

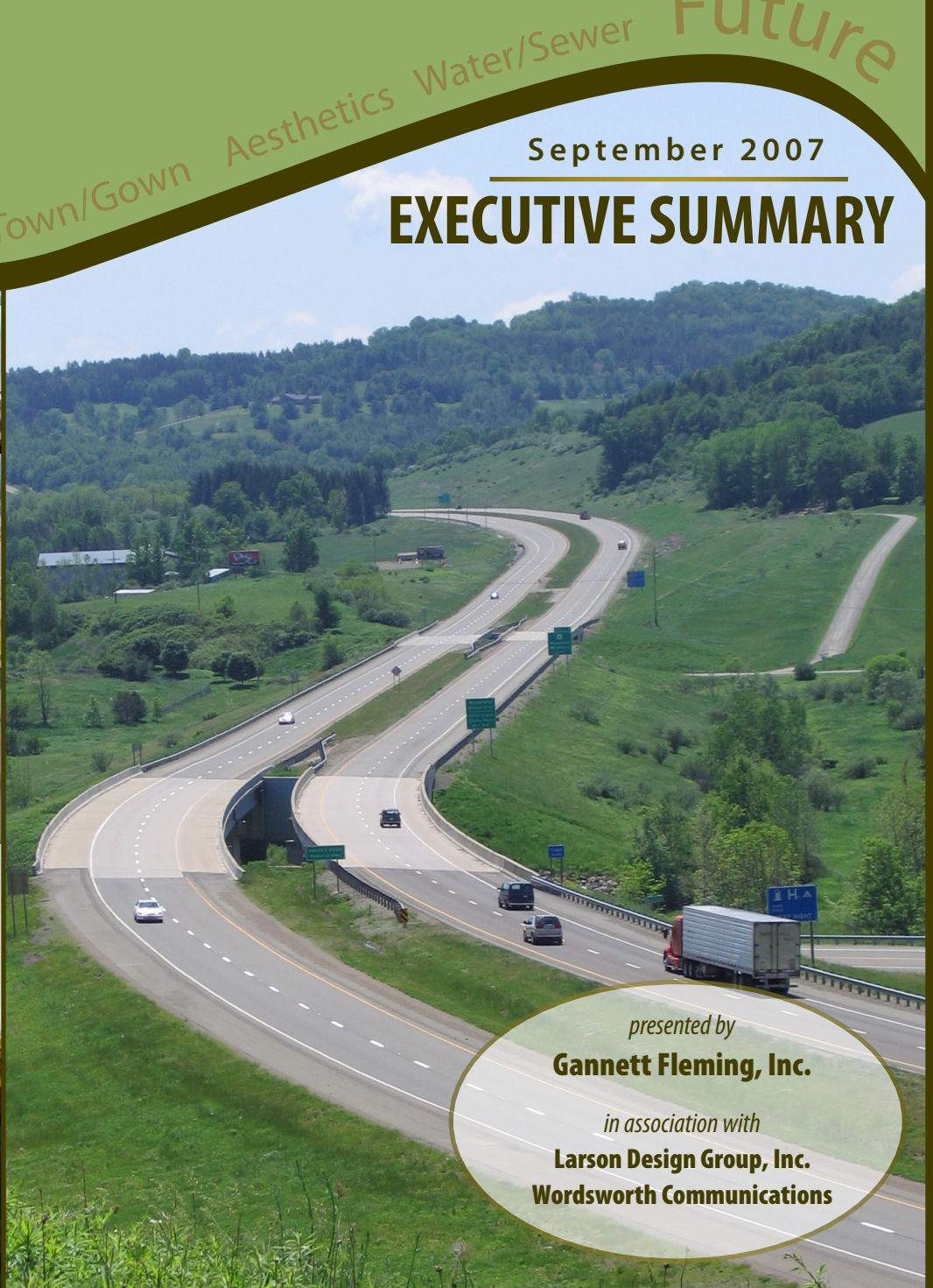


Mansfield - Richmond - Covington Revitalization Strategy & Mobility Analysis

Connectivity Safety Town/Gown Aesthetics Water/Sewer Future

September 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



presented by
Gannett Fleming, Inc.
in association with
Larson Design Group, Inc.
Wordsworth Communications

The final report contains 29 recommendations. Fourteen are highlighted in this executive summary.

Recommendation 1-A:



Fix flooding problems in the southern portion of the study area.

Recommendation 2-A:



Develop greenways from behind Greco's Market to Covington and from Greco's to Mansfield University.

Transportation – Land Use – Economic Development – It's all connected.

Why did we conduct this study?

We live in a great area—and we'd like to keep it that way. Of course, everything is continually changing, but with forethought and collaboration, we can help ensure that the changes we see over the coming decades are positive ones.

Many forces combine to influence a community. The stretch of Tioga County along Business Route 15 from Mansfield to Covington has seen tremendous growth in recent years, and the future promises continued investment in our area. Each type of development—from the completion of the four-lane US 15, to new businesses south of Mansfield, to the proposed industrial park at Routes 6 and 15—spurs other changes. Covington Township, Putnam Township, Richmond Township, and Mansfield Borough, in cooperation with Mansfield University and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, undertook this study to help shape that change.

Community leaders engaged a study team to analyze **transportation** (our roads, sidewalks, bikeways, public transit, and other facilities and services), **land use** (what type of development goes where), and **economic development** (from better jobs to new enterprises to expanded tourism).

The study Steering Committee established five primary objectives:

- Provide recommendations for amending the area's existing multi-municipal comprehensive plan.
- Foster inter-municipal planning and cooperation.
- Advance applicable best practices from other areas, and prevent the mistakes of other communities in community and transportation planning.
- Involve Mansfield University throughout the planning process.
- Advance recommendations to revitalize the Greater Mansfield area, with the commercial center of Mansfield as a strong community core.

The study is aimed at guiding the area's growth—encouraging enterprise while preserving the area's best qualities and making it an even better place to live, work, and play.

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Recommendation 2-C:



Continue working with Mansfield University to match public transportation services with needs.

Recommendation 3-A:



Reactivate a Main Street Manager program.

What was studied, and how?

The Steering Committee (members listed on the back page) provided the overall direction for the study. The consultant team collected and analyzed data for the corridor related to:

People

- population patterns
- income
- employment and commutes

Transportation

- roadway network
- traffic levels
- accidents and safety concerns
- public transportation
- walking and bicycling

Land Use

- parcels and acreage devoted to agriculture, residences, commercial and industrial uses, etc.

In addition to the factual data generated, the team sought subjective input on the area's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities from area leaders, residents, business owners, and students. Their input was collected through one-on-one interviews and mail and electronic surveys of property owners and Mansfield University students. The team also con-

ducted two public open houses during the course of the study to facilitate two-way communication with area residents, business owners, and officials.

Another phase of the study involved scenario development and analysis. The team used spreadsheet models to test the types and patterns of development that could occur under various scenarios given current zoning, and the impact it would have on the local transportation network.

Facts and opinions about the study area are highlighted on the following pages, and presented in full in the final report.

Methodology:

- **Steering Committee**
- **Data Collection**
- **Stakeholder Input**
- **Community and Student Surveys**
- **Public Open Houses**
- **Scenario Development and Analysis**
- **Final Report/Executive Summary**

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Recommendation 3-B:



Redevelop the armory for recreation purposes.

Recommendation 3-E:



Increase awareness of Mansfield University's Service Learning program.

Facts: Highlights of Corridor Data

- **Population:** The study area has a population density of 82 people per square mile, which is more than twice the county's rate. Nearly a third of the study area's population is younger than 20. During the 1980s and 1990s, population growth in the study area outpaced that of Tioga County overall, yet since 2000 it has remained flat.
- **Employment and income:** The dominant employment sector is education, health, and social services, which employs 28 percent of the study area's resident workers—most of whom enjoy relatively short commutes. Since 1989, per capita incomes have increased dramatically in Covington and Richmond Townships, yet they still lag state averages. In Mansfield Borough, incomes adjusted for inflation actually declined over the same period.
- **Transportation:** The area's roadway network is the backbone of its transportation system. The busiest intersection is Business 15 and Route 6 in Mansfield. Although the intersection is performing adequately, safety and performance could be enhanced through improvements such as new pedestrian signal heads ("walk" signals) and protected lefts (turn arrows).
- **Safety concerns:** Several locations in the study area present safety concerns. These include intersections with higher than average accident rates, missing or deteriorated sidewalks and crosswalks, stretches where motorists tend to speed, and locations where bicycling or walking is inconvenient and/or risky due to "missing links" and motor vehicle traffic.
- **Land use:** The study area covers approximately 5,870 acres, or 9.17 square miles. Nearly 50 percent of the study area is devoted to agricultural purposes. Industrial uses are focused on four parcels, all of which are in Mansfield Borough. Most of this land is located off Business 15 between US 15's interchanges with PA 660 and US 6.
- **Projected traffic:** If total "build-out" based on existing zoning ordinances were to occur, the study area could expect a 175 percent increase in traffic. If the 381 acres that are currently zoned as industrial were to be developed as such, trips from industrially-zoned parcels in the study area would be expected to increase by more than 3,000 percent.

Recommendation 3-F:



Explore a “retail incubator” in Mansfield in partnership with Mansfield University.

Recommendation 4-A:



Implement a “gateway” concept at the Canoe Camp interchange and other entrances to the area.

Opinions: What’s important to residents and students

Highlights of resident surveys and open houses:

- **Maintain the area’s quality of life and rural character.** This was the highest-scoring issue, with over two-thirds rating it as a high priority.
- **Bring jobs to the area and manage sprawl along Business 15.** The public rated these two topic areas as high priorities. They were the only two rated as high priorities by more than 50 percent of respondents.
- **Congestion is not a major issue at this time.** Nearly half of survey respondents said congestion is a “low priority.” Safety concerns also scored low (65 percent said there were minor to no safety issues), which is atypical for a study of this type.
- **Maintain a proper balance of development.** Town/gown issues, coupled with the development of needed recreation and cultural facilities and the preservation of agricultural and open space, all point to the need for a sustainable and planned development pattern.
- **Address flooding:** Although it was not a formal part of this study, flooding from the Tioga River and stormwater run-off were two of the most commonly cited issues.

Highlights of the MU student survey:

Needed transportation improvements

- Marked bicycle lanes on the main streets.
- Bicycle rentals, storage units, and racks.
- Expanded EMTA “Mountie” bus service.
- Shelter at the (inter-city) bus stop.
- Improved student parking.

Desired services and attractions

- Bicycle rentals.
- More retail such as book stores, hardware, individual storage sheds, quick copy places, etc.
- Entertainment: movie theatres, 24-hour restaurants, ice skating, roller skating, miniature golf, and updated bowling facilities.
- Chain restaurants such as Chili’s, Cracker Barrel, Olive Garden, Applebee’s, etc.

Aesthetics

- Remove above-ground power lines and improve the area’s entrances to enhance attractiveness. A general lack of streetscaping between Wal-Mart and downtown Mansfield was noted as detracting from the area.

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Recommendation 4-B:



Make streetscape and other highway beautification improvements along Business 15.

Recommendation 5-B:



Accommodate pedestrians—make it safer and easier to walk.

What were the results of the study?

The study team developed 29 recommendations encompassing five broad themes:

- **Water & Sewer** - Addressing flooding issues and modernizing water supply and sewage facilities.
- **Connectivity** - Enhancing the links between areas and among transportation modes.
- **Town/Gown** - Strengthening the ties between the town and the college.
- **Aesthetics** - Preserving the area's natural beauty while improving the look of its man-made elements.
- **Future Development** - Shaping future investment by the private and public sectors.

Fourteen sample recommendations are listed in this summary. In the full report, more detail is provided on each recommendation—why it's important, who would be involved in implementation, what the expected results would be, and the timeframe. Certain recommendations could be implemented in the near future, while others would be longer-term initiatives.

The study recommendations lay the groundwork for more effective transportation infrastructure and services, a more vibrant and diverse economy, and future development that is aligned with our collective vision of our area.



An artist's rendering of how the Canoe Camp interchange might look if several recommendations were implemented (view from the US 15 overpass looking north on Business 15).

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Recommendation 5-E:



Improve the area's two signalized intersections.

Recommendation 5-F:



Implement access management solutions and accommodate non-motorized modes.

What happens next?

For this study to produce results, its recommendations must be prioritized and implemented by a broad range of partners. The Steering Committee is leading the transition from study to implementation, but many local, regional, and state entities will have a role in implementation. These entities include:

- Covington Township
- Putnam Township
- Richmond Township
- Mansfield Borough
- Mansfield University
- Betterment Organization of Mansfield
- Endless Mountains Transportation Authority
- Local businesses
- Mill Cove, Inc.
- Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
- Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs
- Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- Pennsylvania Downtown Center

- Regional Recreational Authority (if formed)
- Southern Tioga School District
- Tioga County
- Tioga County Development Corporation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Are you interested in shaping the future of our area by becoming involved in implementation?

Please contact one of the steering committee members for further information:

Covington Township: Lisa Everett, 570-659-5439, covtwp@epix.net

Mansfield Borough: Ed Grala, 570-662-2315, mnsfield@ptd.net

Mansfield University: Dennis Miller, 570-662-4881, dmiller@mansfield.edu

Richmond Township: Verne Doud, 570-662-3380, richmondtpw@epix.net

A copy of the full report is available upon request.

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Recommendation 5-H:



Extend the school zone along Business 15 for Warren L. Miller Elementary School.

Recommendation 6-D:



Establish a Transportation Development District.

Transportation – Land Use – Economic Development – It's all connected.

Who led this study?

Steering Committee Members

- Rick Biery, Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
- Bob Blair, Tioga County Development Corporation
- Dick Colegrove, Mansfield Borough
- Verne Doud, Richmond Township
- Lisa Everett, Covington Township
- John Farrer, Mansfield Borough
- Shawn Forrest, Mansfield Borough
- Tom Freeman, Betterment Organization of Mansfield
- Ed Grala, Mansfield Borough
- Chris King, PennDOT District 3-0
- Dennis Miller, Mansfield University
- Bob Strohecker, Mansfield Borough
- Jim Weaver, Tioga County Planning Commission

Who paid for it?

Funding Partners

- Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation/ Federal Highway Administration
- Betterment Organization of Mansfield
- Mansfield Borough Council
- Richmond Township Supervisors
- Covington Township Supervisors
- Mansfield University