

Testimony before the Senate Majority Policy Committee

Submitted by David D. Ward, AICP

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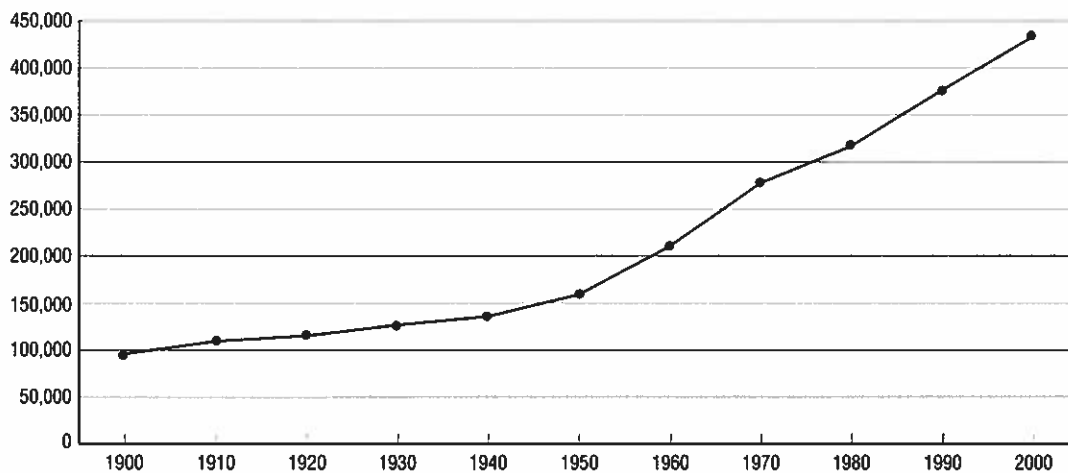
Introduction

Good afternoon distinguished members of the committee. My name is David Ward. I serve as the Assistant Director to the Chester County Planning Commission. I am here today to provide some demographic information and background on Chester County as a backdrop to the testimony you will be hearing concerning the impact growth is posing on our school districts and the basic education funding formula currently in practice.

Over the past 30 years, I have served county government as a professional planner. During that time, Chester County has undergone the most significant change in its history. Growth in the County has been unprecedented over the past decade. We are in the cross hairs of the path of growth on the northeast corridor. Population and housing increases have posed increasing demands on our governments, our infrastructure, our community services and facilities, and most notably, our school districts. As a result, infrastructure and services have not kept pace with these growing demands.

Exhibit A

Chester County Population, 1900-2000

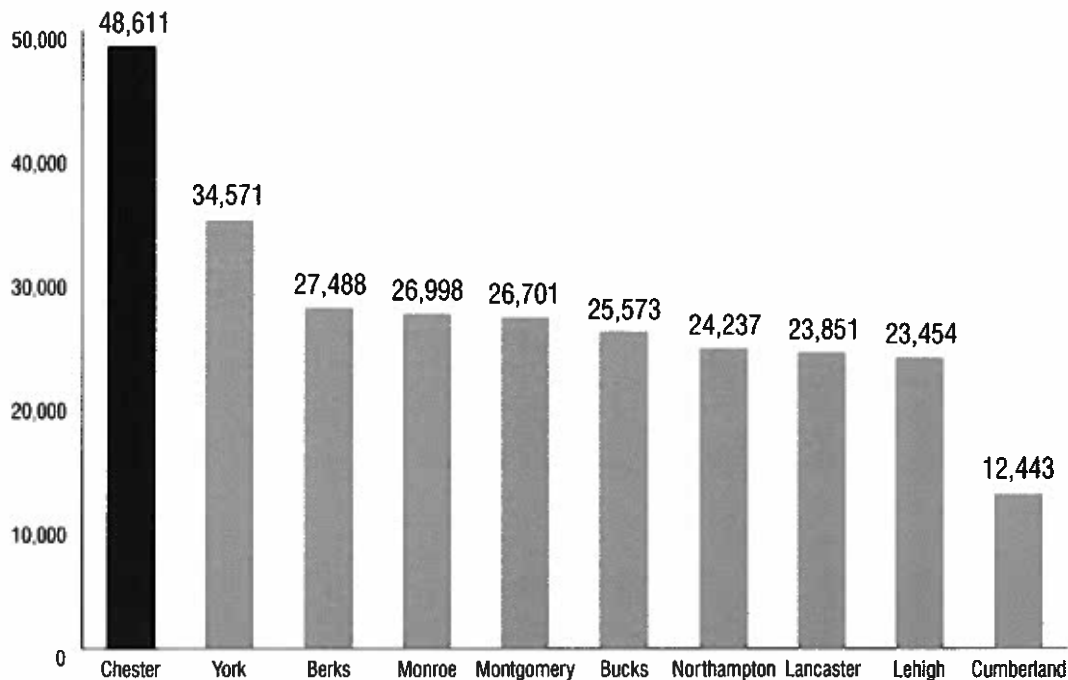


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population and Housing Growth in Chester County

I would like to share some numbers with you to provide a better understanding of the growth pressures municipalities are experiencing within the county. Chester County had an estimated total population of 482,112 in 2006 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This represented an increase of 48,611 residents since the 2000 census; or an 11% increase in just six years. This is the largest increase among all sixty-seven counties in Pennsylvania, and represents more new residents than were gained collectively in five of the top 15 growth counties in the Commonwealth; those of Pike, Franklin, Adams, Butler and Lebanon counties combined. On a national scale, Chester County ranked 86th in the nation among over 3,100 counties for rate of growth. Ladies and gentlemen, Chester County is clearly in the path of growth.

*Exhibit B
Population Change for Counties of Pennsylvania, 2000-2006*



Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau

As can be seen in Exhibit B, most of the growing counties within the Commonwealth are located in the south-central to southeast portion of Pennsylvania and northward along the Delaware River. The counties with the largest population growth appear to be impacted by people moving to the outer edges of metropolitan areas, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The population increase in Chester County has averaged over 7,700 people per year since 2000. This growth has been steady over this time.

In Chester County two-thirds of the population increase from 2000 to 2006 has been due to *net migration*, the difference between those moving into the county and those moving out. Chester County had the largest total net in-migration of all counties in Pennsylvania. The Census 2000 also showed that most of the population increase in Chester County due to migration came from other counties in Pennsylvania, primarily from Delaware County and other counties within the Philadelphia metropolitan area. There was a net out-migration from Chester to Lancaster and Berks counties, resulting in an overall pattern of movement from east to west in southeastern Pennsylvania.

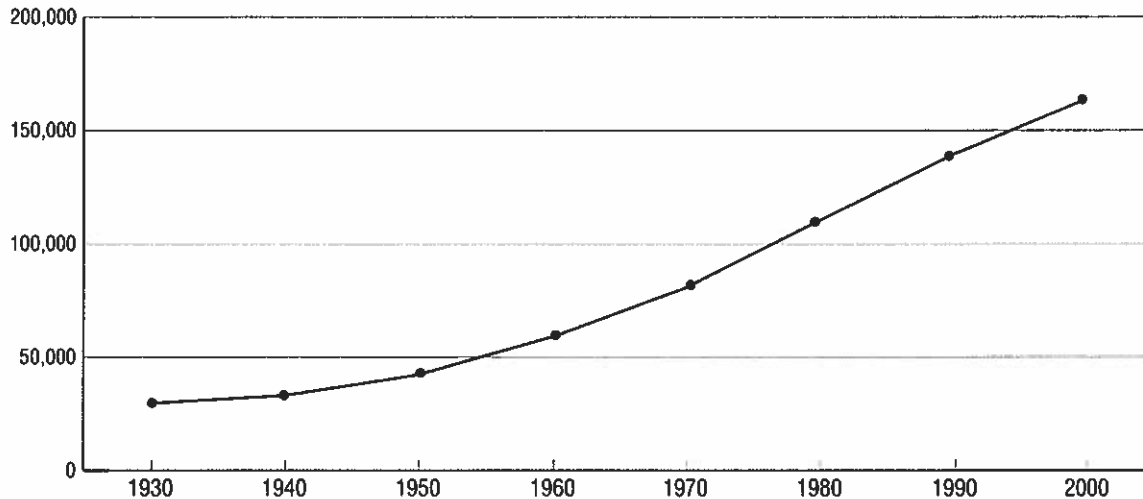
One-third of the population increase since 2000 has been due to natural increase, the difference between the numbers of births and deaths. The natural increase was the second largest among all Pennsylvania counties, behind Philadelphia.

Chester County's population growth has also created unique shifts in age groups. The quality of life associated with Chester County, its proximity to diverse job opportunities, access to higher education facilities, and the excellent reputation of our school districts has attracted working families. The most significant increases have been experienced in the middle of the work force age groups (35-59). As a

result, school aged children, those between ages 5 and 19, have increased by 5630 between 2000 and 2006. This translates into a demand for some 235 new classrooms.

As the population has grown, so have the number of homes. In 2000, Chester County contained 163,773 housing units. An additional 15,000 housing units were added between 2000 and 2005. This is an average of 3,000 new housing units formed each year. As a result, more housing units were added to the county supply over the past 15 years than were built in the first 150 years of its incorporation.

Exhibit C
Total Housing units, 1930-2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Municipal distribution of population growth

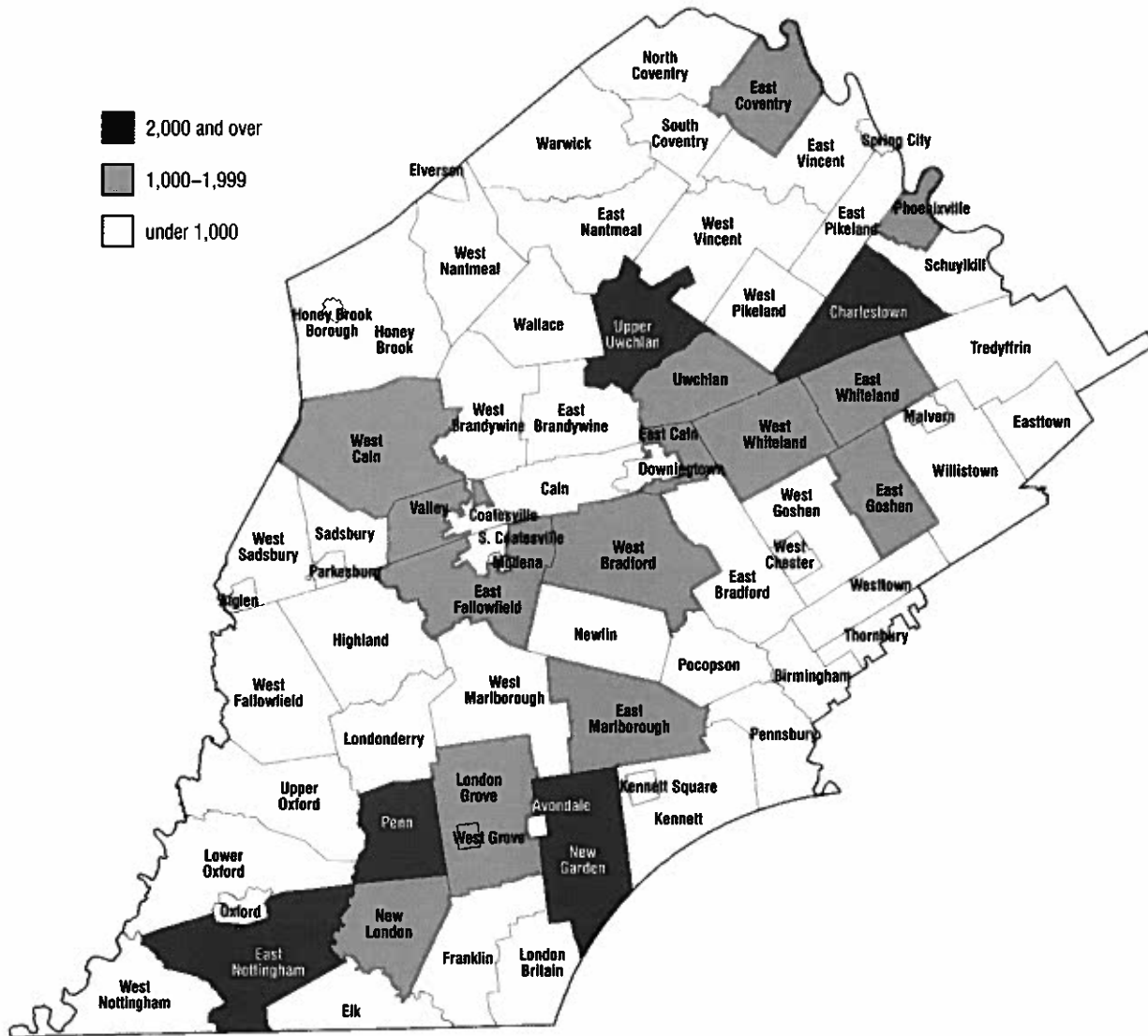
Although the population is steadily increasing, there are notable concentrations developing in the county. The quest for affordable housing has generated significant development pressure in our rural municipalities and school districts. The largest concentrations of development are in the central part of the county and along the Route 1 and 322 corridors.

Some examples:

The Downingtown Area, a suburban school district, has experienced significant growth. Upper Uwchlan Township, near the Pennsylvania Turnpike, has had the largest population growth in Chester County from 2000 to 2006, an increase of 2,700 people. Over half of Upper Uwchlan's growth occurred in between 2005 to 2006 when the township was the fastest growing municipality in Pennsylvania with an annual growth rate of over 18%.

In contrast, East Nottingham Township in the Oxford Area, a rural school district, increased by over 2,000 residents since 2000, with additional subdivision plans in the pipeline. Penn Township, here in the Avon Grove School District, also increased by over 2,000 residents and has grown at the highest rate in the county, 86.8%, since 2000.

*Exhibit D
Population Growth Map 2000-2006*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Projections

The attractiveness of Chester County, coupled with its geographic position along the northeast corridor, suggest that growth will continue into the future. Its proximity to Baltimore, Wilmington and Philadelphia will continue to attract residents.

In conjunction with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), the Chester County Planning Commission projects a 2010 population of 505,000, representing a 4.5% increase over the next four years. This projection rises to 557,623 people (9.3%) in 2020 and 605,271 residents (7.8%) by 2030. Should trends remain the same, these forecasts suggest a school age population in the County of nearly 121,000 by the year 2030.

Exhibit E
Population Forecasts (2010-2035)

School District	Municipality	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
		Census	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Coatesville Area	Caln Twp.	11,916	13,166	14,013	14,815	15,569	16,282
	Coatesville City	10,838	12,238	12,662	13,067	13,454	13,823
	East Fallowfield	5,160	7,143	7,554	7,943	8,309	8,655
	Modena Borough	610	613	669	723	775	824
	Sadsbury	2,580	3,629	3,885	4,130	4,364	4,587
	South Coatesville	995	1,100	1,183	1,262	1,338	1,410
	Valley	5,115	6,498	7,054	7,587	8,095	8,578
	West Brandywine	7,160	8,515	9,357	10,162	10,930	11,662
	West Caln	7,055	8,319	8,803	9,261	9,693	10,100
Coatesville Area Total		51,429	61,221	65,180	68,950	72,526	75,920
Downingtwn Area	Downingtwn	7,590	8,143	8,531	8,902	9,256	9,594
	East Brandywine	5,825	7,527	7,963	8,379	8,777	9,156
	East Caln Twp.	2,855	4,471	4,681	4,882	5,074	5,256
	Upper Uwchlan	6,850	9,540	10,754	11,915	13,023	14,078
	Uwchlan	16,575	19,194	20,151	21,066	21,940	22,772
	Wallace	3,240	3,699	4,033	4,353	4,658	4,949
	West Bradford	10,775	12,521	13,202	13,853	14,475	15,067
	West Pikeland	3,550	4,501	4,768	5,023	5,267	5,499
Downingtwn Area Total		57,260	69,596	74,082	78,373	82,469	86,370
Great Valley	Charlestown	4,050	6,327	6,929	7,505	8,054	8,578
	East Whiteland	9,335	10,757	11,313	11,844	12,352	12,835
	Malvern Borough	3,060	3,157	3,260	3,358	3,451	3,541
	Willistown	10,015	11,114	11,352	11,580	11,797	12,004
Great Valley Total		26,460	31,355	32,853	34,286	35,654	36,957
Phoenixville Area	East Pikeland	6,550	7,374	7,905	8,414	8,899	9,361
	Phoenixville	14,795	15,879	16,323	16,748	17,153	17,540
	Schuylkill	6,965	8,208	8,748	9,258	9,739	10,193
Phoenixville Area Total		28,310	31,461	32,976	34,419	35,791	37,093
Tredyffrin-Easttown	Easttown	10,265	10,630	11,078	11,506	11,915	12,304
	Tredyffrin	29,065	29,514	30,265	30,983	31,668	32,321
Tredyffrin-Easttown Total		39,330	40,144	41,343	42,489	43,583	44,625
Owen J. Roberts	East Coventry	4,565	6,196	6,625	7,035	7,427	7,800
	East Nantmeal	1,785	1,971	2,029	2,084	2,137	2,187
	East Vincent	5,493	6,920	7,496	8,047	8,573	9,074
	North Coventry	7,380	7,795	7,967	8,129	8,282	8,426
	South Coventry	1,895	2,497	2,603	2,704	2,799	2,888
	Warwick	2,555	2,747	2,797	2,845	2,889	2,932
	West Vincent	3,170	4,203	4,396	4,581	4,758	4,926
Owen J. Roberts Total		26,843	32,329	33,913	35,426	36,865	38,233
Spring Ford	Spring City ¹	3,305	3,346	3,522	3,690	3,851	4,004
Spring Ford Total		3,305	3,346	3,522	3,690	3,851	4,004
Twin Valley	Elverson Borough	960	1,322	1,521	1,711	1,892	2,065
	Honey Brook Borough	1,285	1,449	1,554	1,655	1,751	1,843
	Honey Brook	6,280	7,219	7,593	7,946	8,279	8,593
	West Nantmeal	2,030	2,261	2,373	2,480	2,582	2,679
Twin Valley Total		10,555	12,251	13,041	13,792	14,504	15,180

School District	Municipality	2000 Census	2010 Forecast	2015 Forecast	2020 Forecast	2025 Forecast	2030 Forecast
Kennett Consolidated	Kennett	6,450	7,907	8,333	8,741	9,131	9,501
	Kennett Square Borough	5,275	5,418	5,588	5,750	5,904	6,052
	New Garden	9,080	12,152	13,019	13,848	14,640	15,393
Kennett Consolidated Total		20,805	25,477	26,940	28,339	29,675	30,947
Unionville-Chadds Ford	Birmingham	4,220	4,601	4,822	5,033	5,235	5,427
	East Marlborough	6,315	8,649	9,165	9,658	10,129	10,578
	Newlin	1,150	1,304	1,366	1,424	1,479	1,531
	Pennsbury	3,505	4,083	4,181	4,274	4,364	4,449
	Pocopson	3,350	3,719	3,936	4,143	4,341	4,530
	West Marlborough	855	877	885	893	900	906
	Unionville-Chadds Ford Total		19,395	23,233	24,355	25,426	26,449
Avon Grove	Avondale	1,110	1,149	1,294	1,432	1,564	1,690
	Franklin	3,850	4,832	5,186	5,525	5,848	6,156
	London Britain	2,795	3,208	3,282	3,353	3,421	3,485
	London Grove	5,265	7,141	7,768	8,367	8,940	9,485
	New London	4,585	6,315	6,894	7,449	7,978	8,481
	Penn	2,810	5,248	5,744	6,219	6,672	7,104
	West Grove	2,650	2,790	2,932	3,067	3,194	3,314
Avon Grove Total		23,065	30,683	33,100	35,412	37,616	39,715
Octorara Area	Atglen	1,215	1,443	1,531	1,614	1,692	1,766
	Highland	1,125	1,240	1,282	1,321	1,358	1,393
	Londonderry	1,630	2,226	2,401	2,569	2,730	2,882
	Parkesburg Borough	3,375	3,643	3,951	4,246	4,527	4,795
	West Fallowfield	2,485	2,675	2,753	2,826	2,896	2,962
	West Sadsbury	2,440	2,664	2,820	2,968	3,107	3,239
Octorara Area Total		12,270	13,891	14,739	15,544	16,310	17,038
Oxford Area	East Nottingham	5,515	8,963	9,704	10,413	11,090	11,734
	Elk	1,490	1,558	1,636	1,710	1,779	1,845
	Lower Oxford	4,320	5,420	5,905	6,364	6,797	7,205
	Oxford	4,315	4,924	5,153	5,370	5,574	5,767
	Upper Oxford	2,095	2,631	2,723	2,810	2,894	2,973
	West Nottingham	2,634	2,858	3,073	3,278	3,474	3,660
Oxford Area Total		20,369	26,354	28,193	29,945	31,607	33,185
West Chester Area	East Bradford	9,405	10,940	11,528	12,091	12,628	13,140
	East Goshen	16,825	18,749	19,605	20,415	21,178	21,899
	Thornbury	2,678	3,230	3,405	3,572	3,732	3,884
	West Chester	17,861	18,502	18,826	19,136	19,431	19,713
	West Goshen	20,495	22,176	23,037	23,860	24,646	25,394
	Westtown	10,352	10,861	11,224	11,572	11,903	12,219
	West Whiteland	16,500	19,296	20,109	20,886	21,628	22,334
West Chester Area Total		94,116	103,754	107,733	111,531	115,146	118,583
Grand Total		433,512	505,095	531,971	557,623	582,047	605,271

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, June 2007.

