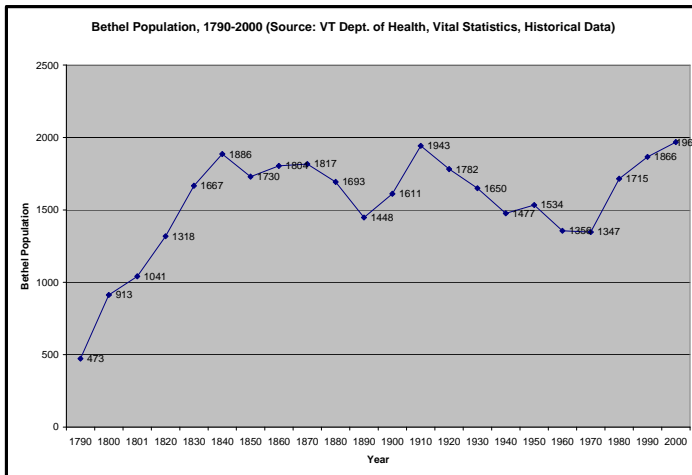


Here is the Planning Commission's **PROPOSED DRAFT REVISION** of the **'Population'** section of the **Bethel Town Plan**. By State Statute, the Town Plan is revised every five years. The Planning Commission will hold a duly warned public hearing in mid-June on this and, depending on comments received then, will transmit it to the Select Board, which will hold a hearing at the end of July. Public comments are appreciated. Formal adoption by the Select Board is anticipated by August 13, 2006.

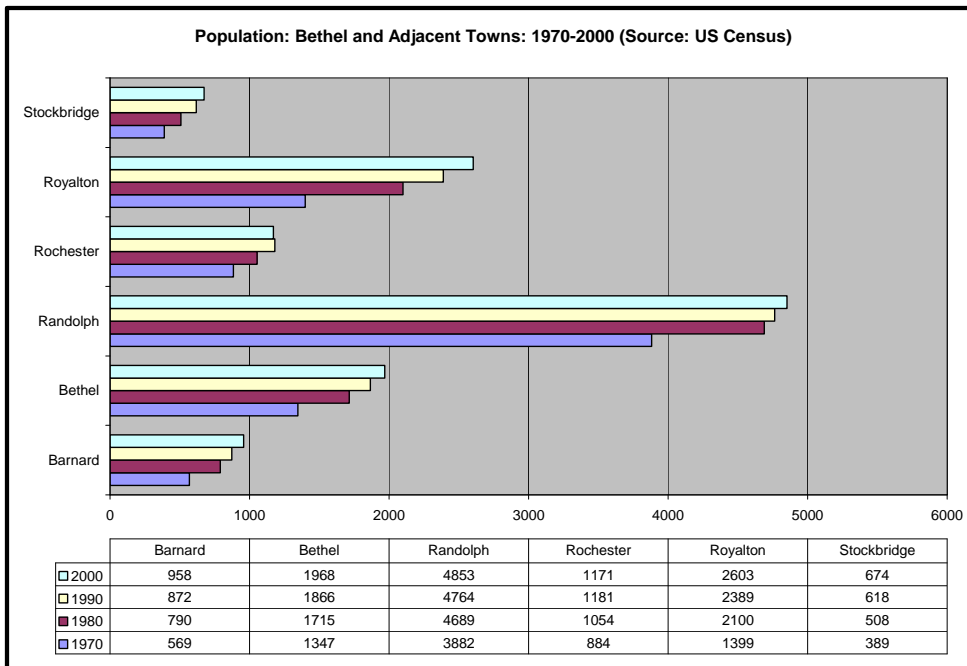
III POPULATION

A. POPULATION PATTERNS



Population growth is an important factor in municipal planning and development. Increases or decreases in population, as well as, the density and overall distribution pattern of resident and non-resident populations, can affect the type of public services and infra-structure that are necessary. Large public investments such as educational facilities, public utilities, and highways can be more effectively planned and built within the context of population characteristics or changes within the town and within the geographic region impacting it.

Population statistics reveal that Bethel's population in 2000 was 1,968 compared to 1,866 in 1990, a growth rate of 5.4%. Compared to adjacent towns, Bethel experienced one of the slower growth rates, also less than that of either Windsor County or the statewide average.



Although at a lower rate, Bethel's population marches in tandem with the state as a whole for 1990, 2000 and (estimates for) 2003.

Population: Bethel and Vermont, 1950 – 2000 (Source: US Census)				
Census Year	Population: Bethel, VT	% Change	Population: Vermont	% Change
1950	1,534	+3.8%	377,747	+5.1%
1960	1,356	-11.6%	389,881	+3.2%
1970	1,347	-0.6%	444,330	+13.9%
1980	1,715	+27.3%	511,456	+15.1%
1990	1,866	+8.8%	562,758	+10.0%
2000	1,968	+5.4%	608,827	+8.1%
2003 (est.)	1,980	+0.6%	619,107	+1.6%

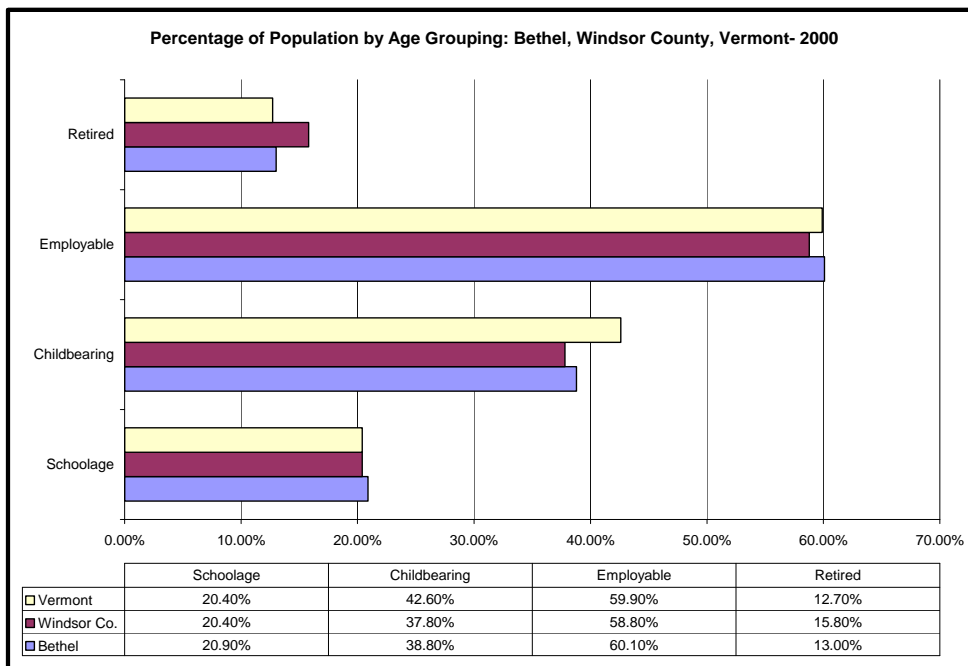
Births and deaths of Town residents, 1999-2002, reveal an overall gain, however, this increase is far smaller than the gain in total population for the same time period. The primary factor influencing population is families moving into Bethel rather than unusual birth or death rates.

Birth/Death Rates versus Total Population, 1999-2002, Bethel VT (Source: VT Department of Health, Vital Statistics)					
Year	Bethel Births & Deaths to Town Residents			Bethel Total Population	
	Births	Deaths	Net Diff.	Population	Net Diff.
1999	31	20	+11	1864	
2000	15	13	+2	1968	+104
2001	27	16	+11	1976	+8
2002	19	26	-7	1980	+4
Four Year Difference			+17		+166

The 2000 Census saw Vermont move from the 48th ‘most populous state’ to 49th. Notwithstanding this rank, population density (persons per square mile of land area) continues to increase. This is consistent within Windsor County and Bethel. In Bethel, population density was 37.86 in 1980, 41.19 in 1990, and 43.44 in 2000.

B. AGE OF POPULATION

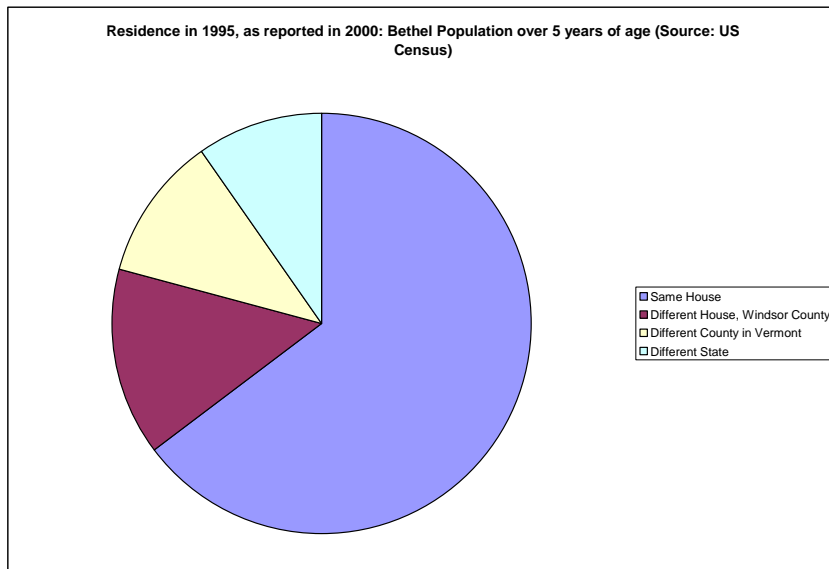
Bethel’s population is not significantly different than other parts of the State. Comparing 2000 census numbers for the percentage of population groups in Bethel to Windsor County and all of Vermont, we have a similar volume of school-aged children and adolescents, a slightly higher percent of workforce-aged adults, and are the median for women of child-bearing age and for the over-sixty-five group.



Between 1990 and 2000, the under-18 age group decreased as a percent of total population. This was consistent for Bethel, Windsor County, and the State, although for Bethel it continues to be a larger overall percentage than for Windsor County or Vermont. Nationally, for the past three decades, older persons have continued to represent an increasing percentage of all age groups. While the 19-64 year group percentage in Bethel continued to grow between 1990 and 2000, there was no change in the over-65 group as a percentage of total population.

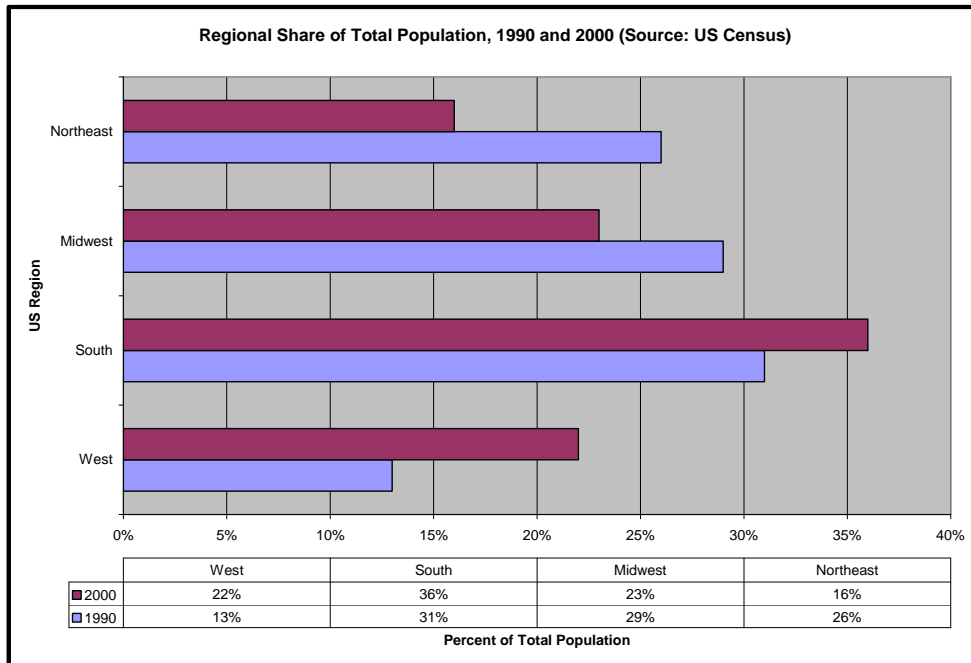
C. HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

At the time of the 2000 census, nearly 65% of Bethel residents over the age of five years had been at the same residence since 1995 and 90% had been residents of Vermont in 1995.



D. FUTURE POPULATION PROJECTIONS

US population patterns indicate that the Northeast had the smallest growth rate (6%) during the 1990's (West- 20%, South- 17%, Midwest- 8%). In conjunction with changing growth rates, regional shares of the total population shifted considerably between 1990 and 2000: the Northeast's proportion moved from 26 to 16%, the South from 31 to 36%, West from 13 to 22%, Midwest from 29 to 23%. (Source: US Census).



Population increases in both Vermont and Bethel reflect the Northeast's declining growth as compared to the 1990's. It is anticipated that these slower rates will continue in the 21st Century. (Source: US Census and VT Dept. of Health, Vital Statistics, Historical Data).

Net migration (difference between population change and natural increase- births minus deaths) can be expected to increase Bethel's population at less than two per cent growth. *(Source: VT Dept. of Health, Vital Statistics).*

The fastest growing segment of the Vermont population is the 45-64 year old group. There has been a slight decrease since the 2000 Census in the under-15 population, as well as in the 25-39-age group. *(Source: VT Dept. of Health, Vital Statistics).*