

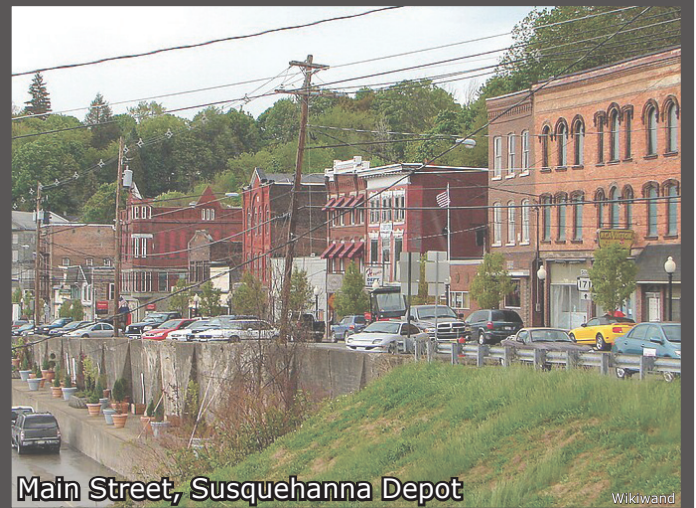
Oakland Susquehanna Comprehensive Plan 2026

Borough Mural
Meghan and Michelle Kiernan Artists



State Street (SR 92), Oakland Borough

Google Earth



Main Street, Susquehanna Depot

Wikiwand



Susquehanna River Sojourn 2024

Susquehanna Greenway



Ira Reynolds Park

Susquehanna Independent News

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pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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**This Comprehensive Plan is funded in part by the
Pennsylvania Department of Community
& Economic Development**

Location Map

SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

These are the borders of Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot Borough.

The two boroughs, in northern Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, are immediately adjacent to each other, separated only by the Susquehanna River, and connected by the Veterans Memorial Bridge (State Route 92).

Each municipality enjoys shared access to area public schools, local healthcare facilities, and the Susquehanna River. Two State Routes (highways) exist allowing travel to and from the greater region, while a railroad system continues to ship freight through Susquehanna Depot.

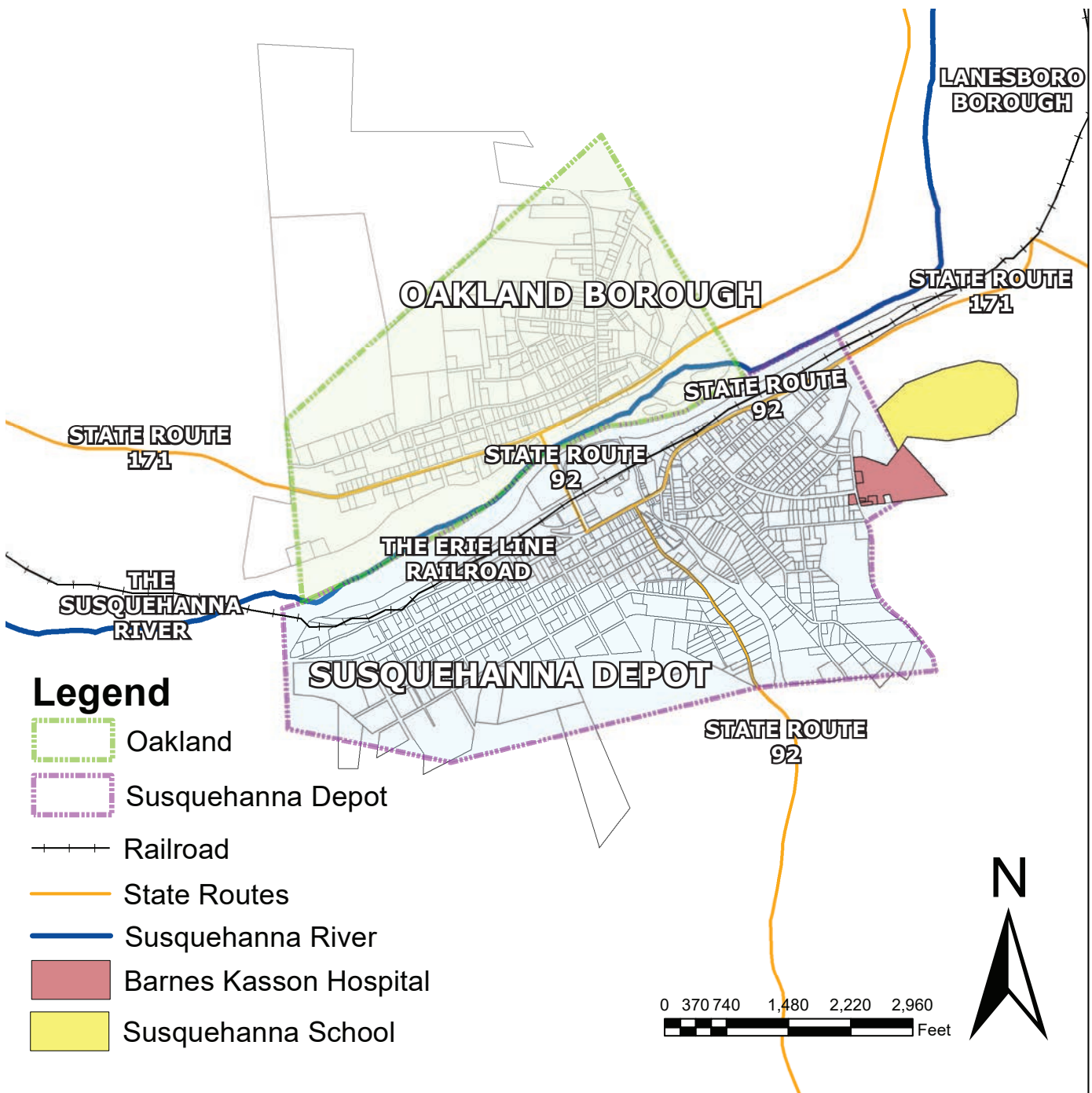


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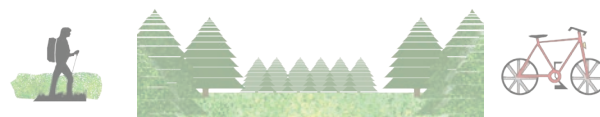


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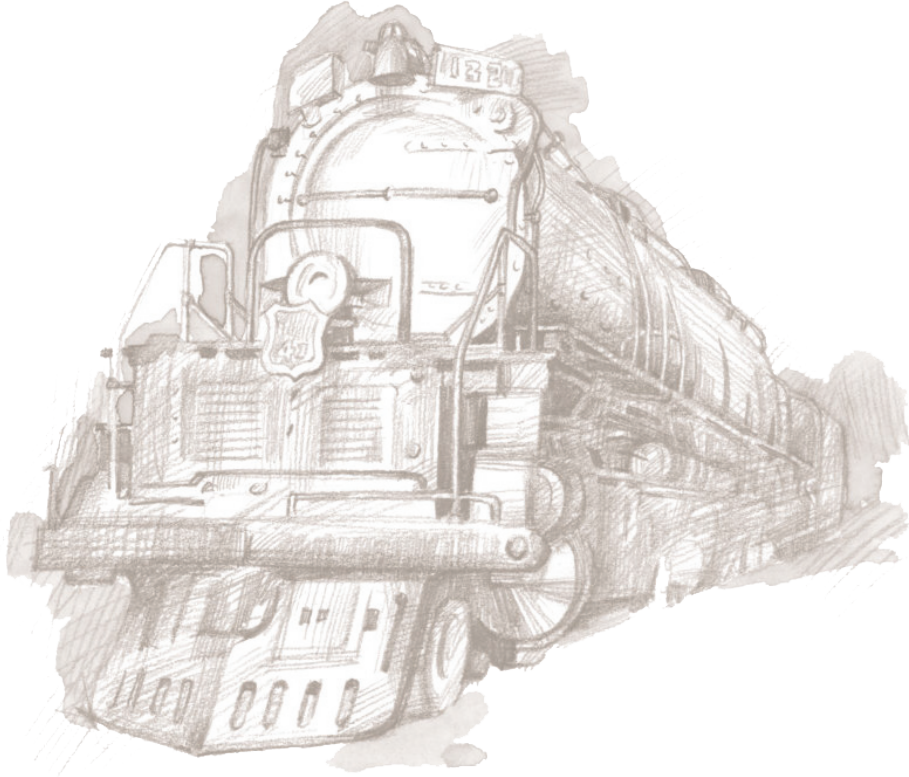
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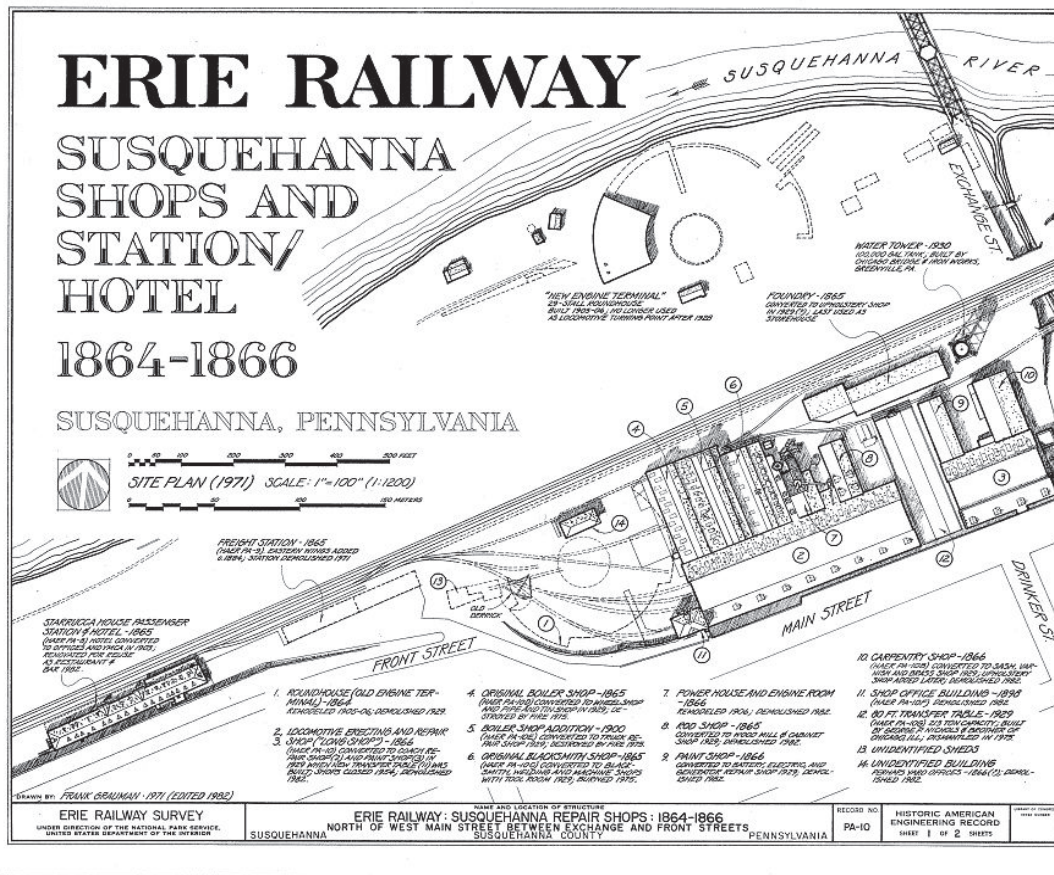
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I

Introduction



I-I. State Mandated Comprehensive Plan Review

Act 247, Article III, Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires local municipalities to review and update their Comprehensive Plan at least once every ten years. This requirement underscores the importance the Commonwealth places on planning at the local level. Over the course of a decade, communities often experience a variety of changes and emerging issues. While the MPC establishes a minimum review period, continuous evaluation of zoning and land use ordinances by local leadership provides the greatest benefit to the community.

The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) governs local planning in Pennsylvania. The MPC provides guidance and establishes requirements for local officials to follow when developing, reviewing, and implementing a comprehensive plan. Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot Borough recognize the value of assessing their current conditions and establishing a shared vision for the next ten years. This Comprehensive Plan was prepared and adopted in accordance with the requirements of the MPC.

I-II. VISION STATEMENT

Oakland and Susquehanna Depot Boroughs are two communities along the Susquehanna River in northern Pennsylvania that have become welcoming regional destinations, offering a variety of employment and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Community revitalization efforts, including building renovations, blight reduction initiatives, and recognition as both an “Outdoor Town” and a “River Town,” have made these boroughs highly desirable places to live.

As the goals and recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan are achieved, the area will experience a 10 percent increase in population, a sustained \$5,000 increase in median household income, and an enhanced quality of life for residents—all while preserving the region’s scenic beauty and rural character.

Ira Reynolds Park



Source: Google Earth 2025

I-III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough, two communities along the Susquehanna River in Susquehanna County, have developed together, over the last century; relying on Susquehanna Depots shops, businesses, and rail line corridor, the Veterans Memorial Bridge, and Oakland Borough's single-family homes where workers prefer to reside. Over the years, the population and economics of both communities have moved in lockstep as each have relied heavily on the Erie Railway for employment, goods, and influence from New York City and Binghamton, New York.

Today, the framework from early development remains, albeit with substantial blight and heightened economic need. Officials from both communities have reviewed the public requests made during the comprehensive planning process, inventoried infrastructure, and land uses, analyzed economic needs, and charted their course for the next ten years.

The resulting Comprehensive Plan includes achievable recommendations that support local economics, highlight the area's heritage, welcome young families, and new businesses, and promote renovations and development. High priority goals contained in the plan also include maintaining the area's rural character, remedying the imbalance between income and home ownership in the area by supporting renovations and construction of new homes, reducing the number of rentals owned by a absentee landlords, creating additional assisted living facilities, offering educational opportunities beyond high school, and improving employment prospects by encouraging business growth.

The planning committee is also interested in promoting tourism by pursuing an "Outdoor Town" designation through the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, to further highlight the area's scenic beauty and outdoor activities and bolster a pedestrian connection to the D&H Trail system in Lanesboro.

Along with these large-scale changes, Officials from both Susquehanna and Oakland Boroughs must work together to ensure that they remain fiscally responsible, protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens, and guide growth so it has the best chance to be successful. The re-establishment of a local police presence, enhancement of emergency services, enforcement of local codes and ordinances, and welcoming needed amenities, like a hardware store locally, are additional keys to the area's revitalization.

-the Comprehensive Planning Committee



Source: Endlessmtnlifestyles.com

I-IV. THE ERIE RAIL LINE

The first plans for the New York and Erie Railroad were developed and presented to the public in 1831. The proposed route passed through Susquehanna County, where construction costs were expected to be lower. However, with the recent completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, many local farmers saw little need to invest in a freight rail line, believing the canal provided an effective means of transporting goods.

Fortunately for the region, the terrain along several alternative routes proved more challenging and costly to develop. As a result, the railroad ultimately selected the more economical route through Susquehanna Depot along the Susquehanna River. Despite this decision, local residents remained skeptical of the railroad's potential economic benefits and were reluctant to grant rights-of-way across their farms or sell their properties. Securing the necessary rights-of-way and easements took approximately nine years.

Construction of the Erie Rail Line began in 1848 and was completed in 1851. As a major hub supporting the railroad's construction and operations, Susquehanna Depot experienced significant growth and was incorporated as a borough in 1853. Throughout the decade, skilled mechanics, railroad workers, and their families relocated to the area. Development rapidly expanded within the borough, including the construction of machine shops, schools, banks, and the Starrucca House, which served as both a hotel and railroad station. A wooden bridge spanning the Susquehanna River connected Susquehanna Depot to Oakland Borough, where much of the area's residential development was concentrated.



In 1890 4,000 immigrants came to the area in search of prosperity. These immigrants were mostly from the coal, bluestone quarry, and agricultural businesses. The Susquehanna-Oakland region saw their working population increase 1400%, and with it, productivity grew.

In 1903, electricity was introduced to the area. That same year, the Starrucca House—the local passenger train station, which included an opera house, hotel rooms, and other public amenities—closed because newer trains could run around the clock and required fewer stops.

From 1910 to 1945, the Erie Rail Line faced strikes and increasing financial difficulties. As a result, workers and their families left the area in search of employment.

V. FREIGHT AND INDUSTRY



The area took another big financial hit in 1947 when trains began running on diesel fuel, a more efficient fuel than the coal used throughout the region. Population continued to decline and only a few shops remained.

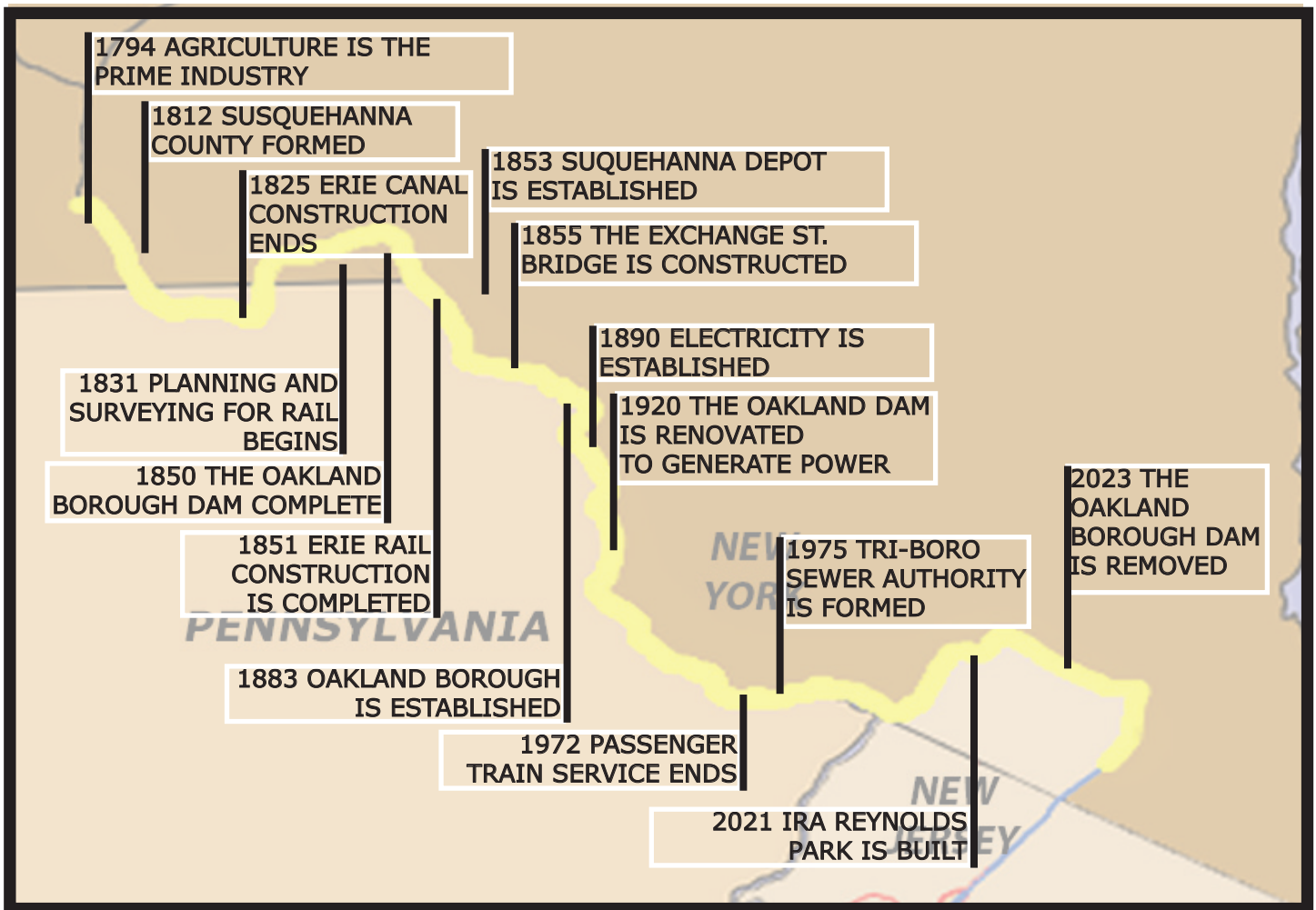
From 1950-1960 it is estimated that the workforce shrunk 90%. By 1960, with the automobile becoming America's primary mode of transportation, the Erie Rail Company began scraping and salvaging the remains of its business. With this, even more workers fled for better and opportunities.

In 1972 the last passenger train ran through Susquehanna. And four years later, the freight line stopped running. Today, the rail line is for freight only and no longer stops in Susquehanna Depot.



Passing between the two boroughs, The Susquehanna River is fundamental to the quality of life of citizens. It has been the region's primary source of water, transport, and food since the area was founded. Throughout the decades the river's banks and waters were manipulated to benefit area residents, including the construction of multiple bridges between the boroughs and a hydroelectric dam. Most recently, area residents recognize the river as a unique scenic attraction that has the potential to provide a variety of recreational activities and attract thousands of visitors each year.

I-VI. SUSQUEHANNA-OAKLAND AREA TIMELINE



Figures 1.2 New York Susquehanna Rail Line

I-VII. THE NEED FOR CONTINUED PLANNING

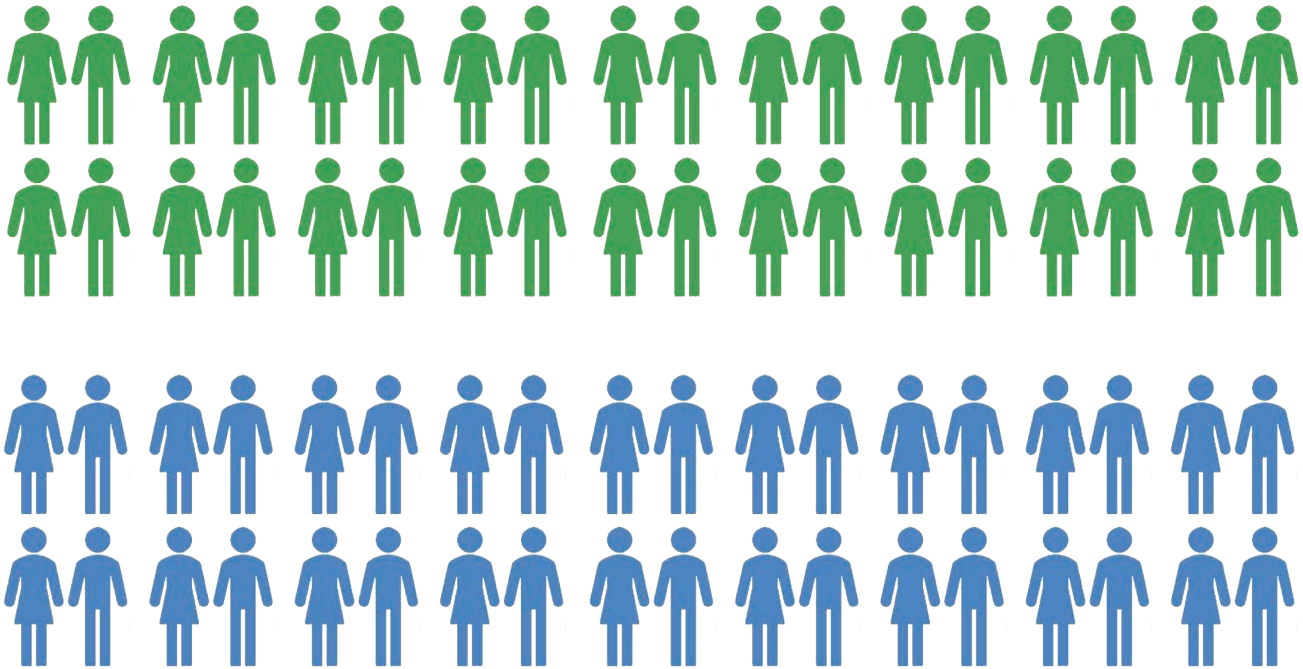
This Comprehensive Plan should not be viewed as a document to be placed on a shelf, but rather as an integral component of an ongoing community management process. Its success depends upon the commitment, vision, and leadership of the public officials entrusted with guiding the community's growth and development.

A Comprehensive Plan serves as a blueprint for the future development of a municipality. It establishes a framework for decision-making and should be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changing conditions, community values, emerging issues, and local priorities.

The success of the planning program will ultimately be measured by the extent to which its goals and recommendations are implemented. Achieving the Plan's vision will require active participation and support from residents, as well as sustained leadership and positive action by municipal officials.

II

POPULATION



II-I. POPULATION

Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough have always followed similar population trends throughout the years. Their populations have always been directly tied to local employment opportunities. Both boroughs have been on a steady decline since the closure of the rail line in the 1900's, which was the peak of their industrial history.

Although significant portions of Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough's housing and industry have fallen into disrepair, the area still maintains an attractive and preserved, scenic environment. This highly sought after, rural, and scenic environment continues to be a highly desirable place to live.

Similar municipalities in the Commonwealth are facing challenges like those found in Oakland and Susquehanna Boroughs today-- including unaffordable rents and mortgages and an increase in the number of vacant and declining buildings. If efforts can be made to improve the area's economics and local leaders achieve the actions contained in this report (securing new jobs and industry, remediating blight, supporting the construction of a variety of affordable housing types, and enhancing transportation opportunities, the population and quality of life will grow together.

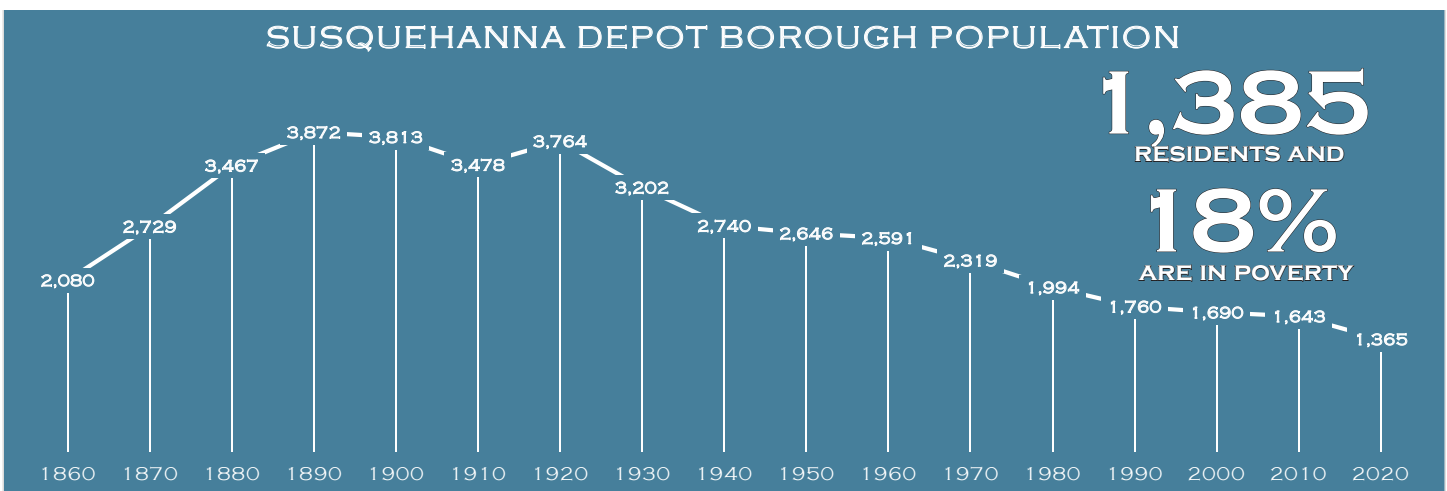
II-II. POPULATION SUSQUEHANNA DEPOT



Susquehanna Depot was once a thriving community characterized by economic opportunity and industrial growth. The area's primary industries were railroad-related employment and agriculture. Over the past century, population levels have fluctuated significantly, closely reflecting the establishment, growth, and eventual decline of railroad operations in the region.

Although many physical reminders of this era remain—including the Veterans Memorial Bridge, the Starrucca House, former machine shop buildings, and the water tower—several of these historic structures are underutilized or in varying states of disrepair.

The decline of railroad-related manufacturing has had a lasting impact on the Borough's economy, tax base, and ability to maintain aging infrastructure and historic buildings. Today, the Borough would benefit greatly from the attraction of new industries and employment opportunities. Combined with the area's scenic rural character, access to the Susquehanna River, and abundance of open space, these opportunities have the potential to enhance the quality of life for current residents while attracting new families and investment to the community.



AVG. AGE
42.2

Age Break Down:

Under 18:	21%
18 to 64:	63%
65 And Over:	17%

51%
FEMALE

49%
MALE

Demographics

White:	97%
Black:	1%
Asian	1%
Other	1%

Figure 2.1 Susquehanna Depot Population

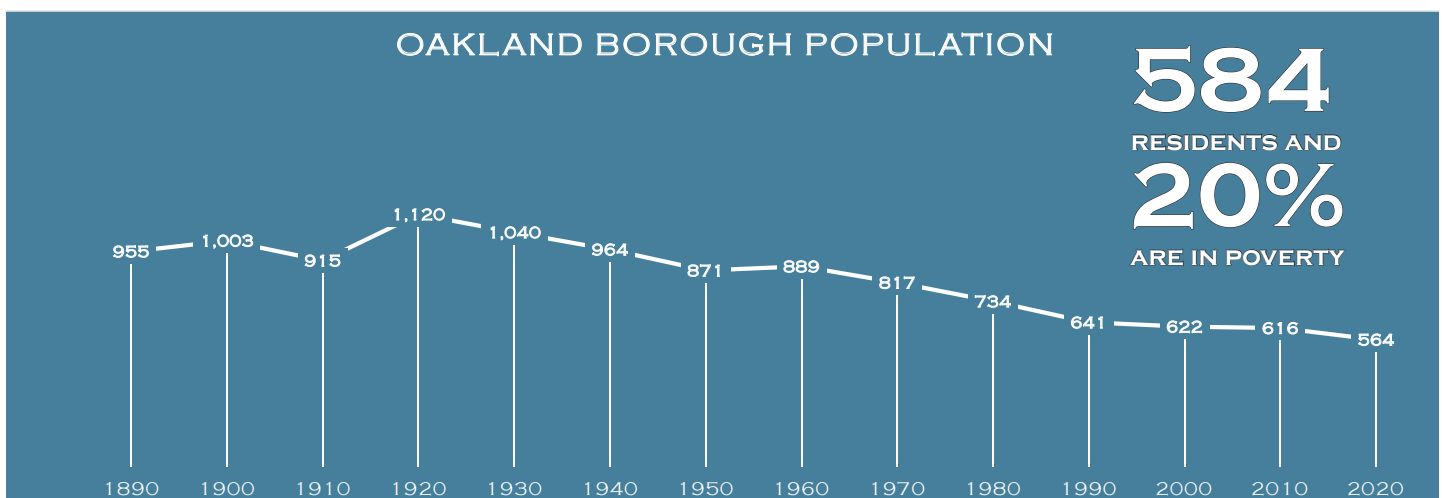


II-III. POPULATION OAKLAND BOROUGH

Oakland Borough has always featured a population that is slightly lower than its neighbor, Susquehanna Depot, yet it has had similar population fluctuations. Currently the Borough of Oakland features a population under 1,000 people, with a third of them under 18 years of age. This is a positive statistic to see, as it supports the idea that this rural and scenic area is a desirable location to live and raise children.

Both Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot can benefit from achieving planning strategies over the next ten years that will bolster housing availability and food for those within the prevalent poverty rate.

Oakland Borough enjoys a median age about ten years younger than that of Susquehanna Depot. The establishment of new industry, affordable housing, and the revitalization of dilapidated buildings and infrastructure will significantly benefit all area residents and families.



AVG. AGE
33.4

Age Break Down:

Under 18:	29%
18 to 64:	58%
65 And Over:	13%

47%
FEMALE

53%
MALE

Demographics

White:	95%
Hispanic:	2%
Other	3%

Figure 2.2 Oakland Borough Population

II-IV. SUSQUEHANNA EMPLOYMENT

56% BOROUGH EMPLOYMENT

62% STATE EMPLOYMENT

Occupation Sector

- Service occupations
- Management, Business, Science and Art occupations
- Sales and Office occupations
- Production, Transportation, Material moving occupations
- Natural resources, Construction and Maintenance occupations

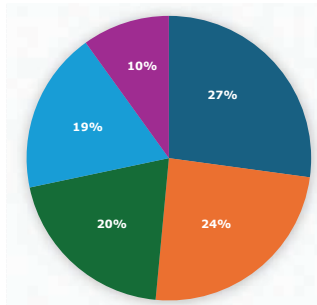


Figure 2.3 Susquehanna Depot Jobs by Sector

8%

SELF EMPLOYED

13%

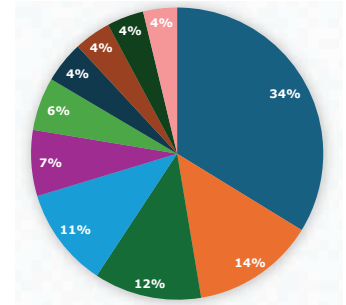
PRIVATE NON-PROFIT

19%

LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Local Industry

- Education services, Health care and Social assistance
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Food service
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, Warehouse, and Utilities
- Construction
- Finance, Insurance, Real estate, rentals, and leasing
- Professional scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste management
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining
- Retail Trade
- Information



604

LOCAL EMPLOYEES

60% EMPLOYMENT VIA PRIVATE COMPANIES

Employment opportunities in Susquehanna Depot are limited, and many residents commute outside the region for work. Historically, a significant share of local employment has been concentrated in healthcare and public education, which together employ more than 30 percent of the local workforce. The Borough would benefit from the expansion of local job opportunities and increased commercial activity.

Approximately 77 percent of employed residents commute by personal vehicle. Expanding transportation options may help improve access to employment and regional mobility. In addition, the development of manufacturing and distribution uses, particularly those that could leverage proximity to the existing freight rail line, may support commercial growth. If passenger rail service were to be re-established in the future, it could further enhance regional access and attract visitors.

Given its existing rail infrastructure, large undeveloped parcels, and underutilized buildings within the commercial core, the community has strong potential for economic development. These assets present opportunities to expand commercial activity, diversify employment options, and support jobs that provide family-sustaining wages.

WALK TO WORK

DRIVE

CARPOOL

PUBLIC TRANSIT

WORK FROM HOME



4%



77%



12%



2%



6%

26 MINUTE AVG COMMUTE

II-V. OAKLAND EMPLOYMENT

49% BOROUGH EMPLOYMENT

Occupation Sector

- Service occupations
- Management, Business, Science and Art occupations
- Sales and Office occupations
- Production, Transportation, Material moving occupations
- Natural resources, Construction and Maintenance occupations

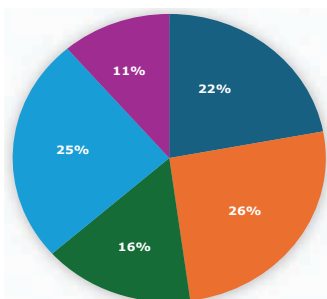


Figure 2.4 Oakland Borough Jobs by Sector

11% **25%**

SELF EMPLOYED

PRIVATE NON-PROFIT

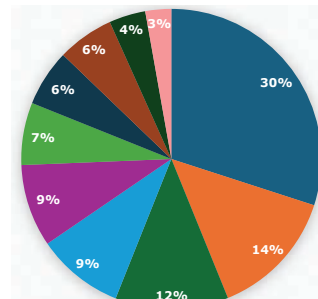
4%

LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

52% COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

Local Industry

- Education services, Health care and Social assistance
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Food service
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, Warehouse, and Utilities
- Retail Trade
- Professional scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste management
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining
- Construction
- Wholesale trade
- Other services, excluding public administration



186

LOCAL EMPLOYEES

60% EMPLOYMENT VIA PRIVATE COMPANIES

Oakland Borough faces employment and mobility challenges similar to those of its neighbor, Susquehanna Depot. Differences in overall employment levels are largely attributable to population size.

Based on available data, Oakland Borough residents appear to be highly dependent on personal vehicles for commuting. In the Comprehensive Plan public survey, no respondents indicated that they walk, bike, or use public transportation to travel to work. In addition, Oakland Borough contains fewer commercial establishments and retail opportunities compared to surrounding communities.

Oakland Borough residents may benefit from expanded transportation options and increased commercial development within the Borough, including improved pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, pathways, and potential transit stops.

DRIVE



81%

CARPOOL



13%

OTHER



2%

WORK FROM HOME



4%

24 MINUTE AVG COMMUTE

II-VI.ECONOMICS

Susquehanna County

Susquehanna County has a median income of \$66,930; an employment rate of 52%; 6.8% of residents do not have health care coverage; and the average household size is 2.43 persons.

Susquehanna Depot

Susquehanna Depot has a median household income of \$57,560, an employment rate of 56%, and 11.4% of residents do not have health care coverage. The average household size is 2.62 persons.

Oakland Borough

Oakland Borough has a median household income is \$51,250, an employment rate of 49%, and 13.2% of residents do not have health care coverage. The average household size is 2.78 persons.

These statistics signify a strong potential for growth in the area. Household sizes are larger than both the County and State (2.35 people), suggesting a desire to live in these municipalities and begin families.

Although, median household income and employment rates are significantly lower than the County's and State's (25% lower). Other statistics showing financial issues include each Borough's employment rate; these are 5% and 10% lower than Pennsylvania's, respectively. Eighteen percent of Susquehanna Depot's residents live below the poverty line, while 20% of residents live below the poverty line in Oakland Borough. Each of these are double that of the County, State, and Country.

Migration

Migration to the area is an important attribute to consider regarding sustainably growing the population and welcoming young families to the area. When the population of a region is declining or stagnant, promoting migration is a significant strategy to bolster the workforce and grow business and commerce.

According to 2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, fifty-five people immigrated to Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough from within Susquehanna County; fifteen immigrated from a different county within Pennsylvania; and twenty-two people migrated from outside the Commonwealth.

Both Susquehanna Depot and Oakland can benefit from promoting the area as a scenic, beautiful, rural place to live and raise a family, with affordable housing, public amenities, and job opportunities that pay family sustaining wages. Action items (goals and objectives) are included at the end of this chapter and in the Implementation Matrix at the end of this Plan that, once achieved, can greatly support population and economic growth for these municipalities.

Susquehanna Depot		Oakland	
Households	497	Households	188
Houses on SNAP	22%	Houses on SNAP	22%
Total Families	336	Total Families	117
Avg. Household Size	2.62	Avg. Household Size	2.78
Avg. Household Income	\$57,560	Avg. Household Income	\$51,250
Avg. Yearly Expense	\$10,834	Avg. Yearly Expense	\$8,362

Figure 2.8 Economic Statistics

II-VII. TAXATION

Susquehanna Depot

Susquehanna Depot Borough generated \$638,243 in revenue in 2023 according to their PA DCED 2023 audit statement. This statement shows total annual capital expenditures, including annual insurances, liabilities, operations, public safety, and highway and street maintenance. The municipalities capital budget (revenues and expenditures) for the year showed a deficit of (\$14,876). This deficit signifies that the municipalities spending is unsustainable long term.

In the past, Susquehanna Depot had a local police officer. They continue to maintain vehicles and tools to support a police force. To bolster safety in the area, both municipalities see the benefit in hiring and maintaining a new officer.

Susquehanna Depot relies heavily on Real Estate taxes to cover their annual expenditures. They also receive substantial tax income (\$69,173) from the receipt of liquid fuels taxes from the State. Although, they continue to have issues with degrading streets and infrastructure. In 2018, with guidance from the County, Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot considered regionalization of their emergency services and other infrastructure to reduce costs and ensure the rural area receives these services. Unfortunately, this never came to fruition.

During development of this Comprehensive Plan, Susquehanna Depot Borough reported that it had hired a new code enforcement officer and was open to becoming a home rule municipality, establishing an advisory planning board to review shared services and costs, and reassessing annual taxes. As a home rule municipality, its government structure, authority, and tax system could be streamlined, allowing taxes to be organized by category and proportion to better support specific expenditures instead of relying mainly on recently sold, renovated, or reassessed properties.

Based on population estimate from the American Community Survey in 2023 of 1,365, tax revenue per person in Susquehanna Depot Borough was \$327.54.

Oakland Borough

Oakland Borough was able to generate \$362,581 in revenue in 2023 according to their 2023 audit statement. This statement shows total expenditures in their capital funds to cover annual insurances, liabilities, operations, public safety, and highway and street maintenance. This resulted in a deficit of \$3,185 in their general fund for the year.

During this planning process of this Plan, Oakland Borough was able to adopt rental and vacancy ordinances. These, combined with a newly hired code enforcement officer, have allowed them to accurately assess blight, have some unsafe conditions at homes corrected, and assess the condition of the homes and structures. Oakland Borough has also expressed a willingness to obtain a home rule charter, reorganize taxes, and form an advisory planning committee to consider shared infrastructure. These can be particularly beneficial strategies for Oakland Borough as they rely even more on real estate tax millage for annual revenues than Susquehanna Depot does and are in a similar deficit.

Based on a population estimate from the American Community Survey in 2023 of 563, tax revenue per person is \$405.01.

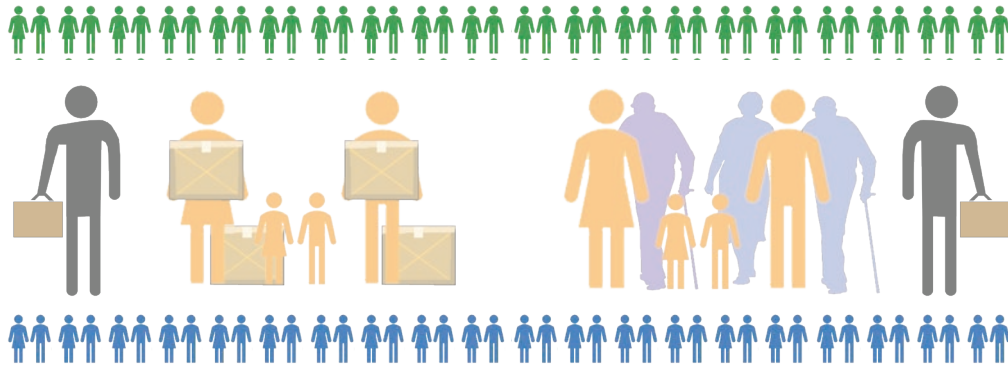
District	Real Estate	Act 13	Library	Boro	Special
Oakland Borough	12.5	-2	0.33	24.7	0
Susquehanna Depot	12.5	-2	0.33	25.7	0

Figure 2.9 Tax Millage 2025

POPULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

(GOALS & OBJECTIVES)

II



- 1. Make this document publicly accessible to all residents so they are able to clearly see the wishes of the community and the opportunities and constraints that exist.**
- 2. Proactively seek and attract new businesses to the Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot area by highlighting regional assets, including access to the Susquehanna River, the existing freight rail infrastructure and its potential for distribution, the area's scenic character, and available vacant properties suitable for development.**
- 3. Form an advisory planning committee to review and coordinate shared uses and infrastructure.**
- 4. Consider obtaining a home rule charter which will require a vote on a public ballot and, if successful, restructuring and reorganizing each municipal board as well as taxes.**
- 5. Consider current area cost of living expenses, Borough employees and personnel, capital budgets (revenue and debts), code enforcement, infrastructure degradation, and existing blight then adjust area taxes to ensure each annual budget is balanced.**
- 6. Consider hiring a joint police force for both municipalities to ensure all citizens are safe and receive adequate assistance when needed.**
- 7. Investigate regionalization potentials and costs for coordinated emergency services to ensure all citizens receive adequate care and help when needed.**

III

The Community Today



III-I. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Oakland–Susquehanna study area features a rich history shaped by the Susquehanna River, a freight rail line, residential development, and large facilities associated with railroad component manufacturing. If existing vacant and underutilized structures within both municipalities are rehabilitated to current code, the area may have the capacity to support significant additional population growth over time.

A key challenge facing both municipalities is strengthening the local economy, reducing fiscal pressures, and ensuring that schools, healthcare facilities, and infrastructure can accommodate future demand.

In addition, statewide investments in river access projects along the Susquehanna River have improved public access and are expected to continue over the next decade. This natural resource is a defining feature of the community and contributes significantly to quality of life. Continued investment in river access and related amenities presents opportunities to further enhance recreation, tourism, and community development.

III-II. EXISTING ZONING

Below are the existing zoning maps for Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Boroughs. Both utilize 4-5 different zoning classifications. Single Family (R-SF), Two Family (R-TF), Central Business (CB), and Park and Industry (P+I).

While Oakland Borough has codified several ordinances, they have not adopted a zoning map or ordinance. Ample land for development does exist throughout Oakland Borough, some of which lends itself to building out new industry and commercial entities. Susquehanna Depot has zoned the river's edge to allow for public recreation and for industry. This zone is strategic because of the zone's proximity to the river, rail, line, and the sewage treatment plant.

It is recommended that the Boroughs form an advisory planning committee to evaluate proposed large-scale industrial sites and recommend zoning amendments and conditions for each Borough Council to consider. This committee would help both Councils protect residents from incompatible and nuisance land uses.

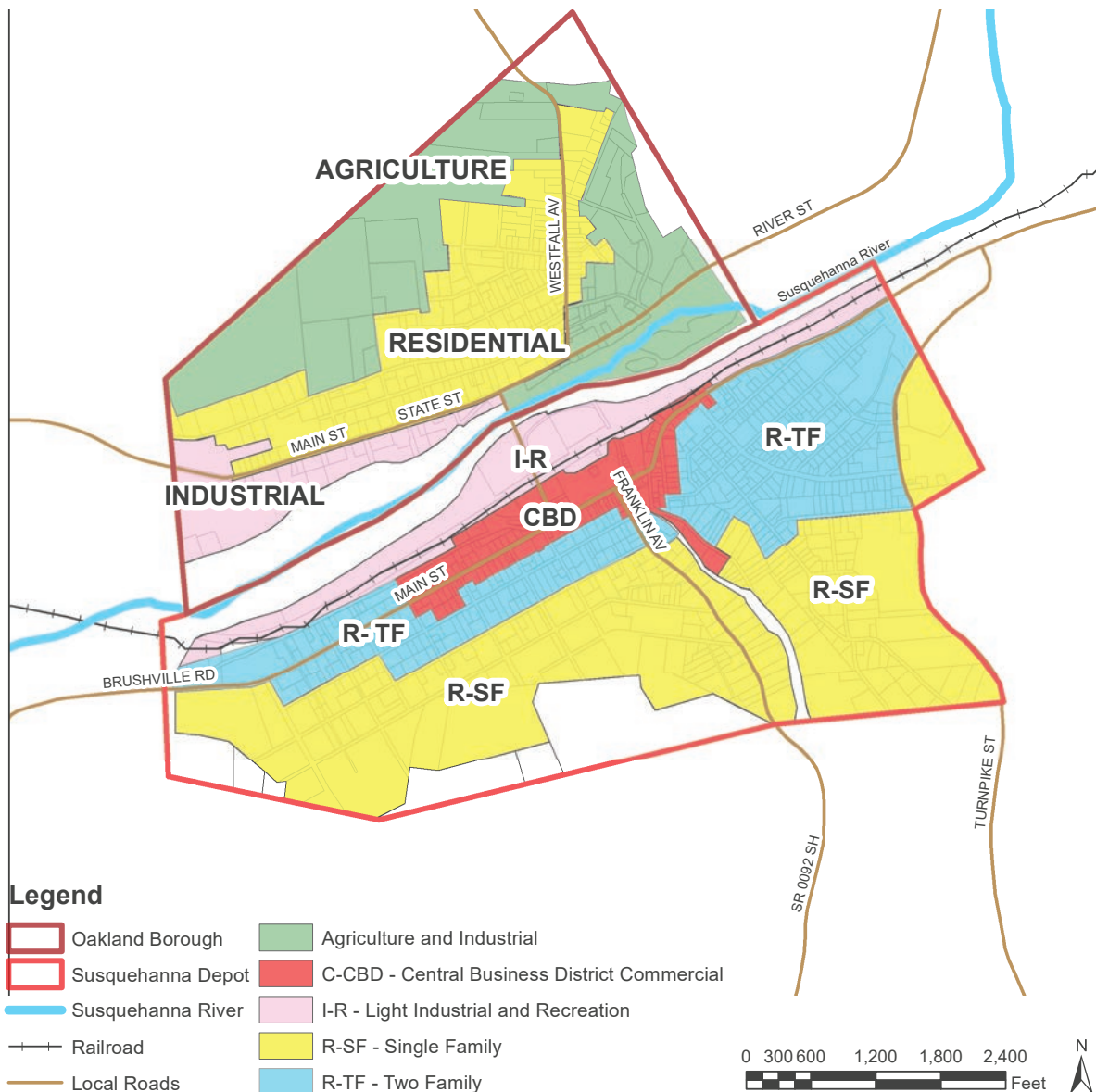


Figure 3.1 Zoning

III-III. EXISTING LAND USE

The accompanying map illustrates existing land uses within each borough and highlights the significant amount of open space present in both municipalities.

While there are multiple reasons property owners may not be full-time residents, both municipalities have experienced challenges related to rental properties, including instances where some landlords have failed to maintain essential services such as heat, water, and sewer for tenants. In some cases, code enforcement notices have not been consistently addressed in a timely manner.

Code enforcement efforts may include the use of violation notices, liens, and the implementation of rental, vacancy, and quality-of-life ordinances to help address these issues and reduce blight.

Oakland Borough has recently adopted rental and vacancy ordinances. These measures are intended to reduce the occupation of unsafe structures, improve oversight of rental properties, and support blight remediation efforts. They also help ensure that water and sewer services remain active for occupied rental units, provided accounts are kept in good standing.

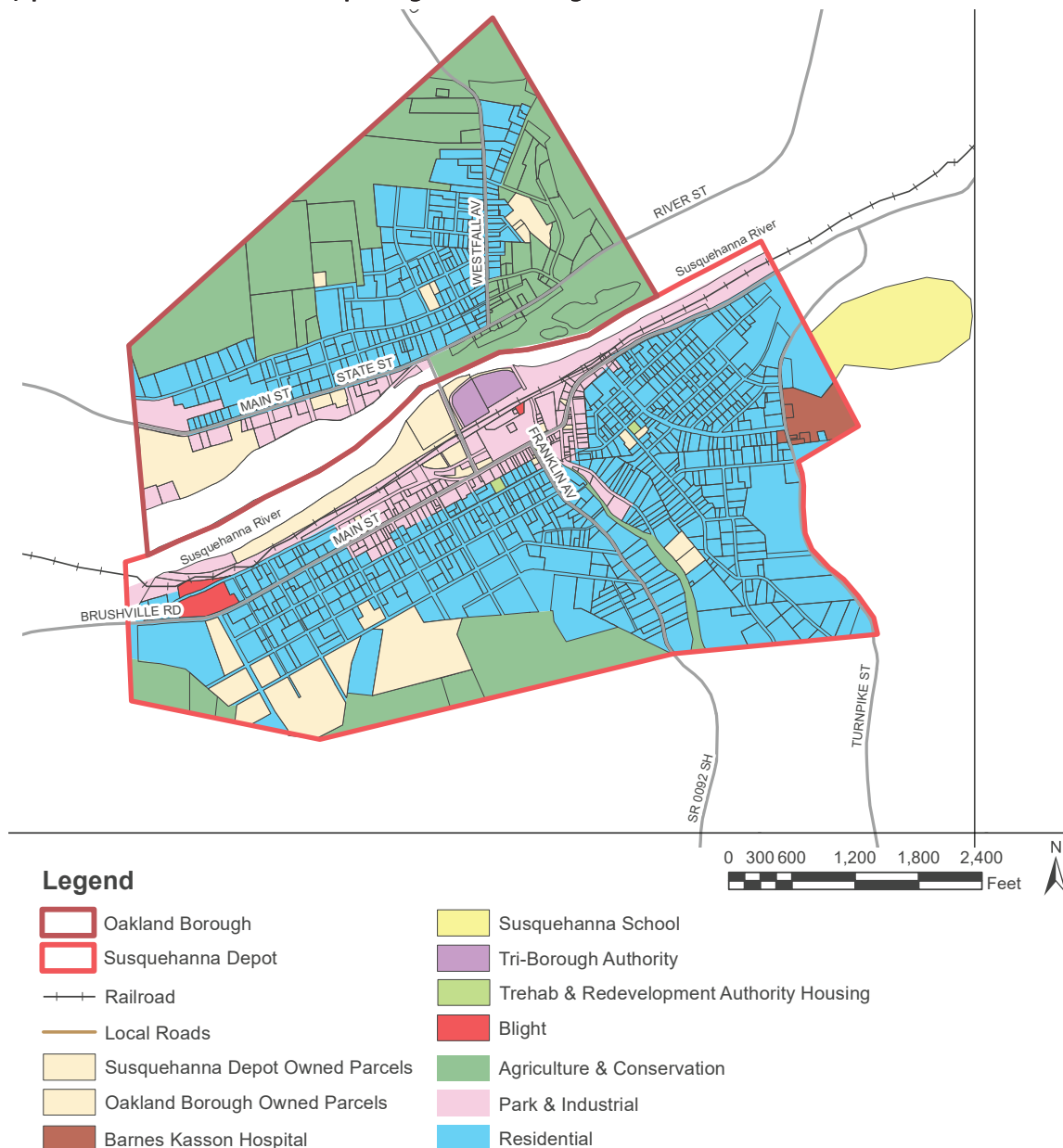


Figure 3.2 Land Use

III-IV. UNDEVELOPED PARCELS

There are thirty-three undeveloped plots of land in Oakland Borough, and fifty-nine undeveloped plots of land within Susquehanna Depot Borough. These undeveloped parcels are marked out in red in Figure 3.3 below, allowing local officials to see their location and consider how they might be combined, connected, or laid out in the most beneficial way for the community, should they be obtained by the municipality or deeded for public use.

There are several properties located in Susquehanna Depot's Industrial Zoning District that are prime parcels for new businesses. There are also undeveloped plots that could potentially connect roads via trails and greenways, offering transportation options for residents. We have provided more information on this subject in the recreation section of this Comprehensive Plan.

Susquehanna County's Housing and Redevelopment Authority is a great resource and has expressed a willingness to collaborate with both municipalities to accurately inventory and map vacant and blighted parcels as well as those in the County's repository. From this coordination, land banking and a blight task force can be formed to continue to bolster economic development, build additional housing, and otherwise determine the best use of parcels that become available.

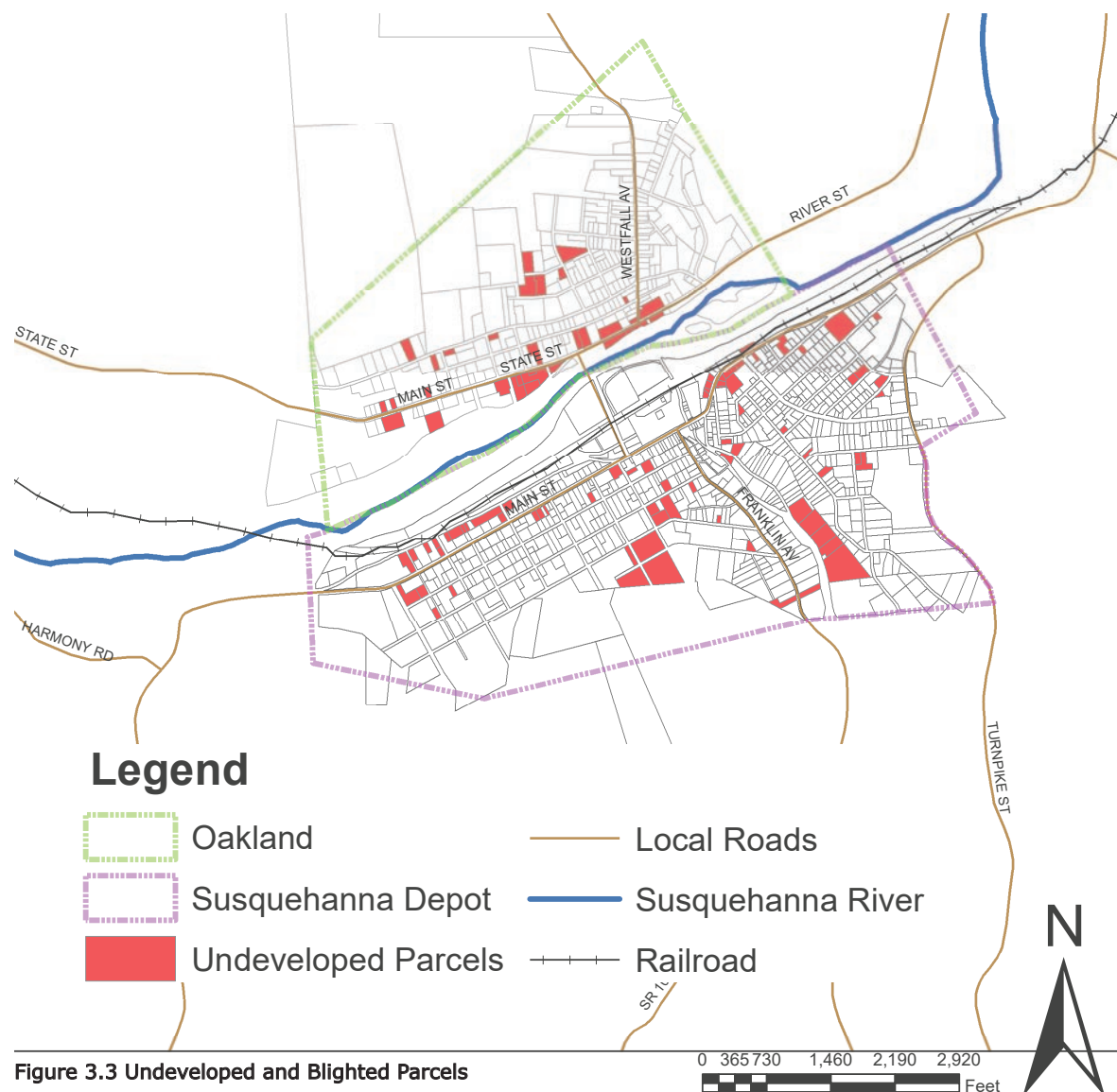


Figure 3.3 Undeveloped and Blighted Parcels

III-V. INFRASTRUCTURE (WATER AND SEWER)

As shown in Figure 3.4, the boroughs are served by separate water providers. Oakland Borough, highlighted in red, is served by the Oakland Water Authority. Susquehanna Depot Borough, shown in yellow, receives water service from Pennsylvania American Water.

Wastewater treatment services for Oakland Borough, Susquehanna Depot Borough, and Lanesboro Borough are provided by the Tri-Borough Sewer Authority, located in Susquehanna Depot.

Existing water and sewer systems are considered adequate by residents and the Comprehensive Plan Committee. No service extension requests have been submitted over the past 10 years. The Tri-Borough Sewer Authority has recently applied for grant funding to support system upgrades and renovations, although current infrastructure is generally sufficient to meet existing demand.

While existing utilities are operating within current capacity, establishing funding mechanisms for future expansion—such as impact fees and increased tax revenue—may be appropriate to accommodate anticipated population and development growth.

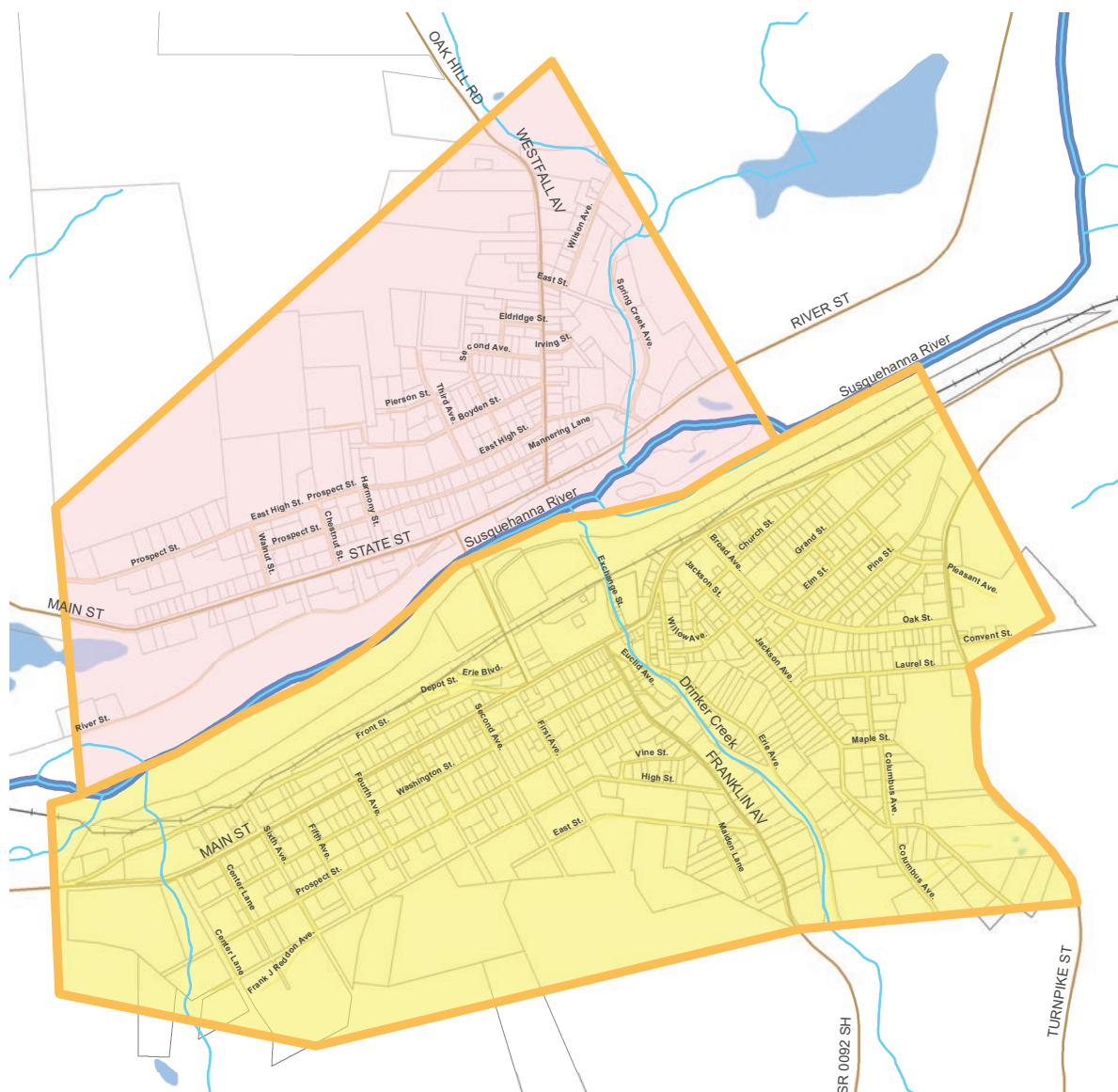


Figure 3.4 Water and Sewer Service Map

Legend

Oakland Water Authority Service Area

Pennsylvania American Water Service Area

Tri Boro Sewer Authority Service Area

III-VI. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Of the ninety-two undeveloped sites within the Boroughs, thirty-seven of them appear to have high potential for future development. As confirmed in the community survey and focus group session, the greatest need in the area is affordable housing, which is safe for families, seniors, and those with disabilities. Once each borough collaborates with the County's Redevelopment Authority and Trehab to map all blighted and vacant parcels, the newly formed team can form a land bank and begin to maintain a list of parcels they jointly own and can develop into affordable housing or sell to landowners wishing to develop new housing, small businesses, or other commercial entities.

As the town continues to grow economically in lockstep with population and housing catches up with demand, the municipalities can begin to look at available open space to create recreational and civic public spaces. The connections, transportation modes, and walkability between amenities and homes can be enhanced to ensure it is simple and easy for residents to obtain goods and services within their community.

Because vacancies and dilapidation are prevalent in the study area, both municipalities appear to qualify for and would benefit from establishing tax incentive areas to encourage development. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development offers several types of designated zones-- TIF Zones (Tax Incremental Financing Zones), Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA), and KOZs (Keystone Opportunity Zones).

A TIF Zone utilizes projected tax revenue for a project to secure bonds to pay for a project's upfront costs (including infrastructure). Municipal officials can establish the current undeveloped taxes for the TIF area (base taxes) and once developed the property tax increase above that pre-determined baseline would be used to pay for infrastructure and continued construction in the zone.

A LERTA Zone reduces real estate tax or prevents it from increasing for a set period of time so that those developers willing to invest and revitalize the area can use the moneys to further their improvement efforts.

A Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) can offer state and local tax incentives and rebates for businesses and individuals economically developing and revitalizing the zone. This works well for blighted areas and buildings as it welcomes developers with discounted taxes until the KOZ is fully revitalized and the KOZ designation removed.

Suggested areas for KOZs and TIFs are outlined in Figure 3.5 on the next page.

III-VII. FUTURE LAND USE

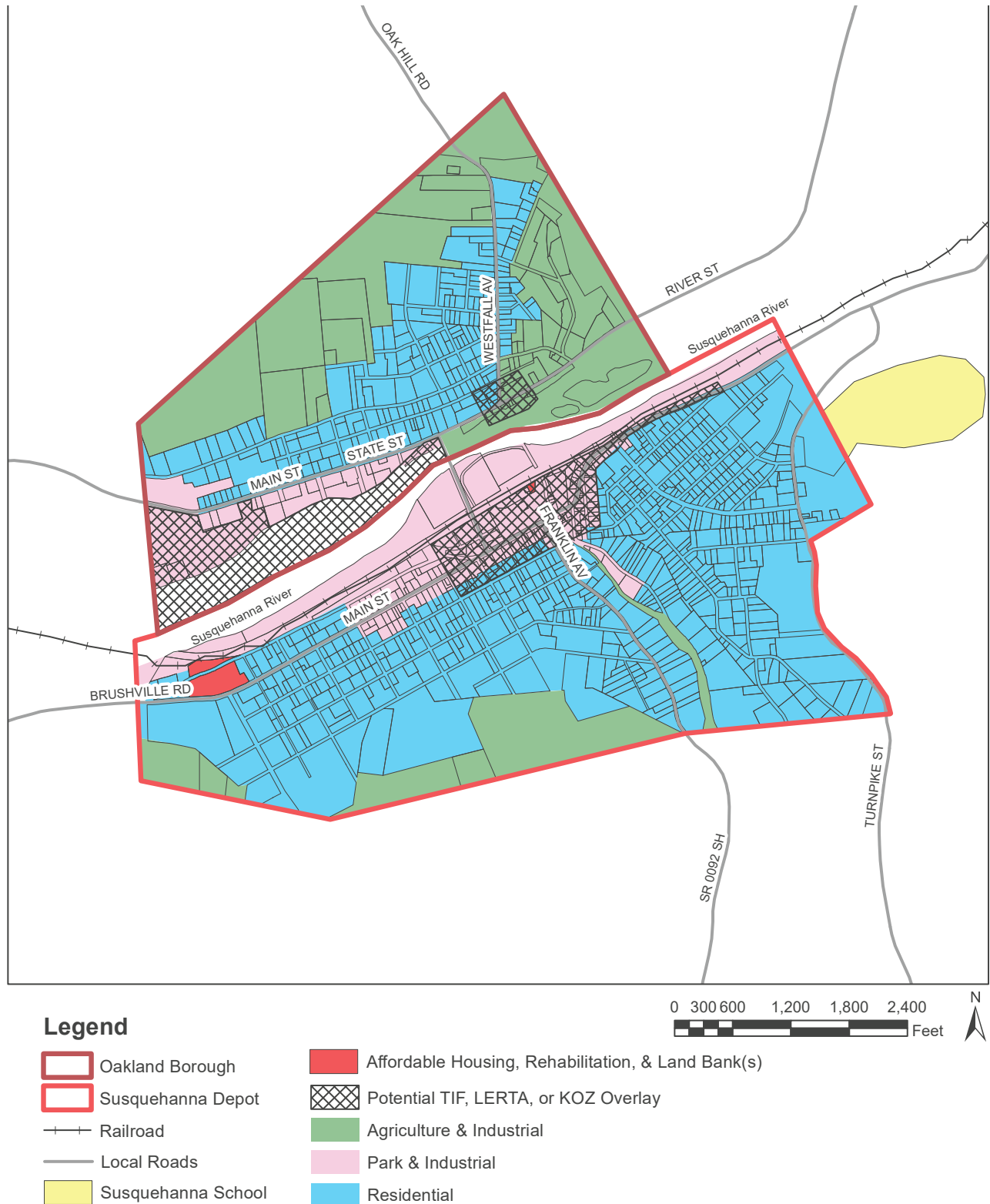


Figure 3.5 Future Land Use

III-VIII. LOCAL SERVICES

In addition to their shared border, the two boroughs share several services and amenities, including sewage treatment, a school, a hospital, and the Susquehanna River. Given their close proximity and existing shared resources, it is recommended that they form an advisory committee to evaluate these services and identify opportunities to reduce costs and improve efficiency through additional shared departments, such as police or emergency services.

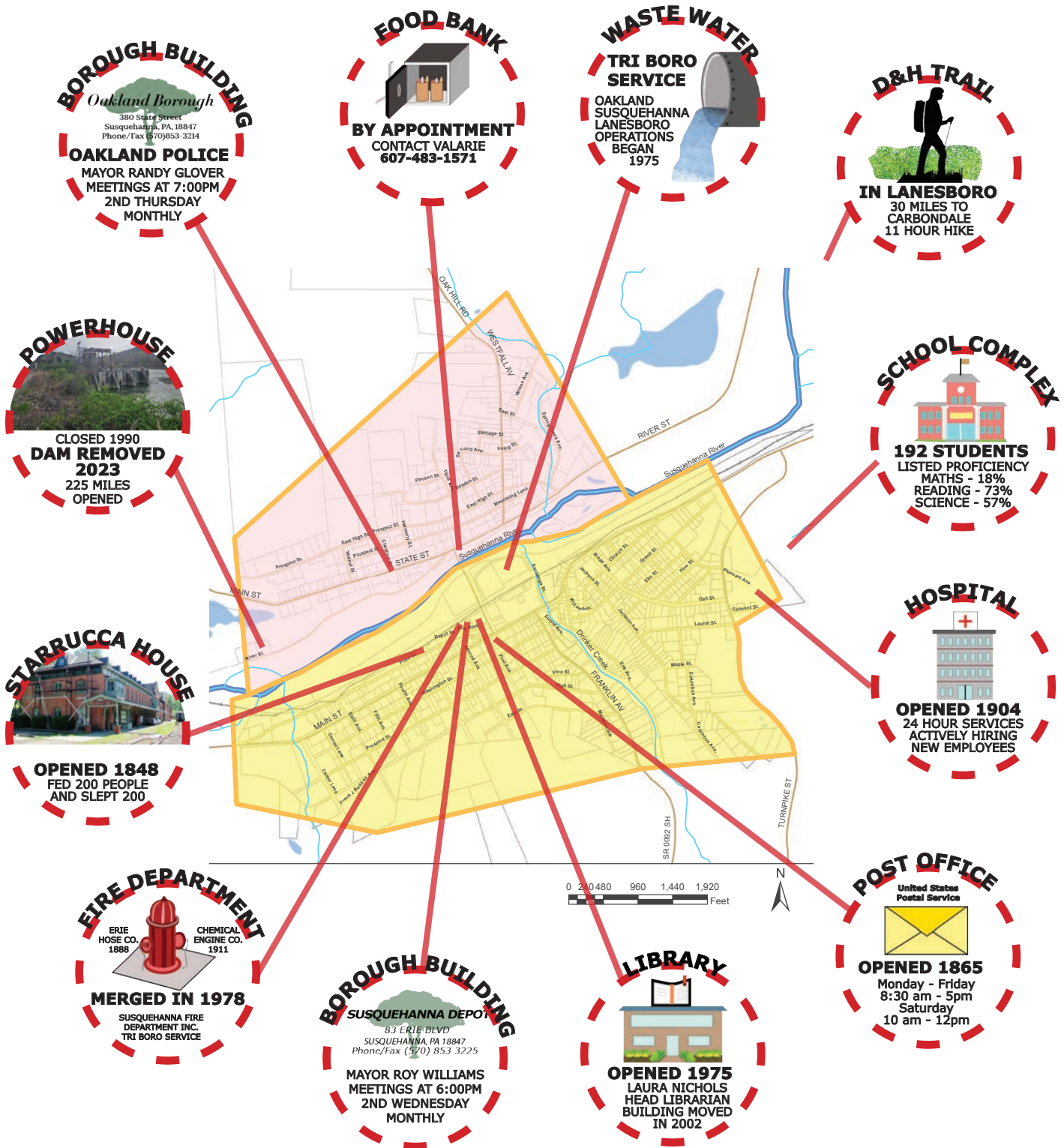


Figure 3.6 Local Service Map

III-IX. PUBLIC SURVEY

During the comprehensive planning process the planning committee created a public survey asking citizens to express concerns and hopes for the area's long-term planning efforts. The questions and the responses received are provided graphically over the next several pages.

A total of 106 participants completed the survey, representing approximately 5% of the local population. Overall, residents' feedback was consistent and echoed the views of local officials and the planning committee: there is a serious shortage of affordable housing for people of all ages and income levels; the area could benefit from additional commerce and industry; the community's rural and scenic character is highly valued; safety and emergency response times are a concern; and additional amenities could encourage families and workers to remain in the area.

90%

OF RESIDENCES
RESIDE IN SINGLE
FAMILY HOMES



55 / 45



EX. FAMILIES

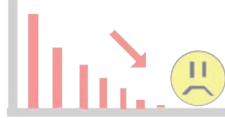


NEW FAMILIES

64%



VIEW JOB
PROSPECTS
AS POOR



50%

WHERE DO THE
PEOPLE
WORK

22%

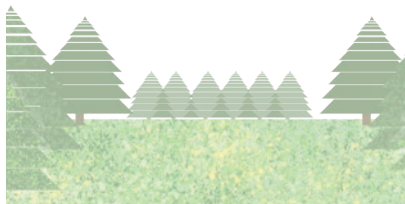
17%

11%

ROUGHLY
1 HOUR
RADIUS



LOCAL
NEW YORK
SUSQUE COUNT.
OTHER COUNT.



88%

BELIEVE IN
STRENGTHING
OPEN SPACE

50%

OF NEW REQUESTS
HARDWARE STORE | RESTURANT | ENTERTAINMENT



80%

WANT TO SEE
IMPROVED ALTERNATE
METHODS OF
TRANSPORTATION

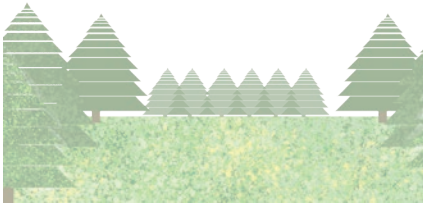


90%

OF THE COMMUNITY
BELIEVES BLIGHT IS
A GROWING PROBLEM
AND REQUIRES
IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

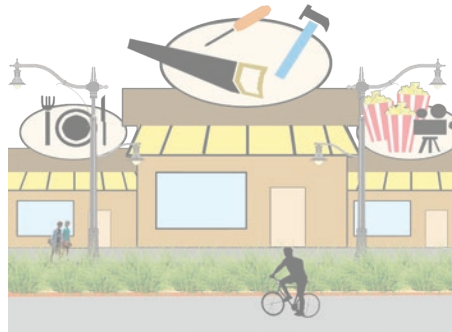


WHY WE STAY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

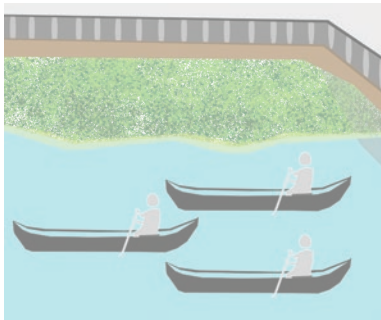


75%

**WANT TO SEE THE
AREA REVITALIZED
AND IMPROVED**



**RESIDENTS PUT OUT
ADDITIONAL REQUESTS,
TO ADDRESS AND
IMPROVE RESPONSE
TIMES FOR PUBLIC
BASED AMENITIES**



66%

**OF RESIDENCES FULLY
SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT
OF BECOMING A RIVER TOWN**



**PEOPLES CHOICE:
COMMUNITIES HIGHEST PRIORITY**



PUBLIC SURVEY CONCLUSION:

Residents of both boroughs expressed strong interest in economic development and community revitalization. Key themes from the public survey include preserving the region's scenic and rural character, improving local infrastructure, ensuring adequate emergency services, supporting and expanding local businesses, and increasing the availability of affordable single-family housing. Respondents also noted that enhanced regional connectivity and expanded public transportation options may provide additional community benefits.

III-X. FOCUS GROUP

A focus group of residents, officials, volunteers, and business owners formed and discussed the opportunities and needs of the community at the Susquehanna Depot municipal building on October 6th, 2025. This group reaffirmed much of what the planning committee and public survey expressed.

Each member of the focus group shared specific insight regarding housing, economics, and life in the area, based on their connection to the community and individual work efforts. The discussion even included details regarding how Trehab and the County's Redevelopment Authority continue to work to acquire blighted parcels, build housing on them, and rent them to local families and seniors, while maintaining affordable rent costs.

Key takeaways from the discussion:

- The community has an ardent desire to maintain the area's rural character, and scenic beauty. The focus group members believe doing so is integral to the area's quality of life.
- Community strengths that support economic revitalization in the area include the natural history of the area, the history of the power plant and earthen dam, significant industrial era architecture (the Starrucca House), the area's train tracks, and the significant Mormon religious sites adjacent. It was noted that tens of thousands of pilgrims come to the area to visit these sites each year and, although requested, it has been difficult to offer them lodging, food, and beverages. Most return the same day from their visit or seek lodging and food elsewhere.
- The focus group believes the highest priority economic development item that must be addressed is affordable housing. Employees of Trehab and the County's Redevelopment Authority described the significant amount of blight, difficulty procuring vacant parcels, difficulty obtaining grants to renovate, and the long list of residents seeking homes. Practical solutions to this issue include forming land bank and blight task forces.
- Focus group members expressed a need to obtain additional resources for the local hospital, emergency services, and to reform the local police force. Supporting these will alleviate concerns described by the community regarding safety and security in the rural area, which affects people's desire to live in the boroughs.
- The focus group also considered and discussed each municipalities taxes and financial stability; noting that DCED's STMP program may assist Susquehanna Depot in meeting their capital budget, reforming their police force, and establishing a blight task force and land bank. All agreed that transparent, revised taxes were appropriate to ensure solvency and proper maintenance of borough budget items.
- How to best welcome new families and workers was discussed with the focus group noting an imbalance in the price of newly renovated homes being sold. Most houses have been on the market for extended periods because their mortgage or rent costs exceed median family and senior budgets. Efforts to grow area businesses to pay family sustaining wages and to provide a variety of housing options at prices reflective of the area's cost of living can be beneficial in this instance.

- Due to the deep desire to welcome area families and bolster opportunities for area youth, the focus group cited a lack of amenities and services as the primary reason residents leave or choose not to move to the area. Establishing area daycare services, theatre groups, additional restaurants, an additional grocery, and a public gym can help correct this issue. An effective solution discussed was creating a local community center with daycare, stage facilities, a gym, and other activities was discussed.
- The focus group deeply supports the idea of bolstering recreation and tourism as they view these as “fundamental infrastructure”. Because of this view, they fully support obtaining “Outdoor” and “River-”town designations from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Susquehanna Greenways, respectively. They believe that creating a Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan in the coming years and building upon the County’s Active Transportation Plan can benefit area youth and families. A trail through Susquehanna Depot to the D&H Trailhead was noted as a high priority.
- The focus group shared beneficial programming that they feel are positive and well attended by the community and can benefit from additional financial support and growth. These all annual include Hometown Days, the Homecoming Parade, Music at the Park, and Riverfest. Future hot-air balloon rides for residents to view their communities was noted as a potential, highly desired event too.
- Lastly, the focus group also expressed concerns about sharing their efforts with the community. Citing the “Social Media Effect” each member described the negativity, difficulties, and opposition they have faces when publicly posting on social media about new efforts, renovations, programs, tax increases, and construction. Removing the ability for public comment from social media posts and being very transparent at the municipal level with these projects can help reduce some of the negativity moving forward.

FOCUS GROUP CONCLUSION:

Overall, the focus group confirmed themes identified in the public survey and by the Planning Committee over the past eighteen months. Key priorities include housing rehabilitation, blight reduction, and the development of recreational amenities, all of which were identified as critical components of community revitalization.

Participants expressed a willingness to continue collaborating with municipal leaders and community members to address these needs. Suggested strategies included the potential formation of a land bank and blight task force, evaluation of tax policy and fiscal incentives, pursuit of economic development programs, and expanded community engagement initiatives. These efforts are intended to support improved quality of life and help attract new residents and families to the boroughs.

III

COMMUNITY OF TODAY RECOMMENDATIONS

(GOALS & OBJECTIVES)



1. Form a blight and/or a land bank task force with Susquehanna County to develop land bank and blight remediation plans.
2. Inventory all vacant and/or blighted parcels within the two boroughs.
3. Appoint a multi-municipal advisory board to review shared services and make recommendations, including for police and emergency services.
4. Improve emergency service response times.
5. Establishing a Tax Incremental Financing, Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance, or Keystone Opportunity Zone to reduce the tax burden for developers who revitalize buildings and parcels within these zones.
6. Review access and walkability throughout each borough to adjacent amenities, the hospital and the school. Improve transportation opportunities between these.

HOUSING

IV



IV-I. HOUSING

Although Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough have deep housing issues, they are all manageable. The focus group and planning committees consider a lack of affordable housing to be the primary problem facing the boroughs today. This section of the Comprehensive Plan features recommendations to remedy the issue with support and direction from the County, the boroughs, and the State.

Unfortunately, the identification and removal of blight is a lengthy process that involves code enforcement, liens and citations, and the local magistrate(s). While State level judges are likely to issue notices of eviction and allow the municipality to remedy the situation, local magistrates have been reluctant to act, and it can take twenty-four months (or more) of back and forth to obtain approvals and monies for demolition.

Nevertheless, both boroughs have clearly identified the need to inventory the blight in the area, record vacant lots and those on the County repository, and create homes for area families. The need for housing in the area is already dire as the County Redevelopment Authority maintains a lengthy list of seniors and families looking to obtain homes of adequate size with rents within their means (rent costs no more than one third of their gross annual pay).

This chapter provides supporting information regarding the status, availability, and cost of housing, notes constraints from blight and incomes, supports the streamlined removal of blight, and supports new residential renovations and construction.

IV-II. SUSQUEHANNA DEPOT HOUSING

At the time this document was prepared, Susquehanna Depot contains 670 total housing units, of which 557 are occupied and 113 (17 percent) are vacant. This is in stark contrast to statewide averages, which show a vacancy rate of 8.8 percent (American Community Survey 2023)—less than half the rate observed in Susquehanna Depot.

Vacancy in the Borough appears to be influenced by a combination of factors, including a limited supply of inspected homes available for sale and the continued deterioration of blighted structures and parcels.



670
TOTAL UNITS

\$633 AVG RENT

8% RENTERS

113

VACANT UNITS

17%

OF HOMES
ARE VACANT



557 OCCUPIED

71% OF HOMES ARE
2-3 BEDROOMS

72% HOME OWNERSHIP

IV-III. OAKLAND BOROUGH HOUSING

Oakland Borough, at the time this plan is taking shape, features 238 total housing units; 222 of which are occupied. Oakland Borough can benefit from implementing home renovations programs and adjusting the tax burden on newly renovated or constructed homes. This is because Oakland Borough relies primarily on real estate taxes. Most tax revenues received by Oakland Borough come from recently renovated or newly constructed homes. Residents are not inclined to build new or renovate in the area as they view a new assessment and the resulting tax increase as cost prohibitive.

Working with the County's Redevelopment Authority, Trehab, and surrounding municipalities to renovate existing and construct a variety of house sizes and types can alleviate the issues plaguing the two boroughs (housing distribution, affordability, and a lack of homes).

Although both boroughs enjoy over 70% homeownership rates with only 8% of homes being rental units. The immediate need for additional homes that offer mortgages and rents within local means and budgets is clear. It is important to note, though that residents looking to own or rent a home in the area must secure employment that pays wages that can support ownership, long term rents, and other family sustaining costs. If new employment opportunities are not provided, it is likely that some families will default on loans and or be unable to maintain their homes, leading to additional blight conditions.



238
TOTAL UNITS

\$714 AVG RENT

8% RENTERS

222 OCCUPIED

80% OF HOMES ARE
2-3 BEDROOMS

72% HOME OWNERSHIP



16
VACANT UNITS

7%
OF HOMES
ARE VACANT

IV-IV. BALANCING HOME COSTS

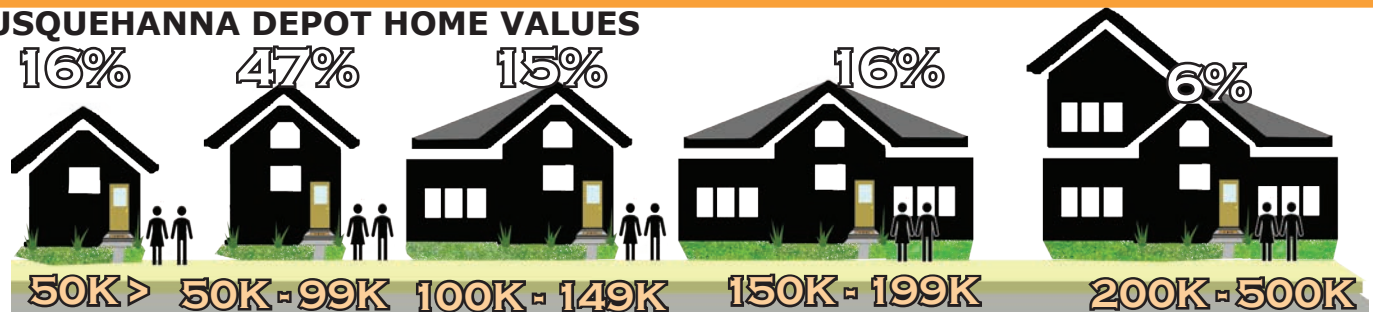
Based on median household income levels in Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough, an estimated portion of income suggests that approximately \$1,600 per month may be available for housing-related costs, including mortgage payments, rent, insurance, and utilities. Under standard lending assumptions, this level of housing expenditure typically corresponds to a home purchase price significantly lower than many of the renovated properties currently available on the market.

At present, average home values in the area range between approximately \$50,000 and \$99,000. However, properties listed within this range are often in poor condition and may require substantial rehabilitation to meet current housing standards.

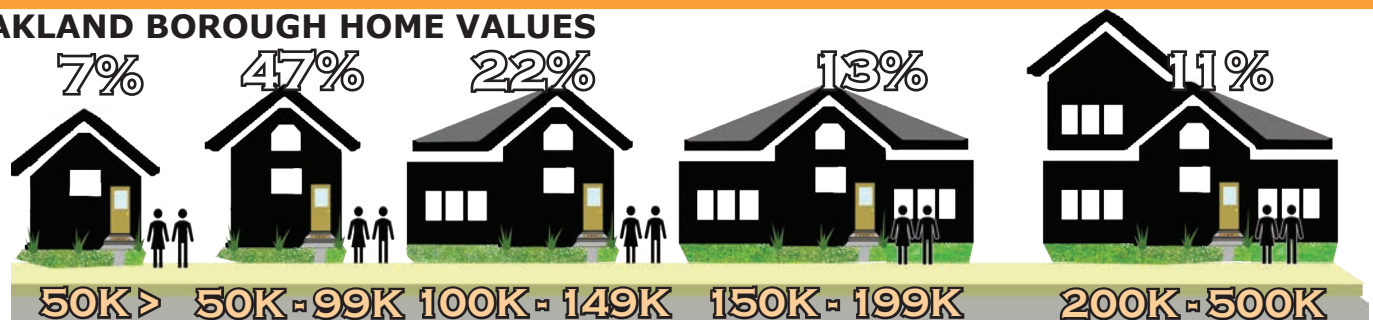
Organizations such as the County Redevelopment Authority and Trehab have made progress in acquiring vacant and blighted properties and rehabilitating them to current code for resale or rental to area households, including units priced at approximately \$2,200 per month. However, these organizations have limited capacity relative to demand, and project timelines for rehabilitation can be lengthy. Continued municipal support may help facilitate and accelerate these redevelopment efforts.

It is also noted that median household incomes have increased since 2019, improving overall purchasing capacity for some residents. However, increased investment from outside buyers has contributed to rising property values following renovation and resale of homes. In some cases, this has resulted in housing costs that exceed what local households can comfortably afford based on median income levels, contributing to affordability pressure within the local housing market.

SUSQUEHANNA DEPOT HOME VALUES



OAKLAND BOROUGH HOME VALUES



IV-IV. REVILATIZATION

The overarching goal of the planning committee and both boroughs is to connect with and encourage developers and home buyers to buy existing buildings and homes, renovate them, and have area families and workers live in them long term. Blighted and vacant parcels can be inventoried and a blight and land banking task force, in conjunction with County Redevelopment Authority, formed to efficiently fulfill this strategy. New homes can also be built as blighted homes are renovated, to efficiently meet demand and stabilize pricing.

With each home being reassessed, each municipality can adjust their tax base to specific capital expenditure, while not placing the local tax burden so heavily on real estate taxes.

Once these actions are taken, and a variety of housing options for families and workers are in place at affordable prices, the municipalities can move toward becoming a bustling "Outdoor" and/or "River" Town, as defined by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council. The Council provides guidance for municipalities to celebrate the outdoors and rivers within them, promoting the communities as a destination for recreation and scenic beauty.

IV-V. BLIGHT

As previously described in this Comprehensive Plan, both municipalities have several vacant and/or blighted parcels that they would like to take corrective action on. Initial steps that can be taken to efficiently manage these are:

- Establish a blight and/or land banking task force that can collaborate with Susquehanna County's Redevelopment Authority and Trehab to inventory and analyze vacant lots, blighted parcels, and properties on the County's repository.
- Have the blight and land banking task force review and decide what each vacant or blighted parcel may be used for, with housing being the top priority.
- Develop and consider adopting a "quality of life ordinance" to create an efficient path for blight remediation in both boroughs.
- Develop and adopt rental and vacancy ordinances in Susquehanna Depot.
- Support the task force's endeavors with assistance from municipal code enforcement and the borough attorneys.

Please see the Implementation Matrix for additional steps to combat blight and bolster economics.



Figure 4.1 Schematic Blight Map



HOUSING

RECOMMENDATIONS

(GOALS & OBJECTIVES)

IV



1. **Form a blight task force and land banking committee with the County's Housing and Redevelopment Authority Office and Trehab.**
2. **Identify dilapidated and/or vacant properties and create a blight inventory map.**
3. **Decide what land use would be most beneficial for each blighted or vacant lot; knowing that additional housing is in high demand.**
4. **Review, develop and adopt a "quality of life" ordinance for each borough. These can be used to establish code violations, fines, and solicit corrections from a landowner efficiently.**
5. **Work toward a balanced housing stock that includes a range of affordable rental and ownership opportunities in varying sizes, in order to meet the needs of both seniors and young families and accommodate current and anticipated demand.**
6. **Pursue "Outdoor Town" and "River Town" designations from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, to showcase the area's scenic beauty, boost tourism, and welcome families and workers to live in the boroughs long-term.**

V

RECREATION



V-I. RECREATION

Recreation in Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot represents a significant community asset, as both residents and visitors cite the rural character and scenic beauty of the area as key factors influencing their decision to live in or remain within the region. While some open space has been preserved and efforts have begun to rehabilitate existing park facilities, residents also value the Boroughs' location along the Susquehanna River Water Trail and their proximity to the D&H Trail system.

The following chapter provides a comprehensive inventory of existing parks, recreational amenities, adjacent trail systems, and identifies several vacant open parcels and connections that, if acquired and developed, can support strong access to recreation and connections between communities.

A list of recommended goals is provided at the end of the chapter to guide citizens and officials in their pursuit of developing, renovating, connecting, and enhancing their area's recreation network. As described in the Pennsylvania Department of Recreation and Natural Resources' Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan, economic development and recreational development are intrinsically linked.

V-II. PARCEL DATA



Figure 5.1 Parcel Map

Source: Susquehanna and Oakland Boroughs & Google Earth

V-III. LAND BASED RECREATION

Oakland and Susquehanna Depot Boroughs have several public park spaces, share a border on a public water trail (the Susquehanna River), and are in proximity to the D&H Trail in Lanesboro Borough. As shown in Figure 5.2, each of these parks and trails lend themselves to be better connected.

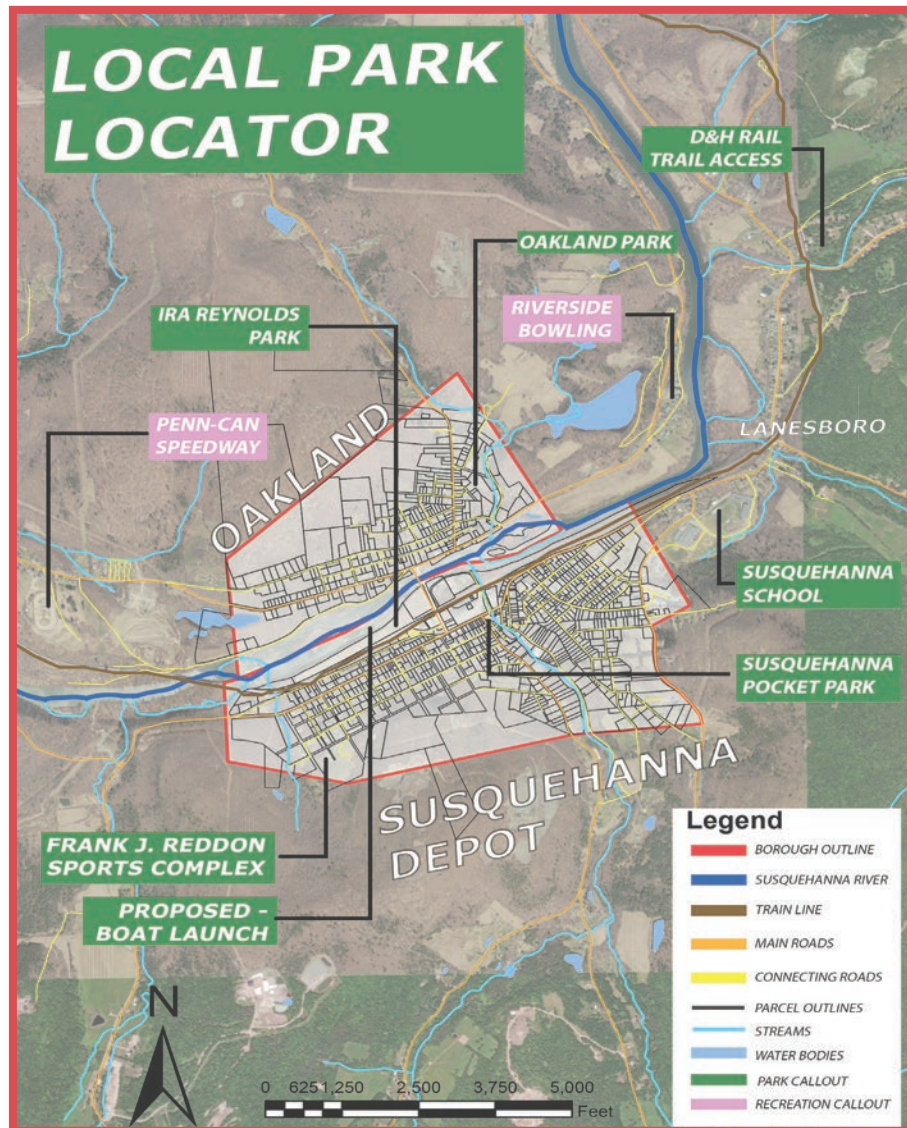


Figure 5.2 Local Park Locator

The Susquehanna River – a major public water trail through New York State and Pennsylvania.

Ira Reynolds Park – a local greenspace offering river access, a loop trail, and other amenities.

Susquehanna Depot Pocket Park – a public space with seating along E. Main Street and adjacent to a café. This park is planted with perennials and annually maintained by the local garden club, however, last year a retaining wall collapsed into the park space and the site is temporarily unavailable.

The Frank J. Reddon Sports Complex – a public park with multiple ball fields, trails, courts, and playground equipment.

The Susquehanna High School – a local public school sports complex with an accessible running track, football field, tennis courts, and ballfields.

Oakland Park – a public park with a ballfield, picnic area and pavilion, playground and parking.

Penn-Can Speedway – a privately owned dirt racetrack for a variety of motorized race cars.

D&H Rail Trail – a nearly 38-mile trail system built on a retired railway bed that runs from the New York State border to the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Trail north of Scranton, PA.

V-IV. WATER BASED RECREATION

Oakland and Susquehanna Depot Boroughs are located along the Susquehanna River Water Trail and enjoy thousands of feet of Susquehanna River frontage. With the Susquehanna River with five cold-water designated streams the municipalities provide excellent opportunities for water sports, fishing, and water-based recreation. The Susquehanna River provides connections to greater biological and water trail systems and has had significant work done to it over the last several decades, within this shared river section.

The Susquehanna River has always been a source of food, water, transportation, and enjoyment for the people of Oakland and Susquehanna Depot Boroughs. Despite being in the northern tier of Pennsylvania, the stretch of river bisecting Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot is strategically located along the Susquehanna River Water Trail and primed for additional use and access creation.

In 2017, with the support of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Endless Mountains Heritage Region, Inc., and others, Susquehanna Depot joined PA DEP's Brownfields to Playfields pilot program. Through this program they received funding to design construct Ira Reynolds Park; complete with earthen river accesses, trails, plantings, and parking, however, the municipality was required to "cap" the contaminated soils at the site that exist from previous industry. This would allow it to be safe for children and families to play on. The park renovation, completed in 2022, also includes wayfinding signage, a replica (scaled down) train display, and a pavilion with power for public events.

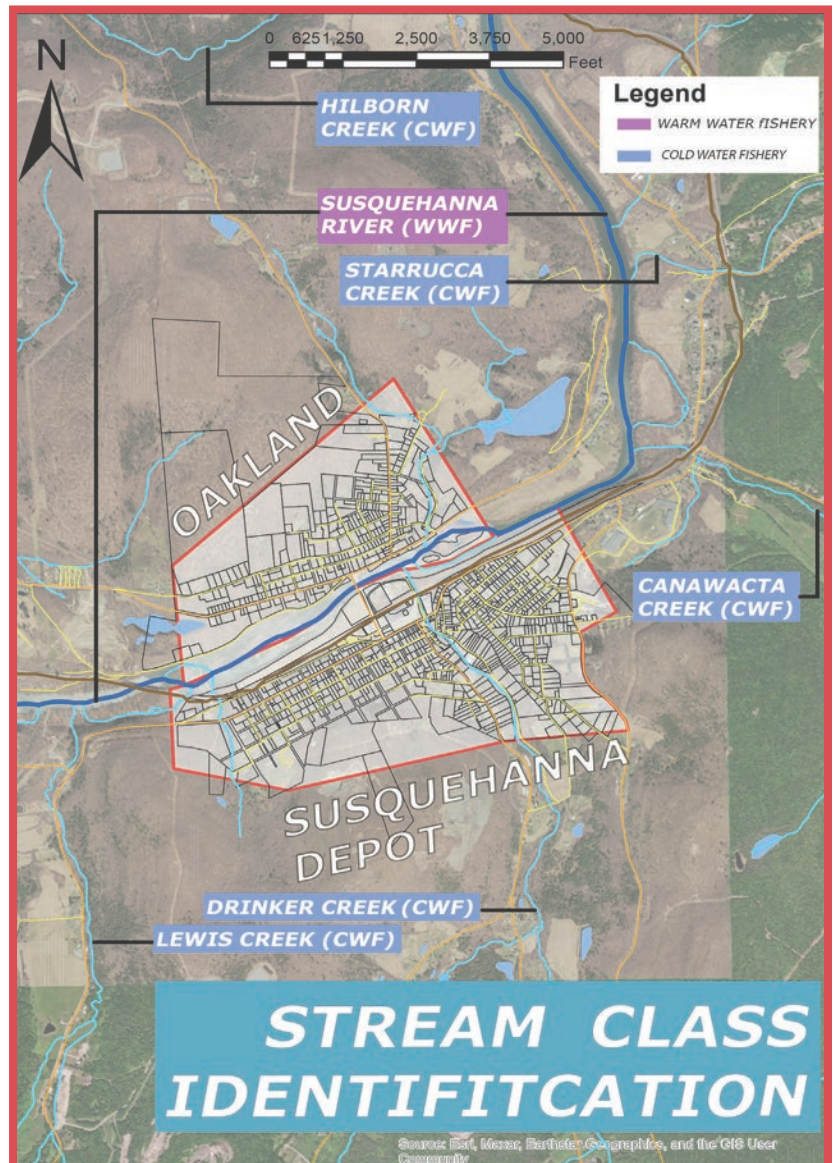


Figure 5.3 Stream Class Identification



In 2023, the Susquehanna Dam—a hydroelectric dam associated with a power plant located along the Susquehanna River's edge in Oakland Borough—was removed. The power plant, which requires significant rehabilitation, was left in place, and together with surrounding lands and an adjacent northern parcel, is now owned by Oakland Borough.

More recently, Susquehanna Depot has been awarded funding to construct a river access site and boat launch within Ira Reynolds Park in support of the Susquehanna River Water Trail. The project includes a concrete boat launch, parking, and a composting restroom, and is anticipated to be completed in 2027.

Additional opportunities include installing branded wayfinding signage consistent with Susquehanna River Water Trail Association standards, coordinating shuttle services, and developing primitive camping areas for water trail users. These improvements would strengthen regional recreational assets and support increased tourism and outdoor recreation.

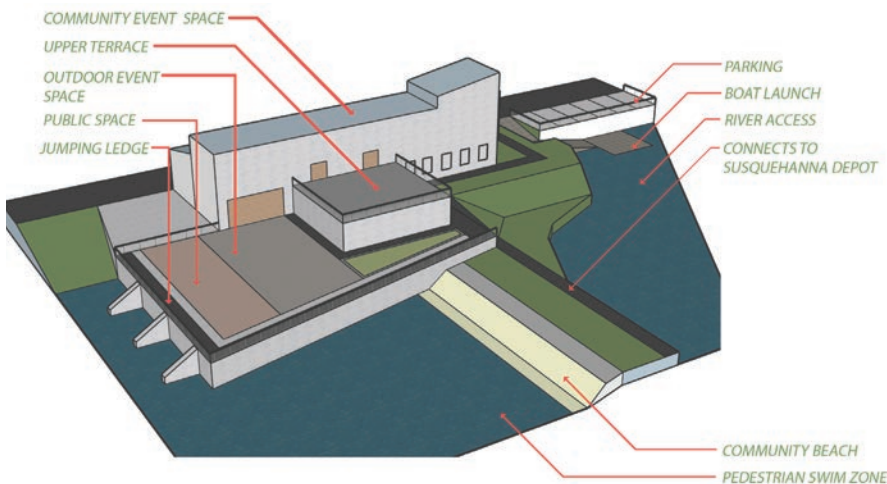
V-V. THE POTENTIAL FOR ADDITIONAL PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE...

Several publicly accessible green spaces and parks exist in Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough. Per the Park Locator figure, beyond Ira Reynolds and Irving Parks, there exists open spaces along the Susquehanna River, a potential connection to the D&H Trail along SR 171, and ballfields owned and maintained by the local School District.

Each Borough has applied for grant funding to renovate and rehabilitate their parks, including Irving Park, Ira Reynolds Park, and a feasibility study for a trail connection to the D&H Rail Trail in Lanesboro (Northern Tier Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2019 and the Ira Reynolds Park to D&H Rail Trail Connector Feasibility Study, 2022).

Recently, PennDOT announced a large “bifurcation” project with improvements, bridges, and widening started on Interstate 81 through Susquehanna County. Part of this project proposed widening State Route 171 near Susquehanna Depot. Although there were public meetings and construction began on the overall project in 2023, the planning committee believe that additional sidewalk and trail could be placed, as part of that project, to fully connect Susquehanna Depot and the D&H Trailhead in Lanesboro on State Route 171. A conceptual location for this is noted in Figure 5.8. Municipal officials and members of the public are encouraged to call their state representatives and PennDOT to request that these be added to these plans; fully connecting both municipalities to this world-class trail system.

The following conceptual designs are noted by the planning committee as high priority desires of each community. Each of these projects is warranted and each strongly support Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot’s pursuit of “Outdoor Town” and “River Town” designations from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, respectively.



The “Power House” can be made into an event space, river access, and park – providing pop-up restaurants, galleries, and temporary businesses in a beautiful setting. A non-motorized boat launch would provide a public connection to the river and on the acreage to the north, mountain biking, picnicking, and hiking opportunities.

Figure 5.4 Powerhouse Renovations



The existing Susquehanna Depot Pocket Park is in need of repair as a large retaining wall, boulders, and soil have collapsed into the park space. The space, during renovations, can be reimagined by the community to have contemporary amenities beyond the tables, benches, and flowers that previously existed.

Figure 5.5 Susquehanna Pocket Park Renovations

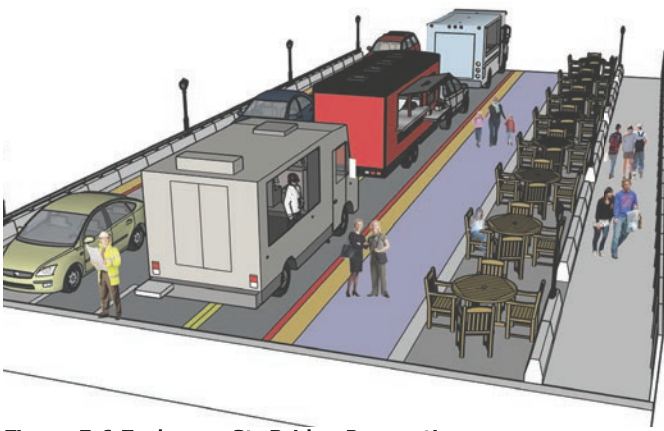


Figure 5.6 Exchange St. Bridge Renovations

Centrally located between and connecting both Boroughs, the Exchange Street Bridge provides ample space and beautiful views of the Susquehanna River and activities occurring in both communities. Municipal officials have expressed a desire to host a programmed annual weekend of events where the bridge is partially closed and opened up to pedestrians, vendors, and recreational enthusiasts to celebrate the region.



Figure 5.7 Lid Park Renovations

The Susquehanna Depot Lid Park – an existing space with parking along E. Main Street in Susquehanna Depot adjacent to an existing war memorial, grocery store, and W. Main Street (SR 92). Current conditions at the site worth noting are a failing retaining wall. Borough officials desire to turn this space into a promenade with seating and access to the street, grocery, and Exchange Street bridge.



Figure 5.8 Trail Feasibility

V-VI. THE POTENTIAL TO BE AN “OUTDOOR TOWN”

“An Outdoor Town is a place that uses natural assets to bring people together to revitalize economies. Outdoor Towns are fun and welcoming, they invite all people to recreate outside, and they have easy access to recreation for hiking, biking, paddling, hunting, fishing, or wildlife viewing. Outdoor Towns embrace nearby parks, trails, rivers, lakes, and forests as valuable assets to be protected and enhanced. Ultimately an Outdoor Town is a vibrant community that connects people seeking outdoor experiences with places to eat, stay, and shop.”

*–Janet Sweeney, Vice President
Pennsylvania Environmental Council*

Becoming an “Outdoor Town” typically requires a local community to complete seven steps very similar to this Comprehensive Plan and/or a Comprehensive Recreation Plan:

- Step 1: Organize a Team
- Step 2: Identify Partners
- Step 3: Create Vision
- Step 4: Set Priorities
- Step 5: Implement Projects
- Step 6: Celebrate Success
- Step 7: Track Results

Available Resources

Additional information regarding the economic and wellness benefits the community would gain if designated as an “Outdoor Town” are available in the William Penn Foundation “Outdoor Towns Toolkit”:

<https://townsandtrailstoolkit.com/whatisanoutdoortown/>

V-VII. THE POTENTIAL TO BE A “RIVER TOWN”

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership currently offers the “The Susquehanna Greenway River Towns Program” designation for communities along a Pennsylvania River who meet and exceed their four-stage process:

Stage 1: Organize

Create a diverse team of community members interested in river programming and enjoyment on the river.

Stage 2: Discover

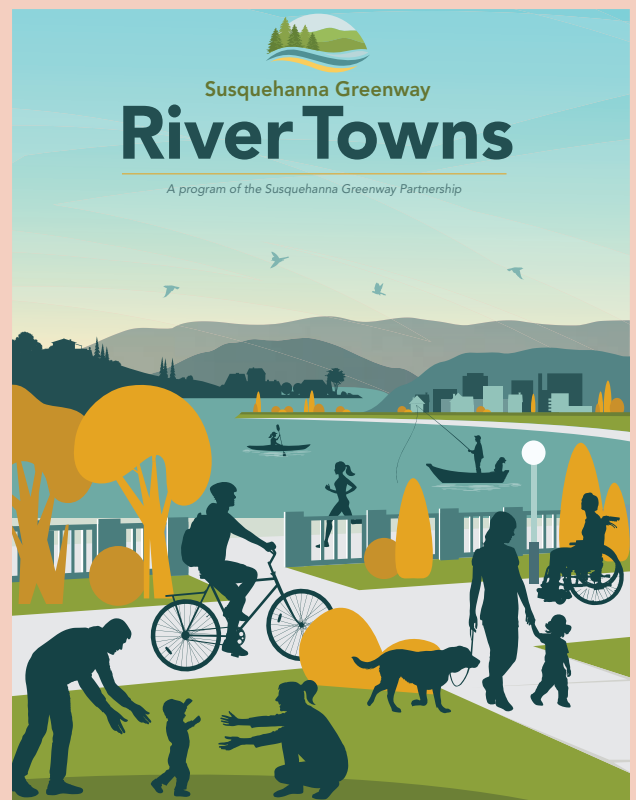
The freshly organized River Town committee will begin to work with the Susquehanna Greenways Partnership to inventory community opportunities and assets, conduct public outreach and envision programming, connections, and economic development centered on the adjacent Susquehanna River.

Stage 3: Strategize

Create an action plan or a list of prioritized projects and programming strategies to ensure the next steps for the committee and community are clear.

Stage 4: Designate and Celebrate

Once your action plan and report have been adopted by the municipality and approved by the Susquehanna Greenways Partnership, the community will receive a “River Town” designation from the Susquehanna Greenways Partnership. Although receiving the designation is beneficial, the economic growth, ecological restoration, and stronger connection with the river are the true benefits.



RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

(GOALS & OBJECTIVES)

V



- 1. Contact both PennDOT and Lanesboro to coordinate constructing additional sidewalks and adding “sharrows” to SR 92 and 171, as part of PennDOT’s bifurcation project to connect Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot to the D&H Trailhead in Lanesboro.**
- 2. Create a Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Comprehensive Plan to document and prioritize all potential recreation projects.**
- 3. Amend local tax codes to obtain money specifically for the parks and recreation capital budget.**
- 4. Contact PennDOT to obtain approvals to use the Exchange Street Bridge for an annual, one weekend long, community celebration event, appoint a committee composed of residents of both Boroughs, and develop programming for the event, including vendors, safety officers, and activities.**
- 5. Contact the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and coordinate and discuss Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough becoming an “Outdoor Town”.**
- 6. Contact the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership to enroll to receive a “River Town” designation.**
- 7. Continue efforts to establish an accessible non-motorized boat launch in Ira Reynolds Park.**

VI

TRANSPORTATION



VI-I. TRANSPORTATION

The development of Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough has historically been closely tied to transportation networks through the region. From its earliest settlement, the area relied on the Susquehanna River for the movement of goods and people, including ferry crossings and later bridge construction. Early infrastructure also included river control improvements such as dam construction.

The arrival of the railroad further established Susquehanna Depot as a regional transportation hub between Erie, Binghamton, Scranton, and New York City. The alignment of the rail line along the river contributed to the area's early growth, with the boroughs developing rapidly and supporting a concentrated population within a short distance of employment centers. At its peak, the railroad-supported economy sustained significantly higher population levels than exist today. Over time, as rail passenger service declined and freight activity diminished locally, population levels decreased and automobile travel became the dominant mode of transportation.

Today, population has stabilized at approximately one-third of historic peak levels. Some infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, and buildings, shows signs of deterioration, and vacant parcels and underutilized structures are present throughout the area.

Regional pedestrian and bicycle connectivity opportunities exist through nearby access to the D&H Trail in Lanesboro. A feasibility study has been completed exploring potential connections between Susquehanna Depot, Oakland Borough, and the broader trail network. Expanding multimodal transportation options could support mobility, public health, and environmental benefits.

The region is also located within proximity to several significant historic and religious sites in Oakland Township along State Route 171, which attract tens of thousands of visitors annually. These sites include the Priesthood Restoration Site Visitor Center, the Smith family home, and a baptismal site along the Susquehanna River. Visitors typically arrive by bus and often travel onward to nearby cities for lodging and services, as local accommodations are limited. Improved transportation connections, including potential rail, shuttle, and pedestrian linkages, could help better serve visitor demand and support local economic activity.

VI-II. THE NORTH BRANCH SUSQUEHANNA RIVER

The Susquehanna River has long been a source of transportation for people from upstate New York through Pennsylvania to the Chesapeake Bay. Today the river offers the ability to boat, fish, and recreate for hundreds of miles, safely, throughout Pennsylvania.

The Susquehanna River Water Trail is supported by many groups and agencies, including the Alliance of the Chesapeake Bay, The City of Harrisburg, The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, The Pennsylvania Game Commission, The Susquehanna River Trail Association, The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, the Endless Mountains Heritage Region, and others. Since 2009, Endless Mountains Heritage Region personnel, with support from the groups and agencies listed above, have worked diligently to build accesses, amenities, and connections along the 146 mile long "Susquehanna River North Branch Water Trail". This section exists through "the Great Bend" where the river flows from Broome County, New York into Pennsylvania, through Oakland and Susquehanna Depot Boroughs, and then continues back into New York State, where it eventually bends back down into Sayre, PA.

Figure 6.1 below, the Section 1 Water Trail Map compiled by the Endless Mountains Heritage Region, Inc., shows several river access points adjacent to both boroughs. These allow visitors from all over the region to park, launch and retrieve their boats; however, some of these are earthen or otherwise not accessible to those with disabilities. Although the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PA F&BC) currently provides access points 3 miles upstream and 3 miles downstream of the boroughs they, with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR), both offer grant monies to develop boat launches and river accesses that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards of access. Susquehanna Depot has applied for grant monies through these agencies and hopes to create a concrete, non-motorized river access ramp at Ira Reynolds Park, complete with ADA parking. Oakland Borough is encouraged to pursue the same access grants, should they have a location for one in mind, because connecting residents with the outdoors can be beneficial for the health and economics of their community too.

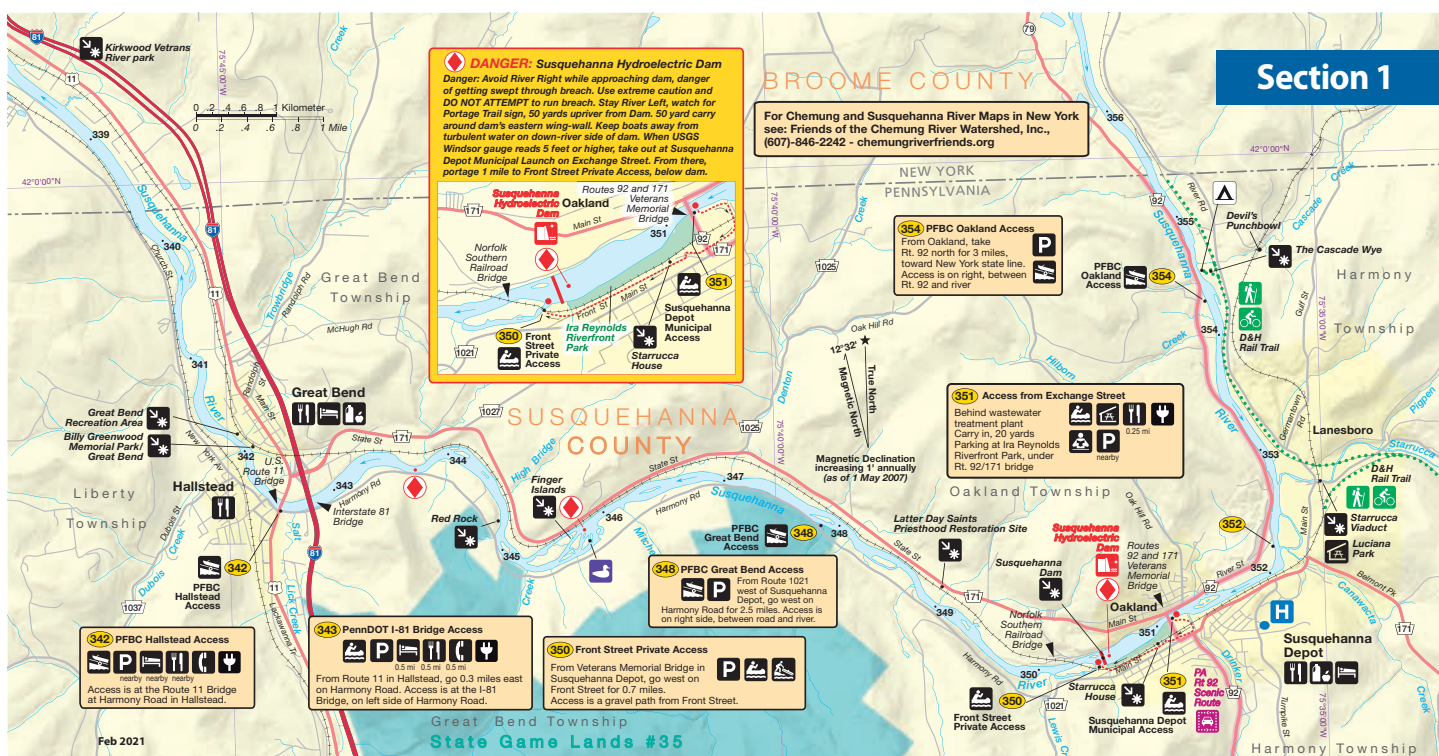


Figure 6.1 Susquehanna River (Great Bend) Section 1 Map (EMHR)

NEIGHBORING BOROUGHS

LANESBORO
HALLSTEAD

5 MIN DRIVE

12 MIN CYCLE

15 MIN DRIVE

1 HOUR CYCLE

ADJACENT CITIES

BINGHAMTON
CARBONDALE
SCRANTON

32 MIN DRIVE

2 +HOUR CYCLE

43 MIN DRIVE

2 +HOUR CYCLE

1 HOUR DRIVE

4 +HOUR CYCLE

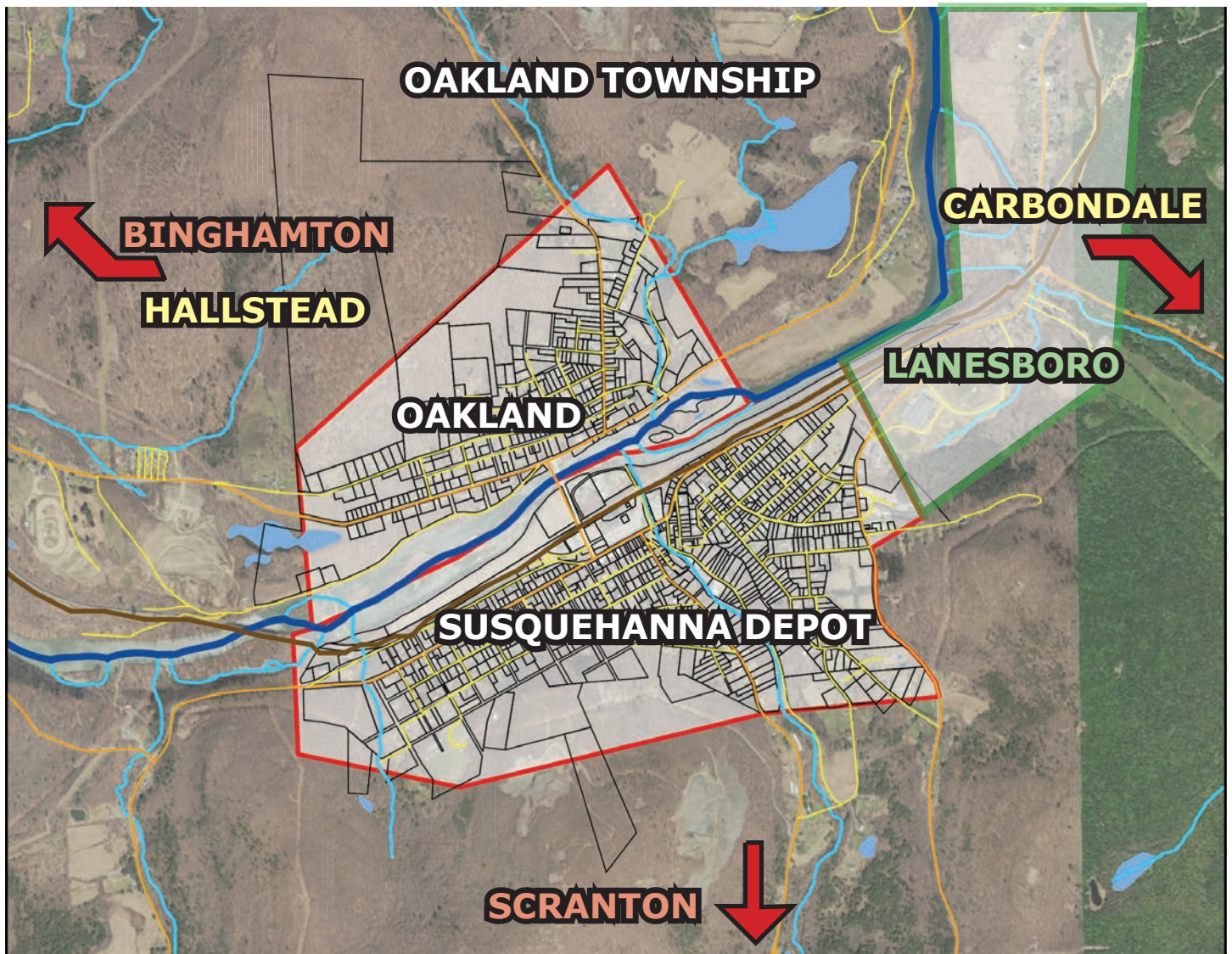
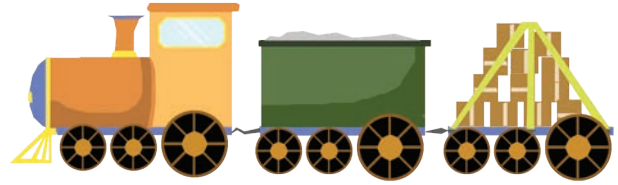


Figure 6.2 City and Borough Distance Tracker

VI-III. THE NEW YORK SUSQUEHANNA AND WESTERN RAILWAY



The New York Susquehanna & Western Railways is a passenger and freight train line. The tracks span primarily throughout New Jersey and New York State. This track system also goes through northern Pennsylvania. Although passenger service is limited, it still exists from Binghamton to Albany, New York. Residents and Visitors seeking to get to Oakland Borough or Susquehanna Depot from surrounding cities must rely on privately operated bus services or airports and automobile service. While once an important stop along the line, Susquehanna Depot no longer has a platform for passenger or freight service, rail cars simply pass through.

The opportunity to restore passenger service to the area can benefit both boroughs. Excursions as simple as bringing visitors from the Mormon religious sites in Oakland Township into Susquehanna Depot for food and accommodations can be made, while offering passenger service to Binghamton and New York City can be cost efficient (track rights are already in place) and reduce the reliance on personal vehicles and private bus systems.

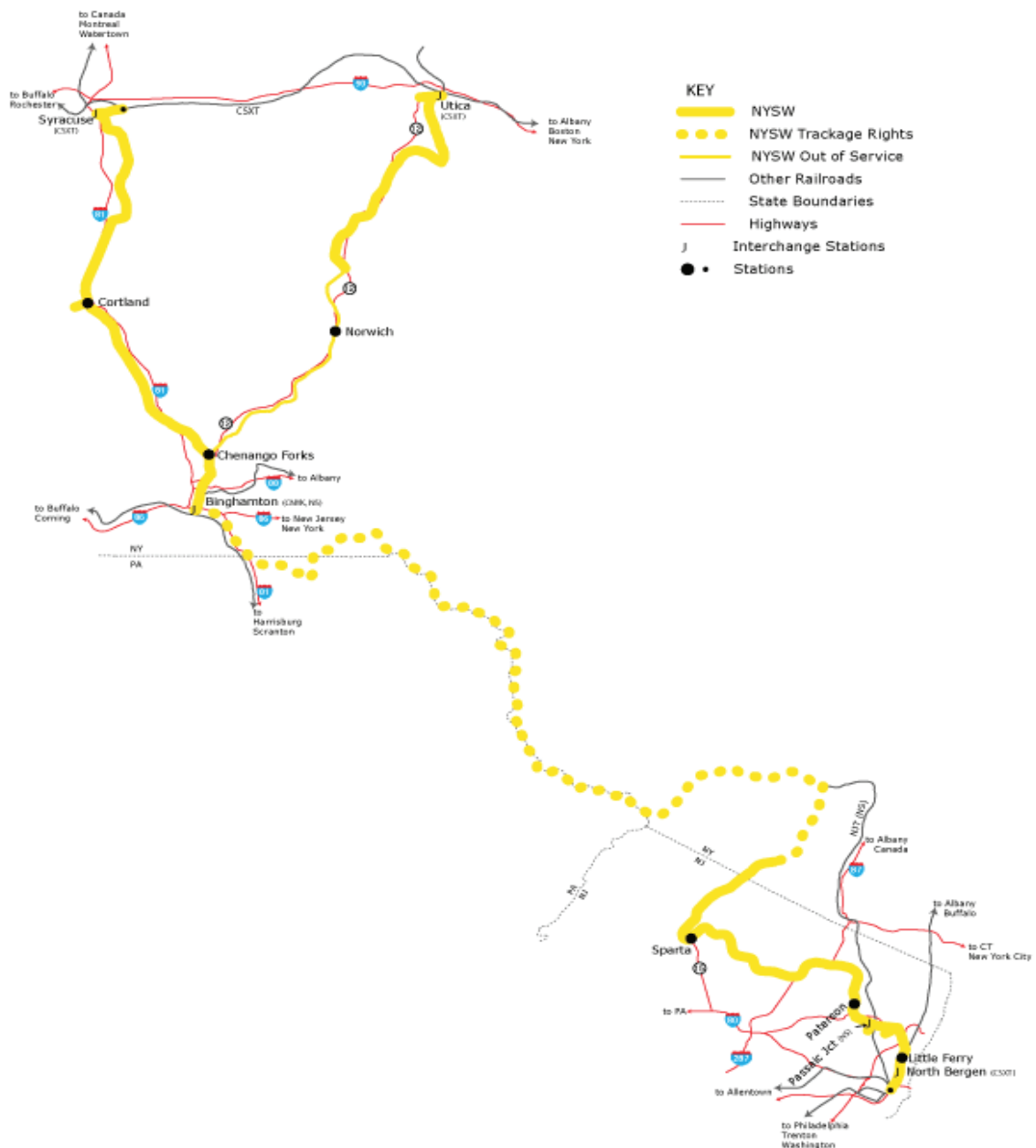


Figure 6.3 NYSW Freight and Passenger Lines

VI-IV. WALKWAYS, GREENWAYS, TRAILS, AND BIKE ROUTES

Without targeted investment, both boroughs will likely continue to rely heavily on automobile travel. The region may benefit from the development of additional multimodal transportation options. It is recommended that each municipality initiate transportation planning efforts in collaboration with Susquehanna County and one another, including walkability assessments and greenway or trail feasibility studies.

Opportunities exist for incremental improvements to the existing transportation network, including shared roadway markings (“sharrows”), bicycle lanes, bicycle parking facilities, enhanced crosswalks, sidewalk improvements, and improved wayfinding signage. Addressing gaps and maintenance needs in existing pedestrian infrastructure would also support safer and more accessible mobility.

These transportation enhancements are consistent with the goals of “Outdoor Town” and “River Town” designations. If implemented, they would improve access to scenic areas, enhance community connectivity, and support the region’s recreational and environmental assets.

VI-V. STREETS, ROADS, AND THE AUTOMOBILE

Both boroughs receive substantial funding each year from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in the form of liquid fuels taxes to maintain their roadways. With the reduction of purchased fuel during the Covid-19 Pandemic and the more prevalent use of electric vehicles, the amount of liquid fuel funds, which are generated from added taxes on fuel at local gas pump stations, has decreased. Recently, Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough have pursued grant funding to repave roads that need resurfacing. Many of the roads have substantial potholes, stormwater issues, and are deteriorating. Unfortunately, Susquehanna Depot is unable to cover the costs of maintenance, repairs, and re-paving using only the funds received from liquid fuel taxes. As a result, reviewing and adjusting taxes is recommended. This can allow for the scheduling and repair of unsafe roadways and stormwater issues in a timely manner.

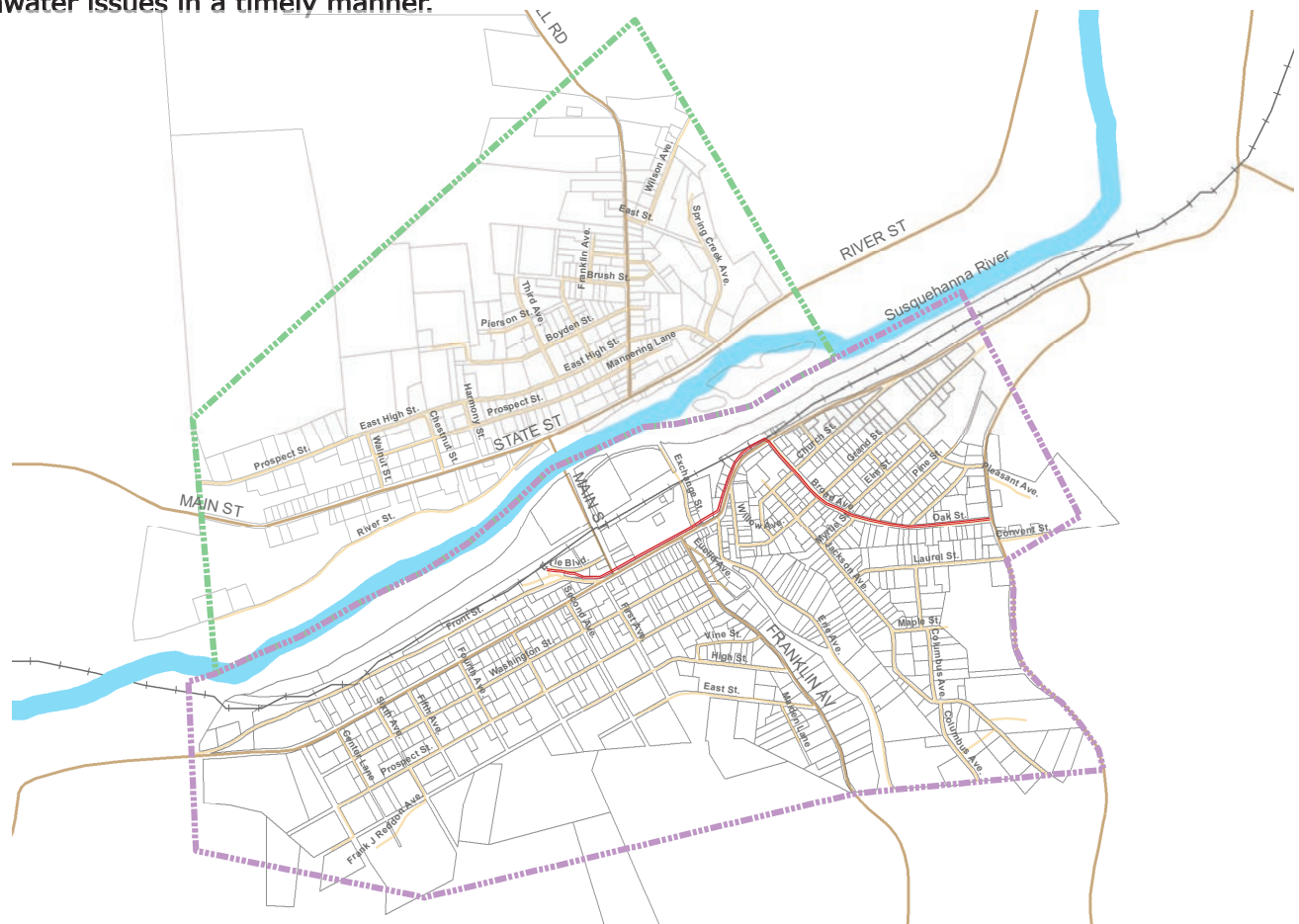


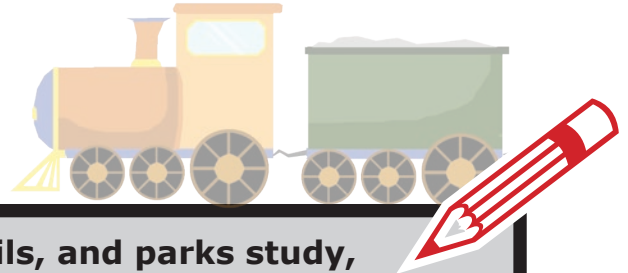
Figure 6.4 Oakland & Susquehanna Local Roads

TRANSPORTATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

(GOALS & OBJECTIVES)

VI



- 1. Conduct a multi-municipal greenways, trails, and parks study, specifically considering access to amenities, the river, connections between communities, and transportation alternatives to the automobile for the area.**
- 2. Conduct an existing condition study of roadways, streets, and sidewalk walkability in the area; specifically noting conditions, needed crosswalks, lighting, amenities, and needed repairs, and budget estimates to renovate these.**
- 3. Collaborate with both boroughs, local religious officials who maintain the Mormon sites in Oakland Township, and willing rail operators to see if passenger service or a shuttle can be created between the religious sites and Susquehanna Depot with stops along Susquehanna River, Oakland, and the D&H Trailhead on State Route 171.**
- 4. Review the Susquehanna River Trail system mapping with the Endless Mountains Heritage Region and Susquehanna Greenways agencies and coordinate new access points, branded signage, and location mapping to match other communities along the entire Susquehanna River Water Trail.**
- 5. Review and adjust local taxes to ensure roadway and infrastructure repair costs are fully covered so that each municipality can make streets and walkways safe for all residents in a timely manner.**

VII NATURAL RESOURCES



VII-I. NATURAL RESOURCES

Oakland and Susquehanna Boroughs are characterized by rolling countryside and extensive forested areas. Historically, development has occurred in small, dispersed clusters over time, allowing for incremental infrastructure expansion while limiting impacts to the Susquehanna River and surrounding natural resources.

Much of the surrounding undeveloped land in Susquehanna County is located within the Marcellus Shale Formation, an area that contains significant natural gas resources. Natural gas development in the region involves regulated extraction processes, including the construction of well pads and drilling infrastructure, and is subject to state permitting requirements and environmental regulations.

Local officials should consider a range of current and potential land uses alongside available natural resources, including strategies for responsible resource management, infrastructure planning, and environmental protection. Efforts such as establishing a land bank and maintaining an inventory of vacant buildings and parcels may support the removal of blight and facilitate redevelopment opportunities, including affordable housing.

Coordinated planning with neighboring municipalities, the County, and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority is recommended to evaluate the formation of a land bank. Such an entity could support the acquisition of blighted properties, their rehabilitation or clearance, and their eventual resale or redevelopment for housing and community uses.

VII-II. OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION

Susquehanna County, in northern Pennsylvania, features the Marcellus Shale Formation, a formation in bedrock saturated with natural gas deposits formed millions of years ago. There are five natural gas wells within 5 miles of the study area.

Figure 7.1, the "PA Oil and Gas Map" obtained from PA DEP's ESRI mapping website, shows these wells as red dots. Many, if not all of these regional pumps are located in Oakland Township, all of them obtained drilling licenses between 2015 and 2019 and appear to have been fully drilled and installed.

- PUMP SITE
- RIVER
- OAKLAND
- STREAM
- SUSQUEHANNA
- ROADS

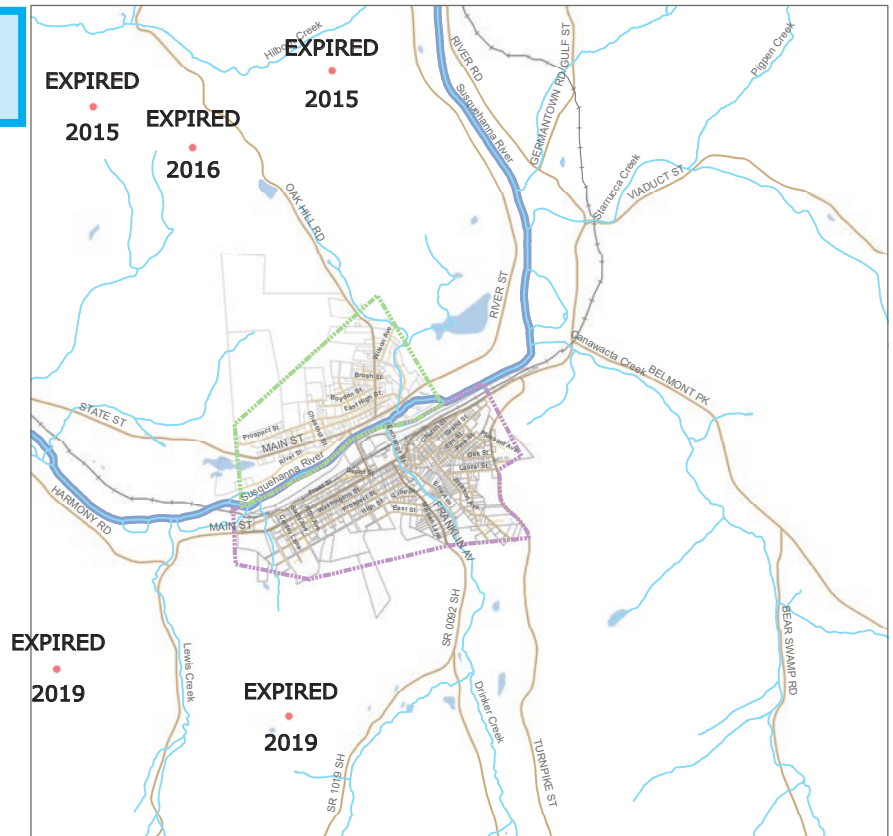
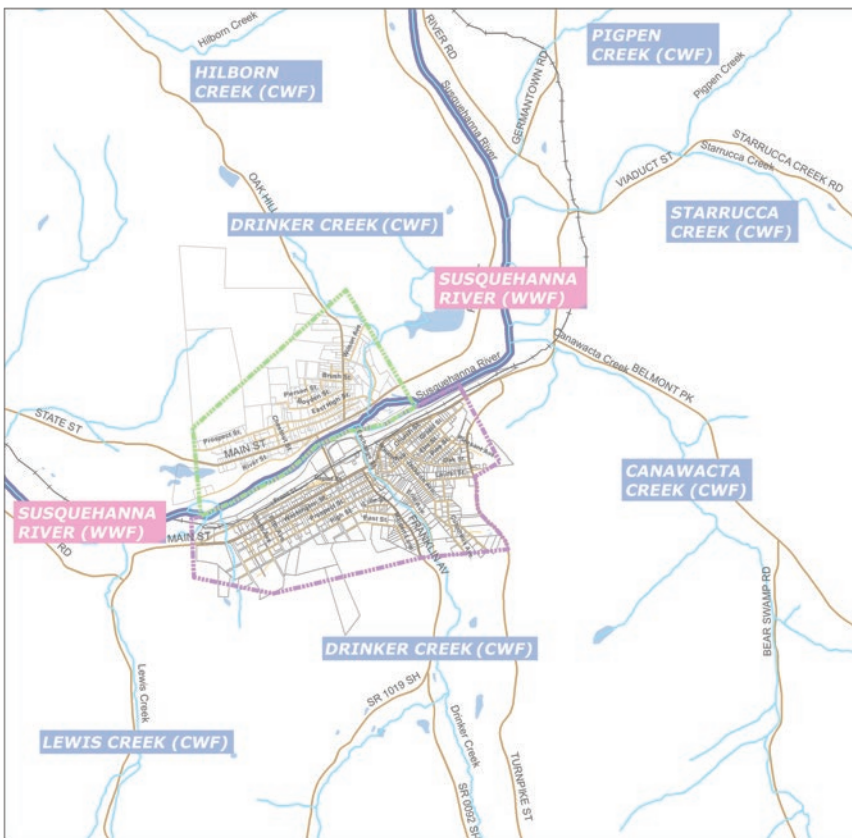


Figure 7.1 Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Map

0 625 1,250 2,500 3,750 5,000
Feet



- COLD WATER CREEK
- WARM WATER RIVER
- OAKLAND
- SUSQUEHANNA DEPOT

0 600 1,200 2,400 3,600 4,800
Feet



VII-III. RIVERS AND STREAMS

Shown in Figure 7.2 each borough has clear, beautiful waterways. The pollution and deterioration of these waterways would directly affect quality of life and local health.

Many homes in the area have basements that require sump-pumps. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), since the 1970s, has required stormwater treatment be included for any projects that are over one acre of earth disturbance.

Obtaining an organized record of the location and type of existing stormwater conveyance drop inlets, manholes, pipes, channels, and detention basins is extremely beneficial to these municipalities as they can record replacements and have each item sized correctly by an engineer.

Figure 7.2 Stream Locations and Designations

VII-IV. CONTIGUOUS FOREST

Both boroughs enjoy an abundance of undeveloped wooded parcels (Figure 7.3). Developing or disturbing these large, wooded tracts should be carefully considered by the current landowners and by each municipality (via ordinance adoption).

Many of them can provide beneficial public amenities, scenic views, hiking, cycling, boating, camping, carbon emissions reductions, and a variety of recreational activities. Additionally, these spaces can also be developed into needed housing sites, data centers, distribution centers, manufacturing entities, or fully preserved recreation network.

It is our recommendation that Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Boroughs review their current Zoning Ordinance and municipal code, respectively, to create amendments that provide acceptable locations and prescribe conditions to protect community residents from conflicting or nuisance uses and attempt to limit the large scale removal of these valued forests and lands.



Figure 7.3 Undeveloped, Wooded Parcels

0 625 1,250 2,500 3,750 5,000
Feet



NATURAL RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATIONS

(GOALS & OBJECTIVES)

VII



- 1. Begin conversations with the County's Housing and Redevelopment Authority to create a land banking committee.**
- 2. Review each borough's ordinances and zoning codes and consider additional standards for proposed development to better protect the region's scenic character and preserve large, contiguous wooded parcels.**
- 3. Review and adopt stormwater and erosion and sediment control regulations to better protect adjacent streams and waters.**
- 4. Have each borough's DPW and developers proposing new construction in the area document existing and proposed stormwater conveyance systems they are working on or installing so a record of the system and its condition can be established.**
- 5. Establish a multi-municipal advisory committee to evaluate and recommend amendments to zoning ordinances related to emerging land uses not currently addressed, such as data centers, large-scale distribution facilities, and short-term rentals, particularly where such uses may impact residential areas and natural resources.**

VIII

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 0-2 Years Plan

This Implementation Matrix is a series of obtainable actions that local Municipalities can enact and develop to improve their communities over time. The actions are accompanied by measurable outcomes to help track and gauge the effectiveness of these planning strategies. Additional information regarding specific funding opportunities are attached to aid in achieving each goal in the right column of the Matrix and after the Matrix. The matrix suggests manageable planning strategies to be completed in groupings of 0-2, 2-5, and 5-10 year increments.

	ACTIONS	MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	FUNDING
1.1 Category: Population 0-2 Years	Publish this Comprehensive Plan on the Borough and County websites and maintain printed copies at each municipal building to ensure convenient public access.	Developers and the public demonstrate improved understanding of land development requirements and the community's long-term development priorities, as outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.	DCED STMP
1.2 Category: Population Economics 0-2 Years	Conduct an annual review of municipal capital budgets and adjust tax rates as necessary to ensure adequate funding for infrastructure, maintenance, code enforcement, parks and recreation, and public safety services, while maintaining a balanced municipal budget.	Each Borough's budget has been balanced each year for the past decade, with minor adjustments to taxes taking place to ensure community needs are met adequately, including new full time police and a parks and recreation budget that can meet grant matching requirements so the communities can pursue additional trails and park amenities.	Funding N/A
1.3 Category: Population Economics 0-2 Years	Review, vote on, and pursue a home rule charter for each borough. In order to enact one, it must be added to a public ballot with the community electing to move forward with it.	By establishing a home rule charter, each municipality has much more control over their governmental structure, administrative operations, tax rates, and proposed developmental activities. This has allowed the boroughs to have balanced budgets and garnered clear control to establish a land bank, remediate blight, fix infrastructural issues, and reform its police force and emergency services.	DCED STMP
1.4 Category: Population Land Use Housing Economics 0-2 Years	Partner with the County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and TreHab to create a land bank and a blight task force to combat area housing deterioration.	With land bank and blight task forces formed a blight map and list of residents seeking affordable housing can be established and shared. Properties can be obtained and organized, revitalization can take place.	Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, HUD, DCED, TreHaB

ITEM	ACTIONS	MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	FUNDING
1.5 Category: Population Land Use Economics 0-2 Years	Establish a multi-municipal advisory planning committee to review borough ordinances and provide recommendations for amendments that protect the region's scenic character and support the development or refinement of rental, vacancy, stormwater, and quality-of-life regulations.	Both boroughs now have a zoning ordinance with amendments in place that protect scenic views, prescribe locations for new proposed uses, and establishing efficient code enforcement procedures for rentals and maintenance of homes to ensure a reduction in nuisances.	Susquehanna County Planning Office, DCED, American Planning Association
1.6 Category: Population Land Use Economics 0-2 Years	Form a multi-municipal advisory planning committee that can identify the areas the boroughs would like to establish tax incremental financing (TIF), a Local or Keystone Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Area (LERTA), and or a Keystone Opportunities Zone (KOZ) in Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough.	Several zones have been established that temporarily reduce the tax burden for local developers and agencies revitalizing vacant lots and renovating blighted structures in the boroughs.	Susquehanna County Planning Office, DCED, American Planning Association
1.7 Category: Population Land Use Economics 0-2 Years	Form a multi-municipal advisory planning committee that can review and coordinate shared uses, adjacent uses, and shared infrastructure; including emergency services and the police force.	Both boroughs now consider shared uses and infrastructure upgrades together, ensuring well thought out upgrades, changes, maintenance, and extensions together. The boroughs have re-established their police force and offer emergency services with response times within twenty minutes.	Susquehanna County Planning Office, DCED, American Planning Association
1.8 Category: Population Land Use Economics 0-2 Years	Develop and adopt short-term rental ordinances in Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough that establish operational standards, address nuisance impacts, protect adjacent residential properties, and ensure compatibility with neighborhood character and municipal objectives.	Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough have adopted short-term rental ordinances that support organized enforcement, a reduction in code violations and nuisance complaints, and the establishment of regulated short-term lodging options that contribute to local income generation.	Susquehanna County Tourism Bureau, DCED, Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
1.9 Category: Recreation Land Use Economics 0-2 Years	Create a multi-municipal Parks and Recreation committee to pursue grant funding to create a parks, recreation, and greenways comprehensive plan for the area and to meet with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Susquehanna Greenways groups to pursue "Outdoor Town" and "River Town" designations, respectively.	Once funding is received a comprehensive recreation plan can be drafted that reflects the community's desire to obtain "Outdoor Town" and "River Town" designations.	DCNR, Susquehanna County Planning, DCED, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
1.10 Category: Transportation Economics Recreation 0-2 Years	Meet with the train operator, bus-line operators, TreHab, and other agencies involved in transportation to provide residents with reliable transportation to area groceries, the jobs, and to boat launches along the Susquehanna River water trail.	Visitors now have several transportation options to get around the region. The boroughs have also developed a shuttle service for those using the Susquehanna River water trail, area parks, and the local Mormon religious sites.	Norfolk Southern, TreHab, FlixBus, Greyhound

VIII IMPLEMENTATION

MATRIX 2-5 Years Plan

ITEM	ACTIONS	MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	FUNDING
2.1 Category: Population Land Use Housing 2-5 Years	Develop a plan with the land bank and blight task force to remove unsafe buildings, maintain vacant parcels, and renovate and build affordable housing over the next ten years.	Each borough maintains an inventory of blighted properties and implements streamlined strategies for remediation, including participation in the County land bank and blight committee, use of liens where appropriate, and removal or rehabilitation of unsafe structures within a two-year time frame.	Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, DCED, TreHab
2.2 Category: Population Land Use Economics 2-5 Years	Amend Susquehanna Depot's Zoning Map and Ordinance and develop Oakland Borough's Zoning Map and Ordinance to streamline blight removal and housing construction, bolster quality of life, and protect its residents from adjacent deterioration and unsafe conditions. Through cooperative planning, both boroughs can provide for all uses jointly.	Each Borough now has an organized, streamlined zoning ordinance that developers and residents can use to obtain needed permits and propose projects that are agreeable to adjacent neighbors. Local Code Enforcement Officers are able to quickly and clearly enforce the new ordinances. Four new housing projects have been constructed in each Borough over the last two years.	Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, DCED, TreHab
2.3 Category: Land Use- Housing Economics 2-5 Years	Establish a tax incremental financing (TIF), Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance, or Keystone Opportunities Zone (KOZ) in Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough in the area(s) recommended by the advisory planning committee.	Multiple developers have come to the area to renovate buildings for businesses and homes within the new economic revitalization zones because taxes are limited, freeing up monies that can be invested directly into their revitalization efforts.	Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, DCED, TreHab
2.4 Category: Land Use Recreation Economics 2-5 Years	Create a multi-municipal parks, recreation, and greenways comprehensive plan noting a desired connection to the D&H Trail, sharrows for cyclists on SR 92 and 171, renovations to the power plant, a community center, and renovations to the Susquehanna Depots lid and pocket parks, and a potential, annual festival on the Exchange Street bridge.	The Boroughs now have an organized clear plan to create construction plans, obtain construction funding, and renovate a variety of items to strengthen their recreational network and programming.	DCNR, Susquehanna County Planning, DCED, PennDOT, PA F&BC

ITEM	ACTIONS	MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES	FUNDING
2.5 Category: Recreation Economics 2-5 Years	Become a Pennsylvania Environmental Council designated, "Outdoor Town".	Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough have received an "Outdoor Town" designation from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, recognizing the area as a designation for outdoor events and amenities, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty.	Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, PEC, DCNR, PA F&BC, PA DEP, DCED, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
2.6 Category: Recreation Economics 2-5 Years	Become a Susquehanna Greenway Partnership "River Town".	Susquehanna Depot and Oakland Borough achieve and maintain "River Town" designation through the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, meeting all program requirements. Success is demonstrated through installation of standardized signage, expanded recreational and trail support services, and sustained promotion of the region as a recreational tourism destination.	Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, PEC, DCNR, PA F&BC, PA DEP, DCED, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
2.7 Category: Land Use Recreation Economics 2-5 Years	Determine the desired location of and renovate an existing building into a municipal owned "Community Center", with programmed activities for families, educational events, and displays of local art and history.	A community center has been established with art, history, and theatre events, classes, and gatherings; all strongly meeting the community need described in the Comprehensive Plan's public survey.	Susquehanna County, Slanted Art Co-op and Gallery, DCED, PA Creative Communities
2.8 Category: Land Use Recreation Economics 2-5 Years	Create a Master Plan for Oakland Borough's "Power Plant" and surrounding lands and have the existing building structurally analyzed.	A Master Plan and budget have been established for the "Power Plant" and adjacent property. Local officials can now pursue funding and begin to renovate the space for public use for vendors, events, and gatherings.	DCNR, DCED, Susquehanna County Act 13, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission

VIII

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX 5-10 Year Plan

3.1

Category:
**Land Use
Economics
Population**
5-10 Years

Continue efforts to remediate and acquire blighted and vacant parcels in Oakland Borough and Susquehanna Depot through coordination with the County Redevelopment Authority, Trehab, and relevant task forces, and utilize land banking strategies to facilitate the redevelopment of these properties for housing and commercial uses.

Within a ten-year period, the boroughs achieve a measurable reduction in blighted properties through coordination with the Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Trehab. Success is demonstrated through increased acquisition and remediation of unsafe structures via the County land bank and the subsequent redevelopment of properties for housing and commercial use.

**DCNR, DCED,
Susquehanna County
Act 13, Northern Tier
Regional Planning and
Development
Commission,
Susquehanna County
Chamber of Commerce**

3.2

Category:
**Recreation
Economics**
5-10 Years

Continue to attract and support new business development, including educational institutions such as a community college or other post-secondary training facilities, to expand educational and career opportunities for high school graduates and adult learners in the region.

Susquehanna Depot has partnered with a regional technical school to establish a building with faculty, evening courses, and secondary technical education opportunities for its citizens; in turn bolstering the area's quality of life and the household median income as area residents are trained and begin local high-skilled jobs and careers.

**DCNR, DCED,
Susquehanna County
Planning, Northern
Tier Regional
Planning and
Development
Commission, PennDOT**

3.3

Category:
**Recreation
Economics**
5-10 Years

Renovate and replace dilapidated sidewalks and accessibility ramps to maintain walk and bikeability to area businesses, the hospital, school, and the D&H Rail Trail, per the findings of the parks, recreation, and greenways comprehensive plan.

Each Borough has worked to replace all broken up sidewalks, fill sidewalk gaps, and install accessibility ramps and crosswalks throughout town to enhance walkability and enhance safety and separation between automobile traffic and pedestrians.

**DCNR, DCED,
Susquehanna County
Planning, Northern
Tier Regional
Planning and
Development
Commission, PennDOT**

3.4

Category:
**Population
Land Use
Recreation
Economics**
5-10 Years

Renovate the "Power Plant" and surrounding lands as a public event, gathering, and recreational space; complete with a river access and non-motorized boat launch.

Oakland Borough has successfully renovated the "Power Plant" which now offers pop-up food and beverage options on week-ends, local events, spaces for rent to local professionals, a river access and non-motorized boat launch, and a beautiful park space adjacent.

**DCNR, DCED,
Susquehanna County
Act 13, Northern Tier
Regional Planning and
Development
Commission,
Susquehanna County
Chamber of Commerce**

3.5

Category:
Land Use
Economics
Recreation
Transportation
5-10

Develop an annual festival on the Exchange Street Bridge; welcoming visitors and celebrating area food, businesses, and culture.

The annual "Exchange Street Bridge Festival" has been established, connecting the two sister Boroughs in an event that celebrates the areas history and heritage. Local artisans and food vendors are able to set up stands on the Exchange Street bridge for one weekend with activities put on by each municipality, the Greater Susquehanna County Chamber of Commerce, and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, among others.

Susquehanna County, DCED, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, The Susquehanna County Chamber of Commerce

3.6

Category:
Land Use
Recreation
5-10 Years

Renovate Susquehanna Depot's parks and public spaces.

Public spaces have been renovated and are now enjoyed by visitors, business owners, and residents as they walk along the shops on E. Main Street.

DCNR, DCED, Susquehanna County Act 13, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission



IX FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Population and Economics

Ben Franklin Partners https://dced.pa.gov/download/ben-franklin-technology-partners-challenge-guidelines/?wpdmdl=57857	(BFTDA)	12/31/2035	50% Match
Business in Our Sites https://dced.pa.gov/programs/business-in-our-sites-grants-and-loans-bos/	(BOS)	__/__/__	40% Match
Pennsylvania First https://dced.pa.gov/download/pa-first-guidelines/?wpdmdl=84679	(__)	12/31/2035	Varies
PA Manufacturing Training to Career https://dced.pa.gov/download/manufacturing-pa-training-to-career-grant-program-guidelines/?wpdmdl=87122	(PMTTC)	7/1/2035	\$3,000 Per Person
Public School Improvements https://dced.pa.gov/download/public-school-facility-improvement-grant-program-guidelines/?wpdmdl=123263	(__)	12/31/2035	25%
Qualified Manufacturing https://dced.pa.gov/download/qualified-manufacturing-innovation-reinvestment-deduction-guidelines/?wpdmdl=83341	(QMIRD)	12/31/2035	Tax Credit
Rail Freight Program https://dced.pa.gov/programs/rail-freight-program/	(__)	__/__/__	30%

Land Use

Community Development Bank https://dced.pa.gov/download/pa-community-bank-guidelines/?wpdmdl=58084	(PCD)	12/31/2035	50% Match
Industrial Site Reuse https://dced.pa.gov/download/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc-guidelines/?wpdmdl=82281	(ISRP)	__/__/__	25% Match
Main Street Matters https://dced.pa.gov/download/main-street-matters-funding-guidelines/?wpdmdl=124636	(MSM)	8/31/2025	50% MSM 10% - EMS
Mixed Use Revitalization Planning https://dced.pa.gov/download/mixed-use-revitalization-program/?wpdmdl=126865	(MURP)	8/31/2025	20% Match
Pennsylvania Strategic Investments https://dced.pa.gov/download/pennsylvania-strategic-investments-to-enhance-sites-program-guidelines/?wpdmdl=121837	(PA SITES)	12/31/2028	Varies
Sewage Facilities Program https://dced.pa.gov/download/sewage-facilities-program-sfp-guidelines/?wpdmdl=81389	(SFP)	05/31/----	50%

Housing

HomeInvestment https://dced.pa.gov/download/home-fact-sheet/?wpdmdl=114206	(HOME)	__/__/__	25% Match
Multifamily Weather Assistance https://dced.pa.gov/download/industrial-sites-reuse-program-isrp-guidelines/?wpdmdl=59834	(WAPM)	__/__/__	\$8,000 Per Unit
Neighborhood Assistance Program https://dced.pa.gov/download/neighborhood-assistance-program-nap-guidelines/?wpdmdl=86209	(NAP)	6/30/2035	Varies

Recreation

Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Programing	(BOS)	___/___/___	40% Match
https://dced.pa.gov/download/greenways-trails-recreation-program-gltp-guidelines/?wpdmdl=81379			
Historic Preservation Credit	(HPTC)	13/31/2035	TAX
https://dced.pa.gov/download/historic-preservation-tax-credit-hptc-guidelines/?wpdmdl=82281			
Local Government Capital Project	(LGCPL)	12/31/2035	2% Loan
https://dced.pa.gov/download/local-government-capital-project-loan-program-lgcpl-guidelines/?wpdmdl=57888			
Marketing to Attract Tourists	(MTAT)	7/1/2025	Varies
https://dced.pa.gov/download/marketing-attract-tourists-guidelines/?wpdmdl=65452			

Transportation

All-Terrain Vehicle And Snowmobile	(___)	12/31/2035	No Match
https://www.pa.gov/grants/search/grant-details.dcnr1#overview			
Alternative Fuel Incentive	(___)	10/10/2025	50% Match
https://greenport.pa.gov/elibrary/GetDocument?docId=9775452&DocName=ALTERNATIVE%20FUELS%20INCENTIVE%20GRANT%20PROGRAM%202025.PDF			
Multimodal Transportation Fund	(MTF)	07/31/___	30% Match
https://dced.pa.gov/download/industrial-sites-reuse-program-isrp-guidelines/?wpdmdl=59834			
Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside	(TASA)	10/31/2025	Reimbursement
https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/pennidot/documents/research-planning-innovation/planning/documents/tasa%20statewide%20program%20guidance.pdf			

Resources

904 Recycling Preformance	(___)	12/31/2035	Varies
https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/waste-programs/recycling-in-pennsylvania/municipal-resources/financial-assistance/recycling-performance-grants			
Orphan or Abandoned Well Plugging Program	(OAWP)	5/31/2025	50%
https://dced.pa.gov/download/orphan-abandoned-well-plugging-program-oawp-guidelines/?wpdmdl=81384			
PA Grid Resilience	(___)	8/8/2025	1 to 1
https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dep/programs-and-services/energy-programs-office/pennsylvania-grid-resilience-grant-program			
Funding	(___)	___/___/___	1 to 1
Municipal Assistance Program	(MAP)	12/31/2035	50% Match
https://dced.pa.gov/programs/municipal-assistance-program-map/download/municipal-assistance-program-guidelines/?wpdmdl=114012			
Strategic Management Planning Program	(SMPP)	13/31/2035	50%
https://dced.pa.gov/download/strategic-management-planning-program-smpp-guidelines/?wpdmdl=91021			



CONCLUSION

Over the next decade, both municipalities will work to achieve the goals, recommendations, and actions outlined in this Comprehensive Plan. The Implementation Matrix, funding guidance, and chapter-specific recommendations provide a framework for advancing coordinated economic development and community improvement efforts.

The Oakland and Susquehanna area is characterized by a strong natural landscape and distinct community identity. Over the past eighteen months, residents, stakeholders, and local officials have identified shared concerns and priorities that this Plan seeks to address in order to improve quality of life, support population stability and growth, and promote revitalization in both boroughs. Implementation of the actions identified in the Implementation Matrix will support improved public perception, address community needs, and strengthen the local economy, while also supporting future efforts to achieve “Outdoor Town” and “River Town” designations.

Key objectives of this Comprehensive Plan include improving pedestrian accessibility and safety, increasing local employment opportunities and wages, expanding housing options, and enhancing public amenities to support both current residents and future growth.

This Comprehensive Plan represents the beginning of a long-term effort to strengthen and revitalize the municipalities. As implementation progresses, local officials are encouraged to recognize milestones and continue advancing safety, infrastructure, and economic development initiatives. It is the intention of the Planning Committee, municipal officials, focus group participants, and community members that successful implementation of these actions will support the shared vision for the municipalities through 2035 and beyond!

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1. Oakland Borough, 2025
3. Susquehanna Depot, History, 2025.
4. Susquehanna Western Rail New York, History, 2025.

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3. Google Earth, 2025.
4. Endless Mountain Heritage Region, Ira Reynolds, 2021.
5. Susquehanna Western Rail New York System Map, 2025.



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Sources

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2. U.S Census, American Community Survey, Susquehanna Depot, 2025.
Population | Age | Gender | Race | Poverty |
S.N.A.P | Health Care | Family Size | Expenses |
Income | Employment | Job Sector | Commute Times
3. U.S Census, American Community Survey, Oakland, 2025.
Population | Age | Gender | Race | Poverty |
S.N.A.P | Health Care | Family Size | Expenses |
Income | Employment | Job Sector | Commute Times
4. Borough, Susquehanna Depot, Council, Taxes, 2025.
5. Borough, Oakland, Council, Taxes, 2025.

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1. Woodland Design Associates, Logos, 2025.
2. Woodland Design Associates, Population Graphs, 2025.
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COMMUNITY OF TODAY

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2. Borough, Oakland, Zoning - Parcel Data, 2025.
3. Google Earth, 2025.
4. Susquehanna Depot Borough, 2025.
5. Oakland Borough, 2025.
6. Oakland and Susquehanna Depot Boroughs, Community Survey, 2023.

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2. Woodland Design Associates, Maps, 2025.
3. Susquehanna County, Logo, 2025.



Sources

1. U.S Census, American Community Survey, Susquehanna Depot, 2025.
Households | Rent | Occupied - Vacancy | Home Value | # of rooms
2. U.S Census, American Community Survey, Oakland, 2025.
Households | Rent | Occupied - Vacancy | Home Value | # of rooms

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2. Google Earth, 2025.

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3. Oakland Borough, Parcel Data, 2025.
4. NEPA Rail Trails, D&H Rail Trail, 2025.
5. Susquehanna River Greenways, Rivertown's, 2025.
6. River Trails, Susquehanna, North Branch, 2025.
7. Delta Engineering, Trail Feasibility, 2022.
8. Pennsylvania Environmental Council Outdoor Town Toolkit, 2025.

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2. Woodland Design Associates, Maps, 2025.
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4. Google Earth, 2025.
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6. Susquehanna River Greenways, Rivertown's, 2025.

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2. Pennsylvania Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (PA DCNR), 2025.
3. Susquehanna River, Endless Mountain Heritage Region, 2025.
4. Google Earth, 2025.
5. Susquehanna Depot Borough, History, 2025.
6. Susquehanna Western Rail New York System Map, 2025.

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2. Google Earth, 2025.

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ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Boroughs

Oakland Borough

<https://oaklandborough.com/>

Susquehanna Depot Borough

<https://susquehannaborough.com/>

Census Data

Oakland Borough

https://data.census.gov/profile/Oakland_borough,_Pennsylvania?g=160XX00US4256008

Susquehanna Depot Borough

https://data.census.gov/profile/Susquehanna_Depot_borough,_Pennsylvania?g=160XX00US4275568

Susquehanna County

https://data.census.gov/profile/Susquehanna_County,_Pennsylvania?g=050XX00US42115

Pennsylvania

<https://data.census.gov/profile/Pennsylvania?g=040XX00US42>

Funding

Department of Economic Development

<https://dced.pa.gov/>

Mapping Tools

Geographic Information Services

<https://www.esri.com/en-us/about/about-esri/overview>

Google Earth

earth.google.com/web/search/Susquehanna,+PA

Department of Environmental Protection

<https://gis.dep.pa.gov/PaOilAndGasMapping/OilGasWellsStrayGasMap.html>

Outdoor Towns

Pennsylvania Environmental Council

<https://pecpa.org/news/turning-towns-into-outdoor-towns/>

Outdoor Industry

<https://townsandtrailstoolkit.com/whatisanoutdoortown/>

Railroads

New York Susquehanna Western Rail

<https://nysw.com/>

New York and Erie Railroad

<https://susquehannaborough.com/history/erie-effects>

Susquehanna River

Endless Mountain Heritage

<https://emheritage.org/susquehanna-river-north-branch-water-trail/>

Susquehanna Greenway

<https://susquehannagreenway.org/about-the-greenway/north-branch/>

River Towns

<https://susquehannagreenway.org/river-towns/>