

Land Use and Growth Management Profile

Greene County is located in southwest Pennsylvania. Its boundaries to the west and south abut the West Virginia state line, placing Wheeling and Morgantown within commuting distance. In Pennsylvania, Washington County marks the northern boundary, and Fayette County provides the eastern boundary. The County has 20 townships and six boroughs. Waynesburg is the county seat and a center of services for Greene County.

According to the 2000 Census, Greene County had a total population of 40,672, ranking it the 57th most populous among Pennsylvania's 67 counties. From 1990 to 2000, Census figures show a 2.8 percent gain in population. Its population density of 70.6 per square mile makes Greene County the 50th most densely settled county. The County's land area is 576 square miles.

From 1990 to 2000, the number of households increased by 3 percent. The County's average figure of 29 housing units per square mile makes it 53rd in housing density in the state. The median value of owner-occupied housing in 2000 was \$56,900, which is 59 percent of the statewide figure for Pennsylvania. The rate of home ownership in 2000 was 74.1 percent for Greene County, as compared to 71.3 percent statewide. Although there has been some housing gentrification, the price of housing has not risen significantly.

Existing Land Use Conditions

Approximately 89 percent of the County's total land area is undeveloped, with about

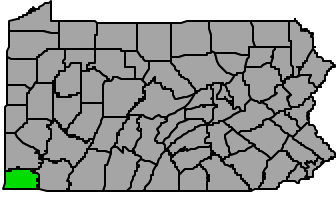
10.7 percent of this land devoted to forest and agricultural uses.

Rolling mountains and farmlands provide attractive scenic resources in Greene County. For over 100 years, a thriving coal extraction industry supported the County. Greene County has deposits of bituminous coal, and the coal extraction industry is a significant component of the County's employment base.

Greene County had 666 farms in 1997, according to the Census of Agriculture. Its total of 131,000 agricultural acres placed it 22nd in agricultural land use. Average annual earnings of Greene County farms were \$10,653 in 1997, the second lowest earnings level in the state. Approximately one-third of Greene County's land area is currently in agricultural use. Only three percent of Greene County's land is classified as Class I or II prime agricultural soil. The remaining agricultural land is used for grazing or is fallow.

Re-engineering of intersections along Route 21 west of Morrisville is expected to attract some growth. The areas around the Borough of Waynesburg (the county seat) and the Mount Morris area along I-79 (near the southern border of Greene County), are experiencing significant housing growth as a bedroom community location for workforce commuters to nearby Morgantown, West Virginia.

Onerous business taxes in neighboring West Virginia is a significant factor in some business relocations into Greene County. The Greene County Industrial Development



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Authority currently has several industrial parks partially occupied and is currently in development stage with other industrial parks along I-79. Greene County also has several hundred acres of Keystone Opportunity Zone tax-free land available for development.

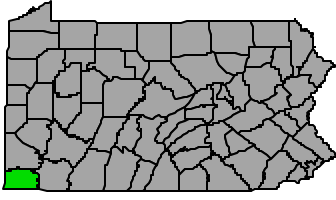
One of Greene County's locational assets is its network of job skill training providers. This network has developed the backbone of the County's technology infrastructure, retained teachers, and developed programs for children. Network partners beyond County borders include Penn State Behrend's Plastics Deployment Technical Center and Concurrent Technologies Corporation in Johnstown. However, the opportunity to participate in the high quality job creation which is benefiting other southwestern Pennsylvania counties will require substantial infrastructure investment in water and sewer line extensions.

Key Land Use Issues

☑ **Decreased activity in the coal mining industry has significantly impacted Greene County's economy.** It has reduced discretionary income and has been reflected in declining retail sales and tax revenues. From 1990-2001, Greene County's manufacturing employment grew by 72.9 percent. However, manufacturing employment decreased from 1999-2001 by 9.3 percent. This economic decline has led the U.S. Department of Labor to designate Greene County as a Labor Surplus Area, a classification that

provides preference to employers bidding on federal procurement contracts. Other southwestern counties, Allegheny, Beaver, and especially Washington, have attracted new firms with high-quality job development in tool and die, plastics, industrial machinery, and powdered metals. Greene County is involved in economic development and job training programs with these counties and others throughout the Mon Valley.

- ☑ **Greene County's reputation for high quality of life could be negatively affected if continuing long wall mining results in acid mine drainage into its aquifers.** There is concern that mine acid drainage could threaten the water quality of the County's aquifer as continuing mining activity shifts the location of long walls. Especially in a county more dependent on well water than more densely settled areas, this could affect continuing housing investment in the southern part of the I-79 corridor. Any prospect of regulatory action resulting from such problems could also impede business investment in the County's industrial parks.
- ☑ **Post-mining land use is an issue as the County's coal mining industry is declining.**
- ☑ **Availability of water also is a problem for Greene County's farmers.**



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Land Use Planning Activities

- ☑ **Greene County's Comprehensive Plan is in the process of being updated.** The previous comprehensive plan was completed in the late 1970s.

- ☑ **Greene County is also developing several other planning tools for the County.** These include a disaster/emergency preparedness plan, hazard mitigation plan, water quality assessment and plan, and a housing market assessment and plan.