

Section 1. Introduction

Advancing the Regional Vision

The 2040 Transportation and Development Plan, or 2040 Plan, is an update of the 2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania (2035 Plan). The 2035 Plan was developed as a mechanism for connecting the region's vision to an official, coordinated implementation program of projects and actions. The 2035 Plan was developed through an unprecedented community engagement process called Project Region. Project Region was led by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, and was conducted in partnership with a wide range of other public, private and non-profit organizations. This unprecedented planning process was used as the backbone and basis for the 2040 Update.

The Project Region process was a set of organized activities to help the 10 counties of Southwestern Pennsylvania work together to develop regional consensus on a growth plan by using analytical tools, community involvement and scenario development to create the most effective strategies. It was designed to maximize regional assets and infrastructure to achieve balanced, cost effective growth; to capitalize on investments in existing communities; and to strengthen quality job creation and regional economic competitiveness.



The 2035 Plan was developed actively engaged the region in envisioning the future of Southwestern Pennsylvania and utilized what is known as scenario planning. The premise of scenario planning is that rather than focusing on only one picture of the future, a region can consider different versions of the future by considering a range of possibilities and identifying policies that can lead in different directions. Comparing and contrasting a range of different future scenarios empowers a region to make better, more informed choices.

A scenario is essentially a story about the future that can help people understand the forces of change and the collective choices they have. Scenarios show alternative futures by using maps, pictures and text that illustrate different projections of future conditions that could occur as a result of different choices.

The most up to date scenario planning research found that the four most common components or variables used in scenario planning were: 1) the location of development, 2) the density of development, 3) the mix of development, and 4) the transportation system elements.

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Using these basic concepts of scenario development discussed above, SPC employed a series of work groups to help develop the scenarios by describing the location of development, density of development, mix of development, and transportation system elements through facilitated group discussions.

Based on facilitated group discussions, four scenarios were developed to move forward; the Trend Scenario, Corridor/Cluster Scenario, the Compact/Infill/Transit Oriented Scenario and the Dispersed/Fringe Sketch Scenario.

The next step in the planning process was to present the draft scenarios for wider public review and discussion in order to reach consensus on which scenario or elements of the scenarios are preferred for the region. SPC hosted America's first-ever live interactive webcast Regional Town Meeting to present the draft scenarios. This was the first time that residents and communities throughout a region had come together via live video web meetings to talk and work together on what they wanted their region to look like in the future and how to make the most effective use of public investments throughout the region.

This meeting was conducted live over the internet in downtown Pittsburgh and 10 satellite meeting locations around the region. Participants at each location were able to have discussions with their neighbors as well as hear feedback from the participants at the other locations.

Regional Town Meeting participants reviewed the draft scenarios depicting different patterns of growth and development in the future. Maps and data for each scenario showed different ways in which our region could accommodate the new people, jobs and residences that would be added over the next 25 years.



Participants reviewed these different scenarios and discussed the pros and cons of each development pattern on their own local community and on the region as a whole, considering the scenario performance indicator scores on criteria including:

- Density of development
- Amount of land developed
- Households close to highway interchanges
- Households close to transit stops
- Regional travel
- Cost for basic infrastructure

Because no individual scenario tells the entire story, it's important to consider the elements in each scenario and how they differ from one another. Scenarios show possible futures based on differing sets of strategies and policies, and are designed to help people understand the potential impacts of various policy decisions. It's also important to remember that these scenarios show patterns of **how** growth and development could occur, **not how much** growth and development there will be.

Regional Town Meeting participants were encouraged to think about the positives and negatives of each of the scenario elements. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the specific elements of each scenario. The focus wasn't on choosing a single scenario for the region, but rather to elicit discussion on various policy options which could guide the development of a preferred scenario.

After this discussion, participants voted on the scenario they preferred based on the performance indicator scores, and results were shared live across the region.



Based on this input a new scenario combining the positive attributes of the Compact/Infill/Transit Oriented and Corridor/Cluster Scenarios was developed.

The consensus view that emerged from the extensive analysis, region wide public engagement, partner meetings, work group meetings, electronic town meetings and comparison of key policies - the Vision – was a regional development scenario of transportation and land use that supports and enhances the regional economy and the communities within it, The Regional Vision Scenario.

The 2035 Plan uses this Regional Vision Scenario, its characteristics and its corresponding policies as core consideration of all other plan components. The SPC reaffirmed the use of this Regional Vision Scenario and all that it entails as the basis for the 2040 Plan Update. This Regional Vision is described below.

The Regional Vision Scenario

The Regional Vision: Transportation and land use that supports and enhances the regional economy and the communities within it.

The scenario supporting this vision is characterized by regional policy statements addressing the public interest in mutually supportive regional activities, places, and the connections among them. The scenario is characterized by high to medium density development in centers and clusters with value placed on a mix of uses. Infrastructure improvements would be targeted within the centers and clusters of development and the corridors that connect them. This scenario also places an emphasis on infill development with reinvestment in existing business districts and brownfield rehabilitation

throughout the region. Open space preservation and support for agriculture are key emphases in the more rural areas of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

There is a strong multimodal focus including highways, transit, railways and waterways with an increasing emphasis on connecting the centers and clusters and promoting excellent access to the urban core. This scenario promotes improved transportation operations and safety. This scenario emphasizes upgrading existing water and sewer, with limited expansion primarily to historically underserved communities.

Most importantly the Region Vision Scenario also includes 16 policies (the Plan Policies) that are used to help guide the region towards achieving the vision. The Plan Policies are focused in three key areas; place, connections and activities.



Plan Policies

Regional Places

- 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.

Regional Connections

- 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.
- The entire region will have access to broadband communications infrastructure.
- The region's infrastructure system will be designed to protect and enhance public health and the environment.

Regional Activities

- 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 support identified strategic industry clusters.
- 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.
- The region will preserve and develop its agricultural industry.

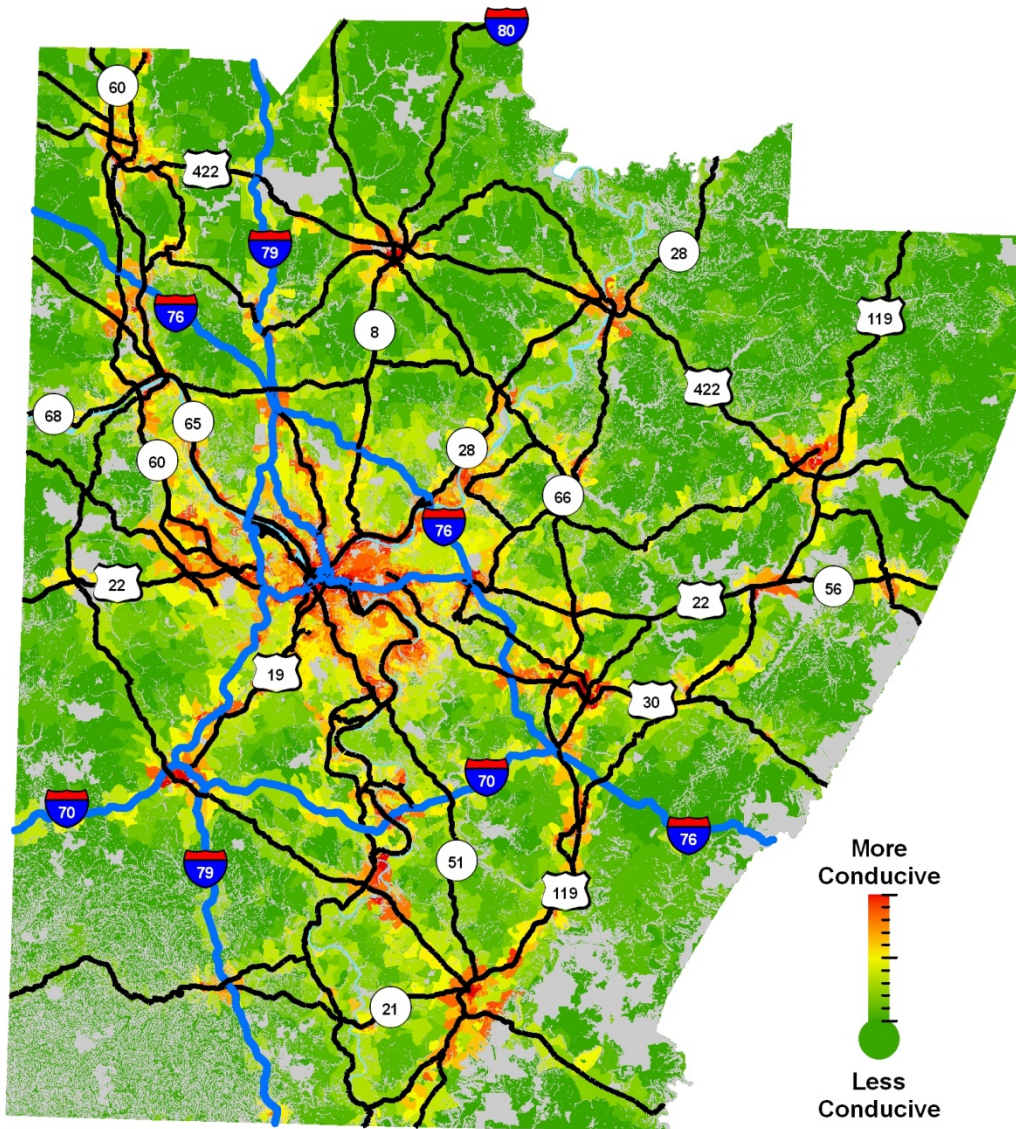


Figure 1.1 The Regional Vision Scenario

Summary

The core development values expressed in the Regional Vision Scenario were developed through various means, be they recent formally-adopted county, regional or state plans and strategies, or be it through an extensive public dialogue with citizens or professional experts.

The basics of those values, though stated many ways, are simple. Preserve, enhance and build upon our existing assets. That may mean redeveloping and revitalizing our existing communities and small towns, or it may mean capitalizing on previous infrastructure investment. It may mean preserving our open space and nurturing our agricultural industry, or it may mean investing in a well maintained multimodal transportation system that provides safe, secure, and efficient transportation options. It may mean making the most productive use of our thriving academic community, or it may mean capitalizing on historic, cultural, recreational and ecological assets. In fact, it means all these things, and more. That is what we heard repeatedly from the region and what is the spirit and intent that this scenario. It was basis for the 2035 Plan and it is the basis for the 2040 Plan Update.