

City Profile



An ornamental iron fence alongside the Central Moravian Church on Church Street



Bethlehem in the Lehigh Valley

Bethlehem is a business hub and a residential growth center. The City’s 19.4 square miles straddle the Lehigh County-Northampton County boundary, much of which is formed by the Monocacy Creek. About three-quarters of the City’s land and population is on the Northampton County side and one quarter in Lehigh County.

Identifying the Lehigh Valley

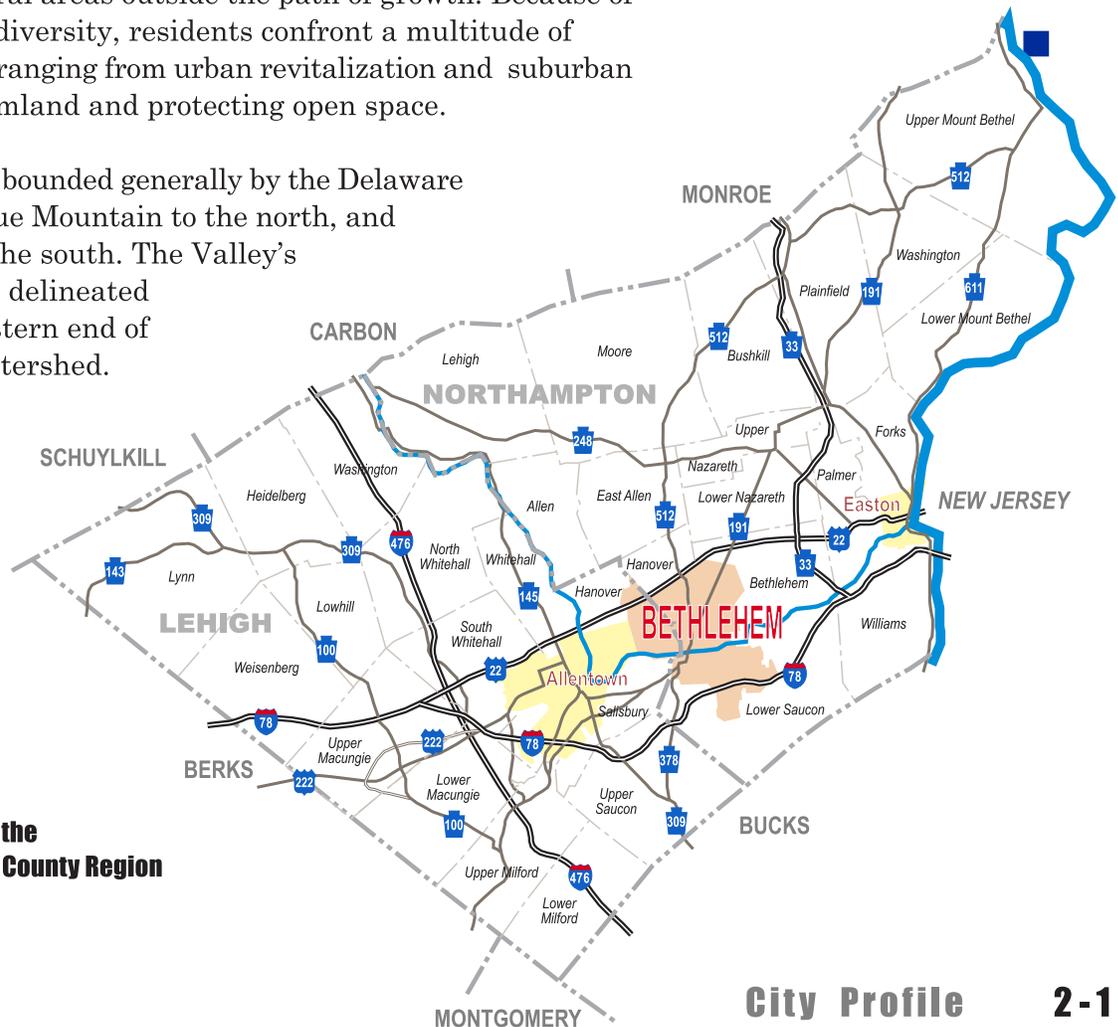
The Lehigh Valley encompasses Lehigh County and Northampton County. The cities of Allentown (in Lehigh County), Bethlehem (in both counties), and Easton (in Northampton County) are the region’s three cities.

The Lehigh Valley also includes all of the townships and boroughs in both counties. The boroughs are typically small, older communities with only limited undeveloped land. The townships of the Lehigh Valley range widely – from stable suburbs to rapidly growing bedroom communities and rural areas outside the path of growth. Because of the Lehigh Valley’s diversity, residents confront a multitude of development issues, ranging from urban revitalization and suburban sprawl to saving farmland and protecting open space.

The Lehigh Valley is bounded generally by the Delaware River to the east, Blue Mountain to the north, and South Mountain to the south. The Valley’s western boundary is delineated generally by the western end of the Lehigh River watershed.



Broad Street in downtown Bethlehem



City of Bethlehem within the Northampton and Lehigh County Region

Bethlehem Demographics

Following the release of the 2000 census, the City of Bethlehem issued *Bethlehem, Pennsylvania - General Population and Housing Characteristics From the 2000 U.S. Census*. Highlights from that report and the Census Bureau’s 2006 estimates show that Bethlehem’s population is:

- Increasing again
- Growing older
- Becoming more racially diverse
- Creating demand for new housing
- Causing the number of rental units to grow faster than owner-occupied homes
- Encompassing concentrations of low income households

The official 2010 U.S. Census will be the next opportunity to comprehensively update the City’s demographic information.

Population

- In July 2006, Bethlehem was home to an estimated 72,704 people. Between 2000 and 2006, the City reversed a decade of decline by adding 1,375 new residents. During the 1990's Bethlehem’s population decreased by 99 persons. The high water mark was the 1960 census, which recorded 75,408 Bethlehem residents.
- As of the 2006 estimates, Bethlehem was Pennsylvania’s seventh largest city behind Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Allentown, Erie, Reading, and Scranton (in that order).
- With an estimated 2006 population of 107,294, Allentown is the most populous of the Lehigh Valley’s three cities. As of 2006, Bethlehem was second with 72,704 residents, followed by Easton with 26,209 persons.
- While second in total population, Bethlehem is the fastest growing of the three Lehigh Valley cities. Between 2000 and 2006, Bethlehem’s population grew by 1.9%. Allentown added 0.6% and Easton declined by 2.1%.
- During the 1990's, Northeast Bethlehem and West Bethlehem each added new residents, while Central Bethlehem and South Bethlehem each lost population. (Please see accompanying map).

Population by City Neighborhood



Neighborhood	1990 Population	2000 Population
Central Bethlehem	18,838	18,556
Northeast Bethlehem	15,431	15,779
South Bethlehem	18,292	17,965
West Bethlehem	18,867	19,029



Borinquen Fest celebrates Puerto Rican heritage



Musikfest - fun for all ages



Age

- Residents over 65 years old are slowly increasing as a proportion of all residents. Residents under 24 years old are gradually comprising a smaller part of the total.

Race and Ethnicity

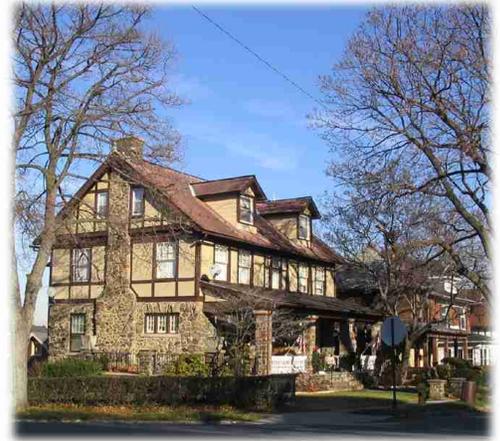
- Hispanics are the fastest growing segment of Bethlehem's population. Residents of Hispanic origin grew by 40% during the 1990's. In 2000, Hispanics accounted for 18% of Bethlehem's population.
- The City's African American population increased by 25% during the 1990's. In 2000, African Americans comprised 4% of all City residents.

Households

- The "typical" household is changing in Bethlehem, just as it is nationwide. Later marriages, more divorces, fewer children, and a wider diversity of lifestyles have led to more smaller households and a shrinking average household size.
- In Bethlehem, the average number of persons per household dropped from 2.48 in 1990 to 2.34 in 2000.
- During the 1990's Bethlehem's female-headed households increased significantly and the percentage of people living in two-parent household decreased.

Housing

- Bethlehem’s housing stock increased by 4% between 1990 and 2000 from 28,486 units to 29,631 units. Because of shrinking average household size, housing unit numbers usually increase even when communities are not adding new population.
- Citywide, the number of owner-occupied housing units decreased by 1.8% between 1990 and 2000. During this same period, renter-occupied homes grew by 10.8% . The biggest change in the owner/renter balance was in South Bethlehem.



Bethlehem’s housing stock features a wide-range of architectural styles

Income

- Bethlehem residents living below the federal poverty level grew by 16% between 1990 and 2000. The “poverty level” varies according to how many people live in the household. The federal government adjusts it regularly to account for inflation.
- Percentage of City residents below poverty level in 2000 by area:

<i>South Bethlehem:</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>West Bethlehem:</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>Central Bethlehem:</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>Northeast Bethlehem:</i>	<i>5%</i>



South Side Bethlehem's 3rd Street Corridor

