

## **CHAPTER 6      POPULATION AND HOUSING**

### Population

#### Introduction

Since the original drafting of this Plan, the year 2000 U.S., Census total population figures have been released for Chester County and its municipalities. Other than the tabulation of population by race and origin, no further data is currently available. The census count figures for 2000 have been factored into the Plan and this Chapter.

An analysis of East Pikeland Township's population growth over time and the characteristics of the existing population are important elements in the preparation of the Township's Comprehensive Plan. Knowledge of past, current and future population levels and the make up of the community's population in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, income and ethnicity is important in measuring the likely demand upon the Township's resources. The purpose of this analysis is to assess current population characteristics, past population trends and, by analysis of those trends, forecast future population growth to the year 2020. This information together with the analysis of the Township's housing characteristics and economy set out in subsequent chapters of this Plan will provide the necessary data to determine the future demand for land in varying uses, housing and community facilities and services.

#### Current Population and Past Trends

In 2000 the U.S. Bureau of the Census reported a total population of 6,551 persons in East Pikeland Township. This represents an increase of 2167 persons, or 49.4%, since 1970. See Table 6.1. Between the years 1960 and 1970, the Township grew substantially by almost 56%, however growth declined during the decade of the 1970's, the population increasing by only six tenths of a per cent. Since the seventies however, population growth has been on the rise, growing by 24.3% in the eighties and by another 12% between 1990 and 2000 to 6551 persons. See Table 6.2.

East Pikeland Township's population grew by 49.4% during the thirty year period from 1970 to 2000, close to the rate of 56.2% for Chester County as a whole. Two townships exceeded the County growth rate for the same period. West Pikeland Township grew by a rate of 145% and West Vincent grew by 67.7%. All of the other townships grew by rates less than that of the County; Schuylkill Township grew by 20.4 %, Charlestown Township by 14.8%, and East Vincent by 8.0%. East Vincent reversed an earlier trend of population losses by gaining

1332 persons, resulting in the first positive rate gain since the 1960's. The two boroughs adjacent to East Pikeland Township, Spring City and Phoenixville, each saw a decline in population, -7.6% and -0.2% respectively, during the thirty year period. Phoenixville, by far the largest municipality in the region around East Pikeland Township, has seen its population fluctuate positively and negatively during the period, with almost no overall numerical change. With the exception of Phoenixville Borough, an urban center, and Schuylkill Township, East Pikeland Township is the most populated of all the surrounding municipalities in the region, and is only slightly less populated than Schuylkill Township. The population according to Census figures was 6551 persons in 2000.

### Population Characteristics

Total population figures help to define the overall need for varying residential and non residential land uses and for facilities and services. More significant however are the characteristics of the overall population in terms of geographic distribution, density, age and gender distribution, household structure, income levels, racial composition and educational attainment. Trends in these population characteristics tend to determine the more specific kinds of future needs for housing and other non-residential land uses as well as the likely demand for the full array of public and private facilities and services. Changes in family structure, for example smaller family size, more women entering the work force, increasing single-parent households and single person households and aging populations can cause significant changes in future land use patterns and demand for facilities and services.

Geographic Distribution – In East Pikeland Township the population density varies considerably among three distinct areas of the Township. The three areas can be described as: 1) the northeast area, approximately 25% of the Township land area lying between the Schuylkill River and PA Route 724; 2) the middle area, approximately 50% of the land area of the Township, lying between PA Route 724 and a line generally following the French Creek drainage basin; and 3) the southwest area, the remaining 25% of the Township land area generally defined by the Pickering Creek drainage basin.

Approximately 81% of the Township's population reside in the French Creek basin, the middle area, or about one half the area of the Township. The overall density of this area is approximately 900 persons per square mile. About 12% of the population reside in the northeast area at a density of approximately 350 persons per square mile and 7% reside in the southwest area at a density of 160 persons per square mile.

Ethnicity of the Population - In 2000 the non-white population in East Pikeland Township was 279 persons, or 4% of the total, of which 32% was African American, 16% Hispanic and 40% Asian. The non-white population increased from 2.0% of the 1990 total Township population to 4.3% between 1990 and 2000.

Age and Gender Distribution - Tables 6.3, 6.3A and 6.4 provide data regarding the changes in the age and gender composition of East Pikeland Township between 1980 and 2000. Because the distribution of age ranges is reported in a different format in 2000, Table 6.3A has been presented separately from Table 6.3. Together, they portray the distribution of ages within the total population over the last three census periods, although they cannot be compared directly.

Due to lower birth rates and out-migration of young adults, the number of school age children and young adults, age 18 - 24, in East Pikeland Township declined during the 1980's. The out-migration of young adults is typical for small suburban communities as this group seeks post secondary education and employment opportunities, have generally not reached family formation years and usually are not prepared, financially or otherwise for a suburban life style.

The decline in persons in the age group 5 - 17 will in the short term temporarily reduce school enrollments but in time will be offset by the rather large increase in the Under 5 age group as they enter the school system. Substantial decreases in the number of persons in the 5 to 24 age groups occurred between 1980 and 1990 in direct contrast to an increase in all of the other age groups.

The proportion of the population in the 24 to 64 age group, generally considered to be the productive labor force age group, increased from 54% of the total population of East Pikeland Township in 1980 to 58% in 1990, or an increase from 2,381 to 3,383 persons. Increases in this age group are likely to impact income levels and housing demand in the Township.

The elderly population, 65 years and older, of the Township increased from 310 persons in 1980 (7.0% of the total population) to 500 persons in 1990 (8.6% of the total population, however this is still well below the elderly population, at 10.9%, of Chester County as a whole.

Table 6.3

EAST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP  
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, 1980 TO 1990

Age Group	1980	1990	% Change
Under 5	251	524	108.8%
5 - 17	1,041	1,022	-1.8%
18 - 24	427	396	-7.8%
25 - 44	1,282	2,105	64.2%
45 - 64	1,099	1,278	16.3%
65 - 74	224	344	53.6%
75 and over	86	156	81.4%
Totals	4,410	5,825	32.1%

SOURCE: Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, East Pikeland Township, July 1993

Increases in the elderly population are the result of the general aging of the population and lower death rates. Continued increases in the elderly population can be expected in most communities particularly as the "baby boom" generation matures and life expectancy increases. This will, undoubtedly, increase the demand for different housing types and additional facilities and services in East Pikeland Township. The demand may arise for retirement and active adult communities, nursing homes, elder housing, accessory apartments, public transportation and related social, medical and recreational services.

Table 6.3A contains the most recent population distribution by age ranges and it can be seen that the distribution is similar to a "bell curve" pattern of symmetry around the center. Several areas of the pattern are worthy of note. The 15 to 24 year olds brackets are lower than might be expected, reflecting an out migration of population in that range, possibly for education or employment. The greatest numbers in the distribution occur in the 25 to 54 year old brackets, which is due to the strength of the suburban pattern of employed adults. There is a decline in the 55 to 59 bracket to 359 individuals, which deviates from the pattern somewhat. The table should be used cautiously, since the brackets are made up of differing numbers of year intervals, either 5 or 10.

Table 6.3A

EAST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP  
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, 2000

Age Group	2000 Census	Percent
Under 5	421	6.4%
5 – 9	500	7.6%
10 – 14	495	7.6%
15 – 19	362	5.6%
20 – 24	191	2.9%
25 – 34	763	11.6%
35 – 44	1300	19.8%
45 – 54	1042	15.9%
55 – 59	359	5.5%
60 – 64	303	4.6%
65 – 74	487	7.4%
75 – 84	250	3.8%
85 and over	78	1.2%
Total	6551	99.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Table 6.4

EAST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP  
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER, 1990

Age Group	Gender 1990		Female Number	Percent
	Male Number	Percent		
Under 5	280	53%	244	47%
5 - 17	532	52%	490	48%
18 - 24	210	53%	186	47%
25 - 44	1,035	49%	1,070	51%
45 - 64	640	50%	638	50%
65 - 74	163	47%	181	53%
75 and over	69	44%	87	56%
Totals	2,929	50%	2,896	50%

SOURCE: Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, East Pikeland Township, July 1993

The current data available from the 2000 Census provides less specificity for male-female distribution than that shown in Table 6.4 for 1990. Therefore, the following totals are presented:

Table 6.4A

EAST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP  
POPULATION BY GENDER

Total	Male	Female	Male Percent	Female Percent
6551	3167	3384	48.3%	51.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

The gender distribution for East Pikeland Township is somewhat atypical insofar as there appears to be a higher proportion of males to females in the under 17 age groups and a lower than normal difference in the male to female ratio in the over 65 age groups. Overall, however, the male to female ratio in the Township is reasonably well balanced.

Median Age - As a result of lower birth rates and out-migration of persons in the young adult age group, the median age in East Pikeland Township increased from 33.0 in 1980 to 34.4 in 1990. Table 6.5 compares the change in median age of the Township with that of Chester County and the Commonwealth. The median age of the Township population in 2000 is currently not available.

Table 6.5

East Pikeland Township Median Age  
Comparison with Chester County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

	1980	1990
East Pikeland Township	33.0	34.4
Chester County	30.5	33.8
Pennsylvania	32.1	35.0

SOURCE: Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, East Pikeland Township, July 1993

Population Projection Techniques

Since the original drafting of this Plan, the year 2000 population totals for all Chester County municipalities have been made available and incorporated into this chapter. Further data from the Census has not been released. The

discussion of projection techniques is included and the results compared to the actual Census figures.

Because of its location relative to surrounding population centers and its rural and suburban character, East Pikeland Township and its growth in population has been heavily influenced by the outward migration from the Philadelphia area and by the location or relocation of employment opportunities in King of Prussia and the U.S. Route 202 corridor. Future economic conditions, particularly related to the costs of housing and transportation, and the availability of services, such as public sewer and water, will determine the degree to which this outward migration continues.

The population projections contained herein have been predicated upon the following assumptions.

- East Pikeland Township has land available for development, particularly in the northeast area, and will continue to have an attractive environment for some time.
- The Route 113 Phoenixville Bypass may be completed during the latter part of the planning period.
- The Route 113 Phoenixville Bypass, if constructed, will attract some commercial, industrial and residential development to East Pikeland Township, although such development is more likely to occur in Phoenixville.
- A number of jobs and some residential growth, resulting from growth and development in Phoenixville, with the completion of the Route 113 Phoenixville Bypass is likely to occur in East Pikeland Township.
- Communities and lands made accessible by the Pottstown Expressway will have developed sufficiently that the present leapfrogging of East Pikeland Township will diminish making the Township a prime location for development.

Two sets of population projections were prepared for East Pikeland Township, both of them in the early 1990's and based upon the 1990 Census data, prior to the release of the 2000 data. Each of these will be discussed below.

*Chester County Planning Commission, Population Projections 1995-2020*<sup>1</sup> – The Chester County Planning Commission prepared a population projection for Chester County in 1992 using the cohort-component method. This method uses the three elements of population change (births, deaths and net migration) to project, separately, 5-year age cohorts for both males and females. The method employs general fertility rates, U.S. Census survival rates and migration rates for each age cohort to carry the population forward every 5 years. Determining the projections for municipalities involved a 2-step process. The first step was to calculate the average ratio of the municipalities' populations to the total for the County in previous Census years. In addition, a 1990 population for the municipalities was calculated using the average ratio-shared method for the years 1960, 1970 and 1980. These were then compared to the actual 1990 Census counts to calculate a percentage difference.

For projections the average ratio-shared numbers were adjusted by the percentage difference. The second step involved adjusting the projections obtained in step 1 to account for a number of variables in the municipalities like past population trends, existing land use, known development proposals, transportation access and other factors that could affect population change. The year 2020 population projection by the Chester County Planning Commission for East Pikeland Township is 6,910 persons or an increase of 1,085 or 18.6% over the 1990 population of 5,825. The percentage increase for the County as a whole is projected to be 30.0%. The Chester County projections also include one for the year 2000 at 6,070 persons and one for the year 2010 at 6,520 persons.

*East Pikeland Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan*<sup>2</sup> – This Plan was adopted in 1993 and includes three sets of projections for East Pikeland to the year 2010. One is the Chester County Planning Commission projection of 6,520 persons in 2010 and the others are those of the consultant, a “moderate” projection of 7,830 persons and a “maximum” of approximately 9,500 persons in 2010. According to the Plan, the “moderate” growth projection is based upon a straight line projection of the 1960 to 1990 trend with some adjustment to account for what was then a “current economic recession and slowdown in building”. The “maximum” growth projection is based upon “an arithmetical projection of the 1980 to 1990 rate up until the year 2000 and a geometrical projection for the following decade”. If projected to the year 2020, the “moderate” projection would yield approximately 8,600 persons and the “maximum” approximately 10,800 persons.

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<sup>1</sup> Population Projections 1995-2020, Planning Bulletin # 45, Chester County Planning Commission, July 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, East Pikeland Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, prepared by Robert Bartmann, AICP, Reading, Pennsylvania, July 1993.

Table 6.6 summarizes all of the above projections for East Pikeland Township. These projections for the year 2020 range from a low of 6,910 persons to a high of 10,800 persons. It also includes the actual year 2000 count of 6551, recently released as of this writing. It should be noted that the actual figure is close to the Chester County 2010 projection of 6520.

Table 6.6

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EAST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>
Chester County Projections	6,070	6,520	6,910
Open Space Plan Projections			
Moderate	6,270	7,830	8,600
Maximum	7,200	9,500	10,800
U.S. Census	6551		

Residential Building Permits

Recent building permit data published by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission reveals that between the years 1990 and 1997 inclusive approximately 459 residential building permits were issued in East Pikeland Township. See Table 3. In 1990 there were 2,014 dwelling units. At a population of 5,825, the household size would be 2.89. With the 2000 population at 6551 persons, and using the household size of 2.58 persons per household, the number of dwelling units in 2000 was 2604, which represents a 29.3% increase from 1990. By comparison, the rate of change from 1980 to 1990 was 37.5%.

Population Projections

Several approaches can be used to determine the likely growth in the Township by the year 2020. A reasonable approach for small areas with a relatively low population base is by projection of past trends and judgement.

Based upon the past trends in building permit activity, it would appear that the Township will likely continue issuing building permits at an average annual rate of 59 per year. Should the economy and interest rates remain at current levels,

and 59 dwelling units per year are constructed and occupied, the total number of dwellings in the year 2020 would be 3,784 ( $2,604 + (59 \times 20)$ ) yielding, at 2.58 person per household, a total population of 9,763 persons. This figure is between the projections in the Township's Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan, however much higher than the County's projection (6,910). At this writing, projections derived from the 2000 Census have not as yet been formulated by the County.

Another approach is a simple straight-line projection of past population growth trends. That method would yield a population in the year 2020 of approximately 8,400 persons. It would appear reasonable, for planning purposes, to expect a population, by the year 2020, somewhere between 8,400 and 10,800 persons.

As shown earlier in this chapter, the Township's population in the year 2000 is 6551 persons. All of Chester County grew at a rate of 15% over the 1990 to 2000 period. If that rate were used to project growth in East Pikeland Township, such a projection would result in a population growth between 2000 and 2020 of approximately 2,537 persons for a total population in the year 2020 of 9,860. This appears to be a reasonable figure, but probably high for planning purposes, given East Pikeland Township's location and accessibility and, moreover, given the Township's growth management goals, policies and strategies, discussed later in this plan. The 15% rate of growth for Chester County compares to a figure of 12% for East Pikeland Township during the decade of 1990 to 2000. Historically, the Township has grown at a slightly slower rate than the County, namely 49.4% for the Township and 56.2% for the County during the decades between 1970 and 2000. It is reasonable to assume that East Pikeland might sustain a 12% growth rate again between 2000 and 2020, especially since the Township continues to progress toward a fully developed situation. The 12% figure should represent a maximum, given that the decade in which it occurred was generally one of high economic trends. See Table 6.7 for the projections by year.

## Housing

### **Introduction**

An understanding of the nature of the existing housing stock in East Pikeland Township is another essential element of the demographic background information required for the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The composition, age, value, occupancy and tenure of the housing stock are key indicators of a municipality's vitality and, to a great degree, define the character of the community.

Most of the data in this chapter are derived from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, as prepared and published by the Chester County Planning Commission<sup>3</sup>. An additional source of information regarding residential building permits was the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Data Bulletin No. 61.<sup>4</sup> At the time of this writing, some data derived from the 2000 Census has become available and will be incorporated and noted where appropriate.

### **Housing Composition**

The composition of the housing stock is simply a measure of the mix of dwelling unit types in a community. The amount of the varying types of housing, single family detached housing, single family attached housing, apartments and mobile homes, can provide insight into the physical character of the community and the potential demands on community facilities and services. For example, a higher incidence of multiple family dwellings may translate into higher population and housing densities, resulting in a more urban character and possibly greater demands on Township resources. Furthermore when compared to the characteristics of the population, the housing stock composition can indicate how well the community is meeting its housing needs now and in the future.

In East Pikeland Township, the housing stock consists of predominantly single family detached dwelling units. As of 1990 approximately 84% of the total 2,014 dwellings or 1,684 dwellings were single family detached units. Another 11% or 228 units were single family attached. Only 2.5% were multiple family dwelling

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<sup>3</sup> Chester County Census '90, General Economic, Social and Housing Unit Characteristics for Chester County, The Chester County Planning Commission, West Chester, Pennsylvania, April 1993.

<sup>4</sup> Delaware Valley Data, 1990-98 Residential Building Permits, Data Bulletin No. 61, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, May 1999.

unit types and less than 2% mobile homes. Table 6.8 illustrates in detail the housing stock composition in 1990.

East Pikeland Township is similar to the surrounding rural / suburban communities in terms of the predominance of single family detached dwellings. Schuylkill Township's is about the same as East Pikeland at 83% single family detached, while Charlestown, West Pikeland and West Vincent Townships exceed that of East Pikeland with 95%, 92% and 92% single family detached units respectively.

These relatively high rates of single family detached dwelling units are in stark contrast to East Vincent Township and the more urban areas of Spring City and Phoenixville Boroughs. East Vincent Township had, in 1990 approximately 65% single family detached units and much higher percentages of units in structures of 10 or more dwellings as well as mobile homes and other dwellings. Spring City and Phoenixville have even lower percentages of single family detached units and higher amounts of single family attached dwellings than the other municipalities as well as dwellings in structures of 10 or more units.

A useful comparison can also be made with Chester County as a whole wherein the percentage of single family detached units is almost 61% with percentages ranging from about 4% to 16% for all other categories. See Table 6.9.

### Housing Value

The median value of owner-occupied housing in East Pikeland Township stood at \$156,600 in 1990. This compared favorably with that of Chester County as a whole at \$155,900. The median value of housing in East Vincent Township was somewhat less at \$140,700 while that of Spring City and Phoenixville Boroughs considerably less at \$89,400 and \$94,700 respectively. This more than likely reflects the higher numbers of attached dwellings and mobile homes in those municipalities as well as a higher percentage of older housing. The other surrounding municipalities however exhibited substantially higher median values with Schuylkill Township at the lower end of this group at \$180,600 and West Pikeland Township at the higher end at \$257,900.

Clearly the preponderance of housing in East Pikeland Township lies in the range of \$100,000 to \$200,000 with very few residences in the below \$50,000 range or in the range of \$300,000 and higher. In contrast the housing values of the Boroughs of Spring City and Phoenixville lie in the range of \$50,000 to \$150,000. At the higher end of the spectrum, in West Pikeland, Charlestown and West Vincent Townships the preponderance of the housing lies in the range of

value between \$200,000 and greater than \$300,000. Table 6.10 offers a comparison of housing values among East Pikeland Township, the surrounding municipalities and Chester County.

### Age of the Housing Stock

The overall age of a community's housing, coupled with other demographic factors, for example income levels, can, in some instances indicate the presence of or the potential for blighting conditions. On the other hand, It also contributes significantly to the character of a community and is a measure, to some degree, of its historical growth.

A significant portion, almost 38%, of the housing in East Pikeland Township was constructed during the decades of the 1950's and the 1960's. After a period of limited construction during the 1970's and early 80's, residential construction witnessed a dramatic upswing in the late 1980's with 27% of East Pikeland Township's housing having been built between 1985 and 1988. The limited amount of residential construction prior to the 1950's in East Pikeland Township is indicative of the then very rural nature of the Township and similar to the other surrounding Townships such as Schuylkill, Charlestown, East Vincent and, to a lesser degree, West Pikeland Township. West Pikeland Township has witnessed the majority of its residential growth more recently. Only the Township of West Vincent and the Boroughs of Spring City and Phoenixville had either a significant portion or the majority of its housing constructed prior to 1950. Table 6.11 compares the historic residential growth of East Pikeland Township with surrounding municipalities and all of Chester County.

The residential growth of East Pikeland Township follows the same historical pattern of many municipalities in Chester County and across the nation, for that matter. The pattern was defined by the first wave of suburbanization created by the high demand for housing after World War II and the federal housing policies put in place at that time. The pattern continued with a second wave, beginning in the 1980's and continuing today to meet the housing needs of the so called "Baby Boomers" and the demand for "Move Up" housing as a result of better economic conditions and relatively low mortgage interest rates. Layered on these demographic and socio-economic conditions was the desire of many to move away from the older, densely settled and, in many instances, declining urban areas to a "place in the country".

## Housing Occupancy and Tenure

“Occupancy and Tenure” are census terms used to define the proportion of the housing stock that is occupied by the owner, occupied by renters or vacant. Occupancy and tenure can be, among a number of other socio-economic factors, indicators of a community’s stability. In many instances, very high rates of renter occupancy and or housing vacancies can be indicative of decline or the potential therefor.

Table 6.12 shows the owner-occupied and renter occupied housing units in East Pikeland Township in 2000 and compares them with that of the surrounding municipalities and Chester County as a whole. East Pikeland Township had in 1990 an extremely low vacancy rate at 1.7% and a low rental occupancy rate of 8.9%. Both rates were, in fact, the lowest among all surrounding municipalities and that of all of Chester County. Housing tenure data has recently been released for 2000 and is shown on Table 6.12. The region demonstrated what is considered a “normal” vacancy rate of around 5% while the County was 3.7%. Renter occupancy on the other hand varied widely among the municipalities compared with the low of 6.9% in West Pikeland Township and the highs of 46.9% and 44.0% in Spring City and Phoenixville Boroughs.

## Housing Growth Since 1990

Much of the preceding analysis was based upon the 1990 Census data and presents a picture of housing conditions as of that time. Housing development has continued and while current characteristics of the housing stock are not yet available, however building permit data, tracked by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, is. That data, for the years 1990 through 1998, is summarized in Table 6.13 for East Pikeland Township, the surrounding municipalities and Chester County. The table illustrates that during the 9-year time period, 1990 through 1998, building permits were issued for a total of 603 residential dwelling units of which 108, or 18%, were in multi-family structures, that is in structures of 3 or more dwelling units. During that time period, East Pikeland Township sustained a higher residential growth rate, or an average annual rate of 67 dwelling units per year than all of its surrounding municipalities. This rate of residential growth was followed closely by both Schuylkill and Charlestown Townships at annual rates of 50 and 49 dwelling units per year. All of the others had moderate rates of growth with the exception of Spring City Borough that grew very little. Clearly East Pikeland grew at a rate 34% higher than Schuylkill Township, the second highest in residential growth. More interesting is the fact that a significant percentage of the residential growth in East Pikeland Township, since 1995, was multi-family development and not

characteristic of the other municipalities in the region. On the assumption that all of the additional 603 dwelling units, for which permits were issued, have been constructed, the total number of dwelling units in the Township as of 1998 would be 2,617 units.

### Summary

In terms of its housing characteristics, East Pikeland Township appears to be a suburbanizing community of moderately to moderately high valued housing. While the Township has been characterized by predominantly single family detached housing, this appears to be changing somewhat in light of the more recent growth in multi-family dwelling units. Furthermore East Pikeland Township continues to be a very stable community insofar as it has a very high percentage of owner-occupied dwellings and a very low vacancy rate. Although a considerable amount of the housing stock in the Township was constructed in the post World War II era that, to some degree, may have characterized the Township, the more recent, since around 1985, residential building activity appears to be changing that picture.

## Socio-Economic Characteristics

### Introduction

The socio-economic characteristics, such as educational attainment, household income and other measures, of a municipality's population can help to define the level of expectation regarding the provision of municipal facilities and services as well as the types of services that may be demanded. Frequently, with higher levels of education and income, a population will expect more in the way of municipal services and facilities and be more willing to pay for them.

This chapter will examine the socio-economic characteristics of East Pikeland Township's population. Discussed are the educational attainment, income levels, occupational characteristics and the age distribution of the Township's population all of which have certain planning implications that need to be considered as part of the long-range comprehensive planning process.

### Educational Attainment of the Population

In 1990 East Pikeland Township enjoyed a highly educated population with close to 90% of the population having graduated from high school and 40% having graduated from college. This would place East Pikeland Township somewhat above the midpoint of the range of attainment in all of the municipalities compared in Table 6.14. Table 6.14 also reveals that the educational attainment of the population of East Pikeland is significantly higher than that of Chester County as a whole. Data used in this category is from the 1990 Census, since comparable data from the 2000 Census has not been made available to date.

Higher educational levels are usually indicative of higher incomes and, therefore a community stability, however communities with these kinds of demographic characteristics are more likely to experience higher demands for community facilities and services, particularly recreational and educational services.

### Income Characteristics of the Population

As stated above with higher levels of educational attainment, there is generally a higher level of income. Table 6.15 indicates this quite clearly with respect to one measure of income level, namely median household income. In East Pikeland Township, the median household income in 1990 was slightly more than \$50,000 per year. Median household income varied widely within the region, from a low of just over \$31,000 in Spring City to a high of close to \$76,500 in

West Pikeland Township. The median household income of the population of East Pikeland was just about at the middle of the income range of the municipalities compared in Table 6.15, however considerably more than that of Chester County taken as a whole. 1990 Census data was used in this category, since the comparable 2000 data is not available at this date.

### Occupation Characteristics of the Population

Related to both educational attainment and income levels, occupation is another measure of community stability and potential demand for municipal services. Table 6.15 presents the percentage of the population in East Pikeland Township, age 16 and over, who are employed in the various occupational sectors including managerial, sales and support, service, farming, craft and repair and labor sectors. Also provided for comparison purposes is similar data for the surrounding municipalities. Clearly over two thirds of the township's population have occupations likely to provide generally higher income levels, managerial occupations and sales and support occupations. Service, farming, craft and repair and labor account for the remaining approximately 32% of the employed population in East Pikeland Township. This is very similar to the distribution of occupations across all of Chester County. 1990 data was used in this category, since the comparable 2000 Census data is not available to date.

### Age Distribution of the Population

Another important population characteristic for comprehensive planning purposes is the distribution of population according to age groups. This distribution can have implications for not only the provision for certain services, for example recreation and educational facilities and services, police and emergency medical services, transportation services, but also for the provision of various housing types in the Township. Of particular concern in municipalities that developed predominantly in the 1940's, '50's and 60's is the aging of the population and the potential need for an array of senior housing options.

Table 6.16 provides data regarding the median age of the Township's population and the distribution of the population according to a broad array of age groups. In addition, a comparison to similar data for the surrounding municipalities is provided. The table provides 13 age ranges for the population of the Township and the surrounding municipalities. The reader should note that some of the ranges are for 5 years and some for 10 years intervals. For purposes of comparison, it should be recognized that the two boroughs, Phoenixville and Spring City, shown in the table have distinctly different demographic patterns due to their urbanized density and comparison to the suburbanized townships should be done cautiously. They have been included due to their contiguous

locations with East Pikeland Township and resulting influence. Another factor to be aware of when using the table is the relatively small numbers in various age ranges, which can exaggerate the effect of the percentages of the total population.

Several conclusions are evident from the data in Table 6.16. East Pikeland Township is near the average for the region in terms of school age children, although it is near the lowest, at 6.4% of the total, for children under 5 years of age. The 20 to 24 year old range is generally lower than the brackets around the range throughout the region and the township is near the lowest at 2.9%. This figure stands out from the progression of percentages as being indicative of an out-migration of youth for either employment or educational reasons. The range between 25 to 59 years of age, or employment years, tends to be similar throughout the area and represents the largest proportion of the population. The ranges over 65 years of age total to 12.4% of the population, a significant sector of the Township total. This range tends to be consistent throughout the region.

## **Summary**

It would appear from the socio-economic characteristics of the population of East Pikeland Township, provided above, that it is a relatively young, moderately affluent and economically stable community. These factors coupled with the age distribution of the Township, with a relatively high percentage of the population in the school and young working family age groups, East Pikeland Township may expect demands for increased municipal services particularly recreation facilities and services. The demographic characteristics would suggest, moreover, that East Pikeland Township is an attractive place for young families with children, a fact that has certain planning implications for the types, design and densities of future housing as well as facilities and services needs. While the Township has a relatively young population and a small proportion of its population in the retirement age groups, age 65 and over, this is likely to change in the future as those in the age groups 45 to 64 years move into the 65 and over age group.