



# 2013 Mercer County Comprehensive Plan



Prepared by:

The Center for Urban & Public Affairs  
Wright State University  
3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy.  
Dayton, OH 45435  
(937) 775-2941

The Business Enterprise Center  
Wright State University  
Lake Campus



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## Executive Summary

Mercer County's entire culture has evolved from the farmers who settled the region after the building of the Erie and Miami Canals. As a new recreation and tourism industry has more recently taken hold, newcomers are being drawn to the area to enjoy resort living next door to the pastoral, open environment of the farms.

Simultaneously, changes in farm technology and our economy as a whole have slowly changed the nature of farming as a business. Farming is done more intensively on fewer acres at a smaller margin of profit. Fewer young people are taking over the family farm operations and more farmers must supplement their earnings with non-farm income. Still, agriculture remains a most important segment of the economy of Mercer County. This has created the perfect market of the willing land seller and eager land buyer, and rapid conversions of farmland to residential and other uses.

This plan is drawn up to balance the competing but equally important interests of preservation of the farm economy and its principal resource, farmland, with community growth and development and the revenues and vitality that it can bring.

The farmland itself appears to be the most sensitive resource at risk. Its preservation is necessary to the survival of the farm economy, the survival of the rural culture and quite possibly for the survival of the recreation-tourism industry as well. While it may not be necessary or desirable to preserve every acre under cultivation today, it is extremely important through the measures outlined in this plan to ensure that the best land, in large usable tracts, survives and can remain sufficiently removed from others, allowing all citizens full enjoyment of their property and the quiet lifestyle of Mercer County.

As Mercer County begins experiencing the changing development patterns now commonly experienced by agricultural communities across Ohio, a Comprehensive Plan becomes critical to the preservation of existing resources.

This plan represents the work of the Plan Steering Committee, Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, County Engineer's Office and other County and local officials.

The plan begins with a discussion of public involvement. Planning cannot be done in a vacuum and citizen participation is crucial to the success of any plan. The citizens of Mercer County have participated in several events sponsored throughout the course of the planning process. This input has proved invaluable to the planning effort. Full results of these events can be found in Appendix A.

The plan strategies that follow the Land Use Plan supplement the policy statement. These strategies detail objectives and supporting principles that provide a base for preserving Mercer County's resources.

Then, in the Action Plan discusses critical items based on urgency. A timeline is also established in the Action Plan.

A section of detailed background information and the current status of the County follows the action plan. Information included in this section includes population statistics, township profiles, economic statistics, and an inventory of historic resources and environmental factors.



## Introduction

The best place to start in planning for growth is the County Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a statement of policy and direction: where the County should grow and where what type of development should go. It is a guide for developers, landowners, concerned citizens, planning commissions, and elected officials as they make decisions about land.

The plan is based on citizen input and careful studies of the planning areas, which merge into a broad consensus on land use and the location of development. That is, the Comprehensive Plan sets forth a realistic vision for how the community or county should grow and develop.

The Mercer County Commissioners, in partnership with the Mercer County Planning Commission and the support of various local authorities within the County, began the comprehensive Planning process in the spring of 2012. Wright State University's Business Enterprise Center and the Center for Urban and Public Affairs were selected to support and facilitate the planning process.

This plan contains many strategies that can be utilized by the County to preserve the rural heritage of the County. The plan also contains other key strategies that can be utilized to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Grand Lake Saint Mary's, establish open space networks, and capitalize on the tourism industry.

## Vision

The purpose of this planning is to ensure consistency, promote efficiency, establish a public record, maintain a basis for planning, and develop a planning method.

## Objectives/Goal

This plan contains statistical data and strategies to achieve a high quality of life for its residents through vibrant communities, productive farms, and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Goals identified to accomplish social, economic, and environmental needs are:

- 1) Establish a citizens-based approach to ensure the plan is aimed towards fulfilling the needs of the community for today and tomorrow.
- 2) Enhance and maintain viable farms as working resources; agricultural land should be preserved to protect Mercer County's agricultural industry.
- 3) Preserve, protect, and enhance natural areas, lakes, rivers, and forests. Complement the Strategic Plan for improving Grand Lake.
- 4) Foster and encourage structured, long-term growth of commercial/industrial within defined areas. Develop and maintain an aggressive existing business retention program.
- 5) Continue expansion of Mercer County's sewer subdistricts in populated residential areas; encourage residential development in public sewerred subdistricts. Limit fragmentation of agricultural land.

- 6) Pursue improvements to existing transportation systems with focus on safety, congestion relief, and future development needs.
- 7) Serve as a resource and supporting tool for subdivision and drainage regulations, drive access regulations, and economic development plans.
- 8) Encourage best management practices for agriculture and residential properties. Best management practices examples include but are not limited to: stormwater plans implemented on construction sites; no phosphorous fertilizer on lawns and grassed waterways and conservation areas in farm fields.

## Public Involvement

In order to have a successful plan that is supported by the community, it is crucial to invite participation representative of the whole community. A series of focus group sessions were conducted to guarantee a high level of involvement by community representatives to ensure that each community's interests were accurately articulated in the plan.

1. A series of focus group meetings were held, beginning in April and continuing through the end of 2012. As representatives of their community, government officials gathered to express their ideas regarding necessary revisions to the existing plan while incorporating new issues and ideas into the development of a countywide comprehensive plan. Attendees were asked to review the existing plan, population and economic growth patterns, and identify specific areas of concern related to development and how to address these issues.
2. In November of 2012, the public opinion survey was prepared for the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan as a means of gathering input from residents, property owners, and local businesses. It provided an opportunity in the planning process for the public to provide their opinions on various planning topics and issues, such as services; traffic and commuting; housing; quality of life; roads, water, sewer, and other public infrastructure; community appearance; and economic development.

The public opinion survey was programmed and deployed in February 2013. E-mails were distributed inviting the public to participate and provide input into planning for future growth and change. Responses were collected through March 11, 2013. A total of 427 surveys were received and tabulated for this analysis. Nearly all of the residential respondents believe that the quality of life in Mercer County today good or excellent and that the County has maintained or improved the quality of life for residents over the past five years. Similarly, 89.1% of businesses are very satisfied or satisfied with Mercer County as a place to conduct business. The highlights are presented below.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For detailed survey results, refer to Appendix A: Citizen Input

Residents and business felt that the County should focus most of its attention on planning for the future and maintaining the County's agricultural/rural character. Residents support planning goals, which:

- Protects their property from adjacent land uses that would threaten quality of life
- Extends water and sewer lines to encourage new development
- Extends public water and sewer systems to areas which lack those services in Mercer County
- Protect agricultural land from development
- Encourages new development at the edge of existing development

However, over half of respondents felt that it is important to control or limit residential, commercial, and industrial growth to areas where services, like water and sewer, already exist. Over two-thirds of respondents also felt that it is most important to address the following issues to help Mercer County achieve its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents and businesses through vibrant communities, productive farms, and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.

- Increasing employment opportunities in Mercer County
- Working with local businesses to help them expand
- Preserving/managing water resources such as lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, or ground water
- Recruiting businesses from outside Mercer County to locate here
- Preserving Mercer County's cultural, historical, and architectural heritage
- Preserving agricultural resources and farmland in Mercer County
- Improving vehicular traffic circulation and congestion on County roads
- Improving pedestrian circulation and safety

Additionally, respondents identified increasing taxes, bureaucracy, residents moving to other areas, business district decline, and the loss of agricultural land, open spaces, wetlands, and habitat for wildlife and native plants as the obstacles most likely to prevent Mercer County from achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents.

In May of 2013, the draft plan was made available on the County's website (<http://www.mercercountyohio.org/plancomm/>) for public review. Citizens were asked to review the new draft plan and provide feedback through an internet accessible questionnaire.

## Planning Statement

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this plan is to:

1. **Ensure Consistency.** Promote the legal requirement of reasonableness by avoiding arbitrary decisions and furthering the uniform application of the various planning procedures.
2. **Promote Efficiency.** Simplify the preparation of materials for Planning Commission action through the provision of guidelines and criteria. This will promote expeditious disposition in the interest of both the public and the petitioner.
3. **Establish a Public Record.** Provide a clear statement of policies upon which the community may rely.
4. **Maintain a Basis of Planning.** Assure the judicious use of resources planning decisions, such as zoning actions, need to be founded upon adopted principles and objectives. This will assist in accomplishing the intended purpose, and avoid the legal problems of arbitrary and capricious actions.
5. **Develop a Planning Method.** Promote the rational utilization of land and the economical provision of required facilities and services, both for the individual, and collectively in the public interest. This is accomplished through the allocation of land to a variety of uses based upon desired community objectives and intensity criteria.

## Applicability

### Total Community Interest

Planning loses its vitality as well as its credibility if it: (1) becomes a mere composite of neighborhood desires; (2) is abused to advance the interest only of certain individuals or special interest groups; (3) is implemented arbitrarily or capriciously; or (4) becomes unreasonable or confiscatory in its application to private properties.

It is our policy that the general welfare of the area in its entirety must be served by all planning measures. Therefore, general, as distinguished from individual, interests will be furthered.

Economic benefit to individuals shall be subordinate to the community economic considerations. Implementation of planning shall not be conducted solely for the purpose of what is should be, not what it should not be.

### Check List Analysis

To promote a systematic review of major development, and all rezoning amendments, considerations shall be analyzed by using the following questions as guidelines:

1. Would the proposed development be contrary to the future Land Use Plan?
2. Is the development (change) contrary to the established land use pattern?

3. Would change create an isolated, unrelated district?
4. Would change alter adversely the population density pattern?
5. Will the proposed development increase the load on public facilities beyond reasonable limits (water, sewers, streets, schools, etc.)?
6. Are the present development boundaries logically drawn in relation to existing conditions?
7. Will the change adversely influence living conditions in the surrounding area?
8. Will the change seriously affect the natural character of the land to the point of creating potential hazards?
9. Have the basic land use conditions changed?
10. Will approval be a deterrent to the improvement or development of adjacent property in accordance with existing plans and regulations?
1. Will the proposal constitute a grant of a special privilege to an individual, which will not be granted to others at the expense of the general welfare?
11. Are there reasons why the property cannot be used, as it is presently planned or zoned?
12. Is the change out of scale with the area's needs? The neighborhood's needs? The City's needs? The region's needs?
13. Are there alternative undeveloped sites for the proposed use(s)?

## Reasons for Actions

The Regional Planning Commission and, where appropriate, County Commissioners, shall list its findings of fact and reasons for recommendations and actions.

## By-Passed Land

In order to prevent development inconsistent with the plan, requests for development must demonstrate to the Commission that all adjacent land could be developed consistent with existing zoning and/or an approved overall development plan.

## Specific Issues

### Aesthetics or Appearance

Mercer County's residents have identified the preservation of the historic areas and natural character of the surrounding land as a high priority concern. Proper care for these two amenities is of economic as well as aesthetic benefit to the citizens, present and future, because it creates a better quality of life. The desire to preserve and protect the area in an attractive manner should continue to be an important determinant for development approaches.

### Separation Zone

Physical—separation zone between adjacent and differing land uses through transitional areas, open space, fencing, and/or planting areas will be required to reduce visual and physical impacts and/or provide noise abatement. The extent of the application of this effort should be determined by the degree of incompatibility between the uses.

## **Pedestrian Orientation**

As the County continues to develop, there is a need to have a people-oriented, pedestrian environment. It is the County's intention to encourage bicycle and pedestrian linkages.

## **Traffic (Arteries and Access)**

Preventing indiscriminate access and strip development must protect the tremendous public investment in traffic-carrying facilities including streets, highways, and expressways. In the review development requests, including rezoning requests of land abutting major streets.

## **Planned Conservation Developments**

In keeping with the planning principles, Conservation Districts, including a mix of land uses, will be encouraged where appropriate.

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# Land Use Plan

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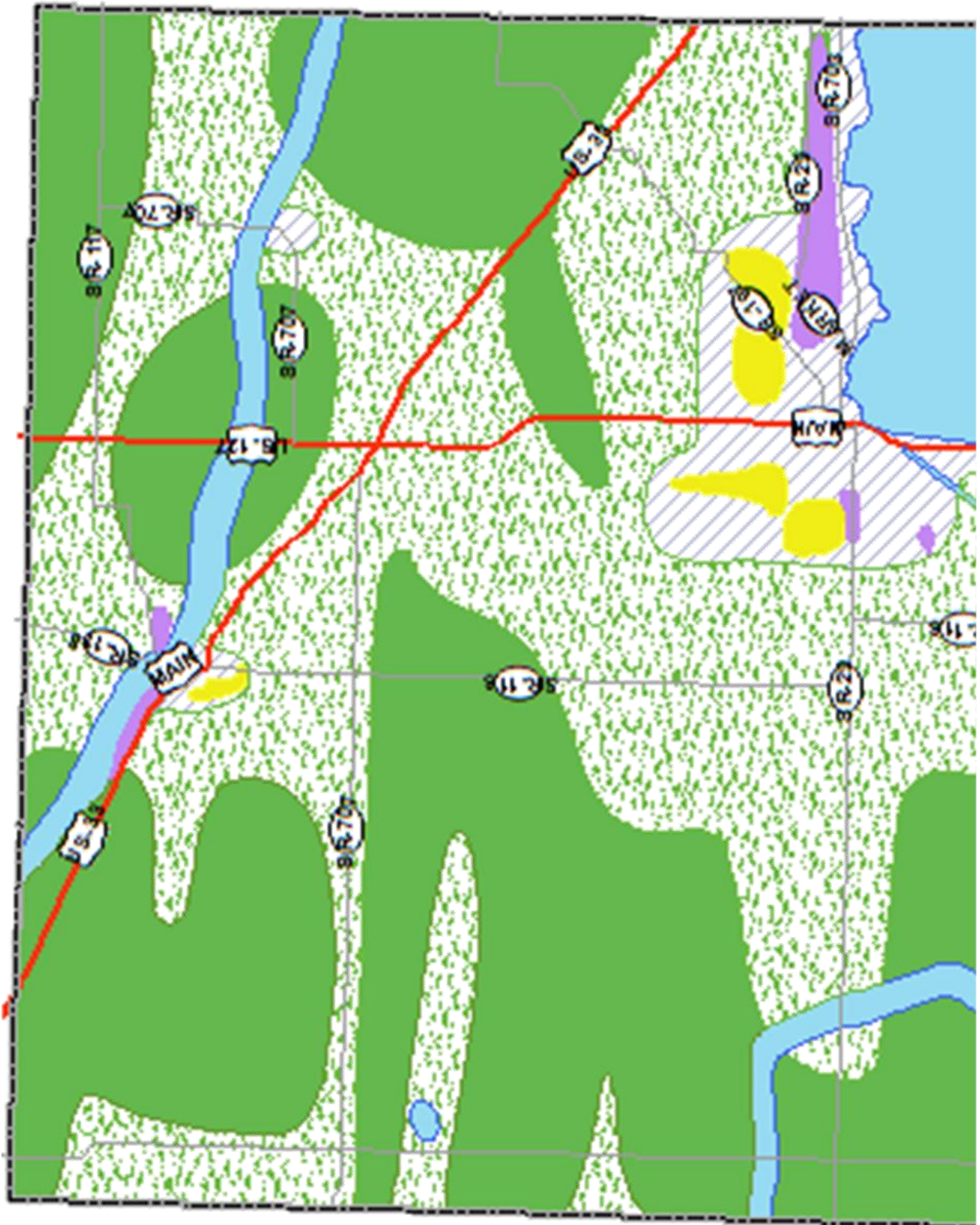
## Prologue & Intent

This Plan portrays a vision of future land use patterns within Mercer County. It is not the intent of the Plan to force or encourage uses other than those presently existing within the area. Rather, the Plan provides a basis for a public policy dialog and the framework for the orderly development of the area. The existing land use pattern has occurred over time and the parcel patterns and uses are appropriate for those times and uses. However, as private owners explore development opportunities, and seek new zoning opportunities from the County and townships reflecting those opportunities, it is imperative that land use patterns, configurations and arrangements reflecting the public interest be considered. This Plan provides a guide for those discussions.

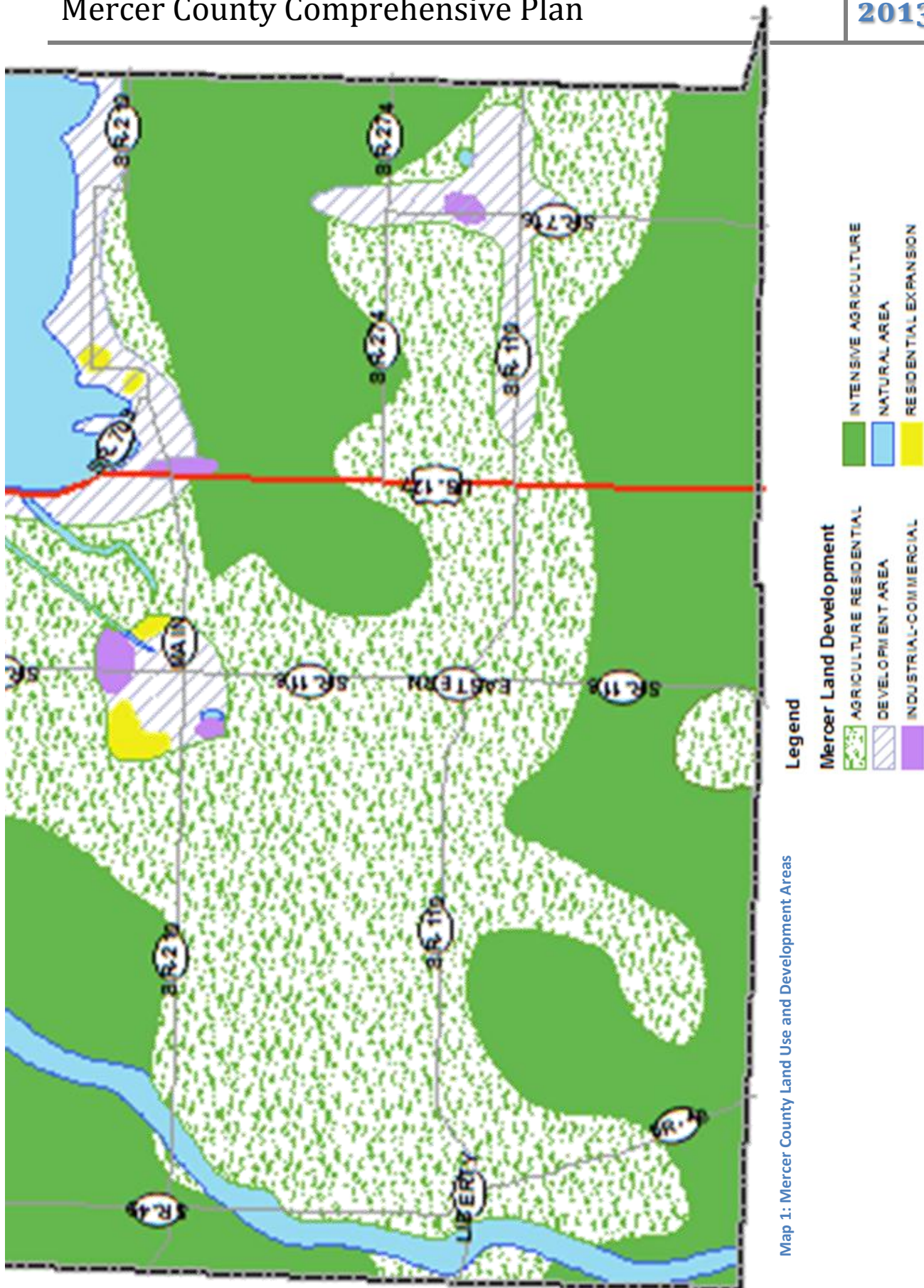
The Land Use Plan Map for Mercer County is very general in nature. In contrast to zoning maps, which display exact zoning classifications for each parcel, this map does not recognize or follow property lines and is based upon very broad use categories, as described below. As such, the Land Use Plan Map does not dictate how specific parcels should be zoned in the future. Rather, the Planning Commission, County Commissioners, and Township Trustees should consider the map to be only one of several tools available to assist them in making land use recommendations and decisions. Impact studies and other site-specific information should always supplement the information contained on the map.

The following Land Use Map provided illustrates the areas where future development best aligns with the goals, strategies, and action items discussed on the following section.









Map 1: Mercer County Land Use and Development Areas

## Agricultural Preservation and Development

The majority of rural Mercer County has flat topography, fertile soil and good drainage. Our farmers have consistently used these resources to produce crop and livestock yields at or near the top for all Ohio counties.

In 2012, the County Auditor reports that land use for agriculture totaled 293,026 acres, occupying 92.5% (down 1.5% from 1997) of the total area of the county.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the total market value of agricultural products sold in 2007 was \$535 million, which ranked Mercer County 1<sup>st</sup> of the Ohio 88 counties and 51<sup>st</sup> of the 3,079 United State counties. Approximately 82.4% of the total value of agricultural products sold in 2007 was directly related to sale of livestock, poultry, and their products – also ranking Mercer County 1<sup>st</sup> in the State and 35<sup>th</sup> nationally. Net cash farm income of operation was \$136.9 million or \$105,120 per farm, on average.<sup>2</sup>

According to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, 415 farms in Mercer County employed a total of 1,436 workers with an annual payroll of \$8.9 million in 2007. Recent trends indicate that the average size of farms has been decreasing (from 248 acres on average in 1992 to 225 acres in 2007) while the number of farms is increasing. Since 1997, the USDA reports that number of small farms (1 to 9 acres) has increased 74.1%. Although the total land in production has been relatively stable, rural residential development has been encroaching at a rate of approximately 70 sites<sup>3</sup> per year since 2007. The overwhelming majority of these sites are scattered 1 to 5 acre lots fronting township or county roads.

Nearly half (48.2%) of the County's principal farm operators are employed in primary occupations half-time or more in occupations off the farm. It might be assumed that this is done to supplement farm income. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the majority of farm operators are between 45 and 64, but the fastest growing group of farm operators is those 65 years and older. Forty-one percent of farm operators are over age 55, an age where they might begin to consider retirement due to health or other factors, while 31.7% of operator's are between the ages of 45 and 54. These data continue to confirm the impression that land is in transition from agriculture to more urbanized uses and with the number farmers reaching retirement age, this transition can be expected to continue. Historically, sale of the land has been the farm operator's retirement account.

In 1999, purchase of development rights were studied as an alternative to combatting the fragmentation of farmland in Mercer and rejected as a viable solution. The same holds true now. Mercer County lacks the large population base needed to obtain adequate funding for purchase of development

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<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2007 Census of Agriculture.

<sup>3</sup> Ohio Department Of Development, Office of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning, Ohio County Profiles, May 2012.

rights. In addition, the land being used in the scattered residential development is very small when compared to the amount of land still in agricultural production.

More traditional approaches, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, if applied properly, can aid in preserving our growing farm economy and directing residential development to more suitable locations. This should be done by adopting larger minimum lot sizes and agricultural zoning districts that greatly restrict housing in prime agricultural areas. Conversely, the location and operation of confined animal feeding operations need to be controlled, especially near existing and proposed development areas. Until state law is changed to permit rural zoning of agricultural operations, voluntary standards should be adopted.

## Development Areas

As a way to protect prime agricultural and environmentally sensitive land, development areas are identified. Notice that most of the areas surround existing villages and cities. The entire area surrounding Grand Lake has also been designated for development. As development occurs in these areas, it will be important to utilize development standards, sign ordinances, and lighting requirements. Drainage also becomes a critical issue. As more development occurs and the number of impervious surfaces increases, the amount of water draining into Grand Lake increases, causing potential flooding problems.

Strong consideration should be given to the agricultural preservation development prior to permitting large industrial wind development.

Landowners considering granting easements to a company for the purpose of erecting wind mill(s) for a wind farm generating over 5 megawatts should take full consideration of the following potential ramifications and concerns by local citizens:

- Aesthetics and appearance
- Potential negative impact on surrounding home values
- The excavation and compacting of the area around the towers
- Operational noise levels or potential shadow flickers
- What happens when turbine is decommissioned? (Commercial scale wind turbines typically have a life expectancy of 20-25 years)

It is recommended that landowners who proceed with granting an easement ensure that financial arrangements are in place to disassemble a decommissioned turbine and that the site is to be restored to the same topography that existed prior to construction.

## Agricultural Preservation Strategies

**Purpose:** To preserve adequate land for agriculture; to minimize conflicts with other uses and to avoid undue hardships to farmers; to protect all agricultural areas outside of the development areas.

### Principles:

1. Establish an agricultural zone with required lot sizes that are practical for the practice of farming
2. Guide non-farm development into more dense areas served by public sewerage
3. Encourage growth in areas with established public sewers, designated clustered developments, and other urban centers
4. Guide residential uses away from areas of intensive farming operations like animal confinement operations
5. Discourage proliferation of lot splits for solely residential use in prime agricultural areas
6. Require a high standard of buffering between conflicting land uses
7. Create viable farming/non-farming buffer zones to minimize nuisances.

### Implementation Strategies:

1. Agricultural Zoning Districts
2. Permit only low density residential in agricultural areas
3. Making houses accessory uses to farms
4. Encourage farmers to enroll in agricultural districts and CAUV programs
5. Use conservation zoning in subdivisions to provide environmental buffers
6. Recommend home placement on lots to give maximum buffer
7. Common driveways

## Agricultural Preservation and Development Action Items

*To preserve adequate lands for agriculture; to minimize conflicts with other uses and to avoid undue hardships to farmers; to protect all agricultural areas outside of the development areas; to promote additional food processing opportunities for local farmers; to continual seek Best Management Practices and Technologies to prevent further nutrient runoff from limiting our agriculture production.*

1. Maintain zoning regulations that include a hierarchy of agricultural districts. These should range from intensive agricultural districts to the agriculture/residence districts currently in place. Intensive agricultural districts would discourage the encroachment of residential development in our prime agricultural areas through the use of a large minimum lot size, and permitting new residences only as accessory uses to farms.
2. Discourage proliferation of lot splits solely for residential use in prime agricultural areas.
3. Create a viable farming/non-farming buffer zones to minimize nuisances.
4. Promote and encourage farmers to enroll/participate in agricultural districts, CAUV & CREP programs, and agricultural & conservation easements purchase programs.

5. Guide non-farm development into more dense areas served by public sewer via countywide sewer district, health department, and zoning rules.
  - a. Permit only low density residential in agricultural areas via more stringent zoning.
6. Guide residential uses away from areas of intensive farming operations like animal confinement operations.
7. Review and modify the County Subdivision Regulations to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
8. Draft other zoning guidelines for use by townships and other local governments that support and implement the initiatives of the Comprehensive Plan and lead to greater consistency in development regulations.
9. Maintain drainage standards and guidelines for use by the County, townships, and other local governments.
10. Encourage business enterprise to test & implement new strategies for increase farm production WHILE reducing the impact to the watershed... i.e. Manure Management, Cover Crop, etc.



## Residential Development

As a way to preserve farmland and protect the rural way of life in Mercer County, residential development should be discouraged in rural areas. The clustered residential development concept should be used as a way to control residential sprawl while allowing limited development in these areas.

Several residential expansion areas have been identified in the future land use plan. These expansion areas include the southern edge of Grand Lake, the east end of Fort Recovery, the north and south ends of St. Henry, the northwest and northeast corners of Coldwater and the eastern and western edges of the City of Celina.

For the purposes of this map, a “residential” land use designation includes all residential development (single-family, multi-family, condominium, etc.) including estate residential and up to and including residential designations where more intense residential development might be appropriate.

High-density residential development should only be permitted where water and sewer service is available. Also, residential development should be limited in natural and environmentally sensitive areas.

## Future Residential Development Design

Mercer County’s future residential development in agricultural area should avoid extending water and sewer lines into areas of prime agricultural land and be attached to existing sewer systems. The future land use map identifies twenty-five such areas in the county.

The location of new residential developments should meet the Plan’s objectives of the planning area and be consistent with County and Township policies.

While some existing developments presently may or may not have public water or sewer system, if they are planned to accommodate new development, small-scale systems may be required by the Health Department and/or Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). The amount or level of new development should conform to the capacities of natural resource and infrastructure systems that would exist in the absence of the water and sewer systems.

## Development Strategies

**Purpose:** To promote safety and health; To preserve the rural ambiance; To enhance the visual appeal of developed areas; To promote good development practices; To provide livable communities.

**Principles:**

1. Encourage residential development within the existing service areas to avoid overextending services and infrastructure.
2. Encourage limited residential and commercial development in the small villages of the county.



3. Ensure lot and development requirements adequate for light, air, scenic views, access by safety services, and safe access and egress for residents
4. Promote use of landscaping and natural materials for buffering between uses and to enhance the environment.
5. Provide a sound framework for neighborhoods by preventing them from being bisected by major traffic-ways or isolated from necessary community services.

## **Implementation Strategies:**

1. Adopt policies of approving land use decisions that favor nonfarm development in or near the currently developed areas and discourage nonfarm development in prime agricultural areas.
2. Work with all available resources to upgrade infrastructure in the villages to attract investment.
3. Draft zoning guidelines for use by local governments, which support the Comprehensive Plan and lead to greater consistency between jurisdictions.
4. Create a system of evaluating impacts of all proposed new developments on the health, safety, and welfare of Mercer County.
5. Develop a systematic convenient plan for obtaining permits and information (building, draining, zoning/inspection, well/septic).
6. Modify existing subdivision regulations to be consistent with goals of the Land Use Plan.
7. Adopt economic development plans and policies to be consistent with goals of the Land Use Plan.
8. Adopt building codes.
9. Develop construction standards.

## **Development Action Items**

To promote safety and health; to preserve the rural ambiance; to enhance the visual appeal of developed areas; to promote proper development practices; to provide livable communities.

1. Encourage residential development within the existing service areas to avoid overextending services and infrastructure.
2. Ensure lot and development requirements adequate for light, air, scenic views, access by safety services, and safe access & egress for residents.
3. Adopt policies of approving land use decisions that favor nonfarm development in or near the currently developed areas and discourage non-farm development in prime agricultural areas.
4. Work with all available resources and apply/obtain grant funding where possible to upgrade infrastructure in the city and villages to attract investment. A community that re-invests in itself proves that it is worthy of outside/private investment to invest in such a community.
5. Develop countywide plan in which all villages, the city and the Health Department have a clear strategy for dealing with blighted properties that should be removed for everyone's benefit.
6. Modify existing subdivision regulations to be consistent with the land use plan's goals.

7. Establish an overlay district within the lake region that would NOT allow channels without any proven aeration/circulation plan. Encourage neighborhood marinas as an alternative.
8. For more uniformity in overseeing the plan, consolidate all township zoning inspectors into one paid position charged with oversight, management and enforcement of the plan responsible to the Mercer County Planning Commission.
9. Develop and adopt countywide building codes.
10. Recommend well/septic inspections, by the County Health Department, prior to the transfer of ownership of property; and, the assurance that such new or future systems are not linked to farm drainage systems.

## Economic Development and Tourism

### Industrial & Commercial Development

Industrial and commercial development is scattered throughout the County. However, the majority of future industrial/commercial sites are located at the State Route 29 industrial corridor, east of Celina to the county line. The northern and southern edge of the Village of Fort Recovery and the northwestern edge of the Village of Rockford, along the north side of US Route 33, Franklin Industrial Park adjacent to the airport, Marion Industrial Park south of Chickasaw and those of Coldwater and St. Henry.

Commercial areas may contain retail or wholesale businesses, offices or highway commercial establishments. The amount of development, its intensity and signage requirements will vary according to specific characteristics of the proposed location.

The use of access management as a way to reduce traffic congestion is encouraged in all commercial districts. Also, a pedestrian orientation is encouraged in all commercial development along major roadways.

Industrial areas include both heavy and light industrial, manufacturing, and wholesale uses, as well as some office and highway commercial development. The use of planned development districts, emphasizing quality development and open space, is recommended.

When industrial development abuts residential development, special buffering requirements will be encouraged. Signage and lighting requirements will vary depending on the characteristics of the surrounding areas.

### Strategies for Diversifying the Local Economy

**Purpose:** To encourage expansion of jobs within Mercer County while diversifying the tax base; to assure that commercially and industrially zoned land is appropriate in location, character, and extent; to assure that any site shall be developed in a safe manner with enhanced site design and architectural compatibility with surrounding development.

**Principles:**

1. Encourage commercial and industrial development within the existing service areas to avoid overextending services and infrastructure.
2. Ensure lot and development requirements adequate for light, air, scenic views, access by safety services, and safe access & egress for residents, employers/employees, and consumers.
3. Encourage those types of commercial and industrial establishments, which will stabilize and diversify the economic base.
4. Prohibit development in environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Prohibit development outside of designated “development areas”.
6. Reduce traffic congestion by locating major commercial and industrial uses near major thoroughfares and interchanges where they are more accessible.
7. Assure logical access to goods and services by encouraging planned, integrated commercial areas of compatible size with surrounding uses, and in proper locations to serve the residents.
8. Encourage desirable, productive commercial land development by creating sites with street access that can be developed in harmony with surrounding land uses in the area.
9. Encourage attractiveness by incorporating standards within the development process, which will result in well-designed commercial areas, integrating parking, shops, landscaping, and adequate buffering.

**Implementation Strategies:**

1. Require the incorporation of special buffering aimed at eliminating negative impacts.
2. Require that commercial and industrial developments be attached to public water/sewer facilities.

## Action Items for Diversifying the Economy

Following a proper re-investment strategy, encourage the expansion of jobs within Mercer County while diversifying the tax base; to assure that commercially and industrially zoned land is appropriate in location, character, and extent; staying focused on the multiple business sectors (agribusiness & production, food processing, advanced manufacturing, and logistics/transportation) in which this region has excelled; implement and encourage strategies that increases the likelihood of a more steady, stable, and sustainable growth into the future.

1. Encourage commercial development within the existing service areas to avoid overextending services and infrastructure.
2. Support current businesses and look for strategic linkages and cluster development to encourage more growth opportunities for these businesses within the sectors of this county already doing well.
3. Market and promote the area based on these current successful business sectors and on the successful businesses themselves that chose Mercer County in which to do business.
4. Examine what additional business sectors would do well in our setting that could complement, not compete, with our current businesses.

5. Encourage and establish Business Advisory Councils at every local school district to encourage collaboration on methods, outreach, and promotion of Workforce Development Tools. Increasing awareness and improving career alignment strategies will not only assist our county's young people in finding and attaining a successful career, but it will also improve the chances our local companies will find the local talent needed to sustain their operations into the future. This is the single most important Economic Development Re-Investment Strategy a County should be involved with when examining the continued renewal and growth of our communities, our schools and our businesses.
6. Promote Industrial Development in regions of the county that are conducive for such growth. Industrial Development areas along SR 29 (4-lane highway with rail), along US 33 (in and out of Rockford), and within the Industrial Parks in the City of Celina, Villages of Coldwater, St. Henry, Rockford, Fort Recovery, and Marion Township. These areas within the county are properly zoned and are attached to the appropriate water/sewer facilities.
7. Encourage attractiveness by incorporating standards within the development process, which will result in well-designed commercial areas, integrating parking, shops, landscaping, and adequate buffering.
8. Adopt a countywide economic development plan that is consistent with the goals and actions of the Comprehensive Plan. The Economic Development office shall be closely affiliated with the development "one stop shop", sharing information on available sites, their attributes and local jurisdictional requirements and concerns.

### Strategies for Enhancing the Local Recreation and Tourism Industry

**Purpose:** To locate, design and construct a countywide park system that provides recreational opportunities for the County; to protect and enhance Mercer County's scenic beauty, unique features, historic resources, and local heritage; to stimulate quality development and recreational opportunities that will increase the County's standing as a recreational destination; to enhance tourism as an economically viable industry in Mercer County.

**Principles:**

1. *Enhance unique landmarks and environmentally significant areas* by carefully locating parks.
2. *Maintain cooperative use of school-park sites and facilities* to provide maximum recreational opportunities.
3. *Carefully review park sites* accepted for use by the County to ensure suitability for the projected needs of a given area. Such review should include review of the topography, nature of the soils, vegetation, and surrounding land uses.
4. *Encourage well-engineered and attractive communities* that will preserve regional identity visual open space, and enhance property values and stimulate tourism through conservation design concepts.

5. *Reduce motorized vehicle orientation* by requiring pedestrian paths/trails be completed within and between new developments and encouraging the use of other pedestrian/bicycle linkages within and between existing residential, retail developments and commercial areas.
6. *Promote and encourage the dedication and development of bicycle/pedestrian linkages* between parks and other recreational and trail areas.
7. *Provide easy access from neighborhoods to all public facilities* particularly schools and parks.
8. *Use of private roads and easements* may be considered as an alternative to dedicated public right-of-way when developing the pedestrian/bicycle routes.

**Implementation Strategies:**

1. Explore the creation of a countywide land trust system
2. Explore the adoption of a fund a park district with the staff to properly maintain our park facilities.
3. Encourage developers to identify significant landmarks and environmentally sensitive areas in the proximity of their proposed developments.
4. Preserve the existing bikeway.

**Action Items for Enhancing the Local Recreation and Tourism Industry**

To locate, design, and construct a countywide park system that provides recreational opportunities for the County; to protect and enhance Mercer County's scenic beauty, unique features, and local heritage; to stimulate the quality development and recreational opportunities that will increase the County's standing as a recreational destination; to enhance tourism as an economically viable industry in Mercer County.

1. Locate parks and pathways to enhance unique landmarks and environmentally significant areas.
2. Establish an Eco-Tourism marketing strategy highlighting our trails, wetlands, and protected wildlife refuges to attract more people to the area to experience what the County has to offer.
3. Maintain cooperative use of school-park sites and facilities to provide maximum recreational opportunities.
4. Carefully review park sites accepted for use by the County to ensure suitability for the projected needs of a given area. Such review should include the review of topography, nature of the soils, vegetation, and surrounding land uses.
5. Encourage trail/bikeway connections through and between communities and developments.
6. Explore the creation of a countywide land trust system as well as a Lake Facilities Commission or Port Authority for such land preservation initiatives.
7. Establish and fund a park district with a staff to properly maintain park facilities.

## Natural Areas, Parks, and Recreation

Next to high quality schools, open space, amenities including parks and recreation lands and facilities, are rated high as attributes contributing to a high quality of life. Clearly, the existence of Grand Lake St. Marys and the adjacent State facilities establishes a centerpiece attraction, which few communities can match. In addition, the county contains a wide variety of other open space features that its citizens and visitors can utilize.

Mercer County has an abundance of natural resources that must be preserved to ensure the future viability of the area as a tourist destination as well as development area. Grand Lake is one of these primary resources. The Wabash and St. Marys Rivers and the land adjacent to them have also been identified as natural areas. These rivers serve as a drinking water source for some downstream municipalities.

Trees and vegetative cover should be preserved whenever possible. They reduce the amount of runoff going into the lake and streams and serve as a natural filter. Construction standards should be in place to limit the amount of runoff and sedimentation that occurs during the development process.

Each of the Townships has open space and recreation facilities, both public and private, which should be protected. Facilities such as the many historic churches and public buildings like various school buildings, township houses and municipal buildings all form a strong base when developing an open space plan. Add to these existing museums (e.g., the fort site and museum in Recovery, and the Mercer County Historic Museum); and, a long list of parks and water management areas and one can readily identify a strong environmental framework aimed at meeting the needs of Mercer County residents and visitors.

An added major element, which contributes to Mercer County's attractiveness, is the rich agricultural/rural setting of the County. To date, urban growth has been fairly well contained to the municipalities and sprawl characteristics are not as evident as in many other areas of Ohio. Retaining and continuing this valuable attribute will be a challenge in the future. The existence of Grand Lake St. Marys has also attracted investments by both public and private organizations. There are a number of sports clubs, health clubs, 4-H and YMCA facilities and a branch campus of Wright State University sited adjacent to the lake.

A concerted effort should be made to preserve and enhance our natural areas and recreational facilities. Good parks, quality recreational facilities and attractive vistas will help us to retain our businesses, give our young adults another reason to stay in the county and aid in attracting new industry. It is recommended that a park district and land trust be established and funded to give these facets of our community the proper emphasis.

## Strategies for Protecting Existing Natural and Historic Resources

**Purpose:** To protect Mercer County's existing natural resources.

**Principles:**

1. Preserve natural features such as wetlands, woodlands and stream corridors.
2. Avoid erosion and sedimentation by encouraging preventative measures.
3. Maintain historical and aesthetic value of Mercer County's landscape.
4. Encourage best management practices to avoid erosion and sediment while addressing drainage. Refer to the Grand Lake St. Marys/Wabash River Watershed Action Plan, [ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil\\_&\\_Water\\_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys%20%26%20Wabash%20R/](ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil_&_Water_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys%20%26%20Wabash%20R/)

## Implementation Strategies:

1. Develop prototype Conservation Development regulations for township zoning codes. Such regulations may include suggested new classification standards or the development of a township wide overlay district.
2. Establish a county park/trail committee to develop specific implementation steps targeted at the creation of more parkland, green space and pedestrian/bicycle trails. Explore the inclusion of the creation of a land trust for public and non-public lands.
3. Create or enforce drainage ditch maintenance regulations. Refer to the *Grand Lake St. Marys/Wabash River Watershed Action Plan*, [ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil\\_&\\_Water\\_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys%20%26%20Wabash%20R/](ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil_&_Water_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys%20%26%20Wabash%20R/)
4. Enforce existing flood plain, wetland, and county storm drainage management regulations.
5. Support and encourage the recommendations of the Grand Lake St. Marys Watershed Protection Plan, [ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil\\_&\\_Water\\_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys%20%26%20Wabash%20R/](ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil_&_Water_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys%20%26%20Wabash%20R/). also, refer to the *Grand Lake St. Marys & Its Watershed: Water Quality Improvement Initiatives*, [http://www.ohiodnr.com/portals/12/water/watershedprograms/GLSM/glsm\\_water\\_quality\\_plan.pdf](http://www.ohiodnr.com/portals/12/water/watershedprograms/GLSM/glsm_water_quality_plan.pdf)

## Action Items for Protecting Mercer County's Existing Natural & Historic Resources

1. Maintain and enhance the visibility of those elements that build the image of the County such as the historic areas and the rural character of the surrounding countryside.
2. Amend subdivision regulations to require storm water prevention plans according to OEPA requirements. See: [http://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/storm/construction\\_index.aspx](http://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/storm/construction_index.aspx) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources *Rainwater and Land Development Manual* <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/9186/Default.aspx>
3. Amend the subdivision regulations requiring that all wetlands, woodlands and streams be identified within pre-plat material. Such a requirement will permit the Planning Commission to identify areas, which should be preserved in the development process.



4. Encourage that wetlands and streams be preserved through the establishment township zoning regulations through setback (no-build) zone of not less than 100 feet.
5. Address present problems related to rural drainage and nutrient runoff via the Soil and Water Conservation Office, the Lake Restoration Commission, and the AgSolutions Group.
6. Restrict the tie-in of septic overflow to farm drainage tiles.
7. Enforce drainage ditch maintenance regulations and Best Management Practices (BMPs) within our watersheds.
8. Enforce existing flood plain, wetland, and county storm drainage management regulations.
9. Support and encourage the implementation of the Grand Lake St. Marys Watershed Protection Plan  
[ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil\\_&\\_Water\\_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys2026Wabash20R/](ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil_&_Water_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys2026Wabash20R/) and the Grand Lake St. Marys Restoration Commission Lake Action Plan  
<http://www.lakeimprovement.com/sites/default/files/glsmrc-plan.pdf>.
10. Promote and encourage the preservation of sensitive areas along the St. Marys River, Wabash River, Beaver Creek, Grand Lake St. Marys, Mile Creek and other feeder streams to these major watercourses.

## Strategies for Promoting an Interconnected Greenway and Open Space System

**Purpose:** To cluster development and maintain open spaces to preserve the rural character of the area, while still allowing development to occur naturally in response to the market; To Provide and protect Mercer County's natural features in keeping with the vision in the plan.

### Principles:

1. *Provide an interconnected open space system* to permanently maintain visual and functional linkages between parks and other open spaces.
2. *Promote the conservation concept through the acquisition of property or development rights and easements* as development occurs and preserve open space, scenic views, woodlands, wetlands and flood plains.
3. *Preserve natural features* such as woodlands and ravines through strict enforcement of flood plain, wetland, and county storm drainage management regulations.
4. *Avoid erosion and sedimentation* by encouraging preventative measures during the development process.
5. *Support and encourage*, the recommendations of the Grand Lake St. Marys Watershed Action Plan.  
[ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil\\_&\\_Water\\_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys2026Wabash20R/](ftp://ftp.dnr.state.oh.us/Soil_&_Water_Conservation/WatershedActionPlans/EndorsedPlans/GrandLakeStMarys2026Wabash20R/)
6. *Develop streetscapes* as attractive and integral parts of public open places, including setbacks from the centerlines of all major thoroughfares as a natural buffer.

## **Implementation Strategies:**

1. Establish a county land trust.
7. Promote the conservation concept through the acquisition of development rights and easements as development occurs.
8. Encourage municipalities to purchase land around towns for parks.
9. Develop a countywide open space plan.
10. Form a parks district.

## **Action Items for the Development of County Open Space and Greenways**

1. Develop prototype Conservation Development regulations for the County and township zoning codes. Such regulations may include suggested new classification standards or the development of a countywide overlay district.
2. Establish a county park/trail committee to develop specific implementation steps targeted at the creation of more parkland, green space and pedestrian/bicycle trails. Explore the inclusion of the creation of a land trust for public and non-public lands.

## **Transportation**

### **State Highways**

Currently no major improvements in Mercer County are listed as priority projects by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).

### **Locally Identified State Highway Needs**

1. US 33  
US 33 has been identified by the Ohio Department of Transportation as a macro corridor and recognized as a long term need to become a four-lane highway or at this highway is large commercial vehicles. The Village of Rockford is concerned about the safety of these large vehicles traveling through town combined with the SR 118 traffic. Some of these vehicles haul material that could be quite hazardous if involved in an accident or accidental spill.
2. Celina SR 29  
Three roadway sections that, based on the vehicle count ratio and level of service, show periodic levels of congestion. However, the Ohio Department of Transportation analyzed the location and expected traffic growth for all routes around Celina. These sections are all on Market Street (SR 29) in Celina between Main Street (SLM 12.43) and Lake Shore Drive (SLM 12.80). ODOT currently has no plans for added capacity projects at this time.
3. Western Ohio Interstate  
Several western Ohio counties joined to promote a North — South Interstate Route through the western tier of counties from Cincinnati north through the state as an alternate to 1-75, which is

expected to become deficient and very difficult to add lanes to. This group felt this would also promote economic development in these counties and be preferable to widening 1-75. While this could be a very long-term possibility, there have been many other projects identified as more urgent needs.

## Future Traffic Projections

The only current macro corridor through the county is US 33. As other sections are improved, the traffic will probably increase through Mercer County. The Ohio Department of Transportation estimates the development of property within ten miles of these macro corridors can be significantly influenced by any major improvements. If US 33 is improved to four lanes, portions or most of it could be relocated.

The existing four-lane SR 29, which connects Celina to US 33 and to 1-75 to the east, is the current major artery to Celina.

US 127 has significant traffic and sections close to Celina should be improved. Most of the traffic on this road appears to be relatively locally generated from the populated areas within Mercer County, from Greenville in Darke County, and from Van Wert to the north. Even if a four-lane bypass was built to the north and west of Celina, it may not significantly affect the traffic flow from the south or east. Large trucks could be required to take the bypass, improving the situation in downtown Celina. Other alternatives should be considered to handle traffic from both the south and east through Celina.

## Local Roads

Much of the county's population is near Celina and around the lake. Coldwater, St. Henry, Montezuma, Chickasaw, Burkettsville and Maria Stein are all located in the southeast corner of the county. Within five miles to the east in Auglaize County are St. Marys, New Bremen and Minster. Northern Darke County and northwestern Shelby County, also is fairly heavily developed. Consequently, the southeast quarter of Mercer County and the area surrounding Celina has the most traffic. The traffic on our local roads is not congested and no additional lanes are required, but wider lanes and shoulders with flatter front slopes are needed for safety reasons. The southern half of the county also has a lot of livestock and dairy operations, which require many large heavy trucks on most of these roads. In addition to needing wider lanes and shoulders, these large heavy trucks require stronger pavements and better bridges and culverts. The grain operations in the northern half of the county also need stronger, wider pavements, and bridges. The intersections of all these roads should also be improved to provide adequate visibility and maneuverability.

Transporting and maintaining commercial wind turbines require intensive use of local roadways creating a concern for both short and long-term transportation problems. Road Use Maintenance Agreements (RUMA) should be heavily scrutinized to ensure mechanisms are available to improve / maintain local roadways. Specifically, the RUMA with local officials should require pre-construction upgrades, post-construction repairs, and financial assurance to return all roads to pre-construction condition or better upon decommissioning.

## Programmed Local Projects

Encourage the donation of roadway right-of-way to improve the safety of local roads by widening them. Roadway widening projects are planned for the following locations:

- Howick (2.549 miles) – from US 127 to SR 197
- Depweg (1.836 miles) – from US 127 to Sebastian
- Howick (3.144 miles) – SR 197 to US 33
- Tama (1.999 miles) – SR 49 to Wabash
- Siegrist-Jutte (3.023 miles) – SR 118 to US 127
- Karch (2.522 miles) – St. Anthony to SR 29
- St. Anthony (4.995 miles) Ohio-Indiana Line to Erastus-Durbin
- Philothea (3.070 miles) SR 118 to Carthagen
- Burkettesville-St. Henry (4.438 miles) SR 119 to Burkettesville Village Limits
- St. Johns (1.011 miles) SR 274 to Brockman
- Mud Pike (2.913 miles) SR 118 to City of Celina
- Frahm Pike (1.991 miles) SR 49 to SR 118
- Township Line (2.520 miles) St. Anthony to SR 29

## Mercer County Rail Transportation Facilities

Mercer County's goal is to optimize the potential for trade and economic development. Freight rail service provides important economic development benefits; it is a key location factor for many new companies who are seeking to locate or expand. Rail service also provides important environmental benefits, such as positive air quality gains, energy consumption reduction, and saves in pavement maintenance.

**Rail Freight** — Mercer County is presently served by a short line railroad operated by the R. J. Corman Company. Rail freight service is important to manufacturing and agriculture. Rail freight service can be a critical factor in the development of the industrial area east of Celina, located between the four lanes, SR 29 and the railroad. Rail freight service is also important if Mercer County would expand four, their grain or livestock exporting. A nearby automated intermodal freight terminal could make Mercer County more attractive to manufacturing.

**Rail Passenger Service** — Mercer County is not on the rail corridor that would serve any major metropolitan areas, making passenger service availability less likely. However, passenger service from Lima to Grand Lake could provide recreational and retail opportunities.

## Mercer County Air Transportation Facilities

**Airports** — Mercer County is served by the Lakefield Airport, located south of Celina at the southeast corner of US 127 and SR 219. This facility currently has 16 usable hangars. In 2009, the runway was extended to 4400 feet to accommodate larger aircrafts. Mercer County currently has plans to construct a taxiway parallel to the runway, maintain the current airport infrastructure, and conduct studies to

assess future need. Prior to this project improvement, a T-hangar (plane storage building) that would obstruct the proposed taxiway will need to be removed. A new hangar is planned to be constructed.

This is a publicly-owned airport. The Lakefield Airport Authority Board, appointed by the Board of Commissioners, contracts a fixed-based operator. The current manager, Island Seas, LLC, Rockford, Ohio offers flight instruction. Island Seas, LLC plans to expand the service to supply pilots for private companies and offer an on-site mechanic. There is a growing market for short-term and/or same-day business trips. A private charter flight allows busy executives to bypass long lines and security screenings at big airports.

Nearby airports are important to businesses with commercial airplanes and important to recreational pilots.

## Mercer County Bicycle Transportation System

**Rail-Trail Bikeways** — Mercer County is served by a railroad converted to a bikeway between Celina and Coldwater. This four-mile bikeway is heavily used by bicyclists, skaters, joggers, and walkers. It is connected to designated bike routes through town. Users can travel from the park in Goldwater to Eastview Park in Celina if they so desire. The SR 29 connector links the Celina street system to the bike lanes on SR 703.

**Bike Lanes** — Designated bike lanes along SR 703 connect St. Marys and Celina. These bike lanes pass the Mercer/Auglaize YMCA and the Wright State University Lake Campus. US 33 has also widened lanes.

**Future Bikeways** — (paths and lanes) Additional bikeways connecting other recreational facilities, such as Grand Lake, parks, and swimming pools, would enhance recreational opportunities.

Connectors could be built in and out of villages to low traffic rural roads. Install bike lanes in development areas where needed to make bike access practical.

## Mercer County Transit Services

Mercer County does not have an established public transit system. Services are provided to eligible residents through county agencies, such as the Mercer County Veterans, Council on Aging, and non-profit organizations.

COLT Transportation System is a referral-based, cooperative, multi-agency transportation system administered locally by Sources Community Network Services. Currently, 22 participating agencies refer riders for services. Referral organizations include local government, aging programs, programs for people with disabilities, churches, schools, healthcare, and the private sector. The COLT Transportation System provides transportation services for employment, medical, court, and social service needs. Eligible riders are residents of Auglaize, Mercer, or Van Wert counties to destinations anywhere within Ohio and Indiana.

With no public transit system, expansion of an on-demand service is the most feasible method of expanding the residents served by public transit.

## Transportation Strategies

1. Exercise access management systems to reduce traffic conflicts and the stripping of township and county roads.

## Transportation Action Items

1. Develop an access management plan.
2. Develop regulations and guidelines aimed at accomplishing the goals of the access management plan.
3. Widen narrow pavements and narrow shoulders on local roadways.
4. Encourage the private donation of road right-of-way to improve local narrow roadways for safety and use.

## Utilities

### Utility Strategies

1. Encourage well/septic inspections prior to the transfer of property.
2. Encourage residential, commercial, and industrial development within the existing service areas to avoid overextending services and infrastructure.

### Utility Action Items

1. Require that residential, commercial, and industrial developments be attached to public water/sewer facilities.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## Population and Growth Trends

### Introduction

Mercer County ranks 62<sup>nd</sup> out of the 88 counties in the State of Ohio in regards to population size. The County is located in the western edge of Ohio midway between the Ohio River and the northern border of the State, bordered on the east by Auglaize County, the north by Van Wert County, the west by Adams and Jay Counties in Indiana, and south by Darke County. Established in 1820, these 463.2 square miles were named for General Hugh Mercer, a veteran of the Revolutionary War.<sup>4</sup>

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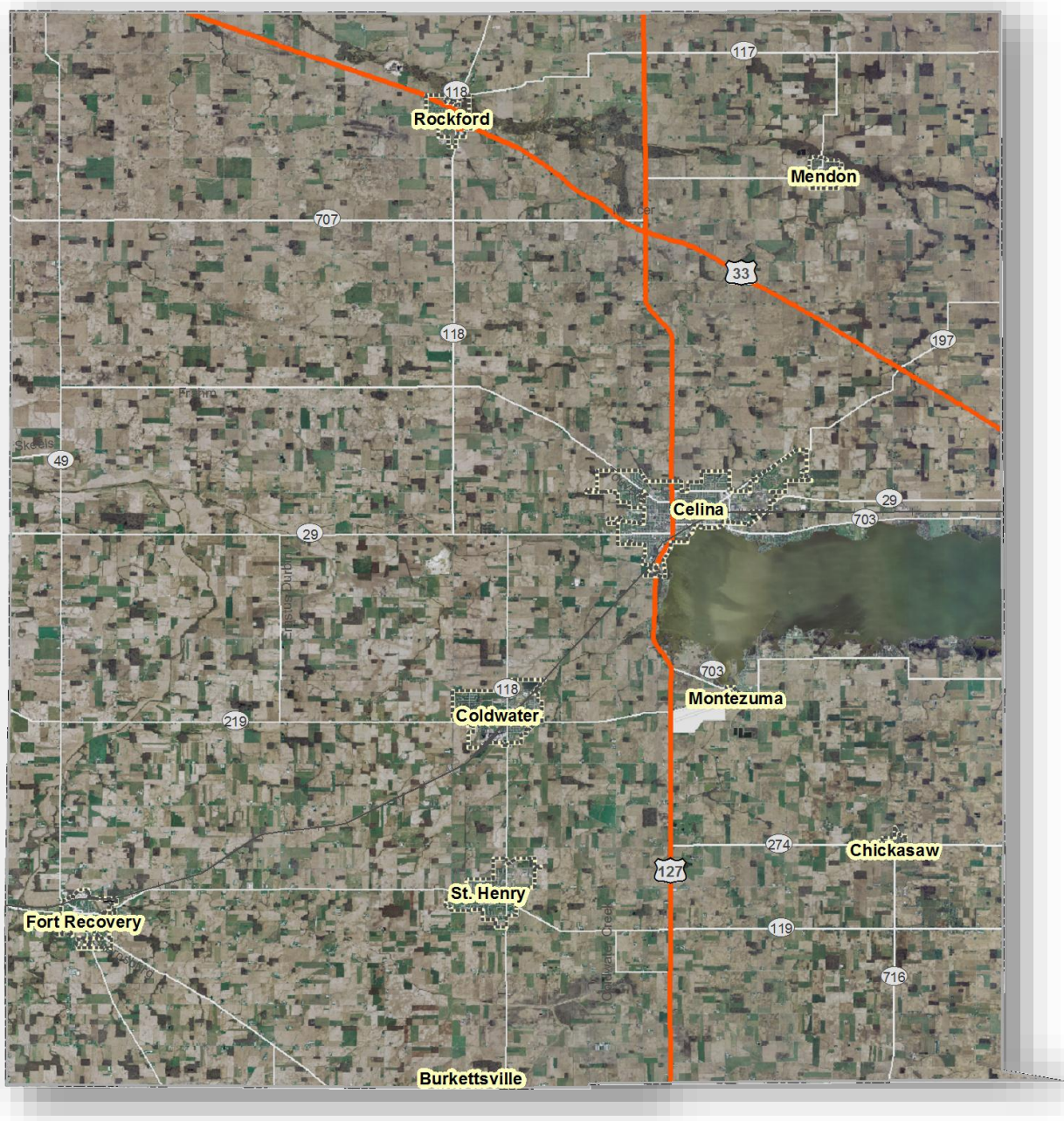
<sup>4</sup> Ohio Department of Development,

The County is home to one city and eight villages, 14 townships, and six public school districts encompassing 22 public schools and one private school, one public library with three branches, and one four-year public university.

As shown in the following figure, the county is bi-sected north to south by US Route 127 and across the northeast corner of the county by US Route 33. US State 127 runs from Chattanooga, Tennessee in the southern United States to junction with I-75 in Michigan and provides the primary north/south transportation through Mercer County. US State 33 runs from the northwestern Indiana near Elkhart through Ohio to West Virginia near the Virginia border and provides the primary northeast/southwest transportation through the northeastern quadrant of Mercer County connecting with US Interstate 75 in Auglaize County, Ohio. North and south transportation through Mercer County is also provided by State Routes 49, and 118; east/west passage through the county is also provided by State Route 29 and 219 through the midsection of the county and 119 through the southern portion of the county.

Along with the highways that run through the county, a railroad Norfolk Southern Railway bisects the county from east to west. However, there are no major Norfolk Southern Railway rail classification yards in the county.





Source: Ohio Department of Transportation and Ohio Statewide Imagery Program

**Figure 1: Mercer County**

## Mercer County Population Trends

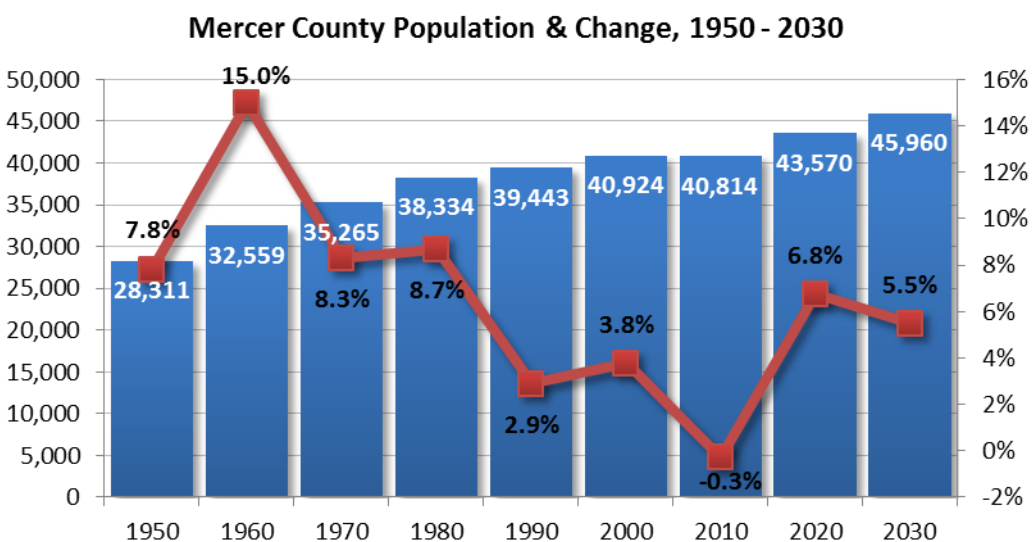
According to the 2010 United States Census, 40,814 people lived in 15,532 households across Mercer County. Another 439 resided in group quarters. Of all Mercer County residents, 39,761 (97.4%) were white down nearly two percent from 2000, 101 (0.2%) were African American, and 614 or 1.5% of the population was Hispanic.

Population by Race	Persons	Percent
<b>White</b>	39,761	97.4
<b>Black or African American</b>	101	0.2
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	101	0.2
<b>Asian</b>	181	0.4
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</b>	71	0.2
<b>Some Other Race</b>	229	0.6
<b>Two or More Races</b>	370	0.9
<b>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</b>	Persons	Percent
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	614	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 & Census 2010 Summary File 1

Table 1: Population by Race, 2010

The United States Census also reports that the population in Mercer County had steadily increased since 1950 until 2000 when population growth peaked at 40,924 residents. In 2010, the United States Census reports the population of the county decreased slightly to 40,814 residents or -0.3%. However, the Ohio Department of Development projects that the County's population will show moderate growth through 2030 — an additional 6.8% increase in the population by 2020 and then the rate of increase is expected to taper off by 2030. The county is expected to witness a total increase in the population of 12.6% or 5,776 residents through the year 2030.



Source: Ohio Department of Development, Ohio County Profiles

**Figure 2: Mercer County Population & Change, 1950 – 2030**

The county has one city with a population greater than 10,000 — Celina. Celina is the county's largest incorporated jurisdiction with a population of 10,400. Over one-quarter (25.9%) of Mercer County's population resides in the City of Celina. Coldwater is the largest village with a population of 4,427.

Jurisdiction	Population
<b>Celina city, Ohio</b>	10,400
<b>Coldwater village, Ohio</b>	4,427
<b>St. Henry village, Ohio</b>	2,427
<b>Fort Recovery village, Ohio</b>	1,430
<b>Rockford village, Ohio</b>	1,120
<b>Mendon village, Ohio</b>	662
<b>Chickasaw village, Ohio</b>	290
<b>Burkettsville village, Ohio</b>	244
<b>Montezuma village, Ohio</b>	165

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 & Census 2010 Summary File 1

**Table 2: Population by City/Village, 2010**

The county's largest Township is home to 13,155 residents 10,400 of whom live in the City of Celina. The remaining 2,755 residents live in the unincorporated portion of the county. One in seven people (15.5%) reside in the Butler Township—Mercer County's second largest township. The US Census reports the fastest growing township in Mercer County, Gibson Township, increased by 7.3% from 1,869 residents in 2000 to 2,005 in 2010. Conversely, Dublin Township witnessed the largest decrease in population (5.1%), from 2,254 residents in 2000 to 2,138 residents in 2010. Between the 2000 and 2010 Census, the Village of Fort Recovery witnessed the highest rate growth in Mercer County—19% or 165 residents, St. Henry grew 7% or 156 individuals, while Gibson and Recovery Townships had the highest township rates of growth at a 7% and 5% increase in population, respectively. Conversely, the villages of Chickasaw and Montezuma witnessed the largest decline 20% (74 residents) and 14% (26 residents), respectively. The township exhibiting the largest decline (5%) in population was Dublin Township, 116 residents. For a complete historical breakdown of the population by Township, refer to the following table and for a geographical breakdown by Township, refer to the following map.

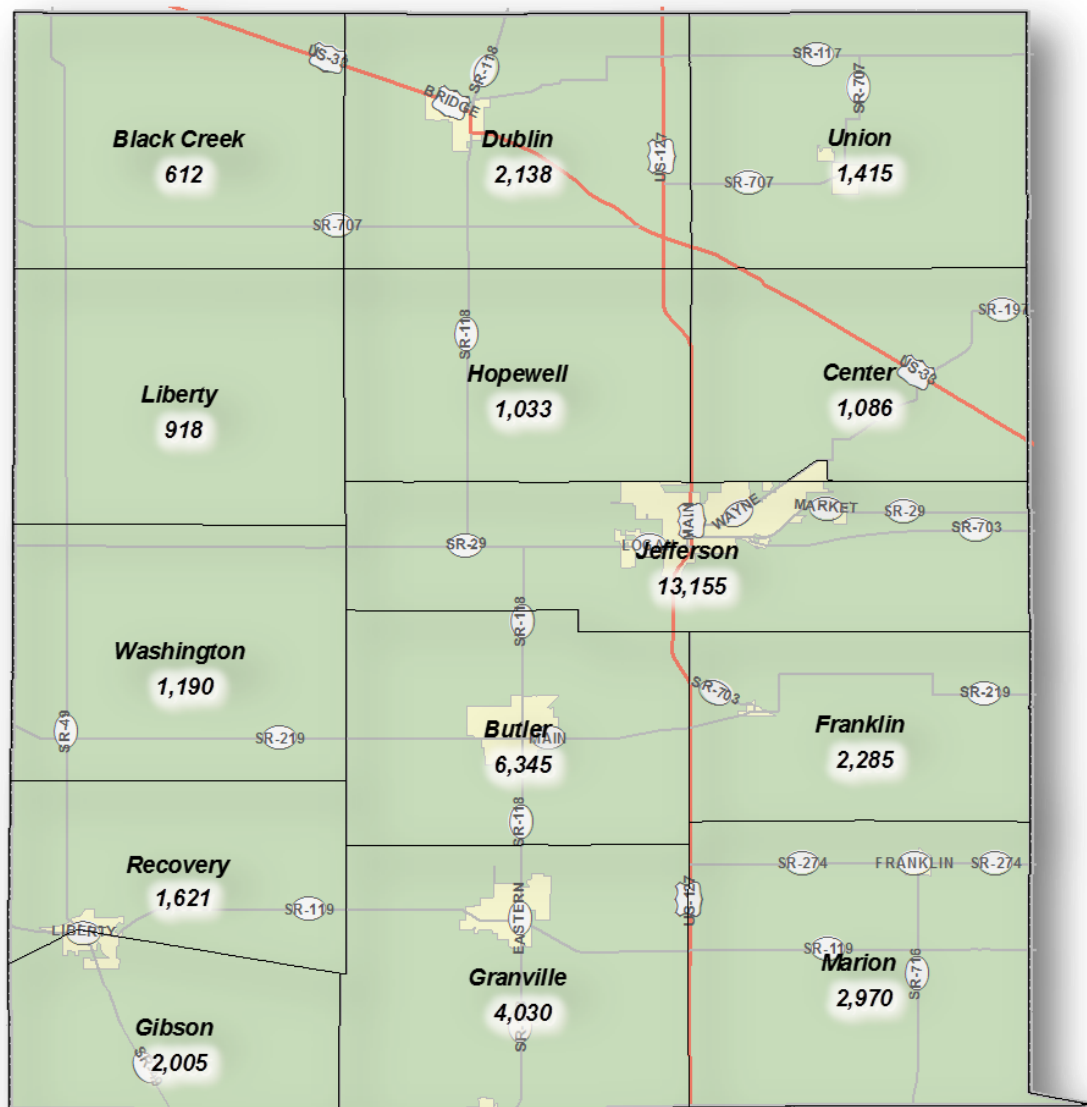
Geography	2000 Population	2010 Population	Percent Change 2000-2010
<b>Mercer County</b>	40,924	40,814	-0.3%
<b>Jefferson township</b>	13,231	13,155	-0.6%
<b>Butler township</b>	6,459	6,345	-1.8%
<b>Granville township</b>	3,885	4,030	3.7%
<b>Marion township</b>	2,969	2,970	0.0%

<b>Franklin township</b>	2,303	2,285	-0.8%
<b>Dublin township</b>	2,254	2,138	-5.1%
<b>Gibson township</b>	1,869	2,005	7.3%
<b>Recovery township</b>	1,550	1,621	4.6%
<b>Union township</b>	1,490	1,415	-5.0%
<b>Washington township</b>	1,218	1,190	-2.3%
<b>Center township</b>	1,082	1,086	0.4%
<b>Hopewell township</b>	1,066	1,033	-3.1%
<b>Liberty township</b>	917	918	0.1%
<b>Black Creek township</b>	631	612	-3.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 & Census 2010 Summary File 1

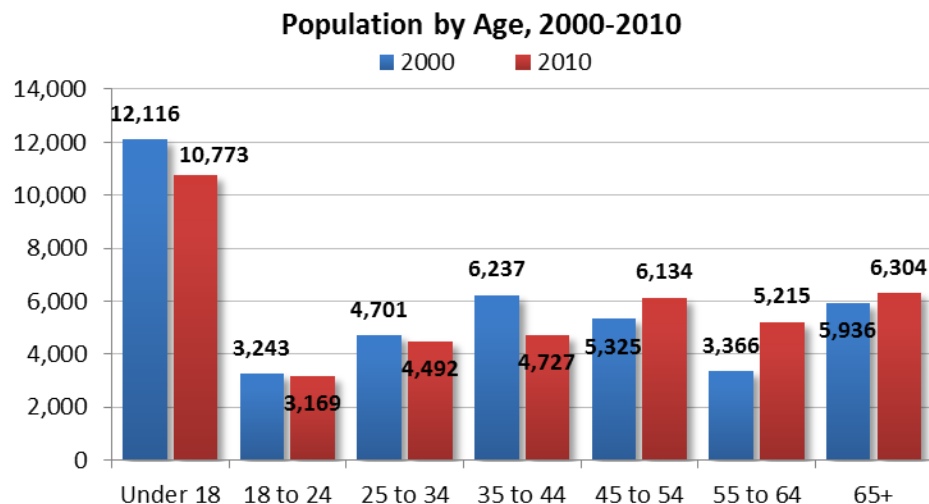
**Table 3: Population by Township, 2000-2010**





**Map 2: Population by Township, 2010**

Since the 2000 Census, the population has continued the trend of aging in place as witnessed in the figure below. The median age has increased from 35.7 in 2000 to 39.4 in 2010. Younger age cohorts (44 years of age and younger) have experienced declines ranging from 2.3% to 24.2%, while the population cohorts 45 years of age and older experienced significant increases. According to the 2010 Census, the largest population age cohort was under 18 years of age (26.4% - see the following figure). The second largest age groups were between 45 and 54 years old and 65 years of age or older (15.0% and 15.4%, respectively). In the 2010, one in seven residents was age 65 years or older and this population is expected to grow 38.0% by the year 2030, when one in five residents will be 65 years of age or older.

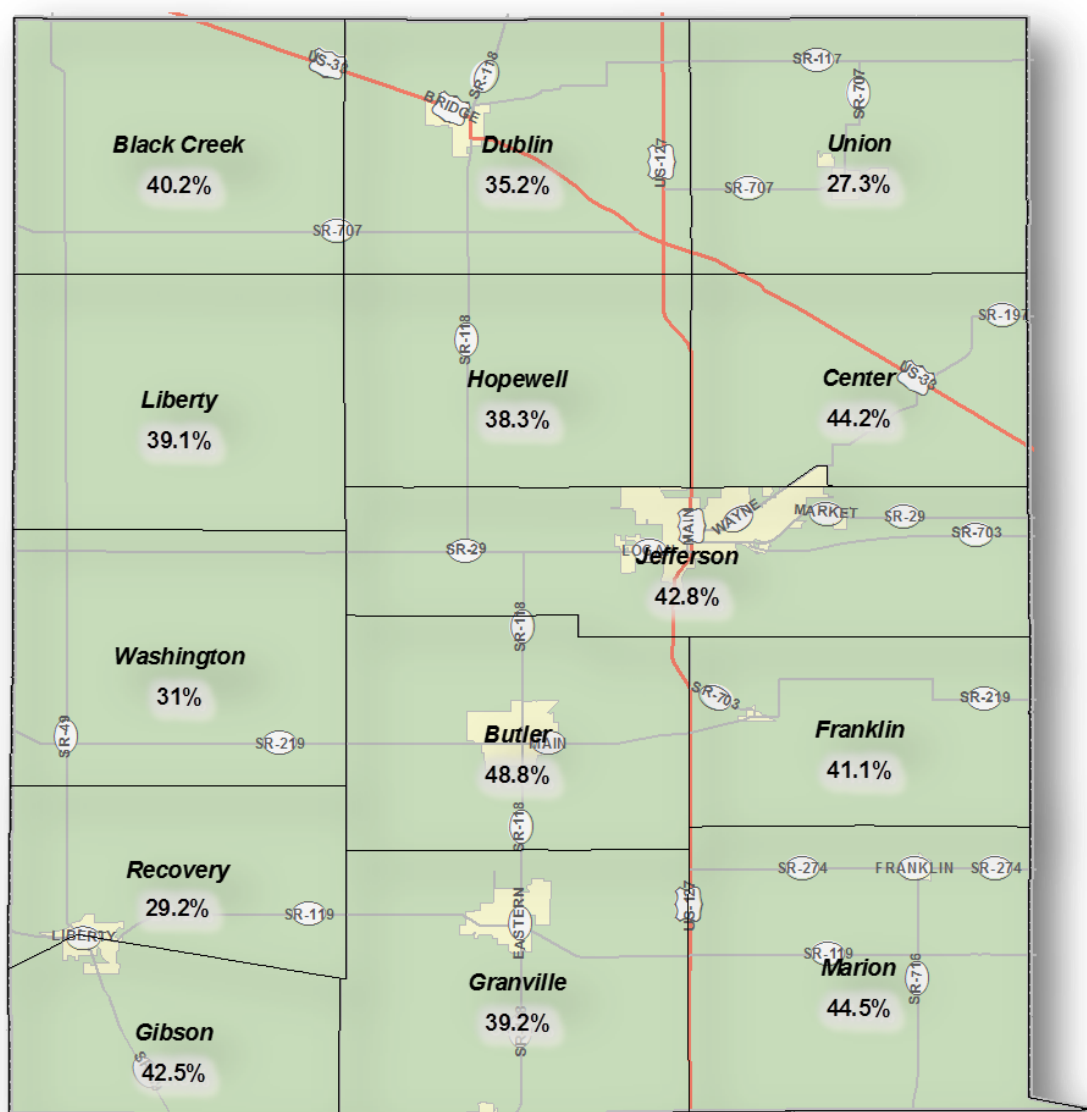


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 & Census 2010 Summary File 1

**Figure 3: Population by Age, 2000-2010**

Eighty-eight percent of the county's residents over 25 years of age and older have graduated from high school (equivalent to the overall state average – 87.4%) and 15.3% are estimated as having bachelor's degrees and/or graduate/professional degrees, which is nearly 9% lower than the 24.1% state average.

However, six townships have 40% of the 25 and over population receiving at least some college education. Following closely behind are Granville and Hopewell Townships each with over 38% of persons 25 and over with post-high school education. As previously mentioned, a well-educated workforce is a good incentive for businesses to locate in the community and is an indication of economic stability. For a detailed look by Township, refer to the following map.



**Map 3: Percentage of the Population with Some College Education or Higher by Township, 2010**

Of the estimated 10,565 individuals over the age of three enrolled in school, 677 (6.4%) were enrolled in preschool, 601 (5.7%) in kindergarten, 4,924 (46.6%) elementary and/or middle school, and 2,503 (23.7%) in high school. The remaining 17.6% were enrolled in college or graduate school<sup>5</sup>

According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census of Housing and Population, Mercer County had 17,432 housing units—15,606 are considered occupied housing units. Four out of every five of these units were owner occupied (81.2%) units and the median value was \$125,600, nearly \$11,000 below the State's median value. Nearly 3,000 units in Mercer County were rental units and the median contract rent was \$606, \$72 below the State's median rent.

<sup>5</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey



As reflected in the Mercer County Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, there is a lack of quality, affordable housing for single head of household females and the aging citizens that are becoming disabled. Although many homes for sale have an affordable price, the rehabilitation costs make the home unaffordable. There is always a waiting list at SOURCES of families needing financial assistance to improve the homes they currently live in.

Mercer County's civilian labor force was made up of approximately 21,680 residents and nearly one-third (30.7%) of the county's labor force was employed in the Manufacturing industry. One in five workers was employed in the educational services, and health care and social assistance industry. Retail was another major area of employment, employing approximately 10.4% county's work force. The county's unemployment rate was 6.2%, which was lower than both the national (7.9%) averages and the state average (8.6%).

## The Protected Classes

### Race and Ethnicity

Since 2000, the minority population in Mercer County has increased 65.0% (from 638 individuals in 2000 to 1,053 in 2010) also becoming more diverse as the years have passed. In 2010, 97.4% of the population was white, down 1.0% since the decennial census. Another notable change in the County was witnessed in the Hispanic population, which experienced a 30.6% increase since the 2000 Census—from 470 individuals in 2000 to 614 individuals in 2010.

Since 2000, the minority population has remained consistently more concentrated in the City of Celina than the remainder of County. In 2010, the population was 2.8% Hispanic and 5.1% minority races of the population compared to the County, 1.5% and 2.6% respectively. The Minority population residing in Celina accounts for over half of the Minority population in the County.

The following figure illustrates the historical change in the minority and Hispanic population since 2000 and how these populations are distributed (although unevenly) throughout the County and where these populations are most heavily concentrated.

Geography	2000 Minority		2010 Minority		Percent of County Pop	2000-2010 Percent Change	2000 Hispanic		2010 Hispanic		Percent of County Pop	2000-2010 Percent Change
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent			Count	Percent	Count	Percent		
<b>Mercer County</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>1053</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>
<b>Black Creek Township</b>	11	1.7%	8	1.3%	0.0%	-27.3%	0	0.0%	4	0.7%	0.0%	N/A
<b>Butler Township</b>	72	1.1%	75	1.2%	0.2%	4.2%	64	1.0%	50	0.8%	0.1%	-21.9%
<b>Center Township</b>	20	1.8%	25	2.3%	0.1%	25.0%	9	0.8%	12	1.1%	0.0%	33.3%
<b>Dublin Township</b>	15	0.7%	52	2.4%	0.1%	246.7%	24	1.1%	30	1.4%	0.1%	25.0%
<b>Franklin Township</b>	13	0.6%	32	1.4%	0.1%	146.2%	7	0.3%	16	0.7%	0.0%	128.6%

Geography	2000 Minority		2010 Minority		Percent of County Pop	2000-2010 Percent Change	2000 Hispanic		2010 Hispanic		Percent of County Pop	2000-2010 Percent Change
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent			Count	Percent	Count	Percent		
Gibson Township	8	0.4%	30	1.5%	0.1%	275.0%	8	0.4%	9	0.4%	0.0%	12.5%
Granville Township	31	0.8%	63	1.6%	0.2%	103.2%	36	0.9%	53	1.3%	0.1%	47.2%
Hopewell Township	14	1.3%	28	2.7%	0.1%	100.0%	9	0.8%	6	0.6%	0.0%	-33.3%
Jefferson Township	398	3.0%	613	4.7%	1.5%	54.0%	284	2.1%	343	2.6%	0.8%	20.8%
City of Celina	305	3.0%	527	5.1%	1.3%	72.8%	220	2.1%	293	2.8%	0.7%	33.2%
Liberty Township	9	1.0%	18	2.0%	0.0%	100.0%	1	0.1%	13	1.4%	0.0%	1200.0%
Marion Township	7	0.2%	14	0.5%	0.0%	100.0%	9	0.3%	15	0.5%	0.0%	66.7%
Recovery Township	17	1.1%	35	2.2%	0.1%	105.9%	5	0.3%	15	0.9%	0.0%	200.0%
Union Township	11	0.7%	27	1.9%	0.1%	145.5%	14	0.9%	26	1.8%	0.1%	85.7%
Washington Township	12	1.0%	33	2.8%	0.1%	175.0%	0	0.0%	22	1.8%	0.1%	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 & Census 2010 Summary File 1

Table 4: Minority Population, 2000-2010

As illustrated in the previous table, the minority population living outside of the City of Celina is pretty evenly distributed across the county, but seven townships witnessed minority populations above two percent — Center, Dublin, Hopewell, Jefferson, Recovery, and Washington Townships. Conversely, the Hispanic population is disproportionately concentrated in six of the townships—Center, Dublin, Granville, Liberty, Union, and Washington Townships. If the population were evenly distributed throughout the county, the population would be 1.5% Hispanic in each of the townships.

### Households

From 2000 to 2010, the number of households increased by 5.3%, from 14,756 in 2000 to 15,532 in 2010 in Mercer County, while the average household size decreased from 2.74 persons per household in 2000 to 2.60 in 2010—a 5.1% decrease in size. Similarly, eight of the County's townships saw an increase in population outpacing the county, but most notably two townships witnessed growth in the double digits—Granville (13.8%) and Marion Townships (12.6%). For a complete breakdown of households by jurisdiction, refer to the following table.

Geography	2000		2010		2000-2010 Percent Change
	Count	% of County Total	Count	% of County Total	
Mercer County, Ohio	14,756		15,532		5.3%
Blackcreek township, Mercer County, Ohio	220	1.5%	220	1.4%	0.0%
Butler township, Mercer County, Ohio	2,246	15.2%	2,378	15.3%	5.9%
Center township, Mercer County, Ohio	373	2.5%	407	2.6%	9.1%

Dublin township, Mercer County, Ohio	812	5.5%	833	5.4%	2.6%
Franklin township, Mercer County, Ohio	932	6.3%	1004	6.5%	7.7%
Gibson township, Mercer County, Ohio	635	4.3%	691	4.4%	8.8%
Granville township, Mercer County, Ohio	1,201	8.1%	1,367	8.8%	13.8%
Hopewell township, Mercer County, Ohio	359	2.4%	392	2.5%	9.2%
Jefferson township, Mercer County, Ohio	5,309	36.0%	5,420	34.9%	2.1%
Celina city, Ohio	4,191	28.4%	4,329	27.9%	3.3%
Liberty township, Mercer County, Ohio	341	2.3%	337	2.2%	-1.2%
Marion township, Mercer County, Ohio	888	6.0%	1000	6.4%	12.6%
Recovery township, Mercer County, Ohio	495	3.4%	528	3.4%	6.7%
Union township, Mercer County, Ohio	562	3.8%	556	3.6%	-1.1%
Washington township, Mercer County, Ohio	383	2.6%	394	2.5%	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 & Census 2010 Summary File 1

**Table 5: Households and Household Change, 2000-2010**

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, seventy percent (71.9%) of households are families. The largest cohort is the married-couple family with no children present, accounting for 36.1% of all households. Twenty-four percent of all households are married-couple households with children under 18 years of age, while 6.8% are single-parent households. Nonfamily households increased by 16.6% since the 2000 Census, from 3,739 in 2000 to 4,360 in 2010 and 87.3% of these households are householders living alone. For a complete breakdown by household type, refer to the following table.

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total households	14,756	100.0	15,532	100.0
Family households (families)	11,017	74.7	11,172	71.9
With own children under 18 years	5,471	37.1	4,786	30.8
Married-couple family	9,461	64.1	9,334	60.1
With own children under 18 years	4,554	30.9	3,724	24.0
Male householder, no wife present	457	3.1	665	4.3
With own children under 18 years	258	1.8	377	2.4
Female householder, no husband present	1,099	7.4	1,173	7.6
With own children under 18 years	659	4.5	685	4.4
Nonfamily households	3,739	25.3	4,360	28.1
Householder living alone	3,343	22.7	3,808	24.5
Households with individuals under 18 years	5,708	38.7	5,070	32.6
Households with individuals 65 years and over	3,930	26.6	4,285	27.6
Average household size	2.74	(X)	2.60	( X )
Average family size	3.24	(X)	3.11	( X )

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 & Census 2010 Summary File 1

**Table 6: Household Type, 2000 – 2010**

## Economic Conditions

The overall economy for Mercer County has been resilient over the past several years despite a national/state economic downturn. Although there remain a few pockets of weakness, many business sectors within the County are experiencing growth and are showing signs of continued strength. Agri-Business, Food Processing, and Agricultural-related sectors have expanded their reach and thus have experienced steady growth, which can be expected to continue into the future. Advanced manufacturing/machining/tool & die within Mercer County has also seen growth over the past couple years. Several of Mercer County's larger employers within the manufacturing sector expect continued strength and future growth moving forward. Aside from these large employers, much of the growth within advanced manufacturing and tooling can be attributed to the small & medium sized machine shops scattered throughout the County. The growth potential for many 15-20 employee companies to become 40-60 employee companies is real over the next several years. Finally, the travel & tourism industry for the region is showing some signs of life after a very rough 2010.

Mercer County lodging tax receipts rose by 8% and the campground occupancy rate rose by nearly 9% over the previous year. The collaborative effect of local, state, and federal efforts to improve Grand Lake have resulted in a much more stable situation in 2011. The advisory in the summer of 2011 only urged people to avoid visible surface scum at the public beaches and did not limit people's ability to use the lake, as the toxin levels were significantly lower. Although the County is unable to predict what effect future advisories will have on the usage of the lake and its related travel and tourism businesses, it is clear that the positive momentum this area has witnessed over the past year will continue.

The negativity surrounding the lake several years ago has also turned around. The state and local officials have worked diligently to improve the lake's water quality, which will help all economic conditions. Recreational businesses will prosper, the new sporting goods store should thrive, local restaurants, hotels, and real estate sales are recovering from the decline they experienced when the blue-green algae was first witnessed. Ag Conversions (an organic fertilizer manufacturer) are actively working on a new facility in Mercer County to convert the excess livestock waste into an organic fertilizer that will reduce the phosphorous level in the watershed, ultimately improving the lake's water.

Mercer County has not had any major layoffs or negative economic activity in the last six months. Actually, we have seen a steady climb in the number of employees at various companies. Randall Bearing, Inc. (a bronze manufacturing company) started their 23,700 sq. ft. expansion this spring, which will create 10 FTE jobs. J & M Manufacturing just completed their latest expansion, which should create 10 jobs by the time they are in full production.

Currently the Economic Development office is discussing future expansions with three more manufacturing companies and one food manufacturing company, all expecting to grow within the next year. On the commercial development front, two daycare centers expanded recently and a new dog grooming/boarding facility is constructing a new building and will start business this fall. Various vacant

buildings in the City of Celina have been filled due to companies out-growing their current space. The old Wal-Mart building was leased to Dunham's Sports this summer, which will filled 35,000 sq. ft. vacant floor space and created 25 jobs. Second National Bank is opened another branch office in Celina.

Therefore; the future economic outlook looks bright for Mercer County; however, Mercer County continues to work on our strong areas, such as agriculture, manufacturing and strive to improve the areas we are inefficient.....which are workforce development and available industrial land (due to the high price of land. Farmland has increased dramatically.)

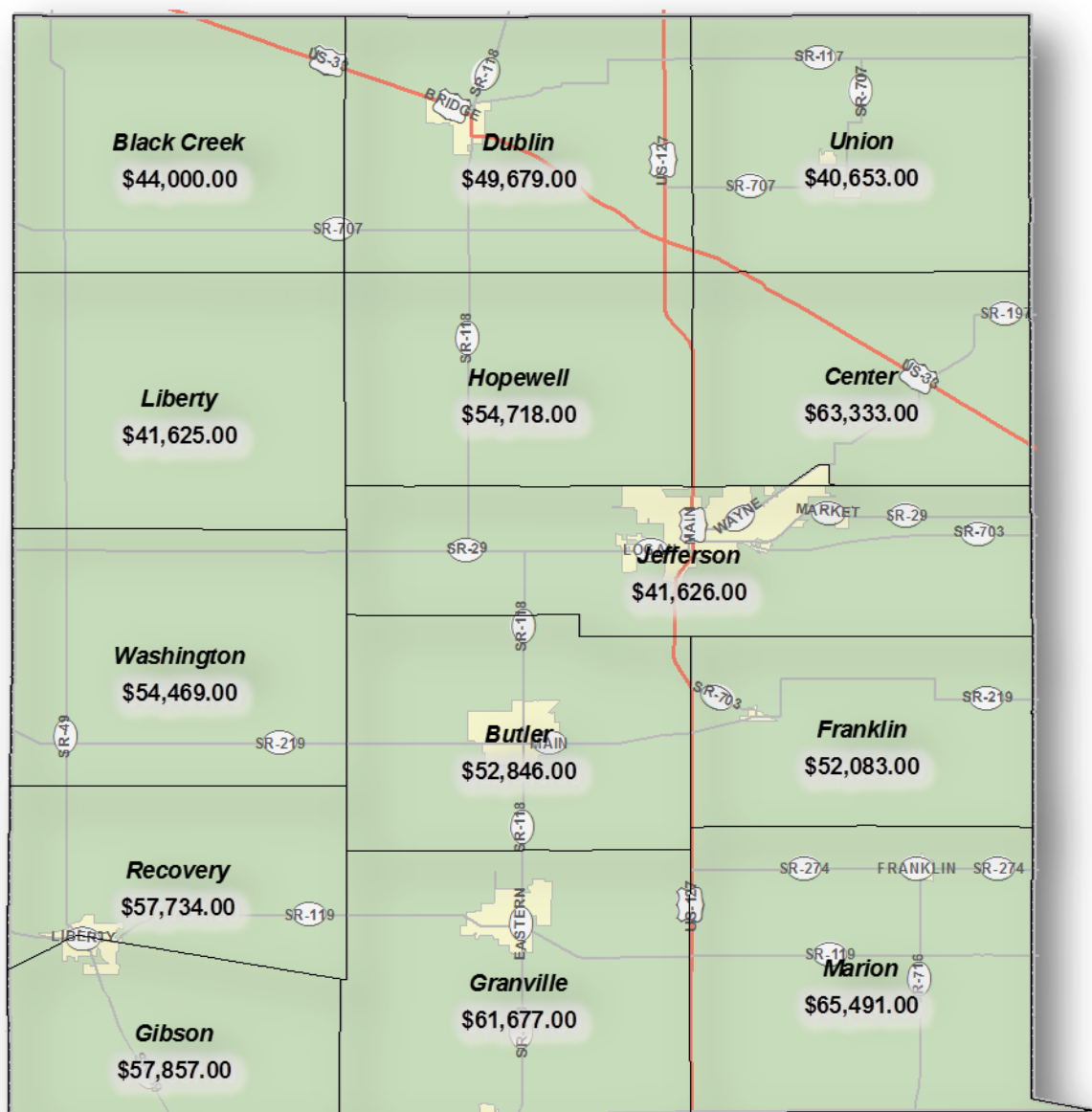
Per capita and household income are indicators of both the overall economic health of the community and the financial resources of residents. A higher than average per capita income is important indicator of a county's ability to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce. In 2010, Mercer had a per capita personal income of \$35,168. Per capita income increased 5.1% from 2009 to 2010 outpacing both the state and nation - 2.9% and 2.8%, respectively. However, per capita income is lower than both the national and state average, ranking Mercer County 17th in the state up 18 places from 2000, when Mercer County ranked 35th in the state. Notice that the per capita income has risen annually at an average of 3.7% since 2000.

	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>US</b>	\$30,319	\$35,452	\$37,725	\$39,506	\$40,947	\$38,846	\$39,937
<b>Ohio</b>	\$28,695	\$32,445	\$34,008	\$35,183	\$36,401	\$35,150	\$36,162
<b>Mercer County</b>	\$25,750	\$29,233	\$29,889	\$32,361	\$34,962	\$33,456	\$35,168

*Source: Per Capita Income, Ohio Department of Development citing the Regional Economic Information System, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce. April 2012*

**Table 7: Per Capita Income, 2000-2010**

Household income is the most important factor determining a household's ability to afford shelter and life's necessities. The 2010 median household income for Mercer County was \$49,719. Households in five of Mercer County's townships earned less than the median household income of the county in 2010. In Union Township, the median income was estimated to be \$40,653, 82.7% of the County's median income. One in five (19.6%) of the households in Union Township reported incomes below \$25,000 in 2010 – 2.8% more households than the County. The median income of households living in Granville, Center, and Marion Townships was over \$60,000 and \$12,000 greater than the County's median income, according to the 2005-2010 American Community Survey. For a more detailed look at median income by geography, see the map below.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

**Map 4: Median Household Income, 2010**

The 2006-2010 American Community Survey reports that in Mercer County, 8.3% of all residents are living below the poverty level. Over thirteen percent (1,697 residents) of the population in the Jefferson Township also lived below the poverty level—accounting for over half of the County’s population living below the poverty level. Similarly, nearly thirteen percent of the population (12.7% or 302 residents) in Dublin Township and 12.0% of the population (110 residents) in Liberty Township lived below the poverty level in 2010. Refer to the table below for a complete breakdown by township.

	Total Population	Persons below the Poverty Level	Percentage below the Poverty Level
<b>Mercer County</b>	40,522	3,359	8.3%
<b>Jefferson Township</b>	12,911	1,697	13.1%
<b>Dublin Township</b>	2,371	302	12.7%
<b>Liberty Township</b>	917	110	12.0%
<b>Union Township</b>	1,322	144	10.9%
<b>Washington Township</b>	1,380	149	10.8%
<b>Franklin Township</b>	2,218	201	9.1%
<b>Black Creek Township</b>	378	33	8.7%
<b>Butler Township</b>	6,389	350	5.5%
<b>Recovery Township</b>	1,540	74	4.8%
<b>Center Township</b>	1,279	58	4.5%
<b>Gibson Township</b>	1,856	64	3.4%
<b>Granville Township</b>	4,015	113	2.8%
<b>Marion Township</b>	2,975	64	2.2%
<b>Hopewell Township</b>	971	-	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

**Table 8: Persons Living below the Poverty Level**

Examination of 2010 American Community data reveals that 8,744 Mercer County residents (21.6%) also met guidelines to qualify for many Federal Low-Income Assistance Programs (i.e., food and nutrition assistance programs, home energy assistance programs, and low-income Medicaid coverage, etc.). Income eligibility to qualify for these program benefits or entitlements is based upon the applicant's income qualifying at or below 185% of the poverty level. Using this metric, nearly one-third (32.5% or 449) of Washington Township Residents, 31.4% of Liberty Township residents, 29 percent of Black and Dublin Township residents are considered to be low-income (below 185% of the poverty rate). Refer to the table below.

	Persons below 185% Poverty Level	Percentage of the Total Population
<b>Mercer County</b>	8,744	21.6%
<b>Washington Township</b>	449	32.5%
<b>Liberty Township</b>	288	31.4%
<b>Black Creek Township</b>	111	29.4%
<b>Dublin Township</b>	693	29.2%
<b>Recovery Township</b>	444	28.8%
<b>Jefferson Township</b>	3,687	28.6%
<b>Union Township</b>	327	24.7%
<b>Center Township</b>	256	20.0%
<b>Franklin Township</b>	373	16.8%
<b>Gibson Township</b>	297	16.0%
<b>Butler Township</b>	906	14.2%
<b>Marion Township</b>	370	12.4%
<b>Granville Township</b>	464	11.6%
<b>Hopewell Township</b>	79	8.1%

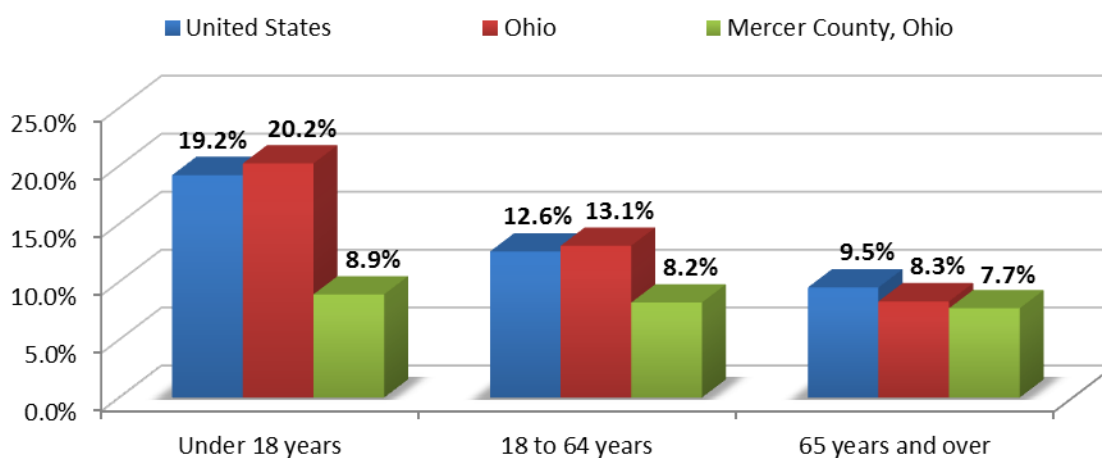
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

**Table 9: Persons Qualifying for Federal Low-Income Assistance Programs, 2010**



The 2006-2010 American Community Survey reports that in Mercer County, persons living below the poverty level are somewhat evenly distributed across the age cohorts when compared to the state and the nation. For example, in 2010, poverty affected children the hardest — 8.9% of the population under the age of 18 is reported as living below the poverty level—over ten percent lower than both the state and the nation. Nearly eight percent (7.7%) of the senior adult population lives below poverty level, which is similar at both the state and national level. However, eight percent of the population between the ages of 18 and 64 years live below the poverty level, which is 4.4% lower than the state and 4.9% lower than the nation.

### Percentage of the Population below the Poverty Level



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

**Figure 4: Percentage of the Population below the Poverty Level by Age Cohort, 2010**

In 2011, the Ohio Workforce Informer reports that Mercer County's civilian labor force (individuals ages 16 to 64) was made up of approximately 24,500 residents after witnessing eleven years of increase since 2000 when the workforce was reported at 21,700. The county's unemployment rate was 5.9 percent (1,400 Unemployed) in 2011. The following table shows a comparison of unemployment rates in 2000 and 2011 for Mercer County, the State of Ohio, and the United States. As can be seen in the following table, unemployment in the county is below both the national averages and the state average through 2011.

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force		Employment		Unemployment		Unemployment Rate	
	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011	2000	2011
<b>Mercer County</b>	21,700	24,500	20,900	23,100	900	1,400	4.0	5.9
<b>OHIO</b>	5,807,000	5,806,000	5,573,000	5,305,000	234,000	501,000	4.0	8.6
<b>US</b>	142,583,000	153,617,000	136,891,000	139,869,000	5,692,000	13,747,000	4.0	8.9

Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2011

Table 10: Mercer County Employment Statistics, 2011

Year	Establishments	Employees	Total Wages (in thousands)	Average Annual Wage
2000	912	12,775	\$308,043	\$24,113
2001	930	12,623	\$319,533	\$25,314
2002	939	12,705	\$327,470	\$25,775
2003	943	13,212	\$352,408	\$26,673
2004	937	13,631	\$376,367	\$27,611
2005	950	14,115	\$403,176	\$28,564
2006	961	14,381	\$425,866	\$29,612
2007	954	14,557	\$443,389	\$30,458
2008	946	14,659	\$460,557	\$31,418
2009	950	13,781	\$429,780	\$31,185
2010	942	14,508	\$460,876	\$31,766
<b>Change from 2000 (pre-2001 recession total Statewide employment peak) to 2010</b>				
<b>Absolute Change</b>	30	1,733	\$152,832	\$7,653
<b>Percent Change</b>	3.3%	13.6%	49.6%	31.7%

Source: Ohio Labor Force Informer, Employment and Wages

Table 11: Total Private Employment, 2000-2010

From 2000 to 2010, Mercer County has seen the number of private establishments increase by 30 businesses, from 912 employers to 942—a 3.3% increase. The employed workforce of these businesses increased by a total 13.6% over this same period from 12,775 to 14,508 employees. Total wages paid by these establishments increased 8.2% or \$35 million while the average annual wage increased 7.3 percent from \$24,113 to \$31,766.

In 2011, the service industries employed the most workers in the county, totaling 12,141 (52.6 % of the workforce). Manufacturing is the largest employing industry with 5,066 workers. The retail/wholesale industry is the second largest employer in Mercer County, employing 3,245 workers or 14.0% of the workforce. For a complete breakdown by industry, refer to the following table. In 2011, the average weekly earnings for individuals employed by all industries in the county were \$37,334 (see the following table). The Management of Companies and Enterprises industry paid the highest weekly wage at \$2,090. The utilities industry yielded the second highest average weekly wage at \$1,905, and the finance and insurance industry paid the third highest weekly wage at \$1,071. Individuals employed in the service industries: wholesale and retail trades; accommodations and food services; and arts, entertainment, and recreation had the lowest average weekly earnings, however, these industries typically employ a substantial number of workers and in this case, employ 20.4%.

NAICS Code	Description (Expand All)	2011 Jobs	2016 Jobs	Change	2011 Avg. Annual Wage	2011 Establishments
<b>11</b>	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,726	1,732	6	\$23,613	31
<b>21</b>	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	20	21	1	\$55,673	1
<b>22</b>	Utilities	32	33	1	\$99,074	1
<b>23</b>	Construction	1,311	1,445	134	\$45,575	121
<b>31-33</b>	Manufacturing	5,066	5,173	107	\$50,873	88
<b>42</b>	Wholesale Trade	724	715	-9	\$55,633	69
<b>44-45</b>	Retail Trade	2,521	2,786	265	\$27,092	161
<b>48-49</b>	Transportation and Warehousing	1,303	1,563	260	\$46,453	53
<b>51</b>	Information	220	245	25	\$32,181	14
<b>52</b>	Finance and Insurance	992	1,150	158	\$48,123	67
<b>53</b>	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	812	941	129	\$19,970	30
<b>54</b>	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	521	576	55	\$37,308	39
<b>55</b>	Management of Companies and Enterprises	23	12	-11	\$108,707	2
<b>56</b>	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	591	743	152	\$20,578	34
<b>61</b>	Educational Services	167	191	24	\$15,877	3
<b>62</b>	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,710	1,959	249	\$29,107	76
<b>71</b>	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	225	236	11	\$13,225	14
<b>72</b>	Accommodation and Food Services	1,236	1,319	83	\$13,620	82
<b>81</b>	Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,096	1,138	42	\$21,708	93
<b>90</b>	Government	2,802	2,840	38	\$46,251	94
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23,098</b>	<b>24,819</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>\$37,334</b>	<b>1,074</b>

Source: EMSI Complete Employment - 2011.4

**Table 12: Employment by Industry, 2011-2016**

Industry in Mercer County, as whole, is expected to experience 7.5% growth through 2016. The most notable changes expected through 2016 include a 25.7% increase in the manufacturing industries, and the following industries are expected to see an increase in total annual average employment of 3% or more:

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services - 5.1%
- Utilities - 4.0%
- Information - 3.2%
- Wholesale Trade - 3.2%
- Construction - 2.9%
- Management of Companies and Enterprises - 2.9%
- Manufacturing - 2.3%
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction - 2.1%
- Other Services (except Public Administration) - 2.1%
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting - 2.0%
- Finance and Insurance - 1.3%

The fastest growing occupations are dominated by the Health Care industry, of which three-quarters of the fastest growing occupations belong to this group. See the following list for the fastest growing occupations:

- Cardiovascular Science - 32%
- Biomedical Sciences, General - 32%
- Oncology and Cancer Biology - 32%
- Physical Therapy/Therapist - 24%
- Finance, General - 24%
- Physician Assistant - 19%
- Athletic Training/Trainer - 18%
- Cardiovascular Technology/Technologist - 18%
- Occupational Therapy/Therapist - 17%
- Kinesiology and Exercise Science - 17%
- Immunology - 17%
- Information Technology - 16%

## Historic Resources

### Historic Impacts on County Geography

Mercer County has a rich history, containing the sites of two important outposts of the Indian War era, Fort Recovery and Fort Adams. The site of the battle of Fort Recovery in 1791 is commemorated in a State of Ohio Historical Memorial.

The U.S. Government treaties with Native Americans: Ft. Greenville, 1795; Foot of the Rapids, 1817; and St. Marys, 1818; established boundaries that shape the geographic layout of portions of the county and is traced by some of the township road system. The Indian reserves created in the northern portion of the county are also still mapped, although long since have been sold into private ownership.

U.S. Route 33 traces the historic trails to Fort Wayne, a major fur trade center of the eighteenth century. The area is believed to have archeological remnants of structures of the period, although exact locations of structures related to Ft.

Adams have not been officially documented and catalogued yet.

Equally significant are the traces of Indian settlements and activities prior to influx of the French and English explorers and settlers. Artifacts may be found along the St. Marys River and Wabash River, which were important tribal routes for the tribes of the area. The area around the St. Marys River and U.S. Route 127 was known as “Halfway Crossing”, marking the halfway point between Fort Wayne and Greenville. Indian burial mounds are known to exist in the county.

There appear to be prehistoric bones and other fossilized items preserved in some unique areas of the county.

### Historic Architecture

A number of examples of significant architecture from the nineteenth century can be found in the cities and villages of Mercer County. A portion of Celina’s downtown has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district. This action not only officially recognizes this collection of buildings as significant, but also makes a significant tax credit available to building owners who seek to renovate those buildings in keeping with their historic character.

Another listing on the National Register of Historic Places is a thematic grouping known as The Land of the Cross-Tipped Churches. It is a selection of sixty-four churches and church-related buildings on over thirty sites within a twenty-two mile radius of the former convent at Maria Stein. In spite of the designation in 1979, some of these buildings have been destroyed. The large residential grouping on North Main Street in Celina has been inventoried and is judged to be eligible for listing on the National Register. The attempt to achieve the National Register designation as a district did not go forward due to public resistance. However, the Mendon Town Hall has received National Register recognition and the protections it conveys.

Of those on the register is the locally significant Riley House, which now houses the Mercer County Historical Society and Museum. It is a Victorian era home, built by the descendants of Captain Riley. He was a surveyor of the territory and platted the City of Celina.

There is an assortment of one room schoolhouses still standing. They were inventoried in 1973, although some have been demolished since then.

## Organizational Resources

The historic accounts of the region are preserved through the efforts of the Mercer County Historical Society and Museum and the Celina Preservation Board. In addition to housing a wide variety of collections of articles significant to the county's history, the Museum arranges special exhibits, provides interpretive educational tours of the Museum, and conducts and publishes original research into aspects of the area's history. To date, seven books have been published and sold to interested individuals and libraries throughout Ohio.

## Potentially Endangered Historic Resources

Most of the sites in Mercer County having historical and archeological resources lie in private holdings. There are also locations of particular historic stories of the county, of which physical evidence may or may not yet exist. Refer to the Historical Areas Map at the end of this section.

**Prehistory:** The receding glaciers of the ice age left gravel kames scattered throughout this largely level county. Near Cranberry, in Granville Township, a small bog and prairie were created on a plateau of the high ground of Mile Creek and the Wabash Divide. From here, the creek flows south to the Ohio River. In these areas, of both historic and environmental significance, ancient prairie plants, otherwise unusual to Ohio and petrified bones of ancient animals have been discovered. Slightly farther west, mastodon teeth have been unearthed.

**Native Tribes:** There is an organized association of Indian relic collectors who closely guard knowledge of their artifact hunting grounds and Indian burial mounds. They fear trespassers and vandals will spoil their sites if locations become general knowledge. It cannot be determined if property owners will continue to protect areas or make them available for academic study to increase the public knowledge of the history of the area, or whether they regard their finds simply as private treasures. However, there is some general knowledge that many articles can be found in the flood plains of the Wabash River and St. Marys Rivers, which were routes of travel for the early, fur trading between the French and English and the Indian Tribes.

**Indian Wars:** Westward movement of Americans, after the Revolutionary War, resulted in the Indian Wars. Two significant battles were fought outside of Ft. Recovery; the fort grew into a settlement and is well documented. The location of Ft. Adams, built in 1794, is approximated. In the summer of 1998, Dr. Mike Pratt of Heidelberg University helped conduct a search for remnants of Ft. Adams. One building of the entire complex was uncovered. The search is scheduled to continue over the next several years to recover other areas of the old Ft. Adams.

**Lake & Canal:** Grand Lake was created by building a dam between glacial ridges at the peak of the Ohio Divide, and thus fed both the Erie and Miami Canal Systems. Several remnants of the canals are marked. Canal workers, many of German descent, bought farmland in the lands that dried up due to the building of the canal system. Very few of the pre-1850's German styled homes they built are still in existence today. These German settlers' being predominately of the Roman Catholic faith constructed the massive and ornate "Cross Tipped Churches" that dominate the village parishes that they serve.

**Oil Industry:** From the late 1800's until approximately 1920, a significant amount of oil was extracted in the county. Most of the approximately 2,700 wells had played out by the 1920's. Many of the drilling rigs were located in the middle of Grand Lake itself, and some remains of rigs are thought to lie submerged there.

**Black History:** In the early 1800's, small settlements of freed slaves developed in the areas of Carthagenia and Philothea. The Randolph Freed Men case was a notorious lawsuit brought in the early twentieth century by descendants of freed slaves. In 1846, an agent of a dying Virginian was sent to purchase land in that area for his freed slaves. When they arrived at New Bremen (then a part of Mercer County), they apparently were not permitted to land, and they went on to settle in Troy and Greenville. The descendants sought to recover the money that purchased the land their ancestors were denied.



## Environmental Factors

### Summary

Environmental issues in Mercer County range from common to unique. Common issues include those related to land use, geology, hydrology and climate. Unique issues are those related to Grand Lake St. Marys. There are several additional significant and sensitive environmental areas.

### Common Issues

Throughout Mercer County history, land has been cleared and tilled for agriculture use. Rich soils and relatively level terrain lend itself to agriculture being the predominant economic source for this county. In order to efficiently plant row crop, fields are tilled for effective drainage. These tile systems include ditches and create very flashy waterways. Flashy waterways lead themselves require buffers and maintenance to prevent erosion and nutrient loss. According to the Total Maximum Daily Load Studies, completed by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Upper Wabash River watershed is considered to be the most degraded in the state of Ohio. This condition is attributed to the agriculture practices. Further information can be found at <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/tmdl/WabashRiverTMDL.aspx>

As Mercer County became populated, various types of septic systems were installed over time. Sometimes these systems are not updated or maintained as required. This can quickly contribute to poor water quality in the streams and ditches. In 2011, the Health Department estimated there are over 1,000 failing septic systems in just the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed. Failing systems are those, which are discharging, those over 25 years old or those not properly maintained.

At one time Mercer County encouraged cluster septic systems. At that time it was a good practice. The Health Department is no longer encouraging these systems. Instead, connection to central sewer or separate septic systems is encouraged. Additional information on this topic can be seen in the section about residential expansion.

Stormwater is an issue everywhere, including in Mercer County. To be specific construction sites are a leading issue. Typical construction sites do not follow best management practices. They do not install silt fence, plant grass in a timely fashion or create a stormwater management plan. In Ohio, the EPA requires a plan and actions if there is more than 1 acre of soil disturbed. The Division of Surface Water is aware of this issue and attempts to exercise their enforcement. This enforcement takes a long period of time. This enforcement problem is not unique to Mercer County. Counties who want construction sites to follow best management practices are implementing and enforcing their own requirements. EPA typically works with these counties and encourages this commitment to improving water quality.

Mercer County villages have either completed or are planning to complete separation of sanitary and storm sewers. In some villages the wastewater treatment plant would overflow every time it rained, discharging untreated water into the streams. Another rain water sanitary sewer overflow issue is when the level of Grand Lake St. Marys rises. This causes an influx of water into the treatment plant,

according to the Solid Waste Department. At this time there is an analysis being completed to determine if the lake level can be lowered to prevent this issue.

As stated earlier, Mercer County is an agronomic driven county. This includes a high concentration of livestock. Some are not permitted by the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA). These farms have smaller livestock numbers than the amount required by ODA to obtain a permit. Typically, these are family farms with a variety of livestock. Livestock utilize and produce nutrients. How these nutrients are handled varies across the county. Mercer Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCS) encourage livestock and grain farmers to properly utilize nutrients and obtain and utilize a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP).

Woodlands, both wooded river corridors, their flood plains and the remaining wooded acreage in the county are made unique because of their relative scarcity. The vegetation along the rivers serves to trap topsoil and excessive nutrients eroding from unprotected soil.

Flood zones must not be obstructed. The current zoning and subdivision regulations of the County are in accordance with Federal regulations for qualification for flood insurance.

## Unique Issues

### Rules

The majority of the GLWWA watershed lies in the Central Lowland physio-geographic province, and more specifically in the Indiana and Ohio Till Plain section. Throughout the watershed, the relief is nearly level with some gentle sloping areas, with the greatest elevation found at approximately 1,070 ft. mean sea level (msl) in the watershed's southwest corner near the Mercer-Darke County Line.

"Mercer County is a part of two continental watersheds. The Ohio-Erie Divide crosses the county in a general east-west direction and is partly oriented to the Wabash moraine through its central extension in the county. North of this divide, the county is mostly drained into Lake Erie by the St. Marys River and its tributaries. ... Grand Lake lies across the Ohio-Erie divide. It is an artificially created body of water 13,500 acres in size, two-thirds of which is in Mercer County. The lake was created by damming each end of a long, narrow swale to provide water for the Ohio-Erie Canal system. It drains to Lake Erie from the east and to the Ohio River from the west by Beaver Creek, a major tributary of the Wabash River in Mercer County." [Priest, T.C. 1979]

Historical and current topographical maps of Ohio and each county can be found at the following website: <http://historical.maptech.com/statemap.cfm?stateabr=OH>.

The Grand Lake St. Marys watershed is a unique watershed in that it overlies two major drainage basins. Approximately 60% of the watershed lies west of the drainage divide and has an historical Ohio River drainage via Beaver Creek to the Wabash River. The remaining 40% of the watershed historically drained to the St. Marys River and on to the Maumee River to Lake Erie. Since the current drainage to Lake Erie is through a feeder canal, and discharge volume is estimated to be as little as 10% of the lake

outflow, the watershed is considered to be a part of the larger Wabash River Hydrologic Unit, and is administered as such by state and federal agencies.

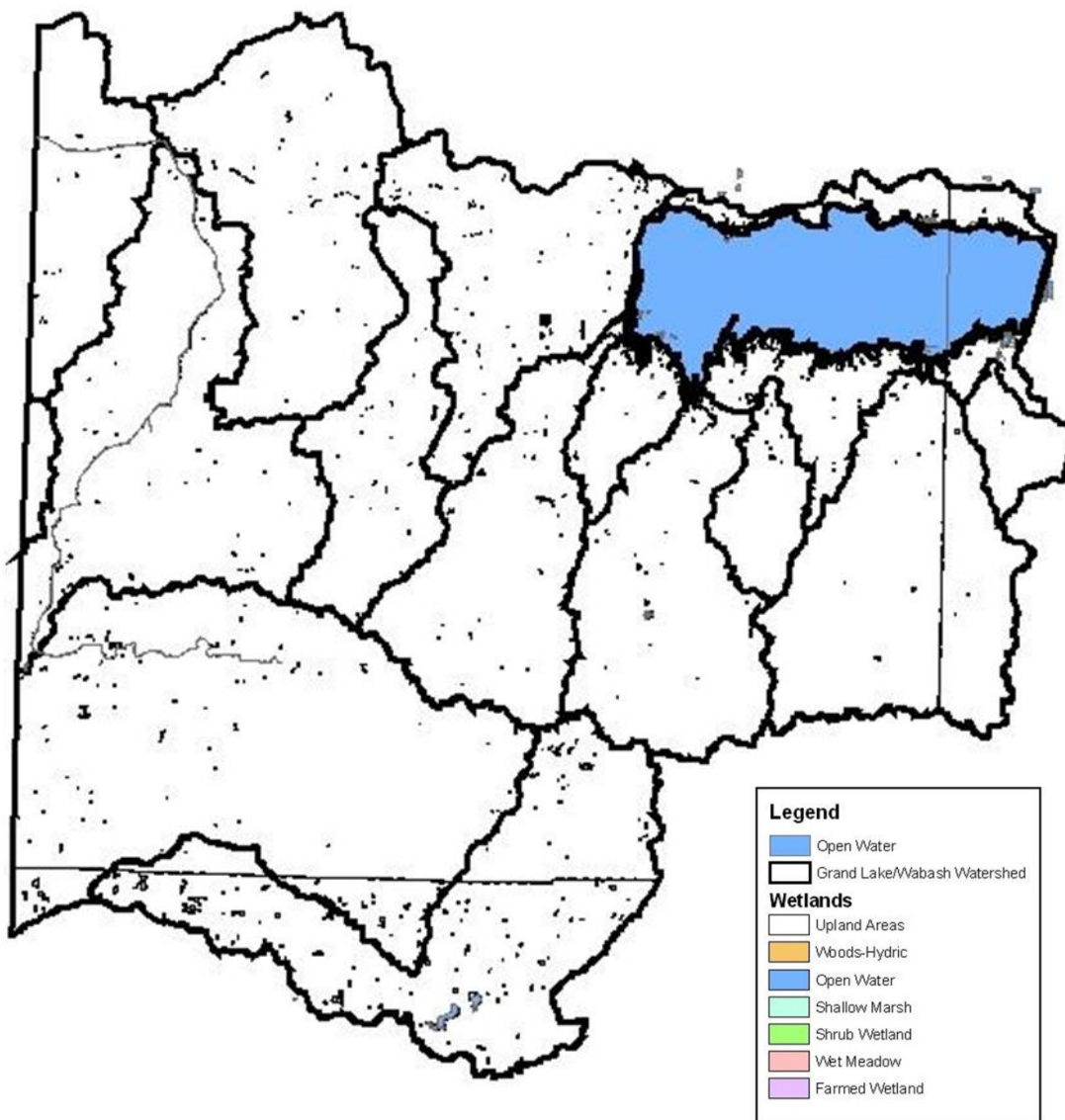
The watershed has been covered three times by glaciers, the most recent coverage by the Wisconsin advance (14,000 to 24,000 years old). The geology of the area is composed of glacial tills, clayey or silty materials deposited by water, and silty materials deposited by wind. Till materials contain a high percentage of limestone and dolomite, both fines and pebbles, and igneous rock transported from the north. Sub-soils in the watershed are classified as having permeabilities of slow to moderately slow due to their clayey nature.

## Surface Water

### Wetlands

The map on the following page shows areas considered to be suitable for wetlands based on presence of hydric soils. Both forested and non-forested wetlands account for approximately 1,436 acres or 2.24 square miles of the entire watershed. This constitutes a total of 0.7% of the watershed. Local interest groups within Auglaize, Darke and Mercer counties are continuously putting forth efforts to protect, restore, and/or create wetlands. To name a few, they include local chapters of Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, and numerous Sportsmen's Associations. Ohio EPA Section 319 Grant Funds have also been expended to help restore and create wetlands associated with wildlife attraction, wetland ecosystem awareness and education, and water treatment.

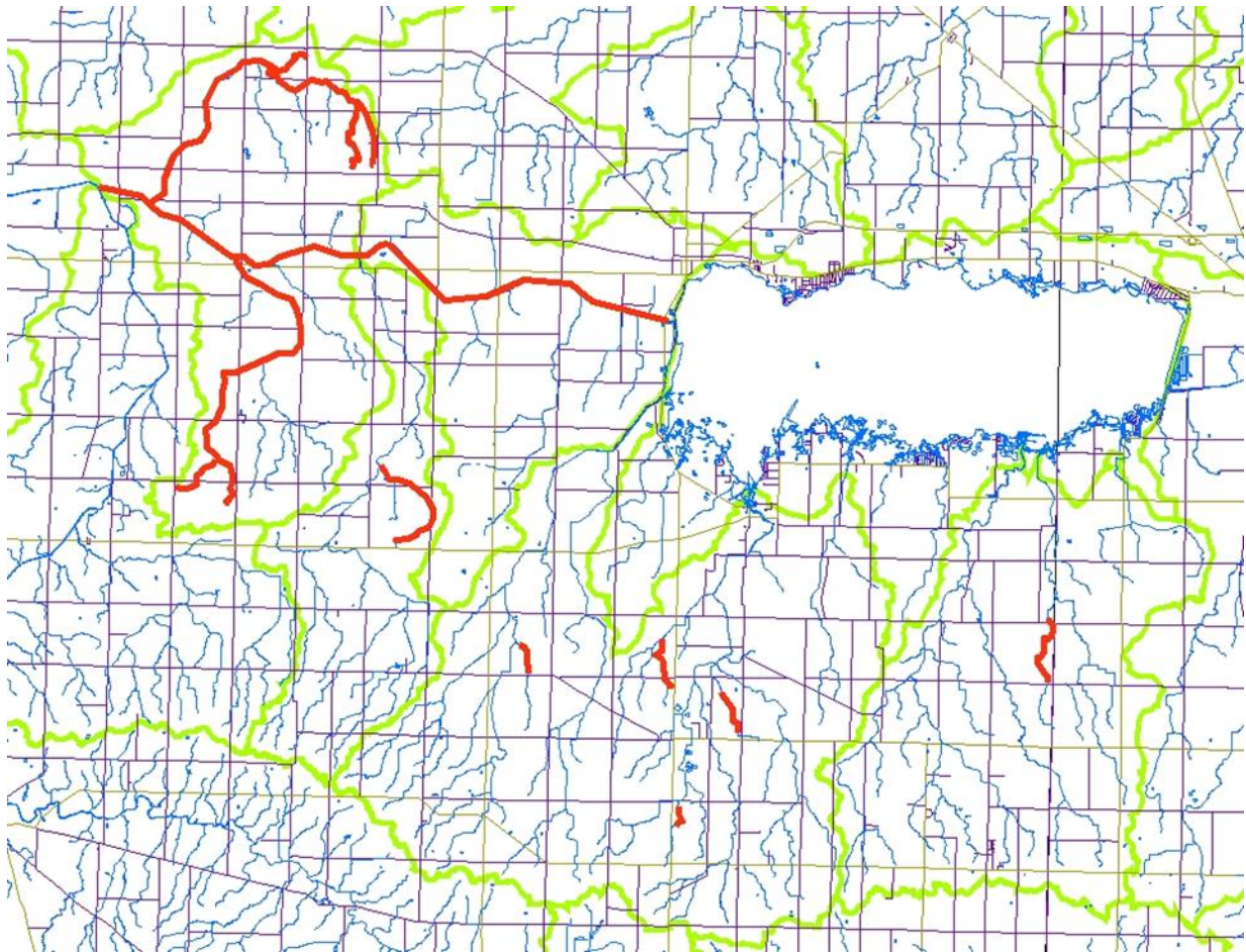
The data for this map was gathered from several sources, primarily from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Geographic Information Management Systems website, located at [www.dnr.state.oh.us/gims](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/gims). This site also provides valuable information, in downloadable format, regarding oil and gas well locations, floodplains, land cover and watersheds for each county in Ohio.



Map 5: Wetland Locations

### Streams

A small percentage of the open ditches and tiles in Mercer County are a part of Mercer County Ditch Maintenance. According to the Mercer County Engineer's Office, the ditches are typically sprayed annually. The ditches will be dipped out; however, this has not been done on a regular basis. The ditches will be dipped only if they fill with sediment. The purpose of ditch maintenance, as prescribed under the law, is to perpetually provide flood relief and to drain property for productive use. The location of ditches on county maintenance can be seen on the following page.

**Legend**

  Ditch Maintenance

Map 6: Ditch Maintenance Locations

Stream channel, floodplain connectivity, and riparian corridor status have been investigated and mapped to guide efforts in restoration and protection of the streams and creeks draining to Grand Lake St. Marys and the Wabash River. The riparian corridor maps of each subwatershed in section 4.0 indicate areas of stream segments where there are less than 10 feet, 10 to 40 feet and more than 40 feet of vegetation on the stream banks.

The topic of redirecting agriculture ditches is not well received in the Grand Lake/Wabash River watersheds. The land is predominately agricultural and farming along curves or using farmland for riparian areas or two stage ditches is not considered economical by landowners nor do they convey drainage to alleviate flooding as well as conventional ditches. There is, however, one particular township that has started to purchase and preserve farmland.



Franklin Township in Mercer County has returned a tiled farm field to a wetland area and is working on several other property purchases and restoration projects. They are working with Pheasants Forever, GLWWA, Mercer County Soil and Water Conservation District and local businesses on their projects. They are also forming a greenspace management group and have partnered with the GLWWA on a Litter grant. One of their projects includes a piece of property that contains a channelized agricultural ditch, which has the potential for stream restoration. The Franklin Township Trustees agree this would be a good project, and if funding can be procured, this property will be a demonstration site for the ideal stream restoration and wetland habitat project. The site will have public access and is adjacent to properties where the public can view channelized agriculture ditches and manmade lake channels to compare to the restored stream.

As this project progresses, there will be times for the public to see the water quality and habitat improvement of stream restoration. These events may be combined with a countywide tour or field day to observe best management practices.

## **Drinking Water Source Assessment**

The Drinking Water Source Assessment for the City of Celina was drafted in July of 2003 by Dana Martin-Hayden and Janet Hageman, Ohio EPA Division of Surface water and Amy Klei, Ohio EPA, Division of Drinking and Ground Waters, Central Office. According to this report, "Several pesticides (alachlor, atrazine, metolochlor, simazine, and cyanazine) and nitrates have been detected in the finished water indicating an impact from land use activities within the Grand Lake watershed". It also mentions that the City of Celina is having difficulties complying with maximum contaminant levels of Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) which is a byproduct of chlorine disinfection. This by-product of water treatment (TTHMs) is of a carcinogenic nature (cancer causing). This difficulty has been attributed to the high levels of total organic carbon present in the lake.

The City of Celina's drinking water source has been shown to be susceptible to pollution from sources such as "agricultural runoff, industrial and commercial sources, home construction runoff, oil and gas production activities, unsewered areas, waste water treatment plant discharges, combined sewer overflows, airports and landfills". Further protection may be accomplished by Education and outreach, coordination with existing activities, zoning ordinances, water quality monitoring and emergency response planning.

According to the assessment, "Source water protection efforts for the City of Celina should focus on controlling agricultural runoff and runoff from cattle grazing pastures; with particular attention to sources of pesticides, nitrates, phosphorus, and microorganisms such as fecal coliform bacteria".

The entire document can be obtained from the Grand Lake/Wabash Watershed Alliance or the Mercer Soil and Water Conservation District office. In the legend portion of all maps, the abbreviation WTP indicates the Water Treatment Plant intake pipe and the Corridor Management Zone is defined as: "an area along streams and tributaries within the source water assessment area that warrants delineation, inventory, and management. Typically, this zone runs a total of ten miles upstream from the intake, and

includes the tributaries that drain into it. The zone is 1,000 feet wide on each side of the Grand Lake mainstem and 500 feet wide on each side of any tributaries. "The City of Celina is continuing to make improvements on its water treatment system. In 2008, they installed an activated granulated carbon system. This has lowered their TTHM level to a point of attainment. They have continued to look for innovative ways to improve their drinking water source. One of these ideas include having a dredge line pumping over 3 miles to dewatering lagoons and eventually building islands across the lake with dredge material. They are looking for federal funding for this project.

## Groundwater

### Aquifers

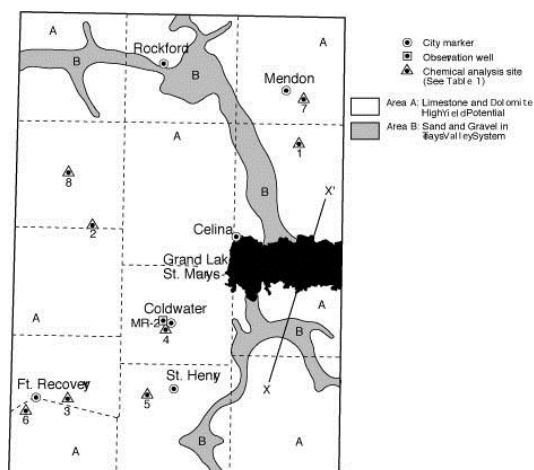
An aquifer is best described as an underground reservoir that is capable of providing enough water to support a well, also having the ability to transmit, store, and receive water. Auglaize, Darke and Mercer Counties are atop several layers of dolomite and limestone creating a vast carbonate aquifer. These formations can be as old as 450 million years and are covered by a glacial till layer, which may date back 20,000 years.

All three counties have an extensive reach of the ancestral Teays Valley, a pre-glaciation drainage pattern cut into the underlying limestone. Screened wells in these areas can produce a sufficient domestic water supply of 10-25 gallons per minute (gpm).

Yields in the limestone and dolomite areas can produce water supplies well over 400 gpm at depths ranging below 300 ft. At depths of 150 ft. and above adequate supplies for farm and domestic use can be obtained.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water monitors one well in each county. The figures below depict the locations and specific information for each of those wells.

### Groundwater Resources Mercer County, Ohio



- Observation Well MR-2
- Constructed in limestone/dolomite
- Depth = 253 ft.
- Depth to limestone = 37 ft.
- Lowest recorded level: 81.6 ft. below surface in September 1988
- Highest recorded level: 60.1 ft. below surface in February 1967

(modified from K.S. Crowell, ODNR Division of Water, by R.A. Roberts)



## **Flood Plain Management**

Mercer County has special flood hazard areas that are subject to periodic inundation, which may result in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood protection and relief, and impairment of the tax base. The map of Mercer County Special Flood is available at the following website. Refer to the Special Purpose Flood Damage Reduction Resolution Mercer County Unincorporated, Ohio.

## **Groundwater pollution potential**

In recent times, it has become more and more apparent that the local water resources are in great need of both management, such as withdrawal limits, and well placement, but also protection from pollutants and contamination. For this reason, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water, was given the task of creating an evaluation/ranking system to determine the potential for pollutants to reach the groundwater in each of the counties in Ohio. Following this, color coded maps were created, also showing the potential for groundwater pollution. The intent for these maps and evaluation systems is that they be used by local planners or managers to better site locations of businesses, homes, or other operations to reduce the potential of contamination.

The Grand Lake/Wabash River watershed consists of three ranges in similar proportions. The south shoreline of Grand Lake St Marys can be categorized in the “moderately high” (140-159 range); the north shoreline of Grand Lake St Marys, the area encompassing Montezuma, Carthagen, and Chickasaw and southeastern Mercer County and northeastern Darke County lie in the region evaluated as “moderate” (120-139); and the southwestern section of the watershed lie in the “moderately low” (100-119) range. The full Groundwater Pollution Potential maps for Auglaize, Darke and Mercer counties can be obtained by contacting the Mercer Soil and Water Conservation District.

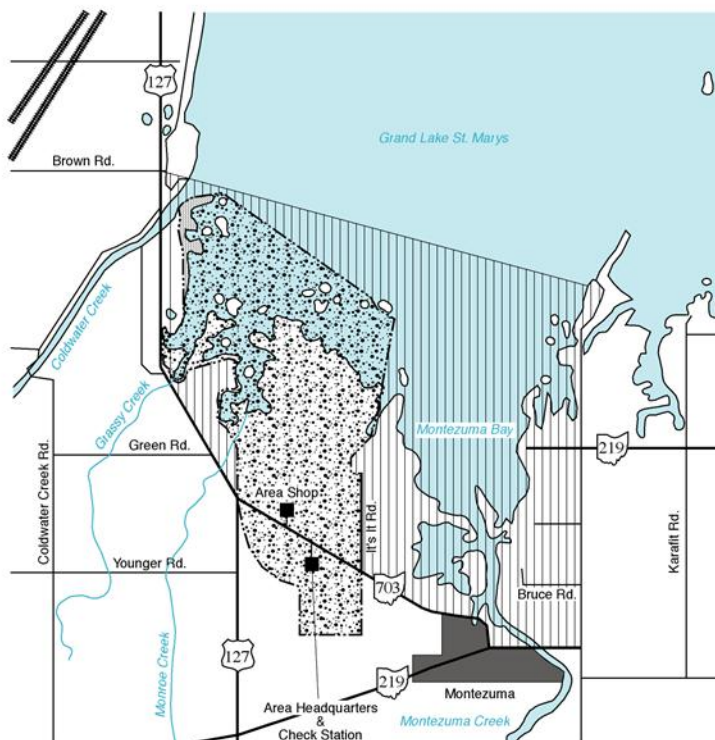
## **Protected Lands**

### **Grand Lake St. Marys State Park**




The map found below shows the areas of land surrounding Grand Lake St. Marys that collectively make up the Grand Lake St. Marys State Park. The map is available at the following website:

<http://www.dnr.ohio.gov/parks/parkmaps/grandlakestmarys.gif>

(419) 394-3611 - Main Office  
(419) 394-2774 - Camp Store  
(419) 394-8173 - FAX



0  $\frac{1}{2}$   
Scale in Miles

 Waterfowl Management Area  
 No Waterfowl Hunting Area  
 Water

A map of the St. Marys area in Indiana. St. Marys is located at the northern end of Grand Lake St. Marys. Major highways shown include US-41, US-24, US-127, and US-12. Surrounding towns include Celina, Wapakoneta, St. Marys, Coldwater, St. Henry, Ft. Recovery, Burketsville, Chickasaw, Now Knoxville, Bottins, Kettlersville, and Anna.

© This map may not be reproduced for sale.

## Map 8: Mercer Wildlife Area

The map of the Mercer Wildlife area can be viewed at the following website:

<http://www.dnr.ohio.gov/wildlife/pdf/pub154.pdf>

The reverse of the map, publication 154, describes the purpose of the wildlife area:

“The rapid increase in human population and the development of the lake for recreational uses have imposed many restrictions on the wildlife community. The primary purpose of the wildlife area is to act as a refuge, providing resting and feeding areas for local and migrant wildlife. The waterfowl management area provides the largest and one of the few remaining areas around the lake that is free from human disturbance.

The Canada goose management program began in 1956. Nesting and migrant goose populations have increased steadily since that time. Wildlife management activities have included development and management of grain crops and meadow, primarily for nesting and migrant waterfowl. Trees and shrubs have been maintained along the lakeshore to prevent erosion. Seven ponds have been constructed on the area to increase nesting sites and area utilization by waterfowl.

Waterfowl production has been enhanced by the use of several hundred wood duck nest boxes and Canada goose nesting structures on the management area and in shallow waters around Lake St. Marys.”



Map 9: Franklin Township Greenspace Areas

The above map shows the properties in Franklin Township that were purchased by the township trustees. These purchases fall into line with the Franklin Township Community and Land Use Plan that

was developed in 2000. The full plan can be viewed at the following website: [www.franklintownship-mercercounty.org](http://www.franklintownship-mercercounty.org)

A: The Franklin Township Nature Park: 33.77 acres that consists of a paved trail and plastic/wood trail combination, wetlands, wooded and grass areas. Additional wetlands have been constructed, and there are plans for native grasses and additional trees. This includes a trail through the area and a wildlife viewing area overlooking the wetlands.

B: Prairie Creek Nature Park: 37.098 acres. This area was purchased and used as a dredge material relocation area for the state park. It has been reclaimed and functions as wildlife habitat.

C, D & E: The Strasburg Nature Park: 6.393 acres include a paved trail, and consists of a stream with wooded and grass areas. Additional trees were planted in 2004 and long-term plans include the development of grass walkways through the property and additional plantings for water quality and wildlife habitat.

F: Franklin Township Recreational Trail (marked in blue and red stripes): This trail connects Montezuma to the Club Island area by a paved trail. This trail winds throughout many different nature areas, totaling almost 10 miles. Expansion is planned to complete the bicycle trail circumferencing Grand Lake St. Marys.

G: Gilliland Property (green striped area): This nature area has grassed paths throughout the 80.182 acres of wildlife habitat. Shrubs have been planted marking the trails and more plantings are planned. An information kiosk is planned for near the parking area of this land.

H: Recreational Trail Montezuma Extension (to the west of the pictured area): This trail is planned to be extended through Montezuma, past Kozy Campground to the ODNR Nature Preserve. Funds are being researched for wetland restoration, stream restoration and reforestation throughout this area.

I: Gaston Property: A portion of this area has already been purchased. On this area, a bicycle path was installed complete with a bridge over Prairie Creek. With this construction, some reforestation has been completed and more is planned. This property consists of wetlands, wooded and grass areas. Long-term plans will include planting of additional trees and native grasses and the preservation of wildlife habitat.

J: Auglaize County Connection: This section of the recreational trail would complete a bicycle trail around Grand Lake St. Marys. This is planned for east of the pictured area. Funds are being researched, along with potential for stream and wetland restoration in this area.





Map 10: Baker's Woods, Mercer County, Ohio

The highlighted area is a 47.2 tract of forested area owned by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. Baker Woods has the potential to be a valuable resource for education and protection efforts. Baker Woods State Nature Preserve is not a site open to the public. If you are interested in visiting the site, a permit application will need to be submitted to the Division. Although permits cannot be processed on-line, an application can be downloaded from (<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/dnap/permits/default.htm>) and then mailed or faxed to the division. Please allow at least two weeks for processing.

Further information regarding the site comes from ODNR: Division of Natural Areas and Preserves' Directory of Ohio's State Nature Preserves:

"Although small in size, Baker Woods is a high-quality, old growth forest remnant. The 47-acre site was donated to the division in 1982. Large specimens of oaks, hickories and maples dominate the forest canopy. Much of the woods is wet during the growing season. Two state-listed species occur at Baker Woods. Best time to visit is autumn or early spring-- before the mosquitoes emerge. Located in Butler Township in Mercer County. No facilities."

### Cultural, Historical, and Recreational Resources

There are many cultural, historical and recreational resources located within the boundaries of the Grand Lake/Wabash Watershed. A few of those resources are listed below with descriptions provided by the Visitors Guide entitled “Discover Ohio’s Other Great Lake & So Much More” produced by the Auglaize and Mercer Counties Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**Fort Recovery State Museum and Monument Park:** Museum features Anthony Wayne’s legion and the two Indian battles fought there. Also shown are a typical 1790’s Native American and one of the largest collections of Indian Artifacts in the state of Ohio. On the grounds are two reconstructed blockhouses, a connecting stockade and the Greenville Treaty Line marker. Fort Recovery is the site of two of the most dramatic Indian battles in American history. The first was the devastating defeat of General Arthur St. Clair in 1791 and the second, the successful defense of the fort by General “Mad” Anthony Wayne in 1794. President William Howard Taft signed a bill in 1908 to authorize a monument in honor of the soldiers who died serving under St. Clair and Anthony Wayne. Congress approved the bill in 1910 and work was begun in 1912. A 103-foot monument stands to remember the 900+ soldiers that died there and an oak tree to remember the Native Americans. The base of the monument holds the bones of the fallen soldiers who died in the battles. The nine-foot tall statue depicts a frontiersman facing west to the beautiful unsettled land into which he triumphed. Other attractions are a log home, blacksmith shop, historical walkway, local walk-by museum and a state park.

**Maria Stein Heritage Museum:** Located on the second floor of the former convent building, this museum interprets the German settlements of southern Auglaize and Mercer Counties and the history of the Sisters of the Precious Blood.

**National Marian Shrine of the Holy Relics:** The shrine contains approximately 1,000 relics of the saints and is the second largest collection of its type in the United States. Built in 1890, the shrine and the adjacent former convent were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

**Land of the Cross Tipped Churches:** In July of 1979, over sixty buildings representing the German Catholic settlements of southern Auglaize and Mercer Counties, as well as portions of northern Darke and Shelby Counties, were placed on a National Register of Historic Places. Consisting of churches, schools, rectories, and convents, this grouping is symbolic of the cultural and historical uniqueness of the region. Today, most of these structures remain to remind us of the hard work and dedication of these early settlers as they built the Miami-Erie Canal and forged a new life on the area’s rich and productive farmland. A drive along this Ohio Scenic Byway through the rural countryside follows the quaint churches with their cross tipped “spires to heaven” and includes stops at the focal points of the region: the former convent at Maria Stein, St Augustine Church – the original Mother Church of the area at Minster and St Charles center, the magnificent and impressive seminary at Carthagen.

**St Charles Center:** This magnificent former seminary rests on 500 acres. Begun in 1861 by Missionaries of the Precious Blood, the current structure is a late gothic revival building. The awesome facility features a 370-foot frontage and is topped by a five story octagonal dome.

**Wright State University Lake Campus:** Located on the north shore of Grand Lake St. Marys, the Lake Campus became a branch of Wright State University, Dayton in June of 1969. The Lake Campus provides pre-baccalaureate and technical education at the associate degree level. Bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education and organizational Leadership are available. A BSN completion program is offered for registered nurses. A new weekend MBA program is offered for working professionals. Other master level programs provided include Education and Educational Leadership.

**Grand Lake St Marys State Park:** The lake itself and much of its perimeter was dedicated as an Ohio State Park in 1949. The park currently provided 210 campsites (135 with electric). A "campers only" swimming beach and boat tie-ups are available within the campground. Horseshoe pits, sand volleyball, basketball, a tennis court, bicycle rentals, a 9-hole putt-putt course and a camp store are available within the campground. The park also has two public swimming beaches as well as swimming areas for boaters. Picnic areas with tables and grills are located in scenic areas around the lake. The East Bank/Villanova area has several shelter houses available on a reservation basis. Boat dock rentals are available through the State Park Office. Hunting is permitted in designated areas. There are seasonal duck blinds available by lottery through ODNR. Constructed as a feeder lake for the Miami-Erie Canal, Grand Lake St Mary, at its completion in 1845 was the largest manmade lake in the world. The feeder reservoir was formed by raising two walls of earth, from ten to twenty-five feet high, called the East and West embankments. These walls formed a high basin to retain water. The reservoir rests on the summit between the Ohio River and Lake Erie. Now Ohio's largest inland lake, Grand Lake St Marys is a primary recreational area offering a variety of activities for the whole family. With over 13,500 acres and 52 miles of shoreline (much of it accessible to the public), Ohio's Other Great Lake provides many opportunities for picnicking, swimming, fishing, boating and camping.

**Boating:** Grand Lake St Marys is open zoned for skiing and has unlimited horsepower for power boating. A 300-foot "no wake" zone provides for safety and shoreline protection. There are five state operated launch ramps providing boaters access to the lake. Private launch ramps are also available at marinas along the shallow shoreline. Sailing and jet skiing are very popular on this grand lake and rentals are available at area marinas.

**Fishing:** Fishing is a year around affair on Grand Lake St. Marys. Since the lake is shallow (average 6-7 feet depth), it warms quickly in the spring activating largemouth bass and large catches of bluegills and crappies. There are professionally run and organized fishing tournaments held every year. The lake is considered one of the finest "pan fishing" areas in the state, with good populations of crappies and yellow perch. The last few years have shown increases in the perch population and anglers report record catches. Walleye fry and fingerlings have been stocked and a significant population is developing with good-sized walleye reported being caught.

**State Fish Hatchery:** One of only six hatcheries in the state of Ohio, the St. Marys site is the only one that raises yellow perch and largemouth bass. Other species raised at the St. Marys site include channel catfish, fathead minnows, walleye and saugeye.



Golf Courses: Elks Club – 18 holes, driving range; Northmoor Golf – 18 holes, driving range; Fox's Den – 18 holes, driving range.

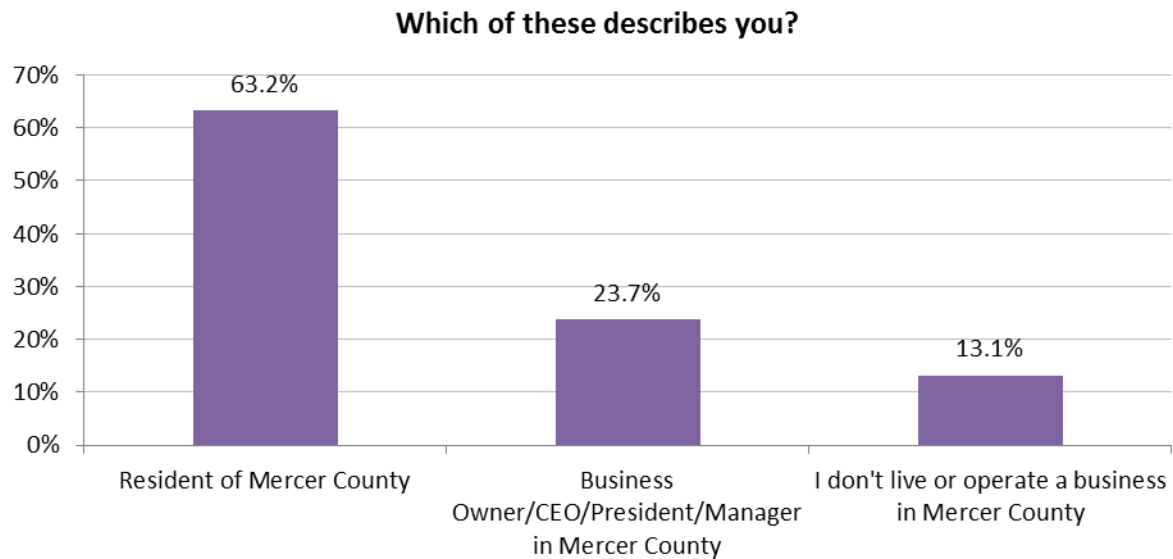
Marinas: Bayview Sun & Snow Marina; D&W Marina; Kozy Marina; Ohio Marine Inc.; St. Marys East Bank Marina; Windy Point Marina.

Other local areas of interest near to the watershed and also found in the Visitors Guide include The Miami-Erie Canal Towpath, St. Marys Memorial Park, Celina-Coldwater bike Path, Route 703 Bike Path, Auglaize and Mercer Counties Historical Museums; and many others, too numerous to mention. For more information on any of these sites, please visit the Auglaize and Mercer Counties Convention and Visitors Bureau at [www.seemore.org](http://www.seemore.org).

## Appendix A: Citizen Input

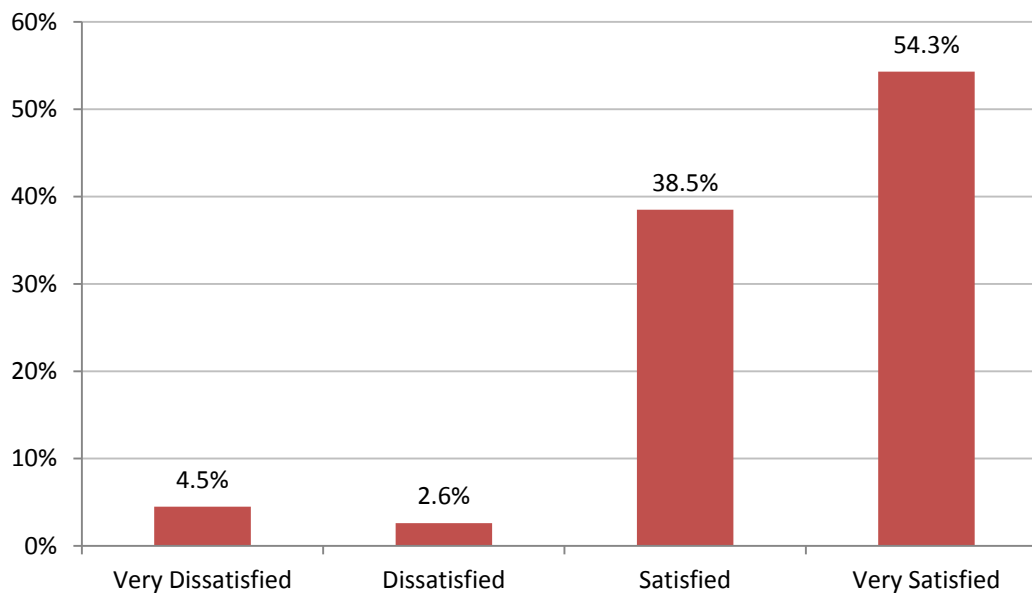
### Mercer County Comprehensive Plan – Citizen Input Survey (427 responses)

*Which of these describe you? Are you?*



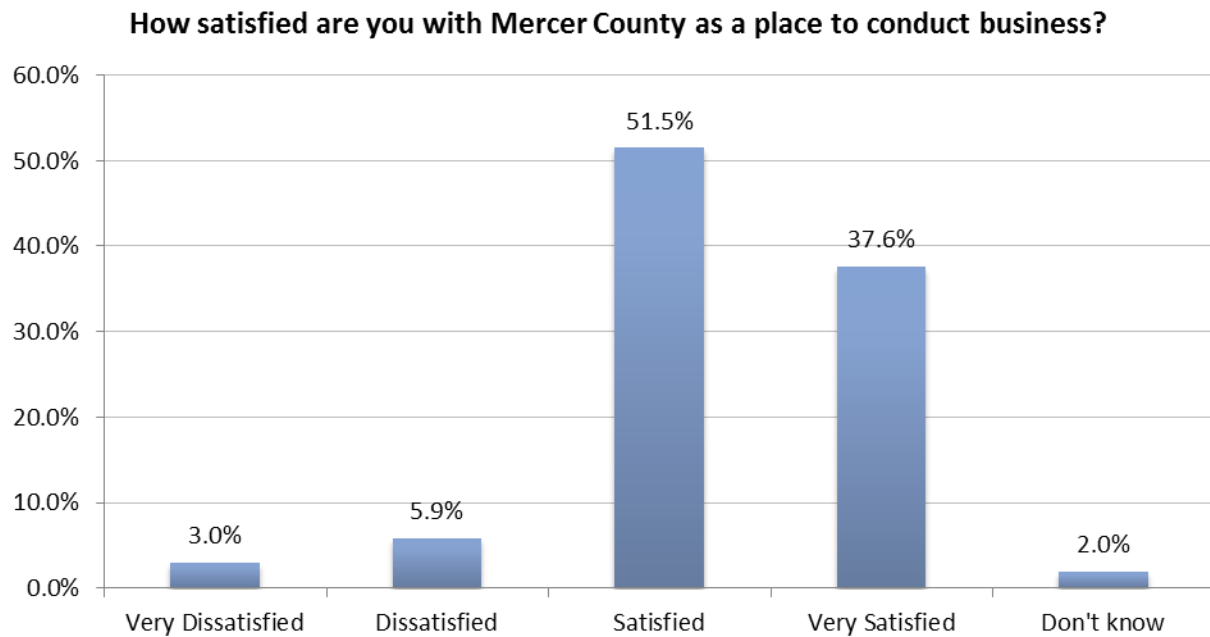
Which of these describe you? Are you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Resident of Mercer County	270	63.2	63.2	63.2
Business Owner/CEO/President/Manager in Mercer County	101	23.7	23.7	86.9
I don't live or operate a business in Mercer County	56	13.1	13.1	100.0
Total	427	100.0	100.0	

*How satisfied are you with Mercer County as a place to live?***How satisfied are you with Mercer County as a place to live?**

## How satisfied are you with Mercer County as a place to live?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Dissatisfied	12	2.8	4.5	4.5
Dissatisfied	7	1.6	2.6	7.2
Valid Satisfied	102	23.9	38.5	45.7
Very Satisfied	144	33.7	54.3	100.0
Total	265	62.1	100.0	
Refused	5	1.2		
MissingSystem	157	36.8		
Total	162	37.9		
Total	427	100.0		

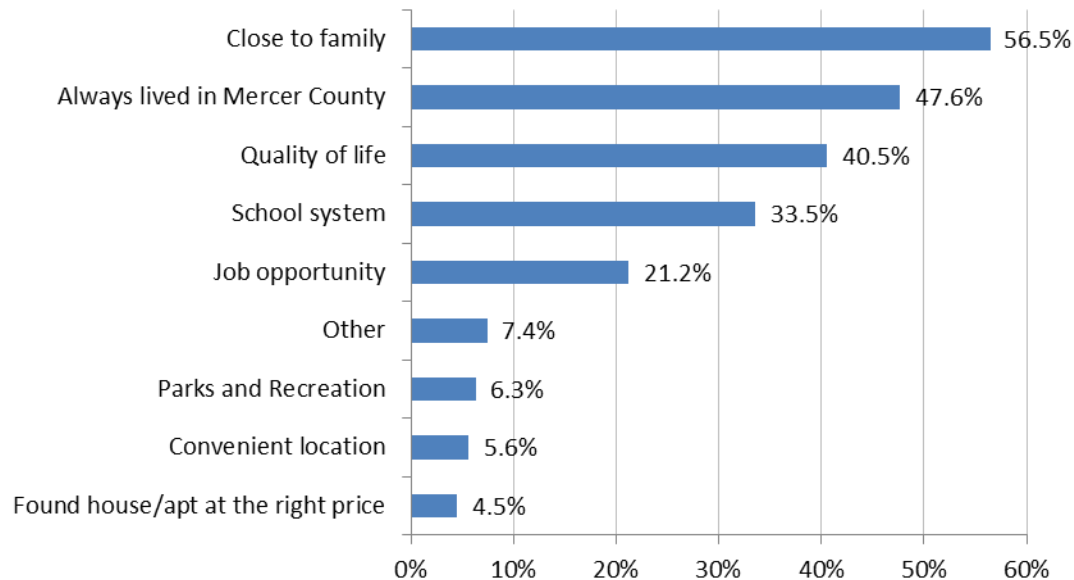
*How satisfied are you with Mercer County as a place to conduct business?*

## How satisfied are you with Mercer County as a place to conduct business?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Dissatisfied	3	.7	3.0	3.0
	Dissatisfied	6	1.4	5.9	8.9
	Satisfied	52	12.2	51.5	60.4
	Very Satisfied	38	8.9	37.6	98.0
	Don't know	2	.5	2.0	100.0
Total		101	23.7	100.0	
Missing	System	326	76.3		
Total		427	100.0		

## Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?

### Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?



#### Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Close to family

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	117	27.4	43.5	43.5
Valid Selected	152	35.6	56.5	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
MissingSystem	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

#### Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Convenient location

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	254	59.5	94.4	94.4
Valid Selected	15	3.5	5.6	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
MissingSystem	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Have always lived in Mercer County

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	141	33.0	52.4	52.4
Valid Selected	128	30.0	47.6	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
Missing System	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Job opportunity

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	212	49.6	78.8	78.8
Valid Selected	57	13.3	21.2	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
Missing System	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Parks and recreation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	252	59.0	93.7	93.7
Valid Selected	17	4.0	6.3	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
Missing System	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Quality of life

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	160	37.5	59.5	59.5
Valid Selected	109	25.5	40.5	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
Missing System	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-School system

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	179	41.9	66.5	66.5
Valid Selected	90	21.1	33.5	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
MissingSystem	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Was able to find the right house or apartment at the right price

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	257	60.2	95.5	95.5
Valid Selected	12	2.8	4.5	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
Missing System	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Other, please specify

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not selected	249	58.3	92.6	92.6
Valid Selected	20	4.7	7.4	100.0
Total	269	63.0	100.0	
Refused	1	.2		
MissingSystem	157	36.8		
Total	158	37.0		
Total	427	100.0		

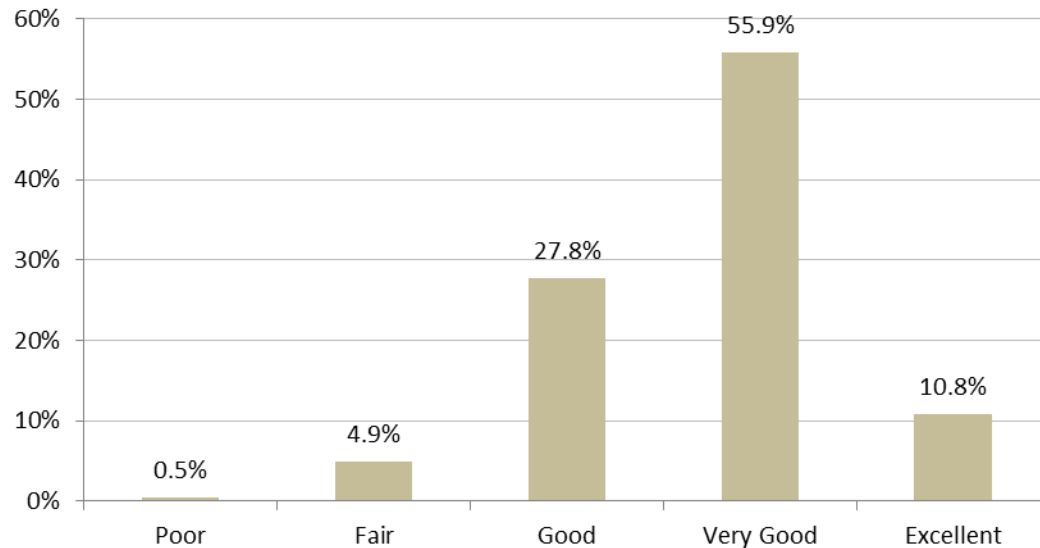
Why did you choose Mercer County as a place to live?-Other, *please specify*

- Catholic
- Cleanliness, good upkeep
- Dad purchased the farm
- Grand Lake St. Mary (4)/lake home (2)
- Great place to raise a family
- Low crime, white German Catholic Ghetto
- Got married, spouse lived here (2)
- Moved here
- NO wind turbines (2)
- Own local business
- Raised in Mercer County/born here (2)
- Strong Christian Faith



## How would you rate the overall quality of life in Mercer County today?

### How would you rate the overall quality of life in Mercer County today?

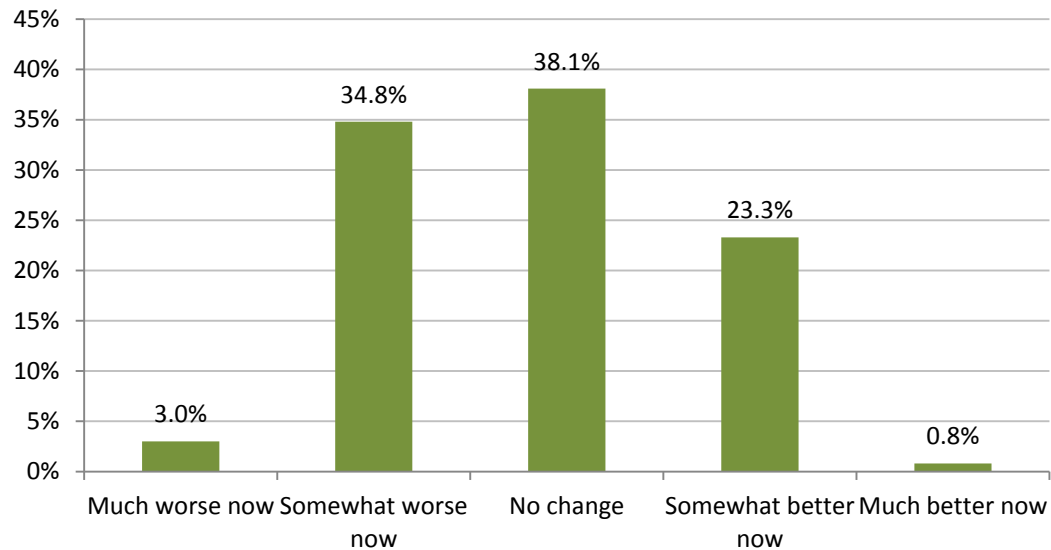


### How would you rate the overall quality of life in Mercer County today?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poor	2	.5	.5	.5
	Fair	18	4.2	4.9	5.4
	Good	103	24.1	27.8	33.2
	Very Good	207	48.5	55.9	89.2
	Excellent	40	9.4	10.8	100.0
	Total	370	86.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	1	.2		
	System	56	13.1		
	Total	57	13.3		
Total		427	100.0		

*Which of the following best describes how you believe the quality of life in Mercer County has changed in the past 5 years:*

**How has the quality of life in Mercer County changed in the past 5 years?**

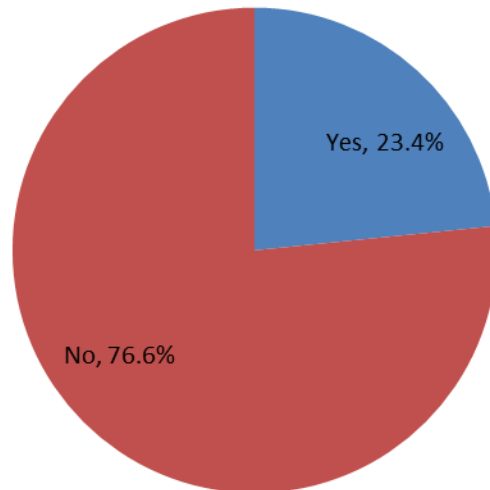


Which of the following best describes how you believe the quality of life in Mercer County has changed

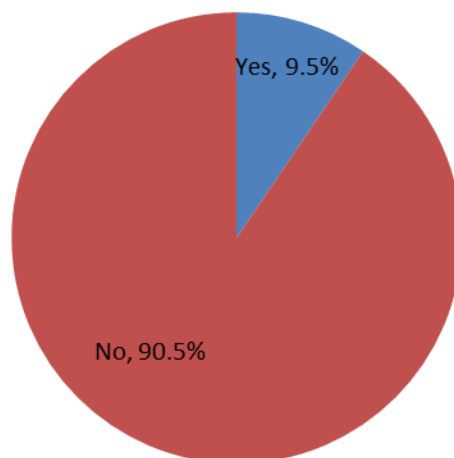
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much worse now	11	2.6	3.0	3.0
	Somewhat worse now	127	29.7	34.8	37.8
	No change	139	32.6	38.1	75.9
	Somewhat better now	85	19.9	23.3	99.2
	Much better now	3	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	365	85.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	6	1.4		
	System	56	13.1		
	Total	62	14.5		
	Total	427	100.0		

*The following questions pertain to the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan.*

**Did you know that Mercer County has a Comprehensive Plan?**



**Have you ever read or reviewed the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan?**



The following questions pertain to the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan.-Did you know that Mercer County has a Comprehensive Plan?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	86	20.1	23.4	23.4
	No	282	66.0	76.6	100.0
	Total	368	86.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	3	.7		
	System	56	13.1		
	Total	59	13.8		
Total		427	100.0		

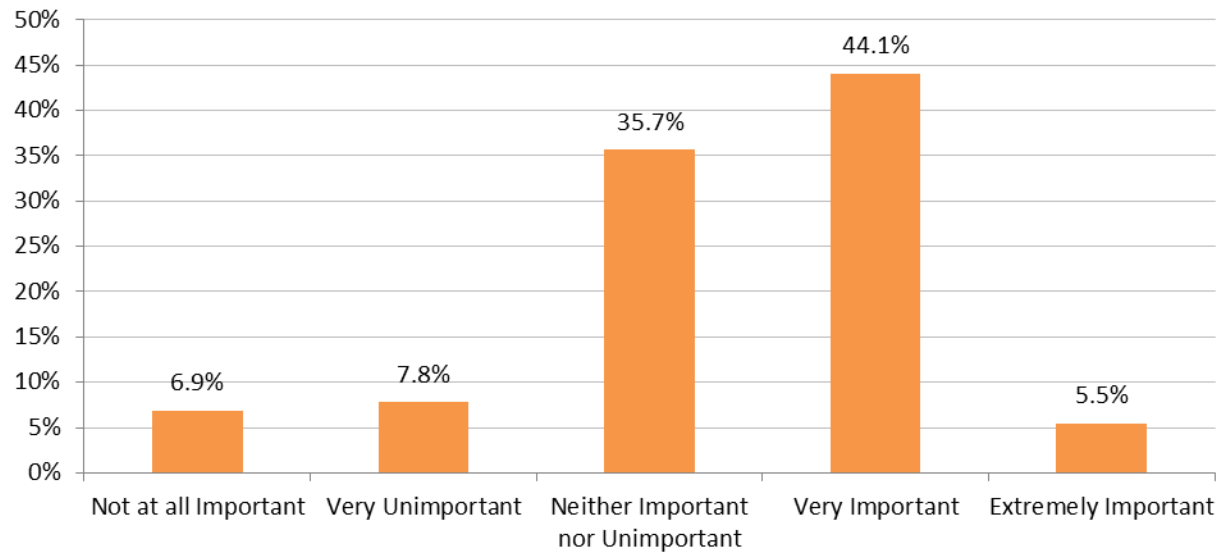
The following questions pertain to the Mercer County Comprehensive Plan.-Have you ever read or reviewed the Mercer County the Comprehensive Plan?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	8.2	9.5	9.5
	No	333	78.0	90.5	100.0
	Total	368	86.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	3	.7		
	System	56	13.1		
	Total	59	13.8		
Total		427	100.0		

*The following sections ask you to provide citizen input into varying topics covered in the Comprehensive Plan.*

*How important is it that residential growth be controlled and/or limited to areas where services, like water and sewer, already exist?*

**How important is it that residential growth be controlled and/or limited to areas where services, like water and sewer, already exist?**

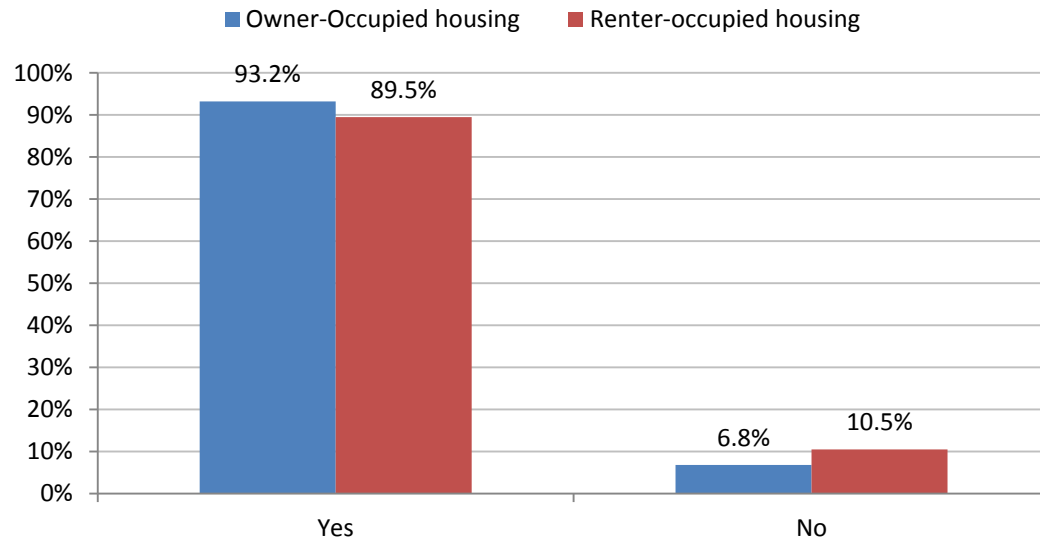


How important is it that residential growth be controlled and/or limited to areas where services, li...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	24	5.6	6.9	6.9
	Very Unimportant	27	6.3	7.8	14.7
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	124	29.0	35.7	50.4
	Very Important	153	35.8	44.1	94.5
	Extremely Important	19	4.4	5.5	100.0
Total		347	81.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	68	15.9		
Total		80	18.7		
Total		427	100.0		

*Please tell us your views on housing in Mercer County.*

## Do you think there is adequate affordable housing in Mercer County?



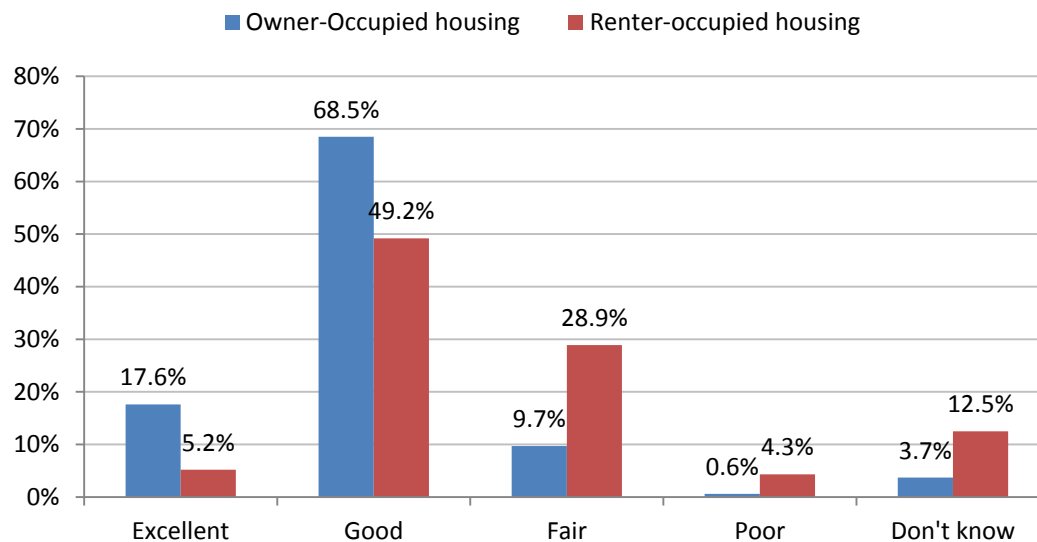
Please tell us your views on housing in Mercer County. : Do you think there is adequate affordable housing in Mercer County?-Owner-occupied housing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	315	73.8	93.2	93.2
	No	23	5.4	6.8	100.0
	Total	338	79.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	21	4.9		
	System	68	15.9		
	Total	89	20.8		
Total		427	100.0		

Please tell us your views on housing in Mercer County. : Do you think there is adequate affordable housing in Mercer County?-Renter-occupied housing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	257	60.2	89.5	89.5
	No	30	7.0	10.5	100.0
	Total	287	67.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	72	16.9		
	System	68	15.9		
	Total	140	32.8		
Total		427	100.0		

**How would you rate the quality of the available housing in  
Mercer County?**



Please tell us your views on housing in Mercer County. : How would you rate the quality of the available housing in Mercer County?-Owner-occupied housing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	62	14.5	17.6	17.6
	Good	241	56.4	68.5	86.1
	Fair	34	8.0	9.7	95.7
	Poor	2	.5	.6	96.3
	Don't know	13	3.0	3.7	100.0
	Total	352	82.4	100.0	
Missing	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	68	15.9		
	Total	75	17.6		
Total		427	100.0		

Please tell us your views on housing in Mercer County. : How would you rate the quality of the available housing in Mercer County?-Renter-occupied housing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Excellent	17	4.0	5.2	5.2
	Good	162	37.9	49.2	54.4
	Fair	95	22.2	28.9	83.3
	Poor	14	3.3	4.3	87.5
	Don't know	41	9.6	12.5	100.0
	Total	329	77.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	30	7.0		
	System	68	15.9		
	Total	98	23.0		
Total		427	100.0		



Please tell us your views on housing in Mercer County. : If you answered no,-Owner-occupied housing-where do you see the need for affordable housing?

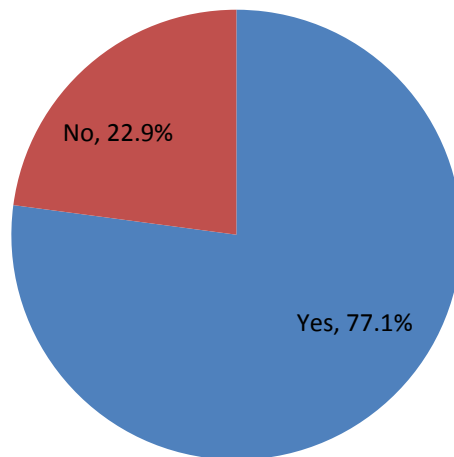
- 3 bedroom 2 bath homes
- a need but needs to be controlled and located in the right areas
- Africa (sarc/)
- all communities
- FAR FROM Wind Turbines
- For working class, the cost of food, gas rising and wages are not.
- I said yes, but we have enough low income places, we have little nice housing locations.
- land/housing prices a very high
- Maria Stein
- modest housing from \$50,000 to \$55,000 is scarce
- no where
- Price pt
- Some other county
- St Henry
- Too pricey for someone just starting out
- Young families

Please tell us your views on housing in Mercer County. : If you answered no,-Renter-occupied housing-where do you see the need for affordable housing?

- Africa
- Celina
- Coldwater, St Henry
- FAR FROM Wind Turbines
- I don't
- Increased ownership costs passed down as higher rental costs
- larger towns
- low income and elderly
- lower cost of rent/better quality houses
- Rental properties have high rates
- Senior living
- Some landlords let their properties decline and renters must live in dangerous situations including poor wiring and poor or broken down heating.
- Some other county
- St Henry
- Too costly, or poor locations

*Would you like to see more tourists attracted to Mercer County?*

**Would you like to see more tourists attracted to Mercer County?**

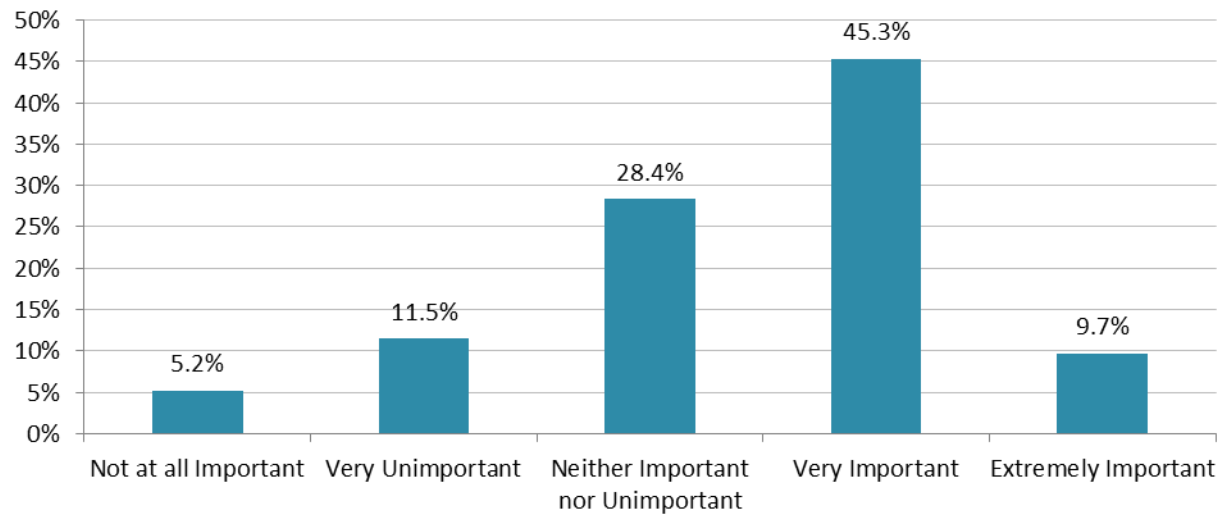


Would you like to see more tourists attracted to Mercer County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	263	61.6	77.1	77.1
	No	78	18.3	22.9	100.0
	Total	341	79.9	100.0	
Missing	Refused	15	3.5		
	System	71	16.6		
Total		86	20.1		
Total		427	100.0		

*How important is it that commercial and industrial growth be controlled and/or limited to areas where services, like water and sewer, already exist?*

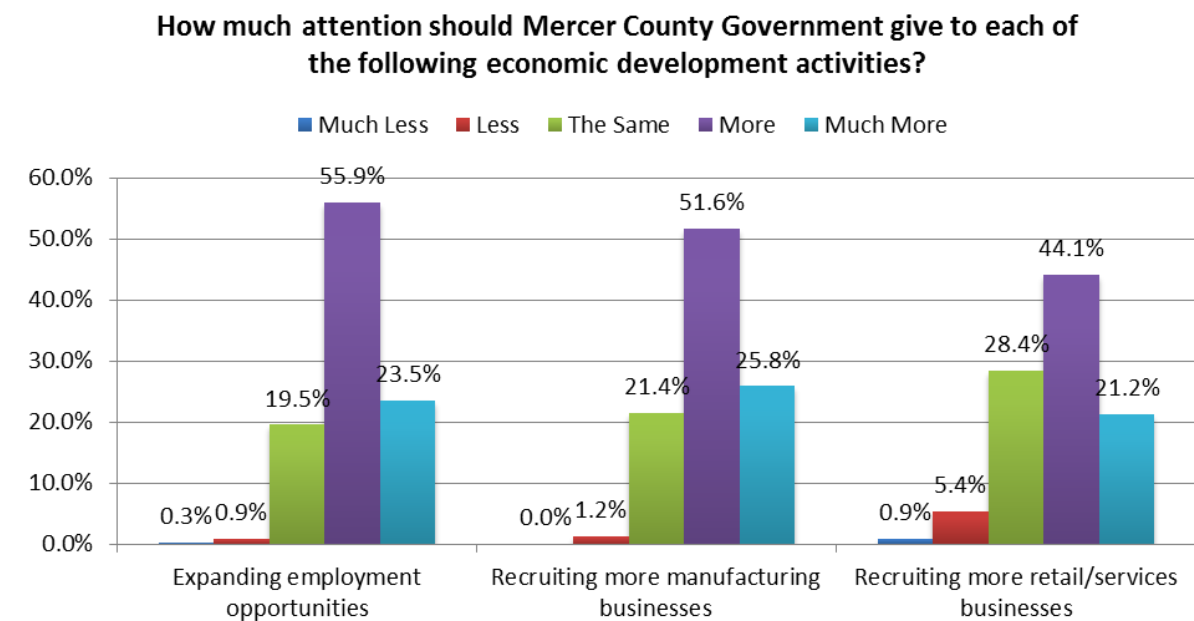
**How important is it that commercial and industrial growth be controlled and/or limited to areas where services, like water and sewer, already exist?**



How important is it that commercial and industrial growth be controlled and/or limited to areas wher...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	18	4.2	5.2	5.2
	Very Unimportant	40	9.4	11.5	16.6
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	99	23.2	28.4	45.0
	Very Important	158	37.0	45.3	90.3
	Extremely Important	34	8.0	9.7	100.0
	Total	349	81.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	71	16.6		
	Total	78	18.3		
Total		427	100.0		

*How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following economic development goals?*



How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following economic developmen...-  
Expanding employment opportunities in the County

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much Less	1	.2	.3	.3
	Less	3	.7	.9	1.1
	The Same	68	15.9	19.5	20.6
	More	195	45.7	55.9	76.5
	Much More	82	19.2	23.5	100.0
	Total	349	81.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	71	16.6		
	Total	78	18.3		
	Total	427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following economic developmen...-  
Recruiting more manufacturing businesses in the County

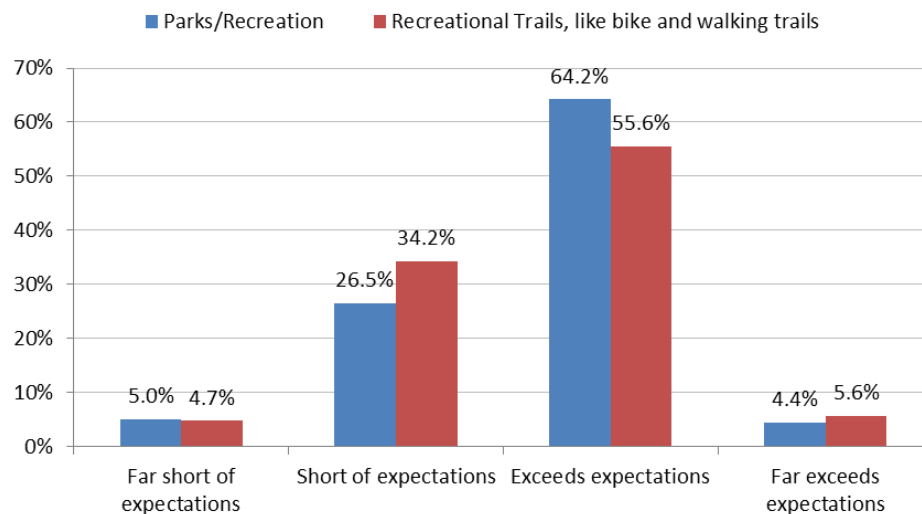
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less	4	.9	1.2	1.2
	The Same	74	17.3	21.4	22.6
	More	178	41.7	51.6	74.2
	Much More	89	20.8	25.8	100.0
	Total	345	80.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	71	16.6		
	Total	82	19.2		
	Total	427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following economic developmen...-Recruiting more retail/services businesses in the County

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much Less	3	.7	.9	.9
	Less	19	4.4	5.4	6.3
	The Same	99	23.2	28.4	34.7
	More	154	36.1	44.1	78.8
	Much More	74	17.3	21.2	100.0
	Total	349	81.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	71	16.6		
	Total	78	18.3		
Total		427	100.0		

*Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:*

**Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:**



Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:-Parks/Recreation

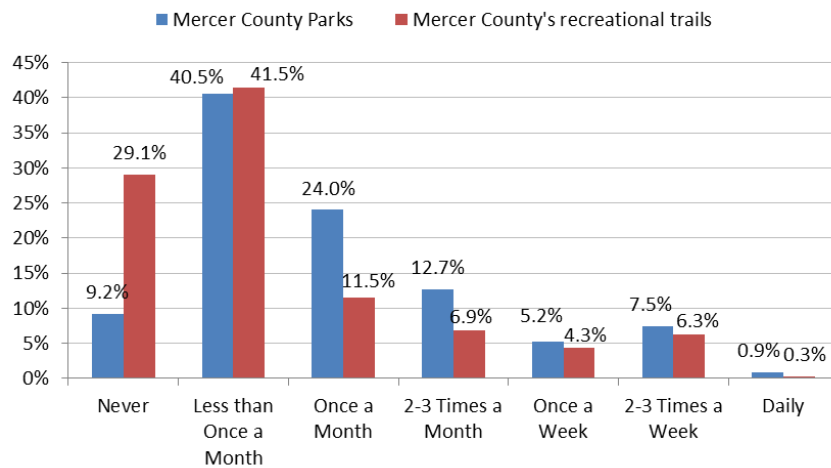
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far short of expectations	16	3.7	5.0	5.0
	Short of expectations	85	19.9	26.5	31.5
	Exceeds expectations	206	48.2	64.2	95.6
	Far exceeds expectations	14	3.3	4.4	100.0
	Total	321	75.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	33	7.7		
	System	73	17.1		
	Total	106	24.8		
Total		427	100.0		

Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:-Recreational Trails, like bike and walking trails

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far short of expectations	15	3.5	4.7	4.7
	Short of expectations	110	25.8	34.2	38.8
	Exceeds expectations	179	41.9	55.6	94.4
	Far exceeds expectations	18	4.2	5.6	100.0
	Total	322	75.4	100.0	
Missing	Refused	32	7.5		
	System	73	17.1		
Total		105	24.6		
Total		427	100.0		

*Which of the following describes how often you use Mercer County Parks/recreational trails?*

How often do you use:



Which of the following describes how often you use Mercer County Parks?

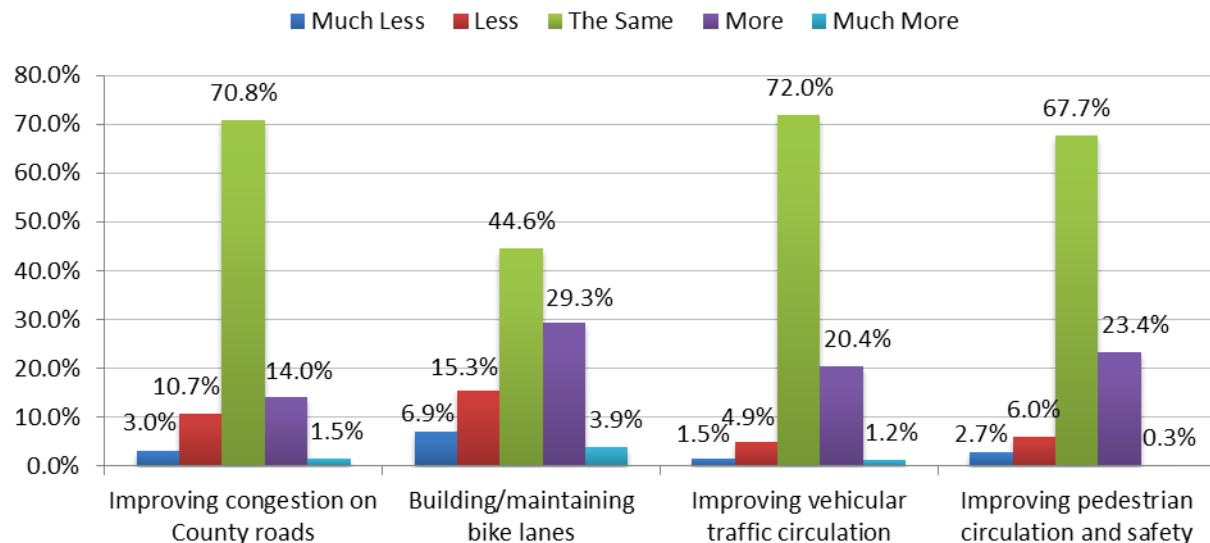
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	32	7.5	9.2	9.2
	Less than Once a Month	140	32.8	40.5	49.7
	Once a Month	83	19.4	24.0	73.7
	2-3 Times a Month	44	10.3	12.7	86.4
	Once a Week	18	4.2	5.2	91.6
	2-3 Times a Week	26	6.1	7.5	99.1
	Daily	3	.7	.9	100.0
Total		346	81.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	8	1.9		
	System	73	17.1		
Total		81	19.0		
Total		427	100.0		

How often do you use Mercer County's recreational trails?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	101	23.7	29.1	29.1
	Less than Once a Month	144	33.7	41.5	70.6
	Once a Month	40	9.4	11.5	82.1
	2-3 Times a Month	24	5.6	6.9	89.0
	Once a Week	15	3.5	4.3	93.4
	2-3 Times a Week	22	5.2	6.3	99.7
	Daily	1	.2	.3	100.0
Missing	Total	347	81.3	100.0	
	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	73	17.1		
Total	Total	80	18.7		
	Total	427	100.0		

*How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following transportation goals?*

**How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following transportation goals?**





How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following transportation goal...-Improving congestion on County road networks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much Less	10	2.3	3.0	3.0
	Less	36	8.4	10.7	13.7
	The Same	238	55.7	70.8	84.5
	More	47	11.0	14.0	98.5
	Much More	5	1.2	1.5	100.0
	Total	336	78.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	3	.7		
	System	88	20.6		
	Total	91	21.3		
Total		427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following transportation goal...-Building/maintaining bike lanes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much Less	23	5.4	6.9	6.9
	Less	51	11.9	15.3	22.2
	The Same	149	34.9	44.6	66.8
	More	98	23.0	29.3	96.1
	Much More	13	3.0	3.9	100.0
	Total	334	78.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	5	1.2		
	System	88	20.6		
	Total	93	21.8		
Total		427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following transportation goal...-Improving vehicular traffic circulation

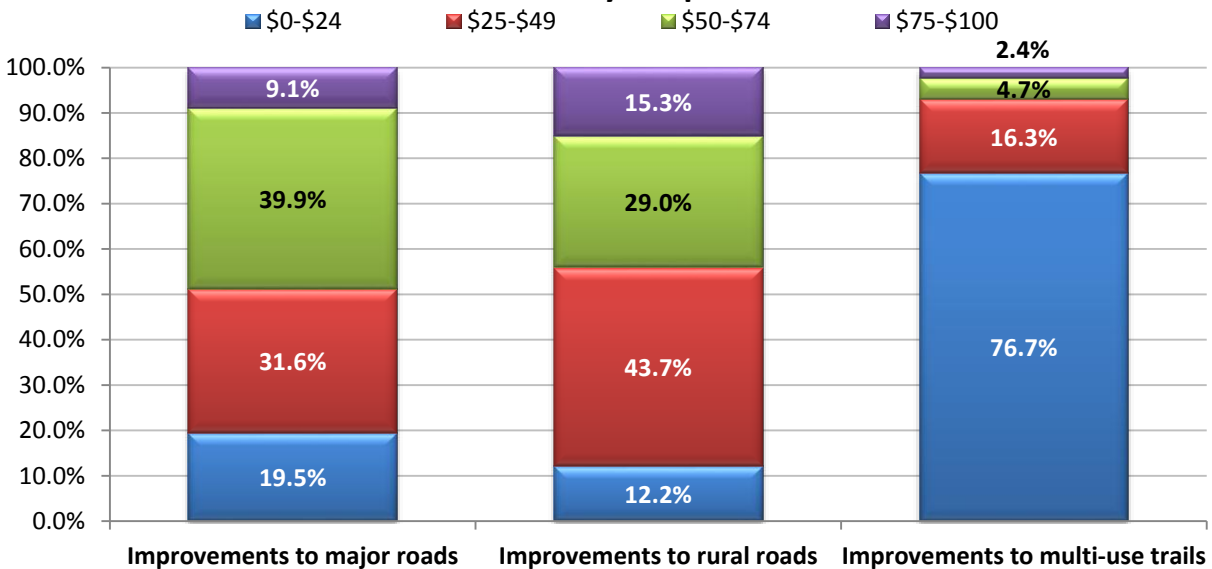
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much Less	5	1.2	1.5	1.5
	Less	16	3.7	4.9	6.4
	The Same	237	55.5	72.0	78.4
	More	67	15.7	20.4	98.8
	Much More	4	.9	1.2	100.0
	Total	329	77.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	88	20.6		
	Total	98	23.0		
Total		427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following transportation goal...-  
Improving pedestrian circulation and safety

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much Less	9	2.1	2.7	2.7
	Less	20	4.7	6.0	8.7
	The Same	226	52.9	67.7	76.3
	More	78	18.3	23.4	99.7
	Much More	1	.2	.3	100.0
	Total	334	78.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	5	1.2		
	System	88	20.6		
	Total	93	21.8		
Total		427	100.0		

*If you were spending \$100 on transportation improvements in Mercer County, how would you spend the \$100 among the improvements listed below?*

**If you were to spend \$100 on transportation improvements in Mercer County, how would you spend it?**



If you were spending \$100 on transportation improvements in Mercer County, how would you spend the \$...-  
Improvement to major roads

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
.00	56	13.1	16.5	16.5
10.00	1	.2	.3	16.8
12.50	1	.2	.3	17.1
15.00	2	.5	.6	17.7
20.00	6	1.4	1.8	19.5
25.00	24	5.6	7.1	26.5
30.00	13	3.0	3.8	30.4
33.00	8	1.9	2.4	32.7
33.33	1	.2	.3	33.0
35.00	6	1.4	1.8	34.8
Valid 37.00	1	.2	.3	35.1
40.00	35	8.2	10.3	45.4
42.00	1	.2	.3	45.7
45.00	17	4.0	5.0	50.7
49.00	1	.2	.3	51.0
50.00	102	23.9	30.1	81.1
55.00	3	.7	.9	82.0
60.00	19	4.4	5.6	87.6
63.00	1	.2	.3	87.9
65.00	4	.9	1.2	89.1
66.00	1	.2	.3	89.4

If you were spending \$100 on transportation improvements in Mercer County, how would you spend the \$...-  
Improvement to major roads

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
69.00	1	.2	.3	89.7
70.00	4	.9	1.2	90.9
75.00	12	2.8	3.5	94.4
80.00	5	1.2	1.5	95.9
85.00	1	.2	.3	96.2
90.00	1	.2	.3	96.5
100.00	12	2.8	3.5	100.0
Total	339	79.4	100.0	
Missing System	88	20.6		
Total	427	100.0		

If you were spending \$100 on transportation improvements in Mercer County, how would you spend the \$...-  
Improvements to rural roads

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
.00	21	4.9	6.2	6.2
5.00	1	.2	.3	6.5
10.00	5	1.2	1.5	8.0
12.50	1	.2	.3	8.3
15.00	4	.9	1.2	9.4
20.00	9	2.1	2.7	12.1
25.00	30	7.0	8.8	20.9
28.00	1	.2	.3	21.2
30.00	27	6.3	8.0	29.2
33.00	4	.9	1.2	30.4
33.33	1	.2	.3	30.7
34.00	4	.9	1.2	31.9
35.00	14	3.3	4.1	36.0
36.00	1	.2	.3	36.3
40.00	48	11.2	14.2	50.4
42.00	1	.2	.3	50.7
45.00	13	3.0	3.8	54.6
48.00	1	.2	.3	54.9
49.00	3	.7	.9	55.8
50.00	82	19.2	24.2	79.9
55.00	3	.7	.9	80.8
60.00	7	1.6	2.1	82.9
65.00	1	.2	.3	83.2
70.00	4	.9	1.2	84.4
74.00	1	.2	.3	84.7
75.00	11	2.6	3.2	87.9
80.00	4	.9	1.2	89.1
85.00	1	.2	.3	89.4

Valid

If you were spending \$100 on transportation improvements in Mercer County, how would you spend the \$...-Improvements to rural roads

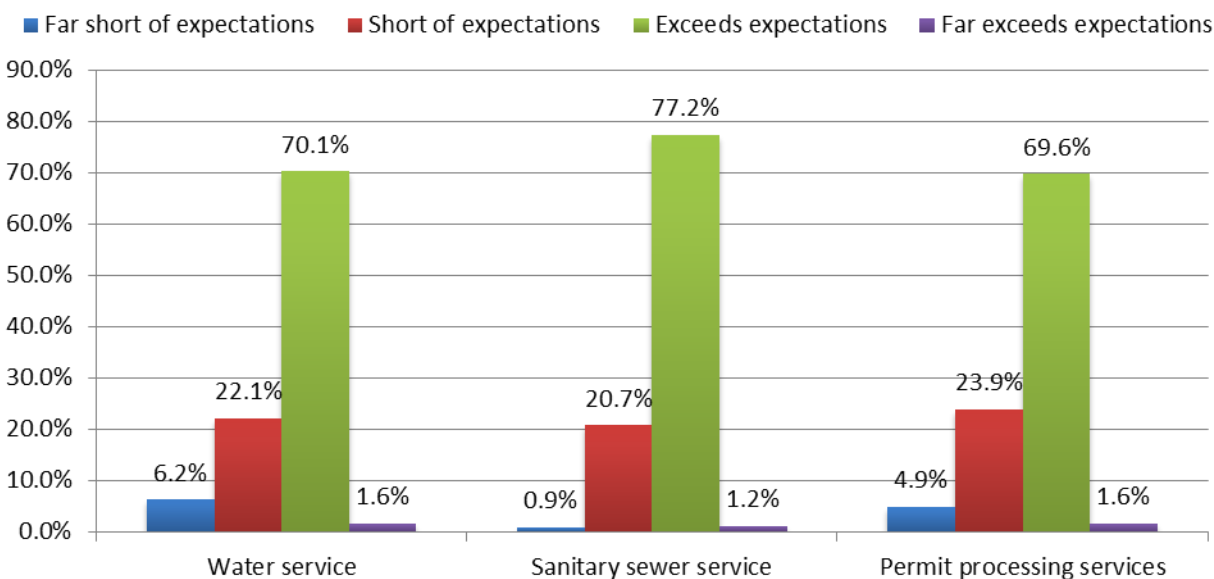
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
90.00	3	.7	.9	90.3
100.00	33	7.7	9.7	100.0
Total	339	79.4	100.0	
Missing System	88	20.6		
Total	427	100.0		

If you were spending \$100 on transportation improvements in Mercer County, how would you spend the \$...-Improvements to multi-use trails

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
.00	127	29.7	37.5	37.5
1.00	4	.9	1.2	38.6
2.00	4	.9	1.2	39.8
5.00	20	4.7	5.9	45.7
10.00	59	13.8	17.4	63.1
12.50	2	.5	.6	63.7
15.00	11	2.6	3.2	67.0
16.00	1	.2	.3	67.3
20.00	32	7.5	9.4	76.7
25.00	30	7.0	8.8	85.5
Valid 27.00	2	.5	.6	86.1
30.00	9	2.1	2.7	88.8
33.00	3	.7	.9	89.7
33.34	1	.2	.3	90.0
34.00	4	.9	1.2	91.2
35.00	2	.5	.6	91.7
40.00	4	.9	1.2	92.9
50.00	13	3.0	3.8	96.8
60.00	3	.7	.9	97.6
100.00	8	1.9	2.4	100.0
Total	339	79.4	100.0	
Missing System	88	20.6		
Total	427	100.0		

*Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:*

**Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:**



Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:-Water service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far short of expectations	20	4.7	6.2	6.2
	Short of expectations	71	16.6	22.1	28.3
	Exceeds expectations	225	52.7	70.1	98.4
	Far exceeds expectations	5	1.2	1.6	100.0
	Total	321	75.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	18	4.2		
	System	88	20.6		
	Total	106	24.8		
	Total	427	100.0		

Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:-Sanitary sewer service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Far short of expectations	3	.7	.9	.9
	Short of expectations	67	15.7	20.7	21.6
	Exceeds expectations	250	58.5	77.2	98.8
	Far exceeds expectations	4	.9	1.2	100.0
	Total	324	75.9	100.0	
Missing	Refused	15	3.5		
	System	88	20.6		
	Total	103	24.1		
	Total	427	100.0		

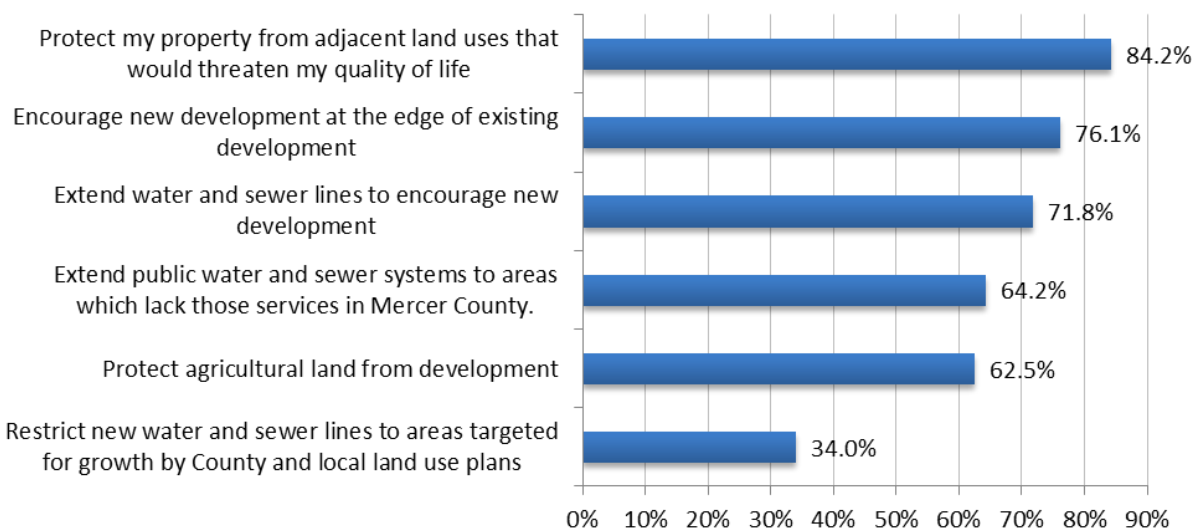
Please rate how well you think the following services are being provided:-Permit processing services

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Far short of expectations	15	3.5	4.9	4.9
Valid Short of expectations	73	17.1	23.9	28.8
Valid Exceeds expectations	213	49.9	69.6	98.4
Valid Far exceeds expectations	5	1.2	1.6	100.0
Total	306	71.7	100.0	
Refused	33	7.7		
Missing System	88	20.6		
Total	121	28.3		
Total	427	100.0		

*Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.*

**Residents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements.**

**I support comprehensive planning goals which where feasible,**



Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.-I support comprehensive planning goals which where feasible, extend public water and sewer systems to areas which lack those services in Mercer County.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	10	2.3	3.0	3.0
Valid Disagree	29	6.8	8.8	11.8
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	79	18.5	23.9	35.8
Valid Agree	179	41.9	54.2	90.0
Valid Strongly Agree	33	7.7	10.0	100.0
Total	330	77.3	100.0	
Refused	7	1.6		
Missing System	90	21.1		
Total	97	22.7		
Total	427	100.0		



Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.-I support comprehensive planning goals which restrict new water and sewer lines to areas targeted for growth by County and local land use plans.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	21	4.9	6.4	6.4
	Disagree	73	17.1	22.3	28.7
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	122	28.6	37.3	66.1
	Agree	95	22.2	29.1	95.1
	Strongly Agree	16	3.7	4.9	100.0
	Total	327	76.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	90	21.1		
	Total	100	23.4		
Total		427	100.0		

Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.-I support comprehensive planning goals which extend water and sewer lines to encourage new development

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.4	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	17	4.0	5.2	7.0
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	70	16.4	21.2	28.2
	Agree	190	44.5	57.6	85.8
	Strongly Agree	47	11.0	14.2	100.0
	Total	330	77.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	90	21.1		
	Total	97	22.7		
Total		427	100.0		

Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.-I support comprehensive planning goals which protect my property from adjacent land uses that would threaten my quality of life.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	.2	.3	.3
	Disagree	6	1.4	1.8	2.1
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	45	10.5	13.6	15.8
	Agree	136	31.9	41.2	57.0
	Strongly Agree	142	33.3	43.0	100.0
	Total	330	77.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	90	21.1		
	Total	97	22.7		
Total		427	100.0		

Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.-I support comprehensive planning goals which protect agricultural land from development

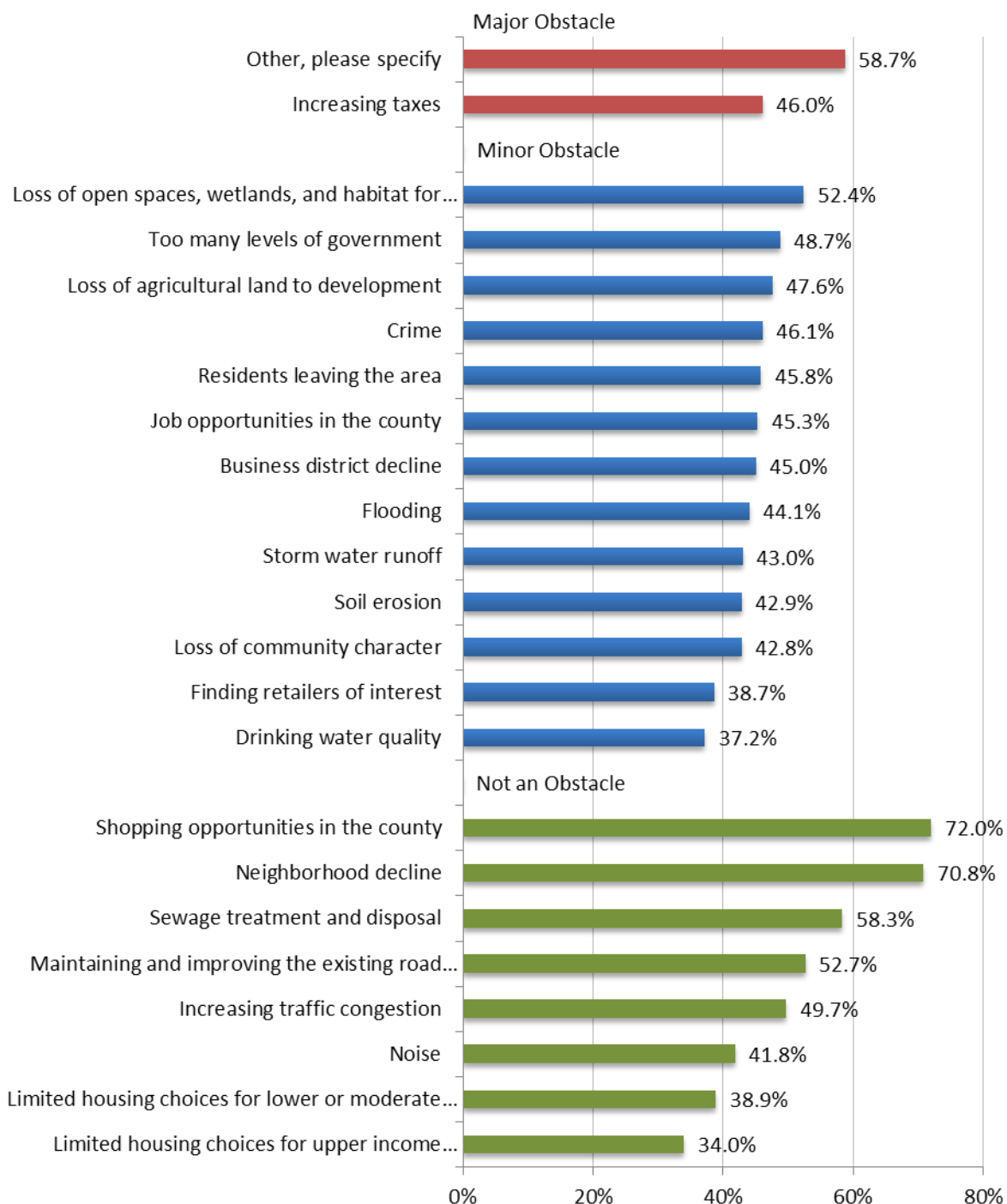
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	3.3	4.3	4.3
	Disagree	25	5.9	7.6	11.9
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	84	19.7	25.6	37.5
	Agree	120	28.1	36.6	74.1
	Strongly Agree	85	19.9	25.9	100.0
	Total	328	76.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	90	21.1		
	Total	99	23.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.-I support comprehensive planning goals which encourage new development at the edge of existing development

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	.9	1.2	1.2
	Disagree	5	1.2	1.5	2.7
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	70	16.4	21.2	23.9
	Agree	193	45.2	58.5	82.4
	Strongly Agree	58	13.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	330	77.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	7	1.6		
	System	90	21.1		
	Total	97	22.7		
Total		427	100.0		

*Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents through vibrant communities, productive farms, and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Please tell us if you feel any of the following items is an obstacle to Mercer County achieving these goals:*

## Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents



Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Limited housing choices for lower or moderate income residents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	9	2.1	2.9	2.9
	Minor Obstacle	94	22.0	30.1	33.0
	Not an Obstacle	182	42.6	58.3	91.3
	No Opinion	27	6.3	8.7	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Limited housing choices for upper income residents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	8	1.9	2.6	2.6
	Minor Obstacle	66	15.5	21.4	24.0
	Not an Obstacle	218	51.1	70.8	94.8
	No Opinion	16	3.7	5.2	100.0
	Total	308	72.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	13	3.0		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	119	27.9		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Increasing taxes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	142	33.3	46.0	46.0
	Minor Obstacle	120	28.1	38.8	84.8
	Not an Obstacle	41	9.6	13.3	98.1
	No Opinion	6	1.4	1.9	100.0
	Total	309	72.4	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	118	27.6		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents leaving the area

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	79	18.5	25.6	25.6
	Minor Obstacle	150	35.1	48.7	74.4
	Not an Obstacle	66	15.5	21.4	95.8
	No Opinion	13	3.0	4.2	100.0
	Total	308	72.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	13	3.0		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	119	27.9		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents Loss of agricultural land to development

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	82	19.2	26.5	26.5
	Minor Obstacle	120	28.1	38.7	65.2
	Not an Obstacle	99	23.2	31.9	97.1
	No Opinion	9	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	310	72.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	117	27.4		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents Loss of open spaces, wetlands, and habitat for wildlife and native plants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	100	23.4	32.1	32.1
	Minor Obstacle	116	27.2	37.2	69.2
	Not an Obstacle	82	19.2	26.3	95.5
	No Opinion	14	3.3	4.5	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Loss of community character

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	60	14.1	19.3	19.3
	Minor Obstacle	118	27.6	37.9	57.2
	Not an Obstacle	121	28.3	38.9	96.1
	No Opinion	12	2.8	3.9	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Increasing traffic congestion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	27	6.3	8.7	8.7
	Minor Obstacle	113	26.5	36.3	45.0
	Not an Obstacle	164	38.4	52.7	97.7
	No Opinion	7	1.6	2.3	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Too many levels of government

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	89	20.8	28.8	28.8
	Minor Obstacle	101	23.7	32.7	61.5
	Not an Obstacle	105	24.6	34.0	95.5
	No Opinion	14	3.3	4.5	100.0
	Total	309	72.4	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	118	27.6		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Crime

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	81	19.0	26.0	26.0
	Minor Obstacle	137	32.1	44.1	70.1
	Not an Obstacle	91	21.3	29.3	99.4
	No Opinion	2	.5	.6	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Job opportunities in the county

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	70	16.4	22.4	22.4
	Minor Obstacle	149	34.9	47.6	70.0
	Not an Obstacle	90	21.1	28.8	98.7
	No Opinion	4	.9	1.3	100.0
	Total	313	73.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	8	1.9		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Shopping opportunities in the county

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	46	10.8	14.8	14.8
	Minor Obstacle	143	33.5	46.1	61.0
	Not an Obstacle	117	27.4	37.7	98.7
	No Opinion	4	.9	1.3	100.0
	Total	310	72.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	117	27.4		
Total		427	100.0		



Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Finding retailers of interest

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	58	13.6	18.8	18.8
	Minor Obstacle	133	31.1	43.0	61.8
	Not an Obstacle	109	25.5	35.3	97.1
	No Opinion	9	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	309	72.4	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	118	27.6		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Drinking water quality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	57	13.3	18.3	18.3
	Minor Obstacle	93	21.8	29.8	48.1
	Not an Obstacle	155	36.3	49.7	97.8
	No Opinion	7	1.6	2.2	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Flooding

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	61	14.3	19.6	19.6
	Minor Obstacle	143	33.5	45.8	65.4
	Not an Obstacle	99	23.2	31.7	97.1
	No Opinion	9	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Sewage treatment and disposal

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	37	8.7	11.9	11.9
	Minor Obstacle	134	31.4	42.9	54.8
	Not an Obstacle	128	30.0	41.0	95.8
	No Opinion	13	3.0	4.2	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Noise

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	10	2.3	3.2	3.2
	Minor Obstacle	61	14.3	19.6	22.8
	Not an Obstacle	224	52.5	72.0	94.9
	No Opinion	16	3.7	5.1	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Soil erosion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	60	14.1	19.3	19.3
	Minor Obstacle	133	31.1	42.8	62.1
	Not an Obstacle	99	23.2	31.8	93.9
	No Opinion	19	4.4	6.1	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Storm water runoff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	60	14.1	19.3	19.3
	Minor Obstacle	141	33.0	45.3	64.6
	Not an Obstacle	94	22.0	30.2	94.9
	No Opinion	16	3.7	5.1	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Neighborhood decline

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	41	9.6	13.2	13.2
	Minor Obstacle	129	30.2	41.5	54.7
	Not an Obstacle	130	30.4	41.8	96.5
	No Opinion	11	2.6	3.5	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents...-Business district decline

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	64	15.0	20.6	20.6
	Minor Obstacle	140	32.8	45.0	65.6
	Not an Obstacle	96	22.5	30.9	96.5
	No Opinion	11	2.6	3.5	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its r...-Maintaining and improving the existing road network

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	35	8.2	11.3	11.3
	Minor Obstacle	162	37.9	52.4	63.8
	Not an Obstacle	105	24.6	34.0	97.7
	No Opinion	7	1.6	2.3	100.0
	Total	309	72.4	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	118	27.6		
Total		427	100.0		

Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its r...-Other, please specify

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Major Obstacle	37	8.7	58.7	58.7
	Not an Obstacle	9	2.1	14.3	73.0
	No Opinion	17	4.0	27.0	100.0
	Total	63	14.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	258	60.4		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	364	85.2		
Total		427	100.0		

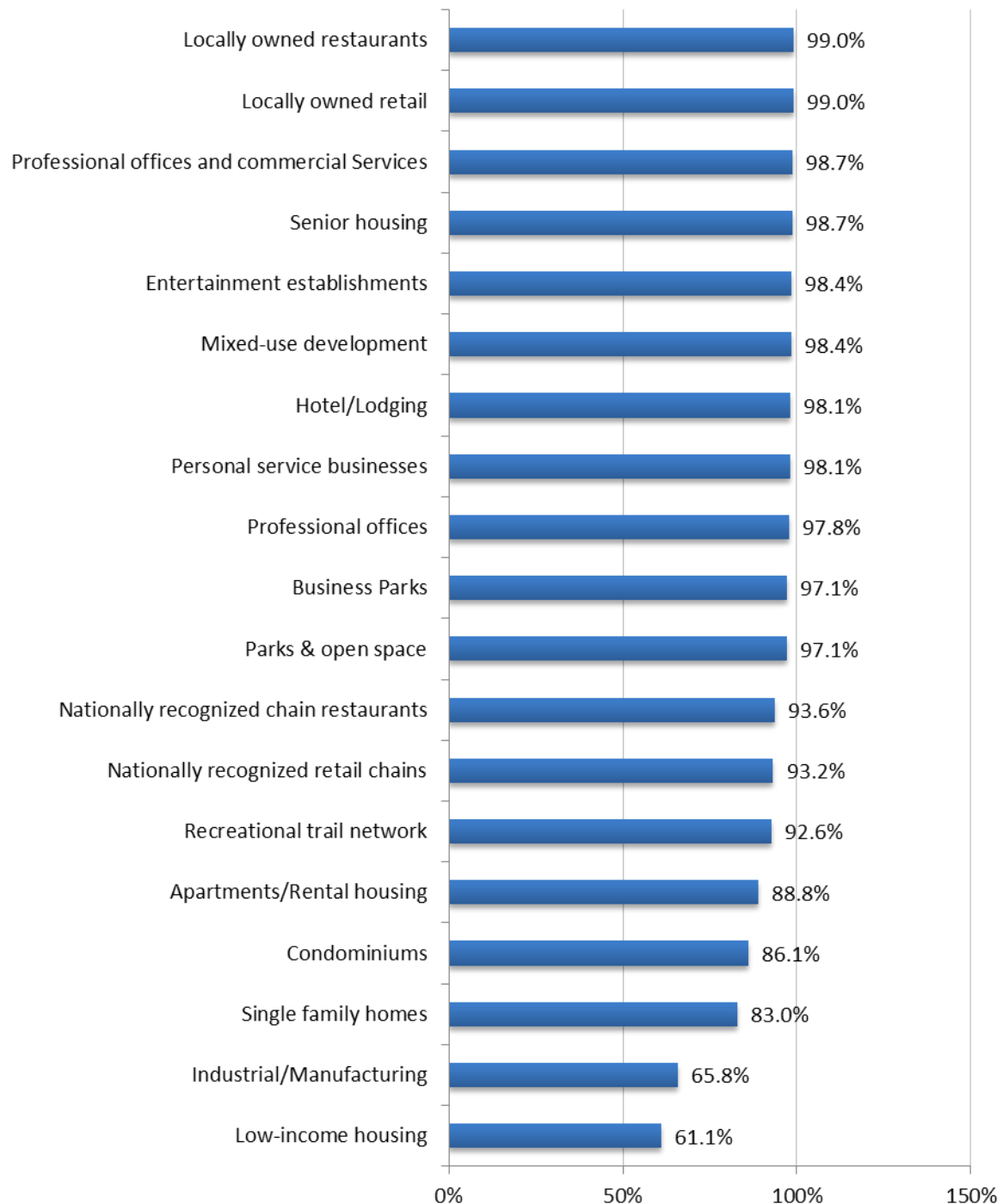
Mercer County may face obstacles to achieving its goal of providing a high quality of life for its r...-Other, please specify

- Ag. vs. Industry dynamics
- Agricultural runoff to GLSM (2)
- All Retail is Low End "Walmart" Quality Stores
- Commissioners transparency
- Drugs
- Environmental the county has no clue
- Lack of Community support to Existing Business
- Lake quality/condition (5)
  - GLSM condition/quality (2)
- Loss of woodlands due to agricultural conversion
- Mega chicken, cow & pig farms going up!!! We are already the manure capital county of the state!!! It's nothing but personal greed at the county's residences expense!!!! WAKE UP!
- More walking trails
- Must protect Land of the Cross Tipped Churches against any and all threats similiar to and including wind turbines
- No control of livestock

- No young farmers
- Not sure where you are going with this questions
- Opioids problem
- Preserving the Land of the Cross Tipped Churches
- Residents leaving is the worst
- STEM jobs for returning college or technical school graduates
- Stop farm run off
- We do not want any wind turbines put in our county please....
- Wind Energy/ Turbines (12)
  - If wind turbines were allowed, it would greatly decrease property value.
  - As a resident of Mercer County, discourage large industrial wind energy in Mercer County. I discourage large industrial wind energy in Mercer County. I am against industrial wind energy in Mercer County.
  - Keep Wind Farms out of Mercer County
  - Large industrial wind farms
  - Increasing wind industry
  - Keeping wind turbines
  - Potential Large Industrial Wind development

*For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or NEEDS LESS. What types of development would you like to see in Mercer County? Select all that apply.*

**For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY**



For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-  
Apartments/Rental housing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	30	7.0	9.6	9.6
	Adequate supply	247	57.8	79.2	88.8
	Needs less	35	8.2	11.2	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-Senior housing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	69	16.2	22.0	22.0
	Adequate supply	240	56.2	76.7	98.7
	Needs less	4	.9	1.3	100.0
	Total	313	73.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	8	1.9		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-Single family homes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	48	11.2	15.4	15.4
	Adequate supply	258	60.4	83.0	98.4
	Needs less	5	1.2	1.6	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-Condominiums

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	28	6.6	9.0	9.0
	Adequate supply	239	56.0	77.1	86.1
	Needs less	43	10.1	13.9	100.0
	Total	310	72.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	117	27.4		
Total		427	100.0		



For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-Low-income housing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	15	3.5	4.8	4.8
	Adequate supply	175	41.0	56.3	61.1
	Needs less	121	28.3	38.9	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-Business Parks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	101	23.7	32.6	32.6
	Adequate supply	200	46.8	64.5	97.1
	Needs less	9	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	310	72.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	117	27.4		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-Professional offices and commercial Services

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	76	17.8	24.3	24.3
	Adequate supply	233	54.6	74.4	98.7
	Needs less	4	.9	1.3	100.0
	Total	313	73.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	8	1.9		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUP...-Hotel/Lodging

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	71	16.6	22.8	22.8
	Adequate supply	234	54.8	75.2	98.1
	Needs less	6	1.4	1.9	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has an EXCESSIVE SUPPLY for the following:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	206	48.2	65.8	65.8
	Adequate supply	105	24.6	33.5	99.4
	Needs less	2	.5	.6	100.0
	Total	313	73.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	8	1.9		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has an EXCESSIVE SUPPLY for the following:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	97	22.7	31.9	31.9
	Adequate supply	202	47.3	66.4	98.4
	Needs less	5	1.2	1.6	100.0
	Total	304	71.2	100.0	
Missing	Refused	17	4.0		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	123	28.8		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has an EXCESSIVE SUPPLY for the following:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	69	16.2	22.1	22.1
	Adequate supply	234	54.8	75.0	97.1
	Needs less	9	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has too many. Professional offices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	58	13.6	18.6	18.6
	Adequate supply	247	57.8	79.2	97.8
	Needs less	7	1.6	2.2	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has too many. Recreational trail network

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	101	23.7	32.5	32.5
	Adequate supply	187	43.8	60.1	92.6
	Needs less	23	5.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has too many. Locally owned restaurants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	98	23.0	31.3	31.3
	Adequate supply	212	49.6	67.7	99.0
	Needs less	3	.7	1.0	100.0
	Total	313	73.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	8	1.9		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has TOO MUCH. -Nationally recognized chain restaurants, such as Olive Garden or Bob Evans

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	135	31.6	43.1	43.1
	Adequate supply	158	37.0	50.5	93.6
	Needs less	20	4.7	6.4	100.0
	Total	313	73.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	8	1.9		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has TOO MUCH. -Locally owned retail

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	151	35.4	48.4	48.4
	Adequate supply	158	37.0	50.6	99.0
	Needs less	3	.7	1.0	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has TOO MUCH. -Nationally recognized retail chains, such as Target or Kohl's

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	125	29.3	40.2	40.2
	Adequate supply	165	38.6	53.1	93.2
	Needs less	21	4.9	6.8	100.0
	Total	311	72.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	116	27.2		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has an EXCESSIVE SUPPLY. Personal service businesses, such as beauty salons and dry cleaners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	31	7.3	10.0	10.0
	Adequate supply	273	63.9	88.1	98.1
	Needs less	6	1.4	1.9	100.0
	Total	310	72.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	117	27.4		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has an EXCESSIVE SUPPLY. Entertainment establishments, such as a movie theater

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	89	20.8	28.5	28.5
	Adequate supply	218	51.1	69.9	98.4
	Needs less	5	1.2	1.6	100.0
	Total	312	73.1	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	115	26.9		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has an EXCESSIVE SUPPLY. Other (please specify)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Needs more	10	2.3	31.3	31.3
	Adequate supply	11	2.6	34.4	65.6
	Needs less	11	2.6	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	7.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	289	67.7		
	System	106	24.8		
	Total	395	92.5		
Total		427	100.0		

For each of the following, please indicate if you feel Mercer County NEEDS MORE, has an ADEQUATE SUPPLY, or has an EXCESSIVE SUPPLY. Other, please specify

- Bike trails
- Bring in the business and the rest will take care of themselves.
- Current movie theater needs remodeling & cleaning!!!

- Do not need wind development
- Entertainment
- High End Food Chain
- Improved access to high speed internet and cable services in outlying areas
- Lake development and clean-up
- Large Industrial Wind Farms would harm area
- Marinas
- More dry cleaners not salons, BETTER quality locally owned restaurants, Higher quality professional office space.
- New car sales diversity
- No manure in lake
- NO WIND TURBINES
- Other than major malls or outlets, this area has it all and that's perfect.
- St patrol
- We need more wildlife habitat
- Wind Farms

*How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achieve its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents through vibrant communities, productive farms, and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.*

**Importance in helping Mercer County achieve its goal of providing a high quality of life for its residents through vibrant communities, productive farms, and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.**





How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Preserving agricultural resources and farmland in Mercer County

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	9	2.1	3.0	3.0
	Very Unimportant	18	4.2	5.9	8.9
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	54	12.6	17.8	26.7
	Very Important	131	30.7	43.2	70.0
	Extremely Important	91	21.3	30.0	100.0
	Total	303	71.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	124	29.0		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Increasing employment opportunities in Mercer County

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Unimportant	8	1.9	2.6	2.6
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	25	5.9	8.3	10.9
	Very Important	188	44.0	62.0	72.9
	Extremely Important	82	19.2	27.1	100.0
	Total	303	71.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	124	29.0		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Preserving open areas or green spaces

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	3	.7	1.0	1.0
	Very Unimportant	16	3.7	5.3	6.3
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	96	22.5	31.9	38.2
	Very Important	142	33.3	47.2	85.4
	Extremely Important	44	10.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	126	29.5		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Providing affordable housing for all incomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	13	3.0	4.3	4.3
	Very Unimportant	28	6.6	9.3	13.6
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	118	27.6	39.2	52.8
	Very Important	124	29.0	41.2	94.0
	Extremely Important	18	4.2	6.0	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	126	29.5		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Preserving Mercer County's cultural, historical, and architectural heritage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	6	1.4	2.0	2.0
	Very Unimportant	18	4.2	5.9	7.9
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	80	18.7	26.4	34.3
	Very Important	147	34.4	48.5	82.8
	Extremely Important	52	12.2	17.2	100.0
	Total	303	71.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	124	29.0		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Providing public services (i.e. water, sewer, etc.)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	2	.5	.7	.7
	Very Unimportant	10	2.3	3.3	4.0
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	63	14.8	20.9	24.9
	Very Important	182	42.6	60.5	85.4
	Extremely Important	44	10.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	126	29.5		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Preserving/managing water resources such as lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, or ground water

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	2	.5	.7	.7
	Very Unimportant	13	3.0	4.3	5.0
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	28	6.6	9.3	14.3
	Very Important	140	32.8	46.5	60.8
	Extremely Important	118	27.6	39.2	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	126	29.5		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Building/connecting bike paths or trails

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	19	4.4	6.3	6.3
	Very Unimportant	42	9.8	14.0	20.3
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	123	28.8	40.9	61.1
	Very Important	89	20.8	29.6	90.7
	Extremely Important	28	6.6	9.3	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	126	29.5		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Managing Traffic

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	7	1.6	2.3	2.3
	Very Unimportant	24	5.6	8.0	10.3
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	153	35.8	50.8	61.1
	Very Important	115	26.9	38.2	99.3
	Extremely Important	2	.5	.7	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	126	29.5		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Building parks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	12	2.8	4.0	4.0
	Very Unimportant	44	10.3	14.6	18.5
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	173	40.5	57.3	75.8
	Very Important	66	15.5	21.9	97.7
	Extremely Important	7	1.6	2.3	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	125	29.3		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Maintaining parks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	4	.9	1.3	1.3
	Very Unimportant	16	3.7	5.3	6.6
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	80	18.7	26.5	33.1
	Very Important	165	38.6	54.6	87.7
	Extremely Important	37	8.7	12.3	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	125	29.3		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Utilizing our waterways and waterfronts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	4	.9	1.3	1.3
	Very Unimportant	16	3.7	5.3	6.7
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	90	21.1	30.0	36.7
	Very Important	144	33.7	48.0	84.7
	Extremely Important	46	10.8	15.3	100.0
	Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	13	3.0		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	127	29.7		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Capitalizing on our low cost of living

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	2	.5	.7	.7
	Very Unimportant	13	3.0	4.3	5.0
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	85	19.9	28.1	33.1
	Very Important	162	37.9	53.6	86.8
	Extremely Important	40	9.4	13.2	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Working with local businesses to help them expand

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	1	.2	.3	.3
	Very Unimportant	9	2.1	3.0	3.3
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	30	7.0	10.0	13.3
	Very Important	175	41.0	58.1	71.4
	Extremely Important	86	20.1	28.6	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Encouraging people to buy local products and foods

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	4	.9	1.3	1.3
	Very Unimportant	12	2.8	4.0	5.3
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	31	7.3	10.3	15.6
	Very Important	153	35.8	50.8	66.4
	Extremely Important	101	23.7	33.6	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System Total	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Recruiting businesses from outside Mercer County to locate here

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	1	.2	.3	.3
	Very Unimportant	18	4.2	6.0	6.3
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	40	9.4	13.3	19.6
	Very Important	156	36.5	51.8	71.4
	Extremely Important	86	20.1	28.6	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	126	29.5		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Improving vehicular traffic circulation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	8	1.9	2.7	2.7
	Very Unimportant	13	3.0	4.3	7.0
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	176	41.2	58.7	65.7
	Very Important	90	21.1	30.0	95.7
	Extremely Important	13	3.0	4.3	100.0
	Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	13	3.0		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	127	29.7		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Improving and redeveloping existing areas

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	3	.7	1.0	1.0
	Very Unimportant	7	1.6	2.3	3.3
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	84	19.7	28.0	31.3
	Very Important	169	39.6	56.3	87.7
	Extremely Important	37	8.7	12.3	100.0
	Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	13	3.0		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	127	29.7		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Encouraging new development at the edge of existing development

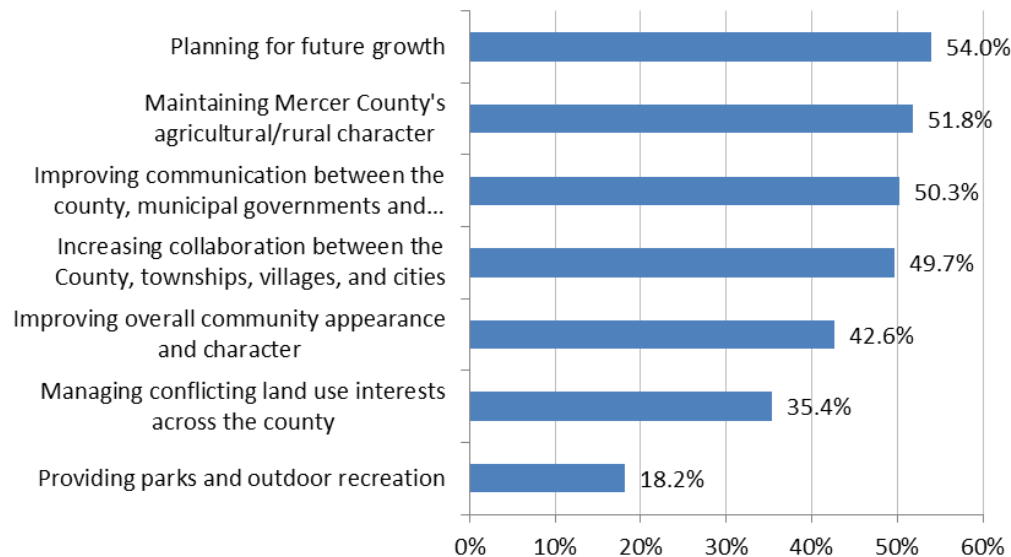
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	4	.9	1.3	1.3
	Very Unimportant	17	4.0	5.6	7.0
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	79	18.5	26.2	33.2
	Very Important	163	38.2	54.2	87.4
	Extremely Important	38	8.9	12.6	100.0
	Total	301	70.5	100.0	
Missing	Refused	12	2.8		
	System	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

How would you rate the following issues in terms of their importance in helping Mercer County achiev...-Preserving historical/archaeological resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Important	8	1.9	2.7	2.7
	Very Unimportant	14	3.3	4.7	7.4
	Neither Important nor Unimportant	103	24.1	34.4	41.8
	Very Important	121	28.3	40.5	82.3
	Extremely Important	53	12.4	17.7	100.0
	Total	299	70.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	14	3.3		
	System	114	26.7		
Total		427	100.0		

## How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?

### Residents who felt Mercer County Government should give alot of attention to each of the following planning goals



### How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?-Planning for future growth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	3	.7	1.0	1.0
	Very little	5	1.2	1.7	2.6
	Some	131	30.7	43.4	46.0
	A Lot	163	38.2	54.0	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	125	29.3		
Total		427	100.0		

### How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?-Managing conflicting land use interests across the county

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	5	1.2	1.7	1.7
	Very little	25	5.9	8.3	9.9
	Some	165	38.6	54.6	64.6
	A Lot	107	25.1	35.4	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	125	29.3		
Total		427	100.0		



How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?-Maintaining Mercer County's agricultural/rural character

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	10	2.3	3.3	3.3
	Very little	34	8.0	11.4	14.7
	Some	100	23.4	33.4	48.2
	A Lot	155	36.3	51.8	100.0
	Total	299	70.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	14	3.3		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	128	30.0		
Total		427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?-Providing parks and outdoor recreation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	14	3.3	4.6	4.6
	Very little	60	14.1	19.9	24.5
	Some	173	40.5	57.3	81.8
	A Lot	55	12.9	18.2	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	125	29.3		
Total		427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?-Increasing collaboration between the County, townships, villages, and cities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	6	1.4	2.0	2.0
	Very little	14	3.3	4.6	6.6
	Some	132	30.9	43.7	50.3
	A Lot	150	35.1	49.7	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	125	29.3		
Total		427	100.0		

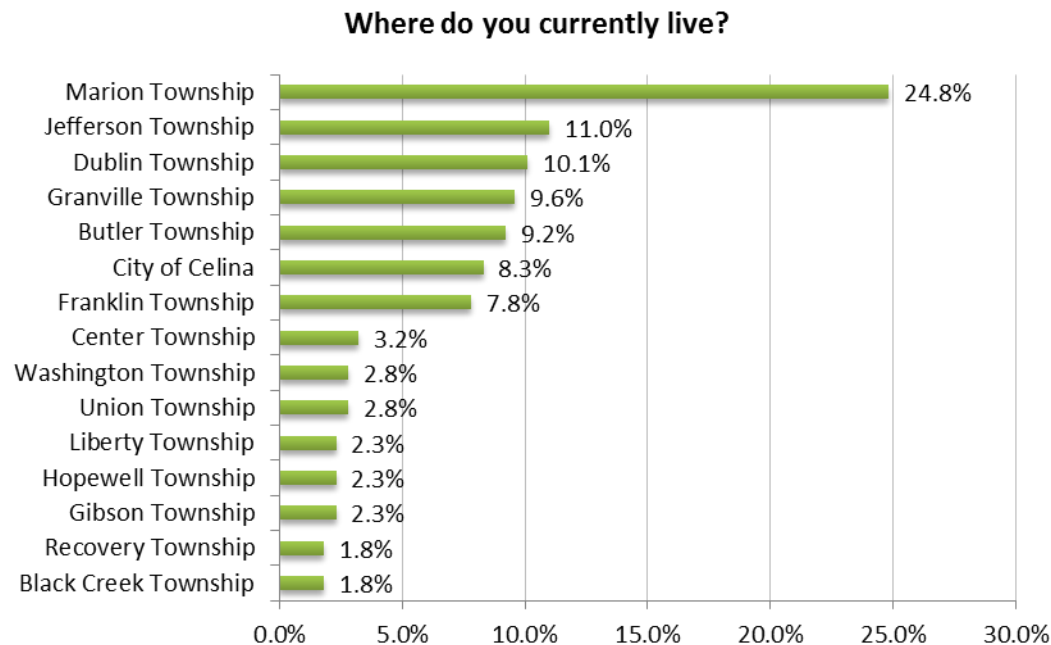
How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?-Improving overall community appearance and character

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	7	1.6	2.3	2.3
	Very little	19	4.4	6.3	8.6
	Some	148	34.7	48.8	57.4
	A Lot	129	30.2	42.6	100.0
	Total	303	71.0	100.0	
Missing	Refused	10	2.3		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	124	29.0		
Total		427	100.0		

How much attention should Mercer County Government give to each of the following planning goals?-Improving communication between the county, municipal governments and residents

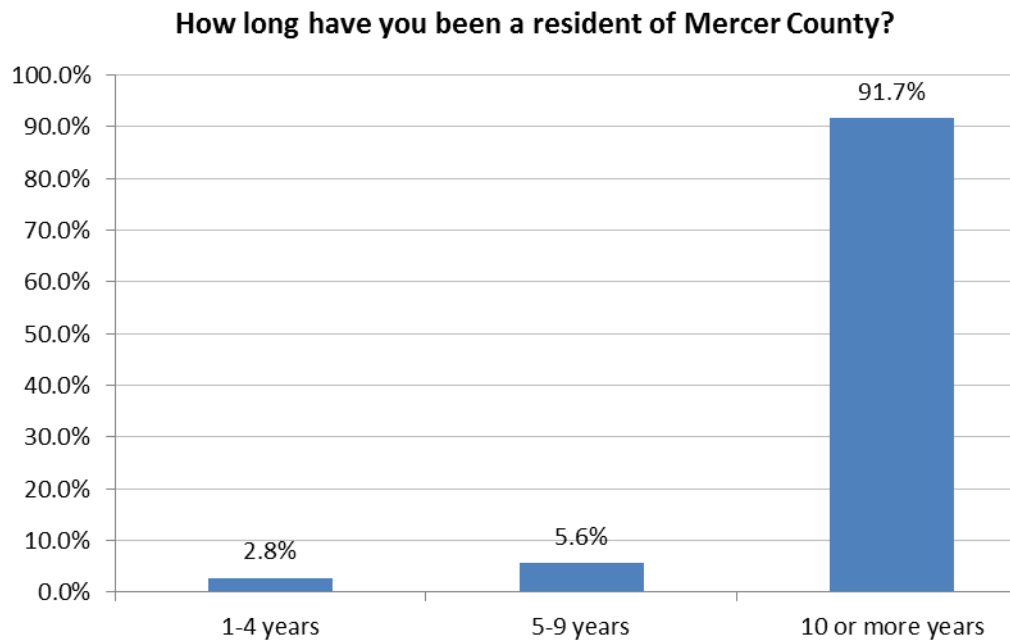
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	6	1.4	2.0	2.0
	Very little	19	4.4	6.3	8.3
	Some	125	29.3	41.4	49.7
	A Lot	152	35.6	50.3	100.0
	Total	302	70.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	114	26.7		
	Total	125	29.3		
Total		427	100.0		

## Where do you currently live?



## Where do you currently live?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black Creek Township	4	.9	1.8
	Butler Township	20	4.7	11.0
	Center Township	7	1.6	14.2
	Dublin Township	22	5.2	24.3
	Franklin Township	17	4.0	32.1
	Gibson Township	5	1.2	34.4
	Granville Township	21	4.9	44.0
	Hopewell Township	5	1.2	46.3
	Jefferson Township	24	5.6	57.3
	City of Celina	18	4.2	65.6
	Liberty Township	5	1.2	67.9
	Marion Township	54	12.6	92.7
	Recovery Township	4	.9	94.5
	Union Township	6	1.4	97.2
	Washington Township	6	1.4	100.0
	Total	218	51.1	100.0
Missing	Refused	4	.9	
	System	205	48.0	
Total	Total	209	48.9	
	Total	427	100.0	

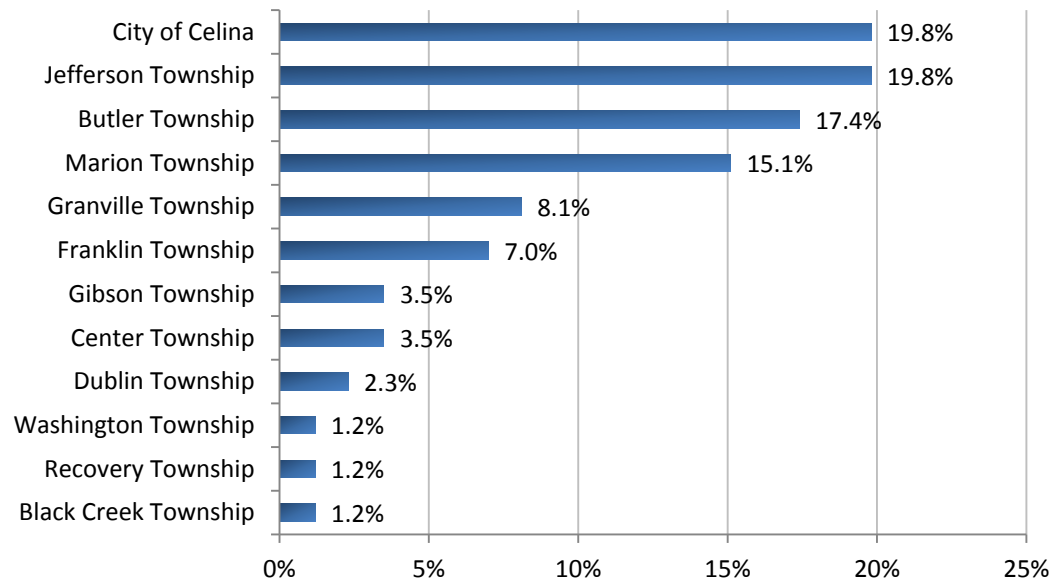
*How long have you been a resident of Mercer County?*

## How long have you been a resident of Mercer County?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-4 years	6	1.4	2.8	2.8
	5-9 years	12	2.8	5.6	8.3
	10 or more years	198	46.4	91.7	100.0
	Total	216	50.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	6	1.4		
	System	205	48.0		
	Total	211	49.4		
Total		427	100.0		

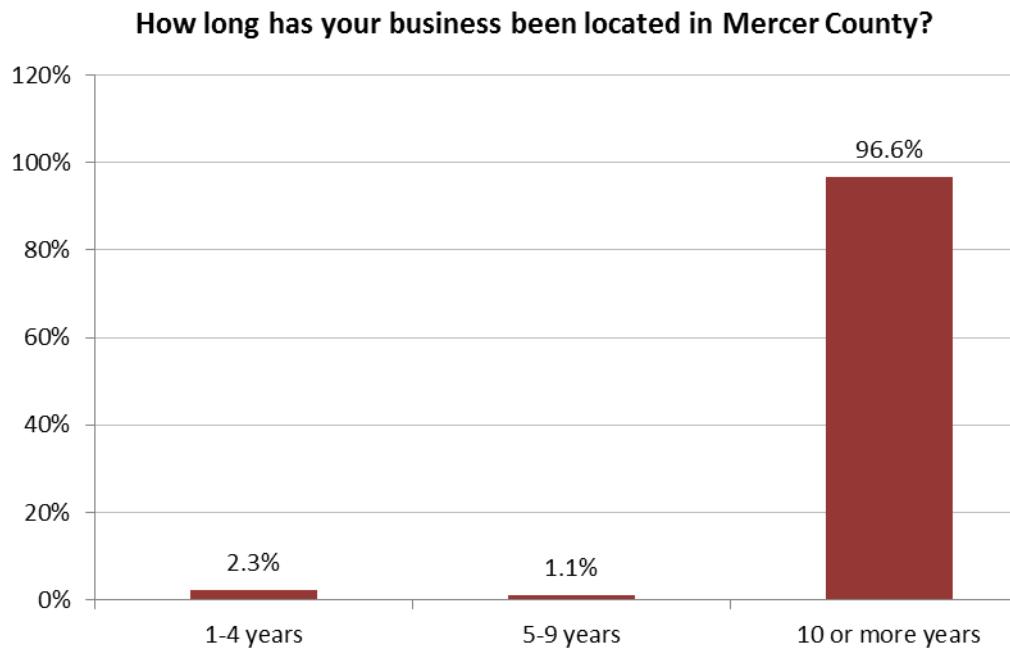
## My business is located in:

### My business is located in:



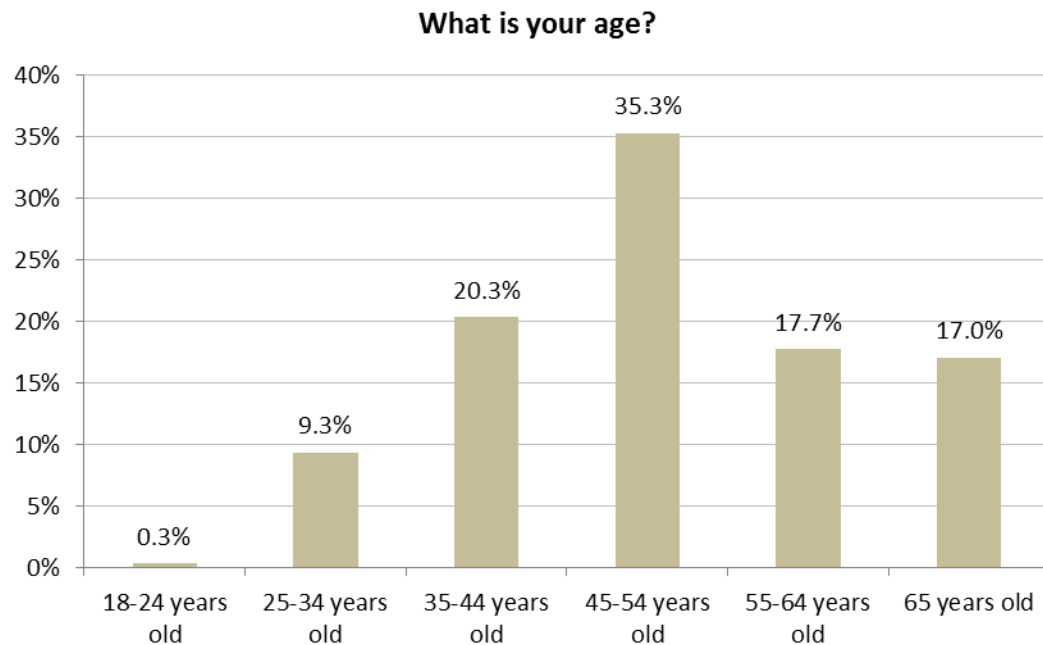
### My business is located in:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black Creek Township	1	.2	1.2	1.2
	Butler Township	15	3.5	17.4	18.6
	Center Township	3	.7	3.5	22.1
	Dublin Township	2	.5	2.3	24.4
	Franklin Township	6	1.4	7.0	31.4
	Gibson Township	3	.7	3.5	34.9
	Granville Township	7	1.6	8.1	43.0
	Jefferson Township	17	4.0	19.8	62.8
	City of Celina	17	4.0	19.8	82.6
	Marion Township	13	3.0	15.1	97.7
	Recovery Township	1	.2	1.2	98.8
	Washington Township	1	.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	86	20.1	100.0	
	Refused	3	.7		
Missing	System	338	79.2		
	Total	341	79.9		
Total		427	100.0		

*How long has your business been located in Mercer County?*

## How long has your business been located in Mercer County?

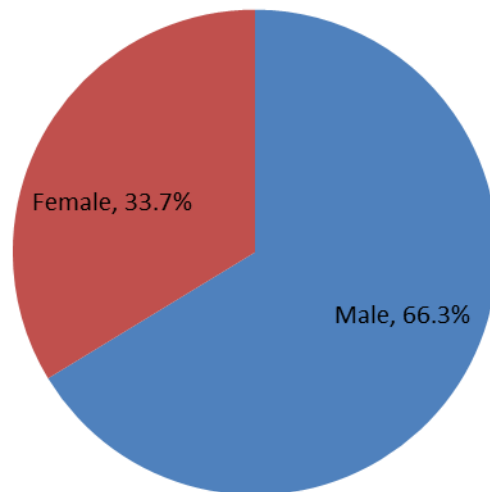
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-4 years	2	.5	2.3	2.3
	5-9 years	1	.2	1.1	3.4
	10 or more years	85	19.9	96.6	100.0
	Total	88	20.6	100.0	
Missing	Refused	1	.2		
	System	338	79.2		
Total		339	79.4		
Total		427	100.0		

*What is your age?**What is your age?*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-24 years of age	1	.2	.3	.3
25-34 years of age	28	6.6	9.3	9.7
35-44 years of age	61	14.3	20.3	30.0
45-54 years of age	106	24.8	35.3	65.3
55-64 years of age	53	12.4	17.7	83.0
65 years of age or older	51	11.9	17.0	100.0
Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Missing Refused	11	2.6		
System	116	27.2		
Total	127	29.7		
Total	427	100.0		

## What is your gender?

What is your gender?

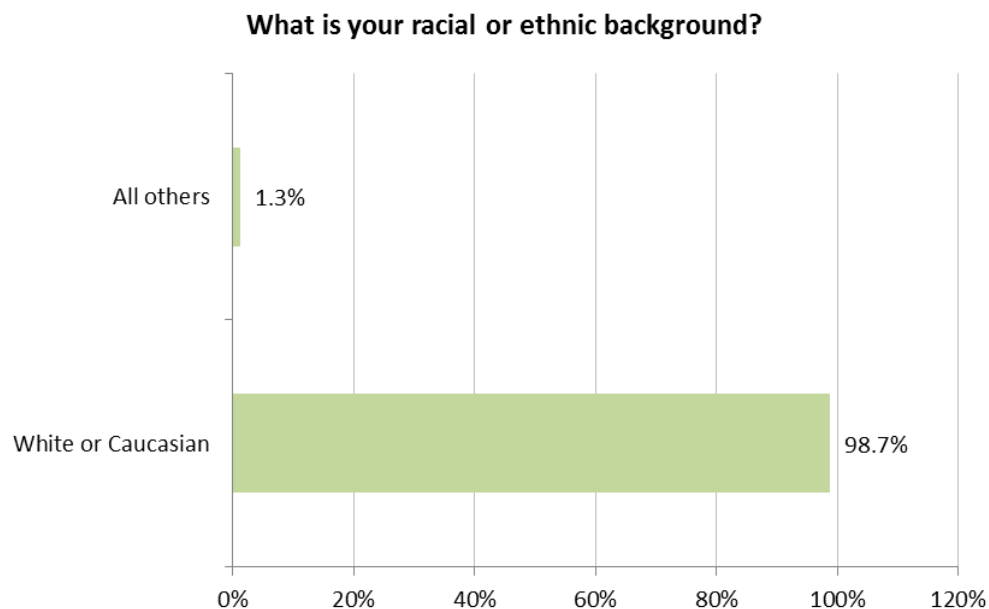


What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	199	46.6	66.3	66.3
	Female	101	23.7	33.7	100.0
	Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Missing	Refused	11	2.6		
	System	116	27.2		
Total		127	29.7		
Total		427	100.0		



## What is your racial or ethnic background?



### What is your racial or ethnic background?-Hispanic or Latino

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not selected	300	70.3	100.0	100.0
Refused	11	2.6		
MissingSystem	116	27.2		
Total	127	29.7		
Total	427	100.0		

### What is your racial or ethnic background?-White or Caucasian

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not selected	4	.9	1.3	1.3
Valid Selected	296	69.3	98.7	100.0
Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Refused	11	2.6		
MissingSystem	116	27.2		
Total	127	29.7		
Total	427	100.0		

### What is your racial or ethnic background?-Black or African American

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not selected	299	70.0	99.7	99.7
Valid Selected	1	.2	.3	100.0
Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Refused	11	2.6		
MissingSystem	116	27.2		
Total	127	29.7		
Total	427	100.0		

What is your racial or ethnic background?-Asian

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not selected	300	70.3	100.0	100.0
Refused	11	2.6		
MissingSystem	116	27.2		
Total	127	29.7		
Total	427	100.0		

What is your racial or ethnic background?-American Indian or Alaska Native

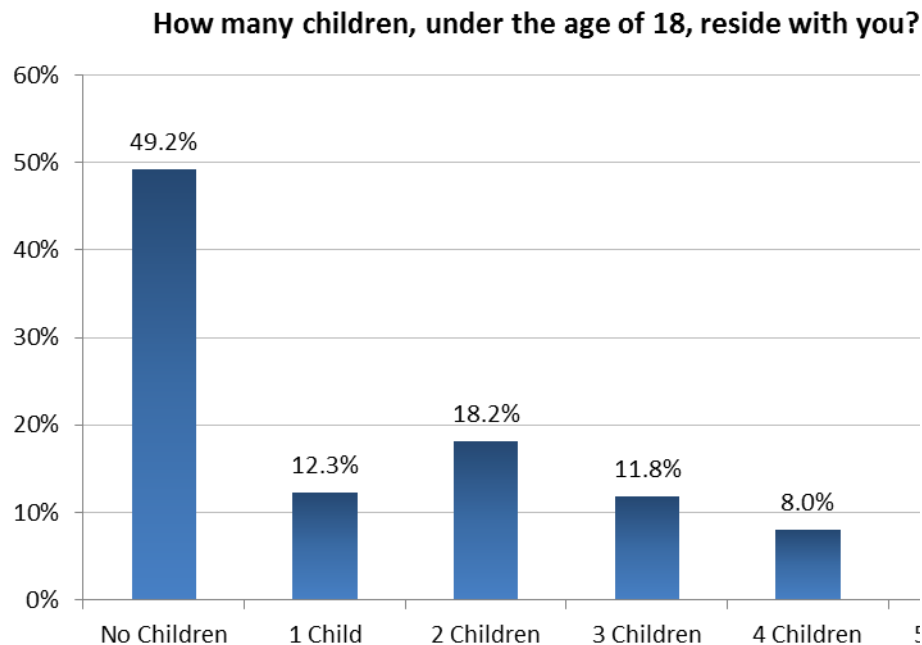
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not selected	299	70.0	99.7	99.7
Selected	1	.2	.3	100.0
Total	300	70.3	100.0	
Refused	11	2.6		
MissingSystem	116	27.2		
Total	127	29.7		
Total	427	100.0		

What is your racial or ethnic background?-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Not selected	300	70.3	100.0	100.0
Refused	11	2.6		
Missing System	116	27.2		
Total	127	29.7		
Total	427	100.0		

What is your racial or ethnic background?-Other, please specify

- German
- None of your business

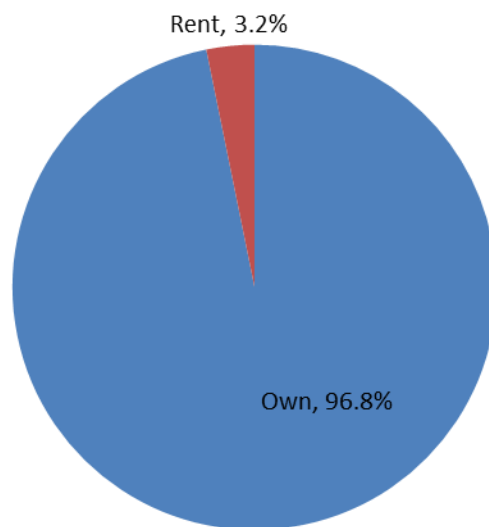
*How many children, under the age of 18, reside with you?*

## How many children, under the age of 18, reside with you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00	92	21.5	49.2
	1.00	23	5.4	12.3
	2.00	34	8.0	18.2
	3.00	22	5.2	11.8
	4.00	15	3.5	8.0
	5.00	1	.2	.5
Total	187	43.8	100.0	
Missing System	240	56.2		
Total	427	100.0		

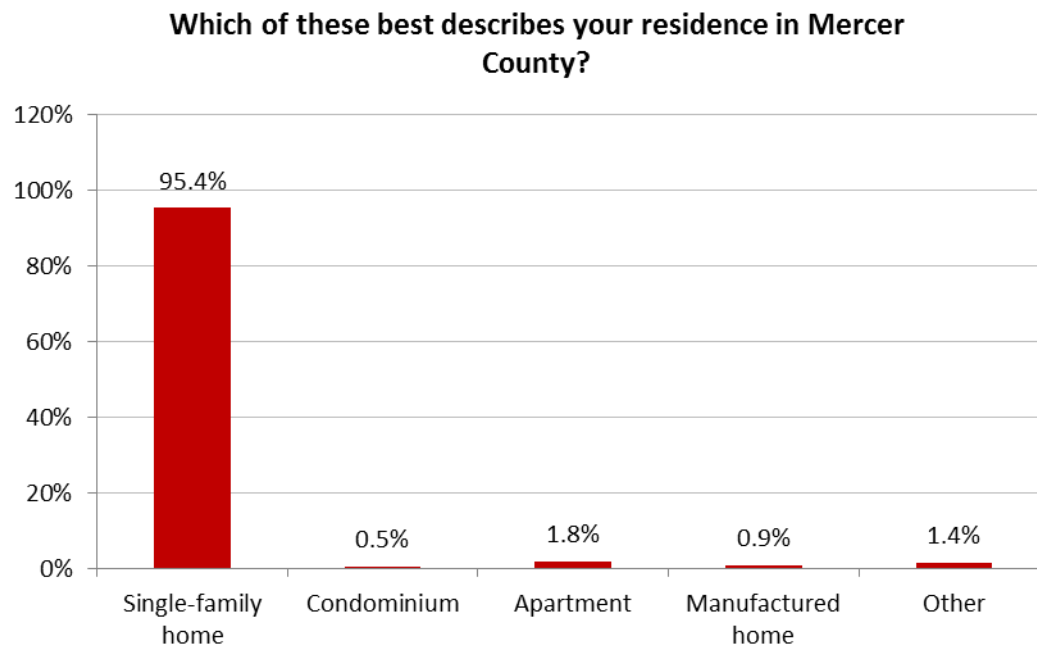
## Do you own or rent your home?

### Do you own or rent your home?



### Do you own or rent your home?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Own	210	49.2	96.8	96.8
	Rent	7	1.6	3.2	100.0
	Total	217	50.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	5	1.2		
	System	205	48.0		
	Total	210	49.2		
Total		427	100.0		

*Which of these BEST describes your residence in Mercer County?*

## Which of these BEST describes your residence in Mercer County?

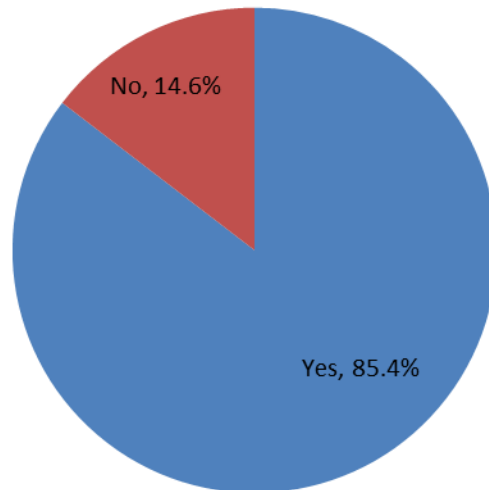
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single-family home	207	48.5	95.4	95.4
	Condominium	1	.2	.5	95.9
	Apartment	4	.9	1.8	97.7
	Manufactured home	2	.5	.9	98.6
	Other, please specify	3	.7	1.4	100.0
	Total	217	50.8	100.0	
Missing	Refused	5	1.2		
	System	205	48.0		
	Total	210	49.2		
Total		427	100.0		

Which of these BEST describes your residence in Mercer County? Other, *please specify*

- duplex
- farm house

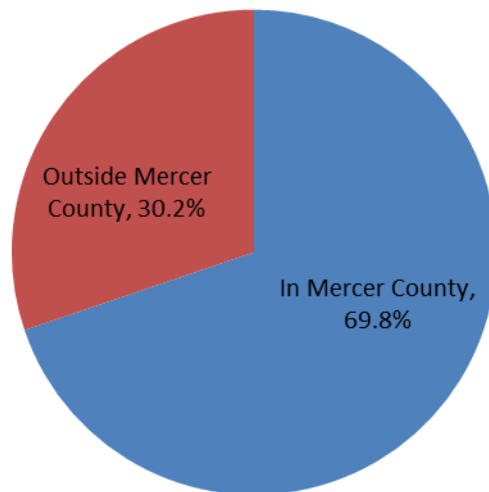
## Are you currently employed?

### Are you currently employed?



## Are you currently employed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	182	42.6	85.4	85.4
	No	31	7.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	213	49.9	100.0	
Missing	Refused	9	2.1		
	System	205	48.0		
Total		214	50.1		
Total		427	100.0		

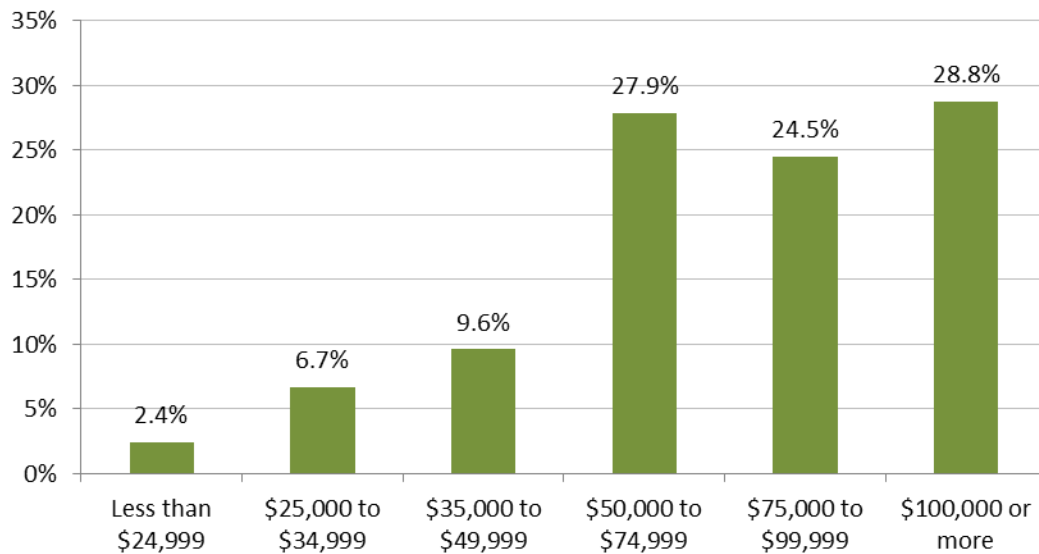
*Where are you currently employed?***Where are you currently employed?**

## Where are you currently employed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	In Mercer County	127	29.7	69.8	69.8
	Outside Mercer County	55	12.9	30.2	100.0
	Total	182	42.6	100.0	
Missing	System	245	57.4		
Total		427	100.0		

*What was your approximate total annual gross household income from all sources for last year (2011)?*

**What was your approximate annual gross household income from all sources for last year (2011)?**



What was your approximate total annual gross household income from all sources for last year (2011)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than \$24,999	5	1.2	2.4	2.4
	\$25,000 to \$34,999	14	3.3	6.7	9.1
	\$35,000 to \$49,999	20	4.7	9.6	18.8
	\$50,000 to \$74,999	58	13.6	27.9	46.6
	\$75,000 to \$99,999	51	11.9	24.5	71.2
	\$100,000 or more	60	14.1	28.8	100.0
	Total	208	48.7	100.0	
Missing	Refused	13	3.0		
	System	206	48.2		
	Total	219	51.3		
Total		427	100.0		



## Mercer County Comprehensive Plan – Citizen Input Public Sessions

<insert meeting results here>

## Appendix B: Natural Resource Management Plan

### Best Management Practices

Although technology changes and populations grow, the basic principles of natural resource management remain constant. Each impact on the land affects a larger segment of the population. Private and political boundaries no longer constitute the end of our obligation to the protection of our natural resources; thus, addressing immediate natural resource concerns on a small area of the landscape is quite necessary. Nonetheless, it remains far more beneficial to address all potential concerns that occur on a farm or within a watershed or community.

#### GOALS

1. Promote the installation of grassed waterways, wooded riparian buffers, and wetlands.
2. Encourage landowners to improve wildlife habitat both on their own and by using available cost share programs.
3. Promote the use of conservation tillage to reduce erosion and improve water quality.
4. Cooperate with ODNR Division of Forestry for the preservation and development of woodlands.

### Nutrient Management

Because Mercer County is ranked first in Ohio for swine, second for milk cows and all cattle, and has a large concentration of poultry, a large amount of organic nutrients are produced. Many times this is not seen as a product but is identified as a waste. It is important to stress proper nutrient management, which includes utilizing nutrients produced on the farm.

#### GOALS

1. Provide technical assistance with Best Management Practices, in developing plans, preventing problems, and construction in correcting pollution problems of cooperators with livestock operations. Best Management Practices (BMP's) include reducing erosion, implementing water quality practices, and mitigating flood damage.
2. Cooperate with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) by encouraging landowners to install BMP's to reduce nutrient pollution and meet agricultural nutrient regulations.
3. Work with schools, landowners, organizations, and the general public to inform them of proper conservation and pollution abatement practices. Share information in an effort to reduce water pollution from manure.
4. Implement cost share programs available through NRCS, FSA, ODNR, and watershed projects for the installation of animal waste facilities.
5. Work with producers and Technical Service Providers (TSP) to write Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP) for all agricultural land in the county.

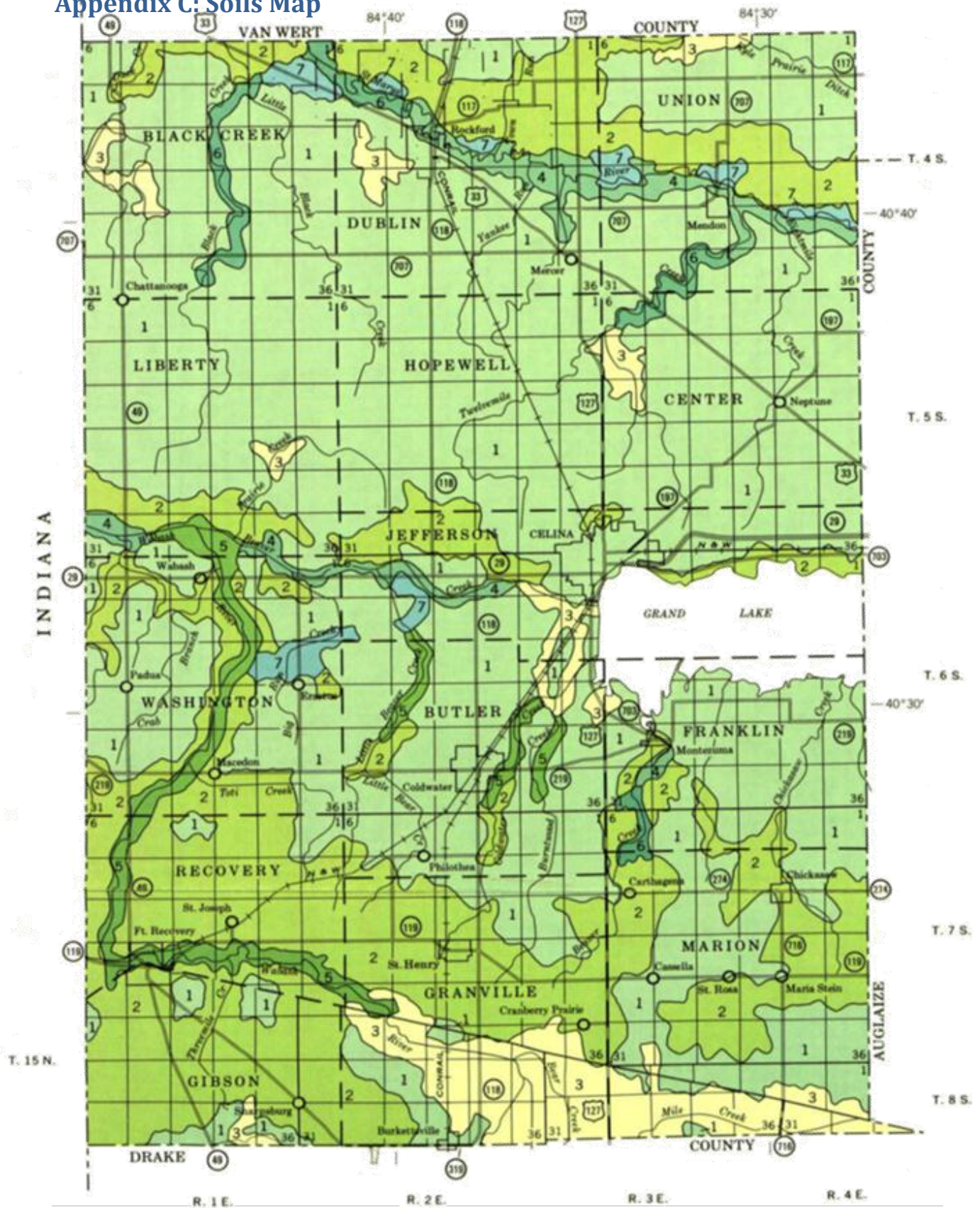
## Water Quality

**Utilize a watershed approach to reduce pollutants entering the water bodies of Mercer County and to improve the overall water quality.**

### *GOALS*

1. Place a high priority on providing technical assistance to landowners in planning and installing Best Management Practices (BMP's) to reduce nutrient loading.
2. Collaborate with other agencies and organizations in encouraging landowners to apply for available cost share funds including rental payments (CRP and CREP) for the installation of BMP's.
3. Inform the public, through education, presentations, press releases, and newsletters, of the need to control non-point source pollution.
4. Work with existing watershed groups including the Grand Lake Wabash Watershed Alliance (GLWWA) and the Loramie Valley Alliance (LVA) in order to accomplish mutual goals.
5. Collaborate with the Health Department and watershed groups to improve septic systems in the homes of county residents.
6. Provide technical and administrative support to watershed groups as mutually agreed upon by both Boards of Supervisors.

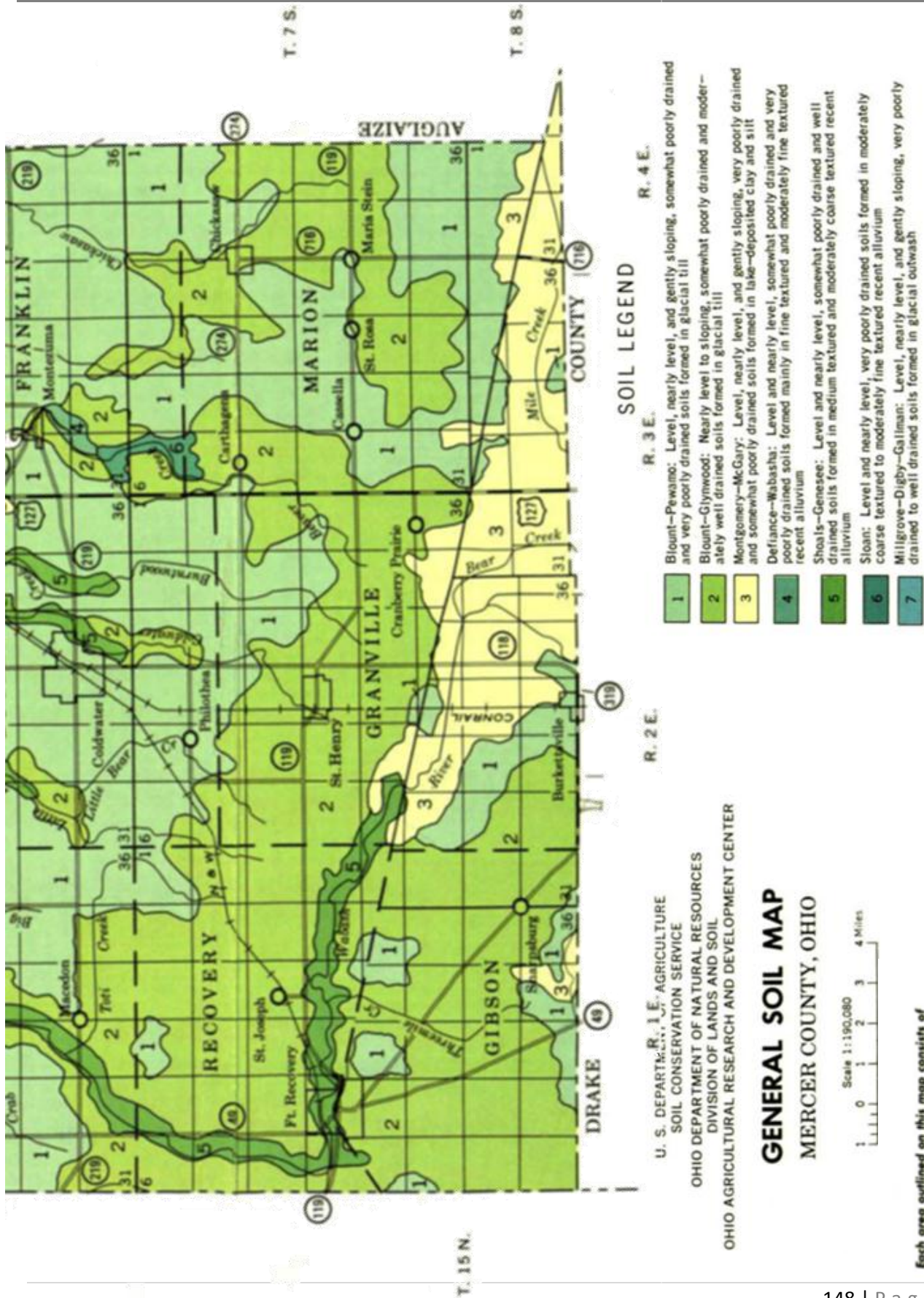
Appendix C: Soils Map











Soil	Acres	% of County
Defiance silty clay	3,042	1.00%
Millgrove clay loam	5	0.00%
Millgrove silty clay loam	1,874	6.00%
Millsdale silty clay loam	122	0.00%
Montgomery silty clay	15,939	5.30%
Montgomery silty clay loam	1	0.00%
Olentangy mucky silt loam	69	0.00%
Pewamo silty clay	426	0.10%
Pewamo silty clay loam	83,850	27.70%
Pewamo silty clay loam, ponded	455	0.20%
Sloan silty clay loam	3,739	1.20%
Wabasha silty clay	1,552	0.50%
Wabasha silty clay loam	22	0.00%
Totals	111,096	42.00%

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## **Appendix D: Mercer County Flood Management Plan**

Mercer County Flood Management Plan begins on the next page.

Further information regarding rainwater management refer to the Rainwater and Land Development Manual, which can be accessed at the following link.

<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/9186/Default.aspx>