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## **II-D. Economic Development Plan**

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Economic development is a concern for most municipalities. A healthy and growing community requires employment opportunities within commuting distance of municipal residents. Further, there is a perceived need in most communities for non-residential development within the Central Business District (CBD) of the Borough. A lack of regional employment opportunities leads to high unemployment, low incomes, out-migration and, in the long-term, disinvestment in the community. Even where regional employment opportunities exist in sufficient quantity to assure population stability or growth there is a need to balance residential development with development of income producing properties. Such properties provide higher tax revenues and help the local government maintain fiscal solvency.

Regional employment opportunities are based on many factors. Many of those factors are not amenable to change by municipal level efforts. Location, resources, available sites, infrastructure, transportation, and labor force are the critical concerns indicated by most companies. County, regional, and state development programs and policies may have much more impact on most of these than local efforts.

The above is not to suggest that the municipal governments should not concern themselves with the generation of regional employment opportunities, only that their impacts will be relatively marginal, and that larger entities are better equipped to take the lead in most direct economic development programs.

Most minor civil divisions within the Commonwealth are also too small to have much impact on local economic development patterns and trends even within their region. However, Rice's Landing's main concerns are not for large scale economic growth. The Borough is attractive to current residents because of the "small town" atmosphere, a rural like setting, and its people. Rather, the Borough's desire is **"to keep, protect, and promote the historical and natural resources within the context of increasing recreational and cultural tourism."** In doing so the goal of the Borough is focused on infrastructure improvements and recreational tourism promotion. The Economic Development Goal of Rice's Landing Borough is as follows:

**"To provide a maximum of economic opportunities for appropriate commercial and industrial growth consistent with the protection of the residential "small town" atmosphere."**

In order to have opportunities for any economic development, such as businesses or higher density housing, infrastructure must be capable of supporting the activity. Currently, the Borough does not have public sewer. Neiland Engineers recently completed an Act 537 study and the Borough Council and the residents of Rice's Landing tentatively approved the construction of public sewer in the Borough. Concurrently the Borough is applying for a Small Communities Planning Assistance Program Grant for Downtown Revitalization and Recreation Infrastructure Improvements Plan. The plan will focus on improvements to the downtown area with opportunities for a few small businesses, additional recreational facilities in Pumpkin Run park, and for expanded use of the Monongahela River. The sewer is the key to the future recreational tourism and resulting growth capabilities of the Borough.

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**Recommendation:** Continue to support of public sewer system for the Borough.

It is the hope that a revitalization plan will result in several improvements which are visible and relatively inexpensive for the Borough to implement. One improvement of this nature is improved signage, or gateway beautification upon entrance into the community.

**Recommendation:** Improve signage to the Borough by continually soliciting Penn Dot and beautify the entrances to the community from:

1. Crucible Road.
2. Route 88.
3. Improve the area entering the downtown near the Borough building on Main Street.

Safety concerns are factors which can greatly inhibit enjoyment by tourist and recreationalist from the Borough. Rice's Landing should concentrate on the establishment of a part-time police officer.

**Recommendation:** Improve the enforcement of existing ordinances which serve to improve the conditions of persons using facilities located downtown by establishing a local police force.

One of the local strengths and constraints are the large amount of industrial or potential open space which could be developed. However, the current undeveloped lands are owned by Consolidated Coal Company who has been more than reluctant to sell the lands. The Borough's goal could be "to promote the municipality as a good place for low impact and service sector employment opportunities" if the land were available.

**Recommendation:** Continually approach developers and Consolidated Coal for the sale and reuse of the large amount of Borough lands they own.

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## **II-E. Transportation Plan**

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## TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The efficient movement of goods and people are the objective of the Transportation Plan. Pedestrian circulation and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act are other objectives of the transportation plan. One of the major goals of this planning program is the provision of a plan for the expeditious and safe movement of traffic within and through Rice's Landing Borough. The existing road system and proposed future improvements satisfy the following general desires:

1. To insure the efficient and safe movement of traffic between the commercial, residential, and industrial areas of the community.
2. To minimize the detrimental effects of large volumes of traffic upon the residential areas of the community.
3. To prevent large volumes of through traffic from passing through the residential areas.
4. To provide for expected traffic increases in the future.
5. To serve areas of proposed future development.

Specifically, the overall goal for transportation in the Borough is **"To maximize safety and convenience of travel in a manner which provides accessibility to all areas of the Borough."** This goal is supported by four major objectives. The first and second objectives consider general traffic circulation and roadway conditions. The third and fourth objectives are related to expanding alternative modes of transportation for recreational purposes.

### Traffic Circulation

Rice's Landing is located in such a manor that major through traffic is not an issue. There are no major roadways which serve as connectors to a major traffic generators, and with the decline in usage of the Consolidated coal mines, traffic in the Borough is very limited. The heaviest traffic flows in the area are at the intersections of Route 88 and Route 188 just beyond the Borough limits. At this point access to the Borough is readily available, but the directional signage to the Borough is poorly marked.

**Recommendation:** To improve access to the Borough including improved directional signage at three key areas:

1. The intersection of Route's 188 and 88.
2. The intersection of Crucible Road and the road connecting to Route 88.
3. The intersection of Crucible Road and Carmichaels Street.
4. The intersection of Route 88 (south of Route 188 intersection) and Crucible Road.
5. The intersection of Millsboro Road and Route 88.

The Borough does not contain any poor intersections or traffic signals. But despite the Borough's relatively small amount of roads and very limited traffic, road repairs and maintenance are a major part of the budget. A logical step in ensuring the efficient use of the funds is to establish a list of roads and their conditions with a schedule for repair.

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**Recommendation:** To develop long-term solutions to efficient and equitable Borough road concerns by devising a prioritized schedule of maintenance and upgrades.

### **Alternative Modes of Transportation**

One of the greatest resources the Borough possesses is access to the Monogahela River. Expanded use of the facilities such as the boat ramp and fishing rail could be facilitated through the development of three major areas of alternative transportation:

1. Sidewalks.
2. Trails.
3. Boat dock.

The facilitation of these ideas would be greatly enhanced by proceeding with a downtown revitalization strategy and plan with an emphasis on riverfront development. The plan could be funded through a number of sources (see the Community Facilities and Public Utilities plan for a listing of potential funding streams, Section II-F) including a 1997 Small Communities Planning and Assistance Grant.

**Recommendation:** Develop a Downtown Revitalization Strategy and Plan with an emphasis on riverfront development which would facilitate the following objectives:

1. Explore potential for expanding alternative modes of transportation including bike paths and sidewalks, in older parts of the Borough near the riverfront.
2. Explore potential for the development of a boat dock.

Upon completion of the revitalization plan a consulting firm or other qualified resource should be retained for grantsmanship to apply for funding for bricks and mortar development.

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**II-F. Community Facilities  
and  
Public Utilities Plan**

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## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES PLAN

The final step in the development of the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan Elements, have been cultivated to reflect the general value statements and expressions of community vision of the Rice's Landing Planning Committee. Throughout the production of the plan sections care has been taken to be within the overall goal formed for Rice's landing which is "... **To make Rice's Landing an attractive and functional community in which people will want to live, shop, and work..**" Additional care has been taken to ensure that the goals and objectives for individual sections have been accurately interpreted into action oriented recommendations.

Rice's Landing offers a wide array of community facilities and services to its residents, including educational, recreational, public safety resources, libraries, and health facilities. A single goal was developed "**To assure that appropriate facilities are built and maintained which will meet the safety and service needs of the communities in an affordable manner.**" Derived from this goal are seven objectives specific in application and examined in the following sections.

### Education

Schools not only serve an educational purpose; they also serve as community centers, recreation areas and social facilities as well. The Jefferson-Morgan School District serves the local area including Rice's Landing. Due to a declining population base the district has adequate capacity for the future. The educational abilities of the district is considered, locally, very good, and statewide at the median. Rice's Landing, in general, considers the school district an attractive asset. The major objective in the area of education for the Borough residents does not specifically apply to the school district, but rather to the educational opportunities of its residents as a whole.

Access to information is a growing need for all communities which enables them to keep pace with the amazing availability of knowledge and current technological growth. In most communities, access to such information and technology can be found through the local library system. The region surrounding Rice's Landing is deficient in this respect. The nearest major library is Bawby Library in Waynesburg or in California at the Pennsylvania University of California. Locally, Flenniken Library in Carmichaels, serves the population.

Rice's Landing desire is to improve access to information for its residents. The realization is that, locally, insufficient funds exist to start and maintain a library within the Borough; however, a regional library would be an interesting solution with shared municipals services with other local municipalities and the school district. Expansion of existing library services at the school and computer access for local citizens would be a valuable use for local tax money, regionally located in a mutually agreeable environment. The recommendation for education in Rice's Landing include the following:

**Recommendation:** To expand the educational and cultural amenities in the Borough by supporting the development of a local public library or expansion of library services through the school district.

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## **Municipal Buildings**

Municipal buildings are the nerve center of a municipality's operations. Most borough offices and personnel are located at the municipal building. The most visible of all the community facilities, the Rice's Landing Community Building's future recommendations are geared toward the most common needs of the community. These future recommendations for the Community Building are as follows:

**Recommendation:** To maintain the building and continue to improve the interior organization.

## **Public Safety**

**Fire Service** Rice's Landing's fire department is a volunteer department. Fire protection is provided for the Borough through the Rice's Landing Volunteer Fire Department Station 66. The fire and ambulance protection serve Rice's Landing, a portion of Jefferson Township, and Cumberland Township. Currently, enrollment is adequate to maintain the current high level of service; however, volunteer organizations must always be concerned with future volunteers. The department is authorized to carry a 50 person roster. Currently the roster is 40 persons with 20 EMT's. Future recommendations related to the fire service include the following:

**Recommendation:** Maintain adequate human resources through recruiting and training.

**Police Service** Police protection in Rice's Landing as of this writing is served through Greene County 911 which dispatches State Troopers from Waynesburg. Rice's Landing has maintained a police staff of one part-time officer until 1990-1991. In late October of 1996 the Borough purchased a used police vehicle from Mason Borough in anticipation of Borough funded plans to hire a part-time police officer. Currently the candidate, a retired State Trooper, went through 75 percent of the recertification and minor training such as CPR, but did not commit after the Borough invested significant resources.

Police service in the Borough is not adequate. The State Troopers are slow in response and will only come for crimes or disturbances of relatively significant levels. A part-time officer is needed. To avoid future expense without services it is recommended that the Borough prepare an agreement prior to enrollment with a commitment of a specified time of service upon completion of certification.

**Recommendation:** Interview potential part-time officers and prepare a contract of services prior to enrollment in recertification training.

It should be noted that the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development has grant monies available to form regional police departments. The grant money can be used to purchase new equipment, uniforms, vehicles and other police related articles.

## **Public Utilities**

Public Utilities serve as means of promoting public health, protecting the environment, communications and proper land use. The major issue concerning the Borough The following are recommendations regarding public utility service in Rice's Landing:

**Sanitary Sewers** The need for a sanitary sewer system is probably the most critical community issue facing the borough. Expansion of housing types, especially multi-family housing or an elderly care facility, and the growth of residential living in the Borough depends on it. Currently, the Borough's engineering consultant, Neiland Engineers, is doing a feasibility and needs assessment survey on the Borough to consider installing a sanitary sewer system in Rice's Landing.

**Recommendation:** Complete the comprehensive plan a supply all helpful information from the document to the engineers.

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**Recommendation:** To provide an ongoing Comprehensive Community Planning process and provide a framework into which the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Planning will fit.

- a. Complete and publish the Act 537 Plan for Antis Township.
- b. Review the content, proposals, and recommendations of the Act 537 Plan.
- c. Adopt the Act 537 Plan and initiate implementation of the recommendations.
- d. Prepare and submit applications for financial assistance to PennVest, PA H&CD, PA CDBG, FmHA, CFA and others to keep the cost to local residents of the system improvements manageable.
- e. Update the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan every five (5) years.
- f. Guide future development in an orderly manner consistent and compatible with existing development.

**Water Service** Water is supplied to Rice's Landing by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Water Authority. The system is under utilized with a capacity of 9,000,000 gallons per day (GPD), while average demand is only 3.5 million GPD and peak demand is 5.0 million GDP. The Borough is served at above 95 percent with room for expansion. No expansions or major repairs are scheduled for the lines in the next five years. The water source is the Monongahela River used 365 days a year with no plans to change to another source. Overall the Borough is adequately served and the system can handle growth. A wellhead, aquifer, or water quality protection ordinance does not exist for the Borough; therefore, the following is the recommendation regarding water service in Rice's Landing:

**Recommendation:** To develop a water quality protection ordinance in the next 5 to 10 years.

**Electric** Electric power for Rice's Landing is supplied by Allegheny Power and current service is 100 percent with room for expansion. Recommendations for future electric service are as follows:

**Recommendation:** Maintaining the existing system, and placing all electric lines underground where possible.

## **Recreation**

A section dedicated to recreational resources is usually part of the community and facilities background studies as is the case in this plan. However, a goal independent of the community facilities and public utilities was derived due to the significant interest in such facilities in the region. The goal is "... To provide adequate amounts and variation of well maintained recreational facilities for the residents of the region.

Rice's Landing is a very small Borough. Recreational facilities are limited within the Borough

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because of space limitations due to development and Borough land area, but also because of the large land amassed within Pumpkin Run Park. The park is a large resource, but is in need of numerous improvements which would improve the usefulness of the park greatly.

**Recommendation:** To complete development of recreational facilities in Pumpkin Run including: improving trails, adding playground equipment, bathroom facilities, and parking spaces to meet the goal of maintaining adequate park and recreational facilities for the present and future residents of the Borough.

The needs of the park are also related to dissatisfaction with local parents and the available youth activities, organized or unorganized. Perhaps the additions of trail improvements and playground equipment would alleviate recreational shortages for the very young, but the teenage facilities are not substantial. A recent complaint is that some church parking lots are being utilized for street hockey frequently. With proper funding a minor facility could be built, perhaps in the park, but insurance for liability purposes is very expensive. Perhaps a shared services agreement could be made with other local municipalities for a regional facility.

**Recommendation:** To encourage the development of a regional, paved area for youth sports such as street hockey and skate boarding.

Upon completion of a revitalization plan (recommended in the Transportation Plan, section II-E) a consulting firm or other qualified resource should be retained for grantsmanship to apply for funding for bricks and mortar development.

**Potential Funding Sources** Municipalities often cannot afford to make improvements to their park systems. Current funding sources should be explored in order to carry out the improvements recommended above. The following are several potential funding sources for recreational improvements are the following:

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Monies** Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Monies can be used to fund recreation projects. Neighborhood parks would be the category that Rices Landing Borough would be eligible to receive funds. These projects include the following:

- Acquisition of land.
- Replacement of equipment.
- Purchase of handicapped accessible equipment.
- Recreation programs that serve low to moderate income persons.

The projects must be local in nature and serve an area that is designated as 51 percent or higher low to moderate income neighborhood.

**Keystone '93 Recreation, and Park and Conservation Fund (KEY '93)** KEY '93 was signed into law on July, 2, 1993 by Act 50 of the Pennsylvania Legislature. The program is financed by a \$50 million dollar bond issue and 155 of the states realty transfer tax revenues. The bond issue portion of the program is scheduled to last three years, beginning in 1994-1995. The Key '93 Program can fund park and recreation projects, zoo projects and land acquisitions. Rices Landing may wish to consider applying for a park and recreation project of a land acquisition project. The latter could be

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done for a future park or permanent open or wooded areas. The Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs is the administrator of this program. Applications are usually received in early February each year. The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation fund was established in 1993 for the following purposes:

- Providing technical assistance for open space and recreation studies and plans.
- Recreational Circuit Riders (Shared Professional).
- Small Communities Projects for communities with less than 5,000 persons.
- Acquiring recreational lands.