

Chapter 4

Population and Housing

Introduction

The allocation of land uses and amount of services to be provided are based on the anticipated population to be served. This chapter will review the population and housing characteristics of Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships including past and present trends as well as projections for the future. This chapter includes discussion about expected housing increases and the anticipated demand for land zoned for residential use over the next ten and twenty years.

It is useful to begin by considering the pattern of residential development that has occurred so far. The growth pattern of the Region has been strongly affected by the City of Reading and the surrounding metropolitan area of Philadelphia. Future population growth will be contingent on the provision of a variety of community and public services to the communities such as public water and sewer services, highway improvements, economic development initiatives, and agricultural preservation.

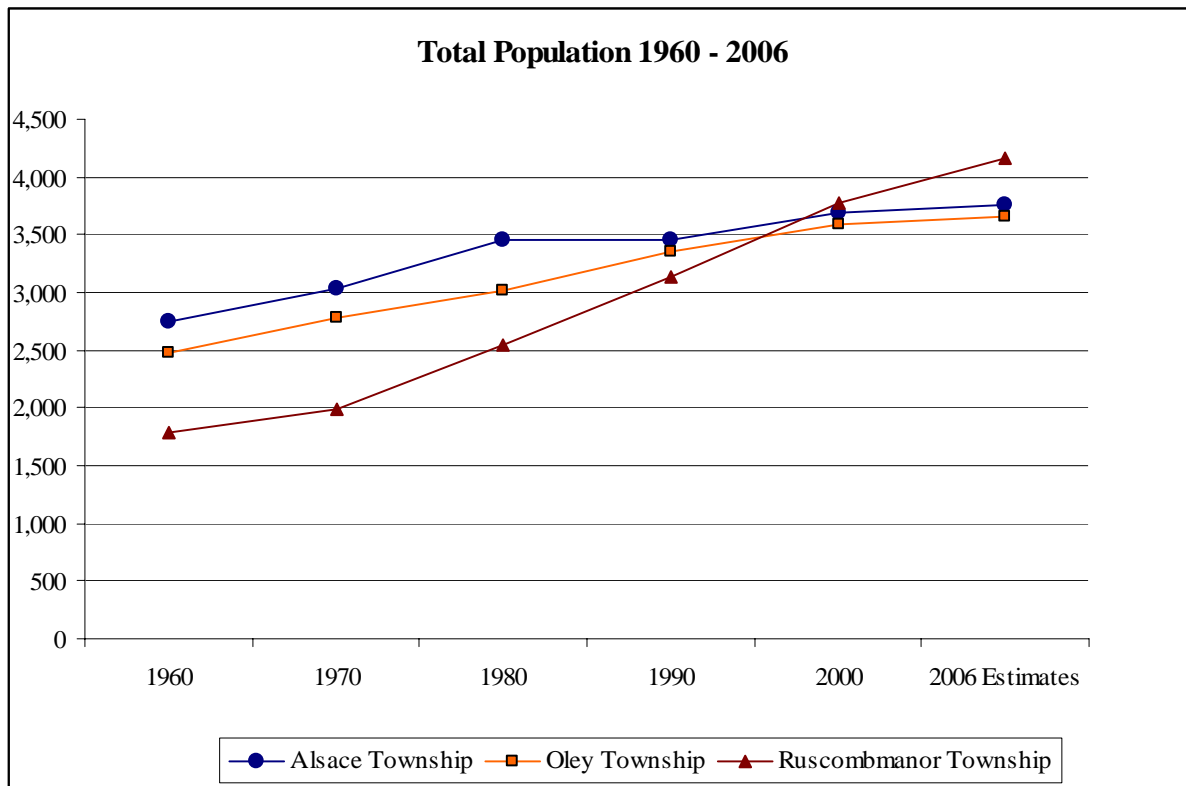
There is land available for new residential development in the Region, though much of it is agricultural land.

This chapter includes tables that show past and present conditions as well as projections of future growth. This information is intended to assist local officials in the decision-making process, as well as point out opportunities for intermunicipal cooperation.

Historic Population Growth and Trends

The rate of population growth over time can provide insight into how the population may increase in the years to come. The following graph shows how the population has changed over time in each municipality as well as for the Region.

FIGURE 4.1 TOTAL POPULATION GROWTH IN THE REGION



SOURCE: Berks County Planning Commission; U.S Census Bureau

Total Population

Alsace Township's population in 2000 was 3,689, an increase of 230 persons (6.6%) since 1990. The 2006 Census population estimates are an additional 3.6% increase. Alsace had a fairly low growth rate that was approximately half the rate of Berks County, which had a 2006 estimated growth rate of 7.3%.

The population in Oley Township, according to the 2006 population estimate, was lower than Alsace Township and less than half of the County. The Oley estimated increase in population is 2.1% following a 6.6% increase from 1990 to 2000.

Ruscombmanor Township is the area in the Region with the most growth. The population in 2000 was 3,776, which was an increase of 20.7 percent (647 persons). The 2006 estimates project an additional 382 persons or 10.1%. This is higher than Berks County 2000 increase of 11.03% and 2006 increase of 7.3%.

The 2006 population estimates and the 2000 population for Alsace and Oley Townships are lower than the County percentages for the same time period. Ruscombmanor Township has had the most growth in the region every decade since 1980.

Figure 4.1 demonstrates that Oley and Alsace Townships are slowing down on growth while Ruscombmanor is clearly continuing on this growth trend.

TABLE 4.1: TOTAL POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISON

Total Population Comparison												
Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County												
1960 - 2006												
	Alsace Township			Oley Township			Ruscombmanor Township			Berks County		
YEAR	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change	Persons	Number Change	Percent Change
1960	2,739	-	-	2,474	-	-	1,787	-	-	275,414	-	-
1970	3,034	295	10.7	2,778	304	12.2	1,985	198	11.1	296,382	20,968	7.6
1980	3,456	422	13.9	3,024	246	8.9	2,546	561	28.2	312,509	16,127	5.4
1990	3,459	3	0.1	3,362	338	11.2	3,129	583	22.8	336,523	24,014	7.7
2000	3,689	230	6.6	3,583	221	6.6	3,776	647	20.7	373,638	37,115	11.03
2006 Estimates	3,758	131	3.6	3,661	78	2.1	4,158	382	10.1	401,149	27,511	7.3

Socioeconomic Data

The decennial census gathers a wide variety of data in addition to the raw count of persons. The data on household size, age, and income can give insight into how the composition of the Region's residents is changing. These are the parameters that are most useful for planning purposes as they allow us to make projections relative to housing and land use issues. The following topics refer to Table 4.2: Basic Demographic Characteristics.

TABLE 4.2 BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This data included in this table will be the basis of the remainder of the chapter.

All data is based upon the 2000 Census unless otherwise noted.

	ALSACE TOWNSHIP	OLEY TOWNSHIP	RUSCOMBMANOR TOWNSHIP	REGION TOTAL
Total Population 2000	3,689	3,583	3,776	11,048
Total Households	1,433	1,382	1,378	4,193
Total Families	1,060	1,029	1,104	3,193
Racial Composition				
White	3,631 (98.4%)	3,535 (98.7%)	3,730 (98.8%)	10,896 (98.6%)
African-American	16 (.4%)	5 (.1%)	6 (.2%)	27 (.24%)
Hispanic (of any race)	36 (1.0%)	35 (1.0%)	46 (1.2%)	117 (1.06%)
Asian and Pacific Islander	22 (0.6%)	10 (.3%)	9 (.2)	41 (.37%)
Other, including mixed racial composition*	15 (0.4%)	7 (.2%)	2 (.1%)	24 (.22%)
Household Characteristics				
Average number of persons	2.57	2.58	2.71	#
Married-couple households	905	868	993	2766
Total households with children under 18	332	376	450	1158
Female-headed households	74	103	63	240
Non-family Households	373	353	274	1000
Householder living alone	288	274	224	786
Householder 65 years +	123	111	97	331
Age Characteristics				
Median age	41.8	39	40.7	#
Persons under 5 years	139 (3.8%)	181 (5.1%)	186 (4.9%)	506 (4.6%)
5-9 years	248 (6.7%)	222 (6.2%)	261 (6.9%)	731 (6.6%)
10-14 years	263 (7.1%)	286 (8.0%)	306 (8.1%)	855 (7.7%)
15-19 years	229 (6.2%)	250 (7.0%)	259 (6.9%)	738 (6.7%)
20-24 years	140 (3.8%)	158 (4.4%)	145 (3.8%)	443 (4.0%)
25-34 years	373 (10.1%)	443 (12.4%)	332 (8.8%)	1,148 (10.4%)
35-44 years	652 (17.7%)	662 (18.5%)	754 (20%)	2,068 (18.7%)
45-54 years	622 (16.9%)	502 (14.0%)	705 (18.7%)	1,829 (16.6%)
55-59 years	232 (6.3%)	208 (5.8%)	206 (5.5%)	626 (5.7%)
60-64 years	191 (5.2%)	164 (4.6%)	168 (4.4%)	523 (4.7%)
65-74 years	360 (9.8%)	289 (8.1%)	273 (7.2%)	922 (8.3%)
75-84 years	184 (5.0%)	180 (5.0%)	131 (3.5%)	495 (4.5%)
85 years and over	56 (1.5%)	38 (1.1%)	50 (1.3%)	141 (1.3%)
Income Characteristics				
Median household income	\$46,500	\$52,151	\$56,813	#
Median family income	\$52,621	\$58,045	\$64,010	#
Per capita income	\$21,385	\$21,565	\$23,889	#
Persons below poverty line	161 (4.4%)	72 (2.0%)	157 (4.2%)	390 (3.5%)
Families below poverty line	26 (2.5%)	9 (.9%)	32 (2.9%)	67 (.61%)

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

*When reporting Hispanic or mixed race, the total percentages may add to greater than 100% because individuals report more than one race.

This data cannot be determined for the Region from available information.

Population in Adjacent Municipalities

Oley and Alsace are adding population at a slower rate than the surrounding municipalities. Ruscombmanor has had moderate to high growth in the past, 23% and 21%, but appears to be slowing down with a 10% increase shown for the 2006 estimates.

Maidencreek Township, which borders Ruscombmanor, has grown 93% between 1990 and 2000 and according to the 2006 estimates, is increasing another 34%. Growth pressure from Maidencreek Township may influence the growth in Ruscombmanor. Amity Township to the south of Oley also has experienced high growth, 38% in 2000 and 29% for the 2006 estimate.

In 2000, the County had an 11% increase in population while the 2006 estimate is anticipating a 5% growth overall. The large increases are offset by several municipalities with low increases and a few with population losses, such as neighboring Lower Alsace that consistently had population losses over the past 30 years and will remain the same as of the 2006 estimate.

TABLE 4.3: REGIONAL POPULATION TRENDS

Regional Population Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Surrounding Municipalities 1960 - 2006											
MUNICIPALITIES	1960	1970	% Increase	1980	% Increase	1990	% Increase	2000	% Increase	2006*	% Increase
Alsace Township	2,739	3,034	11%	3,456	14%	3,459	0%	3,689	7%	3,758	2%
Oley Township	2,474	2,778	12%	3,024	9%	3,362	11%	3,583	7%	3,661	2%
Ruscombmanor Township	1,787	1,985	11%	2,546	28%	3,129	23%	3,776	21%	4,158	10%
Amity Township	2,699	4,718	75%	5,883	25%	6,434	9%	8,867	38%	11,431	29%
Earl Township	1,904	2,290	20%	2,607	14%	3,016	16%	3,050	1%	3,313	9%
Exeter Township	8,848	10,607	20%	14,419	36%	17,260	20%	21,161	23%	24,776	17%
Lower Alsace Township	4,965	5,091	3%	4,906	-4%	4,627	-6%	4,478	-3%	4,487	0%
Maidencreek Township	2,042	2,376	16%	2,377	0%	3,397	43%	6,553	93%	8,786	34%
Muhlenberg Township	10,955	13,693	25%	13,031	-5%	12,636	-3%	16,305	29%	18,085	11%
Pike Township	754	867	15%	1,056	22%	1,359	29%	1,677	23%	1,914	14%
Richmond Township	2,369	2,745	16%	3,204	17%	3,439	7%	3,500	2%	3,633	4%
Rockland Township	1,289	1,452	13%	1,911	32%	2,675	40%	3,765	41%	3,956	5%
BERKS COUNTY	275,414	296,382	8%	312,509	5%	336,523	8%	373,638	11%	391,640	5%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2006, Berks County Planning Commission

Population Density

Population density, measured in persons per square mile, is a way of comparing the extent of development in the Region with surrounding municipalities and Berks County overall. Table 4.4 shows that Pike Township is the least developed municipality in the Region with a population density of 137.7 persons per square mile. Oley is second with 151.3 persons per square mile, with Ruscombmanor and Alsace being sixth (299.1 persons/sq. mile) and seventh (308 persons/sq. mile) least developed municipality, respectively. Muhlenberg, Lower Alsace, and Exeter, the townships adjacent or closest to the City of Reading, are the Region's most developed municipalities. Oley, Alsace, and Ruscombmanor Townships have fewer persons per square mile than the County which has 463 persons per square mile.

TABLE 4.4: POPULATION DENSITY

Population Density Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Surrounding Municipalities 2006			
MUNICIPALITIES	ESTIMATED 2006 POPULATION	LAND AREA (in square miles)	POPULATION DENSITY (in persons per square mile)
Alsace Township	3,758	12.2	308
Oley Township	3,661	24.2	151.3
Ruscombmanor Township	4,158	13.9	299.1
Amity Township	11,431	18.4	621.3
Earl Township	3,313	13.8	240.1
Exeter Township	24,776	24.6	1007.2
Lower Alsace Township	4,487	4.7	954.7
Maidencreek Township	8,786	14.3	614.4
Muhlenberg Township	18,085	12.2	1482.4
Pike Township	1,914	13.9	137.7
Richmond Township	3,633	23.7	153.3
Rockland Township	3,956	17.1	231.3
Berks County	401,149	865.7	463.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Berks County Planning Commission

Population By Age

The largest population groups by age in each municipality during 1990 were the 35-44 year old age group, followed closely by the 25-34 year old age group, and then 45-54 year olds. The groups between 25-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds represent the baby boomer generation. Oley Township was the only Township of the three that had a higher 25-34 year old group than 35-44 year old group.

There are various dates given for the baby boomer years but the most widely accepted time period is people born between 1946 and 1964. The groups in the Region that have the highest numbers also include the 45-54 year old group. This is the initial jump in population as compared to other groups. This is probably due to a large number of 45 or 46 years old which would have been born around 1954 to 1963 at the end of the baby boomer years.

As the baby boomers continue to age, the group that they are represented in will continue to be the largest group. Due to the 35-44 age group having a twelve year span, the trend stays the same for 2000 with the largest group being the 35-44 year olds. The change in 2000 is in the second largest group which is now the 45-54 category and the third group, 25-34 year olds, has a fairly significant decrease as many of the baby boomers move into the 35-44 age group.

In each municipality the Under 5 category has decreased from 1990 to 2000. Alsace had the most significant drop, 32%, while Oley dropped 26% and Ruscombmanor had an 11% decrease. This decrease can also be attributed to the baby boomers. First, the baby boomers did not have as many children as their parents, which reduced the population. Then as the baby boomers continue to age, the fertile population also decreases which is reflected in the number of births.

The baby boomer generation trend can be clearly seen in the % change column in Table 4.5 Population By Age. The largest percentage of change comes from the baby boomers moving through the age categories.

Ruscombmanor Township has the only very large % increase that does not follow the other trends. The Township had a 213% increase in the 85+ category from 1990 to 2000. This can be explained by a retirement community being introduced in the Township or it can be a natural occurrence based on the high number from the two previous categories. As the age groups progress, the categories are reduced from 10 plus year increments to 5 year increments.

TABLE 4.5: POPULATION BY AGE

Population by Age Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township 1990 - 2000															
AGE	Alsace Township					Oley Township					Ruscombmanor Twp.				
	1990 Population		2000 Population		% Change from 1990 to 2000	1990 Population		2000 Population		% Change from 1990 to 2000	1990 Population		2000 Population		% Change from 1990 to 2000
	%	Number	%	Number		%	Number	%	Number		%	Number	%	Number	
Under 5	5.9	205	3.8	139	-32	7.3	245	5.1	181	-26	6.7	209	4.9	186	-11
5-9	5.8	201	6.7	248	23	7.4	250	6.2	222	-11	7.5	235	6.9	261	11
10-14	6.1	210	7.1	263	25	6.6	223	8.0	286	28	7.1	221	8.1	306	38
15-19	5.9	204	6.2	229	12	5.9	200	7.0	250	25	6.2	194	6.9	259	34
20-24	5.4	186	3.8	140	-25	5.4	182	4.4	158	-13	5.0	158	3.8	145	-8
25-34	14.1	486	10.1	373	-23	17.1	576	12.4	443	-23	15.3	480	8.8	332	-31
35-44	16.7	576	17.7	652	13	16.0	537	18.5	662	23	19.9	624	20.0	754	21
45-54	12.2	422	16.9	622	47	11.3	379	14.0	502	32	11.9	372	18.7	705	90
55-59	5.8	201	6.3	232	15	5.3	177	5.8	208	18	5.4	169	5.5	206	22
60-64	6.5	224	5.2	191	-15	4.8	160	4.6	164	3	5.0	155	4.4	168	8
65-74	9.7	337	9.7	360	7	8.0	270	8.0	289	7	6.3	197	7.3	273	39
75-84	4.8	167	5.0	184	10	4.0	133	5.0	180	35	3.2	99	3.5	131	32
85+	1.2	40	1.5	56	40	0.9	30	1.1	38	27	0.5	16	1.3	50	213
Total	100	3459	100.0	3,689		100	3362	100.0	3,583		100.0	3,129	100.0	3,776	

Source: U.S. Census

Educational Facilities

Oley Valley School District is located in the heart of Oley, approximately 10 miles east of Reading. The school district encompasses 65 square miles and includes the residents of Alsace, Oley, Pike, and Ruscombmanor Townships.

The student population has remained relatively stable over the past seven (7) years with slight fluctuations occurring. The % change in population from 1990 to 2000 has increased in the student age ranges but the “under 5” category has decreased 32%, 26% and 11% for the Townships. This would indicate that the school size is adequate for the population as it is reported today. An increase in development in the area could influence these numbers.

Table 4.6 shows student enrollment per grade for the 2006-2007 school year. The largest numbers of students are in the high school with the class size decreasing in the Kindergarten through third grade. The average class size for K-5 is 22 students while the average size for the Middle and High School is 24 students per class.

TABLE 4.6: ENROLLMENT BY GRADE 2006-2007

Elementary School	Number of Students		Middle School	Number of Students		High School	Number of Students
Kindergarten	139		6 th	152		9 th	217
1 st	139		7 th	171		10 th	180
2 nd	138		8 th	165		11 th	166
3 rd	123					12 th	152
4 th	166						
5 th	149						

TABLE 4.7: BERKS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENTS, 2000-2007

School District	2000-01	2001-02	% Increase	2002-03	% Increase	2003-04	% Increase	2004-05	% Increase	2005-2006	% Increase	2006-2007	% Increase
Antietam	1,045	1,051	1%	1,014	-4%	1,093	8%	1,109	1%	1116	1%	1121	0%
Boyertown Area	6,712	6,727	0%	6,787	1%	6,919	2%	7,005	1%	6979	0%	7047	1%
Brandywine Heights	2,036	2,013	-1%	1,950	-3%	1,983	2%	1,997	1%	1943	-3%	1924	-1%
Conrad Weiser Area	2,117	2,724	29%	2,743	1%	2,822	3%	2,904	3%	2977	3%	3002	1%
Daniel Boone Area	3,002	3,174	6%	3,361	6%	3,503	4%	3,579	2%	3782	6%	3877	3%
Exeter Township	3,822	3,908	2%	3,955	1%	4,076	3%	4,210	3%	4322	3%	4401	2%
Fleetwood Area	2,426	2,496	3%	2,526	1%	2,633	4%	2,658	1%	2694	1%	2698	0%
Governor Mifflin	4,149	4,120	-1%	4,194	2%	4,265	2%	4,154	-3%	4281	3%	4279	0%
Hamburg Area	2,702	2,708	0%	2,755	2%	2,765	0%	2,746	-1%	2728	-1%	2687	-2%
Kutztown Area	1,809	1,814	0%	1,826	1%	1,801	-1%	1,771	-2%	1766	0%	1711	-3%
Muhlenberg	2,914	2,980	2%	3,015	1%	3,001	0%	3,112	4%	3304	6%	3342	1%
Oley Valley	2,174	2,136	-2%	2,203	3%	2,131	-3%	2,073	-3%	2075	0%	2057	-1%
Reading	14,914	15,553	4%	16,266	5%	16,494	1%	17,215	4%	17362	1%	17820	3%
Schuylkill Valley	1,863	1,880	1%	1,897	1%	1,910	1%	1,969	3%	1993	1%	2000	0%
Tulpehocken Area	1,719	1,735	1%	1,716	-1%	1,694	-1%	1,778	5%	1699	-4%	1673	-2%
Twin Valley	2,975	3,050	3%	3,133	3%	3,083	-2%	3,246	5%	3331	3%	3422	3%
Wilson	4,894	4,997	2%	5,148	3%	5,300	3%	5,478	3%	5626	3%	5699	1%
Wyomissing Area	1,848	1,813	-2%	1,858	2%	1,984	7%	1,865	-6%	1905	2%	1872	-2%
Total	63,121	64,879		66,347		67,457		68,869		69,883		70,632	

SOURCE: Berks County Intermediate Unit; Pennsylvania Department of Education

Population Projections

The population projections on Table 4.8 assume the municipalities in the Region do not make significant amendments to their Zoning Ordinances or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Table 4.8 shows Alsace adding approximately 22 persons per year or 7 new homes per year. This is a continuation of the Township's previous averages and would result in a total 2010 population of 3,908 and a 2020 population of 4,142.

The projected population growth for Oley Township shows a change of 213 people between 2000 and 2010. The projected growth for 2020 is 227 people or approximately 23 people per year (7 new homes).

Ruscombmanor Township shows a 2020 projected growth of 239 which is similar to both Alsace and Oley. The additional persons per year would be approximately 24 with 8 new homes per year.

TABLE 4.8: POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population Projections Alsace Township, Oley Township and Ruscombmanor Township 2010 and 2020			
Municipality	Alsace Township	Oley Township	Ruscombmanor Township
2000 Population	3,689	3,583	3,776
2010 Projected Population	3,908	3,796	4,000
Change 2000 - 2010	219	213	224
Percent Change 2000 - 2010	5.93	5.94	5.93
2020 Projected Population	4,142	4,023	4,239
Change 2010 - 2020	234	227	239
Percent Change 2010 - 2020	5.98	5.97	5.97

Source: BCPC

Gender

Gender refers to the number of males and females in a population. There are no special conditions in the Region that have altered the traditional 50/50 balance between males and females.

TABLE 4.9: GENDER

Gender Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000					
Area	Total Population	Males		Females	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Alsace Township	3,689	1,858	50.4	1,831	49.6
Oley Township	3,583	1,788	49.9	1,795	50.1
Ruscombmanor Township	3,776	1,894	50.2	1,882	49.8
Berks County	373,638	182,956	49.0	190,682	51.0

Source: U.S. Census

Household Size

Household size is determined by the number of persons living in a housing unit whether they are related or not. The household size in the United States has declined in the past two or three decades for a variety of reasons: later marriages, more divorces, fewer children, and more elderly households. The average household size for Oley and Ruscombmanor in 1980 was 2.9 while Alsace was 2.87 and the County was 2.66. In 2000, the County was 2.55 and Oley and Alsace were 2.57 and 2.58 with Ruscombmanor dropping the least at 2.71.

Growing areas with young children tend to have larger household sizes, and older communities with more singles and elderly people have smaller household sizes.

TABLE 4.10: AVERAGE PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

Average Persons Per Household Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 1980-2000			
AREA	AVERAGE PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD		
	1980	1990	2000
Alsace Township	2.87	2.63	2.57
Oley Township	2.90	2.70	2.58
Ruscombmanor Township	2.90	2.76	2.71
Berks County	2.66	2.56	2.55

Source: U.S. Census

Total Housing Units

Total Housing Units is calculated based on the increase of new homes and converted single family dwellings to apartments. In general, housing units and population are consistent and remain similar but new households are often created with singles, divorces, and the elderly which can skew the results and give the appearance that new housing units are being created in the absence of population growth. These results are expected in areas with decreasing average persons per household.

Alsace Township added 126 housing units between 1990 and 2000. This represents a 9.2% change in total housing units for the Township. The population increased 7% during that same period.

The population of Oley Township increased 7% between 1990 and 2000 but the housing units increased 11.2% or 144 units.

Ruscombmanor Township added 258 housing units by 2000. This represents a 22.2% increase in housing units or an additional 25 houses per year. The total population increased 21% during the same period.

TABLE 4.11: TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

Total Housing Units Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 1990 - 2000				
AREA	Total Housing Units		1990-2000 Change	
	1990	2000	Number	Percent
Alsace Township	1,377	1,503	126	9.2%
Oley Township	1,281	1,425	144	11.2%
Ruscombmanor Township	1,163	1,421	258	22.2%
Berks County	134,482	150,222	15,740	11.7%

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Type

Housing types and needs vary throughout the life cycle. Young singles and beginning families often require smaller, less expensive homes or multi-dwelling housing. As the family expands or children start to become mobile, the needs change and families then prefer larger, single-family homes. As children grow older and leave home, families then downsize and return to apartments, townhouses, or row homes.

Close to half of all homes in Berks County are single family detached homes followed by single family attached homes. The Regional Housing Types do not follow the County

make-up very closely. The County numbers are heavily influenced by the City of Reading.

In Alsace and Ruscombmanor Townships, single family detached homes make up 90% and approximately 95%, respectively. Oley Township is different in its make-up of housing types because of the downtown component. Oley is comprised of 78% single family detached housing, 9% single family attached housing and almost 8% of 2 unit housing.

TABLE 4.12: HOUSING TYPE

Housing Type Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000								
TYPE	ALSACE TWP		OLEY TWP		RUSCOMBMANOR TWP		BERKS COUNTY	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single family detached	1,354	90.1	1,111	77.9	1,347	94.7	81,581	54.3
Single family attached	24	1.6	128	8.9	11	0.8	34,822	23.2
2 Units	16	1.1	109	7.6	12	0.9	14,400	9.6
3 or more Units	9	0.6	52	3.6	27	1.9	13,689	9.1
Mobile Home & Others	100	6.6	25	1.7	24	1.7	5,730	3.9
Total	1,503	100.0	1,425	100.0	1,421	100.0	150,222	100.0

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Tenure and Vacancy

Housing tenure and vacancy is an important component to review in a Comprehensive Plan. Housing tenure defines residents as either owners or renters in a unit. Vacancy rates reflect utilization and give an indication if a variety is available.

The relationship between owner-occupied housing and rental units influences the demographics of an area. An area with higher rates of renter-occupied units has affordable, less expensive housing for singles, young families and the elderly. Areas with more owner-occupied housing often preclude young starter families and singles from being able to enter the market.

Almost 90 percent of all homes in Ruscombmanor Township and 85 percent of homes in Alsace Township are owner-occupied. Oley Township is very similar to the County statistics with 73 percent of owner-occupied housing and 24% renter-occupied. The difference in the County statistics and Oley Township is in the vacant housing. The County has double the vacancy percentage as Oley Township.

The median value of owner-occupied housing was highest in Ruscombmanor Township, \$142,700, and lowest in Alsace Township, \$112,000. The median value was higher for the Region than Berks County.

TABLE 4.13: HOUSING TENURE, VACANCY, AND VALUE

Housing Tenure, Vacancy and Value Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000								
TENURE	ALSACE TWP		OLEY TWP		RUSCOMBMANOR TWP		BERKS COUNTY	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner-occupied	1,278	85.0	1,041	73.1	1,262	88.8	104,719	69.7
Renter-occupied	155	10.3	341	23.9	116	8.2	36,851	24.5
Vacant	70	4.7	43	3.0	43	3.0	8,652	5.8
Total	1,503	100.0	1,425	100.0	1,421	100.0	150,222	100.0
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Unit	\$112,000		\$123,900		\$142,700		\$104,900	

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Age

The housing age gives an overall picture of the area and the housing stock. Oley has the most housing from 1939 or earlier which is to be expected considering the historic significance of Oley. When comparing the age of houses from 1969 and earlier, Alsace Township has the most, 900. Oley has 882 and Ruscombmanor only has 660.

Ruscombmanor has the newest houses with 566 houses being added from 1980 until 2000. This represents almost 40 percent of the houses in Ruscombmanor Township have been built since 1980. 28% of Oley's housing stock has been added in the same time period while the addition to Alsace makes up 23%.

TABLE 4.14: MUNICIPAL HOUSING AGE

Municipal Housing Age Alsace Township, Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township and Berks County 2000							
AREA	TOTAL UNITS	1990 TO MARCH 2000	1980 TO 1989	1970 TO 1979	1960 TO 1969	1940 TO 1959	1939 OR EARLIER
Alsace Township	1,503	207	138	258	194	418	288
Oley Township	1,425	153	246	144	125	264	493
Ruscombmanor Township	1,421	287	279	195	132	216	312
Berks County	150,222	20,623	16,834	19,089	14,922	29,829	48,925

Source: U.S. Census, 2005 Berks County Data Book