



DESTINATION ERIE

A Regional Vision | Vision Report

Regional Plan for Sustainable Development
Partnership for Sustainable Communities



Destination Erie:
A Regional Vision
www.planerieregion.com

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ABOUT DESTINATION ERIE: A REGIONAL VISION

Destination Erie: A Regional Vision is a planning process that involves citizens and leaders from Erie County and beyond to create a common vision, strategies, and actions to meet the challenges facing the region in the 21st century. The final product will be a plan reflecting the values of the entire Erie County community, from residents of the region's cities, boroughs, and townships. A diverse consortium of local organizations, involved through the Leadership Team and Work Groups, is helping to guide the plan over a three-year period and will see it through implementation.

Funded in part by a generous grant from the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities.



Prepared by WRT

Revised: 7 October 2013

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	06
2 PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW: PHASE 2	12
3 VISION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	16
4 TREND AND ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT	24
5 SELECTING A PREFERRED FUTURE	34
6 GROWTH AND INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK	36
7 PHASE 3 AND NEXT STEPS	37



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01 /

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



VISION STATEMENT

Our Realized Vision has Resulted in an **Erie County** that is **THRIVING, EDUCATED, GREEN, LIVABLE, AND CONNECTED:**

The regional vision for Erie is crafted to be both inspirational and aspirational, reflecting the shared values of the region's citizens. To date, nearly 3,000 persons have participated in community forums, meetings-in-a-box and online activities, offering ideas which are reflected and woven into this vision statement. The process to develop a regional vision began in May 2012 with kickoff meetings in which citizens were challenged to express ideas for how the region's environment, transportation and infrastructure systems, economy and workforce, and community facilities could be strengthened in the future. From October through November 2012, participants at the next major round of public input (Workshop Series #1) worked in small groups to record their thoughts on local and regional strengths, challenges, and ideas for the region's future.

All of the input from project kickoff meetings, the public workshops, and meetings of the CLT and Destination Erie Work Groups was synthesized into 6 vision themes in December 2012. The community reviewed, rated, and commented on the vision themes and each sub-theme during the second public workshop meeting series held from May through July 2013. The nearly 2,000 residents that participated in the second round of community input strongly supported the vision themes (on a scale of 1-5, each averaged at least a rating of 4). The vision themes and sub-themes have been refined in the vision narrative and strategic directions.

In 2040, Erie County is one of the nation's celebrated success stories, renowned for its unique heritage and natural setting, its strengthened, diversified economy, and its livable neighborhoods in a choice of urban, suburban and rural, small town settings. Our culture and identity is one that values innovation and where citizens are connected to the community - our cities, boroughs and townships and to each other.

Erie County is a place where **businesses, neighborhoods and families thrive, where education is valued** and seen as a pathway to success and fulfillment, where the **natural environment is conserved** for future generations, and where **communities are livable and connected** both within the county and the larger Great Lakes region.

For 2040, we have successfully addressed the key challenges we face today – the need for a regional economic strategy, high poverty rates and concentration of poverty, and lack of regional coordination. The Erie region's leadership supports a clear and bold vision for the county that has been realized through an integrated approach, one in which barriers to regional cooperation have been overcome, allowing Erie to create new synergies between local and state governments, universities, local institutions and foundations and businesses. We have realized this vision by leveraging our assets, correcting our shortcomings, and balancing our priorities for what makes our community outstanding.

THRIVING

A thriving economy and community provides economic opportunities for all residents, is prosperous and diverse, and supports safe and affordable housing and neighborhoods. Jobs and housing are linked and there are opportunities for employment in urban, suburban, and rural areas. An entrepreneurial culture supports emerging businesses and markets and the regions' workforce is prepared to meet the needs of our employers. Formerly underutilized land and building have been re-purposed through re-investment. Our collective energy and network of organizations and businesses supports education, innovation, and economic growth.

EDUCATED

A successful education system with opportunities for all residents is the "keystone" of the region's transformation. Erie County's children have equal opportunities to succeed and the workforce has the skills and training that meets the needs of our diversifying economy. The education system, from pre-K through post-graduate, is competitive with other regions and prepares students for their chosen careers. Public-private partnerships support early education that prepares youth for both academic and career success.

GREEN

One of the region's greatest strengths, its natural environment of Lake Erie, waterways, woodland habitats and open space, is enhanced and protected. Residents and visitors have improved access and enjoyment of the lakefront and bayfront. Our communities are healthy and have enriched recreational opportunities, including trails and bikeways, contributing to the health of our citizens. We use and promote renewable energy and conserve resources through energy efficiency and reuse of land, buildings, and materials.

LIVABLE

Our communities are welcoming to residents, businesses, and visitors and we embrace and celebrate our diversity. Erie County has safe, affordable, and healthy neighborhoods with quality housing, educational, and recreational opportunities. Our history and culture is strengthened and expressed through local and regional events, arts, and festivals.

CONNECTED

Erie County's cities, boroughs, and townships are linked by a regional transportation system that provides safe and efficient travel. Neighborhoods, jobs, and attractions are connected by walking, biking, transit, and vehicle transportation options. Mixed-use redevelopment and infill is supported by existing infrastructure and reduces distance between housing, jobs and other destinations. Our water, sewer, police and fire, information networks, and community services are coordinated and benefit from shared resources.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The **vision themes** paint a conceptual picture of what kind of region Erie aspires to be 25 years in the future. They describe in greater detail the “destination” for Destination Erie, framing the plan’s strategic directions and actions, which follow. **Strategic directions** are the step between vision and action; they are the pathways toward progress that answer the question “what will we do to realize the overall vision” and help to focus and organize the plan implementation. **Regional coordination** is the overarching key to fulfilling the vision. The vision requires leadership and collaboration between governments, public-private partnerships, institutions, property owners, and neighbors to succeed.

THRIVING

1. **Diversify the economy** and support local and regional entrepreneurial growth.
2. **Reinvest in the region’s cities and boroughs** and strengthen existing public infrastructure (e.g., roads, water and sewer lines, community health, and community services).
3. Ensure neighborhoods are **safe, affordable, and walkable** with quality schools, retail, and services.
4. **Support rural communities** through “smart growth,” support for rural economic development, and the business of farming.

EDUCATED

5. Develop an educational system that provides a **variety of affordable and high quality educational opportunities** beginning with early education through post-secondary schools (Pre-K through 12, technical schools, colleges, and universities).
6. **Prepare students to succeed in the regional workplace** and ensure the workforce has the skills that are required by employers and can compete globally.
7. Support schools as **centers of the community** that foster learning, collaboration, recreation, and community safety.

GREEN

8. Protect the **quality of water resources** and **improve access** to the region’s open spaces, rivers, streams, lakes, and the Bayfront.
9. **Conserve the natural environment** (air, water, and land) through connected green infrastructure, protected open spaces, and increased opportunities for outdoor recreation.
10. Expand the **green economy** through technology, innovation, renewable energy, and workforce training.
11. Develop and redevelop communities in a **sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner** that efficiently uses resources.



LIVABLE

12. Ensure all ages, ethnicities, and incomes have **access to housing, safe communities, economic opportunities, and transportation.**
13. Respect and ensure that **diversity**, in our population and businesses, **is represented** in the region to guarantee our prosperity.
14. Create **family-friendly, affordable neighborhoods** with a range of housing that provide options for all types of households.
15. Foster and value a **creative and vibrant cultural life**, accessible to all residents and visitors.
16. **Support and grow tourism** in all parts of the county, highlighting the region's attractions that include water resources, parks and recreation, farmland and wineries, and culture, entertainment and festivals.

CONNECTED

17. **Link jobs and housing** through multi-modal transportation options that include safe walking, biking, transit, and vehicle connections.
18. Focus **walkable and bikeable development around transit**, between job and population centers, and near major activity centers –such as universities, schools, and hospitals.
19. Encourage **regional entities and municipalities to share information** and resources and coordinate services.
20. Grow our **economy and regional identity** through collaboration within the **Great Lakes region.**

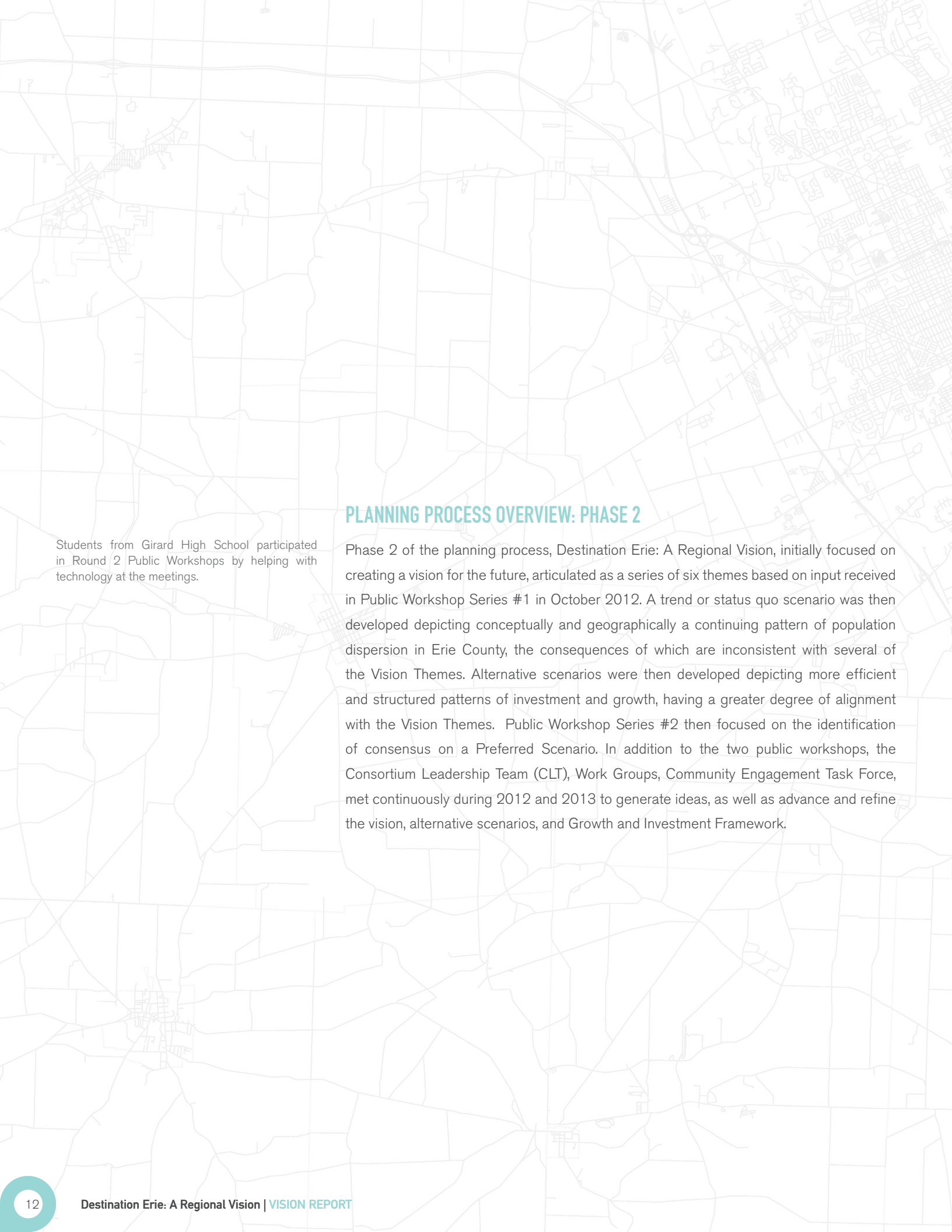


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02/ VISION REPORT

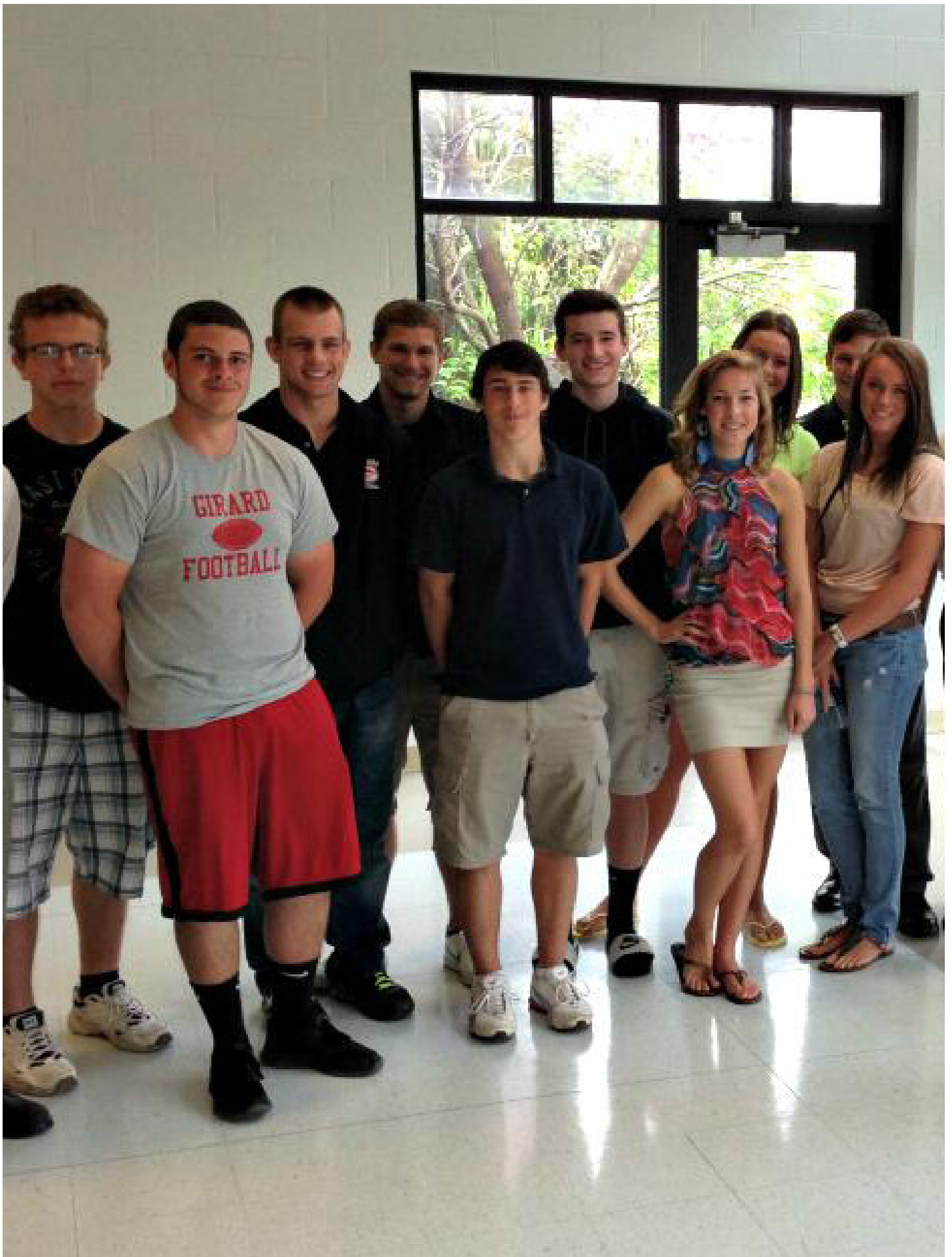




Students from Girard High School participated in Round 2 Public Workshops by helping with technology at the meetings.

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW: PHASE 2

Phase 2 of the planning process, Destination Erie: A Regional Vision, initially focused on creating a vision for the future, articulated as a series of six themes based on input received in Public Workshop Series #1 in October 2012. A trend or status quo scenario was then developed depicting conceptually and geographically a continuing pattern of population dispersion in Erie County, the consequences of which are inconsistent with several of the Vision Themes. Alternative scenarios were then developed depicting more efficient and structured patterns of investment and growth, having a greater degree of alignment with the Vision Themes. Public Workshop Series #2 then focused on the identification of consensus on a Preferred Scenario. In addition to the two public workshops, the Consortium Leadership Team (CLT), Work Groups, Community Engagement Task Force, met continuously during 2012 and 2013 to generate ideas, as well as advance and refine the vision, alternative scenarios, and Growth and Investment Framework.





Municipal Officials Meeting

Public Workshop Series #1: Regional Strengths, Challenges, and Ideas for the Future

During the first round of public workshops in October 2012, Erie County residents worked in small groups to share and prioritize their thoughts about local and regional strengths, challenges, and aspirations for their future of the region. The breakout group ideas were brought back to the larger groups at each meeting, and participants voted for priorities. The input from the workshops and follow up remote meeting sessions held among smaller groups throughout the county was reviewed and combined into six forward-looking vision themes (Thriving, Green, Educated, Energized, Linked, and Welcoming) to describe the Erie region in 2040. More than 300 people participated in the workshops and meeting in a box sessions, with another 400 participating in other ways, including in the first open house, work group meetings, and consortium meeting in Round 1.



Round 2 Public Workshop Gallery

Public Workshop Series #2: Selecting a Preferred Vision and Future

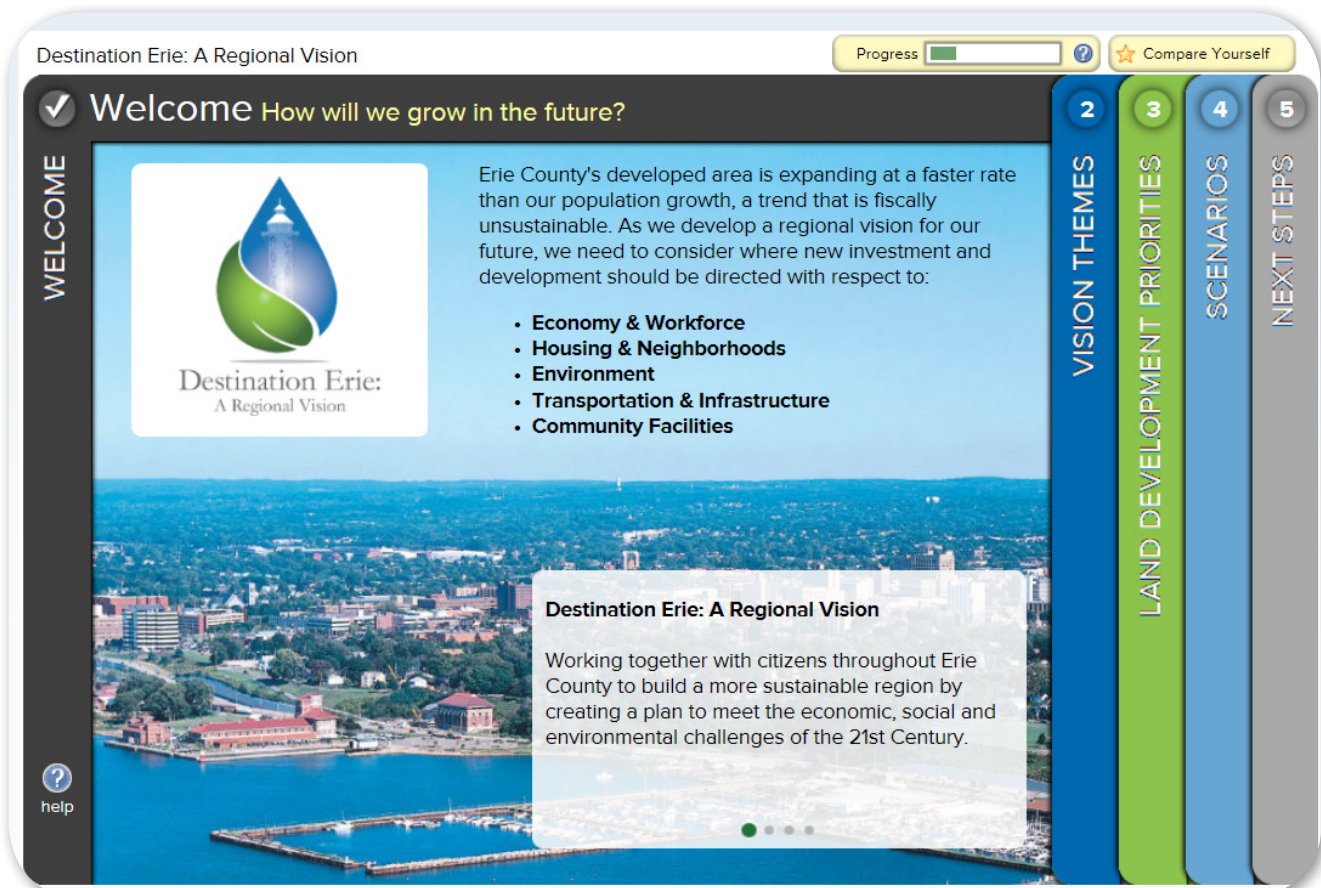
In Round 2 of the planning process, Destination Erie asked the public for feedback on the vision themes, priorities for future development and investment, and possible alternative scenarios for how the region could look in 2040. This series included two large public workshops to kick-off the public engagement, followed by 86 facilitated group sessions throughout the county. The online Metroquest survey was available for public input from May through early July 2013, allowing the public to participate at their convenience and describe their preferences through the survey. Nearly 2,000 people participated in the meetings and/or survey, exceeding targets set by the Steering Committee and Community Engagement Task Force and significantly increasing participation from Round 1.



Round 2 Public Workshop Presentation and Discussion

Consortium Leadership Team (CLT), Work Groups, and Community Engagement Task Force

The Consortium Leadership Team (CLT) is helping to guide all aspects of the planning process, including providing feedback and direction to the Destination Erie staff and the consultant team. The CLT includes the chairs and vice-chairs of each of the work groups described below with additional members representing private business, townships, and boroughs in Erie



Metroquest online survey platform.

County. The CLT is also working to build capacity across the region and champion the planning process to the public, local governments, and organizations.

Early in the process, Work Groups were organized around the themes of the HUD Regional Planning Grant for Destination Erie: A Regional Vision. They include Transportation and Infrastructure, Economy and Workforce, Housing and Neighborhoods, Community Facilities, and Environment. In addition, the Community Engagement Task Force is assisting the project team with outreach, communication, and public participation.

The CLT and Work Groups met throughout Phase 2 to shape the design of the community workshops and to provide feedback and direction on the vision, strategic directions, scenarios, the growth and investment framework, and other interim work products. In addition, the groups have defined key challenges that confront each work group, along with identifying and developing potential action initiatives that will be the focus of the next public workshop (scheduled for early 2014) and Phase 3 of the planning process.

In addition, the project team has held X? meetings to engage elected and municipal officials, as well as water and sewer authority representatives. Finally, Destination Erie Steering Committee meets on a monthly basis to oversee the project, provide feedback on key elements, and help build regional capacity for implementation.



Right: Figure 1. Vision Themes and Subthemes Ranking. Themes were ranked from 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest, and 5 the highest.

VISION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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All of the input from project kickoff meetings, the public workshops, and meetings of the CLT and Work Groups was synthesized into six vision themes. The community reviewed, rated, and commented on the vision themes and each sub-theme during the second public workshop meeting series held from May through July 2013. The nearly 2,000 residents that participated in the second round of community input strongly supported the vision themes (on a scale of 1-5, each averaged at least a rating of 4).

The vision themes and sub-themes were then refined in the vision narrative and set of strategic directions in the table below. The vision and strategic directions forms the basis of the plan and its strategies and actions.

FIGURE 1: RANKING OF VISION THEMES AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

VISION THEMES	COUNT	AVERAGE
THRIVING	4.30	
1. The economy is diversified and small businesses are supported	1732	4.42
2. Neighborhoods are safe, affordable, and livable	1700	4.59
3. City and town centers are strengthened and revitalized	1527	4.23
4. A nurturing environment allows global companies to grow.	1456	3.97
GREEN	4.29	
1. Residents have improved access to open space, rivers and streams, lakes, and the bayfront.	1417	4.21
2. The natural environment (air, water, and land) is protected and conserved through green initiatives.	1462	4.37
3. Agriculture is maintained and valued as part of an economic development mix.	1398	4.29
EDUCATED	4.53	
1. Residents have access to a variety of affordable and high quality educational options (Pre-K, K-12, 2-and 4-year colleges).	1527	4.67
2. Students who graduate from the region's educational system are prepared to compete globally	1486	4.44
3. The region's education and workforce training system prepares residents to meet the current and future needs of our region's employers.	1523	4.55
ENERGIZED	4.19	
1. Leadership provides a clear and bold vision for the region	1351	4.33
2. Renewable energy sources are used in new development	1390	4.09
3. Development of communities occurs in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner	1349	4.17
4. A creative and vibrant cultural life is fostered and valued as a regional asset.	1348	4.18
LINKED	4.19	
1. Regional entities share information, assets, and coordinate services	1321	4.28
2. Multimodal transportation options link jobs and housing	1371	4.15
3. Walkable development occurs around existing transit and infrastructure.	1343	4.13
WELCOMING	4.26	
1. All ages, ethnicities, and incomes have access to housing, economic opportunities, and transportation.	1356	4.29
2. Diversity is respected and represented.	1287	4.19
3. The entrepreneurial spirit is embraced to ensure our region's prosperity.	1352	4.34
4. The charm and character of our rural communities is maintained and preserved.	1315	4.21

VISION STATEMENT

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VISION THEMES & STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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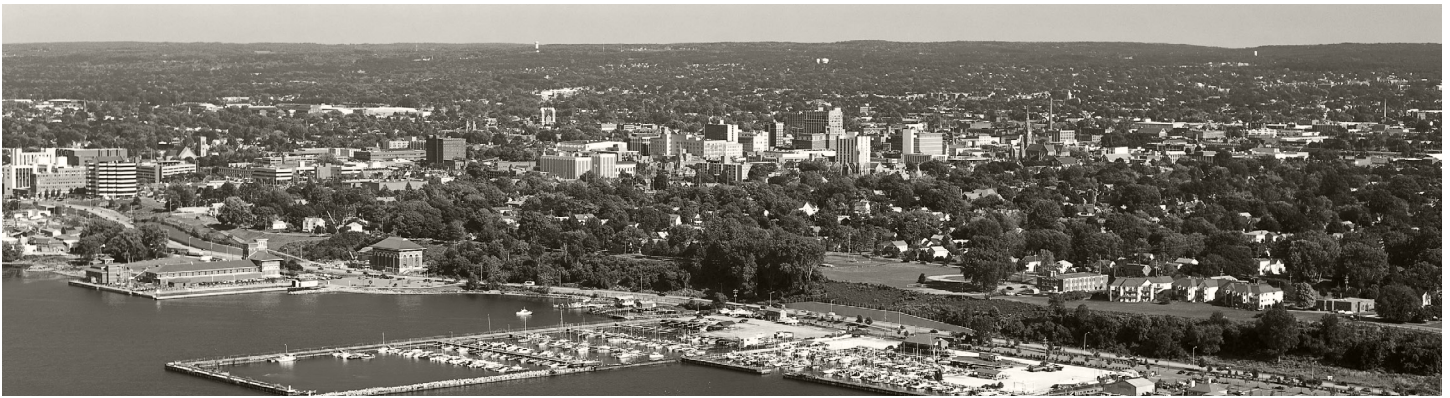


LIVABLE

Our communities are welcoming to residents, businesses, and visitors and we embrace and celebrate our diversity. Erie County has safe, affordable, and healthy neighborhoods with quality housing, educational, and recreational opportunities. Our history and culture is strengthened and expressed through local and regional events, arts, and festivals.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

12. Ensure all ages, ethnicities, and incomes have **access to housing, safe communities, economic opportunities, and transportation.**
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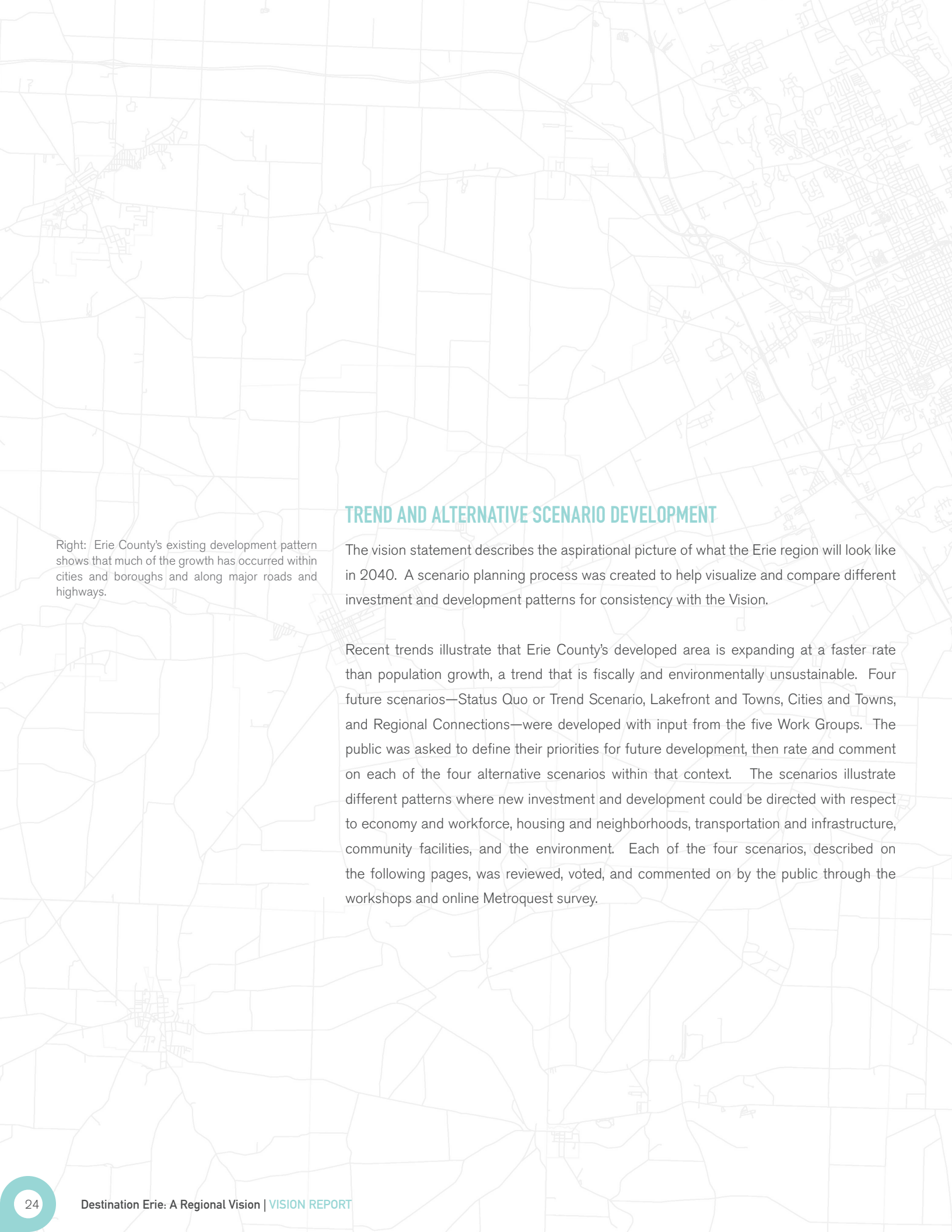
CONNECTED



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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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18. Focus **walkable and bikeable development around transit**, between job and population centers, and near major activity centers –such as universities, schools, and hospitals.
19. Encourage **regional entities and municipalities to share information** and resources and coordinate services.
20. Grow our **economy and regional identity** through collaboration within the **Great Lakes region**.



Right: Erie County's existing development pattern shows that much of the growth has occurred within cities and boroughs and along major roads and highways.

TREND AND ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

The vision statement describes the aspirational picture of what the Erie region will look like in 2040. A scenario planning process was created to help visualize and compare different investment and development patterns for consistency with the Vision.

Recent trends illustrate that Erie County's developed area is expanding at a faster rate than population growth, a trend that is fiscally and environmentally unsustainable. Four future scenarios—Status Quo or Trend Scenario, Lakefront and Towns, Cities and Towns, and Regional Connections—were developed with input from the five Work Groups. The public was asked to define their priorities for future development, then rate and comment on each of the four alternative scenarios within that context. The scenarios illustrate different patterns where new investment and development could be directed with respect to economy and workforce, housing and neighborhoods, transportation and infrastructure, community facilities, and the environment. Each of the four scenarios, described on the following pages, was reviewed, voted, and commented on by the public through the workshops and online Metroquest survey.

FIGURE 2: EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

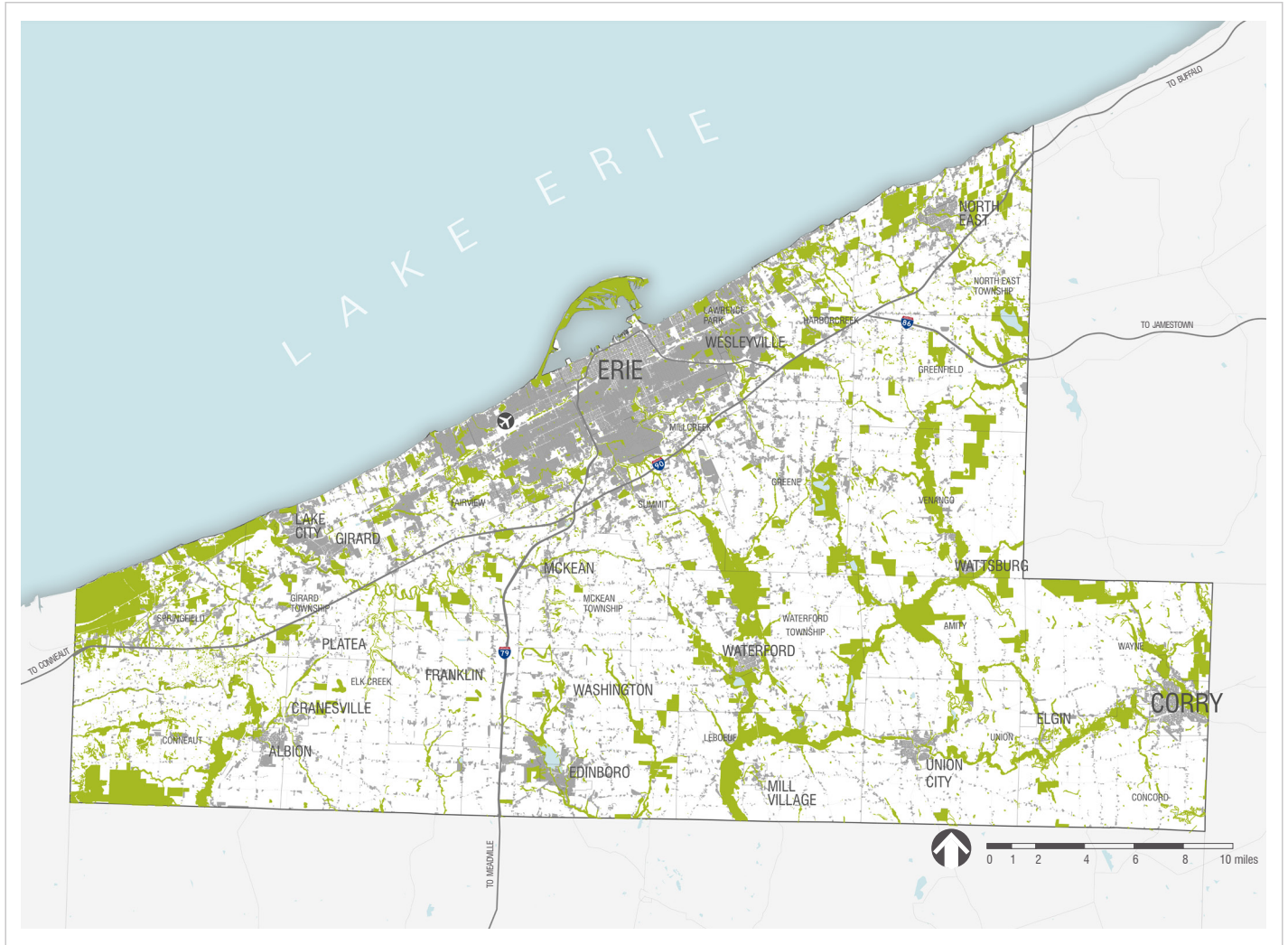
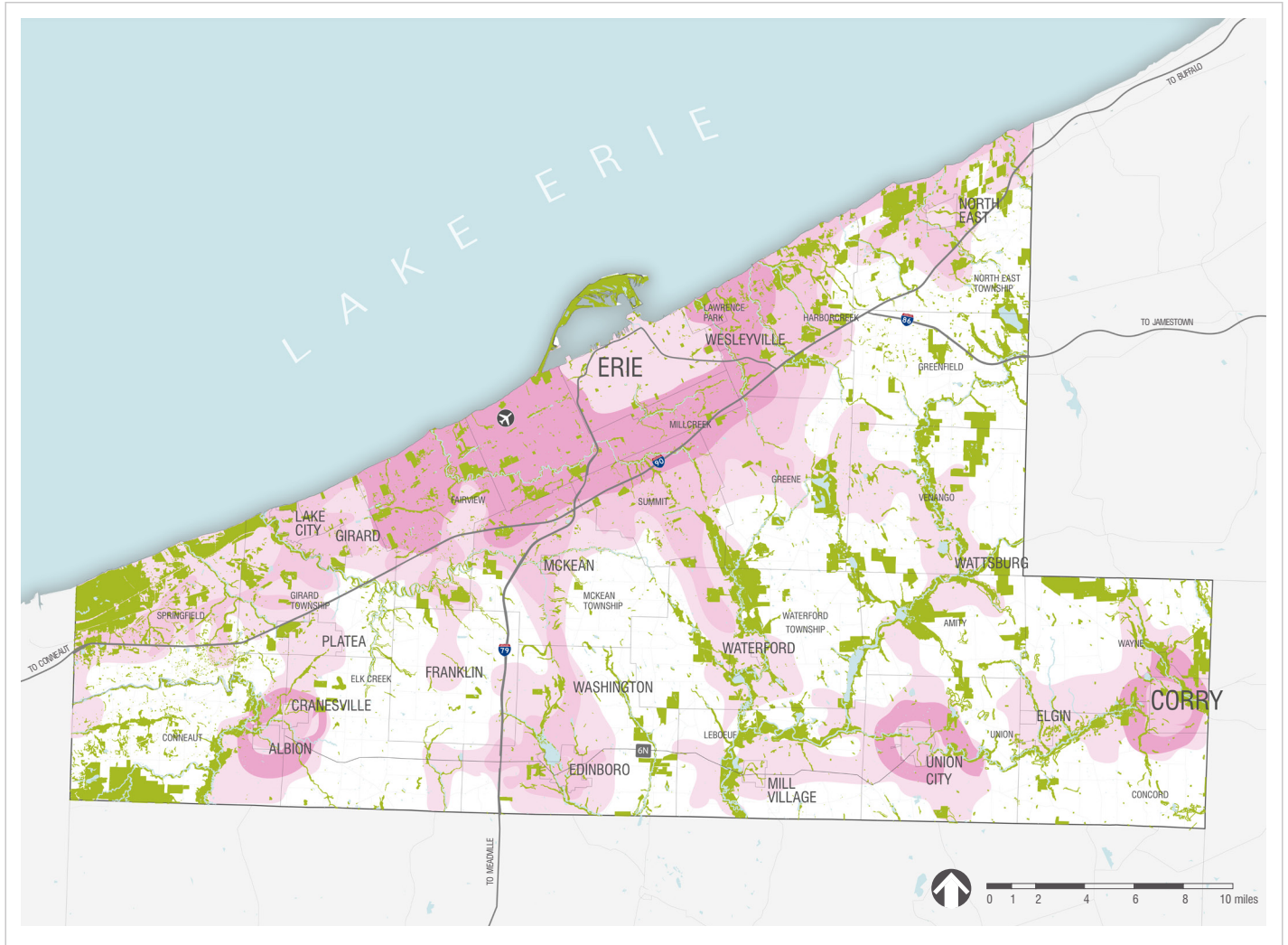


FIGURE 3: STATUS QUO / TREND SCENARIO MAP



Scenario 1: Status Quo / Trend

In Scenario 1, the majority of growth and investment occurs in suburban areas and townships, expanding along major roads into rural areas, while urban areas continue to lose population. New development is car-friendly and jobs and homes are separated from each other. The status quo/ trend scenario shows how the county might look in 2040 if this land consumption rate continues.

- Urban areas continue losing population along with associated disinvestment, blight and fiscal distress
- Most growth occurs in suburban townships and boroughs
- High municipal costs as a result of new infrastructure and service delivery costs
- Natural resources and agricultural lands compromised by development
- Adds an estimated 137 square miles of developed land area by 2040¹
- This scenario has the greatest increase in growth in undeveloped areas and easy highway access compared to the current condition.

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY



Protected Natural Resource Areas

Growth Areas

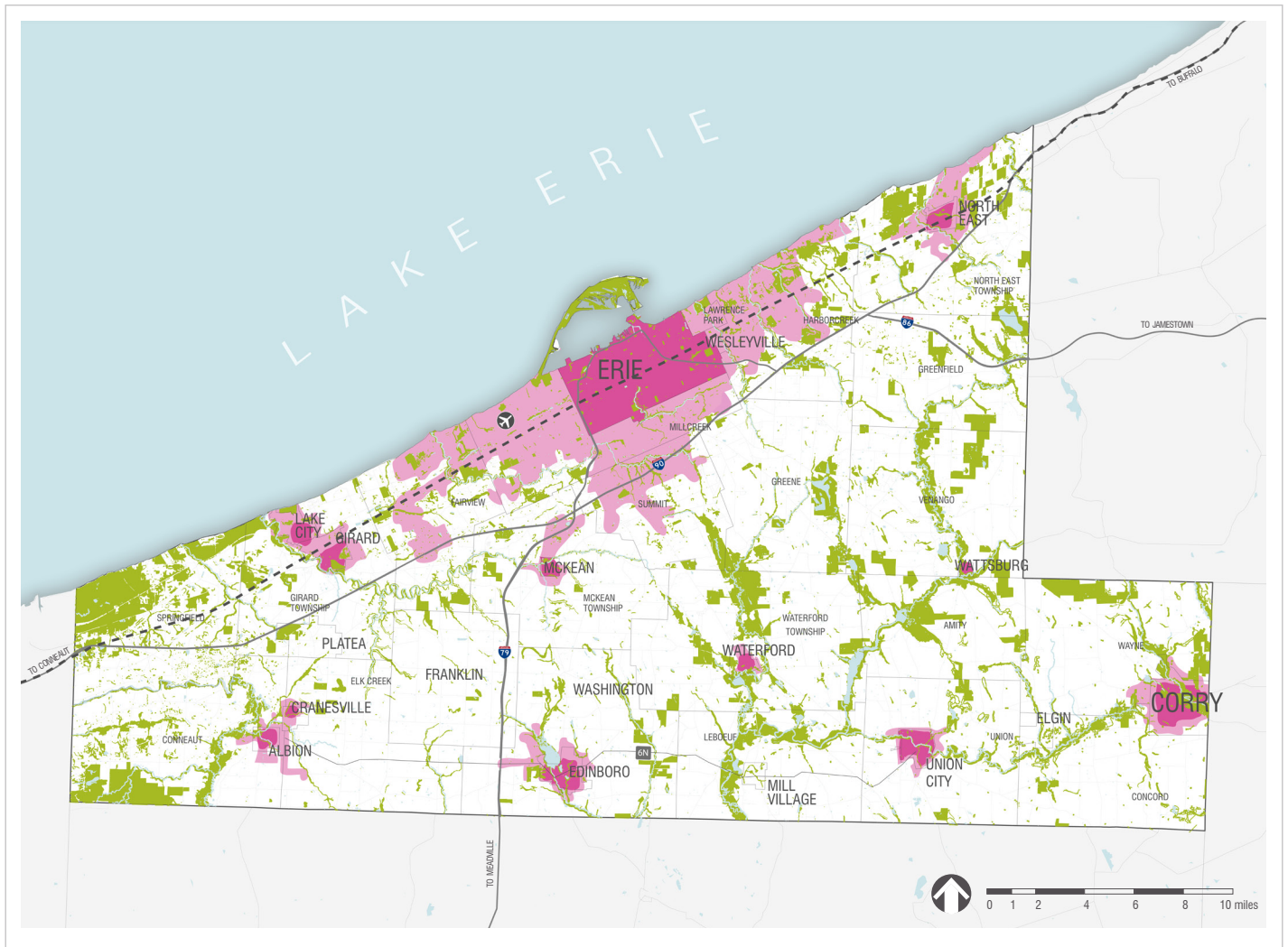
Growth areas are ranked on a scale from High to Low referring to the intensity of use and density of future development within those areas.

Protected Natural Resource Areas

Slopes >25%, wetlands, Parks and Recreational Facilities, State Gamelands, WPC and LERC land, floodplains, Preserved Farmland

¹ To determine the growth pattern for the status quo trend, a growth, or land consumption ratio was calculated using change in population and change in developed area in the years between 1980 and 2000. The resultant ratio of 29.5 was used to calculate the added urban area based on population projections for 2020, 2030, and 2040. The resultant 137 square miles of added development were divided into a 70/30 mix of residential and commercial uses and then allocated based on proximity to existing development and major roadways. Areas within the county's designated growth areas and areas zoned for residential and commercial development were given highest priority for new development while areas within floodplains, wetlands, and locations with steep slopes were excluded.

FIGURE 4: LAKEFRONT AND TOWNS SCENARIO MAP



Scenario 2: Lakefront and Towns

In Scenario 2, growth and investment occurs mainly in Lakefront communities and smaller towns in southern Erie County. The majority of development would be encouraged in areas with established roads, public water and sewer, and community facilities. Improvement of recreation and amenities is focused along the lakefront. Regional rail transit is enhanced, and environmentally sensitive areas and agriculture are protected.

- Focuses investment near lakefront, generally north of I-90, balanced with reinvestment in the southern county communities;
- Takes advantage of existing infrastructure, including roads, vacant and underutilized buildings, rail lines, water and sewer lines, community facilities and services;
- Limits the need to build new or expanded infrastructure to serve developed areas;
- Greatest focus on public waterfront amenities;
- Improves regional transit (rail) service and local bus transit;
- Preserves agriculture and rural development areas;
- Adds an estimated 56 square miles of developed land area by 2040²;
- This scenario has the greatest increase in redevelopment and infill compared to the current condition.

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY



Protected Natural Resource Areas

Growth Areas

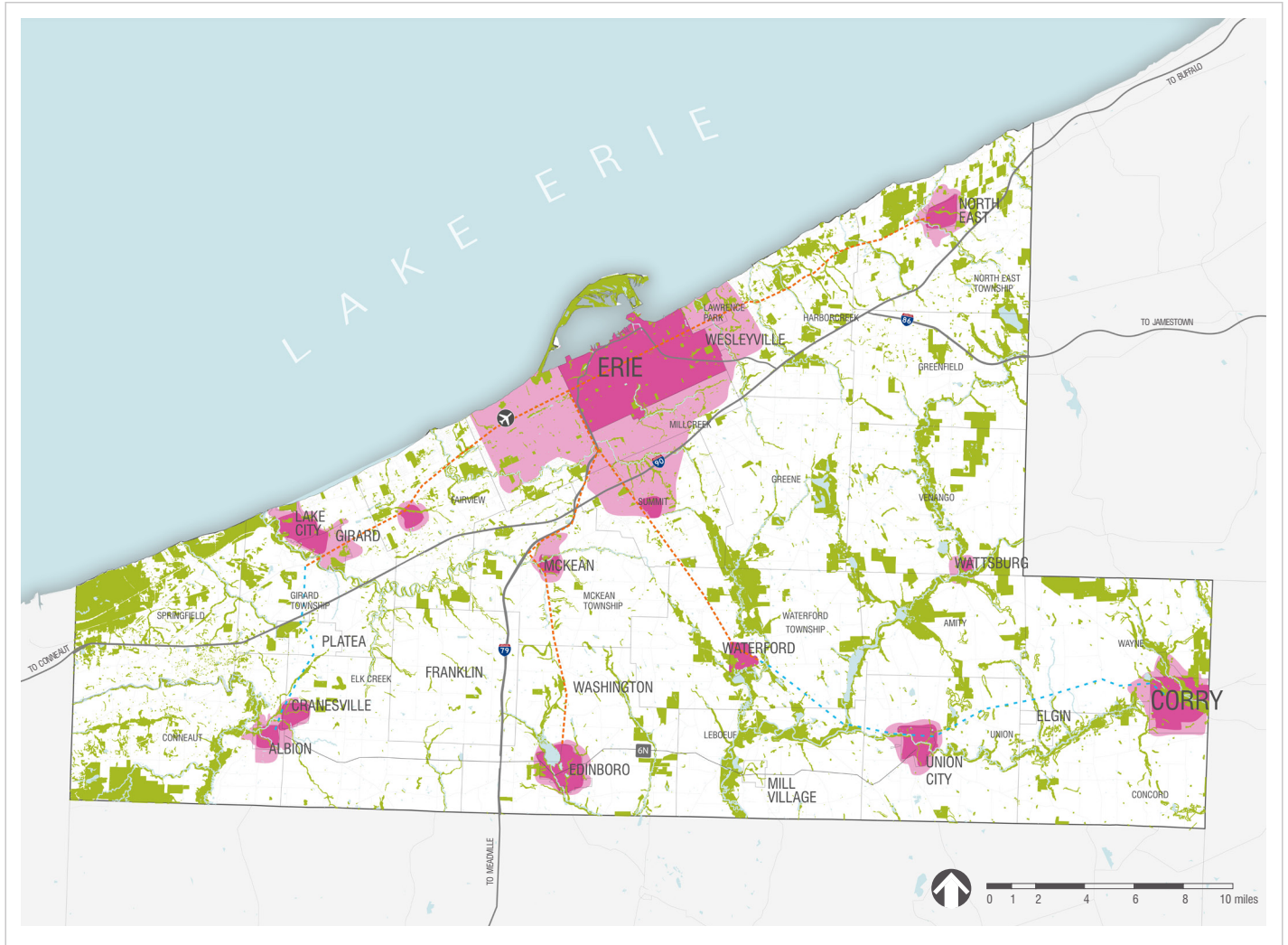
Growth areas are ranked on a scale from High to Low referring to the intensity of use and density of future development within those areas.

Protected Natural Resource Areas

Slopes >25%, wetlands, Parks and Recreational Facilities, State Gamelands, WPC and LERC land, floodplains, Preserved Farmland

² The land consumption ratio for Scenario 2 was calculated using the projected change in population with a smaller change in the estimated amount of added urban area. The resultant ratio, 13.5, takes into account the larger amount of infill and new development at a higher density than Scenarios 1, 3, and 4.

FIGURE 5: CITIES AND TOWNS SCENARIO MAP



Scenario 3: Cities and Towns

In Scenario 3, growth and investment occurs in and around existing cities, boroughs, and small towns. A majority of the development would be redevelopment including infill and reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure. Regional and local bus service is enhanced, and environmentally sensitive areas and agriculture are protected.

- Focuses redevelopment in cities, boroughs, and small towns;
- Takes advantage of existing infrastructure, including roads, vacant or underutilized buildings, rail lines, water and sewer lines, community facilities and services;
- May require investment in maintenance and upgrades to existing systems;
- Limits the need to build new or expanded infrastructure to serve developed areas;
- Each community would have some level of its own mix of employment, retail, residences - similar to a traditional walkable main street or neighborhood;
- Improves regional transportation bus rapid transit and local bus service;
- Preserves agriculture and rural development areas;
- Adds an estimated 66 square miles of developed land area by 2040³;
- This scenario has the greatest increase in walkable neighborhoods and access to local shopping opportunities compared to the current condition.

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY



Protected Natural Resource Areas



Growth Areas

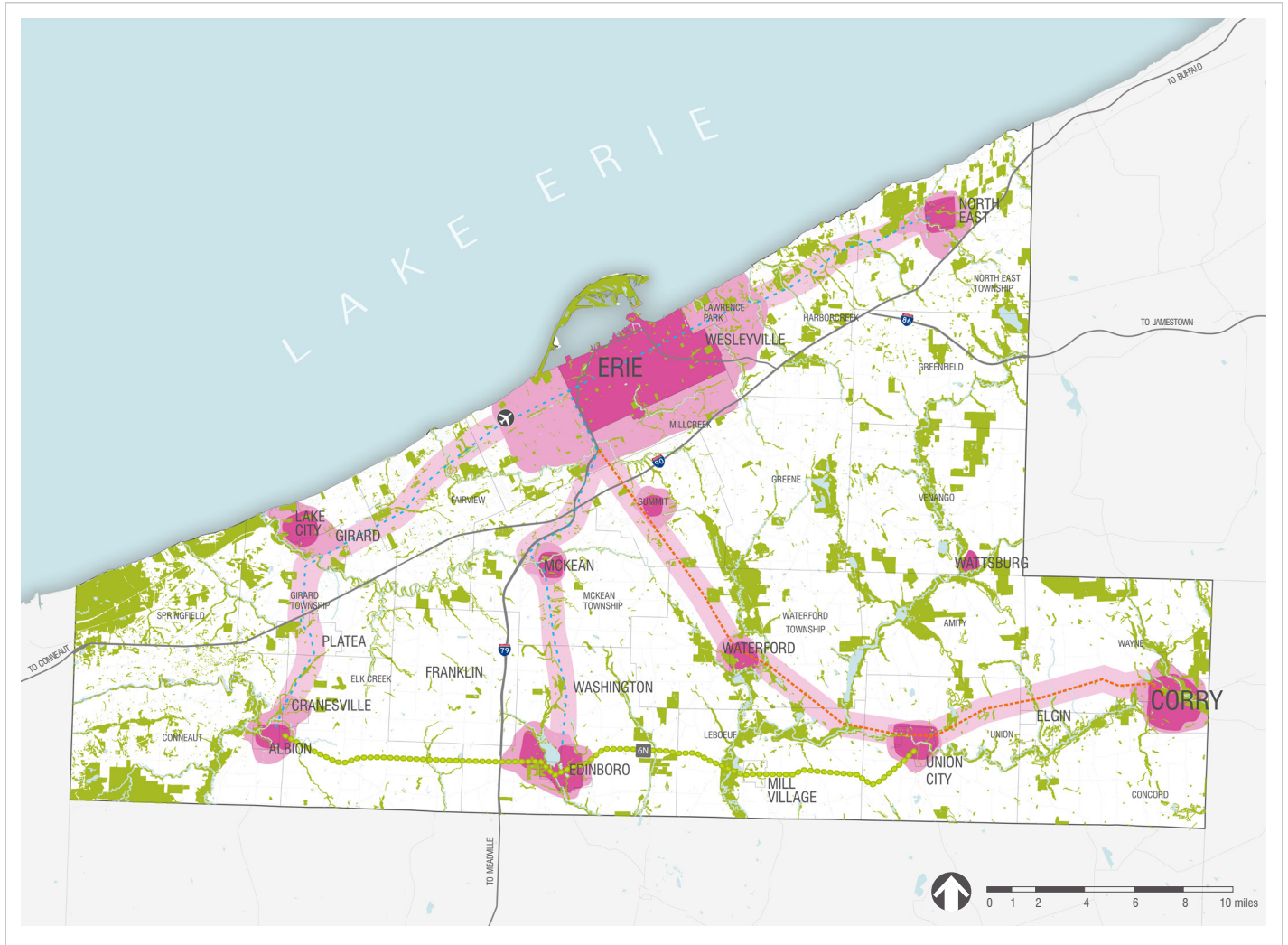
Growth areas are ranked on a scale from High to Low referring to the intensity of use and density of future development within those areas.

Protected Natural Resource Areas

Slopes >25%, wetlands, Parks and Recreational Facilities, State Gamelands, WPC and LERC land, floodplains, Preserved Farmland

³ Scenario 3's land consumption ratio of 15.9 takes into account the larger amount of infill and redevelopment at a higher density than Scenarios 1, and 4.

FIGURE 6: REGIONAL CONNECTIONS SCENARIO MAP



Scenario 4: Regional Connections

In Scenario 4, growth and investment occurs in “smart growth” corridors, balanced with redevelopment in existing towns and cities. Corridor development would emphasize walkable patterns, transit and bicycle enhancement, and improved regional transit connections to job centers. Environmentally sensitive areas are protected.

- Balances urban and suburban development, while supporting existing communities;
- Locates new development adjacent to, and within, existing developed areas;
- Improves road, transit, pedestrian, and land use relationships along corridors;
- May require road and infrastructure extensions and/or investments;
- Encourages conservation subdivision patterns for lower-density residential development;
- Includes lower density office and research parks;
- Improves regional transit through bus rapid transit and bus service along corridors, preserves agriculture and rural development areas;
- Adds an estimated 92 square miles of developed land area by 2040⁴;
- This scenario has the greatest increase in transit access compared to the current condition.

DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY



Protected Natural Resource Areas

Growth Areas

Growth areas are ranked on a scale from High to Low referring to the intensity of use and density of future development within those areas.

Protected Natural Resource Areas

Slopes >25%, wetlands, Parks and Recreational Facilities, State Gamelands, WPC and LERC land, floodplains, Preserved Farmland

⁴ The land consumption ratio for Scenario 4 of 22.9 is higher than Scenarios 2 and 3 and lower than Scenario 4. It takes into account growth in boroughs and townships as well as suburban development along major transportation corridors.

Comparing Scenarios Using Indicators

The following land use priorities, or indicators, were used to measure how well each of the scenarios perform in relation to key issues selected by the public. Participants were able to select their top five priority issues and review the chart to see how their priorities aligned with each scenario before rating the four alternatives.

The green arrows represent levels of increase in the land development priority, while red arrows represent levels of decrease in the land development priority compared to current patterns of investment and growth.

FIGURE 7: INDICATOR SCORING BY SCENARIO

	SHOWS CHANGE COMPARED TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERN			
	SCENARIO 1 "STATUS QUO"	SCENARIO 2 "LAKEFRONT"	SCENARIO 3 "CITIES & TOWNS"	SCENARIO 4 "REGIONAL"
FOCUS ON REDEVELOPMENT & INFILL	←	→	→	→
LOW CARBON EMISSIONS	←	→	→	→
EASY HIGHWAY ACCESS	→	→	→	→
PROTECT SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS	←	→	→	→
HOMES ON LARGE LOTS	→	←	←	←
PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS	←	→	→	→
INCREASE ACCESS TO LOCAL SHOPPING	←	→	→	→
EASY TRANSIT ACCESS	←	→	→	→
INCREASE ACCESS TO RECREATION	→	→	→	→
GROW IN UNDEVELOPED AREAS	→	←	←	←
WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS	←	→	→	→
LOWER TAXES	←	→	→	→

FOCUS ON REDEVELOPMENT & INFILL



New development occurs on vacant and underutilized land within existing developed areas. The scoring for this indicator was based on the percent of proposed redevelopment within each scenario.

Most Supportive: Lakefront and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo

LOW CARBON EMISSIONS



A mix of housing types, commercial uses, and transportation improvements allows residents to travel fewer miles per day reducing the amount of pollution from motor vehicles. Lower carbon emissions was scored for each scenario using Cadmus's analysis of estimated carbon emissions based on the percentage of low, medium, and high density development and the amount vehicle miles traveled.

Most Supportive: Lakefront and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo

ACCESS TO HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

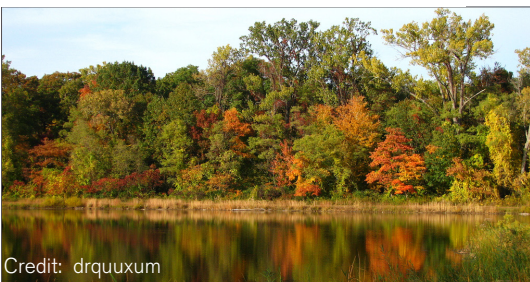


Automobile travel along major roads is accessible. Access was calculated based on proximity of new development to existing highways and interstates.

Most Supportive: Status Quo

Least Supportive: Not applicable

PROTECT SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS



Sensitive environments and natural areas including stream corridors, wetlands, and wildlife habitats are protected from development. This indicator was scored using the percentage of development within sensitive areas, such as county greenways and wildlife habitats, and the percentage of development within close proximity to a floodplain.

Most Supportive: Cities and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo

HOMES ON LARGE LOTS



New homes are primarily single family and are built on large lots in suburban and rural areas. The new homes on large lots indicator was scored using the percentage of low density development and percentage of development outside of existing developed areas.

Most Supportive: Status Quo

Least Supportive: Cities and Towns

PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS



Credit: Nicholas A Tonelli

Preserved agriculture areas provide food, jobs, and economic benefits to the region. Scores for the preservation of agricultural areas were based on the percent of new development that would occur in existing agricultural land.

Most Supportive: Lakefront and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo

ACCESS LOCAL SHOPPING



Convenient and local retail establishments are located near housing. Access to local shopping opportunities scoring included the proximity of retail to existing residential and job centers and the percent of mixed-use development in each scenario.

Most Supportive: Cities and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo

ACCESS TO TRANSIT



Public transportation is close by, direct, and easy to get to and use from home and work. Access to transit scoring was based on the percent of residential development and job centers near existing transit routes.

Most Supportive: Lakefront and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo

INCREASE ACCESS TO RECREATION



Parks, trails, and recreation opportunities are accessible to residents throughout the region. Access to recreation scores were based on proximity of existing and proposed development to trails and parks.

Most Supportive: Lakefront and Towns

Least Supportive: Not Applicable

GROW IN UNDEVELOPED AREAS



New development occurs on agriculture, open space, or forested land within existing undeveloped areas. Grow in undeveloped areas was scored using the percentage of currently undeveloped, or greenfield, land that would be developed in each scenario.

Most Supportive: Status Quo

Least Supportive: Lakefront and Towns

WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS



Mixed-use walkable neighborhoods locate housing near schools, shopping, and job centers. The scoring for walkable neighborhoods was based on geographic proximity to schools and employment centers and the percent of mixed-use development within each scenario.

Most Supportive: Cities and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo

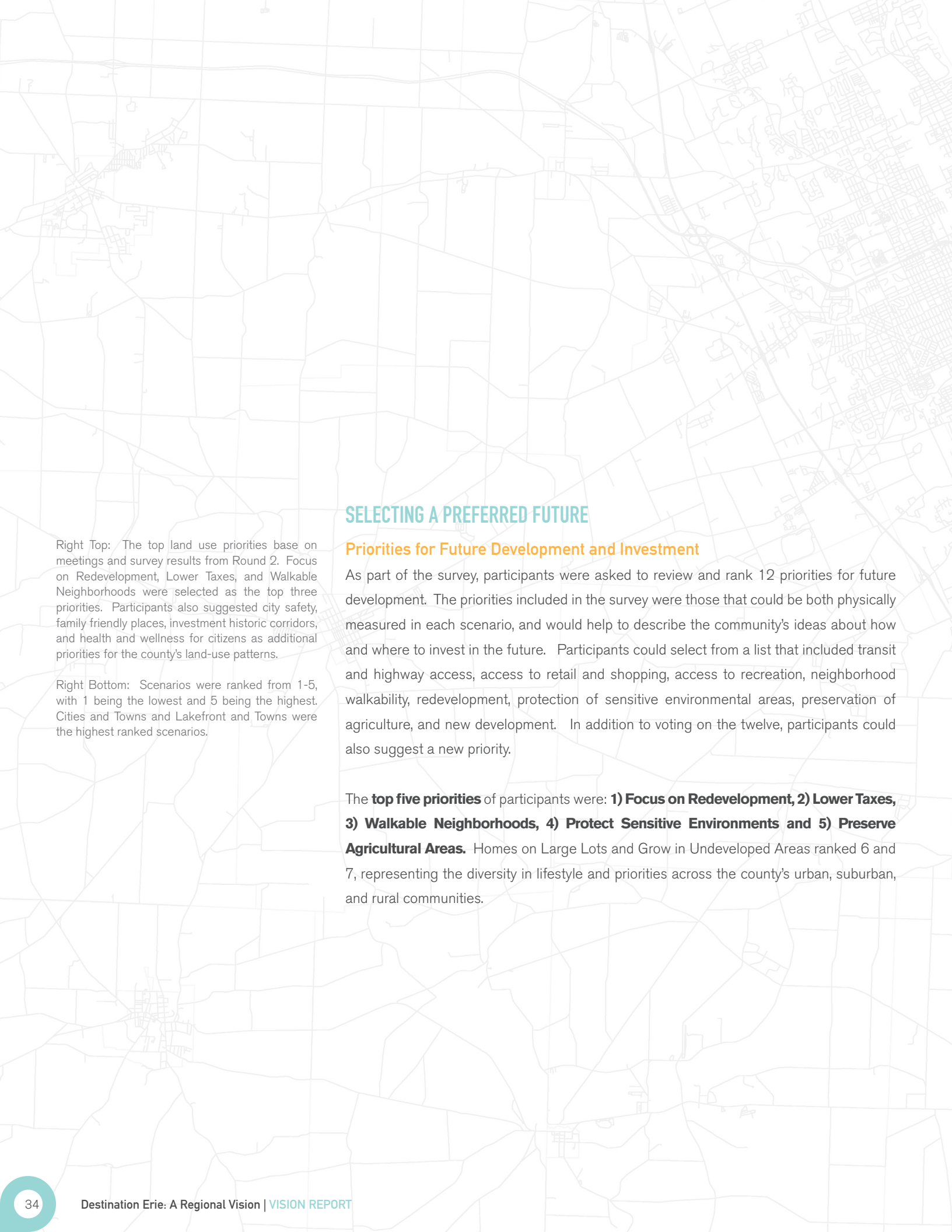
LOWER TAXES



New development is located near existing water and sewer, transportation, and schools and requires a lower level of investment and burden on tax payers. Lower cost of development was determined using the percent of development within existing water and sewer service areas and the percent of development that would occur on currently undeveloped land.

Most Supportive: Cities and Towns

Least Supportive: Status Quo



Right Top: The top land use priorities based on meetings and survey results from Round 2. Focus on Redevelopment, Lower Taxes, and Walkable Neighborhoods were selected as the top three priorities. Participants also suggested city safety, family friendly places, investment historic corridors, and health and wellness for citizens as additional priorities for the county's land-use patterns.

Right Bottom: Scenarios were ranked from 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Cities and Towns and Lakefront and Towns were the highest ranked scenarios.

SELECTING A PREFERRED FUTURE

Priorities for Future Development and Investment

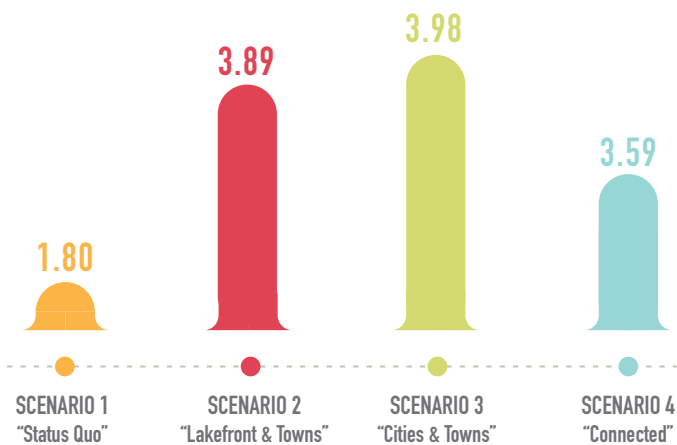
As part of the survey, participants were asked to review and rank 12 priorities for future development. The priorities included in the survey were those that could be both physically measured in each scenario, and would help to describe the community's ideas about how and where to invest in the future. Participants could select from a list that included transit and highway access, access to retail and shopping, access to recreation, neighborhood walkability, redevelopment, protection of sensitive environmental areas, preservation of agriculture, and new development. In addition to voting on the twelve, participants could also suggest a new priority.

The **top five priorities** of participants were: **1) Focus on Redevelopment, 2) Lower Taxes, 3) Walkable Neighborhoods, 4) Protect Sensitive Environments and 5) Preserve Agricultural Areas.** Homes on Large Lots and Grow in Undeveloped Areas ranked 6 and 7, representing the diversity in lifestyle and priorities across the county's urban, suburban, and rural communities.

FIGURE 8: TOP RATED LAND USE PRIORITIES



FIGURE 9: SCENARIO RANKING AVERAGES



Alternative Scenarios

These priorities were then reflected in the ranking of the four alternative growth and investment framework futures. Participants could see how their priorities scored in relationship to each scenario. The public could then review the four scenarios: 1) Status Quo, 2) Lakefront and Towns, 3) Cities and Towns, and 4) Regional Connections, score each, and provide written comments.

Scenario 1, Status Quo, was the least preferred scenario with an average ranking of 1.8 out of 5. **Scenario 3, Cities & Towns, was the most preferred scenario** with an average ranking of 3.98 out of 5 followed closely by Scenario 2, Lakefront and Towns, with an average ranking of 3.89 and Scenario 4, Connected, with an average ranking of 3.59. Many participants commented that Scenario 1, Status Quo, was "undesirable," "an expansion of what we currently have," "unsustainable," and costly for taxpayers. Alternately, participants remarked that Scenario 3, **Cities & Towns, was "a good option to strike a balance between sprawl and compact towns,"** and "would best preserve who we are as a county." In response to Scenario 2, comments focused on growing downtown, capitalizing on what makes Erie beautiful and unique – the waterfront, and increasing rail and transit service. Scenario 4 comments included questioning the cost of development in rural areas and impact on the environment. A full summary and listing of all comments are included in the appendix to this document.



Right: Growth and Investment Framework Map Series depicting layers of growth, transportation, and natural resource areas.

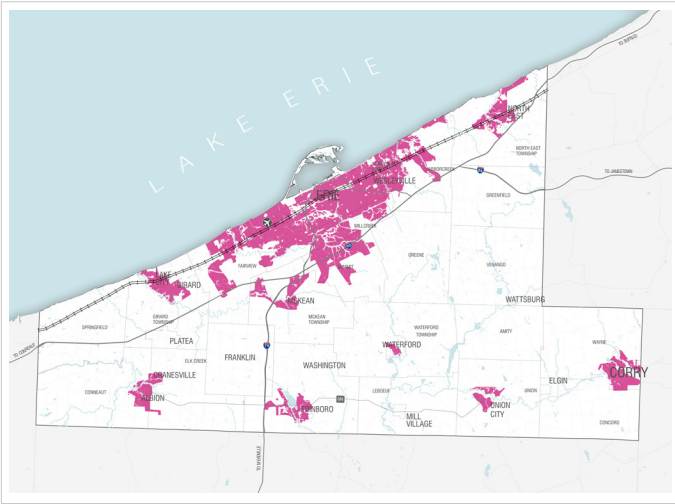
GROWTH AND INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Using the ideas and data gathered in Round 2 of the community's input, the consultant team developed and refined the "preferred scenario" as the Growth and Investment Framework for the future. The CLT reviewed the draft Growth and Investment Framework at its August 19, 2013 meeting.

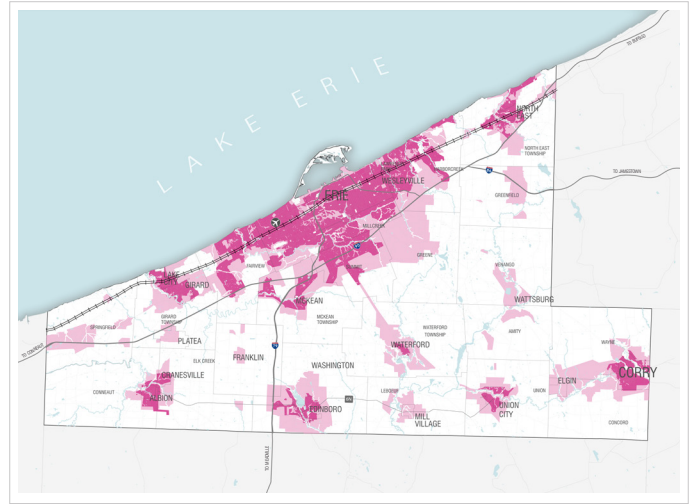
The Growth and Investment Framework blends the two scenarios that scored the highest through the community input – Cities & Towns and Lakefront & Towns. It is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use Plan. The Erie County Comprehensive Plan's principles derived from the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code include:

- Land uses of higher intensity are encouraged in "Designated Growth Areas" (an area including a surrounding a city, borough, or village, where public infrastructure services are provided or planned) and "Future Growth Area" (areas outside of and adjacent to Designated Growth Areas where future development is planned) and "Villages" (unincorporated settlements where mixed-uses exist or are permitted).
- Improvements and extension of community water and sewer facilities are encouraged within the Designated Growth Areas, Future Growth Areas, and Villages.
- Rural Resource Areas are intended for low-intensity uses, including open spaces, farming, timbering, forest land, tourism, and rural residential. They are not planned for community water and sewer facilities.

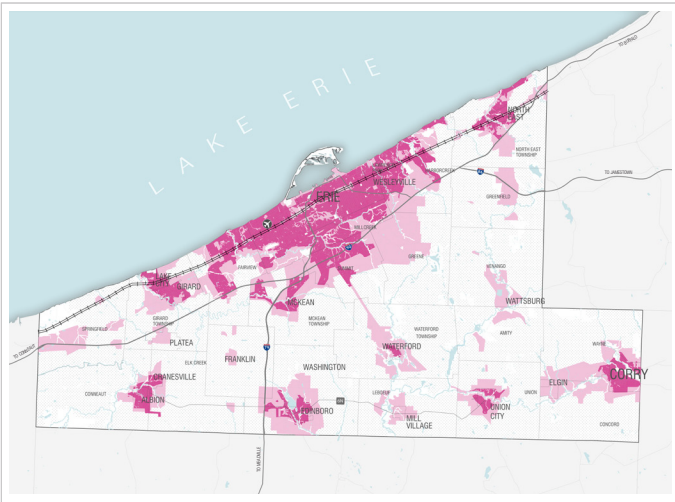
FIGURE 10: GROWTH AND INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK SERIES



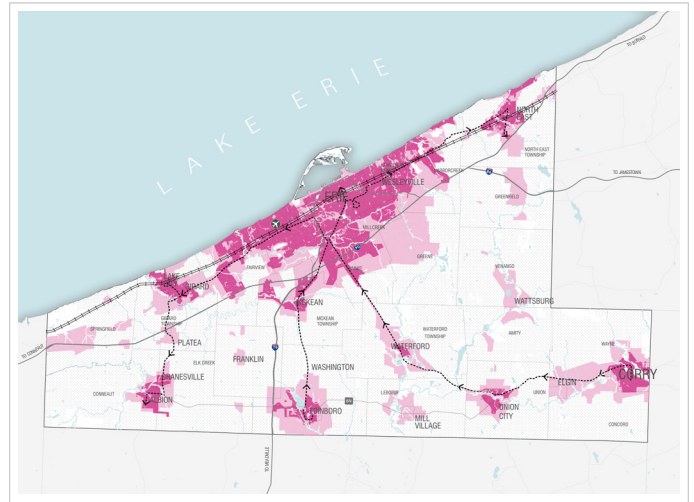
Map 1: Shows Primary Growth Areas



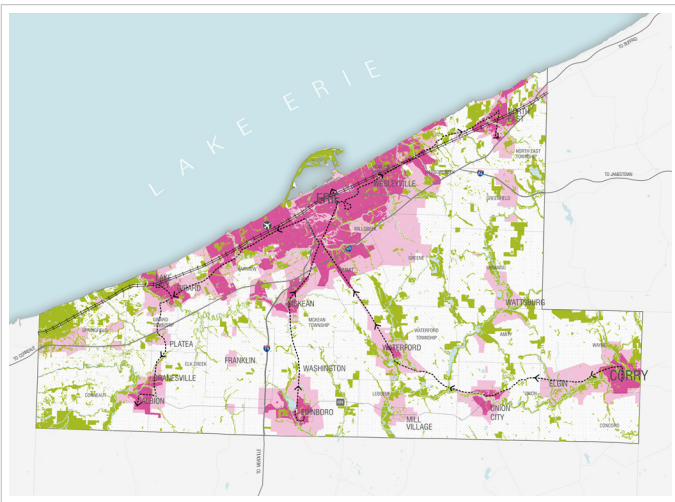
Map 2: Shows Primary and Secondary Growth Areas



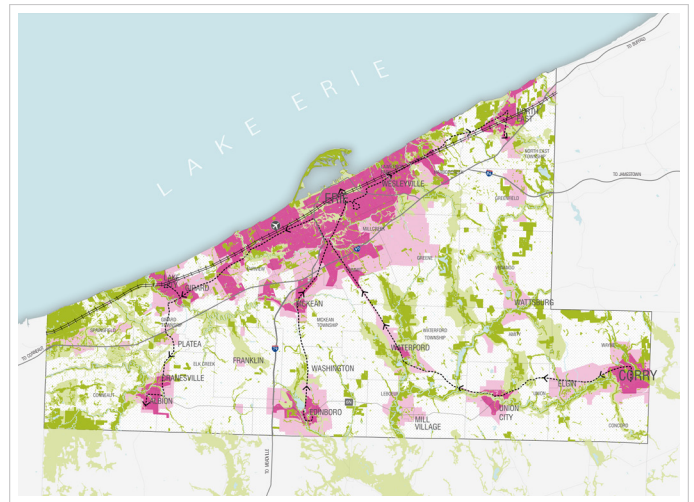
Map 3: Shows Primary and Secondary Growth Areas and Rural Resource Areas



Map 4: Shows Primary and Secondary Growth Areas, Rural Resource Areas, and Transportation Improvements

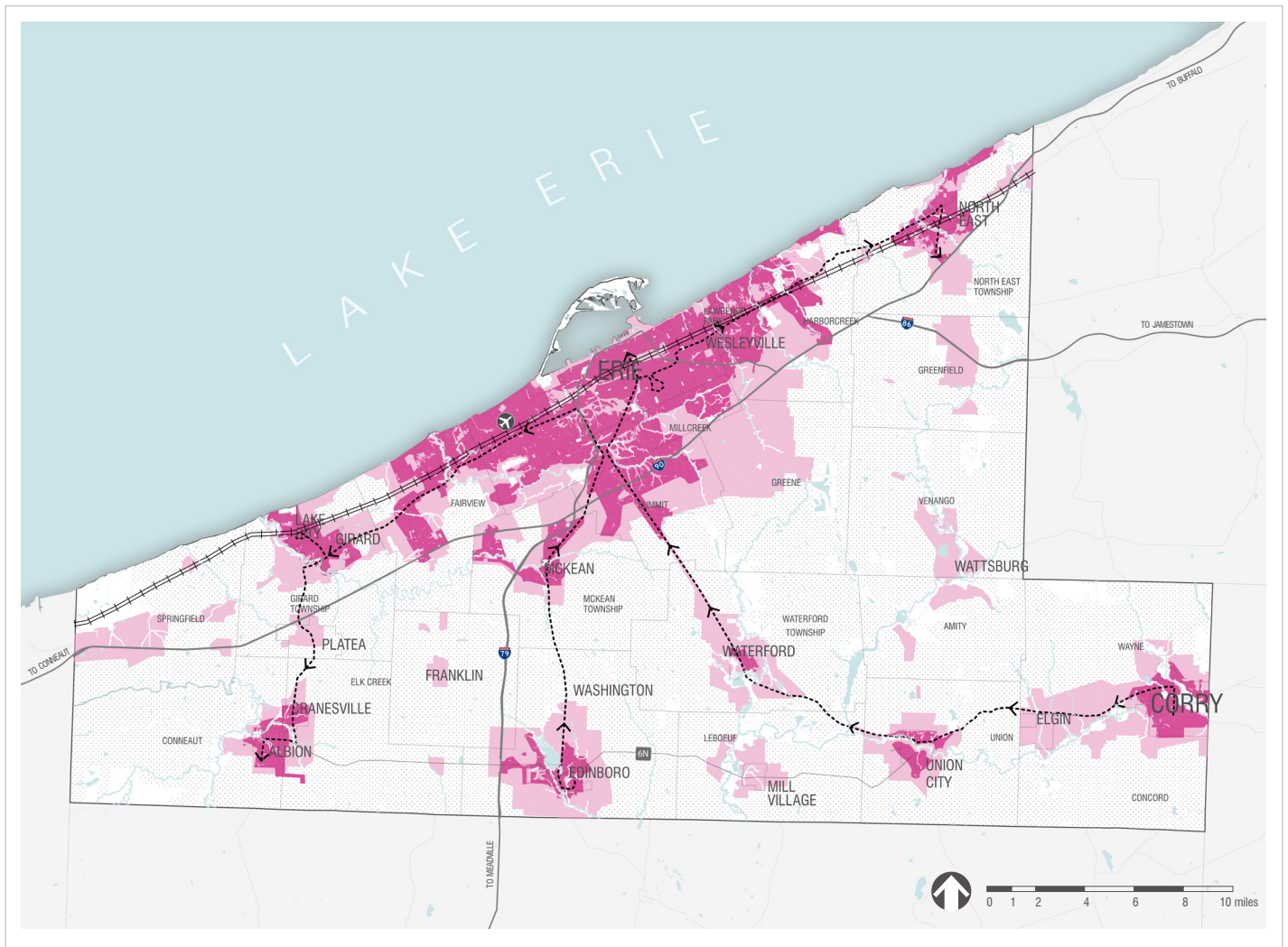


Map 5: Shows Primary and Secondary Growth Areas, Rural Resource Areas, Transportation Improvements, and Protected Natural Resource Areas



Map 6: Shows Primary and Secondary Growth Areas, Rural Resource Areas, Transportation Improvements, Protected Natural Resource Areas, and Natural Resource Areas

FIGURE 11: GROWTH AND INVESTMENT AREAS



Growth And Investment Framework Components

The three levels of development in the Growth and Investment Framework shown above are locations where future development would be most economically and environmentally efficient. The natural resource areas within the growth and investment framework are based on the recommended Erie County Greenways Plan (2010) and currently protected land.

Primary Growth Areas:

These are the first level of growth and investment, located where infrastructure—water, sewer, and transportation—is already present or could be easily extended without much burden on taxpayers. In blending the two preferred scenarios, the areas that fall within water and sewer service areas (updated in 2012) were selected as the primary growth areas. Future commercial, residential, and mixed use development at greater densities is planned in these areas.

GROWTH & INVESTMENT AREAS

- Primary
- Secondary
- Rural Resource Areas

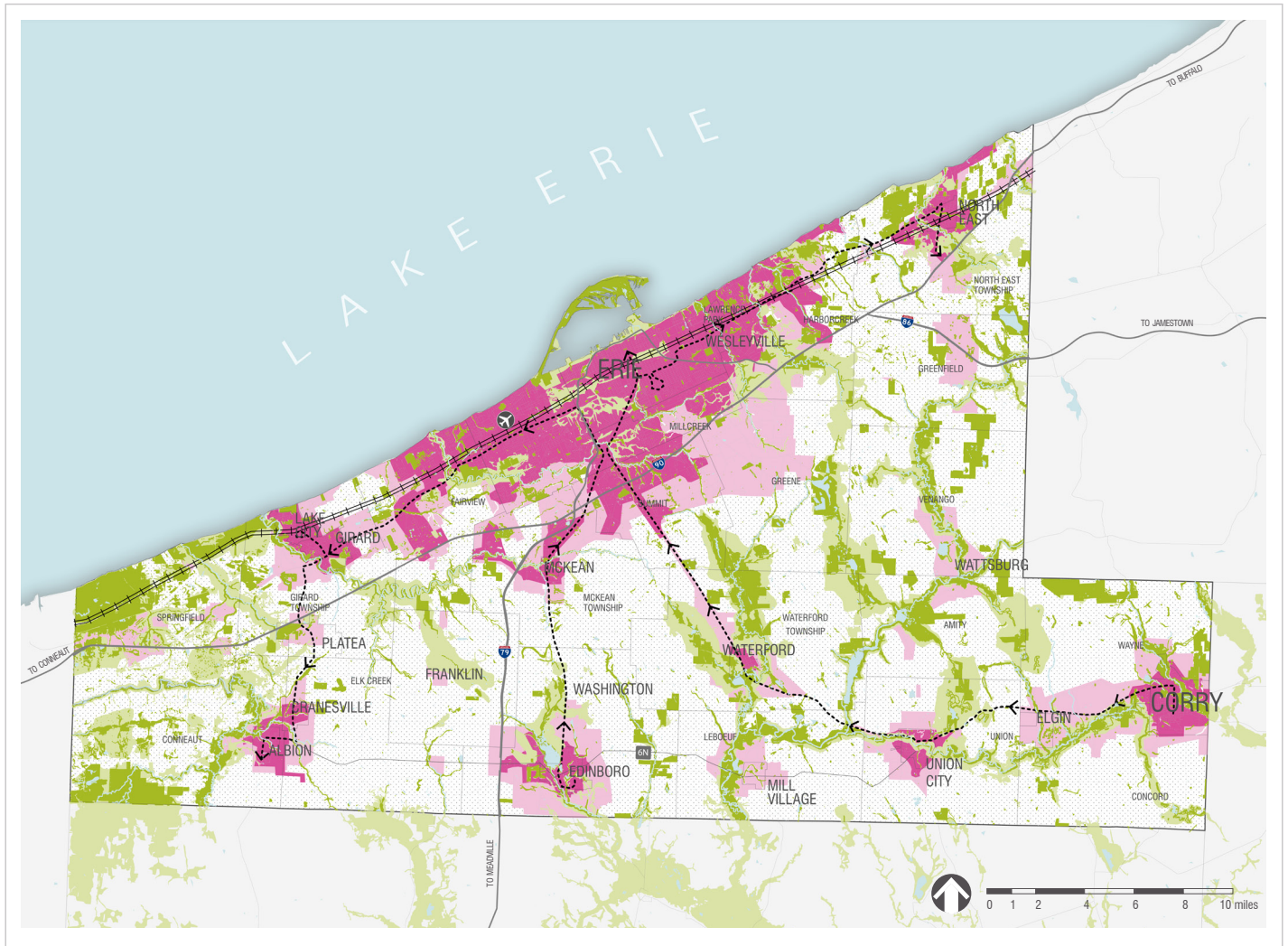
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Protected Natural Resource Areas
- Natural Resource Areas
- Water Resources

TRANSPORTATION

- Passenger Rail Improvements
- County Transportation Improvements

FIGURE 12: GROWTH AND INVESTMENT AREAS WITH NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS



Secondary Growth Areas:

These are the second level of growth and investment, located outside of the primary growth areas, in areas that have been designated as future growth areas and village development in Erie County's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2003. Lower density commercial and residential development is planned within these areas.

Rural Resource Areas:

These areas are the same as those in Erie County's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2003. In Rural Resource Areas agriculture, timbering, quarrying, forest and gamelands, recreation, or tourism uses are encouraged and enhanced with no public infrastructure services. However, development that is compatible with or supportive of such uses is permitted.

Protected Natural Resource Areas:

These areas are currently protected from development pressure by government regulations, zoning, or ownership. They include lands owned by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Lake Erie Region Conservancy, wetlands, areas of steep slope (over 25%), parks, recreation, state game lands, farmland preserved through conservation easement, and floodway.

Natural Resource Areas:

These are areas where additional habitat protection and greenways are recommended for protection. Natural Resource Areas include the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) core habitat (2012) and all of the greenways from the recommended Erie County Greenways Plan (2010).



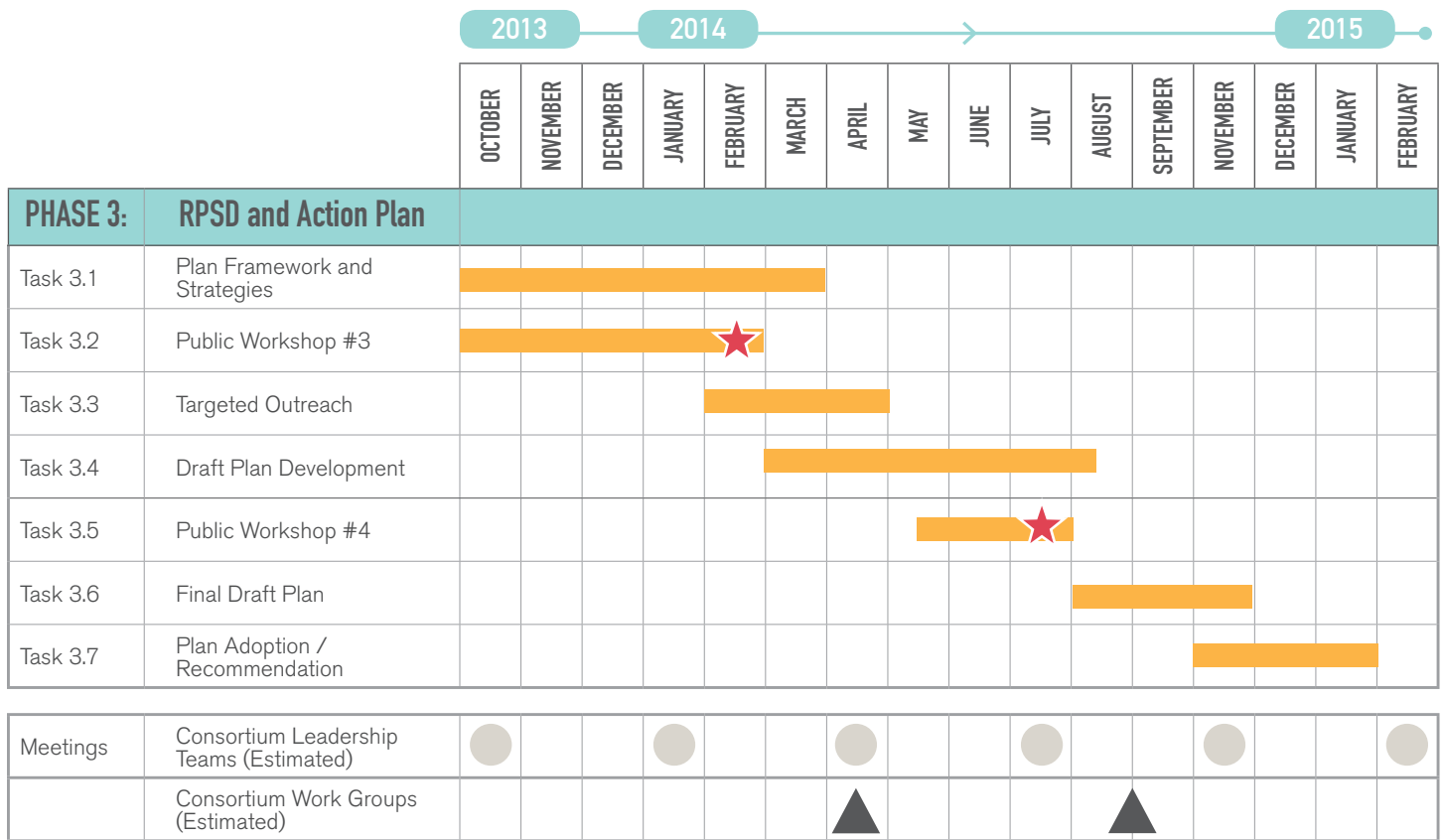
PHASE 3 AND NEXT STEPS

Right: Phase 3 Schedule beginning October 2013.

In Phase 3 of the project, the Consortium will develop Destination Erie's strategies, actions, and implementation schedule. The Work Groups have started formulating the recommendations that will be reviewed by the larger community at the next public workshop series. The recommendations and actions will address the challenges and show how Destination Erie's vision will be implemented. In addition, at the next public workshop, tentatively scheduled for February 2014, the community will be invited to add their ideas into the mix.

Smaller community outreach meetings will follow the workshops to ensure diverse and broad representation in the development of the plan's recommendations and actions. After the next round of outreach, the consultant team will work with the Consortium to refine and prioritize the plan's actions, as well as build capacity for implementation.

FIGURE 13: PHASE 3 DRAFT SCHEDULE



★ Public Open House / Public Workshop

● Consortium Work Groups - Meetings coordinated with community forums (work in parallel with planning phases and tasks).

▲ Consortium Leadership Team (CLT) Meetings coordinated with Work Groups on an as-needed basis.