

Mercer County Tomorrow - Values, Visions, Goals, Objectives, & Ingredients for Livable Communities

Residents of Mercer County choose to live here for a variety of reasons. Some are attracted to the County's rural character. Others find employment opportunities in the County and surrounding areas. And many choose to live close to family and friends they have known for a lifetime. Whatever the reason, their choice to live in Mercer County is based on their personal and community values.

Residents of Mercer County were asked to help focus the planning process on the unique issues and assets of the County. Several central themes emerged from their responses. These themes provided the foundation for a County-wide vision, goal statements, measures of progress (objectives and indicators), and strategies to address pressing issues and to preserve and enhance existing assets.

This chapter reports on the public involvement components of this planning process. The primary and on-going source of public input was the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC members were invited along with volunteer representatives from various county, regional, and local government organizations, as well as local interest groups. Additional input from the public and private sectors was gathered through stakeholder workshops. Regional public meetings were held to present and seek consensus on draft policy statements and strategies for improving quality of life. Project information was posted on the MCRPC website to provide project updates and public meeting announcements.



County Values

The planning process began by defining the features, resources and community qualities that make Mercer County a desirable place to live, work and play and those conditions and circumstances that cause concern for residents. A Stakeholders Workshop was held in the fall of 2003 to identify key assets of Mercer County, as well as to prioritize the variety of issues that impact the daily lives of the county's residents.

As part of the workshop, attendees worked in small, facilitated "focus groups" centered around the various elements of the comprehensive plan, including:

- Economic Development,
- Housing and Community Development,
- Community Facilities and Services,
- Land Use,
- Transportation, and
- Natural/Historic Resources and Recreation

The results of the focus group sessions were summarized and presented to the Planning Advisory Committee for review and validation. The summary of this process can be found in Appendix C, Technical Background Studies and Other Supporting Data.

The Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Planning Advisory Committee was established to provide input, feedback and pertinent information pertaining to the development of the comprehensive plan, as well as to present issues and concerns facing the future of Mercer County. The 42-member committee included municipal representatives, citizens, and representatives from many of the key organizations that will help implement the comprehensive plan.

The PAC met in February 2004, and as mentioned above, their first task was to review and validate the list of issues developed during the Stakeholders Workshop. Working in small groups, the PAC also identified additional sources of information. The complete summary is found in Appendix C.



The following presents the top issues identified by both the Stakeholders and the PAC. This information was used to update the Mercer County Vision Statement, Ingredients for Livable Communities, and the Growth and Development Policy Statement presented in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan - *Planning for Livable Communities*.

Top Five Priority Issues - Housing and Community Development	Vote Tally
Lack of reinvestment in housing in many neighborhoods – lack of investment in many neighborhood amenities (small business development, green space (active and passive)).	15
Communities under DEP consent order for sewer limits number of new, affordable housing units that can be built.	13
Northeast corner of the county is attractive; the rural atmosphere is drawing new residents. Small towns allow residents to enjoy rural atmosphere, and partake in urban amenities.	13
Housing in urban areas has public facilities (but rural housing can't find areas for new homes on public water and sewer)	10
Housing rehabilitation needed for all municipalities. Some municipalities provide rehab programs, many don't – USDA helps in rural areas.	8

Top Five Priority Issues - Community Facilities and Services	Vote Tally
(Lack of) Intergovernmental cooperation	15
Money - lack of funding for infrastructure projects – local, state, federal	16
Fragmentation of schools, social services and racial, local governments, fire, tax structure	15
Disparity among communities – services and finances	11
Public school performance – local and regional	7

Top Five Priority Issues - Land Use	Vote Tally
Creating a land use vision	21
Lack of sense of community (need neo-traditional planning, mixed-use approaches)	11
Strategy 1000	11
Continue to encourage infill development	9
Multi-municipal cooperation (zoning)	8
Multi-municipal planning	8

Top Five Priority Issues - Natural/Historic Resources and Recreation	Vote Tally
Development Pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher use of game land Influx of gas companies Change in the American dream 1 acre – now 4 acres Need cooperation of utilities to layout infrastructure in growth areas 	14
Loss of forests and agricultural lands due to parcelization	10
Water resource (water quality of streams) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1400 miles of streams – tied to historic resources; lakes – natural and man-made; potential for greenways, tourism, recreation scenic home sites, scenic community Wetlands need more attention 	15
Historic rail corridors – historic and recreation value	10
College/Universities as a cultural resource	9

Top Five Priority Issues - Transportation	Vote Tally
Need more pro-active transportation planning	13
Rail Corridor Preservation for future use	10
Congestion on PA 62 – SW to Mercer and New PA18 low speed limits	11
Better long range planning	6
I-80/79 should be looked at being converted to full interchange	5

Top Five Priority Issues - Economic Development	Vote Tally
Municipal fragmentation challenges coordination, need consolidation	26
Skilled set of workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of workers Fall short – not as competitive Need access to other labor data 	19
Sewer – utilities	18
Union mentality perception causes negative impact	13
Shovel ready sites	7

Community Vision

The PAC was also tasked with updating Mercer County's Vision Statement. The 1996 vision statement served as a foundation for extensive public and stakeholder discussion aimed at defining a comprehensive and collectively supported image of future conditions. It was agreed that the 1996 statement was still valid but needed to incorporate current issues, trends, and public preferences to better guide and inform county and local decision-making. Therefore, a revised Vision Statement was prepared, reviewed and approved that describes the ideal physical, social, and economic conditions for Mercer County's future.

The revised vision statement was then presented to the general public via two regional meetings and a second Stakeholder meeting. Comments and ideas were incorporated and resulted in the final Vision Statement as presented on the following page. The Statement will guide the development of county policies that address land use, natural resource protection, public utilities and service delivery, and transportation investments. The vision is written in the present tense to describe what Mercer County has achieved by 2025 (or sooner).

What is a Vision?

An overarching statement that describes the ideal or preferred physical, social, and economic fabric of the community in the future

A statement of what is collectively valued in a community or region, formed with input from a broad range of stakeholders and achieving consensus and collective support

In Year 2025...

...Mercer County maintains a diverse array of urban, suburban and rural community types, yet has grown in a manner that respects the rural character and provides a high quality of life for all residents.

...the County has embraced the concept of “smart growth,” as evidenced through guiding policies, strong leadership, and citizen feedback.

...existing towns continue to invest in their core districts and continue to grow in areas that are suitable for development. Municipalities plan and implement jointly to save costs and provide high-quality services as a region.

...economic opportunities are flourishing within the County, creating new jobs and attracting new residents. Sustainable forestry and agriculture are strong economic components of the rural landscape and economy.

...the County provides many recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities for residents and visitors through sound planning and program development.

...young persons are staying or moving to the region to take advantage of abundant entertainment and recreation opportunities, as well as safe, affordable neighborhoods well-served by water/sewer and telecommunications utilities.

...existing residents and newcomers enjoy many opportunities to live, work, learn, retire, and play among the County’s strong community fabric and friendly people.

Growth & Development Policy Statement

The PAC also worked to update Mercer County's Growth and Development Policy Statement. The revised version is presented below and focuses on the growth management policies needed for Mercer County to achieve the Vision statement on the previous page.

Mercer County and its communities should plan for continued development and should work to enhance the sense of place in each of the urban, suburban, and rural areas. This will be established by striving to achieve the Community Vision and by establishing policies that:

- define existing developed areas and areas for future growth
- encourage redevelopment in existing developed areas and encourage new development near existing developed areas
- balance a variety of land uses and densities, as well as combinations of uses, appropriate to urban, suburban, and rural character
- encourage land uses that support a strong tax base, including agriculture and forest industries in rural areas
- encourage development patterns that complement and preserve existing natural, environmental, and historic features
- coordinate infrastructure (water, sewer, and transportation) upgrades and extensions in areas of existing development and those areas targeted for growth
- incorporate public participation in the decision-making and land development process

These growth policy statements encompass sustainable smart growth principles where urban, suburban, and rural areas complement one another.

Goals

With an understanding of a more desirable community condition, a list of goals, objectives, and strategies that would enable the County to achieve its vision was prepared. Each item from the vision statements was categorized by its relationship to municipal planning and written as a Goal—a broad directive for enhancement or improvement. Objectives were then written to support each goal, describing various means by which to achieve progress. Finally, strategies detailed specific actions to be taken and were accompanied by relevant tools, partners, and funding resources in the various action plans (see Chapter 4). This categorization and development process involved

the Planning Advisory Committee, the County Planning Commission, and the County Commissioners as goals were deemed relevant to the County as a whole.

Land Use

Goal – Promote sound land use planning that is consistent with town, village and rural settings, as well as protecting the health and safety of the County’s residents. There is major concern in the Grove City area regarding the expansion of an existing waste transfer station into a land fill operation, which research has shown to be a health hazard. Local zoning and DEP regulations are the two primary tools for preventing the development of this project; the County can provide guidance, information, and other leadership to achieve this end.

Goal - Promote continued multi-municipal planning throughout the County. Include land use information from current projects.

Goal – Promote continued cooperation and coordination with surrounding counties.

General Objectives

- Provide technical guidance to municipal officials
- Continue to provide review of local subdivision plans and municipal and regional planning documents
- Guide new development in such a way as to minimize impacts on existing community character
- Continue Smart Growth Policy development and implementation
- Ensure consistency between land use designation and the availability of public sewer and water capacity
- Evaluate Growth Target areas
- Advance the application and capability of providing countywide GIS data, and expand linkage and coordination with public and private sector entities

Consistency Objectives

- Facilitate and incentivize multi-municipal planning efforts, joint zoning, and cooperative implementation agreements throughout the County, as well as with surrounding counties and states.
- Ensure consistency between the County and municipal and regional plans
- Enhance and maintain the County’s Future Land Use Map to ensure consistency with of the Growth and Development Policy statement
- Identify sites for future economic development

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- Identify agricultural security areas and conservation easements on the future land use map.

Revitalization Objectives

- Place more emphasis on revitalization (brownfields) vs. opening up “greenfields.”
- Identify existing brownfields sites that meet or could meet the needs of the Strategy 1000 initiative.
- Provide a concise and consistent definition of the revitalization area land use designation.
- Expand revitalization efforts beyond the “downtowns” to include residential neighborhoods.
- Implement land use controls to guide uses toward suitable sites and away from sensitive and productive natural resources.

Education Objectives

- Educate the general public about land use issues within the County and their implications for the future.
- Educate landowners, residents and prospective residents about the value of the agricultural and forest industries.
- Encourage stewardship of agricultural and forest land for recreation, timber production, wildlife habitat, and water quality protection

Economic Development

Business Development and Diversity Goal: Broaden economic development initiatives to include a wider variety of economic sectors and to better address the expansion of existing businesses.

Rural Industries Development Objectives

- Provide support for new agri-businesses, marketing, and other agriculturally related activities to encourage the sustainability and livelihood of the industry
- Promote and educate on the opportunities for sustainable forestry in urban, suburban, and rural areas and support the development of forestry related economic development initiatives
- Support the development of agriculture and forestry niche markets

Tourism and Community Promotion Objectives

- Promote the County's vision and incorporate the County's natural areas, green infrastructure, and wealth of recreational opportunities into tourism initiatives
- Market the low cost of living, affordable housing, educational opportunities, and safe communities to attract and retain young persons and new residents
- Develop a countywide tourism promotion program

Supporting Revitalization Objectives

- Promote reuse of brownfields and development of infill properties
- Streamline the process for review and approval for revitalization projects (brownfield, infill, and redevelopment projects)
- Focus incentives and programs (such as KIZ, KOEZ, and KOZ) in underutilized areas where infrastructure investment has already been made
- Give higher priority to brownfield, infill, and redevelopment projects in County grant programs, transportation programming, and infrastructure improvements

Supporting Land Use Objectives

- Designate a variety of land uses that will support an array of economic development possibilities through County and municipal future land use maps and ordinances
- Designate and develop a business industry corridor that is served by highways, rail, and sewer/water infrastructure
- Ensure sufficient land is available to accommodate new economic development in appropriate locations.

Supporting Infrastructure Objectives

- The LRTP and TIP should be compatible and promote timely transportation projects that support priority economic development initiatives
- Explore innovative financing mechanisms and agency cooperation to obtain funding for water and sewer infrastructure that supports priority economic development projects
- Place a higher priority on economic development sites that have supporting infrastructure in place and reasonable highway or rail access

Workforce Support and Development Goal: Improve workforce support and development to improve the employability of Mercer County residents.

Objectives

- Promote pre-employment training, on-the-job training, and on-going educational programs
- Link the local work force with existing businesses in Mercer County
- Identify work force needs of County businesses and coordinate with school districts, universities, and job training programs to prepare skilled workers for employment within Mercer County
- With local universities, encourage entrepreneurialism and incubator development that will support existing and new small businesses
- Provide a diversity of employment options for all citizens in order to help eliminate poverty in the county.

Leadership and Coordination Goal: Encourage leadership and coordination among public, private, and non-profit sectors to seamlessly carry out economic development initiatives.

Objectives

- Promote inter-governmental cooperation to reduce duplication of resources, streamline review and approval processes, and maximize time and resources
- Provide seamless coordination between the County, municipalities, developers, Penn-Northwest, and other economic development agencies to leverage and nurture new projects
- Seek out opportunities to partner with local universities, businesses, government agencies, and non-profit groups to achieve the County's economic development goals
- Continue to support and build leadership within Penn-Northwest and other public, private, and non-profit parties
- Encourage and support small businesses and entrepreneurs in the County

Housing

Housing Diversity Goal: Promote development of a diversity of well maintained housing options that meet a range of needs and income levels for County residents.

Objectives

- Continue to support development of new owner-occupied housing
- Develop or support development of housing options for seniors
- Promote construction or renovation of rental units(all types)

- Encourage a variety of housing designs, types and values to meet the residential needs of all segments of the County's present and future population
- Assist municipalities to develop alternative zoning/ subdivision and land development techniques that provide for flexible housing designs

Housing Maintenance Goal: Promote sound maintenance and modernization of existing housing.

Objectives

- Promote renovation of existing housing stock
- Eliminate and prevent conditions that contribute to and perpetuate blight in residential areas
- Assist municipalities with the development and enforcement of property maintenance codes

Residential Neighborhoods Goal: Promote safe, vibrant and livable neighborhoods.

Objectives

- Provide regulatory amendments that will augment the revitalization of existing neighborhoods
- Encourage redevelopment that is compatible with neighborhood character

Community Facilities, Services and Utilities

Libraries Goal: Maintain and enhance the County's public libraries.

Objectives

- Provide services to students, educators, and senior citizens
- Provide or partner to provide literacy programs
- Cooperate with the business community to make the library a center for business information and outreach
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and County on using the library as a source of information for tourists and prospective residents

Fire/Police/Emergency Management Services Goal: Provide public safety services that meet the needs of the Mercer County residents and reflect national and statewide standards.

Objectives

- Maintain the number of fire fighting organizations and volunteers that are consistent with statewide and regional standards
- Maintain the number of municipal police officers that are consistent with statewide and regional standards
- Provide training of public safety professionals
- Explore cooperative efforts to provide cost effective public safety services

Water and Sewer Infrastructure Goal: Encourage sanitary sewer and water systems that are cost-efficient, meet residents' needs, maintain community health, and provide an equitable level of service.

Objectives

- Meet existing community needs as a first priority
- Encourage cooperation and shared facility use by two or more government entities or agencies
- Develop facilities in a cost-effective manner
- Update Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plans
- Encourage innovative approaches to managing on-lot systems
- Support municipalities and authorities with their funding and repair initiatives to maintain existing sewer and water systems.

Supporting Land Use Objectives

- Encourage consistency between water and sewer infrastructure improvements and expansions and the growth management policies diagrammed on the future land use map.

Supporting Economic Development Objective

- Promote strategic investments in local water and sewer systems that will aid community revitalization and preservation, as well as to facilitate new growth and development in target growth areas.

Stormwater Management Goal: Manage development to minimize site disturbance and stormwater generation, to maximize infiltration (where appropriate) and to maintain water quality

Objectives

- Work with municipalities to update stormwater regulations to adequately address water quality as required by government agencies

- Encourage best practices and innovative stormwater management techniques to minimize runoff from new land development, thereby reducing potential for increased flooding and flood damage
- Minimize erosion potential from existing development and construction sites

Solid Waste Infrastructure Goal: Provide an adequate solid waste disposal and collection system to serve the needs of Mercer County residents while maintaining public health, environmental, and land use compatibility standards

Objectives

- Encourage coordination of solid waste planning and programming at all levels of government through the Mercer County Act 101 Municipal Waste Management Plan
- Support the development and continuation of recycling programs
- Promote proper handling and location of disposal sites for hazardous materials and solid waste

Natural Resources

Resource Systems Goal: Retain natural landscape systems

Objectives

- Coordinate land use planning with resource knowledge and management.
- Strengthen municipal regulations to minimize the impact of development on sensitive environmental features and their functions.
- Assist municipalities in assembling essential data to support local regulations.
- Develop and maintain a detailed resource inventory for each planning region or watershed in the County.
- Promote connectedness of landscape features.

Resource Quality Goal: Sustain or improve the quality of natural and manmade environmental features

Objectives

- Promote forest stewardship by landowners and residents for recreation, timber production, wildlife habitat, and water quality protection

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- Utilize existing organizations to promote the use of sustainable forestry practices to woodland owners.

Resource-based Industries Goal: Encourage the sustainable management of natural resources for resource-based industries

Objectives

- Promote the accessibility and marketability of local forest and agricultural products through farmers' markets, trade shows, etc.
- Promote managed development of tourism destinations, activities, and programs that showcase the County's natural resources

Education Goal: Demonstrate (or support demonstration of) the value of the natural environment to landowners, residents, and visitors

Objectives

- Integrate environmental education efforts with nature-based recreation sites.

Cultural Resources

Historic Preservation Goal: Support protection and encourage active use of historic sites

Objectives

- Support preservation and conservation easements of historic sites.
- Encourage innovative development approaches that integrate historic resources into new site and building design
- Encourage innovative approaches to adaptive reuse and building rehabilitation/ restoration

Supporting Tourism and Community Promotion Objective

- Promote cultural sites and events to residents and visitors

Supporting Recreation Objective

- Integrate historical interpretation efforts with the recreation network

Contemporary Identity Goal: Promote a culture of connectedness to community

Objectives

- Promote community vision and values statements, as defined by municipal and multi-municipal planning efforts.
- Promote strong community leadership and volunteerism.
- Promote participation in community decision-making
- Promote heritage events and other cultural activities
- Promote community coordination and cooperation where common values and objectives exist

Recreation

Recreation Network Goal: Support development and sustainable management of a recreational network across Mercer County

Objectives

- Promote a guideline of 10 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents in urbanized areas.
- Encourage urbanized municipalities to provide neighborhood parks within walking or short-driving distance (10 minute walk or 5 minute drive) of residential areas.
- Develop and support development of on-road and off-road trails that link residential neighborhoods with park facilities.
- Encourage the development of accessible resource-based recreation opportunities, e.g. fishing piers, playgrounds, etc.
- Encourage the development of adequate recreational infrastructure, e.g. parking, trash receptacles, picnic and seating benches, restrooms, etc.
- Assist municipalities in budgeting and exploring funding options for facility maintenance and policing.
- Encourage new development to incorporate trail connections with adjacent properties.
- Encourage re-development of underused or substandard recreation facilities.
- Encourage shared use of specialized recreational facilities (e.g. indoor swimming pools) that require significant investment and operations/maintenance support.

Recreation Services Goal: Support provision of year round recreational programs for residents of all ages

Objectives

- Support recreational and leisure programs for specific age groups (pre-school, elementary, teens, adults, seniors) and for intergenerational groups.
- Integrate environmental education and historical interpretation efforts with the recreation network.

Recreation Network Goal (same as urban): Support development and sustainable management of a recreational network across Mercer County

Objectives (different from urban)

- Promote a guideline of 3 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents in rural municipalities.
- Encourage rural municipalities to plan for and develop recreational facilities jointly.
- Encourage the development of accessible resource-based recreation opportunities, e.g. fishing piers, trails.
- Encourage the development of adequate recreational infrastructure, e.g. parking, trash receptacles, picnic and seating benches, restrooms, etc.
- Assist municipalities in budgeting and exploring funding options for facility maintenance and policing.
- Encourage re-development of underused or substandard recreation facilities.

Recreation Services Goal (same as urban): Support provision of yearround recreational programs for residents of all ages

Objectives (different from urban)

- Encourage rural municipalities to plan for and develop recreational services jointly.
- Support recreational and leisure programs for specific age groups (pre-school, elementary, teens, adults, seniors) and for intergenerational groups.
- Integrate environmental education and historical interpretation efforts with the recreation network.

Transportation

Goal: Identify transportation projects that improve the county's economic viability

Objectives

- Advance transportation projects that take advantage of brownfield reuse and other similar opportunities such as KOZ sites.
- Upgrade any bridges that pose as bottlenecks to regional shipping needs.
- Advance projects in support of goods movement.
- Upgrade older urban corridors as part of downtown revitalization efforts.
- Work with key shippers in identifying transportation system improvement needs.

Goal: Improve the safety and security of the county's transportation system.

Objectives

- Improve the safety of the highway system by implementing safety improvements and by considering safety concerns in all TIP projects.
- Consider PennDOT Crash data and trends in TIP development and updates.
- Continue to monitor all security related planning guidance from Homeland Security, FEMA, FHWA, PennDOT, and PEMA.
- Continue to participate in District ITS planning activity.

Goal: Improve accessibility and mobility options for people and freight

Objectives

- Develop and maintain an integrated transportation system utilizing bicycle/pedestrian, rail, air, and highway networks in meeting the goals of TEA-21.
- Improve accessibility of system for all users, including persons with disabilities.

Goal: Environment, Energy Conservation and Quality of Life

Objectives

- Coordinate local land use and zoning with roadway network capacities.
- Expand the skills of decision makers and planning commission officials' use in the coordination of land use and transportation planning techniques.

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- Encourage policies that will minimize growth in single occupant vehicle travel.
- Promote the use of public transportation and ridesharing.

Goal: Improve the connectivity of the county's transportation system.

Objectives

- Preserve right of way for major highway projects.
- Improve rural area accessibility to the interstate network, where consistent with desired growth and development objectives.
- Support the development of adequate facilities (terminals/stations/park and ride lots, etc.) for linking different modes of transportation.

Goal: System Management and Operation

Objectives

- Encourage municipalities to use access management techniques.
- Improve system management and operation through ITS.
- Continue to work with the Youngstown MPO on the distribution of transit program dollars and related issues.
- Work to get corridors placed on PennDOT's Congested Corridor Program.
- Work with PennDOT in alleviating the financial burden of I-80 and I-79 on the county's program.

Goal: System Preservation

Objectives

- Continue PennDOT's policy of Maintenance First with respect to giving priority to the county's existing transportation system.
- Continue to provide input to PennDOT on regional maintenance and betterment needs
- Monitor the county's rail freight network to ensure needed long-term capacity and current operability.

Ingredients for Livable Communities

Eight vision themes have been defined from the earlier vision statement.

- Recreational Opportunities
- Cultural, Historic, and Entertainment Resources
- Economic Development
- Smart Growth & Community Character
- Inter-governmental Cooperation
- Environmental and Natural Resources
- Infrastructure (transportation, water, sewer)
- Community Social Fabric

Each vision theme is related to a list of ingredients or elements that Mercer County will need to focus on to achieve a high quality of life and livable communities. Like the 2004/2005 Vision Statement, the Ingredients for Livable Communities Matrix was based upon the ingredients for livable communities listed in the 1996 Mercer County Comprehensive Plan and revised with input from public meetings and the Planning Advisory Committee. Some ingredients may be relevant to more than one theme, yet have been placed under the most relevant theme. This matrix was used to help facilitate prioritizing exercises with the PAC and Stakeholders.

The Ingredients for Livable Communities Matrix follows.

Ingredients for Livable Communities Matrix

VISION THEMES								
Ingredients for livable communities	Recreational Opportunities	Cultural, Historic, and Entertainment Resources	Economic Development	Smart Growth & Community Character	Inter-governmental Cooperation	Environmental and Natural Resources	Infrastructure (transportation, water, sewer)	Community Social Fabric
	Well-maintained, well-connected parks, trails and recreational facilities	Cultural and artistic events	Healthy, diverse, economy	Innovative land use regulations (zoning and SALDO)	Regionally consistent (possibly joint) land use policies and tools	Sustainable agricultural and forestry activities	Safe ease of movement for all modes of transportation (automotive, rail, air, bicycle, pedestrian)	Safe, friendly communities
	Variety of recreational programs for all ages	Preserved cultural and historic sites, structures, and landscapes	Variety of job opportunities	Strong sense of community character (unique features)	Regional cooperation to deliver services (police, fire, recreation)	Available resource preservation tools (purchase conservation easements, ASAs)	Well-maintained water and sewer infrastructure	Good schools, libraries, and educational opportunities
	Recreational opportunities available to visitors/tourists	Variety of event venues	Entrepreneurs working to initiate new business ideas	Sound, affordable, diverse housing	Tax-base sharing	Good water quality	Planned infrastructure expansion in areas targeted for growth	Encourage diversity and a feeling of openness
		Cultural, Historic, and Entertainment Resources available to visitors and tourists	Public-private partnerships	Conserved natural and historic resources within developed areas	Open and clear communication mechanisms	Programs that encourage private resource stewardship	Inter-modal connections	Good, locally available health care and human services
			Government policies and regulations that support economic development	Attractive vibrant downtowns		Detailed, up -to-date environmental resource inventory	Public transit in densely developed areas and for elderly and ADA persons	Attractive public spaces

VISION THEMES								
	Recreational Opportunities	Cultural, Historic, and Entertainment Resources	Economic Development	Smart Growth & Community Character	Inter-governmental Cooperation	Environmental and Natural Resources	Infrastructure (transportation, water, sewer)	Community Social Fabric
			Productive rural industries (agri-businesses, forest industries, etc.)	Mixed use community centers		Regulations that protect sensitive environmental resources	Managed corridor access	
			Business development/re development assistance services	Quality design		Recycling services/programs		
						Designated greenway networks		

