

CHAPTER FOUR

Community Demographics

Demographic patterns and trends are important to analyze when compiling a comprehensive plan. Population shifts and changes need to be assessed to plan adequately for future land use, community needs, transportation networks, etc. Therefore, in this chapter, the demographics of Whitemarsh are analyzed for past trends, present status and selected future projections. Statistics related to such population characteristics as median age, educational attainment, and employment patterns are analyzed for their relevance to the township's future. This examination also includes how Whitemarsh relates to its surrounding communities and the county. Also, where relevant, historic data is included to provide a clear picture of the changes that have occurred in Whitemarsh. Unless noted, all of the data comes from the decennial U.S. Census.

2000 Township Population

Present day Whitemarsh is divided into five census tracts by the federal government. All are entirely located within the township. Their location is shown in Figure 4-1.

As can be seen by the figures below, the township's most populous region in 2000 was contained in its lower portion along the Germantown and Ridge Pike corridors, especially in Census tract 2031.05, which is the township's second largest tract in terms of area, encompassing Spring Mill, Harmonville, and Miquon, and in tract 2031.04, which is in the heavily developed Lafayette and Barren Hill areas.

Figure 4-2

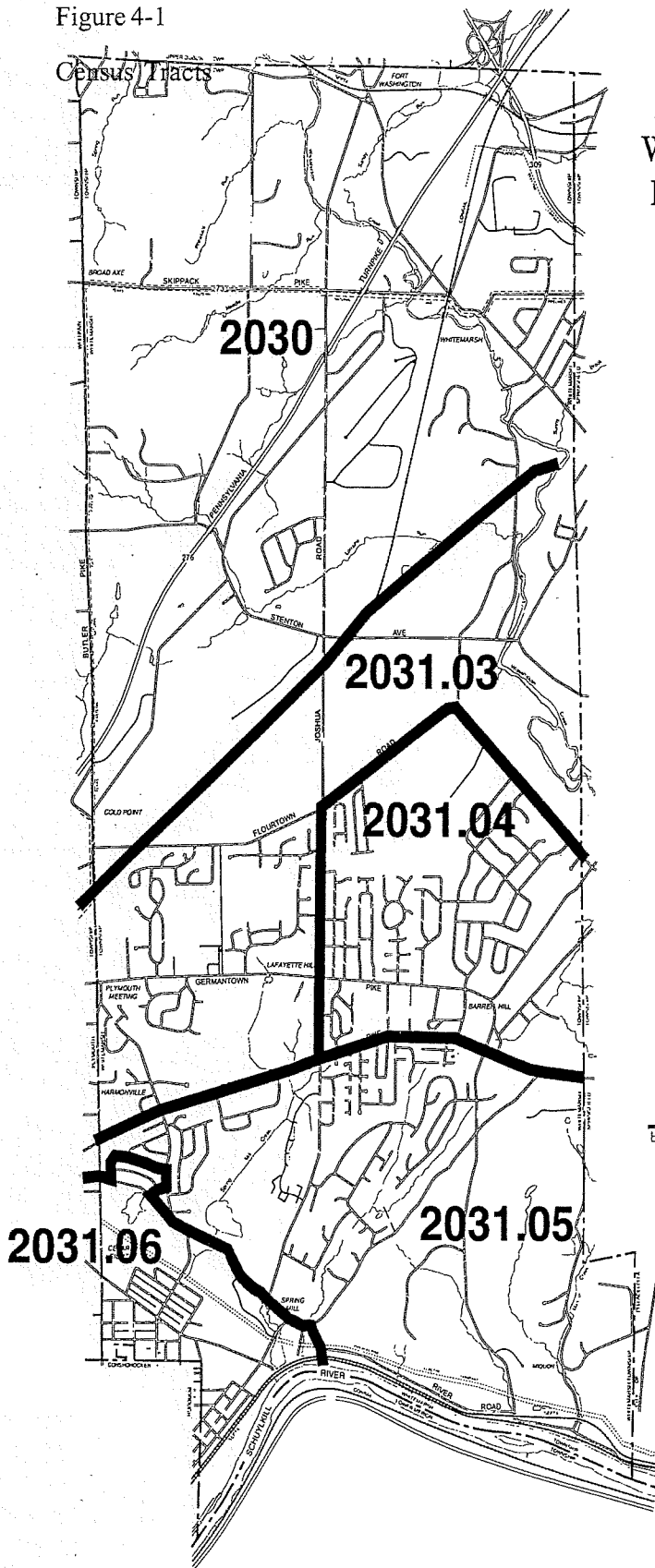
2000 Township Population by Census Tract

Tract	Population Count
2030	2,630
2031.03	2,951
2031.04	4,015
2031.05	5,456
2031.06	1,650
	<i>Total 16,702</i>

Population Changes Over Time

The table below indicates a rather slow, but steady growth rate for the township until the decade of the 1920s when it suddenly boomed. Even during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the township grew by a healthy 13 percent, the second largest total during this 60-year period. A cursory view of the township would seem to indicate that much of this 1920-1940 growth occurred around Conshohocken in the Cedar Heights area. This section of Whitemarsh has the largest percentage of housing from this period. However, there are pockets of Bungalows and American Four Square houses-popular housing styles during this period-throughout the township. This would indicate that, while development was concentrated around Conshohocken, it did occur sporadically elsewhere.

Figure 4-1



Whitemarsh Township
Montgomery County
Pennsylvania

Figure 4-1
CENSUS TRACTS

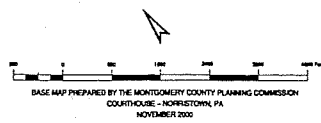


Figure 4-3

Historic Population Changes: 1880-1940

Year	Population	% Change
1880	3,239	—
1890	3,516	+8.5
1900	3,350	-5.0
1910	3,354	+0.2
1920	3,436	+2.2
1930	4,286	+24.7
1940	4,855	+13.0

Source: 1965 Comprehensive Plan

As Figure 4-4 indicates, Whitemarsh experienced a phenomenal growth rate between 1950 and 1960, and reached a population peak in 1970. After that the township experienced a decline over the next two decades that was reversed during the 1990s. This decline can partially be explained by the empty nest syndrome. Nationally, suburban communities that experienced heavy development during the 1950s and 1960s, have declined during the next 20 years as the children of the baby boom generation grew up and left home. However, for Whitemarsh, this decline was relatively low, for it consisted of slightly over 1,000 residents. By 2000 the population rose to a new peak of 16,702. Much of this increase can be attributed to the housing growth which occurred in the township during the 1990s.

Whitemarsh is expected to continue to grow at a relatively modest rate of 8.5% to a population of 18,120 by 2025 (Figure 4-5). Among its immediate neighbors, the township's growth rate is similar to Upper Dublin, which is projected to grow 5.8%. Notably, Whitemarsh's 2025 population will still be below that of Springfield's, which is projected to continue a population decline that began in the 1970s.

Households

The average household size has been declining in recent decades in Whitemarsh, from 3.34 in 1970 to 2.62 in 2002. (see Figure 4-6). This decrease mirrors trends in adjacent communities, the county, and the nation, and is the result of the changing structure of the family and the increase in elderly and nontraditional households. However, the average household size in Whitemarsh remained the same in 2000 as it had been in 1990, a trend unique among its neighbors. During the 1980s Whitemarsh began to experience a growth of non-traditional households, those that differ from the traditional nuclear family. The trend continued during the 1990s. For example, during the 1980s while overall household grew by 11%, nontraditional households accounted for 43.6% of this growth, while traditional household accounted for only 3.6% of this growth. Similarly during the 1990s, while traditional households rose by 8.6%, non-traditional grew by 17.7%. This trend is reflective of the nation as a whole and, in particular, of older first generation post-World War II communities (see Figure 4-7).

Figure 4-4
**Population Changes
 Whitemarsh and Surrounding Areas: 1950-2000**

	1950	1960	% Change 1950-1960	1970	% Change 1960-1970	1980	% Change 1970-1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	Change 1990-2000
Whitemarsh	5,977	12,286	105	15,886	29	14,985	-6.0	14,863 ⁽¹⁾	-0.8	16,702	12
Springfield	11,403	20,652	81	22,394	8.4	20,344	-9.2	19,612	-3.6	19,533	-0.4
Upper Dublin	1,637	10,184	53	19,562	92	22,348	14.2	24,028	7.5	25,878	7.6
Whitpain	3,063	7,331	139	9,295	26	11,772	26.6	15,673	33.1	18,562	18
Plymouth	5,118	11,430	123	16,911	47	17,168	1.5	15,958	-7.0	16,045	0.5
Conshohocken	10,922	10,259	-6	10,195	-0.6	8,591	-16.9	8,064	-6.1	7,589	-5.8
Montgomery County	353,068	516,682	49	624,080	20	643,371	3.1	678,111	5.4	750,097	10.6

Source: 1965 Comprehensive Plan and the US Census.

(1) The 1990 Census under counted Whitemarsh by 48 people and over counted Whitpain by the same amount. The above figure was corrected to reflect this error.

Figure 4-5
Population Projections: 2000-2025

	2000 Census	2010 Projections	2020 Projections	2025 Projections	% Change 2000-2025
Whitemarsh	16,702	17,260	17,680	18,120	8.5
Springfield	19,533	19,490	19,320	19,320	-1.1
Upper Dublin	25,878	26,730	27,150	27,370	5.8
Whitpain	18,562	19,860	21,580	22,480	21.1
Plymouth	16,045	15,850	15,280	15,170	-5.5
Conshohocken	7,589	7,500	7,350	7,800	2.8

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Figure 4-6
Average Household Size

	1970	1980	1990	2000
Whitemarsh	3.39	2.93	2.62 ⁽¹⁾	2.62
Springfield	3.37	2.84	2.57	2.44
Upper Dublin	3.85	3.24	2.86	2.78
Whitpain	3.92	3.06	2.80	2.64
Plymouth	3.65	2.88	2.54	2.43
Conshohocken	3.26	2.72	2.45	2.27
Montgomery County	3.22	2.79	2.58	2.54
United States	3.11	2.75	2.63	2.59

Source: US Census

⁽¹⁾ Remained consistent with 1990

Figure 4-7

Whitemarsh Township Households: 1990 and 2000

	Total Household	Family Households	% of Total	Nonfamily Households ⁽¹⁾	% of Total
1990	5,575	4,231	75.0%	1,344	25.0%
2000	6,179	4,597	74.4%	1,582	25.6%

Source: US Census

(1) Defined by the Census as single households or unrelated people living together exclusive of group quarters/institutions.

Although traditionally considered a bedroom community of single-family houses full of nuclear families, it is notable that in 2000 only 30% of the township’s households are married couples with children under 18 (see Figure 4-8).

Figure 4-8

Detailed Types of Whitemarsh Township Households: 2000

Total Households:	6,179	100.0
Family Households:	4,597	74.4
w/ own children under 18	2,126	34.4
Married Couple Family	3,980	64.4
w/own children under 18	1,853	30.0
Single Female Household	439	7.1
w/own children under 18	196	3.2
Nonfamily Households:	1,582	25.6
Householder Living Alone:	1,284	20.8
Householder over 65 Years:	449	7.3
Average Household Size:	2.62	—
Average Family Size:	3.06	—
Households w/Individuals under 18:	2,222	36.0
Households w/Individuals 65 and Older:	1,557	25.2

Figure 4-8 also shows the graying of the township’s population. Twenty-five percent of the township’s households have one or more members over 65. Below is a breakdown by Census tract of Whitemarsh households (see Figure 4-9).

Figure 4-9

2000 Households - Census Tract

Census Tract	Total
2030	933
2031.03	1,017
2031.04	1,416
2031.05	2,086
2031.06	727

The following section analyzes the individual characteristics of Whitemarsh's current residents.

Population Characteristics

Whitemarsh essentially conforms to the county in its median and age cohort categories. The deviations appear to be slight and statistically insignificant. This is significant because all of Whitemarsh's abutting municipalities, with the exception of Conshohocken, have some of the highest median ages in the county and also rank high for having residents over 65 (see Figures 4-10 and 4-11). The township also generally conforms to the countywide figures for race (see Figure 4-12).

Whitemarsh ranks high throughout the county for its income level. It's median income is nearly \$20,000 more than the county's (see Figure 4-13). It also has 37% of its income producers making over \$100,000 a year.

Not surprising, this affluence is associated with high levels of educational attainment. Over 50% of the township residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher, while over 90% have a high school diploma. The township's higher education attainment level is 13% greater than the county's; however, in regard to high school diplomas it is only 3% greater, an indication of the relatively high level of attainment throughout all of Montgomery County (see Figure 4-14).

Figure 4-10
Median Age: 1990-2000

	Whitemarsh	County
1990	38.3	35.8
2000	39.8	38.2

Implications of the Data

The major implication of the data is that the township will have a steady but slight growth rate through 2025. Currently the township, while more diverse than in its past, is still a stable, relatively affluent community of nuclear families. However, it does have an aging population and, while its median age is significantly lower than that of its neighbors, 16% of its total population is over 65 and 25% of its households have an individual in this age category. Therefore, an important aspect of this plan is to provide for their needs and to ensure that the neighborhoods developed for them remain stable and desirable for future buyers.

Figure 4-11

Age Cohorts as a Percentage of the Total Population: 2000

	PERCENTAGES												
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
Montgomery County	6.3	6.8	7.0	6.1	4.9	13.5	17.1	14.2	5.1	4.0	7.4	5.5	2.0
Whitemarsh	6.7	7.1	6.6	5.5	3.4	13.0	16.8	15.5	5.3	4.2	7.7	5.9	2.1

Figure 4-12

Race Characteristics: 2000

	Whitemarsh Township		Montgomery County	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
White	15,673	93.8	655,447	87.4
Black or African-American	403	2.4	60,052	8.0
American Indian/Alaska Native	24	0.1	2,798	0.4
Asian	663	4.0	32,767	4.4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	—	527	0.1
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	165	1.0	15,300	2.0
Some Other Races	51	0.3	7,975	1.1

Figure 4-13

Household Income by Income Groups: 2000

	0-10,000 % of Total	10,000-14,999 % of Total	15,000-24,999 % of Total	25,000-34,999 % of Total	35,000-49,999 % of Total
Whitemarsh	2.7	2.7	4.6	7.2	11.7
Montgomery County	4.3	3.6	8.1	9.5	14.5
	50,000-74,999 % of Total	75,000-99,999 % of Total	100,000-149,999 % of Total	150,000-199,999 % of Total	200,000+ % of Total
Whitemarsh	19.1	14.6	17.5	8.4	11.4
Montgomery County	21.6	14.9	13.5	4.6	5.4

Median Income 2000:

Whitemarsh	78,630
Montgomery County	60,829

Figure 4-14

Education Attainment: 2000

	9th Grade or Less	High School (no diploma)	High School Degree	Some College (no diploma)	Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Degree
Whitemarsh	2.5	5.9	20.2	14.1	5.8	28.2	23.3
Montgomery County	3.0	8.5	27.3	16.5	5.9	23.1	15.7
	% High School Degree		% College Degree (Bachelor's or higher)				
Montgomery County	88.5		38.7				
Whitemarsh	91.5		51.5				