

PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY PROFILE

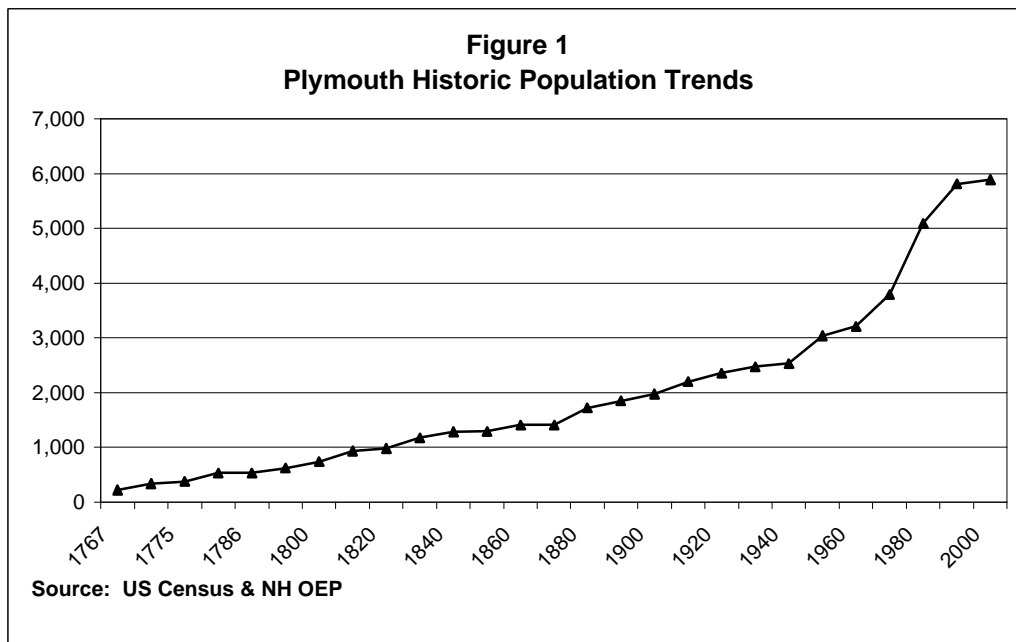
OCTOBER 4, 2005

1. Summary

- Since data was first recorded in 1767, Plymouth has seen a steady rise in population from 227 residents to the 2000 US Census figure of 5,892.
- The greatest rate of growth occurred between 1960 and 1980 when Plymouth's population increased by 50%, largely due to growth of its state college.
- Population growth slowed significantly from 1990 to 2000 in the area, with rates of growth in Plymouth, Ashland and Rumney decreasing from double digits to single digit increases, 1.4%, 2.1% and 2.4% respectively.
- Plymouth's household size continues to decrease from 2.93 people per household in 1970 to 2.56 in 1990 and to 2.51 in 2000.
- There are 209 people per square mile in Plymouth with 28.2 square miles of land area. The total number of people per square mile in Plymouth in 2000 was the highest of the towns in the immediate vicinity, with only Bristol and Bridgewater coming close.
- Founded in 1870, Plymouth State University (PSU) grew from a normal school to a small teachers college to a university of nearly 3,900 full time and 1,500 part-time students. From 1970 to 2004, the full-time student enrollment doubled from 1,907 to 3,894 students.
- Plymouth's population by New Hampshire standards is very well educated. More than 90% of Plymouth residents 25 years and older have graduated from high school and 41% with a Bachelor's degree or better (compared 87% and 28% respectively statewide).
- According to population projections prepared by both the New Hampshire Office of Energy Planning, Plymouth's population is projected to increase by 30% by 2025 (an increase of 1,828 people) at a steady rate.

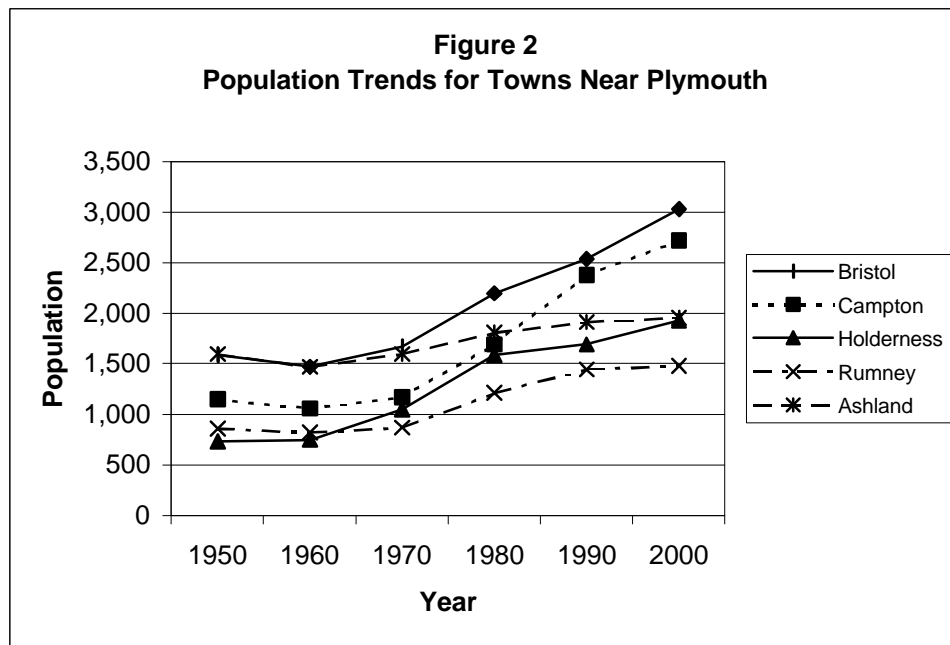
2. Historical Population Trends

Unlike many communities in New England, Plymouth did not have a spike in population in the 19th century and a decline when many New Englanders headed west in search of better soils and a higher quality of life. Since data was first recorded, Plymouth has seen a steady rise in population. The greatest rate of growth occurred between 1960 and 1980 when Plymouth's population increased by 50%, largely due to growth of its state college. During the last two decades, population has continued to grow at a steady rate for the same reason with some leveling off in the last decade of the 20th century. According to the US Census, Plymouth's population reached 5,892 in 2000, a 1.4% increase from 1990.



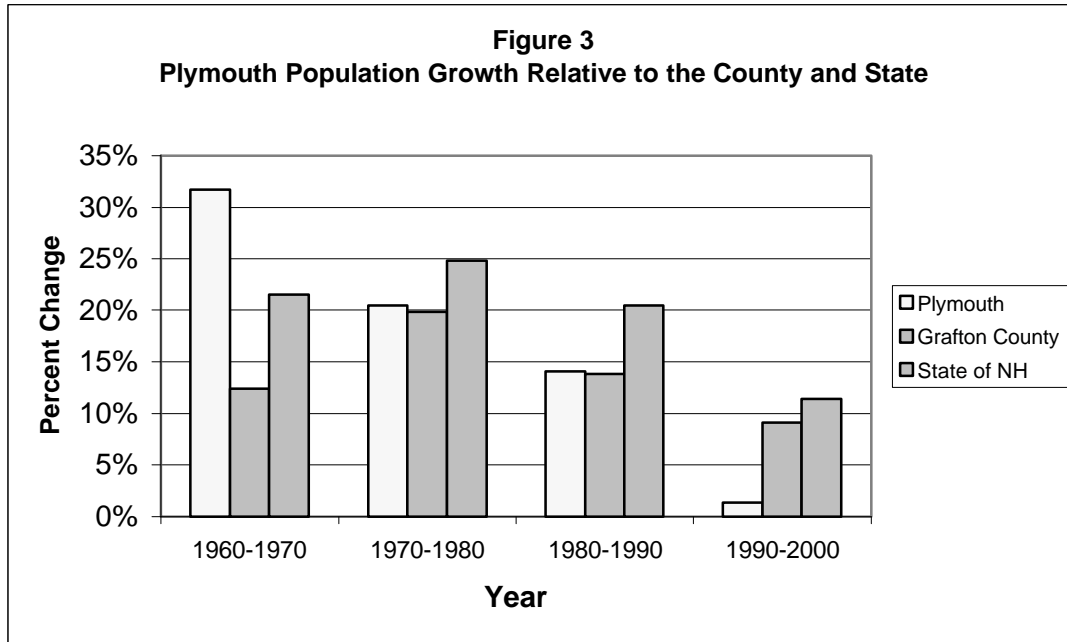
Communities with more than 500 residents surrounding Plymouth have shown similar rates of growth in the last five decades. Generally experiencing a steady rise in population without the leveling off experienced by Plymouth in the last decade of the 20th century.

- Holderness experienced the fastest growth in the 1970s with a 51% increase population with Campton close behind at 45% growth in the decade since 1970.
- Campton also was the fastest growing town in the region during the 1980s with an increase of 40% (from 1,694 people to 2,377).
- Population growth slowed significantly from 1990 to 2000 in the area, with rates of growth in Plymouth, Ashland and Rumney decreasing from double digits to single digit increases, 1.4%, 2.1% and 2.4% respectively.
- Communities of Bristol, Campton and Holderness continued to see increases in population growth during the 1990s, exceeding the rates of the county (9.1%) and the state (11.4%), with rates 13.9% respectively.
- Plymouth’s rate of population increase during the 1990s was the slowest in the immediate vicinity.



Source: US Census, NH OEP

Plymouth's population growth relative to Grafton County and the state mirrors the trends noted above, including a decrease in the rate of population growth for the past two decades from 1980 to 2000. After rapid growth during the 1960s and 70s, Plymouth's rate of population growth has lagged behind that of the state. This trend is especially pronounced in the 10 years since 1990 when Plymouth showed significantly less growth than the state as well as Grafton County.



Source: US Census, NH OEP

3. Natural Increase and Migration

The two components of population change are migration and natural increase. Migration refers to the number of people moving into and out-of-town. Natural increase is the number of births less deaths. Plymouth's *natural population increase* (the number of births less deaths) during the 1990s was consistently positive with the exception of 1997. From 1991 through 2000, it appears as though the natural increase of 99 persons exceeded the Census recorded figure of 81 people, which would indicate a slight migration out-of-town during that period.

Year	Births	Deaths	Natural Change	Total Population
1990	55	26	29	5,811
1991	44	40	4	
1992	35	33	2	
1993	47	43	4	
1994	46	41	5	
1995	42	35	7	
1996	29	25	4	
1997	36	42	-6	
1998	51	26	25	
1999	54	31	23	
2000	55	24	31	5,892
2001	48	21	27	
2002	31	28	3	
2003	31	21	10	
2004	24	19	5	

Source: NH Bureau of Health Statistics 1990-2001, Plymouth Reports 2002-2004

- Since 2000, there has been a natural increase in population of 45 people, which is comparable to the trends of the 1990s.

4. Household Size

Plymouth's household size continues to decrease from 2.93 people per household in 1970 to 2.56 in 1990 and to 2.51 in 2000. This decline is generally consistent with Grafton County, state and national trends. Census data show that until recently the state's mean number of persons per household had been a bit higher than in Plymouth and the county, but Plymouth's household size has remained steady in the past decade while Grafton County and the state continue to decline.

Area	1970 Mean	1980 Mean	1990 Mean	2000 Mean
Plymouth	2.93	2.57	2.56	2.51
Grafton County	2.90	2.60	2.51	2.38
New Hampshire	3.10	2.75	2.62	2.53
<i>Source: US Census</i>				

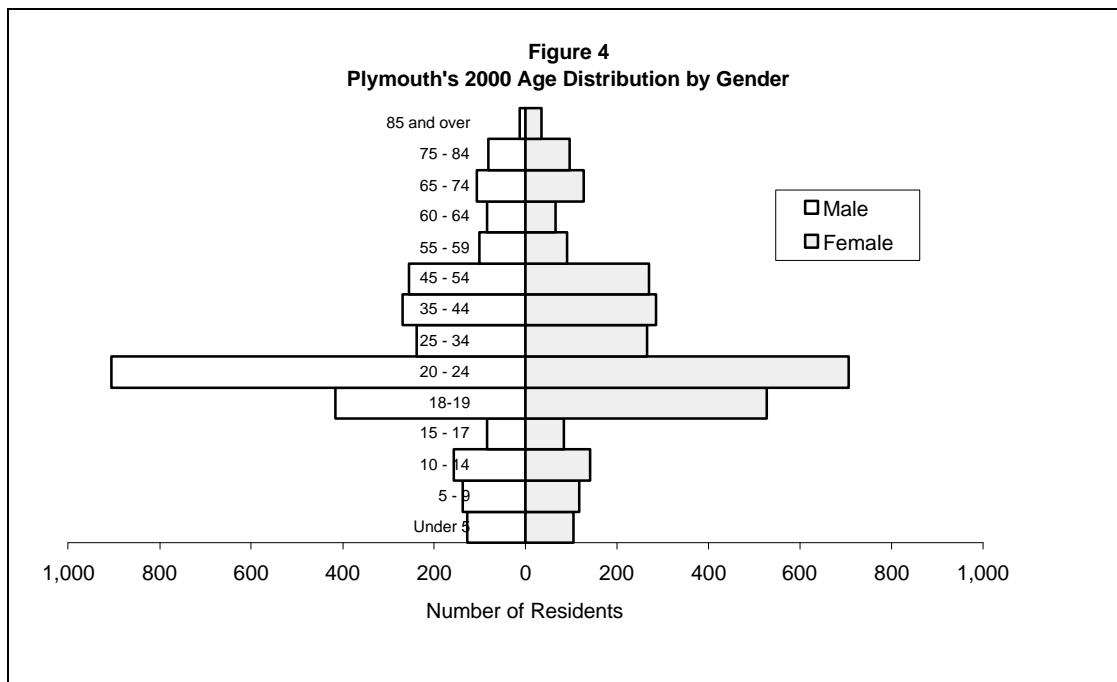
5. Population Density

The total number of people per square mile in Plymouth in 2000 was the highest of the towns in the immediate vicinity, with only Bristol and Bridgewater coming close. There are 209 people per square mile in Plymouth with 28.2 square miles of land area. Bristol is the next most densely populated adjacent town with 177 people per square mile. The population density of the county is about one-quarter of Plymouth's while the overall state is approximately two-thirds as dense as Plymouth.

6. Age and Gender Distribution

Understanding the age and gender composition of a community is vital in planning for future facility and service needs. A change in the school-age population, for example, may indicate a need for new or expanded school. With more children not only are more classrooms needed, but also pressure is placed on recreational facilities and programs. Likewise, a shift to a more elderly population would require development of a different range and type of services and facilities. Shifts in age distribution, moreover, reflect changes in household characteristics resulting in different demands on housing.

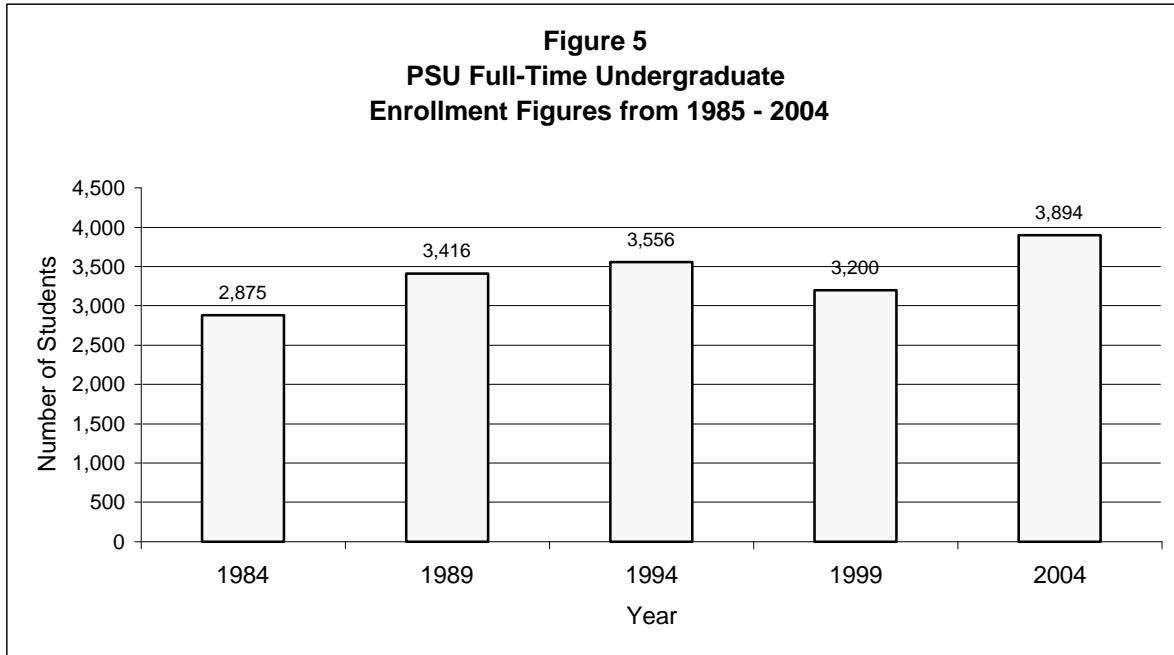
- The 2000 US Census data show a slight increase in the number of people living in town in the last decade with very minimal changes in the age composition of the town's population. This is unusual as across the state as well as nationwide, the percentage of the senior population is increasing.
- The University population explains the very large group of 18 to 24 year olds. There are also a greater number of males attending PSU than females, which explains the gender difference.



- Not quite 8% of Plymouth's population is made up of seniors with county and state percentages 13.5% and 12% respectively. However, if the number of students living on-campus is removed from the data set, Plymouth's percentage of persons 65 and over becomes 13.6% of the total population.

7. University Population

PSU students make up a large proportion of the town's population and therefore deserve consideration. Founded in 1870, Plymouth State University (PSU) grew from a normal school to a small teachers college to a university of nearly 3,900 full time and 1,500 part-time students. From 1970 to 2004, the full-time student enrollment increased by 104% (from 1,907 to 3,894 students). The following graph presents full-time undergraduate enrollment trends for the past 20 years.



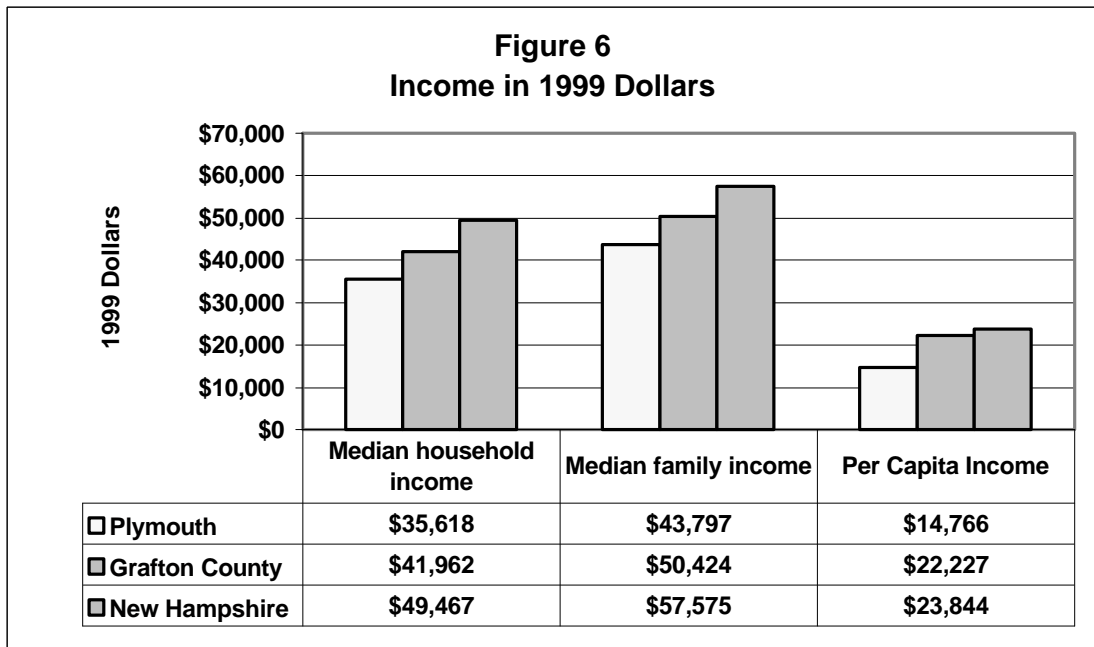
Source: Nick Mathis, PSU Office of Institutional Research - June 1, 2005

8. Educational Attainment

Plymouth's population by New Hampshire standards is very well educated. More than 90% of Plymouth residents 25 years and older have graduated from high school and 41% with a Bachelor's degree or better (compared 87% and 28% respectively statewide). In 2003-2004, the most recent year for which data is available, 67% of graduates from Plymouth Regional High School were college bound (compared with 54% statewide).

9. Income Levels

Plymouth is a modest income community. Median household and family incomes in Plymouth are slightly lower than in the county and more so in the state, although per-capita incomes are slightly lower than in the county. This may be due to the composition of households in Plymouth, and the greater percentage of students.

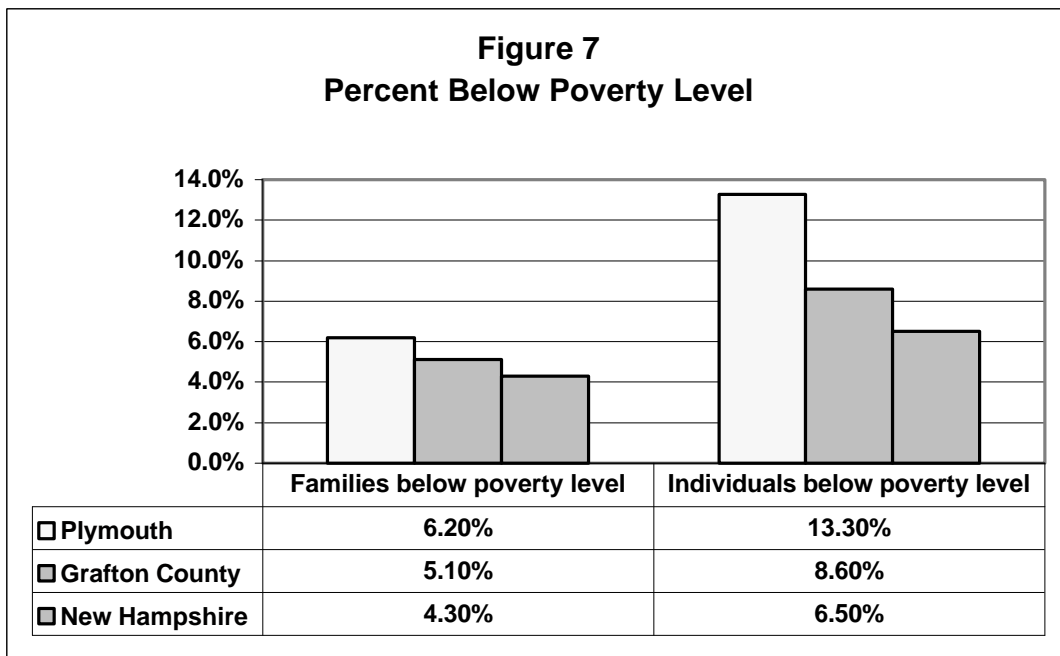


10. Poverty Level

Plymouth’s population is characterized by a greater rate of poverty than the county and state as a whole, which is consistent with other college communities and regional service centers. It is likely that the high proportion of Plymouth residents living below the poverty level in the age category 18-24 may be due to the students with low income but with some financial support from their parents or with little income of their own.

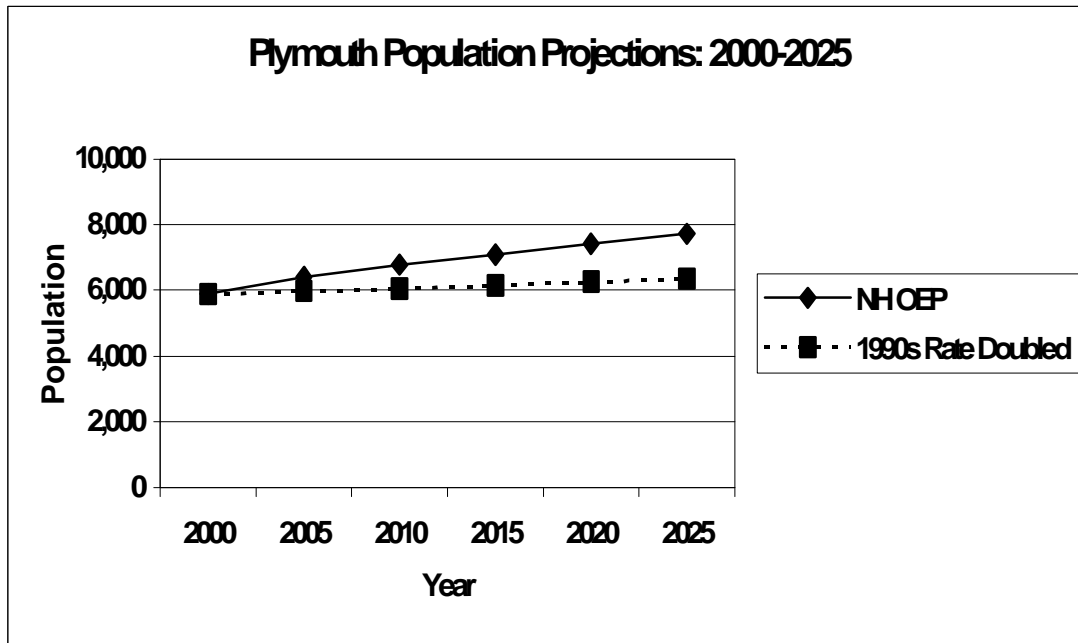
Age	Plymouth		Grafton County		New Hampshire	
	# of Poverty Persons	%	# of Poverty Persons	%	# of Poverty Persons	%
Under 18	102	13.0%	1,489	23.0%	22,028	28.1%
18 - 64	640	81.5%	4,214	65.2%	46,510	59.2%
65-75	43	5.5%	759	11.7%	9,992	12.7%
Total Persons	785		6,462		78,530	

*Note: 553 of the 640 persons are in the 18 - 24 age group
Source: US Census*



11. Population Projections

According to population projections prepared by both the New Hampshire Office of Energy Planning, Plymouth’s population is projected to increase by 30% by 2025 (an increase of 1,828 people) at a steady rate. Using the rate of population increase that occurred between 1990 and 2000 (1.4%) every 5 years through 2025 (noted on the graph as "1990s Rate doubled"), the projected increase is only 8% or 470 people through 2025.



12. Planning Considerations

Goal: The accommodation of a reasonable rate of population growth in Plymouth.

- (1) Anticipate and plan for a projected annual population growth rate of 1% for the next five to ten years. *[Note - annual population growth rate between 1990-2000 = 0.14% annually]*
- (2) Work cooperatively with other towns in the area, the County and North Country Council to plan for the project population growth in order to accommodate the subsequent demand for housing, economic opportunity and community services.
- (3) Take steps through planning, zoning, and capital improvements to ensure that growth and development in excess of the projected growth rate does not over-burden town services and facilities or adversely affect the town's character.