

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* summarizes the major findings of the planning process. The findings are organized in the same sequence as the overall *Plan*.

Community Character and Development History

- L The Milford Planning Area clearly serves as a *gateway* community lying between the 15,600-acre Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Areas and the Upper Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River, and at the eastern edge of a county which some 95,000 acres of state park, state forest and state game lands.
- L Complementing this public land are the many historic resources highlighted locally by the Pinchot Institute in Milford Township and the Milford Borough Historic District.
- L *Gateway communities – the towns and cities that border these public lands – are the destinations of choice for much of the country's migrating populace. With their scenic beauty and high quality of life, gateway communities have become a magnet for millions of Americans looking to escape the congestion, banality, and faster tempo of life in the suburbs and cities.*¹
- L The Planning Area can best be characterized as a small gateway town in transition to a bedroom community where open land remains a predominate, yet fragile, feature of the landscape.
- L Continued residential development, and in fact total suburbanization, is clearly on the horizon as stimulated by recent internal population growth and migration from nearby urban areas to the Borough and Township and other small communities.
- L Timbering, farming and milling served as the base for the initial settlement and early economic development of the planning area.

- L During the Nineteenth Century, the Milford area was a rural community surrounded by small farms, and it saw the beginning of tourism and recreation which would lead to the many second homes of the 1970's and 1980's.
- L Today, the basic natural resource activities have lost significance to the local economy and many acres in the region which once were forested or in agriculture are now subdivided into residential lots.
- L Given its proximity to New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania metropolitan areas, its attractive lifestyle, recreation appeal, and the effect of 9-11, the Milford planning area holds great potential for continued development.

Growth and Development, and Existing Land Use

- L The Planning Area's economy and land use pattern is inextricably linked to nearby metropolitan areas, and as these areas expand there will be more pressure for development in the Township and Borough.
- L The challenge is to strike a balance for sustainable development. That is, to provide for the essential economic growth and development of the area, while conserving its scenic and natural environment, particularly open land and natural resources, and its small town character, the very elements which have largely been the impetus for the area's past development.
- L Area economic development organization efforts to attract light manufacturing and commercial development could provide jobs for the entire region, and enhance the Township's attraction as a residential community.
- L The Planning Area's future land use, environmental quality and community character will evolve in response to the actions of community leaders and active citizens combined with the forces of the local and regional economy, and the demand for land and community facilities and services.

¹Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities, Howe, J., McMahon, and Propst, L., Island press, Wash., D.C., 1997, p. 1.

- L Intermunicipal cooperation and area wide planning will be vital to meeting the problems created by regional growth and development.
 - L Two key land use issues in the Planning Area are:
 - The use of the Santos Farm, the last working farm in the Planning Area.
 - Managing development in the watershed of Milford Springs, the water supply for the Borough and part of the Township.
 - L Forest and open land remain the primary land use types in the Township.
 - L An integral part of the *gateway* community character of the Milford Planning Area are the wooded ridge lines and scenic vistas visible from the major highways passing through the area.
 - L Residential development is the primary type of development in the Planning Area.
 - L The primary type of dwelling in the two municipalities is single-family residential, eighty-three percent in the Township and sixty-five percent in the Borough according to the 2000 Census.
 - L Most commercial development is found along Route 6 and Route 209. The largest scale commercial in the Planning Area is located in the Township along Route 6/209 east of the Borough.
 - L Milford Borough and Milford Township have each adopted a subdivision and land development ordinance and a zoning ordinance, and have amended each as needed over the years to manage land use and provide local environmental controls
- Community Facilities and Services**
- L Community facilities and services, as provided by local, county and state government, and by quasi-public institutions such as volunteer fire departments, hospitals and libraries, are most often considered in terms of government or institutional response to meet the needs and demands of the community's residents. .
- L As the Planning Area and regional population continues to increase, the demand for facilities and services will also increase -- more classroom space, police protection, social services, recreation facilities, etc. will be needed.
 - L In addition to the historic role of providing road maintenance, municipalities in Pennsylvania have become responsible for a wider range of facilities and services including land use controls, environmental protection, police protection, water, sewer and storm water facilities, parks and recreation, and solid waste disposal.
 - L Community facilities and services can also serve as a tool, or as an unexpected trigger, to guide or stimulate community growth and development.
 - L The provision of community facilities and services offers myriad opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation which can result in efficiency of program operation and service delivery, and economies of scale in purchasing of supplies and materials.
 - L Staffing at the Township appears adequate as does office and meeting space, with the replacement of a dump truck in the next several years as the primary capital expenditure.
 - L Borough office space is tight and the renovation of the Borough Hall and Office Building is planned.
 - L Borough operations and programs have become more complex in recent years and additional staff may be warranted.
 - L Milford Borough and Milford Township each employ road crews who provide all normal winter and summer maintenance. Each municipality contracts for larger scale road maintenance and improvement projects, primarily major improvement projects such as paving and shoulder reconstruction.
 - L Milford Borough owns and maintains two large parks, Memorial Park and the Borough Ballpark and several other small parks and public places with the help of the Borough Recreation and Parks Commission and the Milford garden Club.

- L Having historically relied on the facilities in neighboring municipalities to meet the demand, Milford Township does not currently provide any recreation facilities.
- L The community surveys found that recreation opportunities are important, they are not as important as other aspects of the local community.
- L The Borough community survey found that more than seventy percent of respondents rated Borough police protection good to excellent. Forty-two percent of Township survey respondents believe more local police protection is important and twenty-one percent believe it is very important.
- L Fire protection and basic life support services in the Milford Planning Area are provided entirely by volunteers, and most survey respondents in each municipality rated emergency services as good to excellent.
- L Advanced life support is provided by ALS Pike County, a nonprofit organization operating out of Dingman Township.
- L Many volunteer organizations are finding it more difficult to find volunteers given the increased demands for training, and this situation must be monitored along with the need for paid staff.
- L Solid waste collection and disposal in the Township is provided by private contractors and appears to be adequate.
- L The Borough Council annually awards a contract to one hauler for the collection of all solid waste and recyclables in the Borough and a large majority of respondents to the Borough survey rated garbage collection service as good to excellent.
- L The recent improvement of the sidewalks and *streetscapes* along Board Street and Harford Street have added significantly to the small town character and quality of life for all who live in or visit the Borough.
- L In many areas of the Borough the sidewalks are in poor condition or missing altogether, or have been damaged or removed when residents park in front yards, and a variety of surface treatments are used.
- L In 2002, the Milford Borough Parking Committee completed a Study of Parking in Downtown Milford which identifies problems and proposes solutions.
- L County facilities have long been an integral and important part of the fabric of the Borough, adding to the local economy. Any new County facilities must be developed in consideration of the effects on parking, and if developed within the Historic District, maintaining its integrity.
- L The Delaware River, the Sawkill Creek and the Vandermark Creek are important parts of the community but pedestrian access is somewhat limited.

Water Supply and Sewage Disposal

- L Groundwater is the source for all potable water in the Milford Planning Area and its conservation and quality protection are two critical issues facing the community.
- L Based on available studies, with long term consumption primarily residential, and large areas of undeveloped land for recharge, it appears that the overall supply of groundwater in the Planning Area and all of Pike County will be adequate for quite some time.
- L All of Milford Borough and adjoining areas of Milford Township are served by the Borough of Milford Municipal Authority system which relies on springs for its source.
- L The Milford Borough Municipal Authority is aggressively addressing water quality protection in the watershed that supplies Milford Springs based on the recently completed *Source Water Protection Plan*.
- L The entire Milford Planning Area relies on soil-based sewage disposal systems, most of which are individual on-lot disposal systems with a number of residential developments served by community on-lot systems
- L No widespread sewage disposal problems have been reported in either the Borough or Township, and reported malfunctions are corrected in accord with DEP requirements

- L While sewage disposal in the residential areas of the Borough has not been a problem, the commercial areas in the Borough have historically suffered sewage disposal problems given the small lot sizes and the higher volume of water use for certain types of establishments.
- L None of the Milford Planning Area is served by a central sewage collection and treatment system.
- L Based on the sewage disposal needs of the commercial zoning districts in the Borough and along Route 6/209 in Milford Township, the Milford Borough Municipal Authority has been coordinating the discussion of providing central sewage disposal via extension of the Westfall Township Sewer Authority system.
- L Any sewer service area in the Township must be strictly defined so that the central sewage would not be available outside the Route 6/209 corridor to avoid stimulating residential development.
- L In the Borough, service could be limited to the commercial zoning districts or could be extended throughout the community.

Historic Preservation

- L The many historic resources in the Milford Planning Area are key components of the traditional small town character so critical to the local lifestyle and tourism based economy.
- L Six individual structures in the Milford Planning Area and three historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- L In 1999 the Borough Council adopted a Historic District Ordinance which applies to the entire Commercial Zoning District and the entire Limited Commercial Zoning District.
- L The Historic District Ordinance establishes the Architectural Review Board to advise the Council on the appropriateness of any proposed construction, alteration, repair, restoration or demolition of any buildings in the designated historic district.
- L The Architectural Review Board has published the *Milford Design Guide* to aid property owners with planning and completing building renovation and construction projects in compliance with the Ordinance.
- L Most respondents of the Borough community survey view the preservation effort as positive and a number believe additional eligible areas should be included.
- L The Historic Preservation Trust of Pike County, Inc., assists business owners in the areas governed by the Historic District Ordinance to design signs that are consistent with the heritage of the building and/or business.

Highways and Transportation

- L Route 6 and Route 209 carry some of the highest traffic volumes in Pike County.
- L Much of the traffic in eastern Pike County passes through the intersection of Broad Street and Harford Street.
- L Level-of-service, a measure of a traffic flow, is unacceptable on Broad and Harford at peak traffic periods - particularly on weekends and holidays, and as the population increases the level-of-service will decline.
- L Congestion on Broad and Harford results in increased traffic in residential areas of the Borough.
- L Level-of-service on other roads in the Planning Area is expected to remain satisfactory over the next ten to fifteen years even with increased traffic, projected by PennDOT at two-to-three percent per year.
- L Other state roads in the Township are generally in good condition with steep grades and sharp turns, and poor sight distance at certain intersections the major concerns.
- L The primary concern for Township and Borough streets is drainage and routine paving/maintenance which will not place a serious strain on budgets.
- L Diligent re-paving, routine maintenance, and shoulder widening are the major concerns for state roads.

- L Public transportation in Pike County is associated only with the provision of social services and the Shortline bus service. Train service to New York City is available in nearby Port Jervis.

Housing

- L Real estate values in the Milford Planning Area, and all of Pike County, have been increasing rapidly given the appeal of the quality lifestyle so close to metropolitan areas.
- L Balancing this demand driven housing cost increase with the need for affordable housing is difficult, particularly when coupled with the problem of providing adequate sewage disposal for higher density housing.
- L U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines define *affordable housing* as costing no more than thirty percent of a household's gross monthly income.
- L Compared to the other municipalities in Pike County, the Township and Borough clearly contain a *fair share* of two-family and multi-family housing which are important to the affordability issue.
- L Although many homes are more than fifty years old, there are very few homes in either the Township or Borough which are not in good condition.
- L In both the Borough and Township a significant proportion of home owning households and renting households have housing costs which exceed the *thirty percent rule* for household income and housing expense.

Economic Development

- L While Pike County as a whole has grown rapidly, the Milford Planning Area's 15.4% expansion only slightly exceeded the national growth rate, indicating commercial expansion and economic development will continue to be associated with growth in surrounding jurisdictions
- L As second homes have been converted to first homes, the average travel time to work has increased to 34 minutes within the Township, a

fifty-six percent jump.

- L The U.S. Census Bureau includes Pike County as part of the New York - Northern New Jersey Metropolitan Area.
- L An astounding 9.1% of Pike County workers commuted to New York City to work in 2000. Moreover, the top five counties from whom Pike County's in-migrating households came between 1995 and 2000 were Orange (NY), Queens (NY), Bergen (NJ), Kings (NY) and Sussex (NJ).
- L Many Milford Planning Area residents find work on the periphery of the City in revitalized areas such as Jersey City and Hoboken, as well as scores of business parks in locations such as Morris County.
- L The Milford Planning Area is the principal center within the Eastern Poconos tourist region and draws thousands of tourists to its combination of culture and design, together with surrounding parks, forests and recreational attractions.
- L Strengths:
 - *Gateway* and upscale community.
 - Significant and accessible historic sites and districts.
 - High overall quality of life.
 - Available land and skilled workforce of commuters.
- L Weaknesses
 - Few local career job opportunities for young workers.
 - Increasing pass-through traffic.
 - Increasing population placing increased demands on community facilities, services, and infrastructure.
 - Commuting workers have less time to volunteer for community organizations.
 - Lack of parking in the Borough and seasonality of tourism inhibit year-round business development.
- L Opportunities
 - Workforce and quality of life attractive to clean industries.
 - Continued evolution of service center for area wide expanding population and tourists.
 - *Gateway* status enables more tourist, restaurant,

real estate and hospitality-related services.

L Threats:

- New residents often maintain *not in my backyard* attitude to any development.
- Rapid growth impacts ability to provide community facilities and services and threatens community character.
- Commercial growth of *big box* in Westfall Township demands more competitive small business operation.
- In-migration of higher income households is producing some gentrification.
- Lack of space in Planning Area may drive expanding County facilities to other parts of the County.

Demographics and Economic Base

- L The population in Pike County has historically been concentrated in the two boroughs in the County (Matamoras and Milford) situated along the Delaware River.
- L In more recent times, the higher density population and the population growth has shifted to the Townships in the County, most dramatically to Lehman, Dingman and Delaware Townships.
- L This population shift has contributed to many of the growth and development issues now facing the planning area and other municipalities in Pike County – loss of open land, traffic, increased numbers of school children, and demand for recreation, police protection and other public facilities and services.
- L With its many acres of open land, the Township holds more potential for population growth than the Borough.
- L Based on a conservative 10-year, 15% growth rate, the Township population would reach almost 1,600 by 2010 and over 1,700 by 2020.
- L Clearly, the Township would continue to be rural by Census definition, although many new lots and housing units will be required to meet the demands of the population.
- L Based on a 10-year, 5% growth rate, perhaps somewhat optimistic, the Borough population in

2010 would reach some 1,160 persons and increase to almost 1,200 in 2020, essentially the same number of residents as in 1960 and 1970.

- L Although the development potential in the Borough is very limited compared to the Township and other parts of the County, both municipalities can expect to see a continued high demand for housing.

Financial Analysis

- L In terms of revenue available for meeting general operating expenses, the real estate tax generates the most revenue in Milford Borough and Milford Township.
- L The realty transfer tax varies from year to year depending on the level of real estate sales, but accounts for significant revenue in the both the Township and Borough.
- L Road maintenance accounts for the highest proportion of spending in Milford Township and a significant proportion in Milford Borough.
- L In the case of the Borough, public safety, which includes police protection, is the highest spending category.
- L Given the fixed costs of local government and the range of facilities and services provided by the Borough, its per capita taxation, revenue, and expenditures were significantly higher than Milford Township and the other municipalities in the County.
- L As demand for facilities and services increases, Milford Borough will have a much more difficult time balancing its budget than most other Pike County municipalities given its limited potential for development increased assessed valuation.
- L Given its higher assessed valuation and lower millage, Milford Township has the greatest potential for additional tax revenues. The Township will certainly be able to meet its revenue needs withing its current tax structure for many years.
- L Owing largely to its relatively fixed real estate valuation, Milford Borough has reached the 30-

mill limit, a position shared by many mature, small boroughs in the Commonwealth. Increased costs of governance will obviously require the Borough to find additional revenue sources. pay for local government services.

Planning and Development in Contiguous Municipalities, Pike County and the Region

- L The update of the *Pike County Comprehensive Plan* is expected to be completed in the Summer of 2006.
- L Given that the *County Plan* sets goals which are similar to those of this *Milford Borough / Milford Township Comprehensive Plan* and will provide a broad framework for the future, no inconsistencies between the two plans are anticipated.
- L The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance, located in Pittston, Luzerne County, serves as a community and economic planning and development information source and funnel for grants and special projects for Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Lackawanna Counties, but has no municipally authorized regional planning power.
- L The three local municipalities in the County which adjoin the Milford Planning Area, Dingman Township, Shohola Township and Westfall Township, have each adopted comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.
- L Although the adjoining comprehensive plans vary in date, status of formal adoption, and content, all of the plans concentrate on land use issues and no significant inconsistencies are anticipated between those plans and this *Plan*.