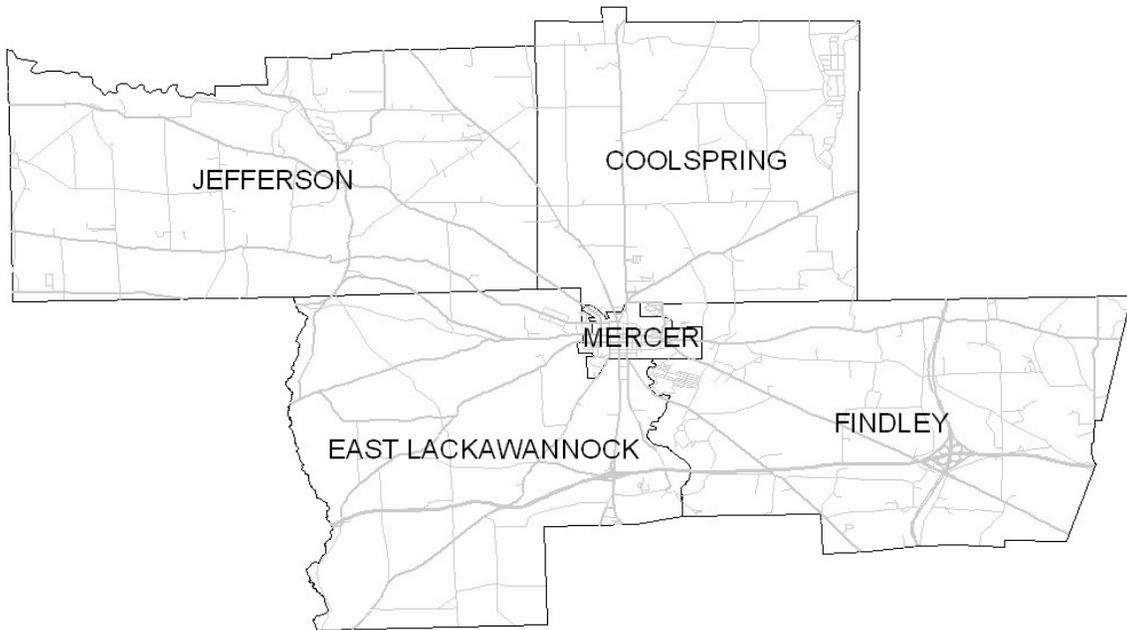


Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan



*Coolspring Township, East Lackawannock Township,
Findley Township, Jefferson Township
& Mercer Borough*

Mercer County, Pennsylvania

December 2005

Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

*Coolspring Township, East Lackawannock Township, Findley Township
Jefferson Township & Mercer Borough*

Mercer County, Pennsylvania

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is an official municipal document. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (PA MPC) regulates its preparation and contents. The plan itself serves several roles:

- State agencies rely on the plan in making a variety of funding decisions, ranging from competitive grants to highway permits.
- If the plan is adopted, any decision relative to public property such as extension of water/sewer lines, construction, demolition or sale of municipal or school district buildings/land, and adoption of land use ordinance amendments must be reviewed for consistency with the plan. (This review is non-binding, and conducted by the municipal planning commission.)
- Zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances must be generally consistent with the comprehensive plan. Beyond the consistency requirement, the plan is important as a place to explain these laws in easy to understand terms. This helps citizens and can also be very useful in a dispute between a developer and a community.

The following table helps to briefly explain both what a comprehensive plan is, as well as what it is not.

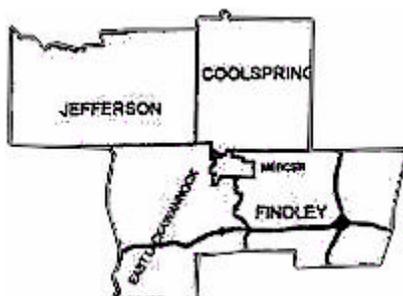
A Pennsylvania Comprehensive Plan

<i>Is . . .</i>	<i>Is not . . .</i>
The official statement of where and how the community wants to see future growth and development take place.	An ordinance that makes decisions about individual properties.
The explanation of policies behind ordinances, funding policies, and general changes (construction, demolition, etc.) in public facilities.	A document that binds the community to unchangeable policies.
A measuring stick State agencies use to make funding or permitting decisions.	A specific plan to build, design or locate any public or private facility.
A way to focus on major issues.	A document to deal with every possible issue in the future.

Communities of the Mercer Region

This section generally describes the communities of Coolspring Township, East Lackawannock Township, Findley Township, Jefferson Township, Springfield Township, and Mercer Borough and their location, land use pattern, and population and economic characteristics.

Location



These municipalities are located in the south-central part of Mercer County. Jefferson and Coolspring Townships are located in the northern part of the cluster and East Lackawannock and Findley Townships are located in the southern part. Mercer Borough, found in the center of the cluster, is the smallest municipality in land area and is the county seat. The intersections of U.S Route 62, U.S Route 19, and State Route 58 all converge within Mercer Borough.

Probably one of the largest advantages of this area is the intersection of Interstate 80 and Interstate 79 in Findley Township. I-80 stretches across the state and continues across the U.S. and I-79 starts in Erie and runs south past Pittsburgh. There is also an interchange off I-80 at SR19 in East Lackawannock Township approximately 2 miles south of Mercer Borough.

Land use pattern

With the exception of Mercer Borough, all of the other municipalities are predominantly open space and woodlands. There are two gravel mines, one in Jefferson Township and one in East Lackawannock Township. Mercer Borough is characterized by mostly residential and commercial land use. In the northwestern part of Jefferson Township there is public open space along the Shenango River.

MUNICIPALITY	2000 POPULATION	LAND AREA (SQUARE MILES)
Coolspring Township	2,287	19.2
East Lackawannock Township	1,701	21.2
Findley Township	2,305	21.1
Jefferson Township	2,416	24.5
<u>Mercer Borough</u>	<u>2,391</u>	<u>1.3</u>
Mercer Region Totals	11,100	87.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 Census

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Article III Section 301 (a) (1) the following have been developed as statements of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including, but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development, that may also serve as statements of community development objectives.

Community Development Objectives

- Promote intergovernmental cooperation between all municipalities to support regional activities and sharing of services.
- Direct future growth to encourage sustainable development of the I-80/Route 19 interchange. Take advantage of the region's access to the interstate highway system and transportation network.
- Encourage diversified infill development in locations where adequate infrastructure is already in place.
- Coordinate with County efforts to provide for an efficient and safe transportation network that allows for alternative transportation options and relieves congestion.
- Foster a regional approach to support economic development activities throughout the Townships and the Borough.
- Promote the preservation of agricultural land and open space to preserve the rural character of the communities within the region.
- Develop innovative strategies to meet the infrastructure needs of the region to provide for quality development.
- Promote the historic assets of the region to provide for preservation activities and as a marketing tool to support tourism.
- Support the existing recreational assets of the communities and provide for additional recreational opportunities as needed.
- Support revitalization of downtown Mercer with infill residential and commercial development.
- Develop innovative strategies to capitalize on the existing housing stock and available land for new residential development to meet the changing needs of the region.

Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

“The Mercer Region will take advantage of its historic small town and quaint rural atmospheres, its good schools, and access to interstate highways, as well as developing job opportunities, directing growth into the most appropriate areas, and preserving its agricultural and rural livelihood to improve the quality of life for the entire region through intergovernmental cooperation.”

The Goal of the Comprehensive Plan

Once adopted and implemented by the communities, the comprehensive plan will encourage positive growth and sound land use policies. The Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan was developed to:

- Revitalize the economy
- Provide transportation options that reduce congestion and promote safety
- Control public expenditures and ensure efficient use of resources
- Foster a strong business and industrial environment
- Create a sense of place which is attractive to residents and visitors
- Capitalize on the natural, cultural, environmental and historic features of each community
- Promote those aspects which are unique to each community

Only with the support and commitment of the elected officials, residents, and business and civic leaders can the Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan truly be a positive and powerful tool. The plan is a framework that outlines the strategies that should be implemented by local leaders in order to achieve the stated community development objectives.

Interrelationships Statement

Section 301 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that a comprehensive plan contain both a statement of the interrelationships between various plan components, and a statement outlining the consistency of this Plan with the plans of neighboring municipalities. The plan is generally consistent with plans of neighboring municipalities. It is anticipated that consistency with the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan will be achieved through co-adoption, and incorporation of this document into the county plan.

It is the purpose of the comprehensive plan to ensure that the development of each community is orderly and consistent with the identified goals of the plan. In order to function properly, the plan must serve as an overriding guide for the development process. As each element of the comprehensive plan is interrelated, any changes or development of one element has an impact and effect on all the others within the community and region. It is the role of the comprehensive plan to ensure that the positive effects outweigh the negative.

The plan elements were developed to strengthen the community as a whole and recommendations were prepared in a coordinated manner so that the overall goals of the comprehensive plan can be met. After an analysis and review of existing conditions within the borough and townships was completed, recommendations were developed to address environmental concerns and land use issues. These recommendations will provide for new development opportunities while protecting natural resources and preserving historically and culturally significant areas.

Previous planning documents and studies were thoroughly reviewed and considered when investigating existing needs and when developing recommendations for future action.

Multi-municipal comprehensive plan implementation

The Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan was prepared to meet the standards for multi-municipal cooperative comprehensive plans contained in Article XI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). A multi-municipal plan is more than just a plan prepared by two or more municipalities. The PA MPC gives multi-municipal plan participants special planning tools and unique authorities (see table below) not given to municipalities that prepare comprehensive plans alone.

Multi-municipal comprehensive plans Unique planning tools and authorities	
Optional plan content	Legal effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May designate <i>growth areas</i> for 20-year development at 1+ unit per acre where public services are provided or planned for. • May designate <i>future growth areas</i> for longer term growth and orderly extension of services. • May designate <i>rural resource areas</i> for low-density, rural development where publicly-financed services are not intended. • May plan for the accommodation of all categories of land uses within the entire area of the plan without all uses being provided for in each municipality. • May plan for developments of regional significance and impact. • May plan for conservation of scenic and aesthetic resources in addition to natural and historic resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities will be given protection from exclusionary zoning challenges if land uses are accommodated within the entire area of the plan without all uses being provided for in each municipality. • Municipalities will be given more favorable state decisions regarding funding requests and certain facilities permitted by the state. • Municipalities may share tax revenues and fees. • Municipalities may adopt a transfer of development rights program enabling transfer between municipalities. • Municipalities may adopt specific plans to guide development, in greater detail, of specific non-residential properties.

Implementation agreement

The PA MPC provides that the Mercer Region municipalities may enter into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement to implement the multi-municipal comprehensive plan. While entering into such agreements is optional, the PA MPC provides that municipalities must enter into such agreement in order to legally utilize most of the above-described tools and authorities.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Mercer Region municipalities enter into an intergovernmental cooperative agreement. Such agreements are enacted by ordinance as provided for in the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Law. The contents of such an agreement are enumerated below.

Implementation agreement content required by the PA Intergovernmental Cooperation Law

1. Conditions of the agreement.
2. Duration of the agreement.
3. Purpose and objectives of the agreement, including powers and scope of authority delegated in the agreement.
4. How the activities and actions specified in the agreement will be financed.
5. Organizational structure necessary to carry out the agreement.
6. Manner in which any property involved in the agreement will be acquired, licensed, or disposed.
7. Provisions for employee insurance and benefit contracts, if any, associated with the agreement.

Implementation agreement content required by the PA Municipalities Planning Code

1. Consistency review process to be used by participating municipalities to judge consistency of implementing actions, like zoning ordinances or capital projects, with the multi-municipal comprehensive plan.
2. Process for the review and approval of developments or regional significance and impact.
3. Roles and responsibilities of participating municipalities with respect to implementation of the multi-municipal comprehensive plan, including particularly the provision of public infrastructure and services.
4. Yearly report of implementation activities, particularly infrastructure projects undertaken and development applications and approvals.
5. Process by which the multi-municipal comprehensive plan can be amended and growth, future growth, and rural resource areas can be redefined.

A sample implementation agreement is included in the appendix of the plan document. The agreement can be modified to address more specific plan implementation activities. Also, other parties – municipal authorities and utility providers, the county and/or county planning commission – can be added to the agreement to serve in specific roles in order to help implement the plan.

Many MPC-related aspects of multi-municipal plan implementation – including designation of growth, future growth, and rural resource areas, area-wide accommodation of land uses, and developments of regional impact – are discussed in more detail in the main body of this document. However, one important aspect deserves additional attention here – *the consistency review process*.

Consistency review process

A consistency review process is a required element of an implementation agreement. It ties implementing actions taken by municipalities to the comprehensive plan. As the adopted comprehensive plan is a form of partnership, in which municipalities agree on long-range regional development and how to implement it, the consistency review process is a major part of keeping the partner municipalities on the same course in implementing the agreed upon plan.

The consistency review process provides a means through which implementing actions can be reviewed by all partner municipalities in order to determine whether those actions are consistent with the goals and recommendations of the multi-municipal comprehensive plan. Implementing actions can include the adoption or amendment of land use ordinances like zoning, subdivision and land development, or an official map; implementation of capital projects like water or sewer system improvements; street and highway upgrades; and other publicly-funded projects like streetscape, industrial development, housing development, or parks. A joint review process is outlined below and further addressed in the sample implementation agreement included in the appendix of the plan document.

Basic elements of a consistency review process

- According to the PA MPC, implementing ordinances must be adopted within 2 years of the plan adoption date. The primary focus will be the amendment, as necessary, of municipal zoning ordinances to reflect the new comprehensive plan.
- A joint review committee should be established to conduct consistency reviews.
- Definition of consistency:
 - According to the PA MPC: “an agreement or correspondence between matters being compared which denotes a reasonable, rational, similar, connection or relationship.”
 - Other recommended criteria: 1) an implementing action furthers or complements, or at least does not interfere with, the goals, policies, and recommended actions and strategies contained in the comprehensive plan; 2) an implementing action is compatible with the proposed future land uses and densities and/or intensities contained in the comprehensive plan.
- A participating municipality would provide notice and information about a proposed implementing ordinance or project to the joint consistency review committee
- The committee would review the proposal and confirm consistency in writing or identify corrections needed to make the ordinance or project consistent.

Plan for area-wide accommodation of uses

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code grants zoning flexibility to municipalities participating in multi-municipal comprehensive plans. Those municipalities may plan for zoning of land uses considering the whole geographic area of the plan. Any municipality that has not adopted a multi-municipal plan, on the other hand, must accommodate via zoning every conceivable reasonable and lawful use in their municipality, whether or not the use is compatible.

Multi-municipal plan participants may zone for higher-density uses requiring a full range of public services in an urban core municipality where such uses are appropriate and services/infrastructure are available, and not zoned for such uses in a more rural municipality where such uses are not appropriate and services are not available. Conversely, multi-municipal plan participants may zone for low-density uses and uses that require space to buffer their impacts in a more rural municipality, and not zone for such uses in an urban core municipality. This will facilitate a more rational and efficient development pattern.

In preparing a plan for area-wide accommodation of uses, the PA MPC specifies that the plan must accommodate uses within a “reasonable geographic area.” This term and concept is not defined in the MPC. Also, since the law is new (2000), courts have not yet heard cases on and further defined the term reasonable geographic area. However, two criteria make sense in support of the reasonable geographic area concept:

1. Market – Uses should be accommodated in quantity and location reasonably appropriate for their markets. For example, fewer locations are needed for major retail department stores with regional markets while more locations throughout an area are needed for personal service uses like beauty salons with neighborhood markets.
2. Compatibility – Uses accommodated where reasonable and appropriate for the character of an area, i.e. its density, scale, physical attributes, etc.

Developments of regional significance and impact

The Mercer Region comprehensive plan recommends that certain large land uses be given greater scrutiny when proposed. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code terms such uses “developments of regional significance and impact” and defines them as follows:

“Any land development that, because of its character, magnitude, or location will have substantial impact upon the health, safety, or welfare of citizens in more than one municipality.”

DRIs (short for developments of regional impact) are developments, large in size or impact or both, that will affect neighboring municipalities in addition to the one in which it is located. Examples of DRIs include large residential subdivisions, shopping malls, industrial parks, waste disposal facilities, and major highways. Development impacts may include traffic, noise, light, stormwater runoff, pollutants, open space loss, commercial market encroachment, and/or water/sewer demand. It makes sense for all affected municipalities to participate in reviewing the development.

The Mercer Region plan recommends establishing a process allowing all municipalities to review proposed DRIs. The process is outlined in the suggested intergovernmental cooperative agreement for implementation included in the appendix of the plan document. It includes a few basic elements:

- Referral by the host municipality of a zoning permit application by a DRI.
- Review by a committee consisting of representatives from all municipalities.

- Comments and recommendations, as appropriate, by the review committee.
- Consideration by the host municipality of the review committee's comments.

While DRIs may be subject to review by all municipalities, Pennsylvania planning law clearly specifies that the host municipality retains the decision-making authority to grant or deny the permit. According to law, the host municipality must approve the DRI if it meets all local requirements. Further, though DRI review may involve all municipalities, the review process may take no longer than already provided for in state planning law.

Since the PA MPC definition for DRIs is broad, additional threshold criteria should be employed to determine if a development is a DRI and should be subject to the DRI review process. The following criteria were researched from other states with DRI threshold criteria and modified to best fit the Mercer Region municipalities.

Determined to be DRI because of character of land use or development

- Sanitary landfills
- Airports & rail terminals
- Community water/wastewater treatment plants
- Hospitals

Determined to be DRI because of magnitude of land use or development

- Commercial, retail, service, etc. greater than 150,000 sq. ft.
- Industrial facility, park etc. greater than 150,000 sq. ft., 100 acres, or creating more than 500 jobs
- Attractions & recreation facilities with more than 500 parking spaces or capacity for more than 2,000 patrons
- Housing developments which have created more than 100 lots or units
- Any development causing more than 100 acres of earth disturbance
- Any development generating more than 1,000 vehicle trips per day or 100 truck trips per day

Demographic Analysis

This Section of the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan will examine the demographics of both the Mercer Region and the municipalities within. It will look at overall population trends, as well as trends and figures for age, race, income and employment, and family and household data. These figures provide the foundation for both understanding the Mercer Region as it has developed, and for making planning decisions for the future of the region.

POPULATION

According to 2000 U.S. Census information, the population of the Mercer Region is 11,100. The following paragraphs and tables will explain the trends in total population for the region and municipalities in the region. Table 1 shows the population of the region, as well as that of the County and the Commonwealth. Table 2 shows the rate of population change for the same areas. Although the population at the State Penitentiary in Findley Township is included in the census figures, it was taken out of these population figures to better evaluate the trends of the Township and the Region.

TABLE 1				
POPULATION – 1970 to 2000				
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Mercer Borough	2,773	2,532	2,444	2,391
Coolspring Township	1,518	1,984	2,140	2,287
East Lackawannock Twp	1,314	1,709	1,606	1,701
Findley Township	1,337	1,481	1,428	1,390
Findley Twp (w/Prison)	1,337	1,651	2,284	2,305
Jefferson Township	1,623	2,007	1,998	2,416
Mercer Region	8,565	9,713	9,616	10,185
Mercer County	127,125	128,299	121,003	120,293
Pennsylvania	11,793,909	11,864,720	11,881,846	12,281,054

Source: U.S. Census Data (Mercer Region population does not include State Prison in Findley Township)

TABLE 2				
POPULATION CHANGE – 1970 to 2000				
	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	TOTAL 1970-2000
Mercer Borough	-8.7%	-3.5%	-2.2%	-13.8%
Coolspring Township	+30.7%	+7.9%	+6.9%	+50.7%
E Lackawannock Township	+30.1%	-6.0%	+5.9%	+29.5%
Findley Township	+10.8%	-3.6%	-2.7%	+4.0%
Jefferson Township	+23.7%	-0.4%	+20.9%	+48.9%
Mercer Region	+13.4%	-1.0%	+5.9%	+18.9%
Mercer County	+0.9%	-5.7%	-0.6%	-5.4%
Pennsylvania	+0.6%	+0.7%	+3.4%	+4.1%

Source: U.S. Census Data (Figures do not include State Prison in Findley Township)

The Mercer Region, with 10,185 residents, ranks third in Mercer County in population, behind the Shenango Valley (which includes Sharon, Farrell, Hermitage, and Wheatland) and Grove City (which includes Grove City, Pine, Liberty, Springfield, and Wolf Creek) regions. While the County has lost population over the past 30 years, the Mercer Region has grown more numerically than any area in the county, with a population increase of 1,620 persons, or 18.9% of its population.

Although these numbers are very encouraging, by examining Table 2, there are other trends that occur that can be a cause for concern. The first is that most of the population increase that has occurred in the region happened in the decade between 1970 and 1980, and the growth that has occurred since has been at a much lower rate. In fact, real population decreased in the decade between 1980 and 1990 in the Region (due mainly to the collapse of industry in Mercer County during this decade), followed by a modest increase in the last decade. Another trend that could be a cause for concern is that while the four Townships experienced population growth between 1970 and 2000, Mercer Borough lost population. This suggests that although there has been some in-migration to account for the population growth in the outlying Townships, there is also a significant number of people moving out of the Borough and into the Townships. This is a concern because expansion of infrastructure without real regional population growth occurs, which in turn leads to the possibility of increasing per-capita costs of public infrastructure such as water, sewer, and road maintenance, which in turn can translate into increased user fees and taxes.

Another concern shown by Tables 1 & 2 is that all of the municipalities have not been experiencing the high rates of population increase that the Region as a whole has received. As discussed in the previous paragraph, Mercer Borough has actually seen a loss of 382 residents since 1970, which computes to a 13.8% loss in population. East Lackawannock Township, after significant gains in the decade of 1970-80, has lost population since, although it has nearly rebounded back close to the 1980 population level. Findley Township, after subtracting those who are housed in the State Penitentiary in the Township, has shown the lowest level of growth in the Townships, actually losing approximately 6.1% of its population in the past 20 years.

AGE

This section will examine the age characteristics of the region. Table 3 shows the median age for the study area, as well as the County and State figures. Unlike Tables 1 and 2, however, the population at the State Penitentiary in Findley Township is not able to be removed from the age cohorts. Therefore, the prison population is included in the age statistics.

MUNICIPALITY	MEDIAN AGE (years)
Coolspring Township	41.8 years old
East Lackawannock Township	40.3 years old
Findley Township	40.5 years old
Jefferson Township	39.3 years old
Mercer Borough	37.4 years old
Mercer Region (Average age)	39.8 years old
<hr/>	
Mercer County	39.6 years old
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	38.0 years old
<i>Source: U.S. Census Data</i>	

As shown in Table 3, the approximate average age of a Mercer Region resident is 39.8 years old, which is near the County median age, but almost two years older than the median for the Commonwealth. An older population traditionally requires more in the way of social services that need to be provided by either the municipality or the county, such as transportation, centers for activity and socialization, and health care facilities. Additionally, older populations are often on more of a fixed income. Unlike the Townships in the Region, Mercer Borough has a relatively young age, slightly under the Commonwealth figures and between two and four years younger than the surrounding Townships. Table 4 breaks down the 1990 and 2000 population counts for the study area, the County, and the State into age cohorts that are commonly used in U.S. Census data to show the breakdown of each age group and the change to each group over the past decade.

Number	Coolspring Township	E Lackawannock	Findley Township	Jefferson Township	Mercer Borough	Mercer Region
Total pop	2,287 (2,140)	1,701 (1,606)	2,305 (2,284)	2,416 (1,998)	2,391 (2,444)	11,100 (10,472)
>5 yrs	145 (120)	132 (95)	68 (88)	159 (128)	145 (144)	649 (575)
5-9 yrs.	160 (133)	125 (106)	79 (110)	169 (143)	138 (169)	671 (661)
10-14 yrs	156 (142)	116 (113)	108 (103)	164 (126)	146 (179)	690 (663)
15-19 yrs	133 (134)	105 (116)	116 (130)	153 (142)	153 (159)	660 (681)
20-24 yrs	79 (103)	51 (66)	112 (304)	86 (124)	168 (181)	496 (778)
25-34 yrs	237 (297)	185 (226)	376 (560)	317 (282)	352 (383)	1,467 (1,748)
35-44 yrs	349 (295)	243 (266)	580 (429)	401 (293)	347 (354)	1,920 (1,637)
45-54 yrs	314 (286)	270 (205)	469 (183)	334 (272)	314 (255)	1,701 (1,201)
55-59 yrs	157 (126)	97 (90)	109 (93)	137 (122)	136 (122)	636 (553)
60-64 yrs	138 (111)	81 (71)	81 (88)	148 (99)	90 (119)	538 (488)
65-74 yrs	221 (179)	142 (154)	136 (129)	207 (174)	206 (236)	912 (872)
75-84 yrs	139 (139)	99 (69)	59 (57)	117 (74)	160 (121)	574 (460)
85 yrs +	59 (75)	55 (29)	12 (10)	24 (19)	36 (22)	186 (155)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Percent	Coolspring Township	E Lackawannock	Findley Township	Jefferson Township	Mercer Borough	Mercer Region	Mercer County	Pennsylvania
Total	2,287 (2,140)	1,701 (1,606)	2,305 (2,284)	2,416 (1,998)	2,391 (2,444)	11,100(10,472)	120,293	12,281,054
>5 yrs	6.3% (5.6%)	7.8% (5.9%)	3.0% (3.9%)	6.6% (6.4%)	6.1% (5.9%)	5.8% (5.5%)	5.7% (6.2%)	5.9% (6.7%)
5-9 yrs.	7.0% (6.2%)	7.3% (6.6%)	3.4% (4.8%)	7.0% (7.2%)	5.8% (6.9%)	6.1% (6.3%)	6.3% (6.6%)	6.7% (6.6%)
10-14	6.8% (6.6%)	6.8% (7.0%)	4.7% (4.5%)	6.8% (6.3%)	6.1% (7.3%)	6.2% (6.3%)	6.9% (6.5%)	7.0% (6.4%)
15-19	5.8% (6.3%)	6.2% (7.2%)	5.0% (5.7%)	6.3% (7.1%)	6.4% (6.5%)	5.9% (6.5%)	7.5% (7.5%)	6.9% (6.9%)
20-24	3.5% (4.8%)	3.0% (4.1%)	4.9% (13.3%)	3.6% (6.2%)	7.0% (7.4%)	4.5% (7.4%)	5.9% (7.0%)	6.1% (7.3%)
25-34	10.4% (13.9%)	10.9% (14.1%)	16.3% (24.5%)	13.1% (14.1%)	14.7% (15.7%)	13.2% (16.7%)	11.2% (14.2%)	12.7% (16.1%)
35-44	15.3% (13.8%)	14.3% (16.6%)	25.2% (18.8%)	16.6% (14.7%)	14.5% (14.5%)	17.3% (15.6%)	14.8% (13.8%)	15.9% (14.7%)
45-54	13.7% (13.4%)	15.9% (12.8%)	20.3% (8.0%)	13.8% (13.6%)	13.1% (10.4%)	15.3% (11.5%)	13.7% (10.3%)	13.9% (10.2%)
55-59	6.9% (5.9%)	5.7% (5.6%)	4.7% (4.1%)	5.7% (6.1%)	5.7% (5.0%)	5.7% (5.3%)	5.2% (5.0%)	5.0% (4.6%)
60-64	6.0% (5.2%)	4.8% (4.4%)	3.5% (3.1%)	6.1% (5.0%)	3.8% (4.9%)	4.8% (4.7%)	4.5% (5.7%)	4.2% (5.1%)
65-74	9.7% (8.4%)	8.3% (9.6%)	5.9% (5.6%)	8.6% (8.7%)	8.6% (9.7%)	8.2% (8.3%)	9.1% (10.0%)	7.9% (9.0%)
75-84	6.1% (6.5%)	5.8% (4.3%)	2.6% (2.5%)	4.8% (3.7%)	6.7% (5.0%)	5.2% (4.4%)	6.8% (5.5%)	5.8% (4.9%)
85+	2.6% (3.5%)	3.2% (1.8%)	0.5% (0.4%)	1.0% (1.0%)	1.5% (0.9%)	1.7% (1.5%)	2.2% (1.7%)	1.9% (1.4%)
>18	24.6%(22.6%)	26.6%(24.2%)	14.3%(16.1%)	24.9%(24.2%)	22.2%(23.9%)	22.3%(22.0%)	23.4%(23.5%)	23.8%(23.5%)
18-64	57.1%(59.1%)	56.0%(60.1%)	76.7%(75.3%)	60.7%(62.5%)	61.0%(60.6%)	62.6%(63.8%)	58.5%(59.4%)	60.6%(61.1%)
65+	18.3%(18.4%)	17.4%(15.7%)	9.0%(8.6%)	14.4%(13.4%)	16.8%(15.5%)	15.1%(14.2%)	18.1%(17.2%)	15.6%(15.4%)

In comparing the figures from 1990 and 2000, Mercer region residents are increasing in age. Although the number of children in the Region is increasing, a decrease has been shown in the younger brackets of the working ages: 20-24 and 25-34. This shows that out-migration seems to be outpacing in-migration in these age brackets. Other comparisons of the Region to the County and Commonwealth are inconclusive, due to the inability to separate the population at the State Penitentiary from the figures.

At a local level, however, comparisons can be made from all municipalities (except Findley Township) to the County and Commonwealth. The remaining Townships fare well in regards to the number of children 0-18. Mercer Borough has continued to keep a higher percentage of the 20-24 and 25-34 age groups in the Borough, with a percentage that exceeds the County and the Commonwealth. The number of residents aged 65 and over is slightly lower than County figures, but over Pennsylvania figures for most of the communities. This growing segment of the population, especially those in the 75-84 and 85+ age groups, where much of the increase is occurring, suggests that municipalities need to be aware of the possibility of increased demand for senior services in the future, such as medical facilities and support, assisted living facilities or elderly housing, and transportation services. Otherwise, the age patterns in the Region are similar to those at the County and Commonwealth levels.

RACE

This section examines the racial makeup of the Region, comparing it to the County and State. Table 5 shows the 2000 data for race.

**TABLE 5
RACIAL MAKEUP OF STUDY AREA**

	White	Black / African	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other Races	Two or More	Hispanic
Coolspring Township	98.7%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	---	0.1%	0.3%	0.9%
E Lackawannock Twp	97.2%	1.2%	0.1%	0.3%	---	0.3%	1.0%	0.9%
Findley Township	84.6%	14.8%	0.1%	---	---	0.1%	0.3%	4.0%
Jefferson Township	98.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	---	0.1%	0.7%	0.5%
Mercer Borough	96.4%	2.2%	0.2%	0.2%	---	0.2%	0.8%	0.8%
Mercer Region	95.0%	3.8%	0.2%	0.2%	---	0.1%	0.6%	1.4%
Mercer County	93.1%	5.3%	0.1%	0.4%	---	0.2%	0.9%	0.7%
Pennsylvania	85.4%	10.0%	0.1%	1.8%	---	1.5%	1.2%	3.2%

Source: U.S. Census Data

All of the communities in the Mercer Region have a very similar racial makeup. Findley Township's numbers seem to differ from the rest of the Region, but much of that is due to it being the location of the State Correctional Facility. The Region is mostly made up of persons who are considered "White", 95.0% to be exact. The only other racial/ethnic groups with over 1% of the population are those considered "Black or African-American", which account for 3.8% of the population, and those considered "Hispanic", which account for 1.4% of the population (according to the U.S. Census Bureau, race is considered a separate concept from Hispanic origin). The Mercer region's numbers are less diverse than the State figures, and only slightly less diverse than the County as a whole.

POVERTY

The Income and Poverty statistics show that the Mercer Region has levels of poverty comparable to those at the County and Commonwealth levels. Table 6 shows the poverty rate for various segments of the population in 2000. The poverty rates for individuals and families seem collectively to be under or very close to that of Mercer County and Pennsylvania.

**TABLE 6
POVERTY STATISTICS**

	Coolspring Township	E Lack. Township	Findley Township	Jefferson Township	Mercer Borough	Mercer County	Pennsylvania
Families in poverty:	6.3%	9.2%	4.4%	7.6%	6.0%	8.8%	7.8%
1. With children >18	10.9%	16.1%	4.0%	11.0%	12.9%	14.9%	12.1%
2. With children >5	13.3%	20.0%	7.9%	8.2%	28.9%	19.3%	15.3%
Families with female householder:	33.3%	16.7%	---	25.0%	24.2%	32.0%	24.9%
1. With children >18	59.0%	23.5%	---	36.2%	34.8%	14.9%	12.1%
2. With children >5:	100%	---	---	42.1%	60.0%	63.8%	47.4%
Individuals in poverty:	10.4%	15.0%	6.6%	9.2%	9.0%	11.5%	11.0%
18 years and older:	9.4%	9.7%	6.5%	7.4%	8.8%	9.5%	9.8%
65 years and older:	16.2%	10.6%	6.1%	2.6%	8.5%	7.2%	9.1%

Source: U.S. Census Data

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

While the previous sections have focused on the individual, this section focuses on the households that constitute the Mercer Region.

The Household Characteristics of the Mercer Region are shown in Table 7. The Mercer Region as a whole has a higher number of households with children under 18, and a lower number of households with individuals over 65 than Mercer County or Pennsylvania. On a municipal level, however, Mercer Borough has a lower number of households with children under 18 than Mercer County and Pennsylvania.

Household	Coolspring Township	E Lack Township	Findley Township	Jefferson Township	Mercer Borough	Mercer Region	Mercer County	Pennsylvania
Households w/ kids under 18	34.7%	35.1%	35.8%	33.7%	29.2%	33.2%	31.9%	32.6%
Households w/ individuals 65+	24.8%	27.4%	25.8%	25.6%	29.2%	26.7%	31.4%	27.8%
Average size Household	2.61	2.77	2.56	2.52	2.24	2.51	2.44	2.48
Average family size	2.99	3.15	2.93	2.96	2.89	2.98	2.96	3.04

Source: U.S. Census Data

Family	Coolspring Township	E Lack Township	Findley Township	Jefferson Township	Mercer Borough	Mercer Region	Mercer County	Pennsylvania
Family Households	76.7%	78.9%	75.1%	73.0%	59.8%	71.5%	69.3%	67.2%
-with own kids <18	31.3%	32.5%	33.2%	31.0%	26.8%	30.5%	(29.3%)	(30.0%)
Married couples	65.5%	70.0%	65.7%	60.4%	43.7%	59.3%	54.8%	51.7%
-with own kids <18	24.9%	28.8%	28.4%	24.0%	16.6%	23.6%	(21.4%)	(21.8%)
Female household-er, no husband	8.1%	5.3%	5.5%	8.2%	13.1%	8.7%	10.9%	11.6%
-with own kids <18	4.5%	2.1%	2.6%	4.6%	8.5%	4.9%	(6.1%)	(6.2%)

Source: U.S. Census Data

Table 8 shows the statistics of families in the Mercer Region. The Region has a higher percentage of both family households and married couples, as 71.5% of the households are family households, and 59.3% of the households consist of married couples. The Region also has a higher percentage of families with their own children, both for married couples and for all families, and a lower percentage of families with a female householder, as well as families with a female householder with their own children under 18. At a municipal level, however, Mercer Borough reverses all of the trends shown by the region as a whole. The higher rates of female householders and female householders with children in the Borough could possibly be a concern, because

as shown in Table 6, female householders and female householders with children have higher poverty rates than the average individual or family.

**TABLE 9
NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS**

Family	Coolspring Township	E Lack Township	Findley Township	Jefferson Township	Mercer Borough	Mercer Region	Mercer County	Pennsylvania
Non- Family Households	23.3%	21.1%	24.9%	27.0%	40.2%	28.5%	30.7%	32.8%
Householder living alone	19.3%	17.3%	20.1%	23.6%	34.2%	24.0%	27.0%	27.7%
Householder living alone & 65+	6.4%	8.9%	9.6%	8.2%	13.3%	9.5%	13.2%	11.6%

Source: U.S. Census Data

Table 9 shows the statistics for non-family households in the Mercer Region. The Region has fewer people in non-family households than the County and Commonwealth as a whole. Non-family households include those living alone or with a roommate. Mercer Borough has a higher percentage of non-family households than the other municipalities, which could be due to the higher percentage of rental housing in the Borough.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Instead of looking at current figures to describe the state of the Mercer Region, this section looks at projecting what the future of the Region might hold. These population projections have been calculated for the Mercer Region by using a cohort survival projection method, which takes into account the actual population for the years 1980, 1990, and 2000, the retention rates in those years, and current fertility rates (the number of live births per 1,000 women of a specified age group). The population in each age group at the State Correctional Facility was approximated and taken out of the calculations for Findley Township. The figures also include the movement of the County Jail out of Mercer Borough and into Findley Township between the 2000 and 2010 figures.

Three projections were done for each of the five municipalities. The low projection (#1) represents a continuation of the trends from 1980 to 2000. The likely projection (#2) assumes a stable economy, coupled with slight out-migration and in-migration. The high projection (#3) assumes a growing economy and in-migration to the Region. Table 10 shows the projections for 2010 and 2020. Table 11 shows the historical population and the average of the three projections. The average is used to represent the most likely possibility for the next 15 years in the Mercer Region.

**TABLE 10
POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

	Population			Low - #1		Likely - #2		High - #3	
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Coolspring Township	1,984	2,140	2,287	2,407	2,453	2,507	2,664	2,593	2,859
E Lackawannock Twp	1,709	1,606	1,701	1,620	1,492	1,684	1,616	1,757	1,763
Findley Township	1,481	1,428	1,390	1,485	1,411	1,532	1,502	1,595	1,630
Jefferson Township	2,007	1,998	2,416	2,575	2,656	2,667	2,852	2,771	3,084
Mercer Borough	2,532	2,444	2,391	2,264	2,184	2,362	2,377	2,468	2,602
Mercer Region	9,713	9,616	10,185	10,351	10,196	10,752	11,011	11,184	11,938

Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC)

**TABLE 11
HISTORICAL POPULATION AND AVERAGE OF PROJECTIONS**

Average of Projections	1980	1990	2000		2010	2020
Coolspring Township	1,984	2,140	2,287		2,502	2,659
East Lackawannock Township	1,709	1,606	1,701		1,687	1,624
Findley Township	1,481	1,428	1,390		1,537	1,514
Jefferson Township	2,007	1,998	2,416		2,671	2,864
Mercer Borough	2,532	2,444	2,391		2,365	2,388
Mercer Region	9,713	9,616	10,185		10,762	11,049

Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC)

The population projection for the Mercer Region shows growth in the Region, as well as three of the five municipalities. The current population for the Region is 10,185 and the average of the projections is 10,762 in 2010 and 11,049 in 2020. This would be an increase of 5.7% between 2000 and 2010 and of 2.7% between 2010 and 2020, for a total increase in population from 2000 to 2020 of 8.5%.

The growth in the Mercer Region is expected to happen primarily in Jefferson and Coolspring Townships, with some in Findley Township and Mercer Borough. Jefferson Township is expected to experience the highest rates of population growth, with an average projected growth rate of 10.6% between 2000 and 2010 and 7.2% between 2010 and 2020. Coolspring Township is not far behind, with an average projected growth rate of 9.4% between 2000 and 2010 and 6.3% between 2010 and 2020. Although much of Findley Township's population gain occurs due to the movement of the Mercer County Jail from Mercer to Findley, the Township is expected to grow in population between 2000 and 2010. Mercer Borough, after taking out the approximately 100 prisoners at the County Jail that will be moved to Findley Township, shows slight population growth in both 2000 to 2010 and 2010 to 2020. East Lackawannock Township shows a slight population decrease, but much of the growth in the Township will most likely be of a commercial or industrial nature around the Interstate 80 / U.S. Route 19 interchange.

Land Use

The land use section of the Mercer Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan covers three main elements: existing land use, local land use controls, and the future desired land use of the Region. This section of the Plan serves as the basis for land use decisions in the Region and amendments to local land use ordinances.

EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

Mercer Borough, with only 1.3 square miles and 2,391 residents, is characterized by low-density urban development. The other municipalities, although they do have existing small areas of low-density urban development (such as the Lake Latonka development in Coolspring Township and the areas directly adjacent to Mercer Borough) are characterized mostly by farmlands and forests. The quarries shown on the existing land use map are sand and gravel operations located in Jefferson Township along Route 62 (Sharon-Mercer Road), and the northeastern quadrant of the Interstate 80 / Route 19 interchange.

LOCAL LAND USE CONTROLS

As stated earlier, the comprehensive plan serves as the basis for land use ordinances. The comprehensive plan is dependent on these land use ordinances to carry out and implement the recommendations and strategies set forth in the plan. These land use controls can include zoning regulations (including Planned Residential Development and Traditional Neighborhood Development provisions), subdivision and land development regulations (including Conservation Subdivision Design regulations), stormwater management plans, building codes, and official maps.

Zoning

Zoning is a land use control which regulates the uses allowed on the land, as well as the location and intensity of development. Communities can also use zoning to protect the public welfare, health, and safety of their residents. Zoning can also be used to guide future growth into areas where it is most desired and where public costs and impact are lowest. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act 247, states that zoning ordinances may permit, prohibit, regulate, restrict, and determine the following:

- Uses of land, watercourses, and other bodies of water;
- Size, height, bulk, location, erection, construction, repair, maintenance, alteration, razing, removal, and use of structures;
- Areas and dimensions of land and bodies of water to be occupied by uses and structures, as well as areas, courts, yards, and other open spaces and distances to be left unoccupied by uses and structures;
- Density of population and intensity of use;
- Protection and preservation of natural and historic resources and prime agricultural land and activities.

All five of the communities in the Mercer Region have adopted zoning ordinances as a form of land use control.

Coolspring Township

Coolspring Township adopted a zoning ordinance in 1968. Although minor text amendments have been done to the ordinance, a major overhaul has not been done since its adoption. This makes the Township's ordinance the second-oldest in the County. Due to its age, the Ordinance does not address many uses that did not exist in 1968. In addition, modern planning techniques and powers available now have not been incorporated into this ordinance. Township officials are interested in updating and revising their ordinance, which divides the Township into the following five zones:

R-1 Residential-Agricultural Low Density Zoning District- is a residential district which also allows agricultural and institutional uses. However, not much protection is given to agriculture, and 20,000 sq. ft. minimum lot sizes may not match the rural areas of this zone.

R-2 Residential Medium Density Zoning District- is a residential district with similar uses as the R-1 district, but has reduced lot sizes for areas that contain public sewers.

R-3 Residential High Density Zoning District- is a residential district that provides for multi-family, as well as single-family, residential uses.

C Commercial Zoning District- is a district that allows solely commercial uses. No mixing of office, institutional, or residential uses is allowed in this zone, which encourages all trips to be made only by automobile.

I Industrial Zoning District- is a district that permits industrial and office uses, as well as some commercial uses (such as gas stations and restaurants). Also included in this zone is a provision to allow any other principal use equivalent to the above permitted uses as a Special Exception heard by the Zoning Hearing Board.

East Lackawannock Township

East Lackawannock Township adopted their zoning ordinance in 1965, and although some minor revisions have been made, no major overhaul has been done since its original adoption. That makes the Township's ordinance the oldest in Mercer County. Because of this, many of the same observations made about Coolspring Township's ordinance also apply here. Township officials are interested in revising and updating their zoning ordinance. The Township is divided into the following five zones:

R-1 Agricultural-Rural Zoning District- is structured similarly to Coolspring Township's R-1 district, although the minimum lot size in East Lackawannock is 25,000 square feet.

R-2 Residential Zoning District- is structured similarly to Coolspring's R-2 district, although the minimum lot size in East Lackawannock is 15,000 sq. ft. (Coolspring - 10,000 sq. ft.)

B-1 Business-Highway Service Zoning District- is structured similarly to Coolspring's C district.

I.D.D. Interstate Development Zoning District- is a district that allows for commercial and light industrial uses. Access control provisions are included to limit the number of intersecting streets on Route 19.

I Industrial Zoning District- is structured similarly to Coolspring's I district.

Findley Township

Findley Township adopted their zoning ordinance in 2000, which was a complete revision of the 1987 version. Township officials are interested in some minor revisions to their ordinance, such as regulations for accessory structures. Although there is more flexibility of uses in Findley's zoning districts than in the municipalities already mentioned, there is still a rigid separation of uses between the districts. In addition, the entire Township is zoned for either 10,000 or 20,000 sq. ft. lots, which may conflict with the rural nature of the Township. The Township is divided into the following four zones:

R-1 Agriculture / Residential Zoning District- The purpose of this district is to permit agriculture and other uses, such as health care facilities, kennels, and one- & two- family dwellings.

R-2 Rural Residential Zoning District- The purpose of this district is to permit a variety of residential uses. Mobile home and recreational vehicle parks are also allowed in this district.

B-1 Business-Highway Service Zoning District- The purpose of this district is to allow for a variety of commercial uses. Agricultural uses are permitted as well.

I Industrial District- This district permits all industrial uses. Agricultural uses are permitted as well, but no commercial or residential uses are permitted.

Jefferson Township

Jefferson Township adopted their zoning ordinance in 1989, which was a complete revision of their 1968 version. Township officials have shown interest in looking at their regulations, especially in the area proposed for sewer extensions from the City of Hermitage. The Township is divided into the following four zones:

R-1 Residential-Agricultural Zoning District- This district is designed to allow for a variety of uses, including residential uses (including single-family, two-family, mobile

home parks, and planned residential developments), agricultural uses, campgrounds, sanitary landfills, mining uses, animal hospitals, schools, and hospitals. The lots in the district are a minimum of 24,000 sq. ft in area.

B-1 Business Neighborhood Service Zoning District- This district is designed to allow residential, office, and commercial uses, but not automobile-oriented uses, such as gas stations, auto sales, car washes, or auto repair shops.

B-2 Business Highway Service Zoning District- This district is designed to allow residential, office, commercial, and light industrial uses. Automobile-oriented uses are allowed to locate in this area, as well as drive-in theaters.

I Industrial Zoning District- This district is designed to allow industrial uses.

Mercer Borough

Mercer Borough adopted their zoning ordinance in 2002, as a complete revision to their 1986 zoning ordinance. The Borough is divided into the following seven zones:

R-1 Residential Single Family- This district provides for single-family residential neighborhoods in a more suburban setting.

R-2 Residential General- This district provides for a mix of residential uses with smaller setbacks and lot sizes than found in the R-1 district. The buildings in this district have a defined orientation to the sidewalk and street.

R-3 Residential Mixed Use- This district provides for a mix of residential, office and light commercial uses (as a reuse of older residential structures). The orientation in this district is to the sidewalk and the street, where parking is placed in the rear and signage is kept smaller.

C-1 Commercial Town Center- This district provides for a mix of commercial, office, and apartment uses in Mercer's downtown. Buildings are kept close to the street and geared towards the sidewalk. Common walls are permitted, and mixing of uses is encouraged.

C-2 Commercial General- This district provides for the same uses in the C-1 district, but in a manner less oriented to the pedestrian and more oriented to the highway. Buffering and screening requirements are used to ensure higher quality development.

I Industrial- This district provides for industrial uses.

PO Planned Opportunity- This district provides for any residential, business, or light industry uses, controlled through the conditional use permit.

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances

Subdivision and land development ordinances contain regulations for the creation of new lots or changes in property lines as well as the construction of public or private improvements on the land. Municipalities may have a municipal subdivision ordinance, a multi-municipal subdivision and land development ordinance, or be under the jurisdiction of a county subdivision ordinance.

Coolspring, East Lackawannock and Findley Townships

Coolspring, East Lackawannock and Findley Townships all are under the Mercer County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The ordinance was adopted in 1995, but is under revision with an anticipated adoption date of late 2005.

Jefferson Township

Jefferson Township has its own municipal subdivision and land development ordinance, originally adopted in 1965 and last updated in 1984. No land development standards are included in the regulations, other than those for mobile home parks.

Mercer Borough

Mercer Borough has its own municipal subdivision and land development ordinance, adopted in 1973. Like Jefferson Township's ordinance, the Borough's does not include any land development standards.

Stormwater Management Plans

Mercer Borough has a recently adopted Stormwater Management Plan. The Mercer County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance require a stormwater management plan for any major subdivision, in which post-development runoff must be equal to or less than pre-development runoff.

FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use map gives a visual representation of the vision of the future for the Region. It was developed through public participation efforts, and breaks the Region down into the following five categories that prescribe different ideals for future development:

Rural / Agricultural Preservation Areas - These areas are rural and agricultural in nature, and are to continue these land uses into the future. This does not mean that new development can not occur. However, development in these areas must be rural in nature and complement and enhance the agricultural and forestry industries, as well as low-density residential and other rural uses.

- These rural areas, which constitute the majority of the four Townships, should remain dominated by open spaces, farming and other rural uses, and low-density development.

Revitalization Target Areas - These are areas where some form of action is necessary to ensure their long term vitality. These areas are traditionally areas which have had public infrastructure, streets, and services, and the action is needed to maintain and enhance these prior public investments as a cost-effective measure instead of recreating these investments in a new location.

- Downtown Mercer - Revitalization efforts in Mercer's town center should be a high priority to ensure its long-term viability and its place as the centerpiece not only of the Region, but the County as a whole.
- Mercer's residential neighborhoods - The Borough's has stable, attractive neighborhoods worthy of preservation and is well known as a quaint, historic Victorian community.

Open Space Preservation Areas - These areas are places where open spaces or recreational activities can be enjoyed by residents and visitors of the Region, and therefore should be kept up and preserved. These areas include:

- Shenango Reservoir and Trail
- Munnell Run Farm
- Brandy Springs Park
- 4-H Park

Growth Target Areas (0-10 years) - These areas include places that new or expanded residential, commercial, and/or industrial development should be directed towards. These areas have been determined to be logical extensions of existing development, and also the places where growth can be accommodated in the most cost-effective manner.

- Extended growth around Mercer Borough - these areas have already experienced some residential and business growth, extended out from Mercer Borough, and are good places for further residential and business growth, so long as they do not adversely affect revitalization efforts in Mercer's town center and residential neighborhoods.
- US 19 Corridor / Exit 15 interchange - This area generated the most discussion for future growth in the Region. Future development around the interchange should be geared towards larger-scale development opportunities that will provide for a number of higher-wage workers. Commercial development at the interchange should be limited and focus more on travel services. Between the interchange and Mercer along US 19, development that occurs should consist of a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses, as a mixed-use extension of the Borough of Mercer. These uses should not be allowed to sprawl up and down the corridor; development should be concentrated to maximize the opportunities in the

corridor. Since public utilities do not presently exist in this corridor, a key to development is expansion of service into this area.

- East State Street (US 62) development - This area is proposed for extended growth from Hermitage and the Shenango Valley with the future extension of sewer along the Route 62 corridor. There was a desire to limit the amount of strip-commercial development in this corridor and encourage a mix of residential and light commercial uses, especially in and around the village of Charleston. Development in the area proposed to be sewerred along Lamor Road is expected to be more residential and lower density than East State Street.
- Lake Latonka - This area is proposed for further infill residential development.

Future Growth Areas (10-20 years) - These areas are places designated for long-term development, either residential, commercial, or industrial. Growth should occur in these areas further into the future. Care should be taken to encourage full development and build-out of the growth target areas through land use policies, public improvements, and other means before development occurs in these future growth areas.

- Southern half of Exit 15 interchange, East Lackawannock Township - this area should be considered for warehousing and industrial uses. This area will be a target for growth after the northern half of the interchange is developed and is providing the tax base necessary to facilitate expansion of the sewer system south of the Interstate.
- US 62 Corridor, east of Charleston village - this area should be considered for further residential development, as well as light commercial development, only after areas further to the west have been built out.
- Area between US 19 and PA 258, East Lackawannock and Findley Townships - this area should be considered for further industrial development and job creation, most likely as an extension of development that occurs at the Exit 15 interchange.
- PA 58 Corridor, west of Grove City / Pine Township - this area should be considered for an extension of commercial and industrial development after areas in the corridor closer to Grove City have been developed.

Transportation

Transportation is a key element to any community plan, and the Mercer region is no different. A good transportation system will benefit the citizens of the area and aid in economic development within the region.

The Mercer region serves as a central point within Mercer County. Because of the historical development of the county the region's transportation system acts as a hub with many spokes. In addition to the state routes that traverse the area, two major Interstate Highways are also found within the region (E. Lackawannock and Findley Townships).

Existing Conditions

The capacity and condition of the roadways within the region varies, although overall the condition of the roads is good. Another factor to examine when discussing the transportation infrastructure is its ability to move people and goods in an efficient way. One community in particular is affected adversely by congestion. Mercer Borough is the only community within the region with traffic signals, and has severe problems when detours occur on the interstate system.

For the purpose of this plan, roadways will be classified by a functional classification system (PENNDOT). This will also allow the plan to be consistent with the County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Long Range Plan, and the County comprehensive plan.

Functional Classification Definitions

Interstate Highways, Other Freeways and Expressways – These highways are designed to provide for the movement of the greatest number of vehicles over the longest distance in the fastest allowable time. Access to expressways is restricted to grade-separated interchanges and flow of traffic is uninterrupted. These highways generally serve either interstate and interregional traffic or cross-town traffic in densely developed areas.

I-79

Interstate 79 is a four-lane, limited access highway, capable of accommodating all types of vehicles. I-79 runs south from the City of Erie and enters Mercer County in Deer Creek Township. Continuing southward, the highway traverses the entire length of the County, intersecting with I-80 about four miles southeast of Mercer Borough before leaving the County at the Springfield Township - Lawrence County Line. The northern terminus of I-79 is the City of Erie. It continues south through Western Pennsylvania and ends in Charleston, West Virginia where it connects with I-64 and I-77.

I-80

Interstate 80 is a coast-to-coast four-lane, limited access highway, that spans all of Pennsylvania, capable of accommodating all types of vehicles. I-80 runs west from Venango County, entering the County in Wolf Creek Township. Continuing westward the highway traverses the entire length of the County before leaving at the Shenango Township - Ohio State line.

Arterials - Arterials also provide for the movement of large volumes of traffic over longer distances; however, these highways generally operate at lower speeds due to the presence of traffic control devices and access points. They can be subclassified as Principal Arterials, which serve inter-city traffic, and Minor Arterials, which link smaller developed areas within large areas of the County.

Principal – There are no principal arterials within the Mercer Multi-Municipal planning area.

Minor Arterials

U.S. Route 19

U.S. Route 19 is a two-lane, Federal Aid Primary Highway, capable of accommodating all types of vehicles. Route 19 runs south from the City of Erie and enters Mercer County in Sandy Creek Township. Continuing southward, paralleling I-79, this highway traverses the entire length of the County, intersecting with I-80 about two miles south of Mercer Borough before leaving the County at the Springfield Township - Lawrence County line.

U.S. Route 62

U.S. Route 62 is mostly a two-lane, Federal Aid Primary Highway, capable of accommodating all types of vehicles. Route 62 enters Mercer County near the Sandy Lake/Stoneboro area. Continuing southwestward, the highway crosses I-79 and passes through the Shenango Valley - Hermitage and Sharon - and leaves the County and Pennsylvania at the City of Sharon - State of Ohio boundaries.

PA Route 58

PA 58 is a two-lane, Federal Aid Primary Highway, capable of carrying all types of vehicles. PA 58 is approximately 35 miles long and spans the entire County diagonally from Greene Township in the extreme northwest corner of the County southeastward to Butler County, southeast of Grove City. It passes through Greenville, Mercer Borough and Grove City, thus providing a highway connection between these Economic Activity centers.

Collectors - Collector highways serve moderate traffic volumes and act to move traffic from local areas to the arterials. Collectors, too, can be subdivided into subcategories. Major Collectors provide for a higher level of movement between neighborhoods within a larger area. Minor collectors serve to collect traffic within an identifiable area and serve primarily short distance travel.

The following roads are classified as major/minor collectors: PA 158, PA 258, US 19 (north of Mercer Borough), PA 318, SR 2014, SR 2015, SR 3007 and SR 3039

Local - Local roads and streets are, by far, the most numerous of the various highway types. These highways provide access to individual properties and serve short distance, low speed trips.

All remaining roads in the region are classified as local.

The annual average daily traffic (AADT) for major roadways within the region is as follows (PENNDOT):

Annual Average Daily Traffic, 2000		AADT Within Mercer Borough
I-80	19,000	N/A
I-79	23,000	N/A
US 62 East of the Borough	5,200	9,200
US 62 West of the Borough	8,900	--
US 19 South of the Borough	7,000	14,000
US 19 North of the Borough	3,000	--
PA 58 SE of the Borough	5,700	6,700
PA 58 NE of the Borough	4,400	--
PA 318	1,300	3,700
PA 258	2,300	2,800
PA 158	1,900	2,700

Regional Network

Transit

Public transportation is provided to Mercer County residents by two carriers: The Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (SVSS) and Mercer County Community Transit (MCCT). The SVSS is a fixed route service and provides transportation to only the urbanized population of the Shenango Valley. Public transportation for the Mercer region is provided by the MCCT. The MCCT is an on-demand service, which provides transportation throughout all of Mercer County. Each of these services is run by the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments.

Major Corridor Profiles

As part of the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP) was developed. The LRP is developed based on the PENNDOT LRP which analyzed and identified projects based on a corridor level. The County LRP identifies eleven (11) major corridors which affect the Mercer region. Corridors in the Mercer Region include the 1-79, I-80, US 62, and PA 58. Each of the profiles contains detailed information for the populations within the corridor. Each of these profiles can be found in the appendix of the plan.

HOUSING

A housing plan is a vital element of a comprehensive plan. It incorporates many of the other aspects of the plan including land use and infrastructure. Housing is perhaps one of the most recognizable elements of the history of a region. It embodies the style of the region and sets its place in history. Many people are impassioned by preserving historic homes and buildings as a way of keeping the “feel” of a community. These can stand as symbols of our place in history and our reason for location of the town (for example the affluent summer homes of the past or farmsteads).

Analysis of Existing Trends

MERCER REGION HOUSING UNIT DATA - 2000														
	Owner Occupied					Renter Occupied			Vacant			Seasonal		
Municipality	Housing Units		Housing Units			Housing Units			Housing Units			Housing Units		
	1990	2000	1990	2000	2000 % HU	1990	2000	2000 % HU	1990	2000	2000 % HU	1990	2000	2000 % HU
Mercer Borough	1,043	1,086	589	595	54.8%	379	425	39.1%	72	66	6.1%	3	6	0.6%
Coolspring Township	838	927	622	716	77.2%	103	102	11.0%	38	109	11.8%	75	66	7.1%
East Lackawannock Township	581	599	503	518	86.5%	59	66	11.0%	13	15	2.5%	6	1	0.2%
Findley Township	565	564	465	484	85.8%	66	58	10.3%	25	22	3.9%	9	4	0.7%
Jefferson Township	763	993	669	880	88.6%	64	78	7.9%	28	35	3.5%	2	7	0.7%
Mercer Region	3790	4169	2848	3193	76.6%	671	729	17.5%	176	247	5.9%	95	84	2.0%
Mercer County	48,689	49,859	34,184	35,646	71.5%	11,407	11,066	22.2%	2,406	3,147	6.3%	692	482	1.0%
Pennsylvania	4,938,140	5,249,750	3,176,121	3,406,337	64.9%	1,319,845	1,370,666	26.1%	442,174	472,747	9.0%	144,359	148,230	2.8%

Source: 2000 Census – U.S. Census Bureau

There are a total of 4,169 housing units in the Mercer Region according to the 2000 U.S. Census data. This is an increase of 379 total units (9%) throughout the Mercer Region from the 1990 Census. The majority of this increase over the 10-year period came from Jefferson Township which gained a total of 230 housing units. This percentage is above the County trend as a whole. The county gained 1,170 units in the same time period, which is a 2% increase.

The Borough of Mercer, being the most urban and densely populated community in the region, has the majority of the renter occupied housing units, which is a standard occurrence. All of the other communities in the region have a vast majority of owner-occupied housing units. It is important to the region to maintain a diverse mix of housing types while keeping the standard of the housing stock at a high level.

As shown in the data below, 69% of the housing stock in the region is made up of one-unit, detached dwellings, which are typically single-family houses. This figure is in line with the rest of Mercer County but well above the state percentage. This could be attributed to the rural nature of the planning area. Three townships (Coolspring, East Lackawannock and Findley) each have almost 80% of their housing stock as 1-unit, detached dwellings. Jefferson Township has 60% as one-unit detached and a large percentage of mobile home units (26%). Mercer Borough, as the most urban community, has the most diverse types of housing in the region.

MERCER REGION HOUSING TYPE - 2000																		
Municipality	1-Unit, Detached	% 1-Unit, Detached	1-Unit, Attached	% 1-Unit, Attached	2 Units	% 2 Units	3-4 Units	% 3-4 Units	5-9 Units	% 5-9 Units	10-19 Units	% 10-19 Units	20+ Units	% 20+ Units	Mobile Home	% Mobile Home	Boat, RV, Van, etc.	% Boat, RV, Van, etc.
Mercer Borough	604	55.6%	25	2.3%	115	10.6%	140	12.9%	75	6.9%	6	0.6%	53	4.9%	68	6.3%	0	0.0%
Coolspring Township	733	79.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	189	20.4%	0	0.0%
East Lackawannock Township	491	82.0%	16	2.7%	3	0.5%	0	0.0%	12	2.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	77	12.9%	0	0.0%
Findley Township	457	81.0%	2	0.4%	5	0.9%	2	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	96	17.0%	0	0.0%
Jefferson Township	604	60.8%	0	0.0%	17	1.7%	4	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	368	37.1%	0	0.0%
Mercer Region	2889	69.30%	43	1.0%	140	3.36%	291	6.99%	87	2.09%	12	0.29%	55	1.32%	1089	26.12%	0	0.0%
Mercer County	36,684	73.6%	829	1.7%	2,084	4.2%	1,655	3.3%	1,668	3.3%	922	1.8%	1,284	2.6%	4,721	9.5%	12	0.0%
Pennsylvania	2,935,248	55.9%	940,396	17.9%	273,798	5.2%	241,745	4.6%	179,909	3.4%	131,691	2.5%	283,714	5.4%	258,551	4.9%	4,698	0.1%

Source: 2000 Census – U.S. Census Bureau

The Mercer Region has a median housing value of \$89,440. This number is above the County median but below the state median. The highest median value among the region’s municipalities is Coolspring Township at \$120,400 while the lowest housing value in the region is Mercer Borough at \$76,300. This difference could be attributed to new housing developments being built in the rural areas on the fringe of the Borough while the Borough itself has the older, more urban housing stock.

MERCER REGION HOUSING VALUE - 2000																	
	Housing Value - 2000																
Municipality	< \$50,000	% < \$50,000	\$50,000-\$99,999	% \$50,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,999	% \$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000-\$199,999	% \$150,000-\$199,999	\$200,000-\$299,999	% \$200,000-\$299,999	\$300,000-\$499,999	% \$300,000-\$499,999	\$500,000-\$999,999	% \$500,000-\$999,999	\$1,000,000+	% \$1,000,000+	Median House Value
Mercer Borough	71	14.4%	332	67.5%	71	14.4%	10	2.0%	4	0.8%	4	0.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$76,300
Coolspring Township	32	6.5%	159	32.3%	135	27.4%	86	17.4%	71	14.4%	10	2.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$120,400
East Lackawannock Township	31	9.7%	176	55.2%	86	27.0%	19	6.0%	7	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$87,200
Findley Township	54	17.8%	179	59.1%	57	18.8%	6	2.0%	5	1.7%	2	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$78,500
Jefferson Township	39	9.8%	228	57.4%	98	24.7%	23	5.8%	9	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$84,800
Mercer Region	227	11.33%	1074	53.59%	447	23.1%	144	7.19%	96	4.8%	16	0.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$89,440
Mercer County	6,575	24.2%	12,780	47.1%	5,055	18.6%	1,589	5.9%	813	3.0%	219	0.8%	89	0.3%	13	0.0%	\$76,000
Pennsylvania	435,193	15.1%	1,079,698	37.4%	703,093	24.3%	344,172	11.9%	214,812	7.4%	84,425	2.9%	23,654	0.8%	4,437	0.2%	\$97,000

Source: 2000 Census – U.S. Census Bureau

Mercer County Data

(Source: Mercer County Comprehensive Plan Update – 2005)

Average Cost per New Housing Unit, 2002

Average Cost	
Pennsylvania	\$123,512
Mercer County	\$105,504
Butler County	\$130,077
Crawford County	\$82,054
Lawrence County	\$117,234
Venango County	\$87,754

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Housing Affordability

Mercer County compares favorably to Pennsylvania as a whole in terms of housing affordability. According to 2000 Census data, 16.4 percent of home owners are considered cost burdened (spending 30 percent or more on housing costs) compared to 20.8 percent at the state level. This is also the case for those who are extremely cost burdened (spending 50 percent or more) - 5.4 percent in Mercer County, 7.3 percent in Pennsylvania.

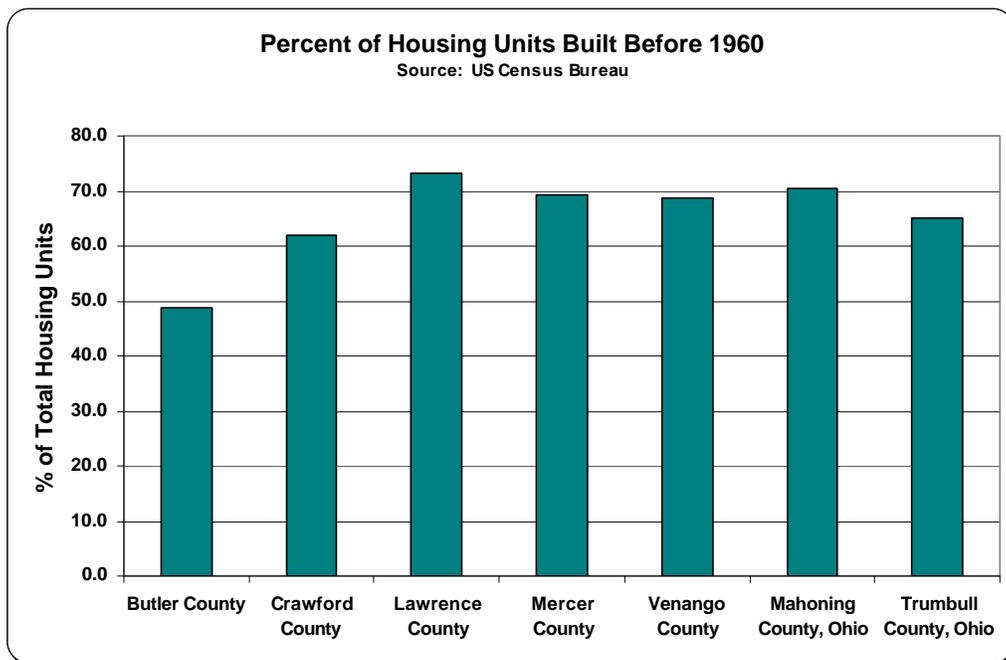
Renters in Mercer County are also less burdened by housing costs when compared to the state – 33.7 percent vs. 35.6 percent. However, these are much higher percentages than for those who own or are buying a home.

MERCER REGION – YEAR STRUCTRE BUILT – 2000 DATA								
Year Structure Built	1939 or earlier	1940-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1994	1995-1998	1999-March 2000
Coolspring	137	135	116	263	106	66	72	32
E. Lackawannock	97	102	82	157	80	27	42	12
Findley	157	111	45	138	46	26	23	18
Jefferson	166	152	86	245	149	75	94	26
Mercer Borough	486	280	95	75	58	67	25	0
Region total	1043 (25%)	780 (19%)	424 (10%)	878 (21%)	439 (11%)	261 (6%)	256 (6%)	88 (2%)
Mercer County	15,980	12,940	5,647	7,028	3,678	2,051	2,116	419

Source: 2000 Census – U.S. Census Bureau

Of the housing units in the Mercer Region, 44% were built before 1960. Mercer Borough has the highest percentage of their housing stock built before 1960 (71%). The four surrounding townships all have a relatively equal balance in the age of their housing stock.

Mercer County Data



Age of Housing Units in Mercer County

Almost 60 percent of Mercer County’s housing units are over 45 years old. This is somewhat higher than Crawford County, but relatively comparable to other adjacent counties. The exception to this is Butler County, where less than 50 percent of units were built before 1960.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

WATER SUPPLY

The Borough of Mercer is served by public water through Aqua Pennsylvania Company. Aqua PA is a public utility that also provides water service to a small portion of southern Coolspring Township adjacent to the Borough line. There is also public water service available along Route 62 through Jefferson and East Lackawannock Townships into the Borough. The remainder of the region is served by individual wells.

The comprehensive plan includes a plan for the reliable supply of water, considering current and future water resources availability, uses and limitations, including provisions adequate to protect water supply sources. The plan is generally consistent with the State Water Plan and any applicable water resources plan adopted by a river basin commission. The plan also contains a statement recognizing that:

- Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
- Commercial agriculture production impact water supply sources.

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

Mercer Borough – The Mercer Borough Wastewater Treatment Plant is located on Fish for Fun Street in the southeast quadrant of the Borough. The sewer plant has a current capacity of .99 million gallons per day (MGD). The plant is the only public sewer plant located in the planning region. It serves approximately 2,500 customers. All of Mercer Borough is served by the plant. The plant also currently serves a small portion of Coolspring Township just north of the Borough.

Jefferson Township – Jefferson Township, in conjunction with the City of Hermitage, currently has plans to extend sewer collection lines out of Hermitage into the west end of Jefferson Township along Route 62. The sewer line expansion is planned to connect approximately 300 homes in Jefferson Township by 2007.

Coolspring Township – Parts of southern Coolspring Township are served by the Mercer Borough Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Township has plans for expansion north on Route 19 (approximately 195 EDUs).

East Lackawannock Township – currently has no public sewer in the Township. A study is in progress to discuss expansion plans with Mercer Borough to the I-80/S.R.19 interchange.

Findley Township - currently has no public sewer in the Township. Study in progress to discuss expansion plans with Mercer Borough.

The remainder of the parcels located within the Mercer Region are served by either on-lot sewer systems or package plants.

The following text is an excerpt from a technical memo prepared for the Borough by Kurtanich Engineers & Associates, Inc. in regards to the Borough sewer facility and capacity issues:

“The purpose of the Mercer Borough ACT 537 update was to explore the options for the Borough in both serving its existing customer base and in expanding its customer base by accepting sewage from the adjoining communities of Coolspring Township, Findley Township and East Lackawannock Township. This undertaking was the result of a meeting held in July 2000 at which Mercer Borough along with Coolspring, Findley and East Lackawannock Townships discussed the preparation of a sewage facilities study to determine the sewage needs of the Borough and portions of the surrounding Townships.

The plan includes the needs of the Borough with its existing 1350 EDU's and four areas in need of central sewers from the Coolspring-Findley Township Study and one area of need from the East Lackawannock Township Study. These areas included State Route 19, Tripplewood Drive area and Pine Grove Mobile Home Park (Area No. 1); and the Fredonia Road area(Area No. 3) both of which are located in Coolspring Township as well as Scrubgrass Road area (Area No. 7) and Plantation Park (Area No. 8) both of which are located in Findley Township. Plantation Park is a private resort community located on the east side of Neshannock Creek across from the Borough's treatment facility. Also included is a portion along Route 19 south of the Borough in East Lackawannock Township.

As a result of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A detailed inspection utilizing internal televising of the sewer lines needs to be performed on both interceptor lines. The north interceptor should be inspected from the Wastewater Treatment Facility to S.R. 58 and the south interceptor from the Wastewater Treatment Facility to S.R. 19.
2. The Borough needs to begin and maintain an aggressive program related to the elimination of excess Inflow/Infiltration.
3. The Borough should review its existing Agreements with the surrounding communities for a determination of any reserve capacity that any of these communities may be entitled to.
4. The Borough Wastewater Treatment Facility has an existing available capacity of approximately 125,000 gpd and new connections should be permitted provided that the appropriate InterMunicipal Agreements are in place. This available capacity is not sufficient to handle all of the proposed flow, therefore, it would be allotted on a "first come, first served" basis subject to purchase of reserve capacity.
5. The Borough should review its "tap-in fee" structure and revise it, if necessary, to comply with current standards as established in Act 203.
6. The Borough should establish a "Capital Improvement Program" to keep its facility operational and in accordance with PaDEP discharge requirements.

7. The Borough should ultimately become a part of the proposed "Regional Sewage Authority" and convey its flow to the proposed wastewater facility in lieu of upgrading its facility.

Neshannock Creek Watershed Joint Municipal Authority Basic Information

- **Organization** – The NCWJMA was created as a joint municipal authority under the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act of 1945.
- **Purpose** – It was created for the purpose (stated in the authority’s articles of incorporation) of undertaking projects pertaining to sewers, sewer systems, and sewage treatment works.
- **Participating municipalities** – Coolspring Township, East Lackawannock Township, Findley Township, Mercer Borough, Mercer County, and Springfield Township.
- **Creation** – The authority was created at a joint meeting of all the participating municipalities on August 18, 2003. Each municipality adopted an ordinance authorizing creation of the authority and approved the authority’s articles of incorporation. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania gave its approval of the articles of incorporation on September 29, 2003.
- **Office** – The authority will initially use the address of Findley Township, 369 McClelland Road, Mercer, PA, 16137, 724-748-4808.
- **Additional background** – The authority was created by Coolspring Township, East Lackawannock Township, Findley Township, Mercer Borough, Springfield Township, and Mercer County in order to provide a cooperative means of implementing long-term sewerage solutions for the region. Future development is currently limited by the lack of public sewer facilities outside Mercer Borough and by the Mercer wastewater plant being near its capacity. The I-80/US 19 interchange in East Lackawannock Township, particularly, has been considered for new business development but is hindered by the lack of public sewerage service or infrastructure. The Neshannock Joint Authority will bring together the 5 area municipalities and the county to devise and implement a regional sewerage solution.

FIRE & POLICE SERVICE

Fire

- Mercer East End Volunteer Fire Department – services Mercer Borough, Coolspring Township, Findley Township, and the northern part of East Lackawannock Township.
- Jefferson Township Volunteer Fire Department – services Jefferson Township.
- New Wilmington Volunteer Fire Department – services the south part of East Lackawannock Township.

Police

- The Mercer Borough Police Department (5 full-time personnel, 1 part-time)
- The Jefferson Township Police Department (1 full-time, 2 part-time)

- The Pennsylvania State Police provide police service for the region.

HEALTH SERVICES

Regional Health Care Facilities

Sharon Regional Health System Hospital – Sharon, PA (14 miles west)

UPMC Horizon Hospital, Farrell Campus – Farrell, PA (16 miles west)

UPMC Horizon Hospital, Greenville Campus – Greenville, PA (14 miles northwest)

United Community Hospital – Grove City, PA (9 miles east)

Mercer Family Medicine - 405 Greenville Road

Primary Health – 737 Greenville Road

OTHER UTILITIES

Natural Gas, Cable Television, Electricity, Telephone, Garbage, Media

- Gas – National Fuel Gas, Dominion
- Electric – Pennsylvania Power Company
- Cable TV – Armstrong Cable, Adelphia, Time Warner, satellite service
- Telephone – Verizon
- Garbage – Tri-County Industries, Waste Management
- Newspapers – Sharon Herald, Greenville Record-Argus, Grove City Allied News

HISTORIC RESOURCES

NATIONAL REGISTER LISTED / ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

December 2004

Municipality	Historic Name	Address	Status	Date Listed
Coolspring Township	Zahnizer, George & Margaret, Farm	319 Tait Rd	Eligible	06/ 12/ 2003
East Lackawannock Township	Sharlow Farm	750 W Middlesex Rd	Eligible	02/ 12/ 1987
Jefferson Township	Big Bend Historical Area	Rte. 258/ T- 577; N Bank Shenango River	Listed	04/ 21/ 1975
Mercer Borough	John A., House	124 S Diamond St	Eligible	12/ 12/ 1994
Mercer Borough	Houston's Building	110 N Pitt St	Eligible	10/ 03/ 2001
Mercer Borough	Lindsey, Christiana, House	313 E Butler St	Listed	01/ 15/ 1998
Mercer Borough	Mercer County Courthouse	Roughly along Diamond St., Erie St. & Pitt St	Listed	11/ 12/ 1998
Mercer Borough	Mercer County Jail	S Diamond St	Eligible	07/ 20/ 1978

Source: Pennsylvania Historic & Museum Commission

- The Mercer County Courthouse** is located inside the “Diamond” in the Borough of Mercer. The current building, built between 1909 and 1911, is the third courthouse built by Mercer County on the site (the first two courthouses were destroyed by fire). The nominated property also includes the Diamond, along with several contributing resources, the Mercer County War Memorial and the old Mercer County Jail, now the South Court House Annex. The Mercer County Courthouse is red brick and light gray sandstone, rectangular in form with monumental entrances and a central rotunda. The 166 foot tall, carefully symmetrical Classical/Beaux Arts-styled building is three stories tall with a domed bell/clock tower. In addition to its height, it is located on a hill which makes it visible for several miles on the ground and it served as a navigation point for early commercial aviation. The principal designer of the building was Charles F. Owsley, whose family also designed the Buhl Mansion. The courthouse contains three courtrooms, two of them original to the building. The monumental stairs and rotunda (containing allegorical paintings and circular stained-and-art glass light) are two outstanding features of the interior. The building is still in use as the Mercer County Courthouse and has recently undergone an extensive historic renovation.
- The Christiana Lindsey House**, located at 313 East Butler Street in the Borough of Mercer. The house is a two and a half story brick Italianate-style residence with a slightly raised sandstone ashlar foundation and a truncated hip slate roof. It was designed in the centered gable substyle—only about fifteen percent of all Italianate-styled buildings in the nation fall into this category. The house is noteworthy as one of Mercer Borough’s large and stylistically ornate Victorian-era mansions, but it is

truly significant because it is the only high-style Italianate residence in the borough and because of the abundance and quality of its stylistic details.

- **The Big Bend Historical Area**, located at the eastern end of the Shenango Reservoir in Jefferson Township. The area, comprising three areas totaling 209 acres, was the location of the town of Big Bend, which no longer exists. The town took its name from its location at a hairpin bend in the Shenango River. Formerly the site of a Delaware and Seneca Indian village, the town was initially laid out in 1808 but developed little until the opening of the Erie Extension Canal in 1840. Subsequently, Big Bend prospered as a major shipping and destination point along the canal. By the 1850s, it contained an iron furnace, a couple of nearby woolen and lumber mills, a hotel, warehouses, a church, a school, a blacksmith, two grocers and a butcher. The iron furnace, built in 1846, was considered one of the pioneer iron works in the United States. However, because it was so far from other population centers in the county, it did not develop beyond the canal trade. When the canal shut down in 1871, Big Bend virtually disappeared by 1900. Located in the three areas comprising the historical area are the canal towpath (which is now the Shenango (hiking) Trail), the site of the iron furnace and nearby Shenango House Hotel, the remains of Dam No. 2 and two locks and accompanying lockkeeper's houses north and west of Big Bend. Except for the hiking trail, the site is currently heavily overgrown. The site is owned by the United States Army Corp of Engineers. The Shenango Trail (maintained by the Shenango Outing Club) traverses the towpath of the old Erie Extension Canal and connects the Kidd's Mills, New Hamburg and Big Bend Historical Areas.

Local Historic Preservation Organization

The Mercer County Historical Society - The Mercer County Historical Society (MCHS) is a private, nonprofit group (501c3) established in 1947. MCHS headquarters are located in the Anderson/Magoffin Complex, at 119 South Pitt Street, Mercer. The MCHS Research Library and Archives features permanent and temporary exhibits, as well as valuable resources for local history and genealogical research; original manuscripts, newspaper maps, family histories, census data, published works, microfilm, and oral histories are available for on-site use. Personal assistance is available. The headquarters has display areas and a library. The executive director is a full time employee. About three thousand guests visit MCHS sites annually, with just over one third being children on school field trips. The MCHS sells books and other small items at its headquarters. MCHS sites and services are free and open to the public; donations are accepted and encouraged. MCHS has knowledgeable, trained docents at each of its sites.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

Agricultural Security Areas in the Mercer Region - 2003

Township	Number of farms included in ASA	Number of acres included in ASAs	Date ASA was established	Renewal Deadline
Coolspring	61	5,742	March, 1992	2006
East Lackawannock	44	5,387	June, 1990	2004
Findley	74	4,317	November, 2001	2008
Jefferson	36	4,034	May, 1990	2004
Mercer Region	215	19,480		
Mercer County	1264	112,436		

Source: Mercer County Cooperative Extension

Mercer County Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program

Agricultural Conservation Easements Purchased by County in Mercer Region

Municipality	# of Farms	Acreage
Coolspring Township	3 (1 partially in Fairview Twp.)	861 Acres
East Lackawannock Township	1	139 Acres
Findley Township	N/A	N/A
Jefferson Township	5	557 Acres
Mercer County	27	4793 Acres

Source: Mercer County Agricultural Land Preservation Board

RECREATION

US Army Corps of Engineers – Shenango River Lake

The Shenango River Lake is the reservoir created by the Shenango River Dam, which was constructed by the US Army COE in 1965. The dam serves multiple purposes: flood control and seasonal discharge regulations for water quality improvements on the Beaver and Upper Ohio Rivers, as well as recreation. The property includes 15,071 acres (589 acres above the dam) and 3560 acres (5.5 square miles) of water surface during the summer pool stage. The Pennsylvania Game Commission manages approximately 3,000 acres for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Recreational facilities are located throughout the property and include:

- 14 recreation areas
- 334 picnic sites
- 413 camping sites
- 7 playgrounds
- 3 swimming areas
- 29 miles of trail
- 1 fishing dock

- 7 boat ramps
- 1 marina
- 328 marina slips

Brandy Springs Park – Mercer Borough

Brandy Springs Park, Inc. is a non-profit agency that administers and maintains Brandy Springs Park. The fifty-five acre park is located in the southwest corner of Mercer Borough on S.R. 158—the S. Shenango Street, and is open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Funding and support comes from the five municipalities that compose the Mercer Area School District—Mercer Borough and Coolspring, East Lackawannock, Findley and Jefferson Townships. In addition, the United Way of Mercer County, membership dues, program revenues and contributions also contribute. The park is staffed mainly by volunteers, in addition to several paid lifeguards and part-time maintenance personnel, who are generally senior citizens and high school and college students.

The park is open to any visitor and is heavily used by all age groups. The park community building is used for senior citizen's activities, among other things. Families can use the park's picnic pavilions and stroll around the fishing pond, containing ducks that are cared for by the Special Education students of Mercer Area High School. Due to the fact the park is adjacent to the Mercer Area High School, it is used by the students of the school district for educational and recreational purposes. Boys and girls leagues use the three girls' softball fields and three boys' baseball fields. Individuals of all ages use the park's double tennis court, two basketball courts, playground, two swimming pools, exercise trail and walking and bicycle paths.

Jefferson Township Community Park – Jefferson Township

The Jefferson Township Community Park is located along Lamor Road adjacent to the Township Building and fairgrounds property.

Mercer 4-H Park – Coolspring Township

The Mercer 4-H Park is located along Route 19 in Coolspring Township. It is located near the Mercer County Cooperative Extension offices and the Mercer Livestock Auction.

Two (2) public golf courses are located in the Mercer Region.

- **Spring Valley Golf Club** – Route 62, East Lackawannock Township
- **Mercer Public Golf Course** – Route 58, Jefferson Township

There are a total of twelve (12) golf courses located throughout Mercer County.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Heritage Inventory for Mercer County provides a preliminary report of the County's natural heritage. Completed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in June 2003, the inventory identifies and maps the most significant natural places in Mercer County. Plant and animal species, natural communities that are unique or uncommon in the County and areas important for wildlife habitat and scientific study were investigated and included in the inventory process. While the inventory does not protect these areas, it provides the necessary information to guide land acquisition and conservation decisions. It can also be used in the development of municipal comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, as well as in the review of development plans. The entire report can be accessed online via the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission's website – www.mcrpc.com

Natural Heritage Areas are classified as a Biological Diversity Area (BDA), a Landscape Conservation Area (LCA), or Managed Lands. A BDA contains plants or animals of special concern at state or federal levels, exemplary natural communities, or exceptional native diversity. An LCA is a large contiguous area that is important because of its size, open space, habitats, and/or inclusion of one or more BDAs. Managed Lands are owned or leased properties with importance or potential importance to the overall maintenance and protection of ecological resources in the County and fall into three categories: Public, Private, and Dedicated Areas. The areas have also been ranked according to significance – exceptional, high, and notable. This ranking process assures that the most important sites and resources receive priority consideration for preservation.

The Natural Heritage Inventory for Mercer County includes the municipalities in the Mercer Region. Attached in the Appendix of the plan is the inventory for all 5 municipalities in the Mercer Region.

Note: The Natural Heritage Inventory for Mercer County, completed by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in June 2003, is an advisory and reference document only and has not been adopted by the Mercer County Commissioners. It is included in this plan as a reference.

Waterways in the Mercer Region

Waterway	Tributary of..	Location
Otter Creek	Neshannock Creek	Otter Creek Twp, Delaware Twp, Fairview Twp, Coolspring Twp, Findley Twp, Mercer Borough
Cool Spring Creek	Neshannock Creek	Jackson Twp, Cool Spring Twp, Findley Twp, Mercer Borough, Fairview Twp
Little Neshannock Creek	Neshannock Creek	Jefferson Twp, border between Lackawannock and East Lackawannock Twp
Neshannock Creek	Shenango River	Mercer Borough, border of East Lackawannock and Findley and Springfield Twp

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is one of the highest priorities of the Mercer region. Most regions view economic development as a high priority. It is viewed as central to a high standard of living and high quality of life. Economic development includes that type of development (typically industrial, but to a lesser degree also commercial and service) that does several important things. This primarily includes creating a product or adding value to a product that is exportable out of the region, thus returning income and wealth to the region, creating jobs for people living in the region who, by their wage or salary, earn a share of the returning wealth and enhancing the tax base on which communities depend in order to provide needed public services.

Analysis of Existing Trends

The Mercer Region has a variety of employment sectors spread out among the 5 municipalities with the majority of commercial and industrial uses within or adjacent to the Borough of Mercer boundaries.

The top three sectors of employment for the citizens who live in the planning area are Education, Health & Social Services (20%), Manufacturing (19%), and Retail Trade (13%) according to U.S. Census Data. The data for the Mercer Region is right in line with County and State figures.

MERCER REGION EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY INDUSTRY - 2000																
Municipality	Employment Status			Industry												
	Population 16 years +	Population 16+ Years Employed	% Pop. 16+ Years Employed	Agriculture	Construction	Manufacturing	Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade	Transportation and Warehousing	Information	Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	Professional	Education, Health & Social Services	Arts & Entertainment	Public Administration	Other Services
Mercer Borough	1,929	1,185	61.4%	3 (0%)	42 (4%)	168 (14%)	51 (4%)	179 (15%)	59 (5%)	17 (1%)	26 (2%)	76 (6%)	245 (21%)	198 (17%)	59 (5%)	62 (5%)
Coolspring Township	1,802	1,016	56.4%	16 (2%)	52 (5%)	183 (18%)	68 (7%)	94 (9%)	65 (6%)	10 (1%)	38 (4%)	45 (4%)	194 (19%)	118 (12%)	81 (8%)	52 (5%)
East Lackawannock Township	1,302	747	57.4%	27 (4%)	56 (7%)	135 (18%)	32 (4%)	80 (11%)	46 (6%)	12 (2%)	24 (3%)	33 (4%)	165 (22%)	66 (9%)	32 (4%)	39 (5%)
Findley Township	2,033	713	35.1%	24 (3%)	40 (6%)	163 (23%)	32 (4%)	92 (13%)	34 (5%)	2 (0%)	23 (3%)	26 (4%)	162 (23%)	42 (6%)	41 (6%)	32 (4%)
Jefferson Township	1,875	1,083	57.8%	26 (2%)	89 (8%)	230 (21%)	28 (3%)	156 (14%)	122 (11%)	11 (1%)	45 (4%)	29 (3%)	189 (17%)	55 (5%)	57 (5%)	46 (4%)
Mercer Region	8,941	4,744	53.1%	96 (2%)	279 (6%)	879 (19%)	211 (4%)	601 (13%)	326 (7%)	52 (1%)	156 (3%)	209 (4%)	955 (20%)	479 (10%)	270 (6%)	231 (5%)
Mercer County	95,664	52,142	54.5%	850 (2%)	2,642 (5%)	10,501 (20%)	1,984 (4%)	6,970 (13%)	2,594 (5%)	835 (2%)	2,179 (4%)	2,425 (5%)	12,362 (24%)	4,036 (8%)	2,176 (4%)	2,588 (5%)
Pennsylvania	9,693,040	5,653,500	58.3%	73,459 (1%)	339,363 (6%)	906,398 (16%)	201,084 (4%)	684,179 (12%)	304,335 (5%)	148,841 (3%)	372,148 (7%)	478,937 (8%)	1,237,090 (22%)	397,871 (7%)	235,767 (4%)	274,028 (5%)

Source: 2000 Census – U.S. Census Bureau

The median household income of the five municipalities ranges from a low of \$29,795 (Mercer Borough) to a high of \$42,153 (Findley Township). Each municipality in the planning region (except for Mercer Borough) was above the median income level on a county-wide basis. 13.1% of the households in the Mercer Region had an income level of less than \$15,000 per year while 34.2% had incomes above \$50,000 per year.

MERCER REGION HOUSEHOLD INCOME - 1999																					
Municipality	Less Than \$10,000	% Less Than \$10,000	\$10,000-\$14,999	% \$10,000-\$14,999	\$15,000-\$24,999	% \$15,000-\$24,999	\$25,000-\$34,999	% \$25,000-\$34,999	\$35,000-\$49,999	% \$35,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$74,999	% \$50,000-\$74,999	\$75,000-\$99,999	% \$75,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,000	% \$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000-\$199,999	% \$150,000-\$199,999	\$200,000+	% \$200,000+	Median Income
Mercer Borough	117	11.4%	97	9.4%	181	17.6%	190	18.5%	95	9.2%	210	20.4%	81	7.9%	40	3.9%	0	0.0%	17	1.7%	\$29,795
Coolspring Township	36	4.4%	48	5.8%	133	16.1%	150	18.2%	173	21.0%	128	15.5%	67	8.1%	71	8.6%	11	1.3%	8	1.0%	\$37,106
East Lackawannock Township	37	6.3%	31	5.3%	102	17.3%	85	14.5%	94	16.0%	149	25.3%	56	9.5%	24	4.1%	10	1.7%	0	0.0%	\$41,250
Findley Township	20	3.7%	44	8.2%	69	12.8%	92	17.1%	120	22.3%	142	26.3%	46	8.5%	3	0.6%	3	0.6%	0	0.0%	\$42,153
Jefferson Township	32	3.3%	57	5.9%	191	19.8%	205	21.2%	195	20.2%	179	18.5%	83	8.6%	16	1.7%	0	0.0%	8	0.8%	\$34,872
Mercer Region	242	6.1%	277	7.0%	676	17.1%	722	18.3%	677	17.1%	808	20.5%	333	8.4	154	3.9%	24	0.6%	33	0.8%	N/A
Mercer County	4,486	9.6%	3,613	7.7%	7,974	17.1%	7,527	16.1%	8,732	18.7%	8,629	18.5%	3,246	6.9%	1,614	3.5%	430	0.9%	504	1.1%	\$34,666
Pennsylvania	465,860	9.7%	333,381	7.0%	657,266	13.8%	633,953	13.3%	809,165	16.9%	929,863	19.5%	457,480	9.6%	317,171	6.6%	84,173	1.8%	90,874	1.9%	\$40,106

Source: 2000 Census – U.S. Census Bureau

Mercer Region Municipalities	1979	1989	1999	Change 1979-99
Median Household Income				
Coolspring	\$19,176	\$28,854	\$37,106	94%
E. Lackawannock	\$19,745	\$29,194	\$41,250	109%
Findley	\$20,118	\$25,912	\$42,153	110%
Jefferson	\$18,571	\$27,115	\$34,872	88%
Mercer Borough	\$14,147	\$23,405	\$29,795	111%
Mercer County	\$17,160	\$24,599	\$34,666	102%
Pennsylvania	\$16,880	\$29,069	\$40,106	138%

Of the people living in the Mercer Region municipalities, 81.2% have a high school education or higher. This is comparable to State (81.9%) and County (83%) figures.

MERCER REGION EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT - 2000																
Municipality	School Enrollment		< 9th	% < 9th	9th- 12th	% 9th- 12th	High School Graduate	% High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	% Some College, No Degree	Associate Degree	% Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	% Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree	% Graduate or Professional Degree
	1990	2000	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade										
Mercer Borough	578	533	44	2.7%	247	15.0%	637	38.7%	195	11.9%	135	8.2%	234	14.2%	152	9.2%
Coolspring Township	448	525	116	7.2%	169	10.5%	718	44.4%	184	11.4%	112	6.9%	195	12.1%	123	7.6%
East Lackawannock Township	325	357	83	7.1%	171	14.6%	483	41.1%	170	14.5%	69	5.9%	141	12.0%	58	4.9%
Findley Township	440	587	92	5.1%	382	21.0%	654	35.9%	372	20.4%	120	6.6%	152	8.4%	48	2.6%
Jefferson Township	446	553	31	1.8%	165	9.8%	961	56.9%	232	13.7%	111	6.6%	141	8.4%	47	2.8%
Mercer Region	2237	2555	366	4.6%	1134	14.3%	3453	43.5%	1153	14.5%	547	6.9%	863	10.9%	428	5.4%
Mercer County	28,594	29,378	3,975	4.9%	9,921	12.2%	36,823	45.2%	12,285	15.1%	4,402	5.4%	9,191	11.3%	4,902	6.0%
Pennsylvania	2,829,553	3,135,934	452,069	5.5%	1,044,036	12.6%	3,150,013	38.1%	1,284,731	15.5%	487,804	5.9%	1,153,383	14.0%	694,248	8.4%

Source: 2000 Census – U.S. Census Bureau

Educational facilities in the area include the following:

Thiel College – Greenville
 Grove City College – Grove City
 Penn State Shenango – Sharon
 Youngstown State University – Youngstown, OH
 Westminster College – New Wilmington
 Butler County Community College – Hermitage

Mercer Area School District – Mercer
 Mercer County Vocational Technical School – Mercer
 Business Institute of PA – Sharon
 New Castle School of Trades – Pulaski
 Mercer County Career Link – Sharon
 West Central Job Partnership - New Castle

According to the Center for Workforce Information & Analysis 3rd quarter 2004 report released in March 2005, the top 10 employers in Mercer County were as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sharon Regional Health System | 6. Werner Co. |
| 2. Horizon Hospital System | 7. George Junior Republic |
| 3. John Maneely Co. | 8. US Investigative Services |
| 4. PA State Government | 9. Duferco Farrell Corp |
| 5. Wal-Mart | 10. United Community Hospital |

Employers located in the Mercer Region in this top 50 report include Mercer County Government, Thomas Betts Corp. and the Mercer Area School District.

According to the Mercer County, PA 2005 Industrial Directory as published by the Penn-Northwest Development Corporation, some other larger scale employers in the Mercer Region include: Chevron, Mercer Forge Corporation and the Pennsylvania Rail Car Co.

With its close proximity to Interstates 80 & 79, the region has access to regional markets for employment and economic development opportunities. The greater Pittsburgh and greater Youngstown, OH areas are easily accessible with the interstate system.

Mercer County Data

(Source: Mercer County Comprehensive Plan Update – 2005)

Select Business Statistics, 2000

	Private nonfarm establishments, 1999	Private nonfarm employment, 1999	Private nonfarm employment, percent change 1990-1999	Nonemployer establishments, 1999	Value of Manufacturers' shipments, 1997 (\$1000)
Pennsylvania	293,491	4,986,591	8.40%	614,594	172,193,216
Mercer County	2,951	44,414	16.40%	5,785	2,440,846
Butler County	4,292	60,989	36.50%	9,242	2,989,977
Lawrence County	2,158	28,718	2.90%	4,553	1,076,616
Crawford County	2,127	27,936	9.70%	5,066	1,263,394
Venango County	1,310	17,000	-3.70%	2,655	1,084,640
Mahoning County	6,451	95,110	2.90%	12,639	2,110,011
Trumbull County	4,785	84,059	-3.40%	10,724	11,235,598

A **nonemployer** business is one that has no paid employees, has annual business receipts of \$1,000 or more (\$1 or more in the construction industries), and is subject to federal income taxes. Nonemployer businesses are generally small, such as real estate agents and independent contractors. Nonemployers constitute nearly three-quarters of all businesses, but they contribute only about three percent of overall sales and receipts data.

Generally, an **establishment** is a single physical location at which business is conducted or services or industrial operations are performed. However, for nonemployers, each distinct business income tax return filed by a nonemployer business is counted as an establishment. Nonemployer businesses may operate from a home address or a separate physical location. Most geography codes are derived from the business owner's mailing address, which may not be the same as the physical location of the business.

Select Business Statistics, 2000

	Minority-owned firms, percent of total, 1997	Women-owned firms, percent of total, 1997
Pennsylvania	5.90%	24.20%
Mercer County	3.10%	21.30%
Butler County	1.70%	25.40%
Lawrence County	2.10%	21.10%
Crawford County	2.00%	24.00%
Venango County	less than 100	20.10%
Mahoning County	5.80%	24.40%
Trumbull County	5.10%	24.80%

Women-owned firms are those owned by sole proprietors who identified themselves as female on the 1997 or 1992 survey or were categorized as female on their applications for a Social Security Number; or, in the case of firms with multiple owners, where 51 percent or more of stock interest, claims or rights were held by females.

Minority-owned firms are those where the sole proprietor was Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native, or, in the case of firms with multiple owners, where 51 percent of the stock interest, claims or rights were held by Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, or American Indians/Alaska Natives.

Select Business Statistics, 2000

	Federal funds and grants, 2001 (\$1000)	Federal funds and grants (2001) per capita (\$)	Local government employment - full-time equivalent, 1997	Local government employment - full-time equivalent, 1997 per capita
Pennsylvania	79,310,064	6,458	365,556	0.03
Mercer County	660,590	5,492	3,318	0.03
Butler County	968,354	5,563	4,306	0.02
Lawrence County	577,871	6,395	2,328	0.03
Crawford County	427,479	4,517	2,216	0.02
Venango County	306,712	5,328	2,070	0.04
Mahoning County	1,450,850	5,633	8,776	0.03
Trumbull County	1,051,817	4,672	7,544	0.03

Federal funds and grants include federal expenditures or obligation for the following categories: grants, salaries and wages, procurement contracts, direct payments for individuals, other direct payments, direct loans, guaranteed or insured loans, and insurance. Dollar amounts (reported here in thousands of dollars) represent either actual expenditures or obligations.

Retail Sales Statistics, 1997

	Retail Establishments, 1997	Retail Establishments Per 1,000 Residents	Total Retail Sales (\$1,000)	Retail Sales Per Capita
Pennsylvania	50,208	4.18	\$109,948,462	\$9,150
Mercer County	618	5.06	\$1,285,017	\$10,525
Butler County	709	4.2	\$1,480,171	\$8,761
Crawford County	360	4.03	\$628,750	\$7,039
Lawrence County	370	3.88	\$627,064	\$6,583
Venango County	247	4.25	\$417,353	\$7,180

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania; Census 2000

Average Annual Wage, 2000

	Average Annual Wage, 2000	Comparison to PA (\$)	Comparison to PA (% of PA)	Real Change in Average Annual Wage, 1990-2000
Pennsylvania	\$33,809	-	-	10.10%
Mercer	\$25,976	-\$7,833	76.8%	-1.70%
Butler	\$29,436	-\$4,373	87.1%	4.80%
Crawford	\$26,596	-\$7,213	78.7%	3.20%
Lawrence	\$26,395	-\$7,414	78.1%	5.10%
Venango	\$26,117	-\$7,692	77.2%	-2.20%

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

Farm Sales Statistics, 1997

	Total Market Value of Ag. Products Sold, (\$1,000), 1997	Average Market Value of Products Sold per Farm	Average Market Value of Products Sold per Acre
Pennsylvania	\$3,997,565	\$87,942	\$558
Mercer County	\$46,096	\$44,753	\$277
Butler County	\$27,671	\$28,468	\$233
Crawford County	\$58,428	\$54,657	\$282
Lawrence County	\$25,396	\$40,895	\$291
Venango County	\$6,515	\$18,561	\$141
	Percent of Farm Sales by size of farm		
	Small Sale Farms (Sales Under \$10,000)	Medium Sale Farms (Sales \$10,000-49,999)	Large Sale Farms (Sales \$50,000 and Over)
Pennsylvania	45.90%	22.80%	31.30%
Mercer County	51.20%	29.50%	19.30%
Butler County	60.50%	22.90%	16.60%
Crawford County	48.20%	22.50%	29.40%
Lawrence County	53.90%	27.10%	19.00%
Venango County	68.90%	20.50%	10.50%

Source: Center for Rural Pennsylvania

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN

VISION: *Downtown Mercer is the focal point for the region providing a diversity of services and attractions for the region.*

GOAL: Provide a downtown environment that is attractive and inviting to residents, visitors and new investment in the downtown.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Organize a Downtown Mercer Revitalization Team to coordinate and develop a comprehensive strategy for revitalization. Specific elements of an overall strategy should include improving the downtown's appearance, attracting new businesses, developing common and themed signage, and identifying potential niche markets.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Officials, Downtown Business Owners	CDBG funds, New Communities Main Street Program, DCED Community Revitalization Program, Elm Street Program
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation, PA Downtown Center	
Review Borough ordinances to identify potential obstacles to downtown improvements, e.g., the re-use of vacant buildings and the development of living quarters above ground floor store fronts. Amend as appropriate.	MED	LEAD: Borough Council	Municipal Revenues, Local Municipal Resources and Development Program (DCED)
		SUPPORT: MCRPC	
Regularly analyze the amount, type, and use of the Borough's parking facilities to ensure adequate parking both on- and off-street.	MED	LEAD: Mercer Borough	Municipal Revenues, Local Municipal Resources and Development Program (DCED)
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, PennDOT	
Establish a façade improvements and maintenance fund to assist local businesses/residents.	LOW	LEAD: Mercer Borough	Municipal Revenues, Main Street Program, PHMC
		SUPPORT: Mercer County Historical Society, Local Business owners	
Target historic buildings for preservation and improvement.	LOW	LEAD: Mercer County Historical Society	Private Investors, Main Street Program
		SUPPORT: Mercer Borough, MCRPC, Local property owners, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission	

LAND USE PLAN

VISION: *The region should grow strategically, targeting areas for growth and preservation.*

GOAL: Target areas for future development and growth management

GOAL: Target areas for agricultural preservation.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
<p>Adopt the Proposed Future Land Use Map for the Mercer Region, including the following designations:</p> <p>Rural / Agricultural Preservation Areas - These areas are rural and agricultural in nature, and are to continue these land uses into the future. This does not mean that new development can not occur. However, development in these areas must be rural in nature and complement and enhance the agricultural and forestry industries, as well as low-density residential and other rural uses.</p> <p>Revitalization Target Areas - These are areas where some form of action is necessary to ensure their long term vitality. These areas are traditionally areas which have had public infrastructure, streets, and services, and the action is needed to maintain and enhance these prior public investments as a cost-effective measure instead of recreating these investments in a new location.</p> <p>Open Space Preservation Areas - These areas are places where open spaces or recreational activities can be enjoyed by residents and visitors of the Region, and therefore should be kept up and preserved.</p> <p>Growth Target Areas (0-10 years) - These areas include places that new or expanded residential, commercial, and/or industrial development should be directed towards. These areas have been determined to be logical extensions of existing development, and also the places where growth can be accommodated in the most cost-effective manner.</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>LEAD: Municipal Officials</p>	<p>N/A</p>

MERCER REGION DRAFT ACTION PLANS

<p>Future Growth Areas (10-20 years) - These areas are places designated for long-term development, either residential, commercial, or industrial. Growth should occur in these areas further into the future. Care should be taken to encourage full development and build-out of the growth target areas through land use policies, public improvements, and other means before development occurs in these future growth areas.</p>			
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LAND USE PLAN (Continued)

VISION: *The region should grow strategically, targeting areas for growth and preservation.*

GOAL: Target areas for future development and growth management

GOAL: Target areas for agricultural preservation.

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Base extension of target growth areas on the availability and/or planned expansions of sewer and water services.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Officials	N/A
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Penn-Northwest	
Where appropriate, encourage landowners to enroll properties in existing Agricultural Security Areas, or to be considered for the county's conservation easement purchase program.	MED	LEAD: Mercer County Agricultural Preservation Board	Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Municipal Officials	
Utilize the Future Land Use Map as a basis for developing a joint zoning ordinance to guide new development to targeted growth and mixed use areas and to preserve the rural and agricultural areas of the region	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials	DCED - LUPTAP
		SUPPORT: MCRPC	
Explore the feasibility of developing a multi-municipal Transfer of Development Rights program as a means of protecting agriculture and open spaces.	LOW	LEAD: Municipal Officials	Shared Municipal Services Program (DCED)
		SUPPORT: MCRPC	

HOUSING PLAN

VISION: *Provide safe, affordable and attractive housing with access to community facilities and service while preserving the historic neighborhoods within the region.*

GOAL: Promote housing development and renovation

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Review existing zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances and amend as needed to eliminate barriers to developing a variety of housing types in the region, including owner-occupied and rental units.	HIGH	LEAD: MCRPC, Municipal Officials	N/A
		SUPPORT: Development Community	
Adopt land use regulations that allow for flexible housing development techniques, particularly conservation developments	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Officials	Shared Municipal Services Program; LUPTAP
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Development Community	
Conduct a multi-municipal housing market analysis to identify gaps in the existing housing stock, particularly housing for seniors, young adults, and population with low- to mid- income levels.	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials	Municipal Revenues
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Real Estate professionals, Mercer County Housing Authority	
Continue to identify, prioritize, and obtain funding for housing rehabilitation and renovation.	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials	HOME, CDBG
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Mercer County Housing Authority	

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

VISION: *Growth along the Region’s corridors should be carefully managed to accommodate additional commercial services, while safely preserving the free flow of traffic.*

GOAL: The municipalities in the Region work together to manage growth along the transportation corridors in the Region so that they remain viable connectors in and out of the Borough and the Region

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Pursue designation for US 62's inclusion in the Congested Corridor Improvement Program.	HIGH	LEAD: Shenango Valley MPO, MCRPC SUPPORT: PennDOT, Local municipal officials	
Develop a joint subdivision and land development ordinance that includes strict access management standards along all of the planning area's roadways.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Officials SUPPORT: MCRPC, PennDOT	Shared Municipal Services Program and LUPTAP
Develop and enforce a joint zoning ordinance that includes a Community Gateway Overlay district to encourage limited, high quality development along the region's primary transportation routes, particularly US 19, US 62, and PA 58.	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials, MCRPC SUPPORT: PennDOT	Shared Municipal Services Program and LUPTAP
Work together to identify opportunities for developing bike/ped facilities within the region, particularly in Mercer Borough, around Lake Latonka, and possibly connections from Mercer Borough to Shenango Lake at Big Bend and also to Lake Latonka.	MED	LEAD: Shenango Valley MPO, MCRPC SUPPORT: PennDOT, Local municipal officials	PennDOT Transportation Enhancements

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES PLAN

VISION: *High quality community services are provided to the Region's residents, including public safety, water and sewer, trash removal and stormwater management*

GOAL: Provide residents with community services that are efficiently managed and cost effective

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Establish a regional cooperation sub-committee that would be responsible for identifying opportunities to work together to improve public safety (fire, EMS, and police), road maintenance, and other services. The committee would also investigate gaps in existing services.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Officials	Shared Municipal Services Program
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Local Public Safety Providers	
Coordinate with Mercer County Solid Waste Authority to ensure current regional practices are consistent with the County Solid Waste Management Plan.	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials	Municipal Revenues, DEP
		SUPPORT: Mercer County Solid Waste Authority , MCRPC,	
Include state of the art stormwater management standards within local/regional subdivision and land development ordinances	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials	Municipal Revenues
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, DEP	

GOAL: The Region has safe and adequate water supplies, as well as sufficient capacity for the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Identify and prioritize needed improvements to the existing water and sewer infrastructure within the planning area.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Authorities	Infrastructure Development Program (DCED), PennVest, Increased user fees
		SUPPORT: Municipal officials; MCRPC	
Work together to develop a regional infrastructure expansion plan that is consistent with the Future Land Use Map and does not encourage sprawl development.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Authorities	Infrastructure Development Program (DCED), PennVest
		SUPPORT: Municipal officials; MCRPC	
Update Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plans as necessary.	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials	DEP
		SUPPORT: MCRPC	

RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES

VISION: *Municipalities in the Region work cooperatively to provide varied recreational experiences that meet the needs of the region's residents.*

GOAL: Identify and designate areas that provide recreational opportunities

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Organize a Regional Recreation Commission or similar organization that would be responsible for developing and implementing a regional recreation plan.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal officials	DCNR
		SUPPORT: MRCOG, MCRPC, local recreation groups	
Encourage improvements to and increased usage of existing recreational facilities.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal officials	Municipal revenues, local businesses
		SUPPORT: MCRPC	
Develop greenways along the region's waterways. Neshannock Creek, Cool Spring Creek, and Otter Creek would be ideal for active greenways that could include hiking/biking trails.	MED	LEAD: MCRPC	DCNR, PennDOT (Bike/ped facilities)
		SUPPORT: Municipal officials, DCNR, Local Watershed Groups	

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

VISION: *Develop diversified job opportunities in the Region that are consistent with future land uses and the revitalization of downtown Mercer*

GOAL: Provide a combination of business opportunities that will retain and attract businesses and services to the Region

STRATEGY	PRIORITY	IMPLEMENTING PARTIES	FUNDING SOURCES
Implement the strategies recommended for the revitalization and continued development of downtown Mercer.	HIGH	LEAD: Municipal Officials, Downtown Business Owners	Main Street Program (DCED), Office of Appalachian Development (ARC)
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation, Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission	
Work with the Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote the region's historic, cultural, and recreational assets as part of a diversified economic development plan.	HIGH	LEAD: Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau	First Industries - Tourism Program; Heritage Tourism Cooperative Marketing Grants (DCED)
		SUPPORT: MCRPC Municipal Officials, Mercer County Historical Society, MCRPC	
Continue to work closely with the region's farmers to identify and promote additional opportunities to enhance and improve their economic viability.	MED	LEAD: Mercer County Agricultural Preservation Board	First Industries - Agriculture Program; PA Grows
		SUPPORT: PA Department of Agriculture, Municipal Officials,	
Organize a regional economic development committee that would work closely with Penn-Northwest Development Corporation to promote sustainable economic development that is compatible with the revitalization of downtown Mercer.	MED	LEAD: Municipal Officials	Municipal Revenues, Office of Appalachian Development (ARC), DCED
		SUPPORT: MCRPC, Penn-Northwest Development Corporation, Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission	