

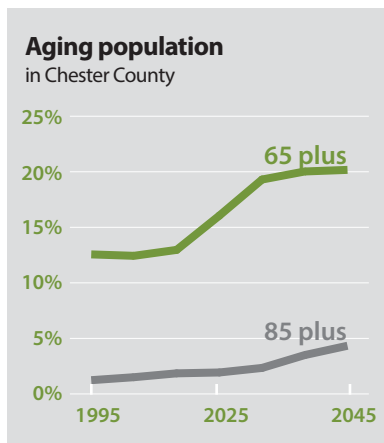
COMMUNITY HEALTH

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

Constitution of the World Health Organization

Aging friendly communities

By 2045, the Baby Boomer 65 and over population is expected to increase from 13% to at least 20% (65,000 to 129,000 residents) in Chester County. Planning for this significant increase in the aging population is critical so that Chester County residents can choose to age in place and remain in a community that reflects their changing lifestyles and physical capabilities. Many communities outside of the urban centers in Chester County lack the facilities necessary to allow this, resulting in the aging populations either moving back into more livable communities that provide housing and public transportation options, walkable ADA accessible public facilities, community services, and opportunities to remain active, or into isolated senior community developments.



Chester County is considered to be Pennsylvania's healthiest county in 2016 by the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Program. While Chester County has many elements working in its favor towards achieving this ranking relative to health behaviors (smoking, obesity, alcohol consumption, etc.), access to clinical care, and social & economic factors, Chester County ranks in the bottom half of PA counties with respect to the physical environment (air/water quality, driving alone/long commute).

An alarming trend is the number of Chester County school aged children considered to be overweight and obese as it has increased 46% between 2005–06 and 2012–13. This trend must be reversed if the younger generations of Chester County residents are to live as healthy and as long as previous generations.

Healthiest county!
Chester County is **1st in Pennsylvania** but ranked **36th** out of 67 counties in **physical environment**

Childhood obesity

Percent of all students overweight and obese (BMI) in Chester County



Bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, open space and recreation

A safe, well connected system of multi-use trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and public transit routes to various destinations with interconnections to parks, open space, and recreation allows individuals to choose a convenient, affordable, sustainable, and healthy lifestyle. While there have been recent advances in improving this infrastructure in Chester County with the development of multi-use trails, there are still many missing links leaving users feeling uncomfortable on facilities that may be perceived as unsafe. These missing links are most prevalent in the suburban environment where previous automobile-only oriented developments excluded the installation of active transportation facilities, as evidenced in many residential developments and corporate business parks where they are now most needed.

The proximity to protected open space and multi-use trails not only has a significant positive impact on the health of community residents, it also increases the economic value of housing and real estate, thus improving the local economy. Open space also helps to naturally filter drinking water supplies and provides for significant air pollution removal and carbon sequestration resulting in better air and water quality.

Chester County has...

556 miles existing trails (publicly accessible, all types)

756 miles planned or proposed trails

782 miles sidewalk

22,238 acres public open space

Community services

To maintain and achieve a healthy, prosperous community, certain community services such as education, human services, public health and emergency service facilities and programs must be available and accessible to all. These services are generally good in Chester County but may need to be combined in Chester County for more efficiency, or to address potential gaps in service. Expansion of these services to populations that are without or are disadvantaged is also crucial to identifying and responding to new and emerging issues as required to maintain a healthy and safe community. Maintenance and expansion of facilities may be needed to accommodate the overall growth in population (146,000 additional residents by 2045) while providing for high quality education, healthcare, and appropriate emergency response.



- 13** School districts
- 96** Public schools
- 10** Charter schools
- 154** Private schools
- 15** Higher education colleges/universities



- 18** Public libraries



- 5** General medical & surgical hospitals
- 1** Long-term acute care hospital
- 2** Mental health hospitals
- 2** VA hospitals
- 10** Urgent care facilities



- 47** Police stations
- 57** Fire stations
- 30** Ambulance stations

“Healthy places are those designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders.”

Center for Disease Control and Prevention 'Healthy Places' website

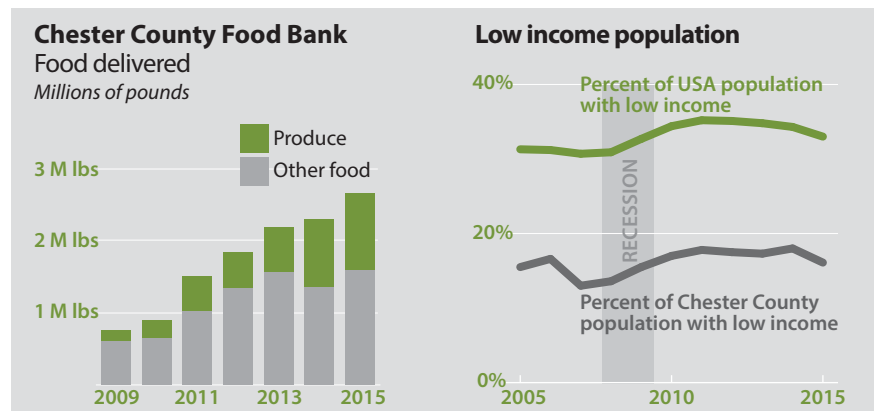
Environmental health

How Chester County will address climate change resiliency will have an impact on community land use planning, not only relative to the primary issue of flooding, but also in other areas of the built environment such as how building orientation and the strategic placement of landscape material could minimize the effects of increased and sustained summer heat.

Chester County will also need to continue to provide equitable development for all residents. Social equity draws from both environmental justice and smart growth principles and generally refers to a range of approaches for creating communities and regions where residents of all incomes, race, and ethnicities participate in and benefit from decisions that shape the places where they live.

Food access and distribution

While access to food is taken for granted by some in Chester County, others are limited in what they can access due to lack of transportation or limited funds. The Chester County Food Bank and affiliated food cupboards distribute food to those in need from fresh, local farm products to the traditional canned supplies that they have provided since their inception. Since 2009, the Chester County Food Bank has increased its distribution over 119%, supplying 2.5 million pounds of food.



“...chronic health conditions, food deserts, a lack of accessibility to services and recreational opportunities, and barriers to making physical activity a part of daily life are unsustainable emerging trends...”

American Planning Association Smart Growth Policy on Healthy Communities