

C. POPULATION

The purpose of this section is to:

1. Describe the population and household characteristics of the town of Whitneyville and compare them with similar changes and patterns occurring in the region and the State;
2. Determine how population trends will influence the future demand for housing, land, and community facilities; and
3. Predict, for the next ten years, the size and significant characteristics of the population of Whitneyville, and compare these with similar projections for the region, and the State.

FINDINGS

The year round population in Whitneyville was 220 in 2010. This is a 16% decrease since 2000. However, with such a small population size the decisions of a few families to move into or out of town can affect the percentage rate of growth. Overall, Whitneyville's population has been relatively stable at around 250 people for the past century.

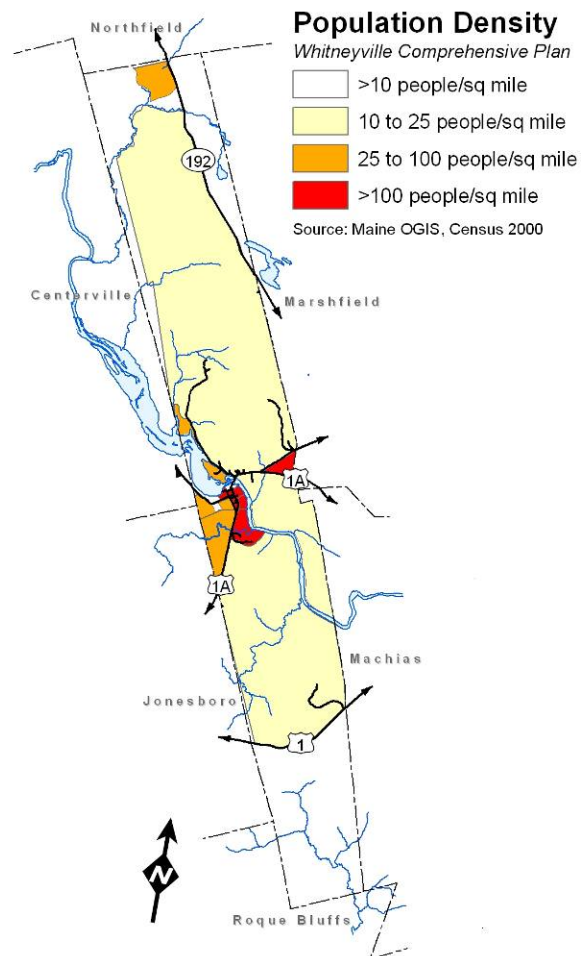
A map of population density based on the 2000 Census shows that most Whitneyville residents live "in town" – the traditional village area along Route 1A – with a small cluster of residents along Route 192. Most residents work or attend school in the neighboring service center community of Machias.

Since 1990, Whitneyville has experienced an increase in median age and a decrease in the number of school-aged children. School enrollment figures show that the decrease in school-aged children continued over the first decade of this century. Over the next 20 years, a continued increase in our elder population is anticipated.

Over the past 30 years, demand for new housing in Whitneyville has been driven by decreasing household size rather than population growth.

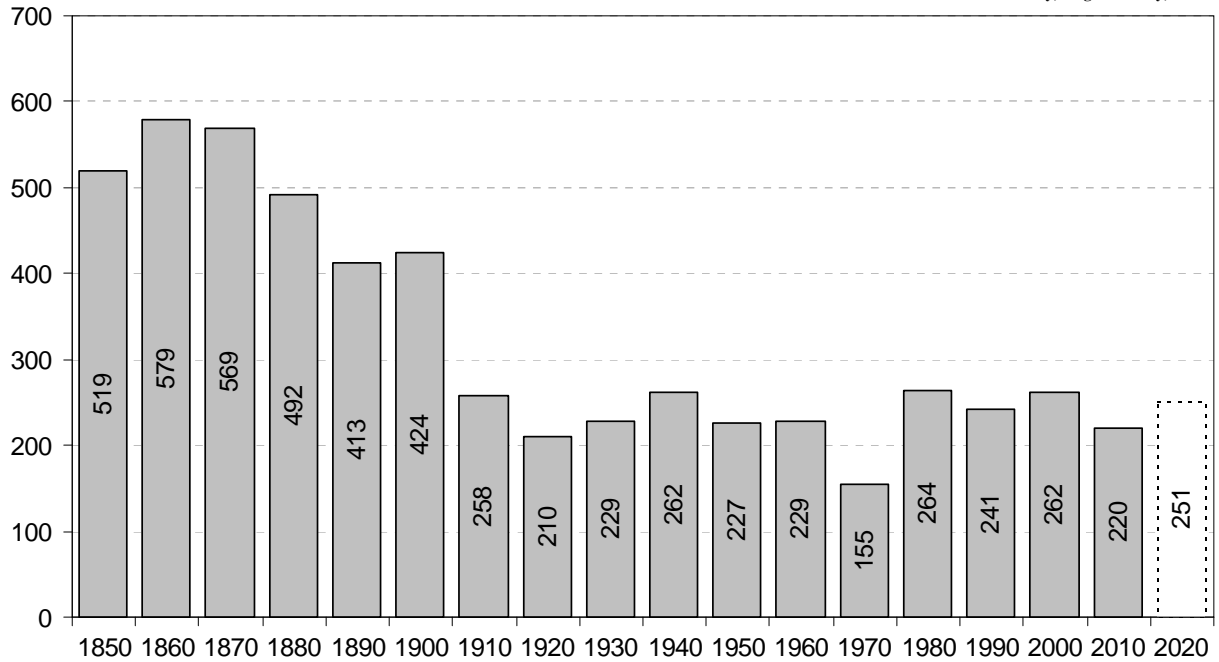
Population Change

Over the next ten to twenty years, the overall population of Whitneyville is expected to remain about the same.



Historic Population, 1850 to 2010

Source: Frank Wihbey, Folger Library, UMaine



Regional population trends

During the decade that ended in 2010, Maine as a whole saw a 4% increase in population. At the same time Washington County experienced a population decline of 7%. The loss of population countywide is part of an overall trend that saw movement of residents from rural counties in eastern and northern Maine to more affluent counties in central and southern Maine.

Regional population trends within Washington County tell a more complex story, though. Service center communities – such as Machias and Calais – lost population in both the 1990s and 2000s. At the same time, smaller rural communities included both population ‘winners’ and population ‘losers.’ In the 1990s Whitneyville – like many other communities neighboring service centers – was a population ‘winner.’ The population increased from 241 to 262. These gains, though, were off-set by population loss in the first decade of the 21st century.

Given Whitneyville’s small population, the population decline over the last 10 years only represents decisions made by a small number of residents. Whitneyville’s existing infrastructure easily absorbed the level of population growth that occurred over the 1990s. Over the coming decade, the population is expected to remain near the historic average over the last 70 years – about 250 residents.

Given Whitneyville’s small population – in both absolute terms and relative to neighboring communities – regional population trends have an important influence on Whitneyville’s demographic make up.

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Year-round Population Whitneyville & surrounding communities: 1990-2010

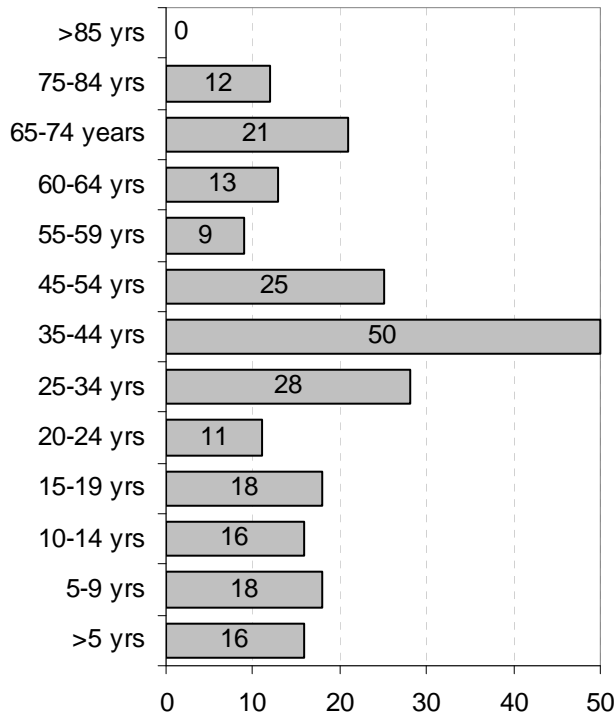
	1990	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010
Machias	2,569	2,353	2,221	- 6 %
Machiasport	1,166	1,160	1,119	- 4 %
Marshfield	461	494	518	+ 5 %
Jonesboro	585	594	583	- 2 %
Northfield	99	131	148	+ 13 %
Roque Bluffs	234	264	303	+ 15 %
Whitneyville	241	262	220	- 16 %
Washington County	35,308	33,941	32,856	- 6.9 %
State	1,227,928	1,274,923	1,328,361	+ 4 %

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

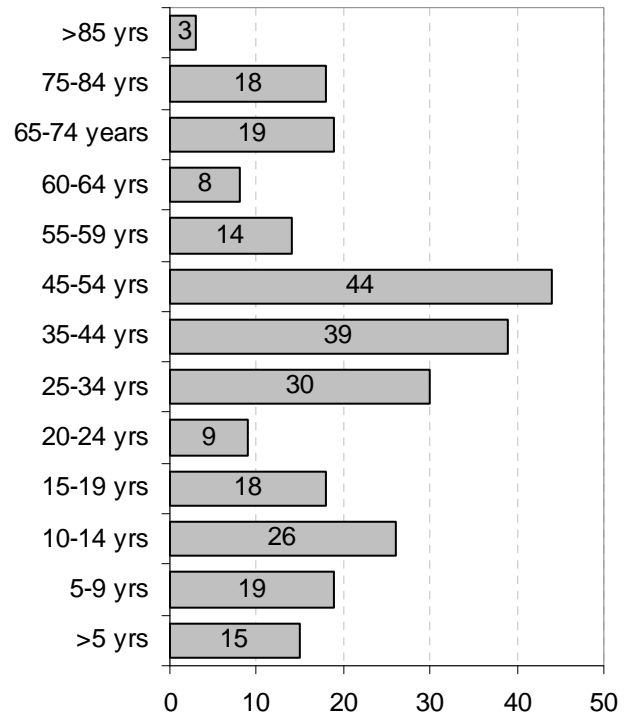
Demographic Change

Over the last two decades, Whitneyville saw a decline in the town’s school-aged population and an increase in the town’s middle-aged and elderly population. School enrollment figures show that the decline in school aged children continued over the first decade of this century.

Whitneyville Age Distribution: 1990



Whitneyville Age Distribution: 2000



Source: Census 1990, Census 2000

The demographic change in Whitneyville reflects broader trends in demographic change across Washington County and the State. Due to the fact that most Whitneyville students attend school in Machias, where they make up a relatively small portion of the total enrollment, continued declines in Whitneyville’s school-aged population are likely to have little impact on school

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services. Overall changes in population and demographics are anticipated to be small and have little or no impact on other municipal services.

New Residents

Whitneyville has experienced little or no population growth or development of residential housing over the past twenty years. As a result, Whitneyville has fewer new residents than many nearby communities. New residents include a mix of people moving to Whitneyville from other towns in the area, people “from away” and families with historic ties to the area.

Given Whitneyville’s small population and the relatively small number of new residents, there are no significant issues between ‘locals’ and ‘people from away’ in Whitneyville. As one community member put it, “When a new family moves to town, we are mostly excited to have someone new in the community.”

Seasonal Residents

Whitneyville does not have any seasonal population to speak of. There are a handful of camps in town, but the town office reports that most are owned by people from the local area. Most Whitneyville residents live in town and work in Machias or other nearby communities or are retired.

Major Employers

Over the last 50 years, Whitneyville has not been an employment center. Most Whitneyville residents work in the nearby service-center community of Machias or are self-employed. Whitney Wreaths recently opened a balsam wreath manufacturing and shipping facility in Whitneyville that employs several hundred people at peak operations (October, November & December).

Although the new factory is located in Whitneyville (on Route 1), it is just over the town-line from Machias. Since the new facility replaces a nearby manufacturing facility, its location in Whitneyville is not anticipated to have any discernable impact on Whitneyville’s population or demand for housing.

Number and Size of Households

One significant demographic trend in Whitneyville over the last 30 years has been a change in the number and size of households. While Whitneyville’s population has remained about the same since 1980 (approximately 250 people), the number of households has increased from 86 in 1980 to 105 in 2000.

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS AND PERCENT OF GROWTH : 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000
Whitneyville	86	95 (+10%)	105 (+11%)
Washington County	12,222	13,418 (+10%)	14,118 (+5%)
State of Maine	395,184	465,312 (+18%)	518,200 (+11%)

Source: 1980 Census, 1990 Census, 2000 Census

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An underlying reason for the increasing number of households is a decline in the number of people per household. Declining household size is closely correlated with an increase in the median age: as middle-aged and older residents make up a larger percent of the population, there are fewer families with children at home.

The declining number of people per household in Whitneyville mirrors state and national trends. In fact, at 2.5 the number of people per household in Whitneyville exceeded the county average (2.34) and the statewide average (2.39) in 2000.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE: 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000
Whitneyville	2.91	2.54	2.50
Washington County	2.86	2.55	2.34
State	2.85	2.56	2.39

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

One implication of the declining number of people per household is that more housing units are required to accommodate the same number of residents. Based on projected population change, though, even if Whitneyville's population continued to increase at a rate of 10% per decade and the average household size were to come into line with the county average, by 2030 the town would only need an additional 30 housing units. This level of new housing could easily be accommodated within the existing capacity of public roads and services.

Over the next 20 years, the town anticipates that in-migration – both of new residents from nearby communities and of residents who are new to the area – will balance out the loss of elderly residents and out-migration. The overall population is expected to remain relatively stable at around 250 people. Population growth – if any – will be determined as much by regional population trends as by changes in land use; and is not anticipated to result in any significant demand for new municipal services or infrastructure.

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POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Given the importance of understanding, planning for and meeting the needs of current and future residents, the town has developed the following policies and implementation strategies to monitor its population.

Goal: Whitneyville will use complete and current information about its population when making administrative and policy decisions.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Whitneyville will actively monitor the size, characteristics and distribution of its population.	In conjunction with the Washington County Council of Governments, the designated census information center for Washington County, the town will gather all available population estimates, census data and other information concerning the number and characteristics of the town's population.	Selectmen	On-going