

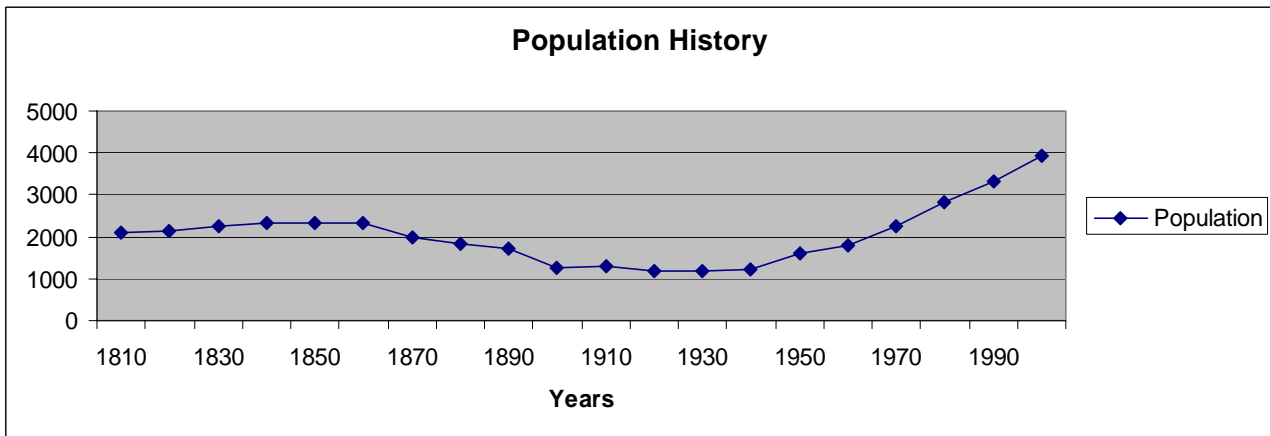
2. POPULATION

Introduction

This section of the Comprehensive Plan profiles current and projected demographic characteristics of the Town of Wiscasset. While there is some historical information available, most of the data used for this Plan is derived from the 1990 and 2000 Census. This data help document the change in the last decade and compare the demographic characteristics of Wiscasset to those of neighboring towns and Lincoln County.

Historical Population Change

Wiscasset had a year-round population of 2,083 people in the year 1810. The Town grew very slowly, reaching a population of 2,318 by the year 1860. This was followed by a long period of decline until there were only 1,273 residents by the year 1900. The population remained relatively stable until 1950, when the Census documented 1,584 residents. The Town has shown steady growth since that time, reaching a level of 3,603 people in the year 2000. Wiscasset’s historical growth patterns are shown in the chart below and are summarized in Table 1.



**Table 1
Wiscasset’s Historical Growth**

Date	Population	Date	Population	Date	Population
1810	2,083	1880	1,847	1950	1,584
1820	2,138	1890	1,733	1960	1,800
1830	2,255	1900	1,273	1970	2,244
1840	2,314	1910	1,287	1980	2,832
1850	2,332	1920	1,192	1990	3,339
1860	2,318	1930	1,186	2000	3,603
1870	1,977	1940	1,231		

Source: Fogler Library, University of Maine

Population Change and Comparisons

Table 2 contains a summary of population changes in the past 30 years for Wiscasset, Lincoln County, Sagadahoc County, Cumberland County, and a number of surrounding towns. Over the past 30 years the rate of growth in Lincoln County has been about twice as high as the State's growth rate overall.

Wiscasset's rate of growth mirrors that of the County in the decades since 1970. The Town grew by 26% in 1970s, 18% in 1980s, and 8% in the 1990's.

As shown in Table 2, the rate of growth has been greatest in small neighboring towns. This is due to the fact that a small absolute change in a very small town results in a large percentage change. While Wiscasset grew by 61% over the last 30 years, Alna, Edgecomb and Westport tripled their populations.

Place	1970	1980	% Change 1970-80	1990	% Change 1980-90	2000	% Change 1990-00	% Change 1970-00
Wiscasset	2,244	2,832	26%	3,339	18%	3,603	8%	61%
Alna	315	425	35%	571	34%	675	18%	114%
Damariscotta	1,264	1,493	18%	1,811	21%	2,041	13%	61%
Dresden	787	998	27%	1,332	33%	1,625	22%	106%
Edgecomb	549	841	53%	993	18%	1,090	10%	99%
Newcastle	1,076	1,227	14%	1,538	25%	1,748	14%	62%
Westport	228	420	84%	663	58%	745	12%	227%
Woolwich	1,710	2,156	26%	2,570	19%	2,810	9%	64%
Lincoln County	20,537	25,691	25%	30,357	18%	33,616	11%	64%
Sagadahoc Co.	23,452	28,795	23%	33,535	16%	35,214	5%	50%
Cumberland Co.	192,528	215,789	12%	243,135	13%	265,612	9%	38%
Maine	992,048	1,124,660	13%	1,227,928	9%	1,274,923	4%	29%

Source: U.S. Census

Components of Population Change. Between 1990 and 2000, Wiscasset's population increased by 264 people. Of that number, a gain of 86 can be attributed to births exceeding deaths. The remaining 178 are the "in-migrants." Not much is known about the demographic characteristics of these in-migrants.

Population Change, 1990-2000	264
Births, 1990-2000	414
Deaths, 1990-2000	326
Natural Increase	86
Net In-migration	178

Source: 2000 Census

Age Distribution

Municipal services and land needed to accommodate the population over the next 10 years depends very much on how the population demographics change in age. Young families may desire to live in the country, whereas the aging “baby-boomers” are more likely to seek to simplify their lives by living in town or in a multi-family or condominium unit. Table 3 and the graph below show the change in the age of the population and how they compare to area towns and the County.

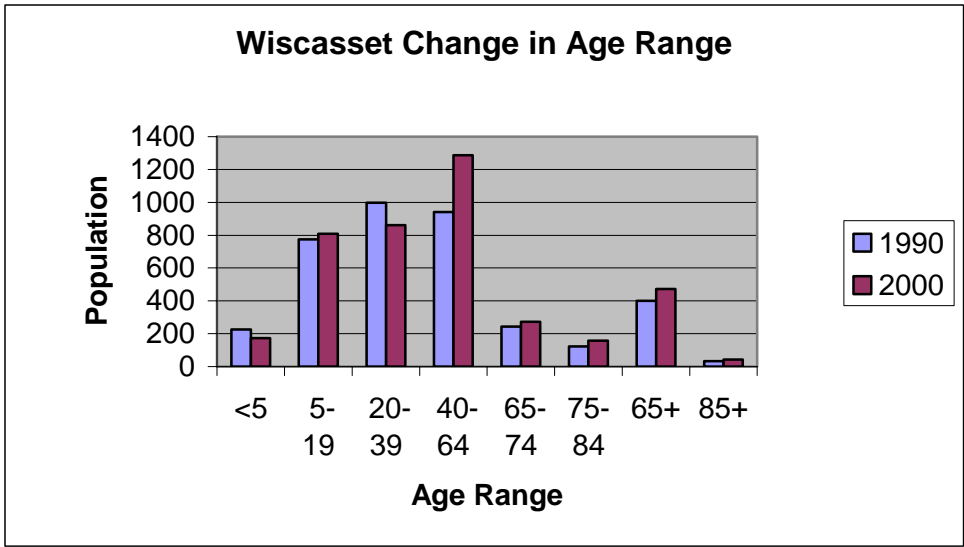
The median age is increasing in the County and in Wiscasset. In the year 2000, Wiscasset had the second youngest median age of any jurisdiction shown in Table 3 (39.2 years), even though Wiscasset’s median age increased from 34.7 in 1990 to 39.2 in 2000. Damariscotta had the oldest median age in 2000 (48.0 years). The increase in the median age between 1990 and 2000 was roughly around 14% in all communities with the exception of Westport where the median age increased by 23% and in Alna where it only increased by 5%.

Town	% Under 5		% Under 18		% Over 54		% Over 64		Median age		% Change
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	
Wiscasset	7	5	25	23	21	25	17	18	34.7	39.2	13
Alna	7	4	25	25	23	26	13	14	38.6	41.2	7
Damariscotta	5	4	22	20	36	41	26	31	42.8	48.0	12
Dresden	8	7	28	26	19	21	10	12	33.7	37.4	11
Edgecomb	7	5	25	23	23	30	15	16	38.5	43.9	14
Newcastle	7	7	12	23	29	31	20	19	38.7	44.8	16
Westport	8	4	24	22	25	32	14	17	36.5	44.8	23
Woolwich	7	5	27	24	19	23	10	11	34.4	39.7	15
Lincoln Co	7	5	25	23	27	30	17	18	37.4	42.6	14

Source: U.S. Census

Between 1990 and 2000, there was a significant change in the age composition of the population, both in Wiscasset and Lincoln County, as shown in the graph below and in Table 4. The “under 5” population declined by 23% in Wiscasset, and 19% in Lincoln County. Between 1990 and 2000, the “20-39” age bracket declined by 14% in both Wiscasset and Lincoln County.

The other end of the spectrum shows a significant increase in the “40-64” age group (a gain of 37% in Wiscasset, and a gain of 39% in Lincoln County) during the 1990-2000 time period. There was also a significant increase in the “75-84” age group. This group increased by 28% in Wiscasset, and 25% in Lincoln County. The “85 and over” group also increased significantly (26% in Wiscasset; 46% in Lincoln County).



	<5	5-19	20-39	40-64	65-74	75-84	65+	85+
Wiscasset								
1990	226	774	997	942	243	123	400	34
2000	173	808	861	1,288	272	158	473	43
% Change	-23%	4%	-14%	37%	12%	28%	18%	26%
Lincoln County								
1990	2,012	2,180	8,192	8,803	2,804	1,660	5,024	560
2000	1,621	2,083	7,022	12,201	3,221	2,067	6,107	819
% Change	-10%	-4%	-14%	39%	15%	25%	22%	46%

Source: U.S. Census

What are the Implications of the Change of Age Groups? The 1990-2000 trends were accurately predicted and explained in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan:

These faster growth rates are the result of two factors: the aging of the population generally as the baby boom generation matures, and the in-migration of retirees who are attracted to the mid-coast region.

This age group consists of many individuals who have earned money elsewhere and are able to afford coastal property. They build large homes resulting in a net revenue gain because no children are added to the school system. They also push up the value of coastal property, increasing the valuation of those who are on fixed incomes.

One issue facing Wiscasset is the declining school enrollment which creates financial pressures for the school system. Regardless of enrollments, the school system still has to have a minimum number of teachers and has to maintain the school buildings. Declining enrollments is one reason there has been some talk of consolidating both on the regional level as well as in Wiscasset by annexing the Middle School to the High School.

Another issue is that the retirees, not having children in the school system, possibly never having had children in the Wiscasset school system, may not be strong supporters of public education. This is a problem state-wide. One means of generating support for the schools is to make facilities and programs available to adults.

A final concern is that as the seniors get older there will be more demand for affordable housing close to services and perhaps more of a demand for bus transportation.

Household Size and Characteristics

The percentage increase in household formation between 1990 and 2000 has been the same in both Wiscasset and Lincoln County (19%), but only 11% in the State as a whole (Table 5). The growth in the number of households exceeded population growth because average household size has been declining since 1980, as shown in Table 6.

Table 5			
Change in Total Number of Households			
	Wiscasset	Lincoln County	Maine
1990	1,240	11,889	465,729
2000	1,476	14,170	518,372
% Change	19%	19%	11%

Source: US Census

Table 6			
Change in Average Household Size			
	Wiscasset	Lincoln County	Maine
1980	2.89	2.70	2.75
1990	2.60	2.52	2.56
2000	2.43	2.35	2.39
% Change, 80-90	-10.0%	-6.7%	-6.9%
% Change, 90-00	-6.5%	-6.7%	-6.6%

Source: US Census

People Living Alone. Table 7 reveals a drop in household size. In the last decade the number of people living alone went up by 40%. That is a surprisingly high number. What is even more surprising is that the total number of females living alone, regardless of age, went up by 81.5%.

Among 65-year old females living alone, the number went up by 15% and males living alone actually went down by 24%. According to the State Planning Office “living alone” means there is neither an adult partner nor any children in the household. These singles might consist of people in their late 20’s who live alone before forming a family, or are older (but not yet 65) who may be divorced. Postponing marriage and child-raising and increasing divorce among empty nesters are phenomena that have increased in the last decade.

All Ages	1990	2000	% Change
Total Living Alone	286	401	40.2
Male Living Alone	167	185	10.8
Female Living Alone	119	216	81.5
65 and Over			
Total Living Alone	131	138	5.3
Male Living Alone	33	25	-24.2
Female Living Alone	98	113	15.3

Source: U.S. Census

Implications. The question for comprehensive planning is to consider the housing preference of this demographic group: where do they want to live and in what type of housing. Will they increase the demand for in-town rentals, or for purchase of condominiums closer to downtown?

It is likely that as the baby boomers reach 65 later in this decade, the population bubble of single females will show up in the “over 65” category. This may increase the demand for condos or congregate housing or apartment units. In both the above cases, this trend for singles could result in continued enrollment declines in the school system, which has begun. One positive impact might be the net gain for the property tax revenues because the retirees moving into Wiscasset are likely to be more prosperous and require minimal municipal services. Therefore their property taxes will result in net revenue to the Town. On the other hand, the support for the school system may become weaker.

Density

Wiscasset has a land area of 24.6 square miles plus 3.12 square miles of water. The density of single family homes per square mile is a determinant of the character of the community, its place on the urban/rural continuum. Table 8 includes a comparison of the impact of growth or degree of urbanization or suburbanization for Wiscasset, several nearby communities and Lincoln County.

	Land Area in Square Miles**	Density 1990*	Density 2000	Density % Change '90-'00	Population % Change '90-'00
Wiscasset	24.6	49.4	65.5	33%	8%
Alna	20.9	12.4	15.1	22%	18%
Damariscotta	12.4	79.4	92.7	17%	13%
Dresden	30.1	18.3	24.6	34%	22%
Edgecomb	18.1	28.6	31.6	10%	10%
Newcastle	29.0	25.7	30.3	18%	14%
Westport	8.7	45.7	58.4	28%	12%
Woolwich	35.1	29.0	34.5	19%	9%
Lincoln County	455.6	35.4	45.8	29%	11%

Source: Robert Faunce, Lincoln County Planner, and State Planning Office

*Density is the number of dwelling units divided by the land area

**Land area does not include water

Among the neighboring towns, Alna is the least densely settled. Damariscotta is the most densely settled, Wiscasset ranks second and Westport is third. The last two columns in Table 8 provide a comparison between the change in density and population in the last decade. There doesn't seem to be a direct correlation between the change in density and the increase in population. The density in Wiscasset has increased by 33%, even though the population only grew by 8%. On the other hand, the increase in density in Dresden does seem to be due to the increase in population.

What does this mean? Perhaps the density increased in Wiscasset because all those singles prefer to live in the multiple units that have gone up in the last ten years. It seems the rural nature of Dresden is most diminished among these towns.

Educational Attainment

The Census provides information on educational attainment for persons 25 and over, as shown in Table 9. Highlights include the following:

- 12% of the residents of Wiscasset have less than a high school education. That percentage is the same as that for Lincoln County as a whole, and it's less than the percentages for Alna (13%), Dresden (16%), Westport (15%) and Woolwich (15%).
- The highest level of educational attainment for 40% of the Wiscasset population is High School; 20% have 2 or 4 year college degrees, which is the lowest among all comparison towns except Dresden (also 20%) and the County. Edgecomb has the highest percent of college grads (32%).
- Only 6% of Wiscasset residents have an advanced or graduate degree, the lowest among the jurisdictions shown in Table 9. Newcastle has the highest level of advanced degrees (17%).

	Less Than HS	HS Graduate No College	Some College No Degree	2/4 Year College Degree	Graduate Degree
Wiscasset	12%	41%	21%	20%	6%
Alna	13%	32%	16%	29%	9%
Damariscotta	8%	29%	22%	30%	11%
Dresden	16%	35%	21%	20%	8%
Edgecomb	6%	25%	23%	32%	15%
Newcastle	9%	30%	15%	28%	17%
Westport	15%	33%	17%	25%	10%
Woolwich	15%	35%	19%	22%	9%
Lincoln County	12%	35%	20%	24%	9%

Source: U.S. Census

Income and Poverty

There are two types of poverty guidelines. One is the Federal Poverty level, which is published in the Federal Register annually. The other is the Livable Wage standard, published by the Maine Center for

Economic Development. This standard is used by the Maine Development Foundation in its annual Growth Indicator report.

Table 10 below shows that the Median Household Income of Wiscasset residents is \$37,378 and the Per Capita income is \$18, 233, both of which are slightly lower than State and County medians. Table 10 also shows that:

1. From a comparison perspective, the percent of households with incomes less than \$15,000 is slightly lower in Wiscasset than at the State or County level. However, the percent of household in Wiscasset with incomes between \$15,000 and \$25,000 is higher than the County and the State (19.4% in Wiscasset versus 15.3% in the County and 14.8% in the State).

2. From the perspective of likely needs for assistance or affordable housing, there are approximately 699 households in Wiscasset with incomes below the Median Household Income (MHI). If we assume there are 2.4 persons per household:
 - 77 households or 185 people have incomes between \$10,000 and \$15,000. These households are just about at the poverty or livable wage guidelines;
 - 286 households or 743 people are in households earning between \$15,000 and \$25,000. These households are getting by but not very comfortably.

Table 10 Household Income - 2000						
	Wiscasset		Lincoln County		Maine	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than \$10,000	110	7.5	1,174	8.3	53,259	10.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999	77	5.2	960	6.8	39,231	7.6
\$15,000 to \$24,999	286	19.4	2,172	15.3	76,633	14.8
\$25,000 to \$34,999	226	15.3	2,104	14.8	73,614	14.2
\$35,000 to \$49,000	270	18.3	2,899	20.5	94,848	18.3
\$50,000 to \$74,999	257	17.4	2,602	18.4	100,423	19.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	154	10.4	1,155	8.2	43,341	8.4
\$100,000 to \$149,999	89	6.0	759	5.4	24,348	4.7
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7	0.5	150	1.1	5,866	1.1
\$200,000 or more	0	0	195	1.4	6,809	1.3
Median HH Income	\$37,378		\$38,686		\$37,240	
Per Capita Income	\$18,233		\$20,760		\$18,533	

Source: 2000 Census

Another way of looking at these numbers is for the purpose of determining eligibility for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs aimed at assisting low income people, or for any social service such as Medicare, family assistance or housing subsidies. More recent income data than the 2000 census is available for the counties. This can be used to estimate the number of people or percent of the community meeting the housing subsidy or assistance threshold. The guideline, used by banks and HUD, is that people can afford to pay 30% of their income for housing. In Lincoln County, 30% of medium income is \$10,950 for a household with 3 persons.

Low and very low income households are eligible for HUD services. The income of a three-person “very low income” household in Lincoln County is \$18,250; a “low income” is \$29,150. While the income categories in Table 10 don’t exactly correspond to HUD figures, it can be determined by extrapolation that Wiscasset has 221 very low income households and 151 low income households.

There are various means to calculate the eligibility of a community or neighborhood for a CDBG grant. The simplest way to describe it is that over 50% of residents have to be below the median household income. When applying for a CDBG grant, the income of the household in the area to be served has to be more accurately determined by an income survey, according to survey methodologies required by the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Poverty Status. As shown in Table 11, Wiscasset has a comparatively high number of households, children and the elderly living in poverty. In both Wiscasset and Dresden, 12.5% of the total population are living below the federal poverty level. This compares to 10.1% at the County level, 4.3% in Edgecomb, 6.1% in Woolwich, and 6.6% in Westport. Wiscasset has the second highest percentage of children living below the poverty level (16.2%) of any jurisdiction shown in the table, while Edgecomb has the lowest (2.0%). Of all the jurisdictions shown in the table, Wiscasset has the highest percentage of people 65 years and older living below the poverty level (14.9%).

Table 11 Persons for Whom Poverty Status is Determined, 2000						
	All Ages		Children Under 18		People 65 and Over	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Wiscasset	450	12.5	140	16.2	70	14.9
Alna	43	6.3	9	5.7	9	10.1
Damariscotta	238	11.7	65	16.4	36	5.7
Dresden	203	12.5	76	19.5	19	10.3
Edgecomb	47	4.3	5	2.0	8	4.5
Newcastle	122	7.0	24	6.1	31	9.5
Westport	48	6.6	13	7.6	10	7.5
Woolwich	170	6.1	42	6.5	19	6.1
Lincoln County	3,375	10.1	930	12.8	564	9.5

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Population Projections

In January of 2002, the Maine State Planning Office released population projections by age category for every community in the State. These projections are somewhat conservative in nature and are based on an econometric computer model that first projects the number of residents statewide from 2001 to 2015. Some of the assumptions/methods used in the model include, but are not limited to the following:

- The model assumes that population growth stimulates economic demand, while economic growth encourages in-migration and population growth;
- The model allocates statewide figures to municipalities based on the trends in each community;
- The model assumes that population growth or decline is unlikely to continue unchecked forever, so the annual rate of change declines as the projection time period increases.

The State’s projections do not include the effect of Maine Yankee’s closure, rising property taxes or the possibility that businesses will be drawn into Wiscasset due to its many economic development opportunities. The State Planning Office’s projections for Wiscasset are shown in Table 12.

Based on the information in Table 12, Wiscasset can expect an overall growth rate of about 5.5% between 2005 and 2015. During that same period, Wiscasset can expect modest but continued declines in the “under 5” category (-3.8%), as well as in the “5-17” school age population (-2.3%) and young adult, “18-44” population (-2.6%). Population gains can be expected in the “45-64” age group (12.1%), the “65-79” category (27.2%) and in the “80+” category (15.8%).

Table 12						
Historical Population (1990, 2000) and Population Projections						
	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	% Change 2005-2015
All Ages	3,350	3,610	3,706	3,792	3,908	5.5%
<5	238	168	157	152	151	-3.8%
5-17	680	737	687	654	671	-2.3%
18-44	1,349	1,256	1,225	1,185	1,193	-2.6%
45-64	674	966	1,142	1,288	1,280	12.1%
65 -79	328	358	349	369	444	27.2%
80+	81	125	146	164	169	15.8%

Source: Maine State Planning Office

The Maine State Planning Office projections do not reflect recently-approved developments.