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Based upon the 1990 census data, partial 2000 census data and other data, and based upon trends occurring at the state and national levels, certain conclusions can be made about Westfield's population trends. Three stand out: 1) Westfield's total population has declined in recent decades, and has only recently shown a small increase, 2) the Town's proportion of adults in the total population has increased, and 3) the racial make-up of the Town is shifting toward a slightly greater proportion of minorities.

Total Population

After declining for a number of years, Westfield's total population has experienced an increase in recent years. Table 1 gives total population figures for Westfield and Union County for the census years since 1930. The table shows that both the Town and the County increased in population through 1970, but declined in both the 1980 and 1990 census. The 2000 census shows a population increase for both Westfield and Union County. Table 2 shows the total population figures for Westfield and seven nearby municipalities for the census years since 1960. Table 2 shows a similar pattern to that in Table 1: in most municipalities, population increased between 1960 and 1970, but decreased in 1980 and 1990. The 2000 data show the population decrease leveling off or increasing in most of the adjacent municipalities.

Population Density

The pattern of population density follows that of total population, as indicated by Table 3. Total population density for a community is influenced by many factors, including the amount of developable land, the amount of land devoted to housing development, the type and density of housing developments, etc. For these reasons, comparisons between communities are not fair in a strict sense. However, density figures are useful in a broad sense to indicate the level of development in a community. It is interesting to note that Westfield's density is very similar to the County as a whole, suggesting that Westfield is in the middle between the intensely developed urban core areas and the less intensely developed outer suburbs.

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Household and Family Size

One of the most significant factors in Westfield's population is household and family size. Table 11 gives the household size for Westfield, Union County and New Jersey for the decennial years from 1960 through 2000. In each jurisdiction there has been a decreasing household size over this period, with the lone exception of an increase in household size for Union County between 1990 and 2000. This decrease in household size has actually been a national trend, caused by a variety of factors, including women having fewer children, couples delaying marriage and child-bearing, an increase in the divorce rate and single parent households, greater economic prosperity and incomes, etc. The decrease in household size in many communities has resulted in population declines, despite an increase in the number of housing units. This exact situation has occurred in Westfield, as seen by comparing Tables 1, 2, 11 and 14. Although Table 14 has shown an increase in total housing units over time, Tables 1 and 2 show a population decrease, except for the increase exhibited by the 2000 census numbers. This corresponds with the decreasing household size exhibited by Table 11.

Over the long-term, the Town of Westfield's average household size has been slightly higher than Union County's or New Jersey's, as indicated in Table 11. The 2000 Census figures, however, show a narrowing of this gap. Table 10 provides more detailed household size and family size figures for the Town, County and State for the year 2000. Westfield averaged 2.77 persons per household, versus 2.77 persons for the County and 2.68 persons for the State. The table also shows that Westfield has a lower percentage of one person households than the County or State, and a lower percentage of households with six or more persons than either the County or State. The percentage of households with two to five persons is greater, however, in Westfield than either the County or State. This data suggests that Westfield contains a higher percentage of nuclear family households than the County or State, and fewer single or extended-family households.

Shortage of Vacant Land

A second important factor affecting population trends is the availability of vacant land for new housing units. Given the declining household size noted above, additional housing units must be constructed and occupied for population to remain stable. A comparison of Tables 11 and 14 is illustrative. Between 1960 and 1970, the population increased despite a slight decrease in household size. This happened because sufficient new housing units were built and occupied to offset the decrease in household size. However, between 1970 and 1980, population declined despite an increase in the rate of home building. In this case, construction and occupancy of new homes was not sufficient to offset the steep drop in household size. In the period between 1980 and 1990, both the relative rate of

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housing unit production and household size declined, and population dropped. Finally in 2000, household size leveled off and population rose slightly from 1990 due to the construction of additional housing units.

While housing construction is influenced by a number of factors, including market conditions, local regulation, interest rates, etc., it is fairly certain that the lack of vacant land is the primary factor controlling housing unit construction in Westfield. A great majority of Westfield is zoned for residential use. The Town is located in a prime area for housing and contains many desirable residential neighborhoods. In addition, there were strong markets in the State for housing construction during the 1980's and 1990's. Despite these positive factors, relatively few housing units were built in Westfield during the 1980's and 1990's, as indicated by Tables 16 and 18. The scarcity of developable vacant land was the primary reason.

Resident Birth Rate

A third important factor affecting population is the birth rate. Table 4 shows the birth rate in New Jersey between 1955 and 1997 and in Westfield between 1966 and 1997. For many years, the birth rate in Westfield was consistently lower than the State average. Only since the mid-90's has the Town's birth rate equaled the State's rate. Despite the differences, the trend for both has been the same. Following the "baby boom" years after World War II, the birth rate declined from 1958 to 1976. This decline has been a factor in the declining household size discussed above. Since 1976, however, the birth rate has increased. This phenomenon has been referred to as the "baby boom echo", since it reflects the fact that the large numbers of children born during the baby boom have reached child bearing age and are producing their own offspring. Only since the mid-90's has the birth rate started to level off or decline, signaling perhaps the repeat of the downward trend of the 60's and early 70's.

The effects of the rising birth rate have been seen for several years in many schools, as evidenced by increasing enrollments. This rising birth rate, along with the number of additional housing units constructed during the 1990's, has contributed to the slight population increase between 1990 and 2000.

Age of Population

Table 5 shows the population age groups for Westfield for the census years from 1960 to 2000. The age groupings in this table are limited to two categories in order to emphasize the youth cohort. The table indicates that Westfield's population has been aging. This is not a truism describing normal human aging, but a demographic phenomenon resulting from changes in the birth rate, household size trends and longer life spans. Between 1960 and 1990, the under 18 age group declined in proportion to the total population. Only since 1990 has the percentage

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of this age group increased. In absolute numbers, the under 18 age group increased slightly between 1960 and 1970, decreased sharply over the next decade, and decreased more moderately between 1980 and 1990. The increase since 1990 has restored the population of the under 18 age group to 1980 levels. During the 1950's, the proportion of people under the age of 18 similarly increased, due in large part to the "baby boom" following the Second World War. During the period from 1960 to 2000, the number of people aged 18 and above remained fairly stable, and did not increase. This further confirms that the age shift has been due primarily to birth and death rates, and not other factors such as migration.

Table 6 shows more detailed age groups for Westfield, Union County and New Jersey for the years 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. This table exhibits similar patterns to that in Table 5. For all three jurisdictions, the percentage of the 0-19 age cohort declined from 1960-1990, and has increased since 1990. The 20-34 age cohort percentage increased for all jurisdictions over this same period, but decreased since 1990. The percentage of the 35-54 age cohort declined from 1970 to 1980, and then increased in 1990 and 2000, again for all three jurisdictions. The 55-74 cohort percentage increased early in the 1960-1990 period, whereas the percentage decreased for all jurisdictions since 1990. Finally, all three jurisdictions reported an increase in the 75+ age cohort during the 40-year period. The similarity in these trends suggests that the causes are not local in nature, but regional or national in scope.

Table 7 compares a detailed breakdown of the population in various age groups in the Town of Westfield, Union County and New Jersey for the year 2000, and also provides the median age level for that year. Review of the table indicates some variation between age groups in the Town of Westfield and that of the County and the State; however, the percentages are generally comparable. The median age in Westfield (38.6 years), however, was reported to be higher than either the County (36.6 years) or the State (36.7 years).

Table 8 shows that since 1960 there has been a trend towards a higher median age for the Town, County and State. In broad terms, this data reflects the maturing of the "baby-boom" generation and the lower birth rates exhibited following the baby boom.

Racial Shift of the Population

Census data since 1960 indicates a continuing shift in the racial make-up of Westfield's population. Table 9 presents a breakdown of this shift. In surveys prior to 1980, the Census did not enumerate racial data in as much detail, so strict comparisons are not possible. However, in looking at the broad data, one can see that Westfield's population is predominantly white. Since 1960, however, the proportion of whites has been gradually shrinking. Until the 2000 Census, the black

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population was the largest minority in Westfield, and it has remained fairly constant as a proportion of the total population. The 2000 Census reported that Asians and Pacific Islanders became the largest minority in Westfield. This shifting racial trend is not local, but regional and national in scope.

Income Level

Household income in the Town of Westfield is significantly higher than either the County or the State. Table 12 shows the median income figures for the Town, County and State for the year 1989, as well as giving the percentage of households in each income level. Median income for Westfield was reported as \$66,760, compared with median incomes of \$41,791 for the County and \$40,927 for the State. The table also shows the Westfield has a much smaller percentage of lower income households than either the County or the State, and a higher percentage of higher income households.

Table 13 presents poverty level data for households in Westfield, Union County and New Jersey for 1989. This table indicates that the Town has a lower percentage of households of all types below poverty level than either the County or the State. Not surprisingly, the higher income levels in the Town correspond with the higher housing values that exist.

Existing Labor Force

Table 24 indicates that Westfield had a total civilian labor force of 15,779 persons in 1990, based upon Census data. This is an increase from the 14,211 persons in the civilian labor force in 1980. Not only has the total number of persons in the civilian labor force increased, but also the percentage. In 1980, the civilian labor force was 60.4 percent of persons 16 years and older, whereas in 1990 the percentage increased to 69.6. This corresponds with a decrease of over six percent of those not in the labor force, to 30.3 percent in 1990.

The Town of Westfield's unemployment rate in 1990 was less than the rate for either Union County or New Jersey. Table 24 shows an overall unemployment rate of 3.0% for Westfield, 6.1% for Union County and 5.7% for New Jersey in 1990.

Existing Jobs

Table 25 compares private sector covered employment for Westfield, Union County and New Jersey for the years 1980-1998. Although these figures are subject to errors in reporting, they do provide information about basic trends. First, although the number of covered jobs has fluctuated in response to economic conditions, there has been a general increase in employment. Employment peaked in the late 1980's, when economic conditions were stronger, and declined to a low in 1992.

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Employment has increased somewhat since that time, although not yet returning to levels of the late 80's. The Town's employment growth (17.4%) over this period has easily outpaced job growth in the County (-11.9%), but has not kept pace with job growth in the State (23.3%).

A second trend is the increase in employer units, which has exceeded the increase in employment. This corresponds with the trend toward fewer jobs per employer unit; the average number of employees per employer unit has dropped in the Town, County and State; in Westfield the ratio has changed from 9.0 in 1981 to 7.3 in 1998. The change in jobs per employer unit in the County and State has been more substantial, as indicated on the table. It is also noteworthy that Westfield has consistently had fewer employees per employer unit than either the County or the State.

Employment by Occupation

Table 26 presents information concerning employment by occupation for Westfield, Union County and New Jersey for 1990. The data in the table indicates that a majority of the labor force in the Town is employed in "white collar" occupations. The four largest occupation groups are as follows, with the percentage of the work force in parentheses: Professional Specialty (26.0%); Executive, Administrative and Managerial (23.0%); Administrative Support, including Clerical (15.2%) and Sales (14.7%). The percentage of the work force in Westfield in all of these occupations, except Administrative Support, exceeds the percentages in both the County and State. Administrative Support occupations contain the highest percentage of workers in both the County and State. Although not indicated by the table, the work force engaged in Administrative Support occupations has declined, both in numbers and percentage, since the 1980 census. Over the same period the work force engaged in Professional Specialty, Executive and Sales occupations has increased. This is common recently, as many companies have reduced much of their administrative support staff due to automation, consolidation and competition.

Employment by Industry

Table 27 presents information concerning labor force employment by industry for Westfield, Union County and New Jersey for 1990. The data in the table indicates that in Westfield the four largest industry groups by employment are as follows, with the percentage of the workforce in parentheses: Other Professional and Related Services (14.3%); Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (13.1%); Retail Trade (11.6%); and Educational Services (9.9%). For the County and State, the largest industry groups are Retail Trade, Manufacturing/Nondurable Goods, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, and Health Services. This correlates with the higher percentage of "white collar" employment discussed previously.

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Labor Force Projection

In 1980, 14,836 residents of Westfield were employed in the civilian labor force, according to the Census. This figure represented 5.8% of civilian labor force in Union County. In 1990, the Census reported 15,779 persons in Westfield in the civilian labor force. This represented 5.9% of the County's civilian labor force of 268,600 for that year.

The New Jersey Department of Labor has projected that the civilian labor force in the County will increase to 284,200 persons by the year 2010, and 290,300 persons by the year 2015. Assuming the Town's percentage of the labor force remains at approximately 5.9% of the total, this would result in a labor force in Westfield of 16,768 persons and 17,128 persons for the years 2010 and 2015, respectively.

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