



CITY OF MONESSEN

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

SPECIAL CONDITIONS REPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BLIGHT STRATEGY

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SPECIAL CONDITIONS REPORT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Economic development is defined as the “sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area.”¹ Such decisions by policy leaders may involve the development of personnel, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, public safety, and development guidelines. Above all, economic development should result in an improved quality of life for the citizens in the target area.

Economic development occurs most often in communities where certain factors are present. These include:

1. Location and transportation access.
2. Public services including roads, water, and sewer connections.
3. Market conditions that identify specific opportunities.
4. Land use regulations that facilitate and support sound development practices.

As part of this economic development study each of these factors was examined and specific recommendations for more effective economic development strategies are provided. The key findings and action strategies are provided for consideration in the following sections of this report.

Above all, economic development should result in an improved quality of life for the citizens in the target area.

¹ Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_development

MAP 1 – CITY OF MONESSEN AND SURROUNDING AREA



LOCATION

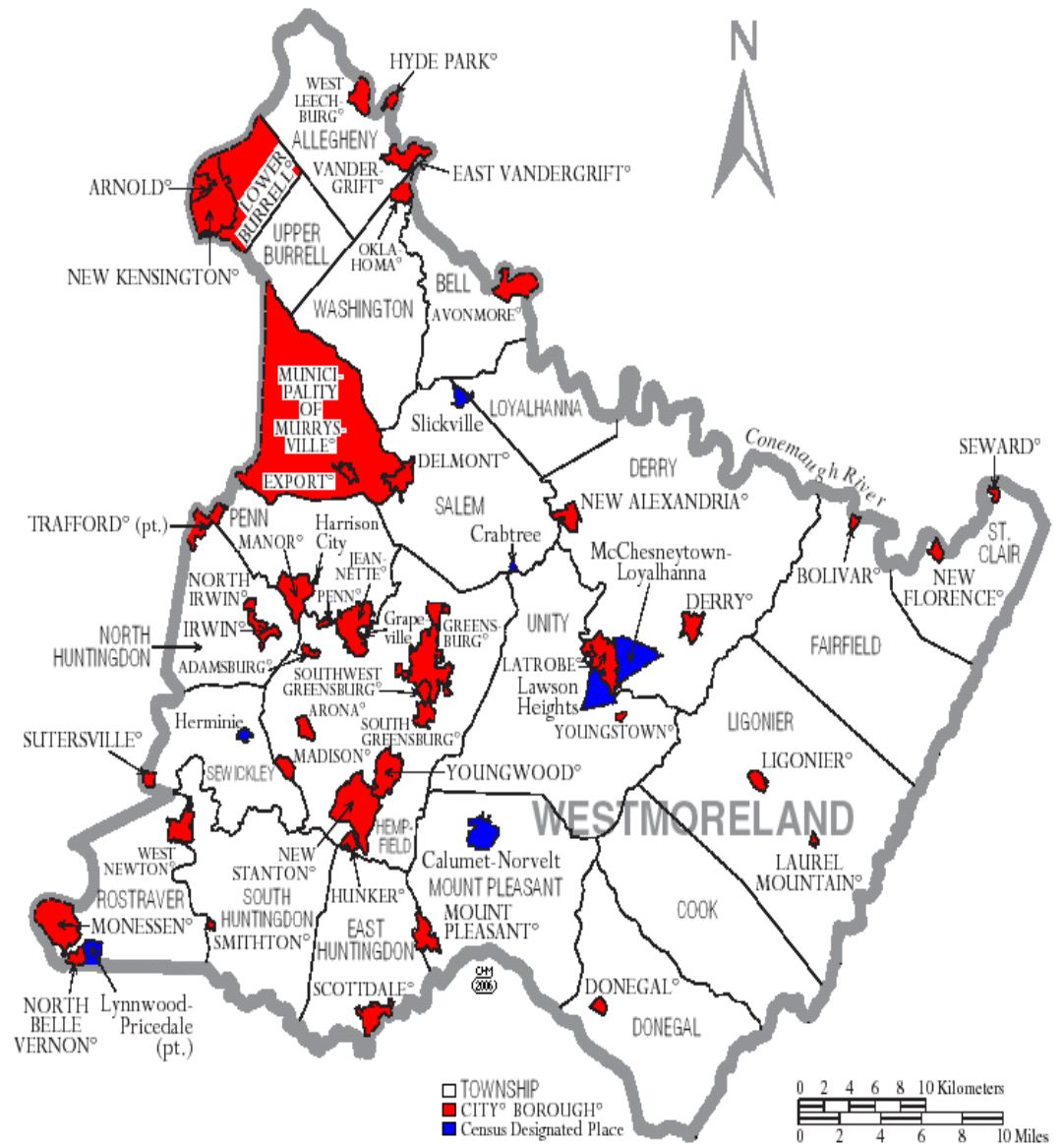
In real estate development, location is everything and Monessen has a very good location. The City of Monessen is located approximately 27 miles south of the City of Pittsburgh and has a total land area of 3.1 square miles. The City is located along the Monongahela River with direct access to the river at several locations. Located just off of the juncture where Interstate 70 and Route 43 meet, the City is easily accessible for automobile travel to employment centers Pittsburgh, Washington, and Uniontown. In fact, most residents report about a 25-minute commute to all employment locations.

Norfolk and Southern Railroad provide active rail service to the industrial establishments that are located along the Monongahela River.

One of the most important assets for the City is the Herman Mihalich Memorial River Launch. This boat marina and park provide one of the primary access areas for recreational use of the river. It was identified in the focus groups as one of the City's opportunities for community and economic development.



MAP 2 – WESTMORELAND COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES



PUBLIC SERVICES

MANAGEMENT

The City provides very good public services. The City Municipal Building serves as the primary source for economic development information. The Mayor, City Clerk, and Community Development Department are the contacts for development and construction activities. Hours of operation for the City Offices are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. A fee schedule for services is in place.

The Mayor and City Council work with the Community Development Department and the Redevelopment Authority to evaluate ideas and projects related to development and redevelopment opportunities for the City. Development and redevelopment are driven by the City staff and officials and the City controls many parcels of land that have been cleared for development through sheriff sales and demolitions. There are many more parcels that could be cleared for development but there has been no comprehensive redevelopment plan in the past.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The City operates its own police department with 10 full time and 8 part-time officers. The Monessen Police Department is a very busy department and the department statistics support this observation with about 9,000 calls per year. Of nine comparable communities in western Pennsylvania, only Duquesne and Farrell reported more violent crime than Monessen in 2015. Safety and low crime are important factors for supporting economic development in a community. A well-equipped and well-trained police department using community policing tactics is essential to the long term economic health and sustainability of the City.

The Monessen Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD) is an all-volunteer fire company with 40 active members that provide fire suppression, hazardous materials response, and rescue services to the Monessen area. MVFD services approximately 10 square miles of land area that includes residential, commercial, and industrial parcels and 25,000 residents from two fire stations. Station 81-1 houses 8 units that are in-service: 1 rescue/air, 1 ladder truck, 1 snorkel, 2 engines, 1 squad, 1 rescue boat, 1 6X6 Duece. Station 81-2, which is located on the hill-top, houses 4 units that are in-service: 1 special service, 1 TeleSquirt 55 foot, 1 rescue vehicle, and 1 engine. The fire service has an excellent reputation and response time.



PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE ENFORCEMENT

The City recently hired a part-time code enforcement officer to enforce the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) and local property nuisance regulations. Response to complaints is typically reactive and few have made it to the magistrate for further enforcement. There is almost no proactive code enforcement undertaken in the City. Notices are documented manually and are tracked in a notebook daily. At the end of the month a report is generated for the City Council that details the activities.

BUILDING INSPECTION

The City has opted into the PA Uniform Construction Code (UCC) and the building inspection is overseen and managed by the City Clerk under a contract with a private vendor. The code enforcement officer performs residential inspections and K-2 Engineering, a third-party independent contractor, provides all commercial inspection services, plan reviews, and any other blueprint or architectural review services. Since there is not much new construction in the City, the contracted services are a good option.



PARKS

The City parks are supported by street department employees who maintain and operate the nine (9) city parks. The parks each offer distinct park amenities with City Park being the largest and offering the most amenities. City Park offers a walking trail, ballfields, amphitheater, tennis courts, pavilions, passive open space, and play structures. The Mahalic Boat Launch, the most important park from an economic development perspective, is uniquely situated along the Monongahela River and has an attractive shelter and benches, a restroom facility, boat launch, and dock space. It provides the only public access to the riverfront but is somewhat disconnected from the neighborhoods and central business district. Signage and access to the Mihalic Park is not good and visitors might ever be aware of this recreation and leisure opportunity.

ROADS

The highway system that leads to and is directly adjacent to Monessen (including Interstates 70 and 43) is very good and the roadway system within the City is fully developed. The City crews maintain 47 miles of paved, brick, and concrete constructed roadways. Donner Street and Schoonmaker Street are the two main streets for the business district each designated as one-way streets and both are designated as Route 906 which is part of the state highway system. The City does not have a separate fund or a pavement management plan for addressing road improvements.

WATER AND SEWER UTILITIES

Sewer utilities are operated and maintained by the Mon Valley Sewage Authority (MVSA) which drains stormwater and treats sewage for 2,000 customers in Donora and 3,500 customers in Monessen. The Authority approved a significant rate increase in

2013 due to a mandatory multimillion-dollar long-term control plan project and the impending closure of the PolyOne plant in Donora. The Authority's minimum charge per quarter is \$114. Donora and Monessen own their respective sewer lines and impose a sewer line usage fee that is used to maintain and repair the sewage infrastructure. The long-term control plan could be a limiting factor for new development.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The City receives a direct allocation of Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG). The City's CDBG program funds have primarily been used for demolitions, road projects, sewer rehabilitation, and recreational programs. In recent years, the program funds have been used more for demolition and sewer rehabilitation and less on road projects.

The City has contracted services with Urban Design Ventures for oversight of the CDBG program. The Director consults them for legal compliance, application assistance, information gathering, and electronic submissions.

MONESSEN SCHOOL DISTRICT

The City of Monessen School District contains two buildings: the elementary center and the middle/high school campus. The present enrollment for the district is 1,120 students.

The elementary center is located at 1275 Rostraver Street next to Memorial Stadium. The building has twenty-three (23) classrooms, a computer lab, cafeteria, gym, large group instruction area, greenhouse, and four specialty rooms. The center houses grades K through 5 and programs include regular education, special education including resource room and gifted classes, remedial reading and math programs, and developmental kindergarten. All classrooms are equipped with computers for teacher and student use.

The middle/high school campus complex is located at 1245 State Road. The middle school (left wing of the building) has fourteen (14) classrooms accommodating students in grades six (6) through eight (8). This wing houses an auxiliary gym available for community use.

The high school (right wing of the building), grades nine (9) through twelve (12), consists of seventeen (17) classrooms that include laboratory classrooms for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

The School District is not a highly rated school district, ranking 523 out of 676 school districts in Pennsylvania based on the 2015-2016 performance scores. It ranked lower than Charleroi, Belle Vernon, and Frazier high schools. However, the scores increased in both 2015 and again in 2016 indicating an upward trend in educational proficiency.



MARKET CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

THE COMMERCIAL MARKET

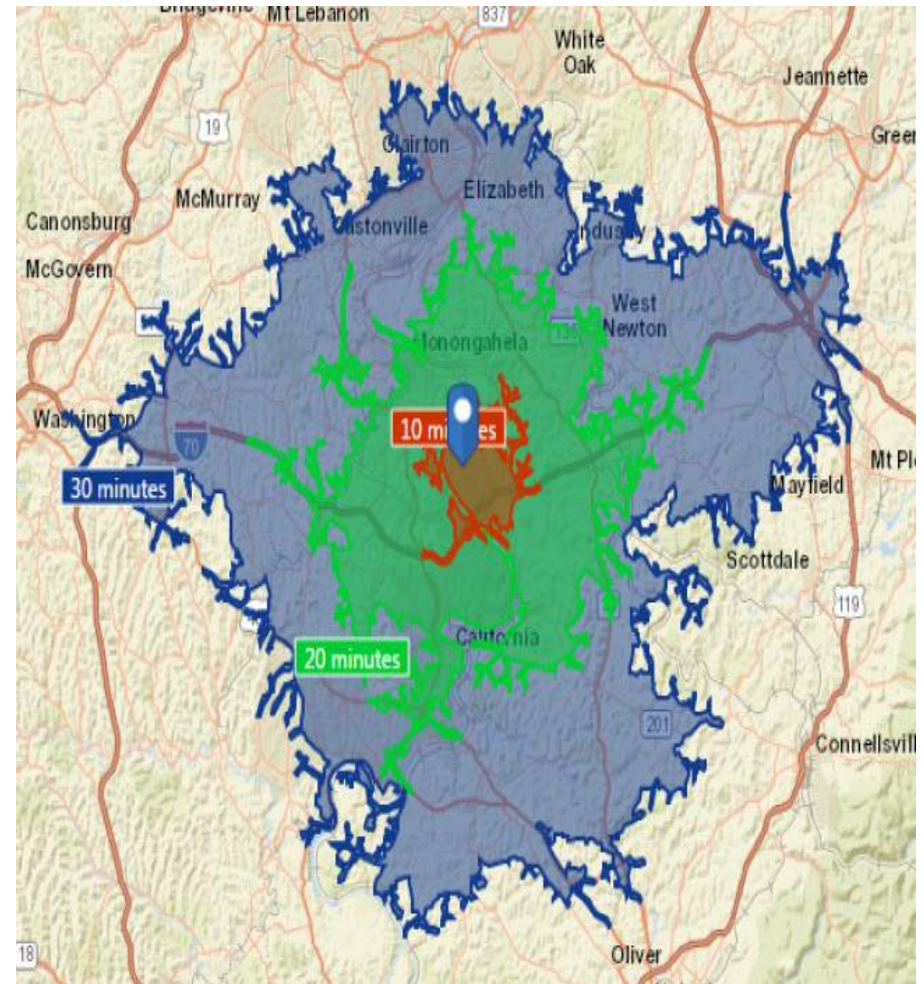
The EIP team conducted a market analysis to determine the highest and best commercial market potential. A market analysis includes a series of tools used to analyze current building uses, business mix, market area size, and economic and consumer data. It provides the foundation necessary to identify potential opportunities in different business and real estate sectors for the City.

To establish a geographic parameter for the market analysis, a Primary Market Area (PMA) has been defined as the borders of Monessen in addition to a 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive time from the geographic center point of the City. Drive times are an acceptable definition of market area and are considered an industry standard for market analysis. These drive times are a bit larger than the more frequently used drive times of 5-, 10-, and 15- minutes because of the more rural geography that surrounds the City. These drive times will be used throughout the market analysis to quantify population and competitive products for both the commercial and residential sectors.

TOP INDUSTRY SECTORS

The top industries for the City's targeted market areas (10-, 20-, and 30- minute drive times) were identified to examine the business mix of the commercial base and provide a useful snapshot of the types and number of establishments that are located within the PMA. Typically, businesses are categorized using a grouping system known as the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The NAICS divides businesses into defined categories based on the types of products the businesses sell or services they provide.

MAP 3 – PRIMARY MARKET AREA WITH DRIVE TIMES



The industry sector data was derived from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), which classifies all businesses and industry sectors using the NAICS. This data is compiled and updated annually by ESRI. Using this data source, the industry sectors are listed separately for each respective PMA. It is important to note that when classifying businesses using the NAICS classification system, each business is placed into only one category. The category used is based on the primary goods or services provided by the business.

All NAICS code descriptions can be found on the NAICS Website at www.naics.com.

The largest industry sector in the City is *Other Services* that consists of 20% of the total establishments within the City. According to NAICS, the *Other Services* category “comprises

establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided for elsewhere in the classification system. Establishments in this sector are primarily engaged in activities, such as equipment and machinery repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, grantmaking, advocacy, and providing dry cleaning and laundry services, personal care services, death care services, pet care services, photofinishing services, temporary parking services, and dating services.” (www.bls.gov).



The second largest sector in the City is *Retail Trade*, which has 42 businesses in the sector, or 14.5% of the total establishments within the City. *Retail Trade* includes those establishments that are, “engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise. The retailing process is the final step in the distribution of merchandise; retailers are, therefore, organized to sell merchandise in small quantities to the general public. This sector comprises two main types of retailers: store and nonstore retailers.” (www.bls.gov).

The *Retail Trade* category is a reflection of the City’s downtown business district. The City’s business district is primarily located along Donner Avenue and E. Schoonmaker Avenue. The *Other Services* sector is also the largest industry sector in the 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive times and *Retail Trade* is the second largest category in the 10-, 20-, 30-minute drive times.

TABLE 1 - MONESSEN CITY INDUSTRY SECTORS - 2016

INDUSTRY SECTOR	# OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS	% OF TOTAL ESTABLISHMENTS
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING & HUNTING	1	0.3%
MINING	1	0.3%
CONSTRUCTION	24	8.3%
MANUFACTURING	5	1.7%
WHOLESALE TRADE	16	5.5%
RETAIL TRADE	42	14.5%
TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING	2	0.7%
INFORMATION	6	2.1%
FINANCE & INSURANCE	20	6.9%
REAL ESTATE, RENTAL & LEASING	14	4.8%
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, & TECHNICAL SERVICES	9	3.1%
MGMT. OF COMPANIES & ENTERPRISES	1	0.3%
ADMIN. & SUPPORT & WASTE MGMT. & REMEDIATION	4	1.4%
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	5	1.7%
HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	34	11.8%
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, & RECREATION	2	0.7%
ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICES	17	5.9%
OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT PUBLIC ADMIN.)	58	20.1%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	22	7.6%
UNCLASSIFIED ESTABLISHMENTS	6	2.1%
TOTAL	289	100.0%
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI) BUSINESS ANALYST		

Services, Retail Trade, and Healthcare are the primary industry sectors in the City of Monessen. Construction, Finance and Insurance, and Public Administration are also important segments.

Services, Retail Trade, and Healthcare are the primary industry sectors in the **10-Minute Drive Time** for the City of Monessen. Construction, Finance and Insurance, and Accommodation and Food Services are also important segments.

TABLE 2 – 10-MINUTE DRIVE TIME MARKET AREA - 2016

AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING & HUNTING	2	0.2%
MINING	3	0.3%
UTILITIES	4	0.4%
CONSTRUCTION	66	7.2%
MANUFACTURING	29	3.2%
WHOLESALE TRADE	40	4.4%
RETAIL TRADE	137	15.0%
TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING	23	2.5%
INFORMATION	13	1.4%
FINANCE & INSURANCE	72	7.9%
REAL ESTATE, RENTAL & LEASING	39	4.3%
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, & TECHNICAL SERVICES	38	4.2%
MGMT. OF COMPANIES & ENTERPRISES	1	0.1%
ADMIN. & SUPPORT & WASTE MGMT. & REMEDIATION	16	1.8%
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	11	1.2%
HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	92	10.1%
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, & RECREATION	11	1.2%
ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICES	69	7.5%
OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT PUBLIC ADMIN.)	185	20.2%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	49	5.4%
UNCLASSIFIED ESTABLISHMENTS	14	1.5%
TOTAL	914	100.0%

TABLE 3 – 20-MINUTE DRIVE TIME MARKET AREA - 2016

INDUSTRY SECTOR	# OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS	% OF TOTAL ESTABLISHMENTS
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING & HUNTING	6	0.2%
MINING	7	0.3%
UTILITIES	17	0.6%
CONSTRUCTION	221	8.1%
MANUFACTURING	86	3.1%
WHOLESALE TRADE	102	3.7%
RETAIL TRADE	378	13.8%
TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING	82	3.0%
INFORMATION	31	1.1%
FINANCE & INSURANCE	239	8.7%
REAL ESTATE, RENTAL & LEASING	109	4.0%
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, & TECHNICAL SERVICES	131	4.8%
ADMIN. & SUPPORT & WASTE MGMT. & REMEDIATION	70	2.6%
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	53	1.9%
HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	258	9.4%
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, & RECREATION	40	1.5%
ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICES	194	7.1%
OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT PUBLIC ADMIN.)	519	18.9%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	145	5.3%
UNCLASSIFIED ESTABLISHMENTS	54	2.0%
TOTAL	2,743	100.0%

Services, Retail Trade, and Healthcare are the primary industry sectors in the **20-Minute Drive Time** for Monessen. Construction, Finance and Insurance, and Accommodation and Food Services are also important segments.

TABLE 4 – 30-MINUTE DRIVE TIME MARKET AREA - 2016

INDUSTRY SECTOR	# OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS	% OF TOTAL ESTABLISHMENTS
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING & HUNTING	29	0.5%
MINING	17	0.3%
UTILITIES	36	0.6%
CONSTRUCTION	559	9.5%
MANUFACTURING	239	4.1%
WHOLESALE TRADE	238	4.0%
RETAIL TRADE	786	13.3%
TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING	214	3.6%
INFORMATION	60	1.0%
FINANCE & INSURANCE	475	8.1%
REAL ESTATE, RENTAL & LEASING	200	3.4%
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, & TECHNICAL SERVICES	288	4.9%
ADMIN. & SUPPORT & WASTE MGMT. & REMEDIATION	171	2.9%
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	124	2.1%
HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	480	8.1%
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, & RECREATION	98	1.7%
ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICES	391	6.6%
OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT PUBLIC ADMIN.)	1,028	17.4%
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	332	5.6%
UNCLASSIFIED ESTABLISHMENTS	129	2.2%
TOTAL	5,900	100.0%

Services, Retail Trade, and Construction are the primary industry sectors in the **30-Minute Drive Time** for the City of Monessen. Healthcare, Finance and Insurance, Accommodation and Food Services are also important segments.



JOB PROJECTIONS BY TYPE

Jobs in Monessen are expected to increase from between 2010 and 2,040. The unemployment rate for March of 2017 for Westmoreland County was 5.5% which is slightly higher than that for Allegheny County which was 5%. Projections for new jobs in the future are shown in **Table 5**. These projections were produced by the Southwestern Planning Commission for communities in the 10-county service area. Overall, the City is expected to add 381 new jobs by 2040. The largest increases are expected to be in the service industry where nearly 200 new jobs are projected. There are some new manufacturing jobs projected because of the Monessen Riverfront Industrial Park. This opportunity is discussed in the industrial section of this report.

TABLE 5 - JOB PROJECTIONS BY TYPE

YEAR	RETAIL	MFG	SERVICES	OTHER	TOTAL
2010	237	5	1429	432	2103
2015	258	19	1527	504	2308
2020	269	14	1544	562	2389
2025	263	11	1533	573	2380
2030	250	9	1511	576	2346
2035	249	9	1541	595	2394
2040	246	9	1618	611	2484

SOURCE: SOUTHWEST PLANNING COMMISSION, WWW.SPCREGION.ORG,
REGIONAL DATA CENTER, DATA LIBRARY

THE DOUGLAS EDUCATION CENTER

One of the most important assets identified in focus group meetings is the Douglas Education Center (DEC) located at 130 Seventh Street. It was established in 1904 as a business and secretarial school by founder Warren Douglas. Current owner, Jeffrey D. Imbrescia, has owned the school and has been the CEO and President since 1989. Douglas School of Business was incorporated on January 31, 1977 and began doing business as Douglas Education Center on February 20, 2001.

Between 1989 and 1999 DEC offered degree programs in specialized business, business administration, and executive secretary. Graduates from these programs were primarily hired by businesses from around the Monongahela Valley. Seeing a need in the community for education in the medical fields, DEC added medical programs into the curricula in 1992.



In 1999 DEC made the decision to add art programs into the curricula and launched an Associate Degree in specialized degree programs for Graphic Design and Internet Web. The millennium saw continued expansion with the introduction of Tom Savini's *Special Make-Up Effects Program*, affiliated with George A. Romero, which moved DEC from a community school to a destination school. The Cosmetology Academy at Douglas Education Center opened in 2003 and in 2008 *The Factory Digital Filmmaking Program at Douglas* (currently named George A. Romero's Filmmaking Program) was added. Demands for trained laborers in the skilled trade industries prompted DEC to launch programs in 2013 and the *Commercial Driver's License Program* in 2014. Also, in 2014, DEC began offering distance learning through online course delivery specifically in its Allied Health programs.

With 267 students and 30 faculty, it has become a destination educational center and operates as a private for-profit institution. DEC owns nine education and student housing buildings and several surface parking lots. Over 110 years ago, DEC opened its doors, committed to serving its students and helping them achieve their educational and career goals. Today, generations of students later, that commitment remains DEC's top priority.

RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS SPENDING POTENTIAL INDEXES (SPI)

Understanding the spending patterns and the spending potential of the targeted customer base and market is important when planning an effective development strategy. It is important to determine how much retail spending can be captured in the market areas that surround Monessen. **Table 5** below provides an analysis of the Spending Potential Index (SPI) that reports the amount that consumers spend in specific retail markets in the City as well as the 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive time markets relative to a



national average of 100. For instance, if the SPI for the *Travel* sector in the local area is 50, it means that local households spend 50% less on travel expenditures than the average U.S. household. It should be noted that the consumer spending does not equate to the amount of revenue local businesses take in because consumers have the option of shopping at any number of retail locations.

Table 5 shows that for Monessen as well as the PMAs, **there are no industry sectors where consumers in the Monessen market areas are spending more than the national average.** Moreover, it appears that in Monessen the SPI numbers for all the categories are lower in every sector than for the same respective sectors in the 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive time market areas, which means residents in Monessen City, are spending less than the outlying areas. The sector with the highest SPI in Monessen was *Health Care* and the lowest sector was *Education*. The *Health Care* sector is also the highest SPI in the 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive times.

Several factors could be attributed to a lower than expected SPI number in Monessen than its surrounding PMAs. These could include, a lower household per-capita population as well as the presence of a larger, saturated market located just outside of the Monessen market areas where consumers are going to spend their retail dollars such as the nearby Rostraver Square commercial development and the Tri-County Plaza both located in North Belle Vernon.

TABLE 6 - ESTIMATED MARKET SPENDING POTENTIAL (RESIDENTIAL CONSUMER SPENDING)

SECTOR	CITY OF MONESSEN		10-MINUTE DRIVE TIME*		20-MINUTE DRIVE TIME*		30-MINUTE DRIVE TIME*	
	SPI	HOUSEHOLD SPENDING	SPI	HOUSEHOLD SPENDING	SPI	HOUSEHOLD SPENDING	SPI	HOUSEHOLD SPENDING
APPAREL & SERVICES	61	\$4,124,591	61	\$10,646,856	69	\$38,438,917	73	\$98,663,051
EDUCATION	55	\$2,616,509	55	\$6,727,269	65	\$25,472,184	68	\$64,536,198
ENTERTAINMENT/REC.	65	\$6,385,719	65	\$16,509,608	74	\$59,010,332	77	\$152,045,799
FOOD AT HOME	68	\$11,433,386	69	\$29,597,701	76	\$104,411,132	79	\$266,592,193
FOOD AWAY FROM HOME	62	\$6,510,569	63	\$16,816,132	71	\$60,520,655	74	\$155,194,219
HEALTH CARE	70	\$12,510,493	71	\$32,369,201	79	\$114,859,488	83	\$296,715,062
HH FURNISHINGS & EQUIP.	62	\$3,732,789	63	\$9,623,913	71	\$34,701,885	75	\$89,631,341
PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS & SERVICES	62	\$1,530,539	62	\$3,954,202	71	\$14,224,662	75	\$36,862,442
SHELTER	59	\$31,073,076	59	\$79,919,506	67	\$288,492,096	71	\$742,451,681
SUPPORT PAYMENTS/CASH CONTRIBUTIONS/GIFTS IN KIND	67	\$5,233,899	67	\$13,493,006	76	\$48,369,024	80	\$125,495,898
TRAVEL	58	\$3,630,326	58	\$9,347,701	67	\$34,398,201	72	\$90,103,284
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS	67	\$2,358,287	68	\$6,106,538	76	\$21,711,199	80	\$55,758,595

SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI) BUSINESS ANALYST2

*SPI= SPENDING POTENTIAL INDEX

**10-, 20- AND 30- MINUTE DRIVE TIMES ARE BASED ON DONUTS AND ARE NOT CUMULATIVE SMALLER DRIVE TIMES

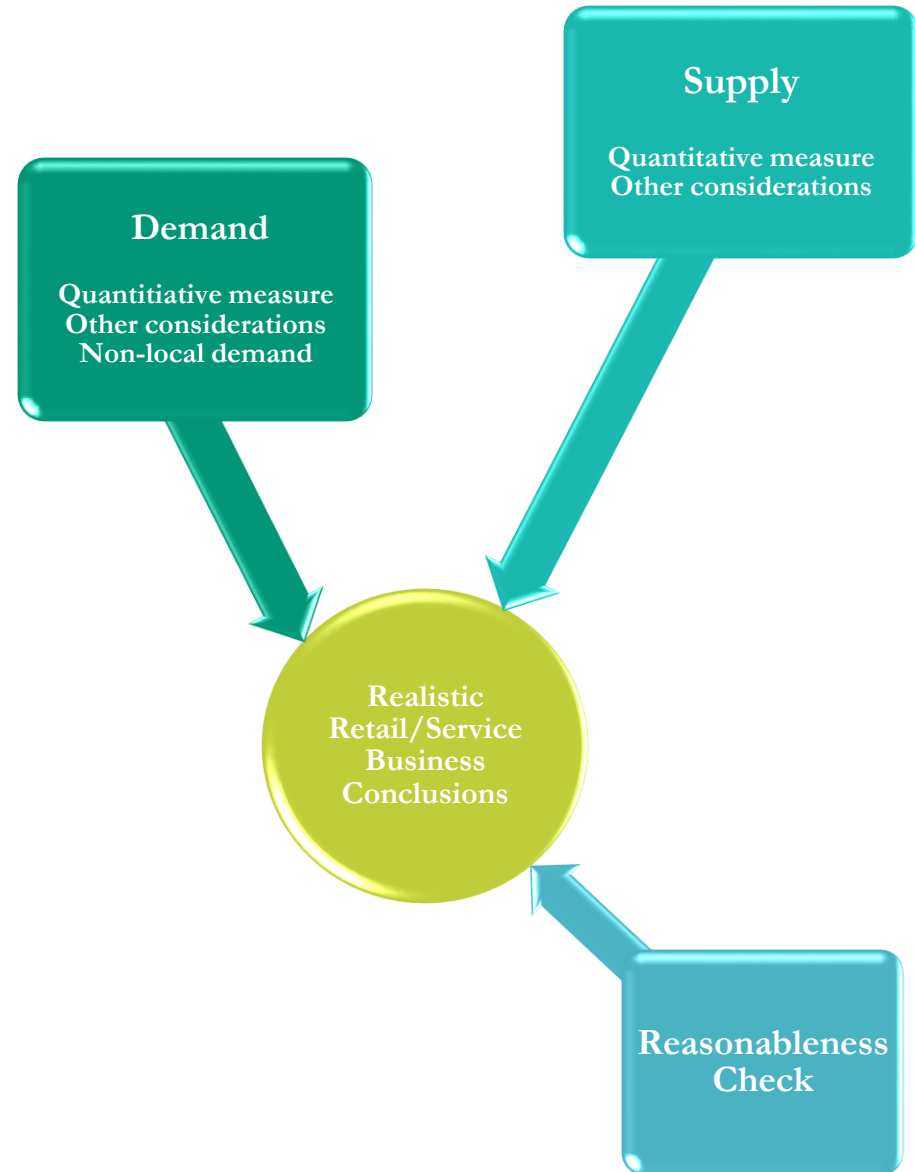
RETAIL AND DINING GAP ANALYSIS

Another method to help determine potential retail opportunities for the Monessen market area is performing a retail surplus/leakage analysis or what is frequently referred to as a “gap analysis” or a “supply and demand analysis.” The retail gap analysis is an effective tool for identifying retail and service needs in a community by examining the quantitative aspect of the community’s retail opportunities. It is a guide to understanding retail opportunities but it is not an analysis that reveals absolute or unconditional opportunities. The surplus/leakage index is generated by dividing the community’s actual sales by the community’s sales potential for a specific industry sector that is classified using the NAICS classification system. Among the industry sectors, 27 sub-industry groups make up a larger group called the *Retail Trade* sector and four other sub-industry groups make up the larger *Food and Drink* sector.

Performing the retail surplus/leakage analysis can aid Monessen City in the following ways. It can:

- Indicate how well the retail needs of residents in each market area are being met
- Uncover unmet demand and possible opportunities
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local retail sector
- Measure the difference between actual and potential retail sales

A **retail leakage** (an index more than 1.0) means that residents are spending more for products than what the local businesses are providing. Retail leakages suggest that there is an unmet demand for a particular good or service in that particular industry sector. A leakage also suggests that the community may support additional square feet of store space for that type of business or



industry sector. Identifying significant leakages can be an excellent tool to use in presenting a case for attracting private investment in that sector.

A **retail surplus** (an index less than 1.0) means that the community's businesses in a particular industry sector are capturing the local market spending as well as attracting non-local shoppers and consumers.

The surplus/leakage factor presents a snapshot of retail opportunity for Monessen City. While the analysis serves as a guide to opportunity, or the lack thereof, there will be instances when leakages do not translate into opportunity and when surpluses do not mean that a community cannot support additional businesses in that sector. There is no expectation that the City can capture the sales potential within the market area. However, it should raise the question as to whether the leaked sales could be captured within the market area and if that capture rate is enough to attract additional new retailers.

MONESSEN MARKET AREA

There are an estimated 3,384 households in Monessen and the median household income over the past 12 months is \$34,362 (www.spcregion.org). Monessen has a total of 41 *Retail Trade* businesses and 19 *Food & Drink* businesses. The total retail potential is \$87,951,636 (demand) and the total retail sales are \$51,372,700 (supply), resulting in a total leakage factor of 26.3 meaning that the consumers are spending more than what the local businesses are capturing. **Table 7** provides the supporting calculation for this observation.

TABLE 7 – RETAIL AND DINING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

INDUSTRY SUMMARY	RETAIL POTENTIAL (DEMAND)	RETAIL SALES (SUPPLY)	RETAIL GAP	LEAKAGE (+) / SURPLUS (-) FACTOR	# OF BUSINESSES
TOTAL RETAIL TRADE	\$80,382,664	\$47,796,078	\$32,586,586	25.4	41
TOTAL FOOD & DRINK	\$7,568,972	\$3,576,622	\$3,992,350	35.8	19
TOTAL RETAIL TRADE AND FOOD & DRINK	\$87,951,636	\$51,372,700	\$36,578,936	26.3	60
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI) BUSINESS ANALYST					

In reviewing the 27 NAICS industry sectors for the City, the overall *Retail Trade & Food & Drink* market sectors have some large leakages in different sectors. This means that residents in the City are spending more in the respective industry sector than what the Monessen market is capturing. This could mean there is an unmet need in the City and that there is the potential to attract businesses in those specific sectors that have large leakages. There are several sectors that have leakages of 100, which means there are no businesses within the City where residents are spending money in that sector. These sectors include *Motor Vehicle Dealers; Auto Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores; Specialty Food Stores; Shoe Stores; Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods Stores; Department Stores; Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores; Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Businesses; Vending Machine Operators; and Direct Selling Establishments*. It should be noted there may be sectors that are showing a large leakage, but it may not translate into a “win” for the City because of the presence of those same businesses immediately outside the market that are already attracting those consumers. For example, the City has a leakage of 100 in *Auto Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores* which means that none of those dollars are being spent within the City; however, the City probably will not be able to attract any businesses in this sector because Advanced Auto Parts and NAPA Auto Parts are already present just outside the City in nearby Rostraver Square. As a result, there may not be a need for an auto parts or a tire store to come into the City.

There are three industry sectors where the City is experiencing a surplus in spending. These include *Lawn and Garden Equipment and Supplies Stores; Gasoline Stations; and Special Food Services*. These are sectors where the City appears to be attracting outside consumers to specific industries within the City. For example, the City has a surplus (-56.3) for *Gasoline Stations*. This is most likely a result of easy access gas stations in the City that include Sunoco on 10th Street and Exxon on Schoonmaker Avenue. These businesses are attracting consumers into the City to spend consumer dollars in that specific industry sector. **Figure 2** provides a complete overview of surpluses and leakages.

FIGURE 1 – MARKET FACTORS



FIGURE 2 - SURPLUS/LEAKAGE FACTOR



TABLE 8 - LEAKAGE/SURPLUS FACTOR BY INDUSTRY GROUP - MONESSEN CITY

INDUSTRY GROUP	DEMAND (RETAIL POTENTIAL)	SUPPLY (RETAIL SALES)	RETAIL LEAKAGE/SURPLUS	LEAKAGE/SURPLUS FACTOR	# OF BUSINESSES
Automobile Dealers	\$15,707,836	\$4,280,095	\$11,427,741	57.2	3
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$2,006,899	\$0	\$2,006,899	100.0	0
Auto Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores	\$1,016,430	\$0	\$1,016,430	100.0	0
Furniture Stores	\$1,374,056	\$496,017	\$878,039	47.0	1
Home Furnishing Stores	\$886,975	\$504,985	\$381,990	27.4	1
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$3,935,598	\$635,013	\$3,300,585	72.2	2
Buildings Material and Supplies Dealers	\$3,217,548	\$981,092	\$2,236,456	53.3	2
Lawn and Garden Equipment and Supplies Stores	\$560,921	\$651,912	(\$90,991)	-7.5	1
Grocery Stores	\$13,825,367	\$12,129,630	\$1,695,737	6.5	4
Specialty Food Stores	\$976,089	\$0	\$976,089	100.0	0
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	\$1,248,429	\$210,510	\$1,037,919	71.1	1
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$3,832,694	\$2,733,014	\$1,099,680	16.7	2
Gasoline Stations	\$5,755,092	\$20,603,701	(\$14,848,609)	-56.3	6
Clothing Stores	\$2,681,685	\$801,126	\$1,880,559	54.0	3
Shoe Stores	\$565,967	\$0	\$565,967	100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods Stores	\$411,561	\$0	\$411,561	100.0	0
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrumental Stores	\$1,980,248	\$347,844	\$1,632,404	70.1	2
Book, Periodical, and Music Stores	\$450,155	\$305,927	\$144,228	19.1	2
Department Stores	\$9,889,791	\$0	\$9,889,791	100.0	0
Other General Merchandise	\$3,015,706	\$1,270,813	\$1,744,893	40.7	2
Florists	\$190,903	\$149,772	\$41,131	12.1	1

TABLE 8 - LEAKAGE/SURPLUS FACTOR BY INDUSTRY GROUP - MONESSEN CITY (CONTINUED)

INDUSTRY GROUP	DEMAND (RETAIL POTENTIAL)	SUPPLY (RETAIL SALES)	RETAIL LEAKAGE/SURPLUS	LEAKAGE/SURPLUS FACTOR	# OF BUSINESSES
Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores	\$750,843	\$0	\$750,843	100.0	0
Used Merchandise Stores	\$269,092	\$214,195	\$54,897	11.4	3
Other Misc. Store Retailers	\$3,032,258	\$1,480,432	\$1,551,826	34.4	5
Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses	\$2,159,024	\$0	\$2,159,024	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	\$83,242	\$0	\$83,242	100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	\$558,255	\$0	\$558,255	100.0	0
Full-Service Restaurants	\$3,993,989	\$2,909,538	\$1,084,451	15.7	14
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$3,051,247	\$421,782	\$2,629,465	75.7	3
Special Food Services	\$162,276	\$209,698	(\$47,422)	-12.7	1
Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	\$361,460	\$35,604	\$325,856	82.1	1
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI) BUSINESS ANALYST					

ESRI's Market Potential database measures the likely demand for a product or service in an area. The database includes an expected number of consumers and a Market Potential Index (MPI) for each product or service. An MPI compares the demand for a specific product or service in an area with the national demand for that product or service. The MPI values at the US level are 100, representing overall demand. A value of more than 100 represents higher demand, and a value of less than 100 represents lower demand. For example, an index of 120 implies that demand in the area is likely to be 20 percent higher than the US average; an index of 85 implies a demand that is 15 percent lower. (ESRI website, www.esri.com/library)

RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX

Another measure that can be used to analyze consumer spending and determine the overall market potential of a specific geographic area or drive time market area is the Market Potential Index (MPI). The MPI measures the probability or likelihood that adults within a specific market area will exhibit particular consumer behavior or purchasing patterns. An MPI number of 100 represents the U.S. average. There are a number of different categories where consumers in Monessen City exhibit a significantly higher MPI than the national average. These are consumer behaviors that the City should consider when thinking about attracting new businesses to the area.

TABLE 9 - RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX RESULTS

	MONESSEN CITY		10-MINUTE DRIVE TIME*		20-MINUTE DRIVE TIME*		30-MINUTE DRIVE TIME*	
PRODUCT/CONSUMER BEHAVIOR	% OF ADULTS	MPI	% OF ADULTS	MPI	% OF ADULTS	MPI	% OF ADULTS	MPI
One cell phone in household	38.7%	120	38.8%	121	37.1%	116	36.2%	113
Bought cigarettes at convenience store in the last 30 days	18.3%	146	18.4%	147	16.7%	133	16.1%	129
Bought gas at convenience store in the last 30 days	41.0%	124	41.3%	125	42.1%	127	41.3%	125
Spent \$100 at convenience store in last 30 days	28.6%	125	29.2%	127	28.7%	125	28.4%	124
Buying American is important to me	49.0%	116	49.2%	116	48.7%	115	49.3%	116
Read daily newspaper (paper version)	31.6%	121	31.5%	121	30.8%	118	31.1%	119
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI) BUSINESS ANALYST								
*10-, 20- AND 30- MINUTE DRIVE TIMES ARE BASED ON DONUTS AND ARE NOT CUMULATIVE SMALLER DRIVE TIMES								

An observation, from looking at the consumer activity in **Table 9**, is that those behaviors typically correlate to a demographic group that spends money at convenience stores and gas stations. This could be a result of having an existing gas station and convenience store in the City or that there is a lack of options for retailers that may otherwise provide items that convenience stores carry. For example, some of the largest sectors are *Bought Gas at Convenience Store in the last 30 days* and *Spend at convenience store in last 30 days: \$100+* of which the City sees an MPI of 124 & 125 respectively in these two categories.

Monessen has an MPI of 120 for those households that have one cellphone – this means that they have 120% of the median for this consumer behavior. This could bode well for the recruitment of wireless retailers who could expand or relocate a store into the City, such as Verizon, AT&T, or Cricket Wireless. A complete Spending Potential Index report for the City of Monesson is provided in Appendix G.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

Another market assessment tool is the *Community Tapestry Segmentation*, provided by ESRI, which classifies U.S. neighborhoods into 65 segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic variables such as age, income, home value, occupation, household type, education, and other consumer behavior characteristics. Segmentation systems operate on the theory that people with similar tastes, lifestyles, and behaviors seek others with the same tastes. These behaviors can be measured, predicted, and targeted. Community Tapestry combines the “who” of lifestyle demography with the “where” of local neighborhood geography to create a model of various lifestyle classifications, or segments, of actual neighborhoods with addresses – district behavioral market segments.² Understanding the lifestyle and behavior of households in the trade area is just as important as understanding their basic demographic profile and buying power.

In Monessen, there are five major tapestry segments that are identified, the largest of which is *Heartland Communities* with approximately 34.5% of households falling into this category. This tapestry segment consists of households of persons with a median age of 41.5. This segment is typically semirural and semiretired with older householders who are homeowners – many of whom have paid off their mortgages. The median household income in this group is \$39,000. This group enjoys a routine daily life and likes to support their community. They often enjoy country music and outdoor activities that include motorcycling, hunting, and fishing. This segment is also found in the 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive time markets. A complete profile of this segment is contained in **Appendix A**.

The second tapestry segment found in Monessen City is *Small Town Simplicity* consisting of approximately 27.2% of the households. In addition to Monessen City, this segment type is only found in the 10-minute drive time. This segment generally consists of younger families and senior households. The median age is 40.0 and the median household income is \$27,000. This segment has a larger-than-normal unemployment rate at 11.9% and approximately 65% of residents have a high school diploma and some college. Residents are typically community-oriented and rely on television and newspapers to stay informed. They are price conscious and shop with coupons, but also rely on convenience items. They enjoy a semi-rural lifestyle that can include ATVs, vegetable gardens, hunting, and fishing. With a larger senior population found in this segment, residents often visit doctors and health practitioners regularly. A complete profile of this segment is contained in **Appendix B**.

The third largest tapestry segment found in Monessen City is *Midlife Constants* consisting of 18.1% of residents. This group is also found in the 10-, 20-, and 30-minute drive times. This group generally consists of residents who are seniors or those approaching retirement ages. This group has a median age of 45.9 and a median household income of \$48,000. Most residents in this group are married and live in older homes that they own. This group prefers more practical automobiles such as SUVs and trucks. They are active in the community and are involved in groups such as local church organizations, fraternal orders, veterans’ clubs, and



² Environmental Systems Research Institute, <http://www.esri.com/>

charitable organizations. They also enjoy home projects such as remodeling and gardening. They enjoy movies at home, reading, fishing, and listening to country music. A complete profile of this segment is contained in **Appendix C**.

The fourth tapestry segment that is found in Monessen City is *Traditional Living* consisting of 10.3% of the City's population. This is a younger demographic group with a median age of 34.8 and a median household income of \$37,000. These residents typically live in a low-density area, with concentrations found in the Midwest. It consists mostly of married-couples and singles. Top sectors of employment for this group include manufacturing, healthcare, and retail trade. This group shops at discount retailer such a Wal-Mart and often utilize convenience stores. This group typically carries credit card balances and has student loans. They often visit quick-service restaurants and enjoy outdoor activities such as camping. A complete profile of this segment is contained in **Appendix D**.

The City's fifth tapestry segment is *Modest Income Homes*. This segment has a median age of 36.1 and a median household income of \$22,000. Over half the homes in this group are renter occupied with an average rent lower than the U.S. average. Labor force participation is only 50% - with unemployment at more than double the U.S. rate. This group is unlikely to own a credit card and to make ends meet, consumers shop at large warehouse or low-cost retailers. A complete profile of this segment is contained in **Appendix E**. The Community Tapestry analysis provides insight into the diversity and possibilities that are available for developing a strategy that includes many opportunities for a wide variety of interests, needs, and preferences of consumers in the market area.

TABLE 10 - TAPESTRY SEGMENTS FOUND IN MONESSEN MARKET AREA

MONESSEN CITY		10-MINUTE DRIVE TIME		20-MINUTE DRIVE TIME		30-MINUTE DRIVE TIME		U.S. HOUSEHOLDS VS. MONESSEN CITY	
TOP TAPESTRY SEGMENTS	PERCENT	TOP TAPESTRY SEGMENTS	PERCENT	TOP TAPESTRY SEGMENTS	PERCENT	TOP TAPESTRY SEGMENTS	PERCENT	TOP TAPESTRY SEGMENTS	PERCENT
Heartland Communities	34.5%	Heartland Communities	38.6%	Heartland Communities	28.4%	Heartland Communities	24.6%	Heartland Communities	2.4%
Small Town Simplicity	27.2%	Small Town Simplicity	29.3%	Small Town Simplicity	21.3%	Small Town Simplicity	16.3%	Small Town Simplicity	1.9%
Midlife Constants	18.1%	Midlife Constants	15.4%	Midlife Constants	18.5%	Midlife Constants	15.0%	Midlife Constants	2.5%
Traditional Living	10.3%	Hardscrabble Road	5.7%	Salt of the Earth	11.5%	Salt of the Earth	12.8%	Traditional Living	2.0%
Modest Income Homes	9.9%	Traditional Living	4.0%	College Towns	3.7%	Comfortable Empty Nester	8.2%	Modest Income Homes	1.3%

COMPETING RETAIL SHOPPING AREAS

There are two significant retail shopping areas within the primary market area. These are Tri-County Plaza and Rostraver Square both in North Belle Vernon with a combination of 220,000 total square feet of gross leasable retail area within the 10-Minute Drive Time market area.

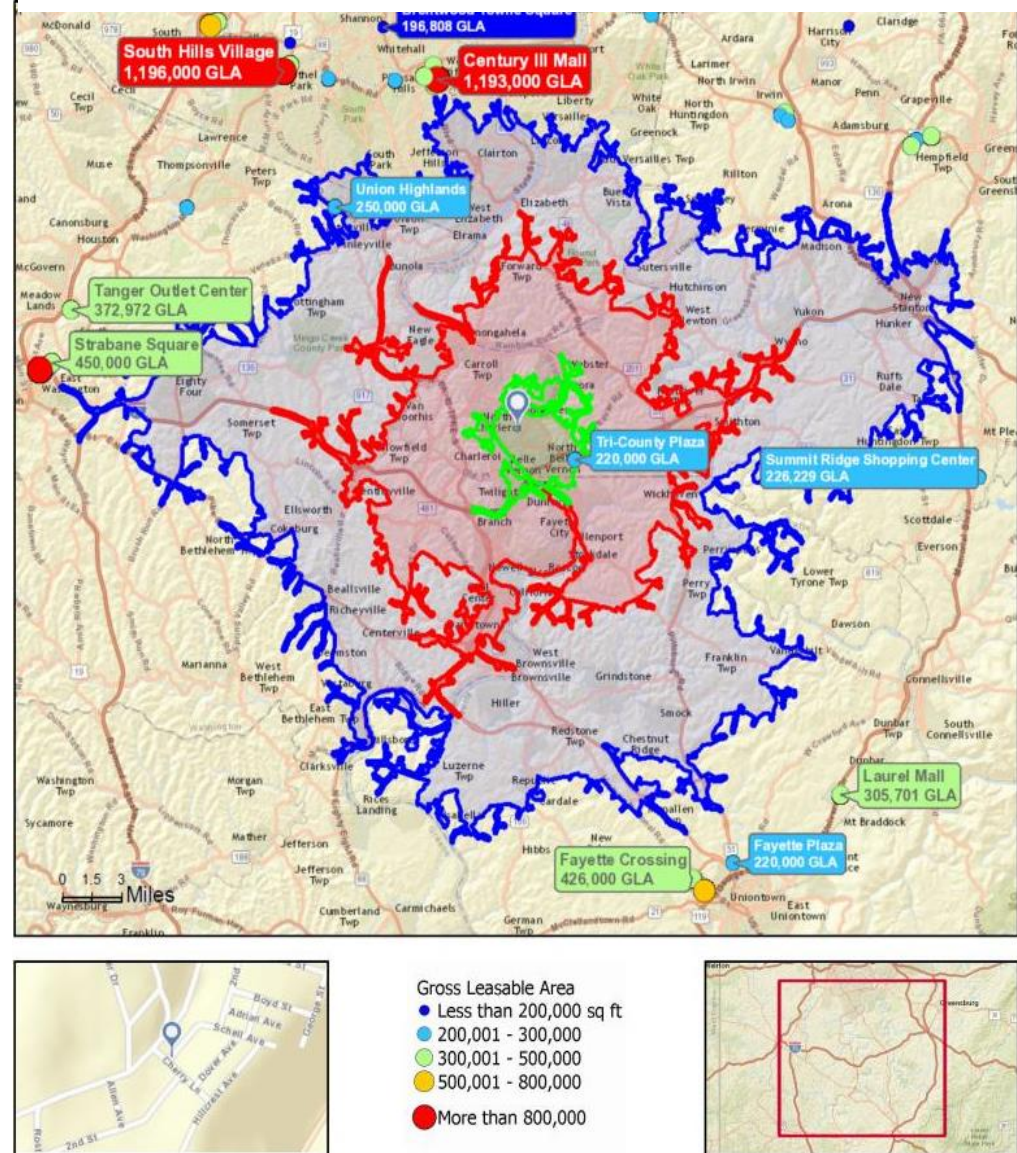


Another significant retail shopping area at Summit Ridge Shopping Center in Mt. Pleasant is just outside the 30-Minute Drive Time market area.

Major shopping malls, South Hills Village and Century III, with over 1 million square feet of retail space each, are well outside of the market area. Tanger Outlets and the shopping areas in Strabane Square, with about 400,000 square feet of retail shopping are also outside of the Monessen market area.

The current lack of shopping and dining opportunities in the region may provide retail and dining opportunities for Monessen because current demands are not being addressed within the primary market area.

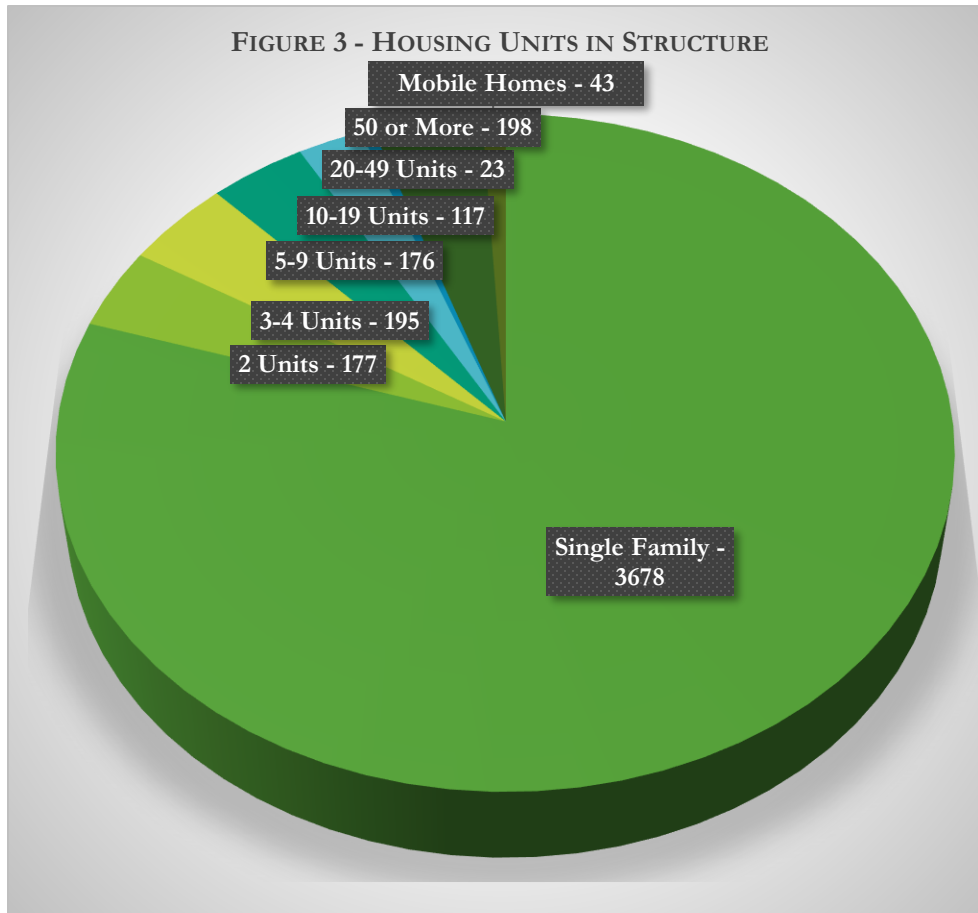
MAP 4 – COMPETING RETAIL SHOPPING IN THE PRIMARY MARKET AREA



THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET

HOUSING PROFILE

According to the American Community Survey (2010-2014), the City has 4,607 housing units, 80% of which are single family homes. There are 886 multi-family units and 43 mobile homes. **Figure 3** provides a breakdown of the housing units in the City.



SOURCE: 2015 ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES,
SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION, DATA
SERVICES, SPCREGION.ORG

About 17% of the City's 4,607 housing units are vacant as compared to the national average which is 10.9%. **Figure 4** provides a profile of housing vacancy rates in the City according to the most recent ACS. Some of the vacant units are not permanently vacant but are for sale or for rent. However, the high percentage of vacant properties is alarming and should be the subject of additional research to identify the factors that have led to this condition. High vacancy rates tend to drive down market prices.

The largest group of homeowners (about 31%) moved into the City between 2000 and 2009 but most residents have resided in the City for more than 20 years. **Table 11** provides a breakdown of when homeowners moved into their current housing unit and how long they have lived in the unit. About 19% of all residents moved into their current housing unit in 2010 or later. About 50% of residents have lived in their current homes for over 20 years.

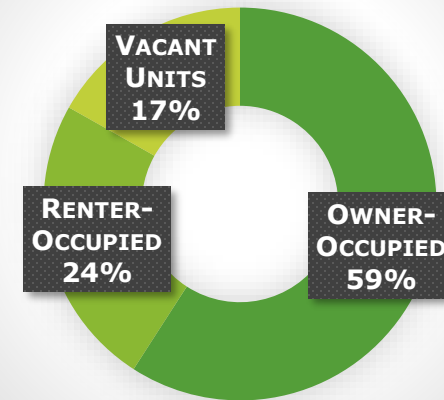
TABLE 11 - TENURE OF RESIDENCY OF HOUSEHOLDERS

Year Moved In	# of Householders	% of Householders
2010 or Later	705	19.23%
2000 - 2009	1149	31.33%
1990 - 1999	560	15.27%
1980 - 1989	191	5.21%
1970 - 1979	310	8.45%
1969 or Earlier	752	20.51%
Total Occupied Units	3667	100.00%

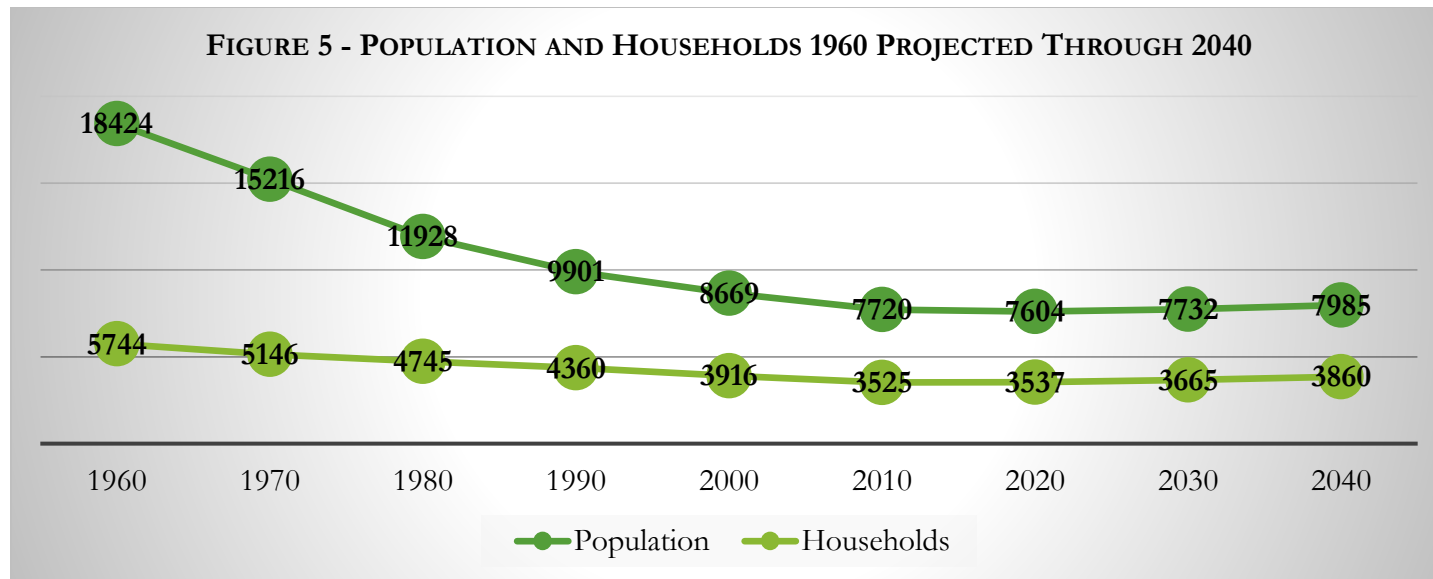
SOURCE: 2015 ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION, DATA SERVICES, SPCREGION.ORG

The total number of households in the City decreased in every decade since 1960 as shown in **Figure 5**. According to the latest projections from SPC, the households and population of the City are projected to increase slightly in the next three decades through 2040. This is a positive trend since it provides additional residents and consumers for participating in economic activity.

FIGURE 4 - HOUSING OCCUPANCY RATES



There have been 54 new housing units constructed in the City since 2000.



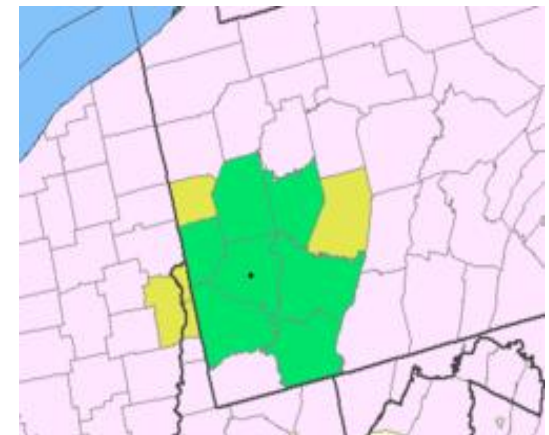
SOURCE: 2015 ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION, DATA SERVICES, SPCREGION.ORG

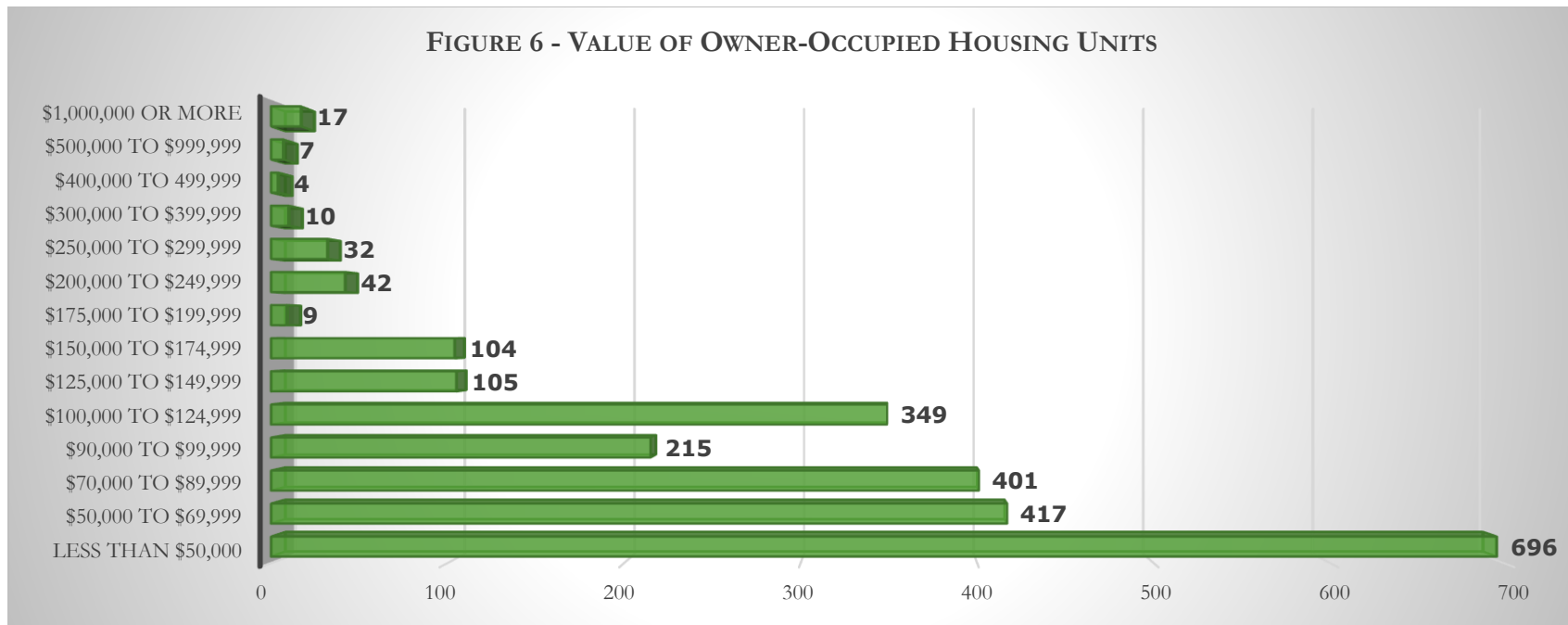
Housing Values

Monessen is part of the Pittsburgh Metropolitan housing market for purposes of national reporting. This includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, and parts of Westmoreland and Washington counties. The forecast for home values in the Pittsburgh Metro area is very good – the average value in August of 2016 was estimated to be \$126,500 and to increase at a rate of 1.9% annually. This is slightly lower than the national average rate of increase of 2.2%.

The median home value in Westmoreland County is \$128,300, while the average housing sale in Monessen is \$77,700. Westmoreland County home values have gone up 4.0% over the past year and Zillow predicts they will rise 2.9% within the next year. The median price of homes currently listed in Westmoreland County is \$134,700. The median rent price in Westmoreland County is \$800, which is lower than the Pittsburgh Metro median of \$1,200. **Figure 6** provides an overview of the value of owner-occupied housing units in the City.

MAP 5 – PITTSBURGH METROPOLITAN HOUSING AREA





SOURCE: 2015 ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION, DATA SERVICES, SPCREGION.ORG

A sample of recent home sales in Monessen, PA (zip code 15062) is shown below:

- 516 DELAWARE ST: \$ 33,070 ON 2014-09-02 (RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY)
- 38 PENNSYLVANIA BLVD: \$ 84,000 ON 2014-08-25 (RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY)
- 393 RIDGE AVE: \$ 95,000 ON 2014-08-25 (RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY)
- 391 HELEN AVE: \$115,000 ON 2014-08-22 (RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY)
- 1231 REEVES AVE: \$ 57,200 ON 2014-08-19 (RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY)
- 86 PENNSYLVANIA BLVD: \$ 89,000 ON 2014-08-18 (RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY)
- 15 JACKSON DR: \$ 67,900 ON 2014-06-20 (RESIDENTIAL - SINGLE FAMILY)

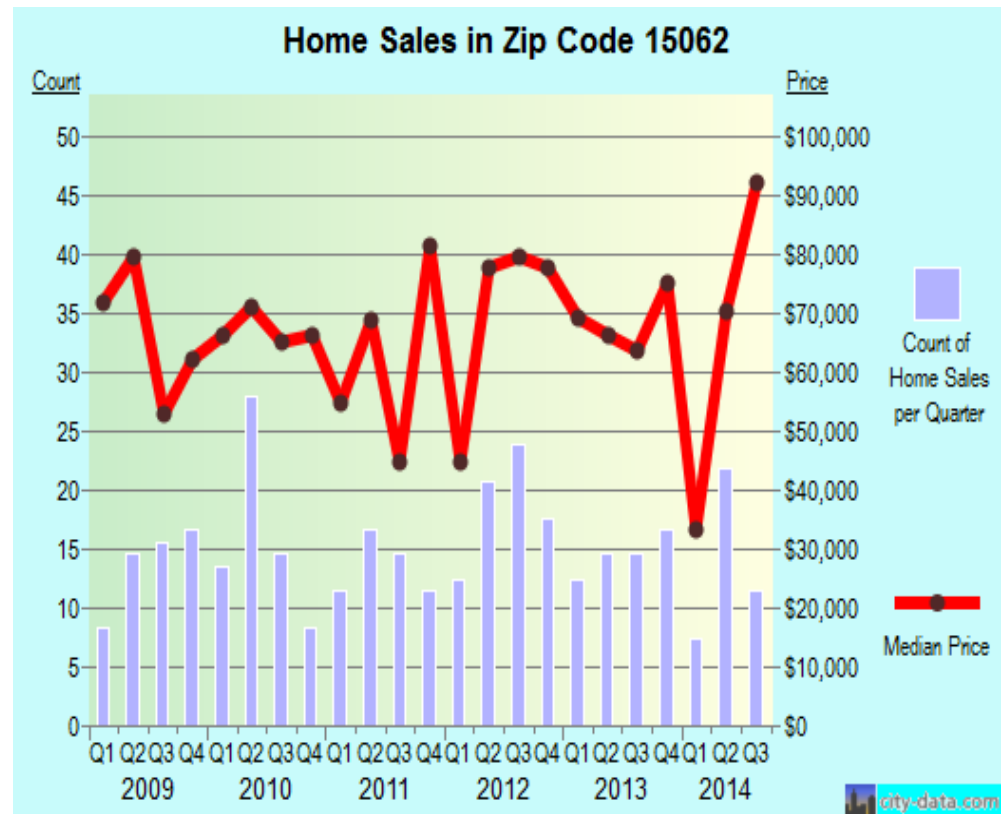
The history of single-family new housing construction building permits is shown in **Table 12**:

TABLE 12 - SINGLE FAMILY NEW CONSTRUCTION BUILDING PERMITS

YEAR	# BUILDINGS	AVERAGE COST
1997	2	77,000
1998	1	78,000
1999	1	78,000
2000	4	83,800
2001	10	110,000
2002	2	246,700
2003	2	165,000
2004	3	156,700
2005	1	100,000
2007	6	142,500
2008	2	128,500
2012	1	100,000
2014	1	241,400

SOURCE: CITY- DATA [HTTP://WWW.CITY-DATA.COM/CITY/MONESSEN-PENNSYLVANIA.HTML](http://www.city-data.com/city/monessen-pennsylvania.html)

FIGURE 7 – HOME SALES 2009 - 2014



From a review of the building permits issued for new construction over the past 10 years, it is obvious that the average cost of housing sales for new construction has tripled in cost. Unfortunately, there have not been any new housing starts for the past 2 years. MVI is working in the Monessen area to address market priced housing needs for addressing housing needs for the middle-income residents who want to purchase homes in the City.

Residential Market Trends

The housing market in the Pittsburgh Metro area including Westmoreland County is gaining strength and will provide a significant opportunity for the City in the next few years because of its location. Furthermore, the market values in and around the City are strong and steadily increasing especially in the southern areas of the City. There are many parcels of vacant land that could be assembled by a private developer with full utilities and infrastructure. And the average price of new housing starts has increased to over \$200,000 which means that the market price of new housing construction is attractive.

The mediocre performance of the Monessen Area School District presents a challenge for residential development but is beyond the control of the elected officials at the City. Continuing to work with the school district towards improvements should be a priority.

To attract residential development to Monessen and to be competitive with adjacent markets such as Rostraver and North Belle Vernon, officials and staff will need to create positive conditions for residential development to occur. These include: favorable land use regulations; downtown amenities; pedestrian and bike-friendly linkages to parks, entertainment, employment opportunities, and services; website information for access to community development information; and a streamlined permitting process. There are many potential markets that can be captured in Monessen based on the retail gap analysis. Municipalities can capture markets that are trending by understanding

what those markets are and creating conditions within the municipality that support the emerging market. Once the proper conditions are in place, it is a matter of marketing the City to developers and realtors as a prime area for residential development.



2017 PITTSBURGH HOUSING MARKET

Southwestern Pennsylvania's housing market has lacked the drama of skyrocketing prices and the bursting of housing bubbles. Its rate of homeownership is among the highest in the nation, and more people are finding housing that fits their budgets than a decade earlier. But a high percentage of renters struggle to pay for their housing, and vacant and abandoned housing remains a costly problem. More than 69 percent of Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area residents own their home—higher than any of the other benchmark regions. Housing prices rose 23.8 percent over the past 10 years. Only Austin, Denver and Nashville have done better among benchmark regions. Over the past five years, however, local prices have risen about 17 percent, below the average appreciation across benchmark regions. A lower rate of homeowners and renters in the region are paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing than in 2005. Still, more than 45 percent of renters are cost burdened in the eyes of HUD. Their rent has been rising. The average local fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased 23 percent to \$827 a month since 2005 in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

Pittsburgh Today & Tomorrow, 2017 Regional Annual Report, Housing

http://pittsburghtoday.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/PTTreport_spr17.pdf

INDUSTRIAL SITE DEVELOPMENT

The Monessen Riverfront Industrial Park at the southernmost border of the City includes buildings that are leased to seven (7) different companies and lots that are owned by four (4) additional companies.

Some businesses that exist in the industrial park are: Westmoreland Advanced Materials, Wyatt Inc., Farnham and Pfile, Santelli Tempered Glass, and ECI Inc. Larger companies such as Alumisource, IBEX, Praxair, and Koppers all still have a presence in Monessen. Lots are leased by Maronda Homes, Farnham & Pfile, Keystone River Properties, and the Monessen Food Pantry. The Riverfront Industrial Park is owned and operated by the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation in Greensburg PA.



Outside of the Industrial Park, Graycor Industrial recently completed a major coke plant upgrade for ArcelorMittal at its Monessen coke plant along the Monongahela River, which had been idle since 2009. The upgrade modernized pollution control equipment at the plant and made the plant safer and more competitive.

The 12-month project, which began in February 2013, was completed in the first quarter of 2014, in time for coke production to begin the following quarter. Peaking at 140 craft personnel and 10 supervisors, the industrial construction project recorded 240,000 man-hours over the course of the project.



KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Monessen's location could be a major driver for economic development based on its links to major transportation systems, employment centers, and access to the Pittsburgh Metro area and river and rail transportation.
- The high quality of basic public services and the capacity provided by the City staff could support commercial and residential development.
- The City has taken affirmative steps to adopt property maintenance and uniform construction codes that provide consistent enforcement activity and regulate the construction inspection processes.
- The commercial market has the potential to capture both retail and dining activity – specifically there are major dollars being spent by consumers that are not being captured in Monessen. Some of these categories are: automobile dealers, auto parts stores, electronics and appliances, groceries, and other miscellaneous retail. Limited and full-service restaurants are also opportunities for the City.
- Industry segments that are strong, projected to increase in the future, and should be maximized are retail, health and social assistance services, and a variety of other professional and personal services.
- Community tapestry segmentation indicates that there is a high demand for home improvements (i.e. Lowe's, Ace Hardware, Home Depot), fishing and hunting stores (i.e. Cabela's or Bass Pro), healthcare (i.e. MedExpress, Doctors Express), and discount retailers (i.e. Dollar General, Dollar Store, Family Dollar) and that these could be future markets to be captured.
- The Douglas Education Center presents opportunities to attract residents, consumers, and visitors to the City.
- Housing vacancy is high and housing values are relatively low-especially in the northern areas of the City indicating that persons who are interested in affordable housing could be potential new residents because housing stock is available. A family can buy a home in Monessen for the average cost of \$77,700.
- The overall housing market is improving in the Pittsburgh Metro area and Monessen could take advantage of the healthy and robust market because of its location and its short 25-minute commute to Pittsburgh, Washington, and Uniontown – the most important employment centers for the region.
- The City controls many properties in the City that provide opportunities for strategic and focused redevelopment of key sites. These parcels have not been assembled into a coherent redevelopment plan.

FACTORS THAT ARE BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The lack of population growth and household growth create a barrier for a robust development environment. However, slight increases in population, households, and employment growth are projected for future years.
- The number of crime incidents (both violent and non-violent) are relatively high for a City and present a challenge for attracting private development interest. The City should begin a strategic effort to address crime through prevention programs and community policing strategies.
- The quality and mediocre performance of the Monessen Area School District is not attractive to families with school age children. The City may need to focus on attracting younger (20-30 years of age) and older populations (50 years of age and over) who are not affected by the School District to reside in the City.
- The intra-municipal road system within the City is excellent – but there is no long-term pavement management program for addressing improvements in the commercial district and neighborhoods.
- Land use regulations based on the current zoning districts do not support or encourage development. The zoning should promote and support the uses that are desired by the City within the various sections of the central business district. It should also allow for more mixed use in adjacent residential areas and encourage pedestrian connections between uses (i.e. parks, businesses, neighborhoods, services).
- There are significant areas of blight in both the commercial and residential districts that must be addressed through a strategic and focused blight and vacant property plan.
- The relatively low consumer spending numbers in the primary markets may be a disincentive for private developers to invest in new commercial development.
- Realtors noted the competitiveness of nearby markets especially in Rostraver, North Belle Vernon, and Frazier Township. The City is lacking some of the amenities that potential property owners seek when making a decision about purchasing business and residential properties.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The City is encouraged to take swift action to begin the process of building the framework for positive redevelopment supported by reasonable and practical land use regulations that encourage and support redevelopment efforts. Toward that end, the following land use and economic development recommendations are made.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No. ED1 – Utilize a strategic comprehensive planning process to evaluate the City’s current public posture toward future development.

There is no evidence that the City has ever engaged in a comprehensive planning process. This process could be a valuable exercise especially if it includes a widespread public outreach effort. Representatives from the various development partners should be included in the process (i.e. Redevelopment Authority, Monessen Community Development Corporation, Mon-Valley Initiatives, Mon-Valley Progress, and Monessen Communities that Care).

Before development occurs, residents should have an opportunity to express whether additional residential and commercial development is supported, in what areas of the City they would like to see the development occur, and what types of development are most desired. The Plan should include:

- A focused and specific strategy for each developable site
- A redevelopment plan for the central business district
- An infrastructure development plan for maintaining roads throughout the City
- A specific and focused blight and vacant property strategy
- Specific recommendations for future land use that support the desired development and can be used to update the zoning map and the subdivision and land development ordinance.

Funding assistance could be available through the EIP implementation phase process or in combination with the Municipal Assistance Program (MAP). www.newpa.com

Recommendation No. ED2 – Update land use regulations – Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO).

The land use regulations should support the goals outlined in the strategic plan and provide reasonable and practical guidelines that will encourage and support development that is desired by the City residents. The City should adopt the concept of “Livable” communities that address the lifestyle features that are desired by residents of all ages. These include: walkable neighborhoods, public transportation options, affordable housing, safe streets, easy access to shopping, dining, and entertainment, green spaces, and indoor and outdoor places for all ages to gather and stay connected. The SALDO should implement the “livable” communities

concepts and include provisions for landscaping, street trees, and stormwater management including retention ponds, residential rain gardens, and bio-swales. The SALDO can be the City's most important tool for requiring desired elements in the development and redevelopment of residential and commercial areas.

Recommendation No. ED3 – Adopt the latest International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) for purposes of uniformity and consistency.

The City has adopted the 2009 International Property Maintenance Code. There are substantial updates made to this code about every three years. Updates are typically made to reflect improvements to the code and recent court decisions. The City should be proactive and aggressively enforce the IMPC.

Recommendation No. ED4 – Update the City website to include material regarding development, zoning, and building inspection.

The website should include all development ordinances, planning studies, marketing information (including this *Market Analysis*), and permitting information (including this *Economic Development Study*). The following should be included and updated on the City's website for residents, businesses, and developers: development ordinances; up to date Zoning Map; code ordinances, the IPMC and adopting ordinance; signage ordinances; name and contact for permitting and development activity; building inspector; land development process; link to PennDOT contact information; updated Fee Resolution; utility contact names and information; businesses to frequent within the City, and available commercial and industrial property.

Recommendation No. ED5 – Update the City website to include turnkey packets for residents, contractors, and developers.

The City should develop a checklist of items for developers of what is required for zoning permits, special exceptions, subdivision and land development applications and associated fees. Residents, business owners, and potential developers view this favorably and appreciate the ease in understanding expectations. Much of the routine information and permit applications should be available on the City's website so that seekers can save time and resources by downloading and completing applications in advance of an inspection or permit request.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the economic development review process, a public outreach meeting was held in July of 2016. Over 230 invitations were issued and about 125 people attended the meeting. Market and demographic information was presented by the EIP Team and the group was then divided into five (5) subgroups to discuss commercial and residential development opportunities. Some of the observations and comments were:

- The parcels at 4th Avenue and Donner Avenue provide an opportunity for redevelopment – there are already 2 banks, a drug store, and Family Dollar store in that area.

- Route 906 (becoming Donner Avenue and Schoonmaker Avenue) was described as a “raceway” – there is no way to draw people into town if they don’t slow down.
- The image of Monessen is negatively impacted by the appearance of blighted and dilapidated buildings that don’t create an inviting “ambiance” that draws people to the downtown.
- There are not enough destination businesses, niche retail, and restaurants to encourage downtown activity – 6 restaurants, 1 museum and 1 library.
- The boat launch and fishing pier provide great recreational opportunities – but they are disconnected from the main business district
- Redevelopment should include mixed use so that residential, supporting commercial, and personal services are within walking distance.
- Public housing developments should be better integrated into the neighborhoods



To advance the goals of the redevelopment effort, the following actions are recommended for commercial revitalization.

Recommendation No. CBD1 – The City should develop, maintain, and provide a website link to an inventory of property that is owned and controlled by public agencies.

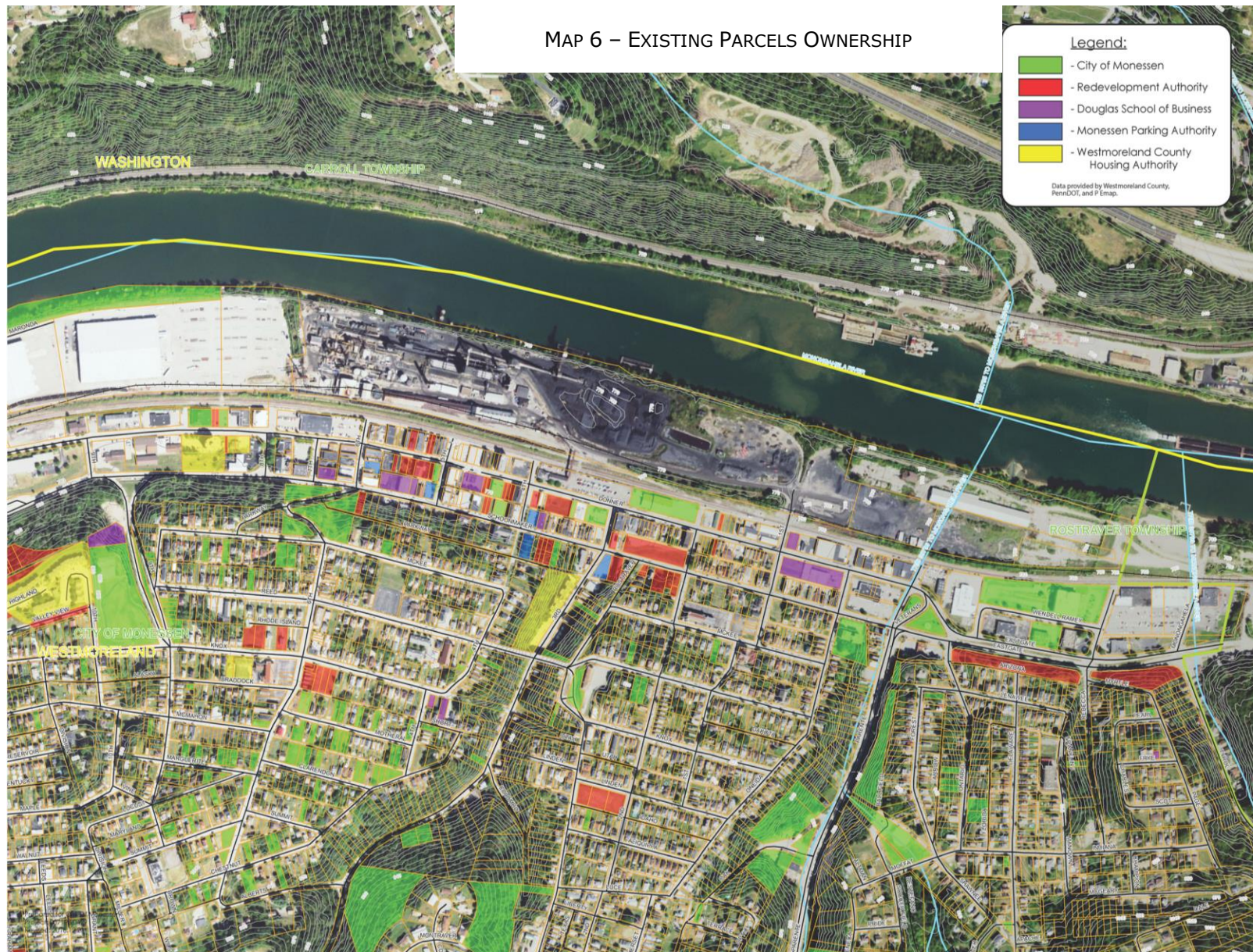
As part of this study, the EIP team developed a map for easy access of information about developable property. The City and its agencies own or control significant properties in the central business district as shown in **Map 6**. These properties are identified as being owned or controlled by the City, the Redevelopment Authority, the Monessen Parking Authority, and the Westmoreland County Housing Authority. The map also identifies property owned or controlled by the Douglas Education Center because DEC is a major property owner in the central business district.

Recommendation No. CBD2 – The City should officially adopt the Redevelopment Plan as shown in Map 7.

The Redevelopment Plan shown in **Map 7** is based on the public outreach meetings and additional discussions with City officials and development agencies working in the City. Several conceptual perspectives were also developed based on the redevelopment plan. Implementation and support for the redevelopment plan will require additional action by City officials. These actions are outlined in the recommendations in this section. They are based on the outcomes of the public outreach and additional discussions with City officials and staff. The outcomes and goals include:

- Redevelopment, support, and investment in the central business district from 4th Street to 6th Street on Donner Avenue
- Emphasis on the river launch/river access opportunities
- Integration and strengthening of the relationship with the Douglas Education Center
- Identifying Schoonmaker Avenue as a mixed use, high density transition and buffer to residential neighborhoods
- Creating a Gateway strategy for main entrances into the City

MAP 6 – EXISTING PARCELS OWNERSHIP



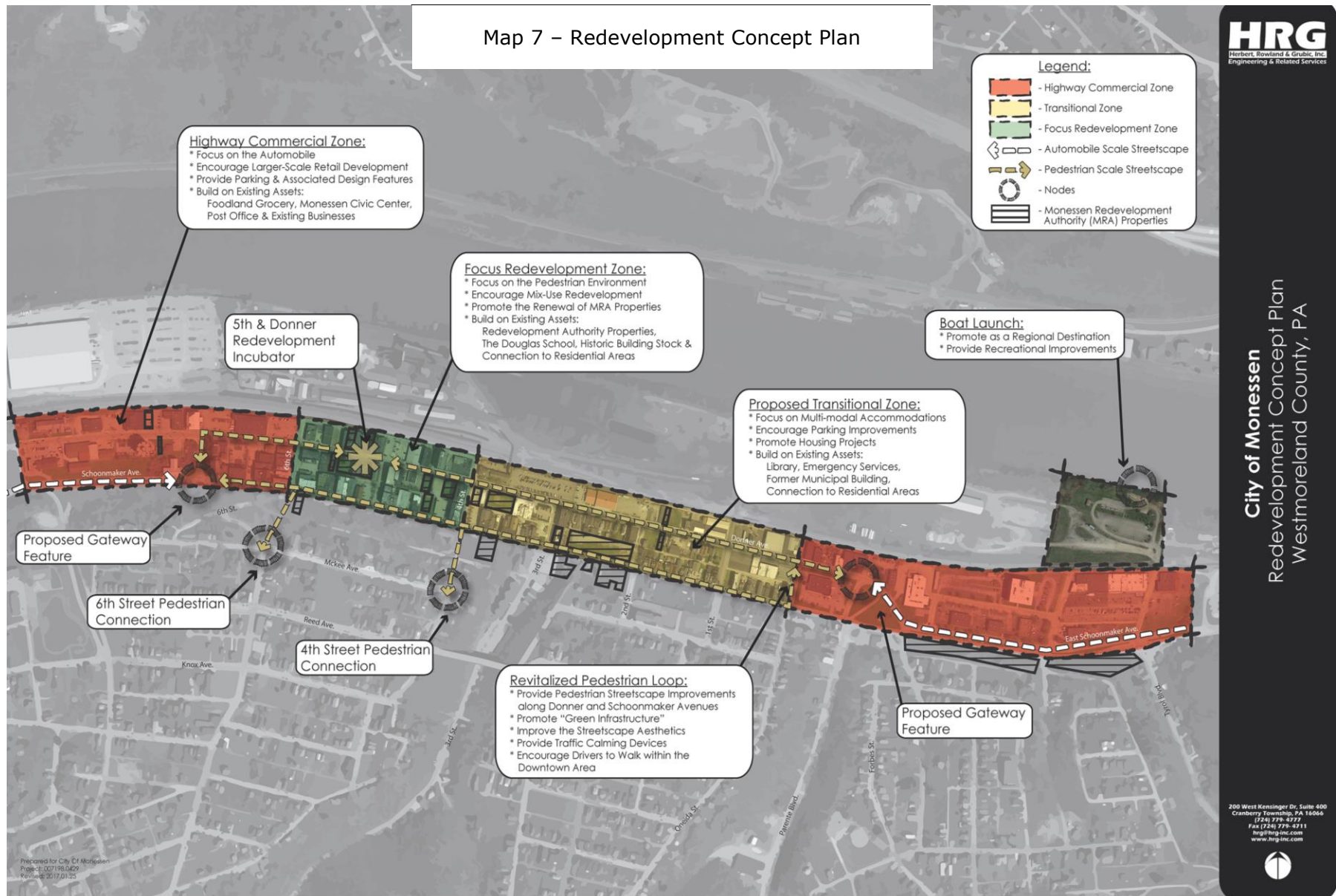
HRG
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Engineering & Related Services

City of Monessen
Parcel Analysis
Westmoreland County, PA

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Cranberry Township, PA 15066
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Map 7 – Redevelopment Concept Plan



Recommendation No. CBD3 – Partner with a local non-profit agency (i.e. the MCDC, MVI, or CTC) to explore, apply for and implement a Neighborhood Assistance Program.

The Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to assist neighborhoods throughout the state to address housing, crime, delinquency and blight through the use of tax credits. Tax credits provide the incentive for corporations and financial institutions to invest in the community to support programs and projects that will improve the conditions of cities like Monessen in return for tax credits. Thousands of businesses in the Commonwealth have joined the program and have invested millions of dollars that have created an impact in local business districts and neighborhoods. Eligible activities include:

- Affordable housing
- Community and economic development
- Community services
- Crime prevention
- Education
- Job training
- Neighborhood assistance
- Neighborhood conservation

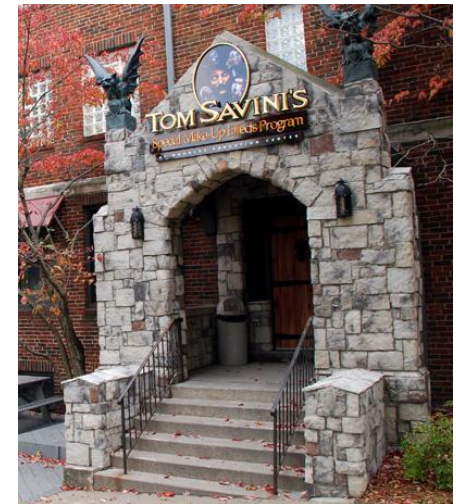
Applicants for the NAP/NPP must be a community based non-profit organization that has been active and operational for at least two (2) years. Qualified applicants can apply for NAP (one project for one year), NPP (many projects and programs for multiple years), SPP (special project that has been designated as high priority by the Commonwealth).

Recommendation No. CBD4 – Develop and strengthen the relationship between the City and the Douglas Education Center (DEC).

The DEC, as a destination educational institution, provides unique opportunities for the City to partner for developing incentives for housing and supportive retail, dining, and entertainment establishments. A private-public partnership with DEC could provide benefits for the City and for DEC to address the needs of residents, students, faculty and visitors to the center.

Recommendation No. CBD5 – Demolish the downtown parking structure on Donner Avenue and create convenient, attractive, well-signed and well-lit parking areas in the central business district.

One of the primary transportation issues in the business district is the location and availability of parking for customers, students, and visitors. Although parking studies at various times of the day and days of the week have confirmed that there is sufficient parking during peak and off-peak hours, it also revealed that the parallel parking is difficult and not conveniently located. Attendees at the public meeting suggested angle parking that is easily accessible and conveniently located. The location of convenient, well lighted, and well signed parking is a topic that should be addressed by the City to provide support for the City's fragile business district



Recommendation No. CBD6 – Commission an architectural firm for gateway entrance monuments and “wayfinding” signage for the central business district.

The boundaries of Monessen are not easily discernable on the major roads entering and leaving the City – a traveler could easily cross the border into the City and never realize that they are within the City limits. “Gateways” to a community are important because they create an identity for the community and provide an opportunity to make a positive first impression. Residents often take pride in their community when they identify with a theme, branding, or a specific identity. The City should:

- Develop attractive signage, “wayfinding”, and landscaping at the north and south entrances to Monessen. Hire an architect to design a coherent and consistent theme that residents can embrace and leaders can point to for inspiration and pride.
- Include signage, landscaping, wayfinding and other elements in the streetscape design that can be partially funded by county and state funds.
- Install public art and decorative lighting at highly visible intersections or in City rights-of-ways that clearly define the City’s image and theme.
- Continue to install public murals and public art.

**Recommendation No. CBD7 – Work with the Redevelopment Authority to create a program to stabilize vacant and significant buildings in the central business district.**

The City should work with the Redevelopment Authority to develop a real estate database of retail, commercial, and residential space by location, condition, ownership, jobs, units, and occupancy to facilitate marketing and redevelopment efforts. The Redevelopment Authority should develop incentives such as a façade program and rent abatements for developers and investors to reclaim existing space and pursue development of new mixed-use structures that are capable of providing both housing and retail and service opportunities.

Recommendation No. CBD8 – Develop and adopt a Streetscape Plan.

The City should identify a stakeholder group to guide and support a “business district” revitalization effort including the development of a full-blown streetscape design. The stakeholder group should include members of the Council, Redevelopment Authority, and the Community Development Department, and should oversee the development, implementation, and review of the plan. They should oversee the development of design guidelines for the downtown redevelopment zones. They can also identify and pursue funding for the streetscape construction and help to develop a capital improvement plan for long-term projects. The CIP program should identify funds for street improvements, building stabilization, property acquisition, and demolitions. The stakeholder group should meet regularly with the state, county, and foundation representatives to review the status and opportunities for funding programs and projects. **Figures 7, 8, and 9** provide preliminary streetscape designs developed by HRG Engineering for consideration by City officials.

FIGURE 7 – STREETScape GATEWAY ENTRANCE



FIGURE 8 – STREETScape DONNER AVENUE

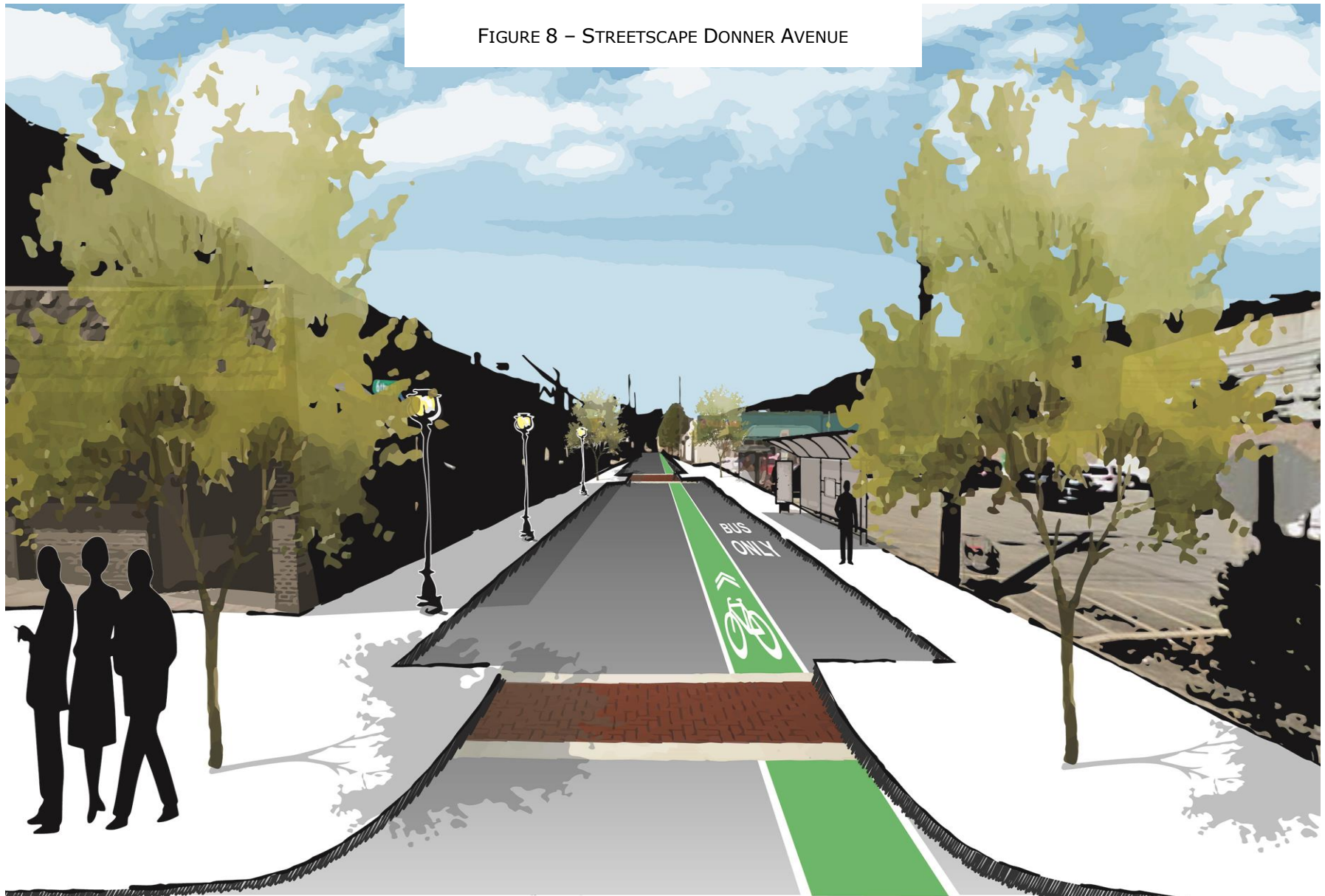


FIGURE 9 – STREETScape PRIMARY REDEVELOPMENT AREA



Recommendation No. CBD9 – Identify, advance, and promote central business district development opportunities.

The City has several commercial properties within its borders that may be attractive to area businesses looking to relocate, expand, or start a new business. The City should make commercial property identification and development potential a priority. Once development sites have been evaluated, consensus is reached, land use regulations have been updated, and a Plan is adopted, the City should prioritize its sites to begin to identify funding and implement the redevelopment plan. State funding may be available to support identified projects including:

Business in Our Sites (BOS) - This program empowers communities to attract growing and expanding businesses by helping them build an inventory of ready sites. It provides funds for site development activities that are required in order for a site to be attractive to a developer. There is no repayment of these funds until a development is completed. <http://community.newpa.com/programs/business-in-our-sites-grants-and-loans-bos/>

Industrial Sites Reuse (ISR) – This program provides grants and low-interest loans for environmental assessments and remediation of “brownfield” sites. The program is designed to foster the cleanup of environmental contamination at industrial sites, thereby bringing blighted land into productive reuse.

Transportation Alternative Programs (TAP) - SPC sponsors the TAP round annually for the PA Department of Transportation. Examples of eligible TAP projects include bicycle or pedestrian facilities, conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails, overlooks and viewing areas, historic preservation and rehab of historic transportation facilities, vegetation management, and wildlife mortality mitigation projects, among other types. Local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts, local education agencies, or schools, and tribal governments are eligible to apply for the competitive TAP funds. http://spcregion.org/trans_tap.shtml

Multi-Modal Transportation Funding - The Multimodal Transportation Fund provides grants to encourage economic development and ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to the residents of the Commonwealth. Funds may be used for the development, rehabilitation and enhancement of transportation assets to existing communities, streetscape, lighting, sidewalk enhancement, pedestrian safety, connectivity of transportation assets and transit-oriented development. <http://community.newpa.com/programs/multimodal-transportation-fund/>

PENNVEST Water and Sewer Funding - PENNVEST has been empowered by state law, the *Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority Act of 1988*, to administer and finance the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) pursuant to the federal Water Quality Act of 1987, as well as to administer the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds. PENNVEST also finances, through the issuance of special obligation revenue bonds, water



Recommendation No. CBD10 – Use a “Request for Proposals” process to solicit proposals for the highest and best use of sites for desired commercial and residential opportunities.

In many cases, private developers may not be aware of potential development opportunities in a community. In order to alert private investors to the commercial and residential opportunities for specific sites, it is often helpful to send out a “Request for Proposals” (RFP) packet to regional developers that includes:

- Description and details about the development site including utilities and roads
- Pictures and any conceptual drawings or site plans
- *Market Condition Analysis*
- Financing and funding instruments that might be available to support the development.

The RFP should require the developer to provide a proposed preliminary plan for the use of the site and a business pro-forma that can be evaluated by the City for the feasibility of the development.

Recommendation No. CBD11 – Explore and consider other funding mechanisms to promote and support development.

There are other funding mechanisms that could be used for infrastructure development and financing support for desired development.

Tax Increment Financing Guarantee Program – This program is designed to promote and stimulate the general economic welfare of various regions and communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and assist in the development, redevelopment and revitalization of brownfield and greenfield sites through the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in accordance with the Tax Increment Financing Act. The program is part of an effort by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) and the DCED to provide credit enhancement for TIF projects to improve market access and lower capital costs through the use of guarantees to issuers of bonds or other indebtedness (“TIF Debt Obligations”).

Transportation Impact Fees – This is a locally operated program that is authorized under the Municipalities Planning Code that allows municipalities to collect fees from developers that can be used to address transportation improvements that will address the impacts on local and state roads caused by the new development.

Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Act - This is a mechanism to implement strategic financial opportunities for communities in order to spark revitalization. Many Pennsylvania municipalities have developed a LERTA program to initiate reinvestment in the community. Municipalities that have LERTA in place provide a temporary abatement of the local, school, and county property taxes as an incentive for development. New Brighton has successfully implemented LERTA <http://www.newbrightonpa.org/LERTA.pdf>

Growing Greener II Grant Program - This program provides redevelopment grants to municipalities and nonprofits to help a community's redevelopment effort, focusing on the improvement of downtown sites and buildings. The eligible projects may include approaches that assist in business development and/or public improvements in core communities.

Keystone Communities Program (KCP) - This program assists Pennsylvania's communities in achieving revitalization of older commercial areas and those neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the commercial districts. The program designates and funds communities that are implementing Main Street, Elm Street, or Enterprise Zone efforts or other community development efforts by supporting physical improvements to communities that are undertaking revitalization activities.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND BLIGHT STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the public outreach process, the issue of blight and vacant properties was a recurring theme with residents who are hopeful that the City will take steps to address this problem. The attendees expressed a desire for clean, safe neighborhoods with good pedestrian access to parks, institutions, services and employment. The Douglas Education Center would also benefit from stronger neighborhoods, better transportation access, and improved housing for students and faculty.

Recommendation N1 – Create a *Blight and Vacant Property Committee* to develop a focus and strategy for addressing blight in the commercial and residential areas.

The Committee should be staffed by City personnel and should use the publication "From Blight to Bright"³ as a guiding source for action in the community. The strategies identified in this publication for Preventing and Eliminating Blight include:



- Adopting the Legal Framework to Hold Properties to Clear Standards
- Registration of Rental, Vacant, and Foreclosed Properties
- Requiring Buyers to Bring Properties up to Code
- Offering Grants and Loans to Homeowners
- Prioritizing Severely Blighted Properties – Health and Safety Issues

The strategies identified in this publication for Addressing Long-Term Vacant and Abandoned properties include:

- Demolition of Unsafe Properties
- Establishing a Blight Fund
- Opening Estates of Deceased Property Owners

³ From Blight to Bright: A Comprehensive Toolkit for Pennsylvania, July 2014, The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

- Appointing Conservators
- Condemning Properties Using a Blight Review Committee
- Creating or Using a Land Bank

Recommendation N2 – Develop and adopt a pedestrian and bike trail plan.

The City should develop and adopt a pedestrian and bike trail plan that creates a local trail system to link parks, employment centers, transit facilities, and adjacent municipalities. The pedestrian oriented plan would:

- Provide convenient and well illuminated pedestrian walkways throughout the downtown and within parking lots.
- Provide pedestrian links between the redevelopment zones and the neighborhoods to the south.
- Provide pedestrian improvements and connections between the Douglas School and existing student housing particularly on McKee Avenue.

Healthy lifestyles and changes in demographics have created a demand for more pedestrian oriented activities and the need for more walkable communities. Enabling safe access for pedestrians and bikers will help improve the experience and help to make alternatives to car travel more attractive. Adopting the policy of “complete streets” for the design, development, or redevelopment of City roads should be a priority. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition (smartgrowthamerica.org) “Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.” Complete streets can also be important for creating economic activity for smaller business areas such as Donner and Schoonmaker Avenues. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition:



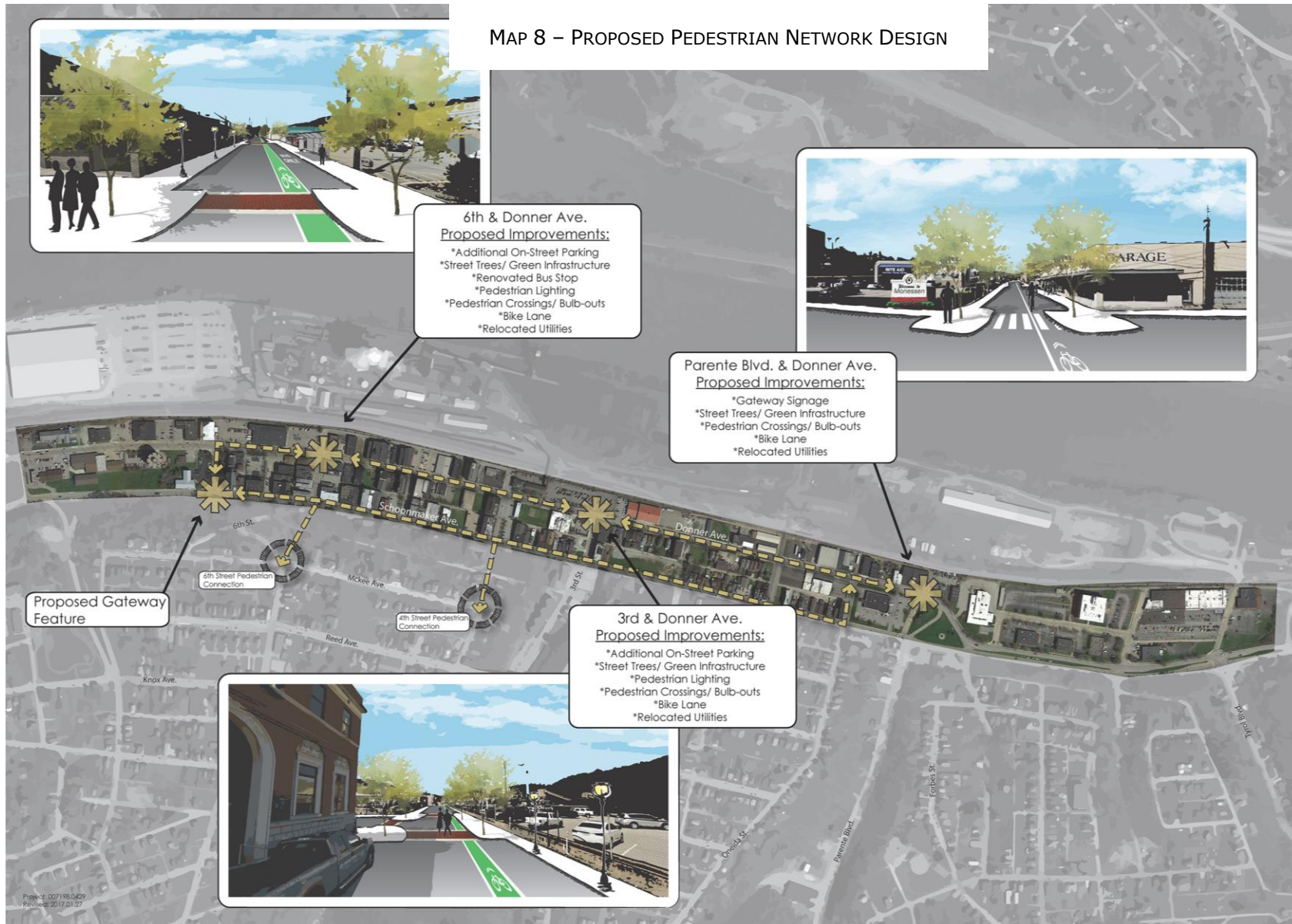
“Building more sidewalks and striping bike lanes has been shown to create more jobs than traditional car-focused transportation projects.” With the increased demand for bike lanes and pedestrian connections from the public, and with the goal of increasing the attractiveness of Monessen to attract the millennial and young professional class, the City would be well advised to consider exploring pedestrian and bike path options. Map 8 provides a pedestrian oriented plan for consideration by the City officials.

MAP 8 – PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN NETWORK DESIGN

HRG
 Hensel & Hensel & Grubbs, Inc.
 Engineering & Related Services

City of Monessen
 Proposed Pedestrian Network Improvements
 Westmoreland County, PA

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Recommendation N3 - Maximize the Use of City Parks

Strong parks make strong neighborhoods and the City is rich in parks and greenspace. Monessen is slightly over 3 square miles and has 9 parks including a large community park and a riverfront boat launch park. These parks are not fully maximized in terms of facilities or programming. Some action items that should be considered by the City include:

- Undertake a comprehensive master planning project for City parks that includes a new more “passive park” approach with emphasis on pedestrian trails and gathering areas for events and activities.
- Encourage healthy programs like running, walking, biking events in the park areas and in the central business district to encourage the use of the parks and to create gathering events for residents.
- Consider the creation of a Recreation Board of volunteers to begin to explore possible programming for City parks. The City has one of the highest populations of under 18 residents of any of the surrounding communities and there should be programming for this age group. Some programs that should be considered are: summer camp that includes free breakfast and lunch for children; community day events; basketball leagues; and holiday events (i.e. Halloween party, easter egg hunts, light up night). The Recreation Board should act as an advisory board to Council and should provide volunteer labor to help support recreation programming.
- Hire a Recreation Director with an early childhood or recreation background to oversee summer programming, especially a summer day camp in the parks. Fees can be charged that would partially cover the salary of the Director.
- Work with senior agencies to include additional programming and activities for senior citizens. In most studies, seniors have indicated a demand for planned day trips; strength, stretching, fitness and cardio classes; healthy cooking classes; gardening, movies, yoga, and dance classes.



Recommendations N4 - Support an Informed and Cohesive Community

In today’s world, there are more ways than ever to obtain information and thousands of bits of information available. Yet people are more likely than ever to be un-informed about their local government operations and services. This is due to competing demands for attention from many different sources and an infinite number of distractions. It is important, therefore, to create social opportunities for residents where there is a central meeting place with a theme related to the local culture.

- Consider identifying locations in the business district corridor for the installation of public plazas with lighting, seating, water features, landscaping, and local art. Feature entertainment, festivals, and local activities on a regular basis. By creating gathering places for residents, people are more likely to come together for social interaction and leave with a better understanding of their neighbors and the community as a social construct. “Real” places include a social experience.

- Consider scheduling City “news updates” at a local coffee shop or diner or at least creating the “coffeehouse” experience. Most people are more interested in buying a coffee and sitting around with friends for conversation than coming to a public meeting or event.
- Use a service like “Swiftreach,” NIXEL, or “Reverse 911” to communicate with residents about possible emergencies or interruption of services that may affect specific areas of the City. These services can also be used to make announcements about upcoming events or specific information that may be useful to residents.
- Consider the use of an electronic newsletter that can be sent out via an email blast to residents. Continue to make improvements to the City’s website that invite interaction and allow for conducting business on-line. Whether it’s paying taxes, applying for a permit, reading the latest news, or registering a request for service, residents want to do it on their own time at their convenience.



CONCLUSION

The City of Monessen has a long and proud heritage as an important community along the Monongahela River. It is home to 7,720 residents and provides walkable neighborhoods with access to City amenities. With riverfront access, stable and close-knit neighborhoods and easy commutes to employment, dining, entertainment, education, and cultural nodes, there are significant opportunities for the future of the City.

The City has had challenges maintaining a stable financial condition due to declining assessed values, rising costs of personnel, and deficiencies in its budgeting process. Through reliance on professional management support, comprehensive financial reporting, and creative problem solving, the City is committed to providing quality services and operational and financial transparency for its residents.

Implementation of the EIP Special Conditions Plan recommendations for development and redevelopment and implementing the blight strategy outlined in this report will provide the momentum and action required to advance the City’s goals and vision of the future.



APPENDIX A – RETAIL MARKET PROFILE

Retail MarketPlace Profile				
City of Monessen, PA				
Industry Group	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor
Total Retail Trade, Food, and Drink	\$87,951,636	\$51,372,700	\$36,578,936	26.3
Total Retail Trade	\$80,382,664	\$47,796,078	\$32,586,586	25.4
Total Food and Dining	\$7,568,972	\$3,576,622	\$3,992,350	35.8
Industry Group	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor
Motor Vehicle				
Automobile Dealer Sales	\$15,707,836	\$4,280,095	\$11,427,741	57.2
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$2,006,899	\$0	\$2,006,899	100
Auto & Tire Stores	\$1,016,430	\$0	\$1,016,430	100
Furniture & Home Goods				
Furniture	\$1,374,056	\$496,017	\$878,039	47
Home Furnishings	\$886,975	\$504,985	\$381,990	27.4
Electronics				
Electronics Stores	\$3,935,598	\$635,013	\$3,300,585	72.2
Home Improvements				
Building Supplies Dealers	\$3,217,548	\$981,092	\$2,236,456	53.3
Lawn Equipt. & Supply Stores	\$560,921	\$651,912	(\$90,991)	-7.5
Food & Beverages				
Grocery	\$13,825,367	\$12,129,630	\$1,695,737	6.5
Specialty Food Stores	\$976,089	\$0	\$976,089	100
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	\$1,248,429	\$210,510	\$1,037,919	71.1
Health				
Health Care Stores	\$3,832,694	\$2,733,014	\$1,099,680	16.7
Gasoline				
Gasoline	\$5,755,092	\$20,603,701	(\$14,848,609)	-56.3
Clothing				
Clothing Stores	\$2,681,685	\$801,126	\$1,880,559	54
Shoe Stores	\$565,967	\$0	\$565,967	100
Jewelry, Leather Goods Stores	\$411,561	\$0	\$411,561	100
Leisure				
Sporting and Hobby Stores	\$1,980,248	\$347,844	\$1,632,404	70.1
Book, Music Stores	\$450,155	\$305,927	\$144,228	19.1
General Merchandise				
Department Stores	\$9,889,791	\$0	\$9,889,791	100
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$3,015,706	\$1,270,813	\$1,744,893	40.7
Miscellaneous				
Florists	\$190,903	\$149,772	41131	12.1
Office & Gift Stores	\$750,843	\$0	\$750,843	100
Used Merchandise	\$269,092	\$214,195	\$54,897	11.4
Other Miscellaneous Retailers	\$3,032,258	\$1,480,432	\$1,551,826	34.4
Non-Store Retailers				
Electronic Mail-Order Houses	\$2,159,024	\$0	\$2,159,024	100
Vending	\$83,242	\$0	\$83,242	100
Direct Selling Stores	\$558,255	\$0	\$558,255	100
Dining & Drinking				
Full-Service Restaurants	\$3,993,989	\$2,909,538	\$1,084,451	15.7
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$3,051,247	\$421,782	\$2,629,465	75.7
Special Food Services	\$162,276	\$209,698	(\$47,422)	-12.7
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverag	\$361,460	\$35,604	\$325,856	82.1

APPENDIX B – HEARTLAND COMMUNITIES

See following pages.

APPENDIX C – SMALL TOWN SIMPLICITY

See following pages

APPENDIX D – MIDLIFE CONSTRAINTS

See following pages.

APPENDIX E – TRADITIONAL LIVING

APPENDIX F – MODEST INCOME HOMES

APPENDIX G – RETAIL MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX