

## **CHAPTER II POPULATION AND HOUSING**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**



Litchfield has experienced tremendous growth in population and housing over the past thirty years. Since 1970, the Town's population increased 418 percent while the number of housing units increased 491 percent. Population and housing trends and characteristics in the Town of Litchfield are examined in this chapter, including historical and future growth. These trends and characteristics provide a basis for the analysis and recommendations of the Master Plan.

#### **1. Data Sources, Limitations and Units of Analysis**

The information in this chapter is based primarily on the 2000 US Census and the 1999 Nashua Region Housing Needs Assessment in conjunction with other local and state studies, estimates and reports. While the 2000 census information is the most comprehensive and standardized data available, portions of the data have not been released to date. Where 2000 census data is not available, 1990 census data was used. Wherever possible more recent data from other sources have been utilized; however, alternative up-to-date data or estimates are often only available for larger geographical units, such as the county, statistical areas or the state.

Two different, although relatively similar definitions are used to describe aggregate demographic trends in greater Nashua. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) region is comprised of Litchfield, Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, and Wilton. The Nashua Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (hereafter PMSA) defined by the US Census includes most of the NRPC region with the following exceptions: Pelham is in the Lowell MA-NH PMSA; and New Ipswich and Mason are Southwest Regional Planning Commission towns included in the Nashua PMSA. Therefore, when Nashua PMSA data are presented, it is slightly different than aggregate data presented for the NRPC region.

### **B. POPULATION**

Litchfield population growth potential is enhanced by its close proximity to the cities of Manchester and Nashua – the two largest cities according to 2000 census figures of 107,006 and 86,605 persons. Based on recent historical trends, it is reasonable to expect that growth will continue in the New Hampshire Southern tier. The close proximity of Litchfield to the rest of Southern New Hampshire will be enhanced with development of both the Nashua Circumferential Highway and the Manchester Airport Access Road. The tables that follow present historical population changes in Litchfield and the Nashua Region. After examination of the characteristics of the existing population and housing stock, the subsection 'Population Projections' discusses the future potential for growth.

#### **1. Historical Trends**

Litchfield's population trends are illustrated in Table II-1 and Figure II-1. During the first part of the century, Litchfield's population declined. Then it increased through the 1950s. By 1960, dramatic increases in population were taking place, peaking in the 1970s with 192 percent growth from 1970 to

1980. The largest increase during the 1970's decade represents an addition of 2,730 persons. The most recent US Census population figures place the current town population at 7,360.

**Table II-1: Litchfield Population Change 1890-2000**

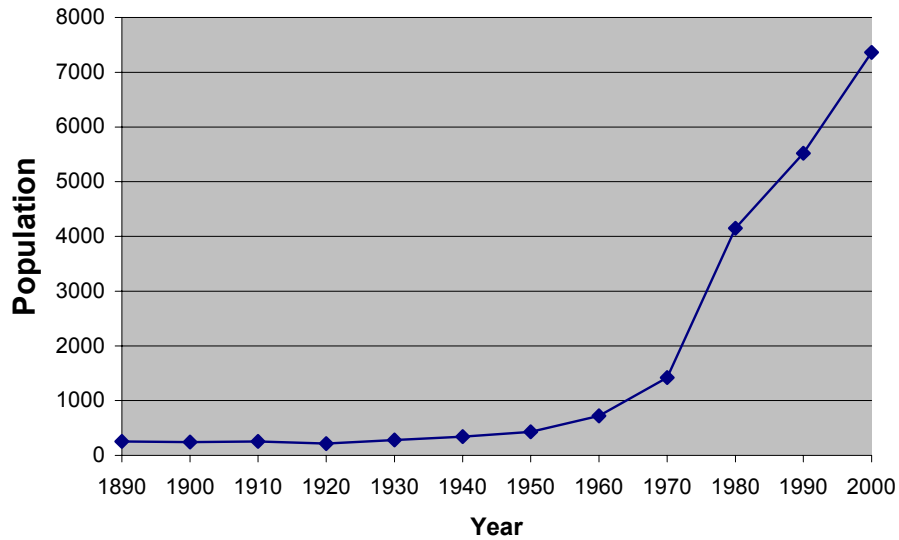
Year	Population	% Change	Numerical Change	Avg. Annual % Change
1890	252	-13.4	-39	-
1900	243	-3.6	-9	-0.4
1910	255	4.9	12	0.5
1920	213	-16.5	-42	-1.6
1930	283	32.9	70	3.3
1940	341	20.5	58	2.0
1950	427	25.2	86	2.5
1960	721	68.8	294	6.9
1970	1,420	96.9	699	9.7
1980	4,150	192.2	2,730	19.2
1990	5,516	32.9	1,366	3.3
2000	7,360	33.4	1,844	3.3

Source: US Census (1890-2000).

**Figure II-1**

**Historic Population Trends**

*Litchfield, NH 1890-2000*



Source: US Census (1890-2000).

The population growth since the 1960s is nearly exponential. This means that population often nearly doubled over the prior period. The most significant growth occurred in the period 1970 to 1980. During this ten year period population nearly tripled, with 2,730 persons added to the 1970 population of 1,420 persons. A factor influencing increased rates of growth in Litchfield from the 1960s to 1980s was that the baby boom generation born during the high fertility period in the 40s and 50s was having children. Large population increases are often indicative of social and physical changes in communities.

The regional population expansion during the last 25 years also stems from two broad trends, which continue today, the growth of the greater Nashua economy and in-migration from the Boston area following improvements in the state and federal highway system. The PMSA is one of ten sub-units of the larger Boston-Worcester-Lawrence Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA). Table II-2 shows the 1980, 1990 and 2000 population of the Boston area PMSAs, along with the corresponding percentage changes in population for these periods. As indicated, Nashua was the fastest growing sub-area during this time frame.

**Table II-2: Boston Area PMSAs Population Changes 1980-2000**

PSMA	1980	1990	% Change 1980 - 90	Annual % Change 1980 - 90	2000	% Change 1990 - 00	Annual % Change 1990 - 00
Boston, MA-NH	3,149	3,228	2.5	0.3	3,407	5.5	0.6
Brockton, MA	225	236	5.1	0.5	255	8.1	0.8
Fitchburg-Leominster, MA	125	138	10.5	1.1	142	2.9	0.3
Lawrence, MA-NH	298	353	18.4	1.8	396	12.2	1.2
Lowell, MA-NH	249	281	12.5	1.3	302	7.5	0.8
Manchester, NH	146	174	18.9	1.9	198	13.8	1.4
Nashua, NH	134	168	25.4	2.5	191	13.7	1.4
New Bedford, MA	167	176	5.4	0.5	175	-0.6	-0.1
Portsmouth-Rochester, NH-ME	189	223	18.0	1.8	241	8.1	0.8
Worcester, MA-CT	439	478	8.9	0.9	511	6.9	0.7

**Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997 (US Bureau of the Census, October 1997); US Census 2000.**

Continuing trends established in the 1950s and 60s the Nashua region continued to experience rapid population growth during the 1980s. The population of the NRPC region in 2000 was 195,788 persons and the 2000 State population was 1,235,786 persons. The Litchfield 2000 population of 7,360 represents approximately 0.6 percent of State population. The NRPC region represents approximately 16 percent of New Hampshire population and Hillsborough County, with a population of 380,841, represents approximately 31 percent of State population. Table II-3 shows recent population changes for Litchfield, the Region, Hillsborough County and the State.

**Table II-3: Population Change 1960-2000**

Year	Litchfield Population	% Change (Decade)	NRPC Region Population	% Change (Decade)	Hills. Co. Population	% Change (Decade)	NH Population	% Change (Decade)
1960	721	68.8	63,893	-	178,161	-	606,900	-
1970	1,420	96.9	100,862	57.9	223,941	25.7	737,579	21.5
1980	4,150	192.3	138,089	36.9	276,608	23.5	920,475	19.9
1990	5,516	32.9	171,478	24.2	335,838	21.4	1,109,252	20.5
2000	7,360	33.4	195,788	14.2	380,841	13.4	1,235,786	11.4

**Source: US Decennial Censuses 1960 - 2000.**

Since 1990, regional growth moderated, due in part to the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The economic resurgence of the later 1990s is accompanied by higher growth rates. For example, data from the Housing Needs Assessment for the Nashua Region (August 1999) documents increases in building permits in the region and total home sales in the State and the NRPC region. This growth is driven by new in-migration to the Nashua region and natural increases in the existing population. Table II-4 presents population shares for the NRPC region municipalities from 1950 to 2000. Litchfield's share of the regional population increased from 0.8 percent in 1950 to 3.8 percent in 2000.

**Table II-4: Local and Regional Population Shares, Percent, 1950-2000**

Municipality	1950 %	1960 %	1970 %	1980 %	1990 %	2000 %
Amherst	2.8	3.2	4.6	6.0	5.3	5.5
Brookline	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1
Hollis	2.3	2.7	2.6	3.4	3.3	3.6
Hudson	7.9	9.2	10.6	10.2	11.4	11.7
Litchfield	0.8	1.1	1.4	3.0	3.2	3.8
Lyndeborough	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8
Merrimack	3.6	4.7	8.5	11.2	12.9	12.8
Milford	7.9	7.6	6.6	6.3	6.9	6.9
Mont Vernon	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.0
Nashua	65.5	61.2	55.3	49.2	46.5	44.2
Pelham	2.5	4.1	5.4	5.9	5.5	5.6
Wilton	3.7	3.2	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.9
NRPC Region	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Source: Profile of the Nashua Region, NRPC 1994 and 2000 US Census.**

The NRPC region represents approximately 16 percent of New Hampshire population, which is consistent with the higher population densities demonstrated in the rest of the Southern New Hampshire, especially the southeast part. The 2000 census population figure for the NRPC Region was 195,788 persons while total New Hampshire population was 1,235,786 persons. For comparison, Hillsborough County population in 2000 was 380,841, or approximately 31 percent of State population, which shows that the other 19 Hillsborough County municipalities have a lower population density than the region.

## **2. Population Density**

Population densities (population/land area) for the NRPC region are presented in Table II-5. While Litchfield has the smallest area of any community in the region, in 2000 it ranked fifth in population density behind the much larger communities of Nashua, Hudson, Merrimack, and Milford. Litchfield's 2000 population density was 487 persons/square mile, a 33 percent increase over the 1990 population density of 365. It is remarkable that Litchfield has a relatively high population density and yet a rural community ambiance. This is in part a result of community success in guiding and managing growth.

**Table II-5: NRPC Region Population Density -- 1990 and 2000**

Municipality	Area (sq. mi.)	1990			2000		
		Pop.	Density (per sq. mi.)	Rank	Pop.	Density (per sq. mi.)	Rank
Amherst	34.5	9,068	263	7	10,769	312	7
Brookline	20.1	2,410	120	9	4,181	208	9
Hollis	32.6	5,705	175	8	7,015	215	8
Hudson	29.2	19,530	669	3	22,928	785	2
Litchfield	15.1	5,516	365	5	7,360	487	5
Lyndeborough	30.6	1,294	42	12	1,585	52	12
Merrimack	33.0	22,156	671	2	25,119	761	3
Milford	25.9	11,795	455	4	13,535	523	4
Mont Vernon	16.8	1,812	108	11	2,034	121	11
Nashua	30.6	79,662	2,603	1	86,605	2,830	1
Pelham	26.7	9,408	352	6	10,914	409	6
Wilton	26.1	3,122	120	10	3,743	143	10
Region	321.2	171,478	534		195,788	610	-
State of NH	8,993	1,109,252	123		1,235,786	137	-

Source: Profile of the Nashua Region, NRPC, 1994 and 2000 US Census.

### 3. **Natural Increase and Migration**

Over the last 30 years, migration of new residents into the community has come to represent a smaller share of the total population increases. Table II-6 shows that people who moved to Litchfield and started families in the 1970s and 1980s probably are a source of natural increases in populations in more recent periods. Compared with the rest of the communities in the region, in the period 1990 to 1999 Litchfield had among the highest rates of natural increase. The resident population represents a major source of growth in municipal population. This transition to a majority of population growth resulting from natural increases occurred around the late 1980s. This means that a significant part of the increasing demand for public services, such as school facilities, comes from existing residential population. Natural increases may edge up in coming years if older people continue to demonstrate increased longevity and there is a baby boom. Conversely, new highway development could stimulate more in-migration within Litchfield.

**Table II-6: Litchfield Natural Increase/Migration**

Decade	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase	Pop'n Change	Migration	% Migration
1970-79	510	93	417	1,558	1,141	73.2
1980-89	870	124	746	1,542	796	51.6
1990-99	1,178	147	1,031	1,564*	533	34.1

Source: NH Office of Community & Public Health – NH Vital Statistics Reports.

\*1990 US Census and 1991-1999 Office of State Planning Estimates.

### 4. **Age Distribution**

Examining the age profile of community population provides insight into future changes in local population and the future needs of the Town. Litchfield's age distributions for 2000 are depicted in Table II-7 and Figure II-2 along with the NRPC region and the State. The percentage of Litchfield's population aged 0-19, 35 percent, is greater than the Nashua region or State, 30 and 28 percent respectively. Conversely, the percentage of Litchfield's population over 55 is 9 percent compared to 18 percent for the

NRPC region and 21 percent for the State. These comparisons indicate that the percentage of school age children in Litchfield is much higher than the region or state, while the senior citizen category is less than half that for the region and the State.

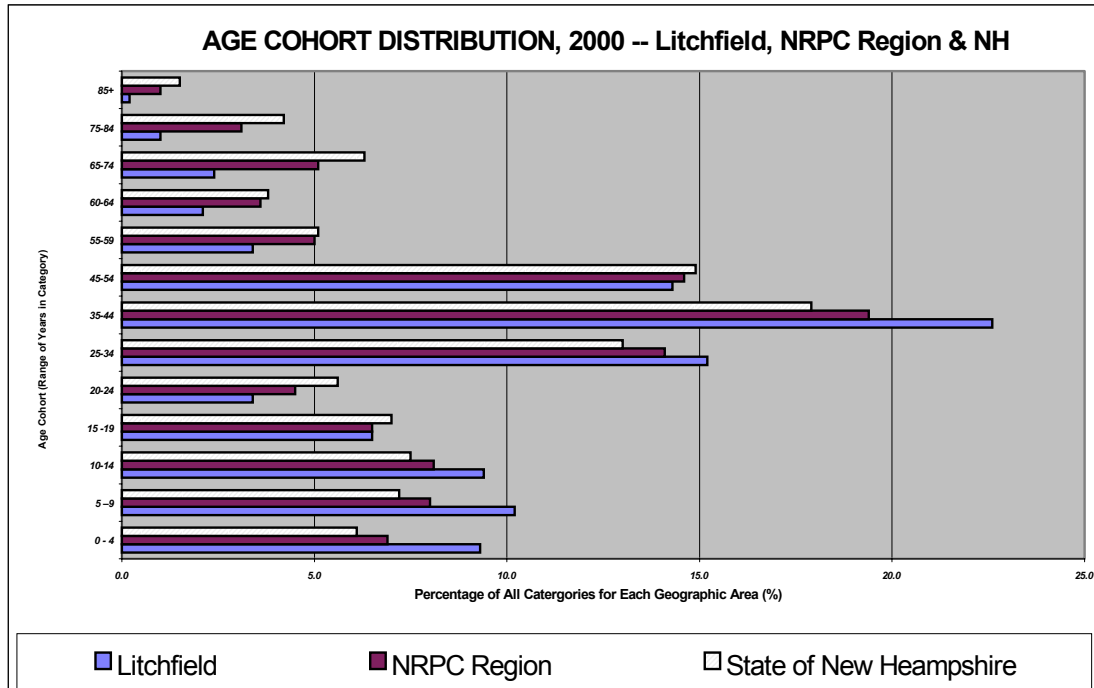
**Table II-7: Age Distribution, Litchfield, NRPC Region, NH, 2000**

Age	Litchfield	% Total	Region	% Total	State	% Total
0 - 4	682	9.3	13,510	6.9	75,685	6.1
5 -9	754	10.2	15,638	8.0	88,537	7.2
10 -14	690	9.4	15,800	8.1	93,255	7.5
15 -19	481	6.5	12,789	6.5	86,688	7.0
20-24	248	3.4	8,888	4.5	68,766	5.6
25-34	1,118	15.2	27,628	14.1	160,061	13.0
35-44	1,664	22.6	37,954	19.4	221,179	17.9
45-54	1,053	14.3	28,609	14.6	183,986	14.9
55-59	253	3.4	9,855	5.0	62,664	5.1
60-64	156	2.1	6,981	3.6	46,995	3.8
65-74	174	2.4	10,025	5.1	78,327	6.3
75-84	73	1.0	6,091	3.1	51,412	4.2
85+	14	0.2	2,020	1.0	18,231	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,360</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>195,788</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,235,786</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2000 US Census.

Not shown in the table or graph is that while relative percentages of persons in the 0-19 age category declined in the last 20 years, absolute numbers in these categories increased from 619 in 1970 to 2,607 in 2000, an overall change of 1,988. This dramatic change required the construction of a new middle school, an addition to that school in 1997 and precipitated the construction of a new high school that opened for the 2000-01 school year.

**Figure II-2**



Source: 2000 Census.

The elderly population, aged 65+, experienced slight absolute growth since 1970, but relative to other cohorts the percentages in the 65+ category have varied. While the working age populations have grown, the relative steadiness in the categories of elderly people aged 65+ may indicate that members of these cohorts are moving elsewhere to retire. The addition of Housing for Older Persons as a permitted use under Litchfield’s zoning in 2001, while targeting the 55+ category, may impact retention of the 65+ age group.

The remaining categories for Litchfield do not exhibit as much variation from the region and the State. The age cohorts in the middle were more stable. The actual numbers in the 20-34 category declined slightly from 1980 to 2000, 1,430 to 1,366. During the 1970 to 2000 period, the population in the 35-64 category saw an actual increase of 2,764.

## 5. Household Size

Table II-8 is a breakdown of the number of households and average household size for communities in the NRPC region. In 2000, the average household size, for all households, was 3.12, down slightly from the 1990 average household size of 3.20. This is consistent with the national trend towards smaller household sizes. However, the average household size in Litchfield was the highest of all communities in the region in 2000, likely due to the predominance of family households and Litchfield’s status as a bedroom community located between Manchester and Nashua. In addition, the type of housing in Litchfield tends to attract families with heads of household who are in childbearing age or have established families.

**Table II-8: Households, 1990 and 2000**

Community	Total HH 1990	Total HH 2000	% Change	Average # of Persons per Total HH		Average # of Persons per Family HH	
				1990	2000	1990	2000
Amherst	2,988	3,590	20.1%	3.03	3.00	3.52	3.26
Brookline	811	1,343	65.6%	2.97	3.11	3.53	3.36
Hollis	1,942	2,440	25.6%	2.94	2.88	3.47	3.16
Hudson	6,630	8,034	21.2%	2.95	2.83	3.67	3.17
Litchfield	1,725	2,357	36.6%	3.20	3.12	3.65	3.35
Lyndeborough	451	560	24.2%	2.87	2.83	3.71	3.20
Merrimack	7,439	8,832	18.7%	2.98	2.84	3.67	3.19
Milford	4,463	5,201	16.5%	2.64	2.58	3.72	3.11
Mont Vernon	582	693	19.1%	3.11	2.90	3.65	3.17
Nashua	31,051	34,614	11.5%	2.57	2.46	3.81	3.05
Pelham	2,907	3,606	24.0%	3.24	3.03	3.75	3.33
Wilton	1,152	1,140	-1.0%	2.71	2.65	3.68	3.06
NRPC Region	62,141	72,410	16.5%	2.76	2.85	3.72	3.20
State	411,186	474,606	15.4%	2.70	2.53	3.79	3.03

Source: 2000 US Census.

### C. INCOME

The standard of living in New Hampshire is high. Litchfield embodies the Nashua Region and the Southern Tier overall with some of the highest levels of income and well being in the State of New Hampshire. Table II-9 shows the most recent detailed data available for median family, median household, and median per capita income for individual municipalities, Hillsborough County and the State. The median household income in Litchfield is the fourth highest in the region and is \$5,000 higher than the NRPC Region and \$33,000 higher than the median for the State. The range of median household income in the region extends from a low of \$51,969 in Nashua to a high of \$92,847 in Hollis. There appear to be many high to moderate income households in Litchfield. The data confirms the higher incomes in the NRPC region compared with the State. That Litchfield is in the highest third of communities in the region according to per capita income seems to confirm that there are relatively more wealthy families in the community who drive up the median per capita income figure. Indeed, the median family income in Litchfield is higher than the median household income.



**Table II-9: Median Income, 1989 and 1999**

Community	Household Income		Family Income		Per-Capita Income	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
Amherst	\$62,568	\$89,384	\$66,491	\$97,913	\$25,778	\$35,531
Brookline	\$55,858	\$77,075	\$57,372	\$80,214	\$19,564	\$29,272
Hollis	\$64,351	\$92,847	\$68,096	\$104,737	\$26,005	\$44,936
Hudson	\$47,859	\$64,169	\$50,714	\$71,313	\$17,678	\$25,696
Litchfield	\$49,946	\$73,702	\$52,438	\$76,931	\$16,592	\$25,203
Lyndeborough	\$42,208	\$59,688	\$46,250	\$70,223	\$16,690	\$27,169
Merrimack	\$52,798	\$68,817	\$55,844	\$72,011	\$19,129	\$27,748
Milford	\$38,792	\$52,343	\$43,628	\$61,682	\$16,547	\$24,425
Mont Vernon	\$49,650	\$71,250	\$52,740	\$77,869	\$19,273	\$30,772
Nashua	\$40,505	\$51,969	\$46,614	\$61,102	\$18,010	\$25,209
Pelham	\$50,187	\$68,608	\$51,147	\$73,365	\$17,715	\$25,158
Wilton	\$36,098	\$54,276	\$39,402	\$61,311	\$16,935	\$26,618
NRPC Region	\$49,798	\$68,713	\$51,793	\$72,688	\$17,863	\$26,894
State	\$36,329	\$49,467	\$41,628	\$57,575	\$15,959	\$23,844

**Source: 2000 US Census.**

As depicted in Table II-9, the median household income in 1999 of \$73,702 represents a 48% percent numerical increase over the 1989 figure of \$49,946. However, a review of income trends for the period 1989-1999 adjusted, or indexed, for inflation shows that real incomes for the period in Litchfield actually increased just over 8 percent. On a percentage rate basis the increase in income during the period, 1989-1999 in Litchfield is slightly higher than rises within the NRPC region and significantly higher than the limited rise demonstrated statewide.

Table II-10 shows a breakdown of household income in 1999 by category. Litchfield had a greater percentage of its population in the \$50,000 to \$149,000 income ranges than the region. The largest income category in Litchfield in 1999 was households earning \$50,000 to \$74,999. Compared with the region, Litchfield has relatively fewer households in low-income categories. One factor that may influence this statistic is that there are comparatively fewer residents in the highest age categories. The elderly are one group that demonstrates low household incomes due to the fixed incomes associated with retirement and diminished rates of workforce participation.

**Table II-10: Percent of Population in each Income Category, 1999**

Community	<\$10,000	\$10,000- \$14,999	\$15,000- \$24,999	\$25,000- \$34,999	\$35,000- \$49,999	\$50,000- \$74,999	\$75,000- \$99,999	\$100,000- \$149,999	\$150,000- \$199,999	>\$200,000
Amherst	2.0%	1.6%	3.7%	5.5%	8.5%	19.0%	15.6%	23.7%	11.0%	9.4%
Brookline	1.6%	1.6%	6.0%	3.4%	12.9%	21.9%	23.3%	21.8%	3.3%	4.2%
Hollis	2.3%	2.1%	7.0%	6.8%	8.9%	14.1%	11.8%	21.4%	10.1%	15.6%
Hudson	2.3%	1.8%	7.4%	8.0%	14.9%	26.8%	17.9%	14.7%	3.4%	2.8%
Litchfield	2.4%	0.0%	5.4%	5.3%	12.3%	26.1%	23.3%	20.5%	3.4%	1.3%
Lyndeborough	2.6%	3.4%	4.8%	11.1%	16.8%	25.4%	17.8%	12.7%	2.8%	2.6%
Merrimack	1.4%	2.3%	4.8%	6.5%	11.4%	29.2%	18.9%	18.4%	5.5%	1.8%
Milford	4.6%	3.9%	7.8%	11.3%	18.8%	26.1%	13.9%	9.9%	2.4%	1.2%
Mont Vernon	1.9%	0.7%	6.7%	7.0%	12.1%	24.1%	14.8%	21.7%	5.7%	5.4%
Nashua	5.7%	4.9%	10.7%	10.4%	15.6%	22.8%	14.1%	11.0%	3.1%	1.8%
Pelham	3.2%	1.5%	5.0%	7.7%	14.2%	24.1%	20.6%	17.8%	3.7%	2.3%
Wilton	3.6%	7.6%	7.4%	7.9%	17.5%	24.3%	14.4%	8.1%	4.9%	4.3%
<b>NRPC Region</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

Source: 2000 US Census.

New Hampshire consistently has among the lowest poverty rates in the nation. In the 1995-1996 period the poverty rate for the State was 5.8 percent (US Census, September 1998). For the 1996-1997 period, the poverty rate increased to 7.7 percent. Although the 1.9 percent increase in poverty between these two periods is statistically significant, the State retains the lowest ranking among all 50 for percentage of persons in poverty nationwide. It is noteworthy that the proportion of people in poverty increased during a period often described as prosperous.

Table II-12 presents FY2002 US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dollar income figures in the Nashua PMSA classified as having *very low* or *low* family incomes according to the number of persons per household. Very low income figures represent 50 percent of median family incomes in the region. *Low* family incomes are 80 percent of the median family incomes in the PMSA. In recent years, the New Hampshire income gap has been widening, with people in the lowest income brackets typically earning disproportionately less than the upper brackets.

**Table II-11: Very Low & Low Median Income Thresholds by Family Size,  
Nashua PMSA, FY2002**

Nashua PMSA	1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
Very Low Income	\$24,900	\$28,450	\$32,000	\$35,500	\$38,400	\$41,250	\$44,100	\$46,950
Low Income	\$38,100	\$43,500	\$48,950	\$54,400	\$58,750	\$63,100	\$67,450	\$71,800

Source: HUD; December 2001 at [http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il/fmr02/prts801\\_02.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il/fmr02/prts801_02.pdf).

The Nashua PMSA has among the lowest poverty rates compared with other parts of the State and Litchfield has lower poverty rates than the City of Nashua. About 13.1%, or 311 households, earned less than \$35,000 per year. In 2002, according to Housing and Urban Development guidelines, a Litchfield family of three persons that earned \$48,950 was classified as *low* income. Taking the 2000 Litchfield median family income of \$76,931 and adding one year of annual income growth at the historic rate of growth adjusted for inflation,<sup>1</sup> it is estimated that the median family income in Litchfield in 2001 was \$78,777. Comparing this figure with the low-income threshold for the PMSA of \$48,950 confirms

<sup>1</sup> Inflation calculator available at: <http://www.westegg.com/inflation>

that current Litchfield median household incomes are probably skewed towards a higher median value than the region as a whole.

## D. EDUCATION

The characteristics of educational attainment of Litchfield residents are similar to those for the region and the State as illustrated in Table II-12. The proportion of residents in Litchfield with no high school is less than that for the NRPC Region and the State. Like the rest of the region, Litchfield also demonstrates a higher proportion of graduate or professional degrees than the State overall. Over 33% of Litchfield's population over age 25 has at least a Bachelor's degree.

**Table II-12: Educational Attainment of Population over Age 25, 2000**

Education Level	Litchfield		Region		State of NH	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	96	2.2	3,696	2.9	32,426	3.9
9 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade (No Diploma)	219	4.9	9,977	7.7	71,328	8.7
High School graduate	1,141	25.6	33,716	26.0	247,726	30.1
Some College (No Degree)	1,010	22.6	26,918	20.8	164,634	20.0
Associates Degree	509	11.4	12,771	9.9	71,722	8.7
Bachelor's Degree	1,115	25.0	28,666	22.1	153,874	18.7
Graduate or Professional Degree	372	8.3	14,316	11.0	82,230	10.0

Source: 2000 US Census.

## E. HOUSING

### 1. Housing Supply

A history of new residential unit building development in Litchfield is presented in Table II-13. The trend for local residential development has followed that for population growth with the highest level of new building peaking in the 1980s.

**Table II-13: Housing Unit Growth 1970-2000**

Year	Total Housing Units	Change	% Change
1970	424	-	-
1980	1,319	857	211.1%
1990	1,845	526	39.9%
2000	2,389	544	29.5%

Source: 1970 - 2000 US Censuses

Note: 2000 does not match figure in Table II-15 as it is from a different source.



Table II-14 shows the annual number of building permits issued from 1990 to 2001. Clear trends are not evident in annual building permit data regarding the pace of residential housing construction in Litchfield. There has been variation in the number of new permits issued annually. Between 1990 and 2001, a total of 732 building permits were issued. With the repeal of the Growth Management Ordinance in March of 1991, 91 permits for single-family units were issued in that year alone. Subsequently the rate of growth moderated from 1992 to 1997, but expanded significantly from 1998 to 2000. In March 2000, a new Growth Management Ordinance was adopted following three years of higher building permit issuance with a high of 98 permits in 1999. The growth ordinance appears to have reduced the issuance of building permits in 2001.

**Table II-14: Annual Building Permits Issued, 1990-2001**

Year	New Units	Total Housing Units
1990	56	1,845
1991	91	1,936
1992	58	1,994
1993	39	2,033
1994	65	2,098
1995	56	2,154
1996	40	2,194
1997	66	2,260
1998	73	2,333
1999	98	2,432
2000	72	2,504
2001	18	2,522
Average	61	-

Source: Annual Town Reports.

## 2. Housing Types

Table II-15 describes the local breakdown of housing types. Single family detached homes, with 1,451 occupied units, is the most common housing type. There are also 123 occupied mobile homes units and 118 occupied multi-family units. This shows that there is not a great deal of diversity in the Litchfield housing stock. Local zoning does not permit development of multifamily housing. Only four duplexes and no multifamily units were permitted in 2001. In 2002 a number of applications for housing for older persons development, which is often designed as duplexes, have been approved. However, Litchfield housing stock is likely to remain primarily single family.

**Table II-15: Local Housing Types, Litchfield, 2000**

Type of Housing	Total Units	Percent
Single family, detached	1,978	82.8
Single-family, attached	40	1.7
Duplex	126	5.3
Multi-family	124	5.1
Mobile home	121	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,389</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2000 US Census.

### 3. *Housing Tenure*

Housing tenure refers to whether a housing unit is owned or rented by the occupants. Table II-16 presents housing tenure for Litchfield and the NRPC region. Of 2,389 occupied housing units in Litchfield, 2,060, or 86 percent, are owner occupied, and 13 percent are renter occupied. The Nashua region has a higher percentage of owner occupied units and fewer renter-occupied units than the State. On a regional basis, Litchfield falls in the middle for the region in terms of the proportion of rental units. However, the rental housing market is very tight in the Region and throughout Southern New Hampshire. In 2000, many categories of rental units had vacancy rates below one percent. There is practically no available rental housing supply in some communities and the supply is very tight in many other parts of greater Nashua.

**Table II-16: Housing Tenure, 1990 and 2000**

Community	Total Units		Occupied		Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied		Vacant		Seasonal/ Recreation/ Occasional Use*	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Litchfield	1,845	2,389	1,725	2,357	1,482	2,060	243	297	120	32	3	8
NRPC Region	66,375	74,341	62,141	72,680	42,720	50,991	19,421	21,689	4,234	1,661	363	549
State	503,904	547,024	411,186	474,606	280,372	330,700	130,814	143,906	92,718	72,418	57,177	56,413

\*Included in Vacant Housing Units.

Source: 2000 US Census

### 4. *Age of Housing*

As Table II-17 illustrates, over 40 percent of the housing stock in Litchfield was built between 1960 and 1980. Approximately 31 percent of the units (some 741 dwellings) were constructed during the 1970s alone. Very few of the Town's dwelling units were constructed prior to 1940. The nearly 70 units that were constructed pre-World War II appear to be grouped primarily along the Route 3A corridor in areas of early settlement by the Merrimack River and farmlands. These homes are a significant cultural resource for the community as they are architecturally significant and represent the heritage of the community (see Chapter VII, Historic Resources).

**Table II-17: Age of Housing Stock**

Year Built	Total Housing Units	% Total
Pre 1939	70	2.9%
1940 - 1959	94	3.9%
1960 - 1969	214	9.0%
1970 - 1979	741	31.0%
1980 - 1989	640	26.8%
1990 - 1994	318	13.3%
1995 - 1998	246	10.3%
1999 - March 2000	66	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,389</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2000 US Census.

Although a prior effort to designate a historic district failed, efforts could still occur to inventory these structures and define and document their characteristics. Such information could be used to investigate the potential to nominate the most important site or sites for National Historic Register designation. Such an initiative would require collaboration with property owners. Collaboration with community groups could also be useful to investigate other tools and tactics to preserve these structures and their surrounding sites for the benefit of future generations. Historic preservation easements, conservation easements, the use of Federal historic rehabilitation tax credit, and fund raising are examples of common historic preservation techniques.

## 5. **Owner-Occupied Housing Costs**

Table II-18 indicates that the average sale price of homes has increased steadily in recent years, both in the NRPC Region and in Litchfield. From 1991 to 2001, the average sales price of a home in the NRPC Region increased 52% from \$141,640 to \$215,500. The bulk of that increase took place in the period from 1998 to 2001, when the average sales price increased 46% from \$147,358 to \$215,500. In Litchfield, the average sales price of a home increased 90.5% from 1991 to 2001, with a 24.8% increase from 1998 to 2001. The average sales price of a home in Litchfield was \$222,000 in 2001, slightly higher than the average for the NRPC Region but substantially lower than communities such as Amherst and Hollis. Census data indicates that the average monthly mortgage for homes financed in Litchfield in 2000 was \$1,429, slightly higher than the NRPC Regional average of \$1,371. This is likely due to the high percentage of single family homes in comparison with the region.

**Table II-18: Average (Mean) Residential Sales Price, 1991, 1998 and 2001**

Community	1991	1998	2001	% Change 1991-1998	% Change 1991-2001	% Change 1998-2001
Amherst	\$174,296	\$196,000	\$258,000	12.4%	48.0%	31.6%
Brookline	\$147,795	\$168,000	\$243,000	13.7%	64.4%	44.6%
Hollis	\$228,355	\$241,000	\$339,000	5.5%	48.5%	40.7%
Hudson	\$119,094	\$130,000	\$188,000	9.2%	57.9%	44.6%
Litchfield	\$116,528	\$146,000	\$222,000	24.8%	90.5%	52.1%
Lyndeborough	\$106,972	N/A	\$162,000	N/A	51.4%	N/A
Merrimack	\$129,275	\$127,000	\$183,000	-1.8%	41.6%	44.1%
Milford	\$110,443	\$137,302	\$180,000	24.1%	63.0%	31.1%
Mont Vernon	\$134,630	\$214,000	\$208,000	59.0%	54.5%	91.2%
Nashua	\$126,523	\$135,000	\$174,000	6.7%	37.5%	28.9%
Pelham	\$148,500	\$164,000	\$255,000	10.4%	71.7%	55.5%
Wilton	\$157,269	\$110,000	\$174,000	-30.1%	10.6%	58.2%
NRPC Region	\$141,640	\$147,358	\$215,500	4.0%	52.1%	46.2%
State of NH	\$119,364	\$118,084	\$193,625	-1.1%	62.2%	64.0%

Source: New Hampshire Association of Realtors, 1991, 1998 and 2001;

1991 and 1998 municipal data derived from a sample conducted by NRPC of every fifth residential sale.

N/A indicates that data not available or sample size too small.

Table II-19 shows the average sales price by housing type (condominium and single family home) for the NRPC Region. The sample size for condominiums in Litchfield was too low to produce significant result. Condominiums in the region sold for 37% less than single family homes, indicating that such housing can contribute towards the stock of housing defined as “affordable.”

**Table II-19: Average (Mean) Residential Sales Prices by Housing Type, 2001**

Community	Average Sale Price Single Family	Average Sale Price Condominium	Average Sale Price All Residential
Amherst	\$277,070	\$174,768	\$257,401
Brookline	\$242,855	N/A	\$242,855
Hollis	\$356,931	\$176,155	\$339,295
Hudson	\$220,197	\$148,814	\$187,350
Litchfield	\$222,383	N/A	\$216,563
Lyndeborough	\$161,598	N/A	\$161,598
Merrimack	\$222,954	\$134,455	\$182,708
Milford	\$203,648	\$102,549	\$177,449
Mont Vernon	\$207,748	N/A	\$207,748
Nashua	\$198,603	\$143,444	\$172,792
Pelham	\$255,037	\$185,000	\$254,650
Wilton	\$177,344	\$107,500	\$174,169
NRPC Region	\$223,000	\$141,000	\$194,000

Source: New Hampshire Association of Realtors, 2001. Edited and tabulated by NRPC.

N/A means that the sample size was 5 or less, which is too small to adequately reflect sales price trends.

Note: does not include manufactured housing.

## 6. *Renter Occupied Housing Costs and Assisted Housing*

Approximately 30% of all housing units in the NRPC region are renter occupied, which is the same proportion as the State. In Litchfield, approximately 13% of all occupied housing units are renter occupied (Table II-16, above). All indicators reveal a critical demand for rental units. In 1990, the rental vacancy rate in was 12.4% in the Nashua PMSA, which reflected the economic conditions of that period of time. Since 1996 rental vacancy rates have been below 1% (Table II-20), and reached an all time low of 0.2% in 2000.

**Table II-20: Rental Vacancy Rates, 1990-2000**

Year	Nashua PMSA	State of NH
1990	12.4%	8.7%
1991	8.7%	12.0%
1992	5.8%	7.8%
1993	3.9%	5.4%
1994	3.8%	4.6%
1995	1.8%	3.2%
1996	0.5%	1.4%
1997	0.9%	2.1%
1998	0.5%	2.3%
1999	0.5%	1.6%
2000	0.2%	1.0%

Source: NH Housing Finance Authority, 2000.

The demand for rental housing has also contributed to increased rents (Table II-21). Since 1992 median gross rental costs have been creeping upward both in the NRPC Region and in the State. From 1991 to 2001 median gross rental costs increased 40% in the Nashua PSMA and 33% statewide, indicating that the region is experiencing disproportionate housing costs likely due to employment growth in

southern NH and northeast Massachusetts. Census data indicates that the average monthly rent in Litchfield for all units was \$766 in 2000.

**Table II-21: Median Gross Rental Costs, 1991 - 2001**

Area	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
City of Nashua	\$620	\$687	\$717	\$703	\$633	\$704	\$737	\$764	\$829	\$874	\$966
Nashua PSMA	\$664	\$654	\$703	\$678	\$637	\$698	\$729	\$752	\$799	\$834	\$923
New Hampshire	\$554	\$560	\$564	\$573	\$563	\$596	\$606	\$636	\$665	\$697	\$738

Source: NHHFA.

Note: Gross rent includes utility costs.

Table II-22 shows that more than half of all assisted housing in the NRPC Region is located in the City of Nashua. A significant portion is also located within the center of Milford. As of 2000, Litchfield had twenty-five units of family assisted housing.

**Table II-22: Assisted Housing, 2000**

Community	Elderly Assisted	Family Assisted	Other Assisted or Combined Types*	Total Assisted
Amherst	0	0	0	0
Brookline	0	0	0	0
Hollis	23	0	0	23
Hudson	64	0	0	64
Litchfield	0	25	0	25
Lyndeborough	0	0	0	0
Merrimack	80	0	10	90
Milford	132	56	0	188
Mont Vernon	0	0	0	0
Nashua	731	360	400	1,491
Pelham	42	0	0	42
Wilton	25	0	0	25
NRPC Region	1,097	441	410	1,948
State of NH	9,742	7,516	**	16,390***

Source: NHHFA, Directory of Assisted Housing, September 2001.

\* Other or combined includes group homes, mentally handicapped, physically handicapped, and developments containing both elderly and family housing.

\*\* NHHFA does not manage their database to total this category.

\*\*\* This total is less than the elderly and family assisted columns due to some units being added twice in the NHHFA database.

Table II-23 shows the assisted units as a percent of total housing units for the NRPC Region. The NRPC regional average percentage of assisted housing units is 2.6%, which is lower than for the State as a whole. In 2000, only one percent of the total housing units in Litchfield were considered assisted, and a total of 36 new "assisted" units would need to be constructed to meet the regional average. In order to afford housing, it is reasonable to assume that many people would have to use a higher portion of their total income to purchase housing. Decreases in interest rates over the last five years have helped keep housing relatively affordable, thereby helping to offset the problem of rapid increases in home prices. It is reasonable to assume that, with housing demand remaining high, many people in lower income



categories will be priced out of the large portions of the regional housing market.<sup>2</sup> The disparity between the rates of increases in income and housing costs may point to a need to stimulate housing development in the lower cost categories in Litchfield in order to promote lower prices and an ample supply.

**Table II-23: Assisted Housing Proportional Burden, 2000**

Community	Total Housing Units, 2000	Percent Assisted Units	(Shortfall)/ Excess
Amherst	3,825	0%	(99)
Brookline	1,419	0%	(37)
Hollis	2,547	1.0%	(43)
Hudson	8,213	0.8%	(150)
Litchfield	2,460	1.0%	(39)
Lyndeborough	604	0%	(16)
Merrimack	9,158	1.0%	(148)
Milford	5,422	3.5%	47
Mont Vernon	752	0%	(20)
Nashua	35,582	4.2%	566
Pelham	3,852	1.1%	(58)
Wilton	1,473	1.7%	(13)
NRPC Region	75,307	2.6%	-
State of NH	546,525	2.9%	-

Source: NHHFA, Directory of Assisted Housing, September 2001; US Census; NRPC.

## F. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Office of State Planning (OSP) population projections for the NRPC region are presented in Table II-24 and depicted for Litchfield in Figure II-3. The forecasting methodology is based on building permit trends and a community's historical share of its respective county's growth according to the 1970, 1980, and 1990 Census. OSP has not yet prepared population projections based on 2000 Census data. Rates of change are applied to the most recent population estimate as a growth factor, from which the projection is derived. By this method, changes that have taken place in the 1970, 1980, and 1990 populations guide the projections beyond the year 2000. Litchfield's population is expected to continue to grow approximately 2.6 percent annually over the next 20 years. If projections hold true, this may mean the addition of 6,269 persons by 2020; however, the actual rate of growth in any community is unpredictable and due to forces beyond most local control. Keeping this in mind, it can be reasonably expected that Litchfield will likely grow at a faster rate than any other community in the NRPC region except for Brookline.

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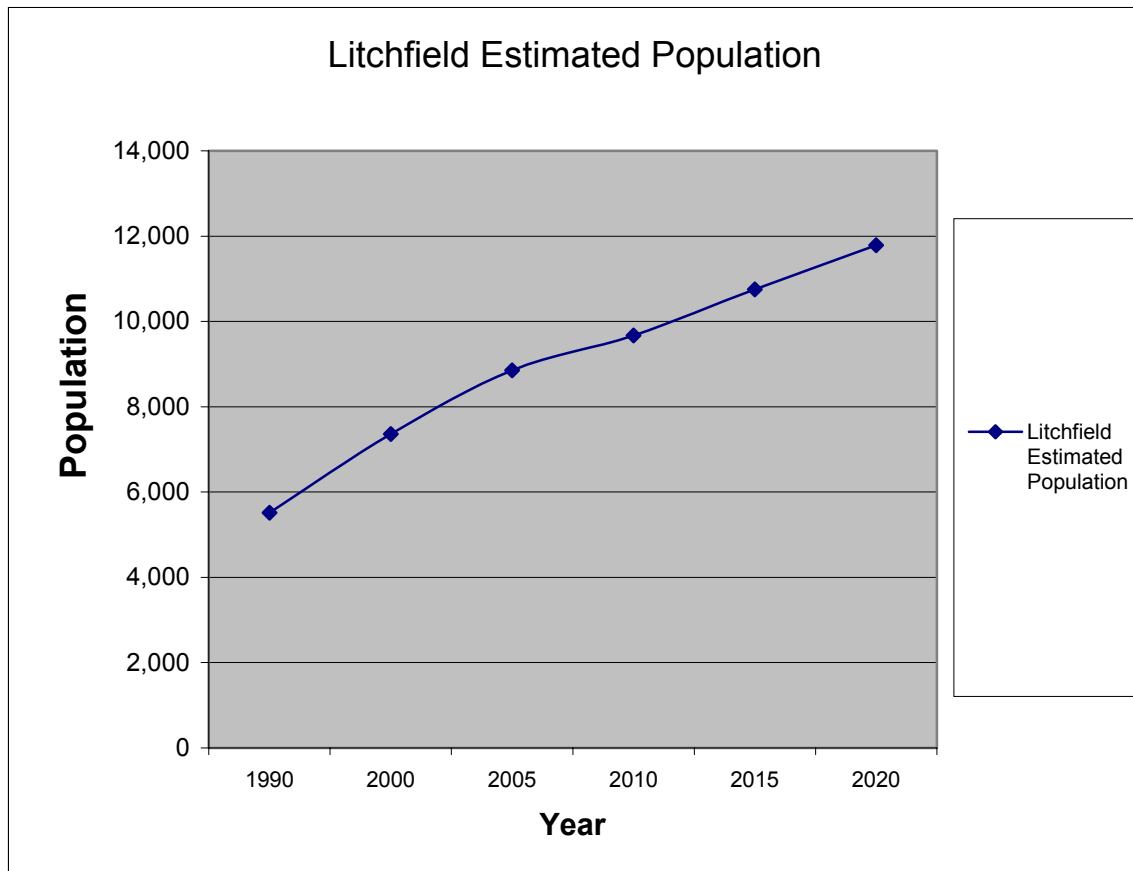
<sup>2</sup> NH Housing Finance Authority, *The State of Housing in New Hampshire*, January 2002.

**Table II-24: Population Projections, NRPC Region**

Community	1990 Census	2000 Census	2005	2010	2015	2020	% Change (1990-2020)	% Annual (1990-2020)
Amherst	9,068	10,769	11,295	12,113	13,547	14,686	62%	1.6%
Brookline	2,410	4,181	5,135	5,953	7,243	8,279	244%	4.2%
Hollis	5,705	7,015	8,535	9,299	10,696	11,940	109%	2.5%
Hudson	19,530	22,928	24,904	26,267	29,013	31,656	62%	1.6%
Litchfield	5,516	7,360	8,856	9,674	10,749	11,785	114%	2.6%
Lyndeborough	1,294	1,585	1,756	1,920	2,178	2,427	88%	2.1%
Merrimack	22,156	25,119	26,664	28,126	30,813	32,886	48%	1.3%
Milford	11,795	13,535	14,452	15,106	16,073	17,006	44%	1.2%
Mont Vernon	1,812	2,034	2,326	2,448	2,708	2,978	64%	1.7%
Nashua	79,662	86,605	86,906	87,997	89,072	91,145	14%	.4%
Pelham	9,408	10,914	13,082	14,118	15,730	17,285	84%	2.0%
Wilton	3,122	3,743	3,704	3,889	4,104	4,363	40%	1.1%
NRPC Region	171,478	195,788	209,620	216,910	231,926	248,456	44%	1.2%

Source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning, *New Hampshire Population Projections, 1998*.

**Figure II-3**



Source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning, *New Hampshire Population Projections, 1998*.  
US Census, 1990, 2000.

The 1997 *Town of Litchfield Buildout Analysis* is a study of future potential demographic, spatial and fiscal development of Litchfield as it pertains to the residential sector. The amount of available, developable, residentially zoned land was determined by examining physical constraints to development. The two types of development restrictions quantified were: 1) already developed land, and 2) physical constraints due the presence of wetlands, steep slopes, or 100-year floodplain. Using geographic information systems analysis, areas covered by these two development restrictions were subtracted from all land in residential zoning districts to estimate the amount of potentially developable residentially zoned land. The findings were then used to project future potential population growth and housing development in Litchfield and to estimate the annual fiscal impact of new residential development at full-buildout.

The buildout analysis calculated a Developable Land Area (DLA) for all residential zones of 2,258 acres. With 2,253 residential units in 1996, it was projected that at full buildout there was potential for an additional 1,550 to 1,806 residential units. The Town population in 1995 was estimated as 5,516 persons. It was projected that the population at full buildout could range from 11,675 to 12,461 persons. The buildout study should be updated using the latest data.

## **G. GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

Fair share analysis is a planning technique used to measure growth within a given municipality compared with the cities and towns that abut and surround it. A 'fair share' is growth proportional to and consistent with regional change. The basis of this technique stems from NH RSA 674:22, *Growth Management; Timing of Development*, which empowers communities (after preparation and adoption of a community Master Plan and Capital Improvement Program) to:

*"... regulate and control the timing of development ... (which) shall be based upon a growth management process intended to assess and balance community needs and consider regional development."*

Table II-25 compares Litchfield growth with that of adjacent and surrounding municipalities. The table shows new residential dwelling unit building permit activity for all types of residential units over the five-year period: 1996 to 2001. The source data is 'building permits issued' as reported on a monthly basis by the US Census or from local Building Inspector data. First tier communities were used, which are those communities immediately adjacent to Litchfield. The table illustrates the growth rates in residential housing units by year within Litchfield and each municipality within the first tier to describe the distribution of growth over time.

Litchfield has had one of the largest proportional increases in residential building permits in the NRPC region. The 2.9 percent average annual percent change for new permits issued from 1996 to 2001 is higher than any of the five adjacent communities. The average annual change in permits issued in the first tier ranged from 0.5 percent in Nashua and 2.2 percent in Merrimack. The total increase in dwelling units for the first tier communities was 4,685. The 2.9 percent average annual growth from 1996 to 2001 resulted in 333 new dwelling units being permitted in Litchfield over the five-year period. The total housing stock in Litchfield is much smaller than adjacent communities, but especially in the late 1990's, Litchfield demonstrated proportionally more housing starts than Hudson or Londonderry. There is little reason to expect declines in market demand for new residential units in Litchfield in the near future; rather, the community appears to face significant growth pressure. The impending construction of the Circumferential Highway in southern Litchfield, airport access road to the north, completion of Campbell High School, and a continued strong housing market despite an economic downturn will likely result in continued residential development.

**Table II-25: Fair Share Analysis, 2001<sup>1</sup>**

Record Period	First Tier NH Communities Adjacent to Litchfield 1997 Through 2001						
		Surrounding First Tier Towns					5 Town Total
Annual Change	Litchfield	Hudson	Londonderry	Nashua	Manchester	Merrimack	Units
Permits Issued (1996)	40	106	106	77	226	98	
Total Units	2,195	7,500	7,438	34,081	45,484	8,618	<b>103,121</b>
Permits Issued (1997)	66	123	165	128	454	169	
Total Units	2,261	7,623	7,603	34,209	45,938	8,787	<b>104,160</b>
1996-1997 Annual Change	3.01%	1.64%	2.22%	0.38%	1.00%	1.96%	
Permits Issued (1998)	73	152	219	167	166	183	
Total Units	2,334	7,775	7,822	34,376	46,104	8,970	<b>105,047</b>
1997-1998 Annual Change	3.23%	1.99%	2.88%	0.49%	0.36%	2.08%	
Permits Issued (1999)	104	227	151	170	181	191	
Total Units	2,438	8,002	7,973	34,546	46,285	9,161	<b>105,967</b>
1998-1999 Annual Change	4.46%	2.92%	1.93%	0.49%	0.39%	2.13%	
Permits Issued (2000)	72	53	148	164	174	197	
2000 Additional Dwelling Units (Multi-Unit Permit)	0	0	0	88	66	0	
Total Units	2,510	8,055	8,121	34,798	46,525	9,358	<b>106,857</b>
1999-2000 Annual Change	2.95%	0.66%	1.86%	0.73%	0.52%	2.15%	
Permits Issued (2001)	18	122	112	190	116	237	
2000 Additional Dwelling Units (Multi-Unit Permit)	0	4	0	8	160	0	
Total Units	2,528	8,181	8,233	34,996	46,801	9,595	<b>107,806</b>
2000-2001 Annual Change	0.72%	1.56%	1.38%	0.57%	0.59%	2.53%	
Average Annual Percent Change	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	
Litchfield Fair Share Regional Average Growth Rate (FSRAGR Factor) (Excluding Litchfield) =	0.893%	Average Annual Percent Change of 5 Towns					

1) This table assumes that all permitted units were actually built.

Source: US Census Building Permit Records; Litchfield Annual Reports; 2000 US Census

## **H. ALTERNATIVE HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The main housing type in Litchfield is owner-occupied single family units. A review of the existing housing stock and new development in Litchfield since 1990 shows that while there is some diversity in the housing available, very little new development has occurred except for single family dwellings. Other types of housing may represent alternative forms of shelter for people of low incomes or for people who have unique housing needs such as the elderly, young adults, small families, single parent households, and recent immigrants.

Duplexes, condominiums, multifamily apartments, in-law apartments, assisted living facilities, motels, extended stay facilities, and nursing homes are examples of non-traditional housing demonstrated in communities. For many consumers, these forms of shelter provide inexpensive alternatives to the stand-alone single family home. A diversity of housing opportunities may also provide the required flexibility for people who newly locate in the community or temporarily reside there in case of a change in job or living situation. An investigation of the benefits of fostering a diverse housing base in Litchfield may be useful.

The strategic provision of housing opportunities can be an asset for the community. For example, as demographic patterns shift to smaller households and an older population, assisted living facilities or elderly communities provide for the unique needs of the elderly. Housing for older persons, as defined in NH RSA 354-A:15, can provide affordable living situations for people with fixed incomes, accessibility to people with disabilities, and social contact for a group that can experience isolation. Current data indicates that elderly people often move out of Litchfield in later years of life. Providing housing opportunities that enable this group to remain in Litchfield could provide a healthier community environment and the community should continue to implement its Housing for Older Person's Ordinance which appears to have been successful in attracting such development in 2001 and 2002.

In terms of public services provision, many housing for older persons arrangements can be structured to help minimize the cost of providing health care and social services. It may also provide elderly people with the chance to continue residing in close proximity to friends and family. In Litchfield, a high cost of living and housing price inflation coupled with limited housing opportunities may force elderly people to move out of the community in order to locate affordable housing. One response in some New Hampshire towns has been to permit accessory housing opportunities by right within local zoning codes. Permitting in-law apartments and accessory apartments promotes affordability, development of a diverse housing mix, as well as intergenerational living situations. It can also provide housing for young people returning to the area for employment.

In Litchfield in recent years there has been negligible duplex, condex and condominium development, although these forms of housing are in higher demand than after the condominium market collapsed in the late 1980s. In contemporary times, people often spend less time with one employer and adults are likely to wait until later in life before starting a family. Condominiums are a type of housing that may provide more flexible living situation for smaller and non-traditional households. Condominium or duplex development is a form of housing that is ideal for open space development applications. An advantage of enabling these types of housing is that diverse supplies with adequate vacancy rates promote a stable and affordable marketplace. More so, than in the past, there is evidence that more Americans are shelter poor -- they pay more than 30 percent of their family income to pay for housing. Allowing and promoting mixed-use housing, such as in commercial zones, is unlikely to cause congestion, would increase the available supply and may actually help the market viability of these locations. For the same reasons, it is worthwhile to examine how to enable more development of affordable housing.

One technique to promote the production of a larger supply of affordable housing units is to increase the potential for manufactured housing units siting in Litchfield. The *New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions* defines manufactured housing as:

*“Factory-built, single family structures that meet the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 5401), commonly known as the ... HUD code.”<sup>3</sup>*

Contrary to ‘mobile homes’ of earlier eras that were designed to be movable, contemporary manufactured housing is larger, meets uniform building code requirements, and generally is a much higher quality physical building stock. These structures are often placed on foundations and it is often difficult to visually discern the difference of manufactured housing from other housing types. Studies of property values show that manufactured housing developments do not have negative effects on the market value or appreciation rate of adjacent housing.<sup>4</sup>

The Planning Board could evaluate using development review and incentives within local land use ordinances to stimulate production of manufactured housing that is of good quality and affordable. To address concern that poor physical and visual quality manufactured housing development will occur out of character with the community, the Board could establish a flexible housing zoning district, or an overlay district, where development of this type of dwelling unit development would require Planning Board review. Stimulating development of affordable manufactured housing could be achieved by providing density bonuses if a proportion of housing is reserved for people of low or moderate incomes or if open space preservation occurs. Furthermore, building caps could be used to ensure that annual manufactured housing unit production within this category does not adversely impact local budgets.

## **I. CONCLUSIONS**

As growth occurred in the Nashua region over the last 40 years, Litchfield has been transformed into a bedroom community. Further residential growth is expected to occur in the next 25 years, although less rapidly than the peak experienced in the 1970s. Rather rapid increases in population and changed demographic characteristics have resulted in social change within the community. Residents’ incomes have demonstrated consistent increases over earlier periods; however, the costs of housing have outpaced rises in income. The high cost of housing and limited housing opportunities may influence the high incidence of elderly residents moving out of the community later in life. Another change already underway is the larger numbers of children entering the school system each year.

Residential development is a major influence on land use and has a significant impact on municipal finance and the local economy. Housing development is cyclical and influenced by the regional and national economies. Over the past decade, local and regional incomes demonstrated consistent gains over earlier periods; however, housing costs increases outpaced the rises in income. For “...many employers the housing shortage may mean an inability to attract new workers, hampering or reducing operations.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Moskowitz and Lindbloom, *New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions* 1993, page 169.

<sup>4</sup> Sanders, *Manufactured Housing: Regulation, Design Innovations, and Development Options*, 1998, page 7.

<sup>5</sup> NH Housing Finance Authority, *The State of Housing in New Hampshire*, January 2002.

## **J. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Planning Board recommends the following initiatives:

- Continue to implement the housing for older persons ordinance in Litchfield.
- Commission a Housing Policy Plan. Such a study could analyze the local housing market using the 2000 Census information and examine local issues, such as housing supply and affordability, in even greater detail. Such a plan could analyze different policies and programs available and best suited to influence the future development of a supply of housing that is high quality and affordable to residents and new migrants to the region. The programming options that come out of such a Plan could be used to stimulate more development of housing affordable to residents with moderate and low incomes.
- Update the 1997 Buildout Analysis using the latest Geographic Information Systems technology.
- Evaluate regulatory methods and incentives to stimulate production of manufactured housing that is affordable, of good quality and does not detract from the community's rural character.
- Continue to implement the Litchfield Growth Management Ordinance to ensure that the community accommodates its fair share of growth.