

Mercer County Today A Summary of Community Indicators

To evaluate the success of Mercer County's Comprehensive Plan, a variety of community indicators have been identified. They will enable the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission and others to measure their progress towards achieving the goals and objectives laid out in the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Indicators have been used in a number of areas throughout the Commonwealth; most notably in Lancaster County. Basically, they are "numeric measures of community health and well being"¹. Once they are collected, combined, and analyzed they can give a general idea of which direction the County is going.

MCRPC and other county stakeholders have identified the following community indicators to monitor as they implement the comprehensive plan. In some instances, there is already a good base of information to identify past trends. In others, this data represents the baseline from which to begin that process. In both cases, the MCRPC will now have another tool to assist them with prioritizing their implementation efforts.

A more thorough review of Mercer County trends can be found in the Technical Background Studies found in Appendix C.

¹ Lancaster County Planning Commission, www.co.lancaster.pa.us.

Environmental Indicators

These indicators will be used to monitor how well the natural resources strategies of the comprehensive plan are working. They focus primarily on the protection of sensitive natural resources in Mercer County. While farmland preservation is discussed briefly here, additional indicators relative to agriculture can be found on pages...

Land Preservation and Conservation

Increases in the amount of land permanently preserved as public or private open space indicates a commitment to retaining the traditional rural character of Mercer County. These spaces are used for recreation and also for agriculture and timbering activities.

Mercer County has almost 9,000 acres of preserved open space and woodland owned and managed by the state as either State Game Lands or State Parks. Even though a variety of active and passive recreation activities are permitted in these areas, they are generally protected from development. Additional opportunities to protect more public open spaces are identified in the Mercer County Greenways, Open Space, and Rural Recreation Plan.

According to the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Board, Mercer County has purchased conservation easements for 32 farms totaling 5,684 acres as of December 2005. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Mercer County ranks 17th in total number of acres preserved (5,684 acres) and 20th in the number of farms preserved (32), when compared to the other 52 counties throughout the state that have purchased easements. However, the County is paying the 7th lowest average price per acre (\$767); significantly lower than the statewide average of \$2,175 per acre.

Environmental Regulations

There are several federal and state regulations that protect many of Mercer County's most sensitive environmental features, including wetlands and surface waters. However, other features must be protected through the use of local ordinances. Zoning and Subdivision/Land Development Ordinances can be effective tools for protecting the natural environment when they include special provisions for limiting development in sensitive areas such as floodplains and steep slopes.

At the present time, 30 of Mercer County's 48 municipalities have local Zoning Ordinances and 12 have local Subdivision/Land Development Ordinances. Many have not been updated for over 20 years and there is no "inventory" of existing local environmental regulations across the county. As the MCRPC works

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with local municipal officials to update and/or develop new ordinances, these kinds of provisions should be inventoried and monitored. Growth in the inventory would indicate success in achieving several of the plans goals, including resource protection and encouraging development that complements the county's rural character.

Development in the Floodplains

Monitoring development within Mercer County's floodplains will allow the county to determine how well local regulations are working to protect these areas.

Recent GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data indicates that there are approximately 1,900 acres of developed land that fall within the 100 year floodplains of Mercer County's waterways. This represents approximately 7 percent of the total floodplain acreage within the county and only 0.4 percent of the entire county land area.² This data provides a base line for future monitoring with the goal of reducing flood hazards throughout the county.

Woodland Areas

Over time, this indicator will show how much new development is occurring in the traditionally wooded areas of the county. This information will help county and local official gauge how well this resource is being protected and can be used to direct current and future preservation efforts.

Mercer County has approximately 162,000 acres of woodland dispersed throughout the County according to 2003 Penn State University land cover data. This is 37 percent of the County's total land area. Deciduous Forest is the primary type, covering almost 155,000 acres. Coniferous and Mixed Forests make up the balance.

Impaired Streams

A stream is considered impaired by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection if it does not support its designated use as determined by Chapter 93, Title 23 of the Pennsylvania Code, e.g. cold water fishery, warm water fishery, etc.

At the present time, DEP has assessed most of the waterways in Mercer County and has determined that approximately 67 miles of assessed streams are impaired. This is approximately 6 percent of the County's total waterways. These streams have been identified and mapped (See Profile 1 - Natural Resources), which will allow

² Developed land categories are based on information generated by Penn State University (PSU), and include the categories of High and Low Density Urban, as well as Transitional.

local officials to focus their water protection efforts as needed. Ideally these efforts will result in removing the streams from the impaired list, with no new ones being added.

Impervious Surfaces

Changes in land use will alter the amount of impervious surfaces within an area, which can impact stream quality due to increased storm water runoff. In order to measure the potential change in the amount of impervious surfaces within the county's watersheds, values for percent impervious were assigned to each of the existing and future land use categories in the county. These values were based on data provided by PA DEP in the Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program Manual.

GIS software analysis indicates that the most significant change in the amount of impervious surfaces would occur in the Shenango River watershed. Approximately 11,000 acres would shift from less than 30% impervious to between 30-44% impervious and an additional 4,000 acres would shift to 70-85% impervious. This would represent approximately 10% of the entire watershed, compared to less than two percent at the present time. However, these are projected changes that can be influenced by implementing best management practices that can limit the total amount of impervious surface associated with new development, including subdivision design that includes small building lots and public open spaces.

Socioeconomic Indicators

Several measures or indicators of Mercer County's socioeconomic condition were available from an analysis prepared by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. The following indicators were selected for comparison with surrounding Pennsylvania counties and the state.

Difference in Median Age in Years

Comparisons of median age over time will indicate how fast the population is aging and can assist with planning for needs that are specific to certain age groups. In 2000, Mercer County's median age was 39.6 or 1.6 years older than the state median (38.0) and 4.3 years older than for the United States (35.3). Lawrence and Venango Counties in Pennsylvania and Mahoning County in Ohio have populations that are also older than Pennsylvanians on average. Only Butler County residents are younger than Pennsylvanians among surrounding counties.

Table 1 - Difference in Median Age

	Median Age 2000	Comparison to PA (years)
Pennsylvania	38.0	-
Mercer County	39.6	1.6
Butler County	37.6	-0.4
Crawford County	38.1	0.1
Lawrence County	40.5	2.5
Venango County	40.2	2.2
Mahoning County, OH	39.7	1.7
Trumbull County, OH	39.0	1.0

Source: US Census Bureau

Average Annual Wage and Income as Percent of State Average

Mercer County workers earn less than the state and national averages. According to 2002 data from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor Statistics, the average annual wage for Mercer County workers in all industries was \$27,872. This is approximately 78 percent of the average annual wage for Pennsylvanians, and 76 percent of the average wage for the United States. This is likely due to two facts: 1) Mercer County has fewer resident workers employed in higher paying industrial sectors, namely information, finance, insurance, real estate, and the professional scientific, and management sectors, and 2) Wages for each sector are lower in the county relative to the state and the nation.

Future Youth and Senior Population

Using Pennsylvania’s projections for population, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania projected the distribution of future population among the under 20 and the 65 and older age groups. These projections suggest that Mercer County’s population under 20 years of age will decline from 26.5 percent to 23.8 percent of the County’s total population, and the County’s 65 and older population will grow from 18.1 percent to 18.5 percent of the County’s total population by 2020. The direction of these trends is the same for surrounding counties and the state. Mercer and Butler Counties are projected to have the most dramatic decrease in under 20 population (a change of -2.7 percent) while Trumbull County, Ohio is projected to have the most dramatic increase in residents 65 years and older (a change of 5.2 percent).

Table 2 Future Youth and Senior Populations

	Projected Total Population 2010	Projected Total Population 2020	Population Under 20 Years Old, 2000	Projected Population Under 20 Years Old, 2020	Population 65 Years Old & Older, 2000	Projected Population 65 Years Old & Older, 2020
Pennsylvania	12,407,523	12,569,017	26.60%	24.70%	15.60%	18.40%
Mercer	123,152	124,609	26.50%	23.80%	18.10%	18.50%
Butler	171,066	177,837	27.50%	24.80%	14.30%	18.90%
Crawford	90,315	93,048	28.00%	27.00%	15.60%	19.80%
Lawrence	86,452	83,259	25.90%	25.70%	19.30%	21.00%
Venango	53,140	50,852	26.80%	24.30%	16.80%	22.00%

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Live Births and Death Rates per 1,000 Residents

A smaller child-bearing resident population translates to fewer births in Mercer County. Mercer County had 11.2 live births per 1,000 residents in 2001. This value reflects a decrease of 0.9 live births per 1,000 residents since 1990. Similar trends were experienced in Butler, Crawford, and Lawrence Counties. Venango County and Pennsylvania both demonstrated declines of approximately 3.0 percent in live births per 1,000 residents.

Mercer County had 11.7 deaths per 1,000 residents in 2001. This value reflects an increase of 0.2 deaths per 1,000 residents over 1990 values. Deaths per 1,000 residents are typically higher in Mercer County and surrounding counties than across Pennsylvania as a whole. However Mercer County had the same rate of increase as Pennsylvania, while other counties had higher increases in deaths per 1,000 residents.

While the number of births is only 0.5 less per 1,000 residents than the number of deaths, a continuation of this trend, coupled with continued out-migration of younger residents will mean continued loss of population. In addition, it will mean an additional increase in the county's median age.

Table 3 Births and Deaths per 1,000 Residents, 2001

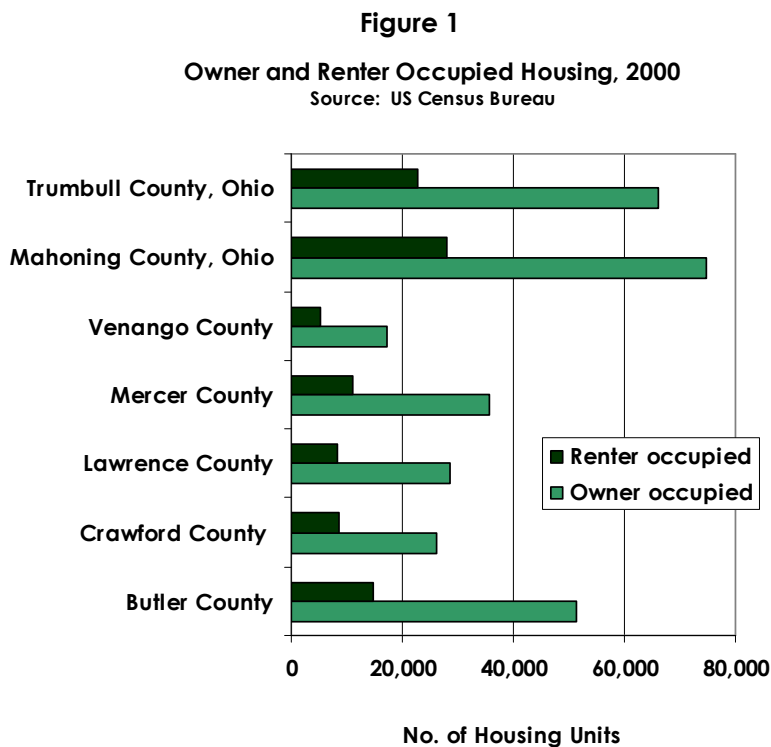
	Live Births Per 1,000 Residents		Change in Live Births per 1,000 Residents	Deaths Per 1,000 Residents		Change in Deaths per 1,000 Residents
	1990	2001	1990-2001	1990	2001	1990-2001
Pennsylvania	14.4	11.5	-2.9	10.3	10.5	0.2
Mercer	12.1	11.2	-0.9	11.5	11.7	0.2
Butler	13.5	12.3	-1.2	9.4	9.8	0.4
Crawford	13.2	11.9	-1.3	10.1	10.6	0.5
Lawrence	11.9	10.7	-1.2	12	12.3	0.3
Venango	13.3	10.2	-3.1	10.4	11.3	0.9

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Housing Indicators

Home Ownership

Seventy-six percent of housing units in Mercer County are owner-occupied. This is comparable to other counties in the region; where between 73 and 78 percent of housing units are owner-occupied. It is significantly higher than for Pennsylvania (65%) and the U.S. (66%) and may indicate that there are few options available for segments of the population that are traditionally renters, including single young adults and married couples with no children.



Average Cost of New Housing Units

The average cost of new housing units in Mercer County is below the state average and falls in the middle range among surrounding counties. When combined with data regarding home ownership, it appears as though Mercer County has an affordable, albeit older housing stock.

Table 4 Average Cost of New Housing, 2002

	Average Cost
Pennsylvania	\$123,512
Mercer	\$105,504
Butler	\$130,077
Crawford	\$82,054
Lawrence	\$117,234
Venango	\$87,754

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Assisted Rental Housing Units

According to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the state's rural areas have, on a per capita basis, fewer assisted rental units than urban areas. There are 13 units for every 1,000 residents in rural areas and more than 15 units for every 1,000 residents in urban areas. In addition, 50 percent of the rural units statewide are for the elderly. In urban areas, less than 40 percent of the units are for the elderly.

There are 19.4 assisted rental housing units per 1,000 residents in Mercer County, which is significantly higher than for the state, but comparable to the adjacent counties of Lawrence (19.1 units per 1,000) and Venango (18 units per 1,000). Approximately 40 percent of assisted units are for the elderly, while in Lawrence and Venango they represent 47 percent and 43 percent respectively. In Butler County, over 62 percent of assisted units are for elderly residents.

Regular monitoring of the availability of these units relative to the age and income indicators will flag the need for additional units in Mercer County.

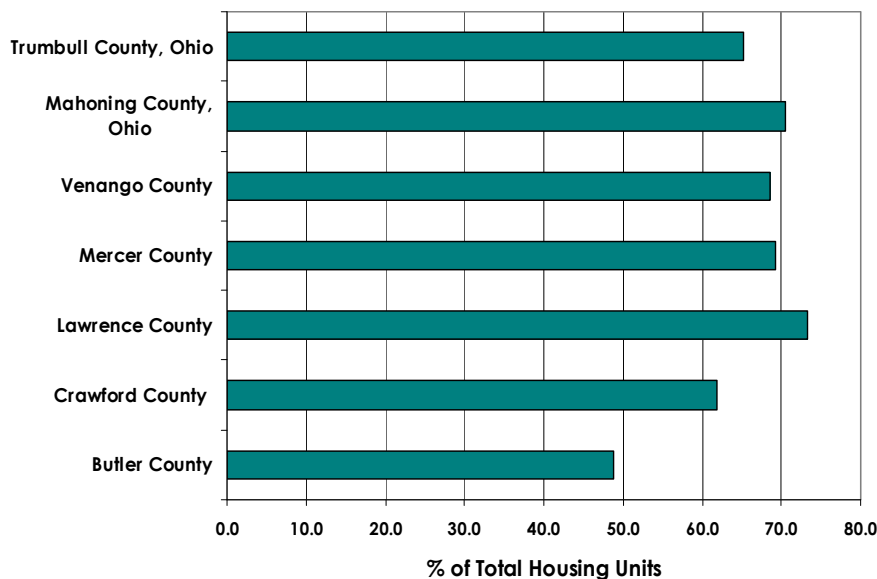
Age of Housing Units in Mercer County

Almost 60 percent of Mercer County's housing units are over 45 years old. This is somewhat higher than for Crawford, but relatively comparable for other adjacent counties, except for Butler where less than 50 percent were built before 1960. It is significantly higher than for the US, where only 35 percent of housing units date back to 1959 or earlier

Figure 2

Percent of Housing Units Built Before 1960

Source: US Census Bureau



Housing Affordability

Mercer County compares favorably to Pennsylvania as a whole in terms of housing affordability. According to 2000 Census data, 16.4 percent of home owners are considered cost burdened (spending 30 percent or more on housing costs) compared to 20.8 percent at the state level. This is also the case for those who are extremely cost

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burdened (spending 50 percent or more) - 5.4 percent in Mercer County, 7.3 percent in Pennsylvania.

Renters in Mercer County are also less burdened by housing costs when compared to the state - 33.7 percent vs. 35.6 percent. However, these are much higher percentages than for those who own or are buying a home.

Economic Indicators

Retail and Farm Sales

In 1997, Mercer County had 618 retail establishments, or 5.06 retail businesses per 1,000 residents. These establishments reported \$1.29 million in sales (1997), equivalent to \$10,525 per capita. This indicates considerable in-migration to retail outlets by out-of-county visitors.

Mercer County has more retail establishments per 1,000 residents than any of the surrounding counties and Pennsylvania's average rate as shown in Table 5. Its retail sales per capita value was also higher than that for Pennsylvania and notably higher than any of the surrounding counties. These statistics reflect the influence of Prime Outlets in Grove City, where over 140 retailers are located.

Table 5 Retail Sales Statistics, 1997

	Retail Establishments, 1997	Retail Establishments Per 1,000 Residents	Total Retail Sales (\$1,000)	Retail Sales Per Capita
Pennsylvania	50,208	4.18	\$109,948,462	\$9,150
Mercer County	618	5.06	\$1,285,017	\$10,525
Butler County	709	4.2	\$1,480,171	\$8,761
Crawford County	360	4.03	\$628,750	\$7,039
Lawrence County	370	3.88	\$627,064	\$6,583
Venango County	247	4.25	\$417,353	\$7,180

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania; Census 2000

Mercer County farms reported a total of \$46 million in agricultural product sales in 1997. The average value of products per farm was \$44,753. The average market value of products sold per acre was \$277. The average size of a Mercer County farm was 162 acres.

Mercer County had the second highest total market value of its agricultural products of the surrounding Pennsylvania counties. Only Crawford County reported a higher value (\$58.4 million).

The County also had the second highest average market value of products sold per farm, again following Crawford County (\$54,657). The County ranks third in average market value of products sold per acre after Crawford County (\$291) and Butler County (\$282) among surrounding Pennsylvania counties. These regional values are significantly lower than the statewide average market value of products sold per acre (\$558).

Table 6 Farm Sales Statistics

	Total Market Value of Ag. Products Sold, (\$1,000), 1997	Average Market Value of Products Sold per Farm	Average Market Value of Products Sold per Acre
Pennsylvania	\$3,997,565	\$87,942	\$558
Mercer County	\$46,096	\$44,753	\$277
Butler County	\$27,671	\$28,468	\$233
Crawford County	\$58,428	\$54,657	\$282
Lawrence County	\$25,396	\$40,895	\$291
Venango County	\$6,515	\$18,561	\$141
	Percent of Farm Sales by size of farm		
	Small Sale Farms (Sales Under \$10,000)	Medium Sale Farms (Sales \$10,000-49,999)	Large Sale Farms (Sales \$50,000 and Over)
Pennsylvania	45.90%	22.80%	31.30%
Mercer County	51.20%	29.50%	19.30%
Butler County	60.50%	22.90%	16.60%
Crawford County	48.20%	22.50%	29.40%
Lawrence County	53.90%	27.10%	19.00%
Venango County	68.90%	20.50%	10.50%

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

A number of other business statistics relevant to the health and diversity of the business environment are reported among the Census Quickfacts. The following tables report these select statistics. A few highlights are presented here:

- Mercer County’s employment among non-farm establishments rose 16.4 percent from 1990 to 1999. This rate was twice that of Pennsylvania as a whole and second only to Butler County among surrounding counties.
- Manufacturers in Mercer County shipped \$2.4 billion in goods in 1997. This value ranked third among surrounding counties behind Trumbull County, OH (\$11.2 billion) and Butler County (nearly \$3.0 billion).

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- One in five businesses in Mercer County is owned by women (21.3 percent). This percent is similar to Pennsylvania and the surrounding region.
- Only 3.1 percent of businesses in Mercer County are minority-owned. This value is similar to those of surrounding Pennsylvania counties, but lower than those of Pennsylvania (5.9 percent) as a whole and adjacent Ohio counties (Mahoning County, 5.8 percent; Trumbull County, 5.1 percent).
- Mercer County received \$660.6 million in federal funds and grants in 2001, ranking fourth among surrounding counties (second among surrounding Pennsylvania counties). Mahoning and Trumbull Counties, OH each received over \$1.0 billion in federal aid monies.
- Mercer County and its municipalities employed 3,318 full-time employees (or full-time equivalents) in local government in 1997, ranking fourth among surrounding counties (second among surrounding Pennsylvania counties).

Table 7 Select Business Statistics, 2000

	Private nonfarm establishments, 1999	Private nonfarm employment, 1999	Private nonfarm employment, percent change 1990-1999	Nonemployer establishments, 1999	Value of Manufacturers' shipments, 1997 (\$1000)
Pennsylvania	293,491	4,986,591	8.40%	614,594	172,193,216
Mercer County	2,951	44,414	16.40%	5,785	2,440,846
Butler County	4,292	60,989	36.50%	9,242	2,989,977
Lawrence County	2,158	28,718	2.90%	4,553	1,076,616
Crawford County	2,127	27,936	9.70%	5,066	1,263,394
Venango County	1,310	17,000	-3.70%	2,655	1,084,640
Mahoning County	6,451	95,110	2.90%	12,639	2,110,011
Trumbull County	4,785	84,059	-3.40%	10,724	11,235,598

A **nonemployer** business is one that has no paid employees, has annual business receipts of \$1,000 or more (\$1 or more in the construction industries), and is subject to federal income taxes. Nonemployer businesses are generally small, such as real estate agents and independent contractors. Nonemployers constitute nearly three-quarters of all businesses, but they contribute only about three percent of overall sales and receipts data.

Generally, an **establishment** is a single physical location at which business is conducted or services or industrial operations are performed. However, for nonemployers, each distinct business income tax return filed by a nonemployer business is counted as an establishment. Nonemployer businesses may operate from a home address or a separate physical location. Most geography codes are derived from the business owner's mailing address, which may not be the same as the physical location of the business.

Table 9 Minority- and Women-Owned Firms, 1997

	Minority-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	Women-owned firms, percent of total, 1997
Pennsylvania	5.90%	24.20%
Mercer County	3.10%	21.30%
Butler County	1.70%	25.40%
Lawrence County	2.10%	21.10%
Crawford County	2.00%	24.00%
Venango County	less than 100	20.10%
Mahoning County	5.80%	24.40%
Trumbull County	5.10%	24.80%

Women-owned firms are those owned by sole proprietors who identified themselves as female on the 1997 or 1992 survey or were categorized as female on their applications for a Social Security Number; or, in the case of firms with multiple owners, where 51 percent or more of stock interest, claims or rights were held by females.

Minority-owned firms are those where the sole proprietor was Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native, or, in the case of firms with multiple owners, where 51 percent of the stock interest, claims or rights were held by Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, or American Indians/Alaska Natives.

Table 8 Additional Business Statistics

	Federal funds and grants, 2001 (\$1000)	Federal funds and grants (2001) per capita (\$)	Local government employment - full-time equivalent, 1997	Local government employment - full-time equivalent, 1997 per capita
Pennsylvania	79,310,064	6,458	365,556	0.03
Mercer County	660,590	5,492	3,318	0.03
Butler County	968,354	5,563	4,306	0.02
Lawrence County	577,871	6,395	2,328	0.03
Crawford County	427,479	4,517	2,216	0.02
Venango County	306,712	5,328	2,070	0.04
Mahoning County	1,450,850	5,633	8,776	0.03
Trumbull County	1,051,817	4,672	7,544	0.03

Federal funds and grants include federal expenditures or obligation for the following categories: grants, salaries and wages, procurement contracts, direct payments for individuals, other direct payments, direct loans, guaranteed or insured loans, and insurance. Dollar amounts (reported here in thousands of dollars) represent either actual expenditures or obligations.

Cultural and Historic Resources Indicators

“Historic” Identification

- The built environment is an important part of a community’s history and identity. Mercer County’s architectural heritage, as well as the events that took place in those structures, are part of what makes the county a distinctive place. The community is fortunate that many of its historic resources remain.
- Identifying structures or other resources as historic is one of the first steps in determining its significance. Resources must be at least fifty years old to be designated as “historic,” using criteria established by the National Park Service. The actual number of sites in Mercer County that meet guidelines for identification as “historic” is believed to be significantly greater than what has been documented to date. Because these resources have not been properly identified, they may not have received adequate consideration in land use development.
- The Housing Chapter indicates that 42.3 percent of housing units are greater than 50 years old, however this percent does not represent commercial, industrial, government, or other public buildings over 50 years in age. The County may want to measure the percent of all buildings over 50 years old as another indicator of cultural and historic resource conservation.

Historic Conservation

- Once a historic district has been designated, a community can establish an historic architectural review board (HARB) if it desires to maintain the visual character of the district in addition to recognizing its geographic location. Properties within the designated district are then required to meet specific guidelines when making structural and aesthetic improvements.
- The County may want to measure the percentage of buildings identified as historic that are subject to review before modification or demolition as a new indicator of cultural and historic resource conservation. Buildings that meet this criterion would include properties listed and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as well as buildings in historic districts that have a HARB.
- There are no HARBs that administer review of structural and aesthetic improvements in the County’s historic districts.

Land Use Indicators

Residential, Commercial and Industrial Land Use Trends

Even though the County's population has been decreasing over the past 30 years (-5.4 percent between 1970 and 2000), the amount of developed land has increased significantly. Between 1973 and 1993, there was a 46 percent increase in residential land uses in Mercer County. This rate is more than double the increase in households within the County and is indicative of increasing sprawl throughout the county.

Trends in Commercial and Industrial land use also indicate increased sprawl. Commercial land uses have increased by about a third while incomes and retail sales have been decreasing (-7 percent and -4 percent respectively). Industrial land use has increased by 24 percent, yet non-agricultural employment has only increased by approximately 2 percent. Land use data for 2003 is not readily comparable to 1993; however, all indications are that these trends are continuing.

Figure 3

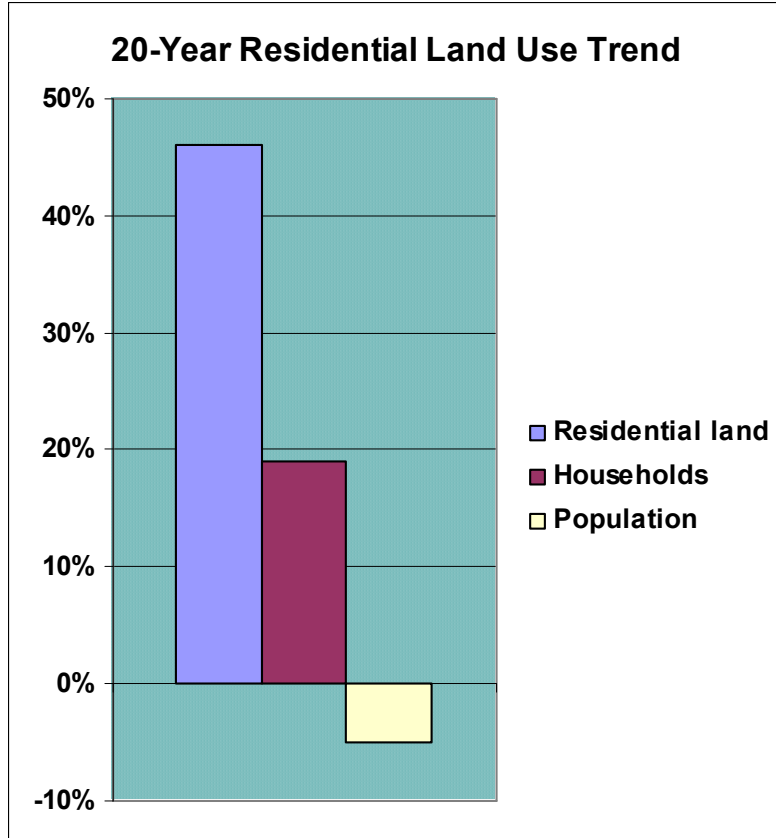
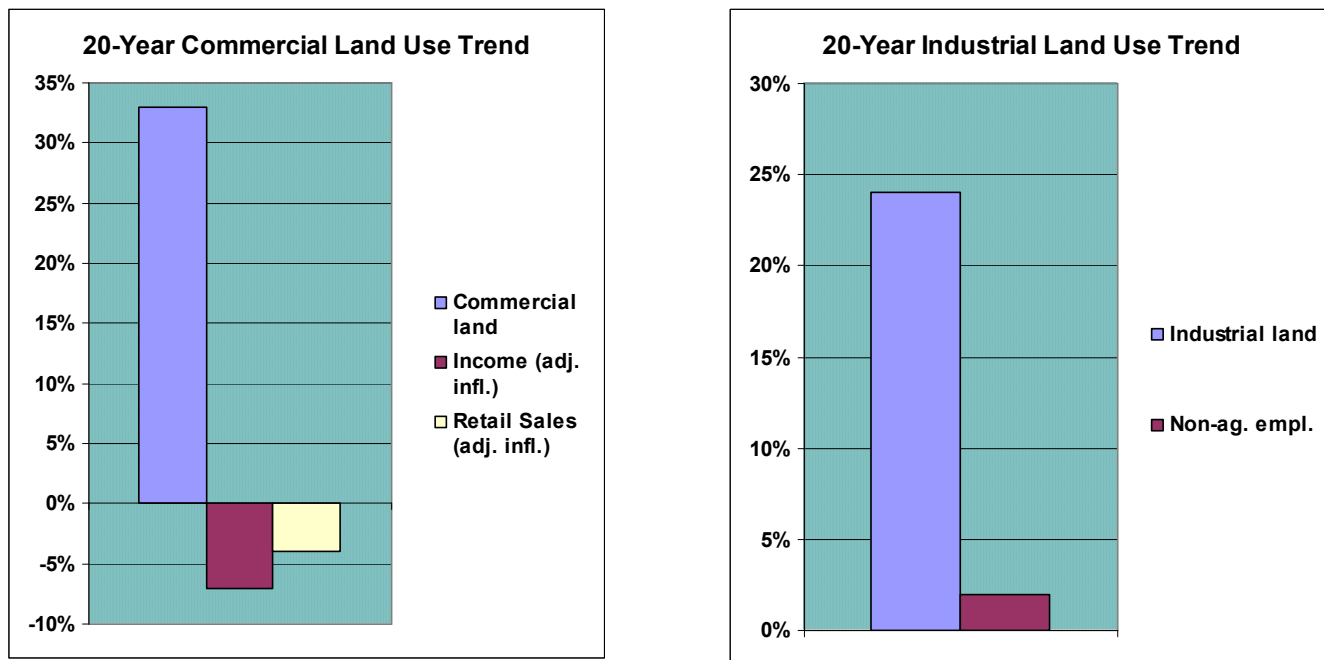


Figure 4 - Commercial and Industrial Land Use Trends



Open Space and Agricultural Preservation

Mercer County is still a predominantly rural county, with almost 92 percent of its total land area classified as Undeveloped (woodland, farm, parks, etc.). Although the total amount of undeveloped land increased slightly over the past ten years, there has been a net decrease since 1973 as shown below. This decrease is primarily due to larger lot sizes for all uses, particularly residential.

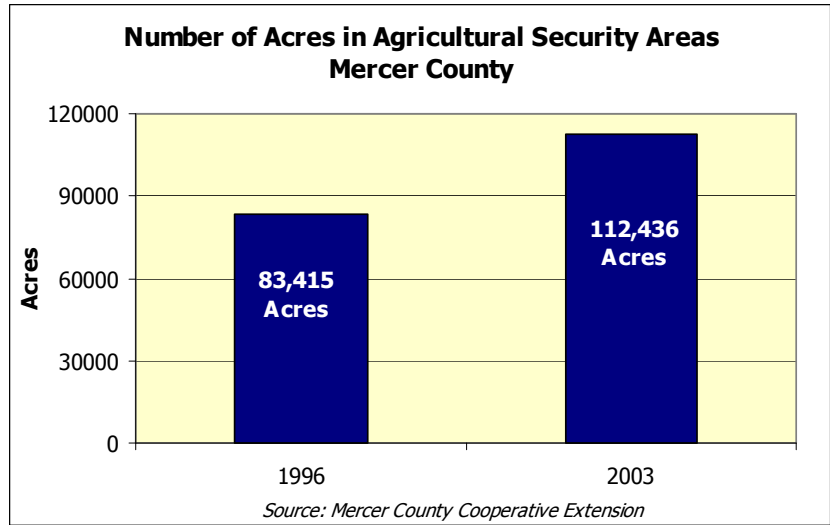
Table 10 Developed and Undeveloped Land Totals, 1973-2003

	1973		1993		2003		% Change 1973-93	%Change 1973 - 2003
	Acres	% Total Area	Acres	% Total Area	Acres	% Total Area		
Total Developed Land	26,100	6.1	36,791	8.5	35,743	8.2	41.0	36.9
Total Undeveloped Land	404,903	93.9	394,209	91.5	400,689	91.8	(2.6)	(1.0)

Mercer County has experienced a decline in the number of farms and acres of land in farms, but has a very successful Agricultural Security Area program, which has enrolled about one-quarter of the county's total acreage in Agricultural Security Areas. The ASA program was first created under Act No. 43 and it allows a landowner or landowners, who collectively own 250 or more acres of viable farmland, to protect their land from nonagricultural uses and obtain

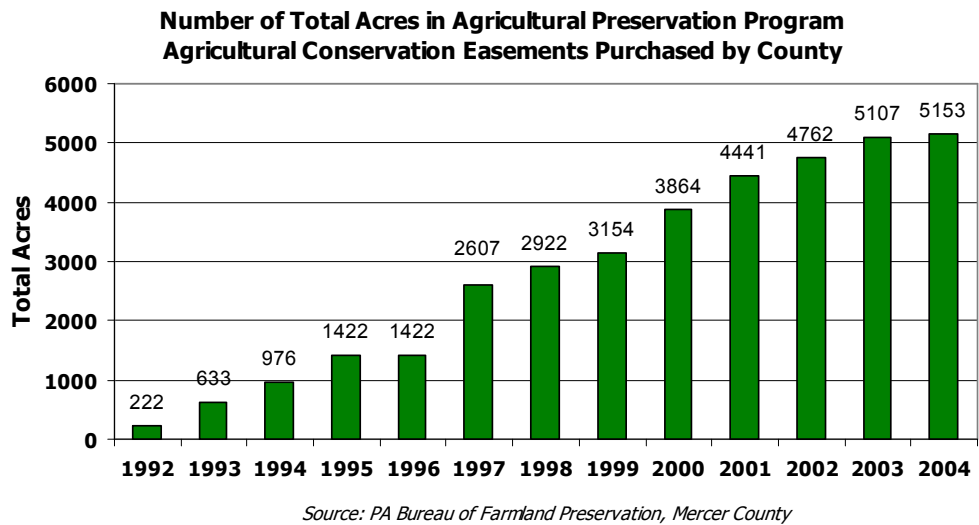
special considerations under local ordinances and state regulations. Unlike the conservation easement program, parcels included in an ASA are reevaluated every seven years and new parcels may be incorporated at any time.

Figure 5



The County also has an Agricultural Conservation Easements Purchase Program. Between 1992 and 2003 over 5,000 acres of farmland has been preserved through the purchase of conservation easements. On average, easements for approximately 425 acres have been purchased annually.

Figure 6



Shovel-Ready Industrial Areas

Table 11 lists the sites that are currently available through Penn-Northwest Development Corporation.

Table 11 Available Sites in Mercer County

Acreage	Property Name	Location	Zoning
2.3 acres	Reynolds North	Greenville-Reynolds Industrial Park	Industrial
14 acres	VIP Industrial Park	City of Hermitage	Industrial
18 acres	Broadway North	City of Sharon	Industrial
23+ acres	Lewnes/Poole Partnership	City of Hermitage	Industrial
40 acres	Jackson Commerce Park	Jackson Township	Industrial
41 acres	Wolf Fruit Farm Property	City of Hermitage	Planned Technical Park
42 acres	Barkeyville Road Property	Pine Township	Industrial
60 acres	Moroco Family Industrial Site	City of Hermitage	Industrial
82 acres	Stateline Industrial Park	City of Hermitage	Industrial
100 acres	Spanger/Quarterson Property - Coldwell Banker	City of Hermitage	Commercial
112 acres	LindenPointe	City of Hermitage	Planned Technical Park
150 acres	Reynolds East Business Park	Hempfield/Delaware Townships	Industrial
160 acres	Shenango Business Park	Shenango Township	Industrial

Source: Penn-Northwest Development Corporation. Available Sites, 2005.

Mercer County Brownfields

- The Pennsylvania Land Recycling Program was started in 1995 and has been responsible for over 1,300 clean ups in 64 counties across the commonwealth. The program focuses on redevelopment of brownfields and consists of four cornerstones – liability relief, financial incentives, uniform cleanup standards, and standardized reviews and time limits. According to the 2003 Annual Report, there have been a number of properties within Mercer County that have taken advantage of the program. These properties and their status are listed below.

Table 12

Mercer County Properties in the PA Land Recycling Program, 2003

Property	Location	Size	Status
Roemer Industries	Sharon	n/a	Remediated 1996
Sharon Steel	Farrell	17 acres	Met standards for a special industrial area in 1996
Sharon Steel	Farrell	1.2 acres	Met state standards 1996
Sharon Steel	Farrell	1.2 acres	Met state standards 1997
Sharon Steel	Farrell	35 acres	Met state standards 1998
Duferco Farrell Corp.	Farrell	104 acres	Remediated 2000
Nicholas Cianci	Greenville	n/a	Remediated 2000
Caparo Steel	Farrell	0.77 acres	Remediated 2001
Caparo Steel	Farrell	0.2 acres	Remediated 2002
Duferco Farrell Corp.	Farrell	104 acres	Remediated to special industrial area status 2001
BP	Hermitage		Remediated to statewide health standard 2002
Caparo Steel	Farrell	250 acres	Attained non-residential statewide standard 2002
Haywood Industries	Farrell	5.75 acres	Special Industrial Area 2001
L.M. Stevenson	Grove City	2 acres	Remediated to non-residential statewide standard 2002

Source: PA Land Recycling Program 2003 Report

- Legacy Commons, which includes the Broadway North and South Sites, and the Henry Evans Industrial Park are prime examples of the success of the Land Recycling Program. Located along the Broadway Avenue Industrial Corridor on segments of the Sharon Steel Property, the Broadway South site is fully occupied; the Broadway North site had only 18 acres available in the fall of 2005. The Sharon Tube Company chose to expand into the Henry Evans Park rather than into Ohio due to the opportunities provided by the Land Recycling Program. These figures will provide a baseline for monitoring the success of this program within Mercer County. A comprehensive list of all existing brownfields sites in the county would allow for a more accurate assessment of the success of redevelopment policies..

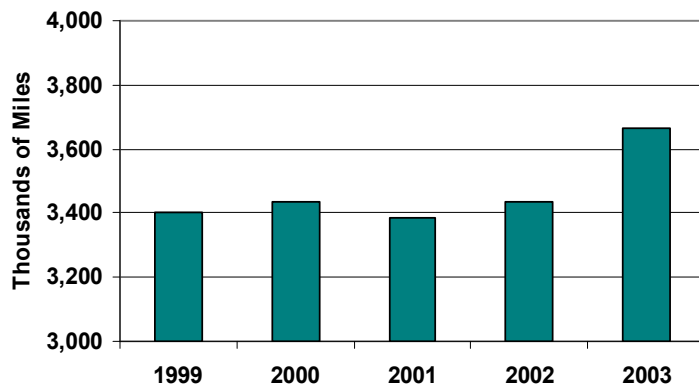
Transportation Indicators

Vehicle Miles Traveled and Congestion

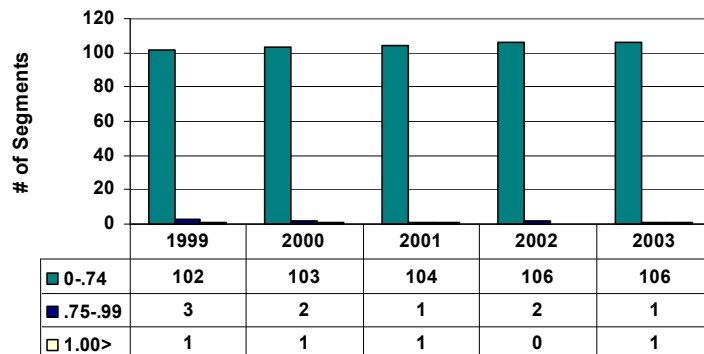
Vehicle traffic has grown in recent years, but county roads remain relatively free of congestion. The charts in Figure 7 show the Daily Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT)³ in Mercer County from 1999 to 2003. As shown, they remained relatively steady from 1999 to 2002; however, in 2003 there was a significant increase. The “Volume/Service Flow” chart shows that even though VMT has increased, only one roadway has been classified as having exceeded full capacity. In other words, there is only one section that would be considered congested. These trends also are indicative of sprawling development patterns and the continued separation of work and home.

Figure 7

Mercer County Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled
Source: PA Department of Transportation



Volume/Service Flow



1.00 = Full Capacity

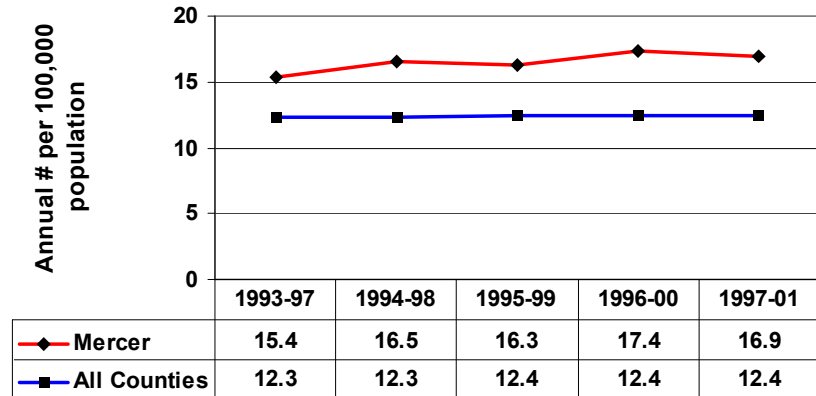
Source: PA Department of Transportation

³ Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled is a measure of the total traffic on the roads in Mercer County. This is a product of average daily traffic counts as well as the length of the roads in the County.

Traffic Safety

Mercer County has a greater rate of death from auto accidents, especially alcohol-related auto accidents, than from leading diseases.

Figure 8
Mercer County Motor Vehicle Death Rate

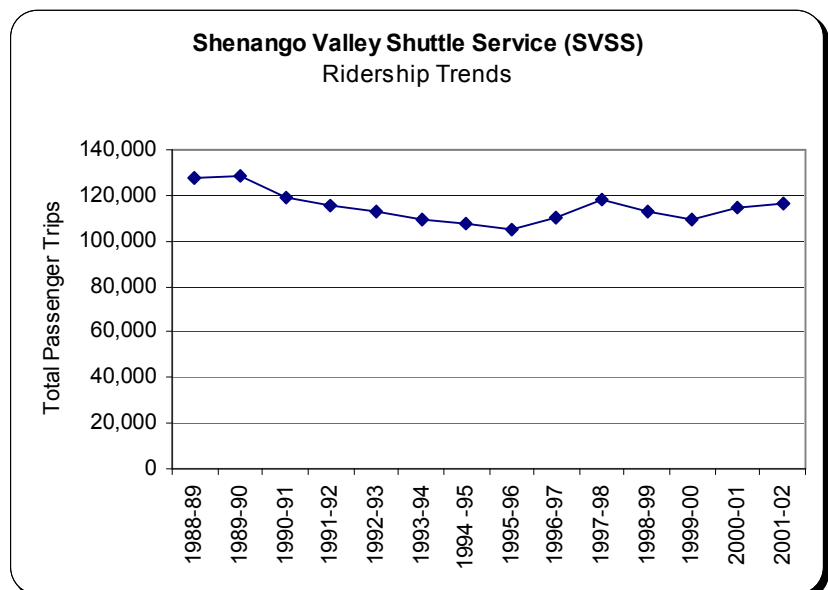


Source: PA Department of Health

Transit Ridership

After experiencing declines throughout the 1990s, ridership on the County's only transit system - the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (SVSS) - has rebounded to 1991 levels. The SVSS operates fixed route service in the Sharon/Hermitage area.

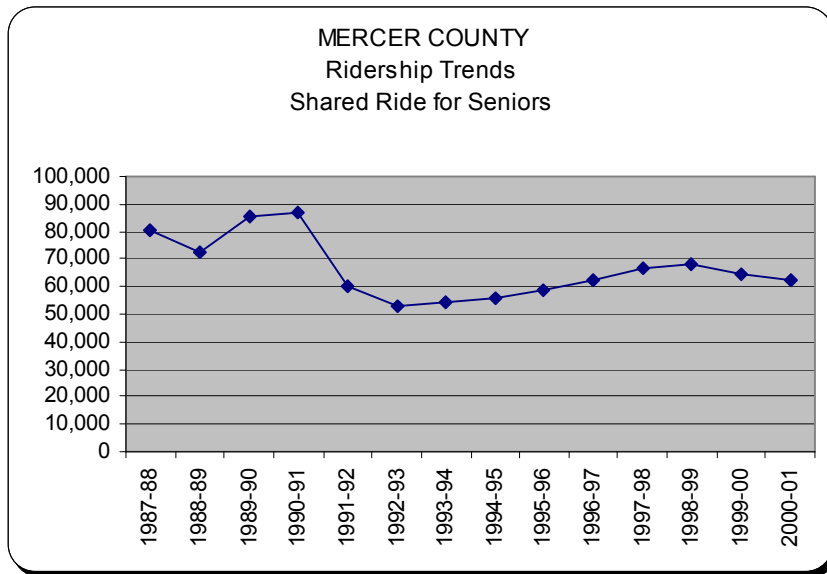
Figure 9 Transit Ridership Trends 1989 - 2002



Summary of Indicators

The County's Shared Ride program for seniors experienced a sharp drop in ridership between 1990 and 1993. This loss was gradually being recovered through the rest of the decade; however, since 1999 there has been another period of lost ridership. Ridership numbers should be

Figure 10 Shared Ride Trends, 1987-2001



Community Facilities and Services Indicators and Trends

Select Law Enforcement and Crimes Statistics

- Mercer County reported 77 full-time municipal law enforcement officers in 2001. As a ratio of full-time officers to residents, this figure represents 0.6 officers per 1,000 residents. This is the lowest ratio in the region. This figure does not include state police officers.
- Trends indicate that crime has declined over the past five years. Total crimes are down 44.6 percent and serious crimes declined by 49.5 percent.

Table 13 Law Enforcement and Crime Statistics and Trends, 1996-2001

	Total Full-Time Law Enforcement Officers, 2001	Officers Per 1,000 Residents	Total Crimes Per 100,000 Residents	Serious Crimes Per 100,000 Residents	Change in Total Crimes, 1996-2001	Change in Serious Crimes
Pennsylvania	23,550	1.9		2,591	0.90%	-11.60%
Mercer County	77	0.6	4,066	1,273	-44.60%	-49.50%
Butler County	202	1.1	9,627	1,947	53.60%	9.60%
Crawford County	94	1	5,887	1,919	-3.80%	-8.40%
Lawrence County	93	1	6,357	2,650	-0.50%	-3.30%
Venango County	60	1.1	9,429	2,344	-9.60%	-13.50%

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Firefighting Organizations Per 100,000 Residents

- Mercer County reported 25 firefighting organizations in 1997. As a ratio of organizations to residents, Mercer County has 20.5 organizations per 100,000 residents. This is the lowest ratio in the region and the same as that of Pennsylvania.
- The number of fire fighting organizations declined from 1993 to 1997, when the data was last collected.

Table 14 Fire Protection Organizations Statistics and Trends, 1993-1997

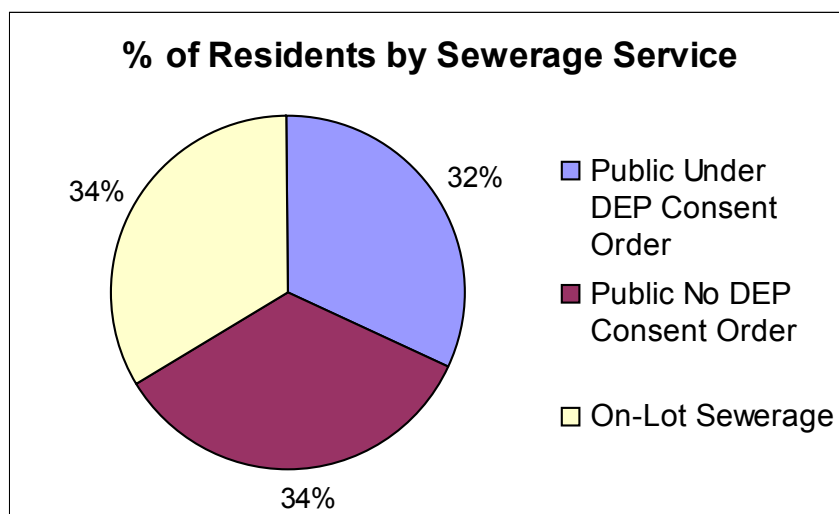
	Firefighting Organizations, 1997	Firefighting Organizations Per 100,000 Residents	Change in Firefighting Organizations, 1993-97
Pennsylvania	2,463	20.5	-2.70%
Mercer County	25	20.5	-7.40%
Butler County	37	21.9	0.00%
Crawford County	28	31.3	-12.50%
Lawrence County	22	23.1	0.00%
Venango County	20	34.4	-9.10%

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Water and Sewer Systems

Water and sewer systems in Mercer County are mostly aged and in need of significant upgrade. Capital improvement needs countywide amount to a minimum of \$137 million. One-third of county residents are connected to a public sanitary sewer system experiencing state water quality violations and under DEP consent order.⁴ Another third of county residents utilize on-lot sewage disposal systems, an unknown number of which have problems because of unsuitable soils.

Figure 11 Sewerage Service in Mercer County



The Department of Environmental Protection has created consent orders and agreements for municipalities which address potentially hazardous sewer outfalls. Municipalities must inventory and access sewers owned and repaired by the municipality; monitor the flow within sewers; implement an operation and maintenance plan to prevent future system deterioration; and continue to implement federally established controls.

⁴ A consent order and agreement is a signed agreement between a municipal authority and PA DEP that outlines a series of tasks needed to address potentially hazardous sewer outfalls, as well as a timeline to achieve the tasks, in order for the authority to meet the standards of the Federal Clean Water Act or the PA Clean Streams Law. The agreement also outlines the fees and penalties that would take effect should they not meet the terms of the agreement.

New indicators to monitor

In addition to these indicators assembled by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Mercer County may want to establish and measure additional indicators of community and utility services, such as:

- Average emergency call response time (in minutes) – in conjunction with County emergency dispatch
- Number of park/recreation facility visits per resident per year
- Number of bike-ped miles traveled
- Average distance/Average travel time between neighborhood parks

