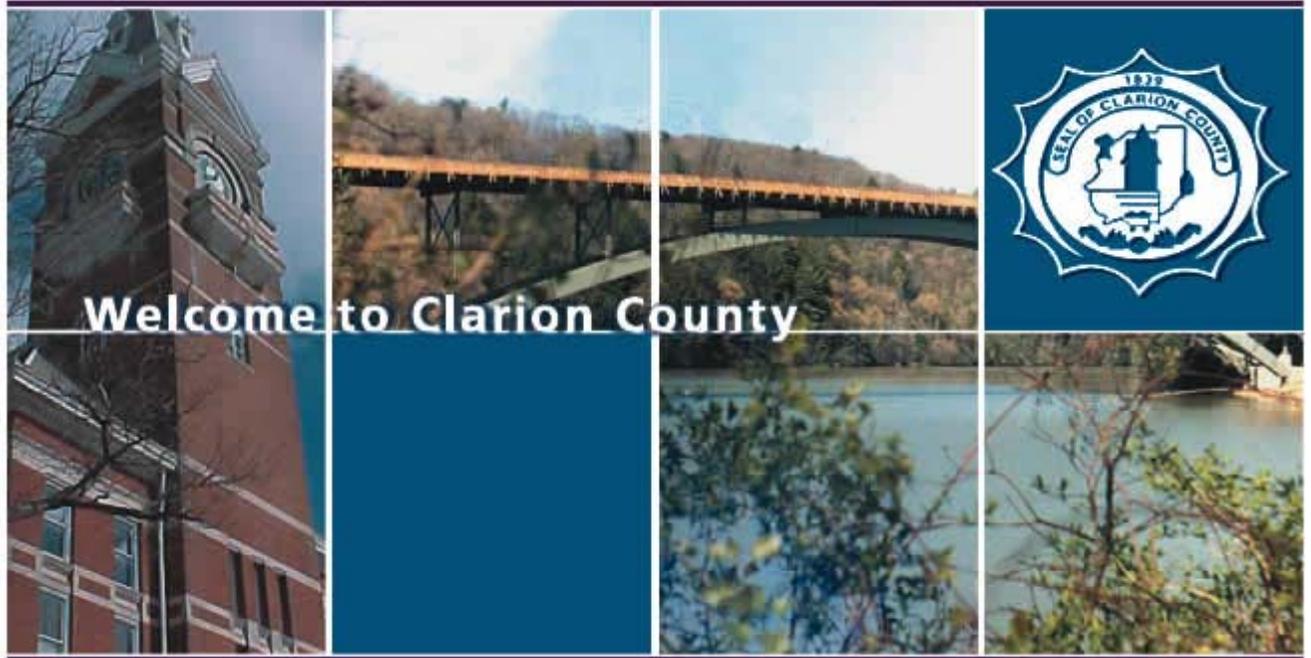


CLARION COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



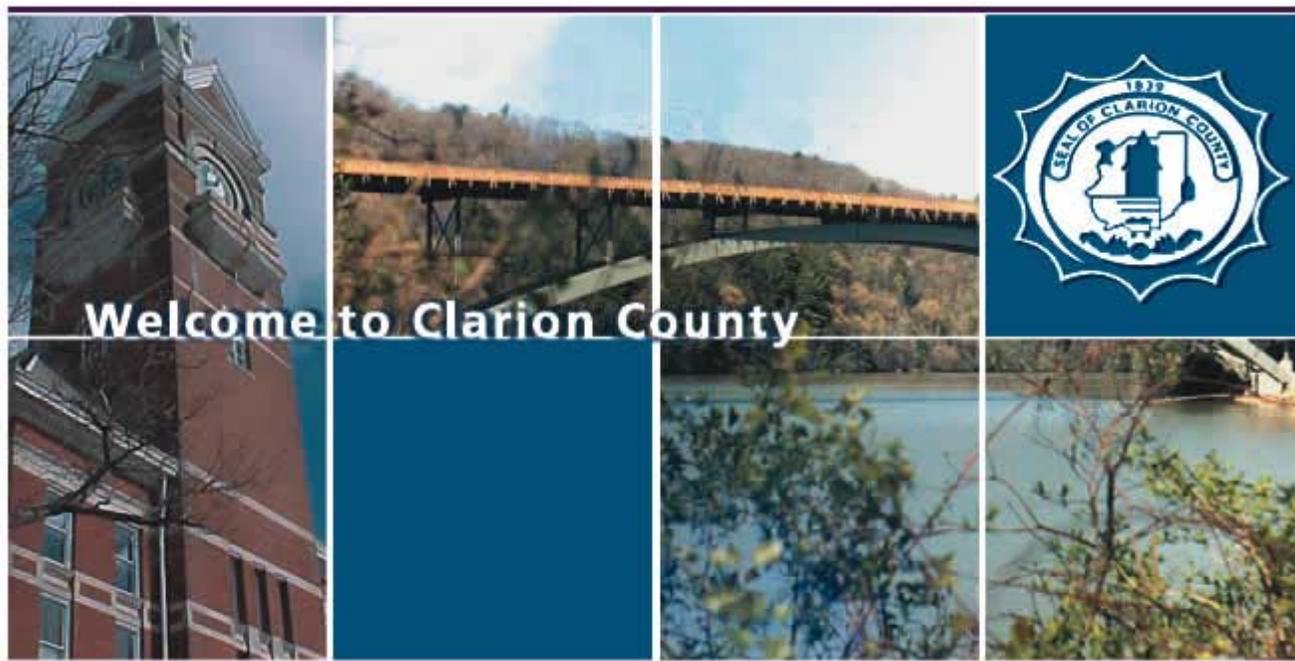
Welcome to Clarion County

Prepared by the
Clarion County Planning Commission

November 9, 2004

*Open Page to
Enter the Future*

CLARION COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Welcome to Clarion County

Prepared by the
Clarion County Planning Commission

March 2004

*Open Page to
Enter the Future*

**CLARION COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

2004

Prepared by the
**CLARION COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

For the
COUNTY OF CLARION

Assisted by
GRANEY, GROSSMAN, COLOSIMO AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
Grove City, Pennsylvania

This document was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Technical Assistance Program.

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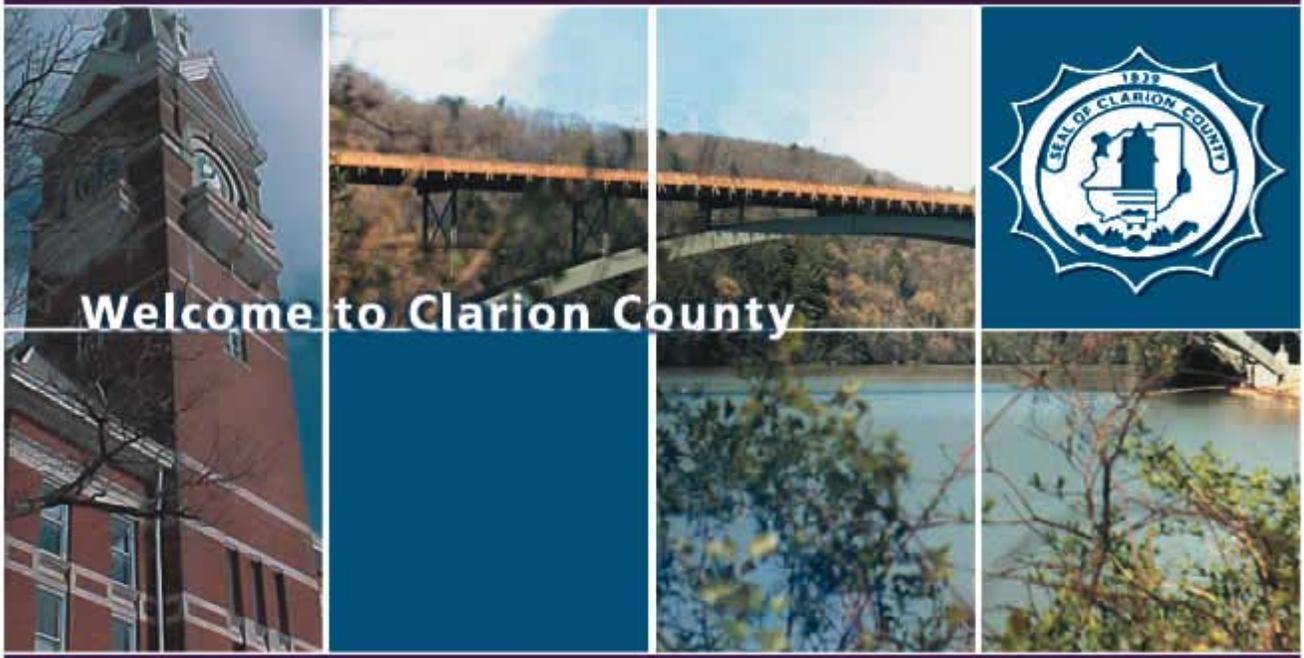
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Welcome to Clarion County

Introduction

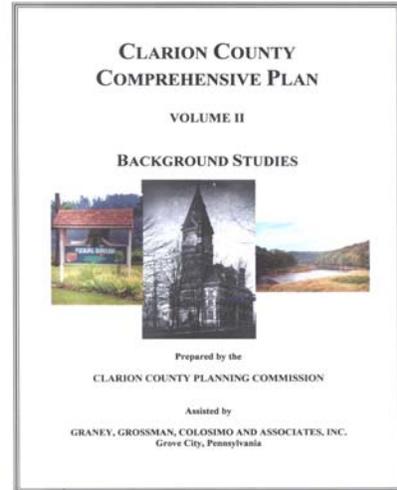
INTRODUCTION

This document represents the final phase of a new comprehensive plan for Clarion County. (Phase I and Phase II are available from the Planning Commission as separate technical appendixes.) Of all the volumes, this one may be the most important, because it contains the actual recommendations for the County's future. With this in mind, and to make reading the Plan easier for busy citizens and officials, much important information from Phases I and II has been integrated in this document.

As an introduction, it is helpful to explain precisely what a comprehensive plan is and what such a plan means to Clarion County, its communities, and its citizens. The following is adapted from Phase I of the Plan document.

Planning is simply an active effort by any one or any group to prepare for the future. Preparation for the future should entail examining trends, learning what citizens and local leaders think about those trends, attempting to deduce where those trends lead, and finally, developing strategies and actions which will allow a community to preserve its good aspects and prevent problems.

A comprehensive plan is simply an effort to create a formal plan, which examines every major aspect of a county (or other units of government) and how these aspects interrelate. A comprehensive plan should, above all other things, attempt to balance all the needs of the community. The foremost feature of such a comprehensive plan should be striving for balance. For example, a good and efficient transportation system is crucial to a community. However, if all roads in a community were four-lane limited access, there would be a negative affect on property values, quality of life, and safety. There must then be a balance between all aspects of planning—the economic, the social, and the natural environment. The ideal in planning is that the community can “have it all”: good jobs; a high quality of life; and safe, friendly, livable communities.



The ideal in planning is that a community can have it all: good jobs; high quality of life; and safe, friendly, livable communities.

A county in Pennsylvania must prepare a comprehensive plan to be compliant with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The State Code establishes the study elements and public participation standards, which a comprehensive plan must contain. The page dividers of this volume contain the text that each chapter of a legal Pennsylvania comprehensive plan must, or may, contain.

A Pennsylvania Comprehensive Plan

Is . . .	Is not . . .
The official statement of where and how the community wants to see future growth and development.	An ordinance that makes decisions about individual properties.
The explanation of policies behind ordinances, funding policies, and general changes (construction, demolition, etc.) in public facilities.	A document that binds the community to unchangeable policies.
A measuring stick state agencies use to make funding or permitting decisions.	A specific plan to build, design or locate any public or private facility.
A way to focus on major issues.	A document to deal with every possible issue in the future.

THE ROLE OF THE COUNTY

The task of planning can be confusing in Pennsylvania because of the numerous units of local government. In addition to the County of Clarion, there are 22 townships, 12 boroughs, and 7 school districts in the County. These are considered independent units of local government. The MPC, however, states that there must be general consistency in the comprehensive plans between all units of local government. To foster such consistency, this Comprehensive Plan includes County policies that it will try to directly carry out. The plan also includes *recommended* local policies, which would be carried out by units of local government other than the County. When possible, the County will assist townships, boroughs, and school districts in completing projects and implementing policies, which are consistent with both the county and local comprehensive plans.

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN WITHOUT PLANNING?

One of the easiest ways to see the value of a comprehensive plan is to examine what direction the community would move without *any* planning. The results of such an analysis in Clarion County are depicted on the map, entitled "*Clarion County 2015: An Analysis of Trends Which Will Happen Without Planning.*"

As the map shows, an unplanned future could change different parts of the County in very different ways. The map identifies five different geographic regions (Central Clarion Core, Northern County, Southern Tier, Boroughs, and Rural Areas) and the trends, which may affect them.

CLARION COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: THE NEED FOR PLANNING

CLARION COUNTY 2015:
AN ANALYSIS OF TRENDS WHICH
WILL HAPPEN WITHOUT PLANNING.

RURAL AREAS:

- SCATTERED DEVELOPMENT, GENERALLY WITHOUT INFRASTRUCTURE.
- CONTINUED LOSS OF FARMLANDS THROUGH REVERSION TO WOODLANDS.
- POSSIBLE LAND USE CONFLICTS.

BOROUGHES:

- DECLINE ISSUES SIMILAR TO SOUTHERN TIER.
- SOME MAY EVOLVE INTO BEDROOM SUBURBS.

NORTHERN COUNTY:

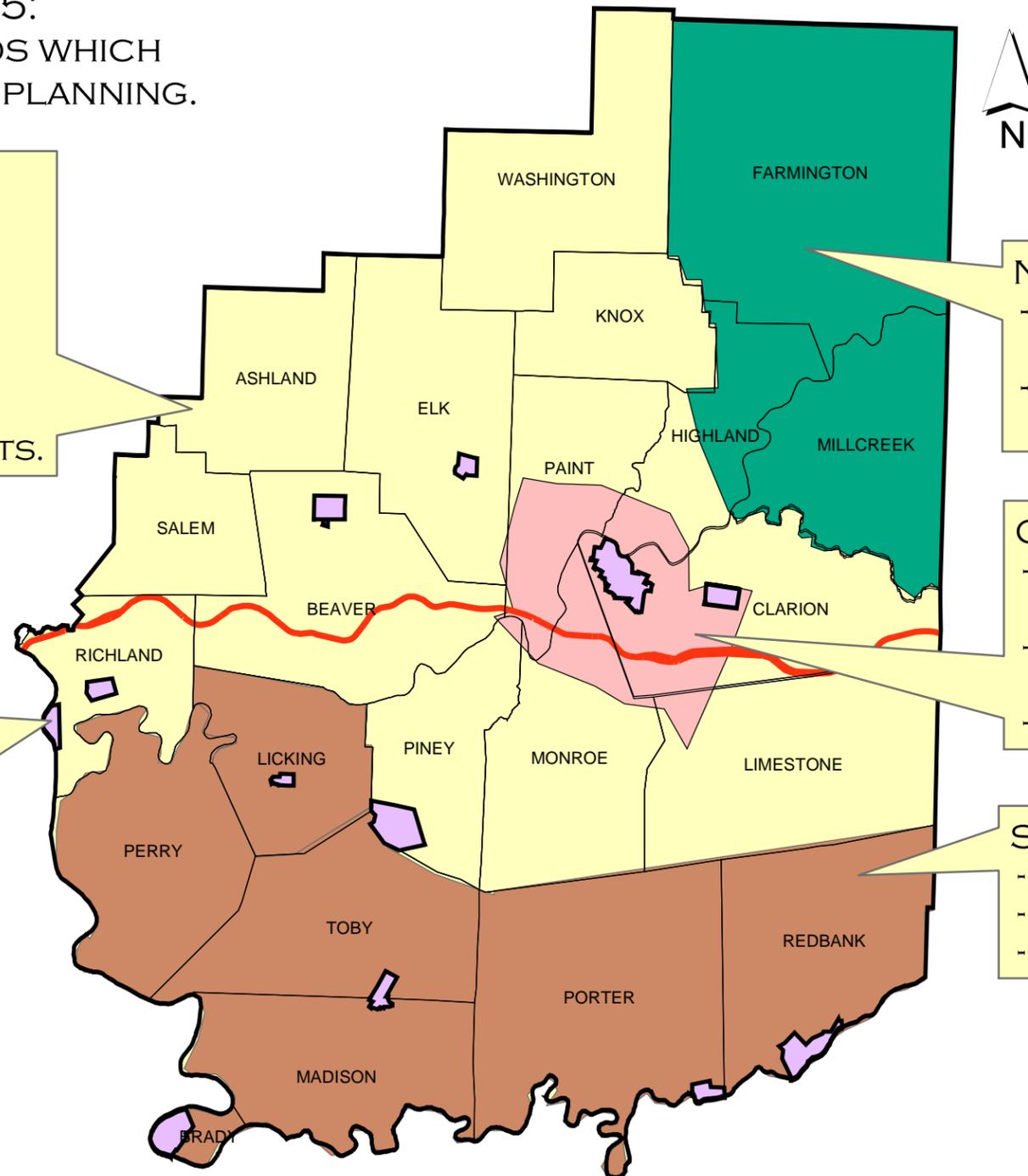
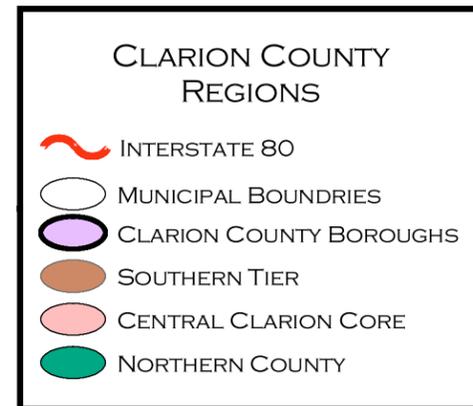
- CONTINUED PUBLIC LAND GROWTH MAY CREATE TAX BASE PROBLEMS.
- SOME GROWTH MAY BE SEEN IN TOURISM RELATED DEVELOPMENT.

CENTRAL CLARION CORE:

- EXTENT AND CAPACITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE OVERWHELMED BY DEVELOPMENT.
- TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION BETWEEN I-80 AND ROUTE 322.
- LAND USE CONFLICTS.

SOUTHERN TIER:

- ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE.
- DETERIORATING BUILDINGS.
- DIFFICULTY MAINTAINING SERVICE LEVELS.



This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.

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The affects of a future in which there is no community planning upon Clarion County are summarized below. However, there are also many overall County issues, which do not appear on the map.

- ◆ **Central Clarion Core:** An easy way to understand the Central Clarion Core is to think of two concentric circles. The inner circle is the Borough of Clarion. Development there is older; and many buildings and homes are over 100 years old. The outer circle represents the surrounding townships. Formerly, this area was mostly farm and forestland, but it has seen many new homes and commercial or industrial buildings within the past 20 to 30 years.

Within the inner ring, there is less interest in rehabilitating older buildings, and less interest by families to occupy older homes. In the outer ring, there is interest in building new homes and commercial or industrial buildings, but there is less infrastructure compared to the inner circle to support such development. The worst realistic future for Clarion Borough would be a community of empty commercial storefronts, housing only attractive to student renters, and expansion of the university to the point that there is no real estate tax revenue. The outer ring of townships would become a zone of traffic congestion and land-use conflict between residential and commercial/industrial development.

It should be noted, however, that like Charles Dickens' Ghost of Christmas Future, the map is of a future that could happen, not one that will happen.

- ◆ **Other Boroughs/Southern Tier:** Without planning, for many boroughs in Clarion County, the future could be bleak to an even greater degree. As this document will show, many boroughs have seen significant population loss. Land-use surveys have found areas of vacant storefronts and deteriorating buildings. This is especially true in some of the southern areas of the County. The result of this is fewer taxpayers to maintain consistent levels of public services. These problems are replicated in much of southern Clarion County.

- ◆ **Northern County:** The chief problems in the northern part of the County are from an abundance of public lands. For the typical Pennsylvania municipality, most revenues come from real property and personal income of residents. Once a public body for open space owns land, it will not generate municipal revenue. Certain agencies make payments in lieu of taxes. In some cases, this is mandated by the state legislature. And, in other cases, it can be discretionary (such as a non-profit conservation organization). However, these payments are immune to re-assessments by County government, and can never account for the potential increase through improvements that could occur on private tracts. However, this northern portion of the County also has seen some beneficial development through tourism. This may bring some needed economic activity, with only a danger if overdevelopment threatens the tremendous natural beauty of the area.
- ◆ **Rural Area:** Finally, there is the large, demographically stable, rural area in the central part of the County. It has seen scattered development, generally without significant infrastructure. The danger here is that if developments either create land-use conflicts (for example, a large sawmill versus a housing development) or development demands significant infrastructure (for example, failed on-lot sewage systems or dry weather wells force a township to develop infrastructure), the latter can be a very expensive proposition where there is not enough development to absorb the costs.

Overall County Issues

At a series of five public meetings, and through a widely distributed attitude survey, the residents and local leaders of Clarion County have given the Planning Commission direction about what issues are important and what should be done to reach the ideal of Clarion County's future. The ideal future is a sound and prosperous economy, an attractive and diverse physical environment, and healthy communities with a strong quality of life.

As a participatory planning process, the citizens' survey was one of the central features of the Comprehensive Plan. There are several, standard methods of gaining citizen input. The first considered was through a survey mailed to every household in the County. At a cost of \$14,000 for postage alone, this option was not feasible. Therefore, the two financially feasible choices were either a statistically significant random mail survey or a wide distribution of surveys with no attempt at statistical validity. The first option would have given everyone a theoretically equal chance at inclusion in the survey. The second option would give anyone who cared a real chance to participate.

The Clarion County Planning Commission and County Commissioners wanted the survey to be a chance for any member of the community who had an interest in the future to have more than a theoretical chance to participate. The survey was viewed by all local leaders as if it were voting—an exercise in participatory democracy. Therefore, to reach the most residents, a series of news releases were sent out and 2,000 surveys were printed. Copies of the survey and boxes for the return of completed surveys were made available at 13 locations throughout the County.

In addition, a staffed booth distributed and picked up surveys at the Clarion Autumn Leaf Festival from noon to dusk and at a Clarion County Recycling Day. Finally, surveys were distributed and returned at the Clarion County Association of Township Supervisors Convention.

Simultaneous to the survey process, the County sponsored a series of five town hall meetings. The first four were held during the evening at locations throughout the County. The final session was held at Clarion during the day and was targeted toward community, government, and business leaders.

The visioning sessions and town hall meetings, combined with related activities, such as presentations to various groups, made thousands of County residents aware of the Plan and created input from over 600 persons. This level of response led the County Planning

CLARION COUNTY TOWN HALL MEETING

All County residents are invited to a Town Hall Meeting to discuss ways in which to build a better community and prepare for our future.

**WHERE:
KNOX AMERICAN LEGION**

**WHEN:
OCTOBER 13, 1998, 7:00 P.M.**

These things are important to the citizens of Clarion County: a sound and prosperous economy, an attractive and diverse physical environment, and healthy communities with a strong quality of life.

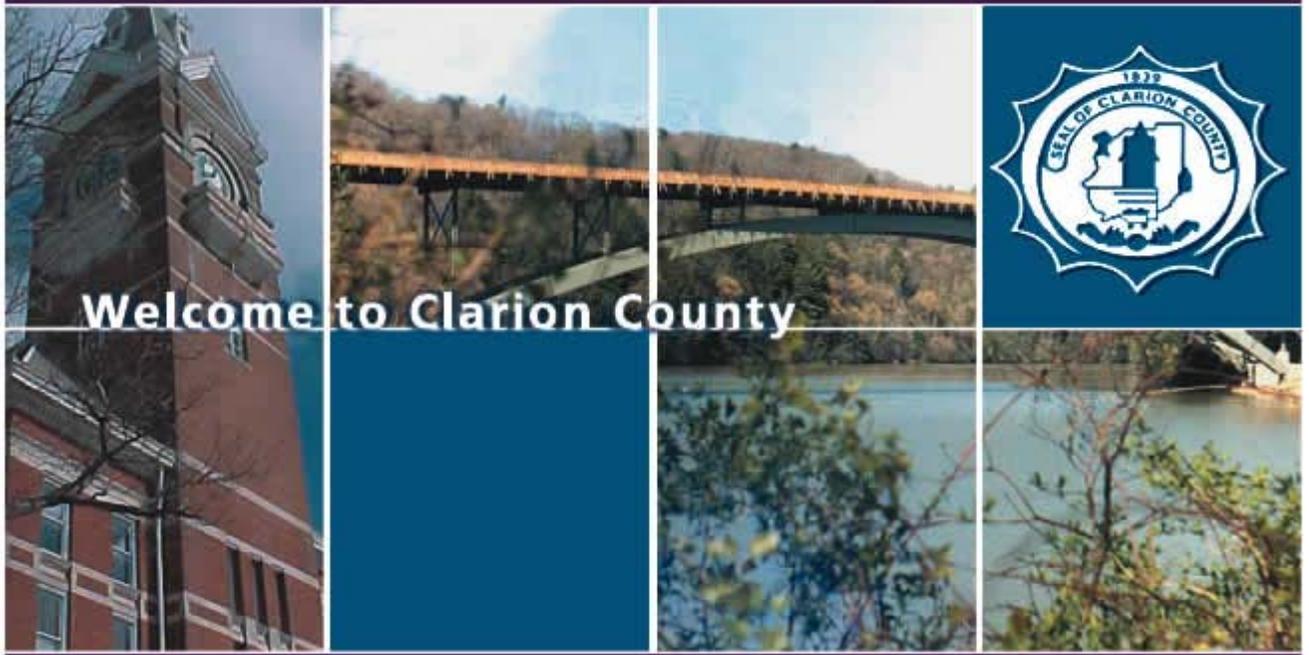
Commission to create a summary of those issues that arose throughout the public participation process.

Summary of Findings and Initial Recommendations

Following the last of the visioning sessions and the tabulation of the survey results, the Planning Commission met several times to review the issues. The Commission then summarized all of the input into the following eleven critical issues (listed in no priority):

- ◆ Preserving the historic and economic character of older downtowns
- ◆ Addressing abandoned strip mines and acid mine drainage
- ◆ Determining the future of landfills in the County
- ◆ Ensuring that the natural landscape remains scenic and beautiful
- ◆ Providing affordable rental housing
- ◆ Retaining young people in the community
- ◆ Supporting and growing local businesses
- ◆ Setting priorities to upgrade water and sewer for public health and environmental protection
- ◆ Developing analyses of traffic congestion in growth areas
- ◆ Providing developed recreation needs, such as parks and ball fields
- ◆ Better coordination between Clarion University and local governments

The Trends Analysis that was later undertaken was generally done with an eye toward these eleven issues (and the requirements of the State Code). They also allowed the Planning Commission to develop a vision statement to begin establishing the Community Development Goals and Objectives mandated for a county comprehensive plan.



Welcome to Clarion County

Community Development Goals and Objectives

A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including, but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development, that may also serve as a statement of community development objectives.

Clarion County Vision Statement

The means to the future is summarized in the vision statement. According to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania's *Handbook for Community Visioning*:

"The (vision) statement can be thought of as a compass used to guide a community through the ups and downs of economic, social, and political change. If the statement is truly community developed and supported, changes in the political landscape will have little impact. In addition, the statement can be used to assess whether new initiatives and programs are compatible with what residents want their community to be. Communities will always be presented with new opportunities (new factories, highways, government programs, etc.), but it is up to the residents to determine if these opportunities will either hinder or help the community in achieving its vision for the future."

The vision statement can be thought of as a compass used to guide a community through the ups and downs of economic, social, and political change. If the statement is truly community developed and supported, changes in the political landscape will have little impact.

VISION STATEMENT

Citizens and officials in Clarion County developed a vision statement with the hope that it would become the first step in reaching a successful future in Clarion County. Though the citizen members of the Clarion County Planning Commission produced the following vision statement, they do not consider it *their* vision statement. Instead, it is their effort at summarizing what citizens and local leaders have expressed at town hall meetings and through the completed written surveys.

We envision a Clarion County where choices are made at the community level and not pre-determined by outside conditions. These choices should include that of our communities to chart their destiny, and for individuals to create fulfilling lives for themselves. The limiting factor on the range of choices should be the moral weight of membership in the community and responsibility to each other. In reference to this, it is our vision that each action be preceded by the questions: What will this do to my community? How will this affect my neighbor?

We envision tangible results from this overall vision of a balance between individual and community. This leads to another essential balance—the needs of the people and the land as manifest through the economy. We envision a Clarion County that is a pioneer in "win-win" solutions that create prosperity while enhancing the environment.

In addition to the general vision statements, citizens also developed vision statements for the social, economic, and environmental futures of Clarion County.

SOCIAL VISION

- ◆ *Young people have the choice of remaining in their community to pursue a wide variety of job and business opportunities. There should be such opportunities available for citizens at all levels of skill and education.*
- ◆ *Older people have the choice of remaining in the community where they have spent their lives. Their need for care or other limitations should not force their relocation.*
- ◆ *Recognizing that much of the community will remain rural, we envision that the traditional rural virtues remain in place to replace public facilities and services. In the absence of local police presence, neighbors protect each other. In the absence of institutional living, those who need care are cared for by their neighbors. It is our vision that County and local governments encourage this.*

ECONOMIC VISION

- ◆ *We envision a Clarion County where steady, sustainable levels of growth occur. The definition of steady and sustainable is a product of the residents of pre-existing development. We envision that steady, sustainable growth occurs throughout Clarion County—a very different situation than alternating areas of explosion and decline.*
- ◆ *Recognizing the desirability of certain locations adjacent to interchanges, involvement will be directed at preserving the quality of life for pre-existing residents.*
- ◆ *We envision a new renaissance for the small villages and boroughs away from the I-80 corridor through the concerted efforts of these communities.*
- ◆ *Economic prosperity comes from within Clarion County, rather than being dependent on the whims of the greater national/global economy. This entails assisting businesses, building consumer loyalty to Clarion County products, and finding ways to tie land-based sectors to value-added activities.*

ENVIRONMENTAL VISION

- ◆ *We envision the continuation of the high-quality environment and scenic landscapes for which Clarion County is so well known. Within the context of the false argument of “jobs versus the environment,” we see a county with both high-quality jobs and a high-quality environment, through our commitment to the whole community.*
- ◆ *We envision a new commitment to rectify environmental degradation that occurred in the past. This is hoped to be manifest in the restoration of abandoned mine lands and the improvement of streams polluted by acid mine drainage or lack of effective sewage treatment.*
- ◆ *Recognizing that there have lately been significant land use and environmental conflicts in many areas of the County, we envision a solution in which sound planning*

preempts future conflicts through the site selection and land development process. Where conflicts have already occurred, the County would serve as a mediator, minimizing conflict through problem-solving processes.

- ◆ *Recognizing that much of our rural communities' livelihood is based upon land-based wealth, we envision new ways in which this can continue, becoming both a source of greater prosperity and environmental security. We see a Clarion County landscape characterized by profitable family farms, private stewardship forests, and the sound use of natural resources, such as re-mining, followed by modern reclamation.*

Community Development Goals and Objectives

Community development goals and objectives are an outgrowth of the County's vision statement. However, they serve a more specific goal by providing specific criteria about the "location, character, and timing of future growth and development." Toward that end, the County has established the following: Countywide Community Development Goals and Objectives. However, to avoid unnecessary planning jargon, the following terms should be understood:

- ◆ **Growth:** The action of getting bigger. An increase in size, whether in population, housing units, or land area.
- ◆ **Development:** A change in the use of land, normally resulting in more buildings, or a change in intensity.
- ◆ **Intensive:** Aiming to achieve maximum production in a limited area, a heavy concentration of activities within a relatively small area.
- ◆ **Density:** The quantity of people or buildings within a given space.
- ◆ **Character:** The qualities that make a place distinctive.
- ◆ **Conservation:** The act of using, but protecting from harm, destruction or overuse.

In general, the County of Clarion welcomes future growth and development where it serves to diversify the economy and increase local quality of life.

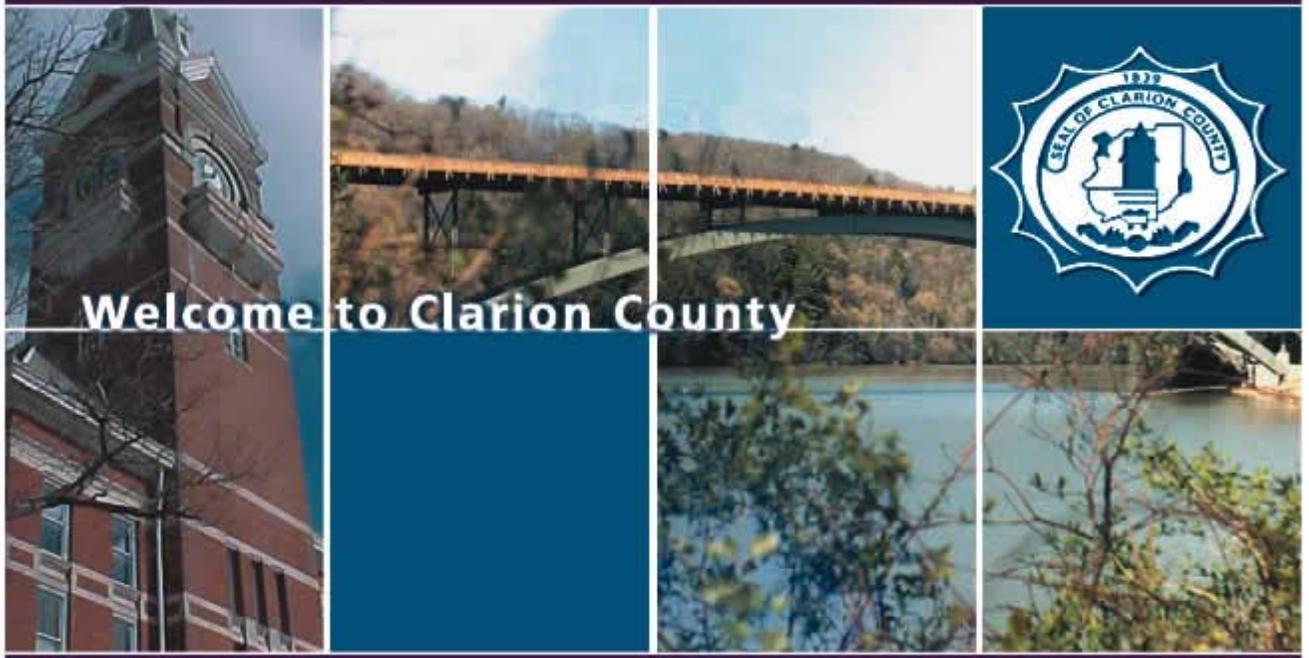
Clarion County Growth Statement: In general, the County of Clarion welcomes future growth and development where it serves to diversify the economy and increase local quality of life. Every form and level of growth and development, however, is not appropriate to every area in the County. As the Land Use Plan map illustrates, most intensive growth and development in the County should be confined to major highway corridors, which also have (or are planning the extension of) a full infrastructure. Exceptions to this policy may be less traffic-dependent major developments, or developments that would not present a conflict with other neighboring uses.

Assuming continued modest population increase, residential development of various levels is appropriate throughout the County, but its density must be linked to historic density in the vicinity, and the presence of infrastructure. Low density is essential in areas of the County

that have no public water or sewer, or a road system that cannot absorb high traffic levels. It must also be recognized that certain areas of the County are inappropriate for all but very low density or low intensity forms of growth and development. These are areas that have environmental constraints, such as steep slopes or floodplains, or where development would cause environmental problems or property damage, such as stormwater runoff flooding.

The character of future growth and development should emulate the character of the area of the County where the particular growth and development is to occur. Clarion County residents want new development to be sensitive to the distinctive attributes of place. For example, new development in an older borough should reflect what surrounds it. Development in the many rural areas of the County should also reflect the character of the landscapes. In this way, development conflict can be lessened and high-quality development can be attracted through a high-quality environment.

Finally, the timing of future development must be linked to locational issues. There are areas of the County that lack infrastructure to support intensive growth and development, but where development is ultimately desired. In these areas, the ideal would be a high level of coordination between developers and infrastructure providers.



Welcome to Clarion County



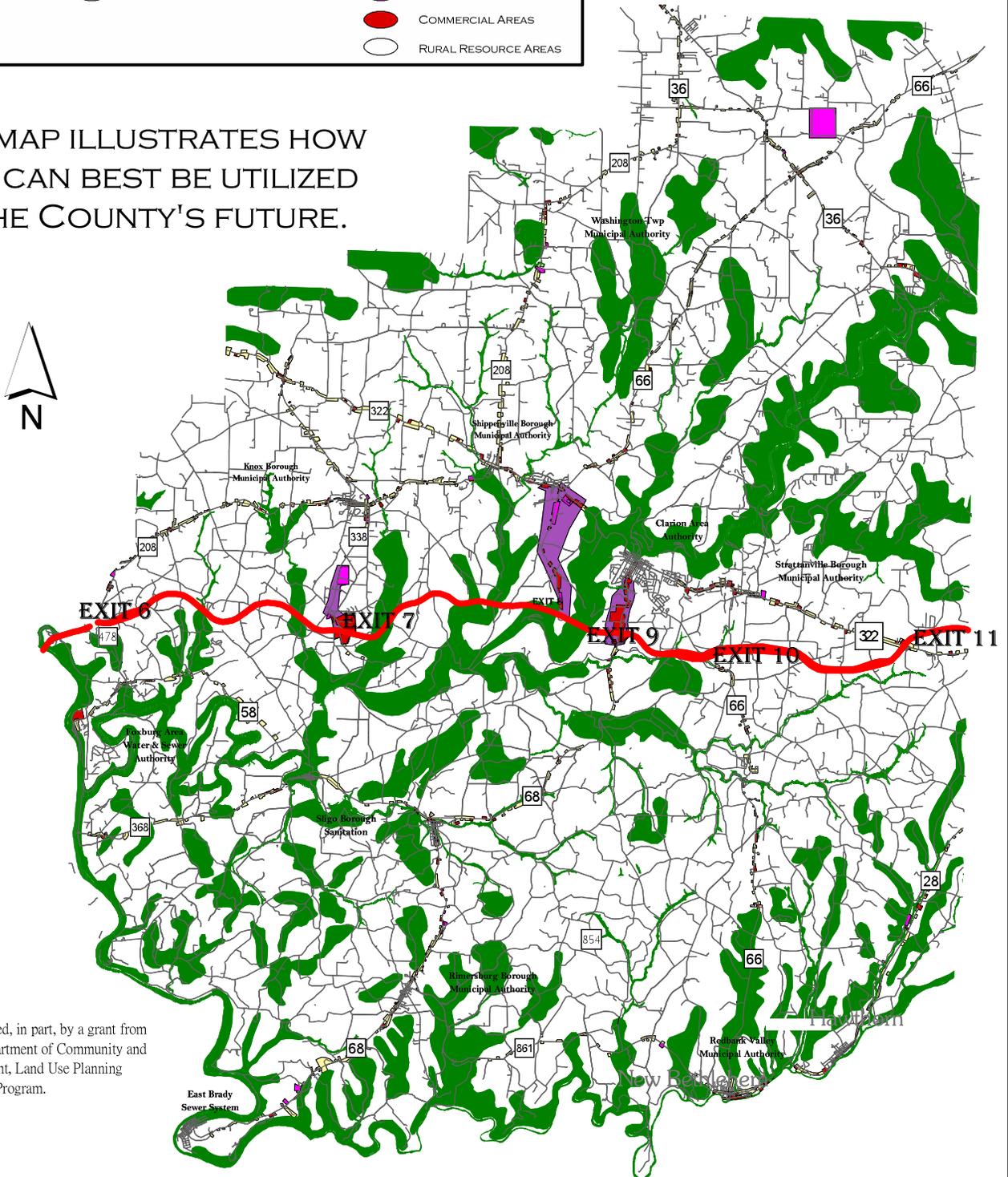
Land Use Plan

A plan for land use, which may include provisions for the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use proposed for residence, industry, business, agriculture, major traffic and transit facilities, utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation, preservation of prime agricultural areas, floodplains and other areas of special hazards and other similar uses.

CLARION COUNTY LAND USE PLAN



THIS MAP ILLUSTRATES HOW LAND CAN BEST BE UTILIZED IN THE COUNTY'S FUTURE.



This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.



LAND USE PLAN

Many planners regard land-use planning as the core of a comprehensive plan. Land is a limited resource; and policies in other areas will affect its future use. If the County does not plan carefully, public policy (such as which roads to improve and how often to improve them) could prevent the use of private property for an owner's preferred use. For example, most homeowners do not want to live near a busy road. Conversely, some public improvements are necessary to ensure that the County can provide for anticipated or needed growth and development. At times, local laws must also be passed to protect landowners from misuse of property by other property owners.

For example, in a typical year, western Pennsylvania may get 40 inches of precipitation. If a property owner paved his entire one-acre lot, that 40 inches of precipitation would place over one million gallons of water per year on the neighbors' properties (in addition to the water that must be absorbed from the property's roofs and paving). From the community point-of-view, there are two choices. Storm sewers can be built, likely financed by an increase in taxes, or the percentage of impervious surfaces can be regulated by a subdivision or land development ordinance. Conversely, in some East Coast communities, land-use regulations are so extensive that they can add up to \$20,000 to the purchase and construction price of a home. This makes homeownership an expensive option for middle-income families.

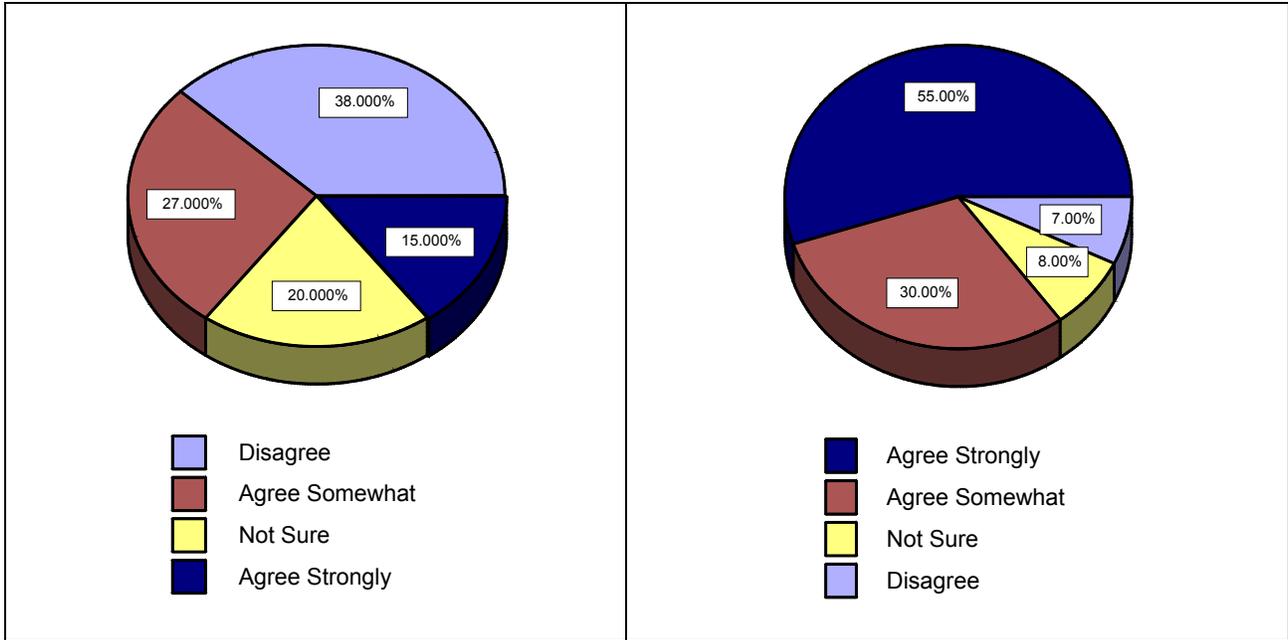
Land use is a very complicated topic, because it involves how public money is spent, the laws we all live under, and the essential right of property ownership.

WHAT CITIZENS AND LOCAL LEADERS SAID ABOUT LAND USE ISSUES

Citizens and local leaders supported three of the top five highest priorities in the future, which use planning to guide future growth and development. These priorities are:

- ◆ Protect rural and residential areas from incompatible development
- ◆ Preserve woodlands for recreational use
- ◆ Prepare long-range community plans to guide future growth

Citizens had mixed opinions about the regulation of land as a tool to accomplish such goals. Two survey questions were purposely phrased to solicit strong opinions. Citizens seemed to have mixed opinions, as shown in the following charts.



Question 1: I am against all zoning and land-use regulations that restrict any use of any private land.

Question 2: I support land-use regulations that protect my property and community from development, which would threaten our quality of life or property values.

Generally, a majority of citizens will support land-use regulations—if they perceive them as protecting, rather than restricting. They are more cautious, however, about the term “zoning” in this context.

WHAT TRENDS SAY ABOUT LAND USE ISSUES

Because of the level of detail in the *Clarion County 1968 Comprehensive Plan Background Report*, the County has a true long-term view of changes in land use. The first trend is readily apparent in the changing nature of land use in the County.

- ◆ State-owned lands have grown by 35% over 31 years, an average of 192 acres per year (mostly in state game lands). This was one of the fastest growing forms of use change.
- ◆ During roughly the same decades, farmland declined by 18,045 acres in Clarion County, a loss of about 600 acres per year. In other places in Pennsylvania, farmland was lost to development. In Clarion County, it seems that in many cases, farming simply stopped and land reverted to forest.
- ◆ Significant residential development (major subdivisions of relatively high density) was rather moderate, absorbing only 424 acres over 31 years. However, housing and demographic changes indicate higher levels of scattered, very low-density residential development. Since 1980, the County has gained 2,226 housing units, or an average of 111 units per year. If each unit occupies 1/4 acre (an unlikely scenario), the average level of land-use growth should still have exceeded the 424 acres. Thus, many residents are choosing large-lot rural areas or small subdivisions.

- ◆ Industrial land use appears to have declined somewhat because of improvements in surveying methodology. In reality, it has probably been growing moderately but changing in character, with mining-related uses declining and light industries growing.
- ◆ There has been a general shift in land-use pattern over time to conform to major roads serving the County and the presence of infrastructure to support intensive growth and development.
- ◆ As the attached map shows, most townships and boroughs have not adopted any local land use ordinances, and the County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance has by far the most widespread jurisdiction.

County Policies and Activities

Within the context of Clarion County, it might be expected that the County will continue to play a role in the regulation of future development. However, the role of the County must remain limited, because of staff limitations in this county of nearly 42,000 citizens, and the fact that it is not the role of the County to replace the normal functions of townships and boroughs in regards to land-use policy. Therefore, County policies will be limited to:

1. Providing basic regulations to protect public health and safety through an updated Clarion County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).
2. Protecting the safety of the Clarion County Airport facility through a County airport zoning ordinance, and examining the need to examine other County facilities and issues of countywide importance.
3. Assisting townships and boroughs to adopt and develop consistent land-use regulations, based on their need and consistency with this comprehensive plan as well as the applicable local comprehensive plan.

Providing Basic Regulations

The current adopted edition of the Clarion County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance dates from 1983. Since that date, the Pennsylvania MPC was significantly amended twice, in 1989 and 2001. Thus, the standards for what a subdivision and land development ordinance may and should accomplish have also significantly changed.

One of the most sweeping changes has been in the area of land development. "Land development" is a term defined explicitly within the Planning Code.

"Land development," is any of the following activities:

- ◆ The improvement of one lot or two or more contiguous lots, tracts or parcels of land for any purpose involving:

- Group of two or more residential or nonresidential buildings, whether proposed initially or cumulatively, or a single nonresidential building on a lot or lots regardless of the number of occupants or tenure; or
- The division or allocation of land or space, whether initially or cumulatively, between or among two or more existing or prospective occupants by means of, or for the purpose of streets, common areas, leaseholds, condominiums, building groups or other features.
- ◆ A subdivision
- ◆ Development in accordance with Section 503 (1.1)

Further, the Code states that all subdivision ordinances must include provisions for land development unless “such land development involves:

- ◆ The conversion of an existing single-family detached dwelling or single-family, semi-detached dwelling into not more than three residential units, unless such units are intended to be a condominium;
- ◆ The addition of an accessory building, including farm building, on a lot or lots subordinate to an existing principal building; or
- ◆ The addition or conversion of buildings or rides within the confines of an enterprise, which would be considered an amusement park. For purposes of this sub clause, an amusement park is defined as a tract or area used principally as a location for permanent amusement structures or rides. This exclusion shall not apply to newly acquired acreage by an amusement park until plans for the expanded area have been approved by proper authorities.”

It is the task of the County to promote basic uniformity of approach and to mitigate harmful effects of major land developments on pre-existing developments within the context of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

While the 1983 Ordinance does include a definition of land development, the standards are virtually indistinguishable from those for a residential subdivision. Recognizing that land development has many different forms, different impacts may be anticipated from different kinds of land development. For example, a large apartment complex in a single-family residential neighborhood may have impacts of noise and concentrated withdrawal of water and production of wastewater. The impact of a large shopping center may be traffic and greater stormwater displacement.

It is not the task of the Clarion County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to determine precisely where particular land developments should or should not be located. It is the task of the County, however, to promote a basic uniformity of approach and to mitigate harmful effects of major land developments on pre-existing development within the context of the Pennsylvania MPC.

The County has devised a strategy to address general impacts by amending the Clarion County SALDO to include specific standards for stormwater management and procedures, which will

CLARION COUNTY LAND USE POLICY PLAN

LAND USE REGULATIONS

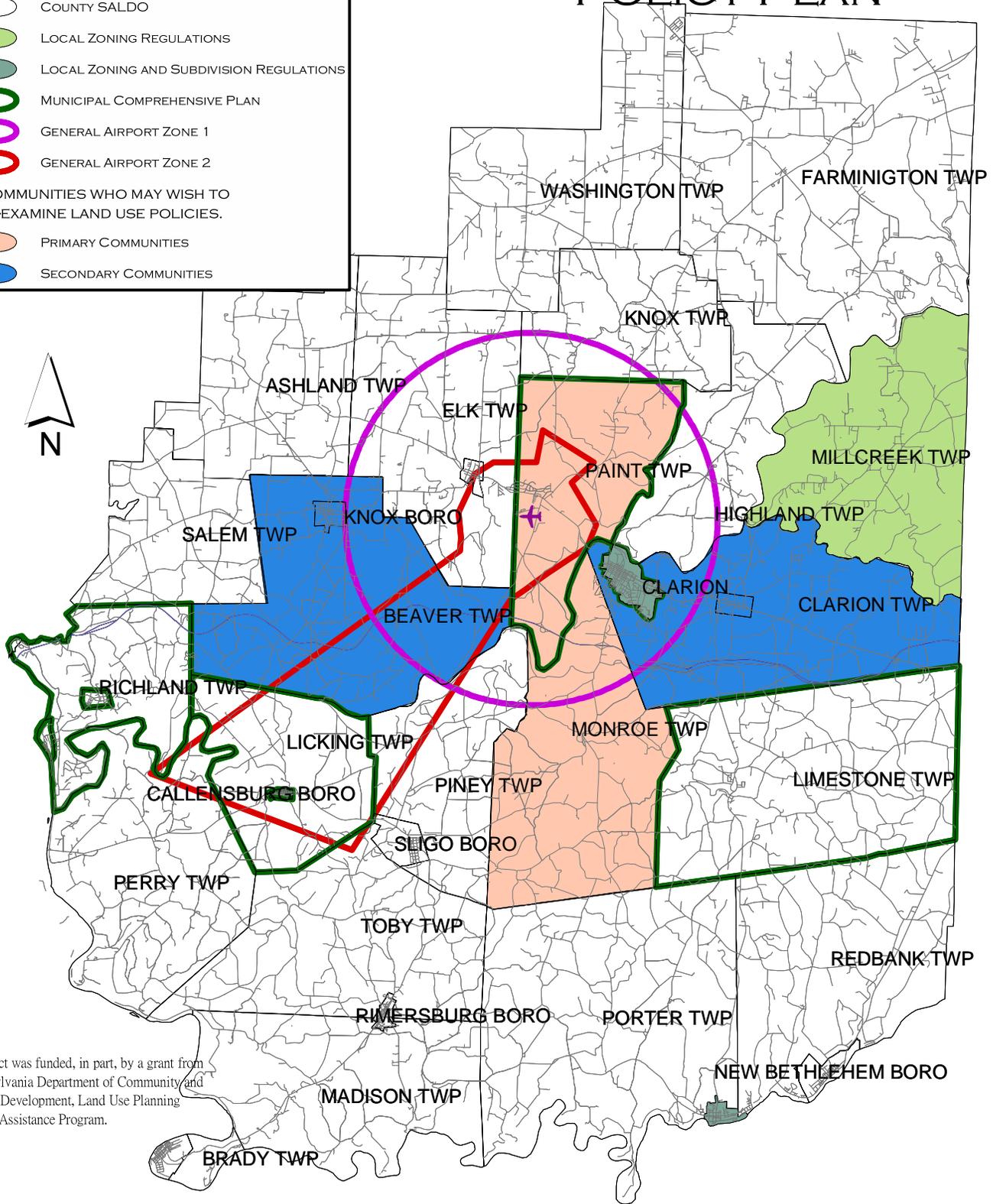
-  AIRPORT
-  ROADWAYS

LAND USE REGULATION LEVELS

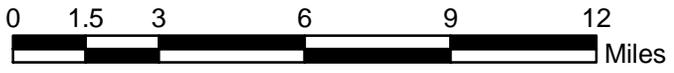
-  COUNTY SALDO
-  LOCAL ZONING REGULATIONS
-  LOCAL ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS
-  MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
-  GENERAL AIRPORT ZONE 1
-  GENERAL AIRPORT ZONE 2

COMMUNITIES WHO MAY WISH TO RE-EXAMINE LAND USE POLICIES.

-  PRIMARY COMMUNITIES
-  SECONDARY COMMUNITIES



This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.



differentiate land developments from standard residential subdivisions. A present, a substantial amendment to the County SALDO is under consideration for adoption to implement this strategy.

In the absence of zoning, which regulates where activities can occur, the County will use land development regulations as mandated by the MPC to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of County residents. The County will continue to develop and refine standards for the review of land developments to ensure that large buildings and parking lots do not create stormwater runoff problems and that these developments meet minimum lot and setback standards. Parking standards will be tied to guidelines developed by transportation engineering associations.

One area anticipated for changes will be in the definition of developments that have “regional impact and significance.” Developments with regional impact and significance are defined by the MPC as those developments that, because of size, intensity or population, affect more than one municipality. Sanitary landfills are such developments. From the viewpoint of its economic impact on the County, Clarion University is also a development of regional impact and significance.

Other examples may include those in neighboring counties, such as the proposed prison in Forest County, which will affect Clarion County. As the above list shows, a development of regional impact and significance is neither inherently beneficial nor detrimental to a community, only that its size will innately bring change. The Planning Commission will work to develop standards, and where possible, integrate them into an intergovernmental review process and also within land development regulations, if such approaches are feasible for these developments.

In addition, the County has developed specific standards for specific forms of land development, which may have particular impacts. These include:

- ◆ **Commercial/Industrial:** Parking and traffic impacts, setbacks from street rights of way, and screening/buffering from residential uses.
- ◆ **Multi-Family Dwellings:** Lot size linked to the number of dwelling units. Screening from pre-existing residential areas.
- ◆ **Sanitary Landfills:** Distance from other developments. Fencing, access routes, restoration plans.
- ◆ **Communication Towers:** Preferred co-location of new antennae on pre-existing towers, fencing, and height standards.

It must be stressed that land development regulations are not zoning; they do not restrict where a development can occur. However, one of the real dangers present in Clarion County’s future is land-use conflict between residential development and large commercial or industrial developments. Therefore, the County will implement screening and buffering standards for the purposes of using distance and plant or physical material barriers to lessen land-use conflicts.

Issues of Countywide Importance

Clarion County Airport Zoning: The Clarion County Airport is a significant facility in terms of economic impact, emergency access, and alternative transportation (see the Transportation Plan of this report on page 46). This facility is threatened by two potential land uses: sanitary landfills and improperly placed communication towers. Both of these uses should be regulated within the vicinity of the airport. Landfills are not a danger to the airport from height concerns, but because they attract significant numbers of birds. The hazard of a plane being struck by a bird is a health and safety danger to those in the plane and as well as those on the ground. Cellular communication towers have become a relatively common land use in the I-80 corridor. FAA regulations require that towers over 200 feet high from grade are marked with various strobes or lights and that they are registered as an air obstruction. FAA, however, does not preclude a tower from being erected in a flight path. In a worst-case scenario, an obstruction could cause the airport to lose its instrument rating, and with that, some of the facility's practical value to the community.

The County Planning Commission believes that the value of this facility is very important to Clarion County's future. It is thus recommended that airport zoning be enacted and maintained under County powers of zoning under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. This zoning should accomplish the basic goals of protecting flight paths from permanent obstructions and definite hazards such as landfills.

The County may analyze similar issues in the future where there is a definite Countywide interest. However, the preferred policy is to work with local communities to establish their own land-use policies.

County Recommendations and Policies for Townships and Boroughs

Zoned Communities: At present, Clarion County has only three zoned communities: Clarion Borough, New Bethlehem Borough, and Millcreek Township. Each will be using zoning to accomplish different objectives. It is the policy of Clarion County to support the local use of zoning in these communities by utilizing the County Comprehensive Plan as support documentation.

For **Clarion Borough**, zoning can be a tool to accomplish important goals, which will allow the borough to thrive into the twenty-first century. The borough faces several issues. The first is student housing, a perennial problem in small university towns. Students represent a transitory population, which has a different lifestyle from a permanent family household. Frequently, the student residents of a household change from one semester to the next, and college students frequently engage in activities that can adversely affect neighboring non-student dwellings. It is thus reasonable to control both the number of occupants per structure and where student homes can locate within a college community. The Borough of Clarion uses family-size regulations through its definitions as a control. Census counts of non-family household size seem to justify this approach with demographic trends.

One growing problem seems to be the higher numbers of cars per student than in the past, which creates a parking problem in the Borough of Clarion. It may be worthwhile to examine the idea of treating a "student home" as a separate use, as State College Borough has done. This can accomplish two goals. First it will prevent the large number of cars from outstripping

available public (on-street) parking. Second, by limiting density, it may also level the rental market and make it more possible for non-college singles and young families to find affordable rental housing in Clarion Borough. This will have a significant potential tax benefit to the borough in terms of earned income taxes.

A related issue to student homes may be uses of land by the University itself. Presently, schools and colleges are permitted uses in all R-1 and R-2 Districts. Two issues arise from this. The first is that many normal university activities vary in intensity, density, and daily activities from normal dwelling uses. A gymnasium, stadium, dormitory, or student union could have a detrimental affect on surrounding residential uses. A related issue is the potential of expanded non-taxable buildings and uses in the borough. A common solution to these issues is to try to create some balance and security for all parties by creating an institutional zoning district. This district should allow typical university uses by right and create reasonable expansion opportunities. It should also set some quality standards to protect the University from other uses.

Millcreek Township developed its own zoning ordinance, which is unique in Clarion County and somewhat unique in western Pennsylvania. Rather than traditional “Euclidean” zoning (zoning that separates uses strictly by category), it is evident that Millcreek attempted to fit its needs to the land in question. However, the township has not created a zoning map, which could make the ordinance more readily understandable. The County would support efforts by the township to create a map and make any necessary amendments to the text of the ordinance.

New Bethlehem Borough is not identified as a rapidly growing community. However, it has implemented zoning due to the high density of development in the community. The borough may wish to examine the use of zoning to foster revitalization efforts in the future.

Non-Zoned Communities: Many communities have not adopted local zoning, probably for one or more of these reasons:

- ◆ Lack of growth and development pressure
- ◆ Lack of the land-use diversity to provide for a reasonable range of land uses through zoning
- ◆ Lack of understanding of rural alternatives to strict traditional zoning
- ◆ Belief that protection through the County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance is adequate

The County of Clarion will make it a policy to examine and distribute non-zoning ordinances, which may meet local needs.

How true will this remain in the future? The analysis has shown that growth and development pressures have not been uniform throughout Clarion County. The communities that have had an increase in growth and development over the past twenty years will likely see more over the next ten years. For many communities, a lack of land-use diversity may be a problem, but these communities are generally those that do not have growth pressures. It is true that traditional zoning can be unnecessarily restrictive. A traditional “Euclidean” zoning ordinance can be a poor fit for rural

areas with more home occupations, greater mix of homes and businesses, and larger lots. However, there are some very rural communities in northwestern Pennsylvania that have created zoning ordinances which meet their needs by *protecting*, rather than *restricting* activities. Finally, while the Clarion County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance provides a basic layer of municipal and citizen protection, it is uniformly applicable in every situation, from a small borough with a declining population to a growing township. It cannot, by its nature, have the specificity needed to deal with a particular local problem.

Zoning is not uniformly needed in Clarion County communities. Many communities must begin to think about growth, development, and planning on a local level, however. The attached Land Use Policy Plan map shows those municipalities that have a local comprehensive plan, and those that have local zoning. When this situation is compared to the anticipated growth situation in earlier maps, a number of communities in the central Clarion area may wish to re-examine their land-use policies. In particular, the townships of Paint and Monroe should revisit their planning programs in light of changing circumstances. Following a participatory planning process, they could then consider the effectiveness of zoning in their particular circumstances. The County will assist by obtaining examples of good rural zoning ordinances that protect but do not unnecessarily restrict.

For those communities that do not need, or do not wish to pursue, zoning, there may be still be a need for targeted local regulations to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the community and its citizens. With the understanding that zoning may be controversial, and, in fact, is not always the best tool to meet local objectives, the County of Clarion will make it a policy to examine and distribute non-zoning ordinances which may meet local needs. Based on the issues thus far, several trends and special purposes needs are particularly commended for township and borough review.

For example, an issue that affects any community with a transient population of any sort is adult uses. In Clarion County, the Clarion Borough and surrounding townships have a transient population of students. In addition, the proximity to I-80 for many communities makes the likelihood of an adult or sexually oriented business very likely. Generally, an unregulated sexually oriented business can have negative consequences for community development.

A planning study by the City of Indianapolis found that sex crimes rose 77% in areas of the city where there were sexually oriented businesses. Beaumont, Texas concluded that sexually oriented business tended to discourage other businesses from locating in the same neighborhoods. Late night operating hours in Amarillo, Texas contributed to significant neighborhood problems. Problems can be summarized as:

- ◆ Heightened prostitution activity and associated petty crime and theft
- ◆ Concentrated illicit drug activity around the businesses
- ◆ Littering of drug paraphernalia
- ◆ Illicit sexual activity in public places

The Borough of Clarion has amended its zoning ordinance to provide for adult uses by conditional use in the I-Industrial District. This will limit impact of sexually oriented businesses on surrounding uses. No other community in the County has any such regulations.

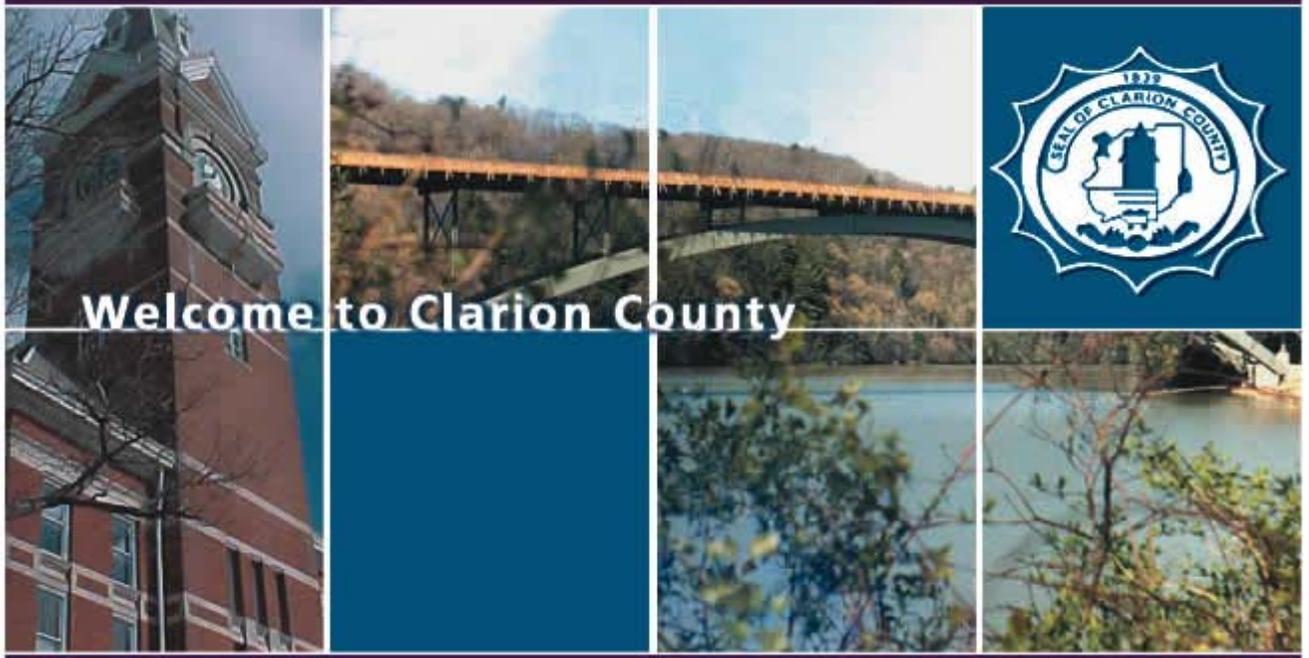
There are options potentially available for both zoned and un-zoned municipalities. Traditionally, obscenity ordinances were used to prevent adult uses, by addressing the *material* being sold or performances, which occur in the businesses. The material, however, may or may not be obscene, as the legal definition of obscenity is a complicated test. If the material is *not* obscene, it is protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, as legal free speech/expression.

Zoning is not uniformly needed in Clarion County communities. However, many communities must begin to think about growth, development, and planning on a local level.

Townships that have a concern about these types of businesses should consider a single-purpose licensing ordinance or integrating licensing standards into zoning ordinances. Licensing ordinances require criminal background checks on operator and/or employees, and contain standards for inspection of the premises, designs to prevent illicit activity, and limitations upon hours of operation. The County has model ordinances available for local use.

Over time, the County will develop more model standards for local use, made by monitoring changing land-use trends against local needs of constituent municipalities. A very simple means for boroughs to enact lot and setback standards is through a building line ordinance. This does not include zoning controls, but ensures that every new building maintains a modest yard area and does not encroach on neighboring properties. The County also has a building line model available.

Finally, a community that does not wish to adopt zoning but has concerns about future development may wish to consider its own subdivision and land development ordinance. In particular, communities that have special needs may wish to pursue this option, as the general countywide standards may not fit every circumstance. At a minimum, the County will support and offer limited administrative assistance in these circumstances, including review by the County Planning Commission.



Welcome to Clarion County

Housing Plan

A plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.

HOUSING PLAN

Why plan for housing? On the surface, this seems like an element of life that is completely in the private realm. The most facile answer to this question is that the Pennsylvania MPC requires a housing plan as a component of the county comprehensive plan. The need, however, to plan extends beyond just meeting regulatory requirements. Proper planning for housing needs ensures that:

- ◆ There will be enough houses for the number of people expected to live in the community in the future.
- ◆ The types of housing that exist or are planned for will meet the practical needs of the population (single-family dwellings, mobile homes apartments, elderly housing).
- ◆ A sound housing stock is an important element of overall community conservation. Planning can protect existing housing through infrastructure investment, proper zoning and sensible public policies. Ultimately, this protects the investment of resident homeowners.
- ◆ Most of the subdivision activity is being done to facilitate new residential development. This closely links land use and housing policies. A central question is whether land-use regulations are ensuring a decent residential environment without unduly contributing to higher housing costs.

WHAT CITIZENS SAID ABOUT HOUSING ISSUES

Frankly, citizens who answered the survey did not put the highest priority on housing issues. Most identified housing as a “high” or “moderate” priority, not a “top” priority. Part of this is due to the persons who returned the surveys (survey respondents more likely to be homeowners and less likely to have a mortgage). The project planner, however, was struck by the number of young adults who worked in Clarion County, but who resided in rental housing in other counties because rental housing in Clarion County was unaffordable. When this issue of affordable housing did arise in meetings, many citizens agreed it was a problem. It was simply not a pressing concern to those who answered the survey.

WHAT TRENDS SAY ABOUT HOUSING ISSUES

The County has two principal housing issues: housing affordability and housing quality.

Affordability: Especially in terms of rental housing, Clarion County has a potential problem with housing affordability. Both statistical analysis derived from the census and problems identified by citizens confirm this. The lack of affordable rental housing can be attributed almost wholly to the presence of Clarion University of Pennsylvania (CUP) and the need of its students for off-campus housing. Owners of rental property find that they can easily receive rents of \$1,000 or even \$1,500 per month, by charging numerous students to occupy a single unit. Students accept the situation because they are a captive market, (at least while they’re attending CUP), and need proximity to the University. Their individual rents are also less costly because of their willingness to share quarters with three or more students.

Quality: While older homes are not necessarily lower-quality homes, as housing ages, it requires more maintenance. Thus, areas of the County with concentrations of older homes may be thought of as a sort of “watch list,” where the housing stock may be in danger of deterioration. Watch list areas are primarily the boroughs and sections of both the extreme northern and southern portions of the County.

COUNTY POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Housing also relates to the larger issue of growth. Respondents to the citizen survey and town hall meeting attendees were concerned with the loss of young people in the County, much of which has been economically motivated. Many communities in western Pennsylvania have identified affordable purchased housing as a tool to keep young people in the community. Homeowners are less likely to leave in search of economic opportunity elsewhere. The reality is also that the widespread American dream of owning a home may be easier to achieve in Clarion County than in many of the nation’s boomtowns. Therefore, the cornerstone of Clarion County’s housing policy will be to use housing and homeownership as a way to keep young people in the County.

A possible resource for keeping young people in the County is the availability of reasonably priced older homes (especially outside the central Clarion core), and available vacant land for the placement of locally manufactured mobile homes, or custom-built homes.

Older homes, however, are often in poor condition. In the early 1990s, the County did a pilot housing rehabilitation program, using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Currently, lead-based paint regulations make replication of this initiative cost prohibitive. Counties in western Pennsylvania *have* undertaken homeownership programs, however, most notably Indiana County (another rural Pennsylvania county with a major university). Funding is potentially available from the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) grant and the CDBG competitive or entitlement programs. Some counties have undertaken rehabilitation and homeownership assistance by an increased realty transfer fee as allowed by Act 137. Where rehabilitation is undertaken, and regardless of the funding source, the target should be small boroughs and southern portions of the County. These areas have both the concentrations of older homes and the higher proportions of persons likely to need assistance.

The following table compares two communities in the central Clarion core to two in the southern tier, based upon 2000 Census statistics.

Comparative Characteristics	Redbank (Southern)	Paint (Central)	Hawthorn (Southern)	Limestone (Central)
Percent of population over 65	13.77%	20.7%	14.3%	11.8%
Percent of population over 85	1.1%	3.6%	1.2%	0.7%
Percent of single female-headed households with children	3.5%	3.4%	9.4%	2.8%
Non-seasonal vacancy rate	6.7%	3.3%	3.7%	3.6%
Percent of rental occupied units	21.3%	14.6%	28.6%	14.9%
Percent of high school+ graduates	75%	84.6%	76.6%	88.1%
Percent of households making < \$15,000 per year	19.8%	11.7%	16.6%	10.2%
Median household income	\$31,622.00	\$39,167.00	\$26,771.00	\$40,045.00
Median family income	\$35,185.00	\$43,750.00	\$29,545.00	\$45,368.00
Percent of families below poverty	8.1%	8.3%	14%	4.2%
Percent of pre-1940 housing	20.5%	6.9%	55%	28.5%
Percent of population with no vehicle	4.4%	3.4%	0.9%	3.3%
Median housing value	\$54,100.00	\$100,700.00	\$45,800.00	\$79,600.00
Median contract rent (per month)	\$199	\$538	\$432	\$371

Between the two regions, there are significant differences in the income of residents, their age, their familial status and its relationship to housing. The result in the southern tier is greater abandonment of housing, less money to repair housing and other concerns. Thus, this section of the Plan must talk about two Clarion Counties; one with affordability problems, and one with quality problems.

A cornerstone of the County's housing policy should be to create homeowners as a means to stabilize population.

If the means could be found to upgrade the quality of the housing stock, especially in the southern tier, it might simultaneously increase housing quality *and* housing affordability. As previously stated, it is recommended that a cornerstone of the County's housing policy be to create homeowners as a means to stabilize population.

Innovative Approaches to Increase Home Ownership

A major impediment to homeownership is the amount of down payment traditionally required by lenders. A low-to-moderate-income (LMI) family may be able to afford the monthly mortgage payment for a home, but they cannot assemble a down payment. Many local banks in other communities have formed public/private partnerships in cooperation with local governments to accept rehabilitation assistance grants in lieu of a traditional down payment. This approach may work well in Clarion County, as there are several locally owned banks.

Another approach to creating homeownership would be a cooperative venture between lenders, realtors, and owners of vacant property, prospective homebuyers, and the County. The County has pockets of older vacant homes. Some are for sale, but many are just vacant. Realtors also have older homes that are not selling because the condition of the houses. If the homes are vacant, it may be easier to rehabilitate them under lead-based paint abatement regulations. The owners would need to agree to sell the home to a LMI buyer for the pre-rehabilitation program. If the lender would accept the value of the rehabilitation work in lieu of a down payment, a credit-worthy, LMI buyer could purchase the unit. There may be other approaches as well. Indiana County has pioneered a number of homebuyer initiatives. Meetings between the two counties could yield a strategy for Clarion County.

Indiana County, which has many similarities to Clarion County, may serve as an example to Clarion County in terms of generating homeownership.

Other ways to encourage homeownership is to examine the options in alternative affordable housing. One means to homeownership for many Clarion County residents (16% according to the 2000 Census) is to own a mobile home on a lot they own, or a leased lot in a mobile home park. The 1983 edition of the Clarion County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance has extensive standards for mobile home parks. Among these are a minimum total park size and required recreation areas. If density standards were revised to the same level as single-family housing, recreation lands would not be needed. The County should investigate standards for lower-density “mini” mobile home parks. Mobile home parks that provide more individual space can be released from standards requiring that they reserve recreation space.

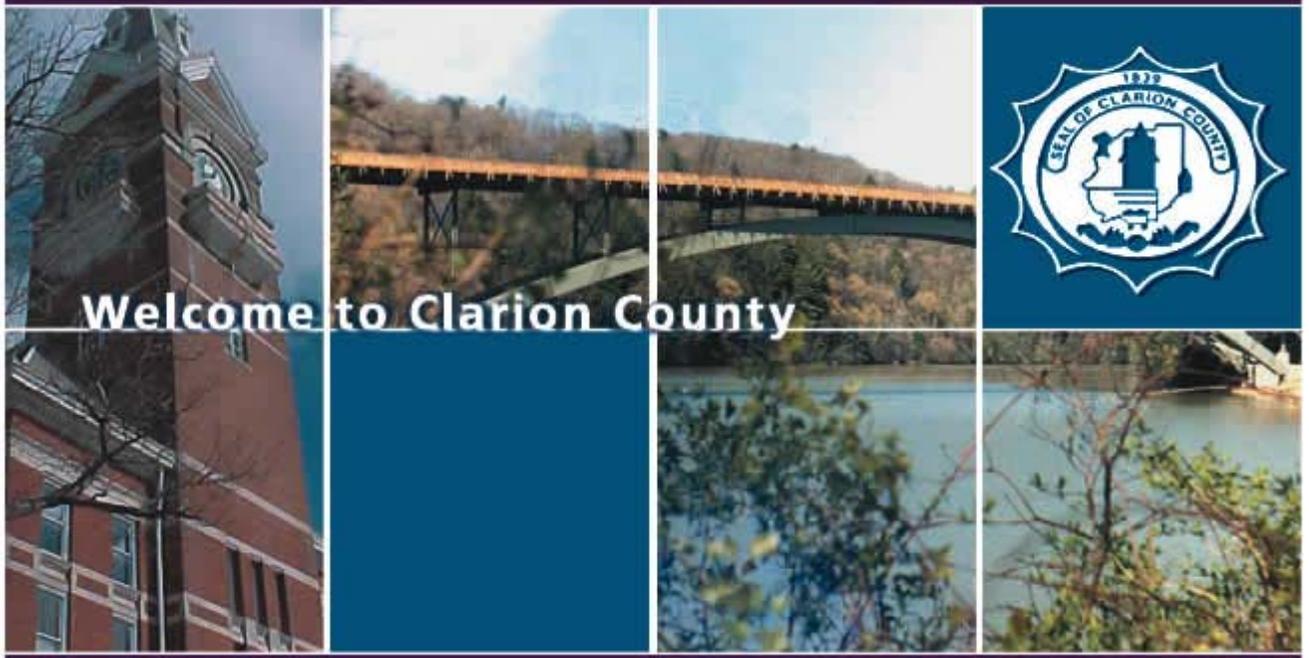
The student market will continue to inflate rental-housing costs. Student housing areas are usually not environments where non-students wish to live. Under certain circumstances, however, private developers do not need to rent to students (students are not a protected class under fair housing laws). While county or local government will probably never get into the market rate housing business, it is appropriate for local governments to point out potentially profitable opportunities. It is recommended that the County do a modest rental housing price and availability survey to provide market analysis for those private developers who may wish to development non-student, multi-family housing. In general, there is probably a market for new family-oriented, middle-income apartment developments within the County.

The County should assess deteriorated areas neighborhood by neighborhood. Addressing all of the problems at one time, rather than individually as in the past.

Finally, it is essential that Clarion County fully review housing deterioration in the boroughs, and potentially deteriorating areas of the southern tier. The consultant recommends that

Clarion County undertake a comprehensive neighborhood assistance initiative and target multiple resources in areas with characteristics of “at-risk” housing stock, poverty, and out-migration. In the past, CDBG funds have dealt separately with individual neighborhood components, such as water, sewer, and housing. Instead, the County should assess small neighborhoods, and then simultaneously rebuild housing, streets, sidewalks, water and sewer lines (or other identified needs) simultaneously. The process should include significant participation by neighborhood residents, including “sweat equity” or match.

Because these areas of “at-risk” housing stock are almost always concentrations of low/moderate income households, Community Development Block Grant money could be targeted for rebuilding water or sewer lines, sidewalk restoration, streetscape improvements, neighborhood-level recreation improvements, or housing rehabilitation. As mentioned previously, new lead-based paint regulations may preclude traditional CDBG housing rehabilitation. As an alternative, the County could pass an Act 137 realty transfer fee ordinance, and use the proceeds for housing. This would provide locally based funding with no regulatory strings. Finally, the state has recognized the need for strong residential neighborhoods through its new “Elm Street Program.” This initiative, supported by CDBG money, could offer some encouraging options in selected residential neighborhoods of the County.



Welcome to Clarion County

Economic Development Plan

Please Note: This component is not mandated by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. It is an element of the Clarion County Land Use Plan to promote economic prosperity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Clarion County residents have placed a premium upon improving economic performance. Residents stated in the survey that their main reason for dissatisfaction with living in Clarion County was lack of employment opportunities. Citizens also prioritized the forms of economic development they believed were most appropriate to this County. Economic development will remain one of the great challenges of Clarion County into the next decade.

Economic development will remain one of the great challenges of Clarion County into the next decade.

WHAT TRENDS SAY ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Clarion County economics have been characterized by change, with decline in some sectors and growth in others, as shown in the following table.

Clarion County: Sector Employment and Change, 1997–2001					
Sector	Employment 1997	Employment 2001	Change Employment	% Change Employment	% Total Employment 2001
Agriculture	17	32	15	88.2	0.2
Agriculture Services, Forestry, and Fishing	31	68	37	119.4	0.5
Mining	217	231	14	6.5	1.6
Construction	346	480	134	38.7	3.4
Manufacturing	2,643	2,547	-96	-3.6	17.9
Transportation/Utilities	804	825	21	2.6	5.8
Wholesale	580	417	-163	-28.1	2.9
Retail Trade	2,913	3,507	594	20.4	24.7
Finance Insurance, Etc.	454	443	-11	-2.4	3.1
Services	2,400	2,544	144	6.0	17.9
Government	2,921	3,123	202	6.9	17.9

This data in the table, however, does not show the whole picture. Certain forms of manufacturing have been increasing rapidly, particularly the building and wood-related sectors.

Of particular note is the rapid growth of the mobile home construction industry in Clarion County. This industry has located in the County for a variety of reasons, including access to I-80, and a labor force with appropriate construction skills. The development of this local industry has reversed many of the County's negative economic trends. In fact, in the

economic period from January 2001 to September 2002, Clarion County was the only county in Pennsylvania to *gain* manufacturing jobs. *Every other* Pennsylvania county had manufacturing job losses during the same 18-month reporting period.

One reason for the growth seems to be that the construction of mobile homes and modular buildings has thus far been immune to competition from imports, whereas imports have affected virtually every other manufacturing sector. In terms of imports on the manufacturing sector at the regional, state, and national level, the trends have not been encouraging. It is likely that these trends will likely affect Clarion County as well.

POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic development should address each and every sector of the economy, not just industry. Agriculture, natural resource sectors (mining, forestry, and agriculture), services, retail trade, and industry should all be included in efforts. There should also be efforts to build and strengthen the links between each sector.

If Clarion County is to retain its quality of life (which has become a local defining phrase), a sound economy is absolutely necessary. However, “a healthy economy” and “prosperity” can be elusive. For example, many local residents would not trade their relative local poverty for great monetary wealth if it meant they needed to live in a place with traffic-clogged streets, crowded housing, and high crime. In Clarion County, citizens and local leaders have defined prosperity as:

- ◆ A complex economy where many sectors and economic activities protect the community by insulating it from up and down business cycles
- ◆ An economy compatible with a rural and small-town way of life
- ◆ An economy that allows the County to be somewhat economically self-reliant

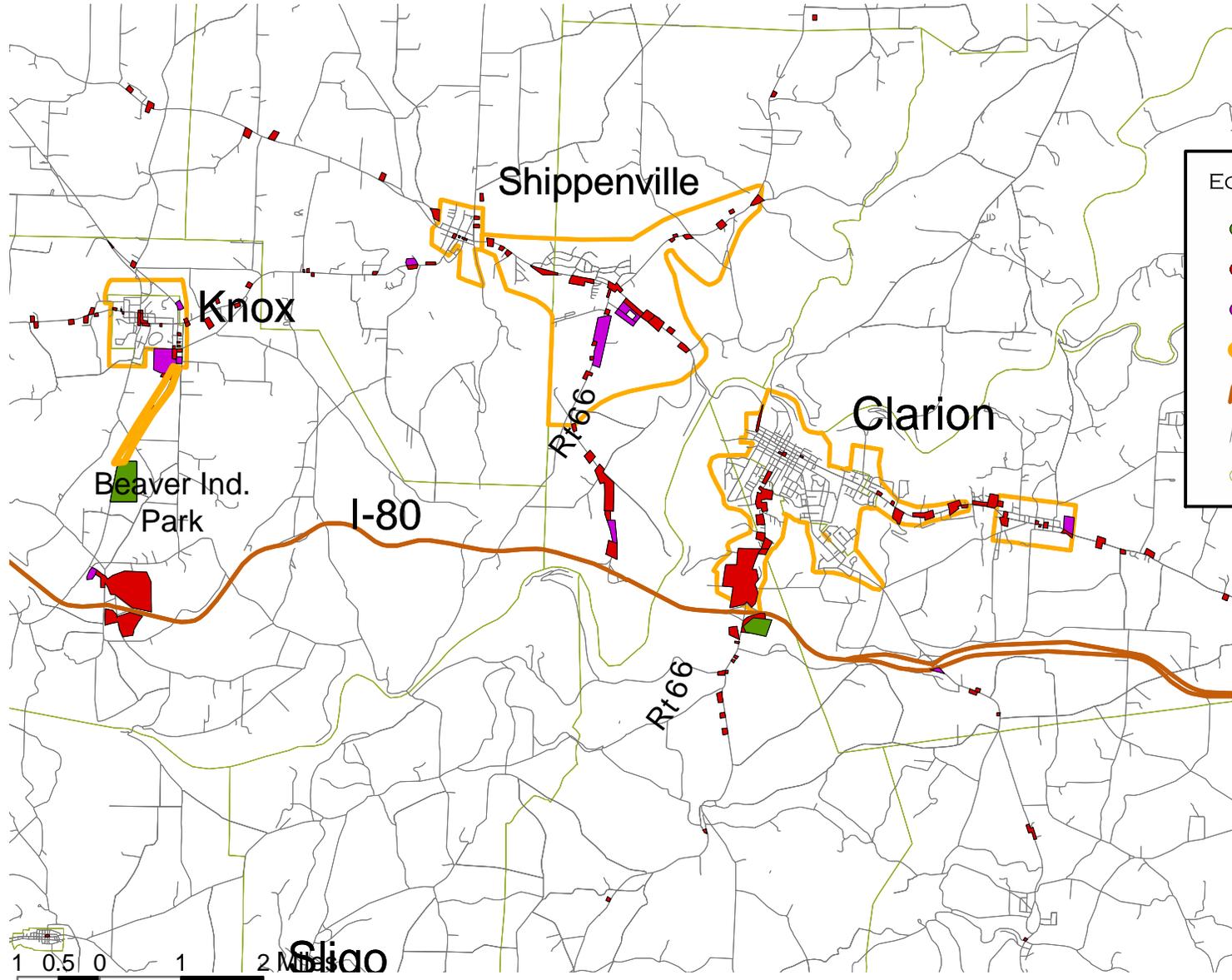
This emphasis on this approach comes from lessons learned by other rural counties. First, counties with a single-purpose economy (such as *only* mining or tourism) suffer if that sector has an economic setback. In a related vein, all rural areas seem to have magnified economic problems during periods of national recession.

Finally, the economy must reflect the true nature of a community—Clarion County is a rural place with many small towns and wishes to remain so.

FIVE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are two prevalent theories in economic development. One is that communities can bring industries from elsewhere by advertising and marketing, which in turn brings prosperity. Thousands of communities are using this strategy, but reality shows that such large-scale relocations are few and far between. The alternative is to build the economy from within by creating a climate for local business to grow and prosper. Rather than spend limited resources on “smokestack chasing,” Clarion County proposes to build its economy from within. To do this, the Plan recommends five principles to guide future economic development efforts:

CENTRAL CLARION COUNTY SELECTED ECONOMIC LAND CHARACTERISTICS



ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- KOZ SITES
- COMMERCIAL CLUSTERS
- INDUSTRIAL CLUSTERS
- SEWER SERVICE AREAS
- INTERSTATE 80
- HIGHWAYS AND ROADS
- TOWNSHIP AND BOROUGH BOUNDARIES

This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.



1. Economic development should address *each and every sector of the economy, not just industry*. Agriculture, natural resource sectors (mining, forestry, and agriculture), services, retail trade, and industry should all be included. There should also be efforts to build and strengthen the links between each sector.
2. Business assistance resources should support and strengthen existing local businesses as a first priority.
3. To broaden the economic base, resources should support and encourage more capable local residents to develop their own businesses.
4. Efforts to attract existing businesses from elsewhere should be limited and largely tied to joint activities and cooperation on a regional and state level. Resultant marketing activities should be low cost.
5. Planning for economic development and monitoring economic progress should be a constant, rather than a periodic activity. This should be an inexpensive process, which can be quickly executed with local resources.

PRIORITIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The County Planning Commission has prioritized ways in which resources and assistance can be directed. The preferred priorities are:

Priority #1: Provide every form of infrastructure to support businesses, including the traditional utilities of water and sewer but also sites, buildings, and space.

Priority #2: Provide economic data and information to foster sound decision-making.

Priority #3: Expand the availability of locally controlled below-market capital.

Priority #4: Inspire and support a vision of rural/small-town forms of prosperity, not urban or suburban prosperity.

Priority #5: Examine legal means of preferential taxing for target business sectors.

With these in mind, the balance of this Plan addresses the County's sectors, both from an information and action-planning basis.

Solidify and Strengthen Current Economy

Whether a happy accident, or policy realization, the economy is working rather well in Clarion County. Unemployment remains lower than many counties in the region. However, this may not continue as regional conditions worsen. The basic needs thus become expanding the information base about economic conditions to be used for sound decision-making, educating the public that their actions will affect the economy, and broadening the base actions to support economic initiatives.

Recent regional analysis has revealed that northwestern Pennsylvania's economic development delivery system is somewhat cumbersome and duplicative. While the County supports efforts to streamline the system and eliminate regional duplication, Clarion County does not have the multiplicity of agencies found elsewhere. Therefore, this County Comprehensive Plan endorses a policy of maintaining and enhancing a strong economic development delivery capacity within Clarion County.

Key action should include:

- ◆ Continuing comprehensive economic analysis by sector, coupled with swift action
- ◆ Developing economic indicators that are clearly understandable and can be used as part of ongoing public education efforts



A Key Action—Expand Business Site Opportunities

Historically, the County has had some marked success in supplying developed sites to business, and this is being continued with the new KOZ site. What is currently lacking is turnkey space for startup businesses. (Turnkey space is defined as space ready to occupy quickly.)

Unlike other western Pennsylvania counties, Clarion County does not have many large older, vacant industrial buildings. Typically, industrial space in western Pennsylvania can be leased for about \$1.75 per square foot. Industrial space in Clarion County (when it can be found) typically leases for twice that amount.

As of this writing, there are no industrial sites with complete sewer, water, roads, and site preparations available within the County. Correcting this situation should be a priority.

Increase Availability of Low-Cost Capital and Technical Support for Business

Businesses need both information and money to succeed. The County should supply information and support efforts for businesses to have access to training and capital (money) at affordable interest rates. Actions should include:

- ◆ Compare local business types and capital needs. Provide analysis of local loan and training programs. Build upon the Genesis-small business loan concept
- ◆ Develop ongoing technical support for high-risk businesses to prevent defaults on loans
- ◆ Open new, long-term, self-supporting local loan programs, including the Pennsylvania New Communities Program and CDBG micro-enterprise programs

The Clarion County Economic Development Corporation (funded by the County's CDBG allocation) examined economic factors by sector, real estate trends, and the viability of a business incubator or multi-tenant building. The results of this effort are as follows:

- ◆ Identification of 21 regional industries with economic growth potential

- ◆ An understanding of some peculiarities of the local real estate market, particularly in the high cost of land and buildings compared to neighboring counties
- ◆ Confirmation of the most likely corridors and sites in the County to focus on economic development opportunities. This was a market analysis that confirmed the results of both the Pennsylvania Economy League and the County Comprehensive Plan process.
- ◆ Specific costs and funding scenarios for development of two sites, both of which are in the central Clarion core

In summary, significant effort has been made in:

- ◆ Providing a basic economic analysis
- ◆ Taking a first step toward expanding business site opportunities

Actions to Take the Analysis from Recommendation to Reality

Clarion County needs more space for business expansions, relocations, and startup businesses. The local market is not providing affordable space that can be immediately occupied and used to generate income for the business owner. Businesses that need a building or a site to build on will go elsewhere.

Whether the space is a retrofit of an older building, or new construction, whether it targets existing business that need to expand or is an incubator for startups, business space is needed.

Whether retrofitting older buildings or building new ones, whether targeting existing businesses or providing incubators for startups, business space is needed in Clarion County.

Future efforts should focus on:

- ◆ Further analysis of non-industrial sectors (retail/service, agriculture and natural resources, small businesses)
- ◆ Further analysis of the industrial community to build linkages and clusters within identified growth industries
- ◆ Increasing the availability of low-cost capital and technical assistance to all businesses

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC SECTORS (INCLUDING POSSIBLE INDICATORS FOR CONTINUAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS MONITORING)

Agricultural Sector

Historic Performance: Local agriculture has been performing equal to other areas of the state and the United States—abysmally. Some analysts have questioned whether this sector can even survive in certain areas of Pennsylvania (ironically, the most rural and urban). In

each case, as the number of farms fall below a critical mass, support businesses such as feed mills, implement dealers, and small processing plants can no longer operate. Another problem is the age of operators and the high cost of entry into this business.

Key Policies



- ◆ Bring agriculture fully into the economic development system
- ◆ Assist producers shift from commodity-based approaches to product-based approaches (products which can be directly marketed to retailers or consumers)
- ◆ Emphasize support for agriculture-related businesses

However, employment is only a small part of the agricultural economy. Information should be assembled to monitor a variety of economic trends, including:

- ◆ Agricultural receipts
- ◆ Operator characteristics
- ◆ Sales of crops and livestock
- ◆ Market sources
- ◆ Agricultural infrastructure (implement sales and repair, feed services, etc.)

It should be emphasized that this must be an effort of the economic development and planning community, not just agricultural specialists. Foremost, agriculture producers and support businesses (feed mills, implement dealers, lenders) must be brought together with other businesses.

For example, it may be possible to create new opportunities by linking farmers with businesses in both the food retail and transportation sectors. Inevitably, there are problems of seasonality, scale, and processing, but opportunities can be created and developed.

Forestry Sector

Historic Performance: Raw prices of local hardwoods continue to rise. One threat to this is that high prices may cause manufacturers to seek alternate, lower-cost sources, such as Southeast Asia. More important than supply, is the issue of the raw product leaving the County for value-added processing elsewhere. Another issue is the stewardship of private forests, which could jeopardize long-term supply.

Key Policies



- ◆ Educate public about sound forestry practices
- ◆ Examine and strengthen links between existing timber processors and the manufactured housing industry

On-going indicators of performance may include:

- ◆ Timber inventories
- ◆ Volumes of saw logs
- ◆ Local use of saw logs
- ◆ Principal sales of wood products

This sector is discussed at length in the Conservation of Natural and Historic Resources Plan.

Other Natural Resources

Historic Performance: In terms of employment, coal extraction has fallen off significantly. Sand and gravel has been a somewhat bright spot. The question is if mining continues to be capital intensive rather than employment intensive, what will happen to public support for this sector? Survival of the mining trade may be more and more dependent on the industry being able to meet locally imposed environmental/land-use performance standards.



Key Policies

- ◆ Develop a voluntary, non-regulatory quality assurance program for mining operations, including grant assistance from state and federal competitive sources. The goal should be to make resource extraction in Clarion County profitable, as well as the most conservation-minded in Pennsylvania.
- ◆ Support, where possible, energy policies based on utilization of local coal.

This sector is discussed at length in the Conservation of Natural and Historic Resources Plan.

Retail Trade and Service Businesses

Retail Trade

Historic Performance: Retail trade has been an overall bright spot in the County economy. If, however, downturns occur in capital import sectors, regional competition could affect local business. There has also been an undeniable shift from the locally owned to outside ownership, which is tied to land-use factors, such as the shift from traditional downtowns.



Key Policy

- ◆ Increase support for traditional downtown retail, including developing a comprehensive retail market study. The study should focus on Clarion, Knox, New Bethlehem, Rimersburg Boroughs, and other boroughs with viable downtowns.

Service Businesses

Historic Performance: Service businesses are another overall growth sector, both locally and nationally. With the exception of health services, the forms of services found locally have not been concentrated in high wage areas such as business services. Health sector activities are also potentially jeopardized by the non-profit consolidation seen in other places and high costs of technology.



Key Policies

- ◆ Find ways to retrofit existing support structures for turning manufacturing into business services, and, where possible, health services, including the non-profit sector.
 - On-going indicators may include:
 - Service businesses by type
 - Service receipts by type
 - Retail establishments by type
 - Site analysis (downtown versus highway commercial areas)
 - Retail/service real estate trends
- ◆ Continue to support the local hospital/medical infrastructure, particularly from the threat of greater regional consolidation and loss of local service.

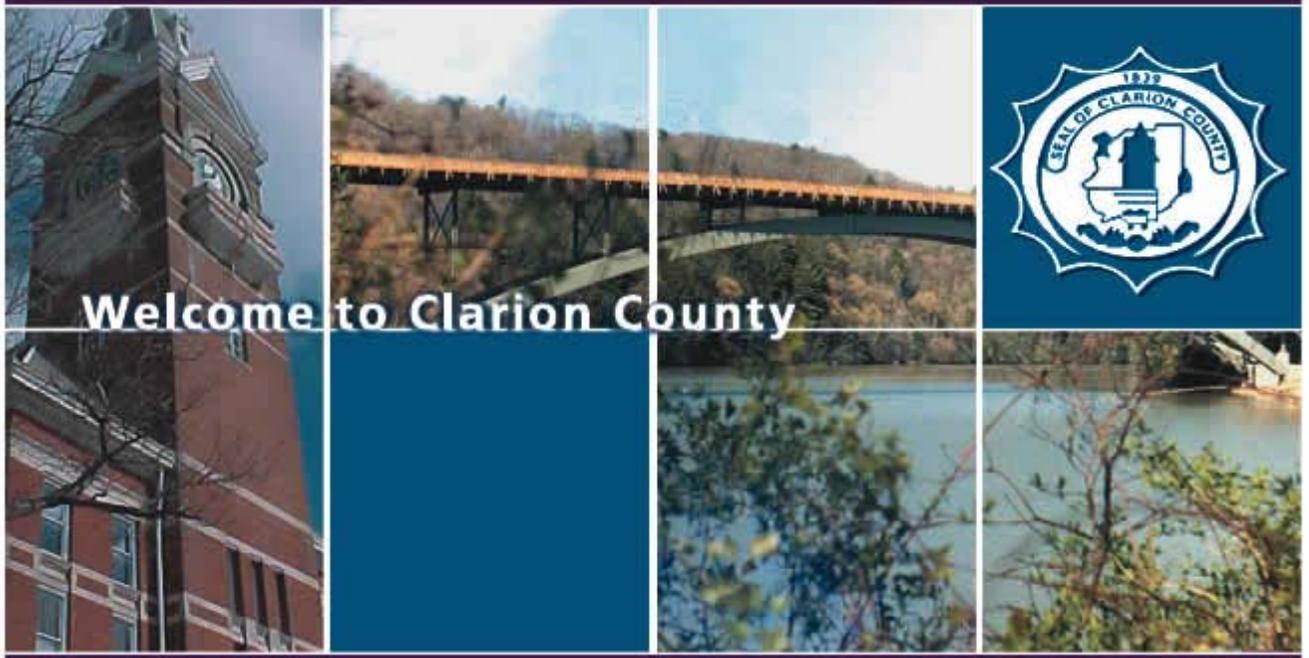
Industrial Sector

As previously noted, there has been significant research and planning for the industrial sector. Concentrations of growth industries and future expansion sites have been identified, and there is some engineering under way. Initial future work should be confined to three particular areas:

1. **Develop Public/Private Capital Resources:** An analysis of the local use of private banking capital and local use of state, regional and local below-market capital.
2. **Strengthen Relationships Between Local Businesses to Increase Multiplier Factors:** There may be a gap between local core industries and where these businesses purchase supplies and services. Key to this analysis would be to conduct detailed interviews with purchasing agents of major local industries. The ideal would be to find services, materials, or supplies, which local entrepreneurs could provide within the County.
3. **Expand the Diversity of the Industrial Base:** This activity would continue to examine gaps in the local economy, and why the County is not attracting industries outside its

traditional clusters. Information would be gathered by conducting interviews with businesses from outside Clarion County.

4. Develop an early warning system to gauge when events outside Clarion County could cause major local dislocation (such as plant closures) and, where possible, high-risk industries by nature of outside corporate ownership. Local officials should always have an understanding of how national and world trends will effect the local situation. For example, a change in interest rates or the tax code could affect the local mobile home industry.
5. Increase the ability of the County to offer sites for all forms of businesses and below-market or guaranteed capital for all forms of businesses.



Welcome to Clarion County



Community Facilities and Public Utilities Plan

A plan for movement of people and goods, which may include expressways, highways, local street systems, parking facilities, pedestrian and bikeway systems, public transit routes, terminals, airfields, port facilities, railroad facilities, and other similar facilities or uses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES PLAN

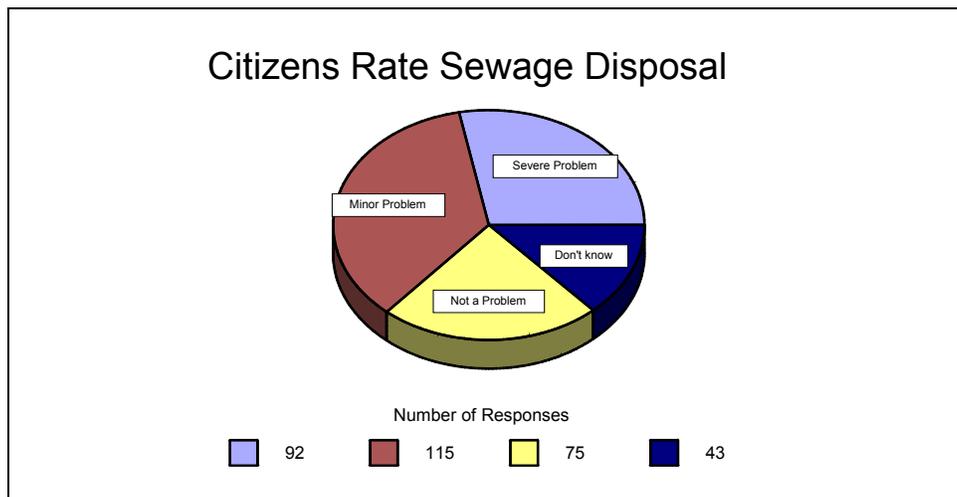
Community facilities and public utilities generally have the most direct local government involvement in terms of improvement. There is no doubt that public water systems, and especially public sewers, are a necessary pre-requisite for any form of dense or intensive development in Clarion County. Other community facilities contribute to the economic and social well being of the County. Schools produce the next generation of leaders. Fire and police companies prevent disasters and save lives and property. Parks and recreation make lives better and attract investment as a quality community.

WHAT CITIZENS AND LOCAL LEADERS SAID ABOUT FACILITIES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

At the final visioning meeting, an audience comprised mostly of local leaders, identified “lack of water and sewer” as the greatest challenge facing Clarion County. Citizens, frankly, did not make public water and sewer a major priority (compared to such issues as economic development, or the need for long-range planning), though many did regard it as a real problem. In terms of growth and development, public water and sewer systems are an economic development and long-range planning issue.

What Trends Show About Community Facilities Issues

In response to the early identification of infrastructure as both a citizen and local leader priority, the County undertook a mini study of infrastructure capacity and problems within the County. Of 22 known systems in the County (at the time of the survey), only eight communities returned the one-page questionnaire, with capsule results as follows:



Farmington Township: Currently has no water or sewer. The Township has plans over the next two to five years to develop both water and sewer systems. The projects would address health and safety, economic development, and environmental protection. The proposed systems would serve the Villages of Leeper and Tylersburg. *(Note: Since the original survey was returned, Farmington Township has been implementing this plan.)*

Knox Borough: Knox Borough operates both water and public sewer systems. There are no immediate or long-term plans for extension or system expansion.

Limestone Township: Limestone Township has neither a public water nor public sewer system. It currently has general long-term plans for both a new sewer and new water system, which Township officials believe would address economic development and health and safety problems.

Foxburg Borough: Foxburg has both public water and sewer facilities. There are no plans for extension of the public water. Over the next five years, however, the Borough would like to connect the Foxburg sewage plant to the Borough of St. Petersburg and parts of Richland Township. *(Note: A part of this project was completed in 2001-2002, serving St. Petersburg.)*

Shippenville Borough: Shippenville operates both a public water and public sewer system. There are no future projects and no identified system problems.

Redbank Township: This township has no public water or sewer, but has a general interest in tapping into a neighboring sewer system. There are no concrete plans, however.

St. Petersburg Borough: This community has a water system and anticipates an extension of service along Route 58 for health, safety, and development purposes. As mentioned in above, St. Petersburg would like to tap into Foxburg’s sewer system within five years, but does not yet have the funds.

Strattanville Borough: Strattanville has both public water and sewer. Beyond the sale of the water system to the Pennsylvania-American Water Company, there are no plans for extensions.

County Assistance: The low survey response was in direct conflict with the fact that the County receives numerous requests for CDBG assistance for water and sewer systems each year. Projects for the last three fiscal years included the following:

Fiscal Year 2002	FFY 2001	FFY 2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Water line replacement in Rimersburg—\$126,475 ◆ Sanitary Sewer Lateral Assistance in Farmington Township—\$40,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Water tank in Rimersburg/East Brady—\$140,000 ◆ Water treatment tank in West Freedom (Perry Township)—\$27,000 ◆ Water line replacement in Shippenville—\$51,000 ◆ Sewage system for St. Petersburg—\$35,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Water tap-in fees for Farmington Township—\$26,000 ◆ Sewer line replacement in Foxburg—\$57,100 ◆ Sewer line replacement in Rimersburg—\$51,850 ◆ Sludge drying beds in Shippenville—\$68,000

In some communities, there appears to be a disconnect between maintenance needs and long-term system needs. Some communities that did not return surveys or did not identify

problems in their survey later applied for significant funds for capital projects, very soon after the survey was distributed.

A second trend had been that of privatization of water resources and greater consolidation of water systems. At the beginning of this planning project, the Strattanville water system was sold to the Pennsylvania-American Water Company. At the time of this writing, Pennsylvania-American Water is negotiating, or has purchased systems in Sligo and Shipperville, and is preparing for extensions in Limestone and Farmington Townships. This will place a significant portion of Clarion County into a single centralized, privately owned water system, which has the rights to withdraw surface water from the Clarion River. Privatization raises issues of local control in making infrastructure decisions. A private company, which is owned by a European corporation, is, by its nature, several times removed from the future development needs of Clarion County. There is also the issue of placing public funds into systems that are later sold by the public entity to a private enterprise.

Key Points

In conclusion, there are several discernable trends in the County's water and sewer systems. First, there are a number of areas which lack public sewer and water and which need such facilities to either protect the health and safety of existing development or to support new growth and development. The second is that there is a plethora of small systems which frequently need capital support, sometimes for routine maintenance, and which are sometimes not looking toward long-term needs or projects. Some of these systems give up the ghost as public systems and sell to private utility companies. Finally, needs for capital improvements exceed available funding.

While water and sewer was a focus of this plan, there are other community facilities and needs. Developed and organized recreation has been identified by some citizens as a community need. Also at a meeting of school district officials, overall concerns about future growth and development were expressed as they relate to the eroding tax base and financial sustainability of school districts.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Early in the planning process the local leaders identified water and sewer as the most important community facilities for the County's future. The Planning Commission's response centers on trying to develop a rational way to prioritize the need for water and sewer infrastructure when there is more need than available funds. From a policy standpoint, the County has identified both topical priorities and geographical priorities. The County will respond to any request for infrastructure assistance based upon a three-tier system, as defined below:

County Response #1: These projects fulfill a County Comprehensive Plan geographic or topical priority. Where possible, the County will support these technically and financially, based upon available resources.

County Response #2: These are projects that the County will support technically (as resources are available), but not financially until Response #1 projects are realized.

County Response #3: These are projects that the County has no interest in, or which do not meet the priorities of the Comprehensive Plan. Generally, the County response shall be “no comment,” though in extreme instances, where a project is actually contrary to the Plan, a cautionary comment may be issued.

With these responses in mind, the following are the County’s topical priorities:

Priority One: Extend public water or sewer service areas to places with preexisting dense development, and which have failed on-lot sewer systems or insufficient quality or quantity of well water. Where feasible, the preferred course would be to provide independent interconnection to existing systems, but small self-contained alternative systems are strongly endorsed as well.

Priority Two: Extend full public water and sewer to those areas of the County identified in the Comprehensive Plan as most likely to be developed by job-creating entities.

Priority Three: Support upgrades of public systems, which would build long-term capacity (both in terms of municipal technical and actual system capacity); create greater cooperation among small systems; increase the likelihood of continued local ownership and management of the system; and (broaden water source) sewage treatment options. Broadening of water sources is an especially important County priority due to recent trends of greater centralization and dependence on surface water withdrawal from the Clarion River. Over-dependence on a single-surface water source raises both emergency management concerns and long-term water supply issues. This over-dependence should be avoided.

Priority Four: Provide assistance to older systems with maintenance or rehabilitation needs where it is not contrary to other priorities, and where the local systems have a long-term plan for improvement and continual public ownership.

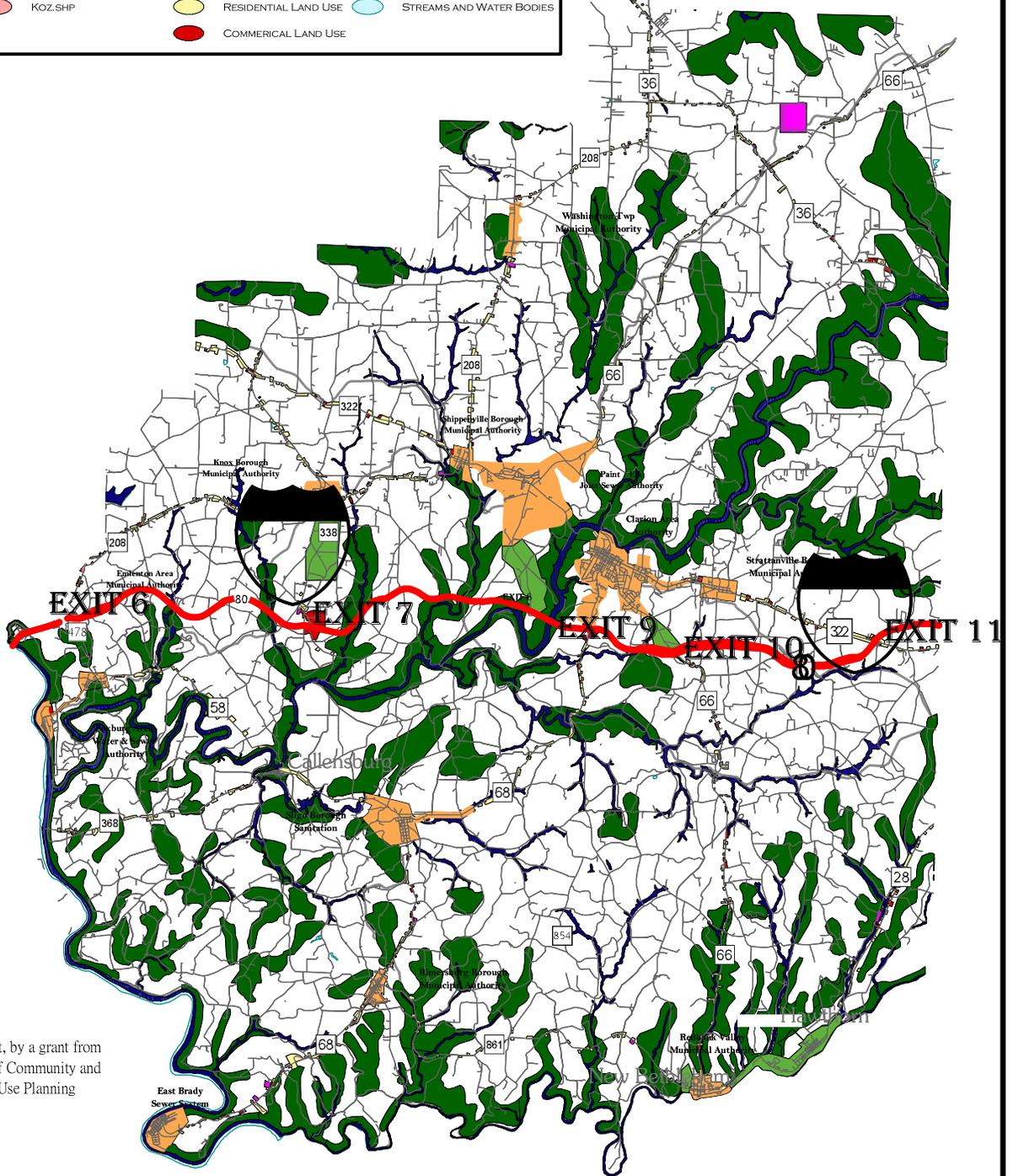
Geographic priorities are shown on the two attached maps, entitled *Future Sewer Service Priorities* and *Future Public Water Supply Plan*.

The County will assist municipalities in fulfilling its priorities by utilizing CDBG funding (as available) and preparing other grants on behalf of municipalities or municipal authorities as staff capacity permits. Overall, the County will also attempt to provide assistance that is equally available to all municipalities or municipal authorities.

Clarion County formed an Intergovernmental Cooperation Steering Committee to examine the issue of increasing capacity of small local units of government in the County. As local government issues become more complex, greater capacity is needed. This does not mean that a township or borough must give up its local autonomy, or merge with its neighbor. It does mean that higher levels of sophistication and wider utilization of resources are going to be necessary in the future. The County will continue to provide every means of assistance possible to communities engaged in inter-municipal cooperation in the area of community facilities. The County will continue to find examples of successful intergovernmental endeavors and share these locally.

CLARION COUNTY COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN FUTURE SEWER PRIORITIES

SEWER CONSIDERATIONS			
	INTERSTATE 80		FUTURE SEWER PRIORITIES
	MIXED LAND USE		SLOPES 30% AND GREATER
	ROADS		SEWER SERVICE AREAS
	HIGHWAYS		INDUSTRIAL LAND USE
	RAILROAD		RESIDENTIAL LAND USE
			STREAMS AND WATER BODIES
			COMMERCIAL LAND USE
			FLOOD PLAINS

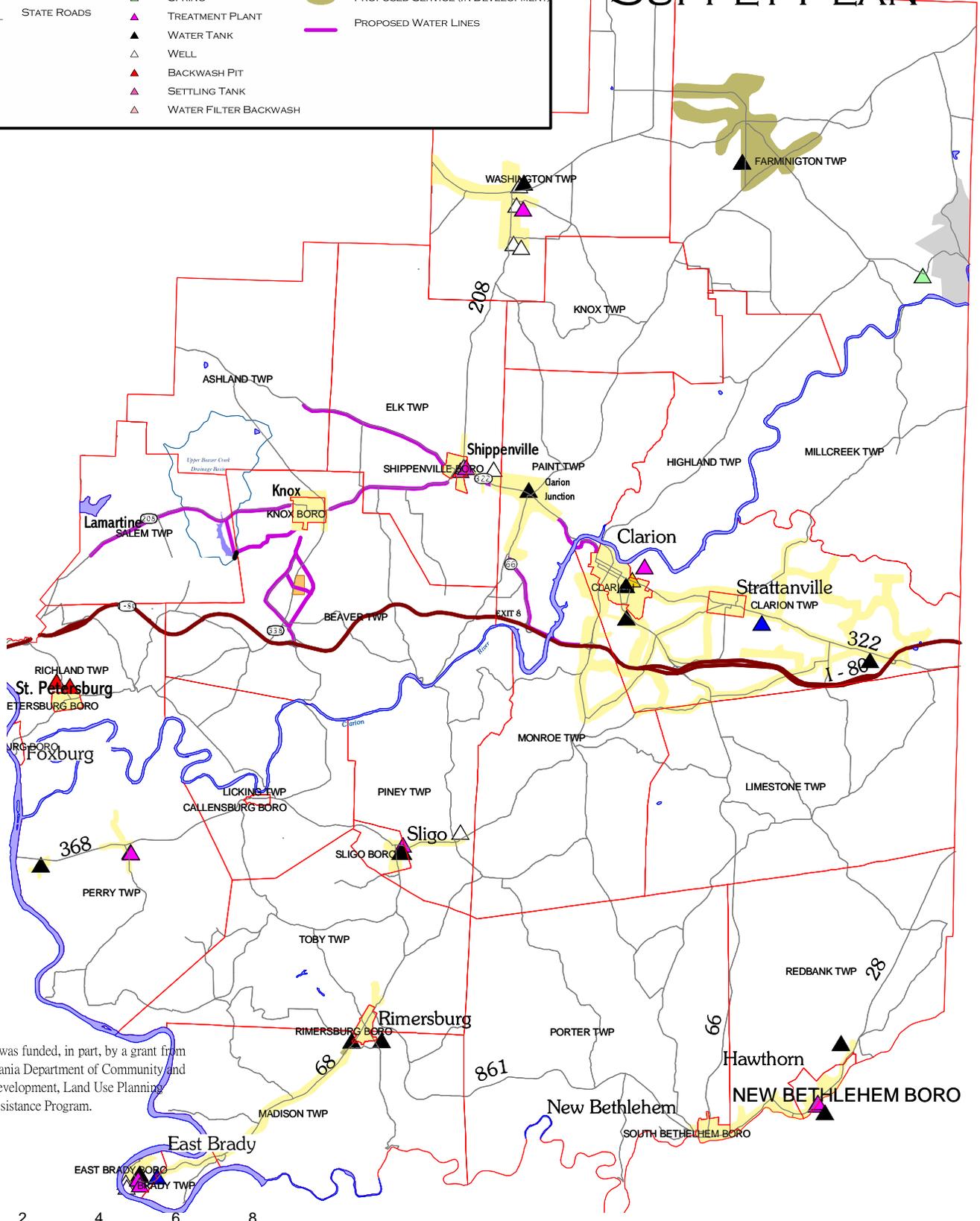


This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.



CLARION COUNTY PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY PLAN

WATER SERVICE		
	COUNTY BOUNDARY	
	MUNICIPALITIES	
	INTERSTATE 80	
	STATE ROADS	
	BOOSTER STATION	
	OPERATIONS CENTER	
	SPRING	
	TREATMENT PLANT	
	WATER TANK	
	WELL	
	BACKWASH PIT	
	SETTLING TANK	
	WATER FILTER BACKWASH	



This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.



Other Community Facility Policies: Community water supply and sewage collection and treatment technology have allowed greater accumulations of people to live together in a safe and decent environment. Only through central technology could large cities be safe and sanitary. A look at history shows that cities without this infrastructure were breeding grounds of many water-borne diseases. The development of water and sewer technology is one of the major factors that caused the rise of cities in 19th century America. The residents of these cities frequently came from rural areas, and the demographic decline of many rural areas in the nation can be dated from this time. In recent years, the development of new communications technologies has the potential to allow the opposite, de-centralization of economic activity. Ultimately, this may be the first time since before the Great Depression where there is real opportunity for a rural economic renaissance. If technology such as the Internet allows economic activity anywhere, people will be free to choose where the quality of life suits them. The key in making this choice will be in part whether the necessary technology is in place to allow the decentralized economic activity to occur.

There is a very real concern that rural areas will be left behind during the latest technology revolution. Information and knowledge seems to have a real economic value. Within the context of rural western Pennsylvania, communities with a college or university seem to be relative islands of economic prosperity, even during times of recession. It may not be coincidental that universities have been the leaders in adoption of new technologies. In rural Pennsylvania, the counties with the greatest potential are those with colleges and universities, and the benefit seems to be linked to the ratio of the university's size to the rest of the community.

How can towns without a college or university tie in to this activity? One way is to ensure that the technology necessary for the best access to the Internet and the telecommunication web is available locally. At present, The Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission is undertaking a Broadband Action Plan. Clarion County must take a lead in the implementation of any such plan. Consideration may be given to alternative means to achieve technological parity with more urban areas. Consideration may also be given to formation of cooperatives (as those which extended telephone and electric service to rural areas in the early years of the 20th century) or the direct municipal provision of services. Pennsylvania municipalities, such as New Wilmington and Kutztown, provide cable and Internet services directly to their citizens. In New Wilmington's case, the fees from services avoid any property tax. The bottom line is that Clarion County must help itself. The presence of Clarion University may be a real advantage in rural technology transfer. The related issue to this is the role it will play in workforce development. While young people are an export commodity, the expansion of decentralized job and business opportunities may make the choice of staying in Clarion County after college a little easier. Just as roads created job and business opportunities for the mobile home construction cluster, adequate technology can create jobs for everyone from database consultants to electronic merchants (150,000 people earn a full-time living from selling on E-bay!). One significant threat to this may be changes in state law, which would restrict who can provide technology infrastructure.

Recreation: A majority of citizens have stated that Clarion County needs more community and local recreation facilities, such as ball fields, gyms, libraries and community centers. The County is rich in open space recreation (fishing, camping, hunting, etc.) but, admittedly, impoverished in terms of developed recreation (parks, ball fields, and playgrounds). Developed recreation may mean a significant difference in whether some families with children will choose to locate or remain within the County. One key facility is the Clarion

County Park. In the absence of township or borough facilities, the County Park may be the principal access to developed recreation for many County residents. Priority should be given to continued expansion of County Park facilities.

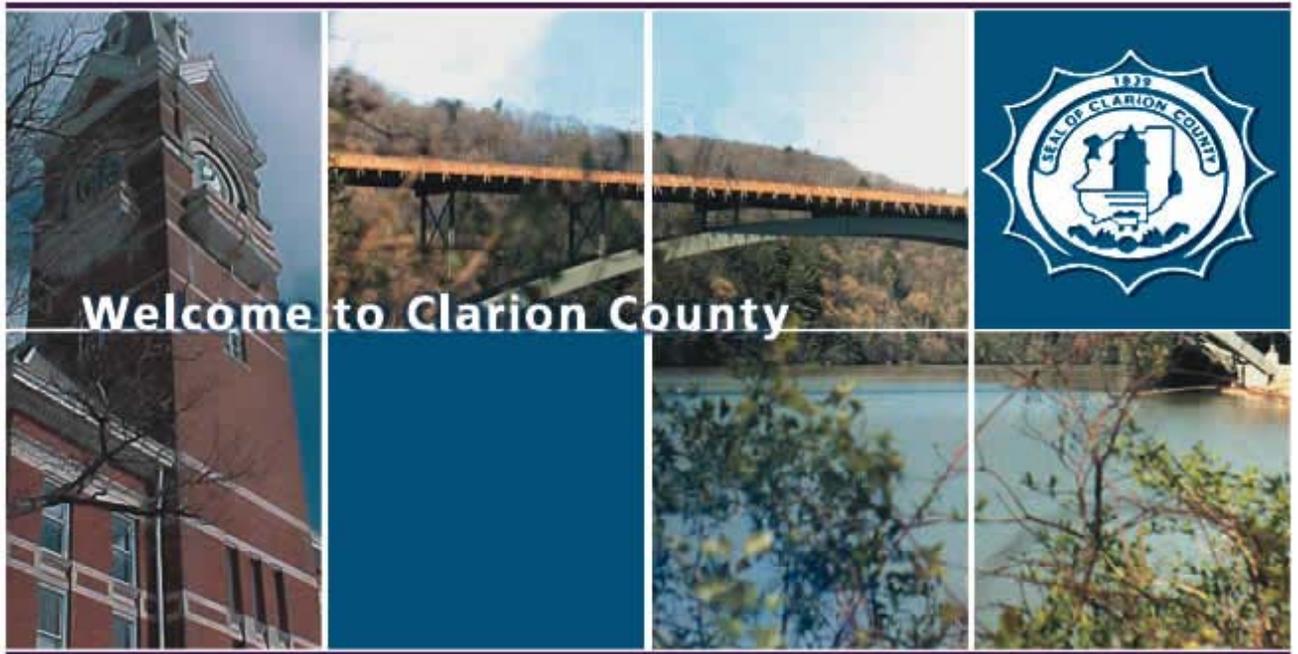
If the County Park is anticipated to remain the principal form of developed recreation for many County residents, consideration should be given to the preparation of a Clarion County Park Recreation and Open Space Plan. This will assist in funding for both the County Park facility and local parks under the plan's omnibus. Also, if adopted, authority would then be given under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to level per-lot impact fees upon subdivisions, for improvement to the park. In the case of Clarion County, a relatively modest impact fee could produce a major difference in paying for facilities.

As noted during Phase II of the planning process, some boroughs and townships do maintain local recreation facilities. The question is how can these be funded in an environment where there are so many water and sewer needs? There are three potential strategies recommended to improve recreation opportunities in the County. One is to integrate these recreation needs into the overall neighborhood revitalization approach described in the Housing Plan. While a low-moderate income neighborhood is being targeted for housing, street, and utility line assistance, small neighborhood parks could also be developed. Another strategy is to maximize Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) funding to Clarion County communities. The precursor for this is the Countywide Park Recreation and Open Space Plan. This process could be funded by DCNR and could integrate the third approach—maximizing the availability and use of existing facilities, such as the County Park and school district facilities.

School districts represent the final area of concern. With population and development shifts in the County, some school districts may be in a situation where they will experience both declining enrollment and a deteriorating tax base. The County may be able to support more intergovernmental cooperation in this area, to aid in resource sharing. Land-use policies, however, must also examine the relationship between future development and the tax revenues generated from development. According to numerous Pennsylvania and national studies, various forms of new development will have divergent effects upon the three taxing bodies (county, township, and school district).

Generally, new, single-family detached residences require as much services from the local governments as they generate in new tax revenue (this is primarily due to the numbers of children who are sent to public schools). Because of higher densities, and lower assessed values per unit, mobile home parks and multi-family housing can require greater levels of public service than the tax revenues produced. Industrial and commercial developments can enhance revenue surpluses, particularly if they do not require local police services. Finally, privately owned open land (farms and forests) while not producing much total revenue, normally generate surpluses in local government coffers because they require almost no public services.

Throughout Clarion County, concentrations of commercial/industrial development concentrate tax revenues in only a few municipalities, and there is also a trend of greater concentration of non-taxable public lands in fewer sections of the County. Townships and boroughs can sometimes manage reduced revenue by decreasing services. This is much more difficult for a school district because of the numerous mandates of services that must be provided. County land-use policies should monitor land use by school district as well as by municipality to prevent an imbalance that could create economically unsustainable situations.



Conservation of Natural Resources and Preservation of Historic Resources Plan

A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources to the extent not preempted by federal or state law. This clause includes, but is not limited to, wetlands and aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, floodplains, unique natural areas and historic sites.

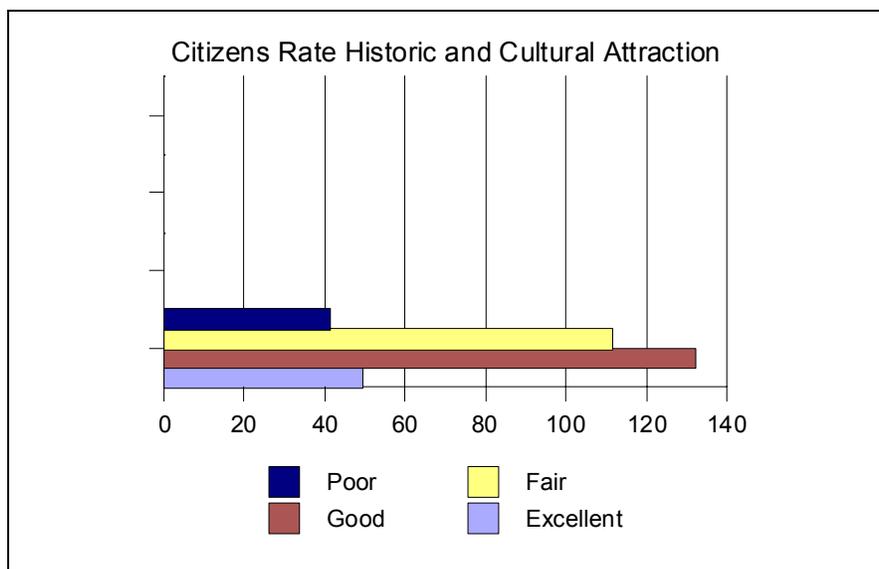
CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES PLAN

Why plan for the protection and wise use of natural resources and historic sites and buildings? First, these are things that make Clarion County unique. America is a free society where people may live anywhere they choose. Some make their choice of a home based on economic opportunity. For others, proximity to family influences their choice. The third major factor is often the natural and built environment that surrounds them. Many growing communities have seen that individuals and businesses have chosen to invest there because it is a beautiful, clean place.

Good land-use planning is always a balancing act to provide for all human needs. At the most basic level, these are clean air and water. But we are tied to the natural world in many other ways, as well. Regardless of advances in science and technology, we still require soil to grow food; trees to make everything from homes to the paper this Plan is written on; minerals for a variety of uses; and, for many people, especially those who enjoy the natural world, the presence of wild plants and animals for spiritual refreshment. The presence of historic resources from our past are also essential to remind us that other humans were here before us, as other humans will be here after us. This section will examine the natural and historic resources of Clarion County from the vantage of meeting a variety of needs.

What Citizens and Local Leaders Said About Conservation and Preservation Issues

Citizens rated two environmental issues as the most severe problems, among all problems the County is facing. The first such problem was stream pollution and the second was the potential for toxic pollutants. The second priority was repeated as the third priority identified at the citizens/local leaders' conference.



Citizens did not rate historic or cultural opportunities as one of the best aspects of the County.

Scenic beauty was the highest rated aspect of the community. Thus, there is something of a paradox present. Citizens overwhelmingly believe Clarion County is a beautiful place to live. They believe, however, that there are few things related to the environment in terms of activities for them to do. Many also see threats to the environment.

What Trends Say About Conservation and Preservation Issues

Trends show a strong relationship between the County's history and the natural environment well into pre-history. The navigable rivers brought native peoples who have left the archeological resources such as the Fishbasket site and the petroglyphs (rock pictures) at Parker's Landing. The economy of the County grew through a timber boom, an iron smelting boom, an oil-drilling boom, and a coal boom. One citizen described the dilemma of this well. He stated,

"I would like to add that I feel any area of this Plan should be very well thought out before implementation. Too much is at stake and too many people could be affected. There will always be conflicts and differences of opinion and a careful balance will be needed. For example, take the local coal industry. When it was going strong, the area definitely benefited economically. People could support their families and this, in turn, benefited various businesses and merchants. However, the earth was badly scarred and many of our streams and water supplies are still polluted to this day. Were the tradeoffs worth it? Some will say yes, some will say no. Perhaps, at this time, it was worth it. But, with the industry's demise, we are still paying for the prosperity we once enjoyed. Perhaps back in those days, we should have tried harder to strike the needed balance. There will always be differences of opinion about policy matters."

The history of the County clearly shows that a balance in policy areas is crucial.

Perhaps the greatest trend that has affected planning at the county level in Pennsylvania has been the recent changes to the Pennsylvania MPC. Local governments must now identify natural resources and provide plans for their wise use, as well as interface appropriately with Commonwealth law. Plans must now contain statements *that mineral extraction may affect water sources but still be governed by other statutes and also that commercial agricultural production may impact water sources*. Furthermore, plans must be consistent and may not exceed a number of state environmental and resource laws. The Code now references nine of these environmental laws, which any comprehensive plan must be consistent with and may not exceed:

1. Agricultural Operations—Protection from Suits (1982 P.L. H 54 No. 133)
2. Nutrient Management Act (1993 P.L. 12 No. 6)
3. Clean Streams Act (1937 P.L. 1987 No. 394)
4. Oil and Gas Act (1984 P.L. 1140 No. 223)
5. Agricultural Area Security Law (1981 P.L. 128 No. 43)

6. Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act (1945 P.L. 1198 No. 418)
7. Noncoal Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act (1984 P.L. 1093, No. 219)
8. Coal Refuse Disposal Control Act (1968 P.L. 1040 No. 318)
9. Bituminous Mine Subsidence and Land Conservation Act (1966 P.L. 31, No. 1)

POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the best ways to understand existing resources is through mapping. The attached maps illustrate select areas of environmental concern throughout the County. What are the realistic threats to these resources? They seem to vary with the resource.

Archeological Resources

Generally, archeological resources will not be threatened if the sites remain undisturbed. Sites could be disturbed through development practices or mining. The most probable location of prehistoric archeological sites is at the confluence of streams, near wetland areas, or on floodplains. Sites may also be found where there might be natural caves or rock shelters on steep slopes.

Clarion County may be unusual in the respect that the most likely areas to be developed are largely upland areas away from the previously mentioned environmental conditions. This is not to say there are not archeological sites in upland areas. It is simply a little more difficult to predict the presence of prehistoric archeological sites by a cursory examination of the environment.

Historic-period archeological sites may be a different matter. Structures probably exist from the iron production era, lumber boom, oil boom, and coal boom. Frankly, little is known about these resources. The Clarion County Historical Society has made some effort to catalogue iron furnaces, and one furnace site is under County ownership, but almost nothing is known about oil sites, former boom towns like Turkey City, and coal mines or tipples which may be scattered throughout the County. The major threat to the majority of these is not development, but the ravages of time.

As discussed in the Background Report, many historic homes have been documented in the County, whereas historic commercial buildings and other non-residential structures have not. Whether documented or not, the major local threat to these is the owner's inability to maintain them because of a lack of funding. There are few identified historic structures in major growth corridors.

Prime Farmland and Agricultural Soil Resources

As detailed in the Background Report, Clarion County has lost significant numbers of farms and acres of farmland since the early 1960s. Most of this was not due to development, but simply the landowner stopped farming. Some of the farmland has now reverted to forest. Some farmland may have been acquired by public agencies as the Pennsylvania State Game Commission for use as state game lands. Some of the development at the PA Route 68 exit of I-80 was formerly farmland, but this does not account for the large losses of acreage. Overall,

the most significant threat to prime farmland in Clarion County is agricultural economics. See the section on economic development for a more thorough discussion.

Mineral Resources

Mineral resources have long played an important role in the County's history. Many of the best historic homes in the County's boroughs were built with coal or oil receipts. On the other side, as the citizens commented at the beginning of this chapter, local citizens are still paying for that former prosperity with poor quality drinking water and acid mine drainage problems. Many of these problems were created prior to the development of Commonwealth laws to regulate the practices of the mining industry. An extreme example of changing attitudes about mining is that backfilling of open pit mines was discouraged or forbidden during World War II (to both allow future access if lower seams were to be mined, and prevent the waste of fuel). Currently, Pennsylvania has stricter laws regulating coal mining than other states, such as Kentucky or West Virginia. There are also situations where re-mining older surface mines can have both environmental and economic advantages.

Forest Resources

The Pennsylvania State University has estimated the value of all the standing timber in Clarion County at over \$181 million. This is twice the amount of the annual combined payroll of every manufacturing business in the County. It is over twice the \$74 million currently deposited in every branch of Farmer's National Bank in the County. In a typical year, \$3.6 million of timber is sold in the woods (subsequent processing generated another \$7 million or so in activity locally), with 80% of harvested acres coming from private forest, and the balance split between public lands and private industrial forest reserves.

Proportionally, private ownership of forestland in the County is slightly higher than statewide percentages. Thus, the future of the vast majority of the County's timber resources is in private hands. The quality of management of these resources ranges from exemplary (one of the nation's finest tree farms—The George Freeman Tree Farm—is in Clarion County) to abysmal. Where poor timber cutting and management practices occur, the landowner is often victimized both from an economic and a conservation vantage.

Whether private forests are being managed well, over-harvested, or not harvested at all (which can be a concern as well) relates directly to the knowledge of the property owner. Owners without knowledge about the economic or ecological value of their timber are more likely to accept poor forestry. The public, even in rural Clarion County, also takes a dim view of timber harvesting in general.

CLARION COUNTY MINERAL RESOURCES

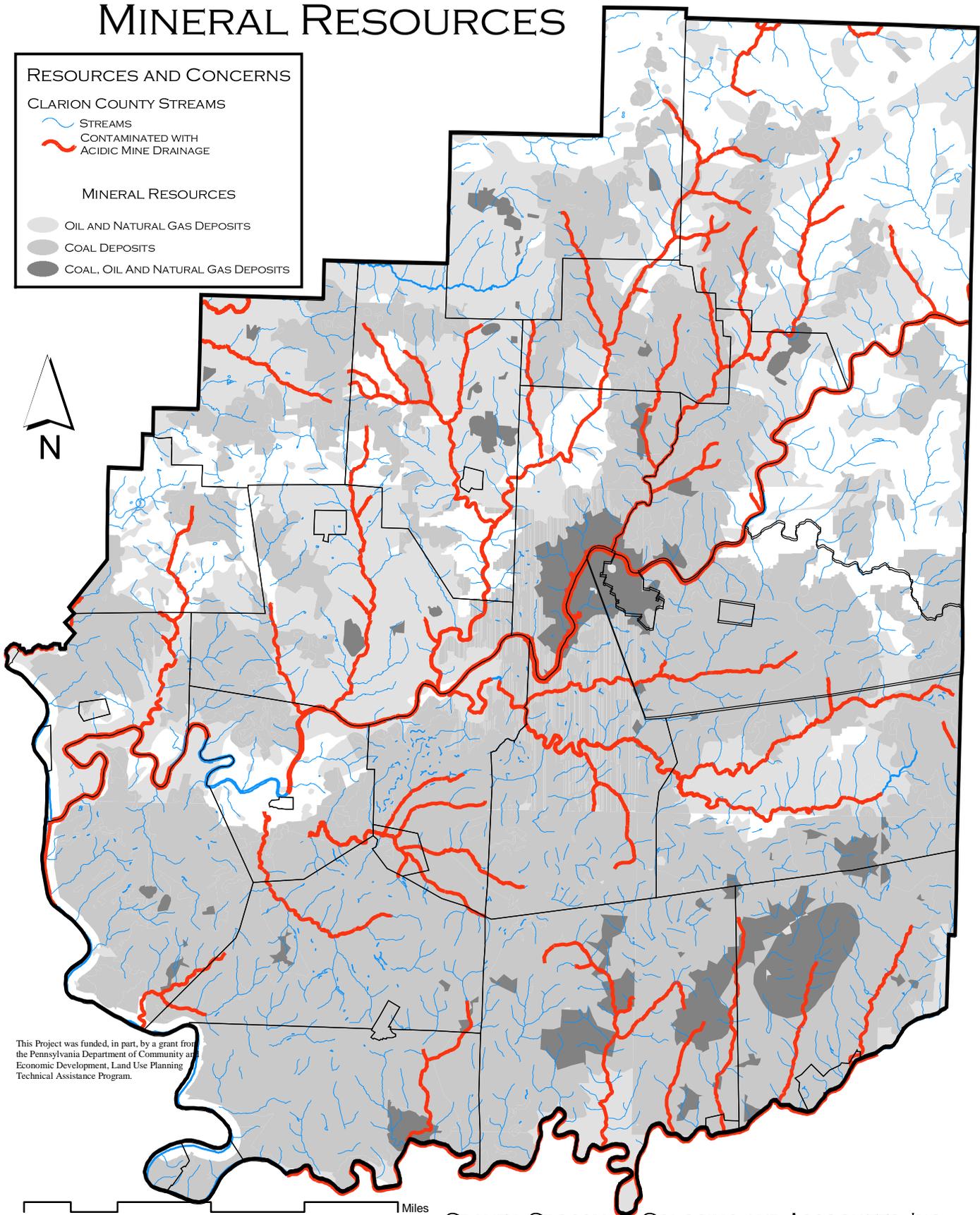
RESOURCES AND CONCERNS

CLARION COUNTY STREAMS

- STREAMS
- CONTAMINATED WITH ACIDIC MINE DRAINAGE

MINERAL RESOURCES

- OIL AND NATURAL GAS DEPOSITS
- COAL DEPOSITS
- COAL, OIL AND NATURAL GAS DEPOSITS



This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.



CLARION COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

**DEVELOPMENT
CONSIDERATIONS**

RIPARIAN CONSTRAINTS

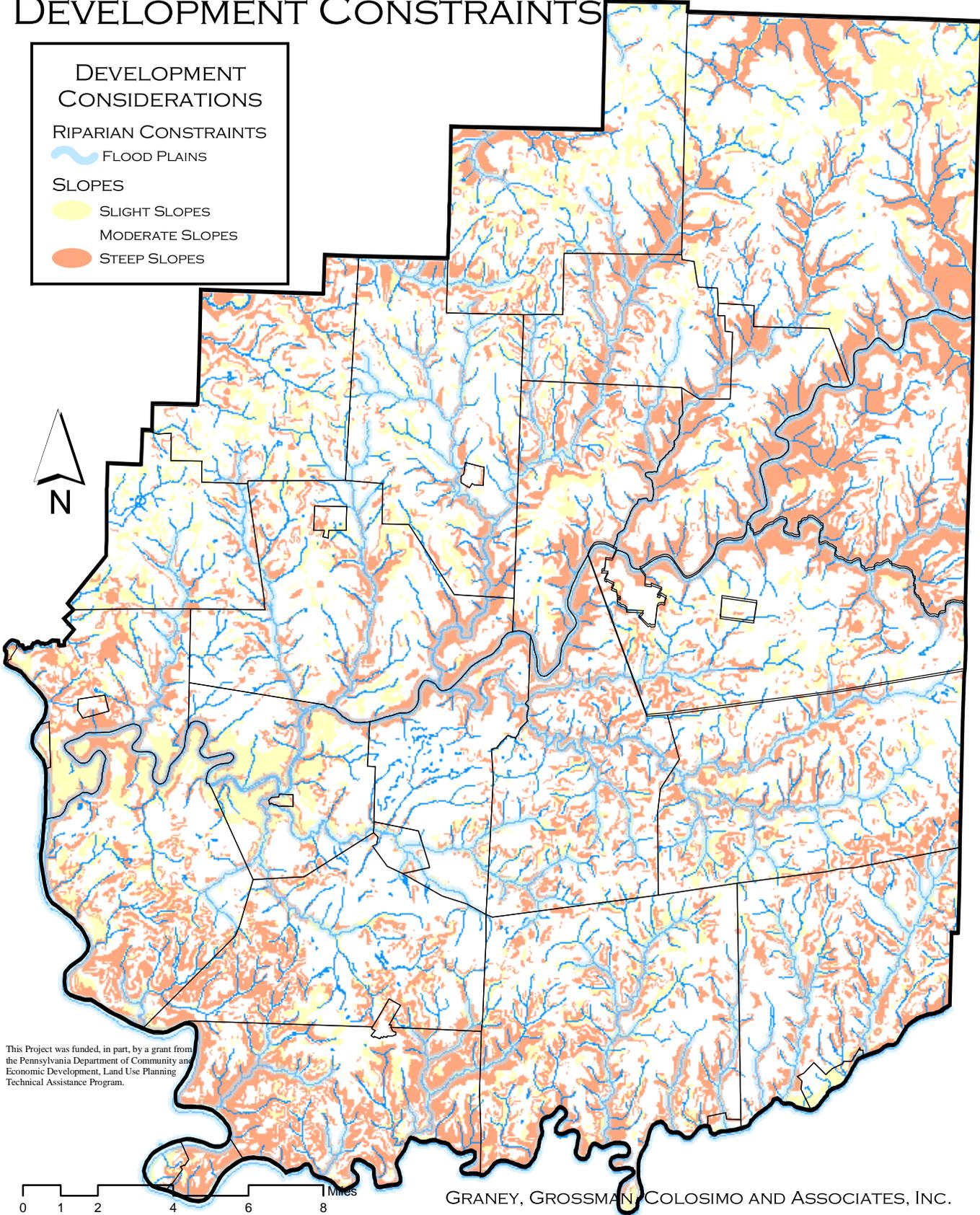
 FLOOD PLAINS

SLOPES

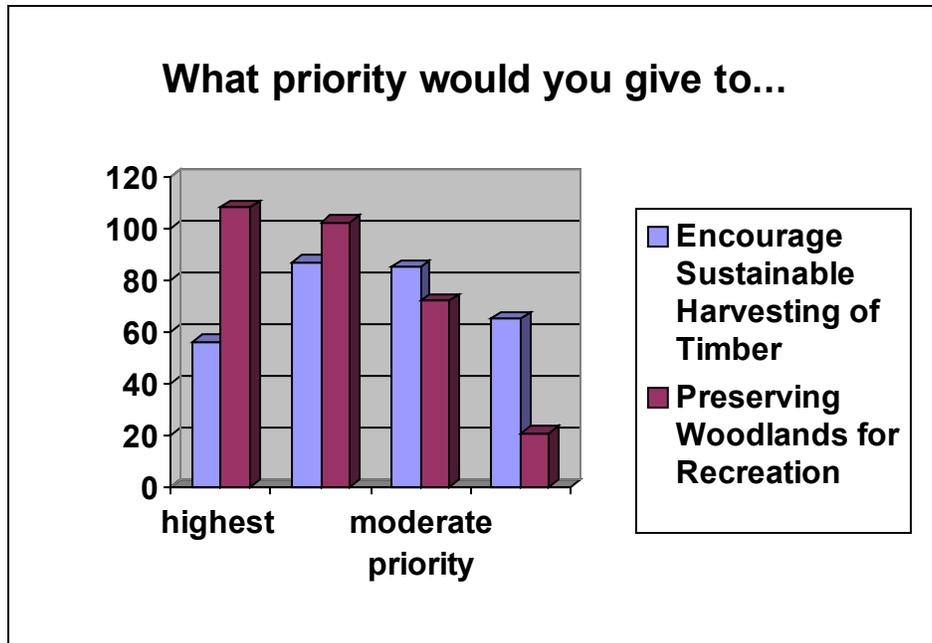
 SLIGHT SLOPES

 MODERATE SLOPES

 STEEP SLOPES



This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program.



Many citizens ranked the recreation/open space value of woodlands much higher than their production capacity. Thus, one of the greatest threats to this significant land use in Clarion County may be lack of knowledge about the resource. The County must simultaneously work to educate citizens about the ecological value of scientific timber management and work to show forestland owners the economic advantages of scientific forestry as opposed to harvesting practices based only on economics.

Water Resources

Clarion County is named for the river that flows diagonally through the heart of the County. Water resources are important in so many physical, biological, and psychological ways it is hard to over-estimate the importance of the resource. Water resource planning is also a component of the Community Facilities Plan, but if natural surface water supplies (streams and rivers) are compromised, they will affect drinking water.

Surface activities that may impact the quality and quantity of water supplies include sewage, stormwater runoff, mine discharges, and agricultural runoff (including manure and agrochemicals). In Pennsylvania, a county comprehensive plan must contain a statement that “Lawful activities such as the extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities... Commercial agriculture production impact water supply sources.”

In a way, the Code reminds constituent municipalities that Pennsylvania has extensive regulations to minimize or prevent the impact of certain land uses on water.

In Clarion County, it is unlikely that major commercial agriculture would affect water resources at the present. Much of the contamination of water resources by mineral extraction (primarily acid mine drainage) happened before regulations were in place to prevent it. Gas and oil drilling could impact water resources, and some communities have responded by

requiring some planning standards prior to drilling. One potential use of old gas wells is to use them as injection wells for waste oil disposal. Realistically, however, the largest threats to water resources in Clarion County would be acid mine drainage from abandoned mines, sewage runoff, and possibly isolated cases of stormwater contamination.

TOOLS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

What tools are available to counter threats to natural resources? Communities have several choices. They can acquire the threatened resource. They can utilize regulation to prevent misuse of the resource, they can educate citizens to ensure responsible stewardship, or they can take direct action with their time and money to improve stewardship. One threat to stream and river resources is the simple potential for overuse or over-development. This was dealt with in the Land Use Plan section by the identification of river valleys as “Key Conservation Areas.” In particular, the County desires continual wise, measured use for the river it is named after.

In 1999, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania passed Act 68, the “Growing Greener” Program. This act funds a variety of on-the-ground conservation initiatives; plugging of abandoned gas wells, abatement of acid mine drainage, sound land-use planning, re-mining, followed by full restoration and sustainable forestry. Among the stipulations of the act are that counties with a landfill may use local landfill closure accounts for any purpose of the act, and have the Commonwealth’s assurance that its own closure funds are available. At present, the County has approximately \$380,000 in such funds. Neighboring Butler County has utilized its funds for a mini-grant program. While its closure funds were more significant, the County may investigate a similar initiative.

Other funding options may be available. The DCNR has funded greenway studies to determine ways to link public and private green space through natural corridors. The Department has also funded natural diversity inventories, frequently as a necessary pre-cursor to further department funding. Such studies may need to be completed in the future, and the County may wish to investigate the economy of scale available by completing them in conjunction with a neighboring county.

Clarion County also has the potential to be a place where the battles between the environment and the economy are ended in favor of a clean environment as well as a sound economy.

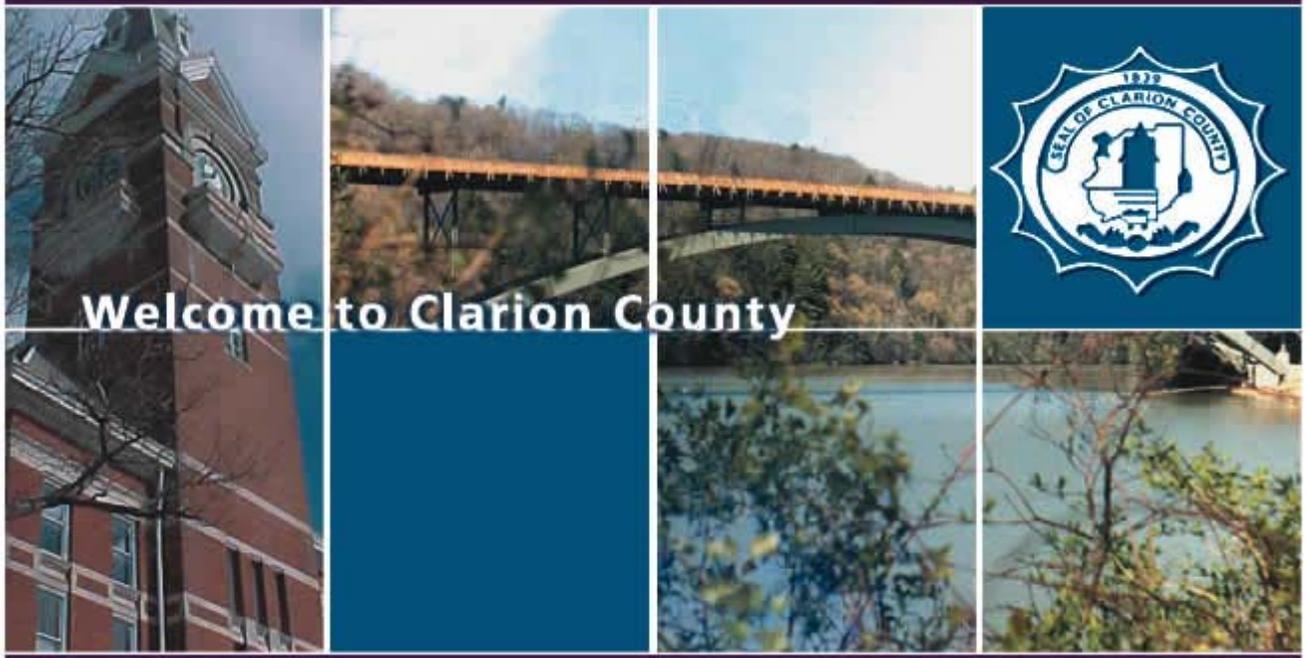
For example, at the present, without the extremes of either a coal boom or a complete collapse of the market, there may be a chance for both mining and other community interests to work together in creating a new mining legacy. The goal should be the most profitable and environmentally low-impact mining in the United States. Such a goal will not be achieved by operators alone, or by DEP regulations. It will move beyond compliance into voluntary agreements. A pilot initiative will need to be sponsored, perhaps leading to the idea of “green” coal (coal extracted in such a way as to be environmentally neutral or even beneficial).

One of the best ways to preserve land or conserve its resources is to own it, and this has been a large part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s strategy. However, as mentioned in the Community Development Goals and Objectives, the problems this creates with local tax base are severely detrimental to small municipalities within the County. The County believes that

the affected township and school district governments must be a part of the decision-making process about expansion of any state-owned public lands within Clarion County. The County planning process is concerned about the use of land, and private ownership for hunting, forestry, or low-intensity development is not incompatible with public conservation needs. State and statewide or regional non-profit entities should examine alternatives to public fee simple ownership, including conservation easements and voluntary purchase of development rights. The policies of these entities should also seek to avoid excessive concentrations of non-taxable holdings within the jurisdiction of any single taxing body.

It must also be noted that environmentally sensitive areas can create hazards for human development. Deep valleys are often a floodplain hazard. Storms have affected power supplies in upland areas. Certain hazards can be avoided by sensitive development practices or the enforcement of municipal ordinances. For example, every flood prone municipality within the County has adopted a floodplain management ordinance. The policy of the County shall be to coordinate administrative activities where proposed development is subject to local floodplain ordinances, and also under the jurisdiction of the Clarion County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. However, certain private activities (such as the building of a single-family dwelling without a subdivision) fall wholly under township or borough jurisdiction.

Finally, the County recognizes that there must be a clear identification of responsibilities and coordination between all parties involved in the important work of conservation. Within the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code is a requirement that state agencies coordinate with county and municipal planning. In the context of Clarion County, this must include coordination between County planning and Commonwealth conservation agencies. To ensure maximum consistency between state agencies, nonprofit conservation groups, and this Plan, all activities related to land management decisions (including, but not limited to, grant applications for purchase of land, inter-agency land transfers, land purchases or sales, or planning proposals) must be submitted to the Clarion County Planning Commission for review.



Welcome to Clarion County

Transportation Plan

A plan for movement of people and goods, which may include expressways, highways, local street systems, parking facilities, pedestrian and bikeway systems, public transit routes, terminals, airfields, port facilities, railroad facilities, and other similar facilities or uses.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

From the earliest times, transportation has been an issue in Clarion County. Native peoples were drawn to the County by the combination of water resources for travel and paths, which had been game trails. Only by using water could the timber resources of the County be exported for sale. Railroads became dominant whenever resources such as coal and oil needed to be exported. Today, the road system is the dominant factor in transportation in the County, though air traffic is economically important and water transport is at least theoretically possible.

What Citizens and Local Leaders Said About Transportation Issues

The presence of the I-80 corridor was identified in two separate town hall meetings as one of the County's greatest assets. In fact, citizens in Clarion County do not believe that access or transportation issues hinder the County. An overwhelming majority of citizens prioritized the maintenance of existing roads over the construction of new ones.

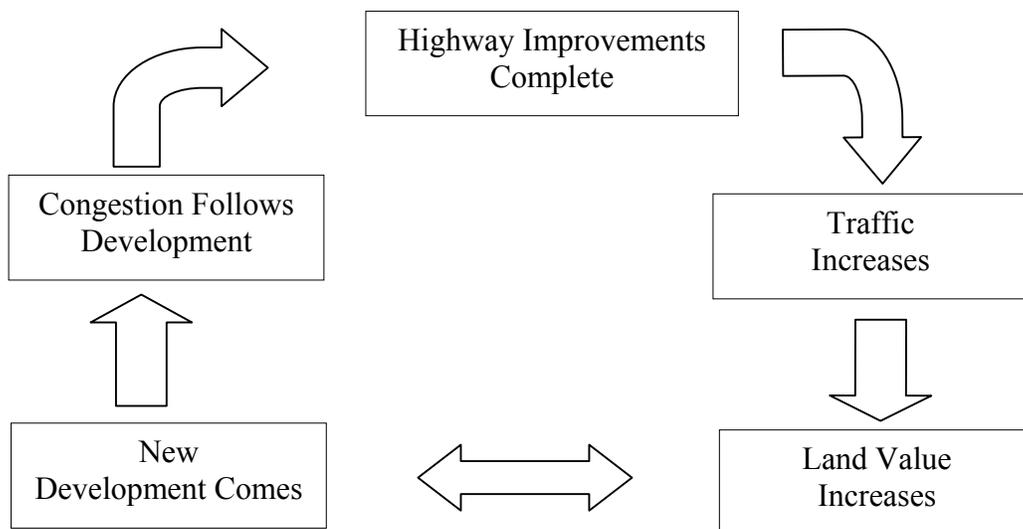
What Trends Say About Transportation Issues

Two trends are evident in examining transportation systems in Clarion County. The first is the influence of Interstate I-80 on nearly every aspect of growth and development in the County. The map in the section on economic development compares commercial and industrial land uses with the location of I-80 and its interchanges. The second related trend is the concentration of greater amounts of vehicular traffic in fewer areas, particularly the roads that serve as collectors of traffic for I-80.

In relationship to land development, it is also evident that auto transport is the dominant mode of transportation in Clarion County. Rail lines are becoming less important. There are, however, other transportation modes that warrant mention, particularly the Clarion County Airport, and pedestrian access.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Across Pennsylvania, the most significant transportation problems over the past decade have been clearly linked to land use. In response to greater congestion, the Commonwealth and communities have responded to traffic congestion by widening roads and increasing capacity. Often, this has resulted in becoming a magnet for most land development and traffic *increases* in response to the improvements in an endless cycle.



Based upon land-use mapping of Clarion County, it is relatively easy to determine where this undesirable trend will occur in the County. Current congestion occurs on PA Route 68 between I-80 and Route 322. Congestion is building at PA 66 from the I-80 Interchange north to the intersection with PA Route 322. Over a longer time, similar trends may happen at the Knox Interchange of I-80.

Route 68 has already become the most stressed road in Clarion County. Over the short term, some physical improvements are slated. Of particular concern is the horizontal and vertical geometry of the roadway near the Clarion Borough line. Now is the time to begin looking past these physical improvements to the time when additional land development will bring more congestion.

One solution is the PennDOT congested corridor analysis. These analyses have been more common in rapidly growing sections of southwestern Pennsylvania, than northwestern Pennsylvania, though analysis has been conducted along Route 257 in the Oil City/Cranberry Township area, and Route 322 in Vernon Township (Crawford County). The key of the congested corridor approach is to project the rate of development and associated traffic and begin planning a punch list of long-term improvements.

Since traffic congestion is a land-use problem, the community can also implement congestion controls through curb-cut management. Curb-cut management is simply controlling the place and manner where new major driveways and streets meet an arterial or collector road. There are three approaches. One is utilization of zoning to create traffic management districts. Another is a stand-alone curb-cut management ordinance. Finally, elements of the subdivision and land development ordinance can be developed to manage new curb cuts on to congested roads.

A typical ordinance will have the following features:

- ◆ A requirement to conduct traffic studies by major land developments or major subdivisions
- ◆ Ingress and egress are limited to the minimum necessary
- ◆ Large traffic generators are required to share curb cuts, where feasible
- ◆ Rights-of-way for future access between large parking lots must be set aside
- ◆ Curb cuts on opposite sides of a road must be set up, so that traffic lights are more feasible
- ◆ Encouraging greater depth of development (as opposed to “strip commercial”) to concentrate traffic at fewer intersections

While PA Route 68 is the immediate need, forward looking communities along affected parts of Routes 66 and 338 may wish to examine this tool. PA Route 66 North of I-80 is a comparatively level and straight road compared to PA Route 68. It has developed into Clarion County’s principal industrial corridor. Industrial job development is a key component of the County’s successful economy-building efforts, and analysis has shown that good sites and space for industrial buildings is at a premium.

The consultant strongly recommends that the County and Paint Township reserve the PA Route 66 corridor for future industrial use.

It is recommended that Clarion County and Paint Township find ways to reserve this corridor for future industrial use, especially if public sewer is extended to the interchange. Unrestrained commercial development could destroy the utility of this corridor for truck traffic by creating congestion. There are two choices for this. One is to set aside corridor frontage through industrial zoning designation. The other is to adopt some form of curb-cut management. Over a longer term, the same approach should be examined in the Route 338-Canoe Ripple Road corridor from Knox to I-80.

Finally, mention must also be made of Route 28 and Route 66 south of I-80. At this time, there is no danger of over-development destroying the capacity of these roads. Both routes, however, are the key means for reaching the southern portions of Clarion County. This area needs a sound transportation network to ensure economic revitalization (if only for residents to safely commute to jobs elsewhere).

Exit 64 (former Exit 10) of Interstate 80 has not seen significant development between the interchange and Clarion Borough. Road geometry and lack of infrastructure would present obstacles to proper development. This road is not a County priority and intense or significant development here should only be pursued with extreme caution.

Another issue that will warrant attention by many of the townships in Clarion County is the problem of new local roads. In the past, many residential subdivisions have been served by private local roads. Inevitably, these create maintenance or access disagreements among the private road users. Reasonable levels of density and reasonable construction standards will enable new public roads to be self-funding from a maintenance standpoint. It is in the interest of Clarion County to limit the number of lots served by private roads. The County will

also work with communities to develop new standards for new public roads within their jurisdiction or to implement County road specifications under the Clarion County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Communities without significant experience in new development may also lack a good local road standard. The County will provide examples and continue to refine them as efficient road building technologies evolve.

A related problem is the number of inadequate existing roads, especially in small rural townships within the County. Some local roads do not have the capacity for even modest rural development. Some are not passable on a year-round basis. To encourage appropriate low intensity and low intensity development in rural areas, as well as providing a very basic level of service to rural residents, the County encourages upgrade of local roads to year-round service where feasible. Continued upgrades to protect water resources from runoff are also encouraged. Where possible, the County will actively support road upgrades through the sharing of ideas, increasing township purchasing power through intergovernmental cooperation, and similar initiatives.

Some attention must also be given to non-highway issues to ensure that all transportation options are not reliant upon a single mode. The Clarion County Airport is one such key facility. In times of war or civil emergency, this airport may be desperately needed. It is also an economic resource in its own right, providing perhaps the fastest movement of people and goods available in the County. In addition to the airport protection zoning ordinance in the Land Use Plan, the County will support runway expansions and physical improvements to the airport.

There is also the oldest form of transportation—walking. Virtually every borough in the County has some sidewalk areas for pedestrian use. Many of these are deteriorated. Where feasible, the County will support restoration efforts. One significant proposed new pedestrian facility is the new North Country Trail. This is to be part of a national trail system through the northern United States and will likely pass through Clarion County. There is the economic potential to bring new visitors to the County. The trail is presently completed through a portion of Butler County. The County supports the trail, and generally supports a route of the trail crossing at Foxburg and leaving the County in the area of Cook Forest.

Finally, there is the key issue of funding transportation improvements. The County participates in the funding process through its relationship with the Northwest Commission, which serves as the County's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is the entity that directly administers PennDOT and certain federal transportation funds. The County's responsibility is to submit and sometimes prioritize projects for funding. Obviously, individual priority projects will change on a frequent basis. However, like the issue of prioritizing community facilities, transportation funding must be prioritized. Generally, the County will prioritize projects based upon the following:

Priority One: Citizens desire to see the bulk of funding directed toward maintenance of existing roads, rather than new roads.

Priority Two: Within the context of Priority One, the principal priority is for projects that will objectively increase vehicular or pedestrian safety in correcting innate design hazards or unsafe facilities due to age or lack of design capacity as compared to current use.

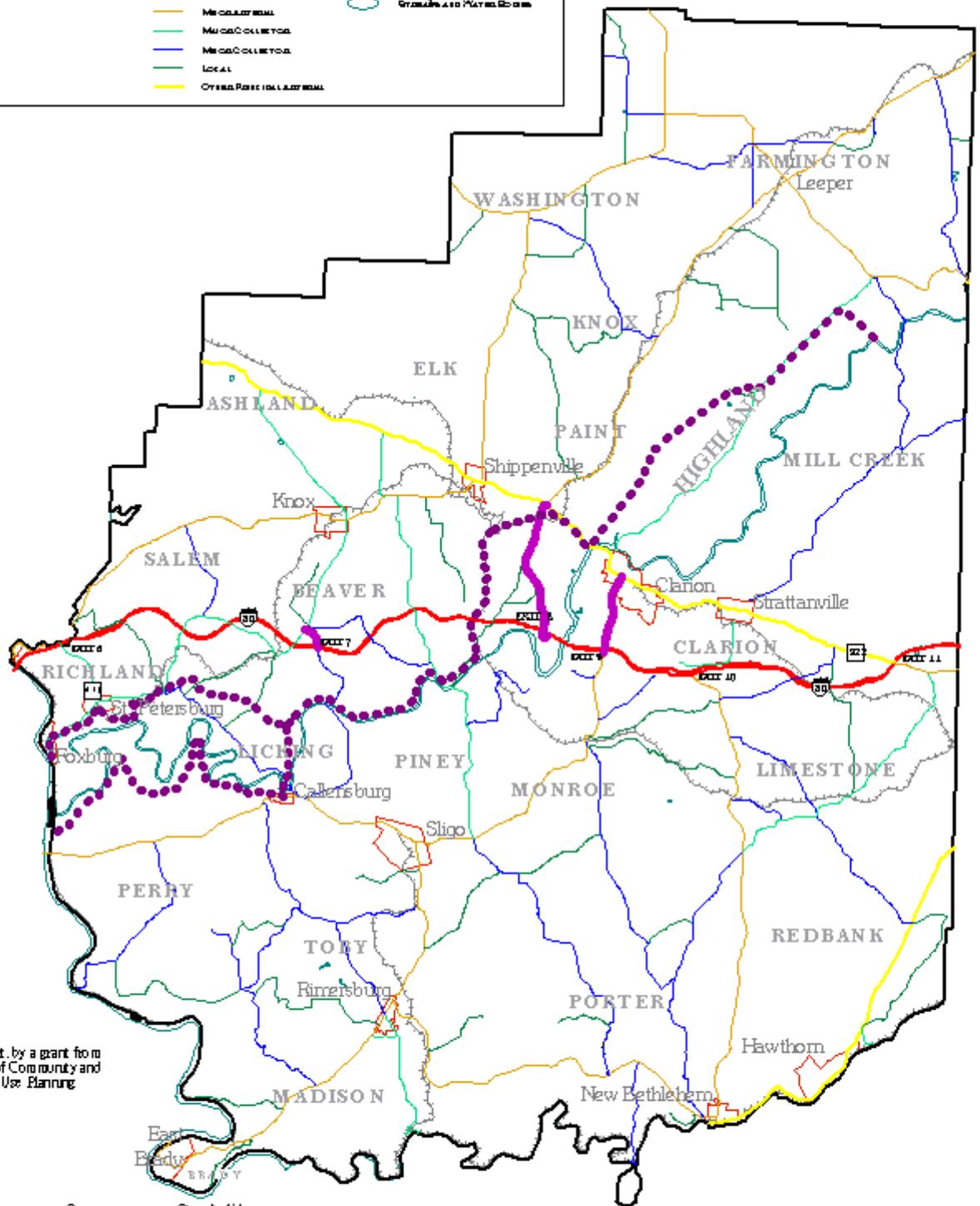
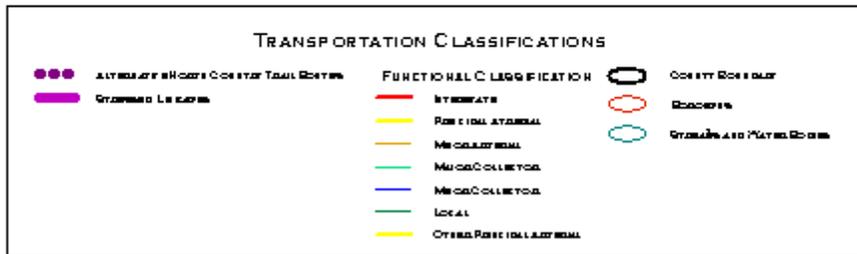
Priority Three: Projects to increase the viability of road, air, or inter-modal networks in identified economic development or economic revitalization priority areas.

Priority Four: Projects that measurably increase local capacity to manage their own municipal transportation facilities.

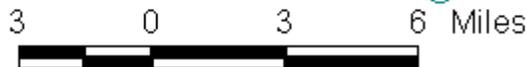
Priority Five: Other projects.

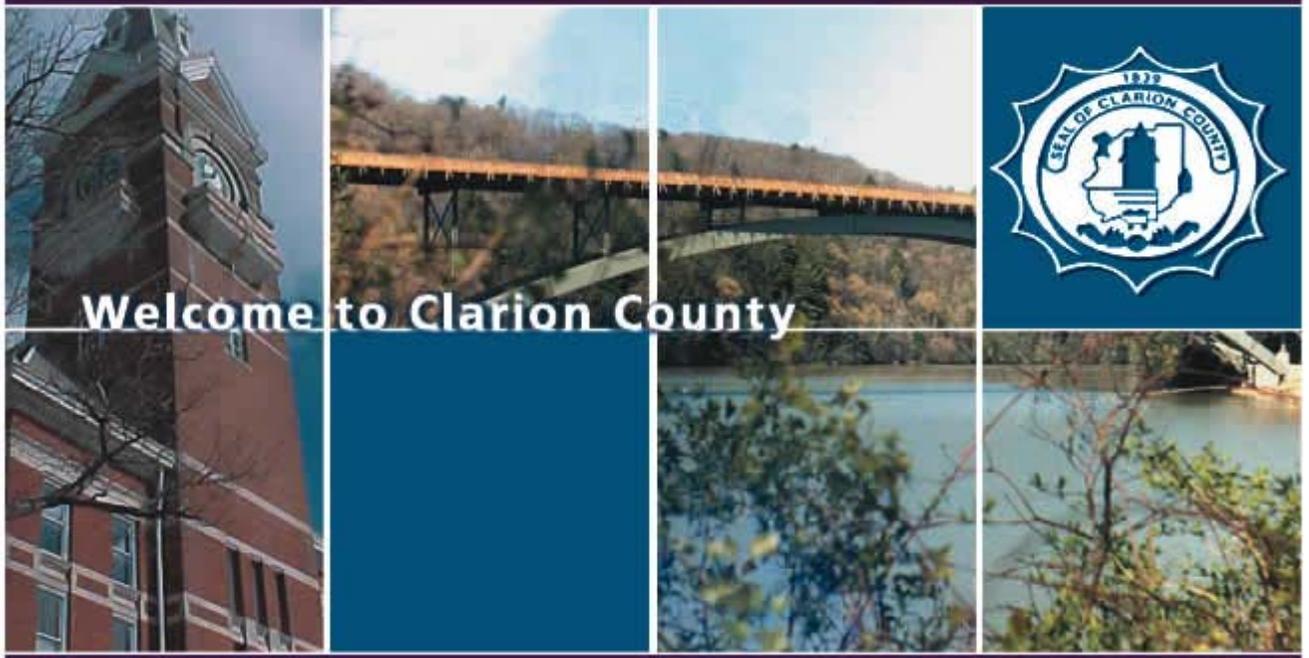
The County Planning Commission will work toward activating the rating system to assist local governments in developing projects to meet these priorities.

CLARION COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLAN ISSUES



This Project was funded, in part, by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Land Use Planning Technical Assistance Program





Interrelationships and Action Plan

A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components, which may include an estimate of the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality ... A discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies, which may include implications for capital improvements programming, new or updated development regulations, and identification of public funds potentially available ... A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses..

INTERRELATIONSHIPS AND ACTION PLAN

The purpose of planning is to effect positive change and, as much as possible, to prevent negative change. The comprehensive plan alone will not do that. Making the plan come true will only happen when local officials use it as a measuring stick in their decision-making processes. The reason that this is a comprehensive plan is that it does not look just at one aspect of the County. The needs of the economy must be balanced against the environment. The needs of citizens to access a good highway system must be balanced against their desire for safe neighborhood streets. The whole planning process is thus a study in interrelationships. The Action Plan accomplishes this by being able to see all various policies and their component actions in a summarized form.

The need to be aware of interrelationships does not stop at the Clarion County line, however. What happens in Clarion County will be influenced by events in Venango, Forest, Jefferson, Armstrong, and Butler Counties. To ensure that some examination of these regional issues is included, a brief examination of neighboring county processes is provided.

Venango County

Venango and Clarion share a border on the eastern side of Clarion County, the Borough of Emlenton straddles both counties, and there are significant economic and regional ties. Venango County has embarked on a comprehensive plan process somewhat contemporary to Clarion's. In discussions with Venango County, several intergovernmental issues emerged.

The shared Route 322 corridor in both counties is especially important with the new Northwest Medical Center being constructed in Venango County by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

- ◆ The importance of interchange development to both counties
- ◆ The opportunities for shared approaches to planning, particularly in the Allegheny River region

Route 322 carries significant traffic and allows residents of eastern Clarion County to reach Venango County relatively easily. At present, the road is adequate to carry anticipated traffic. The future question is the affect the proposed new UPMC Cranberry campus will have on both transportation and community facilities.

According to information presented by UPMC executives to Cranberry Township officials, the new facility will serve the entire region from Jefferson County to Warren, as well as eastern Crawford and Mercer Counties. From a transportation vantage, this would probably mean an increase in patient and employee traffic from Clarion to Cranberry. From a community facilities vantage, it may frankly endanger the availability of medical services in Clarion County. Ironically, other information does not point to a significant expansion of the UPMC Hospital. Other public information shows that UPMC Northwest expects employment to remain constant or *decrease*. If the former scenario is true, the UPMC facility will be a true development of regional impact. At this point, the only recommendation is for Clarion County to monitor this situation.

Interchange development has been discussed in the previous sections of the Plan. This is also a priority for Venango County. The Interchange of I-80 and PA 38 is of particular interest to Clarion County. This interchange straddles the Venango County line with Butler County, but has the potential through access via nearby PA 208 to benefit Clarion County residents. At present, the Allegheny-Clarion Valley Development Corporation has constructed a successful industrial park in the Butler County portion of this interchange. The site has community water and sewer systems and Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) tax abatement status (see the section on Butler County below). Plans are currently under consideration to extend water and sewer from the industrial park into Venango County, which would open up relatively developable land for most likely commercial purposes along portions of Routes 208 and 38. Clarion County supports efforts by The Allegheny-Clarion Valley Development Corporation and Venango County to make this extension. Clarion County further recommends continuous improvements to the portion of Route 208 between the Borough of Emlenton and this interchange area to make commuter and commercial traffic more feasible for Clarion County residents.

Clarion County recommends the creation of the Allegheny River Communities Initiative.

The preceding narrative highlights a particular concern of this area—a multiplicity of jurisdictions along the Allegheny River Valley. Within a few hundred feet, four counties converge. Residents of the area are faced with numerous phone exchanges and area codes, and a real disconnect between their natural community/local economy and the political boundaries they face. This will naturally affect every area of planning. Clarion County would thus recommend the creation of the Allegheny River Communities Initiative. This should be a joint effort of

Armstrong, Clarion, Butler and Venango Counties, with the Allegheny-Clarion Valley Development Corporation serving as the central entity. The purpose of the initiative would be to:

1. Pool financial and technical assistance to benefit the river communities
2. Overcome intergovernmental obstacles to transportation and community facilities improvements
3. Promote the river area as a single region for tourism purposes
4. Promote cooperation in river conservation from a bioregional perspective

As a first project, the County of Clarion would further propose the creation of way-finding signs (way-finding signs are signs that help tourists find points of interest and businesses), and investigation of the feasibility of two overlooks to be created along I-80 above the Allegheny River Valley. These overlooks could include tourist kiosks, which could benefit the region by highlighting recreational opportunities available in all four counties.

Simultaneous to this process, Venango County and Clarion may be able to begin cooperating on conservation initiatives. Neither county has completed DCNR Natural Heritage Inventories or countywide Greenways plans. The shared river may be a basis for such initiatives, as well as an opportunity to take advantage of some economy of scale.

Forest County

The southern boundary of Forest County forms the border of the majority of northern Clarion County. The Forest County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1998. The Land Use Plan includes two major components: The first Land Use Plan component identifies areas appropriate for priority growth, community revitalization, or agricultural area revitalization. The second component is a public lands growth boundary.

Key policies in border areas with Clarion County include efforts at community revitalization in Barnett Township and agricultural revitalization of the Red Brush valley. These are consistent with the desire of Clarion County to revitalize communities in northern Clarion County, as well as have overall consistency with the Clarion County Land Use Plan. Forest County is also prioritizing growth in the PA Route 36 and PA Route 66 corridors, but not to the extent that they will directly affect Clarion County. It must be mentioned however, that such development might have the indirect benefit of creating accessible job and business opportunities for northern Clarion County residents.

Much of Forest County's land-use policy centers on the identified need to preserve private land and prevent the loss of tax base and beneficial development opportunities through excessive Commonwealth or federal public lands. The boundary included in the plan discourages the purchase of new public lands in the general areas of Tionesta, Green, and Barnett Townships. An overabundance of public land is not a countywide problem in Clarion. However, it is a problem in northern portions of the County. Therefore, Clarion County endorses the growth-boundary concept in Forest County, as it will benefit northern County municipalities.

Finally, the new state correctional facility at Marienville, officially known as SCI Forest, is likely to affect both Forest and Clarion Counties. The prison is presently under construction and is expected to be completed in 2004. The impacts of this facility are numerous. According to the Forest County Comprehensive Plan, the facility will necessitate the transfer of 100 corrections officers from other areas of the state and result in 300+ local hires (about 200 officers and 100 support personnel). The new households alone will bring economic impact, but this must be combined with other impacts, as summarized below:

Much of the economic activity generated by the correction facility will be through spin-off sales and employment, including:

- ◆ Purchase of goods and services by the facility
- ◆ Purchase of goods and services by employees, contractors, etc.
- ◆ Purchase of goods and services by new residents
- ◆ Support jobs generated by new import of capital

A few examples included:

- ◆ Spin-off capital by the facility payroll of perhaps \$12 million per year
- ◆ \$2.4 million in food purchases by new resident households

- ◆ Enormous food purchases for inmates (78 tons of potatoes each year)
- ◆ 50 to 75 new retail/service jobs created by increased economic activity

It would be wholly reasonable to expect that a significant amount of both relocations and new hires will directly affect Clarion County.

To quote the Forest County Comprehensive Plan, *"In summary, with current conditions, Forest County would absorb little of the immediate housing, or economic impact. The actual economic impact of the project would probably be spread through large parts of Forest, Venango, Clarion, Warren, and Elk Counties."*

This result is because Forest County simply cannot absorb the anticipated impact. Forest County does not have enough unemployed persons to fill the needed jobs. There are not enough vacant houses for rent or sale to meet the needs of the new hires. In addition, many of those who relocate will not choose to live near the prison for a variety of reasons.

Clarion County will be the gateway to this new development of regional impact. By necessity, it will also be the place where much of the economic and housing impact will occur. Three issues are of particular importance:

1. Route 66 from I-80 to the SCI Forest site
2. The accessibility of retail and service opportunities in Clarion County to eastern Forest County
3. The greater range of housing choices in Clarion County

The key inter-county issue will be ensuring that PA Route 66 remains a usable road for traffic to reach Marienville.

Butler County

Butler and Clarion County only share approximately 900 feet of border, in a small area located south of Emlenton Borough along the Allegheny River. A larger area is nearby, but it is interrupted by a narrow strip of Hovey Township in Armstrong County. Despite this small, shared boundary, there are connections between the two counties. A significant number of residents of communities such as Foxburg and East Brady Boroughs are commuting to jobs in Butler County. As previously mentioned, there are also shared feelings of community among the residents of the Allegheny River valley, and such intergovernmental agencies as the Allegheny-Clarion Valley Development Corporation (which equally serves valley residents in all the river communities).

The Butler County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2002. The Land Use Policy Plan designates the corridor of communities nearest to Clarion County as "rural revitalization areas, or small towns-prioritize revitalization, redevelopment and neighborhood conservation." Other policies suggest greater intergovernmental cooperation between the small boroughs of Eau Claire, Bruin, Karns City, Fairview, and Petrolia, especially to take advantage of shared infrastructure needs. At present, a very real project is underway to

develop a joint water system for this area. Massive contamination of the water table from decades of industrial waste disposal has left hundreds of water wells unusable in Petrolia Borough, Fairview Township, Fairview Borough, Concord Township, and Perry Township (Armstrong County). The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) has selected the East Brady Borough Municipal Authority to supply water to the contaminated area.

This Plan wholly endorses this project. In addition to providing water to a contaminated area desperate for clean water, this project will build the capacity of communities in need of economic development on both sides of the border. Clarion County guidelines will continue to support policies, which build economic cooperation in the Allegheny River valley and find ways to treat the area as a single economy, regardless of political jurisdiction. A related, but more minor project is the proposed North Country Trail. The route of this trail has been more highly defined in Butler County than it has in Clarion County. According to the Butler County Green Space Linkage Concept Plan, the trail is proposed to cross into Clarion County near Foxburg. This will benefit the development of that region's tourist economy.

Finally, there is a major KOZ site in Butler County, just south of the Venango County line at the Interchange of PA 38 and I-80. This site is a 160-acre business park owned and operated by the Allegheny-Clarion Valley Development Corporation. At present, there are two tenants; a truss manufacturer with 60 employees and a plastic filter manufacturer with another 14 employees. A private developer has constructed a speculative building that is also for sale, and 120 acres remain available. This development can be an essential component of economic development, which can potentially benefit eastern Clarion County residents.

Armstrong County

Armstrong County is presently undertaking its first comprehensive plan. Clarion County will review that document and seek appropriate levels of cooperation when that process develops.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County is presently in the process of updating its 1991 County Comprehensive Plan. As the 1991 document is the official adopted one, comments are restricted to that plan. Access between Jefferson County and Clarion County is significant due to I-80, Route 322, and Route 28. The 1991 Plan made a particularly thorough examination of transportation clusters and nodes. Of particular importance to Clarion County is Route 28. Clarion County endorses any project that would improve Route 28, as this would greatly benefit the communities of southern Clarion County. Proposed industrial development at Summerville (pursuant to the 1991 Plan) would bring similar benefit.

Intergovernmental Priorities

Perhaps as important as the relationships between the County and neighboring counties is the relationship between Clarion County and its constituent municipalities. Throughout the planning process, a number of citizens and leaders expressed the concern that many township and borough officials were unaware of their level of responsibilities beyond very basic functions of meetings, budgets, and road equipment. A concern was also expressed that many units of local government are resistant to municipal functions of accepting and maintaining

new roads or water and sewer systems. As the world grows more complex, so do the issues before local governments. Local leadership is an absolutely essential aspect of local community and economic development. Upon adoption of this County Plan, and in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, all township, borough, or municipal authority actions related to the functions and activities listed below must be submitted to the County Planning Commission for review against this document (see also Section 304 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code).

Location, opening, widening, vacation, enlargement of any street public ground, pier head, or watercourse

Location, erection, removal, or sale of any public structures

Adoption amendment or repeal of local comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, or subdivision and land development ordinances

Construction, extension, or abandonment of any water line, sewer line, or sewage treatment facility

The County Planning Commission comments are non-binding upon the municipal action, but the process must be adhered to. The County will work with communities pursuant to assisting them in compliance with the Code, but may reserve or limit assistance where legal planning and review processes are not observed.

ACTION PLAN

As seen in all the previous plans, a comprehensive plan is both a measuring stick to see that individual decisions are moving toward the desired direction, and a punch list of projects that the County would like to see accomplished. The measuring sticks, which are to be regarded before making decisions, are policies. Things to be done are actions.

In a rural community such as Clarion County, everyone wears several hats. A planning commission member has a job or business to attend to. Citizens typically split their time between work, family, recreation, and community service activities. To make the key actions and policies of this Plan more accessible, the following is a summary of key points from each of the topical plans:

SUMMARY OF KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS

LAND USE PLAN

Item	Policy or Action	Priority
Revisions to focus County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance on changing land development issues.	Action	High
Adopt County Airport Zoning to protect the Clarion County Airport.	Action	High
Support updates of Clarion Borough zoning to meet County and local community development objectives.	Policy	Medium
Work with New Bethlehem Borough to ensure their zoning can meet changing needs.	Policy	Medium
Support Millcreek Township to graphically represent their zoning ordinance on an official zoning map.	Policy	Medium
Support local need for comprehensive planning in select high growth townships in the central Clarion core.	Policy	Medium
Where need is indicated by a planning process, support development of zoning ordinances or alternative land-use policies by high-growth townships in the central Clarion area.	Policy	High
Develop and distribute models of alternative land-use ordinances to all communities.	Action	High

HOUSING PLAN

Item	Policy or Action	Priority
Utilize affordable housing as a tool to assist young people with remaining in the community.	Policy	High
Utilize new standards for mobile home parks in the County SALDO.	Action	High
Determine if there is a greater market for new, middle-income rental housing units targeted toward non-students.	Action	Medium
Focus Housing Conservation Assistance in southern Clarion County communities, small villages outside the central Clarion core, and boroughs.	Policy	High
Develop new comprehensive Neighborhood Assistance Program.	Action	Medium
Develop a homebuyer program in concert with local banks.	Action	High

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Item	Policy or Action	Priority
Support economic development that will address every economic sector, not just industrial sectors or large employers only.	Policy	High
Highest County priority is to retain or expand existing businesses (of all sizes) and develop new businesses owned by County residents.	Policy	High
Expand public water and sewer, and where necessary improve road infrastructure, to the potential best future business sites within the County.	Action	High
Generally expand the array of ready to occupy or build site opportunities for businesses.	Action	Low
Re-examine the full range of capital available to business in Clarion County.	Action	Medium
Continue to research, publish and distribute economic information.	Action	High

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES PLAN

Item	Policy or Action	Priority
Respond to infrastructure assistance requests based upon County priorities.	Policy	Medium
Highest priority to expand public water and/or sewer to areas of dense pre-existing residential development with either failed septic systems endangering public health or insufficient quantity or quality of public water.	Action	High
Second highest priority to extend public water and sewer to the best sites for future businesses that will create jobs in Clarion County.	Action	High
Build greater management and technical capacity as well as better cooperation among small public providers of water and sewage treatment.	Action	Medium
Undertake a Countywide assessment of recreation needs.	Action	Medium
Begin examining land-use balances per school districts, as well as municipalities.	Action	High

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES PLAN

Item	Policy or Action	Priority
Provide further education about the use and value of the County's natural resources from both an economic and ecological vantage.	Action	Medium
Integrate historic preservation into any revitalization work conducted in boroughs with concentrations of historic resources.	Action	Medium
Investigate the utilization of local landfill closure funds per Growing Greener Act.	Action	High
Considerations of a DCNR-funded Greenways Plan and Natural Heritage Inventory.	Action	High

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Item	Policy or Action	Priority
Complete a Congested Corridor Study for Route 68 and support the development of a linked system of physical improvements and curb-cut management for Route 68.	Action	High
Preserve the integrity of PA Route 66 between Route 322 and I-80 for industrial land development and preserve capacity.	Policy	High
Examine selected improvements to the PA 338 corridor/Canoe Ripple Road and preserve capacity.	Action	Low
Work with communities to improve local road standards.	Action	Medium
Support improvements to the Clarion County Airport runway, and improved precision instrument approaches.	Policy	Medium
Support continued maintenance of and expansion of pedestrian transportation systems, whether for recreation, or utilitarian use.	Policy	Medium

INTERRELATIONSHIPS PLAN

Item	Policy or Action	Priority
Support the AC-Valley Industrial Park as a means to benefit eastern Clarion County residents.	Policy	Low
Monitor the UPMC Cranberry campus project from a transportation and community facilities vantage.	Action	Medium
Monitor the Forest County Prison to discern and take advantage of opportunities in northern Clarion County.	Action	High
Establish a multi-County, Allegheny River Region initiative.	Action	Medium
Examine cooperating with Venango County in Greenways planning and a Natural Heritage Inventory.	Action	Medium