

Demographics and Socioeconomic Trends

Regional Perspective

Between 1990 and 2000, the Pennridge Area municipalities have grown by 3,181 housing units and 4,589 residents as shown in Table 1. Municipalities in this region undergoing the most housing and population growth are Hilltown and East Rockhill townships, and Perkasio and Telford boroughs. This can be attributed to good highway access and the provision of public water/sewer service to these communities. In this decade, West Rockhill Township had the lowest housing growth (17 dwelling units) and actually lost resident population (-285), which may be attributed to limited public utilities available in the township. Dublin Borough received only limited housing and population growth due primarily to the fact that there is limited land available for development, and the borough is approaching build out.

Table 1. Housing and Population, Pennridge Planning Area, 1990–2000

Municipality	Housing			Population		
	1990	2000	1990–2000	1990	2000	1990–2000
Bedminster Township	1,733	1,868	135	4,602	4,804	202
Dublin Borough	840	869	29	1,985	2,083	98
East Rockhill Township	1,359	1,883	524	3,753	5,199	1,446
Hilltown Township	3,659	4,370	711	10,582	12,102	1,520
Perkasie Borough	3,089	3,378	289	7,878	8,828	950
Silverdale Borough	209	329	120	881	1,001	120
Telford Borough	761	1,015	254	1,673	2,211	538
West Rockhill Township	1,684	1,701	17	4,518	4,233	(285)
Total	13,334	15,413	2,079	35,872	40,461	4,589

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000

Township Perspective

East Rockhill Township has experienced continued population growth over the past fifty years. Although growth rates were slow (3.6 percent) from 1970 to 1980, they surged during the next twenty years with an overall growth rate of 75 percent, until reaching the municipality's 2000 U.S. Census population of 5,199. East Rockhill also experienced its highest 10-year population increase of 1,446 persons or about 39 percent between 1990 and 2000. Housing units increased from 1,359 units in 1990 to 1,883 units in 2000 or a 19 percent increase (For more discussion on housing and future housing needs, see the Residential Development section.)

East Rockhill's average household size fell from 2.92 persons per household in 1990 to 2.84 persons per household in 2000. (See Table 2.) This trend, which is occurring throughout the county, is due to an increase in the number of smaller families and singles living alone. It may also reflect an increased number of people whose children have grown up and left home. As of 2000, East Rockhill Township contains 1,828 households. Of these households 1,428 of them are considered family households. Of the family

households, 1,254 are married-couple families. This is down slightly from 1990, when there were 1,310 married-couple families. Nonfamily households rose from 229 in 1990 to 400 in 2000. Of these nonfamily households, 312 consist of a householder living alone.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics, East Rockhill Township, 1990–2000

Characteristic	1990	2000
Median Age (years)	33.6	36.5
Households*	1,286	1,828
Family household**	1,057	1,428
Married Couple Families	948	1,254
Nonfamily Households***	229	400
Householders Living Alone	174	312
Average Household Size	2.92	2.84
Average Family Size	3.22	3.21

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000

*A household is an occupied housing unit.

**A family household is a household with two or more individuals related by marriage, birth, or adoption.

***A nonfamily household is a household with a group of unrelated individuals or a person living alone.

The median household income for East Rockhill Township is \$59,663, just under the countywide estimate of \$59,727. According to the 2000 Census, 87.1 percent of East Rockhill's population over the age of 25 earned a high school diploma. Of that fraction, 17.8 percent also completed bachelor degrees and an additional 10 percent hold master degrees. Education attainment and employment are often the most accurate determinates of an area's income.

Age Composition

Census data indicate the composition of East Rockhill Township's population is very similar to that of Bucks County and the surrounding municipalities within the Pennridge Area. Keeping to earlier trends, the median age within East Rockhill increased from 31.6 to 36.5 during 1980 to 2000. This climb in median age partially occurred as a result of the increase in the 35 to 54 age cohorts, which represent the greatest share of the township's population. School age cohorts, 5 to 19, account for 24.1 percent of the township's population while retirement age cohorts, 65 and older, represent 8.9 percent. (See Table 3.) Differences between East Rockhill and the county suggest that the township is home to a comparatively larger percentage of families than the county as a whole.

During the 1980s, the under-9 age category rose by 2 percent, while throughout the 1990s, percentages dropped slightly. The age groups of 15 to 34 also declined since 1980. The increase in the 35 to 54 age brackets reflects the aging of larger cohorts in previous stages. After a slight increase in 1980s, the 55 to 64 cohorts began to decrease while the 65-plus age range remained fairly constant. With the future aging of the 35 to 54 cohorts, a higher demand for senior services including housing, healthcare, and transportation may be generated. Such needs will also depend on migration rates and lifestyle preferences of these age groups.

Table 3. Population by Age, 1980–2000

Age	1980		1990		2000	
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total
Under 5	187	6.29%	314	8.37%	357	6.87%
5 to 9	201	6.77%	325	8.66%	444	8.54%
10 to 14	288	9.69%	252	6.71%	444	8.54%
15 to 19	288	9.69%	228	6.08%	365	7.02%
20 to 24	233	7.84%	188	5.01%	212	4.08%
25 to 34	448	15.08%	676	18.01%	639	12.29%
35 to 44	406	13.67%	666	17.75%	1,049	20.18%
45 to 54	331	11.14%	430	11.46%	789	15.18%
55 to 64	306	10.30%	307	8.18%	439	8.44%
65 to 74	188	6.33%	242	6.45%	268	5.15%
75+	95	3.20%	125	3.33%	193	3.71%
Total	2,971	100%	3,753	100%	5,199	100%
19 and under	964	32.45%	1,119	29.82%	1,610	30.97%
20–64	1,724	58.03%	2,267	60.41%	3,128	60.17%
65+	283	9.53%	367	9.78%	461	8.87%
Total	2,971	100%	3,753	100%	5,199	100%

Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990 and 2000

Population Projections ¹

Population projections are useful in helping a municipality plan for future needs, such as park and recreation facilities, emergency services, and senior services. The following population projections shown in Table 4 were developed using an age cohort survival model. The age cohort survival model simulates the process by which population actually changes by applying birth (fertility), death, and migration rates to a starting population (2000 Census). Under the process, the starting population was broken down into five-year increments (called cohorts) according to the age structure and sex of the population. Fertility, death, and migration rates based on past trends were applied to the cohorts of the starting population to produce a 2015 projected population. Holding past death and fertility rates constant, three possible migration rates were used to produce low, medium, and high population projections.

The low-growth scenario projects an additional 1,571 people in 2015, the medium-growth scenario projects an additional 2,554 people, and the high-growth scenario projects an additional 3,213 people. It should be noted that these numbers are not definitive and that any forecast of future growth is tentative and subject to a given set of assumptions holding true for a defined period of time and constraints of the projection model employed, but these projections should provide a fairly good picture of population growth to the year 2015.

¹ Housing projections will be developed in the Residential Development section.

Table 4. East Rockhill Township Population Projections, 2015

	2000 Census	2015 Projections		
		Low	Middle	High
Population	5,199	6,770	7,753	8,412
Migration Rate*	20.64%	5%	14.36%	20.64%

*Migration rate used to develop the low projections assumes a reduction in in-migration. The migration rate for the middle projection assumes a return to the rate of migration seen during the 1980s, while the migration rate for the high projection assumes a continuation of the rate of migration found during the 1990s.