

# Population Growth

## County-wide Expectation

Growth in Monroe County's year-round resident population accelerated dramatically during the 1960s with the opening of I-80. The trend continued during the '70s and '80s and, by the 1990 Census, almost 96,000 people were living in the county. Though slowing somewhat through the decade of the 1990s, the county's rate of growth far exceeds that of neighboring Pennsylvania jurisdictions. Monroe's population is expected to approach 130,000 by the turn of the century. The combination of further Metropolitan in-migration and natural increase as county residents form new households and have children, will result in continued growth to the year 2020 and beyond. Trends and past experience<sup>7</sup> point to the likelihood of population within the following ranges:

**Table 1**  
**Population Projected for Monroe County**

<i>Year 2000</i>	<i>Year 2010</i>	<i>Year 2020</i>
130,000	153,000-175,000	177,000-221,000

Numerous economic and demographic factors will influence where, within these broad ranges, actual population numbers will be. For planning purposes, however, a reasonable intermediate level appears to be about 165,000 by year 2010, up 35,000 from year 2000, and about 200,000, up another 35,000 by year 2020. These 70,000 new county residents in the first two decades of the new century will represent an increase of more than 50 percent over current population.

According to the Penn State Data Center<sup>8</sup>, the number of school children (ages 5-19) are projected to increase faster than the population as a whole between 1990 and the year 2000, some 56 percent (from 20,000 to about 31,500). That accounts for the heavy volume of school construction in all four school districts during the past decade, and the correspondingly big increase in school property taxes. The Data Center anticipates continuing, yet somewhat slower, growth of about 40 percent between the years 2000 and 2020.

The elderly component of the resident population is expected to show even greater proportional growth. Monroe County has become attractive as a retirement area as well as a setting for young families, and long-time residents seem not to wish to relocate as they age. During the 1980s, population age 65 and over increased 38 percent (double the statewide average) to about 13,000. The State Data Center anticipates elderly population will be about 15,500 by the year 2000, and increase by 80 percent in the 10 years that follow.

<sup>7</sup> A detailed examination of population prospects for the County, identifying assumptions and references may be found in Rivkin Associates: "Population and Households Projections for Monroe County Inevitability or Options," August 1998. Sources include the U.S. Census Bureau (published data and interviews with staff analysts); Pennsylvania State Data Center; Center for Rural Pennsylvania; Claritas Data Service; residential building and/or occupancy permits issued by each of the Monroe County municipalities, 1990-97 (as reported to the County Planning Commission); field visits to individual municipalities and discussions with planning staff.

<sup>8</sup> Rivkin Associates, Memorandum, on Population projections to 2020, May 12, 1998, unpaginated.

**Part II . . . The Analysis**

Facilities and services for these groups, from schools to health centers and transportation, will be of concern to the County, school districts/planning areas, and municipal governments, in terms of both capital and operating costs.

***Planning Area/School District and Municipal Population***

Table 2 below translates the intermediate population projection into long term estimates for the county’s four school districts/planning areas. Charts 1-5 that follow illustrate trends within each of the school districts and present some general indication of changes in individual municipalities if they keep growing as they have since 1990.

**Table 2  
Intermediate Population Projection, 1990-2020  
by School District Planning Area**

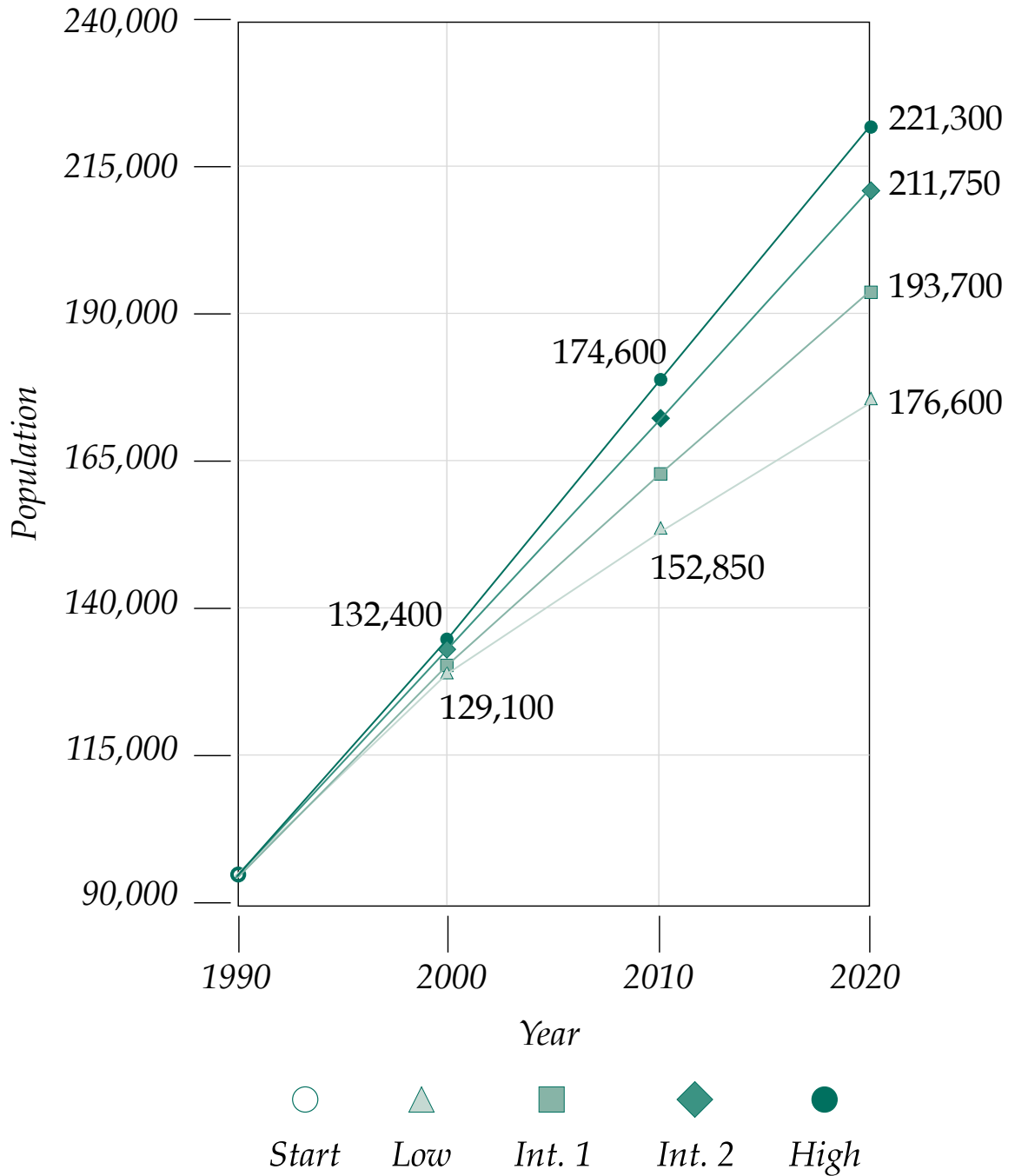
<i>School District/ Planning Area</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>Year</i> <i>2010</i>	<i>2020</i>
<i>East Stroudsburg</i>	21,500	28,600	34,100-35,000	39,600-41,700
<i>Pleasant Valley</i>	19,200	28,300	35,400-36,400	42,500-44,900
<i>Pocono Mountain</i>	31,700	45,500	59,400-60,800	73,300-75,200
<i>Stroudsburg</i>	23,300	28,800	32,600-34,500	36,600-40,100
<i>Monroe County</i>	95,700	131,200	161,500-166,700	192,000-201,900

All four school districts/planning areas will continue to grow substantially. Pocono Mountain will remain the most populous while Pleasant Valley, the smallest in 1990 will more than double in the 30-year period, passing both Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg.

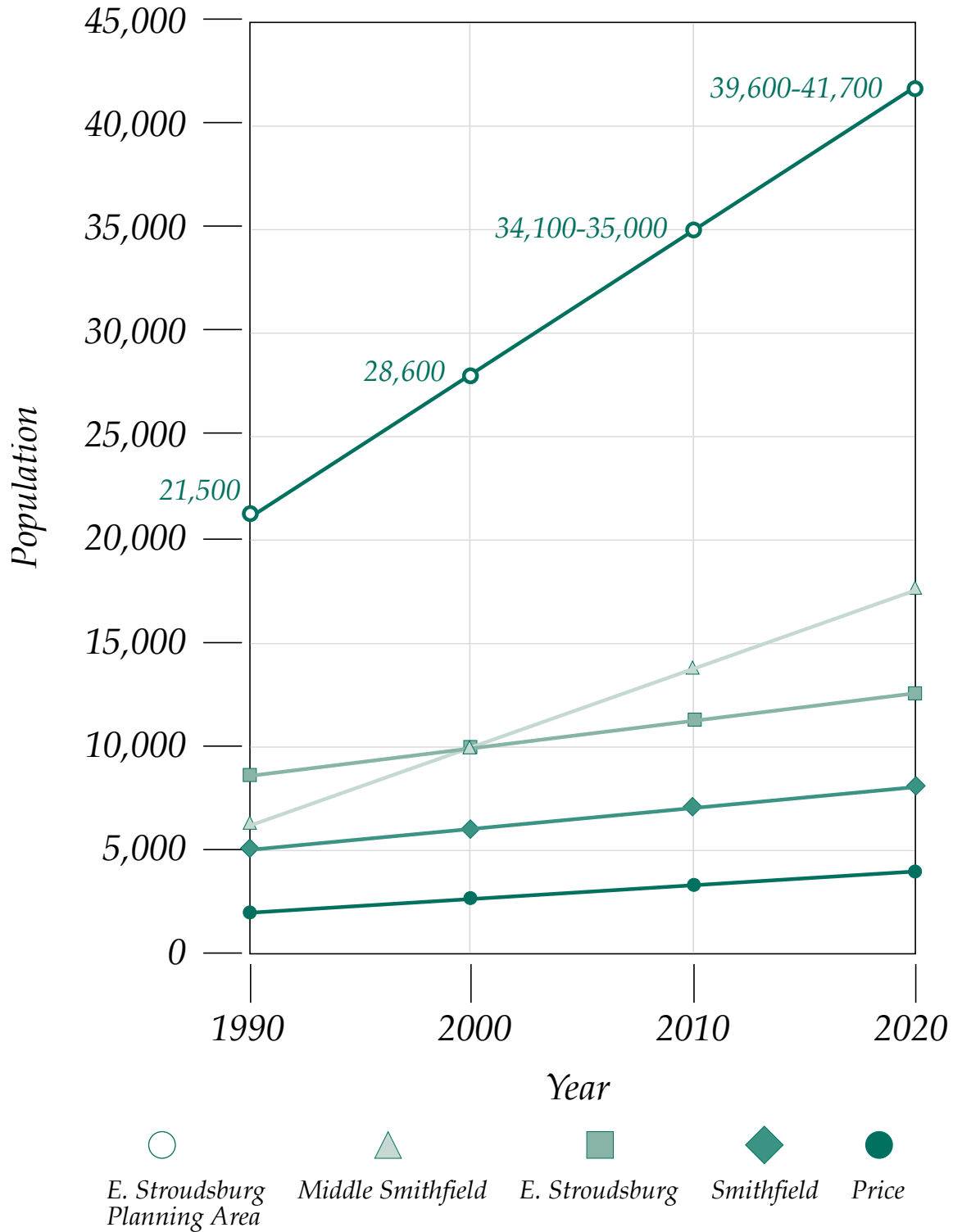
The trend lines for municipal growth show what will happen over the long term if the individual communities continue to experience residential construction at roughly the same pace as in the 1990s (See Charts 1-5).

Under this scenario, Middle Smithfield will become the most populous community in the East Stroudsburg area; and Coolbaugh, in Pocono Mountain. Stroud in the Stroudsburg area and Chestnuthill in Pleasant Valley are, and will likely remain, the largest in their planning areas. While overall population growth in the school district/planning areas can reasonably be expected to fall within the range outlined by the trend lines, it will probably not be so steady as the smooth lines suggest. Short term plateaus and rises can be expected within a projection period as long as twenty years. Actual production of housing in the individual municipalities will surely vary year to year in response to general economic conditions, prevailing mortgage terms and market demand, all of which are subject to cyclical fluctuations, as well as availability of utilities, prices and location of available land and municipal development approvals.

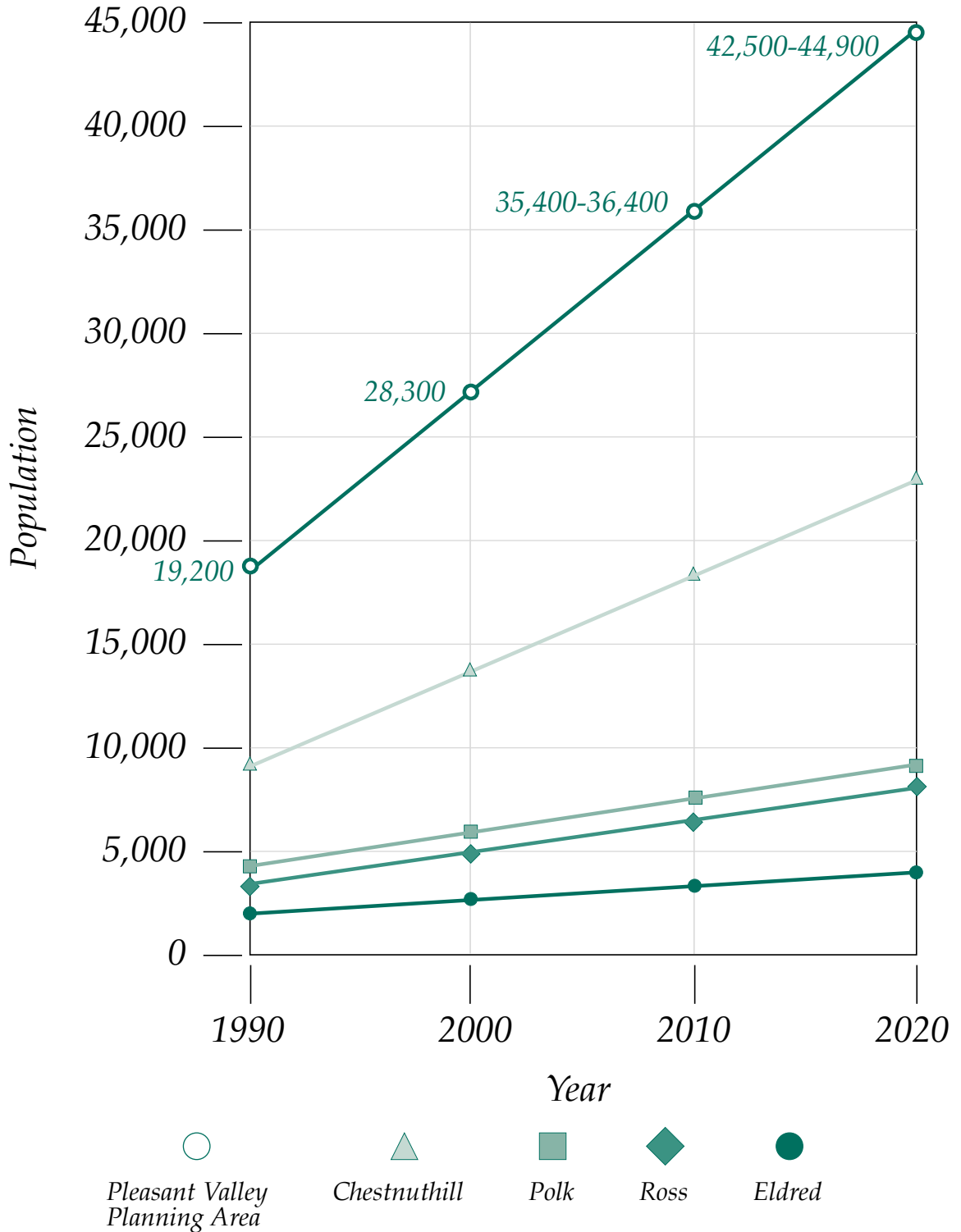
**Chart 1**  
*Monroe County Population Projections, 1990-2020*



**Chart 2**  
*East Stroudsburg Area Population Trend, 1990-2020*

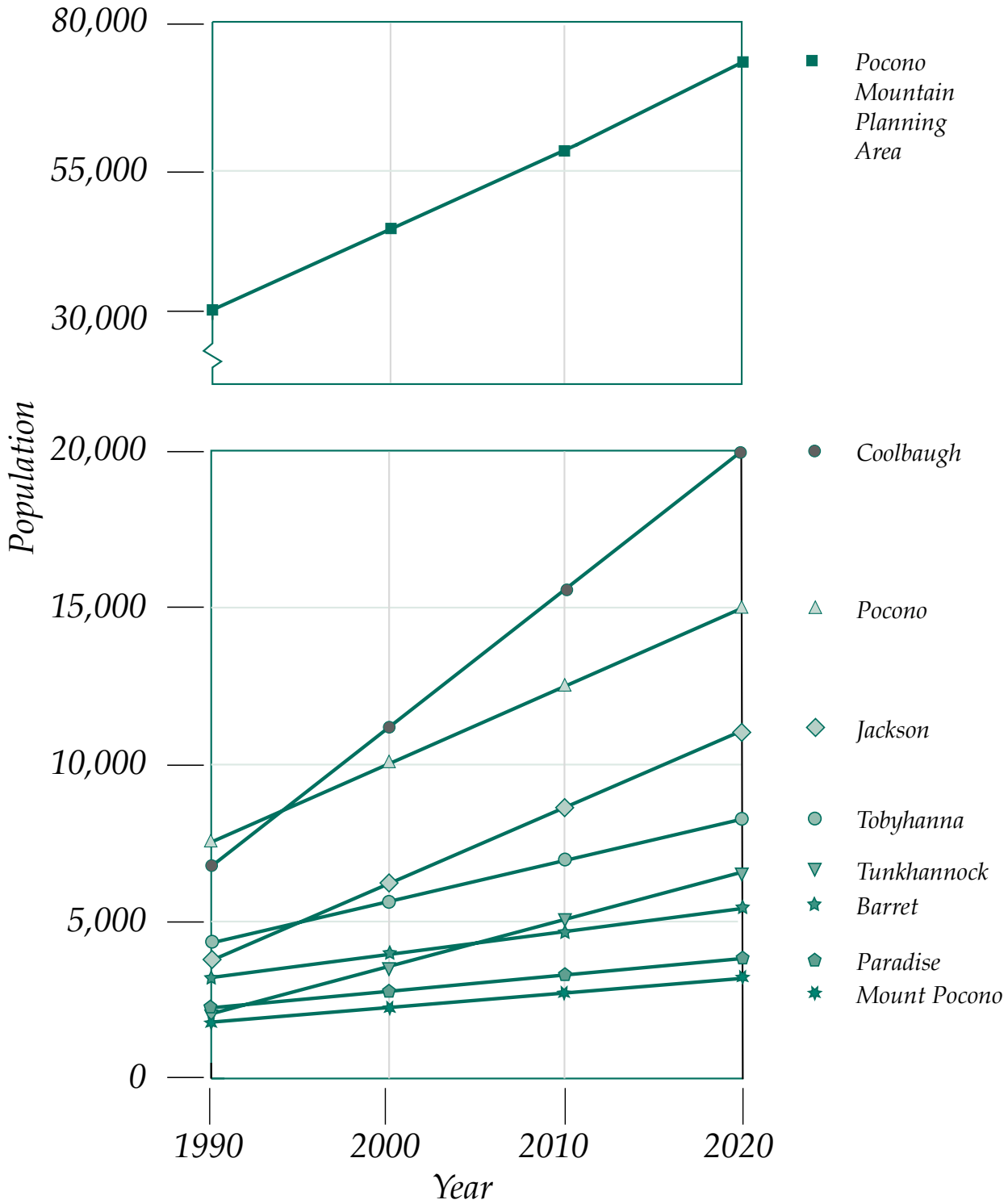


**Chart 3**  
*Pleasant Valley Area Population Trend, 1990-2020*

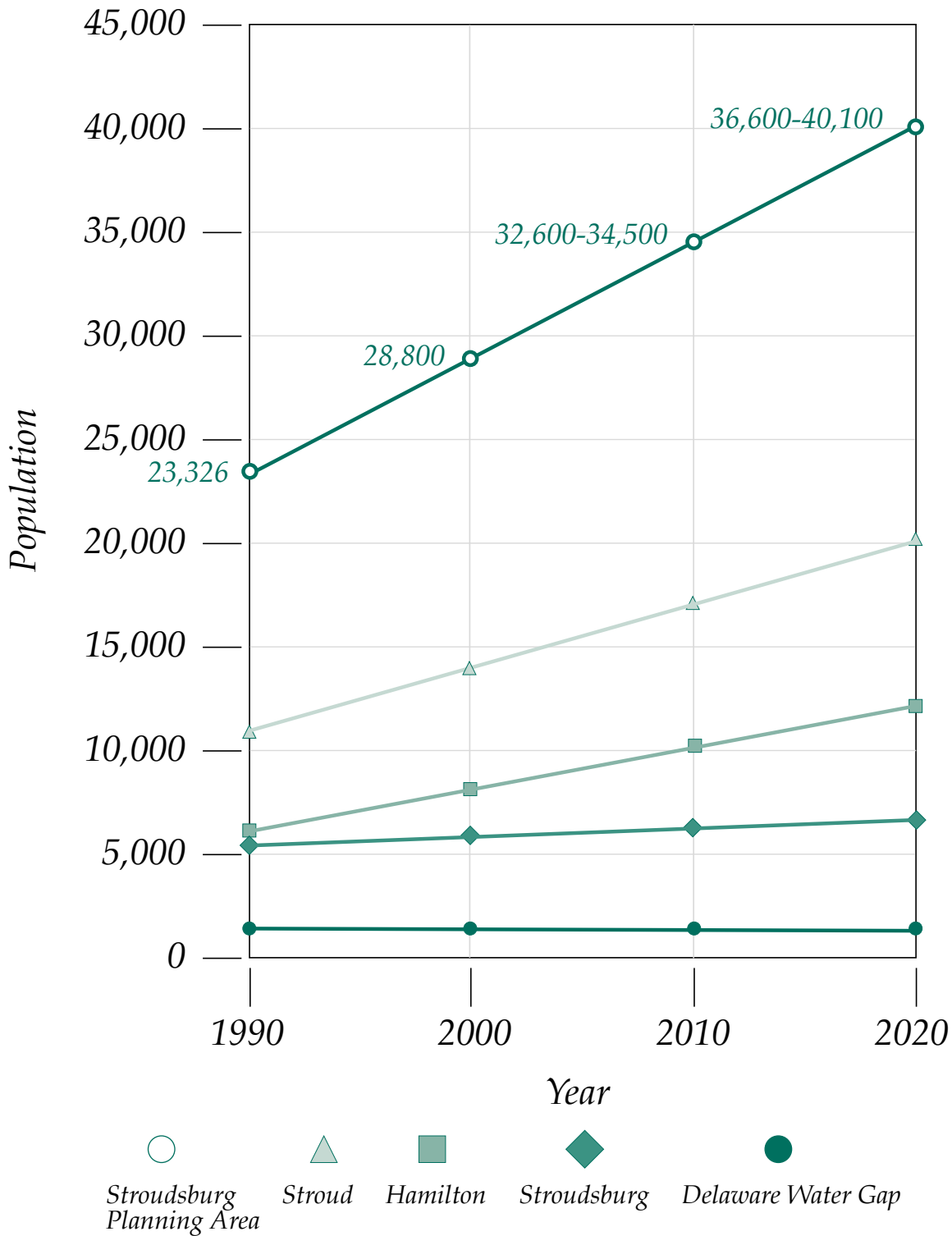


**Chart 4**

*Pocono Mountain Area Population Trend, 1990-2020*



**Chart 5**  
*Stroudsburg Area Population Trend, 1990-2020*



*Potential Housing Demand*

Viewed together with average household size, the population estimates serve as a gauge for future housing demand. In 1990, average household size in Monroe County was 2.69. Recent national and regional trends and intercensal analyses by the U.S. Bureau of the Census show decreasing household size nationally and in Monroe County as well. With Monroe’s growth of the last two decades, its demographic profile is approaching that of a typical suburban jurisdiction and its average household size is moving toward 2.5.

Housing estimates for Monroe County reflect this trend of decreasing household size. Table 3 shows what will happen if housing production continues to the year 2000 at the rate averaged between 1990 and 1998, and if the total population projected over the next two decades lives in smaller and smaller household groupings as expected. The County is likely to see as many as 30,000 new dwelling units between 1998 and 2020. Probably the total will be even higher, when replacement of some existing houses is taken into account as well as a normal percentage and variety of vacant units on the market.

**Table 3  
Total New Dwelling Units 1998-2020**

<i>School District/ Planning Area</i>	<i>1998-2000 @ average annual 1990-97 production rate</i>	<i>2000-2010 @ 2.55 persons/ dwelling</i>	<i>2010-2020 @2.50 persons/ dwelling</i>	<i>Total New Dwelling Units 1998-2020</i>
<i>East Stroudsburg</i>	440	2,160-2,510	2,200-2,680	4,800-5,630
<i>Pleasant Valley</i>	570	2,790-3,180	2,840-3,400	6,200-7,150
<i>Pocono Mountain</i>	1,150	5,450-6,000	5,560-5,760	12,160-12,910
<i>Stroudsburg</i>	320	1,490-2,240	1,600-2,240	3,410-4,800
<i>Monroe County</i>	2,480	11,890-13,930	12,200-14,080	26,570-30,490