

CHAPTER 7

EVALUATION OF GROWTH AREAS

In addition to establishing open space preservation areas, it is important to identify areas that can accommodate any projected community growth. While virtually all of Rockledge is built out, there is some room for both residential and non-residential infill development. This chapter examines the direction of population and employment changes expected in Rockledge and evaluates whether the municipality needs to identify specific growth areas.

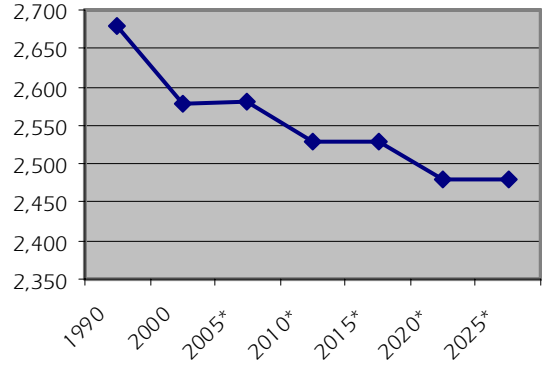
POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

From 1990 to 2000 the Borough's population declined by 3.8 percent to 2,577. The drop in population is part of a larger pattern of declining population in the region's urban areas and Boroughs. By the year 2025, DVRPC projects Rockledge's residential population will decrease modestly to 2,480 persons, or 97

fewer than the Borough had in 2000 (Figure 7.1). In addition, it is expected to have about 1,200 people employed, up from 1,150, in 2000 (Figure 7.2). As population is projected to decline by 2025, so will Rockledge's average household size; however this is not expected to make up for the decrease in new units

Figure 7.1:
Population Projection

Year	Population	Years	% Change
1990	2,679	1990-2000	-3.8%
2000	2,577	2000-2010	-1.8%
2005*	2,580	2010-2020	-2.0%
2010*	2,530	2000-2025	-3.8%
2015*	2,530		
2020*	2,480		
2025*	2,480		

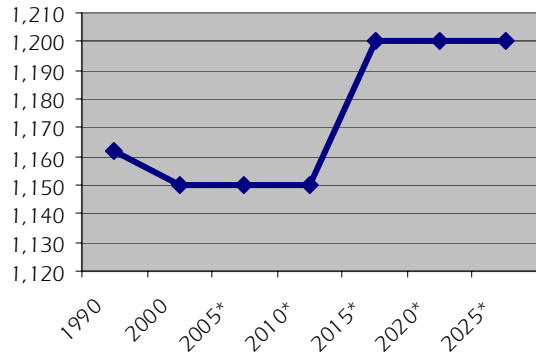


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000; DVRPC Projections

* Projected Populations

Figure 7.2:
Employment Forecast

Year	Total Employment	Years	% Change
1990	1,162	1990-2000	-1.0%
2000	1,150	2000-2010	0.0%
2005*	1,150	2010-2020	4.4%
2010*	1,150	2000-2025	4.4%
2015*	1,200		
2020*	1,200		
2025*	1,200		



***Source:** DVRPC Forecasts

Figure 7.3
Residential Build-out Estimate

Residential	2025
Projected Population in HHs	2,480
Projected Average HH Size	2.36
Vacancy Rate	1.6%
Projected Future Housing Units Needed	1,068
Existing Housing Units (2000)	1,091
New Housing Units Needed	-23

needed (Figure 7.3). Therefore, no particular future growth area needs to be delineated for Rockledge.

Rockledge is expected to experience revitalization rather than growth. While the number of residents in Rockledge may not increase over the next twenty years, changes in demographics are likely to occur. For example, the Borough’s homes are relatively affordable compared to the rest of Montgomery County. This may make the Borough increasingly attractive to age groups that contain first-time homebuyers looking for affordability and “empty-nesters” seeking to downsize to the type of home found in Rockledge (smaller on average than the larger homes typically found in the newer suburbs). New and existing residents will come to expect advances in the Borough, such as a revitalized Huntingdon Pike commercial area, and upgrades to housing, municipal facilities, and passive and active open space areas.

VULNERABLE AREAS

As stated in Chapter 6, there are a few sizable areas considered vulnerable to potential future development. This includes the undeveloped portions of the Lawnview and Montefiore Cemeteries within the Borough

itself. Adjacent to the Borough, in Abington Township, are two other vulnerable areas: the relatively undeveloped properties of Medical Mission Sisters to the east, and the Sisters of St. Basile to the west.

RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT POTENTIAL

There are three areas designated vulnerable to development in the Borough (see Figure 6.1). The two larger parcels are undeveloped portions of cemetery properties which lie in the IN-Institutional zoning district. If these areas are developed in the future under current zoning, uses that could be built include: institutions for the care of the aged or children, or schools and other educational facilities (including boarding). No residential uses are permitted. The undeveloped portion of Lawnview Cemetery that lies in the Borough is approximately 10.4 acres. The undeveloped portion of Montefiore Cemetery which lies in the Borough is approximately 6.2 acres.

If the lowest-density housing currently permitted in the Borough was permitted on these parcels, up to 75 homes could be built on the parcel on Huntingdon Pike and up to 45 homes could be built on the smaller parcel on Church Road. The density used in these calculations is one home per 6,000 square feet (the density permitted in the SUR-Single-Family Urban Residential District).

The other vulnerable area in Rockledge (.44 acres) lies in the Limited Industrial District; residential uses are not permitted in this district.

