

A BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT CONDITIONS

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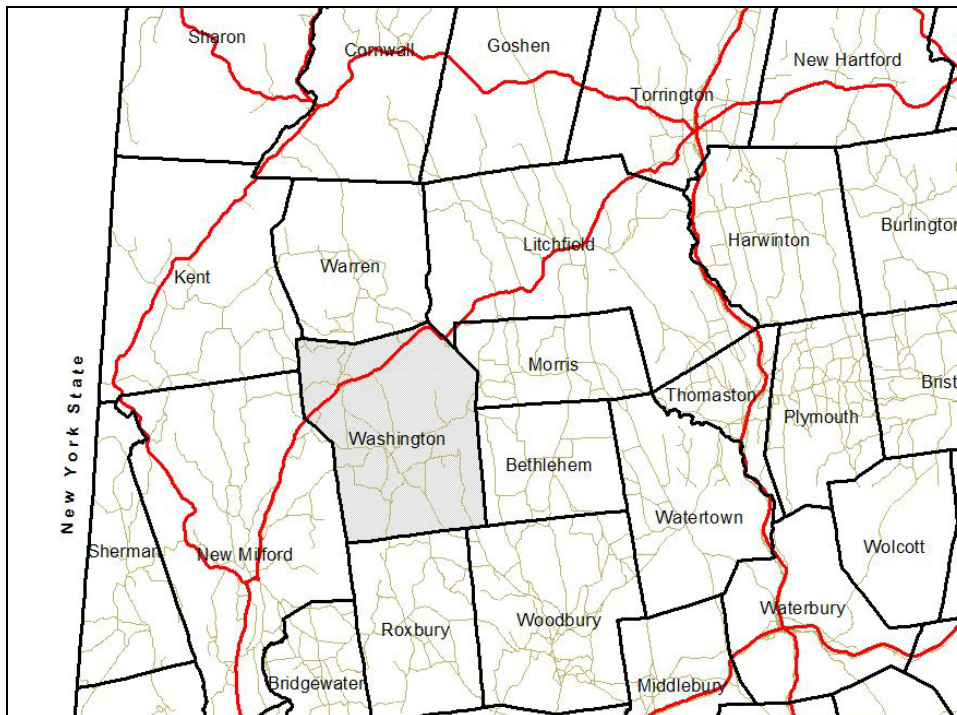
Washington is located in Litchfield County in northwest Connecticut. The Town is bounded by New Milford and Kent on the west, Roxbury and Woodbury on the south, Morris and Bethlehem on the east, and Warren and Litchfield on the north. Washington is located about 45 miles west of Hartford, the State capital, and about 95 miles northeast of New York City.

It is estimated that in the year 2000, Washington had about 4,277 people within its land area of about 38.6 square miles (24,727 acres). This is an increase of 372 people (10 percent) from the 1990 Census. (This estimate is higher than the 2000 U.S. Census due to an undercount of housing units in Washington.)

“If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it.”

Abraham Lincoln

Location Map



Washington Green

Because the first Judea meetinghouse was built there, the area around "The Green" became the early spiritual, commercial and political center of the community.

Shops, stores, schools, and the residences of some of the town's early ministers, judges and merchants ringed the Green. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the Green was probably used for grazing animals as well as training the local militia.

Ehrick Rossiter

Ehrick Kensett Rossiter, a graduate of The Gunnery and a gifted architect, returned to Washington in 1882.

Over the next several decades, Rossiter designed many extraordinary shingle-style and Colonial Revival summer cottages for other well-to-do New York City residents and Gunnery alumni. Several of these people also contributed their money and artistic and literary gifts to the establishment and design of some of the town's civic institutions.

However, Rossiter's most important legacy to Washington was conservation. When Steep Rock, the Clamshell and other lands along the Shepaug River were slated for logging, Rossiter purchased the land to protect it. These lands formed the kernel of what is now Steep Rock Reservation. Over the years, the Steep Rock Association has preserved additional lands in Washington (now over 3600 acres in fee and easements) as open space and nature preserves.

A Brief History of Washington

Like most areas of Connecticut in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Washington had a subsistence-based agricultural economy. Eventually, water-power from local streams drove a number of mills (grist mills, saw mills, fulling mills) that supported the growing community, and the population grew to 1,675 people by 1790. Numerous manufacturing sites were located in Factory Hollow, later to be known as the Depot. New Preston became a center for mills and factories producing a variety of goods and Marbledale had stone saw mills for marble deposits found in this area.

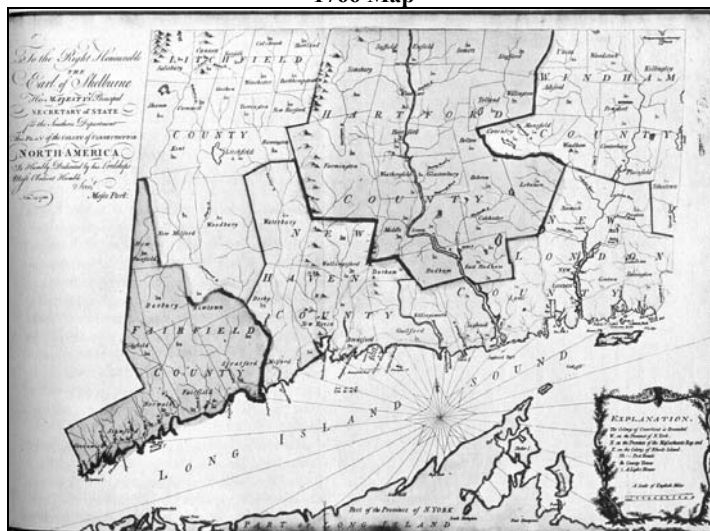
The arrival of the railroad in 1872 caused a major shift in Washington's economy and history. Importation of goods by the railroad caused a decline in local manufacturing activity and the Town returned to its agricultural roots.

Washington became a major producer of dairy products. A great boon to local farmers was the Borden Creamery, which stood on the site of Bryan Memorial Hall. Butter and cheese were produced and shipped by train to New York City. The former Factory Hollow became known as Washington Depot, the main community focal point.

The arrival of rail service resulted in another change in the local economy. Washington was now more accessible from a larger area and trains brought an increasing number of city dwellers seeking rural vacation retreats. Inns and boarding houses were established around Lake Waramaug with horse and carriage service to the New Preston train station. The whole town became a rural, second home retreat for many New York City residents.

The advent of the automobile and the establishment of a state highway system created new opportunities throughout Connecticut. Even as rail passenger service declined in importance, Washington remained accessible and continued to grow due to the lure of its rural character and pleasant setting. This growth accelerated after World War II with the expansion of residential development into once rural areas.

1766 Map



The People of Washington

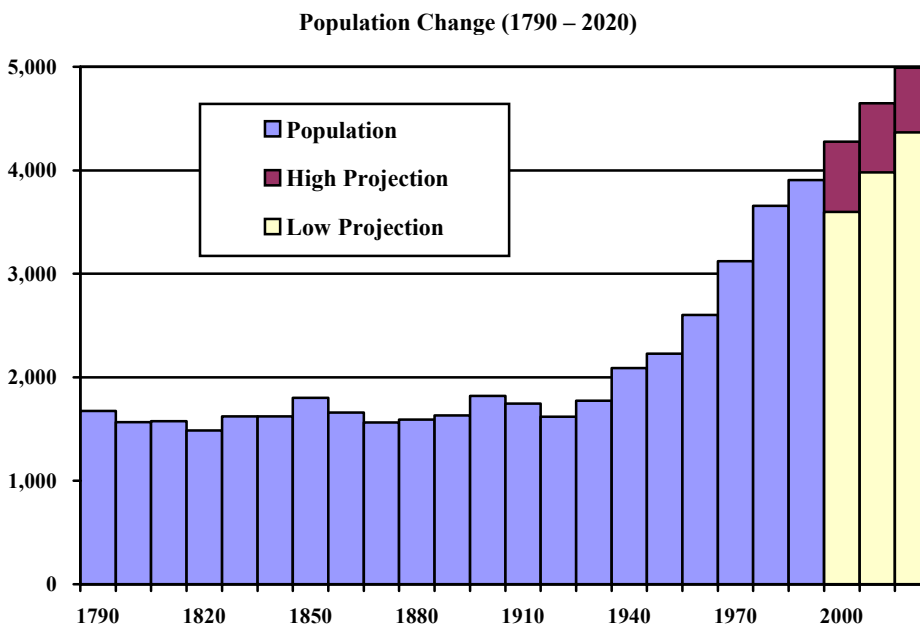
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Washington had a population of 3,596 people in the year 2000. This is a decrease of 309 people (nine percent) from the 1990 Census. In comparison, the populations of Connecticut and Litchfield County grew by 3.6 and 4.4 percent during this same period.

However, there is reason to believe that the Census Bureau did not account for all the housing units in Washington, resulting in an undercount of about 344 housing units and the people that reside in them. If the missed housing units had the same occupancy as the counted units, Washington's 2000 Census would have reported the following:

	Official Census Report	Unofficial Municipal Count	Difference
People	3,596	4,277	681
Housing Units	1,764	2,098	334

This Plan estimates the year 2000 population at 4,277 people, which represents an increase of 372 people (ten percent) from the 1990 Census.

Historically, Washington's population was fairly stable between 1790 and 1930 (ranging between about 1,500 and 1,800 people). Since 1930, Washington's population steadily increased, almost doubling between 1940 and 1990.



Population Growth

Year	Population
1790	1,675
1800	1,568
1810	1,575
1820	1,487
1830	1,621
1840	1,622
1850	1,802
1860	1,659
1870	1,563
1880	1,590
1890	1,633
1900	1,820
1910	1,747
1920	1,619
1930	1,775
1940	2,089
1950	2,227
1960	2,603
1970	3,121
1980	3,657
1990	3,905
2000	3,596*

U.S. Census

Population Projections

Year	Low	High
2000	3,596	4,277
2010	3,970	4,650
2020	4,340	4,990

*Census Resolution

After a request by the Town and other agencies, the Census Bureau declined to revisit or revise the data for Washington. As a result, the 2000 Census population count of 3,596 people will remain the official population count for the Town of Washington until the 2010 Census.

Population Projections

Age-specific population projections for Washington are a challenge for two reasons.

First, the undercount of the 2000 Census means that the current age composition of the community must be estimated.

Second, the 1995 age-specific population projections prepared by the Connecticut Census Data Center in 1995 projected slow to flat growth for Washington to the year 2020.

As a result, this data should only be used for an indication of general trends rather than specific expectations.

Dynamics of Population Change

Since 1960, Washington's population has grown primarily due to net immigration. While there has been some natural increase (a surplus of births over deaths) it has been fairly modest compared to total population change. This Plan assumes that 308 new residents moved to Washington in the 1990s, compared to a net natural increase of 64.

While population growth trends are important, changes in age composition are more significant for planning purposes. Planning for the potential effects of demographic changes using age-specific population projections can help allocate resources for future needs.

For planning purposes, the age composition of a community can be considered to include three major age groups with differing needs or concerns: children (ages 0-19), adults (ages 20-54), and mature residents (ages 55 and up).

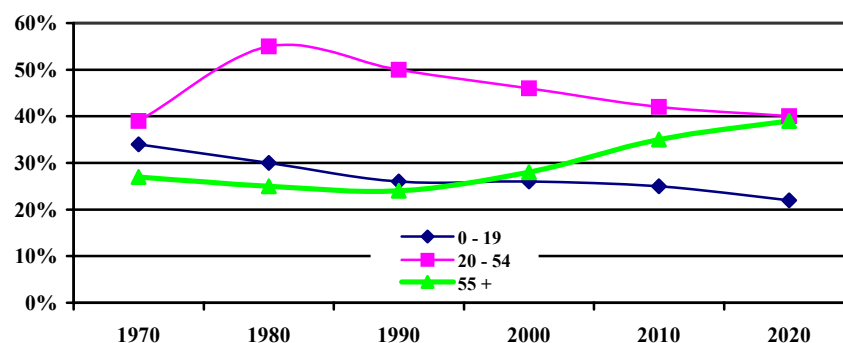
The following percentage distribution provides a sense of the expected changes in age composition.

Washington Age Composition (1970 to 2020)

Ages	Actual			2000 Estimated		Projections	
	1970	1980	1990	Census	Plan	2010	2020
0-19	34%	30%	26%	26%	26%	25%	22%
20-54	39%	55%	50%	46%	46%	42%	40%
55 +	27%	25%	24%	28%	28%	35%	39%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

1970 - 2000 Census, Projections by Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (1995)

Percent of Total Population



According to these estimates, several expected demographic changes that may influence Washington's future will occur over the next twenty years:

- youth age groups (ages 0 to 19) are expected to decline for the next 10 to 15 years and then begin to increase again,
- adult age groups (ages 20 to 54) are expected to decline as the baby boom generation ages, although the effect on Washington may be balanced by in-migration of young adults in their peak earning years,
- mature age groups (ages 55 and over) are expected to increase significantly over the next 20 years to almost 40 percent of the total population of Washington.

2000 Age Comparison

	Wash- ington	State
0 - 4	4%	7%
5 - 19	22%	21%
20 - 34	13%	19%
35 - 54	32%	31%
55 - 64	12%	9%
65+	16%	13%

Some of the planning implications of this demography are summarized in the table below.

Description	Age Range	Needs	Projection / Comment
Infants	0 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care 	Decline to a trough about 2010 then increase to 2025
School-Age	5 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School facilities • Recreation facilities • Recreation programs 	Peak around 2005 then decline to a trough around 2020
Young Adults	20 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental housing • Starter homes • Social destinations 	Modest decline to a trough about 2005 and then increase
Middle Age	35 to 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family programs • Trade-up programs 	Peak around 2000 and then decline to around 2020
Mature Adults	55 to 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller homes • Second homes 	Continue to grow to 2020 and beyond
Retirement Age	65 and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax relief • Housing options • Elderly programs 	Continue to grow to 2020 and beyond

Definitions

Developed Land – land that has buildings, structures, or improvements used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential or institutional)

Committed Land – land that is used for a particular economic or social purpose (including protected open space)

Agricultural Land – land that is currently farmed and may be temporarily protected open space but is not permanently protected or otherwise considered “committed”

Vacant Land – land that is not developed or committed

Open Space – for the purposes of land use categorization, includes only land permanently protected, including protected agricultural land.

Community/Civic – these include municipal property, schools, state property, cemeteries, and recreational land.

Potential Incremental Development – land that is already developed but, because of its size, may be subdivided or resubdivided.

Land Use in Washington

Washington contains about 24,727 acres. The land use survey found that 9,467 acres (38 percent of the Town) is either developed for residential or business use or committed as open space and related uses or for municipal use. Less than two percent of all land in Washington (73 acres) is used for business purposes.

Approximately 18 percent of all land in Washington is permanently protected as open space, including protected farmland. Another 2 percent is used for private recreational facilities and cemeteries. Approximately 10 percent is used for agricultural purposes, but is not permanently protected.

Approximately 15,260 acres (62% of the town) is either vacant land, agricultural land that is not permanently protected, or developed land that may be subdivided and further developed in the future. As a result, the rural character of Washington could still be affected by future development activities on that land. Current land uses are shown on the map on the facing page.

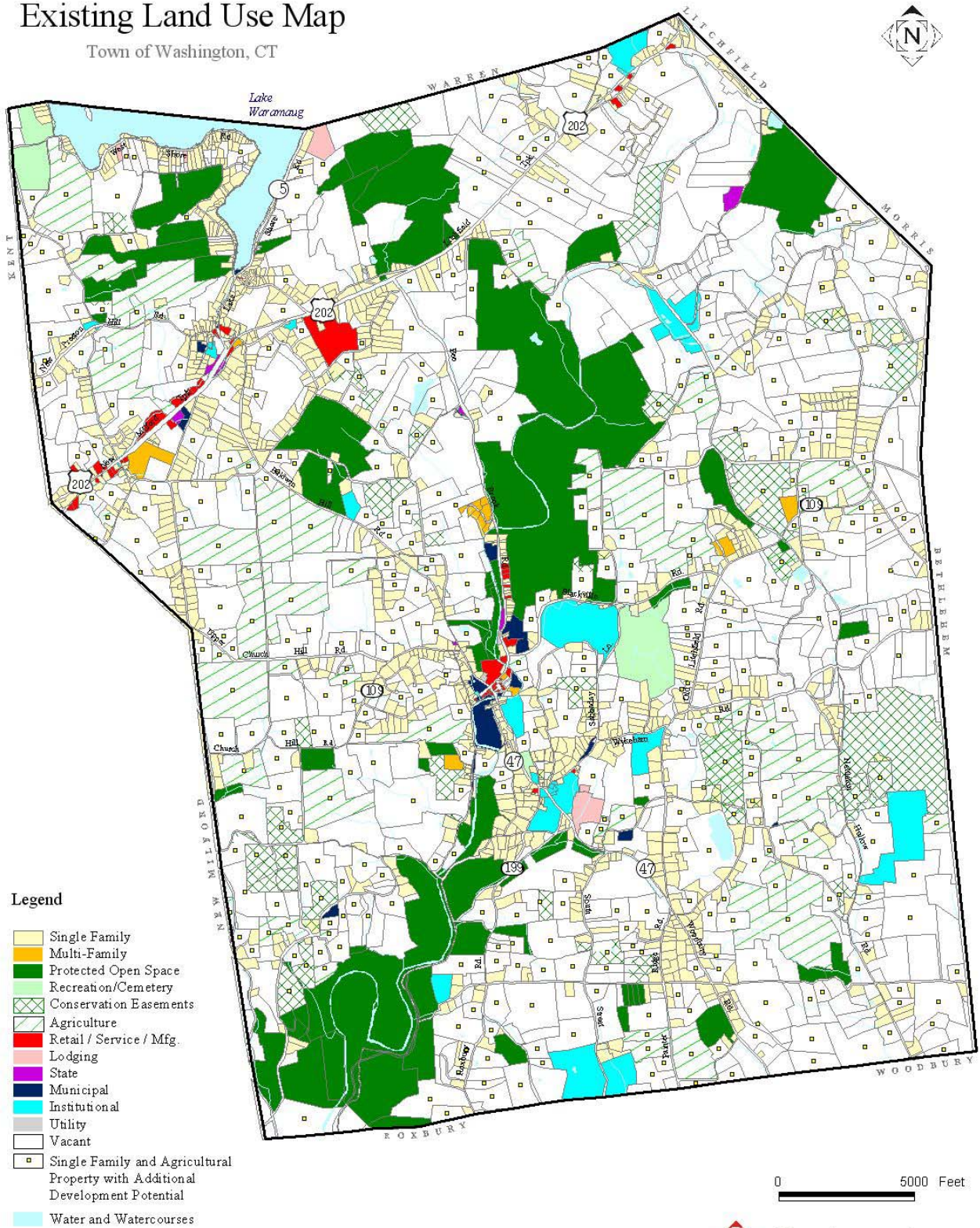
2002 Washington Land Use

Use	Acres	Percent Of Land Committed	Percent Of Total Land
Developed / Committed			
Residential	2,856	30%	12%
Single Family	2,779		
Multi-Family	77		
Business	182	2%	<1%
Retail / Service	123		
Office	5		
Lodging	54		
Open Space	4,480	47%	18%
Permanently Protected	4,480		
Community/Civic Facilities	741	11%	3%
Municipal Facilities	192		
State Facilities	21		
Institutional	320		
Recreational, Cemeteries	208		
Infrastructure	886	9%	4%
Roads	863		
ROW / Parking / Utility	23		
Water	322	1%	1%
Total	9,467	100%	38%
Vacant / Developable			
Vacant	5,866		
Agricultural	2,433		
Potential Incremental Development	6,961		
Total	15,260		62%
Total Land Area	24,727		100%

Planimetrics (Totals may not add due to rounding). Land use information from Washington with field updates by Planimetrics.

Existing Land Use Map

Town of Washington, CT



Soil-Based Zoning Classes

Soil Class	Maximum Density
A	0.50 Units / Acre
B	0.33 Units / Acre
C	0.25 Units / Acre
D	0.15 Units / Acre
E	Variable
F	0.0 Units / Acre

Buildout Potential

Based on the present regulations, future development may occur on properties that:

- are currently vacant and not protected, or
- are developed, but may be further subdivided.

Zoning in Washington

Washington has adopted and effectively implemented soil-based zoning to manage and guide development in the community. This type of zoning determines the density at which new development may occur based on the characteristics of soil types found on a given development site. Soil based zoning helps to ensure that impacts from new development do not exceed the capacity of the land to absorb them. In the Fall of 2000, Washington received an award from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association for recent enhancements to its zoning regulations, which encouraged residential development patterns more responsive to environmental land use considerations.

Washington contains three zoning districts for residential development. The Farming and Residential district comprises 23,888 acres or 97 percent of the total land area. The Lake Waramaug Residential district is the next largest residential zone at 565 acres. The Washington Green district is a special residential district comprising 10.2 acres.

Commercial development is permitted in the Marbledale, New Preston, Washington Depot, and Woodville business districts. These districts occupy 264 acres, or 1 percent of the total land area of Washington.

Development Potential in Washington

The Washington Ad Hoc Conservation Committee, as part of the Natural Resource Inventory Report, calculated the potential total residential buildout of the Town, based on the soil-based zoning regulation refinements enacted in 2000.

The Report indicated that there are approximately 24,727 acres of land in Washington. Of this figure, 8,103 acres were deducted because they consisted of protected open space, wetlands, watercourses, and slopes in excess of 25 percent. The Report estimated that soil types of the remaining land might eventually support a total of about 4,400 building lots (approximately 2,069 lots existed when the analysis was done).

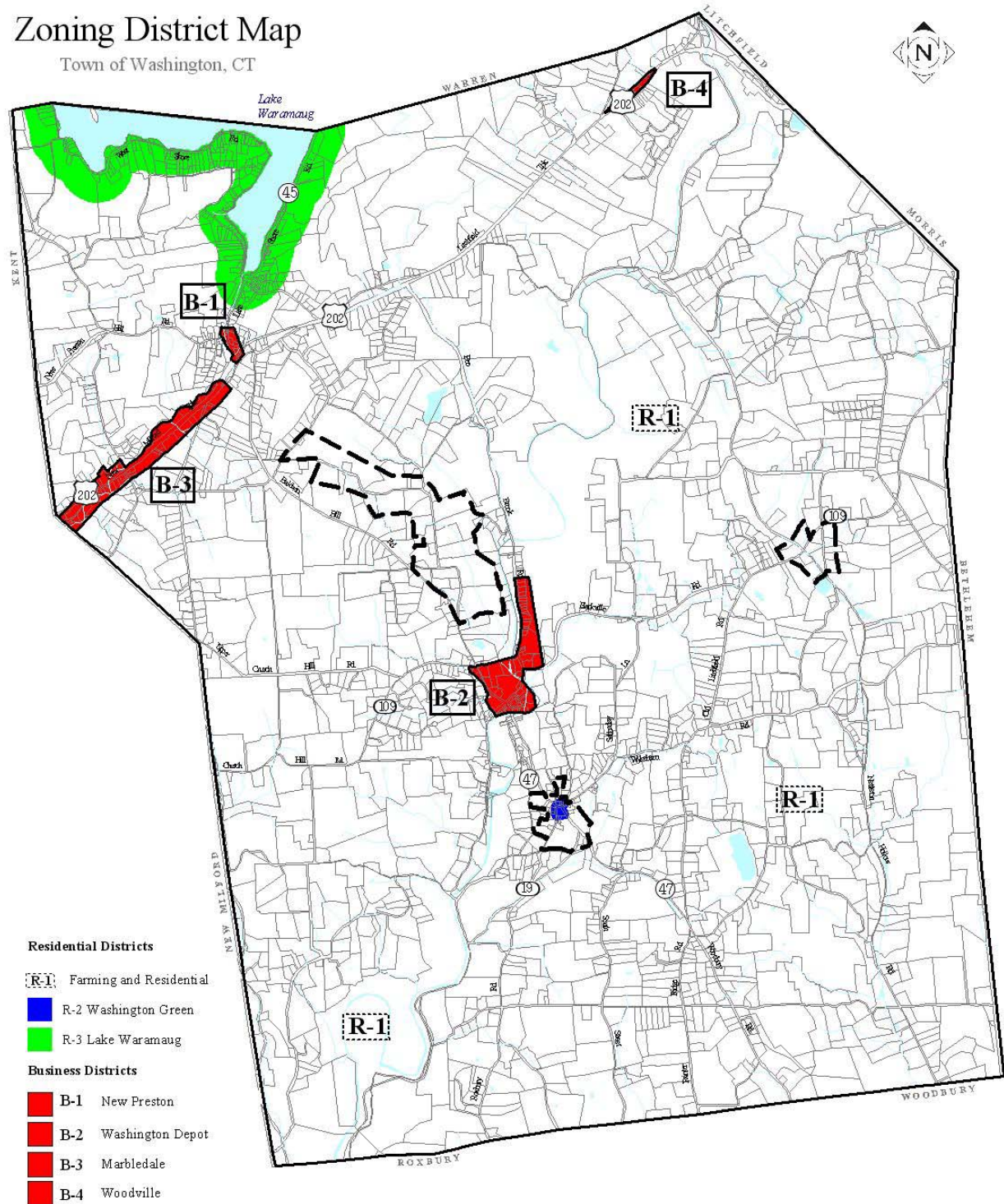
If about 16 percent of the housing units in Washington continue to be held for seasonal or occasional use, the ultimate year-round population of the community might be about 9,200 residents under current zoning and subdivision regulations.

On the other hand, if all housing units were to be occupied year-round at the current average size per occupied unit (2.45 persons), the ultimate year-round population of Washington might be about 10,800 residents.

However, another factor that will influence the ultimate population of Washington is the current trend toward large lot development, reflecting the value that current and new residents place on homes on large acreage lots. This trend, if continued, would reduce the estimated ultimate population while contributing to the perceived openness of the Town, but may exacerbate the limited housing diversity that already exists.

Zoning District Map

Town of Washington, CT



Residential Districts

R-1 Farming and Residential

R-2 Washington Green

R-3 Lake Waramaug

Business Districts

B-1 New Preston

B-2 Washington Depot

B-3 Marbledale

B-4 Woodville

--- Historic Districts

Other

Water and Watercourses



Housing Growth

1980	1,564
1990	1,856
2000 (Census)	1,764
2000 (Plan)	2,098

1980-2000 Census

Median Housing Value

Roxbury	\$355,700
Washington	\$235,500
Woodbury	\$235,000
Bethlehem	\$213,800
Warren	\$203,700
Kent	\$188,300
New Milford	\$184,900
Morris	\$180,100
Litchfield	\$179,900
Connecticut	\$166,900

2000 Census

Housing Tenure

	Wash- ington	State
Owner Occupied (full time)	63%	63%
Renter Occupied (full time)	17%	31%
For Rent or Sale	4%	4%
Occa- sional Use (owned or rented)	16%	2%

2000 Census

Housing in Washington

Building permit information at both the local and state level indicates that housing growth in Washington continued over the past ten years and approximately 150 housing units were added during the 1990s. Approximately 16 percent of all housing units in Washington are kept for weekend, seasonal or occasional use, significantly higher than the State average of two percent.

Housing prices in Washington are higher than most surrounding communities and significantly higher than the state average. While part of this is a function of the value of some of the outstanding historic homes in Washington, it also reflects the desirability of the community for both occasional and year-round residents.

According to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, in 2000 only 1.08 percent of Washington's housing qualified as "affordable" according to the statutory definition (CGS 8-30g). Less than 10% affordable housing subjects the Town to the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure. However, if the recently approved housing units in New Preston (11 units) are developed by the Washington Community Housing Trust and if the 12 Riverwoods units and 7 Ellsworth apartments are included, Washington would exceed 2% affordable housing under the State statutes and would qualify for temporary exemption from the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure of CGS 8-30g.

Washington's Economy

Once an agricultural community, Washington has gone through several economic and transportation changes. While there are about 1,500 jobs in Washington, most of these are associated with public and private educational facilities and so Washington has a decidedly residential character. No major changes are foreseen in the factors that have driven community growth over the last several decades:

- rural character and quality of life
- natural features and open space
- availability of jobs in the Town and in surrounding areas
- proximity to New York City
- recreational and educational amenities

About 1,500 people were employed at various enterprises in Washington in the year 2000. Employment in Washington has been increasing steadily and about 500 new jobs have been added in Washington since 1980. Washington has a large share of self-employed workers (17.5 %). This is significantly higher than the State average of 6.6 percent.

It is important to note that seasonal or occasional homes are a form of economic development in Washington. While such uses do not produce goods and services that benefit residents, they can result in local employment (caretakers and maintenance work) and do enhance the local tax base because the taxes paid generally exceed the services provided (the owners do not live here year-round and their children do not attend public schools in Washington).

Employment Growth

1980	1,040
1990	1,300
2000	1,520

CT Labor Dept

Median Household Income

Roxbury	\$87,794
Bethlehem	\$68,542
Woodbury	\$68,322
New Milford	\$65,354
Washington	\$65,288
Warren	\$62,798
Litchfield	\$58,418
Morris	\$58,050
Connecticut	\$53,935
Kent	\$53,906

2000 Census

Per Capita Expenditures

Washington	\$3,058
Roxbury	\$3,045
Morris	\$2,562
New Milford	\$2,515
Connecticut	\$2,444
Kent	\$2,437
Litchfield	\$2,163
Woodbury	\$2,030

CT Policy & Economic Council 2000-2001

Per Capita Property Taxes

Roxbury	\$2,559
Washington	\$2,495
Morris	\$2,044
Litchfield	\$1,866
Kent	\$1,865
Woodbury	\$1,729
Connecticut	\$1,612
New Milford	\$1,610

CT Policy & Economic Council 2000-2001

Per Capita State Aid

Connecticut	\$627
New Milford	\$622
Morris	\$339
Kent	\$226
Litchfield	\$170
Roxbury	\$140
Woodbury	\$127
Washington	\$119

CT Policy & Economic Council 2000-2001

1999 Per Capita Grand List

Roxbury	\$251,177
Washington	\$202,940
Kent	\$139,106
Morris	\$134,890
Woodbury	\$107,305
New Milford	\$101,516
Litchfield	\$100,099
Connecticut	\$96,546

CT Policy & Economic Council

Tax Base Composition

	Percent Business
Connecticut	26%
New Milford	24%
Litchfield	17%
Kent	15%
Woodbury	14%
Morris	8%
Washington	6%
Roxbury	2%

CT Policy & Economic Council

Fiscal Overview

Expenditures

The annual budget in Washington for fiscal year 2000-2001 was approximately \$11,996,853. Education is the highest category of expenditures at 59.12%.

On a per capita basis, Washington spends more than the state average on education and public works. This is typical for a rural community like Washington.

2000-2001 Per Capita Expenditures Distribution

	Washington		Connecticut	
Education	\$1,808	59%	\$1,386	56%
Police	\$59	2%	\$161	7%
Fire	\$42	1%	\$93	4%
Debt Service	\$25	<1%	\$181	7%
Public Works	\$627	21%	\$191	8%
Other Expenditures	\$497	16%	\$432	18%
Total	\$3,058	100%	\$2,444	100%

Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

Revenues

Since Washington receives less state aid than the state average, it relies on property taxes to generate most of its revenue. Washington ranked 3rd out of 169 towns in Connecticut for the percentage of total revenue from property taxes.

2000-2001 Per Capita Revenue

	Washington		Connecticut	
Current Taxes	\$2,495	82%	\$1,612	65%
State Aid	\$119	4%	\$627	26%
Surplus	\$248	8%	\$39	2%
Other	\$196	6%	\$166	7%
Total	\$3,058	100%	\$2,345	100%

Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

Tax Base

Washington's Equalized Net Grand List was about \$827 million in the year 2000. Only about 6.3 percent of local tax revenue is generated from business property.