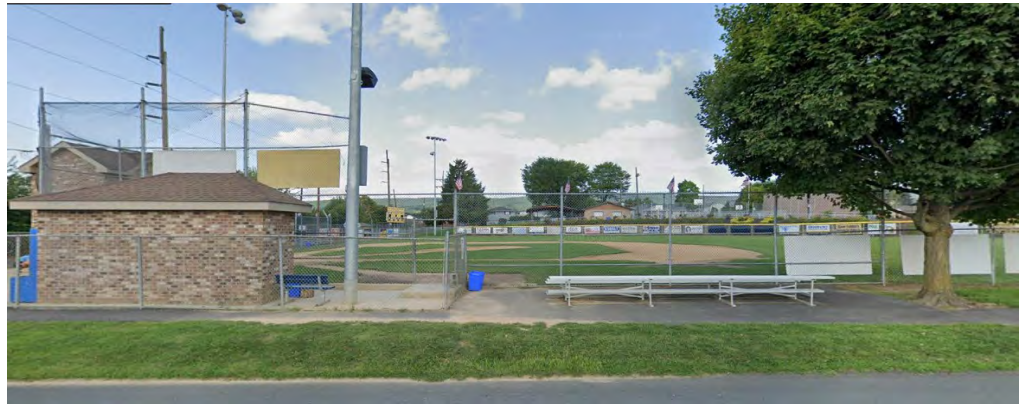# Old Forge Borough
## Lackawanna County, PA.

## Draft

# Comprehensive Plan

### A Plan for the Development and Conservation of the Borough of Old Forge

# Borough of Old Forge Comprehensive Plan

## A Comprehensive Plan for the Development and Conservation of the Borough of Old Forge

**Photos to be added**

**Community Planning Consultants**
**Urban Research and Development Corporation**
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

# Contents

# INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Plan is an overall guide for the development and conservation of Old Forge over the next 10 to 15 years.  It is not a regulation by itself, but is intended to provide the rationale for updates to Borough development regulations.  The Comprehensive Plan includes background information about existing conditions and trends, mapping and a set of recommended policies.  This Plan is intended to be implemented through many short-term actions that are carried out within a long-term perspective. The Comprehensive Plan primarily addresses:

- Land Use and Housing
- Transportation
- Community Facilities and Services
- Natural Feature Conservation
- Ways to Carry Out the Plan

## Major Benefits of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan offers many benefits, including the following:

•     Addressing land uses in coordination with transportation issues, to avoid future traffic problems;

•     Avoiding conflicts between different types of development, such as not allowing intense business uses adjacent to a residential neighborhood;

•     Considering development policies in a comprehensive and coordinated manner for an entire area, as opposed to piecemeal review of individual parcels or lots;

•     Recommending ways that natural features should be preserved and conserved; and

•     Suggesting improvements that should be the basis of future grant applications.

## How Was This Plan Prepared?

This Plan was developed in draft form during monthly meetings of a Comprehensive Plan Committee, including Borough Staff, members of Borough Council, members of the Planning Commission, and other interested citizens.

First, maps showing existing conditions were prepared, as well as summaries of previous plans and reports. Information was collected on existing conditions. An online citizen survey was conducted, with paper copies also being made available. A set of Goals was then prepared to provide overall direction for the Plan. Various subject areas were discussed at workshop meetings. The Plan document was then prepared, and the new Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map were prepared to carry out the Plan.

Next, a public meeting will be held with the public by the Borough Planning Commission to discuss the draft Plan and Zoning Ordinance.  The Borough Council will then hold a public hearing on the Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

# OVERALL DIRECTION: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS PLAN

## Community Vision Statement

Old Forge Borough will guide development and redevelopment to protect residential neighborhoods and important natural features.

Old Forge will continue to provide a variety of highly livable neighborhoods, with quality community services. An emphasis will be placed upon strengthening the Main Street corridor and other older commercial areas. Pedestrian connections will be improved, particularly to connect to a future extension of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail and parks.

New business development will be encouraged to provide additional tax revenues for the Borough and the School District. Most new major industrial development will be concentrated in areas that have truck access to the Northeast Extension of the Turnpike, without adversely affecting residential neighborhoods or steep roads.

This Vision will be carried out with the involvement of residents and business-persons, and by prioritizing community needs.

## Major Goals and Objectives

The following are the major goals and objectives of this Plan:

Land Use and Housing Plan

GOAL L.1.    Provide for orderly patterns of development that provide compatibility between land uses, particularly to protect the livability of residential areas.

Objective: Direct new uses that generate significant truck traffic to locations accessible to the Taylor/Old Forge exit of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, along routes that are unlikely to impact residential areas. Limit the heaviest and most intensive industrial uses to one selected land area that will have minimal impact upon existing neighborhoods.

Objective: Provide areas for a range of housing types and densities, to meet needs of various types and ages of households, including older persons and persons with disabilities.

Objective: Offer incentives for development of housing for older persons, and also allow for personal care homes and other facilities that care for them.

Objective: In any large new residential development, provide an incentive for Cluster/ Open Space Development that preserves open spaces that serve a valuable public purpose, such as providing recreation areas, preserving important natural areas or buffering homes from industrial development and major highways.

Objective: Strengthen and protect older residential neighborhoods, with an emphasis on encouraging home-ownership, rehabilitating older buildings to avoid blight, minimizing through-traffic on residential streets, and avoiding nearby development that creates nuisances.

Objective: Encourage infill development that continues the best features of older development, such as locating new business buildings close to the street with parking to the side or rear, encouraging front porches, and requiring street trees and sidewalks.

Objective: Promote greater interest in Old Forge's historic buildings and heritage, and promote rehabilitation of older buildings, in a manner that preserves historic features.

GOAL L.2.    Promote various types of business development in different areas, to increase tax revenues and employment opportunities.

Objective: Seek a full range of business, retail and service opportunities that are conveniently available for residents, motorists and employees.

Objective: Strengthen the Main Street corridor and other older commercial areas as a Town Center, with an emphasis upon neighborhood-oriented businesses that are compatible with nearby homes.

Objective: Use shade trees, highly visible crosswalks, banners, streetscape improvements and other methods to improve the appearance of older commercial areas, in order to promote new investment.

Objective: Examine ways to streamline development regulations and approval processes to offer an inviting business climate, to reduce uncertainty for applicants and to avoid unnecessary delays, while targeting regulations to address important public concerns.

Natural Resources Conservation Plan

GOAL N.1.    Protect important natural features, including the Lackawanna River, creek valleys, flood-prone areas, reservoirs, lakes, wetlands, steeply sloped woodlands, and groundwater and surface water supplies.

Objective: Improve the quality of storm water runoff, and treat it as a resource, by slowing it down and allowing it to infiltrate into the ground.

Objective: Use development regulations to conserve important natural features.

Community Facilities and Services Plan

GOAL C.1.    Provide high-quality community facilities and services in the most cost-efficient manner.

Objective: Ensure that adequate public water supplies, sewage treatment allocations and transmission capacities continue to be available.

Objective: Emphasize coordination of municipal and emergency services across municipal borders, and expand and update services to meet changing needs.

Objective: Seek the development of new trails or improved sidewalks to provide connections to an extension of the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail and parks.

Transportation Plan

GOAL T.1.    Make well-targeted cost-effective street improvements while improving safety, in cooperation with PennDOT, adjacent landowners and developers.

Objective: Complete short-term improvements (such as improving sight distances) while seeking State funding to complete longer-range improvements.

Objective: Make sure that any major road improvements fully consider pedestrian and bicycle travel, while seeking to avoid speeding.

Objective: Consider adopting an "Official Map," which can be used under State law to reserve land needed for road and trail connections (among other public improvements).

<u>Putting This Plan Into Action</u>

GOAL A.1.    Promote citizen input, including making sure residents are well-informed about community issues and have adequate opportunities to provide their opinions on Borough matters.

GOAL A.2.    Coordinate transportation, development and infrastructure across municipal borders, and seek opportunities for shared municipal services.

GOAL A.3.    Continually work to put this Plan into action through a program of updated planning and short-term actions in accordance with a long-range perspective.

# LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN

The Land Use and Housing Plan includes recommendations for land development and conservation policies in various areas. The main tool that Old Forge has available to carry out these policies is through its zoning ordinance.  An aerial photo is included on the following page. The Existing Land Uses Map and a map showing existing zoning as of 2022 are included on the following pages. A new zoning map is proposed for adoption in late 2023.

**Base land use policies substantially upon the Comprehensive Plan Map and the following categories, and update development regulations to carry it out.**

The Comprehensive Plan is not a regulation. The Borough's zoning regulations are being rewritten as part of this project, and are intended to carry out many aspects of this Plan. Zoning is the most valuable tool available to the Borough to carry out land use and housing policies. In most cases, the land use and housing categories in this Plan relate to an existing or proposed zoning district.

The Zoning Ordinance is the main tool that the Borough has to address new development. The Zoning Ordinance primarily regulates:  a) the uses of land and buildings, and b) the densities of development. Zoning is primarily intended to protect existing residential neighborhoods from incompatible development. However, it also can be used to avoid traffic problems, improve the appearance of new development, preserve historic buildings, and protect important natural features. Different types of land uses and different densities are allowed in various zoning districts that are shown on the Zoning Map. Some districts are primarily residential, some are primarily commercial and some are primarily industrial. Other districts promote a mix of uses. In most cases, a land use category described in this Plan is intended to become a zoning district.

Zoning is primarily directed towards new development, new construction and expansions of existing uses. If an existing legal use operates today, it can generally continue to operate regardless of the zoning district. This is known as a "non-conforming use."  A non-conforming use typically predates zoning or a zoning amendment.  Generally, a non-conforming use can expand within limits, can be sold, and can be changed to a different non-conforming use, provided the new use is not more intensive than the previous use.

The following section describes the major land use categories, as shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map, which is on a following page:

Public Recreation - The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the location of existing public recreation areas. More detailed information on the public parks is provided in the Community Facilities Plan secton.

Public/Semi-Public Uses - This category highlights major community facilities, such as the High School, Elementary School, the Fire Company and Borough-owned buildings.

Environmental Conservation (relates to the E-1 district) - This category mainly includes undeveloped land that was formerly mined in the west-central part of the Borough, which is north of Edgewood Dr. and west of Pittson Av. on both sides of Mountain Road.  The district also includes land along the Lackawanna River east of Bridge St., which suffered from contamination from past waste landfill operations, but was subsequently remediated by the federal government, with a cap over the contaminated area.  Limited uses are possible above a site with an environmental cap, but one option would be to allow a solar energy farm, which would generate tax revenue to the Borough and provide clean energy. These areas are proposed to mainly allow single family detached houses on one acre minimum lots, as well as commercial outdoor recreation uses and campgrounds.

**OLD FORGE BOROUGH, LACKAWANNA COUNTY**

**AERIAL**

SOURCE: PASDA and ESRI.

**Urban Research & Development Corporation**
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# OLD FORGE BOROUGH
## LACKAWANNA COUNTY

Taylor Borough

Ransom Township

476

NE Extension Pennsylvania Turnpike

Moosic Borough

Duryea Borough

11

## STREET MAP

Feet
0    425    850    1,275    1,700

N

SOURCE:     PASDA and ESRI.

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URDC

# OLD FORGE BOROUGH, LACKAWANNA COUNTY

**Legend:**
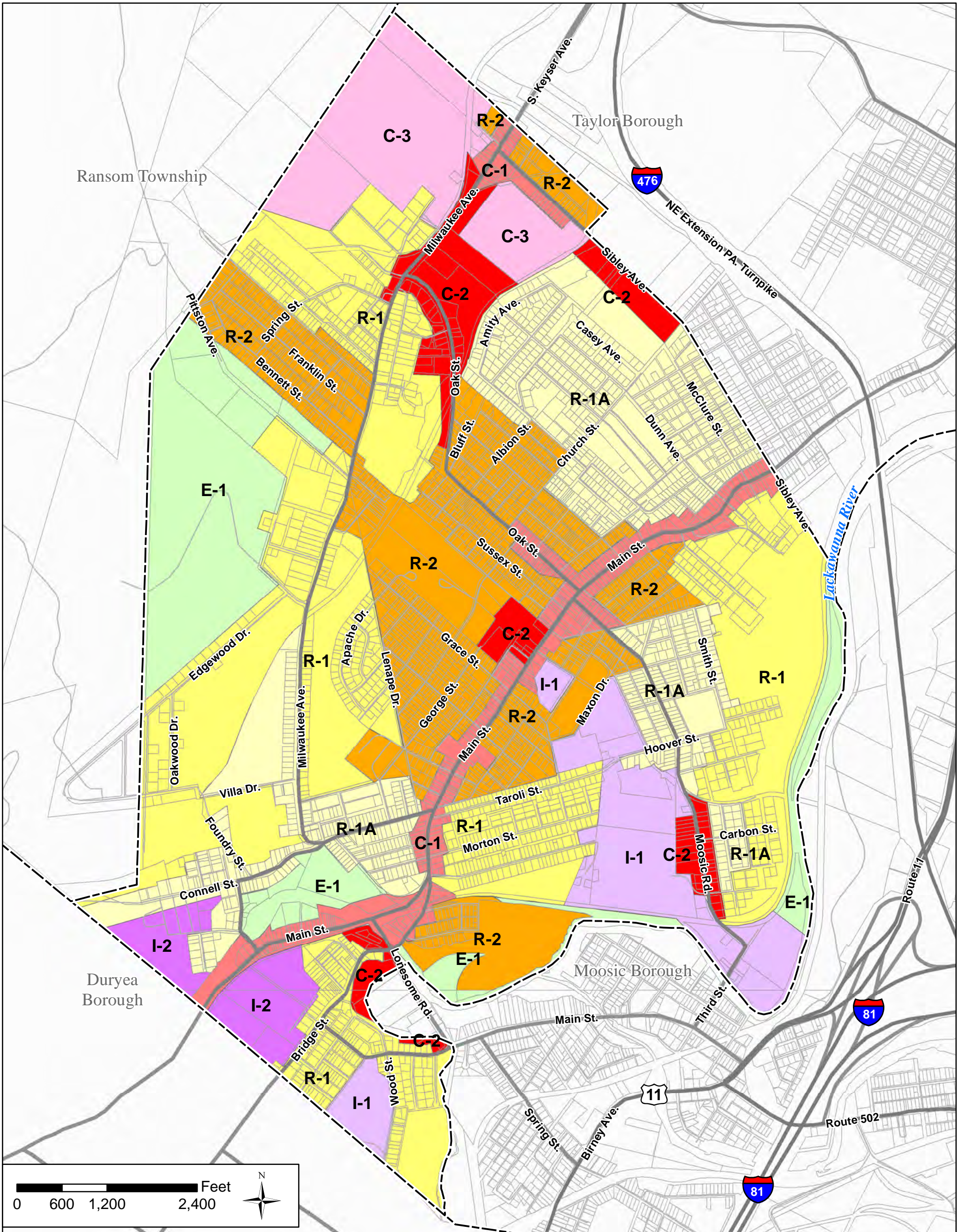
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| E-1 | Environmental Conservation | C-2 | Highway Commercial | |
| R-1A | Moderate Density Residential | C-3 | Office Commercial | |
| R-1 | Low Density Residential | I-1 | Light Industrial | |
| R-2 | Medium Density Residential | I-2 | Heavy Industrial | |
| C-1 | Main Street Commercial | | Approximate 100 Year Floodplain | |

**UNOFFICIAL
EXISTING ZONING, 2022**
Corrected December 2022

SOURCE OF BASE MAP INFORMATION:
PASDA and ESRI.

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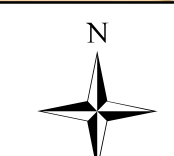URDC

Taylor Borough

Ransom Township

Duryea Borough

Moosic Borough

**Street and feature labels:**
S. Keyser Ave. · St. John's Creek · 476 · NE Extension PA. Turnpike · Main St. · Milwaukee Ave. · Sibley Ave. · Amity Ave. · Casey Ave. · McClure St. · Dunn Ave. · Sibley Ave. · Pittston Ave. · Spring St. · Franklin St. · Bennett St. · Oak St. · Bluff St. · Albion St. · Church St. · Oak St. · Sussex St. · Main St. · Mountain Dr. · Edgewood Dr. · Apache Dr. · Lenape Dr. · Grace St. · George St. · Main St. · Maxon Dr. · Smith St. · Hoover St. · Oakwood Dr. · Milwaukee Ave. · Villa Dr. · Foundry St. · Connell St. · Taroli St. · Morton St. · Carbon St. · Moosic St. · Main St. · Lonesome Rd. · Bridge St. · Woods St. · Foote Ave. · Main St. · York Ave. · Spring St. · Birney Ave. · 11 · Third St. · Lackawanna River · Route 11 · 81 · Route 502

Feet
0   600   1,200   2,400

N

# OLD FORGE BOROUGH, LACKAWANNA COUNTY

**Legend:**

- Vacant/Undeveloped
- Residential
- Commercial
- Public/Semi-Public
- Manufacturing
- Parks and Recreation

## EXISTING LAND USE 2022

SOURCE OF BASE MAP INFORMATION:
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# OLD FORGE BOROUGH, LACKAWANNA COUNTY

Taylor Borough

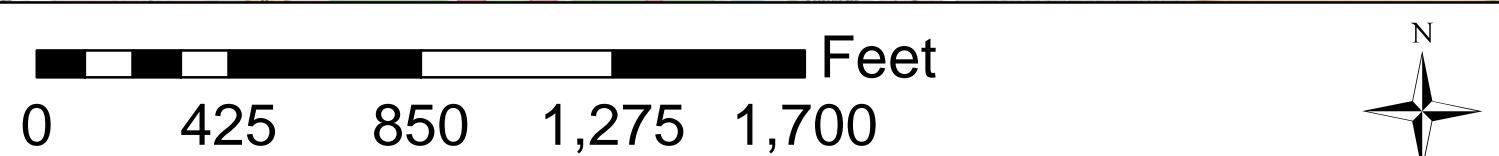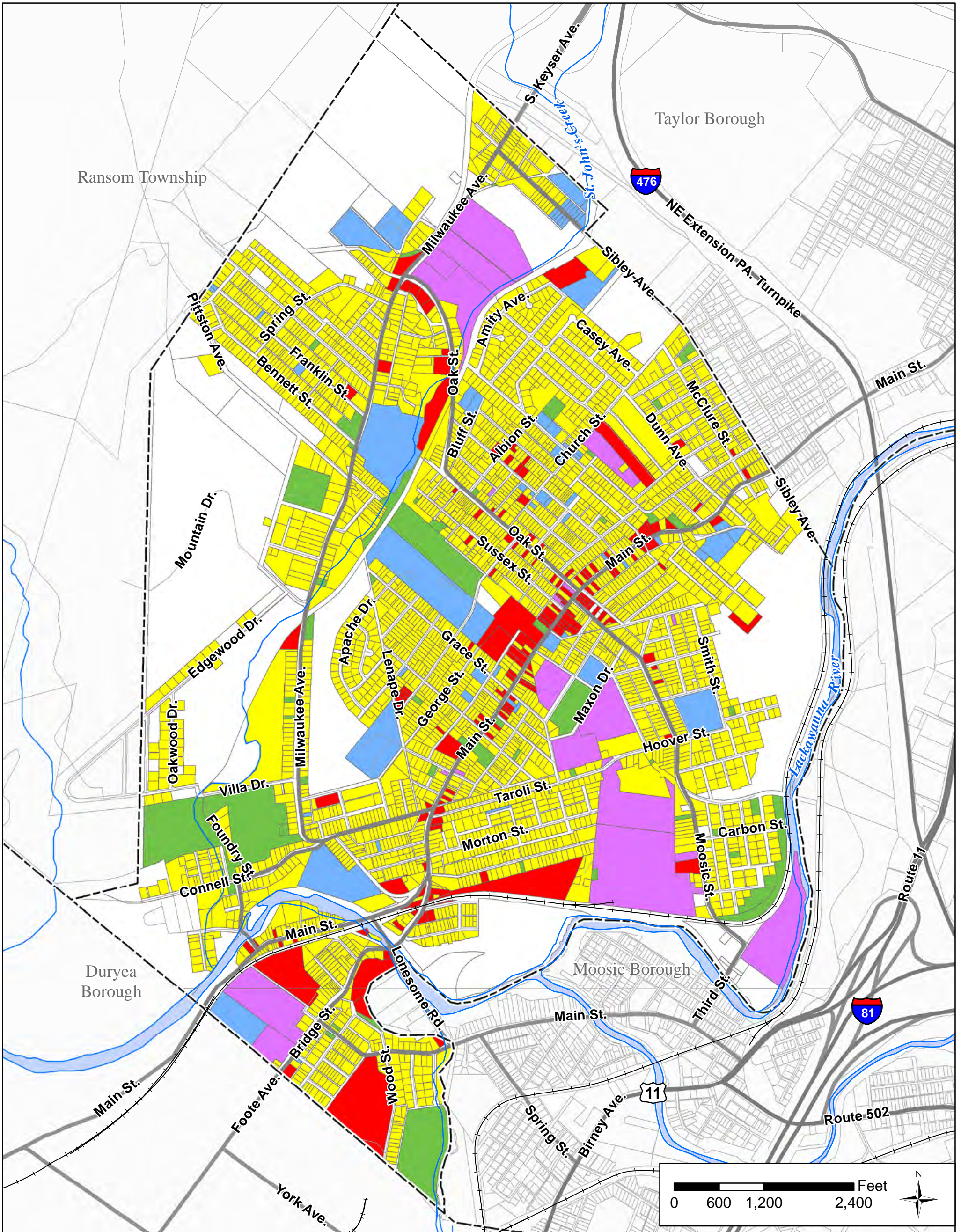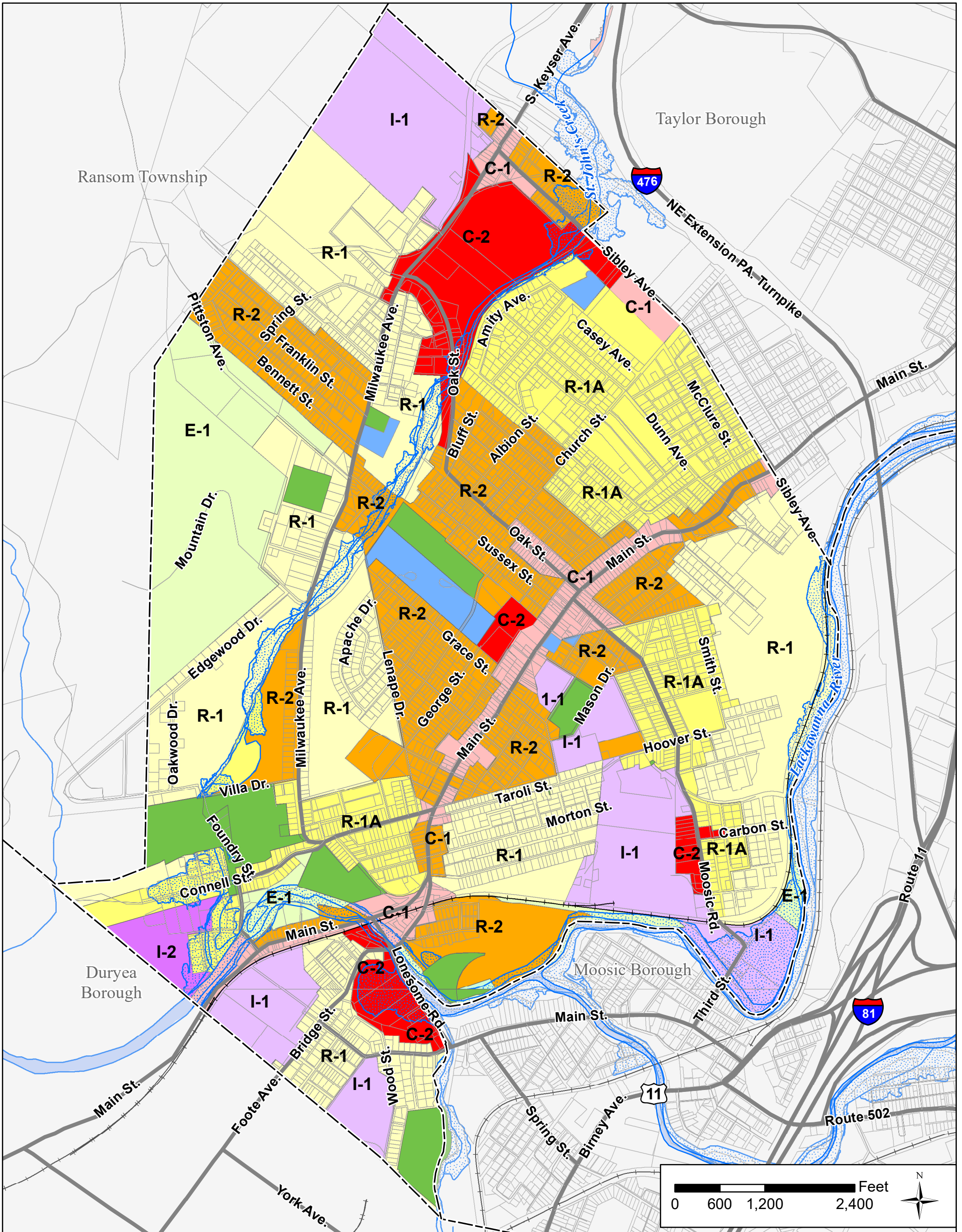Ransom Township

Duryea Borough

Moosic Borough

**Map labels (zoning districts):** I-1, R-2, C-1, C-2, R-1, R-1A, E-1, I-2

**Street and feature labels:**
S. Keyser Ave., St. John's Creek, NE Extension PA. Turnpike, Main St., Sibley Ave., Casey Ave., McClure St., Dunn Ave., Church St., Albion St., Bluff St., Amity Ave., Oak St., Spring St., Franklin St., Bennett St., Pittston Ave., Milwaukee Ave., Mountain Dr., Edgewood Dr., Oakwood Dr., Apache Dr., Lenape Dr., George St., Grace St., Sussex St., Mason Dr., Smith St., Hoover St., Taroli St., Morton St., Moosic Rd., Carbon St., Third St., Villa Dr., Foundry St., Connell St., Bridge St., Lonesome Rd., Wood St., Foote Ave., York Ave., Spring St., Birney Ave., Route 11, Route 502, Route 81, Route 476, Lackawanna River, Main St.

## Legend

| | |
|---|---|
| **E-1** | Environmental Conservation |
| **R-1** | Low Density Residential |
| **R-1A** | Moderate Density Residential |
| **R-2** | Medium Density Residential |
| **C-1** | Main Street Commercial |
| **C-2** | Highway Commercial |
| **I-1** | Light Industrial |
| **I-2** | General Industrial |
| | Approximate 100 Year Floodplain (see official FEMA map) |
| | Major Public Buildings and Schools |
| | Public Recreation & Open Space |

**Draft Comprehensive Plan
August 2023**

SOURCE OF BASE MAP INFORMATION:
PASDA and ESRI.

**Urban Research & Development Corporation**
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URDC

Feet
0   600   1,200   2,400

N

Low Density Residential (relates to the R-1 district) - This category mainly includes most newer residential areas of the Borough, including areas south of Edgewood Dr., areas around the High School, areas west of Lenape Dr., areas along the Lackawanna River, areas near the Duryea border, and areas along Spring St. near Milwaukee Av. Most of the undeveloped residentially zoned land in the Borough would continue to be zoned R-1. This category would continue to allow single family detached houses on 9,000 sq. ft. lots (about 1/4 acre) and side-by-side twin homes. Townhouses at an average of 4 homes per acre and personal care/assisted living homes (with a 2 acre minimum lot size) would be allowed with conditional use approval by Borough Council. The category would no longer apartments at 10 homes per acre. Conversions of an existing one family home into two or more housing units would be prohibited.

Moderate Density Residential (relates to the R-1A district) - This category includes a few areas of existing homes, including areas along Moosic Rd. near Smull St., areas along Church St. northeast of Winter St., and an area west of Milwaukee Av. north of Villa Dr. This category would continue to mainly allows single family detached houses on 6,000 sq. ft. lots (such as 60 by 100), and twin homes and townhouses at an average of 6,000 sq. ft. per unit. Personal care/assisted living homes (with a 2 acre minimum lot size) would be allowed with conditional use approval by Borough Council. The category would no longer allow apartments at 14 homes per acre. Conversions of an existing one family home into two or more housing units would be prohibited.

Medium Density Residential (relates to the R-2 district)- This category mainly includes older residential areas, including areas southeast and northwest of the downtown, areas along Oak St. near Albion St., and areas northwest of Milkaukee Av. along Franklin St. An existing apartment development west of Milwaulkee Av. is proposed to be changed to R-2. This category would allow a full range of housing types at an average of 4,000 square feet per housing unit. As a result, the maximum density of apartments would be reduced from 14 to 10 homes per acre. Conversions of an existing one family home into two or more housing units would be prohibited, except for unusually large homes that have over 3,000 square feet of heated floor area.

Main Street Commercial (relates to the C-1 district) - This category mainly includes most areas along the length of Main St. It also includes two areas along Sibley Av., including around the intersection with Milwaukee Av. A couple areas along Main St. are proposed to be changed from C-1 to R-2, including an area near Dunn St. and an area near Morton St. The lots fronting Main St. across from Borough Hall would be changed from C-2 to C-1, while the back of the property that was a grocery store would remain C-2.

The intent of the Main Street category is allow types of commercial uses that fit in well with neighboring homes and that promote pedestrian activity, including retail stores, personal service uses, offices, funeral homes and dance schools. Restaurants would be allowed, but not drive-throughs. This category would no longer allow new gas stations, vehicle repair garages and car washes. Currently, residential uses are limited to "dwellings related to businesses." Instead, new apartments would be allowed by right, provided that a lot along Main Street would need to include a street level commercial use. Buildings in all of Old Forge's commercial and industrial districts are limited to only 2 stories, vs. the new draft would allow 3 stories. New buildings would be required to be built close to the street, as opposed to a strip-mall type of design with a large parking lot in front of a building.

Highway Commercial (relates to the C-2 district) - This category would continue to include an area along Lonesome Road near the Lackawanna River and portions of Moosic St. near Quarry and Carbon Sts. A portion of the east side of Moosic St. that mainly includes existing homes is proposed to be changed from C-2 to R-1A. The current C-3 district would become part of the C-2 district. As a result, much of the southeast side of Milwaukee Av. south of Sibley Av. would be zoned C-2.

This category would continue to allow a wide range of commercial uses, including auto body shops, vehicle repair, vehicle sales, offices, restaurants and motels. This category would no longer allow trucking terminals, light manufacturing uses, and manufactured/mobile home parks. Junkyards would be prohibited. This category also would not allow warehouses and distribution centers.

Light Industrial (relates to the I-1 district) -  This category mainly includes lands along the railroad north of the Lackawanna River and south of Hoover St., which includes Verrastro, Marriotti Building Products and Jed Pool Tools.  It includes an area north of Hoover St. that includes Northeastern Envelope and Newbreed Athletics.  The category also includes an area along Wood St. south of Drake St.  An area northwest of Milwaulkee Av./Keyser Ave. west of the Alliance Landfill would be changed to I-1.  An industrial area west of Bridge St. would be changed from I-2 to I-1.  This category would not allow landfills or junkyards.

The draft zoning ordinance should include a stronger distinction between the types of industrials allowed in the light industrial district vs. the general industrial district.  Currently, there are few differences in the allowed uses in the two districts in Old Forge.  Most common types of industrial uses would be allowed in the I-1 district, plus some commercial uses.   A full set of standards are proposed to control large distribution centers, including larger setbacks from homes and a requirement for conditional use approval by the Borough Council.

New billboards are proposed to be limited to the two industrial districts.  Currently, billboards are allowed in both industrial districts and the C-2 district.  New billboards would be limited to 300 sq. ft., which is less than half the size of billboards that are commonly seen along major highways. There would be large setbacks between a new billboard and an existing home.

General Industrial (relates to the I-2 district) -   This category includes an area of land along the Duryea border that is northwest of Lackawanna River, south of Connell St. is mostly open land that was mined. These General Industrial areas are proposed to allow a wide range of commercial and industrial uses. Under State law, a municipality needs to have a location that allows almost all types of land uses.

**Use of Alleys**

Where a suitable alley exists or where it could be reasonably extended or improved as part of a construction project, it should be used for vehicle access to homes in older areas of the Borough.  This type of design is particularly important for townhouses, so that the front of the townhouses are not comprised largely of garage doors, and so that there is room for on-street parking.  The alley could connect to a parking pad, a rear parking court, a garage door at the back of the home (possibly with a deck above it) or a detached garage.

**Other Housing Policies**

A new set of standards should be added for townhouses. As described above, the  goal is to encourage rear access from an alley wherever it is practical to use it or to extend it. If a townhouse has driveways or garage doors in the front yard, a wider unit width should be required. The intent is to avoid townhouses with the entire front yards covered with vehicle parking and the entire facades covered with garage doors. That type of pattern is not only unattractive, but also leaves no room for on-street parking. In fact, front driveways can actually cause a net reduction of the amount of parking available in a neighborhood.  The main door of a home should be required to face onto a street.

The conversion of an existing one family homes into two or more apartments should be prohibited in residential areas, unless it is an unusually large existing home.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development**

In newer areas, there could be incentives to promote residential development that recreates the best features of older development.  This is known as "Traditional Neighborhood Development." This should include a grid street system with alleys, where feasible.  A traditional pattern of development should be encouraged, including inclusion of front porches, alleys and placement of most garages to the rear or side of homes.  This option could also allow for a limited amount of commercial development to serve local needs.

**Code Enforcement**

Proper code enforcement is important to make sure that older housing is properly maintained before it becomes blighted and needs unaffordable repairs. The Borough is now enforcing a Property Maintenance Code for existing buildings and has started a system of writing tickets for nuisance violations, such as the build up of trash.

**Age-Restricted Housing**

It is desirable to continue to allow density bonuses for housing that is limited to persons age 55 and older, with no residents under age 18. Age-restricted housing has a very positive financial impact upon the school district. Age-restricted housing bonuses can also be justified because statistically it generates less traffic, less need for parking, less water use, less sewage use and less crime than other types of housing. For instance, age-restricted housing is proposed on a site adjacent to Station Park, which is a suitable location where seniors can obtain services and where there will be additional customers for downtown businesses.

**Strengthening the Town Center**

The traditional downtown along Main Street in Old Forge should be strengthened as a Town Center. The goal is to have a range of commercial uses that mainly serve local needs and do not create serious nuisances for nearby homes. The Town Center should continue to have a mix of commercial and residential uses.

a. The revitalization of a Town Center should involve several approaches. Additional street trees and decorative street lights should be added. Ideally, there would be more visible crosswalks, which can help to slow down traffic. Extensions of curbs near crosswalks can improve the safety of pedestrian crossings.
b. A proper range of uses and densities of residential development are important in the Town Center, including upper story apartments that help create a market for downtown businesses. A sufficient density of upper story apartments can also promote new construction of buildings with first floor commercial uses.
c. Sufficient parking needs to be provided, and the parking spaces need to be managed so they are convenient for customer parking. That typically involves time limits on parking during peak hours in the key blocks where there is strong demand for spaces, so that the prime spaces are not taken up all day by employees.
d. Marketing and promotions are also important, including joint marketing by nearby businesses. Special events (such as car shows and festivals) can bring in new customers who may not be aware of the offerings.

**Carefully Control Development in Flood-prone Areas**

The 100-year floodplain includes land areas expected to be flooded during the worst storm in an average 100-year period. The floodplain mainly exists along the Lackawanna River and the St. John's Creek, in addition to some smaller creeks. The Borough of Old Forge has a separate Floodplain ordinance that meet the minimum federal and state regulations on development in the 100-year floodplain. The "floodway" is the main channel that carries the deepest flood waters. The rest of the floodplain is known as the flood-fringe and may be covered by less deep flood waters. These areas function as "overlays" to the regular zoning districts, which means they apply more restrictive provisions for certain matters.

**Recognize Mining and Agricultural Impacts Upon Water Supplies.**

The following statements are included to comply with Section 301(b) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code:
1) Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
2) Commercial agriculture production impact water supply sources.

# TRANSPORTATION  PLAN

**Work to reduce speeding.**

In the Citizen Survey, there were main concerns expressed about excessive speeding on several streets. It would be desirable if the State Legislature would allow local police to use radar for speed enforcement. The occasional parking of an officer in a police car along problem segments can improve traffic law compliance, even if the officer is  not actively running a speed check. The required studies could be conducted by the Borough under State regulations to see whether lower speed limits are justified on key segments of streets, particularly in residential areas or where there are sight distance limitations.

**Improve bicycle access along shoulders.**

On through-roads, wide smooth shoulders that are separated from traffic lanes by white lines are beneficial to improve the safety of bicyclists.  These types of shoulders are particularly valuable where a bicyclist does not have the option of traveling on a nearby lower traffic residential street to get to common destinations.

**Encourage use of public transit and para-transit services.**

The County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) operates a bus route that connects Old Forge to Downtown Scranton, where it is possible to transfer to many other bus routes.

It is possible to encourage the use of the bus service by distributing information about the available services and promoting the construction of bus passenger shelters at the busiest stops.  These shelters are often constructed and maintained by private companies in return for the Borough allowing the shelter to include an advertising sign and use of part of the street right-of-way.

COLTS also operates a paratransit service for persons who have disabilities that make it difficult for them to use fixed route buses.  Services are also available for persons on Medical Assistance who need transportation services to reach medical appointments.

# OLD FORGE BOROUGH, LACKAWANNA COUNTY
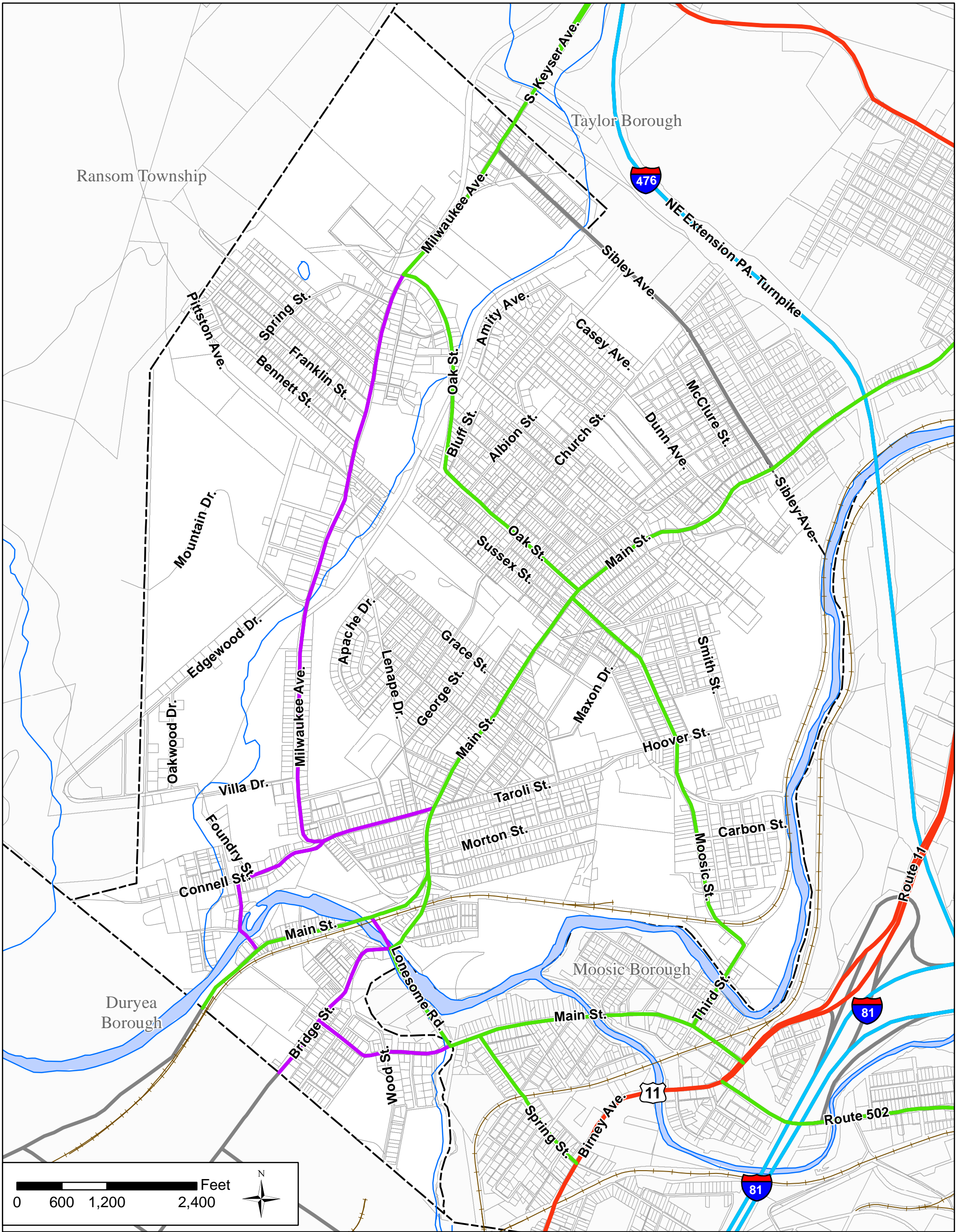
**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Interstate Highways
Other Principal Arterial Highways
Minor Arterials
Major Collectors

SOURCE: PASDA and ESRI and Pen DOT.

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# ECONOMIC  DEVELOPMENT  PLAN

It is important to attract new business development to generate additional Borough and School District tax revenues.  The bulk of real estate taxes are comprised of School District taxes.  New business development results in "net profits" to a school district, because it generates tax revenues without directly resulting in additional school students. Therefore, it is essential to have new business development in suitable locations in the School District to moderate real estate taxes upon residents.

It also is essential to promote new business development to offer wider employment opportunities for residents, and to allow residents to find good jobs closer to their homes. In addition, new business development also offers a wider choices of goods and services to residents.

**Consider use of tax incentives and market their availability.**

One major tax incentive program that is available to the Borough is named LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Abatement).  A State law allows a municipality to enact LERTA incentives within blighted areas.  When new development occurs, the local real estate taxes on the improvements are phased in.  Usually, the phase in occurs over a 10 year period, so that the first year 10% of the taxes on the improvements are paid, then in the second year 20% are paid, until the full real estate taxes are paid after 10 years.  This type of incentive should be carefully targeted so that it is only available where private development is unlikely to occur without a significant tax incentive. Typically, a LERTA incentive is only effective when both the municipality and the school district participates.  The county may also participate.

**Seek to maintain a positive business climate to attract business investment.**

The Borough can also attract investment by offering a positive business climate. This involves streamlining the timing of development approval processes and inspections for projects that meet Borough ordinances.  It also involves clearly informing an applicant of changes that are desired to building or development plans as soon as possible, to avoid unnecessary delays from redesigns of a project.  There should be oversight of the construction code officials who work for the Borough to make sure that they are able to complete inspections of various types of construction within a reasonable period of time.  If Old Forge is known as a very predictable place to do business without unnecessary delays, it will attract additional investment.

# NATURAL FEATURES CONSERVATION PLAN

**Protect important natural features, including the Lackawanna River, creek valleys, flood-prone areas, reservoirs, lakes, wetlands, steeply sloped woodlands, and groundwater and surface water supplies.**

Surface waters include rivers, streams, and ponds, which provide aquatic habitat, carry or hold runoff from storms, and provide recreation and scenic opportunities. Surface water resources are a dynamic and important component of the natural environment, but ever-present threats, such as construction, clear-cutting, mining, overuse, and pollution have required the regulated protection of valuable surface waters.

The Natural Features Map shows the locations of waterways and floodplains. The Lackawanna River flows through the southern part of Old Forge and forms part of the southern and eastern borders of the Borough. The Lackawanna River is part of the Lower North Branch sub-basin of the Susquehanna River. The Susquehanna River drains into the Chesapeake Bay. The only other waterways in Old Forge are:
- an unnamed tributary to the St. Johns Creek with a confluence near West Oak Street in the northern part of the Borough, and
- the St. Johns Creek itself, which flows southward into the Lackawanna River near the Old Forge/Duryea border.

The waterways in Old Forge are not classified as High Quality or Exceptional Value. The Lackawanna River experiences pollution from former mining activities, including from the Old Forge Bore Hole. Extensive clean-up efforts have been underway to reduce the amount of pollution that enters the Lackawanna River from this discharge from former underground mines.

Flood-prone Areas

Floodplain areas perform many critical ecologic functions. Floodplains absorb, store, and release large amounts of water to the surrounding soils and groundwater systems. Natural vegetation supported by floodplains helps to trap sediment and absorb excess nutrients from upland surface runoff, stabilize stream banks, and reduce soil erosion. Floodplains also provide habitat and travel corridors for wildlife and influence conditions for aquatic life. In addition to their ecologic value, many people value the scenic and recreational qualities of creek valleys.

Regulation of floodplains helps to reduce the threat to human life and property caused by periodic flooding. For regulatory purposes, a floodplain is defined by the 100-year or "base" flood, which is flood of such a severity that is statistically likely to occur only once in an average 100-year period. In other words, the flood severity has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year.

Old Forge's 100-year floodplain boundaries and wetland areas are shown on the Natural Features Map. The floodplains are located along the Lackawanna River and St. Johns Creek and are regulated through a Borough ordinance.
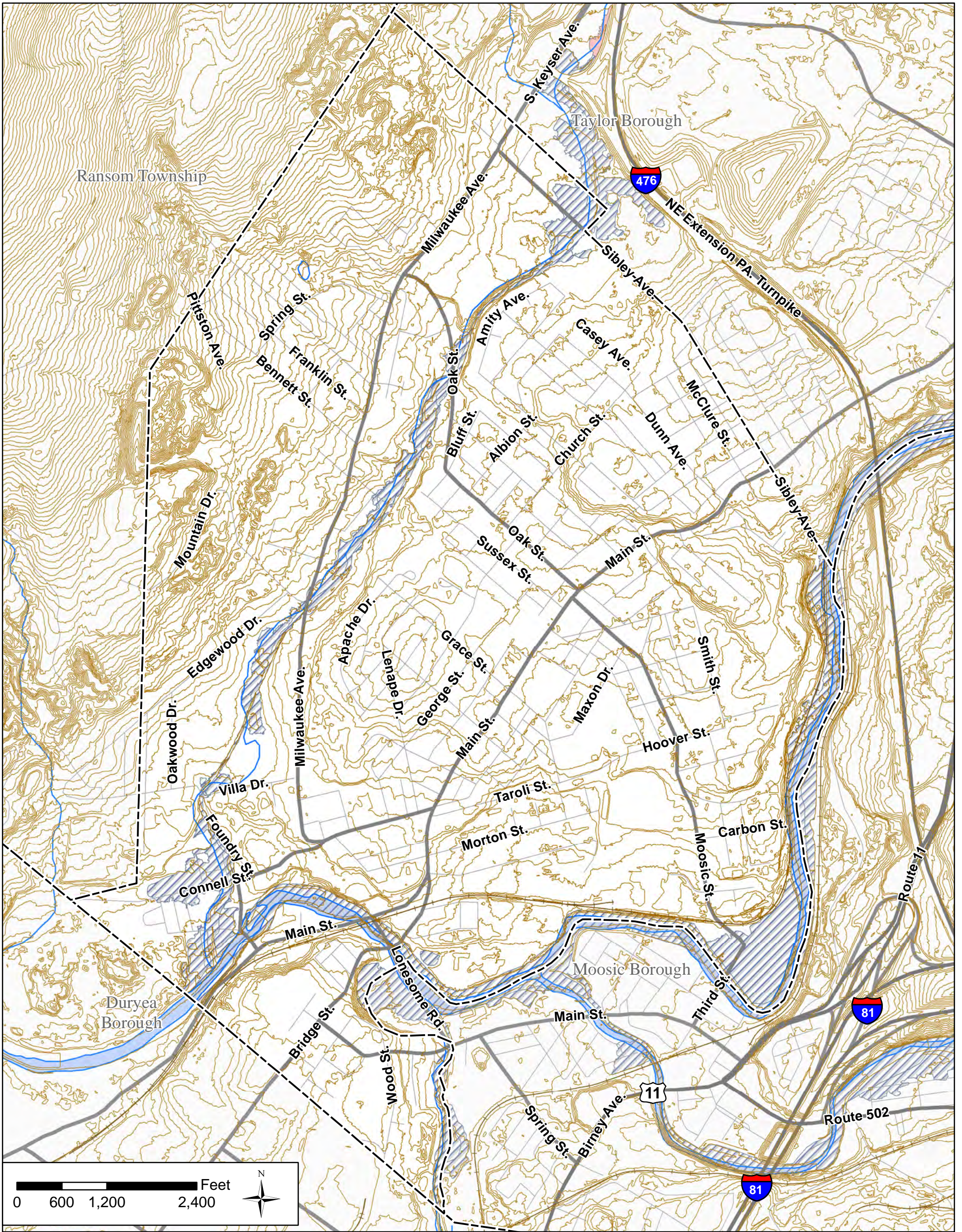
# OLD FORGE BOROUGH, LACKAWANNA COUNTY

**10' Contours**

**Approximate 100 Year floodplain**

## NATURAL FEATURES

SOURCE: PASDA and ESRI.

**Urban Research & Development Corporation**
81 Highland Ave. • Bethlehem, PA 18017 • 610-865-0701
URDC

The Community Rating System (CRS) encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum federal floodplain regulation standards. Under the CRS, flood insurance premium rates can be reduced in a municipality to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from community activities that meet the three goals of the CRS: 1) reduce flood losses, 2) facilitate accurate insurance rating, and 3) promote the awareness of flood insurance. The CRS includes three classes that offer various amounts of floodplain insurance premium reduction. Points are offered in categories such as Public Information, Mapping and Regulations, Flood Damage Reduction, and Flood Preparedness.

Participation in the CRS is voluntary and would involve the Borough submitting materials to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), along with documentation that shows that it is implementing the activities for which credit is requested. For example, points can be received for requiring that new construction be elevated to a specific height above flood levels, beyond the minimum requirement. Some points can be received for actions the Borough is already doing, such as enforcing stormwater regulations.

Wetlands

Wetlands are critically important lands for recharging groundwater, maintaining the flow of creeks, protecting water quality, and providing valuable habitats. Wetlands moderate stormwater runoff and downstream flood crests because they are natural water storage areas. Wetlands also provide important habitat for many species of plant and animal life. Draining or filling of wetlands increases flooding, harms water quality, and provides unstable surfaces for structures. While there are scattered areas of wetlands in Old Forge, no large wetlands have been identified by federal mapping.

**Use development regulations to protect important natural features, including lands that are naturally very steeply sloped.**

Steep Slopes

The Topography Map shows contour lines, which are lines with the same elevation above sea level. The closer together contour lines are, the steeper the incline between them. Slopes with grades of 15 percent or greater are considered moderately steep, and are prone to higher erosion rates, which causes sediment in creeks. Very steep slopes, with grades over 25 percent, produce much higher threats of erosion.

The Borough regulates alterations of steeply sloped areas in its zoning ordinance. Old Forge has three notable concentrations of steep slopes, all of which include former mine lands:
1.    two areas in the western portion of the Borough, and
2.    one area in the northern portion of the Borough.

In addition, some steep lands are located along the banks of the Lackawanna River and the St. Johns Creek.

Erosion and stormwater problems on steeply sloped areas can be avoided by maintaining the areas in thick vegetation and trees. Where portions of steep slopes need to be altered (such as for utility crossings), proper erosion control measures are essential, and the area should be stabilized and replanted as soon as possible. State regulations restrict the placement of most types of septic systems on steeply sloped areas, because they are more prone to malfunctions and surface contamination. Development on steep slopes often results in excessively steep roads and driveways, which become hazardous during snowy and icy conditions

Forests

Old Forge has several forested areas, including:
- the northern point of the Borough at the border with Ransom Township,
- the western area along Mountain Drive,
- along Main Street in the southern part of the Borough,
- along the Lackawanna River at the southern and eastern borders of the Borough,
- along Sibley Avenue in the northeast part of the Borough, and
- along the Saint Johns Creek through the middle of the Borough

Forests and related understory vegetation perform several vital functions for the local ecology, including:
- Providing habitat, both food and shelter, for local wildlife,
- Circulating nutrients between the soil and the atmosphere,
- Stabilizing soils prone to erosion,
- Filtering nutrients, pollutants, and sediment from runoff, particularly along streambanks, and
- Serving as productive sources of timber.

**Coordinate local conservation and trail efforts with the Regional Watershed and Trail Associations.**

Watershed associations typically work to reduce erosion, sedimentation and pollution along waterways and to promote stream bank stabilization and planting programs and public education. Local citizens created the Lackawanna River Conservation Association ([www.lrca.org](www.lrca.org)) to promote the restoration and conservation of the Lackawanna River and its watershed resources. Together with the Lackawanna Valley Conservancy (LVC), the LRCA works with property owners and municipalities to help preserve areas in the watershed.

The Lackawanna River Corridor Association's mission is to involve citizens of the watershed with conservation and stewardship of the River, its tributaries and water resources. Five goals define the mission:

1. Clean up the River environment;
2. Aid in the development of the 40-mile Lackawanna River Heritage Trail;
3. Create partnerships among government, businesses and community groups promoting conservation and recreation;
4. Develop partnerships with schools, universities, and the general public to promote environmental and conservation education to better understand our relationship with the local environment; and
5. Advocate for the conservation of open space and natural habitat throughout the watershed.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) assists local associations in preparing comprehensive strategies for river conservation. The Lackawanna River Corridor Association prepared the Lackawanna River Watershed Conservation Plan in 2001, which is available on the DCNR website. The Plan promotes various methods of land conservation, forest preservation, and pollution and erosion control. The Plan also emphasizes planting and retaining thick vegetation along waterways (riparian buffers). The Plan further recommends ways to minimize water pollution and erosion from agricultural and livestock operations, including using fencing to limit the locations where livestock can cross creeks. The Plan promotes the use of Best Management Practices,

such as using rain gardens and vegetated swales. The Plan also promotes public access to trails and selected areas of land for nature study, fishing, and passive recreation.

Under DCNR's Rivers Conservation Program, the completed rivers conservation plans could help qualify conservation organizations and local governments for future funding for projects.

**Carefully manage stormwater to avoid flooding and to protect water quality.**

Stormwater management involves the control of the amounts and velocities of water runoff. As land is developed and additional surfaces are covered with surfaces that are impervious to infiltration into the ground, and as thick natural vegetation is removed, runoff volumes and speeds increase. With proper engineering methods, infiltration can be promoted (such as by using surfaces that are pervious or improving areas that promote infiltration), velocities can be slowed, soil erosion can be avoided, and stormwater can be detained and released gradually to avoid increased flooding.

Because of limited state funding, a regional stormwater plan has not been prepared for the Lackawanna River watershed. Old Forge has adopted a local stormwater management ordinance.

Federal regulations require Old Forge and many similar municipalities to establish a program to comply with Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) requirements. The program is designed to reduce the discharge of pollutants from stormwater in order to protect water quality. The Borough completed an MS4 Pollution Reduction Plan in 2020. The Plan notes some pollutants in the Lackawanna River, but those are outside the control of the Borough. The main obligation of the Borough is to reduce sedimentation in the Lackawanna River and St. John's Creek. The Plan proposes that a new infiltration basin be constructed on existing Borough-owned lands near the High School. The Plan also proposes that a new rain garden be constructed on an area of land that drains to the Lackawanna River southeast of Sibley Avenue.

DEP and the Lackawanna County Conservation District implement erosion and sediment pollution control programs for any earth disturbance activities. Persons proposing earth disturbance activities are required to develop an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan containing Best Management Practices (BMPs), which minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation during construction.

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN

Community facilities are public facilities designed to provide public services. Examples of community facilities include fire stations, schools, parks, and the Borough Building, The Existing Land Uses Map shows the locations of major community facilities located in Old Forge.

**Provide high-quality community facilities and services in the most cost-efficient manner.**

Police Department / Municipal Building

Old Forge Borough Hall is located at 310 South Main Street. The building houses Borough administrative offices and the the Old Forge Police Department.

The Chief of Police provides daily operational direction of the Department guided by the oversight of the Mayor. The Department patrols the Borough; enforces codes, ordinances, and laws; and investigates crimes.

According to the Police Chief, the Department employs seven full-time officers, including the Chief, and seven part-time officers. The Department is currently in the process of testing for more full-time officers and to establish ranks.

The Department's fleet of vehicles includes:

3. Two 2022 SUVs,
4. One 2015 Sedan,
5. One 2016 SUV,
6. One 2017 Sedan,
7. One 2016 Sedan, and
8. One 2018 SUV.

The Borough offices and Police Department facilities were recently extensively renovated. The Police Chief reports the facilities are very adequate for the Department's anticipated needs.

**Emphasize coordination of municipal and emergency services across municipal borders, and expand and update emergency services to meet changing needs.**

Fire Protection, Ambulance, and Rescue

The Eagle-McClure Hose Company, located at 375 Milwaukee Avenue, provides fire protection and emergency rescue services in Old Forge. The fire chief reports that the Department has 36 volunteers. The Department website (https://offd-e93.com/) lists the following ranks and duties for active members:

- Chief,
- Assistant Chief,
- Engine Captains,
- Engine Lieutenants,
- Firefighters,
- Paramedic,
- Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs),
- Probationary Firefighter, and
- Junior Firefighter.

The Chief also reports the following apparatuses for the Department:
- Engine 93 — 2002 Pumper, 1,000-gallon tank
- Ladder 93 — 1996 Pumper / Ladder, 500-gallon tank
- Engine 93-3 — 2006 Pumper, 750-gallon tank
- Brush 93 — 1985 Brush Truck — 150-gallon tank, complement of forestry tools
- Chief 93 — 2013 SUV — carries basic tools
- Assistant Chief 93 — 2000 SUV - carries basic tools

The Department may replace the Brush Truck with a mini-pumper within the next two years.

As with many volunteer-based companies, fire response during daytime, working hours is often inconsistent. The Chief reports an average response of anywhere between two and eight firefighters per weekday call. The Company responds to the first call for the Boroughs of Old Forge, Avoca, Moosic, and Taylor and is second call for the Borough of Duryea.

A municipality can assist in recruiting and retaining volunteer emergency service workers by offering local tax benefits to regular volunteers. These tax benefits are authorized by State law. The Borough also could offer preference in hiring of municipal employees to persons who agree to serve as a volunteer emergency service worker, and by providing them with reasonable flexibility during the workday to respond to emergency calls.

A municipality is also allowed to have a dedicated real estate to fund emergency services. This type of dedicated tax provides a more equal distribution of the costs than relying mostly on voluntary contributions. In addition, this type of dedicated tax revenue can reduce the burden of the firefighters to engage in fundraising, and free up more of their time for important training.

Pennsylvania Ambulance provides basic life support and advanced life support emergency medical ambulance services to Old Forge. Their nearest stations are in Scranton and Moosic.

**Provide quality public education, and maintain good communications between the Borough and School District about proposed housing developments and pedestrian and traffic issues.**

Old Forge is served by the Old Forge School District (OFSD). Old Forge is the only municipality in the District. According to the 2020 decennial census, the District serves a total resident population of 8,497.

The District includes two schools:

- Old Forge Elementary School (K–6)
  401 Melmore Street
  Old Forge, PA 18518

- Old Forge Junior-Senior High School (7–12)
  300 Marion Street
  Old Forge, PA 18518

In addition, local students attend other schools in the region, including religious, charter and cyber charter schools and the Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technical Center.

As of the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, student enrollment in the District was 959 students (Table A-12). According to the Business Manager, enrollment typically fluctuates between 930 and 980 students.

Table A-12
**Enrollment in Public Schools Serving Old Forge Borough**

| Name | Grades | 2022-23 Enrollment |
|---|---|---|
| Old Forge Elementary School | K-6 | 504 |
| Old Forge Junior-Senior High School | 7-12 | 455 |
| | TOTAL | 959 |

Source: Old Forge School District Business Manager's office, as of Sept 2022

OFSD is currently completing a $17 million renovation project of both buildings, which will install improved educational technology and improve building spaces. The work also involves improvements to traffic flow and pedestrian safety outside the buildings. The project is being financed with bonds and a State grant.

**Continue to improve the parks and recreation offerings in Old Forge, and seek the development of new trails or improved sidewalks to provide connections to the Lackawanna River Heritage Trail and parks.**

Old Forge has four public recreation sites:

- Marion Street Park
  Marion Street and Railroad Street
  1 softball field, 1 soccer field

- Pagnotti Park
  Villa Drive
  3 softball fields

- Anthony Pero Park
  867 Sibley Avenue
  2 soccer fields

- Miles Street Community Park
  Miles Street and Maxson Drive
  playground, 1 full basketball court, 1 softball field,
  2 squash/handball courts

The Borough and School District cooperate in providing recreation facilities. Therefore, many outdoor recreation facilities on school district property, such as the Rich Notari Golf Center (driving range), are open to the public when they are not needed for school programs.

In addition to the facilities noted above, the Borough operates a summer day camp at Miles Street Community Park for children who are Borough residents in grades K-8.

**Ensure that adequate public water supplies, sewage treatment allocations and transmission capacities continue to be available.**

All developed areas in Old Forge are served by central water and sanitary sewer systems. The central water system is owned and operated by the Pennsylvania American Water Company.

The Borough maintains the central sewer collection system within its borders. The Lower Lackawanna Valley Sanitary Authority operates the regional system and the wastewater plant, which serves the Boroughs of Old Forge and Taylor in Lackawanna County and the Boroughs of Avoca, Dupont, and Duryea in Luzerne County.

**Support continued quality library services.**

Public library services are provided to Old Forge residents through the Lackawanna County Library System. The closest public library to Old Forge is the Taylor Community Library, 710 South Main Street in Taylor. Many residents also use the Albright Memorial Library, 500 Vine Street in Scranton, and the adjacent County Children's Library.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN APPENDICES

## A. POPULATION, HOUSING AND ECONOMICS DATA

The following section contains data regarding population, housing, income, education, and selected economic data for Old Forge residents. In many cases, data for Old Forge are compared to Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania. Unless otherwise indicated, 2000, 2010, and 2020 data are from the U.S. Census decennial census, and 2019 data are 5-year estimates (2015-2019) from the Census' American Community Survey (ACS).

### Total Population

From 2010 to 2020, the U. S. Census showed relatively stable populations for Old Forge, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania (Table A-1). Population in Old Forge increased by 2.2 percent between censuses, compared to 2.4 percent for Pennsylvania and only 0.7 percent for Lackawanna County.

Table A-1
**Total Population, 2010–2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

|  | Total Population | | Change, 2010-2020 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2010** | **2020** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| Old Forge Borough | 8,313 | 8,497 | 184 | 2.2% |
| Lackawanna County | 214,437 | 215,896 | 1,459 | 0.7% |
| Pennsylvania | 12,702,379 | 13,002,700 | 300,321 | 2.4% |

Source: U. S. decennial census, redistricting data (Table P1)

### Age

The US Census reported that Old Forge residents age 65 and older increased by 0.6 percent from 2010 to 2020, compared to an increase of 9.2 percent for the whole of Lackawanna County and 17.4 percent for Pennsylvania (Table A–2). The "median" is the number at which 50.0 percent of persons or households are above and 50.0 percent are below. Using the 2020 median age as an indicator, Old Forge has a much older population than both Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the population of Old Forge aged more from 2010 to 2020 than for either the County or the Commonwealth.

### Race / Ethnicity

From 2010 to 2020, the Census Bureau reported that the population of white residents in Old Forge, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania all declined, while non-white and mixed-race populations increased (Table A-3). Regarding ethnicity, the Hispanic or Latino population of the Borough, County, and Commonwealth all increased during the same period. The Hispanic/Latino population of Old Forge more than doubled from 2010 to 2020, although the Latin.

Table A-2
**Population Age 65+ and Median Age, 2010–2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| | Population, Age 65+ | | Change, 2010–2020 | | Median Age (Years) | | Change, 2010–2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2010** | **2020** | **Number** | **Percent** | **2010** | **2020** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| Old Forge Borough | 1,616 | 1,625 | 9 | 0.6% | 42.3 | 45.7 | 3.4 | 8.0% |
| Lackawanna County | 38,044 | 41,918 | 3,874 | 9.2% | 41.9 | 42.1 | 0.2 | 0.5% |
| Pennsylvania | 1,929,744 | 2,335,104 | 405,360 | 17.4% | 39.8 | 40.9 | 1.1 | 2.8% |

Source:    American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table S0101)

Table A-3
**Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2010-2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| | Race | | | | | | | | Hispanic or Latino | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | | | | Non-White and Mixed | | | | | | | |
| | Number | | Change, 2010–2020 | | Number | | Change, 2010–2020 | | Number | | Change, 2010–2020 | |
| | **2010** | **2020** | **No.** | **Pct.** | **2010** | **2020** | **No.** | **Pct.** | **2010** | **2020** | **No.** | **Pct.** |
| Old Forge Borough | 8,053 | 7,664 | (389) | (4.8) | 260 | 833 | 573 | 220.4 | 234 | 500 | 266 | 113.7 |
| Lackawanna County | 197,296 | 179,038 | (18,258) | (0.1) | 17,141 | 36,858 | 19,717 | 1.2 | 10,682 | 18,267 | 7,585 | 71.0 |
| Pennsylvania | 10,406,288 | 9,750,687 | (655,601) | (0.1) | 2,296,091 | 3,252,013 | 955,922 | 0.4 | 719,660 | 1,049,615 | 329,955 | 45.8 |

Source: U. S. decennial census, redistricting data (Table P1)

**Housing**

The US Census reported increases in the number of housing units in Old Forge, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania from 2010 to 2020 (Table A-4). The housing stock in the Borough increased by 2.1 percent during the decade.

The U. S. Census Bureau reported that, from 2010 to 2020, the number of households (occupied housing units) in Old Forge increased by a modest 1.3% (Table A-5). During the same period, the number of households decreased by 8.4% in Lackawanna County and increased in Pennsylvania by 5.5%.

Household size — the number of persons per household — decreased from 2010 to 2020 in Old Forge, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania (Table A-6). Decreasing household sizeThe increases represent a reversal of recent nationwide trends. Higher household sizes are often the result of adult children living with parents or older adults living with their children or other family members. Reasons may include health issues for older adults or difficulty in finding suitable, affordable housing and choosing to share living quarters or to live with family.

Table A-4
**Total Housing Units, 2010–2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| | Total Housing Units | | Change, 2010–2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2010** | **2020** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| Old Forge Borough | 4,040 | 4,125 | 85 | 2.1% |
| Lackawanna County | 96,832 | 99,815 | 2,983 | 3.1% |
| Pennsylvania | 5,567,315 | 5,742,828 | 175,513 | 3.2% |

Source:    U. S. decennial census, redistricting data (Table H1)

Table A-5
**Households (Occupied Housing Units), 2010–2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| | Households | | Change, 2010–2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2010** | **2020** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| Old ForgeBorough | 3,734 | 3,783 | 49 | 1.3% |
| Lackawanna County | 96,832 | 88,745 | (8,087) | (8.4)% |
| Pennsylvania | 4,940,581 | 5,210,598 | 270,017 | 5.5% |

Sources:   U. S. decennial census, redistricting data (Table H1)

Table A-6
**Average Household Size, 2010–2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| | Persons per Household | | Change, 2010–2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **2010** | **2020** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| Old Forge Borough | 2.25 | 2.17 | (0.08) | (3.6)% |
| Lackawanna County | 2.37 | 2.31 | (0.06) | (2.5)% |
| Pennsylvania | 2.47 | 2.42 | (0.05) | (2.0)% |

Source:    ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table S1101)

As reported in the 2020 ACS 5-year estimates, approximately two out of three (67.7%) of units in Old Forge are single-family detached structures (Table A-7). Old Forge has a higher percentage of single-

family detached homes than both Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania. Old Forge also has a noticeably higher share of structures with 3–4 units than in the County or the Commonwealth.

Table A-7
**Units in Structure, 2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| Units in Structure | Old Forge Borough | | Lackawanna County | | Pennsylvania | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Structures | Percent | Structures | Percent | Structures | Percent |
| 1, detached | 2,771 | 67.7% | 64,851 | 64.5% | 3,264,031 | 57.1% |
| 1, attached | 201 | 4.9% | 7,192 | 7.2% | 1,060,733 | 18.6% |
| 2 | 366 | 8.9% | 9,962 | 9.9% | 248,422 | 4.3% |
| 3–4 | 540 | 13.2% | 7,416 | 7.4% | 228,942 | 4.0% |
| 5–9 | 0 | 0.0% | 3,859 | 3.8% | 182,004 | 3.2% |
| 10–19 | 42 | 1.0% | 1,325 | 1.3% | 146,248 | 2.6% |
| 20–49 | 46 | 1.1% | 1,007 | 1.0% | 124,353 | 2.2% |
| 50 or more | 0 | 0.0% | 2,748 | 2.7% | 239,148 | 4.2% |
| Mobile home | 128 | 3.1% | 2,203 | 2.2% | 217,645 | 3.8% |
| Boat, RV, van, etc. | 0 | 0.0% | 13 | 0.0% | 1,819 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 4,094 | 100.0% | 100,576 | 100.0% | 5,713,345 | 100.0% |

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates

Old Forge Borough has a slightly higher percentage of home ownership than Lackabanna County (Table A-8). However, both Old Forge and the County have less home ownership (and, correspondingly, a higher portion of renters) that the Commonwealth, in which almost seven out of 10 households are occupied by the owner.

Table A–8
**Housing Ownership, 2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| | Occupied Housing Units | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | | Percent | |
| | Owner-Occupied | Renter-Occupied | Owner-Occupied | Renter-Occupied |
| Old Foirge Borough | 2,381 | 1,255 | 65.5% | 34.5% |
| Lackawanna County | 56,316 | 31,421 | 64.2% | 35.8% |
| Pennsylvania | 3,522,269 | 1,584,332 | 69.0% | 31.0% |

Source:    ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table S2502)

**Education**

By most measures, Old Forge has relatively high levels of educational attainment. According to the latest data available for 2020 (ACS 5-year estimates), Old Forge had higher percentages of the population age 25 and older with high school diplomas, Bachelor's degrees, or some college without a degree than both Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania as a whole (Table A-9).

Table A–9
**Percent of Population, Age 25 and Older, by Educational Attainment, 2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania**

|  | Old Forge Borough | Lackawanna County | Pennsylvania |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Population, 25 years and older* |  |  |  |
| Less than 9$^{th}$ grade | 2.6% | 2.9% | 3.1% |
| 9$^{th}$ to 12$^{th}$ grade, no diploma | 2.9% | 5.6% | 5.9% |
| High school graduate (incl. equivalency) | 40.1% | 36.7% | 34.2% |
| Some college, no degree | 17.2% | 16.6% | 15.9% |
| Associate's degree | 9.1% | 9.5% | 8.6% |
| Bachelor's degree | 20.1% | 17.8% | 19.5% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 7.9% | 10.8% | 12.8% |

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (Table S1505)

**Income**

The most common measure of income is the median. By definition, half of residents or households have incomes above the median, and half have incomes below the median.

The 2010 Census did not ask any questions about income. The American Community Survey (ACS) has data on income, but the data is based on sampling. For equal comparison, Table A-10 shows incomes reported in the 2010 and 2020 ACS.

Table A-10
**Median Household Income, 2010–2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania**

|  | Median Household Income | | Change, 2010–2020 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2010 | 2020 | Number | Percent |
| Old Forge Borough | $49,688 | $57,014 | $7,326 | 12.8% |
| Lackawanna County | $43,673 | $54,064 | $10,391 | 19.2% |
| Pennsylvania | $50,398 | $63,627 | $13,229 | 20.8% |

Sources: ACS 5-Year Estimates

In 2010 and 2020, the income level in Old Forge was higher than in Lackawanna County but lower than in Pennsylvania (Table A–10). In 2020, median annual household income in Old Forge was estimated to be $2,950 higher than in the County and $6,613 lower than in the Commonwealth. Between 2010 and 2020, income levels in Old Forge increased less than in both Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania.

**Economic Data**

In addition to income, the Census Bureau collects economic data on topics such as workers by occupation and industry. Examining the share of the work force in each occupational category (Table A-11), Old Forge Borough has a noticeably higher share of workers in sales/office occupations and in production/transportation/material moving occupations than both Lackawanna County and Pennsylvania. Conversely, the Borough has a lower share of workers in management/business/science/arts and in natural resources/construction/maintenance occupations.

Table A–11
**Civilian Workers by Occupation, 2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| Occupation | Old Forge Borough | Lackawanna County | Pennsylvania |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total workers, age 16 and over | 3,967 | 98,930 | 6,206,829 |
| Management, business, science, arts | 34.4% | 35.4% | 39.9% |
| Service | 14.1% | 17.8% | 17.0% |
| Sales and office | 28.2% | 23.0% | 20.8% |
| Natural resources, construction, maintenance | 5.1% | 8.3% | 8.0% |
| Production, transportation, material moving | 18.1% | 15.7% | 14.2% |

Sources:   ACS 5-Year Estimates

The number of workers (or jobs) by industry is another measure of economic activity (Table A–12). Compared to the Commonwealth and the County, Old Forge has a noticeably higher share of workers in the following industries:

•    Wholesale trade,
•    Transportation, warehousing, utilities,
•    Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing, and
•    Public administration.

Correspondingly Old Forge has a noticeably lower share of workers in the following industries:

•    Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining,
•    Construction,
•    Information,

•    Educational services, health care, social assistance,
•    Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services, and
•    Other services, except public administration.

Table A–12
**Workers by Industry, 2020**
**Old Forge Borough, Lackawanna County, and Pennsylvania**

| Economic Sector | Old Forge Borough | Lackawanna County | Pennsylvania |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total workers, age 16 and over | 3,967 | 98,930 | 6,206,839 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining | 0.0% | 0.7% | 1.3% |
| Construction | 5.1% | 5.9% | 6.0% |
| Manufacturing | 10.7% | 10.1% | 11.6% |
| Wholesale trade | 6.7% | 3.2% | 2.6% |
| Retail trade | 11.2% | 12.2% | 11.0% |
| Transportation, warehousing, utilities | 8.7% | 6.8% | 5.8% |
| Information | 0.1% | 1.6% | 1.6% |
| Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing | 9.8% | 6.4% | 6.6% |
| Professional, scientific, management, administration, waste management services | 8.7% | 8.1% | 10.6% |
| Educational services, health care, social assistance | 26.1% | 26.9% | 26.2% |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services | 3.8% | 8.4% | 8.1% |
| Other services, except public administration | 4.1% | 4.7% | 4.7% |
| Public administration | 5.2% | 5.0% | 4.0% |

Sources:   ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Travel to Work**

The 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates report that there were 3,934 workers age 16 and over in Old Forge. A total of 79.4 percent of the workers drove to work alone. In comparison, 78.6 percent of workers drove alone in Lackawanna County, and 74.4 percent of workers age 16 and over in Pennsylvania drove to work alone. The mean (average) travel time to work in 2020 was 27.1 minutes in Pennsylvania, and a shorter 21.8 minutes in Lackawanna County and 22.5 minutes for workers in Old Forge.

**B.   LACKAWANNA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Comprehensive Plan for Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties is the joint comprehensive and long-range transportation plan for both counties. The Plan was adopted in 2021 by the Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners. The plan can be found at:

*https://cms8.revize.com/revize/lackawanna/Document_center/Department/Planning/LL-Comp-Plan-2021-Digital.pdf*

As with most county-level comprehensive plans in Pennsylvania, the Comprehensive Plan for Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties is more of a policy-oriented document than a detailed, topic-specific plan.

After an explanation of the planning process, the document includes information and data in the following areas:

- Demographics and Socio-Economic Data,
- Housing,
- Community Facilities and Services,
- Economy,
- Natural Resources,
- Transportation, and
- Land Use.

The existing land use in the Plan is generalized with categories based on population density. The General Land Use map classifies Old Forge as "Urban Development," as descrbed below:

"Urban Development areas are the growth areas surrounding Urban Core areas usually created by critical transportation corridors or arteries. Historically, development occurred along corridor frontages and eventually connected Urban Core areas. Development then created rings around the Urban Core forming less dense residential neighborhoods with limited commercial uses. These areas are usually characterized by older roadways and homes. Homeownership and rental rates tend to be more evenly split."

The Plan then concludes by presenting regional policies and implementation steps.

## C.   A BRIEF HISTORY OF OLD FORGE

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has installed a historic marker to recognize the history of Old Forge. The marker reads:

> *"On the south bank of the Lackawanna River opposite this spot was located the*
> *iron forge built in 1789 by Dr. William Smith and James Sutton.*
> *This was the region's oldest forge, after which the town was named."*

Dr. Smith was an Army Surgeon during the Revolutionary War.  During the 1820s, an inn was established in Old Forge to serve a stagecoach route.  A post office was established in Old Forge in 1848.  Old Forge was incorporated as a township in 1871, and became a borough in 1899.

During the first half of the 1900s, Old Forge's main industry was anthracite coal mining.  The flooding from the Knox Mine Disaster in 1959 south of Pittston helped to end most underground mining in the area, along with decreasing demand for coal.  There also were a number of textile, apparel and silk mills.  By 1920, the Borough's population reached a peak of 14,000 residents.

The largest number of immigrants in Old Forge were from Italy, including large numbers from the Salerno area.  These immigrants helped make Old Forge into a destination for pizza restaurants. There also were large number of immigrants from Poland, Ireland, Germany, Russia and Wales.

## D.   EXISTING LAND USES BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following section presents information on the current land uses in Old Forge. The Existing Land Use Map is presented in the Land Use and Housing Plan section.

Residential

In terms of area, residential land is the largest land use in the Borough. Residential uses are found throughout Old Forge. Major concentrations are in the following areas:

- northwest part of the Borough west of Milwaukee Avenue,
- north of Oak Street, and
- Main Street northward to Grace Street.

Commercial

Several large-footprint commercial uses are located in the southern part of the Borough, along Main Street and the railroad tracks, and along the Borough lines with both Moosic and Duryea. Several other large-footprint commercial uses are scattered throughout the Borough, while smaller commercial uses are clustered in the Old Forge downtown along Main Street.

Public/Semi Public

Public and semi-public land uses include places of worship, the Borough Hall, schools and cemeteries. Public buildings and park sites are discussed in the Community Facilities section.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing uses in Old Forge include factories areas for transporting goods on a large scale, such as trucking terminals. Major manufacturing areas in Old Forge include:
- uses along the railroad tracks in the southern part of the Borough,
- miscellaneous industrial uses on and around Maxson Drive, and
- industrial uses along Milwaukee Avenue in the northern part of the Borough.

Major Undeveloped Areas

Several large areas of Old Forge land are undeveloped (see the Existing Land Use Map on the previous page), including:
- along the Lackawanna River in the southern part of Old Forge.
- along the Lackawanna River in the eastern part of Old Forge,
- parcels along the south side of Church Street,
- the northeast part of the Borough along Sibley Avenue.
- the northern corner of the Borough,
- the western part of the Borough around Mountain Drive,
- the area south of Edgewood Drive, and
- the area between Milwaukee Avenue and Apache Drive.

**E.  COMPATIBILITY WITH ZONING IN ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES**

From the Borough's northern-most point, Old Forge shares borders with the following municipalities, moving clockwise:

- Taylor Borough
- Moosic Borough
- Duryea Borough (Luzerne County), and
- Ransom Township.

The following information describes the zoning in the areas immediately adjacent to Old Forge and the existing zoning in Old Forge, as of December 2022.

**Taylor Borough (Lackawanna County)**

Moving clockwise (southeast) from the northernmost point of Old Forge, zoning in Old Forge is C-3 Office Commercial. Adjacent zoning in Taylor is S-3 Special Purpose, which is intended to accommodate the Alliance Landfill. Commercial and industrial uses are better than residential uses adjacent to landfills.

Continuing clockwise to the St. Johns Creek, zoning in Old Forge is R-2 Medium Density Residential. Adjacent zoning in Taylor is C-3 Heavy Commercial. A potential conflict is noted. However, a portion of that area in Taylor is within the floodplain.

Continuing southward (clockwise) along Sibley Avenue to Church Street, zoning in Old Forge is R-1 Low Density Residential. Adjacent zoning in Taylor is C-3 Heavy Commercial to C Street and R-2 General Residential to Claire Drive. A significant conflict exists north of C Street, and a moderate conflict in allowed density occurs south of C Street.

Continuing south along Sibley Avenue to Claire Drive, zoning in Old Forge is R-1A Moderate Density Residential compared to R-2 General Residential in Taylor.

Southward from Claire Drive to the Lackawanna River, Old Forge zoning is R-1 Low Density Residential. Corresponding zoning in Taylor is R-1A One-Family Residential, Low Density.

**Moosic Borough (Lackawanna County)**

The entire border between Old Forge and Moosic Boroughs is the Lackawanna River. Therefore, all adjacent zones between Old Forge and Moosic are separated by the river, which mitigates any potential conflicts.

Continuing clockwise from the Old Forge/Taylor border to an unnamed street that is near the I/81/U.S. 11 interchange, zoning in Moosic is M Manufacturing. Corresponding zoning in Old Forge is R-1 Low Density Residential as far as approximately Bertha Street (extended).

Continuing along the Lackawanna River, Moosic zoning is C-2 General Commercial. Corresponding zoning in Old Forge is L-1 Light Industrial.

Further along the Lackawanna River in Moosic to the point where the Old Forge/ Moosic border turns southward, zoning in Moosic is R-2 Medium Density Residential. On the other side of the Lackawanna River, zoning in Old Forge is E-1 Environmental Conservation and R-2 Residential.

Moving southward, the Old Forge/ Moosic border forms a semi-circle along Lonesome Road. Zoning in Moosic along the area is R-2 Medium Density Residential. Adjacent zoning in Old Forge is primarily C-2 Highway Commercial.

The Borough border then turns directly southward to the Luzerne County line. Moosic's zoning along the area is R-2 Medium Density Residential. Old Forge zoning along the area is R-1 Low Density Residential.

**Duryea Borough (Luzerne County)**

Turning to the northwest, Old Forge borders the Borough of Duryea in Luzerne County. Duryea is under the jurisdiction of the Luzerne County Zoning Ordinance.

Old Forge's zoning begins as R-1 Low Density Residential to Wood Street. Adjacent zoning in Duryea is MI Mining.

Continuing to Center Street, zoning in Old Forge is L-1 Light Industrial, while corresponding zoning in Duryea is LI Light Industrial.

From Center to Bridge Streets, Old Forge zoning is R-1 Low Density Residential. In the same area, Duryea zoning is R-1 One-Family Residence.

From Bridge Street to the Old Forge border with Ransom Township, zoning in Old Forge is I-2 Heavy Industrial. Adjacent zoning in Duryea is MI Mining, with a segment of GB General Business along S. Main Street.

**Ransom Township (Lackawanna County)**

Continuing clockwise along the Old Forge / Ransom Township border to just past Edgewood Drive, Old Forge zoning is R-1 Low Density Residential. Corresponding zoning in Ransom Township is R-2 Suburban Residential.

Moving northward to Pittston Avenue, zoning in Old Forge is E-1 Environmental Conservation. Ransom Township zoning is S-1 Open Space/Conservation.

Continuing clockwise from Pittston Avenue to Mine Street, Old Forge zoning is R-2 Medium Density Residential. Adjacent zoning in Ransom Township is S-1 Open Space Conservation.

Moving northeast along the border, zoning in Old Forge from Mine Street to West Oak Street (extended) is R-1 Low Density Residential. Corresponding zoning in Ransom Township is S-1 Open Space/Conservation. No conflict is noted.

Returning to the northernmost point of Old Forge, zoning in the Borough is C-3 Office Commercial. Adjacent zoning in Ransom Township is S-1 Open Space Conservation.

A portion of Ransom Township that touches the northern tip of Old Forge and extends further northeast is zoned Heavy Manufacturing, which allows the Alliance Landfill.

# Q1 Development: Please check the top three types of businesses you would most like to see encouraged in Old Forge

Answered: 443   Skipped: 0
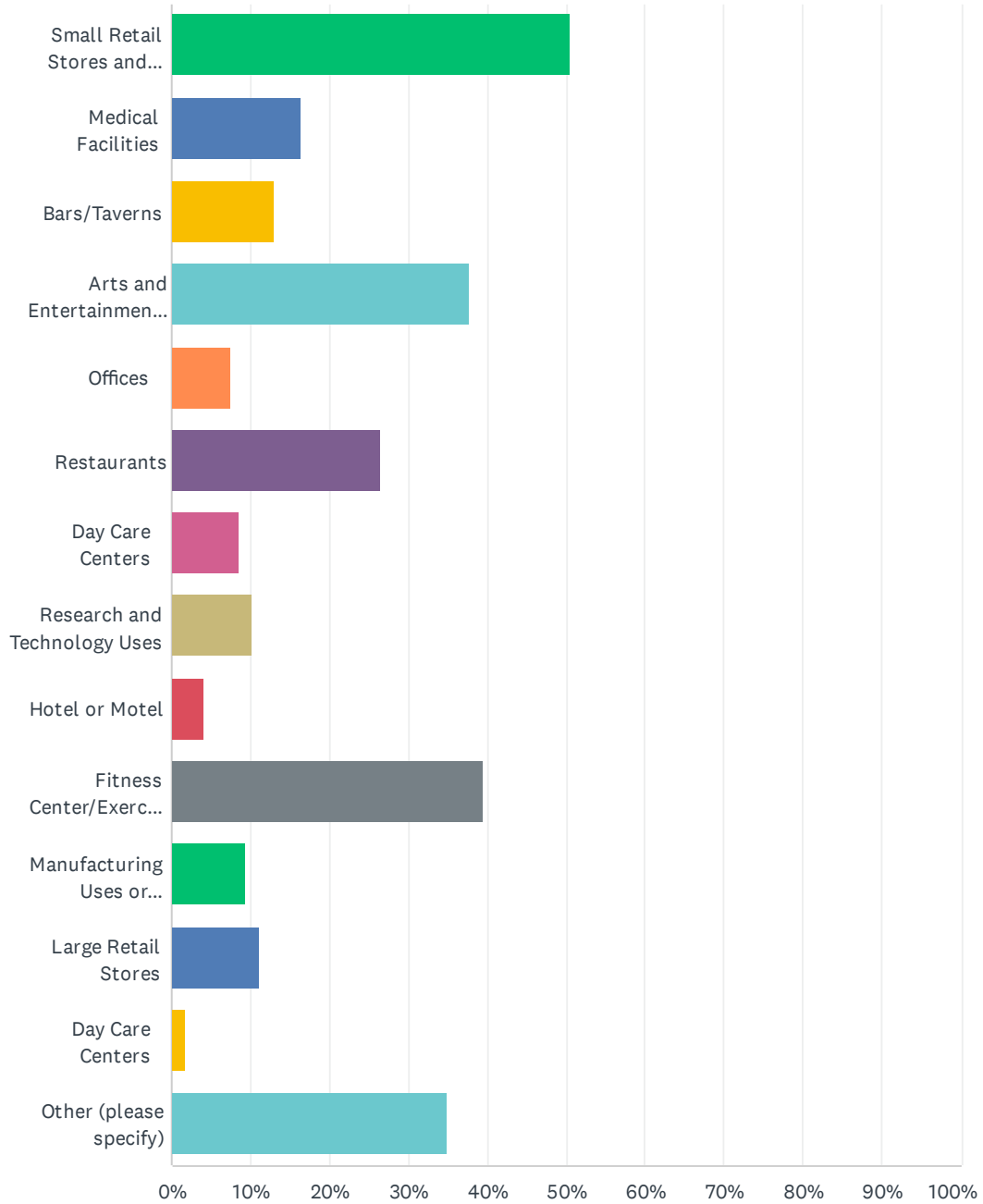
| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Small Retail Stores and Services (other than grocery stores) | 50.56% | 224 |
| Medical Facilities | 16.48% | 73 |
| Bars/Taverns | 13.09% | 58 |
| Arts and Entertainment Uses | 37.70% | 167 |
| Offices | 7.45% | 33 |
| Restaurants | 26.41% | 117 |
| Day Care Centers | 8.58% | 38 |
| Research and Technology Uses | 10.16% | 45 |
| Hotel or Motel | 4.06% | 18 |
| Fitness Center/Exercise Club | 39.50% | 175 |
| Manufacturing Uses or Warehouses | 9.48% | 42 |
| Large Retail Stores | 11.06% | 49 |
| Day Care Centers | 1.81% | 8 |
| Other (please specify) | 34.99% | 155 |
| Total Respondents: 443 | | |

# Q2 Please check the top three types of new housing that you believe are most needed in Old Forge.

Answered: 435    Skipped: 8
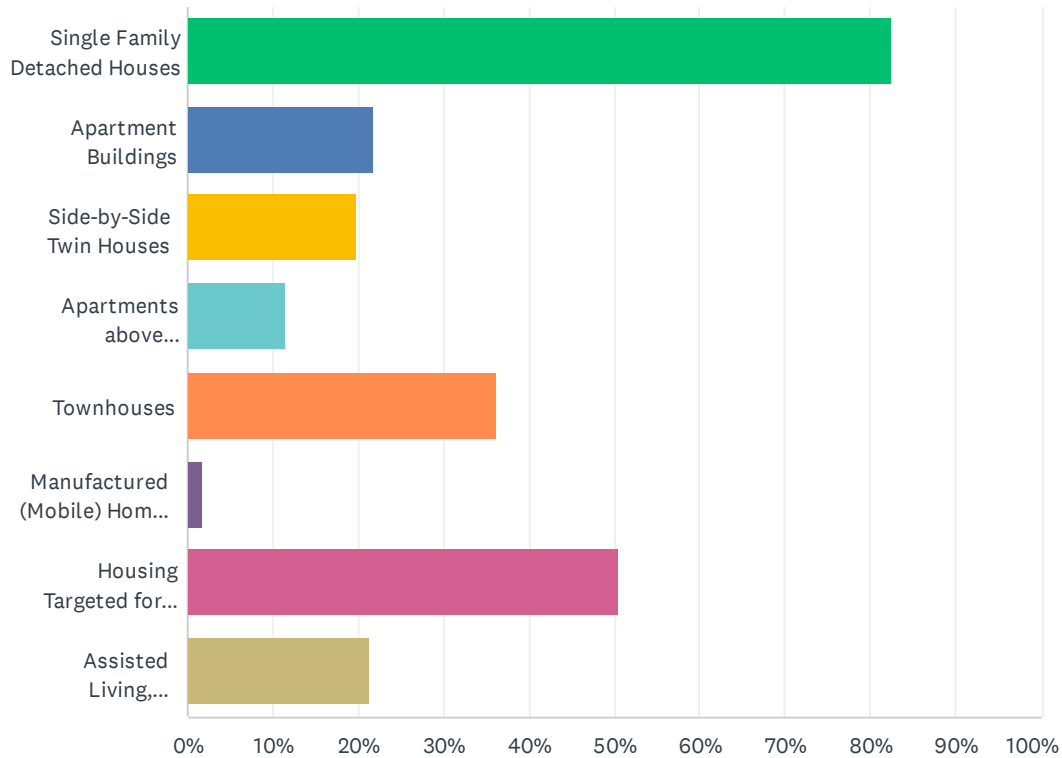
| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Single Family Detached Houses | 82.53% | 359 |
| Apartment Buildings | 21.84% | 95 |
| Side-by-Side Twin Houses | 19.77% | 86 |
| Apartments above Businesses | 11.49% | 50 |
| Townhouses | 36.32% | 158 |
| Manufactured (Mobile) Home Parks | 1.61% | 7 |
| Housing Targeted for Persons Over Age 55 | 50.57% | 220 |
| Assisted Living, Personal Care or Nursing Homes for Seniors | 21.38% | 93 |
| Total Respondents: 435 | | |

## Q3 Transportation:  Please check the top three types of transportation improvements you believe are most needed in Old Forge.

Answered: 420    Skipped: 23

  

## Old Forge Community Survey
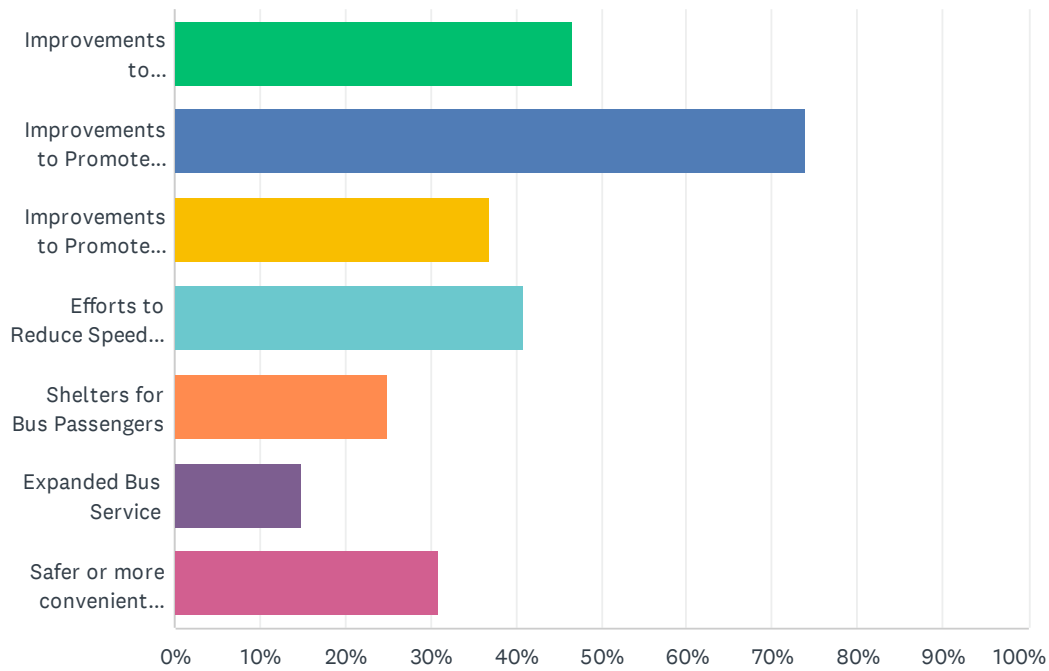


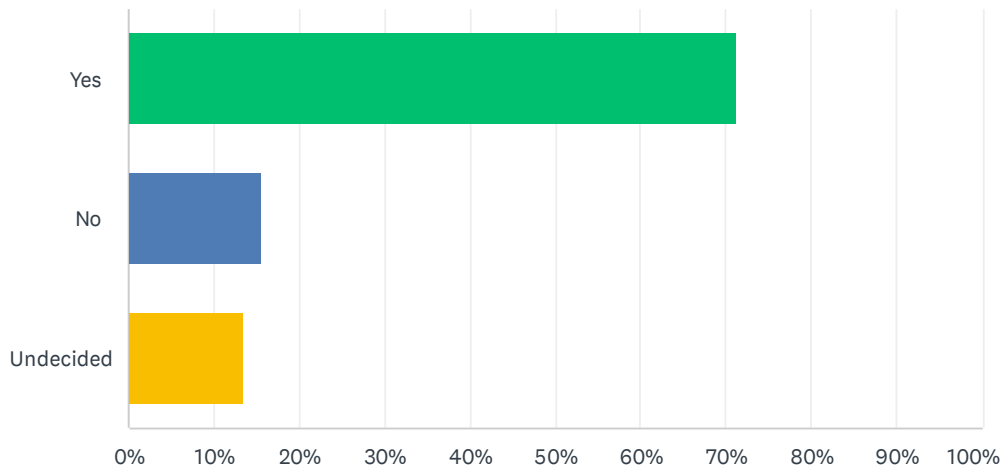| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Improvements to Intersections | 46.67% | 196 |
| Improvements to Promote Walking (Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Pedestrian Signals at Intersections) | 74.05% | 311 |
| Improvements to Promote Bicycling (such as bike lanes) | 36.90% | 155 |
| Efforts to Reduce Speeding | 40.95% | 172 |
| Shelters for Bus Passengers | 25.00% | 105 |
| Expanded Bus Service | 15.00% | 63 |
| Safer or more convenient School Bus Stops | 30.95% | 130 |
| Total Respondents: 420 | | |

# Q4 Do you wish to describe a street or transportation problem that you would like to see addressed?  (such as improvements to a hazardous intersection or a difficult pedestrian crossing)

Answered: 195     Skipped: 248

# Q5 Do you believe that additional parks and recreation improvements are needed?

Answered: 438     Skipped: 5

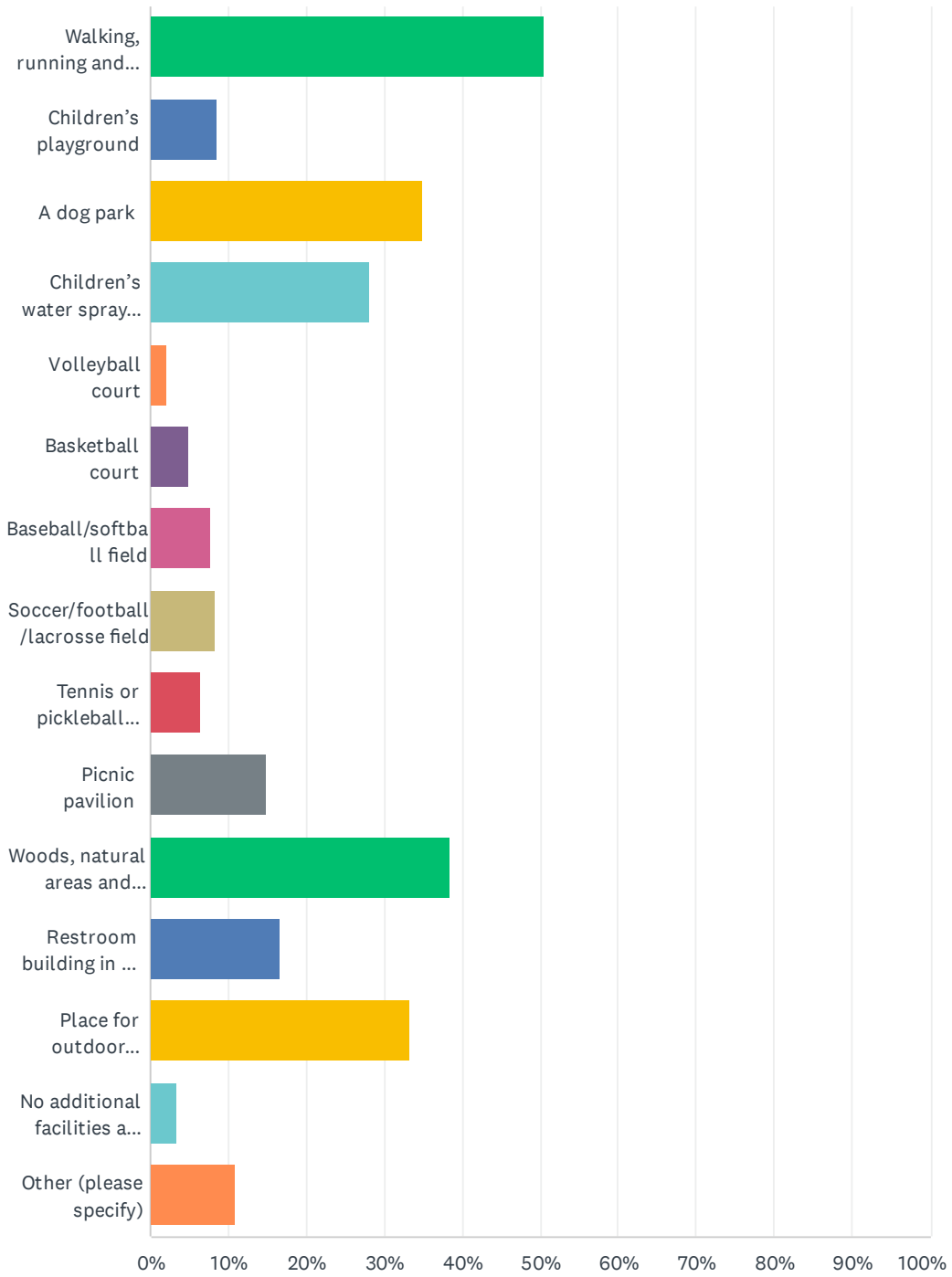| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 71.23% | 312 |
| No | 15.53% | 68 |
| Undecided | 13.47% | 59 |
| Total Respondents: 438 | | |

# Q6 Recreation:  Please check which three types of new parks and recreation improvements you believe should be provided in Old Forge, if any?

Answered: 443     Skipped: 0

# Old Forge Community Survey

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Walking, running and off-road bicycle paths and trails | 50.56% | 224 |
| Children's playground | 8.58% | 38 |
| A dog park | 34.99% | 155 |
| Children's water spray area | 28.22% | 125 |
| Volleyball court | 2.03% | 9 |
| Basketball court | 4.97% | 22 |
| Baseball/softball field | 7.67% | 34 |
| Soccer/football/lacrosse field | 8.35% | 37 |
| Tennis or pickleball court | 6.32% | 28 |
| Picnic pavilion | 14.90% | 66 |
| Woods, natural areas and river/creek access | 38.37% | 170 |
| Restroom building in a park | 16.70% | 74 |
| Place for outdoor concerts and events | 33.18% | 147 |
| No additional facilities are needed | 3.39% | 15 |
| Other (please specify) | 10.84% | 48 |
| Total Respondents: 443 | | |

# Q7 What do you like most about Old Forge (other than presence of friends and family)?

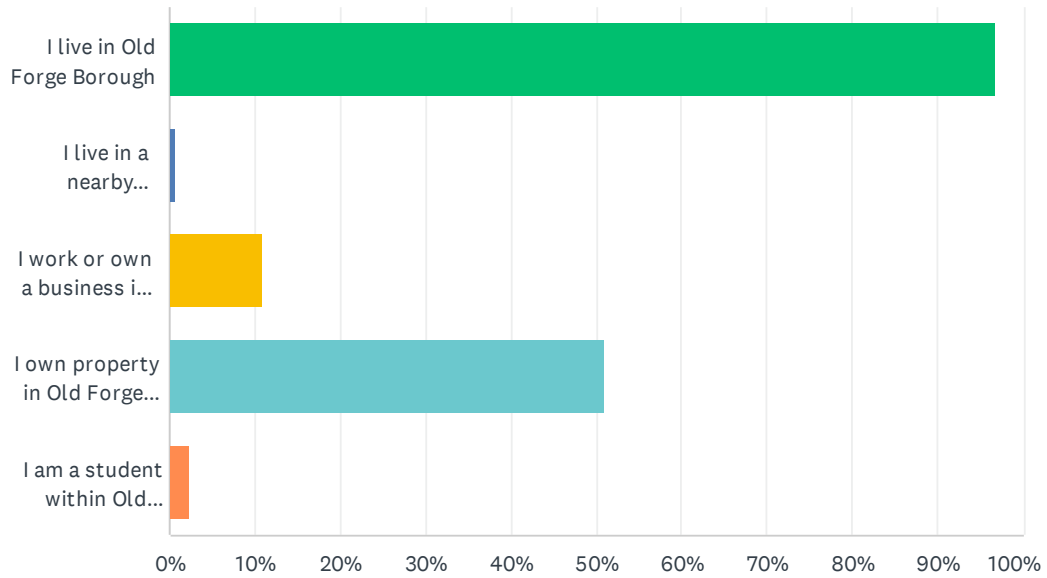Answered: 313    Skipped: 130

# Q8 What do you like least about Old Forge?

Answered: 303    Skipped: 140

# Q9 Please check all that apply. (optional question)

Answered: 412    Skipped: 31

# Old Forge Community Survey



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| I live in Old Forge Borough | 96.84% | 399 |
| I live in a nearby community (such as Moosic or Duryea). | 0.73% | 3 |
| I work or own a business in Old Forge Borough | 10.92% | 45 |
| I own property in Old Forge Borough | 50.97% | 210 |
| I am a student within Old Forge Borough | 2.43% | 10 |
| Total Respondents: 412 | | |

# Q10 Are you:

Answered: 415    Skipped: 28

# Old Forge Community Survey
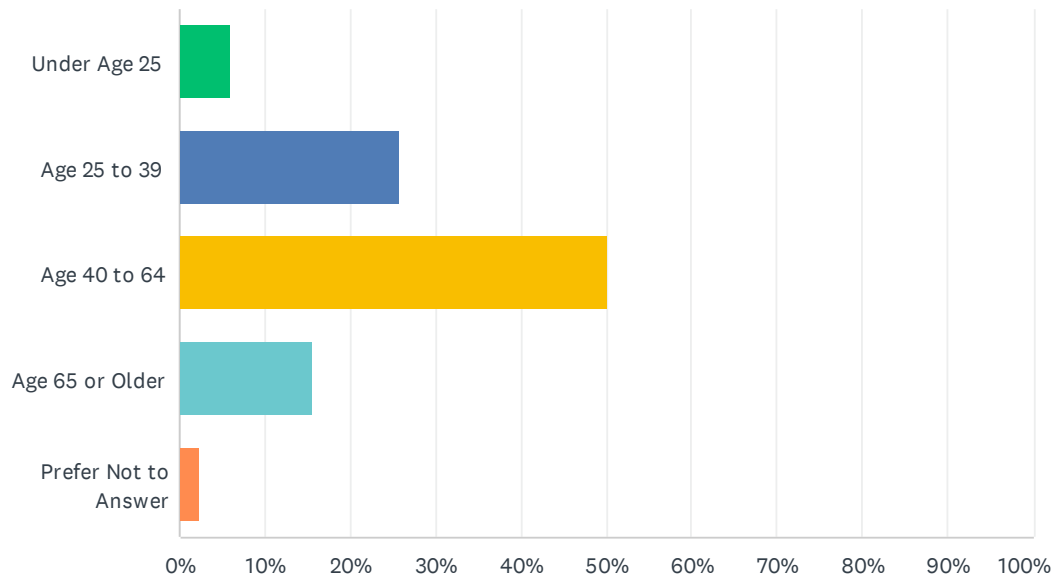


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Under Age 25 | 6.02% | 25 |
| Age 25 to 39 | 25.78% | 107 |
| Age 40 to 64 | 50.12% | 208 |
| Age 65 or Older | 15.66% | 65 |
| Prefer Not to Answer | 2.41% | 10 |
| TOTAL | | 415 |