

Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Update

Chapter XIX - Implementation Guidelines and Other Elements

The *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code* (MPC) mandates the following specific items (generally excerpted from the law itself) be included in a county comprehensive plan, each item of which is then addressed in a separate sub-section following:

- **Statement of Interrelationships:** A statement of the interrelationships among the various plan components, which may include an estimate of the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality.
- **Implementation Strategies:** A discussion of short and long-range plan implementation strategies, which may include implications for capital improvements programming, new or updated land use development regulations and identification of potentially available public funds.
- **Identification of Uses of Regional Impact:** Identification of current and proposed land uses that have a regional impact and significance, such as large shopping centers, major industrial parks, mines and related activities, office parks, storage facilities, large residential developments, regional entertainment and recreational complexes, hospitals, airports and port facilities.



- **Compatibility Statement:** 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 in municipalities.
- **Advisory Guidelines:** Advisory guidelines to promote general consistency with the adopted county comprehensive plan and promote uniformity with respect to local planning and zoning terminology and common types of municipal land use regulations.

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Statement of Interrelationships

This Plan includes a great deal of data about Wayne County, combined with a series of recommendations designed to set forth the strategy for dealing with growth and change in Wayne County. It stresses four basic themes that serve to link its various components:

1. The importance of leaving land use regulation and other government policy with that level of government closest to the people and capable of accomplishing it well - namely municipalities.
2. The need to balance environmental protection with diverse forms of economic development in the context of conservation of natural resources.
3. The need to avoid exclusionary land use regulations and help to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing for Wayne County's existing residents as well as future generations.
4. The necessity for the County to be aggressive in influencing the development and implementation of State and Federal policies that impact it.

The Plan, generally, accepts growth and attempts to guide the County in dealing with it so as to conserve the County's natural resources and, at the same time, promote economic development that will raise income levels and help provide a supply of affordable housing. The thrust of those recommendations that can be expected to generate environmental impacts is to create positive incentives for conservation of the County's natural resources. Rather than setting arbitrary standards that say what cannot be done, this plan stresses innovative approaches that offer incentives and performance based standards that benefit all parties.

The Plan does recommend various highway and community facility improvements and higher density housing in some instances, all of which could theoretically generate negative environmental impacts within specific affected areas. However, the Plan also recommends municipalities adopt regulatory performance standards to deal with these impacts. It further recommends larger projects be subjected to impact analyses and suggests public activities should be held to the same standard as private ones.

It is, moreover, recommended that, prior to implementing major new land use regulations, an analysis be made of their economic impact so officials can be sure whatever they finally do will not have a negative effect overall. More importantly, such analyses would provide a basis for developing new model regulations that accomplish the dual objectives of effective land use control and flexibility to accommodate economic development.

The importance of considering economic impacts and balancing these with the other goals of the Plan is emphasized throughout. Numerous recommendations, in fact, are offered with a view to reducing negative economic impacts and enhancing the positives associated with various forms of development. Conservation subdivision, for example, is offered as a vehicle to accomplish three separate goals; (1) lower cost development, (2) more affordable housing and (3) greater preservation of open space. Other environmental and economic impacts are analyzed within each element of the *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan*.

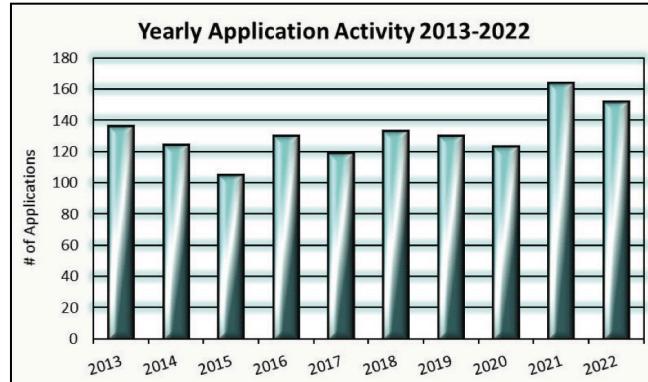
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Implementation Strategies

Implementation of this *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan* will involve a number of short and long-range plan implementation strategies. Short-range implementation strategies include the following:

1. Administering the *Wayne County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance* under the Municipalities Planning Code until all municipalities have enacted their own regulations, repealing the County ordinance.

Reviewing applications submitted to municipalities is also part of this duty. The chart to the right from the most recent Wayne County Planning Commission Annual Report indicates this activity has increased slightly the last two years but is still only roughly half the volume experienced in 2005 when there were more than 300 applications submitted.



2. Assisting municipalities, when requested, in enacting their own subdivision and land development, zoning and other land use related regulations.
3. Development of model regulations and a library of samples for municipalities to use in developing or redrafting their own regulations.
4. Reviewing municipal land use applications and regulations for consistency with local and County requirements and comprehensive plans.
5. Participating in the development of regional transportation infrastructure priorities to ensure those addressed herein are reflected in spending.
6. Assisting municipalities and the County in securing funding and approvals of community facility projects identified herein as priorities.
7. Advocating for affordable housing in the review of proposed projects and regulations that could affect the supply.
8. Assisting WEDCO and other local economic development entities with the recruitment of new business and retention of existing employers by providing technical support.
9. Utilizing GIS and related technologies to increase the knowledge of natural resources and constraints so as to improve the quality of development and the protection of resources.
10. Providing technical assistance, when requested, to private non-profit entities engaged in historical preservation and interpretation.

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Long-range implementation strategies include:

1. Conducting of planning schools to ensure all local officials are up to date on the law and its requirements, as well as planning concepts such as conservation subdivision, capital improvements programming and performance zoning.
2. Developing supplementary plans related to special issues such as stormwater management planning.
3. Continuing the assembly and distribution of data on the County that can be used by both public and private entities to further the proper development of the County.
4. Participating in regional alliances with other counties to address matters of mutual planning interest, not limited to the seven counties of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the Poconos or other conventional groupings but also others with common interests.
5. Acting as an advocate, within larger units of government, for the principle of leaving government policy to those levels of government closest to the people and still able to accomplish the tasks, thereby preserving the primary role of municipal and county government in an overall system that is bottom up rather than top down in focus.
6. Adapting this plan to constantly changing conditions by regularly measuring key indicators with the respect to the County. The Wayne County Planning Department is the best entity to do this as it has access to the County's own data collected by its various agencies and partners (including the "Wayne Tomorrow" effort) as well as Census and state data. An additional source of data is the recently created non-profit collaborative known as "The Institute" which also has access to academic research and health care data, for example. It is primarily focused on Lackawanna and Luzerne County but is also now addressing Wayne County.

Two cautions are important, though. First, much of the data is regional and Wayne County's interests and commonalties do not regularly coincide with those of Lackawanna and Luzerne County. Rather, Wayne County often shares more interests with Monroe and Pike or Susquehanna or even adjoining New York State counties than the Lackawanna/Wyoming Valley area. Lumping Wayne County data with that for these areas can very much distort reality in many cases.

Secondly, because The Institute is a private non-profit entity it has a particular agenda that may or may not match Wayne County's and, therefore, its key indicators may not be important to measuring Wayne County's against *Comprehensive Plan* goals. Indicators that are important to Wayne County and could potentially be supplied by entities such as The Institute (with comparisons to all adjoining or nearby counties) include but are not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home prices• Housing affordability• Housing construction• Wage data (across all industries)• Job distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medicaid eligibility• Poverty rates• Regional GDP (inflation adjusted)• Job growth rates (across all industries)• Homeownership rates
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Compatibility Statement

This MPC requirement is primarily intended to address the land use plans of adjoining municipalities and ensure their compatibility. There being relatively few cases of countywide zoning in Pennsylvania and none being proposed in this instance, the requirement has little applicability in the case of the *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan*. Notwithstanding this point, the recommendations of adjoining county plans have been reviewed for compatibility, with the following results:

- **Pike County**

The *Pike County Comprehensive Plan* identifies the area along the border of Pike and Wayne Counties as a combination of land uses with villages at Wilsonville, Greentown and La Anna and a “Minor Growth Area” north of Greentown. These areas are adjoined by similarly planned areas on the Wayne County side with Hawley, Newfoundland, and South Sterling all being proposed as “Population Center/Corridor” areas. Therefore, planning is very compatible between the two counties.

- **Monroe County**

Monroe County adjoins Wayne County along Dreher and Lehigh Townships. The area is largely public land or low density recreational and residential (rural) development on both sides of the border, excepting that the Village of Gouldsboro is a commercial service center for travelers on Routes 435 and I-380 and second home residents of communities such as Big Bass Lake. The Village cannot expand in Monroe, however, because the adjoining acreage is all public land. There is, therefore, no conflict between the proposed plans for Monroe and Wayne Counties.

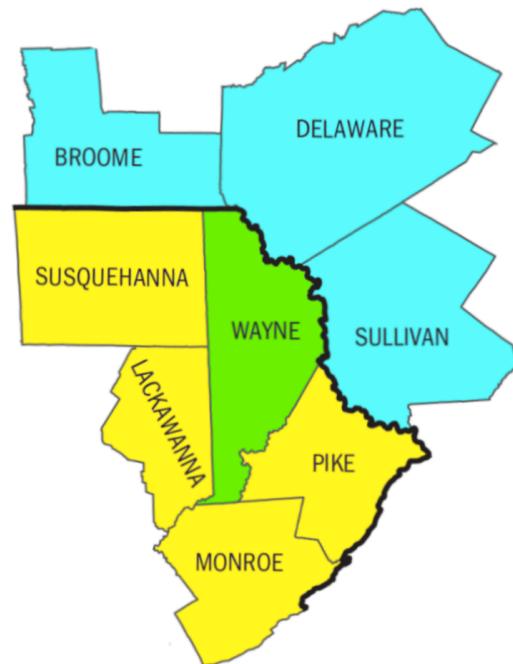
- **Lackawanna County**

The *Lackawanna-Luzerne Counties Comprehensive Plan* proposes the area along the Moasic Mountain Ridge that separates Lackawanna and Wayne Counties along the border as “Conservation Area.”

It also proposes “Infill Areas” in Vandling, Carbondale, Mayfield, Elmhurst, Moscow and the southern portion of Covington Township that all come very close to Wayne County.

These are matched by proposed “Population Center/Corridor” areas in Browndale, Canaan Township, Waymart, Hamlin and Gouldsboro on the Wayne County side. The areas between are proposed for “Lake Region/ Recreation” and “Neighborhood Development” areas.

Once again, there are no issues with compatibility of planning between the two counties.



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- **Susquehanna County**

Those areas of Susquehanna County along the Wayne County border are largely very rural in nature with the exception of Forest City, Uniondale/Herrick Center and Thompson. Northern Wayne County is a combination of “Rural Mix” and “Neighborhood Development” areas interspersed with the villages of Browndale, Pleasant Mount and Starrucca, which generally consist of extensions of similar patterns of development in Susquehanna County. There are no conflicts with Wayne County planning although Susquehanna has significant natural gas development taking place that has yet to occur in Wayne County.

- **Broome County (NY)**

The Town of Sanford, Broome County, New York adjoins Wayne County along its northern border. This area is largely a combination of low-density residential, recreational and vacant land on both sides of the border, with the Village of Deposit serving as a population/commercial center for the area. It is proposed by Wayne County as a “Rural Mix” area, indicating no issues of compatibility.

- **Delaware County (NY)**

The Towns of Deposit and Hancock in Delaware County, New York adjoin Wayne County along the West Branch of the Delaware River and the Upper Delaware River. Neither the Town of Deposit (which includes a portion of Village of Deposit) nor the Town of Hancock (which includes Hancock Village) have zoning laws applicable outside of Villages but both have Comprehensive Plans that recommend the areas in question for mixed-use activities, including industrial development.

Route 17 (I-86) cuts through the same corridor and several existing processing facilities are located along the border in both towns. The Wayne County side is also proposed for “Rural Mix” development. The Village of Hancock is the service center for this region, including Northern Wayne County and adjoins a “Population Center/Corridor” proposed on the Pennsylvania side. Planning between the counties, therefore, is very compatible.

- **Sullivan County (NY)**

The *Sullivan 2020 Comprehensive Plan* covers four towns adjoining Wayne County (Fremont, Delaware, Cocheaton and Tusten), all of which have their own comprehensive plans and zoning laws. The hamlets of Callicoon, Cocheaton and Narrowsburg are connected by bridges to Wayne County and matched by proposed “Population Center/Corridor” areas on the Pennsylvania side. The bulk of the land between is planned for rural/recreational use, much of it in the form of River Districts that generally conform to the objectives of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. Planning is compatible between the two counties.

The compatibility of the *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan* with planning in adjoining counties indicates no buffers or transitional measures are required.

The MPC requires that, when a municipality having a comprehensive plan is located in a county with one, both the county and the municipality shall each give the plan of the other consideration so the objectives of

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each plan can be protected to the greatest extent possible.

Numerous Wayne County municipalities have developed their own comprehensive plans and additional communities are considering doing so or are updating their plans. Several municipalities have joined together in regional planning programs, some extending to communities outside of Wayne County.

Each of these plans has been fully considered in the crafting of this *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan* and the objectives and recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan* protect those of each municipal comprehensive plan.

Identification of Uses of Regional Impact

Some land uses have potential to create regional impacts that go beyond individual municipal or county borders. Projects relating to these land uses should receive priority attention in Wayne County Planning Department reviews with the objective of identifying any benefits and/or mitigation that should be considered by the approving agencies of government. Such uses, specified in the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code*, include the following:

- Major shopping centers
- Large residential developments
- Hospitals and institutions
- Mines
- Business/office/industrial parks
- Entertainment/recreation complexes
- Storage facilities
- Airports

The County has the opportunity to review land development plans for all projects of any size but projects of regional significance, as defined the MPC, should be given additional consideration beyond the scope of the local regulations. Such review should be for the specific purpose of identifying spillover benefits and costs that may need to be addressed by the approving authority, including suggestions for any mitigation that may be appropriate to meeting the objectives of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

Advisory Guidelines

The following are advisory guidelines for promoting general consistency with the *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan*. These guidelines are intended to promote uniformity with respect to local planning and zoning terminology and common types of municipal land use regulations.

1. Municipal residential density standards should generally conform to those recommended herein for purposes of achieving affordable housing. Densities of less than one dwelling unit per acre (minimum lot areas of greater than one acre) with on-lot sewage and water should only be required in instances where limitations related to soil or other natural characteristics would otherwise render the specific land in question unsuitable for this density. Notwithstanding this, it is the prerogative of municipalities to establish appropriate densities consistent with scientific principles.
2. Municipal plans and regulations should incorporate consideration of County objectives with respect to County economic development, housing availability and natural resources protection and utilization.

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3. Municipal plans and regulations should be coordinated with those of adjoining municipalities, using the *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan* for overall guidance and with a view toward ensuring proper transitions of land uses from one municipality to the next.
4. Municipal plans and regulations should reinforce the development of centers identified in the *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan*, such that development in Palmyra Township, for example, is a logical extension of Hawley Borough and provides for its natural expansion.
5. Municipal infrastructure projects should reinforce development patterns recommended in the *Wayne County Comprehensive Plan*.
6. Municipal regulations should, where practical, incorporate similar terminology to that utilized by the County in its *Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance* so as to promote uniformity of terms for ease of use by both the public and private sectors.
7. Continue to develop community partnerships that include municipal and county government leaders, business and non-profit leaders, to best plan for the ongoing challenges that our community faces including housing inventory shortages, an aging populations, severe weather threats and public safety.