

COMMUNITY PROFILE

City of New Kensington, Westmoreland County

REGIONAL SETTING

The City of New Kensington is 4.0 square miles in size, located along the Allegheny River in Westmoreland County. New Kensington has a population of approximately 14,701 people and is bordered by Plum on the South, Arnold on the North, Frazer on the West and Upper Burrell on the East.

The City's defining feature is an attractive downtown business district comprising of approximately 18 blocks. The community has a well developed, well used park adjacent to the downtown district.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Westmoreland County

(Taken from inwestmoreland.com)

During the French and Indian War, in the middle of the 18th century, Britain and France fought for control of North America. In 1758, in what would become part of Eastern Westmoreland County, General John Forbes began a road across Pennsylvania. Forbes' Road was guarded by fortifications, and its ultimate aim was of aiding in the attack on Fort Duquesne. One of these fortifications along the Loyalhanna he named "Fort Ligonier" after Sir John Ligonier, his commander in Great Britain. In 1763, the Battle of Bushy Run decided the fate of the region in favor of the English, and by 1773, Westmoreland County was born.

The first county established in Pennsylvania west of the Allegheny Mountains, Westmoreland County originally encompassed a vast area of Western Pennsylvania, including what is today Fayette, Greene, and Washington counties. Parts of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, and Indiana counties were also included in this "Mother of Counties."

The home of Robert Hanna was originally used for the county courts, and historic Hanna's Town, near Greensburg, PA, remains an ongoing archeological dig, a site registered with the National Register of Historic Places.

Today the Westmoreland County Courthouse is located in downtown Greensburg. Constructed in the Italian Renaissance style in 1906, it is the fourth courthouse to be built on the spot, and its main feature is a central dome 175 feet high. Designed by architect William Kauffman (1857 – 1945), the original courtrooms feature beautiful murals, Edwardian chandeliers, and deep coved ceilings.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Westmoreland County grew on the strength of the coal, steel, and rail industries, and while manufacturing remains a critical component of its economy, the 21st century is likely to see Westmoreland County making progress towards service and technology industries. Westmoreland County has been considered as one of the possible routes for the Pennsylvania High-speed Maglev project, and whatever occurs in the future for commerce and industry, it is certain that Westmoreland County has the workforce, intellectual resources, committed industry and governmental leaders, and the community spirit to remain a great place to live and work in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

New Kensington

(Taken from Community's own profile)

New Kensington was founded in 1891. In 1890, the Burrell Improvement Company considered the advantages of the level land south of its home in Lower Burrell, and deemed it a prime location for a city and named the area "Kensington," which was later changed to New Kensington for postal purposes.

In an attempt to make New Kensington comparable to Pittsburgh, the streets were named with numbers. Avenues ran parallel to the river, while streets were perpendicular. 4th and 5th Avenues are the main commercial streets.

Once the land was surveyed, a public sale was held on June 10, 1891. Thousands of people flooded the area and investors began bringing industry with them. The first large company was the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, which later became ALCOA. They acquired 3.5 acres that allowed the company to exploit their closeness to the riverfront. The aluminum industry was born in New Kensington.

Eventually companies such as Adams Drilling, Goldsmith and Lowerburg, New Kensington Milling, New Kensington Brewing, Logan Lumber, Keystone Dairy, and many more were built late in the 19th Century and have continued into the twentieth century. Early achievements in New Kensington included a railroad station, the 9th street Bridge, a passenger boat that navigated the Allegheny, a street car line that ran to Natrona, the "Kensington Dispatch" newspaper, a fire department, hotel, opera house and YMCA.

New Kensington was known through the 1930's to 1970's as the shopping district of the entire valley. With the establishment of the Monroeville Mall and the other malls to follow, the downtown shopping area began to decline, resulting as well in a declining tax base. A K-Mart store was established on Tarentum Bridge Road in New Kensington, and this began another business district near a bridge on which approximately 32,806 vehicles pass daily. Originally seen as an advantage, the downside was that the new K-Mart put even more of the smaller merchants in the downtown business district at risk and many closed up, thus leaving the downtown area to suffer even more damage and blight.

As a full service city, New Kensington has grown and has expanded to 5 Fire Departments, a 24 person Police Department and Rescue Team and Ambulance Service. The City is home to the Peoples Library, over 15 churches, 9 banks, 2 elementary schools, 1 parochial school, 1 high school and a branch campus of Penn State University. Its major health facility – Citizens General Hospital - closed approximately five years ago, resulting in the loss of approximately 400 jobs.

The City of New Kensington has been engaged in various redevelopment initiatives over the past ten years, beginning in 1996 with the preparation of a Redevelopment Plan for the Fifth Avenue downtown business area, which was subsequently put on hold. In 2003, however, the City and the Redevelopment Authority began to aggressively address the project again. Although the City of New Kensington has a number of specific redevelopment plans in place, it does not have a comprehensive plan/vision in place.

In spite of certain acknowledged weaknesses in its economy, New Kensington's location and accessibility, an aggressive City government, and a good infrastructure are characteristics which attract people to the community.

DEMOGRAPHICS

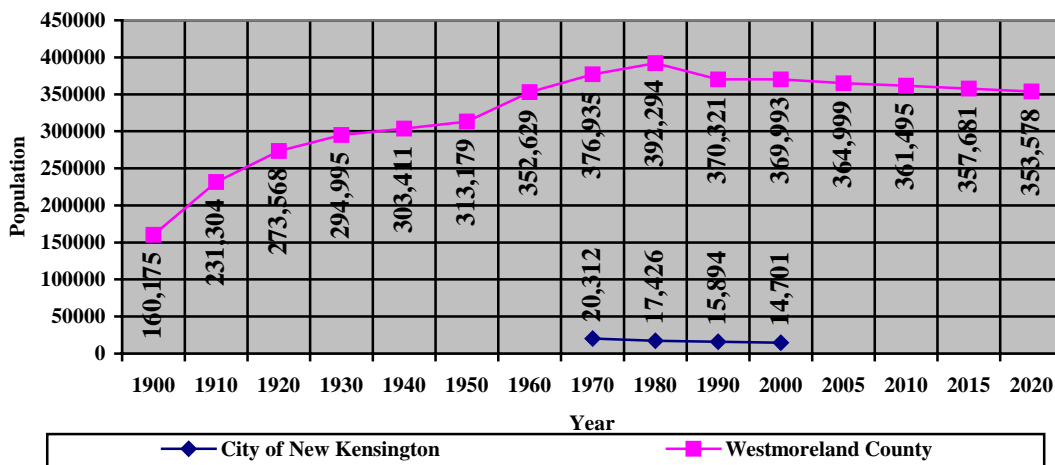
In order to enable an assessment of the present and future needs of the City of New Kensington and its residents, a broad analysis of demographic factors is presented in this profile. Reviewing population trends and estimates, age distribution, and employment enables the City to better understand the needs and concerns of the community. This examination also helps to enable planning to occur relative to, for example, the amount and type of services that may be required. The data also provides an understanding of the City's future position within the County. All following data used in the profile is extracted from 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census. (U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau).

Population

Trends and Forecasts

Over the past hundred years, the population of Westmoreland County and the City of New Kensington has changed significantly. These changes have followed the same pattern as many other metropolitan areas of the United States. Westmoreland County's population grew steadily and from 1900 to 1980 (the peak period of growth) increased 59.2%. Starting in the 1980's, Westmoreland County's population began to decline as the population sprawled to suburbia past the county borders. From 1980 to 2000, there was a population decrease of 6.0% in Westmoreland County's population. Currently, Westmoreland County's population is predicted to decrease slightly another 4.6% from 2000 to 2020. Similarly, New Kensington's population has grown and declined over the past thirty years; from 20,312 in 1970 to its current level of 14,701; a decline of 38.2% (See figure 2-1 – Population Trends and Forecasts). What is uncertain is the proportion – if any – of the projected decline in the population of Westmoreland County will occur in New Kensington.

Figure 2-1 - POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS



Racial Composition

With a sizeable White percentage (87.4% in 2000), the racial composition of New Kensington has remained relatively stable over the past twenty years, despite a decrease of 5.0 percent in the White population, a 2.6 percent increase in the Black population, a 0.3 percent increase in the Latino population and a 2.1 percent increase in the Other populations of New Kensington. An analysis of Westmoreland County shows a similar pattern over the past twenty years, with a 1.4 percent decrease in the White population, a 0.4 percent increase in the Black population, and a 0.2 percent increase in the Latino population. There was a 0.9 percent decrease in the Other populations. (See Table 2-1 – Racial Composition, 1980-2000)

**TABLE 2-1
RACIAL COMPOSITION, 1980-2000**

	White	Black	Latino	Other
City of New Kensington				
1980%	92.4%	7.1%	0.4%	0.1%
1990%	90.3%	8.4%	0.7%	0.5%
2000%	87.4%	9.7%	0.7%	2.2%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-5.0%	2.6%	0.3%	2.1%
Westmoreland County				
1980%	97.6%	1.6%	0.3%	0.4%
1990%	97.2%	1.8%	0.3%	0.6%
2000%	96.2%	2.0%	0.5%	1.3%
Percent Change 1980-2000	-1.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.9%

Age Distribution

The age distribution of a community can suggest the levels of service and infrastructure necessary to meet the future needs of the various age groups. It can help to forecast future educational, recreational, and elderly facilities that may be needed. Table 2-2 compares the age distribution of New Kensington and Westmoreland County between 1990 and 2000. Based upon the aggregate data, the age distribution of the population of New Kensington and Westmoreland County has remained fairly stable, with little evidence of any dramatic shifts from 1990 and 2000. Moreover, when various age groups such as those 25 and under and 60 years of age or older are considered, there is little difference in the percent of each grouping in 2000. However, what is missing is data relative to changes in the age distribution based upon race in New Kensington which has a sizeable Black population of almost 10%.

**TABLE 2-2
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1990 AND 2000**

	City of New Kensington					Westmoreland County				
	1990 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	2000 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	Percent Change	1990 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	2000 Pop.	Percent of Pop.	Percent Change
00-04	1,108	7.0	784	5.3	-1.7	22,122	6.0	19,175	5.2	-0.8
05-09	1,020	6.4	936	6.4	0.0	23,235	6.3	22,897	6.2	-0.1
10-14	898	5.6	922	6.3	0.7	23,516	6.4	24,430	6.6	0.2
15-19	819	5.2	813	5.5	0.3	23,950	6.5	23,040	6.2	-0.3
20-24	862	5.4	683	4.6	-0.8	22,091	6.0	16,794	4.5	-1.5
25-34	2,355	14.8	1,686	11.5	-3.3	54,572	15.0	42,331	11.4	-3.6
35-44	2,075	13.1	2,236	15.2	2.1	56,190	15.0	59,467	16.1	1.1
45-54	1,461	9.2	2,054	14.0	4.8	40,626	11.0	55,925	15.1	4.1
55-59	726	4.6	771	5.2	0.6	18,912	5.1	20,664	5.6	0.5
60-64	1,036	6.5	636	4.3	-2.2	21,635	5.8	17,489	4.7	-1.1
65-74	2,103	13.2	1,479	10.1	-3.1	38,606	10.0	34,453	9.3	-0.7
75-84	423	2.7	1,326	9.0	6.3	19,615	5.0	25,691	6.9	1.9
85+	271	1.7	375	2.6	0.9	5,251	1.4	7,637	2.1	0.7
Total	15,894	100	14,701	100		370,321	100	369,993	100	

Economics

Income and Education

The U.S. Census Bureau records income in two categories. Household income is defined as the yearly earnings of a group of unrelated people or one person living alone. Family income comprises a group of two or more people residing together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. As more residents obtain diplomas and degrees, their income earning potential improves, creating a direct positive correlation between the two. Table 2-3 shows that educational attainment in New Kensington increased in almost every category. However, when the percent of those in 2000 with some higher education and above are considered, there is considerable disparity between New Kensington and Westmoreland County, with the former at 46.7% and the latter with 71.2%. Also, while median family income has increased in New Kensington over the past twenty years, the actual dollar difference between New Kensington and Westmoreland County has also increased over the past ten years from \$2,599 to \$8,044. Moreover, New Kensington's median family income of 37,952 (in 2000), is below the State's median income of \$40,106.

**TABLE 2-3
INCOME AND EDUCATION, 1980-2000**

Income and Education	City of New Kensington	Westmoreland County
1980		
Median Household Income	\$13,215	\$17,795
Median Family Income	\$17,060	\$20,469
NO DEGREE	34.5%	31.4%
High School Graduate	43.1%	45.7%
Some higher education	10.0%	10.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	12.4%	12.4%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a
1990		
Median Household Income	\$21,525	\$25,736
Median Family Income	\$28,761	\$31,360
NO DEGREE	24.1%	36.1%
High School Graduate	41.0%	42.0%
Some higher education	20.4%	14.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	14.5%	15.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.7%	5.0%
2000		
Median Household Income	\$30,505	\$37,106
Median Family Income	\$37,952	\$45,996
NO DEGREE	17.2%	31.3%
High School Graduate	41.4%	41.2%
Some higher education	25.6%	44.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	15.9%	20.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	5.2%	6.6%
Percent Change from 1980-2000		
Median Household Income	56.7%	52.0%
Median Family Income	55.0%	55.5%
NO DEGREE	-17.3%	-0.1%
High School Graduate	-1.7%	-4.5%
Some higher education	15.6%	34.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	3.5%	7.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	n/a	n/a

Employment

Based upon the analysis of Table 2-4, several employment characteristics are evident. In 2000, the percent of New Kensington's population that is in the labor force increased by 5.1% from 1980, despite a 22.7% decrease in New Kensington's population of persons 16 years old and over. Over the past twenty years, the percent of unemployment in New Kensington averaged 4.3. By comparison, Westmoreland County's population of individuals 16 years and over fell 1.3% and its labor force increased 3.1%. Unemployment in the County averaged 3.8 percent over the past twenty years.

Relative to poverty, the percent of New Kensington families falling at or below the level was 8.5, which was slightly higher than the State average of 7.8 percent.

**TABLE 2-4
EMPLOYMENT, 1980-2000**

	City of New Kensington		Westmoreland County	
	No. of Persons	%	No. of Persons	%
1980				
Persons 16 years and Over	14,341	100.0%	302,139	100.0%
In labor Force	7,270	50.7%	170,008	56.3%
Civilian Labor Force	7,270	50.7%	169,886	56.2%
Employed	6,540	45.6%	156,687	51.9%
Unemployed	730	5.1%	13,199	4.4%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	122	0.0%
Not in Labor Force	7,071	49.3%	132,131	43.7%
1990				
Persons 16 years and Over	12,886	100.0%	296,596	100.0%
In labor Force	6,582	51.1%	170,896	57.6%
Civilian Labor Force	6,582	51.1%	170,657	57.5%
Employed	6,097	47.3%	158,570	53.5%
Unemployed	485	3.8%	12,087	4.1%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	239	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	6,104	47.4%	125,700	42.4%
2000				
Persons 16 years and Over	11,692	100.0%	298,300	100.0%
In labor Force	6,519	55.8%	177,124	59.4%
Civilian Labor Force	6,497	55.6%	176,959	59.3%
Employed	6,025	51.5%	167,853	56.3%
Unemployed	472	4.0%	9,106	3.1%
Armed Forces	22	0.2%	165	0.1%
Not in Labor Force	5,173	44.2%	121,176	40.6%
Percent Change from 1980-2000				
Persons 16 years and Over	-22.7%	n/a	-1.3%	n/a
In labor Force	5.1%	n/a	3.1%	n/a
Civilian Labor Force	4.9%	n/a	3.1%	n/a
Employed	5.9%	n/a	4.4%	n/a
Unemployed	-1.1%	n/a	-1.3%	n/a
Armed Forces	0.2%	n/a	0.1%	n/a
Not in Labor Force	-5.1%	n/a	-3.1%	n/a

Housing and Real Estate

Not unlike many older urban areas in Westmoreland County, the proportion of housing 30 years or older (85.9%) in New Kensington is high, indicating that there has been relatively little new housing built in the last ten years. (See figure 2-2) The data further suggests that the level of occupancy of existing housing has decreased 4.6% over the past decade. What is not known, however, is the quality of the occupied housing units. It is also significant to note that over the past decade, the number of units valued at over \$100,000 has increased by 14.6%; a characteristic that might reflect the general increasing value of housing in Westmoreland County. (See figure 2-3). On the other hand, the housing market analysis of the City of New Kensington as whole suggests that real estate values may be more depressed than in the County as a whole. While the exact level of affordability of rental housing cannot be fully determined, the data indicates that approximately 19.4 percent of New Kensington families spend 30% (the generally accepted threshold of affordability) or more of their household income for rent. This relatively low percent indicates that there is a reasonably affordable supply of rental units in New Kensington.

Figure 2-2 - AGE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

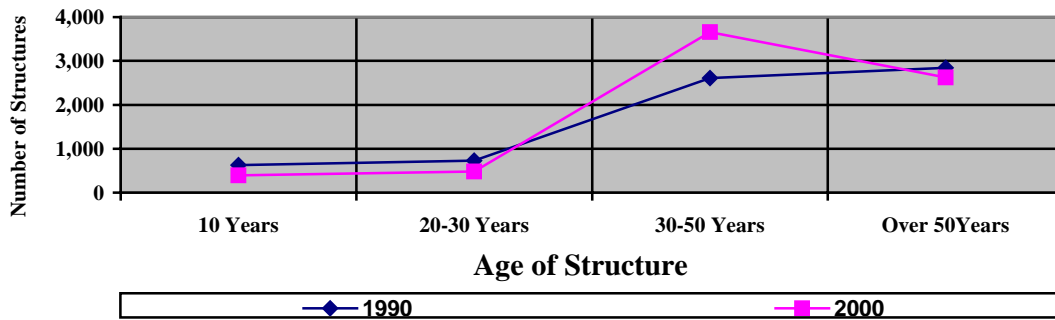


Figure 2-3 - VALUE OF STRUCTURE, 1990 AND 2000

