

## **Section 10. Plan Implementation**

The Plan itself is a living document. With adoption it will be used in ongoing planning efforts throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. It will serve as vital input and as a planning tool into shorter-range planning efforts, ensuring coordination between different areas of planning, advancing specific projects that are in the pipeline that are being planned/programmed to achieve the Plan's vision through advancing delivery of the policy statements. In addition, general policy actions to deliver the Plan vision will also be advanced through SPC's various work programs and through outreach to the public, regional public and private leadership, the media and the general public.

Continuing the exchange of information and ongoing coordination among the various partners in the public private and civic sectors will maximize the return from individual planning efforts at the local, regional and state level. It will help match regional investments and policies in all sectors to the direction provided by the 2035 Plan.

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

A variety of planning tools will be utilized by SPC in its role as the MPO to translate the plan's policies, programs and projects into reality. For transportation these tools include SPC's Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program. Updated every two years, the Transportation Improvement Program for Southwestern Pennsylvania sets the schedules for all transportation investments and project phases to be advanced over the next four years. The TIP is developed cooperatively by the regional planning partners with public input and directs and controls transportation funding. The TIP is the delivery mechanism for advancing all transportation investments in the Plan. The next TIP update begins immediately with Plan adoption, with the new TIP in place by summer of 2008. The Plan will drive the next TIP's investment decisions.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

SPC's Unified Planning Work Program identifies the transportation planning priorities and activities to be carried out within the region each year. The next UPWP that starts July 1<sup>st</sup> with Plan adoption, has been developed to immediately begin to advance the Plan through a wide range of planning support tasks, including as examples Transportation Plans and Programs, Modal Transportation and Operations/Management, Data Systems and Modeling, and Outreach/Coordination. The UPWP also includes other federally-funded transportation planning activities that are to be performed by other regional partners during the year. It also includes significant state or local planning activities to be conducted without federal funds in the region. The UPWP provides the planning tool to coordinate and advance Plan implementation for transportation strategies across all partners throughout the region. Development of the next UPWP will begin in the fall of 2007 with a continued priority emphasis on Plan implementation.

## **Development District Programs**

The Economic Development District and the Local Development District SPC administers and manages several state and federal programs including the Appalachian Regional Commission Area Development Program, the Economic Development Administration Economic Development Assistance Program, and various programs under the Commonwealth's Department of Community and Economic Development including the Enterprise Development Program and the Broadband Outreach and Aggregation Fund. In addition to the guidelines and direction establish for each program by their sponsor SPC will carry out these programs with the intent of implementing this plan.

### ***Appalachian Regional Commission Area Development Program***

ARC's Area Development Program seeks to augment the Highway Program and bring more of Appalachia's people into America's economic mainstream. At least half of ARC's area development grant funding is directed to projects that benefit counties and areas in the Appalachian Region designated by ARC as economically distressed.

The focus of the area development program is on:

- promoting a diversified regional economy through strategies that help communities create and retain businesses and jobs;
- helping communities develop an educated, skilled workforce and create access to affordable, quality health care; and
- supporting the development and improvement of infrastructure, including water and sewer services, and the development and use of Internet access.

SPC seeks to build such projects as education and workforce training programs, highway construction, water and sewer system construction, leadership development programs, small business start-ups and expansions, and development of healthcare resources to meet the Area Development goals.

These Area Development Goals are supported by the following Plan Policy Statements:

- Revitalization and redevelopment of the region's existing communities is a priority.
- Investment in infrastructure improvements will be coordinated and targeted at the corridor level to optimize the impact of the investment.
- The region will focus on the identification and development of industrial sites with special attention given to well situated brownfield locations.
- The entire region will have access to broadband communications infrastructure.
- The region will place a priority on business development with a focus on existing business retention and expansion.
- The region will support initiatives designed to improve both the quality and quantity of the region's workforce to meet emerging industry demands.
- The region will place a priority on programs and services to attract and retain a diverse population with a particular focus on young adults and immigrants.

- The region will proactively support the emerging role of colleges and universities in economic development.
- The region will preserve, promote and develop the tourism and hospitality industries by capitalizing on historic, cultural, recreational and ecological assets.

SPC's role as the LDD is key to project development and review, providing technical assistance to local project sponsors and sending priority recommendations to the state. High priority projects must exhibit support and enhancement of the plan policies.

***Economic Development Administration Economic Development Assistance Program***

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) was established under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 3121), as amended, to generate jobs, help retain existing jobs, and stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas of the United States. EDA assistance is available to rural and urban areas of the nation experiencing high unemployment, low income, or other severe economic distress.

In fulfilling its mission, EDA is guided by the basic principle that distressed communities must be empowered to develop and implement their own economic development and revitalization strategies. Based on these locally- and regionally-developed priorities, EDA works in partnership with state and local governments, regional economic development districts, public and private nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribes. EDA helps distressed communities address problems associated with long-term economic distress, as well as sudden and severe economic dislocations including recovering from the economic impacts of natural disasters, the closure of military installations and other Federal facilities, changing trade patterns, and the depletion of natural resources.

This document serves as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This EDA-approved plan for economic development will be used as a guide in grant awards for water and sewer infrastructure systems, technology training centers, telecommunications facilities, research parks, and other major public-works projects. Priority projects must exhibit support and enhancement of the plan policies. (see project listing).

In addition, one of the most important components of the CEDS is the Plan of Action. Economic Development Administration guidance on CEDS development indicates that a "CEDS Plan of Action" implements the goals and objectives of the CEDS in a manner that: promotes economic development and opportunity; fosters effective transportation access; enhances and protects the environment; maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy; promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications; balances resources through sound management of physical development; and obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

It goes on to say that the CEDS must also contain a section that discusses the methodology for cooperating and integrating the CEDS with a State's economic development priorities. Each component of that requirement is addressed in the 2035 Plan.

*Promotes Economic Development and Opportunity*

The overall policy statement of the plan “The region’s transportation and land use will support and enhance the regional economy and communities within it” shows that it is the intent of this plan help guide sound investment decisions in a manner the enhances the regional economy. It can be said that it was a guiding principals along with enhancing the communities of the region.

*Fosters Effective Transportation Access*

As stated previously SPC, as the Economic Development District and the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Southwestern Pennsylvania, has integrated its CEDS development with the development of its Long Range Transportation plan as joint transportation and development plan. In that regard this plan explicitly recognizes and stresses the ties between a well maintained efficient transportation system and economic opportunity. This is reflected as well in several of the key policy statements of the plan. These statements include:

- Investment in infrastructure improvements will be coordinated and targeted at the corridor level to optimize the impact of the investment.
- Maintenance of the existing transportation system will be a regional priority.
- Transportation and development choices will reflect a priority on safe and secure multimodal and intermodal networks for both people and goods.
- The region’s transportation system will be actively managed and operated to allow the system to function at its full potential.
- The region’s transit system will connect people with resources throughout the entire region.

*Enhances and Protects the Environment*

It is understood that the concept of enhancing and protecting the environment in the region is inherent to the planning process and the plan itself. There are several key policy statement that address this issue specifically the first is “The region’s infrastructure system will be designed to protect and enhance public health and the environment.” This is an understanding that all of the investments considered through the course of action supported by the plan should be designed not just to minimize their impact on the environment but enhances it. This becomes even more crucial when considering the policy statement that “The region will preserve, promote and develop the tourism and hospitality industries by capitalizing on historic, cultural, recreational and ecological assets”. In order for the region to advance this strategy it must enhance and protect the environment.

## *2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania*

---

### *Maximizes Effective Development and Use of the Workforce Consistent With Any Applicable State or Local Workforce Investment Strategy*

Again this Plan addresses this issue directly in one of its policy statements. The statement that “The region will support initiatives designed to improve both the quality and quantity of the region’s workforce to meet emerging industry demands” is a direct response to the understanding that workforce issues are on the forefront of the economic development challenges of the region.

### *Promotes the Use of Technology in Economic Development, Including Access to High-Speed Telecommunications*

Another of the key policy statements comprising the plan is “The entire region will have access to broadband communications infrastructure”. This plan recognizes that access to high-speed telecommunications is a vital component of modern business and seeks to support initiatives throughout the region to insure our competitiveness.

### *Balances Resources Through Sound Management of Physical Development*

The plan was developed with the understanding that to make the most effective and efficient use limited resources the region needed to smart on how where it made development and investment choices. This is ultimately reflected in the preferred scenario, but can best be captured in the following three policy statements:

- Revitalization and redevelopment of the region’s existing communities is a priority.
- Investment in infrastructure improvements will be coordinated and targeted at the corridor level to optimize the impact of the investment.
- The region will focus on the identification and development of industrial sites with special attention given to well situated brownfield locations.

### *Cooperating and Integrating the CEDS with a State's Economic Development Priorities*

The basis for plan development were the plans and strategies of SPC’s members and partners including State and other region plans. Project Region is the nexus of those planning activities. Throughout the course of the organized activities that comprised the Project Region process SPC has participated in, reviewed and collected plans including; Commonwealth’s Transportation and Land Use for Economic Development Initiative, the strategies of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Keystone Principles for Development, County and City comprehensive or strategic plans, Action Plan for Investing in a New Pennsylvania (*IBM*), SPC 2030 Long Range Transportation & Development Plan, Regional Vision for Public Transportation, Transit Agencies’ Strategic Plans and Studies, Transportation Management Associations’ Plans, PennDOT Mobility Plan & Districts’ Business Plans, and the Governor’s Transportation Funding and Reform Commission.

### *Enterprise Development Program*

As a one of seven Local Development Districts in Pennsylvania SPC receives funding to assist in the delivery of business development services to the region's small business community under its Enterprise Development Program. The Enterprise Development Program consists of three core programs: Business Finance Assistance; Government Procurement Assistance; and, Export Assistance.

#### *Business Finance Assistance*

SPC's Business Finance Program helps entrepreneurs create business opportunities by acting as a public partner to reduce risk for local private sector lenders. SPC works with industrial development corporations and community-based development departments to create comprehensive loan packages that encourage economic investment in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Small businesses come to SPC to obtain low interest loans for working capital, machinery and equipment, or real estate to increase business and employment opportunities.

#### *Government Procurement Assistance*

SPC's Government Procurement Assistance program helps hundreds of companies in the region market to and contract with federal, state and local government agencies. We provide one-on-one counseling and training with an emphasis on small businesses with minority, female or service-disabled veteran owners to facilitate their participation in this market.

SPC's Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) helps companies to enter and succeed in the world of government contracting. Along with technical assistance, SPC provides companies with immediate alerts on solicitations that are issued for their particular products or services.

On any given day there may be 2,000 or more solicitations that SPC sorts through and passes on to client companies at no charge. PTAC helps companies gain knowledge of standards and how to comply. In addition, PTAC provides the personalized technical assistance on bidding procedures and regulations that must be met when selling to the government. The one-on-one support PTAC offers is instrumental for small companies that are new to the government procurement process.

#### *Export Assistance*

The goal of SPC's Export Development Program is to provide assistance and create opportunities for Southwestern Pennsylvania companies to expand their business internationally, thereby increasing export sales and employment prospects in the region. SPC's Export Development staff offers consultative services to small- and mid-sized businesses located throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. SPC's Export Development Program also sponsors and co-sponsors educational seminars and training programs designed for exporters and potential exporters in the region.

These Enterprise Development Programs supports the following Policy Statements:

- The region will place a priority on business development with a focus on existing business retention and expansion.
- The region will support initiatives designed to improve both the quality and quantity of the region's workforce to meet emerging industry demands.
- The region will place a priority on programs and services to attract and retain a diverse population with a particular focus on young adults and immigrants.
- The region will proactively support the emerging role of colleges and universities in economic development.
- The region will preserve, promote and develop the tourism and hospitality industries by capitalizing on historic, cultural, recreational and ecological assets.

#### *Broadband Outreach and Aggregation Fund*

Most recently SPC received a grant under the Broadband Outreach and Aggregation Fund. The Broadband Outreach and Aggregation Fund (BOAF) is a vehicle whereby the SPC will be develop outreach programs concerning the benefits, use and procurement of broadband services as well as providing seed grants to aggregate customer demand in communities with no service. Through the Broadband Outreach and Aggregation Fund SPC will help communities aggregate the demand for broadband service and require local telephone companies to respond to the new demand for services in a more timely fashion.

This program will implement the following policy statement:

- The entire region will have access to broadband communications infrastructure.

#### **Continuing Implementation**

Whether it is in its role as the Economic Development District, the Local Development District, the Metropolitan Planning Organization or a simply the region's forum, SPC will continue to seek out opportunities support, progress and implement, the policies and intent of the 2035 Plan.

The Plan's policy statements will provide the ongoing basis for interim decision-making related to all investments in southwestern Pennsylvania, with delivery through the various tools highlighted above, the TIP, the UPWP, and the economic development public and private sector delivery programs of SPC. Direction will be provided through a combination of SPC's committee structure and outreach programs and continuing new initiatives for regional involvement as utilized extensively in Plan development. Work will continue to create explicit connections between the Plan and ongoing SPC programming responsibilities and processes across transportation and economic development for the region's planning partners and the public. Collaboration will continue with all partners to ensure steps are taken to advance the Plan's regional consensus to implement the policies and strategies in the Plan.

The elements that are in place to guide Plan delivery include Plan Monitoring, Advance Plan Policies/Strategies, and Plan Administration. Implementation will require participation and

commitment of all sectors of the region. It will also require change – change in how and what investment decisions are made. Change in funding levels and investment policies. The response received by SPC during the extensive outreach that was conducted for Plan development documented the region’s readiness to take on these challenges as the region move’s forward.

### **Plan Monitoring**

Plan monitoring must first be responsive to issues that may arrive over time between Plan update cycles. With regards to the transportation component of the Plan, since southwestern Pennsylvania is an air quality maintenance area, the transportation plan element must be reviewed and updated at least every four years. A sample of the range of issues that could surface between Plan update cycles could range from substantial changes in the economy, in funding levels, or as a result of individual major development or project decisions. Significant changes in funding assumptions, extremely active current discussions at local, state, and federal levels will require consideration of a Plan revision.

The Plan monitoring process is designed to track and flag the need for consideration of Plan update or amendment. It will also track and assemble feedback on issues and regional priorities between Plan update cycles. As needed, specialty studies would be considered, and when appropriate undertaken through SPC’s work programs to investigate or address issues that surface between Plan cycles. Such studies could also be used to input to subsequent Plan updates.

A framework and process will be designed through SPC’s work programs. This may include a continuing role for Project Region’s four technical Work Groups that were utilized in Plan development. Technical tools and data collected will also be screened and analyzed to track trends and changing conditions, like SPC’s Congestion Management Process a data base that is continuously maintained and readily available on SPC’s website.

Technical monitoring and tracking will also be conducted of the specific actions and projects identified in the Plan. Results for transportation will be developed through TIP monitoring reports and through various UPWP tasks annually. With regards to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) element of the Plan, performance measures will be used to evaluate implementation. These will include but not be limited to number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS, number and type of investments undertaken in the region, number of jobs retained in the region, amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS, and changes in the economic environment of the region. SPC’s extensive data bases and systems will be used for this performance monitoring. Key findings from these monitoring activities will be presented in SPC’s Annual Reports, will be shared with SPC’s various committees and posted on the SPC website. Information and Plan implementation status reports will be shared with decision-makers, stakeholders and the public.

Monitoring of the Comprehensive Economic Development element of the Plan will also focus on advancing the CEDS plan of action. This includes implementing the goals and objectives of the CEDS in a manner that: promotes economic development and opportunity; fosters effective

transportation access; enhances and protects the environment; maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with applicable state and local workforce investment strategy; promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications; balances resources through sound management of physical development; obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources; and effectively and cooperatively integrates the CEDS with the Commonwealth's economic development priorities.

Results and findings from the implementation monitoring process will be assembled and available up front, and at the start of the next Plan update cycle. This will ensure that the Plan remains a living document that provides on target and clear direction to southwestern Pennsylvania. It will also allow an effective and efficient start to the next Plan update cycle with all sectors of the region involved.

Transportation line items will be monitored between Plan cycles. This will occur through the ongoing maintenance and delivery of the TIP. The result will be much improved tracking of project delivery, better accountability with the public, elected officials and the individual project sponsors. This will also result in improved program management and delivery between Plan cycles, keeping the Plan a living document while advancing responsible project investment decisions.

Unfunded projects listed in the Plan document for information will also be closely tracked to monitor any changes or developments with regards to these unfunded areas. This list will be monitored in case additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were to become available. The Plan monitoring process will work to stay on top of unfunded needs and be prepared to consider Plan amendment requests, such as Turnpike projects as money becomes available to them, and the other priority regional projects as needs and resources are identified.

Interstate Capital Maintenance projects that are recommended for advancement between Plan cycles by PennDOT through their statewide evaluation of condition and need process will be considered as Plan amendment requests. It is expected that the timing of these statewide technical decisions will be tied to each TIP update cycle (adoption even years, every two years). Since 2006, maintenance of the Interstate system programming decisions are being handled statewide and not at the individual region level. Once interstate capital maintenance individual project decisions are made, they must be reflected in SPC's TIP and Plan. Centralized Interstate capital maintenance allows for a consistent statewide approach to managing and maintaining Pennsylvania's Interstate network. Pennsylvania's Interstate network is the fourth largest in the country, and is critical to our region and to the Commonwealth's economic health and competitiveness.

### **Improve Project Delivery Process**

Plan implementation also includes advancing strategies for improving the transportation project delivery process. Plan projects and investments cannot languish amidst rising construction costs. Tight funds dictate timely and efficient usage of all available resources. Actions will include better integration across all modal programs through SPC's committee structure that brings

project sponsor partners regularly to the SPC table, improved and expanded mechanisms for public and stakeholder involvement to assist planning, programming and project delivery, and improved project data bases for tracking project costs, emerging delivery issues, and sponsor performance. SPC's Unified Planning Work Program will continue to advance activities to improve the project delivery process. Examples of such projects in SPC's 2007-2008 UPWP include Financial Planning and Transportation Needs Assessment, Project Evaluation and Coordination, Intermodal Initiatives, Transportation Systems Operations Program, Transit Technical Planning Assistance and Public Participation/Communications Program. The Long Range Plan Implementation and Update project in SPC's 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program will continue to advance the Plan's focus areas through feedback from standing and special committees, member planning and development staff, and the individual county Public Participation Panels.

Continuing and ongoing stakeholders and public outreach involvement will be essential to Plan implementation. Through SPC's various work programs, efforts on multiple fronts will continue to engage all sectors of the public and stakeholders throughout the region. SPC will work to continue to evolve creative ways to keep all partners involved between plan update cycles. Continued roles for Project Region's Regional Partners Group and its four Technical Work Groups will also be investigated. Innovative outreach to ensure a broad cross section of the public will continue, ensuring that participation in Plan implementation and monitoring of delivery is not limited to just special interest groups and professionals.

### **Plan Administration**

It is critical that the Plan be responsive to changing conditions within the region. Plan administration will be directed at maintaining and confirming the Plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation, economic and land use trends. The Plan administrative process will ensure that the Plan is responsive to changes on the funding and project development front. Monitoring will receive feedback from SPC's committee structure, from public involvement/outreach activities, from annual work program activities, and from the various data bases maintained at SPC. The administrative process will work to be responsive to changes in regional investment needs and strategies, changes that occur with individual projects through the project development process, and changes in funding programs at the federal, state and local level. Coordination will continue between Plan update cycles with various planning partners to identify the possible need for change through such instruments as monitoring updates of individual county comprehensive plans to tracking direction from the Mobility Plan for Pennsylvania. Plan administration will focus on three areas – amendment procedures, project delivery, and preparation for the next Plan update cycle.

### ***Amendment Procedures***

Major Plan amendments will require Commission action. This includes all Plan amendment requests that may affect air quality conformity, add a major project that is not covered under line items by investment category, or change the overall Financial Plan. The advancement of air quality non-neutral projects from the Illustrative Project List (or from any other source) will be

considered only upon submission of a project budget and identification and confirmation of the sources of additional funding. To qualify, the submitted project financial information must conform to the current federal guidelines for determining fiscal constraint.

Federal fiscal constraint guidelines, as of early 2007, require a federal review and determination that the construction costs for a project are included in a fiscally constrained TIP/LRTP before approval may be granted to advance a project beyond the environmental study phase of project development. The effect of this requirement is an increased demand to manage projects and revenues in Stage 2 of the LRTP in a manner similar to the TIP. Therefore, to expedite LRTP amendment processes and to keep the current project costs synchronized between the TIP and LRTP Stage 2, regular amendments and administrative changes to the LRTP will follow the TIP Revision Procedures identified in SPC's current version of the TIP. Examples include projects advanced under the highway and transit investment line items, minor individual project cost increases, and changes in project schedule that remain within the Plan years.

Technical amendment requests from sponsoring agencies will be advanced for consideration through the appropriate SPC technical committee. This will vary by Plan element. All transportation amendments will first be through the Transportation Technical Committee for highway requests, and through the Transit Operators Committee for transit requests.

For the Plan's Transportation Component, project delivery will be through the Transportation Improvement Program that is updated in even years. Plan implementation will quickly begin immediately after adoption with the start of the development of the 2007-2010 TIP this summer (2007). Action on the 2007-2010 TIP by the Commission is scheduled for June of 2008. A second TIP update to advance project delivery will also occur two years later in the summer of 2009 as work begins to develop the 2009-2010 TIP for June 2010 adoption. Thus two TIP update cycles will be advanced between Plan updates cycles to deliver projects that match the direction and vision of the Plan and its policy statements. With TIP adoption in 2008 and 2010, the Transportation Component of the Plan will also be amended as needed to reflect the current status of projects and of funds available for the region. Thus at a minimum there are several opportunities between the four year Plan update cycle to revisit the Plan's detailed content and reflect current regional climate and direction for transportation planning and funding. This will allow the Transportation Component of the Plan to remain current and responsive to change at the federal, state and local level. As necessary Plan amendment requests will also be considered between TIP update cycles.

Economic development investment coordination will occur through SPC's economic development committee structure and SPC's partnering efforts with the member economic development departments, the economic development stakeholders and partners throughout the region.

### **Next Plan Update Cycle**

Per language in SAFETEA-LU's Metropolitan Transportation Planning guidance, Long Range Transportation Plans must be reviewed and updated at least every four years in air quality maintenance areas to confirm validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation

*2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania*

---

and land use conditions and trends and to extend the forecast to at least a 20-year planning horizon. Federal SAFETEA-LU guidance for the Transportation Component of SPC's Plan will guide both the Plan update cycle and the Plan horizon year. The next SPC Plan will be updated in 2011. SPC looks forward to continuing to improve the process and the Plan as we move forward.