

EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

Community Planning is a complex process that requires considerable forethought. However, determining the direction and vision for a community's future demands an examination of past and present conditions. Understanding the current social, physical and natural environments and how they have changed over time helps to ensure better decision making.

The inventory and analysis portion of the plan addresses a wide range of conditions that affect the social, economic and environmental character of the Town of Jerusalem. The topics selected in this section were based on input received from the Steering Committee and reflect some of the critical areas that will be addressed by the plan's vision and goals.

Reliable resources such as the United States Census, the New York State Department of Transportation, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Yates County Real Property Services Department, the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the Town of Jerusalem were used to compile the data needed for an accurate representation of the Town.

In the demographics section, data from several points in time have been provided to show the trends in the Town of Jerusalem. Observing changes over time allows us to make educated assumptions about future conditions based on recent trends. Where appropriate, information at the County level has been included as well, providing context and an understanding of regional dynamics that may be affecting the Town.

It is important to note that information from the 2000 Census was used when available. However, as more data are published, a review of the information should be conducted to ensure the accuracy of the conditions information, upon which the direction and goals of the plan are based.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Population

The number of people residing in a community is one of the most basic indicators of change in a community. Changes in population impact a wide range of community services, dictate development demands and affect environmental quality and stability.

According to 2000 US Census figures the Town of Jerusalem's population is 4,454, up almost 20 percent from 1990 (3,717). Jerusalem's population growth in that time period was more than double that of the County. Yates County's population increased almost 8 percent to 24,621 in 2000. That kind of dramatic population increase has not occurred in the Town since 1970 when it increased 29 percent from 1960. The population figures, as reported by the Census Bureau, are based on the Census' short form questionnaire, in which all households were surveyed. It is possible that the figures do not fully account for the community's seasonal residents since a majority of the questionnaires would have been completed (either by household residents or with Census workers' assistance) between March and April 2000. While the data contained in the Census is the most comprehensive, it should not be considered infallible.

Although the Town experienced an unusually large jump in population, projections for future population growth predict a steady, moderate rise. Developed by the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, the projected increase in population between 2000 and 2010 is 7.3 percent, approximately 2 percentage points higher than the County's anticipated population growth. While this is a good indicator of future growth in the community, the Town should be prepared for larger increases. The growing number of retired persons in the region, personal financial growth, and the abundance of available development opportunities could expedite Jerusalem's population growth.

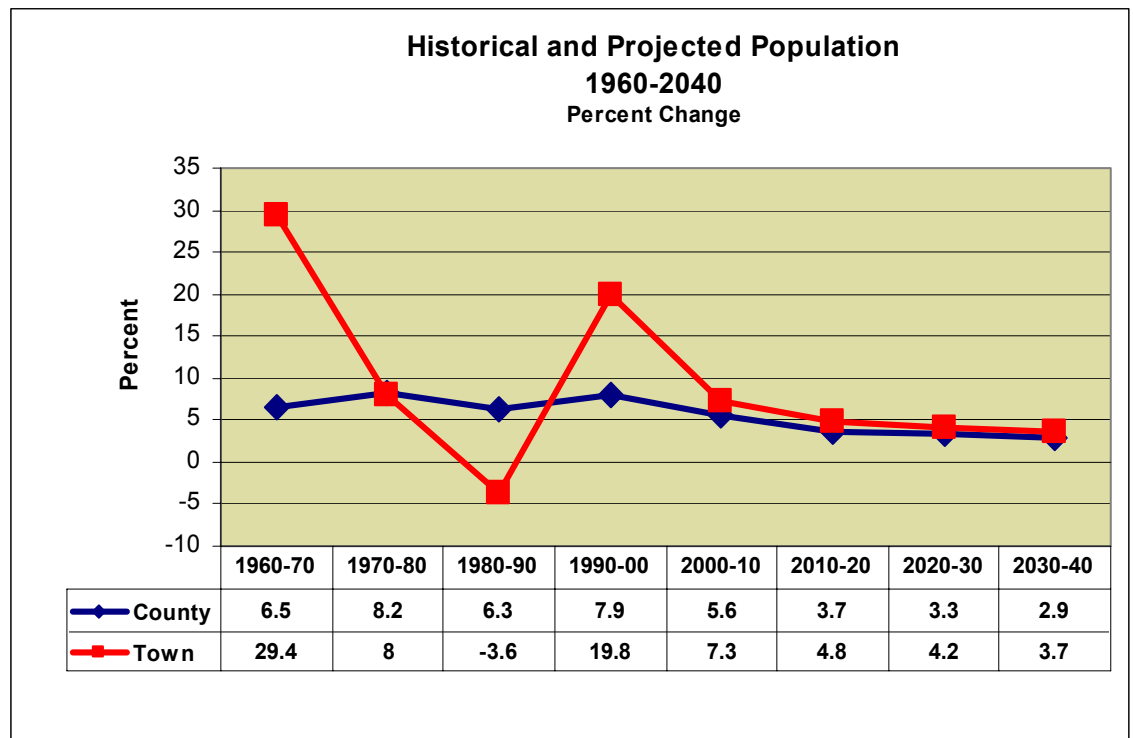


Figure 1: Source, Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

Age

The age breakdown of the Town's population is an important consideration in determining changes to current and future level of services provided within the community. For example, an increasing number of pre-school and school-aged children might indicate the need for enhanced educational services and facilities to accommodate future increases in demand. Changes in the senior population can impact the type and location of residential housing development and the need for services that cater to seniors.

As Figure 2 illustrates, marginal changes in the Town's age breakdown occurred between 1990 and 2000. For example, the number of children under the age of five decreased by 2 percentage points to 4 percent. Although this decrease may not be large enough to significantly impact services, this drop could change classroom numbers and sizes in the future. Additionally the loss of population in the age group could be an indication that people with young children are leaving the area or not locating here with the same frequency as people in other age groups. The number of people aged 25 to 44 years dropped eight percent to 20.2 percent of the entire population.

The change in households mirrors the changes in population. Families made up 69 percent of the total households in the 2000 Census, down from 73 percent in 1990. And between 1990 and 2000, the 45 to 54 age cohort grew over five percent. These changes in age might reflect the increased development of lakeside and lakeview properties during that same time period.

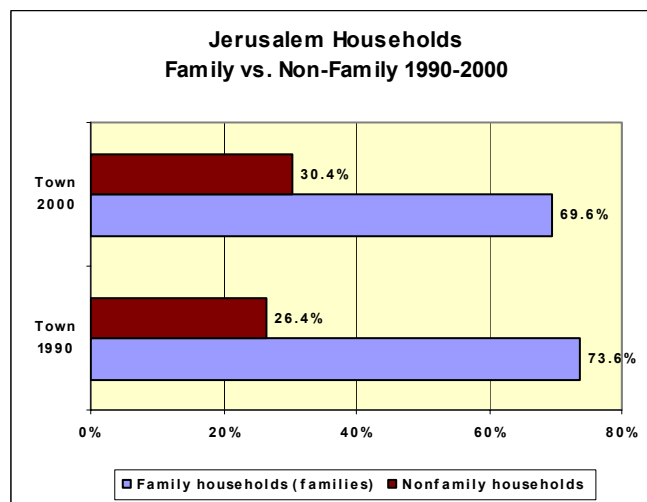
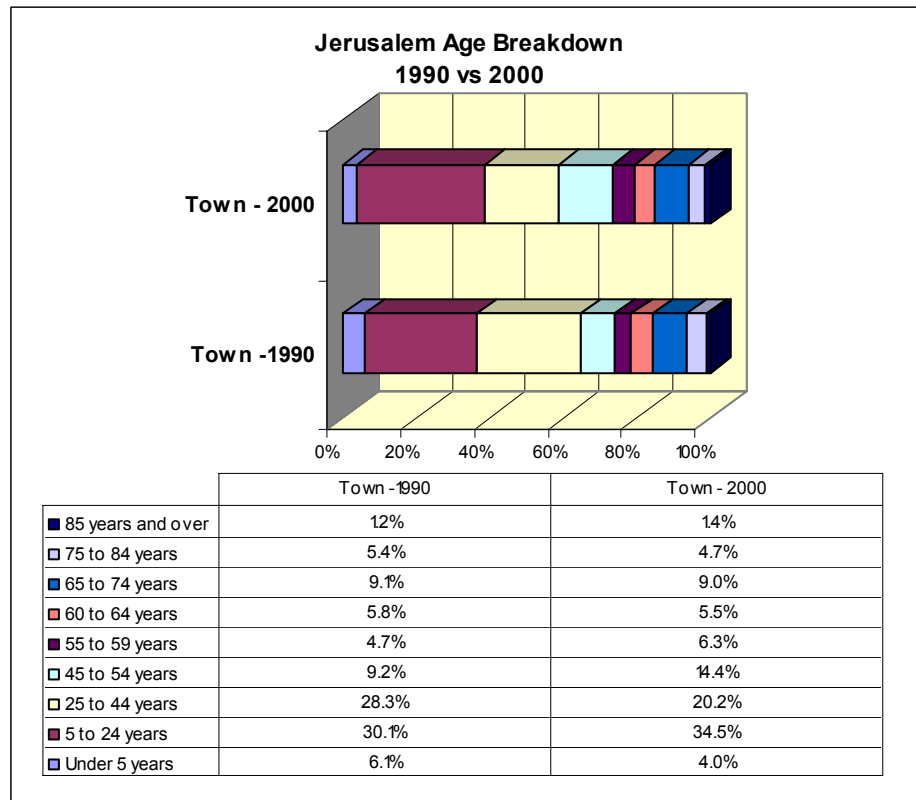


Figure 2 (Top): Source, US Census; Figure 3 (Bottom): Source, US Census

Household Data

Although much of the demographic information outlined in the existing conditions analysis is based on total population, it is interesting to note changes in household makeup over time. Changes in household can provide insight into the dynamics of the community that will assist in identifying future service and development needs.

In 2000, the number of households in Jerusalem increased to 1,606, which is an 18 percent jump from 1,360 households in 1990. Jerusalem's household make-up also experienced some changes during this time period. The percentage of one- and two-person households increased by about four percent while the percentage of three- and four-person households decreased by about four percent. This change in the number of people per household is consistent with population trends showing slight decreases in pre-school and parent-aged groups.

In 2000, the number of total household units was 2,523. Of those units, 808, or 32%, were considered seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. While specific population figures are not available, this gives a sense of how much of Jerusalem is made up of part-time residents.

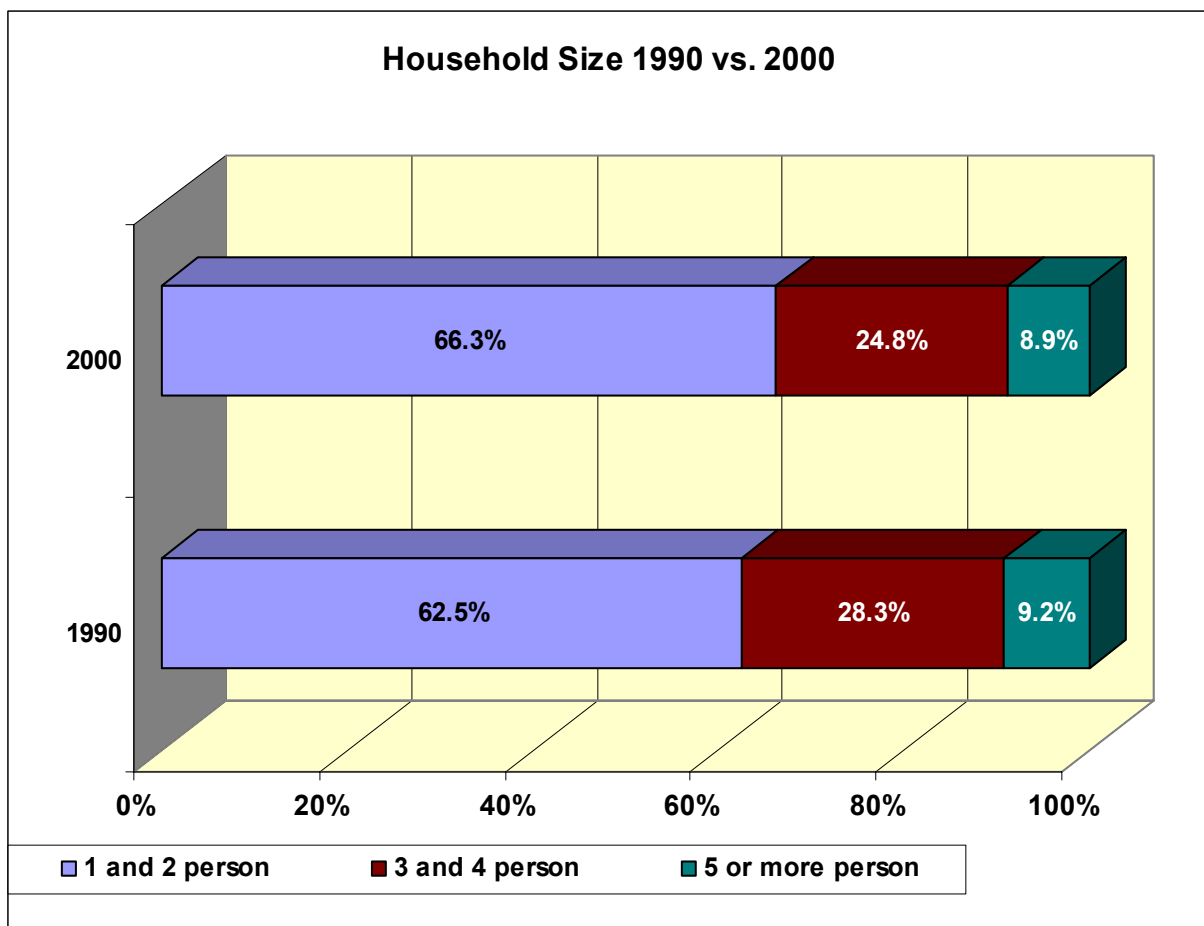


Figure 4: Source, US Census

Income

Residents' wealth and disposable income provide insight into retail patterns and needs, the types of residential development that can be supported and the potential demand for future services. As Figure 5 indicates, the median family income, when adjusted for inflation, has only increased 3.7 percent. This increase is comparable to the County's increase of 4 percent.

Although the Median Family Income doesn't seem to indicate any major changes in income, the breakdown of family households tells a slightly different story. While the percentage of middle-class earners has remained relatively constant, the percentage of low-income residents and very high-income residents has changed considerably, as is shown in Figure 6. In 1990, there were no families in the \$150,000 or more income category; in 2000 that category consisted of 4.7% of Jerusalem's families. The percentage of families earning under \$25,000 decreased from 34.7 to 22.3 percent, while the percentage of families earning \$75,000 more than doubled, increasing from 8.3 to 18.5 percent. The increase in families with higher incomes may provide

commercial and support service development opportunities. It also raises the question of whether the Town's lower-income residents will continue to drop due to gentrification. A good mix of income levels helps to ensure that a community is diverse and balanced. Ensuring that all income levels are welcome in the Town will be addressed in the Plan's Vision and Goals.

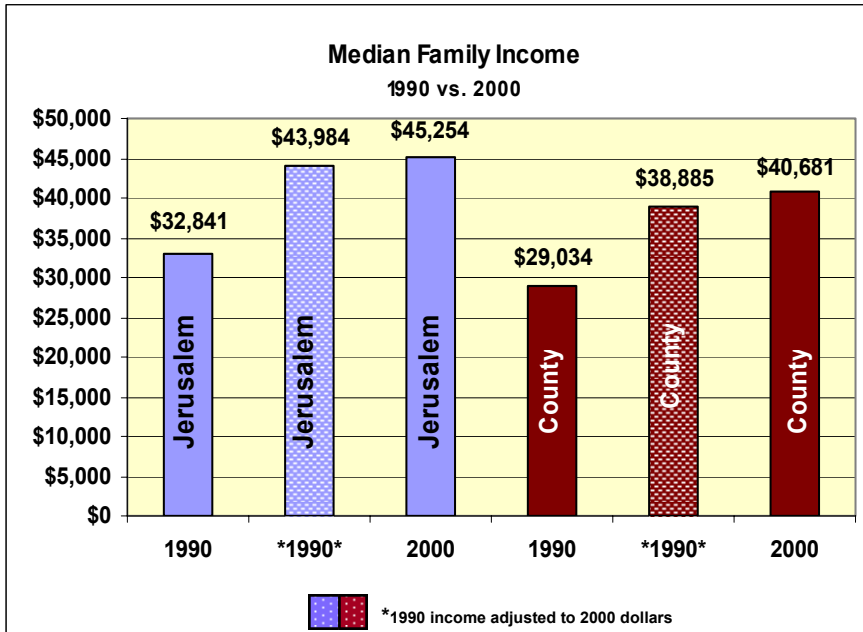


Figure 5: Source, US Census

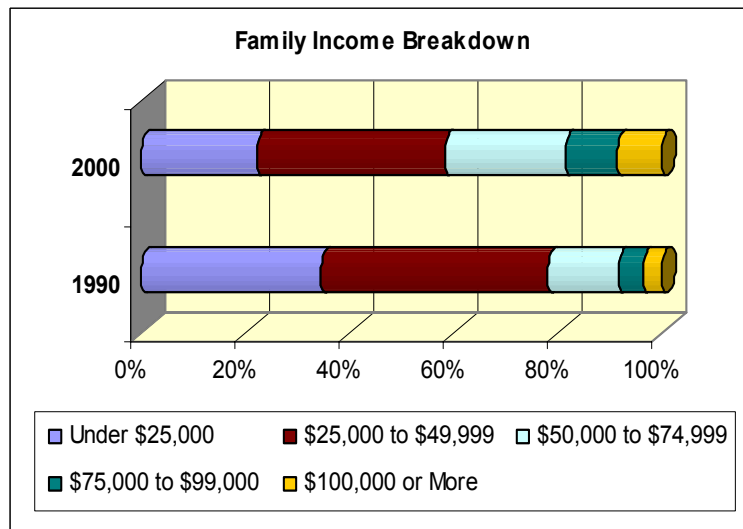


Figure 6: Source, US Census

Education

The education level of a given community is almost always interconnected to employment and income levels. Communities with higher educational attainment tend to have higher employment and income levels. The educational attainment of a community or region is sometimes a significant factor in businesses' location decisions, especially employers requiring an educated labor force.

Between 1990 and 2000, a larger percentage of Town residents had obtained a college degree, Associates Degree or higher. In fact, the percentage of residents with graduate or professional degrees rose over 4 percent to 14.3% (Figure 7). Since it is not possible to know the age cohorts that comprise each educational level, we do not know whether the increase in educational attainment is a result of long-time residents seeking advanced degrees or a result of the influx of affluent lakeside residents who are likely to have college degrees. In 2000, just under 3 percent of school age children were enrolled in pre-primary school, 49 percent enrolled in elementary or high school and 48 percent enrolled in college (Figure 8).

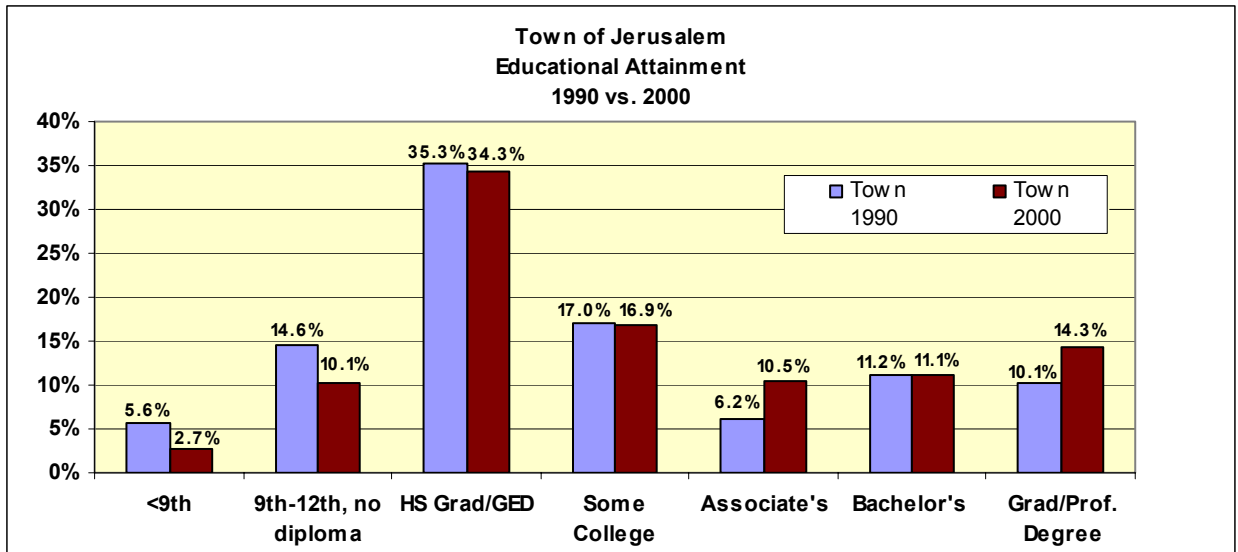


Figure 7: Source, US Census

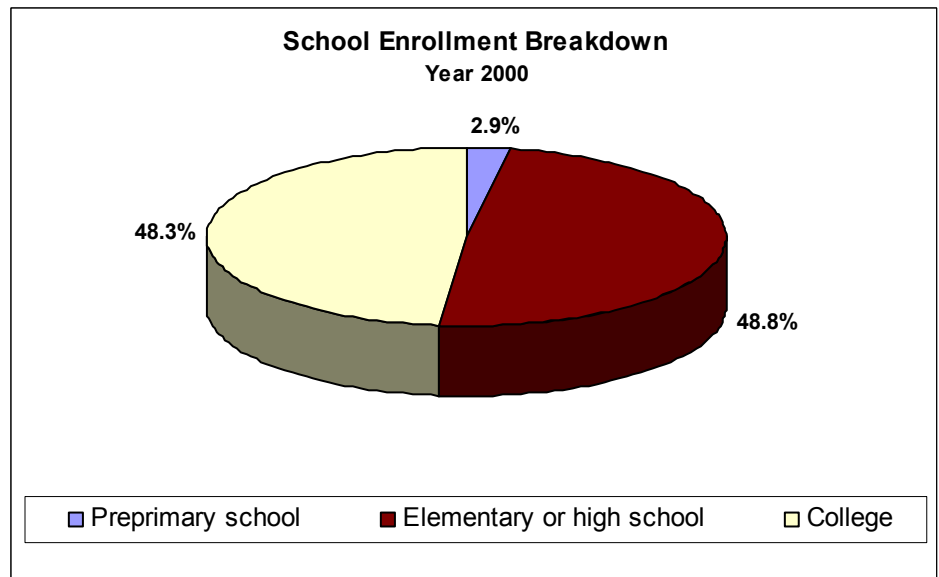


Figure 8: Source, US Census

Employment

Employment statistics provide important information about a community's social and economic status. One of the most basic employment indicators is the unemployment rate. Unemployment data from the New York Labor Department is not available at the town level for communities with less than 25,000 people. However, County unemployment figures, which are available, offer a regional perspective that illustrates how the area's economy is performing. Yates County's unemployment rate in 2003 was 4.3 percent. The current unemployment rate is comparable to, and often lower than, other Western New York counties, which ranged from 5.6 (Ontario) to 8.4 (Steuben).

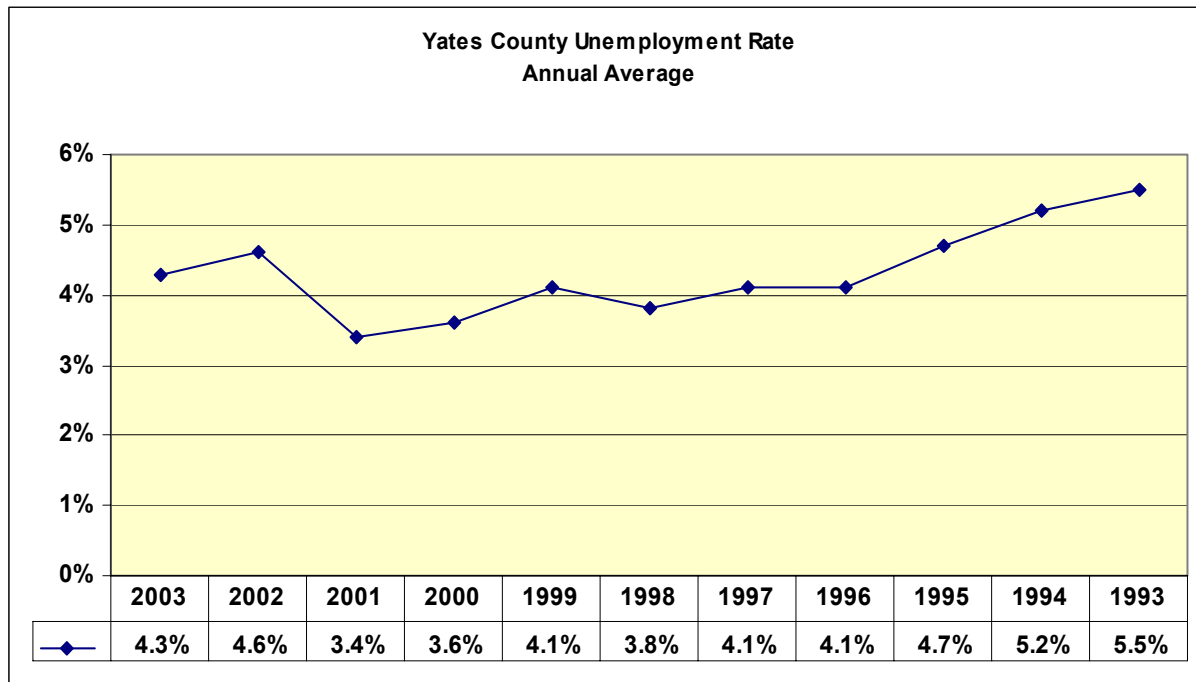


Figure 9: Source, NYS Labor Department

If unemployment rates provide a general indication of economic performance, a breakdown of residents' employment by occupation provides insight into the social climate of a community. The breakdown of occupations can often be tied to education levels and the types of resources found in a community. More than three quarters of Jerusalem residents have management, professional, sales and office, or service occupations. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that there is a wide range of educational and income levels among town residents.

In reviewing the chart below (Figure 10), it is important to note that the breakdown of occupation provided for the town's residents does not equate to the breakdown of occupations available within the town.

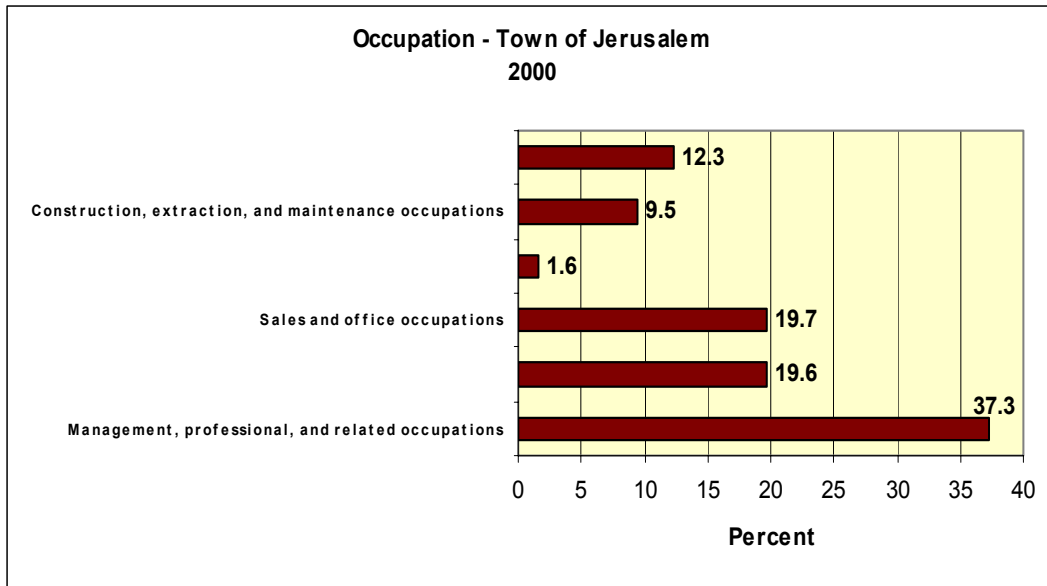


Figure 10: Source, US Census

In the early stages of review, Steering Committee members questioned the low percentage of residents identified in the farming, fishing and forestry occupation category. According to the Census, occupations describe the type of work that person does on the job, while industry describes the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization. One industry could have multiple occupations within it, which could explain the low number in the farming, fishing, and forestry occupation field above. As Figure 11 shows, the agriculture and related industries account for 3.4 of Jerusalem's eligible workforce (16 years and older). A significant portion of Town residents (38.5 percent) are employed in the educational, health and social services; manufacturing was a distant second.

Industry (workforce 16+ in age)	Percent
Wholesale trade	1.3%
Information	2.2%
Public administration	3.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3.4%
Other services (except public administration)	3.9%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	4.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.2%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	4.4%
Retail trade	7.0%
Construction	7.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	8.8%
Manufacturing	11.6%
Educational, health and social services	38.5%

Figure 11: Source, US Census

Housing and Residential Development

Over the last decade, Jerusalem's level of homeownership has remained relatively consistent, with owner-occupied housing increasing from 83 to 84 percent (Figure 12). Communities typically view a high percentage of homeownership favorably because it indicates that the community's residents are enjoying financial wellbeing and the town's property values will be maintained or increase. While this is true in many communities, the low percentage of renters can sometimes indicate a lack of diverse housing choices. Individuals or families that cannot afford to buy a home may have to leave town to find suitable rental options. This may be the case in Jerusalem, which has a lower percentage of renters than the County as a whole.

The housing stock in Jerusalem varies widely in age, style and condition. Almost 50 percent of the housing in Jerusalem was built in 1940 or earlier. The age of housing could become an issue for the Town in terms of the development and enforcement of property maintenance standards. Often times, older housing stock, especially homes that have not been maintained through the years, are the focus of property upkeep issues. The higher the percentage of older homes, the higher the chances that housing stock maintenance will be needed. A majority of the community's oldest homes are farm houses and homesteads located along the rolling terrain of the town.

However, a majority of the newer homes are single family homes built on lakefront or lakeview properties. Over 6 percent of the Town's housing stock (as of the year 2000) was built between 1995 and March 2000. This represents a significant increase in the housing stock in a relatively short period of time.

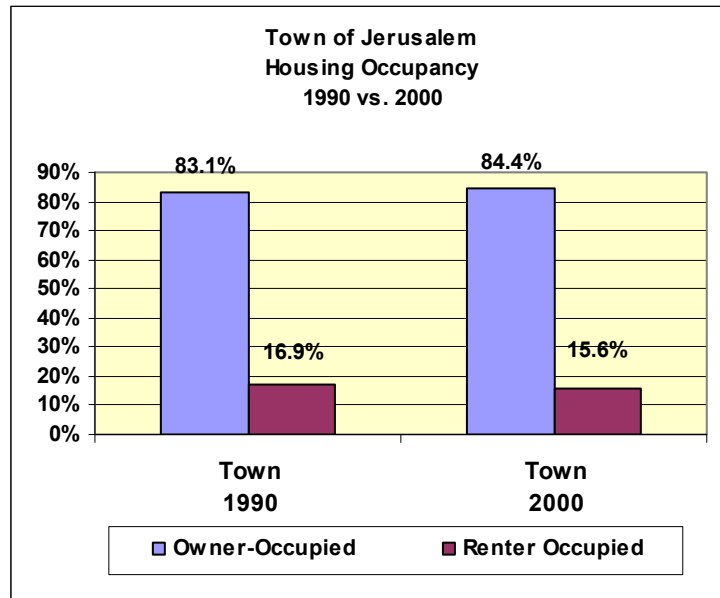


Figure 12: Source, US Census

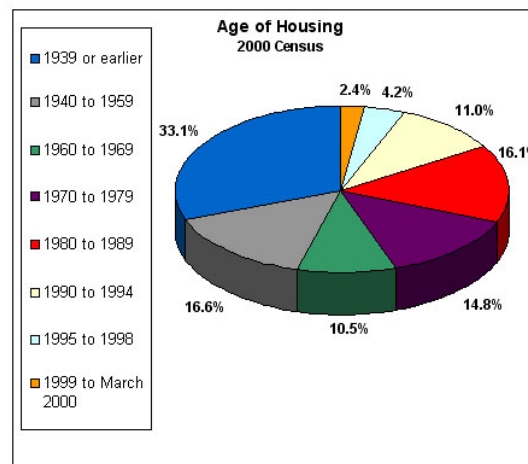


Figure 13: Source, US Census

Housing Values

In 2000, the median value of owner-occupied housing in the Town (\$93,500) was over 23 percent higher than that of the County (\$75,600). The median rent was only slightly higher in the Town (5 percent). It is likely that the median housing value is skewed upward as a result of the more expensive lakefront properties. Housing and property values in these areas have increased significantly over the last 10 years or more.

Sales information for the entire Town was obtained from the Greater Rochester Association of Realtors. As the data indicates, housing sales have steadily increased in price, with the average sales price nearly doubling between 2002 and 2005. This data also is likely to be slightly skewed upward as a result of the more expensive lakefront properties. The amount of properties sold has remained fairly constant between fifty and sixty units per year, indicating steady sales in the Town.

Town of Jerusalem—House Sales by Year

	2005	2004	2003	2002
Median Price	\$249,000	\$126,500	\$135,000	\$137,500
Average Price	\$309,979	\$202,395	\$170,970	\$157,835
Total Sales	\$18,908,744	\$12,548,500	\$10,258,230	\$8,049,600
# Properties sold	61	62	60	51

Figure 14: Source, Greater Rochester Association of Realtors

Cost of Development

Although residential development is often an indicator of prosperity and growth in a town, it does come at a cost. “While farmland pays less in property taxes than residences do, it requires significantly less in public services. ‘Cost of Community Services’ studies from around the country have demonstrated that farmland and forestland generate a net property tax ‘profit’ while houses generally cause a property tax ‘loss’ (due to demand for expensive public services). Thus having farmland in a community can help maintain a lower demand for public services and keep property taxes lower. By forcing growth in areas with access to underutilized infrastructure, communities can promote fiscal efficiency, preserve farmland and open spaces and avoid costs of sprawl.”*

* “American Farmland Trust’s Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York”, 2005; p8.
This document is available for purchase online at www.farmland.org/resources/publications.