

Chapter VIII - Population Analysis

Population Growth

Wayne County was, for several decades, one of the faster growing counties in the Commonwealth, but at a slower pace than either of its two Pocono neighbors, Monroe and Pike Counties. The County growth rate has though, along with the rest of the nation, slowed considerably during the 21st century. Some of this was due to weak real estate markets at the beginning of this period but there are now additional factors that affect more than just Wayne County.

The County grew by 5,100 persons between 2000 and 2010 inclusive of State and Federal prison population, a 10.7% gain, but then lost 1,667 persons or 3.2% between 2010 and 2020, according to the Census Bureau's latest annual data. See Table VIII-1: Population Change, 2000 – 2020 on the following page for the details. This reversal of trends is also reflected among many other jurisdictions regionally but the Northeast as a whole grew by 4.1% between 2010 and 2020. Pennsylvania grew by 2.4%, while Wayne County and four out of seven surrounding counties lost population. However, COVID interfered with proper Census counts and growth did occur afterward as a result of COVID.

Nearly all such growth taking place can be explained as a consequence of what's happening in the New York City metropolitan area market, New York State, for example, gained 4.2% over the decade. Many of these people are now migrating to Wayne County, but the aging of households has tended to offset many of the gains.

Wayne County's population growth rate exceeded the national average during the 1990s but is now significantly lower. Most of the growth during the 1990s took place in Lake, Paupack and Salem Townships as second homes converted to first homes and existing developments within these communities continued to build out. All three of these municipalities lost population between 2010 and 2020, though, and at faster rates than the County. Lake Township, in fact, lost 8.0%, which is very significant.

Only eight of 28 municipalities gained during the decade and all of these growth rates were less than that of the U.S. as a whole. Only two (Oregon and Mount Pleasant) exceeded the Pennsylvania average. The others (Lebanon, Sterling, Hawley, South Canaan, Cherry Ridge and Damascus) grew, but slower, indicating all of Wayne County is experiencing absolute or relative population decline, although some of this arguably attributable to poor census taking due to the pandemic and factors discussed in the next Chapter.

The proximity of Wayne County to metro areas and patterns in Monroe and Pike Counties over the last several decades suggest the growth rate could easily resume, especially following the COVID pandemic and other issues faced by both New Jersey and New York. Economic issues, nonetheless, put that in doubt. Moreover, Wayne County is more remote than either of those counties and Monroe County also lost population between 2010 and 2020.

Also, aging of the population does not suggest much growth on the horizon although a real estate bump occurred during COVID. The County has many seniors whose households include very few children (see next section on Population Age). This has had major impacts on new household formation and particularly on household sizes, depressing growth rates. Housing affordability is also an issue for young households.

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Table VIII-1: Population Change, 2000 – 2020

Geography	Population 2000	Population 2010	2000-10 Gain/Loss	% Chg.	Population 2020	2010-20 Gain/Loss	% Chg.
United States	281,421,906	308,745,538	27,323,632	9.7%	331,449,281	22,703,743	7.4%
Northeast Region	53,594,378	55,317,240	1,722,862	3.2%	57,609,148	2,291,908	4.1%
New York State	18,976,457	19,378,102	401,645	2.1%	20,201,249	823,147	4.2%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,702,379	421,325	3.4%	13,002,700	300,321	2.4%
Broome County, New York	200,536	200,600	64	0.0%	198,683	-1,917	-1.0%
Delaware County, New York	48,055	47,980	-75	-0.2%	44,308	-3,672	-7.7%
Sullivan County, New York	73,966	77,547	3,581	4.8%	78,624	1,077	1.4%
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania	213,295	214,437	1,142	0.5%	215,896	1,459	0.7%
Monroe County, Pennsylvania	138,687	169,842	31,155	22.5%	168,327	-1,515	-0.9%
Pike County, Pennsylvania	46,302	57,369	11,067	23.9%	58,535	1,166	2.0%
Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania	42,238	43,356	1,118	2.6%	38,434	-4,922	-11.4%
Wayne County*	47,722	52,822	5,100	10.7%	51,155	-1,667	-3.2%
Berlin Township	2,188	2,578	390	17.8%	2,478	-100	-3.9%
Bethany Borough	292	249	-43	-14.7%	241	-8	-3.2%
Buckingham Township	656	528	-128	-19.5%	506	-22	-4.2%
Canaan Township*	1,916	3,963	2,047	106.8%	3,610	-353	-8.9%
Cherry Ridge Township	1,817	1,895	78	4.3%	1,913	18	0.9%
Clinton Township	1,926	2,065	139	7.2%	2,040	-25	-1.2%
Damascus Township	3,662	3,659	-3	-0.1%	3,674	15	0.4%
Dreher Township	1,280	1,412	132	10.3%	1,350	-62	-4.4%
Dyberry Township	1,353	1,402	49	3.6%	1,397	-5	-0.4%
Hawley Borough	1,303	1,211	-92	-7.1%	1,229	18	1.5%
Honesdale Borough	4,874	4,480	-394	-8.1%	4,458	-22	-0.5%
Lake Township	4,361	5,269	908	20.8%	4,850	-419	-8.0%
Lebanon Township	645	662	17	2.6%	678	16	2.4%
Lehigh Township	1,639	1,881	242	14.8%	1,876	-5	-0.3%
Manchester Township	888	828	-60	-6.8%	785	-43	-5.2%
Mount Pleasant Township	1,345	1,381	36	2.7%	1,439	58	4.2%
Oregon Township	745	799	54	7.2%	841	42	5.3%
Palmyra Township	1,127	1,339	212	18.8%	1,251	-88	-6.6%
Paupack Township	2,959	3,828	869	29.4%	3,676	-152	-4.0%
Preston Township	1,107	1,050	-57	-5.1%	1,000	-50	-4.8%
Prompton Borough	243	238	-5	-2.1%	237	-1	-0.4%
Salem Township	3,664	4,271	607	16.6%	4,115	-156	-3.7%
Scott Township	669	523	-146	-21.8%	483	-40	-7.6%
South Canaan Township	1,666	1,768	102	6.1%	1,793	25	1.4%
Starrucca Borough	216	183	-33	-15.3%	169	-14	-7.7%
Sterling Township	1,251	1,450	199	15.9%	1,482	32	2.2%
Texas Township	2,501	2,569	68	2.7%	2,287	-282	-11.0%
Waymart Borough	1,429	1,341	-88	-6.2%	1,297	-44	-3.3%
* Includes State and Federal prison populations							

Source: U.S. Census and ESRI

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The numbers, it is important to note, include State and Federal prison populations that do not necessarily reflect true local population trends. The combined populations of the two prisons in Canaan Township amounted to 1,105 persons in 2000, some 3,069 inmates in 2010 (the Federal prison being opened by that time) and 2,668 individuals in 2020. If these numbers are excluded, the following are the adjusted populations for both Canaan Township and Wayne County:

Table VIII-2: Population Change, 2000 – 2020 (Excluding State/Federal Prison Population)

Geography	Population 2000	Population 2010	2000-10 Gain/Loss	% Chg.	Population 2020	2010-20 Gain/Loss	% Chg.
Wayne County	46,617	49,753	3,136	6.7%	48,487	-1,266	-2.5%
Canaan Township	811	894	83	10.2%	942	48	5.4%

These adjustments have the effect of reducing Wayne County's population to 2.5% for 2010 to 2020 and growing Canaan Township's by 5.4%, which makes it the fastest growing municipality in Wayne County.

Population Age

Table VIII-2 following compares populations aged under 18 years and 65+ years old:

Table VIII-3: Population Age Comparison, 2020

Geography	Population % <18 Years	Population % 65+ Years	Ratio
United States	22.2%	16.8%	1.32
New York State	20.7%	17.5%	1.18
Pennsylvania	20.6%	19.7%	1.05
Broome County, New York	19.4%	26.0%	0.75
Delaware County, New York	16.0%	19.2%	0.83
Sullivan County, New York	21.4%	20.3%	1.05
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania	20.6%	18.5%	1.11
Monroe County, Pennsylvania	19.5%	23.5%	0.83
Pike County, Pennsylvania	17.4%	24.6%	0.71
Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania	18.8%	17.5%	1.07
Wayne County	16.2%	24.8%	0.65

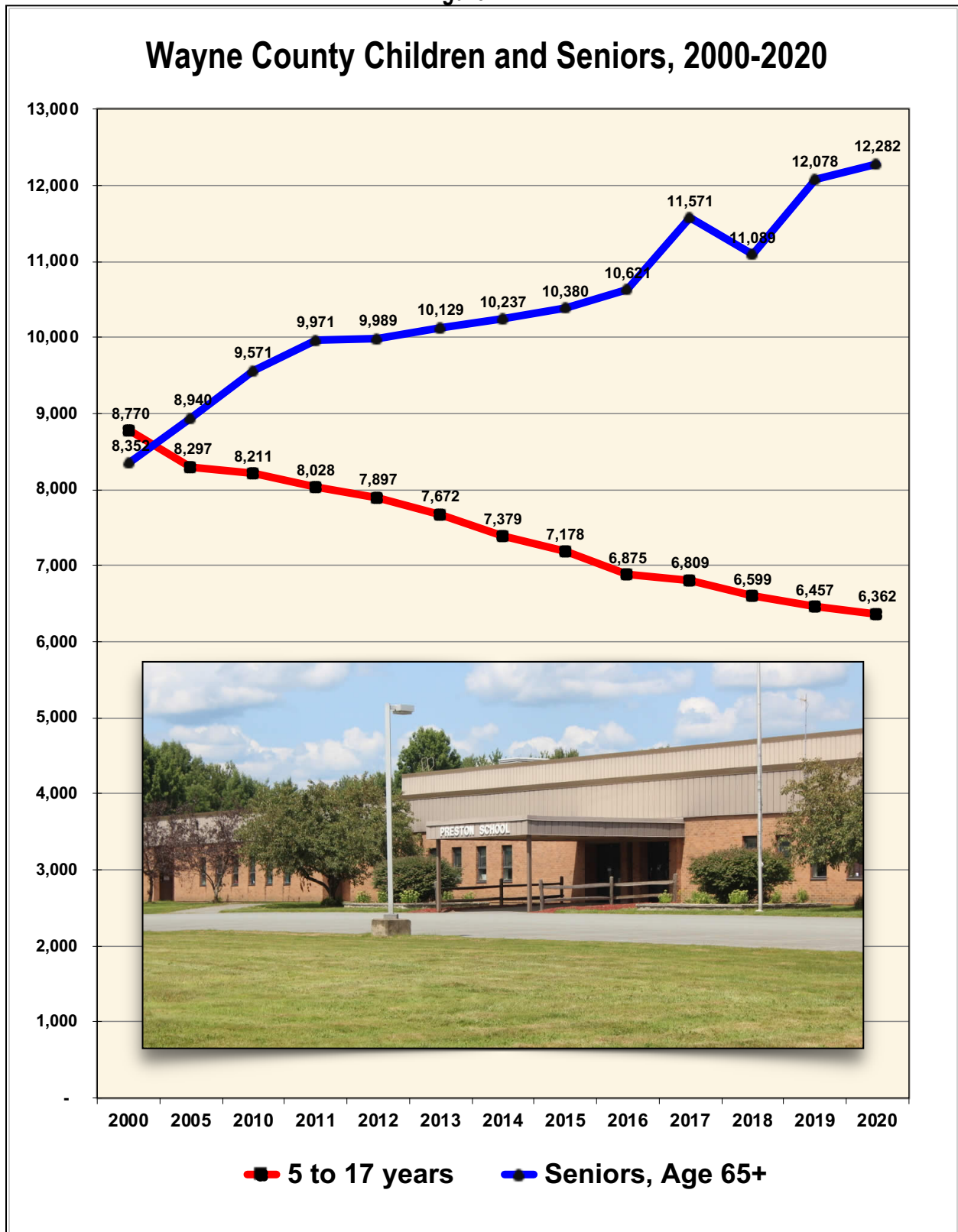
Source: U.S. Census

The ratio of persons under 18 years of age to those 65 or more years old is extremely revealing. The ratio for the United States as a whole is 1.32, more than twice that of Wayne County at only 0.65. Broome, Delaware, Monroe and Pike also have ratios below 1.00 meaning they, too, face future potential problems sustaining school and other infrastructure.

The current pattern in Wayne County is one of rapid aging, median age having gone from 40.8 years in 2000, to 45.8 years in 2010 and 48.7 years in 2020. It is, moreover, projected by ESRI to reach 49.4 years by 2027. The implications for future infrastructure and services planning are serious. Figure VIII-1 following depicts U.S. Census population estimates by age for 2000 to 2020, indicating the senior population is steadily increasing while the school-age population is shrinking at an equally steady pace that began to impact school enrollments early in the century and continues to do so today.

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Figure VIII-1



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2000-2020

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If, as expected for at least the short-term, this trend continues, there will be severe pressure on schools and other providers of family services to reduce their overhead costs by eliminating infrastructure.

It is, as noted in the last update of this plan, economically prohibitive to maintain multiple large facilities for a declining base of students – some growth is essential to replace students lost through aging of the population. School state aid, for example, is typically related in some respects to enrollments and is likely to be affected.

The need for additional health and senior services could also expand at the same time putting the County taxpayers in somewhat of a vise unless there is growth of the commercial tax base. Nursing home demand has declined due to better home care and other options available but those services will be more needed than ever.

Commercial growth is difficult, though, without concurrent growth in the working age population, which is, also, the foundation of the tax base as a whole, there being neither industry nor commerce without workers and shoppers.

Households and Household Sizes

Table VIII-4 summarizes changes in household sizes between 2010 and 2020. Household sizes for the County as a whole declined by an average of 0.07 person or 2.94% for the decade.

They also dropped in 22 of 28 municipalities but in Canaan, Clinton, Lebanon, Mount Pleasant and Oregon Townships and Prompton Borough, there were slight increases. Canaan Township had the largest increase (4.82%) and Sterling Township declined the most (8.27%).

Outside Wayne County, household sizes have also declined, with the exception of Sullivan County, New York, which had a very small gain, probably due to a growing Orthodox population of larger families in the central and eastern part of Sullivan County.

Household size shrinkage is one reason for softening population growth rates in Wayne County (and now Monroe and Pike) and recent declines in school age populations throughout the region. There is also a lack of higher-wage jobs in Wayne County to retain young households seeking good opportunities.

When household sizes will eventually bottom out is unclear. This uncertainty makes it extraordinarily difficult to plan for infrastructure and services. The rate of decline is, though, itself declining, which offers some hope for a reversal in trends.

Ever smaller household sizes temper demand for new housing. Heavy in-migration of metro area households could, nevertheless, change direction in household sizes and lead to some temporary bursts in population as these combine with increased housing construction.

This is essentially what caused the large increases in Monroe and Pike populations during previous decades, although that pattern has now changed somewhat. The one certainty is that patterns are likely to change several times more in the future but, in the short-term, housing growth is having relatively little impact because it is offset by declining household sizes (more houses but with fewer people living in them).

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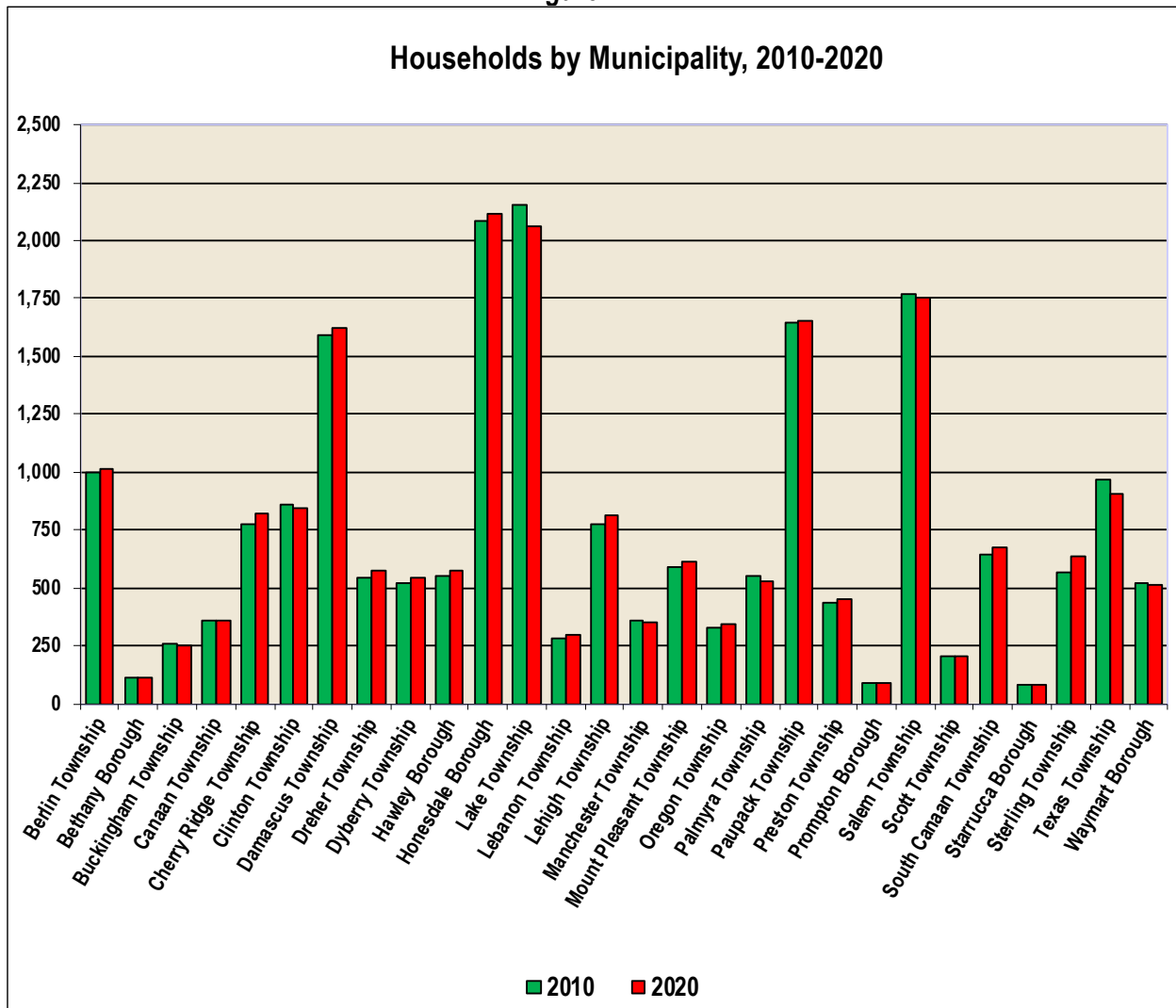
Table VIII-4: Households and Household Sizes, 2010–2020

Geography	HH's 2010	HH's 2020	10-20 Gain/Loss	% Chg.	HH Size 2010	HH Size 2020	10-20 Gain/Loss	% Chg.
United States	116,716,292	126,817,580	10,101,288	8.7%	2.58	2.55	-0.03	-1.16%
Northeast Region	21,215,415	22,376,124	1,160,709	5.5%	2.53	2.50	-0.03	-1.19%
New York State	7,317,755	7,715,755	398,000	5.4%	2.57	2.54	-0.03	-1.17%
Pennsylvania	5,018,904	5,210,598	191,694	3.8%	2.45	2.42	-0.03	-1.22%
Broome County, New York	82,167	82,088	-79	-0.1%	2.32	2.28	-0.04	-1.72%
Delaware County, New York	19,898	19,193	-705	-3.5%	2.29	2.20	-0.09	-3.93%
Sullivan County, New York	30,139	30,183	44	0.1%	2.45	2.46	0.01	0.41%
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania	87,226	88,745	1,519	1.7%	2.37	2.34	-0.03	-1.27%
Monroe County, Pennsylvania	61,091	62,284	1,193	2.0%	2.72	2.65	-0.07	-2.57%
Pike County, Pennsylvania	21,925	23,635	1,710	7.8%	2.59	2.46	-0.13	-5.02%
Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania	17,798	16,297	-1,501	-8.4%	2.42	2.34	-0.08	-3.31%
Wayne County	20,625	20,794	169	0.8%	2.38	2.31	-0.07	-2.94%
Berlin Township	1,002	1,014	12	1.2%	2.55	2.44	-0.11	-4.31%
Bethany Borough	112	112	0	0.0%	2.22	2.15	-0.07	-3.15%
Buckingham Township	259	251	-8	-3.1%	2.04	2.02	-0.02	-0.98%
Canaan Township	359	361	2	0.6%	2.49	2.61	0.12	4.82%
Cherry Ridge Township	773	821	48	6.2%	2.45	2.33	-0.12	-4.90%
Clinton Township	863	848	-15	-1.7%	2.39	2.41	0.02	0.84%
Damascus Township	1,588	1,620	32	2.0%	2.30	2.27	-0.03	-1.30%
Dreher Township	542	575	33	6.1%	2.44	2.29	-0.15	-6.15%
Dyberry Township	523	546	23	4.4%	2.55	2.42	-0.13	-5.10%
Hawley Borough	549	576	27	4.9%	2.21	2.13	-0.08	-3.62%
Honesdale Borough	2,086	2,116	30	1.4%	2.15	2.10	-0.05	-2.33%
Lake Township	2,156	2,059	-97	-4.5%	2.39	2.30	-0.09	-3.77%
Lebanon Township	279	296	17	6.1%	2.24	2.29	0.05	2.23%
Lehigh Township	775	811	36	4.6%	2.43	2.30	-0.13	-5.35%
Manchester Township	360	349	-11	-3.1%	2.30	2.25	-0.05	-2.17%
Mount Pleasant Township	589	613	24	4.1%	2.34	2.35	0.01	0.43%
Oregon Township	331	345	14	4.2%	2.41	2.44	0.03	1.24%
Palmyra Township	551	530	-21	-3.8%	2.43	2.36	-0.07	-2.88%
Paupack Township	1,643	1,654	11	0.7%	2.33	2.22	-0.11	-4.72%
Preston Township	439	448	9	2.1%	2.39	2.23	-0.16	-6.69%
Prompton Borough	92	89	-3	-3.3%	2.59	2.66	0.07	2.70%
Salem Township	1,770	1,750	-20	-1.1%	2.40	2.34	-0.06	-2.50%
Scott Township	207	201	-6	-2.9%	2.53	2.40	-0.13	-5.14%
South Canaan Township	645	678	33	5.1%	2.68	2.59	-0.09	-3.36%
Starrucca Borough	80	78	-2	-2.5%	2.29	2.17	-0.12	-5.24%
Sterling Township	570	636	66	11.6%	2.54	2.33	-0.21	-8.27%
Texas Township	964	906	-58	-6.0%	2.41	2.34	-0.07	-2.90%
Waymart Borough	518	511	-7	-1.4%	2.40	2.38	-0.02	-0.83%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Figure VIII-2



Source: U.S. Census

Population Density

Changes in population density also reveal much about the County's growth patterns. Wayne County had a population density of only 69 persons per square mile in 2020, compared to 291 persons per square mile for the Commonwealth as a whole. Overall, Wayne County continues to be one of Pennsylvania's most rural counties, ranking 46th in total density. The U.S. population density as a whole was 94 persons per square mile in 2020, some 25 persons per square mile higher than Wayne County. The spread was only 17 persons per square mile in 2010 and even lower prior, meaning Wayne is consistently becoming relatively more rural.

Population density within Wayne County varies a great deal. The highest density is found in the Borough of Hawley where it was 2,182 persons per square mile in 2020. The lowest density was in Buckingham Township, which had only 10 persons per square mile. Scott Township was very similar. Other municipalities with high population densities included Honesdale, Waymart, Texas, Lake and Lehigh.

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Migration

Wayne County experienced minor net out-migration between 2016 and 2020 as the following Table VIII-5 indicates:

Table VIII-5: Migration to/from Wayne County, 2016–2020

Notable Sources of Migration	Migration to Wayne County	Migration from Wayne County	Net to Wayne County
United States	2,821	2,926	(105)
Pennsylvania	1,470	1,487	(17)
• Dauphin	10	102	(92)
• Lackawanna	469	290	179
• Monroe	69	31	38
• Pike	120	423	(303)
• Susquehanna	93	42	51
New Jersey	297	14	283
• Bergen	154	0	154
• Morris	29	0	29
• Passaic	19	0	19
• Sussex	29	0	29
New York	426	215	211
• New York City	129	61	68
Florida	85	139	(54)
North Carolina	157	83	74
South Carolina	13	200	(187)

Source: U.S. Census, 2020

Wayne County had more in-migration from Lackawanna County than anywhere else between 2016 and 2020 and 179 more people came from there than went from Wayne to Lackawanna. The trend was the opposite for Pike County, which received a net 303 residents from Wayne County. Northern New Jersey, New York City and North Carolina were significant sources of in-migration and Florida and South Carolina were significant destinations for out-migration.

Population Projections

The following Table VIII-6 provides ESRI projections of population for Wayne County to the year 2027, the trend being one of generally expected stability.

Table VIII-6: Population Projections

Category	2020 Census	2022 ESRI Estimate	2027 ESRI Projection
Population	51,155	50,700	50,528
Households	20,794	20,623	20,666

Source: ESRI