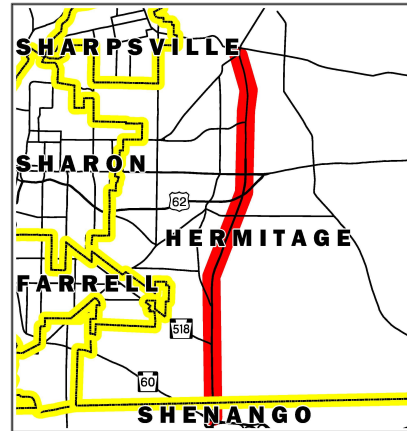


THE SHENANGO VALLEY NORTH-SOUTH COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

The Shenango Valley North-South Commercial Corridor

The Shenango Valley North-South Commercial Corridor is one of the shortest corridors in the county's LRTP, yet it is one of the most important in terms of its strategic importance to the City of Hermitage and the rest of the Shenango Valley. It not only provides for the movement of local traffic, but serves as the region's sole north-south highway to two economically important centers, the Shenango Valley and the Greenville-Reynolds development area to the north of the City of Hermitage.



CORRIDOR PROFILE ►



Hermitage
Shenango Township

PA 18 is the corridor's primary transportation facility. The MPO has functionally classified the roadway through the City of Hermitage as an Urban Principal Arterial. During 2001-02, the roadway was the subject of a five-lane widening project, with four, 12' wide travel lanes and a 14' wide lane for two-way left turns (TWLTLs). A new signal was also added at the entrance to the Shenango Valley Mall. The widening project was essentially an extension of three miles of PA 18 from I-80 to US 62 in 1995 and completed a "missing link" between US 62 and the South Pymatuning Township line.

One pedestrian design element of the widening included a 10-foot wide bituminous multi-use trail along the eastern side of the roadway linking the Shenango Valley Mall and the vicinity of the City's administrative building at 800 North Hermitage Road.

The corridor functions as one of the county's most significant commercial corridors, especially after the decentralization of commercial activity from the county's older, urban cores of Sharon and Farrell during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. Hermitage is now the county's second most-populous municipality.

Key Findings & Corridor Highlights

- Corridor travel time to work is getting longer, yet is still below the county average.
- Nearly a third of resident corridor workers are employed at destinations within the City of Hermitage. Fifteen percent are employed at destinations in Ohio.
- Corridor population growth during the 1990s was moderate, yet outpaced county growth overall. Population growth in Hermitage was over 5.5 percent for the decade.
- The corridor - and particularly the City of Hermitage - has a higher than average percentage of elderly (65+) population. In the case of Hermitage, the rate of persons over age 65 is more than five percentage points higher than the county average (23.6 percent versus 18.1 percent).
- The corridor is racially homogenous, at nearly 95 percent white. Hermitage does have Indian and Asian populations at a rate double the county average.
- Per capita incomes in the corridor are generally higher than the county overall.
- A majority of corridor employees are employed in occupations related to management and professional trades.
- Over \$12.5 million in transportation improvements have been programmed for the corridor as part of the MPO's 2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Recommendations for the Shenango Valley North-South Corridor:

This section outlines some suggested draft actions, based on the results of public involvement, data collection efforts from county and multi-municipal comprehensive plans, and the Census data.

- The candidate projects that appear below should be used as a starting point in the development of the 2007 TIP, which is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2005.
 1. **Broadway Road Improvements** - including the safety and congestion improvements included in a 2003 transportation study.
 2. **PA 18 intersection** with Lamor and Valley View Roads - study and implement a realignment of Valley View Road to a new intersection on PA 18 to reduce congestion at the existing intersection and to provide access for future development on the west side of PA 18.
 3. **East State Street** intersections - upgrade of 3 existing intersections on East State Street to improve safety and reduce congestion as well as to provide or upgrade pedestrian facilities.
 - East State @ Ellis -
 - Revisit the narrow Hermitage Towne Plaza entrance
 - Provide pedestrian crosswalks and signalization
 - Replace span wire with mast arms.
 - Provide sidewalk connections and handicap ramps at intersection



- Upgrade the signal controller.
- East State @ Kerrwood - Provide a left turn lane on S. Kerrwood, as well as the following recommended improvements:
 - Widen the radius on N. Kerrwood and provide for a protected left-turn movement on E. State.
 - Install crosswalks,
 - Upgrade pedestrian signalization,
 - Provide sidewalk connections at the intersection
 - Upgrade the signal controller
 - Replace span wire with mast arms.
- East State @ Maple/Dutch:
 - Provide left turn lane on Maple Dr.
 - Upgrade pedestrian crossing and provide sidewalk connections at intersection and along frontage of the public parcel on the intersection's southwest corner.

5. **Hermitage Town Center** - Complete and implement a Master Plan for the redevelopment of the Town Center, as recommended by the Route 18 North Corridor Study (2000). This could include new traffic signals on East State Street and the Freeway. This \$110,000 project is slated to begin in the fall of 2005.

6. **Various trail projects and linkages** - between residential neighborhoods and from residential to commercial areas... also along stream corridors, especially Pine Hollow Run from Hermitage School Campus to Rail Trail along Shenango River, north of Pierce Bluffs.

- **Further expansion of the County's bicycle and pedestrian projects should remain a priority.** The physical improvement and ongoing connectivity of the City of Hermitage's bicycle and pedestrian network should continue. The county's bicycle/pedestrian plan lists the need for wider shoulders on Keel Ridge Road (SR 3011) from Hermitage to the Lawrence County line.

Traffic Volumes

Historical traffic volume data for PA 18 indicate that volumes have been steadily growing. For example, volumes on PA 18 between PA 60 and PA 518 have grown from 17,700 in 1994 to a 2003 volume of 18,900. Year 2003 volumes range from a low of 14,000 immediately south of PA 18's intersection with Dutch Lane (SR 3035), to a high of 19,800 north of Lamor Road (SR 3020).



Mode Split

According to the 2000 US Census, corridor workers overwhelmingly rely on the private automobile as a means of getting to work. In Shenango Township, over 96 percent rely on an automobile, with over 12 percent reportedly carpooling. Carpooling rates in the township are three percentage points higher than the county average. Shenango's larger neighbor to the north drives most of the mode split statistics. For a city of 15,000 residents, Hermitage has just over 7,000 commuters, only 13 of which reported using public transportation as a means of getting to work. Percentages of those walking (1.3) and bicycling (0.1) were also very low. Table 1 and the bullet points below provide more detail on mode split data for the corridor.

**Table 1: Mode Split (in %) – 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	SOV	CARPOOL	TRANSIT	WALK	BICYCLE	OTHER MEANS	WORK AT HOME
HERMITAGE	88.1	7.6	0.2	1.3	0.1	0.2	2.5
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	84.2	12.1	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.3	1.6
CORRIDOR	87.3	8.5	0.1	1.2	0.1	0.6	2.2
MERCER COUNTY	83.2	9.2	0.3	3.2	0.1	0.7	3.2

Significant findings regarding journey-to-work mode split along the corridor are noted below:

- Approximately 7,700 resident corridor workers (87.3 percent) commute to work alone. This is over four percentage points higher than the county rate.
- Only nine workers from the City of Hermitage reported using a bicycle as a means of getting to work in 2000.
- Despite the relatively urban character of the corridor, only 106 reported walking to work.
- No one in Shenango Township reported using a bicycle or public transportation as a means of getting to work.

Travel Time to Work

Journey to work travel times in the corridor are generally consistent with those of the county overall. Table 2 and Table 3 show how journey to work travel times in the corridor have remained relatively constant over the past decade, compared to county trends.



**Table 2: Travel Time to Work (in minutes by percent) – 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	< 15		15-29		30-59		60-89		90+	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
HERMITAGE	3,564	52.0	2,136	31.1	886	12.9	155	2.3	117	1.7
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	595	32.3	909	49.4	289	15.7	21	1.1	27	1.5
CORRIDOR	4,159	46.7	3,045	34.2	1,175	13.2	176	2.0	144	1.6
MERCER COUNTY	22,293	45.0	16,568	33.5	8,532	16.7	1253	2.5	829	1.6

**Table 3: Travel Time To Work (in minutes by percent) – 1990
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	< 15		15-29		30-59		60-89		90+	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
HERMITAGE	3,353	53.7	1,829	29.3	732	11.7	123	2.0	51	0.8
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	819	38.7	882	41.7	337	15.9	47	2.2	0	0.0
CORRIDOR	4,172	49.9	2,711	32.4	1,069	12.8	170	2.0	51	0.6
MERCER COUNTY	22,944	46.9	15,686	32.1	7,410	15.2	971	2.0	277	0.6

Overall, travel to work times in the corridor during the 1990s remained relatively constant, although some variations included:

- Of the 8,700 resident corridor workers who did not work at home, approximately 4,160 - or 47 percent - required less than 15 minutes to get to work. This is slightly higher than the county rate of 45 percent but a slight decrease from the 1990 rate of 50 percent. (By contrast, the state average was only 30.4 percent.)
- During the 1990s, the number of resident corridor workers traveling longer than 90 minutes to work increased by 182 percent. For the county as a whole, the rate tripled.

Commutation Patterns

Table 4 depicts the top commuter destinations for resident corridor workers. Data from the Census reveal that the cities of Hermitage and Sharon are the two largest destinations of employment for corridor workers. Other Census data reveal:

- Over 35 percent of Hermitage resident workers are employed at destinations within the city.
- Shenango Township exports 93.3 percent of its resident workforce to destinations outside the municipality.
- Nearly 15 percent of corridor workers commute to destinations in Ohio.



**Table 4: Top 10 Commuter Destinations – 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Percent
1. HERMITAGE CITY	31.5
2. SHARON CITY	17.7
3. TRUMBULL, OH	9.8
4. FARRELL CITY	4.8
5. MAHONING, OH	4.6
6. WEST MIDDLESEX	2.9
7. SHENANGO TWP	2.5
8. WHEATLAND	2.5
9. SHARPSVILLE	2.0
10. GREENVILLE	1.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Population Trends

On the strength of the City of Hermitage, corridor population trends have outpaced that of the county as a whole. The City grew by over 5.5 percent during the 1990s to a 2000 population of 16,157. This growth was tempered by a 7 percent decline in Shenango Township. Overall corridor growth was nearly three percent for the decade. Table 5 depicts corridor population trends since 1980.

**Table 5: Population Trends
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	1980	1990	2000	% CHANGE
				90-00
HERMITAGE	16,365	15,300	16,157	5.6
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	4,399	4,339	4,037	(6.9)
CORRIDOR	20,764	19,639	20,194	2.8
MERCER COUNTY	128,299	121,003	120,293	(0.6)

Age Group Distribution

Shifts within the corridor’s population composition between 1990 and 2000 indicate that numbers of elderly population are increasing dramatically.

Table 6 and the bullet points below provide more detail on the age group distribution within the corridor and its municipalities.



**Table 6: Percent Change by Age Group – 1990, 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	Total	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
SHARON	(6.7)	31.9	(19.4)	(31.6)	7.1	42.3
HERMITAGE	5.6	36.2	(14.2)	(8.5)	60.9	44.8
CORRIDOR	(1.0)	34.1	(16.6)	(19.9)	31.3	43.6
MERCER COUNTY	(0.6)	32.2	(9.4)	(10.0)	24.2	28.1

Other highlights of age groups distribution in the corridor include:

- The corridor’s 75-plus age group increased approximately 34 percent from 2,726 to 3,655.
- The population of the corridor’s age 65-74 age group actually *decreased* approximately 20 percent, indicative of those born during the Great Depression years of 1926 to 1935.

Racial Composition

The corridor is racially homogenous, with nearly 95 percent reporting their race as White. In Shenango Township, the percentage was over 98 percent. Table 7 and the bullet points below provide information on the corridor's racial composition.

**Table 7: Racial Composition – (in %)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	Total	White	Black	Indian	Asian	Other
HERMITAGE	16,130	93.8	3.0	0.2	1.6	1.4
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	4,037	98.1	1.2	0.2	0.0	0.5
CORRIDOR	20,167	94.7	2.7	0.2	1.4	1.0
MERCER COUNTY	120,293	94.2	3.6	.1	1.0	1.1

- The corridor is slightly more racially homogenous than the county as a whole, with nearly 95 percent of its population white.
- The City of Hermitage has the corridor's highest percentage of minority population, with over 6 percent. There are 540 blacks residing in the corridor. These compose the corridor's largest minority group.

Per Capita Income

Average annual household incomes in the Shenango Valley North-South Corridor are generally higher than the county as a whole. A majority of corridor households (35 percent) have per capita incomes of between \$25-50,000. Hermitage ranked 14th countywide in per capita income in 1999, yet had more households (126) earning more than \$200,000 a year than any other municipality. Table 8 and the bullet points below provide more information concerning corridor per capita incomes.



Table 8: Per Capita Income (2000)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR

LOCATION	Households	< \$25,000		\$25-49,999		\$50-74,999		\$75-99,999		\$100,000+	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
HERMITAGE	6,797	1961	28.9	2353	34.6	1286	18.9	603	8.9	594	8.7
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	1,633	403	24.7	722	44.2	272	16.7	182	11.1	50	3.1
CORRIDOR	8,430	2,364	28.0	3,075	36.5	1,558	18.5	785	9.3	644	7.6
MERCER COUNTY	46,755	16,073	34.4	16,259	34.8	8,629	18.5	3,246	6.9	2,548	5.4

- The corridor exceeds countywide averages of per capita incomes in excess of \$25,000 a year.
- A quarter of all Mercer County households earning more than \$200,000 annually are located in Hermitage.
- Both Hermitage and Shenango Township boasted higher than average household incomes (\$39,454 and \$38,162, respectively) in 1999 than the county as a whole (\$34,666).
- Fewer than 28 percent of corridor households earned less than \$25,000.

Economic

The following tables demonstrate the composition of the corridor across a variety of economic factors, including labor force characteristics and employment by occupation. Table 9 and the bullet points below highlight some of the corridor's civilian labor force characteristics from the year 2000.

Table 9: Civilian Labor Force Characteristics – (2000)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR

LOCATION	Total	Not in Labor Force		Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force				In Armed Forces	
		#	%	#	%	Employed		Unemployed		#	%
						#	%	#	%		
HERMITAGE	13,058	5,564	42.6	7,494	57.3	7,088	94.6	397	5.2	9	0.1
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	3,178	1,207	38.0	1,971	62.0	1,881	95.4	79	4.0	11	0.5
CORRIDOR	16,236	6,771	41.7	9,465	58.3	8,969	94.8	476	5.0	20	0.2
MERCER COUNTY	95,664	40,113	41.9	55,551	58.1	52,142	93.9	3,353	6.0	56	0.1

- Statistics on the corridor's labor force are generally similar to the county's as a whole. Corridor unemployment rates were lower than the county's in 2000, led by a 4 percent unemployment rate in Shenango Township. The township also had a higher than average rate of participation in the labor force, at 62 percent.



- Shenango Township had over half of the corridor's labor force in armed services. Of the 56 persons in Mercer County who are engaged in the armed forces, over a third are from the Shenango Valley North-South Corridor.

Table 10 displays the breakdown of employment by occupation for corridor municipalities.

**Table 10: Employment by Occupation - (2000)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Total	Mgmt./ Professional & Related		Service	Sales/ Office		Farming, Fishing & Forestry	Construction, Extraction & Maintenance		Production/ Transportation & Material Moving			
HERMITAGE	7,088	2,617	36.9	978	13.8	2,046	28.9	12	0.2	447	6.3	988	13.9
SHENANGO TOWNSHIP	1,881	488	25.9	313	16.6	484	25.7	7	0.3	234	12.4	355	18.9
CORRIDOR	8,969	3,105	34.6	1,291	14.4	2,530	28.2	19	0.2	681	7.6	1,343	15.0
MERCER	52,142	14,392	27.6	9,001	17.3	13,203	25.3	319	0.6	4,281	8.2	10,946	21.0

- The most common employment occupations for corridor workers is in management and professional services, at 35 percent. Employment in these occupations is seven percentage points higher than the county average of 28 percent.
- Corridor employment in sales is also slightly higher than the overall county rate of 25 percent.
- Rates of corridor employment in the farming, fishing and forestry occupations are only one-third the county average. Corridor employment in service, construction and production occupations are also lower than county averages.

2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

While there are no TIP projects programmed for the PA 18 roadway per se, there are other projects that have been programmed affecting lower order roadways and bridges within the corridor. The most significant project within the corridor includes the widening of Highland Road from Buhl Farm to Kerrwood to a width of 48 feet. A reconfiguration of the roadway intersection with Buhl Farm is also programmed. The TIP also includes a 1000 foot realignment of Hofius Lane to the intersection of PA 18. A Transportation Enhancement programmed within the corridor includes the completion of missing sidewalks, curbing, striping and signage to the roadways of Highland Road, Walnut Street and Forker Boulevard in Hermitage. Table 11 provides more information on these projects.



**Table 11: 2005 -- 2008 TIP Projects (in \$000s)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY N-S CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Project/Description	Year				Total
		05	06	07	08	
HERMITAGE	Highland (SR 3014) Ph 1	900	1,000	2,000		3,900
HERMITAGE	Highland (SR 3014) Ph 2		200	500	500	1,200
HERMITAGE	Hogback Rd bridge repl	350				350
HERMITAGE	Trout Island Trail	180				180
HERMITAGE	SV Bike/ped Sys. Ph 1	210				210
HERMITAGE	Pine Hollow Run	4,250	2,500			6,750
HERMITAGE	Kelly Rd Brs T-388 (Dual)	25				25

Source: PENNDOT District 1-0