



**Warren County
Comprehensive Plan
Update**

August 2005

Warren County Comprehensive Plan Update

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**Prepared by the
Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Assisted by
GCCA
Grove City, Pennsylvania**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

The Warren County Comprehensive Plan

Preface	1
“Keep Our Kids in Warren County!”	1
What is A Comprehensive Plan?	2
The Planning Process	2
Public Input	2
The Warren County Citizen Survey	3
Survey Results	5
Warren County Survey Data	6
Citizen Visioning Meetings	13
Focus Groups	16
The Steering Committee	19
The Comprehensive Plan	22
Statement of Objectives	24
Overall Plan Priorities	24
The Economy	24
Land Use	25
Housing	25
Transportation	26
Community Facilities and Utilities	26
Natural Resources	27
Historic Resources	27
Land Use	28
Warren County – General Land Use Policies	28
Goal #1	28
Goal #2	28
Goal #3	29
Goal #4	29
Goal #5	29
Goal #6	29
Land Use Guidelines	30
Agricultural/Conservation/Recreation	30
Residential/Urban	30
Village, Limited Business	31
Business Districts	31
Industrial Districts	31

Subdivision Ordinance Standards	32
Traditional Subdivision Regulations	32
Definitions	34
Land Uses of Regional Impact and Significance	37
Development Constraints	38

Future Land Use Plan	39
Land Use Plan Designation	40
Commercial	40
Industrial	40
Mixed Use	40
Residential	40
Public/Semi-Public	40
Other Public Lands	40
Allegheny National Forest	40
Agricultural/Low-Density Residential	41
Growth Area #1 – Columbus	41
Growth Area #2 – Sugar Grove	41
Growth Area #3 – Lander	41
Growth Area #4 – The Russell/North Warren/Warren Route 62 Corridor	42
Growth Area #5 – The Sheffield, Clarendon Corridor	42
Growth Area #6 – The Starbrick Corridor	42
Growth Area #7 – The Youngsville-Brokenstraw-Pittsfield Region (Route 6)	42
Growth Area #8 – Grand Valley	43
Growth Area #9 – Tidioute	43
Agriculture	43

Housing Plan	47
Implications for Housing	49
General Housing Plan Goals	49
Maintain and Improve the Current Housing Stock	50
Warren County Housing Rehabilitation Program	50
Emergency Program	53
Code Enforcement and Demolition	53
Other Housing Issues	54
Homebuyers' Assistance	54
Additional Housing Initiatives	56
Public Housing	59
Summary	59

Historic Preservation Plan	60
-----------------------------------	-----------

Transportation Plan	63
Transportation Funding/Planning	63
Overall Priorities	64
Air	64
Rail	65
Transit	65
Bridges	66

Highways	67
Route 6	67
Route 62	68
Route 27	69
Route 69	69
Route 957	70
Other Highway/Road Projects	69
Bike Trails	70
Summary	71

Community Facilities and Utilities Plan	72
Community Facilities	72
Schools	72
Warren County AVTS	74
Summary	75
Policy	75
The College and University Center in Warren	77
Health Care Facilities	77
Hospitals	77
Nursing Homes	79
Summary	79
Sanitary Sewer Services	79
Water Projects	82
Libraries	83
Public Safety	84
Fire Services	84
Fire Services – Warren County	84
Police	85
Summary	85
Recreation	85
Federal Resources	85
County Recreation: Warren	86
Local Recreation	87
School Facilities	87
Summary and Recommendations	87

Economic Development	89
Top Paying Positions	91
Analysis	92
Manufacturing and Industry	92
Training	93
Below-Market Loan Programs	93
Tax Incentives	93
Land and Buildings	94
Caution	95
Retail	95
Tourism	96
Agriculture	98
The ANF	98

Communications	99
Special Projects	100
Interrelationships, Implementation and Compatibility	101
Interrelationships	101
Compatibility	102
Implementation	103
Implementation Schedule	104
Tables	
H-1, Comparison – 1990 to 2000 Warren County Key Demographics	48
H-2, Housing Conditions Survey – 2004	51
CF-1, School Enrollment – Current and Projected, Warren County, Corry Area and Titusville Area	73
CF-2, Warren County Area School District	74
CF-3, Warren County Nursing Home Facilities	79
E-1, Major Employers in Warren County	90
E-2, Top Ten – Employment by Sector – 2003	91
E-3, Top Ten Occupations by Pay in Warren County – 2003	92
Maps	
Warren County Regional Location	Follows Table of Contents
Warren County Municipalities	Precedes Page 1
Warren County Development Constraints	Follows Page 38
Warren County Future Land Use and Growth Areas	Follows Page 43
Warren County Growth Areas	Precedes Page 44
Warren County Prime Farmlands	Follows Page 45
Warren County Transportation Projects	Follows Page 71
Warren County School Districts	Follows Page 76
Warren County Existing and Proposed Sewer Service Areas	Follows Page 81
Warren County Existing and Proposed Water Service Areas	Follows Page 82
Warren County Municipalities and Public Lands	Follows Page 85

The Warren County Comprehensive Plan Update

Preface

Every human endeavor entails some type of planning. This planning may be as complex as concerns about technology futures and foreign exchange rates to something as simple as buying enough pasta for next week’s customers. Without the planning function, life is chaos. From large corporations to the smallest retail vendor, some type of forethought is required. And, public entities are no exception to that rule. The idea of setting future goals is as old as civilized man.



For Warren County, this update to the current Comprehensive Plan could not have occurred at a more appropriate time. From a technical standpoint, the update is due—Pennsylvania’s Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires such an action every ten years [see 302(d)]. The last plan was completed in 1992. But, the impetus was more than statutory. This update was based upon some very real concerns. Concerns initially articulated by the Warren County Intergovernmental Co-Op as well as the County Planning Commission, but echoed by citizens at nearly every one of eight public forums. This concern can be very simply stated:

“Keep Our Kids in Warren County!”

Indeed, this is a truly genuine concern. At first glance, Warren County’s population seems to be stabilizing after a disastrous decade in the 1980s. After a loss of -5.1 percent between 1980 and 1990, the drop from 1990 to 2000 was only half that rate – 2.6 percent.

Yet, as is often the case with demographics, the “devil is in the details.” True, the overall population rate of loss was halved, but certain age cohorts suffered dramatic losses. If the young children of 1980 (aged 0 to 9 years) are traced to the year 2000, we find that 57 out of each 100 are gone. Of the nearly 4,000 persons lost in those age brackets, less than 200 could be attributed to natural attrition; the balance was the result of out-migration.

Therefore, this Plan is primarily predicated upon that concern. What changes—what new directions are needed, to reverse these trends—to make Warren County an attractive place to live? A place where our children want to stay and to which new residents are attracted?

What Is A Comprehensive Plan?

Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code sets forth the requirements for, and the impact of, a comprehensive plan. The plan does not have “the force of law” such as a zoning ordinance or a subdivision regulation, but it is a much more important document currently, than it was even five years ago. Certain changes to the Planning Code occurred in the year 2000, which give comprehensive plans a greater influence over land use controls as well as some State programming decisions. Even with this, the plan remains essentially a policy guide—yet a guide, which must be taken seriously.



The Planning Process

Typically, the comprehensive planning process is one that involves a detailed inventory of facts and trends before the plan itself is initiated. This was not the case in Warren County. When the process started, the background data was less than a decade old. There was little apparent value in expending scarce resources updating a mountain of facts. Consequently, the work program dwelt on three primary tasks:

- Community Visioning/Strategic Planning—To Update the Plan
- The Warren County Zoning Ordinance
- The Warren County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

Public Input

Public input was a vital element of this Plan. In past years, many fine planning efforts basically involved only the planning commission and the elected governing body. The public’s involvement came at the very end of the process and appeared to several as an after thought. Not in Warren County! From the very start, public input has been center stage. The process utilized many forms. Primarily, these were:

- A random citizen survey
- A series of eight citizen visioning sessions
- Focus group meetings with the private sector, Downtown Warren City merchants, the Warren County School District, and special interest groups

- A series of meetings with a specifically selected Core Committee. This Committee had representatives from the Warren County Intergovernmental Co-Op, the County Commissioners, the County Planning Commission, as well as representatives of key local institutions [the ANF, the WCCBI* (Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry), the Warren General Hospital].

*Formerly WCDA

This entire process proceeded under the watchful eye of the County Planning staff.

Furthermore, the required plan adoption procedure was to be followed. Namely, a public meeting was held by the Warren County Planning Commission and a public hearing by the County Commissioners.

The Warren County Citizen Survey

No comprehensive plan can hope to be implemented if it is not consistent with citizen priorities. Ultimately, government policy is an extension of the concerns of community residents.

Americans view themselves as people with abundant leisure time. Usually, we are at work by 8:00 a.m. and home by 5:30 p.m. But, our free time is often not very free. There is softball, Little League, soccer, dance lessons, and a raft of other pursuits with mom or dad playing chauffeur. As a result, many households find it difficult to attend meetings, no matter how important the topic, nor how conveniently they may be scheduled. So a mechanism for public input had to be designed to allow for a wide range of adults to offer ideas that did not rely upon meetings. A citizen survey was the answer.

The purpose of the Warren County citizen survey was to measure how County residents “rate” the County on a variety of characteristics as well as measuring their priorities relative to public policies, county assets, economic development, transportation, housing, and quality of life issues.

One traditional problem with surveys is their reliability. How can the user be reasonably sure that the results fairly represent the opinion of the survey universe—in this case, the adults of Warren County? Such endeavors can be quite expensive. To achieve the highest degree of accuracy possible, the entire Plan budget could have been devoted for this single activity.

To be reasonably sure the survey was valid and yet within the constraints of the budget, the following steps were taken:

- **Universe:** As the survey was intended for adults in Warren County, the largest possible name database was used. The one selected was the “per capita” tax rolls, which included all County residents aged 18 and over. There were approximately 30,000 names on that list, about 60 percent of the County’s total population.
- **Randomness:** A second quality of a good survey is randomness. Each name in the universe must have an equal chance for selection. To ensure this quality, a random starting point was used in the per capita list and then the list was passed through twice to select names using this procedure. A sample of 1,250 was drawn and used.
- **Confidence:** The final problem is sample size. Given a universe of 30,000 and a random selection process, what size of response is needed? According to the statisticians of the Association of American Geographers, for this universe, a random sample size of 384 persons is needed to achieve a confidence level of 95 percent for a confidence interval of 5 percent. Or, to state it another way, the users can be “95 percent sure the surveys are not more than 5 percent wrong.”

Surveys were mailed in early summer of 2001. In all, 1,250 surveys were sent out over a few week period. The 419 responses received were in excess of the goal of 384. Just as important to the County was the fact that one out of every three respondents answered the survey—without phone calls, post cards, or other reminders. Obviously, people take planning issues seriously in Warren County.

During the survey process, some residents who were not drawn for the sample expressed a desire to be a part of the survey. Although surveys from such citizens are of great interest, they could not be included as part of this “official” survey or the randomness, and confidence levels of the survey could be questioned. Such surveys were tabulated separately.

The survey results gave some clues to its general reliability.

The first part of the survey asked questions relative to the survey respondents. The residency responses were roughly similar to the County’s population breakdown; that is, there were more respondents from Warren City than Youngsville. However, surveys from the City and boroughs elicited a modestly higher response than those from rural areas. In addition, homeowners were more apt to return the survey than renters. Finally, older residents proportionally returned more surveys than younger persons. However, these

variations are of degrees, and the overall response characteristics generally coincided with the demographic pattern of Warren County's adults. One final note: Even though 419 persons responded to the survey, they did not all respond to all questions.

Survey Results

The typical survey respondent had lived in Warren County for approximately 40 years, was a homeowner (87 percent), and employed (59 percent). Retirees comprised 34 percent of those responding.

Warren County Survey Data

Numerical Results for the Citizen Survey of the Warren County: Results are based on surveys received by July 20, 2001. Total respondents – 419.

Bear Lake Borough	1	Mead Township	12
Unnamed Borough	5	No Response	1
Brokenstraw Township	15	Pine Grove Township	12
Cherry Grove Township	1	Pleasant Township	30
Clarendon Borough	1	Russell	1
Columbus Township	13	Sheffield Township	27
Conewango Township	50	Southwest Township	1
Deerfield Township	4	Spring Creek Township	4
Eldred Township	5	Sugar Grove Borough	3
Elk Township	9	Tidioute Borough	4
Farmington Township	16	Unnamed Township	26
Freehold Township	8	Warren City	126
Glade Township	29	Youngsville Borough	13
Limestone Township	2		

How long a resident of Warren County?

Average - 39 years Longest - 87 years Shortest - 0 years

Tenure:

Homeowner - 367 Renter - 37 No Response - 15

Employment:

Employed - 217 Self-employed - 29 Unemployed - 8
Retired - 144 Student - 8 Homemaker - 20

If in a household with adult children, do your children still live in Warren County?

Yes - 167 No - 122 No Response - 130

As might be expected, the majority of those children who left did so, in whole or part, for employment opportunities.

The next series of questions involved fourteen separate categories in which to rank the County from Excellent to Poor. Overall, the County was rated as good. The most positive points were:

- A place to raise children
- Personal safety
- Fire and police services
- Housing
- Municipal services - water, sewer, snow removal, and library facilities

Areas that garnered a large number of “poor” ratings were as follows:

- Employment opportunities
- Shopping
- Youth activities
- The road system

How do you rate Warren County in the following areas:

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>No Response</u>
Employment Opportunity	2	32	140	237	8
Raise Children	85	254	63	8	9
School System	11	153	191	56	8
Road System	6	81	211	115	6
Library System	72	245	80	8	14
Snow Removal	60	248	91	16	4
Youth Activities	17	99	164	121	18
Personal Safety	101	269	37	7	5
Housing Quality	23	256	119	15	6
Shopping	3	44	164	204	4
Fire Services	80	278	42	5	14
Police Services	46	264	81	20	8
Sewer/Septic	32	248	84	29	26
Water System	43	252	68	30	26
County Overall	32	236	128	17	6

After rating the quality of Warren County, residents were asked to offer their input on 10 typical planning issues. What is the most important policy down to the least important?

In terms of public policy issues, the top five priorities, in order, were:

- Economic development
- Public safety
- Road maintenance
- E911
- Public recreation

The least important was historic preservation.

Policy: What are your priorities (1 highest, 10 lowest)

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
Public Recreation	5	5.83	397
Public Safety	2	3.15	399
Economic Development	1	2.56	398
Road Maintenance	3	3.94	398
Preservation of Rural Character	7	6.25	391
Historic Preservation	10	7.49	392
Library System	6	5.93	391
Public Water Extension	8	6.27	389
Public Sewer Extension	9	6.57	389
E911	4	5.22	389

Allegheny National Forest

As the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) is a large landowner in the County, a series of questions was asked on policies relating to the ANF. County residents viewed the ANF as a prime asset, but believed new acquisitions should only focus on unique properties along current boundaries.

In terms of forest use, County residents were neither “tree huggers” nor reckless users. When asked about using the ANF for timber harvesting or recreation, respondents opted for selective use certainly indicating a respect for this valuable resource but a willingness to actively utilize it. Respondents were given three policy options from no use (none) to maximum use. Those with extreme views would have opted for either no use at all or a maximum utilization. In fact, the “None” option received the lowest number of selections. It is obvious that the residents of Warren County desire an active, but controlled, utilization of the ANF.

How important is the Allegheny National Forest in Warren County?

The single most important County asset	62
One of our prime assets	328
Not that important to the County	20
No response	9

What is your opinion on future land buys for parks and conservancy?

Should aggressively buy more land	38
Should buy only unique forest land along existing holdings	262
They should consider selling some of their holdings	81
No response	38

What is your opinion of the following uses?

	<u>None</u>	<u>Selective</u>	<u>Maximize</u>	<u>No Response</u>
Timber Harvest	17	316	52	31
Recreational Use	10	225	150	31

Economic Issues

The next series of questions centered on economic development. The first question asked for a simple ranking (first to third) of obvious economic activities. New manufacturing/industrial jobs ranked first by a wide margin, with retail activity next and tourism last.

The second element has seven choices ranging from tourist promotion to a “do-nothing” option, which stated, “Our economy is fine now.” There is little doubt residents believe local business should be promoted and tax incentives used. Then consistent with their prior response, survey takers desired some new “big-name” retailers. The most interesting element of these selections was the closeness of most average values. On a one-to-seven scale, the difference between the first and sixth priority was only one-and-one-half points. The only exception to this pattern was the seventh ranked option – “Our economy is fine now.” Obviously, County residents believe the Warren economy is lagging.

Economic Development - Rank your priorities (1 highest, 3 lowest)

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
Tourism (ANF, Kinzua, etc.)	3	2.56	397
We need more retail stores.	2	2.03	404
More manufacturing/industrial jobs	1	1.26	409

What activities do you suggest to improve our economy? (1 highest, 7 lowest)

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
Tourist promotion	6	4.46	387
New industrial park(s)	5	3.65	386
Recruit big-name retailers	3	3.25	396
Provide tax incentives to business	2	2.98	391
Our economy is fine now	7	6.54	382
Promote local business	1	2.85	399
Promote higher education	4	3.54	392

Transportation

In Transportation, Route 6 and better connections to Erie were the top two choices, with “local roads” a close third priority. When asked to name a specific project, the Hickory Street Bridge was mentioned most frequently. Buses and transit were the lowest rank transportation options. In a specific question, continued support of the Bradford Airport was given a two-to-one-thumbs down.

Transportation priorities - (1 highest, 6 lowest)

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
Focus on Route 6	1	2.91	376
Route 62 is our priority	5	3.44	377
Better connections to Southern Tier	4	3.19	382
Better connections to Erie	2(T)	3.07	379
Local roads	2(T)	3.07	384
Buses and transit	6	4.74	378

Any road, bridges, traffic, or safety projects you can suggest:

There are 113 different responses by 244 respondents. The Hickory Street Bridge was on 135 of the responses. Most wanted it either repaired or, preferably, replaced (as is the case). A few wanted it replaced by a bridge from Market Street to the Route 6 bypass. The Fifth Avenue Bridge was the next project named on 31 responses. There were about 0 responses voicing concerns about the quality of both Route 6 and Route 62. The rest were one or two responses dealing with a multitude of issues.

The most important roads in the County:

<u>Road</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
Route 6	229
Route 62	189
Local roads in general	22
Route 27	20

There were a number of other roads mentioned with less than 10 responses, including Routes 426, 666, 957, 958, 948, Pennsylvania Avenue, Market Street, Miller Hill Road, Fourth Avenue, Water Street, Jackson Run Road, and any road ultimately connecting to I-79, I-80, and I-86.

Should Warren County continue its financial support of the Bradford Regional Airport?

Yes - 123 No - 248 No Response - 42

Housing

Housing issues saw the priority given to middle income housing needs, with the rehabilitation of exiting units in second place. Code enforcement was in last place, but only by one-half point under “more elderly units.”

Housing (1 highest, 4 lowest)

	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Respondents</u>
We need more elderly units	3	2.53	373
Building code enforcement needed	4	2.99	359
Housing rehabilitation programs	2	2.21	360
More middle income housing	1	1.99	369

Land Use

Finally, the most surprising result of the survey resulted from the Quality of Life heading. Generations ago, land use regulations were always controversial and often unpopular. In this survey, the overwhelming majority of surveys indicated respondents believed some type of development control are needed for the County.

Quality of Life

I am opposed to any new land use regulations	87
I support moderate land use/development regulations	196
I believe land development regulations are needed for a good Quality of Life	102
No response	34

As stated at the beginning of this section, people in Warren County take both the future of this County and their quality of life seriously. They have concerns, yet they obviously have a commitment to the future of their County.

Citizen Visioning Meetings

Certainly, a random sample survey is an excellent manner to measure public concerns on a variety of issues. But, it does have limits. The primary one is the lack of one-on-one discussion with interested citizens. Discussions that can elicit concerns, offer ideas, or present challenges that can only happen through personal dialogs.

The visioning sessions were a series of publicized public meetings held at various locations around Warren County in 2001. Following is a list of the dates and locations:

Warren Public Library – April 26
Youngsville Community Center – July 10
Mead Township Building – July 26
Tidioute Borough Fire Hall – August 28
Columbus Township Fire Hall – August 30
Russell Fire Hall – September 18
Sugar Grove Borough Hall – September 20
Conewango Township Municipal Building – October 1

The attendance at these meetings varied. In a few places, a dozen or so citizens would be in attendance, while in other locations only a few people participated. However, it proved to be a useful exercise in hearing opinions on specific problems, strengths, and needs. Though many of the concerns of citizens in visioning workshops echoed those found in the Citizen Survey, others did not. This was the chance for people to elaborate on individual or local circumstances.

Generally, the format at these sessions was as follows:

- **Background Presentations:** This included highlights of the Citizen Survey, the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and the purpose, as well as sponsorship, of the current comprehensive planning effort.
- **Participants** were then asked to enumerate strengths, weaknesses, and possible action for the area. This was typically done in a round-robin fashion.
- **Ratings:** Participant ideas were written on easel pads. After all ideas were listed, a number of stickers were given to each citizen. These were “votes.” A person could use all their votes on one issue or scatter them as wished. Priorities from each session were based upon the number of “votes,” individual ideas received.

In some communities where there was only limited participation, that format was not practical. In its lieu, an open-ended “brainstorming” format was used.

Narratives and rankings for each session were prepared (available at the Planning Office). The principal themes of these sessions follow:

- **The Economy:** As might be expected from the Citizen Survey results, the economy was also a priority with those who participated in the visioning sessions. To these citizens, the “economy” was a very personal concern – namely, the availability of good-paying jobs for themselves or their children. There were many complaints that residents had to look for work elsewhere (Jamestown, New York for example) or their children had to leave Warren County for “good jobs.” Coupled with the complaint was recognition that technical training and higher education resources were required to help change this situation.

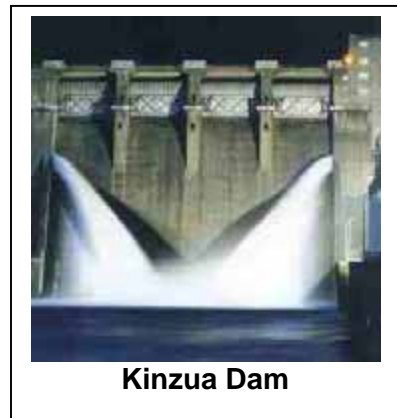
Two other major concerns were common. First, there was a feeling that the management of public lands, especially the ANF, prevented reasonable use of wood, gas and oil resources. Also, there was the expressed need for a “big-box” retailer.

Certainly, all input was not negative. While many believed public lands were not contributing all that they might, they were still regarded as an important, underused, resource. Furthermore, the amount of wood resources led to a suggestion for an industrial park specifically for targeted wood products.

Tourism was also discussed. Most participants believed there was a need to make the Kinzua area more attractive and user-friendly. Better beaches, a restaurant, and more attractions for vacationers were mentioned. The resort development concept, abandoned some years back, was discussed.

There was also a consensus that good industrial sites were needed with formal industrial parks and perhaps multi-tenant buildings.

Finally, various ideas were presented to enhance Downtown Warren. These were from the mundane, such as free parking, to the fanciful, a weather



Kinzua Dam

“dome” over Liberty Street, and a convention center were mentioned. Overall, participants wished to see a return of a strong retail downtown in the City.

- **Education:** Though not as widely discussed as the economy, education was a major topic. Many persons seemed to agree that there was a need for both higher education and technical training. But, there was less consensus on the key issues of school taxes and the cost of keeping all current facilities operating. Some participants appeared to really appreciate the local or neighborhood schools. However, others argued that these facilities, with a dwindling student population, were keeping school taxes too high.
- **Transportation:** This was another topic that generally mirrored the Citizen Survey. Better access to I-86 (the former Southern Tier Expressway), the construction of additional four-lane roads in the County, and improved access to major destinations (Erie, I-80, and I-79) were some specific concerns, which did surface. People at the Columbus Township session had concerns about Route 957 to Sugar Grove. Those in the Tidioute sector responded a dual problem. One problem was the numerous accidents on Route 62, and the second was frequent “dead” spots in the area for cell phone use. They noted that this latter circumstance made accidents difficult to report.
- **Housing:** In general, there was little discussion about housing. Most believed the housing stock was in good condition. Two ideas did surface. One related to a perceived need for more elderly units. The second concerned the attractiveness of historic structures.
- **Public Services:** In general, public safety/emergency services were well regarded. Also, cultural resources, especially those in Warren City, were given high marks. Warren’s improving riverfront park was another plus. The only negatives were telecommunications and spotty cell phone coverage (see item 3 above). The telecommunication problems focused on slow Internet service.
- **General:** Overall, visioning groups had a positive opinion for:
 - ▶ Local government Co-Operation
 - ▶ Quality of life
 - ▶ Natural beauty
 - ▶ Sense of community

The negatives were:

- ▶ Apathy
- ▶ Negative press
- ▶ Over-regulation

Focus Groups

While the survey was aimed at the general public and the visioning at the “participating public” meetings, the focus groups aimed at those who had special knowledge or represented important elements of the community.

This section sets forth the general results of the four focus group meetings. The results are presented in abbreviated form, as they were recorded at the meetings.

April 26, 2001 – Schools

What is planning about? It is about the future—and, certainly, our children are our future. Consequently, it makes sense to work with the Warren County School District to ask students their thoughts. The district obliged and a session including traditional students, an adult student staff, and faculty was convened.

- Do not need five high schools – school population can support only two or three.
- Two elementary schools in Warren City to close.
- Career centers – trying to attract main stream students to:
 - Machine technology
 - Computer technology
 - Power equipment technology
- Students seem to support a single high school concept, as they believe it would offer more facilities and programs.
- New school facilities are indeed a magnate – example, the new Youngsville Middle School.
- Need state-of-the-art high school.

- Health care training should be initiated.
- Lack of condo-apartments – townhouse for new teachers.
- War Memorial Field (Warren), bike trails are important community assets.

This session was held at the offices of the Warren County School District in North Warren.

June 8, 2001 – Industrial Group

About 30 participants in a session sponsored by WCCBI:

- Transportation is okay – could improve access to Interstates, especially I-86
- Rail important, but used primarily for bulk freight – not time-sensitive.
- Trained and motivated labor force is a big need. A secondary concern was relative to its age. Some employers indicated that new recruits are often older workers near retirement or inexperienced youngsters.
- Retention of professional staff is a problem (hospital) – housing an issue (see also comments in School section above).
- Out-of-County environmentalists hurting wood industry – competition from Mexico/South America woods and plastics is increasing. Representative Lynch had recently traveled to North Carolina, home of many furniture manufacturers. Pennsylvania wood suppliers were told that if they could not supply that industry’s wood needs, these other options were becoming more attractive.
- Job training/technical training a continuing need.
- Need for immediate access to vacant industrial land and buildings. Tom Ehrensberger of the Governor’s Action Team stated that most companies scouting for space are interested in *immediate* access. “Spec” buildings, multi-tenant structures, and incubators are typical, market-ready, facilities.

The meeting with the Industrial Group was a breakfast gathering at the Warren Holiday Inn.

July 26, 2001 – ANF, Chapman Dam State Park

The purpose of this meeting was twofold. First, it was to ascertain the future economic impact of these institutions and, second, to determine if any future capital or expansion projects were planned. Representatives from the Allegheny National Forest (USDA) as well as the head of Chapman Dam State Park were in attendance. This meeting took place at the ANF offices in Downtown Warren.

- **Chapman Dam:** There are no plans for the physical expansion of this park. However, funds for refurbishing its sanitary sewers, showers, and the installation of a concession stand are in hand, and improvements will be completed soon.
- **ANF:** Due to issues raised by environmental groups, wood harvesting in the ANF was reduced sharply after 1998. Based upon historic averages, Warren County municipalities have lost over \$4 million in “25 percent” funds (1999 and 2000). ANF personnel indicated a new harvesting plan had been prepared and procedures that met ADP objections had been devised. This would allow an increase in timber sales to previous levels. However, due to the increased complexity of offerings, it was unlikely that that goal could be reached. Land acquisition plans are limited. One of their primary aims is to acquire the mineral rights of land already owned.



September 20, 2001 – Downtown Warren Focus Group

Principally, this group was comprised of Downtown merchants. It was an afternoon session at the Warren Public Library.

- Improve property appearance
- More and more convenient parking
- Courtesy notes versus parking meter tickets
- Need more niche retail – unable to compete against big-box retailers
- Store size, too big, or too small? *
- Convention center as an attraction

*The retail Focus Group could not come to a conclusion on the space needs for potential tenants in Downtown Warren. Some participants flatly stated that available rental spaces

were just too small and, where possible, vacant, first-floor facilities needed to be expanded. Others insisted the small scattered, and often isolated, storefronts were what the marketplace needed.

October 9, 2001 – Wood Products Group

Deb Roberts of WCCBI hosted this meeting at their facility. However, only two timber businesses were present. Their concerns were:

- Over-regulation by DEP.
- The ADP anti-timbering efforts to halt timber harvesting in the ANF.
- They reported that timber interests are now turning to private holdings as ANF wood is too complex to bid on and too expensive to harvest.
- They recommended that a “niche” wood products industrial park be considered.

The Focus Group sessions were quite valuable. In each instance, those helping to frame Warren County’s new Comprehensive Plan were able to have one-on-one discussions with persons directly involved with important elements of the community. These exchanges had one important characteristic that both the Survey and the Visioning Sessions lacked. In these former elements, the primary aim was to develop wants and perceptions.

The Focus Groups usually involved those directly involved in a particular aspect of the County. Results were a check on other efforts. For example:

The students appear less married to the concept of local schools. They clearly believed that larger schools offer both better facilities and a greater range of activities.

The Steering Committee

Of all groups that participated in the Plan process, the most pivotal role came from the Steering Committee. The Committee was primarily based upon representatives from the Warren County Intergovernmental Co-Op (COG), the Warren County Commissioners, and the Warren County Planning Commission. To these were added persons representing key stakeholders in the Warren County community; these included:

Allegheny National Forest

Economic Opportunity Council of Warren and Forest Counties
Warren County Chamber of Commerce
Warren County Development Association
Warren County School District - Career Center
Warren County Historic Society
Warren County General Hospital
Warren-Forest Higher Education Council
City of Warren
Warren County Housing Authority
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation – Warren County

To these were added individuals who had participated in various community planning or economic efforts over the past few years. Overall, the meeting of the Committee had good attendance, varying from 20 to 30 participants for sessions. The meetings were luncheon affairs, and, by design, were over in one-and-one-half hours.

January 31, 2002
February 21, 2002
March 14, 2002
April 4, 2002
May 4, 2002

Each meeting focused on certain themes, i.e. housing, land use, transportation, the citizen survey, or the economy.

Much of the results of these sessions are reflected in the comprehensive plan document. Because of this, the results are not covered. Individual sessions were as follows:

Meeting 1 – January 10, 2002 – Review of the citizen survey and overall Steering Committee priorities.

Meeting 2 – January 31, 2002 – Economic agencies and strategies.

Meeting 3 – February 21, 2002 – Continuation of possible economic development projects from industrial parks to “web” sites.

Meeting 4 – March 14, 2002 – More on economic strategies, then housing.

Meeting 5 – April 4, 2002 – This meeting focused on transportation, particularly PennDOT projects and highway projects.

As was the case with the Focus Group sessions, the meetings with the stakeholders of the Steering Committee were quite valuable. Part of that was the fact that the three groups most intimately connected with the Comprehensive Plan process (i.e. the Planning Commission, the County Commissioners, and the Intergovernmental Co-Op) all participated. The second fact was that other key organizations could supply needed facts, comments on practicality, or sensible suggestions on the document.

All in all, the goal of public/community involvement in this process was met.

The Comprehensive Plan

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 of 1968, is the basic planning legislation of Pennsylvania. Within that Code, Article III deals with the Comprehensive Plan. Section 301 establishes the elements that must be included in any comprehensive plan. Specific items include:

- A Statement of Community Development Objectives
- A Land Use Plan
- A Housing Plan
- A Transportation Plan
- A Plan for Community Facilities and Utilities
- A Plan for the Protection of Natural and Historic Resources
- County Plans. These include:
 - ▶ Land use as it relates to important natural resources and mineral utilization
 - ▶ Advisory guidelines to promote general consistency, especially relative to land use regulations
 - ▶ Land uses of regional impact
 - ▶ The preservation and enhancement of prime agricultural land
 - ▶ A plan for historic preservation

In addition, there are various other specific items that are required, along with implementation strategies.

Historically, a comprehensive plan was to be a general statement of development policy, rather than a legally binding document, such as a zoning ordinance. And, that philosophy is generally still correct. Yet, since the enactment of Acts 67 and 68 in 2000, the Plan does have more substance to it now than it did in past years. In these two acts of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, along with subsequent laws and some court decisions,

the linkage between the policy statements of the comprehensive plan and implementation has become stronger. Land use controls, such as zoning and subdivision/land development ordinances, are now to reflect the standards and policies of the community.

Further evidence of the growing importance of the comprehensive plan is the increased emphasis that various State permits and programs place on that document. A decade ago, few Commonwealth agencies even knew about comprehensive plans. Now, nearly every permit application contains a series of questions relative to the conformity of the proposed project to local or county plans.

A final point. The current Warren County Comprehensive Plan was prepared in a series of three volumes completed between 1990 and 1992. This current effort is intended as an amendment and update to that effort. Where this document does not address or set forth a policy/action, which was clearly given in Volume 3 of the prior effort, that policy/action is still in effect. However, any policy/action set forth by this Plan, as adopted, must be interpreted as Warren County's clear intent.

Essentially, the purpose of planning is for the citizens of a community. When a plan sets forth future sewer service areas, land use policies, or transportation project, these are not intended as individual projects; rather, they are part of an overall, a comprehensive guide to benefit all the residents of Warren County. Because of this, the planning process is organic. It never really stops, as life does not stop. It sets clear guidelines, but does so with the knowledge circumstances may change, and the Plan will need future amendments. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code recognizes that fact, as it states county plans are to be updated every ten years.

Planning is a tool for community use, now and in the future.

Statement of Objectives

The purpose of this element of the Warren County Comprehensive Plan is to set forth the overarching objectives of this document, per Section 301(a)(1) of the Planning Code.

Overall Plan Priorities

Warren County’s most important asset is its youth—the children of today are the community builders of tomorrow. Over the past two decades, more and more of these young people have been leaving Warren County to seek work, education, and start families elsewhere. The primary purpose of this Plan is to create economic opportunities in Warren County to keep our future leaders here, and attract new residents while maintaining a superior quality of life.

The Economy

Based upon public input, a major element of this Plan will be to help initiate and support activities that will create good paying jobs in Warren County.

Industrial-Manufacturing-“High-Tech” Initiatives

Based upon State and County data, jobs in these sectors, on average, pay better than any other economic sector. As a consequence, programs, policies, and initiatives to create jobs in these sectors will receive top priority. Generally, activities will focus in the following areas:

- **Physical Assets:** Create the needed physical resources, i.e. industrial land, the reuse of brownfield sites, and new structures to accommodate the expansion of existing businesses and attract new businesses to the County.
- **Education:** Support and create the infrastructure needed to both create and maintain a world-class workforce.
- **Incentives:** Make available to existing and new businesses an array of financing, tax, and other incentives to encourage existing firms to stay and grow while fostering new business.
- **Make wise use** of the County’s natural resources, especially timber.

- **Improve** the retail options of County residents by supporting the rejuvenation of existing retail centers and the addition of new options.
- **Promote** tourist activities that feature the County’s physical assets without degrading them.

Land Use

The people of Warren County prize their unparalleled environment of hills, forest, and streams. While promoting community growth and prosperity, the various qualities, which make Warren County a special place, must be preserved.

- **Update** the County’s land use ordinances to provide modern flexible controls, which facilitate growth without a sacrifice of the quality of life.
- **Provide** a set of reasonable standards and definitions for municipal land use ordinances in Warren County.
- **Encourage** land use policies on County or regional levels.
- **Identify** “Growth Corridors” where future development is most likely to occur and where it can best be accommodated.
- **Identify** current areas of regional significance and establish criteria for identifying them.
- **Preserve** rural farmlands.

Housing

Warren County’s housing stock is generally attractive, in good condition, and affordable.

- **Maintain** and **improve** the current housing stock through pro-active initiatives, including housing rehabilitation.
- **Pursue** “First-Time Homebuyers” programs to encourage young families to be homeowners.
- **Encourage** a limited number of housing units for professional people (doctors, teachers, etc.).

- **Explore** private-market housing options for Warren’s older citizens.

Transportation

Warren County’s transportation network is adequate but needs improvement for the traveling convenience of its residents and to support other goals of this Plan.

- **Work** with regional organizations, PennDOT, and elected officials to continue improvements to the condition and capacity of Route 6.
- **Recognize** access to the Erie Metro Area is important to local residents.
- **Work** with regional organizations, PennDOT, elected officials, and the State of New York to create a better access to I-86, the former Southern Tier Expressway.
- **Maintain** and **improve** State and local roads, whose prime function is to provide transportation within the County.
- **Work** with regional groups and PennDOT to improve/maintain State and local roads and bridges to optimum conditions and levels of service.
- **Re-examine** the County airport policy.

Community Facilities and Utilities

Adequate infrastructure of a community is essential for its economic well-being. The most basic of these facilities are water and sewer, but other elements are also important. Public safety, recreation, and education are three themes, which deserve attention.

- **Extend** water and sewer facilities to accommodate expected growth and provide for economic development opportunities, as shown by the Future Land Use Plan.
- **Promote** inter-municipal solutions to infrastructure problems.
- **Provide** for cutting-edge technical training on a secondary and post-secondary basis.
- **Assist** the Warren County School District, as requested; develop a strategy on its physical plant, which is consistent with prudent fiscal and tax policies.

- **Support** the Warren County Library system and similar cultural resources, which add to the quality of life to County residents.

Natural Resources

Warren County has abundant natural resources, timber resources, farmland, and scenic beauty. These elements can contribute to the County's prosperity, but they must also be respected and used wisely.

- **Develop** strategies to allow the wise use of the Allegheny National Forest for timbering, natural gas production, and recreation.
- **Encourage** local municipalities to protect viable farmlands by participating with farmers to establish Agricultural Security Areas and explore the PACE Program.
- **Help** the WCCBI to develop the infrastructure needed to properly utilize the world-class hardwoods found in the area.
- **Explore** public-private partnerships to exploit the visual and recreational attractions of the Allegheny National Forest and Kinzua Dam.
- **Develop** land use standards to preserve prime farmlands.
- **Promote** the wise use of all natural resources.

Historic Resources

Provide technical assistance to groups to help preserve the historic resources of Warren County.

Land Use

There is no single topic more important to a comprehensive plan than the issue of land use. The use of land influences community facilities, transportation, preservation policies, and very often the individual quality of life. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code recognizes the importance of land use planning by its relative position in Article III. Also, since the changes to the Code in the year 2000, a county land use plan takes on a special importance. Section 301.4 requires the “County planning commission shall publish advisory guidelines . . .” shall promote uniformity with respect to local planning and zoning terminology and common types of municipal land use regulations. To meet the requirements of 301.4, the County’s advisory guidelines are included as an appendix to this document. For this section on land use, there are the following elements:

- General Land Use Policies
- Land Use Guidelines
- Land Uses of Regional Impact and Significance
- Land Use Constraints and Concerns
- The Future Land Use Plan

Finally included as part of this land use section are discussions on agriculture and mineral resources.

In Warren County, the land use plan takes on an even greater importance. Warren County is one of the few counties in Pennsylvania that offers a county zoning ordinance. In Warren County, the practice has been to include individual municipalities, on request, by adopting a zoning map for that area. The text portion is consistent for all municipalities.

Warren County – General Land Use Policies

Goal #1

The residents of Warren County treasure the quality of life it now offers. All land use policies will be judged on the impact on that quality and the overall community trend.

Goal #2

Consistent with Goal #1, the Future Land Use Plan, and any future amendments to it, will attempt to enhance the economic prosperity of Warren County.

Goal #3

The Future Land Use Plan and the Community Facilities Plan, especially as it deals with water and sanitary sewer facilities, shall be consistent.

Goal #4

The Warren County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, along with the Zoning Ordinance, shall be updated to reflect the policies of this Plan, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, and contemporary land use practice.

Goal #5

Preserve agricultural activities

Goal #6

Promote the wise use of natural resources.

Land Use Guidelines

Section 301.4(b) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that a county “shall publish guidelines to promote general consistency with the adopted county comprehensive plan. These guidelines shall promote uniformity with respect to local planning and zoning terminology and common types of municipal land use regulations.” Warren County is unique. It has a zoning ordinance that applies to thirteen municipalities. Only two municipalities have their own zoning ordinance. And, it is very likely that if other municipalities opt for zoning, they will chose to come under the County’s ordinance. Therefore, this section will have limited application. As such, it will be kept brief.

This portion of the guidelines offers suggestions relative to zoning districts and the core uses for these districts. It must be stressed that the exact names of these districts are not critical. Rather, it is to the issue of consistency. Nor will an exact list of uses be critical. The types of uses and their intensity will be the key guidelines for County consistency reviews.

Agricultural/Conservation/Recreation

Sometimes referred to as an Agricultural or Conservation District. This district is, by design, a low-density rural zone. Sewer and water facilities are on-lot, and intense uses are neither anticipated nor encouraged. Agriculture is a welcome use with activities which complement farming activities. Residential uses are primarily low density and usually scattered. However, more intense residential uses, such as mobile home parks, can be accommodated with appropriate controls. Densities will vary, but generally one-acre lots are envisioned.

Residential/Urban

This “R-1” District is primarily designed for boroughs, cities, and villages, with public water and sewer facilities. In addition, non-sewered residential developments can be accommodated. A density of four dwelling units per acre or more is anticipated when public water and sewer are available. Conversely, where on-lot septic systems are used, one-acre lots will be the standard. This assumes such lots are acceptable for such systems. Some non-residential, compatible uses are also appropriate for this district.

Village, Limited Business

This district is designed for built-up urban places, large or small. In this district, some non-retail commercial and limited retail* uses are permitted along with residential development. It is truly a mixed-use urban area. Densities are similar to the Residential/Urban classification. However, this district will only work when public infrastructure is available.

*Limited relative to floor area size, typically a 3,000 square foot to 5,000 square foot size limit is proposed.

Business Districts

For the purpose of this Plan, the following guidelines are set forth for three separate Business Districts. They need not all be present in a single ordinance to be judged consistent with these guidelines. Rather, the inclusion of such districts will be a function of the development patterns of the municipality.

General Business: This district includes both a General Business District as well as Neighborhood Business areas. For smaller boroughs, it could even include a “downtown” of limited size. The main function of such districts is to provide for a variety of retail and service uses.

Business Highway/Transitional: This district would include all of the General Business uses, plus those found along busy highways. Lots are larger to accommodate on-site parking. Typical uses are “big-box” retailers, car dealers, malls, and fast-food restaurants.

Downtown: This district is intended to function in dense urban centers. Lot sizes are usually minimal, front yards are usually not required, and parking is normally provided by public facilities. Uses include retail, office, and urban multi-family residential.

Industrial Districts

In general, industrial, manufacturing, transportation, commercial offices, and wholesaling operations would be included. Industrial and Office Park Districts would be considered as controlled elements of this category. “Light” and “heavy” industrial zones also can be considered as variations on this theme, the difference being the impact of such uses on nearby properties. Performance standards and screening standards are needed in these zones.

Subdivision Ordinance Standards

The purpose of this section is to present guidelines for new subdivision regulations within Warren County.

The eight principal divisions of a subdivision ordinance should be included. These are:

- Administration/Enforcement
- Definitions
- Plan Standards
- Design and Construction Standards
- Improvements/Bonding
- Blocks and Lots
- Mobile Home Park Standards
- Land Development Standards

Traditional Subdivision Regulations

In its review of subdivision regulations, the County will expect such controls to be compliant with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and contain the necessary processing and administrative standards.

In reviewing the ordinance's design standards, the following guidelines will be followed:

- **Roads**: Local roads should have a 50-foot right-of-way. Urban roads should be curbed; low volume, rural roads, can use earthen berms and swales. Cartways from 20 (rural/ suburban) to 36 feet (urban) would be acceptable, consistent with expected traffic volumes and storm drainage concerns. Detailed design criteria (sight distance, curves, intersections, spacing, etc.), which are similar to the Warren County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, will be considered consistent. Private roads are acceptable, but should be constructed to a serviceable level.
- **Sewage and Water**: Standards for on-lot and sewage collection and treatment systems should be consistent with the standards of the Department of Environmental Protection.
- **Storm Drainage**: These standards must follow sound engineering practice as well as a concern for neighboring communities.

- **Mobile Home Parks:** Generally, a five-acre minimum parcel size and individual mobile home lots of 5,000 square feet are considered standard. However, the County encourages enhanced standards for such developments as have been espoused by the Manufactured Home Institute and recent American Planning Association publications. Mobile home parks in western Pennsylvania suffer from a bad image. Improved development standards can help to remove that stigma while still keeping such housing options affordable.

- **Land Development Standards:** At a minimum, the standards set forth by the Warren County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance will be acceptable. However, municipalities are encouraged to examine more sophisticated models. The impact of land development can vary significantly. A small light industrial building may only have a very modest impact while a new Wal-Mart Super Center has tremendous consequences. Even a convenience store can cause dramatic changes. So reasonable land development standards are a must.

DEFINITIONS

Often the definition section of a land use ordinance can be critical. This is especially true of zoning ordinances. The following are offered to encourage consistency:

Accessory Building - a subordinate building, incidental to, and located on the same lot as, the principal building, and used for an accessory use.

Accessory Use - a use incidental to, and subordinate to and located on the same lot occupied by the principal use to which it relates.

Agriculture - any agricultural use, including farming, dairying, pasturage, agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture, floriculture, viticulture, horse keeping, animal and poultry husbandry, and forestry (including the harvesting of timber), but excluding specialized animal raising and care or dog kennels.

Bed and Breakfast - an owner-occupied residence offering, for pay, overnight or short-term lodging with breakfast, the only meal served and for guests.

Billboard - a sign that identifies or communicates a commercial or non-commercial message related to an activity conducted, a service rendered, or a commodity sold at a location other than where the sign is located.

Buffer Area - a landscaped area of a certain depth specified by the Ordinance which shall be planted and maintained in trees, grass, ground cover, shrubs, bushes or other natural landscaping material.

Building or Setback Line - imaginary line parallel to or concentric with the nearest road right-of-way line. No portion of a building foundation or wall may extend nearer the lot line than the required front yard depth.

Church - a place of religious instruction or public worship.

Commercial Recreation - a facility which offers various indoor or outdoor recreational opportunities for its patrons including such games as: pool, billiards, bowling, video games, miniature golf and similar pursuits.

Day Care Services for Children (Day Care) - provides out-of-home care for part of a 24-hour day to children under sixteen (16) years of age, excluding care provided by relatives and excluding day care furnished in places of worship during religious services. There are three classes of Day Care that are defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare.

Dwelling - a building arranged, intended, designed or used as the living quarters for one (1) or more families living independently of each other upon the premises.

- a. Single-family dwelling - a building containing only one (1) dwelling unit.
- b. Two-family dwelling - a building containing two (2) dwelling units, collectively defined under this Ordinance as a duplex, regardless of configuration.
- c. Multi-family dwelling - a building containing three (3) or more dwelling units, including apartment houses, townhouses, flats, and garden apartments.
- d. Detached dwelling - a dwelling with yards on all four (4) sides.

Dwelling Unit - a building or portion thereof containing one (1) or more rooms for living purposes together with separate and exclusive cooking and sanitary facilities, accessible from the outdoors either directly or through an entrance hall shared with other dwelling units, and used or intended to be used by one (1) family.

Essential Services - the erection, construction, alteration or maintenance by public utilities or municipal or other governmental agencies of underground or overhead gas, electrical, steam or water transmission or distribution systems, including poles, wires, mains, drains, sewers, pipes, conduit cables, fire alarm boxes, police call boxes, traffic signals, hydrants, and other similar equipment and accessories in connection therewith; reasonably necessary for the furnishing of adequate services by such public utilities or municipal or other governmental agencies or for the public health and safety or general welfare, but not including buildings.

Floor Area - the sum of the gross area of the several floors of a building or buildings measured from the face of the exterior walls, or from the centerline of the walls separating two (2) buildings.

Height of Building - the vertical distance measured from the average level of finished grade along all the exterior walls of the building to the highest point of the roof and to the highest point on any structure which rises wholly or partly above the roof.

Mini-Storage Facilities, a/k/a Self-Storage Facilities - a building consisting of individual, small, self-contained units that are leased or owned for the storage of business and household goods or contractors supplies.

Parking Space - an open space with a dustless all-weather surface, or space in a private garage or other structure with an effective length of at least eighteen (18) feet and a uniform width of at least nine (9) feet.

Personal Services - any enterprise conducted for man which primarily offers services to the general public, such as: shoe repair, valet services, watch repairing, barber shops, beauty parlors and related activities.

Planning Code - the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247 of 1968 as re-enacted and amended by Act No. 170 of 1988 and Acts 67 and 68 of 2000, and as further amended from time to time.

Sign - any structure, building, wall, or other outdoor surface, or any device or part thereof, which displays or includes any letter, word, model, banner, flag, pennant, insignia, device, or other representations used for announcement, direction, advertisement or identification. The word "sign" includes the word "billboard," but does not include the flag, pennant, or insignia of any nation, state, city or other political unit, nor public traffic or directional signs, nor religious or devotional displays. (See also Billboard.)

The "area of a sign" shall be construed to include all lettering, wording, and accompanying designs and symbols, together with the background, which is incidental to the display itself. Where the sign consists of individual letters or symbols attached to or painted on a surface, the area shall be considered the smallest rectangle, which can be drawn to encompass all of the letters and symbols.

Sign, Business - a sign that directs attention to a business, profession or industry conducted on the premises or to products sold, manufactured or assembled upon the same premises upon which it is displayed.

Structure - any man-made object having an ascertainable stationary location on or in land or water, whether or not affixed to the land.

Yard - that portion of a lot that is unoccupied and open to the sky and extends from the lot line or right-of-way to the setback line.

Zoning Officer - the Zoning Officer of the municipality, or his/her authorized representative.

Special Note: The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, as amended, contains certain definitions that local ordinances should include. See generally Section 108 of that law.

Land Uses of Regional Impact and Significance

Section 301(7)(11) requires that a “county comprehensive plan shall identify current and proposed land uses which have a regional impact and significance. This Plan recognizes the following current land uses of this type:

- Kinzua Dam
- The Allegheny National Forest
- Downtown Warren

Criteria to identify future land uses of regional impact:

- Any development that generates 200 or more full-time jobs in a single year
- Any residential development that will construct 100 or more dwelling units in a one-year period
- A commercial, tourist, or recreational development, expected to generate 1,000 or more vehicle trips a day
- Any power plant

It is the County’s policy that such developments should be:

- Compliant with, and located in, municipalities where both zoning and SALDOs are in effect
- Be served by public water and sewer facilities, or have DEP-approved facilities sufficient for proposed uses.
- Be on a paved road of a width and construction sufficient to accommodate both the use and its traffic.

Development Constraints

As noted at the beginning of the Plan, it was not its intention to duplicate earlier work. That applies in particular to developmental constraints. The land has not changed significantly in the little over one decade since the last comprehensive plan.

Constrained land—that which is generally unsuitable for development—is normally quite obvious. For example, the ANF holdings are not available for general development, nor are the State Game Lands or Chapman Dam State Park. Steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains are all poor choices for development. Severely constrained land is best left for the lowest density developments. If zoned, it would best be placed in an Agricultural/Conservation/Recreation classification.

The plate, Development Constraints, follows this page, and graphically shows these areas.

Future Land Use Plan

There are six goals for this Plan element set forth at the beginning of this chapter. Generally, these goals can be realized without conflict. But, conflict is a frequent companion to land use decisions, and Warren County will be no exception to this truism. Though this Plan can offer overall guidance for future decision makers, it will not obviate the need for “tough calls.” Usually, this involves the zoning of individual properties. At such times, this Plan must be considered “in *toto*” and a truly comprehensive approach used. This issue is: What is the overall intent and purpose of this comprehensive plan and its land use policies?

In most cases, this will not be the case, and this section and its attendant maps can be followed as guideposts to the future. Why? Because it is expected that growth in Warren County will continue to be modest. True, the most recent Census Bureau population estimates (for July 2003) see a continued downward trend of approximately 1,000 persons (about -2.4 percent) since 2000. This change is apparently primarily fueled by out-migration (see Census Bureau “Components of Change” tables), though the low birth rate is also a factor.

Yet, these are strongly contradictory times. Though overall County population may be static, or even modestly declining, that does not mean there will be no growth pressure. In fact, such pressure can be safely predicted as a result of two forces. One is the fact people move. They relocate from community “A” to community “B.” Their current home is too big, or maybe too small. There is a myriad of reasons why people move from one to another. And usually that move is within the same county. The second reason is the continued shrinkage of family size. So, even though Warren County may have fewer persons, this smaller population may need more homes. This phenomena is well documented, the single-parent home, empty nesters, or the older widow or widower living alone all need homes. New homes (stick-built and manufactured) are being developed in Warren County at a pace of about 200 per year. This, combined with commercial and industrial growth, will use about 200-plus acres per year—a very small percentage of County land.

The Future Land Use Map looks at where future growth is likely to occur and, when possible, specifies the appropriate land use category.

Land Use Plan Designation

Commercial

These areas cover a great variety of land uses from retail to office. Most service businesses are covered. Density of use will vary. In villages, boroughs, and Warren City, these uses will be quite intense, often on small lots. In rural areas, they will tend to be along major highways with less building coverage, but larger parking areas. Areas not already actively used for such uses are classified as designated growth areas.

Industrial

Industrial areas are a mixture of various manufacturing and industrial uses. Any future expansion would be classified as a designated growth area.

Mixed Use

Some areas, particularly along primary corridors, are classified as mixed use, primarily residential/commercial. This designation is due to existing development patterns.

Residential

The areas in Warren County show a residential use, primarily higher-density residential areas, either current or future.

Public/Semi-Public

These are primarily the current grounds of the State Hospital in North Warren.

Other Public Lands

These are comprised of state parks and state game lands. By definition, no private development is anticipated on these areas.

Allegheny National Forest

Every effort has been made to accurately delineate “ANF” land. By definition, private development is not expected except in very controlled situations.

Agricultural/Low-Density Residential

This land use is a rural resource area designated to preserve agricultural uses and low-density resolutions.

To facilitate the discussions of future land use, this Plan has designated nine separate growth areas in Warren County. These growth areas were generously drawn, and specific use patterns only shown in a portion of the area designated. Why? The reason is because real growth is not a neatly lineal happening. It can often skip one property for any number of reasons. These designated growth areas serve not only for land use guidance, but also provide guidance where future water and sewer service may be needed. These areas are set forth below.

Growth Area #1 – Columbus

In the early 1990s, Columbus Township joined with Warren County in preparing a comprehensive plan concurrent with the County effort. That is that case again. But, due to funding schedules, they are just beginning their efforts as this Plan draws to a conclusion.

The Columbus growth area is focused around the Village of Columbus. The village has both water and sewer services, as does the area at the Scott's Crossing and the Route 426 area, south of the village. Modest growth is seen in this region, generally following major transportation routes.

Growth Area #2 – Sugar Grove

This area is already experiencing some growth and appears influenced by two separate urban areas—the City of Warren and Jamestown, New York. A sewer system has been designed for this region, and construction will start as soon as financing can be arranged. Most future growth is expected around the borough and is expected to be residential. A corridor along Route 69 is also expected. Again, new development is anticipated to be residential. Commercial uses are projected to be primarily in the borough core, although a few highway-oriented uses might be accommodated along Route 69.

Growth Area #3 – Lander

This is a small village along Route 957. The potential for modest residential growth is seen for the Lander area.

Growth Area #4 – The Russell/North Warren/Warren Route 62 Corridor

This is one of the busiest highway corridors in Warren County. Traffic counts from Warren City north to Russell vary from 8,000 to 16,000 vehicles per day. The corridor already has extensive commercial development, such as the Warren Mall, car dealers, and Farm Colony. A new “big box” retailer is scheduled to begin construction soon. In addition to business uses, residential development is also found here. Future land use will likely be an extension of current patterns. This area is expected to be one of the two primary growth areas of Warren County. It is also an area where detailed (parcel by parcel) recommendations are difficult to make at this time.

Growth Area #5 – The Sheffield, Clarendon Corridor

Currently, this is a mixed land use sector. Uses primarily front on Route 6 or intersecting roads. Uses vary. There are industrial, commercial, and institutional developments. Future growth is expected to remain mixed, with two areas forecast for most development. These are the sections just north of Sheffield Village, which will continue to serve in a multi-use fashion.

Growth Area #6 – The Starbrick Corridor

Similar to Growth Area #4, this corridor (Route 6/62) has relatively high traffic volumes and much of it is a four-lane divided highway. In addition, rail service is available. As a consequence, Growth Area #6 has important industrial development, and that pattern is encouraged to continue. In addition, commercial and residential growth is expected. As this is a region of mixed use, care in establishing development patterns is vital. Incompatible uses will need buffering and other techniques to limit conflicts.

Growth Area #7 – The Youngsville-Brokenstraw-Pittsfield Region (Route6)

In many ways, this is a continuation of Growth Area #6, but there are some significant differences. Development is less linear, with Pittsfield and Youngsville showing depth in land use patterns. Also, the new sewer project in that area is likely to induce future growth. Conversely, traffic volumes here are about 20 to 30 percent lower than the Starbrick corridor. Overall, most growth is projected as residential with mixed use—predominantly highway-oriented commercial from Youngsville to Pittsfield.

Growth Area #8 – Grand Valley

This is a small rural, essentially residential area along Route 27. A sewer project is projected to induce new residential development. This area is more closely oriented to Pleasantville and Titusville than Warren City.

Growth Area #9 – Tidioute

Tidioute is a small self-contained borough along the Allegheny River. Modest growth is anticipated, primarily residential; some limited commercial growth may occur along Route 62.

This land use policy can primarily be realized through the County zoning and subdivision ordinances prepared to complement this Plan. It must be noted these ordinances are specifically designed to allow for the reasonable use of minerals and natural resources. Only two communities have their own zoning ordinances in Warren County—Warren City and Youngsville Borough. Both communities are heavily developed so most new development activity in Warren County will be in areas governed by the County zoning ordinance, and all will be governed by the County’s subdivision ordinance.

Agriculture

Pennsylvania’s agriculture is big business. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, the market value of agricultural production was \$4.2 billion. It is also important in Warren County with some \$15 million (2002) in production representing 0.3 percent of the State’s total. Warren’s output ranks 49th among Pennsylvania’s 67 counties, according to the Census. And, the County wishes to preserve this industry. To implement that policy, agriculture must be both protected and promoted. There are three primary policies that can protect farmland in the Commonwealth. The first is the Agricultural Security Area.

The Agriculture Security Law was originally enacted in 1981 but has been amended at various times since its original adoption. The act was intended to assist farmers in handling certain economic and social pressures. In particular, the act meant to protect farmers against nuisance lawsuits as well as allowing them to make a long-term commitment to farming. The Commonwealth wished to preserve prime farmland, realizing it was often attractive for other development. An outline of the “Ag” Security Act is given below. By necessity, the descriptions of its programs are brief. Those interested in more details can contact the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

The primary element of this law is the power of local government to create Agricultural Security Areas. But, unlike many elective powers granted to local governments, citizens, not the governing body, initiate this one.

A landowner/farmer (or owners) petitions a municipal government (usually a township) to initiate the process to create an Agricultural Security Areas. The Agricultural Security Area offers limited protection for farms and farming. These include protection from local nuisance regulations, some protection from state or local condemnation and eligibility for the Commonwealth’s “PACE” program of buying conservation easements. An outline of the process is:

1. Landowners propose creation of a new Agricultural Security Area—its minimum size 250 acres, but the farms involved need not be contiguous.
2. Public notification of proposal, including a newspaper notice
3. Proposal review—to include soils suitability, legal qualifications, and compliance with local comprehensive plan/zoning. Copies sent to:
 - County planning commission
 - Municipal planning commission
4. Public hearing—at the municipal building
5. Decision—if approved, a description of the Agricultural Security Area filed at the Recorder of Deeds in the County Court House. In addition, the municipality is to notify the Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture. Finally, a notice of the action is filed with the local and County Planning Commissions. Generally, all agencies must receive a description of the area, landowners, acreage, and the approval date.
6. Periodic review (once every seven years)

(See Act 149 for detail.)

Some communities in Warren County have started the “Ag Security” process but may have not followed all required procedures, and there is a question if such areas have legal standing. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the following communities are participating in this program.

Township	Acreage	Farmers	Year
Farmington	3,418	23	1992
Glade	1,014	6	1993
Pittsfield	2,235	9	1992
Spring Creek	2,387	17	1990
Pine Grove	1,413	15	2005
Sugar Grove	1,681	19	2005
Total	12,148	89	

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

There is a seven-year review requirement and, once more, according to the State, these reviews have been completed in a timely fashion. However, local officials could not find evidence of filing with the County Planning or Recorder’s Office.

To provide farmers with the protection, it is essential that local governments follow all required procedures to establish viable “Ag Security” areas in Warren County.

As noted above, the basic Agricultural Security Area offers only limited protection. The next level of protection is the “PACE” program, or the purchase of agricultural easements in “Ag Security Areas.” This is a State program, but needs County participation. A County Agricultural Land Preservation Board is required, and Warren County recently created this body. Generally, this program entails the acquisition of development rights of farmland. The landowner is paid the difference between the value of land for farming and its value as development acreage. In this manner, farming can continue, but the landowner is not economically penalized. The agricultural easement is permanent. The PACE program is quite popular in northwestern Pennsylvania. Nearby Erie County has over 3,700 acres in the PACE program, Mercer County 5,000. Warren County is now in the process of establishing the needed County board. It will also provide technical assistance, as needed, to interested municipalities. This technical assistance is needed to establish “Ag Security” areas that are properly documented, and recognized by the Commonwealth.

A final popular protection technique for agriculture is through zoning. In Pennsylvania, there are two primary types of agricultural zoning—exclusive and non-exclusive. The “exclusive” approach allows only agriculture use and is followed in highly productive agricultural areas where extreme development pressure is experienced. The most notable examples are in Lancaster County. Non-farm dwellings may be permitted, but their numbers are limited and they are to be situated on land not suited to farming.

The second zoning option is the “non-exclusive” approach. Given the limited farming activity now present in Warren, this Plan follows the non-exclusive option. Non-exclusive zoning promotes agriculture and also allows a wide variety of other uses on a large-lot and with separation from nearby uses. By allowing a variety of other uses, farmers can engage in other businesses to supplement their agricultural income. The practice of a second income is relatively common for farmers in western Pennsylvania. This policy should both protect and encourage farming in Warren County for the next decade. If agriculture becomes more prosperous and extensive in Warren County, the “exclusive” approach may warrant consideration. The Land Use Plan will place agricultural lands in the rural resource category. Such a policy discourages both development and the provision of water and sewer services, while keeping low densities important to successful farms.

Housing Plan

This portion of the Warren County Comprehensive Plan addresses housing. Its housing stock is one of the mainstays for any community. True, an individual's perception of their own home is critical, as most persons spend half their life, or more, "at home," but housing is also an important component to a community's economy.

Many of today's service and light manufacturing operations are "footloose." They could locate in Warren County just as easily as San Francisco. And, because of this fact, the appearance of the housing stock is important. An example of the negative perception of housing stock occurred just a few years ago in nearby Oil City. The stockholders of Quaker State Oil brought in a new management team. The new CEO and his top executives were all from the New York/New Jersey metro area. They judged the housing quality in the Oil City area inferior, and many in the top management echelons actually commuted from east-coast homes weekly. Consequently, when Quaker State had the opportunity to relocate the Oil City headquarters to Texas, there were few local ties to consider in their decision to leave. That is not to claim that housing alone will bring a new industry to town, rather, it is to emphasize its importance is much greater than the function of providing individual shelter.



Finally, housing has another value for Warren County and its constituent municipalities. The relative value of homes is reflected in their assessed value, which determines a large portion of county and local taxes. Attractive, well-maintained homes translate into a stable tax base—a tax base needed for the viability of municipal, county, and school district operations.

Thus, for a variety of reasons, housing is important.

Before the Housing Plan policies are discussed, it is well to look at some changes that have occurred since the last comprehensive plan.

Housing, like many other elements of community life, is dynamic, not static. Markets change, needs shift, and this Plan must accommodate such shifts. The table below compares key housing and demographic characteristics measured by the Census of 1990 and 2000.

Table H-1 Comparison – 1990 to 2000 Warren County Key Demographics				
	1990	2000	Change	(%)
Population	45,050	43,863	-1,187	(-2.6)
Median Age	36.3 Years	40.5 Years	+4.2 Years	+12.0
Housing Units	22,236	23,058	+822	+3.7
Occupied Housing Units	17,244	17,969	+452	+2.6
Owner-Occupied	77.2%	78.2%		+1.0
Renter-Occupied	22.8%	21.8%		(-1.0)
Average Household Size	2.66	2.42	(-0.24)	(-9.0)
Seasonal Units	3,852	4,125	+273	+7.1
Median Contract Rent	\$228	\$307	+79	+34.6
Median Home Value	\$43,900	\$64,300	+20,400	+46.5
Median Household Income	\$26,351	\$36,083	+\$9,732	+36.9
Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000				

What do these trends mean? The first notable item is though the County’s population dropped -2.6 percent, its housing units actually increased by nearly 4 percent. Why? The most obvious reason is the continued reduction in household size. The reduction of average household size is a trend that has been evident in Western Pennsylvania for some years. Its causes are many. However, the primary reasons are: the general aging of the population with fewer children still at home, an increase of single-persons households (especially in the 65-plus age category), and single-parent families. In 1990, a general population of 1,000 in the County needed 376 housing units; by 2000, that same population required 413 homes. That is an increase in housing demand by 37 units for the same population. Given the demographic profile of Warren County, this pattern of declining household size will likely continue, resulting in a continued demand for new dwellings.

A few other changes are worthy of notice:

- The number of seasonal, second, homes increased.
- Rents increased by 34.6 percent.

- Estimated owner-occupied housing values increased 46 percent. In comparison, the median value of owner-occupied housing increase for the Commonwealth was 39 percent.
- Though housing costs, especially of the owner-occupied units, increased by a rate greater than that for the State or the cost of living, Warren County housing remains very affordable, when measured as a function of local income. There are two affordability indexes. For purchased homes, cost in excess of two years of income is considered high while rents under 15 percent of income is seen as affordable. The median cost of owner-occupied homes, per the 2000 Census, was indexed at 1.78—well under the 2.0 “affordable” levels. The median contract rent represented 10 percent of the median household income—also very affordable by any yardstick.
- The County is growing older. By 2000, the median age had increased to 40-plus years. This trend is predicted to continue.

Implications for Housing

What do these figures and trends mean for Warren County?

- The County’s population is aging. Consequently, the demand for new traditional single-family units should remain modest while the demand for condos or apartments is likely to increase.
- Another consequence of an aging population will be an increase of homes entering the real estate market. “Empty nesters” and single-person households do not need larger homes.
- Given the relative costs of homes, the real estate market should remain attractive.

General Housing Plan Goals

Based upon these trends and the priorities set forth by the Community Development Objectives, this Housing Plan is predicated on the following goals:

- Maintain and improve the current housing stock
- Promote “First Time Homebuyers” Program
- Promote market rate housing options for seniors
- Examine the need for special housing markets

Maintain and Improve the Current Housing Stock

Traditionally, there are two primary programs that address the quality of the current housing stock. One is to assist in housing rehabilitation; the second relates to code enforcement activities. Both are needed if the housing stock is to be well maintained. As an adjunct to code enforcement, demolition must also be considered. Based upon housing surveys, there are not a great number of dilapidated homes in Warren County, but they do represent a problem that must be dealt with.

Warren County Housing Rehabilitation Program

Similar to other counties in Western Pennsylvania, Warren County can expect modest growth in its need for additional housing. This fact shifts the primary focus of housing from the issue of extensive new development to the preservation of existing homes.

The simple act of rehabilitating one's home, whether with private or public funds, can often act as a catalyst prompting other homeowners to similar actions. Recent planning studies in the City of Warren verified that trend. Clusters of remodeling or "fix-up" projects in specific neighborhoods demonstrated this pattern.

The need for a County housing rehabilitation program was clearly established in the previous comprehensive plan. In 1991, a Countywide random housing survey was done (370 structures) along with a targeted survey covering some eight areas encompassing 2,662 structures; that effort found:

- Countywide, the housing stock was good – 91 percent of all units were either sound or with only minor deterioration.
- In the targeted surveys of specific areas, approximately 8.5 percent of all structures were identified as in need of major work or rated dilapidated.

Though the overall figures were encouraging, by projecting survey results countywide, there were still an estimated 2,700 units that needed assistance. These estimates are now some ten years old.

In order to ascertain current needs, new targeted surveys were completed in 2004. These surveys cover fourteen separate areas in nine Warren County municipalities. Table H-2 presents the results.

Municipality	Sound	Percent	Minor	Percent	Major	Percent	Dilapidated	Percent	Total	Percent
Grand Valley	8	25.0	13	40.6	11	34.4	0	0.0	32	100.0
Enterprise	14	50.0	5	17.9	7	25.0	2	7.1	28	100.0
Triumph Township	20	69.0	7	24.1	2	6.9	0	0.0	29	100.0
Limestone Township	32	76.2	8	19.0	1	2.4	1	2.4	42	100.0
Cherry Grove	20	60.6	8	24.2	4	12.1	1	3.0	33	100.0
Pittsfield	12	42.9	12	36.4	4	12.1	0	0.0	28	91.3
Irvine Village	25	45.5	22	40.0	8	14.5	0	0.0	55	100.0
Youngsville East	47	60.3	24	30.8	7	9.0	0	0.0	78	100.0
Youngsville West	36	50.0	28	38.9	8	11.1	0	0.0	72	100.0
Youngsville Highland	7	46.7	6	40.0	2	13.3	0	0.0	15	100.0
Sheffield Barnes	30	68.2	7	15.9	6	13.6	1	2.3	44	100.0
Sheffield Foulkrod	18	81.8	3	13.6	1	4.5	0	0.0	22	100.0
Sheffield Mill St.	44	73.3	5	8.3	11	18.3	0	0.0	60	100.0
Sheffield Pickering, Etc.	49	89.1	2	3.6	4	7.3	0	0.0	55	100.0
Totals	362	61.0	150	25.3	76	12.8	5	0.8	593	100.0

Source: Field Surveys – 2004

Overall, the contemporary surveys examined just under 600 structures and found results quite similar to the 1991 countywide effort. That is, some 86.3 percent of all units were sound or had only minor defects, with 12.8 percent needing major work and 0.8 percent dilapidated. These findings re-enforce the need to continue the housing rehabilitation programs in Warren County.

In Warren County, such housing rehabilitation can occur through private initiative or via some type of public program. Private-sector efforts are particularly attractive at this time, due to favorable interest rates.

Although publicly funded “rehab” projects now see high costs due to program restrictions and limitations, federally funded housing rehabilitation programs remain an essential element to preserve housing stock. There are three primary governmental programs that can help to finance housing rehabilitation:

- Community Development Block Grant
- The HOME Program
- The Warren County Housing Trust Fund (Act 137)

All programs are based upon individual economic need. Since 1992, the first two resources have been the primary ones used to rehabilitate housing of income-eligible owner-occupants. Income eligibility is measured against guidelines annually published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and are aimed at those of low-moderate income. The 1992 Plan proposed a goal of twenty rehabilitated homes a year. In practice, the program has yielded only seven to ten annually. And, recently, even fewer homes were completed per year.

The production goals were not met, primarily due to a lack of qualified contractors who would participate in this rule-ridden, federally funded, program. Recently, however, the Warren-Forest Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) has found more contractors who may enter the program. This could increase the number of units successfully rehabilitated annually. Yet, a second, and more significant production impediment has arisen, which can account for even more delays in the “rehab” program. Beginning in FY 2002 year, certain restrictions, relative to lead-based paint hazards, were imposed upon federally financed housing rehabilitation programs. That regulation has significantly increased the cost of completing individual units and may further limit contractor participation.

The consequence of these new restrictions is difficult to estimate at this time. However, given this additional requirement, the best estimate is four to six housing units per year can be completed at this time. At present, a total cost of \$24,999 per unit, plus administration and delivery, is the program cost guideline.

In the prior plan, certain geographic priorities were set for Warren County.

Based upon these considerations and the work done to date, the following communities should remain priority areas for the traditional housing rehabilitation programs (CDBG and HOME):

- Bear Lake*
- Youngsville**
- Columbus*
- Sugar Grove*
- Enterprise*

*These communities are currently covered by the ongoing housing programs (Warren County via the Warren-Forest EOC and Enterprise via the Titusville Redevelopment Authority). Freehold Township was included in the above group, due to its geographic location.

**Youngsville has been asked to become part of the housing rehabilitation program, but has declined until 2004. Youngsville will now participate in the program. In the 2004 surveys, approximately 20 percent of the Borough’s housing stock was examined. Of these, some 35 percent had minor deterioration and 10 percent required major rehabilitation. Certainly, their willingness to become part of this program is timely.

Once the above-referenced communities are serviced, Sheffield Village is the last priority municipality identified in the 1992 Plan to be targeted. After all targeted communities are serviced, a countywide first-come, first-serve, process is recommended.

The primary issue will be, however, if housing rehabilitation activities can be continued effectively with the Federal restrictions now in place. If they cannot be, a severely restricted option may be considered, limiting expenditures to under \$5,000 per unit. That approach may exempt the program from the more expensive elements of the lead-based paint requirements. Using that option, “fresh-paint” exterior surface work could be contemplated or follow an “emergency” program, similar to the one outlined below. Regardless of the policy, there must be some way to expedite the housing rehabilitation program if it is to have a meaningful impact in Warren County.

Emergency Program

The County’s Housing Trust Fund Program is now devoting 25 percent of its funds (or approximately \$15,000/year) for “emergency” repairs for low-to-moderate income homeowners. Generally, such grants are limited (under \$5,000) and aimed at single-issue problems as roofing, a new furnace, etc. Given this program’s immediacy and a low “red-tape” threshold, no change is suggested.

Code Enforcement and Demolition

The use of housing rehabilitation initiatives, either public or private, are a positive, preferred way to deal with the preservation of, or the improvement of, the current housing stock. Alone, it is not enough. Limited funds make that approach insufficient for the housing problems of Warren County, which leads to the second program element—code enforcement.

Code enforcement begins with a sound regulation. Certainly, all municipal codes in Pennsylvania allow for the adoption of property maintenance standards. This Plan recommends that the International Code Council’s most recent Property Maintenance Code be the standard ordinance used by Warren County municipalities. That code has all the attributes needed for success:

- Objective standards
- Due process
- Successful application in Pennsylvania

Code adoption should be a first priority with boroughs and townships that have areas of intense or village-like developments. The abatement or removal of badly deteriorated structures is a necessity, both for public safety and to stop blight. The use of such regulations in very rural areas with widely spaced structures is desirable but is a second priority. The administration of property maintenance standards is a difficult task. And, is

best left to those with training and experience in the field. Two options are recommended. One would be a purchase of services using an experienced code officer from a nearby municipality. The second would be the retention of a third-party inspector using the COG.

Unfortunately, even the combination of a housing “rehab” program and a property maintenance code will not solve all problems, and spot demolition must be considered.

The demolition needs outlined in 1992 essentially remain unchanged. Except for an occasional “voluntary” burning of dilapidated structures by volunteer fire departments and some Warren City demolition, no Countywide program has emerged. The following preliminary steps are suggested:

- Advertise a voluntary “demo” program once or twice a year. Offer at least a partial forgiveness of liens (say 50 percent of the cost of demolition) as an incentive. The CDBG Program is a possible funding source for this program, as well as other DCED options.
- For units where “voluntary” demolition is not an option, a property maintenance or sound nuisance ordinances *are a must*. The County can suggest model ordinances for local adoption (see prior page), but the municipality must initiate such actions. A consortium of communities or a COG approach is a second option. The Department of Community and Economic Development may be of assistance in this program

Other Housing Issues

Up to this point, the Plan has dealt with overall housing trends as well as housing remediation programs. This section examines other housing issues relative to Warren County. These include the support of the general single-family dwelling market and the consideration of unique needs. As stressed in the first page of the Housing Plan, this resource is vital for several reasons and certainly deserves public attention.

Homebuyers’ Assistance

In the 1992 Plan, an emphasis on homebuyer assistance was highlighted. Typically, these programs are aimed at potential “first-time” homeowners of low or moderate income and focus on methods of reducing the cash needed at closing or lowering the interest rate on a mortgage. Most program experience suggests that the most effective efforts are aimed at reducing the cash needed at closing. Generally, to qualify as a “first-time homebuyer,”

the buyer may not have owned a home, manufactured or otherwise, in the prior three years.

Why is this program needed? As noted in the 1992 Plan, there are a number of older homeowners in Warren County. As these householders reach or pass retirement age, many opt for a freer lifestyle, which does not include the obligations of yard work or the expense of home upkeep. This characteristic remains. According to Census 2000, one in every five owner of a housing unit in Warren is a person 65 years of age or older. It can be expected these units will come onto the market at increasing rates, with the potential of “softening” the housing marketplace with negative implications for owners (sale price) and local governments (lower assessments).

As their houses enter the marketplace, the first-time homebuyer is a potential purchaser. There are at least two “first-time homebuyer” programs now available in Warren County. They are intended to reduce, or eliminate, the cash needed at closing for income-eligible “first-time” buyers.

Though the exact program may vary, it usually provides \$2,000 to \$3,500 at closing. This can be a grant or a no-interest second mortgage. The most attractive source of assistance is the County’s Act 137 fund. However, it, at the most, may assist five families a year. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has greater resources, but its guidelines are more restrictive. Normally, younger families, of limited means, and good credit records, who have not owned a home recently, are the best candidates. A Federal program, the American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) has been announced but not yet fully funded. When funded, ADDI offers more substantial aid than existing options.

A second reason for homebuyer assistance programs is more immediate to one of the key goals of this comprehensive Housing Plan. Meetings with County citizens, and those who responded to citizen surveys, delivered a resounding mantra of “Keep our kids here.” Certainly, promoting homeownership amongst young families is one way to achieve this goal. Homeownership does tend to keep families in a community. Here, the County’s role is primarily one of an advocate.

Up until recently, there was little success in this program. The real estate and mortgage communities perceived it to be cumbersome. However, as a few families have now successfully used the program, its acceptance has increased. More emphasis is needed to capitalize on this method of achieving multiple goals for Warren County.



**HUD ADDI Program
(May 2004 Web Site)**

Additional Housing Initiatives

- Special Needs:** Very often, the needs of special populations are forgotten. In Warren County, there are no non-group housing resources designed for chronically mentally ill persons. An eight-unit HUD Section 811 housing complex is in the development stages in Warren City. County mental health personnel estimate a current need of at least 16 units and relate that a current apartment complex in their inventory may be closing, making their need even more immediate. The planned apartments (Warren Anthems) are for mentally challenged persons who are capable of living an independent life with outside (not in-home) support services. The Warren Anthems project is a joint effort of the County and the Housing and Neighborhood Development Service (HANDS) of Erie County. A second project for mentally handicapped citizens is currently pending. This project is called Presidential Place and involves two 4-bedroom group homes in Warren City’s west side. These are for low-income individuals with developmental disabilities.



Another area of special interest is non-assisted senior housing—that specifically aimed at those 55 years and older. As noted previously, the County Housing Authority has indicated they now have sufficient elderly units, and, in fact, some vacancies. However, given the age profile of Warren County and its income patterns, the need for market-rate units serving older citizens has

not been completely addressed. Impact Warren partially addresses this need with 28 mixed-income townhouse/condominium units under construction in downtown Warren. They overlook the Allegheny River. Of the new units, there will be 24 affordable senior units and four market rate condos. The target incomes are as follows:

No. of Units	Income Eligibility	Proposed Sales Price
6	Up to 50% of area median income	\$55,000
6	Up to 60% of area median income	\$60,000
6	Up to 80% of area median income	\$65,000
6	Up to 100% of area median income	\$75,000
4	Up to 115% of area median income	\$85,000

In nearby counties, there have been two other approaches to elderly needs. Purely private-market condos and patio homes are one. Their principal benefit is that exterior maintenance is part of the “condo” fees. A second option is developments, usually by a non-profit entity, for non-assisted apartment living, which still makes meals, social events, and similar services available, along with maintenance and housekeeping. Often, these developments are in a campus setting, with assisted and nursing units also available, as individual needs change. The Rouse Estate is examining such an option, but it is a long-term plan. No other group has made such a plan public, and it remains an unfulfilled need for the Warren County housing market.



Rouse Estate

- **Middle Income Housing—For the Young and for the Old:** During the Visioning sessions and meetings with the Core Committee, several persons pointed to a need for affordable housing options to young families starting out as well as older residents. For households of limited incomes, various governmental programs abound; those with high incomes have the private means to satisfy their housing needs. Middle-income persons appear to be the forgotten market. In fact, “middle income” housing was the number one housing priority of the Citizen Survey. There are two specific actions that are recommended. Both of these involve the creation of a Housing Advisory Commission, with representatives of the County, the Warren/Forest EOC, and the majority of members taken from local real estate brokers, sales force, and local banks/savings institutions. This committee would have two functions:
 - ▶ Examine PHFA programs to determine if the program guidelines would provide for true middle-income housing. If it will, initiate activities to begin the development of middle-income homes. Upper limits for HUD assistance (three persons) are \$34,650 in Warren County, while PHFA is at \$65,000.
 - ▶ Monitor housing needs and determine if the County or a new County agency should play an active role in the middle-income housing needs

of the community. Such an agency could be a precursor to a County housing development corporation or a community development corporation.

Any special housing committee will have a good opportunity to measure the viability of in-town housing due to some of the initiatives of “Impact Warren.” At least two separate housing projects are part of that initiative. There are 24 elderly apartments along Pennsylvania Avenue (just east of Hickory Street). These are ready for occupancy and reportedly will see full occupancy. A second project consists of 28 mixed-income condominiums on the “river” side of the new downtown parking garage. This will be a mixed-income development. These developments will provide some insight into both the County and City housing market.

- **Upper Income Transient Housing:** Just as those with middle incomes appear to have limited housing options, some employers express concern about the lack of up-market apartments or condos in Warren County. Young professionals and management persons often prefer such accommodations during their first few years on a new job. This need does not fit existing housing programs that are aimed at those of low or moderate income. And, providing public funds to such a housing project is inappropriate.

It would be appropriate, however, for the County or the County’s economic development agency to bring interested parties together to construct 10 to 15 condo or rental units (see also Housing Study below).

- **The Warren County Housing Needs Market Study:** Housing is inextricably linked to economic development. Deficiencies in the housing market may well adversely affect the County’s ability to hold and attract all types of workers. In a similar vein, the lack of senior housing options as well as the transient units noted above may well be a negative in the economic field.

However, the common problem of all of these perceived needs, as presented in this section, is a lack of “bankable” market studies to determine the objective need for such facilities and their potential feasibility. This deficiency suggests the following actions.

- ▶ The County Planning Office, County Real Estate Interests, WCCBI, the Rouse Estate, Warren Hospital, and any other interested stakeholders should engage a top-rate real estate marketing firm to prepare an objective housing market analysis. That study should:

- Identify unmet housing needs in the areas outlined above.
- Identify housing initiatives/developments that can be met through private investment.
- Identify vital housing needs that cannot readily be met by traditional private-market means. Suggest private sector or public-private partnership strategies with preliminary pro-forma budgets.

Public Housing

In 1992, the Plan suggested about 50 new “elderly” units of public housing. Geographic locations in North Warren (Conewango Township) and Youngsville were suggested. However, that situation has changed. The County Housing Authority recently noted vacancies in its elderly inventory units (the Towers) and expresses no need for additional units in the short term. The same is true for public housing units in general for Warren County, including the “Section 8” program. In fact, a recent newspaper story indicates that the County Authority will return some unused Section 8 vouchers to HUD. Consequently, no new public housing is recommended in the near future.



Summary

The protection, enhancement, and construction of housing are as important to Warren County as the construction of a new industrial park. The challenges are difficult and the road ahead long, but the rewards are the preservation, and the improvement of this very special place, Warren County.

Historic Preservation Plan

Warren County has important historic resources. According to the October 1, 2003 National Register (of Historic Places), Warren County has twenty-four entries. Some ten are formally registered and fourteen classified as eligible. By far, the most significant entry is the Warren City Historic District (approved July 22, 1999). Four of the listings are bridges, seven are public buildings, and two are churches. Of the total of twenty-four listings, fourteen are in Warren City. Though there are reported to be archeological sites in Warren County, they are not listed. Generally, such places are not definitively identified due to fear of unauthorized digging. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission follows this policy; consequently, no specific County sites will be identified here. (*Note: See the Commission's web site for policy details.*)



In the citizen survey, some ten policy items were listed. Historic preservation was one of these items, and it was ranked as tenth (last) out of the list. Yet, during the citizen visioning sessions, some areas, notably, Sugar Grove, were quite interested in historic preservation. Furthermore, Warren City has included a Historic District Overlay option in their draft zoning ordinance. And, finally, the recent changes to the Planning Code [Section 301(7)(iv)] require a Historic Preservation Plan.

Based upon these factors and the recommendations of the 1992 Plan, the following actions are appropriate:

- Increase local interest in Warren County's past. The more residents know about local history, the greater the interest in historic preservation will become.
- Local government will need assistance in preservation planning. The Warren County Historical Society is a logical organization to spearhead this effort.
- Foster cooperation in historic preservation between governmental bodies, the private sector, and non-profit organizations.
- Promote historic preservation on the neighborhood level and as part of a quality of life preservation strategy, through municipal action.

Three tools are recommended for the implementation of these goals:

- Make technical data relative to historic resource inventories available to local groups and local municipalities.
- Explain and assist with applications to the National Register for Historic Places.
- Explain and offer technical assistance relative to local government tools for historic preservation, i.e. zoning and Act 167 of 1961.

Because Warren County already administers a county-level zoning ordinance, interested municipalities could also protect their historic resources through an Overlay Zone, written into the existing ordinance. Again, this is not a common approach, but it does allow great flexibility. Given the County's proven zoning expertise, it would be a sound preservation strategy. Yet, given the fact that historic preservation was a low priority among Warren County's citizens (see survey section), such an action must be the result of citizen requests—not as a top-down elitist edict.



Whatever option is pursued, further historic resource surveys are necessary. A Museum Commission grant can be sought for this purpose. A match to make the grant more competitive could be provided through the CDBG administrative funds, private donations, or local foundations. It is recommended that the survey hire either summer interns from a reputable college, historic preservation program, or retain a temporary preservation planner or consultant. A complete survey could probably be completed in two or three summers.

The National Register can be used as the central local preservation tool. County Historical Society personnel can work with property owners and interested citizens.

The County's role should include informational meetings for interested citizens. To promote the listing on the Register with local residents, the tax credit program should be advertised liberally. This potential incentive could enlarge residents' knowledge about the financial advantage of historic preservation. If interest is developed, even individual meetings with eligible business owners to explain the program would be in order.

While not yet determined as formally eligible, there are some possibilities for new historic districts in Warren County. They include:



- An industrial heritage-related district in the Sheffield area
- An architectural district in Sugar Grove Borough
- A rural district linked to Swedish settlement in the Chandlers Valley area
- A rural district in Columbus Village

Archaeological/cultural resource planning will require a particularly high degree of integration. It is recommended that the County develop an ongoing liaison with The Carnegie Museum of Natural History. While not the designated SHPO representative, The Carnegie could be very helpful in the planning process.



Further inter-organizational cooperation will be absolutely essential to carry out an accelerated historic preservation program for Warren County. The County Historical Society, through its governing board, should be asked to provide their expertise in Plan implementation. Because of educational implications, the Warren Area School District also has a role to play in the task of caring for Warren County's past.

The County Historical Society has already begun some work for local history education. This commendable effort has been made with limited Society resources. If funding increases to the Society, money should be specifically earmarked to complete this important endeavor. Of all the elements needed to promote this element of the Comprehensive Plan, public education is probably the most important. Without widespread public support, little can be done for historic preservation.

In conclusion, the matter of historic preservation as a quality-of-life consideration must be addressed. Warren County is a pleasant place, comprised of scenic, historic, visually pleasing communities. Historic preservation planning can enhance these dimensions of Warren County. Warren County's citizens must ask themselves two questions. Do they like the old downtowns, the stately homes, and tree-lined streets of their towns? Do they like the neat clapboard farmsteads, ancient barns, and wooded expanses of their countryside? The indication is that these items are important. The time is now, to make historic activities as a full partner in the Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation Plan

Transportation is critical for modern living. The ability to travel quickly and conveniently has become a major element of contemporary life and has shaped our very physical environment. A home in a rural suburb, big-box retailers, a job in another county. None of these characteristics, that are now so common, would be possible without a modern road network. Warren County is no exception to this need.

In Warren County, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation reports there are some 1,331 miles of road, and on an average day, there are over one million miles driven. Consequently, it is obvious roads, highways, and bridges are of paramount importance.

To truly plan for Warren County's transportation, however, other modes must be considered—rail, air, transit, and bikeways. All are covered by one or another Federal and State program and, all are important to the County's well being.

Transportation Funding/Planning

Transportation planning in Pennsylvania is a combination of Federal and State laws. And, with the cost of two-lane highway hovering at the \$2 million per mile level, money is of critical importance. For most major transportation projects, some 80 percent of needed funding is from the Federal Government. The programming process for these projects is under the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) law passed in 1998. This law requires the development of Long-Term Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) in a state-local partnership arrangement. And, this planning encompassed all forms of transportation.



Warren County participates in such a partnership through the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (NWPRP&DC). Designated as a Rural Planning Organization by PennDOT, this partnership includes Warren, Forest, Crawford, Clarion and Venango Counties, with the Regional organization acting as coordinator. These counties meet with PennDOT to develop both a TIP and the Long-Range Plan. The TIP has a four-year horizon and includes projects that are scheduled for action. The Long-Term Plan is exactly that—a long-term program. Project planning is a give-and-take process between the counties and PennDOT. It is further constrained by projected

budgets. The TIP and Long-Range Plan are updated every two years. After State concurrence, results are sent to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration for approval.

A second process, the Twelve-Year Plan, is a uniquely Pennsylvania device. By law (Act 120 of 1970), the State Transportation Commission submits a Twelve-Year Program every two years to the General Assembly, the Governor, and the Secretary of Transportation for approval. This transportation planning effort divides project recommendations into three, four-year segments. The first four years contain those activities scheduled for construction, while the second and third four-year segments are akin to the TEA-21 Long-Term Plan.

Under PennDOT's management, these two processes are well coordinated.

Are these plans important? They most certainly are! For the upcoming four years, Warren County is scheduled for over \$16 million in highway and bridge improvements, as well as \$1.4 million for the new transit facility in downtown Warren.

Overall Priorities

Because it is a “project-driven” process, it is all too easy to lose sight of any overall rationale for transportation planning in Warren County. Based upon the Citizen Survey, public meeting input, and the Warren County Planning Commission, the following general policies guide this part of the Plan:

- Safety and the efficient operation of the Warren County road system
- Improved connections to Erie County
- Improved connections to I-86 in New York state

Air

There are neither public airports nor commercial air service in Warren County. The only facilities are private ones. The Brokenstraw Airport is primarily intended for private use. A second facility is the Emory Mahan airstrip in Conewango Township. No local public support is now suggested.

Due to an arrangement that dates back several years, the County did provide financial support for the Bradford Regional Airport. This policy was established when that facility was indeed developed as a regional resource. Many citizens, during the public visioning session, indicated the Jamestown facility is nearer and more popular with local travelers.

The Citizen's Survey also indicated little support of Bradford's airport. Based upon these findings, the County stopped its support of the Bradford operation.

Rail

The Allegheny and Eastern Railroad (now part of the Genesee and Wyoming system) is an important transportation resource for Warren County. Historically, this line was closely tied to the International Paper (I-P) (Hammermill) operation in Erie, Pennsylvania. It delivered wood chips and logs to the Erie operation as well as shipping liquefied pulp from Erie to the I-P Lock Haven operation. However, the I-P Erie operation has closed. Fortunately, the line developed additional users. Those other users have increased their use of this rail line and are now the customers that provide the needed volumes for ongoing viability. This railroad is critical to Warren County as major employers such as United Refining and Whirley Industries need its service. Consequently, the retention of this rail line is important to Warren County to help sustain current industry. It is also an asset to consider in the establishment of a future industrial park.

Transit

The Transit Authority of Warren County (TAWC) provides service on three fixed lines. Two are centered in the City of Warren. The North/South Route serves parts of Pleasant Township and south Warren as well as areas north (Conewango and Glade Townships), with the Warren Mall as its terminus. The East/West Route generally follows Pennsylvania Avenue in Warren City and Route 6 in Conewango Township. The eastern service stops near the Glade Bridge, while the western service turns at the former Blair Outlet store at Route 6 and Yankee Bush Road. The third route again uses Route 6 as its primary road and provides service from Sheffield on the east to Youngsville on the west. Due to the closure/demolition and reconstruction of the Hickory Street Bridge, there have been some temporary changes to the North/South and East/West Routes.

Senior citizens ride free on off-peak hours. Operations are Monday through Saturday, with no service on Sunday or on the six major holidays (Christmas, New Years, etc.).

In addition, the Authority also operates the "203" demand/response ride program for seniors, which is funded by the Pennsylvania State Lottery. With a day's notice, the program will pick up seniors at their home in a van for such purposes as doctor's appointments, shopping, and similar purposes. The return ride is also to the user's home.

This Plan supports the TAWC operation as an important adjunct to the County's overall transportation strategy. Current service areas should be maintained and, where feasible,

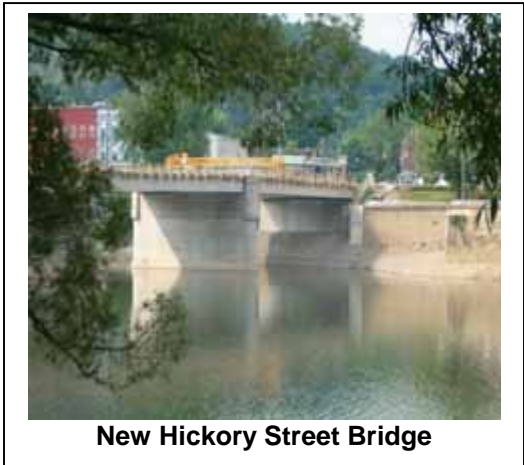
expanded. For many Warren County citizens, these transit services are their only transportation option.

The Authority reports that it does not anticipate any changes to its transit services. They do, however, have a major project in the process. The Authority will move its offices, bus barn, and maintenance facility to the Breeze Point development in Downtown Warren from its current home along Route 6 in Conewango Township. Funding for the project, \$1.43 million, is already committed, with most of the dollars from Federal sources. The Authority is expecting to acquire part of the Lorranger Building in the Breeze Point project area and refurbish it for its new home.

Bridges

Between those bridges already on the State’s Twelve-Year Plan and new projects, some 40 to 50 individual bridge projects are possible. Generally speaking, the current PennDOT priority appears logical. However, certain bridges must receive priority, due to their importance to Warren County. These include:

- **The Hickory Street Bridge in Warren:** The connection between the south side of Warren and Downtown Warren is vital. Though alternate sites were possible, the replacement of this bridge is essentially at the same site as the former link. Construction has started and a new bridge should be in place by the end of 2005.
- **The Market Street Bridge:** Just upstream from the Hickory Street Bridge, another river crossing is proposed—the Market Street Bridge. This bridge could serve as a direct link from Route 62 north to Route 6. Its primary benefit would be to divert much truck traffic, which now uses Pennsylvania Avenue, both east and west from the necessity of traveling or those already congested urban streets.
- **The Fifth Avenue Bridge in Warren:** This facility is on the Historic Register as an “eligible” structure. As such, construction was delayed for approximately two years, as the needed documentation was completed. It is scheduled for demolition and replacement within the next few years.



- **The Pittsfield Truss Bridge on Route 27:** Long a problem for larger trucks, it is on the current TIP and should be bid for construction in 2005 or 2006. Route 27 is a major truck route, and though the center of the bridge has adequate clearance, the side trusses did create problems.
- **Other Bridges:** In addition to the named priorities, there are a number of State and local bridges (Creamery Road, Nelson Hill, Jenks Hill, etc.) on the TIP and Twelve-Year Plan scheduled for construction. These projects must be monitored to see that they are completed.

State and local bridges will always be an issue in Warren County. The Planning Commission's role is to both prioritize and advocate new needed projects.

Highways

In 1992, the Comprehensive Plan focused on two primary highway goals. The first was to improve access to the Southern Tier Expressway (now I-86) and the second to improve and maintain the intra-County road network. The goals for this Plan remain essentially the same with the addition to a continual improvement to Route 6, especially west, as it connects to the Erie area and its two prime Interstate highways (i.e. I-79 and I-90). Other essential roads of concern are Route 62, Route 27, Route 69, and Route 957. These are discussed below:

Route 6

The primary east-west road in Warren County is Route 6, and it is truly a key transportation link. But, it is more than that. Route 6 was one of the original numbered highways in the United States first designated in 1925-1926. By 1936, Route 6 achieved transcontinental status and had the distinction of being the longest route in the United States, at 3,652 miles. In 1934, the idea of designating the road as the Grand Army of the Republic Highway was initiated by Mayor William L. Anderson. However, formal designation was not completed until May 3, 1953. Within Pennsylvania, Route 6 traverses 405 miles from Matamoras in the east to Pennline in the west. It travels through some of the Commonwealth's most picturesque countryside and was touted by National Geographic as "*One of America's most scenic drives.*" Route 6 travels through eleven Pennsylvania counties, and they have joined to promote "Pennsylvania's Heritage Route" as a tourist attraction. (See also the section on the Warren County economy.) Warren County's segment of Route 6 is an important element of this attractive highway.

The highway has current value. Route 6 west is an important connector to the Erie area. This view is held by local citizens, participants in focus groups, as well as expressed in the Citizen Survey. Goals for Route 6 are:

- All sections to have at least two 12-foot traffic lanes with adequate shoulders/bike lanes (3R standards)
- Slowly increase the four-lane sections from Youngsville westward as traffic counts warrant
- Make turn lane improvements, especially at the Route 27 intersection in Pittsfield village.
- Relieve the bottleneck at the railroad bridge in Columbus Village

Special Note: During the discussions leading to this Plan, some advocated a realignment of Route 6 west of the Village of Pittsfield using a portion of Route 27 and Route 426. However, when this possibility was investigated, it was found the widening of Route 426 presented a number of physical issues (steep slopes, wetlands, etc.) that practically precluded that concept.

Route 62

Route 62 is on the National Highway system and performs two major functions for Warren County. First, it is a major link to the Oil City-Franklin area south and it also provides primary access north to I-86.

The following actions are needed:

- All sections to have 12-foot traffic lanes with adequate shoulder areas (3R standards)
- Improve the geometry of the area from the Forest County line to Route 6; this primarily involves removal of curves, and improving visibility. (See also Summary.)
- Keep the area from the City of Warren to the New York state line in good repair, and improve traffic flow and safety, as needed (especially in the congested area just north of the City of Warren).

- Work cooperatively with New York officials to develop a better and quicker access to I-86. In 2002 and 2003, representatives from two states, Pennsylvania and New York, began to discuss this project seriously. Participants included the NWPRP&DC, the Southern Tier West (NY), PennDOT, NYDOT, Warren County, Chautauqua County, ARC, and a host of other agencies. The preliminary scheme calls for seven related projects from the City of Warren to I-86, then to Gerry in New York, some 6.4 miles north of I-86. The Warren County element of this project is estimated to cost \$21.6 million for 12 miles of improved road. The next 10.1-plus miles to I-86 in New York State are estimated at \$15 million. Overall, this project has a \$50 million price tag. However, the lasting benefit would be a much-needed connection to the nation’s Interstate System.

Funds to a detailed study of needed improvements in Pennsylvania are available on the TIP. As yet, New York has not made a similar commitment. Due to its importance, County officials need to continue their support of this road project. This would include Congressional support or even the potential of designating the link as an ARC road.

Route 27

Route 27 is an important link for Warren County to the Titusville area and to Route 8. Trucks originating in and traveling to the Warren City area are heavy users of this facility. Generally, the road is in good physical condition. However, a combination of hills and sight distance limitations does create problems in both Eldred and Southwest Townships, generally from the Village of Grand Valley south to the Crawford County line. Periodic three-lane passing zones in this area are recommended. (See Summary also.)

Route 69

Route 69 begins at Route 62 in Conewango Township and proceeds northward to the New York State border via Sugar Grove Borough. This highway sees traffic volumes only slightly less than those of Route 6 (west of Pittsfield) and Route 27. Likely, the reason for this high usage is the fact it represents a convenient path to the Erie area via I-86 and I-90. The entire length of this road should be improved to “3R” standards (12-foot traffic lanes and adequate berms). As part of this upgrade, the intersection of Main and



Big Tree in Sugar Grove Borough needs attention.

Route 957

Though a rural highway with a limited AADT, this road is an important link for northwestern Warren County. A general need for improvement is warranted from Columbus Village to Sugar Grove Borough.

Other Highway/Road Projects

Brokenstraw Township: Improve Matthews Run Road to “3-R” standards.

Columbus Township: General improvements to Route 426.

Elk Township: Improvements to the Scandia Road as a second, eastbound connector to I-86. (Use SR 1009 and SR 1013.)

Spring Creek Township: Improvements to the intersection of Turner Hill and Old Route 77. Improve the Eldred Hill Road.

Bear Lake Borough: Install a four-way stop sign at the intersection of Center and Main Streets.

Clarendon Borough: Provide financial assistance for resurfacing

Watson Township: Improvements needed to Route 337 from Township line to Cobham.

Bike Trails

Since the inception of the TEA-21’s multi-modal philosophy, bike trails have become a feature of transportation planning. The following are the primary trail recommendations for Warren County:

- Extend the Route 62 Warren/North Warren Bike/Hike Trail north to the New York State line. This would entail a project some 8½ miles in length and should be aligned to join with the Chautauqua Rails-to-Trails facility. The minimum goal is to reach the Village of Russell. Through the North Warren Feasibility Trail, consultants have identified three possible alignments. The selected one to be based upon cost, safety, acquisition issues, and public

acceptance. Most acquisition problems appear to be focused in the northern section. Total costs for this entire project is estimated at \$4.5 million*. It is expected to be a multi-stage endeavor.

- Youngsville/Brokenstraw Area: Create a bikeway along Rouse Road or along abandoned railroad right-of-way. Both Youngsville Borough and Brokenstraw Township are willing sponsors of this initiative

**Note: As bike trails also serve recreational functions, trails can also seek grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.*

Summary

The recommendations of this section are ambitious and expensive. As such, they will take many years to realize. In order to provide a more focused priority of needs, this Plan recommends that a firm with traffic engineering capacity be retained to examine Route 62 from Forest County to the Route 6 intersection and the section of Route 27 south of Grand Valley. Such a reconnaissance study should be developed to pinpoint and prioritize exact needs along these two roads. Specific projects can then be recommended to PennDOT, either via the TEA-21/Twelve-Year Program, or as maintenance activities. That approach will have a greater impact than generalized recommendations.

The Warren County Planning Commission as well as interested businesses, economic development groups, and local governments should regularly monitor the realization of the recommendations of this Plan. An annual Transportation Day for Warren County with PennDOT and NWPRP&DC will help to keep this Plan viable and on target.

Community Facilities and Utilities Plan

Community Facilities



Warren County School District Website
www.wcsd.pa.org

This section examines community facilities and services. These services are essential to modern life. Health care, public safety, education, culture, and basic utilities are all components of this heading. Some services are public in nature, others semi-public, or private-sector endeavors. Regardless of the type of provider, all are essential for a healthy, attractive Warren County.

Schools

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, there were 6,471 school students in Warren County for the 2003-2004 school year. Approximately 95 percent of these students were in public schools; the balance, 351, were enrolled in private schools. Most of the non-public students were enrolled in the elementary grade, with only 77 listed in non-public secondary schools.

Three school districts serve Warren County (see map): Corry Area, Titusville Area, and Warren County. The first two cover three townships (Southwest, Spring Creek, and Columbus) on the western edge of Warren County, with a total combined population of 3,173, about 7 percent of Warren's total population. The Warren County School District serves over 90 percent of the County's population and is the primary source of public education. All three school districts share certain characteristics.



Corry Area School District
Website www.corry.iu5.org

- Their school enrollments have declined from 1999 to 2004 (from -5% to -10%)
- Projected enrollments are all projected to decrease over the next ten year from -8 to -25 percent

Table CF-1
School Enrollment – Current and Projected
Warren County, Corry Area and Titusville Area School Districts

<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Warren County</u>	<u>Corry Area**</u>	<u>Titusville Area**</u>
1999-2000	6,825	2,622	2,653
2003-2004	<u>6,120</u>	<u>2,485</u>	<u>2,457</u>
Difference (%)	-705 (-10%)	-136 (-5%)	-196 (-7%)
2003-2004*	6,120	2,485	2,457
2013-2014	<u>4,587</u>	<u>2,025</u>	<u>2,253</u>
Difference (%)	-1,533 (-25%)	-460 (-19%)	-204 (-8%)
*Actual enrollment			
**Entire District, not just Warren County			
Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education			

Of primary concern to Warren County is the fact that the Warren County School District had the highest projected five-year decrease (-10%) as well as the greatest projected drop in enrollment over the next ten years (-25%). Of these three districts, these statistics are further displayed by a second overall trend. That is, total class size in the entry-level grades (first through five) is, on average, one hundred students less than the upper grades.

Of the three school districts, only the Corry Area and Warren County Districts have physical facilities within the County.

Corry has one elementary school in Warren County, at Columbus Village. Current enrollment is 281 students. Situated on a 13.7-acre site, the school was constructed in 1963. That district is reviewing its facilities and the future status of the Columbus School is not now known.

The Titusville Area School District has no school buildings within Warren County.

In 2003, the Warren Area School District has 18 facilities within Warren County, as follows:

**Table CF-2
Warren County Area School District**

School Name	Enrollment
Allegheny Valley (E)	138
Beaty-Warren (M)	903
Eisenhower (M/H)	644
Home Street (E)*	98
Jefferson (E)*	139
Market Street (E)*	200
North Warren (E)*	128
Pleasant (E)*	152
Russell (E)	269
Sheffield (E)	157
Sheffield (M/H)	457
South Street (E)	214
Sugar Grove (E)	235
Tidioute Area*	34
Tidioute (E)*	116
Warren Area (H)	959
Youngsville (E/M)	642
Youngsville (H)	572
<p>Key E = Elementary M = Middle School H = High School *To close at the end of the 2004/2005 school year.</p> <p>Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education 2003-2004</p>	

In addition to its public schools, Warren County has five non-public schools:

- Beaver Valley Amish School (16 students – 1st through 8th)
- Calvary Chapel (45 students – K through 12th)
- Little Ash Parochial (23 students – K through 8th)
- St. Joseph (138 students – K through 6th)
- Warren County Christian School (129 students – K through 12th)

Warren County AVTS

The Warren County Career Center is located on East 5th Street, on the same campus as the high school and new elementary school. Its enrollment averages approximately 350 students.

Summary

All three school districts that serve Warren are experiencing declining enrollments, with the Warren County District seeing the most significant losses. Furthermore, the enrollment models of the Pennsylvania Department of Education all point to a continuation of this trend over the next ten years (see Table CF-1). Once more, the Warren County School District is forecast to have the biggest loss (about 1,500 students).

Based upon the County's population losses over the past twenty years, and its increasing age profiles, there is little doubt that the Warren County School District is facing a surplus of facilities. This fact has already led to the closure of the Lander School. Those students from that school now attend the recently refurbished Russell Elementary or Sugar Grove schools.

There are more facilities closing after the 2004-2005 school year. One closure is scheduled in Tidioute. In the fall of 2005, students from that K-to-12 facility will attend schools in Youngsville. However, the Tidioute community, using the former school facility, has decided to form a charter school to allow students of the area an option to continue the former school facility. The most dramatic changes will happen in Warren City. Some five schools will close, and their estimated 700 students will attend the new Warren Elementary School located on the Career Center/High School campus in Glade Township, just east of the Warren City line.



Policy

It is obvious that the future of individual schools is important to the residents of Warren County. During the public input process leading to this Plan, a variety of comments were heard. Many residents identified their community with the local school and wish to retain all existing schools. Others argued that the continued drop in enrollment, coupled with high school taxes, demand the closure of some buildings and consolidation of facilities. There was one visioning session with school students, and they expressed more of a concern with facilities and programs than school location.

Yet, is this an issue for a school district or a county comprehensive plan? Clearly, the decision to build new, close, or consolidate schools is one legally assigned to the school

district and not the county comprehensive plan. And, in fact, the major decisions appear to have already been taken. There are planning implications.

The reuse of closed school facilities is, in fact, a land use issue, a matter of real concern to the Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission. Unfortunately, school closings are usually decided during periods of fiscal stress. In such situations, school boards are often looking at the highest return on the property that they can realize.

Section 305 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, however, clearly requires that before “any proposed action of any public school district located within the municipality or county relating to the location, demolition, removal, sale, or lease of any school district structure or land,” this proposed action is to be submitted to the local and county planning agencies for comment. This is to occur at least 45 days prior to the action.

Given the local situation, no new construction is anticipated in the near term. However, policies for both the construction of new, or the sale/demolition of existing schools should be set forth by this document.

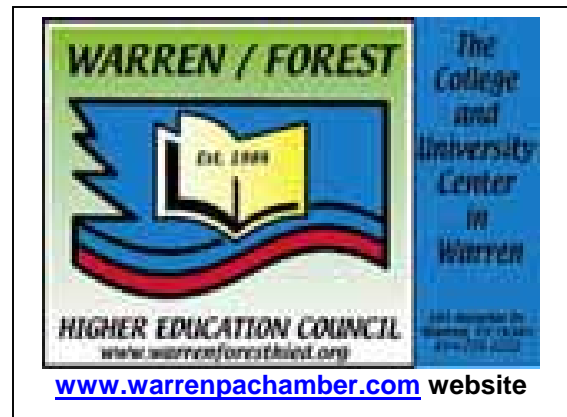
- ▶ If a new school is proposed:
 - Is the lot large enough to accommodate the building and ancillary facilities?
 - Is public sewer and water available?
 - Will neighboring residential uses be buffered?
 - Will light fixtures be shielded?
 - Can access roads accept the increased traffic?
 - Will the stormwater systems conform to State law?

- ▶ If the sale or demolition of a building or land is proposed:
 - What is the proposed reuse? Will it be compatible with surrounding land uses?
 - Will the new use create traffic problems?
 - Are any buffering yards advisable for the new use?

The Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission hereby extends an open invitation to either the Corry Area or Warren County School Districts to assist in school facility deliberations, especially relative to land use and community development issues.

The College and University Center in Warren

In addition to its elementary and secondary schools, there is the College and University Center in Warren. Sponsored by the Warren/Forest Higher Education Council, this facility allows local residents to attend classes offered by a variety of institutions at its local facility. Their facility is located at the Warren State Hospital campus. Courses vary greatly from traditional associate, bachelor, and master's degrees to vocational options (health care, tool and die, quality control). Course sponsors include:



Jamestown Community College
CAM Tech
Gannon University
Clarion University
Edinboro University
Slippery Rock University
University of Pittsburgh (Bradford and Titusville)

Health Care Facilities

For a county of modest population, Warren is fortunate to have a variety of health care facilities. The purpose of this section of the Plan is to identify the main elements of these resources.

Hospitals

Warren General Hospital



The centerpiece of the County's health care resources is Warren General Hospital. This is an independent, community-centered, operation. It is a full service, acute-care facility with 89 beds. There is 24-hour emergency care service, a cancer care center, and modern diagnostic technology is used. The hospital has a staff of 500, with 50 physicians. Some 18 specialists are

represented, and the great majority of these attending physicians are board-certified in their specialties.

This is only a partial list of the many services provided by Warren General. From wound care to renal dialysis, local residents can find most needed services here, including maternity, with over 300 babies delivered in a year. In a typical year, the hospital emergency room sees about 15,000 patients, while there are 2,600 admissions to its medical/surgical facility. Its newest resource is the cancer care center, which opened in 2004.

Warren State Hospital

The Warren State Hospital must be regarded as a regional mental health care facility serving 13 counties in northern and western Pennsylvania. This hospital dates back to 1874 when the cornerstone for Center Building was laid; patients were first admitted in 1880. With extensive grounds, Warren State Hospital once housed numerous patients. By 1963, there was a patient population of 2,600. Since that time mental health treatment methods favor returning most patients to the community living, so today's resident population has shrunk to just over 200 (186 civil and 27 forensic). Over the past years, this facility has slowly been shedding some of its excess resources. The Farm Colony Business Park and future Wal-Mart site are two examples of the adaptive re-use of such property.



The hospital's current treatment policy for its civil patients emphasizes short stays and a return to the community, with individual aftercare plans developed by individual County mental health programs.

The forensic services are primarily aimed at residents of Commonwealth or County jails.

Nursing Homes

There are five nursing home facilities in Warren County, as listed below:

Table CF-3
Nursing Home Facilities in Warren County

Name	Location	Beds
Beverly Health Care/Kinzua Valley	Warren, PA	106
Beverly Health Care/Warren	Warren, PA	46
Rouse Warren County Home	Youngsville, PA	189
Transitional Care Center at Warren General	Warren, PA	16
Warren Manor	Warren, PA	121
Total Beds		478
Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health		

Warren residents can be particularly proud of the Rouse Warren County Home. This facility is unique, as it was founded not as a County “poor farm,” but via a bequest from Henry R. Rouse. In addition to the traditional nursing care services, the Rouse facility also provides specialized needs units, such as those patients with Alzheimer’s. For those who only need limited help, there is an assisted-living option at their Youngsville campus.

Summary

Citizens of Warren have a well-rounded health care system and are fortunate enough to retain a community hospital. This Plan cannot pretend to analyze health care facilities and future health care needs. It does strongly support the continued presence and viability of these important community services.

Sanitary Sewer Services

Perhaps few public services are as important as sanitary sewers. Given the general soils characteristics in Warren County, no intense development can be supported by on-lot systems. Consequently, sanitary sewer systems and their expansions are critical for any future Warren County growth. In this section of the Plan, the current and proposed sanitary sewer systems are discussed, along with any short-term projects. Given the vital role such utilities will play in future County development, this Plan recognizes that. Sanitary sewer system development or extensions in any designated “Growth Area” (see Future Land Use) will be considered as consistent with this Plan. Discussions of the individual sewer systems and recommendations follow. These sections are keyed to map references (following page 82).

1. **Columbus Township:** Columbus Township has a sewer collection system with less than 300 users. The Columbus Township General Authority owns the system. The City of Corry plant in nearby Erie County provides treatment of the wastewater.

Currently, the only proposed expansion to this system is along Route PA 436 in the Scott Crossing area. This would encompass approximately 40 new users, most of these in a mobile home park. Another short-term potential is an area to the immediate east of the Corry Wal-Mart, where three commercial out-parcels are a development potential. However, as the “Growth Area” outline shows, there is a potential for further development east of Columbus Village, in the Dodd Farm area, as well as more extensions east of the Scott’s Crossing area.

2. **Grand Valley:** In Eldred Township, a proposed sanitary wastewater collection and treatment system will service the Village of Grand Valley and adjacent areas. Currently, at least 25 homes use a “wildcat” collection system, which outfalls to Caldwell Creek. The new system will have approximately 130 users. Once construction is completed, no immediate expansion is anticipated. The system should be fully operational in 2005.
3. **Tidioute:** The Southwest Warren County Authority provides sewer service to the Tidioute area. Their hydraulic plant capacity is rated at 250,000 gallons per day. As is the case with older systems, general maintenance as well as control of infiltration and inflow is always a concern. Average use is estimated at 130,000 gallons per day. There are plans to extend limited service into Limestone Township to service some commercial uses along Route 62.
4. **The Brokenstraw Valley Area Authority (BVAA):** BVAA provides sanitary sewer service to the townships of Brokenstraw, Pittsfield, and Pleasant. Its plant, located along the Allegheny River in Pleasant Township, has a rated hydraulic amount of 400,000 gallons per day, but only uses a portion of that capacity. There are planned extensions to the collection system. These include new service areas along Route 6 West, Davey Hill Road, Matthews Run Road, and Indian Camp Run Road. These latter two extensions, however, will flow to the Youngsville sewer treatment plant, rather than the BVAA facility. Its service area includes one of the prime growth corridors in Warren County.
5. **Sugar Grove Area Sewer Authority (SUGASA):** The SUGASA was formed as a joint effort by the borough and township of Sugar Grove. Though not yet constructed, the system has been designed to serve 620 equivalent dwelling units (or EDUs—sewer jargon for a typical household). The system will be

centered in the Borough of Sugar Grove and essentially provide service to the entire municipality and adjacent areas in Sugar Grove Township. Extensions into the township will follow: Catlan Hill Road, Big Tree Road, Jamestown Street, Route 957 (East), Old State Road, Jackson Run Road, and Route 957 (West). Construction is scheduled for 2005-2006. This area is anticipated to experience additional residential development.

6. **Youngsville Borough:** The Youngsville wastewater treatment plant historically has had I&I problems. However, remedial steps were implemented, and this STP now does have excess capacity. Currently, the plant serves the Borough collection system, but, as noted, the BVAA planned lines along Matthews Run Road and Indian Camp Run Road would flow to the Youngsville plant.
7. **The Village of Lander:** The Village of Lander is serviced by a small sanitary sewer system owned by the Farmington Township Municipal Authority. The system has a limited hydraulic capacity of 25,000 gallons per day and is reportedly using less than one half that capacity, with perhaps 64 EDUs on line. The system can accommodate additional users, and expansion is anticipated for residential development.
8. **Sheffield:** The Sheffield Municipal Authority provides sanitary sewer service to the Village of Sheffield, with limited extensions along Route 6 and other local roads. Capacity is listed at 270,000 gallons per day. Historically, the system has had I&I problems. Average flows are approximately 75 percent of capacity. The remediation of I&I has always been a system priority.
9. **Clarendon-Mead Township:** This system, operated by the Kinzua-Warren Area Joint Sewer System is relatively new and includes portions of Mead and Pleasant Townships along with the Borough of Clarendon. This system generally follows Route 6. Its capacity is listed at 250,000 gallons per day, with average use just over one half that amount. There is a proposal to extend this system east along Route 59 in Mead Township. Other extensions are also expected along roads intersecting Route 6.
10. **Warren:** The City of Warren has the largest wastewater treatment plant in the County, with a hydraulic capacity of 4,250,000 gallons per day. Its average use is about one half that amount. However, due to a variety of conditions, the system can have problems with excess I&I. These issues are normally related to wet-weather events associated with water releases from the Kinzua Dam. Recently, testing has shown an excessive “BOD” loading, which was above the system’s

permit level. Warren is now in the process of implementing an Industrial Pre-Treatment Program to resolve this problem. The service area includes Conewango Township (Starbrick area), parts of Pleasant, and Glade Township, as well as the City of Warren. Some service extensions are planned primarily along roads in Glade Township as well as Conewango. Such extensions would be consistent with existing agreements this facility has with neighboring municipalities.

- 11. North Warren Municipal Authority:** This system includes three townships: Conewango (north of Warren) as well as parts of Glade and Pine Grove. The system has a relatively large treatment plant rated at 750,000 gallons per day. At this time, only a modest extension off Hatch Run Road is planned, but its service area includes Route 62 North, a potential growth area.

Water Projects

- 1. Columbus:** The City of Corry owns and operates the water system to Columbus Village, the Dodd Farm area and surrounding development in Columbus Township. There are approximately 250 users on the system. Given the growth area around Columbus Village, there are several potential extensions possible. Yet, one of the most immediate needs is to “loop” the system. It is now a single-pipe affair with a dead end.
- 2. Tidioute:** The Southwest Warren County Authority provides water to Tidioute Borough, Limestone Township, Triumph Township, and a few users in Deerfield Township. This system has approximately 500 customers. Beyond some modest line extensions, their primary need is a systematic replacement program of old iron pipe.
- 3. Youngsville:** Youngsville operates a water system using wells. Historically, this system has had a capacity much greater than even its peak demands. There are approximately 800 users on this system. Due to its age, the system has had both line problems (leaks) and some line dead-end issues. However, there have been ongoing efforts to solve these problems. Potential waterline extensions would follow Route 6. The most pressing need would be toward Pittsfield; however, some thought also must be given to needs eastward toward the Village of Irvine.
- 4. North Warren Municipal Authority:** The Authority has a well system for its water and ample storage capacity. Their service area is essentially the North Warren area of Conewango Township. A modest extension is being considered to service a residential subdivision just south of the Farm Colony development.

5. **Warren:** The Pennsylvania-American Water Company supplies water for the Warren area. This utility company serves the City of Warren but also provides water to contiguous areas of Pleasant, Glade, Conewango, and Mead Townships. In all, they serve over 5,200 customers. This is a groundwater system with a large 1,000,000 standpipe. The only known short-term needs are some line extensions along Ridge and Jackson Avenues. A long-term project would be the provision of service along Route 59 east, toward the Kinzua Dam.
6. **Clarendon:** The Clarendon Water Company, a privately owned utility, serves Clarendon and adjacent areas of Mead Township. There are approximately 350 customers in this system. It obtains its raw water from wells and has three standpipes. No expansion projects are known.
7. **Sheffield Township:** The Sheffield Township Municipal Authority has a system center in the Village of Sheffield and serves over 550 customers. It has a 400,000-gallon covered concrete storage tank. There is some potential for expansion of this system, especially north along Route 6.
8. **Pine Grove Township:** The Pine Grove Water Authority services approximately 200 customers, primarily in the Village of Russell. This is a groundwater system that had serious water losses in the past, due to older leaking lines. Though no short-time expansion is known, this system does service the northern end of the Route 62 Warren/North Warren/Pine Grove growth corridor.
9. **Sugar Grove:** There is no public water system in the Sugar Grove Borough/Township area at this time. However, once the designed sanitary sewer system is constructed and successfully operational, local officials will examine the potential of a water system.

Libraries

Residents of Warren County can access anyone of five public libraries. These include:

The Sheffield Township Library
The Sugar Grove Free Library
Tidioute Public Library
Youngsville Public Library
Warren Public Library

These libraries have agreed to cooperate and provide services to all County residents. This approach seems to be a success, as over 19,000 residents have active library cards. The Warren Public Library is the flagship facility with over 167,000 items in their collection.

Public Safety

This issue is receiving more attention in recent years; but in spite of impressive Federal legislation and funds, it remains essentially a local, county, or state responsibility.

Fire Services

Within Warren County, there are twenty-one public fire services and one private operation. Only the City of Warren has a public paid operation. All of the other services are volunteers. There is a service at the Warren State Hospital as well as a department at United Refining. Some of these systems offer quick response, basic life support systems, as well as their fire service. And, they participate in a countywide organization with both a president and fire coordinator.

Fire Services – Warren County

- Bear Lake Volunteer Fire Department
- Cherry Grove Volunteer Fire Department
- Clarendon Volunteer Fire Department
- Columbus Volunteer Fire Department
- Garland Volunteer Fire Department
- Glade Volunteer Fire Department
- Grand Valley Volunteer Fire Department
- Lander Volunteer Fire Department
- North Warren Volunteer Fire Department
- Pleasant Township Volunteer Fire Department
- Russell Volunteer Fire Department
- Scandia Volunteer Fire Department
- Sheffield Volunteer Fire Department
- Spring Creek Volunteer Fire Department
- Starbrick Volunteer Fire Department
- Sugar Grove Volunteer Fire Department
- Tidioute Volunteer Fire Department
- Warren Fire Department

Wrightsville Volunteer Fire Department
Youngsville Volunteer Fire Department
United Refining Company

Police

There are five local police departments in Warren County, Conewango and Sheffield Townships, Tidioute and Youngsville Boroughs, and the City of Warren. By far, Warren's is the largest. The State Police serve the remainder of the County. Police barracks are located in the Starbrick area of Conewango Township as well as in nearby Corry, Pennsylvania.

Summary

No changes are recommended in the current system. However, many volunteer fire companies in the Commonwealth have had increasing difficulty in maintaining sufficient membership to provide needed services. Consequently, the County is available to direct any such fire companies to State officials/programs that could be of assistance.

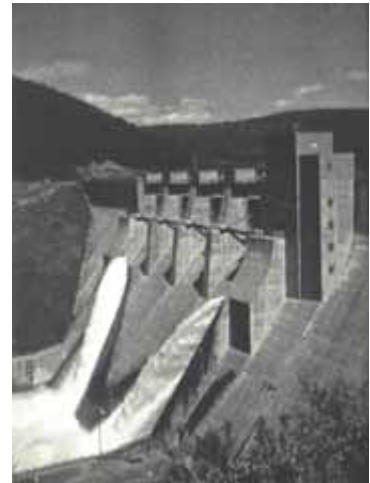
Recreation

Warren County has outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities. The Federal, State, County, and local governments combine to offer abundant outdoor resources. This study's function is to outline these resources and to recommend policies and projects.

Federal Resources

Two agencies of the Federal government have significant resources in Warren County: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates the Kinzua Dam and Allegheny Reservoir. The Reservoir is approximately 12,000 acres in size. Completed in 1965, the dam is used for flood control purposes and hydroelectric. However, it has also become a tourist attraction. The Kinzua Dam itself, a truly impressive structure, draws some. Others come for the Reservoir and its associate attraction. There is camping, boating, swimming, as well as hiking trails available.



The Allegheny National Forest (ANF) is not a public park. Rather, it is part of the National Forest system, which is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. National forests are intended as multi-use resources, with a balance of timber harvesting, resource recovery, as well as the recreational use. The Allegheny National Forest comprises approximately 514,000 acres of land in northwest Pennsylvania, with just over one quarter of the forest in Warren County. The forest surrounds the Allegheny Reservoir



and is the dominant land use/landowner in the southeast quadrant of Warren County. Primary recreation resources in the ANF include hiking, fishing, ATV trails, campgrounds, snowmobiling, and numerous other outdoor activities. The ANF estimates there are approximately one-and-one-half million visits a year to this resource.

State facilities within the County consist of Chapman State Park and State Game Lands.

There are eight State Game Lands in Warren County, estimated at 35,000-plus acres. These are primarily associated with rivers or streams. The Game Lands include 29, 86, 143, 197, 291, 306, and 309. Both 197 and 209 extend into Erie County, though they are primarily in Warren.

While the State Game Lands are primarily for the hunter, fisherman, and outdoor enthusiast, the 800-plus acre Chapman complex is a State Park. The key feature of this facility is Chapman Dam and its 68-acre lake. Chapman offers campgrounds, tenting, picnicking, fishing, swimming, and boating. Hiking options are also available at the park or in the adjacent ANF, or State Game Land 29. At this time, there are no plans for the expansion of this park, but there is a policy of steady improvements of facilities. Improved showers, a concession stand, and improved sewers are recent projects.

County Recreation: Warren

The County's commitment to recreation is focused in two primary areas. One is the County recreation director and the second is the bike trail.

The Warren County bike trail follows the former Penn Central Valley branch line, generally along Route 62 north from Warren City. To date, the bikeway has been constructed in three phases and now extends from Seventh Avenue and East Street to North State Street near the Warren State Hospital. The current trail is approximately 3 miles. There is a trail master plan to continue the trail from the Warren State Hospital Arboretum (its current terminus) to the New York State line—an additional 8.5 miles.

Currently, the bike trail is the responsibility of the County Planning Office. However, the intent is to create a group of persons with an interest in the facility to operate it.

A new element of the County's recreation interest has been evidenced by the appointment of the Warren County Recreation Director. The Director has many duties, but there are three principal ones. First, he is responsible for the annual Winterfest celebration each January at Chapman State Park. Here, thousands are attracted to view ice sculptures, see dog sled races, and be either spectators or participants in a variety of other winter activities. A second duty is to aid County municipalities, as a technical advisor, on special events they may wish to host locally. The third is to oversee the summer playground program the County finances each summer. Though these are his primary duties, they are not his only tasks. One recent one is to assist the County in forming a bikeway organization, which could eventually take over the responsibilities of the County's growing bikeway system.

Local Recreation

Some seven municipalities within Warren County have public park and recreation facilities. These vary from Mather Park in Columbus to the Betts Park in the City of Warren. A detailed inventory of these facilities can be found in Volume I of the prior comprehensive plan. In general, this inventory is still accurate.

School Facilities

Although the Warren County School District has closed a number of its schools, some Eleven sites remain. There is some type of recreation facility connected with each of these.

Summary and Recommendations

This Plan has only a few recommendations relative to recreation but these are important ones.

- **Federal Sites:** Although both the Kinzua Dam/Allegheny Reservoir complex and the ANF are located in Warren County, there is little local input into the development, or operation of these resources—resources important for local recreation opportunities and for economic development. This should, and must, change. See the Economic Development Plan.
- **State Recreation:** Warren County applauds and supports the steady improvement at Chapman State Park and its dam. It provides an alternative

to Army Corps facilities at a scale conducive to local use. However, the County does have concerns relative to State Game Lands. Between the ANF and State Game Lands, an estimated 180,000 acres of land—about 30 percent of all land in Warren County—is under public ownership. The Game Commission should consult with the County prior to any additional acquisition of land in Warren County.

- **County:** The County has the following goals for its part in local recreation:
 - ▶ Develop a management/development team for the bike trail from true user enthusiasts.
 - ▶ Continue trail development to the New York line in reasonable increments.
 - ▶ Enhance the recreation director’s role of a technical advisor for local municipalities.
 - ▶ Continue the summer recreation program.

- **Local Municipalities and Schools:** There is little doubt the budget difficulties are an increasing issue with Pennsylvania local government. Recreation is nearly always one of the first to see cuts. That means dollars must be spent wisely. This Plan recommends:
 - ▶ Municipalities, especially adjacent ones, examine ways to cooperate in recreation programs and facilities.
 - ▶ Where no true recreation study has been completed in ten years, new ones, especially multi-municipal, are needed. It is clear the County’s age profile—its “market demographics” are changing. And, recreation, like any service, should accommodate its users.
 - ▶ All school districts, in particular the Warren County School District, should be a partner in any recreation plan, be it a formal long-term capital plan or next year’s program needs. Either formally, or on an adhoc basis, their *active* participation is vital.

Economic Development

“Keep Our Kids in Warren County”

That statement is an important one to this Plan. Historically, the efforts of community planning and economic development were often viewed as antithetical. Much of this concept was due to land use conflicts. Often, such conflicts involved competing uses for desirable land. What is best at this location—farm, factory, store, or home? Though land use conflicts may become an issue in Warren County, there are very strong reasons why planning efforts and economic development must be now—and remain in the future as strong partners.

The very best reason is that enunciated in the beginning phrase of this section, it is the strong wish of the residents of Warren County. And, are they the citizens not the “*raison d’etre*” for both efforts. In the surveys conducted as part of this Plan, the people of Warren County expressed two clear policy statements. They wished to:

- Foster, good head-of-household, jobs
- Protect the quality of life in Warren County

Need these goals conflict? No! Given the County’s size, the acres of land already set aside by public ownership and the amount of land available for development, there is no need for conflict. In this context, an argument of 50 acres here or 100 acres there appears ludicrous. Where conflicts do arise, there are proven land use techniques to protect the natural environment as well as nearby uses and, at the same time, make locations available for development. Fair, impartial, decisions can avoid a land use impasse, while righteous implacability will cause it. And, the “kids will leave!”

It is not the purpose of this element to present a lengthy history of Warren County’s recent economic past. The websites of the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry (WCCBI) provide good data from Census 2000 and more recent information can be obtained from the Economic Series of the Census (sector reports from 2002), the County Business Patterns (2002), or the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Rather, we will focus on the most recent data that answers these questions:

Where do people work?

What are the relative income levels of current occupations in Warren County?

Logically, this allows a strategy to build upon existing strengths. After these questions are asked, the next step is to suggest actions, by sector, to strengthen the County’s capability to create and retain jobs. But before any words of local policy, words of caution! Warren County does not set the tax policy of Pennsylvania or the trade policies of the United States. As such, it *cannot* offset the cheap labor found in China or in a third-world country. Also, it does not have the capacity to change the Pennsylvania corporate income tax. Rather, it must try to maximize its own resources and advantages.

One of the classic measures of economic health is the rate of unemployment. The two most recent figures for Warren County are from April and May of 2005. In April, local unemployment was 5.2 percent of the civilian labor force and in May, 5.0 percent. Both figures put Warren in the “high middle” when compared with other Pennsylvania counties, ranking 30th and 28th, respectively out of 67 counties. More importantly, the rate of County unemployment has remained near National and State levels for some time. This pattern has been typical for some years

Where do people work? The Warren County Profile, as published by the Pennsylvania Department of Workforce Information and Analysis, provides the following insights:

Table E-1	
Major Employers in Warren County	
Major Employers¹	Industry Sector
Blair Payroll LLC	Retail Trade
Warren County School District	Educational Services
Pennsylvania State Government	Public Administration
Warren General Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance
United Refining Company	Professional and Technical Services
Whirley Industries Inc.	Manufacturing
Northwest Savings Bank	Finance and Insurance
Rouse Estate	Health Care and Social Assistance
Osram Sylvania Products Inc.	Manufacturing
Warren County	Public Administration
¹ 3 rd Quarter 2004 – Initial Data	
Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry	

In terms of employment by industrial sector, that same source reveals in 2003 the following “top ten.”

Table E-2			
Top Ten – Employment by Sector – 2003			
Sector	Employment	Percent	Average Annual Wage
Retail Trade	3,250	22	\$26,035*
Manufacturing	3,057	20	\$34,914
Health Care/Social Assistance	2,018	13	\$28,058
Local Government	1,556	10	\$29,461
Accommodations and Food Service	876	6	\$8,333
State Government	742	5	\$45,352*
Professional and Technical Service	573	4	\$38,395
Finance and Insurance	537	4	\$34,900
Other Services	533	4	\$12,817
Transportation and Warehousing	392	3	\$23,923
County Total	14,951	91	\$29,127
*In these two sectors, the annual average wage was higher in Warren County than in the State; all others sectors were below State averages.			
<i>Note: In all 23 sectors represented, only the top ten are shown here; the remaining sectors represent less than 9 percent of all jobs in the County.</i>			
Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry			

Top Paying Positions

It is certainly important to determine the type of employment, which now exists in Warren County, as it is a clear indicator of the marketplace at work. Those jobs that are well represented in Warren County are there because they fit local strengths. However, that is only part of the equation. There may be 500 jobs available at fast-food restaurants, but they will not support families. They will not “keep the kids.” Table E-3 shows income figures by occupation. Once more, only the top ten are shown, and the results are informative.

Occupation	Annual Average Wage
Management	\$74,401
Computer and Mathematical Operations	\$52,330
Life, Physical and Social Services	\$49,053
Architectures and Engineering	\$47,637
Health Care	\$46,668
Business and Financial Operations	\$38,347
Community and Social Services	\$38,208
Construction and Extraction	\$33,364
Installation, Maintenance and Repair	\$32,724
Production Operations	\$29,264
Total All Occupations	\$28,355
Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry	

Analysis

What do the preceding tables indicate and how can that information be used to retain jobs, attract employment, and retain the quality of life now employed in Warren County? Certain facts are evident. Retail trade, manufacturing, and the health care/social assistance provide over one half of all jobs in the County. A second observation is that most of the “top ten” jobs in pay appear to require more than a high school diploma. Yet, certainly, many positions may lend themselves more to technical training (i.e. computer operation, construction, maintenance) than a formal four-year college degree.

There already exists in Warren County agencies that have the leadership and capacity to act in the primary private sectors already noted, and the balance of this section will be devoted to setting forth general policies to help maximize these resources. It is not the intent of this Plan to suggest that new agencies be formed to promote economic activities, rather to support those agencies already available and suggest activities—if needed—for them.

Manufacturing and Industry

Manufacturing accounts for about 20 percent of all County jobs. It offers comparatively good jobs with the average manufacturing worker earning 20 percent more than the average County wage—somewhere at \$15 to \$18 per hour, plus fringe benefits. Obviously, these are head-of-household jobs, and it is important to retain as well as to attempt to expand positions in this sector.

This Plan recognizes the Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry as the lead agency in this field. This agency has resources to both support existing businesses and encourage new firms. These resources include:

- Access to training
- Below-market loan programs
- Land and buildings

Training

The first element is training. In a day of global competition, training and retraining is a constant need. The WCCBI can help employers to access both on-the-job training and customized job-training resources for current and potential employers as well as offering assistance in recruitment and staffing. Much of these services must, of necessity, rely upon State assistance. Continued use of these programs is needed.

Below-Market Loan Programs

The access to funds for working capital, real estate, machinery, or equipment is important to any firm. Though the United States now enjoys relatively low interest rates for such loans, there is little doubt that rates are beginning to climb. Warren County businesses are fortunate that the WCCBI has access to various sources of funds. Of prime importance are their connections to various State programs (Small Business First, PIDA, MELF, PEDFA, EFP) that can provide sizeable loans at attractive rates and sometimes take a junior lien position. As these programs work in concert with private lending (banks, etc.), these sources can often “make the deal.” The WCCBI also has access to local funds, which, though limited, can also help close the gap to realize important projects. It must be stressed that these programs are now expected everywhere, and WCCBI must continue them just to remain competitive with other communities in and outside of Pennsylvania.

Tax Incentives

Another “carrot” used widely to induce new industrial investment are tax abatement programs. In Warren County, two such programs are used. The LERTA program, which provides for real estate tax abatement on assessable improvements, and the Pennsylvania KOZ, KOEZ, and KOIZ tax abatement programs. Both of these programs are locational specific. That is, a potential beneficiary must locate within a specific area to enjoy tax benefits. Only the LERTA program is locally controlled, and requires all three taxing bodies—county, municipality, and school district—to cooperate. The Pennsylvania programs have a limited lifespan and depend upon State law for any extension or expansion. As is the case with below-market loans and training, the business community

now considers these tax benefit packages as typical, and their continuation is necessary—just to remain competitive.

Land and Buildings

Another area the WCCBI has been active in is the provision of land and buildings for industrial/business sites. This effort ranges from the rental of building space to startup companies (incubators) or established firms (multi-tenant buildings) to open industrial land at an industrial park. A partner in efforts is SPEDD. This IDC operation, originally, from the Pittsburgh area owns and operates some incubator and multi-tenant facilities in the Warren City area. Currently, the WCCBI is completing sales at its Farm Colony site and starting to develop the Brokenstraw site near the Village of Pittsfield. These projects will answer the short-term needs in Warren County, but to be competitive, the WCCBI needs an ongoing inventory of land and buildings. This Plan suggests the following steps:



1. **Greenfield Development:** Some industries prefer new industrial land to brownfield sites. However, such sites will be more likely to prosper if they have the following qualities:
 - Be along a major transportation corridor, especially Routes 6 and 62. If feasible, one site should also have rail access.
 - Be in an area where water and sewer services are accessible directly, or within easy reach.
 - Special-purpose facilities, especially for wood products production and transportation should be a priority.

The WCCBI already has a working list of potential sites, which stretch across the County. This report suggests that as soon as development can begin at the Brokenstraw site, the next property be selected so the agency always has 20 to 60 acres of good industrial land available at any one time.

2. **Brownfield Development:** Brownfield development poses special problems due to possible environmental problems. However, Pennsylvania has enacted legislation that facilitates the reuse of such properties, and such options can be

attractive. However, only larger structures should be considered by WCCBI—structures that could provide multi-tenant units, which meets real market needs. Portions of these buildings can often be used for startup incubators as well as traditional rental spaces.

3. **Shell Buildings:** Often a new industry, spin-off buildings or expansions need space, and they need it quickly. There is a variety of shell building options that the WCCBI could consider. Normally, these are metal buildings, insulated, with basic utilities but with no floor or special electric equipment. Furthermore, such structures should be on good-sized lots and designed for easy expansion. Often a shell building can be made tenant ready in just a few months to accommodate an industrial use. A basic shell building of 12,000 to 20,000 square feet is suggested.

Though the efforts of SPEDD have been quite helpful in the past, and likely in the future, the Plan recommends the WCCBI become the major developer of industrial facilities in Warren County.

Caution!

The construction, maintenance, and subsequent sale or rental of industrial spaces takes time and *money*! The WCCBI needs to be prudently aggressive. It must take advantage of opportunities, but this Plan recognized that it must also operate within a realistic financial framework. Yet, it has the opportunity to be the lead in the economic renaissance of Warren County and deserves support.

Retail

As statistics demonstrate, retail trade is the major employment sector in Warren County and offers a surprisingly good wage. In fact, the typical retail worker in Warren County, on average, made over \$3,000 more than a typical retail employee in Pennsylvania (2003 statistics). But retail business is a function of local consumers, which, in Warren County, means both local shoppers as well as those from nearby areas in New York State. There is always a limit on how many consumers there are in the marketplace, and as a consequence, this sector is always limited by that fact.

However, retail business means more than jobs and consumer spending. It also is identified with traditional downtowns—the places that give communities identification. Be it downtown Warren or downtown Sugar Grove, the cluster of stores and businesses, large or small, is a key part of the community's identity.

This Plan can offer little advice to the City of Warren but “stay the course.” Impact Warren is a regionally significant revitalization program. Some \$50 million will be spent on streetscapes, a new park, a parking garage in town, housing, community facilities, and a new transit facility.



The downtown is already an employment hub with both Northwest Savings Bank and the Blair Company. The expansion of the Northwest Saving Bank offices in downtown

Warren must be regarded as a real vote of confidence in the City. It also brings more potential consumers to the downtown, as does the new townhouses on Pennsylvania Avenue. Yet, retail operations still struggle and need ongoing assistance. Fortunately, Warren City already has a Main Street Program with creative activities founded on an understanding of business as well as marketing needs, and, as the construction of another “big box” retailer nears, it will need the Main Street Program even more in the future. Impact Warren is a great idea, but is only part of the answer. New facilities need a strong retail base for a complete downtown.

Yet, not every downtown in Warren County enjoys major employers and high-profile investments. Often, smaller downtowns cannot even afford to participate in the Commonwealth’s Main Street Program. The needed local funding just is not available. Realizing this limitation, five, and possibly six, downtowns are looking at a possible innovative approach. Sugar Grove Borough, Clarendon Borough, Youngsville Borough, Tidioute Borough, and Sheffield Village are seriously studying a joint Main Street Program. What one community may not afford on its own, together, they may make this approach possible. By sharing costs, a Main Street Manager could be retained to assist these downtowns. And both the County of Warren and WCCBI Main Street Program of Warren are ready to lend a hand. Certainly, if these smaller downtowns are to remain viable, this cooperative Main Street Program is a must—and recommended by this Plan.

Tourism

Tourism is touted as one of Pennsylvania’s lead industries. And according to the Department of Community and Economic Development, 2004 was a banner year for this sector. Warren County is fortunate as it is covered by at least three State programs that primarily or partially promote tourism. These are:

- **The PA Wilds:** PA Wilds is a multi-county region of northern Pennsylvania with 17 million acres of forest



and 83,000 miles of rivers and scenic streams. Warren County is on the western edge of PA Wilds, with the Allegheny National Forest offering thousands of wilderness acres.

- **The Lumber Heritage Park:** Some 15 counties comprise the Lumber Heritage Park an effort to explain the key role lumber resources has played in Pennsylvania's need. Although the Heritage Park program is multi-disciplined, tourism is one of its prime benefits. Warren County is its official western "landing point" at the new Visitors Center located along Route 6 west of Warren City.
- **The Route 6 Corridor:** Route 6 stretches for 400 miles through 11 northern Pennsylvania counties and is yet another Heritage Park—or in this case—a Heritage Corridor. The *National Geographic* has identified Route 6 as one of America's most scenic drives from Pike to Crawford County. The interest in Route 6 is so great that a recent advertising campaign brought in so many visitors that facilities were taxed to (sometimes beyond) their limit.

These three State initiatives emphasize Warren County's unique quality of being in the center of so many primary attractions.

In addition to these facilities, the County is also the home to the Kinzua Dam and Allegheny River Reservoir. The Warren County Tourist Promotion Agency is part of the Northern Allegheny Vacation Region and has offices in the Visitors Center on Route 6. Between the tourist agency and the WCCBI, the County is making strides in this economic sector. Not only for day-trippers, and stopover visitors, but for even participants.

However, more resources are needed. One prime local deficiency is the lack of a lodge in the Kinzua Dam area. Currently, that key facility's resources are aimed at the outdoor camper or day visitor. A lodge could attract the overnight traveler. Overnight travelers represent a key increase in tourist spending, important for local tourist-related businesses. Typically, lodges on Army Corps of Engineers facilities are based on a 25-year lease. The first step is a feasibility study for such a unit.

A second need is for more motel/hotel rooms in the Warren City area. This deficiency limits conferences, conventions, and special events in the County. A recent study has identified actions needed to encourage another major motel in the area, and steps are being taken to meet these needs. Another exciting local concept is the proposed Musaruim. Essentially, the proposal calls for combining a museum and aquarium at one location. Currently, organizers are looking for a suitable property and some \$40 to \$60 million in funding.

Warren is truly a tourist Mecca.

Agriculture

Warren County has shown its commitment to agriculture by active support of the Agricultural Security Program and through its policies in the proposed new zoning ordinance, and more may be needed. In 2005, the Penn State Extension Services conducted a farmer's survey. Some 73 farmers in Warren County were interviewed in depth, and the results were mixed. Some key findings were:

- The greatest percentage of farmers had a gross income of \$100,000 to \$249,900.
- The greatest percent of farms are 260 to 499 acres.
- In Warren County, dairy farming appears to be the most successful option—about 60 percent of the County's farmers derived most of their income from that source.

But there are challenges. Most farmers see a need for expanded markets if they are to be successful. And, nearly one out of five farmers believes they would be out of farming in ten years.

If farming is to remain viable in the County, it is obvious some innovative assistance will be needed.

The ANF

A goodly portion of Warren County (about 150,000 acres) is comprised of the Allegheny National Forest (ANF). The ANF is part of the National Forest system administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and it is *not* a national park. The philosophy of these forests is sound resource management. This means provisions for conservation, recreation, and sound timber harvesting. Historically, the income from timber harvesting in the forest is important, as a portion is shared with local municipalities and school districts. In 2003, the ANF offered 20.2 mmbf of timber for sale, and municipalities in Warren County received \$1,774,171.04 from that source. In 1991, that figure was approximately \$1.2 million. Thus, roughly, the ANF payment to local governments appears to be keeping up with inflation. Yet, that is very misleading. In the 1990s, the ANF plan allowed a harvest of 94 mmbf annually, with actual harvests more in the 70-mmbf range. In 2003, the harvest was less than 30 percent of the typical 1980-1990's harvest.

With the current market prices of hardwoods, Warren County communities should be realizing about \$5.6 million a year from timber sales—not \$1.7 million seen in 2003.

Much of the reduction in timbering and the resulting income is due to lawsuits brought by environmental groups.

Currently, the ANF is devising a new management plan. The people of Warren County (see survey results) have no desire to see the ANF ravaged. But, they should receive fair compensation for the land now locked in Federal ownership. Warren County must join with McKean, Forest, and Elk Counties to participate in the future ANF plans to ensure the benefit to the many, so the ANF can be a true economic asset to Warren County.

Communications



One of the deficiencies identified during the preparation of this Plan was communications. In particular, two problems were identified: cell phone dead spots and a lack of adequate (fast) Internet access.

The issue of cell phone coverage is not an easy one to resolve. Cell towers are constructed by private companies to service cellular telephones. These costs range from \$200,000 to \$250,000, plus. In areas of low population and low usage, towers are apt to be spread far apart. Obviously, there are areas in Warren County where the cost of tower, and its land lease expense, is not economically feasible. This Plan can offer no easy solutions, but does note that technology is constantly changing, and, as a result, improvements in the effective range of phones and towers can be anticipated.

However, the improvement of Internet connections is an area where there is some promise. In 2004, the General Assembly enacted, and the Governor signed, Act 183. As stated, the purpose of this act is to assure every Pennsylvania community will have Broadband access as early as 2008, but no later than 2015.

To accomplish that, the Broadband Outreach and Aggregation Fund (BOAF) was created, and the Department of Community and Economic Development will be in charge of the outreach and grant programs. The BOAF fund is capped at \$5 million per year, and the program is anticipated to begin next year (2006) with \$2.5 million in funding.

Special Projects

One of the keys to success for larger projects is to be able to take advantage of grant programs. Often, the notice for the availability of funds comes quickly and does not allow adequate time for project solicitation and evaluation. Therefore, it is necessary to have a current list of these projects. This is of particular importance for projects that may be eligible for Capital Budget assistance. A consortium of local agencies should develop such a list. At a minimum, the County Commissioners, Planning and Zoning Commission, and WCCBI should be on such a consortium. Projects should be annually solicited. Broad criteria of prioritization should include:

- Eligibility under Capital Budget program guidelines
- Availability of needed local matches
- Status of construction plans
- Project status (immediate – short- and long-term)
- Relative community benefit

Inclusion by Reference

There are two special plans completed by Warren County over the past two years that are incorporated into this document by reference. One is the Hazard Mitigation Plan of Warren County, formally adopted by Warren County in August of 2004. The second is the Warren County Solid Waste Plan, adopted by the Warren County Commissioners in January of 2004.

Interrelationships, Implementation and Compatibility

Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code sets forth certain topics that must appear in a comprehensive plan. This Plan element addresses three such issues: item (4.1), Interrelationships; item (4.2), Short- and Long-term Implementation Strategies; and (5), Compatibility. Of these topics, (4.2), Implementations can be found in table form on the last pages of this element, while the two other items are covered in narrative fashion in this front section.

Interrelationships

Plan interrelationships is particularly critical to two elements of the Warren County Comprehensive Plan – Land Use and Community Facilities. In devising the Land Use Plan, two basic concepts were used. First, logical extensions of existing development patterns were designated as logical short-term growth areas. Second, growth corridors were designated. Though most of the growth, in the majority of these corridors, will be residential, there is a likelihood of commercial and industrial pockets, especially along areas of Route 6 and Route 62. The specific uses in these places can be identified in future years as the market warrants.

According to recent growth patterns, land consumption for housing will only average 100 to 175 acres per year, over the next decade. Commercial use as well as industrial, combined, should only add another 100 acres. In total, this amounts to 200 to 300 acres per year, approximately 0.05 percent of the County’s land mass. Over a 10-year period, it will only amount, at most, to 0.5 percent of all land—a relatively minor figure. Because of this fact, and the protection of the proposed County zoning ordinance offers various development scenarios in the growth corridors can be accommodated without undue conflicts.

But, to realize these logical development patterns, infrastructure is critical. The provision of water and sewer in these growth corridors is essential. This Plan sees the growth corridors as places for development on an urban or suburban basis, along with business and industrial developments. And, public water and sewer are absolutely necessary for this type of growth. By identifying growth corridors, this land use policy also supports a general goal expressed by County residents to preserve the rural character of Warren County. By placing growth corridors primarily along major transportation routes only, the great majority of land can be kept in an open, wooded, or agricultural state.

The **Transportation Plan**, in a fashion, stands alone. Namely, its role is to make transportation within the County and to nearby destinations more convenient for all

residents and businesses. On a broader scale, it also supports the Economic Development Plan, as a good transportation network is essential for a viable economy. In Warren County, this includes rail as well as road traffic. And, as fuel prices increase, transit will become a more attractive option for worker transportation; again showing the close relationship between these two elements.

The **Land Use Plan** is also important for the continued health of agriculture. Its “Ag-friendly” policy, as reflected in the proposed zoning ordinance, helps both part-time and full-time farmers to explore ways to supplement their agricultural income in bad times. And, for many local farmers, this assistance will be needed.

Housing can be seen to impact all elements of the Plan. Good homes and a sound housing stock are fundamental to this Plan’s success. Maintaining and improving the County’s housing stock is critical to preserve the high quality of life this community now enjoys.

Compatibility

The issue of compatibility is a relatively simple one for the Warren County Comprehensive Plan to address. Its entire east border, and two-thirds of the southern border of Warren County is comprised of land of the ANF, and that use extends into the abutting counties of Forest and McKean. The remaining Pennsylvania bordering counties are Venango, Crawford, and Erie. Nearly the entire border areas with these neighbors are wooded, or open, lightly settled, areas, matching similar patterns in the abutting county. The only intense development, current or proposed, is in Columbus Township. In that region, these areas can be considered as extensions of similar developments of the Corry area. Along the New York border, Warren County land use is rural low density; there is a State Game Land; and ANF land. Once more, this pattern matches the low-density use land in New York State.

Overall, no issues on incompatible of land uses are seen.

Implementation

The purpose of this Plan element is to set forth discrete Plan activities and identify agencies best positioned to undertake these activities. This is essential, as no plan is self-implementing. It takes people to accept and undertake key activities. In some key areas, the Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission, or the staff will be the lead. For others, the WCCBI is the lead, while in other areas, a variety of local governments and agencies will be needed.

To help insure Plan realization, this Plan suggests partnerships. The key ones will be between the Intergovernmental Co-Op, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the County Commissioners, and the WCCBI. Each major element of the Plan should have a task force composed of such individuals that represent these groups, which can foster named implementation activities.

People—not words on paper—translate plans to reality!

Implementation Schedule

The following schedule is divided by Plan element, activity, prime agency, and priority. The priority key is given below:

- A – Immediate – 0 to 2 Years
- B – Short Term – 3 to 5 Years
- C – Long Term – 5 Years and More
- O – Ongoing
- SP – Special Projects – No given time line; rather opportunistic in nature

Other common abbreviations:

- WCP&ZC – Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission
- WCCBI – Warren County Chamber of Business and Industry

Land Use		
Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Adopt the new County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. (This task already accomplished.)	WCP&ZC and the Warren County Commissioners	A
Adopt the new County Zoning Ordinance and Map created to implement this Plan.	WCP&ZC and the Warren County Commissioners	A

Housing		
Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Warren County Housing Rehabilitation Program	County of Warren, WCP&ZC, in cooperation with the Warren-Forest EOC	O
Emergency Program for Home Repair	Referred by local government to Warren County, administered by WCP&ZC, in cooperation with Warren-Forest EOC	O
First-Time Homebuyer’s Program	Currently, this program is operated cooperatively between local real estate agents, the County, WCP&ZC, and the Warren-Forest EOC	O
Code Enforcement and Demolition	Will require a special task force with the Intergovernmental Co-Op	B
Special Needs – Real Estate Market Study, Non-Assisted Senior Housing Complex – Upper Income Transient Housing	WCP&ZC, with participation of local agencies and banks	B
Middle Income Housing Program, Creation of a Possible Housing Development Corporation	WCP&ZC, County Commissioners, Warren-Forest EOC, Private Real Estate agents	B

Historic Preservation Plan		
Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Informational and Educational Efforts	Warren County Historical Society	B
<i>*See Plan. Informational and educational efforts are needed to promote specific preservation activities.</i>		

Transportation		
Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Railroads – Monitor for continued rail service to prime County users	The WCCBI will be the ideal agency to monitor. If problems arise, the County Commissioners should lead any effort to continue/ resume rail service, using WCP&ZC for technical aid.	O
Transit – Continued operation	Warren County Commissioners and TAWC	O

Bridges		
<i>Note: The WCP&ZC is the lead local agency acting with the NWPRP&DC and PennDOT for Transportation Priorities Projects as shown.</i>		
Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Hickory Street Bridge	<i>Note: Under construction</i>	A
Market Street Bridge	Under Study*	A
Fifth Avenue Bridge	Is on TIP	A
Local Bridges (see Plan text)	On TIP or 12-Year Plan – WCP&ZC and appropriate municipalities must monitor.	A and B

*Part of Route 62 Study

Highways		
<i>Note: The WCP&ZC is the lead local agency acting with the NWPRP&DC and PennDOT for Transportation Priorities Projects as shown.</i>		
Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Route 6	WCP&ZC	O
3R Standards on all 2-lane sections	WCP&ZC	O
4 Lanes – Extension west of Youngsville	WCP&ZC	C
Turn/Intersection Improvements with Route 27	WCP&ZC	B
Rail Bridge – Columbus Village	WCP&ZC	C
Route 62 – North Study	WCP&ZC	A
All sections – 3R Standards	WCP&ZC	O
Route 62 – Improve Road Geometry – Forest County Line to Route 6	WCP&ZC	B
Access to I-86	WCP&ZC with NY DOT	B
Route 27, Passing Lanes, Eldred and Southwest Townships	WCP&ZC	B
Route 69 – Route 62 to New York State boarder to 3R Standards	WCP&ZC	B
Route 957 – Columbus to Sugar Grove Borough to 3R Standards	WCP&ZC	B and C

Highways (Continued)

Note: The WCP&ZC is the lead local agency acting with the NWPRP&DC and PennDOT for Transportation Priorities Projects as shown.

Other Projects		
Matthews Run Road	WCP&ZC	B
Route 426	WCP&ZC	B
Scandia Road to I-86 East	WCP&ZC	B and C
Turner Hill and Route 77	WCP&ZC	B
Eldred Hill Road	WCP&ZC	B
Route 337 (Watson Township line to Cobham)	WCP&ZC	B

Bike Trail*

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Extension of North Warren Trail to New York Line	WCP&ZC	A and B
Youngsville Brokenstraw	WCP&ZC, Youngsville Borough, Brokenstraw Township	B

*See also Recreation

Schools

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
School Facilities -- Officially Adopt Plan Policy for New Facilities as well as Sales or Demolition	WCP&ZC	A

Sanitary Sewer

Note: The projects are the responsibility of the local municipality or appropriate authority.

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Scott Crossing Project	Columbus Township General Authority	A
Grand Valley (Under Construction)	Eldred Township	A
Tidioute	Southwest Warren County Authority	B
Brokenstraw Township Projects	BVAA and Youngsville Borough, as needed	A and B
Sugar Grove (Under Construction)	SUGASA	A
Mead Township, Route 59 and Route 6 Extensions	Kinzua Warren Joint Authority	A and B
Warren City Corrective Action	City of Warren	A
Glade-Hatch Run Road	North Warren Municipal Authority	A

Water Projects

Note: The projects are the responsibility of the local municipality or appropriate authority.

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Columbus System Loop	Columbus Township General Authority	B
Tidioute – Small Extension, Line Replacements	Southwest Warren County Authority	B
Youngsville – Extension Along Route 6, East and West, Line Replacements and Loops	Youngsville Borough and Brokenstraw Township	B and O
Conewango – Extensions to Subdivision (near Farm Colony)	North Warren Municipal Authority	B
Warren – Ridge and Jackson Avenue Extensions	Pennsylvania-American Water Company	C

Water Projects (Continued)

Note: The projects are the responsibility of the local municipality or appropriate authority.

Sheffield – Route 6 Extensions	Sheffield Township Municipal Authority	C
Sugar Grove – Possible New System – Borough and Environs	Joint Authority	C

Recreation

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Bike Trails – Extension of “Route 62” Bike Trail	County of Warren/WCP&ZC	A and B
Youngsville, Brokenstraw Bike Trail	WCP&ZC, Youngsville Borough, Brokenstraw Township	B

ANF Management Plan – *Special Note: Between the ANF, the State Game Lands, and Chapman Park, approximately 30 percent of all land in Warren County is under public ownership. A formal policy of County participation in further acquisition decision by these bodies is essential. (See also Economic Development.)*

Economic Development

Note: The WCCBI is recognized by this Plan as Warren County’s lead economic agency. This Plan focuses not only on physical assets for economic development, but also pledges cooperation with WCCBI relative to issues of loan funds, tax incentives, and training.

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Greenfield Development – 50 to 70 net acres of Development-Ready Industrial Land	WCCBI	A
Brownfield Development, Multi-Tenant/Incubator	WCCBI	SP
Shell Building – 15,000 to 20,000 square foot Shell Industrial Building	WCCBI	SP
Main Street Program – Warren	The Warren City Program is in place under the WCCBI	O
Cooperative Main Street Program	Warren County, Sheffield, Clarendon, Youngsville, Sugar Grove Borough, Tidioute	A
Kinzua Lodge	Army Corps of Engineers or ANF, as appropriate, with a private development on a 25 Lease Basis. First step is a feasibility study.	B
Input to ANF Resource Use Policy	Warren County; Warren Intergovernmental Co-Op; and Elk, Forest and McKean Counties	A

Communications

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Broadband Initiation	County, WCCBI, Act 183 Funds	A

Special Projects

Activity and Comments	Agency	Priority
Create a project list	County Commissioners, WCP&ZC, WCCBI	O