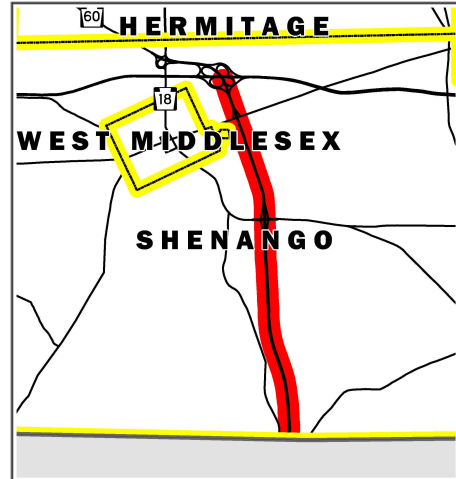


**PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO
VALLEY CORRIDOR**

***Pittsburgh to Shenango Valley
Regional Thruway***

The Pittsburgh to Shenango Valley Corridor connects the communities of the Valley with greater Pittsburgh. Two roadway facilities - PA 18 and PA 60 are the corridor's primary transportation facilities. An abandoned rail line (the former Penn Central line, abandoned in 1982) could be redeveloped as a rail to trail facility. The MPO has classified PA 60 as a Rural Principal Arterial while PA 18 is a rural minor arterial (west of PA 60) and a Rural Major Collector (east of PA 60).



CORRIDOR PROFILE ►



Shenango Township
West Middlesex Borough
Wilmington Township



While a portion of the corridor traverses the Borough of West Middlesex, most of the corridor consists of rural forested and agricultural land.

PA 60 is a limited access facility connecting the Valley with Toll PA 60 - the James E. Ross highway - in New Castle. This highway provides travelers with access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the Beaver Valley Expressway north of Pittsburgh. Built and maintained by the Turnpike Commission, the completion of the James E. Ross toll highway in 1992 put Pittsburgh International Airport within an hour's drive of the Shenango Valley.

The Shenango River is a significant natural feature in the corridor. The former Penn Central Railroad lines approximately parallel to the river and has been considered for development as a rail to trail facility. The corridor surface is typically eight feet wide and is well compacted.



Key Findings & Corridor Highlights

- Most recent PennDOT cluster lists, based on 2001 crash data, reveal an accident cluster of note at PA 18's intersection with Longview Road.
- The corridor is marked by population decline - at rates in excess of the county.
- A bill was introduced in the U.S. Congress in February 2005 to designate PA 60 as part of the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.
- There is currently a study to upgrade PA 60 from Beaver to I-80 to interstate standards. The idea of designating PA 60 as an interstate has been met with resistance from those in the trucking industry, as standards for interstates limit the weight of steel loads that can be carried. Cost issues are also a concern for the Pittsburgh MPO (Southwestern Planning Commission), as that MPO has identified approximately \$1 billion in improvement needs for the interchanges along its portion of PA 60.
- Approximately 79 percent of corridor commuters drive alone to work. This is slightly less than the county rate of 83 percent.

Recommendations for the PA 18 and PA 60 Corridor:

Beyond the completion of the interchange with PA 18, there are several recommended actions for planners to consider in this corridor, moving forward:

- **Direct MPO funds to enhance PA 60.** PA 60, with its old concrete surface, has extensive improvement needs. The MPO should give priority to reconstructing portions of the roadway with TIP dollars.
- **Improve PA 60 to achieve interstate standards and designation.** The Shenango Valley MPO should continue to work with PennDOT Districts 1-0 and 11-0, the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association and other industry advocates to improve PA 60 to interstate standards. An examination of Mercer County's three PA 60 interchanges will need to be accomplished as part of the designation effort.
- **Create Shenango Valley Rail-Trail.** The region should explore the development of an off-road trail along the Shenango River south to New Castle. This link would ultimately provide Shenango Valley residents and visitors with a rail trail from Sharon 20 miles south to downtown New Castle. From the Lawrence County seat, the route could utilize existing streets to a connection with the Savich Trail along the Mahoning River into Lowellville, Ohio.

MPO and/or municipalities of the region should jointly administer a feasibility study for this trail concept. A feasibility study would address major issues relative to the conversion of an abandoned rail right of way to trail use. The extent of such a study would vary depending on the known level of public support, as well as the number of environmental hazards and engineering/structural issues such as the bridge over the Shenango River in Hermitage. A feasibility study would also answer questions related to: legal issues, trail alignment, latent demand, intended use, and



ownership/management issues. A potential trailhead is possible at West Middlesex. Any trail feasibility should also examine options for providing connections from the borough to the rail-trail.

Public Input & Key Person Interviews

- PA 18 South of Hermitage was reported to have problems with traffic flow. Observers complain that there are also too many traffic lights.
- Cluster of accidents reported at the intersection with PA 18 and Longview Road caused by traffic signal running (Federal Highway Safety Field View).

Traffic Volume

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes in the corridor are predictably highest on PA 60, ranging from 11,000 south of its interchange with PA 18 to 15,000 between the PA 18 interchange and I-80. PA 18 itself has an AADT of 4,000 through Wilmington Township, with volumes gradually increasing to a high of 9,700 through West Middlesex Borough. The other signed state route in the corridor - PA 551 - carries an average of 700 vehicles daily.

Mode Split

Table 1 and the bullet points below provide information on mode split characteristics within the corridor, by municipality.

**Table 1: Mode Split (in %) – 2000
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | TOTAL | SOV | CARPOOL | TRANSIT | BICYCLE | WALK | OTHER MEANS | WORKED AT HOME |
|----------------|--------|------|---------|---------|---------|------|-------------|----------------|
| SHENANGO | 1,871 | 84.2 | 12.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.8 | 1.3 | 1.6 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 422 | 83.9 | 6.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 5.7 |
| WILMINGTON | 476 | 68.7 | 6.3 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 2.1 | 5.3 | 17.0 |
| CORRIDOR | 2,769 | 81.5 | 10.3 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 4.9 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 51,120 | 83.2 | 9.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 3.2 | 0.7 | 3.2 |

- Mode Split within the corridor is generally in line with county rates. Commuters from Shenango Township carpool at rates exceeding the county rate by three percentage points.
- Data from Wilmington suggests that the township is not as dependent on the private automobile for employment as other municipalities in the corridor, with a corridor high 17 percent working from home. West Middlesex also has higher rates of people working at home than the county average.



Travel Time to Work

Table 2 and

Table 3 show changes in journey to work travel times during the past decade. Corridor journey to work travel times are generally in line with county rates, although those traveling longer than an hour to work are slightly higher. The number of those traveling longer than an hour to work increased from only 57 in 1990 to 95 ten years later. In Wilmington Township, over 10 percent of commuters require more than an hour. The percentage of those in the corridor traveling less than a half hour to work declined slightly during the 1990s.

**Table 2: Travel Time to Work (in minutes by percent) – 2000
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | < 15 | | 15-29 | | 30-59 | | 60-89 | | 90+ | |
|----------------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| SHENANGO | 595 | 32.3 | 909 | 49.4 | 289 | 15.7 | 21 | 1.1 | 27 | 1.5 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 199 | 50.0 | 153 | 38.4 | 40 | 10.1 | 6 | 1.5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| WILMINGTON | 140 | 35.4 | 136 | 34.4 | 78 | 19.7 | 25 | 6.3 | 16 | 4.1 |
| CORRIDOR | 934 | 39.2 | 1,198 | 40.7 | 407 | 15.2 | 52 | 3.0 | 43 | 1.9 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 22,293 | 45.0 | 16,568 | 33.5 | 8,532 | 16.7 | 1,253 | 2.5 | 829 | 1.6 |

**Table 3: Travel Time to Work (in minutes by percent) -- 1990
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | < 15 | | 15-29 | | 30-59 | | 60-89 | | 90+ | |
|----------------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| SHENANGO | 819 | 39.3 | 882 | 42.3 | 337 | 16.2 | 47 | 2.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 206 | 50.4 | 156 | 38.1 | 43 | 10.5 | 3 | 0.7 | 1 | 0.0 |
| WILMINGTON | 126 | 32.7 | 159 | 41.3 | 94 | 24.4 | 6 | 1.6 | 0 | 0.0 |
| CORRIDOR | 1,151 | 40.6 | 1,197 | 41.6 | 474 | 17.3 | 56 | 2.1 | 1 | 0.0 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 22,944 | 46.9 | 15,686 | 32.1 | 7,410 | 15.2 | 971 | 2.0 | 277 | 0.6 |

Commutation Patterns

There are approximately 2,769 commuters in the corridor, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Table 4 depicts the top commuter destinations for corridor workers. Data reveals that the Valley communities of Hermitage and Sharon are the most common destinations for corridor workers, while employment destinations in Ohio account for approximately 16 percent of journey to work trips.



**Table 4: Top Commuter Destinations – 2000
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | PERCENTAGE SHARE |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. HERMITAGE | 13.8 |
| 2. SHARON | 12.5 |
| 3. TRUMBULL, OH | 9.3 |
| 4. WEST MIDDLESEX | 9.0 |
| 5. MAHONING, OH | 6.8 |
| 6. NEW CASTLE | 6.0 |
| 7. SHENANGO TWP | 5.7 |
| 8. FARRELL | 4.6 |
| 9. NEW WILMINGTON | 4.6 |
| 10. WHEATLAND | 2.2 |
| 11. MERCER | 1.7 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Other commutation pattern data from the Census reveal:

- The corridor is a major exporter of employees.
- West Middlesex Borough leads all corridor municipalities in the percentage of workers employed within the municipality of residence, at 21 percent. Shenango Township follows at 6.7 percent.

Population Trends

Population trends in the corridor have not been favorable over the past 20 years. The corridor has sustained a population loss of 465 people since 1980, and has declined by 7 percent since 1990. Table 6 shows changes in population for corridor municipalities since 1970.

**Table 6: Population Trends - 1970-2000
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | % CHANGE |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| | | | | | 90-00 |
| SHENANGO | 3,141 | 4,399 | 4,339 | 4,037 | (7.5) |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 1,293 | 1,064 | 982 | 929 | (5.7) |
| WILMINGTON | 812 | 1,073 | 1,177 | 1,105 | (6.5) |
| CORRIDOR | 5,246 | 6,536 | 6,498 | 6,071 | (7.0) |
| MERCER COUNTY | 127,225 | 128,299 | 121,003 | 120,293 | (0.6) |



- Shenango and Wilmington Townships have suffered population declines after experiencing gains during the 1970s.
- West Middlesex Borough has registered population declines over the past three decennial censuses.

Age Group Distribution

Table 7 displays the age group distribution among the municipalities along the PA 18 corridor as recorded by Census 2000.

**Table 7: Age Group Distribution – 2000
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | <5 | 5-9 | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ |
|----------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| SHENANGO | 5.6 | 6.5 | 7.1 | 5.5 | 4.4 | 10.8 | 16.6 | 15.2 | 5.7 | 5.4 | 17.0 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 4.0 | 5.7 | 8.9 | 6.9 | 5.0 | 11.1 | 15.5 | 15.1 | 5.4 | 4.6 | 17.9 |
| WILMINGTON | 6.8 | 7.8 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 6.5 | 8.1 | 13.9 | 15.5 | 5.0 | 3.3 | 13.5 |
| CORRIDOR | 5.6 | 6.6 | 7.9 | 6.5 | 4.9 | 10.4 | 16.0 | 15.3 | 5.6 | 4.0 | 16.5 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 5.7 | 6.3 | 6.9 | 7.5 | 5.9 | 11.2 | 14.8 | 13.7 | 5.2 | 4.5 | 18.1 |

- The age group distribution averages for the corridor closely reflect county rates.
- The corridor has a greater percentage of those age 15 and younger. This is especially true in Wilmington Township, where nearly 25 percent are under the age of 15, compared to the county rate of 19 percent.

Racial Composition

Table 8 shows how racially homogeneous the Pittsburgh/Shenango Valley Corridor is compared to Mercer County as a whole. Shenango Township is the most racially homogeneous community in the corridor, with less than 2 percent of its population of minority status.

**Table 8: Racial Composition – (in %)
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | Total | White | | Black | | Indian | | Asian | | Other | |
|----------------|---------|---------|------|-------|-----|--------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
| | | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| SHENANGO | 4,037 | 3,963 | 98.2 | 49 | 1.2 | 8 | 0.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 17 | 0.4 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 929 | 894 | 96.2 | 8 | 0.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 11 | 1.2 | 16 | 1.7 |
| WILMINGTON | 1,105 | 1,077 | 97.5 | 10 | 0.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 9 | 0.8 | 9 | 0.8 |
| CORRIDOR | 6,071 | 5,934 | 97.7 | 67 | 1.1 | 8 | 0.13 | 20 | 0.33 | 42 | 0.69 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 120,293 | 113,036 | 94.0 | 6,869 | 5.7 | 511 | 0.4 | 656 | 0.5 | 417 | 0.3 |



Per Capita Income

Table 9 displays the per capita income breakdown for the corridor according to the 2000 Census.

Table 9: Per Capita Income (2000)
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR

| LOCATION | Households | < \$25,000 | | \$25-49,999 | | \$50-74,999 | | \$75-99,999 | | \$100,000+ | |
|----------------|------------|------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|------------|-----|
| | | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| SHENANGO | 1,633 | 403 | 24.7 | 722 | 44.2 | 272 | 16.7 | 182 | 11.1 | 50 | 3.1 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 365 | 130 | 35.6 | 127 | 34.8 | 73 | 20.0 | 16 | 4.4 | 9 | 2.5 |
| WILMINGTON | 383 | 132 | 34.5 | 100 | 26.1 | 83 | 21.7 | 40 | 10.4 | 28 | 7.3 |
| CORRIDOR | 2,381 | 665 | 27.9 | 949 | 39.9 | 428 | 17.9 | 238 | 9.9 | 87 | 3.7 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 46,755 | 16,073 | 34.4 | 16,259 | 34.8 | 8,629 | 18.5 | 3,246 | 6.9 | 2,548 | 5.4 |

- Most corridor households (40 percent) have a per capita incomes of between \$25,000 and \$49,999 followed by 28 percent with per capita incomes less than \$25,000.
- Wilmington Township has the corridor's greatest percentage of households that have a per capita income greater than \$100,000 at 7.3 percent. This is slightly higher than the county average of 5.4 percent.
- West Middlesex has the corridor's greatest concentration of lower income households, with over 70 percent earning less than \$50,000 annually. In Shenango Township, the rate is 69 percent.

Economic

Table 10 displays the civilian labor force characteristics and Table #11 displays the Employment by Occupation and Table #12 displays Employment by Industry by Place of Residence for the municipalities in the PA 18 corridor, Pittsburgh to Shenango Valley.

Table 10: Civilian Labor Force Characteristics – (2000)
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR

| LOCATION | Total | Not in Labor Force | | Labor Force | | Civilian Labor Force | | | | In Armed Forces | |
|----------------|-------|--------------------|------|-------------|------|----------------------|------|------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
| | | # | % | # | % | Employed | | Unemployed | | # | % |
| | | | | | | # | % | # | % | | |
| SHENANGO | 3,178 | 1,207 | 38.0 | 1,971 | 62.0 | 1,881 | 95.4 | 79 | 4.6 | 11 | 0.5 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 743 | 274 | 36.9 | 469 | 63.1 | 438 | 93.4 | 31 | 6.6 | 0 | 0.0 |
| WILMINGTON | 818 | 327 | 40.0 | 491 | 60.0 | 477 | 97.1 | 14 | 2.9 | 0 | 0.0 |



| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|-----|----|-----|
| CORRIDOR | 4,739 | 1,808 | 38.3 | 2,931 | 61.7 | 2,796 | 95.3 | 124 | 4.6 | 11 | 0.4 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 95,664 | 40,113 | 41.9 | 55,551 | 58.1 | 52,142 | 93.9 | 3,353 | 6.0 | 56 | 0.1 |

- At 62 percent, the corridor has a greater level of those participating in the labor force than the county as a whole.
- The Census reported 11 individuals from Shenango Township serving in the Armed Forces. This is nearly 20 percent of the county's total.
- Unemployment rates in the corridor are generally lower than the county overall. Wilmington Township had the corridor's lowest unemployment rate, at less than 3 percent.

**Table 11: Employment by Occupation - (2000) by percent
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| LOCATION | Management & Professional | Service | Sales and Office | Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance | Production, Transportation, and Material Moving |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------|------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| SHENANGO | 25.9 | 16.6 | 25.7 | 0.4 | 12.4 | 18.9 |
| WEST MIDDLESEX | 20.8 | 19.2 | 26.0 | 0.0 | 10.3 | 23.7 |
| WILMINGTON | 33.3 | 8.8 | 25.6 | 3.4 | 11.7 | 17.2 |
| CORRIDOR | 26.6 | 14.9 | 25.8 | 1.3 | 11.5 | 20.0 |
| MERCER COUNTY | 27.6 | 17.3 | 25.3 | 0.6 | 8.2 | 21.0 |

- Corridor employment rates in farming, fishing and forestry occupations are generally higher than those countywide. Wilmington Township leads all corridor municipalities with 3.4 percent of its workforce employed in these occupations.
- The percentage of those in Wilmington Township employed in service occupations is well below both county and corridor averages, at 8.8 percent.

2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The MPO has programmed three projects in the corridor worth nearly \$4.5 million.

Key among these is the \$4.3 million completion of the diamond interchange of PA 60 with PA 18 in Shenango Township. The project will include the construction of a northbound off-ramp from PA 60 as well as a south-bound on-ramp. Table 12 below includes more detail concerning the three TIP projects.



**Table 12: 2005 -- 2008 TIP Projects
PITTSBURGH/SHENANGO VALLEY CORRIDOR**

| Municipality | Project/Description | Year | | | | Total |
|-------------------|------------------------|------|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| | | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | |
| SHENANGO | Intrchge imp PA 60/318 | 300 | 750 | 250 | 3,000 | 4,300 |
| SHENANGO | Riggs Rd bridge repl | 75 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 80 |
| WILMINGTON | PA 158 bridge repl | 0 | 0 | 110 | 0 | 110 |

Source: PENNDOT District 1-0

