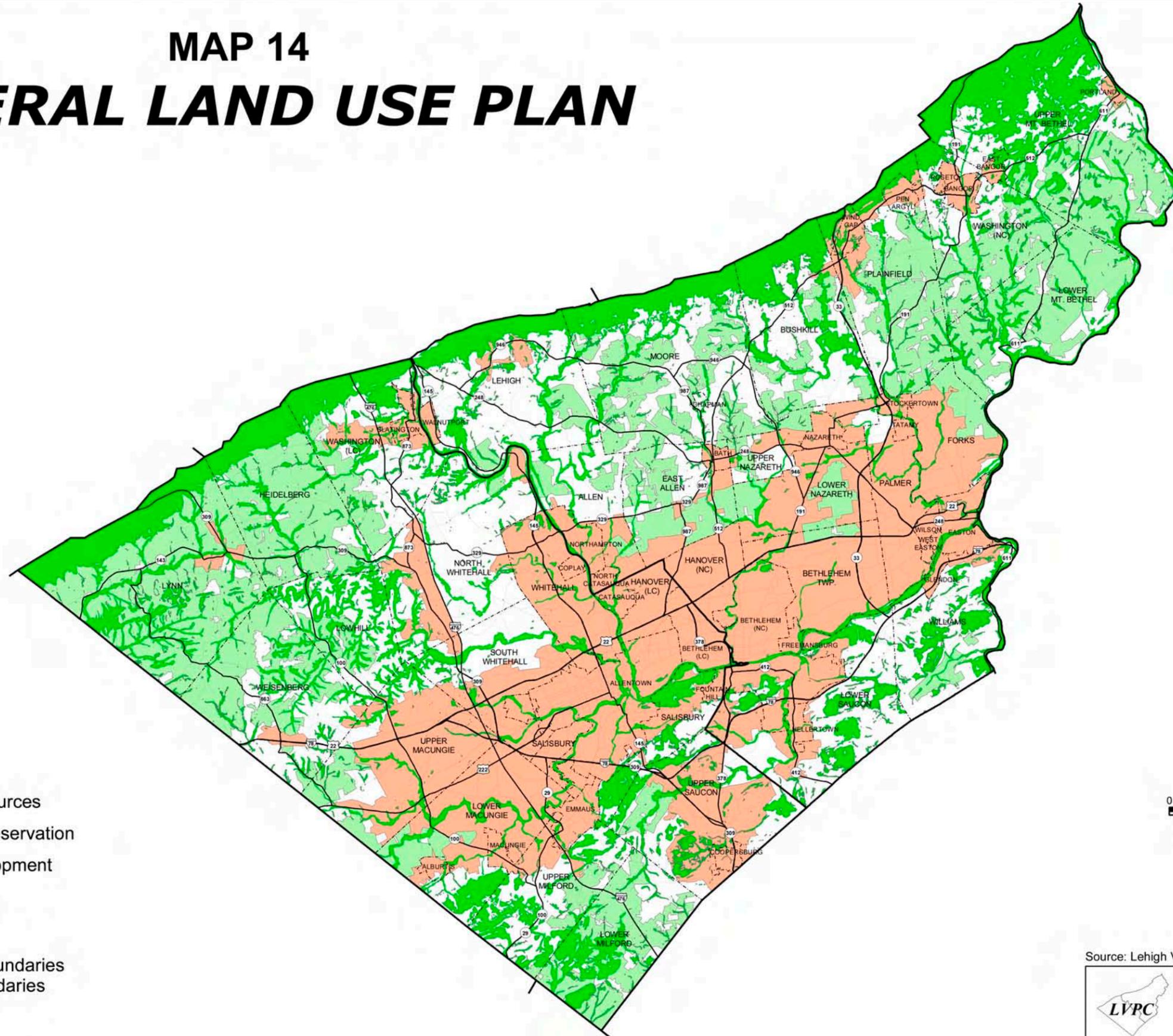
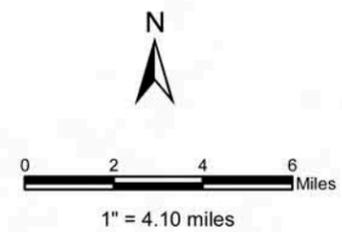


MAP 14 GENERAL LAND USE PLAN



- Natural Resources
- Farmland Preservation
- Urban Development
- Rural
- Major Roads
- Other Roads
- Municipal Boundaries
- County Boundaries



Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310
 Allentown, PA 18109-9397
 (610) 264-4544

Most growth in property valuation is in townships. Between 1991 and 2004, the assessed valuation of the townships in the Lehigh Valley increased by more than \$2.8 billion, an increase of 41%. At the same time, the assessed valuation of the cities and boroughs grew by \$43 million, a gain of less than 1%. The absence of growth in development and the high demand for services contribute to the tax burden in the cities and boroughs. In 2004 the average real estate tax in Lehigh County cities and boroughs was over four times that in the townships. In Northampton County the average city and borough millage rates were approximately three times township rates.

The cities and boroughs have greater needs for services but diminishing financial resources when compared with townships. According to the 2000 Census data, the cities have lower housing values and higher poverty rates than other areas of the counties. Disparities in these measures are growing. Housing values are lagging in the cities and poverty is becoming more concentrated.

GOAL

To achieve growth, property development, redevelopment and an improved tax base in the cities and boroughs in the Lehigh Valley.

POLICIES

- Support infill development, redevelopment and reuse of abandoned properties and brownfield sites.
- Encourage the coupling of community development and economic development activities so that economic development programs give highest priority to renewal of cities and boroughs.
- Promote reuse of properties that are considered under utilized or under valued.
- Give high priority to infrastructure projects and programs that will redevelop and renew cities and boroughs.
- Encourage high quality and innovative urban design practices in private and public open spaces. Development in cities and boroughs should stress urban design motifs not suburban design.
- Give highest priority to cities and boroughs in the siting of schools, government centers, cultural, entertainment and athletic facilities.

- Encourage development of high quality residential land uses in and near to downtown areas.
- Support state legislation that will assure equitable distribution of growth benefits to all municipalities in each county.

IMPLEMENTATION

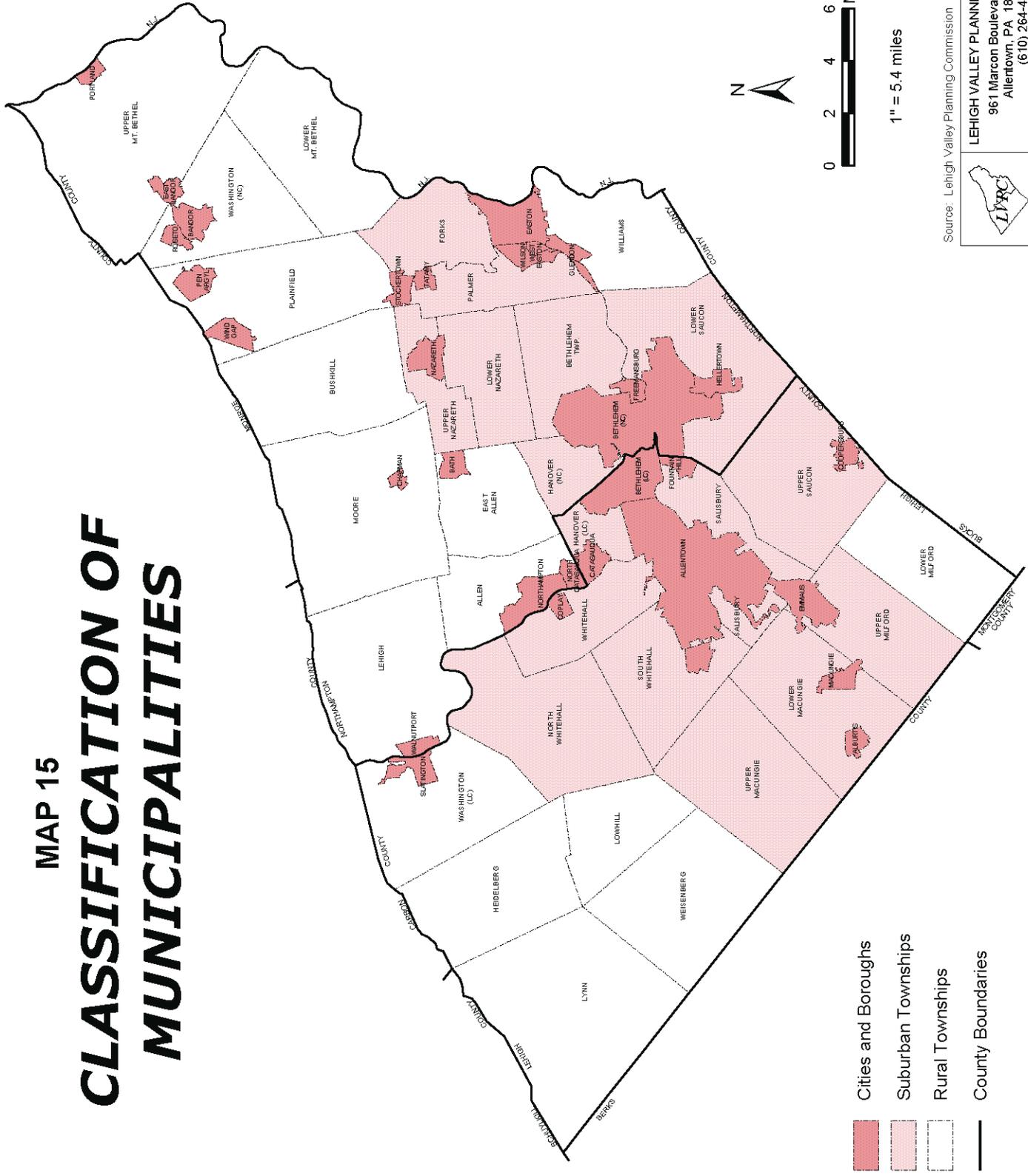
- Support local, state, and federal programs that target funds for renewal, revitalization and redevelopment activities in cities and boroughs.
- Advocate that economic development agencies give priority to reuse and redevelopment of properties in cities and boroughs.
- Give high priority to transportation projects that will improve access, safety, and urban environments in cities and boroughs.
- Support development of innovative incentives, financing and other tools for redevelopment of brownfields and previously used sites that are not brownfields but are under used.
- Support tax-base sharing.
- Support statewide reforms that make it easier for municipalities to merge or consolidate and allow municipalities to dissolve themselves.

SUBURBAN TOWNSHIPS

As shown on Map 15 suburban townships in the Lehigh Valley lie on the perimeter of the three cities on an east-west axis from Easton westward to the Berks County line. Since 1970 71% (80,714) of the rural and suburban population growth in the Lehigh Valley has been in this area. In the next 30 years it is projected that 69% (82,146) of the growth will be in this area. All suburban townships have public sewers and public water in at least a part of their jurisdiction. Much of the regional highway system extends through suburban townships. Since the 1970s the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission has considered parts of these townships contiguous to previously developed areas to be the logical path for most future growth in the Lehigh Valley provided adequate infrastructure is expanded concurrently and natural resources are protected. Some outer areas of these municipalities have also opted to preserve significant sections of farmland.

Development in suburban townships is characterized mainly by low density, single family residential

MAP 15 CLASSIFICATION OF MUNICIPALITIES



1" = 5.4 miles

- Cities and Boroughs
- Suburban Townships
- Rural Townships
- County Boundaries

Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission



LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
 961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310
 Allentown, PA 18109-9397
 (610) 264-4544

subdivisions, various types of shopping centers, and greenfield industrial parks. In comparison with cities and boroughs in the region many suburban townships must deal with too much growth happening too fast. This trend is a constant challenge to local planning and zoning policies where frequent changes and shifts are made in response to development proposals. Common development problems include: increasing traffic congestion, sewer and water system expansions, developer sponsored exclusionary challenges to zoning ordinances, need for more school facilities and other services such as police, fire protection, and parks.

Suburban townships generally have staffs to manage planning problems. However, many need better, more coordinated planning tools — comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, Act 537 sewer plans, access management controls, subdivision regulations and official maps. Following are LVPC goals, policies and implementation strategies relating to suburban townships.

GOAL

Improved planning and management of growth in suburban townships in the Lehigh Valley.

POLICIES

- Support sewer and water system expansion to serve new development in areas designated for urban development on Map 14.
- Public infrastructure improvement should be made concurrently with all new development.
- Advocate greater variety of housing types in suburban townships and higher densities than currently prevail.
- Oppose strip commercial planning and zoning because they require added public investment in traffic control measures and increase the probability of accidents.
- Protect important natural resources and farmland either through effective zoning controls or acquisition.
- Consider traditional neighborhood development concepts instead of conventional subdivision design practices.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Suburban townships should adopt compre-

hensive plans that are in accord with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Such plans should be updated at least every ten years.

- Zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and sewer plans should be consistent with the municipal comprehensive plan and the county comprehensive plan.
- Subdivision regulations should be amended to include access management measures, assure street connectivity and provide for sidewalks and bikeways.
- All suburban townships should adopt impact fee ordinances to help defray some of the costs associated with traffic impacts of new development.
- All suburban townships should adopt an official map to help reserve sites for future road improvements, parks and other public facilities.
- Suburban townships should invest in local road improvements and local open space acquisitions.

RURAL TOWNSHIPS

For purposes of this plan, townships with a year 2000 density of under 350 persons per square mile are considered rural. In some areas a population density of 100 persons per square mile is considered rural. By this measure only Lynn Township in Lehigh County would be rural. At 93 persons per square mile in 2000 it is the most rural municipality in the Lehigh Valley. The sixteen townships under 350 persons per square mile are shown on Map 15. Most are experiencing increased development pressure. Unless rural municipalities act to preserve farmland, most will be a lot less rural in 2030.

From the perspective of the LVPC regional plan most sprawl in the Lehigh Valley is in rural townships. Its pattern (or lack thereof) follows the textbook definition of sprawl: scattered subdivisions with intervening patches of open space; ribbons of strip commercial development; large residential developments on large lots served by septic tanks and well water. In the Lehigh Valley this hodgepodge of development is further complicated by the occasional presence of slate and cement quarries and isolated commercial and industrial sites.

Most rural municipalities and school districts are



Rural Lynn Township — Mid 1990s



Rural North Whitehall Township — 2004

struggling with strong development pressure. They are challenged to expand schools, resolve increasing traffic problems, and fix or take over small sewage treatment plants or water systems that fail due to poor design or lack of maintenance. In addition there is growing demand for police, fire services, park and recreation facilities. Rural communities need to reevaluate their comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to determine more effective measures to retain their rural character.

GOAL

Reduce urban sprawl in rural townships and retain the rural character of rural areas.

POLICIES

- Preserve farmland and natural resources through strong zoning regulations and public acquisition of property.
- Rural villages should be the preferred location for local convenience retail establishments.
- Refrain from development of public sewer and water systems except where necessary to resolve existing health problems.
- Practice conservation design measures in subdivision development.
- Plan and zone for land uses that are appropriate in rural areas. Avoid planning and zoning for regional commercial, industrial and institutional uses.
- Oppose strip commercial planning and zoning practices.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Rural townships should adopt comprehensive plans that are in accord with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Such plans should be updated at least every ten years.
- Zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and sewer plans should be consistent with the municipal comprehensive plan and the county comprehensive plan.
- Subdivision regulations should be amended to include access management measures, assure street connectivity and provide for sidewalks and bikeways.
- Rural townships should adopt impact fee ordinances to help defray some of the costs associated with traffic impacts of new developments.

- All rural townships should adopt an official map to help reserve sites for future road improvements, parks and other public facilities.
- Rural zoning and subdivision regulations should encourage conservation design practices in the subdivision of land that involves natural resources recommended for conservation.
- Rural townships should invest in local road improvements and local open space acquisition programs.

LAND USES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code calls upon county comprehensive plans to identify current and proposed land uses that may have regional impact or significance. Such uses are of special significance because they may have a substantial effect upon the citizens and property owners in more than one municipality. The planning code does not convey extraterritorial power on any municipality to act upon a development in a neighboring municipality. In cases where a property boundary extends into more than one municipality each municipality acts on the basis of its own regulations. In cases where municipalities have agreed to create and implement a multimunicipal plan the municipalities are authorized to create a regional zoning ordinance. Counties are given broad review authority under the planning code. Municipal plans are required to be generally consistent with the adopted county plan. It has been LVPC practice to forward review comments to neighboring municipalities where a development has significant impact on that municipality. County comments cannot override local zoning.

Table 4 identifies land uses and criteria that the LVPC will use in review comments on regional significance. Retail uses are of particular importance because of their wide regional impact and the frequency of retail development. In this section the LVPC has established general policies and implementation strategies for review of developments of regional significance and some special policies for retail uses.

GOAL

To facilitate communication and coordination be-

**TABLE 4
LAND USES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Land Use Category	Minimum Criteria
Major Shopping Centers	Greater than 200,000 square feet of leasable area
Major Industrial Parks	Greater than 100 acres
Mines and Related Activities	Greater than 200 acres under permit
Office Buildings & Office Parks	100,000 square feet of office space in buildings
Storage Facilities	Greater than 500,000 square feet of building
Large Residential Developments	500 dwelling units
Regional Entertainment Complexes	All
Regional Recreational Complexes	Identification as a regional recreational facility in park and recreation inventory
Hospitals	Inclusion in list of hospitals in Annual Trends report
Airports	All
Landfills and Other Solid Waste Facilities	All solid waste facilities
Power Plants	All power plants
Educational Facilities	Colleges; high schools; school campus arrangements
Railway and Rail Facilities	All

tween municipalities in the planning and review of developments of regional significance.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The LVPC will review and comment on the intergovernmental impacts of developments of regional significance based on planning goals and policies in this comprehensive plan.
- The LVPC will send its review to all potentially impacted municipalities and agencies.
- The LVPC will call on entities proposing developments of regional significance to conduct studies that clearly indicate environmental, land use, traffic and other impacts on all municipalities that may be affected by a development.
- The LVPC will provide mediation services to municipalities desirous of such services consistent with the provisions of Section 502.1 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

GOAL

To minimize negative impacts associated with subdivisions and land developments of regional significance and impact.

POLICIES

- Municipalities should establish design guidelines for nonresidential developments of regional significance to protect nearby resi-

dential areas from undesirable environmental impacts. Sign regulations, architectural controls, buffering of nearby uses and parking lot landscaping should be considered.

- The off-site traffic impacts of developments of regional significance should be minimized. The developer should pay for the portion of the needed improvements attributable to the development. Municipalities should enact an appropriate impact fee ordinance to assure this happens.
- Driveway entrances should be arranged to minimize the disruption to the traffic flow of arterial and collector roads.
- Sub-regional, regional and super-regional shopping centers should be sited in areas near interchanges with expressways or along major arterials.
- Developments of regional significance and development regulations should be coordinated so that the land use decisions in one municipality are sensitive to the impacts in neighboring municipalities.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The LVPC will research and prepare model provisions for design guidelines.
- LVPC reviews of zoning ordinances and land use plans will promote siting criteria consistent with these policies. LVPC proposed zoning ordinances and land use plans will promote consistency with the policies.

GOAL

To facilitate renewal and redevelopment of developments of regional significance.

POLICIES

- The LVPC supports the renewal, redevelopment and retrofitting of existing shopping centers, industrial sites and office complexes in preference to the development of new facilities on greenfield sites.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The LVPC supports the use of public financial incentives for renewal and redevelopment sites in preference to greenfield sites.

POLICIES

- Commercial development should be sited in areas designated for urban development on Map 14 which meet the following criteria:
 - Public sewage disposal and community water supply should be available.
 - The affected nearby roads should have adequate capacity to handle the traffic.
 - Safe access should be available.
 - The location should be convenient for the intended customers.
 - The development should meet the environmental policies of this plan.

Also, the availability of transit service by LANTA is desirable.

- Private developers should pay for infrastructure needs generated by their development.

IMPLEMENTATION

- LVPC reviews of zoning ordinances and land use plans will promote consistency with criteria stated in these policies. Municipalities should not zone for retail uses in areas that cannot meet the criteria stated in this plan.