

Regional Location

Located in the northwestern region of central Bucks County, East Rockhill Township encompasses 12.95 square miles (8,288 acres). The township lies within the following approximate boundaries: Rich Hill Road to the north, Tohickon Creek and Nockamixon State Park to the northeast, Old Bethlehem Road to the southeast, slightly below the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek to the south, Callowhill Road to the southwest, and Old Bethlehem Pike to the west.

East Rockhill is part of the Pennridge Planning Area that includes nine municipalities (Bedminster, East Rockhill, West Rockhill, and Hilltown townships and Telford, Sellersville, Perkasio, Silverdale, and Dublin boroughs). The township also abuts Richland and Haycock townships located to the north in upper Bucks County.

East Rockhill is predominantly rural in nature; however, there is a potential for increased development due to the existing transportation system leading to and from the area. Pennsylvania Routes 313 and 309 provide access to the north and south, and PA Routes 563 and 113 provide access to the east and west.

History

East Rockhill Township was originally inhabited by the Lenni Lenape Indians, who settled along the area's valleys including the East Branch of the Perkiomen Creek. During the early days of the county's history, William Penn had reserved the lands of East Rockhill and neighboring West Rockhill Township for the future home of indentured servants. In fact, the area was also known as "Servants."

Quakers of English and Welsh descent are believed to have been the first white settlers in this region. During 1720 to 1730 large movements of German immigrants arrived and soon dominated the population. The majority of early settlers built farmsteads and cultivated crops and livestock. Local villages provided a wide range of businesses offering essential goods and services to residents of the surrounding countryside. General stores, post offices, churches, blacksmiths, and wheelwrights were among the common merchants and trades of early villages.

Named after its rocky and uneven landscape, Rockhill Township initially encompassed both East and West Rockhill townships. It was established as a result of a petition by Richland Township residents who argued that roads in the unincorporated territory to the southeast were inadequately maintained and in poor condition. Rockhill Township was created by court order in 1740, and a road supervisor and constable were appointed soon after.

In 1870, Rockhill Township was the largest township in Bucks County with a land area of 19,168 acres and population of 3,369. During this time, Sellersville, Perkasio, and Telford were also included within the boundaries of Rockhill Township. Early industries included sgraffito pottery, brickyards, hand-made cigars and cigar boxes, and gunsmiths. Rockhill Township was officially divided into East and West Rockhill townships on December 24, 1890.

Between the late 19th and early 20th centuries, East Rockhill Township, like many other upper Bucks communities, saw minimal growth and development. Most growth occurred within the incorporated boroughs or villages. However, during the 30-year period between 1940 and 1970, the township's population increased about 110 percent from 1,350 to 2,886 people.

In 1957, the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike from Norristown to Scranton was officially opened. As a result, access to upper Bucks County, as well as destinations throughout this corridor were significantly increased. In 1969, access to the area was further enhanced following the completion of Route 309 bypass. This bypass runs from County Line Road in Hilltown Township to Bethlehem Pike in West Rockhill Township.

Over the past 30 years population growth has exceeded 80 percent, and there have been various significant developments such as the construction of Interstate 78 from Fogelsville to the Pennsylvania–New Jersey State line in 1989. Within East Rockhill, the construction of the Pennridge Airport and industrial park, Hansen Materials quarry operation, Pennridge High School, and the Upper Bucks Campus of the Bucks County Community College have had an impact on the land use and development. East Rockhill's proximity to Perkasio Borough and convenient access to the regional transportation network will continue to provide both residential and nonresidential development opportunities. Balancing the preservation of historic, natural, and scenic resources with the need to satisfy its population and economic base will be among the challenges for East Rockhill Township in the future.