

# *Population and Housing*

## *Introduction*

Londonderry is quite different than the town it was 30, 20, or even just 10 years ago – and it continues to change and evolve. However, it is the townspeople – local businesspeople, community volunteers, groups, and organizations, community leaders, and the 24,000 Londonderry residents who make the town a special place. Even though the town has added almost 18,000 people since 1970 (many of whom have relocated here from out of state), the New Hampshire volunteer spirit still thrives. The community's dedication to the town can be seen in the various civic committees, athletic groups and leagues, volunteer organizations, and most obviously during Old Home Days when the entire community gathers to enjoy summer and life in Londonderry.



*Londonderry residents (and staff) participating in a Master Plan workshop.*



*Old Home Days Parade, intersection of Mammoth and Pillsbury Roads.*

## *Population and Projections*

Of course, the town will continue to face change and growth. According to the New Hampshire Office of State Planning, Londonderry's 2000 population of 23,236 persons is projected to increase 29 percent by the year 2020 - adding almost 7,000 persons<sup>1</sup> (a growth rate similar to projections for surrounding

towns and Rockingham County overall - see table 1). However, it is important to note that the widening of Interstate 93 (I-93), scheduled for completion in 2014 may encourage and/or enable a faster population growth rate for the entire region in subsequent years.<sup>2</sup>

By most standards, Londonderry is considered a young community. The median age is 35 years old with 35% of the population under 20. The town's older population still represents a small proportion of the overall community (persons 65+ account for only 5% of the total population). However, during the 1990s, the number of persons

between 55 and 64 and 65+ grew by 92% and 52%, respectively (the fastest growing segments of the community). This trend - a general aging of the community - is likely to continue over the next 20 years. (Note: the state's population projections show that by 2025 almost 1 in 4 persons in New Hampshire will be over the age of 65 (compared to just over 1 in 10 currently.)

Table 4.2: Projected Percentage Change in Population

*Source: New Hampshire Office of State Planning, March 2003*

	2000-2010	2010-2020
Londonderry	<b>16%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Derry	12%	10%
Windham	19%	11%
Manchester	11%	7%
Hudson	14%	12%
Litchfield	26%	18%
Auburn	14%	10%
Rockingham County	13%	10%
New Hampshire	12%	10%

Table 4.3: Age Characteristics, 1990 to 2000

*Source: US Census 1990 and 2000*

	1990	2000	% change 1990 to 2000
under age 5	1,771	1,726	-3%
5 to 19	5,084	6,500	28%
20 to 34	4,821	3,408	-29%
35 to 54	6,410	8,670	35%
55 to 64	886	1,699	92%
65 +	809	1,233	52%

<sup>1</sup> *Municipal Population Projections, New Hampshire Office of State Planning 2005 to 2025, Prepared March 2003.*

<sup>2</sup> *The rate of growth is predicted to accelerate based on a study of the Secondary Impacts of the I-93 Widening project prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.*

### *Maintain Growth Management*

Londonderry's Growth Management ordinance, enacted primarily as a response to the rapid development of the 1970s and 1980s, is designed to establish a rate of growth that is consistent with the town's capacity to accommodate growth. With the exception of recent growth spikes due to grandfathered projects, the town's growth management ordinance and policies have been effective. In addition to the ordinance, these policies include the conservation of land through purchase or easement (reduction of buildable land in town) and the town's performance overlay district. Nevertheless, as conditions within the town and region change, the effectiveness of the growth management ordinance should be monitored and refined as needed. In particular, refinement of the factors used to measure and establish a period of unsustainable growth should be considered in relation to the town's build-out data when the analysis is complete (see Land Use section page 3 – 12).

## *Housing and Neighborhoods*

Over the past few decades, as Londonderry's population has increased, so has the town's housing stock. During the 1990s, total housing units in Londonderry grew at a rate of approximately 15 percent – virtually mirroring the increase in population for the decade. By far, single-family homes have represented the

Table 4.4: Total Housing Units

Source: US Census 2000

Units in Structure	Number	Percent
1-unit, detached	5,388	69.8
1-unit, attached	1,011	13.1
2 units	283	3.7
3 or 4 units	75	1
5 to 9 units	335	4.3
10 to 19 units	249	3.2
20 or more units	47	0.6
Mobile home	330	4.3
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0

vast majority of new units (the town permitted approximately 1,145 such units between 1993 and 2003). According to the US Census, the single-family detached home represents over 70 percent of the 7,718 total units in town (see Table 2).

Londonderry's housing is also relatively new. Almost 86% of the town's housing built after 1970, compared with 63% for Rockingham County and

Table 4.5: Units by Year Built

Source: US Census 2000

Year Built	Units	% of Total
1995 to 2000	1,009	13.07%
1990 through 1994	524	6.79%
1980 through 1989	2,434	31.54%
1970 through 1979	2,644	34.26%
1960 through 1969	561	7.27%
1940 through 1959	299	3.87%
1939 and earlier	247	3.20%

57% for New Hampshire. Overall, Londonderry's residential neighborhoods are considered safe, pleasant, and great places to be. The majority of the town's neighborhoods are characterized by single-family homes on one- to two-acre lots and surrounded by woods and other natural features. The substantial amount of woodlands in residential subdivisions helps to maintain Londonderry's rural character or country feel – one of the town's most prized qualities.

### **||** *Maintain the quality of existing neighborhoods*

Londonderry should ensure that new development does not adversely impact existing neighborhoods and residential areas.

### **||** *Initiate a neighborhood planning effort*

Some residential areas in town are either within transition zones (e.g., growing commercial centers), sensitive to even small changes in land uses, or dealing with the impacts of “commercial creep” – an increase in commercial uses along

neighborhood borders. As such, these areas may require special attention in terms of abutting land uses, traffic, commercial design, etc. To address these issues, the town should begin a neighborhood planning initiative for the purposes of managing “local-level” site specific, physical, and connectivity planning issues. For example, North Londonderry and the neighborhood east of Exit 5 on Route 28 are two potential areas that could benefit from a more focused, area-specific planning effort.

Other neighborhoods should be encouraged to participate based on need and willingness of residents. Some potential neighborhood areas include: West Road, Auburn Road, Mammoth Road south of Route 102, Mammoth/Route 28 intersection, and Gilcreast Road.



*One of the more recent single-family home subdivisions built in Londonderry*

### *Regional Housing Affordability*

As a result of many factors including, but not limited to regional growth and population increases, Londonderry's popularity as a residential community, its location along I-93, and its high level of public services (e.g., great school system), housing affordability has become a major issue for Londonderry and the region.

According to the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission's (SNHPC) Housing Needs Assessment for the Region (January 2000), Londonderry does not meet its "fair share" allocation for affordable units in the region. The report, which estimates the size and distribution of need for affordable housing in the region, is designed to be a guideline for housing affordability goals and a needs assessment tool by which each community can compare with regional municipalities.

Table 4.6: Fare Share Allocation 1988, 1997, 2000, Southern New Hampshire

Source: *Housing Needs Assessment for the SNHPC Region, 2000, 1995, 1988*

Municipality	1988 Allocation	1995 Allocation	% change 1988 to 1995	2000 Allocation	% change 1995 to 2000
Auburn	91	107	18%	120	12%
Bedford	380	584	54%	403	-31%
Candia	91	121	33%	138	14%
Chester	90	130	44%	137	5%
Deerfield	145	238	64%	265	11%
Derry	767	1,429	86%	1,273	-11%
Goffstown	46	500	987%	380	-24%
Hooksett	317	570	80%	371	-35%
<b>Londonderry</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>14%</b>
Manchester	3,941	4,705	19%	4,733	1%
New Boston	140	211	51%	227	8%
Raymond	127	331	161%	311	-6%
Weare	193	258	34%	224	-13%
Total	6,738	9,669	43%	9,137	-6%

Table 5 presents data from the past three SNHPC housing reports and shows that as a region, the need for affordable housing units actually decreased by over 500 units between 1995 and 2000. However, Londonderry's fair share allocation increased by 14% placing the town behind only Derry and Manchester in terms of affordable housing need. (Note: this information

should only be used as a guide, as Londonderry may not receive credits for pre-existing or future affordable housing units under the methodology used by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission to develop this table.)

The need for creating additional housing options, including increasing housing affordability, was also highlighted by many participants at various public outreach events in support of this plan. While Londonderry's median household income is higher than the state and county figures as well as many surrounding communities, most residents work outside of the area (63% of all workers commute outside of Rockingham County for employment). Further, many residents lamented the fact that their children, upon their return to Londonderry following college, could not find nearby affordable housing.

Table 4.7: Median Household Income in 1999

Londonderry	\$70,501
Derry	\$54,634
Windham	\$94,794
Manchester	\$40,774
Hudson	\$64,169
Litchfield	\$73,302
Auburn	\$70,774
Rockingham County	\$58,150
New Hampshire	\$49,467

Source: US Census, 2000

Housing in Londonderry is expensive whether one is looking to buy or rent. According to the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA), the median gross rent is now almost \$1,400 per month and has increased on an average of 6.2% annually or 50% since 1995. During the same time period, the purchase price of housing (new and existing combined) increased by almost 120%, and as of September 2003, the median purchase price for a home in Londonderry was \$250,000. However, Londonderry's housing prices, while higher than the state median, are comparable with most surrounding communities, and lower than the county's median (see Table 7).

Table 4.8: Median Value Purchase Price for a Home (new and existing)

Londonderry	\$250,000
Derry	\$219,000
Windham	\$384,000
Manchester	\$192,000
Hudson	\$227,220
Litchfield	\$257,000
Auburn	\$280,000
Rockingham County	\$265,000
New Hampshire	\$212,000

Source: NHHFA Purchase Price Database, 2003

This data, studies, and public comments and input all point to the regional affordable housing problem. In fact, according to the SNHPC data, not one

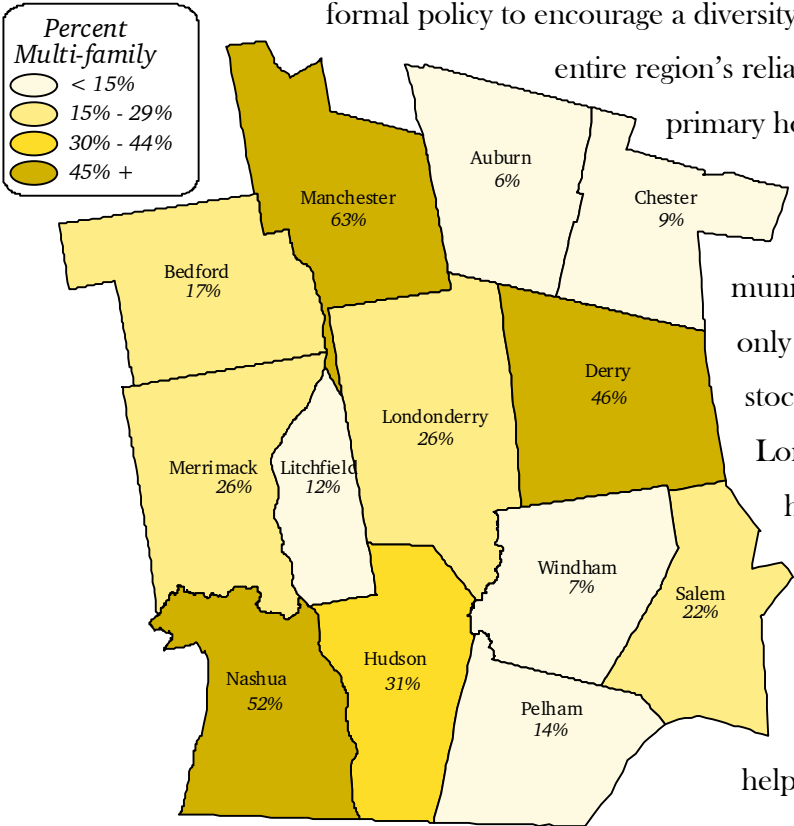
municipality within the region provides sufficient affordable housing. As a regional issue, each community must play a role in addressing the need. For Londonderry, this means finding a balance between the needs of the region and maintaining the character and qualities of existing residential neighborhoods.

*Establish a town housing task force to implement housing options and work on regional solutions*

Advances in Londonderry’s “fair-share” allocation can only be made if the cause receives official support from the town and community. As such, the town should establish an affordable housing task force whose role it would be to implement and update this section of the Master Plan. Members should represent a diverse background, be familiar with housing affordability issues, and have a good understanding of regional growth issues.

*Encourage a diversity of housing types*

The town (and the housing committee recommended above) should establish a formal policy to encourage a diversity of housing types in Londonderry. The entire region’s reliance on the single-family home as the primary housing option serves to limit housing affordability and choices regionally. As the map demonstrates, most municipalities in the surrounding area dedicate only a small amount of their total housing stock to multi-family housing. Actually, Londonderry has a larger percentage of its housing in multi-family units than three of the six bordering municipalities (Auburn, Windham, and Litchfield). Nevertheless, the town should continue to strive for diversity in housing options to help address regional affordable housing needs



as well as prepare for an aging community. Some techniques and strategies the town should consider are discussed below.

### *Identify potential areas for housing options*

As discussed previously, the town's R-III zone (multi-family) is almost built to capacity. However, the need for this type of housing is unlikely to subside in the foreseeable future. The town should consider updating or modifying the R-III district to meet the community's needs. Any future high density housing areas should be fully-served by public infrastructure, such as sewer and water, and have easy access to major highways. However, the town should look to disperse housing types, rather than locating all affordable units in one area.

#### To Live and Work in Londonderry

It is commonly stated that housing becomes unaffordable when a person or family must spend more than 30% of their wages on housing. In Londonderry, a person would need to earn approximately \$56,000 to cover the rent costs of a typical two-bedroom unit (~\$1,400/month). However, the average annual wage in Londonderry is only \$33,677 (County Business Patterns, 2001). These figures highlight the need for increased wages and employment opportunities locally as well as strategies to deal with the high cost of housing.

### *Review the town's zoning ordinance*

The town's zoning ordinance already includes components that enable the development of affordable housing units. For example, Section 408 allows accessory apartments for the purpose of providing housing alternatives while maintaining neighborhood aesthetics and quality. In addition, the Planned Residential Development (PRD) allows for a cluster approach to the subdivision process on lots 20 acres in size. However, in this case, while the clustering of units may lower infrastructure costs, there is no mechanism in place to ensure or encourage any proportion of units to be "affordable." Note: according to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to be considered affordable housing, a unit's cost must not exceed 30% of the annual income of a household considered to be "low-income" (a household whose income does not exceed 80% of the median income for the area). More information on affordable housing can be found in the appendix of this

document and on the web at:

[www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/index.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/index.cfm)

These and other components of the town's zoning ordinance should be reviewed to determine impact and effectiveness at providing affordable housing. Where possible, the town should consider adding incentives that encourage the construction of a certain percentage of affordable units in exchange for project approvals at densities higher than allowed in the underlying zoning as well as ways to promote increased use of the existing provisions within the town's zoning ordinance for back lot development. Finally, as demographics change, the town should encourage housing types that meet the community's needs. For example, the zoning ordinance should be reviewed to identify ways to encourage senior housing and well-designed assisted living units in Londonderry.

### **||** *Ensure appropriately designed housing*

Most housing types likely to be developed in Londonderry can be made compatible with existing neighborhoods through the use of design and buffering techniques. The town could develop design standards for affordable housing, identifying the type, character, size, location, etc. of units that would be acceptable in Londonderry. In general, all housing types built in Londonderry should be good quality construction and design and the town should make an effort to ensure that well-designed, affordable housing is blended into developments and not segregated or separated.



*Affordable single family housing unit in the Parkside Gables Neighborhood in Stamford, CT. Source: Affordable Housing Design Advisor.*

### **||** *Support regional efforts to deal with affordable housing*

The entire Southern New Hampshire Planning Region is struggling with affordable housing issues. Londonderry should work with the SNHPC and surrounding municipalities to identify regional, long-term solutions to housing affordability. A set of representatives from the town's housing committee (recommended above), as well as additional, interested stakeholders, could be selected to participate in a regional working group.

