

Fast Fun and Fervent Regional Planning Practices

PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

OCTOBER 13, 2025

The Line Up

Centre Regional Planning Agency

- Pam Adams, Director
- Jenna Wargo, AICP, Principal Land Use Planner

Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development

- Joshua Spano, Deputy Director
- Jillian Caswell, Planner II

Breaking Boundaries: The Functions and Benefits of Making Regionalism Work in PA

Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning
Association Annual Conference

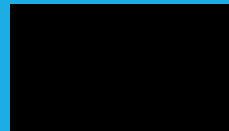


Pam Adams

Director

padams@crcog.net | 814-231-3050

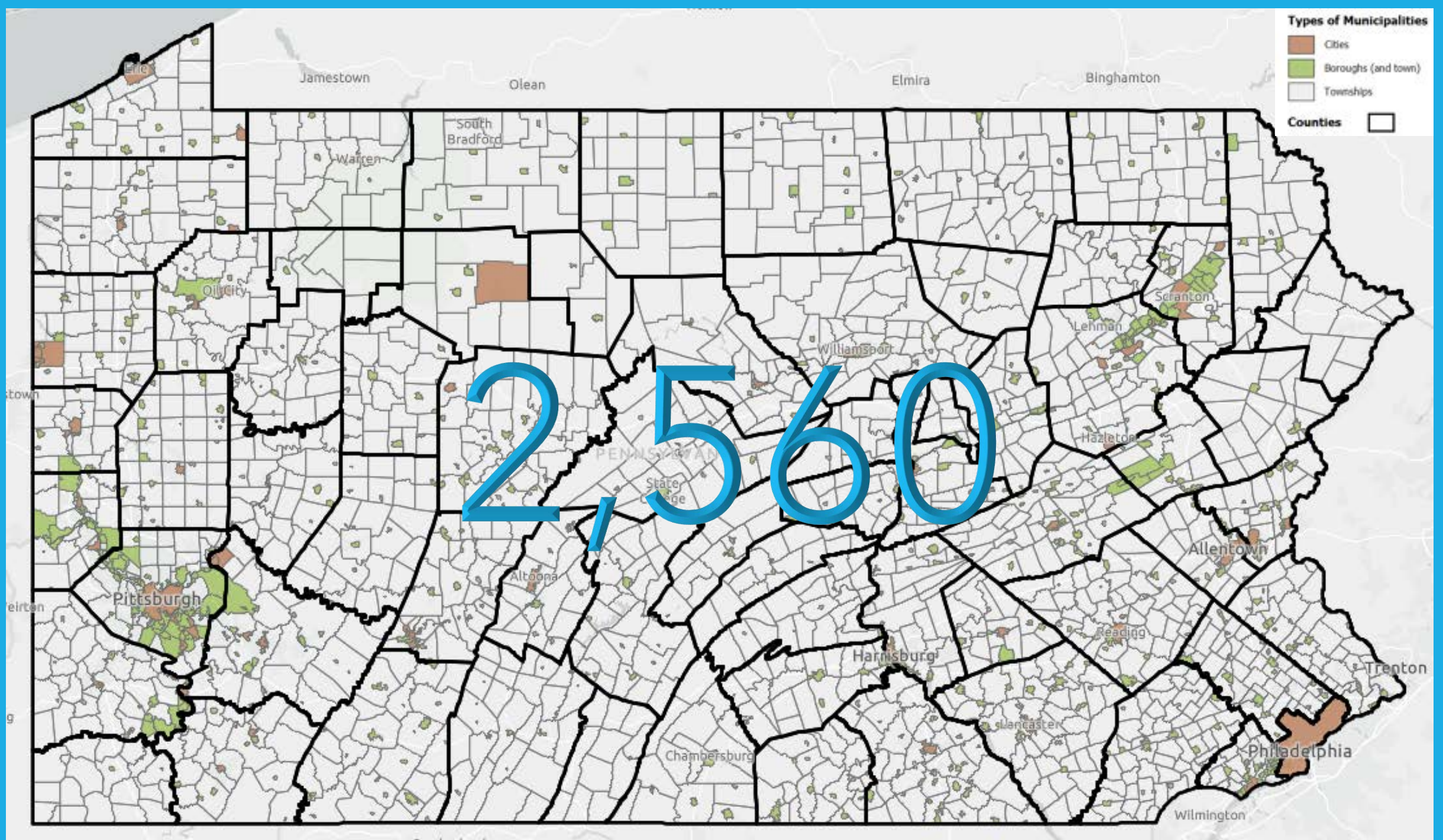
CRPA
Centre Regional
Planning Agency



October 13, 2025

- **Why regionalism matters**
- **Functions of Regionalism**
- **Benefits**





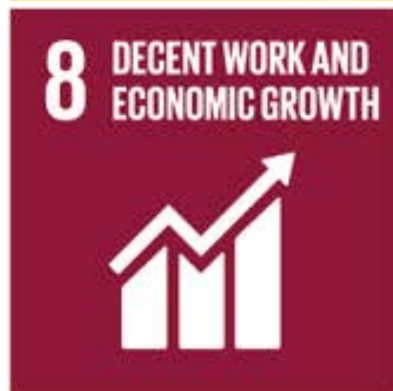


- Climate Change
- Housing Crisis
- Political Discourse

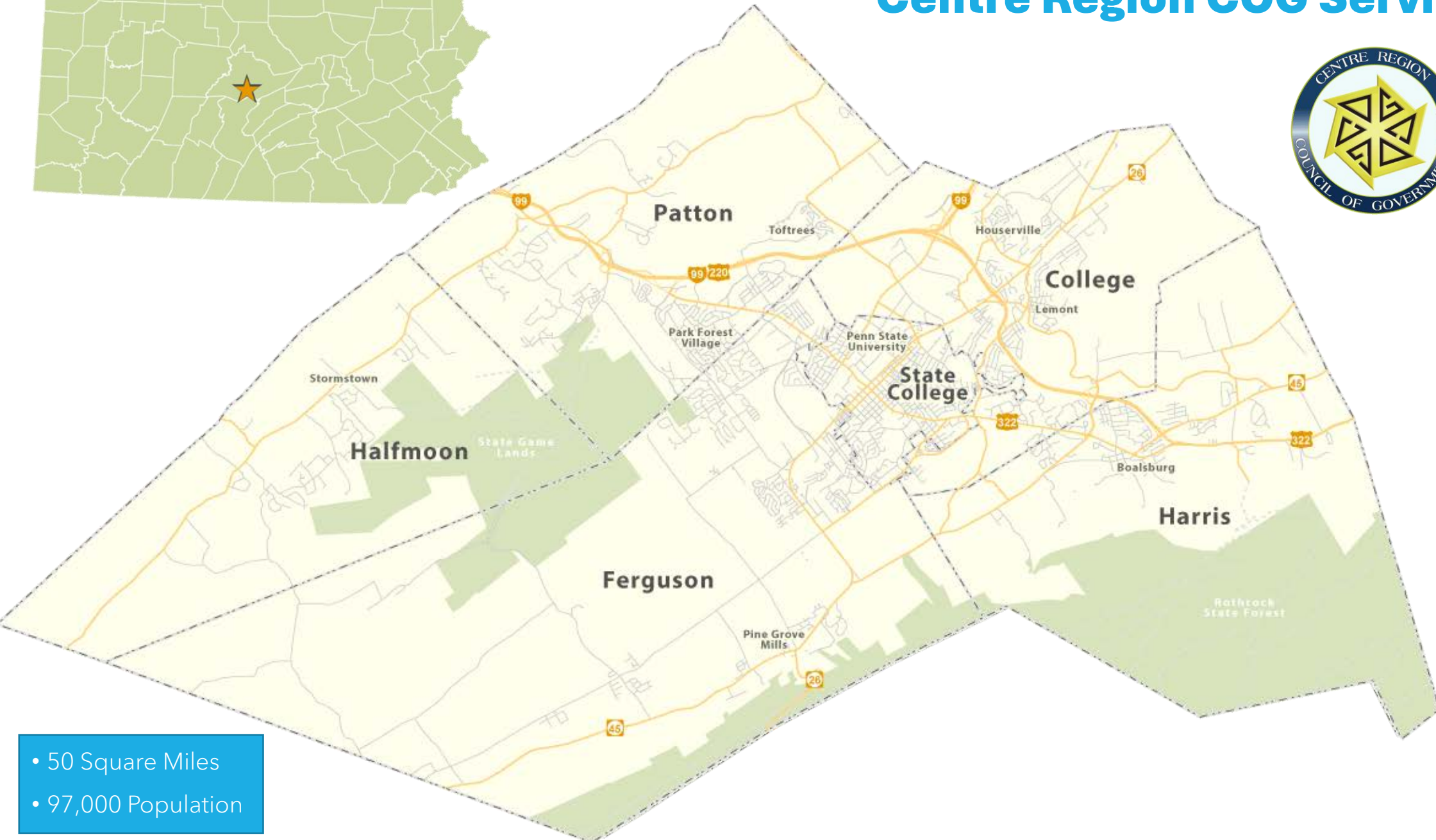
Yesterday's tools won't solve today's problems



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Centre Region COG Service Area



- 50 Square Miles
- 97,000 Population

Legal Authority

Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes - Title 53

Municipalities can delegate any function, power, or responsibility to another municipality or a newly created governmental unit.



Fire and EMS



Parks



Library



Fire and EMS



Parks



Library



Codes



Regional
Planning



Refuse &
Recycling



- Multi-municipal contract
- Self funded administrator
- Control costs
- Consistent messaging

Refuse and Recycling



Crossing Boundaries, Sharing Vision

Together, our climate goals become achievable.

Shared Sustainability Goals



**Cost savings,
efficiency, and
shared
prosperity.**



Power in Partnerships: Energy PPAs

Bigger scale = better deals



Power in Partnerships: Energy PPAs

Bigger scale = better deals





Different voices, one vision

Resilient + Reliable Future

Planning for the next generation

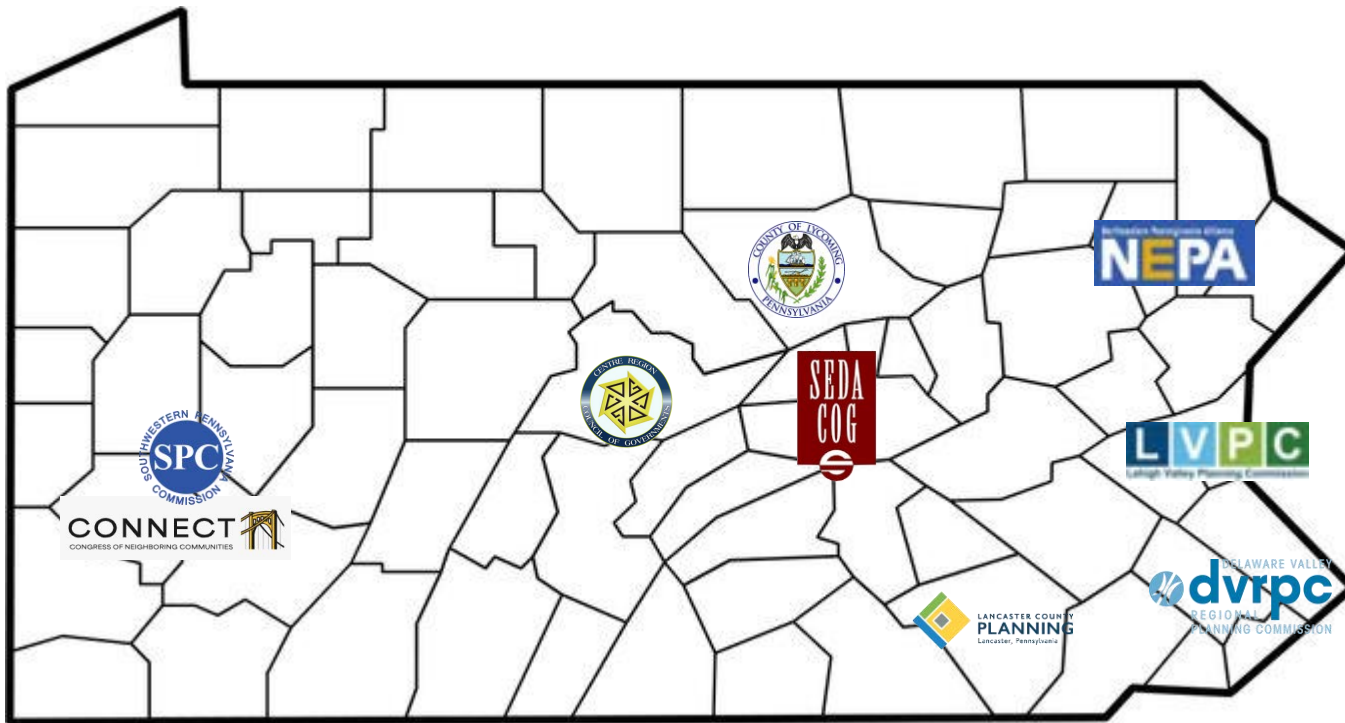




Community Collaboration

- Promote an understanding
- Build broader ownership
- Guide decision making and prioritization

Regionalism is already alive in Pennsylvania



- Multi-municipal zoning
- Regional growth boundaries
- Agricultural preservation
- Economic development
- Housing
- Transportation
- Energy programs

Roadmap for regional high-quality services

Identify a Shared Need

Build Intermunicipal Trust

Start Small

Formalize and Scale



**What could YOUR
community do
together?**





Thank you!



Pam Adams

Director

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Borough of State College

Ferguson Township

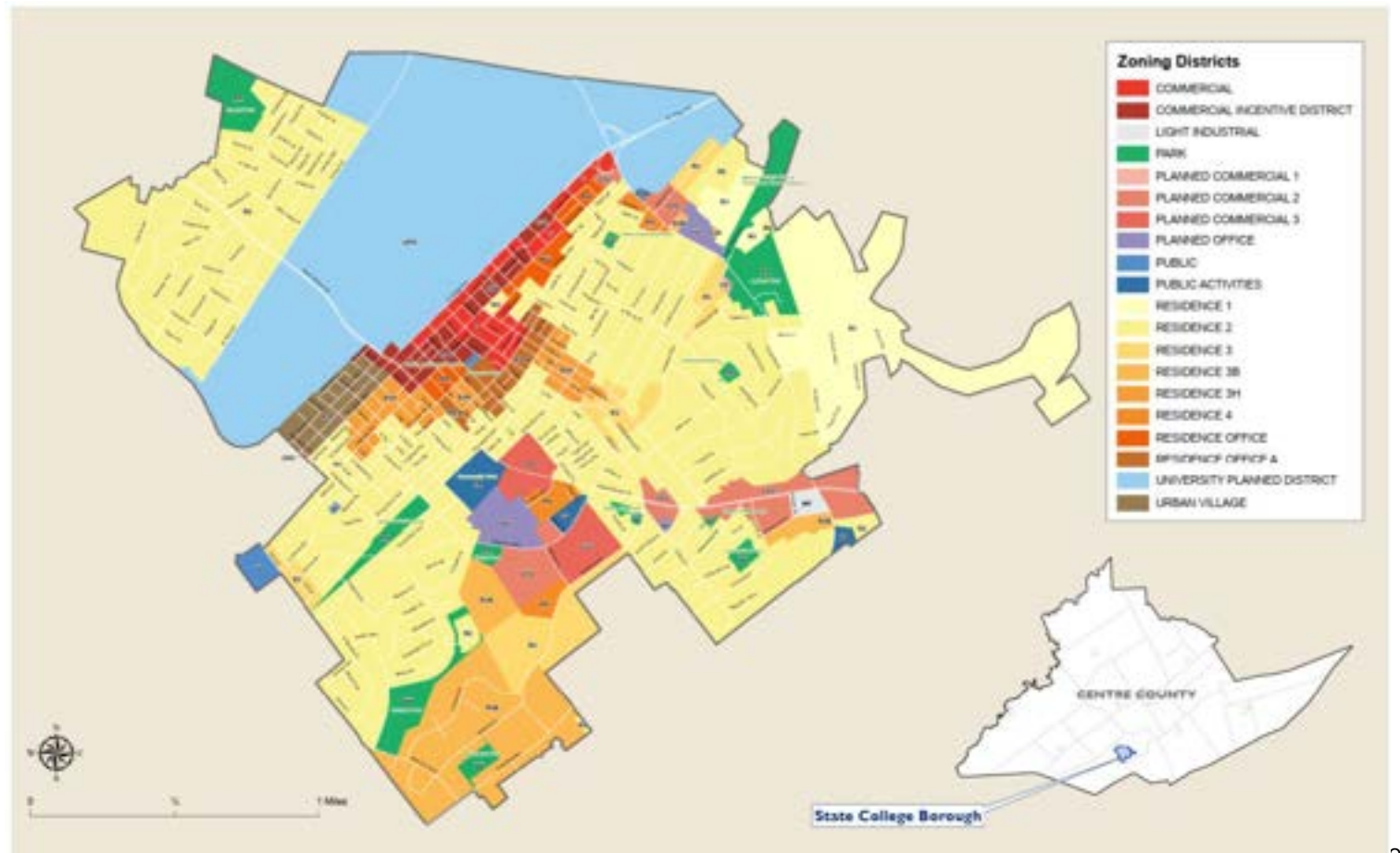


Borough of State College

Ferguson Township

The Challenge

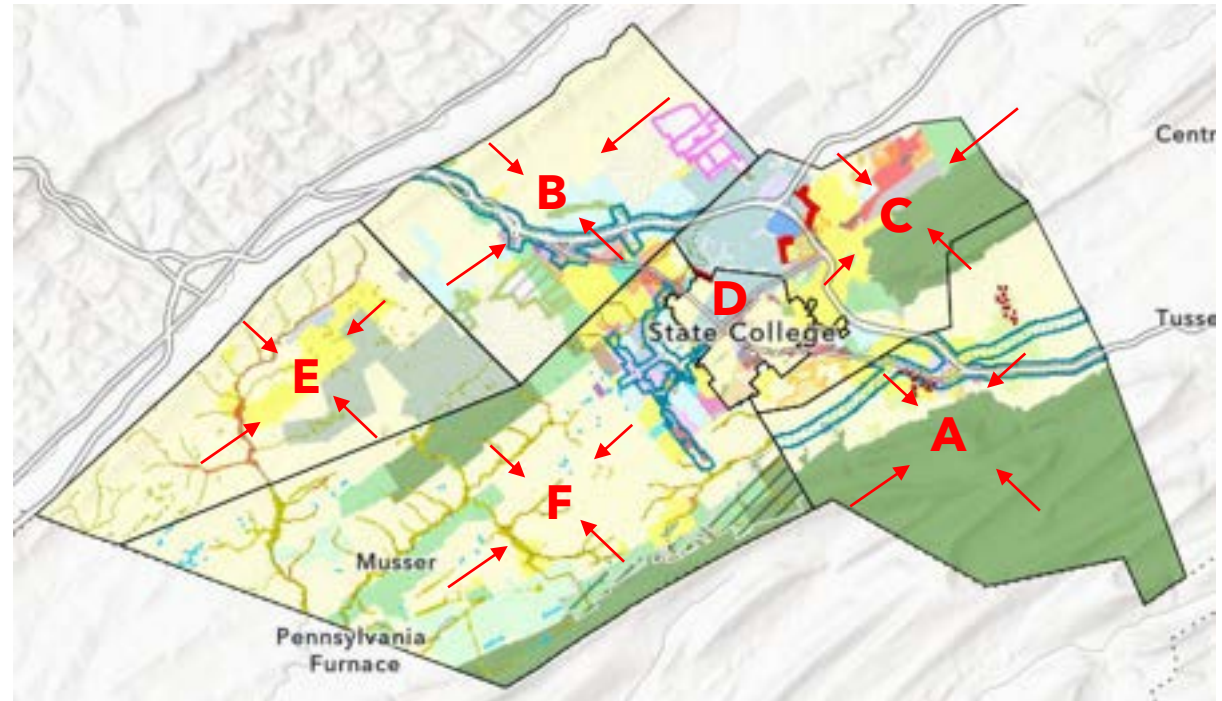
- Fragmented development patterns
- Smaller municipalities forced to plan for all land uses
- Competition instead of cooperation



Competition

Results:

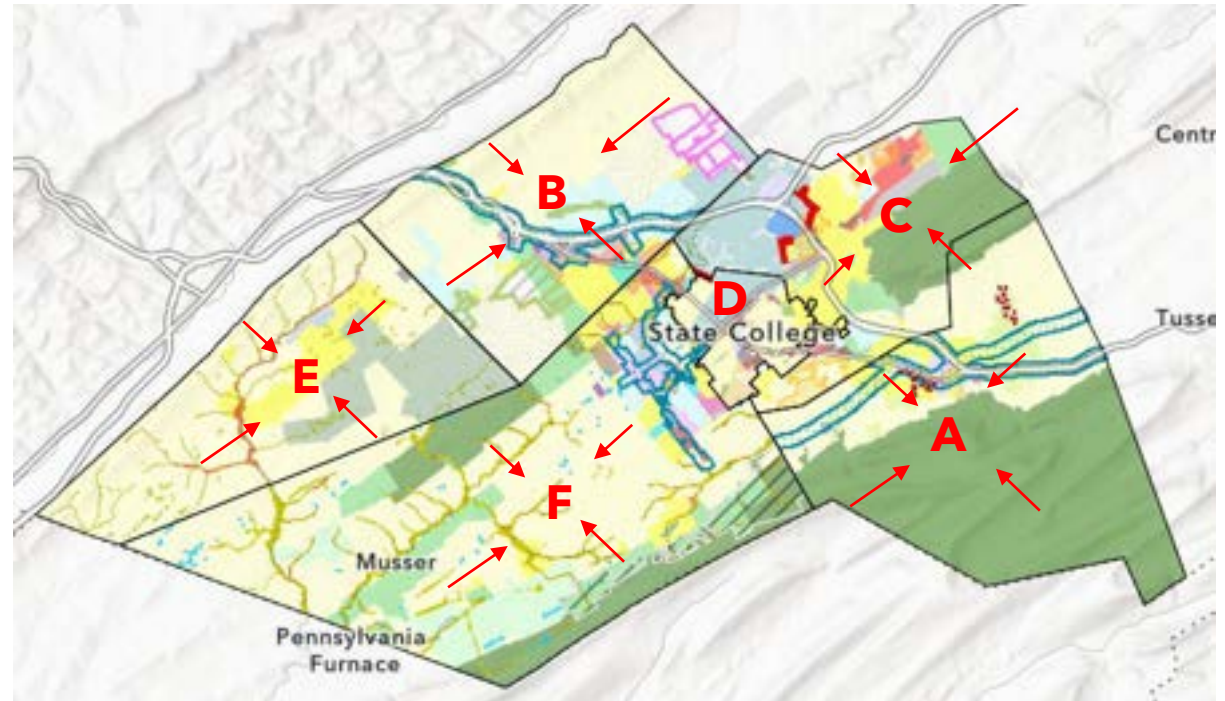
- Duplicated infrastructure
- Oversupply of industrial space
- Increased sprawl and traffic
- Strained municipal services



Competition

Results:

- Duplicated infrastructure
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Competition

Results:

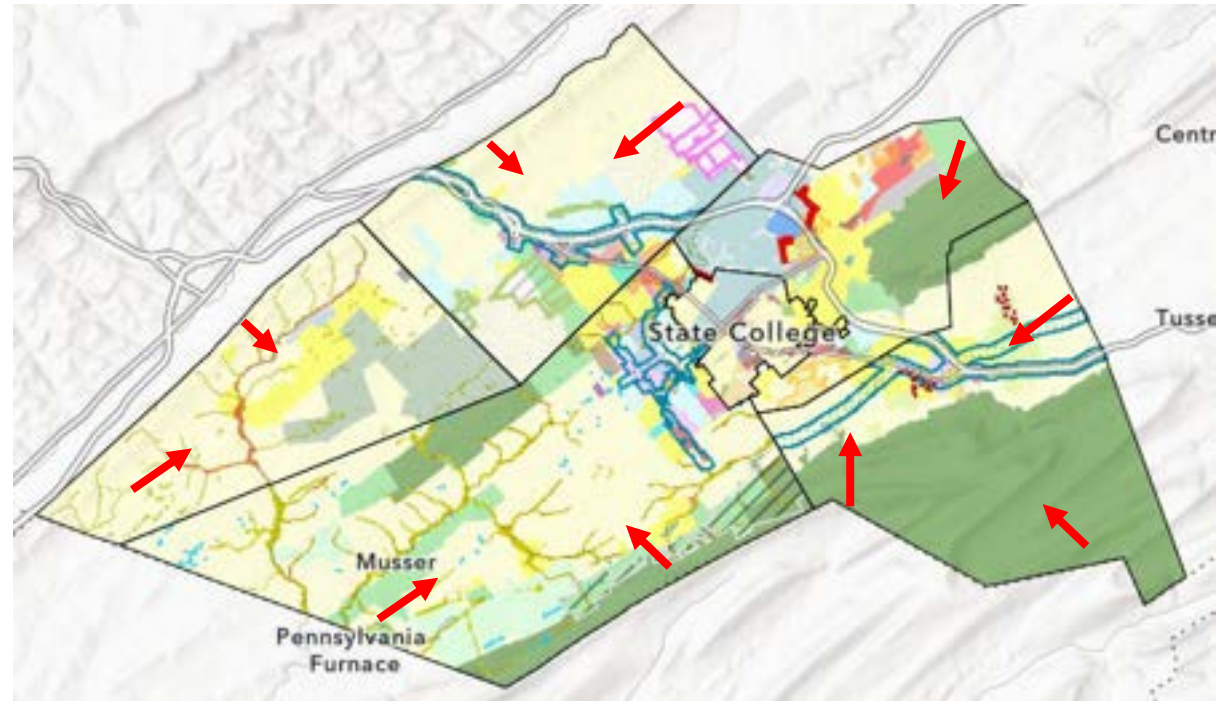
- Duplicated infrastructure
- Oversupply of space
- Increased traffic
- Strained municipal services

Bottom Line:
**When everyone tries to do everything,
no one does anything well.**



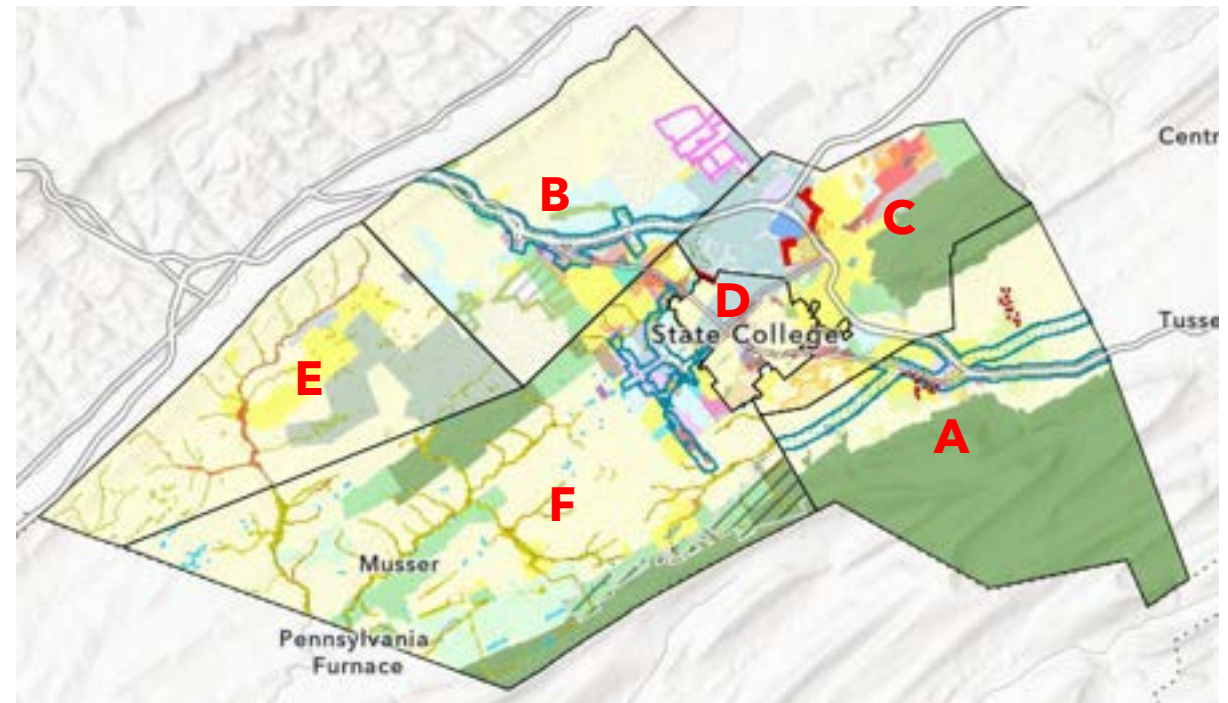
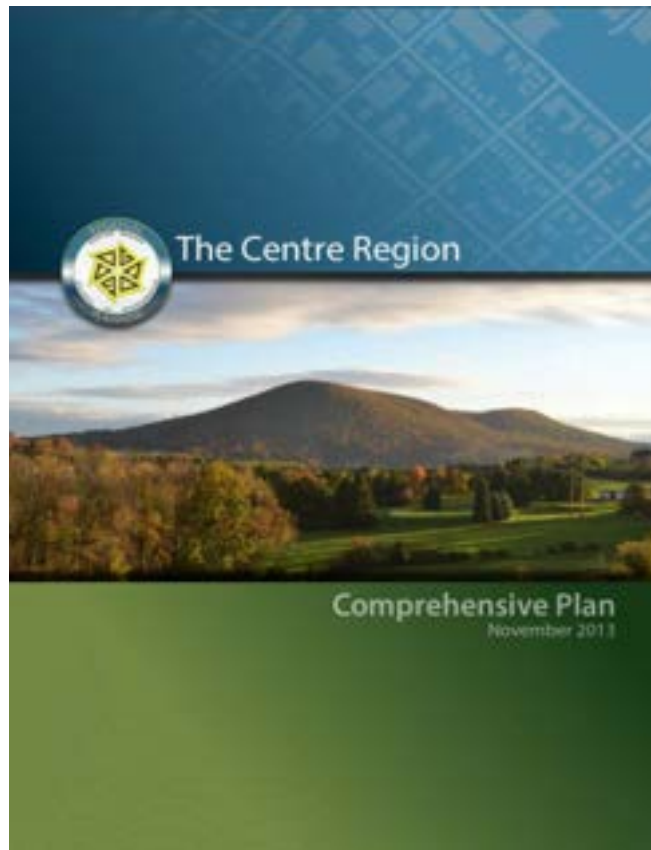
The “What If” Moment

**What if instead of
6 municipalities
competing...
we had 6
municipalities
collaborating?**



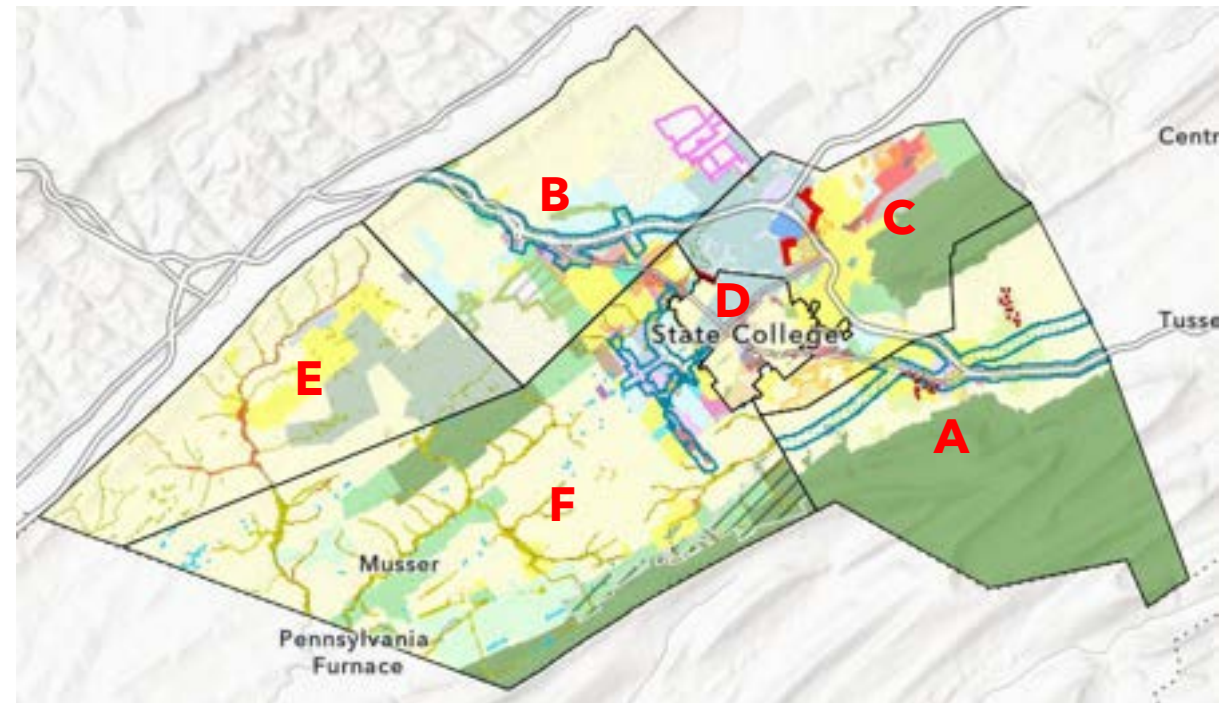
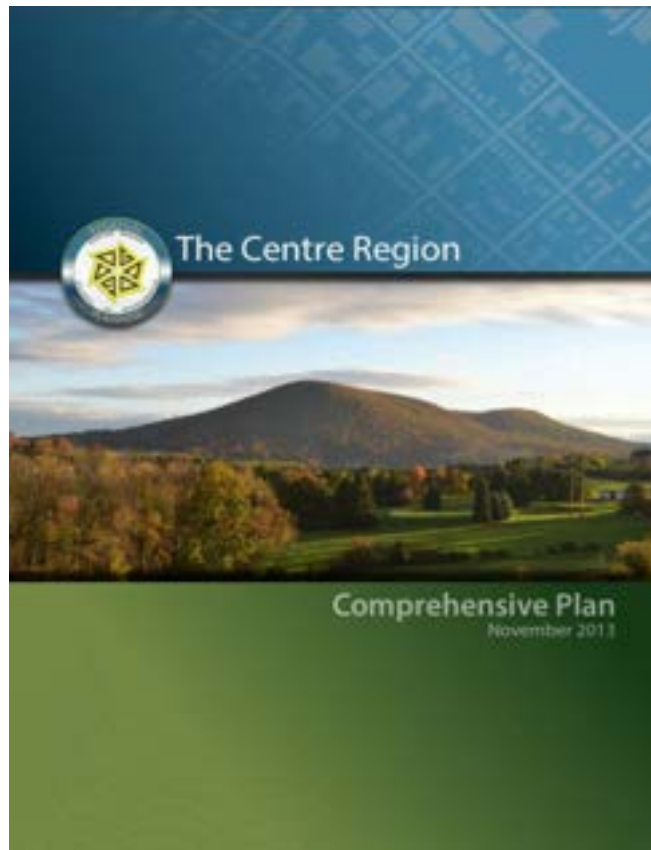
The Solution

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



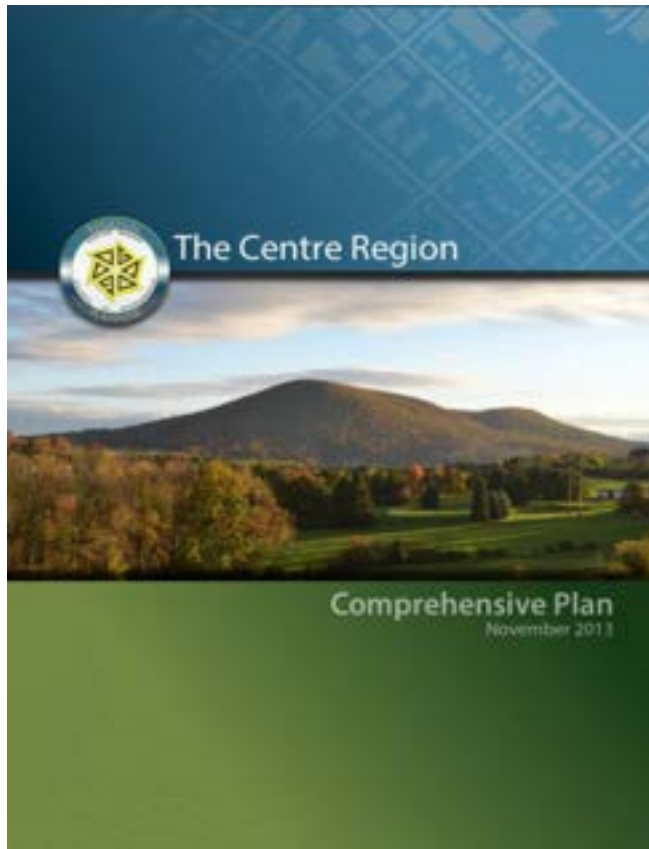
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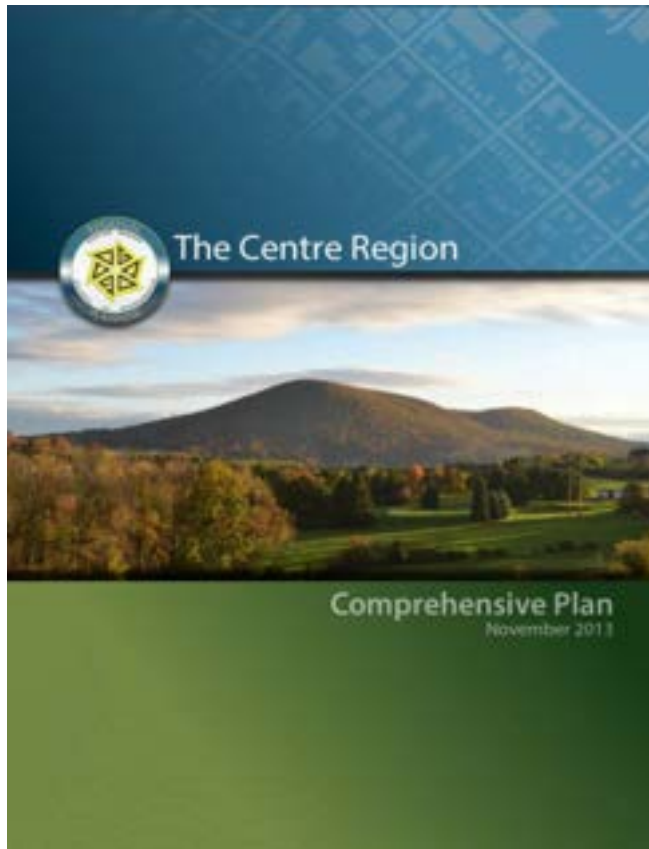
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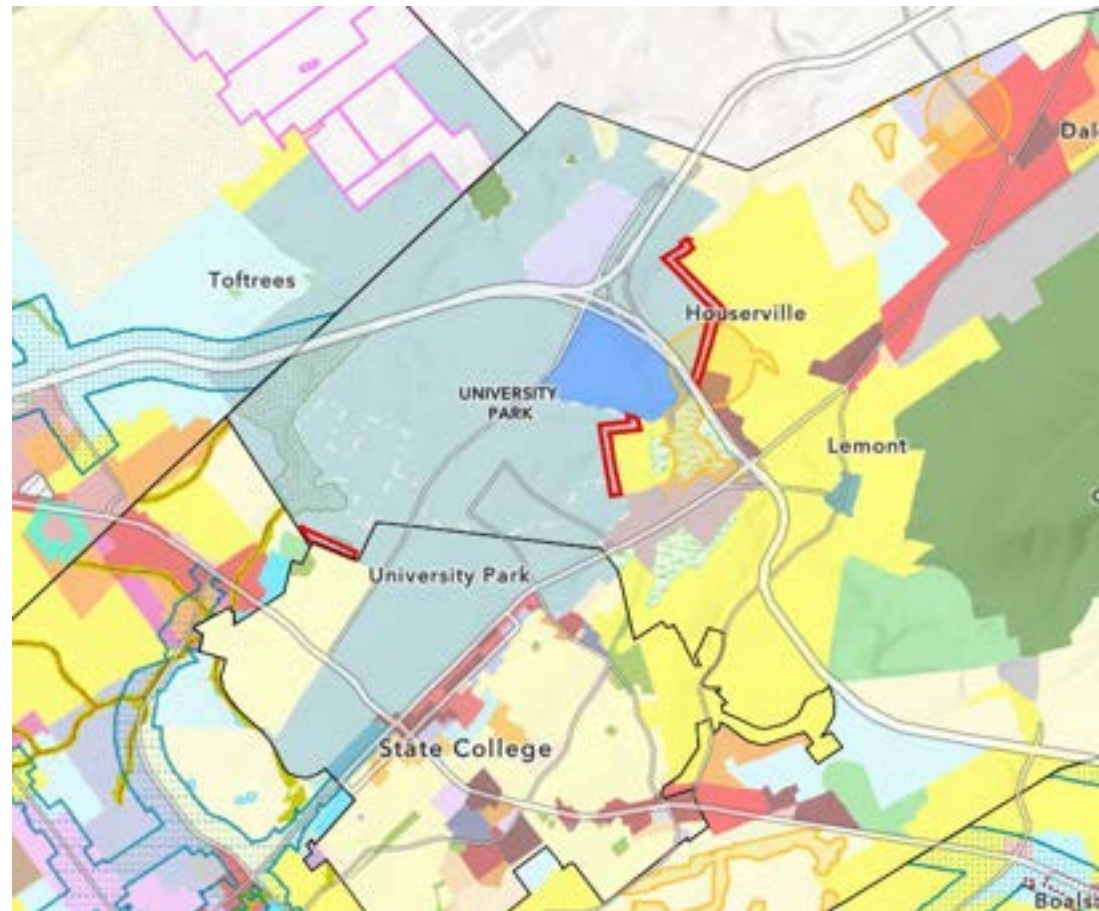
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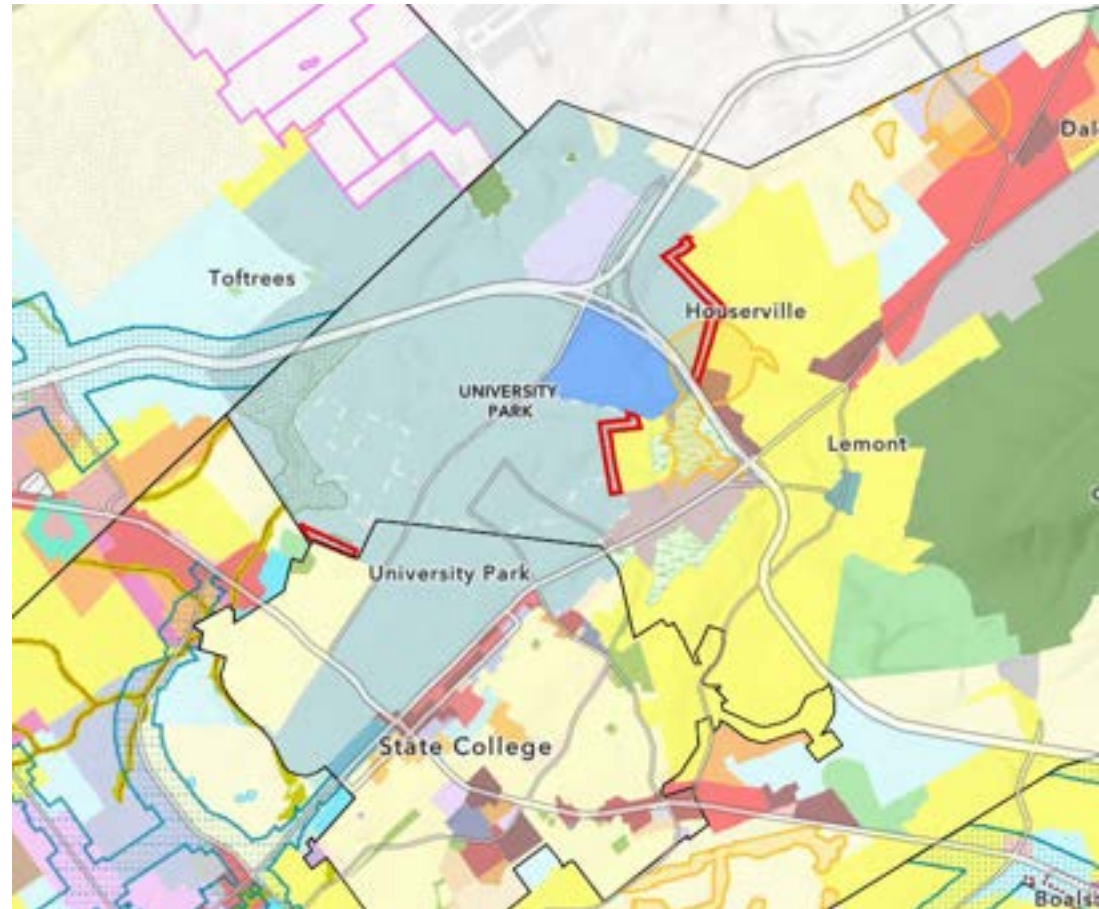
Shared Zoning

**One zoning
district,
multiple
municipalities,
one vision.**



Shared Zoning

**One zoning
district,
multiple
municipalities,
one vision.**



Regional Growth Boundary + Sewer Service Area



Where pipes go, growth goes...

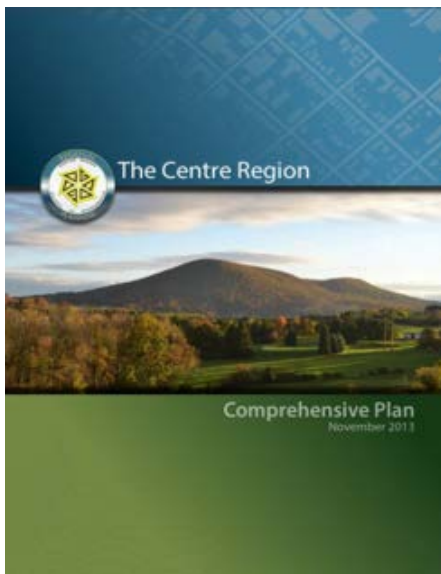
Regional Growth Boundary + Sewer Service Area



Where pipes go, growth goes...

Guess what?

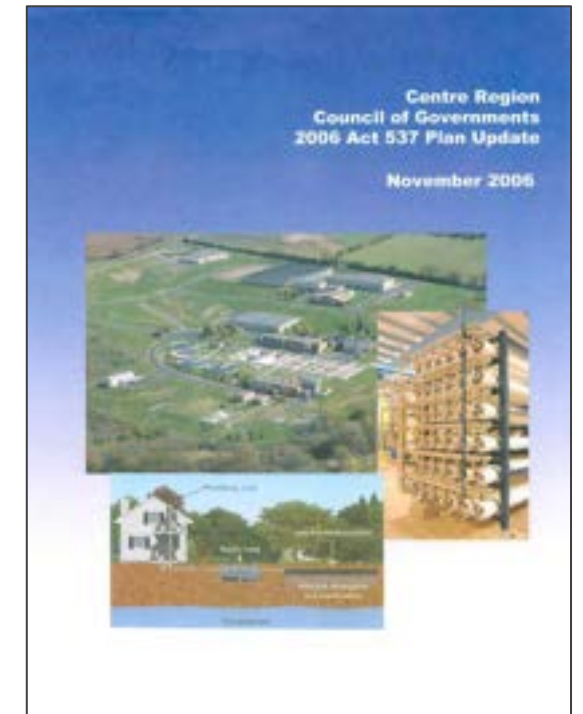
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



REGIONAL GROWTH BOUNDARY

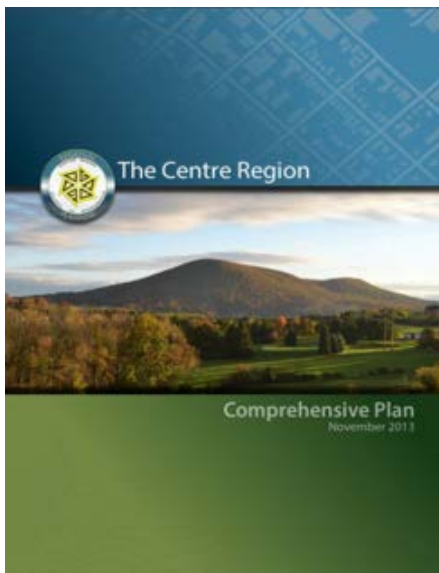


Act 537 Plan



Guess what?

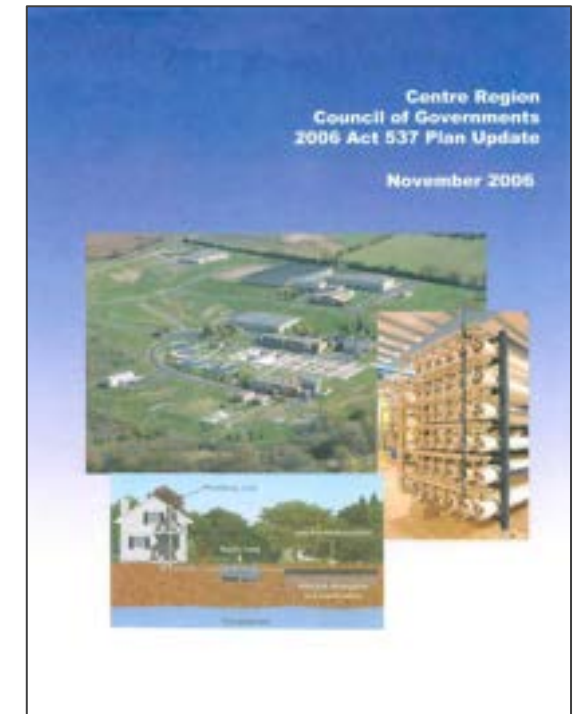
REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



REGIONAL GROWTH BOUNDARY



Act 537 Plan



Thank you!



Jenna Wargo, AICP
Principal Land Use Planner

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Centre Regional
Planning Agency

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO COLLABORATION: THE PLANNING DISTRICT APPROACH PROCESS



WESTMORELAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT JOSHUA SPANO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
JSPANO@WESTMORELANDCOUNTYPA.GOV

Westmoreland County

Located in Southwestern Pennsylvania

352,000 Residents

65 Municipalities

1,036 Square Miles

Planning & Development

Subdivision and Land Development

Comprehensive Plan

Technical Resources and Municipal Services Program

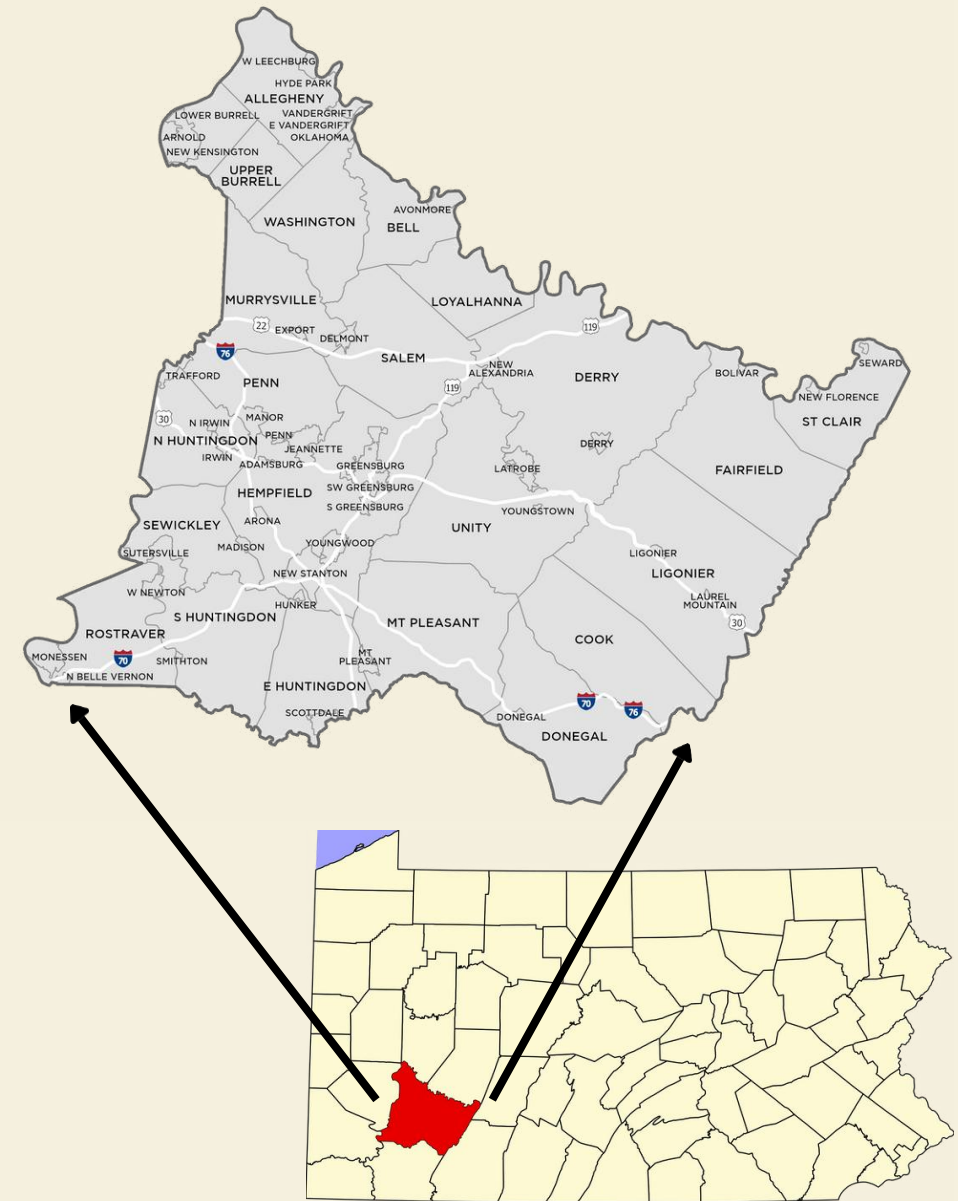
Transportation Planning

Broadband

Solid Waste

Stormwater

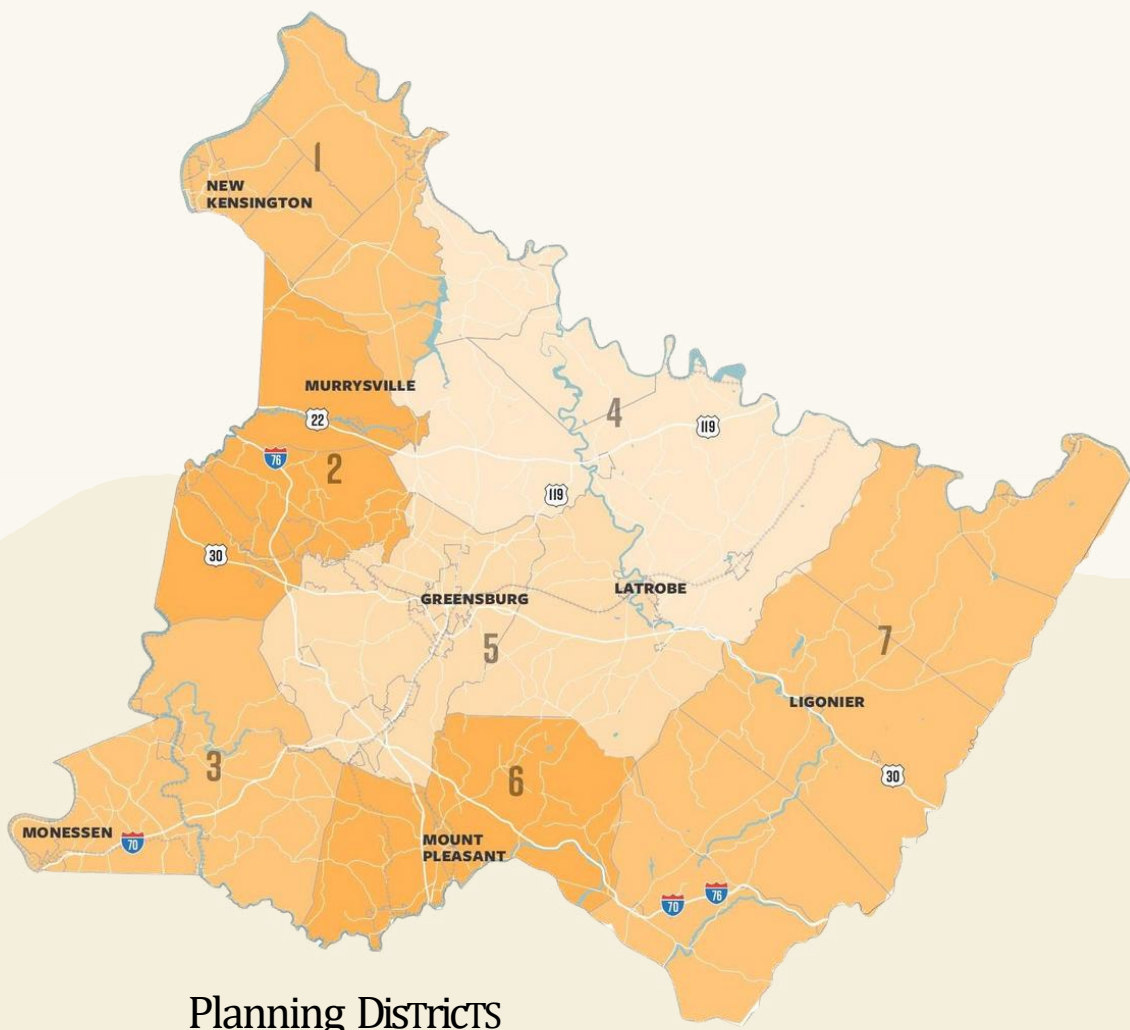
Housing



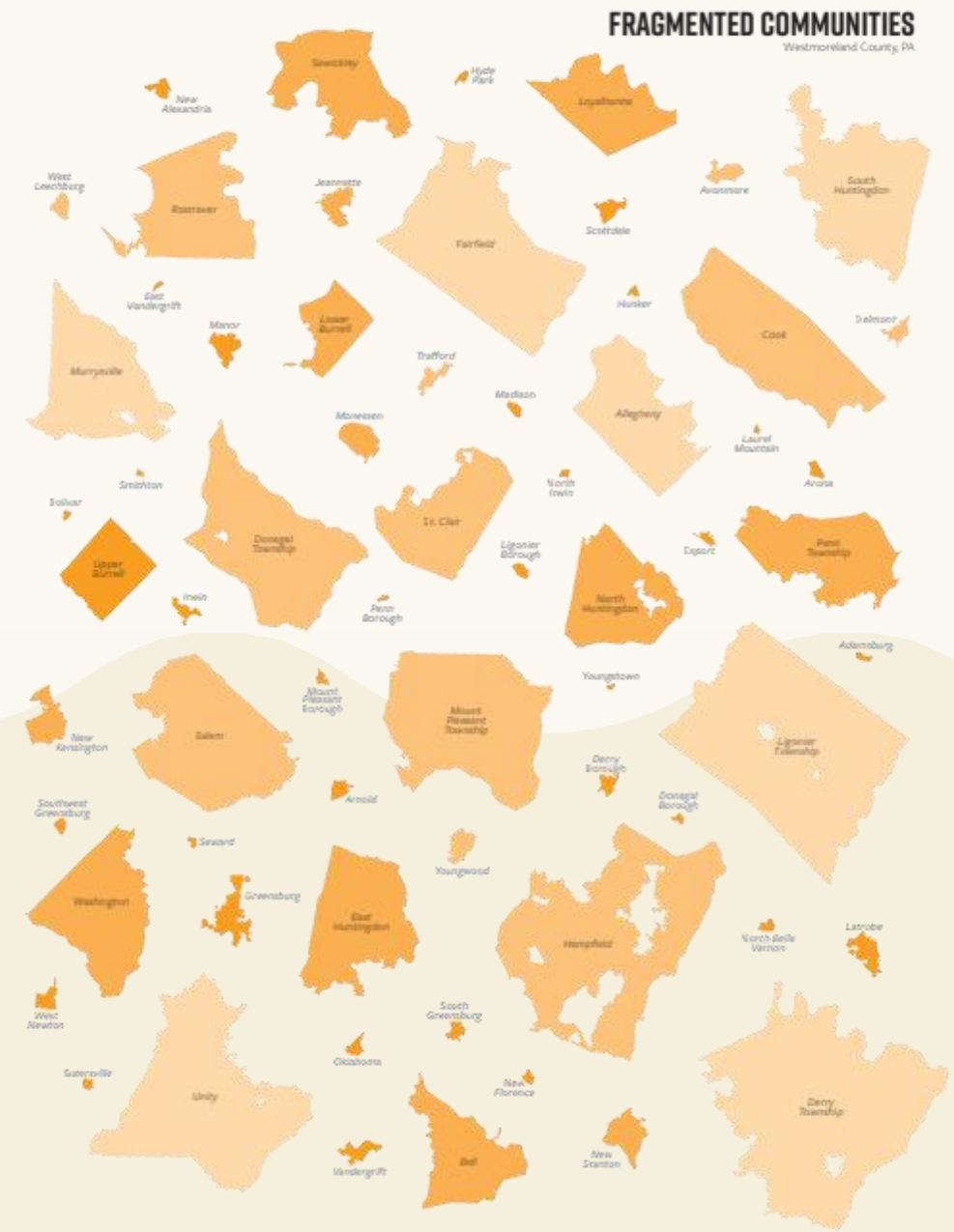


Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan: Reimagining Our Westmoreland

Fragmentation



Planning Districts



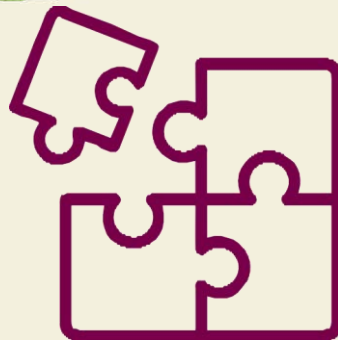


Regional Thinking...Local Action

REIMAGINING OUR WESTMORELAND



PLANNING DISTRICT PROGRESS



**Alinigin
Strategies**



**Land Use
Planning**

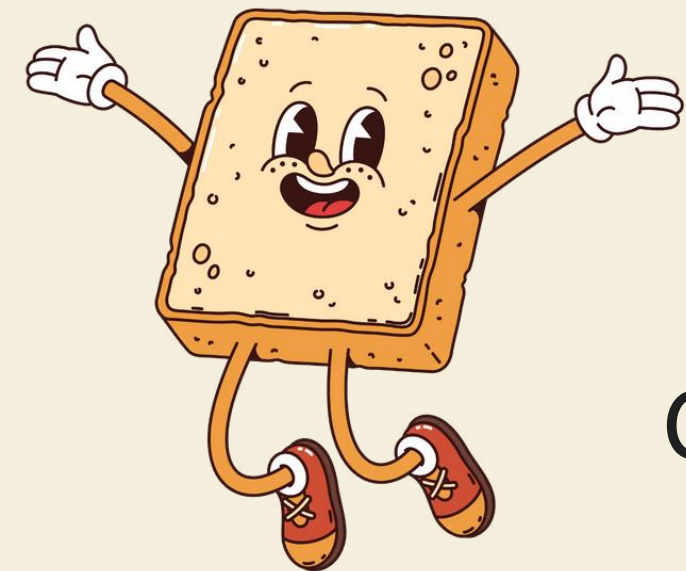


**Mobility
Planning**



**Intergovernmental
Cooperation**



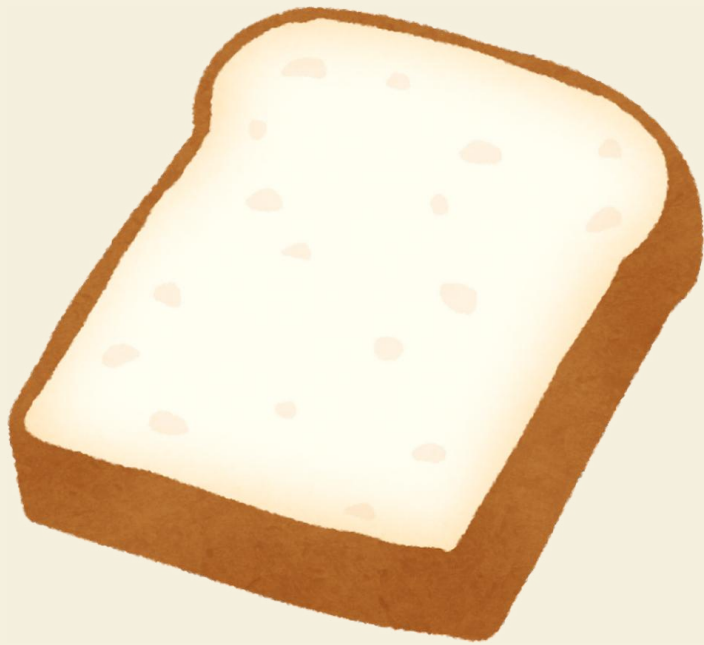


Bread - A strong, supportive foundation

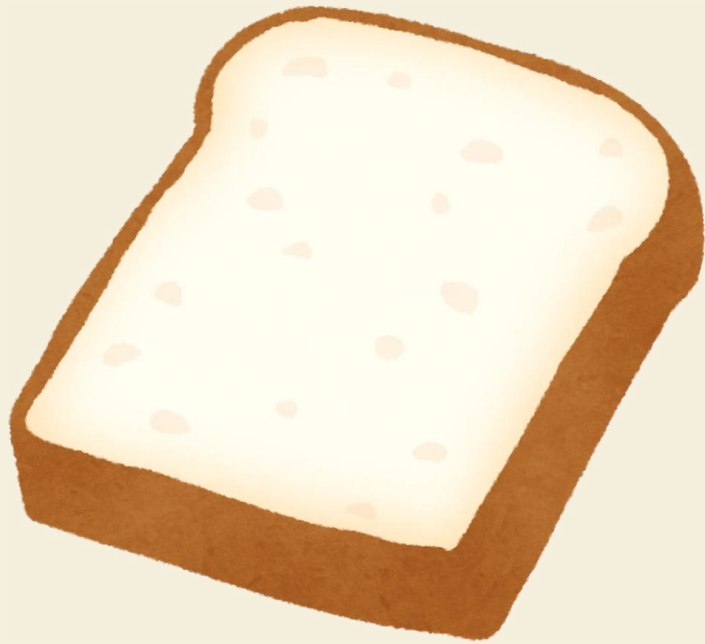
Peanut Butter & Jelly - Main Components

Chips - Complementing the dish, tying it all together

Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich with Chips!



A Strong, Hearty Foundation



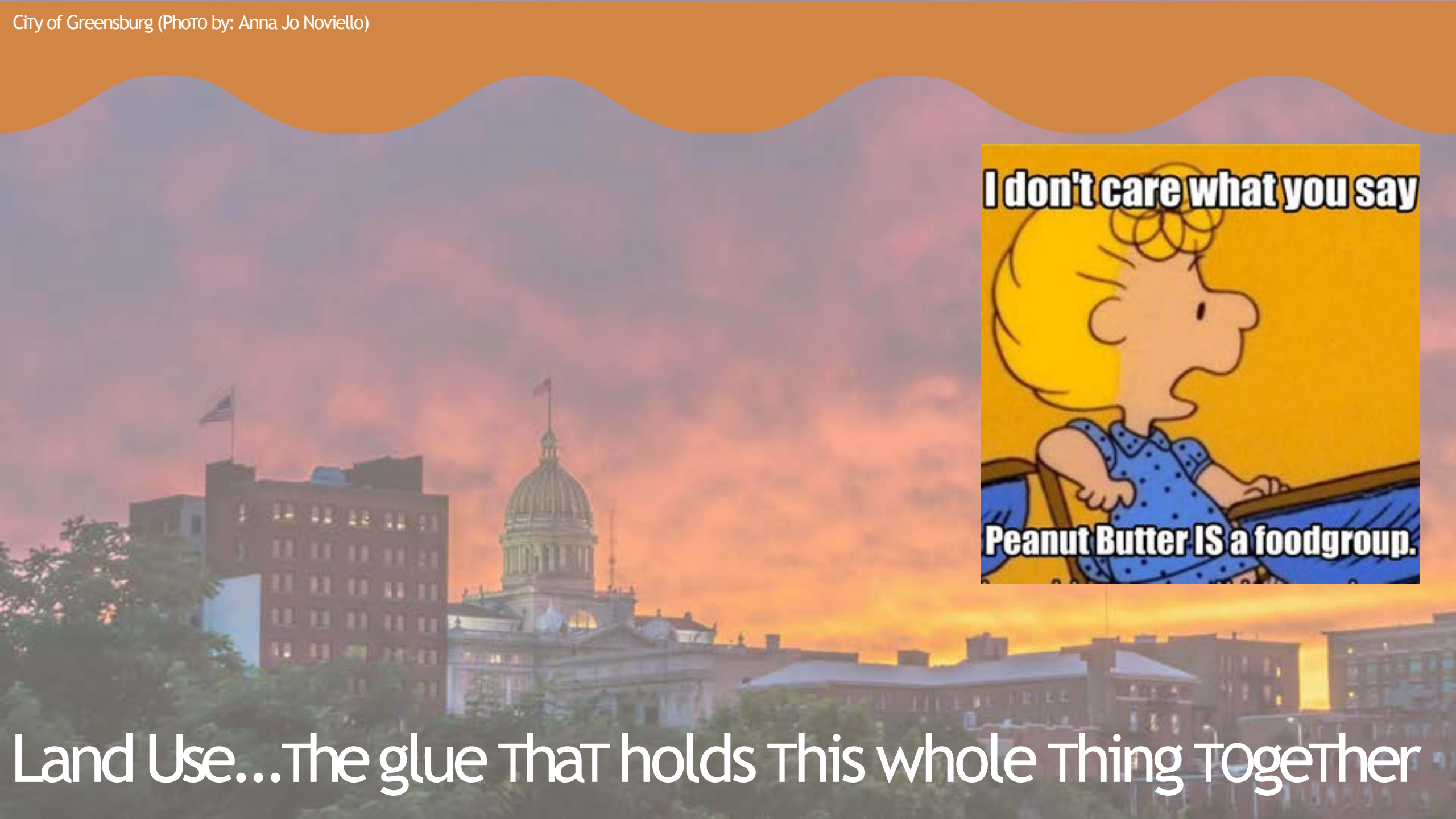
KEY ISSUES

1. Parks and beautification
2. Marketing the region
3. Blight
4. Infrastructure
5. Trails and waterways
6. Cooperation
7. Land use best practices
8. Housing options
9. Workforce

CORE OBJECTIVES

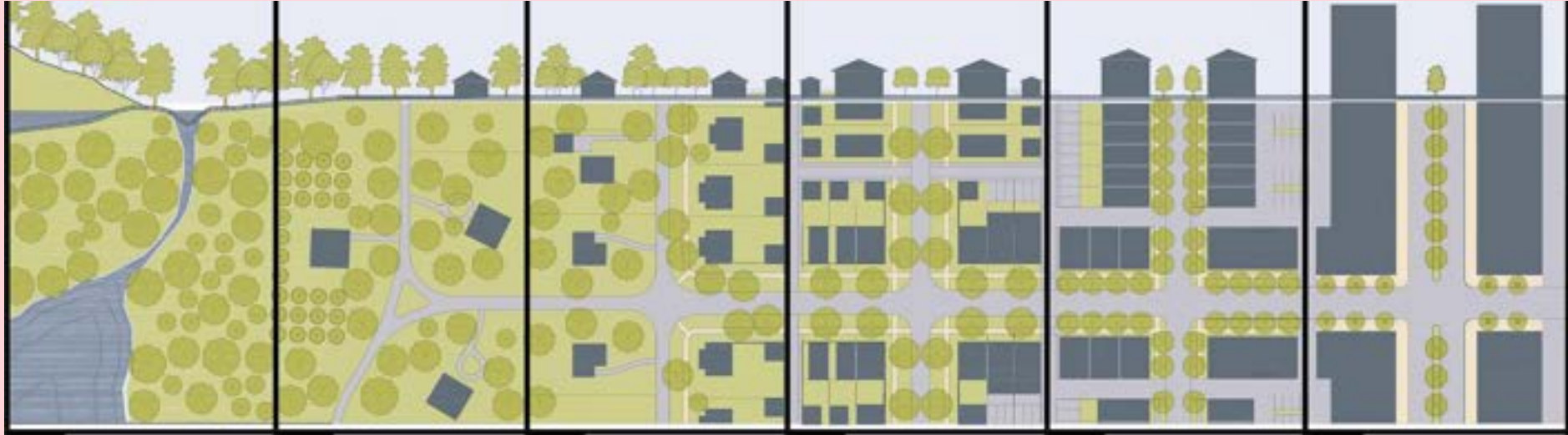
- Align Workforce, Education, Employers, and Entrepreneurship
- Discover Westmoreland
- Reposition Our Towns
- Connect with Parks and Nature
- Build Healthy and Whole Communities
- Plug into the New Economy
- Create Transportation Choices

A Strong, Hearty Foundation



Land Use...The glue That holds This whole Thing Together

Land Use

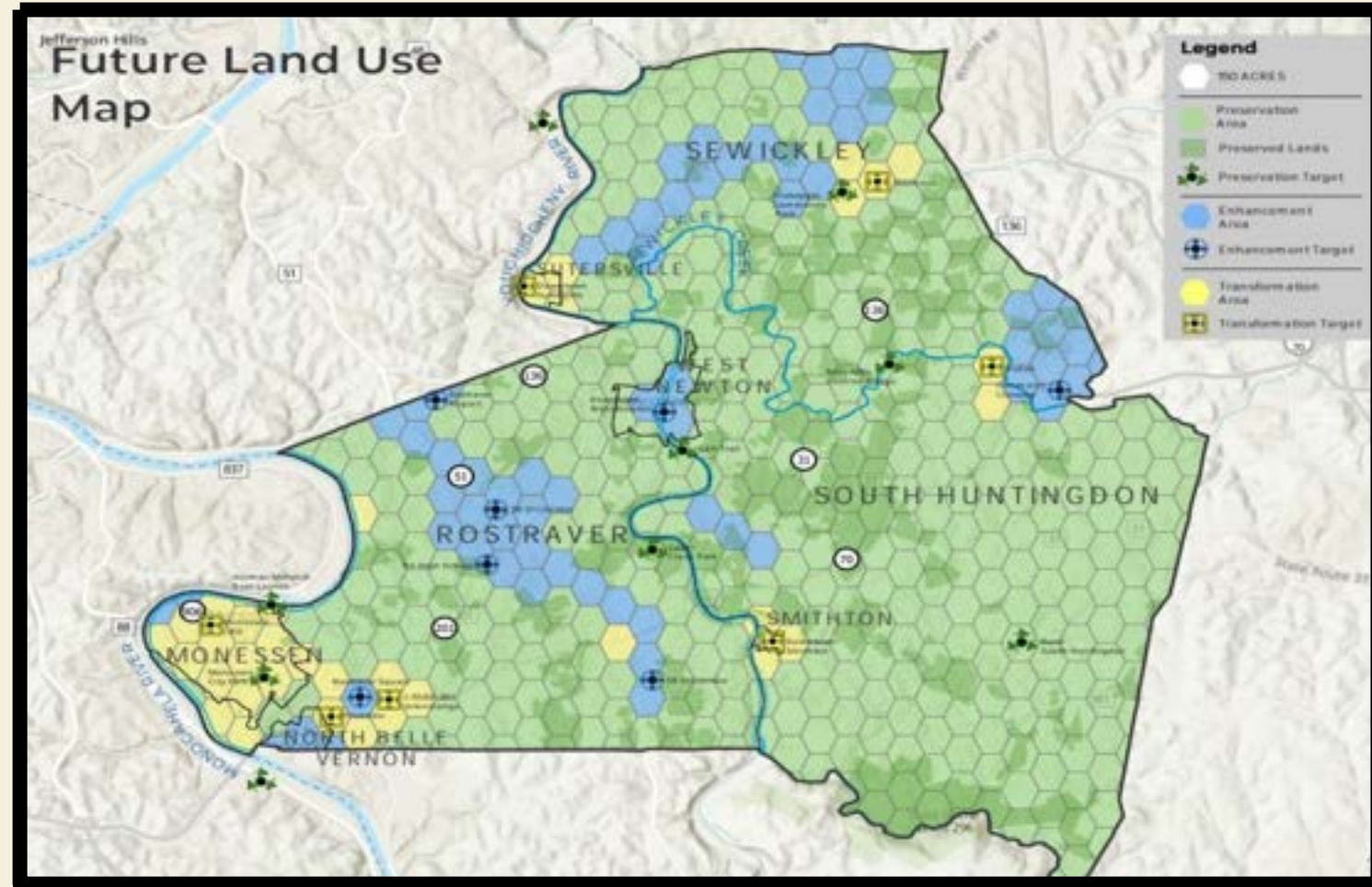


Less ← Preserve Enhance Transform → More
Spectrum of Change



Land Use

Strategies and Actions
Priority Locations
Future Land Use Map





Mobility...Don't Get Stuck in a Sticky Situation

Mobility!

LIVE

WORK

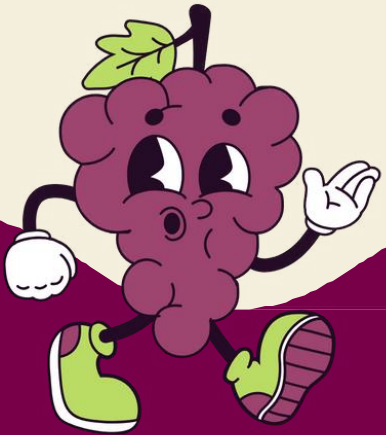
PLAY

WORSHIP



Mobility

Strategies and Actions
Priority Project Lists
Mapping
Funding Opportunities



Planning District Process Layers



County Comprehensive Plan

Mobility

Land Use

Aligning Strategies

What's a Plan Without Implementation??



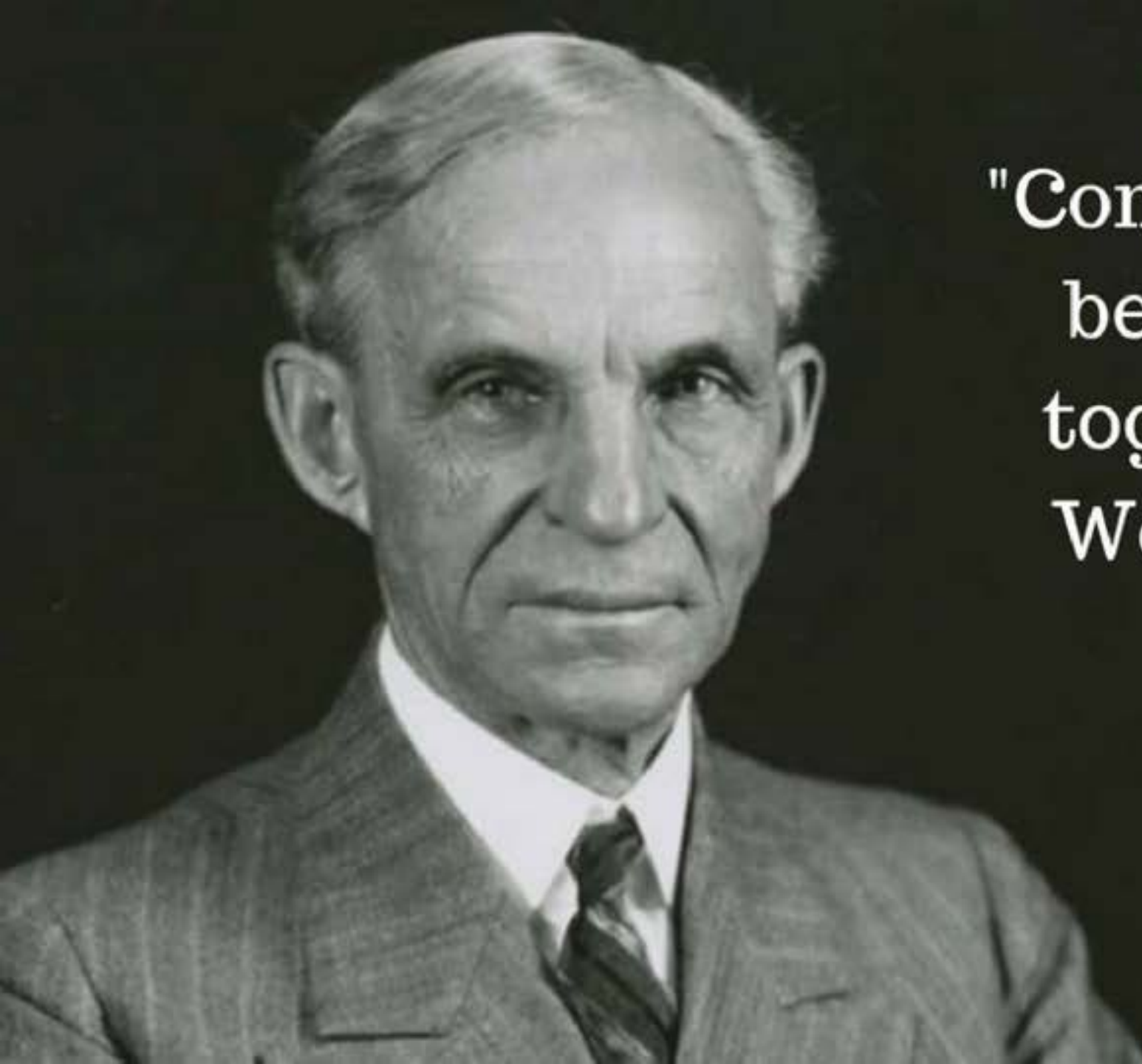
What's a Sandwich without Chips??

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Multi-Municipal Blight Fight
Transit Circuit
Regional Code Enforcement
Council of Government
Marketing/Placemaking
Recreational Assets



Local Issues...Common Opportunity



"Coming together is the
beginning. Keeping
together is progress.
Working together is
success."

Henry Ford

Planning District Process Layers

County Comprehensive Plan

Mobility

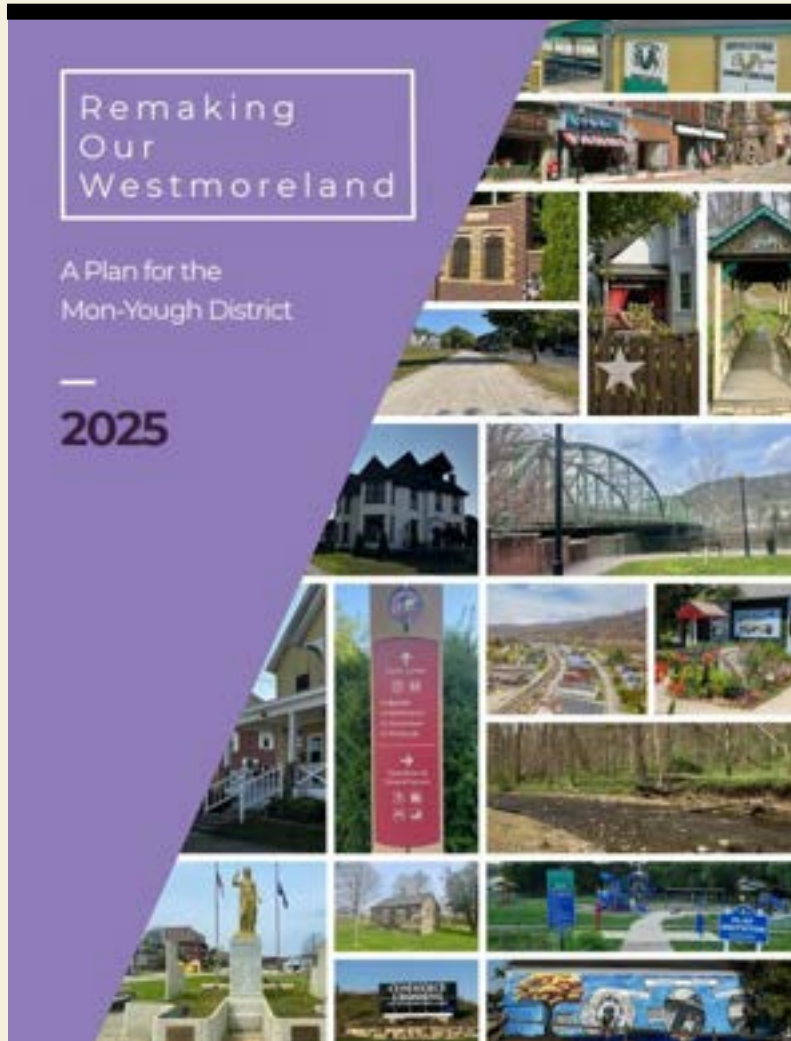
Land Use

Aligning Strategies

Intergovernmental Cooperation



PLANNING DISTRICT PROGRESS



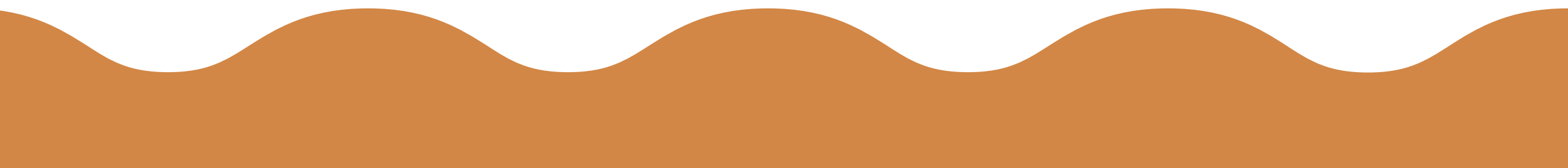


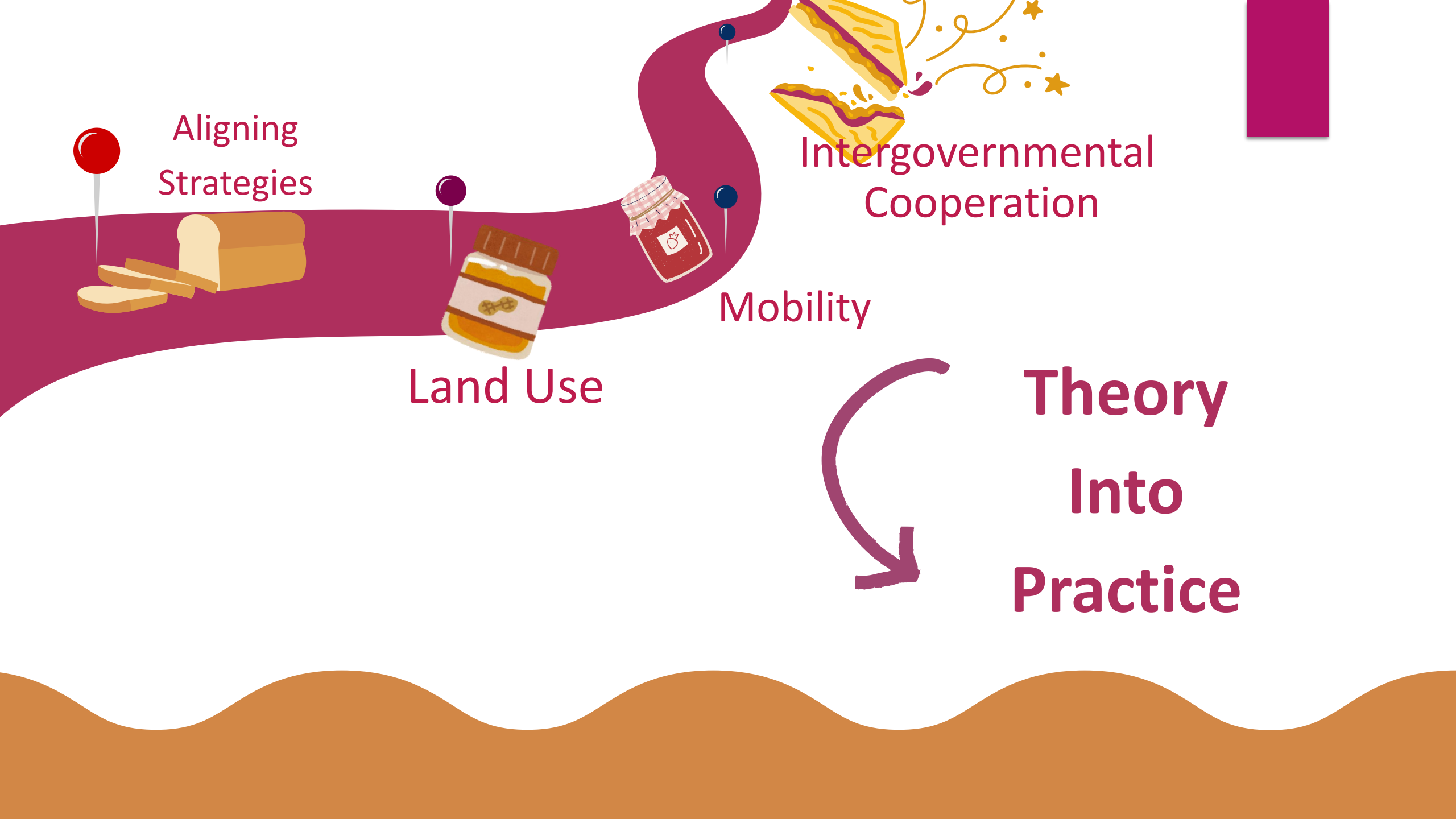
FROM FRAGMENTATION TO COLLABORATION: THE PLANNING DISTRICT APPROACH CHALLENGES

WESTMORELAND COUNTY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

JILLIAN CASWELL, PLANNER II

JCASWELL@WESTMORELANDCOUNTYPA.GOV







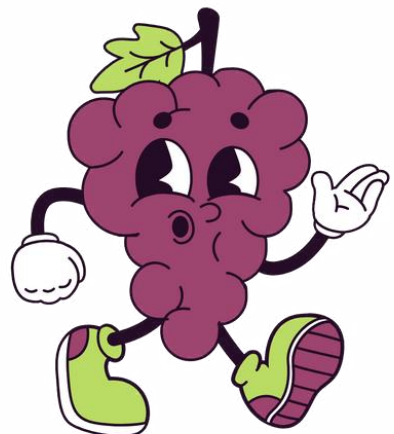
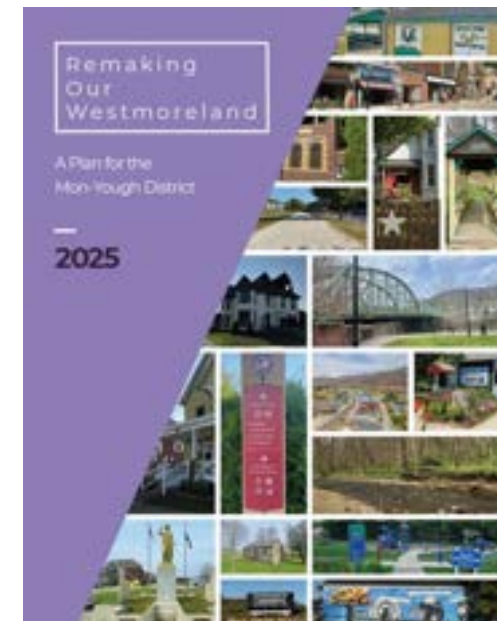
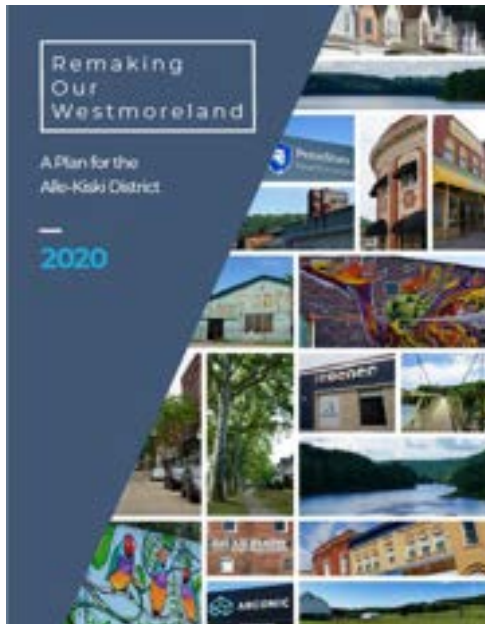
**I am once again asking
for flavor.**

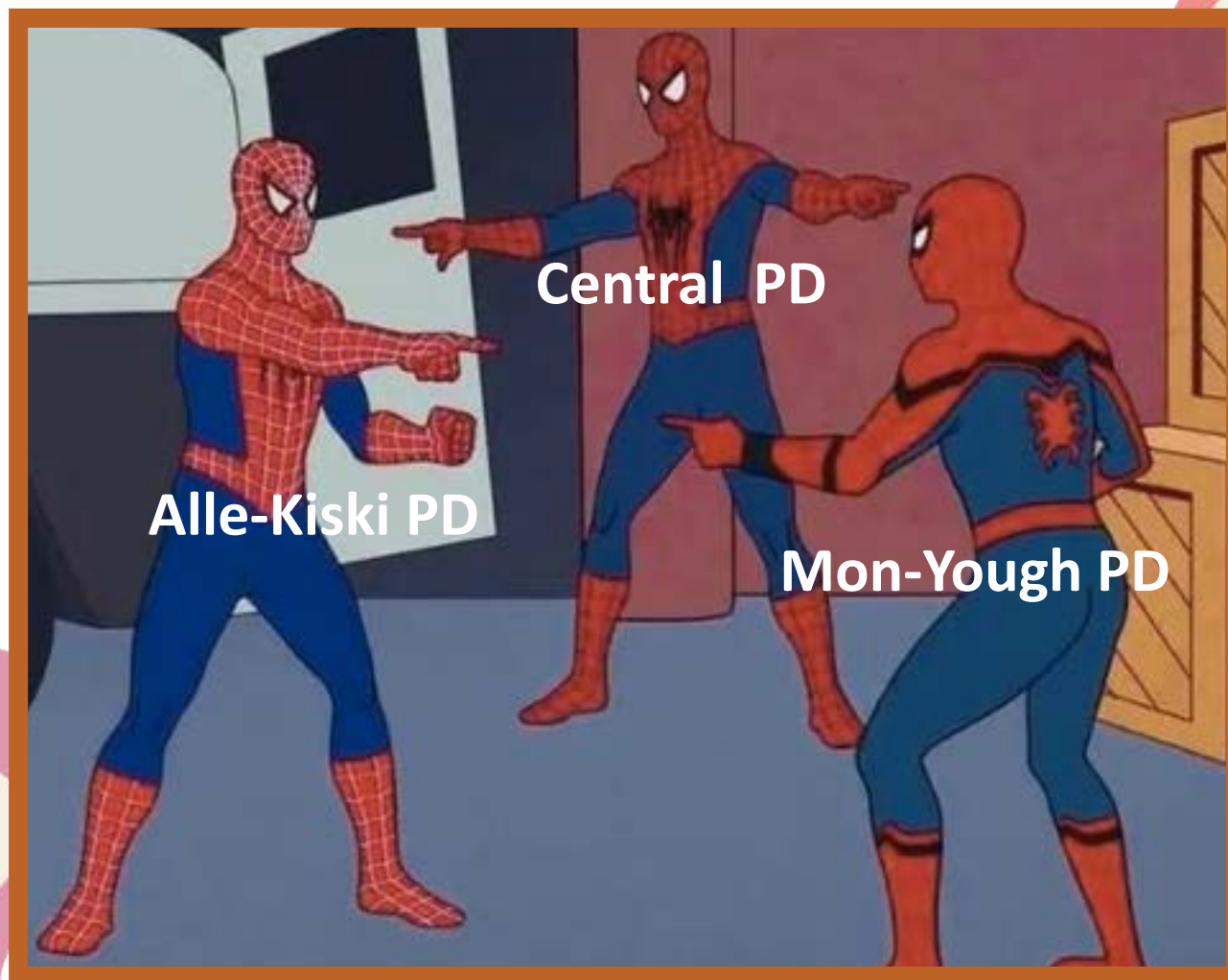
Westmoreland Planning Districts

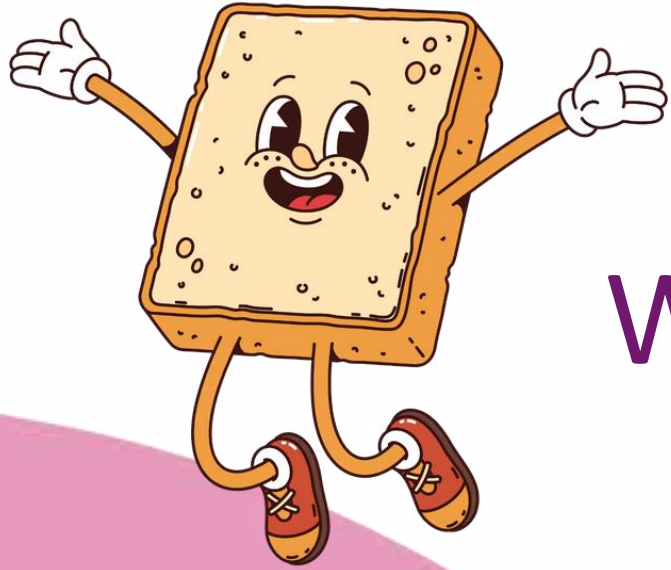
**Alle-Kiski Planning
District**

**Central Planning
District**

**Mon-Yough
Planning District**

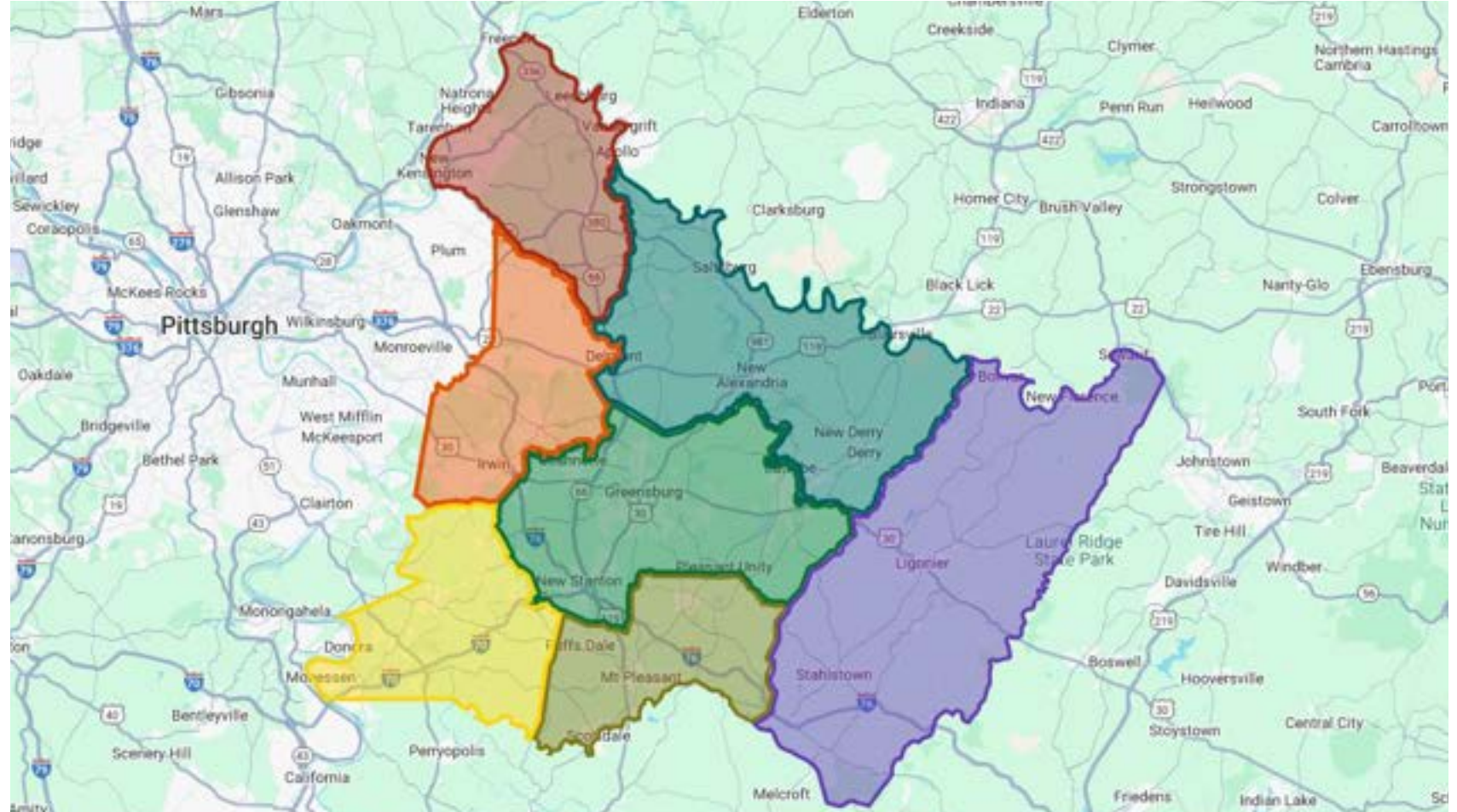






WORKING AROUND EXISTING COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

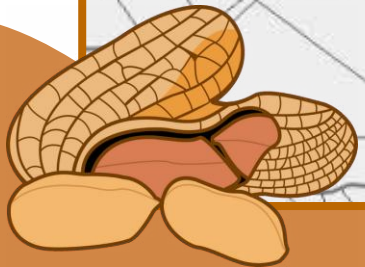
Westmoreland Planning Districts



Building Strategy Around Regional Differences. . .



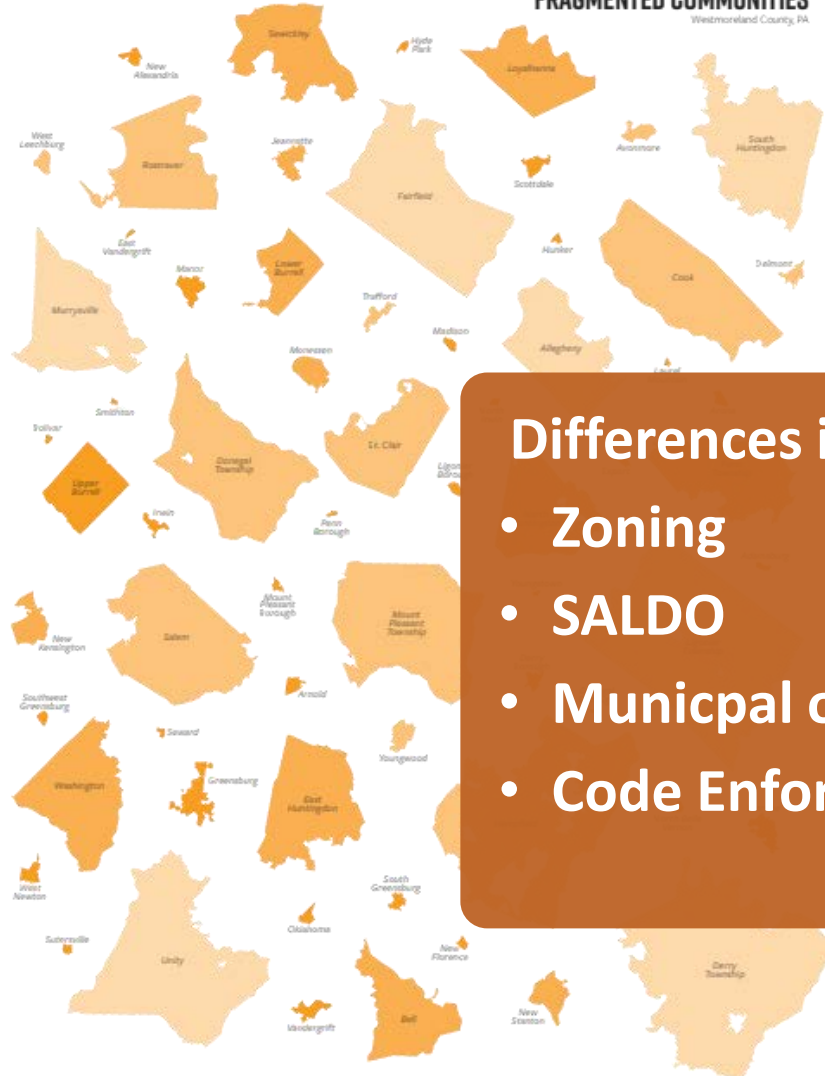
Sparse Rural Communities V. Dense Urban Communities



LEVELS OF LOCAL CONTROL

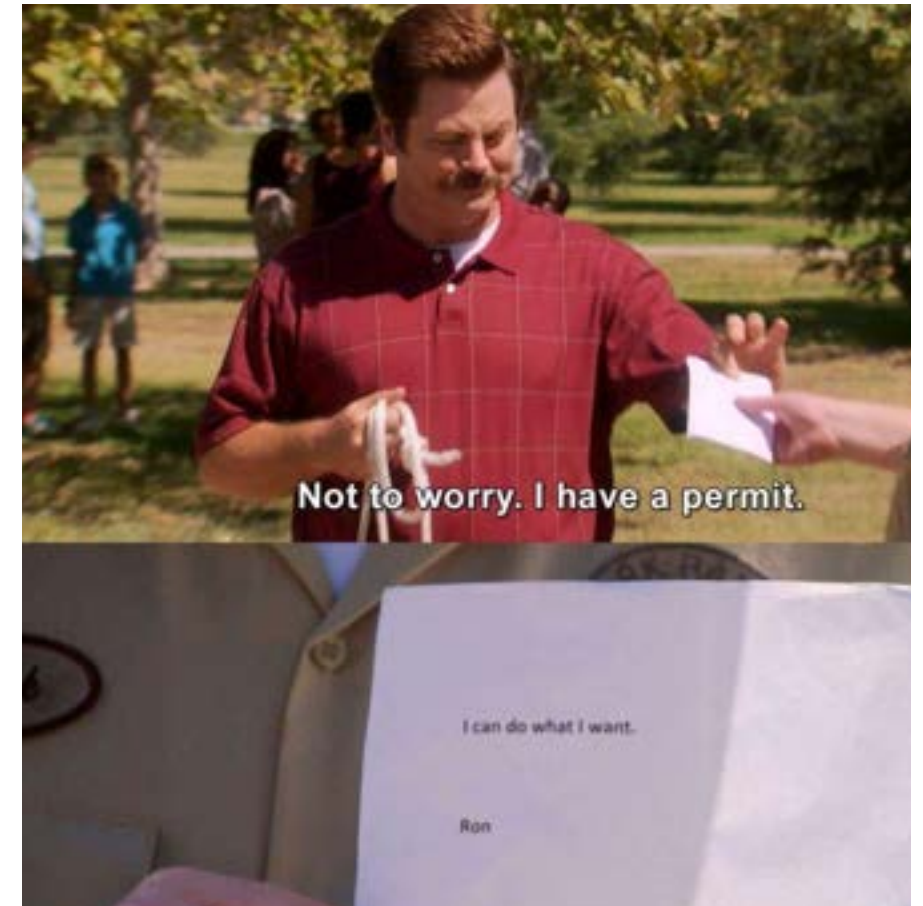
FRAGMENTED COMMUNITIES

Westmoreland County, PA



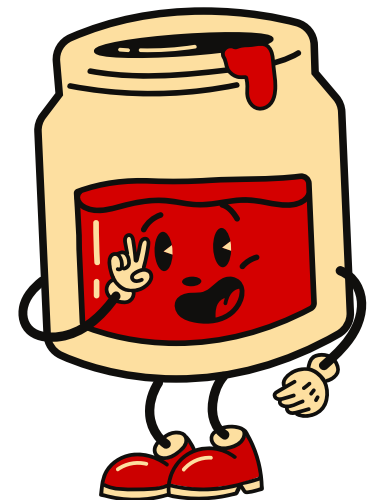
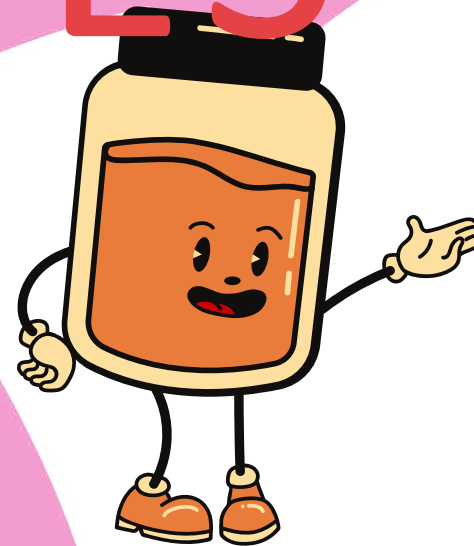
Differences in Policies & Programs

- Zoning
- SALDO
- Municipal ordinances
- Code Enforcement

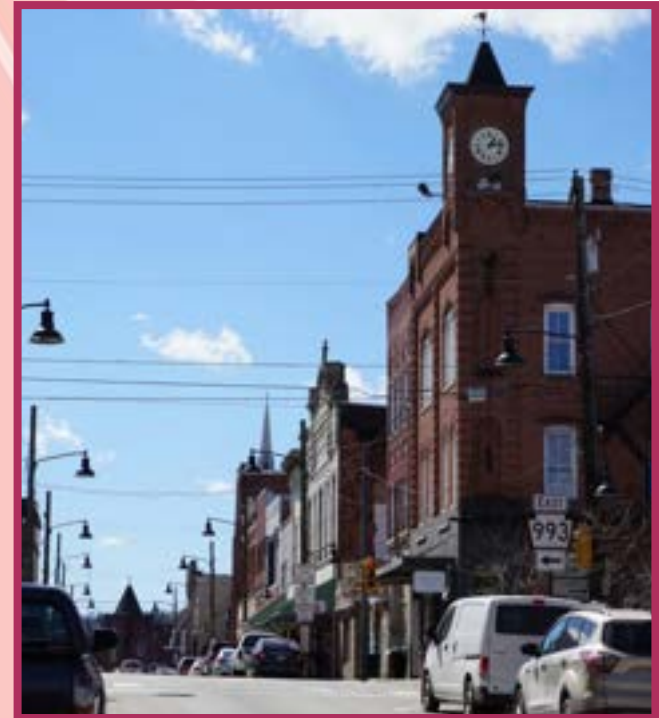


ALIGNING

VALUES



PRESERVATION V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



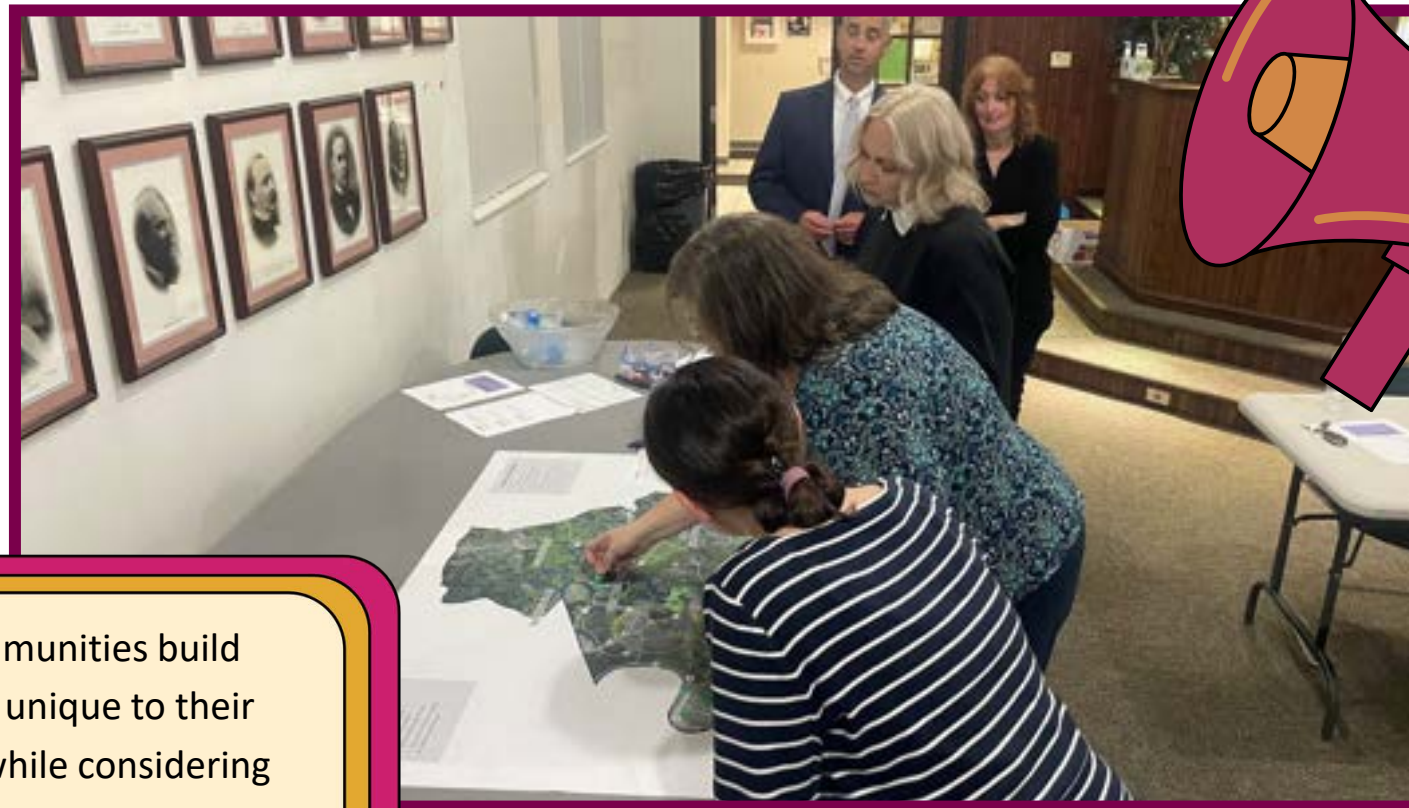
NIMBYISM...



HOW CAN WE HELP COMMUNITIES ALIGN VALUES?



Make sure each community is heard and provides input...



help communities build strategies unique to their priorities while considering regional priorities as well...

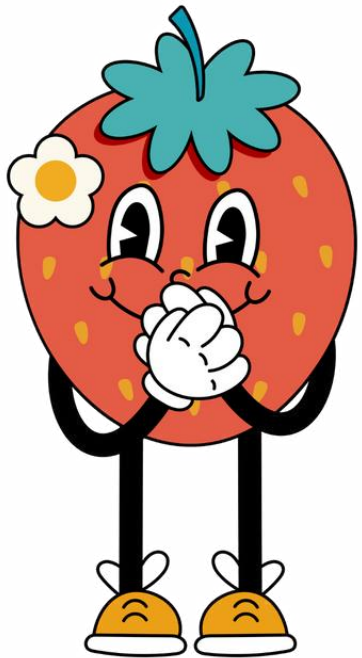
THIRD PARTY FACILIATATION



Personality Types & Leadership Styles



WILLINGNESS & OPENMINDEDNESS



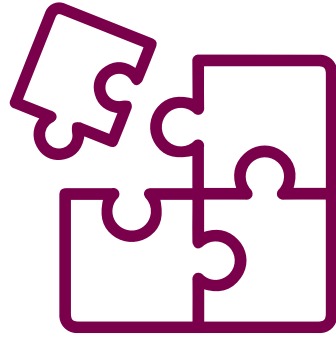


**IT IS THE MOST EXCLUSIVE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT EVENT OF THE YEAR.**

BUILDING A TEAM



PLANNING DISTRICT PROCESS



Aligning
Strategies



Land Use
Planning

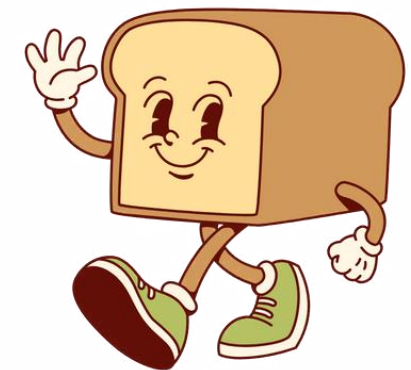


Mobility
Planning



Intergovernmental
Cooperation

**"You learn it through endless repetition until it belongs to you." —
Jacques Pepin, on becoming a great chef**





GET TO WORK CHEFS!

That's a wrap

Centre Regional Planning Agency

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- Jenna Wargo, AICP, Principal Land Use Planner

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