

3 | population and land use trends

Winchester is a stable residential community that is growing very slowly. Population growth in itself is not responsible for the fiscal and other challenges that face the Town. However, some demographic changes have occurred in the last fifteen years that should be considered in planning for the future, such as an increase in the number of older adults and school-aged children and a decrease in the number of young adults in Winchester. Although Winchester’s essential character as a family-oriented community will remain the same, population changes may affect the demand for municipal services and facilities and the Town’s finances. Similarly, Winchester’s land use patterns were determined many years ago and are unlikely to undergo major changes. Winchester will continue to be predominantly residential, with the majority of its land area occupied by single-family detached homes in established neighborhoods. There is very little undeveloped land remaining in the town and the opportunities for redevelopment are also focused in a few places. Although the amount of construction occurring in Winchester

every year is not very large overall, it takes place within a context of well-established neighborhoods, where the close adjacency of new and old development makes residents very sensitive to change.

Winchester Population Growth (1940-2007)

YEAR	POPULATION	PERCENT CHANGE
1940	15,081	—
1950	15,509	2.8%
1960	19,376	24.9%
1970	22,269	14.9%
1980	20,701	-7.0%
1990	20,267	-2.1%
2000	20,810	2.7%
2005	21,181	1.8%
2007	21,608	2.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Census 2000 and 2005 American Community Survey) and Town Census data (May 2007)

A. Population

As a mature suburban community in a major metropolitan area, Winchester’s twentieth-century population history reflects the national pattern of urban decline and suburban growth in the post-World War II decades. Between 1940 and 1960, Winchester’s population increased by 29% from 15,081 residents in 1940 to 19,376 residents in 1960. The town’s population grew steadily during the 1960s, and by 1970 it had reached its peak of 22,269 residents. Like many Boston suburbs, Winchester lost residents between 1970 and 2000, the population declining by over 6% during this period. However, this trend has reversed in recent years. In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that Winchester had 21,181 residents and had experienced a 0.4% annual growth rate since 2000. This differs slightly from adjacent communities such as Belmont, Arlington, Stoneham, Woburn, Lexington, and

Medford, all of which experienced small population declines during the same time period. Town Census data for 2007 show continued growth in Winchester and an estimated total population of 21,608 residents.

AGE COMPOSITION

Winchester’s median age in 2000 was 41.1, which was higher than the Massachusetts median age of 36.5. Since 2000, Winchester’s population has grown older: 2007 estimates place the population’s median age at 42.7. In 2000, over 25% of the town’s population was under 18 years old, which was slightly higher than the state’s total (24%) for the same age category.

Winchester and Massachusetts Age Composition (2000 and 2007)

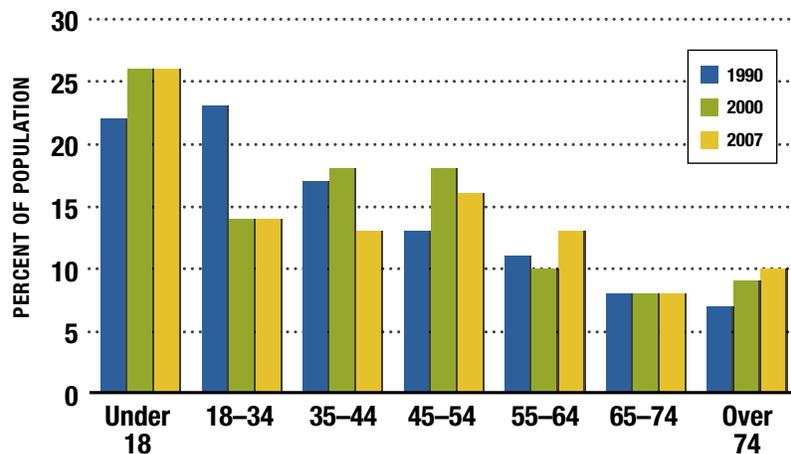
AGE GROUP	WINCHESTER		MASSACHUSETTS	
	2000	2007	2000	2007
Under 18	25.7%	26%	23.6%	22.6%
18-34	13.8%	13.8%	23.7%	22.5%
35-44	17.5%	13.4%	16.7%	15.3%
45-54	15.6%	16.4%	13.8%	15.1%
55-64	10.4%	13.3%	8.6%	11.1%
65-74	7.9%	7.5%	6.7%	6.4%
75 and older	9.2%	9.7%	6.8%	7.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Census 2000) and Claritas 2007 estimates

This figure is approximately the same for 2007. In 2000, Winchester also had a higher percentage of older residents than the state as a whole: 27.5% of the town’s residents were 55 or older, in comparison to 22.1% for Massachusetts. The percentage of older Winchester residents increased to over 30% in 2007. This suggests that many Winchester residents are choosing to remain in Winchester as they age and that the town may be attracting some new “empty nester” households that wish to spend their retirement years in Winchester.

Between 1990 and 2007, Winchester’s population composition underwent several notable changes. During the 1990s, the under-18 cohort increased by 20%, the 45-54 cohort increased by 26%, and the over-75 cohort increased by 33%. These changes reflect the aging of the “baby boom” generation and the “echo” generation of children under 14. The increases, however, were offset by a significant decrease in Winchester’s young adult population. In 1990, persons aged 18 to 34 comprised almost 23% of the population; by 2000, however, this group had shrunk to only 13.8% of the population. Estimates for 2007 indicate that this age group continues to make up only 13.8% of Winchester’s population. The decline of the younger adult cohort may be explained by the fact that it represents the “baby bust” generation (born in the 1970s), which is smaller than the “baby boom” generation and thus constitutes a smaller portion of the population. However, this

Age Composition in Winchester (1990–2007)



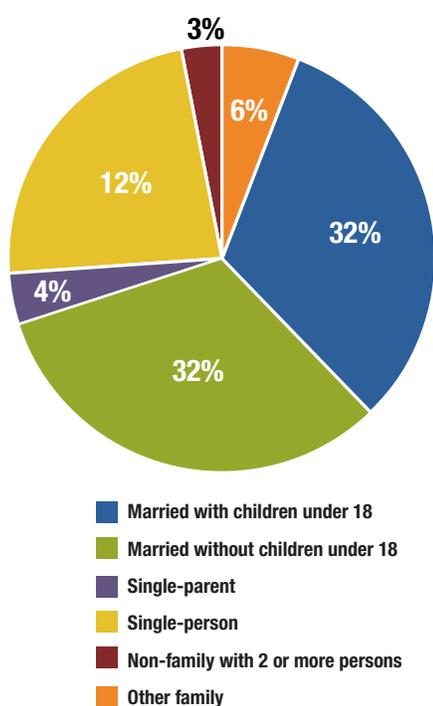
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (Census 2000)

young adult cohort is considerably smaller than in the state as a whole. It is likely that Winchester's high housing prices have made it difficult for young adults and families to reside in Winchester.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Although Winchester's total population increased by 2.7% during the 1990s, the number of households grew by 6% during the same time period. Household growth continued to outpace total population growth from 2000 to 2007: during this period, the number of households grew by 3.8%, but the population increased only at a rate of 0.9%. This reflects a nationwide trend of smaller household size. There are more households, but fewer people living in each household on average.

Household Composition (2007)



Source: Claritas data (2007)

Winchester is primarily a family-oriented community, as 75% of its 7,715 households in 2000 were family households (made up of people related by blood or marriage, but not necessarily with children). Of these households, 65% were married-couple households and 32% included children under age 18. Only 4% of all households were headed by single parents. Estimates for 2007 show a slight decline in the number of family households to 74%, but the percentage of family households with children under age 18 remained at 32%. Many households also include senior residents: in 2000, 29.5% of all households included one member aged 65 or older and 15.8% included someone aged 75 or older.

However, population data show that Winchester's households are decreasing in size. Twenty-two percent of all Winchester households in 2000 were single-person households, increasing to over 23% in 2007. The average number of persons per household in 2000, 2.65, was higher than the state average of 2.51 persons. By 2007, the estimated average number of persons per household had fallen to 2.6 persons. Average family size in 2000 was 3.11 persons, which was slightly smaller than the state's average family size of 3.13

persons per household.

RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION

Winchester traditionally has been a predominantly white suburb, but during the past two decades its population became slightly more racially and ethnically diverse. During the 1990s, Winchester's white population decreased by 3% and its Asian population increased by 2%. Population estimates for 2007 show 91% white, 0.7% African-American, 6% Asian, and 1.9% of other racial or ethnic background. In addition, 1.2% of the 2007 population is identified as being of Hispanic or Latino origin. The school population is more diverse than the overall population. Town of Winchester school enrollment figures for 2006-2007 suggest that the community's racial and ethnic com-

position has continued to change since 2000. These figures identify a student population that is 87% white, 7% Asian, 2% Hispanic, less than 1% African-American, and 3% of other racial or ethnic background.

SCHOOL POPULATION

For the 2006-2007 school year, Winchester’s elementary school enrollment (Pre-K through 8) totaled 2,849 students and high school enrollment included an additional 1,095 students. Winchester boasts one of the most successful public school systems in Massachusetts, and a large percentage of its school-aged residents attend the public schools. Only 2.7% of its students are from low-income households (compared to the state total of 28.9%). Enrollment has grown steadily, with an annual growth rate of 2.5% since the 2000-2001 school year (which outpaced the town’s 0.4% annual growth rate during the same period). Enrollment projections point toward continued school population growth at a rate between 1% to 2% per year until the 2010-2011 school year.

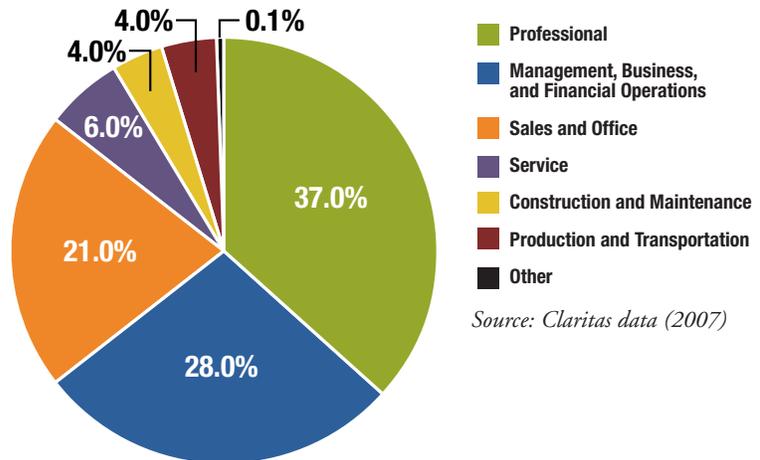
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Winchester’s residents are well-educated compared to the state as a whole. In 2007, almost 65% of residents have at least a bachelor’s degree, which is nearly twice the state average of 33%. In addition, 20% of residents hold a master’s degree and 13% have earned a doctoral or professional degree. Only 5.5% of Winchester residents over age 25 do not have a high-school diploma.

Owing to its character as a residential suburb, Winchester has relatively few jobs and a high rate of employment for its residents. In January 2007, almost 11,000 Winchester residents were in the labor force. Almost two-thirds of Winchester’s residents work in professional, financial, educational, or health care jobs. In May 2007, the unemployment rate of town residents in the labor force was 3.8%, which was significantly better than the state unemployment rate of 5.1%.

However, in 2005, there were only 691 employers and 8,139 jobs in Winchester. Winchester has more workers in the labor force than it does jobs, and most Winchester residents work elsewhere in the Greater Boston area. In 2000, over 82% of Winchester residents in the labor force were employed outside of the town, mostly in Boston or its northern suburbs. Jobs located in Winchester include professional/technical services (20%), retail/wholesale (11%), health care (10%), and construction employment (8%). Jobs in Winchester also include home-based employment for almost 6% of Winchester residents. Winchester’s five largest employers in 2006 were the Winchester Hospital (2,000 jobs), Winchester Health Care Management (1,500 jobs), the Winchester School District (350 jobs), the Town of

Winchester Resident Occupations (2007)



Source: Claritas data (2007)

Winchester (250 jobs), and Mahoney's (200 jobs). Jobs in Winchester pay substantially less than jobs in the high-wage sectors in which most residents work: in 2005, the average annual wage for a job in Winchester was \$43,368. Winchester's estimated median household income for the same year was just over \$110,000, more than twice the average wage of a job in Winchester.

INCOME PROFILE

Winchester's median income is one of the highest in the Greater Boston area. In 1999, median household income was \$94,049 and median family income was \$110,226. Median non-family income was \$42,308. These figures were approximately 1.5 times higher than median incomes in Middlesex County and 1.8 times higher than median incomes in Massachusetts. In 2005, the Boston Metropolitan Area

Planning Council (MAPC) estimated Winchester's median household income at \$110,098, and Claritas, a marketing demographics firm, estimates a median household income of \$112,192 in 2007.

Comparative Income (2007)

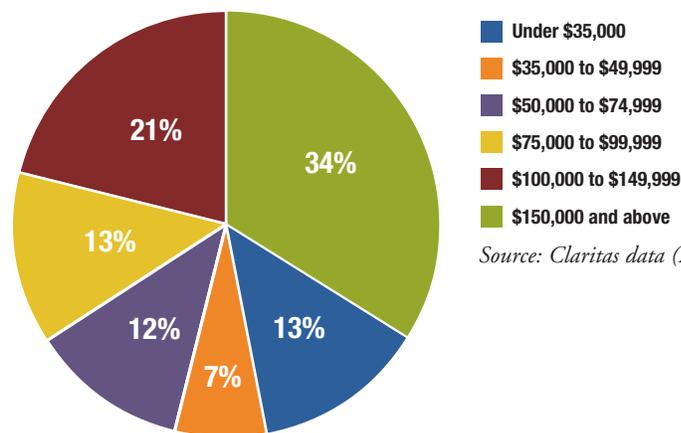
	WINCHESTER	MIDDLESEX COUNTY	MASSACHUSETTS
Median household income	\$112,192	\$71,669	\$60,331
Average household income	\$155,176	\$95,298	\$79,471
Per capita income	\$58,829	\$37,361	\$31,364

Source: Claritas data (2007)

On average, Winchester is an affluent community, but its residents have a range of incomes. Forty-seven percent of Winchester's households had incomes over \$100,000 in 1999. At the same time, however, 24% of the town's households had incomes under \$50,000. By 2007, over 55% of Winchester households had incomes over \$100,000 and 20% of households had incomes under \$50,000.

Although Winchester is an affluent community and its residents have a relatively high rate of employment, some residents live in poverty. In 1999, 3% of all residents and 3% of Winchester children under the age of 18 lived in households with incomes under the poverty level. Forty-seven percent of residents living in poverty were in under-65 married couples, and 14% of residents living in poverty were aged 65 or older. The percentage of younger married couples in poverty in Winchester was much higher than Middlesex County's rate of 24% and the state rate of 21%. However, Winchester's percentage of elderly residents in poverty closely matched the county and state rates of 13%.

Winchester Household Income (2007)



Source: Claritas data (2007)



Income Distribution (2007)

ANNUAL INCOME	WINCHESTER % OF HOUSEHOLDS	MIDDLESEX COUNTY % OF HOUSE- HOLDS	MASSACHUSETTS % OF HOUSEHOLDS
Less than \$15,000	5.0	8.8	11.8
\$15,000 - \$24,999	3.8	7.0	8.9
\$25,000 - \$34,999	4.3	7.2	8.7
\$35,000 - \$49,999	6.5	11.5	13.0
\$50,000 - \$74,999	12.1	17.9	18.7
\$75,000 - \$99,999	13.1	14.3	13.6
\$100,000 - \$149,999	21.3	18.4	15.3
\$150,000 - \$249,999	18.1	10.2	7.0
\$250,000 and above	15.8	4.8	3.1

Source: Claritas data (2007)

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

As part of the ongoing MetroFuture regional planning process, the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) prepared a series of population forecasts for all communities in the Greater Boston area. These projections were developed in 2006 and 2007 and depict outcomes if current regional growth and development trends were to continue until 2030.

According to projections released in May 2007, Winchester will continue to grow at a slow but steady pace between 2007 and 2030. Annual growth will be at a rate of 0.3%, and by 2030, Winchester will have a population of 22,206 residents.

Household growth also will continue, but at a faster rate. MAPC projections show 9,325

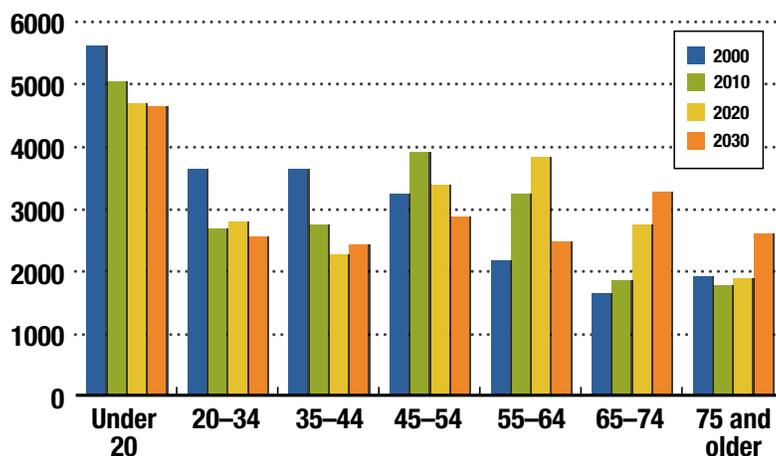
households in 2030, or an annual growth rate of 0.6%. The projected increased pace of household growth suggests that many new residents would be living in small or single-person households, rather than traditional married-couple-with children configurations. However, this data does not match buildout projections for Winchester. According to a buildout analysis done in 2006 by Larry Koff and Associates, Winchester only has land available for a maximum of 588 new residential units, under a higher-density development scenario, over more than twenty years. The MAPC data project over 1,600 new households by 2030. These projections appear to be straight-line projections and do not match the actual rate of building activity in Winchester over the past decade. Winchester does not have enough development capacity to accommodate the new households identified by the MAPC projections unless there are significant changes to zoning (see below).

MAPC Population Projections for Winchester (2007)

	2000	2030	% CHANGE
Number of individuals	20,810	22,606	8.6%
Number of households	7,715	9,325	20.9%

Source: Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council

MAPC Age Composition Projection (2000–2030)



Source: Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council (2006)

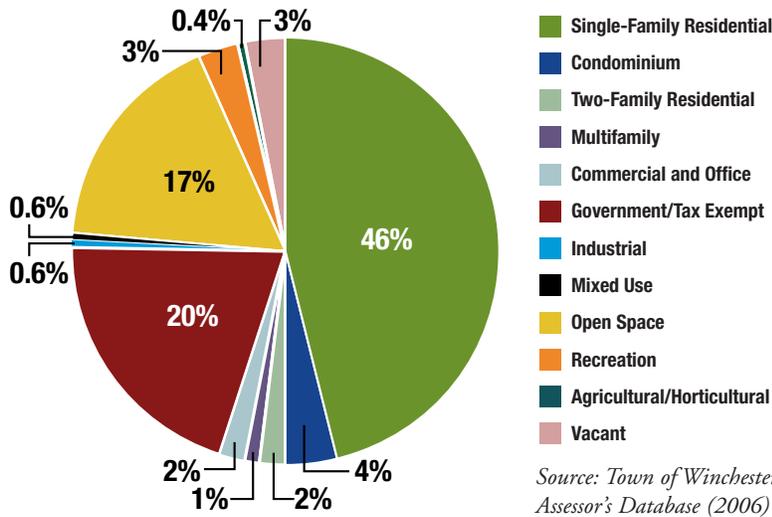
In general, the MAPC projections show that Winchester’s population will continue to age until 2030, as more seniors and fewer young adults and children will live in the town. The MAPC data identify the largest decrease in the young adult cohorts as occurring between 2000 and 2010. At the same time, the number of middle-aged residents (ages 45 to 64) is expected to increase significantly. After 2010, however, fewer large-scale shifts will occur. This initial change may be attributable to national demographic changes discussed above (*i.e.*, the “baby boom” and “baby bust” generations), but the MAPC data also reflect current regional housing trends that price many young singles and families out of suburban communities like Winchester.

B. Land Use

“Land use” is the umbrella term for the activities that actually are occurring on a piece of land, such as residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural activities, and so on. Land uses often evolve over time with social and market changes, such as when a farm is redeveloped as a residential subdivision or a former industrial area is converted to a park. Zoning, however, is a set of government-applied regulations that determine how land may be used. Land use and zoning are not synonymous, for land can be zoned for a use that has not yet been developed, uses can be “grandfathered” or “nonconforming” (meaning that they existed before the land was zoned for a particular use), and zoning categories can permit more than one use.

Land use data was obtained from the Winchester assessor’s 2006 database, which contains land use codes for each town parcel. These codes were assumed to be the most accurate information available. In 1999, the state conducted a survey of land use in all Massachusetts municipalities. The resulting product was seen as overly general by many communities, and some of the land use coverage data for Winchester is questionable. For example, the 1999 data identifies almost 63% of land area as covered by residential uses; however, the assessor’s 2006 data codes only 53.6% of land area as residential (including mixed-use parcels with residential units). It is unlikely that residential uses would have

Winchester Land Use (2006)



decreased by over nine percent in seven years. Therefore, it is difficult to identify specific numbers for changes in land uses during the past decade.

RESIDENTIAL USES

Most of Winchester’s land is used for residential purposes, with the majority of parcels being occupied by single-family homes. In 2006 Winchester’s assessor’s data showed that 52% of the town’s acreage was occupied by residential dwellings, including 5,572 single-family homes, 1,128 condominiums, 439 two- or three-family homes, and ten multifamily buildings.

COMMERCIAL USES

Winchester is a residential suburb and few commercial uses exist in the town. In 2006, only 47.7 acres (87 parcels) were devoted to commercial uses, including retail, storage/warehousing, restaurants, auto services, and day care centers. Most of Winchester’s commercial properties are concentrated in the town center and along the North Main Street corridor, which extends northward to Woburn. Commercial uses outside of the town center typically include surface parking lots that are associated with each business. Businesses in the town center, however, generally are served by on-street parking or small shared surface lots located beside or behind the commercial buildings.

OFFICE USES

Office uses also are found along North Main Street and in the town center. In 2006, these uses occupied 14.5 acres (103 parcels) and included 25 general office properties, four medical offices, and six bank facilities. As with the town’s commercial buildings, most of these office uses are served by surface parking lots located on the same parcel.

INDUSTRIAL USES

Winchester historically had several thriving industrial properties located in the north-eastern part of town along the Aberjona River. As time passed, the importance of the industrial district diminished and many of these properties were converted to different

uses. One notable example is the construction of the Parkview office building (now condominium units) on the former Beggs and Cobb Tannery property along Swanton Street. In 2006, industrial uses were confined to 24.4 acres (16 parcels). Most of these parcels are found in the traditional industrial area between Swanton Street and Cross Street and include small manufacturing and warehousing operations. However, several of these industrial properties are for sale or lease in 2007 and may lead to changed land uses in that area.

MIXED USE

Few mixed-use projects exist in Winchester. Twenty-six parcels combine residential and commercial uses on 24 acres of land. Seventeen of these properties are occupied primarily by commercial uses and contain residential units as a secondary use. Mixed uses can be found in the town center, and new projects recently have been proposed for North Main Street and the hospital expansion site.

AGRICULTURAL/HORTICULTURAL USES

Although the western part of Winchester used to contain several large farm properties, the town today includes few true agricultural uses. Two parcels comprising 14 acres are devoted to non-Chapter 61 agricultural/horticultural uses. These properties appear to be parcels that serve Mahoney’s Garden Center, a local plant nursery business located along Route 3/Cambridge Street near the Woburn line.

GOVERNMENT AND TAX-EXEMPT USES

Twenty percent of Winchester’s land (1,346.8 acres) is devoted to government/tax-exempt uses. This acreage includes land used for municipal, state, and federally-owned buildings and conservation/recreation areas. The largest government-owned property is the Middlesex Fells, an open space area in the eastern part of town that is owned by the state and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Several tax-exempt entities own property in Winchester, including Winchester Hospital, private

schools, and other non-profit organizations.

Winchester Land Uses (2006)

LAND USE	NUMBER OF PARCELS	ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL TOWN ACREAGE
Residential	7,176	1,963	52.2
Commercial	87	47.7	1.3
Office	103	14.5	0.4
Industrial	16	24.4	0.4
Mixed Use	27	24	0.6
Private Recreation	4	130.5	3.5
Agricultural/Horticultural	2	14.3	0.4
Government	143	1,346.8	35.8
Tax-Exempt	40	72.1	1.9
Vacant	253	123.1	3.3

VACANT LAND

Winchester is substantially built out and contains few vacant parcels. The 2006 assessor’s database identifies 123.1 acres of vacant land, but about one-fifth of this (23.4 acres) cannot be developed. An additional 33.4 acres are identified as only potentially developable. Most of the vacant property is noncontiguous parcels which are too small to permit large development. The small amount

Source: Town of Winchester Assessor’s Data (2006)



of developable land ensures, for the most part, that land uses throughout Winchester are not likely to change significantly. Although redevelopment and intensification of uses is possible--particularly through mixed-use projects in the town center--the town's built-out condition almost guarantees that Winchester will remain primarily a single-family residential community.

Recent activity on some of the major undeveloped parcels in Winchester has reduced the inventory of undeveloped land in the Town even further:

- Pansy Patch (9.5 acres); approximately 50 units planned
- Winning Farm (12.5 acres); 88 units planned
- Hamilton Farm (19.5 acres); possibility of up to 80 units

ZONING

Winchester's Zoning By-Law includes 14 zoning districts and eight overlay districts. Residential zoning accounts for over 73% of the town's total land area. Five single-family residential districts are differentiated by lot sizes ranging from 6,500 square feet to 20,000 square feet. RG-6.5 districts, the residential districts with the smallest minimum lot size, can be found in the North Main Street-Swanton Street-Cross Street area. The residential district with the largest minimum lot size, RDA-20, is found only to the west of Route 3/Cambridge Street. Two residential districts permit the development of apartments and townhouses, but all multifamily development is subject to site plan approval. The multifamily districts, RA-120 and RB-20, are found in the town center, off of North Washington Street, and in the river area between Cross and Swanton streets. In addition, residential uses are permitted by the Planned Residential District (PRD), a zoning district which allows single-family and two-family houses, townhouses, and garden apartments as part of a planned residential community on a large tract of land. Projects in PRDs are subject to site plan review and special permit approval.

Commercial zoning covers approximately 1.6% of the town's land area. Winchester has five commercial zoning districts, but only four currently are in use. The town center falls within the CBD-2 district, a district that mandates small lots and setbacks in order to provide a pedestrian-scale downtown retail environment. Three other commercial zoning districts, the general business districts (GBD-1, GBD-2, and GBD-3), line the North Main Street corridor and a small portion of Cambridge Street near the Woburn line. These districts allow retail, restaurants (fast food only with a special permit), business/professional offices, and medical offices. GBD-2 and GBD-3 districts also permit single-family and two-family homes, along with apartments and townhouses (subject to a special permit). The BL-0.5 district, or Local Business District, exists in the zoning by-law, but does not apply to any properties in 2007. This district permits limited commercial uses and is intended to apply to neighborhood retail centers.

Winchester's one industrial zoning district, IL-1, is located in the Swanton Street-Cross Street area and includes the town's traditional industrial area. The IL-1 district permits light industrial uses and a range of businesses, such as banks, offices, medical services, and business/professional offices. Industrial zoning accounts for just over 1% of Winchester's total land area.

Almost one quarter of Winchester is covered by the SCI-0.5 district (Conservation-

Institutional District). This district was established primarily to preserve important open space areas and allow educational and public facility uses. SCI-0.5 districts are found throughout Winchester, and include important natural areas such as the Middlesex Fells, Mystic Lake, and the Aberjona River, and private open spaces, such as Wildwood Cemetery and the Winchester Country Club. Municipal parks and schools and non-profit institutions—including Winchester Hospital—also fall into this zoning district. Winchester also has several zoning overlays that provide additional restrictions on many

Winchester Zoning Districts (2007)

DISTRICT	PRIMARY USES	MINIMUM LOT SIZE (SQARE FEET)	PERCENTAGE OF TOWN LAND AREA
RDA-20 (Residential District A)	Single-family detached dwellings	20,000	19.6
RDB-10 (Residential District B)	Single-family detached dwellings	10,000	31.4
RDC-15 (Residential District C)	Single-family detached dwellings	15,000	0.4
RG-6.5 (General Residence)	Single-family and two-family detached dwellings	6,500	9.6
RA-120 (Multiple Family Residential)	Single-family detached dwellings; group/garden apartments or townhouses, subject to site plan approval	120,000	10.8
RB-20 (Apartment House Residential)	Group/garden apartments, townhouses, or mid-rise apartments, subject to site plan approval	20,000	0.04
PRD (Planned Residential District)	Single-family detached dwellings; two-family detached dwellings; group/garden apartments and townhouses, subject to site plan approval	NA	1.5
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL			73.3
CBD-2 (Center Business District)	Retail, services, restaurants, banks, offices, medical services, and auto services (special permit required)	NA	0.6
BL-0.5 (Local Business District)	Retail, services, restaurants, banks, and business/professional offices	NA	0.0
GBD-1 (General Business District)	Retail, services, restaurants, banks, offices, medical services, and auto services (special permit required)	NA	0.3
GBD-2 (General Business District)	Retail, services, restaurants, banks, offices, and medical services	NA	0.3
GBD-3 (General Business District)	Banks, offices, medical services, and science laboratories	NA	0.4
TOTAL COMMERCIAL			1.6
IL-1 (Limited Light Industrial)	Light industry, services, restaurants, banks, offices, medical services, science laboratories, and retail (special permit required)	20,000	1.1
SCI-0.5 (Conservancy-Institutional District)	Conservation areas, parks, public facilities, schools, and hospitals (special permit required)	NA	24

Source: Town of Winchester GIS data and Zoning By-Law



commercial, industrial, and residential properties:

- The Adult Uses Overlay District (AUD) is located near the town center and regulates the location and operation of sexually-oriented businesses.
- The Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) is found in three nodes along North Main Street and is intended to encourage more intensive pedestrian-oriented neighborhood retail.
- The Multiple Use Development District (MD) overlay applies to the CBD-2 district (the town center area) and allows mixed-use development in the form of ground-floor retail and upper-floor residential units (apartments and condominiums).
- The Independent Elderly Housing (IEH) overlay applies to a property that lies east of Cambridge Street near the Woburn line and regulates the development of rental housing and limited retail and services for senior residents.
- The Flood Plain District (FPOD) overlay applies to flood-prone areas identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- The Wireless Communications Facilities District (WCFD) controls the placement of telecommunications devices in various locations throughout Winchester.
- The Attached Residential Cluster Development Overlay District (ARCDOD), adopted in 2006, applies only to sites of ten acres or more and is intended to preserve open space by encouraging clustered development.
- The Health Services Overlay District (HSOD) was adopted in June 2007 and will apply specifically to the new Winchester Hospital development on North Washington Street. This overlay district is designed to minimize the impacts of the hospital project on the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Winchester’s zoning by-law requires site plan review and special permit approval for many non-single family residential projects. The Zoning Board of Appeals conducts site plan review for multifamily developments, mixed-use projects, private clubs and recreation areas, fast-food restaurants, some retail uses, some accessory uses, development in industrial districts that will abut a residential neighborhood, and projects that will require more than 20 parking spaces. In addition, site plan review automatically applies in all general business districts for a proposed project that is 15,000 square feet or greater in floor area (identified as a Major Commercial Project or a Major Retail Project). A set of performance standards has been adopted for these major commercial projects. Site plan review also may apply to projects that include affordable housing units and seek to increase density and projects that will use clustered development to preserve open space. The Planning Board provides advisory opinions to the ZBA for site plan review and for special permits. After site plan approval, the development can proceed. If a special permit is required, the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold hearings, review the special permit issues, and if the project is approved, issue the special permit.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Winchester is a community approaching buildout. In 2006, Larry Koff and Associates prepared an estimate of buildout capacity within Winchester. This analysis examined short-term (10-20 years) and long-term (more than 20 years) development potential, which may include redevelopment of parcels with existing buildings. The study looked at

Winchester Buildout Estimate
(Larry Koff and Associates, 2006)

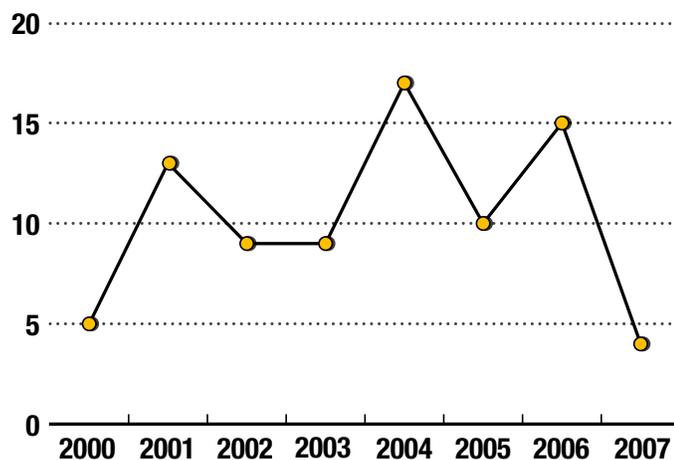
SCENARIO 1	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
New residential units	187	179
New commercial space	227,000	386,000
Additional school children	115	114
SCENARIO 2	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
New residential units	460	588
New commercial space	206,000	150,000
Additional school children	253	276

Source: *Profiles in Planning (2006)*

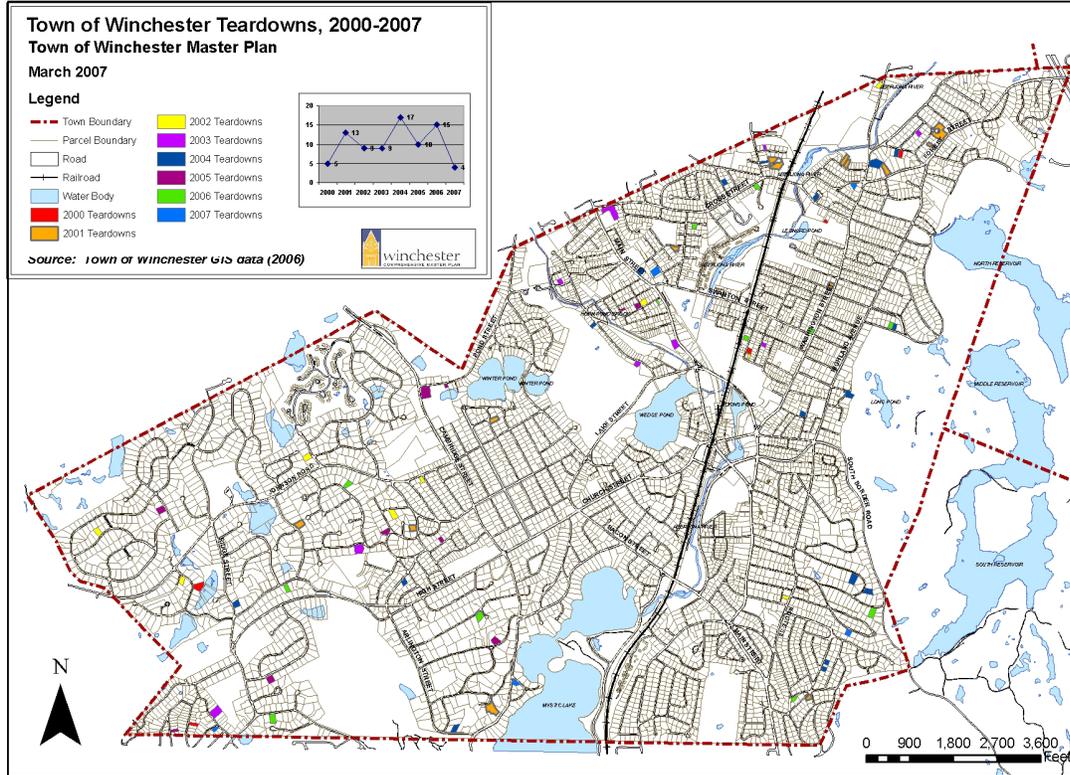
two scenarios, one assuming moderate-density development and one assuming higher-density (re)development. All estimates also assumed that current zoning will remain in place and no Comprehensive Permit projects were constructed. This analysis determined that in the long term, Winchester can accommodate up to 386,000 square feet of new commercial space and 179 new residential units under the moderate-density scenario and 150,000 square feet of new commercial space and 588 new residential units under the higher-density scenario.

Single-family residential construction in Winchester is limited by the small amount of developable land available. New homes typically are built as infill housing on remaining developable lots or as replacements for “teardowns” of older houses. Between 2000 and 2005, 139 new single-family homes were constructed, including 53 replacement homes on lots with “teardowns.” These new homes tended to be larger and more expensive than existing homes in Winchester. Subdivision of “oversized” lots in established neighborhoods and subsequent construction of new homes also accounts for a portion of Winchester’s housing growth. Lot subdivision and new construction may occur after the demolition of a single-family home on a large lot. Many “teardowns” and lot subdivisions have resulted in more units than previously existed on a lot. Between 2000 and 2005, 62 single-family homes and 16 condominium/townhouse units were built on 58 lots with demolished single-family homes. New residential development has not been confined to a particular neighborhood; “teardowns,” replacement homes, and lot subdivisions have occurred in scattered locations throughout Winchester since 2000. These construction trends have prompted concerns about preservation of neighborhood character and open space.

Winchester Teardowns (2000–2007)



Source: *Town of Winchester GIS data*



Few opportunities exist for new commercial development. Winchester has a limited number of commercial districts, and new commercial construction is uncommon. However, opportunities for redevelopment do exist in commercial areas along North Main Street and in the town center. Commercial properties with single-story buildings or suburban-style office buildings and parking lots offer the potential for greater density and mixed-use redevelopment.

The MAPC population and household projections discussed above estimate that Winchester will gain over 1,600 new households by 2030. Land exists for new residential development and higher-density mixed-use redevelopment that will include new residential units. However, it is unlikely that the town will be able to provide enough new housing units to meet the MAPC projections. Building activity in Winchester between 2000 and 2005 suggests that the actual number of households added over the next twenty-five years will not be as high as the MAPC total. In any event, Winchester faces choices about new construction on its remaining developable land and potential redevelopment sites. Decisions will have to be made about density and uses and their impacts on Town finances and services and town character.

The land use trends discussed in this Comprehensive Master Plan reflect the development trends that have occurred in Winchester during the past decade. Managing “tear-downs” and replacement houses, providing a variety of housing types while preserving neighborhood character, ensuring affordable housing, creating new commercial opportunities as part of mixed-use centers, and cost-benefit analyses will be discussed in detail in subsequent elements of the Plan.