Alternative Themes and Scenarios Description

Alternative Themes are, like the Trend Scenario, informed conjectures as to what the county could be like in 20 years. In contrast to the Trend, which is controlled by recent land development trends, Themes are free to depart from recent custom and to propose a wide variety of patterns of growth, mix and distribution of types of land uses, densities, and additions to transportation and utilities systems that could occur into the future.

The following four Themes were developed for Allegheny Places.

- Activity Centers
- Riverfront Rehabilitation and Revitalization
- Transit Oriented Development
- Trend Dispersed

A large amount of information assisted the team in selecting the aforementioned Themes. This information is listed in the table below.

	Activity Centers	Riverfront Rehabilitation & Revitalization	Transit Oriented Development	Trend Dispersed
Identify Alternative Themes				
Meetings / Presentations				
Port Authority presentation on Eastern Corridor Study and Transit Visioning Study			X	
Simon Tripp presentation on the Mon Valley Economic Development Strategy		X		
Initial meeting with ACED and MT to present Alternative Themes	X			X
Reports				
Mon Valley Economic Development Strategy				
Zone Locations		X		
Allegheny County 2001				
Build highways and interchanges only to improve safety or relieve congestion	X			
Reduction of Urban Sprawl at fringes of the county	X	X		
Encourage new development in areas that can be served by existing	X	X	X	

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infrastructure				
Encourage new development in densities high enough to be served by public transit, with a mix of uses			X	
Allegheny County Priority Brownfield Sites Tour		X		
Municipal Plans / Ordinances				
Marshall Township Zoning Ordinance	X		X	X
Pine Township Zoning Ordinance	X		X	X
Moon Township Zoning Ordinance	X		X	X
Data Collection				
Public Survey Results	X		X	X
64% responded that close to employment is a factor that plays the biggest role in making where you live desirable	X	X	X	
49% responded that 15-30 minutes is acceptable distance to live from employment	X		X	
59% responded that Maintaining and improving existing older neighborhoods was a top priority	X	X		
50% responded that improving and expanding transit options was a top priority			X	
1993-2005 Major Development locations	X			X

Once selected, the four Themes were transformed into the Alternative Development Scenarios (Alternatives), which were then mapped (see Alternative Scenario Mapping on Supporting Documentation CD-ROM). The four Alternatives are:

- Good Old Places
- Hot New Places
- River Places
- Transit Places

The Alternatives use the same representation of uses as the Trend Scenario --100-acre color "chips," graphically depicted as a layer over an existing land use base map. As with the Trend Scenario, yellow chips represent residential use, red represent retail uses, and salmon (pink) represent employment center use. ("Employment center" combines the office and industrial categories of land use.)

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The amount of total new residential, retail, and employment center development in each Alternative is the same and is identical with new development totals for the Trend Scenario. New residential development is presumed to be about 50,000 units. New retail development is assumed to be about 20 million square feet. New employment center development is presumed to be about 30 to 40 million square feet. The purpose of keeping the amounts of prospective development constant across all future development scenarios – Trend and various Alternatives – is to allow the location, type, and intensity of development to vary and to focus attention on the implications of these variations.

As mentioned above, each Alternative presents a distinct concept or theme for the development of the county into the future. An obvious way in which each Alternative distinguishes itself from another is in the geographic distribution of new dwellings and nonresidential development. The intensity of development differs from one Alternative to another as well. For example, Good Old Places emphasizes hubs or centers of activity, with corresponding high intensities and a mix of uses, while Hot New Places stresses a more spread-out pattern of low to medium intensity land development. Transportation factors are a major determinant for Alternatives as well. Transit Places, for instance, emphasizes future transit utilization more than the others.

The 100-acre color chips technique employed in Trend and Alternatives is highly flexible, allowing for wide variations in the distribution pattern for development, but also different use-mix and density approaches. For example, the combining of different color chips in one location infers a prospective future mixing of uses at this setting and the "stacking" or "layering" of chips connotes increased density when compared to strictly side-by-side placement of chips.

The descriptions of the Alternatives are listed below:

Alternative Development Scenario Description

Like the 2025 Trend Scenario…
• Alternative Themes are informed conjectures as to what the County could look like in 20 years.
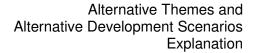
Unlike the 2025 Trend Scenario…
• Alternative Themes are free to depart from recent custom.
• Alternative Themes propose a wide variety of patterns of growth, types of land uses, densities and additions to transportation and utilities.

As part of the Visioning phase of the project, we have considered how Allegheny County has evolved over the past 10-13 years and what it will look like if we continue to evolve this way for the next 20 years – this is called the 2025 Trend Scenario.

We considered information gathered at 19 resource panel meetings; 26 special interest

group meetings; field views; economic and demographic studies for this project done by the University Center for Social and Urban Research at Pitt; as well as various other local studies.

The following Alternative Themes form the basis for the development of the alternative growth concepts (alternatives). The names of these themes should capture the type of development proposed in each. These themes will be combined and collapsed from four to two to one Final Preferred Alternative. As we take public comments and refine the first round of alternatives, a shared vision for Allegheny County will emerge.
Again, it is important to remember that the themes are not the recommended plan for the future.

Good Old Places
Development will be mainly directed to existing boroughs and towns through revitalization of brownfields, infill construction, and rehabilitation/reuse of existing structures.

This Theme also focuses development in the "hubs" identified in the Mon Valley Economic Development Strategy, which includes the City of Pittsburgh, Carrie Furnace, McKeesport / Duquesne, and Clairton. In order to be considered a hub in the Mon Valley Economic Strategy, the areas must meet specified criteria which include being an area of economic need, high population density, developable land, convenient location, serviced by mass transit, high visibility, and in need of revitalization.

While these areas may already be functioning as commercial and social hubs, commercial development will be directed to established downtowns and central business districts to assist with the revitalization of older communities. This Theme also promotes conservation of green space by focusing development in areas that have access to adequate infrastructure, including roads, public water, and public sewer while maximizing open space preservation.

Hot New Places
This Theme focuses development at two types of centers. The first type is areas surrounding or adjacent to selected interchanges of limited access highways. These locations offer excellent regional access. Over the planning period, these locations are targeted for mixed-use, relatively high-density development, as well as relatively compact moderate-intensity residential development.

This concept also acknowledges planned transportation improvements along certain corridors, such as PA Route 910, by distributing new development to this area. Development is also shown near the Allegheny County border with Butler, Washington and Westmoreland Counties.

The second kind of center builds upon the 2025 Trend Scenario and responds to where the market is showing interest in areas around the perimeter of the county, especially the southwest and northwest portions of the county that are currently receiving growth pressures. These locations are targeted for mixed-use, medium-density development.

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River Places

This Theme focuses development on the riverfronts of Allegheny County, including the Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio as well as the Youghiogheny. While flood prone areas and steep slopes will be avoided, the main thrust is to revitalize the communities on the riverfronts, which includes many of the County's brownfields and established boroughs and villages.

This Theme promotes preservation of green space as well as equitable development as the majority of development is concentrated in established communities.

Transit Places

This Theme includes utilizing the TOD concept, which clusters walkable, mixed-use, relatively high-density residential and non-residential development around existing transit stations. In Allegheny County, the existing transit stations are on the "T" and the East, South and West Busways. In addition to the existing stations, this Theme also designates a significant number of new TOD developments along proposed transit lines through the Allegheny Valley, Mon Valley and Airport Corridor. This Theme promotes preservation of green space as well as equitable development as the majority of development is concentrated in areas with access to existing infrastructure including roads, transit, water and sewer.

Assumptions

It is important to note that the Alternative Themes use the same assumptions as the 2025 Trend Scenario:

- The scenarios illustrate development over the next 20 years

- 25,000 acres of residential development, which translates into 50,000 new residential units

- 10,000 acres of non-residential development

- New development is shown as 100 acre chips, which translates into 200 Residential units, 1,000 Retail jobs and 2,500 Employment Center jobs

o   Yellow = Residential

o   Red = Retail

o   Pink = Employment Center, which includes office and industrial development

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