Located or occurring within an 805-kilometer (500-mile) radius of Pittsburgh are some of the nation's largest cities, 51 percent of the U.S. population, 28 of the top U.S. metropolitan retail markets, 63 percent of the national industrial output, and 53 percent of U.S. buying income.

The study area contains a wide range of historic resources. The resources are of national, state, and local importance. Potential prehistoric archaeological sites are also present.

The project area's three major rivers, the Ohio, Allegheny, and Monongahela, are each classified as a Warm Water Fishery (WWF) by *Chapter 93 of Title 25 of the Pennsylvania Code*. One-hundred year and 500-year floodplains and flood hazard areas surround the major rivers and their tributaries. All wetland types, sizes, and conditions are encountered throughout the project area.

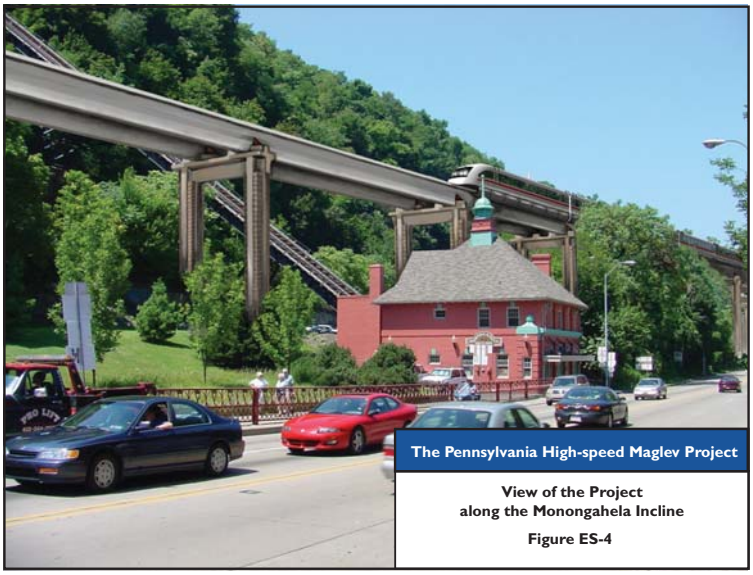
Existing woodland cover is a mosaic of second- and third-growth forests, primarily consisting of sycamores, maples, and oaks. The dominant land cover identified within the project area includes urban areas, rangeland, cropland and pasture, forestland, streams and rivers, wetlands, and barren land. A diverse array of wildlife is found in the area, including small and large mammals, songbirds and raptors, and amphibians and reptiles.

Numerous potential hazardous/residual waste sites dot the landscape, including operating and abandoned gas stations, industrial sites, utilities, landfills, and other waste areas.

Allegheny County and Westmoreland County are in attainment for carbon monoxide (CO) except for a small portion of Allegheny County coinciding with Downtown Pittsburgh that has been designated as a maintenance area. While both Allegheny and Westmoreland counties had acquired maintenance status for ozone (O_3), they will revert to nonattainment in June 2005. Additionally, both counties are in nonattainment for fine particulates (PM 2.5).

ES-4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A comprehensive range of alternative alignments was developed to minimize impacts and assess the safest, most practical, and reasonable alternative to fit the project purpose and need. The proposed maglev system is designed to avoid or minimize the extent of potential impacts to the natural, cultural, and community resources of the project area (see Figure ES-4). In some locations, the placement of support piers and guideway beams will be adjusted to avoid sensitive social, cultural, or environmental features. Guideway support structure and various pier and beam combinations will also be utilized as a means of avoidance and minimization. Although the environmental consequences have been based on the potential impact zones, the Project would leave much of the physical area that it traverses undisturbed.



As summarized in Table ES-1, each of the alternative alignments carried