

# COMMISSIONERS OF WAYNE COUNTY

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Honorable Committee Chairs and Distinguished Senators

Thank you for allowing us to speak to you today concerning the potential closure of SCI Waymart. Many people have spoken to you today regarding the potential closure of “their” facility and what it will mean in economic impact to their communities. We would like to speak to you today about why you should not close SCI Waymart, but why we feel an investment in this facility and in Wayne County will benefit the Department of Corrections.

SCI Waymart has been a part of our community for 106 years. It has provided many of our past and current residents with family sustaining wages which have helped to support our local and regional businesses, sent children onto higher learning, and provided community services within Waymart and Canaan Townships. At one time, an active farm and community garden provided an opportunity for the community to be on facility property and work with staff and inmates in the development of agriculture and community programming.

When the Federal Bureau of Prisons was looking for a location to develop a new penitentiary, one of the prime factors or positive points for a Wayne County site was the Canaan Township and Waymart Borough communities have had SCI Waymart as part of their lives and the communities welcome potential new residents, new partnerships and supportive community spirit that comes with partnerships with the correctional facility. We are one of the few counties that has a Federal, State and County prison facility within 15 miles of each other and the positive impact this arrangement has had is great. The sharing of facilities for training and community support activities, the emergency cooperation agreements in place when the need arises, regular participation with all 3 facilities on the Wayne County CJAB Board as well as open communication on potential policies, programs, equipment sharing are numerous. It should be noted that after a visit to SCI Waymart by a DOC – Policy and Legislative Affairs staff member, the staff of SCI Waymart were commended for the compassion, commitment and dedication that was observed at the facility, an observation not noted at previous visits to other SCI facilities.

The location of SCI Waymart within the Wayne/Lackawanna corridor and the proximity to local medical care, local goods and service providers is a key factor to consider. Wayne Memorial Hospital and Wayne Memorial Health System are local health care facilities that are currently undergoing a \$ 40 million dollar physical and service expansion. They are a certified trauma unit with helicopter service and as well have serviced the Correctional community, its workers and its inmates for years. Their acceptance of this “clientele” is never questioned and they welcome opportunity to expand available services close to “home”.

SCI Waymart is currently the forensic unit for Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wayne County prisons. The next nearest facility to Wayne is Norristown, which historically has wait lists up to 3 to 4 months. Currently Wayne County has 67% of its inmates on psychotropic medication; our mental health needs are great. The cooperation, assistance and available treatment provided at SCI Waymart are second to none and the availability of this facility to our regional county prisons is necessary. With 82 of the PA Department of Corrections 127 Mental Health Units located at SCI Waymart, this is the facility to invest in, not close. While the cost per inmate cited is high, one must consider the type of inmate housed in this facility and the treatment and services that are provided here, and not at other locations. Also this number is distorted by the Overtime costs due to a hiring freeze, which has been cited by the Auditor General in a January 2017 Audit report, as a factor in the high cost per inmate calculation.

SCI Waymart has undergone several large renovation projects including an extension of a gas line with a commitment of service with UGI. As well the Waymart Sewer Authority is currently undergoing an expansion project to handle capacity including service to SCI Waymart. If this facility were to close, the impact on residents for sewer costs could be extremely heavy. We have reviewed the Statewide Facility Closure Guidelines and a figure of \$ 35,000,000 has been used as the budget for necessary upgrades. We believe based on our knowledge of contracts in place or completed as well as visual changes and noted upgrades that much of this work has been completed or is in process already and thus we believe the actual figure to be much less.

SCI Waymart is located on a parcel of more than 438 acres and has the potential for further development and growth. Waymart has access to major highways of Route 6, Route 81, Route 380, Route 84 and the PA Turnpike. It employs approximately 732 employee and contract employees from 12 different PA Counties, with the majority of the employees being from Lackawanna and Wayne Counties. This statistic alone shows the regional impact and reach that SCI Waymart has in these communities. (please refer to maps included in written package)

If you are looking for a Facility and County to invest in, Wayne County is the clear choice. Wayne County Correctional Facility currently has a contract with DOC to house Technical Parole Violators; we have not housed any of these inmates since July of 2015, we have available beds. Wayne County has the lowest per capita real estate tax in our region, we welcome your employees. Wayne County, as an employer, has invested in the Correctional System, we train our correctional officers who advance to new opportunities at both SCI Waymart and USP Canaan, we are happy to help all of you and share our talents. SCI Waymart in Wayne County is a facility that has validity now and for future Corrections needs.

## **State Correctional Institute (SCI) Waymart**

11 Farview Dr, Waymart, PA  
Canaan Township, Wayne County

### **Utility Access, Available or Neighboring**

Phase 3 Power (*PPL*)

Natural Gas (*UGI*)

Fiber Optic Internet (*Laurel Highlands*

*Total Communications/*

*South Canaan Telephone Company*)

Renewable Energy (*Waymart Wind Farm*)

Central Sewer Service (*Waymart Area Authority*)

Central Water Service (*Aqua America*)

### **Facility/Resource Access, Proximity**

Waymart Volunteer Fire Company: 1.4 mi.

Public Transit (*COLTS bus, Carbondale*): 4.6 mi.

Wayne Memorial Hospital: 10.4 mi.

State Police, Honesdale Barracks

(*Wayne Co*): 10.8 mi.

State Police, Dunmore Barracks

(*Lackawanna Co*): 16.8 mi.

Wayne County Correctional Facility: 15.0 mi.

## **Pennsylvania SCI's Considered for Closure**

### **Distance to Nearest SCI**

the Closest SCI to **SCI Frackville** (*Schuylkill Co*)

is *SCI Mahoney, Schuylkill County*: **2.1 mi.**

the Closest SCI to **SCI Retreat** (*Luzerne Co*)

is *SCI Dallas, Luzerne County*: **6.9 mi.**

the Closest SCI to **SCI Pittsburgh** (*Allegheny Co*)

is *SCI Fayette, Fayette County*: **32.6 mi.**

the Closest SCI to **SCI Waymart** (*Wayne Co*)

is *SCI Dallas, Luzerne County*: **36.7 mi.**

the Closest SCI to **SCI Mercer** (*Mercer Co*)

is *SCI Cambridge Springs, Crawford County*: **42.1 mi.**

### **Distance to Nearest Federal Facility**

the Closest fed. facility to **SCI Waymart** (*Wayne Co*)

is *USP Canaan, in Wayne County*: **0.9 mi.**

the Closest fed. facility to **SCI Pittsburgh** (*Allegheny Co*)

is *RRM Pittsburgh, in Allegheny County*: **3.1 mi.**

the Closest fed. facility to **SCI Frackville** (*Schuylkill Co*)

is *FCI Schuylkill, in Schuylkill County*: **7.6 mi.**

the Closest fed. facility to **SCI Retreat** (*Luzerne Co*)

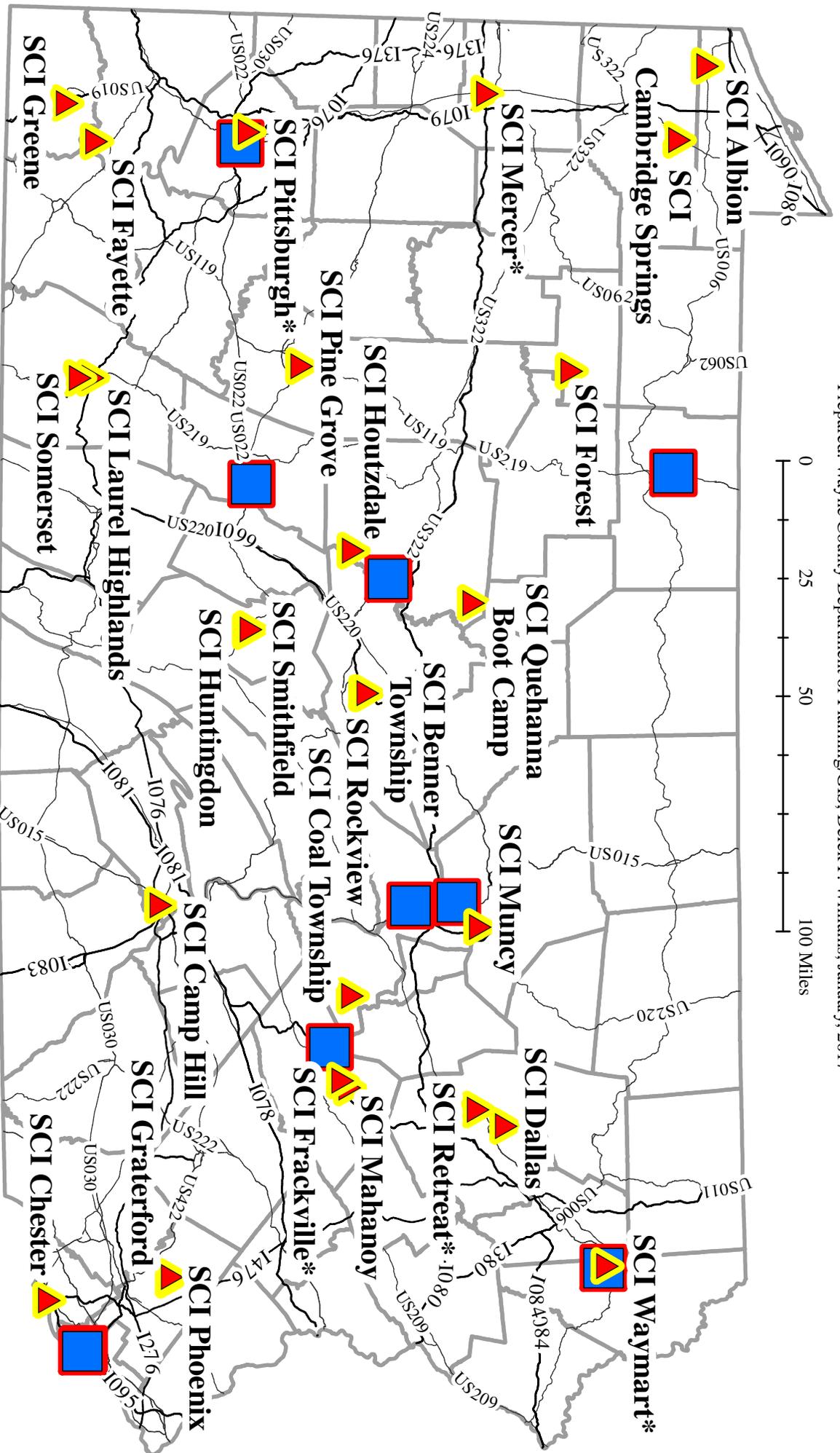
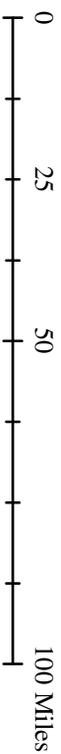
is *FCI Schuylkill, in Schuylkill County*: **34.3 mi.**

the Closest fed. facility to **SCI Mercer** (*Mercer Co*)

is *RRM Pittsburgh, in Allegheny County*: **53.7 mi.**

# PA State and Federal Correctional Facilities

Prepared: Wayne County Department of Planning/GIS, Derek F. Williams, January, 2017



State Prison Facility
   
 Federal Prison Facility
   
 Major Roads
   
 County Boundaries

Note: SCI's with an asterisk denote their consideration for closure.

Data: Federal Bureau of Prisons, US Dept. of Justice, 2017. Pennsylvania Dept. of Corrections, 2017. Pennsylvania Dept. of Transportation, 2011. US Census Bureau, US Dept. of Commerce, 2009. Wayne County Assessment and Planning/GIS, 2017.