

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS AS A BASIS FOR PLANNING

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 provisions must be made for housing, for 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.

### Regional trends

When the center of Middletown was incorporated as a city at the close of the Revolution, it had approximately the same population as Hartford, New Haven, New London, Norwalk and Stonington. These were the largest communities in Connecticut and all were located on the only major transportation routes, the navigable waters. Middletown was, and still is, the "middle town" of the State. Industrial development in New Haven and Hartford outstripped that of Middletown; the principal railroad lines bypassed it. But today's development is chiefly one of decentralization. The older centers are largely built up. Growth is spreading outward and new facilities for transportation are again changing the patterns of development.

Middletown has long been the central city of the middle and lower Connecticut Valley. It has provided the business, professional and service center for that area. Until 20 or 30 years ago, the neighboring towns were small rural places, and Middletown itself contained the largest proportion of the Region's population and business activity. As in all comparable regions, the outlying towns have been picking up in the last two or three decades. They have been accounting for a large share of the growth everywhere.

The towns most closely related to Middletown are those which border it on the north, east and south. For several years the Connecticut Development Commission has been making studies of the various economic regions of the state. Middletown and its neighboring communities have been appropriately designated as the "Midstate Region." The City and the six adjacent towns in this Region constitute 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.

Table 1 shows the trends of population in these communities in the past two decades. Comparison of census figures in Middletown for 1940 and subsequent years is complicated by the fact that, prior to 1950, the residents of institutions were counted as part of the population of their towns. In the 1950 and 1960 censuses, these persons are included in the population of the city or town in which the institution is located. Thus, for Middletown, the 1940 census gives the actual number of residents of the City, excluding residents of other places who happened to be at the State Hospital, Long Lane Farm or Wesleyan University. But the 1950 and 1960 census figures for Middletown include approximately 4,000 persons in these institutions, who are not properly part of the residential population of the community.

For the purposes of planning, we are primarily concerned with space and facilities for actual residents. Therefore their numbers have been determined by subtracting from the 1950 and 1960 census figures the total numbers in each of these years counted in the three institutions. The actual census figures are given in the footnote to Table 1. This Table gives the population of each of the communities of the Region in 1940, 1950 and 1960 and the percentage of regional population in each. It is seen that Middletown was responsible for 64 percent of the Region's residents in 1940, but for only 50 percent in 1960. The share of the other towns rose in the same period from 36 percent to 50. What is happening around virtually all central cities is happening around Middletown.

TABLE 1  
POPULATION TRENDS OF THE MIDSTATE REGION

	1940	1950	1960
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	Number	% of Region	Number	% of Region	Number	% of Region
Middletown	26,495	63.9	25,644*	56.3	29,419*	49.9
Cromwell	3,281	7.9	4,286	9.4	6,780	11.5
Portland	4,321	10.4	5,186	11.4	7,496	12.7
East Hampton	2,955	7.1	4,000	8.8	5,403	9.2
Haddam	2,069	5.0	1,636	5.8	3,466	5.9
Durham	1,098	2.7	1,804	4.0	3,096	5.3
Middlefield	1,230	3.0	1,983	4.3	3,255	5.5
Total	41,449	100.0	45,539*	100.0	58,915*	100.0
The Region Outside Middletown	14,954	36.1	19,895	43.7	29,496	50.1

\* Middletown and regional total after deducting institutional population, which amounted to 4,067 in 1950 and 3,831 in 1960. The population of Middletown as given in the U.S. Census was 29,711 in 1950 and 33,250 in 1960; for the Region it was 49,606 in 1950 and 62,746 in 1960. The institutional population was not included in the 1940 census.

#### Comparisons: State and Region

Connecticut is a rapidly growing state in the regional complex of the north-eastern seaboard. Today's development is one of decentralized urban spread at a relatively low density, compared with that of past generations. Industry, business, homes, the automobile, all require much more space than was needed in the past. We can foresee a total development of areas such as Connecticut within a relatively few decades under the type of growth which is now established in our communities and controlled in large part by their zoning policies.

For these reasons we have used the term "target population" and "target growth" to represent the complete development of the community according to its plan. This "target" for Middletown appears likely to be reached somewhere around 1990 or 2000. Unforeseen happenings may slow down or speed up the pace of development, but this does not alter the quantitative factors on which to base the plan.

The growth of a community or region is caused partly by the natural increase in population, that is the excess of births over deaths, and partly because of new people moving in. Between 1950 and 1960 the population of Connecticut increased by 527,954 residents. The number of births in the State exceeded the number of deaths in that period by 249,911. This means that 233,043 persons moved into the State over and above the number who may have moved out. Slightly over half of the population increase was caused by natural increase and a little less than half by net in-migration.

Table 2 shows the increase in population of the State, the Midstate Region and the local communities in the past two decades. It shows the proportion of the growth due to natural increase and that due to in-migration. Between 1940 and 1950, the Region grew at only about half the rate of the State as a whole. After 1950 the growth rate increased, exceeding the State's rate from 1950 to 1960. In the 1940-50 decade, the surrounding towns had a reasonable growth, but Middletown's own increase, as given by the census, was more than offset by the inclusion in 1950 of the institutional population. From 1950 to 1960 Middletown experienced a growth in its own residential population greater than in any decade since the consolidation of City and Town.

The trends of population are shown graphically in Chart 1. This is on a semilogarithmic base so that the same slope of line indicates the same rate of change, whether it is that of a large unit such as the State as a whole or whether it is a single community at the bottom of the chart. If the State were to continue at the same rate of growth which it experienced from 1950 to 1960, it would reach a population of 3,200,000 in 1970 and 4,000,000 in 1980. Similarly, the Midstate Region would have 76,000 residents by 1970 and

98,500 by 1980. Middletown's own resident population increased by slightly less than 15 percent from 1950 to 1960. This same rate of growth would mean 33,750 residents by 1970 and 38,700 by 1980.

TABLE 2  
POPULATION CHANGES, 1940 - 1960

	Increase, 1940-50		Increase, 1950-60			Due to Net In-Migration
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Due to Natural Increase	
State of Conn.	298,038	17.4	527,954	26.3	14.7	11.6
Midstate Region*	4,090	9.9	13,375	29.3	16.0	13.3
Middletown*	-851	-3.2	3,775	14.7	14.9	-0.2
Cromwell	1,005	30.5	2,494	58.1	19.0	39.1
Portland	865	20.5	2,310	44.5	17.7	26.8
East Hampton	1,045	35.2	1,403	35.1	13.6	21.5
Haddam	567	26.9	830	31.5	10.4	21.1
Durham	706	65.2	1,292	71.5	22.8	48.7
Middlefield	753	61.2	1,272	64.2	25.0	39.2
Increase in Region Outside Middletown	4,941	33.0	9,601	48.3	17.4	30.9

\* Excluding Institutional Population

\* Data on natural increase and migration from Burnight and Ingalls, A Decade of Population Change, Dec. 1961, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

#### The Target Population

There are many factors which may change the present rate of growth, both in the Region and in the City. The Middletown area is located between the more densely developed regions around Hartford and New Haven. It occupies a location between Hartford and the lower Valley area which is rapidly expanding. Most important of all are the major transportation routes created by the express highway system which is again putting Middletown on the principle arteries of movement. An idea of the future may be gained by a look at the relationship between the local community, its region and the entire State. The Midstate Region's share of the State's population has changed little in recent years, as shown by the figures in Table 4. On the other hand, the town's outside Middletown have assumed a considerably larger proportion of the regional population.

In connection with its regional planning studies, the Connecticut Development Commission has prepared projects of population for the State and for its various regions, carried ahead to the year 2000. These are summarized in Table 3. Different methods of projection have arrived at differing figures which represent a range of high and low projections within the actual count will probably fall.

TABLE 3  
STATE AND REGIONAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS  
BY CONNECTICUT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Year	State		Midstate Region		Region as
	High	Low	High	Low	% of State
1970	3,068,000	2,847,000	74,000	70,000	2.4 to 2.5

1980	3,710,000	3,245,000	89,000	78,000	2.4 to 2.5
1990	4,558,000	3,992,000	109,000	98,000	2.4 to 2.5
2000	5,624,000	4,707,000	135,000	116,000	2.4 to 2.5

Connecticut is essentially a group of urban oriented communities, all but a few of which have a relatively low density of development. Most industrial development today is taking place in areas where considerable space is available and much of the residential development is also at a low density. With the exception of urban renewal projects, the preponderance of development is taking place in presently vacant land.

Some idea of future growth patterns can be obtained from the trend of migration into and out of Connecticut towns in the past decade. The study of Burnight and Ingalls, cited above, gives a picture of these trends, tabulating the population increase from 1950 to 1960 in each town due to natural increase and that due to migration. These show that the rate of net in-migration into the Midstate Region is slightly higher than for the State as a whole. Although in Middletown itself the increase due to the excess of births over deaths was cancelled by a net out-migration, there was a high degree of in-migration into the surrounding towns. In the Midstate Region, outside of Middletown, the net in-migration caused 64 percent of the total growth in the last decade, compared to 44 percent for the State as a whole. In three of the six towns, the net in-migration amounted to twice the natural increase. Middlesex County had the second highest rate of growth of any of the counties in the last decade, following only Tolland County. Clearly the Midstate Region is a growth area.

The projections made by the Connecticut Development Commission as listed in Table 3 conclude that the Midstate Region will grow at approximately the same rate as the State and that the Region will continue to have from 2.4 to 2.5 percent of the State's resident. We are inclined to believe that the Region will have an increasing share of the total population, because of its geographical location, especially with respect to expressways, and because of the availability of land and growth potential of its towns. For the purpose of the present study, we have established the projections summarized in Table 4.

Under the assumption that Connecticut's population will, by the end of the century, be around 5.5 million, the population of the Midstate Region is likely to reach a figure close to 145,000 or 150,000.

TABLE 4  
MIDDLETOWN AND MIDSTATE REGION  
IN RELATION TO POPULATION OF STATE

	State	Midstate Region *		Middletown	
	-	Number	% of State	Number	% of Region
1940	1,709,242	41,449	2.42	26,495	63.9
1950	2,007,280	45,539	2.26	25,644	56.3
1960	2,535,234	58,915	2.33	29,419	49.9
1970	3,100,000	74,500	2.40	35,700	48.0
1980	3,700,000	92,500	2.50	42,500	46.0
1990	4,500,000	117,000	2.60	52,600	45.0
2000	5,500,000	148,500	2.70	65,000	44.0

Middletown's part of the Region's population has dropped in the last two decades, in the face of the very rapid growth of the other towns. However, the reduction in its percentage was not as great for the 1950-60 decade as for the previous one. Middletown has better public utilities available than most of the other communities and other factors such as zoning and highway expansion may favor the City as compared

with outlying places. It seems likely that Middletown's share of the Region's population will not drop as rapidly as in recent years. The population figures given in Table 4 are exclusively of future institutional residents.

From this study it is seen that Middletown's population is likely to reach a figure in the neighborhood of 65,000 by the closing years of the century. Today's planning has the chief purpose of indicating the land and other facilities needed to take care of the future residents. If their number is greatly underestimated, the City will have troubles of past communities to find space where it does not exist. If as the years go by, Middletown shows signs of reaching a higher figure than projected here, the Plan can be revised to provide for a somewhat more intensive use of land, but following the same general pattern.