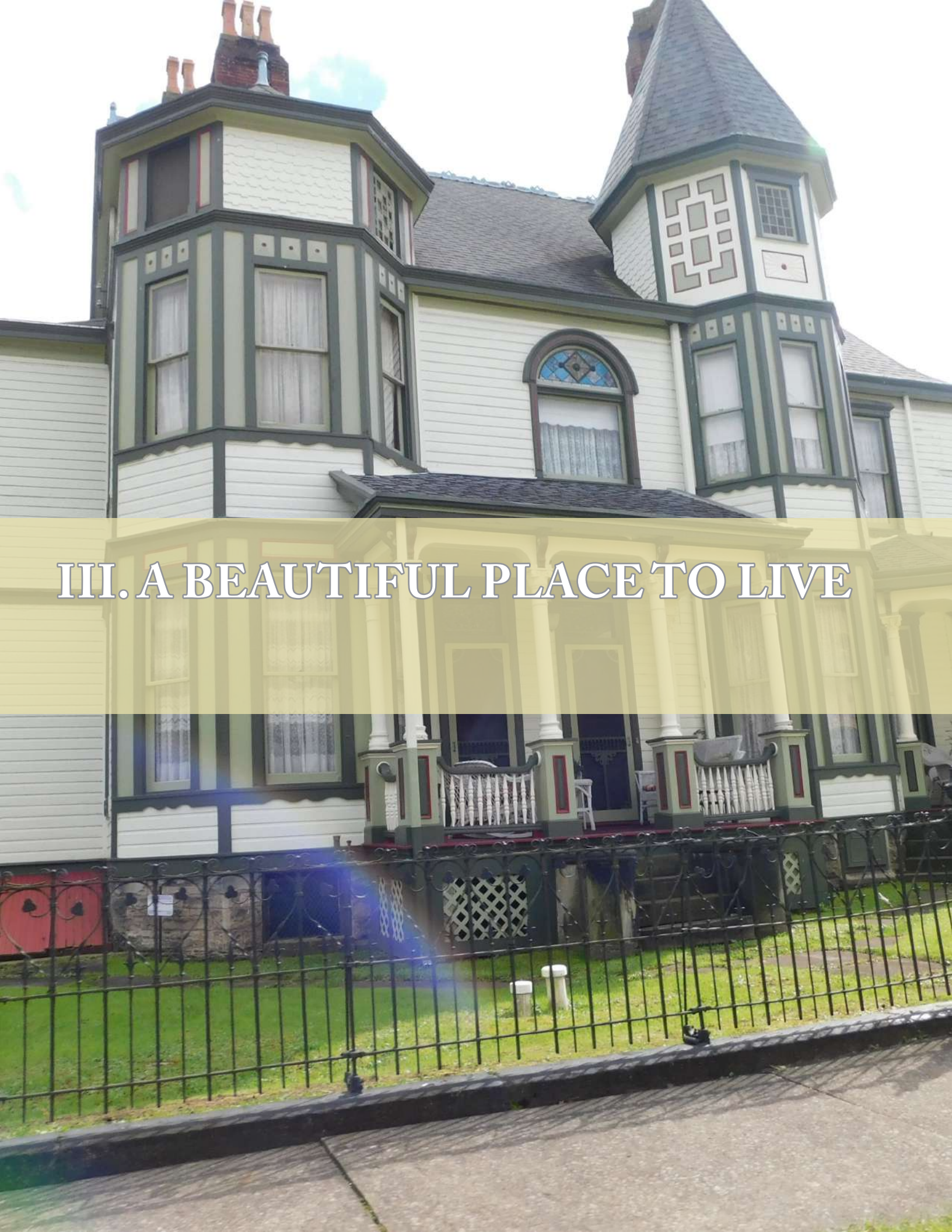
- Lack of funding and resources to address transportation deficiencies.
- Lack of ownership of state and local roads.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Reduced number of crashes/incidents.
- More efficient operations and traffic flow.
- Increase in a variety of modal travel.
- Adherence to regional targets for the Federal Performance Measures (PM):
  - » Two percent (2%) reduction in number/rate of fatalities, number/rate of serious injuries, number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries.
  - » No more than 5% of interstate miles in poor pavement condition and no more than 10% of bridges by deck area in poor conditions.





### III. A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO LIVE



## A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO LIVE

*Offering healthy and sustainable neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices*



Fayette County's bountiful natural resources represent some of its most defining features. Visitors and residents alike enjoy mountains, rivers and other beautiful scenery. Strategic improvements to County communities could enhance the way of life they offer within this scenic setting, making it even more attractive to current and potential residents. The County's plan to provide a beautiful place to live is centered around the following concepts:

- Improving neighborhoods by providing for a variety of housing choices, maintaining housing affordability and eliminating blight.
- Attracting new residents by improving the public school rankings and offering more public transportation choices.
- Improving the overall health and wellness of the County through providing a high quality parks and recreation network, encouraging active living and promoting sustainable land use policies such as requiring sidewalks, providing access to healthy food options, etc.
- Maintaining the rural character through land use policies that promote smart and sustainable growth and development and improve environmental quality.
- Ensuring that communities can provide the necessary public services and facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents.



## *Variety of Neighborhoods*



Typical rural village development - detached single-family dwellings (Newell)



Example of historic downtown renovation to convert a commercial building into senior housing (Brownsville)

## *County Parks*



Jacobs Creek Park



Sheepskin Trail in South Union Township (photo credit: [www.southuniontownship.com](http://www.southuniontownship.com))



## L1: Provide for more variety in housing choices in downtown centers.



### Target Areas:

- Targeting the more densely populated areas of Uniontown and Connellsville as well as other Downtown Centers
- Village Centers would be the most appropriate because of existing infrastructure, more walkable neighborhoods and a mix of uses.



### Why this is important:

- Even though the more densely populated areas of the County, such as Uniontown and Connellsville provide some variety in housing types, single family structures are still the predominant housing type.
- According to the National Association of Realtors, nearly 90% of households looking for homes in 2035 will be either under 35 or 70 and over, and both groups tend to buy less square footage. “What you have is everyone chasing the same type of home,” says Rick Palacios, director of research at John Burns Real Estate Consulting. “More and more buyers of all ages want to avoid having to deal with a huge yard and all the upkeep and the costs to maintain [a larger] home.”

- The effects of an aging population will be felt strongly in the downtown centers. As baby boomers retire, many choose to downsize from their traditional detached single-family home to a townhouse or condominium where exterior maintenance is provided. The market for older dwellings will decrease, causing the potential for blight and decay to increase.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Encourage housing choice in new developments.

- Beginning with municipalities where new housing would be well served by nearby jobs, schools, water/sewer infrastructure and amenities, the County should update the County Zoning Ordinance and/or review municipal zoning ordinances to identify and recommend eliminating overt and de facto barriers to the creation of a variety of housing types. This goes beyond ensuring that a variety of structure types (duplexes, triplexes, quads, townhouses, multi-family buildings) are permitted by right in one or more districts. The update and review should also ensure that:
  - » Land is available to develop in districts where non-single-family housing types are permitted.

- » Dimensional and parking minimum requirements are not so high as to create financial barriers to housing development.
- » Dimensional requirements do not prohibit the creation of patio or courtyard homes, which are increasingly popular configurations for the growing number of households that prefer low-maintenance, accessible single-family living.
- » Adaptive reuse is allowed under certain circumstances, such as converting large single-family homes for other residential or mixed uses or adapting vacant schools or commercial buildings for rental units.

## 2. Ensure that residents can age in place.

- Besides retrofitting existing housing stock to better accommodate their needs, there is a need to offer a greater variety of senior appropriate housing options throughout the County. Senior housing is a term that can be applied to a broad spectrum of housing options to serve everything from active-adult to assisted living.
- Provide housing options near services for the continuum of care needed through aging years. Encourage senior housing to be located along transit lines, near neighborhood commercial centers and close to medical offices/services.
- Encourage the integration of senior appropriate housing, both active adult and assisted living, into the fabric of the community, thus offering multigenerational or lifelong housing opportunities.

- Update the County Zoning Ordinance to accommodate alternative senior housing options such as connected one-story homes (patio, carriage, etc.) and multi-generational housing, such as accessory dwelling units, particularly in communities such as Brownsville and Masontown.
- Encourage municipalities such as Uniontown, Connellsville, and Perryopolis to accommodate alternative senior housing options in their zoning ordinances as well.

## 3. Encourage transit-oriented development (TOD).

- TOD is defined as “compact, mixed-use development near transit facilities that promotes sustainable communities by providing people of all ages and incomes with improved access to transportation and housing choices, [and] reduced transportation costs that reduce the negative impacts of automobile travel on the environment and the economy.”
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) completed a project called “Region-Specific Success Factors for the Implementation of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Transit Revitalization Investment Districts (TRID)” that identified the unique factors that make TOD successful in the SPC Region. One of the outcomes of that effort is a guide entitled “Future Investment in TOD (FIT).” It is a tool that describes how to apply the TOD success indicators to a potential site in order to determine whether that particular site is conducive to TOD.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spcregion.org/fit/pdf/fit.pdf>

- Potential sites in Unionton and Connellsville should be identified and evaluated to determine if TOD could be a successful tool for new development opportunities.

#### **4. Update the 2005 Fayette County Housing Study.**

- Updating the countywide housing study will allow the County to understand and address the dynamics between supply and demand within the context of larger market forces (economic ebb and flow, employment dynamics), providing a fact-based basis for future budget and program decisions.

#### **5. Convene a workgroup of housing providers, developers and real estate agents to meet on a regular basis to discuss trends, issues and potential opportunities regarding housing in the County.**

- Hosting regular meetings with developers and real estate professionals would provide a forum to ensure that County and municipal regulations align with the market. The County can provide data to local developers to encourage the type of housing developments it would like to see.
- The growth of Morgantown needs to be included in any discussion of housing growth in Fayette County (especially in the southern portion of the County near the West Virginia border). This will help to provide a more accurate depiction of housing need due to the rapid growth of Morgantown.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Lack of population growth. Demand is not high for redevelopment due to the lack of growth.
- Cost (for rehab in particular). The cost of rehabbing or retrofitting an existing home is costly. Especially given the fact that a majority of Fayette County's existing housing stock was built before 1939.
- Perception. Even though it is changing somewhat, a large number of people have a negative perception of urban, more dense areas and they want to live in the suburbs



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Number of permits for new housing developments that include units other than single family detached homes.
- Number of local zoning ordinances allowing more flexibility in housing development (such as allowing ADUs).





## L2: Reduce blight in communities.



### Target Areas:

- Targeting the more densely populated areas of Uniontown and Connellsville as well as other Downtown Centers.
- Village Centers would be the most appropriate because of existing infrastructure, more walkable neighborhoods and a mix of uses.



### Why this is important:

- #1 goal for housing as ranked by the public and #5 overall (meetings and online).
- Blighted buildings are not only a safety risk, but they also decrease property values and diminish the aesthetics of a community.
- As noted by a study completed by the US Census in 2013, housing is the number one reason why 48 percent of Americans move to a new community.
- The housing vacancy rate for the County increased from 2015-2019 (by 1.2%) while it decreased in the Pittsburgh Metro Area.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Utilize the recently adopted resolution designating the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority as the County Landbank to develop a blight plan.

- Develop promotional materials about the benefits and encourage local municipalities to participate.
- Educate the public regarding housing rehab programs available through the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority.
- Follow the “Five Step Fast Track Method for Fighting Blight” developed by the Housing Alliance of PA- <http://www.pablightlibrary.com/readdownloadprintshare/>.

Step 1: Gain consensus for blight plan

Step 2: Assess the nature and extent of the blight

Step 3: Convene a Blight Task Force

Step 4: Engage Municipal Officials

Step 5: Identify priority actions and implement them

## 2. Work with State Legislators to fund blight strategies.

- Restore Pennsylvania, Governor Wolf's bipartisan proposal funded through a commonsense severance tax, would invest \$4.5 billion over the next four-years in significant, high-impact projects to rebuild Pennsylvania's infrastructure. It would provide financial resources at the local level to establish land banks and acquire and demolish blighted buildings to create new development opportunities or provide new green space. The funding will be administered by entities established by the legislature as land banks or demolition funds.<sup>1</sup>
- Currently, local municipalities are unable to fund the demolition or redevelopment of most of their blighted properties by themselves. If passed into law, Restore Pennsylvania would fund blight remediation efforts at a level far beyond any existing funding mechanisms at the local and state levels.



### Issues/Obstacles:

- Cost. Demolition is extremely costly and the magnitude is great at a county level (number of properties).
- Local municipal cooperation. Need to get everyone on board.
- Multiple taxing bodies. Everyone needs to agree.
- Staffing / Volunteers. Getting dedicated people to serve on the task force.



### Benchmarks for Success:

- County Land Bank is properly functioning.
- Blight strategy is in place.
- Number of blighted properties is reduced.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dced.pa.gov/newsroom/wolf-administration-and-beaver-county-leaders-discuss-how-restore-pa-could-help-region-battle-blight/>



## L3: Encourage and support educational institutions to adequately prepare students for the workforce.



### Target Areas:

- School districts in the County. The following are the ratings for each of the Fayette County High Schools according to GreatSchools.org. The ratings are based on a number of factors including college readiness, standardized test scores, student progress (based on how students improve over a multi-year time frame), and equity (how students of various races and ethnicities perform). The ratings are based on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. While this is only one source of rating and cannot be taken as the final say on how the schools perform, some observations can be made based on this data. Most of the districts score 5 or above which is about average as compared to other high schools in Pennsylvania, but there are several that score very low, which can lead to negative perceptions regarding the districts in the County.

- » Albert Gallatin Area High School: 3/10
- » Belle Vernon Area High School: 6/10
- » Brownsville Area High School: 2/10
- » Connellsville Area High School: 6/10
- » Frazier High School: 6/10

- » Laurel Highlands Area High School: 5/10
- » Uniontown Area High School: 5/10



### Why this is important:

- #2 goal for housing as ranked by the public and #6 overall (meetings and online).
- Employment in the County remains below pre-recession levels.
- The County's labor force participation rate is relatively low (53.2% compared to an average labor force participation rate of 63% based on national and regional statistics).
- Educational attainment is low in the County.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Work with and support the Fayette Business Education Partnership (FBEP).

- The Fayette Business Education Partnership (FBEP) is a collaborative effort among the Fayette Chamber of Commerce, the Westmoreland-Fayette Workforce Investment Board, educators, legislators and other community groups. FBEP was created in 2012 in an effort to respond to the

needs of employers to hire and keep skilled staff. The mission of the FBEP is to develop collaborative partnerships between business and education, and to assist partners in creating and sustaining workforce development activities throughout Fayette County. FBEP also provides a “workforce consortium” that prepares students for local careers and should continue to be supported.

- Support and help expand career days at high schools throughout the County to help connect students with employers from various local industries.
- Work with educational providers, local organizations and employers to develop internship programs for students to explore various job opportunities available in the County.
- Identify programs available through state and regional workforce system and utilize them to the extent possible.
- Continue to partner with the local school districts on events as well as utilizing their facilities. This is a great way to increase exposure at the schools as well as integrate the schools more with Fayette County.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Negative perception of trade occupations.
- Attitudes and perceptions of work, as reported by stakeholders: Pervasive sentiment that receiving public benefits is preferable to maintaining a job.
- Drugs – opioid addiction.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increase in number of people in workforce.
- Increase in entrepreneurial activity.
- Increase in internship opportunities.
- Decrease in unemployment.





## L4: Facilitate and encourage high-quality indoor and outdoor public recreation amenities that serve County residents.



### Target Areas:

- County Parks
- Trail systems throughout the County



### Why this is important:

- Fayette County is well known for its recreation amenities and natural beauty. Providing high quality facilities at the County level was consistently mentioned at public meetings as a high priority (this was in the top 10 (#9) for the public rankings-meetings and online voting).
- The County owns and operates three County Parks: Dunlap Creek, Jacobs Creek and German-Masontown.
- Fayette County owns and operates two trail systems (note: the Great Allegheny Passage Trail is not owned by the County):
  - » The Sheepskin Trail is a proposed 34-mile bicycle/pedestrian path that once completed, will extend from Dunbar Township to Point Marion Borough at the Pennsylvania/West Virginia state line. Still in the early stages of development, it is a missing link to a nationally significant trail system, ultimately linking to the Great Allegheny

Passage, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, the West Virginia Rail-Trail System and the American Discovery Trail.

- » The Browns Run Trail is a rail-trail that follows abandoned Monongahela and B & O railroad in German Township. The Trail begins at the Monongahela River near Ronco and continues on to Smithfield as the Ronco Spur of the Sheepskin Trail, a distance of approximately 12 miles.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Update the Fayette County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Greenways and Trail Plan.

- There have been many changes to the County's parks, recreation and trail network since the adoption of the County's plan in 2010. The County should update the plan to address these changes and update the accompanying recommendations and priorities. Specifically, the Plan update should address the following issues:
  - » Improve overall maintenance of County parks and facilities.
  - » Increase staffing to improve administration, maintenance and programming (Park and Recreation staff

and / or board).

- » Consider the development of a dog park.
- » Assess recreation deficiencies within the County and identify underserved areas/ populations.
- Municipalities can adopt the County's Plan if they do not have their own parks and recreation plans in order to:
  - » Seek grant funding for priority projects (many agencies, such as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources require that the project is identified in an adopted plan for funding).
  - » Update subdivision and land development ordinances to require property developers to dedicate public open space within proposed subdivision and land developments, construct recreational facilities, pay the municipality a fee to be used instead of dedicating land or a combination of land dedication, construction of recreational facilities, or the payment of the fee.

## **2. Continue to pursue land acquisition, financing and the construction of the missing gaps in the Sheepskin Trail.**

- Currently there are almost six (non-contiguous) miles of the Sheepskin Trail open, including 2.0 miles in Dunbar Township, 2.3 miles in South Union Township and 1.7 miles from Point Marion to the PA/WV state line. The County is currently working to acquire a two-mile section of right-of-way between the US 119 Bridge in Point Marion and Nilan. Construction

funding has been secured and is anticipated to start in 2020.

- The Sheepskin Trail Feasibility Study was updated in 2018, which includes recommendations for land acquisition, design and construction cost estimates and prioritizes trail segments.

## **3. Complete and implement Master Site Plans for the three County Parks**

- Implement the recommended projects from the Jacob's Creek Park Master Plan (scheduled for adoption in 2019).
- Complete and implement the recommended projects from the planned Master Site Plans for German-Masontown Park and Dunlap Creek Park.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Lack of funding.
- Lack of technical expertise / staffing.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increased amount of money into the County from recreation-related grants.
- Implementation projects arising from the adopted County Parks and Recreation Plan Update and master site plans.
- Additional new trail sections open for the Sheepskin Trail.



## L5: Improve overall health by encouraging active living.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide



### Why this is important:

- 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 Healthy People 2010 report 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.”
- According to Countyhealthrankings.org, an organization that annually ranks the overall health of counties throughout the United States, Fayette County ranks 66 out of 67 counties in both Health Outcomes and Health Factors.
  - » The overall rankings in health outcomes represent how healthy counties are within the state. The ranks are based on two types of measures: how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive. For length of life, Fayette ranks 64/67 and is 66/67 for quality of life.

- » The overall rankings in health factors represent what influences the health of a county. The ranks are based on four types of measures: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors. Health behaviors are of particular concern in the County, particularly looking at the percentage of residents who smoke, adult obesity, physical inactivity, lack of access to exercise opportunities and teen births. In terms of clinical care, poor access to primary care physicians, dentists and mental health providers is a concern. Additional concerning factors include low high school graduation rates, high unemployment and high percentage of children in poverty.



### What the County should do:

1. **Determine validity of creating a countywide WalkWorks route / group.**
  - Currently Fayette County has five WalkWorks routes including Masontown, Connellsville, Fayette Business Park, Point Marion, and Uniontown. The WalkWorks program promotes safe walking routes, helps to develop walk to school programs, offers social support through community walking groups. The County should monitor future funding opportunities through WalkWorks to assist with the development of active transportation plans.

## 2. Encourage local municipalities to encourage or require sidewalks, where appropriate.

- Municipalities have the ability to require sidewalks through subdivision and land development ordinances. Regulations that will fortify sidewalk networks include requiring sidewalks as follows:
  - » Along both sides of all roadways in commercial and industrial areas and in residential areas, along all arterials and collectors and local streets with at least one unit per acre.
  - » Along at least one side of the street in residential areas with less than one unit per acre.
  - » Allowing developers to propose alternative pathways, i.e. crushed stone/permeable material trails, in areas where sidewalks may not be necessary.

## 3. Develop a countywide health campaign to improve overall health and wellness of Fayette County residents.

- Fayette County can develop a campaign modeled after Live Well Allegheny, which aims to improve health and well-being of residents through collaborative work with partners, stakeholders and residents. The campaign includes initiatives to improve access to healthy foods, increase active lifestyles, quit smoking, etc.<sup>1</sup>
- The County should ensure that its website, social media and print materials are marketing and publicizing programs available in the County on health and wellness, specifically through the Republic

Food Enterprise, such as the Farmer's Markets, nutrition education and Community Supported Agriculture.

- Consideration should be given to whether or not there is local support for and the feasibility to establish a year-round indoor Farmer's Market.
- Encourage and provide assistance to local municipalities operating or trying to develop community garden programs.
- Support / partner with hospitals, schools and local law enforcement and EMS providers to continue to provide educational outreach programs on the opioid epidemic. More information on this is included under Goal E2.4 on page 34.



### Issues/Obstacles:

- Land use decisions are primarily made at the local level and the county has little control.
- Lack of awareness regarding healthy life choices.



### Benchmarks for Success:

- Improvement in County Health Rankings for Health Outcomes and Health Factors.
- Increased online presence and marketing of resources related to healthy living.
- The development of a countywide health campaign.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.livewellallegheny.com>





## L6: Protect the rural character through sustainable land use policies.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide



### Why this is important:

- Maintaining the rural character was discussed as an important issue in multiple meetings during the planning process.
- Flooding is an ongoing and increasing problem throughout the County. The Fayette County Stormwater Management Plan (Act 167) was adopted in 2010 and identifies specific problem areas. The Plan includes a model ordinance, which the municipalities were required to adopt.



### What the County should do:

1. **Encourage the development of conservation subdivisions in rural areas.**
  - Conservation subdivisions can be encouraged through zoning ordinances (the County and municipal). Conservation subdivisions protect networks of open space by rearranging a development to keep open space connected and permanently preserved while maintaining (or increasing) the density of the desired development.
  - Conservation subdivision practices have been proven to ease tensions between developers and municipalities while preserving an average of 62% of residential land.
2. **Encourage use of green infrastructure to help with flooding issues.**
  - Green Infrastructure uses the natural environment as an alternative to building costly storm water infrastructure. Green infrastructure solutions provide clean water, preserve wildlife and conserve the ecosystem functions.
  - Stormwater runoff can often introduce pollutants into the water system as impervious surfaces such as roads and parking lots cause stormwater build up. As stormwater accumulates, floods and water

damage can occur. Increasing the number of pervious surfaces is a natural way of managing this storm water and reducing floods and damage.

- Rain gardens and rain barrels are additional initiatives that manage stormwater runoff. Rain barrels attach to downspouts and capture rainwater that could potentially run off into sewers and streets. Rain gardens provide an attractive rainwater solution that also encourages the plants in the garden to use some of the stormwater retained in the garden.

### **3. 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.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Awareness – difficult to change mindset.
- Interest - municipalities not experiencing development pressure may not see the value in adopting sustainable land use policies at this time.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increase in Conservation Subdivisions (actual development and ordinances that allow / encourage it).
- Increased acres of preserved farmland.
- Decrease in major flood events throughout the County.
- Consistent review processes at County and local levels.



## L7: Explore methods to increase the availability of public transportation.



### Target Areas:

- These options should be increased Countywide, but particular attention should be paid to increasing public transportation to/from downtown centers, employment centers and commercial centers.



### Why this is important:

- Transportation options other than personal vehicles are lacking in the County. According to American Community Survey data presented by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), more Fayette County residents drive themselves to work (84.7 percent) than residents in any of the other nine counties in SPC's region.
- According to the US Census American Community Survey (2011-2015) more than 38% of Fayette County residents commute out of the County for work, which is more than all its neighbors (Washington, Westmoreland and Greene Counties).
- A 2012 study published in the New York Academy of Medicine's Journal of Urban Health found that longer commutes are associated with behavioral patterns which may contribute over time to obesity and other poor health outcomes, taking away

time that could otherwise be spent on healthy activities.

- Currently only one vanpool exists in the County (through SPC CommuteInfo program. The existing group is looking for new riders to replace some who have left the vanpool.
- Traditional measures of housing affordability ignore transportation costs. The Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation (H+T®) Affordability Index provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the true affordability of place. Typically a household's second-largest expenditure, transportation costs are largely a function of the characteristics of the neighborhood in which a household chooses to live. Compact and dynamic neighborhoods with walkable streets and high access to jobs, transit, and a wide variety of businesses are more efficient, affordable and sustainable. H&T assigns neighborhoods an AllTransit Performance Score, which is an overall transit score that looks at connectivity, access to jobs and frequency of service.<sup>1</sup> The County's Downtown Centers rate as follows (note: the scale is 1-10 where 10 is the most access to public transportation):
  - » Uniontown - 3.2
  - » Connellsville - 2.6
  - » Brownsville - 2.2

<sup>1</sup> <https://htaindex.cnt.org/map/>

- » Masontown - 1.3
- » Perryopolis - 0.9



## What the County should do:

### 1. Continue to support Fayette Area Coordinated Transit (FACT) and periodically meet with FACT officials to discuss opportunities for increased or additional routes.

- FACT is the County's public transportation agency. They provide 11 fixed routes throughout the County and region as well as several other programs such as Shared Ride. Funding is usually very limited for public transit agencies, so the County should continue to provide support when possible.

### Facilitate meetings with representatives from CommuteInfo and large employers or entities such as Fay-Penn and the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce.

- The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the region's planning agency. SPC has a program called CommuteInfo ([www.commuteinfo.org](http://www.commuteinfo.org)). This program is a ride sharing program offering multiple solutions to alleviating stress, and even saving commuters time and money. The program provides multiple services including: finding a carpool or vanpool to join, locating park and ride facilities near your commute route and assisting with finding public transit routes in your area. CommuteInfo currently has one vanpool route in Fayette County, but is always looking to add more options if the demand warrants.

- Meeting with large employers and economic development agencies that are active in the County could assist with identifying where there are riders/interest in providing additional routes in the County.
- The County media staff should be made aware of this program in order to spread the word through the county print and social media outlets.



## Issues/Obstacles:

- Cost. The cost of public transportation is extremely high and funding is limited.
- Awareness. Fayette County is a more rural area and making residents aware of transportation options can often be difficult.



## Benchmarks for Success:

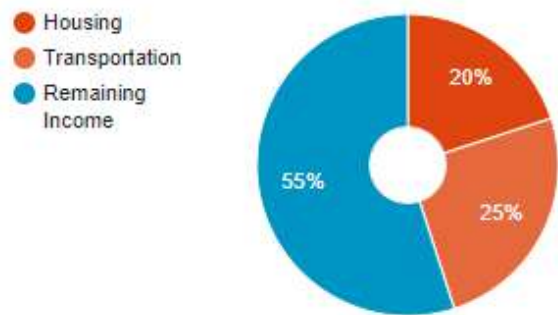
- Increased ridership on FACT bus routes.
- Increased car/van pools operating in the County.
- Improved AllTransit scores in the Downtown Centers.



# LOCATION MATTERS.

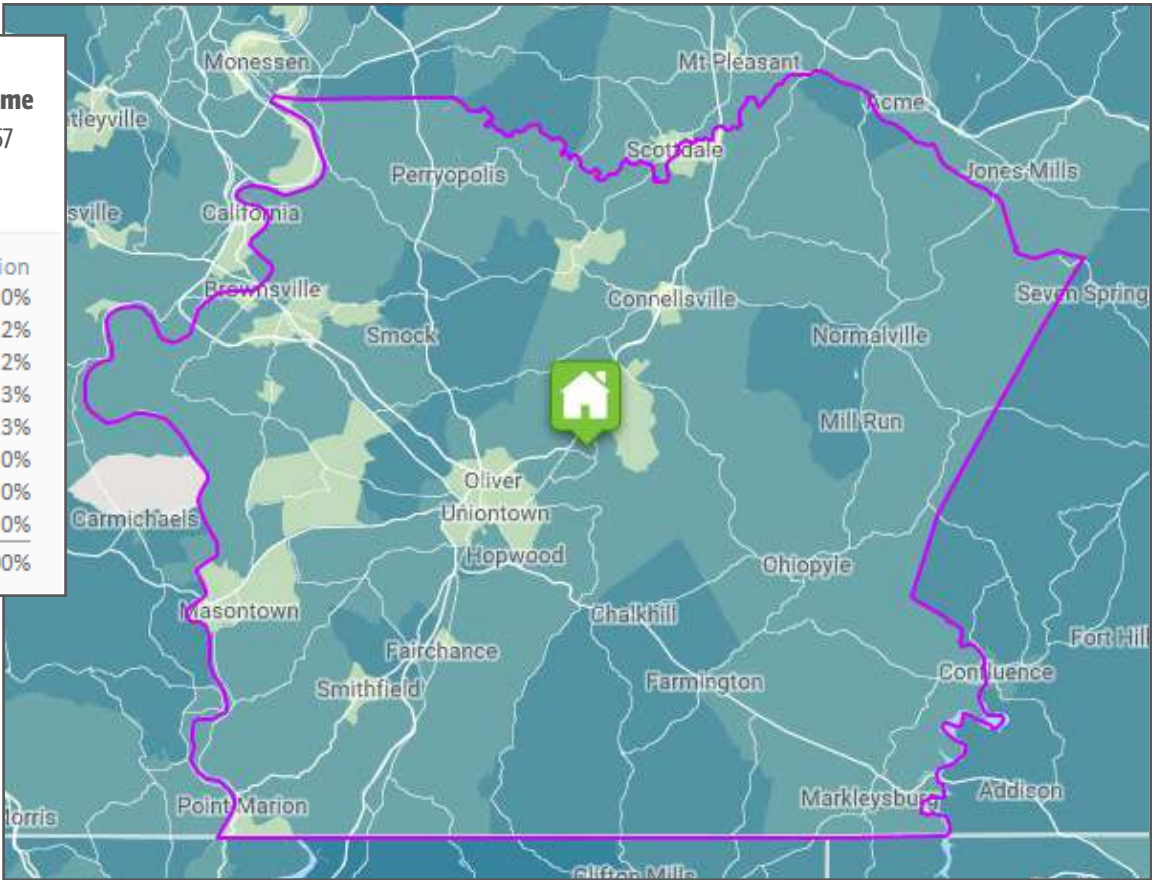
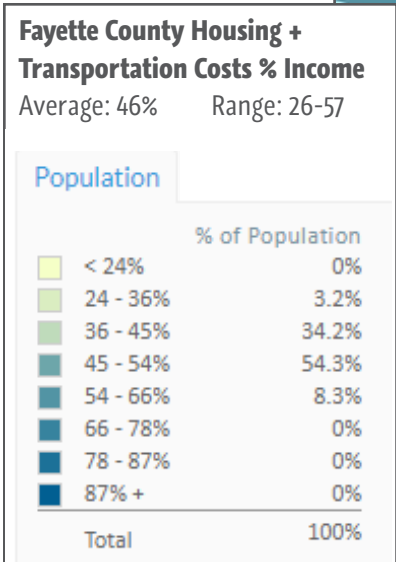
Traditional measures of housing affordability ignore transportation costs. The Center for Neighborhood Technology’s Housing and Transportation (H+T®) Affordability Index provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the true affordability of place. Typically a household’s second-largest expenditure, transportation costs are largely a function of the characteristics of the neighborhood in which a household chooses to live. Compact and dynamic neighborhoods with walkable streets and high access to jobs, transit, and a wide variety of businesses are more efficient, affordable and sustainable.

**Fayette County Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income**



Factoring in both housing and transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability. Transportation costs can range from 8% of household income in location-efficient neighborhoods to over 26% in inefficient locations.

The average household in Fayette County spends 20% of its income on housing and 25% on transportation.



Source: <https://htaindex.cnt.org/fact-sheets/?lat=39.9272324&lng=-79.65021050000001&focus=county&gid=1772#fs>



## L8: Expand the marketing campaign to attract new residents.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide, but a focus should be on the cities - Uniontown and Connellsville



### Why this is important:

- This issue was discussed in Advisory Committee meetings as a way to further utilize the existing branding process and positive media campaign to target and attract new residents to the County.
- Fayette County has lost 32% of its population since its peak population of 200,999 in 1940. Despite the population loss, there is a current unmet demand for almost 2,000 housing units and the housing costs in Fayette County are more affordable overall than the state and Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). For example, in 2015, the median contract rent in the county was \$455 per month, compared to \$582 per month in the MSA and \$677 per month in the state, overall. Similarly, the average 2017 median sale price in the county was \$120,000, compared to \$173,150 in the MSA and \$169,900 in the state.



### What the County should do:

1. **Develop online and print brochures highlighting the benefits to living in Fayette County.**
  - Utilize the existing media staff to spread the message throughout the County.
  - If needed, a marketing consultant could be utilized to assist with preparing professional brochures and other marketing items.
2. **Ensure that the County website is updated frequently with new marketing and promotional materials.**
  - Fayette County launched a new and improved website in late 2018. The site is visually appealing and contains important information and contacts for the County.
  - This site should be updated regularly with marketing material as it is developed.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Lack of jobs in County. Both Fayette County and the Pittsburgh MSA experienced sharp drops in total employment during the 2008-2009 recession, equivalent to a loss of approximately 1,620 jobs (4.1 percent of total employment) in the county and 25,630 jobs (2.3 percent of total employment) in the MSA. While total employment in the MSA has rebounded, total employment in the county remains lower than it was in 2009 (2,210 fewer jobs available).
- Housing condition and choice throughout the County. The majority of the housing stock in the County is older with 32.7% of the housing stock being built 1939 or earlier. As housing ages, the issues of maintenance become greater and there is a higher likelihood of deferred maintenance due primarily to cost. In addition, the type of housing available throughout the County is not diverse. 75% of the County's housing stock is single family residential. Most of the multi-unit dwellings are located in more densely populated areas such as the Cities of Uniontown and Connellsville.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Positive media campaign launched to attract new residents.
- Population increase.
- Increase in new housing permits, particularly a variety beyond single-family detached.







## IV. A FUN AND EXCITING PLACE TO VISIT





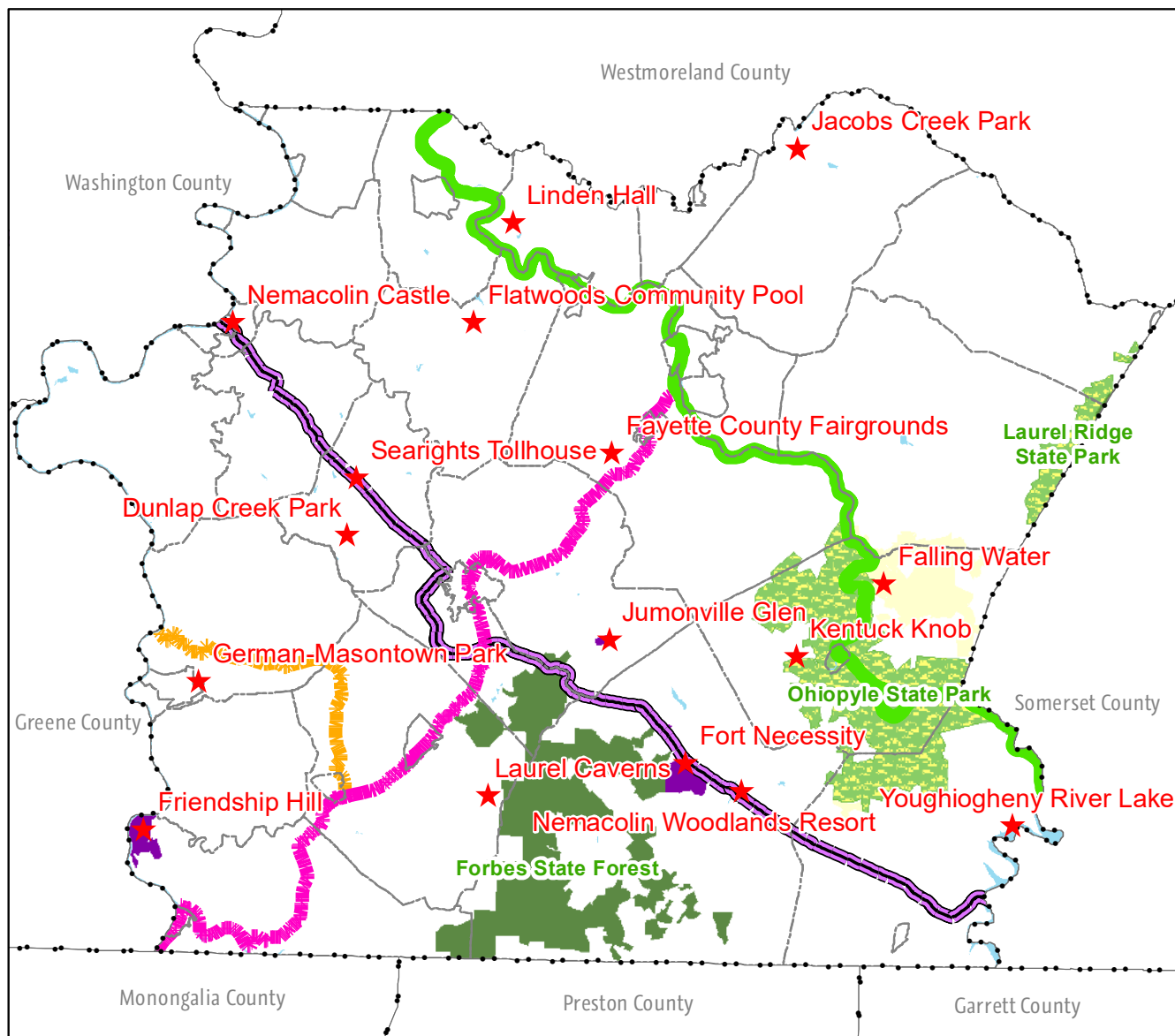
## A FUN AND EXCITING PLACE TO VISIT

*Where tourism supports and drives community development*



Within Fayette County's borders are 48 historic markers, more than 50 historic buildings and sites, two national parks, the Great Allegheny Passage trail, world-class lodging, five national historic landmarks, Pennsylvania's largest state park and many other attractions such as three county wide parks and a public pool facility located in Franklin Township. As such, Fayette County is well positioned to provide unforgettable memories for visitors. In turn, visitors provide valuable investment in the local and regional economy. Tourism represents a rich opportunity for growth within the County, as ongoing improvements to its recreational, cultural, historic and other attractions will continue to draw travelers from other counties, states and countries. The County's plan to provide a fun and exciting place to visit consists of:

- Capitalizing on the various outdoor recreation attractions, such as the GAP Trail, Sheepskin Trail, Ohiopyle State Park and others to drive tourism and economic development.
- Promote all types of tourism, including heritage, agricultural and recreational-based.
- Work with communities to ensure that they are well-equipped to handle the impacts of tourism and ensure that it supports community development efforts.
- Protect the rural character from potential negative impacts to ensure that the outdoor-based attractions are sustainable for the long-term future.



## Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- State Forest
- State Parks
- National Park
- WPC Property
- Waterways
- National Road Heritage Corridor
- Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) Trail
- Sheepskin Trail Corridor (existing & proposed)
- Browns Run Trail
- ★ Attraction

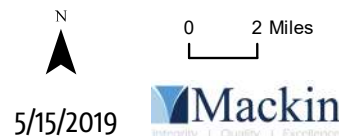
## Tourist Attractions

### Fayette County Comprehensive Strategy

Data Sources:

Fayette County GIS: Parcels, Ag Preservation (2013), Ag Security (2013), Clean & Green (2016), Trails  
PASDA: Natural Heritage Inventory, Soils, Forests, Parks, Railroad, Floodplain (FEMA), Roads, Waterways

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Pennsylvania South FIPS 3702 Feet  
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic  
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Standard Parallel 1: 39.9333  
Standard Parallel 2: 40.9667  
Latitude Of Origin: 39.3333  
Units: Foot US





## V1: Capitalize on the land and water trail network to drive tourism and economic development.



### Target Areas:

- Communities along the existing and future trail network.
- Potential trail towns



### Why this is important:

- Ranked #1 overall with the public meetings and online voting
  - Fayette County has two major trail systems located within its boundaries (the Great Allegheny Passage and the Sheepskin Trail). Continued development of the Sheepskin Trail is one of the Commissioner's Priority Projects. See Goal L4 on pages 61-62 for more information about the planned extensions for the Sheepskin Trail.
  - Fayette County is home to two major waterways, the Monongahela River and Youghiogheny River, both of which are designated Pennsylvania Water Trails.
  - The County has seen an increase in lodging revenue over the past several years (Percentage of hotel tax goes to the county for tourism related projects – one of which is the development of the Sheepskin Trail).
- Fayette County is home to four Trail Towns (Connellsville and Ohiopyle along the GAP and Point Marion and Dunbar along the Sheepskin) and two River Towns (Brownsville and Point Marion). Economies in Trail Towns:
    - » CREATE economic growth. The Great Allegheny Passage now has a \$50 million economic impact each year, leaping from 25% of the local income to 40% in a 6-year span.
    - » GROW local business and creates jobs. In its pioneering 10 years, the Trail Town Program netted 65 new businesses and 270 jobs, while growing revenues of even more local merchants.
    - » COMPOUND the trail's economic potential. A simple path can be turned into a long-term destination. Overnight trips can generate more than 6x the revenue per day, and they span more days.
    - » IMPROVE infrastructure in rural areas. It opens doors to new ventures and opportunities, which enriches a community's options (and boosts pride!)
    - » PROTECT the trails and surrounding nature. Preservation funds are hard to find, but a community that's benefitting from the trail will invest back in it, too. And if you build it right, it also endures.





## What the County should do:

### 1. Create a map of all the land and water trails in the County and post it online for reference.

- A complete map of all land and water trails in the County should be created utilizing the County's through the County's GIS Department.
- The map, once created, should be posted on the County's new website to provide users with additional information where trails are located as well as distance, connections, etc.

### 2. Work with the National Road Heritage Corridor and the Progress Fund to establish additional Trail Towns.

- Currently Dunbar and Point Marion are designated Trail Towns along the Sheepskin. Potential future towns include: Mount Braddock, Lemont Furnace, Uniontown, Hopwood, Fairchance, and Smithfield.

### 3. Work with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council to identify additional River Towns.

- Currently Brownsville and Point Marion are designated River Towns. Potential future towns include: Dawson, Ohiopyle, Masontown and Belle Vernon.

### 4. Promote the use of the Trails and Towns toolkit in existing and future Trail Towns.

- The towns and trails toolkit contains information to assist communities with attracting and accommodating cyclists and trail related visitors. Once the needs are

identified, the toolkit provides numerous proven resources that a community can use to satisfy the identified needs, help the community flourish from its local trail and estimate the economic impact and value of a trail system for a community and its businesses.<sup>1</sup>

### 5. Continue to work with the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau to promote and market the tourism opportunities in the County.

- The Bureau has a robust social media following, which can be utilized to promote Fayette County opportunities. The Bureau also has an e-newsletter that goes out every two weeks. The newsletter can be targeted to County specific news and events.



## Issues/Obstacles:

- Lack of funding and resources.
- Multitude of property owners for trail extensions.
- Lack of broadband access in recreational areas.



## Benchmarks for Success:

- Trail information is readily available online.
- Number of Trail Towns increased.
- Number of River Towns increased.

<sup>1</sup> [www.townsandtrailstoolkit.com](http://www.townsandtrailstoolkit.com)



## V2: Continue to promote recreation-, heritage- and agri-tourism programs.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide but specifically:
  - » National Road Corridor (Rt. 40)
  - » Mountain Area - Ohiopyle
  - » Areas along the GAP Trail (Connellsville)
  - » Areas along the Sheepskin Trail



### Why this is important:

- Tourism related to recreation and history is one of the leading economic drivers of Fayette County.
- Agriculture is also a leading economic driver of the County. Income from tourism is another potential source of revenue for farms. Towns along the Great Allegheny Passage see a direct link between tourism and local food sales.
- Nemocolin Woodlands is one of the top three employers in Fayette County as of first quarter 2018 (according to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania).



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Enhance gateways into the County.

- Gateways, defined as the entrance into a place, should welcome residents and visitors to a place and most often include signage.
- Fayette County currently has a number of signs at key locations into the County. These could be improved as well as extended to other key gateway locations. Exits along the Mon-Fayette Expressway would be ideal locations for gateway improvements.

#### 2. Support the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau and other organizations in tourism related efforts.

- Currently the Bureau is developing programs that cross state lines such as Group Tours and Travel119.com. These programs have web sites and other collateral material to promote motor coach and motorcycle tours of the 119 corridor.
- The Bureau operates the Visitors Center in Fayette County from May-October and compiles all the visitor data collected at the Center. This information can be provided to businesses in terms of tourism numbers and impact.

- The Bureau is also working with the Fayette County Visitors Bureau to locate electronic kiosks throughout the County to provide information to visitors when a real person isn't available.
- Fallingwater is embarking on a new marketing and branding campaign to cross promote Frank Lloyd Wright's houses (Fallingwater, Kentuck Nob, and the Duncan House in Polymath Park in Westmoreland County) – hoping to encourage multiple day stays to visit all the properties.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Lack of funding.
- Perception – especially of protection of historic resources.
- Lack of education – regarding the importance of these resources for economic development.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increased tourism programs in the County.
- Increased business / economic development due to tourism.



## V3: Ensure that communities are equipped to handle the impacts of tourism.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide but specifically:
  - » National Road Corridor (Rt. 40)
  - » Mountain Area - Ohiopyle
  - » Areas along the GAP Trail (Connellsville)
  - » Areas along the Sheepskin Trail



### Why this is important:

- The Laurel Highlands Conservation Plan identifies community development as a top priority. The landscape seeks to revitalize core communities and expand local and regional economies through sustainable resource use and development. Projects include: a joint plan/implementation strategy between Ohiopyle Borough and Ohiopyle State Park, including strategic economic investments in borough businesses and infrastructure; visioning sessions in local communities to help these communities move toward implementing their vision of the future; and the Trail Town Program which seeks to connect the Great Allegheny Passage and the towns along the way to encourage visitors to enjoy these towns as part of their adventure, and to help

local businesses benefit from the biking/hiking boom.

- Tourism is a major economic driver in the County. Ensuring the health of local communities in turn supports the sustainability of tourism economically. It is important to ensure that visitors can easily travel around the county (to encourage return visits and to visit multiple sites).
- Discussions at multiple meetings focused on the difficulty of getting around the county if you don't have a car. There is a lack of alternate transportation options such as Uber/Lyft drivers, taxis, shuttles, etc.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Create a toolbox of strategies and funding sources that the County can provide as technical assistance to communities and developers.

- Provide model ordinances to communities that are experiencing tourism to ensure the appropriate development is encouraged.
- Coordinate annually with local communities to identify infrastructure needs to support tourism efforts (i.e. water/sewer, transportation, etc.).



## **2. Support transportation infrastructure improvement projects that will increase safety and improve access to major attractions.**

- Continue to support the Multi-Modal Gateway Project in Ohiopyle to improve safety and connectivity. A pedestrian/ bicycle safety study is currently funded; the County should support efforts to implement priority projects that arise from the study.
- Continue to support the Route 711 (Crawford Ave. Bridge) rehab project in Connellsville. The project is in the planning stages and needs to have enhanced pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

## **3. Continue to follow the improvements scheduled for the Route 68 Corridor.**

- This is a key corridor for Fayette County to bring more people into the County primarily from the Washington DC and Maryland areas.

## **4. Assist communities with increasing the availability of public transportation to support tourism.**

- Spread the word about app-based ride-sharing.
- Contact Uber and Lyft to determine if they can offer resources to expand service in the County.
- Continue to work with FACT to monitor routes and determine if new or expanded routes are feasible.
- Coordinate with tourism providers to determine if shuttle buses are feasible between destinations.



### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Cost.
- Lack of population / demand for public transportation options.
- Lack of resources.



### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increased Uber / Lyft drivers in the County.
- Shuttle bus system shared between tourism vendors.
- Completed priority transportation improvement projects.



## V4: Protect the rural character from negative impacts related to tourism.



### Target Areas:

- Countywide, but particularly in trail towns and areas surrounding major tourist attractions



### Why this is important:

- Ranked #3 overall with the public meetings and online voting.
- Fayette County is known for its abundance of natural resources but there is growing concern over protecting the rural character and natural areas from tourism.
- Research has shown that trash attracts trash and when a community is clean, it tends to stay clean. Conversely, if a community or area is littered or dumped on, then it sends a message that it is acceptable behavior.
- Water quality – According to 2018 water sampling data from the Mountain Watershed Association, over half of the monitoring sites on the Yough River and various streams in the County were not safe for swimming (meaning they had a bacteria count of more than 126). Note: The excessive precipitation that the region faced contributed to the poor water quality results.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Promote the values and benefits of preserving farmland and reducing ag-related pollution.

- Update the County website to include maps of preserved farmland and the benefits of preservation and methods to control agricultural pollution.

#### 2. Work with Countywide organizations such as the Fayette County Conservation District and the Mountain Watershed Association to continue to protect natural resources in the County.

- Utilize their websites and social media sites for promotion of events and education for general public (Mountain News – Facebook, Uniontown, Real County Life website, PEC e-blast, etc.

#### 3. Continue to provide education and assistance with recycling and waste reduction.

- Expand the Countywide “Hard to Recycle Days.” The County is planning five events for 2019 including a Household Hazard Waste Event.
- Work with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful ([www.keeppabeautiful.org](http://www.keeppabeautiful.org)) to assist with education on littering and dumping as well as a partner for Countywide cleanup events.

#### **4. Work with the state (DCNR and DEP) to address issues of bacteria in the Youghiogheny River.**

- The Mountain Watershed Association monitors water quality around the Youghiogheny River Watershed. In the summer of 2018, a number of areas along the Youghiogheny River had high levels of bacteria present. This information should be shared with state agencies to ensure that the issues are addressed properly to provide safe swimming, wading and paddling areas.



#### **Issues/Obstacles:**

- Lack of education on the issues.
- Lack of resources.



#### **Benchmarks for Success:**

- Increase in water quality (monitoring).
- Expansion of recycling programs and hard to recycle days.
- Expansion of Countywide clean up days.



## V5: Preserve historic resources.



### Target Areas:

- Historic properties throughout the County, but specifically:
  - » Listed Historic Districts - Brownsville Commercial & Brownsville Northside (Brownsville Boro), Smock (Franklin Twp), Shoaf (Georges Twp), Penn-Craft (Luzerne Twp), New Geneva (Nicholson Twp), Whitsett (Perry Twp), Uniontown Downtown (Uniontown City).
  - » Eligible Historic Districts - Dawson Borough, Keisterville (Menallen Twp), Star Junction (Perry Twp), Southside (Uniontown City).
  - » National Road Corridor (US Route 40).



### Why this is important:

- Fayette County has a large number of historic resources (57 properties / districts listed, and 138 eligible on the National Register of Historic Places as well as 5 National Historic Landmarks)
- According to a 2015 Study prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Sustainable Communities, Historic

Downtowns are one of the most important assets in a community trying to spur their economies. In all of the case studies included in the report, every one of them worked to revitalize and beautify their downtowns.



### What the County should do:

#### 1. Provide a map / list of historic resources on County website.

- A map and list of historic resources throughout the County should be created utilizing the County's through the County's GIS Department.
- The map, once created, should be posted on the County's new website to provide visitors with additional information on the historic resources in Fayette County.

#### 2. Assist local municipalities with historic resources to seek funding for the preservation of historic resources.

- The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) maintains Pennsylvania's historical heritage information. They document, collect and teach historical information to create vital places and attract tourists. PHMC offers several grants and tax credits available to communities.

- » Museums with an annual operating budget exceeding \$100,000 and county historical societies with an operating budget less than \$300,000 can receive Cultural and Historical Support Program grant awards between \$2,000-\$65,000.
- » The Keystone Historic Preservation Planning Grants provide between \$5,000-\$25,000 of funding with a 50% match. These competitive grants assist nonprofit organizations and local governments with the planning and development of listed and eligible places on the National Register of Historic Places
- » Additional funding and technical support is available for construction projects, local preservation programs and records care. The PHMC also provides information about federal and state tax credits.

### 3. Encourage appropriate adaptive reuse of historic structures by promoting the economic impacts of historic preservation.

- The National Park Services is responsible for the maintenance and care of America's Parks. They also help local governments and organizations preserve local history and heritage while creating opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors in their local community.
- The NPS offers several tax benefits to communities. A 20% income tax credit is available to rehabilitate historic, income-producing certified historic structures. For non-historic buildings in service before 1936, a 10% tax credit is available if it is rehabilitated for non-residential use and

the majority of the existing structural framework and walls remain in place. Owners of historic properties who grant a historic preservation easement may be eligible for tax benefits as well.

- Community Assistance is available to communities that have ideas for their local trails, rivers and parks. They have a national network of conservation and recreation planners who work with local organizations to help design trails and parks and preserve natural resources.



#### Issues/Obstacles:

- Lack of funding.
- Lack of technical resources.
- Poor condition of some historic structures.



#### Benchmarks for Success:

- Increased number of historic properties preserved.
- Increased economic benefit to communities (tied to preservation efforts).





A scenic view of a river with buildings and trees in the background under a cloudy sky. The image is used as a background for a title slide. The text "V. FUTURE LAND USE" is overlaid on a semi-transparent brown band across the middle of the image.

## V. FUTURE LAND USE

# Future Land Use



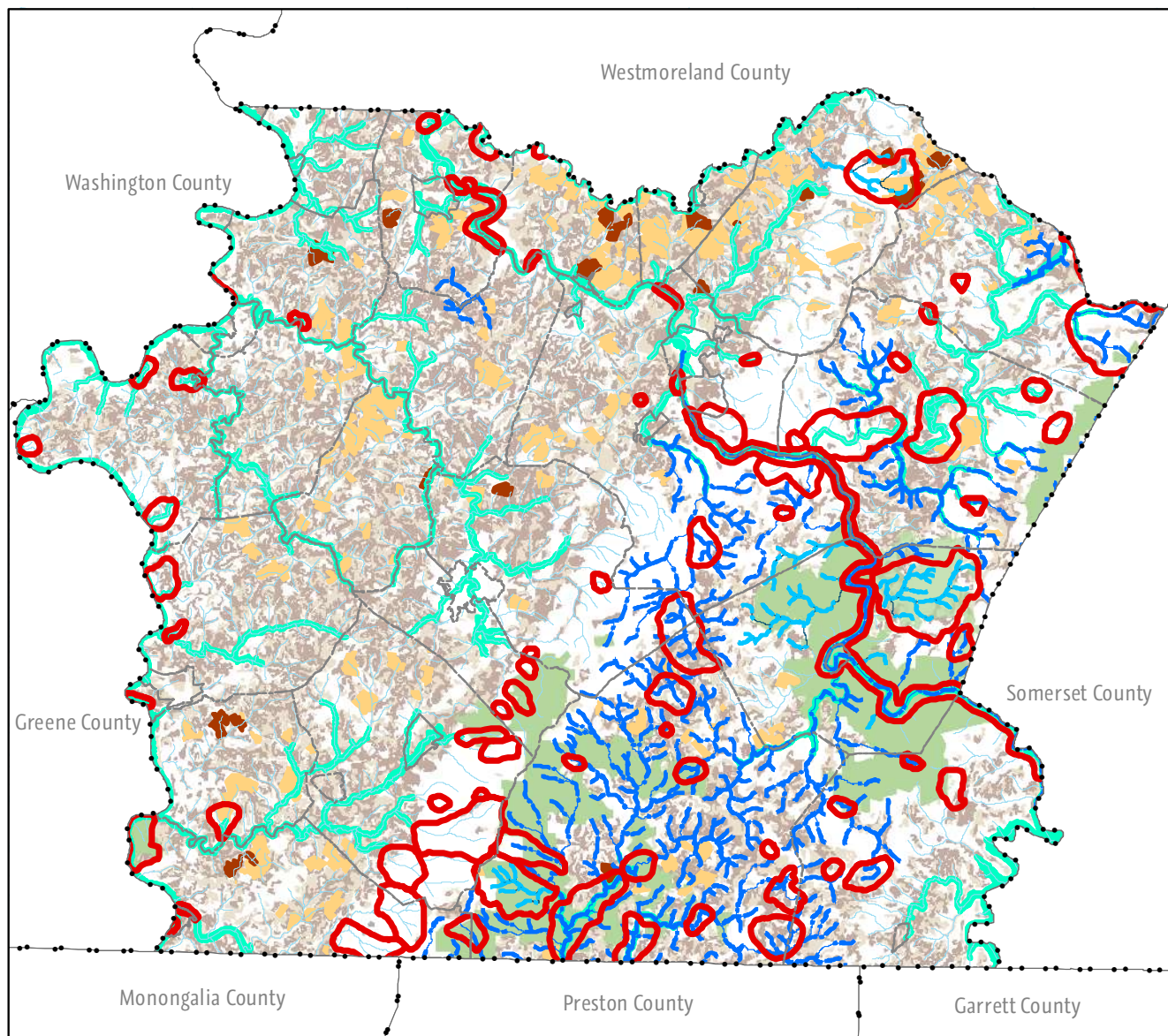
The Fayette County Future Land Use Plan was developed in three phases:

Phase 1 involved examining the development constraints (see map on page 89). Development constraints include protected lands (State Parks, State Forests, National Park Service lands and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy property); floodplains (0.1% chance annual flood); waterways of exceptional value and high quality; agricultural lands (preserved farmland, agricultural security areas, prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance) and biological diversity areas (BDA) from the County's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI). It is not meant that these areas cannot be developed, but that any development should take care to protect these areas from negative impacts associated with development.

Phase 2 identified potential growth areas by examining where public water and sewer is available. It is to be used as a guide for anticipated growth and preservation strategies to ensure that future development occurs in a sustainable manner. The County is divided into three general categories: Growth Areas, Future Growth Areas and Rural Resource Areas (see map on page 93). This map should be used as a guide for density and intensity of development and to direct expansion of public infrastructure.

Phase 3 involved working with the County Commissioners, Planning Commission, municipalities and Advisory Committee to identify priority areas for investment. The investment areas include: Downtown Centers, Commercial Centers, Employment Centers, Village Centers, Neighborhoods, Rural, Investment Corridors, the GAP Trail Corridor and the Sheepskin Corridor (see map on page 97).





## Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Protected Lands
- Preserved Farmland
- Ag Security Areas
- Prime Farmland
- Farmland of Statewide Import
- NHI - BDA
- .1% chance annual flood
- Waterway
- Exceptional Value Waterway
- High Quality Waterway

## Development Constraints

### Fayette County Comprehensive Strategy

Data Sources:

Fayette County GIS: Parcels, Ag Preservation (2013), Ag Security (2013), Clean & Green (2016), Trails  
PASDA: Natural Heritage Inventory, Soils, Forests, Parks, Railroad, Floodplain (FEMA), Roads, Waterways

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 StatePlane Pennsylvania South FIPS 3702 Feet  
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic  
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Standard Parallel 1: 39.9333  
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Latitude Of Origin: 39.3333  
Units: Foot US



## A GROWTH AREA IS...

- Served entirely by public sewer and water service.
- Near a concentration of community services and facilities.
- Near economic growth and employment centers.
- Focus on revitalization and/or infill development.

### *Types of Development Encouraged:*

- » Downtown Centers
- » Village Centers
- » Commercial Centers
- » Employment Centers
- » Neighborhoods





## A FUTURE GROWTH AREA IS...

- May be served by public water or sewer, or is a priority area for expansion.
- Along one of the priority investment corridors or near a major highway interchange.
- Accommodates most future growth and development.

### *Types of Development Encouraged:*

- » Downtown Centers
- » Village Centers
- » Commercial Centers
- » Employment Centers
- » Neighborhoods



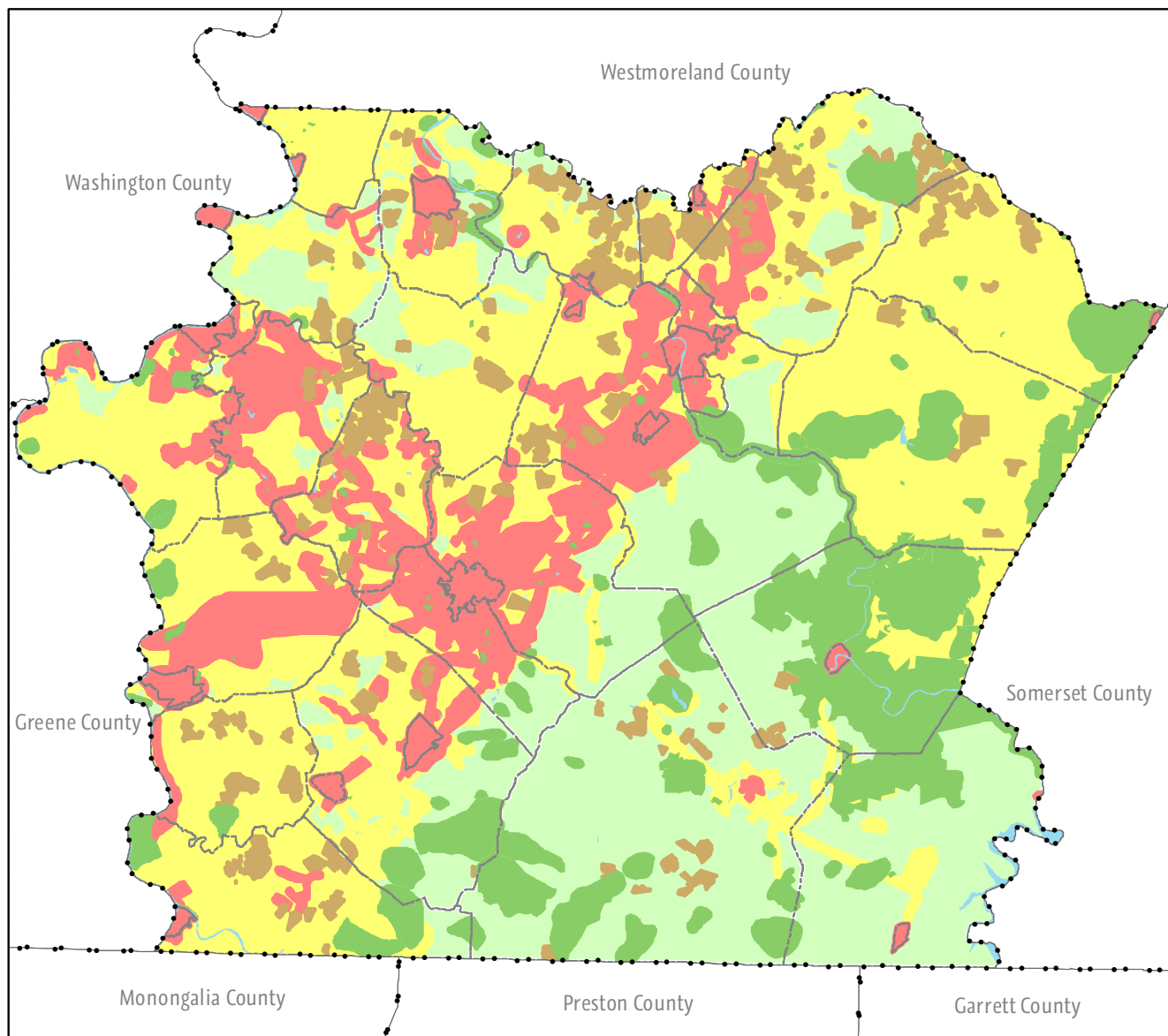
## A RURAL RESOURCE AREA IS...

- Served by on-lot sewer and water service.
- Contain significant open lands, woodlands and farmlands.
- Limited number of community facilities and services.
- Limited future growth.

### *Types of Development Encouraged:*

- » Village Centers
- » Rural Development
- » Open Space Preservation
- » Agricultural Preservation





## Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Waterway

## Future Land Use

- Growth Area
- Future Growth Area
- Rural Resource
- Open Space Preservation
- Agricultural Preservation

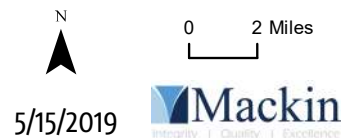
## Future Land Use

### Fayette County Comprehensive Strategy

Data Sources:

Fayette County GIS: Parcels, Ag Preservation (2013), Ag Security (2013), Clean & Green (2016), Trails  
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5/15/2019



## Downtown Centers

## Commercial Centers

## Employment Centers

### Development Patterns



### Photo Examples



### Design Characteristics

- Home to traditional downtown / Main Street development.
- Contains the highest development density.
- Arranged in a pedestrian-oriented traditional grid street pattern.
- Downtown buildings often three+ stories.
- Variety of uses, including commercial, residential and institutional.

- Major commercial areas with a variety of large-scale retailers, restaurants, offices and services.
- Primarily commercial in use, though may include a mix of employment and residential uses.
- Located along arterial streets near major highway interchanges.
- Serves local and regional; up to 70 miles away.

- Concentrated areas of office or industrial uses that are a destination for residents and employees.
- Includes institutional uses, such as healthcare facilities and schools.
- May also include service businesses that provide convenience needs to employees, like restaurants or child care.

### Example Areas

- Uniontown
- Connellsville
- Brownsville
- Masontown
- Perryopolis

- Laurel Mall
- Uniontown Mall
- Nemacolin
- Fayette Crossing

- Connellsville Airport
- Grindstone
- Hospitals (Uniontown & Highlands)
- Industrial / Business Parks (public and private)
- Penn State Fayette
- SCI Fayette



## Village Centers



- Contains a mixed-use core along a main street or crossroads with residential and commercial uses.
- Retail and community services are locally oriented and often located in preserved historic structures.

- Belle Vernon
- Chalkhill
- Dawson
- Dunbar
- Everson
- Fairchance
- Fayette City
- Hopwood
- Markleysburg
- Ohiopyle
- Point Marion
- Smithfield
- Smock
- Vanderbilt

## Neighborhoods



- Neighborhoods contain a variety of housing types and densities, and supporting land uses, including neighborhood stores and professional services offices.

- Mostly in Townships that surround cities, towns and villages

## Rural



- Woodlands and open space occupy a large proportion of the land.
- Agriculture continues as a common use, helping to define the rural character, and remain important to the local economy.
- Small stores and businesses serve nearby residents.

- Ohiopyle State Park
- County Parks
- State Forests
- State Game Lands
- Bear Run Nature Reserve
- Agricultural Lands

## Photo Examples



## Design Characteristics

- Gateway entrances into County - signage, landscaping
- Limited access / reduce curb cuts
- Design standards to encourage compatible design with historic structures and rural design principles

- Continued development of trail towns along the GAP Trail
- Focus on connecting trail to downtowns/commercial areas

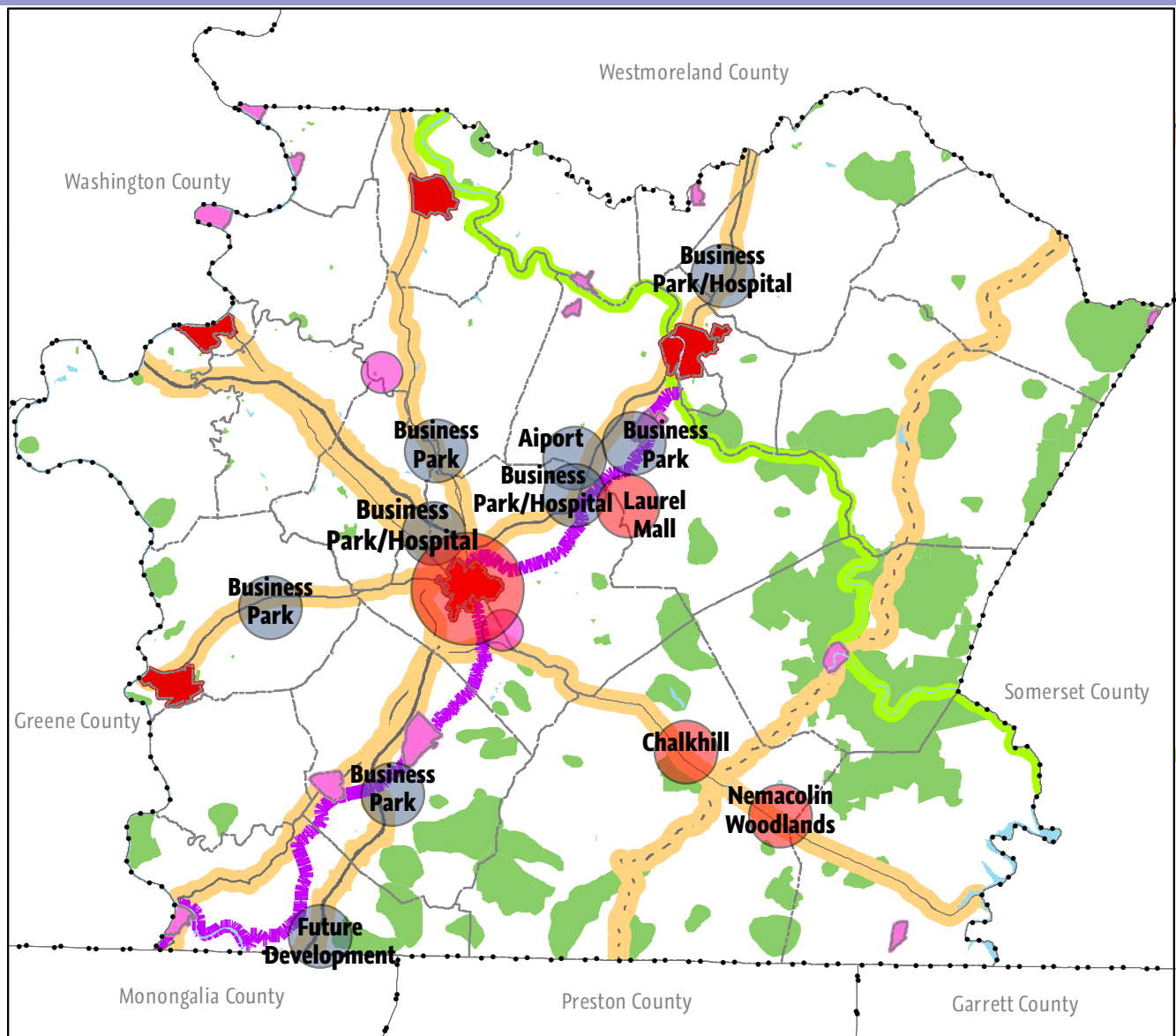
- Continued development of the Sheepskin Trail (currently the trail corridor is constructed in South Union Township and Point Marion)
- Development of trail towns similar to along the GAP Trail

## Example Areas

- US 119
- PA 43 / Mon Fayette Expressway
- PA 51
- PA 21
- US 40
- PA 711/381

- Perryopolis
- Dawson
- Connellsville
- Ohiopyle

- Connellsville
- Dunbar
- Uniontown
- Hopwood
- Fairchance
- Smithfield
- Point Marion



## Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Waterway
- Downtown Center
- Village Center
- Sheepskin Trail Corridor (existing & proposed)
- Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) Trail
- Investment Corridor
- Open Space Preservation
- Downtown / Commercial Center
- Village Center
- Employment Center (existing & proposed)

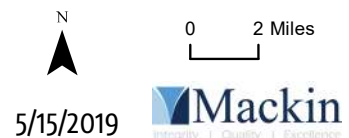
## Priority Investment Areas

### Fayette County Comprehensive Strategy

Data Sources:

Fayette County GIS: Parcels, Ag Preservation (2013), Ag Security (2013), Clean & Green (2016), Trails  
PASDA: Natural Heritage Inventory, Soils, Forests, Parks, Railroad, Floodplain (FEMA), Roads, Waterways

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## VI. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



# Implementation Plan



Once the Fayette County Comprehensive Plan is adopted, additional steps should be made to build on the success that has already taken place. The action steps in the plan have been developed to guide the County over the next ten years and to achieve the overall Vision of the Plan. The following steps should be taken by the Fayette County Planning, Zoning and Community Development Department to track implementation moving forward:

1. Prepare an implementation update annually: Plan implementation should be tracked and publicized to market the County's progress with realizing the established Vision. This update should be included on the County website and provided to the municipalities. The annual update should:
  - Identify actions taken by the County over the past year that helped to achieve the Vision and support the Goals set forth in the Plan.
  - Survey municipalities and other County Departments to include projects that have been completed by organizations outside of the Department that implement the Plan.
  - Include a list of priority projects to be undertaken in the next year.
2. Coordinate, conduct and promote educational outreach: Education is a critical component for successful Plan implementation. The County incorporated educational and outreach opportunities into the planning process and should continue this by implementing the following:
  - Materials could also be created and taken to various events throughout the County to increase public awareness of the Comprehensive Plan and its purpose.
  - Assist with and/or 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 and property maintenance codes.



- Provide an online toolkit with model ordinances and links to organizations that can provide funding and technical support for plan implementation.
3. Prepare a checklist for reviewing municipal plans and ordinances, as well as zoning requests and 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. A similar checklist should be prepared to assist County Planning Commission with their review and approval process.

## **Partner Organizations/Potential Funders**

### **County Departments / Boards / Commissions**

- Airport Authority
- Agriculture Land Preservation Board
- Bridge Department
- Industrial Development Authority
- Planning, Zoning and Community Development (Planning Commission)
- Solid Waste, Recycling and Stormwater
- Uniform Construction Code Administration
- Zoning Hearing Board

### **Economic Development**

- Allegheny Conference/Pittsburgh Regional Alliance - [www.alleghenyconference.org/](http://www.alleghenyconference.org/)

- Appalachian Regional Commission - [www.arc.gov/](http://www.arc.gov/)
- Connellsville Chamber of Commerce - [www.greaterconnellsville.org/](http://www.greaterconnellsville.org/)
- Fay-Penn Economic Development Council - [www.faypenn.org/](http://www.faypenn.org/)
- Fayette Chamber of Commerce - [www.fayettechamber.com/](http://www.fayettechamber.com/)
- PA Department of Community and Economic Development - [www.dced.pa.gov/](http://www.dced.pa.gov/)
- Redevelopment Authority of the City of Connellsville - [www.connellsvilleredevelopment.org](http://www.connellsvilleredevelopment.org)
- Redevelopment Authority of the City of Uniontown - [www.uniontowncity.com/redevelopment-authority/](http://www.uniontowncity.com/redevelopment-authority/)
- Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette - [www.racfpa.org/](http://www.racfpa.org/)
- Small Business Association - [www.sba.gov/](http://www.sba.gov/)
- Small Business Development Center, St. Vincent College - [www.stvincent.edu/community-events/small-business-development-center/](http://www.stvincent.edu/community-events/small-business-development-center/)
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission - [www.spcregion.org/](http://www.spcregion.org/)
- United States Department of Agriculture - [www.usda.gov/](http://www.usda.gov/)
- United States Economic Development Administration - [www.eda.gov/](http://www.eda.gov/)
- Westmoreland and Fayette Workforce Investment Board - [www.westfaywib.org/](http://www.westfaywib.org/)

## Housing

- Fayette County Community Action - [www.fccaa.org/](http://www.fccaa.org/)
- Fayette County Housing Authority - [www.faycha.org/](http://www.faycha.org/)
- Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette - [www.racfpa.org/](http://www.racfpa.org/)

## Recreational Resources / Natural Resources / Historic Resources

- Allegheny Trail Alliance - [www.gaptrail.org/](http://www.gaptrail.org/)
- Appalachian Regional Commission - [www.arc.gov/](http://www.arc.gov/)
- Fayette County Conservation District - [www.fayettecd.org/](http://www.fayettecd.org/)
- Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau - [www.laurelhighlands.org/](http://www.laurelhighlands.org/)
- Mountain Watershed Association - [www.mtwatershed.com/](http://www.mtwatershed.com/)
- National Road Heritage Corridor - [www.nationalroadpa.org/](http://www.nationalroadpa.org/)
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - [www.dcnr.pa.gov](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov)
- Regional Trail Council - [www.regionaltrailcorp.com/index.html](http://www.regionaltrailcorp.com/index.html)
- PA Historical and Museum Commission - [www.phmc.pa.gov](http://www.phmc.pa.gov)

## Transportation / Utilities

- Appalachian Regional Commission - [www.arc.gov/](http://www.arc.gov/)

[www.arc.gov/](http://www.arc.gov/)

- Fayette County Coordinated Transportation - [www.factbus.com/](http://www.factbus.com/)
- PennDOT District 12 - [www.penndot.gov/RegionalOffices/district-12/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.penndot.gov/RegionalOffices/district-12/Pages/default.aspx)
- PENNVEST - [www.pennvest.pa.gov/](http://www.pennvest.pa.gov/)
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission - [www.spcregion.org/](http://www.spcregion.org/)

## Implementation Matrix

Priority goals were identified through public input gathered as part of the planning process. The following matrix includes the top priority goal from each main theme of the plan along with their supporting action items. In addition, for each action item, the following information is included:

- County Lead or Assist – Indicates whether Fayette County would take the lead role in implementation of the particular action item or if they would provide assistance or support.
- Potential Partners – Identifies organizations or individuals who could serve as partners to assist with implementation of the particular action item.
- Policy or Project – Indicates whether the action item is a policy that the Commissioners would put in place or if it is a project that may require financial or staff commitment from the County.



Table 1: Implementation Matrix

	County Lead or Assist	"Potential Partners"	Policy or Project
<b>Attract New business and industry corporations to locate within Fayette County.</b>			
Market the availability and assets of existing downtown and employment centers	A	Chamber, Fay-Penn, FayCo Red Auth	Policy
Support the expansion of pad-ready development sites	L	Fay-Penn, FayCo Red Auth	Project
Digitize the official zoning maps, update zoning regulations for the Mon/Fayette Expressway interchange areas and include the boundaries of the Airport Hazard Overlay District on the Zoning Map	L	Consultant	Project
Work collaboratively with municipalities and other organizations to encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites	L	Mun Off, Fay-Penn, FayCo Red Auth, Conn Red Auth, Union Red Auth	Policy
Create a one-stop shop for economic development	L	Fay-Penn, FayCo Red Auth, Conn Red Auth, Union Red Auth	Project
Support the expansion of public water and sewer coverage to encourage economic development in priority areas	A	Water and Sewer Providers, Mun Off	Policy
<b>Reduce blight in communities.</b>			
Utilize the resolution designating the Redevelopment Authority of Fayette County as the County Landbank to develop a blight plan	A	RAFC, property owners	Policy
Work with State Legislators to fund blight strategies	L	Mun Off, PA Rep, PA Sen, DCED, FCCA, FACHA	Policy
<b>Capitalize on the land and water trail network to drive tourism and economic development.</b>			
Create a map of all the land and water trails in the County	L	NHRC, Progress Fund, PEC, RTC	Project
Work with NRHC and Progress Fund to identify additional Trail Towns	A	NHRC, Progress Fund, ATA	Policy
Work with PEC to identify additional river towns	A	PEC	Policy
Promote the use of the Trails and Towns toolkit in existing and future Trail Towns	A	NHRC, Progress Fund, PEC, RTC, ATA, Mun Off	Policy
Continue to work with the LHVB to promote and market tourism opportunities in the County	A	LHVB, Chamber, Tourism Operators	Policy

ATA - Allegheny Trail Alliance; Chamber - Fayette County Chamber of Commerce; DCED - PA Department of Community and Economic Development; DCNR - PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; FAYCHA - Fayette County Housing Authority; Fay-Penn - Fay-Penn Economic Development Council; FCCA - Fayette County Community Action; LHVB - Laurel Highlands Visitor Bureau; Mun Off - Municipal Officials; NHRC - National Road Heritage Corridor; PA Rep - Bud Cook, Pan Snyder, Ryan Warner, Matthew D. Dowling; PA Sen - Patrick J. Stefano; PEC - Pennsylvania Environmental Council; RACC - Redevelopment Authority of the City of Connellsville; RACU - Redevelopment Authority of the City of Uniontown; RAFC - Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette; RTC - Regional Trail Council



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