

Chapter 1

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

I. INTRODUCTION

An analysis of trends in a town's changing population is one of the most fundamental aspects of a master planning effort. Any significant changes in the population of a town will consequently affect land use patterns, the town's economic base and local demand for housing, transportation, human services and community facilities. Shifts in the composition of the population are important, since knowledge of changes in the school age, senior citizen and seasonal population is a prerequisite to providing for proper education, senior housing and the timing and tailoring of services in the future.

II. HISTORICAL TRENDS

A. Population Growth

In the year 1800, the population of Hebron was 281. By 1820 the Town's population doubled in size, to an all-time high of 572 persons. Between 1820 and 1850, the population size remained relatively stable, but then went into a steady decline for the next one hundred years. In 1950, Hebron had only 130 residents. Unless noted otherwise, all the figures and tables in this chapter are based on the United States Census.

Figure 1-1 and Table 1-1, (Population Growth – 1800-2000) show that another period of rapid growth began in the 1950's and continues to this day. The population of Hebron increased by about 18 percent between 1950 and 1960, 53 percent from 1960 and 1970, 49 percent from 1970 to 1980, 11 percent from 1980 to 1990, and 19 percent from 1990 to 2000. The Town's population in the 2000 census was 459, an increase of seventy-three residents in ten years or about seven percent per year. The median age was fifty, the highest of any town in the State.

As shown in Figure 1-2, in the years from 1970 to 2000, the "natural growth" of the Town, i.e. the growth based only on actual birth and death rates, was close to zero. The gap between the growth as shown in the census data and the natural growth shows an influx of over 200 new residents during that thirty-year period

HEBRON POPULATION
1800-2000

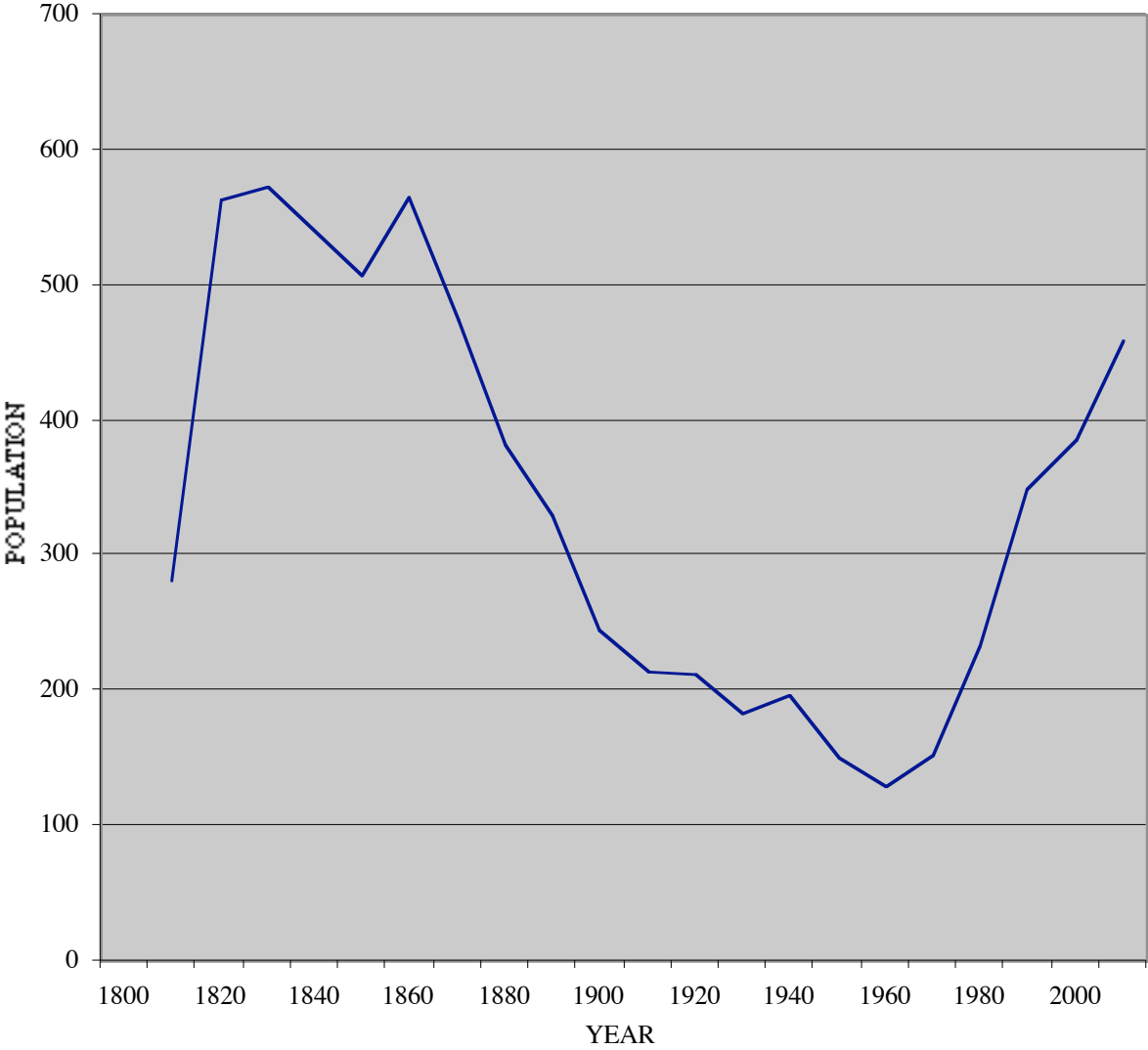


Figure 1-1

TABLE 1-1

Population Growth – 1800-2000
Hebron, N.H.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Numerical Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
1800	281	—	—
1810	563	+282	100.4
1820	572	+ 9	1.6
1830	540	- 32	-5.6
1840	508	- 32	-5.9
1850	565	+ 57	11.2
1860	475	- 90	-15.9
1870	382	- 93	-19.6
1880	329	- 53	-13.9
1890	245	- 84	-25.5
1900	214	- 31	-12.7
1910	213	- 1	-0.5
1920	184	- 29	-13.6
1930	197	+ 13	7.1
1940	151	- 46	-23.4
1950	130	- 21	-13.9
1960	153	+ 23	17.7
1970	234	+ 81	52.9
1980	349	+115	49.1
1990	386	+ 37	10.6
2000	459	+ 73	18.9

HEBRON POPULATION GROWTH: CENSUS vs NATURAL

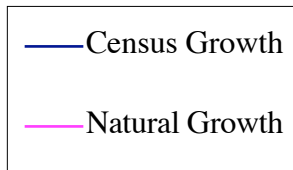
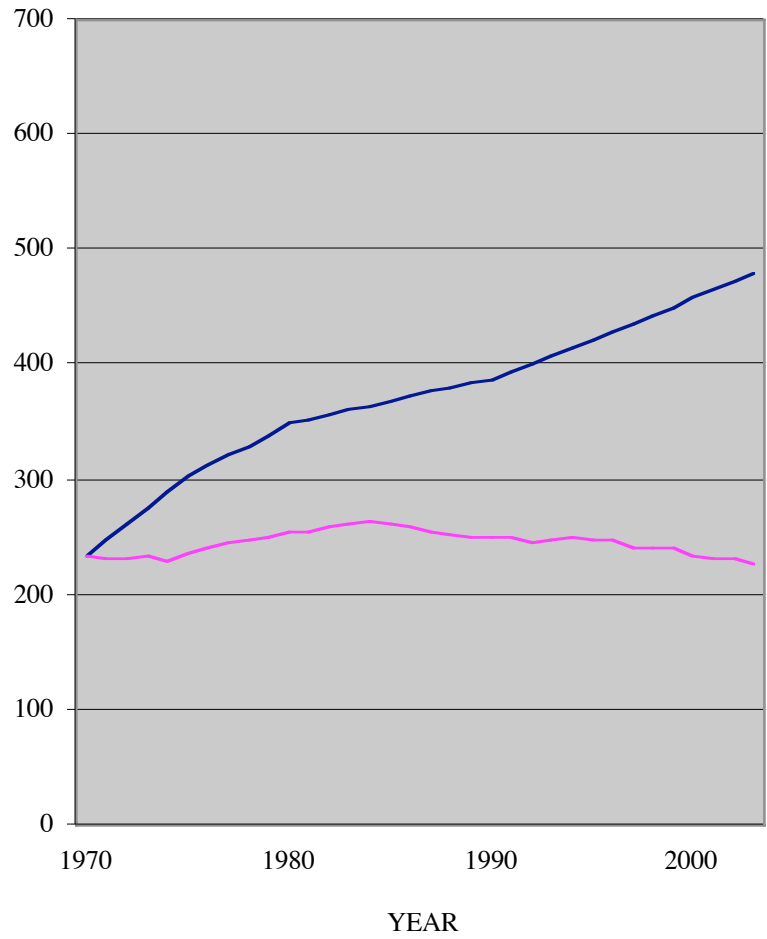


Figure 1-2

B. Hebron, County and State Comparisons

Figure 1-3 compares the wild swings of Hebron's growth rates in the 20th century with the more sedate growth rates of Grafton County and the state of New Hampshire. It is important to note that because the population of Hebron is so small and because growth rates are calculated in percentages, even an increase or decrease of a few residents will affect the town's growth rate dramatically. Taking this into consideration, if we look at the last four decades (1960-2000), we see that Hebron's growth rate outstripped the county's and the state's in every decade except the years between 1980 and 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, Hebron's growth rate was 19 percent - over twice that of Grafton County.

Another way of comparing the population growth of Hebron with Grafton County and the State of New Hampshire is to look at what percentage of the County's and the State's population lives in Hebron, and how that percentage has changed over the years.

We see from Table 1-2 that the population of Hebron has grown from 0.3% of Grafton County in 1960 to 0.6% in 2000. This is yet another way of saying that the Town has grown at a much faster rate than the County. Note that in the same period the Town's population varied between .03% to .04% of the State's population. This would indicate that in projecting the population growth of the Town, one would be better off looking at projections of State growth rather than Grafton County growth.

COMPARATIVE GROWTH RATES STATE, COUNTY, TOWN

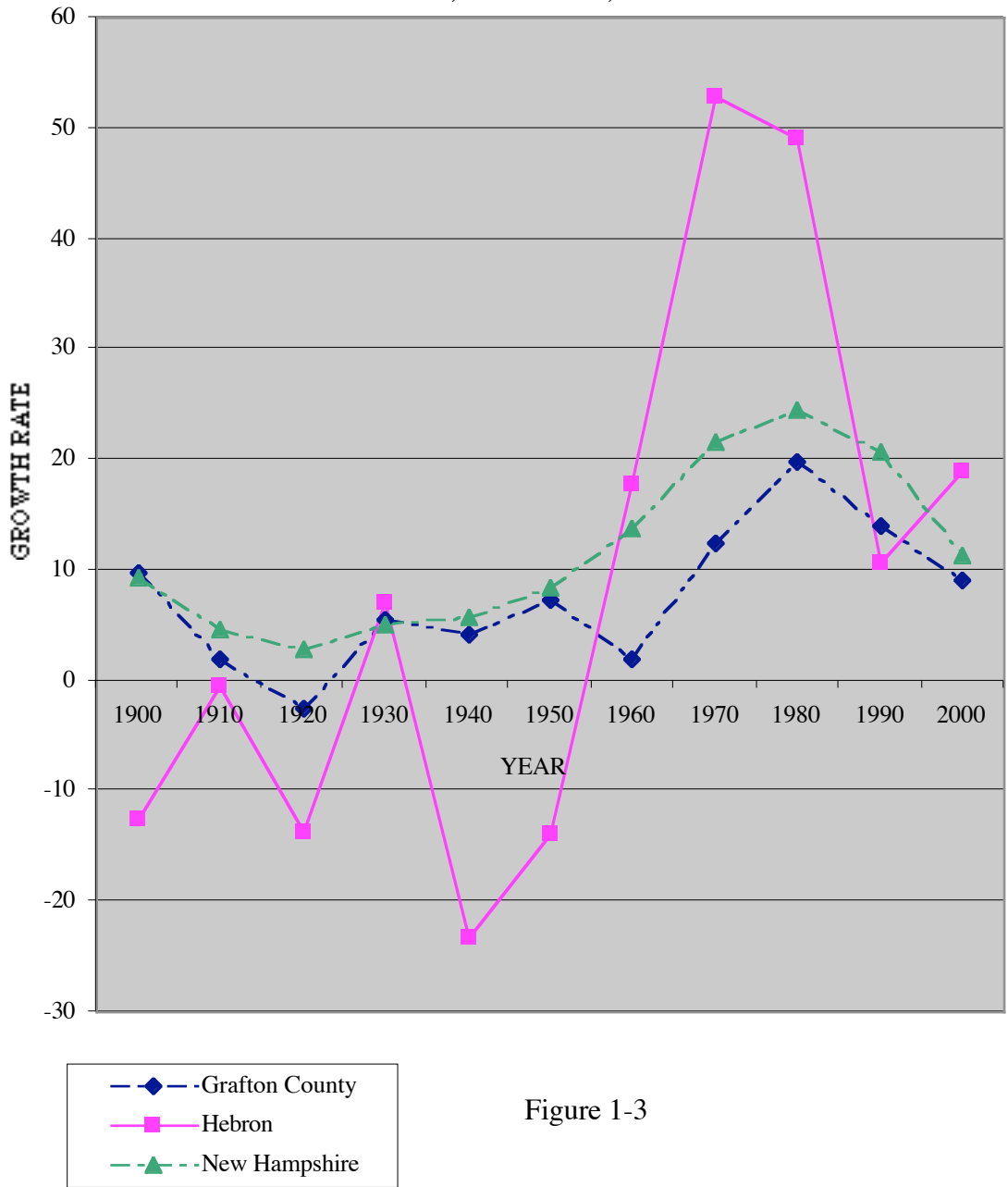


Figure 1-3

TABLE 1-2

Relative Share of Population: 1890-2000
Hebron, Grafton County, State of New Hampshire

<u>Year</u>	<u>Hebron</u>	<u>Grafton County</u>	<u>Percent Hebron/G.C.</u>	<u>State of N.H.</u>	<u>Percent Hebron/State</u>
1890	245	37,217	0.66	376,530	0.065
1900	214	40,844	0.52	411,588	0.052
1910	213	41,652	0.51	430,572	0.049
1920	184	40,572	0.45	443,083	0.042
1930	197	42,816	0.46	465,293	0.042
1940	151	44,645	0.34	491,524	0.031
1950	130	47,923	0.27	533,242	0.024
1960	153	48,857	0.31	606,921	0.025
1970	234	54,914	0.43	737,578	0.032
1980	349	65,731	0.53	918,827	0.038
1990	386	74,929	0.52	1,109,252	0.035
2000	459	81,743	0.56	1,235,786	0.037

C. Population Density

Population density remains very low in Hebron. Between 1990 and 2000, it increased from 23.0 to 27.2 persons per square mile. Figure 1-4 shows how Hebron's population density compares with neighboring towns.

POPULATION DENSITY IN SELECTED LAKES REGION COMMUNITIES

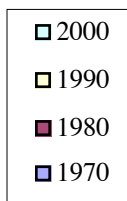
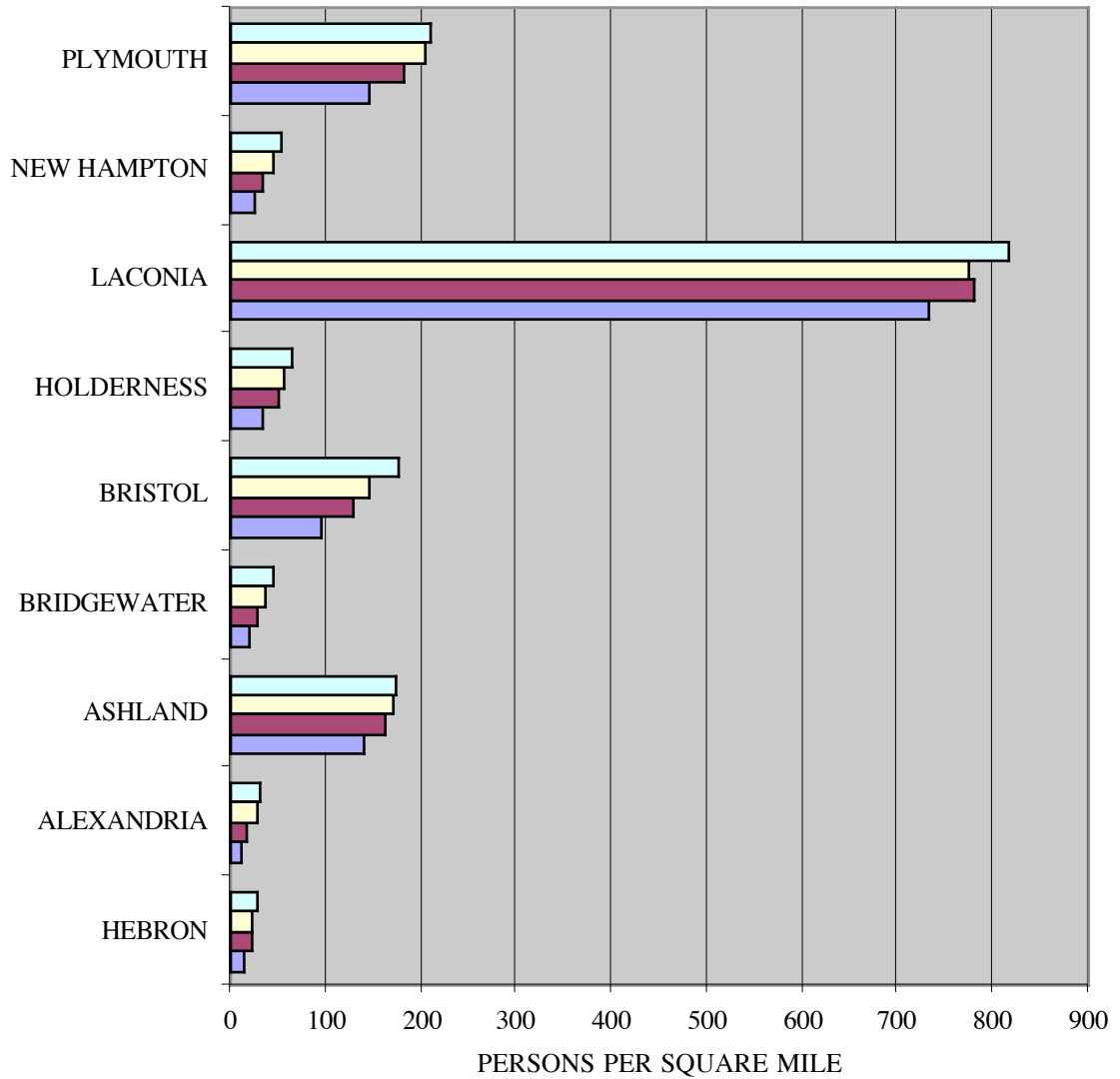


Figure 1-4

D. Seasonal Population

Seasonal population figures, per se, are not captured in the U.S. Census, but data on seasonal and year-round housing units are collected and inferences on seasonal population may be drawn from these data. As shown in Table 1-3 and Figure 1-5, Hebron had 167 housing units (116 seasonal, 51 year-round) in 1960. There was a net change of 248 units (164 seasonal, 84 year-round) over the next two decades, then the ratio of seasonal to year-round began to change. Between 1980 and 2000, there was a net change of 102 housing units, but only 31 were seasonal while 71 were year-round. In the forty-year period 1960-2000, the percentage of the total housing units that were seasonal dropped from 70 percent to 60 percent.

It is probable that the seasonal population will continue to grow, but at a slower rate than the resident population as more seasonal units are converted for year-round occupancy.

TABLE 1-3
Housing Units in Hebron

Year	<u>Seasonal Units</u>			<u>Year-Round Units</u>			<u>Total Units</u>	
	No.	% Change	% of Year-Round Units	No.	% Change	% of Year-Round Units	No.	% Change
1960	116	---	69.5	51	---	30.5	167	---
1970	189	62.9	70.5	79	54.9	29.5	268	60.5
1980	280	48.1	67.5	135	70.9	32.5	415	54.9
1990	267	-4.6	59.1	185	37.0	40.9	452	8.9
2000	311	16.5	60.2	206	11.4	39.8	517	14.4

NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS

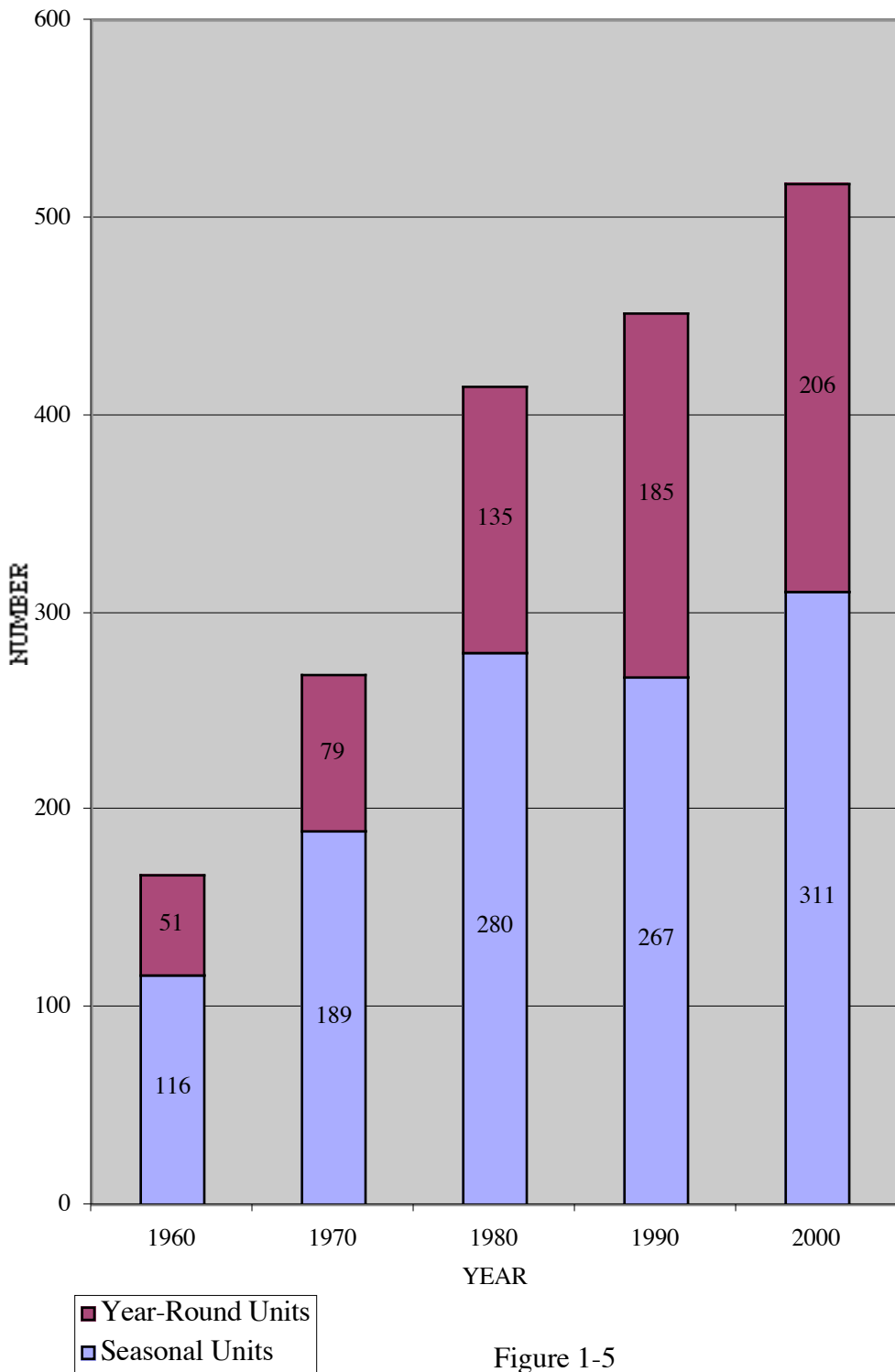


Figure 1-5

III. AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age composition of a community has a substantial influence on the relative demand for local public services (schools, recreation, senior services, etc.). Table 1-4 and Figure 1-6 provide an overview of the age distribution of Hebron's population.

TABLE 1-4

Hebron Population Distribution

<u>Age Groups</u>	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
0-4 Pre-School	14	9.2	15	6.4	33	9.5	15	3.9	24	5.2
5-19 School Age	29	18.9	48	20.5	57	16.4	74	19.2	58	12.6
20-64 Working Age	82	53.6	130	55.6	203	58.1	212	54.9	248	54.0
65+ Senior Citizens	28	18.3	41	17.5	56	16.0	85	22.0	129	28.1
Totals	153	100	234	100	349	100	386	100	459	100

A. Pre-School (0-4)

This age group showed a steep jump from 6% to almost 10% of the population in 1980, but then fell back to 4% in 1990 and was only 5% of the population in the 2000 census data. In absolute numbers though, the number of pre-school children in the period between 1960 and 2000 ranged from fourteen to thirty-three, so the twenty-four recorded in the 2000 census was a mid-point in the historical range.

B. School Age (5-19)

First, please note that this range is slightly different from that used in the 1985 Master Plan where the range was 5-17. The new range reflects the way the data was tabulated in the 2000 U.S. Census.

The size of the school-age population directly affects the town's single largest fiscal expenditure, that of educational facilities and busing. This group steadily increased in numbers from 29 students in 1960 to 74 in 1990, but then dropped back to 58 in 2000. In terms of percentage of the total population, school-age students accounted for only 12.6% of the Town's population in the year 2000, the lowest in the past forty years.

C. Working Age (20-64)

This age group constitutes the vast majority of the community's labor force; however, it is understood that not all persons of this age group are actually in the labor force, employed or looking for employment. Many in the upper end of the age range are retirees. The age group also includes the majority of young households that will potentially contribute to the expansion of the younger age groups in the future. The "working age" group has continued to account for about 55% of Hebron's total population. In actual numbers, the working age population has grown steadily from 82 persons in 1960 to 248 in the year 2000.

Again, please note the change in the range from the 1985 Master Plan where the range was 18-64.

D. Senior Citizens (65+)

The percentage of the senior citizen population within Hebron during the 1960-1980 period dipped, at a time when many communities within the Lakes Region were experiencing an increase in the number of retirees. Hebron soon caught up with the regional trend, showing an increase in the senior citizen percentage of its population from 16% in 1980 to 28% in the year 2000. In actual numbers, the 2000 U.S. Census data shows 129 senior citizens in Hebron, an increase of 73 since the 1980 figure included in the 1985 Master Plan.

**HEBRON POPULATION COMPOSITION IN
PERCENTAGES
1960-2000**

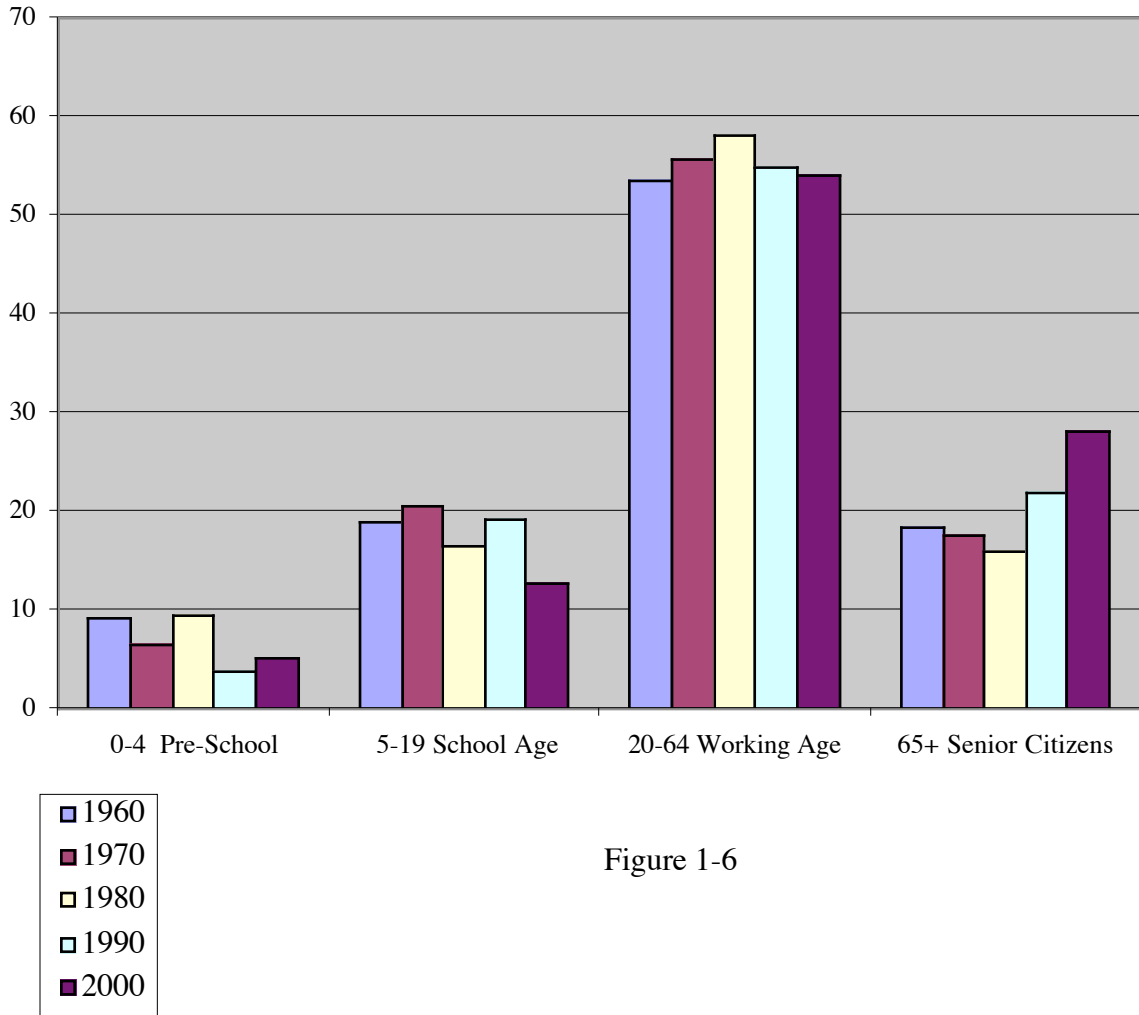


Figure 1-6

IV. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Understanding the future population level of a community is most important in estimating land use and public facility needs as well as the private market demands for housing and retail services.

Projecting long-term future population for a small community such as Hebron is difficult due to the substantial impact individual projects, such as the addition of a large subdivision, roadway changes, and industry can have on an individual town's development pattern. Nevertheless, the extrapolation of existing trends can provide a general estimate of future population, based upon the assumption of the continuation of these trends.

The 1985 Master Plan used "least squares curve fitting" and ratio techniques to project Hebron's population growth from the 1980 Census. The least squares projection was far off the mark – projecting a population of 536 in 2000 whereas the actual population was 459. The ratio technique, which assumed that Hebron would maintain its 1980 percentage – approximately .04% - of the State's population, projected a year 2000 population of 483. The actual percentage of the State's population who lived in Hebron in the year 2000 was .037%. Using that percentage figure and the most current population projection available from the State's Office of Energy and Planning, projections for Hebron's population are:

TABLE 1-5

Projection Based on New Hampshire's Population Growth Projections

<u>Year</u>	<u>N.H. Population Projection</u>	<u>Hebron %</u>	<u>Population Projection .037% of State</u>
2000			459
2010	1,393,000	0.037	515
2015	1,463,000	0.037	541
2020	1,528,000	0.037	565

In 2003, the OEP (then known as the Office of State Planning) projected that Hebron's population would be 500 in the year 2005. This projection was based on projections for Grafton County. In July 2004, the OEP estimated that Hebron's population in 2003 was 523, an increase of sixty-four residents in three years or about twenty-one per year – three times the average annual increase during the 1990s. Note that this estimate of 523 is 23 more than their own projection of 500 for the year 2005. Using Grafton County as a basis for projecting Hebron's population didn't pan out, even in the short term. If the OEP population 2003 estimate of 523 is correct, the Table 1-5 projection to 515 in 2010 would appear to be too low. If the Town continues to add an average of twenty-one residents each year, as it has done in the past three years, the projected population in 2010 would be 669.

We can look at the number of new houses being built each year to get another possible basis for projecting population growth. As shown in Table 1-3, the total number of housing units listed in the 2000 census was 517. Current OEP data show that there were 539 housing units in Hebron in 2001 (an increase of 22 in one year) and 548 in 2002 (an increase of 9 in one year). Using these data, the average number of houses being built each year is 15.5. If we assume that the percentage of year-round residences will continue to be about 40 percent of the total housing stock, then about six of the homes built each year will house permanent residents. In the 2000 census, there were 459 residents living in 206 "occupied housing units", or about 2 people per residence. Thus we might project that if the growth in housing continues at or near the same rate as it has in the past two years, about 12 new residents would be added to Hebron's population each year.

Many factors will likely contribute to Hebron's housing growth: the health of the State's and the Nation's economy; interest rates for home mortgages; local employment opportunities; demand for vacation homes; and the number of retirees seeking to make Hebron their primary residence. Many of these factors are inter-related; none lend themselves to confident predictions. Figure 1-7 shows graphically the three population projections discussed above. Which projection will prove to be the best predictor in the year 2010? That is anybody's guess, but the sharp increase in the number of development proposals coming before the Hebron Planning Board would seem to support one of the more aggressive projections, at least for the next few years.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

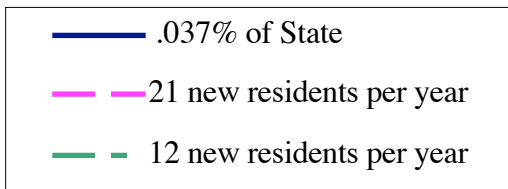
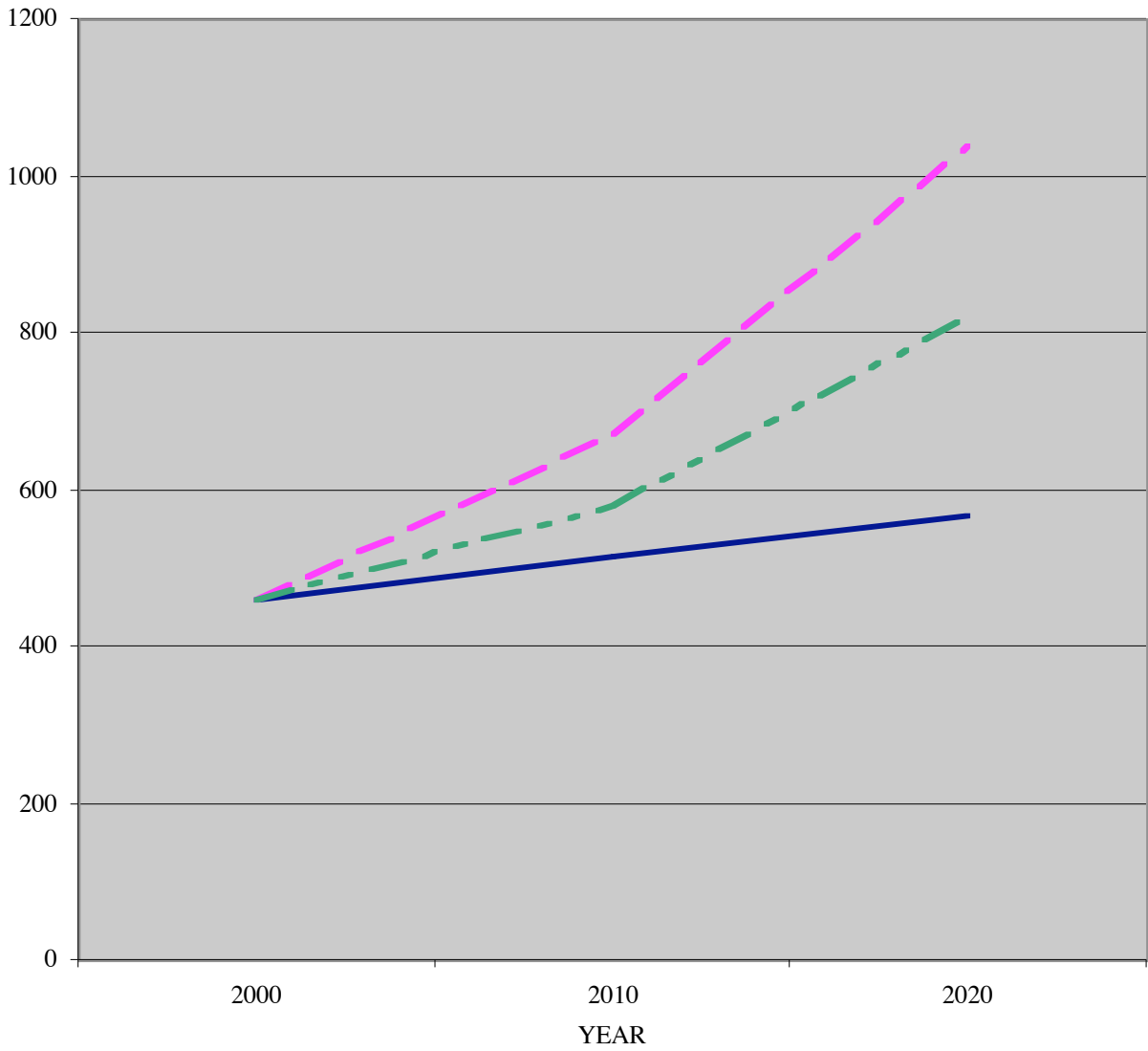


Figure 1-7