



MEMORANDUM

TO: BELFAST COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
FROM: NOEL MUSSON
SUBJECT: POPULATION/DEMOGRAPHICS CHAPTER UPDATE
DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

The Population and Demographics chapter has been updated to represent current data. These updates include:

- The State Economist Office projects the population of Belfast will begin to decrease by 2036 from 6,714 in 2018 down to 6,552 by 2036. The State Planning Office predicts both Waldo County and the State's population will increase by 2036. This is different from the 2012 plan predictions and may have impacts on the overall recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Population data from the 2017 American Community Survey has been added. It is interesting to note the changes in population cohorts under 45 and over 45.
- According to ACS estimates, the average household size has increased from 2.14 in 2012 to 2.26 in 2017.
- Median Household income has significantly increased from \$37,553 in 2009 to \$59,260 in 2018.
- Belfast's educational attainment has increased over the last 9 years, surpassing both the County and the State.

There are various examples of projects that were completed or planned in 2012 that should be updated to reflect recent projects or updates on project completion. These examples include:

- 2004 Expansion of the Tall Pines Facility
- 2002 construction of 32 unit elderly housing by Volunteers of America
- 2012 (stated in plan as "now under construction") 24 unit Goose River Elderly Housing

Historical knowledge of City events and/or information not found in the State's Data Pack includes:

- Did the Belfast and other communities that formerly comprised SAD 34 withdraw from RSU? (City of Belfast Website lists RSU #17 as district not RSU #20 as mentioned in 2012 plan)
- Belfast Seasonal Residences – need an updated number more recent than 2012 (page 6-3 and 6-9)
- Need updated employment/employer information for Belfast and surrounding towns.
- Need birth and death records to update to inform population change (page 6-9)

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Introduction

An important goal of a municipal comprehensive plan is to relate the demographics of a community with its economy, development and environment. Most of the chapters and the recommendations of this plan are dependent upon or strongly influenced by the size and composition of the City of Belfast's current and forecasted population, both year-round and seasonal.

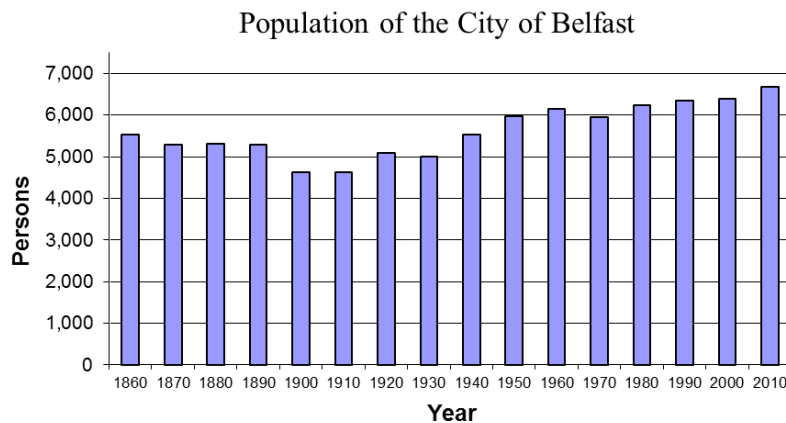
A. State Goals

None required

B. Analyses and Key Issues

- (1) Is the rate of population change expected to continue as in the past, or to slow down or speed up? What are the implications of this change?

Belfast's population growth over the long term has been modest, with periods of no growth and decline during the late 1800s, early 1900s, 1930s, and in the 1960s. An increase in the growth rate has been seen most recently. In 2010 ~~40~~, ~~6,668~~ ~~6,384~~ people lived in Belfast, and by 2018 ~~40~~, the population was ~~6,714~~ ~~6,668~~ (See Table 1-1); a relatively small increase over the decade. Further, Belfast's population has been rather constant for the past ~~70~~ ~~60~~ years (since 1950), with the total population ranging between 6,000 and 6,700. Since 1960, Belfast's growth rate has been outpaced by Waldo County, echoing trends of many regions, where outlying areas attract more new residents than do their service center communities.



Source: Census

Commented [E1]: Reformatting in progress

The proportion of school-aged children has declined over the past two decades, as has the number of young adults. The number of middle-aged persons has increased as has the number of retiree-aged persons. Most of the growth seen in Belfast is the result of in-migration of new residents, rather than through natural increase (births to residents). See Tables 1-3a and 1-3b.

For planning purposes, Belfast’s population is projected to ~~increase to a maximum of 6,552 by the year 2036, 7,058 persons by the year 2023,~~ as forecasted by the ~~State Economist Office. Mid Coast Regional Planning Commission. Municipal level forecasts are not currently available from the State Planning Office.~~ By ~~2023~~2036, the State Planning Office forecasts that Waldo County will have ~~39,879~~38,412 persons and the State’s population will total ~~1,322,449~~1,337,568, both ~~slight decreases~~ increases from current population levels. See Tables 1-4a and 1-4b.

Commented [E2]: Pop projected to decline. Look at changes to analysis.

Changes in land use within Belfast including new year-round residential development will determine the actual population growth in the City. The implications of a growing population include increased pressures on municipal government to expand needed services as demanded by residents. See the Public Facilities Chapter for discussion and recommendations.

(2) *What will be the likely demand for housing and municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics, both as a result of overall change and as a result of change among different age groups?*

If recent trends continue, the need for housing for the elderly, from independent living to assisted living facilities, will increase. The private sector has developed senior housing to meet the needs of more affluent retirees; the 2004 expansion of the Tall Pines facility is an example of such. The City has pursued encouraging subsidized housing for low and moderate-income people. A 32 unit elderly housing project was constructed in 2002 by Volunteers of America, and in 2012, the 24 unit Goose River Elderly Housing project on Swan Lake Avenue is now under construction. See the Housing Chapter for more information on housing trends and needs.

Commented [E3]: Updated example needed.

Demand for municipal services should increase with the growth in overall population and especially for services upon which the elderly are most dependent. The presence of Waldo County General Hospital and its associated physicians is a critical resource for many residents, but particularly the elderly. See the Public Facilities Chapter for a discussion of services that the City recommends continuing and enhancing. See the Transportation Chapter for public transportation recommendations.

Commented [N4]: Does this analysis need to be rephrased?

Although education comprises the largest single category of municipal expenditure, education is a function of the school system, and is not under the control of the municipal government. The former SAD 34 (Belfast area) and SAD 56 (Searsport) school districts consolidated 3 years ago as required by the State to form Regional School Unit 20. However, Belfast and the other former communities that comprised

SAD 34 are now (2012) exploring how to withdraw from the RSU and to re-establish a district similar to the former SAD 34. How the establishment of a new school district will affect current expenditures is not yet known. See the Public Facilities Chapter for recommendations on education. See the Fiscal Capacity Chapter for a discussion on municipal revenues and expenditures, the local tax burden, and recommendations.

Commented [E5]: RSU #17 is district as stated on Belfast webpage

(3) *Does your community have a significant seasonal population, is the nature of that population changing? What is the community's relationship to and dependence on seasonal visitors?*

As a scenic, coastal community with a lively and historic downtown and active waterfront, Belfast experiences significant increases in seasonal populations and has hotels, motels and inns offering accommodations. Relative to some neighboring coastal communities, Belfast has a modest number of seasonal residences; about 216 in 2010. It is anticipated that this figure will increase in future years as Belfast has experienced an increase in commercial and seasonal visitor activity in the past 3 years. Also, new industrial/service developments such as the Front Street Shipyard may result in an increase in the number of seasonal residents. See the Housing Chapter for more information.

Commented [N6]: Need data from City on seasonal homes.

Belfast, like other communities, cannot predict how the tourist profile may change over the next ten years with any accuracy. That said, the number of seasonal events in Belfast has grown dramatically over the past 5+ years, as has the creative economy, which is perhaps best illustrated by the growth of Waterfall Arts, the Friday Night Artwalks, and the [establishment of the Belfast Creative Coalition with the assistance of community receiving a Maine Arts Commission Grant in 2011 to help establish the Belfast Creative Coalition](#). These developments, when coupled with our waterfront location and the adjacent downtown, our location on Route 1, and our proximity to significant population centers in Maine (Bangor, Augusta and Knox County within 45 minutes) all appear to be fueling an increase in short-term (1 day) and longer-term visitation by tourists. A very important component of such is the number of visitors from other Maine communities which like to visit Belfast.

Based mostly on anecdotal comment, it appears that quite a few residents of Belfast became interested in settling here after first visiting the community as a tourist. These residents are generally older individuals and families whose children have started families of their own. Empty nesters make up the largest group of new residents and also may continue to comprise a large portion of our tourism market.

In addition to accommodations, many restaurants and retail stores see much of their sales activity occur during the expanding tourist season and these businesses comprise a large portion of our local economy. Public services, finance and health care services, however, are the City's largest employment sectors. See the Economy Chapter for more information. Belfast is truly a destination, and the viability of this community depends upon maintaining and enhancing our offerings to seasonal

Commented [E7]: Does this hold true? Confirm with economy data

visitors, while seeking at the same time to ensure that our traditional way of life and economy are not impinged or overrun; as has occurred in some of Maine’s larger resort communities. See the Economy Chapter for discussion and recommendations.

(4) *If your community is a service center or has a major employer, what additional effort does it have to make to serve a daytime population that is larger than its resident population?*

Belfast is a service center community and is the 'shire-town' and County seat for Waldo County. Many residents of surrounding towns frequently travel to Belfast to work, to recreate/socialize, to receive health care, to shop, and to use public services offered in Belfast that may not be offered in their town (e.g. library, swimming pool, dog park). Belfast's daytime population is much larger than its resident population, particularly because our 10 largest employers employ more than 3,500 persons. See the Economy Chapter for more information on employment, income and poverty within Belfast. Belfast, unlike many communities in the County, has its own police force and EMT/ambulance service, and its municipal offices are open five days/week. There also is an extensive sewer and water (fire protection) system. Collectively, these municipal services result in Belfast spending more per capita than neighboring communities. See the Public Facilities Chapter for more information. Belfast seeks to attract more jobs and businesses that benefit not only the City but also the region as a whole.

Commented [E8]: Does this remain true?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

(1) *The community’s Comprehensive Planning Population and Demographic Data Set (including relevant local, regional, and statewide data) prepared and provided to the community by the Office or its designee.*

Table 1-1

Total Population	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018	Change #	Change %
Belfast	6,140	5,957	6,243	6,355	6,381	6,668	6,714	574	
Waldo County	22,632	23,328	28,414	33,018	36,280	38,786	39,694	17,062	43%
Maine	969,265	993,722	1,125,043	1,227,928	1,274,923	1,328,361	1,338,404	369,139	27.6%

Source: Census, Rounded

Commented [N9]: This table has been updated with current data estimates

Commented [N10]: May changes numbers to 2017 to be consistent with other data

Table 1-2

Average Household Size	1990	2000	2010	2017	Change #	Change %
Belfast	2.41	2.23	2.14	2.26	-0.15	-10.6%

Source: Census

Commented [N11]: This table has been updated with current estimates

Commented [N12]: Update Data sources to include 2013-2017 ACS

City of Belfast Comprehensive Plan Section 3 6. Population & Demographics

Table 1-3a

Belfast Age Cohort Breakdown	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2017	% of Total	1990-2017 Change #
Under 5 years	415	6.5%	330	5.2%	370	5.5%	442	6.6%	27
5 to 9 years	395	6.2%	339	5.3%	387	5.8%	390	5.8%	5
10 to 14 years	471	7.4%	408	6.4%	355	5.3%	371	5.6%	-100
15 to 17 years	265	4.2%	256	4.0%	217	3.3%	145	2.2%	-120
18 and 19 years	157	2.5%	155	2.4%	118	1.8%	50	0.7%	-107
20 to 24 years	349	5.6%	325	5.1%	293	4.4%	299	4.5%	-50
25 to 29 years	356	5.6%	334	5.2%	358	5.4%	404	6.0%	48
30 to 34 years	436	6.9%	362	5.7%	350	5.2%	328	4.9%	-108
35 to 39 years	499	7.9%	384	6.0%	325	4.9%	384	5.7%	-115
40 to 44 years	491	7.7%	465	7.3%	395	5.9%	306	4.6%	-185
45 to 49 years	347	5.5%	539	8.4%	426	6.4%	400	6.0%	53
50 to 54 years	307	4.8%	513	8.0%	512	7.7%	265	4.0%	-42
55 to 59 years	336	5.3%	381	6.0%	547	8.2%	546	8.2%	210
60 to 64 years	351	5.5%	311	4.9%	553	8.3%	629	9.4%	278
65 to 69 years	345	5.4%	318	5.0%	417	6.3%	731	10.9%	386
70 to 74 years	267	4.2%	296	4.6%	284	4.3%	370	5.5%	103
75 to 79 years	255	4.0%	264	4.1%	261	3.9%	251	3.8%	-4
80 to 84 years	173	2.7%	183	2.9%	205	3.1%	195	2.9%	22
85 years and over	140	2.2%	218	3.4%	295	4.4%	174	2.9%	34
Total	6,355	100.0%	6,381	100.0%	6,668	100.0%	6,680	100%	325

Commented [N13]: This table has been updated to add 2017 data. May also change comparison years.

Source: Census, Rounded

Table 1-3b

Belfast Summarized Age Cohort Breakdown	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2017	% of Total	1990-2017 Change #
0-19 years	1,703	26.8%	1,488	23.3%	1,447	21.7%	1,398	20.9%	-305
20-44 years	2,131	33.5%	1,870	29.3%	1,721	25.8%	1,721	25.7%	-410
45-64 years	1,341	21.1%	1,744	27.3%	2,038	30.6%	1,840	27.4%	499
65+ years	1,180	18.6%	1,279	20.0%	1,462	21.9%	1,721	26%	541
Total	6,355	100.0%	6,381	100.0%	6,668	100.0%	6,680	100%	325

Commented [N14]: This table has been updated with 2017 data

City of Belfast Comprehensive Plan Section 3 6. Population & Demographics

Median Age	38.4	--	43.3	--	46.9	--	46.8	--	8.4
------------	------	----	------	----	------	----	------	----	-----

Source: Census, Rounded

Table 1-4a

Projected Population	Forecast Year
Belfast	NA 6,552
Waldo County	39,879 38,412
Maine	1,337,568 1,322,449

Source: Maine State Planning Office, 2016 March 2010

Table 1-4b

Belfast Projected Population (methodology used)	Based Upon the Period	Forecast Year 2023
Linear Regression	1960-2010	6,728
Percent Growth per year (non-compounded)	1960-2010	6,817
Linear Regression	1990-2010	6,828
Percent Growth per year (non-compounded)	1990-2010	6,881
Linear Regression	2000-2010	7,041
Percent Growth per year (non-compounded)	2000-2010	7,058

Source: Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission

Commented [E15]: Suggest delete table, forecast above more helpful

Table 1-5

Educational Attainment Persons 25 Years and Over	1990	2000	2009	2018
% High School Graduate or Higher				
Belfast	74.0%	82.0%	89.2%	95.2%
Waldo County	77.4%	84.6%	90.0%	92.9%
Maine	78.8%	85.4%	89.4%	92.1%
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher				
Belfast	19.1%	29.1%	20.5%	42.6%
Waldo County	16.8%	22.3%	21.3%	30.3%
Maine	18.8%	22.9%	26.1%	30.3%

Source: Census, Rounded

Commented [N16]: This table has been updated

Commented [E17]: ACS 2013-2019 estimate

Table 1-6

Belfast Race, Hispanic origin and Gender	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2018	% of Total	1990-2018 Change #
White	6,312	99.3%	6225	97.6%	6,449	96.7%	6,479	98%	167
Black or African American	7	0.1%	18	0.3%	32	0.5%	74	1.1%	67
American Indian, Alaskan Native	22	0.3%	17	0.3%	30	0.4%	--	--	NA
Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10	0.2%	19	0.3%	27	0.4%	--	--	NA
Other race	4	0.1%	17	0.3%	13	0.2%	--	--	NA
Two or more races	NA	--	85	1.3%	117	1.8%	53	0.8%	NA
Total	6,355	100.0%	6,381	100.0%	6,668	100.0%	6,714	100%	359

Commented [N18]: This table has been updated

City of Belfast Comprehensive Plan Section 3 6. Population & Demographics

Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	27	0.4%	44	0.7%	78	1.2%	114	1.7%	87
Female (all races)	3,443	54.2%	3,405	53.4%	3,589	53.8%	3,740	55.7%	297
Male (all races)	2,912	45.8%	2,976	46.6%	3,079	46.2%	2,974	54.3%	62

Source: Census, Rounded

Table 1-7

Median Household Income	2000	2009	2018	Change #	Change %
Belfast	\$32,400	\$37,553	\$59,260	\$26,860	82.9%
Waldo County	\$33,986	\$41,697	\$50,162	\$16,176	47.5%
Maine	\$37,240	\$46,541	\$53,024	\$ 15,784	42.3%

Source: Census, Rounded

Commented [N19]: This table has been updated

Commented [E20]: 2013-2017 ACS

Table 1-8

% of Households Below Poverty Level	2000	2009	2018
Belfast	13.2%	20.0%	15.1%
Waldo County	14.2%	15.1%	13.1%
Maine	11.5%	12.8%	11.1%

Source: Census, Rounded

Commented [N21]: This table has been updated

Population change (births and deaths)

Births to Belfast residents between 2000 and 2008 totaled 643, while deaths totaled 879. Natural change (births minus deaths) accounted for a net loss of 236 persons. Accordingly, recent modest population gains are the result of people moving into Belfast, rather than through births to Belfast residents.

Commented [E22]: Need data from City

According to the Census, 84.8% of Belfast residents lived in the same house in 2009 as they did in 2005. That statistic was 87.2% for Waldo County residents and 85.6% for Maine residents.

Commented [E23]: Need updated information?

Seasonal population and anticipated trends

No State or federal statistics on seasonal population for Belfast are available. Based upon 216 seasonal/recreational housing units, as reported in the 2010 Census, and estimating non-resident household size at 2.6 persons, about 562 persons may stay in seasonal housing in Belfast. By 2023, around 670 persons may stay in seasonal housing in Belfast. When combined with the year-round population forecast maximum of 7,058 people, in 2023 Belfast may total 7,728 persons in season for extended stays. Shorter-term visitors are served by hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfasts, and the like, with approximately 280 rooms/suites/cottages available, for an estimated capacity of 700 persons. That figure is likely to increase with the expansion of these facilities and with new facilities, some of which involve the conversions of the larger historic single-family homes to inns. By 2023, it is estimated that Belfast hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfasts, etc. may accommodate over 1,000 people.

Commented [E24]: Need seasonal housing data from city.

D. Policies

None Required

E. Strategies

None Required