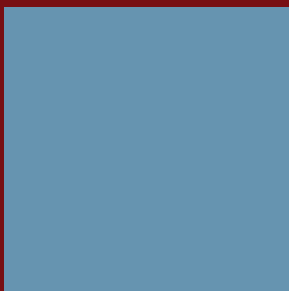


July 2010

Integrating Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development in Pennsylvania

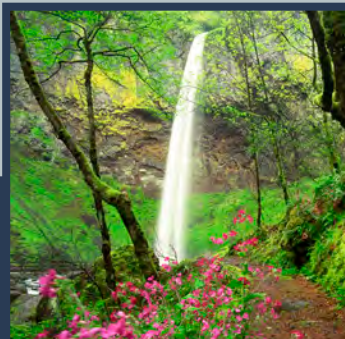


NADO RESEARCH FOUNDATION

**Center for Transportation Advancement and Regional Development
with support from the Federal Highway Administration**

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Pennsylvania's Regional Development Organizations

From April 26 – 28, 2010, the NADO Research Foundation Center for Transportation Advancement and Regional Development, under a cooperative agreement with Federal Highway Administration, held a Peer Exchange event in Pennsylvania. At this event, a group of transportation planning practitioners from rural and small metropolitan regions across the nation visited three regional planning and economic development organizations based in Pennsylvania: the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission, SEDA-Council of Governments, and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.

Through presentations, in-depth discussion and site visits organized by the three host organizations, the Peer Exchange participants learned how organizations across Pennsylvania have engaged in a statewide effort called Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development (LUTED) to develop regional visions and strategies that identify projects related to multiple issue areas. Although the process began as a special state-level initiative, the regions have identified connections with their ongoing work through the U.S. Economic Development Administration-funded Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) process, the regional transportation planning process and other planning programs. The regional organizations visited on the Peer Exchange have also sought out project funding sources that are outside of the initial scope of the LUTED program.

This proceedings report describes the background of regional planning and the LUTED process in Pennsylvania, and provides case studies of how the three organizations observed on the Peer Exchange approached the integration of land use, transportation and economic development planning in their regions.

A network of regional development organizations (RDOs) addresses regional planning and development issues in Pennsylvania. There are seven local development districts (LDDs) serving 52 of the state's 67 counties, and they are part of a larger network of 72 multi-county planning and development organizations that serve Appalachia under the federal-state-local partnership of the Appalachian Regional Commission. LDDs provide services related to community and economic development and strategic planning and perform regional transportation planning by staffing a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and/or a rural planning organization (RPO). These LDDs are also part of the national network of Economic Development Districts (EDDs) funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is not a part of the LDD network but provides planning services and staffs the MPO for the Greater Philadelphia region.



Multi-county regional development organizations in Pennsylvania are referred to as local development districts (LDDs). Entities that provide similar services in other states may be called councils of government (COGs) or regional commissions. The term “regional development organizations” (RDOs) is a universal term used to refer to such entities.

Rural Transportation Planning in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) partners with and funds six of the state's LDDs, along with five rural independent counties, to conduct rural transportation planning activities as RPOs in regions not served by MPOs. PennDOT awards each region between \$90,000 and \$140,000 in state and federal planning funds, which is matched 10 percent with local funds.

The rural transportation planning process provides a forum for state, regional and local decision-makers to identify issues and opportunities, conduct studies and make informed recommendations regarding the programming and implementation of transportation investments. The RPOs conduct transportation studies and recommend project candidates. Short- and long-range plans are produced in each region, and the six regional organizations and PennDOT jointly develop, negotiate

and approve the rural portions of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In addition, the RPOs provide geographic information system (GIS) services to state and local agencies and provide technical assistance to transit providers, emergency responders and other transportation stakeholders.

According to both state and local officials, the RPO process has helped build professional capacity at the local level, bring attention to the long-range planning needs of rural areas and generate plans more closely aligned to community interests. It has also raised awareness of local economic development activities and improved the coordination between statewide plans and regional initiatives. With funding support from the state and other sources, each region engages in a wide range of special projects and studies.



LUTED Planning Initiative

The Land Use, Transportation and Economic Development (LUTED) initiative began in 2002 when Pennsylvania was one of six states to participate in the National Governors Association Policy Academy. That year, the program focused on finding ways that states can better integrate transportation and land use planning to promote economic development, improve livability and conserve limited state financial resources. Through Pennsylvania's participation in this process, the Commonwealth uncovered some alarming land use and demographic trends: Pennsylvania ranked 12th in the nation in the rate of land consumption, yet ranked 45th in the nation in terms of population growth.

In May 2003, the secretaries of four state agencies—PennDOT, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)—hosted a statewide conference on transportation, land use and economic development. More than 200 stakeholders attended, and the direct recommendation to emerge from this meeting was that the Commonwealth agencies needed to better engage in regional planning processes and better integrate agency decision-making with regional planning.

The Commonwealth consists of 2,567 municipalities, mostly in the form of cities, boroughs or townships. Only counties are required to complete comprehensive plans, although many municipalities also prepare comprehensive plans to guide local growth and development. At the state level, there was a growing recognition that regional planning was an important tool to coordinate these planning efforts across the state's many jurisdictional boundaries. By building on



the regional planning processes already in place throughout the state, Pennsylvania aimed to better coordinate agency efforts and prioritize funding more efficiently.

In 2004, PennDOT, DCED, DEP, and DCNR along with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) and the Office of the Governor formed the LUTED State Interagency Team to manage interagency efforts within the LUTED process. This entity prepared a Statewide Action Plan, which aimed “to foster sustainable economic development and improve the quality of life in Pennsylvania's diverse urban, suburban, and rural communities through the adoption and coordination of Commonwealth agency policies, programs and actions to increase economic prosperity; promote orderly and fiscally responsible development;

LUTED was initiated to address statewide trends in land consumption and population growth.

The Keystone Principles & Criteria for Growth, Investment & Resource Conservation

1. Redevelop First
2. Provide Efficient Infrastructure
3. Concentrate Development
4. Increase Job Opportunities
5. Foster Sustainable Businesses
6. Restore and Enhance the Environment
7. Enhance Recreational and Heritage Resources
8. Expand Housing Opportunities
9. Plan Regionally; Implement Locally
10. Be Fair

The Interagency Land Use Team was created by the Commonwealth in 2001 to address interagency collaboration regarding land use. This team developed “The Keystone Principles & Criteria for Growth, Investment & Resource Conservation,” which outline a coordinated interagency approach to fostering sustainable economic development and resource conservation through investment in Pennsylvania’s diverse communities. The Keystone Principles provided a basis for the underlying themes of LUTED.

respect the environment; and conserve natural, historic, rural and recreational resources.”

Upon the recommendations of the 2003 statewide conference and the Interagency Land Use team, nine regional conferences were held in 2005, jointly hosted by PennDOT, DEP, DCNR, DCED, PDA, the Governor’s Office and the State Planning Board. These “Regional Conferences on Transportation and Land Use for Economic Development” were conducted in each of the seven LDD regions of the state. Conferences were also held in the southeast region, which is partially served by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), and in the south central region, which is not served by a regional organization. Each conference brought together area leaders to discuss issues unique to that region and develop a common vision for the future. Through facilitated discussion, the forum participants outlined primary and secondary objectives and action steps needed to realize the vision.

Next, each of the state’s regional organizations was asked to submit proposals for how to develop a regional plan based on the outcomes of these conferences. In 2006, DCNR, DCED, and PennDOT designated funds for each regional entity to develop a “Regional Action Strategy” (RAS) to link land use, transportation and economic development, under a process to be known as LUTED.

The aim of LUTED was to better coordinate planning efforts across all levels of government. By integrating land use and transportation goals and objectives with economic development strategies as well as concerns related to natural resources, energy, agriculture and other related issues, the State intended to better synchronize state and regional goals with existing programs. The goal was to

develop regional visions and associated planning and prioritization strategies for regionally significant projects that would help state agencies determine the most effective methods of distributing funding.

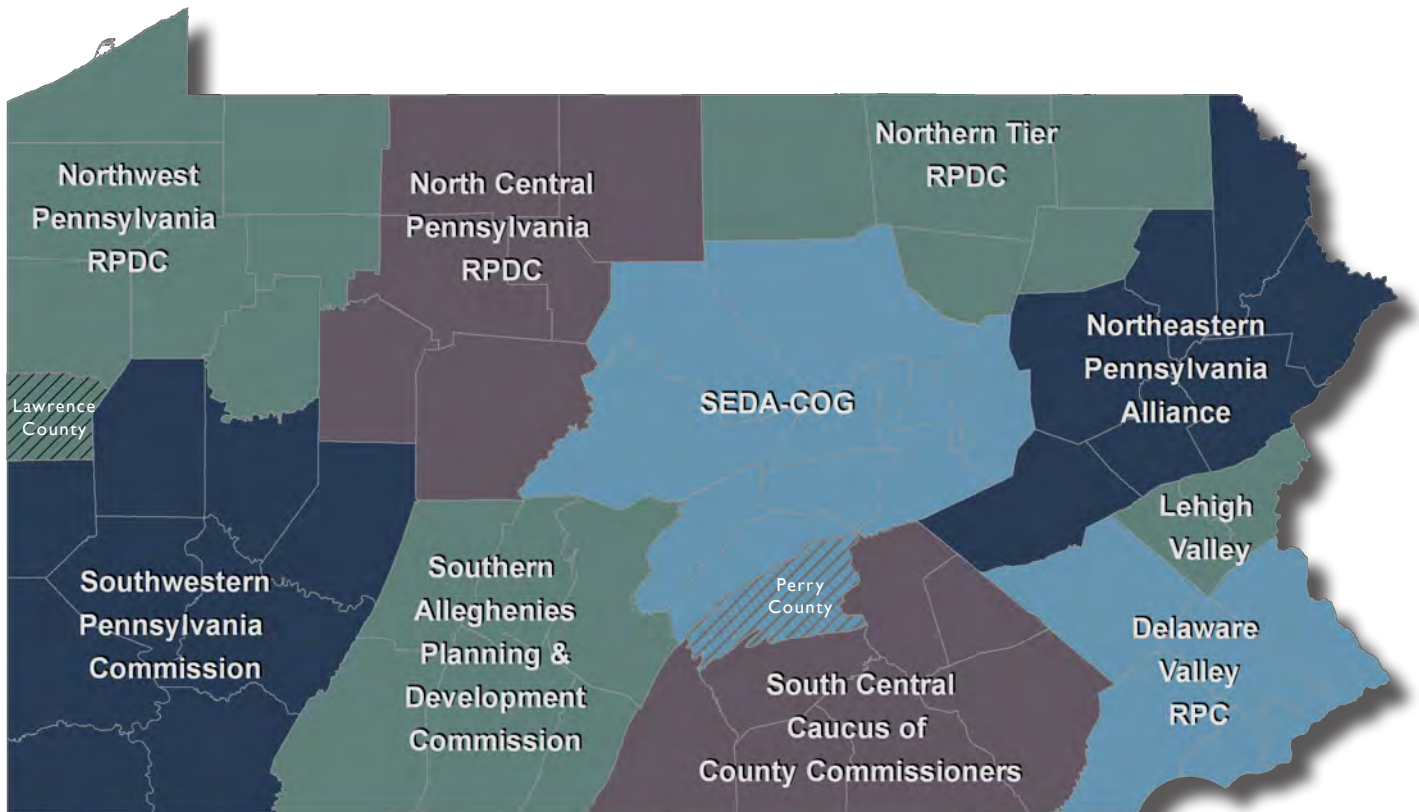
The LUTED process was implemented in ten different regions, as shown below:

- The 7 LDDs led the LUTED process in their respective regions
- DVRPC carried out the LUTED process for the southeastern region
- The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission created a regional plan for Lehigh and Northampton

Counties, located in eastern Pennsylvania

- The South Central County Commissioners Caucus was formed to develop the LUTED process for the seven counties in the south central region of the state that are not served by an RDO.

While LUTED was a statewide initiative, there was no single statewide dedicated fund for LUTED, nor was there a prescribed scope of work. Rather, each region entered into a contract with either PennDOT, DCED or DCNR, and the planning process varied from region to region. Some regional entities had already



The LUTED initiative was carried out by the multi-county entities indicated above. Lawrence County, in western PA, is a member of the Northwest Pennsylvania RPDC but was included in the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) LUTED process because the SPC MPO provides transportation planning services to Lawrence County. Perry County is located in the SEDA-COG region but was also included in the South Central LUTED planning process because of a shared MPO service boundary.

begun to integrate their transportation plans and economic development strategies, and were fortunate to have the institutional framework in place to allow them to initiate this process smoothly. For other regions, embarking on extensive public outreach efforts and devising ways to encourage sometimes disparate groups to collaborate represented new opportunities and challenges.

Just as the planning processes varied around the state according to each region's characteristics and needs, the implementation processes are also unique in each region. Regional development organizations in Pennsylvania were funded by state agencies to conduct the initial planning processes under the LUTED initiative, but no state funding

has been allocated specifically for the implementation of projects identified under the LUTED process. Instead, each region is currently identifying potential sources of local, state and federal funds and developing creative strategies to blend funding sources that will allow the plans created under the LUTED initiative to become reality.

The NADO Research Foundation Peer Exchange visited three regional organizations in Pennsylvania to learn about the varying approaches to this process in three different parts of the state. The following pages highlight the LUTED planning and implementation process in the Southern Alleghenies region, the SEDA-COG region and the Southwestern region.



Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission

The Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC) serves six rural counties in the southern portion of the state, east of Pittsburgh and west of Harrisburg. SAP&DC is designated as the economic development district (EDD) for the region by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). Under contract with PennDOT, SAP&DC acts as the RPO for four rural counties (Bedford, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset). The remaining two counties in the SAP&DC region are each served by MPOs.

Approach to LUTED

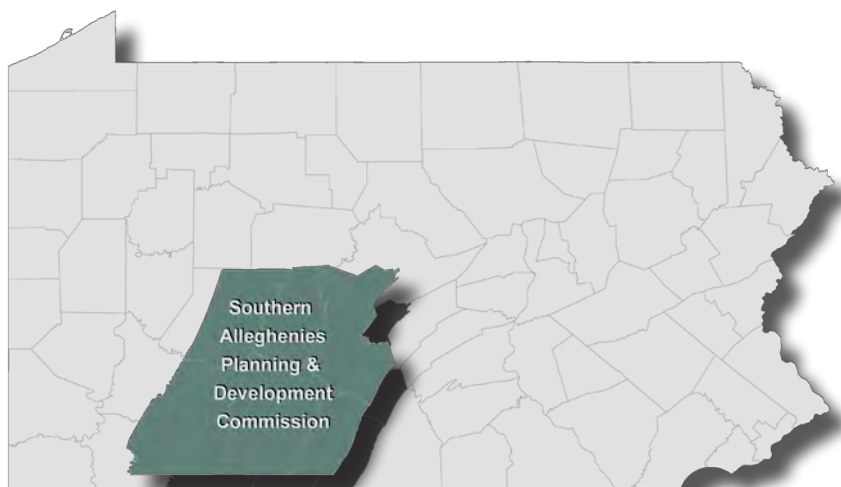
To kick off the LUTED initiative in the Southern Alleghenies region, the Regional Conference on Transportation and Land Use for Economic Development was held in May 2005 to develop a framework for coordination, synchronization and implementation of multi-agency projects in the region.

Six primary objectives were developed at the 2005 Regional Conference to achieve a vision statement for the region. During a series of six public meetings in spring 2007, an additional objective was identified relating to alternative energies and energy conservation. The issue of telecommunications was also added to the primary objectives as a result of the public meetings. These primary objectives are listed on the following page.

A regional committee was formed to guide the LUTED process, which consisted of SAP&DC's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), plus SAP&DC staff and an agency representative from the five state agencies supporting LUTED.

Annual operating budget	\$3 million
Staff members	39
Board members	19 plus 6 alternates
Counties	6
Municipalities	236
Area (square miles)	4,600
Population (2007)	460,810
Population Projection (2020)	437,750
Staffs MPO	No
Staffs RPO	Yes
Serves as EDA-funded EDD	Yes
Serves as Appalachian Regional Commission LDD	Yes

This group devised the **SAP&DC LUTED Action Plan**, with citizen input through a series of six public participation meetings held around the region. Within the planning process, the project team mapped Project Investment Areas, which are areas that should be targeted for regional investment, based on member county comprehensive plans, the EDA-



SAP&DC Regional Conference Primary Objectives

1. Think Regionally. Cooperate at the municipal level through education of parties involving planning. Work to form partnerships and encourage public participation in the planning process.
2. Provide coordination between development and infrastructure (examples: water, sewer, telecommunications, workforce, and transportation infrastructure).
3. Create priority incentives for core community investment while reducing incentives for greenfield/sprawl development.
4. Put policies in place now to preserve open space.
5. Be conscious of the opportunities and impacts that alternative energies and energy conservation may have on the region.
6. Capitalize on the region's assets.
7. Continue to develop a multi-modal transportation system in the region.



funded CEDS document and the Regional Greenways Plan. Projects proposed to be included within the LUTED Action Plan were placed into one of four categories:

1. Economic Development
2. Town Center Revitalization
3. Agriculture/Open Space/Tourism
4. Regional Multi-Category

The development of these Project Investment Areas (see map on next page) and the crafting of project evaluation and approval criteria formed the backbone of SAP&DC's LUTED Action Plan.

Plan Description

SAP&DC's LUTED Action Plan was completed in 2008. The purpose of this document is to provide a planning framework for coordination and synchronization of multi-agency projects in the Southern Alleghenies region.

The region is projected to lose population over the planning horizon, which extends through 2020. The SAP&DC sought to develop strategies that would promote economic diversification, increase the number of available higher-paying professional technical service jobs and address the region's population loss through new policies and plans in an effort to stimulate growth. The LUTED Action Plan aims to strengthen and diversify the region's economy through investments that encompass sound land use principles, infrastructure and transportation planning, tourism development, town center revitalization, agricultural preservation, and greenways/open space recreation and preservation.

The region approached the LUTED planning process primarily as a method to prioritize and evaluate proposed projects in the region. The LUTED Action

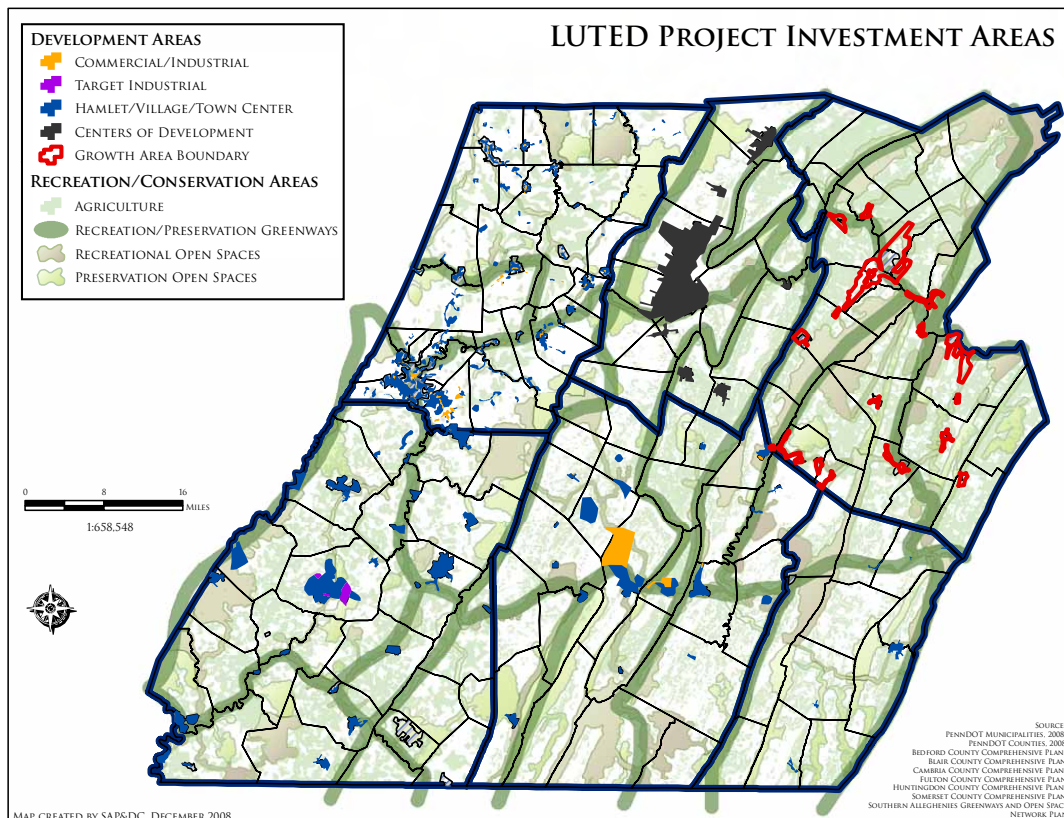
Plan outlines guidance and procedures at the county and regional levels regarding project development, project identification, project prioritization, implementation and completion. Under SAP&DC's LUTED planning process, the PAC reviews proposed projects against a benchmark set of criteria before recommending them to the Board of Directors or seeking state and federal support and funding.

A project proposed under this framework must forecast significant economic impact and have regional strategic importance. Proposed projects must be consistent with county and municipal plans and other regional and state planning documents. SAP&DC also requires projects to secure funding and support from two or more of the state agencies that spearheaded the LUTED process.

Implementation

SAP&DC has incorporated the objectives and goals that developed from the LUTED process into their EDA-funded CEDS document, which was adopted by all six member counties and was developed simultaneous to the LUTED Action Plan.¹ While the CEDS focuses on economic development, the LUTED Action Plan strives to further synchronize land use and transportation elements within the economic development framework. Although there is no dedicated state fund to implementing LUTED projects, many of the projects identified through SAP&DC's LUTED Action Plan are eligible to be funded from a variety of sources, and will rely on a blend of state, federal and local funding sources for implementation.

¹ The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is produced every five years and updated annually by EDDs. It includes regional goals and objectives and a list of proposed projects related to regional economic development over a five-year planning timeframe. Regions must complete the CEDS to be eligible to receive EDA funds for projects specified in this document.



Greenways and Open Space Network Plan

The LUTED process in the Southern Alleghenies region was shaped by the development of the region's Greenways and Open Space Network Plan. To realize the region's goal of becoming the premier outdoor recreation area in the northeast United States, SAP&DC led the development of a Greenways and Open Space Network Plan that would link the region's open spaces and natural resources and promote tourism and economic development. Through funding from DCNR and PennDOT, SAP&DC worked with the member governments and regional stakeholders to create a region-wide greenways plan.

The project team conducted an extensive public involvement process to gather feedback from the region's residents, business leaders, recreation enthusiasts and other groups. SAP&DC hosted a series of public meetings in each county and developed a series of draft plans based on feedback received from public participation processes and meetings with other regional stakeholders.

This analysis was completed through three key phases: the compilation of background mapping, the establishment of planning objectives and greenway criteria, and the identification of potential greenway elements and corridors. GIS mapping was the project's primary analytical tool, and SAP&DC used this opportunity to position itself as the technical clearinghouse for GIS data for the region. SAP&DC developed an extensive GIS database in a cross-county coordination process which included significant involvement from DCNR and PennDOT.

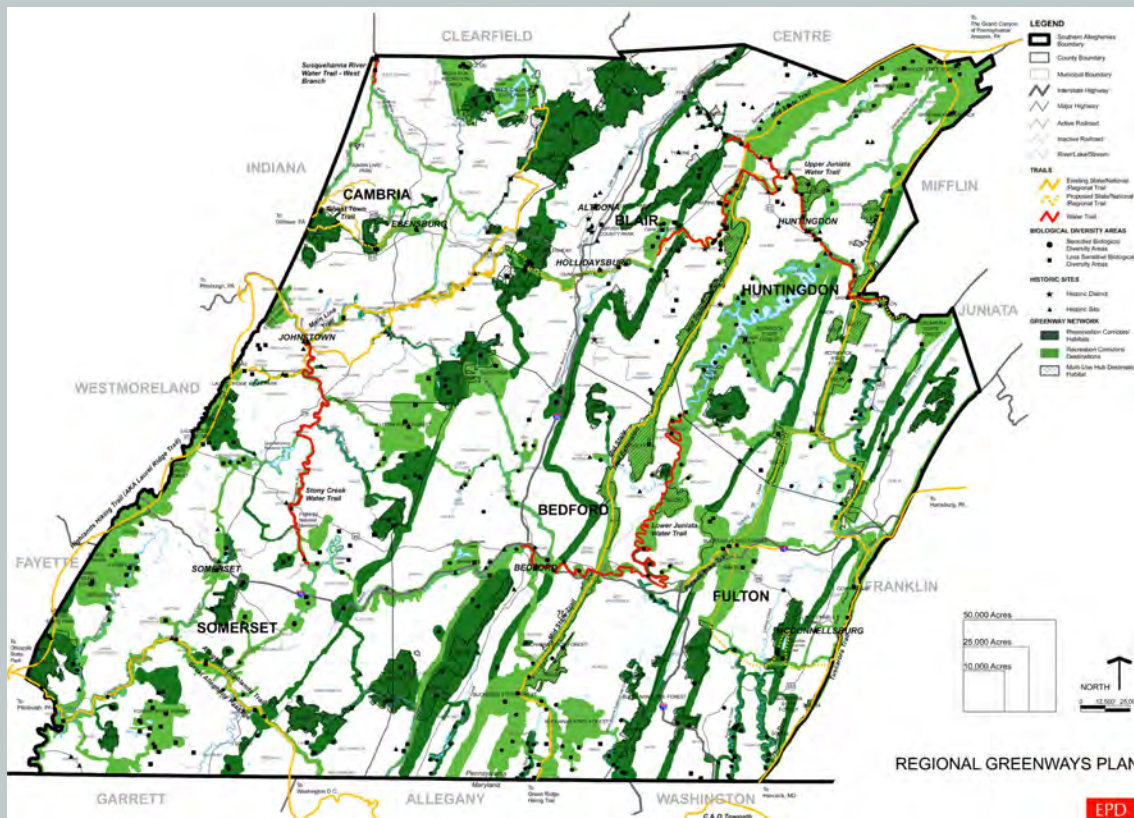
Through this effort, an overall vision was developed that both builds upon the region's many opportunities and addresses its challenges. The Greenways Plan was developed to achieve the following goals:



1. Conserve important natural resources
2. Expand recreation opportunities
3. Celebrate cultural heritage
4. Bolster economic development
5. Increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility
6. Promote healthy lifestyles

The greenways and open space networks established a vision for an integrated system of greenways that connect the region's numerous natural, historic and cultural assets. A defining principle of the Greenways and Open Space Network Plan was that linking the region's assets into a comprehensive greenway network would allow the region to leverage these natural resources to further promote and strengthen the region's attractiveness to both residents and visitors.

Within this vision, greenways are composed of two major elements: corridors and hubs. Corridors are linear elements that are suitable for recreation and/or preservation purposes. Hubs are typically non-linear sites that possess a common natural or man-made asset which makes them significant. Natural hubs are considered habitat areas while man-made hubs are deemed destinations. Using the regional open space network as a framework, greenway corridors for each individual county were identified, which may be implemented as discrete projects at the county level.



Map provided by SAP&DC

IMPLEMENTATION

The Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan was completed in early 2008, and was the first regional greenway plan to be completed in Pennsylvania. Each member county has adopted the plan as an element of their comprehensive plans.

The plan identifies a strategic framework for prioritizing greenways and project corridors as well as a palette of potential implementation tools and a summary of support and funding sources. The plan calls for periodic workshops to build capacity and coordination at the local level, and offers the technical expertise of SAP&DC to provide grant-writing support and other technical assistance to assist the counties with plan implementation. The plan also calls for regular review of implementation progress.

LESSONS LEARNED

Some challenges that SAP&DC encountered in the planning and implementation of the Greenways and Open Space Network Plan include:

- Disconnected existing open space
- Environmental degradation in some areas
- Limited regulatory tools, funds and staffing resources for implementation
- Lack of a coordinated implementation approach
- Limited public awareness regarding the greenways area

One of the most successful aspects of SAP&DC's greenways planning effort was the coordination of the member counties to collaborate on the regional plan. The planning process has served as an effective planning framework tool for the region, and has provided the region with the tools they need to accomplish future regional planning and visioning efforts. Other regional planning organizations in Pennsylvania have worked on greenway plans, and the SAP&DC plan is serving as a model for other regions.

SEDA-Council of Governments

Annual operating budget	\$10 million
Staff members	100
Board members	22
Counties	11
Municipalities	295
Area (square miles)	6,317
Population (2008)	670,000
Population Projection (2020)	720,000
Staffs MPO	No
Staffs RPO	Yes
Serves as EDA-funded EDD	Yes
Serves as Appalachian Regional Commission LDD	Yes

The SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) serves 11 counties and 295 municipalities in central Pennsylvania. Composed of 13 departments, SEDA-COG offers an array of services to its member communities, including housing development and investment; planning, engineering, and landscape architecture services; economic development; and transportation planning. SEDA-COG



serves as the EDA-funded economic development district (EDD) for the region. Under contract with PennDOT, SEDA-COG acts as the RPO for the rural portions of the region that are not served by MPOs.

The major economic drivers in the region are agriculture, tourism, education and health care. Historically, central Pennsylvania's economy was largely supported by small and medium manufacturing, but that has declined over the past several decades. Modular construction and wood product development still represent a significant component of the regional economy, and natural gas extraction has emerged recently as a growing industry.

The region is characterized by forested mountains and cultivated valleys, small towns and villages and several small cities. The State College and Williamsport metropolitan areas are the two largest communities in central Pennsylvania. A well-developed network of state and interstate highways traverse the region as does a system of freight rail service, making the region a transportation hub within the Commonwealth.

The Susquehanna River flows through the SEDA-COG region. Being the longest non-navigable river east of the Mississippi, the river cannot accommodate barge traffic but represents a boon for recreational opportunities. There is significant activity underway in the region for greenway preservation and development of trails and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and the small towns located along the river represent an opportunity for tourism and marketing. Central Pennsylvania is also home to a large amount of state lands and forests.

Approach to LUTED

The SEDA-COG region's current population of 670,000 residents is projected to grow by another 50,000 residents by 2020. SEDA-COG approached the LUTED planning framework as an opportunity to develop a vision for the region's growth through 2020, amid concern that current land use and demographic trends would continue unsustainably without the guidance of a regional vision. Increased population growth and the migration of populations from historic core communities to rural townships within commuting distance of employment centers threatens the region's historic towns and cities and as well as productive farms and scenic landscapes.

The Regional Conference on Transportation and Land Use for Economic Development in the Central Region was held in 2005, and resulted in the six primary objectives listed in the box at bottom of this page.

Following the regional conference, SEDA-COG embarked on a major public outreach and consensus-building effort to engage regional stakeholders in the development of a regional vision. SEDA-COG called this visioning process ***Valley Vision 2020***, named for the Juniata and Susquehanna River valleys which characterize the Central Pennsylvania landscape and shape the region's social, economic and environmental prospects.

SEDA-COG Regional Conference Primary Objectives

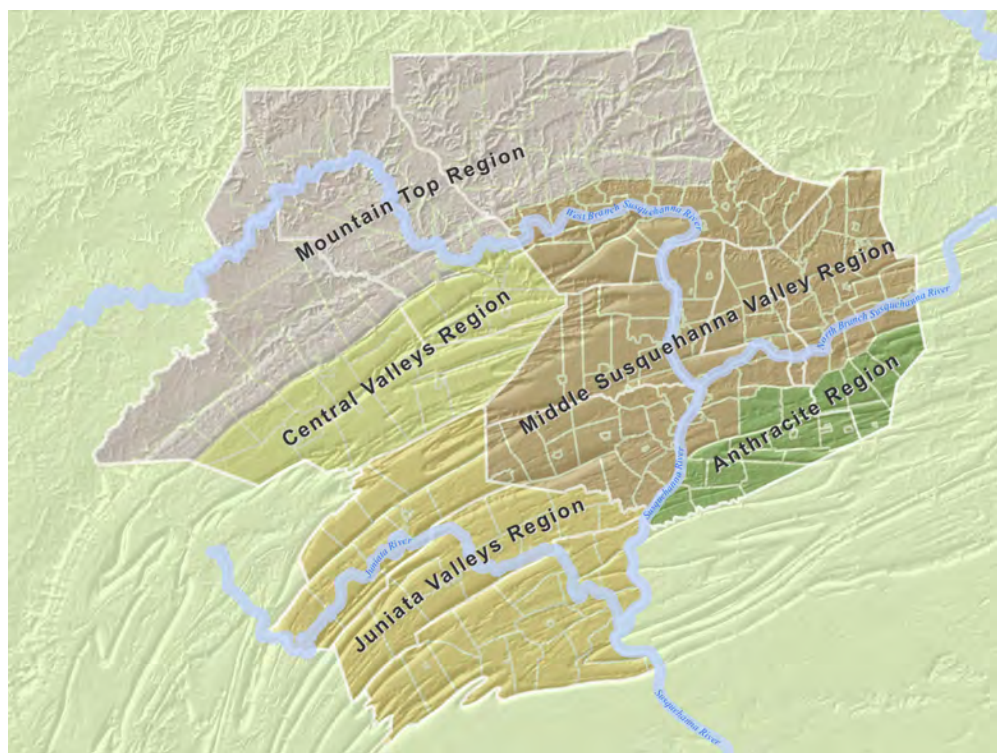
1. Create an overall development plan to identify designated areas for development and redevelopment for economic development.
2. Implement effective land use planning in this region.
3. Revitalize, reinvest, maintain, restore, and improve existing communities through economic development and the preservation of natural, historic, cultural, and open space resources.
4. Develop a broad, regional educational outreach about economic development, land use, and transportation for students, general citizenry, municipalities, and legislators. Raise awareness, define avenues to get involved, and stress the need to be involved.
5. Encourage comprehensive regionalization of services (including policing, water and sewer, marketing and tourism, and reduced government).
6. Capitalize on the location of institutions in our core communities (which are already supported by existing infrastructure) by providing for their growth, expansion, and modernization as a strategy for strengthening the local economy.

SEDA-COG formed a steering committee to engage area stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The steering committee initially was composed of 35 members, but later grew to 50. A team of approximately 12 SEDA-COG staff members representing different departments within the organization led the effort internally.

To manage the regional visioning process, the Valley Vision 2020 team took an approach unique to their region. The

as economic characteristics, commuting patterns, geographical elements and other factors that contributed to defining the sub-regional communities as places that share common interests and traits.

The team then conducted focus groups and outreach forums in each sub-region, with the purpose of reviewing the six original objectives that were defined at the regional meeting in 2005 and refining those objectives into a plan for the region.



SEDA-COG's subregional neighborhoods (map provided by SEDA-COG)

team decided to divide the region into five sub-regional “neighborhoods” to break down the challenges and opportunities unique to particular areas, and to develop common themes that were relevant to all parts of the region. Staff met with political leaders and citizens to develop sub-regional boundaries, which were not based on jurisdictional boundaries but rather on other defining features such

The first major component of the Valley Vision 2020 public outreach effort was the use of focus groups. These were small discussion groups consisting of participants who were recruited through targeted invitations, based on recommendations from the steering committee and other local resources. These groups formed the dialogue and began to shape the categories of issues to be addressed

through the larger planning process. The focus groups provided staff with insights into local issues and concerns, and also highlighted the broader themes affecting the region as a whole.

The second major component of the public outreach process consisted of a series of outreach forums, also conducted at the sub-regional level. Staff met with elected officials in each sub-region and held open public forums to learn the perspectives of a cross-section of local citizens and stakeholders. At these events, staff conducted visioning sessions and used interactive mapping tools to encourage participants to determine where and how to prioritize regional strategic investments.

Plan Description

The LUTED visioning process in SEDA-COG culminated in the release of *Valley Vision 2020: A Plan for Pennsylvania's Heartland*, published in June 2008. The primary goal of the plan was to examine how land use, transportation and economic development decisions will affect the vitality of the region's core communities, the region's ability to compete in the national and global economy, and its ability to provide quality jobs for future generations in a way that will not undermine the area's valued assets. This report documents the overarching trends identified through the LUTED process, including population change, land development patterns, decline of core communities, fiscal health and cost of services, economic engines, rural sprawl, commercial development, energy conservation and energy development.

The Valley Vision 2020 Plan aims to capitalize on new opportunities while fostering stewardship of the region's culture and treasured landscapes. Through the public participation process,

Valley Vision Guiding Principles

LIVE

- Maintain, improve, and revitalize core communities.
- Designate areas for development and preservation.
- Strengthen towns to attract a mix of housing, commerce, and jobs.

WORK

- Invest in core communities.
- Focus on business retention and expansion.
- Create jobs to retain college graduates.
- Train the workforce to attract higher paying jobs.
- Link funding for municipal services to inter-municipal cooperation.

CONNECT

- Develop and maintain a transportation system that attracts and retains business and industry and harmonizes with the region's natural, cultural, and historic assets.
- Expand broadband telecommunications infrastructure to enhance investment and employment in advanced technology enterprises.
- Invest in the development of greenways and trails that promote active and healthy living.

Scenario Planning

Recently, regional planning bodies of various shapes and sizes have turned to scenario planning to develop a long-term regional vision. Scenario planning is an analytical tool that addresses land use, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, community services, housing and other related issues. The process relies on the creation of multiple versions of potential growth and development patterns over a long-term planning timeframe, typically 20 to 50 years. By creating a series of possible future scenarios, decision makers can analyze how different investment and policy decisions might affect the region's future. Scenario planning relies on extensive public participation to review the potential scenarios and the myriad factors influencing regional change. This process enables a region to make better, more informed choices by determining its priorities and evaluating the impacts of policy decisions.

In the scenario planning process, a team typically develops a series of alternative scenarios using GIS technology and other software modeling tools that incorporate significant amounts of data related to land use, population, demographics, finances and other information. Alternative future scenarios are created and displayed as maps. By manipulating this data and revising the investment decisions and other information that is entered into the model, planners can observe the results of different decisions and work with the community to establish the preferred development scenario for the region's future.



Several RDOs in Pennsylvania employed scenario visioning techniques to develop LUTED Regional Action Strategies. Scenario planning has been successfully employed in many diverse regions around the country to create long-term plans for areas that include both rural and urban regions, such as the Salt Lake City metropolitan area and the Sacramento region.

For additional resources on scenario planning, visit FHWA's Scenario Planning website at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/scenplan/index.htm>.

For example, seven counties in central Florida partnered to develop a regional vision using a scenario planning process under the "How Shall We Grow?" initiative. This map reveals the region's preferred 2050 development scenario, which was chosen based on the input of nearly 20,000 participants through a series of community meetings, presentations and surveys in which residents indicated their preferences among multiple alternative growth scenarios. (source: myregion.org)

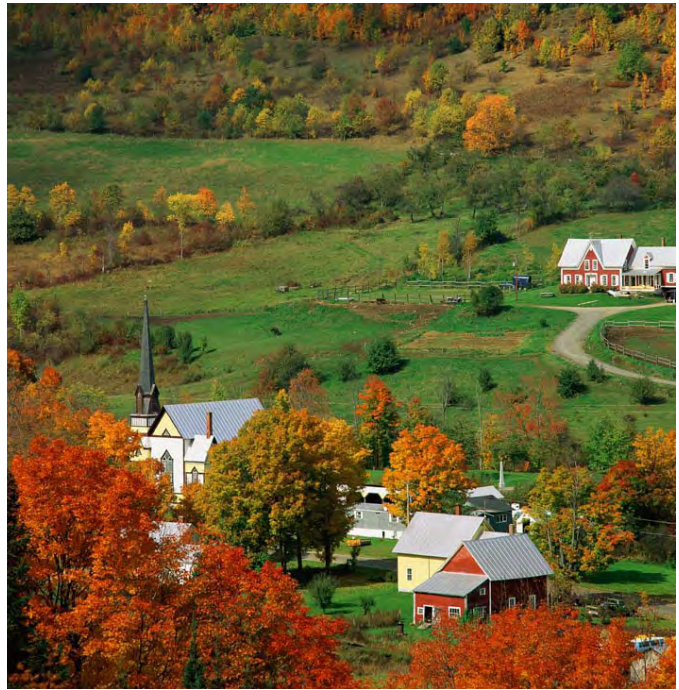
SEDA-COG developed a framework of principles to guide regional development across all Valley Vision sub-regions. The keyword themes of “Live/Work/Connect” and the associated planning principles form the heart of Valley Vision 2020. From these principles (listed on page 17), the Valley Vision team derived concrete goals, strategies and actions that would guide planning and development in Central Pennsylvania through 2020.

These goals will be achieved through the implementation of a series of short-, medium-, and long-term actions to be completed at the local, county or regional level.

Implementation and Next Steps

The Valley Vision 2020 plan has been incorporated into the CEDS, which was updated in February 2010 to reflect the findings and recommendations of the visioning process. The regional visioning process defined the region’s goals and therefore helped to shape the CEDS update, including objectives and policies that will serve to promote sustainable economic development in central Pennsylvania. The SEDA-COG RPO is currently updating the Long-Range Transportation Plan and is drawing on the information gleaned from the Valley Vision process to draft this document.

SEDA-COG is continuing to refine the goals, objectives and action strategies identified in the Valley Vision 2020 plan into a set of “Targeted Investment Area” projects. Staff is exploring a variety of funding sources available to move these initiatives forward. For example, the Lake Augusta Gateway Corridor Study was a project identified under LUTED that SEDA-COG is in the process of implementing. The project is a unified concept plan that includes redesigning



the Route 11-15 highway system to alleviate congestion, improve safety and accommodate multiple modes of transportation. SEDA-COG has received state funding to move forward with this project, and is working to identify alternative sources of funding that will support similar projects that will help to realize the goals of Valley Vision 2020.

Lessons Learned

- The sub-regional approach was a useful technique for analyzing the region, although staff found that using sub-regional boundaries that were not co-terminus with political boundaries created some confusion.
- The Valley Vision 2020 process has showed the region the benefit of integrated planning and targeted investment, and SEDA-COG is now prepared to continue to utilize these techniques in the future.
- Member governments that lacked significant planning capacity were challenged by the process. SEDA-COG acknowledged the importance of developing strong local partners when conducting a regional visioning process.

Newberry Rail Yard

In response to abandonment of local railroads, the SEDA-COG Board of Directors formed the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority (SEDA-COG JRA) in 1983. The SEDA-COG JRA was formed to purchase rail lines and contract operation to the private sector, in order to preserve rail operations and support local rail customers who relied on short-line rail service in Central Pennsylvania. The JRA initially purchased two lines serving five counties; today, the JRA owns over 200 miles of tracks along five rail lines in eight counties. The JRA's formation initially saved 3,000 jobs, and now the JRA has 67 customers, which support more than 8,500 railroad-based jobs.

While the manufacturing sector has declined in the region overall since the 1970s, rail activity plays a significant role in the regional economy and supports high-paying jobs. Most recently, increased natural gas drilling in the region has added a significant amount of rail line traffic. Traffic density, measured in carloads per mile, has increased dramatically since the JRA formation, rising from 22 carloads per mile in 1985 to 132 carloads per mile in 2009.



During the NADO Peer Exchange, SEDA-COG staff offered a tour of the Newberry Railroad Yard. This site, located in Williamsport, includes a \$4.1 million, 109-acre bulk transfer facility which opened in 2009. Supported by a \$1.5 million grant from PennDOT, this facility handles the transfer of plastics, food products and other commodities. After less than a year of operations, the bulk transfer facility is already approaching capacity, a sign of its importance to area businesses. The rail yard also features a mud plant facility used by natural gas drilling companies for preparing chemical mixtures used in the drilling process.



The railroad right-of-way that bisected the neighborhood was replaced by a linear park.

Peer exchange participants also visited the Newberry neighborhood, a residential area adjacent to the Newberry Railroad Yard. SEDA-COG partnered with the City of Williamsport to convert an abandoned railroad right-of-way that bisected the neighborhood into a linear park. The right-of-way lay between two parallel roadways, Federal Avenue and Trenton Avenue, each of which were fronted by historic single-family homes, with the abandoned railroad line dividing the two streets and the facing rows of homes. With the support of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant funds and state brown-fields remediation funds, the right-of-way was converted to a linear park and streetscaping improvements were completed to reconnect the neighborhood and promote community revitalization. SEDA-COG created a neighborhood strategy plan and devised a set of design guidelines for the neighborhood to ensure that future redevelopment projects would be consistent with the historic neighborhood character.



Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Annual operating budget	\$17 million
Staff members	52
Board members	61 voting, 5 non-voting
Counties	10
Municipalities	548
Area (square miles)	7,112
Population (2005)	2,660,000
Population Projection (2035)	3,070,000
Staffs MPO	Yes
Staffs RPO	No
Serves as EDA-funded EDD	Yes
Serves as Appalachian Regional Commission LDD	Yes

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) serves 10 counties and 548 municipalities in southwestern Pennsylvania, including Pittsburgh and its suburbs as well as more rural areas. Working in three primary program areas—Transportation, Planning and Development, and Information Services—SPC offers a range of programs and services designed to help small- and

medium-sized businesses and local governments. SPC staffs the MPO for the region, which serves all 10 counties in the region, although the urbanized area consists of only seven counties. SPC also serves as the EDA-funded economic development district (EDD).

Approach to LUTED

SPC has been integrating transportation planning and economic development efforts since 2000. Initially, SPC combined its Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) with the EDA-funded Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) into one document, and in 2003, the SPC strengthened the ties between these two plans by refining the goals and objectives to respond to industry demands and market realities.

The region’s visioning process and long-term plan developed with assistance from the LUTED initiative represents the third time the region has integrated transportation planning and economic development planning within the larger framework of regional land use and strategic planning.

The process was kicked off with the Southwest Regional Conference, held in 2005, at which the region’s stakeholders identified the following components of the desired vision of the Southwest Region:

- Economy that supports demographic diversity
- Revitalized communities of all sizes
- Parity in taxing and resource allocation



- Integrated, multi-modal transportation systems
- Regional coordination of land use and infrastructure

The SPC embarked on a scenario visioning process, termed **Project Region**, which involved an extensive public outreach effort to build consensus around the region’s future. As a Rust Belt city, Pittsburgh has faced declining population since the mid-20th century, although out-migration has slowed recently. The suburban areas have grown in population and the 2035 population projections forecast modest population growth for the region. The biggest issue facing southwestern Pennsylvania is

increasingly sprawling development patterns in the suburbs and outlying areas.

SPC utilized a variety of technological tools, including GIS, economic and demographic forecasting, scenario development, electronic surveys and web-based public meetings, to incorporate the views of a wide cross-section of regional stakeholders. The outreach effort, which incorporated approximately 3,000 participants in total, relied on partnerships with a range of public, private and non-profit organizations around the region. SPC organized the effort into the four categories outlined in the box below.

Public Outreach Effort

- **Principals** included project sponsors and funding agencies, and their role was to provide guidance and recommendations for the Project Region process and the plan content development.
- **Partners** included representatives of government agencies and organizations with an interest in or connection to regional development issues. SPC hosted several large meetings with approximately 400 Partners, who represented public, private, civic, philanthropic sectors; municipal, county, state, and federal agencies; school districts, community groups, economic development agencies; and citizens. The purpose of these meetings was to gain insights and begin to develop strategies. SPC used an interactive polling technique at these meetings, at which only one vote per table was allowed, requiring groups to develop a consensus. The Partners provided review and input into policy development, scenario development, and indicators used in the scenario planning process.
- **Working Groups** were composed of technical representatives of SPC members, primary funding agencies and supplementary funders, and other organizations. Their role was to provide technical review and comment on the plan components, in the areas of transportation strategies, economic development strategies, financial resources (including projections and strategies related to service delivery), and forecasting and modeling (including demographic forecasting and allocations and scenario model development).
- **Public Input** was gathered through a series of regional workshops as well as a region-wide meeting and the use of surveys and interviews.



The SPC Project Region planning process consisted of the following phases:

Plan Technical Work

First, SPC reviewed the visioning and scenario modeling software available to assist in visualizing the impacts of planning, policy and investment decisions on a region. The region needed a tool that would be feasible for use over a large geographic area, and as some parts of the region are forecast to lose population over the planning horizon, SPC needed a model that would allow the user to allocate population decline as well as growth. SPC GIS staff developed a process to adapt the scenario modeling software known as INDEX to be applicable to the specific needs of the region.

In this phase, SPC staff analyzed the existing member and partner plans within the region at all levels of government, and used this analysis to synthesize common goals across the region. SPC

SPC's outreach effort incorporated the input of over 3,000 participants.

also reviewed the Keystone Principles for Growth and included this document and other statewide initiatives in the member plan analysis.

Policy Statement Development

SPC next began to craft policy statements for the region's vision using the input of the principals, partners and working groups; the information gathered from the member and partner plan analysis; and input learned through an extensive public participation campaign.

SPC collected public comment via a series of regional workshops focused on transportation and economic development. The region hosted 10 public workshops focused on transportation issues, which incorporated over 800 participants, and 11 public workshops focused on economic development, which incorporated another 200 participants. SPC also partnered with Sustainable Pittsburgh, a regional organization, to gather public input at a series of regional forums and at the organization's annual smart growth conference. At these events, SPC presented the information gathered from their partners and working groups and synthesized their current findings into common themes.

The workshops were facilitated events that encouraged participants to brainstorm local and regional strategies and set priorities. SPC used voting technology that allowed individuals to vote on ideas from their seats with remote devices and see the results projected on the screens at the meeting immediately, which helped participants feel part of the process and prevented individuals from dominating the discussion. This technique also allowed the groups to vote, discuss the topics, and then vote again if the discussion raised new issues. SPC prepared the voting technology to allow results to be analyzed by demographic,

further increasing staff's understanding of the regional population's characteristics and interests.

SPC employed a variety of other approaches to gather public participation and ensure a broad swath of the region's population was able to participate. At the public workshops, SPC set up kiosks which consisted of a basic touchscreen monitor that was connected to a computer with a database. Participants were asked to answer questions generated by the program's user interface, and the results were automatically tabulated in the database, which was a simple and effective way to gain additional public input. SPC also utilized online surveys, oral statements and written comments.

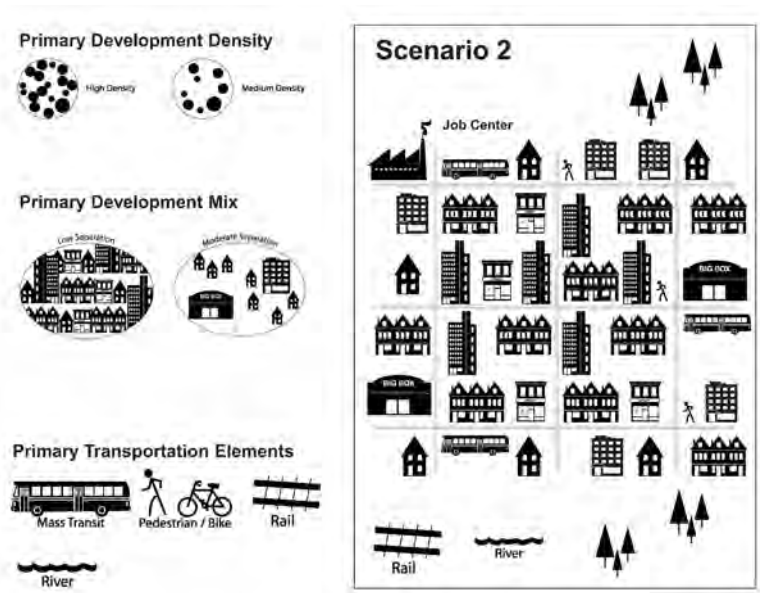
SPC then summarized the results of these workshops and integrated that information with the statements that practitioners expressed in the working groups, and with the goals listed in the region's adopted planning documents. The synthesis of all these sources of information became Project Region's draft policy statements, which were then incorporated into the scenario development process.

Scenario Development and Evaluation

Before developing the region-specific scenarios, SPC reviewed the work of national experts in scenario planning as well as the experiences of other organizations around the country who have undertaken regional visioning exercises. From this research, SPC learned the most common scenario types that typically develop and the key variables that can shape the scenario planning process.

The Working Groups collaborated with SPC staff to develop six sketch scenarios for the region based on this information.

Each scenario described development location, density and mix; identified predominant transportation system elements; and listed policy statements. SPC developed summary statements and schematic representations of each scenario. Staff used these diagrams to illustrate the different densities, development mix, and the transportation elements represented by each scenario.

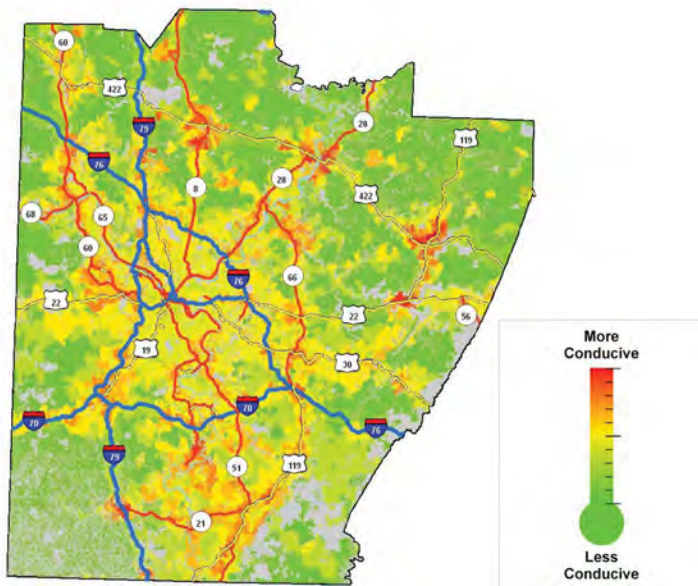


Example of the schematic representations SPC staff used to illustrate the scenarios (source: SPC)

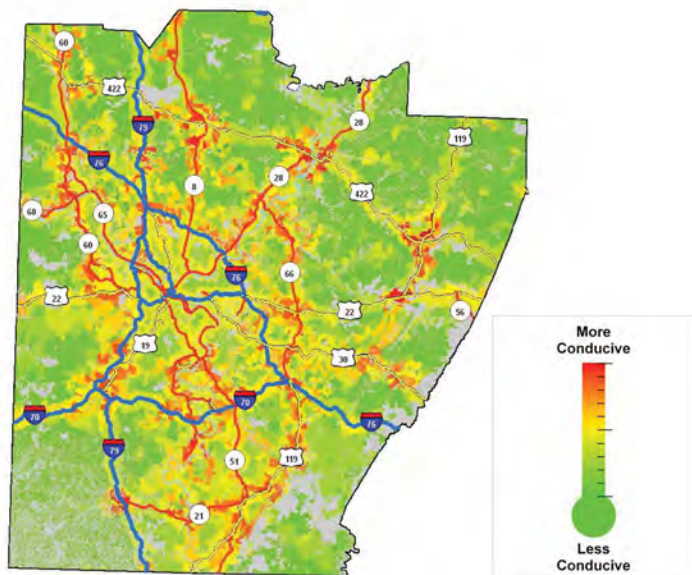
Using geospatial analysis to reveal how these scenarios would appear in the region, the six sketch scenarios were refined by the Regional Partners into four more distinct draft scenarios, consisting of a Trend scenario and three alternative scenarios. The four draft scenarios were carried forward for further analysis and broader public review and discussion.

The team mapped these four scenarios onto a base map of the region. Each scenario was evaluated in terms of how it performed based on a set of six indicators, which were:

SPC's Four Draft Scenarios



Trend Scenario: Represents a continuation of the region's current land development trends, with investment scattered throughout the region without strong linkages between the locations of population growth and employment growth. Development tends to be medium to low density. Red indicates areas more conducive to growth, while green indicates areas less conducive to growth. Gray indicates areas unable to be developed, such as conservation areas.



Dispersed Fringe Scenario: Represents a lower-density development pattern with new development outside of the urban cores. Transportation focus is primarily highway-oriented with transit and transit accessibility playing little to no role. It would require the expansion of infrastructure, including water and sewer utilities, to previously unserved areas.

- Development density
- Amount of land developed
- Households near transit
- Households near highway interchanges
- Regional travel
- Infrastructure costs

These indicators allowed the team to analyze each scenario according to how it would shape growth and movement in the region. Specific indicator scores were produced for each draft scenario using the visioning software. These measures helped the team to understand where and how development would take place, and how each scenario would impact access to transportation modes, land use patterns and investment in infrastructure.

Scenario Selection

To select the scenario that would guide long-range planning and development in southwestern Pennsylvania based on regional consensus, SPC held a “Regional Town Meeting” in 2007 to review and discuss the pros and cons of each of the four scenarios.

SPC used an interactive web-based format, in which staff hosted a public meeting at SPC headquarters in Pittsburgh that was simultaneously broadcast to 10 satellite locations around the region. In this way, SPC was able to include over 300 participants in the meeting from all parts of the region.

At each location, public facilitators and staff members were on hand to help facilitate and answer questions. From the primary meeting location, the four draft scenarios depicting different patterns of growth and development in the future were presented. The scenarios were explained with maps and data to describe the different ways in which the region could accommodate additional population over the next 25 years. The

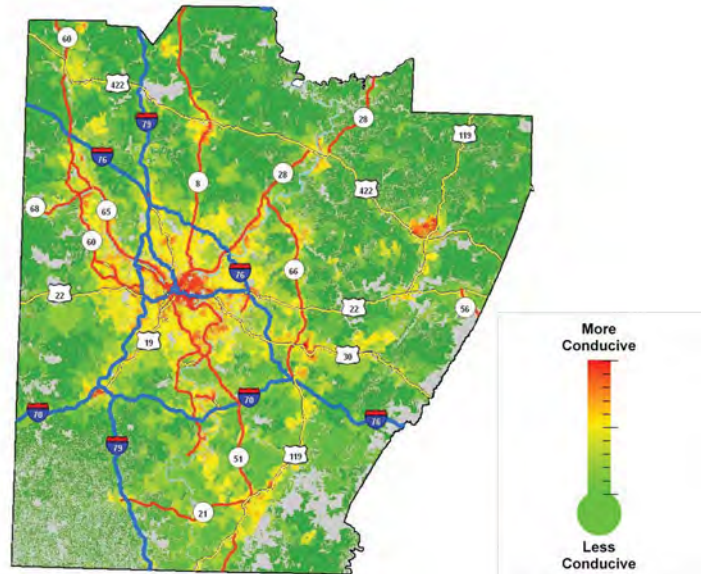
specific elements of each scenario were discussed, and the region's options under each scenario were outlined. The implications of each scenario were presented using the six indicators developed by the Regional Partners during the scenario developments stage.

After the presentation and discussion portions of the Regional Town Meeting, participants were asked to identify the scenario they thought performed the best in each of the six indicators. In this way, participants were not limited to voting on only one scenario, but were able to indicate their preferences for which characteristics of each scenario were most appropriate for the region.

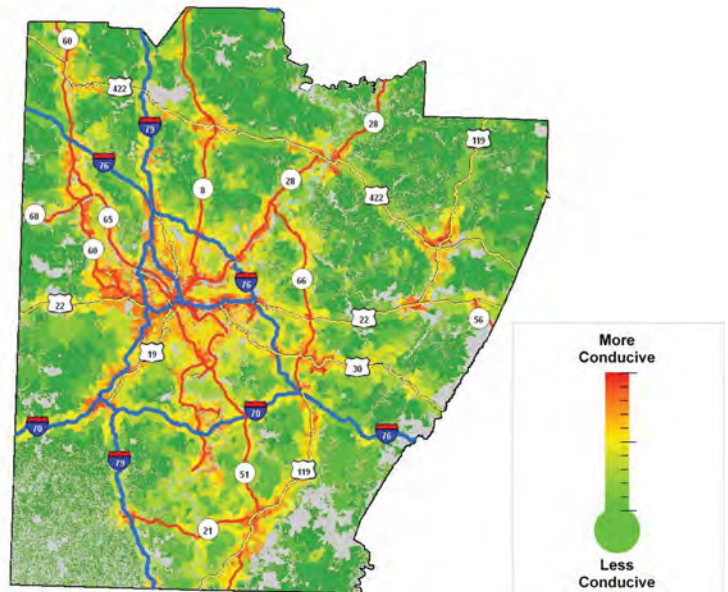
In each category, the "Compact" and "Corridors" scenarios received the most number of votes by a wide margin. Based on this feedback and additional analysis, SPC was able to draft the Regional Vision Scenario, which was a hybrid scenario that combined the strongest elements of corridor/cluster and compact/infill/TOD scenarios, incorporating feedback heard at the Regional Town Meeting and at previous public outreach events. This scenario formed the basis of the regional plan, and serves as a guide to decision-makers throughout the region.

Plan Description and Implementation

The chosen scenario addresses investment strategies for transportation, economic development and the provision of infrastructure and community services. The plan is structured around three interconnected elements: Regional Places, Regional Connections and Regional Activities. The purpose of these elements is to support and strengthen the linkages among existing communities, redevelopment sites, infrastructure investments, multimodal and intermodal networks,

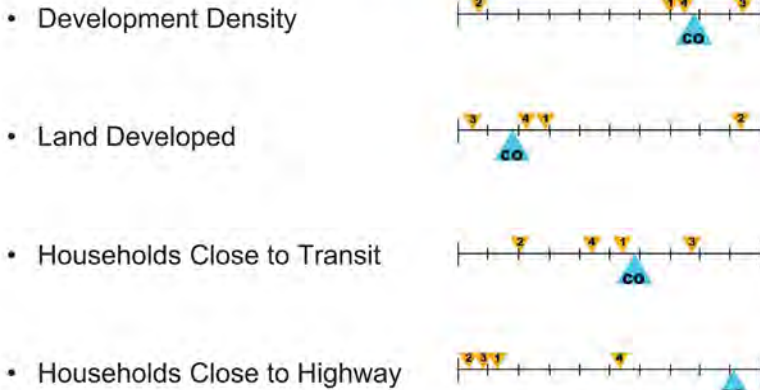


Compact/Infill/Transit-oriented Development (TOD) Scenario: Represents high-density development with a mix of uses and development types targeted within or adjacent to core communities. This scenario would take advantage of opportunities for infill development, reinvestment in existing business districts and brownfields rehabilitation. Open space preservation would be key in rural areas. This scenario would be pedestrian-oriented and have a strong reliance on public transportation. There would be minimal expansion of existing utilities to accommodate new growth.



Corridor Cluster Scenario: Represents medium- to high-density development in centers, clusters and transportation corridors with a strong multimodal focus including highways, transit, railways and waterways. This scenario has excellent access to the urban core with improved transportation operations. This scenario will require expansion of water and sewer infrastructure at the corridor level. (SPC provided all maps in this section)

Draft Indicator Scores



This chart compares each of the four scenarios (in yellow) and the final chosen scenario (in blue) based on their indicator scores. A score to the right end of the chart equals a high score, and the left end represents a low score. For example, scenarios 1, 3, 4 and the final chosen scenario all represent high density, with less land developed, while scenario 2 scored low on development density and high on amount of land developed.

communications infrastructure, business retention and expansion, workforce development and support for existing and expanding industries.

This plan embodies the region's Long-Range Transportation Plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and Regional Action Strategy under the LUTED initiative. Officially known as the **2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania**, the plan was adopted by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission in June 2007.

The LRTP is being implemented through the region's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program. Because the SPC administers the EDA-designated Economic Development District and the ARC Local Development District for the region, it manages and participates in several state and federal programs which are being carried out to be consistent with the Region's Plan. The Plan's policy statements provide the ongoing basis for interim decision-making related to all investments in southwestern Pennsylvania.



Straw Polling Results

REGIONAL TOWN MEETING TOTALS by %				
	Trend	Dispersed	Compact	Corridor
Development Density	1.5	7.0	38.2	53.3
Amount of Land Developed	2.8	4.5	48.1	44.6
Households Close to Transit	4.4	3.7	56.7	35.2
Households Close to Highway Interchanges	3.1	4.2	40.8	51.9
Regional Travel	4.2	8.1	37.5	50.2
Basic Infrastructure Cost	0.6	3.5	54.5	41.3

Results of the Regional Town Meeting vote on the six indicators of the draft scenarios. (source for charts: SPC)

Next Steps

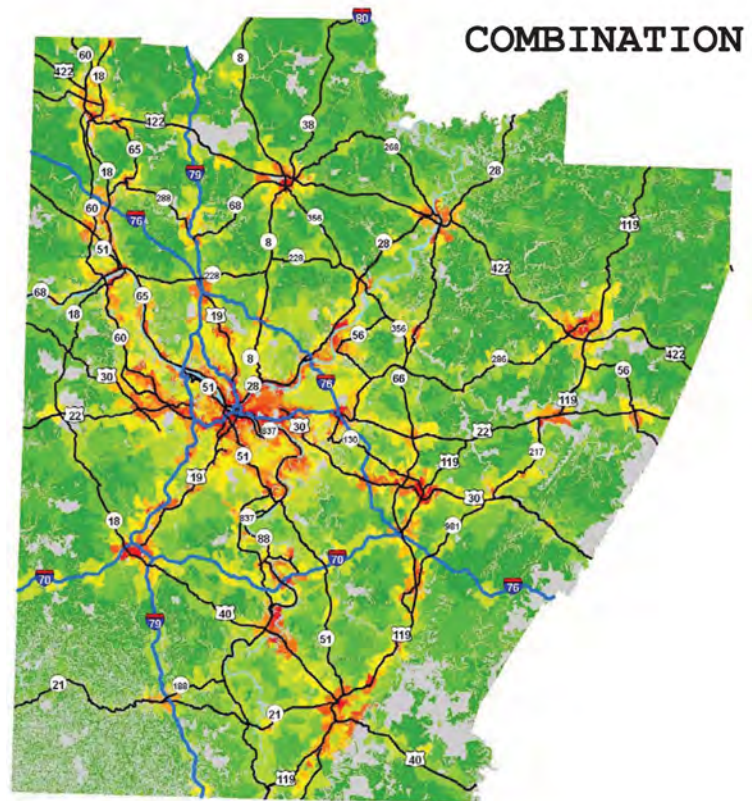
The Regional Plan places a strong emphasis on land use patterns, economic development strategies and transportation initiatives. SPC acknowledged that an in-depth analysis of housing policy is missing. In the future, SPC would like to better integrate housing into the regional visioning process, including an analysis of employment centers and residential land uses to look at the spatial mismatch between jobs and housing, and to determine where transit links should be located.

SPC is also developing a strategy to undertake integrated water resource planning to address water quality issues in the region. Finally, SPC is beginning to incorporate the Pennsylvania's Smart Transportation initiative into the planning and programming processes, and is seeking opportunities to fund projects identified in the Project Region process.

**SPC's Regional Vision:
"Transportation and land use that
supports and enhances the regional
economy and the communities
within it."**

Lessons Learned

- When SPC initiated the Project Region process, many member counties in the region were in the process of updating their comprehensive planning documents, which was helpful in coordinating local and regional goals and planning strategies.
- SPC found that a key to encouraging public participation in the planning process was conveying to the public the importance of the process and the impact it will have on the region. This was crucial to ensuring that rural stakeholders felt empowered to participate in the process.
- Preparing region-wide scenario models and mapping databases can be a challenge if zoning classifications are inconsistent across jurisdictions, as they are in many regions, or if member municipalities lack zoning regulations.
- Because the CEDS has a shorter planning horizon than the LRTP, coordinating the two documents into one plan proved logistically complicated at times.
- Despite budget issues that have delayed the implementation of some projects, the regional visioning process under LUTED has been an indispensable tool to the region for decision-making and fostering regional collaboration.



The Regional Vision Scenario was a hybrid scenario that combined the strongest elements of corridor/cluster and compact/infill/TOD scenarios that were preferred by regional residents and leaders. (source: SPC)

Future of LUTED



Pennsylvania’s regional planning and development organizations and state agencies have agreed that the most valuable result of the LUTED initiative has been its ability to enable regions to collaborate in the planning process and develop a strong vision and goals and objectives for the future of their regions. In this way, LUTED represented a cultural change of how planners, economic development practitioners, elected officials, residents and other stakeholders think about the planning process.

The implementation of the LUTED Regional Action Strategies is being addressed in various ways around the state. Some organizations have struggled to develop region-wide project prioritization lists without alienating member jurisdictions. The LUTED process was never intended to be funded from a dedicated source for implementation; instead, Commonwealth agencies are working within existing funding programs to help implement priority projects identified in LUTED plans. Many regions are following through with the directives of the Regional Action Strategies and are finding innovative ways to implement the strategies and projects identified through this process by seeking out a combination of federal and state funds.

For example:

- At the state level, regional resource teams have been formed with representatives from each of the five agencies involved in the LUTED process from the start. These teams are devising ways for the LDDs and other regional organizations to integrate their plans and funding requests within existing state programs.
- Through the Community Action Team, the Department of Community and Economic Development coordinates funding from multiple agencies for high-impact, multifaceted projects, such as those identified through LUTED.
- In many ways, the goals of PennDOT’s Smart Transportation program (page 31) are consistent with the regional strategies identified in the LUTED process, so several LDDs are pursuing Smart Transportation as a way to carry out their LUTED plans.
- Those organizations that serve as EDDs are incorporating their LUTED plans into their CEDS documents and are pursuing EDA funding for projects that are consistent with the LUTED visions.
- New federal programs and funding opportunities for initiatives that support sustainable communities may also be applicable to projects identified under the LUTED process.

Smart Transportation

PennDOT has launched an initiative known as “Smart Transportation” to better integrate land use and transportation planning. The goal of the program is to foster development of sustainable and livable communities by transforming how streets and highways are designed. Smart Transportation focuses on transportation investments that are safe, efficient, affordable and tailored to the specific needs of each project to better manage capacity and enable access for all users. It is an approach based on context-sensitive solutions (CSS) in which roadway design considers the different contexts at play—financial, community, land use, transportation and environmental.

Smart Transportation is not intended to be one subset within PennDOT’s operations; rather, PennDOT’s goal is to see the principles of Smart Transportation applied to all projects. PennDOT, together with the New Jersey Department of Transportation, published the **Smart Transportation Guidebook** in March 2008 as a first step in integrating the principles of Smart Transportation into PennDOT’s everyday business. The guidebook is designed to help agencies, local governments, developers and others plan and design roadways in a way that embraces the themes of Smart Transportation. PennDOT is currently using the guidebook to update the agency’s design manuals. The agency has also been working with local and regional partners around the state to facilitate the integration of Smart Transportation into existing plans and programs and to train staff.

To realize the implementation of Smart Transportation projects, PennDOT has awarded \$59.2 million to counties and RDOs to fund 50 community-led planning and construction projects, known

The 10 Themes of Smart Transportation

1. Money counts
2. Leverage and preserve existing investments
3. Choose projects with high value/price ratio
4. Safety always and maybe safety only
5. Look beyond level-of-service
6. Accommodate all modes of travel
7. Enhance local network
8. Build towns not sprawl
9. Understand the context; plan and design within the context
10. Develop local governments as strong land use partners





as the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI). Projects eligible to receive funding under PCTI are those that embrace the principles of Smart Transportation, including collaborative decision-making, integrated land use and transportation decisions, and regional and multi-municipal cooperation throughout the Commonwealth.

With a focus on multi-disciplinary teams and community input into the transportation planning process, Smart Transportation is compatible with the LUTED initiative. SEDA-COG received \$125,000 in PCTI funds to study and develop design options for the Lake Augusta corridor to alleviate congestion, improve safety and accommodate multiple modes of transportation. This project was identified under the region's LUTED planning process, illustrating the compatibility between projects identified in LUTED with the goals of the Smart Transportation program. Other LDDs, including Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, are seeking ways to incorporate Smart Transportation into their planning and programming processes.

Peer Exchange Discussion Remarks

Issues related to regional planning, municipal growth, coordination of plans across jurisdictional boundaries, revenue-sharing, and joint service provision were all discussed during the NADO Peer Exchange.

A common theme across all regional development organizations (RDOs) represented at the Peer Exchange event was the challenge of encouraging suburban municipalities to participate in a regional planning process. Participants acknowledged that in many areas, counties and municipalities are legally enabled to adopt land use plans and regulations, which can limit RDOs' ability to integrate transportation planning with regional economic development strategies and land use planning.

Planners who have undertaken regional visioning efforts noted that many regions around the country that employ scenario modeling techniques often end up with similar alternative scenarios, such as corridor-focused, cluster development, transit-oriented, conservation or sprawl. This may indicate that many regions around the country are facing similar issues regarding land use and transportation planning, and that RDOs are developing comparable solutions to parallel challenges. However, these analogous patterns may also reflect current national trends in the planning field, and it may be time for a different approach in some areas.

RDOs in all parts of the U.S. have faced challenges with plan implementation for a variety of reasons, including lack of available funding or local support and limited regulatory abilities, echoing the concerns of the Pennsylvania organizations struggling to implement LUTED plans amid budget constraints.

Participants noted that securing future public participation in regional planning exercises may be difficult if funding is not available or prioritized to implement plans and projects already identified.

Participants discussed the importance of demonstrating the effectiveness of inter-agency partnerships and public-private partnerships. SPC in particular was commended for leveraging relationships at all levels throughout the region to build support for the process and gather public input.

Peer Exchange attendees remarked that it is useful to have a particular focus or "hook" to bring a region together to address a common need. In the Southern Alleghenies region, developing a regional greenway plan offered a strong example of encouraging a variety of stakeholders to participate in a regional collaboration process.

The Peer Exchange allowed participants to brainstorm strategies and share techniques that they have found to be useful when in their home regions. Participants discussed ways to build long-term, mutually-supportive relationships





with partner organizations, and how to leverage diverse sources of funding. Various ways to encourage public participation and generate publicity were evaluated, including the effective use of social media, the development of a succinct message and striking brand identity, and techniques for forging relationships with well-known, effective organizations.

Inspired by the examples described by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, participants discussed innovative ways to access low-cost software and use it creatively. One concern is that rural areas with limited staff capabilities need access to resources to help them use technological innovations.

Some RDOs represented at the Peer Exchange have been able to integrate transportation planning with economic

development strategies more successfully than others. Of those organizations that administer both an economic development district and an MPO or an RPO found that having a joint EDD/MPO board and other institutional devices to facilitate collaboration between the two entities was invaluable. The experiences of SEDA-COG in staffing the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority were highlighted as representing an impressive way to encourage linkages between transportation and economic development.

Finally, participants discussed the future of linking economic development, transportation and land use planning under joint initiatives. The HUD-DOT-EPA Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities announced in 2009 and other federal or state programs will introduce new ways of thinking about integrated planning techniques. Many RDOs are currently seeking ways to ensure their planning processes are conducive to developing sustainable communities and are exploring methods of performance measurement in terms of sustainability.

As a result of the NADO Peer Exchange, participants were able to learn valuable information from the three host RDOs in Pennsylvania about their experiences with regional visioning exercises to link transportation and land use planning with economic development strategies. In addition, the event facilitated discussions among participants about various successes and challenges they have encountered at their organizations, which further added to the value of the event.

Peer Exchange participants brainstormed strategies for building long-term, mutually-supportive relationships with partner organizations.

Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Department of
Community and Economic
Development LUTED Initiative
www.newpa.com/get-local-gov-support/community-planning/luted-initiative/index.aspx

PennDOT Smart Transportation
www.smart-transportation.com

SEDA-Council of Governments
www.seda-cog.org

Southern Alleghenies Planning and
Development Commission
www.sapdc.org

Southwestern Pennsylvania
Commission
www.spcregion.org

The LUTED RAS reports and the presentations
given at the Peer Exchange can be accessed at
www.RuralTransportation.org.

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Map and Photo Sources

GIS maps were created by Kathy Nothstine using data
from Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA).

Photos on pages 10 and 20-21 were taken at the Peer
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