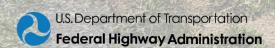
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## Socioeconomic Technical Memorandum

for the

State College Area Connector
Planning and Environmental Linkage
(PEL) Study





**JUNE 22, 2021** 

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## **List of Acronyms**

ACE Agricultural Conservation Easement

ACS American Community Survey

ASA Agricultural Security Area

CATA Centre Area Transportation Authority

CCMPO Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization

CCPCDO Centre County Planning and Community Development Office

COG Council of Governments

CCOT Centre County Office of Transportation

CRPA Centre Regional Planning Agency

EJ Environmental Justice

EPA Environmental Protection AgencyFHWA Federal Highway AdministrationGIS Geographic Information System

HUD U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

I-99 Interstate 99

LAB League of American Bicyclists

LRTP Long Range Transportation Plan

LWCF Land and Water Conservation Fund

NEPA National Environmental Policy Act

PA Pennsylvania or Pennsylvania Route

PA DCNR Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

PASDA Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access

PEL Planning and Environmental Linkage

RGB Regional Growth Boundary

SCAC State College Area Connector

U.S. United States



### 1.0 Introduction

The Planning and Environmental Linkage Study (PEL) for the State College Area Connector (SCAC) is intended to identify, evaluate, and recommend transportation improvements in the PEL Study Area for project delivery. The PEL process allows early planning-level decisions to be carried forward into future transportation projects so that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements are connected and planning analyses and decisions are not revisited. To ensure that the PEL Study results can be used in future NEPA projects, the PEL investigations will meet standards established by NEPA regulations and guidance as well as use consistent NEPA terms (e.g. purpose and need, alternatives, affected environment, environmental consequences, etc.). The PEL Study Area is approximately 70 square miles, extends through the southern portion of Centre County, and includes all or parts of six municipalities: Centre Hall Borough and Potter, Spring, Harris, College, and Benner Townships (see Figure 1). The study area includes key transportation routes that provide access to regional destinations and beyond via major transportation routes such as United States Route (U.S.) 322, Pennsylvania Route (PA) 144, PA 45, and Interstate 99 (I-99) which, in turn, provide access to nearby I-80. The initial data collection area is also shaped by the topography of the area. In general, the study area encompasses the southwestern portion of Penns Valley that extends between the Nittany Mountain to the north and the Seven Mountains area of the Tussey Mountain range to the south. The limits of the study area will be refined as the process advances.

This document is intended to identify the socioeconomic and community features of the PEL Study Area including, but not limited to, community resources, public facilities, existing land uses, and local planning initiatives and goals. This information will be used to identify and analyze community and socioeconomic impacts associated with proposed transportation improvement alternatives that may be developed during the PEL process. In addition, the information will assist in the identification of the concerns for all populations within the study area communities during the transportation decision-making process, including traditionally underserved populations. The assessments will be completed following the guidance provided in the PennDOT Community

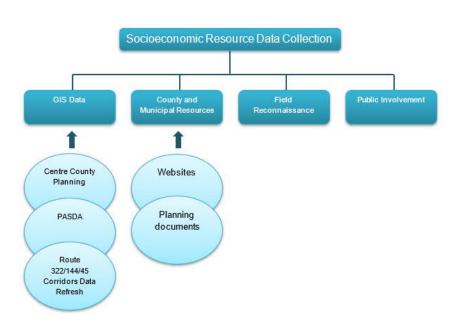


Impact Assessment Handbook (PUB 217, October 2005), and Project Level Environmental Justice Guidance (PUB 746, March 2016).

#### 2.0 Methods

#### 2.1 Data Collection

Data was collected from secondary sources including the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office (CCPCDO), Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA) and the Geographic Information System (GIS) socioeconomic data collected as part of the Route 322/144/45 Corridors Data Refresh Project (2019 Data Refresh Report, April 2019). Appendix A provides a list of the data sources and references used for the compilation and assessment of data for this technical memorandum. A review was conducted of county and municipal websites as well as numerous community planning documents. Field reconnaissance was conducted on



August 5, 2020 to verify the presence of resources. Initial public involvement efforts in October 2020 also aided in identifying additional socioeconomic resources. The flowchart presented here illustrates the steps taken in the development of the socioeconomic database described and illustrated in this memorandum. This data

will be used during the next step in the PEL Study, the analysis of alternatives.



### 3.0 Results

### 3.1 PEL Study Area Description

### 3.1.1 Existing Land Use

Centre County is divided into seven planning regions. Portions of three planning regions exist within the PEL Study Area: Penns Valley Region, Centre Region, and Nittany Valley Region (see Figure 2). The Penns Valley Region includes Potter Township and Centre Hall Borough within the PEL Study Area. The Centre Region includes Harris Township and College Township within the PEL Study Area and the Nittany Valley Region includes Spring Township and Benner Township within the PEL Study Area. Existing land use in the study area is a mix of forest, agricultural, residential, public land, recreation, commercial and industrial land uses as summarized in Table 1 (see also Figure 3).

Table 1: Land Use

Land Use	Percent of Study Area
Forest	47%
Agricultural	36%
Residential	9%
Commercial/Industrial	3%
Recreation/Public Land/Water/Transportation	5%

The majority of the study area is forest land making up 47%. Agricultural land is the second largest land use in the study area at 36%. Single family homes on large rural lots are scattered throughout the study area. Residential subdivisions are scattered throughout the study area but are primarily concentrated closer to the State College area in the Centre Region and adjacent to or near PA 45 and U.S. 322. Commercial and industrial development is also found along these corridors and, to a lesser degree, along PA 144. Multiple industrial establishments, including quarries, are located to the northeast of the village of Pleasant Gap in Spring Township, in the vicinity of the I-99/Harrison Road Interchange and the PA 26/PA 64 intersection. These developed areas are



minimal, making up only 9% of the study area in residential use and 3% in commercial and industrial use, including quarries. The remaining 5% of the study area includes land uses such as recreation, public land, private golf courses, large ponds/lakes, transportation facilities, etc.

The Mount Nittany Conservancy owns 332 acres within the study area that is adjacent to 433 acres owned by the Penn State Lions Paw Alumni Association. These lands extend along the western end of the Nittany Mountain range, commonly referred to as Mount Nittany, and are maintained for conservation (see Figure 4). The area includes multiple trails that are open to the public and is known for overlooks with scenic views of Nittany Valley, Penns Valley, and the State College area.

Agricultural Conservation Easements (ACE) exist within the study area. In Centre County these types of easements are primarily purchased through the Centre County Farmland Trust (private, non-profit) and Centre County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (public). There are 3,005 acres of ACEs located throughout the study area, with most located within Penns Valley. The locations of ACEs are presented in the Agricultural Resource Technical Memorandum.

The ClearWater Conservancy also has conservation easements on seven agricultural and non-agricultural properties within the study area. The ClearWater Conservancy is a non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve and restore natural resources through land conservation, water resources stewardship, and environmental outreach across central Pennsylvania. Properties with conservation easements within the study area include Tussey View Farm, Nittany Farms, Rhoneymeade, Potter Farm, Millbrook Marsh, Nittany Noll Preserve, and the Lisle Property. The locations of these properties can be seen on Figure 3.

### **3.1.2 Zoning**

Existing zoning in the PEL Study Area is illustrated in Figure 5. All six municipalities in the study area have adopted zoning ordinances. Current zoning in the study area includes Agricultural, Commercial, Open Space, Cultural, Forest, Forested Conservation, Conservation, Industrial,

Residential, Medical Campus, Rural Commercial, Rural Residential, Rural Resources, Village, and Commercial, Village as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Zoning

Zoning	Percent of Study Area
Agricultural	36%
Commercial	2%
Open Space	17%
Cultural	<1%
Forest	9%
Forested Conservation	2%
Conservation	8%
Industrial	2%
Medical Campus	<1%
Residential	9%
Rural Residential	11%
Rural Commercial	<1%
Rural Resources	3%
Village	<1%
Commercial, Village	<1%

The majority of the PEL Study Area is within Potter Township. Current zoning shows most of the township is zoned as Agricultural where is extends through Penns Valley, which also includes a major part of the study area. The second largest zoning type in the township is Open Space/Forest and these areas all include the mountain, forested areas in the township including Nittany Mountain to the north, First Mountain and Tussey Mountain to the south, and Egg Hill to the east. Large parts of the township are also zoned Rural Residential and include residential areas at the base of the Seven Mountains area to the south and a smaller area on both sides of PA 45 at the township's western border with Harris Township. The area surrounding the



intersection of PA 45 and PA 144 south of Centre Hall Borough and identified as Old Fort, is designated Commercial and Industrial. A small area along U.S. 322 between Tussey View Lane and Taylor Hill Road has also been designated as Planned Commercial-Industrial. In addition, the areas adjacent to and surrounding Centre Hall Borough are zoned Residential and small areas known as Potters Mills (intersection of U.S. 322 and PA 144) and Tusseyville (along U.S. 322 in the center of the township) are designated as Village. The goals and intent of the Potter Township zoning ordinance is to support the community development objectives of the Penns Valley Region including preserving the rural nature of the region and limiting growth that may result from improvements to the U.S. 322 corridor. Potter Township does not currently have any proposed zoning changes or updates.

The portion of Benner Township within the study area primarily includes the Nittany Mountain and is designated as Forested Conservation and Agricultural. Benner Township has been revising their zoning ordinance over the past several years and the March 2020 version of the Zoning Ordinance is currently under review by the Township's Board of Supervisors. The only major change proposed to the zoning map at this time is the addition of a Spring Creek Canyon Conservation Overlay District located northwest of I-99 and outside of the PEL Study Area. The intent of the Spring Creek Canyon Conservation Overlay is to minimize site disturbance in order to promote conservation and restoration of native plant communities and promote suitable buffers in proximity to critical habitat areas; preserve cultural and historical resources; safeguard groundwater infiltration and protect surface and groundwater quality conditions for local and regional residents; provide educational opportunities that are based on sustainable resource management; protect the economic value and importance of Spring Creek to the community and the Centre Region; and balance passive recreation opportunities with site capacity and sensitive environments. The Spring Creek Canyon Conservation Overlay is the only proposed zoning update in Benner Township at this time.

Spring Township zoning in the study area is predominately designated as Conservation and Rural Resource and these areas primarily encompass the Nittany Mountain. Parts of the designated Rural Resource area also encompass the large quarry along PA 26. Areas zoned Residential,



Industrial, and Agricultural all lie within Nittany Valley, including the residential areas of the village of Pleasant Gap. The purpose of the Spring Township zoning ordinance is to support the community development objectives of the Nittany Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan including preserving important sensitive natural resources as well as accommodating growth but limiting and minimizing its impact on the rural feel of the region. Spring Township does not currently have any proposed zoning changes or updates.

Centre Hall Borough is zoned as Residential, Village and some Commercial. The designated Commercial area is adjacent to the Potter Township Commercial area at the intersection of PA 45 and PA 144. The goals and intent of the Centre Hall Borough zoning ordinance is to support the community development objectives of the Penns Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan including retaining the Borough's sense of community through historic preservation and local economic revitalization. Centre Hall Borough does not currently have any proposed zoning changes or updates.

The majority of College Township within the study area is designated as Forest (along Mount Nittany/Nittany Mountain), and Residential/Rural Residential. The area known as Lemont is designated as Village. Areas designated as Agricultural also exist between U.S. 322 and Mount Nittany. The goals and intent of the College Township zoning ordinance is to support the community development objectives of the Centre Regional Comprehensive Plan including preserving the characteristics that make the region unique, while guiding and shaping future growth and expansion. College Township does not currently have any proposed zoning changes or updates.

Harris Township zoning in the study area is predominantly designated as Forest, Agricultural, and Residential. The Forest zoning districts include Nittany Mountain to the north and Tussey Mountain to the south and the Agricultural zoning districts are lands within Penns Valley between the mountains. The Boalsburg area is designated as Village and the area where the Pennsylvania Military Museum exists is designated as Cultural. The areas surrounding Boalsburg are zoned Residential. The Mountain View Country Club is designated as Rural Commercial and a small

area at the U.S. 322 and Boal Avenue intersection where the new technology park is being constructed is designated as Commercial and Industrial.

Harris Township conducted a zoning review in 2012 and began the Designated Rural Areas Project in 2014 to identify long range planning goals for rural properties to preserve the rural feel of the township. These areas will include the portion of the township within the study area. The proposed rural rezoning is currently under review for approval by the Township Board of Supervisors. The proposed rezoning would divide the rural parts of the Township into four zoning districts: Natural Areas, Agricultural Areas, Rural Residential Areas, and Rural Centers. The Natural Areas district will include areas primarily comprised of steep slopes and other environmental constraints along the southern forested ridge of the township. These areas have very low development densities and future zoning is intended to reinforce the natural character of the district. The Agricultural Areas district will be primarily comprised of existing agricultural properties and parcels that are large enough to support agricultural uses and located primarily outside of the Centre Region's designated Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) (see Figure 6). The area will also include a limited number of residential parcels that are next to larger agricultural tracts. These areas are intended to remain primarily agricultural in nature, with additional agriculture-related uses being permitted in order to support farm operations. The Rural Residential district will be comprised of a mixture of smaller agricultural lots and residential properties that are less than 10 acres in size. Where this area is currently primarily developed as large-lot residential uses, future residential development would be permitted at similar densities. The Rural Centers district will be located around the villages of Linden Hall and Shingletown and consist of smaller residential parcels that were created prior to zoning regulations being adopted. The Designated Rural Areas Project envisions zoning regulations for these areas that support existing uses at current densities.

#### 3.1.3 Future Land Use

Future land use (Figure 6) and development in the PEL Study Area, as illustrated in the Centre Region, Penns Valley, and Nittany Valley regional comprehensive plans, is influenced by the

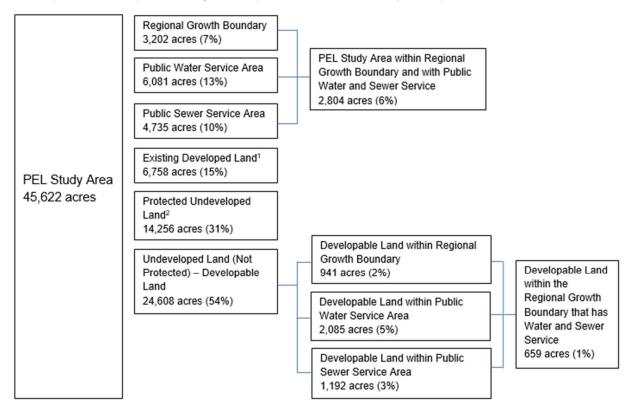


study area's proximity to the State College area and the Pennsylvania State University, agricultural preservation investments, the Centre Region RGB, and sewer service areas. The employment and educational opportunities of the Pennsylvania State University, along with the relatively high quality of living standard, make the County (and hence the study area) attractive for planned development. Population, employment and households are expected to increase in the study area (see Economics, Employment, and Business Conditions section).

Centre County has an active preservation program for protecting farmland from development. It is particularly active in the Penns Valley and Nittany Valley that make up a large part of the PEL Study Area. This effort not only includes the Agricultural Security Areas (ASA) created by local municipalities to extend benefits to farmers that ensure the viability of their operations, it also includes ACEs that preserve the land for farming uses in perpetuity. In Centre County, there are three entities that purchase ACEs (development rights): Centre County Farmland Trust (private, non-profit), Centre County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (public), and ClearWater Conservancy (private, nonprofit).

The Centre Region developed the RGB (illustrated on Figure 6) to use in the approval process for public sewer service extensions and to influence where development occurs. The adopted RGB extends into the western end of the PEL Study Area and includes the village of Lemont in College Township to the north then follows U.S. 322, extending eastward to encompass the residential subdivisions along both PA 45 and U.S. 322 in Harris Township, up to and including Huntridge Manor subdivision. Only 7% of the PEL Study Area lies within the RGB, and the availability of public sewer service is limited as well (see Figure 7 for public water and sewer service areas). The following flowchart presents the acreage estimates for various features that affect the potential future development of land in the study area. This information was used for a preliminary assessment of existing developable land within the study area, the RGB, and the water and sewer service areas. These areas are also illustrated on Figure 8. It is anticipated that this information will be used as the basis for future indirect and cumulative effects analyses conducted for future NEPA studies of the proposed transportation improvements carried forward from the PEL Study.

#### **Developable Land (Percentages are percent of PEL Study Area)**



<sup>1</sup>Existing Developed Land – based on existing land use data and includes commercial, communications, industrial, mined land, mixed use, residential, transportation, and utility land uses.

<sup>2</sup>Protected Undeveloped Land – includes conservation and preserved agricultural easements, public recreation lands, floodplains, wetlands, natural heritage areas, SCI Rockview property, quarries, and conservation/forest conservation zoning districts.

While there is no adopted RGB in the other planning regions within the study area, there are small public sewer facilities that serve limited, higher density, small communities (see Figure 7). A small community sewage treatment system was recently installed to serve the village of Potters Mills in Potter Township to address the need of 43 properties. These community systems may also affect the location and extent of future development in the study area but with limitations associated with the capacity of the respective treatment facilities.



### 3.1.4 Neighborhoods and Communities

Neighborhoods, communities, and subdivisions documented by the CCPCDO within the PEL Study Area are illustrated on both Figure 4 and Figure 9 and are listed in Table 3 (Map IDs in the table correspond to the labels shown on Figure 9). Community boundaries will be used to assess impacts to community cohesion during the NEPA phase of the future projects that evolve from the PEL Study. Community cohesion describes the social network and actions that provide satisfaction, security, camaraderie, support, and identity to members of a community or neighborhood. Assessing likely effects on community cohesion involves analysis and public input on safety, mobility, economic conditions, access to public services, and social/psychological aspects.

Table 3: Neighborhoods, Communities and Subdivisions by Municipality

Municipality	Neighborhoods, Communities, Subdivisions	Figure 9 Map ID	Municipality	Neighborhoods, Communities, Subdivisions	Figure 9 Map ID
	Potter Mills	1		Bigler Heights	42
	Sinking Creek	2		Pleasant Gap	43
	Tusseyville Summit	3		Noils Addition	44
	Willevey Acres	4		Kellers Addition	45
	Country Haven	5	Spring	Kel-Aire Acres	46
	Wilson Subdivision	6	Township	Pleasant Hills	47
Potter	Ashford Manor	7		Steeplechase	48
Township	Penns Manor	8		Stonehenge	49
Township	Emery Development	9		Beaumont	50
	Country Club Park	10		Laurel Meadow	51
	Sand Mountain	11		Nittany Grove	52
	Black Hawk Village Mobile Home Park	12		The Hill	53
	Centre Hall Assoc. Mobile Home Park	13	Harris Township	Liberty Hill	54
Contro Holl	Grandview Terrace	14	] '	Huntridge Manor	55
Centre Hall	Bartolemew Addition	15	1	_	
Borough	Centre Quarries	16			



Table 3: Neighborhoods, Communities and Subdivisions by Municipality (Continued)

Municipality	Neighborhoods, Communities, Subdivisions	Figure 9 Map ID	Municipality	Neighborhoods, Communities, Subdivisions	Figure 9 Map ID	
	Long Subdivision	17	mamorpanty	Bear Meadow Village	56	
Centre Hall	Schaffer Addition	18		Laurel Hills	57	
Borough	Reese Development	19		Willowbrook Estates	58	
(continued)	Centre Hall	20		Willowbrook	59	
	Fieldstone	21	1	Elkview Townhomes	60	
	Panorama Village	22	1	Aspen Heights	61	
	Canterbury Crossing	23	Harris	Rocky Ridge	62	
	Oak Grove	24	Township (continued)	Kaywood	63	
	Armau Village	25	(continued)	The Gates	64	
	Nittany Orchard	26		Country Place	65	
	Lemont	27		Springfield Commons	66	
	North Lemont	28		Boalsburg	67	
	Walnut Grove	29		Brookside	68	
	Barnbridge	30		Ashworth Woods	69	
College	Klinger Heights	31				
Township	Mount Nittany Terrace	32				
Township	Shooks Terrace	33				
	Clover Highlands	34		None identified in PEL Study Area since this part of the township is primarily the property of the		
	Nittany Hills	35				
	Branch Road Village West	36	Benner			
	Centre Hills – Dalevue	37	Township	Rockview State Correctional		
	Bathgate Springs	38		Institute		
	Stearns Crossing	39				
	Spring Lea Acres	40				
	Houserville	41				

### 3.1.5 Planning Initiatives

Table 4 lists various existing planning documents for Centre County, the three planning regions, and municipalities in the PEL Study Area, and identifies the goals and visions in each document.



**Table 4: Planning Initiatives** 

Planning	
Document	Goals, Visions, Plans for the Study Area
Centre County Comprehensive Plan Phase I (2003)	Goals: -Identify, preserve, enhance and monitor agricultural resourcesIdentify, preserve, and monitor environmental and natural resourcesPreserve historic and cultural resourcesEnsure decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing in suitable living surroundings, compatible with the environment for all individualsAppropriately locate and maintain existing and proposed community facilities, utilities, and services for all residentsIdentify and promote economic development initiatives to maintain and grow a diverse economic base in each of the County's planning regions.
Centre County Comprehensive Plan Phase II Implementation Strategies (2016 - 2020)	Land Use:  Economic Development — Focus on the need to drive capital investment toward existing infrastructure, build on existing assets and support revitalization for communities where the economy is in transition.  Energy Conservation — Focus on energy conservation and renewable energy sources. Specific to transportation, this includes pursuing the expansion of park and ride stations for commuters, including facilities in the Penns Valley Region.  Public Safety — Focus on gaps in fire protection infrastructure, access to water, and the reliance on volunteer or state-based public services.  Historic Resources — Focus on historic preservation, including the promotion of community revitalization and long-term sustainability. Penns and Nittany Valleys are the top two planning regions in the county with adverse impact potential to preservation efforts due to economic development and/or decline and the ever-present possibility that historic resources may be affected by encroachment of human activities, unintended land use conflicts, or rapid physical deterioration due to neglect.  Recreation — Focus on access to recreation opportunities, interagency cooperation and municipal support to improve and construct recreation infrastructure, and to address gaps in the trail system. The Penns Valley Rail Trail was included as one of four trail gap assessments.



# Table 4: Planning Initiatives (Continued)

Planning Document	Goals, Visions, Plans for the Study Area
Centre County Comprehensive Plan Phase II Implementation Strategies (2016 - 2020) (continued)	Communications & Information Technology — Focus on access to broadband internet services and the need to mitigate the visual impacts associated with wireless infrastructure.  Sewage Facilities Management — Focus on malfunctioning onlot sewage disposal systems and regionalization of public services management operations. The latter described the use of public sewer service areas to identify Regional Growth Boundaries used by the Centre Region to focus larger developments within the boundary and deter developments of regional impact outside the boundary.  Community Facilities and Services — Focus on identifying more multiuse, shared facilities and more opportunities to increase citizen participation in planning for local and regional community facilities and services. This included multi-use facilities that serve as a park and ride location. The State College Connector (US 322/SR 144/SR 45 improvements) was also noted.  Agriculture — Focus on opportunities to support agricultural related businesses and industries and the implementation of Best Management Practices to improve environmental conditions locally and regionally. Transportation limited to automobile access is a sign and symptom of "urban sprawl" that is the greatest challenge facing farmland preservation
Centre County Long Range Transportation Plan 2050 (2020)	Eight Goals: -Improve safety and security -Preserve the Existing Transportation System -Optimize system management and operation -Improve integration and connectivity of the transportation system -Improve accessibility and mobility options for people and freight -Complement planned growth and development areas -Maintain the environment and air quality conformity -Enhance economic vitality
Centre Region Comprehensive Plan (2013)	Multi-modal transportation planning initiatives. Regional growth boundary and sewer service are to influence where growth occurs.
Nittany Valley Region Comprehensive Plan Update (2019)	Goals to improve bike and pedestrian corridors, maintain local Centre Area transportation Authority (CATA) bus service and encourage greater use of public transportation options.



Table 4: Planning Initiatives (Continued)

Planning Document	Goals, Visions, Plans for the Study Area		
Penns Valley Region Comprehensive Plan (2006)	"Community Vision" to preserve the region's natural and cultural resources. Includes community planning goals to guide development and help the planning region preserve its rural character. Strategy that will enable a new road to convey vehicles into and through the region quickly and efficiently with controlled access points and to accommodate growth and development in a compact and dispersed configuration that reflects the Region's past development patterns.		
Harris Township Comprehensive Rural Rezoning Report (2019)	For areas of the Township outside the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area. Long range planning goals for the rural properties in the Township along with a zoning implementation strategy.		
Boalsburg Small Area Plan (2016)	Addresses three areas that encompass the Boalsburg area that are referenced as the village, commercial and cultural nodes. Boal Avenue (US 322 Business) corridor is part of the commercial node. The plan notes that the corridor lacks greenery and pedestrian/bicycle facilities. Future land use map, goals and actions that constitute the official policies for growth and development issues. Transforming Boal Avenue corridor into a "welcoming and attractive gateway" and providing transportation facilities that balance the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists through streetscape improvements. Plan recommends approaching PennDOT to reduce the number of travel lanes on Boal Avenue and provide a center turn lane and bike lanes.		

### 3.1.6 Existing Roadway Network

Centre County's roadway network includes I-80 and I-99, U.S. traffic routes (including U.S. 220 and U.S. 322), and Pennsylvania state (PA) traffic routes (such as PA 26, PA 144, PA 45, and PA 64) that are within or near the PEL Study Area. I-80 traverses east and west across the United States from California to New Jersey, and I-99 is a north-south route that links the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-70/I-76) with I-80. Pennsylvania is in a strategic position with interstate roadways traversing the state and serving national and international trade routes. Centre County is centrally located within the Commonwealth. This geographic position makes the County's network of roads important for interstate, statewide and regional traffic and commerce in addition to local trips.



The PEL Study Area is primarily served by the following major roadways: U.S. 322, PA 144 and PA 45. The U.S. 322 corridor carries both local and regional through traffic with a mix of vehicle types (automobiles, medium trucks, and heavy trucks). U.S. 322 is classified as a principal arterial, indicating that the intended purpose of the facility is to convey traffic throughout the region (i.e., the purpose of the facility is not solely for local trips, but to carry through and regional traffic). Due to substantial roadside land development and the sparse local street network; however, U.S. 322 in the study area also operates and functions as a collector and local route. On a county level, U.S. 322 serves as a key connection to the State College area, providing access to the County's economic hub and to Penn State University's main campus. On an intrastate level, the U.S. 322 corridor serves as the prime connection between many cities to the east and west of Centre County.

While PA 144 is also classified as a principal arterial roadway, a posted weight restriction for trucks (10 tons, except for local deliveries) is in place from its intersection with PA 192 in Centre Hall, over Nittany Mountain, to its intersection with PA 26 in the village of Pleasant Gap. This stretch of PA 144 also includes a section of reduced speed limit for trucks, a southbound runaway truck ramp at Centre Hall Borough's northern boundary, and a northbound runaway truck ramp at the southern end of the village of Pleasant Gap. The weight restriction and reduced speed limit for trucks and the runaway truck ramps were put in place due in part to a 1985 fatality resulting from a runaway truck in Centre Hall. This stretch of PA 144 crosses over Nittany Mountain and includes vertical grades/curves and horizontal curves that fail to meet criteria for the posted design speeds for vehicles.

PA 45 is classified as a minor arterial roadway and is intended to service trips of moderate length and provide connectivity to the arterial system with minimum interference to through movement. From the eastern end of the study area south of Centre Hall Borough, PA 45 travels through large areas of productive farmland with scattered residential development. As it extends westward, closer to the village of Boalsburg and the State College area, the roadway fronts more residential areas, including large residential subdivisions, with multiple driveway access points and local crossroads. The roadway has become a major east-west thoroughfare that links Penns Valley to the Lewisburg area in Union County, east of the PEL Study Area. More importantly, PA 45



connects Penns Valley to the Centre Region, west of the PEL Study Area, particularly providing access to the State College area. As documented in the Penns Valley Region Comprehensive Plan (2006), local officials expressed the desire to protect the roadway's ability to efficiently move vehicles that, in turn, requires careful location configuration of planned growth areas with limited points of property access.

PA Route 26, a principal arterial roadway, also traverses short sections of the northernmost portion of the PEL Study Area, connecting with U.S. 322 and PA 144 and providing access to I-99.

#### 3.1.7 Economics, Employment, and Business Conditions

Analysis of U.S. Census Data determined that the population in Centre County has been steadily increasing over the past 30 years (see Table 5). Centre County population and employment projections indicate that population and employment will continue to increase in the future. According to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania Population Projections 2010-2040, Centre County population in 2030 is projected to be 180,148, a greater than 11% increase from the 2019 estimated population.

Top Employers in Centre County include The Pennsylvania State University, Mount Nittany Health System, State Government, State College School District, Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc., Wal-Mart, Weis Market, Centre County Government, Geisinger Health System, and the Federal Government. The Pennsylvania State University is the largest employer in Centre County and employs more than 17,000 full-time faculty and staff.

According to the CCPCDO 2018 Census Profile, the average travel time to work for Centre County residents is 20 minutes. Most commuters in Centre County commute to work within the County, however, 75% of residents work in a different municipality than in which they live. Approximately 47% of the population in Centre County is in the labor force and 53% are not in the labor force. As of October 2020, 4.1% of the population in the labor force was unemployed.

Table 5: Census Data

Do	sta Catagory	Centre	Bonnovlyonia	USA
Da	ta Category	County	Pennsylvania	
	1990	125,155	11,881,643	248,709,873
Population	2000	135,830	12,281,054	281,421,906
	2010	153,990	12,709,630	309,349,689
	2019 <sup>1</sup>	161,960	12,801,989	328,239,523
	White Alone	87.6%	79.6%	72.0%
	Black or African American	3.8%	11.4%	12.8%
Race <sup>1</sup>	American Indian & Alaska Native	0.1%	0.2%	0.9%
Nace	Asian	6.1%	3.5%	5.7%
	Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0.2%
	Some other Race	0.6%	2.6%	5.0%
	Two or More Races	1.8%	2.6%	3.4%
Poverty Rate <sup>1</sup>		18.2%	12.0%	12.3%
Median Age <sup>1</sup>		32.3	40.8	38.4
Foreign Born <sup>1</sup>		8.7%	7.0%	13.7%
Language other than English Spoken at Home <sup>1</sup>		12.1%	11.7%	22.0%
High School Graduate or Higher <sup>1</sup>		94.3%	91.0%	88.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher <sup>1</sup>		45.5%	32.3%	33.1%
Total Households <sup>1</sup>		58,201	5,119,249	122,802,852
Median Household Income <sup>1</sup>		\$60,403	\$63,463	\$65,712
Median Home		\$234,900	\$192,600	\$240,500
Average Rent <sup>1</sup>		\$1,000/month	\$951/month	\$1,097/month
Home Owners	•	61.8%	69.9%	65.8%

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, 2019 estimates

According to the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan, home ownership and rental housing are becoming increasingly expensive for existing and new residents in the Centre Region. This is mostly because income is not keeping pace with housing costs. In addition, over the last several decades, the Centre Region's new residential developments have consisted mostly of single-family homes built in traditional suburban and rural subdivisions priced in the \$300 and \$400 thousands. As shown in Table 5, the average home price in Centre County in 2019 was \$234,900. This is greater than the average home price for the state of Pennsylvania at \$192,600. Some

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau 2020 Homeownership Quarterly Report





municipalities in the Centre Region have developed local ordinances to assist with the development of new affordable housing and a variety of housing types.

#### 3.2 Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice (EJ) means identifying and addressing the potential for disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in order to achieve an equitable distribution of benefits and burdens. EJ, as undertaken by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is intended to ensure full and fair participation by potentially affected communities in every phase of the transportation decision-making process. When this is accomplished, the development, construction, operation and maintenance of transportation projects should reflect an equitable distribution of benefits and burdens. The federal EJ initiatives started with Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) of 1994. This Executive Order focused the federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of federal actions on minority and low-income populations with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities.

The analysis of potential EJ impacts to minority and low-income populations undertaken for the SCAC PEL Study is conducted using guidance established in the South-Central Pennsylvania Environmental Justice Unified Process and Methodology Guide (April 2019), which was jointly developed by the FHWA PA Division, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region III, PennDOT Central Office, PennDOT Engineering District 8-0, and six MPOs within District 8-0. The guide provides several strategies for accomplishing the "core elements" of an EJ analysis acceptable to FHWA and FTA.



Steps for Project-Level EJ Analysis include the following:

- Step 1: Define the Study Area.
- Step 2: Identify Low-Income and Minority Populations.
- Step 3: Solicit Input from Low-Income and Minority Populations.
- Step 4: Evaluate Adverse and Beneficial Effects.
- Step 5: Identify Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects.
- Step 6: Evaluate Mitigation Measures.
- Step 7: Re-evaluate Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects and Document Decision.

Step 1: Define the Study Area, is completed by using the defined PEL Study Area. This step will be revisited for future transportation projects evolving from the PEL Study process. It is anticipated that the study area for individual transportation improvement projects undergoing NEPA review will be refined based on the individual proposed project limits and location.

Preliminary efforts completed for the PEL Study to address Step 2: Identify Low-income and Minority Populations, included the collection of demographic data for the PEL Study Area to identify the potential presence, location, and characteristics of low-income and minority populations within the large rural PEL Study Area. However, it is anticipated additional outreach, including coordination with school districts and religious institutions, will be needed to better identify the location and characteristics of low-income and minority populations (and individuals) to fully assess potential EJ issues associated with proposed transportation improvements. This effort will occur as part of future detailed studies conducted during the NEPA review process for the individual transportation improvement projects evolving from the PEL Study process. This additional outreach will be targeted to the institutions and community facilities serving and within the individual projects' redefined study areas.

As the PEL Study progresses, Step 3 will be initiated through the public outreach plan developed for the study and Steps 4 through 6 will be completed for the alternatives determine to meet the PEL Study's defined Purpose and Need and carried forward for impact analysis. The Step 7 re-



evaluation will be conducted during the detailed studies of the NEPA review process for the individual transportation improvement projects evolving from the PEL Study process.

In summary, following the PEL Study, future NEPA studies to be undertaken for proposed transportation improvement projects that are identified in the PEL Report will reanalyze the potential impacts to EJ populations and will include the following steps:

- Refinement of the study area to be assessed as part of the NEPA process.
- Update and refinement of the identification (including location and characteristics) of Low-Income and Minority Populations (and individuals) through targeted outreach to the institutions and community facilities serving and within the respective NEPA project study areas.
- Solicitation of input from potentially affected Low-Income and Minority Populations.
- Re-evaluation of Adverse and Beneficial Effects.
- Re-identification of Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects.
- Re-evaluation of Mitigation Measures.
- Reevaluation of Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects and Document Decision, as needed (these re-evaluations could include updates during the final design phase of projects if design refinements, passage of time, and project area changes dictate the need for re-evaluation).

The following definitions are used for the EJ Analysis conducted for this PEL Study:

#### Minority – Person who is:

- Black/African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian American
- American Indian/Native American or Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander



**Low-Income** – Person whose median household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

#### 3.2.1 U.S. Census Data

Data was collected from Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) EJ Screen tool and the latest available U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates for all census block groups within the study area (see Table 6 and Figure 9). The EJ Screen low-income term is defined as the percent of individuals whose ratio of household income to poverty level in the past 12 months was less than 2 (calculated from the Census Bureau's ACS 5-year estimates). The block groups in the PEL Study Area with percentages greater than the Centre County average percentages are highlighted in Table 7 and the corresponding block group areas are hatched on Figure 9. The highlighted percentages only include minority populations.

**Table 6: Environmental Justice Analysis** 

	ACS 2019 E	stimates	EJ SCREEN Estimates <sup>1</sup>				
Area	Below Poverty	Minority	Low- Income	Minority			
Pennsylvania	12.0%	20.4%	29%	23%			
Centre County	18.2%	12.4%	33%	15%			
PEL Stud	PEL Study Area Census Tracts and Block Groups						
Tract 109	7.6%	2.3%	24%	3%			
Block Group 3	0%	0%	10%	5%			
Block Group 4	10.0%	0%	22%	1%			
Block Group 5	10.4%	4.7%	21%	3%			
Block Group 6	5.0%	0%	18%	0%			
Tract 118	7.2%	6.6%	14%	12%			
Block Group 1	5.7%	0.4%	18%	3%			
Block Group 2	7.4%	3.0%	8%	6%			
Block Group 3	6.9%	15.2%	13%	24%			



Table 6: Environmental Justice Analysis (Continued)

PEL Study Area Census Tracts and Block Groups					
Tract 110	2.7%	2.6%	14%	3%	
Block Group 2	0%	0%	6%	0%	
Block Group 3	6.8%	3.1%	19%	5%	
Block Group 4	6.1%	0%	3%	0%	
Block Group 5	0%	7.6%	18%	0%	
Tract 112.01	7.0%	4.0%	23%	5%	
Block Group 2	4.3%	5.1%	13%	6%	
Tract 117.02	3.9%	6.4%	11%	11%	
Block Group 1	2.0%	7.8%	18%	18%	
Block Group 2	1.9%	4%	7%	3%	
Block Group 3	5.2%	6.9%	8%	12%	
Tract 116	14.5%	18.3%	25%	18%	
Block Group 1	1.5%	9.9%	26%	11%	
Block Group 2	11.9%	23.8%	25%	23%	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> EJ SCREEN data collected on 5/12/2021

The State College area (includes State College Borough and portions of the Townships of College, Harris, Patton, and Ferguson), where the "Minority Block Groups" have been identified, is the largest population center in Centre County and includes the Penn State University, University Park Campus. The presence of the university likely contributes to the higher minority percentages in these block groups. The University Park Campus has approximately 46,700 students that includes 7,775 International students (Fall 2019 enrollment). The block groups in the more rural areas of the PEL Study Area, outside the State College area, primarily consist of small agricultural communities, older towns in the valleys, and state game lands and forests. Centre County average percentages for low-income and below poverty populations are greater than the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania average percentages. However, none of the PEL Study Area block group percentages exceed the statewide percentages.



### 3.2.2 Center County Long Range Transportation Plan 2050

The Centre County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CCMPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2050 included an EJ analysis for the county (Appendix B of the LRTP 50) and used U.S. Census block group information from the ACS data to prepare maps illustrating the geographic location of minority and low-income populations in the county. The census block groups with minority and low-income populations greater than the Centre County average were identified as containing EJ populations. The LRTP 2050 did not identify any low-income populations within the PEL Study Area and identified limited minority populations in the western portion of the study area near the State College area. This is consistent with the findings in Table 7 and shown on Figure 9. The LRTP 2050 EJ Analysis also overlaid the locations of the plan's proposed roadway and bridge projects on these map that located minority and low-income area when a project location was specified. It was noted that not all projects in the plan have a specific location at this time and therefore could not be mapped for impacts. It specifically identified the SCAC Study as having only a study area identified at the time the analysis was completed, and details of potential impacts to minority and low-income populations could not be determined due to the size of the study area and lack of "potential alternative improvements" being identified. As the SCAC PEL Study advances and alternatives are identified, the CCPMO intends to update the EJ analyses for future Transportation Improvement Plans to address EJ impacts associated with future projects identified by the PEL Study. However, the EJ analysis did identify the SCAC PEL Study as one of two "major highway projects" in the county that is anticipated to have a "significant impact from a qualitative perspective" to minority or low-income populations groups. This qualitative analysis was based on the assumption that an improvement(s) of some type would occur within the SCAC study area, potentially resulting in both negative (burden) and positive (benefit) impacts.

### 3.2.3 Section 8 Housing

To further assist in the identification of the possible location of low-income/below poverty populations, information was obtained from the Centre County Housing Authority. This information

identified the following housing complexes in the PEL Study Area as accepting Section 8 Vouchers: Huntington Park and Centre Estates along U.S. 322 in Harris Township, Limerock Court along PA 26 in College Township, and Pleasant Hills Apartments along PA 144 in Spring Township (see Figure 7). Section 8 is a federally funded rental assistance program for low- and very-low income households. The program is administered by the Centre County Housing Authority in the study area. Under the Section 8 program, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) pays the landlord the difference between 30% of the family's adjusted gross income and the approved fair market rent for that area. HUD also provides housing-related programming and funding. There are no HUD subsidized housing complexes in the study area. In addition, the Centre County Housing Authority does not own or maintain any public housing complexes within the study area.

### 3.3 Plain Sect Community

Plain sect communities exist within the eastern regions of Penns and West Brush Valleys and within Nittany Valley as suggested by the presence of Amish schools (PA Department of Education online School Directory, <a href="https://www.education.pa.gov/Pages/Education-Directory-and-Maps.aspx">https://www.education.pa.gov/Pages/Education-Directory-and-Maps.aspx</a>, 2021) and as illustrated on maps provided in the Amish Church Directory, Volume II Maps, 1996. One Amish school has been identified, just east of Centre Hall. Amish people on bicycles and horse and buggies were also observed traveling in the PEL Study Area during field reconnaissance for the PEL Study.

Public outreach was completed as part of PEL Study including an in-field meeting on October 16, 2020, with the Bishop of the West Penns Valley Church District and confirmed the presence of plain sect communities within the eastern portion of the PEL Study Area. The western portions of two Church Districts, the West Penns Valley Church District and the West Brush Valley Church District, extend into the PEL Study Area (see Figure 10).

The western most Plain Sect communities are located east of Luse Road and T-437 (Manor Road), within Potter Township, according to the West Penns Valley Church District Bishop. Plain



Sect communities exist eastward of this location along SR 45 and within West Penns Valley. West Penns Valley Church District is the southernmost Church District within the PEL Study Area. The West Brush Valley Church District is the only other Church District with a Plain Sect community within the eastern portion of the PEL Study Area and is located east of T-438 (Pond Lane) and paralleling SR 192.

The West Nittany Valley Church District and the Little Nittany Valley Church District are located further to the north. The West Nittany Valley Church District parallels SR 64 and is located east of Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc. quarries in Walker Township. The Little Nittany Valley Church District exists along SR 26, just north of Sand Ridge in Marion Township. While nearby or adjacent to the PEL Study Area, neither Church Districts appears to extend into PEL Study Area.

It is recognized that the Plain Sect Community may have unique transportation needs given their use of non-motorized vehicles for travel. The SCAC PEL Study Purpose and Need Report included "accommodating other modes of traffic (bike, pedestrian, horse and buggies, farm equipment traffic, and public transit) where appropriate" in the Study Purpose. In addition, the report included the findings of the Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) analysis conducted for the study area roadways which indicated that in the Base Year (2017) scenario within the study area; PA 45, PA 144, and US 322 currently operate at BLOS D or worse, and all BLOS scores are anticipated to deteriorate in the Design Year (2050). This rating indicates that only more experienced riders should use these primary roadways, or these roadways should not be used by any bicyclists. This finding reflects the existing unacceptable narrow lane widths and shoulders, high truck volumes, high travel speeds, and pavement conditions in the study area which are undesirable for cyclists. While a review of the State Police crash reports for the study area did not include any reported crashes involving a horse and buggy, the findings for unacceptable bicycle level of service would also apply to horse and buggy traffic that prefers to use eight-foot-wide paved shoulders rather than the travel lanes that serve faster moving motorized vehicles.

During the October 16, 2020 meeting with the West Penns Valley Church District Bishop, public meeting information was distributed and contact information for nearby Church Districts was

obtained. Phone conversations were completed with representatives of the West Brush Valley Church District, West Nittany Valley Church District, and the Little Nittany Valley Church District. This outreach was intended to identify the extent of the Plain Sect community and their farm operations within the study area and to receive feedback on special transportation issues the community may have that could affect the development of proposed transportation improvements. As the PEL Study progresses, outreach will continue to be made to these communities to solicit their feedback. In addition, during future detailed studies to be conducted as part of the NEPA review of transportation improvement projects evolving from the PEL Study, additional outreach will be conducted to further define the travel patterns and transportation needs of the communities within or adjacent to the proposed projects to ensure the communities' needs are considered in the design and construction of proposed transportation improvements.

### 3.4 Community Facilities and Services

Community facilities and services in the PEL Study Area include fire stations, police stations, EMS, medical facilities, schools, places of worship, cemeteries, libraries, parks and recreation areas, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, airports, public transit, and park-and-ride lots (see Figure 4).

### 3.4.1 Fire, EMS, Police and Medical Facilities

The PEL Study Area is serviced by the State College Police Department, Spring Township Police Department and the Pennsylvania State Police. It is also served by the Centre Hall Fire Company, Pleasant Gap Fire Company, Boalsburg Fire Company and Alpha Fire Company as well as the Penns Valley EMS, Centre Life Link, and Pleasant Gap Ambulance (See Figure 11). Mount Nittany Medical Center is the major hospital in the region and is located just outside the PEL Study Area.



#### 3.4.2 Schools

Three public school districts exist within the PEL Study Area including Penns Valley Area School District (Potter Township and Centre Hall Borough), State College Area School District (Harris Township and College Township) and Bellefonte Area School District (Spring Township and Benner Township). Public school facilities that exist in the PEL Study Area include Centre Hall-Potter Elementary School in Centre Hall Borough, Lemont Elementary School in College Township, Mount Nittany Elementary School and Mount Nittany Middle School in College Township, Pleasant Gap Elementary School in Spring Township, and Central PA Institute of Science and Technology in Spring Township (see Figure 4). In addition, St. Joseph's Catholic Academy, a private high school, exists in Harris Township at the former Boalsburg Elementary School.

### 3.4.3 Places of Worship

Places of worship are considered community facilities because they often serve as important community resources and gathering places for the community. In addition, they can provide a critical conduit for contacting and reaching out to traditionally underserved populations that can be used to obtain feedback from these communities to address their needs. Many churches exist throughout the PEL Study Area as seen on Figure 4. Plain Sect communities worship in church members' homes and do not own or maintain separate buildings for worship. A synagogue was identified outside of the study area in State College Borough and an Islamic Society Mosque was identified in College Township just outside of the study area.

#### 3.4.4 Cemeteries

Multiple cemeteries are located within the study area (see Figure 4), most are associated with the local churches; however, one small private, family cemetery was observed during field reconnaissance in the southern portion of the study area near Colyer Lake (see Figure 4). It is possible that other small family cemeteries exist within the study area given the rural and historic



nature of the area. Further investigation will be conducted during the NEPA process and during property owner interviews.

#### 3.4.5 Parks and Recreation Areas

Many municipal parks exist within the PEL Study Area as well as recreation areas maintained by non-profit and other organizations (see Figure 4). Table 7 below includes all park and recreation areas within the study area, the owner, and if recreation grants were used for acquisition or development. Portions of Bald Eagle and Rothrock State Forests exist along the southern edge of the study area and northeast of Centre Hall. Hiking and mountain bike trails exist within the state forests for recreation. Portions of both Bald Eagle and Rothrock State Forests received federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) for development, however, areas that received LWCF funding do not exist within the PEL Study Area. No recreational Pennsylvania Water Trails have designated by the PA Fish and Boat Commission within the PEL Study Area.

**Table 7: Parks and Recreation Areas** 

Park/Recreation Area	Owner	Publicly Owned	Description	Recreation Grant Funding
American Legion Ballfields	Centre Hall American Legion	No	Baseball fields	
Blue Spring Park	Harris Township	Yes	8-acre park in Harris Township with a Basketball court, ballfields, soccer field, playground, seasonal (on- ground) ice rink, and pavilion	Growing Greener <sup>2</sup>
Cairns Crossing	College Township	Yes	Walking path along Spring Creek	
Calvary Harvest Fields Church disc golf course and Harvest Fields Community Trails	Calvary Harvest Fields Church	No	Disc golf course, recreational mountain bike trails	
Centre County Grange Fairgrounds	Centre County Grange	No	265-acre property used for seasonal operation of the annual Grange Fair	Growing Greener <sup>2</sup> Keystone <sup>1</sup>



## Table 7: Parks and Recreation Areas (Continued)

Park/Recreation Area	Owner	Publicly Owned	Description	Recreation Grant Funding
Centre Hall Lions Club	Centre Hall Lions Club	No	8.5-acre property with basketball court, picnic pavilion, playground, and open play area	
Centre Hall-Potter Elementary School	Penns Valley Area School District	Yes	Playground, baseball and softball fields	
Colyer Lake	PA Fish and Boat Commission	Yes	130-acre PFBC property with a lake, boat launch, and hiking trails	
Country Place Park	Harris Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	4-acre park in Harris Township with a playground and half-court basketball	
Dalevue Park	College Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	13.5-acre park in College Township with a playground, picnic pavilion, bike path, basketball court, tennis court, volleyball, and baseball field	Project-70 <sup>4</sup>
Eugene Fasick Memorial Park	Harris Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	17-acre park in Harris Township with a playground, bocce court, nature trail, ballfield, pavilion, and basketball court	Keystone <sup>1</sup>
Fieldstone Park	College Township	Yes	1.8-acre open recreation field	
Future park on Sinking Creek Road	Potter Township	Yes	56-acre future Potter Township park	
Gettig's Little League Field	Pleasant Hills Homeowners Association/P.G. Little League	No	Baseball fields, picnic tables, swing sets	
Glenn Park	College Township	Yes	1.4-acre neighborhood picnic area	
Harpster Park	Harris Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	4.2-acre park/open space in Harris Township in the Liberty Hill subdivision	
Kaywood Park	Harris Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	5.95-acre park in Harris Township with a playground, pavilion, basketball court, and ballfield	Growing Greener <sup>2</sup>
Lemont Elementary School	State College Area School District	Yes	Baseball fields, playground open to the public when not in use by the school	



## Table 7: Parks and Recreation Areas (Continued)

Park/Recreation Area	Owner	Publicly Owned	Description	Recreation Grant Funding
Limerock Terrace Parklet	College Township	Yes	0.4-acre future playlot	
Lions Paw Alumni Association	Lions Paw Alumni Association	No	432.5-acre preserve in College Township on Nittany Mountain with Hiking trails	
Millbrook Marsh Nature Center	Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority leased from Penn State University	Yes	60-acre nature area in College Township with an education building, nature trails, boardwalk with birdblind, and pavilion	Keystone <sup>1</sup> Growing Greener <sup>2</sup>
Mount Nittany Conservancy	Mount Nittany Conservancy	No	332.5-acre preserve in College Township on Nittany Mountain with Hiking trails	
Mount Nittany Terrace Park	College Township	Yes	3-acre township park with a playground and picnic area	
Mountainside Park	College Township	Yes	9.27-acre township park with a nature trail, playground, and picnic area	
Mt. Nittany Elementary School/Mt. Nittany Middle School	State College Area School District	Yes	Baseball field, soccer field, basketball courts, softball fields open to the public when not in use by the schools	
Nittany Orchard Park	College Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	5-acre park in College Township with a playground, tennis court, basketball court, baseball field, and gazebo	
Nittany View Park	Harris Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	7.43-acre park in Harris Township with a pavilion, playground, walking path, ball field, and soccer field	Keystone <sup>1</sup>
Oak Grove Parklet	College Township	Yes	3-acre township park with a playground, picnic area, basketball court, and walking path	
Oak Hall Regional Park	Centre Region Council of Governments <sup>6</sup>	Yes	66-acre park in Harris Township with softball fields, walking trail, and open recreation fields	LWCF <sup>3</sup> Keystone <sup>1</sup>
PA Military Museum	PA Historical and Museum Commission	Yes	Walking paths, open recreation area	



## Table 7: Parks and Recreation Areas (Continued)

Park/Recreation Area	Owner	Publicly Owned	Description	Recreation Grant Funding
Pleasant Gap Elementary School	Bellefonte Area School District	Yes	Playground and sports fields	Keystone <sup>1</sup>
Pleasant Hills Park	Pleasant Hills Homeowners Association	No	1.77-acre playground, basketball court, pavilion	
Potter Athletic Complex/ Emery and Geiss Baseball Fields	Potter Township	Yes	29-acre athletic complex includes 2 baseball fields, bleachers, picnic tables	Growing Greener <sup>2</sup>
Potter Run Park	Potter Township	Yes	6.6-acre park in Potter Township	Keystone <sup>1</sup>
Saint Joseph's Catholic Academy	Saint Joseph's	No	All-purpose field, tennis court	
Slab Cabin Park	College Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	20-acre park in College Township with a picnic pavilion, playground, basketball court, and covered bridge	Project-70 <sup>4</sup>
Spring Creek Park	College Township <sup>6</sup>	Yes	36-acre park in College Township with a playground, picnic pavilions, volleyball courts, tennis courts, walking paths, fishing, and covered bridge	LWCF <sup>3</sup> Project-500 <sup>5</sup> Keystone <sup>1</sup>
Stoney Batter Natural Area	College Township	Yes	28.5-acre wooded area adjacent to the Lions Paw Alumni Association Mount Nittany preserve with hiking trail to Mount Nittany vistas	
Tri-Municipal Park	Centre Hall Borough, Potter Township, Gregg Township	Yes	163-acre municipal park in Potter Township	Keystone <sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund – State funding source for community parks administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Growing Greener Bond Fund – State funding source for community parks administrated by the PA DCNR.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> LWCF – Land and Water Conservation Fund – Federal funding source distributed to all states by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service. Provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The PA DCNR administers the LWCF Program for PA.



### PennDOT.gov/SCAC

#### 3.4.6 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Within the Centre Region, there has been progress toward developing a comprehensive and interconnected bicycle network. The Centre Region Council of Governments (COG) prepared the Centre Region Bike Plan (adopted December 15, 2015; amended May 23, 2016). The Bike Plan identifies future linkages and programs to further expand the existing network. The Bike Plan is also expected to enhance the Region's application to the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) to maintain its Bicycle Friendly Community designation and raise the current designation from Silver level to Gold. Recommendations in the Bike Plan specific to the PEL Study Area include a recommended bicycle corridor in Harris Township, referred to as Corridor Hh. It would extend along PA 45 from the Mount Nittany Expressway to Rosslyn Road. Harris Township also has an adopted Official Map that includes a proposed bicycle facility along Spring Creek from the village of Boalsburg to Elks Club Road and another facility connecting Kaywood Park to the residential development of Aspen Heights.

Bicycle Pennsylvania Route G, which extends through the PEL Study Area, is part of the statewide bicycle route system that serves travel, tourism, and recreation. Route G traverses Potter Township and Centre Hall Borough (using Brush Valley Road, including PA 192), extending into Harris Township (using Brush Valley Road to Rock Hill Road and Linden Hall Road) and College Township (using Linden Hall Road to connect to Boalsburg Road and Warner Boulevard) and then out of the PEL Study Area west using PA 45 (see Figure 4).

Centre County recognizes the Penn's Cave Ride bike route (see Figure 4) which begins in College Township and extends through the study area to Penn's Cave which exists outside of the study area in Gregg Township. The route follows PA Bike Route G (Brush Valley Road, PA 192) into

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Project-70 – Land Acquisition and Borrowing Act of 1964 authorizing seventy million dollars for the acquisition of lands for recreation, conservation and historical purposes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Project-500 – Land and Water Reclamation Act of 1968 authorizing five-hundred million dollars for reclaiming abandoned mines, state parks and forests, sewage plants, and local and county parks.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Maintained by Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority (CRPR)



Potter Township then cuts across Potter Township using Rimmey Road, PA 45, Tusseyville Road, Airport Road, across SR 144 onto Sinking Creek Road and out of the study area into Gregg Township. In addition to formal facilities and routes, several other roadways in the study area are used by bicyclists for recreation or touring purposes.

Although pedestrian facilities are located in the urban and village areas within the PEL Study Area, and given the rural nature of the study area, the pedestrian facilities do not extend through rural areas to connect the urban and village areas. In Centre County, municipalities, the Centre Regional Planning Agency (CRPA), and the CCPCDO routinely require or encourage developers to include pedestrian and bicycle amenities as part of proposed land development site plans and subdivisions in locations where the facilities are appropriate. These entities view individual facilities as integral to the development of an overall interconnected bicycle and pedestrian system. The CCMPO staff is actively involved in land development plan reviews at county, regional, and municipal levels and also works with PennDOT to include pedestrian and bicycle facilities in transportation improvement projects.

Centre County completed a feasibility study for the Penns and Brush Valley Rail Trail (2015). This study evaluated the feasibility of a 27-mile trail on the former Lewisburg to Tyrone rail line extending from the Union/Centre County border through the Penns Valley and Brush Valley and terminating in the village of Lemont in College Township. County and municipal officials determined that the original proposed 27-mile regional trail would refocus on four community-based trails that would be designed using the abandoned rail line in select areas and principally serve the needs of a local community without including the use of or impacts to any major roadways.

#### 3.4.7 Public Transit and Park-and-Ride Lots

Public transit in Centre County is primarily provided by the Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA) with additional on-demand ride services provided by the Centre County Office of Transportation (CCOT). There is no passenger rail service in Centre County. The closest Amtrak

Station is in the Borough of Lewistown, over 18 miles south of the village of Potters Mills and outside of the study area. This station is located along the primary Pennsylvanian Amtrak route that extends along the southern portion of the state connecting Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Intercity bus services are all based in the State College area and include Greyhound, Fulllington Trailways, and Megabus. These bus companies all provide daily intercity bus service that connects to urban areas located outside of the county and focus on serving the large student population of the Penn State University versus daily commuter trips.

CATA is a joint municipal authority, comprised of State College Borough and College, Ferguson, Harris, and Patton Townships. CATA conducts public transportation operations within the boundaries of the participating municipalities. However, the CATA Board of Directors extends public transportation services to three municipalities outside of the Centre Region on a contract basis: Bellefonte Borough, and Benner and Spring Townships. CATA operates service directly (CATABUS fixed route service and CATAGO! Microtransit service); purchases services from a subcontractor (CATARIDE shared ride/demand responsive service); and administers some services that use a decentralized, volunteer driver model (CATACOMMUTE ridesharing services for individuals whose trip either begins or ends in Centre County). The service area for CATABUS fixed route service and CATARIDE shared ride/demand responsive service is approximately 1,035 square miles and has a population of about 95,000 people. The CATACOMMUTE program provides services to users traveling to/from Centre County and eleven surrounding counties (Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Clearfield, Clinton, Huntington, Indiana, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, and Somerset Counties).

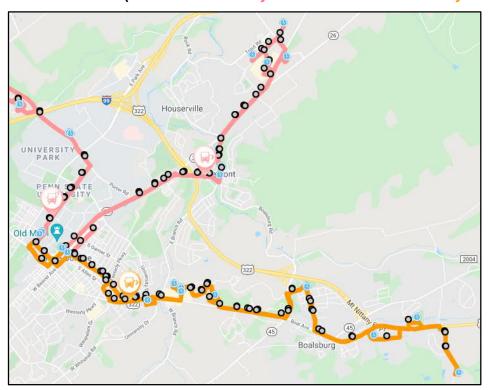
Because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel patterns, CATABUS fixed route service was restructured and currently includes 11 fixed routes, with the following two (2) fixed routes providing access to, from, and within the PEL Study Area:

- Route HM (Toftrees and Nittany Mall)
  - Services Lemont in College Township
  - Uses PA 26
- Route P (Tussey Mountain)

- Extends to the Boalsburg Technology Park and Tussey Mountain
   Ski and Recreation area
- Services only Harris Township within the study area
- o Uses U.S. 322

These two (2) routes are part of eight (8) "Community Service" routes that provide service to downtown State College, surrounding municipalities, and Penn State's University Park Campus. The service is primarily distinguished by a "hub-and-spoke" model that connects outlying points of origin and destination with transfer opportunities in downtown State College and on the University Park Campus. Three (3) routes are "Campus Service" routes (also referred to as the "Loop" and "Link") that are limited to the University Park Campus and downtown State College area. The map below includes the portions of the two fixed routes extending into and servicing the PEL Study Area.

CATA Fixed Bus Routes (Route HM to Nittany Mall and Route P to Tussey Mountain)





In Fiscal Year 2019-20, the CATABUS system transported approximately 5 million passengers. In comparison to the other Community Service routes, Route HM (Toftrees and Nittany Mall) serves a high number of passengers but only covers a small portion of the eastern section of the PEL Study Area. Route P (Tussey Mountain) serves a moderate number of passengers in the study area. The relatively limited bus service in the PEL Study Area reflects the low cost-effectiveness of bus service in more rural municipalities outside of the State College area. In addition, the CATA fixed route service is highly dependent of the needs of Penn State University. All fixed-route services operate on a full-service schedule during the University's fall and spring semester class sessions and operate in reduced service for most of the remainder of the year.

The 12-county (including Mifflin and Juniata Counties, southeast of the study area) ridesharing services provided through CATACOMMUTE includes four offerings: vanpool program, carpool program, emergency ride home program, and park-and-ride program (the latter program is only associated with University Park campus commuter parking lots at this time). Current usage of the regional services is limited as indicated by the following systemwide data:

- Vanpool Program initiated in October 2007 with six vanpool groups and grew during Fiscal Year 2019-20 to include 406 participants.
- Carpool During Fiscal Year 2019-20, carpool participation included approximately 60 persons.
- Emergency Ride Home Program During Fiscal Year 2018-19, Emergency Ride Home use remained relatively low at about 34 trips provided.

The CCOT is a department of Centre County Government that operates a shared ride, demand-responsive transit system providing door-to-door services for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and persons without other transportation options. All trips must have both an origin and destination within Centre County, and selected out-of-county destinations. CCOT service is available to anyone with travel needs, but reduced fares are available only for those age 65 or older and those eligible under certain special programs. For most of the PEL Study Area, the

CCOT service is the only transit service available and often serves as lifeline service for members of the public, particularly elderly residents.

Park and ride activities in the county are primarily informal. One formal program uses Penn State's University Park Campus commuter parking lots at Jordan East, Stadium West, and Medlar Field and is available to eligible individuals who work in downtown State College. No other parking lots are formally designated as park and ride lots.

A countywide park-and-ride study is proposed as part of the CCMPO's LTRP 2050 to develop a strategy to ensure the County's transportation system has an adequate mix of travel modes. This proposed study will account for changing commute patterns in the area, provide the opportunity to reprioritize sites listed in a previous 1996 regional park-and-ride study, add new sites as needed, identify potential environmental issues early in the design process, and allow the CCMPO to work with PennDOT District 2-0 and other local stakeholders to maximize opportunities for use of public right-of-way.

Related to the PEL Study Area, the 1996 regional park-and-ride lot study identified the intersection of PA 45 and PA 144 as a high-priority location to help meet Penns Valley commuter demand. Environmental review and design efforts were initiated for a site in the village of Old Forge in Potter Township. However, issues related to culturally and historically significant features resulted in the CCMPO stopped work on the project.

### 3.4.8 Airports

Centre Airpark is a small air field on Airport Road in Potter Township (see Figure 4). It is a public airport that is privately owned and has a 3,100-foot-long turf runway.

### 4.0 Summary

Skelly and Loy conducted reviews of secondary source information and identified numerous socioeconomic features and resources ranging from demographics and planning initiatives to



physical lands and community features. The planning efforts identify the different goals that are of importance at the regional, county, municipal and neighborhood levels. The community features represent a relatively rural area with development primarily focused in rural villages, along major roadway corridors, and in the western end of the study area near State College Borough and the Pennsylvania State University. Parks and recreational lands offer a diversity of public use areas for members of the public and visitors, including Oak Hall Regional Park, Centre County Grange Fair Grounds, Tri-Municipal Park and Nittany View Park, just to name a few. The mix of socioeconomic features identified adds to the overall diversity of environmental resources in the PEL Study Area.

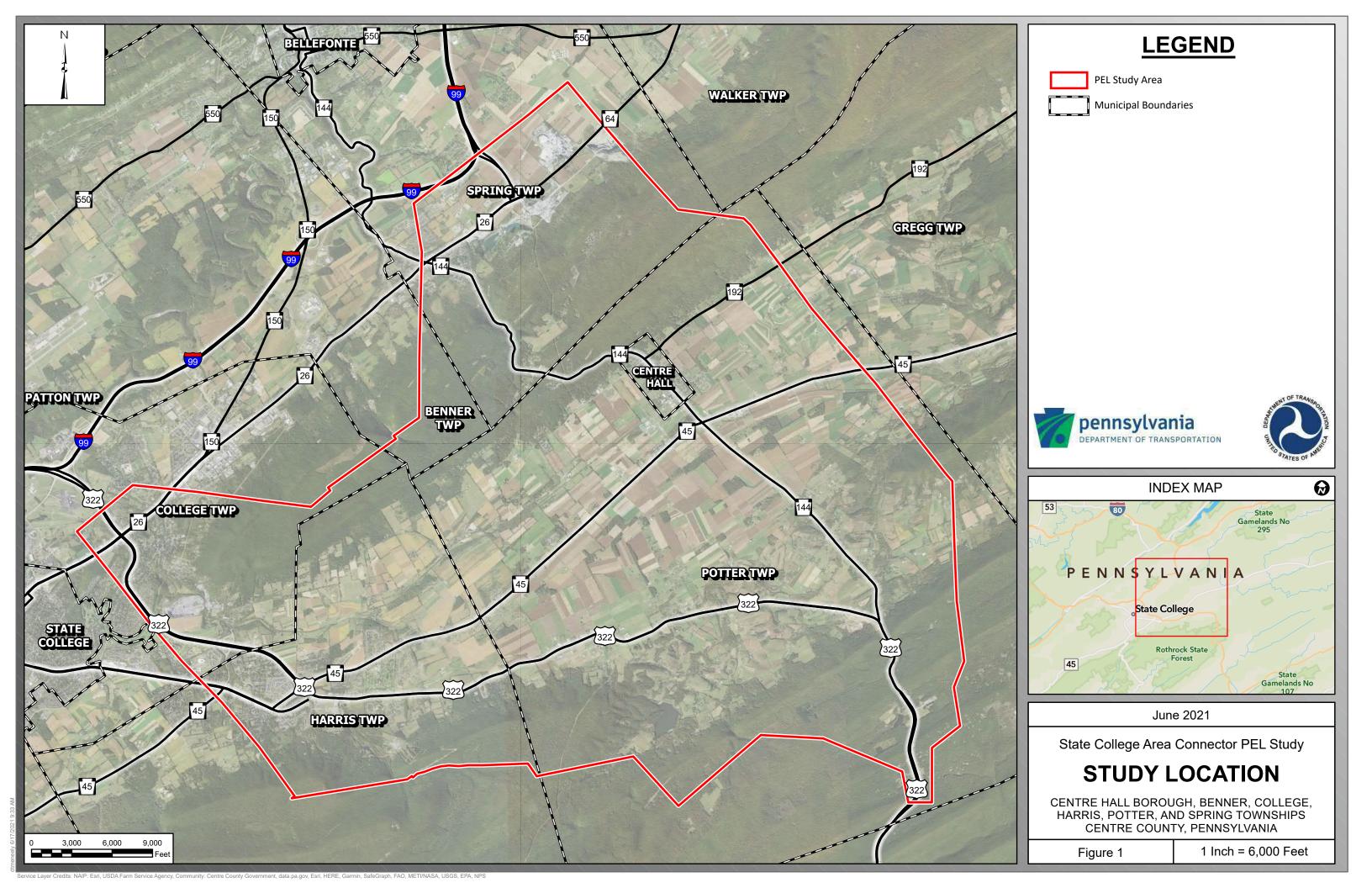
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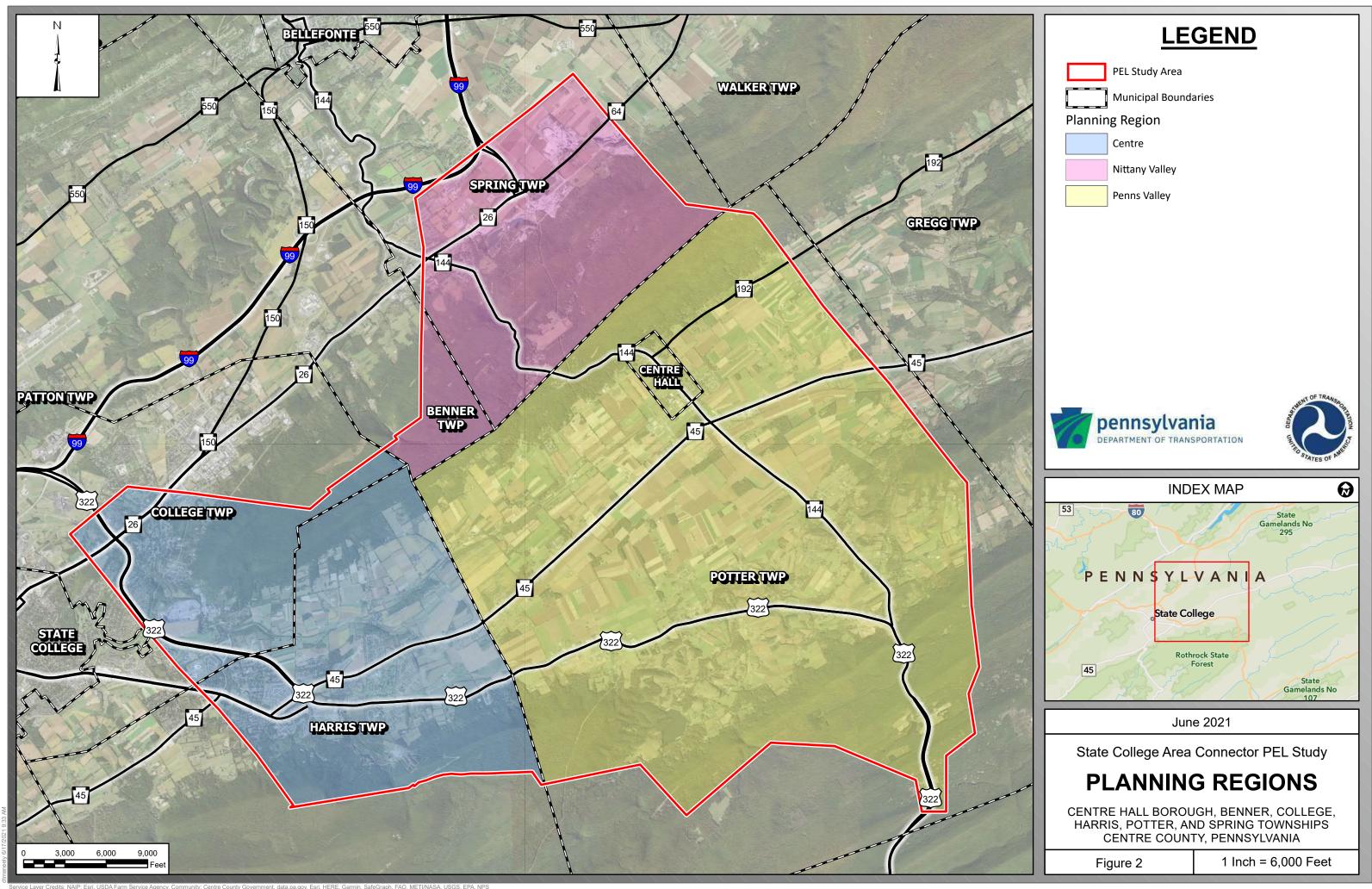
Marintha K. Bower, Senior Project Manager, Skelly and Loy, Inc., A Terracon Company

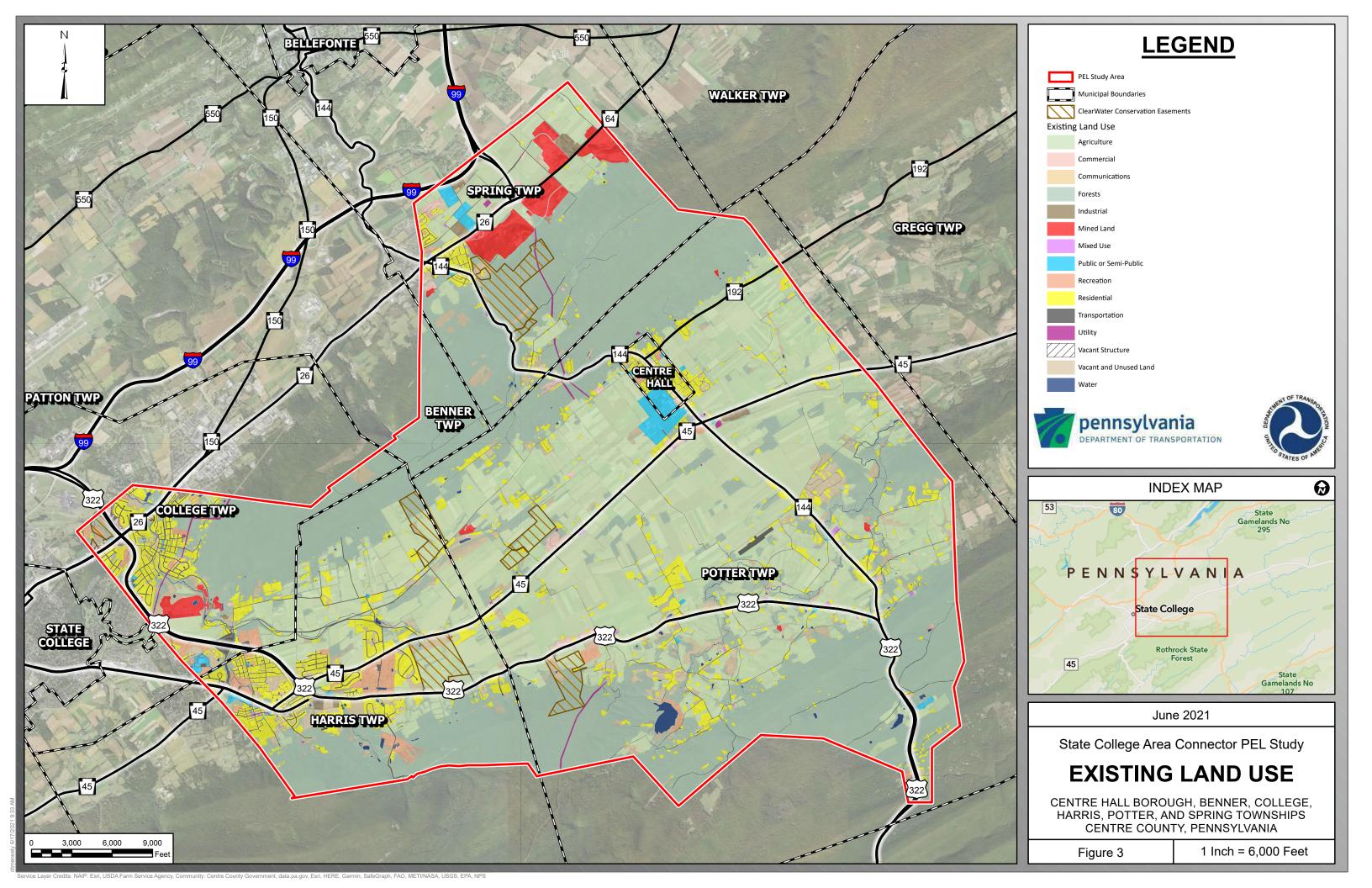
Paul J. DeAngelo, Department Manager, Skelly and Loy, Inc., A Terracon Company

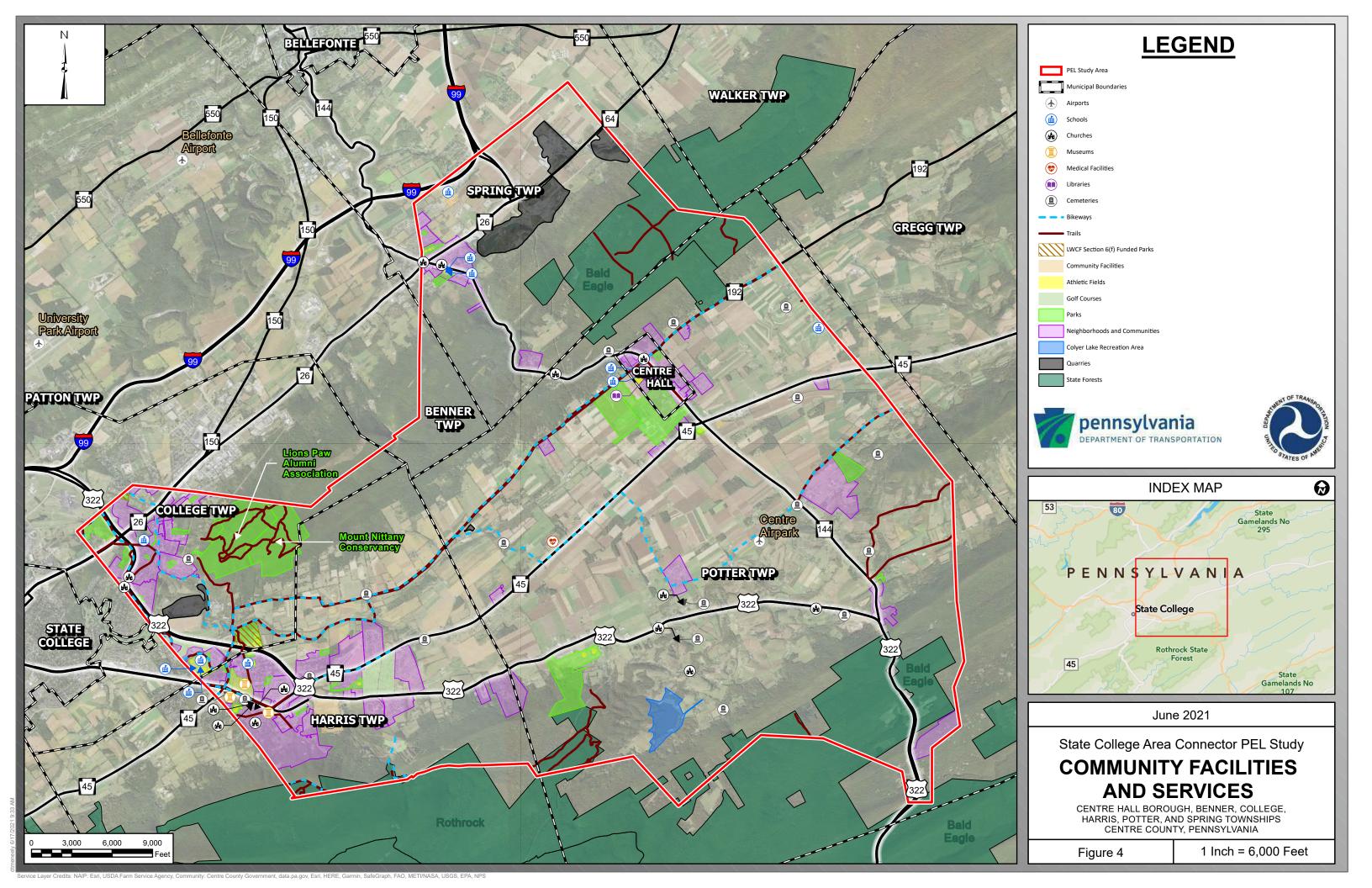
Alyssa R. Lynd, Staff Scientist, Skelly and Loy, Inc., A Terracon Company

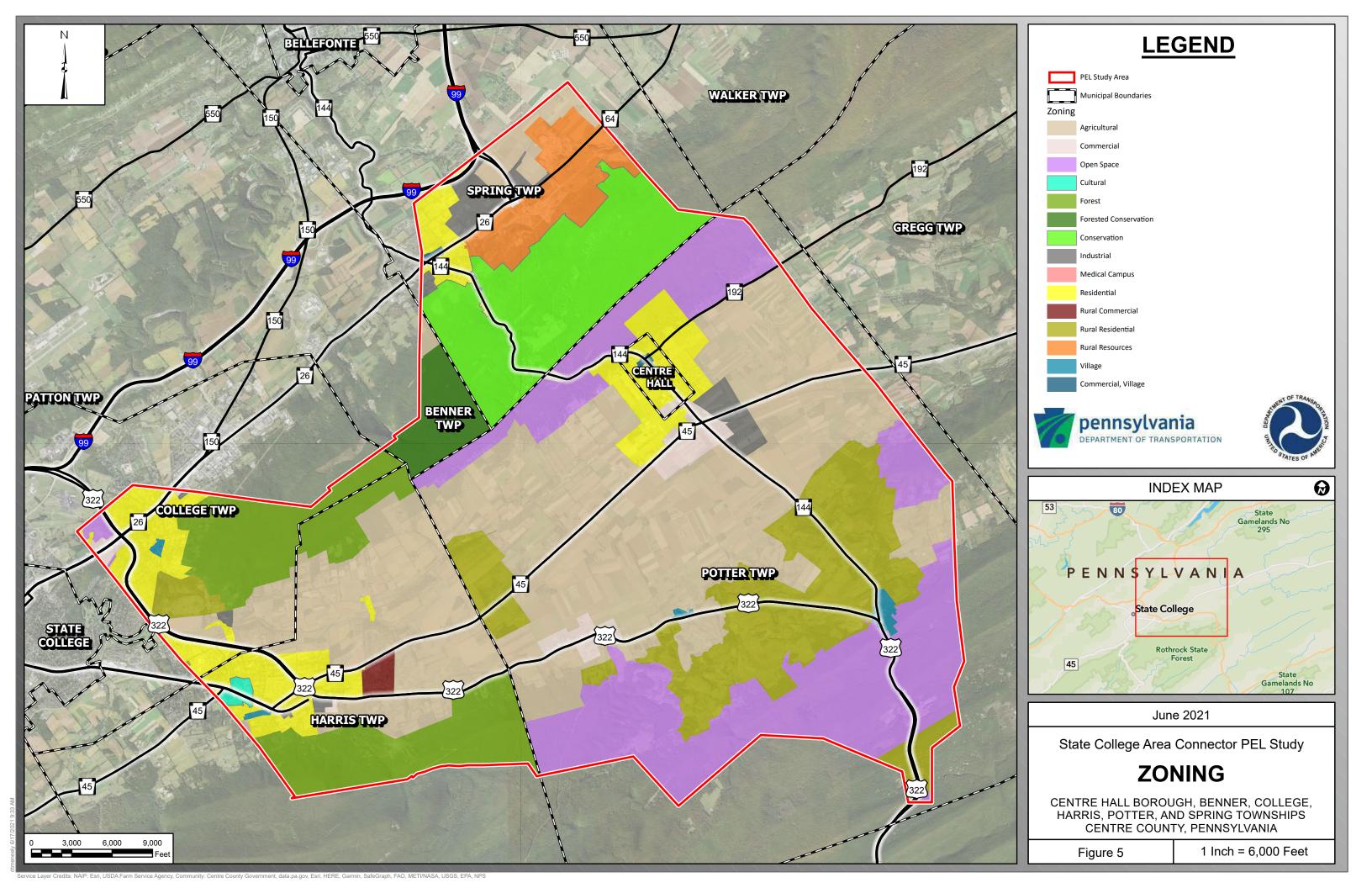
**FIGURES** 

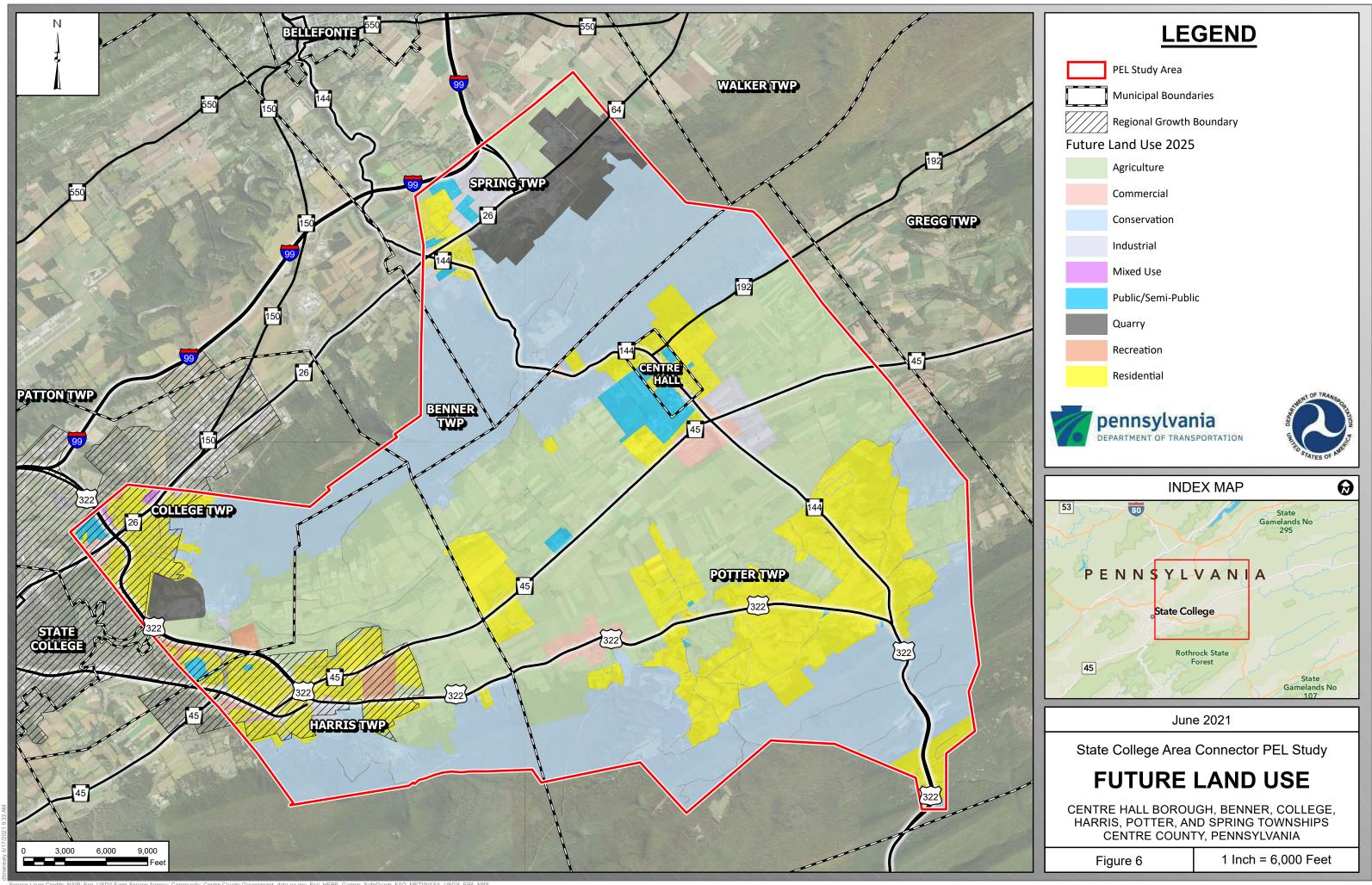


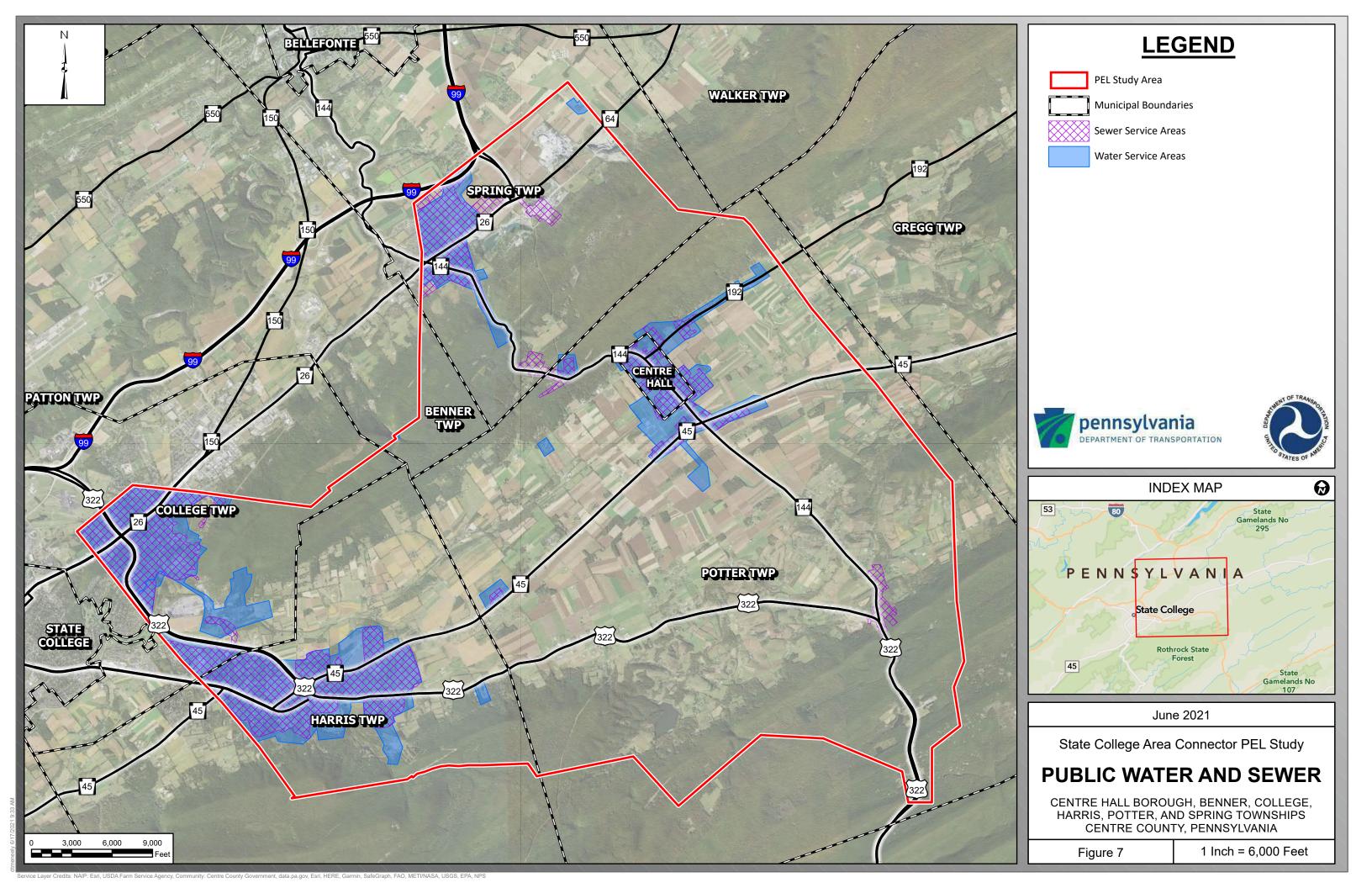


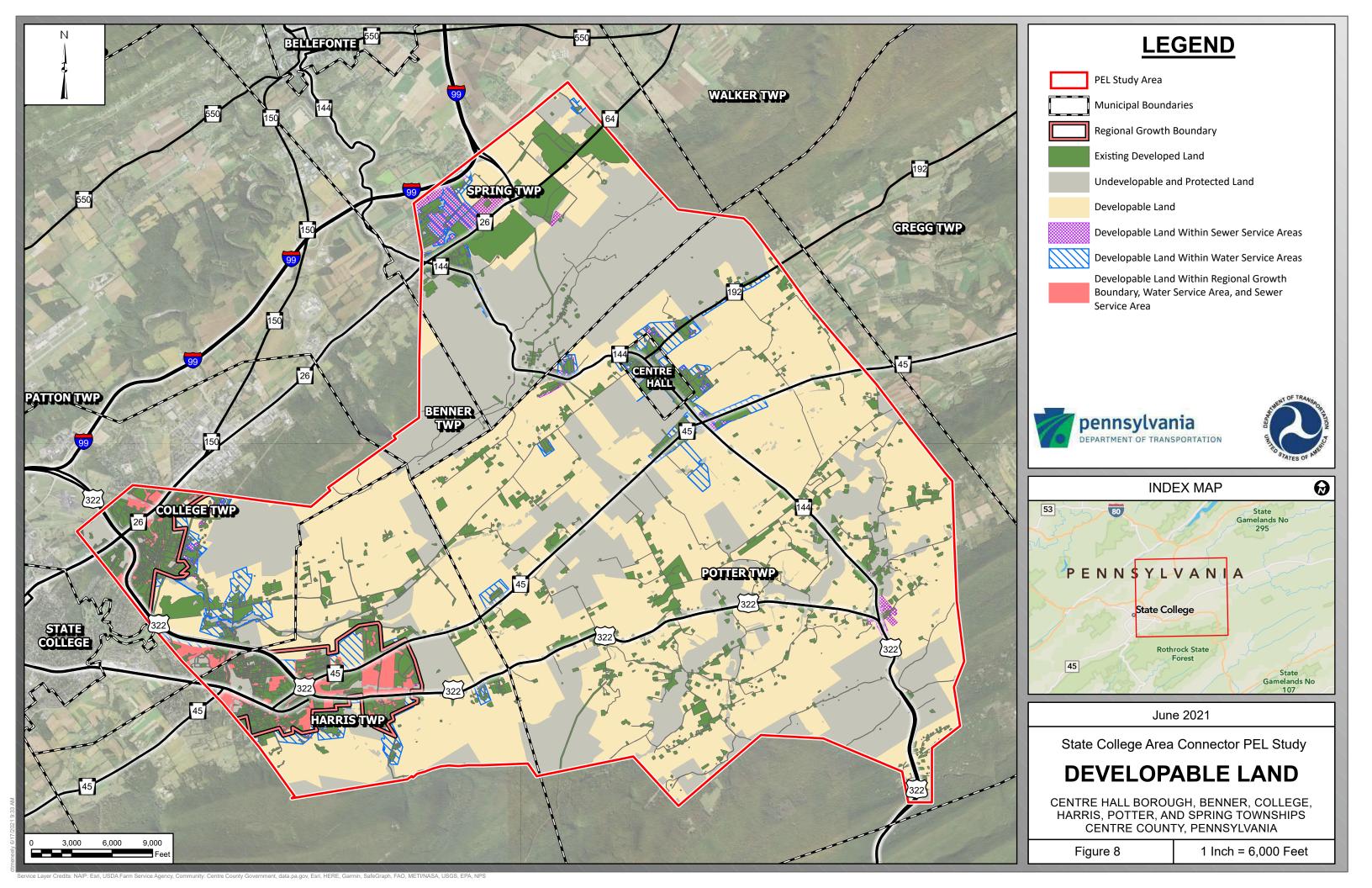


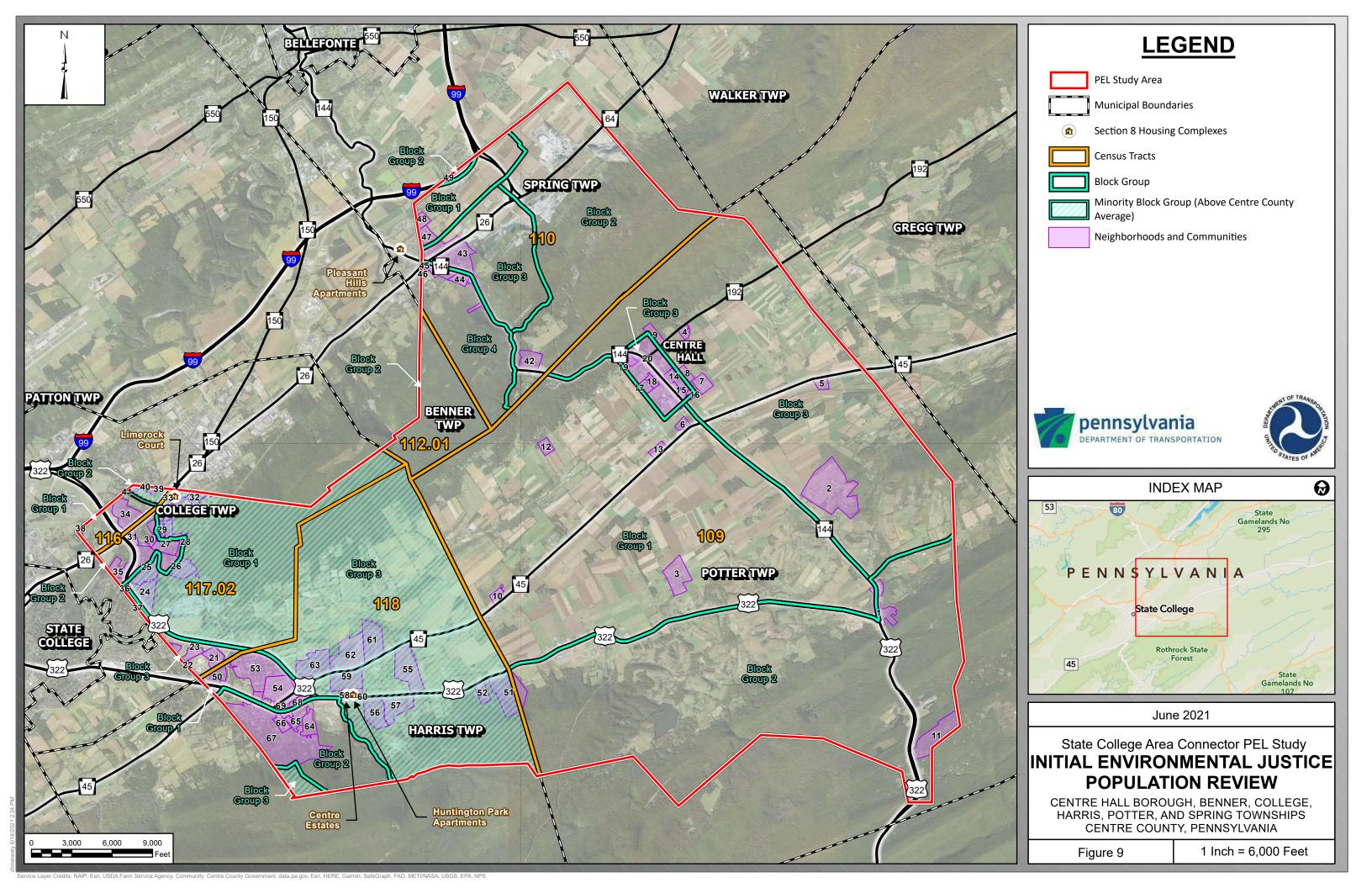


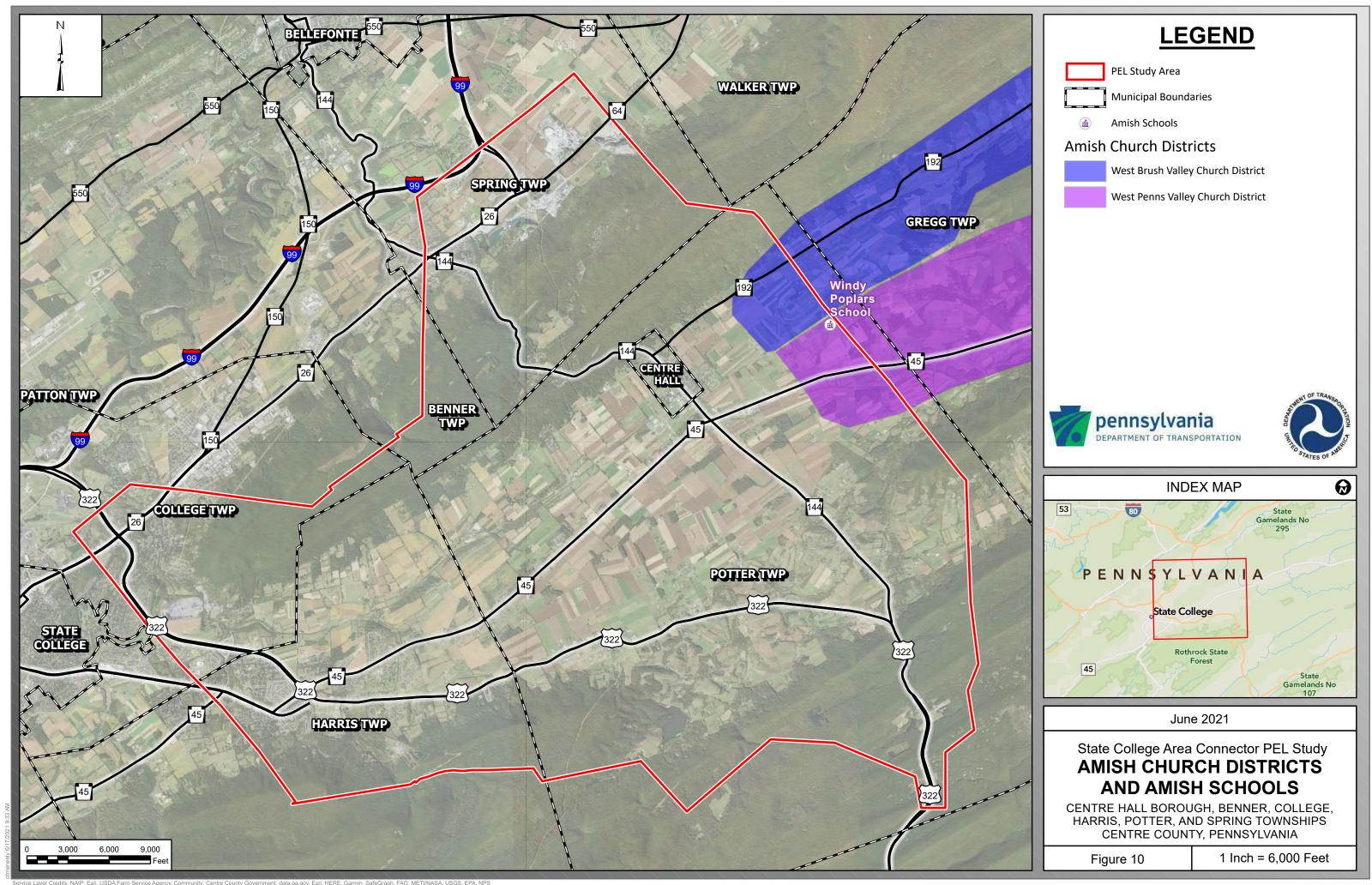


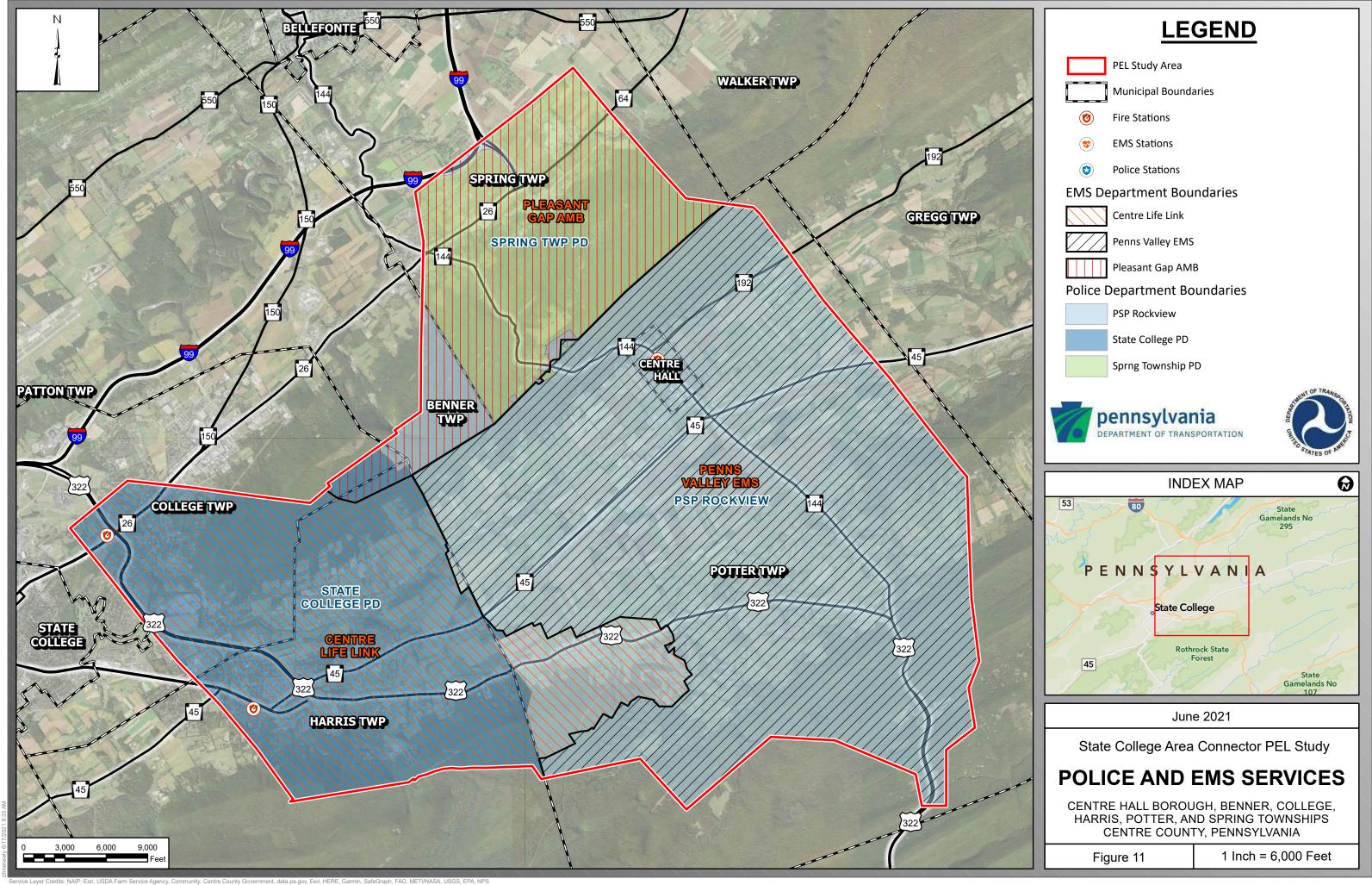












**APPENDICES** 

**APPENDIX A: REFERENCES** 





### **Appendix A: REFERENCES**

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- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <a href="https://www.hud.gov/">https://www.hud.gov/</a>. Accessed February 2021.

#### **GIS Data Sources**

Layer Name	Figure	Source*	Date
Planning Regions	Figure 2 – Planning Regions	S&L	2017
Existing Land Use	Figure 3 – Existing Land Use	Centre County Open Data	2017
Zoning	Figure 5 - Zoning	Centre County Open Data	3/18/2020
Future Land Use (2025)	Figure 6 – Future Land Use	Centre County Planning Department	
Sewer Service Areas	Figure 7 – Public Water and Sewer	MTGIS	2017
Water Service Areas	Figure 7 – Public Water and Sewer	MTGIS	2017
Developable Land	Figure 8 – Developable Land	S&L from Centre County Existing Land Use	2021
Census Tracts	Figure 9 – Initial Environmental Justice Population Review	US Census Bureau	2021
Census Block Groups	Figure 9 – Initial Environmental Justice Population Review	US Census Bureau	2021
Section 8 Housing Complexes	Figure 9 – Initial Environmental Justice Population Review	KMZ file by S&L	2021
Amish Church Districts and Amish Schools	Figure 10 – Amish Church Districts and Amish Schools	MTGIS and then updated by S&L (PA Department of Education, Amish Church Directory, Volume II Maps, 1996)	2017, updated 2021
Churches	Figure 4 – Community Facilities and Services	MTGIS then updated by S&L	2004, updated 2021
Cemeteries	Figure 4 – Community Facilities and Services	MTGIS then updated by S&L	2017, updated 2021

### PennDOT.gov/SCAC

Layer Name	Figure	Source*	Date
Fire Stations, EMS	Figure 11 – Police and EMS	MTGIS	2017
Stations, and Police	Services		
Stations			
Libraries	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS	2017
	Facilities and Services		
Medical Facilities	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS	2017
	Facilities and Services		
Museums	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS	2017
	Facilities and Services	1	
Schools	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS	2017
	Facilities and Services		
Bikeways	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS then updated by	2017,
	Facilities and Services	S&L	updated
<del>-</del>		147010	2021
Trails	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS	2017
111105 0 11 0(0)	Facilities and Services	BOND	2024
LWCF Section 6(f)	Figure 4 – Community	DCNR	2021
Funded Parks	Facilities and Services	NATO IO	00.17
Athletic Fields	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS	2017
0	Facilities and Services	MTOIO the second standing	0004
Community	Figure 4 – Community	MTGIS then updated by	2004,
Facilities	Facilities and Services	S&L	updated
Dorko	Figure 4 Community	MTCIC than undeted by	2021
Parks	Figure 4 – Community Facilities and Services	MTGIS then updated by S&L	2017,
	racilities and Services	Sal	updated 2021
Golf Courses	Figure 4 – Community	Centre County Open	3/18/2020
Oon Courses	Facilities and Services	Data	3/10/2020
Neighborhoods and	Figure 4 – Community	Centre County Open	3/18/2020
Communities	Facilities and Services and	Data	0/10/2020
	Figure 9 – Initial	Data	
	Environmental Justice		
	Population Review		
Colyer Lake	Figure 4 – Community	PASDA/PFBC	2020
Recreation Area	Facilities and Services	_	
Quarries	Figure 4 – Community	S&L	8/13/2020,
	Facilities and Services		updated
			2021
State Forests	Figure 4 – Community	PASDA/DCNR	2017,
	Facilities and Services		updated
			2021

<sup>\*</sup> MTGIS data sources refer to the GIS data compiled for Socioeconomic Resources as identified in the "Route 322/144/45 Corridors Data Refresh Project, Centre County, PA Secondary Source GIS Data Collection Memo", dated October 10, 2018

APPENDIX B: APPLICABLE STATUES AND REGULATIONS

#### **Federal Legislation and Policy**

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970

Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act Amendments of 1987 and 2005

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Related Statutes

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Executive Order 12898 on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice (1994)

23 CFR 771, Environmental Impact and Related Procedures

1987 FHWA Technical Advisory 6640.8A, Guidelines for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents

1996 U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA Publication, Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation

#### **State Legislation and Policy**

Pennsylvania Act 120

Pennsylvania Act 247

Pennsylvania Executive Orders 1993-3 and 1999-1

PennDOT Strike-off Letter No. 438-03-04, Policy on Community Impact Assessment