

Western/Southern Cumberland Region Strategic Plan

Fact Sheet #2 January 2003

BACKGROUND

The Western / Southern Cumberland Region Strategic Plan (WSCRSP) is an effort to advance economic development in the 11 municipalities comprising the Cumberland Development Corporation (CDC) and the City of Bridgeton. This project is being funded through a “Smart Growth” grant from the NJ Department of Community Affairs.

Through the first half of the study, the project team has collected and analyzed data through reviewing master plans, contacting state agencies, interviewing municipal leaders, and other sources. The project team prepared “Planning for the Future—A Summary of Cumberland County Planning Initiatives,” now available on CD-ROM from the County Planning Office, and on the County website:

www.co.cumberland.nj.us.

REGIONAL PROFILE

The study team has prepared a *Regional Profile* for the Western/Southern Cumberland Region. Following are some of the interesting facts and issues from the *Regional Profile* report:

Land Use

- Wetlands are the largest land use, covering 36% of the study area; forest at 30% and agriculture at 21% are second and third largest land uses. The wetlands largely overlap with the CAFRA zone, which restricts building activities. Residential uses cover 5% of the study area. There are many regulated

lands, such as wildlife management areas (WMA’s). There is interest in improving access to WMA’s as part of an ecotourism effort.

Agriculture

- There are 68,000 acres of farmland, with 12,000 acres in the farmland preservation program. Upper Deerfield and Hopewell have the largest amounts of permanently preserved farmland. Several important issues that have emerged in the study include maintaining farmland equity and the financial viability of farming, and preserving farmland.
- One-third of farmland is dedicated to vegetable production, and 7% to ornamental plants and flowers. The nursery business has become an increasingly vital part of Cumberland’s agricultural industry.

Mining

- Mineral processing and glass manufacturing employs close to 12,000 workers in the County. Most of the communities have sand mines, covering 2,000 acres in total. Towns have expressed interest in developing a county-wide reclamation ordinance.

Historic

- About 200 properties are on the Cumberland County Register of Historic Places. Greenwich has the most developed historic preservation program, and Bridgeton has a large historic district. Redeveloping historic properties can assist in community revitalization, and in the promotion of tourism.

Transportation

- County stakeholders have identified east-west highway improvements as having the greatest



East Point Lighthouse



View of the Delaware Bay



Union Hall, Downe Township

potential to spur economy. The County could be accessed through improvements to Route 40. Internal improvements could involve upgrades of Route 56 or Sherman Avenue.

- The area has been identified as ideal for bicycling, due to the flat terrain; wide, smooth shoulders; natural beauty; and temperate climate. This will aid the development of the ecotourist industry.

Sewer/ Water

- Very little of the study area is sewerred, concentrating on Bridgeton, eastern Hopewell, and southern Upper Deerfield. Shiloh, Upper Deerfield, Fairfield and Hopewell are all approved for future sewer service expansion, and Deerfield would like to be included in the CCUA service area. Sewerage processing must also be addressed for Port Norris and Laurel Lake in Commercial Township, and Fortescue in Downe Township. Public sewer in appropriate areas will assist economic growth.
- The study area faces a water supply deficit, estimated to reach 18 million gallons per day by the year 2010. Planning, and conservation actions such as returning treated wastewater to the same local area, is needed to ensure a dependable water yield in the future.

State Plan

- An important task of this Region Strategic Plan is to gain the endorsement of the State Planning Commission, and to complete the designation process for the various centers in the region. This would provide additional funding and expedited permitting for the region.

MUNICIPAL PROFILES

The *Regional Profile* is accompanied by *Munici-*

pal Profiles, which highlights issues in each of the 12 WSCR study area communities. As only one example, issues in Deerfield Township include regional issues, such as the need for improved public transportation, and local issues, such as the need for public water in Carmel.

MARKET FEASIBILITY STUDY

A *Market Feasibility Study* in two phases has also been prepared. Extensive research was conducted for the Phase I report, leading to recommendations on feasible industries for the study area in the Phase II report. Following are only a few of the findings from the *Market Feasibility Study*:

- Promising industrial sectors include additional glass manufacturing, packaging manufacturing, or business services. Food processing can help spur the glass industry by providing a market for glass containers.
- The tourism industry is still in its infancy compared to other counties in New Jersey. Providing a full tourist experience, such as through accommodations, could double tourism expenditures.
- A promising agricultural industry is aquaculture, such as the use of tank farms in Bridgeton to raise tilapia, or shell fishing in Port Norris.

MORE INFORMATION?

All of the above reports are available on the Cumberland Development Corporation website: www.cdcnj.com.

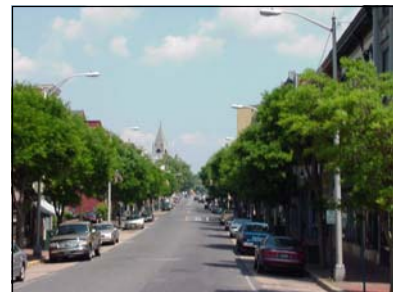
For further information on the Strategic Plan effort, please contact Tony Stanzone, Executive Director, Cumberland Development Corporation at (856) 451-4200 or cdc.nj@verizon.net.



Ornamental Tree Farm, Lawrence Township



Bike Route, Bivalve, Commercial Township



Downtown Bridgeton