

## Middletown's Plan of Development

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE PEOPLE – HOW MANY? THEN, NOW AND TOMORROW

The first truly comprehensive Plan of Development for the City of Middletown was done in 1965 by Technical Planning Associates. In this Plan the chapter on population was entitled "Population Projections as a Basis for Planning". The chapter began with the following paragraph:

"It is obvious that plans for all phases of future development must be geared to the future size of the community. How many people will there be for whom provision must be made for housing, job opportunities, for shopping, recreation, schools and other facilities? A study of population trends described below concludes that today's planning for Middletown should be based on a target population of 65,000 residents and that this will be reached about 1990 or 2000".

After review of population trends, existing and proposed land uses, and the current zoning scheme, the primary conclusion of this chapter is that the 1965 Plan of Development was quite accurate at predicting the population in the year 2000.

#### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS IN THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN

An important part of any Plan of Development framework is the gathering and analysis of information in regard to population trends and projections. This section is essential in a Plan of Development for it helps to describe the extent and quality of the present and potential labor force and, at the same time, population and age distribution projections will help to indicate the level of services and the expenditure of funds which may be required for education, elderly services, day care and other public and quasi public functions.

The most valuable source of demographic information is the United States Census of the Population. While the 1980 census data is available, it is dated. For this reason, this section will pull together information from a variety of reliable sources. When the 1990 Census becomes available, this section will be updated and adopted as part of the Plan of Development.

#### REGIONAL TRENDS

Middletown does not stand alone as an island. The road network provides surrounding communities access to the city and, in particular, the city's downtown. For this reason, it is important to first review the demographics of the region which Middletown is in. Middletown and seven adjacent towns are in the "MidState Region". This region constitutes Middletown's primary trading area and "area of influence". The communities of the region are, to a considerable extent, interdependent. Growth and development of each will depend on the growth of the whole. Figure 3.1 displays this region in relation to the rest of the state. Table 3.1 shows the trends of population in these communities. From this table it is clear that Middletown contributes significantly (44%) to the entire regions population. But, in 1940 Middletown's population comprised 64% of the region's population, in 1950 the figure was 50% and in 1980 the figure was 45%. These figures are a reflection of the decentralizing suburbanization trend which has been occurring nationwide.

TABLE 3.1 TOTAL POPULATION 1980, 1986 ESTIMATE

TOWN	1980	1986	% CHANGE
Middletown	39,040	41,220	5.6

Cromwell	10,265	11,390	11.0
Durham	5,143	5,530	7.5
East Haddam	5,621	6,270	11.5
East Hampton	8,527	9,350	9.0
Haddam	6,383	6,740	5.6
Middlefield	3,796	3,900	2.7
Portland	8,383	8,610	2.7
Region	87,203	93,010	6.6

Source: U.S. Census, CT. Dept. of Health

#### MIDSTATE REGION (Maps here)

Table 3.2 provides projected population by age group for the MidState Region. As the table indicates, several changes in the age distribution of the region's population are expected by the year 2000.

TABLE 3.2 MIDSTATE REGION POPULATION BY AGE

AGE	1980		2000	
0 - 19	26,097	30%	23,065	22%
20 - 34	23,647	27%	20,236	20%
35 - 64	27,999	32%	45,843	43%
65 +	9,460	11%	14,084	15%
Total	87,203	100%	103,228	100%

MID STATE AGE DISTRIBUTION MIDSTATE RPA Chart here..... LOCAL TRENDS CHART HERE.....

Historically, Middletown's population has almost always been an increasing population. This is unlike surrounding somewhat larger cities. Figure 3.3 displays the cities historical population from 1790 to 1980. Also shown in Figure 3.4 are more recent population estimates by the city's Planning Department. The critical date for the 1990 Census of the Population is April 1, 1990. Therefore the Planning Department also estimated the population on this date. The official Planning Department estimate of the total population is 46,860 residents. This figure clearly displays the record growth the city experienced between 1985 and 1988.

#### MIDDLETOWN'S HISTORICAL POPULATION

RECENT POPULATION ESTIMATES CHART HERE..... FIGURE 3.4

The age distribution of this population is important to understand in order to correctly plan for city services, such as schools or programs for the elderly. Figure 3.5 displays the 1980 and the projected 1990 age distributions for the city. From this figure, it is clear that Middletown has an aging population, similar to most other towns and the state, as was discussed earlier. This aging population and the concomitant decline in the younger cohorts will have a significant impact on the city.

1980 & 1990 AGE DISTRIBUTION source: U.S. Census & CT. OPM Chart here..... FIGURE 3.5

It is important to project the future population in the city to better understand the future demand for services. This projection was accomplished using two methods. The first method was simple linear regression using historical data. The second, more reliable method was the land use method. This method is based on the density allowed for in the current zoning scheme. Using Housing Partnership estimates of potential units based on available vacant land, subdivision records, building permits and other information, the Planning office estimated the population at total residential build out to be approximately 63,580 residents. The next figure, figure 3.6, displays these two projections. Interestingly, the 1965 Middletown Plan of Development, as discussed earlier, estimated the ideal population in the year 2000 to be 65,000 residents.

The city's target population becomes extremely relevant when one considers the fact that the Water and Sewer Department has indicated that a target population of 65,000 residents is used when planning for future water supplies.

#### PROJECTIONS INTO THE FUTURE SOURCE: Middletown Planning Office FIGURE 3.6

Another interesting and important projection to review is the future age distribution. The U.S. Census reported and the Office of Policy and Management has estimated future distribution for the years 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010. These distributions are shown in figure 3.7.

#### FUTURE AGE DISTRIBUTIONS Source: Office of Policy and Management

#### Figure 3.7 DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

1. The "MidState" region has been growing steadily and some towns have grown dramatically.
2. The "MidState" region's population is becoming a significantly older population, which will increase the need for further planning for the elderly.
3. Middletown's population has been increasing steadily and it is expected to continue to do so into the year 2000.
4. Housing demand will remain steady as a result of an increasing population, a declining family size and a somewhat still affordable real estate market compared to other surrounding towns.
5. The age distributions indicate that:
  - a. The less than 5 year old age cohort has increased dramatically between 1980 and 1989 and the 20 to 29 year old age cohort has declined. This is indicative of the trend of more career oriented couples, who have waited to have families, now having them.
  - b. The 20 to 29 year old age cohort, or first time homebuyers, are the largest cohort but they are becoming increasingly shut out of Middletown.
  - c. The 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 year old age cohorts are increasing. This displays the fact that Middletown's population is shifting to a population of older, more established, second home families.
  - d. Middletown's population is expected to become an increasingly older population into the year 2010. This will increase the need for a further emphasis on planning for older populations.
  - e. Due to this aging population, the current labor shortage will intensify, barring any significant economic downturns, especially in the lower paying retail and low end service sectors.
6. Finally, in order to insure an adequate supply of potable water, a relatively uncongested road network, and a quality living environment the city should be planning for an ultimate population of approximately 65,000 residents, as suggested in the 1965 Plan of Development.