

THE PA 208 CORRIDOR

The PA 208 Corridor – Grove City Southern Mercer County Tourism Pathway

The PA 208 Corridor is known as the Grove City Southern Mercer County Tourism Pathway. The corridor stretches from the southeastern portion of the County through Springfield Township and into Grove City Borough. The corridor has experienced significant changes during the past two decades due to the development of the Grove City Outlets, additional commercial businesses along PA 208, continued investment in the town and college of Grove City, as well as residential growth in adjoining Liberty Township. Furthermore, the area has evolved into a commutershed for those who reside in southeastern Mercer County and work in the greater Pittsburgh region.



CORRIDOR PROFILE ▶



Springfield Township
Liberty Township
Grove City Borough

The eastern portion of the corridor traverses the heart of Grove City, which includes a mix of residential and commercial uses at high densities. From Grove City to I-79, the PA 208 Corridor can be characterized as a mix of scattered residential, agricultural and woodlands. Near the I-79 interchange, there is a larger concentration of commercial development, catalyzed by the Grove City outlets. Development consists of commercial retail, restaurants, and convenience service stations.

The MPO has functionally classified the PA 208 roadway as a Rural Minor Arterial.

Key Findings & Corridor Highlights

Below are key issues noted from the PA 208 corridor analysis:

- Intersection of PA 208/PA 58/PA 173 - in the heart of Grove City. Three main approaches feed into a one-way road, West Main Street/PA 58. Truck turning alignment is too narrow resulting in unsafe or slow turning capabilities, specifically for trucks.
- Development adjacent to I-80's interchange with PA 173, coupled with access improvements into Grove City, could result in greater travel demand on the PA 208 Corridor.
- The following intersections/locations were identified by corridor transportation stakeholders as having potential safety issues:
 - Dangerous curve at Leesburg Station
 - Site distance problems at George Junior Road
 - Brent Road (SR 2002)
 - Mercer Road
 - Spring Road
 - Blacktown Road (SR 2006)
 - Irishtown Road (SR 2005).
- The area is also becoming part of a larger travel shed for commuters traveling to and from the greater Pittsburgh area. (The City of Pittsburgh in fact is now the tenth most common destination for resident corridor workers.) This has caused an increase in congestion during peak periods.
- Future growth - particularly in Springfield Township - is being driven by the availability of water and sewer infrastructure from private commercial developers adjacent to Prime Outlets at Grove City and the PA 208 Corridor.

Recommendations for the PA 208 Corridor:

As the dynamics of Mercer County's economy changes, so do its transportation issues. Years ago, Cooper Industries was one of the area's largest employers. The area exchanged jobs in heavy manufacturing for service sector employment through a new employer in US Investigating Services. The development of commercial activity - particularly in Springfield Township - has been strong over the past decade. The Outlets are not only an additional new employer but also a significant tourist attraction and generator of additional trips. The following is a recommended action plan for the PA 208 Corridor moving forward.

- **The County should support emergency planning for special events for the Prime Outlets at Grove City.** Part of this contingency planning should be identifying how to direct traffic through the PA 208 Corridor.

- **Two intersections in Grove City are in need of improvement for the effective movement of commercial trucks.** These include the intersection of PA 208 with PA 58 and PA 173. Both intersections are currently not designed to accommodate the growing amount of truck volumes. Both need to be widened and turning lanes added.
- **Pursue possible bypasses in the corridor where previously identified.** Two area roads have been identified in the area's multi-municipal comprehensive plan as candidates for bypasses. Irishtown Road (connecting PA 208 and PA 58) is being examined as a potential bypass, as is Cranberry Road. This would provide a more direct route to Mercer or points west of Grove City.
- **Implement identified quality of life recommendations.** Area officials should implement the recommendations of its multi-municipal comprehensive plan in protecting the existing quality of life in the greater Grove City area. As more people move into the area, protecting the borough's character should be a priority. Development should be centered within two to three miles of Grove City and the interchange as a targeted growth area.
- **Initiate a Land Use/Transportation Corridor study for PA 208 corridor from Grove City to I-79** (one of the County's Wise Use Land Bank areas). At the present time, land use along the corridor is predominantly agriculture, yet the presence of sewer service, along with a continuation of growth pressures from the south may increase the demand for both commercial and residential development along the corridor. The Wolf Creek COG multi-municipal plan recommends that the corridor be included as part of an overall plan for managing future commercial growth. Impacts of future development on Grove City and the agricultural community must be carefully weighed in relation to the potential economic benefits. As in the case of the PA 19 corridor, impacts of future development along the corridor on Grove City and the agricultural community must be carefully weighed in relation to the potential economic benefits.

Public Input & Key Person Interviews

- There are concerns about continued development along the PA 208 Corridor near the Grove City Outlets - and access management.
- The movement of truck traffic through Grove City is also a concern, specifically at PA 208's intersection with PA 58 and PA 173. The improvements should be context sensitive and in scale with the town's urban design.
- Residential growth continues in the Wolf Creek region which is going to continue to increase traffic demands on PA 208.
- The transportation infrastructure improvements along the corridor should be consistent and correspond with areas targeted for growth.

Traffic Volume

Annual average daily traffic volumes vary throughout the PA 208 roadway, depending on location. Traffic volumes range from a low of 3,500 west of US 19 to a high of 8,500 east of I-79. Between US 19 and I-79, volumes average 4,500.

Mode Split

Commuters in the PA 208 Corridor are reliant on the private automobile as a means of getting to work. Table 1 displays the mode split for year 2000.

**Table 1: Mode Split (in %) – 2000
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	TOTAL	SOV	CARPOOL	TRANSIT	BICYCLE	WALKED	OTHER MEANS	WORKED AT HOME
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	3,261	73.5	8.9	0.4	0.8	11.8	0.4	4.3
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	669	86.3	7.4	0.6	0.0	1.1	0.4	4.1
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	974	83.0	6.0	0.6	0.0	3.0	0.6	6.9
PA 208 CORRIDOR	4,904	80.9	7.4	0.5	0.27	5.3	0.5	5.1
MERCER COUNTY	51,120	83.2	9.2	0.3	3.2	0.1	0.7	3.2

- Workers commuting to work in the PA 208 Corridor are slightly less dependent on the private automobile compared to their counterparts elsewhere in the County.
- The corridor features a significant percentage of those walking to work, at 5.3 percent. This is led by Grove City, where nearly 12 percent reported walking to work.
- Springfield Township reported nearly 7 percent as working from home. This is more than twice the county average.

Travel Time to Work

Table 2 and 3 show how corridor journey to work travel times have changed in the past decade.

**Table 2: Travel Time to Work (in minutes by percent) – 2000
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	< 15		15-29		30-59		60-89		90+	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	332	35.5	336	36.0	209	22.4	33	3.5	24	2.6

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	251	40.3	176	28.3	119	19.1	58	9.3	19	3.0
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	1,925	61.7	624	20.0	431	13.8	91	2.9	50	1.6
PA-208 CORRIDOR	2,508	53.6	1,136	24.3	759	16.2	182	3.9	93	2.0
MERCER COUNTY	22,293	45.0	16,568	33.5	8,532	16.7	1,253	2.5	829	1.6

**Table 3: Travel Time To Work (in minutes by percent) – 1990
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	< 15		15-29		30-59		60-89		90+	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	258	33.3	291	37.6	197	25.5	24	3.1	4	0.5
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	261	49.0	156	29.3	105	19.7	7	1.3	4	0.8
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	2,116	66.5	601	18.9	393	12.4	55	1.7	15	0.5
PA-208 CORRIDOR	2,635	58.7	1,048	23.4	695	15.5	86	1.9	23	0.5
MERCER COUNTY	22,944	46.9	15,686	32.1	7,410	15.2	971	2.0	277	0.6

- During the 1990s, corridor workers traveling less than 15 minutes to work decreased at a greater rate than county averages - from 59 percent to 53.6 percent.
- Overall, travel time to work is increasing for corridor workers. The percent of those traveling longer than an hour to get to work increased from 2.5 percent in 1990 to nearly 6 percent in 2000.

Commutation Patterns

According to commutation pattern data from the US Census, Grove City is the most common destination for workers residing in the borough and the two townships of Springfield and Liberty. Table 4 and the bullet points below provide more information relative to corridor commuting patterns for PA 208 Corridor workers.

**Table 4: Top 10 Commuter Destinations – 2000
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

Municipality	#	%
1. GROVE CITY	1,541	31.4
2. PINE	773	15.8

3. SPRINGFIELD	343	7.0
4. SLIPPERY ROCK	199	4.0
5. HERMITAGE	155	3.2
6. MERCER	148	3.0
7. LIBERTY	89	1.8
8. SHARON	82	1.7
9. GREENVILLE	63	1.3
10. PITTSBURGH	61	1.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

- Liberty exports 87 percent of its workforce to destinations outside the municipality of residence. Liberty sends 19 percent of its workforce into Grove City for jobs.
- As in Liberty, Springfield also exports a large majority of its resident workforce (82 percent) outside the municipality of residence. A majority of these (16 percent) are destined for Grove City Borough.
- Within Grove City, 39 percent of its resident workers are employed within the municipality.
- Only 1.1 percent of corridor commuters travel to destinations in Trumbull or Mahoning Counties in Ohio for employment.

Population Trends

Table 5 displays the age group distribution among the three municipalities along the PA 208 corridor, and table 7 displays population trends from 1990 to 2000.

Table 5: Percent Change by Age Group – 1990, 2000
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR

LOCATION	Total	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
SPRINGFIELD	4.2	72.0	(0.6)	3.0	(4.0)	53.3
LIBERTY	4.3	18.4	8.6	(1.0)	14.0	0.0
GROVE CITY	(2.6)	18.8	(20.7)	(21.2)	(5.0)	(6.5)
CORRIDOR	(0.7)	29.5	(12.4)	(15.8)	(3.4)	(3.3)
MERCER COUNTY	(0.6)	32.2	(9.4)	(10.0)	24.2	28.1

Population gains in the rural townships of Springfield and Liberty have been more than offset by losses in Grove City Borough. The borough's decline of 2.6 percent resulted in a net population decrease for the corridor overall (0.7), for the ten year period ending in 2000. Despite the moderate population decline, Grove City has fared better than most Mercer County boroughs in this regard.

**Table 6: Population Trends, 1980-2000
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	1980	1990	2000	% CHANGE
				90-00
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	1,904	1,892	1,972	4.2
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	1,199	1,223	1,276	4.3
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	8,162	8,240	7,984	(3.1)
PA-208 CORRIDOR	11,265	11,355	11,232	(1.1)
MERCER COUNTY	128,299	121,003	120,293	(0.6)

Racial Composition

Table 7 and the bullet points below provide detailed information on racial composition within the PA 208 Corridor, based on the 2000 Census.

**Table 7: Racial Composition – (in %)
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	Total	White	Black	Indian	Asian	Other
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	1,972	99.2	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.1
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	1,276	99.4	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.1
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	7,984	98.0	0.8	0.3	1.3	0.0
PA 208 CORRIDOR	11,232	98.3	0.7	0.38	0.6	0.0
MERCER COUNTY	120,293	94.2	3.6	0.1	1.0	1.1

- The PA 208 Corridor is more racially homogenous than the county as a whole, with only 1.7 percent of the corridor consisting of minority populations.
- Liberty Township is the corridor's most racially homogenous municipality, at 99.4 percent.

Per Capita Income

Table 8 displays the 2000 per capita income breakdown along the PA 208 Corridor.



**Table 8: Per Capita Income - (2000)
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	Households	< \$25,000		\$25-49,999		\$50-74,999		\$75-99,999		\$100,000+	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	718	192	26.7	250	34.8	180	25.1	52	7.2	44	6.1
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	491	113	23.0	180	36.7	124	25.3	32	6.5	42	8.6
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	2,577	952	36.9	775	30.1	496	19.2	193	7.5	161	6.2
PA 208 CORRIDOR	3,786	1,257	33.2	1,205	31.8	800	21.1	277	7.3	247	6.5
MERCER COUNTY	46,755	16,073	34.4	16,259	34.8	8,629	18.5	3,246	6.9	2,548	5.4

- Household incomes in the corridor are generally higher than throughout the rest of Mercer County.
- Liberty Township has the corridor's highest percentage of households earning greater than \$100,000 annually, at nearly 9 percent.

Economic

Table 9 displays the 2000 civilian labor force characteristics of those that live in the PA 208 Corridor.

**Table 9: Civilian Labor Force Characteristics – (2000)
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

LOCATION	Total	Not in Labor Force		Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force				In Armed Forces	
						Employed		Unemployed			
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	1,527	484	31.7	1,043	68.3	990	94.9	53	5.1	0	0.0
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	1,004	308	30.7	696	69.3	673	96.7	20	3.3	3	0.3
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	6,839	3,149	46.0	3,690	54.0	3,523	95.5	201	4.5	0	0.0
PA-208 CORRIDOR	9,370	3,941	42.1	5,429	57.9	5,186	95.5	271	4.5	3	0.0
MERCER COUNTY	95,664	40,113	41.9	55,551	58.1	52,142	93.9	3,353	6.0	56	0.1

- Liberty Township leads all corridor municipalities in participation in the labor force, at nearly 70 percent. This is 12 percentage points above the county rate of 58 percent.
- All corridor municipalities boast lower unemployment rates than the county average of 6 percent. Liberty Township had the corridor's lowest unemployment rate, at only 3.3 percent.
- Grove City has the corridor's highest percentage of those not in the labor force, at 46 percent.

Table 10 displays the employment by occupation distribution among the municipalities along the PA 208 Corridor, based on Census 2000.

**Table 10: Employment by Occupation - (2000)
THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Total	Mgmt./ Professional & Related		Service		Sales/ Office		Farming, Fishing & Forestry		Construction, Extraction & Maintenance		Production/ Transportation & Material Moving	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP	990	176	17.8	185	18.7	268	27.1	8	.8	107	10.8	246	24.8
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP	673	201	29.9	92	13.7	193	28.7	0	0	56	8.3	131	19.5
GROVE CITY BOROUGH	3,489	1,230	35.5	674	19.3	940	26.9	5	.1	168	4.8	472	13.5
PA 208 CORRIDOR	5,152	1,607	31.2	951	18.5	1,401	27.2	13	.3	331	6.4	849	16.5
MERCER COUNTY	52,142	14,392	27.6	9,001	17.3	13,203	25.3	319	0.6	4,281	8.2	10,946	21.0

- Management and professional related occupations constitute the majority of employment types in the corridor, at over 31 percent. These occupations are most common in Grove City, where it constitutes over 35 percent of all employment. Service jobs are also more common in the corridor than in the county overall.
- There are only 13 persons employed in the farming, fishing and forestry occupations (a majority of these are in Springfield Township). This rate represents half the county average.

2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

PennDOT has programmed over \$24 million in improvements to the corridor as part of its 2005 TIP. One of the largest projects in the county includes a \$20 million bridge replacement at I-79's interchange with PA 208. This project also involves intersection improvements and roadway relocation.

A Transportation Enhancement project in Grove City includes work on Broad Street between Main Street and Blair Street. The enhancement will include: lighting, sidewalks, disposition of coal chutes, storm drainage, underground utilities, street furnishings, landscaping and signage.

**Table 11: 2005 -- 2008 TIP Projects
 THE PA 208 CORRIDOR**

Municipality	Project/Description	Year				Total
		05	06	07	08	
GROVE CITY	McDowells Rd RR safety		90			90
GROVE CITY	Streetscape	650				650
GROVE CITY	Chestnut St bridge repl	425	2,600			3,025
SPRINGFIELD	I-79 Interchange recon	9,800	7,000	3,000		19,800
SPRINGFIELD	Milburn Rd bridge repl	95	750			845

Source: PENNDOT District 1-0