



## CLAREMONT MASTER PLAN 2017: POPULATION ANALYSIS

### Land Use Chapter Appendix B

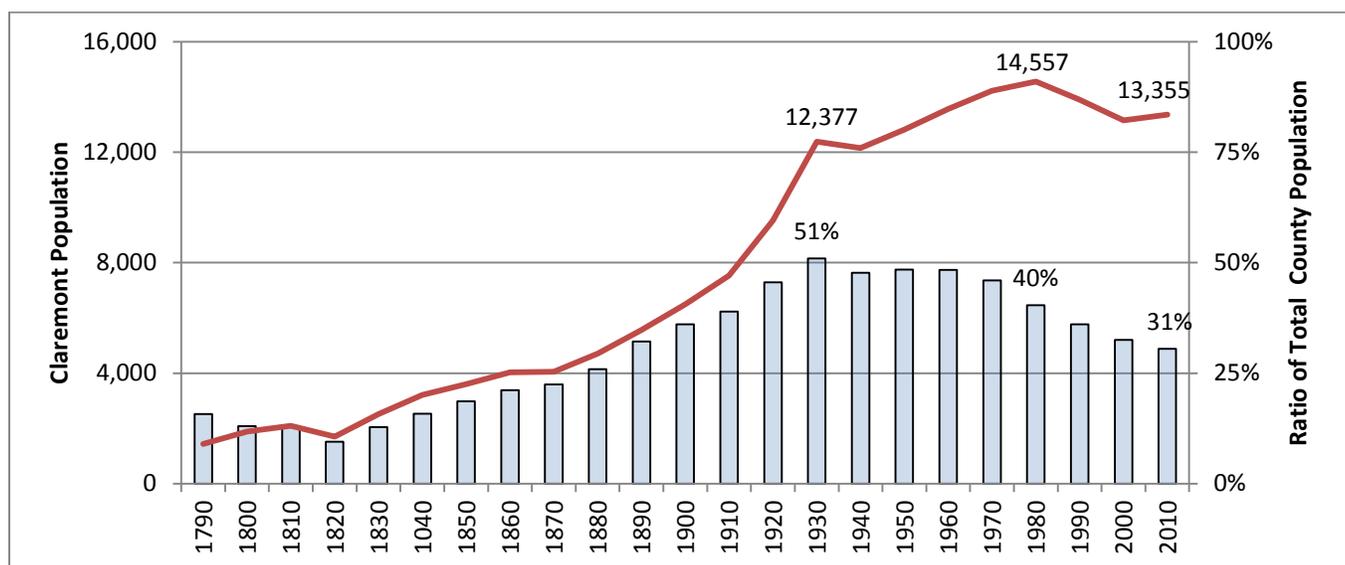
Community planners and decision makers often utilize population trends and projections to evaluate effectiveness of past actions or guide public policy decisions. There is often an assumption that the rate of population growth or decline is an implicit measure of its success. In reality, there are complex socio-economic factors influencing a community's population trends. From a community planning perspective, population trends and projections can reveal important future needs or opportunities.

#### HISTORIC DATA TRENDS

Claremont's population over time, as represented in the chart below, grew substantially in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as the local industrial sectors grew and attracted a workforce from surrounding communities.

The chart below superimposes the City's total population with its share of the total Sullivan county population (based on communities constituting Sullivan County today). This chart illustrates Claremont has historically been the major population center in Sullivan County. The City's status as the population center peaked around 1930 with 51% of the County population.

Subsequent decades reflect a demographic trend called decentralization where the City's share of the total County population declines. Decentralization began after World War II and continues to this day throughout the United States. In more metropolitan areas it has taken the form of suburban development. In Sullivan or Grafton Counties, this decentralization continues to occur with families choosing to live in nearby rural communities and working in employment centers like Claremont, Newport, Lebanon, or Hanover.



Claremont Population History (1790-2010)

While Claremont remains the major population and employment center in Sullivan County, this ongoing trend of decentralization affects the City's long-term population growth. Any increased commercial and industrial employment may not result in direct population growth within the community.

## **POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

Periodically the NH Office of Energy and Planning (NH OEP) conducts detailed population estimates or demographic projections. Population changes are based on three basic demographic conditions: individuals and families moving (migration), new births (fertility), and deaths (mortality). Secondary factors affect the above including existing demographic characteristics (e.g. number of young families, older adults, etc.) and external influences that may affect migration patterns (e.g. economic trends, cost of living, employment opportunities, etc.).

Population estimates and projections are best used as one of many sources of information in community planning. Demographers trying to anticipate short-term and long-term future conditions in their projections, which often amount to their best guess based on available information. For example, in 2009 NH OEP estimated a decline in Claremont's 2010 population, but the 2010 Census proved population growth.

### **Statewide and County Population Projections**

In September 2016 NH OEP developed the latest update to state, county, and local community population projections through 2040. The population projection models utilized the foundational migration/fertility/mortality approach to projecting future population growth or decline. A full explanation of the methodology and full results can be found online at [www.nh.gov/oep/](http://www.nh.gov/oep/).

A few of the highlights from this analysis include:

- The total New Hampshire state population is projected to be 1,432,730 in 2040, an increase of 116,260 or 8.8% from the 2010 Census population of 1,316,470.
- By 2040, every New Hampshire county is projected to experience natural decline - more deaths than births.
- The population age 65 and over will increase from 178,268 (13.5% of total) in 2010 to 408,522 (28.5% of total) in 2040, an increase of 230,200.
- The population under age 15 will decline from 232,182 (17.6%) in 2010 to 214,819 (15%) in 2040.

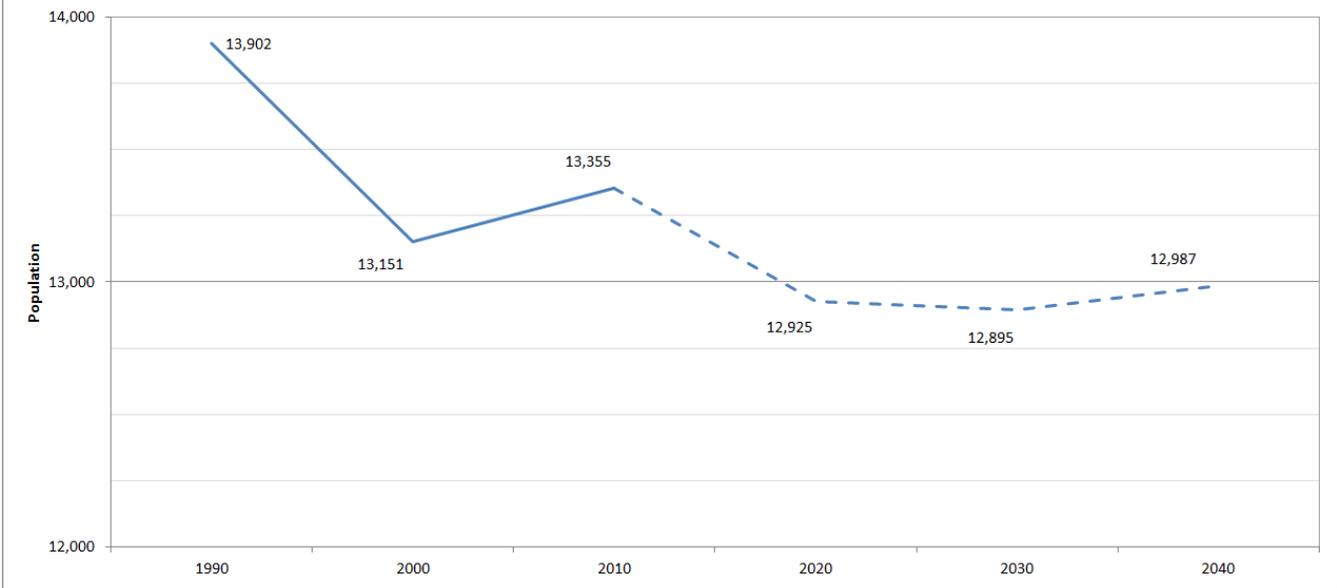
While the statewide population growth projection is 8.8% by 2040 each county will grow at different rates. Merrimack and Strafford Counties will grow as much as 16% while Coos County will decline by 16%. The Sullivan County population will increase approximately 2% by 2040. (Analysis of the projection methodology indicates an inherent bias toward regions and communities in southern New Hampshire where there has been substantial growth in the last 15 years.)

### **Claremont Population Projections**

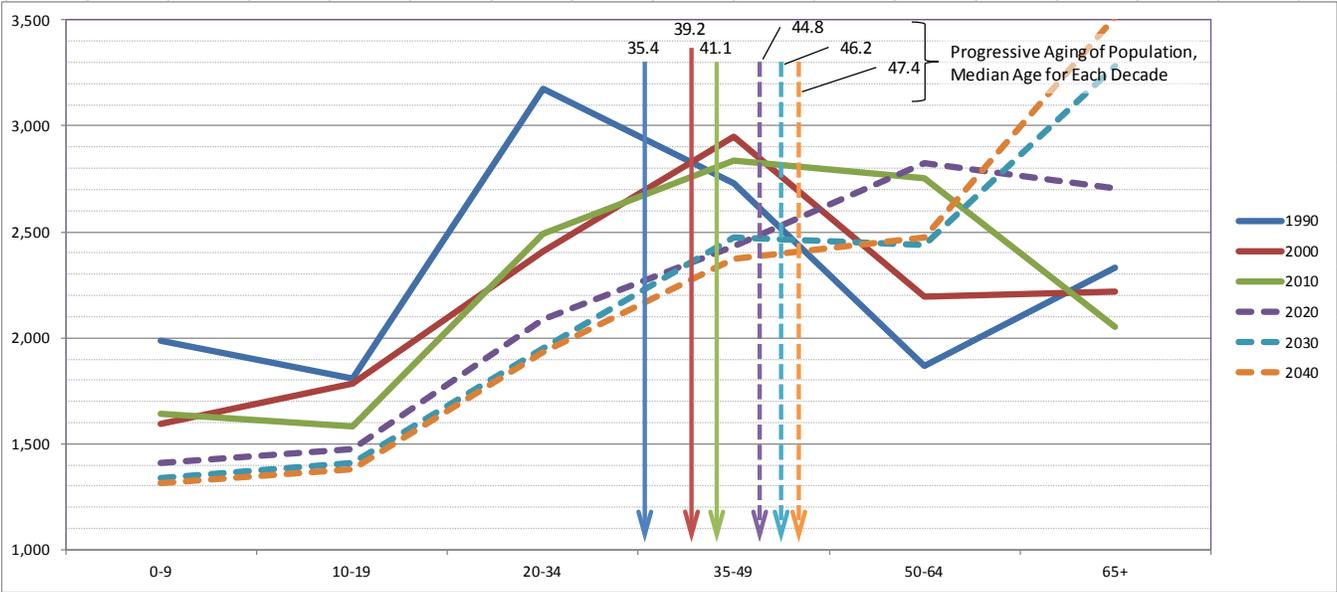
The following charts summarize projections for the City's age cohorts over the coming decades. This community-level analysis has been conducted by City staff to assess general trends:

- While Sullivan County will grow by 2% over the next 30 years, the projections indicate nearly 3% decrease in Claremont's population. This modest decrease in population for the City indicates to City staff a trend more akin to a levelling-off population growth rather than population decline.

- There will be a progressively aging population. Claremont’s residents age 65 and older will increase from 2,053 (15.4%) in 2010 to 3,511 (27.0%) in 2040. The median age will increase from 41.1 years in 2010 to 47 years in 2040.
- The population under age 15 will decline from 2,482 (18.6%) in 2010 to 2,028 (15.6%) in 2040.



Historic and Projected City Population (1990-2040)



Historic and Projected Population by Age Group (1990-2040)

According to these projections there will be a levelling-off of the City’s total population, decline in younger populations, and increasing senior population. These outcomes can have an impact on future demands for City services and infrastructure.

## **PLANNING ANALYSIS**

The above projections try to anticipate Claremont's population over the coming decades. From a planning perspective, using the best available information at this time, these population projections provide a starting point in identifying community needs and opportunities.

### **Aging Population**

Planners and community leaders throughout New England are exploring how to address concerns that have a profound impact on rural communities: median age continues to increase decade to decade, the region's youth are choosing to move to large urban areas, and few individuals and families are moving into the region.

As of 2010 the majority of the City population is 40 years and older. As the majority of the population ages there is a higher demand for health-related services (occurrence of chronic illnesses increase with age) and access to community amenities (e.g. grocery stores, community centers, recreation areas). Claremont may need to shift its priorities, be they policies or budget considerations, to meet the evolving demands of its aging residents.

### **Workforce**

As discussed above, individuals have the ability to live a distance from where they work, known as decentralization. According to 2014 economic analyses by the US Census Bureau approximately 67% of those employed in Claremont live in another community. Similarly, approximately 70% of employed Claremont residents work in another community. The City's workforce population will remain steady over the coming decades but the younger cohort (40 and younger) will likely diminish over time.

### **Growth and Development**

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century many rural New England communities were forced to respond to intense development pressure from an influx of new residents. Claremont's current population projections indicate a level population of approximately 13,000 over the coming decades. In considering Claremont's future for development it is clear population growth will need to be by the City's initiative to 'buck the trends' established in the projections.

### **The Big Picture**

The City will best serve its residents by focusing on maintaining and improving existing community assets with limited, intentional expansion of services for existing and future development. Over the next decade municipal and community leaders in Claremont can build upon its strengths, and address its weaknesses.

Claremont has an opportunity to plan for and promote the community's future population growth. Public survey responses support a strong rate of growth of up to 20,000 residents in the next 25 years. Municipal planning and policies can be foundational in supporting the community and making it an attractive destination for new businesses and residents.