
Chapter 6

The Action Plan

For Mercer County to achieve its vision for greenways, open space, and rural recreation, new, continued and expanded efforts by the county and its many partners are needed. Together, they must answer this question: “How can we change what we do today in order to become the community we want to be?”

The Action Plan outlines recommendations that answer this question. They build on the goals outlined in Chapter 5 by designating measurable objectives and recommending coordinated policies, programs, and tasks.

The recommendations or strategies were developed throughout the public involvement and technical process of the project. Recommendation ideas were suggested by stakeholders and interviewees, greenways committee members, MCRPC staff and the project consultant. The entire list of recommendations was reviewed with the greenways committee to determine which suggestions would be effective in helping the county and its partners achieve the established goals and therefore should be put into the action plan. The greenways committee, MCRPC, and the consultant also discussed the priority of each recommendation to determine which should be implemented in the short term, and which should be longer term initiatives. Finally, the committee gave input to the list of partners, confirming those that should lead each strategy's implementation, and those that should be involved in a supporting or otherwise participatory role.

The Action Plan is presented in three sections. The high priority strategies, those that should be implemented in the next 2-3 years, are shown in a concise matrix format. This format allows MCRPC and its partners to focus on the heart of the plan – what needs to happen first. The matrix includes the high priority strategies, their respective implementing partners and potential funding sources, as well as the goals. As these strategies are completed or achieve sustaining momentum, the partners can then begin to program implementation of the mid and low priority strategies that are listed in the subsequent text with the anticipated implementing partners and funding sources. Finally, the strategies are classified by type to clearly illustrate the nature of the strategy. The Mercer County Comprehensive used three classifications:

- Strategies for Organization and Coordination
- Strategies for Planning and Implementation
- Strategies for Regulatory Guidance and Enforcement

Since DCNR and other funding agencies may be interested in a finer classification, one more specific to open space and recreation missions and programs, a closing matrix classifies the strategies by the DCNR's objectives for county greenways, open space, and recreation plans:

- Open Space Protection, Conservation, and Productivity
- Greenway and Recreation Sites, Networks and Linkages
- Land Acquisition Strategies
- Administration, Management, and Maintenance
- Marketing and Communication
- Land Use Policies and Regulations
- Future Studies/Plans

**GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN
HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES**

GOALS	<p>Greenways: Promote the management and interpretation of natural systems and cultural, historic, and scenic resources through designated corridors.</p> <p>Open Space: Promote the protection of sensitive environmental systems and the managed use of open space lands.</p> <p>Rural Recreation: Support the development and sustainable management of a recreational network and associated programs across Mercer County to interconnect the communities and their resources.</p> <p>Community Growth and Development: Foster sound growth and development that respects open space and integrates recreational amenities.</p> <p>Education: Promote a thorough understanding of the functions and benefits of open space, greenways, outdoor recreation, and community development to residents.</p>
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Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</p> <p>1. Develop a rural industries strategy to sustain and enhance the agricultural and forest industries in Mercer County. This strategy should evaluate current and future forces that threaten the sustainability of agriculture and forestry in this area from within the county and from a global perspective. Specifically, the study should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the strengths, weaknesses and apparent threats to rural industries. • Assess global import/export trends in crop, livestock, and forestry industries; identify the local implications of changing markets, consumer demands and associated impacts. • Identify needed changes in technology, commodities and/or markets. • Determine the effects on agricultural and forest land use and land value. • Establish community planning initiatives and economic incentives to preserve the industries. • Develop innovative marketing approaches. 	<p>LEAD: Conservation District and Cooperative Extension</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: Agricultural landowners, Mercer County agricultural and agribusiness organizations, land trusts and conservancies, local watershed organizations, MCRPC</p>	<p>DEP funding to conservation district; Sustainable Development Challenge Grants; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service</p>

GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES		
Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</p> <p>2. In advance and consistent with the rural industries strategy, actively support rural industries and publicize the organizations that provide support and protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify where volunteer stewardship by private landowners is desired and where public land management or land transfer is preferred. Implement best management practices (BMPs) consistent with the landowner’s management objectives. Encourage landowners to enroll agricultural land in conservation programs, e.g. the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program, in priority conservation areas and pursue preservation programs, e.g. the Mercer County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, in greenways. Encourage landowners to enroll forest land in conservation programs, e.g. the Clean and Green – Forest Reserve Program, in priority conservation areas and pursue preservation, e.g. the Forest Legacy Program, in greenways. Strive to match available farms with new farmers and available forest land with new forest owners to sustain the respective uses and management objectives where possible. (See Economic Development Action Plan) 	<p>LEAD: Mercer County (via county department/agency websites)</p>	<p>Implementation Partners, DEP funding to conservation district; Sustainable Development Challenge Grants; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service</p>
	<p>SUPPORT: Mercer County agricultural and agribusiness organizations, land trusts and conservancies, local watershed organizations, DCNR/Bureau of Forestry, MCRPC, WPC</p>	

**GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN
HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES**

Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p>A Strategy for Organization and Coordination</p> <p>3. Establish local and/or a regional recreation commission to serve the residents of rural communities with recreation facilities, programs and services. Options include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the Greenville Area Leisure Services Association, • Expanding the service of the MC Regional Council of Governments, or • Creating a new regional organization <p>These options are not mutually exclusive. In fact, all three options may be needed to best meet the needs of residents in rural municipalities. Investigating current recreation participation and interest in additional or expanded recreation activities should be a first point of discussion among the implementing parties and rural residents.</p>	<p>LEAD: MCRPC (for initial coordination of) municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships, school districts, public and private recreation organizations</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: MCRPC, business community (e.g. chambers of commerce), YMCA, youth organizations (scouts, boys/girls clubs, etc), Area Agency on Aging, health and wellness advocates</p>	<p>Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP); DCNR peer-to-peer/circuit rider programs; DCED Shared Municipal Services Program</p>
<p>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</p> <p>4. Interconnect public facilities, locally with bike-pedestrian networks and regionally with active greenways (trails).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide safe crossings of roadways, railways, waterways and other features. • Provide trail heads in convenient locations that include parking (automobile/bicycle), trash and recycling receptacles, signage, and lighting. • Clearly identify land and water trail heads in the community. • Incorporate interpretive signage to provide environmental education, conservation, and resource protection information to users. • Strive to provide a major trail within 5-7 miles of each resident. See also Transportation Action Plan; Economic Development Action Plan; Community Facilities, Services and Utilities Action Plan. (Continued) 	<p>LEAD: Mercer County Trails Association, public and private recreation organizations</p> <hr/> <p>SUPPORT: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships (officials/authorities/public works), MCRPC, developers, landowners, natural resource agencies (for interpretive signage), watershed organizations, WPC, Natural Lands Trust, health and wellness advocates</p>	<p>Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), developers (land dedication), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED), Community Revitalization Program, PennDOT Transportation Enhancements Program, DEP funding to conservation districts, U.S. Department of Agriculture Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, private foundations and sponsors</p>

GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES		
Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p>The Greenways Map and supporting tables illustrate and outline several major and minor active greenways. Local efforts are leading the way in developing and enhancing these corridors for bicycle-pedestrian travel. The opportunities for greenways (listed in Chapter 5) show that there are logical places to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ begin the land acquisition or easement process in order to implement existing plans, e.g. the Mercer County MPO Bike-Ped Action Plan and recreation elements of regional comprehensive or recreation/open space plans, ▪ designate new trail alignments, ▪ extend existing trail facilities, or ▪ focus outreach to landowners regarding future trails or open space conservation. <p>Once alignments are designated, they should be evaluated for safety, convenience, and natural and cultural resource interpretation, and new projects for appropriate improvements/enhancements should be developed.</p> <p>As projects are identified by local municipalities and organizations, Mercer County should provide technical and/or financial assistance to help implement existing plans or study new project ideas. Fortunately, transportation planning is strength at MCRPC; the staff has technical assistance and is familiar with a variety of funding sources for trail-type projects.</p>		

GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE AND RURAL RECREATION PLAN HIGH PRIORITY ACTION STRATEGIES		
Strategies	Implementing Parties	Funding Sources
<p>A Strategy for Planning and Implementation</p> <p>5. Through adoption of this plan, establish a Mercer County standard for recreation in rural areas. This policy includes:</p> <p>1) municipalities should meet the recreational needs of residents independently or through multi-municipal partnerships.</p> <p>2) municipalities should provide 3 acres of municipal recreation land per 1,000 residents;</p> <p>3) municipalities should include provisions for recreational land dedication and/or fees-in lieu thereof in their subdivision and land development ordinance or by way of reference to the Mercer County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance*; and</p> <p>4) development within ½ mile of major trails should contribute to local trail networking through subdivision techniques, land or easement donation or fees-in-lieu, as well as the construction of the trail extension.</p> <p>MCRPC should assist in municipal plan preparation and updates and ordinance revisions, where needed.</p>	<p>LEAD: municipalities, developers</p>	<p>Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR); DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP); LUPTAP (DCED)</p>
	<p>SUPPORT: MCRPC, Mercer County Trails Association, PPA, PSATS</p>	
<p>* The Pennsylvania MPC requires an adopted recreation plan as a prerequisite for adopting a mandatory dedication of land ordinance at the county and municipal levels, respectively. This county plan is not expected to be substituted for an adopted municipal recreation plan, but may be used as a tool in seeking funding for such a plan and for consistency with the county’s intent for partnerships.</p>		

Additional Funding Sources can be found in Financing Municipal Recreation and Parks: A Resource Guide for Recreation, Parks and Conservation, 2005 DCNR publication available at www.dcnr.state.pa.us or by calling 717-787-7672.

Keys to Success

1. Regional Perspective and Intergovernmental Cooperation
2. Community Needs Assessment: Citizen Input and Building Awareness
3. Effective Civic Leaders and “Everyday Volunteers”
4. Soliciting Dollar Support and Leveraging Resources
5. Combining Free (Tax Supported) and Fee-based Recreation Programs to Support Recreation Programs and Facilities
6. Managing the Budget

*From Keys to Success in Community Recreation Initiatives:
Four Stories in North Central Pennsylvania, DCNR, 2003*

Medium and Low Priority Strategies

The following are the medium and low priority strategies for greenways, open space and rural recreation. These strategies were evaluated as important issues and efforts that would improve quality of life over the long term.

As previously stated, the partners can begin to program implementation of the mid and low priority strategies once the high priority strategies are completed or achieve sustaining momentum. Timeframes of 3-7 years (2008-2012) for medium priority strategies and 7-15 years (2012-2020) for low priority strategies are suggested to review these initiatives. The goals are listed for easy reference.

GOALS

Greenways: Promote the management and interpretation of natural systems and cultural, historic, and scenic resources through designated corridors.

Open Space: Promote the protection of sensitive environmental systems and the managed use open space lands.

Rural Recreation: Support the development and sustainable management of a recreational network and associated programs across Mercer County to interconnect the communities and their resources.

Community Growth and Development: Foster sound growth and development that respects open space and integrates recreational amenities.

Education: Promote a thorough understanding of the functions and benefits of open space, greenways, outdoor recreation, and community development to residents.

Strategies for Organization and Coordination

Medium Priority

1. **Encourage agricultural landowners to make open space available to hunters through the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Cooperative Farm Game/Safety Zone Program.** This program provides hunters with access to hundreds of acres of open space for wildlife and game hunting. The program promotes respect between sportsmen and land owners and assists in the development of good land use practices that improve small game habitat. The program is administered through executed agreements between landowners (cooperators) and the Game Commission to make the property's hunting rights available to the Game Commission for 5 years or more. Cooperators are eligible to receive the following benefits and services from the Game Commission:
 - food and cover seedlings that attract beneficial game and preference in the pheasant stocking program,
 - increased patrol and law enforcement during hunting seasons,
 - signs warning hunters not to commit unlawful acts,
 - advice on soil conservation and other farm practices, and
 - cutting of woodland borders to remove shade and tree roots from cropland areas and provide immediate cover for wildlife.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: Game Commission – Wildlife Conservation Officers conduct outreach to farmers interested in the program.

SUPPORT: Conservation District for identification of potential cooperators and assistance in soil conservation guidance

FUNDING: Implementation Partners

2. **Coordinate bicycle and pedestrian enhancements (e.g. increased shoulder widths, designated bike lanes, and trail connections) with larger scale transportation projects.** Transportation projects can often address more than one mode. A road or bridge widening can incorporate a bike lane or an intersection improvement can upgrade adjacent sidewalks and crosswalks. As transportation projects are considered by the Mercer MPO, PennDOT, and local municipalities, project partners should consider how such improvements (or even maintenance tasks) could concurrently improve travel for other modes. The Recreation Network Map identifies several sites and corridors for land-based trails and scenic driving/biking corridors. These locations should be reviewed when planning and programming transportation projects for opportunities to coordinate the timing and perhaps leverage the investment of such improvements. (See also the Transportation Action Plan)

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: Municipalities, PennDOT, Mercer County Trails Association

FUNDING: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED)

3. **Assist municipalities and recreation organizations in marketing their facilities and services.** Throughout the project, there was discussion that recreation sites were underutilized and that residents didn't know what kinds of recreation opportunities were available. A marketing campaign could address these issues, by publicizing sites and services more aggressively. This strategy should be combined with a program to measure the change in use of the sites before and after the marketing campaign. ("Before" data may already exist in various reports of program participation, site reservations, etc. If not, before it should be captured in advance of the marketing campaign.) The marketing campaign could include the following elements, as well as others:
- recreation maps by community/municipality,
 - special events related to recreation and other community and cultural interests held at recreation sites to familiarize new users to the sites,
 - a recreation webpage on the County or MCRCOG website, and links to the page from municipal websites,
 - a press series (newspaper, radio, etc.) featuring recreation sites and services.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships, public and private recreation organizations

SUPPORT: MCRPC, health and wellness advocates, Area agency on Aging, Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chambers of Commerce, recreation organizations

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP)

4. **Promote clean recreation facilities.** Clean recreation sites can be the jewel of a community, since residents often translate clean places as safe places and are more likely to be utilized. But if cleanliness is solely the responsibility of the owner, it can be a time and resource intensive task. Promoting sites cleanliness as "everyone's responsibility" can greatly relieve the cost of maintenance for the site owner. Most commonly, owners provide trash receptacles and trash collection. Alternatively, owners can promote litter-free outdoor recreation environments by encouraging recreationists to "pack in and pack out" supplies and trash, thus reducing or even eliminating the need for trash receptacles and trash collection. Where this shared-responsibility approach is not feasible, owners should provide regular clean-up and maintenance service to each site.

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: Mercer County Regional Council of Governments, municipalities, recreation organizations

SUPPORT: DNCR

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP)

Strategies for Planning and Implementation

- 5. Review municipal comprehensive plans and regulations for consistency with county guidance for recreational land and service provisions. Recommend appropriate recreation provisions, as needed.** Consistency is an increasingly important part of policy, decision-making and investment. Funding program sponsors want to see that applicant projects have support of local and regional officials. Demonstrating consistency can help grant applicants be more competitive for limited funding programs. This may require modifications to existing policy or a clear statement on why there is inconsistency, such as a special local issue.

The county planning staff has the unique perspective of how different municipalities operate, including local planning initiatives and regulatory requirements and their impacts on the community. From this perspective, the staff can assess which policies are effective and consistent with county objectives and communicate with local officials the success of existing policy or the benefits of a revised policy.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: Municipalities, Natural Lands Trust

FUNDING: Natural Lands Trust (mini-grants)

- 6. Publicize the designated greenways and develop greenway master plans to focus and define efforts to protect resources in these corridors.** The Greenways Map illustrates the areas and corridors where the most sensitive resources should be protected from the impacts of intensive human activity and development. These same areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map in the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan as Natural Resources Protection Areas.

The county should publicize these greenways by including them on county land use and open space maps, and offering these GIS data layers to municipalities for use in their own planning and mapping activities. The county should also work with partners to develop greenway master plans. Each master plan should address a single greenway corridor or region, and should more specifically define the type (active/passive) and location/alignment of that greenway.

Active greenways are natural resource areas that are open to public recreation, and may include new and existing parks, walking paths, and trails; active greenways may also include bicycle-pedestrian and streetscape networks.

Passive greenways are natural resource areas that are managed for their ecological function and value to the community; they are not open to the public.

Since the greenways represent the most sensitive environmental features of the county, protection and stewardship should be strongest in these areas. Such protection could range from acquisition to easement purchase to landowner agreements and landowner stewardship. Acquisition and easements will likely be required for the active, recreational greenways; private efforts to steward resources and permit limited public access, e.g. for hunting and fishing, are recommended for passive greenways. This approach will limit the public funding required to “protect” these areas and the administrative and management demands of public property, and honor the rights of private landowners.

Partners should consider active greenway corridors as priority locations for future low-impact recreational facilities, since these corridors can accommodate trails for bicyclists and pedestrians. As active greenways with recreational trails and parks evolve, these greenways should also be shown on tourism maps.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships, public and private recreation organizations

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP), Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED)

7. **Develop a plan for historic resource protection.** This strategy goes hand-in-hand with Cultural Resources Action Plan of the comprehensive plan. The primary purpose of this recommended plan is to:
- Inventory historic features (sites, districts, or other features) – which sites, where are they located, what is the historic significance, who owns the sites today, and how are they used today.
 - Determine what threatens these sites and how severe the threat is – lack of occupancy/ownership, lack of maintenance, development pressure, etc.
 - Determine what kind of protection is desired - public/quasi-public preservation, private conservation, or other protection.
 - Designate lead party(ies) to pursue funding for sites recommended for public/quasi-public preservation
 - Designate lead party(ies) to pursue technical assistance for sites recommended for private conservation, or other protection. Provide technical guidance to historic property owners for future maintenance, enhancement and/or improvement of conserved historic features, e.g. a list of publications and qualified local contractors for maintenance, rehabilitation/renovation, and demolition.

In the meantime and as part the implementation to protect historic resources, partners should:

- Identify and market historic sites as redevelopment opportunities. Offer and raise awareness for incentives for historic site rehabilitation.
- Assist the Mercer County Historical Society and other local historical organizations with applications for various grants, tax credits and other assistance programs.
- Develop guidelines for historic site/district redevelopment. Include in these guidelines flexibility for conversion and adaptive re-use of historically significant structures. For historic districts, this should entail a Historic District Overlay. For individual sites not located in a historic district, an overlay or specific historic site provisions should be developed.
- Develop a handbook of site and architectural design features of Mercer County communities. Encourage developers to integrate these features into projects in their respective communities.
- Assist local municipalities with amending their zoning ordinances for incorporating Historic District Overlay provisions and other cultural resource protection measures.

The value of these properties increases as residents understand and appreciate the heritage these sites represent. Therefore, helping residents to understand and appreciate these sites (interpretation), and to some extent, marketing these sites as unique real estate and/or tourism sites can draw attention to their value. Interpretation through signage, maps, brochures, tours and events, etc., can occur for properties in public and private ownership. Partners, together with property owners, should determine what kind of interpretation is appropriate at each site.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: Mercer County Historical Society

SUPPORT: Local historians and historical societies, MCRPC, property owners

FUNDING: PHMC, Historic Preservation Grants (PHMC), private foundations and sponsors

- 8. Integrate historic preservation sites into parks, trails, and greenways.** Planned greenway locations may change and expand as the county “develops” active greenways and works with the private sector to protect passive greenways. As greenway master plans for individual active greenways are developed, partners should look for opportunities to align the greenway with historic resources, so that greenway travelers can appreciate and explore these resources. Where the geography makes it difficult to take the greenway or a trail spur to the historic site, signage could be used to bring the value and general location of nearby historic properties to the greenway.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: Local and county historical societies, public and private recreation organizations, watershed organizations

SUPPORT: Mercer County Trails Association, public and quasi-public landowners

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), Heritage Parks Program (DCNR), Historic Preservation Grants (PHMC), private foundations and sponsors

- 9. Demonstrate and interpret appropriate land and water management techniques (such as riparian buffers) in place of traditional cultivated landscapes on public lands.**

Showing people how to care for resources is more effective and persuasive than telling them to do so. By demonstrating and explaining the methods of resources management, partners can educate landowners about the value of resources stewardship.

Conservation techniques should be applied to

- recreation lands (parks, rights-of-way for walking paths and trails)
- other public lands (schools, public facilities),
- at waterway access points, and
- other places where people regularly observe the treatment of vegetation and wildlife.

Conservation practices may not be practical at every site, but should be considered as an alternative to conventional “landscaping,” where appropriate. Partners could also encourage the same approach on private lands that residents have access to for recreation and leisure activities, e.g. trails, campgrounds, etc.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: Conservation District

SUPPORT: Schools, the Agricultural Board, Cooperative Extension, watershed organizations, state parks, landowners, WPC, public and quasi-public landowners, sportsmen's clubs

FUNDING: DEP funding to conservation districts, U.S. Department of Agriculture Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program

10. Identify scenic view sheds and corridors and prioritize efforts for scenic conservation (land use, land management, etc.). Procedurally, this strategy is a planning study: inventory, assess, define intent, and develop recommendations. To tailor this process to a scenic conservation plan, partners should:

- Conduct a visual assessment of potential viewsheds and corridors to document and evaluate visual resources and amenities.
- Identify threats to visual quality – development, clear-cutting, etc.
- Develop goals for scenic conservation.
- Develop management recommendations (scenic byways designation – a PennDOT program, land use/management guidelines, signage provisions, etc.)

Once designated and characterized, the scenic corridors and viewsheds can be promoted as destinations for recreation/leisure and tourism. (See also the Economic Development Action Plan)

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: Municipalities

SUPPORT: MCRPC, PennDOT, local and county historical societies,

FUNDING: PennDOT Scenic Byways Program, private foundations and sponsors, in-kind and volunteer services from community organizations

11. Prepare municipal and multi-municipal Recreation, Greenways and Open Space Plans to ensure that local needs are met. DCNR provides funding to assist municipalities in developing these plans.

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: municipalities and intermunicipal partnerships

SUPPORT: MCRPC, public and private recreation organizations

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program (DCED), private foundations and sponsors

12. Develop water trails, trail guides, and water access facilities. Water trails are somewhat easier to designate and develop, since the travel corridor (the waterway) is often already a public right-of-way. The challenge to water trails lies in defining and developing the access points and way points where people can get on and off the waterway. Two primary means to improve and publicize access to the county's waterways are to:

- Develop an official PA Fish and Boat Commission-designated water trail for the Shenango Reservoir and the Shenango River. Consider water trails for the Little Shenango River and other major water bodies.
- Develop additional facilities such as fishing piers and accessible surfaces from parking to water shores at existing waterway access points.

PRIORITY: Low

LEAD: Mercer County Trails Association, public and private recreation organizations

SUPPORT:

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR), PennDOT Transportation Enhancements Program, PA Fish and Boat Commission

Strategies for Regulatory Guidance and Enforcement

13. Encourage municipalities to incorporate Greener Visions, as appropriate, into their regulations to conserve open space through subdivision and land development techniques. MCRPC is in the process of extracting and applying the Growing Greener approach, advocated by Randall Arendt and the Natural Lands Trust, to the specific circumstances of Mercer County through a publication called *Greener Visions: Making Smart Growth Options Work in Mercer County: A Technical Guide for Municipal Officials with Model Ordinance Text*. The document presents 1) an introduction to the conservation subdivision approach, 2) model zoning and subdivision language for municipal ordinances, as well as model ordinances for planned residential development (PRD) and traditional neighborhood development (TND), and 3) the benefits of implementing these recommended provisions, including:

- Better-looking, better designed development
- A chance to create a network of open space while still prospering from a new tax base
- Development that is better than that of the 1980s and 1990s
- Clearer, faster approval process
- The same number of development units with lower development costs
- Opportunities to mix uses
- Opportunities to attract emerging demographic sectors of the real estate market

As stated in the document, the model provisions “can help accomplish sound, profitable new development if it is inserted, as applicable, into both municipal zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: Municipalities, PPA, PSATS

FUNDING: Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR); DCNR Recreation Technical Assistance Program (RECTAP)

14. Provide a model greenway overlay district to be incorporated into existing municipal zoning ordinances. MCRPC has taken a strong lead in preparing Greener Visions, and in the same vein could research and develop a refined greenway overlay district from those that already exist around the state.

PRIORITY: Medium

LEAD: MCRPC

SUPPORT: PPA, PSATS, municipalities

FUNDING: Implementation Partners, Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR); Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (DCED)

The Nature of the Strategies

Beyond Mercer County, other agencies may be interested in knowing how Mercer County understands the broader purpose or nature of each strategy, especially when strategies are submitted to funding programs. The following matrix presents the 19 strategies relative to DCNR objectives. Characterizing how each strategy works toward or fulfills these objectives in grant applications should help Mercer County strategically compete for grant awards.

	Open Space Protection, Conservation, and Productivity	Greenway and Recreation Sites, Networks and Linkages	Land Acquisition Strategies	Administration, Management, and Maintenance	Marketing and Communication	Land Use Policies and Regulations	Future Studies/Plans
High Priority Strategies							
Develop a rural industries strategy to sustain and enhance the agricultural and forest industries in Mercer County.	X						X
In advance and consistent with the rural industries strategy, actively support rural industries and publicize the organizations that provide support and protection.	X				X		
Establish local and/or a regional recreation commission to serve the residents of rural communities with recreation facilities, programs and services.				X	X		
Interconnect public facilities, locally with bike-pedestrian networks and regionally with active greenways (trails).		X					X
Through adoption of this plan, establish a Mercer County standard for recreation in rural areas.	X	X	X			X	
Mid Priority Strategies							
Encourage agricultural landowners to make open space available to hunters through the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Farm Game/Safety Zone Program.	X	X			X		
Coordinate bicycle and pedestrian enhancements (e.g. increased shoulder widths, designated bike lanes, and trail connections) with larger scale transportation projects.		X					
Assist municipalities and recreation organizations in marketing facilities and their services.		X			X		
Review municipal comprehensive plans and regulations for consistency with county guidance for recreational land and service provisions. Recommend appropriate recreation provisions, as needed.	X	X				X	
Publicize the designated greenways and develop greenway master plans to focus and define efforts to protect resources in these corridors.		X	X		X		
Develop a plan for historic resource protection.		X	X				X
Integrate historic preservation sites into parks, trails, and greenways.		X					

Continued

	Open Space Protection, Conservation, and Productivity	Greenway and Recreation Sites, Networks and Linkages	Land Acquisition Strategies	Administration, Management, and Maintenance	Marketing and Communication	Land Use Policies and Regulations	Future Studies/Plans
Mid Priority Strategies (continued)							
Demonstrate and interpret appropriate land and water management techniques (such as riparian buffers) on in place of traditional cultivated landscapes on public lands:	X				X		
Encourage municipalities to incorporate Greener Visions, as appropriate, into their regulations to conserve open space through subdivision and land development techniques. (See Land Use Action Plan)	X	X				X	
Provide a model greenway overlay district to be incorporated into existing municipal zoning ordinances.		X				X	
Low Priority Strategies							
Promote clean recreation facilities.		X		X	X		
Identify scenic view sheds and corridors and prioritize efforts for scenic conservation (land use, land management, etc.).	X	X					X
Prepare municipal and multi-municipal Recreation, Greenways and Open Space Plans to ensure that local needs are met.	X	X					X
Develop water trails and trail guides.		X			X		