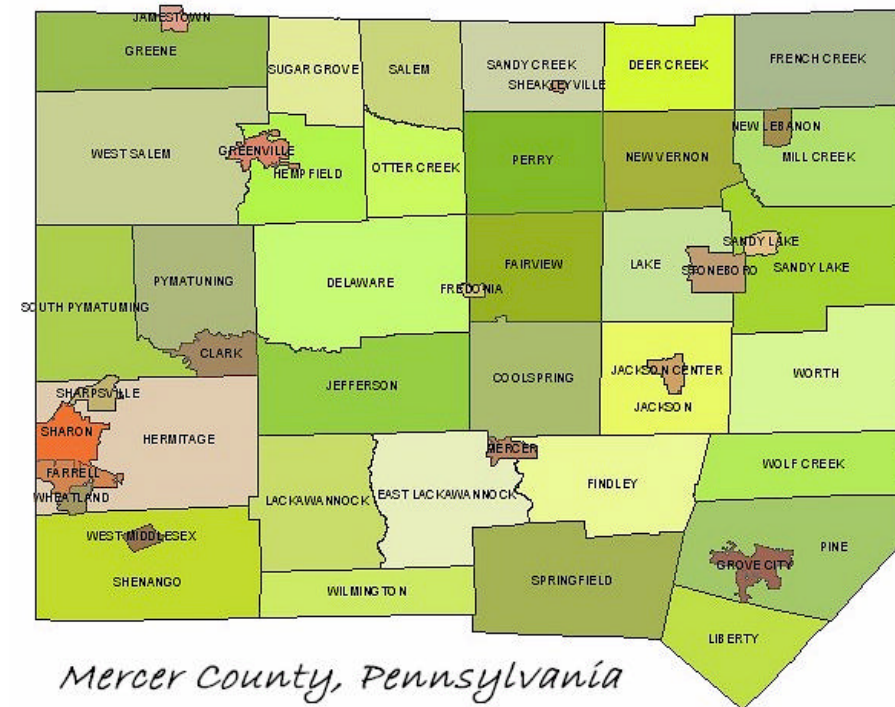


MCRPC 2004 ANNUAL REPORT



Mercer County, Pennsylvania



Mercer County Regional
Planning Commission
2491 Highland Road
Hermitage, PA 16148

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"Planning for Livable Communities"

Mercer County has and should maintain a diversity of community types and living conditions.

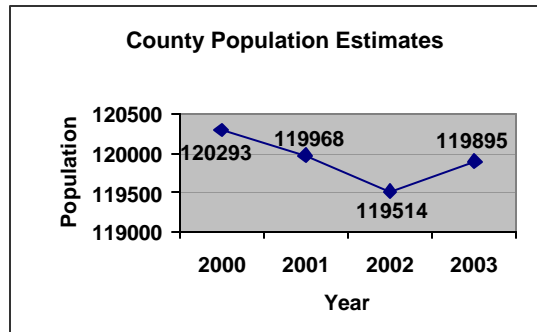
MERCER COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
2491 HIGHLAND ROAD, HERMITAGE, PA 16148 www.mcrpc.com

Census Update

The U.S. Census Bureau has published annual population estimates since the last decennial count in 2000. The latest, the 2003 estimates, were released July 2004. A summary of these estimates shows:

Mercer County's population showed an increase in population between 2002 and 2003, which is encouraging news due to a long period of slow population decline.

Mercer County's (Farrell, Sharon and Hermitage) three cities combined gained 51 residents in the past year. This is due to the fact that Farrell and Hermitage's population increased between the 2002 and 2003 estimates.



All of Mercer County's fourteen boroughs declined in population between 2002 and 2003. These boroughs lost 213 residents in the past year.

The population of Mercer County's thirty-one townships varied between the 2002 and 2003 estimates. Nineteen of the townships experienced population growth in the past year, eleven experienced population decline, and one experienced no growth or decline. Overall, the population of Mercer County's townships grew by 256 residents.

The municipalities that gained the most population numerically were Hermitage City (+132), Pine Twp. (+78), and Farrell City (+72). The municipalities that gained the most population percentage-wise were Wilmington Twp (+4.4%), Sandy Lake Twp (+2.0%), and French Creek Twp (+2.0%).

The municipalities that lost the most population numerically were Sharon City (-153), Greenville Borough (-57), and Grove City Borough (-54). The municipalities that lost the most population percentage-wise were Sharpsville and Jamestown Boroughs (-1.0%), and four municipalities lost 0.9%.

MCRPC 2004 Annual Report

December 21, 2004

MCRPC is pleased to present its 2004 annual report. Between these covers are stories of the organization's service and accomplishments in the past 12 months.

Calendar year 2004 has been a busy year at the MCRPC. Work continues on the update to the County Comprehensive Plan, in addition to several multi-municipal plans. The MCRPC has also initiated a Geographic Information System (GIS) that we believe will benefit the County and its municipalities in the years to come.

Another major event during the year was the departure of Mr. Dennis Puko who had been with the commission for twenty-five years, twelve as the Executive Director. Mr. Puko has taken on a new job with the PA State Department of Community and Economic Development. Mr. Puko will be missed and will certainly be remembered for his dedication and skill as the Director.

The MCRPC continues to maintain a highly qualified staff which is committed to excellence. In addition, the MCRPC has also continued to maintain up to date equipment and library resources. We as a staff strive to provide quality professional services during the year. The staff of the MCRPC remains committed to providing these services and look forward to our continuing partnership in maintaining and building "livable communities" in Mercer County.

Mercer County Regional Planning Commission

2004 Annual Report Table of Contents

MCRPC Commission Members, Staff & County Commissioners	5
MCRPC Continues to Leads Major Countywide Plan Effort	6
Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans	7
Countywide Recycling Depot System	8
New Recycling Consolidation Center Project	9
Multi-County Recycling Education Grant	9
Transportation Improvement Program	10
Countywide Geographic Information (GIS) System Initiated	10
New MCRPC Executive Director Hired	11
Grant Work Completed in 2004	11
New Zoning Ordinances / Revisions	12
Subdivision Update	13
MCRPC Assists Community Development Activities	14
MCRPC Assists Municipalities / Organizations with Applications	15
MCRPC Administered Programs	16
Miscellaneous Information	17
Census Update	18

- MCRPC’s website, www.mcrpc.com, continues to be updated and improved. The website is used to provide information to member municipalities, MCRPC partner organizations and the general public on a variety of MCRPC projects .
- 911 Addressing – MCRPC assigns addresses for 32 of the 48 municipalities in Mercer County and maintains & updates the street/address range database. Approximately 200 address applications were submitted and processed throughout 2004.
- MCRPC conducts environmental reviews for Mercer County, Pine Township, Greenville Borough and the Cities of Farrell and Hermitage on an annual basis for their CDBG programs.
- Participated in task forces exploring changes in economic development and planning being done by the Northwest PA Regional Planning & Development Commission and its 8 member counties (2003).
- Attended meetings of the Neshannock Creek Watershed Joint Municipal Authority by Mercer Borough, Coolspring, East Lackawannock, Findley, and Springfield Townships, and Mercer County to facilitate long-range development of a regional sewer system (2003).
- MCRPC administers the Rodent Control Program, which provides extermination and educational services to the municipalities which fund the program. In 2004 there are 11 municipalities participating in the program. The program is offered annually to all municipalities in the County.
- Carmen Reichard serves on the Executive Board of the Pennsylvania Vector Control Association (PVCA) as the Secretary for the organization. PVCA is an organization dedicated to the advancement of its membership by providing annual conferences and training sessions offering education, interaction and communication. The membership includes municipal and state public health personnel, university faculty and technical and sales representatives from support industry within Pennsylvania and surrounding states.
- MCRPC assisted the Mercer County Solid Waste Authority (MCSWA) in submitting a PA DEP Section 904 Recycling Performance Grant for the County and 25 municipalities in calendar year 2003. The MCSWA also received a \$42,017 grant from the PA DEP for calendar year 2002 Section 904 funding.
- MCRPC annually assists the MCSWA in filing and preparing its annual recycling report for the County.
- MCRPC assisted the MCSWA with its 6th annual Recycling Poster Contest for school grades K-6. Over 1200 posters were received from 14 different elementary schools throughout the County.
- The new 2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was adopted in July by the local Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TIP contains over \$88 million dollars worth of projects involving highway, transit and other modes of transportation.
- Applications from the communities of Jamestown, Sharon and Sharpsville were recommended for funding through the Home Town Streets/Safe Routes to School program. The total available for these projects was \$408,000. One additional project (Greenville) was forwarded onto PENNDOT for their consideration.

Other Items of Interest

MCRPC administers the following programs for Mercer County:

Jefferson Township 2004 HOME Program

Staff assisted Clark Borough and Delaware, Jefferson, and Pymantuning Townships in acquiring a \$400,000 grant for housing rehabilitation funds from PA DCED. Environmental review has been completed, delivery consultant procured, housing rehab manual finalized and initial home inspections undertaken.

Wheatland Borough 2004 HOME Program

Staff assisted Wheatland Borough in acquiring a \$350,000 grant for housing rehabilitation funds from PA DCED. The borough recently executed its contract for this grant with PA DCED.

Mercer County Brownfields for Housing 2002-2003:

Mercer County designated its 2002-2003 funds for the Southwest Gardens Economic Development Corporation's Housing Rehabilitation Project (\$20,632.59) and the Community Action Partnership of Mercer County's Rental/Housing Unit Project (\$62,312.41).

Mercer County Brownfields for Housing 2003-2004:

Mercer County designated its 2003-2004 funds (\$97,361) for housing rehabilitation in municipalities (West Middlesex, Wheatland, Jackson Center Borough/Jackson Township and Fredonia Borough/Fairview Township) that have established programs and guidelines, but did not have funding available to undertake further rehabilitation.

Mercer County Affordable Housing Fund

The Mercer County Affordable Housing Fund Board, along with MCRPC staff, solicited, reviewed, and recommended projects to the Mercer County Commissioners during 2004 for the Mercer County Act 137 Affordable Housing funds. The Mercer County Housing Authority (\$100,000) was approved for funding for a senior housing project in the City of Hermitage.

Mercer County Regional Planning Commission

MCRPC 2004 Commission Members

Chairman:

James Pat White - Hermitage

Vice Chairman:

Thomas R. Stanton - Wheatland

Secretary:

Mark Smith - Wolf Creek

Treasurer:

Patricia McAdams - Fredonia

Jerry Miller - Farrell

William Morocco - Farrell

Rita Ferringier - Hermitage

James A. Rollinson - Hermitage

Darin Flower - Sharon

Stephen Theiss - Sharon

Vic Heutsche - Sharon

Richard Dunlap - Clark

James Carucci, Sr. - Clark

Ronald Boyd, Sr. - Fredonia

Robin Douglas - Greenville

Burroughs Price - Greenville

Clifford McCandless - Grove City

Thomas Shaffer - Grove City

Marvin McAfoose - Jackson Center

Debbie Stevenson - Jackson Center

Darryl Pinney - Jamestown

Doug McElhane - Jamestown

Jim Carnes - Mercer

Jerry Johnson - Mercer

Janice Good - New Lebanon

Mary A. Ziegler - New Lebanon

Brad Martin - Sandy Lake

Robert Kaltenbaugh - Sandy Lake

Alex Kovach - Sharpsville

Bob Piccirilli - Sharpsville

Samuel A. Scott - Stoneboro

Mark David - West Middlesex

Tracy Thompson - West Middlesex

Ray Foster - Wheatland

Robert McGhee - Coolspring

Donald Kremm - Delaware

Caroline Stoyer - Delaware

Jane Clark - Fairview

Mont Clark - Fairview

John Courtney - Findley

Elliott Lengel - Findley

Pamela Brown - Hempfield

Russell L. Dawes - Hempfield

Mary Gealy - Jackson

Linda L. Baun - Jackson

Richard McCullough - Jefferson

Bert Weston - Jefferson

Ron Faull - Liberty

Dave Beatty - Liberty

John Martin - New Vernon

Richard Straub - Otter Creek

Paulette Young - Otter Creek

Richard Marshall - Perry

Fred Brenner - Pine

H. Thomas Paxton - Pine

Richard Whitten - Pymatuning

Walter L. Weir - Pymatuning

Charles Gilliland - Shenango

James Eakin - Shenango

Michael Nashtock - South Pymatuning

David Lapikas - South Pymatuning

Larry T. Gruntz - Springfield

Judy A. Hassler - Springfield

Charles Garrett - Wilmington

Jeff Hoy - Wilmington

Ray Penland - Wolf Creek

Jean Hodge - Mercer County

James L. Hogan - Mercer County

James Hughes - Mercer County

Jeff Fiedler - Mercer County

Patty McCluskey - Mercer County

Julie Widel - Mercer County

Larry McAdams - Mercer County

Michelle Brooks - County Commissioner

Dave George - Borough's Association

Robert Birtciel - Supervisor's Association

Robert G. Kochems - Solicitor

MCRPC Staff

Dennis G. Puko, Executive Director

Daniel M. Gracenin, Assistant Director

Chris Conti, Senior Planner

Jeremy P. Coxe, Senior Planner

Andrew Dash, Planner

Margaret B. Heldorfer, Associate Planner

Carmen L. Reichard, Senior Program Administrator

Donald A. Blakesley, Senior Program Administrator

Jill E. Boozer, Program Administrator

Evelyn Wike, Administrative Secretary

Mercer County Commissioners

Brian Beader, Chairperson

Michele Brooks

Olivia M. Lazor

MCRPC Continues to Lead Major Countywide Plan Effort



Throughout 2004, MCRPC, with help from consultants Gannett Fleming (Harrisburg), continued work on the update of the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan. Several advisory committee, stakeholder and public meetings were held in 2004. The plan update is well underway and MCRPC is expecting to have a completed draft in the spring of 2005 with adoption by the County Commissioners in the summer of 2005. The county plan is examining indicators on county livability – economy, income, population, housing, and others. When completed, the plan will redefine the county’s future vision and strategies for long-term community vitality. Particular emphasis is being given to:

- Target growth, revitalization, & rural areas – Mapping of areas where growth is desired, where it is not desired, or where public efforts are needed to revitalize communities.
- Economic development sites – A market-based analysis and pro-formas leading to targeting and development of new sites to serve needs over 10 years.
- Transportation capital projects – A plan to identify the next generation of highway and other improvements to enhance community and economic vitality and travel safety and flow.
- Water & sewer – A plan for upgrading and expanding systems in response to a \$140 million backlog of needs.
- Greenways development – A plan to enhance availability of green and open space quality of life assets.
- Design guide – Suggested design concepts to promote, via regulation or partnership with developers, quality of both greenfield and brownfield development.

MCRPC assisted the following municipalities/organizations in preparing applications:

HOME Program (Housing Rehabilitation)-PA Department of Community and Economic Development

- Findley, Coolspring, East Lackawannock Townships and Clark Borough (\$500,000)

Hometown Streets/Safe Routes to School- PA Department of Transportation*

- Borough of Sharpsville Streetscape Improvements (\$120,000)
- City of Sharon Streetscape Improvements (\$134,000)
- Borough of Jamestown Safe Routes to School (pedestrian bridge and sidewalks) (\$154,474)

Elm Street – PA Department of Community and Economic Development

- Borough of Sharpsville Streetscape/Sidewalk Improvements (\$250,000)
- Borough of Grove City Streetscape Improvements (\$95,000)

FY 2005 Federal Appropriation Request*

- Cities of Sharon and Hermitage, the Borough of Sharpsville Sewer Improvements (\$450,000)

Archives and Records Managements Grants – PA Museum and Historical Commission

- Mercer County (\$15,000)
Project has received preliminary approval for funding

MCRPC annually administers the Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ) throughout the County by maintaining the database of properties and reviewing annual applications.

MCRPC assists the Sharon/Farrell Weed and Seed program by sitting on various committees and working with the communities and partner organization to revitalize the target area.

MCRPC Assists Community Development Projects

MCRPC continues to serve the community development needs of its member via grant writing and project administration/management expertise in 2004.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Projects that received funding include those in the following categories:

Mercer County's FY 2004 CDBG Entitlement Program:

Mercer County's FY 2004 CDBG Entitlement Program funds are to be used as follows: Hempfield Township ADA improvements to Hempfield Township Park (\$12,173); Jackson Center Borough spot demolition (\$17,868); Jamestown Borough ADA improvements to the borough building (\$37,950); Mercer Borough emergency siren (\$24,800); Mercer County Regional Council of Governments for the transportation/recreation services for LMI persons (\$17,300); The Literacy Council of Mercer County for public service (\$30,000); Wheatland Borough storm sewer project (\$73,095); Woodland Place for facility renovations (\$76,458); and Mercer County Area Agency on Aging, Inc. for Sandy Lake senior center improvements (\$17,200).

Other FY 2004 CDBG Entitlement Programs:

Pine Township's FY 2004 CDBG funds were used to extend new sanitary sewer service to twenty-two (22) homes that currently are characterized by failing on-lot septic systems. The total project cost will be approximately \$400,000.

Greenville Borough's FY 2004 CDBG funds are to be used as follows: Reconstruction of South High Street (street, water) and Sidewalk Rehabilitation (\$59,000), Code Enforcement (\$60,000) and Clearance (\$4,600).

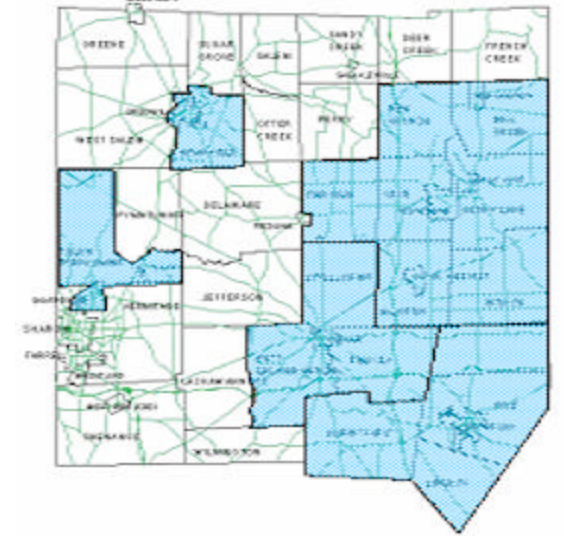
MCRPC's CDBG project administration/management is a daily process that occurs throughout the year to insure compliance with numerous applicable local, state and federal laws, regulations and standards. Preparing requests for proposals, project bidding, holding public hearings, financial management, environmental reviews and labor standards compliance are several of the multi-titudes of administrative tasks performed to successfully bring a project to fruition.

Multi-municipal comprehensive plans

Comprehensive plans are also being developed or updated for five different multi-municipal groupings (see map at below).

The multi-municipal plans will be integrated with the county plan to yield consistent strategies for development and community improvement that leaders throughout the county are willing to pursue.

- **Greenville Borough / Hempfield Township**
Lead consultants – Mackin Engineering (Pittsburgh), with assistance from MCRPC. The joint comprehensive plan was completed and adopted by Greenville Borough Council and Hempfield Township Board of Supervisors in November 2004. Implementation of the plan will begin in 2005.
- **Grove City Region** (*Grove City Borough, Liberty, Pine, Springfield & Wolf Creek Townships*).
Lead consultants – Graney, Grossman, Colosimo & Associates (Grove City), with assistance from MCRPC. Draft plan presented to participating municipalities in September 2004. Expect to complete plan and have adoption by participating municipalities by summer of 2005.
- **Sharpsville Area** (*Sharpsville Borough, Clark Borough & South Pymatuning Township*).
Lead consultants – Waltz Consulting (Sharpsville), with assistance from MCRPC. Planning process ongoing. Expect to complete plan and have adoption by participating municipalities by summer of 2005.
- **Mercer Region** (*Mercer Borough, Coolspring, East Lackawannock & Findley Townships*).
Lead consultants - MCRPC, with assistance from Gannett Fleming. Planning process ongoing. Expect to complete plan and have adoption by participating municipalities by summer of 2005.
- **Lakeview Area** (*Fairview, Jackson, Jackson Center, Lake, Mill Creek, New Lebanon, Sandy Lake Borough, Sandy Lake Township, Stoneboro, Worth*).
Lead consultants – MCRPC, with assistance from Gannett Fleming. Draft plan completed. Expected to meeting with municipalities for further consideration of draft plan by summer of 2005.



Countywide Recycling Depot System



MERCER COUNTY Solid Waste Authority

The Mercer County Solid Waste Authority has continued to experience great success with its countywide recycling depot system. Each site location provides separate bins for glass, cans, plastic (#1 & #2), cardboard, newspaper, and magazines. It takes 2 full-time drivers using 3 different trucks working Monday through Saturday to keep the bins empty. In 2004, over 2 million pounds of recyclable materials were collected. Currently, there are eight permanent drop-off locations throughout the county:

- Wilmington Township (*Township Building, 35 Auction Road*)
- Findley Township (*Township Building, 369 McClelland Road*)
- Jamestown Borough (*Corner of Washington Street & Water Street*)
- West Middlesex Borough (*End of North Street, West of Rt. 18*)
- Shenango Valley Mall (*Parking lot in front of the mall facing Rt. 62*)
- Sandy Lake Township (*Township Building, Rt. 173*)
- Greenville Wal-Mart (*off Rt. 358, in Wal-Mart Parking Lot*)
- Grove City Wal-Mart (*Rt. 58, in Wal-Mart Parking Lot*)

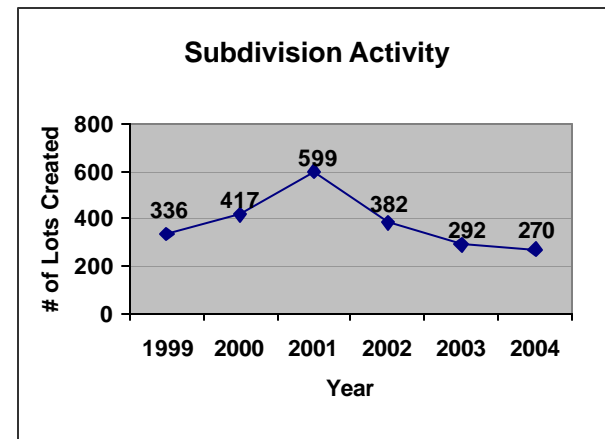


Subdivision Update

For the third straight year, subdivision activity declined in Mercer County. In 2004, there were 181 subdivisions that were approved by MCRPC, creating 270 new lots (179 subdivisions for 292 lots were approved in 2003). In addition, 25 plans were reviewed and 38 new lots created by municipalities with local subdivision ordinances that MCRPC performs the technical review for (22 plans for 56 lots were reviewed in 2003). Thirteen modifications of the Subdivision Ordinance were requested from the Zoning & Subdivision Review Committee. All thirteen were granted. One procedural amendment was also granted to the Subdivision Ordinance by the Committee.

Major Plans Reviewed by MCRPC in 2004:

- Villas at Grove City – 2 lots, 5 new streets and 134 condominium units
- Mallard Lake – 10 building lots, 1 new street, and one common parcel (still in review process)
- Maple Trails – 13 building lots (still in review process)



New Zoning Ordinances in Jamestown & Wolf Creek Township - Revisions in Sharon

MCRPC completed significant work in new and revised zoning ordinances in 2004, incorporating new and creative concepts.

Wolf Creek Township and Jamestown Borough adopted their first zoning ordinances in 2004. MCRPC prepared the ordinances and helped in their adoption.

City of Sharon – An ordinance revision has been underway throughout 2004 to the City’s existing ordinance, dated 1979. A draft ordinance is currently being reviewed and is projected to be adopted in the first half of 2005. Included are revised Planned Residential Development and new Traditional Neighborhood Development regulations as well as overlay districts to protect areas of the Downtown, along the Shenango River, and in steep slope areas to incorporate modernizing the current ordinance that was undertaken to reflect current planning techniques. MCRPC has done much of the preparation of the ordinance and created a new parcel-based zoning map.

MCRPC also provided assistance to:

- Coolspring Township – created adult entertainment regulations
- City of Sharon – created new zoning district to regulate adult entertainment
- City of Farrell – created new zoning district to regulate adult entertainment
- Mercer Borough – helped with regulations for mineral excavation
- Greenville Borough – currently working on a minor revision of their zoning regulations, making changes to a variety of regulations to make enforcement clearer and easier, as well as changing some policies to better reflect the Borough’s goals and objectives. Also created a parcel-based zoning map.
- Shenango Township – currently working on a minor revision of their zoning regulations, clarifying setback & some other provisions, adding regulations for oil & gas wells, as well as stormwater management and temporary mobile homes.
- Hempfield Township – created a new, parcel based zoning map.
- Various municipalities – given technical advice on zoning issues to elected officials, code officers, local planning commission representatives, as well as the public.

Through the course of 2004, MCRPC and its zoning and subdivision review committee reviewed and made recommendations, in accord with the PA Municipalities Planning Code, on 16 zoning amendments – 3 rezoning requests, 11 text changes, and two new zoning ordinances – involving 12 different municipalities.

New Recycling Consolidation Center



Cycle

In part due to the added truck trips and travel time to Meadville (where all material is unloaded), the Mercer County Solid Waste Authority (MCSWA) is building a Recycling Consolidation Center at the Jackson Center Industrial Park just off I-79 & Rt. 62. In October, the MCSWA broke ground for a Recycling Consolidation Center.

The new Recycling Consolidation Center, located in Mercer County, will allow collection trucks to empty multiple times during the day, rather than just one trip daily to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Meadville. This will result in increased efficiency in collections.

Recyclables collected at the Recycling Consolidation Center will then be taken to the MRF by semi truckload or shipped straight to market. Funding for the \$1.8 million dollar project will come from a Pennsylvania Department of Environment Protection (DEP) grant awarded to Lawrence & Mercer County in 2001 and a Sky Bank loan. Construction will be completed in June of 2005. At the time of project completion, MCSWA will move its offices to the center and hire 2 employees to run the recycling/solid waste program.



Robin Presley

Multi-County Education Grant

Mercer and Crawford Counties were awarded a multi-county education grant from DEP in the amount of \$300,000. This grant was used to educate county residents on the benefits of recycling, mainly through the use of promotion and advertising. A main goal of the project was to promote recycling at the eight permanent drop-off locations throughout the county. Education grant activities undertaken during the past year include:

- Hired Project Consultant: Starn Marketing Group
- Created a new Promotional Logo and Mascots (Cycle and Robin)
- Created a new MCSWA web site: countyrecycling.com
- Created Educational Brochure and Packets
- Started Promotional TV, Radio and Billboard Advertisements

2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program Approved

The Mercer County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) adopted the 2005-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Mercer County in July. The TIP list contains transportation projects totaling more than \$88 million dollars. The adoption concludes a one year process of coordination between the MPO, municipalities, county agencies, public, PENNDOT and FHWA. Major transportation projects continue to move forward. The major projects for the new TIP include among others:



- I-79/PA208 Interchange (Construction 2005)
- Broadway Corridor (Final Design 2005)
- Highland Road (Construction 2006/2007)
- Lamor/Pinehollow (Construction 2005/2006)
- PA60/PA318 Interchange (Preliminary Eng. 2005)

Countywide Geographic Information System Initiated

The MCRPC initiated Phase I of the 2003 GIS Needs Study. The aerial photography firm of Earthdata International was hired as the consultant to collect aerial imagery for Mercer County. The imagery was taken in November, 2004. The images are currently being processed and should be available by mid-February 2005.

Funding for Phase I of the project was a coordinated effort between the MCRPC, City of Hermitage, PENNDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Total cost of the project is \$419,000 with 80% federal funding and 20% local funding from the City of Hermitage and DCNR. Both the MCRPC and the City of Hermitage will begin to use the data immediately. The MCRPC will use the data on a project by project basis until Phase II of the GIS system is developed.

Phase II of the project would involve the development of parcels, road centerlines, building footprints and waterways data for the entire County. It is expected that Phase II will be initiated in late 2005.

New MCRPC Executive Director Hired

The MCRPC, at its regularly scheduled meeting of October 26th, hired Mr. Daniel Gracenin as the new Executive Director. Mr. Gracenin becomes the fifth Executive Director in the fifty-two year history of the Planning Commission. Mr. Gracenin is starting his twelfth year with the MCRPC. Since being hired in 1993 at the planner level, Mr. Gracenin has held the positions of Senior Planner, Assistant Director and now Executive Director. As a lifelong resident of Mercer County, Mr. Gracenin has stated that he intends to continue a tradition of providing valuable services to its members and looks forward to the challenges and rewards of the new position.



Daniel Gracenin

The Following MCRPC Grants Received Funding in 2004

Community Conservation Partnership Program (Recreation)-PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

- Munnell Run Farm Foundation Site Plan (\$10,000)
- Stoneboro Borough Skateboard Park (\$30,000)
- FY 2004 Federal Appropriation Request

Cities of Sharon and Hermitage, the Borough of Sharpsville and the Townships of Jefferson and South Pymatuning Water and Sewer Improvements (\$150,000)

Federal Emergency Management Agency – Assistance to Firefighters Grant

Jackson Center Volunteer Fire Department (\$56,000) – pagers, training and protective equipment