

## **Chapter XIII - Community Facilities Plan**

### **Introduction**

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update, many areas of focus have been brought to light as vital to the improvement of the “quality of life” for residents and visitors within the County. These improvements range from recreational opportunities within the municipalities to regulations regarding current economic trends in development. This also extends to programs set in place and run by the County aimed at improving opportunities for businesses and setting precedence for preservation of the agricultural heritage of the region. These programs, their aim, and the goals associated with each are detailed below with further elaboration on how each can and should expect to impact the future growth of the County, its workforce, and the “quality of life” experienced by residents and visitors.

As a plan is developed for the County looking at the years ahead, finding a balance between the desire to attract businesses (manufacturing and services), improve tourism opportunities through shops and outdoor recreation, while maintaining the rural and pristine nature of the region is one desire that has come up time and time again throughout the process. These categories and goals for growth are not isolated focus points to be addressed on their own. Each is related to the next, creating a network of interoperability aimed at improving function, use, and quality of life.

The County has taken great strides towards improving and addressing the existing and future needs of the community by sponsoring the *Wayne Tomorrow!* Initiative. The initiative looks at the ecosystem of the County and all facets related to how the County is run, how it is experienced by visitors and residents, and how to set it up for a sustainable future. Nestled within the *Wayne Tomorrow!* initiative are several Task Forces organized to monitor, improve, and plan for the betterment of the County.

Plan updates related to recreation, parks and natural resources have been omitted from this section to eliminate duplication of work and planning efforts done as part of the Wayne County Recreation, Parks & Natural Resources Plan completed in 2022. Please see that report for a deeper discussion and inventory of the available recreation opportunities across the County as well as recommendations for future planning efforts.

This Community Facilities and Recreation Plan is intended to address unmet infrastructure and service needs of the County and its constituent municipalities. Trends with potential to affect needs may be discerned from the Community Facilities Analysis and Recreation Analysis (Sections III and V, respectively, of this Comprehensive Plan) as well as other background studies. These include the following:

### **Wayne Tomorrow!**

**Agriculture Task Force:** Many of the larger farms/farmsteads within the County are “aging out”. The agriculture industry within the County needs the next generation of farmers to bring their experience and insight to the forefront in order to enliven the industry with the new emerging markets and products.

The Initiative, in partnership with the Wayne Economic Development Corporation, created an [Agriculture Development Plan](#) for which these farms and future generations can build from by updating infrastructure and incorporating innovative technologies to enliven the sector. For an in-depth look at this study and plan, please see the *Wayne County Agricultural Development Plan* available on the Wayne

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County website. Not only is the agricultural industry vital to the economy within the County and livelihoods of residents, but it enhances the aesthetic beauty across the County allowing travelers picturesque views that would otherwise not exist if not for the open fields.

As a primary component of a healthy, thriving, and robust community, the County and Wayne Tomorrow! recognized the need for fresh, locally grown foods that not only benefit the local economy, but also the residents. A feasibility study was conducted for an “Agriculture Innovation Center” which the County Commissioners accepted and authorized the next phase.

As part of this planned multi-use *Agriculture Innovation Center*, space would be made available for community gardens, green houses, and a farmers’ market in addition to areas for packaging and processing local goods for distribution.

Additionally, using and planning a portion of the space for educational and teaching opportunities about food preparation and nutrition is a proposed function of the programming. A facility of this nature, housing this many resources and opportunities for local businesses and residents could be potentially transformative to the local community. It would be a corollary to the County’s AgroLegacy branding initiative.

### **Community Health & Wellness and Community Hubs Task Force:**

This task force is being created as many of the ideas and goals of each are overlapping. By combining forces, they will be able to meet their objectives and gather more community/group members at one time. One main objective of the Health & Wellness portion is to provide resources (links and access to existing resources) to families and community members of all ages. The Task Force has members from various organizations such as Wayne Memorial Health, National Alliance on Mental Illness, The Salvation Army etc.

The Community Hubs Task Force is driven to be the connection that brings together people young and old in a physical location that is safe. Here, people can engage in social/educational activities, congregate as a community, and discuss the resources that are offered by the Health & Wellness portion. By combining these Task Forces into one, the Health & Wellness portion can bring ideas and programs/events to the Community Hubs, where the hubs can help to host and plan events.

### **Housing Task Force:**

See Housing Plan (Chapter XV) for reference to Housing Task Force objectives. Also, see *Wayne County Housing Needs Assessment & Market Study* at [WayneTomorrow.com](http://WayneTomorrow.com).



### **Transportation Task Force:**

See Transportation Plan (Chapter XIV) for reference to Transportation Task Force objectives.

### **Stourbridge Project Business Incubator**

In creating a path for existing and new businesses to prosper and grow within the County, the Stourbridge Project was launched in 2016 as a joint effort between Wayne County, the Wayne Economic Development

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Corporation (WEDCO) & Workforce Alliance to spur collaboration and support entrepreneurs. The space includes a co-working environment, space available for businesses to get started, a prototyping lab, and a digital media lab. This project is a result of the planning and implementation done as part of the previous Comprehensive Plan.

There has been a renewed interest in creating avenues for boutique and manufacturing businesses to grow and prosper within the County. By giving entrepreneurs opportunities to establish new and flourishing businesses within the County, new ideas and younger generations of people are added to the economy.



### Additional Infrastructure:

Although many municipalities have, in recent years, offered additional facilities and services (e.g., parks, sewer systems), the primary function of most municipalities continues to be road maintenance and budgets are often stretched thin in doing so. Additional pressure has been placed on PennDOT to diligently maintain the roads, as well as the bridges, on the travel ways throughout the County. A number of Municipalities have been active in applying for grant funding aimed towards roadway improvements and/or purchase of new Township vehicles for maintenance purposes.

Human services provided by the County are offered under the umbrella of a County Human Services Agency. These services are complemented by others offered by a growing array of non-profit providers.

Broadband connection continues to be a high priority issue County-wide due to the remoteness of parts of the County. The Wayne Tomorrow! Initiative, through funding from the Federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security) Act and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), has taken a proactive approach to identifying ways to expand the network and availability throughout the County. From expanding covered areas to providing students with updated technology to complete their coursework, Wayne Tomorrow! has taken on this challenge directly and continues to do so moving forward.

Public school enrollment continues to be on the decline due to the aging population, even more-so than when the Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2010. Higher education options within the County have expanded as several colleges have offered courses locally, such as Lackawanna College at the Hawley Silk Mill.

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Sewer and septic systems across the County continue to face expansion and siting difficulties by the state stream anti-degradation requirements in areas of High Quality or Exceptional Value streams which are numerable across much of the county. Alternative systems and technologies should continue to be investigated and implemented, in line with PA DEP regulations, to facilitate future development.

The 24 fire departments located in Wayne County are staffed by active volunteers. Maintaining volunteer support is among the challenges facing these services, especially as Wayne County's population continues to age without an influx of younger residents. It may behoove the Municipalities to look at possible "for profit" vendors to fill the void's being created, on behalf of the population.

There are seven public libraries, managed by the Wayne Library Alliance (WLA), located throughout Wayne County from Northern Wayne to Newfoundland. There are also several other cultural facilities and attractions provided and operated effectively by the non-profit sector.



As Wayne County's population continues to grow older, the need to maintain good quality long-term care options within the County must be a priority. Extended long-term care options for Wayne County residents are limited to three primary facilities within the County.

Recreation opportunities across the County continue to be expanded by the County recognizing the need for immersive outdoor experiences. More recently, two water trail/park access points are being designed and implemented (One at White Mills and another at the former Industrial Point) while other trail and park design projects are seeking funding elsewhere within the County.

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### Public Input

During the process of developing *Goals and Objectives* (See Chapter XI) for this *Comprehensive Plan*, a community survey of residents was conducted. The survey asked respondents to identify the five most important needs with respect to making Wayne County “a better place to live.” The top 20 items from the list generated are summarized in Table XIII-1.

Among the list of top 20 needs were 14 items (highlighted in the table to the right) involving infrastructure, community facilities and services and recreation. Taxes & cost of government was the highest rated need by survey respondents, noting a need to address these items in the future. As visible within the table, community infrastructure needs are valued at a high priority amongst respondents. Several other needs were also identified by respondents, including health care facilities and affordable housing.

Table XIII-1: Wayne County Needs

County Needs	%	Rank
Taxes & cost of government	69%	1
<b>High-speed internet</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Open space</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Cellular phone service</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>4</b>
Environmental protection	57%	5
<b>Roads &amp; highways</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Health care facilities</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>7</b>
Overdevelopment/sprawl	53%	8
<b>Affordable housing</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Water supplies</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Police protection</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>11</b>
Economic development	44%	12
<b>Public schools</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>13</b>
Land use controls	41%	14a
<b>Recreation/cultural facilities</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>14b</b>
Public services	40%	15
<b>Youth programs</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Child care</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>17</b>
Higher education	29%	18
<b>Public transportation</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sewage disposal</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20</b>

Source: Wayne County Comprehensive Plan Survey

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### Recommendations

Most of the needs discussed in the preceding section are currently being addressed by local officials. Notwithstanding this, there are some specific needs requiring special attention over the next several years. These include the following:

NOTE: Recommendations related to recreation, parks and natural resources have been omitted from this section to eliminate duplication of work and planning efforts done as part of the [Wayne County Recreation, Parks & Natural Resources Plan](#) completed in 2022. Please see this report for a deeper discussion and inventory of the available recreation opportunities across the County as well as recommendations for future planning efforts.

1. There should be continued emphasis on retention and expansion of the agricultural industry within the County. This expansion includes consideration of all facets of the industry, ranging from the FFA (Future Farmers of America) programs & renewed curriculum within the school as it relates to agriculture and extending to feasibility studies and planning for future processing plants.
2. Continued expansion of post-secondary educational opportunities with a focus on professional vocational training, para-medical/nursing programs and G.E.D programs for those lacking high school diploma. (as suggested by the Survey results).
3. Continued expansion of natural gas services across the County, specifically in western Wayne County, to support development initiatives being carried out by WEDCO (Wayne Economic Development Corporation).
4. Municipal officials should continue to extend and upgrade sewage collection facilities peripheral to existing treatment plants. Given the difficulty of meeting stream anti- degradation standards this will demand considerable diligence and lead time but is essential to economic development and protection of water quality from the greater threats of malfunctioning on-lot sewer systems. Alternative systems that have been approved by DEP should be utilized often to improve site layouts and reduce susceptibility of systems from failure.
5. Continuous upgrading of emergency services through expanded training and financial support for volunteer providers is critical to both residents and vacationers and must be a priority. The existing volunteer system for providing most emergency services is a tremendous cost-saver, ensures high-quality services and promotes community involvement. These are invaluable to the County.
6. The County, through both its Human Services Agency and Hospital and Health Facilities Authority, should continue to work closely with the Wayne Memorial Health System and other health service providers to improve the delivery of health care throughout the County and the access to it by all. Finding new ways to deliver services outside of the hospital itself and bringing patients to doctors and the hospital must be priorities. Additionally, seek additional providers for mental/behavioral health & drug treatment.
7. The County and municipalities should continue to examine opportunities for re-use of existing

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facilities to reduce costs and ensure existing structures of prominence are retained in productive community use. In recent years, existing buildings within Honesdale Borough and Texas Township have been repurposed by private businesses to offset the need for finding new sites and the expenditure of building new.

8. The County should continue to find ways to encourage the community to utilize available resources for recycling goods at one of the thirteen municipal recycling sites. Existing programs available to the community (Backyard Composting and Christmas Tree Recycling) should be expanded upon and advertised to encourage participation. Additional programs should also be developed and implemented as a way to promote reuse, save energy, reduce pollution, and create jobs. An incentive program for local business owners to participate and encourage recycling in the workplace is an example.
9. The County should pursue the potential development of a county transportation vehicle garage and/or maintenance facility. This recommendation has been carried over from the 2010 plan as a point of emphasis for future implementation. The continued development of community facilities across the County, be it outdoor recreation or indoor facilities such as the proposed YMCA relocation, necessitate a well-organized transportation program.
10. The County should encourage municipalities to forge relationships with the summer camp industry to utilize their facilities in the off-season as may be appropriate. There are examples of this both within Wayne County and nearby, where camp facilities have been made available for community recreation events and programs on a regular basis. This makes sense for camps who desire closer relationships with the communities where they operate, as well as municipalities who benefit by access to more extensive facilities at certain times of the year.
11. The Salvation Army's Ladore Lodge and Camp Freedom, both located in Western Wayne are two major non-profit facilities that have achieved widespread recognition outside of Wayne County and should be promoted as much as possible as regional assets that serve to familiarize visitors with Wayne County while providing critical services to families, the community at large, veterans and emergency first responders as well as Gold Star family members,