



6.0 Existing Conditions on the Seaway Trail

6.1 Route

The Seaway Trail in Pennsylvania is generally described as following Route 5 through Erie County. In the east county, the Seaway Trail follows Route 5, also known as East Lake Road to Franklin Avenue on the Lawrence Park/City of Erie line. East Lake Road becomes Route 5A at this point and the Seaway Trail follows Route 5A (6th Street) through the City of Erie. The Seaway Trail goes around the northwest side of Frontier Park and continues to follow 6th Street, although Route 5A follows 8th Street on the west side of the park. Proceeding through a largely residential area, the Seaway Trail then picks 8th Street up again when 6th Street ends at a Y intersection with 8th Street. At Asbury Road on the west side of the City, Route 5A ends at a Y intersection with Route 5 and follows Route 5 through the west county to the Ohio Line at West Springfield.

There are two additional routes designated as the Seaway Trail Scenic Byway. One route diverges from Route 5A at the East Side Access Highway and follows Bayfront Parkway with a spur off Bayfront into a small commercial area at Wolverine Park and Marina and Dobbins Landing in the City of Erie. The Seaway Trail rejoins West 6th Street via Cranberry Street. The other route diverges from the Seaway Trail at Route 832 in Millcreek, also known as Peninsula Drive, and follows the Presque Isle Loop.

A route revision is recommended to provide ample accommodation for additional traffic, simplify the route and provide better access to visitor services. The revision would remove the Cranberry Street/6th Street interchange and follow West 8th Street instead. The revised route is easier to navigate, follows a state road for easier wayfinding and removes the route from a residential to a commercial neighborhood. The figures below illustrate the existing and recommended routes.

**Figure 6-1 - Seaway Trail Designated Route
Pennsylvania Scenic Byway**

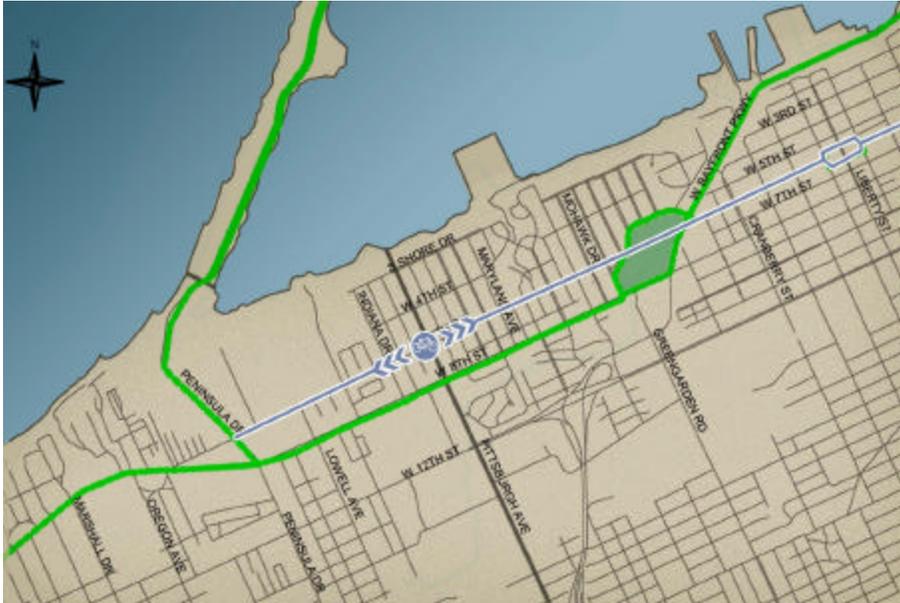


Source: peter j. smith & company, inc.



Figure 6-2 - Seaway Trail Recommended Revision

Pennsylvania Scenic Byway



Source: peter j. smith & company, inc. & Erie County Department of Planning

6.2 The People of the Seaway Trail

6.2.1 Adjacent Communities

The communities of the Seaway Trail are those through which the byway runs, but also those that are influenced by the Seaway Trail along the northern tier of Erie County. The Seaway Trail runs directly through the following:

- Springfield Township
- Girard Township
- Lake City Borough
- Fairview Township
- Millcreek Township
- Presque Isle State Park
- City of Erie
- Lawrence Park Township
- Harborcreek Township
- North East Township

The area of influence of the Seaway Trail includes all of the above as well as the following:

- Girard Borough
- Platea Borough
- Wesleyville Borough
- North East Borough

While it originally supported a fur-trading economy, it was not long before Erie County's natural features associated with its location on Lake Erie, began to attract settlers. The harbor at Presque Isle offered protection and the temperate climate of the lakeshore makes diverse agricultural production possible.

The demographic composition of the population, as well as the economic and housing characteristics of the population is important to the Corridor Management Plan for a number of reasons. The population characteristics help to paint a picture of the local population. Through their age characteristics, we can anticipate the recreational and educational qualities that will appeal to this important audience for Seaway Trail access and enjoyment. Additionally, by identifying the age cohort fluctuations through time, we can craft strategies for stemming “brain drain” and gaps in employment or educational opportunity that would otherwise keep this population from moving away.

The local population is also the economic base for the corridor. Local residents will be the prime movers in development of the tourism economy for the corridor. These residents will become the entrepreneurs, managers and front line workers of new and existing businesses along the Seaway Trail. Their readiness to take on the task of developing this economy is largely reflected through the current economic profile as developed through an analysis of US Census data relating to the educational attainment, industry and occupations as well as with additional employment data.

6.3 Demographic Overview

The first people of the area now known as Erie County were a prehistoric people known as the Eriez¹³. The Jesuits, who recorded a history of the region, alleged these people were related to the Seneca Indian Nation. Little is known about the Eriez and they were gone before continuous settlement of the area by Europeans began in the late 18th century. While it originally supported a fur-trading economy, it was not long before Erie County's natural features associated with its location on Lake Erie, began to attract settlers. The harbor at Presque Isle offered protection and the temperate climate of the lakeshore makes diverse agricultural production possible. The strategic advantage of the so-called Erie Triangle also played a significant role in its settlement.

¹³ Historic information for this section was developed with the help of the Erie County Historical Society's *Erie: Link to the Great Lakes*, by Carl B. Lechner.



6.3.1 Population

In the 1800 census, the county had a population of 1,468, including 156 in Erie Township and 81 in the Town of Erie. Erie developed as a port city, and its population increased dramatically after the War of 1812. In the 1850 census, 38,742 people inhabited the county and 5,858 lived in the then Borough of Erie. Subsistence agriculture developed into commercial agriculture and mills, including paper mills, warehousing, boatbuilding and other enterprises dominated the economy of the City of Erie. Just 100 years later, the railroad had arrived, transforming the economy. Over the century, the population of Erie City grew substantially, to 52,733.

As the 20th Century progressed, the population transformed yet again, entering a largely post-industrial phase. The City of Erie's population peaked with the 1960 Census, at 138,440. In 1990, the population of the county was 275,572 and that of the City of Erie, 108,718. The following table shows the population change for the Seaway Trail Corridor Management Plan Study Area between 1990 and 2000.

Jurisdiction	1990	2000	% Change
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	3%
Erie County	275,572	280,843	2%
Erie City	108,718	103,725	-5%
Fairview Township	9,827	10,140	3%
Girard Borough	2,917	3,164	8%
Girard Township	4,722	5,133	9%
Harborcreek Township	15,108	15,178	0%
Lake City Borough	2,481	2,811	13%
Lawrence Park Township	4,310	4,048	-6%
Millcreek Township	46,820	52,121	11%
North East Borough	4,617	4,601	0%
North East Township	6,283	7,704	23%
Platea Borough	458	474	3%
Springfield Township	3,218	3,378	5%
Wesleyville Borough	3,655	3,617	-1%

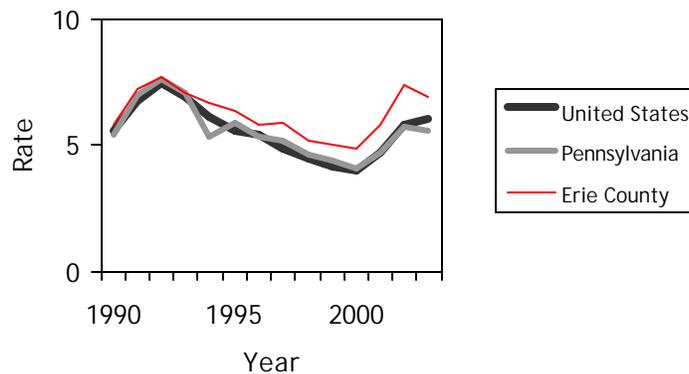
Source: US Bureau of the Census

6.4 Economic Overview

Economic trends experienced at the national level often impact the economy of lower level municipalities. As indicated in the table that follows, although the average unemployment rate between 1999 and 2001 was higher at the County level than at the national level the rates were still relatively close. Additionally, in 2000 the County had a lower poverty rate than the nation as a whole.

As illustrated in the chart that follows, the economies of Erie County and the State of Pennsylvania have and continue to mirror the trends and cyclical changes that occur in the U.S. economy. Between 1990 and 2003 the economies of Erie County, Pennsylvania and the U.S. experienced a period of recession (1990-91), expansion (1992-2000), recession (2001-02) and most recently a slow recovery (2002-03).

Table 6-2 - Annual Average Unemployment
1990 - 2003



Source: US Department of Labor - Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Although Erie County has generally exhibited a similar growth pattern to that of the State and Nation as a whole, its growth rate has not been as robust as the State or the Nation. From June 1990 to June 2001 Erie County (9.5%) experienced a slower rate of job growth than the State (10.3%) and the Nation (20.6%). During the recession in 2001-02, Erie County had a 1.8% decrease in employment compared to a 1.0% decrease in the State and a 1.1% decrease in the Nation.¹⁴

As the State economy slowly recovers from the recession, forecasts for 2004-05 indicate a modest increase in the expansion rate of the Gross State Product (GSP), a modest increase in the rate of job growth and a gradual decline in the unemployment rate. It is anticipated that although Pennsylvania's GSP will increase it will lag behind six of seven neighboring states: New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, New York and Ohio. West Virginia was the only neighboring state that is expected to have a lower rate of increase in GSP than Pennsylvania. Job growth is expected to be similar to that of the Nation and the unemployment rate is expected to be slightly lower in the State than in the Nation.¹⁵

Within Erie County, education, health and social services, manufacturing and retail trade were the three largest employers in 2000 according to the U.S. Census. While these were also the most significant industries for the State, manufacturing employed a significantly higher percentage of the population in the County.

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Table 6-3 - Economic Trends
Erie County and United States

	Erie County	U.S.
Three - Year Average Unemployment Rate, 1999 - 2001	5.3	4.3
Per Capita Market Income, 2000	\$20,452	\$25,676
Poverty Rate, 2000	12	12.4
Three - Year Unemp. Rate, Percent of U.S., 1999 - 2001	121.7	100
PCMI, Percent of U.S., 2000	79.7	100
Poverty Rate, Percent of the U.S., 2000	96.9	100

Source: Economic Institute of Erie

¹⁴ Pennsylvania State University, Center for Economic & Community Development. Road to 2004, Update on Pennsylvania-The Economy: Jobs, Forecasts and Telecommunications, December 2003

¹⁵ Ibid

6.4.1 Industry and Occupation of Employment

Industry and occupation of employment serve as indicators of residents' earning power because certain industries and occupations provide higher rates of pay than others. The primary industries of employment were the same for most comparison areas. The education, health and social services sector and the manufacturing sector employed the most people in all comparison areas except Springfield Township and Wesleyville Borough.

**Table 6-4 - Industry of Employment
Persons 16 Years and Older**

	PA	Erie County	Erie City	Fair-view Twp	Girard Boro	Girard Twp	Harbor-creek Twp	Lake City Boro	Lawrence Park Twp	Mill-creek Twp	North East Boro	North East Twp	Platea boro	Spfd twp	Wesleyville boro
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%	1%	0%	0%
Construction	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	7%	5%	6%	3%	4%	5%	8%	7%	3%	6%
Manufacturing	16%	24%	21%	24%	26%	30%	27%	36%	22%	21%	28%	26%	36%	35%	27%
Wholesale trade	4%	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%
Retail trade	12%	12%	13%	9%	8%	15%	12%	10%	13%	12%	11%	11%	9%	17%	17%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5%	4%	3%	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	5%	13%	6%	4%
Information	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	7%	5%	5%	8%	2%	4%	6%	6%	6%	7%	4%	4%	2%	4%	3%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	9%	6%	7%	8%	10%	3%	5%	6%	6%	7%	5%	6%	3%	5%	6%
Educational, health and social services	22%	24%	24%	24%	25%	19%	24%	18%	26%	27%	24%	20%	11%	14%	16%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7%	9%	10%	7%	5%	5%	8%	6%	8%	8%	9%	8%	7%	5%	9%
Other services (except public administration)	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%	8%	6%	5%
Public administration	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%

Source: US Bureau of the Census



Management, professional and related occupations were the most significant occupation type for the State and County (33% and 29% respectively) followed by sales and office occupations (27% and 26% respectively). While similarities existed among most comparison areas there were some differences. In Lake City Borough, Platea Borough, Springfield Township and Wesleyville, production, transportation and materials moving was the primary occupation type.

	PA	Erie County	Erie City	Fair-view Twp	Girard Boro	Girard Twp	Harbor-creek Twp	Lake City Boro	Lawrence Park Twp	Mill-creek Twp	North East Boro	North East Twp	Platea Boro	Spfgd Twp	Wesley II Boro
Management, Professional, and Related Occupations	33%	29%	25%	43%	31%	22%	31%	22%	28%	40%	27%	29%	11%	22%	21%
Service Occupations	15%	16%	20%	11%	14%	14%	14%	15%	20%	13%	17%	13%	13%	14%	14%
Sales and Office Occupations	27%	26%	27%	24%	26%	27%	27%	24%	31%	27%	24%	24%	24%	20%	28%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Occupations	9%	8%	7%	7%	6%	9%	8%	10%	4%	6%	8%	13%	8%	13%	10%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	16%	21%	21%	15%	23%	27%	21%	29%	16%	14%	23%	21%	43%	31%	28%

Source: US Bureau of the Census

6.5 Economic Development Response

As part of Pennsylvania’s strategy to adopt a market-based approach to workforce development, the Departments of Labor & Industry and Community & Economic Development are leading an industry cluster initiative with the assistance of several other workforce and economic development stakeholders within the State¹⁶. Nine industry clusters, with critical sub-clusters have been targeted for focused workforce development strategies based on projected labor shortages, growth potential and significance to the State’s economy.

¹⁶ Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Center for Workforce Information and Analysis. Pennsylvania’s Targeted Industry Clusters, 2004

An industry cluster is a group of industries that are closely linked by common markets, labor pools and/or other economic ties. Clusters are important because actions that benefit one member of the group generally also have a positive impact on other members of the cluster.

Nine identified clusters and their critical sub-clusters account for almost 69% of employment in the State and include:

- Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing
 - Chemicals, Rubber and Plastics
 - Electronics
 - Metals and Metal Fabrication
 - Printing
 - Vehicle and Vehicle Equipment
- Agriculture and Food Production
 - Food Processing
- Building and Construction
- Business and Financial Services
- Education
- Information and Communication Services
- Life Sciences
 - Bio-Medical
 - Health Care
- Logistics and Transportation
- Lumber Wood and Paper

The nine industry clusters and critical sub-clusters will be used to:

- Provide a consistent definition that allows the industrial structure of the State's regional economies to be compared
- Identify major employers in significant clusters as a springboard for building regional industry partnerships
- Provide a basis for occupational analysis (knowledge, skills, abilities) by grouping industries together that shore workforce needs
- Direct resource allocation to workforce preparation for jobs that offer family sustaining wages



Skill shortages within these nine cluster areas are being identified as well as the availability and quality of post secondary technical training. Data is also being gathered to help address gaps within the targeted industries. At a later date, industry cluster analysis will be performed to determine future educational and skills profiles. These efforts will build on other educational initiatives.

Employment location quotients are used to assess the competitive advantage of an industry within a region. The strength of an industry is measured by comparing its share of local employment to its share of state or national employment. An industry with a location quotient greater than 1.0 exports most of its goods and services to other areas and is considered to have a competitive advantage. Of the industry clusters that are located in Erie County, four had location quotients greater than 1.0: Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing, Agriculture and Food Processing, Life Sciences, and Lumber, Wood and Paper. As the State moves forward with its workforce development strategy, Erie County has an opportunity to partner with the State in its efforts to strengthen these sectors that area important to the Erie County employment base.

Skill shortages are being identified. At a later date, industry cluster analysis will be performed to determine future educational and skills profiles. These efforts will build on other educational initiatives.

