

Chester County Trends and Housing Policies

Chester County Planning Commission

Brian O'Leary, Executive Director

Planning Commission Role: The Chester County Planning Commission provides guidance on growth management, housing, transportation, open space, and infrastructure to the county government and the county's 73 municipalities.

Growth Trends: Chester County is rapidly growing and expected to continue having extensive growth.

- Current Population. Chester County's 2022 population was 545,823. Nearly 5,000 people were added between 2021 and 2022, which was the most of any county in the state.
- Future Population. The county is forecast to have 645,673 people by 2050, which is another 100,000 residents. From 2015 to 2050, the number of people over the age of 65 is expected to nearly double.
- Growth Hot Spots. Currently, Exton, Phoenixville, Downingtown, Eagle, and Kennett are growth hot spots. Most of these will see more growth in the near term, along with more growth in the Route 322 corridor north of Downingtown.
- Nonresidential Growth. Most of our nonresidential growth is institutional or industrial.

Housing Trends: Despite this growth, the county's housing remains very expensive.

- Total Housing Value. In 2022, there were 7,134 units sold for a median value of \$466,480. This is a relatively strong year for number of sales and is the highest housing value, even adjusting for inflation, that the county has ever had.
- New Housing Prices. Newly built units constructed in 2022 had a median value of \$590,000. Adjusted for inflation, only 2007 had a higher value.
- Housing Construction. A total of 2,537 new homes were built during the year. Of these, 925 were singles, 838 were townhouses or twins, and 774 were apartments. For the past ten years, this is a high number, though not as big as 2021.
- Gentrification. Residents are getting priced out of housing in the middle and eastern parts of the county, pushing people westward. In the west, the county's mobile homes parks may face price increases.
- For more information go to: <https://www.chescoplanning.org/Housing/HousingReport-22.cfm>

Housing Policies: The planning commission is working to expand the diversity of the county's housing supply, particularly market-rate housing types that provide workforce housing for those earning 80% to 120% of the area's median household income.

- CCPC's A+ homes initiative encourages housing that is attractive, affordably-priced, adaptable, aging-friendly, and accessible. <https://www.chescoplanning.org/Housing/aPlusHomes.cfm>
- More missing middle housing needs to be provided, such as duplexes or small apartment buildings. <https://www.chescoplanning.org/Housing/MissingMiddle/Introduction.cfm>
- There are many tools municipalities can use to support housing diversity and affordability, such as bonuses for affordable housing or allowing accessory apartments. <https://www.chescoplanning.org/MuniCorner/eTools/34-AffordableHomes.cfm>
- The county's Housing Choices Committee provides guidance to the planning commission on housing issues. <https://www.chescoplanning.org/housing/ChoicesCommittee.cfm>
- The planning commission is conducting outreach to municipalities on housing, looking for municipal partners for a Starter Home initiative, and exploring the creation of a land bank with the county Department of Community Development.

Foundation Assistance: Foundations could potentially get involved in helping to fund small scale home construction projects or supporting advocacy for more housing choices.