

Chapter III

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

INTRODUCTION

The impacts of demographic changes can have a profound effect on a community. Planning for and responding to a changing population involves accurate assessments of historic trends, projections for the future, and a range of land use considerations. This chapter describes the basic characteristics and recent trends in Boscawen's population. Data has been drawn from the 2000 and 2010 US Census, the American Community Survey, the NH Office of Energy and Planning, and the NH Employment and Labor Market Bureau.

The purpose of this Chapter is to provide an understanding of how Boscawen's population has changed in recent years and to explore characteristics of the Town's residents. The information can be used to assist in planning for future development. It may be particularly useful for issues such as housing, transportation, economic development, community facilities, and land use. In short, the characteristics of Boscawen's population as described here are integrally tied to each of the Chapters in this Master Plan.

After compiling demographic data for the Town, a number of observations can be highlighted:

- At 3,965 residents as of the 2010 US Census, Boscawen remains a small- to medium-sized Town in Merrimack County, representing less than three percent of the county's total population.
- After a large boom in the 1960s, Boscawen's population has grown much more slowly in recent decades. However, the 2000s marked a period of slightly more rapid growth that was greater than both county and state growth rates.
- As with the rest of New Hampshire, Boscawen's population is aging. The median age rose from 39.4 in 2000 to 43.1 in 2010.
- Boscawen's population has a particularly large number of residents over the age of 75 as compared to Merrimack County and New Hampshire, due in large part to the presence of the Merrimack County Nursing Home.
- Recent population increases have occurred not due to natural increase (births vs. deaths), but rather due to in-migration from other locations.
- While the total Town population has increased, average household size has decreased slightly, from 2.57 in 2000 to 2.50 in 2010.

- Median household incomes increased significantly from \$42,524 in 1999 to \$56,635 in 2009. However, when controlling for inflation, the real increase was less than \$2,000 over the decade.

As Boscawen enters the second decade of the twenty-first century, the Town has both strengths and challenges to address in the context of municipal planning. Within the Central New Hampshire region, Boscawen is fairly well positioned to attract new residents and businesses at a manageable rate. Key decisions for current residents in the next decade will revolve around how to care for an aging population and how to focus residential and commercial development in desired areas while preserving Boscawen's community character.

POPULATION TRENDS

An analysis of Boscawen's population changes over the years illustrates trends of growth, stabilization, and decline. The characteristics of the Town's residents can be used to identify which kinds of development will be most useful for the community in the future, and where to devote community resources to best serve current residents. By taking a closer look at the Town's population, more can be learned about who lives in Boscawen and what their current and future needs may be.

Table II-1 and Figure III-1 show Boscawen's population changes from 1900 to 2010 in comparison with Merrimack County and the state of New Hampshire as a whole. In that period, the Town's population nearly tripled from 1,455 residents in 1900 to 3,965 in 2010. The largest increase occurred in the 1960s, when the Town grew by 45%, from 2,181 to 3,162 in 1970. Since then, growth has been slower, although the 8% rate of growth between 2000 and 2010 was the highest since the 1970s. This bump in Boscawen's population growth in the 2000s was also higher than both the county (7.5%) and the state (6.1%) during the same period.

Table III-1
Historic Population Trends, 1900-2010

Source: US Census

Year	<u>Boscawen</u>		<u>Merrimack County</u>		<u>New Hampshire</u>	
	Pop.	% Change	Pop.	% Change	Pop.	% Change
1900	1,455	--	52,430	--	411,588	--
1910	1,240	-14.8%	53,335	1.7%	430,572	4.6%
1920	1,260	1.6%	51,770	-2.9%	443,083	2.9%
1930	1,359	7.9%	56,152	8.5%	465,293	5.0%
1940	1,663	22.4%	60,710	8.1%	491,524	5.6%
1950	1,857	11.7%	63,022	3.8%	533,242	8.5%
1960	2,181	17.4%	67,785	7.6%	606,921	13.8%
1970	3,162	45.0%	80,925	19.4%	737,681	21.5%
1980	3,435	8.6%	98,302	21.5%	920,610	24.8%
1990	3,586	4.4%	120,005	22.1%	1,109,252	20.5%
2000	3,672	2.4%	136,225	13.5%	1,240,361	11.8%
2010	3,965	8.0%	146,445	7.5%	1,316,470	6.1%

Figure III-1
Boscawen Population Trends, 1900-2010

Source: US Census

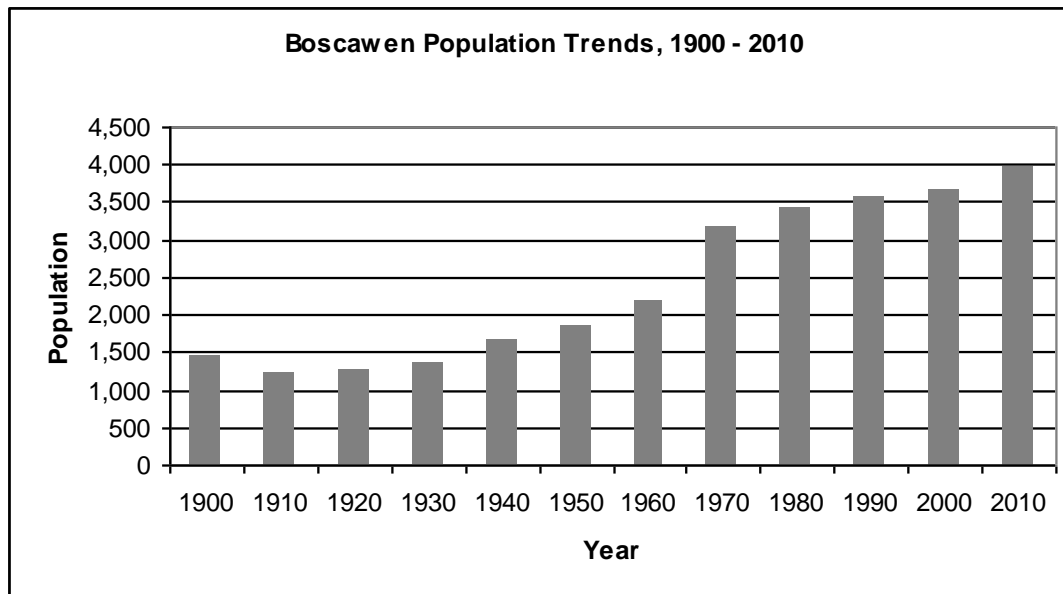
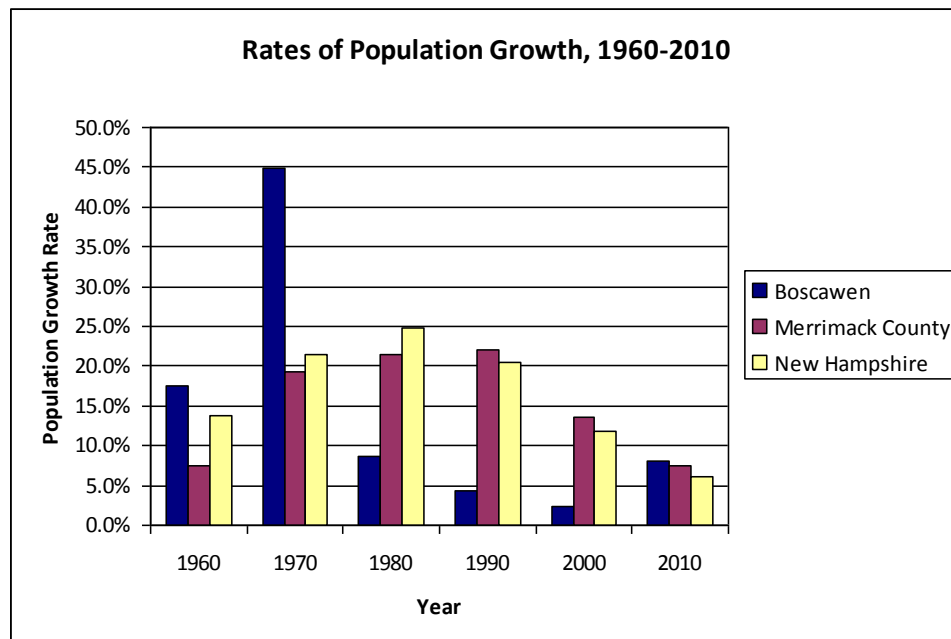


Figure III-2 compares the rate of population growth in Boscawen in recent decades to Merrimack County and New Hampshire. Boscawen's population boom in the 1960s was ahead of the curve for the county and the state. Since then, Boscawen has lagged in population growth until the most recent Census, which showed the Town gaining population at a slightly faster rate than Merrimack County and the state as a whole.

Figure III-2
Rates of Population Growth, 1960-2010
Source: US Census



However, Boscawen's growth rate between 2000 and 2010 was in the middle of the range compared to neighboring communities. Figure III-3 indicates that, while Boscawen grew by 7.6%, the growth rate in surrounding municipalities ranged from 0.8% in Franklin to 21% in Salisbury. Increases in small towns such as Canterbury, Salisbury, and Webster of course show up as larger percentages due to the small number of residents involved.

Figure III-3
Rates of Population Growth, 1960-2010
Source: US Census

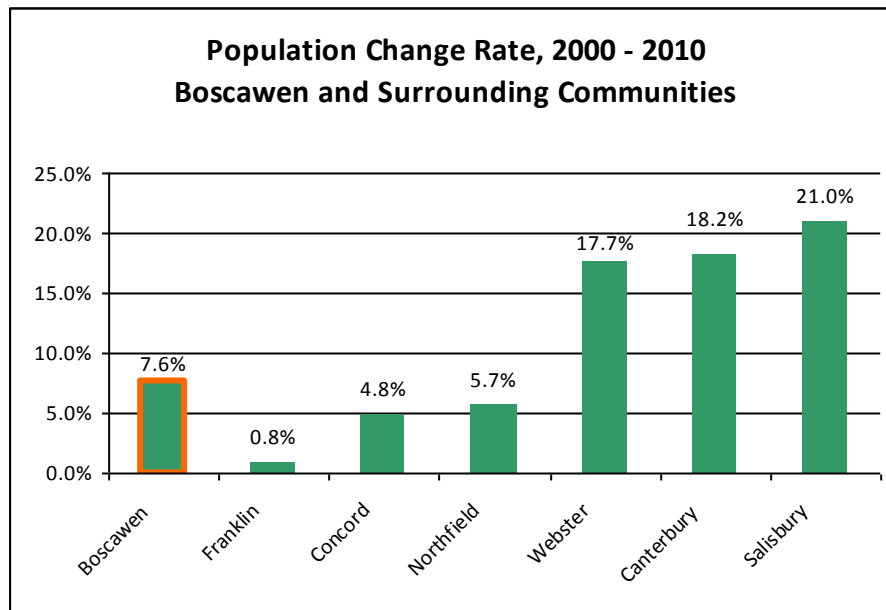
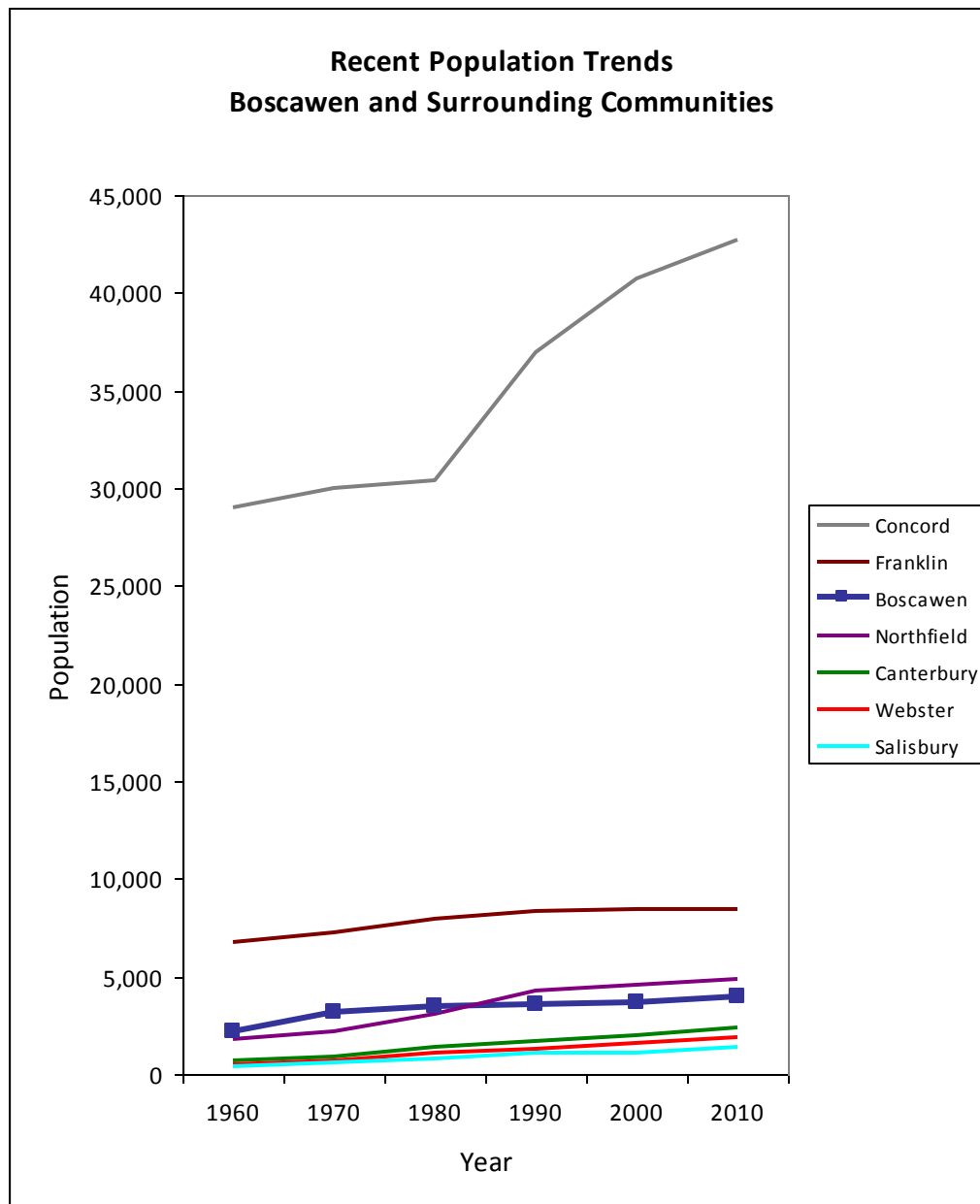


Table III-2 and Figure III-4 show the numeric population growth for Boscawen and its neighbors from 1960 to 2010. Not surprisingly, given that it is the state capital and largest city in the region, Concord's share of the population increase accounts for much of the change during that period (particularly during the 1980s). In total, the population for all seven communities increased by 59%, from 41,244 to 65,564, between 1960 and 2010.

Table III-2
Recent Population Trends, Boscawen and Surrounding Communities
Source: US Census

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Concord	28,991	30,022	30,400	36,994	40,747	42,690
Franklin	6,742	7,292	7,901	8,340	8,411	8,476
Boscawen	2,181	3,162	3,435	3,586	3,672	3,965
Northfield	1,784	2,193	3,051	4,277	4,567	4,827
Canterbury	674	895	1,410	1,692	1,990	2,352
Webster	457	680	1,095	1,274	1,590	1,873
Salisbury	415	589	781	1,056	1,142	1,381
Total	41,244	44,833	48,073	57,219	62,119	65,564

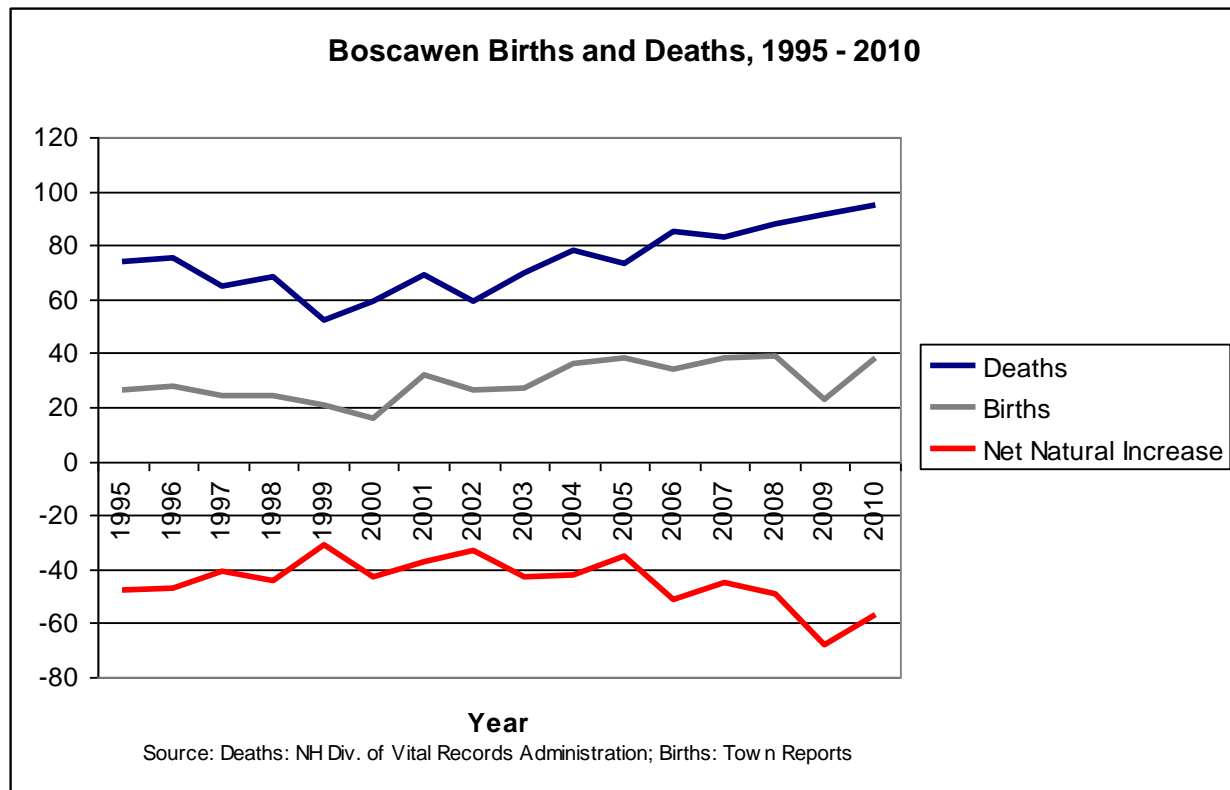
Figure III-4
Recent Population Trends, Boscawen and Surrounding Communities
Source: US Census



Boscawen's rising population can be attributed to in-migration (people moving in from other places) than to a high birth rate. As Figure III-5 shows, the rate of natural increase (Births minus Deaths) has actually been negative over the past decade and a half. In other words, more Boscawen residents die each year than are born here. This situation may be partially explained by the presence of the Merrimack County Nursing Home in Boscawen, which houses over three hundred seniors. However, the trend in the County and across New Hampshire is for a declining birth rate and rising death rate. While Boscawen's natural increase rate is negative, the rate of natural increase in Merrimack County and the state are

both only slightly positive as of 2010. Merrimack County saw a net gain of just 46 people in 2010 from natural increase, and New Hampshire as a whole only grew by 3,041 (0.2%) that year, according to the NH Division of Vital Records Administration.¹

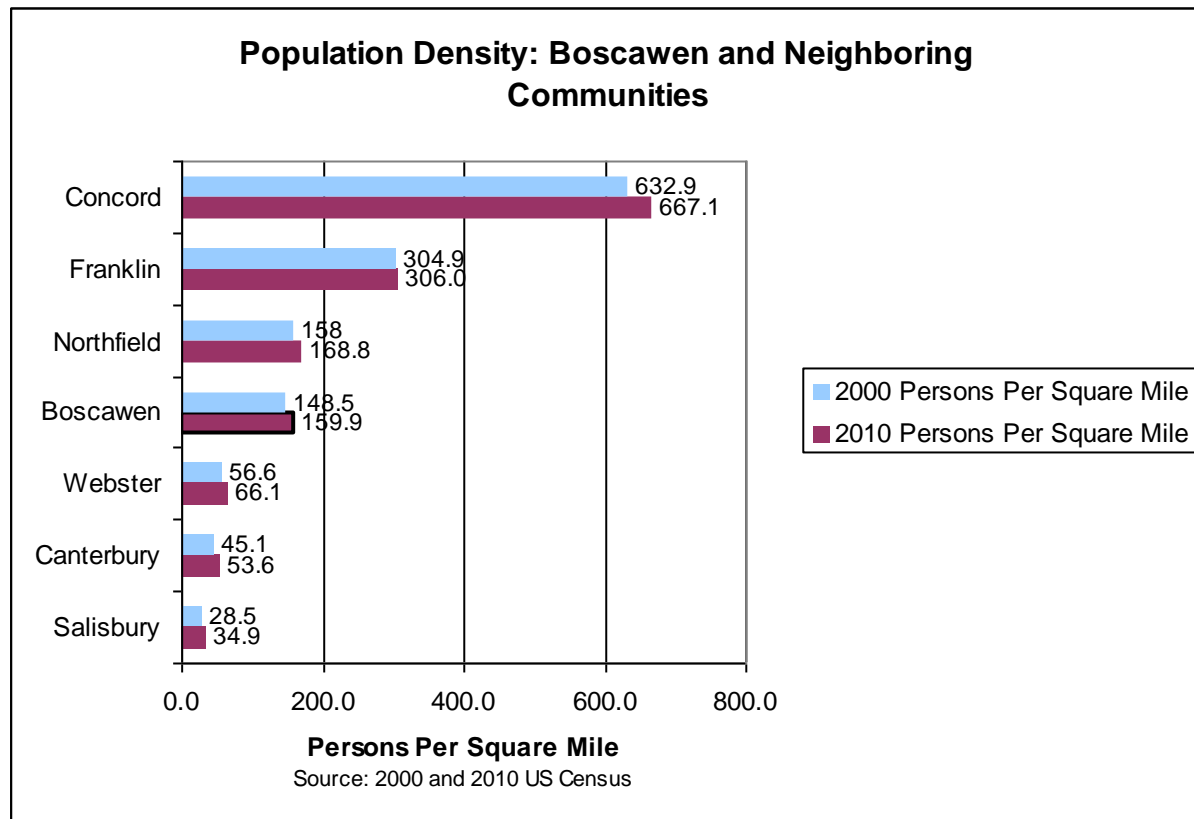
Figure III-5
Boscawen Births and Deaths, 1995-2010
Source: NH Division of Vital Records Administration and Town Reports



Just as Boscawen falls into the middle range in terms of population compared to its neighbors, the same is true for population density. In 2010, according to the US Census, Boscawen had 159.9 persons per square mile. Among its neighbors, Salisbury is the most rural with 34.9 persons per square mile, and Concord is the most densely populated with 667.1 persons per square mile. Figure III-6 shows the population density of Boscawen and surrounding communities in 2000 and 2010.

¹ New Hampshire Department of State, Division of Vital Records Administration, <http://nhvrrinweb.sos.nh.gov/>.

Figure III-6
Population Density, Boscawen and Surrounding Communities
Source: US Census



AGE DISTRIBUTION TRENDS

In addition to raw changes in the number of people residing in Boscawen, it is also important to examine other characteristics of the population. Age characteristics can indicate what kinds of needs and services Boscawen residents may have. For example, residents of different ages have different needs for employment, recreation, education, day care, Town services, health care, and support services.

Like New Hampshire's population, Boscawen's population is aging. The Town has an even older age profile due to the presence of the Merrimack County Nursing Home, which houses a concentration of older adults. In 2010, Boscawen's median age was 43, compared to the statewide average of 41. Figure III-7 illustrates the aging trend for Boscawen between 1970 and 2010. The major age cohorts have steadily shifted upward as the baby boomer generation grows older. By 2010, the 45 to 54 cohort was the largest segment of the population by age.

The Merrimack County Nursing Home housed 319 people as of January 2012, including 290 with nursing home care and 29 in assisted living. The Nursing Home was originally established in 1886. An annex was built in the 1960s, which added 64 beds. In 1974, another addition was constructed called the North Branch, which increased the capacity by 48 beds. In 1977, the McLeod Building was built. This included a 212 bed addition, but all residents from the original building were moved. Approximately 64 beds were added for an overall new total capacity of 312 at the time. A new complex was completed in 2008, although this did not add new beds to the Nursing Home.

If all of the Nursing Home's residents are assumed to be over the age of 65, then Nursing Home residents represent approximately 45% of Boscawen's entire senior citizen population. While this is a significant portion of the senior population, it should not be assumed that all elderly residents are part of the Nursing Home system. More than half are regular residents of the community.

Figure III-7
Boscawen Population by Age Group
Source: US Census

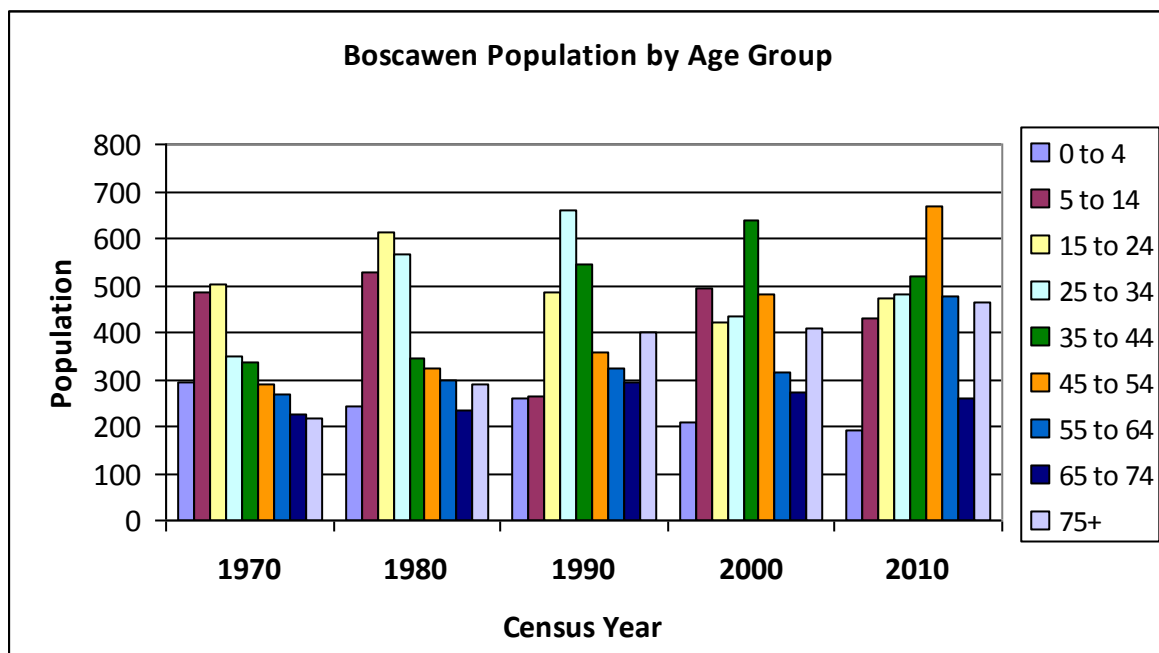


Figure III-8 and Table III-3 compare the age distribution of Boscawen to that of Merrimack County and New Hampshire as a whole in 2010. Here the presence of the Merrimack County Nursing Home can clearly be seen in the 75 and older cohort. Boscawen far outstrips both the county and the state with its high percentage of residents over the age of 75: 12% of the Town's residents are over 75, compared to 6% for the county and the state. Otherwise, the Town's age profile is fairly similar to the broader population, although

Boscawen has fewer school-aged children (categorized here to include residents between the ages of five and twenty-four).

Figure III-8
Age Group Distribution: Boscawen, Merrimack County, and New Hampshire
Source: 2010 US Census

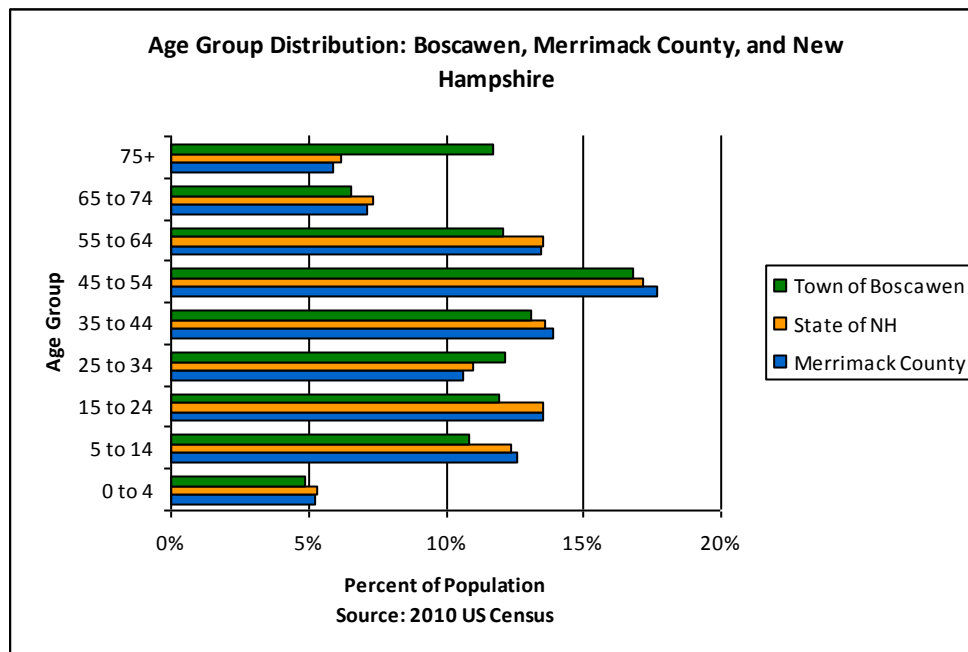


Table III-3
Age Group Distribution
Source: 2010 US Census

Age Group	Town of Boscawen 2010 Pop.: 3,965	Merrimack County 2010 Pop.: 146,445	State of NH 2010 Pop.: 1,316,470
0 to 4	5%	5%	5%
5 to 14	11%	13%	12%
15 to 24	12%	14%	14%
25 to 34	12%	11%	11%
35 to 44	13%	14%	14%
45 to 54	17%	18%	17%
55 to 64	12%	13%	14%
65 to 74	7%	7%	7%
75+	12%	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

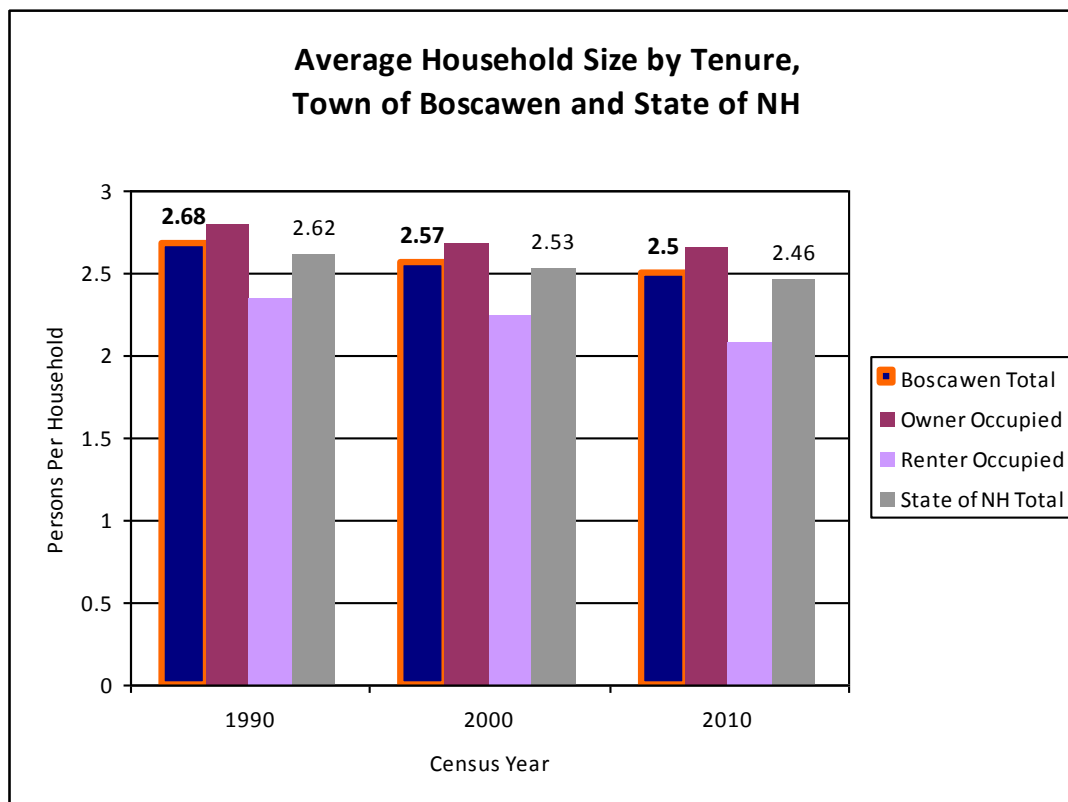
Tracking trends in household size can provide insight into a community's needs and assist in planning. Changes in household size over time indicate shifts in family structure, age

distribution, and housing type preferences. This data is also useful for planning for public service provision. For example, larger household sizes could indicate families with children who are in the local school system. Small household sizes could indicate a concentration of older adults living alone who may require transportation and health services. In Boscawen, household size has declined over the past two decades, from 2.68 people per household in 1990 to 2.5 in 2010. The Town's average is slightly higher than the state average, as shown in Table III-4 and Figure III-9. This chart also breaks down household size by tenure, indicating that Boscawen owner occupied households tend to have more people than renter occupied households (2.66 and 2.08, respectively, in 2010).

Table III-4
Average Household Size by Tenure
Source: US Census

	1990	2000	2010
Boscawen Total	2.68	2.57	2.5
Owner Occupied	2.79	2.68	2.66
Renter Occupied	2.35	2.25	2.08
State of NH Total	2.62	2.53	2.46

Figure III-9
Average Household Size, Boscawen and New Hampshire
Source: US Census



EDUCATION

Boscawen belongs to the Merrimack Valley School District, which also serves the communities of Webster, Salisbury, Loudon, and Penacook in Concord. School-aged children in Boscawen attend Boscawen Elementary School for Grades K-5, and then move to Merrimack Valley Middle School and High School in Penacook (Concord). As Figure III-10 shows, while the Town's population is slowly increasing, elementary school enrollment has been level, with a recent slight decrease. This data matches with the age distribution trends discussed above, indicating a population with fewer young families with school-aged children. At Merrimack Valley Middle and High Schools, enrollments have fluctuated slightly during this time period but have generally remained flat (Table III-5).

Figure III-10

Boscawen Elementary School Enrollment and Town Population Growth, 2000-2010

Source: NH Department of Education; NH Office of Energy & Planning

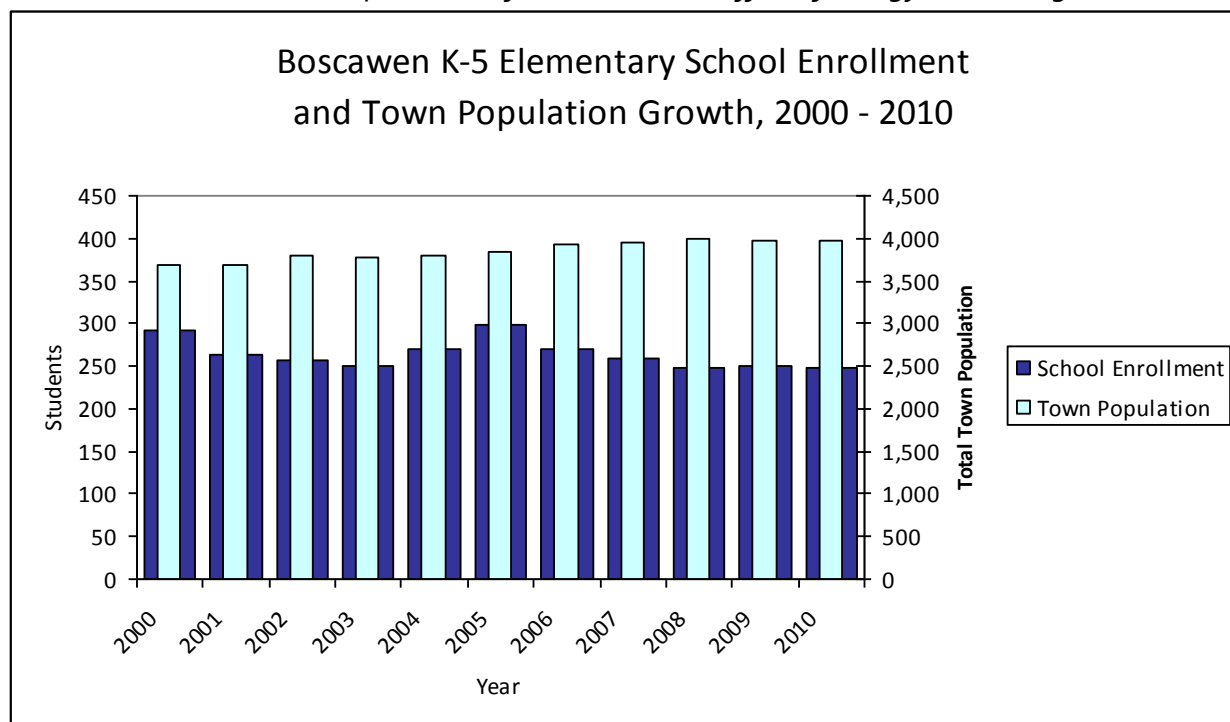
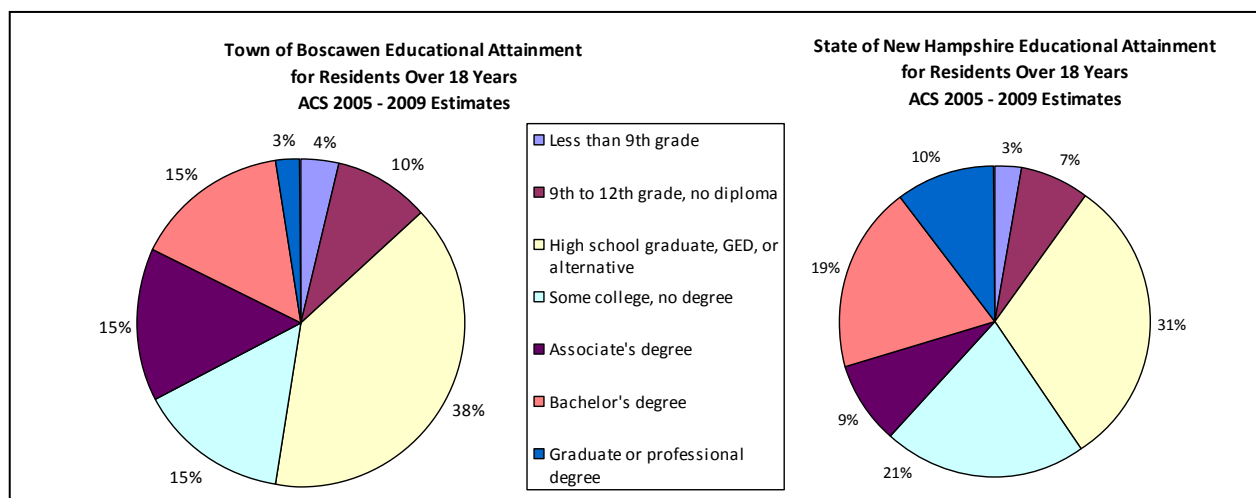


Table III-5
Merrimack Valley School District Middle and High School Enrollment
Source: NH Department of Education

Enrollment Year	Middle School	High School	Total
2001	617	843	1,460
2002	692	850	1,542
2003	642	881	1,523
2004	613	882	1,495
2005	597	918	1,515
2006	606	943	1,549
2007	621	877	1,498
2008	626	890	1,516
2009	622	907	1,529
2010	629	887	1,516

Among Boscawen residents who are over eighteen years of age, 14% do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 10% statewide. Figure III-11 displays the proportion of the population with varying levels of education within Boscawen and the state as a whole. For a larger proportion of Boscawen residents, a high school education is the highest level of educational attainment (38%, compared to 31% statewide). Generally, Boscawen residents have a slightly lower level of educational attainment. This could be a reflection of the historic and current mix of economic opportunities within Boscawen, its history as an industrial center, comparative cost of living, and the Town's geographic setting as a bedroom community to nearby Concord.

Figure III-11
Educational Attainment, Boscawen and New Hampshire
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates



SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Patterns in the economic characteristics of a community offer additional insight into community trends, values, and needs. Income, employment, and poverty rates serve as indicators of the types of services and infrastructure community residents might need. As a rural bedroom community for Concord and other employment centers, Boscawen shares certain characteristics with its neighbors, although a number of differences exist.

The data in this section rely heavily on the American Community Survey (ACS), an annual survey administered by the Census Bureau to supplement decennial census data. Much of the social and economic information gathered during the census in past years is now collected through the ACS. The ACS surveys only a sample of the population, however, rather than enumerating every individual in the country. As a result, ACS data are presented as estimates with a margin of error. The data in this section come from five-year ACS estimates, from 2005 to 2009. At the town level, some data have large margins of error due to small sample sizes. ACS figures are estimates only, and should be considered to reflect broad trends rather than data points with pinpoint accuracy.

INCOME AND POVERTY LEVELS

Boscawen lags behind several of its neighbors in median household income. In 2009, Boscawen's median household income was estimated at \$56,635, as shown in Figure III-12 and Table III-6. Canterbury, Webster, Salisbury, and Northfield all had higher median incomes, while Concord and Franklin were lower. However, Boscawen residents have seen their income rise over the preceding decade both in nominal dollars and when adjusted for inflation. In 1999, the median household income was \$42,524. When adjusted for inflation to 2009 dollars, that was equivalent to \$54,741. Over the same decade, most of Boscawen's neighbors saw a real (inflation-adjusted) decline in household income. Boscawen median income, while lower than both Merrimack County and statewide figures, made gains between 1999 and 2009, while the county and state lost ground. This is reflected in figure III-11.

Map III-1 displays income changes on a map of Merrimack County. Communities in red saw real (inflation-adjusted) median household incomes decrease between 1999 and 2009. Communities in blue experienced an increase in median household income. All 1999 income figures were adjusted for inflation to 2009 dollars. The county was evenly divided: in fourteen (14) municipalities, the median household income decreased, while in thirteen (13) others, incomes rose. Geographically, communities closer to the I-89 corridor, the Suncook River valley, and the Lakes Region tended to be on the increase, while those in the center and western edges of Merrimack County decreased in median income. Boscawen was an exception to this pattern, however.

Figure III-12

Median Household Income, 1999 & 2009: Boscawen and Surrounding Communities

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates

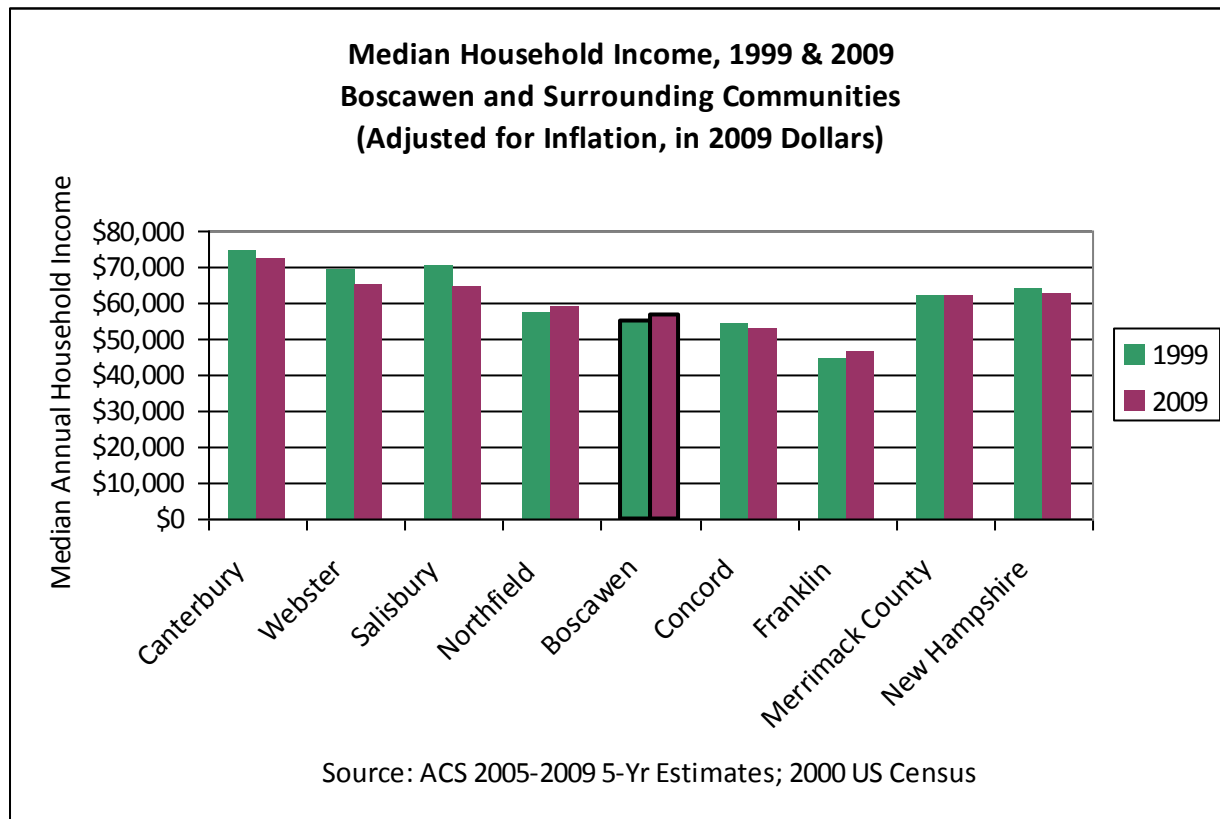


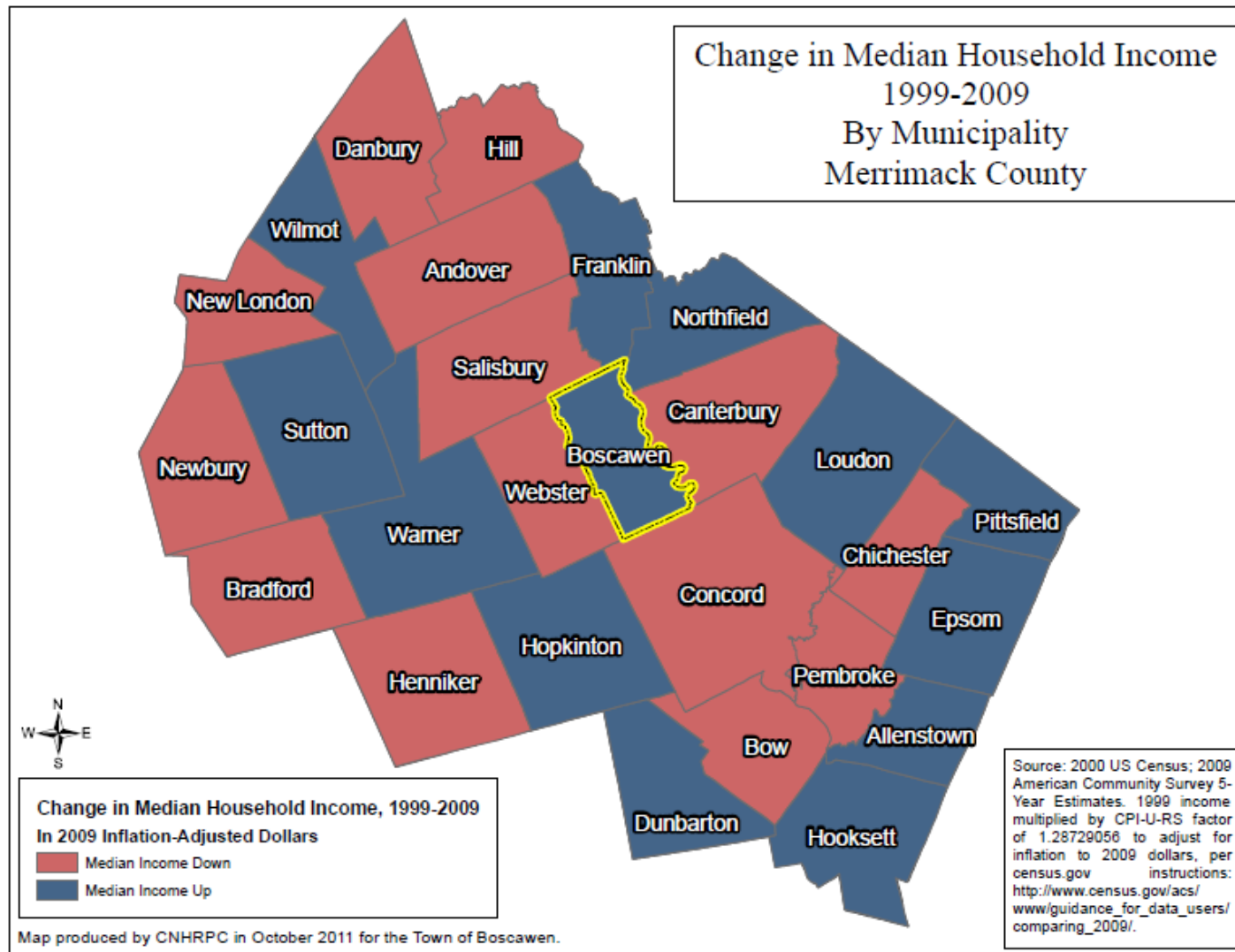
Table III-6

Median Household Income: Boscawen and Neighboring Communities

Source: ACS 2005-2009 5-Yr Estimates; 2000 US Census

Median Household Income			
	1999	2009	2009 Margin of Error (+/-)
Canterbury	\$74,696	\$72,368	7,912
Webster	\$69,581	\$65,096	7,831
Salisbury	\$70,801	\$64,219	7,855
Northfield	\$57,069	\$58,955	3,250
Boscawen	\$54,741	\$56,635	3,723
Concord	\$54,642	\$52,592	3,007
Franklin	\$44,557	\$46,644	4,770
Merrimack County	\$62,462	\$62,225	1,288
New Hampshire	\$63,678	\$63,033	443
1999 Median Income Adjusted for Inflation to 2009 Dollars (\$)			

Map III-1
Change in Median Household Income, 1999-2009, By Municipality
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates

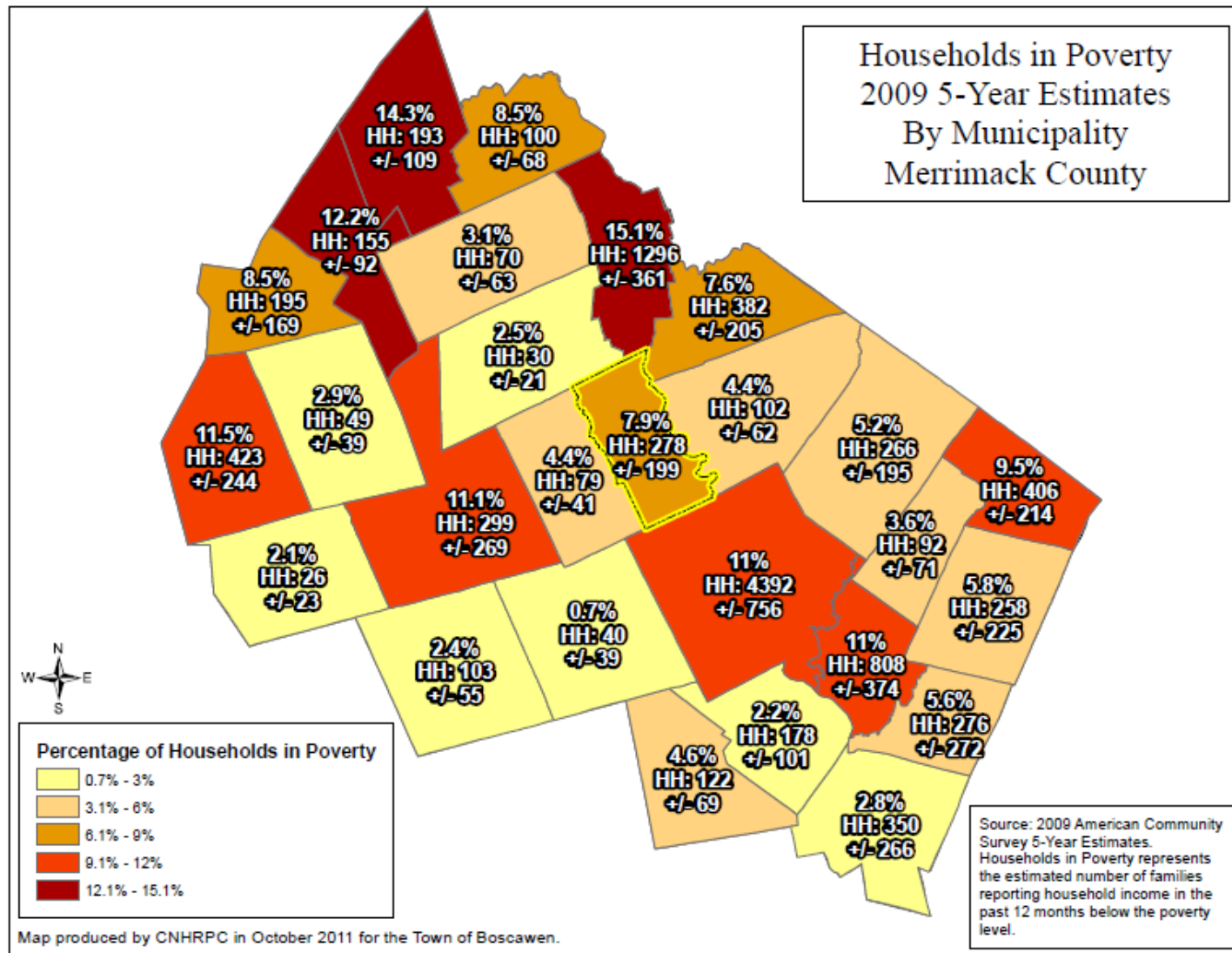


POVERTY STATUS

Poverty status as defined by the US Census Bureau describes families earning less than a set threshold in a given year. Thresholds are determined by family size and composition, but do not vary across the country. Poverty thresholds were initially determined in the 1960s based upon food budgets and percent of income spent on food. While the federal government has not changed formulas significantly over the decades, each year the thresholds are updated for inflation. Poverty thresholds are used as a statistical yardstick, not as a complete description of what people and families need to live. They are used by national, state, and local agencies to determine eligibility for various services. Thus, poverty rates can be useful for communities planning for future community needs and service provision.

According to ACS estimates, Boscawen's poverty rate is 7.9%. This is slightly higher than the statewide poverty rate of 7.7%. Compared to surrounding municipalities and other communities in Merrimack County, Boscawen falls in the middle of the pack. Map III-2 displays poverty rates from the 2009 ACS five-year estimates. Within Merrimack County, the highest poverty rates are found in Franklin (15.1%), Danbury (14.3%), and Wilmot (12.2%). Communities with the lowest poverty rates include Hopkinton (0.7%), Bradford (2.1%), and Bow (2.2%). However, ACS estimates at the municipal level in this dataset come with high margins of error and should be used with caution.

Map III-2
Municipal Poverty Rates, Merrimack County
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates



UNEMPLOYMENT

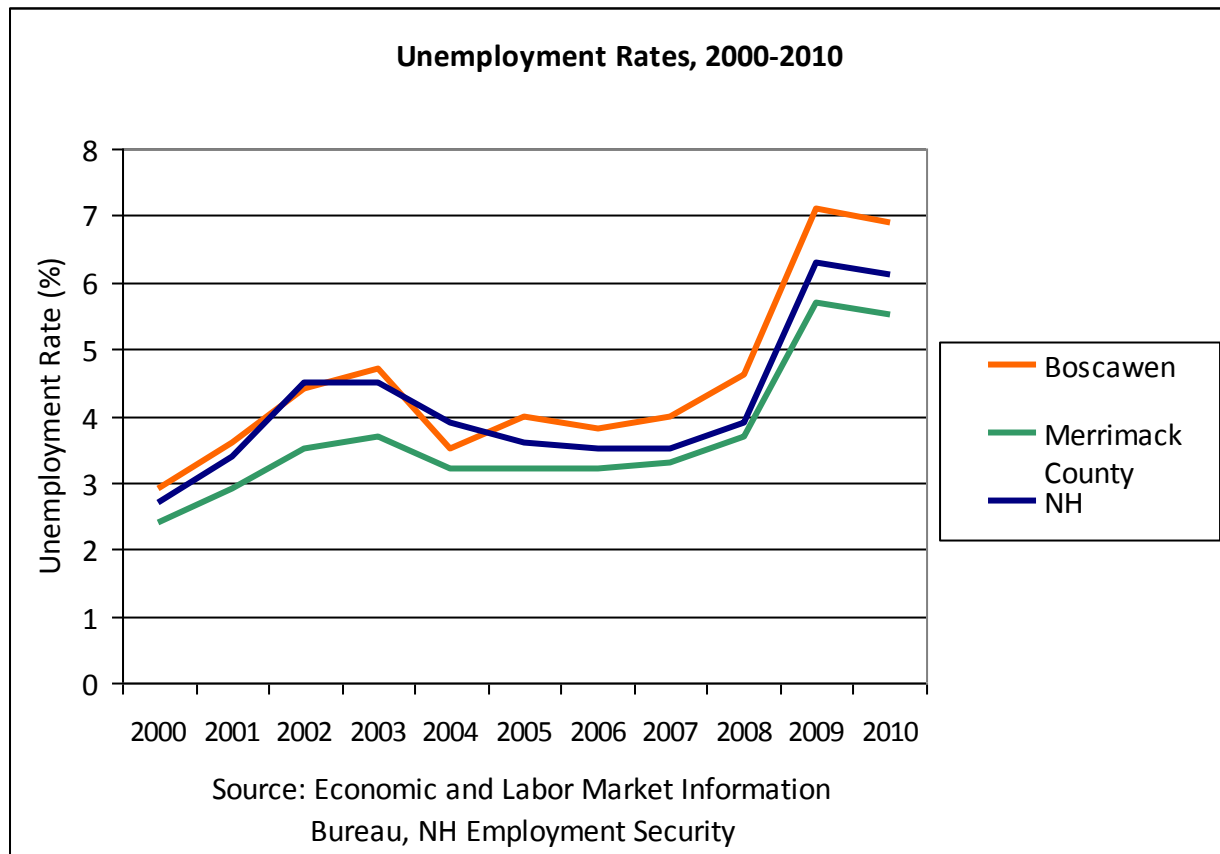
The New Hampshire Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, a division of New Hampshire Employment Security, updates unemployment rates quarterly as well as annually. Boscawen's unemployment rate was 6.9% in 2010, higher than both Merrimack County, at 5.5%, and the state of New Hampshire, at 6.1%. Throughout the 2000s, Boscawen has tracked closely or slightly higher than statewide unemployment rates, but has consistently been higher than Merrimack County levels.

Unemployment trends changed dramatically after the 2008 financial crisis and during the subsequent recession. Although New Hampshire has fared better than other states, it has not been immune from the economic downturn. Unemployment rates in 2009 were more than double the 2000 rates. Unemployment peaked in 2009 in Boscawen at 7.1%, compared to 6.3% for New Hampshire and 5.7% for Merrimack County. More recent indications suggest that unemployment will continue to decline, but when or if they will return to the low levels of 2000 remains an open question. Unemployment trends are shown in Table III-7 and Figure III-13.

Table III-7
Unemployment Rates, 2000-2010
*Source: Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau,
NH Employment Security*

Unemployment Rate Trends			
Year	Boscawen	Merrimack County	New Hampshire
2000	2.9	2.4	2.7
2001	3.6	2.9	3.4
2002	4.4	3.5	4.5
2003	4.7	3.7	4.5
2004	3.5	3.2	3.9
2005	4	3.2	3.6
2006	3.8	3.2	3.5
2007	4	3.3	3.5
2008	4.6	3.7	3.9
2009	7.1	5.7	6.3
2010	6.9	5.5	6.1

Figure III-13
Unemployment Rates, 2000-2010
Source: Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, NH Employment Security



COMMUTING PATTERNS

The labor force of a community is defined as the number of people sixteen (16) years and over who are classified as employed or unemployed. According to the NH Employment and Labor Market Information Bureau, Boscawen's work force as of 2010 was 2,011, or approximately 51% of the total population. Among the employed workforce, distance to work and travel time to work serve as indicators of job availability and the relative burden of getting to work for residents. Table III-8 provides figures for Boscawen, Merrimack County, and the state of New Hampshire relating to place of work.

Of the total labor force, only 15% of Boscawen workers work in Boscawen. This is low compared to the county and statewide figures of 30% and 31%, respectively, and it is consistent with the characterization of Boscawen as a bedroom community. Of those employed inside New Hampshire, 84% of Boscawen workers work in Merrimack County. This is higher than the county and statewide figures of 70% and 78%, respectively. Taken

together, these figures indicate that most Boscawen workers probably commute to Concord or other neighboring communities.

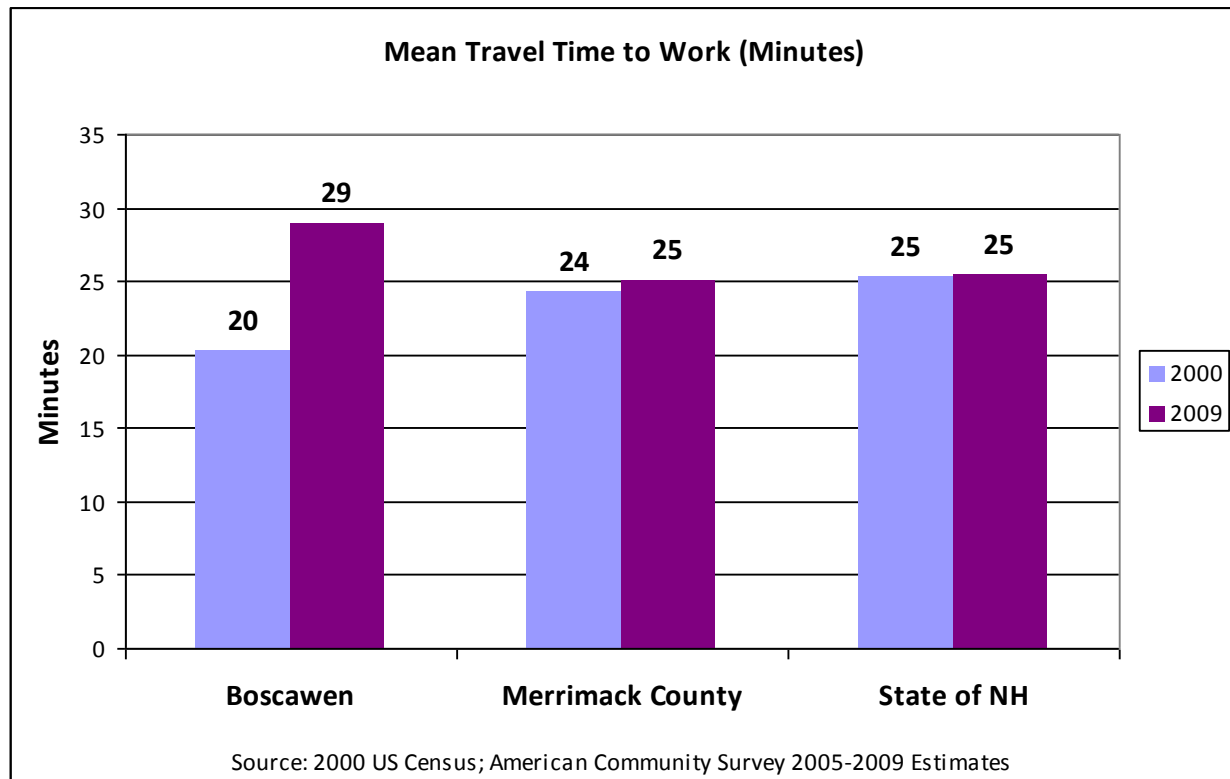
Figure III-14 shows the mean travel time to work for Boscawen compared to Merrimack County and New Hampshire in 2000 and 2009. Between 2000 and 2009, average commuting time for Boscawen workers rose from 20 minutes to 29 minutes. At 29 minutes, Boscawen's commuters have a longer trip to work than most workers in Merrimack County and New Hampshire, both averaged at 25 minutes in 2009. The increase in commuting time in Boscawen could be attributed in part to changing availability of nearby jobs, but it could also reflect the impacts of construction on the Route 3 corridor, which is a major commuting route for residents.

Table III-8
Place of Work

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates

	Total Workers 16+ (Working both in state and outside of NH)	Worked in Place of Residence		Worked Outside Place of Residence	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Boscawen	1,795	270	15%	1525	85%
Merrimack County	74,669	22,325	30%	52,344	70%
State of NH	671,055	208,250	31%	462,805	69%
	Total Workers Working Inside New Hampshire	Worked in County of Residence		Worked Outside County of Residence	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Boscawen	1,674	1,400	84%	274	16%
Merrimack County	72,599	50,679	70%	21,920	30%
State of NH	571,925	444,035	78%	127,890	22%

Figure III-14
Mean Travel Time to Work
Source: American Community Survey 2005-2009 Estimates



SUMMARY

The overall goal of this chapter is to characterize Boscawen's population patterns and trends over time, in the context of its neighbors and the state as a whole. With this information, the Town will be better able to make decisions relating to public services and residents' needs. No major demographic upheavals have been felt in Boscawen over the past decade, although some changes are certainly apparent. Boscawen remains a relatively small town growing at a moderate rate. Its most distinctive demographic feature is the presence of a large elderly population housed mostly at the Merrimack County Nursing Home.

In general, Boscawen's population is aging, which will have impacts on planning issues including housing choices and availability, transportation options, and the provision of support and emergency services. At the same time, the proportion of young families with school age children is slowly decreasing. Although the Town's population has grown over recent decades, it has been the result of in-migration rather than natural increase (births vs. deaths). Household sizes are also on the decline, which could affect the types of housing development desired in the future.

Economically, Boscawen has fared better than its neighbors in some respects, but worse in others. Median household incomes rose over the past decade both in nominal terms and when adjusted for inflation. Unemployment rates remain higher than county and statewide levels, however. This divergence could indicate a trend toward increased economic stratification among residents. Most Boscawen workers travel beyond the Town's borders for employment, and have a higher than average commute. Future economic development in Boscawen could involve efforts to attract new businesses to town to provide increased local job opportunities that match residents' skills and employment needs close to home.

Boscawen is in a reasonably strong position to attract new community members and businesses without being overwhelmed by growth. Residents and decision-makers will need to focus on ways to meet the needs of an aging population. They will also have to consider the location and types of housing and commercial development desired in Boscawen. Well-planned development contributes to the vitality and economic prosperity of Boscawen. However, its location and concentration should be carefully considered to ensure that the Town's distinctive village and rural character are enhanced rather than compromised.