



Susquehanna County Courthouse, 1854-55, National Register of Historic Places: 1996, Photo: Susquehanna County Sheriff's Department.

# SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

NOVEMBER 14, 2018

# SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Adopted by the  
Susquehanna County Board of Commissioners  
November 14, 2018

Funded in part by a  
Municipal Assistance Program Grant  
as administered by the  
Governor's Center for Local Government Services  
Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development



With planning assistance from  
Community Planning and Management, LLC  
Paupack, Pennsylvania



# SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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**Elizabeth M. Arnold**, Vice Chairman  
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## Resolution 2018-18

### APPROVING THE SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, are charged with the protection and promotion of the public health, safety and general welfare; and

**WHEREAS**, the Susquehanna County Board of Commissioners and the Susquehanna County Planning Commissioner recognized four critical community needs-

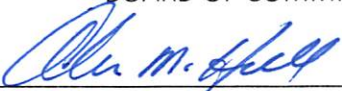
1. The need to identify and inventory the changes which have taken place in the County over the past decade;
2. The need to establish a framework for the conservation of the County's character, agricultural and natural resource economy, open land, and environment while concurrently providing for sustainable growth and development;
3. The need to promote reasonable and consistent land use management effected by subdivision and land development regulations and local municipal zoning, and,
4. The need to organize for the most efficient administration for County Government and the delivery of community facilities and services; and.

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Commissioners, in order to address these community needs, directed the Planning Commission to prepare a Comprehensive Plan Update in accord with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has prepared a Comprehensive Plan Update and has recommended its adoption to the Board of Commissioners;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, by action on this Resolution to approve on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2018, to adopt the 2018 Susquehanna County Comprehensive Plan Update along with all the textual matter, charts, tables and maps therein contained.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Alan M. Hall

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elizabeth M. Arnold

ATTEST:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Martin Kane, Chief Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MaryAnn Warren

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## INTRODUCTION

### 2003 Plan

In 2003 the Susquehanna County Board of Commissioners adopted the *Comprehensive Development Plan Update* which replaced the 1992 *Plan*. The Board of Commissioners, in 2017, charged the County Planning Commission and Department of Planning and Development to again update the County Plan with a focus on assessing the changes in the County since 2003, identifying and prioritizing opportunities and challenges, and creating an Action Plan for the County and its agencies.

### Action Plan

The Action Plan deals primarily with those issues for which the County has responsibility under the authority provided by Commonwealth law for Counties of the Sixth Class (population of 45,000 to 89,999). A detailed listing of County offices and agencies is included in the Appendix. In some cases, actions are related to assisting local municipalities, to the extent any particular municipality seeks assistance, with land use management, natural resource protection and economic development.

### Planning Questions

In short, the planning involves finding the sometimes complex answers to four simple questions:

1. *Where are we?*
2. *Where do we want to be?*
3. *How do we get there?*
4. *How are we doing?*

#### Where are we? - Background Studies

A key step in the process is the collection and analysis of information on a range of community characteristics and issues and concerns aimed at defining the existing condition of the community and identifying planning implications. This *Update* relies primarily on the detailed background studies and maps in the 2003 Plan, reporting only significant changes.

#### Where do we want to be? - Goals and Objectives

The *Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives* are a vision of how residents and officials desire the community to develop and evolve into the future. Objectives are specific actions which are designed to achieve goals and satisfy community



needs. The *Goals and Objectives* are formulated based on the community survey, public input, the findings of the updated background studies and an understanding of the community's needs and expectations. Based on this community vision and the issues identified in the planning process, the various plans to guide the future growth and development of the County are prepared.

*How do we get there? - Implementation Strategies*

The specific means to reach the County's goals and objectives are discussed at various points in the various plan elements. In addition, and to facilitate on-going use of the *Plan*, the actions and the responsible entities required to carry out the plan's expectations are summarized in the *Action Plan*. Examples of *implementation strategies* include zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, historic structures preservation, and capital improvement budgeting.

While the ultimate responsibility for Susquehanna County lies with the Board of Commissioners, much of the work of implementation, assessment of the accomplishment of goals and objectives, and periodic comprehensive plan review can be accomplished by the various offices, agencies, boards and citizen volunteers who may be appointed to special committees or task forces. These groups can provide evaluations and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for action.

*How are we doing? - Need for Continued Planning*

It is important to emphasize that a comprehensive plan should not simply be considered a *document on a shelf*, but instead, one element of a community management process dependent upon the attitude and on-going foresight of the public officials charged with the responsibility of guiding the growth and development of the community. The *Plan* should be used by the community when important decisions are made and its goals and objectives and prioritized actions should be reviewed at least each year to assess the community's accomplishments or the need to shift priorities for action.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A comprehensive plan does not have the force of law. Instead, it serves as a policy statement and an action guide. As community conditions change, the actions in the Plan may require adjustment. The Plan should be continually reviewed to assess what adjustments are necessary to address these changes.

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Simply stated, a comprehensive plan is a starting point – a blueprint to guide the future of the County – and should be revised and updated periodically to reflect changing conditions, attitudes, situations, and goals of the community. The success of the planning program will be measured only in the form of accomplishment. The effectuation of the plan will be the responsibility of the area's residents. It will require public support and positive action by the Board of Commissioners and the entire County administrative structure.

### Planning Needs

This *Comprehensive Plan* was undertaken in recognition of a number of principal critical community needs including to:

- Identify and inventory the changes which have taken place in the County over the past 15 years.
- Continue to strive for the most efficient administration of County government and the delivery of County services. (See Appendix B for a detailed list.)
- Address key growth and development issues such as:
  - The effects of natural gas development.
  - Business retention and economic development.
  - Housing and redevelopment needs.
  - Demand for social services provided or supported by the County.
  - Maintaining an effective 911 communications and emergency management system.
  - Promoting agriculture and forestry as key elements of the economy and landscape.
- Promote well designed residential and commercial development using the County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- Support local municipalities to establish land use ordinances to ensure sustainable growth and development while concurrently providing for the conservation of rural character, residential neighborhoods, open land, and the environment.

### Interrelationships

Although the *Plan* is comprised of a number of separate elements, each element, and, in fact, each planning and development action taken by a public body or private individual, is inextricably interrelated with other plan elements and planning and development actions. For example, the

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development of housing implementation strategies cannot be accomplished without taking into account land use controls and economic development trends. Economic development cannot be achieved without considering land use controls and transportation needs. Community facilities and services planning require an assessment of future development, transportation needs, and housing affordability. These types of interrelationships and implementation strategies are discussed in the various plan elements.

### Participants

The Board of Commissioners authorized the Planning Commission to conduct the planning process. Public participation included a community survey, public meetings and the Planning Commission meeting and Board of Commissioners hearing required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code prior to the adoption of the plan. Community Planning and Management, LLC, of Paupack, PA, provided professional assistance.



### Community Balance

The goals of all residents of the community will not be the same. Some residents expect community conservation and environmental protection while other residents will favor increased economic development. Some residents will demand more community facilities and services, while others prefer lower taxes. Some residents will strive for land use diversity while others would prefer to live in a residential community. One function of the community planning process is to strike a balance between these varied expectations and develop a shared vision to meet the overall goals of the community.

### Planning Process

A theme consistent throughout all elements of this *Comprehensive Plan* is the concept of process. The published comprehensive plan document represents only the first step of what should evolve into an on-going planning process. If this process frame of mind is not firmly established, local officials, businessmen, land developers, and citizens, all players in the community growth and development arena, will have little chance of achieving the sustainable growth vital to the social, economic and environmental future of Susquehanna County. This process will also allow the recognition of the shifting interrelationships of community growth and development decisions vital to the success of long-term planning efforts.

**Local Planning**

A key factor in formulating a county plan is the planning conducted at the local municipal level. Twenty-one of the County's 40 local municipalities have adopted comprehensive plans. This plan focuses on County facilities and services and establishes a broad framework for future population changes and land subdivision and development. Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) §301.4 states municipal comprehensive plans which are adopted shall be generally consistent with the adopted county comprehensive plan. Nothing in this *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to create inconsistency with local municipal plans and, in accord with the MPC, this *Plan* was provided to all local municipalities for review to ensure reconciliation of any inconsistencies with local planning.

**Land Use Ordinances**

Susquehanna County administers a subdivision and land development ordinance which governs how land is divided and how commercial establishments are developed. The ordinance cannot control the location of various types of commercial and industrial developments or provide detailed performance standards; zoning is required. Zoning in the County is the purview of the local municipalities and this *Plan* calls for continued local decisions about zoning. Six local municipalities in the County have adopted zoning ordinances: Forest City Borough, Herrick Township, Hop Bottom Borough, Montrose Borough, New Milford Borough and Susquehanna Depot Borough.

**Regional Planning**

The intent of this Plan is to coordinate with the plans and policies of the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC). The NTRPDC is *the local development district serving the five-county Northern Tier region, encompassing the Pennsylvania counties of Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming.* Our staff provides resources to help businesses and entrepreneurs, local governments and non-profits, and job seekers meet their challenges and succeed in Pennsylvania's Northern Tier. Since 1970, the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission has been providing resources to help our region succeed. Our board and staff are devoted to economic and workforce development across the five-county region. Today's programs cover a wide range of services, including: business financing, export counseling, government contract assistance, internet and technology



*assistance, grant writing, transportation planning and workforce development.*<sup>1</sup>

**Recent Planning**

A number of planning studies specifically applicable to Susquehanna County have been completed since the adoption of the *2003 Comprehensive Plan*. The details of the plans are discussed in the corresponding sections of this *Plan*.

*Economic Impacts of Marcellus Shale in Susquehanna County* - January 2012

A quantitative assessment of the impact of natural gas development. (See *Economic Development* section.)

*Susquehanna County Housing Assessment* - May 2013

An evaluation of the dynamics of the County’s housing market. (See *Housing* section.)

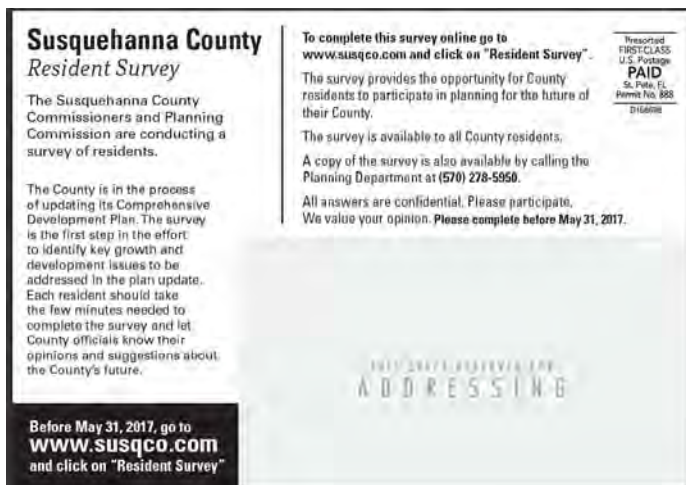
*Susquehanna County Target Site Assessment* - December 2014

A study to determine if the regional economy would support a new business park and to identify potential target industries and business park location. (See *Economic Development* section.)

**Resident Survey**

As part of the planning process a county-wide resident survey was conducted. Post cards announcing the on-line survey were mailed to the real estate tax list and news releases were issued to reach those residents who rent their homes. The post card and news releases also included contact information for those who wanted to receive the survey form by mail. A total of 1,552 completed surveys were returned. Although the results of the

survey are not a statistical representation of the opinions of all County residents, the survey provided the opportunity for interested citizens to participate in the planning and provides a sense of the important issues. The full results of the survey are included in Appendix A and applicable results are discussed in specific *Plan* sections.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.northerntier.org/about.php>



## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

**Regional Location** Susquehanna County lies at the northeastern border of Pennsylvania, just north of Lackawanna and Wyoming Counties and south of Broome County, New York. The Susquehanna River, which gave the County its name, dips into the north central part of the County from New York State. As part of the Endless Mountains Region, the County elevations range from 800 feet near the Susquehanna River to a high of 2,693 feet at Elk Mountain in the southeastern part of the County. The majority of the County is high and rolling with typical elevations above 1,500 feet.

**Development Pattern** Susquehanna County's regional location, physical characteristics (geology, topography, soils, etc.), early settlement patterns, the area transportation network and the regional economy have been synthesized into the existing community. Susquehanna County can best be characterized as a rural, largely bedroom community where agriculture has lost some of its economic importance, yet agricultural and forest land remain the predominate features of the landscape. Dairy farms continue to operate in the County with the better land used for field and forage crops and timbering and bluestone remain important elements of the local economy.

Although Census information shows a decreasing population, commercial activity is becoming more evident as stimulated by the development of natural gas. The Marcellus Shale is the single most important factor creating change in the County over the past decade, with varying opinions about its overall negative or positive effect. The economy, traffic and the road network, housing affordability, land use and environmental quality are all directly related to natural gas development.

Some 1,340 natural gas wells are scattered throughout the County along with 43 compressor stations. Other gas-related industrial activities include metering stations, water treatment facilities and natural gas trucking facilities. Retail and service establishments are situated primarily in the Boroughs and along the major state routes. Single-family dwellings are the predominate type of dwellings along with numerous mobile homes. Relatively few two-family and multi-family dwellings are found in the County, with most in the boroughs. With the exception of a number of planned developments, residential development is found on individual lots divided from larger parcels and in historic village centers.

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**Development History** Susquehanna County is part of, and has historically been linked to the growth and development of, the Endless Mountain Region.

- *The Endless Mountains, named by 18th century European explorers, are found largely in four counties in northeastern Pennsylvania: Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Wyoming.\**
- *Records do not show inhabitants in what would become Susquehanna County until the spring of 1787 when forty families came to settle the region around present-day Brooklyn. Later in 1787 two families settled on the Susquehanna River at Great Bend.\*\**
- Susquehanna County was formed on February 21, 1810, partitioned from Luzerne County.
- Susquehanna is an Indian name meaning *crooked stream of water*.
- *The County was eventually divided into twenty-seven townships and thirteen boroughs and by 1820 could list 9,958 residents. After much discussion and plotting by rival communities, Montrose was chosen as the county seat even though most of its rivals could claim larger populations.\*\**
- Home of Galusha A. Grow, sponsor of the 1862 Homestead Act.
- Home of Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, 1825-29, when he translated The Book of Mormon.
- *During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Endless Mountains experienced an era of industrial expansion, fueled by regional transportation (canal and railroad) improvements.\* Railroads played a major role in development of the County as a means of shipping goods to market. Two railroads, an east-west and a north-south, along with a smaller north-south line, provided a means of transportation for both goods and people.*
- Early industries were related to natural resources such as bluestone and timber.

\* Endless Mountains Heritage Region Management Action Plan, November 1998.

\*\* *A Touch of New England*, Garford F. Williams, Pennsylvania Heritage Magazine, Summer 1982.

- Farming, mainly dairy, moved from subsistence to commercial in the late Nineteenth Century.
- The present transportation system grew out of *farm-to-market* roads as well as *turnpikes* which provided links between more urban areas -- Milford-Owego Turnpike, Bridgewater-Wilkes-Barre Turnpike, Great Bend-Cochecton Turnpike, Philadelphia-Great Bend Turnpike.
- Interstate 81 was opened in Susquehanna County in 1960.

**Demographics**

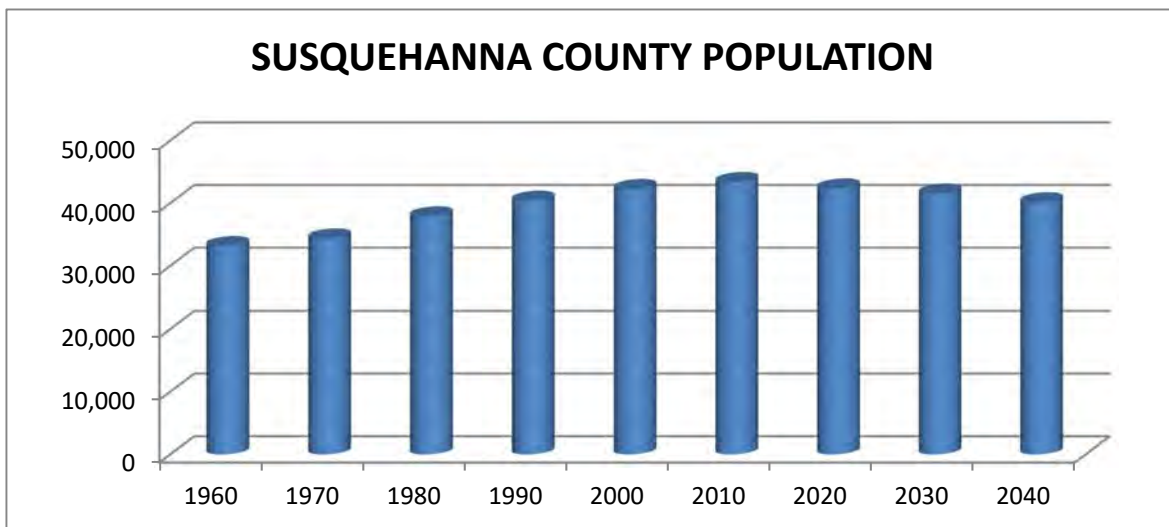
Understanding population demographics is important to planning for the growth and development of a community. The geographic, physical and economic character of the community affects the demographic composition of a community’s population. At the same time, the demographic composition is largely responsible for the manner in which a community develops and grows (or declines) in terms of demand for community facilities and services to meet the specific needs of the changing population, thereby altering the very character of the community.

SUSQUEHANNA CO.	
YEAR	POPULATION
1820	9,690
1830	18,787
1840	21,195
1850	28,688
1860	36,267
1870	37,523
1880	40,354
1890	40,093
1900	40,043
1910	37,746
1920	34,763
1930	33,806
1940	33,893
1950	31,970
1960	33,137
1970	34,344
1980	37,876
1990	40,380
2000	42,238
2010	43,356
2015	41,666

By gaining an understanding of the demographic character of a community and forecasting how the population is likely to change, both in number and composition, public officials can assess the need for additional or different types of public and private facilities and services required to meet the demands of the changing population.

**Historic Population and Population Projections**

Over the period of 1960 to 2010, the population of Susquehanna County increased at an average rate of five percent each ten years with no dramatic increase in any given decade. However, the U.S. Census population estimate for 2015 suggests a countywide decrease of 3.9 percent since 2010. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania estimate shows a decrease of 5.7 percent from 2010 to 2016. Compared to the regional projected population changes, Susquehanna County ranks highest in population decreases from 2010 to 2015 and tied with Wayne County at a 3.7 percent decrease when comparing 2015 to 2040. Individual estimated population decreases in municipalities range from a low of 0.2 percent in New Milford Borough to 7.4 percent in Hop Bottom Borough for the period of 2010 to 2015. During the same periods, the Commonwealth population is expected to increase at modest rates, spurred largely by the growth of higher population municipalities in the southeastern and south central regions.



REGIONAL POPULATION						
<i>U.S. Census</i>						
	1990	2000	2010	% '00-'10	2015	% '10-'15
PA (1,000s)	11,882	12,281	12,703	3.4	12,803	4.2
Susquehanna Co.	40,380	42,238	43,356	2.6	41,666	-1.4
Bradford Co.	60,061	62,761	62,622	-0.2	62,228	-0.8
Broome Co.	212,160	200,536	200,600	0.0	198,093	-1.2
Lackawanna Co.	219,039	213,295	213,731	0.2	213,459	0.1
Wayne Co.	39,944	47,722	52,822	10.7	51,642	8.2
Wyoming Co.	28,349	28,080	28,276	0.7	28,147	0.2

REGIONAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS									
<i>Pennsylvania State Data Center for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania</i>									
	2010	2015	2020	% '15-'20	2030	% '20-'30	2040	% '30-'40	% '15-'40
PA (1,000s)	12,703	12,803	13,230	3.3	13,760	4.0	14,133	2.7	10.4
Susquehanna Co.	43,356	41,666	42,335	1.6	41,525	-1.9	40,133	-3.4	-3.7
Bradford Co.	62,622	62,228	64,106	3.0	65,812	2.7	67,051	1.9	7.8
Lackawanna Co.	213,731	213,459	221,688	3.9	229,062	3.3	233,436	1.9	9.4
Wayne Co.	52,822	51,642	53,511	3.6	53,029	-0.9	49,713	-6.3	-3.7
Wyoming Co.	28,276	28,147	28,460	1.1	28,146	-1.1	27,269	-3.1	-3.1

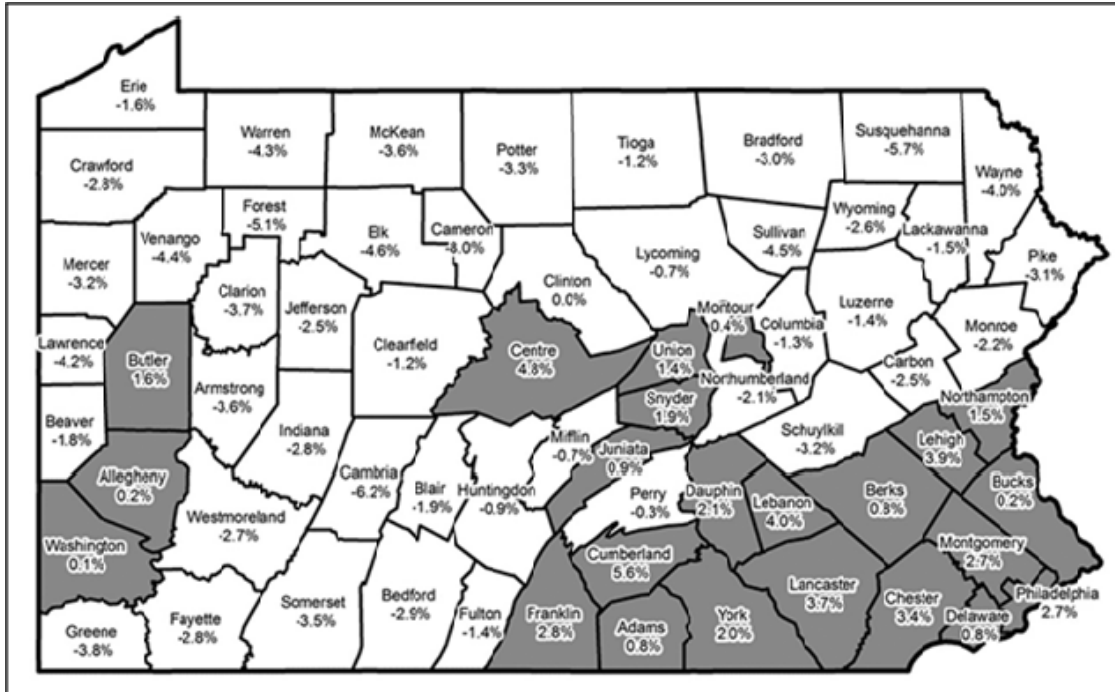
Projections are from the Pennsylvania State Data Center. The formulas used are based on constant growth (or decline) rates and fertility, mortality and migration rates and trends.



SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
**General Characteristics**

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION											
	1960*	1970*	1980*	1990*	2000*	2010*	2000 - 2010		2015** Estimate	2010 - 2015		2010*** Density
							#	%		#	%	
<b>PA (1,000's)</b>	11,319	11,794	11,864	11,882	12,281	12,703	422	3.4	12,803	100	0.8	284
<b>Susquehanna Co</b>	33,137	34,344	37,876	40,380	42,238	43,356	1,118	2.6	41,666	-1,690	-3.9	53
<b>Blue Ridge</b>	6,218	6,801	7,452	7,236	7,331	7,752	421	5.7	7,425	-327	-4.2	70
Great Bend Bor	777	826	740	704	700	734	34	4.9	694	-40	-5.4	2,511
Great Bend Twp	1,088	1,441	1,936	1,817	1,890	1,951	61	3.2	1,866	-85	-4.4	54
Hallstead Bor	1,580	1,447	1,28	1,274	1,216	1,304	88	7.2	1,246	-58	-4.4	3,123
Jackson Twp	587	678	819	757	788	853	65	8.2	808	-45	-5.3	33
New Milford Bor	1,129	1,143	1,040	953	878	868	-10	-1.1	866	-2	-0.2	854
New Milford Twp	1,057	1,266	1,637	1,731	1,859	2,042	183	9.8	1,945	-97	-4.8	46
<b>Elk Lake</b>	4,099	4,310	5,109	5,754	6,399	6,726	327	5.1	6,476	-250	-3.7	38
Auburn Twp	1,146	1,222	1,390	1,639	1,816	1,939	123	6.8	1,881	-58	-3.0	39
Dimock Twp	883	983	1,120	1,226	1,398	1,497	99	7.1	1,449	-48	-3.2	52
Middletown Twp	276	261	363	339	340	382	42	12.4	360	-22	-5.8	13
Rush Twp	842	925	1,079	1,126	1,290	1,267	-23	-1.8	1,226	-41	-3.2	33
Springville Twp	952	919	1,157	1,424	1,555	1,641	86	5.5	1,560	-81	-4.9	54
<b>Montrose Area</b>	7,918	8,948	10,525	11,590	11,708	11,729	21	0.2	11,313	-416	-3.5	51
Apolacon Twp	172	319	499	493	507	500	-7	-1.4	494	-6	-1.2	22
Bridgewater Twp	1,498	1,876	2,284	2,368	2,668	2,842	174	6.5	2,802	-40	-1.4	69
Choconut Twp	325	492	735	799	797	713	-84	-10.5	682	-31	-4.3	35
Forest Lake Twp	727	837	1,054	1,229	1,194	1,193	-1	-0.1	1,137	-56	-4.7	40
Franklin Twp	570	675	751	913	938	936	-2	-0.2	901	-35	-3.7	40
Friendsville Bor	60	77	72	102	91	111	20	22.0	106	-5	-4.5	74
Jessup Twp	396	327	418	483	564	536	-28	-5.0	518	-18	-3.4	25
Liberty Twp	874	1,051	1,284	1,353	1,266	1,290	24	1.9	1,233	-57	-4.4	44
Little Meadows Bor	301	337	375	326	290	273	-17	-5.9	262	-11	-4.0	113
Montrose Bor	2,363	2,058	1,980	1,982	1,664	1,619	-45	-2.7	1,527	-92	-5.7	1,271
Silver Lake Twp	632	899	1,073	1,542	1,729	1,716	-13	-0.8	1,651	-65	-3.8	52
<b>Forest City Reg</b>	3,343	3,037	2,702	2,712	2,822	2,891	69	2.4	2,755	-136	-4.7	102
Forest City Bor	2,651	2,322	1,924	1,846	1,855	1,911	56	3.0	1,809	-102	-5.3	2,090
Herrick Twp	405	436	457	563	599	716	117	19.5	701	-15	-2.1	29
Uniondale Bor	287	279	321	303	368	264	-104	-28.3	245	-19	-7.2	110
<b>Mountain View</b>	5,646	5,776	6,864	7,855	8,700	9,132	432	5.0	8,829	-303	-3.3	47
Brooklyn Twp	731	807	748	873	889	961	72	8.1	928	-33	-3.4	40
Clifford Twp	1,238	1,351	1,704	2,147	2,381	2,408	27	1.1	2,349	-59	-2.5	59
Gibson Twp	745	674	869	1,015	1,129	1,224	95	8.4	1,199	-25	-2.0	38
Harford Twp	985	919	1,041	1,100	1,301	1,427	126	9.7	1,374	-53	-3.7	43
Hop Bottom Bor	381	430	405	345	333	337	4	1.2	312	-25	-7.4	557
Lathrop Twp	583	550	715	794	835	841	6	0.7	808	-33	-3.9	41
Lenox Twp	983	1,045	1,382	1,581	1,832	1,934	102	5.6	1,859	-75	-3.9	48
<b>Susq. Community</b>	5,913	5,473	5,224	5,233	5,278	5,126	-152	-2.9	4,868	-258	-5.0	54
Ararat Twp	307	325	356	420	531	563	32	6.0	542	-21	-3.7	30
Harmony Twp	533	365	506	544	558	525	-33	-5.9	503	-22	-4.2	17
Lanesboro Bor	502	550	465	659	588	506	-82	-13.9	479	-27	-5.3	195
Oakland Bor	889	817	734	641	622	616	-6	-1.0	581	-35	-5.7	1,380
Oakland Twp	490	489	522	544	550	564	14	2.5	531	-33	-5.9	34
Susq Depot Bor	2,591	2,319	1,994	1,760	1,690	1,643	-47	-2.8	1,559	-84	-5.1	2,149
Thompson Bor	286	307	303	291	299	297	-2	-0.7	276	-21	-7.1	580
Thompson Twp	315	301	344	374	440	412	-28	-6.4	397	-15	-3.6	19

\*Decennial Censuses; \*\*2015, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S.; \*\*\* Density = persons per square mile



County Population Change, 2010 – 2016 (Center for Rural Pennsylvania)

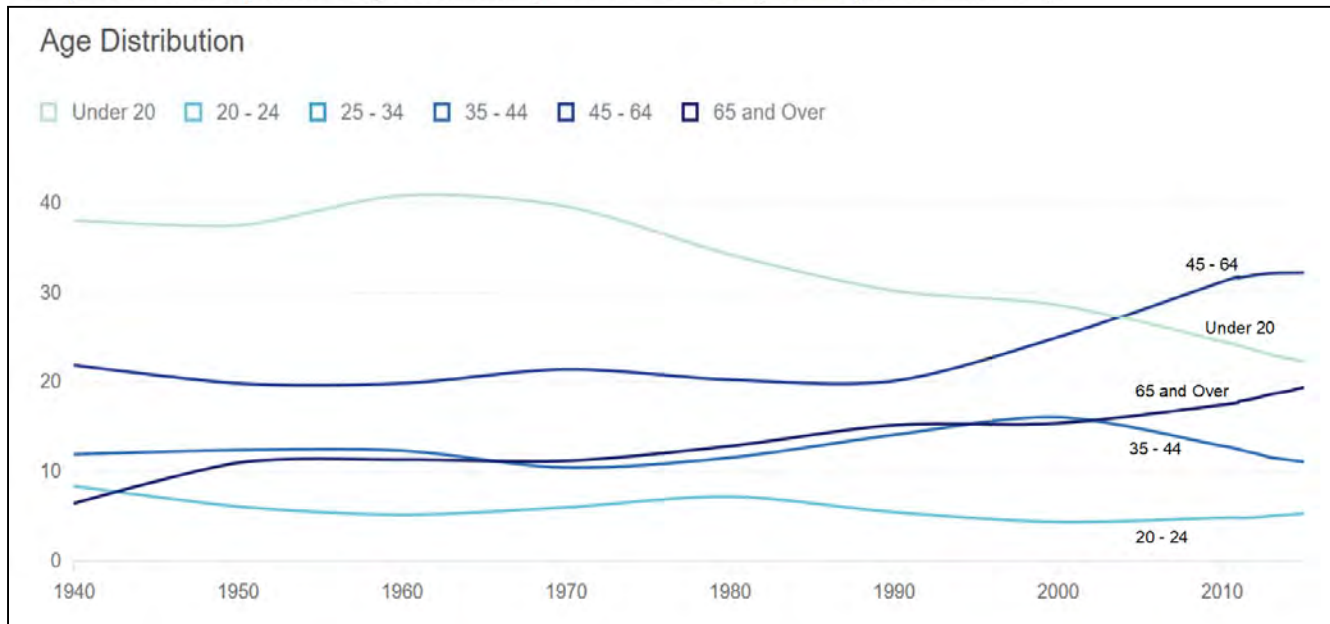
**Projections by Age**

Population projections also indicate a continuation of the overall aging of the County population. The proportion of residents under 20 years of age is projected to fall from almost 29 percent in 2000 to about 20 percent in 2020 through 2040. As shown on the following Age Distribution Chart, the county-wide proportion of residents under 20 years of age has been declining since 1960. Obviously, school enrollment changes would be expected to mirror changes in total resident, and more particularly, the school-age population. The projected population decreases and consequent decrease in enrollment means fewer teachers and expenditures, less state funding per school district and potential school building closures.

<b>SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTONS BY AGE</b>												
<i>Pennsylvania State Data Center for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania</i>												
	2000		2010		2015		2020		2030		2040	
Age	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
under 20	12,080	28.6	10,180	23.5	9,035	21.1	8,339	19.7	8,350	20.1	8,182	20.4
20-24	1,816	4.3	2,061	4.8	2,880	6.7	2,664	6.3	1,937	4.7	2,065	5.1
25-34	4,604	10.9	4,168	9.6	4,066	9.5	4,753	11.2	4,764	11.5	3,835	9.6
35-44	6,758	16.0	5,118	11.8	4,460	10.4	4,318	10.2	5,001	12.0	5,062	12.6
45-64	10,517	24.9	13,915	32.1	13,259	31.0	12,094	28.6	9,264	22.3	9,389	23.4
65 and over	6,462	15.3	7,906	18.2	9,067	21.2	10,167	24.0	12,209	29.4	11,600	28.9
Total	42,238		43,348		42,767		42,335		41,525		40,133	



Susquehanna County Historic Age Distribution, Percent of Total Population (mooseroots.com)



The most significant projected change is in the senior citizen group, 65 years and older, which is expected to increase from some 15 percent in 2000 to almost 29 percent by 2030 through 2040. As is generally known and accepted, more services will be needed for this aging population, including assisted living facilities, lower cost senior housing facilities such as has been provided by the Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and medical care. However, the working age sector of the population, those persons between 20 and 64 years of age who generate income in the County, continues to decrease as shown in the following Dependency Table. Those requiring more services, the population under 20 and 65 and older, are dependent on those of working age. While the youth dependency rate is projected to remain fairly stable, the senior rate is projected to increase from 31 percent from 2010 to 2040.

DEPENDENCY										
	2010		2015		2020		2030		2040	
	Susq	PA	Susq	PA	Susq	PA	Susq	PA	Susq	PA
Dependency Ratio	71.6	67.8	73.4	70.3	77.7	74.6	98.1	86.0	97.2	86.0
Youth	40.3	41.9	36.6	41.3	35.0	41.1	39.8	43.1	40.2	43.0
Seniors	31.3	25.9	36.8	29.0	42.7	33.5	58.2	42.9	57.0	43.0
Dependency ratio = (Age < 20 + Age 65 and over) / (Age 20 to 64) X 100 Youth dependency ratio = (Age < 20) / (Age 20 to 64) X 100 Senior dependency ratio = (Age 65 and over) / (Age 20 to 64) X 100										

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<b>Reasons for Decrease</b>	<p>The population decreases may be the result of a number of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fewer children per family.</li><li>• College students leaving, finding employment elsewhere, and not returning.</li><li>• The aging and deaths of Baby Boomers, people born during the Post-World War II baby boom between the years 1946 and 1964.</li></ul>
<b>School Districts</b>	<p>As shown in the preceding Population Table, the U.S. Census 2015 population estimates suggest that the total resident population of each school district in the County has declined since 2010. This decline follows decades of population growth in each district except Susquehanna Community and the County as a whole. Although Pennsylvania State Data Center population estimates by age are not available by municipality and school district, the anticipated decrease in County population and proportion of children will certainly be reflected in school enrollment.</p>
<b>Population Density</b>	<p>With the expected population decreases, density in the County will remain low and the range of facilities and services required will continue to be those needed to serve a rural population. The average density of the County's population, including all boroughs and townships is 53 persons per square mile based on the Year 2010 population of 43,356 and a land area of 823 square miles. In 2010, the average population density for townships in the county was 38.8 persons per square mile and for boroughs 1,154.4 persons per square mile. (See the preceding Population Table for details.) Using a projected population of 42,235 the countywide population density in the Year 2020 would be 51.3 persons per square mile with the density decreasing to 50.5 persons per square mile based on a projected population of 41,525.</p>
<b>Social Indicators</b>	<p>The Following Table of Social Indicators, as developed by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, presents data on a number of programs and community characteristics which serve as a measure of social conditions in the County. The information is also related to many of the programs which are operated or supported by the County and suggest potential effects on County spending. County-related agencies and programs affected by social conditions include the criminal justice system, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Services for Children and Youth, the Area Agency on Aging, the Trehab Center, the Drug and Alcohol Commission and Domestic Relations. (See Appendix A for details about County services and programs.)</p>

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<b>SOCIAL INDICATORS</b>			
<i>Center for Rural Pennsylvania</i>			
	<b>Susq. Co.</b>	<b>PA</b>	
<b>POVERTY</b>			
<b>Total Poverty Rate</b>			
1980	12.9%	10.5%	
1990	12.1%	11.1%	
2000	12.3%	11.0%	
2013	14.4%	13.7%	
2014	12.8%	13.6%	
2015	12.6%	13.1%	
<b>Poverty Rate for Children Under 18</b>			
1989	15.5%	16.4%	
1997	18.9%	16.6%	
2013	21.5%	19.2%	
2014	19.7%	19.2%	
2015	19.6%	19.1%	
<b>PUBLIC ASSISTANCE</b>			
<b>Population Receiving Cash Assistance</b>			
2014	0.4%	1.5%	
2015	0.3%	1.4%	
2016	0.3%	1.2%	
<b>Population Eligible for Medical Assistance</b>			
2014	14.4%	17.5%	
2015	16.9%	20.1%	
2016	19.3%	21.7%	
<b>Population Participating in Food Stamp Program</b>			
2014	10.0%	14.2%	
2015	10.2%	14.5%	
2016	11.4%	14.6%	
<b>Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for Elderly</b>			
# Enrolled, 2015	1,165	290,850	
% Enrolled, 2015	13.5%	13.3%	
<b>LOW INCOME STUDENTS</b>			
<b>Students Eligible Free/Reduced School Lunches</b>			
2013	43.8%	42.6%	
2014	44.4%	46.9%	

<b>SOCIAL INDICATORS</b>			
<i>Center for Rural Pennsylvania</i>			
	<b>Susq. Co.</b>	<b>PA</b>	
<b>DISABILITY BY AGE</b>			
<b>Non-Institutionalized Disabled Persons 18 to 64</b>			
# with Disability, 2015	3,686	862,720	
% with Disability, 2015	14.4	11.0%	
<b>Non-Institutionalized Persons 65+ with Disability</b>			
# with Disability, 2015	2,998	694,772	
% with Disability, 2015	37.5	34.7%	
<b>UNINSURED PERSONS</b>			
<b>% Without Health Insurance Under 65 Years Old</b>			
2012	14.4	11.7%	
2013	14.3	11.6%	
2014	11.8	10.2%	
<b>CRIME RATE</b>			
<b>Serious Crimes Per 100,000 Residents</b>			
2000	1,522	2,820	
2013	1,099	2,401	
2014	1,213	2,257	
2015	1,296	2,131	
<b>CHILD ABUSE</b>			
<b>Substantiated Cases of Abuse Per 1,000 Children</b>			
1,990	2.6	2.8	
2000	3.5	1.7	
2013	2.0	1.3	
2014	2.0	1.2	
2015	2.9	1.6	
<b>INCOME TO HOUSING COSTS (2015)</b>			
# Homeowners with Income/Mortgage	6,952	2,101,060	
% Paying < 30% of Income	71.2	70.4%	
% Paying 30% to 49% of Income	15.8	18.4%	
% Paying 50%+ of Income	13.0	11.1%	
# Renters with Income/Paying Cash Rent	3,357	1,401,717	
% Paying < 30% of Income	52.7	49.5%	
% Paying 30% to 49% of Income	24.2	23.8%	
% Paying 50%+ of Income	23.1	26.7%	

The overall poverty rate and the child poverty rate generally remained consistent between 1980 and 2015 and the proportion of the population receiving public assistance, with the exception of those eligible for Medical Assistance, remained the same. Child abuse rates are greater than those statewide which indicates a possible need for increases in the Services for Children and Youth. A substantial proportion of households are paying more than 30 percent of income for housing which may indicate the need for increased Housing and Redevelopment Authority participation. The earlier discussion about an increasing senior population will demand attention by the Area Agency on Aging.

**Planning Perspective** Based on projections at the time, the County's 2003 Comprehensive Plan based certain recommendations on a gradual increase in population over a period of time. Now, however, new projections indicate a decrease in population. Aside from constant growth (or decline) rates and fertility, mortality and migration rates and trends, internal factors or external factors such as employment opportunities, housing costs and environmental quality can also affect population. In short, the County population will continue to change in amount and character, and understanding this change provides one tool for planning for the future.

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## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

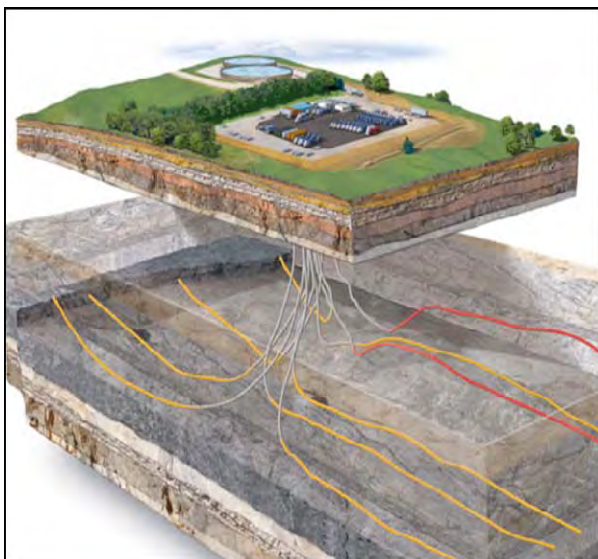
### Overview

The planning process revealed issues needing attention and identified preferences for the future. Some items listed as challenges appear to be hurdles or problems without viable solutions; however, some challenges may, in reality, be unexplored opportunities. Opportunities and challenges are influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors are those that can be managed; external influences are those beyond local control.

The County's powers and responsibilities are specifically enumerated by Commonwealth statute and much of the authority to deal with community and environmental issues rests with community organizations, local municipalities and Commonwealth agencies. Housing programs, zoning, road maintenance and environmental protection are good examples. (See Appendix B for county departments and services.)

Susquehanna County's significant opportunities and challenges are related to:

- Natural gas development
- Delivering quality facilities and services
- Housing
- Economic development
- Land use management



<http://www.cabotog.com/operations/marcellus>

### Natural Gas

The extraction of natural gas from the Marcellus Shale is by far the most significant factor affecting all aspects of life in Susquehanna County. Land leasing, fracking, pipeline and compressor station construction and probable construction of power plants have, and will continue to, dominate community changes.

### Opportunities

- Influx of leasing and royalty money
- Employment opportunities
- Providing retail goods and services to gas workers

Challenges

- Environmental protection
- Land use changes (e.g., compressor station locations)
- Increased traffic, especially trucks, and associated road safety and maintenance
- Difference between gas-related and locally-based pay scales
- Retaining in the County the economic benefit of gas-related employment (e.g., anecdotal evidence suggests engineers and managers live outside the County in areas with amenities.)

**Facilities and Services**

The County’s primary role is providing or supporting facilities and services for residents, including for example, the judicial system, tax assessment and claims, elections and voter registration, social services, housing programs, and recycling and solid waste planning. Providing facilities and services professionally and efficiently while minimizing tax increases is a major goal. This is becoming more difficult as costs rise while County revenue is based largely on taxes and user fees. The cost of improved or additional facilities and service must be balanced against the ability of residents and property owners to pay more taxes. Unfunded state and federal mandates add to the challenge.



Opportunities

- The use of Act 13 gas well impact fees for certain types of expenses
- Recently upgraded County facilities requiring fewer additional funds in the near term
- Board of Commissioners policy of increasing starting pay for new staff to attract quality personnel, reduce training costs and limit turnover

Challenges

- Meeting increased demand for services while minimizing tax increases
- Providing quality telecommunications services throughout the County
- Increasing demand on the criminal justice system
- The rise of opioid use increasing demand for many county-provided services
- Supporting local municipal efforts to provide facilities and services such as emergency services and parks and recreation facilities



**Housing**

The County has a long history of cooperation with the Susquehanna County Housing/Redevelopment Authority, the Trehab Community Action Agency and the First Ward Action Council in providing subsidized elderly and family housing units. The number of housing units now totals 342 with an additional 253 subsidized family/elderly units under the federal housing choice voucher program.

Opportunities

- Continued cooperation with housing agencies to provide subsidized housing
- Land sale and mortgage activity related to gas development resulting in increased affordable housing support fees collected per each recorded deed or mortgage
- Increased rental housing demand by gas workers
- Increased demand for moderately priced housing

Challenges

- Home values and rents increased due to demand by gas workers exceed affordability by local households
- Age of housing stock and aging population
- Limited availability of central water supply and central sewage disposal
- Building moderately priced housing considered a risk by developers
- Public perception of subsidized housing projects
- Grant funding for subsidized housing projects is highly competitive



Susquehanna House Apartments  
([www.trehab.org](http://www.trehab.org))



Tiffany Pines, Bridgewater Township  
([www.trehab.org](http://www.trehab.org))

**Economic Development** The Towanda-based Progress Authority provides economic development services to Susquehanna County and Bradford County. Growing existing businesses, attracting new business, sustaining agriculture, forestry, bluestone and natural gas, and promoting tourism and recreation are all important to sustaining a balanced economy in the County.

#### Opportunities

- Potential for start-up businesses that directly support the natural gas industry
- Access to Interstate Route 81 and the PennDOT proposed reconstruction of the I-81 Gibson Interchange which was identified as the optimal area for a business park
- Demand for retail and service establishments to meet the needs of gas workers
- Many residents are employed outside of the County and that workforce could be employed by local businesses
- Potential for local freight service on railroad lines passing through the County



Gibson Interchange and reconstruction Plans (<http://www.pahomepage.com/>)

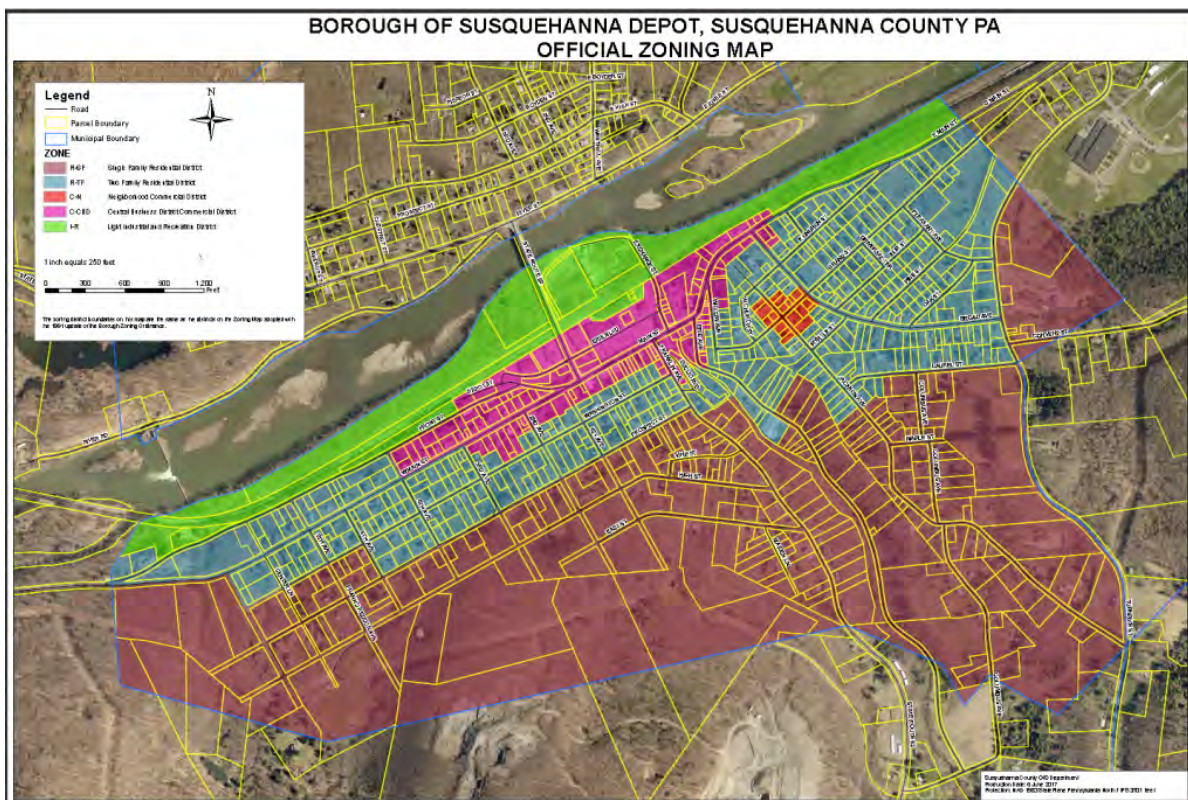
#### Challenges

- Competition from Binghamton and Scranton area business development locations
- Lack of central water supply and central sewage disposal at key I-81 interchanges
- Lack of quality telecommunications services in much of the County
- Lack of zoning causes business developers uncertainty about community acceptance and future adjoining uses
- Reluctance of businesses to develop due to a *boom or bust* perception of the natural gas industry

**Land Use Management** Zoning is the principal land use management tool available to boroughs and townships in Pennsylvania and six of the County’s 40 municipalities have adopted zoning. The County administers a subdivision and land development ordinance which governs how land is divided and requires adequate infrastructure, but the ordinance cannot regulate the location of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Under Commonwealth law, only zoning can establish districts which divide a municipality into residential, commercial and industrial areas to separate incompatible uses.

Opportunities

- Draft zoning ordinances have already been completed for two multi-municipal groups
- Managing new growth and development is seen by most community survey respondents as important (Question 7 of the survey)
- Almost half of survey respondents believe land use should be managed at the local municipal level (Question 8 of the survey)
- Natural gas development has altered attitudes toward land use controls in some instances (e.g., location of pipeline compressor stations and Compressed natural gas stations)



Challenges

- Encouraging municipal officials to adopt the existing zoning ordinances
  - Overcoming some of the public's negative views of zoning
  - Certain natural gas development, such as compressor stations, must be located near sources of natural gas
  - Lack of public facilities in certain areas to which to direct commercial and industrial development
-

**GOALS AND ACTIONS**

**Overview** This section includes goals and actions based on the identified community changes and issues since 2003. Most of the actions in the 2003 Plan remain valid and have been carried forward with updates.

**Land Use and Natural Resources** (Section V) *Goal: Manage and guide development in order to conserve natural resources and rural landscapes, enhance existing community centers, and reduce conflicts between incompatible uses.*

Natural gas extraction is the major factor affecting land use changes in the County as well as affecting many other aspects of the community. The Board of Commissioners and County Planning Commission recognize that local municipalities should take the lead role for land use management by adopting zoning ordinances. The County will continue to enforce the subdivision and land development ordinance to ensure newly created lots are suitable for development and will be an asset to the community and adequate water, sewer, roads and other infrastructure are provided.

<b>LAND USE</b>		
<i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Marcellus Shale</b>		
<i>Encourage DEP to provide the effective enforcement of natural resource regulations</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Continue to apply the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to all gas-related land developments to the extent permitted by the PA Planning Code.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) County Planning (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Continue to provide services to meet the needs of its residents irrespective of the changes precipitated by the Marcellus Shale.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) County Planning (1)</i>	<i>Near term</i>
<b>Intermunicipal Planning and Zoning</b>		
<i>Update existing zoning ordinances to address recent land use issues.</i>	<i>Local municipalities (1) County Planning (2)</i>	<i>Immediate</i>
<i>Reconsider intermunicipal zoning ordinances.</i>	<i>Northern Tier Coalition (1) Eastern Susq Co Partnership (1) County Planning (2)</i>	<i>Near term</i>
<i>Consider adopting comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.</i>	<i>Local municipalities (1) County Planning (2)</i>	<i>Near term</i>
Identify planning areas comprised of local municipalities with common growth and development issues.	County Planning (1)	Ongoing
Provide technical assistance to the municipalities that undertake intermunicipal planning and cooperative zoning.		



<b>Open Land and Natural Areas Conservation</b>		
Encourage Conservation Subdivision Design Development	County Planning (1) Natural Lands Trust (2) PA Dept Commun & Econ Dev (2)	Ongoing
<b>LAND USE</b> <i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Open Land and Natural Areas Conservation</b>		
Include Conservation Design in local land use ordinances	Local Municipalities (1) County Planning (2)	Ongoing
Encourage Smart Growth principles in development and redevelopment	County Planning (1) Local municipalities (1)	Ongoing
<b>Preservation of Agriculture</b>		
Provide the necessary technical support for the Agricultural Security Area program	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Consider Agricultural Security Areas when designating zoning districts	Local municipalities (1)	
Continue to fund and provide staff for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program	County Commissioners (1)	
Investigate alternate funding sources for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program	Ag Preservation Board (1) County Planning (1)	
<b>Watershed Planning</b> Watershed Planning is a proactive approach to conservation and more watershed associations should be formed in the County to promote conservation and water quality protection.		
Provide the necessary staff and other resources to ensure that adequate organizational support and technical assistance is available to all local groups working to form a watershed association.	County Commissioners (1) Conservation District (2)	Ongoing
<b>Water Supply and Water Quality</b>		
In local land use ordinances, require developers of projects involving large quantities of groundwater to document potential impacts and mitigation actions.	Local Municipalities (1) PA DEP (2) County Planning (2)	Ongoing
Maximize groundwater recharge by encouraging or requiring the use of innovate land based sewage disposal and storm water management techniques.		
Should growth and development and population increases dictate or if water supply problems arise, consider preparing a County Water Supply and Well Protection Plan.	County Planning (1) Conservation District (2) Penn State Extension (2) PA DEP (2)	
Encourage the creation and/or expansion of public sewage collection and treatment systems	Local municipalities (1) County Planning (2)	
<b>Forestry</b>		
Include forestry and value added forest products industries in economic development efforts.	Economic Dev. Advisory Board (1) Progress Authority (1)	Ongoing
Encourage local municipalities to be reasonable when adopting any local regulations governing forestry in terms of regulating types of cutting, including requirements for best management practices and compliance with state environmental regulations.	County Planning (1) PA Bureau of Forestry (2)	Ongoing
Work with state representatives and DEP to ensure enforcement of applicable forestry enterprise regulations.	County Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1)	Ongoing



<b>LAND USE</b> <i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Natural Resources</b>		
Encourage the use of natural resources in creating value added industries in economic development efforts.	Economic Dev Advisory Board (1) Progress Authority (1)	Ongoing
Encourage local municipalities to be reasonable when adopting any local regulations governing natural resources.	County Planning (1)	
Natural resource operations should be directed to areas where conditions are adequate, and where conflicts with other development are minimized.	Local municipalities (1) County Planning (2)	
<i>Encourage DEP to provide the effective enforcement of natural resource regulations</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1)</i>	

**Community Facilities and Services**  
(Section VI)

Goal: *Provide necessary community facilities and services to residents in an efficient and cost effective manner within available financial resources based on reasonable tax rates and use of grants.*

Community facilities and services are provided by all levels of government and county responsibilities are established by Commonwealth statute. Achieving a balance between adequate services and facilities and reasonable tax rates is a key component of the Board of Commissioners’ approach. (See Appendix B for Susquehanna County departments and services.)

<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b> <i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Monitor the need for expanded or new services.	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Undertake a detailed evaluation of staff and office space needs to identify improvements required to ensure quality service delivery and develop a ten-year plan, including capital improvements.	County Commissioners (1) Department heads (1)	First 3 years (now completed)
Annually review and update the service delivery plan and spatial needs plan to ensure adequate delivery of services		Ongoing
Employ a human resources director to assist the Chief Clerk with employee matters.		First 3 years (now completed)
Take immediate steps to improve records consolidation, storage and destruction by meeting the needs of the Historical Records/Archives Department.	County Commissioners (1) Department heads (1)	Ongoing (now completed)
Improve interoffice communications by networking computers and requiring use of common software.		First 3 years (now completed)
Designate a common room for hearings, conferences and client interviews which can be used by any department.		First 3 years
Develop an inventory and operation and maintenance plan for all County buildings and grounds.		

<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>		
<i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Recreation Facilities</b>		
<i>Work with local municipalities to identify park and recreation needs.</i>	<i>County Planning (1) PA Dept Cons &amp; Recreation (2)</i>	
<i>Support municipal efforts to provide recreation opportunities through grants</i>	<i>County Commissioner (1) County Planning (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Support private entities in their quest for grant funds to provide recreational opportunities such as Rails-to-Trails</i>		
<i>Support private efforts to provide a recreational campus in the County.</i>		
<b>Internet Service</b>		
<i>Promote deployment of an advanced telecommunications system.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) Economic Dev. Advisory Board (1) Progress Authority (1)</i>	<i>First 3 years</i>
<i>Identify opportunities to encourage telecommunications providers to invest in Susquehanna County and take full advantage of state and federal financial assistance.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) Economic Dev. Advisory Board (1) Progress Authority (1)</i>	<i>First 3 years</i>
<i>Make the County Government an attractive anchor client for advanced services by forming user consortiums with county schools, libraries, and medical facilities and with neighboring counties.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Maintain a current awareness of County needs and of changes in the technology, regulatory, and market environments which may impact those needs.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

**Economic Development**  
(Section VII)

Goal: *Encourage community appropriate, environmentally responsible economic development to provide jobs and tax revenue to support community facilities and services while preserving and enhancing the quality of life for County residents.*

The Towanda-based Progress Authority and the Commissioner-appointed Susquehanna County Economic Development Advisory Board lead efforts for existing business/industry retention and expansion and new business/industry attraction efforts. The attraction of new business and industry is highly competitive along the Interstate 81 corridor and Susquehanna County must use and promote its assets. Natural gas development, which is a reality in the County, provides great potential for economic development.

<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <p>The Progress Authority acts as the representative for Susquehanna County and the Susquehanna County Economic Development Advisory Board in all areas related to economic development. The following area of concentration are taken from the Mission Statement of the Progress Authority are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote economic growth as a whole by creating opportunities for economic development through desirable business growth, expansion, retention and attraction.</li> <li>• To leverage private investment, complimented by public financing and incentive programs, to enhance employment opportunities.</li> <li>• To promote the exchange of information for industrial and commercial development purposes and support local financing efforts through the effective administration of a revolving loan fund.</li> <li>• To work as a partner to develop a climate that is conducive to maintaining the quality of life while navigating the ever-changing economic environment.</li> </ul>		
<i>Support the efforts of the Progress Authority.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Provide support for the Susquehanna County Economic Development Advisory Board.</i>	<i>County Planning (1)</i>	
<i>Monitor the progress and encourage PennDOT to complete the Interstate 81 Gibson Interchange improvement project.</i>	<i>Board of Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1) Northern Tier Reg Plng &amp; Dev (1)</i>	<i>Near term</i>
<b>Heritage Destination and Tourism</b>		
Assemble the disciplines necessary to generate public and business interest and participation.		
Provide the necessary expertise to develop an effective Heritage Destination Development		
Use the Endless Mountains Heritage Region Management Action Plan as a general guideline for heritage destination (tourism) development.	Economic Dev. Advisory Board (1) County Planning (1)	Ongoing
<i>Support private entities in their quest for grant funds to provide recreational opportunities such as Rails-to-Trails.</i>		

**Housing**  
(Section VIII)

Goal: *Support efforts to provide opportunities for a broad range of housing types to consider the needs of all economic and demographic groups in the County.*

In 2015, almost 30 percent of homeowners with a mortgage and almost 50 percent of renters in the County were spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing exceeding the level considered affordable. Families and individuals of all income levels reside in the County and need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home, individuals with disabilities and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. The Board of Commissioners will continue to support affordable housing programs and collect the deed and mortgage recording fee for housing programs established by state law.

<b>HOUSING</b>		
(All actions are from the 2003 Plan.)		
Action	Responsibility (1) Resources (2)	Timing
<b>Housing – Specific County Actions</b>		
Continue to support the efforts of the Susquehanna County Housing/Redevelopment Authority and Trehab to provide affordable housing and home improvements to low income residents	County Commissioners (1) County Planning (2)	Ongoing
Take advantage of available state and federal housing programs and encourage the development of innovative housing assistance programs.		
Continue the assessment of the fee for affordable housing on recording of deeds and mortgages.		
Evaluate and revise as necessary the provisions of the County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance in terms of unnecessarily stringent standards effects on costs of housing.	County Planning (1)	Ongoing
Encourage local municipalities to direct higher density development to the growth areas identified in this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> (i.e., adopting zoning)	Local municipalities (1) County Planning (2)	Ongoing
Promote and provide to local municipalities sample subdivision and land development ordinance and zoning ordinance standards to reduce regulatory effects on the cost of housing.	County Planning (1)	Ongoing
Evaluate the current allocation of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in terms of housing, historic preservation and other authorized activities.	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Identify areas for preferred business and residential growth and develop a strategy for providing adequate infrastructure to those areas.	County Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1)	Ongoing
Provide incentives for development of market-rate housing to fill the market gaps identified.	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Work with municipalities to identify blighted residential areas that could be redeveloped to fill market gaps identified.	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Work with local financial institutions to develop a strategy for moving current renters to home ownership through assistance to first-time home buyers and buyers who are having difficulty qualifying for mortgages, and providing education regarding homeownership.	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Collaborate with an experienced senior housing developer to further assess the feasibility of a senior community in Susquehanna County appropriately sized for the Susquehanna County market, and develop a strategy for providing infrastructure needed to facilitate development.	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Work with Trehab and/or the Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority to secure funding to develop additional rental units designed to lessen the strain on the low- to moderate-income workforce.	County Commissioners (1) County Planning (2)	Ongoing

**Transportation**

(Section IX)

Goal: *Facilitate a safe, efficient, convenient, and cost-effective transportation system to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, and address existing road and transportation concerns.*

Susquehanna County owns and maintains 32 bridges and one short street in Montrose Borough. The County works with the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission and PennDOT to plan and prioritize improvements for state roads and local, county and state bridges located on state and municipal roads. Much of the increased traffic, particularly truck traffic, is associated with natural gas development.

<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
<i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<i>Promote and coordinate the formation of a local municipal Road Task Force to improve communication with PennDOT about state road safety, maintenance and improvement needs.</i>	<i>Board of Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1) Northern Tier Reg Plng &amp; Dev (1) PennDOT (2)</i>	<i>Near term</i>
<i>Monitor the progress and encourage PennDOT to complete the Interstate 81 Gibson Interchange improvement project.</i>	<i>Board of Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1) Northern Tier Reg Plng &amp; Dev (1)</i>	<i>Near term</i>
Use and promote transportation planning as part of County and local municipal land use policies.	Board of Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1) Northern Tier Reg Plng & Dev (1)	Near term
Support state legislation which would provide an equitable share of subsidies for rural transit services.	Board of Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1) Northern Tier Reg Plng & Dev (1)	Ongoing
Continue to support Susq-Wyo County Transportation.	Board of Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Work to preserve existing rail service and facilitate the return of rail service on the several defunct lines throughout the County.	Board of Commissioners (1) Railroad Authority (1)	Ongoing
Continue to work with the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission’s Rural Transportation Advisory Committee to submit and monitor road and bridge projects as part of PennDOT’s Transportation Improvement Program and Twelve Year Plan.	County Commissioners (1) County Planning (1)	Ongoing
Develop a maintenance and capital improvements program for County bridges.	County Commissioners (1)	Ongoing
Direct higher density and higher traffic development to areas with adequate highway capacity. (i.e., adopting zoning)	Local municipalities (1) County Planning (2)	Ongoing
Adopt uniform road ordinances setting standards for new road construction and access to roadways.	Local municipalities (1) County Planning (2)	Ongoing
Include pedestrian and bicycle friendly design in new and existing roads.	Local municipalities (1) County Planning (1)	Ongoing
Avoid the creation of highway hazards in new subdivisions and land developments by developing driveway, parking, setback, and road standards.	Local municipalities (1) County Planning (1)	Ongoing

<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
<i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Work with economic development agencies, municipalities, major industries and PennDOT to formulate a plan for the improvement of east-west travel in the County.	County Commissioners (1) County Planning (1)	First three years
Use designated growth areas as a basis for road improvement prioritization.	County Planning (1) Local municipalities (1)	Ongoing
Encourage legislators to support transportation projects	County Commissioners (1) Local municipalities (1)	Ongoing
Support local rural transportation service, and others offering public transportation to elderly and handicapped citizens.	County Commissioners (1) Northern Tier Reg Plng & Dev (1)	Ongoing
Promote the use of rail freight service for businesses located within the county.	County Commissioners (1) Railroad Authority (1)	Ongoing

**Cultural Resources**  
(Section X)

Goal: *Support the preservation of the historic, architectural, and cultural resources in the County.*

Cultural resources - the remains, buildings, sites and landscapes of human activity - play a critical role in the sense of community and efforts to preserve these assets should continue. While the County does not take the lead role, it can provide support to private, local municipal and historical society education and preservation efforts.

<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>		
<i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<i>Preserve historic and archaeological resources and encourage new development to be consistent with the existing historic character.</i>	<i>Local municipalities (1) County Planning (1)</i>	
<i>Encourage and support programs which preserve historic and archaeological resources.</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) County Planning (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
Use available grant funding to inventory cultural resources and prepare an overall County historic preservation plan.	Historical Society (1)	First 3 years
Develop guidelines for residential and commercial development to encourage historically sensitive design.	County Planning (1)	Ongoing
Develop strategies for the repair, restoration and maintenance of historic structures, including abandoned cemeteries.	Historical Society (1) Housing Authority (1)	Ongoing
Include conservation residential subdivision design in the County subdivision and land development ordinance to preserve important cultural resources and encourage local municipalities to do the same in zoning and subdivision ordinances.	County Commissioners (1) County Planning (1) Natural Lands Trust (2)	Ongoing



<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>		
<i>(Actions in addition to those from the 2003 Plan are in italic font.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Make application to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for a grant to inventory historic and archeological resources	Historical Society (1) County Planning (2)	First 3 years
Support local efforts to submit eligible properties for the National Register of Historic Places	Historical Society (1) Local societies (1)	Ongoing
<i>Identify properties for inclusion in the National Register and potential historic districts.</i>	<i>Historical Society (1) Local societies (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
Encourage the formation of historic districts in qualifying areas and the adoption of the necessary design standards for new and renovated structures.	Historical Society (1) County Planning (1)	Ongoing
Integrate historic resources into economic development plans	Economic Development Board (1) Progress Authority (1)	Ongoing
<i>Encourage municipalities to participate in the preservation of historic resources</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) Historical Society (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Encourage the formation of local historical societies to promote historic resources as an important part of the community and economic development efforts</i>	<i>County Commissioners (1) Historical Society (1)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
Note: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service provide a wide range of assistance to local entities.		

**Contiguous and Regional Planning**

Goal: *Communicate and coordinate planning efforts to ensure Susquehanna County's standing in the region.*

Land use, housing, transportation, economic development and other planning issues transcend municipal boundaries and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code promotes intermunicipal and regional planning. The County will work with other area municipalities to take full advantage of area wide opportunities and share information.

<b>CONTIGUOUS AND REGIONAL PLANNING</b>		
<i>(All actions are from the 2003 Plan.)</i>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility (1) Resources (2)</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Continue to participate in the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission.	County Commissioners (1)	
As land use plans are developed and revised consider existing land use plans, existing zoning ordinances and land uses in all adjoining municipalities to minimize and avoid, if possible, any conflicts.	Local municipalities (1)	Ongoing
Use this Comprehensive Plan as a guideline to ensure compatibility of land uses along municipal borders.	Local municipalities (1)	Ongoing
Given the importance of Broome and Lackawanna Counties and their employment opportunities to the economic well-being of Susquehanna County, pursue cooperation on transportation (e.g., railroads) and economic development.	County Planning (1) Economic Development Dept (1)	Ongoing

**LAND USE, RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Marcellus Shale**

The primary land use and community changes in the County since the 2003 *Plan Update* are associated with natural gas production from the Marcellus Shale. According to PA Department of Environmental Protection SPUD reports, 1,340 gas wells were developed from 2000 through 2016. In addition, a total of 86 gas-related land development plans, primarily compressor stations with a number of metering stations and water treatment facilities, were approved by the County Planning Commission from 2010 through 2017. This development directly related to natural gas accounted for more than half of all land developments during that period.

The multiplier effect of gas development is also reflected in other retail and service business growth. In 2017, the Planning Commission approved two 20 megawatt distributed generation plans which supply electricity to the local system during peak periods. With the availability of natural gas, additional generation plants can be expected, with the potential for much larger capacities. Construction of liquefied natural gas plants in the County is also likely. The above land use changes directly related to natural gas development involve some 7,430 acres,<sup>1</sup> covering about 1.4 percent of the total 832-square mile County land area.<sup>2</sup> Although only accounting for less than two percent of land area, in terms of effects on the community, both positive and negative, this development is certainly significant.

NUMBER OF GAS WELLS 2000 - 2016			
	Vert.	Horiz.	Total
New Milford Twp.	1	157	158
Springville Twp.	20	122	142
Auburn Twp.	0	137	137
Dimock Twp.	26	95	121
Gibson Twp.	0	73	73
Brooklyn Twp.	1	71	72
Rush Twp.	5	67	72
Bridgewater Twp.	1	60	61
Jackson Twp.	0	59	59
Harford Twp.	0	58	58
Forest Lake Twp.	1	54	55
Lenox Twp.	4	51	55
Jessup Twp.	1	40	41
Lathrop Twp.	2	38	40
Liberty Twp.	2	35	37
Franklin Twp.	1	31	32
Apolacon Twp.	0	30	30
Silver Lake Twp.	0	26	26
Middletown Twp.	0	17	17
Great Bend Twp.	1	15	16
Oakland Twp.	1	11	12
Choconut Twp.	0	9	9
Clifford Twp.	1	5	6
Ararat Twp.	0	3	3
New Milford Bor.	0	3	3
Thompson Twp.	1	2	3
Little Meadows Bor.	0	2	2
All others	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>1,340</b>
SPUD Report, PA DEP			



IMG Midstream distributed generation plant, Auburn Township  
<http://imgmidstream.com>

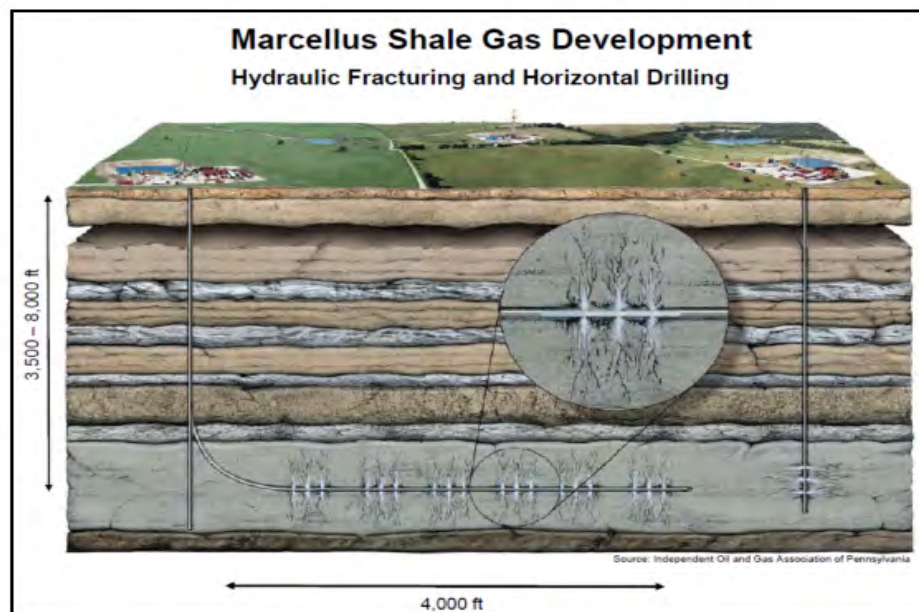
<sup>1</sup> Assuming 5 acres per well and 10 acres per land development.

<sup>2</sup> 7,430 acres / (832 sq mi) (640 acres per sq mi) = 1.4%

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT PLANS			
Year	Total	Natural Gas Related	
		#	%
2010	19	5	26
2011	27	8	30
2012	40	12	30
2013	36	11	31
2014	30	17	57
2015	32	10	31
2016	20	10	50
2017	25	13	52
Total	229	86	36

Natural gas production in the Marcellus Shale and associated activities now dominate much of the development and economy in Susquehanna County and have generated widely differing opinions about environmental and community benefits and effects. Despite the varying opinions, residents and business owners, the County and most importantly the Boroughs and Townships, must monitor the continuing gas development and take full advantage of the benefits (e.g., increased business opportunity) and ensure that all necessary steps are taken to minimize community (e.g., traffic) and environmental effects (e.g., water quality).<sup>3</sup>

**Marcellus Impacts** The 2014 study sponsored by The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, *The Marcellus Shale Impacts Study: Chronicling Social and Economic Change in North Central and Southwest Pennsylvania*, notes: *The development of the Marcellus Shale has created significant questions about the potential implications for the commonwealth's communities and natural environment. This research is the first wave of a longitudinal project examining the impacts of Marcellus Shale development in Pennsylvania. Overall, the research is exploring the social and economic impacts of Marcellus Shale development in Pennsylvania, focusing on the experiences of four study counties - Bradford, Greene, Lycoming, and Washington - with very high levels of natural gas extraction and related activities.*<sup>4</sup>



Source: Independent Oil and Gas Association of Pennsylvania

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the 2016 New Milford Borough Comprehensive Plan, p. Natural Resources – 11.

<sup>4</sup> *The Marcellus Shale Impacts Study: Chronicling Social and Economic Change in North Central and Southwest Pennsylvania*, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2014, p. 1.

Although not specific to Susquehanna County, the findings are worth noting as a means of identifying potential effects. The following is taken from the Executive Summary of the Study.

Population

- Population change varied across the study counties.
- Population changes associated with Marcellus Shale development are not clear.

Health and Health Care

- Very few indicators in health or healthcare service delivery changed.
- The exception was the increases in the number of complaints by responding emergency medical service personnel.
- Increased demands on human service providers.

Schools and Education

- Very little change in enrollment, student demographics and outcomes.
- Drop-out rates were not changed.
- Industry opportunities affect on post-secondary educational aspirations.

Youth Perspectives

- Safety concerns about traffic and road conditions.
- Destruction of natural areas.
- Uncertainty about the impacts now and in the future.
- Relatively low interest in working for the industry.

Housing

- Proportions of owner-occupied, rental or vacant varied more in counties with smaller populations and more limited housing.
- Median value of owner-occupied housing increased more than the state average.
- Temporary housing used by natural gas workers and low-income families.
- Displacement of local people from existing housing.
- Increased homelessness among low-income individuals and families.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR SHALE GAS DEVELOPMENT**

- *Geophysical logging to delineate base of freshwater aquifers*
- *Surface casing and cement/packers deep enough to protect freshwater aquifers*
- *Production casing/cement/packers (with intermediate string if needed) to prevent upward migration of salty water and gas*
- *Cement-bond logging and pressure testing to ensure good seals*
- *Drilling and frac fluid storage in tanks and offsite burial of drill cuttings*
- *Avoid hydraulic fracturing near structures*
- *Microseismic monitoring of hydraulic fracs*
- *Reuse of frac fluid reduces freshwater resource impacts and disposal issue*
- *Water-well sampling before and after drilling/hydraulic fracturing operation*

(Source: PA Water Science Center, USGS, New Cumberland, PA, Campbell-USGS\_MarcellusScienceMeeting.pdf)

**SHALE GAS POSITION STATEMENT, 12/12/2014, Pennsylvania Council of Professional Geologists**

Excerpts from 12-point position statement:

- *PCPG considers shale gas exploration and production to be a worthwhile and necessary endeavor that will have very significant and continuing positive effect on Pennsylvania's economy. Additional shale gas production in Pennsylvania also means more energy independence for the United States. As natural gas is the cleanest burning fossil fuel, there are corresponding positive implications for air and water quality effects throughout the Commonwealth.*
- *Natural gas well drilling and production can and must be done in an environmentally responsible and scientifically sound manner while minimizing the potential for adverse environmental impacts. PCPG recognizes that the natural gas drilling industry continues to implement and upgrade its best practices, in order to protect the environment throughout the drilling, completion and production phases of shale development.*
- *Historically, horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies have a low incidence of proven adverse impacts to groundwater and surface water quality. Marcellus Shale natural gas wells typically consist of a vertical bore (drilled with technically sound, time-tested equipment and methods) which is advanced downward to depths of 5,000 to 9,000 feet below the ground surface and then directionally drilled horizontally to tap into the Marcellus Shale formation. Hydraulic fracturing of such horizontal wells is designed with a radius of influence limited to approximately 500 feet around the well bore. It is unlikely that a properly designed and constructed shale gas well will have an adverse effect on the much shallower fresh water aquifer zones, which typically occur within 500 feet or less from the ground surface. Key to the successful installation of shale gas wells is a proper well design, casing and construction program conducted by experienced and competent natural gas drilling operators, detailed permit application submitted by the operators, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) permit approvals based on a thorough review process; and correct execution and verification of the well drilling, casing, cementing and plugging programs. (Source: www.pcpge.org)*

Criminal Justice System

- Relatively little change in most indicators
- Exception of increased rates of arrests for driving under the influence and traffic violations.

Local Government

- No clear effects of natural gas development on local government budgets.
- Local officials raised concerns related to:
  - Impacts on roads from truck traffic
  - Housing problems.
  - Their lack of preparation for the growth of the industry
  - Lack of transparency by the natural gas industry.
- Impact fee dollars spent on new equipment or new infrastructure to replace what has been damaged, directly or indirectly.

Local Economic Impacts

- Counties with the highest levels of drilling activity generally experienced increased business activity, employment, and wages.
- Number of residents working increased only modestly, suggesting that many of the new jobs were going to non-residents.

Baseline for Measuring Agricultural Changes (Based on focus groups.)

- Shortages in some farm inputs (e.g., lime).
- Difficulty of retaining farm labor.
- Ability to use lease and royalty income to stay in business and reinvest.
- Changes in operations (such as dairy to beef).
- Intergenerational property transfer.
- Mistrust of natural gas companies
- Lack of monitoring and company accountability.
- Uncertainty about environmental impacts.
- Uncertainty about long-term impacts.
- Conflicting views about the impacts on quality of life.

*Additionally, the research documented strategies used by individuals, farms, businesses, local health, housing and human service agencies, and school districts to adapt to changes brought on by Marcellus Shale development. These include:*

- *more consistent use of legal expertise and consultation,*
- *monitoring and management of well development activity,*
- *development of new products and business opportunities,*
- *and collaboration and planning across geographic and organizational boundaries.*

*The research identified several themes that were discussed by focus group participants but were not specific to an individual topical report. These include:*

- *community conflict and divisions,*
- *unequal distribution of the benefits and costs of development,*
- *concerns about the quality of life in their communities, and*
- *concerns about water quality.*<sup>5</sup>

**Community Survey  
Marcellus Shale**

More respondents to the resident survey noted that natural gas development has been *generally good* for the County than *generally bad*. This may not suggest those who believe it has been good do not have certain community or environmental concerns or those who believe it has been bad do not see some benefits. Creation of jobs ranked as the most important benefit and traffic problems ranked as the greatest problem.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.2.

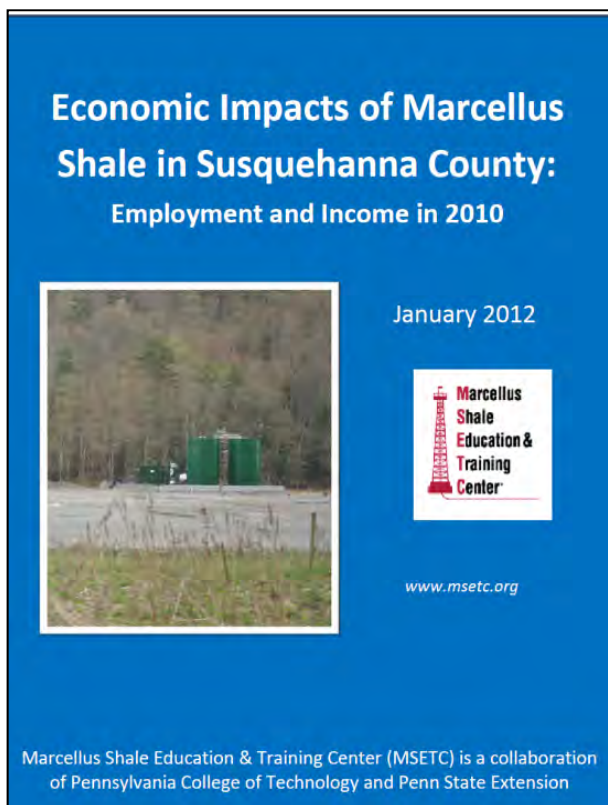


<b>GENERALLY GOOD for the County</b> (please check all that apply) 1,286 respondents	<b>Response</b>
Created job opportunities	81.9%
Created personal wealth	75.1%
Kept large tracts of land intact	50.4%
Brought impact funds to the County and Municipalities	75.8%

<b>GENERALLY BAD for the County</b> (please check all that apply) 839 respondents	<b>Response</b>
Caused traffic problems	70.4%
Caused environmental problems	61.4%
Caused excess noise and air pollution	55.1%
Caused friction among residents	56.0%

**Economic Impact  
Marcellus Shale**

The number of gas wells and compressor stations, increased truck traffic and more spin-off business activity certainly suggest new jobs and an overall positive economic impact. In 2012, the Marcellus Shale Education and Training Center published *The Economic Impact of Marcellus Shale in Susquehanna County: Employment and Income in 2010*. The study reported:



- *State sales tax collections within Susquehanna County increased 10.1 percent between 2007 and 2010, compared to a statewide county level decrease of 3.8 percent which suggests significant increases in local retail sales activity. (p. 6.)*
- *Realty transfer tax collections in the county during this same period dropped by 27.2 percent, which is a bit greater than the state average decrease of 22.1 percent, suggesting that either the quantity or value of real estate sales declined more in the county than in most other locations of the Commonwealth. (p. 6.)*
- *Changes in Personal Income Tax collections are somewhat mixed; total Personal Income Tax collections in the county.*

- *Increased 17.9 percent between 2007 and 2009 . . . compared to a statewide average county level decrease of 5.5 percent. (p. 6.)*
- *Most of the increase in Personal Income Tax collections was due to leasing income rather than employment. (p. 6.)*
  - *Total compensation (e.g. wages and salaries) only increased 4.8 percent in Susquehanna County between these years, while the number of tax returns filed from the county reporting wage or salary income increased slightly (1.0 percent), which suggests there was little increase in total employment by residents within the county. (p. 6.)*
  - *Royalty income, in contrast, increased by 805 percent during this same time period. (p. 6.)*
- *Much of the gas industry spending related to Susquehanna County is occurring in nearby counties, or even out of state. (p. 7.)*

#### **Economic Impacts of Marcellus Shale in Susquehanna County**

*Due to the regional nature of the work and the high specialization of the businesses, equipment, and tasks involved in gas development, it is clear that many of the economic benefits of Marcellus Shale development are occurring outside of the counties where drilling is being done. Many of the firms doing the work are regional, national, or international companies, with little formal footprint in the individual counties with drilling, and they are bringing in specialized equipment and supplies, which are not directly available from local county-based businesses. For example, the companies are not leasing drilling rigs from local businesses, purchasing drilling and gathering line pipe from county hardware stores, or buying fracking sand from local quarries. All these are being leased or purchased outside of the county. Some of these companies are creating regional offices or facilities within the Marcellus region, such as in Washington and Lycoming Counties, which will support drilling activities in the nearby counties. These offices help keep more of the dollars within those regions, but they do not necessarily help keep dollars within the individual counties where the drilling is happening.*

*Even though many of the industry dollars are not being spent in the specific counties where drilling is occurring, it also is very obvious from anecdotes, surveys, and secondary data that the amount of dollars being spent in these communities is significant, and it is having major local economic impacts. Some supplies and services are being purchased locally, such as aggregate used for road and well pad construction, local construction and trucking services, motel rooms and other housing, food service, and other materials and services that are not overly specialized or unique to the industry. For example, one-third of the businesses in Bradford County report that their sales have increased due to Marcellus activity (Kelsey, Shields, Ladlee, and Ward, 2011). Local infrastructure investment is being spurred by Marcellus activity, such as rail, roads, and hotels, and local nonprofits informally are reporting major local charitable giving by gas companies. The local economic development impacts of gas development cannot and should not be slighted and must be understood more completely. (The Economic Impact of Marcellus Shale in Susquehanna County: Employment and Income in 2010, The Marcellus Shale Education and Training Center, 2012, p. 4.)*

- *The limited availability of housing in some counties, which makes it difficult for workers to find housing where they're working, contributes to this loss of income from the county economy. (p.7.)*
  - *Based on industry spending patterns and land development patterns, we estimated that Susquehanna County landowners received \$92.1 million in leasing income in 2010 . . . we estimate 66.7 percent of this leasing income (\$61.5 million) went to mineral rights owners current living in the county. (p. 14.)*
  - *The data suggest that royalties paid in 2010 averaged \$148,561 per well. (p. 9.)*
  - *Much of the leasing and royalty dollars are going to farmers, which is not surprising given that farmers own a significant proportion of Pennsylvania's land. Such spending is consistent with anecdotes and written comments in the survey that many farmers are using Marcellus dollars to buy new tractors, fix barns, and build new structures. (p. 10.)*
  - *About 55 percent of the total leasing dollars were saved in the year they were received, rather than being immediately spent. About 66 percent of all the royalty dollars were similarly saved for the future. Other common uses of the dollars included paying state and federal taxes (17 percent of leasing dollars), purchasing vehicles (9 percent of leasing dollars), and real estate (5 percent of leasing dollars). (p. 9.)*
  - *Overall, we estimated that leasing income in 2010 generated \$11.8 million in output, either directly or through multiplier impacts, which supported \$4.6 million in labor income and about 134 jobs in Susquehanna County. This economic impact is lower than the new income being spent by residents, which is unusual compared to most economic impacts. The results reflect that the economy in Susquehanna County is relatively small, which means residents spend much of their income outside the community. (p. 14.)*
  - *Overall, we estimated that this local spending of royalty income (estimated at \$3.1 million county-wide in 2010) supports \$1.3 million in county output, \$417 thousand in labor income, and about 13 jobs.*
-

- *According to the BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics), Susquehanna County's mining employment totaled 545 in 2010, up almost 200 jobs from the previous year. Preliminary estimates indicate the average annual pay for these jobs in 2010 was almost \$58,000. (p. 12.)*
  - *Construction is one of the largest ancillary economic activities for Marcellus activity. Yet between 2009 and 2010, the industry was relatively unchanged at 391 jobs in Susquehanna County. This is down from a high of 474 jobs in 2007. (p. 12.)*
  - *The trade, transportation, and utility sector is another closely aligned set of industries. Trade captures both retail and wholesale activities, with gains in this aspect closely aligned with increases in household income and wealth. Transportation and utility employment captures, among other things, the impacts of water hauling and other transport. According to BLS data between 2009 and 2010, Susquehanna County employment in the trade, transportation, and utility sector increased by 11 jobs. (p. 13.)*
  - *To the extent that the workers live outside the county, the companies are not based in the county, and a majority of the equipment and materials were not purchased or produced within the county, drilling and pipeline construction activity in Susquehanna County may have little direct contribution to the local county economy. (p. 17.)*
  - *One surprising result was that the economic impacts resulting from lease and royalty dollars going to county residents were not larger, given the amount of these dollars. The relatively large proportion of such spending going to motor vehicles and other retail purchases, combined with the small, rural nature of the county economy, means that much of the dollars going to local mineral right owners end up being spent outside the county. The county and its economy may simply be too small to capture a large proportion of the economic impacts of Marcellus Shale development. (p. 16.)*
  - *Yet the dollars being expended are large enough, even with the leakage, that a significant amount of spending clearly does occur within the county itself and is having a positive job and income impact. (p. 17.)*
-



- *Workforce training for local residents similarly could increase local economic impacts by increasing the share of the workforce who live locally.*
- *Strengthening the ability of locally owned businesses to compete for contracts with the gas companies.*

**County Position  
Marcellus Shale**

The Board of Commissioners realizes that the Marcellus Shale will continue to be a major factor in the development and quality of life in the County. The County has very limited authority for regulating natural gas production and related development. Nevertheless, all applicable local municipal, state and federal rules and regulations must be diligently applied to ensure the best outcome of all development.

**County Regulation  
Marcellus Shale**

The County's role in regulation of natural gas related development is limited to applying the County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) in 32 of 40 local municipalities which have not adopted a SALDO. Natural gas well sites are not governed by a SALDO because the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code links the definition of *land development* to commercial projects which involve a building. Compressor stations, metering stations and generating plants include buildings and can be regulated by a subdivision and land development ordinance.

Susquehanna County will continue to apply the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to all gas-related land developments to the extent permitted by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) which enables the County to set standards to ensure adequate infrastructure such as proper highway access, storm water control, water supply, sewage disposal and utilities. The County will not endeavor, and the MPC does not provide authority, to regulate the operation of gas wells, compressor stations, metering stations and generating plants in terms of environmental quality and other community effects. Such regulation is the purview of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Local municipalities, to the extent not preempted by the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Act, are able via zoning to regulate to a limited extent the location and physical aspects of well sites and other gas-related operations.

**County Services  
Marcellus Shale**

Although clearly having a significant effect on Susquehanna County, the quantitative effect of natural gas development on county-provided services and its cost is difficult to determine. Increased demands on housing programs and the criminal justice system are obvious concerns, but the long term demands are uncertain. Nevertheless, the County must continue to provide services to meet the needs of its residents irrespective of the changes precipitated by the Marcellus Shale. *Tracking these changes over time can assist with identifying ways in which shorter-term gains can be leveraged into strategic and longer term planning that will maximize the opportunities for Pennsylvania's social, economic and environmental sustainability, both now and in the future. The systematic gathering and analysis over time of local, regional and state-level data will be critical in generating information that local stakeholders and state policymakers will need to effectively respond to these new and often unprecedented challenges and opportunities.*<sup>6</sup>

**Background Studies  
2003 Plan**

The natural resource background information and discussion about natural and environmentally sensitive areas, open land and natural area conservation, preservation of agriculture, watershed planning, water supply, bluestone and forestry and related actions in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan remain applicable and are not repeated here. Instead, the primary changes and issues beyond natural gas extraction are addressed.

**Subdivisions and  
Land Developments**

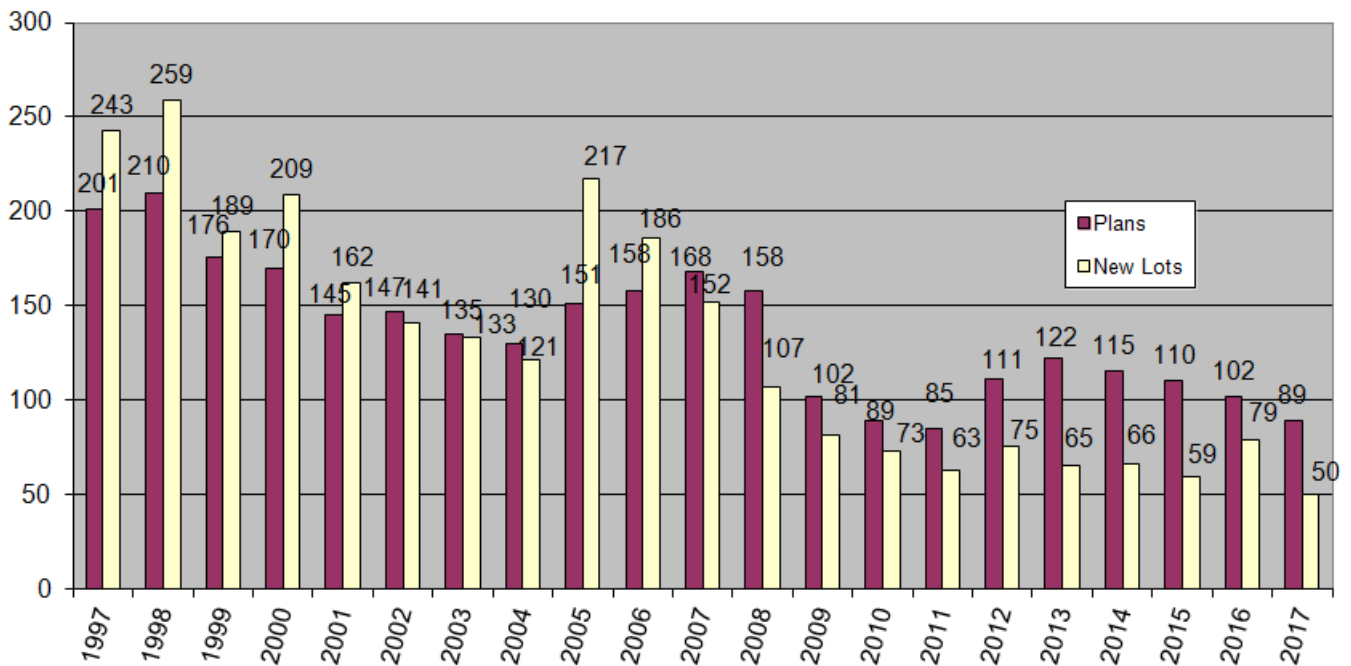
The limited number of new lots created and commercial/industrial land developments in recent years is not significant in terms of any overall changes in the land use mix in the County. The annual number of subdivisions and land developments (discussed above) decreased between 2007 and 2011, then increased somewhat, but the decline continued from 2014 through 2017. In 2017, a total of 50 new lots were created. (Some plans are filed for lot combinations or property line adjustments and do not create new lots.) See the Susquehanna County Subdivisions Chart and Types of Subdivisions/Developments Table.

*The 2017 Susquehanna County Planning Commission Annual Report notes: During 2017, the Commission processed 89 subdivision and land development plans. These plans created 50 new lots/parcels of land given final approval. This represents a smaller number of plans and a decrease in the number of*

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 4.





*new lots compared with the previous few years. The most new residential lots created in any single subdivision were 3, which is less than in recent years.*

*Minor subdivisions decreased substantially this year. Major subdivisions and land developments remained about the same as last year. Approximately half of the commercial and industrial land development plans (13 out of 25) were tied to natural gas activities. A continuing trend is that there have been no subdivisions of large tracts of land that created multiple lots. The average size of new lots created during 2017 was 13.18 acres which is generally consistent with the past 28 years' average lot sizes. The average of the average lot size of all lots created in the past 28 years is 13.84 acres.*

TYPES OF SUBDIVISIONS / DEVELOPMENTS – SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY														
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Add-on Subdivisions	45	53	48	57	54	36	23	19	19	30	24	26	22	25
Land Developments*	15	12	33	32	27	16	19	27	40	45	38	36	23	25
Major Subdivisions	7	14	16	8	4	8	4	5	10	8	17	15	10	11
Minor Subdivisions	63	72	60	71	73	42	42	33	42	38	36	33	48	28
Mobile / RV Parks	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

\*Includes commercial and industrial.

TYPES OF PARCELS (AS ASSESSED) SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY					
Category	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
Agricultural	5,849	6,333	6,576	6,624	6,690
Commercial	989	1,053	1,098	1,130	1,077
Industrial	27	26	25	21	25
Lots (<10 ac)	3,146	2,953	2,854	2,826	2,811
Mining*	23	15	9	0	0
Residential	12,895	13,127	13,240	13,222	13,208
Trailers	1,017	900	796	736	726
Vacant (>10ac)	3,394	3,306	3,270	3,324	3,326
Totals	27,340	27,713	27,868	27,883	27,863
*Mining is now included in <i>commercial</i> .					

**Land Use Changes**

Although it does not provide the acreage, the tax assessment category of the parcels in the County provides another means to gauge the change in land use since the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The assessment records show no significant changes in the types and number of parcels over the past ten years. The number of agricultural parcels increased, and as previously discussed, the increase in the number of commercial parcels is related to natural gas development. Increases or decreases in parcel numbers which appear inconsistent with prior years may be related to a change in assessment, the combination of parcels or the improvement of a lot.

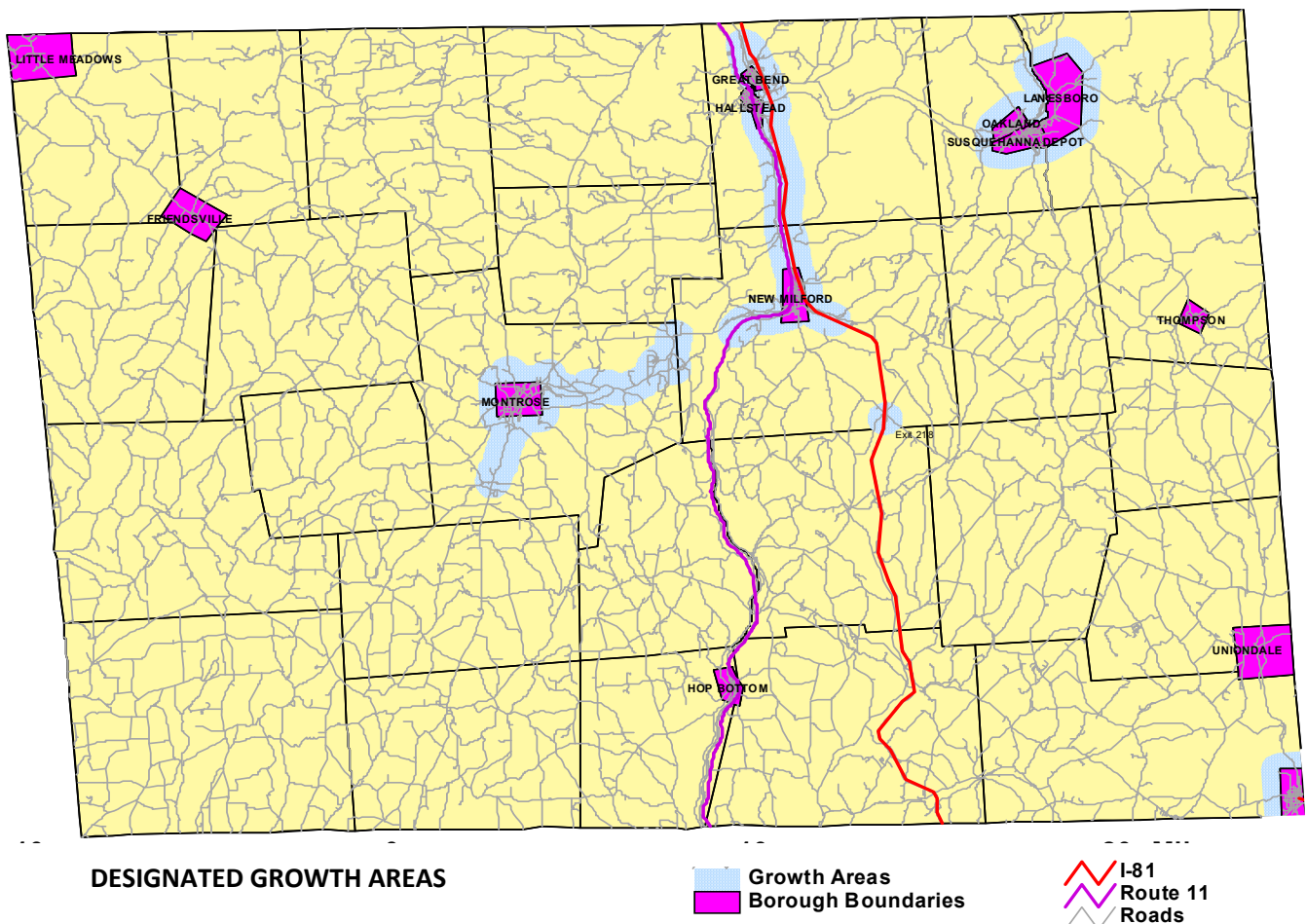
**Growth Areas**

This Comprehensive Plan reaffirms the designated growth areas, future growth areas and rural resource areas identified by the 2003 Plan which notes: *(This) reflects the direction taken by the Year 2000 amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) which included definitions of designated growth area, future growth area, and rural resource area. These types of designations serve well for envisioning the future growth and development of the County. The County Land Use Plan is intended to serve as a broad foundation for municipalities to build on as local plans are developed. In short, local municipal and multi-municipal plans will be more specific than the County Plan in terms of designating growth and development areas and local plans will be the base for zoning and other land use management efforts. Without local municipal participation in managing land use, the county-wide land use vision will be impossible to achieve.*

**Land Uses of Regional Impact and Local Municipal Planning and Zoning** - The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, at §301(7), requires county comprehensive plans to *identify current and proposed land uses which have a regional impact and significance, such as large shopping centers, major industrial parks, mines and related activities, office parks, storage facilities, large residential developments, regional entertainment and recreational complexes, hospitals, airports and port facilities.*

Natural gas development with its community and environmental effects, and associated facilities such as compressor stations, power plants and liquefaction plants are clearly of *regional impact*.

How should local municipalities and the County plan for *land uses of regional impact*? As is the case with most development, some citizens will view a project as positive for the community and others will raise concerns, both legitimate points of view. Land use management is the prerogative of local government and comprehensive planning and cooperative zoning provide the best means for addressing *land uses of regional impact*.



**Generalized Future Land Use Plan**

The map titled Designated Growth Areas shows the principal population/commercial centers in the County, the major transportation routes, and areas served by public water and sewer which are the primary factors for designating growth areas. Based on these factors, five parts of the County are identified as *designated growth areas* and the important characteristics of each area are highlighted below, and taken together represent the *Susquehanna County Generalized Land Use Plan*. The detailed delineation of growth areas and implementation of the land use plan is dependent on the adoption of local municipal comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances and zoning districts which detail the mix and intensity of residential, commercial and industrial uses.

**Designated Growth Area**

An area that preferably includes and surrounds a borough or village, and within which residential and mixed use development is permitted or planned at densities of one unit to the acre or more, commercial, industrial and institutional uses are permitted or planned and public infrastructure services are provided or planned. (PA Municipalities Planning Code)

**SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY LAND USE PLAN**

Basic Land Use Planning Approach

- conserving and protecting the natural environment
- preserving agriculture and rural character
- protecting residential uses
- providing well-situated and appropriate development areas to accommodate projected growth
- encouraging commercial and industrial development in areas with adequate public infrastructure
- recognizing the use of natural resources, particularly timber, blue stone and natural gas, as part of the local economy

Factors for Delineating Future Land Use

- existing land use and existing municipal zoning districts
- availability of public water and sewer
- adequate road access and railroad service
- environmental constraints
- extent of agricultural use

Forest City

- Located in southeast corner of the County with easy access to the Lackawanna Valley Industrial Highway via State Route 171 and State Route 6.
- Existing higher density residential development and commercial development.
- Public water and public sewer.
- Within six miles of railroad service in Carbondale.
- Active industrial development organization – Greater Forest City Industries, Inc.
- Natural gas service available

Susquehanna - Oakland - Lanesboro

- Located in northeast section of the County with easy access to I-81 via State Route 171.
- Existing higher density residential development and commercial development.
- Public water and public sewer.
- Potential for direct railroad service via siding.

New Milford - Great Bend - Hallstead

- Located in north-central Susquehanna County with direct access to I-81 via New Milford and Great Bend interchanges.
- Existing higher density residential development and commercial development.
- Public water and public sewer in New Milford.
- Direct railroad service with potential for commercial/industrial load/off-load siding.

Montrose - Bridgewater

- Located in central Susquehanna County with access to I-81 via State Route 706 and State Route 11.
- Existing higher density residential development and commercial development.
- Historically served as commercial/activity center given that Montrose Borough is the County Seat.
- Public water and public sewer with sewer extension several miles east along State Route 706.

- Natural gas service available.

Gibson Interchange

- Located about midway in the County on I-81 with direct access via an interchange
- Existing and proposed commercial development.
- Private central sewer available if capacity is increased.
- Level land available which is suitable for development.

*Future growth areas* are designated around the *designated growth areas* and would not be developed until the designated growth areas can no longer absorb the higher density residential and larger scale commercial development. The balance of the County is designated *rural resource area* with the principal goal of protecting open land and agricultural land and preserving agriculture, forestry and quarrying as viable components of the local economy. Similar to the *growth areas*, one or more locally designated

**Future Growth Area**

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

**Rural Resource Area**

Rural resource uses including agriculture, timbering, mining, quarrying and other extractive industries, forest and game lands and recreation and tourism are encouraged, single family residential and commercial development and light manufacturing compatible with such uses is permitted, and provision of public infrastructure is not anticipated now or in the very long term.

(PA Municipalities Planning Code)

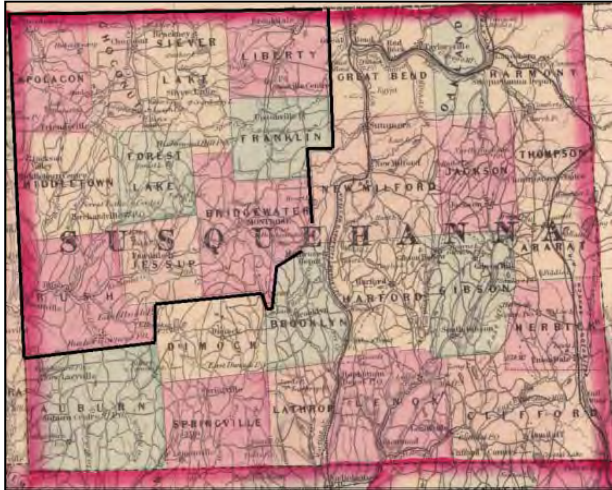
zoning districts should further define the bounds and types of uses permitted. Recognizing that farmers and other large landowners have long been good stewards of their land and must be able to glean a reasonable economic return from this care, single-family residential development and commercial development and light manufacturing should be permitted by local zoning in accord with performance standards aimed at minimizing externalities, that is, negative spillover effects. Local municipal and multi-municipal plans may identify within the county-designated rural resource areas, sub-areas or *village centers* to serve as local focal points for commercial development and social activities. These *village centers* would include smaller scale development than anticipated for the *designated growth areas* and *future growth areas* envisioned by the overall County plan. Development techniques such as conservation residential subdivision design and planned residential development and transfer of development rights should be encouraged to minimize effects on agriculture and open land.

**Intermunicipal Planning**

Population changes, the highway network, economic development, land use planning and management, and environmental protection all transcend municipal boundaries and demand regional attention. The importance of intermunicipal cooperation on growth and development issues in the County cannot be overemphasized. While this *Comprehensive Plan* identifies growth area and sets broad parameters for the future of Susquehanna County, the ultimate responsibility for planning at the community level remains with local governments.

Local planning is particularly important for land use management and community facilities and services, while sharing a vision for the future development of the community and sharing limited resources to provide facilities is a clear advantage. In addition, planning issues vary throughout the County, and inter-municipal planning can focus the efforts of participating municipalities on the issues of most importance.

Two groups of municipalities in the County have each adopted a multi-municipal comprehensive plan which provides the basis for adoption of cooperative zoning among each group of participating municipalities and these municipalities should consider working together on zoning. The Northern Tier Coalition is comprised of Friendsville and Little Meadows Boroughs and Apolacon, Bridgewater, Choconut, Forest Lake, Franklin, Jessup, Liberty, Middletown, Rush, and Silver Lake Townships; and the Eastern Susquehanna County Partnership was comprised of Thompson and Union Dale Boroughs and Ararat, Gibson, Herrick and Thompson Townships. Each plan address common issues and identifies means of intermunicipal cooperation for land use management with zoning and the provision of community facilities and services.



The New Topographical Atlas of Pennsylvania, Stehman, Brown & Lyon, 1872, Philadelphia.

**NORTHERN TIER COALITION**  
SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

**MULTI-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

APOLACON TOWNSHIP BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP CHOCONUT TOWNSHIP FOREST LAKE TOWNSHIP FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP FRIENDSVILLE BOROUGH	JESSUP TOWNSHIP LIBERTY TOWNSHIP LITTLE MEADOWS BOROUGH MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP RUSH TOWNSHIP SILVER LAKE TOWNSHIP
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Financed in part by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development with a Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program grant.

**The Eastern Susquehanna County Partnership**  
**Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan**

**Adopted November 2005**

**EASTERN  
SUSQUEHANNA  
COUNTY  
PARTNERSHIP**

**Gannett Fleming**  
*Celebrating 40 years of Excellence*



**Community Survey**

The community survey addresses land use management issues and the results, which support the need for local municipalities to take the lead role, are reported in the accompanying tables. Zoning is the only option for directing growth and development to certain areas and a large majority of respondents believe this is important. Almost 45 percent of respondents believe the boroughs and townships should take the lead role in land use management decisions and almost 30 percent believe the County should.

7. New growth and development should be managed and be directed to certain areas.	
Very important	45.2%
Somewhat important	37.5%
Not very important	8.9%
Not sure	8.4%

**Land Use Management**

This Comprehensive Plan recognizes local municipal authority and calls for local land use management as authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The comprehensive plan, the subdivision and land development ordinance and the zoning ordinance are the principal land use management tools which are available to counties and local municipalities in Pennsylvania. And, per the MPC, the adoption of a subdivision and land development ordinance or a zoning ordinance by a local municipality supersedes any county ordinance.

8. Who should take the lead role in land use management decisions?	
Borough / Township	43.7%
County	29.2%
The free market	15.4%
Other (please specify)*	11.6%
*See Appendix A for details	

In the case of Susquehanna County, the Board of Commissioners has chosen to adopt a subdivision and land development ordinance, but to refrain from adopting a county-wide zoning ordinance. The County Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission understand the benefits zoning would bring, such as planned commercial and industrial development, the separation of incompatible land uses, environmental protection, and the conservation of natural resources; and support the concept of zoning for the local municipalities and particularly intermunicipal zoning. This position is obviously shared by most county commissioners in the Commonwealth, with less than ten of sixty-seven counties having adopted zoning ordinance. Zoning has historically been viewed as a local municipal prerogative and most counties are reluctant to exercise authorities generally held by local officials. Townships and boroughs typically want to manage land use locally by adopting a zoning ordinance or by making the decision that zoning is not necessary. In addition, the expanse of the County with its 40 municipalities and varied community development make a county-wide ordinance impractical.

<p><u>SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCES</u>                  Ararat Township                  Clifford Township                  Forest City Borough                  Liberty Township                  Montrose Borough                  Silver Lake Township                  Susquehanna Depot Borough                  Thompson Township</p> <p><u>ZONING ORDINANCES</u>                  Forest City Borough                  Hop Bottom Borough                  Herrick Township                  Montrose Borough                  New Milford Borough                  Susquehanna Depot Borough</p>
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**Zoning Ordinance Versus Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance**

- A zoning ordinance and a subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) are the two most used land use management tools in the Commonwealth.
- A zoning ordinance divides a municipality into districts to designate areas of a community where certain types of uses are permitted -- residential vs. commercial vs. industrial.
- Zoning also regulates lot size, building height, setbacks and how nonresidential uses operate in terms of potential community effects such as noise and lighting.
- A subdivision and land development ordinance governs how land is divided into lots and the infrastructure development (but not location) of commercial/industrial buildings (known as land developments).
- The SALDO, according to state law, cannot regulate the location of commercial/industrial buildings.
- The SALDO also sets standards for the infrastructure required to serve major subdivisions and commercial land developments -- roads, sewage disposal, water supply and stormwater management facilities. This is important to ensure that new development is an asset to the community.

**Traditional Versus  
Performance Zoning**

Traditionally, zoning has been used to divide communities into various districts to segregate various land use types such as agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial. The intent is to prevent the *externalities*, or the negative spillover effects, of one use on an adjoining use. One of the problems faced by local officials in designating districts, particularly in rural areas, is determining the ideal use of the hundreds of parcels of land in the community. Each parcel may have the potential for many uses and limiting the use of one parcel to agriculture while allowing commercial development on other parcels may result in a windfall for one owner and severe limitation for another. More recently, municipalities have begun to use *performance zoning* or flexible zoning. In its purest form, *performance zoning* would allow any type of land use on any parcel of land and would control the negative spillovers with development standards. Ordinance criteria would govern such issues as building height, noise, setbacks, lighting, and buffers aimed at protecting the rights of adjoining landowners and community at large, and all new development would be subject to the performance standards.

**Recommended Zoning**

The County Planning Commission envisions zoning ordinances for the local municipalities which use a combination of the traditional district designation approach and performance zoning. District designation is important to recognize areas already developed and where the restriction of incompatible uses can be logically applied. Existing residential neighborhoods, residential subdivisions, downtown main streets and interstate interchanges are good examples. In areas with little development, a broad range of uses would be permitted and performance standards would be applied. Local municipalities would develop zoning ordinances within this broad framework creating such

zoning districts and including the performance standards necessary to address local needs.

**Intermunicipal Zoning** Intermunicipal, cooperative zoning would carry this approach to the next level with two or more municipalities working together to develop, adopt, and administer zoning in their respective township or borough. This approach, authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code if based on a joint comprehensive plan, allows great flexibility. Each municipality can adopt and administer its own ordinance or can adopt and administer a joint ordinance. Zoning cannot be used to exclude particular uses from a municipality, a dogma long held firm by the courts. In other words, a local municipal zoning ordinance must provide reasonable opportunity for the development of all legitimate uses including such activities as adult businesses, cell towers, solid waste disposal facilities, jails, and drug treatment centers. Cooperative zoning enables participating municipalities to spread the range of legitimate uses around the entire area, each not having to provide for each use within individual municipal boundaries. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires a joint comprehensive plan and formal intermunicipal implementation agreements between all municipalities participating in cooperative zoning. Other

**Why zone in rural areas?** Remember, the basic reason for land controls is self-interest. This self-interest is described well in a pamphlet by the extension service of Michigan State University.

*Regardless of where you live or what your interests may be, you surely value your property. You would like your home, your farm, your place of business, your summer cottage - whatever you own - to be worth as much a few years from now as it is today. But, without zoning, many things can happen to your community. Everyone is more or less free to use his property in nearly any way he pleases. The use may be in harmony or in conflict with the interests of the community. It may seriously injure the value of your property. It may even destroy the enjoyment you have had in your property.*

*As property changes hands in your neighborhood, do you know what the new owners will do? If heirs, will they continue the former use? Or will they sell to a stranger because they live elsewhere or do not care to continue the former use? Then how will the stranger use the property? Injuries to your property may be due to mere thoughtlessness on the part of neighboring property owners. They may come from I-don't-care newcomers. They may arise from someone's desire to exploit a location or resource for a particular use at the expense of all other property owners.*

*You won't have a very definite answer until your town or county has enacted a zoning ordinance governing the future use of property. While zoning cannot change existing conditions, it can protect the future value of your property.*

*Zoning is not only in the individual's interest, it is in the community's interest, too: A few years can bring many changes to a community. Unless changes are guided, most communities tend to grow like Topsy. Some become quite a hodgepodge in the course of time, often with mixed-up land uses that cruelly hurt each other. When this occurs, then property values begin slipping. But taxes tend to go up. Special assessments may even be levied to meet the cost of doctoring up the hit-and-miss developments. Thousands of dollars must often be spent to change the makeshift roads or streets into a more useful transportation system – to create a safe sewage disposal system – to provide an adequate fire-fighting or water system. But hit-and-miss is not easily revamped or redesigned into an efficient system. It is better to have had a plan to begin with. The expense is less both in taxes and in costs to the property owner. The results are better. (Source: Rural and Small Town Planning, Getzels, J and Thurow, C., American Planning Association, 1979, p. 56.)*

benefits derived from intermunicipal zoning include the ability to address land use on an area wide basis, less duplication of effort, shared manpower and staff costs, increased availability of grant monies, and the option of using one zoning hearing board. In addition, the cost of developing a joint comprehensive plan would be less than individual plans for each municipality.

#### **Zoning PROs**

Businesses and citizens have predictability in surrounding land uses - Citizens and business owners have a basic idea of how the property around them may be used in the future. This helps in making purchase decisions and long-term development or use decisions.

Businesses and citizens have assurance that their business prospects and investments will be protected - Citizens or businesses have protection from development that is not compatible with the use of their property. This protects a property owner's investment because a neighboring property cannot be developed in a way that will negatively affect the value of their property.

The ability to guide future development will prevent haphazard or patchwork development - A community can be developed in an orderly manner which ultimately provides convenience to the citizen and business owner and protection from adversely suited development.

Conflicts between residents and businesses or industry can be minimized - The areas designated for residential purposes and business or industrial purposes can be separated by zoning district or by setbacks and buffers to avoid conflicts between uses that affect quality of life, and by applying development performance standards such as noise and lighting control.

Provides for greater citizen impact in planning decisions - In certain cases, particularly for development which may have a negative effect on neighbors, a public hearing can be required. This enables the municipality to consider the testimony of residents in making land use decisions.

#### **Zoning CONs**

Property Rights - Zoning does limit the property rights of landowners. The courts have held that this is constitutional for the benefit of community-wide public health, safety and general welfare. Zoning is not constitutional if it is unreasonable, arbitrary, limits the use of property to the point of confiscation or totally excludes a legal use.

Fees - A municipality may charge fees for the administration of a zoning ordinance. The fees can cover the costs of administration, but cannot be used as a money-making operation.

Longer Process - When a public hearing is required for certain commercial or industrial uses, the process may take several months. However, if a new building is proposed, detailed plans must also be prepared for submission to the County under the subdivision and land development ordinance and the zoning and County approval can be processed concurrently.

Existing Land Uses - To a certain extent, zoning limits the development potential of previously existing land uses and structures that do not conform to the zoning's standards.

Long-term Commitment - Properly enforcing a zoning ordinance involves a long-term commitment to a certain level of community spending.

#### **Actions**

Actions related to land use, resource conservation and environmental protection are detailed in Section IV which reflects the importance of natural gas extraction and carries forward many of the actions addressed by the 2003 Comprehensive Plan. Actions in addition to those in the 2003 Plan include:

County

- Continue to apply the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to all gas-related land developments to the extent permitted by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.
- Continue to provide services to meet the needs of its residents irrespective of the changes precipitated by the Marcellus Shale.

Local Municipalities

- Update existing zoning ordinances to address recent land use issues.
  - Reconsider intermunicipal zoning ordinances based on the already completed comprehensive plans – Northern Tier Coalition and Eastern Susquehanna County Partnership.
  - Consider adopting comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.
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## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### Plan Focus

Counties in Pennsylvania are charged with providing a variety of specific facilities and services dependent on the classification of the county. Susquehanna County is a Sixth Class County and provides facilities and services ranging from the Courthouse and court system to real estate tax assessment to solid waste planning. A detailed list of facilities and services provided by the County are included in Appendix B. This Plan Update focuses on those facilities and services provided by the County.

### 2003 Plan

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan Update included the following list of administrative and departmental planning issues:

- *Many County Departments are experiencing an increased demand for services.*
- *Demand for social services and the court system case load is generally increasing more than for other services, and at a rate higher than the County population growth.*
- *The need for additional staff and office space is critical in a number of departments and was identified as a near term need by several other offices.*
- *Several departments identified a need for more privacy for client interviews, hearings and conferences.*
- *Records consolidation, storage, and destruction are issues with many departments.*

#### ***Sixth Class County***

Susquehanna County, with a 2015 Census population estimate of 42,238 persons would be classified as a *Seventh Class County*, however, a previous Board of Commissioners opted to move to the *sixth class* as enabled by the County Code and the State Constitution. In sixth and seventh class counties, the prothonotary and clerk of the courts are combined and the offices of register of wills, recorder of deeds, and clerk of orphans' court are held by one person.



Photo: Courtesy of Susquehanna County Sheriff's Department

As part of the 2003 planning process, County Department Heads were interviewed to gain a general understanding of responsibilities, current service levels, efficiency of office space and future needs. The increase in the number of County employees from 160 in 1990, to 199 in 1995, to 236 in 2002 clearly demonstrated the demand for County services had increased, and the need for additional office space was apparent. The increased demand was obviously related to the changes in the nature of the County population and the condition of the economy, along with more state and federal programs and expanding reporting requirements in existing programs. In 2017 the number of employees was reduced to 214.

**Recent County  
Actions**

The courthouse was constructed in 1865 as a single facility. As the years passed, the Warner Building, formerly the Montrose School, and the Sheriffs Building, the old Fire Station, were all connected. However, the property received general maintenance but little in the way of major improvements over the years.

In 2012 the Board of Commissioners decided that major improvements were needed because the facility that was not compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. The heating system boiler was over 100 years old requiring the maintenance department to shovel coal twice a day, seven days a week. There was little or no air conditioning and air exchanges were non-existent, resulting in poor interior air quality. Electrical issues also existed with panels overheating and shorting out. Restrooms were inadequate and also not ADA compliant.

The move forward started with an energy audit to determine where savings could be achieved and the Commissioners entered into a Performance Contract with Johnson Controls International (JCI). That type of contract had several benefits to the County. First, it guarantees energy savings each year, and if those savings are not realized JCI would pay the difference to the County. Second, it provides a fixed price for the project. If the engineers or architects miss something that results in more costs, the County does not pay, JCI does.

The heating system in the Courthouse was upgraded with two new gas fired boilers and new control systems, all computer controlled. It also placed new air conditioning throughout the Courthouse bringing much needed fresh air to the facility. Door seals and upgraded energy efficient lighting units were

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installed in the entire facility. This phase also placed new natural gas boilers in the County Office Building. At the County Jail it replaced all the old electric roof top units with new gas fired heat and air conditioning units.

A second floor was added in the old gym to accommodate the Assessment Office and Historical Records. The first floor of the old gym now houses the Treasurer, Tax Claim, Auditors, and an employee lunch room. These were important changes as it moved offices out of the basement, which was never intended for offices. The other key part of this change allowed the District Magistrate's office to move out of the old Jail and relocate into the back of the Warner building where the Treasurer was housed. Again, all of these changes made the County offices more accessible and saved the taxpayers money through energy savings.

The three buildings were connected and an addition was completed to house new ADA public restrooms, the District Attorney's Office, the Victim Witness Office and several meeting rooms. This also provided the public a new handicapped accessible entrance.

In summary, this was a major, long overdue reconstruction of the County's properties. The energy savings will pay for the project in less than 25 years. As of the first three years following completion, the savings have been higher than targeted.

Also during this period, the Commissioners replaced the columns on the front of the Courthouse. The original construction allowed water to enter the columns and deteriorate the bases. Upon review it was found that most of the columns were swinging in mid air and no longer in contact at the base. In addition, the Recycling Center also received major upgrades including a new bailer, forklifts, skid steers, doors, painting, and flooring.

#### **Current County Actions**

In 2018 the County is moving forward with the rebuilding of the clock tower and Courthouse roof. The Courthouse roof has been deteriorating over the years due to two fires. The first fire was in the late 1800's when it was reported that the clock tower was struck by lightning. The second fire was in the early 1900's when a painter was using a torch to remove paint on the front columns. Although the fires were extinguished, the structure of the roof received significant damage that remained unrepaired. Over the years the burnt beams and trusses deteriorated to a point that structural integrity was compromised. A section on the roof sheeting had collapsed exposing the rubber membrane with no support. The repair will replace some of the

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damaged beams and trusses and brace and repair the rest of the wood structure. The clock tower is rotted and will be repaired with wood and covered with maintenance free material which will keep the appearance to its original format. All lighting will be upgraded to energy efficient LED lighting. The final step will be to replace the roof using lifetime shingles that will complete the project. Also in 2018, the Commissioners will be constructing a new maintenance building located adjacent to the Jail and Recycling Center. This will enable the Maintenance Department to protect and maintain County equipment indoors.

**Additional County  
Actions**

The next focus is on the Public Safety Office. In July 2017 the County suffered a huge loss at the 911 Communications Center when a massive rain storm overtopped the roof drains and flooded the Adult Probation Department and the entire 911 Center. It was a total loss. The County was forced to modify other rooms to bring the 911 Center back online. The County is now planning the construction of a new 911 Center.

In addition, the District Magisterial Judge Office in New Milford is a rental property that has passed its useful life. The County is in the process of securing land at the I-81 Gibson Interchange to build a new Public Safety Center that would house, in one building, the 911/EOC departments. A second building would house the District Magisterial Judge Office, with a third building for the Coroner, Maintenance, and Task Force. The goal is to be able to use grant money and Act 13 gas impact fee funding to complete the projects. This will also enable the County to comply with the Continuation of Government regulations.

**Future County  
Actions**

In the next 10 years there will be a need for major upgrades and additions to the County Jail which is almost thirty years old. Systems are failing and upgrades are needed for the facility to remain in state compliance. This should be the last major project in the County for many years. If we are successful with grants this will have a huge savings for the taxpayers for many years to come.

**County Finances**

The status of the County's finances could not be better. In 2012 the County had a long term debt of some thirteen million dollars in the underfunded County pension system, but by 2018, the pension fund was not only fully funded but funded at 124 percent. This enables the County to reduce its annual contribution to almost zero. The fund is basically self-sustaining which in turn saves the taxpayers.

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The County now has no short term debt and no long term debt. The County has not raised taxes in ten years and will continue to control revenues and expenditures to continue that goal. All future projects will use as much grant funding as possible to limit the local tax burden.

**Community Survey  
County Services**

The community survey conducted as part of this Comprehensive Plan Update queried residents about a number of services provided or supported by county government.

- The top three items that respondents believe need more attention are job creation, improving telecommunications and improving healthcare availability.
- Most respondents indicated that all other items/issues need more attention.
- Many of the items go well beyond County authority and are dependent on private, local municipal and state actions.

2. Looking to the future compared to the present, how much attention should be given to the following?					
Answer Options	Less	No change	More	Not sure	Response Count
Programs for affordable housing*	111	493	695	236	1535
Job creation*	18	116	1358	46	1538
Environmental quality protection*	63	556	834	86	1539
Improving social services	65	514	693	261	1533
Improving health care availability	21	467	971	80	1539
Increased recreation opportunities	40	596	820	76	1532
Managing land development*	89	524	646	264	1523
Improving telecommunications	28	334	1103	59	1524
Improving recycling facilities	28	656	750	97	1531
Agricultural / forestry promotion*	53	493	787	175	1508

\*Addressed in other Plan sections.

- All listed services were identified by more respondents as needing *more attention* except public libraries.
- Drug/alcohol treatment and education and senior citizen services and received the greatest number of *more attention* responses.
- Veteran’s services and children and youth services each ranked high in terms of requiring more attention.

6. Looking to the future compared to the present, how much attention should be given to the following:					
Answer Options	Less	No change	More	Not sure	Response Count
Veterans services	10	359	989	176	1534
Children and youth services	30	437	901	167	1535
Senior citizen services	10	368	1046	114	1538
Low / moderate income family services	122	539	696	177	1534
Drug / alcohol treatment, education	65	320	1054	99	1538
Adult / juvenile probation support services	67	557	602	301	1527
Child / spouse court support orders	64	546	566	349	1525
Emergency management planning	40	549	730	212	1531
Public libraries	127	790	513	93	1523

**Internet Service**

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan discussed in detail the importance of high speed (*broadband*) Internet access that is always active and much faster than traditional dial-up access, noting that such service *would provide residents with greatly improved access to educational, health care, and community services while fostering substantial economic growth.* Unfortunately, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reports some 800,000 Pennsylvanians lack access to high-speed internet access with 20 percent or 160,000 in rural areas.

The 2003 Plan goes on to cite limitations which remain valid: *Susquehanna County has a population of about 42,000 people (42,335 projected for 2020) dispersed widely over about 825 square miles, with about a dozen clusters accounting for 20-30% of the population. The topography is very hilly pasture and woodlands with an adequate but limiting road structure. These characteristics strongly affect the economic deployment of different modes of broadband telecommunications for much of the county and its population.*

Although the FCC administers the Connect America Fund to subsidize service in rural areas, internet service in Susquehanna County remains inadequate. Community survey respondents reported *improving telecommunications*, second only to *improving job opportunities* as one of community facilities needing more attention. (See preceding Question 2 Table.) Realizing that improvement of telecommunications is largely dependent on private investment, the following are key actions with the primary interest in serving educational institutions and areas where economic development is most likely to occur.

The **FCC Universal Service Fund** is a system of telecommunications subsidies and fees managed by the United States Federal Communications Commission intended to promote universal access to telecommunications services in the United States. The FCC established the fund in 1997 in compliance with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The fund reported a total of \$7.82 billion in disbursements in 2014, divided among its four programs. The fund is supported by charging telecommunications companies a fee which is set quarterly. As of the third quarter of 2016, the rate is 17.9% of a telecom company's interstate and international end-user revenues.

The **FCC Connect America Fund** is the largest and most complex of the four Universal Services Fund programs and is intended to subsidize telecommunications, especially broadband, services in rural and remote areas, the program subsidizes telecommunications services in rural and remote areas and paid out \$4.17 billion in subsidies to telecommunications companies in 2013, with a goal of making telecommunications affordable to rural and remote areas. The program has been criticized as wasteful, granting large sums of money to telecommunications companies while having little effect on access. (Source: Wikipedia.)

- Promote deployment of an advanced telecommunications system, including widespread introduction of broadband services.
- Identify opportunities to encourage telecommunications providers to invest in Susquehanna County and take full advantage of state and federal financial assistance.
- Make the County Government an attractive *anchor client* for advanced services by forming *user consortiums* with county schools, libraries, and medical facilities and with neighboring counties. These can serve both to gain volume discounts on new services and to improve the likelihood of obtaining federal and state funding grants.
- Maintain a current awareness of County needs and of changes in the technology, regulatory, and market environments which may impact those needs.

### Recreation Facilities

This *Plan Update* recognizes the importance of recreation facilities to the quality of life and encourages local municipalities and community organizations to continue to provide and improve recreation opportunities. The majority of community survey respondents reported that more attention should be given to improving recreation opportunities. Many of the boroughs and townships and a number of community organizations in the County do provide recreation facilities for local and community-wide residents. These facilities range from playgrounds, sports fields and walking trails to a swimming pool in New Milford Borough.



**Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services** - Just as water, sewer, and public safety are considered essential public services, parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and a region.

Economic Value

- It is proven that private property values increase the value of privately owned land the closer such land is to parks.
- Quality parks and recreation are cited as one of the top three reasons that business cite in relocation.
- Parks and recreation programs . . . provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals

Health Benefits

- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors
- A study by Penn State University showed significant correlations to reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.

Social Importance

- Parks . . . provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life in a given community.
- Parks provide gathering places for . . . individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of ability to pay for access.
- Access to parks and recreation opportunities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and juvenile delinquency.

(<https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Resources/Parks-Recreation-Essential-Public-Services-January-2010.pdf>)

**Recreation Campus**

A group of County residents are searching for a site and looking to secure funding for a recreation campus that would provide a variety of sporting and community activities to all residents of the County. The County is supportive of such an endeavor and will provide technical assistance when requested.

**Rails-to-Trails**

Trails are recognized by this Plan as an important part of the community, benefitting County residents and stimulating tourism. The County supports additional trail improvement and development. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nationwide organization, notes:

- *As trail systems grow, they spark new investment in trailside businesses and commercial opportunities along the trail route. In urban areas, this supports trail-oriented development on the neighborhood scale; in rural and suburban communities, this spurs and supports tourism, bringing new dollars into the community.*
- *When people have safe places to walk within 10 minutes of their home, they are one and a half times more likely to meet recommended activity levels than those who don't. Comprehensive trail systems can give people new access to outdoor recreation opportunities.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Rail-Trail Council**

the Rail-Trail Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Inc., (RTC) is a non-profit organization whose goal for over 25 years has been to *renew Northeastern Pennsylvania's historic pathways as recreational trails for all to enjoy*. The concept of rail-trail is to transform old railroad beds into linear parks. The RTC has over 1,400 members who support the organization with membership dollars and volunteer hours and is led by a 30-member board with an office in Union Dale. The RTC has a part-time executive director and a part-time program manager.

The RTC relies on federal transportation enhancement (TE) funding for major trail improvement projects to resurface and repair drainage. These funds come through PennDOT and are very competitive. Due to a recent program change which does not allow non-profits to apply, the RTC must use a municipal sponsor or county authority. In addition, the program is capped at one million dollars which typically would allow completion of five or six miles of trail improvements. TE funding covers 100 percent of the construction costs, but design, engineering and permitting costs must come from RTC funds or other state funds.

State funding comes through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Recreational Trail funding. Depending on the type of funding, grants require either a 20 or 50 percent match (cash preferred). The RTC has used DCNR for master planning, feasibility studies, trailheads, engineering, bridge re-decking, and smaller trail projects. Funding

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/trailnation>

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from a new highly competitive program, DCED Act 13 Marcellus Shale Greenways and Trails funding, has been used for bridge projects.

Other sources of funding are small foundations, visitors' bureaus and heritage regions, natural gas companies and the Atlantic Sunrise Environmental Stewardship funding, membership donations and proceeds from the annual half-marathon held each fall.

### D&H Rail-Trail

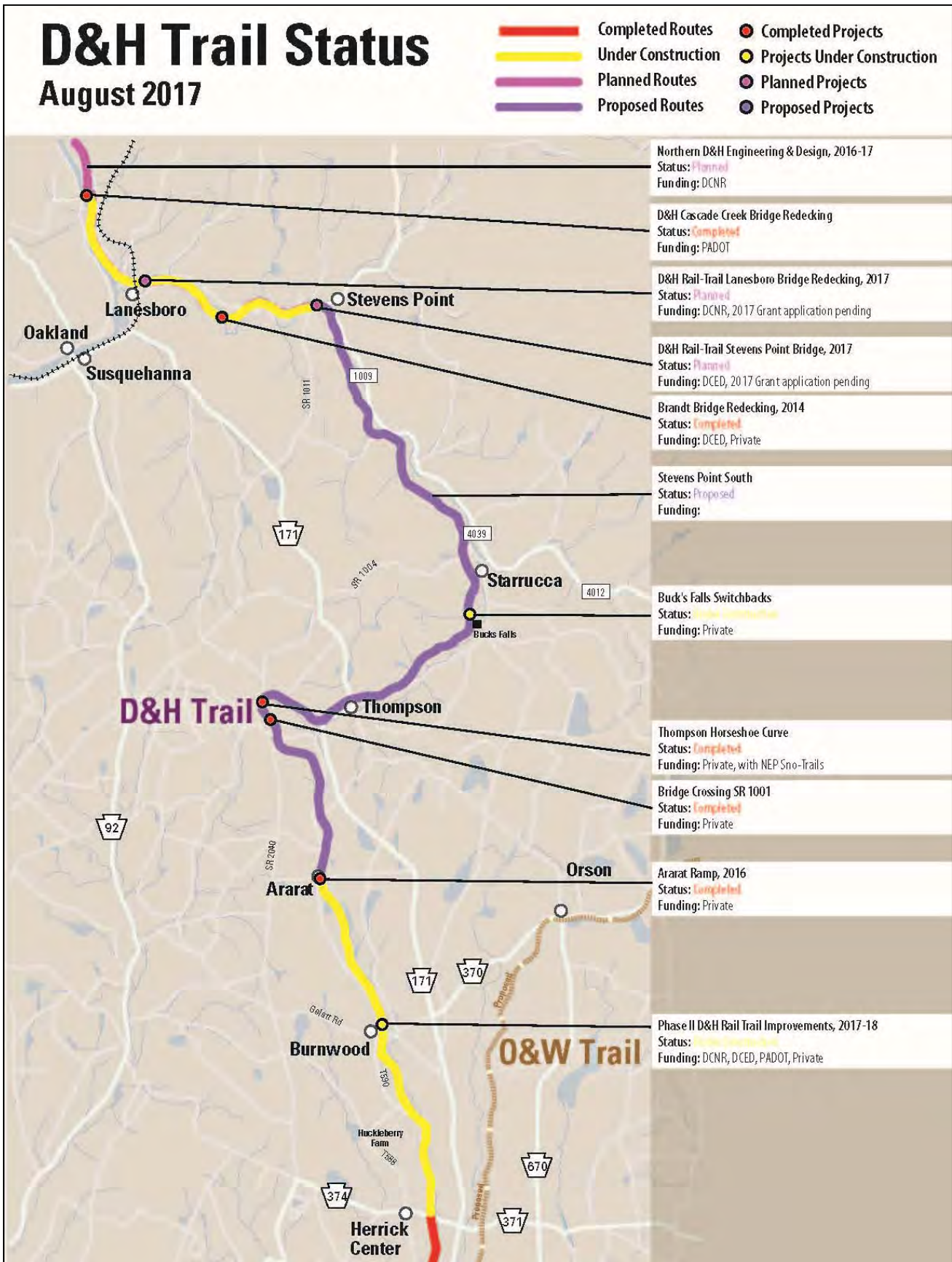
The main trail under development is the 38-mile D&H Rail-Trail along the eastern border of Susquehanna County. The trail begins in Simpson (Fell Township) and heads north through Forest City, Union Dale, Herrick Center, Burnwood, Ararat, Thompson, Starrucca, Lanesboro and ends at the New York border. The trail connects at its southern end to the 32-mile Lackawanna River Heritage Trail (LRHT) and together they are considered a 70-mile major greenway. The trail attracts runners, bikers, walkers, equestrians, cross-country skiers and snowshoers. The local snowmobile club (NEP Sno-Trails) assists in maintaining the trails which are part of their 200+ mile trail system.

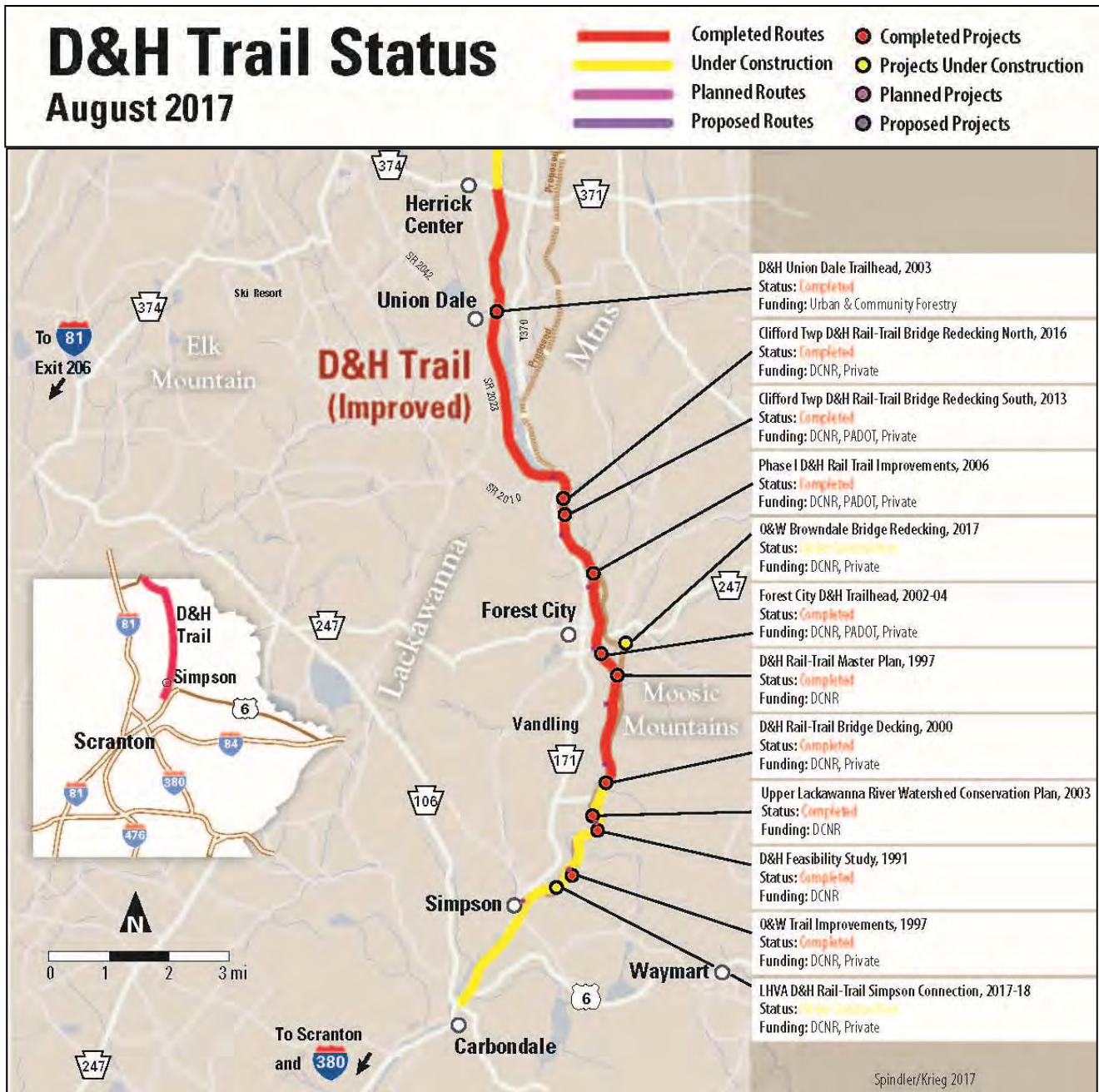
The D&H is owned outright by the RTC. A master plan, maintenance and management plan, risk management plan, signage plan and a yearly updated strategic plan are all in place. Ten miles of the D&H from Forest City to Herrick have drainage and surface improvements completed, and another seven miles of improvements from Herrick to Ararat are underway.



Other trail improvements include re-decking all railroad bridges with concrete decks and safety railings. Six of seven bridges have been re-decked; the last one waiting on potential state funding. A new span over the Starrucca Creek in Stevens Point is also pending a grant. An historical interpretive signage program has begun using small private grants. More signage relating the history of the area is anticipated. Directional signage and mile markers are still needed. A D&H "Pusher" Caboose will be restored as an interpretational display. The RTC is developing construction plans for the northern section from Stevens Point to the New York border and hopes to continue to receive funding for trail design and improvements. The RTC plans to complete all improvements of the 38-mile D&H trail in the next ten or twelve years.



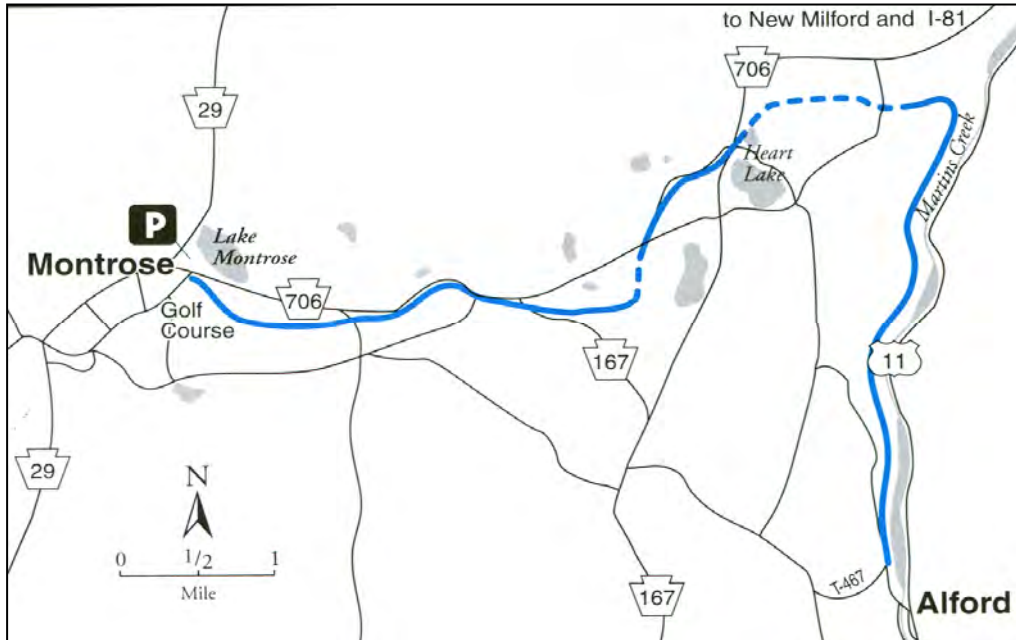




### O&W Rail-Trail

The O&W Rail-Trail is an eight-mile section from Simpson to Stillwater Dam (Clifford Township) which continues northward as an ATV and snowmobile trail under different ownership. This trail is not improved, but is very usable for walking and mountain biking. The RTC grades this section, controls access and repairs erosion problems. This trail provides a connection to the 1,400-acre Panther Bluff conservation area on the Moosic Mountains.





Endless Mountains Trail

**Endless Mountains Trail**

The 10-mile Endless Mountains Trail, formerly known as the Bridgewater Riding Trail, known as one of our nation’s first rail-trails, is the former Montrose Branch of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad from Alford to Montrose. Abandoned as a railroad around 1940, the trail has been used as a horseback riding trail ever since. The RTC took ownership in 2004, but a 2011 feasibility study found legal issues with ownership of the trail which are currently being addressed. A survey and trail easements are needed to resolve title issues and for eligibility for grant funding.

**Salt Springs State Park**

In 1994, Salt Springs became the first Pennsylvania state park to be funded and operated by a nonprofit volunteer organization - The Friends of Salt Springs, Inc. The Bureau of State Parks created Salt Springs State Park on a farmstead it purchased in 1973. Due to lack of funds the state was unable to maintain the property. In 1994 a group of citizens, in partnership with the Susquehanna County Commissioners, proposed that the Park be managed locally. After months of negotiations, the citizens gained approval and formed the nonprofit Friends of Salt Springs Park, Inc. The Friends has been the driving force behind improving the park facilities, restoring its buildings, enlarging its hiking trails, building the campgrounds and cottages, and providing year-round programs. Projects are funded with grants, donations, and membership, camping, and program fees.



The park includes a gorge with three magnificent waterfalls surrounded by a virgin hemlock forest and trails winding through 842 acres. At the base of the gorge is a bubbling salt spring, traces of an 1850s woolen mill, and mid-19th century farmhouses and barns. The Friends sponsor special events and recreational and educational programs all year based on the park's rich natural and human history.

The Friends has more than doubled the size of land open to the public. The park now includes an additional 437 acres owned exclusively by the Friends, the 300-acre Friends Land parcel adjacent to the park and another 137-acre tract adjacent to the Friends Land.<sup>2</sup>

**County**

- Work with local municipalities to identify park and recreation needs.

**Recreation Actions**

- Support municipal efforts to provide recreation opportunities through grants
- Support private entities such as the Rail-Trail Council, snowmobile clubs, riding clubs, etc., in their quest for grant funds to provide recreational opportunities.
- Support private efforts to provide a recreational campus in the County.

**Emergency Management**

The County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is responsible for coordinating local municipal emergency planning and maintaining an ongoing program of emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, and coordinates available county and local resources to deal with emergencies effectively, thereby saving lives, avoiding injury, and minimizing economic loss. Entities involved in emergency response include local governments and public works departments, police departments, fire companies, EMS providers and volunteers. The County EMA also operates the hazardous materials response and is involved in several community outreach and education programs.

**FEMA & PEMA** - The Federal Emergency Management Agency oversees emergency management at the federal level. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency coordinates state agency response to support county and local governments in the areas of civil defense; disaster mitigation; and preparedness, planning, and response to and recovery from man-made, technological or natural disasters.

<sup>2</sup> Compiled from [friendsofsaltspringspark.org](http://friendsofsaltspringspark.org).

## Emergency Management Activities

**Mitigation.** Sustained actions taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from hazards.\*

**Prevention.** Actions necessary to avoid, prevent, or stop an imminent threat or actual act of terrorism.\*\*

**Protection.** Actions necessary to secure the homeland against acts of terrorism and manmade or natural disasters.\*\*

**Preparedness.** Actions taken to plan, organize, equip, train, and exercise to build and sustain the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from those threats that pose the greatest risk to the security of the Nation.\*\*

**Response.** Actions necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred.\*\*

**Recovery.** Actions necessary to assist communities affected by an incident to recover effectively.\*\*

\* Source: 44 CFR §201.2 Mitigation Planning - Definitions.

\*\* Source: National Preparedness Goal, First Edition. September, 2011, FEMA. <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/prepared/npg.pdf>

## Hazard Mitigation Plan

Federal and state laws mandate local municipalities and counties to adopt hazard mitigation plans *to reduce the loss of life and property, human suffering, economic disruption, and disaster assistance costs resulting from natural disasters.*<sup>3</sup> FEMA defines hazard mitigation as *any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from hazardous conditions.* Examples of hazard mitigation measures include:

- Local plans and regulations: stormwater and floodplain management, building codes, zoning.
- Structural projects: stormwater detention, flood retaining walls, safe rooms.
- Natural systems protection: sediment and erosion control, stream corridor restoration, wetland preservation.
- Education and awareness: websites with maps and information, school and community presentation.
- Preparedness and response: updating hazard mitigation plans, mutual aid agreements, citizen notification procedures.

The current Susquehanna County Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted in 2012 and the County Emergency Management Agency is updating the Plan with completion anticipated in 2018. This Comprehensive Plan incorporates the findings and actions of the most current County Hazard Mitigation Plan and any updates.

### Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan (DRAFT)

*Purpose - The purpose of this All-Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is:*

- *To protect life, safety and property by reducing the potential for future damages and economic losses that result from natural hazards;*
- *To qualify for additional grant funding, in both the pre-disaster and the post-disaster environment;*
- *To speed recovery and redevelopment following future disaster events;*
- *To demonstrate a firm local commitment to hazard mitigation principles; and*
- *To comply with both state and federal legislative requirements for local hazard mitigation plans.*

<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the Stafford Act as amended by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

**Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan (DRAFT)**

*Scope: This Susquehanna County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan serves as a framework for saving lives, protecting assets and preserving the economic viability of the forty municipalities in Susquehanna County. The HMP outlines actions designed to address and reduce the impact of a full range of natural hazards facing Susquehanna County, including drought, earthquakes, flooding, tornados, hurricanes/tropical storms and severe winter weather. Manmade hazards such as transportation accidents, hazardous materials spills and fires are also addressed.*

*A multi-jurisdictional planning approach was utilized for the Susquehanna County HMP update, thereby eliminating the need for each municipality to develop its own approach to hazard mitigation and its own planning document. Further, this type of planning effort results in a common understanding of the hazard vulnerabilities throughout the county, a comprehensive list of mitigation projects, common mitigation goals and objectives and an evaluation of a broad capabilities assessment examining policies and regulations throughout the county and its municipalities.*

**Local Municipal Stormwater Management**

The Department of Environmental Protection has required several municipalities in the County to participate in the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer (MS4) Program with detailed planning and costly infrastructure improvements. This Plan Update recognizes the importance of stormwater management and the County will provide planning and technical assistance within County staff and cooperating agency abilities.

**MS4 Program** *The federal Clean Water Act (CWA) prohibits the discharge of pollutants into waterways without the appropriate permits. Pennsylvania’s Stormwater Management Act (better known as Act 167), MS4 Program, Chapter 102 (Erosion and Sediment Control Requirements), and NPDES Permit Program for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities are amongst the Commonwealth’s methods for meeting the runoff-related requirements of the Clean Water Act.*

*For all practical purposes, though, implementation of stormwater management efforts in Pennsylvania occurs at the community level because individual municipalities are ultimately responsible for adopting zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development regulations, and other programs that keep their locality’s runoff under control.*

*Contrary to the common perception, properly planning for stormwater can accomplish this goal while speeding the permitting process, saving on construction costs, and resulting in profitable projects that enhance a community in multiple ways.*

*(<http://www.stormwaterpa.org/how-to-apply-best-practices.html>)*

**An Ounce Of Prevention**

An entire suite of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) have been developed, techniques that range from preserving natural systems and minimizing disturbances to alleviating unavoidable impacts when they do occur through various “structural” means. An ounce of prevention truly is worth a pound of cure when it comes to stormwater management—and prevention comes from planning ahead.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Progress Authority



The Susquehanna County Board of Commissioners contracts with the Towanda-based Progress Authority for economic development services. The Progress Authority also provides similar services to Bradford County. The 12-member Susquehanna County Economic Development Advisory Board, appointed by the Board of Commissioners, serves as an advisory and policy group to the Authority. The Board of Commissioners will continue to work with the Progress Authority and the Susquehanna County Economic Development Advisory Board, and this Comprehensive Plan incorporates the Authority's annual work programs for Susquehanna County. The 2018 Work Program is included on the following pages.

### Progress Authority

The Progress Authority provides economic development technical assistance to address the needs of business. Its staff of highly motivated professionals has established a track record of excellence in working with businesses. We have had great success in leveraging incentive grant programs with low-interest loan financing to provide attractive financing packages for business development projects, infrastructure upgrades and workforce development programs.

#### Progress Authority Programs

The Progress Authority is an economic development organization serving Bradford and Susquehanna Counties, Pennsylvania.

We focus on direct projects involving Industrial Development, Small Business Development, Business Financing, Public Infrastructure Development, Site Preparation, Marketing, and Workforce Development for the benefit of our community. The Progress Authority has worked to address business needs and expansion opportunities through advocacy, funding assistance, and project facilitation since 1993. We own and operate the One Progress Plaza building in downtown Towanda, PA.

The Progress Authority provides economic development technical assistance to address the needs of business. Its staff of highly motivated professionals has established a track record of excellence in working with businesses. We have had great success in leveraging incentive grant programs with low-interest loan financing to provide attractive financing packages for business development projects, infrastructure upgrades and workforce development programs. The Progress Authority also provides a direct, experienced link between businesses and local, state, and federal funding sources and regulatory agencies.

The Progress Authority can trace its roots to the Pennsylvania Enterprise Zone program. Our organization now manages Enterprise Zones in both Bradford and Susquehanna Counties, and this has provided us with local resources for business Dry Kiln development. The Progress Authority administers a local low-interest Revolving Loan Fund that helps to stimulate private investment in business development projects. Our RLF application form can be found under programs to the right.

In addition to the Progress Authority Revolving Loan Fund, an abundance of programs exist to support businesses in our community. The following links detail selected federal, state, and local agencies that have provided funding and support to economic development projects in Bradford and Susquehanna Counties. Additionally, Progress Authority staff members are happy to review potential projects and work to match up appropriate funding sources. ([www.cbprogress.org](http://www.cbprogress.org).)



**The Progress Authority, Susquehanna County 2018 Work Program**Organizational:

- The Progress Authority will meet monthly with the Economic Development Board to prioritize projects of significance to Susquehanna County.
- Continue to effectively manage and expand when possible the EZ Revolving Loan Fund and the SSBCI (State Small Business Credit Initiative Revolving Loan Fund).
  - 2 loans closed in Susquehanna County.
  - 50 jobs created.
  - 75 jobs retained.

County Relations:

- Monthly meetings with the Susquehanna County Commissioners, to provide economic development updates and project opportunities.
- Meet with legislators bi-annually and as needed for specific projects and project updates.
- Implement Housing Development Study.
- Develop marketing initiatives and plan.
- Foster strong PREP (Partners for Regional Economic Performance) primary partnership with the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, Northeastern Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center, Small Business Development Center (University of Scranton) and associated parties; finalize and complete roundtable discussions.
  - 4 client referrals to PREP partners.
  - 4 joint calls with PREP partners.
  - Pursue feasibility planning for countywide Open Access dark fiber network. Appalachian Regional Commission submission.
- Continue to administer the Susquehanna County Enterprise Zone through the Keystone Communities Program and grow local financing resources. Utilize all state programs when available.
  - Secure funding for formal Enterprise Zone strategy plan, if available

Business Opportunities:

- Develop Open Access dark fiber network.
- Target gun and ammunition manufacturers to take advantage of Pennsylvania's regulatory environment and the County's existing technical/ machining capabilities. Effort made in 2016. Will address in marketing plan.
- Continue development of rail transload.

- Solidify relationships with major employers in Susquehanna County to create awareness of the Progress Authority's capabilities and funding opportunities.
- Continue working with small business task force to recognize and foster small business in our county whenever we can.
- Meet regularly with commercial lenders in the county to make them aware of the financing opportunities that the Progress Authority offers.
- Developed a local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) for new projects in specified municipalities.
- Develop tax abatement opportunities such as state KOZ, Enterprise Zone, Tax Credits, etc., should they become available.

Funding:

Explore additional bond financing opportunities to support economic development through our Industrial Development Commission/Authority mechanisms.

- Maintain Progress Authority's ongoing PA Department of Community and Economic Development certification and actively promote relevant financing programs.
- Act as a conduit for state and federal funding sources that can benefit private business projects.

Infrastructure and Business Development:

- Support key infrastructure projects and enhancements involving public water, sewer, electrical, natural gas distribution and transmission pipelines, telecommunications and data infrastructure, primary and secondary roads, and rail.
- Maintain an inventory of potential business development sites in Susquehanna County as prospective project destinations.
- Explore Value-Added opportunities to attract manufacturers that can capitalize on local Marcellus Shale natural gas resources and also utilize the existing Buckeye liquids line for transport.
- Continue to market key business development sites and seek occupancy for available vacant industrial/commercial facilities.
- Continue to market key business development sites and seek occupancy for available vacant industrial/commercial facilities.
- Implement specific critical projects, including:
  - Industrial park location along the 1-81 corridor.
  - Promote upgrades at the Gibson Interchange of 1-81 to allow future development along Route 848 and Oliver Road.

- Continue assistance to Endless Mountains Health Systems with the construction of Phase III of the new hospital campus.
- Work with Greater Forest Cities Industries, Inc., to continue to seek occupancy for the Vision 2000 Industrial Park.
- Promote redevelopment of the Hallstead Foundry site.
- Continue to work with Leatherstocking, LLC for the development of the natural gas distribution lines.
- Continue efforts to occupy and utilize vacant industrial properties.
- Continue to promote tax abatement incentives to promote economic development in Susquehanna County.
- Work with county and local officials to support the growth and development of the travel destination in Oakland Township built by the LDS Mormons at the Aaronic Priesthood Restoration site.
- Support 1MG Energy efforts to build several more electrical generating stations in Susquehanna County.
- Work with tourism and historical site agencies to promote visitors to recreation and historic sites in the county.
- Continue efforts to help Montrose Area Industrial Development Authority and Susquehanna County Industrial Development Authority wind down their activities and direct their accrued funds to county projects.
- React quickly and responsibly as future business development projects are identified during 2018.

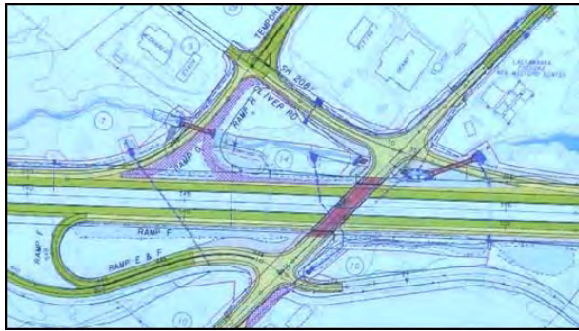
**Target Site Assessment** In December 2014 the Board of Commissioners issued the Susquehanna Target Site Assessment, prepared by Delta Development Group, Inc. The report notes: *With the emergence of Pennsylvania's natural gas industry in 2005 and its continued growth, the Susquehanna County Board of Commissioners (Commissioners) has recognized that the development of a new business park is a unique opportunity to accommodate economic growth related to the natural gas industry and to also encourage additional economic development and diversification. The purpose of this study is to determine if the regional economy will support a new business park and, if so, to identify target industries for recruitment and the optimal location for a new business park.*

The Assessment investigated the potential of the six I-81 interchanges in the County with the development potential summarized as follows:

Lenoxville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited development potential</li> <li>• No water &amp; sewer access</li> <li>• Largest workforce availability</li> <li>• Could potentially support housing development</li> </ul>
Lenox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited development potential</li> <li>• No water &amp; sewer access</li> <li>• Could potentially support housing development</li> </ul>
Harford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developable properties available</li> <li>• Steep slopes would inhibit truck traffic</li> <li>• Could potentially support housing development</li> </ul>
Gibson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developable properties available - properties currently for sale could support development</li> <li>• Flat terrain / easy access / interchange improvements planned by PennDOT for 2016</li> <li>• Existing sewer infrastructure, but near capacity / no water infrastructure</li> </ul>
New Milford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited development potential</li> <li>• Water &amp; sewer access available in New Milford Borough</li> <li>• Rail access</li> <li>• Could support provide transloading for development at Gibson interchange</li> </ul>
Great Bend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited development potential</li> <li>• Rail access</li> <li>• Water &amp; sewer access available Great Bend Borough</li> <li>• Could support provide transloading for development at Gibson interchange</li> </ul>

**Optimal Interchange**

The development of the Gibson interchange is included in the Progress Authority’s 2018 Work Plan as a critical project. The Assessment found: *Of the six I-81 interchanges located in Susquehanna County, the Gibson interchange appears to be the optimal location for the development of a business park. Neither of the two northern-most interchanges (Great Bend and New Milford) has developable sites in close proximity to the interchange. While there are developable sites at the Harford interchange, steep grades would prohibit truck access. Water and sewer infrastructure would be required at the Gibson, Lenox, and Lenoxville interchanges; however, the Gibson interchange has the greatest potential for developable properties. The availability of developable properties and PennDOT’s planned improvements to the interchange make the Gibson interchange the most attractive option.* The Assessment also included suggested target industries, development feasibility including a preliminary cash flow analysis, site development and marketing steps and key economic data.



**I-81 Gibson Interchange Improvement**  
 PennDOT is now planning improvements to the Exit 219 on Interstate 81 at Gibson to improve the safety of the exit. In addition, the bridge carrying route 848 across I-81 will be replaced. The cost is estimated at \$14 million and the project, once started, is expected to require 3 years to complete.

Photos: <http://www.pahomepage.com/video/gibson-interchange-plans> 20180223002047/987405714

**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY - SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY**

(PA Department of Labor & Industry)

	Number of Establishments		Average Number Employees <sup>1</sup>		Average Weekly Wage <sup>2</sup>			Change in Average Wage <sup>4</sup>
	2007	2017	2007	2017	2007	2017	Inflation Adjusted <sup>3</sup>	
Total, All Establishments	1,016	1,048	8,960	9,132	\$524	\$764	\$649	\$125
Accommodation and Food Services	87	100	776	907	\$212	\$263	\$224	\$12
Administrative and Waste Services	28	32	164	183	\$374	\$532	\$452	\$78
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	11	14	52	NR	\$464	NR	NR	NR
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	15	12	181	104	\$179	\$391	\$332	\$153
Construction	116	115	624	684	\$660	\$1,045	\$888	\$228
Educational Services	19	26	1,249	NR	\$906	NR	NR	NR
Finance and Insurance	32	34	231	221	\$541	\$946	\$804	\$263
Health Care and Social Assistance	141	150	1,347	1,261	\$473	\$566	\$481	\$8
Information	7	11	117	104	\$723	\$738	\$627	-\$96
Management of Companies and Enterprises	6	10	79	126	\$477	\$815	\$693	\$216
Manufacturing	63	54	775	558	\$505	\$706	\$600	\$95
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	52	59	443	597	\$599	\$1,157	\$983	\$384
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	75	73	284	302	\$294	\$411	\$349	\$55
Professional and Technical Services	52	66	210	408	\$458	\$1,213	\$1,031	\$573
Public Administration	47	46	462	466	\$512	\$696	\$592	\$80
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	15	20	39	105	\$368	\$979	\$832	\$464
Retail Trade	145	118	1,361	1,136	\$379	\$501	\$426	\$46
Transportation and Warehousing	59	67	275	424	\$661	\$782	\$665	\$4
Utilities	7	10	37	131	\$895	\$2,024	\$1,720	\$825
Wholesale Trade	39	31	254	246	\$653	\$970	\$825	\$172

1. Average total number of employees for the 2nd quarter; 2. Not adjusted for inflation.  
 3. 2017 wage adjusted to 2007 wage per US Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI Inflation Calculator.  
 4. Change in average wage from 2007 to 2017 adjusted for inflation.  
 NR - not reported due to confidentiality.

<b>EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY - SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY</b>				
(PA Department of Labor & Industry)				
	Percent Establishments		Average Percent Employees*	
	2007	2017	2007	2017
Total, All Establishments	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	8.6%	9.5%	8.7%	9.9%
Administrative and Waste Services	2.8%	3.1%	1.8%	2.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1.1%	1.3%	0.6%	NR
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.5%	1.1%	2.0%	1.1%
Construction	11.4%	11.0%	7.0%	7.5%
Educational Services	1.9%	2.5%	13.9%	NR
Finance and Insurance	3.1%	3.2%	2.6%	2.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.9%	14.3%	15.0%	13.8%
Information	0.7%	1.0%	1.3%	1.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.6%	1.0%	0.9%	1.4%
Manufacturing	6.2%	5.2%	8.6%	6.1%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	5.1%	5.6%	4.9%	6.5%
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	7.4%	7.0%	3.2%	3.3%
Professional and Technical Services	5.1%	6.3%	2.3%	4.5%
Public Administration	4.6%	4.4%	5.2%	5.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.5%	1.9%	0.4%	1.1%
Retail Trade	14.3%	11.3%	15.2%	12.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	5.8%	6.4%	3.1%	4.6%
Utilities	0.7%	1.0%	0.4%	1.4%
Wholesale Trade	3.8%	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%
*Average percentage of employees for the 2nd quarter. NR - Not reported due to confidentiality.				

**Employment Changes**

The Employment by Industry Tables provide an overview by industry of how the number of business establishments, the average number of employees and the average wage have changed since 2007. The total number of establishments increased from 1,016 in 2007 to 1,048 in 2017, and the number of employees grew from 8,960 to 9,132.

While the total number of employees increased by 172, the number decreased in several industries, with retail trade registering the greatest decrease. The number of employees working in mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction only increased by 154. This may seem surprising given the Marcellus Shale activity, but most of the natural gas related companies are based outside of Susquehanna County and do not report to the PA Department of Labor and Industry which compiles the employment statistics.

The average weekly wage for all establishments adjusted for inflation rose from \$524 in 2007 to \$649 in 2017. The greatest gain in weekly wages was reported for utility workers at \$825, although the low number of employees may have skewed the data. Employees in the professional and technical



services, real estate and rental and leasing, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction also realized significant gains while the average wage for information sector employees decreased.

The proportion of the various types of establishments did not change significantly between 2007 and 2017. The proportion of retail establishments and retail employees registered the greatest decreases with relatively minor changes in the other sectors.

### **Endless Mountains Heritage Region**

The following discussion includes excerpts from the 2017 Endless Mountains Heritage Region *Living with the Land, 10-year Action Plan Update*. Details about existing sites in Susquehanna County and the potential for development of additional heritage sites are available from the Heritage Region.

Susquehanna County is included in the four-county Endless Mountains Heritage Region (EMHR), designated by the state because of the region's potential to leverage a rich collection of heritage and outdoor recreation assets for community and economic benefit through tourism. These assets include the agricultural and natural landscapes, historic and scenic roads, outstanding land and water trails, state parks and game lands, charming historic downtowns and iconic places, and a wide variety of festivals, fairs and events. Protecting and enhancing the heritage tourism infrastructure creates a foundation for both heritage tourism and the region's quality of life that attracts residents and business.

The iconic historic, cultural and outdoor recreation venues are the places where the story of the region's past can be told, adding depth to visitor experience. The primary interpretive theme of the Endless Mountains

**The Endless Mountains Heritage Region (EMHR)** was created in 1998 as a non-profit agency within the Heritage Areas Program. EMHR is one of twelve current heritage areas in Pennsylvania designated by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. We proudly serve the four-county rural area of Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties in Northeast Pennsylvania. Our industrial theme is agriculture as we are known for our unmatched rural landscapes shaped by centuries of farming and timbering and the unique characteristics of our people living with the land. Our mission is "to maintain and enhance the unique rural character and culture of our Endless Mountains".

Since our formation, the agency has provided capacity-building support and financial support to partner organizations to fulfill this mission, increasing our quality of life and prompting visitor interest. Since 1998, EMHR has provided grant assistance to more than 100 projects. EMHR serves as a regional lead organization of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership and is involved in various greenway, land conservation, and trail initiatives in the region, as well as scenic byways and vista enhancements. (<http://www.endlessmountainsheritage.org>).

Heritage Region is *Living with the Land, the Changing Cultural Landscape of the Endless Mountains*, representing the evolving relationship of people to the land. This theme highlights the region's agricultural heritage but is broad enough to encompass the other important extractive industries that shaped – and still shape - the region's landscapes, transportation corridors, small towns and stories. The Heritage Region's *story* can be displayed and highlighted at strategic locations throughout the four counties.

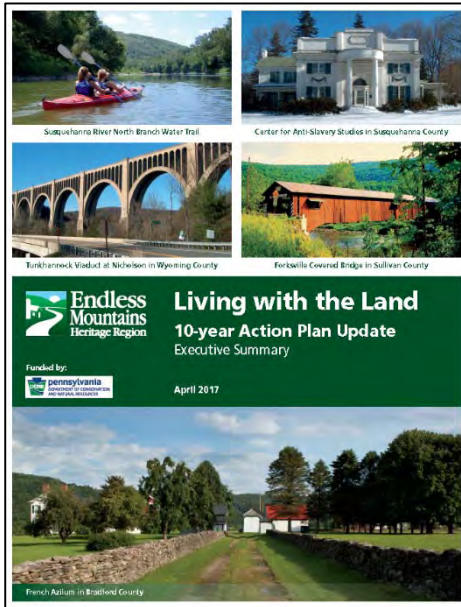
Each heritage area has a unique overarching theme based on common historic roots. The physical remnants and historic places from the past present opportunities to tell the region's stories and can even be transformed to become new attractions; e.g. the historic D&H Railroad is now the D&H Rail Trail, one of the Heritage Region's premier recreational trails.

To achieve the benefits of designation, the Heritage Region needs to offer visitors and residents a wide range of authentic experiences of our historic towns, agricultural landscapes, and natural features. EMHR's action agenda targets these five goals:

- **Attract visitors** to the Region's communities, heritage attractions, and downtowns to strengthen local economies.
- **Engage residents and visitors** in appreciation of and interaction with the Region's heritage.
- **Protect and enhance our heritage assets**, the iconic historic places and *Main Streets*, cultural landscapes, and natural features where the Heritage Region's stories can be told.
- **Offer a wide range of heritage and outdoor recreation destinations and activities** for all ages and abilities.

**Pennsylvania's Heritage Areas Program Goals:** The five overarching goals of Pennsylvania's Heritage Areas Program are broad and give each heritage area the flexibility to tailor programs that fit their heritage development needs. Activities of the Endless Mountains Heritage Region and its government and non-profit partners help to achieve the statewide Heritage Areas Program's overarching goals by addressing the specific local heritage development needs.  
1. Economic Development; 2. Heritage Resource Protection; 3. Interpretation and Education; 4. Tourism and Recreation; and, 5. Community Planning

- **Deliver authentic experiences of *Living with the Land*** in the Endless Mountains.



The Endless Mountains Heritage Region’s first Management Action Plan was published in 1998, the year the four-county heritage area received official designation through the Heritage Areas Program of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The 1998 vision and goals to protect, improve and promote heritage assets remain essentially the same, but the strategies and actions required adjustment to have maximum impact in a today’s social, political and environmental context.

The purpose of the Update is to reaffirm the Heritage Region’s goals and objectives and to identify new directions in response to the many changing conditions, opportunities and issues that have emerged over the past 18 years. These range from societal shifts to changes within the Heritage Region:

- Internet technologies and mobile devices have changed how people communicate, exchange information and plan trips.
- There have also been shifts in the travel and tourism industry, with new emphasis on active, experience-based travel vs. passive and observational.
- National interest in sustainable agriculture and access to locally produced farm products is at an all-time high, which touches the Heritage Region’s primary heritage theme, “Living with the Land.”
- The explosion of the natural gas industry throughout the four counties impacts the Heritage Region, its cultural landscape, identity and the expectation and experience of visitors.
- New destinations like the Troy Sale Barn, the Priesthood Restoration Site, and the Howland Preserve are recent additions to the Region’s heritage and outdoor recreation attractions, bringing important opportunities to develop the heritage tourism infrastructure.

Natural Gas and the Heritage Region

Since EMHR's founding, natural gas extraction has brought new industry, employment and dollars to the Heritage Region based on a nationally and internationally significant energy resource in the Marcellus Shale formation that underlies much of Pennsylvania. Although a close and detailed analysis of impacts and issues in the four-county Heritage Region is beyond the scope of the Plan Update, the natural gas industry is a force of change that must be taken into consideration in planning the Heritage Region's future. EMHR should investigate ways to communicate its mission to representatives of the gas industry and look for opportunities to advance objectives collaboratively. Some of the impacts have complex roots and long-term implications; for example, ownership of mineral rights and access have resulted in "split estates" that change how communities control and manage the landscape and farms. Other impacts are shorter-term and/or temporary that can be addressed with strategies such as those described below.

- Changes to the cultural landscape – The natural gas industry is shaping the cultural landscape today as lumbering, agriculture, railroads and canals shaped it in the past. Like past industries, it is based on an intrinsic natural resource important to markets outside the region. The Heritage Region interprets the cultural landscape and its history through physical remains from the activities and industries of previous centuries. Interpreting the story of the discovery and rise of this new extractive industry is both appropriate and an opportunity for EMHR.
  - Visual impacts – The concrete pads of drill sites and the utility and pipeline corridors that cut through the landscape are visible from the roadways and impact the view. However, visitors can still appreciate the overall natural and pastoral beauty of the Heritage Region. At night, however, lights at the drill sites can be extremely bright and light up the sky, detracting from the experience of the Heritage Region's starry night sky – a feature of the rural landscape that more urbanized areas lack. This can be mitigated through instituting *night sky* ordinances, which require the use of light fixtures that offer full functionality but direct light only where it is needed.
  - Changes in traffic – Activities of the natural gas industry have dramatically increased truck traffic volumes and reduced level of service along segments and key intersections of state, county, and municipal
-

roadways. One of the great pleasures of visiting the Heritage Region is traveling along the scenic and historic roadways to enjoy the rural beauty of farmlands and woodlands. Directing travelers along a designated network of scenic and historic roadways with less truck traffic and lower traffic volumes may be a strategy to mitigate conflicts between tourism and the impacts of the natural gas industry.

- Changes to public perception – Controversy over natural gas extraction in Pennsylvania and beyond has received widespread attention since the onset of drilling in the Heritage Region. This has the potential to color public perception and expectations about what visitors to the Region might see as a result.

**County Economic  
Development Actions**

- Provide support for the Susquehanna County Economic Development Advisory Board.
  - Support the efforts of the Progress Authority.
  - Monitor the progress and encourage PennDOT to complete the Interstate 81 Gibson Interchange improvement project.
  - Use the Endless Mountains Heritage Region Management Action Plan as a general guideline for heritage destination (tourism) development.
-

## HOUSING

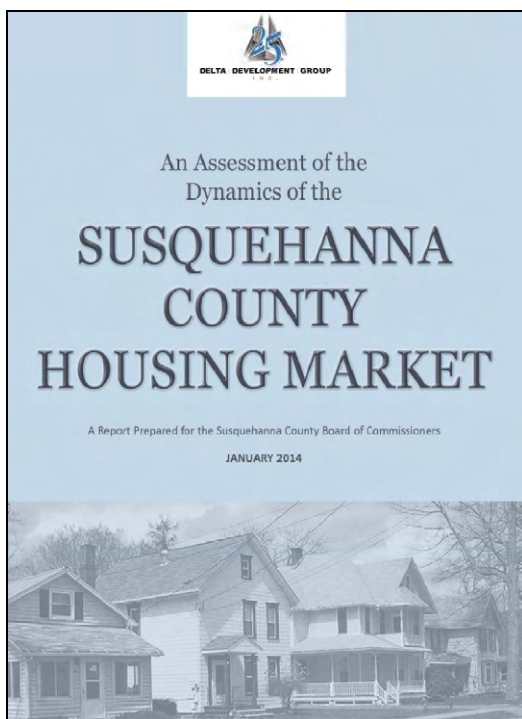
### Overview

Families and individuals of all income levels reside in the County and need continued access to decent and affordable housing with proper community facilities. The special needs of young families looking for their first home, individuals with disabilities and senior citizens on fixed incomes must be addressed. The Housing Plan examines the characteristics of the existing housing stock and provides strategies to address the housing needs of current residents and future housing issues and to accommodate anticipated growth while maintaining community character.

### Housing Assessment

*In May 2013, the Commissioners engaged Delta Development Group, Inc., a community and economic development consulting firm headquartered in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, to conduct a quantitative assessment of the dynamics of the County's housing market. With a better understanding of the changes in the housing market and the factors that have influenced the changes, the Commissioners will be better informed to make decisions that best serve the residents of Susquehanna County. The objectives of the study were to provide the following information:*

- *Identify, quantify, and measure the changes (impacts) that are being experienced in Susquehanna.*
- *Determine whether the impacts are a result of growth in the Marcellus Shale gas industry, general economic trends, social trends, or other local economic factors.*
- *Provide County officials with the quantitative research necessary to accurately identify and prioritize the County's most critical needs related to housing.*
- *Conduct one-on-one interviews with a wide variety of local industry experts, employers, and residents to secure local knowledge and data to support the quantitative research.*





- *In close collaboration with the Commissioners, outline a plan for addressing the County's most critical needs related to housing.*

**Assessment Findings**

*An Assessment of the Dynamics of the Susquehanna County Housing Market included the following findings:*

- *Three primary factors have impacted the housing market in Susquehanna County over the past few years: (1) the global economy, (2) demographic and social changes, and (3) the emergence of the natural gas industry.*
  - *Rental rates in Susquehanna County have increased due to the increase in demand for rental units.*
  - *Local realtors suggested that rates in Susquehanna County range from \$700 to \$800 per month for a small unfurnished unit to \$1,500 to \$2,000 for a large, three-bedroom, two-bathroom unit. Larger homes have been observed with lease rates as high as \$3,000 per month.*
  - *Of Susquehanna County's 40 municipalities, 28 experienced increases in rental rates greater than the statewide increase of 45%, and 27 reported median gross rental rates higher than the County median.*
  - *An estimated 36% of renters in Susquehanna County were considered to be cost burdened in 2011. Cost-burdened renters are defined as households with gross rent that is greater than 30% of the household income.*
  - *An estimated 25.7% of the County's renters in 2011 aged 65 or older were considered to be cost burdened.*
  - *Local real estate professionals provided the following overview of the for-sale housing market in Susquehanna County:*
  - *Real estate sales prices have stabilized over the past three years, with prices ranging from \$174,867 in 2011 to \$178,031 in 2012.*
  - *While sales prices have increased since 2010, increases have been primarily driven by the increased value of land in the County due to the*
-

*presence of Marcellus Shale.*

- *The for-sale housing market is being driven by retirees, natural gas industry workers, outside investors in rental properties, and local “new money.”*
- *With the increase in rental rates in Susquehanna County, an increased number of low-income residents have been displaced and are seeking assistance with housing subsidies.*
- *In 2013, Susquehanna County’s Section 8 Voucher Program received its second-lowest funding allocation (\$729,728), had its third-highest waiting list (77), and its longest waiting period (2 years) in the past eight years; however, because there is a lack of affordable housing units in the County, the program has had its second-lowest number of lease-ups in 2013 (218 of 253 available).*
- *Significant cuts in the availability of HUD funding, due to the federal government’s 2013 budget sequestration, have amplified the local housing issue, since services must be severely reduced as a result of funding cuts.*
- *There are seven subsidized housing developments in Susquehanna County. Six of the seven units are allocated for senior housing, with only one allocated for family housing. In 2012, there were 103 households on the waiting list for these units. An additional 64 units are currently under development.*
- *Due to sufficient evidence of the increased housing rates in Susquehanna County, HUD approved a rental exemption allowing for an increase in the payment standard in the County to 125% of fair market rate; however, the payment standard will likely have to be reduced from 125% to 90% of*



HOUSING DATA		
	Susq Co	PA
<b>Households/Families</b>		
Households, 2015	17,487	4,958,859
Families, 2015	11,858	3,202,874
<b>Types of Households</b>		
total #, 2015	17,487	4,958,859
married/children	16.4%	17.5%
married no children	37.6%	30.6%
single parent/children	6.8%	8.4%
single person	26.5%	29.5%
other types	12.7%	13.9%
<b>Vacant Housing Units</b>		
total, 2000	5,410	472,478
total, 2000	24.3%	9.0%
total, 2015	5,510	626,752
total, 2015	24.0%	11.2%
seasonal, occasional, 2015	70.8%	27.5%
rent/sale, other, 2015	29.2%	72.5%
<b>Average Persons Per Household</b>		
1990	2.69	2.57
2000	2.53	2.48
2015	2.41	2.49
<b>Owner-Occupied Housing Units</b>		
1990	79.2%	70.6%
2000	79.5%	71.3%
2015	76.7%	69.2%
<b>Renter-Occupied Housing Units</b>		
1990	20.8%	29.4%
2000	20.5%	28.7%
2015	23.3%	30.8%
<b>Housing Units by Type</b>		
total # housing units, 2015	22,997	5,585,611
single family home	76.8%	57.1%
duplex/townhouse/row	0.9%	18.4%
small apt building <9 units	6.8%	12.1%
large apt building (10+ units)	1.7%	8.3%
mobile home & other	13.8%	4.1%
<b>Housing Values and Monthly Rent</b>		
median value, 2000	\$81,800	\$97,000
median value, 2015	\$150,700	\$166,000
average value, 2015	\$181,401	\$204,901
median gross rent, 2000	\$427	\$531
median gross rent, 2015	\$714	\$840
average gross rent, 2015	\$761	\$914

*the fair market rate in the coming months due to sequestration. This will mean that the number of lease-ups will likely decline further, as fewer housing units will be available with rental rates that are eligible for the program.*

- *Populations in Susquehanna County that have experienced the greatest impact range from persons with special needs to low-income families and the working-class poor, and specifically include populations that are characterized as underage, disabled, youth in transition, and lower-income seniors.*

**Housing Data**

Housing Units - As shown on the following Housing Units Table, the number of housing units in Susquehanna County has not changed significantly since the time of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, increasing by some 1,170, and on par with the Commonwealth proportionate increase. Great Bend, Herrick, Auburn, Brooklyn and Thompson Townships recorded the greatest increases suggesting more growth in the eastern section of the County. A number of municipalities are reported as having lost housing units, which could be a Census counting error absent any physical evidence.

Types of Households - The proportion of household types in the County are also largely consistent with Pennsylvania, with the largest disparity the number of married households with children.

Vacant Units - The proportion of vacant units in the County remained about one-fourth of the total between 2000 and 2015, more than double the state proportion.

HOUSING UNITS						
	1980*	1990*	2000*	2015**	2000 - 2015	
					#	%
Pennsylvania	4,596,431	4,938,140	5,249,750	5,585,611	335,861	6.4
<b>Susquehanna County</b>	<b>17,202</b>	<b>20,308</b>	<b>21,829</b>	<b>22,997</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>5.4</b>
Apolacon Township	219	252	266	307	41	15.4
Ararat Township	305	378	452	423	-29	-6.4
Auburn Township	615	783	866	946	80	9.2
Bridgewater Township	894	1,063	1,245	1,301	56	4.5
Brooklyn Township	351	369	403	483	80	19.9
Choconut Township	289	374	377	411	34	9.0
Clifford Township	843	1,081	1,198	1,263	65	5.4
Dimock Township	510	631	680	671	-9	-1.3
Forest City Borough	949	961	937	999	62	6.6
Forest Lake Township	488	575	592	624	32	5.4
Franklin Township	328	465	484	525	41	8.5
Friendsville Borough	32	42	45	69	24	53.3
Gibson Township	402	534	590	560	-30	-5.1
Great Bend Borough	298	336	344	378	34	9.9
Great Bend Township	697	781	859	1,013	154	17.9
Hallstead Borough	468	529	544	548	4	0.7
Harford Township	492	634	743	789	46	6.2
Harmony Township	215	345	341	307	-34	-10.0
Herrick Township	519	523	685	808	123	18.0
Hop Bottom Borough	158	145	140	143	3	2.1
Jackson Township	396	496	543	605	62	11.4
Jessup Township	178	225	264	251	-13	-4.9
Lanesboro Borough	188	292	278	215	-63	-22.7
Lathrop Township	314	377	411	391	-20	-4.9
Lenox Township	684	814	929	976	47	5.1
Liberty Township	499	605	577	641	64	11.1
Little Meadows Borough	128	124	131	130	-1	-0.8
Middletown Township	177	236	264	246	-18	-6.8
Montrose Borough	881	868	834	879	45	5.4
New Milford Borough	426	409	396	411	15	3.8
New Milford Township	819	1,053	1,137	1,162	25	2.2
Oakland Borough	271	260	248	278	30	12.1
Oakland Township	223	274	281	302	21	7.5
Rush Township	436	546	622	668	46	7.4
Silver Lake Township	705	934	1,037	1,080	43	4.1
Springville Township	492	628	694	716	22	3.2
Susquehanna Depot Borough	787	765	727	740	13	1.8
Thompson Borough	142	152	148	171	23	15.5
Thompson Township	250	304	335	406	71	21.2
Uniondale Borough	134	145	182	161	-21	-11.5

\*Decennial Censuses; \*\*2015, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census

Persons per Household – Average household size in the County has decreased since 1990 and in 2015 was slightly less than the State.

Occupancy – The proportion of owner-occupied units is somewhat higher in the County than the State while the proportion of County renters is lower. This would be expected given that renting is most common in highly populated urban areas. However, the proportion of renters in the County has increased.

Type of Units – Susquehanna County’s proportion of single-family homes and mobile homes is significantly higher than the Commonwealth’s with the

County having a very minimal proportion of two-family dwellings and apartment units. Again, a reflection of the comparison of a rural area and the inclusion of urban areas in the State data.

Value and Rent – Average home value and monthly gross rent are lower in the County than the State.

Household Income – The primary difference between household incomes between the County and State is the lower proportion of upper income households.

RANGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOMES -- 2015		
	Susq Co	PA
# Households with Income	17,487	4,958,859
Low (<\$20,000)	17.6%	17.7%
Lower-Middle (\$20,000 to \$34,999)	17.4%	15.5%
Middle (\$35,000 to \$49,999)	14.6%	13.5%
Upper-Middle (\$50,000 to \$99,999)	33.9%	30.9%
Upper (\$100,000+)	16.6%	22.4%
Average Household Income	\$62,561	\$73,175
Median Household Income	\$50,141	\$55,683

**Affordable Housing Study** - The Summer 2000 *Affordable Housing Study* for Jacksonville, Florida provides a good description of how affordable housing is assessed. *The American Dream has long been associated with the possibility of owning one's home. National housing-market surveys report that the home ownership rate reached a peak in the late 1990s—almost sixty-seven percent in 1999—due mainly to a robust economy with record levels of low unemployment and low interest rates. However, while this unprecedented economic expansion enabled many Americans to purchase their own homes, it has pushed housing prices and rental rates higher, preventing many other households, with insufficient incomes, from either becoming homeowners or finding affordable, safe, and decent rental housing. Housing affordability is a relative concept—both rich and poor can experience difficulty in affording housing, depending on how much they spend toward housing costs. Housing in one community with a relatively high median income can be quite expensive but affordable compared to housing in another community with a relatively low median income.*

*Federal governmental guidelines, primarily those established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), define affordable housing as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income—referred to here as the 30 percent rule. The income counted is derived from all wages earned by people fifteen and older in the household. For homeowners, affordability is generally defined as owning a house with a value equal to slightly more than twice the household's annual income. The homeowner costs counted typically include a mortgage payment (principal, interest, taxes, and insurance) and utilities. For renters, the costs usually include contract rent and utilities. The 30 percent rule leaves seventy percent for food, clothing, health care, child care, transportation to work, and other basic expenses. Because of increasing housing costs, many lower income Americans are forced to make tradeoffs and go without necessities. Tenants experiencing unexpected emergencies typically fall behind in their rent and face eviction. If not assisted, they may become homeless.*

**Housing Affordability** Municipalities throughout the country have been addressing housing issues for many years. *Pennsylvania Housing*, a 1988 study conducted by the Pennsylvania Housing Financing Agency, defined *affordable* as requiring less than thirty percent of gross monthly income for rent or less than twenty-eight percent for a mortgage and other related housing costs. The Summer 2000 *Affordable Housing Study* for Jacksonville, Florida, reiterated this guideline. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines continue to define *affordable housing* as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income and the U.S. Census provides this information at the local municipal level. (See the preceding *Affordable Housing Study Sidebar*.)

**Affordability in Susquehanna County** Anecdotal evidence suggests that the influx of natural gas workers has had a significant inflationary effect on housing values and monthly residential rents. The following tables include affordable housing data for the County and its municipalities compared to the Commonwealth and the data supports that trend. In short, many households in the County are dealing with unaffordable housing costs which strain their overall budgets.

County-wide, median housing value and median gross rent decreased between 1990 and 2000, but increased significantly from 2000 to 2015, the time of increased natural gas production. By 2015, the proportion of homeowners with a mortgage paying more than 30 percent of income for housing increased to 28.8 percent and renters with rent more than 30 percent of income increased to 47.3 percent. In Pennsylvania, the proportions are 29.5 percent and 50.5 percent, respectively.

Affordability in the boroughs and townships varies widely. The proportion of mortgaged homeowners exceeding the 30 percent rule ranges from 12 percent in Dimock Township to 53 percent in Friendsville Borough. In the case of rents in the Boroughs, where most rental units are available, the proportion of renters exceeding the 30 percent rule ranged from 38 percent in Hop Bottom and Little meadows to 1000 percent in Friendsville with a total of only five rental units.

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<b>SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY AFFORDABLE HOUSING DATA</b>			
	<b>1990*</b>	<b>2000*</b>	<b>2015**</b>
<b>Dwelling Types</b>			
single family home	70.4%	73.6%	76.8%
duplex/townhouse	0.6%	1.2%	0.9%
apartment buildings	10.5%	9.6%	8.5%
mobile home, other	18.6%	15.7%	13.8%
<b>Value, Rent, Income</b>			
median housing value	\$64,200	\$81,800	\$150,700
median housing value adjusted to 2015***	\$117,840	\$112,980	\$150,700
median gross rent	\$342	\$427	\$714
median gross rent adjusted to 2015***	\$628	\$590	\$714
median household income	\$24,736	\$33,622	\$50,141
median household income adjusted to 2015***	\$45,403	\$46,439	\$50,141
<b>Owner Occupied Housing Units with Mortgage</b>			
total	6,264	7,208	6,952
# with home expenditures >30% of household income	1,122	1,543	2,001
% with home expenditures >30% of household income	17.9%	21.4%	28.8%
<b>Specified Renter Occupied Housing Units</b>			
total	2,752	3,053	3,357
# households with rent >30% of income	971	976	1,558
% households with rent >30% of Income	35.3%	32.0%	47.3%
*Decennial Censuses; **2015, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census;			

**Housing Affordability Considerations**

*The term "affordable housing" is no longer just a euphemism for low-income, subsidized projects or large mobile home parks. Many policemen, schoolteachers, shopkeepers, public works employees and other private sector employees cannot afford to live in the communities where they work. In rapidly developing areas, they frequently incur the costs of long commutes to find affordable housing. Long commutes reduce the amount of time residents can contribute to the community. Volunteerism becomes more difficult and decreases. In areas where affordable housing is available closer to employment centers, commuting hours could be converted to community hours.*

*There are also economic and environmental costs associated with long commutes and lack of affordable housing near the work place. High housing costs consume an ever-increasing portion of income. Greater living costs allocated to shelter decrease an individual's disposable income. Local economies can suffer because what could be disposable income is consumed by housing costs. As people seek more affordable housing the length of the commute increases. The impact on the environment of long distance commutes is uncharted. Both environmental and economic costs increase as lanes are added to roadways to reduce commuting delays. (Reducing Land Use Barriers to Affordable Housing, PA DCED, 2015.)*

<b>HOUSING AFFORDABILITY – HOMEOWNERS</b>									
(2015, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census)									
	<b>Homeowners with Income and Mortgage, 2015</b>								
	Total	Percentage of Income Paid for Housing							
		Less than 30%	30% to 49%	50% plus	More than 30%				
Pennsylvania (1,000s)	2,101	1,480	70.4%	386	18.4%	236	11.1%	622	29.5%
<b>Susquehanna Co</b>	<b>6,952</b>	<b>4,951</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	<b>1,096</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>2,001</b>	<b>28.8%</b>
Apolacon Twp	111	86	77.5%	13	11.7%	12	10.8%	25	22.5%
Ararat Twp	114	60	52.6%	26	22.8%	28	24.6%	54	47.4%
Auburn Twp	298	229	76.8%	51	17.1%	18	6.0%	69	23.2%
Bridgewater Twp	513	406	79.1%	25	4.9%	82	16.0%	107	20.9%
Brooklyn Twp	198	129	65.2%	40	20.2%	29	14.6%	69	34.8%
Choconut Twp	142	103	72.5%	14	9.9%	25	17.6%	39	27.5%
Clifford Twp	442	339	76.7%	43	9.7%	60	13.6%	103	23.3%
Dimock Twp	276	243	88.0%	15	5.4%	18	6.5%	33	12.0%
Forest City Bor	280	201	71.8%	72	25.7%	7	2.5%	79	28.2%
Forest Lake Twp	190	138	72.6%	22	11.6%	30	15.8%	52	27.4%
Franklin Twp	157	93	59.2%	30	19.1%	34	21.7%	64	40.8%
Friendsville Bor	30	14	46.7%	15	50.0%	1	3.3%	16	53.3%
Gibson Twp	141	89	63.1%	18	12.8%	34	24.1%	52	36.9%
Great Bend Bor	81	55	67.9%	11	13.6%	15	18.5%	26	32.1%
Great Bend Twp	289	168	58.1%	62	21.5%	59	20.4%	121	41.9%
Hallstead Bor	160	110	68.8%	23	14.4%	27	16.9%	50	31.3%
Harford Twp	250	191	76.4%	32	12.8%	27	10.8%	59	23.6%
Harmony Twp	78	49	62.8%	16	20.5%	13	16.7%	29	37.2%
Herrick Twp	129	89	69.0%	31	24.0%	9	7.0%	40	31.0%
Hop Bottom Bor	44	29	65.9%	14	31.8%	1	2.3%	15	34.1%
Jackson Twp	144	72	50.0%	49	34.0%	23	16.0%	72	50.0%
Jessup Twp	68	53	77.9%	6	8.8%	9	13.2%	15	22.1%
Lanesboro Bor	63	42	66.7%	21	33.3%	0	0.0%	21	33.3%
Lathrop Twp	133	98	73.7%	10	7.5%	25	18.8%	35	26.3%
Lenox Twp	285	195	68.4%	45	15.8%	45	15.8%	90	31.6%
Liberty Twp	172	104	60.5%	36	20.9%	32	18.6%	68	39.5%
Little Meadows Bor	56	48	85.7%	2	3.6%	6	10.7%	8	14.3%
Middletown Twp	28	16	57.1%	10	35.7%	2	7.1%	12	42.9%
Montrose Bor	286	187	65.4%	60	21.0%	39	13.6%	99	34.6%
New Milford Bor	108	79	73.1%	23	21.3%	6	5.6%	29	26.9%
New Milford Twp	401	283	70.6%	72	18.0%	46	11.5%	118	29.4%
Oakland Bor	109	84	77.1%	11	10.1%	14	12.8%	25	22.9%
Oakland Twp	89	69	77.5%	13	14.6%	7	7.9%	20	22.5%
Rush Twp	161	128	79.5%	20	12.4%	13	8.1%	33	20.5%
Silver Lake Twp	353	265	75.1%	47	13.3%	41	11.6%	88	24.9%
Springville Twp	186	133	71.5%	30	16.1%	23	12.4%	53	28.5%
Susquehanna Depot Bor	160	110	68.8%	33	20.6%	17	10.6%	50	31.3%
Thompson Bor	65	40	61.5%	16	24.6%	9	13.8%	25	38.5%
Thompson Twp	110	91	82.7%	8	7.3%	11	10.0%	19	17.3%
Uniondale Bor	52	33	63.5%	11	21.2%	8	15.4%	19	36.5%

<b>HOUSING AFFORDABILITY – RENTERS</b>									
(2015, 5-year average, American Community Survey, U.S. Census)									
	<b>Renters with Income and Paying Cash Rent, 2015</b>								
	Total	Percentage of Income Paid for Housing							
		Less than 30%	30% to 49%	50% plus	More than 30%				
Pennsylvania (1,000s)	1,402	695	49.5%	333	23.8%	374	26.7%	707	50.5%
<b>Susquehanna Co</b>	<b>3,357</b>	<b>1,769</b>	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>47.3%</b>
Apolacon Twp	17	15	88.2%	2	11.8%	0	0.0%	2	11.8%
Ararat Twp	17	5	29.4%	3	17.6%	9	52.9%	12	70.6%
Auburn Twp	91	40	44.0%	10	11.0%	41	45.1%	51	56.0%
Bridgewater Twp	236	139	58.9%	33	14.0%	64	27.1%	97	41.1%
Brooklyn Twp	40	27	67.5%	9	22.5%	4	10.0%	13	32.5%
Choconut Twp	48	32	66.7%	16	33.3%	0	0.0%	16	33.3%
Clifford Twp	147	39	26.5%	69	46.9%	39	26.5%	108	73.5%
Dimock Twp	56	30	53.6%	16	28.6%	10	17.9%	26	46.4%
Forest City Bor	346	189	54.6%	83	24.0%	74	21.4%	157	45.4%
Forest Lake Twp	41	27	65.9%	11	26.8%	3	7.3%	14	34.1%
Franklin Twp	51	34	66.7%	8	15.7%	9	17.6%	17	33.3%
Friendsville Bor	5	0	0.0%	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	5	100.0%
Gibson Twp	42	9	21.4%	13	31.0%	20	47.6%	33	78.6%
Great Bend Bor	146	78	53.4%	35	24.0%	33	22.6%	68	46.6%
Great Bend Twp	208	109	52.4%	59	28.4%	40	19.2%	99	47.6%
Hallstead Bor	195	104	53.3%	52	26.7%	39	20.0%	91	46.7%
Harford Twp	69	36	52.2%	25	36.2%	8	11.6%	33	47.8%
Harmony Twp	6	3	50.0%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	3	50.0%
Herrick Twp	36	26	72.2%	1	2.8%	9	25.0%	10	27.8%
Hop Bottom Bor	37	23	62.2%	9	24.3%	5	13.5%	14	37.8%
Jackson Twp	33	24	72.7%	7	21.2%	2	6.1%	9	27.3%
Jessup Twp	26	12	46.2%	8	30.8%	6	23.1%	14	53.8%
Lanesboro Bor	53	23	43.4%	11	20.8%	19	35.8%	30	56.6%
Lathrop Twp	73	50	68.5%	14	19.2%	9	12.3%	23	31.5%
Lenox Twp	86	57	66.3%	12	14.0%	17	19.8%	29	33.7%
Liberty Twp	97	44	45.4%	25	25.8%	28	28.9%	53	54.6%
Little Meadows Bor	8	5	62.5%	2	25.0%	1	12.5%	3	37.5%
Middletown Twp	18	12	66.7%	1	5.6%	5	27.8%	6	33.3%
Montrose Bor	308	149	48.4%	106	34.4%	53	17.2%	159	51.6%
New Milford Bor	117	59	50.4%	15	12.8%	43	36.8%	58	49.6%
New Milford Twp	60	40	66.7%	6	10.0%	14	23.3%	20	33.3%
Oakland Bor	71	36	50.7%	20	28.2%	15	21.1%	35	49.3%
Oakland Twp	18	10	55.6%	2	11.1%	6	33.3%	8	44.4%
Rush Twp	96	59	61.5%	7	7.3%	30	31.3%	37	38.5%
Silver Lake Twp	48	42	87.5%	3	6.3%	3	6.3%	6	12.5%
Springville Twp	144	78	54.2%	33	22.9%	33	22.9%	66	45.8%
Susquehanna Depot Bor	199	73	36.7%	71	35.7%	55	27.6%	126	63.3%
Thompson Bor	46	18	39.1%	8	17.4%	20	43.5%	28	60.9%
Thompson Twp	9	7	77.8%	0	0.0%	2	22.2%	2	22.2%
Uniondale Bor	13	6	46.2%	4	30.8%	3	23.1%	7	53.8%

**Housing Programs**

The Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority is an independent organization with a mission to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to the low-income residents of the County, and is responsible for administering County housing programs. Funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) flow to the authority through the Commonwealth and are used for housing subsidies (Section 8 named for a section of the federal housing law), housing repair, and the construction of public housing. As authorized by state law, the County Commissioners instituted the collection by the Recorder of Deeds of a fee, now \$13.00, per recorded deed or mortgage for affordable housing programs.

The *Subsidized Housing Units in Susquehanna County Table* provides details on the 208 HUD sponsored and Authority operated public housing units in the County. The Housing Authority's housing complexes historically were one hundred percent occupied with a two-year waiting period. Currently at some complexes the occupancy rate is about 95 percent but with no waiting period. The Authority administers 253 subsidized family/elderly units under the federal housing choice voucher program throughout the County with a 95 percent occupancy rate and an average waiting period of about six

<b>SUBSIDIZED HOUSING UNITS IN SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY</b>	
<b>Housing/Redevelopment Authority</b>	
Turnpike Terrace Apartments, Susquehanna Depot	50 units elderly
William Penn Apartments, Forest City	50 units family
Forest City Duplexes, Forest City Borough	8 units family
Prospect Park Apartments, Susquehanna Depot	43 units family 5 garden style
Howard J Emerson Apartments, Hallstead	40 units elderly
Howard J Emerson Southgate Apartments, Hallstead	24 units elderly
Harford Village Apartments, Harford Township	20 units elderly
Creekside Apartments, New Milford Borough	24 units elderly 3 duplex units
Total units	270
<b>Trehab Community Action Agency</b>	
Station House Apartments, Susquehanna Depot	8 elderly
The Meadow at Tiffany Pines, Bridgewater Township	40 units family
Total units	48
<b>First Ward Action Council (Binghamton, NY)</b>	
Choconut Creek Apartments, Choconut Township	24 units elderly
TOTAL all agencies	342

The **Trehab Community Action Agency** is designated by the Board of Commissioners to provide government supported community-based programs to low and moderate income individuals and families and others in need due to personal, family or health-related circumstances. **Multi-Family Housing Developments** – Trehab builds and renovates affordable multi-family housing for vulnerable populations. **Homeownership Program** – Available in Bradford and Susquehanna counties for first-time homebuyers. Online web-based computer education instructs consumers about home purchase and home ownership. Counseling is available to assist with the purchase of their home. Down payment and closing cost assistance may be available to the homeowner depending on their financial situation.

**First Ward Action Council** is a community-based developer and provider of housing and housing services located in Binghamton, New York. Currently, the organization is managing several storefronts and more than 120 apartments, including fully accessible units, for families of all sizes. Senior housing complexes include the Choconut Creek Apartments in Choconut Township, PA

months. In addition, the Redevelopment Authority provides approximately 15 owner-occupied households a year with housing rehabilitation services including such improvements as windows, siding, furnaces, etc.

### County Actions

Key actions carried forward from the 2003 Plan include:

- Continue to support the efforts of the Susquehanna County Housing/Redevelopment Authority and Trehab to provide affordable housing and home improvements to residents in need.
- Take full advantage of all available state and federal housing programs and encourage the Housing/Redevelopment Authority to develop innovative housing assistance programs.
- Work with Trehab and/or the Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (Housing Authority) to secure funding to develop additional rental units designed to lessen the strain on the low to moderate income workforce.

### What are U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development housing choice vouchers?

The housing choice voucher program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Since housing assistance is provided on behalf of the family or individual, participants are able to find their own housing, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects.

Housing choice vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHAs). The PHAs receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer the voucher program.

A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the family's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by the PHA.

A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Under certain circumstances, if authorized by the PHA, a family may use its voucher to purchase a modest home.

(Source: [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/housing\\_choice\\_voucher\\_program\\_section\\_8](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/housing_choice_voucher_program_section_8))

- Continue the assessment of the fee for affordable housing on recording of deeds and mortgages.
  - Evaluate and revise as necessary the provisions of the County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance in terms of unnecessarily stringent standards effects on costs of housing.
  - Encourage local municipalities to direct higher density development to the growth areas identified in this *Comprehensive Plan*.
  - Promote and provide to local municipalities sample subdivision and land development ordinance and zoning ordinance standards to reduce regulatory effects on the cost of housing.
-

## TRANSPORTATION

<b>Transportation in Rural Municipalities</b>	An ideally sound transportation system would include adequate, safe and – well maintained roads and bridges, available public transportation, safe and convenient pedestrian access, and bicycle routes. However, few communities are able to achieve this ideal level of service. This is particularly true in small, less populated communities with limited budgets in a time when local, state and federal resources are less robust. In the end, local municipalities must evaluate transportation needs, set priorities, and garner all available resources to make improvements.
<b>County Role</b>	Susquehanna County’s primary role in transportation is working with the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission which serves as PennDOT’s Rural Planning Organization for the region. The planning focuses on state roads and local, county and state bridges located on state and municipal roads and planning for public transportation and bicycle/pedestrian travel. Through the Northern Tier Rural Area Transportation Advisory Committee, Susquehanna County and its municipalities submit road and bridge projects for inclusion on the PennDOT Twelve Year Plan (TYP) and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Also under the jurisdiction of the Transportation Advisory Committee are the issues of long range transportation planning and railway planning.

### **What is the Pennsylvania Transportation Improvement Plan?**

The State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) are the first four years of the Twelve Year Program (TYP), which outline the multimodal transportation improvements spanning a four year period. The STIP covers the entire state and includes 23 individual TIPs representing the MPOs and RPOs. The TIPs feed into the statewide STIP. Federal law requires TIPs to be updated at least every three years. PennDOT’s planning partners, both Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations (MPO/RPO), develop a TIP and solicit public involvement for each MPO/RPO Public Participation Plan.

The STIP addresses all modes of transportation, including highways and bridges, public transit, aviation, and rail freight projects that intend to use federal and/or state matching funds excluding specified maintenance funds. This plan provides the public with an active role in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects beginning in the early stages of plan development and continuing throughout the planning process. As needs and priorities change, the TIP may be modified or amended. The State Transportation Commission (STC) reviews and approves the Twelve Year Program every two years and when finalized, the STC adopts the program. It is then forwarded to the Governor, the Highway Administration (FHWA), the Transit Administration (FTA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for their approval prior to the start of the federal fiscal year, which is October 1 of each year. (<http://www.projects.penndot.gov/projects/TIP.aspx>.)



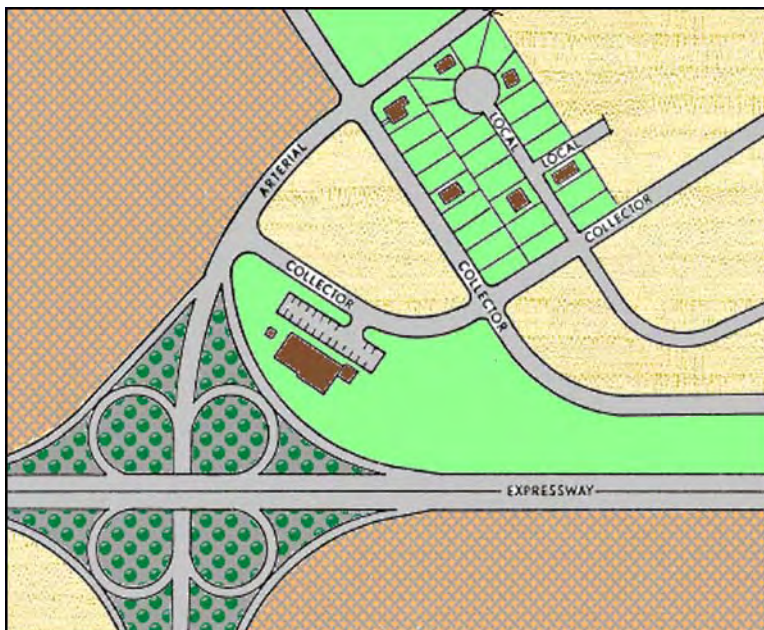
The Twelve Year Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program are incorporated in this Comprehensive Plan by reference. Each plan is updated regularly and each includes the road and bridge improvements identified as most important by the local governments in the County. The Twelve Year Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program Plan are available to the public at the Susquehanna County Planning Office or by contacting the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission. ([www.northerntier.org](http://www.northerntier.org))

**Access - Mobility**

Each highway, road or street in a community plays a specific role for the movement of traffic and it is useful for planning purposes to classify roads according to the particular function each serves. In general terms, the functional classification of a road is based largely on two factors -- access and mobility -- and typically, as access declines mobility increases. The *Highway Functional Classification Illustration* shows the progression from a *local street* to an *expressway*.

For example, Interstate Route 81 clearly serves a different function than does a street in a Borough or a residential subdivision. Although the I-81 and local street example compares streets at the opposite ends of the road classification hierarchy, it clearly depicts the relationship between access and mobility. Traffic on a limited access highway travels over long distances at high rates of speed. On the other hand, traffic using a residential street with

unlimited access from individual properties moves at minimum speeds to reach roads that connect the residential neighborhood with other areas in the community and the region at large. As overall traffic and the proportion of truck traffic on a particular road increases, the function of the road may move to a higher classification. However, if improvements, both the actual road profile construction and alignment, are not made the road cannot adequately carry the increase traffic.



Highway Functional Classification

**AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic):** Average daily traffic on a roadway link for all days of the week during a period of one year, expressed in vpd (vehicles per day). Actual daily volumes encountered on highways may vary from the AADT. Considerably higher or lower values often result in areas of seasonal activities and when comparing weekend versus weekday traffic.

**Traffic Increases** Increased traffic and the associated improvements needed to adequately carry the traffic are the principal highway issues facing the County. The following Average Annual Daily Traffic Table provides a comparison of traffic volumes in 2000 and 2015. In general, traffic has increased considerably with the increase anecdotally attributed to natural gas development. The large decreases reported on the Table are not easily explained, but may result from erroneous counts in one of the reported years.

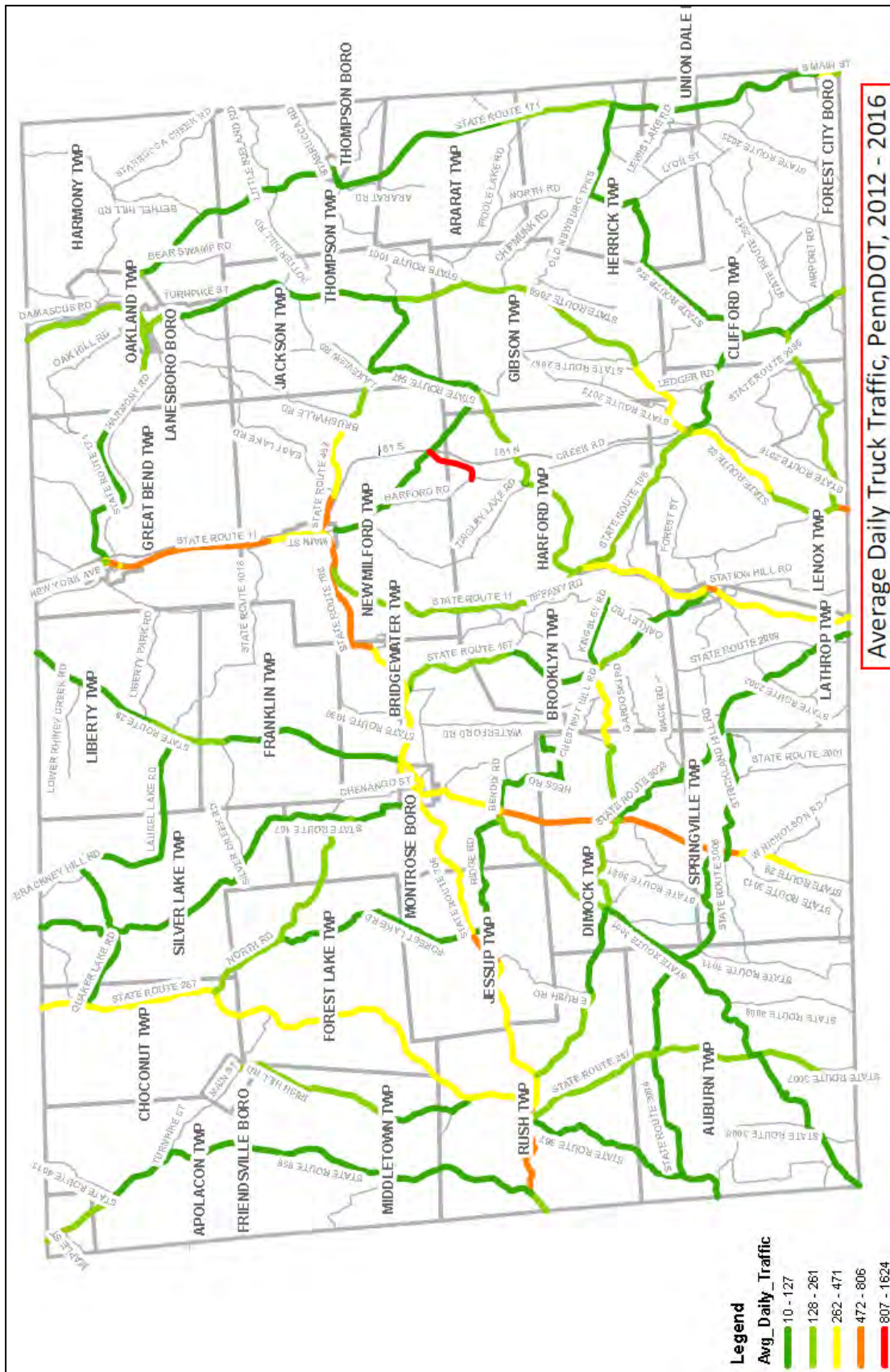
**Truck Traffic** As shown on the following Average Daily Truck Traffic Map and the detailed listing of traffic at the end of this section, trucks comprise a high number and significant proportion of the traffic on many routes in the County. The proportion of trucks is critical to the capacity of a particular route to safely carry traffic. Many rural roads simply do not have the capacity to handle large volumes of trucks leading to rapid road deterioration and increased accidents.

**Road Improvements** Road improvements in Susquehanna County are the responsibility of PennDOT and local municipalities. PennDOT roads are generally of higher capacity classification and carry greater traffic volumes and truck traffic. As discussed earlier, state road improvements are planned as part of the Twelve-Year Plan and local and county officials must actively participate in the process. Local road maintenance and improvements depend on local real estate tax revenues and the State Liquid Fuels Program funding based on local municipal road mileage and population. The annual PennDOT payments typically comprise only a small part of the municipal street maintenance budget and do not nearly cover the cost of long term maintenance and replacement.

**Road Task Force** Communication with PennDOT is important to ensure adequate road maintenance and scheduling of critical improvements. The Pike County Road Task Force is comprised of a representative of each of the boroughs, townships and school districts in the county who meet monthly with PennDOT representative to discuss state road issues.

AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC (PennDOT)				
Route Number	Section of Road	Traffic Count		Increase/Decrease
		2000	2015	
11	County line to Hop Bottom	2,100	1,800	-300
11	Hop Bottom to Kinglsey	1,300	1,900	+600
11	Kingsley to New Milford	4,300	5,000	+700
11	New Milford to Hallstead	2,800	5,100	+2,300
11	In New Milford Borough	5,900	5,000	-900
29	Springville to Dimock	2,800	3,800	+1,000
29	Dimock to S. Montrose	2,900	3,500	+600
29	S. Montrose to Montrose	5,600	5,900	+300
29	Montrose to Franklin Forks	2,700	2,500	-200
29	Franklin Forks to Brookdale	3,100	2,200	-900
92	Lenox to S.Gibson	2,000	2,200	+200
92	S.Gibson to Gelatt	1,200	1,500	+300
92	Gelatt to N. Jackson	1,200	1,300	+100
92	N.Jackson to Susquehanna	1,100	1,000	-100
92	Oakland	600	850	+250
92	Susquehanna	6,900	4,800	-2,100
106	Lenox to Clifford	3,700	3,200	-500
106	Lenox to W. Clifford	2,900	2,700	-200
106	Lenox to Kingsley	2,200	1,600	-600
171	In Forest City Borough	6,600	5,800	-600
171	Forest City to Uniondale	2,900	1,900	-1,000
171	Thompson to Lanesboro	1,400	1,200	-200
171	Herrick Center to Thompson	1,500	1,500	0
171	Lanesboro	7,300	2,700	-4,600
171	Oakland	1,600	2,300	+700
267	Auburn Center to Rushboro	1,100	1,100	0
267	Rushboro to Lawton	1,100	1,200	+100
267	Lawton to Birchardville	1,800	1,600	-200
267	Birchardville to Choconut	4,300	4,300	0
492	New Milford to Lakeside	3,800	3,200	-600
492	Lakeside to Steinbachs Corners	1,500	1,800	+300
492	Steinbachs Corners to Jackson	850	850	0
492	Jackson to Thompson	900	500	-400
706	Rushville to Lawton	1,900	2,600	+700
706	Lawton to Rush	1,400	2,300	+900
706	Rush to Fairdale	1,400	2,200	+800
706	Fairdale to Montrose	1,800	2,100	+300
706	Montrose to Tiffany Corners	6,500	7,100	+600
706	Tiffany Corners to New Milford	3,500	5,200	+1700
858	Rushville to Middletown Center	300	300	0
858	Middletown Center to Little Meadows Borough	700	600	-100
I-81	Lenoxville to Lenox Exit	24,000	24,000	0
I-81	Lenox to Harford Exit	24,000	24,000	0
I-81	Harford to Gibson Exit	25,000	24,000	-1,000
I-81	Gibson to New Milford	25,000	31,000	+6,000
I-81	New Milford to Great Bend	25,000	24,000	-1,000





The approach of working as a consolidated group has been very effective in communicating road maintenance, safety and improvement issues to PennDOT. The municipalities in Susquehanna County should consider organizing a similar Road Task Force.

**Bridges**

The County owns and maintains 32 bridges which are located throughout the County on township and borough roads. The County maintains a detailed inventory of the location, size and condition of the bridges. A contracted engineering firm inspects each regularly and necessary maintenance work is scheduled and performed accordingly. The bridges range in length from 40 to 120 feet and most are in good condition.

**Airports**

No airports in the County can accommodate commercial passenger service and residents rely on regional airports in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey for passenger service. The closest commercial airports are the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport in Avoca, Luzerne County and the Broome County Airport north of Binghamton, New York. Given the current tenuous economic condition of many airports and carriers, and the availability of service relatively close to the County, no specific action relative to airports is planned. The Husky Haven Airport in Bridgewater Township is classified as a public airport by PennDOT Bureau of Aviation but is limited to smaller aircraft.

**Railroads**

The Norfolk-Southern Railway Company's Southern Tier Line provides freight service through Susquehanna County from points south through Scranton, Nicholson (Wyoming County) and Susquehanna County, then north through Binghamton. The New York Susquehanna and Western Railway (*The Susie-Q*), via a 99-year lease from Norfolk Southern, provides service through the County passing through Lanesboro and Susquehanna Depot from North Bergen, New Jersey to Binghamton, Syracuse and Utica, New York. Binghamton is an important interchange of Norfolk Southern and The Susie-Q in addition to the location of the Northern Division headquarters for the New York Susquehanna and Western Railway. The rail lines provide an opportunity for local economic development organizations for business development. No specific action is proposed by the County; however, should the private sector propose to create a siding in the County, the County Railroad Authority may be able to play a role.

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**Susquehanna-Wyoming County Transportation (SWCT)** is a Shared-Ride Transportation Service Sponsored by the PA Department of Public Welfare, PennDOT, Susquehanna County and Wyoming County government other funding sources. Shared Ride is demand responsive transportation, which is available to the general public to all areas of the two counties, operating on a non-fixed route basis, and charging a fare to all riders. Trip costs vary depending on the trip distance. Passengers must agree to share the vehicle with other passengers during a given trip. Anyone who resides in Susquehanna or Wyoming County can utilize this service. (Service to out-of-county or outer-lying areas may be reduced to certain days/hours. Eighty-five percent of the fare for seniors is sponsored by the PA State Lottery Grant and the other 15 percent is paid for by the passenger or by another funding source. In addition, persons between the ages of 18 and 64 with a permanent or temporary disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, are eligible for the service.

**Public Transportation** With the exception of Susquehanna-Wyoming County Transportation (SWCT), managed by Trehab (A Community Action Agency) no public transportation system serves Susquehanna County. Direct provision of public fixed route or on-demand transportation is typically undertaken only by the most populous municipalities given the large volume of riders necessary to meet expenses. In most cases, such systems operate with government subsidies and agency support for specific qualifying clients. Extensive public transportation systems in rural communities are generally limited by low population density, the cost of providing the service, and uncertainty of public acceptance and use. In short, the cost is very high in relation to the potential revenue from the users of the system, and without public subsidy,

**Northern Tier Regional Planning & Dev. Commission *Coordinated Transit-Transportation Service Plan***

Priorities for Improvement	Recommendations
<b>Service Awareness &amp; Traveler Information</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear understanding—among riders, potential riders, and trip generators (e.g., employers, stores)—that public transportation services exist, and how to use services.</li> <li>• Centralized rider information to aid in selecting and scheduling transportation services.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop user-friendly transit materials.</li> <li>2. Educate businesses, organizations, agencies, and other trip generators.</li> <li>3. Develop and maintain a transportation services database; make it available as a one-stop online information source; hire a mobility manager to assist users.</li> </ol>
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Amenities in Core Communities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved coordination on roadway maintenance schedules.</li> <li>• Accessible, marked transit stops and signed connections to bicycle and pedestrian networks.</li> <li>• Planning for transportation service access for new developments.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Work with PennDOT to optimize general and winter roadway maintenance for critical transportation services.</li> <li>5. Install bus stop signage and shelters; evaluate sidewalks, curb cuts; connect transit to trails and bike paths; install wayfinding signage to/from transit.</li> <li>6. Develop model policies/ordinances to ensure new development accommodates public transportation service access.</li> </ol>
<b>Service Analysis, Expansion &amp; Coordination</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimized cost efficiency; expanded service; connected with major destinations and transit systems within the Northern Tier and in adjacent regions.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Conduct studies and pilot service routes to improve efficiencies and expand services.</li> <li>8. Partner to promote services, coordinate services, eliminate duplication of services and expand services for consumers.</li> <li>9. Explore rider interest in non-traditional transportation services, e.g. vanpooling, carpooling, and transportation network companies.</li> </ol>



Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*

Priorities for Improvement	Recommendations
<p><b>Bicycling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of safe places to bicycle.</li> <li>• Assess and improve roadways that bicyclists already use.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote on-road bicycling as a means of healthy, low cost-travel; share vision and plan for improving facilities and conditions.</li> <li>2. Develop and implement detailed plans to improve the four Bicycle PA routes; assess scenic corridors as touring routes; improve as feasible.</li> <li>3. Assess roads in towns and within ~3 miles for bicycle use and barriers to use and safety; improve as feasible or re-direct use to alternative location.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Sidewalks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend accessible (ADA) pedestrian networks throughout and to the edge of towns.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Evaluate sidewalk and crosswalk conditions and pedestrian use in towns and along roadways to the edge of town.</li> <li>5. Develop sidewalk extension and infill projects; consider long-term maintenance.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Trails</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote use of existing multi-use and pedestrian trails.</li> <li>• Support development of additional trails.</li> <li>• Increase capacity for trail development.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Centralize (or cross-reference) online trail promotion; count trail users.</li> <li>7. Educate interested municipalities on the trail development process and on relevant PennDOT and other state programs.</li> <li>8. Facilitate networking among localized trail development groups to share knowledge and experience.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Safety for all Travelers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate and alert all travelers to safe practices for shared-road travel.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Use/install signage, pavement markings, etc.; make public service announcements; work with local media to promote safe travel.</li> <li>10. Promote new bicycling routes and multi-use trails with events.</li> </ol>

it is often not feasible. In addition, even in areas where the public subsidy has been provided, use of public transport is often low given long trips and limited schedules, and the historic reliance on automobiles in rural areas.

**County Actions**

Key actions, many carried forward from the 2003 Plan, include:

- Promote and coordinate the formation of a local municipal Road Task Force to improve communication with PennDOT about state road safety, maintenance and improvement needs.
- Monitor the progress and encourage PennDOT to complete the Interstate 81 Gibson Interchange improvement project. (See Section VII - Economic Development for Details.)
- Continue to work with the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission’s Rural Planning Organization to submit and monitor road and bridge projects as part of PennDOT’s Transportation Improvement Program and Twelve Year Plan.
- Support the planning efforts of the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission for affordable public transportation and improvements for bicycle and pedestrian travel.



- Develop a maintenance and capital improvements program for County bridges.
  - Use and promote transportation planning as part of County and local municipal land use policies.
    - Encourage local governments to use zoning to limit higher density and higher traffic impact development to areas with adequate highway capacity.
    - Avoid the creation of highway hazards in new subdivisions and land developments by applying driveway, parking, setback, and road standards.
  - Work with economic development agencies, municipalities, major industries and PennDOT to formulate a plan for the improvement of east-west travel in the County.
  - Use designated growth areas identified in the 2003 Comprehensive Plan as a basis for road improvement prioritization.
  - Support state legislation which would provide an equitable share of subsidies for rural transit services.
  - Continue to support Susquehanna-Wyoming County Transportation.
  - Work to preserve existing rail service and facilitate the return of rail service on the several defunct lines throughout the County.
    - Support legislation providing railroad subsidies.
    - Support the continuing operation of the County Rail Authority.
    - Promote the use of rail freight service for businesses located within the county.
-

State Route	PennDOT 2012 - 2016	AADT	Truck %	Avg Daily Trucks
0011	County Line to SR2017 Station Hill Road	1,814	23	417
0011	SR2017 Station Hill Road to SR167 Main Street	2,381	24	576
0011	SR167 Main Street to SR2020 Forest Street	1,636	19	304
0011	SR2020 Forest Street to SR2022	1,865	20	365
0011	SR2022 to Kingsley SR106	1,453	30	440
0011	Kingsley SR106 to SR547	1,333	18	241
0011	SR547 Kingsley to T-581 Plank Road	1,088	16	173
0011	T-581 Plank Road to SR706	994	23	224
0011	SR706 to Cobb Street	5,006	12	612
0011	Cobb Street to SR848	5,048	6	323
0011	SR848 to SR1018 / Old Rt 11	5,048	6	323
0011	SR1018 to Hallstead Borough Line	5,026	10	523
0011	Hallstead Borough Line to Franklin Avenue	5,026	10	523
0011	Franklin Avenue to SR1010 Harmony Road	6,233	7	436
0011	SR1010 Harmony Road to SR171	7,920	7	522
0011	SR171 to SR1029	3,713	5	185
0011	SR1029 to NY State Line	2,554	4	113
0029	County Line to T-405	4,207	9	379
0029	T-405 to SR3013	3,367	8	284
0029	SR3013 to SR3023 Springville to Dimock	3,755	20	764
0029	SR3023 to SR3029 Bendix Road	3,481	19	667
0029	SR3029 Bendix Road to SR2053 Meshoppen Creek Road	5,853	5	293
0029	SR3023 Meshoppen Creek Road to Montrose Borough Line	5,638	5	302
0029	Montrose Borough Line to Church Street	3,106	12	373
0029	Church and South Main Intersection to Cherry Street	5,031	19	954
0029	Cherry Street to Maple Street	8,064	13	1,075
0029	Maple Street to Montrose Borough Line	9,091	13	1,167
0029	Montrose Borough Line to SR4008 Silver Creek Road	2,521	4	102
0029	SR4008 to T-721 Jones Creek Road	2,179	7	155
0029	T-721 Jones Creek Road to NY State Line	1,745	5	85
0092	County Line to SR374	2,149	26	562
0092	SR374 to SR2039	1,671	15	251
0092	SR2039 to SR2045	1,223	20	249
0092	SR2045 to SR2022	1,406	24	337
0092	SR2022 to SR106	1,272	24	301
0092	SR106 to I-81	4,351	12	522
0092	I-81 to SR2067	2,227	14	303
0092	SR2067 to SR2034	1,503	15	225
0092	SR2034 to SR492	1,312	10	129
0092	SR492 to SR1008	1,066	11	122
0092	SR1008 to SR1013	960	5	52
0092	SR1013 to SR1019	800	11	88
0092	SR1019 to Susquehanna Depot Borough Line	978	5	50
0092	Susquehanna Depot Borough Line to SR1021 Main Street	4,794	4	192
0092	SR1021 Main Street to SR171 State Street	4,203	2	85
0092	SR171 State Street to Oakland Borough Line	2,302	6	141
0092	SR1023 Westfall Avenue to New York State Line	653	27	174
0106	SR11 Kingsley to SR0092	1,618	9	140
0106	SR0092 to I-81	3,998	5	215
0106	I-81 to SR2065	1,602	5	73

State Route	PennDOT 2012 - 2016	AADT	Truck %	Avg Daily Trucks
0106	SR2065 to SR2014	1,689	4	68
0106	SR2014 to SR374 Royal	2,729	6	152
0106	SR374 Royal to SR2050	3,056	4	115
0106	SR2050 to SR2008 Clifford	3,246	3	108
0106	SR2008 to SR2012	1,860	6	119
0106	SR2012 to County Line	1,716	8	137
0167	SR11 to SR2096 Hop Bottom Borough	1,909	13	256
0167	SR2096 to SR2015 Brooklyn	959	11	104
0167	SR2015 to SR2024 Brooklyn	1,052	12	131
0167	SR2024 to SR2055 Wickizer Road	937	9	84
0167	SR2055 Wickizer Road to SR2015 Post Pond Road	1,512	16	242
0167	SR2015 Post Pond Road to SR706	1,512	16	242
0167	SR706 to SR1026 High School Road	6,359	11	700
0167	SR1026 High School Road to SR0029	7,102	8	599
0167	SR0029 to Wyalusing Street / SR706	3,603	10	366
0167	SR706 Wyalusing Street to SR4007 North Road	1,801	5	88
0167	Sr4007 North Road to SR4008 Silver Creek Road	483	10	49
0167	SR4008 Silver Creek Road to SR4002 Murphy's Corners	808	8	63
0167	SR4002 Murphy's Corners to NY State Line	450	4	16
0171	County Line to SR247 S. Main Street	4,803	4	192
0171	SR247 S. Main Street to SR247 Dundaff Street	5,732	5	286
0171	SR247 Dundaff Street to Forest City Borough Line	1,826	5	89
0171	Forest City Borough Line to Ashley Lane Uniondale Borough	1,826	5	89
0171	Ashley Lane Uniondale Borough to SR2040 Skyline Drive	913	5	45
0171	SR2040 Skyline Drive to Mauseleum Road	927	6	56
0171	Mauseleum Road to Uniondale Borough Line	960	5	47
0171	Uniondale Borough Line to SR374 Herrick Center	1,853	6	112
0171	SR374 Herrick Center to SR370 East Ararat	1,480	10	142
0171	SR370 East Ararat to SR1001	755	10	76
0171	SR1001 to SR1005 Thompson Borough	1,009	7	70
0171	SR1005 Thompson Borough to SR1004 Potter Hill Road	758	9	68
0171	Sr1004 Potter Hill Road to SR2004 Little Ireland Road	810	10	82
0171	SR2004 Little Ireland Road to SR1009 Lanesboro Borough	1,155	4	48
0171	SR1009 Lanesboro Borough to SR1013 Turnpike Street	2,748	8	220
0171	SR1013 Turnpike Street to SR0092 Susquehanna Borough	2,566	9	231
0171	SR0092 Susquehanna Borough to Great Bend Borough	2,595	6	156
0171	Great Bend Borough to I-81 Ramp	1,298	6	78
0171	I-81 Ramp to I-81	2,905	14	407
0171	I-81 to I-81 Ramp	1,298	6	78
0171	I-81 Ramp to SR0011	4,028	9	363
0267	County Line to SR3001 Auburn Center	1,705	8	130
0267	SR3001 West Side to SR3001 East Side	2,012	11	225
0267	SR3001 East Side to SR367	1,107	13	144
0267	SR367 to SR706 Lawton	1,616	10	163
0267	SR706 Lawton to Ballpark Road	3,031	16	490
0267	Ballpark Road to SR706 Intersection	3,031	16	490
0267	SR706 Intersection to SR4007 North Road	1,553	22	337
0267	SR4007 North Road to SR4002 Murphy's Corners Road	3,197	12	393
0267	SR4002 Murphy's Corners Road to SR4006 Hawleyton Road	4,257	8	336
0267	SR4006 Hawleyton Road to NY State Line	3,947	9	339



State Route	PennDOT 2012 - 2016	AADT	Truck %	Avg Daily Trucks
0367	County Line to SR3005	508	14	73
0367	SR3005 to SR3004 West Auburn	369	7	26
0367	SR3004 West Auburn to SR267	240	17	42
0374	SR92 Glenwood to SR407	1,664	16	264
0374	SR407 to SR106 Royal	1,806	14	253
0374	SR106 Royal to SR171 Herrick Center	589	7	42
0492	SR11 New Milford Borough to I-81 West Ramp	5,949	13	773
0492	I-81 West Ramp to I-81 East Ramp	3,231	19	609
0492	I-81 East Ramp to SR1012 East Lake Road	3,231	19	609
0492	SR1012 East Lake Road to SR1021 Brushville Road	2,777	11	305
0492	SR1021 Brushville Road to SR1019	1,844	10	185
0492	SR1019 to SR0092 Jackson	837	15	123
0547	SR0011 Kingsley T-485 Market Street Harford	2,162	11	236
0547	T-485 Market Street Harford to SR2063 Fair Hill Road	1,314	7	93
0547	SR2063 Fair Hill Road to Sherwood Hill Road	924	9	83
0547	Sherwood Hill Road to SR848 Harford Road Gibson	1,165	13	152
0547	SR848 Harford Road Gibson to SR492	701	9	63
0706	County Line to SR858	2,612	10	261
0706	SR858 to SR267 Lawton	2,180	25	541
0706	SR267 Lawton to SR3023	2,313	16	370
0706	SR3023 to SR3027	1,813	26	471
0706	SR3027 to SR3029 Fairdale	2,216	23	510
0706	SR3029 Fairdale to SR0167 Owego Street	2,099	20	420
0706	SR167 to SR1024 Heart Lake Road	4,214	11	464
0706	SR1024 Heart Lake Road to SR11	5,171	12	621
0848	SR0011 New Milford Borough to SR2061 Tingley Lake Road	1,779	3	59
0848	SR2061 Tingley Lake Road to SR2063 Fair Hill Road	1,082	3	34
0848	SR2063 Fair Hill Road to SR2081 Oliver Road	658	3	17
0848	SR2081 Oliver Road to SR547 Gibson	572	3	16
0858	SR706 to SR4017	286	7	20
0858	SR4017 to SR4014	145	7	10
0858	SR4014 to SR4013 Bowbridge Road	579	13	73
0858	SR4013 Bowbridge Road to NY State Line	1,734	8	139
2024	SR3023 and SR0029 Dimock to SR2053 Meshoppen Creek Road	899	24	220
2024	SR 2053 Meshoppen Creek Road to SR2015 Brooklyn	1,090	26	287
2024	SR2015 Brooklyn to SR2057	622	5	30
2024	SR2057 to SR2055 Kingsley	1,150	9	108
2081	Oliver Road New Milford Township	5,801	28	1,624
3001	County Line to SR3005 and Green Road	191	9	18
3001	SR3005 and Green Road to SR3005 and Place Road	611	11	66
3001	SR3005 and Place Road to SR267 South Side	240	5	11
3001	SR267 North Side to SR3019 Elk Lake School	768	11	85
3001	SR3019 Elk Lake School to SR3023 at Elk Lake	1,251	10	126
3001	SR3023 at Elk Lake to SR3029 Ridge Road	1,285	14	180
3004	SR367 West Auburn to SR267 Rushboro	218	8	17
3004	SR267 Rushboro to SR3001 Auburn Four Corners	254	11	28
3004	SR3001 Auburn Four Corners to SR3006 Springville	355	14	49
3004	SR3006 Springville to SR0029 Springville	647	10	65
3004	SR0029 Springville to SR2003	650	10	66

State Route	PennDOT 2012 - 2016	AADT	Truck %	Avg Daily Trucks
3004	SR2003 to SR3023	329	15	49
3023	County Line to SR2009 Pine Grove	904	11	99
3023	SR2009 Pine Grove to SR2002 Tarbell Pond	497	6	32
3023	SR2002 Tarbell Pond to SR2015 Parkvale	626	13	81
3023	SR2015 Parkvale to SR0029 Dimock	503	12	59
3023	SR0029 Dimock to SR3001 Elk Lake	884	16	142
3023	SR3001 Elk Lake to SR3027 East Rush	916	14	127
3023	SR3027 East Rush to SR706	757	20	154
3029	SR2053 to SR2051	381	16	62
3029	SR2051 to SR0029 South Montrose	516	13	66
3029	SR0029 South Montrose to SR3001	2,869	28	806
3029	SR3001 to SR706 Fairdale	532	16	87
3029	SR706 Fairdale to SR4007 North Road	340	12	40
4002	SR267 Choconut to SR167 Murphy's Corners	1,076	6	65
4002	SR167 Murphy's Corners to SR4001 Quaker Lake	489	10	49
4002	SR4001 Quaker Lake to SR0029	797	3	21
4007	SR 167 to SR3029	1,432	10	142
4007	SR3029 to SR267 St. Joseph's	1,606	11	177
4015	SR267 Rush Township to SR3033	483	19	93
4015	SR3033 to T-633 Guiton Road	211	10	21
4015	T-633 Guiton Road to T-620 Stone Street	475	37	175
4015	T-620 Stone Street to SR4014	587	36	209

**CULTURAL RESOURCES****Overview**

The many cultural resources, historic and archaeological, in Susquehanna County are well chronicled and have great community value and heritage tourism potential. Fieldstone walls and fences; bridges, railroad viaducts and related buildings; farmhouses and barns; commercial buildings; and historic Victorian style homes in many of the small villages and boroughs add to the rural character and appeal of the County and can serve as valuable educational tools. Preserving historic and archaeological resources and encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing historic character are critical to the future of the historic fabric of Susquehanna County and its municipalities. Promoting the County's historic buildings and resources will also stimulate tourism, which is significant to the local economy. This promotion will highlight the economic importance of cultural resources and stimulate additional preservation efforts.

This *Comprehensive Plan Update*, in concert with the 2003 Plan, calls for the County to encourage and support programs, which preserve historic and archaeological resources. Without such attention, local history is easily lost. Many cultural resources are in need of repair and restoration, while some have already been lost. The preservation and promotion effort should include:

- A detailed inventory of all cultural resources in the County.
- Action to list qualifying buildings, structures and places on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Identification and designation of historic districts.
- Integration of cultural resources in County economic development efforts.



Montrose Historic District, 1812 - 1935  
<https://en.wikipedia.org>



Bridge in Gibson Borough, c. 1750 - 1824  
<https://en.wikipedia.org>

<b>SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY</b>				
<b>NATIONAL REGISTER LISTED &amp; ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES</b>				
<i>Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission, Bureau of Historic Preservation</i>				
<i>August 1, 2002 (updated September 2017 per National Park Service)</i>				
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Historic Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Status Date</b>
Brooklyn Township	Dennis Farm	Creek Road	Listed	9/30/2014
Choconut Township	Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Church	Friendsville	Eligible	3/15/1995
Clifford Township	Woods, James, House	Rt. 247 at Crystal Lake	Eligible	10/4/1988
Gibson Township	Bridge in Gibson Borough	South Gibson over Bell Creek	Listed	6/22/1988
Gibson Township	Gibson Village Historic District	SR848 & SR547	Eligible	11/20/1998
Hallstead Borough	First Presbyterian Church	107 Pine Street	Eligible	8/14/1997
Harford Township	First Congregational Church	5016 Creek Road	Eligible	5/12/1989
Harford Township	Harford Orphan School Building	Orphan School Road	Eligible	7/14/1995
Harford Township	Martin's Creek Viaduct	SR11	Eligible	1/4/1991
Harford Township	Sophia, John, Farm	Richardson Road	Eligible	3/30/1987
Harford Township	Tyler, John, House	Main Street	Eligible	5/23/1983
Lanesboro Borough	Starrucca Viaduct	Viaduct Street	Listed	10/29/1975
Middletown Township	Coleman Farmstead	SR858	Eligible	4/12/1994
Montrose Borough	Berry St. African M/E Zion Church	Berry Street	Eligible	8/7/1998
Montrose Borough	Montrose Historic District	Church Street	Listed	6/8/2011
Montrose Borough	Mulford, Sylvanus, House	65 Church Street	Listed	5/22/1978
Montrose Borough	Silver Lake Bank (CASS)	75 Church Street	Listed	3/7/1975
Montrose Borough	Susquehanna County Courthouse	31 Lake Avenue	Listed	6/28/1996
Multi-Municipal	Delaware and Hudson Railroad	Fell Twp to NY State Line	Eligible	5/13/1994
Susquehanna Depot Borough	Erie Railroad Station	Bank of Susquehanna River	Listed	6/19/1972
Susquehanna Depot Borough	Commercial Historic DISTRICT	Main Street	Eligible	3/1/1996
Susquehanna Depot Borough	Historic District		Eligible	6/14/1994
<b>Totals: National Historic Landmarks: 0 National Register Listed: 8 National Register Eligible: 14</b>				

**National Register of Historic Places** - The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archaeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission manages the National Register of Historic Places for Pennsylvania. National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. These criteria recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archaeological properties worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions. Listing in the National Register, however, does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage or dispose of property. It often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable parts of our communities. (See accompanying list of National Register properties in Susquehanna County.)

Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community.
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects.
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits.
- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.



An important component of this *Comprehensive Plan* is to encourage community organizations, historic property owners and local municipalities to take an active role in protecting cultural resources which are not only important to the County as a whole, but also to each individual municipality. Without cooperative participation in the process, the long-term preservation of these cultural resources cannot be ensured. In short, the key to historic and archaeological resource protection is:

- careful planning
- strengthening resources to undertake preservation efforts
- organizing local historical societies
- promoting the resources as an important part of the community
- linking the resources to tourism economic development.

### Historical Societies

The Susquehanna County Historical Society, including the Historical Society Museum, presently occupies the entire building that was formerly the home of the Susquehanna County Free Library in Montrose Borough. The Society's main function is to assist people with genealogical research and to provide information regarding the history of the County. Numerous reference materials and historic documents are maintained at the museum. Several independent historical societies in the County work individually to protect their local cultural resources, generally promoting themselves through community fundraising events. These local historical societies use the services of the County Historical Society for resources concerning historic preservation or grant information, and should take the lead in the preservation and restoration of local historic places.

### Preservation Assistance

Grants from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) are available to nonprofit organizations and local municipalities for various aspects of preservation such as planning and surveys, nominations to the National Register, restoration and rehabilitation, museums, history and archives, historical markers, and operating support. PHMC grants are competitive and are awarded on an annual or, in some cases, ongoing basis. PHMC staff is available to assist local groups. The PHMC is the primary source for community organizations, local municipalities and the County to begin a formal preservation effort, with the County Historical Society, in concert with the Department of Planning and Development, making application for a grant to inventory historic and archaeological resources and prepare an overall preservation plan.



Silver Lake Bank, Montrose, 1816  
<https://en.wikipedia.org>

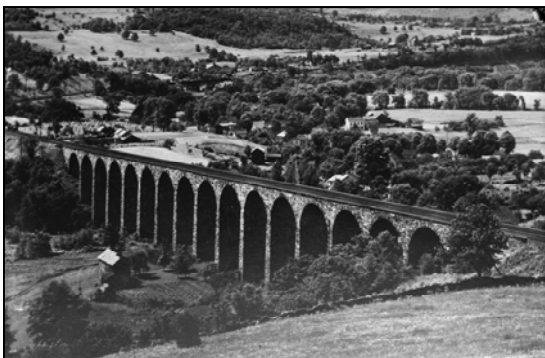
**Preservation Actions**

Property owners, community organizations, local and county officials and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission are all vital participants for a successful preservation program. Specific cooperative actions include:

- Preserve historic and archaeological resources and encourage new development to be consistent with the existing historic character.
- Encourage and support programs which preserve historic and archaeological resources.
- Integrate historic and archaeological resources in the County economic development efforts.
- Use available grant funding to inventory cultural resources and prepare an overall County historic preservation plan to identify properties for inclusion in the National Register and potential historic districts, and make specific preservation recommendations based on the inventory.
- Encourage local municipalities and residents to submit eligible properties for registration on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Develop guidelines for residential and commercial development to encourage historically sensitive design. These guidelines would be recommended to developers in areas not included in a formal historic district where specific architectural design standards can be applied by ordinance.
- Develop strategies for the repair, restoration and maintenance of historic structures, including abandoned cemeteries.
- Based on the cultural resources inventory, encourage the formation of historic districts in qualifying areas and the adoption of the necessary design standards for new and renovated structures. Ordinances to

regulate the architectural integrity of structures are the prerogative of local municipalities and cannot be enforced without the creation of a historic district certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

- Include conservation residential subdivision design in the County subdivision and land development ordinance to preserve important cultural resources and encourage local municipalities to do the same in zoning and subdivision ordinances.



Starrucca Viaduct, Lanesboro, 1847-48

<https://en.wikipedia.org>

**SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS**

On May 1, 2017, 13,627 Resident Survey notification postcards were mailed to the County real estate taxpayer list and news releases were issued to inform other residents that the survey could be completed on-line at the County website or paper copies were available. The survey return deadline was May 31, 2017. Surveys completed online totaled 1,472 responses online. Another 109 paper surveys were mailed to those requesting paper copies and 80 completed paper surveys were returned.

With a total of 1,552 completed surveys, the return rate is 11.4 percent, not atypical for this type of survey. While the survey results should not be interpreted to represent the overall opinion of county residents, it did serve to inform county residents of the comprehensive plan update and provide the opportunity to participate.

1. Please rate Susquehanna County in terms of each of the following:							
Answer Options	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure	Response Count	
Affordable housing	86	494	557	224	169	1530	
Job opportunities in the greater area	17	115	500	839	64	1535	
Environmental quality (water, air, etc.)	292	771	343	113	22	1541	
Social services	64	449	498	191	331	1533	
Health care availability	92	483	552	327	85	1539	
Recreation opportunities	193	501	436	353	48	1531	
Managing land development	56	389	473	307	303	1528	
Telecommunications (cable, TV, internet)	47	321	491	650	23	1532	
Recycling facilities	139	533	454	340	69	1535	
<i>answered question</i>						<b>1543</b>	
<i>skipped question</i>						<b>8</b>	

- The County rated highest for environmental quality with 69.8 percent responding *good* to *excellent*.
- The lowest ratings were given to job opportunities and telecommunications.
  - Job opportunities were rated *poor* by the majority (54.7 percent) of the respondents with another 33 percent giving a fair rating.
  - Telecommunications were rated *poor* by 42.4 percent.
- The availability of affordable housing was rated either *fair* or *good* by about two thirds of the respondents.
- The other items were rated fair to good by most respondents.

**2. Looking to the future compared to the present, how much attention should be given to the following?**

Answer Options	Less	No change	More	Not sure	Response Count
Programs for affordable housing	111	493	695	236	1535
Job creation	18	116	1358	46	1538
Environmental quality protection	63	556	834	86	1539
Improving social services	65	514	693	261	1533
Improving health care availability	21	467	971	80	1539
Increased recreation opportunities	40	596	820	76	1532
Managing land development	89	524	646	264	1523
Improving telecommunications	28	334	1103	59	1524
Improving recycling facilities	28	656	750	97	1531
Agricultural / forestry promotion	53	493	787	175	1508
<i>answered question</i>					<b>1546</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>5</b>

- The top three items that respondents believe need more attention are job creation, improving telecommunications and improving healthcare availability.
- Most respondents indicated that all other items/issues need more attention.
- Many of the items go well beyond County authority and are dependent on private, local municipal and state actions.

**3. Do you think Susquehanna County will become a more or less desirable place to live over the next five to ten years?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More desirable	21.0%	324
Less desirable	33.2%	512
Stay about the same	41.9%	646
Not sure	4.0%	61
<i>answered question</i>		<b>1543</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>8</b>

- Most respondents think the lifestyle in the County will stay about the same in the next 5 to 10 years.
- However, about one-third believe the County lifestyle will become less desirable and less than one-fourth believe it will improve.

**4. Families of all sizes and incomes reside in Susquehanna County and adequate and affordable housing is available to meet the current needs of these residents.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly agree	5.1%	78
Agree	32.7%	504
Disagree	34.6%	534
Strongly disagree	8.2%	126
Not sure	19.5%	301
<b>answered question</b>		<b>1543</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>8</b>

- More than one-third of respondents agreed that housing is affordable and adequate to meet people’s needs, another one third disagreed and almost one-fifth percent were not sure.
- U.S. Census data from 2015 shows 28.8 percent of homeowners with a mortgage and 47.3 of renters pay more than 30 percent of income for housing. The general rule is that paying more than 30 percent makes housing unaffordable. (See the Housing Section for a discussion of housing affordability.)

**5. If you disagree, please check the types of housing you believe are needed. (please check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
One-family	41.5%	333
Two-family	10.3%	83
Apartments	38.2%	307
Mobile homes	4.9%	39
Cluster housing	6.6%	53
Rental units	31.8%	255
Elderly housing	52.1%	418
Condominiums	9.0%	72
Mobile home parks	4.5%	36
Low cost housing	38.0%	305
Middle income housing	52.7%	423
Other (please specify)	8.7%	70
<b>answered question</b>		<b>803</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>748</b>

- Respondents believe that middle income, elderly and single-family housing are the top three types of housing needed.
- For *other* responses see the Other -- Types of Housing Needed Table at the end of this section.

**6. Looking to the future compared to the present, how much attention should be given to the following:**

Answer Options	Less	No change	More	Not sure	Response Count
Veterans services	10	359	989	176	1534
Children and youth services	30	437	901	167	1535
Senior citizen services	10	368	1046	114	1538
Low / moderate income family services	122	539	696	177	1534
Drug / alcohol treatment, education	65	320	1054	99	1538
Adult / juvenile probation support services	67	557	602	301	1527
Child / spouse court support orders	64	546	566	349	1525
Emergency management planning	40	549	730	212	1531
Public libraries	127	790	513	93	1523
<b>answered question</b>					<b>1545</b>
<b>skipped question</b>					<b>6</b>

- The County plays a direct and/or funding role in the above services and all except public libraries were identified by more respondents as needing *more attention*.
- Senior citizen services and drug / alcohol treatment and education received the most *more attention* responses.
- Most respondents noted that there is no need to change attention to public libraries.

**7. New growth and development in Susquehanna County should be managed and be directed to certain areas.**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	45.2%	694
Somewhat important	37.5%	575
Not very important	8.9%	136
Not sure	8.4%	129
<b>answered question</b>		<b>1534</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>17</b>

- The statement *New growth and development . . . should be managed and be directed to certain areas* was seen as either *very* or *somewhat important* by a very large majority of respondents.
- The Boroughs and Townships in the County have the authority to adopt a zoning ordinance which is the only means available to direct development to certain areas or zones.
- The County has adopted a subdivision and land development ordinance to regulate how land is subdivided and require adequate infrastructure for commercial developments, but the location of commercial development cannot be regulated absent zoning.

8. Who should take the lead role in land use management decisions?			
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	
Borough / Township	43.7%	662	
County	29.2%	443	
The free market	15.4%	234	
Other (please specify)	11.6%	176	
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>1515</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>36</b>

- The County has chosen to rely on the local municipalities for zoning and less than one-third of respondents suggested the County *should take the lead role in land use management decisions*.
- A significant number of respondents indicated that *the free market* should lead suggesting zoning should not be adopted.
- For *other* responses see the Other -- Lead Role in Land Use Management Decisions Table at the end of this section.

9. What role should Susquehanna County take in growth and development management?			
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	
Continued enforcement of subdivision and land development ordinance	35.6%	544	
Encourage boroughs and townships to adopt subdivision and land development ordinances	38.8%	592	
Encourage boroughs and townships to adopt zoning ordinances	36.0%	549	
Conduct planning / land use management training workshops	40.4%	617	
County should not have a role	15.8%	241	
Not sure	16.1%	246	
Other (please specify)	7.6%	116	
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>1527</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>24</b>

- Despite the earlier responses that it is important to manage land use, only 35.6 percent want the County to continue to enforce the subdivision and land development ordinance and 15.8 percent believe the County should have no role.
- About one-third of the respondents would like to see boroughs and townships adopt subdivision ordinances and zoning ordinances.
- For *other* responses see the Other -- County Role in Managing Development Table at the end of this section.



**10. If you believe natural gas development has generally been good for the County: (please check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Created job opportunities	81.9%	1053
Created personal wealth	75.1%	966
Kept large tracts of land intact	50.4%	648
Brought impact funds to the County and Municipalities	75.8%	975
<b>answered question</b>		<b>1286</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>265</b>

**11. If you believe natural gas development has generally been bad for the County: (please check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Caused traffic problems	70.4%	591
Caused environmental problems	61.4%	515
Caused excess noise and air pollution	55.1%	462
Caused friction among residents	56.0%	470
<b>answered question</b>		<b>839</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>712</b>

- Although a number of respondents answered both questions, 1,286 indicated gas development has been *generally good* for the County and 839 indicated it has been *generally bad*.
- This may not suggest those who believe it has been *good* do not have certain community or environmental concerns or those who believe it has been *bad* do not see some benefits.
- Creation of jobs ranked as the most important benefit and traffic problems ranked as the greatest problem.
- Were the responses affected by land ownership? As reported for Question 13:
  - 47.2 percent owned five acres or less
  - 8.1 percent owned 5+ to 10 acres
  - 44.9 percent owned ten+ or more acres

<b>12. What is your association with the County? (please check all that apply)</b>			
	<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	Live full-time in the County	98.6%	1517
	Own a vacation home in the County	2.5%	38
	Own vacant land in the County	6.2%	96
	Operate a business in the County	9.7%	149
<b><i>answered question</i></b>			<b>1539</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>			<b>12</b>

- Given that the survey was sent to taxpayers having a zip code in Susquehanna County, it is no surprise that 98.6 percent of those responding live full time in the County.

<b>13. If you own property in the County, how large is it?</b>			
	<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	Less than 1 acre	19.0%	279
	1 to 2 acres	14.3%	210
	2+ to 5 acres	13.9%	204
	5+ to 10 acres	8.1%	119
	10+ to 50 acres	26.8%	394
	50+ to 100 acres	9.3%	137
	More than 100 acres	8.8%	129
<b><i>answered question</i></b>			<b>1472</b>
<b><i>skipped question</i></b>			<b>79</b>

- The vast majority of respondents own property in the County.
- A small majority of respondents (53.0 percent) own 10+ acres.
- Almost one-fifth of respondents own less than one acre.

14. If you are a full-time resident, how long have you lived in the County? Or, if you own a vacation home, how long have you owned it?			
	Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
	Less than 1 year	0.5%	8
	1 to 5 years	3.7%	57
	6 to 10 years	5.7%	87
	11 to 15 years	9.5%	146
	16 to 20 years	6.7%	102
	20 years plus	73.9%	1130
<b>answered question</b>			<b>1530</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>21</b>

- Almost three-fourths of the respondents have lived in the County for longer than 20 years.
- The number of responses generally declined as the time of residency declined.
- Does this substantiate the prevailing thought that interest in one’s community and volunteer service (or time and ability to serve) is declining in the younger population?

**15. If a full-time resident, what is your home Borough or Township?**

- Respondents reside in all Townships and Boroughs in the County. The municipalities with the number of responses are listed below.

111 Bridgewater Twp.	36 Auburn Twp.	17 Ararat Twp.
89 Silver Lake Twp.	35 Jackson Twp.	17 Thompson Twp.
81 New Milford Twp.	32 Herrick Twp.	15 Susquehanna Bor.
74 Great Bend Twp.	32 Montrose Bor.	9 New Milford Bor.
69 Dimock Twp.	29 Choconut Twp.	8 Hop Bottom Bor.
66 Harford Twp.	29 Jessup Twp.	8 Middletown Twp.
64 Clifford Twp.	28 Rush Twp.	7 Great Bend Bor.
50 Lenox Twp.	26 Forest City Bor.	7 Oakland Bor.
49 Forest Lake Twp.	24 Hallstead Bor.	7 Union Dale Bor.
49 Liberty Twp.	20 Apolacon Twp.	6 Friendsville Bor.
47 Gibson Twp.	20 Lathrop Twp.	6 Thompson Bor.
47 Springville Twp.	19 Harmony Twp.	4 Lanesboro Bor.
37 Brooklyn Twp.	18 Oakland Twp.	4 Little Meadows Bor.
37 Franklin Twp.		

16. How old are you?			
	Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
	Less than 18	0.1%	1
	18 to 24	1.2%	19
	25 to 44	13.8%	212
	45 to 64	47.8%	733
	65 to 74	27.3%	419
	75 or older	9.8%	151
<b>answered question</b>			<b>1535</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>16</b>

- Taken together, the majority of respondents are in their working years, 25 to 44 and 45 to 64 years of age, with the 45 to 64 age group comprising the highest proportion of respondents.

17. If you are employed, which best describes where you work?			
	Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
	Home based business	11.5%	113
	Susquehanna County	39.8%	391
	Elsewhere in Pennsylvania	16.6%	163
	Broome County, New York	16.4%	161
	Elsewhere in New York	2.6%	26
	Other (please specify)	13.1%	129
<b>answered question</b>			<b>983</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>568</b>

- Almost 40 percent of those respondents who are employed work in Susquehanna County.
- Another 11.5 percent operate a home-based business, taking the in-county employment to about 50 percent.
- More respondents are employed in New York State than in areas of Pennsylvania outside the County.
- For *other* responses see the Other – Place of Employment Table at the end of this section.

18. Which of the following best describes your employment status?			
	Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
	Retired	38.6%	593
	Homemaker	2.3%	35
	Farming or forestry	2.7%	41
	Manufacturing	4.2%	65
	Wholesale or retail trade	3.1%	47
	Mining or gas production	1.2%	19
	Construction	3.3%	51
	Utilities	1.0%	16
	Transportation or warehousing	2.3%	35
	Information, finance, insurance, real estate, or rentals / leasing	3.6%	55
	Education services	5.6%	86
	Professional, scientific or technical	9.0%	139
	Health care or social services	7.3%	112
	Accommodation or food service	1.6%	25
	Public administration	1.8%	28
	Other services	8.9%	136
	Student	0.4%	6
	Unemployed or unable to work	3.1%	47
		<b>answered question</b>	<b>1536</b>
		<b>skipped question</b>	<b>15</b>

- Retired persons constitute the greatest proportion of respondents.
- A total of 855 of the respondents are employed. The following Table compares the proportion of employed respondents to 2015 Census data grouped by category:

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY	Susq Co	Survey
Manufacturing Sector	13.9%	7.6%
Wholesale & Retail Trade Sectors	15.0%	5.5%
Mining, Construction, Utilities, & Transportation & Warehousing	19.8%	14.2%
Information, Finance & Insurance, & Real Estate & Rental/ Leasing	5.5%	6.4%
Education Services & Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	10.7%	26.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.2%	13.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	6.7%	2.9%
Other Sectors including Public Administration & Farming Forestry	15.2%	24.0%

- The 2015 Census data and survey comparison shows several significant differences in employment by industry proportion.

<b>OTHER - - TYPES OF HOUSING NEEDED</b>	
<b>Categorized Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Affordable Rentals	7
Affordable Single Family Housing	12
Demolition or Rehab of Older Houses	4
Homeless Shelters	2
Housing for Disabled	5
Housing for Singles	2
Low Income Housing Assistance	3
Lower Real Estate Taxes	1
Need Jobs	2
No Changes Needed	2
No More Trailer Parks	1
Not Government Responsibility	1
Not Low Income Housing	5
Rent to Own	1
Senior Housing - Multi-Family and Community	6
Senior Housing - Single Family	5
<b>Uncategorized Responses</b>	
However, preserve the quality of the open spaces	
The drug situation is out of control in the trailer parks. I'm a social worker. It's like going to a 3rd world country in some of them. I've been to a 3rd world country. Good poor people have no way out of poverty in this county.	
fix the roads	
Not sure -- We own. But we are VS. fracking and its pumping of H2O from our local river! Bad for the environment!	
Alternative housing ( tiny homes )	
walking distance to shopping	
Desirable land for home development.	
We really, really need a skatepark. Like, it's not just me who wants one. It's 5+ people I know who also want a skate park. Like in the Clifford area we want a skatepark! We really ask, it will create a lot of attention. Give us a skatepark! We don't need a crazy expensive one either, just like some fun boxes, some rails, and roll in quarter pipes. If possible, a bowl,	
This is Montrose, "RURAL PENNSYLVANIA" is it necessary to keep up with EVERY new change in this world?	

<b>OTHER -- LEAD ROLE IN LAND USE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS</b>	
<b>Categorized Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
All of the above - County/Township/Borough/Free Market	12
Citizens	10
Community	6
County and Citizens	2
County and Free Market	2
County and State	1
County and Township/Borough	34
County/Township/Borough/Citizens	5
Landowners / Homeowners	38
Not sure / Don't know	11
Residents	14
Taxpayers	5
Voters	10
Zoning	2
<b>Uncategorized Responses</b>	
a neutral party without a financial interest...too much nepotism and insider information	
A separate county agency staffed by people with training in that area	
All Borough/Townships should be the same. At this time they are not.	
believe the current system is able to be lobbied	
caring, experienced, professional planners	
Common sense with some rules, B/T don't have power to enforce, County makes dumb rules	
County with great input from environmental agencies	
deal with situation individually	
depends on size and scope, and impact	
Ecological protection of air and water quality are paramount.	
ESTABLISH A NEW COMMISSION	
If you mean: Can I plant a garden w/o a permit, then the land owner. If you mean: Can we build a waste incinerator? then the neighbors.	
judging for our area, locals are not prepared to deal with this	
Local and county regulations should not strangle free market enterprise, but the long term needs of residents (including financial and environmental) need to be protected.	
more public involvement	
No Toxic WASTE Burner	
Non partisan expert group such as smart growth America	
Not current commissioners	
Responsible unbiased person	
tear down all these houses and give the land back to farmers	
The Pennsylvania Constitution regarding Article 1 Section 27 environmental clause that protects quality of life and takes away the fossil fuel industry contamination of our air, land, drinking water, rivers, streams and lakes.	
We need help with Emerald Ash Borer and dead ash trees.	
Which of these takes the lead role is less important than then the need for such management be based on fact and with public oversight or awareness and education as to those facts of some. Each case could result in unsatisfactory results if effected by a self-serving group or individual.	
whoever knows the most about the area/people/what is most desirable from those living there	



<b>OTHER -- COUNTY ROLE IN MANAGING DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Categorized Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Assist / Promote Business and Jobs	11
Clean Energy	1
Code Enforcement	3
Develop a Master Plan	4
Educate Municipal Officials	2
Enforce Ordinances	3
Fix / Pave the Roads	7
Less Regulation	8
More Open Space	1
No Junkyards	1
No Tax Increases	2
No Zoning / Less Zoning	6
None / No Role	2
Protect the Environment	13
Public / Citizen Involvement	14
Waste Management	2
Work with Townships and Boroughs	4
Zoning	14
<b>Uncategorized Responses</b>	
<p>Susquehanna County should follow the Endless Mountains Heritage Region Management Action Plan, which bases development on our natural heritage, which was agriculture, because if we protect our clean air and water, our fields and forests, that alone is our best attraction for our own citizens, and new settlers, tourists and new and existing small businesses. Basing development on protecting our natural and historic assets needs to be our foundational tenet, to first do no harm. Following this basic directive will help our citizens feel safe to stay here, to invest in their future here. Attracting a shopping center along Rt. 81, or Corporate administrative offices, other business with no polluting waste would be more possible if those companies had the confidence of knowing that this county is operating for the health and safety of the people living and working here. Everyone agrees we need job opportunities for our children but it would be harmful to them and everyone who wants to live here to encourage heavy industrial manufacturing, particularly of chemicals and plastics, made from the products extracted here below the surface of our land. This will destroy our living and working environment. We are sacrificing enough with the extraction, production and transportation of Marcellus gas. That means we need to find a way to prevent any further business that creates unwanted pollution of any kind. On question No. 3, I checked that Susquehanna County would be less desirable in the next 5 to 10 years but it does not have to be that way if our Township and County government make it clear to our PA legislature that we expect them to operate our Department of Environmental Protection to put protecting our environment over corporate profit. To put the No. 9 question simply, the role Susquehanna County should take is to follow the part of the PA Constitution that states we have the right to clean water, clean air and .....(A last suggestion or two - a first class retirement complex for our healthy, active, retired citizens so that our friends need not move away to find quality retirement.) (Promote the arts and crafts, old and new, the old rural skills, before they are lost. They are another prime attraction for people who also appreciate rural life and look for rural areas to raise children, enjoy in their retirement years and protect for the next generations. Please realize, small rural communities like ours are special, and sought after throughout the world. Maintain and protect it. Make it sustainable.)</p>	
clean and green may have deterred some land development	
storm water management-Laurel Lake	
<p>How about development in wind and solar jobs? There are 5 times as many jobs in wind and solar than oil, gas and coal combined as stated in the book by NYC former mayor Michael Bloomberg and Carl Popes book. Stop selling out to fossil fuel slavery that has created catastrophic contamination of more than 60,000 miles of our streams that kill fish, ruin our tourism industry and make our state undesirable. Everyone knows Pennsylvania is a sacrifice zone to fossil fuel. That is why we are going back to New York where there is respect for Mother Nature and the rights to a clean environment.</p>	
To rebalance local society	

<b>OTHER -- COUNTY ROLE IN MANAGING DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Uncategorized Responses</b>	
Let's not turn use into a city.	
No competitive gas prices in Montrose - price fixing?	
Rental property condition is a major concern to me.	
The County Politicians are either corrupt or foolish. They have a very poor county, with a wealth of new non-taxed ratables. Natural gas compression stations and pipelines are taxed to the fullest in neighboring states, but not in Pa. As the poor residents are taxed for every land improvement! Multi-billion dollar companies build pipelines and compression stations (tax free) worth far more than entire town ratables. Why is the question? Under FER guidelines, taxes are allowed and passed on to end users, mostly non-residents. Most locals cannot utilize.	
I think a Hemp processing plant would be a great idea. A positive growth industry. Friendly to farmers.	
Reputable Developers w sound track records	
domestic animal ordinances	
Commissioners should not be involved personally in real estate transactions.	
Skatepark.	
We need a dry cleaner!!!!	
Stop trying to make this a city for God's sake.	

<b>OTHER – PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Baltimore	1
Bradford County	1
Broome County	3
Delaware County, NY	1
Disabled	5
Georgia	1
Home-based	11
Lackawanna County	5
Nationwide	5
New England States	1
New Jersey	4
New York State	2
Northeast PA	4
Pennsylvania	1
Retired	55
Scranton	4
Susquehanna County	8
Tioga County, NY	1
Unemployed	5
Wyoming County	3

**APPENDIX B**  
**COUNTY DEPARTMENTS / SERVICES**

**Elected Officials**

- **Three County Commissioners**
    - serve as the policy makers for the County
    - create and manage the annual budget and set tax rates to generate adequate funds
    - manage County personnel
    - ensure that property assessments are fair and equitable
    - cannot direct how other elected row offices are managed
    - ensure that state program mandates are satisfied
    - provide facilities and support for the judicial system
    - address risk management for the County administration
    - make purchasing and contracting arrangements
    - manage county human services
    - provide financial support for the county jail and serve on the County Prison Board for jail management
    - serve as the County Board of Elections which responsible for all aspects of elections
    - manage County buildings and property
    - implement the 911 emergency call system and provide communication system for emergency services
    - provide for emergency management in accord with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency
    - appoint a County Planning Commission and ensure that a comprehensive plan is adopted and updated in accord with the Municipalities Planning Code
    - conduct solid waste disposal planning as required by state law
    - appoint the County Sealer of Weights and Measures who inspects and certifies scales and gas pumps
    - appoint the Conservation District Board of Directors and provide financial support
    - support the services of Penn State Cooperative Extension
    - appoint a Director of Veterans Affairs who assists veterans in the County with claims, record changes, etc.
    - provide for data and information management
  - **Three Auditors** (or, where the office of auditor has been abolished, a controller)  
Susquehanna County elects three Auditors
    - perform a post audit function, not an accounting function
  - **Clerk of Courts** (in Susquehanna County also serves as Prothonotary)
    - chief clerk and record keeper for the criminal courts
    - keeps all papers filed under criminal and civil procedures of the courts
    - maintains the minute book and the records of all similar procedures of the courts
  - **Clerk of Orphans' Court** (in Susquehanna County also serves as Recorder of Deeds and Register of Wills)
    - files all proceedings relative to adoptions and to estates of incompetents
    - adoption records are sealed and not available to the public
-

- 
- **Coroner**
    - investigates deaths of a suspicious or violent nature
    - assisted by a Coroner Jury of Inquest when called to determine the cause of death
    - empowered to perform autopsies, subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, and compel attendance at an inquest
    - required to issue a certificate of cause of death when it occurs without medical attention or attendance
  
  - **District Attorney**
    - signs all bills of indictment
    - conducts all in-court criminal prosecution in the name of the Commonwealth
    - assistants, special assistants, deputy assistants, deputy assistant district attorneys, county detectives, stenographers, and clerks are appointed to assist in criminal investigation and prosecution of the cases before the court
  
  - **Prothonotary** (in Susquehanna County also serves as Clerk of Courts)
    - clerk of the court of common pleas
    - keeps records of all civil procedures before the courts
    - signs all writs and processes
    - files copies of all records and processes
    - takes bail in civil actions, enters judgments at the instance of plaintiffs, and upon the confession of defendants
    - signs all judgments and takes acknowledgments of satisfaction of judgments or decrees
    - administers oaths and affirmations
    - required by state law to maintain the judgment docket
    - receives petitions in connection with roads and rights of way
    - records the action of members of boards of view and eminent domain proceedings
    - processes naturalization papers - obtains information and makes records and arrangements for naturalization court
    - provides applications for passports
    - records divorce proceedings
  
  - **Recorder of Deeds** (in Susquehanna County also serves as Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphans Court)
    - responsible for preservation of real property (land and buildings) records
    - affix seal and record deeds, mortgages, subdivision plans and other property ownership records
    - records oaths of office and commissions of all county officers, notaries and district justices
    - collects state and local real estate transfer tax
    - collects fee of \$1 per document for historical records storage and \$1 per deed or mortgage for affordable housing program
  
  - **Register of Wills** (in Susquehanna County also serves as Recorder of Deeds and Clerk of Orphans Court)
    - jurisdiction over the probate of wills
    - Commonwealth's agent for collection of inheritance taxes
    - maintains records on wills, inventory of estates, fiduciary accounts, inheritance tax records, registration of licenses (including marriage licenses) and other miscellaneous records
  
  - **Sheriff**
    - serves principally as an officer of the court and appoints deputies for assistance
    - delivers and carries out orders of county court, such as protection from abuse orders
-

- serves various writs, processes, and other judicial documents
- provides courthouse security and prisoner transport
- assists in impaneling juries and in executing sheriff's sales
- conducts application checks for pistol permits
- issues pistol permits
  
- **Treasurer** (in Susquehanna County also serves as Director of the Tax Claim Bureau and shares staff)
  - receipt, custody and disbursement of all county monies
  - pays bills on order of Commissioners
  - maintains vouchers and transaction records for the Auditors
  - acts as issuing agent for:
    - Department of Agriculture - thirteen sub-agents for dog licenses
    - PA Fish and Boat Commission - fishing licenses
    - PA Game Commission - hunting and antlerless licenses
  - issues permits for bingo and small games of chance
  - see *Tax Claim Bureau* for more details

### **Departments and Employees**

In addition to the elected officials, a wide variety of individuals and departments operate to provide the facilities and services mandated by the County Code and various state and federal programs. The responsibilities of each department are summarized below.

- **Assessment Office/Chief Assessor** - The real estate tax provides the largest source of funds for local municipalities, school districts and counties, and the assessed valuation of each parcel of land is the basis for the real estate tax. The Commissioners hold the ultimate responsibility for setting assessed valuations but rely on the Assessment Office for operation of the program. The Assessment Office is directed by the Chief Assessor
    - appointed by the Commissioners
    - determines values, updates records and prepares reports
    - updates tax maps for new land subdivisions
    - maintains the occupational privilege tax and per capita tax records
    - sends tax notices for the County and local municipalities
    - administers Act 319 Clean and Green preferential assessment
    - works with Board of Assessment Appeals
      - three-member Board appointed by Commissioners
      - hears formal tax assessment appeals
      - addresses tax exemption questions
  
  - **Office of Commissioners and Chief Clerk** - State law requires the Board of Commissioners to appoint a Chief Clerk, and in Susquehanna County, the Commissioner's Office and Chief Clerk's Office function as one in the same.
    - serves as the Commissioner's liaison to the public
    - coordinates between the Commissioners and other County departments
    - keeps the official record of Commissioners' proceedings
    - operates as the administrative assistant to the Commissioners
    - maintains the books and accounts of the Commissioners
    - serves as the chief purchasing officer for the County
    - assisted by five full-time employees
-

- Deputy Chief Clerk
  - Director of HR and System Database
  - HR Coordinator
  - Payroll Clerk
  - Data Administrator / Budget Coordinator
  
  - **Communications/Emergency Management/Addressing**
    - handles 911 calls for all municipalities in the County except Forest City which is part of the Wayne County system
    - responsible for emergency management planning required by the Commonwealth
    - provides county-wide 911 street addressing for new buildings.
  
  - **GIS**
    - maintains the Geographic Information System used by the County departments
    - makes available to the public parcel maps with aerial photography
  
  - **Historical Records/Archives** - Court related, tax assessment, birth and death, genealogy and other old records are currently stored.
    - shelving and storage of records and documents
    - assists county staff and public with record searches - about 2,000 annually
  
  - **Maintenance** – General upkeep of all County buildings and grounds.
  
  - **Planning and Development**
    - administers the day to day operations of the Susquehanna County Planning Commission
    - review of subdivision land development plans
    - preparation for the monthly Planning Commission meetings
    - ordinance review and development
    - supporting any and all activities relative to the development of the county
  
  - **Services for Children and Youth**
    - goal is to ensure for each child in the County a permanent, legally assured family, which protects the child from abuse and neglect
    - supported by state funds and county
  
  - **Solicitor** - The County Code authorizes the expenditure of county funds for legal counsel.
    - part-time, appointed by the Commissioners to represent them in all legal matters
    - brings suits involving any County rights, claims or privileges
    - defends suits against the County
    - provides legal advice
    - may be assisted by special counsel appointed by the Commissioners
  
  - **Solid Waste and Recycling**
    - administers the County Municipal Waste Management Plan and County waste hauling ordinances
    - licenses refuse and septage haulers, maintains records and reviews landfill issues
    - educational programs on waste reduction, proper disposal, recycling tire disposal, and household hazardous waste are provided to individuals, businesses, organizations and schools
    - assistance with establishing recycling programs
-

- operates the county recycling program and assists municipalities with local recycling programs
- conducts solid waste disposal planning as required by the Commonwealth.
- provides containers to drop-off sites in municipalities and school districts
  
- **Tax Claim Bureau (and Treasurer's Office)** - the elected County Treasurer serves as Department Head.
  - receives tax reports from the 40 Tax Collectors in the County and provides summary to the Treasurer's Office
  - maintains additions and exonerations to the tax rolls along with Assessment Office and Tax Collectors
  - collects delinquent taxes - about 3,000 each year
  - assists with tax sales
  - collects and processes rollback taxes on Clean and Green violations
  - see *Treasurer* for additional office functions
  
- **Veterans Affairs**
  - assists veterans and their dependents with processing claims for Federal, State, and County benefits such as pensions, widow's benefits, burial needs, and educational assistance
  - provides counseling services and maintains files for all veterans
  
- **Voter Registration Office** - The County Commissioners serve as the County Board of Elections and appoint the County employees in the Voter Registration Office to administer election and voter registration under jurisdiction of the Board. When one of the Commissioners is a candidate, the President Judge of Common Pleas appoints a judge or an elector to serve on the Board of Elections in place of the Commissioner. The County Board certifies election results and voter registration totals to the Department of State.
  - maintains registered voter list
  - selects and equips polling places and assists with set-up for elections
  - prepares election ballots and mails absentee ballots
  - purchases and preserves voting booths (voting equipment) and supplies
  - prepares and publishes notices and advertisements
  - receives petitions and nomination papers
  - investigates allegations of vote fraud
  - announces election results and reports to the State
  - issues certificates to successful candidates

### **Cooperating Agencies**

Those agencies which are not County departments but are supported in various ways by the County are listed below.

- **Area Agency on Aging**
  - assists elderly consumers in meeting their needs through home and community based services
  - assessments to determine an appropriate level of long term care to maintain independence care management staff work with older adults in their homes and the Agency office.
  - serves Susquehanna, Bradford, Sullivan and Tioga Counties
  - Six senior centers - Lenoxville, Montrose, Lanesboro, Great Bend Borough, Lawton, Forest City
  
- **Drug and Alcohol Commission**
  - under contract with the PA Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol, manages the



- delivery of drug and alcohol treatment, prevention, and education services
  - provides the following direct care services: drug and alcohol assessments, administrative care management, and intensive case management
  - completes all county drug and alcohol assessments for County residents who are uninsured or Act 152 eligible
- **Economic Development** – Contract with the Towanda-based Progress Authority with direction provided by the Commissioner-appointed Susquehanna County Economic Advisory Board.
- **Housing and Redevelopment**
  - Housing/Redevelopment Authority is an independent organization initially created by the Board of Commissioners
  - Housing Authority’s mission is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to the low-income residents
  - Redevelopment Authority’s mission is to focus on, and address housing and community facility problems; and to pursue economic development and commercial revitalization activities through initiatives that will result in the development and expansion of job opportunities
- **Penn State Cooperative Extension** - An outreach of the Pennsylvania State University consisting of resources and non-formal educational programs in the areas of:
  - agriculture
  - youth development
  - family and consumer sciences
  - community development. The Extension office is located at 88 Chenango Street, Montrose.
- **Trehab Center** - The Trehab Center is a large, non-profit community action agency designated by the Board of Commissioners to provide state-supported community-based programs to low- to moderate-income individuals and families and others in need due to personal, family or health-related circumstances.
  - Serves Susquehanna, Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne and Wyoming Counties with an office in each county
  - Services
    - Community - nutrition, housing, employment
    - Home - homemaker, personal care, caregiver relief
    - Drug and Alcohol Program - treatment and prevention
    - Home Ownership Program - homeowner education and counseling for home loan qualification
    - Weatherization - installation of energy saving home improvements, education
    - Work Force Development Programs -training and skill development
    - Welfare to Work Programs - education and training to welfare recipients to move to employment
- **Susquehanna County Conservation District** - The Susquehanna County Conservation District provides information and technical assistance to assist people and communities in the wise use of their natural resources. Through partnerships among non-profit groups and public agencies, the district promotes a cooperative approach to natural resource issues. The district is guided at the local level by a Board of Directors and at the state level by the State Conservation Commission.

Among the district's programs are:

- Environmental Education

- Erosion and Sedimentation Pollution Control & Waterway and Wetland Protection
- Dirt and Gravel Roads Pollution Prevention
- Nutrient Management
- Chesapeake Bay Program
- Watershed Association formation
- Agricultural Land Preservation

### **The Court System**

The local court system is supported by the County and the county courts taken as a whole provide the foundation for the Commonwealth's judicial system. With the exception of a number of smaller counties which share a judge, each county has its separate court system, court house and contingent of court officials. While judges are elected and are paid by the Commonwealth, the County is otherwise responsible for court staff salaries, court facilities and operation, and the law library, all of which are included in the county budget. The President Judge selects and terminates court system employees, but all new positions and salaries must be approved by the County Salary Board. Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation and Domestic Relations are under the direct jurisdiction of the Court.

- **Adult and Juvenile Probation**
    - provides information to aid the Court in determining an appropriate disposition on offenders through preparation of pre-sentence information
    - supervises adjudicated adult and youth who are on probation
  
  - **Court Administrator**
    - organizes, coordinates and directs all services relative to the Court system under the direction of the President Judge
    - provides liaison between attorneys, the Court, various County offices and the public
    - responsible for preparing the annual court calendar, monthly and daily trial lists
    - administration of the District magisterial Judge system in the County.
  
  - **District Magisterial Judges** - Susquehanna County is served by three District Judges with one located in New Milford Borough for the Northern District, one in Montrose Borough for the Montrose District, and one in the Village of Harford for the Southern District.
  
  - **Domestic Relations**
    - under the supervision of the President Judge and is responsible for assisting the Court in enforcing the law of spousal and child support
    - processes complaints dealing chiefly with alleged non-support of dependent parents and children
    - responsible for securing and enforcing court orders, collecting and disbursing support payments, and locating absent parents
    - discharges its responsibilities primarily by receiving requests from individuals (or via the Department of Public Welfare, Children and Youth, or other agencies and jurisdictions) who believe themselves entitled to support on their own behalf or on the behalf of a minor child for whom it is providing support, and filing the proper documents to obtain a Court Order for support.
    - provides all Title IV-D services of the Social Security Act and required by Federal and State law, including:
      - application and locate services
      - petition/complaint processing
      - paternity service and genetic testing
      - financial assessment services
-

- establishment of support services and medical support
  - enforcement services
  - intra/inter - state services
  - legal services
  - monitoring cases
  
  - **Jail** - The County Jail is responsible for the care, custody and control of adjudicated inmates and is located on twelve acres off Route 29 just south of Montrose.
  
  - **Jury Manager**
    - in charge of jury proceedings and jury service
  
  - **Public Defender**
    - provides cost-free legal representation to indigent persons, juvenile through adult, in criminal matters ranging from traffic offenses to criminal homicide
    - clients may seek representation, pre-arrest through appellate proceedings
-