

## *Land Use and Growth Management Profile*

**I**ndiana County is located in southwestern Pennsylvania and is bordered by Armstrong, Westmoreland, Cambria, Clearfield, and Jefferson Counties. The County is mostly rural, with several small towns scattered throughout. The County has 38 municipalities, including 24 townships and 14 boroughs. Historically, development has occurred predominately in Indiana Borough and surrounding White Township. More recently, there has been development along U.S. Route 119 south of Indiana Borough to the intersection of U.S. Route 22. New commercial and office development has also occurred along the U.S. Route 22 corridor.

According to the 2000 Census, Indiana County's population decreased from 89,994 in 1990 to 89,605 in 2000. This represented a .1 percent decrease since 1990. This population total is below the County's all-time population high of 92,281 in 1980. The population density in 2000 was 108 persons per square mile, which reflects the County's relatively rural character. Indiana County has also experienced an increase in housing units from 34,770 in 1990 to 37,250 units in 2000. This was a 7.1 percent increase from 1990 to 2000.

### **Existing Land Use Conditions**

Approximately 91 percent of the County is considered undeveloped with a majority of this land cover devoted to forest or agricultural purposes.

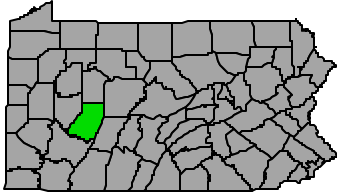
Indiana County has been relatively isolated from major metropolitan areas such as the

Pittsburgh region. With the completion of the U.S. Route 22 and U.S. Route 119 projects, the County will be more accessible to the Pittsburgh region.

Since the late 1700s until recently, the mining of coal has shaped the land use patterns of Indiana County. The County has been home to several strip mines and deep mines that have impacted the landscape in the County. Another significant impact on land use and development in the Indiana Borough and White Townships areas has been the growth of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). Currently, IUP is one of the largest universities in the Commonwealth with over 13,000 students. Its historical development since the 1850s included the construction of significant educational and research facilities and has led to additional business development in the County. Indiana County is home to major companies, such as FMC Incorporated, Fisher Scientific, S.W. Jack, and Gorrell Enterprises. Since the 1990s, the County has focused on development of two corporate campuses located in the Indiana area and the Blairsville area.

### **Key Land Use Issues**

- ☑ **Indiana County has two significant highway projects impacting land use in the County.** The widening of U.S. Route 119 and safety improvements to U.S. Route 22 are changing traffic patterns in communities along the corridor between Indiana and Blairsville Boroughs. The U.S. Route 119 project involves widening of the existing road



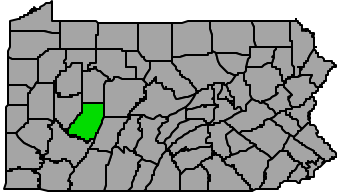
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corridor while the U.S. Route 22 is a safety improvement project. With these transportation improvements will come additional economic development opportunities. None of the townships in the two project areas have zoning ordinances, so land use control will be an issue. The improvements to U.S. Route 22 will lead to better access to the Pittsburgh region. Businesses are already locating in the Indiana Corporate Campus at the intersection of U.S. Route 22 and U.S. Route 119.

- ☑ **Indiana County is challenged by its limited transportation access.** Even with ongoing transportation projects, the County faces severe transportation limitations. U.S. Route 422 is the major east-west route in the County and is a four-lane limited access route south of Indiana Borough. To provide better access to the turnpike, major improvements are required to this corridor in the eastern portion of the County. Indiana County is also constrained by its limited air service access. The closest major air service airport is Pittsburgh International, which is a two-hour commute for County residents. Air charter service at the Indiana County-Jimmy Stewart Airport is limited because of the existing runway length.
- ☑ **Indiana County has experienced limited development during the 1990s.** The County was impacted by the recession of the late 1980s and 1990s. Coal companies, such as Rochester and Pittsburgh, closed during this time.

Most of the development occurred around IUP in Indiana Borough and White Township. Several smaller boroughs and townships experienced population loss. The County has experienced a significant increase in housing units with 2,480 housing units developed between 1990 and 2000, versus a population loss of 389 persons. Part of this gain can be attributed to additional housing units in Indiana Borough and White Township related to IUP.

- ☑ **Indiana County has developed significant recreational opportunities through the creation of rail-trails during the 1990s.** The County has planned and developed several rail trails throughout the County for the benefit of Indiana County residents and hiking and biking enthusiasts. These trails include the Hoodleburg Trail, a six-mile trail south of the Borough of Indiana, and the Ghost Town Trail located in the southeastern corner of the County. Several other trails are planned in the County including one along the Conemaugh River along the southern border of Indiana and Westmoreland Counties.
- ☑ **Indiana County's economic development efforts are focusing on business/industrial parks.** The Indiana County Corporate Campus, located near Blairsville, is a 101-acre business/industrial park with several technology related industries. The Commerce Park, located on the south Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) campus has



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several businesses related to IUP. These efforts demonstrate the County's shift from a resource economy to a service and technology-oriented economy. The result is the development of "cleaner," less land-intensive uses. Although, the County still has significant strip and deep, coal mining operations. A deep coal mine was recently developed near Yellow Creek State Park.

- ☑ **Development of IUP has had a significant impact on land use on the Borough of Indiana and White Township.** The IUP Campus has undergone several development and redevelopment projects. These include the development of a new Business School and Corporate Commerce Park adjacent to the campus.
- ☑ **Downtown Indiana has a successful "Main Street" Program.** The Borough has implemented a main street program that has helped to limit storefront vacancies. There have been several new businesses that have developed in the downtown since the mid-1990s. A façade improvement program has also been initiated, as well as the establishment of the Jimmy Stewart Museum.

### **Land Use Planning Activities**

- ☑ **Indiana County is updating its county comprehensive plan, recreation, parks, housing plan (update,) open space plan, and developing several multi-municipal plans.** This effort has been funded, in part, by the DCED LUPTAP

program and DCNR. The comprehensive plan will aid in targeting economic development and recreational initiatives. Multi-municipal planning efforts will evaluate specific municipal planning issues such as community facility and infrastructure improvement.

- ☑ **Downtown redevelopment is a key to economic revitalization of Indiana County.** Downtown Indiana, Inc. has been the catalyst for downtown redevelopment in Indiana since 1987. The redevelopment efforts have focused on specialty retail and other unique developments.
- ☑ **The construction improvements to the U.S. Route 119 and 22 Corridors have involved land use and transportation planning.** Upgrades to the two corridors will improve transportation access to the County. These improvements have been planned and facilitated by PennDOT and the Indiana County Economic Development and Planning Office. In addition, the corridor improvements will facilitate additional economic development opportunities.