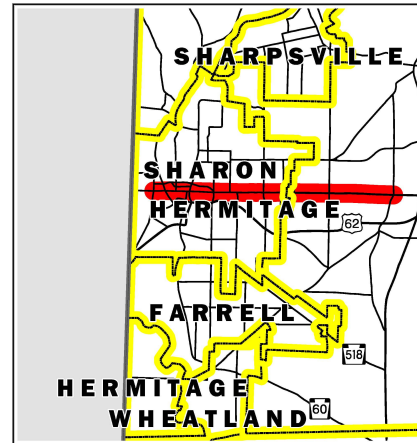


The Shenango Valley East-West Commercial Corridor

The Shenango Valley's East West Commercial Corridor is centered on US 62 and US 62 Business bisecting the cities of Hermitage and Sharon. The corridor is approximately 6.25 miles in length.

The current US 62 Business was the original alignment of US 62. In 1958, a new alignment was constructed south of the current alignment from the Ohio state line through Hermitage and serves as the existing alignment today. Until 1998, US 62's western terminus was at Irvine Street in Sharon at the Ohio state line. The designation was changed to its current alignment at City's request.

The corridor provides connections to PA 18, PA 60, PA 418 and PA 518. US 62 also functions as a gateway between Valley communities and the state of Ohio.



CORRIDOR PROFILE ▶



Hermitage
Sharon



BUSINESS

PennDOT has functionally classified the majority of the US 62 Corridor as an “Other Principal Arterial Highway”. After 62 splits into Business 62 and 62, PennDOT classifies the roadway as an “Other Freeways and Expressways”. Mercer County has further classified this roadway as an Urban Principal Arterial Other Freeway.

Transit service in the corridor is provided by the Shenango Valley Shuttle Service, Mercer County Community Transit, and the Rural Mercer County Public Bus Service. All three of these transit services are operated by the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments.

While there is not an airport directly within this corridor, the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport is located across the state line in Vienna, Ohio. The airport can be accessed via US 62 by traveling within the Corridor on Route 62 across the Ohio/PA Border and connecting with Route 82 in Ohio.



Key Findings & Corridor Highlights

- Workers from the cities of Hermitage and Sharon differ widely in their journey to work travel modes. Use of transit in Sharon is over three times the county rate.
- Population loss in the county's core city of Sharon and adjoining communities have resulted in the MPO losing its urbanized area designation, resulting in a loss of funding. Population gains in Hermitage have been masked by declines in adjoining Sharon.
- Travel times to work in the corridor have been increasing over the past decade, yet are still generally shorter than in other areas of the county.
- Nearly two-thirds of corridor workers are employed at destinations at one of the five Shenango Valley communities of Farrell, Hermitage, Sharon, Sharpsville and Wheatland.
- The percentage of elderly residents in the corridor is growing.
- As a regional gateway from Ohio, improved maintenance and beautification improvements to US 62 would be more welcoming to visitors from out of the area.

Recommendations for the Shenango Valley East-West Commercial Corridor:

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

- **Pursue designation for inclusion in the Congested Corridor Improvement Program.** As a commercial corridor, the US 62 roadway should be considered for inclusion as part of PennDOT's Congested Corridor Improvement Program (CCIP). Upgrading old urban corridors such as US 62 through Sharon and Hermitage through Transportation Enhancement and Betterment projects should encourage a development pattern that invests in the county's urban core area.

Revitalizing US 62 would complement recent efforts by Sharon at acquiring Transportation Enhancement funding aimed at community revitalization oriented around infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks and landscaping.

- **Improved roadway safety must be a priority for the corridor.** The US 62 Bypass (Shenango Valley Expressway) is also in need of improvement. The roadway needs barriers in certain sections due to the number of head-on collisions that occur, particularly in the wintertime.
- **Establish designated truck routes through Sharon.** Sharon does not have adequate traffic routes for trucks. There is concern with truck traffic increasing due to industry plans, yet there should be alternative routing aimed at removing through trucks from the downtown area.



- **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.**
- **Other needs that stakeholders report requiring "immediate" attention include:**
 - Buhl Farm Drive and Highland Road intersection: signal timing and capacity.
 - Dutch Lane and Highland Drive intersection: signal timing and capacity.
 - Broadway: congestion, signal timing and traffic flow.
 - All of the above-mentioned projects are on the MPO's TIP.
 - Transportation needs that should be considered for a longer term include:
 - Reconnection of Budd Street over/under railroad tracks in Sharon/connection to PA 60 and US 62.
 - Bridge on State Street over the Shenango River is ugly and appears in disrepair. (This bridge is posted and appears on the MPO's TIP.)
 - The candidate projects described in the subsection 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.

In addition to the 2005 TIP projects, there are a number of corridor candidate projects to be considered for inclusion as part of the development of the 2007 TIP, which begins during the summer of 2005. A list highlighting these projects is outlined below:

1. **Broadway Road Improvements** - including safety and congestion improvements, as per a 2003 transportation study.
2. **PA 18 intersection** with Lamor and Valley View Roads - study and implement a realignment of Valley View Road to new intersection on PA 18 to reduce congestion at existing intersection and to provide appropriate access location for future development on 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.

4. **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 would possibly include new traffic signals on East State Street and the Freeway.

5. **Ohio Street** and/or S. State Line Road (or though Wheatland) - Improvements as needed to support the development of State Line Industrial Park

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.



Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes on US 62 in the corridor range from just under 10,000 vehicles a day near the intersection of PA 18 to a high of nearly 19,000 towards the Ohio state line. Table 1 shows annual average daily traffic volumes (AADT) for segments along the US 62 in 2003, accounting for both directions of traffic.

**Table 1: Average Daily Traffic
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E/W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	2003
County Line to SR 3008	18,991
SR 3008 to Connelly St	17,136
Connelly St to Stambaugh St	15,919
Stambaugh St to Buhl Farm (SR 3025)	13,471
Buhl Farm (SR 3025) to Maple Drive (SR 3035)	16,921
Maple Drive (SR 3035) to PA 18	9,180

Mode Split

Rates for mode to work vary widely between the two corridor municipalities. Commuters in Hermitage for example have a higher rate of commuting to work alone, while Sharon has higher rates of workers carpooling, using public transportation and walking/bicycling. As a corridor however, rates are generally in line with county averages.

**Table 2: Mode Split (in percent) – 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E/W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	TOTAL	SOV	CARPOOL	TRANSIT	WALK	BICYCLE	OTHER MEANS	WORK AT HOME
SHARON	6,315	80.9	11.4	1.0	4.3	0.3	1.1	1.1
HERMITAGE	7,031	88.2	7.6	0.2	1.3	0.1	0.2	2.5
CORRIDOR	13,346	84.7	9.4	0.6	2.7	0.2	0.6	1.8
MERCER COUNTY	51,120	83.2	9.2	0.3	3.2	0.1	0.7	3.2

Travel Time to Work

Table 3 and Table 4 show how journey to work travel times have changed in the corridor over the past decade. As expected and similar to statewide trends, commute times increased between 1990 and 2000. Travel times in the corridor are generally shorter than in other areas of the county.



**Table 3: Travel Time to Work (in minutes by percent) – 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	< 15	15-29	30-59	60-89	90+
SHARON	58.2	22.3	15.1	2.0	1.2
HERMITAGE	50.7	30.4	12.6	2.2	1.7
CORRIDOR	54.2	26.6	13.8	2.1	1.5
MERCER COUNTY	45.0	33.5	16.7	2.5	1.6

**Table 4: Travel Time To Work (in minutes by percent) – 1990
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	< 15	15-29	30-59	60-89	90+
SHARON	60.3	26.0	12.4	1.5	0.4
HERMITAGE	55.3	30.2	12.1	2.0	0.8
CORRIDOR	57.8	28.1	12.2	1.8	0.6
MERCER COUNTY	46.9	32.1	15.2	2.0	0.6

- Sharon leads the corridor in the percentage of workers requiring less than 15 minutes to get to work, at 58 percent. This is a decline from 1990 rates but still higher than the county rate, overall.
- The rate of corridor workers requiring longer than 90 minutes to get to work more than doubled during the 1990s. In Sharon, the rate tripled.

Commutation Patterns

Approximately 83 percent of corridor workers are employed in one of the top ten employment destinations as shown in Table 5. Slightly over half (55 percent) of all corridor workers are employed at destinations within the corridor, and nearly 65 percent are employed within one of the five Shenango Valley communities.

**Table 5: Top Commuter Destinations – 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Percentage Share 2000
1. HERMITAGE CITY	30.4
2. SHARON CITY	25.1
3. TRUMBULL COUNTY, OH	9.8
4. FARRELL CITY	4.2
5. MAHONING COUNTY, OH	3.4
6. SHARPSVILLE BOROUGH	2.7
7. WHEATLAND BOROUGH	2.5
8. GREENVILLE BOROUGH	2.1



9. GROVE CITY BOROUGH	1.7
10. MERCER BOROUGH	1.4

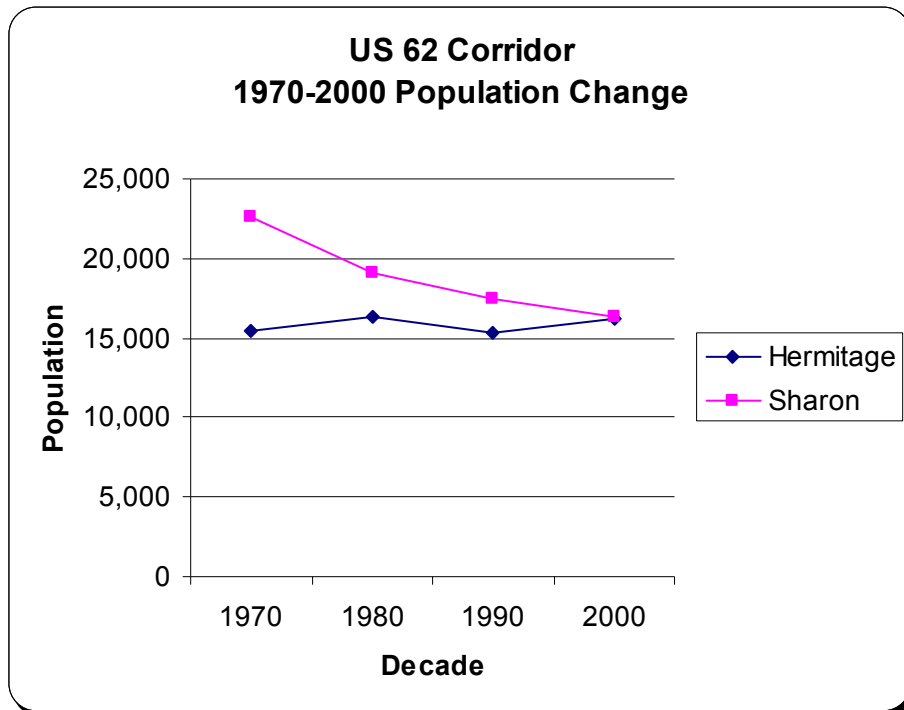
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Population Trends

Total population within the Shenango Valley East-West Commercial Corridor declined slightly during the 1990s by 1 percent. Growth in the City of Hermitage was masked by declines in the City of Sharon to result in a net corridor loss in population. The two cities have experienced population changes over the past several decades, with Sharon sustaining losses while growth in Hermitage has been relatively flat. Years of population decline in Sharon and surrounding communities have resulted in the county losing its MPO designation. MPOs are defined by having a core city urbanized area (central core and adjacent densely settled areas) in excess of 50,000 and a total MSA population of at least 100,000. Table 6 shows the total population figures for the two corridor municipalities.

**Table 6: Population Trends
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	1970	1980	1990	2000	% CHANGE 90-00
SHARON	22,653	19,057	17,493	16,328	(6.7)
HERMITAGE	15,421	16,365	15,300	16,157	5.6
CORRIDOR	38,074	35,422	32,793	32,485	(1.0)
MERCER COUNTY	127,225	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 7 and the bullet points below provide more detail on the age group distribution within the corridor and its municipalities.

Table 7: Percent Change by Age Group – 1990, 2000
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL 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

There are 3,152 minorities in the corridor, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The corridor is less racially homogeneous than the county as a whole, with nearly 10 percent of its population consisting of minorities. The greatest numbers of minorities are in the City of Sharon with 2,157. African Americans comprise approximately 79 percent of all minority population in Mercer County's largest city. Table 8 provides more information on racial composition within the corridor against the individual corridor municipalities.

Table 8: Racial Composition – 2000 (in percent)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

LOCATION	Total	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Other
SHARON	16,328	86.8	10.5	.07	0.3	2.4
HERMITAGE	16,157	93.8	3.0	0.17	1.7	1.3
CORRIDOR	32,485	90.3	6.8	0.1	0.97	1.8
MERCER COUNTY	120,293	94.0	5.7	0.4	0.5	0.3

Per Capita Income

In 2000, the majority of households in Sharon (nearly 46 percent) had an income of less than \$25,000 per year. Hermitage had higher household incomes, where the majority of households in 2000 (35 percent) had an income of \$25,000 to \$49,999. Of the 13,623 corridor households in 2000, nearly three quarters of them had an income of \$49,999 or less.



Table 9 below provides more information concerning per capita income in the corridor against county rates.

Table 9: Per Capita Income (2000)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

LOCATION	Households	< \$25,000	\$25-49,999	\$50-74,999	\$75-99,999	\$100,000+
SHARON	6,826	45.8	32.2	12.8	4.9	4.2
HERMITAGE	6,797	28.8	34.6	18.9	8.9	8.7
CORRIDOR	13,623	37.4	33.4	15.8	6.9	6.5
MERCER COUNTY	46,755	34.4	35.0	18.5	7.0	5.5

Economic

The next three tables demonstrate the composition of the corridor across a variety of economic factors, including labor force characteristics, employment by occupation, and employment by industry by place of residence.

Table 10: Civilian Labor Force Characteristics – (2000)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

LOCATION	Total	Not in Labor Force		Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force				In Armed Forces	
		#	%	#	%	Employed		Unemployed		#	%
						#	%	#	%		
SHARON	12,752	5,747	45.1	7,005	54.9	6,440	91.9	556	8.0	9	0.1
HERMITAGE	13,058	5,564	42.6	7,494	57.4	7,088	94.6	397	5.4	9	0.1
CORRIDOR	25,810	11,311	43.8	14,499	56.2	13,528	93.3	953	6.7	18	0.1
MERCER COUNTY	95,664	40,113	41.9	55,551	58.1	52,142	93.9	3,353	6.0	56	0.1

- Corridor unemployment was highest in Sharon, at 8 percent. Unemployment in Sharon was 2.6 percentage points higher than in neighboring Hermitage.
- Hermitage has a higher percentage of its population participating in the labor force, at 57.4 percent.



**Table 11: Employment by Occupation - (2000) by percent
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Total	Mgmt./ Professional & Related	Service	Sales/ Office	Farming, Fishing & Forestry	Construction, Extraction & Maintenance	Production/ Transportation & Material Moving
SHARON	6,440	25.6	23.8	24.0	0.1	5.2	21.3
HERMITAGE	7,088	36.9	13.8	28.9	0.2	6.3	13.9
CORRIDOR	13,528	31.5	18.6	26.6	0.1	5.8	17.4
MERCER COUNTY	52,142	27.6	17.3	25.3	0.6	8.2	21.0

- Corridor occupation types are generally in line with county averages, although occupations in farming, fishing and forestry are markedly lower than county rates.
- The corridor has a higher percentage of workers employed in management and professional-related occupations than the county as a whole.

**Table 12: Employment by Industry by Place of Residence - (2000)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Total	Agricultural	Construction	Manufacturing	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Transportation	Information	FIRE*	Professional, Scientific, Mgmt	Educational & Health Services	Arts & Entertainment	Other	Public Administration
SHARON	6,440	0.2	3.8	20.1	3.2	13.9	3.4	1.0	5.0	4.9	23.4	11.8	5.0	4.3
HERMITAGE	7,088	0.5	3.5	18.0	3.2	14.5	3.5	2.8	6.8	5.6	26.1	6.4	4.9	4.2
CORRIDOR	13,528	0.4	3.6	19.0	3.2	14.3	3.5	1.9	5.9	5.2	24.8	9.0	4.9	4.2
MERCER COUNTY	52,142	1.6	5.0	20.1	3.8	13.4	5.0	1.6	4.2	4.7	23.7	7.7	5.0	4.2

* Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

- Education and Health Services are the largest employers in the corridor by industry type. There are 3,357 employed in these industries, versus 2,570 in manufacturing activity.
- Given its role as a growing regional commercial retail center, Hermitage has a higher percentage employed in retail trade occupations than does Sharon.
- The two cities have relatively equal numbers employed in the manufacturing sector, with Sharon edging Hermitage 1,292 to 1,279.
- Sharon has nearly twice as many persons employed in the Arts and Entertainment industry than Hermitage.



- Given the corridor's urban nature, employment in agricultural pursuits is not significant, with fewer than 50 persons employed in this industry.

2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

PennDOT has programmed nearly \$22.8 million in improvements in the corridor, according to data from the 2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

There are a total of 13 projects on the 2005-2008 TIP for Sharon and Hermitage. 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 and the roadways of Highland Road, Walnut Street and Forker Boulevard in Hermitage. Table 13 below highlights the programmed TIP projects. All costs are shown and include design, right-of-way acquisition and construction costs inclusive by federal fiscal year.

Table 13: 2005-2008 TIP Projects (\$000s)
THE SHENANGO VALLEY E-W COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Municipality	Project/Description	Year				Total
		05	06	07	08	
HERMITAGE	Hogback Road Bridge T-423	350	0	0	0	350
HERMITAGE	Trout Island Trail	180	0	0	0	180
HERMITAGE/ SHARON	SV Bike/Ped Sys Phas. 1	210	0	0	0	210
HERMITAGE/ SHARON	Broadway Avenue	700	0	1000	3000	4700
HERMITAGE	Pine Hollow Run	4250	2500	0	0	6750
HERMITAGE	Highland Road - Phase 1	900	1000	2000	0	3900
HERMITAGE	Highland Road - Phase 2	0	200	500	500	1200
HERMITAGE	Kelly Rd Brs T-388 (Dual)	25	0	0	0	25
SHARON	Shen. Vly. Ind. Corr-Ph 2	0	0	500	0	500
SHARON	US 62/South Dock St Br	0	80	40	1500	1620
SHARON	US 62 Bridge/CONRAIL	0	80	30	2000	2110
SHARON	US 62 Br./Shenango River	0	0	80	30	110
SHARON	PA 718 State Street Br	80	0	270	750	1100

Source: PENNDOT District 1-0

