Section 2: The Foundation of Mapping the Future

The Regional Vision, Policy Goals and Strategies

The Regional Vision forms the foundation of *Mapping the Future*. It was developed during the Project Region outreach process used to develop the *2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania*, which was among the most aggressive, inclusive, and expansive public participation efforts ever to be undertaken by a regional planning agency. The process led to the most successful, most diverse, discussion of regional values and strategies ever to take place in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Thousands of people participated in the Project Region outreach process through the various meetings, workshops and other participation opportunities.

Scenario planning techniques were used to evaluate alternative transportation and development options to determine which option best helped achieve the vision. The consensus view that emerged from SPC’s extensive analysis, region-wide public engagement, partner meetings, work group meetings, electronic town meetings, scenario development and comparison of key policies through the Project Region outreach process 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.*

SPC utilized a scenario planning process that focused on four key variables: 1) the location of development, 2) the density of development, 3) the mix of development, and 4) transportation system elements. Using these four variables the region considered four different scenarios: a Trend Scenario; a Dispersed/Fringe Scenario; a Compact/Infill/Transit-Oriented Scenario; and a Corridor/Cluster Scenario.

Using the INDEX© scenario planning tool to augment its extensive GIS system, SPC modeled and analyzed each scenario for how well it advanced the key variables. The **Trend Scenario** depicted a continuation of current development patterns with investment taking place scattered throughout the region with no strong tie between population growth and employment growth. The **Dispersed Fringe** scenario had a lower density development pattern with development outside of the urban cores and was primarily highway-oriented with transit and transit...
accessibility playing little to no role. The **Compact/Infill/Transit-Oriented Scenario** had high-density development with a mix of uses and development targeted within or adjacent to core communities and with strong active transportation elements and a reliance on public transportation. The **Corridor/Cluster Scenario** had medium to high density development in centers, clusters, and transportation corridors with a strong multimodal focus including highways, transit, railways, and waterways. The scenario had excellent access to the urban core with improved transportation operations.

SPC then hosted the first-ever live 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 linked 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. The results of the Regional Town Meeting showed that the Compact/Infill/Transit-Oriented Scenario and the Corridor/Cluster Scenario were favored by a majority of the respondents for all of the indicators. In response to this public input, SPC drafted the Regional Development Scenario that reflected the positive elements of those two scenarios.

The Regional Development Scenario (Figure 2.1) illustrates 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 corridors that connect them. There is 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, waterways, and active transportation with an increasing emphasis on connecting the centers and clusters and promoting excellent access to the urban core. This scenario also promotes improved transportation operations and safety. The scenario emphasizes upgrading existing water and sewer infrastructure, with limited expansion primarily to historically underserved communities.
Figure 2.1 Regional Development Scenario

The development scenario supporting the Regional Vision is characterized by regional policy goals that emphasize mutually supportive regional activities, places, and the connections among them, as well as high-level regional strategies.
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.
Regional Strategies

• Promote high to medium density development in centers and clusters with a value placed on a mix of uses

• Target infrastructure improvements within centers and clusters of development and corridors that connect them

• Emphasize infill development with reinvestment in existing business districts

• Emphasize brownfield rehabilitation throughout the region

• Preserve open space

• Support agriculture in rural areas
Regional Strategies, cont.

- Emphasize a strong multimodal focus including transit, bicycle & pedestrian facilities, trails, roadways, active transportation elements, railways & waterways

- Emphasize connecting centers and clusters and promoting excellent access to the urban core

- Promote improved transportation operations

- Promote improved transportation safety

- Emphasize upgrading existing water and sewer systems

- Promote limited water and sewer expansion primarily to historically underserved communities
Throughout the Regional Vision, the core development values have been expressed through various means, including adopted county, regional or state plans and strategies, and through a public dialogue with citizens and professionals. The basics of those values, though stated many ways, are simple. Preserve, enhance and build upon our existing assets to maintain the region’s infrastructure, make it safer and more reliable, and utilize it to grow our regional economy and develop sustainable active communities.

Pursuing the Regional Vision means taking advantage of diverse resources and opportunities throughout the region over the course of the coming decades. This approach may include redeveloping and revitalizing our existing communities and small towns, and capitalizing on previous infrastructure investment. It may include preserving our open space and nurturing our agricultural industry, or it may include investing in a well-maintained multimodal transportation system that provides safe, secure, efficient transportation options through efforts such as complete streets. It may include making the most productive use of our thriving academic community, or it may include capitalizing on historic, cultural, recreational and ecological assets. In fact, it includes all these things, and more.

This is the foundation on which Mapping the Future was built. It is these core development values, policy goals, and high level strategies that Mapping the Future seeks to implement and measure. It is from these that all discussion on performance measures and investment strategies for Mapping the Future is based. And it is by putting these core values into action that the region will achieve Transportation and land use that supports and enhances the regional economy and the communities within it.