



NARC
Building Regional Communities

National Association of Regional Councils
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Written Statement for the Record

Hearing on
“Oversight of the Economic Development Administration”

Before the U.S. Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, DC

From
The Honorable James Kennedy
Commissioner, Butler County, PA
Board Member, National Association of Regional Councils
and
Board Member, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Thursday, May 21, 2009



Good morning and thank you, Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Inhofe and distinguished members of the Committee. I am honored to be before you to testify on the vital role the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and its programs play within regional economic development, as well as the creation of sustainable and livable communities as it pertains to reauthorization, economic stimulus and other innovative opportunities.

I am James Kennedy, Commissioner of Butler County, Pennsylvania, and sit on the Board of Directors for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC). I am also the Region II (Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania) Board of Directors' Representative and Past President of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC). Today, on behalf of NARC, I am here to stress the importance of EDA's programs, funding and activities; the need for immediate reauthorization; SPC's successes and challenges with EDA, particularly with economic stimulus funding; and, and how EDA can be innovatively revitalized to meet the growing requirements of communities and regions within a 21st century context.

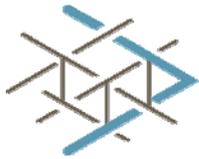
The National Association of Regional Councils is a non-profit trade organization that serves as the national voice for regionalism, advocating for multi-jurisdictional cooperation as the most effective way to address community planning and development opportunities and challenges. NARC is governed by local elected officials and represents member regional planning organizations composed of multiple local governments that work together to improve America's communities - large and small, urban and rural. Through advocacy and assistance, NARC's mission is to increase funding and authority for all regional councils (RCs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), regardless of their size or location, and to strengthen American regions and communities in transportation, economic and community development, homeland security, and the environment – cross-linking fundamental planning and implementation functions within these areas.



Regional councils deliver an array of federal, state and local programs that provide planning support and technical assistance to local governments. The national network of regional councils includes organizations such as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), Councils of Government (COG), Rural Planning Organizations (RPO), Economic Development Districts (EDD) and Local Development Districts (LDD). Regional councils are either created by compact and enabling legislation or as a voluntary consortia of local governments. Their mission is the delivery of services and programs for economic development, first responder and 9-1-1, health care, infrastructure development, aging services, air and water quality, land-use and long-range planning, economic and workforce development, data collection and transportation planning at a regional level. As such, regional councils are responsible for much of the planning and programming of federal, state and local dollars.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the cooperative forum for regional collaboration, planning, and public decision-making within the greater Pittsburgh region, representing a 10-county area with a diverse urban and rural make up that accounts for 2.66 million in population and 7,112 square miles. By providing essential services to the region, SPC develops plans and programs for public investments; fulfills federal and state requirements for transportation, economic development, and local government assistance programs; and operates with public involvement and trust. As the Local Development District (LDD) and Economic Development District (EDD) for southwestern Pennsylvania (as designated by the U.S. Appalachian Regional Commission and the U.S. Department of Commerce), SPC establishes regional economic development priorities and provides a wide range of public services to the region.

A well-planned, coordinated strategy for public priorities in economic development is critical at local, state, and federal levels for sound use of public dollars. As the federally designated EDD, SPC is responsible for developing, monitoring and updating the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). These public-sector, EDA-approved plans for economic development are 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. The EDA grants for infrastructure development, local capacity building and business development help the communities served by SPC to alleviate conditions of substantial and persistent unemployment and underemployment in economically distressed areas within southwestern Pennsylvania.

Many of NARC's members, SPC included, support this Committee's efforts to create and maintain robust investment in economic and community development through regional efforts, and commend the Committee's commitment to a strong federal partnership with our nation's local elected officials. NARC and its members welcome the Committee's questions in addressing the needs, opportunities and challenges facing our nation's regional planning organizations and constituent local governments, particularly as it relates to revived economic and workforce opportunities in our rural and urban regions.

Regional planning organizations like SPC are today's "boots on the ground" planners and implementers of tomorrow's regional infrastructure – built on a strong foundation of regional economic development initiatives. In order to continue our successful efforts, regional planning organizations need a robust federal partner, decisive federal leadership and increased flexibility, funding and resources within federal programs to help make long lasting economic development investments that promote economic development strategies throughout our regions.

Madam Chairman, the convergence of a softening economy, declining federal and state funds, rising unemployment, forecasted population growth, and the clear need for substantial investments in the country's infrastructure, communities and job opportunities provides us with the necessity and opportunity to boost EDA's program success through a revived federal commitment to EDA's core mission – "to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy" – and through a realignment of comprehensive planning activities that spur livable, sustainable and vibrant communities. The question is – how can Congress best direct funding to provide

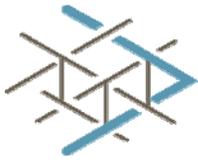


family-wage jobs, while stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship, and offering a wealth of cross-linked options within housing, transportation, and economic opportunity? Let me offer some thoughts on EDA reauthorization, the progress of EDA economic stimulus, innovative economic development concepts and practices, and SPC and the greater Pittsburgh region as a successful example of progress toward comprehensive economic development.

Reauthorization of Economic Development Administration (EDA)

The reauthorization of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) is essential, particularly in these difficult economic times, for providing cost-effective programs, efficient investment of federal resources, creation and retention of jobs, generation of important tax revenues in distressed communities, and tools to achieve regional and global competitiveness. A healthy national economy depends on creating robust regional and local economies. EDA is one of the few federal agencies solely focused on private sector job growth and serves as a critical resource to distressed communities striving to improve local economics through bottoms-up economic development strategies with infrastructure grants, strategic planning assistance, business development capital or technical assistance. EDA programs are an invaluable resource to our communities to implement regional strategies that promote innovation and competitiveness. EDA's role in creating and maintaining jobs while stimulating industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas, both urban and rural, is critical to the sustainability of our regions and local governments, many of whom are facing fiscal budget restraints. EDA programs are also flexible, allowing funding to be applied towards long-term economic development planning, as well as sudden and severe economic distress, meeting the nation's needs on multiple levels through one comprehensive program.

Through EDA, the federal government must re-establish a strong federal role in urban and rural economic development. The federal government should include new federal, state and local economic development priorities into existing programs; establish pilot programs to test new ideas; and, act as a convener to facilitate peer-to-peer



practice exchanges. NARC recommends the federal government, through EDA reauthorization and other comprehensive economic development opportunities, provide:

- **Sustained authority** to ensure the effectiveness of federal economic development efforts by including local elected officials and their regional planning organizations as engaged partners, which is a long-standing practice of EDA. By increasing the authority and flexibility of local governments and regional planning organizations, and strategically targeting scarce funding, the federal government can strengthen regional and national economies;
- **Increased commitment** to funding infrastructure, improving safety, protecting the environment and connecting commerce by leveraging multi-jurisdictional, regional solutions through robust, sustained and coordinated federal funding effort that puts EDA at the center of comprehensive planning, while urging new opportunities that create and incentivize a trained, readily available workforce, which is essential to attracting and retaining industries; and,
- **Increased U.S. innovation and entrepreneurship** that bolsters competitiveness and economic growth through incentives, increased funding, job training and public-private partnerships. Developing strategic alliances with the private sector, entrepreneurial firms, academic institutions and federal research facilities will allow for greater economic opportunities and smoother industry transitions.

In order to do this, NARC recommends that EDA be authorized at the fiscal year 2008 authorized level of a minimum of \$500 million to sufficiently provide for programs and operations resources at all levels of the agency. This would include increased funding and flexibility for EDA's core programs – Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance – which should remain the primary focus of EDA. The individual planning grants that EDD organizations such as SPC receive also should be increased; EDDs have been receiving the same \$52,000 per year in planning grants for the last 25 years. EDA planning grants are the linchpin for local governments to cooperatively address economic development challenges on a regional basis. For this reason, our members look



forward to working with the Committee to determine the appropriate increased level of individual planning grants to meet the growing needs of regional economic development.

For years the federal government, through federal surface transportation legislation, has insured that adequate dollars were invested in transportation planning to effectively plan and program transportation investments. With the advent of such national and international sustainability movements, such as the Administration's *Livable Communities* initiative, it has become increasingly apparent that a community's overall health is tied to the successful integration of mobility and accessibility infrastructure, its economic strengths and weaknesses, and its environmental attributes. The time has come to place as much national emphasis on strategic regional economic planning as is placed on the planning of our transportation investments. EDA is the vehicle by which to do just that by increasing the funding that goes directly to the planning, maintenance and monitoring of regional CEDS and by directly tying EDA to the federal *Livable Communities* initiatives.

EDA serves as a vital resource for distressed communities striving to improve their local economies through bottoms-up economic development strategies with infrastructure grants, strategic planning assistance, business development capital or technical assistance. Without the EDA dollars devoted to sound, strategic planning investments through a regional planning effort our communities would not have the ability to develop cross-sector strategies needed to insure our investment of public and private dollars brings the greatest benefit and is used effectively and efficiently. NARC strongly believes and continues to support the kind of extensive public-private partnerships and public involvement called for by EDA in its planning guidance. Furthermore, we believe that it is only through such partnerships and involvement that true success can be measured.



EDA Success: SPC Regional Example

SPC promotes regionally integrated, cooperative planning and development activities for communities throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania – urban, rural, large and small. Southwestern Pennsylvania region's communities range from the high density urban center of the City of Pittsburgh, to the fast growing suburbs and rural farmlands of my home county of Butler. Southwestern Pennsylvania has over 110,000 businesses and is the second largest region in the state of Pennsylvania. SPC combines management of community assistance, financial assistance, export and government procurement assistance, and special enterprise development activities with the delivery of other state and federal programs to help our region become increasingly competitive in national and global markets.

SPC has had a long history with EDA as an EDD in identifying priority needs of local communities by working with their citizens to foster economic development and to target and meet the most pressing needs by building community cohesion and leadership. Through the development of CEDS, SPC seeks to create and retain domestic jobs; increase local business stability; revitalize local communities; utilize local transportation facilities; and, enhance productivity and competitiveness.

Most recently, EDA provided \$150,000 to the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to support expansion of the Executive-in-Residence (EIR) program, which provides capital investments, customized company formation and business growth services to the region's life sciences enterprises, one of the target industry clusters identified for our region. This expansion will allow additional early-stage companies to benefit from the services offered by the program. This investment is part of a \$300,000 project. Just recently, *Science Progress* profiled the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse in promoting regional centers of innovation around the nation as a way to create jobs and maintain long-term economic competitiveness. The President's fiscal year 2010 budget request includes funding for multiple regional innovation clusters and creating a network of public-private



business incubators. This funding could go a long in supporting and strengthening many of the regional cluster activities already underway.

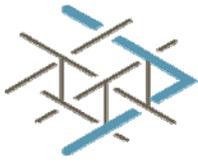
Another EDA supported project is the Armstrong County Industrial Development Council in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, which received \$2 million to construct Northpointe Technology Center II, a facility to house advanced technology firms. This investment is part of a \$4.4 million project that will help create 60 jobs and generate \$20 million in private investment, and is typical in the type of return on investment we see in EDA projects.

For SPC, EDA's funding is critical, particularly as we face a 75 percent state budget cut this year alone. More than ever, we need to patch together as much federal, state and local funding as possible and work regionally in order to get the biggest return on investment, providing for the greatest community benefit.

SPC and Stimulus

As the region's principal regional resource for planning and development information, SPC develops plans and programs through committees involving the public, private and civic sectors. For the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), SPC conveyed stimulus funding opportunities to a wide range of potential applicants, through public participation meetings that focused on opportunities to amend the region's transportation and development plan to incorporate available ARRA money. SPC, in its capacity as a crosscutting regional organization, is a natural venue developing and publicizing new initiatives. We recently held a specially targeted stimulus update workshop for local school districts and municipalities that was co-convened with our two senators' regional offices. (*Invitation attached*)

EDA has very limited staff resources in the regional office with which to adequately address the aggressive timeline associated with accessing ARRA funds. This is problem should be directly addressed within EDA



reauthorization through adequate funding to fully staff EDA headquarters and regional offices. We are in contact with our regional office on a regular basis, and are working on several projects that may, in the future, be able to access some of the limited ARRA funds available through EDA. One issue that did come up in the ARRA process was the ability for businesses and individuals to bypass the SPC regionally-developed EDA process and apply directly on www.grants.gov for EDA ARRA project funding. This is particularly disconcerting given the need to tie all economic development investment to the larger regional plan, meeting the established needs of the region.

EDA and Economic Development for the 21st Century

Creating strong regional economies is critical to maintaining a strong national economy. Regions are economic powerhouses and incubators of opportunity. By drawing on the collective strength of cities, counties and towns across a geographic region, the federal government can build economic and industrial centers to pioneer and test new technologies, train workers and maximize public and private relationships. SPC and its fellow regional planning organizations are recognized as experienced partners, consensus builders, community leaders and program managers. We convene local and multi-jurisdictional government leaders with businesses to support rural, suburban and urban workforce development activities. We have a proven record for administering local, state and federal funds and programs that bolster economic vitality. Our organizations develop innovative approaches and replicable practices that support strategic investments for sustainability and growth agendas in the nation's communities. To support regional and local economic health, we recommend the federal government:

- Coordinate federal funding into mechanisms that fully fund and establish regions and their local constituencies as primary recipients of (current and future) federal resources;
- Create linkages between regions —regardless of size— and avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach;
- Create a mechanism to establish regional planning organizations where they do not currently exist to meet the needs of contiguous local jurisdictions;



- Examine the expanded use of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs), comprehensive regional plans done every five years, to help direct government economic development spending within the region and look to coordinate other federal agency planning efforts with the CEDs process;
- Consider coordinating CEDs with regional transportation (Transportation Improvement Program), land use planning and any other regional planning functions;
- Promote the development of a national study to examine all federal programs that provide economic and workforce development funding for communities and businesses, and determine how these monies and programs can best be leveraged together and innovatively implemented; and,
- Gather all federal agency economic development departments with state, local and regional partners in roundtable discussions focusing on the future of the U.S. economy.

Livability / Livable Communities

The President's fiscal year 2010 budget request contains a myriad of items that addresses a new federal role in economic and community development activities. For the U.S. Department of Commerce, the president increased EDA Economic Assistance Programs by over \$11 million compared to fiscal year 2009. Additionally, in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the president calls for \$150 million for the *Sustainable Communities Initiative* to integrate housing and transportation, and reform zoning and land use. Of that, \$100 million would be geared towards Regional Planning Grants for MPOs and HUD block grant consortia. These items, and many other intermingled throughout the budget request, are laudable and integral to comprehensive regional planning that lead to "livability" or "livable communities" as it is being coined. However, they miss the necessity for inclusion of EDA and the vital role it plays in economic development strategies for urban and rural areas of distress. NARC and its members recommend that EDA's core functions and successes be integrated into these comprehensive planning initiatives in order to ensure appropriate community involvement, maximized federal investment(s), coordinated approaches on long term planning, improved organizational effectiveness, stronger

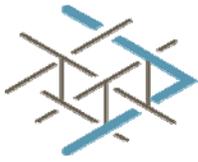


environmental management, reduced costs and time to complete regional projects, and a multitude of other benefits that can drive regional economic growth.

The connection between transportation and economic development is undeniable. SPC has worked tirelessly over the years to optimize the connection in a way that makes sense. As the EDD and the MPO for Southwestern Pennsylvania, SPC has integrated the development of its CEDS with the development of its Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) into a joint transportation and development plan. In that regard, this plan explicitly recognizes and stresses the linkage between a well-maintained, efficient transportation system and economic opportunity. This linkage takes place at both the regional policy and the project level. As one joint plan, SPC's Regional Plan has a single vision and a set of policy statements that guide investments for transportation and economic development. On the project level, consistently evaluating investments in transportation and economic development against the spirit and intent of the plan ensures that projects are mutually beneficial. This means that projects either work in tandem or are mutually supportive, and that they do not work at cross purposes or hinder one another.

In its most recent award winning planning effort, *Project Region*, the Commission took this connection further, by examining the impacts of investment decisions on the region's built environment and communities. The *Livable Communities* concept, as mentioned above, is spurring more active acknowledgment of the need for this kind of coordinated planning nationwide through a full integration of transportation, economic and environmental planning. EDA should be one of the lead agency fulfilling this mission by increasing the funding that goes directly to the planning, maintenance and monitoring of regional CEDS, and by directly tying EDA activities to the federal *Livable Communities* initiatives that call for integrated functional planning.

In 2008, *Project Region* was honored as a Best Practice in Regional Visioning with four national excellence awards, including the American Planning Association 2008 National Planning Excellence Award for Public



Outreach; American Planning Association 2008 Technology Division Award for Best Use of Technology for Public Participation; Federal Highway Administration & Federal Transit Administration 2008 Transportation Planning Excellence Award; and EDA's 2008 Planning Performance Award.

The EDA award was given to SPC as an EDA investment recipient for a project demonstrating outstanding collaboration and effectiveness in the planning phase of a project. The "2035 Transportation and Development Plan" (***Executive Summary attached***) for Southwestern Pennsylvania received this recognition because of its development through an unprecedented community engagement process, *Project Region*. SPC collaborated regionally and produced a unified regional plan, promoting economic growth and generating jobs within its ten-county area. In its collaborative outreach, SPC went well beyond standard public outreach formats, using state of the art technologies to collect feedback across the ten-county region on policy choices. SPC used technology and cost-effective public involvement techniques, rather than expensive traditional marketing, to develop consensus on plans by combining GIS tools, forecasting and scenario methods, electronic kiosk surveys and web facilitated simultaneous public planning meetings.

In pursuing livability from the federal perspective, NARC recommends developing incentives that promote comprehensive regional planning and allows each region to meet federally-established goals by setting regionally-driven objectives based on consensus and a shared regional vision. These objectives should be initiated by strong public and local government involvement, and seek to address new and existing challenges, advance regional collaboration, and leverage a region's assets to compete in a new global economy. While tailored to a region's needs and composition, livability initiatives generally should seek to highlight a region's core strengths while addressing (in most cases, but not all) land use, transportation, the environment, energy, economy/economic development, social welfare, housing, and public safety issues -- in order to properly balance growth, improve the overall quality of life and maintain vibrant local and regional economies. This should be a bottoms up approach that informs a federal process and links the cross-purposes of various federal agencies and programs.



Conclusion

Reauthorizing EDA with increased funding and integrating the agency into regional comprehensive planning measures is critical to empowering local governments and propelling regional efforts to help improve the quality of life within U.S. communities. The EDA approach is a cost-effective, efficient investment of federal resources with programs paying for themselves through the creation of jobs and generating tax revenues in distressed communities. Moreover, the bottoms-up approach reflected in the comprehensive economic development planning process ensures the development of a planning strategy that reflects input from the local government level and meets the needs of local communities.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of NARC and giving me the opportunity to highlight some of the accomplishments and exemplary work of my region. NARC offers its support and assistance on these issues, and any future economic or community development topic that might arise. We look forward to working with Congress on developing proactive federal economic development policies and programs that can help to restore economic prosperity in our nation's communities and foster partnerships and innovative practices that make each region a great places to live, work, play and invest.

**Municipality / School District Briefing
on the
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
(ARRA)**

Hosted by
Senator Arlen Specter and Senator Robert Casey, Jr.

Sponsored by
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Join the offices of Senator Arlen Specter and Senator Robert Casey, Jr. to hear first-hand about the economic stimulus funding and how it can impact or benefit your municipality or school district. Don't miss this opportunity to learn and ask questions about the current opportunities of this landmark legislation.

This briefing will focus on the implementation of the legislation from the federal perspective, as well as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Invited speakers will include representatives from sectors of the federal and state government that have direct responsibility for putting the legislation and programs into action.

Briefing topics will include:

- implementation
- drinking / wastewater
- energy
- education
- weatherization
- block grants
- broadband deployment

FRIDAY - MAY 1, 2009

Registration 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Program 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Regional Learning Alliance

850 Cranberry Woods Drive

Cranberry Township, PA 16066

***THERE IS NO COST TO ATTEND
SEATING IS LIMITED FOR THIS EVENT...RSVP EARLY!***

**RSVP BY April 28, 2009 to Marisa Rowe
at the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
mrowe@spcregion.org
412-391-5590 x 309**

Continental breakfast and refreshments will be provided.



OUR REGION'S
Plan



Include.

Inform.

Inspire.

Imagine.

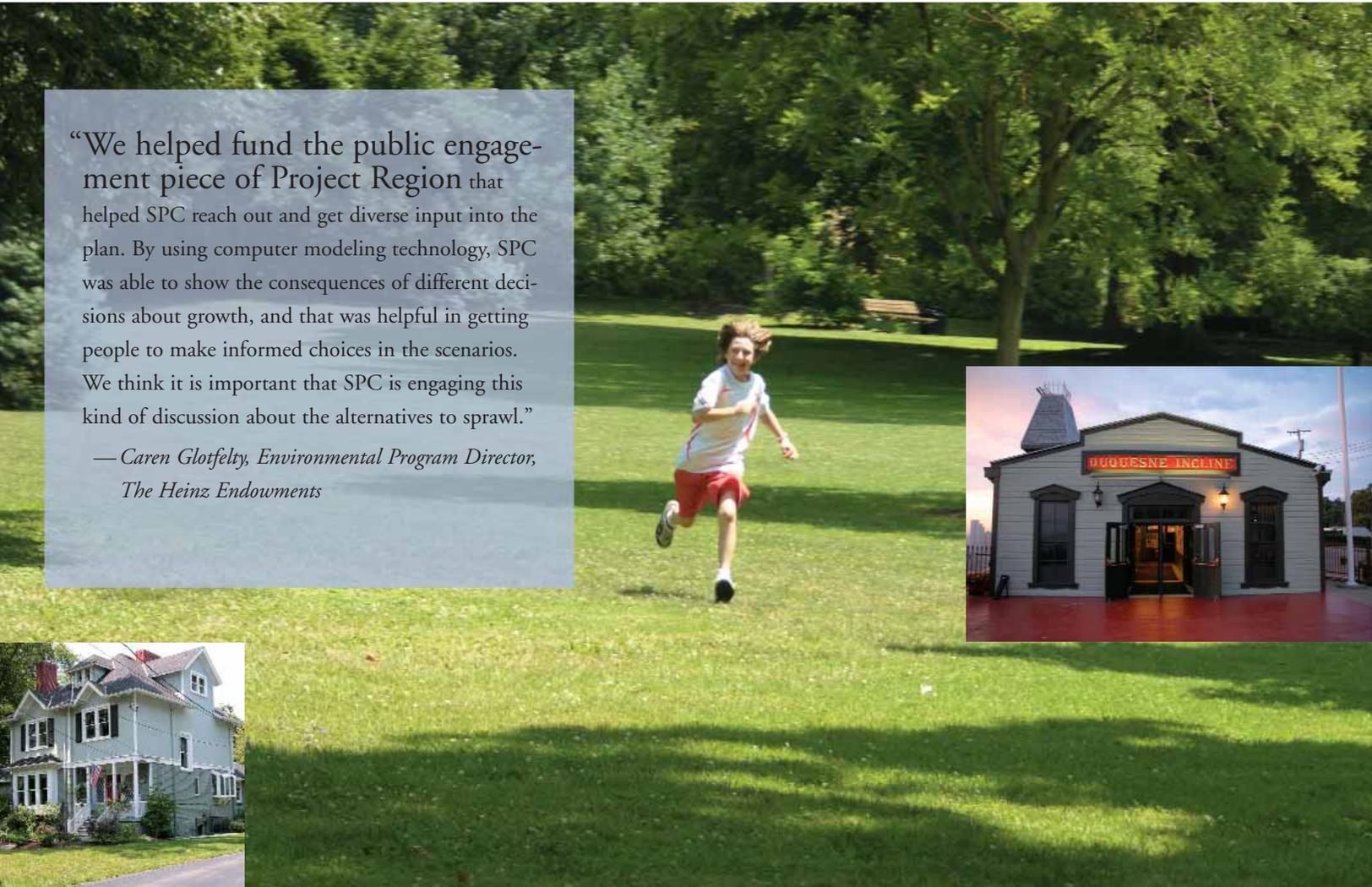
Implement.

2035 Transportation and Development Plan
for Southwestern Pennsylvania

An aerial photograph showing a town nestled along a river. A large bridge spans the river, and the surrounding area is a mix of residential and commercial buildings. The river flows through the center of the town.

“The Project Region outreach process has been, and continues to be, among the most aggressive, inclusive, and expansive public participation efforts ever undertaken by a regional planning agency.”

—2035 Transportation and Development Plan
for Southwestern Pennsylvania

A photograph of a young child running across a large, green grassy field. The child is wearing a white t-shirt and red shorts. The background is filled with lush green trees and a clear sky.

“We helped fund the public engagement piece of Project Region that helped SPC reach out and get diverse input into the plan. By using computer modeling technology, SPC was able to show the consequences of different decisions about growth, and that was helpful in getting people to make informed choices in the scenarios. We think it is important that SPC is engaging this kind of discussion about the alternatives to sprawl.”

—Caren Glotfelty, Environmental Program Director,
The Heinz Endowments



Not Just “A” Plan. *The Plan.* *Your Plan.*

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) has singular status as the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Local Development District and Economic Development District for our region’s 10 counties: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland. In these roles, we develop the region’s Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The LRTP and CEDS are integrated within the regional *2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania* (our Region’s Plan). But that plan’s purpose, and SPC’s work, go far beyond official requirements.

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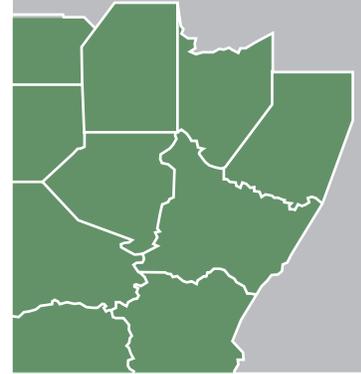
Like other large regions, Southwestern Pennsylvania has many development-related plans—and planning communities. SPC’s mission is to bring them together as part of a unified regional vision—to be the region’s forum for collaboration, planning, and public decision-making.

That mission reached new heights with the Project Region planning process that gave birth to our Region’s Plan. Proactive outreach techniques and state-of-the-art technology helped us achieve a level of public participation that has distinguished Southwestern Pennsylvania nationwide as a leading innovator in regional planning. Over 3,000 participants from our region were directly involved in planning workshops and meetings, and gave input through our websites and surveys.

Our Region’s Plan is an extraordinary accomplishment—truly a consensus vision of our region’s future and the road map for realizing that vision. In both lineage and purpose, it is also *your plan*. Be proud of it, read it, and incorporate it into your understanding of our region, your communications, and your decisions. Using our Region’s Plan will help ensure that our region’s many policies and projects are mutually supportive to maximize benefits. Together, we can continually improve Southwestern Pennsylvania’s quality of life, making our region one of the best places to live, work, play and invest.

Your Partners at SPC

To obtain a copy of our Region’s Plan, learn more about SPC, or participate in future planning efforts, visit www.spcregion.org or call 412-391-5590.



EMPOWERING THE REGION

ALLEGHENY
ARMSTRONG
BEAVER
BUTLER
FAYETTE
GREENE
INDIANA
LAWRENCE
PITTSBURGH
WASHINGTON
WESTMORELAND



WHO WE ARE – AND ARE BECOMING

Our Region’s Plan reflects Southwestern Pennsylvania’s “big picture”—the full diversity of its communities over an extended period of time. A good title for our big picture would be: Transformation.



After decades of challenges—most notably the contraction of the steel industry and resulting declines in the population and prominence of urban centers—our region is recognized worldwide for its ability to adapt and renew through concerted action. It may not receive as much media attention as regions with explosive population growth, but Southwestern Pennsylvania is clearly a desirable place to live with a promising future.

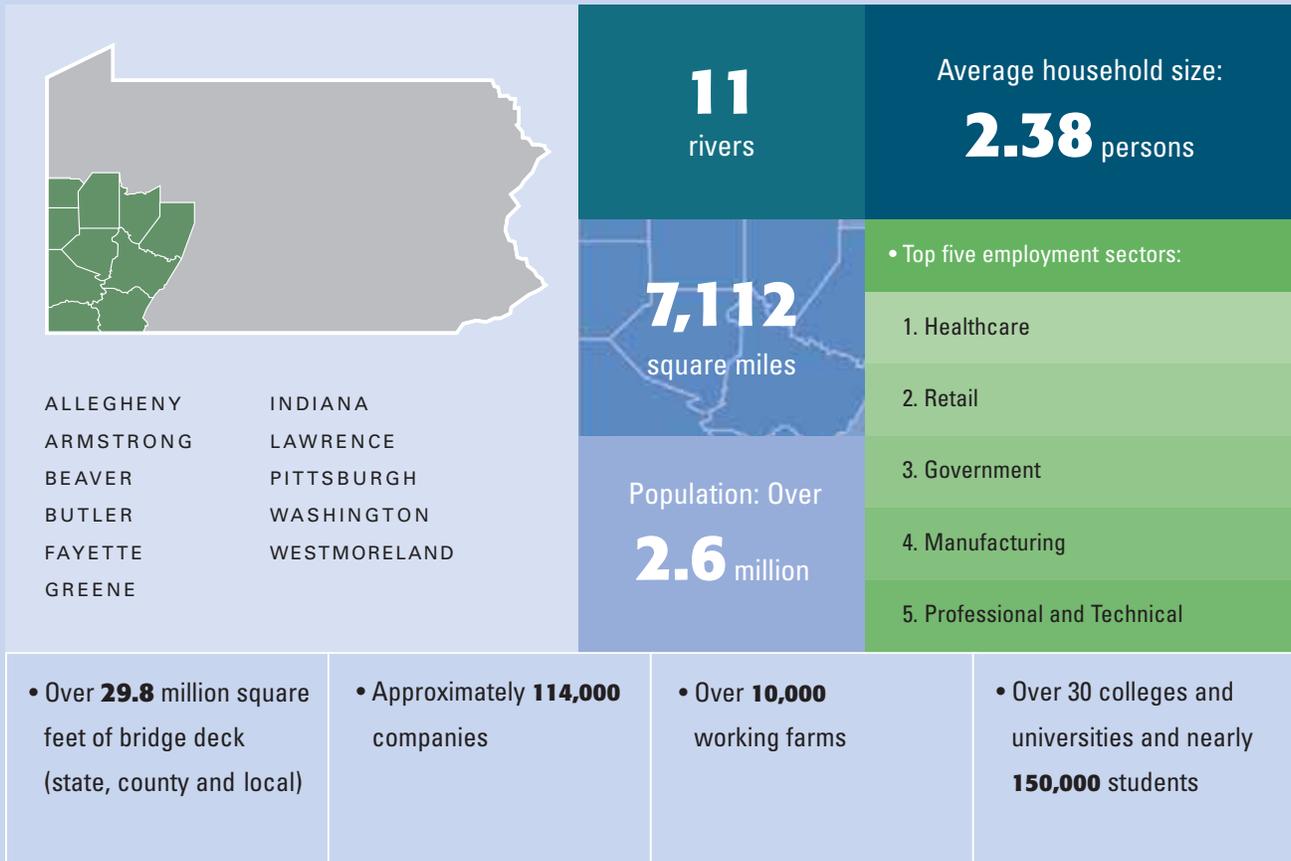
Transformation



Southwestern Pennsylvania is part of the multi-state Appalachian Region, and SPC is designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission as our region’s Local Development District. The shared geographic, environmental and economic conditions of this larger region offer an important context for understanding the forces shaping Southwestern Pennsylvania and can produce insights that aid long-term planning. Appalachia’s different regions play important roles in each other’s economies, and part of SPC’s mission is to communicate with our neighbors and form partnerships to address common issues.

Who We Are...

Effective long-term regional planning starts with knowing who we are and what trends are in play.



And Who We Are Becoming



“Successful places that compete well have good planning, and the growing recognition of the value of regionalism and the importance of regional consensus-building were cornerstones in developing a plan that transcends boundaries, empowers the region and builds on successful foundations.”

—2035 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania

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HOW **You** CREATED OUR REGION'S PLAN

SPC believes that a regional plan must involve active participation by all of the region's communities—both geographic and functional (public, private, civic, philanthropic, etc.) Beyond ensuring fairness, such participation creates a broader sense of ownership in, and ongoing adherence to, the plan itself.



Our Region's Plan achieved unprecedented breadth and depth of community participation through a multi-year outreach and consensus-building process known as Project Region. To mine the initial ore for this innovative process, SPC invited dozens of planning experts to analyze diverse regional plans and identify common goals, values and synergies.

When we say that "this plan is your plan," we mean it literally—our Region's Plan policies and strategies come directly from our partners' documents: county and city strategic plans, the Commonwealth's Transportation and Land Use for Economic Development Initiative, Keystone Principles for Development, Action Plan for Investing in a New Pennsylvania (IBM), Regional Vision for Public Transportation, Allegheny Conference on Community Development strategies, PennDOT Mobility Plan, and many others.

Additional Project Region activities, including meetings, open houses, workshops, conferences, online and traditional surveys, interactive kiosks and regional "town meetings" via the Internet ensured that individuals from all walks of life also contributed directly to our final Region's Plan. The bottom line? **More stakeholders than ever can say our Region's Plan expresses their thoughts, values and visions for Southwestern Pennsylvania.**

"As a member of the business community,

I found this to be a unique opportunity to participate in the inception of this plan's development. SPC took seriously our suggestions and comments on the policy statements and scenario development. I can open the plan, read a policy statement or description and say, 'I was a part of the initial team that helped shape the approved plan.'"

— Doris Carson Williams,
African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania and Member of the Economic Development Strategies Work Group



Best Practices

Extensive research into regional planning best practices and an innovative spirit made Project Region the most inclusive discussion of development priorities and strategies in our region's history—and a model program for planning agencies around the country.

PROJECT REGION OUTREACH PRINCIPLES:

1. Talk to people like a neighbor, not a planner; relate planning to everyday life
2. Make activities interesting and informative; use maps, pictures and technology
3. Make it easy and convenient for anyone who is interested to participate



PROJECT REGION BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION:

- **Maximized** partner organizations and involvement from diverse groups
- **Organized** 100+ experts into Work Groups (Financial Resources, Transportation Strategies, Economic Development Strategies, and Forecasting and Modeling) to provide input and insights at key milestones in plan development
- **Involved** 10 county-based Public Participation Panels throughout the process
- Planning scenarios **created** by Regional Partners Group drawn from all sectors (governmental, economic development, philanthropic, community, transportation, academic, private citizens, etc.)
- Regional Partners meetings and the Regional Town Meeting Web Conference **engaged** over 600 people
- Transportation Improvement Program Workshops **featured** interactive booths staffed by SPC and other planning partners who both gave and gathered information
- Building on Sustainability Forums, at Sustainable Pittsburgh's annual Smart Growth Conference, SPC **brought together** over 200 citizens for small group discussion and interactive polling
- SPC, Allegheny Conference on Community Development, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania **reached** 200 citizens at Project Region Economic Development Workshops
- **Leveraged** technology, including a dedicated Web site, mobile planning kiosks, and interactive surveys to increase opportunities for input and feedback

SCENARIO PLANNING: Imagine Your Possibilities

Project Region employed “scenario planning,” an inclusive, collaborative approach that involves developing and discussing various scenarios with different future conditions and policy directions in order to arrive at a consensus preferred scenario.

Our Work Groups first created six “sketch scenarios” based on research-proven best practices. Each scenario described development location, density and mix; identified predominant transportation system elements; and listed policy statements. Sketch scenarios were refined by Regional Partners into four more distinct draft scenarios: Trend; Dispersed/Fringe; Compact/Infill/Transit-Oriented; and Corridor/Cluster.

SPC presented these scenarios to the entire region through a live Webcast Regional Town Meeting—the first time residents throughout a region had come together via the Web to work together on planning the region’s future. After discussing pros and cons, participants voted on their preferences in six categories: development density; amount of land developed; households near transit; households near highway interchanges; regional travel; and infrastructure cost. The Compact and Corridor scenarios were the top vote-getters, by far, in every category.

Based on this feedback and additional analysis, SPC created the Regional Vision Scenario—an invaluable guide for decision-makers throughout the region and the heart of our Region’s Plan.

Draft Scenarios



Participants voted on their preferences in six categories:

development density
amount of land developed
households near transit
households near highway interchanges
regional travel
infrastructure cost



2035

The background of the page is a topographic map of a region, likely in the Pacific Northwest, showing terrain contours and elevation. A large portion of the map is overlaid with a semi-transparent green rectangle. Within this green area, there is a heatmap where colors range from green to yellow to red, indicating varying levels of intensity or density. The red areas are concentrated in a central, roughly circular region, with yellow and green areas radiating outwards. The overall image has a dark, textured appearance, possibly representing a satellite or aerial view of the terrain.

SEEING THE FUTURE:

Your Regional Vision Scenario

Project Region uncovered broad consensus on development strategies that preserve, enhance and build upon existing assets. That can manifest in myriad ways, as reflected in the Regional Vision Scenario policy statements of our Region's Plan—the essential guides for decision-making throughout the region, and the best benchmarks of our progress:



REGIONAL PLACES

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

THE REGIONAL VISION:

Transportation and land use that supports and enhances the regional economy and the communities within it.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

- The region will prioritize business development with a focus on existing business retention and expansion.
- The region will support initiatives designed to improve workforce quality and quantity to meet emerging industry demands.
- The region will support identified strategic industry clusters.
- The region will prioritize 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 CONNECTIONS

- Maintenance of the existing transportation system will be a regional priority.
 - Transportation and development choices will prioritize safe and secure multimodal and intermodal networks for people and goods.
 - The region's transportation system will be actively managed and operated to function at its full potential.
 - The 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.



To obtain a copy of our Region's Plan, learn more about SPC, or participate in future planning efforts, visit www.spcregion.org or call 412-391-5590.

Traveling to our Future

Your Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Metaphorically, our Region's Plan is a road map for our region's journey to a successful future. But our literal journeys—and real means of transportation—are crucial to both quality of life and quality of business.

SPC is federally mandated to create a Long-Range Transportation Plan matching "reasonably expected" funding with detailed investment priorities and projects over at least 20 years. Aligned closely to your Regional Vision Scenario policy statements, the current LRTP has a "maintenance first" approach to bolster existing infrastructure and prioritizes operations improvements.

"SPC's planning process helps me and the counties I serve identify and understand the region's priorities and needed investments. I appreciate their efforts in developing the 2035 Plan."

—*The Honorable John Murtha*

United States House of Representatives



L RTP Investment Categories and Sample Projects

“I am pleased to see the completion of Project Region. It is helpful to the Congressional Delegation to see significant public input and regional support of Southwestern Pennsylvania’s priorities and plans. This plan will enable us in Washington, DC to fight for the funding that is critical to the continued development of this region.”

—The Honorable
Arlen Specter
United States Senate



Capital Maintenance—Bridge Preservation, Reconstruction and Replacement. Sample Plan projects include: Rankin Bridge; Ambridge-Aliquippa Bridge; Point Marion Bridge; Freeport Bridge; West Kittanning Bridge; State Street Bridge.

Capital Maintenance—Roadway Preservation and Reconstruction. Sample Plan projects include: S.R. 981 Laurel Valley betterments from Turnpike to Air Cargo Park; S.R. 119 interchange reconstruction at S.R. 819; Pittsburgh Central Business District street reconstruction; I-70 Bentleyville Interchange reconstruction.

Capital Maintenance—Public Transit Operations, Preservation and Modernization. Sample Plan projects include: fuel, personnel, supplies, and maintenance and improvements to vehicles and facilities (e.g., buildings, bridges, busways, LRT lines).

New Capacity—Roadways and Bridges. Sample Plan projects include: Duquesne Flyover Bridge; I-79/Parkway West missing ramps; four sections of S.R. 22 in Westmoreland County; Masontown Bridge; I-79 Seneca Valley Ramps.

New Capacity—Transit. Sample Plan projects include: Port Authority North Shore Connector; I-79 / S.R. 422 park-n-ride; Union Township park-n-ride; Slate Lick park-n-ride; S.R. 528 park-n-ride expansion.

Traffic Operations and Safety. Sample Plan projects include: S.R. 19 intersection and safety improvements between I-70 and Allegheny County line; I-376 improvements; Pittsburgh and regional traffic signal system upgrades.

Other Transportation. Sample Plan projects include: completion of key trail linkages such as the Hot Metal Bridge Connection and promotion of safe walking routes for students.

Growing



“Our Region’s Plan makes substantial contributions toward greater mobility and reduced delay for people and goods traveling in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Improved access to regional activity centers facilitates economic growth and development.”

*—2035 Transportation and Development Plan
for Southwestern Pennsylvania*

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Forward:

Common Strategies

Over 100 state and federal programs support regional business development and site revitalization. As Southwestern Pennsylvania's federally mandated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), our Region's Plan establishes the strategic growth objectives and projects that will achieve the greatest return on such funding for the entire region.

At the heart of your CEDS and the Regional Vision Scenario are policy statements that were derived directly from common economic strategies and themes found in diverse development plans throughout the region, including:

Targeted Industry Sectors—provide appropriate business climate and infrastructure to support identified industry sectors.



Geographic Investing—coordinate investment in targeted areas suitable for long-term sustainability, supportive of completed and planned infrastructure projects and responsive to market realities.

Economic Development Services—promote systematic cooperation and collaboration of state, regional, and local economic development services providers.



SPC closely tracks performance measures to evaluate the impact of CEDS implementation, including jobs created and retained, number and type of investments undertaken, amount of private sector investment, and other changes in the region's economic environment.

Business—provide economic development infrastructure needed to support entrepreneurial endeavors and, more critically, to retain and expand existing businesses.



Industrial Sites—identify and develop industrial sites to meet site selection needs, with a particular focus on brownfield sites.



Workforce—provide essential services needed to ensure that region's workforce meets the needs of both today's and tomorrow's industries.



Tourism—expand and enhance tourism and hospitality infrastructure to maximize economic potential of region's historical, cultural, recreation and natural assets.



Community—support revitalization of region's existing communities and focus on initiatives that build and develop communities.



FEDERAL STANDARDS— Regional Excellence

SPC's regional plans and processes have been certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Economic Development Administration, agencies responsible for administering laws and regulations governing regional plans for transportation and environmental protection.

Our Region's Plan meets federal guidelines and is fully compliant with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the latest legislation establishing the following areas of accountability for transportation planning:

SAFETEA-LU Requirement	Our Region's Plan Actions
Support Economic Vitality	Improve efficiency of transportation system, encourage infill development and downtown revitalization, promote effective use of growth corridors, and connect existing communities and corridors with multiple modes of transportation.
Increase Transportation Safety	Significant resources for transportation operations and safety projects.
Increase Transportation Security	Interagency coordination for developing evacuation plans, incident management and response procedures for emergencies, and communication networks for distributing critical traveler information.
Increase Accessibility and Mobility	Two Project Region scenario indicators focused on accessibility; plan improves both.
Environmental Protection, Energy Conservation and Quality of Life	Project Region brought together diverse communities to ensure a well-balanced effort to protect environmental assets. The plan emphasizes growth in existing town centers and corridors, thereby preserving open space and agricultural areas, and promotes transit use, ridesharing and other fuel-efficient transportation strategies, as well as initiatives to reduce air emissions.
Enhance Integration of Transportation Modes	Planning checklist to ensure that highway improvements include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. Sony Interchange project will provide direct truck access between rail facilities and Turnpike.
Promote Efficient System Management and Operation	Monitors 103 regional corridors and identifies strategies to reduce congestion. Online reporting system makes data accessible to planners and the public.
Preserve Existing Transportation System	Vast majority of highway, bridge, and transit funding dedicated to maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure.

CONTINUING Challenges

Our region has a great many assets, and they deserve to be well cared for.

For example:

- Freight volumes are expected to double by 2035, increasing the need for **infrastructure** maintenance and development
- The 17 **locks and dams** which enable commercial navigation of our rivers are old and will require significant attention in the near future
- Over 24,000 linear miles of **roadway** to maintain
- Hundreds of **transit routes** to operate
- Over 1,700 miles of **railroad**
- 22 commercial **airports**
- Over 100 **park-n-ride** facilities
- Over 29.8 million square feet of **bridge deck**

“Local Development Districts

are at the heart of the Appalachian Regional Commission’s work throughout all 13 states of our region. Here in Washington, we see many good initiatives, but SPC’s Project Region stands out in the level of public involvement and the use of the latest technology for civic engagement. I participated in one of their large Regional Partners meetings, and was impressed with the technology they had incorporated to involve large numbers of people and achieve more informed discussion on regional issues. The plan they have produced and the means by which they involved the public is a model others should consider replicating.”

—Rick Peltz, *Alternate Federal Co-Chair,*
Appalachian Regional Commission



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Commitment

Our Region's Plan maps our region's economic terrain and plots a journey to realize our best opportunities. It is an essential resource for anyone involved in planning and serves as a constant check to ensure that investments and policies align with our demographic realities and the aspirations of the consensus Regional Vision Scenario.

Extending the analogy, a great map is incredibly beneficial—but we still have to do the actual driving. SPC takes an active leadership role in many implementation activities related to our Region's Plan. We also do continuous monitoring to flag any economic, funding, individual development and other changes that may require a plan update or amendment. Key findings are presented in SPC Annual Reports and other status reports and posted on our Web site. We also continue to promote information exchange and ongoing collaboration between partners in the public, private and civic sectors.

Successful implementation of our Region's Plan—turning our opportunities into realities—requires regionwide commitment. During Project Region, we found encouraging evidence of our region's readiness to overcome its challenges, adapt, and move ever forward. You can depend on SPC to be part of that work, and, as always, we invite you to contact us to find out how you can be more involved in making Southwestern Pennsylvania a better place to live, work, play and invest.

To obtain a copy of our Region's Plan, learn more about SPC, or participate in future planning efforts, visit www.spcregion.org or call 412-391-5590.



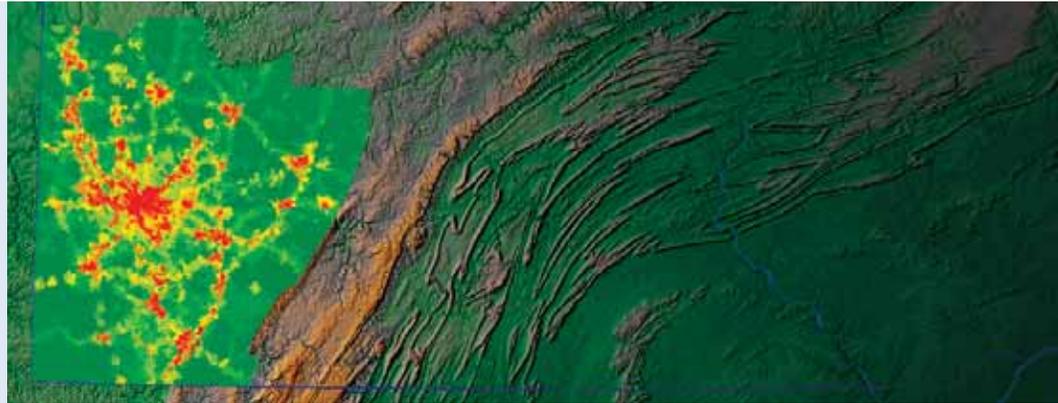
SPC exists to make this the best possible region to live, work, play and invest. We do this by engaging our region's communities—public, private, civic and philanthropic—and working together to define and promote a collaborative vision of our region's future; and by facilitating the partnerships and resources necessary to realize that vision.



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“Our Region’s Plan is built upon the preferred development scenario and related policy statements that guide investments for transportation and economic development. On the project level, consistently evaluating investments in transportation and economic development against the spirit and intent of our Region’s Plan ensures that projects are mutually beneficial. This means that projects either work in tandem or are mutually supportive, and that they do not work at cross purposes or hinder one another.”

—*2035 Transportation and Development Plan
for Southwestern Pennsylvania*

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