

Sustainable Growth in Rural PA: Union County's New Model

APA PA Chapter Conference
October 13, 2008



Agenda

1. **Union County Background**
2. **Community Outreach Results**
3. **Future Growth Options / Growth Management Framework**
4. **Cultivating Community: A Sustainable Comprehensive Plan for Union County**
5. **Discussion**

David Rouse, AICP, Wallace Roberts & Todd

Shawn McLaughlin, AICP, Union County Planning Director

Robert Kerns, AICP, Wallace Roberts & Todd

Union County Background



Union County Background

- Located along the Susquehanna River 60 miles N of Harrisburg, 165 miles NW of Philadelphia, and 200 miles E of Pittsburgh
- Comprehensive Plan for 9 Townships and 4 Boroughs
- Multi-municipal plans for three planning areas



Union County Background

- Attractive rural quality of life with strong agricultural heritage and small towns / villages
- Forests and agriculture represents 60% and 30% of total land use, respectively
- Access to major urban areas via I-80 and other routes
- Historic downtown districts in Lewisburg and Mifflinburg
- Bucknell University is located in Lewisburg

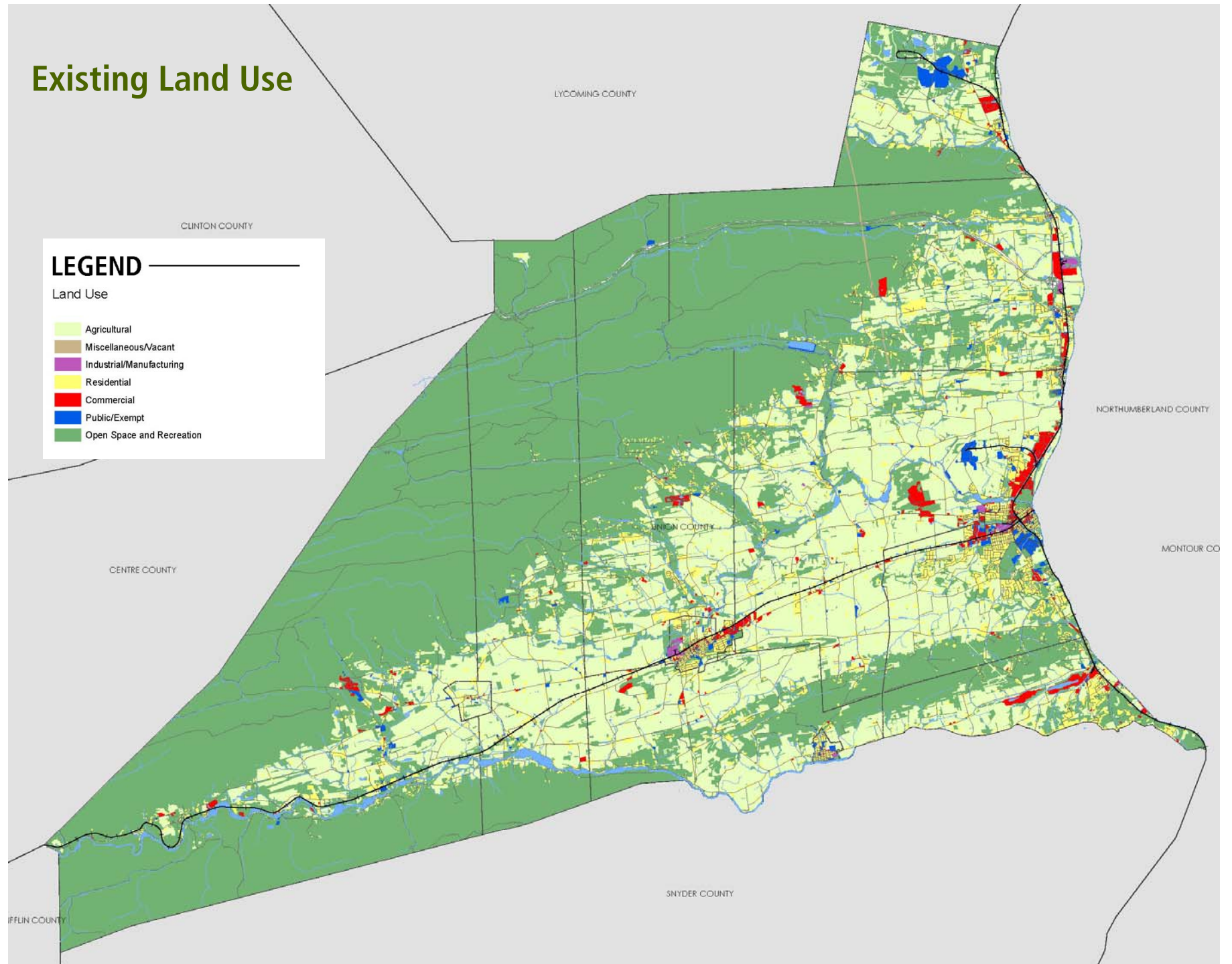


Existing Land Use

LEGEND

Land Use

- Agricultural
- Miscellaneous/Vacant
- Industrial/Manufacturing
- Residential
- Commercial
- Public/Exempt
- Open Space and Recreation



Union County Background

- 80% of County zoned for Agricultural or Woodlands / limited low-density housing is permitted in most of these districts
- Residential housing growth: 14% from 1990-2000 and 8% from 2000-2006
- 40% housing growth projected by 2030 / highest growth expected in agricultural townships



New Structures 2001-2006 (+1,000 units) & Land Preservation

This map displays the geographic distribution of new structures and land preservation in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, between 2001 and 2006. The map includes the following features:

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- Roads:** Shown as thin black lines.

The map also shows the surrounding counties: Clinton County to the north, Northumberland County to the east, Snyder County to the south, Centre County to the west, and Mifflin County to the southwest. Key locations labeled include Lewisburg Borough, West Lewisburg Township, White Deer Township, and various roads such as Old Turnpike Rd, Col John Kelly Rd, and Pleasant Grove Rd.

New Structures 2001-2006 (+1,000 units) & Land Preservation

This map displays the geographic distribution of new residential and commercial structures in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, between 2001 and 2006. The map includes a legend with the following categories:

- New Residential Structures (2001-2006): Represented by yellow dots.
- New Commercial Structures (2001-2006): Represented by red dots.
- Parcels w/ New Residential Structures: Represented by yellow shaded areas.
- Agricultural Preservation Easement: Represented by light green shaded areas.
- State Forest: Represented by dark green shaded areas.
- Municipal Boundaries: Represented by black lines.
- Roads: Represented by thin black lines.

The map shows a high concentration of new residential structures (yellow dots) in the central and eastern parts of Lewisburg, particularly around the downtown area and along major roads like US Route 220 and PA Route 152. New commercial structures (red dots) are also concentrated in the downtown area, particularly along US Route 220. The map also shows the locations of agricultural preservation easements (light green) and state forests (dark green), which are primarily located in the western and northern parts of the city. Municipal boundaries are shown as black lines, and roads are shown as thin black lines. The map is labeled with the names of the surrounding counties: Clinton County to the north, Northumberland County to the east, Snyder County to the south, and Centre County and Mifflin County to the west. The map also shows the names of the surrounding townships: White Deer Township, West Buffalo Township, Lewis Township, Buffalo Township, South Buffalo Township, Harkey Township, and New Berlin Borough. The map also shows the names of the surrounding roads: US Route 220, PA Route 152, PA Route 153, PA Route 154, PA Route 155, PA Route 156, PA Route 157, PA Route 158, PA Route 159, PA Route 160, PA Route 161, PA Route 162, PA Route 163, PA Route 164, PA Route 165, PA Route 166, PA Route 167, PA Route 168, PA Route 169, PA Route 170, PA Route 171, PA Route 172, PA Route 173, PA Route 174, PA Route 175, PA Route 176, PA Route 177, PA Route 178, PA Route 179, PA Route 180, PA Route 181, PA Route 182, PA Route 183, PA Route 184, PA Route 185, PA Route 186, PA Route 187, PA Route 188, PA Route 189, PA Route 190, PA Route 191, PA Route 192, PA Route 193, PA Route 194, PA Route 195, PA Route 196, PA Route 197, PA Route 198, PA Route 199, PA Route 200, PA Route 201, PA Route 202, PA Route 203, PA Route 204, PA Route 205, PA Route 206, PA Route 207, PA Route 208, PA Route 209, PA Route 210, PA Route 211, PA Route 212, PA Route 213, PA Route 214, PA Route 215, PA Route 216, PA Route 217, PA 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Community Outreach Results



Outreach & Involvement Techniques

- Website
- Advisory Teams
- Branding, Advertising & Marketing
- Citizen Survey
- Public Forums
- Meeting In a Box
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Municipal Officials Meetings
- School Programs



www.cultivatingcommunity.net

- Home
- Advisory Teams
- Consultants
- Meetings + Announcements
- Comments
- Public Input
- Maps
- Contact



Share Your Passion for Union County



**CULTIVATING
COMMUNITY**
A Plan for Union County's Future

January 2008 Municipal Officials Meeting

**Listen to the WKOK Roundtable discussion
on Cultivating Community**

Union County has embarked on a new planning process that will shape its future. The process will result in a new comprehensive plan for the County and multi-municipal plans for three regions within the County, intended to guide decision-makers in managing future growth, promoting sustainable economic development, and preserving its rural landscape.

However, the success of the project depends on you. Meaningful public input will increase the effectiveness of the plan and the probability of its success. We invite you to share your passion for Union County by getting involved and voicing your opinion.

For more information about the comprehensive plan and the planning process, [click here](#).

This is your future. What do you want it to look like?

Advisory Teams

- **Countywide Plan Advisory Team – 28 Volunteers**
 - Meets every other month on average
 - 2nd Thursday, 7PM at Mifflinburg High School LGI



- **3 Multi-Municipal Advisory Teams**
 - Elected Officials & Planning Commissioners
 - Meet as needed

We need you in
*YOU*nion County

GET INVOLVED!

www.cultivatingcommunity.net



CULTIVATING
COMMUNITY

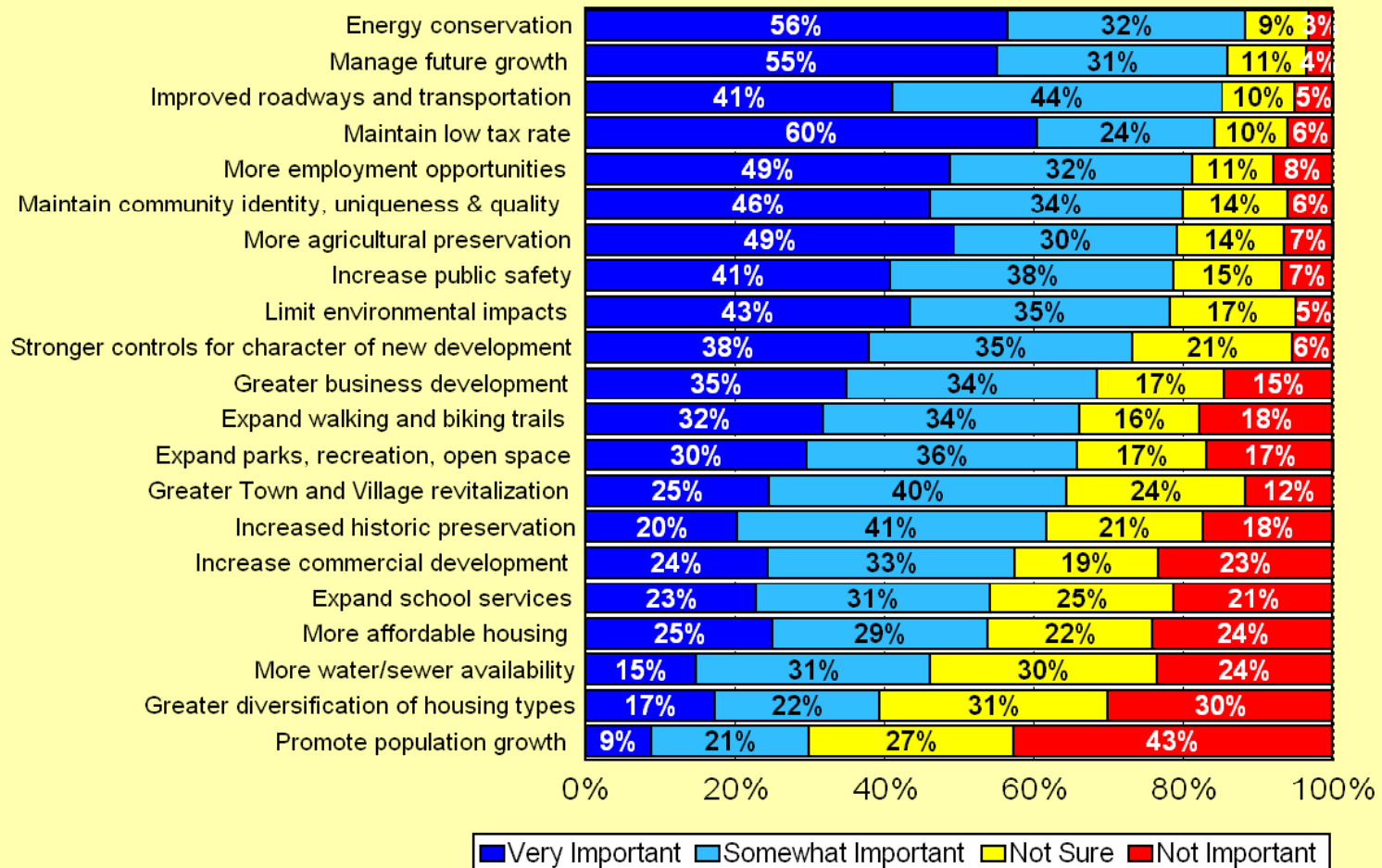
A Plan for Union County's Future

LAMAR

Citizen Survey Results

Q2. Importance of Various Issues Facing Union County

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2007)

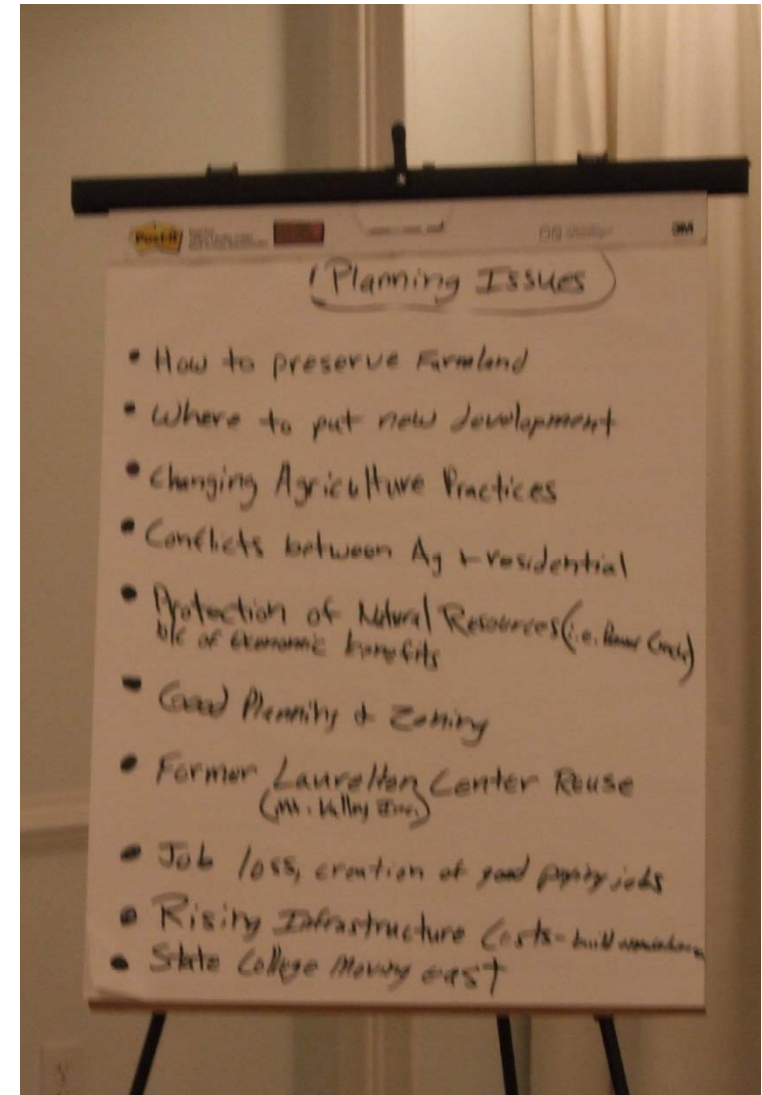
Public Forums



Meeting in a Box



Municipal Officials Meetings



Middle School Program



Future of Agriculture

On-Farm Interviews

- 72 farmers interviewed by volunteer visitor teams
- Survey data analyzed by Penn State University & American Farmland Trust
- Strategic plan for agriculture & rural economy



Outreach & Involvement Themes

- Preservation of Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Energy Conservation & Sustainability
- Growth Management
- Create Trails & Pedestrian-Friendly Development
- Expand Public Transportation
- Vitality of Town Centers
- Regional Cooperation
- Concern About Quality of New Growth
- Economic Opportunity for Current Residents
- Strategic Infrastructure Investment



Future Growth Options / Growth Management Framework



Cultivating Community

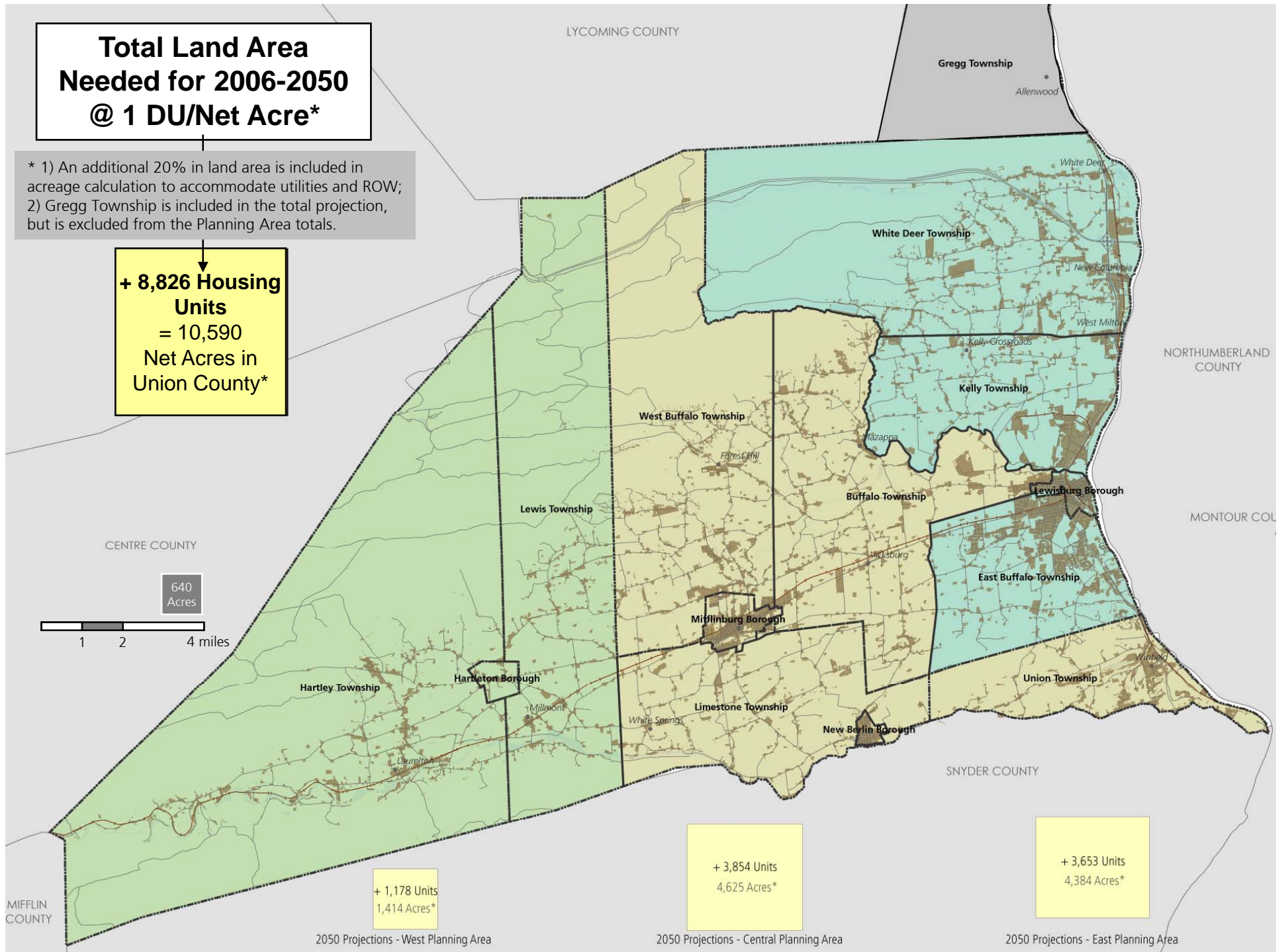
Purpose of the Scenarios

- Illustrate different “patterns” of future growth
- All scenarios show developed area, future growth area and rural resource areas using generalized existing land use
- Accommodate 80%+ of total housing growth and all major non-agricultural commercial expansion in growth areas (2006-2050)
- Right-of-way, utilities and preserved open space are accounted for in growth area calculations

Total Land Area Needed for 2006-2050 @ 1 DU/Net Acre*

* 1) An additional 20% in land area is included in acreage calculation to accommodate utilities and ROW;
2) Gregg Township is included in the total projection, but is excluded from the Planning Area totals.

+ 8,826 Housing Units
= 10,590
Net Acres in
Union County*



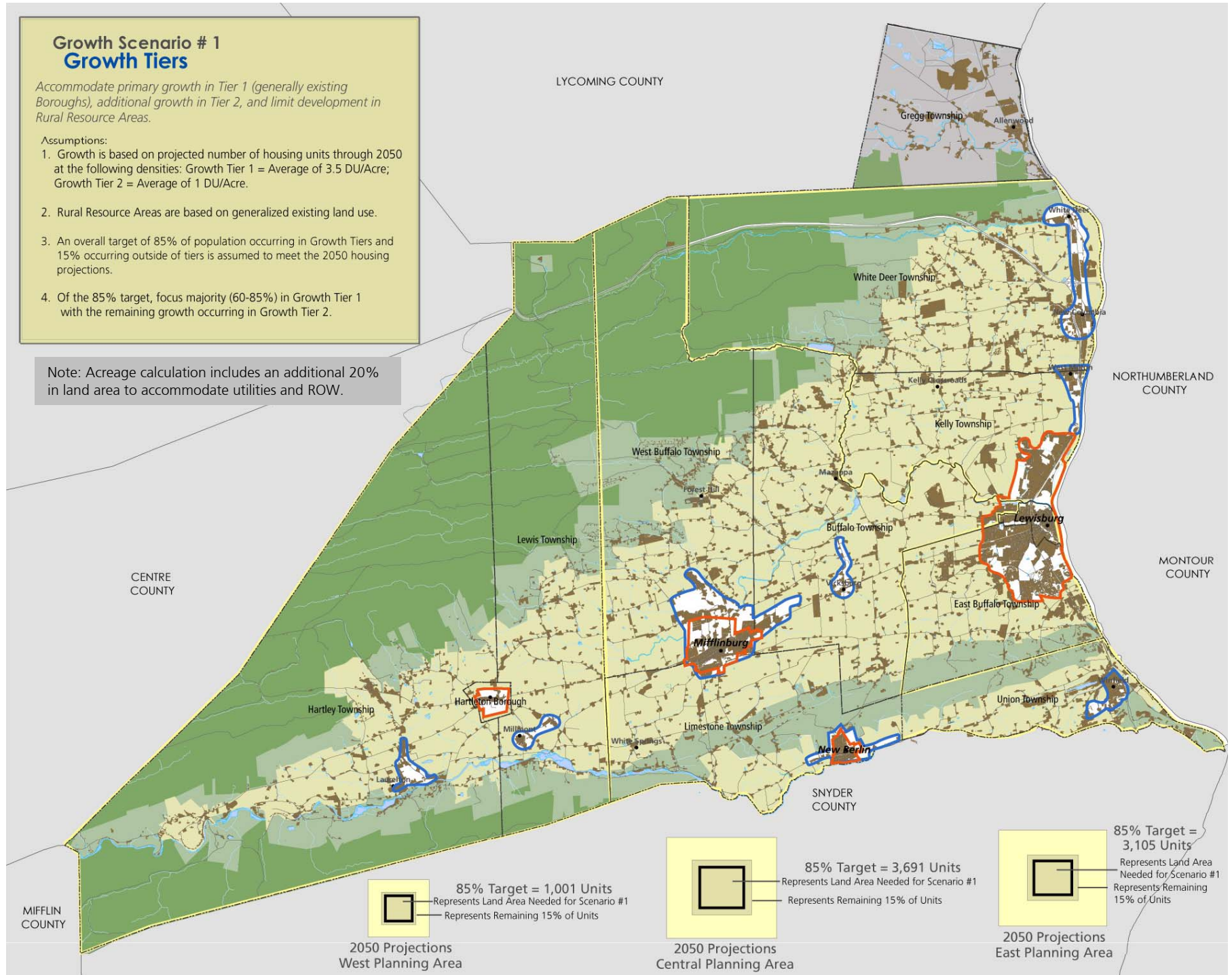
Growth Scenario # 1 Growth Tiers

Accommodate primary growth in Tier 1 (generally existing Boroughs), additional growth in Tier 2, and limit development in Rural Resource Areas.

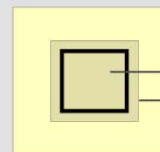
Assumptions:

1. Growth is based on projected number of housing units through 2050 at the following densities: Growth Tier 1 = Average of 3.5 DU/Acre; Growth Tier 2 = Average of 1 DU/Acre.
2. Rural Resource Areas are based on generalized existing land use.
3. An overall target of 85% of population occurring in Growth Tiers and 15% occurring outside of tiers is assumed to meet the 2050 housing projections.
4. Of the 85% target, focus majority (60-85%) in Growth Tier 1 with the remaining growth occurring in Growth Tier 2.

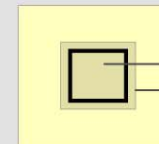
Note: Acreage calculation includes an additional 20% in land area to accommodate utilities and ROW.



85% Target = 1,001 Units
 — Represents Land Area Needed for Scenario #1
 — Represents Remaining 15% of Units
2050 Projections
West Planning Area



85% Target = 3,691 Units
 — Represents Land Area Needed for Scenario #1
 — Represents Remaining 15% of Units
2050 Projections
Central Planning Area



85% Target = 3,105 Units
 — Represents Land Area Needed for Scenario #1
 — Represents Remaining 15% of Units
2050 Projections
East Planning Area

Growth Tiers



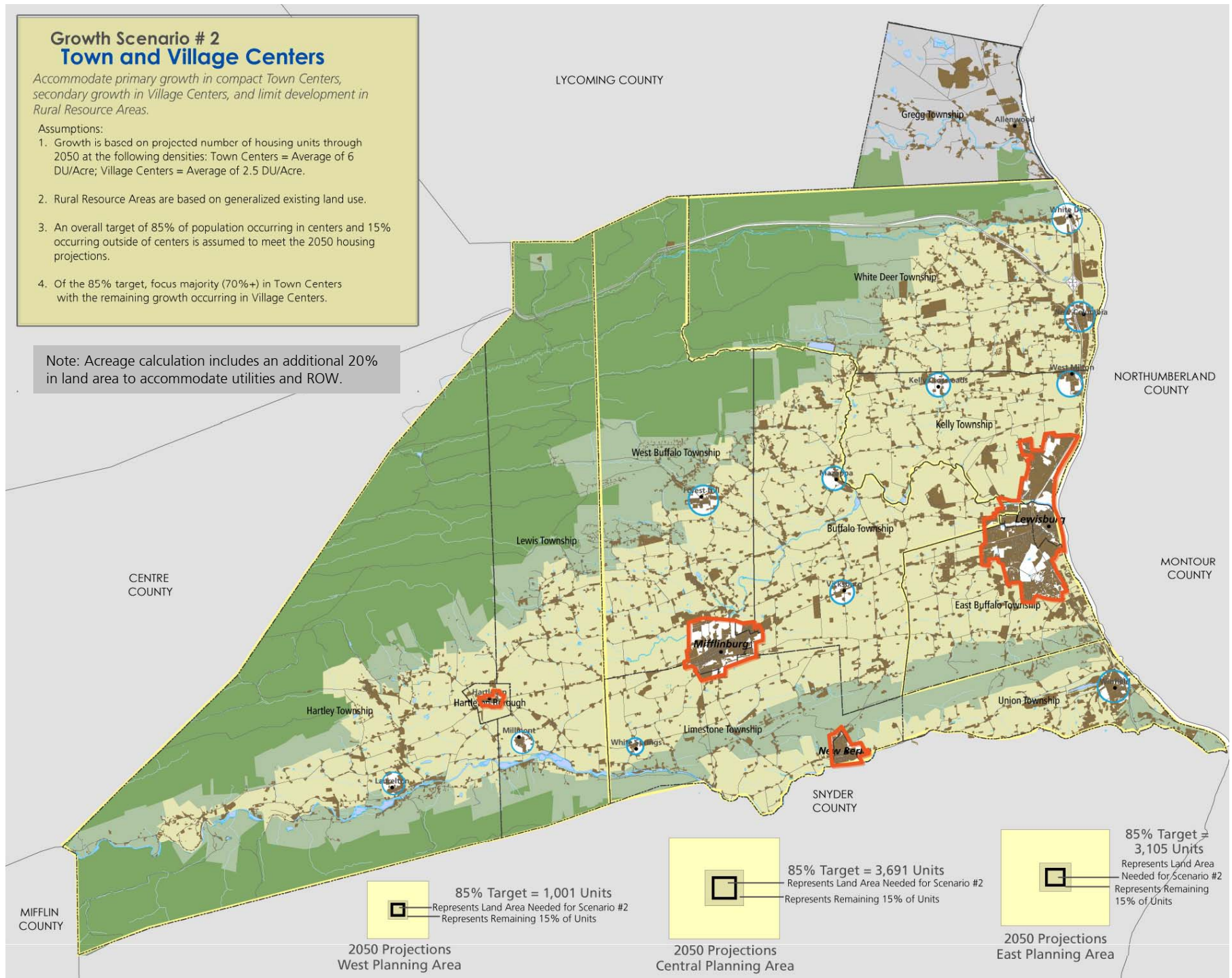
Growth Scenario # 2 Town and Village Centers

Accommodate primary growth in compact Town Centers, secondary growth in Village Centers, and limit development in Rural Resource Areas.

Assumptions:

1. Growth is based on projected number of housing units through 2050 at the following densities: Town Centers = Average of 6 DU/Acre; Village Centers = Average of 2.5 DU/Acre.
2. Rural Resource Areas are based on generalized existing land use.
3. An overall target of 85% of population occurring in centers and 15% occurring outside of centers is assumed to meet the 2050 housing projections.
4. Of the 85% target, focus majority (70%+) in Town Centers with the remaining growth occurring in Village Centers.

Note: Acreage calculation includes an additional 20% in land area to accommodate utilities and ROW.



Town and Village Centers

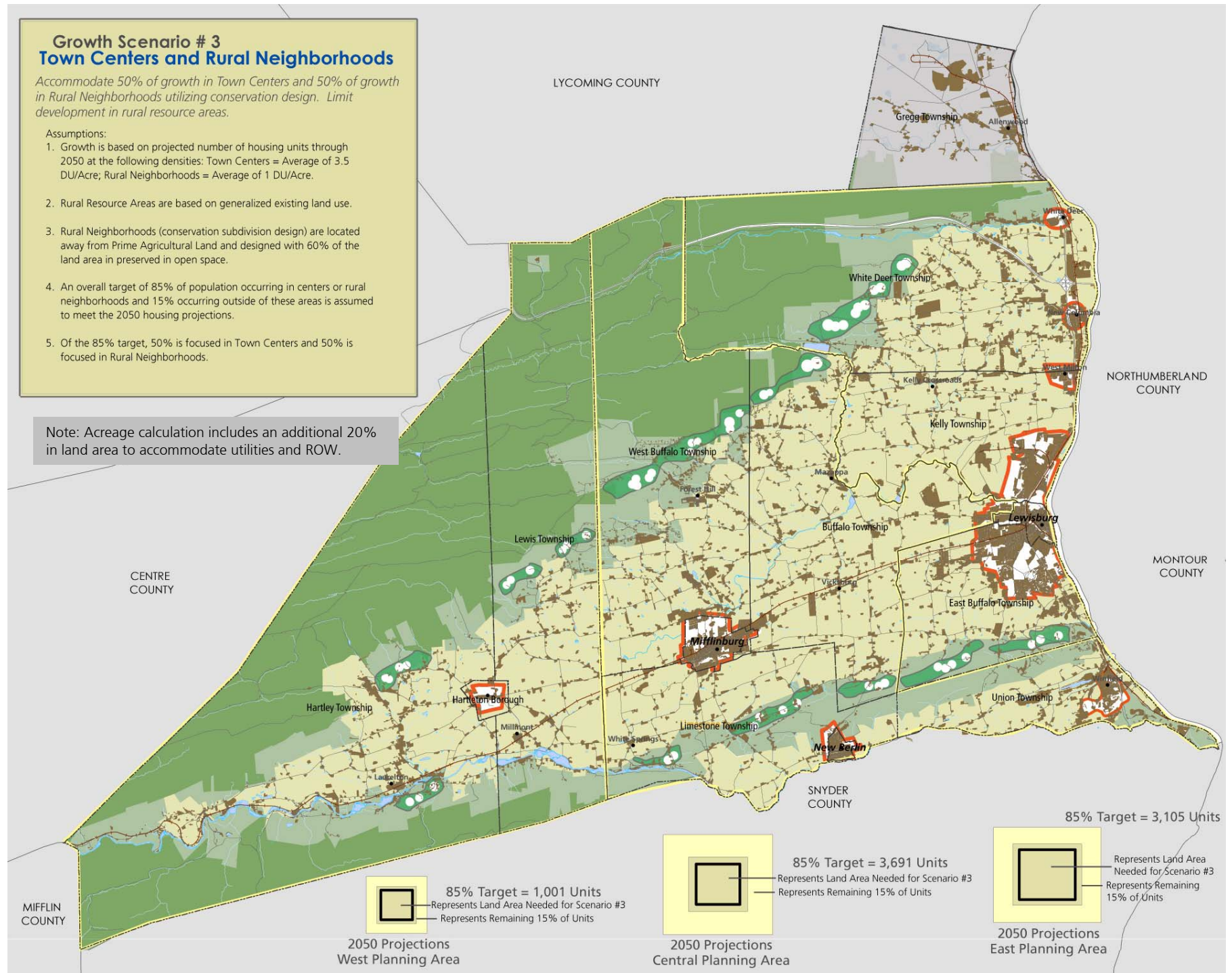


Accommodate 50% of growth in Town Centers and 50% of growth in Rural Neighborhoods utilizing conservation design. Limit development in rural resource areas.

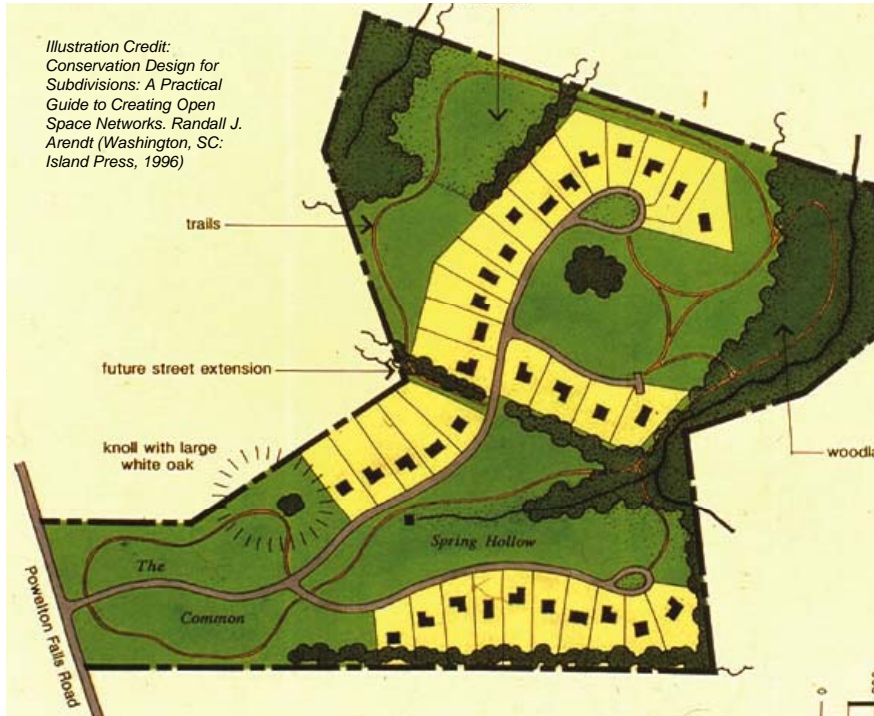
Assumptions:

1. Growth is based on projected number of housing units through 2050 at the following densities: Town Centers = Average of 3.5 DU/Acre; Rural Neighborhoods = Average of 1 DU/Acre.
2. Rural Resource Areas are based on generalized existing land use.
3. Rural Neighborhoods (conservation subdivision design) are located away from Prime Agricultural Land and designed with 60% of the land area in preserved in open space.
4. An overall target of 85% of population occurring in centers or rural neighborhoods and 15% occurring outside of these areas is assumed to meet the 2050 housing projections.
5. Of the 85% target, 50% is focused in Town Centers and 50% is focused in Rural Neighborhoods.

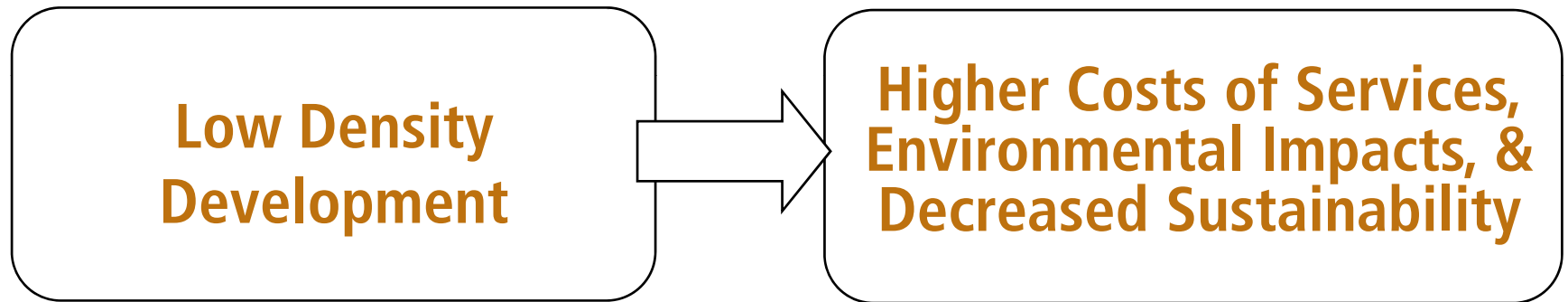
Note: Acreage calculation includes an additional 20% in land area to accommodate utilities and ROW.



Town Centers and Rural Neighborhoods



Future Growth Challenge



Draft Vision Statement

Union County will be a prosperous and beautiful valley in 2030 by:

- Protecting precious natural resources & agriculture
- Supporting sustainable economic growth
- Promoting its unique town & country lifestyle

Three concurrent regional visions will contribute their special strengths to achieving these goals:

The western region will be a home for rural enterprise and connecting with nature.

The central region will be the heart of Union County's agricultural and small town heritage.

The eastern region will be a center of county government, medical service, and higher education in a town and country setting.

Sustainability Goals

1. Focus new development in and around established communities

- Promote reinvestment in existing towns and villages
- Develop in close proximity to existing infrastructure

2. Preserve rural resources

- Maintain agriculture and prime farmland soils
- Preserve sensitive natural features and scenic views

3. Conserve energy

- Decrease fossil fuel consumption
- Reduce automobile use / promote transportation alternatives

4. Conserve fiscal resources

- Limit the negative impacts of new development on municipal budgets
- Limit the negative impacts of new development on community services

Future Growth Management Framework

Citizen Direction & Sustainability

Continue Small Town Patterns





What the Future Could Look Like

Recommended Growth Management Framework

LEGEND

- Major Roads
- Developed Land
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Outside of Study Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary

GROWTH AREAS

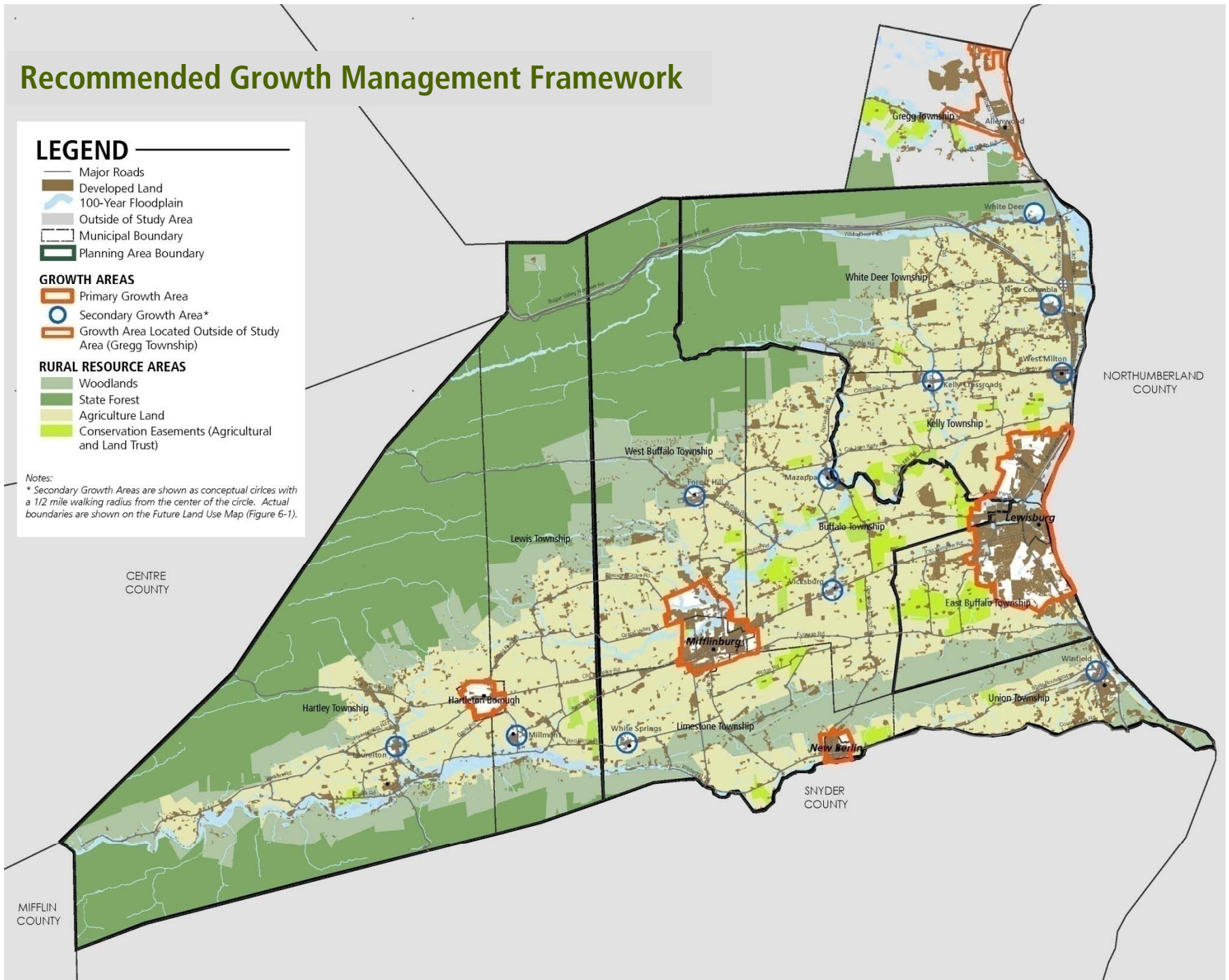
- Primary Growth Area
- Secondary Growth Area*
- Growth Area Located Outside of Study Area (Gregg Township)

RURAL RESOURCE AREAS

- Woodlands
- State Forest
- Agriculture Land
- Conservation Easements (Agricultural and Land Trust)

Notes:

* Secondary Growth Areas are shown as conceptual circles with a 1/2 mile walking radius from the center of the circle. Actual boundaries are shown on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 6-1).





Cultivating Community: A Sustainable Comprehensive Plan for Union County

What is a Sustainable Comprehensive Plan?

Model 1: Discrete Topical Elements

- **MPC Elements**
 - Land Use and Development
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Community Facilities and Utilities
 - Natural and Historic Resources
 - Agricultural Lands (county plans only)
 - Energy Conservation (optional)
 - Implementation
- **Disadvantages**
 - Does not promote integration of related topics, although it does call for a statement of plan interrelationships
 - Does not address implementation capacity and accountability

What is a Sustainable Comprehensive Plan?

Model 2: Interrelated Systems

- **Community Systems or Networks**
 - Energy / Utility
 - Food
 - Mobility
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Building
 - Economic
 - Social
 - Implementation Capacity-Building / Partnerships / Indicators of Progress
- **Disadvantages**
 - Not promoted by MPC guidance for comprehensive planning
 - Requires a fundamental rethinking of how we approach planning

Union County's Cultivating Community Comprehensive Plan: A Hybrid Approach

- **Topical Plan Elements**

- Natural and Agricultural Resources
- Land Use
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resources
- Community Facilities, Utilities, and Energy Conservation
- Implementation

- **Integrating Factors**

- Sustainability Principles
- Sustainability Keys
- Sustainability Indicators

Sustainability Keys



1. **Natural and Agricultural Resources - System Integrity**
2. **Land Use - Mixed Use**
3. **Housing - Diversity**
4. **Economic Development - Building Local Assets**
5. **Transportation – Multi-Modal Choices**
6. **Cultural, Historic, and Recreational Resources - Adaptive Reuse**
7. **Community Facilities, Utilities, and Energy Conservation- Energy Conservation**

Sample Sustainability Indicators (in progress)



- **Natural and Agricultural Resources – System Integrity**
 - Water quality
 - Animal & plant species / key indicator species
 - Agricultural / forest lands preserved (easements, TDR, etc.)
 - Agricultural production / output
- **Land Use – Mixed Use**
 - Land consumption / development inside & outside growth areas
 - Vertical vs. horizontal mixed uses
 - Carbon footprint / greenhouse gas emissions
- **Housing – Diversity**
 - Housing demand based on demographics vs. mix of housing types
 - Affordability
 - Access to services (e.g., recreation, community facilities, retail) .

Sample Sustainability Indicators (in progress)



- **Economic Development – Building Local Assets**
 - Locally-owned businesses
 - Employment opportunities / living wages
 - Growth of locally based economic sectors
- **Transportation – Multi-Modal Choices**
 - Reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
 - Length of sidewalks, recreational / multi-use trails, bike lanes
 - Connectivity index

Sample Sustainability Indicators (in progress)



- **Cultural and Historic Resources – Adaptive Reuse**
 - Historic resources preserved
 - Recycled building stock
 - Heritage tourism activity
- **Community Facilities, Utilities, and Energy Conservation – Energy Conservation**
 - Compactness of infrastructure systems
 - Renewable energy installations
 - Green buildings
 - Reduction in VMT

Union County's Cultivating Community Comprehensive Plan: Implementation

- **Geographic Scale**
 - Countywide Action Plan
 - Multi-Municipal Action Plans
- **Actions**
 - Types (regulatory, policy / planning, capital investment, partnerships)
 - Timeframes
 - Responsibilities
 - Funding sources
- **Monitoring**
 - Annual Assessments / Work Programs
 - Measures of Progress (sustainability indicators)

Key Issue: Capacity-Building

- **Union County and its municipalities have a small population and limited resources**
 - Three municipalities do not have zoning ordinances
- **Partnerships among the public, private, and nonprofit / institutional sectors will be key to success**
 - Public / public (e.g., PA DCED / Union County / municipalities)
 - Public / private (e.g., Lewisburg Area Recreation Park – LARA / Playworld; Pennsylvania House redevelopment)
 - Public / institutional (e.g., Union County / Bucknell University)

Sustainable Growth in Rural PA: Union County's New Model

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Contact Information

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