

Characteristics of Population & Housing

Introduction & Purpose

This chapter will consider observed trends and characteristics of the resident population along with the most prominent characteristics of the Township's housing stock. The information and analysis will be based upon recent and historic census data as well as field observation. We will provide comparisons of the Township with Delaware County as a whole and with surrounding communities. The purpose of this examination is to identify the ways in which the population of the Township is changing and to consider the effects that these changes may have on the community, particularly in the areas of land use and public services.

Historic Pattern of Population Growth

Until the early years of the twentieth century, Upper Providence Township was a rural community dominated by farms. During this time, the population of the Township hovered around 1,000. From the mid-1910's up until the Great Depression, there was significant growth - over five percent annually, on average - such that by the 1930 census there were 2,008 residents in the Township. The population actually declined slightly between 1930 and 1940, and there was virtually no growth during World War II due to restrictions on construction and the social disruptions of the war. When the war ended, the country as a whole experienced a tremendous, sudden increase in both construction and population. This national trend was well represented locally, as the number of residents in Upper Providence increased from less than 2,000 in 1940 to over 9,000 by 1970. Since then, growth has continued at a slower pace: in 1990, the official census count for the Township was 9,727; by the 2000 census it was 10,509.

The dramatic slowing in the rate of increase is most likely due the nature of the post-war residential development. Typical for suburban communities of the period, new residential construction was almost entirely in the form of single-family homes on relatively large lots. This quintessential house in the suburbs represented the attainment of the American dream for many, and the homes that it provided were popular - and remain so today. The proximity of the Township to major employment centers - the city of Philadelphia in particular - as well as its scenic qualities and the availability of major roads and commuter rail service made Upper Providence a highly desirable residential area. By the end of the 1970's there was very little developable property left: the population growth rate slowed simply because the supply of developable land was running out.

As noted in the chapter on existing land use, there are few large, privately owned properties left to be developed. None of them are large enough to accommodate a development that would dramatically change the population of the Township. While the Township must carefully consider the policies that regulate new development, regulating *re-development* is perhaps more critical to the preservation of a high quality of life for residents. In either case, we can expect that the Township population will continue to increase at a modest rate, similar to what has been observed since the mid-1970's. The following chart shows the change in population beginning in 1980 as well as projections through 2020. This chart, like most in this

chapter, will compare the Township with the immediately surrounding municipalities as well as with Delaware County as a whole.

FIGURE 16.1: POPULATION CHANGE AND PROJECTIONS

The percentage figure under the population number indicates the rate of change from the previous period. Figures in italics are projections by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. No percentage-change figure is shown in the “2005” column in order to keep the time intervals consistent; similarly, the percentage-change figure in the “2010” column is the change from 2000, not 2005.

	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020
UPPER PROVIDENCE TWP.	9,477	9,727	10,509	10,930	11,050	11,500
	-	+ 2.64%	+ 8.04%	-	+ 5.15%	+ 0.41%
Edgmont Twp.	1,410	2,735	3,918	4,240	4,790	6,030
	-	+ 93.97%	+ 43.25%	-	+ 22.26%	+ 25.89%
Marple Twp.	23,642	23,123	23,737	23,890	23,830	23,710
	-	- 2.20%	+ 2.66%	-	+ 0.39%	- 0.50%
Media Borough	6,119	5,957	5,533	5,400	5,330	5,100
	-	- 2.65%	- 7.12%	-	- 3.67%	- 4.32%
Middletown Twp.	12,463	14,130	16,064	16,070	16,370	16,850
	-	+ 13.38%	+ 13.69%	-	+ 1.90%	+ 2.93%
Nether Providence Twp.	12,370	13,229	13,456	13,770	13,760	13,990
	-	+ 6.94%	+ 1.72%	-	+ 2.26%	+ 1.67%
Newtown Twp.	11,775	11,366	11,700	11,570	12,000	12,170
	-	- 3.47%	+ 2.94%	-	+ 2.56%	+ 1.42%
Delaware County	555,023	547,651	550,864	551,530	550,970	546,972
	-	- 1.33%	+ 0.59%	-	+ 0.02%	- 0.73%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The chart shows that the County population is essentially stable, although many of the individual municipalities are not. The City of Chester, the boroughs (including Media), and the more densely developed Townships have been losing population while the more rural areas have been gaining. This is consistent with national trends. Except for Edgmont Township, which has a relatively large amount of developable land, the communities shown above have demographic characteristics that are typical for mature communities with little remaining developable land. For such communities, most population change is due to infill and/or

redevelopment and of changes in household composition as children grow up, leave their parents' homes, and the parents in turn sell their now too-large houses to younger, growing families.

One important local condition that is not reflected in these projections is the amount of new and proposed development along the Route 252 corridor in Marple and Newtown Townships: we may find that the projections shown above are low for these municipalities. This development is of particular concern to Upper Providence, as it is expected to generate more traffic along this already-congested corridor as new residents travel to Route 1.

Population Characteristics

The decennial census gathers a wide variety of data in addition to the raw count of persons. The data on household size, age, ethnicity, income, and employment give us insight into how the Township is changing, even if the number of residents changes very little. 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.

Household and Age Characteristics - Even the most cursory tour of the Township will reveal that the great majority of the housing in the Township is in the form of single-family detached homes: a revelation that is supported by empirical data, as will be considered later in this chapter. This observation suggests that most residents live in family units with children, but the data provided below show that this type of household is not any more common in the Township than it is in the County as a whole. Note that the Census Bureau defines "household" as "all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence." This includes individuals who live alone as well as any combination of people who may reside together. "Family" is a type of household, and is defined as "two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption."

FIGURE 16.2: 2000 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

See preceding text for explanation of difference between "household" and "family." The percentage figures show the proportion of HOUSEHOLDS that fit each category. Note that "Average Family Size" (which is not shown here) will be slightly larger than "Average Household Size." We show the latter category as this is more critical in determining housing needs.

	Total Households	Single-Person Households	Total Family Units	Families w/Children under 18 yrs	Average Household Size
UPPER PROVIDENCE	4,075	1,044	2,828	1,322	2.56
		25.6%	69.4%	32.4%	
Edgmont	1,447	414	988	401	2.47
		28.6%	68.3%	27.7%	

Marple	8,623	1,947	6,416	2,587	2.64
		22.6%	74.4%	30.0%	
Media Borough	2,782	1,368	1,113	414	1.85
		49.2%	40.0%	14.9%	
Middletown	5,524	1,576	3,745	1,604	2.45
		28.5%	67.8%	29.0%	
Nether Providence	5,007	1,086	3,755	1,725	2.62
		21.7%	75.0%	34.5%	
Newtown	4,549	1,238	3,183	1,255	2.50
		27.2%	70.0%	27.6%	
Delaware County	206,320	57,028	139,453	65,038	2.56
		27.6%	67.6%	31.5%	

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The household characteristics for Upper Providence and most of the surrounding municipalities are similar to Delaware County as a whole. Media Borough, the principal exception to this observation, exhibits household characteristics that are typical of urban areas, with a relatively high number of single-person households (resulting in a smaller average household size) and a relatively low proportion of family units and families with children younger than eighteen. Examination of the County data reveals that Media is an extreme case: it has by far the smallest average household size in the County (the second smallest is in Brookhaven Borough, at 2.29 persons per household). Media excepted, the average household size figures fall within a fairly small range. Marple Township, at 2.64 persons per household, has the largest average household size in the immediate area. The largest average household size in the County is in Bethel Township, at 3.16 persons per household. As noted above, the proportion of family units tends to be higher than the County average. However, it is a bit surprising to note that the percentage of families with children under eighteen is only slightly higher in Upper Providence (relative to the County), and a number of the surrounding municipalities actually have a lower proportion of such families.

FIGURE 16.3: 2000 AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Age distribution is useful for determining current and future demand for various municipal services. The median age number, in combination with the other data, has implications about the stability of the population, as explained in greater detail following the chart.

	Total Population	Population under 18 yrs.	Population over 65 yrs.	Median Age (County rank)

UPPER PROVIDENCE	10,509	2,599	1,319	40.1
		24.7%	12.6%	(11)
Edgmont	3,918	1,093	832	44.1
		27.9%	21.2%	(3)
Marple	23,737	5,178	5,234	43.3
		21.8%	22.1%	(5 - tie)
Media Borough	5,533	759	1,139	40.8
		13.7%	20.6%	(9)
Middletown	16,064	3,307	4,617	46.1
		20.6%	28.7%	(1)
Nether Providence	13,456	3,423	2,360	41.6
		25.4%	17.5%	(8)
Newtown	11,700	2,704	2,564	43.3
		23.1%	21.9%	(5 - tie)
Delaware County	550,864	136,128	85,669	37.4
		24.7%	15.6%	(n/a)

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The age data are perhaps more revealing than the household data in that we find wider divergences from the County figures. The proportion of under-eighteen residents in Upper Providence is identical to that of the County, but we find lower proportions in four of the six other municipalities. Furthermore, note that *only* Upper Providence has a lower proportion of residents over sixty-five than the County as a whole. Given this finding, it is not surprising to see that every municipality shown has a significantly higher median age than the County. Oddly, these municipalities have some of the highest median ages in the County: Middletown Township is the “oldest” municipality in the County, and all six of the surrounding municipalities shown on the chart are in the “top ten,” with Upper Providence in the eleventh spot.

The relatively high median age combined with average-to-low figures for families with children under eighteen suggests a significant number of “empty nester” couples who may move within the next few years. Given the composition of the housing stock, we may expect these families to be replaced by younger families with children.

Ethnicity - Ethnicity, or “race,” is defined by the Census Bureau as a type of self-identification that has been historically significant for socio-economic and cultural reasons. For the 2000 census, individuals could identify themselves as “White,” “Black or African

American,” “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Asian,” “Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander,” “Some Other Race,” and, starting with the 2000 census, “Two or More Races.” The census also provided for separate identification of Latino persons in recognition that Latinos in some case represent a distinct culture, but may be of any “race.”

FIGURE 16.4: ETHNICITY

The charts below show the breakdown by principal ethnic group, with “Other” including American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islanders, those classified as “other” by the Census Bureau, and multi-racial individuals. For most Delaware County communities, Asians are the largest group within this “Other” category. Note that the sum of “White,” “Black,” and “Other” equals 100% of the total; as described in the text, Latino individuals may be of any race(s). Furthermore, no growth rate is indicated for the Latino population due to change in definition for this category between the 1990 and 2000 censuses.

	2000 Total Population	2000 White Population	2000 Black Population	2000 Other Population	2000 Latino Population
UPPER PROVIDENCE	10,509	9,650	410	449	112
		91.8%	3.9%	4.3%	1.1%
Edgmont	3,918	3,549	192	177	53
		90.6%	4.9%	4.5%	1.4%
Marple	23,737	21,980	261	1,496	156
		92.6%	1.1%	6.3%	0.7%
Media Borough	5,533	4,483	787	263	104
		81.0%	14.2%	4.8%	2.3%
Middletown	16,064	15,145	495	424	139
		94.3%	3.1%	2.6%	0.9%
Nether Providence	13,456	12,121	824	511	152
		90.1%	6.1%	3.8%	1.3%
Newtown	11,700	11,251	77	372	81
		96.2%	0.6%	3.2%	0.7%
Delaware County	550,864	442,448	79,981	28,435	8,368
		80.3%	14.5%	5.2%	1.5%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

	Total Pop. Change	White Pop. Change	Black Pop. Change	Other Pop. Change
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	1990-2000	1990-2000	1990-2000	1990-2000
UPPER PROVIDENCE	+ 8.0%	+ 4.1%	+ 39.5%	+ 93.9%
Edgmont	+ 43.3%	+ 33.6%	+ 1,271.4%	+ 176.6%
Marple	+ 2.7%	- 0.5%	+ 41.8%	+ 77.9%
Media Borough	- 7.1%	- 11.0%	- 5.5%	+ 195.5%
Middletown	+ 13.7%	+ 17.2%	- 47.6%	+ 58.8%
Nether Providence	+ 1.7%	- 0.8%	+ 6.7%	+ 64.3%
Newtown	+ 2.9%	+ 1.6%	+ 40.0%	+ 55.0%
Delaware County	+ 0.6%	- 6.6%	+ 30.3%	+ 127.2%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The information above leads to the following observations.

- The ethnicity of the Township and the surrounding municipalities is consistent with what may be observed nationally. The numerical dominance of the white population is typical of an established suburban community, as minority populations tend to be more prevalent in urban areas. Accordingly, the largest percentage of minority population among the municipalities shown is in Media: a small urban area.
- Although the percentage of minority population is well below that of the County, we note again that the county's minorities are concentrated in urbanized areas such as the City of Chester and the communities adjacent to the City of Philadelphia, such as Yeadon, Upper Darby, and Darby.
- The Township, the surrounding municipalities, and the County have yet to experience the rise in Latino population observed in many other areas.
- Of the seven municipalities included in the chart, only Media Borough declined in population between 1990 and 2000.
- Three of the included municipalities (Marple, Media Borough, and Nether Providence) experienced a numerical decline in their white population. This was also the case for Delaware County as a whole.
- Three other municipalities (Edgmont, Newtown, and Upper Providence) had increases in total population and white population, but the percentage increase in the white population was less than the overall increase. This indicates that these communities are growing *and* becoming more ethnically diverse.
- Of the communities shown, only Middletown Township is becoming less ethnically diverse (i.e., the majority white population increasing more rapidly than overall growth rate).

Ethnic diversity may make for a more interesting community, but a diversity of educational backgrounds and employment experience is more critical, as this kind of diversity enables the supply of skills needed to fill the range of jobs necessary to support a vital community.

Educational Attainment - The Census Bureau collects data on level of education achieved by persons twenty-five years old and older.

FIGURE 16.5: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The chart shows the percentage of population over twenty-five years of age whose highest level of education as of the year 2000 is described by the column heading.

	No Diploma	High School Diploma	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
UPPER PROVIDENCE	4.6%	36.2%	6.7%	29.2%	23.3%
Edgmont	9.4%	35.4%	6.3%	28.7%	20.2%
Marple	12.0%	48.4%	5.8%	20.8%	13.0%
Media Borough	11.1%	42.5%	6.4%	26.1%	13.9%
Middletown	16.6%	42.1%	5.8%	20.8%	14.7%
Nether Providence	6.8%	36.9%	5.8%	25.4%	25.1%
Newtown	7.4%	43.6%	4.8%	26.7%	17.5%
Delaware County	13.5%	50.4%	6.1%	18.2%	11.8%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The chart shows that Upper Providence and the surrounding municipalities are generally better educated than the County as a whole. Upper Providence has the highest proportion of college graduates (i.e., the sum of the “Bachelor’s” and “Graduate” columns) of the communities shown at 52.5%, and only Nether Providence has a higher percentage of people with graduate degrees. Upper Providence also has the lowest percentage (4.6%) of persons lacking a high school diploma. These data suggest a relatively well-employed and affluent community. Employment and income are reviewed in greater detail in following sections.

Employment - The Census Bureau collects employment data based upon both occupation and industry. The figures apply to employed civilians who are at least sixteen years old. “Occupation” refers to the tasks the individual performs, while “industry” describes the individual’s employer. This distinction can be blurred in some cases. For example, “farming” is both an occupation type as well as an industry.

FIGURE 16.6: 2000 EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

OCCUPATION CATEGORY	UPPER PROVIDENCE		DELAWARE COUNTY	
	number	percent	number	percent
Managerial, professional, and related	3,111	57.0%	101,646	39.3%
Service occupations	325	5.9%	34,370	13.3%
Sales and office occupations	1,379	25.3%	75,885	29.3%

Farming, fishing, forestry	7	0.1%	241	0.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	306	5.6%	21,648	8.4%
Production and material transport/moving	331	6.1%	24,992	9.6%
TOTAL	5,459	100.0%	258,782	100.0%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003.

Given the generally high level of education already noted, the large percentage of people in managerial positions and the professions is not surprising. For the same reason the small proportions of individuals in traditionally “blue collar” occupations (e.g., service occupations, construction, transport, production) is as expected. The low figure for farming, fishing, and forestry is more a factor of geography than any characteristic of the population.

FIGURE 16.7: 2000 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

INDUSTRY CATEGORY	UPPER PROVIDENCE		DELAWARE COUNTY	
	number	percent	number	percent
Farming, forestry, fishing/hunting, mining	27	0.5%	541	0.2%
Construction	257	4.7%	14,678	5.7%
Manufacturing	637	11.7%	25,616	9.9%
Wholesale trade	110	2.0%	8,145	3.1%
Retail trade	433	7.9%	29,025	11.2%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	282	5.2%	14,724	5.7%
Information	168	3.1%	9,016	3.5%
Finance, insurance, real estate	486	8.9%	23,024	8.9%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste mgmt services	1,060	19.4%	30,389	11.7%
Educational, health, and social services	1,411	25.9%	65,868	25.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	210	3.8%	16,002	6.2%
Public administration	144	2.6%	9,017	3.5%
Other services	234	4.3%	12,733	4.9%

TOTAL	5,459	100.0%	258,778	100.0%
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SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003.

The chart shows that Township residents are employed by the various industrial sectors in roughly the same proportions as found in the County generally. The most significant aberration is in the professional category. While this is significantly higher than the County rate of employment, it is not the area with the largest proportion of employees: over a quarter of working Township residents are in education, health, and social services. Note that this is only slightly higher than the County figure. Similar to what was noted under the prior chart, the relatively high proportion of professional employment is a logical consequence of the Township's higher-than-typical level of educational attainment. There is no one category that has a significantly smaller proportion of workers in comparison to the County, but many have a slightly lower figure.

Income - Employment characteristics are closely related to income level. A review of residents' income provides insight into housing needs, demand for municipal services, and quality-of-life concerns generally.

FIGURE 16.8: 1999 INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

The chart shows the income information collected for the 2000 census. Income was reported for the preceding full year, hence this is properly referred to as 1999 information.

	Per Capita Income (County Rank)	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Individuals Below Poverty Level	Families Below Poverty Level
UPPER PROVIDENCE	\$39,532 (6)	\$71,166	\$85,450	412 3.9%	38 1.3%
Edgmont	\$46,848 (3)	\$88,303	\$105,311	43 1.1%	5 0.5%
Marple	\$28,494 (14)	\$59,577	\$71,829	1,050 4.4%	137 2.1%
Media Borough	\$28,188 (15)	\$42,703	\$58,065	408 7.4%	69 6.2%
Middletown	\$29,418 (12)	\$62,949	\$77,649	342 2.1%	40 1.1%
Nether Providence	\$32,946	\$68,059	\$78,491	448	117

	(10)			3.3%	3.1%
Newtown	\$39,364	\$65,924	\$82,557	401	59
	(7)			3.4%	1.9%
Delaware County	\$25,040	\$50,092	\$61,590	42,411	8,092
	(n/a)			7.7%	5.8%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

There is a wide range in incomes among Delaware County municipalities. Rose Valley Borough has the highest per capita, household, and family income figures (\$54,202; \$114,373; and \$118,637 respectively) while the City of Chester has the lowest with per capita income of \$13,052, household income of \$25,703, and family income of \$30,336. It is not surprising to find that Chester also has the highest proportion of residents below poverty level, but the actual figure is an astonishing 25.1%. This is in stark contrast to Edgmont Township, with the County's low figure of 1.1%.

The preceding chart shows that Upper Providence has the sixth-highest per capita income figure among Delaware County's forty-nine municipalities and is second-highest among the municipalities shown in every income category. The poverty figures are closer to the middle of the pack when compared with the surrounding communities, but they are still well below the County figures.

This information suggests that we will find relatively high housing values, and that housing affordability may be an issue. We may also expect that the most desired municipal services will address safety and quality of life issues rather than social services and support services.

Housing Characteristics

The Census Bureau collects housing data regarding number of units, type of structure, occupancy, tenure, and value. This provides additional measures of population change and stability. When compared with income characteristics, we can identify housing affordability issues. Note that housing values apply only to owner-occupied units and are estimated by the owner. As such, this number should be seen as a general indicator of value rather than an actual sale price or appraisal of market value.

FIGURE 16.9: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The last column on the right shows the ratio of median housing value to median household income. This is provided as an indicator of housing affordability. Most experts agree that a household can afford a house that costs between 2.5 and 3.0 times its annual income. Hence a number in this column that falls in this range indicates that a median-income household can afford the median-priced home. Phrased another way, it means that approximately 50% of the homes in the community are affordable to a median income household - although there is no assurance that they could afford 50% of the homes actually on the market. If this number is higher than 3.0, then the community in question may have a housing affordability issue.

	1990 Total Housing Units	2000 Total Housing Units (% change)	2000 Owner-Occupied Units	2000 Median Housing Value (county rank)	Housing Affordability Ratio
UPPER PROVIDENCE	3,861	4,299 + 11.3%	3,081 71.7%	\$227,200 (8)	3.19
Edgmont	1,265	1,515 + 19.8%	1,123 74.1%	\$317,000 (2)	3.01
Marple	8,433	8,797 + 4.3%	7,221 82.1%	\$183,600 (12)	2.56
Media Borough	3,023	2,966 - 1.9%	1,160 39.1%	\$138,500 (16)	2.39
Middletown	4,482	5,641 + 25.9%	4,255 75.4%	\$189,300 (11)	2.44
Nether Providence	5,045	5,125 + 1.6%	4,409 86.0%	\$182,500 (13)	2.33
Newtown	4,433	4,690 + 5.8%	3,675 78.4%	\$209,700 (10)	2.54
Delaware County	211,024	216,978 + 2.8%	148,384 63.4%	\$128,800 (n/a)	2.09

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The housing information supports the other findings indicating that Upper Providence is a relatively affluent community in Delaware County. Note that Upper Providence and Edgmont Townships both exhibit high rates of growth in combination with high housing values, thereby indicating a “hot” real estate market, although this is not necessarily a long-term trend. As noted in the preceding paragraph, the housing affordability ratio of more than 3.0 suggests that affordability either is or may shortly become an issue. While the situation does not appear to be extreme, Upper Providence is the least affordable community of those shown on the chart. Note also that all of these communities are less affordable than the County as a whole.

The basic forms of housing identified by the Census Bureau for data collection purposes are single-family detached, single-family attached (i.e., “twin” houses, town houses, and row homes), multi-unit buildings, mobile homes, and “other,” which includes non-traditional

housing such as boats and RV's used as permanent residences. On the date of the census, 4,075 of the Township's 4,299 existing housing units were occupied. Of these, 3,065 (75.2%) were owner-occupied and the remaining 1, 010 (24.8%) were occupied by renters. Additional details on housing types and tenure are shown below with figures for Delaware County provided for comparison.

FIGURE 16.10: 2000 HOUSING BY TYPE AND TENURE

Numbers shown are for units occupied on date of census; "total" numbers will therefore differ from number of housing units shown elsewhere in this chapter, as those figures include vacant units. Percentages indicate proportion of units included in that column such that each column totals to 100.0%.

TYPE OF HOUSING UNIT	UPPER PROVIDENCE			DELAWARE COUNTY		
	owner occupied	renter occupied	TOTAL	owner occupied	renter occupied	TOTAL
Single-family detached	2,653 86.6%	77 7.6%	2,730 67.0%	88,903 60.0%	4,739 8.2%	93,642 45.4%
Single-family attached (i.e, twin, townhouse, row)	363 11.8%	50 5.0%	413 10.1%	53,000 35.7%	11,529 19.9%	64,529 31.3%
Multi-family	44 1.4%	883 87.4%	927 22.8%	5,874 4.0%	41,635 71.7%	47,509 23.0%
Mobile home	5 0.2%	0	5 0.1%	504 0.3%	109 0.2%	613 0.3%
Other	0	0	0	12 < 0.1%	15 < 0.1%	27 < 0.1%
TOTAL	3,065 100.0%	1,010 100.0%	4,075 100.0%	148,293 100.0%	58,027 100.0%	206,320 100.0%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the impression that most of the housing in the Township is in the form of single-family detached homes is supported by these data. Two-thirds of the homes in Upper Providence are single-family detached houses, while fewer than half of the homes in the County are. The great majority of these homes are owner-occupied. Renters dominate the multi-family buildings. It is interesting that the Township is nearly the same as the County in the proportion of housing units provided in multi-unit buildings, although the Township has a much smaller proportion of townhouse-type dwellings. The number of mobile homes is negligible at both the Township and County level.

Conclusions, Analysis, and Planning Implications

- Upper Providence Township is among the more affluent of the forty-nine Delaware County municipalities. This conclusion is supported by data for both income and housing value: Township residents enjoy the sixth-highest per capita income in the County and the eighth-highest median home value. The Township ranks ninth for both median household income and median family income.
- The population is growing less rapidly than it did during the 1960's and 1970's, but the eight percent increase between 1990 and 2000 is impressive - and is more than ten times the County growth rate for the same period.
- The data for age and household composition show the effects of both smaller families and "empty nesters."
- The ethnic composition of the population is predominately white, but it is becoming more diverse.
- As a group, the residents have a high level of educational attainment. Over half of the working population is in management and the professions.
- Despite high incomes, housing affordability may become an issue. While this may not affect the real estate market or vacancy rate, it may reduce the number of persons available to do jobs with low or moderate wages.
- The relatively high cost of housing will make it increasingly difficult to provide affordable housing: the market provides no incentive for the construction of new affordable units, and the supply of existing affordable homes is endangered as they may be demolished and replaced with more expensive housing.
- Largely as a result of the preceding point, it appears that most new Township residents have incomes above the current median. While this is encouraging in that it shows that the Township is a highly desirable neighborhood, it again raises the concern that persons of more moderate means are priced out of the market. In this case, "moderate" does not mean just minimum-wage workers, but also mid-level managers and professionals like police officers and school teachers.
- Many communities attempt to encourage the construction of affordable housing by permitting relatively high residential density in appropriate areas. Given the lack of developable land in Upper Providence, this is not practicable.
- Mobile home parks (or individual manufactured homes on single lots) provide another option for affordable housing. Again, the lack of developable land and the high cost of land generally suggest that this is not a workable approach for Upper Providence.
- It appears that housing for most low- and moderate-income households is provided by the rental market. Many Township residents may be surprised to learn that nearly a quarter (24.8%) of the housing units in the Township are rentals. This may seem high, but it is slightly below the proportion as for the County as a whole: 28.1%.

- A strong housing market is likely to lead to pressure to redevelop properties that are already built upon as well as to build on environmentally constrained properties previously deemed unsuitable for development.
- Another effect of a strong housing market with rising prices is that developers will tend to built new homes to the limits permitted by development regulations (e.g., minimum lot size, maximum building coverage, etc.). This suggests that the Zoning Ordinance and other development regulations should be reviewed to be sure that the development permitted is consistent with what is actually desired, as expressed in this Comprehensive Plan.
- Since the Township is such a desirable residential area, factors other than convenience to employment are likely to dictate the housing choices that bring new residents into the Township. This has significance in that traffic is likely to continue to be a serious issue affecting quality of life in the Township.
- The high proportion of single-family detached homes is as would be expected in a suburban community such as Upper Providence. The Township has a relatively small supply of attached homes, such as townhouse units.
- The housing type combined with relatively high median age and relatively low proportion of families with children suggests that household composition could change in the near future: as older, childless families leave the Township, the type of housing available suggests that they will be replaced by younger families with children. This will result in higher population and additional burdens on public services and the school district, even if no new homes are built.