



**MOUNT PLEASANT
2016-2026 COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN UPDATE**

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WELCOME

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is both a document and a process. It is a public policy guide for big picture thinking about the factors that actually make a place to live a community – its land use patterns, housing choices, transportation networks, utility systems, recreation and the coordination to keep ideas moving forward.

Planning is continuous; the penning of a Comprehensive Plan captures both a reflection of past influences and the evolution of emerging ideas and aspirations. This 10-year plan outlines the Township’s intentions and desires for its future physical character and all of the requirements needed to make those specific goals happen in the coming decade.

A Comprehensive Plan includes and can go well beyond a wide range of elements required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. A Comprehensive Plan contains Goals, Objectives, Recommended Actions and analyses of various considerations. These come together to describe what the community aspires to be.

KEY ELEMENTS OVERVIEW

Goals

- Describe an idea or sought-after end
- Are non-specific/general statements
- Are the foundation to which policies could refer

Objectives

- Advance a goal's specific purpose, aim, ambition or element
- Suggest a course of action

Actions

- Describe how an objective will be carried out
- Describe method or provide guidelines
- Are usually measurable and/or time sensitive
- May have an associated cost
- Identify lead or potential partners for implementation

PART 1: INFLUENCES

INTRODUCTION

This Plan's first part presents the big aspirations of the community: its goals and its objectives. These statements lay out the overarching ideas to answer the question "What are we, as a community, trying to achieve?" The Plan's vision goals and objectives build upon the framework of Mount Pleasant Township's existing Comprehensive Plan concepts. All of these ideas aim to stay true to the community's historic planning philosophies while responding to new and/or emerging challenges. A summary of key planning influences – evolving patterns over the past decade - follows these aspirations. As with many decisions in life, one often reaches a destination efficiently, effectively and most

enjoyably when he or she knows what influences and the way. The Township's previous Comprehensive Plan led to the updating of the community's Ordinance. **Adopted by resolution, a Comprehensive Plan is not legally binding like in a zoning ordinance (adopted by ordinance). The community's ordinances are amended as appropriate to legally implement the Comprehensive Plan. Building on a series of technical analyses, observations from fact-finding and field work along with feedback from the public, the Comprehensive Plan presents a range of concepts and recommended actions for the Township and its lead or potential partners to pursue over the coming decade. Focusing on the community's future, the document presents**



GOALS

1. Balance development with conservation to maintain the appeal and quality of the community's existing landscapes.
2. Uphold responsible development by aligning appropriate development opportunities with realistic infrastructure and services.
3. Maintain fiscal responsibility while delivering effective services.
4. Support a diversified, safe, efficient, and environmentally sound transportation network for moving motorized and non-motorized vehicles, as well as pedestrians.
7. Enforce property maintenance standards.
8. Promote resident stability by encouraging home ownership.

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain the community's overall rural character.
2. Protect the community's natural resources by strategically implementing land use development policies.
3. Coordinate the provision and timing of infrastructure within areas most suitable and practical for public services.
4. Support housing affordability for future generations.
5. Maintain and promote amenities with balanced spending.
6. Expand the system of connectivity within the Township and surrounding communities.

KEY INFLUENCES

Mount Pleasant Township's population patterns are shaped, in large part, by the patterns and relationships of major road corridors and capacities of infrastructure service. Based upon on-going dialogue with Planning Commission, Township staff and the public, key drivers were identified in the planning process. Over the course of the coming decade, these key drivers include identifying ways in which to proactively embrace and address:

- Reviving a stagnant tax base that has been also compounded with decreasing revenues and/or earned income
- Optimizing potential linkages emerging from the proposed Southern Beltway in neighboring municipalities to Fort Cherry Road and other portions of Mount Pleasant Township
- The extent, provision and quality of infrastructure and communications services to areas of existing and future development
- School District revenue needs along with their unique offerings geared to agriculture education
- Potential opportunities for joint recreation/community center-oriented activities with the public, quasi-public and/or private sector
- Future parks and recreation maintenance needs
- A continually expanding regional trail/pedestrian connectivity network
- The dynamic of the Township's aging population and the on-going draw of younger families to the amenities in nearby communities

- Evolving effective methods and timing of Township communication regarding events and news.

In addition to these major drivers, specific comments received during the planning process highlight:

Community Character

- Past “outside world” perception of the community is that of a “working landscapes” community
- Dual personality of the community: bedroom community and rural oasis
- Lack of identifying features such as gateways and community gathering places
- Maintaining rural/agricultural areas while encouraging development
- Perceived lack of history/historic relevance

Land Use, Housing and Economic Development

- Areas need to be available for future residential and non-residential growth.
- Commercial development is clustered in nodes and there is opportunity for more
- The Township wants to promote its business-friendly attitude/position.

Transportation and Connectivity

- Convenient relative to external destinations and proposed Southern Beltway
- Can be difficult to get around within Township – areas of traffic safety concerns and lack of non-vehicular connections

Natural, Historic and Civic Resources

- The Township needs more activities for residents of all ages.
- Park and recreation areas are focused within areas of the community.

- Ample open spaces (fields, woodlands, etc.) but lack interconnectivity.

Cooperation, Government Services and Utilities

- The Township wants to promote coordination and cooperation with the School District
- Quality public school system.
- Existing limited levels of community services



PART 2: LOOKING FORWARD

OVERVIEW

From the goals and objectives, the Comprehensive Plan's ideas for the future come together. Recommendations within this Comprehensive Plan aim to produce positive results for the overall community while being straightforward and cost-effective. It is important to recognize that each goal and objective in the preceding part relates to the others.

concepts that Township aims to pursue over the coming decade. More specific information about each key recommendation is also included in the Action Plan table found at the end of the document.

THIS PLAN REVOLVES AROUND SEVERAL CENTRAL

THEMES:

- Retaining similar land use patterns
- Identifying potential infrastructure service areas to elevate economic development opportunities while preserving agricultural land uses within all residential zoning districts and emphasizing the vibrancy within the community's rural residential character
- Encouraging compatible densities in proximity to both roadway corridors and potential service areas
- Enhancing pedestrian and vehicular connectivity to help shape economic development opportunities

The Plan's key recommendations complement or frame the context for the full range of the Comprehensive Plan's

FUTURE LAND USE AND HOUSING PLAN

In realizing continued Comprehensive Plan successes into the coming decade, land use housing and development remain an important aspect of community discussion and action. For Mount Pleasant Township, upholding quality within the community's character is not just a generic planning concept; in the Township, it is a valued frame of mind in context of a long-standing tradition of community pride. In delivering a plan for land, the Township has identified objectives to encourage continued quality development, an influx of future generations of long-term residents and coordinated community ordinances.

Local residents' activities create a need for various land uses as well as for the amenities and infrastructure systems that support land uses. The relationships of existing and future land uses will shape the character and quality of life in the community for many years to come. To more accurately assess the Township's future needs, an analysis of physical environment trends and patterns was completed. This series of build-out analysis exercises is included in the document's Appendix.

The community's demographic patterns will likely be significant influences shaping land use-related discussions in the coming decade. These socio-economic patterns will also shape what housing products and other development ideas are realized. A specific housing strategy could be created as a complement to this Comprehensive Plan. Based on US Census findings, as the country's population is changing, so

are its real estate preferences. These lifestyle changes have significant implications for suburban and semi-rural development. For the first time, there are more single-person households (26.4 percent) than married-couple-with children households. The groups growing the most quickly, people in their

mid-20s and empty nesters in their 50s, are the groups most likely to look for an alternative to low-density, single-family housing. (ULI, High Density Development, Myth and Fact, 2005) The Future Land Use map illustrates the general pattern of land use anticipated over the course of this Comprehensive Plan. The patterns are aimed to reflect desired relationships of types of land uses, housing and their intensities. The Map has areas designated for which the community anticipates it will aim its future planning strategies and policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Rural Residential Areas

Opportunities seek to minimize impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. Within these areas, the community can align its ordinance requirements so that defined areas of identified sensitivities (e.g. steep slopes) experience minimal disturbance when future development occurs.

2. Moderate & Higher Intensity Residential Areas

Opportunities are relative to existing development patterns and proximity to infrastructure. Consideration should be given to incorporating additional criteria within the Township ordinances to promote compatible land development and zoning and introduce desirable construction techniques including incentives that promote development that complements existing community character.

3. Village of Hickory

Balancing land use types, locations, visibility and access to parking is a key to promoting Hickory as destination. The Township should consider updates to its ordinances that explore parking opportunities in the rear of the lots and alleyways or on underutilized parcels.

4. Non-residential Expansion

Expansion of non-residential development in areas of, adjacent to and complementary to McDonald, Midway, Fort Cherry/Primrose should be coordinated with neighboring

municipal efforts. Development can provide additional jobs and tax dollars.

5. Infill/Re-Use

Development Adaptive reuse of vacant structures promotes infill where there are opportunities for redevelopment within a historical and cultural context. Areas including Hickory and within the vicinity of the planned Southern Beltway interchange area and corridor can be further explored.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a Marketing Commission (minimum of 3- persons that report BOS) goal is to identify and prepare marketing using all forms of media that can be used to promote the Township. These include:
 - a. Promote non-office, non-residential uses on the first floor of buildings within the Village of Hickory
 - b. Create a comprehensive Marketing Brochure for regional business attractions/services
 - c. Develop a New Business Handbook that outlines a step-by-step process to obtaining necessary permits and licenses to start a new business or to renovate an existing building
2. Prepare Specific Plan alternative concept drawings to explore the possibilities of potential building and mixed-use development and redevelopment within the community's historically significant areas of development.
3. Encourage, through ordinances and coordinated efforts, for public-oriented uses/services to remain in the Village of Hickory

NATURAL AND CIVIC AMENITIES PLAN

Civic and recreation amenities focus upon engaging residents the public with activities and projects. In communities like Mount Pleasant Township, these amenities are proven contributors to economic vitality by making a place an attractive destination for businesses, by sparking redevelopment, by increasing property values, by improving public safety, by raising the visibility of a community and, in many situations, by generating dollars through tourism. The Township provides a limited number of amenities for resident enjoyment.

Civic amenities are increasingly essential to a strong business climate within and around Mount Pleasant Township. By some estimates, two-thirds of college educated adults age 25-34 (the "creative class") decide first where to live and then where to work. Civic and recreation amenities – entertainment, the arts, sports, science, recreation and cultural attractions such as parks and museums – play an important role in the desire to live in a given area. By creating or promoting access to a strong, cohesive civic amenities infrastructure, the Township has opportunity to continue strengthening its sense of community and residents' quality of life.

The overarching purpose of enhancing civic amenities is to assist the community in creating a proactive, realistic vision for the Township's next generation of assets. While not traditionally considered part of civic amenities, Mount

Pleasant Township's agricultural resources are an important segment of its identity and

the quality of life for residents who enjoy knowing that they can quickly reach rural destinations.

The Township, in coming years, will continue seeking to understand which civic amenities in the Township people enjoy, are adequate, are missing and/or need to be improved. Where opportunities exist, the community and its neighbors can extend its network of amenities into agricultural tourism, recreation, kid-friendly destinations and other local and/or regional-scale destinations. By balancing assets through a combination of public and private sector efforts, venues can aim to be both economically and physically sustainable for the people of Mount Pleasant Township.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Highlight cultural history and resources - including but not limited to farming, mining, quaint sense of community - as a part of the Township's economic development strategies
2. Evaluate the feasibility, cost savings and approach to cooperative recreation and open space operations and maintenance
3. Emphasize Hickory's streetscape as a part of the region's historic and cultural amenities
4. Create a Marketing Committee to examine the potential for marketing local and regional-scale opportunities that exist within the Township such as road bike routes for riding clubs, bed and breakfasts, road maps
5. Interconnect local greenway corridors and regionally significant natural resource areas to create an extensive network of formally designated and identifiable civic and natural features. Incorporate information and wayfinding into the Township's planning, communication and marketing efforts
6. Create trailheads and gateway features to establish a unique identity and to demarcate the Township's boundaries

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

Although the majority of the residences of Mount Pleasant have limited public water and public sanitary sewer service, there are an increasing number of homes within expanding sewer service areas. Expansion of public sewer service in targeted areas of the Township and along major corridors is a significant goal of the Township. Analysis conducted as part of Act 537 Plan indicates that the groundwater quality in the Township is adequate to support continued use of the individual wells for potable water supply.

Mount Pleasant Township addresses storm water management issues at the local level through criteria in its ordinances. The following is a listing of the minimum control measures the Township aims to implement in compliance with the DEP Protocol Stormwater Management Program.

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation and Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment
- Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations and Maintenance

The community's transportation system continues to play a significant role in the Township's future. In addition to accommodation for vehicles, the potential for expanding the pedestrian/bicycle system within the Township could be important in the coming years.

In delivering a plan for transportation plan, the Township has areas of continued safety and efficiency concern based upon the quantity and speed

of traffic occurring as part of continued industry activity. Planned improvements should be focused on addressing the specific corridors and intersections of concern. The Township should also continue to evaluate the potential and need for new roadway alignments and roadway extensions as part of its Specific Area planning and other infrastructure improvement projects. A clear and concise transportation plan can assist a local municipality as it partners with and provides input to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and PennDOT during the planning and development of planned, needed and applicable transportation project. This coordination will assist the municipality and partners in implementing road network improvements. A key component of the transportation plan could include language pertaining to the importance of promoting multi-modal transportation facilities to provide the local community with an efficient and effective transportation network. In context of multi-modal planning strategies and future development in the vicinity of the Southern Beltway interchange as well as infill development opportunities in Hickory, the Township and other regional/state-level transportation planning stakeholders should evaluate the long-term potential and impacts of on the Fort Cherry Road corridor.

In context of near-term and long-term infrastructure improvement needs, the Township also has the opportunity to designate a municipal service boundary. A municipal service boundary can function to designate the geographic locations where infrastructure improvements exist and/or are desired. Designations of these areas can take on different characteristics - such as based on timeframes, priorities or density of population being served (e.g. primary focus area/secondary focus area).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Define a specific municipal service boundary concept to reflect topography, parcels, rights-of-way, and existing capacity commitments

2. Ensure zoning ordinance consistency within the adopted municipal service boundary and incorporate as an overlay to the Township Zoning Map
3. Develop a methodology and timeframe for periodically re-evaluating/ revising the municipal service boundary based on availability of wastewater system capacity and/or other defined infrastructure capacities
4. Consider the collection of traffic impact fees and preparation of associated ordinances to offset costs associated with needed transportation improvements and impacts
5. Coordinate with PennDOT and as part of development applications for improved intersection safety and visibility.

CIVIC RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Explore suitability of select joint services/efforts, such as recreation and firefighting, in accordance with the population's needs and capacities
2. Assess opportunities for updating the community's comprehensive parks, recreational, and open space plan
3. Construct a coordinated system of major and minor gateways to increase community visibility and pride
4. Implement a way finding/signage system to highlight assets and improve mobility. Where there is opportunity, highlights can focus on aspects of notable amenities and the manner in which residents can access Washington County services.

COMMUNITY POLICIES

Mount Pleasant Township's rural or pastoral character is highly valued by residents. Emphasizing and conserving this character will help to maintain a high quality of life for residents and allow them to continue to enjoy one of the things they love most about their community.

Many of the sensitive areas, such as steep slopes, within the Township will likely continue to be maintained in those areas because of development restrictions. Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals may impact water supply sources. Activities like that are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities. Further, commercial agriculture production may impact water supply sources. Hence, the extent to which development impacts natural resources within the community will be based upon the combination of Federal, State and Township's technical requirements for development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Complete a comprehensive zoning audit and develop an updated zoning ordinance and zoning map
- Focus on coordinated development and design guidelines for Hickory's mixture of permissible and conditional uses
- Create a non-residential overlay zoning district along Route 18 to promote coordinated development, access and optimize corridor opportunities

- Designate a regional greenways/open space network and bicycle-pedestrian plan
- Incorporate provisions into ordinances that encourage greenway and open space areas for conservation and/or recreational opportunities

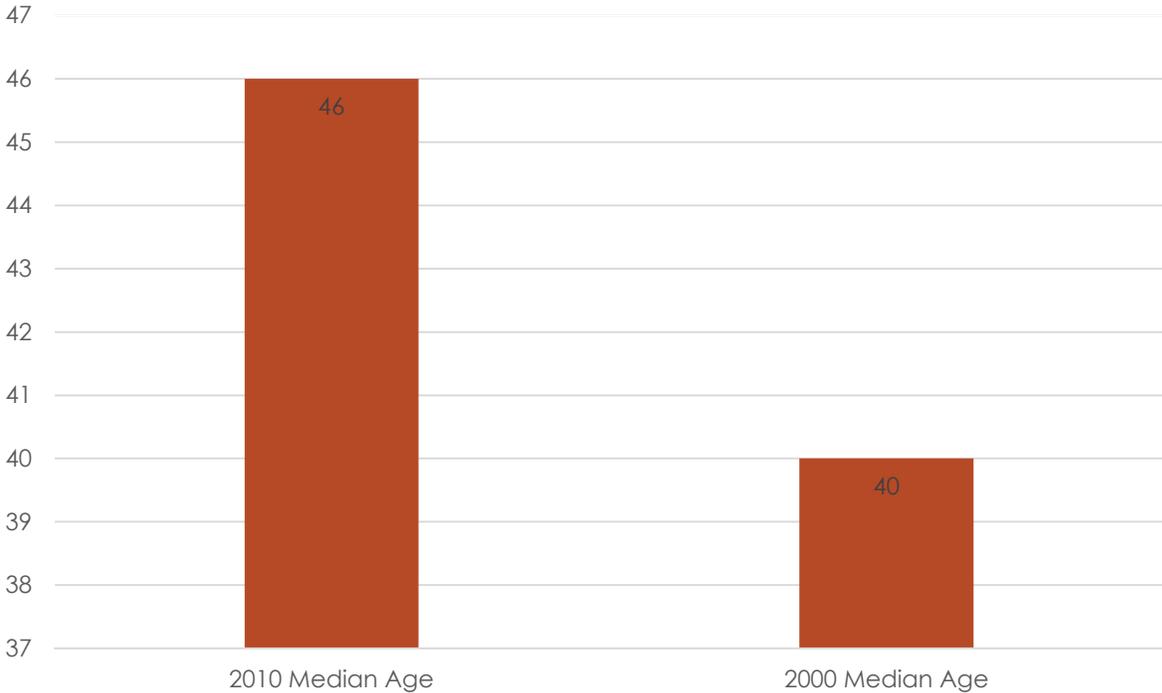


PART 3: INSIGHTS

GRAPH 1 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S 2010 POPULATION COMPARED TO
SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

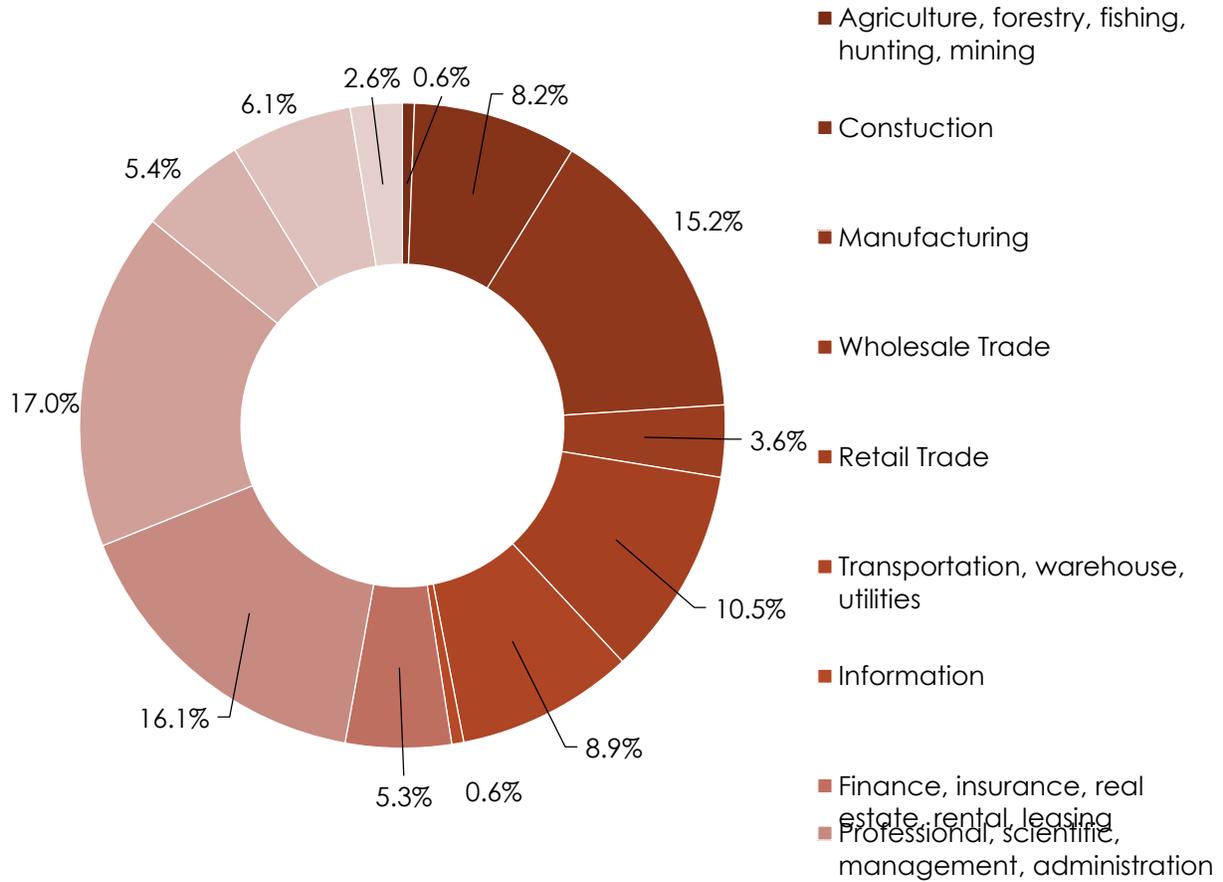
	Total population	Median Age (years)	% under 5 years	% 5 to 19 Years	% 20 years to 64	%65 years and over
Mount Pleasant	3,515	46.4	4.5%	18.0%	60.3%	17.2%
Burgettstown Borough	1,388	40.9	5.6%	18.2%	58.6%	17.6%
Canonsburg Borough	8,992	39.6	6.5%	16.4%	60.8%	16.2%
Canton Township	8,375	44.8	5.3%	17.0%	59.2%	18.5%
Cecil Township	11,271	42.9	5.7%	18.3%	61.1%	14.9%
Chartiers Township	7,818	47.5	4.5%	15.3%	58.0%	22.2%
Cross Creek Township	1,556	46.5	4.4%	18.1%	62.1%	15.5%
Hopewell Township	957	46.1	5.1%	17.6%	60.6%	16.7%
Houston Borough	1,296	43.3	4.6%	16.2%	60.5%	18.8%
McDonald Borough	1,766	42.6	6.4%	15.2%	59.5%	18.9%
Midway Borough	913	41.7	5.7%	18.1%	57.0%	19.3%
Robinson Township	1,931	44.6	4.5%	17.8%	61.3%	16.4%
Smith Township	4,476	44.9	4.6%	18.4%	58.7%	18.3%
West Middletown	139	47.9	5.0%	16.5%	57.6%	20.9%

GRAPH 2 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S 2000-2010 POPULATION COMPARISON



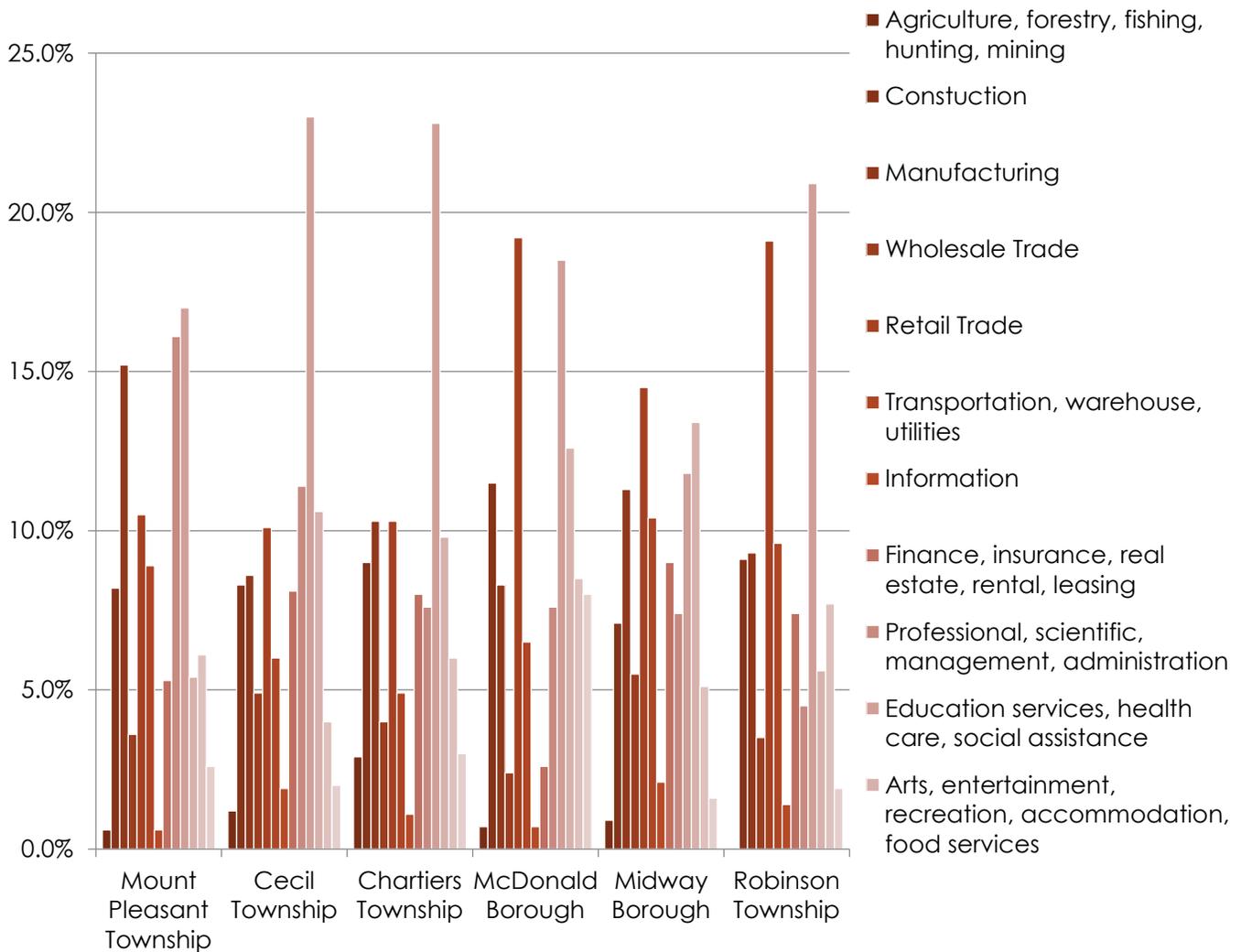
GRAPH 3 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S MOST COMMON FIELD OF OCCUPATION

Education Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance are the most common field of occupation; second most common Field of Occupation: Professional, Scientific, Management, and Administration



GRAPH 4 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S MOST COMMON FIELD OF OCCUPATION COMPARED TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Though Mount Pleasant has a variety of primary occupation fields like manufacturing, education services, healthcare, and social assistance, when analyzing occupations from surrounding communities, some have a single prominent type of industry occupation, while Mount Pleasant

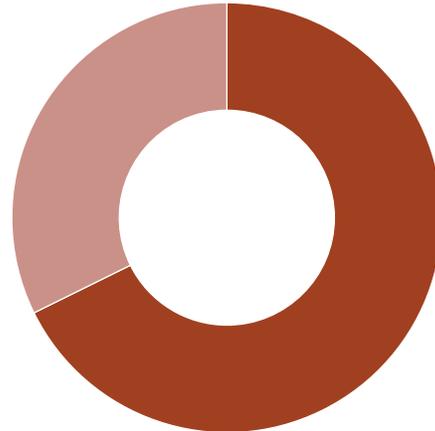
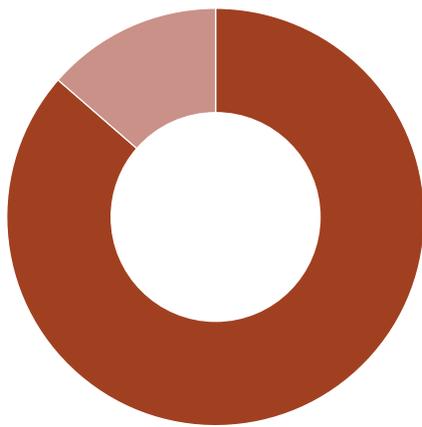


has several.

Communities	Population 16 yrs +	In civilian labor force	Civilian employed	Civilian unemployed	Armed forces
Mount Pleasant Township	2,999	66.3%	63.7%	2.6%	0.0%
Burgettstown Borough	1,227	62.7%	56.5%	6.2%	0.3%
Canonsburg Borough	7,137	67.0%	61.0%	6.0%	0.0%
Canton Township	7,028	64.5%	60.4%	4.1%	0.0%
Cecil Township	6,275	68.2%	62.4%	5.8%	0.2%
Chartiers Township	6,421	63.2%	60.8%	2.2%	0.2%
Cross Creek Township	1,259	60.2%	54.3%	5.9%	0.0%
Hopewell Township	813	66.2%	62.4%	3.8%	0.0%
Houston Borough	1,140	67.7%	58.8%	8.2%	0.0%
McDonald Borough	1,459	62.0%	57.1%	4.9%	0.0%
Midway Borough	776	61.9%	55.9%	9.8%	0.0%
Robinson Township	1,664	58.4%	54.9%	3.4%	0.0%
Smith Township	1,576	64.1%	57.2%	6.9%	0.0%
West Middletown Borough	91	48.4%	47.3%	1.1%	0.0%

GRAPH 5— MOUNT PLEASANT’S MOST COMMON FIELD OF OCCUPATION COMPARED
TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

GRAPH 6 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S

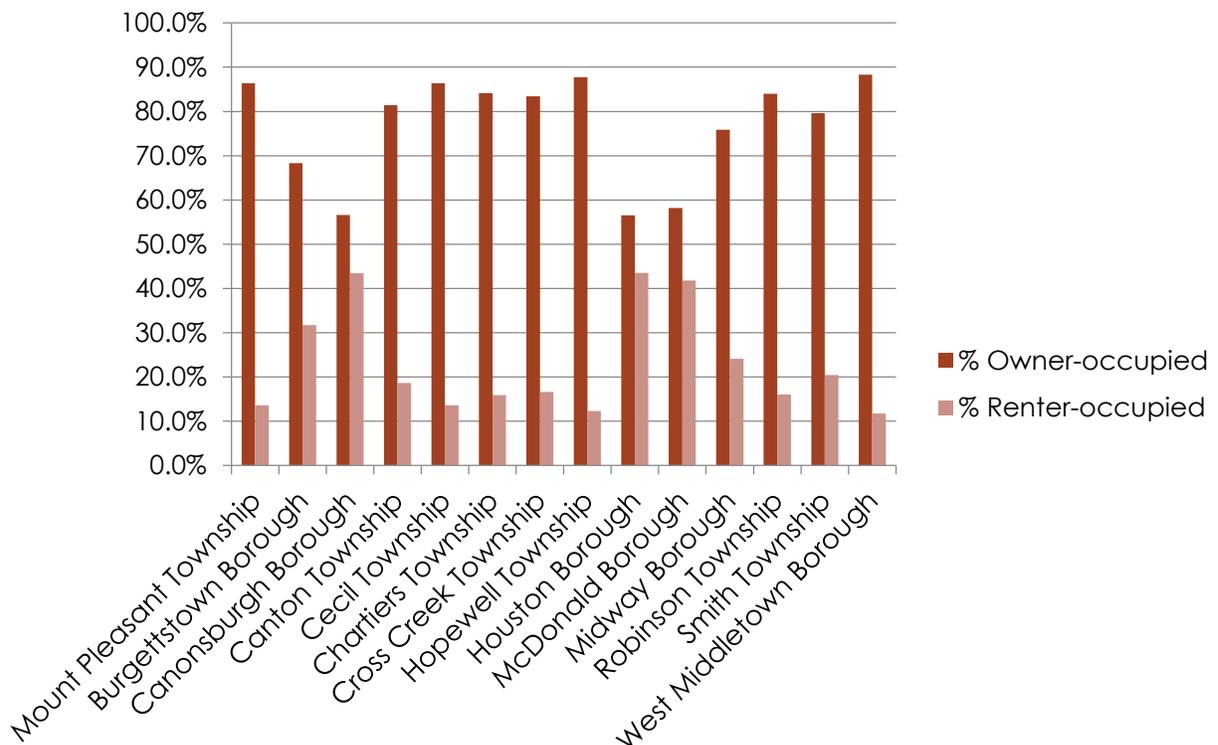


- % Owner-occupied ■ % Renter-occupied
- % Owner-occupied with mortgage ■ % Owner-occupied without mortgage

HOME OWNERSHIP

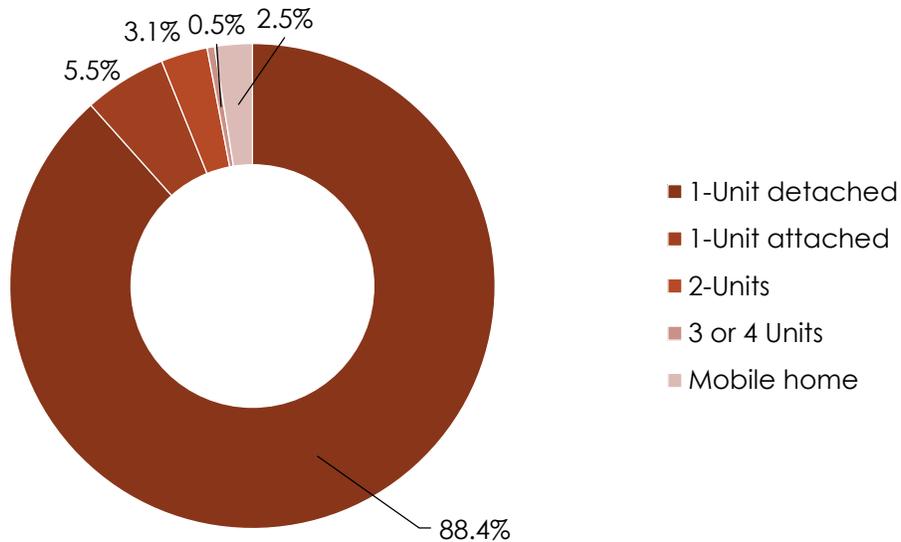
GRAPH 7 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S HOME OWNERSHIP COMPARED TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Residents of Mount Pleasant Township tend to be homeowners, with home ownership rates at almost ninety percent, and when compared to nearby communities, Mount Pleasant has one of the highest rates of home ownership.



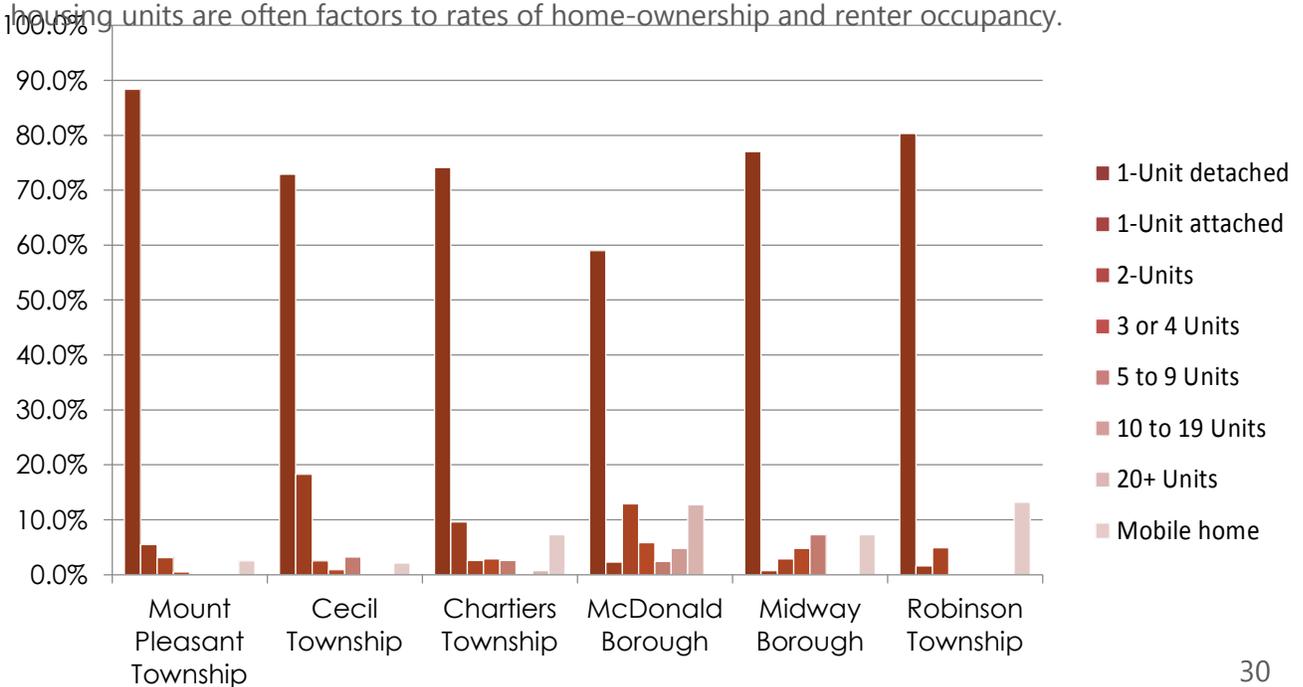
GRAPH 8 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S HOUSING TYPES

The majority of housing units in Mount Pleasant are one unit detached homes

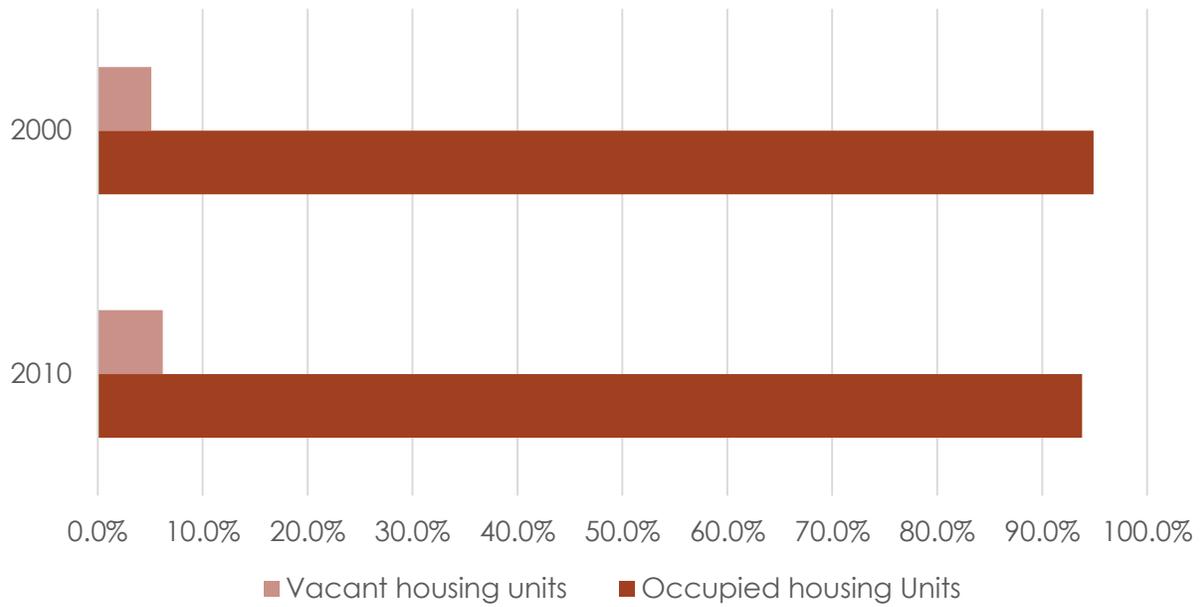


GRAPH 9 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S HOUSING TYPES COMPARED TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

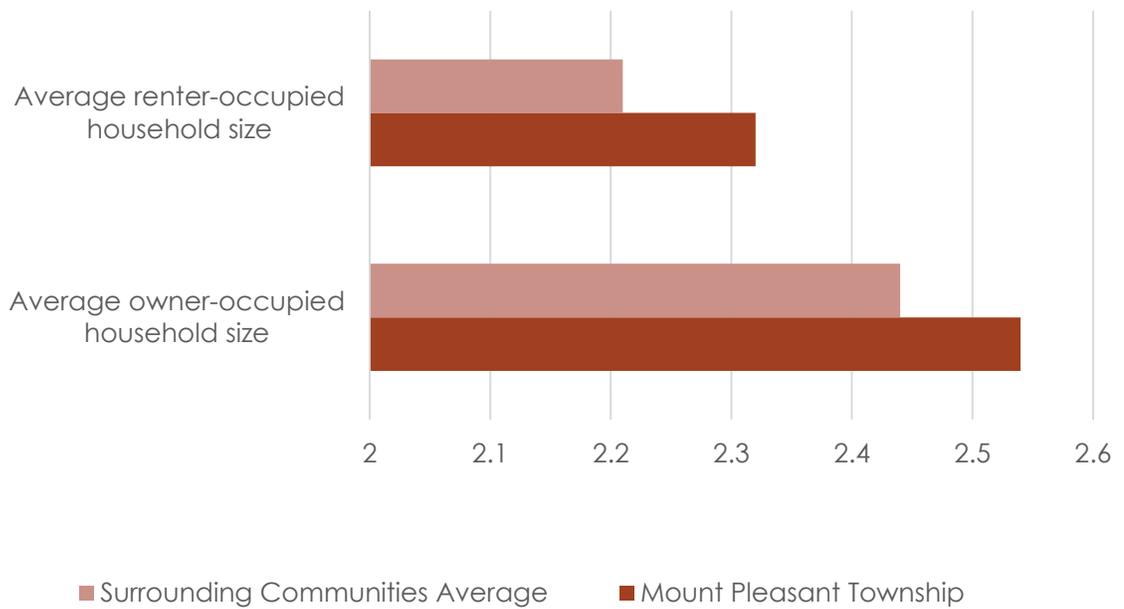
Mount Pleasant has the most one unit detached housing units when compared to surrounding communities. We can see that other surrounding communities have more types of housing styles, like multi-family dwellings and large apartment buildings. These different styles of housing units are often factors to rates of home-ownership and renter occupancy.



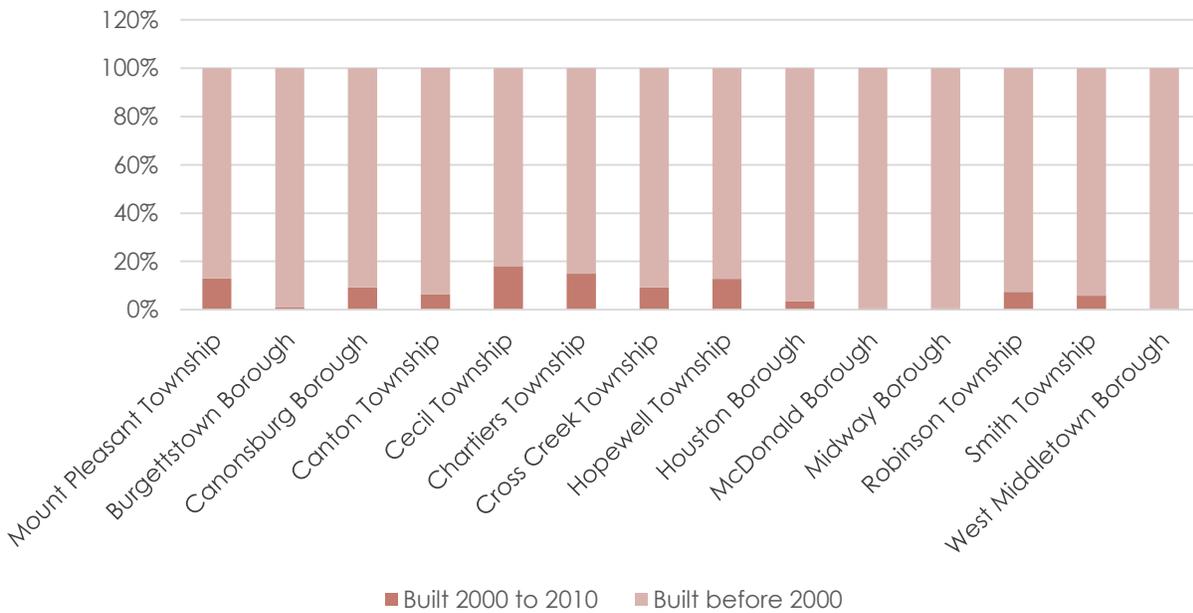
GRAPH 10 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S 2000-2010 HOUSING OCCUPANCY COMPARISON



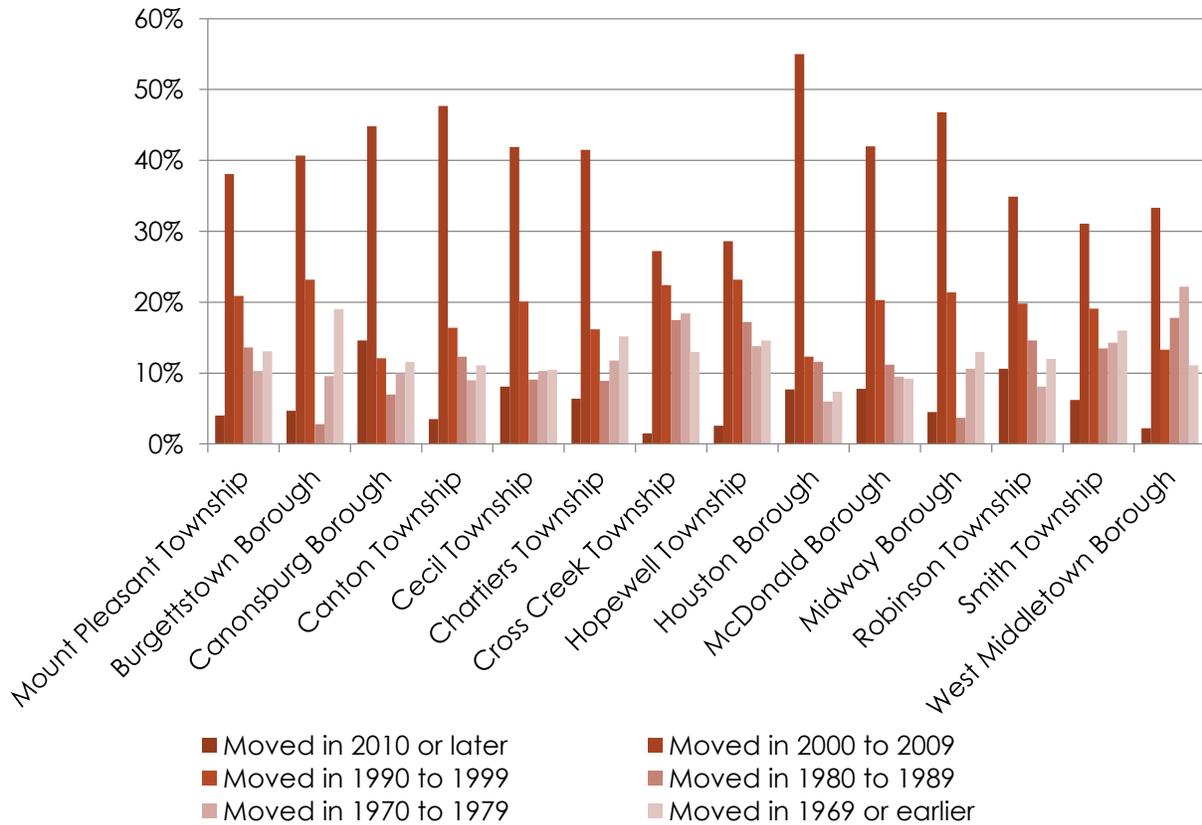
GRAPH 11 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE



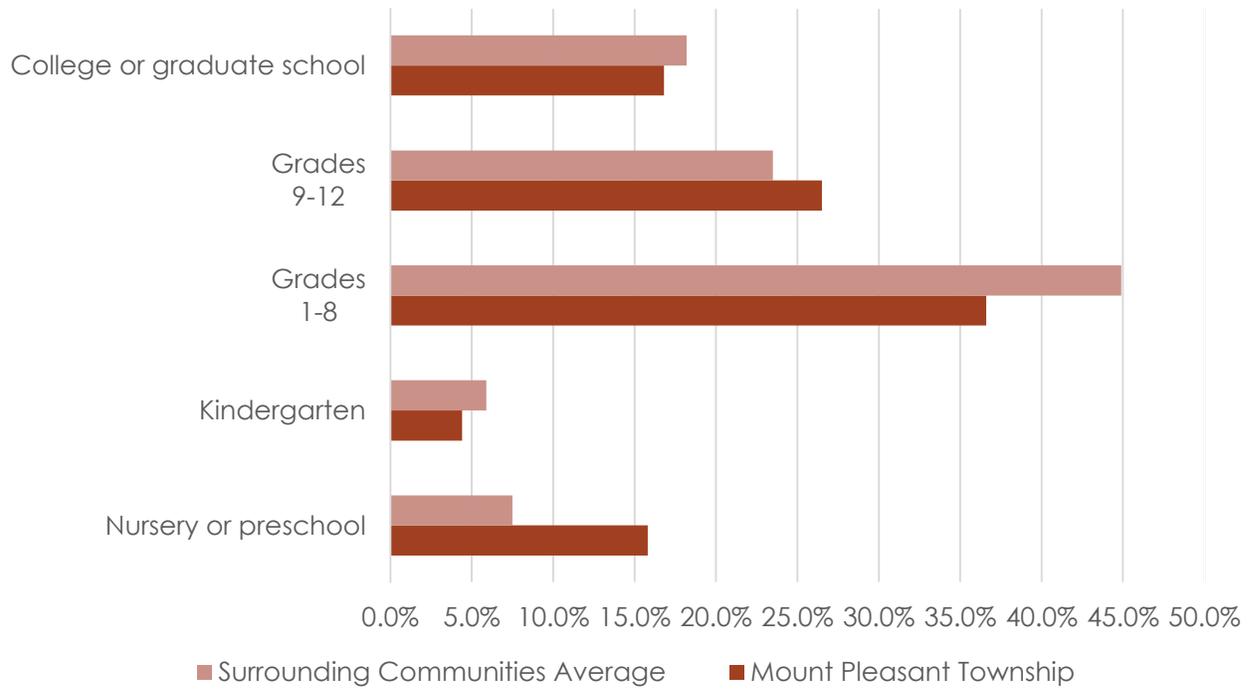
GRAPH 12 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S HOUSING YEARS



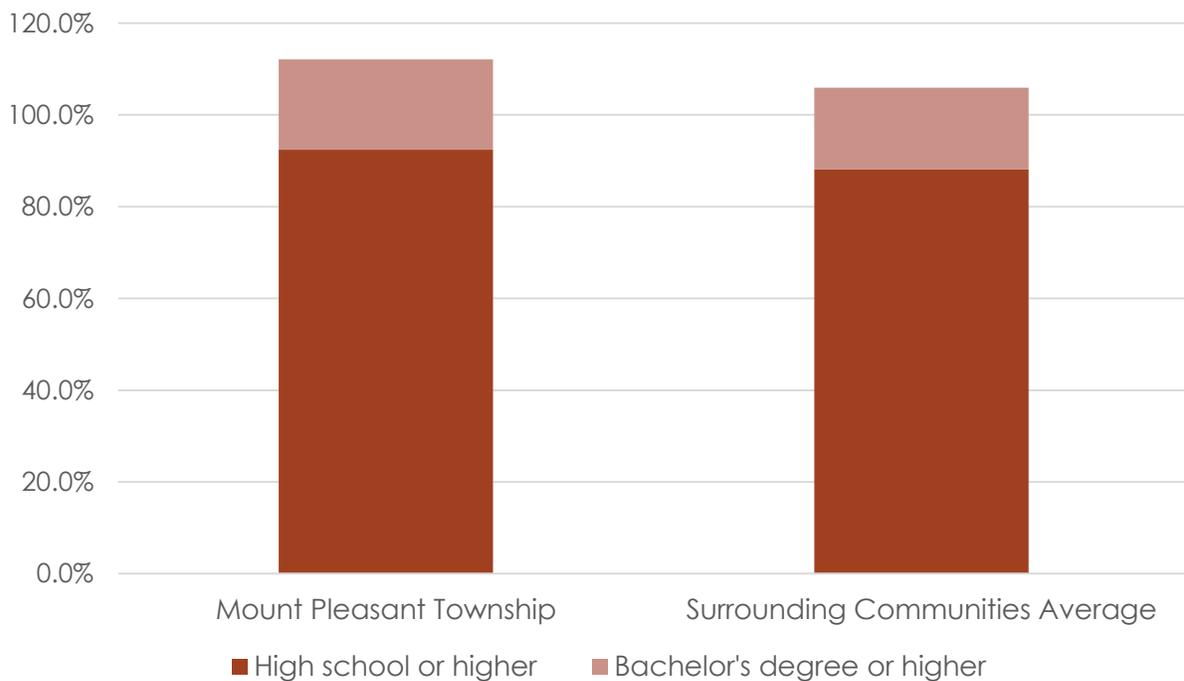
GRAPH 13 – MOVE TO THE COMMUNITY



GRAPH 14 – EDUCATION - 2010 SCHOOL STATUS COMPARISON TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES



GRAPH 15– 2010 EDUCATION ATTAINMENT COMPARED TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES



GRAPH 16 – MOUNT PLEASANT’S TRAVEL TIME COMPARED TO
SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Communities	2010 Travel Time	2000 Travel Time	% change
Mount Pleasant Township	26.6	30.6	-13%
Burgettstown Borough	31.0	26.2	18%
Canonsburg Borough	23.2	20.3	14%
Canton Township	21.4	20.3	5%
Cecil Township	26.8	26.3	2%
Chartiers Township	24.4	22.1	10%
Cross Creek Township	35.7	32.9	9%
Hopewell Township	30.4	30.3	0%
Houston Borough	22.8	18.5	23%
McDonald Borough	30.2	27.3	11%
Midway Borough	30.5	29.7	3%
Robinson Township	27.5	28.0	-2%
Smith Township	30.0	26.8	12%
West Middletown Borough	58.3	34.4	69%

GRAPH 17 – EDUCATION - 2010 SCHOOL STATUS COMPARISON TO
SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

	Median household income	Mean household income	Median individual income
Mount Pleasant Township	\$64,620	\$73,215	\$38,393
Burgettstown Borough	\$48,854	\$61,926	\$35,326
Canonsburg Borough	\$47,671	\$50,727	\$28,202
Canton Township	\$55,393	\$62,425	\$30,402
Cecil Township	\$65,422	\$86,525	\$48,491
Chartiers Township	\$59,067	\$68,358	\$32,154
Cross Creek Township	\$52,240	\$66,571	\$26,719
Hopewell Township	\$61,500	\$77,215	\$38,750
Houston Borough	\$42,500	\$50,820	\$25,063
McDonald Borough	\$41,875	\$47,522	\$23,009
Midway Borough	\$47,609	\$50,257	\$24,375
Robinson Township	\$47,361	\$61,934	\$27,639
Smith Township	\$49,698	\$61,539	\$18,158
West Middletown Borough	\$47,969	\$46,696	\$28,125