Great Neighborhoods

Washington Park

Rich History

Civic organizations

Tree Lined Streets

Washington & Jefferson College

Brownson House

County Seat

National Road - US 40

Main Street

Religious Institutions

Lemoyne House

Washington Area School District

Washington Hospital

Historic Homes

Community Arts

Farmers' Market

Home of Pony League World Series

Small Businesses

Neighborhood Playgrounds

Access to Interstates 70 & 79

Public Facilities & Services

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A. VISIONING

A good Comprehensive Plan needs a unifying element that all involved – from school children to residents and business-owners to non-profits and elected officials – can get behind. The Vision created for the Washington / East Washington Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan captures the essence of the City and Borough's main goal – to embrace the old and encourage the new as a means of invigorating civic pride and propelling the communities into the future. The communities have identified this as their key characteristic – that trait that makes them special and which they want to use as a common overarching theme for their revitalization efforts.

- ☑ The City and its adjacent Borough served as the seat of government beginning in 1781, making it the second oldest County seat west of the Alleghenies.
- ☑ Its lands were among the first settled by those venturing west of the mountains, and as a result the young county seat quickly grew and attracted numerous influential figures, including attorney and Whiskey Rebellion organizer David Bradford, Presbyterian ministers Thaddeus Dod, Joseph Smith, and John McMillan, who were pioneers spreading Presbyterianism in the West, and abolitionist Francis LeMoyne.
- ☑ The nation's first major highway project – the National Road – cut through the heart of the City and brought it into the national spotlight.
- ☑ The community's industries – glass-making chief among them – and its educational institutions, which included not only Washington and Jefferson College but also at one time several smaller institutions including the Female Seminary, brought it positive attention and continued growth.

Its enterprising citizens and willingness to stand up for what they viewed as right and just – from rebelling against an unfair tax to protecting those needing shelter via the Underground Railroad – the City and the Borough have a history unparalleled in the region. It is for these reasons that heritage

has been chosen as the identity for the City of Washington and East Washington Borough and is woven throughout various Plan elements such as Housing, Historic Preservation and Economy. By using their proud past, the City of Washington and the Borough of East Washington can build a bright future.

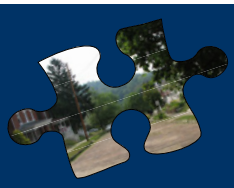
A Vision and Community Development Objectives were established early on to help guide the development of the plan and reflect the overall vision of the municipalities in terms of future development and preservation.

Plan Vision

> "We will engage our citizens to achieve a balance between the old and the new; preserve the historic character while offering modern amenities; instill civic pride and community identity while transcending traditional boundaries; and form strong partnerships with local assets that will allow our community to grow and thrive. "
>
> *~ City of Washington & East Washington Borough Vision Statement*

Community Development Objectives

- ☑ Strengthen partnerships to provide high quality facilities, services and community events for our residents, businesses, workforce, students, and visitors.
- ☑ Preserve our natural, historic, and cultural amenities.
- ☑ Utilize the historic district designation to strengthen the residential vitality of East Washington.
- ☑ Ensure the recreation amenities offered meet our community's needs.



- ☑ Capitalize on our location and availability of infrastructure to retain existing businesses and attract new investment.
- ☑ Revive the Core Downtown Area.
- ☑ Ensure that local ordinances are compatible with the goals and objectives of our plan.
- ☑ Promote the continued investment in our vibrant and thriving neighborhoods.
- ☑ Focus rehabilitation efforts to encourage new investment in our declining neighborhoods.
- ☑ Enhance gateways to welcome visitors into our community.
- ☑ Provide a safe and reliable transportation network within our community and connect to the larger metropolitan region.
- ☑ Ensure that our public facilities and services are accessible to people of all ages, race, income and disabilities.

B. WHY PLAN?

Planning is a vital aspect of everyone's daily lives. People plan every day before they even get out of bed in the morning. They plan on what they will wear, what they will accomplish at work, and what they will eat for dinner. People also plan ahead for the future, such as where to go on vacation, what neighborhood they will buy a house, and how many kids they will have. As people plan everyday it only makes sense that municipalities plan as well. However, municipal planning is a difficult concept to grasp. It's not readily understood why municipalities should take the time to figure out what kind of community they want to be and what services they offer. By planning for the future, community's can achieve their vision and offer a good quality of life for its residents. Planning is essential to communities in terms of infrastructure, roads, parks and recreation, schools, etc. It is only when a community knows where it's going that it will be successful.

C. PLANNING 101

The legal authority to prepare and adopt comprehensive plans comes from the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968 as reenacted and amended. A comprehensive plan is an expression of the overall vision of a community that is an adopted public policy guide for future development. The term comprehensive suggests exactly what it

means-the plan covers every aspect of a community, such as the transportation network, parks and recreation system, existing land use, etc. A comprehensive plan is also an educational tool in that it contains a snapshot of existing conditions and historical trends.

In reality, the comprehensive plan will become a guide and a unifying document for municipal officials as they develop policies to influence change and support future land use decisions. It will enable these leaders to find ways to provide services in a more effective and efficient manner. A comprehensive plan should assist local elected officials in decision making in respect to regulations, subdivisions, public investments, and capital improvements programs. The plan can also be helpful to developers and residents. Developers can use the plan to gain a better understanding of the community and what type of development residents would like to see and where at. The plan is essential to the overall quality of life of residents within a community because it can be a guide for future land uses, the provision of infrastructure, amount of recreation available, and management of traffic.

While municipalities can develop individual comprehensive plans it often makes sense to partner with a neighboring municipality that faces similar issues and concerns as those issues just don't stop at municipal boundaries. Multi-municipal planning in Pennsylvania is enabled under the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The MPC authorizes multi-municipal efforts to:

- ☑ Allow tax-revenue sharing across municipal borders
- ☑ An intergovernmental cooperative planning and implementation agreement, which establishes a process to achieve general consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development ordinances, and capital improvement plans in participating municipalities.
- ☑ Protection from exclusionary zoning challenges if land uses are accommodated within the entire area of the plan.
- ☑ Priority when applying for funding from state agencies.
- ☑ Transfer of development rights from rural resource areas within one municipality to growth areas of another municipality within the plan area.

Keystone Principles

The Keystone Principles & Criteria for Growth Investment & Resource Conservation (Keystone Principles) were created and adopted on May 31, 2005 by the Pennsylvania Economic Development Cabinet and its working group, the Interagency Land Use Team. The goal of the principles is to assist all state agencies coordinate investments in communities throughout Pennsylvania.

The Keystone Principles do not replace state agency program guidelines or criteria, but rather, at each agency's discretion, they will either be integrated into existing program criteria or used as additional, favorable considerations in the scoring or decision-making process. (http://www.newpa.com/default.aspx?id=435). Listed below are the ten Keystone Principles:

- ☑ Redevelop First – funding preference to reuse and redevelop "brownfield" and previously developed sites in urban, suburban, and rural communities for economic activity that creates jobs, housing, mixed use development, and recreational assets
- ☑ Provide Efficient Infrastructure – "Fix it first" – use and improve existing infrastructure; require private and public expansions of service to be consistent with approved comprehensive plans and implementing ordinances
- ☑ Concentrate Development – support infill and "greenfield" development that is compact, conserves land, and is integrated with existing or planned transportation, water and sewer services, and schools
- ☑ Increase Job Opportunities – invest in businesses that offer good paying, high quality jobs, and that are located near existing or planned water & sewer infrastructure, housing, existing workforce, and transportation access (highway or transit)
- ☑ Foster Sustainable Businesses – strengthen natural resource based businesses that use sustainable practices in energy production and use, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, recreation and tourism
- ☑ Restore and Enhance the Environment – conserve and restore environmentally sensitive lands and natural areas for ecological health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat
- ☑ Enhance Recreational and Heritage Resources – maintain and improve recreational and heritage assets and infrastructure
- ☑ Expand Housing Opportunities – support the construction and

rehabilitation of housing of all types to meet the needs of people of all incomes and abilities

- ☑ Plan Regionally; Implement Locally – support multi-municipal, county and local government planning and implementation that has broad public input and support and is consistent with these principles
- ☑ Be Fair – support equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development

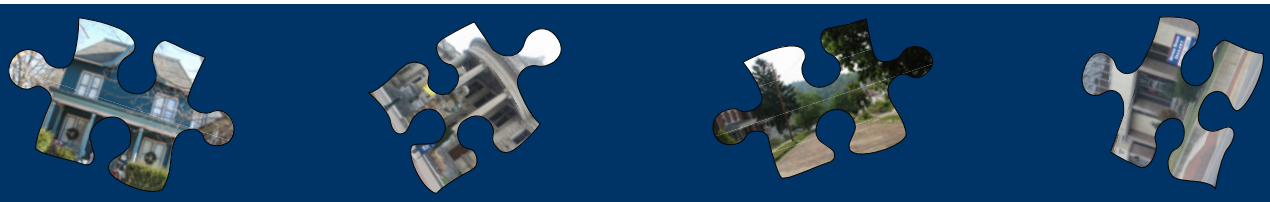
Growing Greener

Growing Greener principles focus on helping communities achieve economic growth and a cleaner environment through investments in natural resource protection. Growing Greener was signed into law in 1999 and reauthorized in 2002, which extended the program through 2012. Monies from Growing Greener can be used to administer farmland preservation projects, preserve open space, state park renovations and improvements, enhance local recreational needs, water and sewer upgrades, watershed restoration and protection, abandoned mine reclamation, etc. Growing Greener II will also direct money to revitalize communities through investments in housing and mixed-use redevelopment projects and to all Pennsylvania counties to help address local priorities.

Smart Growth

Smart growth is a planning theory that states that development should be concentrated to avoid sprawl. By concentrating development in specific areas it allows the development to be more compact and walkable (http://www.smartgrowth.org/default.asp). The following are smart growth principles:

- ☑ Compact building design
- ☑ Create range of housing opportunities and choices
- ☑ Create walkable neighborhoods
- ☑ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
- ☑ Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- ☑ Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- ☑ Mix land uses
- ☑ Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas



- ☑ Provide a variety of transportation choices
- ☑ Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities

State Water Plan

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, Section 301 (b), requires a plan for a reliable supply of water, considering current and future water resources availability, uses and limitations, including provisions adequate to protect water supply sources. The City of Washington and East Washington Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations that provide a reliable supply of water and provisions aimed at protecting water supply sources. Two of the Community Development Objectives for the plan relate to this: Preserve our natural, historic and cultural amenities and Capitalize on our location and availability of infrastructure to retain businesses and attract new investment.

The Comprehensive Plan also recognizes that:

- ☑ Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
- ☑ Commercial agriculture production influences water supply sources.

Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania

Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania is a book that was partly financed by Growing Greener and developed in partnership between the Conservation Fund and the Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources (DCNR). The goal of the book is to discuss how communities can better plan for growth. There are six examples of Better Models for Development and are as follows:

- ☑ Conserve Pennsylvania's farmland, natural areas, and scenic assets
- ☑ Maintain a clear edge between town and countryside
- ☑ Build and maintain livable and attractive communities
- ☑ Preserve historic resources
- ☑ Respect local community character in new construction
- ☑ Reduce the impact of the car and promote walkability

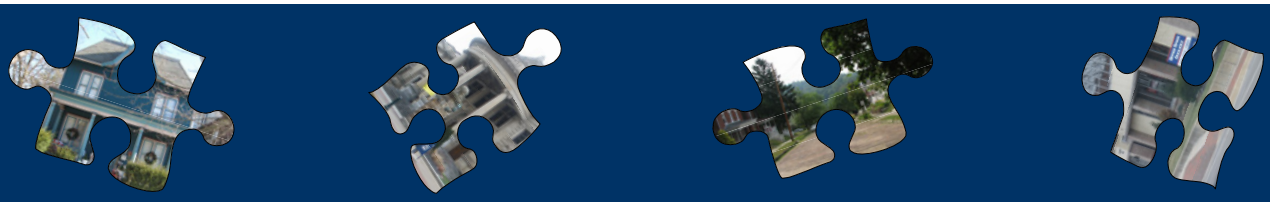
Good Planning Principles

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) have released principles and benchmarks for creating an implementation plan for communities. The four planning principles are as follows:

- ☑ Planning should be a value-adding positive influence on a community's well-being, not an exercise.
- ☑ Planning should be principled. The Keystone Principles are a solid base to be promoted.
- ☑ Planning is not an end itself. It is a key part of a continuum of community improvement and should be made relevant to and provoke a community's efforts in improvement.
- ☑ Planning should lead to transformative change.

Benchmarks were also created to help communities plan for the future. The following five benchmarks are discussed:

1. Start with a focus on real community issues. Issues should be identified in the onset of the project and the plan structured around these issues.
2. Organize the plan the way local officials and citizens think. The plan document should be organized around the issues instead of separate chapters. That way the issues can be identified, explained, and recommendations made that could solve the issues.
3. Devise practical and workable outcomes
4. Create a structure and capacity to implement the plan
5. Attain local ownership of the plan that breed commitment to implementation



D. HOW SHOULD THE PLAN BE USED?

A comprehensive plan is a tool that should be used by local elected officials in decision making regarding capital improvements, parks and recreation, development, etc. The plan should be reviewed annually and updates made when needed.

Implementing recommendations

The main goal of the recommendations included in the East Washington Borough and the City of Washington Comprehensive Plan is to assist both municipalities achieve the overall vision they desire. The City and Borough should use the Implementation Matrix and corresponding priorities to put the plan into action. High priority projects should be the first projects that both Councils begin implementing.

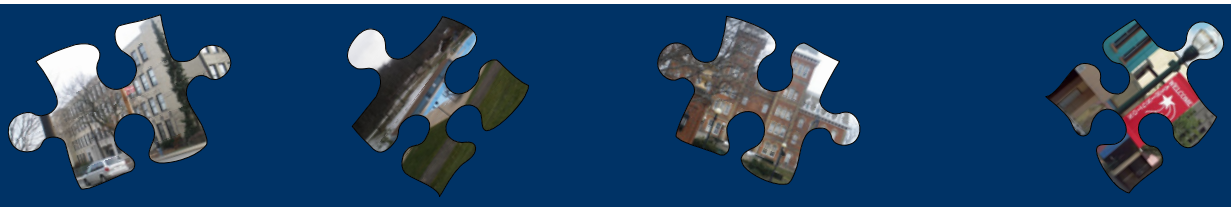
Ordinance updates

As a comprehensive plan is the basis for future land use updates, the City and Borough can use the plan to determine what changes should be made to zoning and/or subdivision and land development ordinances. It is vital that all land use regulations are consistant with the comprehensive plan.

Review development plans

Local elected officials, which includes council, planning commission, and zoning hearing board members, should use the plan when reviewing any development to ensure that the proposed development is consistant with the comprehensive plan. Questions that these members should ask include:

- ☑ Is the Future Land Use Plan consistent with the proposed development?
- ☑ Will the development affect the whole community, specific neighborhoods, or adjacent municipalities?
- ☑ Will the transportation network adequately handle additional traffic from the development? Will improvements need to be made?
- ☑ Will the development increase the need for additional recreation and community services?



- ☑ Will the proposed development increase the need for additional housing in the community? If so, what type of housing?

Annual plan review and updates

As with any planning effort, the comprehensive plan is not a project, it is a process. While the City and Borough will receive a completed plan update within a defined schedule and budget, there is no definitive end because there always will be an opportunity to revise the goals and strategies as priorities change. Planning Commission and Council for each municipality should review the plan annually to ensure that it is still meeting the needs of the community. Updates may be needed if circumstances have changed.

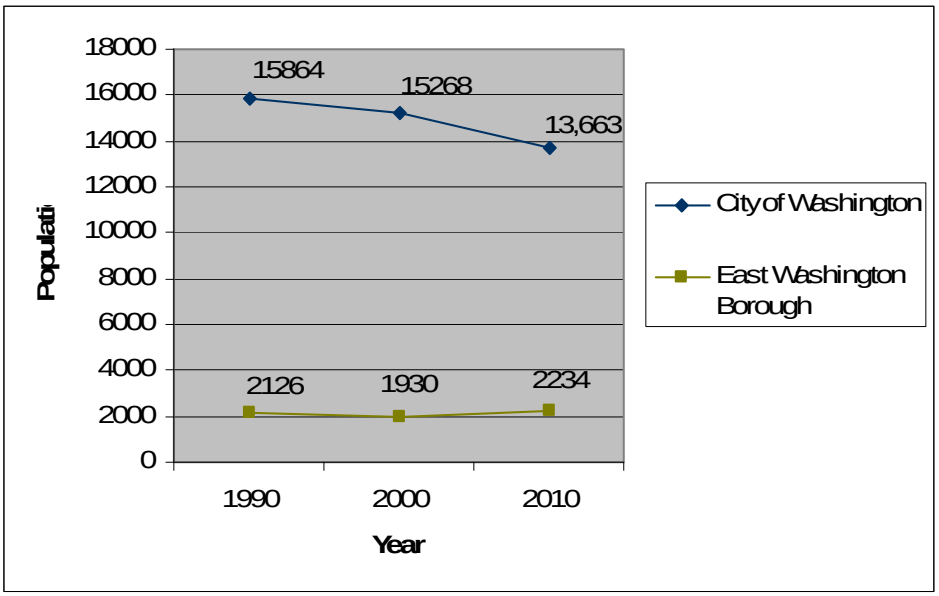
E. WHO LIVES AND WORKS HERE?

To understand what is currently occurring in the City of Washington and East Washington Borough a snapshot of the demographic and socio-economic composition of the residents was developed prior to identifying needs and recommendations. This is important as demographics provide a window into a community. Data for the following charts was gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census.

Population Trends

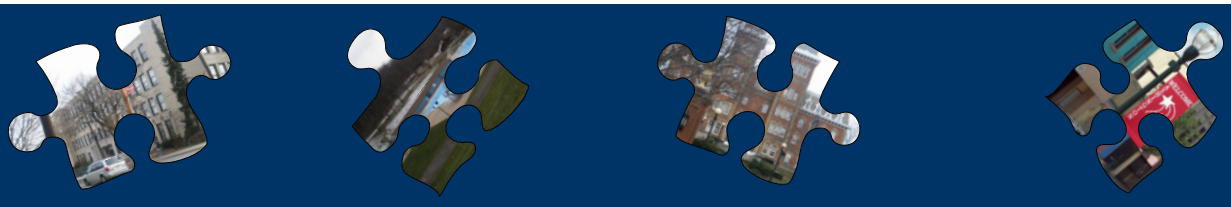
Population within the City and Borough are similar to most communities within Southwestern Pennsylvania. Population has been on the decline since 1990 in the city of Washington, as shown on Chart 1-1. However, East Washington has experienced some growth between 2000 and 2010.

Chart 1-1: Population Trends



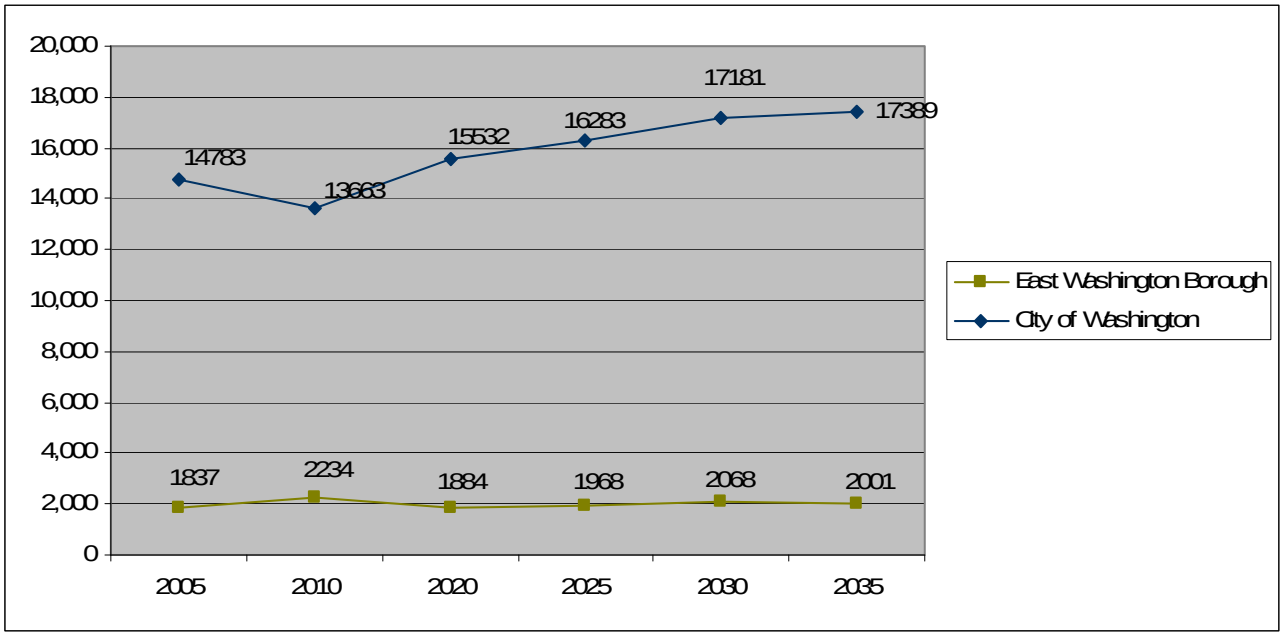
Population Projections

To better understand the pace of growth or decline in the municipalities, population projections were examined. The Southwestern Pennsylvania



Commission (SPC), the metropolitan planning agency for a ten-county region in Southwestern Pennsylvania that includes Washington County, released population projections for 2010, 2020, 2025, 2030, and 2035. SPC used the 2005 population estimates as the base year and adopted the projections on June 28, 2007. Chart 1-2 depicts a gradual increase in population for East Washington Borough and the City of Washington. Total population for the two municipalities is estimated to increase from 16,620 people to 19,390. However, it is important to note that population projections are just forecasts that can change due to many factors, such as economic growth, infrastructure projects, and so forth.

Chart 1-2: Population Projections



Race/Gender

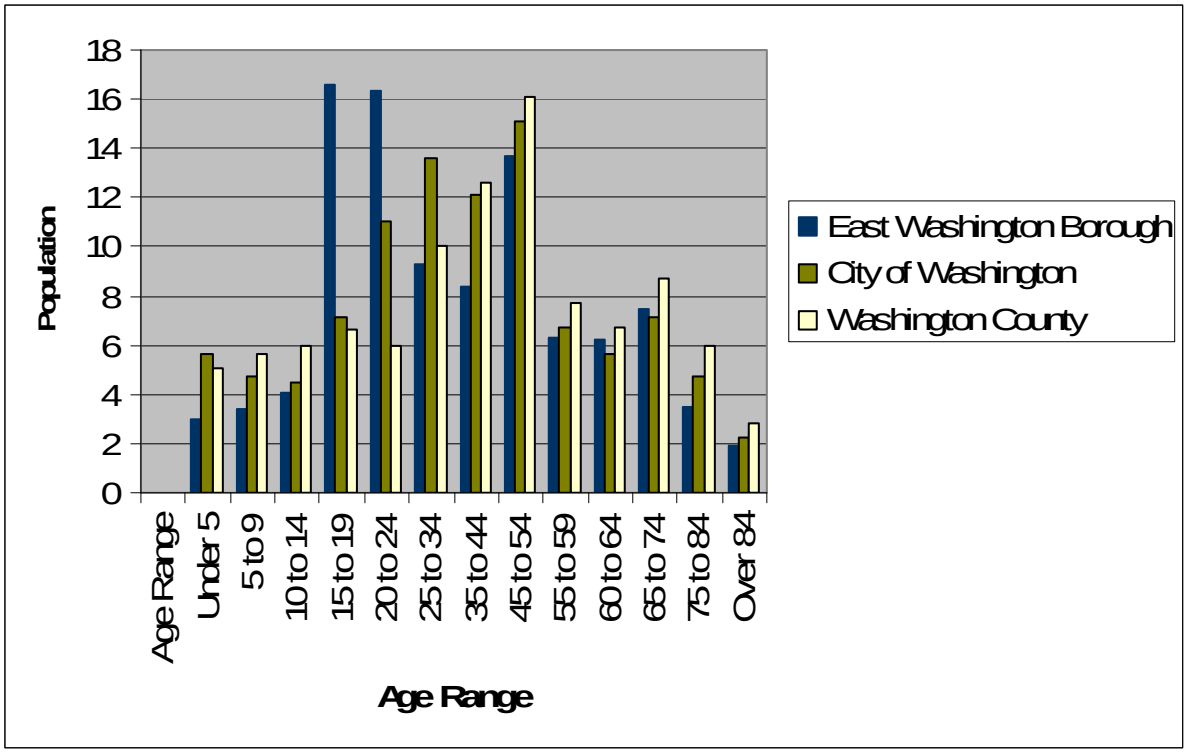
According to the US Census Bureau, the City of Washington's population is comprised of approximately 77.5 percent white and 15.9 percent African-American persons. East Washington Borough is approximately 90 percent white, with 5.3 percent of the population reporting as African-American.

Age

Age is an important aspect to review as it can determine the level and types of services needed in a community. For instance, if a municipality has an aging population then services needed may include transportation geared for persons with limited mobility, a variety of housing options, and different types of recreation. When a municipality has a younger population with a great amount of school age children this can affect the school district, as well as a demand for more playgrounds and recreational programming.

The City and Borough have a relatively younger population as the median age for the City of Washington is 38.2 and 32.3 in East Washington Borough compared to Washington County, which is 43.6. As illustrated on Chart 1-3, the City of Washington has a considerable amount of residents within the 25 to 34 age range and the 45 to 54 age range and East Washington has a significant amount of population in the 15 to 18 and 20 to 24 age ranges.

Chart 1-3: Age Range



F. CONTIGUOUS MUNICIPALITIES STATEMENT

PA MPC Section 301 (a) (5) requires that comprehensive plans include: *"A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan."*

Therefore, the comprehensive plans of the neighboring municipalities as well as the Washington County Comprehensive Plan were reviewed to understand what the vision was, what has been done to implement that vision, and what roadblocks, if any, exist that may have prevented successful implementation. This information will be helpful in identifying key areas to focus on in the plan and how to overcome any pre-existing roadblocks.

South Strabane Township Comprehensive Plan

In 1995, South Strabane Township updated its Comprehensive Plan. South Strabane Township borders the northern boundaries of the City of Washington and East Washington Borough. The Future Land Use Map for South Strabane Township illustrates Neighborhood Housing, General Residential, and General Commercial along the borders of the City of Washington and East Washington Borough, which is consistent with the vision of the City and Borough with this comprehensive plan.

Canton, Hopewell, North Franklin, and West Middletown Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan (currently under development)

Canton Township and North Franklin township border the city of Washington to the west and south. These four municipalities are currently developing a multi-municipal comprehensive plan. To address regional issues, a meeting was held on June 6, 2011 where representatives from the

municipalities were asked to discuss transportation concerns.

Washington County Comprehensive Plan

The Washington County Comprehensive Plan, adopted in November of 2005, was reviewed to ensure that the City of Washington and East Washington Borough Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of Washington County. The plan prioritizes locations for future development where investment should be directed. This Future Development Strategy identifies Targeted Areas for Investment, Transitional Reserve Lands, Village Areas, and Rural Resource Areas within the County. The City of Washington / County Airport is identified as a Targeted Area for Investment (TAI). A TAI is a Designated Growth Area within the County and will be used to control development away from agriculture, forest, and open space. Infill development is highly encouraged within the TAI's, as well as a balanced multi-modal transportation system and a variety of housing options. The TAI's should also provide jobs and shopping in close proximity to where people live.

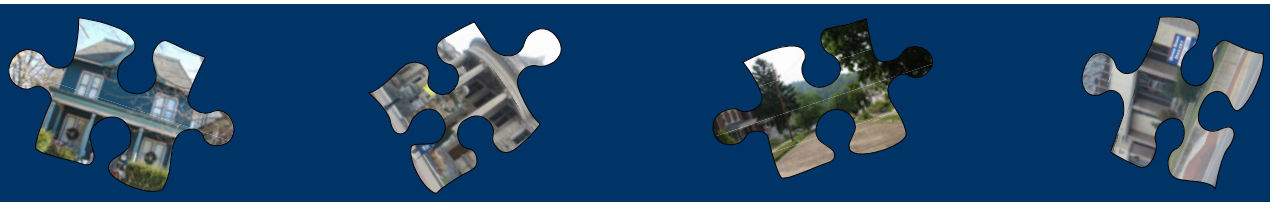
These strategies are very similar in nature to the City of Washington and East Washington Borough's Community Development Objectives and will only strengthen the implementation of the County's overall goals.

Washington County Greenways Plan

The protection of natural resources, farmland, and open space was identified as a key part of the overall vision of the Washington County Comprehensive Plan. In order to achieve the vision, a County Greenways plan was initiated and subsequently adopted in January of 2007. The Greenway's Plan identifies priority locations for greenway development and guidelines on how to preserve these greenways.

The City of Washington and Washington and Jefferson College were identified as hubs in the Greenways Plan. Hubs are access points intended

for human use where people can utilize the ecological and recreational benefits available within the County. It is recommended that pedestrian connections be offered at Washington and Jefferson College that would facilitate the movement of people, reduce reliance on the automobile, and encourage physical activity. It is recommended that future opportunities in the City of Washington dedicate lands for park development, revitalize Brownfields, or develop commercial centers to incorporate areas of greenspace.



G. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A variety of public participation methods were utilized in an effort to gain broad-based participation from those living, working, and visiting the City of Washington and the Borough of East Washington.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was developed to help oversee the development of the plan and guide the overall planning process. The Committee met on a monthly basis to discuss the various plan elements, identify issues, and review draft concepts and recommendations to ensure the process was on the right track. The Steering Committee also participated in a photo exercise where they identified assets and challenges in both communities using pictures. These pictures were used at various meetings throughout the plan. In addition to the Steering Committee, subcommittees were formed for various topics in the Comprehensive Plan. The subcommittees were invited to meetings at key points throughout the process and were kept informed of the project through e-mail correspondence. The subcommittee were Transportation/Transit, Economic Development, Core Area for Revitalization, Housing, Community Services and Parks / Natural Resources. A full list of Steering Committee and sub committees members can be found on the Acknowledgement Page at the beginning of this document.

Focus Groups

In an effort to gather more input into the plan, two focus groups were convened. An Economic Development Focus Group was formed to address specific issues facing the economic future and vitality of the project area. A summary of this meeting can be found in Appendix A.

A Core Area for Revitalization Focus Group was convened to discuss assets and issues specific to the Core Area, which was identified for the planning process. More information about the Core Area (along with a boundary map) can be found in Chapter 2: Land Use. A summary of this meeting can be found in Appendix A.

Workshops

The youth are often left out of planning processes, but it is important to gather their feedback as they are hopefully the future residents for each community. To gather their thoughts and opinions on future needs and issues for Washington and East Washington, a workshop was held with high school students at the Washington High School. The students were divided into three groups and asked to complete a series of exercises including:

- ☑ **A postcard from the future**—Students were to pretend they had moved away and are now returning after ten years. They were asked to write a postcard to a friend or family member describing what they hoped the two communities looked like.
- ☑ **Map It!** - The attendees were given maps and asked to identify areas for improvements in terms of transportation, economic development, recreation and housing.
- ☑ **Top 10 Priorities**—Each group was asked to identify their top ten priorities from the MapIt! Exercise.
- ☑ **Top 5 Programs**—Each group was asked to identify five programs the City and Borough should offer residents.

A summary of this workshop can be found in Appendix B.

In order to "get the plan out into the neighborhoods", a community workshop focused on identifying neighborhood specific issues was held at the LeMoyne Center in the Highland Ridge neighborhood. A full summary of this meeting can be found in Appendix B.

Public Meetings

In order to gather a wide range of input from a large number of residents, several public meetings were held throughout the planning process.

In January of 2011, a series of three workshops (two at the Washington High School and one at the Faith Christian Church in East Washington) were held to introduce the plan to the public. These workshops were held as open houses where people could come anytime during the posted hours to provide comment at the various stations and have one on one discussions with the project team. The stations were as follows:

- ☑ **Welcome** – Sign In and get a project summary handout.
- ☑ **Vision and Community Development Objectives** – Provide input on the vision and overall direction for the planning process.
- ☑ **Assets** – Identify assets that the City and Borough have.
- ☑ **Opportunities** – Identify opportunities that the City and Borough that can be built upon to become assets.
- ☑ **Challenges** – Identify challenges that may prevent the City and Borough from achieving the plan vision.
- ☑ **Historic Resources** – Identify resources in the City and Borough that should be protected in terms of historic importance.
- ☑ **Exit Survey** – Complete a survey to provide additional input for the plan.

A second public meeting was held as an Open House at the Washington High School on October 12, 2011 in order to give the public the opportunity to provide comment and rank their priorities in terms of the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations. The stations were as follows:

- ☑ **Welcome** – Sign In and get a project summary handout and instruction sheet.

- ☑ **Plan Elements** – The recommendations for each plan element (land use, housing, economic development, transportation, historic resources, and community facilities) were available at stations for attendees to rank their top three priorities within each element
- ☑ **Exit Survey**—Attendees were asked to rank their top three overall priorities (regardless of element) and provide any additional comments.

Full summaries from each meeting can be found in Appendix C.

Surveys

A community wide survey was undertaken at the beginning of the project to give residents, business owners and other interested stakeholders the opportunity to provide input on what issues and needs should be included in the plan. The survey was made available at the first round of public meetings and various websites including the City, Borough, Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington and the Washington School District (the school district also distributed the survey to all of their students). A total of 462 surveys were returned.

Stakeholder Interviews

Various stakeholders such as municipal service providers and community organizations were interviewed either by phone or survey to collect information for the Comprehensive Plan. Stakeholder meetings were also held with Washington and Jefferson College, Washington Hospital, and the Farmers Market. A full list of all stakeholders as well as summaries from the stakeholder meetings can be found in Appendix D.