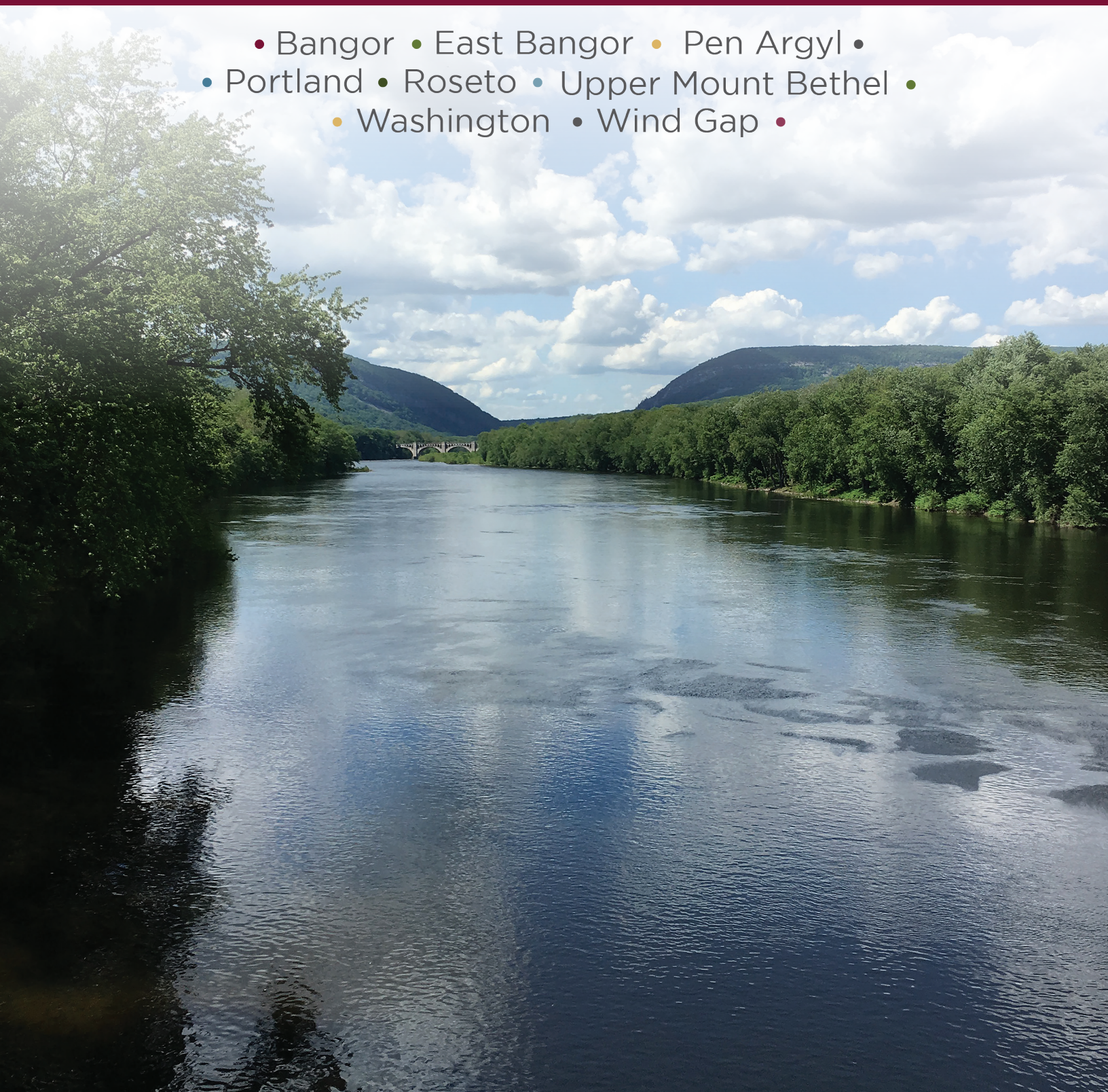
PLAN SLATE BELT

MULTI-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

• Bangor • East Bangor • Pen Argyl •
• Portland • Roseto • Upper Mount Bethel •
• Washington • Wind Gap •



Cover Photo: The Delaware River, from the Portland, PA side.

Revised Draft August 2024

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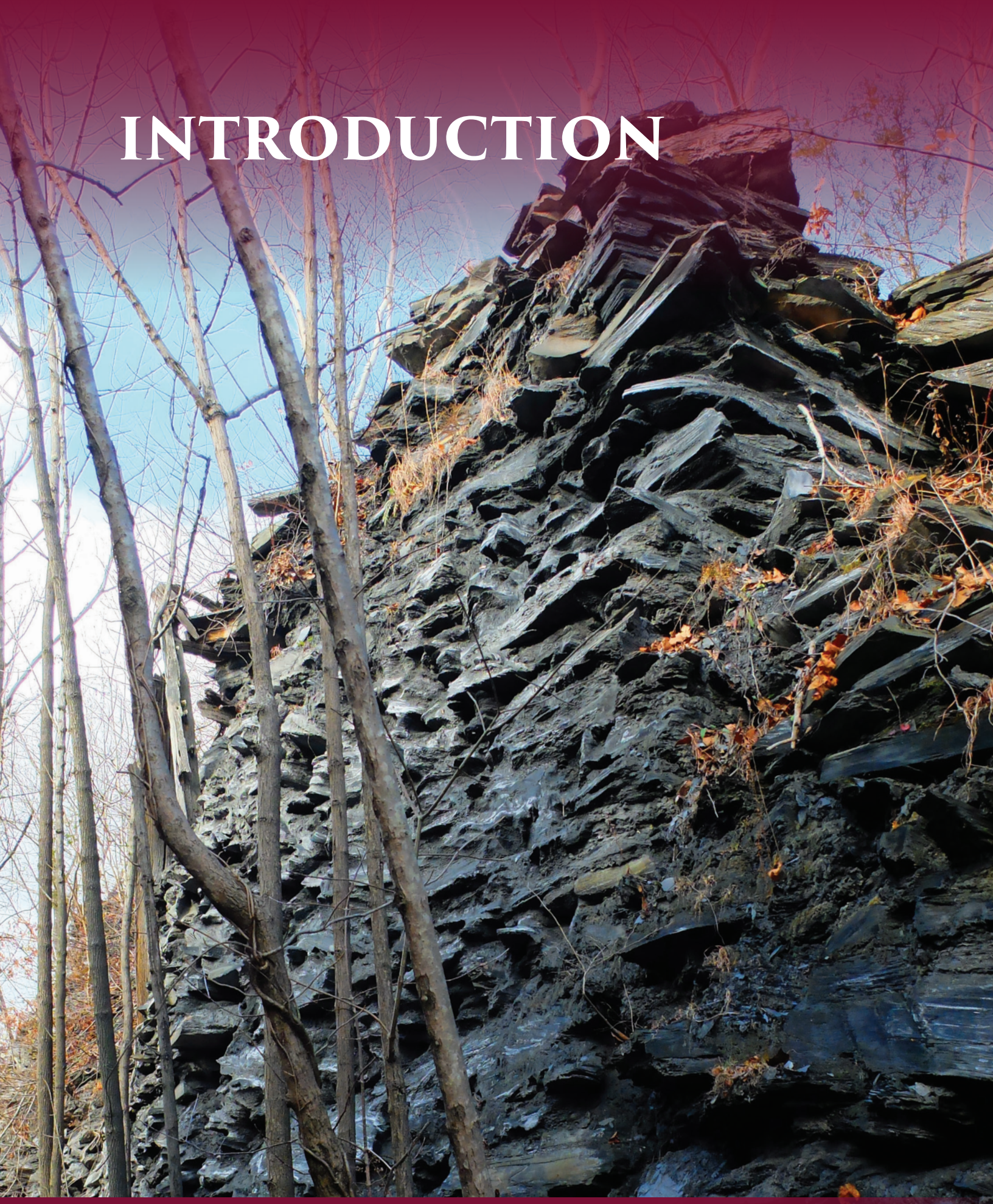
INTRODUCTION



10 Slate along the mountainside, where the area claims its name.

Plan Slate Belt communities have a long history of working together, but now those eight municipalities are enhancing their collaboration to shape their collective vision for the future of the region.

Known for its breathtaking landscapes, rich history and rural character, the Slate Belt in the coming years will face new growth pressures as the arrival of new residents and businesses threaten the very qualities that give the Region its unique identity.

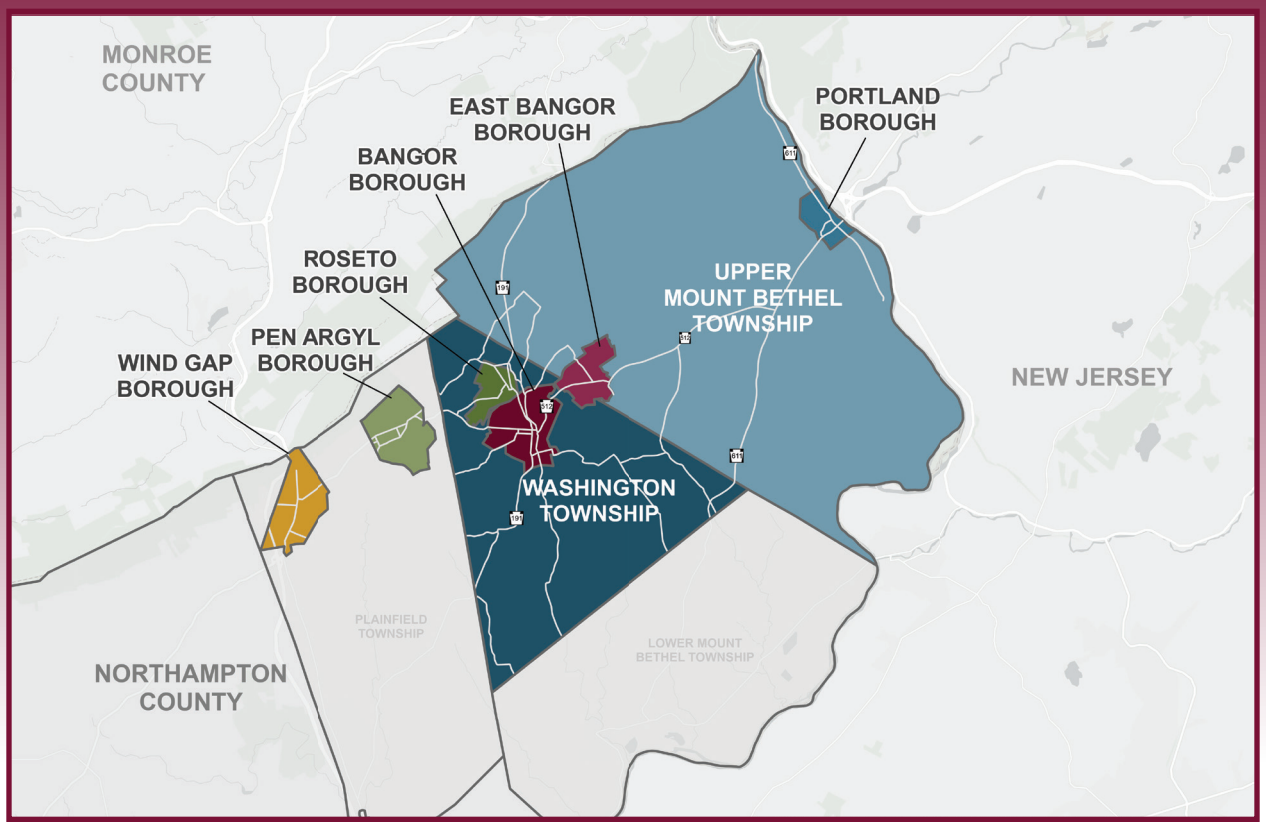
In an effort to manage that development pressure, while seizing the opportunities presented by their shared interests, the boroughs of Bangor, East Bangor, Pen Argyl, Portland, Roseto and Wind Gap, and the townships of Upper Mount Bethel and Washington have come together to create the first-ever Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan.

Six of the municipalities already share a history of multi-municipal comprehensive planning. In the early 2000s, Pen Argyl and Wind Gap boroughs partnered to develop a regional plan for their communities as did the boroughs of Bangor, East Bangor and Roseto together with Washington Township.

The legacy of mining, manufacturing and farming runs deep and defines the character of its historic boroughs and rural townships. The boroughs share a similar history of involvement in the slate and textile industries and bustling downtowns. But with the decline of these industries and recent loss of other businesses, the boroughs have a strong desire to revitalize their downtowns, making them more attractive to new businesses. The townships have strong traditions in farming, which continue today, providing a rural lifestyle desired by residents.

However, as the amount of available land in the suburban and urban areas of the Lehigh Valley becomes more limited, the Slate Belt communities will face unprecedented challenges that growth and development will bring to the area, threatening the sense of community, rural character, heritage and quality of life they wish to maintain. But through this multi-municipal planning approach based on the values of the region, opportunities for success will also present themselves. By planning together, Slate Belt communities can take charge of their future and achieve their vision for the Slate Belt as a desirable place to raise a family, grow a business or visit. The townships of Lower Mount Bethel and Plainfield participated in the analysis, community engagement and drafting of the Plan, but ultimately decided not to be included in Plan Slate Belt.

THE SLATE BELT COMMUNITY



The Plan Slate Belt is an area of about 93 square miles in the northeastern corner of Northampton County. The area is bounded by the Kittatinny Ridge to the north and Delaware River to the east, both significant natural features that contribute to the beauty of the area. Eight of the ten Slate Belt communities participated in this multi-municipal effort, with Lower Mount Bethel and Plainfield Townships consulting, holding individual comprehensive plans.

The Route 33 corridor stretches northward along the entire western side of the Slate Belt, bringing growth and development pressure to the area along with it. The communities to the south have also been generally experiencing similar pressure. This picturesque corner of Northampton County boasts extensive natural resources and farmland, historic and cultural features, and a variety of parks, outdoor recreation and open space, all of which contribute to the area's unique identity and quality of life.

While the Slate Belt shares a rich history of farming, mining and vibrant small towns, it also shares challenges and opportunities in the years ahead.

PARTNER MUNICIPALITIES OVERVIEW

CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT

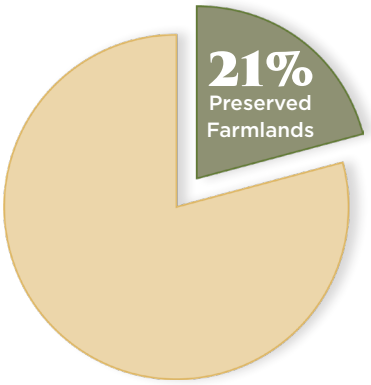
The communities of Bangor, East Bangor, Pen Argyl, Portland and Wind Gap boroughs and Washington and Upper Mount Bethel townships partnered to create the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. An overview of these communities is in this section and additional details may be found in the data companion.

Most of the land base in the region is in agricultural use, which is considered a fully developed land use. 21% of Plan Slate Belt farmlands are preserved; that's 37 farms at 3,152 acres.

Many of the boroughs have limtied available land, requiring revitalizing underused buildings, or replacing existing development.

Public infrastructure, most notably public sewer capacity, required for future development and redevelopment is limited.

All five of the region's public sewer systems, and two of the four community water systems, are operated by borough governments or municipal authorities located in five of the region's boroughs. Some of the sewage treatment systems are facing treatment capacity limitations, often exacerbated by infiltration and inflow from groundwater sources. These capacity restrictions limit the potential for new economic development opportunities, both in the townships and boroughs. Upgrades to these systems are often cost prohibitive for municipal budgets, and other funding options are limited.



SLATE BELT SEWER CAPACITY

MUNICIPALITIES	2018 DESIGN CAPACITIES	AVERAGE FLOW
Bangor	1.6 mgd	1.74 mgd
East Bangor	0.10 mgd	0.087 mgd
Pen Argyl	0.95 mgd	0.707 mgd
Portland	0.105 mgd	0.028 mgd
Wind Gap	1.0 mgd	0.753 mgd

** mgd - Million Gallons Per Day*

A CHANGING ECONOMIC BASE

The region has become more of a bedroom community without a strong jobs base, with a large number of residents commuting to areas of the Lehigh Valley directly outside of the Slate Belt.

Housing and industrial development, primarily distribution and logistics, has followed the Route 33 corridor northward. As development pressure continues northward along the Route 33 corridor, the Plan Slate Belt area is projected to experience a 4.2% increase in population (over 1,100 new residents) through 2050. Achieving the delicate balance between growth and preservation will be critical in maintaining and enhancing the high quality of life desired by Slate Belt residents.

Certain economic activities, such as tourism and basic services, are below average and have potential for growth.

POPULATION GROWTH

26,614
2021 POPULATION

27,736
2050 PROJECTION

4.2%
PERCENT GROWTH

PREDOMINANTLY OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING STOCK

Relatively high percentage of households are owner-occupied (72%) compared to renters (28%). A diversity of housing types will be needed to accommodate residents of all income levels.

Many households are housing cost-burdened, as housing attainability has tightened. Median household income among the municipalities ranges from $50,128 to $79,879. Over 2,400 Slate Belt households earn less than $35,000, or almost 20% of all households. Almost 73% of these lower income households are cost-burdened, meaning that more than 30% of their income is spent on housing alone, according to federal guidelines.

Older and aging housing stock, especially in the boroughs, that has not been maintained will require revitalization strategies.

72% **OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS**

28% **RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSEHOLDS**

OVER
1,950
SLATE BELT HOUSEHOLDS EARN LESS THAN
$35,000 YEARLY

% OF UNITS SOLD BY TYPE IN 2022

SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED	SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED	MOBILE HOME	MULTI-FAMILY	CONDOMINIUM
74%	13%	3%	9%	<1%

AN ADAPTABLE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

The two Plan Slate Belt townships continue to be the heart of the agricultural economy of Northampton County. Much of the total preserved farm acreage in Northampton County is located in Upper Mount Bethel and Washington Townships.

63%
OF FARM OPERATORS IN NORTHAMPTON COUNTY ARE 55 OR OLDER

According to the U.S. Agricultural Census, land in farms in Northampton County decreased by 10% from 2012-2017. While the loss of farmland is not as severe in the Plan Slate Belt region, farmlands have continued to be converted to rural residential use.

In 2017, 63% of farm operators in Northampton County were 55 or older. Reflecting a nationwide trend, the average age of farm operators continues to increase. Farm transition programs, which help younger farmers to start out, will become increasingly important.

OLDER POPULATION AND INCOME DISPARITIES IN THE REGION

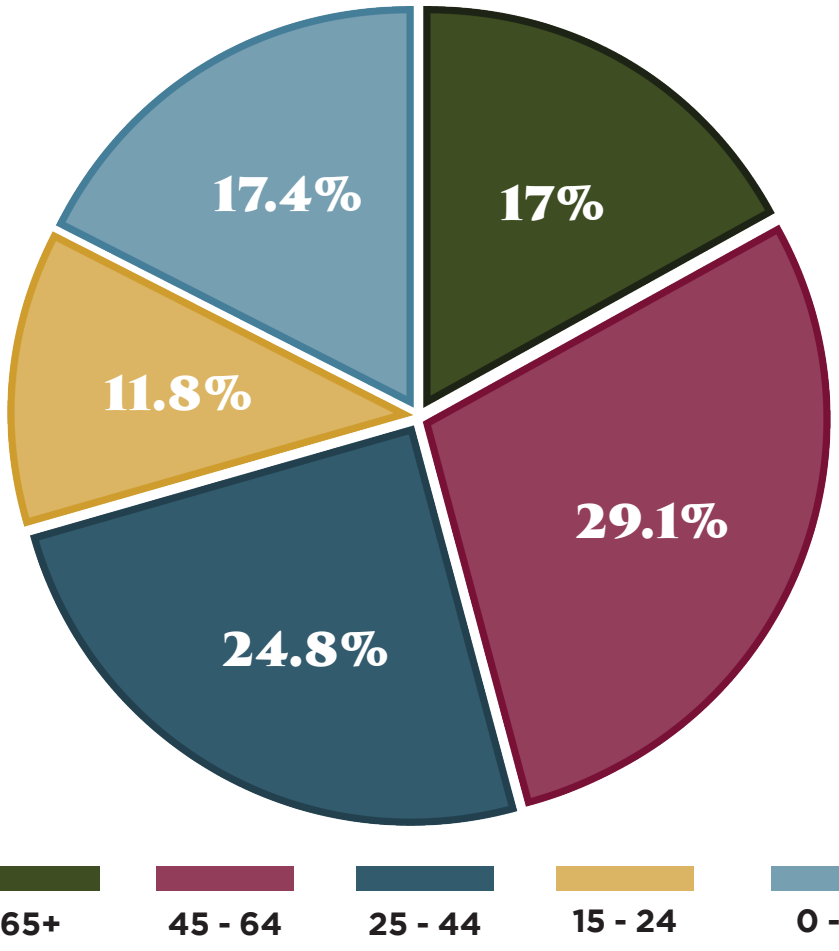
Higher percentage of seniors than Northampton County suggests a higher need for healthcare for seniors. Less than half of the population is 45 years and older, with 17% being 65 and over, indicating a higher need for healthcare services and availability of housing for older residents to age in place.

Low birth rates and high death rates means all of the projected population growth is expected to be due to in-migration.

Lower income levels and higher poverty levels in the boroughs, especially Bangor, East Bangor, Wind Gap and Pen Argyl.

A **17%** senior population suggests a higher need for healthcare services and age-in-place housing.

POPULATION BY AGE



AN AGING AND INCOMPLETE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

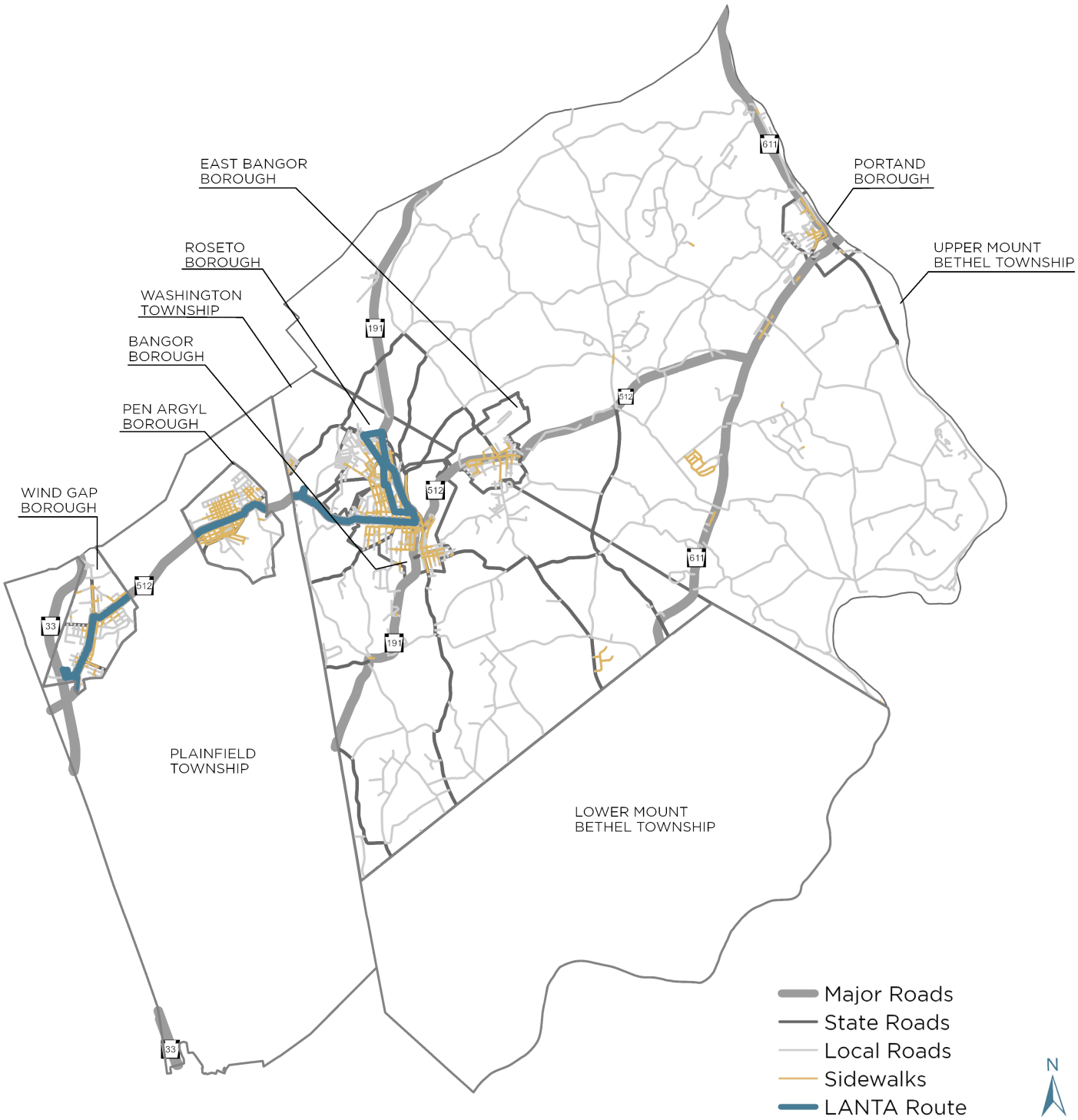
Transportation infrastructure is aging in the Slate Belt. At the same time, the area has experienced increased truck traffic from development in adjoining municipalities and along the Route 33 corridor.

Multimodal transportation options are limited. Transit service exists to a limited extent in the western and northern portions of the region. Sidewalk infrastructure is concentrated in the boroughs and only exists in small portions of the townships. The Plan Slate Belt communities have a strong desire to expand the recreational and commuter network into more areas with the use of trails.

Mount Bethel Highway, Bangor Borough.

EXISTING MIXED-TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The existing transportation network consists of state and local roads, sidewalks, LANTA routes and multi-use trails. LANTA provides public bus service along Sullivan Trail and along Route 512 through Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor and Roseto.



PLANNING FOUNDATIONS

A comprehensive plan is a policy document that provides a living blueprint for the aspirations of an area. The comprehensive plan serves as a guidebook, setting a clear vision for the future and providing implementation ideas that serve as a path to achieve a community's vision. It is the basis for land use regulations and bridging the gap between that future vision and the regulation of private property interests.

That future vision is subject to change, so this comprehensive plan is a living and breathing document that is intended to be revisited and reviewed at least every ten years, as required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Communities in Plan Slate Belt can utilize a variety of means to implement it proactively, rather than reacting to change and future development pressures. A comprehensive plan is also a legal document that empowers municipalities to guide growth and development within a jurisdiction. The MPC does not define the comprehensive plan — rather, a comprehensive plan is defined by its contents.

A multi-municipal plan addresses the judicial mandates of the MPC to provide for all reasonable land uses on a regional basis. These plans cooperatively provide and extend services and facilities in an efficient manner and allow communities to better protect natural resources, prime farmland, scenic areas and community character. The MPC also allows communities to keep autonomy in a multi-municipal plan by enabling communities to individually enact zoning ordinances, while remaining generally consistent with the overall regional plan.

The communities of the Plan Slate Belt are committed to preserving the defining natural resources of the region while adapting to the inevitable future growth and development that the greater Lehigh Valley is experiencing. This commitment is rooted in realizing the full potential of the region's natural and agricultural assets. Yet, while the MPC does not mandate municipalities to follow this plan's recommended implementation ideas, it does require each municipality to shepherd the Plan's shared mission of the future and enact thoughtful legislation that stewards the Plan's vision on behalf of the residents it serves.

PLAN PROCESS

Comprehensive planning is a process that determines community goals and visions, setting public policy for natural resources, transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, agriculture, education, housing and other local priorities. Under the guidance of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission as their professional consultant, the eight communities worked toward defining their shared objectives and setting the course for multi-municipal cooperation and decision making.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Each of the eight municipalities appointed three members to sit on the Steering Committee, which guided the overall planning process to set priorities and develop a full understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the region.

Beginning in March 2019, the Steering Committee held monthly, in-person meetings that continued through March 2020 but moved the meetings to a virtual platform in April in response to the on-set of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, as the Pandemic surged through the Lehigh Valley, the Committee suspended its meetings from May through September, before resuming virtual meetings in October and November 2020. Because the Committee felt meeting in person would be more interactive and productive, meetings were halted, with in-person Steering Committee meetings resuming in June 2021.

The Committee focused on collecting data and discussing options for creating the goals, policies and actions that would serve as the foundation of the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. One of the first actions taken by the newly formed Committee was the preparation by the LVPC of the Slate Belt Issues and Opportunities report, which was a compilation of existing data about the region and analyses regarding housing, economy, development and transportation. This multi-municipal plan builds on this base to create a framework of policies, actions and implementation steps that will prepare the Slate Belt communities to adapt to an evolving region.

Lower Mount Bethel and Plainfield Townships also had Steering Commitee members attend, but the Townships ultimately decided not to be included in Plan Slate Belt.

This listening session, or charrette, held at the Bangor Borough Administration Building helped establish the communities priorities that served as the basis for the Plan goals.

In addition to the Committee's input, a series of four workshops were held in 2020 and 2021 on these topic-specific areas of importance to the region:

FOUR ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION TOPICS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INFRASTRUCTURE

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Local, regional and statewide experts on each topic were invited to attend the workshops to help define issues and concerns and discuss ideas on how to address the issues. Experts included regional economic development and workforce agencies; school districts; local and state transportation entities; regional transit authority; sewer and water authorities; and local, regional and state emergency management personnel, among others. The ideas presented during the workshops were used to help inform the development of the policies and actions.

Front Street, Roseto Borough. 21

During the April 2020 meeting, the Slate Belt Heritage Center and PennPraxis (the practicing arm of the University of Pennsylvania School of Design) presented a new project underway in coordination with Northampton County: Heritage and Nature-Based Placemaking - Adaptive Quarry Reuse Initiative. The objective of the presentation was to determine how this nature and heritage-based project could augment the Slate Belt planning effort, especially the region's heritage and outdoor economy that was prioritized during the workshop discussions. Subsequently, a Nature-Based Placemaking sub-committee of the Slate Belt Steering Committee was formed to explore opportunities to capitalize on the nature and heritage of the abandoned slate quarries in the region. With the Committee paused, the sub-committee met four times virtually during June through August 2020.

North Bangor Quarry, 1930.

North Bangor Quarry, 2006.

PennPraxis, a multidisciplinary portion of the Weitzman School of Design, along with the Slate Belt Heritage Center, ideated design options for the preservation of the American Bangor Quarries, which included ideas for a museum, an amphitheater and a trail.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community input is vital in creating a comprehensive plan and is a key component of this Plan. Residents, business owners, community leaders and officials all hold a stake in the area, and the community engagement effort obtained a mix of input from stakeholders throughout the Slate Belt.

Meetings of local stakeholders were held to obtain early input from community members. The priorities identified during these meetings were circulated via an online survey to gain additional input before creating the draft goals. Several public events were also attended by the LVPC to obtain further input from communities.

A sign from the Slate Belt Bash.

LISTENING SESSIONS

The Slate Belt Steering Committee invited a diverse group of community experts to attend a series of three listening sessions, or charrettes. Community experts, or stakeholders, invited to the charrettes included residents, business owners, farmers, emergency service personnel, municipal officials, state legislators, municipal and county representatives, among others. More than 60 stakeholders attended the charrettes held:

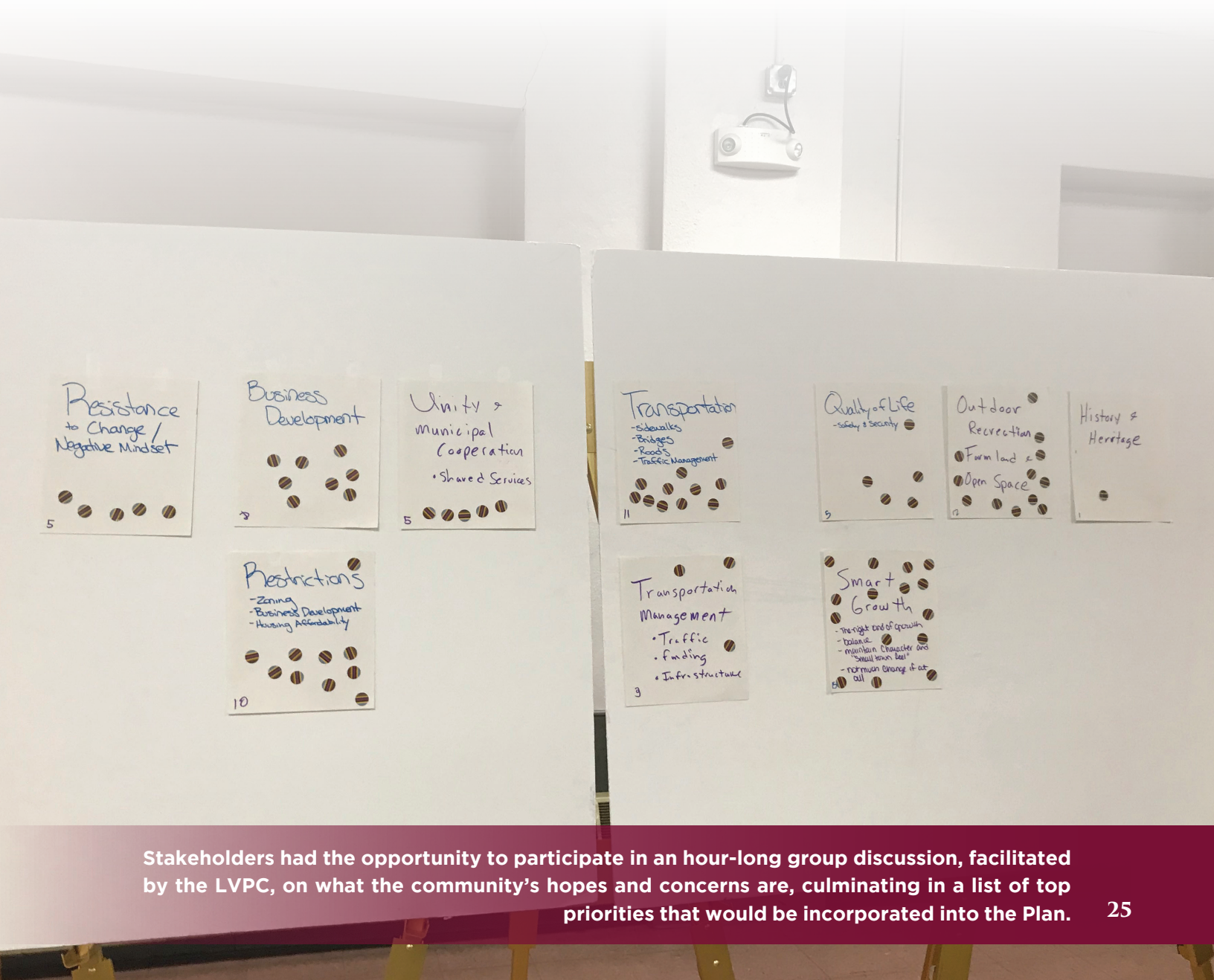
- ✓ June 18, 2019, 8 am at Plainfield Township Municipal Building
- ✓ June 18, 2019, 1 pm at Upper Mount Bethel Township Municipal Building
- ✓ June 19, 2019, 7 pm at Bangor Borough "Beehive" Municipal Building

Each session began with a brief presentation about the multi-municipal planning process and included data on current subdivision/land development, demographics and transportation for the Slate Belt region.

Following the presentation, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission facilitated hour-long group discussions by asking the stakeholders a series of questions on topics meant to spur open and active discussion on community hopes and concerns. At the end of the hour, each group was asked to select its top five priorities and present them to the larger group. Each attendee was provided three votes to select their priorities from the combined list. The result was a list of ten priorities that were further refined by community stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIZATION OF GOALS

The list of priorities derived from the charrettes provided the basis for a process to have stakeholders narrow the list and identify any additional priorities that were not previously considered. Respondents were asked to rank each of the ten issues in order of priority. Additional priorities could be added and ranked as well. The top six priorities were listed in order of rank and served as the basis for what would become six plan goals.



Stakeholders had the opportunity to participate in an hour-long group discussion, facilitated by the LVPC, on what the community's hopes and concerns are, culminating in a list of top priorities that would be incorporated into the Plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

During the summer of 2019, the LVPC developed the Plan Slate Belt website (PlanSlateBelt.org) to engage and inform residents about the multi-municipal planning effort. The website included information about the partnership; steering committee meeting schedule and presentations; a Map Gallery; the Issues and Opportunities report; upcoming events; draft goals, policies and actions; and community survey results.

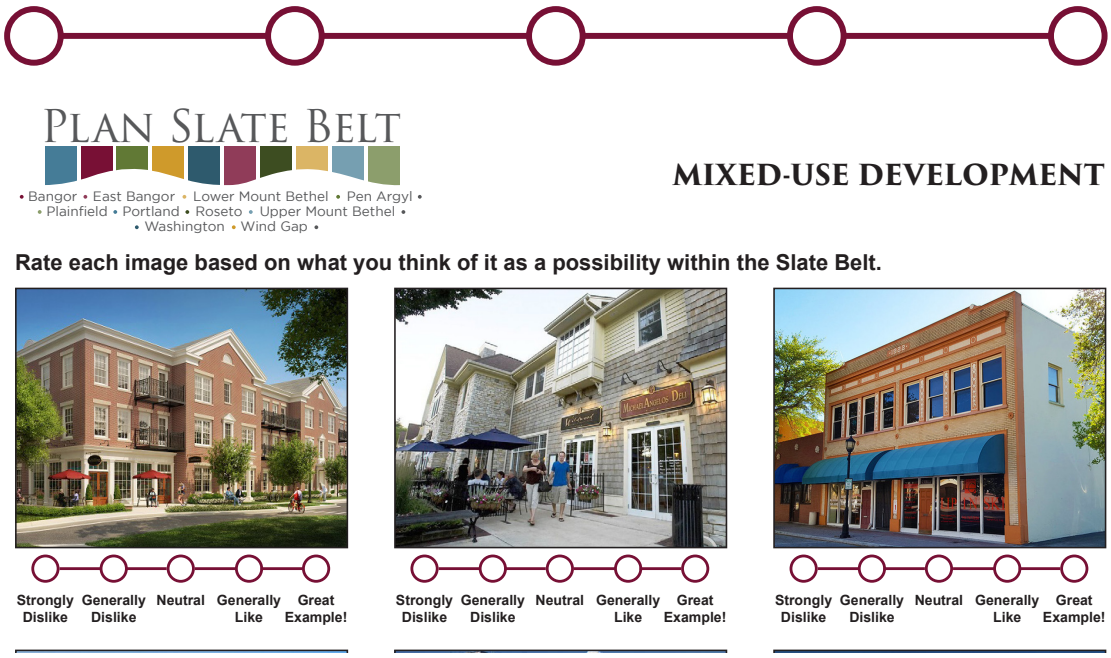
The LVPC staff attended the region's Slate Belt Bash on September 29, 2019. The event was held at Weona Park in Pen Argyl Borough — a central location in the area. Community input was gathered through conversations and an interactive exercise that collected comments on the LVPC's Public Engagement Cube. Participants were asked "What do you love most?" and "What concerns you?" about the Slate Belt. Participants used the Cube to provide their responses. A postcard was also provided to participants directing them to the Plan Slate Belt website for additional information about the planning effort.

THE SLATE BELT BASH

The Public Engagement Cube set up during the Slate Belt Bash at Weona Park in Pen Argyl Borough enabled participates to answer questions like "What do you love most?" and "What concerns you?" about the Slate Belt.

A visual preference survey was conducted from September 21 through October 27, 2021 as part of the planning effort. The LVPC survey was made available electronically and in paper format to the entire ten-community area and was distributed by local governments, the LVPC, members of the Slate Belt community, promoted through social media, and through the Plan Slate Belt website. The survey was taken by 426 people, resulting in a statistically valid survey, with a margin of error of less than 5%. The goal of the survey was to maximize community input so where the Slate Belt grows, preserves, redevelops and reuses honors the legacy of this unique region and positions the community for a prosperous future. This brief survey was designed to help understand how residents and business owners and workers think the Slate Belt can best accomplish this goal through community values, design and tourism enhancements.

The Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan draft goals were unveiled to the public by LVPC staff during the Northampton County Festival at Louise Moore Park on October 16, 2021. The visual preference survey was also promoted to hundreds of people who attended the festival through use of the LVPC Public Engagement Cube and distribution of a postcard with a QR code taking participants directly to the on-line survey. Lower Mount Bethel and Plainfield residents were included in the survey, but the townships decided to not be included in Plan Slate Belt



A snapshot of the Visual Preference Survey, conducted from September 21 through October 27, 2021 as part of the planning effort.

The Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Plan was part of public engagement activities during the Northampton County Festival, October 16, 2021.

GOAL 1

A BALANCE BETWEEN GROWTH AND PRESERVATION.

A 4.2% population increase through 2050 brings new economic opportunities to revitalize borough downtowns and strengthen community identity and sense of place. Broadway in Bangor Borough could benefit from these opportunities, shown here in the juxtaposition of the flower mural and the recently closed record store.

Policy 1.1	Direct intense development to designated growth Centers in boroughs and crossroads villages and along the Corridors that connect them.
Policy 1.2	Promote the preservation of farmland.
Policy 1.3	Protect natural lands and water resources from development or disturbance.
Policy 1.4	Encourage safety and the protection of water at quarry sites and inactive quarries.

INTRODUCTION

The Plan Slate Belt region contains some of the most beautiful countryside within Northampton County and is defined by its varied topography, natural areas, wildlife habitat, farmland, woodlands and scenic views.

These features are an integral part of the Slate Belt's identity and the quality of life enjoyed by its residents today. The communities recognize the economic value of its farmland and the environmental value of its natural resources. Yet, they also recognize that attracting industries and jobs will help revitalize the region's declining economy, while strengthening municipal fiscal stability. Preservation and economic growth are interdependent, as the presence of open spaces and natural features are often key to attracting employers and tourism. Balancing preservation with growth emerged as a top priority for the Slate Belt based on survey results and is imperative for the long-term sustainability of the region.

Regionwide growth trends show housing and industrial development along the Route 33 corridor. Combined with the desirable character of the Plan Slate Belt area and lower cost of living compared to New York and New Jersey metros, these trends will spur a 4.2% population increase through 2050, and an estimated 432 new households will call the Plan Slate Belt region home. This growth brings new economic opportunities to revitalize borough downtowns and strengthen community identity and sense of place. New development and redevelopment has the potential to strengthen the municipal tax base and provide residents with new employment opportunities closer to home. However, this growth also increases demand and wear and tear on the region's aging infrastructure, and if not planned properly, could impact much of what residents find appealing about the region. Therefore, preservation must occur in concert with growth.

The preservation side of the balance protects components of the open space network — natural resources and farmland. Preserving these resources provides many benefits to the region, such as environmental, community, health and wellness, and economic. The Pennsylvania Constitution provides that "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, …" Clean air and safe water for drinking and recreation are prerequisites for a healthy population and environment. The Lehigh Valley Return on Environment (2014) study documented that open space resources provide economic benefits that accrue to businesses, governments and households by providing natural system services (e.g., flood mitigation), improving air quality, providing outdoor recreation opportunities and increasing property values. Natural resource features are surface waters, woodlands, wetlands and hydric soils, steep slopes, local natural areas and natural heritage areas, as identified by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. The Slate Belt region has 32 Natural Heritage Areas, including the only site in the Lehigh Valley with a Global Significance Rank (Mount Bethel Fens) and two sites with a Regional Significance Rank (Lohman Wetlands and Delaware River in Northampton County). The largest natural resource underlying all those listed above is geology, dominated by slate and limestone, the extraction of which created an industrial landscape across the region.

Columcille Megalith Park in Upper Mount Bethel Township.

Agricultural lands, such as croplands, pasture, orchards, tree farms and vineyards, cover more than 7,654 acres of the region and comprise a large portion of individual farms. Approximately 18% of these agricultural lands are located on preserved farms, which total more than 2,280 acres. Another form of farming protection is offered through the Agricultural Security Area Program, which is administered by the municipality and makes the land eligible for the purchase of a conservation easement. Agricultural security areas are intended to promote viable farming operations over the long term by strengthening the rights of farmers to farm and the farming community's sense of security. Landowners that enter this Program receive protection from local laws and ordinances that would unreasonably restrict farm practices, as well as protection from condemnation.

The interrelationship of the natural resource areas and the farmland create a pastoral experience for residents and visitors to enjoy. From the Kittatinny Ridge to the Delaware River, along with Minsi Lake and two designated scenic drives—Delaware River Valley Scenic Byway (Pennsylvania Scenic Byways Program) and the Delaware River Scenic Drive (Act of Dec. 5, 1988, P.L. 1106, No. 134), the region is rich in scenic resources. The Kittatinny Ridge is designated as one of 34 major greenways by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and as an Important Bird Area by Pennsylvania Audubon. Portions of the Delaware River are preserved in the National Wild and Scenic River System for its outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values for present and future generations.

Preparing an official map can be a powerful tool for municipalities to be proactive in shaping future development. An official map, as provided by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, is a combined map and ordinance designed to aid in implementing the elements of the comprehensive plan, such as proposed public streets, watercourses, public grounds, public parks and open space, pedestrian paths and railroad and transit right-of-way and easements. When consistent with a municipal subdivision and land development ordinance, zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan, the official map can give strength and validity to a municipality's vision and needs for future growth. Further, it is an excellent supporting document for grant applications involving land or easements intended for open space or park facilities.

Official maps can be used by townships, boroughs, cities, and counties and should not be mistaken for the official zoning map of a municipality.

Located across the region, from the boroughs to the countryside to the Kittatinny Ridge in the north, these open spaces provide opportunities for a wide variety of activities and attractions for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors. They add beauty and attractiveness to the region, increase understanding and appreciation of the Slate Belt heritage, and improve quality of life.

Tolino Vineyards, Pleasant Road, Washington Township.

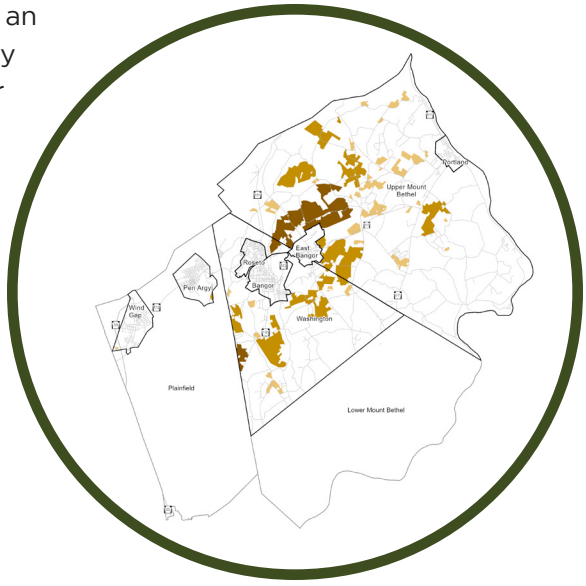
PLAN MAP DESCRIPTIONS

Embedded within the Goals, Policies and Actions are the five plan maps. The intent, description and interrelationships associated with these maps are provided below:

NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN

The High Conservation Priority Natural Resource areas shown on the plan take precedence over other land use recommendations presented in the Slate Belt Plan, including the Future Land Use Plan. This represents a conservation first perspective. The High and Medium Conservation Priority areas are used by the municipalities in review of subdivision and land development proposals, to identify potential preservation areas within a development, development of plans and ordinances, and grant applications, among other uses specified in the policies and actions. The High and Medium Conservation Priority areas should also be used by conservation organizations and other government agencies to prioritize conservation efforts.

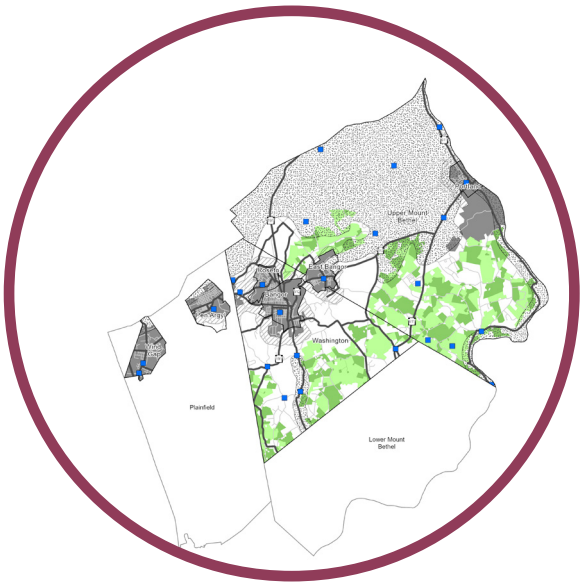
FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN



The High and Medium Priority Farmland Preservation areas on the plan represent the most significant clusters of existing farmland, based on the overall size of the cluster combined with agricultural soils quality. The municipalities will use this plan as an important component of development proposal review. High Priority areas are the largest clusters and represent the best opportunity for infill with farmlandsupportive businesses and services. This plan should be used by other government agencies and conservation organizations to prioritize areas for preservation of farming operations, typically through the acquisition of easements to permanently preserve the land as farming. Other farmlands not shown on the plan, either due to small size, lower soils quality or lack of proximity to other farmlands, should also be considered for preservation as the opportunity arises. High, Medium, and Low Priority areas are shown on the Future Land Use Plan for Farmland Preservation or certain Preservation Buffer areas. In the Preservation Buffer area, Farmland Preservation is preferred.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This plan shows areas recommended for Development, Farmland Preservation, Preservation Buffer and Exurban uses and should guide development and preservation efforts by private and non-profit organizations, government agencies and individuals. High Priority Areas from the Natural Resources Plan are recommended to be conserved regardless of the Future Land Use Plan recommendation. High, Medium, and Low Priority areas from the Farmland Preservation Plan are included on the Future Land Use Plan as recommended for Farmland Preservation or certain Preservation Buffer areas. In the Preservation Buffer area, Farmland Preservation is preferred. Centers and Corridors located within Development areas are recommended for denser, mixed-use, mixed-transportation development. Centers and Corridors located in Preservation Buffer areas or Exurban areas are only recommended for denser, mixed-use, mixed-transportation development if they meet the development criteria. Centers and Corridors located within Farmland Preservation areas are not generally recommended for denser development. Proposed improvements shown on the Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan are compatible with any land use depicted on the Future Land Use Plan.



CENTERS AND CORRIDORS PLAN

This plan shows major transportation infrastructure and opportunities for creating denser, mixed-use, mixed transportation development and should be used by private and non-profit organizations and government agencies to guide efforts to improve the transportation network. The municipalities use this plan as an important component of development review and highly encourage projects that expand, improve or connect the mixed-transportation network.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

This plan shows major existing and planned park, outdoor recreation and open space facilities and should be used to guide efforts by public/private organizations and government agencies to expand, improve and connect regional assets. The municipalities use this plan in concert with their individual open space plans, as applicable, and with the Northampton County Livable Landscapes Plan and other plans to establish priorities for funding and work efforts for these facilities. Recommended improvements shown on this plan are compatible with any land use depicted on the Future Land Use Plan.

POLICY 1.1

Direct intense development to designated growth Centers in boroughs and crossroads villages and along the Corridors that connect them.

Planning and coordinating development that occurs at the edges between boroughs and their surrounding townships is vital to sustaining the economic vitality of the boroughs and managing the impacts of highway-oriented, high-traffic volume development.

- ✓ Encourage development that is connected and adjacent to existing boroughs.
- ✓ Rezone areas in townships around boroughs to allow for greater intensity and diversity of housing development.
- ✓ Promote compatibility between adjacent land uses and along municipal borders.

Promoting a mix of uses will reduce the need for and length of trips as well as provide more livable communities.

- ✓ Encourage mixed-use development in Centers and along Corridors.
- ✓ Promote walkable and bikeable neighborhoods, commercial centers and industrial areas.
- ✓ Explore funding options to assist homeowners and business owners in maintaining and repairing sidewalks.
- ✓ Diversify allowed development types in downtowns and crossroads villages.

Coordinating a range of redevelopment and revitalization actions in the region's boroughs and appropriate crossroads villages will provide benefits to both residents and visitors.

- ✓ Reduce parking minimums in downtowns to create better infill opportunities.
- ✓ Conduct parking studies to identify the location and availability of parking needed to serve infill development.
- ✓ Promote revitalization and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- ✓ Promote infill development and redevelopment in vacant or underutilized areas.
- ✓ Increase the flexibility of zoning provisions in downtowns to promote mixed uses.
- ✓ Adopt design and performance standards to address land use conflicts such as screening, buffering, parking and traffic controls.

Aligning the scale, intensity and location of development across the region will ensure the continuation of the balance of agriculture, historic towns and new development areas that makes the Slate Belt unique.

- ✓ Discourage development in agricultural areas to maintain rural character.
- ✓ Encourage new development to be compatible with the style and scale of existing development.
- ✓ Increase allowed densities in boroughs and appropriate crossroads villages. Recognize that some crossroads villages are not appropriate for additional development and should remain as part of the historic rural character of the region.

This multi-level home on Hazen Avenue in East Bangor Borough establishes the style and scale that new developments would need to be compatible with the area.

HOW TO USE THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

STEP 1

The Future Land Use Plan map on pages 46-47 shows areas recommended for Development, Farmland Preservation and Rural Residential within Farmland, Preservation Buffer, Exurban and Character Defining Areas. It also contains Centers and Corridors that are identified on pages 130-131. It also encompasses recommendations identified on the Farmland Preservation Plan (p. 64-65), Natural Resources Plan (p. 68-69), and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (p. 90-91).

This map recognizes that future land use in the region will consist of both those existing land uses that define the character of the region, such as farmland, open spaces, and vibrant downtowns, as well as future land use recommendations.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide development and preservation efforts by private and non-profit organizations, government agencies and individuals. The Future Land Use Plan mirrors the land use categories used for the bi-county comprehensive plan, *FutureLV: The Regional Plan (FutureLV).* It is intended to provide consistency in land use planning between the entire Lehigh Valley region and the more localized Plan Slate Belt region.

STEP 2

The land use categories utilized in *FutureLV*, and the Plan Slate Belt Future Land Use Plan are generalized in nature and encompass a range of land uses appropriate for that land use category. Because of the map scale needed to depict the entire planning region, the Future Land Use Plan is not intended to provide a detailed look at specific areas in the region.

To provide greater specificity, the plan includes Future Land Use-Detailed View maps for each of the eight municipalities in the region. Again, these plans start with the existing land uses that define the character of the region such as the scenic farmlands, historic downtowns, and outstanding natural areas. These maps also include a more detailed look at the existing land use patterns as well as guidance for redevelopment and reinvestment, open space preservation, and development of a regional trail system. Also included are more detailed views of transitions in land use. Many of these recommendations may not be clearly visible at the larger scale of the region-wide Future Land Use Plan.

These recommendations are a compilation of recommendations included elsewhere in the Plan, including the Centers and Corridors Plan, the Natural Resources Plan, the Farmland Preservation Plan, and others.

These Detailed View maps, along with the goals, policies, and actions, are intended to assist the region's municipalities in the creation of revised zoning ordinances and maps and other regulatory tools. (See Step 3).

STEP 3

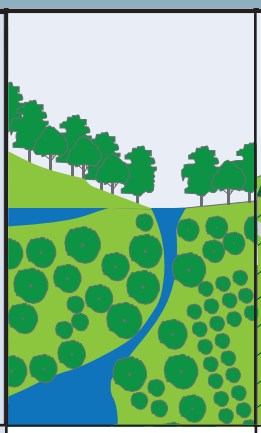
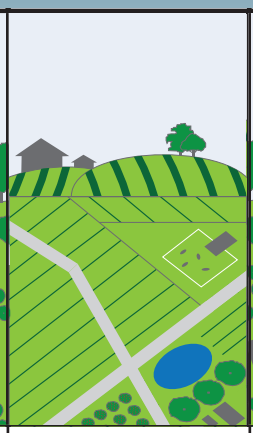
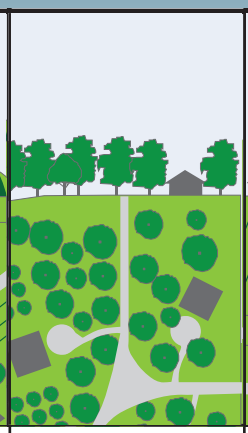
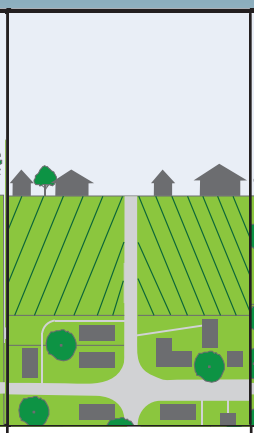
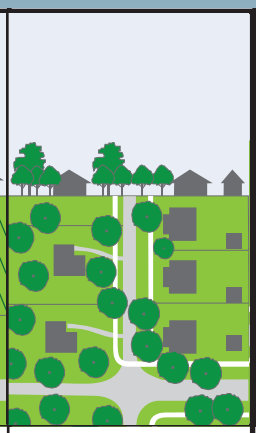
After the multi-municipal plan has been adopted, the participating municipalities will implement the recommendations of the plan. This will include revising municipal zoning ordinances as well as possibly other tools such as official maps, transfer of development rights programs, and Borough Revitalization programs, among others. Actions are outlined in the Plan Implementation section beginning on page 177.

CRITICAL PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

It must be stressed that the Future Land Use Plan map and the Detailed View maps are not zoning maps. The Future Land Use Plan and the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations are intended to be the starting point for the region's municipalities in amending their ordinances. As an example, if a specific borough wishes to implement the Plan's recommendations for a Main Street redevelopment and infill project it would look at its zoning ordinance to ensure that the intended range of uses are permitted in that area. Parking and loading standards could be revised to support economic development. Public infrastructure such as benches and street trees could be targeted by the borough for the area.

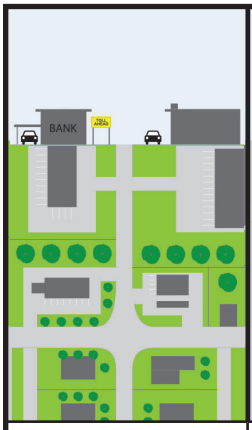
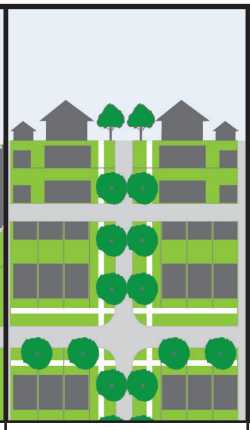
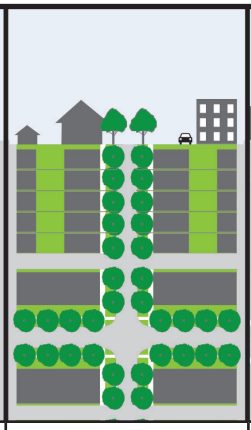
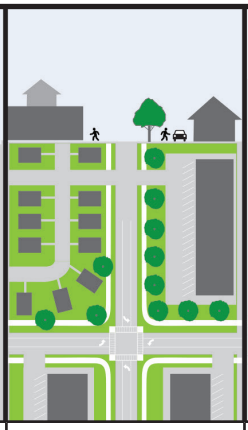
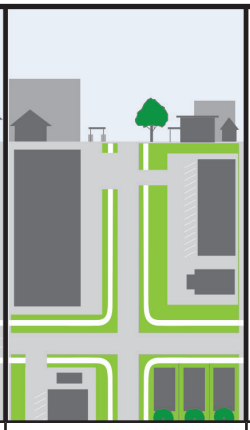
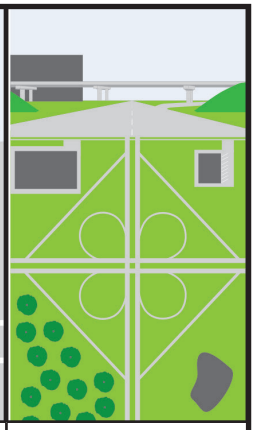
Another example is the expansion of existing uses in locations with limited, inadequate or no infrastructure to support the increased frequency or intensity of a use. Addition or expansion of landfills, quarries or large industrial facilities in exurban and rural areas is likely to have a deleterious effect locally and throughout the Plan Slate Belt region. It is critical that mis-matches between the intent, goals, policies and anticipated outcomes of the comprehensive plan be avoided as partner and supportive zoning, official map, subdivision and land development, transportation impact fees, parks, recreation and open space plans and other municipal tools are created or amended. Particular attention to the goals, policies and actions of this comprehensive plan should also be incorporated as part of individual zoning hearing board, municipal planning commission, board of supervisors and borough council actions on individual land use affecting requests. Utilizing the tools of this comprehensive plan are critical. Understanding what exists now and how changes will affect the community and entire Slate Belt should be the first question when contemplating amending municipal tools and approving individual requests. A good place to start is by referencing the place types chart on pages 42-43. Place types give a community an indication of what can and should be supported in a particular location based on infrastructure requirements matched with land use.

PLACE TYPES

PLACE TYPE					
PLACE TYPE NAME	**Natural Zone**	**Agricultural Zone**	**Exurban Zone**	**Crossroads Village**	**Exurban Center**
PLACE TYPE DESCRIPTION	Undeveloped natural area: • Protects environmentally sensitive areas like forested areas and natural areas. • Parks and Recreational uses. • Limited residential.	Applies to areas of the region where there is a predominance of agricultural resources and uses. The non-farming activities should be restricted to the least productive areas of the farm parcel. Clustering of these uses would be encouraged: • Agricultural lands and businesses/ agri-tourism. • Rural-scale residential. • Agriculture-based commercial.	Lower density, primarily agricultural and residential: • Agricultural lands and businesses • Exurban-scale residential • The provision of public facilities and services to these areas is not anticipated. • Development is provided for at densities between 1 dwelling per 1-2 acres. • Public community services.	Small group of houses organized around the intersection of rural roads; potentially commercial structures, but limited development capacity overall: • Generally, it is a gathering of 5 to 10 residential dwellings with a distinct identity in an exurban area. • Includes areas of existing development to which new development is directly related to the exurban economy and the exurban way-of-life. Uses include: • Rural-scale residential. • Local commercial uses.	Provide for limited development in a scale that mirrors the existing character of a village. Traditionally ag/mining economy, now an active business presence with a mix of uses: • Small-scale commercial. • Residential. • Community-based services. • Local exurban-based businesses (landscaping operations, car dealership, church, local restaurant).
TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS	Should offer trail connections as active transportation to other local and regional areas.	Should offer trail connections as active transportation to other local and regional areas.	Should offer trail connections as active transportation to other local and regional areas.	Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, should be incorporated where possible.	Should offer commuting opportunities via multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.
PLACE TYPE EXAMPLES	Kittatinny Mountain	Ott Hill	Mount Airy	Ackermanville, Riverton	Belfast, Martins Creek
ROAD TYPE CONNECTIONS	Community Corridors, Local Connectors, Local Roads	Community Corridors, Local Connectors, Local Roads	Critical Local Corridors, Local Connectors, Local Roads	Commercial Corridors, Community Corridors, Critical Local Corridors, Local Connectors, Local Roads	Critical Regional Corridors, Community Corridors, Critical Local Corridors, Local Roads

LESS INFRASTRUCTURE

Matching the right development with the road system that serves it is vital to maintaining the character of each Place Type. Use the chart below to match the Place Types with compatible development and road connections that work best to protect and enhance a community's character.

					
Neighborhood Center	**General Urban Center**	**Urban Center**	**Regional Center**	**Critical Regional Center**	**Highway Center**
Accommodates a wide range of retail and service uses which serve the community in areas with or without public services. Accessible primarily by vehicle; little or no residential. Includes small scale establishments: • Convenience stores. • Hardware stores. • Personal services.	This zone can serve as a gateway into an urban center in an urbanized area or could serve as the main urban center for an exurban region. Landscape would include a mix of uses at a high density, but some may incorporate automobile-based businesses. Land uses include: • Office. • Commercial. • Residential. • Light industrial.	Intended to be a compact, densely developed and well-defined area having a strong pedestrian orientation and urban character that provides both office and residential space within multi-story buildings while being compatible with nearby residential neighborhoods: • Provides for the day-to-day and specialty shopping and service needs of the community. • Provides a mix of uses that include: • Office. • Commercial. • Residential. • Light industrial.	Intended for mainly office, light industry, research and development, and data processing, and other job-focused uses; may also include limited opportunities for support uses (e.g., banks, child care), shopping, and other compatible uses at a suburban scale: • Big box retailers. • Office. • Low scale commercial. • Residential - suburban. • Light industrial.	Provide for limited development in a scale that mirrors the existing character of a village. Traditionally ag/mining economy, now an active business presence with a mix of uses: • Small-scale commercial. • Residential. • Community-based services. • Local exurban-based businesses (landscaping operations, car dealership, church, local restaurant).	Highway-dependent uses that generate heavy truck traffic and impacts that are difficult to remediate on-site (e.g. noise and air impacts): • Light or heavy manufacturing. • Warehouse. • Production. • Logistics and distribution.
Should offer commuting opportunities via multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Should offer commuting opportunities via multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Should offer commuting opportunities via multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Should offer commuting opportunities via multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Should offer commuting opportunities via multiple modes of transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Should serve as a major transit route. A dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facility, or facilities, should be incorporated along the roadway.
West Pen Argyl	Wind Gap Borough, North of S. Broadway/ East 1st Street Intersection	Bangor Borough, Roseto Borough, Pen Argyl, Portland Borough	Route 512 between Woodberry Street and Kennedy Drive	Wind Gap Borough - South of S. Broadway/ East 1st Street Intersection	Route 512 (West side of Route 33 Interchange.)
Regional Corridors, Commercial Corridors, Critical Local Corridors, Local Roads	Limited Access, Regional Corridors, Commercial Corridors, Critical Local Corridors, Local Roads	Regional Corridors, Critical Regional Corridors, Commercial Corridors, Critical Local Corridors, Local Roads	Regional Corridors, Critical Regional Corridors, Commercial Corridors, Local Roads	Regional Corridors, Critical Regional Corridors, Commercial Corridors, Critical Local Corridors, Local Roads	Limited Access, Regional Corridors, Critical Regional Corridors, Critical Local Corridors, Local Roads

MORE INFRASTRUCTURE

FUTURE LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

Several key definitions are required to fully interpret the map descriptions, policies and actions that use this terminology:

DEVELOPMENT

These areas have most or all of the factors needed to support growth, such as sewer and transportation infrastructure capacity and contiguity to existing development, and are capable of accommodating additional development. These areas are appropriate for a variety of uses, including major commercial, residential and industrial development. The scale, intensity, citing, infrastructure availability and capacity, natural features, emergency services and other critical components of the public health, safety and welfare must be accounted for to determine the acceptability of individual land use changes.

EXURBAN

These areas have few or none of the factors necessary for development and should remain in rural uses, including agriculture and related businesses, and parks and open space. Housing in or adjacent to rural crossroads villages or at low densities is also compatible. Solid waste uses such as a landfill and/or transfer station are envisioned in those zoning areas, as well as other developed uses which currently are not envisioned in the Future Land Use plan. Where more intensive land uses, such as solid waste facilities, mineral extraction or distribution and logistics facilities, exist within exurban areas, any changes in the scale, intensity, expansion of use should be discouraged.

PRESERVATION BUFFER

These are areas where factors may be present and capable of accommodating additional development. Conversely, these are areas where farming may be the existing land use, and it may be appropriate to preserve these areas for agriculture or to maintain rural uses. The most appropriate future land use for these areas should be based on a planning analysis of the development criteria. Natural resources conservation and farmland preservation are strongly preferred in these areas. The scale, intensity, citing, infrastructure availability and capacity, natural features, emergency services and other critical components of the public health, safety and welfare must be accounted for to determine the acceptability of individual land use changes.

CENTERS

Centers are a wide range of place types that include crossroads villages, neighborhoods, urban or highway centers, among others, each with a unique character and combination of appropriate land uses, infrastructure and connecting transportation Corridors. The character of the varied Center types is supported by the Plan's goals, policies and actions and should be incorporated in municipal ordinances. While Centers have the unique value of providing for a variety of uses, the scale, intensity, citing, infrastructure availability and capacity, natural features, emergency services and other critical components of the public health, safety and welfare must be accounted for to determine the acceptability of individual land use changes. Compatibility of individual land uses should be additive to the overall utility and function of the Center.

CORRIDORS

Corridors are a wide range of road types, from local to commercial and limited access, among others, each with a unique character and each supporting a unique combination of purpose, traffic volume, mobility, access potential for mixed-transportation options. Changes in land uses along Corridors will impact the functioning of these critical connectors within and between communities. Ensuring that individual land use changes are compatible with the infrastructure carrying capacity, whether roadway, bridge, sidewalk or trail, is critical to maintaining and enhancing the utility and function of the transportation network and protecting the public health, safety and welfare.

CHARACTER-DEFINING AREA

These areas represent the natural and scenic character of the region as a simplified version of the Natural Resources Plan, with the highest elevation areas representing scenic resources. Every effort to protect and enhance these critical features should be made to support clean air and water, climate, hazard mitigation and emergency response in the interest of the public, health, safety and welfare.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

These areas are predominantly agriculture and are recommended to remain agriculture. This category includes agricultural land parcels, agricultural easements, and Agricultural Security Areas. The types of uses recommended include agriculture and related housing and businesses, parks and open spaces, and housing not related to agriculture on a very limited scale. The scale, intensity, citing, infrastructure availability and capacity, natural features, emergency services and other critical components of the public health, safety and welfare must be accounted for to determine the acceptability of individual land use changes. Expansion of incongruous existing land uses should be discouraged.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL WITHIN FARMLAND PRESERVATION AREAS

These areas are the intersection of the Rural Residential existing land use category and the Farmland Preservation category. Rural Residential is an existing land use category of any parcel over 10 acres within the Farmland Preservation land use category that contains a residence. The most appropriate future land use for these areas is residential that is accessory to, and supportive of, agriculture. The scale, intensity, citing, infrastructure availability and capacity, natural features, emergency services and other critical components of the public health, safety and welfare must be accounted for to determine the acceptability of individual land use changes. Expansion of incongruous existing land uses should be discouraged.

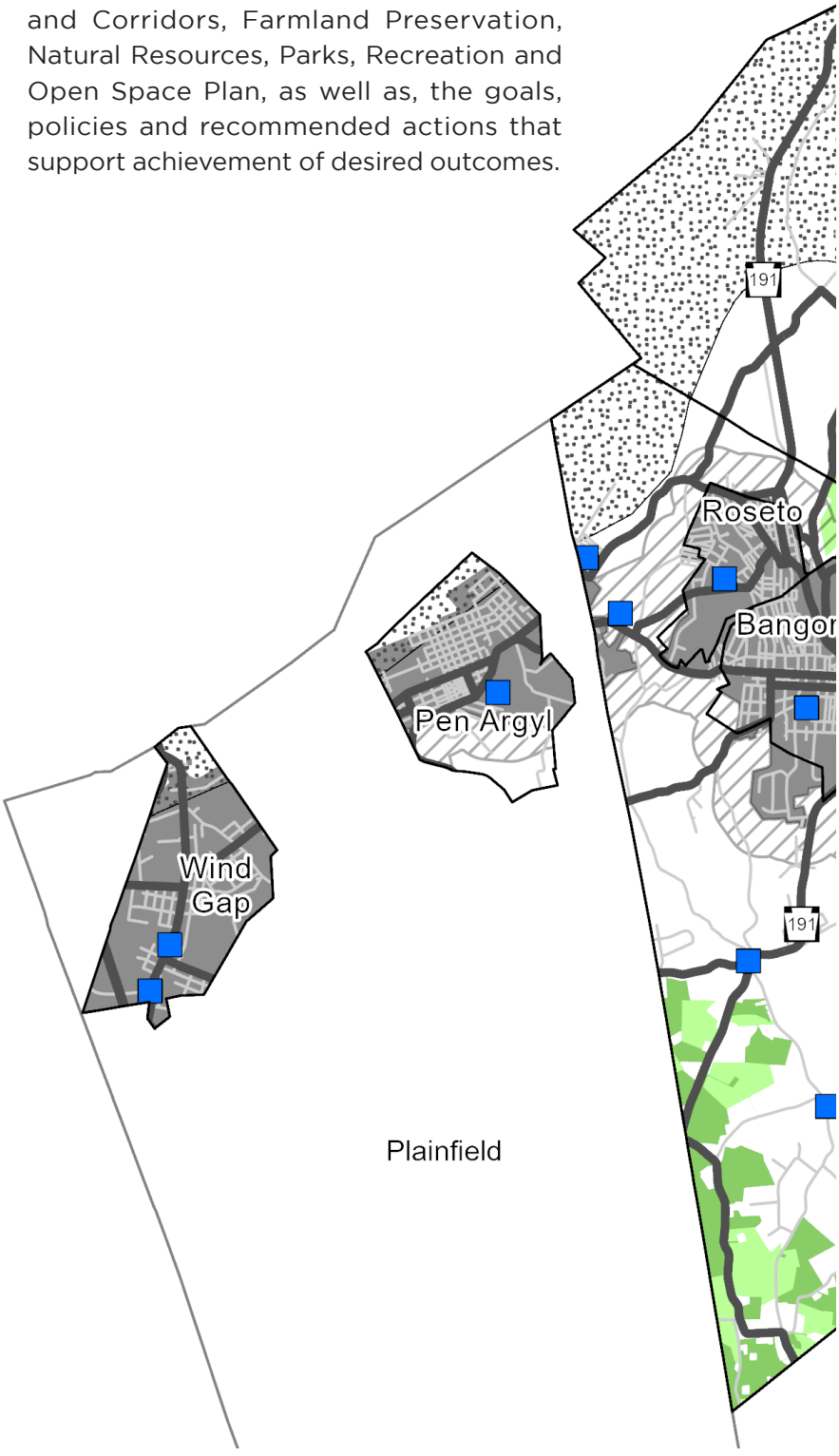
DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

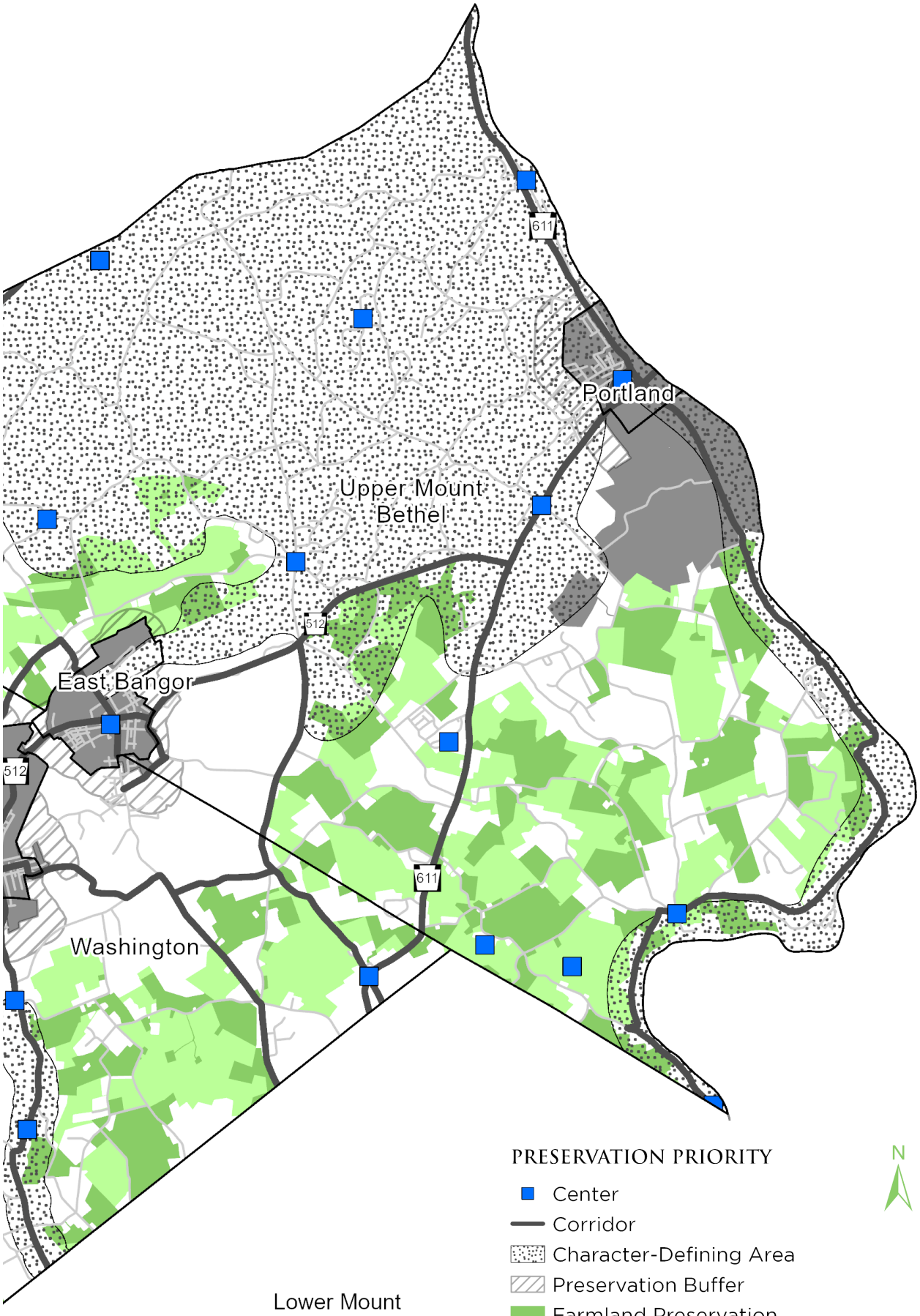
Development Criteria Areas shown on the Future Land Use Plan as Preservation Buffer areas or Exurban areas may be considered appropriate for development if the following criteria are met:

- The proposal is consistent with the conservation of high priority natural resources
- The site is contiguous to existing development
- Adequate sewage conveyance capacity, allocation and treatment capacity are available for public sewage disposal, if appropriate adequate on-lot sewage disposal is provided
- The site is identified in the municipal comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and Act 537 sewage facilities plan for the development type, and sewage facilities, as proposed
- The site will be served by public water with adequate supply and delivery capacity, if appropriate on-lot water supply is available
- Adverse impacts to the transportation system due to development will be mitigated with respect to roads, bridges, transit facilities and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, including traffic safety or congestion, based on accepted transportation planning and engineering professional standards

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This plan shows areas recommended for Development, Farmland Preservation, Preservation Buffer and Exurban uses and should guide development and preservation efforts by private and non-profit organizations, government agencies and individuals. High Priority Areas from the Natural Resources Plan are recommended to be conserved regardless of the Future Land Use Plan recommendation. High, Medium, and Low Priority areas from the Farmland Preservation Plan are included on the Future Land Use Plan as recommended for Farmland Preservation or certain Preservation Buffer areas. In the Preservation Buffer area, Farmland Preservation is preferred. Centers and Corridors located within Development areas are recommended for denser, mixed-use, mixed-transportation development. Centers and Corridors located in Preservation Buffer areas or Exurban areas are only recommended for denser, mixed-use, mixed-transportation development if they meet the development criteria. Centers and Corridors located within Farmland Preservation areas are not generally recommended for denser development. Proposed improvements shown on the Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan are compatible with any land use depicted on the Future Land Use Plan. Character-Defining Areas on the map represent the natural and scenic character of the region as a simplified version of the Natural Resources Plan, with highest elevation areas representing scenic resources. Infrastructure availability and capacity, natural features, emergency services and other critical components of the public health, safety and welfare must be accounted for when considering changes in the use of land that are inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Additional burdens to the community related to land use reduce the probability of the Slate Belt communities achieving individual and collective goals. Alignment of municipal zoning codes must correspond to the Future Land Use, Centers and Corridors, Farmland Preservation, Natural Resources, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, as well as, the goals, policies and recommended actions that support achievement of desired outcomes.




Portland
Upper Mount Bethel
East Bangor
Washington
Lower Mount Bethel
611
512
PRESERVATION PRIORITY
N
Center
Corridor
Character-Defining Area
Preservation Buffer
Farmland Preservation
Rural Residential Within Farmland Preservation Area
Development
Exurban

A DEEPER LOOK AT FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Plan map shown on pages 46-47 identifies general areas recommended for Development, Farmland Preservation, Preservation Buffer and Exurban uses along with Character-Defining Areas, Centers and Corridors. This map recognizes that future land use in the region will consist of both those existing land uses that define the character of the region, such as farmland, open spaces, and vibrant downtowns, as well as future land use recommendations, including the creation of a regional trail system and enhanced redevelopment efforts in the boroughs.

The following set of maps provide a more detailed look at the existing land use patterns as well as guidance for redevelopment and reinvestment, open space preservation, and development of a regional trail system. Also included are more detailed views of transitions in land use, including those that occur at the borders between municipalities. These recommendations are a compilation of recommendations included elsewhere in the Plan, including the Centers and Corridors Plan, the Natural Resources Plan, the Farmland Preservation Plan and others.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

These areas are characterized by a concentration and distribution of retail and commercial uses. These corridors are thoroughfares that, in most cases, include exurban Centers, neighborhood Centers and/or lead to urban Centers.

POLICY 1.1

- ✓ Direct intense development to designated growth Centers in boroughs and crossroads villages and along the Corridors that connect them.
- ✓ Encourage mixed-use development in Centers and along Corridors.
- ✓ Diversify allowed development types in downtowns and crossroads villages.
- ✓ Increase the flexibility of zoning provisions in downtowns to promote mixed uses.

POLICY 2.1

- ✓ Provide economic revitalization through support of redevelopment opportunities in downtowns and along main corridors.
- ✓ Implement a coordinated set of downtown revitalization efforts that stimulate economic development and improve livability.
- ✓ Establish a coordinated Main Street Program among the Slate Belt municipalities.

HIGH AND MEDIUM CONSERVATION PRIORITY AREAS

The High and Medium Conservation Priority areas should be used by conservation organizations and other government agencies to prioritize conservation efforts.

POLICY 1.3

- ✓ Protect natural lands and water resources from development or disturbance.
- ✓ Adopt or amend an official map to preserve high and medium conservation priority natural resource areas

REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK

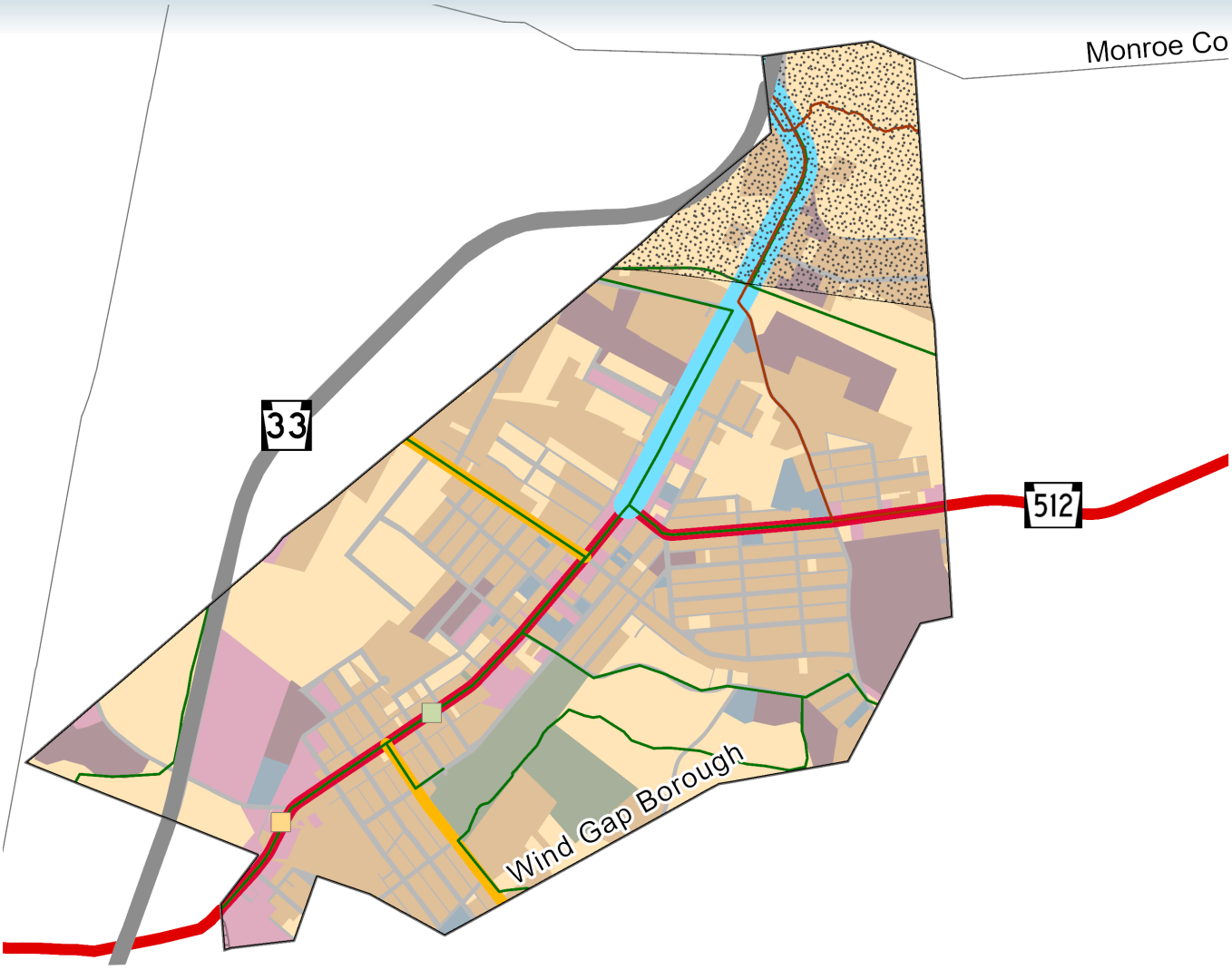
The region has 56 publicly owned park, outdoor recreation and natural area sites. The world renowned Appalachian Trail (A.T.), which runs through 14 states and is 2,193 miles long, skirts along the northern boundary of the region. Additionally, the Northern Tier Trail proposed by Northampton County, which stretches 35 miles from the Lehigh River in Walnutport Borough to the Delaware River in Portland Borough, will connect outdoor recreation, tourism and economic development resources of each community.

POLICY 2.5

- ✓ Establish and maintain an accessible, interconnected Slate Belt area park, trail and recreation network.
- ✓ Connect existing parks and trails to create a recreation network.
- ✓ Adopt or amend municipal official maps to incorporate planned parks and trails identified in Parks, Recreation and Open Space plans.

FUTURE LAND USE | DETAILED VIEW

WIND GAP AND PEN ARGYL



WIND GAP

312

APARTMENT UNITS REVIEWED (2014-2023)

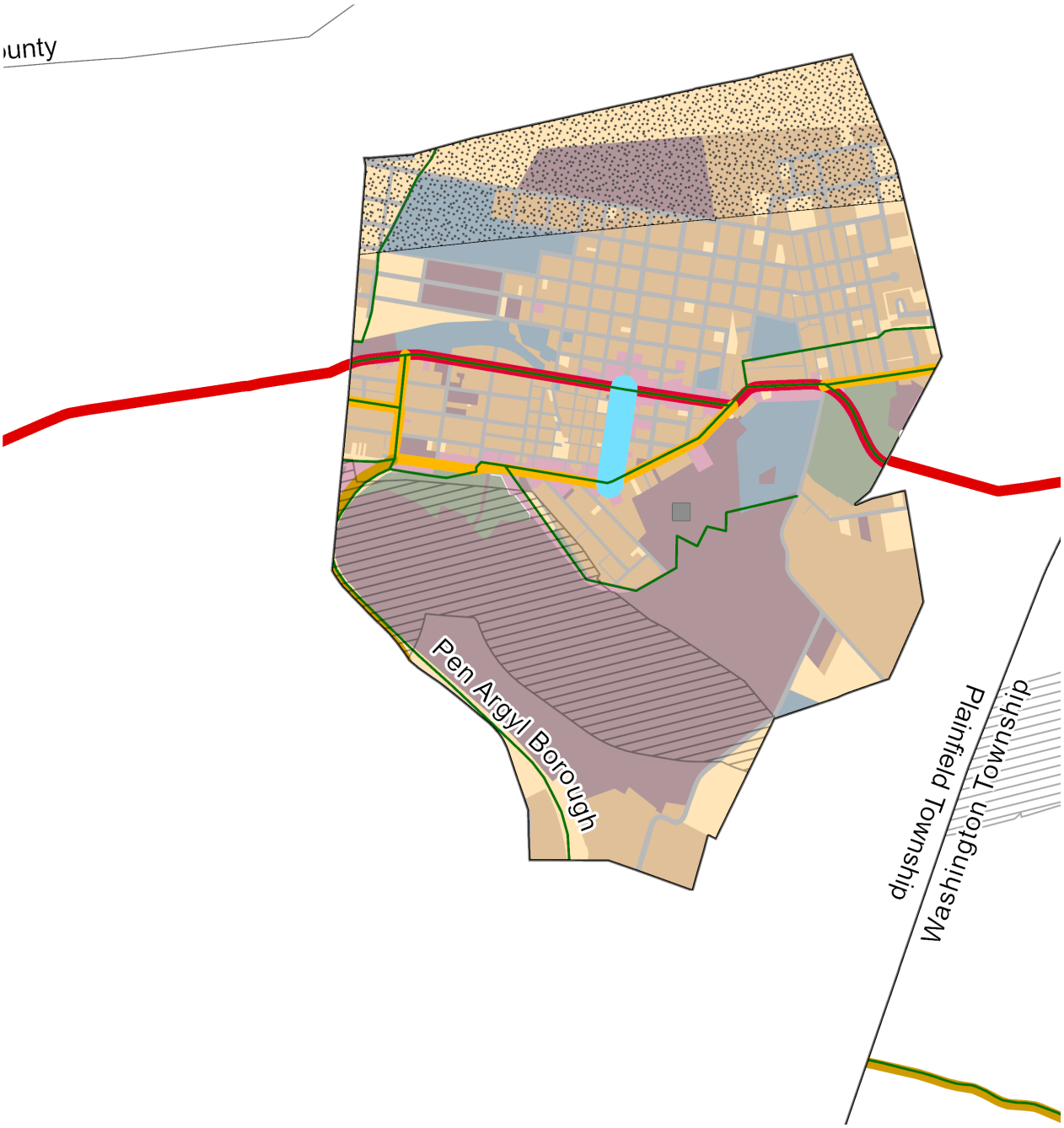
The most reviewed of any Plan Slate Belt municipality

PEN ARGYL

$77,634

HIGHEST MEDIAN INCOME

of any Plan Slate Belt borough



Land Use

- Rural Residential; Agriculture & Vacant
- Residential
- Commercial & Retail; Office & Business
- Industrial & Manufacturing; Warehouse & Distribution; Transportation, Communication, & Utilities
- Parks & Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities
- Public & Quasi-Public
- Rights-of-Way
- Character-Defining Area
- Preservation Buffer

Trails

- Open
- Proposed

Centers

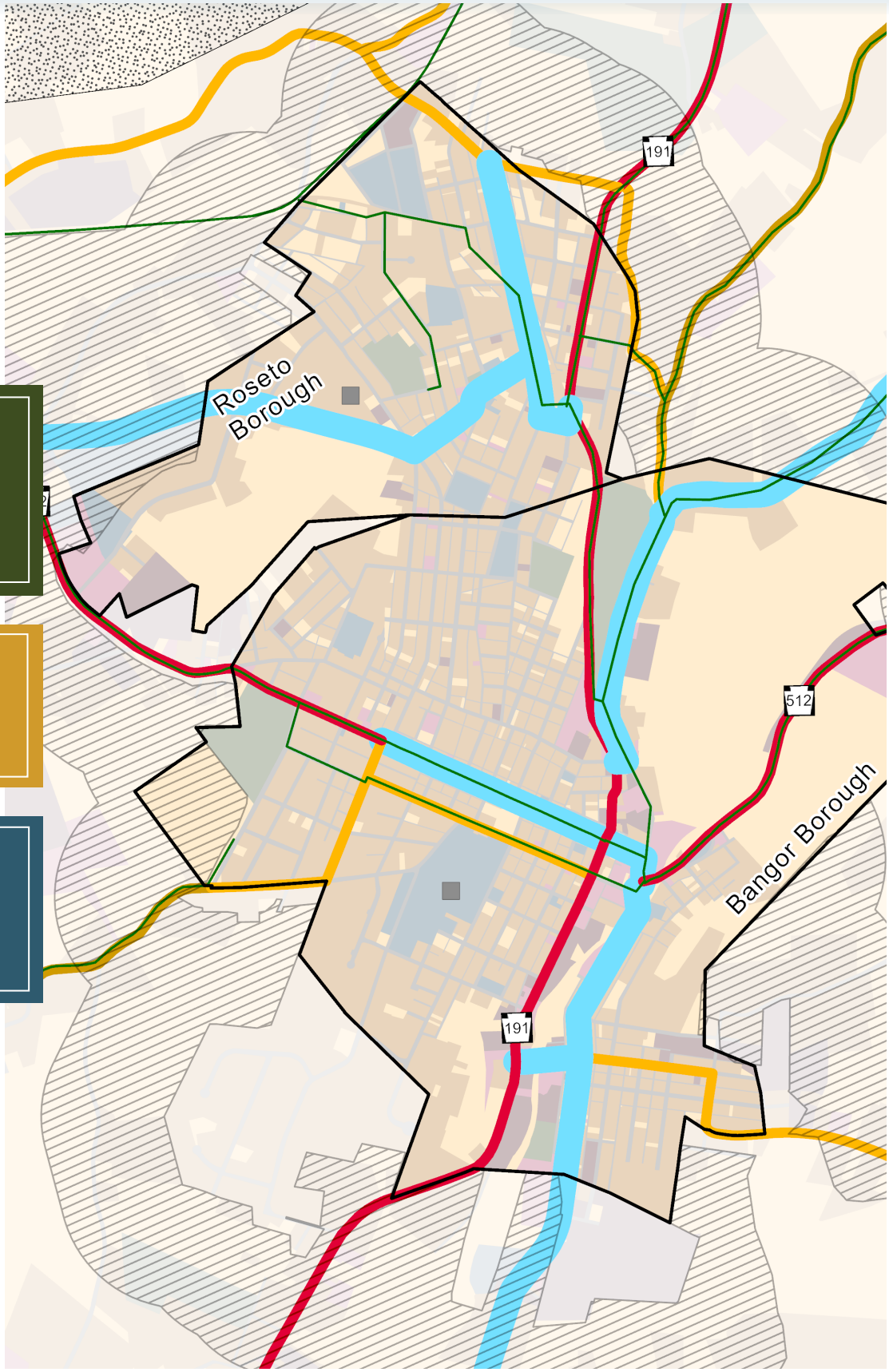
- General Urban Center
- Urban Center
- Critical Regional Center

Corridors

- Limited Access
- Critical Regional Corridor
- Commercial Corridor
- Critical Local Corridor
- Local Connector

FUTURE LAND USE | DETAILED VIEW

ROSETO, BANGOR AND EAST BANGOR



ROSETO

$241,000

MEDIAN HOUSING SALES PRICE

Housing values have increased more than any Plan Slate Belt municipality in the past decade

BANGOR

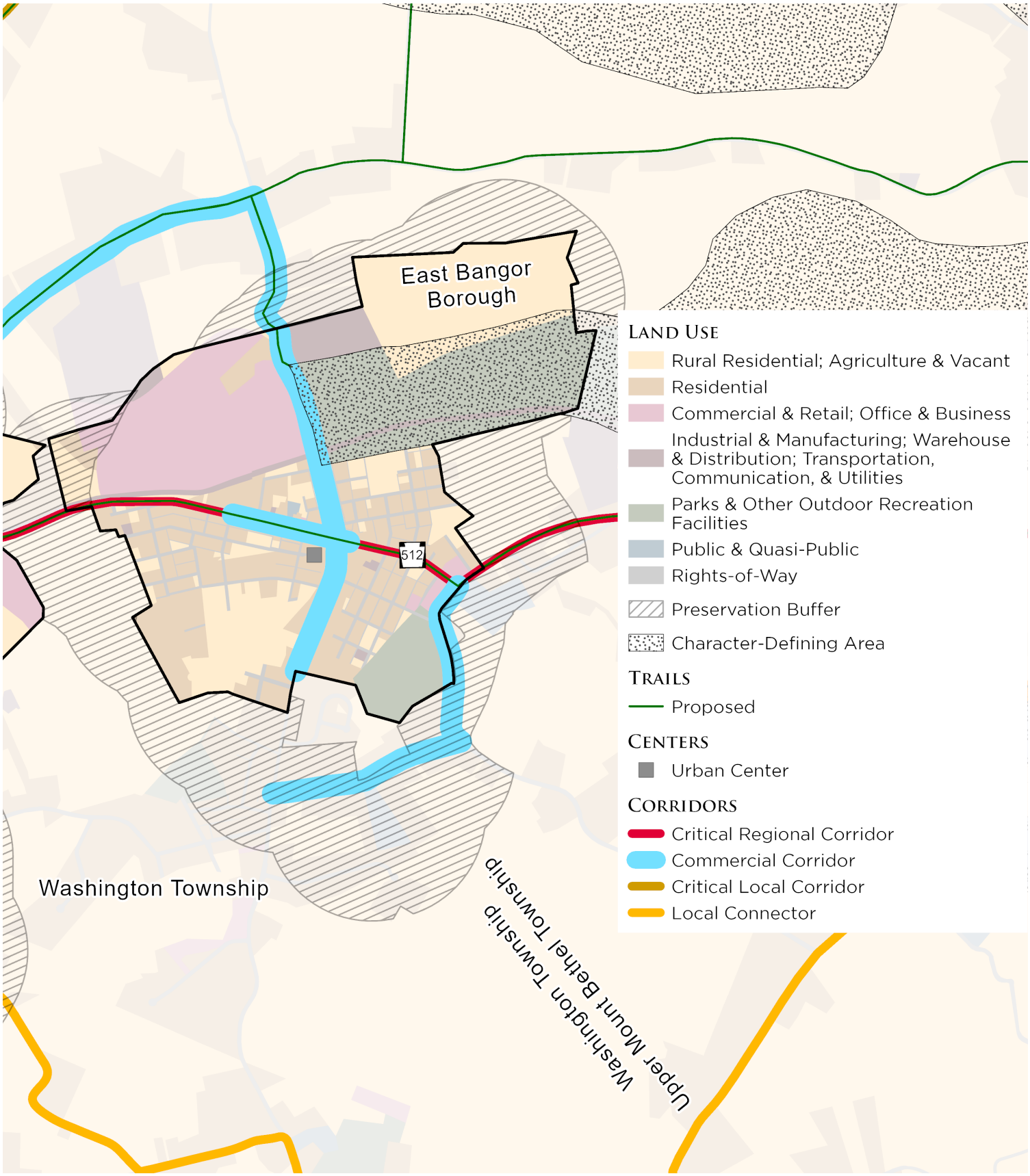
40%

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

EAST BANGOR

20%

POPULATION WORKS IN MANUFACTURING


East Bangor Borough
512
Washington Township
Washington Township
Upper Mount Bethel Township
Land Use
Rural Residential; Agriculture & Vacant
Residential
Commercial & Retail; Office & Business
Industrial & Manufacturing; Warehouse & Distribution; Transportation, Communication, & Utilities
Parks & Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities
Public & Quasi-Public
Rights-of-Way
Preservation Buffer
Character-Defining Area
Trails
Proposed
Centers
Urban Center
Corridors
Critical Regional Corridor
Commercial Corridor
Critical Local Corridor
Local Connector

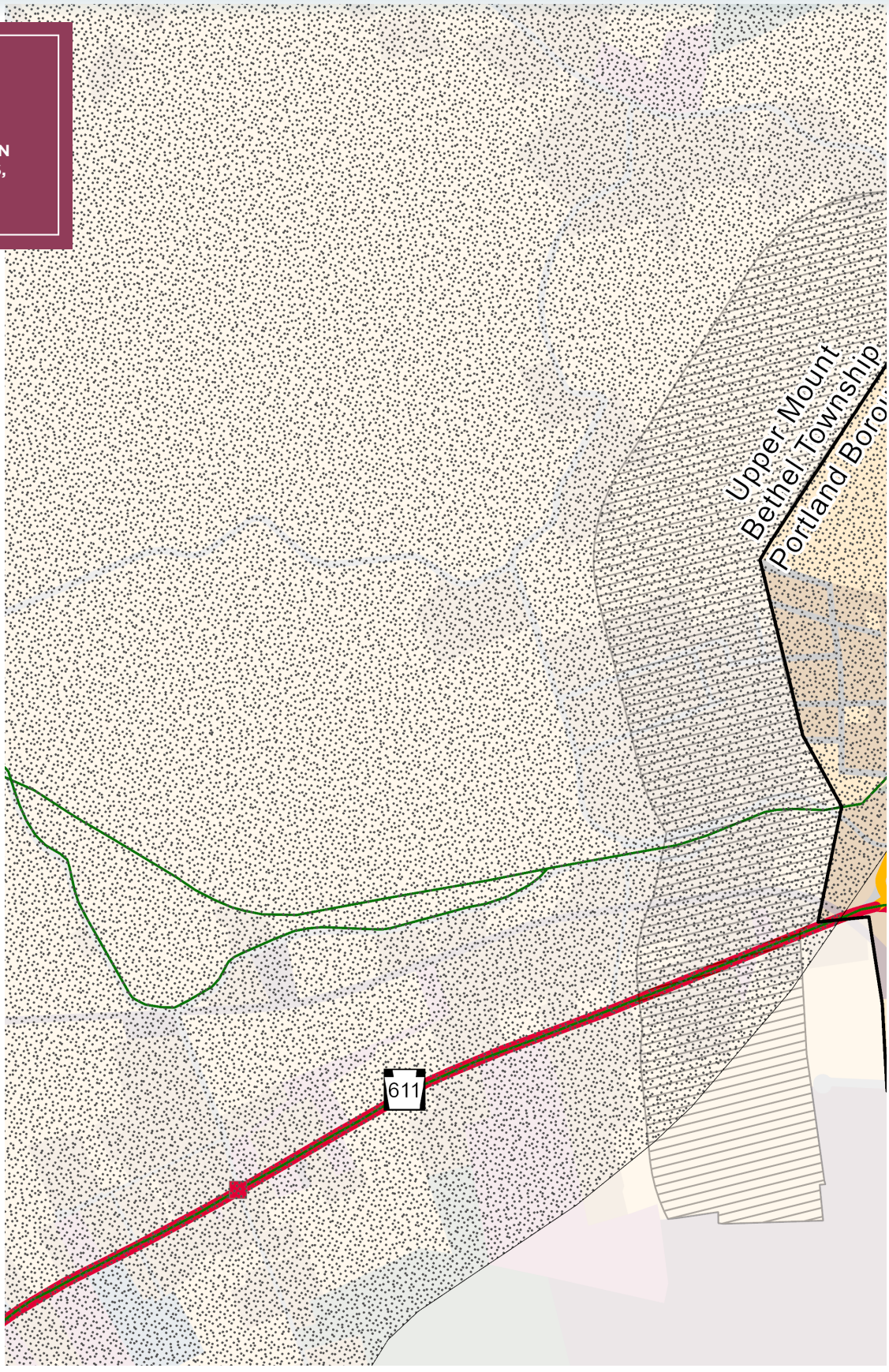
FUTURE LAND USE | DETAILED VIEW

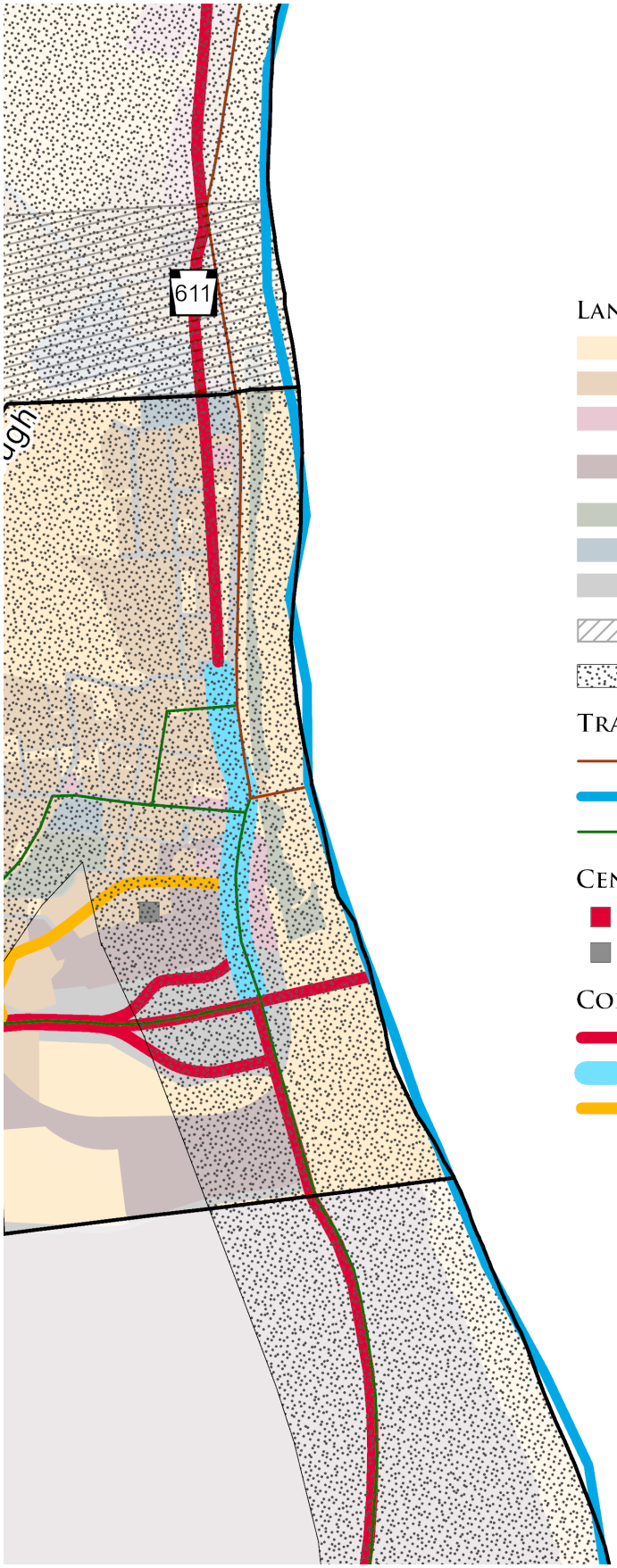
PORTLAND

PORTLAND

25%

POPULATION WORKING IN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE





Land Use

- Rural Residential; Agriculture & Vacant
- Residential
- Commercial & Retail; Office & Business
- Industrial & Manufacturing; Warehouse & Distribution; Transportation, Communication, & Utilities
- Parks & Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities
- Public & Quasi-Public
- Rights-of-Way
- Preservation Buffer
- Character-Defining Area

Trails

- Open
- Open - Water Trail
- Proposed

Centers

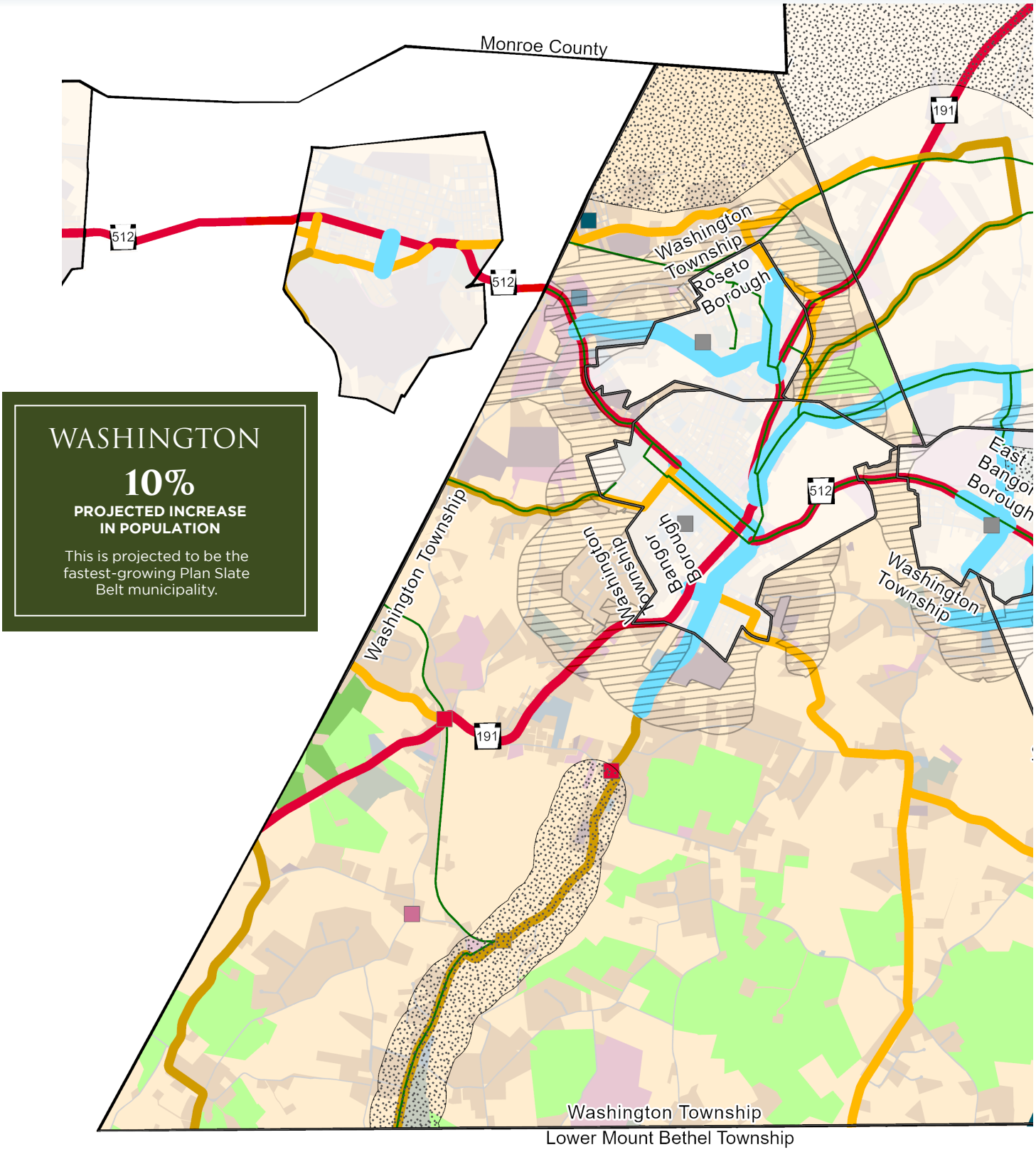
- Crossroads Village
- Urban Center

Corridors

- Critical Regional Corridor
- Commercial Corridor
- Local Connector

FUTURE LAND USE | DETAILED VIEW

WASHINGTON

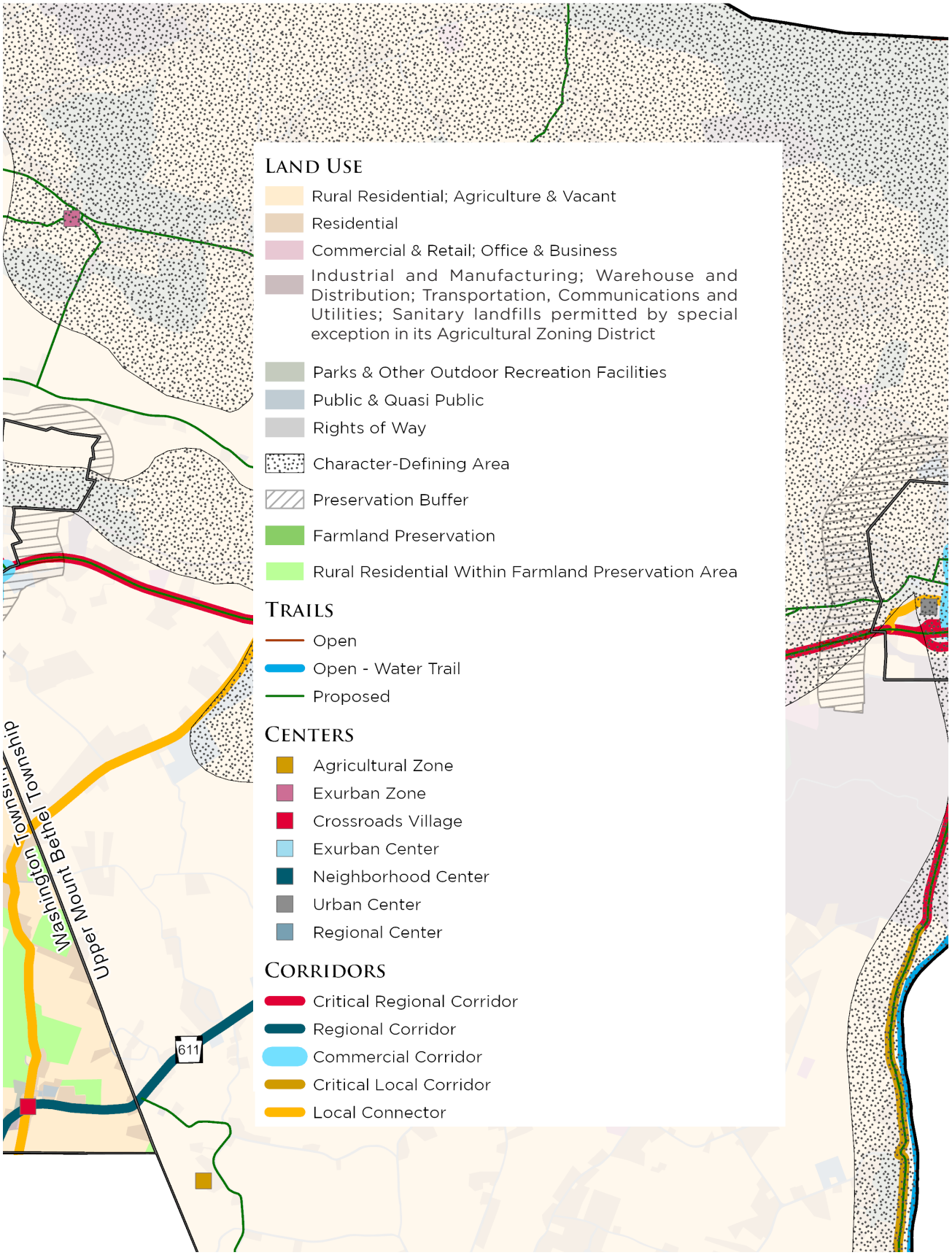


WASHINGTON

10%

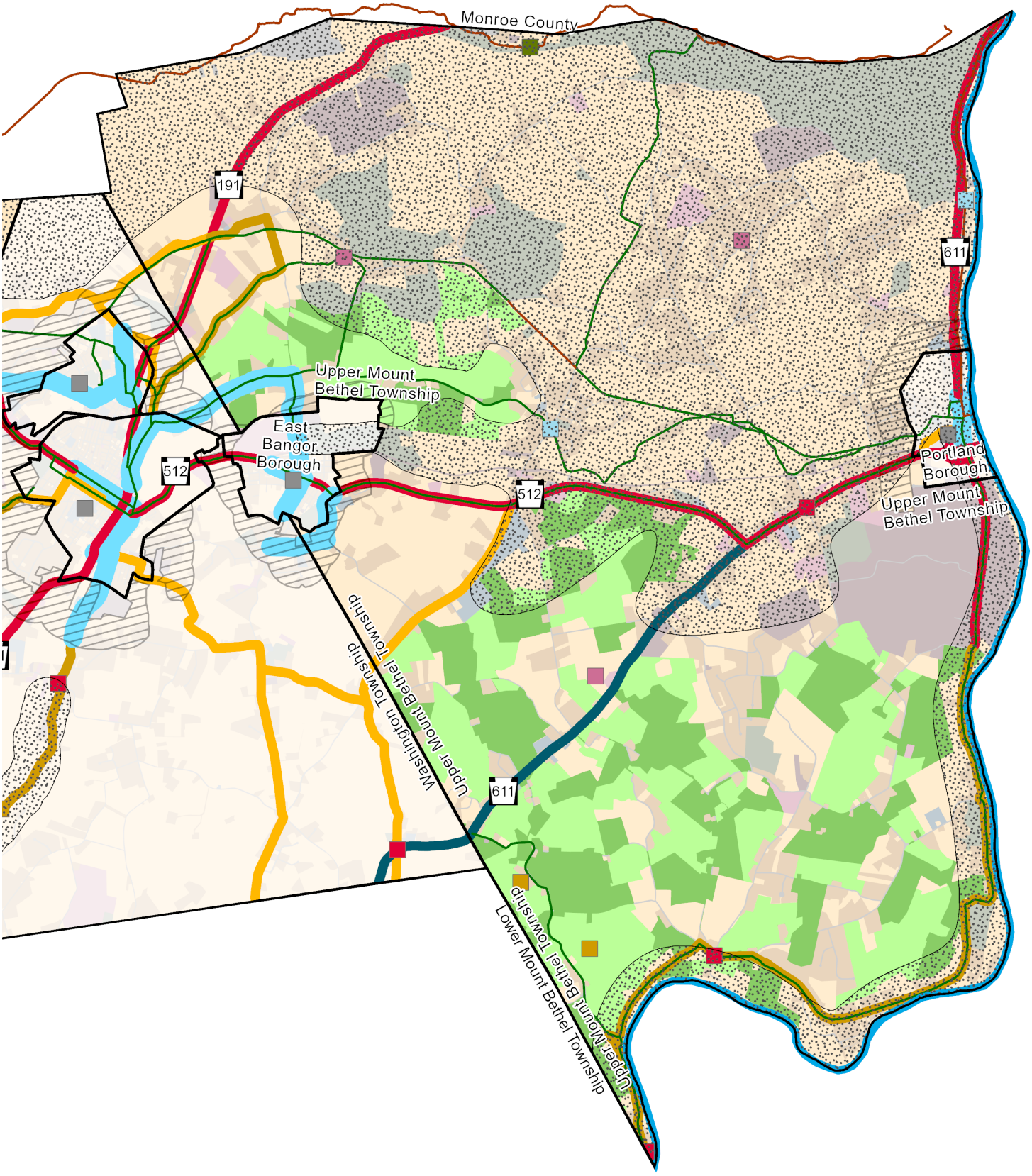
PROJECTED INCREASE IN POPULATION

This is projected to be the fastest-growing Plan Slate Belt municipality.


Land Use
Rural Residential; Agriculture & Vacant
Residential
Commercial & Retail; Office & Business
Industrial and Manufacturing; Warehouse and Distribution; Transportation, Communications and Utilities; Sanitary landfills permitted by special exception in its Agricultural Zoning District
Parks & Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities
Public & Quasi Public
Rights of Way
Character-Defining Area
Preservation Buffer
Farmland Preservation
Rural Residential Within Farmland Preservation Area
Trails
Open
Open - Water Trail
Proposed
Centers
Agricultural Zone
Exurban Zone
Crossroads Village
Exurban Center
Neighborhood Center
Urban Center
Regional Center
Corridors
Critical Regional Corridor
Regional Corridor
Commercial Corridor
Critical Local Corridor
Local Connector
Upper Mount Bethel Township
611

FUTURE LAND USE | DETAILED VIEW

UPPER MOUNT BETHEL



UPPER MOUNT BETHEL

6,430

MOST POPULATED PLAN SLATE BELT MUNICIPALITY

Land Use

- Rural Residential; Agriculture & Vacant
- Residential
- Commercial & Retail; Office & Business
- Industrial and Manufacturing; Warehouse and Distribution; Transportation, Communications and Utilities; Sanitary landfills permitted by special exception in its Agricultural Zoning District
- Parks & Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities
- Public & Quasi Public
- Rights of Way
- Character-Defining Area
- Preservation Buffer
- Farmland Preservation
- Rural Residential Within Farmland Preservation Area

Trails

- Open
- Open - Water Trail
- Proposed

Centers

- Agricultural Zone
- Exurban Zone
- Crossroads Village
- Exurban Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Urban Center
- Regional Center

Corridors

- Critical Regional Corridor
- Regional Corridor
- Commercial Corridor
- Critical Local Corridor
- Local Connector

POLICY 1.2

Promote the preservation of farmland.

Enable the long-term protection and preservation of farmland by a mix of regulations, incentives and public investment.

- ✓ Encourage farmers to participate in their municipality's Agricultural Security Area program to protect farming from non-farming activities.
- ✓ Encourage farmers to apply for agricultural easements through the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Program.
- ✓ Review and revise municipal Agricultural Security Areas (ASA's) per Section 909 of the Agriicultural Area Security Law, which requires review every seven years.
- ✓ Establish municipal financing tools for farmland preservation to leverage with funding available through various county, state and federal programs.

> **Amend zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances to protect agricultural areas, and ensure current and future needs of the agriculture community are not inadvertently hindered.**

Agricultural zoning can be a valuable tool to maintain a block of productive farmland that is generally protected from incompatible low-density rural residential development. However, many times agricultural districts enable land-use conflicts by permitting residential development that opposes normal agricultural operations such as manure spreading and operating farm machinery late at night. This type of zoning also fragments the agricultural base by creating larger, rural estate type lots that are uneconomical to continue farming.

Townships should consider adopting agricultural zoning that limits the number of residential lots that can be created as well as limit the size of non-farm lots to only the minimum needed to accommodate on-lot sewage disposal.

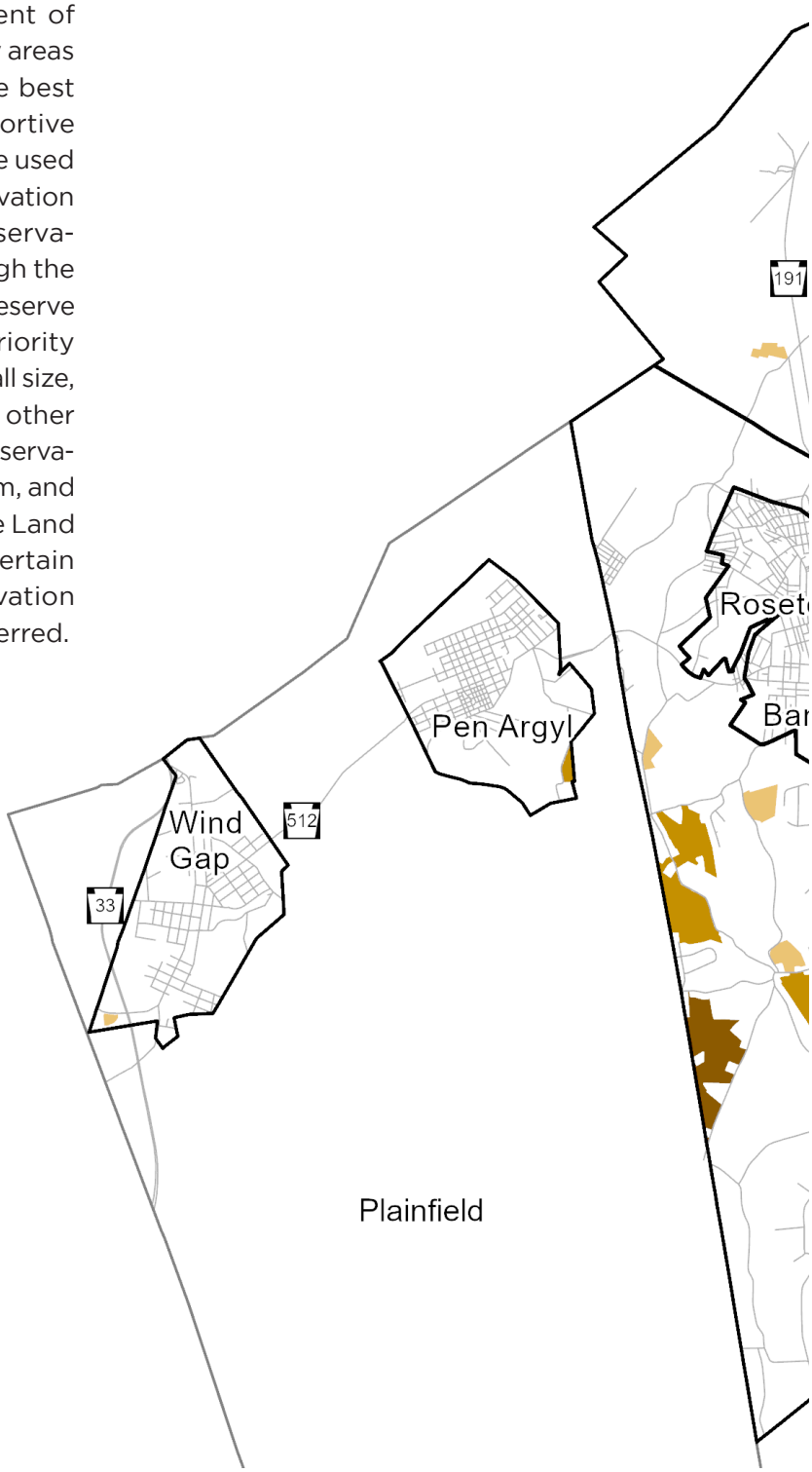
- ✓ Allow transfer of development rights from farmland to development areas.
- ✓ Minimize the subdivision of farms to maintain concentration of farmland.
- ✓ Adopt or amend an Official Map to preserve linkage of working farms.
- ✓ Discourage the extension of water and sewer services and new roads into areas where farming is the recommended land use.

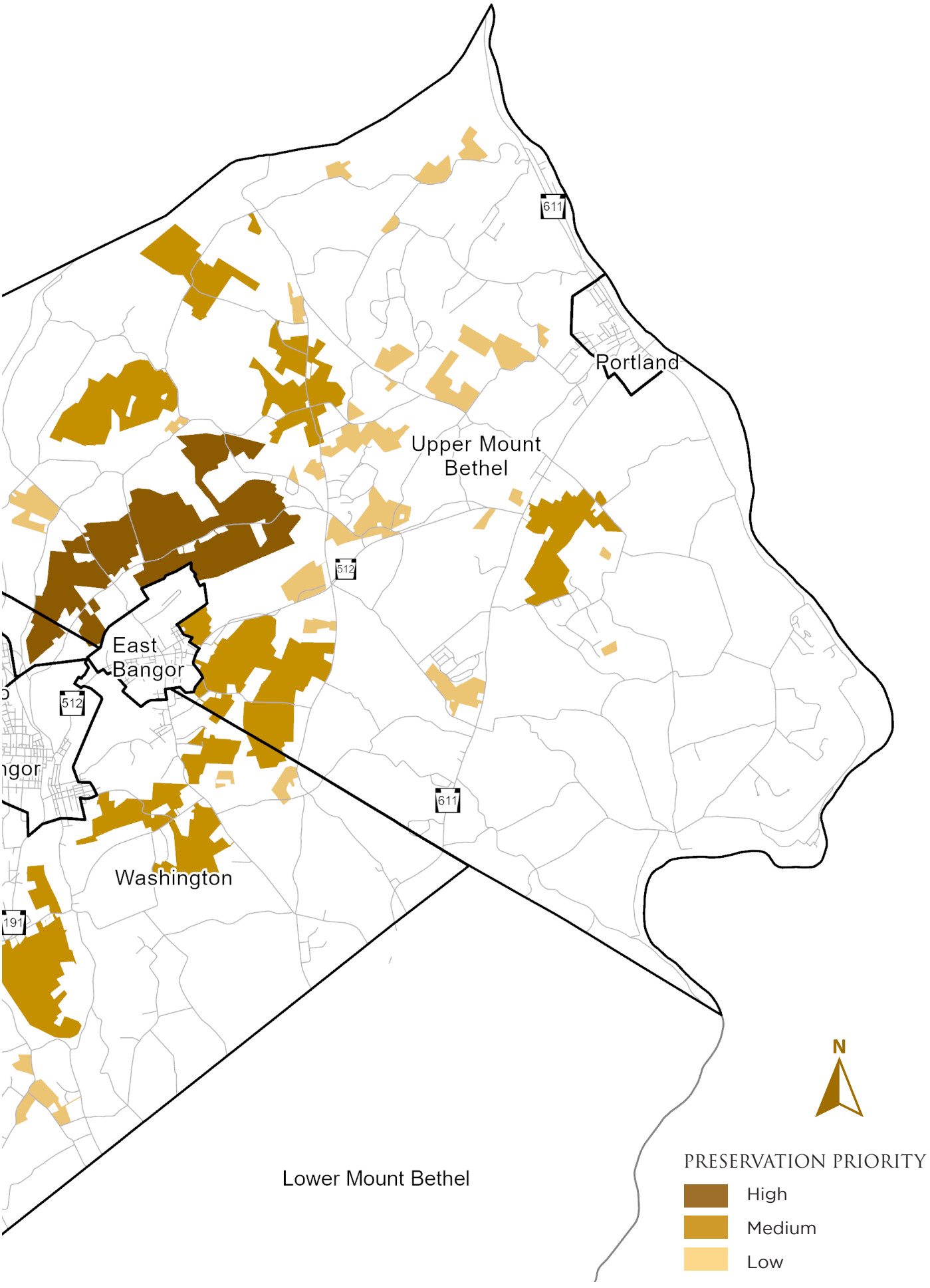
- ✓ Connect farmers to agricultural property owners to support agricultural-based land transfers and minimize the transition to non-farming uses.
- ✓ Encourage the implementation of best management practices and green infrastructure on farms.
- ✓ Encourage agricultural operators to update their manure management and agricultural conservation plans.
- ✓ Educate non-farm landowners on the importance and value of retaining land in agricultural use.

True Blue Farm in Washington Township is among the many in the Northampton County Farmland Preservation program.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN MAP

The High and Medium Priority Farmland Preservation areas on the plan represent the most significant clusters of existing farmland, based on the overall size of the cluster combined with agricultural soils quality. The municipalities will use this plan as an important component of development proposal review. High Priority areas are the largest clusters and represent the best opportunity for infill with farmland-supportive businesses and services. This plan should be used by other government agencies and conservation organizations to prioritize areas for preservation of farming operations, typically through the acquisition of easements to permanently preserve the land as farming. Low Preservation Priority Farmland, defined as such, either due to small size, lower soils quality or lack of proximity to other farmlands, should also be considered for preservation as the opportunity arises. High, Medium, and Low Priority areas are shown on the Future Land Use Plan for Farmland Preservation or certain Preservation Buffer areas. In the Preservation Buffer area, Farmland Preservation is preferred.




611
Portland
Upper Mount
Bethel
512
East
Bangor
512
611
Washington
191
Lower Mount Bethel
N
PRESERVATION PRIORITY
High
Medium
Low

POLICY 1.3

Protect natural lands and water resources from development or disturbance.

- ✓ Adopt or amend an official map to preserve high and medium conservation priority natural resource areas.
- ✓ Preserve and restore woodlands to increase the amount of interior and quality of woodlands and habitat connectivity.
- ✓ Preserve Global or Regional Significant Natural Heritage Area core habitats.
- ✓ Prohibit new development or structures, and control redevelopment in the 100-year floodplain, except as regulated by the Pennsylvania Code.
- ✓ Preserve wetlands and provide a vegetated buffer (150 feet wide in Exceptional Value and High-Quality watersheds and 75 feet wide in all other watersheds).
- ✓ Preserve or restore surface water riparian buffers, where feasible, using a variety of native, climate-adaptive vegetation.
- ✓ Support and promote educational programs on the importance of protecting surface and groundwater resources, especially through the land development process.
- ✓ Manage development, grading and forestry on steep slopes by prohibiting development on grades over 25% and providing restrictions on grades over 15%.
- ✓ Collaborate with Lehigh Valley Greenways partners to conserve critical landscapes and restore stream corridors.

- ✓ Coordinate efforts with local land trusts, conservancies, school districts and the private sector to establish natural lands connectivity.
- ✓ Seek funding through federal, state, county and private grant programs for preservation and restoration of high conservation priority natural resource areas.
- ✓ Educate elected officials and the public on the benefits of conservation and preservation.
- ✓ Encourage private landowners to place conservation easements on portions of their property located in high conservation priority natural resource areas.
- ✓ Encourage public and private landowners to use best management practices in forestry, stewardship and lawn care activities.
- ✓ Use conservation design practices in the subdivision and development of land that involves natural resources recommended for conservation.
- ✓ Establish or use existing greenways to provide buffers between non-compatible land uses, where feasible.
- ✓ Adopt and enforce regulations to manage development in areas with carbonate bedrock.
- ✓ Protect and enhance scenic landscapes and scenic transportation corridors.
- ✓ Examine severe repetitive loss properties (SRLP) for hazard mitigation funding and evaluate potential actions including buyout.

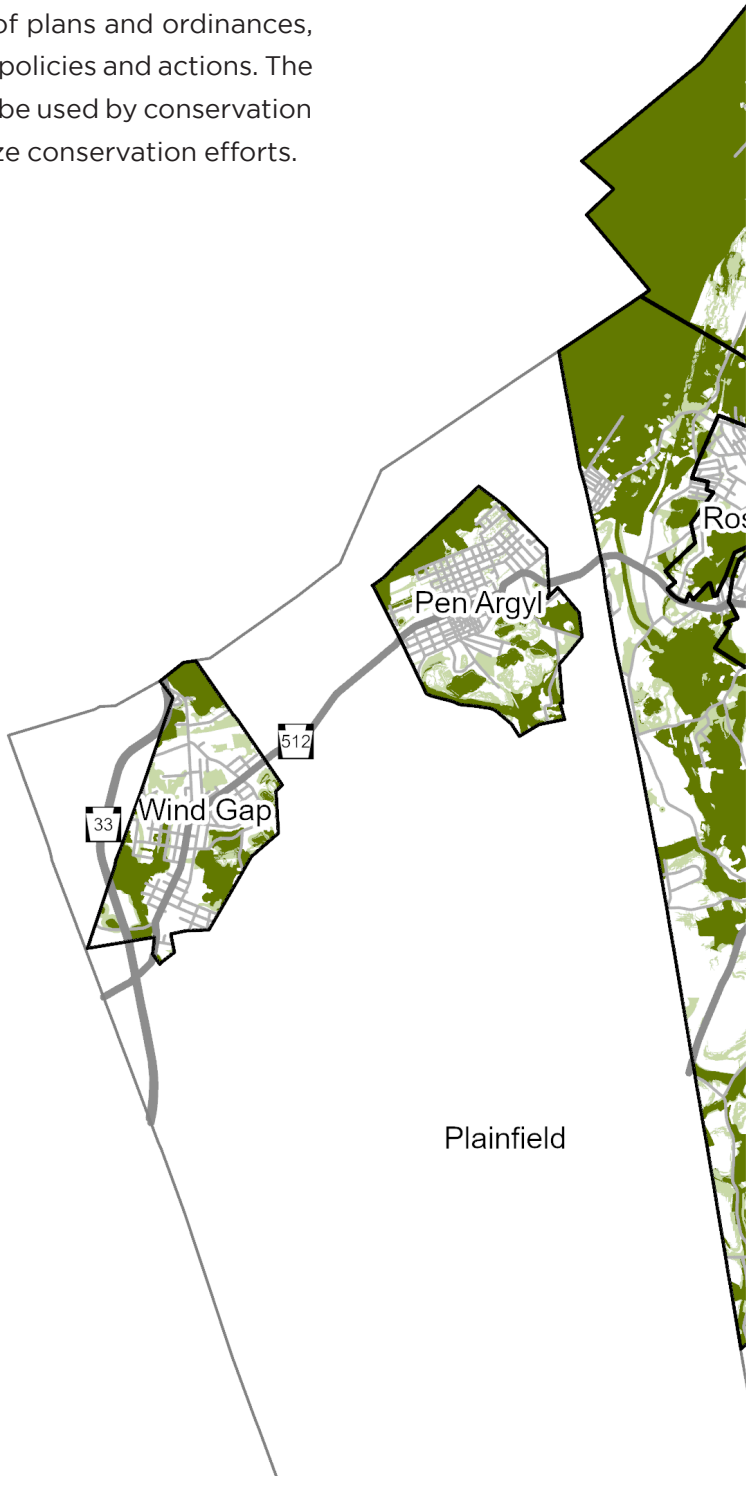
Minsi Lake, Upper Mount Bethel Township.

NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN

The High Conservation Priority Natural Resource areas shown on the plan take precedence over other land use recommendations presented in the Slate Belt Plan, including the Future Land Use Plan. This represents a conservation first perspective. The High and Medium Conservation Priority areas are used by the municipalities in review of subdivision and land development proposals, to identify potential preservation areas within a development, development of plans and ordinances, and grant applications, among other uses specified in the policies and actions. The High and Medium Conservation Priority areas should also be used by conservation organizations and other government agencies to prioritize conservation efforts.

Natural Resources Plan Elements

Element	Priority
Natural Heritage Inventory - Core Habitat	
Global Significance	High
Regional Significance	High
State Significance	Medium
Local Significance	Medium
Natural Heritage Inventory - Supporting Landscapes	
Global Significance	Medium
Regional Significance	Medium
State Significance	Low
Local Significance	Low
Blue Mountain/Kittatinny Ridge Natural Area	High
Local Natural Areas	Medium
Woodlands	
Greater than 500 acres	Medium
100 to 500 acres	Medium
25 to 99 acres	Medium
5 to 24 acres	Medium
Interior Woodlands	Medium
Steep Slopes	
Greater than 25%	Medium
15 to 25%	Medium
Hydrography	High
Riparian Buffers	Medium
Floodplains	High
Wetlands	High
Hydric Soils	
Predominantly	Medium
Partially	Low



611
Portland
191
512
Upper Mount
Bethel
East
Bangor
seto
512
Bangor
611
Washington
191
Lower Mount
Bethel
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION PRIORITY
High
Medium
Low
N

POLICY 1.4

Encourage safety and the protection of water at quarry sites and inactive quarries.

- ✓ Expand open space planning to include former or abandoned quarries.
- ✓ Establish design guidelines for quarry reclamation that create naturalization of these sites and protect the quality of ground and surface water in surrounding areas.
- ✓ Require green infrastructure in any reclamation process to manage or assist in stormwater runoff.
- ✓ Create guidance for property owners to protect water quality and secure inactive quarries. This could include limiting fill to clean fill only.
- ✓ Create or update local property maintenance codes to include properly managing inactive or abandoned quarries.

The American Bangor Quarry, American Bangor Road, Washington Township, PA.

SUMMARY

The natural resources and farmland in the Plan Slate Belt region contribute significantly to the area's identity and quality of life. These areas will face increased pressure based on population growth projections. The Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan will need to balance growth and development with preservation of the character-defining features that make the region so attractive to its residents.

Balancing growth and preservation can be accomplished at the site, local and regional levels. At the site scale, using conservation subdivision principles will provide the opportunity to preserve the natural resources of the site and allow development in appropriate areas. Locally, municipalities can review local building codes, zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances. A regional land use plan that is thoughtful and comprehensive can guide anticipated growth to appropriate places within the region, ensuring local character and an enhanced quality of life is sustained for all residents. These are some of the strategic mechanisms that can support building sustainable and equitable future development. Incorporating regional goals of preservation, regional connectivity and thoughtful, sustainable growth will protect and enhance the region's unique character.

Multi-municipal comprehensive planning in Pennsylvania is a powerful tool that allows municipalities to plan for development collectively to ensure that all land uses are provided for in a way that respects the desires of each participating municipality. The Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan seeks to guide the municipalities on how to accommodate growth over the next 25 years, while preserving each municipality's identity and helping each achieve their aspirations.

A rendering to showcase the use and preservation of the American Bangor Quarry. 71

GOAL 2
A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

 Broadway, Bangor Borough.

Policy 2.1	Provide economic revitalization through support of redevelopment opportunities in downtowns and along main corridors.
Policy 2.2	Strengthen the economy of the Slate Belt with a focus on the evolving needs of business and community.
Policy 2.3	Improve and maintain the condition of existing development in the Slate Belt area.
Policy 2.4	Maintain the existing character of Slate Belt neighborhoods while increasing attainable housing opportunities for all residents.
Policy 2.5	Establish and maintain an accessible, interconnected Slate Belt area park, trail and recreation network.
Policy 2.6	Expand and diversify businesses associated with outdoor recreation and tourism in downtowns, cross-roads villages and along regional trails.
Policy 2.7	Support investment in cultural institutions in down-towns, main streets, crossroads villages and along regional trails.
Policy 2.8	Protect historic and cultural resources.

INTRODUCTION

For many residents, the Slate Belt is not just where they live but is a place they are proud to call home. Its rural feel, sense of community and focus on family help give the Plan Slate Belt region its identity, but residents fear that these connections to heritage, environment and community may be lost as development moves northward. As the region grows, communities want to ensure that the qualities they love are preserved, while also improving the overall livability in the region.

The anticipated population growth in the Slate Belt must be met with a strategic planning and development approach to accommodate more than 432 new households by 2050, without losing the area's unique character and quality of life. With an 8% vacancy rate, revitalization of the Slate Belt's aging housing stock is one important approach to meeting future housing demands. Outside of the boroughs, the housing stock is dominated by single-family detached units, and increasing housing diversity with a variety of options and price points will be critical to ensure housing is attainable and appropriately matched to the incomes of the area.

The Slate Belt economy has historically been specialized, with employment concentrations in manufacturing, mining and farming, and the identity of the Slate Belt community today is rooted in its industrial and agricultural heritage. Since the decline of its industrial base and limited investment in new economic sectors, the region has become more of a bedroom community for adjoining areas of the Lehigh Valley that have seen significant job growth.

As the Slate Belt population grows over the next decade, new businesses and a growing tax base will play an important role in supporting the community services and amenities needed for the Slate Belt's future. Rooting growth and economic investments in the Slate Belt's existing assets is key to its long-term stability, such as by incentivizing revitalization in borough downtowns. Leveraging the Slate Belt's recreational opportunities and historic resources can increase the tourism industry and improve everything from the economy to the well-being and health of residents.

The Dream Apartments, newly built in Wind Gap Borough.

The *Lehigh Valley Return on Environment* (Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, 2014) reports that Northampton County's outdoor recreation results in nearly $351.2 million in total economic impact, sustains 4,518 jobs, and $27.1 million in state and local taxes. The region has 53 publicly owned park, outdoor recreation and natural area sites. In some cases, historic features are located within parks, such as the Weona Park Carousel in Pen Argyl Borough. Parks and outdoor recreation sites in the region range from small municipal parks (Bethel Park, 0.13 acres) to state-owned/Northampton County-managed Minsi Lake (300 acres) to two federally owned sites located along the Kittatinny Ridge — Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge (1,359 acres) and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (1,213 acres). The world renown Appalachian Trail (A.T.), which runs through 14 states and is 2,193 miles long, skirts along the northern boundary of the region. Wind Gap Borough is one of 50 Appalachian Trail Communities along the corridor, which provide food, supplies, recreation and history to users of the A.T. Additionally, the Northern Tier Trail proposed by Northampton County, which stretches 35 miles from the Lehigh River in Walnutport Borough to the Delaware River in Portland, will connect outdoor recreation, tourism and economic development resources of each community.

Walking is often reported in surveys as one of the outdoor activities with the most participation. In addition to hiking and multi-use trails discussed above, walking in more developed/urban areas often occurs on the sidewalk system. Walkability, a component of a multimodal network, connects neighborhoods, people to shops and recreation and workers to job centers. More than 85% of the respondents of the National Association of Realtors 2020 Community and Transportation Preferences Survey consider sidewalks and places to take walks very important or somewhat important in deciding where to live.

Preservation of historic and cultural features also provides economic, community character and environmental benefits, such as enhancing property values, encouraging investment in underserved communities, initiating community revitalization, attracting heritage tourism and strengthening a community's unique sense of place. An integral part of the Slate Belt's heritage is, as the region's name indicates, based on the expansive geological deposits of slate and, to a lesser degree, limestone. The extraction of these resources, which began in the 1830s and continues today, altered the region's landscape with quarries and waste piles. Efforts are underway to preserve and promote the heritage of the region's slate industry by transforming an abandoned quarry into a natural heritage park. Many other historical sites have local and national importance, as documented by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in the National Register of Historic Places as Listed or Eligible sites. Six sites are Listed — Bangor Historic District, Real Estate Building, Weona Park Carousel and three bridges, and 23 sites are Eligible — 16 buildings, 3 bridges and 4 districts.

Mural on 26 Broadway, Bangor Borough. *Artist: Terri Palmer*

POLICY 2.1

Provide economic revitalization through support of redevelopment opportunities in downtowns and along main corridors.

- ✓ Implement a coordinated set of downtown revitalization efforts that stimulate economic development and improve livability. Examples include funding opportunities through the state Department of Community and Economic Development, Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development and other funding sources. Regional funding applications should be emphasized whenever possible to increase potential of receiving grants, loans, and other assistance.
- ✓ Encourage small and medium businesses for downtowns and along main corridors by creating incentive programs for business start-ups.
- ✓ Utilize design strategies to encourage pedestrian activity.
- ✓ Identify projects to improve walkability and accessibility.
- ✓ Encourage narrow store fronts.
- ✓ Maintain, expand and promote Façade Improvement Programs.
- ✓ Identify local tax-incentive programs and funding that apply to redevelopment and reuse projects.
- ✓ Prioritize former industrial sites to accommodate new growth consistent with the overall character of the community.
- ✓ Study the redevelopment potential of key sites in the communities. Conduct real estate market analyses to determine feasibility of new development or redevelopment.
- ✓ Rezone vacant and underutilized industrial properties to allow for expanded reuse/ redevelopment, but limit the land uses to those that the site can safely accommodate.

 Wind Gap Plaza, Male Road, Wind Gap Borough.

Establish a coordinated Main Street Program among the Slate Belt municipalities.

PEN ARGYL BOROUGH REVITALIZATION PLAN

The Pen Argyl Borough Revitalization Plan includes a real estate market assessment to evaluate the residential, retail, hotel, commercial, and entertainment opportunities for the Borough. The goal was to potentially achieve a more active mixed-use environment in the downtown area. Three of the recommendations included:

- ✓ Explore various parking strategies to better serve existing businesses and residents.
- ✓ Evaluate expanding the existing community façade programs for businesses and residences.
- ✓ Explore the implementation of redevelopment strategies for the former glove factory and mill properties.

PORTLAND BOROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Portland Borough prepared a community and economic development strategy in its Portland Neighborhood and Redevelopment Plan. Among the recommended strategies were streetscape improvements including improved sidewalk design and bike racks, and a pedestrian crossing over Route 611. The Plan also recommended the redevelopment of specific properties in the Borough.

The land use component of many portions of the region's transportation corridors is characterized by strip-commercial development without coordinated access or connection to surrounding areas. Often these areas can detract from the region's character and generate significant transportation impacts. Redevelopment of these areas in the future will provide opportunities to more fully integrate these land uses into the community.

- ✓ Encourage reuse and redevelopment of strip-commercial developments by expanding diversity of uses allowed.
- ✓ Connect strip-commercial areas to crossroads villages, residential neighborhoods and regional trails, by requiring sidewalks and bike routes as part of any improvement/redevelopment proposal.
  - + Study the potential of connecting Bangor, East Bangor and Pen Argyl Boroughs with trails that include the shopping complex/Blue Valley Farm Show fairgrounds.

POLICY 2.2

Strengthen the economy of the Slate Belt with a focus on the evolving needs of business and community.

- ✓ Allow for small-scale and light manufacturing in mixed-use districts.
  - + Pen Argyl Borough will explore the possibility of introducing a light or flex industrial district that allows for small-scale industry and manufacturing.
- ✓ Allow for live/workspaces for creative or production-oriented businesses.
- ✓ Support small-scale shipping and distribution systems that assist small online businesses.
- ✓ Encourage business owners to participate in local and regional chambers of commerce to discuss and address current challenges.
- ✓ Cooperate with economic development entities in promoting the retention, recruitment and expansion of employers providing above-average wages and local-first hiring practices.

A mural from the Blue Valley Farm Show, which takes place in the Slate Belt Senior Citizen Center, on American Bangor Road, Washington Township.
Photo credit: Robert Bysher.

POLICY 2.3

Improve and maintain the condition of existing development in the Plan Slate Belt area.

- ✓ Create and implement rental housing registration, licensing and/or inspection programs to enable tenant assistance services and landlord/tenant education opportunities.
- ✓ Review and adopt new or updated property maintenance codes to ensure existing buildings, housing stock and associated lands meet minimum public health and welfare standards.
- ✓ Explore establishing shared code enforcement for the Slate Belt area to provide safe building and healthy housing conditions. Conduct a cost analysis to evaluate the costs associated with a regional versus municipal program.
- ✓ Provide information to landlords to correct building code violations.
- ✓ Inform homeowners about available resources to assist with home repair and maintenance needs.

Review and implement strategies identified in the Northampton County Blight Reversal and Remediation Plan to assess blighted properties and revitalize distressed properties.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Create a registration and inventory of vacant and foreclosed properties.
- ✓ Establish pre-sale inspection ordinances that require sellers to pay for an inspection prior to the transfer of property to stop the cycle of blight.
- ✓ Establish a doors and windows ordinance that levies fines for missing doors and windows on vacant properties and increases fines over time.
- ✓ Deny municipal building, zoning and occupancy permits to owners of delinquent properties.

POLICY 2.4

Maintain the existing character of Slate Belt neighborhoods while increasing attainable housing opportunities for all residents.

Strengthen zoning ordinances and other land use regulations to permit a range of housing types that complement existing communities.

- ✓ Update zoning ordinances to permit diverse housing types at higher residential densities in designated growth areas.
- ✓ Ensure that design standards in ordinances reflect the existing character of development.
- ✓ Utilize Lehigh Valley Planning Commission guidance documents to promote sustainable housing methods, such as Traditional Neighborhood Development, Cottage Housing and Inclusionary Zoning.
- ✓ Permit and promote quality multi-family housing development that meets low-to-moderate-income affordability standards and incorporates long-term energy efficiency features.
- ✓ Provide density bonuses to incentivize the construction of multi-family housing.
- ✓ Review ordinances and amend as needed to support opportunities for congregate living situations for people with special needs.
- ✓ Allow for accessory dwelling units.
- ✓ Incentivize providing a minimum percentage of moderately priced units in residential development projects through density bonuses and streamlined approvals.
- ✓ Protect the character of existing urban neighborhoods through appropriate standards for the redevelopment or reuse of infill properties for residential purposes.
- ✓ Encourage residential development patterns that provide for a range of housing opportunities in appropriate locations.
- ✓ Promote the development and redevelopment of diverse housing types within designated growth areas in proximity to job centers and public transit.
- ✓ Promote neighborhood design that provides market rate and affordable housing options in locations with convenient access to community facilities and services.
- ✓ Provide development incentives to non-profit and for-profit housing providers and developers to create new or redeveloped housing, with an emphasis on multi-family housing, in locations that are connected to public transit, trails or sidewalks.
- ✓ Promote universal design standards that allow seniors to age in place.
- ✓ Share information about fair housing and fair lending practices through municipal websites, newsletters and other outreach materials.

Pursue grants, loans and other housing assistance programs to improve quality of housing and homeownership.

The Pen Argyl Borough Revitalization Plan is a comprehensive set of goals and guidelines intended to foster sustainable economic development, maintain community character, enable appropriate growth, market cultural heritage, improve infrastructure, and protect environmental resources. The Plan includes estimated costs and prioritizes the list of actions. Among the recommendations are the following:

- ✓ Explore rezoning select industrial areas to incentivize more mixed-use developments that will support revitalization.
- ✓ Consider overlay zoning regulations to incentivize new businesses or workforce housing.
- ✓ Review new design guidelines for the Pennsylvania Avenue, Robinson Avenue and Main Street corridors.
- ✓ Pen Argyl Borough will explore the potential redevelopment of the "Quarry site" for a mixed-use development including multi-family and commercial uses.

This plan is a good example of an implementation strategy that is coordinated with this multi-municipal comprehensive plan.

This lot along Robinson Avenue in Pen Argyl is an example of a redevelopment opportunity.

A rendering by PennPraxis, in partnership with the Slate Belt Heritage Center, to show options to preserve and activate the American Bangor Quarries.

TRAIL TOWNS

Trail Towns can be linked to all types of trails, whether they are for hiking, walking, biking, snowmobiling, kayaking or horseback riding. In the Plan Slate Belt region, the trail network can be expanded through the municipalities to connect to regional trails. These trail connections should also connect to parks, residential areas and to employment centers. Expanding these connections and embracing the trails within communities can foster identities around trails and expand local economies.

Local Services and Amenities

- ✓ Rest facilities
- ✓ Specialty restaurants, beverages, stores and farmers markets
- ✓ Travel supplies
- ✓ Bike rentals, supplies and repair
- ✓ Souvenirs
- ✓ Overnight lodging
- ✓ First-aid/medical care

Place-based Activities and Events

- ✓ Historic tours
- ✓ Seasonal events
- ✓ Concerts
- ✓ Events along the trail

Physical Connections

- ✓ Trailheads with parking
- ✓ Walking, biking routes
- ✓ Walking, biking infrastructure

Signage and Visuals

- ✓ Welcome signs
- ✓ Destination markers
- ✓ Directional/wayfinding signage
- ✓ Educational, historic and science-related signage
- ✓ Maps: online, print, and posted in town

Promotion and Advertising

- ✓ Targeted to local citizens
- ✓ Targeted to visitors from near and far
- ✓ Websites, social media, newsletters
- ✓ Reviews/testimonials of experiences

POLICY 2.5

Establish and maintain an accessible, interconnected Slate Belt area park, trail and recreation network.

- ✓ Prepare and update park, recreation and open space plans.
- ✓ Adopt or amend municipal official maps to incorporate planned parks and trails identified in Parks, Recreation and Open Space plans.
- ✓ Require or update the dedication of land or money for parks as a condition for subdivision or land development approval as provided in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.
- ✓ Prioritize park, trail and recreational improvements.
- ✓ Coordinate with Northampton County to implement the recommendations from the Northern Tier Trail – A Trail Feasibility Study.
  - + Connect Weona Park in Pen Argyl to Wind Gap Community Park as part of the Northern Tier Trail.
  - + Connect East Bangor Borough and Roseto Borough to Minsi Lake and on to Portland Borough.
- ✓ Utilize former railroad rights-of-way as links between villages, parks and public areas.
- ✓ Prepare or update master site plans for priority parks and trails.
- ✓ Ensure existing and new outdoor recreation facilities meet universal design standards which integrate accessibility into planning, design, construction and maintenance of outdoor recreation facilities and trails.
- ✓ Take advantage of local, regional, state and federal funding sources for park and trail improvements.
  - + Improve access to existing park, trail and recreation opportunities.
- ✓ Expand parks and recreation programming to meet the needs of all community members.
- ✓ Connect existing parks and trails to create a recreation network.
  - + Washington Township will work toward acquiring a rail trail from their existing park to the American Bangor Quarry.
- ✓ Protect lands along the Appalachian Trail corridor.

POLICY 2.6

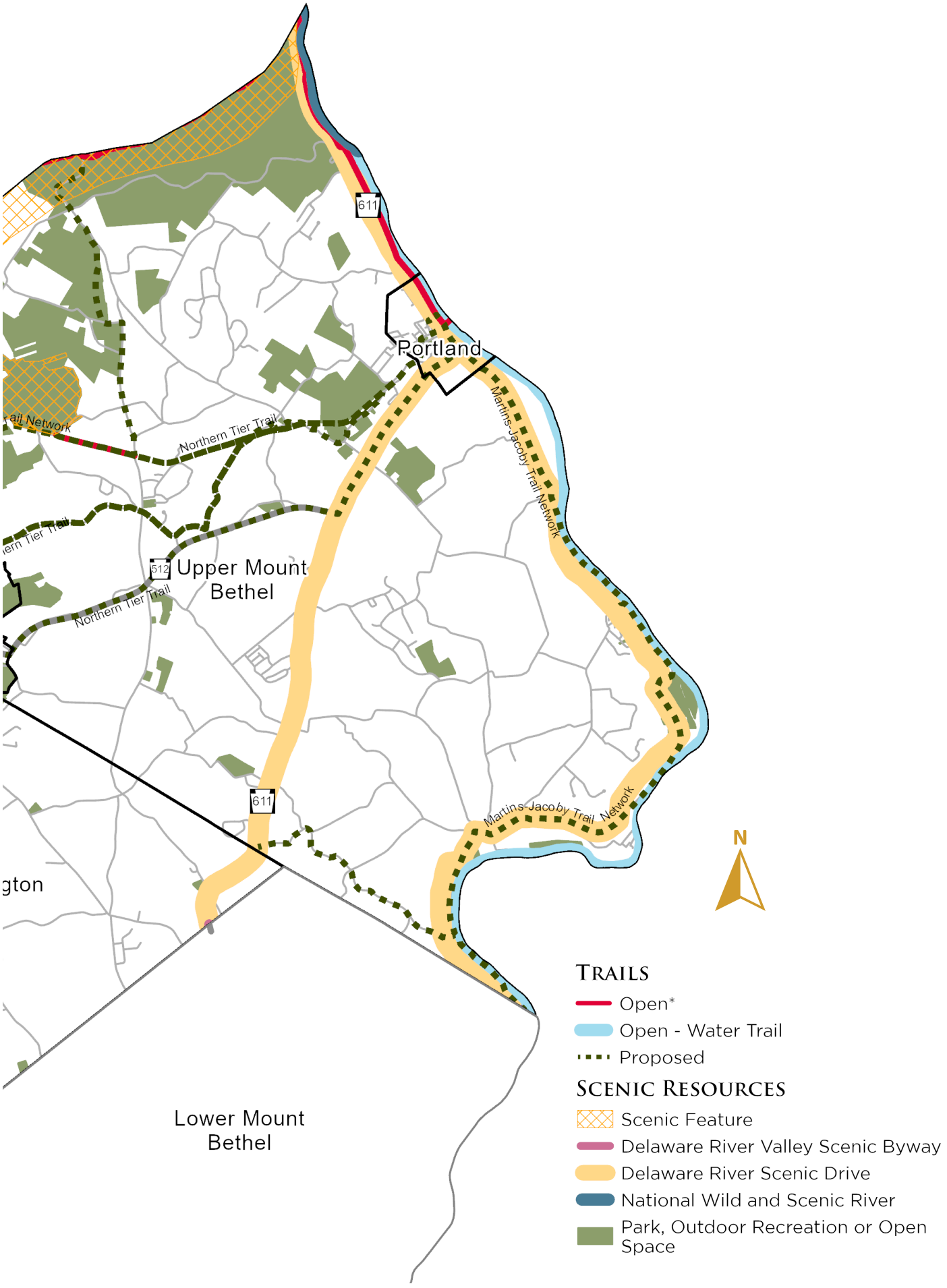
Expand and diversify businesses associated with outdoor recreation and tourism in downtowns, crossroads villages and along regional trails.

- ✓ Update land use regulations to direct lodging to appropriate areas that support local businesses and connect to regional assets.
- ✓ Encourage diverse dining options.
- ✓ Expand services in downtowns and near regional assets that meet the needs of hikers, bicyclists and other outdoor activity enthusiasts.

Weona Park, Pen Argyl Borough

PARKS, OUTDOOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

This plan shows major existing and planned park, outdoor recreation and open space facilities and should be used to guide efforts by public/private organizations and government agencies to expand, improve and connect regional assets. The municipalities use this plan in concert with their individual open space plans, as applicable, and with the Northampton County Livable Landscapes Plan and other plans to establish priorities for funding and work efforts for these facilities. Recommended improvements shown on this plan are compatible with any land use depicted on the Future Land Use Plan.


611
Portland
Martins-Jacoby Trail Network
Northern Tier Trail
512
Upper Mount Bethel
Northern Tier Trail
611
Martins-Jacoby Trail Network
N
Lower Mount Bethel
Trails
Open*
Open - Water Trail
Proposed
Scenic Resources
Scenic Feature
Delaware River Valley Scenic Byway
Delaware River Scenic Drive
National Wild and Scenic River
Park, Outdoor Recreation or Open Space

POLICY 2.7

Support investment in cultural institutions in downtowns, main streets, crossroads villages and along regional trails.

- ✓ Improve downtown parks and plazas.
- ✓ Restore historic theaters.
- ✓ Promote museums and education centers.
- ✓ Expand venues for music and visual art.
- ✓ Develop/expand events that celebrate the history, culture, community and environment of the Slate Belt.
- ✓ Establish programs that encourage community art in mixed-use districts.
- ✓ Develop rules and regulations guiding placement of public art.

Labor Day 2021 in Pen Argyl.

A mural painted on a piano on Broadway, Bangor Borough. *Artist: Alex Blayne.*

The Dentzel stationary menagerie carousel in historic Weona Park, Robinson Avenue, Pen Argyl Borough. *Photo Credit: PennPraxis*

POLICY 2.8

Protect historic and cultural resources.

- ✓ Prioritize locally identified resources that can be used as educational or tourist attractions.
- ✓ Identify key gateways and corridors that define the entrance to the Slate Belt and areas of special interest and explore opportunities for improvement.
- ✓ Identify historic resources in hazard prone areas.
- ✓ Prepare a Slate Belt multi-municipal inventory of historic buildings, areas, neighborhoods and cemeteries that document the history of resources.
- ✓ Increase available funding for historic preservation planning.
- ✓ Encourage property owners to consider applying to add their property to the National Register of Historic Places.
- ✓ Implement the recommendations of the Northampton County Historic and Cultural Assets Plan.
- ✓ Utilize the Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development grant programs to revitalize and enhance historic communities and rehabilitate historic sites.

The Bangor Quarry Hoist, located in Bethel Park, N. 1st Street, Bangor Borough.

- ✓ Establish a Slate Belt multi-municipal historic commission and preservation program.
- ✓ Participate in the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office's Certified Local Government program through which municipalities receive grants, training and technical assistance for preservation programming.
- ✓ Apply for state and federal recognition of historic and cultural resources.
- ✓ Establish guidelines for the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Incorporate historic districts into zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Establish historic overlay districts in downtown cores, neighborhoods and crossroads villages to address strategies for the protection of historic resources and appropriate new development in their vicinity.
- ✓ Promote context-sensitive design regulations.
- ✓ Establish demolition-by-neglect ordinances.
- ✓ Require developers to identify and preserve remaining historic buildings and landscape resources in new development proposals as part of the subdivision and land development process.

- ✓ Support Slate Belt Rising initiatives that capitalize on the shared heritage and culture of the region to increase economic opportunity.
- ✓ Support the Quarry Heritage Park and Trail Network's efforts to transform the American Bangor Quarry into a unique, heritage-based regional park and trail destination.
- ✓ Educate property owners on the value of historic resources and opportunities for preservation.

SLATE BELT QUARRY HERITAGE PROJECT

Through the work of the Nature-Based Placemaking sub-committee, the American Bangor quarry was selected as the best opportunity for an adaptive quarry reuse project based on its beauty, heritage features present, direct access to water that enhances safety, sheer walls that depict the slate quarrying methods, emergent tree canopy and potential acquisition availability. The American Bangor quarry consists of two quarries located east and west of American-Bangor Road in Plainfield and Washington townships. The established vision is to transform the quarry into a Heritage Park to memorialize the cultural history of the site and create an outdoor recreation destination with connections to the Slate Belt trail system. The recommendations created by PennPraxis and the Nature-Based Placemaking sub-committee include a museum and amphitheater, walking and biking trail loops, overlook, water's edge deck, floating stage and trail connections, green stormwater infrastructure, among other features. Existing mining heritage features to be preserved include the overhead derricks, exposed slate wall, buildings and equipment, slate piles and cut slate ledges. A priority of the project is to preserve the water, slate and vegetation habitat features for birds and reptiles. Additionally, preservation of the water quality of the site is of critical importance. Site programming would include demonstrations and educational events regarding the slate industry, provided by the local knowledge and skills of Slate Belt residents. Heritage wayfinding and educational signage would be prominent, and a museum would provide a formal place for slate mining artifacts and education. The site itself would be an outdoor recreation destination but would also provide connection opportunities to Slate Belt trails, including the Northern Tier Trail, the Appalachian Trail, 9/11 National Memorial Trail and municipal trails, among others.

On the basis of this work, the Slate Belt Heritage Center has formed a new subsidiary called the Quarry Heritage Park and Trail Network to be responsible for turning this vision into a reality. This organization has begun fundraising through grants and other opportunities to purchase the property and begin the implementation of this exciting project.

SUMMARY

A high quality of life can be defined in many ways. The Plan Slate Belt communities envision a safe, healthy and vibrant region, with a diverse economy, attainable housing, a variety of recreational opportunities and preserved historic/cultural resources. These characteristics, combined with their sense of home and community, define the communities' desire for their future.

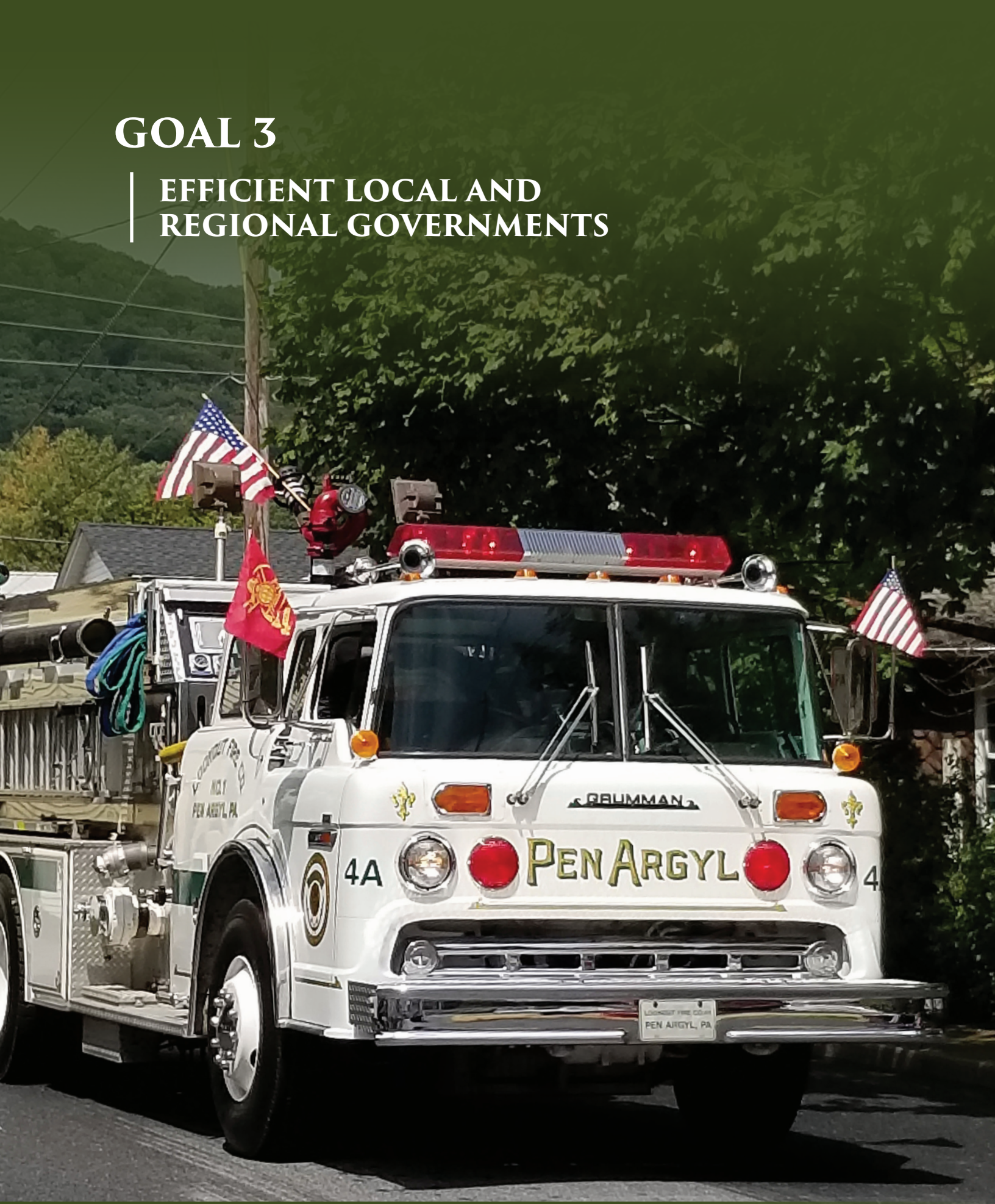
The Slate Belt will need to capitalize on its unique assets to help grow its economy by revitalizing the region's downtowns; protecting and promoting natural, historic and cultural assets; and working with business organizations to attract new businesses. Housing attainability can be achieved through a variety of methods, such as updating zoning to permit diverse housing types for all income levels and providing incentives to developers to create housing with an emphasis on multi-family housing. Providing ample and accessible park and recreational opportunities can provide economic benefits and improve the health and well-being of all residents.

Over the next 20-plus years, the Plan Slate Belt region is expected to see significant growth, which will present challenges to preserving and enhancing the region's quality of life. However, through strategic planning and a strong commitment to working together, the Plan Slate Belt communities can make this goal a reality.

A close-up of the flowers at the Wind Gap Community Garden, E. 3rd Street, Wind Gap Borough.

GOAL 3

EFFICIENT LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS



A fire truck from Pen Argyl Borough.

Policy 3.1	Strengthen municipal financial stability.
Policy 3.2	Provide sustainable and efficient community services.
Policy 3.3	Reduce the impacts of natural/non-natural hazards and climate change.
Policy 3.4	Promote energy conservation and efficiency awareness.
Policy 3.5	Promote environmentally sound and economical solid waste disposal and recycling.

INTRODUCTION

Improving governmental efficiency is a high priority for the region. The Plan Slate Belt communities, much like other communities across the U.S., are seeing their resources increasingly strained, making it difficult to maintain current levels of service. Regional collaboration can bring communities together to identify cost efficiencies, leverage resources and improve services to residents, whether through emergency preparedness efforts, joint purchasing or sharing municipal services.

The majority of the municipalities have their own police department, whether full-time or part-time, with Pen Argyl Borough and Wind Gap Borough served by the Slate Belt Regional Police. Upper Mount Bethel Township does not have police departments and are served by Pennsylvania State Police. Ambulance service is provided by Suburban EMS for all the municipalities except Wind Gap Borough, which has its own ambulance service. Each municipality has its own volunteer fire department. Retention and recruitment of volunteer firefighters is an ongoing and growing issue in the Slate Belt and across the U.S. The longer work commutes and family obligations of many of the region's residents can add to the lack of emergency management volunteers, presenting a major challenge to communities. Ongoing training requirements for firefighters and ambulance personnel can also be a detriment to retaining volunteers. The transition from volunteer to paid fire and ambulance services, as necessary, would place additional strain on municipal budgets.

Across the U.S., natural and non-natural disasters have led to increasing loss of life, injuries, property damage, and interruption of business and government services. Climate change is expected to exacerbate the impacts of hazards. The time, money, and effort needed to recover from these disasters exhausts resources, diverting attention from important public and private programs. Estimates indicate that for every dollar invested in pre-disaster mitigation, $6 is saved through avoided post-disaster damage repair. Since 1955, there have been 23 presidential disaster declarations and emergency declarations in Pennsylvania that have affected the Lehigh Valley. Planning for these disasters helps municipal leaders better manage land use, environmental resources and population to mitigate the impacts of natural and non-natural hazards. The 2018 *Lehigh Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan* was prepared in partnership with all 62 Lehigh Valley municipalities. All 62 communities adopted the plan in a regionwide commitment to create more sustainable, disaster-resistant and resilient communities.

Flooding is the most significant natural hazard in the Lehigh Valley. The National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS) was established in 1990 to encourage local governments to increase their standards for floodplain development. The goal of this program is to encourage communities, through flood insurance rate adjustments, to implement standards above and beyond the minimum requirements. The CRS is a voluntary program designed to reward participating communities for their efforts to create more disaster-resistant communities using the principles of sustainable development and management. By enrolling in the program, municipalities can leverage greater flood protection while receiving flood insurance discounts, ranging from 5% up to 45%. Currently within the Lehigh Valley, no municipalities participate in the CRS program.

Washington Township Municipal Building

Improving energy efficiency of municipal facilities and operations is a cost-effective strategy that can provide multiple economic and environmental benefits, including reducing utility costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Improving energy efficiency and reducing energy expenses can help free up the resources needed to provide and maintain a high level of community services to residents. Coordination among the Plan Slate Belt municipalities on energy efficiency upgrades can provide opportunities to reduce costs through economies of scale. Local governments, leading by example, can educate their communities on the benefits of energy conservation and efficiency. Developing green building design standards in municipal ordinances for new development can lead to a more sustainable, efficient built environment. Green building practices are a strategy to reduce and minimize the human health and environmental impacts of development. These impacts can be reduced by increasing the efficiency with which buildings use resources through better siting, design, construction, operation and maintenance.

In Pennsylvania, solid waste management follows the provisions of the Municipal Waste Planning Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 (Act 101). The Act grants powers and duties to counties and municipalities related to solid waste management. Counties are responsible for the preparation and implementation of a municipal solid waste management plan, which requires approval by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and must contractually assure the existence of waste disposal capacity for a ten-year period. Northampton County completed an update to their plan in 2020, which was recently approved by the DEP. The plan includes a list of designated facilities for accepting waste from within the county, which includes the Grand Central Sanitary Landfill in adjacent Plainfield Township. The facility is expected to reach its capacity within a few years. The Act also mandates curbside recycling programs for municipalities based on population and density. Municipal waste reduction and recycling offers both economic and environmental benefits, such as cost savings on purchasing recycled products and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. And as landfills reach their capacity and expanding existing landfills or siting new landfills becomes more difficult, increased waste reduction and recycling will become more important long-term.

Other communities in the Slate Belt also have solid waste facilities and/or associated zoning regulations for waste and recycling uses. As such, the state requirements set forth in Act 101 and the DEP regulations regarding regional obligations associated with the disposal of solid waste have been taken into consideration with this Comprehensive Plan.

Martins Creek, underneath the South Main Street across from the Bangor Public Library, Bangor Borough.

POLICY 3.1

Strengthen municipal financial stability.

- ✓ Utilize cost/benefit analyses when evaluating development proposals.
- ✓ Update zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances to promote a stable tax base.
- ✓ Carefully consider the fiscal impact of any incentive program.
- ✓ Evaluate alternative funding sources to support municipal services and goals.
- ✓ Increase communication efforts with the county, state and other appropriate entities to identify opportunities for collaboration and funding.
- ✓ Encourage regional shared municipal services.
- ✓ Promote Slate Belt Council of Government (COG) membership as an effective communication venue and organization promoting intermunicipal cooperation and sharing.

The Roseto Municipal Building on Garibaldi Avenue, Roseto Borough.

POLICY 3.2

Provide sustainable and efficient community services.

- ✓ Identify and evaluate opportunities to increase shared public works, emergency response and community services through intermunicipal agreements.
  - + East Bangor Borough will coordinate with Upper Mount Bethel Township to evaluate the feasibility of assisting the Township with police response.
- ✓ Explore and monitor funding opportunities from county, state and federal programs to implementation and sustain intermunicipal services.
- ✓ Consider adopting a dedicated emergency services fee in communities that do not collect funds for emergency services.
- ✓ Increase municipal cooperation through consistent communication, information sharing and conflict resolution within and across municipal boundaries.

Identify police, fire and ambulance equipment and personnel needs.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Analyze needs to ensure that service is properly allocated.
- ✓ Study and establish volunteer recruitment and retention incentives.
- ✓ Inventory Slate Belt emergency service equipment to encourage future equipment purchases that deploy equipment that is needed and not duplicative.

Enhance community awareness of volunteer-provided services in the Slate Belt.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEA

- ✓ Promote all community-based entities in which volunteers are the main provider to recruit and expand upon the current volunteer base.

- ✓ Work with Northampton County to improve access to Geographic Information System (GIS) data and mapping for firefighting and emergency response purposes.
- ✓ Assist the fire and ambulance companies in identifying demographic trends that affect the future recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters and other emergency services providers.
- ✓ Ensure through the land development review process that new development provides adequate access for fire and emergency responders.
- ✓ Continue to support the coordination of emergency services activities among the volunteer fire companies, Northampton County, State Police and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.
- ✓ Support efforts to maintain the inter-operability of the 9-1-1 system.
- ✓ Ensure that water systems installed to serve new development have the capacity to provide fire protection.
- ✓ Encourage fire companies and emergency responders to offer public education and awareness programs that advise residents to have strategies in place for self-reliance until responders can report to the scene of an emergency, such as a fire or an extended power outage.
- ✓ Work with Northampton County Emergency Management Services (NCEMS) to ensure that locations for new emergency shelters are identified as needed, based on population growth.
- ✓ Assist the NCEMS to ensure that all emergency services providers have adequate access to new development projects.
- ✓ Monitor legislation that would require payment by municipalities for State Police services to local governments to assist in determining the best way of delivering police protection services in the future.
- ✓ Encourage and facilitate collaboration and coordination among police services providers to increase efficiency and maximize levels of service.

POLICY 3.3

Reduce the impacts of natural/non-natural hazards and climate change.

- ✓ Continue to participate in updates to the Lehigh Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- ✓ Coordinate with local, state and federal emergency management agencies to identify potential funding sources for mitigation actions.
- ✓ Create a forum for emergency services communication to discuss emergency services amongst the municipal governments and other stakeholders such as railroad companies, utility companies, the County and others.
- ✓ Prioritize and implement mitigation actions as funding becomes available.
- ✓ Consider participating in the federal Community Rating System program.
- ✓ Provide education/outreach on climate change and hazard impacts and actions to reduce those impacts.
- ✓ Support regional climate action planning efforts.

Integrate hazard mitigation planning into municipal plans, programs and ordinances.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Strengthen regulations to reduce climate change and hazard impacts.
- ✓ Preserve and enhance the effectiveness of natural resources to provide resiliency benefits.
- ✓ Incorporate mitigation actions into capital improvement plans.

Encourage utility companies to perform annual tree and vegetation management activities.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEA

- ✓ Conduct municipal and utility company meetings to discuss areas of concern along utility rights-of-way to eliminate weather event downed trees across vital infrastructure connections for electricity, internet and communications.

- ✓ Coordinate with emergency management providers, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and Northampton County on best approaches to mitigate impacts of traffic disruption.
- ✓ Implement and maintain flood control measures on roadways in flood prone areas.

Strengthen existing infrastructure to be more disaster resilient.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEA

- ✓ Coordinate with fire department personnel and public works officials to evaluate infrastructure requirements to meet fire hydrant flow needs and assess adequate fire hydrant placement in locations with insufficient fire-fighting infrastructure.

Jacoby Creek Bridge, Portland Borough

POLICY 3.4

Promote energy conservation and efficiency awareness.

- ✓ Incorporate green building and development requirements in subdivision and zoning ordinances.
- ✓ Conduct an energy audit of municipal facilities to identify opportunities for increased energy efficiency.
  - + The City of Bethlehem has recently adopted a Climate Action Plan that details how an energy audit of municipal facilities would be conducted.
- ✓ Incorporate energy efficiency practices in municipal buildings and facilities.
- ✓ Educate the public on the importance and benefits of energy conservation and efficiency.

POLICY 3.5

Promote environmentally sound and economical solid waste disposal and recycling.

- ✓ Reduce municipal waste generation by reducing paper usage and buying products with less packaging and in bulk, where feasible.
- ✓ Encourage and implement the use of recycled products whenever possible.
- ✓ Promote increased participation in residential and commercial/industrial recycling and reuse of materials.
- ✓ Coordinate with Northampton County and promote County household hazardous waste drop-off events.

Welcome to Bangor Sign, Bangor Borough.

SUMMARY

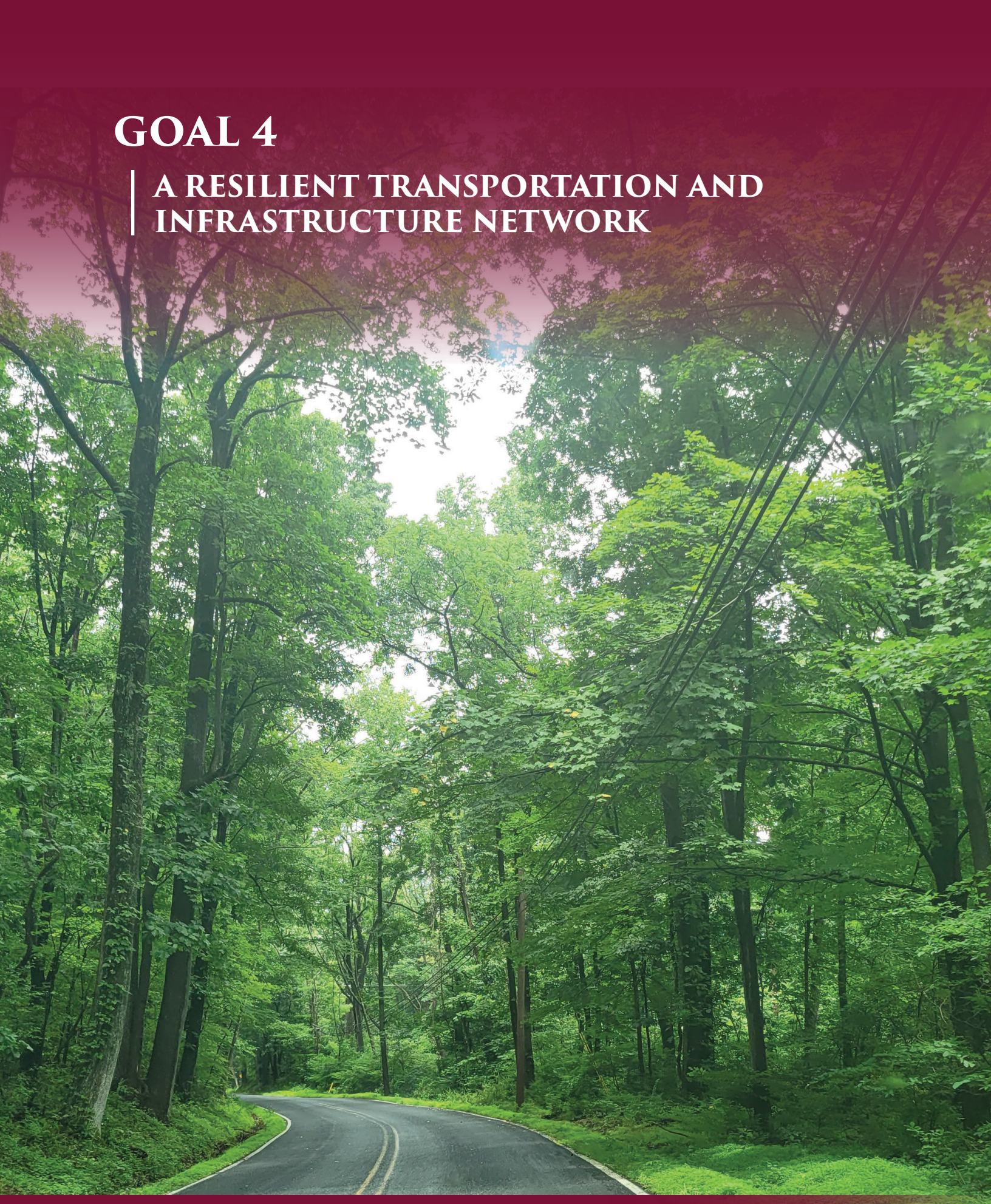
Many of the challenges facing the Plan Slate Belt municipalities today are regional in nature, from providing reliable emergency and community services for residents to reducing impacts from hazards to natural resource protection. As the region continues to grow, municipal budgets will become increasingly stressed. To address these and other challenges, the communities will need to look beyond their municipal boundaries and work together, and this multi-municipal planning effort can play a key role in finding efficiencies by entering into cross-municipal purchasing agreements and sharing costs for such things as fire, ambulance and even municipal services.

Multi-municipal comprehensive plans provide a comprehensive, efficient and coordinated approach to planning and development. With county, state and federal resources increasingly limited, shared regional priorities and resources will increase funding options and present new opportunities for a more sustainable Slate Belt.

A police vehicle for the borough of Portland.

GOAL 4

A RESILIENT TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK



Fox Gap Road, Upper Mount Bethel Township.

Policy 4.1	Provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network for the efficient movement of people, services and goods.
Policy 4.2	Provide a transportation network that safely and efficiently accommodates freight traffic, while preserving community character.
Policy 4.3	Provide and promote safe and convenient walking and biking routes to neighborhoods, popular destinations, schools trail networks and parks.
Policy 4.4	Improve transit service in the Slate Belt area.
Policy 4.5	Identify and maximize transportation infrastructure funding opportunities.
Policy 4.6	Provide safe and reliable sewage disposal and water supply for all persons.
Policy 4.7	Coordinate economical, efficient sewage disposal and water service with existing and future development.
Policy 4.8	Manage the rate, volume and quality of storm runoff.
Policy 4.9	Support new energy and next generation communication technologies.

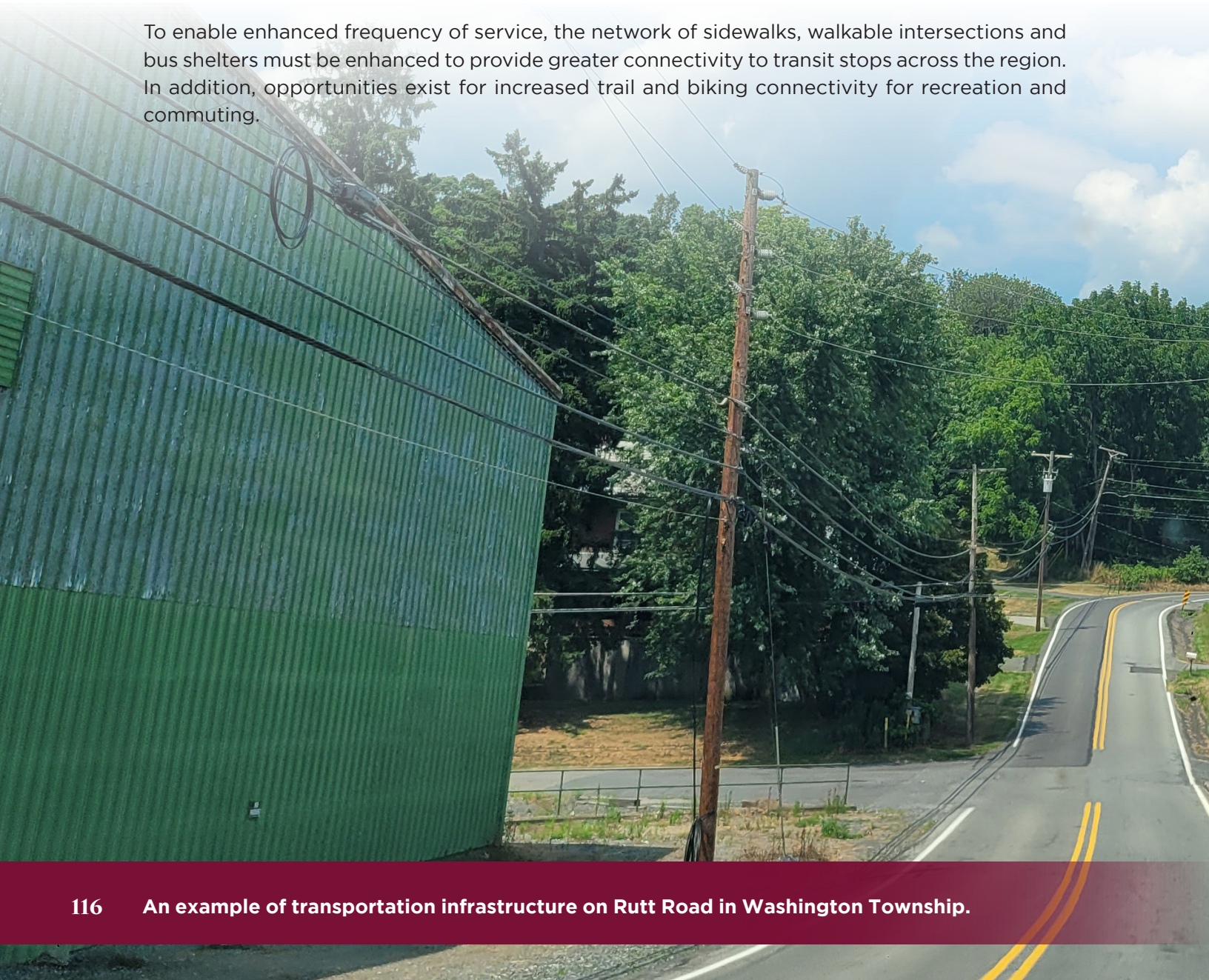
INTRODUCTION

The quality of the Plan Slate Belt region's infrastructure network has a tremendous impact on how residents get to work, feed their families, power their homes, deal with flood risks and access information.

The system of roads, water and sewer services, utilities and even internet access provide the foundation for how Slate Belt residents live, work and recreate, and resilient transportation and municipal infrastructure networks are vital to mitigating stress on the systems from economic development and population growth. As the Slate Belt grows and traffic volumes and freight development impacts increase, the region must work proactively to maintain and improve the aging infrastructure system.

Route 512 serves as the region's transportation backbone, connecting Route 33 in the west, Route 191 in the center and Route 611 in the east. With the sidewalk and transit network concentrated in the boroughs, bus service relies on Route 512's connectivity.

To enable enhanced frequency of service, the network of sidewalks, walkable intersections and bus shelters must be enhanced to provide greater connectivity to transit stops across the region. In addition, opportunities exist for increased trail and biking connectivity for recreation and commuting.



 An example of transportation infrastructure on Rutt Road in Washington Township.

A safe and reliable water supply and environmentally sound sewage disposal are essential to the health, safety and welfare of Slate Belt residents. As sewer and water systems age, their replacement or reconstruction will need to be planned for in a proactive strategic timeline as resources allow. Similarly, aging stormwater infrastructure and new regulations for municipalities to manage both the quantity and quality of stormwater discharges will require robust planning for control measures and will have significant fiscal impacts on Slate Belt communities.

The built infrastructure environment is the skeleton that holds municipalities together along with the connectivity of the entire Slate Belt, ensuring quality of life and safety. Planning for improvement, sustainability and integration of new construction into the transportation network should be an essential focus for all municipalities, infrastructure owners and development proposals.

The goals, policies and actions enable sound infrastructure planning, while providing opportunities to balance and achieve growth or improvement for safe and efficient modes of transportation as well as new or upgraded utility infrastructure for the future of the Slate Belt, while respecting the history and unique character of the area.

WATER SUPPLY

Overall, water of adequate quality and quantity is available to meet current demands in the Slate Belt. However, the ability to provide a safe, reliable water supply could be adversely impacted without careful planning. Water suppliers need to have emergency plans, establish emergency interconnections with other systems and implement water source protection programs. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires comprehensive plans to include strategies for the reliable supply of water and to be generally consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan adopted by a river basin commission. Comprehensive plans must also recognize that 1) lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities, and 2) commercial agriculture production impacts water supply sources.

In the Plan Slate Belt region, water supply is provided by a combination of community water systems, central water systems and individual on-lot wells. Four community water systems provide water service in much of the area. Further, there are nine central water systems serving specific developments in Washington and Upper Mount Bethel townships. Remaining portions of the area are served by individual on-lot wells.

 East Bangor Municipal Authority building in East Bangor Borough.

The four community water systems are:

- ✓ **The East Bangor Municipal Authority**, serving the Borough and several adjacent developments in Upper Mount Bethel and Washington townships. It gets supply from one well in Upper Mount Bethel Township. The Authority has a second well, which is not in use. There are no emergency interconnections with other water systems.
- ✓ **The Portland Borough Authority**, serving the Borough and several adjacent developments in Upper Mount Bethel Township. It obtains its supply from four wells in the Township. There are no emergency interconnections with other water systems.
- ✓ **The Pennsylvania American Water – Blue Mountain District**, serving portions of Wind Gap and Pen Argyl Boroughs. It gets its water supply from a combination of surface and groundwater sources in Monroe and Northampton counties. The Blue Mountain Division has interconnections with the Pennsylvania American Water - Bangor District and Easton Suburban Water Authority.
- ✓ **The Pennsylvania American Water – Bangor District**, serving portions of Washington and Upper Mount Bethel townships and the boroughs of Bangor and Roseto. Its water comes from a combination of surface and groundwater sources. The Bangor District has an interconnection with the Blue Mountain Division.

SEWER SERVICE

Municipalities are responsible for assuring that safe and reliable sewage disposal is provided within their boundaries. To accomplish this, municipalities are required to prepare sewage facilities plans under the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act, commonly called Act 537. These plans must identify the current and future sewage needs of the municipality and evaluate alternatives to meet those needs. The requirements apply to all systems, including public sewer systems, central or package treatment systems, as well as on-lot systems. For public and central sewer systems, Act 537 plans need to assure adequate sewage collection, conveyance and treatment capacity. For on-lot systems, the plans need to assure proper site testing, construction, operation and maintenance, referred to as a sewage management program. Each municipality in the Slate Belt has an official sewage facilities plan, with dates ranging from 1973 to 2010. Upper Mount Bethel Township prepared draft updates to their Act 537 Plan in 2019, however, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection approval of the plan is required.

In the Slate Belt, sewer service is provided by a combination of public sewer systems, central sewer systems and individual on-lot sewage disposal systems. Five public sewer systems provide sewer service in the area. Further, there are three central sewer systems serving specific developments in Upper Mount Bethel Township. Remaining portions of the area are served by individual on-lot sewage disposal systems.

The public sewer systems are:

- ✓ **The East Bangor Municipal Authority**, serving the Borough and several adjacent developments in Washington and Upper Mount Bethel townships. The townships do not have formal allocation limits at the treatment plant. The wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 0.10 million gallons per day (mgd), and the 2018 average flow was 0.087 mgd.
- ✓ **The Bangor Borough Authority wastewater treatment plant**, serving the Borough, Roseto Borough and several adjacent developments in Washington Township. The Township does not have a formal allocation limit at the treatment plant. The design capacity of the plant is 1.6 mgd, and the 2018 average flow was 1.74 mgd. The plant was identified as hydraulically overloaded, and the preparation of Corrective Action Plans by both boroughs was required by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to address the overload condition.
- ✓ **The Pen Argyl Municipality Authority wastewater treatment plant**, serving the Borough and several adjacent developments in Washington Township. They do not have formal allocation limits at the treatment plant. The wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 0.95 mgd, and the 2018 average flow was 0.707 mgd.
- ✓ **The Portland Borough wastewater treatment plant**, serving the Borough and a portion of Upper Mount Bethel Township, which includes the Portland Industrial Park. The wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 0.105 mgd, and the 2018 average flow was 0.028 mgd.
- ✓ **The Wind Gap Municipal Authority wastewater treatment plant**, serving the Borough The wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 1.0 mgd, and the 2018 average flow was 0.753 mgd.

The Bangor Borough Authority Waste Water Treatment Plant on Lower South Main Street in Washington Township.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Within the Plan Slate Belt region, stormwater management for new development is accomplished partially through implementation of ordinances created at the county level and enforced by local municipalities. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) also provides an advisory review role to the municipalities. The ordinances are created under the Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Act, commonly referred to as Act 167. Northampton County and the LVPC created the Act 167 plans for the Bushkill and Martins/Jacoby Creek watersheds. The plans and ordinances provide water quantity and water quality controls. Stormwater management during construction is managed by the Northampton County Conservation District. For many development sites, a Post Construction Stormwater Management permit is required and implemented through the Northampton County Conservation District and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

To comply with permit requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), municipalities in the Slate Belt, except East Bangor and Portland boroughs and Upper Mount Bethel Township, must adopt and implement an ordinance that requires the use of stormwater best management practices to reduce or prevent the discharge of pollutants into receiving waters. The two watershed plans listed above provide a model municipal ordinance that meets this criteria, and each municipality has adopted their respective watershed ordinance(s). The EPA permit program is the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program. The ordinances also meet the EPA requirements for illicit discharge elimination and stormwater management during construction.

The most recent MS4 permit requirements that impact municipalities are those mandating reduction of pollutants being discharged from the municipal systems into surface waters. Municipalities are required to prepare Pollutant Reduction Plans to accomplish this. Communities must implement best management practices of their own to meet defined pollutant reduction targets. Implementation of these plans will place significant cost burdens on the municipalities. Moving forward, municipalities should consider collaboration where appropriate to minimize costs and need to consider all methods available to fund needed improvements, including specific stormwater fees.

Planning and being proactive for the next generation of technological advances in communications and utilities will enable the Slate Belt to be a leader in deployment of infrastructure to grow opportunity and access for the residents and businesses of the area.

Funding is the cornerstone to implementation of infrastructure maintenance, upgrade or new construction. The Slate Belt communities should engage with governmental and utility entities and stakeholders to advocate for funding opportunities to facilitate construction of needed and future projects.

An example of stormwater flowing along W. Central Avenue in East Bangor Borough.

POLICY 4.1

Provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network for the efficient movement of people, services and goods.

- ✓ Plan for a transportation network that provides for the safe movement of people and goods.
- ✓ Identify areas of safety and congestion concern for existing transportation infrastructure.
- ✓ Study locations for potential traffic-calming measures to increase safety and reduce speed and aggressive driving.
- ✓ Reconstruct or rehabilitate roads that are prone to accidents due to deteriorated road surfaces or antiquated road design standards.
- ✓ Promote safe driving and traffic law compliance through signage and community publications and events. Signage should communicate the message in a safe manner without sign clutter.
- ✓ Explore the use of roundabouts to reduce the severity of accidents at intersections of concern.
- ✓ Ensure efficiency and connectivity in the transportation network.

Create and maintain a transportation infrastructure database for an inventory of bridges, roads and multimodal amenities.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Include the infrastructure database on an official map.
- ✓ Document and continually update inspection and maintenance records and plan for replacement or rehabilitation of bridges, streets, sidewalks, trails and bicycle facilities.

- ✓ Require connectivity of streets in land developments to facilitate better emergency response times.
- ✓ Plan for implementation of modern intelligent traffic signals and infrastructure to support their installation and performance.
- ✓ Identify deficient roads to be improved or reconstructed to meet modern design standards for the types of traffic they are experiencing.
- ✓ Integrate developments or redevelopments into existing street grid networks to ensure continuity and seamless connectivity of the transportation infrastructure.
- ✓ Coordinate with other transportation agencies and adjacent communities and counties for the extension, enhancement or creation of existing and planned streets for connectivity. PennDOT Connects initiative and the Local Technical Assistance Program can be a catalyst for conversations with PennDOT.

- ✓ Assess design standards for all classification of roads to preserve or enhance the capability of a roadway to operate safely and efficiently while maintaining the character of the community.
- ✓ Coordinate educational opportunities for municipal staff and officials to learn the impacts of land use developments on the transportation network.
- ✓ Continually update plans as developments occur to raise awareness of potential traffic flow needs.
- ✓ Ensure road detour management plans are developed and updated to provide efficient traffic management strategies when road closures occur on critical roads in the area.
- ✓ Maintain and improve the region's bridges and provide for multimodal use of these facilities.
- ✓ Identify and prioritize structurally deficient bridges for repair, replacement or rehabilitation and inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as explore other funding opportunities.
- ✓ Advocate for improvements to state-owned bridges and roadways through long-range transportation plans.
- ✓ Pursue multimodal amenities and sidewalks for planned new, reconstructed or rehabilitated bridges.

Maintaining the road infrastructure, like Robinson Avenue in Pen Argyl, was among the challenges sited by municipal leaders.

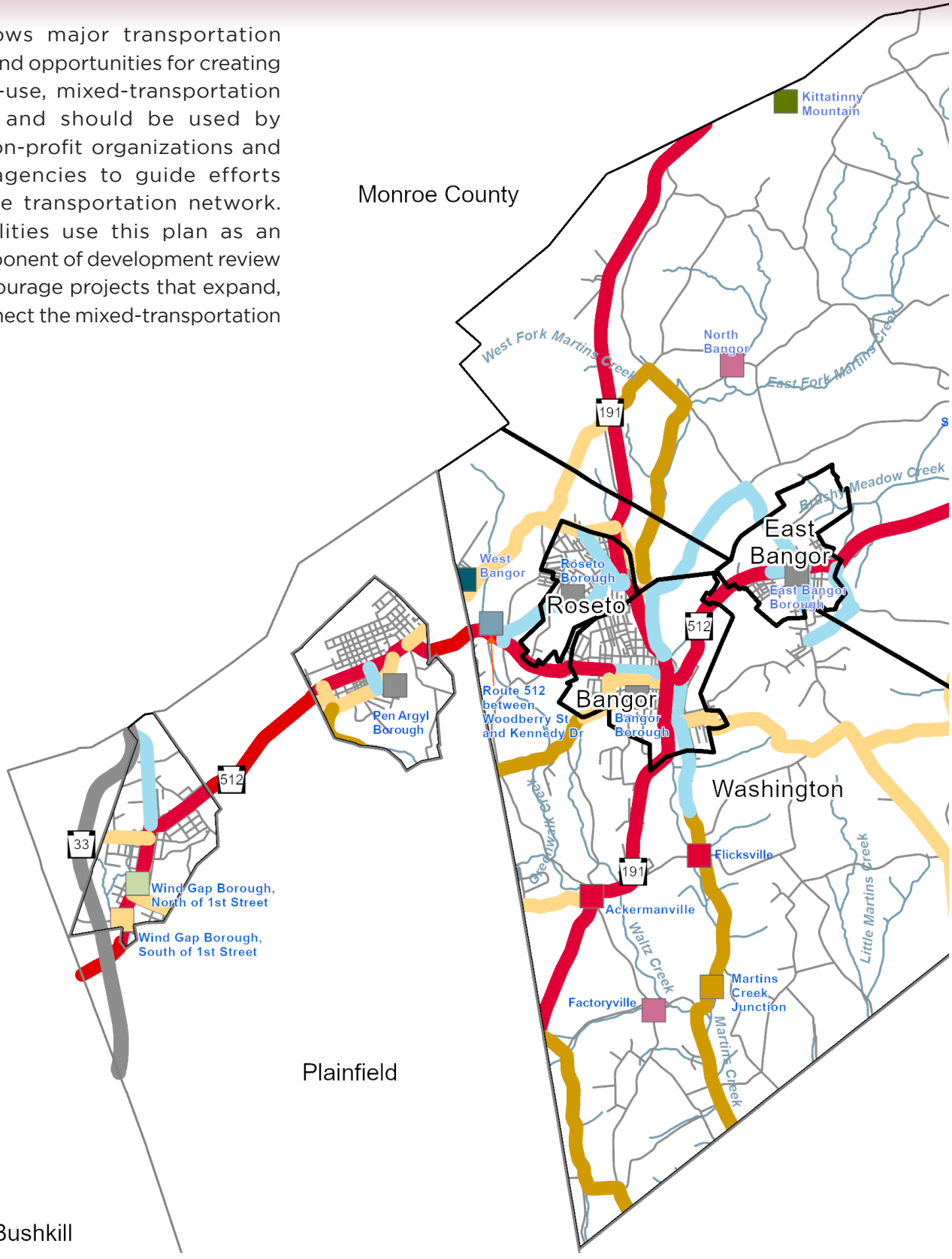
ROAD TYPES

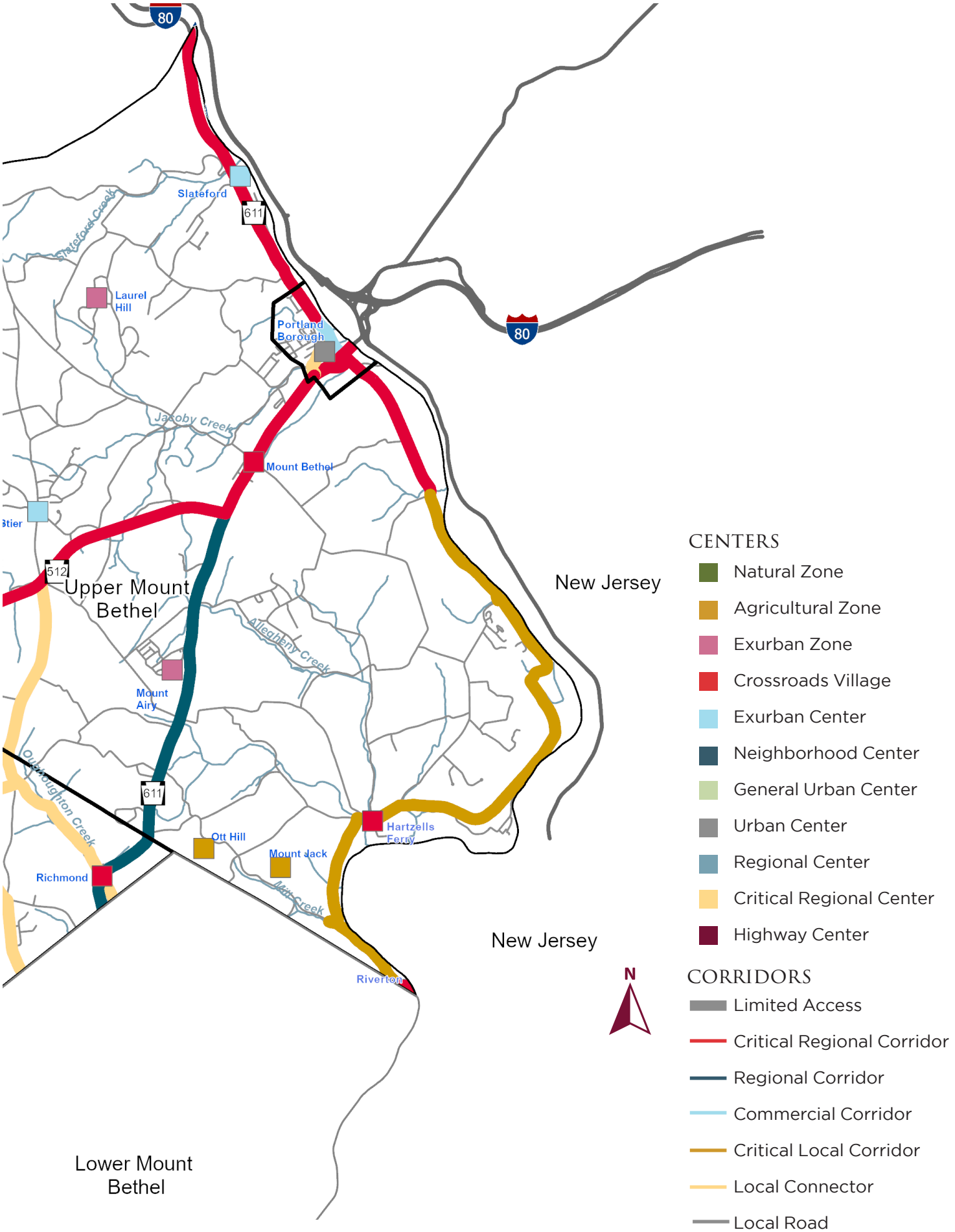
ROAD TYPE	LOCAL ROAD	LOCAL CONNECTOR	CRITCAL LOCAL CORRIDOR	COMMUNITY CORRIDOR
TRANSPORTATION SERVICE TYPE	Mixed-Transportation Corridors	Mixed-Transportation Corridors	Mixed-Transportation Corridors	Mixed-Transportation Corridors
PURPOSE	Principal function is the provision of residential property access and connection to higher order roads.	These local roads experience major through-traffic from connected major corridors and connect residential areas to exurban and natural zones. The surrounding landscape is mainly residential development with accommodating local commercial. These could include State routes that serve as rural corridors.	Characterized by the surrounding residential development. These local road corridors experience some through-traffic from connected regional and community corridors.	These corridors are thoroughfares that lead to exurban centers, crossroad villages and exurban zones. These corridors are characterized by the local businesses and surrounding rural landscape.
VOLUME OF TRANSPORTATION	Automobile traffic volumes tend to be lower and traffic less concentrated with high levels of bike and pedestrian traffic.	Automobile traffic volumes tend to be lower and less concentrated.	Carries a high amount of car, bicycle and pedestrian traffic	Traffic volumes tend to be moderate amount of cars and concentrated.
MOBILITY AND ACCESS	Low mobility and high access.	Low mobility and high access.	Low mobility and high access.	Moderate mobility and high access.
FUTURE POTENTIAL FOR MIXED-TRANSPORTATION	Freight delivery routes. Offer commuting opportunities via multi-modal transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Freight delivery routes. Offer commuting opportunities via multi-modal transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Freight delivery routes and agricultural truck traffic. Offer commuting opportunities via multimodal transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Freight delivery routes and agricultural truck traffic. Offer commuting opportunities via multi-modal transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.
FUNDING AND INVESTMENT	Moderate level of funding for maintenance and repair.	Moderate level of funding for maintenance and repair.	Moderate level of funding for maintenance and repair.	Moderate level of funding for maintenance and repair.
EXAMPLES FOR SLATE BELT	Belfast Road	Ackermanville Road	River Road	N/A
PLACE TYPES SERVED	All Place Types	Natural Zone, Agricultural Zone, Exurban Zone, Crossroads Village	Exurban Zone, Crossroads Village, Exurban Center, Neighborhood Center, General Urban Center, Urban Center, Critical Regional Center, Highway Center	Natural Zone, Agricultural Zone, Crossroads Village, Exurban Center

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR	REGIONAL CORRIDOR	CRITICAL REGIONAL CORRIDOR	LIMITED ACCESS
Mixed-Transportation Corridors	Mixed-Transportation Corridors	Mixed-Transportation Corridors	Auto-oriented limited access corridors
Characterized by a concentration and distribution of retail and commercial uses. These corridors are thoroughfares that, in most cases, include exurban centers, neighborhood centers and/or lead to urban centers.	Largely for local and subregional mobility; connect dayto- day services and institutional and residential areas to regional and local road networks.	Connect intensely utilzed locations or destinations, serve as commercial corridors and highfrequency local routes for commuting and day-to-day needs. Connect regional and local traffic to limited access highways.	Moving both people and goods long distance at relatively high speed.
Carries a high amount of truck, car, and bus traffic. Carries a moderate amount of bicycle and pedestrian traffic.	Carries a high amount of truck, car, and bus traffic. Carries a low to moderate amount of bicycle and pedestrian traffic.	Carries high amount of traffic.	Carries highest amount of traffic.
Moderate mobility and high access.	Moderate mobility and high access.	High mobility and access.	High Mobility and limited access.
Lower order freight corridor providing first mile-last mile access. Offer commuting opportunities via multi-modal transportation, including transit, bicycle, walking, and automobile.	Freight corridors that serve as the connection for limited access highway corridors and lower-level road corridors. Offer commuting opportunities via multi-modal transportation, including transit, automobiles, and dedicated bicycle ways and walking paths.	Freight corridor provides connections to limited access corridors and commercial corridors. Offer commuting opportunities via multi-modal transportation, including transit, automobiles, and dedicated bicycle ways and walking paths.	Main freight corridor for inter- and intra-regional access. Not appropriate for bicycle or pedestrian transportation.
Moderate level of funding for design, construction, maintenance and repair.	Moderate level of funding for design, construction, maintenance and repair.	High level of funding for design, construction, maintenance and repair.	High level of funding for maintenance and repair.
Sullivan Trail, Main Street in Pen Argyl	Route 191	Route 512	Route 33
Crossroads Village, Neighborhood Center, General Urban Center, Urban Center, Regional Center, Critical Regional Center	Neighborhood Center, General Urban Center, Urban Center, Regional Center, Critical Regional Center, HIghway Center	Exurban Center, Urban Center, Regional Center, Critcal Regional Center, Highway Center	General Urban Center, Highway Center

CENTERS AND CORRIDORS PLAN

This plan shows major transportation infrastructure and opportunities for creating denser, mixed-use, mixed-transportation development and should be used by private and non-profit organizations and government agencies to guide efforts to improve the transportation network. The municipalities use this plan as an important component of development review and highly encourage projects that expand, improve or connect the mixed-transportation network.




80
611
Slateford
Slateford Creek
Laurel Hill
Portland Borough
80
Jacoby Creek
Mount Bethel
512
Upper Mount Bethel
New Jersey
Allegheny Creek
Mount Airy
611
Quinsighton Creek
Ott Hill
Mount Jack
Hartzells Ferry
Richmond
Riverton
New Jersey
Lower Mount Bethel
N
CENTERS
Natural Zone
Agricultural Zone
Exurban Zone
Crossroads Village
Exurban Center
Neighborhood Center
General Urban Center
Urban Center
Regional Center
Critical Regional Center
Highway Center
CORRIDORS
Limited Access
Critical Regional Corridor
Regional Corridor
Commercial Corridor
Critical Local Corridor
Local Connector
Local Road

POLICY 4.2

Provide a transportation network that safely and efficiently accommodates freight traffic, while preserving community character.

- ✓ Create designated truck routes, parking areas and associated signage in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and other freight stakeholders.
- ✓ Identify and provide signage for weight-restricted bridges and update signs as inspections occur.
- ✓ Plan for rehabilitation or replacement of bridges that have outlived their design life expectancy to meet the needs of community and freight movements.
- ✓ Work with the County and State to ensure the preservation of historic and scenic bridges and roadways, and the appropriate use of context-sensitive design standards.
- ✓ Expand on truck parking spaces and truck driver amenities with freight-centric developments and corridors.
- ✓ Coordinate with PennDOT, the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, New Jersey Department of Transportation and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) on the Pennsylvania State Route 611 connection to the Portland Columbia Bridge regarding the impacts of proposed developments and freight movements on the bridge. This bridge leads to Interstate 80 in New Jersey and Route 611 local connection to Route 33 and Interstate 78.

> **Monitor the impacts of freight movements through classification of vehicle traffic counts.**

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Inventory traffic impact studies of freight developments to assist in predicting future freight development traffic.
- ✓ Use the PennDOT Traffic Information Repository for traffic counts performed in the area.
- ✓ Work with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and their Land Uses of Regional Significance (LURS) review process to encourage intermunicipal communication regarding impacts.
- ✓ Participate with the Lehigh Valley Freight Advisory Committee through the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study.

The Portland-Columbia Pedestrian Bridge spans the Delaware River, connecting Portland Borough to Columbia, N.J.

POLICY 4.3

Provide and promote safe and convenient walking and biking routes to neighborhoods, popular destinations, schools, trail networks and parks.

- ✓ Identify pedestrian infrastructure for sidewalk gaps, missing connections, poor conditions and non-compliant Americans with Disabilities Act design for prioritization for improvement.
- ✓ Improve connections between transit and bike/pedestrian infrastructure with existing or future dense developments, employment centers and cultural destinations.

Establish or improve physical barriers between pedestrians and vehicles to improve safety.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Consider curb installation and separated shoulders.
- ✓ Consider augmenting barriers with streetscape and street trees.
- ✓ Plan for pedestrian-scale lighting at critical cross-walks and pedestrian corridors.

Inventory existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to identify gaps for potential dedicated bike routes.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Document on an official map.
- ✓ Document and inventory in concurrence with WalkRollLV: Sidewalk Inventory.
- ✓ Study micro-mobility recreation and commuter utilization and incorporate recommendations into project planning and active transportation initiatives.
- ✓ Inventory and identify existing areas where safety improvements or traffic restrictions are paramount for vehicles and pedestrian traffic.

- ✓ Promote awareness and educate the public on pedestrian and bicycle safety responsibilities and laws.
- ✓ Require curbs and sidewalks in new developments to facilitate safe pedestrian access and connectivity.
- ✓ Review the overall curb/sidewalk network to determine feasibility of connections
- ✓ Develop a strategy to identify and promote safe and efficient bike routes.
- ✓ Establish regulations to facilitate and allow parklets in desired locations.
- ✓ Develop a traffic-calming initiative for areas of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular interactions utilizing LTAP (Local Technical Assistance Program) to identify best practices on each site identified.

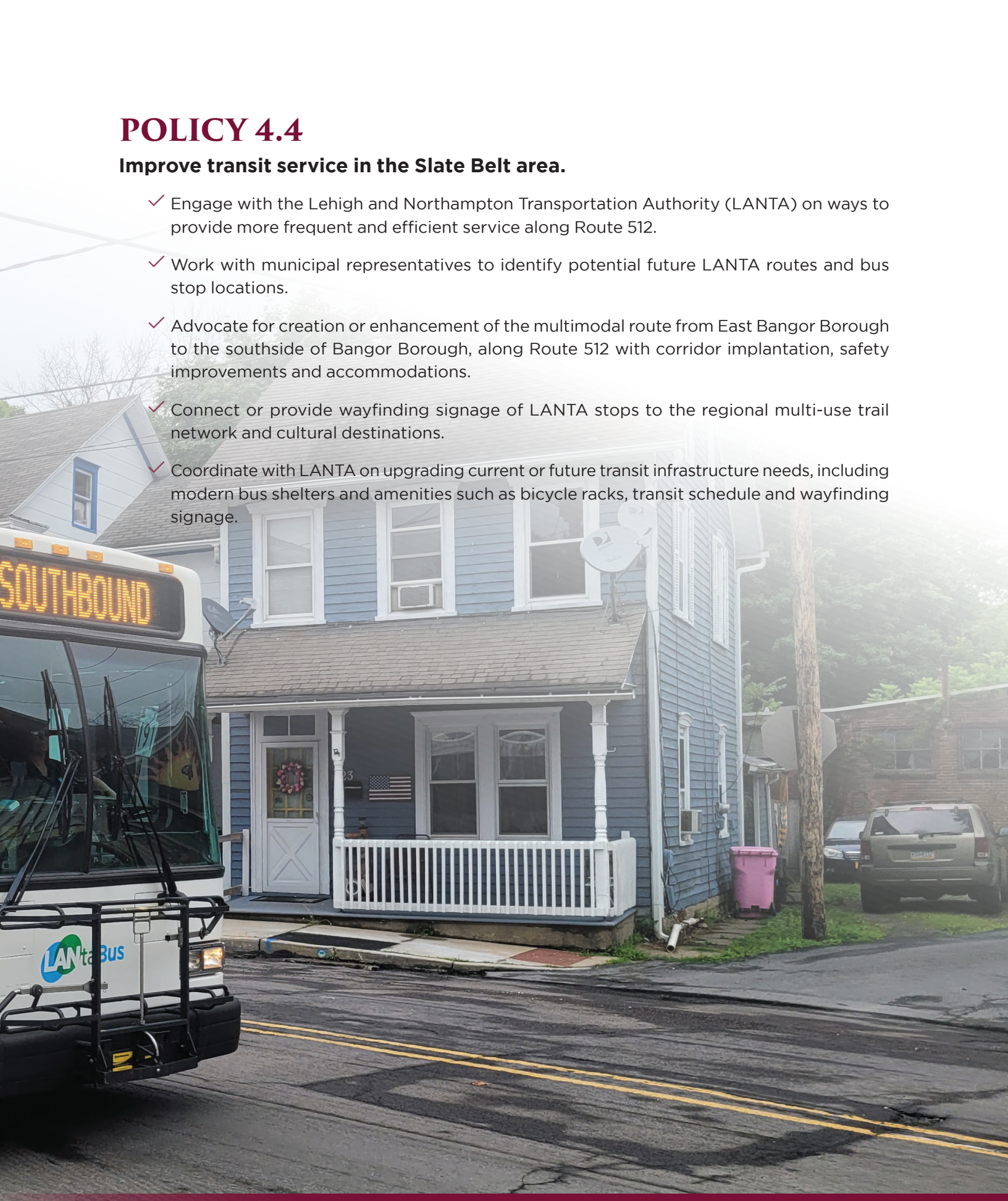
East Bangor Park, East Bangor Borough.

HYBRID ELECTRIC
A Greener Lehigh Valley...One Mile at a Time
LANtaBus
www.lantabus.com
610-776-RIDE
217
217 SOUTHBOUND
1405
Your health deserves a partner.
Lehigh Valley Health Network
1405

POLICY 4.4

Improve transit service in the Slate Belt area.

- ✓ Engage with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) on ways to provide more frequent and efficient service along Route 512.
- ✓ Work with municipal representatives to identify potential future LANTA routes and bus stop locations.
- ✓ Advocate for creation or enhancement of the multimodal route from East Bangor Borough to the southside of Bangor Borough, along Route 512 with corridor implantation, safety improvements and accommodations.
- ✓ Connect or provide wayfinding signage of LANTA stops to the regional multi-use trail network and cultural destinations.
- ✓ Coordinate with LANTA on upgrading current or future transit infrastructure needs, including modern bus shelters and amenities such as bicycle racks, transit schedule and wayfinding signage.



One of two bus routes in the Slate Belt, LANTA bus 217, going Southbound down N. 1st Street, Bangor Borough.

POLICY 4.5

Identify and maximize transportation infrastructure funding opportunities.

Participate in Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania outreach and awareness meetings for funding opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Identify transportation improvements and advocate for them to be included in long-range transportation plans.
- ✓ Explore and identify funding programs and grant opportunities to pursue for transportation projects.
- ✓ Coordinate grant application writing best practices for the benefit of the region when applying for funding.
- ✓ Perform an analysis to determine whether implementing a Transportation Impact Fee to fund transportation infrastructure improvements would be beneficial to the community.

Advocate for long-term transportation funding solutions at the local, state and federal levels.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

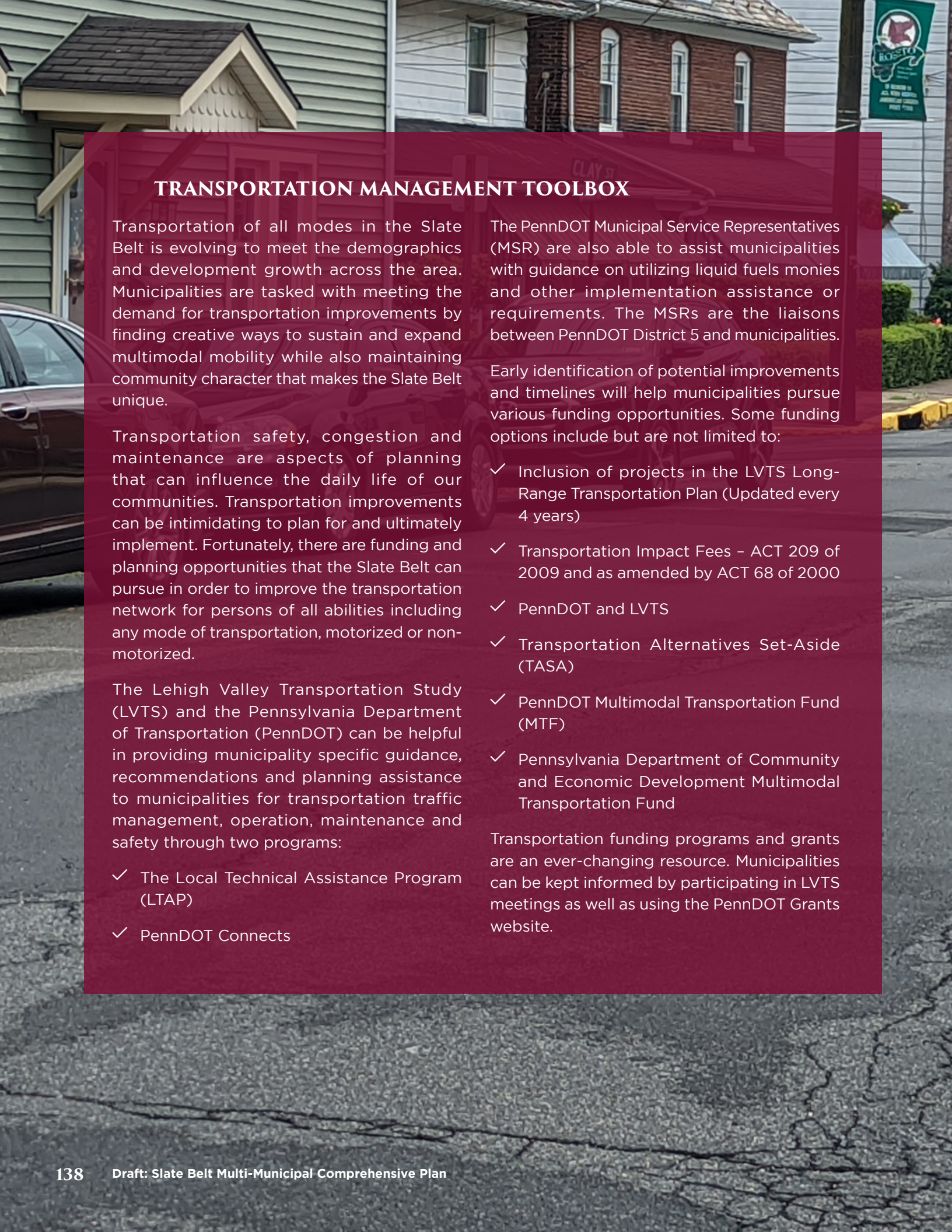
- ✓ Explore establishment of a Slate Belt Regional Transportation advocacy group.
- ✓ Determine the benefit for regional collaboration on transportation issues.
- ✓ Provide information sharing on transportation impacts across the region and neighboring counties and communities.

- ✓ Prepare plans and a vision for projects using cost-benefit or return on investment analysis to enhance project funding opportunities.
- ✓ Create Capital Improvement Plans to budget funding contributions for locally owned roads and bridges to advocate for improvements where funding matches can leverage money for implementation projects.

PROJECTS ANTICIPATED FOR STATE AND FEDERAL INVESTMENT

The adopted 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following projects located in the Slate Belt region:

- ✓ **Million Dollar Highway over Jacoby Creek (Upper Mount Bethel Township):** Replacement/Rehabilitation of Million Dollar Highway (Route 1040) Bridge over Jacoby Creek
- ✓ **Route 512 over Brushy Meadow Creek (Bangor Borough):** Box Culvert Replacement
- ✓ **Richmond Bridge (Washington Township):** Replacement/Rehabilitation of South Delaware Drive (Route 611) Bridge of Oughoughton Creek.
- ✓ **Lower South Main Street Bridge (Washington Township):** Replacement/Rehabilitation of Lower South Main Street (Route 1015) Bridge over Martins Creek.
- ✓ **Route 512 over Martins Creek (Bangor Borough):** Replacement/Rehabilitation Market Street (Route 512) Bridge over Martins Creek in Bangor Borough.
- ✓ **South Main Street over Martins Creek (Bangor Borough):** Replacement/Rehabilitation of South Main Street (Route 1015) Bridge over Martins Creek in Bangor Borough.



TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX

Transportation of all modes in the Slate Belt is evolving to meet the demographics and development growth across the area. Municipalities are tasked with meeting the demand for transportation improvements by finding creative ways to sustain and expand multimodal mobility while also maintaining community character that makes the Slate Belt unique.

Transportation safety, congestion and maintenance are aspects of planning that can influence the daily life of our communities. Transportation improvements can be intimidating to plan for and ultimately implement. Fortunately, there are funding and planning opportunities that the Slate Belt can pursue in order to improve the transportation network for persons of all abilities including any mode of transportation, motorized or non-motorized.

The Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) can be helpful in providing municipality specific guidance, recommendations and planning assistance to municipalities for transportation traffic management, operation, maintenance and safety through two programs:

- ✓ The Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)
- ✓ PennDOT Connects

The PennDOT Municipal Service Representatives (MSR) are also able to assist municipalities with guidance on utilizing liquid fuels monies and other implementation assistance or requirements. The MSRs are the liaisons between PennDOT District 5 and municipalities.

Early identification of potential improvements and timelines will help municipalities pursue various funding opportunities. Some funding options include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Inclusion of projects in the LVTS Long-Range Transportation Plan (Updated every 4 years)
- ✓ Transportation Impact Fees – ACT 209 of 2009 and as amended by ACT 68 of 2000
- ✓ PennDOT and LVTS
- ✓ Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA)
- ✓ PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF)
- ✓ Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Multimodal Transportation Fund

Transportation funding programs and grants are an ever-changing resource. Municipalities can be kept informed by participating in LVTS meetings as well as using the PennDOT Grants website.

An example of the benefits of transportation infrastructure in Roseto Borough.

POLICY 4.6

Provide safe and reliable sewage disposal and water supply for all persons.

- ✓ Maintain adequate Official Sewage Facilities Plans for each municipality, consistent with the requirements of the PA Sewage Facilities Act of 1966 (Act 537).
  - + Upper Mount Bethel Township will update its Act 537 Plan.
- ✓ Require fully tested primary and replacement absorption areas for lots proposed for on-lot sewage disposal.
- ✓ Designate maximum development densities consistent with the long-term use of on-lot sewage disposal systems and wells.
- ✓ Educate users of on-lot sewage facilities on proper system maintenance procedures.
- ✓ Monitor the performance of all sewage facilities and take corrective measures as appropriate.
- ✓ Establish a sewage management program for inspection and maintenance of on-lot sewage systems.
  - + Washington Township will adopt a sewage management program as recommended in its Act 537 Plan.
- ✓ Provide adequate service to areas experiencing problems with existing on-lot or central sewer or water supply systems, implementing the most cost-effective solution to the problem after an evaluation of appropriate alternatives is completed. Under no circumstances is any municipality or municipal authority obligated to provide sewage treatment capacity or public water supply to an adjoining municipality.
- ✓ Define groundwater protection zones for all public water supply wells and implement groundwater source protection programs.
  - + Upper Mount Bethel Township, Washington Township and Wind Gap Borough will implement water source protection programs.
- ✓ Promote water conservation to all residents and businesses.
- ✓ Develop capital improvement programs to identify and prioritize public sewer and water system infrastructure replacement needs.
- ✓ Evaluate the feasibility of public/private partnerships for funding replacement needs.
- ✓ Pursue grant/loan programs, such as PennVEST, to fund infrastructure needs.
- ✓ Identify areas where run-off from farm fields in which sludge has been applied is problematic.
- ✓ Identify areas where polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been documented.

Upper Mount Bethel Township Building in Upper Mount Bethel Township.

POLICY 4.7

Coordinate economical, efficient sewage disposal and water service with existing and future development.

- ✓ Coordinate sewage facilities and water resource planning with comprehensive planning and zoning.
- ✓ Coordinate with community water supply and public sewage disposal providers to accommodate future growth consistent with the land use recommendations of this plan.
- ✓ Prepare or update public sewage facility and community water supply agreements, where appropriate, with adjacent municipalities or authorities to provide service consistent with the development recommendations of this plan.
- ✓ Direct intense development to areas where the public sewer and community water supply systems can accept additional growth, or through limited expansion or upgrading, as consistent with this comprehensive plan.
- ✓ Direct Exurban development to areas consistent with this comprehensive plan to be served by on-lot sewage disposal and water supply.
- ✓ Discourage intense development in areas where it can only be served by on-lot sewage disposal or new or expanded privately-owned central sewage facilities.
- ✓ Identify and remove excess infiltration and inflow in a cost-effective manner to maximize available sewer capacity.
- ✓ Require assurances for proper long-term operation and maintenance of privately owned central sewer and water systems.

POLICY 4.8

Manage the rate, volume and quality of storm runoff.

- ✓ Implement the provisions of approved stormwater management plans.
- ✓ Prepare capital improvement programs to solve existing drainage problems in accordance with Act 167 stormwater management plans.
- ✓ Explore alternative funding sources, including grant programs and implementing a stormwater fee, to fund needed stormwater improvements.
- ✓ Ensure the proper construction of storm drainage facilities.
- ✓ Ensure continued operation and maintenance of storm drainage facilities through regular inspections and enforcement of maintenance plans.

> **Manage stormwater associated with municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4).**

IMPLEMENTATION IDEA

- ✓ Collaborate regarding MS4 implementation, especially best management practices for pollutant control.

- ✓ Incorporate green infrastructure techniques in stormwater management ordinances.

Pen Argyl Public Works on South Main Street in Pen Argyl Borough.

POLICY 4.9

Support new energy and next generation communication technologies.

- ✓ Coordinate with electric utility providers to upgrade utility infrastructure as needed.
- ✓ Support diversification of energy sources and ensure zoning regulations can permit these new energy sources, where appropriate.
- ✓ Consider amending or implementing ordinances to locate small-cell tower technology in areas of need for coverage and service.
- ✓ Work actively with technology service providers to identify gaps or reliability issues in technological access and improve quality of service through new or upgrades to infrastructure.
- ✓ Work with the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority which has been created to distribute state and federal funding for broadband expansion in unserved and underserved areas of the Commonwealth.
- ✓ Integrate new technological infrastructure upgrades or installations into improvement projects along rights-of-way during development projects.
- ✓ Adopt or modify ordinances that enable equitable technological infrastructure sites across the Slate Belt.
- ✓ Ensure technologies are integrated into historic, natural and farmland areas in ways that maintain or enhance service while not diminishing the community character.
- ✓ Prepare for electric vehicles with charging stations and supportive infrastructure at local cultural destinations, employment centers and key high traffic volume areas near retail or restaurant establishments that can be a destination during charging times.
- ✓ Develop a policy for placement of commercial solar farms consistent with preservation of prime farmland.
- ✓ Encourage the use of solar panels for commercial businesses and residential properties.

Portland welcome sign, Portland Borough. 145

SUMMARY

The transportation and infrastructure network are critical elements of a region, allowing it to function and grow, and provide essential health, safety and welfare benefits to everyone. Development pressure in the Slate Belt over the next few decades will put increased strain on these systems.

Transportation is the backbone of the Slate Belt via various Centers and Corridors of state and local roads. Route 512 ties the Slate Belt together, with connections from the east to the west and points beyond. An all-encompassing multimodal transportation network accessible to all persons will provide the necessary mobility for the region to thrive.

Transportation improvements, especially for PennDOT roads that serve as main streets in the boroughs, must be right-sized and coordinated with revitalization efforts in these communities.

The Slate Belt is not immune to the impacts of freight traffic, and the collective goal is to accommodate and mitigate existing and future impacts. Educating residents, businesses and visitors can help gain supporters and promoters of the collective effort to cultivate a sense of place in the region.

By providing strategic investments in the planning and funding of improvements, maintenance and upgrades to existing transportation infrastructure, community character can be maintained, while providing safety and efficiency of all modes of transportation.

Coordinating water and sewer planning with comprehensive planning and zoning will be necessary to meet existing and future water and sewer needs of the Slate Belt, while providing safe and efficient service. The communities will need to identify and evaluate opportunities to maintain compliance with federal stormwater management regulations. Planning for emerging energy and technological advances will be critical for the region to adapt to a new energy future.

By implementing the policies and actions of this Plan, the Plan Slate Belt communities can provide a safe and reliable transportation and infrastructure system to meet the challenges and opportunities that come with growth.

W. Central Avenue, East Bangor Borough.

GOAL 5

A STRONG FARMING COMMUNITY

Horses fenced in on the intersection of Sunrise Boulevard and Sagen Drive, Upper Mount Bethel Township.

Policy 5.1	Promote farming as a community-defining industry and component of the regional identity.
Policy 5.2	Expand agritourism to support agricultural businesses and retention of farms.

INTRODUCTION

Farming is highly valued in the Slate Belt as a business and way to maintain the rural character and culture of the area. Nearly 15% (6,443 acres) of the region's land area is farmland, which is almost 26% of all the farmland within Northampton County. Over 3,096 acres of 37 farms in the Slate Belt region are protected by agricultural easements, which is 16% of the preserved acreage in the County. Additionally, 2,922 acres are within agricultural security areas. All this points to a strong testament to the investment in the future farming economy. However, increasing development pressure, the rising costs of farming, insufficient support infrastructure and the current regulatory climate are making it difficult for farming to remain a viable business.

Slate Belt farmers are increasingly looking toward incorporating cash-generating agritourism activities into their businesses to remain viable. Activities such as wine-tasting, festival events, barn weddings and pick-your-own events can help farmers flourish, complement regional efforts to increase tourism, and promote the agricultural heritage of the Slate Belt. As reported in the 2017 Census of Agriculture, at the county level, 14 farms had $847,000 of income from agritourism or recreational services. The annual Northampton County Open Gate Farm Tour, organized by Penn State Extension, helps educate visitors about different types of farming and raises awareness of the importance of supporting the local agricultural community. The region's rural character combines the rich agricultural heritage of the Slate Belt, the unique natural resources of the area, and the historical built environment. It is imperative to recognize the interconnected nature of these resources and preservation efforts should be coordinated through agricultural preservation efforst, official maps and other tools.

For farms and related businesses in the Slate Belt to maintain their vital economic role, municipalities need to update zoning that promotes agricultural infrastructure and agritourism, equip new and existing farmers with the skills to be successful, provide opportunities to meet the fresh food needs of residents and support opportunities for local farm products to be used locally. Municipalities can also provide support by encouraging farmers to participate in agricultural security area programs. Additionally, the municipality can partner with, or continue to partner with, Northampton County in their farmland preservation Township Partnership Program. This Program, which has been approved by the state's Bureau of Farmland Preservation, leverages state funds based on dollars committed by local municipalities. Municipalities typically raise these funds through a voter-approved Earned Income Tax program. Such a program gives residents a chance to show their commitment to valuing farming and lays out a long-term structure for supporting the farming economy.

M&M Vineyard, Upper Mount Bethel Township.

POLICY 5.1

Promote farming as a community-defining industry and component of the regional identity.

- ✓ Adopt zoning and subdivision and land development ordinance amendments that support and expand agriculture as a business.
- ✓ Encourage farm-related businesses in areas recommended for farmland preservation.
- ✓ Support the retention and expansion of local family farms.
- ✓ Strengthen regional food systems by linking food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management.
- ✓ Promote local farmers' markets and explore creating a regional farmers' market that is centrally located in the rural areas of the Plan Slate Belt region.
- ✓ Encourage the production and purchase of locally grown products to expand the agricultural economy.
- ✓ Promote education and training for existing and prospective farmers, such as apprenticeship programs.
- ✓ Support the retention and expansion of local family farms.
- ✓ Protect new agricultural uses by encouraging creative new revenue streams that supplement traditional farm revenues.
- ✓ Consider the use of blighted or vacant development areas for community gardens and educating children about farming.
- ✓ Educate non-farming community members on the importance of farming and retaining land in agricultural use.

> **Develop strategies to market agricultural resources opportunities and events available in the Slate Belt area.**

IMPLEMENTATION IDEA

- ✓ Involve farms and farmers in any Slate Belt area or regional events.

The challenge of transitioning farm ownership to a younger generation is one facing not just the Lehigh Valley, but the nation as a whole. The average age of farm operators nationally is over 60 years. There are several mentoring and financing programs available to assist young farmers. These include:

- ✓ **Next Generation Farmer Loan program** administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.
- ✓ **Agricultural Business Development Center (ABDC)**, administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The ABDC focuses on business planning, farm ownership transitions, and agricultural production diversification.
- ✓ **PA Farm Link** is a non-profit organization that also provides farm succession planning.

A preserved farm in Upper Mount Bethel Township.

THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

The agricultural economy in the Slate Belt region continues to evolve. Traditional row crop farming and livestock production has been supplemented and, in some cases, replaced by value added production such as wineries, rural event activities like wedding venues, and other rural businesses that may have minimal connection to agricultural production. The three townships in the Plan Slate Belt region are facing difficult decisions determining what are appropriate land uses in their agricultural zoning districts and managing the impacts many of these uses bring.

It is important for the townships to review, and if necessary, amend the following purpose statements in their zoning ordinance for their agricultural zoning districts. These purpose statements often acknowledge, and in some cases, encourage large-lot rural residential development that often conflicts with many agricultural practices. They also permit, by right, special exception, or conditional use, industrial uses which may not be appropriate for agricultural and rural areas, due to a lack of public utilities and adverse impacts on the transportation system. All non-agricultural uses permitted in Agricultural zoning districts should be complementary and accessory to the primary agricultural uses. Examples of uses that may be appropriate include certain agri-tourism uses such as farm markets, u-pick operations, farm stays, and wineries. However, as some of these types of uses expand, impacts such as increased traffic volumes may become problematic. For instance, a winery may have minimal impacts but if it expands to include concerts and other events as well as a small hotel or inn the impacts may overwhelm rural infrastructure. Similarly, a small service and repair business for agricultural machinery may be beneficial for farmers in the region, but expansion of these businesses to include passenger vehicle service and/or sales may not be appropriate for the area.

Upper Mount Bethel Township's zoning ordinance includes the goals and objectives from the Township's 2001 Comprehensive Plan. Goal 3: Agricultural Lands is to "Promote the preservation of prime farmland and agricultural uses where such uses are economically feasible. Promote the orderly development of agricultural lands primarily for residential use, and where appropriate for commercial uses, in order to ensure the retention of rural characteristics within the community."

The Purpose of Washington's Agricultural zoning district is to "... protect and preserve the scenic, recreational and environmental resources of the natural resources in the Township and to provide for agricultural and animal husbandry uses."

True Blue Farm, Washington Township.

POLICY 5.2

Expand agritourism to support agricultural businesses and retention of farms.

> **Establish clear rules and guidelines on the type, location and intensity of agritourism businesses.**

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Ensure the local transportation network can support increased traffic from agritourism.
- ✓ Connect agritourism locations to the area multi-use trail network.

- ✓ Promote and encourage agritourism through municipal webpages, Discover Lehigh Valley and other avenues.

 Tolino Vineyards, Pleasant Road, Washington Township.

SUMMARY

Continued and advanced protection and stewardship of farmland is an essential component toward the maintenance of the Slate Belt's culture, economy and sense of place. Northampton County and the Slate Belt municipalities have been at the forefront of preservation through the agricultural easement program, which permanently preserves land for farming. Other tools, such as establishing agricultural security areas, also help to protect the region's most precious cultural and economic resources. Close connection to the land, participation in the easement program and utilization of tools makes farmland preservation a priority for the region to ensure that future generations can continue to cultivate this community asset. Through strong agricultural preservation, the residents of the Slate Belt can manage the development forces that have dominated the Lehigh Valley and have likely reshaped the cultural identity and character for generations to come.

The region's rural character combines the rich agricultural heritage of the Slate Belt, the unique natural resources of the area, and the historical built environment. It is imperative to recognize the interconnected nature of these resources and preservation efforts should be coordinated through agricultural preservation efforts, official maps, and other tools.

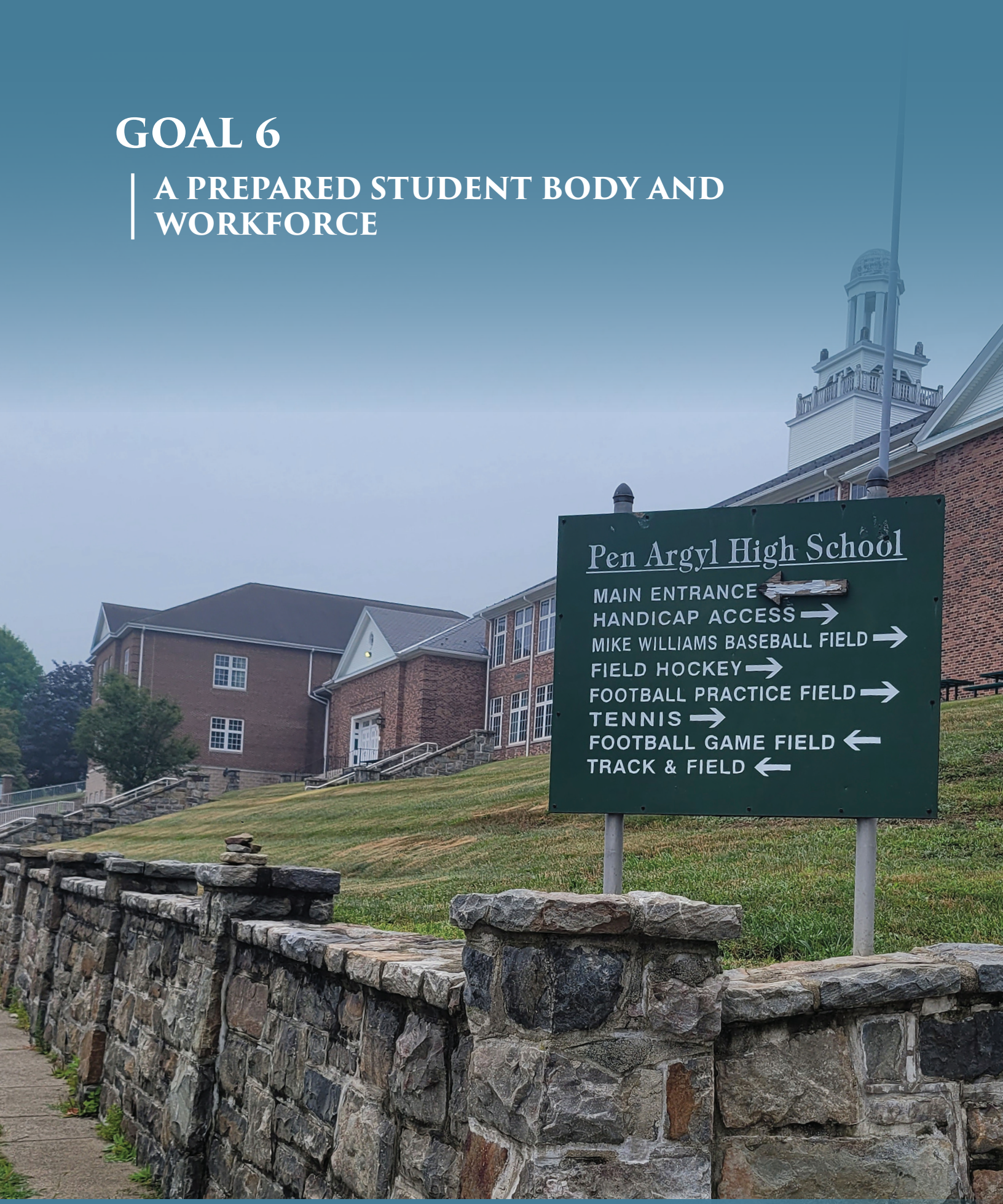
The Slate Belt has identified and recognized its agricultural industry as a destination economy, where tourism and the regional economy can grow. Encouraging economic and agricultural development through endeavors such as small barn venues, corn mazes, wineries and farmers markets, enhance agricultural viability in an approach that is consistent with the rural character of areas within the region. Agritourism and a farming destination economy are industry sectors that match the unique competitive advantages that the Slate Belt possesses as a region.

By preserving the region's farmland, supporting the farming economy and growing its burgeoning agritourism industry, the Slate Belt can protect and enhance the character that helps define its identity.

Green-Walk Trout Hatchery, Washington Township.

GOAL 6

A PREPARED STUDENT BODY AND WORKFORCE



 Pen Argyl Area High School, West Laurel Avenue, Pen Argyl Borough.

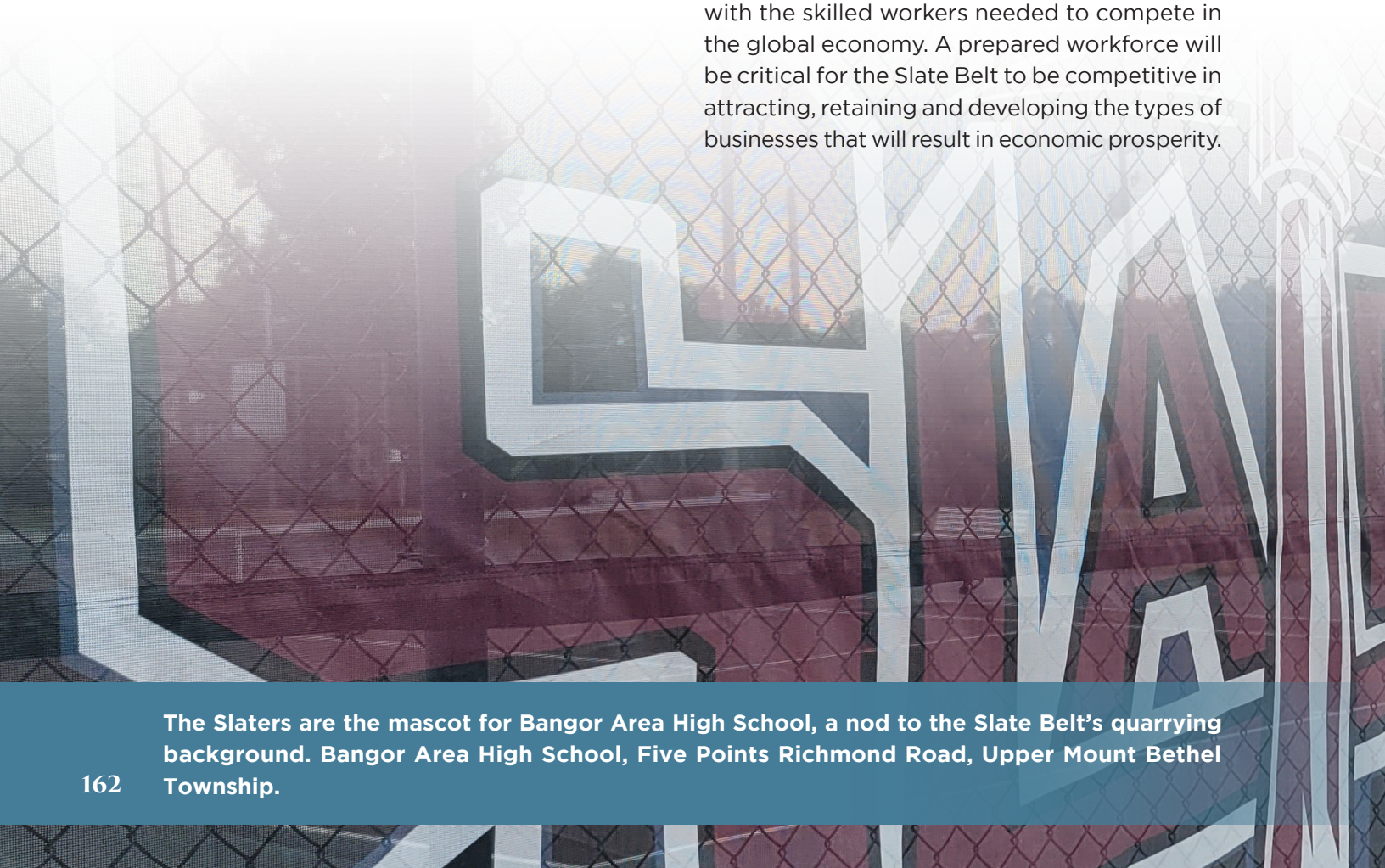
Policy 6.1	Coordinate and promote education and job training programs that improve social and economic opportunities and meet the needs of existing and emerging industries and technologies.
Policy 6.2	Strengthen the role of Slate Belt communities to ensure a high-quality education that prepares all students for the workforce of tomorrow.
Policy 6.3	Coordinate land use planning efforts with the Bangor Area and Pen Argyl Area School Districts.

INTRODUCTION

A well-educated population requires equitable and expanded access to education and is a key element of a thriving region. The Plan Slate Belt region is served primarily by Bangor Area and Pen Argyl Area school districts. With growth and development on the rise, the municipalities will need to coordinate with the school districts to ensure availability of sufficient educational facilities to meet the needs of future students.

Two public libraries, Blue Mountain Community Library in Pen Argyl Borough and the Bangor Public Library in Bangor Borough, also provide educational services to Slate Belt residents. Overall, Slate Belt residents have less higher education than Northampton County as a whole, with about 31% having an associate degree or higher, compared to 41% throughout the county. High-quality educational opportunities will better equip the area's students and workforce to fill the current and future demand for workers with high-tech and building trade skills.

Workforce development should be a key element of the Slate Belt's economic development strategy, enabling residents to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for high-quality job opportunities. The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley provides a variety of services that support the creation of a highly skilled, competitive workforce in the Lehigh Valley through collaboration with economic, education, employer and community partners. Fostering a partnership with the Workforce Board can help job-seekers access employment, education and training services, as well as match employers with the skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy. A prepared workforce will be critical for the Slate Belt to be competitive in attracting, retaining and developing the types of businesses that will result in economic prosperity.



The Slaters are the mascot for Bangor Area High School, a nod to the Slate Belt's quarrying background. Bangor Area High School, Five Points Richmond Road, Upper Mount Bethel Township.

A prosperous Slate Belt will be a more desirable place for people to live and work, attracting people from outside the area and keeping residents from seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Commuting patterns in the Slate Belt show that only about 17% of the region's workers stay in the Slate Belt for employment. Many residents commute to areas of the Lehigh Valley directly outside of the Slate Belt, including Forks and Palmer townships (7%), and about 9% commute to Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton. About 44% of the workers are employed outside the Lehigh Valley, including New Jersey, New York, Washington D.C., Connecticut, Philadelphia and central Pennsylvania. Some of these commuters may work from home or travel to work several times per week, but all of them choose to work well outside the Slate Belt. The unique character and sense of community offered by the region is likely a major factor for these commuters to remain residents of the Slate Belt. A more diverse job market could entice commuters to choose a local job if more options were available.

Improved transportation options, including public transit, will give Slate Belt residents greater access to educational opportunities, while technology enhancements will support an increase in remote learning. Globally, the job market is changing, and the economy continues to diversify. New efficiencies and technologies are helping to overcome challenges and will be significant economic drivers in the global, national and regional economy in the 21st century. The development of a local workforce that is globally competitive and responsive to the changing needs of the workplace lies with providing access to education and training for people of all ages and socioeconomic groups. Ensuring access to technology, such as high-speed internet and 5G, will be imperative to providing and strengthening educational opportunities for the digital skills necessary to compete in today and tomorrow's economy, especially in underserved communities. Approximately 8% of Slate Belt households do not have a computer, and of those that do, 12.5% do not have an internet subscription. Individuals and businesses without access in a connected economy could be left behind without support, exacerbating poverty and increasing social and economic isolation.

POLICY 6.1

Coordinate and promote education and job training programs that improve social and economic opportunities and meet the needs of existing and emerging industries and technologies.

> **Support workforce development programs and technical education programs aimed at improving the skill level of individuals of all ages, incomes and abilities.**

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Facilitate communication between Slate Belt municipalities, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, schools/colleges, business community and residents to identify and meet educational and job training needs.
- ✓ Coordinate with the Workforce Board, schools/colleges and sewer/water providers to promote water and wastewater treatment job opportunities.
- ✓ Strengthen connections with the Workforce Board to enhance the overall effectiveness of job training efforts.

- ✓ Support introduction of new programs into technical schools, community colleges and universities that address the changing needs of businesses.
- ✓ Coordinate with the Workforce Board to locate a training facility in the Slate Belt.
- ✓ Support efforts to provide adult education and retraining, vocational education and job training.
- ✓ Create a strategy to promote job opportunities in the region and the benefits of reducing commutes outside of the region.
- ✓ Support efforts to provide training and employment opportunities for special needs populations.
- ✓ Maintain support for and ensure the continued availability of programs and materials provided through the Blue Mountain Community Library and the Bangor Public Library.

Policy 6.1 ensures the continued support and availability of programs and materials provided at libraries, such as the Bangor Public Library on South Main Street, Bangor Borough.

POLICY 6.2

Strengthen the role of Slate Belt communities to ensure a high-quality education that prepares all students for the workforce of tomorrow.

- ✓ Work cooperatively with the school districts to help maintain and enhance the quality of K-12 education.
- ✓ Coordinate with the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, schools and businesses to provide students with exposure to a wide variety of employment and business opportunities through apprenticeship programs, job shadowing and internships.
- ✓ Support school programs that focus on educational enrichment and critical skills training, especially in science and technology.
- ✓ Support increased student exposure to the trades to provide awareness of technical career opportunities.

Expand access to higher education opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- ✓ Coordinate with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority to provide enhanced service to the Slate Belt area.
- ✓ Communicate with Northampton Community College about the potential for establishing a satellite campus in the Slate Belt.
- ✓ Identify the technology needs in the Slate Belt and work with the private sector to identify possible solutions to providing enhanced access to technology.

- ✓ Support after-school programs that focus on educational enrichment and skills training.

POLICY 6.3

Coordinate land use planning efforts with the Bangor Area and Pen Argyl Area School Districts.

- ✓ Meet annually with school officials to exchange information on development trends and demographic changes that may impact the timing and need for future school facilities.
- ✓ Actively engage with school officials in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and review and provide recommendations regarding any proposed action by the school districts to locate, demolish, remove, sell, or lease any school structure or land.
- ✓ Consider the impact of residential development on the school system and coordinate with local districts to mitigate impacts.
- ✓ Assist school officials with planning for the reuse of any current or future surplus school sites.

Libraries, like the Blue Mountain Community Library, provide essential resources and tools to help people research a number of employment and business opportunities. Robinson Avenue, Pen Argyl Borough.

SUMMARY

Employers are increasingly demanding skills that require a higher level of education and training for people to be competitive and successful in today's technology-based society. Growing a well-qualified workforce that employers need by ensuring equitable and expanded access to education and training is imperative to attracting and retaining new businesses that offer high-paying jobs. Developing partnerships with workforce, education and business leaders will be critical to preparing students to meet the existing and future needs of employers.

By ensuring access to educational opportunities, all residents can achieve the economic and quality of life benefits of a high-quality education. The policies and actions of Plan Slate Belt aim to provide a path toward the growth and retention of a skilled and well-educated workforce, while meeting the ever-changing demands of business and industry.

Plan Slate Belt aims to provide a skilled and well-educated workforce, while meeting the ever-changing demands of business and industry. Bangor Area High School, Upper Mount Bethel Township.

170 Looking east down South Main Street, Bangor Borough.

PLAN COMPATIBILITY

Section 301 (a)(5) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that multi-municipal comprehensive plans include "A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan." This section of the Plan is divided into three components:

- ✓ **The Internal Consistency component** is an evaluation of how the multi-municipal plan relates to municipal boundaries within the multi-municipal area.
- ✓ **The External Consistency component** reviews compatibility between the Plan and the adopted comprehensive plans of neighboring municipalities.
- ✓ **The Consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan component** review is the compatibility of the multi-municipal plan with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan.*

INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

Internally, the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan is generally consistent. This consistency applies to the various components of the Plan and its components regarding abutting municipalities.

The land use plan was constructed by utilizing other elements of the multi-municipal plan. The Future Land Use Plan reflects the natural areas identified in the Natural Resources Plan and the Farmland Preservation Plan. Areas identified for preservation in the Farmland Preservation Plan are similarly treated in the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan has been designed to provide ample opportunities for meeting the area's housing and community utility needs. Areas recommended for higher density development coincide with areas where public sanitary sewer service is available or planned. Conversely, areas recommended for low-density development or preservation are not planned for public sanitary sewer service. The Future Land Use Plan considered accessibility and transportation capacity as a factor in identifying appropriate areas for development. The Natural Resources Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan are interrelated. Some of the areas identified in the Natural Resources Plan as significant natural areas are preserved through the recommendations in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Because the Plan considered the multi-municipal area's needs as a whole and because the policies in the Plan apply throughout the area, the elements operate seamlessly from one municipality to the next. As the Future Land Use Plan reflects Development areas and not specific land uses, the municipalities will need to ensure land use compatibility through the zoning process as an implementation action under the Slate Belt Plan.

EXTERNAL CONSISTENCY

The Plan Slate Belt region has eight municipalities in three counties contiguous to their borders. The Delaware River provides a natural buffer between the area from Upper Mount Bethel Township and Belvidere and Knowlton, White and Harmony townships in Warren County, New Jersey. The five municipalities to the north of the Slate Belt area in Monroe County, including Delaware Water Gap Borough and the townships of Smithfield, Stroud, Hamilton and Ross, are buffered by the Kittatinny Ridge. Based on a comparison between the Future Land Use Plan of the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan and the comprehensive plans and/or zoning ordinances of adjacent municipalities, there is general consistency with the existing and proposed uses in these surrounding municipalities. These minor potential conflicts should be resolved as the Slate Belt municipalities determine actual land uses for the Development category of the Future Land Use Plan. Otherwise, potential land use incompatibility instances can be resolved with appropriate buffering.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan. *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* was adopted by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission on October 31, 2019 and by Northampton County on November 21, 2019.

Minimal differences exist between the county and the multi-municipal comprehensive plan land use plans. The methods used to develop the Future Land Use Plan for each were very similar, with the multi-municipal plan providing more refined scale evaluations for farmland preservation and land use. A more refined place type analysis was used for the multi-municipal plan that led to more rural areas being identified for preservation buffer areas and a more refined Centers and Corridors mapping tied to place types and corridor types. The two plans are generally consistent in goals and policies as they relate to other plan sections.

174 A mural across the street from the Slate Belt Heritage Center on N. 1st Street, Bangor Borough.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The process of implementation starts with the adoption of the Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. Some actions can be accomplished individually, but others require continued cooperative planning among the municipalities. **Immediate actions** are those that should be accomplished within the first six months. **Short-term actions** are anticipated within two years of plan adoption and **medium-term actions** are those that are anticipated after the first two years. Many actions are ongoing activities, such as coordination with implementation partners.

IMMEDIATE ACTION (within 6 months)

PLAN ADOPTION

The Plan Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan was created for the municipalities of Bangor, East Bangor, Pen Argyl, Portland, Roseto and Wind Gap Boroughs and Upper Mount Bethel and Washington Townships. Adoption by all the municipalities is critical for establishing the distribution of land uses to satisfy the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requirements. Adoption of the Plan Slate Belt document serves as the conclusion of the planning process and the beginning of implementation.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT

The adoption of an Intergovernmental Cooperative Implementation Agreement (agreement) is the highest priority for plan implementation. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) created this measure specifically as a means of implementing multi-municipal comprehensive plans. The agreement should be adopted by each of the municipalities that participated in the plan.

The agreement should have the following components, among others:

- ✓ A process to achieve consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and relevant ordinances, such as zoning ordinances that consider all possible land uses.
- ✓ A mechanism for resolving disputes.
- ✓ A process for review and approval of land uses of regional significance. The Agreement will spell out the criteria for what would be considered a land use of regional significance as well as a process for inter-municipal coordination for review of proposals.

IMMEDIATE ACTION (within 6 months)

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- ✓ The Plan Slate Belt steering committee emphasized the need to develop a process to share land uses among the eight municipalities in the region. Municipalities are enabled by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) to share land uses if they have a multi-municipal plan. This means that each municipality is no longer required to provide for each potential land use if that use is provided for somewhere within the Slate Belt region.
- ✓ The Intergovernmental Cooperation Implementation Committee (ICIA) will prioritize reviewing each of the municipality's zoning ordinances to determine which land uses are most appropriate for a specific municipality. Specific land uses may be removed from municipal zoning ordinances if provided for elsewhere in the region.
  - + Review municipal services that were identified in the plan for possible regionalization. These include shared public works, emergency response, and community services (Policy 3.2). However, under no circumstances is any municipality or municipal authority obligated to provide sewage treatment capacity or public water supply to an adjoining municipality.
  - + Identify funding sources for projects.

SHORT-TERM ACTION (within 2 years of plan adoption)

ZONING ACTIONS

Consistency of zoning across all eight municipalities is critical to implementation of the plan. Coordination of definitions and uses, at a minimum, should be achieved and begin immediately upon adoption by all local governments of the new multi-municipal comprehensive plan. Zoning ordinances should be revised as necessary to be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Amend zoning ordinance maps to be consistent with the plan's Future Land Use Map. Specific actions include:

- ✓ Rezone areas in townships around boroughs to allow for greater intensity and diversity of housing development (Policy 1.1)
- ✓ Rezone vacant and underutilized industrial properties to allow for expanded reuse/redevelopment (Policy 2.1)
- ✓ Direct intense development to areas where the public sewer and community water supply systems can accept additional growth, or through limited expansion or upgrading (Policy 4.7)
- ✓ Direct exurban development to areas planned to be served by on-lot sewage disposal and water supply. (Policy 4.7)
- ✓ Discourage intense development in areas where it can only be served by on-lot sewage disposal or new or expanded privately owned central sewage facilities (Policy 4.7)

Provide for a diversity of housing options. Specific actions include:

- ✓ Increase allowed densities in boroughs and appropriate crossroads villages. (Policy 1.1)
- ✓ Permit and promote quality multi-family housing development that meets low-to-moderate income affordability standards and incorporates long-term energy efficiency features. (Policy 2.4)
- ✓ Allow for live/workspaces for creative or production-oriented businesses. (Policy 2.2)
- ✓ Support opportunities for congregate living situations for people with special needs. (Policy 2.4)

SHORT-TERM ACTION (within 2 years of plan adoption)

Agriculture

- ✓ Allow transfer of development rights from farmland to development areas. (Policy 1.2)
- ✓ Minimize the subdivision of farms to maintain concentration of farmland. (Policy 1.2)
- ✓ Review and update Township Agricultural Security Areas (Policy 1.2).

HOW TO AMEND ZONING USING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

To assess if zoning should be amended after the adoption of the Plan a community should compare the Future Land Use Plan, details of the Existing Land Use maps, Centers and Corridors Plan, the Natural Resources Plan, and the Farmland Preservation Plan to the existing municipal ordinance. Next an assessment of where there are differences between the comprehensive plan maps, existing land uses, and municipal zoning code should be identified. If a community has an official map and/or specific plans such as a capital or parks, recreation, and open space plan, or assesses traffic impact or parks and recreation fees associated with new development, comparison of these must also be considered. After the list of differences between documents and laws is determined, referring to the Place Types guidance in the Plan will help determine how to resolve any land use conflicts as each community prepares any zoning code amendments. The Place Types guidance organizes intensity of development with infrastructure.

It is recommended that the all communities in the Slate Belt work together simultaneously as comparison of plans and laws between communities and coordination of individual municipal zoning ordinance amendments will lead to achieving the maximum potential of the Plan's goals. Simultaneous zoning ordinance dialogues support the overall growth management strategy. This is especially relevant to land uses of extremely high impact such as landfills and warehousing. Furthermore, cooperation among the Plan's communities in assessing the need for zoning changes, allows for the preservation, protection and elevation of region-defining land uses like farmland, historic commercial districts, the Appalachian Mountain, Delaware River, and its tributaries, as well as, housing locations and even car-oriented commercial areas critical to the Slate Belt economy.

It is further recommended that each Slate Belt community retain individual municipal zoning ordinances and authorities and that coordination occur through the Intermunicipal Cooperative Agreement resulting from the adoption of this Plan. New multimunicipal comprehensive planning efforts require significant coordination and commitment and building the deep, rich partnerships needed to implement the Plan is a step-by-step process that requires patience, deliberation, and trust. This can only be achieved over time.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTION (after 2 years of plan adoption)

REDEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

Redevelopment and revitalization of the region's boroughs is a key component of the Plan Slate Belt plan. A comprehensive strategy encompassing economic development, housing revitalization, transportation improvements, and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized parcels is required. Two of the boroughs, Pen Argyl and Portland, have already conducted redevelopment studies which can serve as models for the region. It is also vital that each of the boroughs work together to implement regional strategies. Additionally, better coordination of economic activities and transportation improvements is needed at the gateways between boroughs and their surrounding townships.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Funding

- ✓ Explore funding options to assist homeowners and business owners in maintaining and repairing sidewalks (Policy 1.1)
- ✓ Identify local tax-incentive programs and funding that apply to redevelopment and reuse projects. (Policy 2.1)

Downtown/Main Street

- ✓ Establish a coordinated Main Street Program among the Slate Belt municipalities (Policy 2.1)
- ✓ Conduct parking studies to identify the location and availability of parking needed to serve infill development (Policy 1.1)
- ✓ Maintain, expand and promote Façade Improvement Programs (Policy 2.1)
- ✓ Study the redevelopment potential of key sites in the communities. Conduct real estate market analyses to determine feasibility of new development or redevelopment. (Policy 2.1)

Code Enforcement

- ✓ Create and implement rental housing registration, licensing and/or inspection programs to enable tenant assistance services and landlord/tenant education opportunities. (Policy 2.3)
- ✓ Review and adopt new or updated property maintenance codes to ensure existing buildings, housing stock and associated lands meet minimum public health and welfare standards. (Policy 2.3)

MEDIUM-TERM ACTION (after 2 years of plan adoption)

- ✓ Explore establishing shared code enforcement for the Slate Belt area to provide safe building and healthy housing conditions. Conduct a cost analysis to evaluate the costs associated with a regional versus municipal program. (Policy 2.3)
- ✓ Review and implement strategies identified in the Northampton County Blight Reversal and Remediation Plan to assess blighted properties and revitalize distressed properties. (Policy 2.3)

NATURAL RESOURCE AND AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION ACTIONS

Preservation of the Slate Belt Region's agricultural and natural resources is a key component of the Plan. Much of the region's economy, land use, and heritage is tied to protecting those resources for future generations. Maintaining these features requires both a growth management strategy that directs growth to areas planned for development, and a deliberate strategy to protect and preserve the agricultural and natural features so vital to this region.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Natural Resources

- ✓ Adopt or amend an official map to preserve high and medium conservation priority natural resource areas. (Policy 1.3)
- ✓ Collaborate with Lehigh Valley Greenways partners to conserve critical landscapes and restore stream corridors (Policy 1.3)
- ✓ Seek funding through federal, state, county and private grant programs for preservation and restoration of high conservation priority natural resource areas. (Policy 1.3)
- ✓ Require or update the dedication of land or money for parks as a condition for subdivision or land development approval as provided in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. (Policy 2.5)
- ✓ Connect existing parks and trails to create a recreation network. (Policy 2.5)

MEDIUM-TERM ACTION (after 2 years of plan adoption)

Agricultural Lands

- ✓ Promote local farmers' markets and explore creating a regional farmers' market that is centrally located in the rural areas of the Slate Belt. (Policy 5.1)
- ✓ Establish municipal financing tools for farmland preservation to leverage with funding available through various county, state and federal programs (Policy 1.2)
- ✓ Encourage farmers to apply for agricultural easements through the Northampton County Farmland Preservation Program. (Policy 1.2)

Transportation Network Improvement Actions

The Plan Slate Belt region is served by an interconnected transportation network that is the backbone of the region's economy and shapes the pattern of where its citizens live and work. Major roadways, most notably Route 512, serve several roles ranging from being the primary corridor in the region for transporting goods and people, to serving as the Main Street for a number of the boroughs. The transportation system must be maintained and improved to serve all users including walkers and rollers as well as motor vehicles.

Many of the recommended actions, such as identifying deficient bridges and roads, should be undertaken on a regional basis by the implementation committee or other inter-governmental group.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Road Improvements

- ✓ Create and maintain a transportation infrastructure database for an inventory of bridges, roads, and multimodal amenities. (Policy 4.1)
- ✓ Require connectivity of streets in land developments to facilitate better emergency response times. (Policy 4.1)
- ✓ Coordinate with other transportation agencies and adjacent communities and counties for the extension, enhancement or creation of existing and planned streets for connectivity. PennDOT Connects initiative and the Local Technical Assistance Program can be a catalyst for conversations with PennDOT. (Policy 4.1)
- ✓ Ensure road detour management plans are developed and updated to provide efficient traffic management strategies when road closures occur on critical roads in the area. (Policy 4.1)

MEDIUM-TERM ACTION (after 2 years of plan adoption)

- ✓ Create designated truck routes, parking areas and associated signage in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and other freight stakeholders. (Policy 4.2)
- ✓ Create Capital Improvement Plans to budget funding contributions for locally owned roads and bridges to advocate for improvements where funding matches can leverage money for implementation projects. (Policy 4.5)

Pedestrian, Bicycle, Transit Improvements

- ✓ Identify pedestrian infrastructure for sidewalk gaps, missing connections, poor conditions and non-compliant Americans with Disabilities Act design for prioritization for improvement. (Policy 4.3)
- ✓ Inventory existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to identify gaps for potential dedicated bike routes. (Policy 4.3)
- ✓ Require curbs and sidewalks in new developments to facilitate safe pedestrian access and connectivity. (Policy 4.3)
- ✓ Develop a traffic-calming initiative for areas of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular interactions utilizing the LTAP Tech Assist program to identify best practices on each site identified (Policy 4.3)
- ✓ Advocate for creation or enhancement of the multimodal route from East Bangor Borough to the southside of Bangor Borough, along Route 512 with corridor implantation, safety improvements and accommodations. (Policy 4.4)
- ✓ Work with municipal representatives to identify potential future LANTA routes and bus stop locations. (Policy 4.5)

CONCLUSION

The Lehigh Valley is one of the fastest-growing regions in Pennsylvania. Growth and development pressure has begun making its way to the rural areas of the Lehigh Valley that have not seen much growth in recent years, and the Plan Slate Belt region is no exception.

The Plan Slate Belt region is at a pivotal crossroads and is in position to define how it wants to, and does not want to, evolve and change in the coming decades. By committing to working together, the eight communities can realize benefits that working individually cannot provide, whether it be increased funding opportunities or planning together to accommodate all land uses or forming strong partnerships that will allow all communities of the Slate Belt to thrive. This Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan, through its goals, policies and actions, will guide the eight Slate Belt communities along a path to success.

Bangor General Store, Bangor Borough.

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PLAN SLATE BELT

MULTI-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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