

4 Demographics and Housing

This section will inventory the existing population and housing conditions which collectively comprise the demographic profile for the Town of Washington. The community trends will be identified and analyzed to determine potential impacts and related future needs.

The sources of information for the inventory included:

- ◆ U.S. Bureau of Census
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Services
- ◆ Vilas County Zoning Department
- ◆ Vilas County University of Wisconsin Extension
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Revenue

4.1 Population Characteristics

Population change is the primary component in tracking a community's past growth as well as predicting future population trends. Population characteristics relate directly to the town's housing, educational, community, recreational, and economic development. It should be noted however, that over time there are fluctuations in the local and regional economy which generally cannot be predicted. These fluctuations and changes may greatly influence the community's population growth and characteristics.

Population Growth

Table 4-1 presents the past census figures for the Town of Washington, Town of Lincoln, Vilas County and the State of Wisconsin. Similarly, Figure 4-1 depicts the comparative population growth from the 1970 to 1980 census, 1980 to 1990 census, and the 1990 census to the 1998 official population estimate. The official population estimate is calculated by the Department of Administration Demographic Services Center on an annual basis.

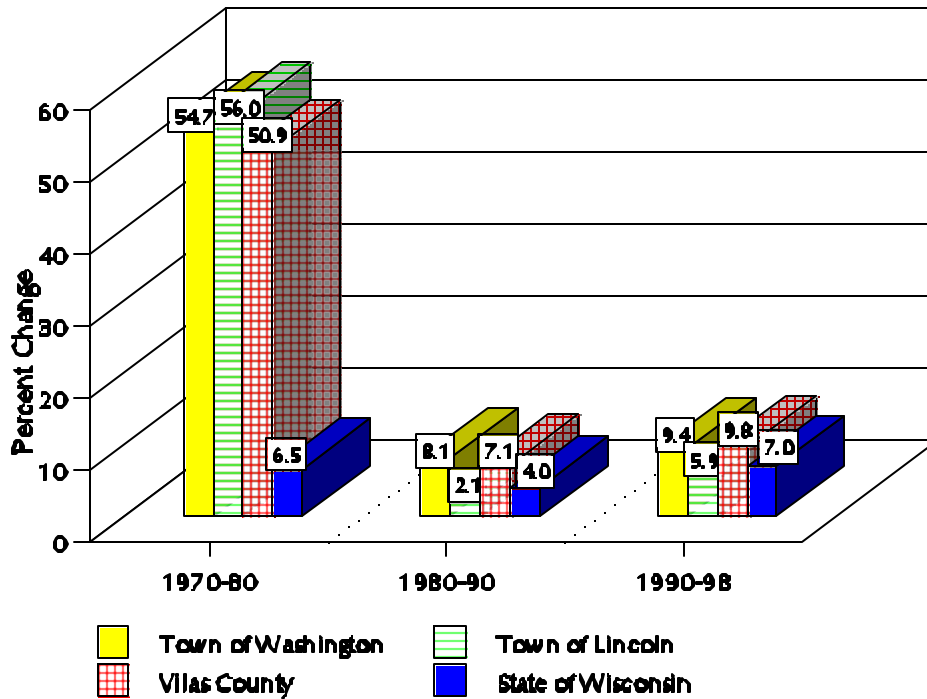
Both Table 4-1 and Figure 4-1 depict the changes in population the Town of Washington has experienced from 1970 to 1998. The town experienced its greatest increase in population between 1970 and 1980, with a total increase of 83% between 1970 and 1990. Since 1980, the town has grown at a higher rate than the Town of Lincoln, but remained consistent with Vilas County. It is important to note that the population trends in the towns of Washington and Lincoln, as well Vilas County are notably different than the state-wide trend. In almost all cases, the Vilas County area has grown at dramatically higher rates than the state.

**Table 4-1
Comparative Population Growth
Town of Washington and Selected Areas
1970-1998**

	1970	1980	1990	1998	% Change 1970-80	% Change 1980-90	% Change 1990-98	% Change 1970-98
Town of Washington	711	1,100	1,189	1,301	54.7%	8.1%	9.4%	83.0%
Town of Lincoln	1,450	2,262	2,310	2,447	56.0%	2.1%	5.9%	68.8%
Vilas County	10,958	16,535	17,707	19,435	50.9%	7.1%	9.8%	77.4%
State of Wisconsin	4,417,731	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,232,739	6.5%	4.0%	7.0%	18.4%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Municipal Population Projections 1990-2015, June 1993; Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Population Estimates, 1998.

**Figure 4-1
Comparative Population Growth
Town of Washington and Selected Areas
1970 to 1998**

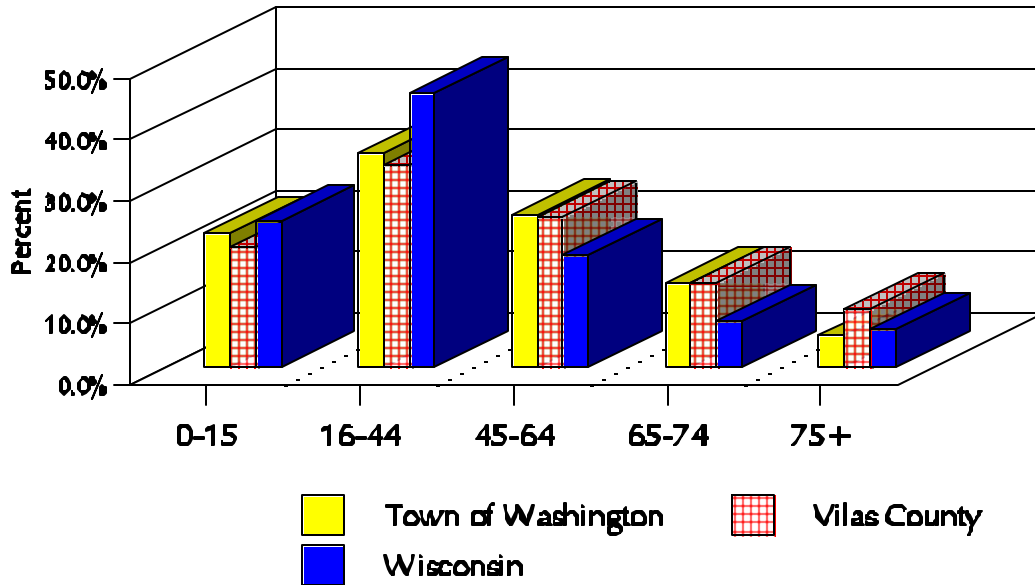


Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Municipal Population Projections 1990-2015, June 1993; Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Population Estimates, 1998.

Population by Age Cohort

The following figure offers a comparison of the population by age cohort, including the age groups 0-15 years, 16-44 years, 45-64 years, and 65-74 years, and 75 or more years of age for the Town of Washington, Vilas County, and the state of Wisconsin. A review of the population by age cohort, or age groups, can indicate local population needs. For instance, a large school age population (age 15 years and under) could impact school and recreational facilities. A predominately elderly population (age 65 years and over) many require additional health care, housing, or different recreational services.

**Figure 4-2
Population by Age Cohort
Town of Washington, Vilas County, and Wisconsin
1990**



Town of Washington	31.7%	34.8%	24.9%	18.7%	8.0%
Vilas County	18.7%	32.8%	24.9%	15.0%	8.5%
Wisconsin	28.7%	44.8%	18.7%	7.9%	6.0%

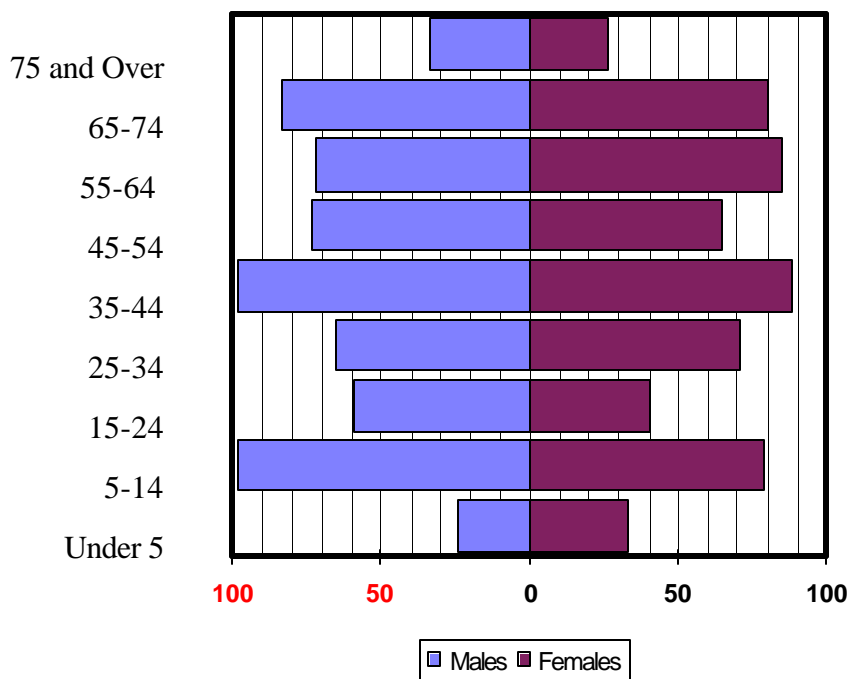
Source: U.S. Census of Population & Housing, 1990

Figure 4-2 indicates that the Town of Washington has a larger portion of individuals in older age groups compared to the state of Wisconsin. Over 43% of the town's population is over age 45, compared to 47% of Vilas County and 31.5% for the state.

Age-Gender Distribution

The following figure presents a more detailed breakdown of the population composition for the Town of Washington in 1990 with the distribution of males and females by age-cohort. Figure 4-3 illustrates the balanced distribution of males and females by age groups.

Figure 4-3
Age-Gender Distribution
Town of Washington
1990



Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990.

Summary of Population Characteristics

The Town of Washington has experienced a high population growth rate since 1970. This growth is mirrored in communities such as Lincoln as well as Vilas County, however the state grew at significantly lower rates from 1970 to 1998.

The structure of the town's population is balanced between males and females, although the percentage of older individuals is much greater than the state of Wisconsin. With over 43% of the town's population over age 45, the town may see the need for additional services and facilities to meet potential demands of an aging population.

4.2 Housing Characteristics

The housing characteristics of the Town of Washington are important elements to the land use plan. The physical location of housing determines the demand and cost of many public services and facilities. In addition, housing characteristics are related to the social, aesthetic, and economic conditions of the community.

This section of the land use plan will provide the town with information about the current housing stock, as well as identify significant changes which have occurred over time. Information is presented about the occupancy characteristics, housing values, the trends in seasonal/recreational housing, building permit activity, and the equalized valuation of the Town of Washington.

General Housing Characteristics

Table 4-2 provides general information about the housing supply for the Town of Washington from 1980 to 1990. Year-round units include all occupied units and vacant year-round units (for sale, for rent, rented or sold but not yet occupied), and seasonal units include those units which are used for seasonal, recreational, occasional, or other uses.

**Table 4-2
Housing Supply
Town of Washington
1980-1990**

Housing	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990
Total Units	1248	1501	20.3
Year Round Units	394	536	36.0
Occupied Units	377	480	27.3
Owner Occupied	336	399	18.8
Renter Occupied	41	81	97.6
Vacant Year Round Units	17	56	229.4
Seasonal Units	854	965	13.0
Persons per Household	2.92	2.48	-15.1

Source: 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, STF3 and STF 1A.

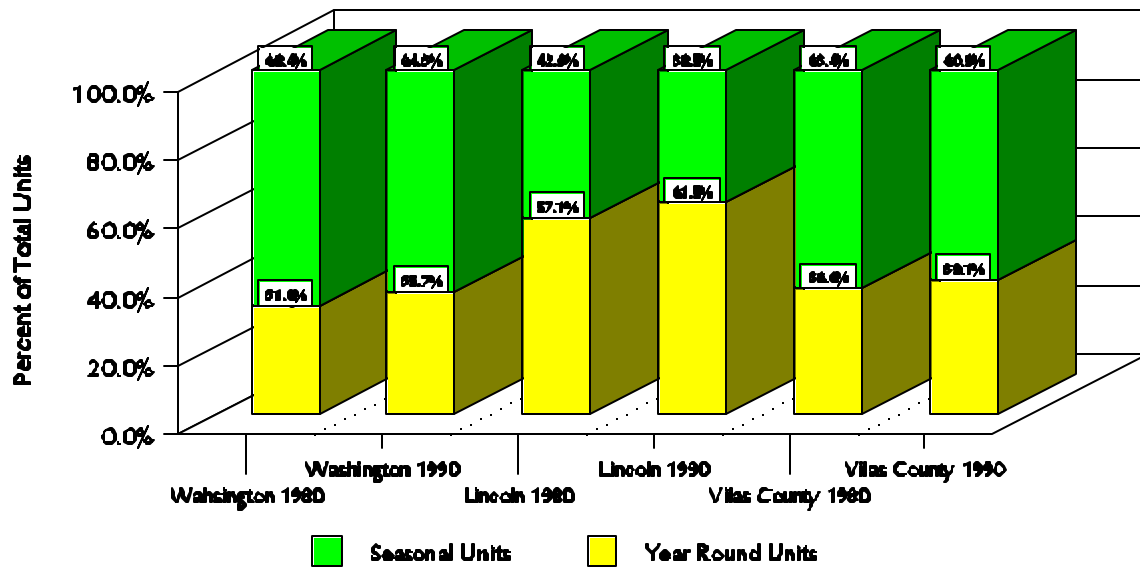
The town's housing supply is comprised of predominately seasonal housing units. From 1980 to 1990 seasonal housing units declined from 68% of the total housing supply to 64% of the total housing supply. The dominance of seasonal housing units in the town left approximately 35% of the housing supply as year-round housing in 1990. In addition, the year-round housing units are predominately owner occupied with renter occupancy in only 81 units in 1990. The number of person per household

in the town declined between 1980 and 1990, from 2.92 persons per household to 2.48 persons per household, respectively. This decreasing household size trend is comparable to the county and state-wide trends.

Seasonal Housing Trend

The Town of Washington offers both residents and visitors year-round recreational opportunities with its abundance of natural resources and "northwoods character". The attractiveness of the town's opportunities are demonstrated by the predominance of seasonal housing. Figure 4-4 compares the composition and trend in the number of seasonal and recreational housing units in the Town of Washington, Town of Lincoln and Vilas County.

**Figure 4-4
Comparative Growth of Seasonal Housing Units
Town of Washington, Town of Lincoln & Vilas County
1980-1990**



Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1980 and 1990.

The Town of Washington has a significantly greater percentage of seasonal housing units than the Town of Lincoln, and a very similar percentage compared to that within Vilas County.

Comparative Housing Value

A comparison of housing stock values in the Town of Washington and Vilas County for 1980 and 1990 is presented in Table 4-3. The housing values are based on specified owner-occupied units only.

Table 4-3
Comparative Housing Values
Town of Washington and Vilas County
1980 - 1990

Specified Owner - Occupied Units	Town of Washington				Vilas County			
	1980	%	1990	%	1980	%	1990	%
Less than \$25,000	25	12.1%	11	3.9%	449	13.5%	168	4.2%
\$25,000 - 49,999	72	35.0%	72	25.3%	1,460	43.8%	1,253	31.1%
\$50,000 - 99,999	98	47.6%	169	59.3%	1,271	38.1%	2,040	50.7%
\$100,000 - 149,999	9	4.4%	23	8.1%	119	3.6%	386	9.6%
\$150,000 - 199,999	2	1.0%	8	2.8%	25	0.7%	121	3.0%
200,000 or More	0	0.0%	2	0.7%	12	0.4%	56	1.4%
Total	206	100.0%	285	100.0%	3,336	100.0%	4,024	100.0%
Median Value	N/A		62,900		N/A		58,900	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing 1980, 1990.

From 1980 to 1990, the Town of Washington experienced a 45% increase in owner occupied housing valued over \$50,000. This growth is mirrored throughout Vilas County which also experienced a 45% increase in housing value over \$50,000. Housing valued less than \$25,000 decreased by over 56% in both the Town of Washington and Vilas County.

Equalized Value

The equalized valuation of real property for municipalities is a vital component to the provision of public facilities and services. The increase in real property values for the Town of Washington provides additional tax revenues necessary to fund public facilities and service programs for the community.

Table 4-4 and Figure 4-5 present the growth in equalized valuation for the Town of Washington from 1991 to 1998 according to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue Division of State and Local Finance.

**Table 4-4
Equalized Valuation
Town of Washington
1991-1998**

Year	Total		Residential		Commercial		Forest		Agricultural		Other	
	\$	% Change	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
1991	93,295,400	---	82,314,400	88.2	7,203,200	7.7	2,989,000	3.2	550,500	0.6	238,300	0.3
1992	95,832,200	2.72	84,811,700	88.5	7,208,200	7.5	3,044,300	3.2	523,800	0.5	244,200	0.3
1993	114,720,200	19.71	103,346,800	90.1	7,617,500	6.6	3,002,800	2.6	508,900	0.4	244,200	0.2
1994	125,866,100	9.72	113,814,500	90.4	7,677,500	6.1	3,479,000	2.8	598,700	0.5	296,400	0.2
1995	155,370,200	23.44	139,502,800	89.8	10,811,000	7.0	3,640,500	2.3	613,000	0.4	802,900	0.5
1996	176,945,700	13.89	160,143,400	90.5	11,784,000	6.7	4,229,100	2.4	558,000	0.3	231,200	0.1
1997	188,143,000	6.33	171,283,500	91.0	11,031,900	5.9	5,023,900	2.7	558,000	0.3	245,700	0.1
1998	239,479,200	27.29	219,125,400	91.5	12,559,900	5.2	7,076,100	3.0	431,500	0.2	286,300	0.1

*Other includes swamp, waste, and other land.

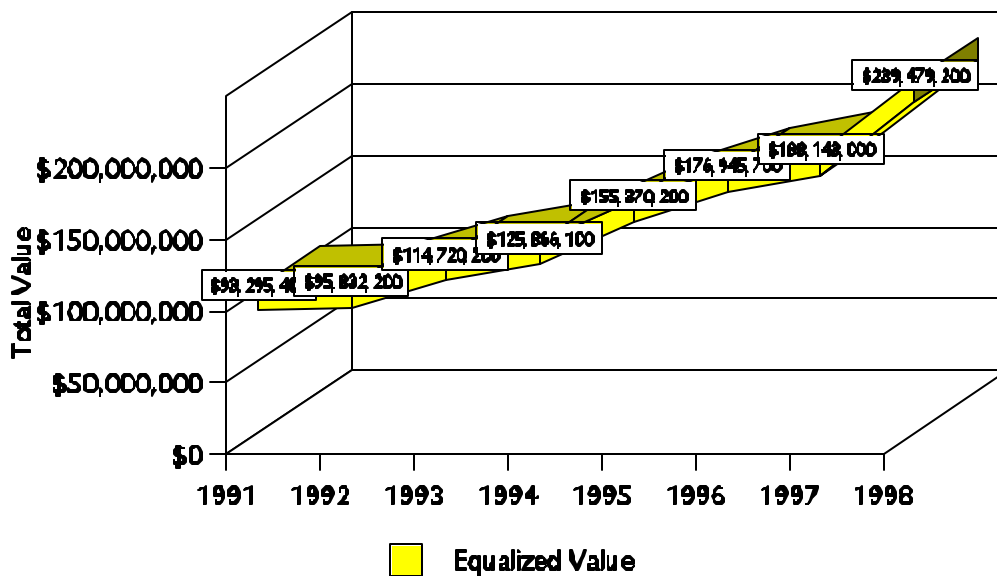
Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue Statement of Merged Equalized Values 1991-1998.

The very character of the Town of Washington is represented by the equalized values of the land use categories. Residential valuation dominates the town's value with approximately 90% of the total value. Between 1991 and 1998, the dollar value of residential property in the town had more than doubled from approximately \$82 million to over \$219 million. The 2001 equalized value was \$300,444,000, up \$29,900,000 from the year 2000, a 11.5% increase.

The representation of each land use category by valuation from 1991 to 1998 remained relatively unchanged with residential property comprising approximately 90%, commercial property around 6%, forest property around 3%, and agricultural and other property each comprising less than 0.6%. However, the actual dollar values of both commercial and forested property rose significantly during this time period, nearly doubling and more than doubling, respectively; the dollar value of agricultural property and other property both remained rather stable.

Figure 4-5 displays the growth trend in equalized valuation for the Town of Washington between 1991 to 1998.

**Figure 4-5
Growth in Equalized Value
Town of Washington
1991-1998**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue Statement of Merged Equalized Values 1991-1998.

Summary of Housing Characteristics

The housing supply in the Town of Washington grew by over 20% in total housing units from 1980 to 1990 with seasonal housing encompassing over 64% of total housing units. The dominance of seasonal housing can be directly attributed to the "northwoods character" and the variety and quality of natural resources and year-round recreational opportunities. As a whole, Vilas County has over 3% more year-round units than the Town of Washington.

The value of the housing stock grew between 1980 and 1990 with over 45% of the housing units valued at over \$50,000 in 1990. Building permit activity from 1990 to 1998 fluctuated between 15 and 56 permits, resulting in an average of 35 new residential permits annually (see Section 9.3). The total valuation of the town has experienced positive growth from 1991 to 1998 with residential land use encompassing approximately 90% of the town's total value, followed by commercial land use with approximately 6.5% of town's value. The continued growth of population and valuation will certainly have land use impacts, as discussed in Section 10, Growth Forecasts.