

# Additional Considerations

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## Projections

Population and employment changes drive urban development. They have a direct effect on housing, transportation and local commercial activity. Understanding the patterns, amounts and causes of past changes in population and employment and its relationship to land development forms is important to proactively plan for the future.<sup>1</sup>

The Baseline Conditions Report prepared by Group Melvin Design provides an assessment of the demographic and employment trends in Montclair.

Projections, however, are notoriously inaccurate at the local level. For example, Montclair's 1933 Master Plan included a population projection of 89,500 persons by 1960 when in actuality the population stayed much the same at 43,000. As shown in Table 1, the Township's projected population for 2035, based on its allocation from the NJTPA forecasting model, will bring the Township's population back to the same levels experienced in the 1950's and 1960's. The difference, however, will be in how this population is housed as household sizes have decreased and housing demand has changed.

Many demographers will not involve themselves in forecasts for small areas as the accuracy of these forecasts are very susceptible to local conditions. Measures such as zoning, public works programming and so on provide an element of local control over the accuracy of forecasts.<sup>2</sup> **Demographic forecasts are a tool used in preparing comprehensive plans to provide guidance and direction on anticipated trends that will impact development decisions. They provide a measure of the demand for future growth and the Township has a choice in how and to what degree it embraces the anticipated growth.**

Year	Population
1910	21,559
1920	28,772
1930	42,017
1940	39,807
1950	43,927
1960	43,129
1970	44,043
1980	38,321
1990	37,487
2000	38,658
2010	37,699
2035 Projection	44,630

## Lifestyle Trends

American households have changed dramatically since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. They are increasingly made up of smaller families, nonfamilies and single people. According to demographer William Frey, "traditional" households – married couples with children – made up only 27 percent of all suburban households; married couples with no children made up 29 percent, nonfamily households made up 29 percent and "other" kinds of

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, Larz T. Guidelines for Preparing Urban Plans. Chicago, Illinois: American Planning Association, 1995. Page 73.

<sup>2</sup> Chapin, F. Stuart. Urban Land Use Planning. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1957. Page 168.

families made up the remaining 15 percent.<sup>3</sup> These changes directly affect housing and lifestyle choices.

Demographics is one factor that is changing the suburbs, as the aging Baby Boom generation is looking to locate in walkable communities. At approximately 77 million Americans, they are fully one quarter of the population. With the leading edge of the boomers now approaching 65 years old, the group is finding that their suburban houses are too big and isolating. Freedom for many in this generation means living in walkable, accessible communities with convenient transit linkages and good public services like libraries, cultural activities and health care.

In 2011, for the first time in more than nine decades, the major cities of the nation's largest metropolitan areas grew faster than their combined suburbs.<sup>4</sup> This is a reflection of the increased demand for urban-style living by both the aging Baby Boom generation and the Millennial generation. Millennials (those born between 1983 and 2000) are already the largest generation in the United States and their choices will play a crucial role in determining future housing and transportation needs. Sixty-four percent of college-educated Millennials choose first where they want to live, and only then do they look for a job. Fully 7 percent of them plan to live in America's urban cores.<sup>5</sup>

Not only have demographics changed, but lifestyles have changed. Many people have more money but less free time than ever; consequently, they value time over money. Some people have grown tired of the maintenance that comes with homeownership; others never want to settle into that routine to begin with. Fewer people want to spend large chunks of their day commuting from remote locations or driving to one errand after another. Increasing numbers of people work at home and more people are concerned about environmental and health related issues. All these trends spell changes to communities – changes that affect how they are developed, what kinds of services and amenities they include and what kinds of homes they provide. Many of the comments heard during the public outreach process correspond with these lifestyle trends.

However, as growing numbers of Americans opt for more urban lifestyles, they are often met with city centers that don't welcome their return. Outdated zoning and building codes, often imported from the suburbs, have created uninviting streetscapes with equally antisocial private buildings, creating a public realm that is unsafe, uncomfortable and boring. Forward-thinking cities are attracting these residents by creating walkable communities through reforming their codes to create useful, safe, comfortable and interesting places and laboring to reestablish the proper balance of activities downtown.<sup>6</sup> Key to this is bringing housing back to downtown. **Montclair Township, where "the suburb meets the city," with its rich array of transportation**

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<sup>3</sup> "The New Shape of Suburbia: Trends in Residential Development." Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute, 2003. Page 3.

<sup>4</sup> Frey, William H. "Demographic Reversal: Cities Thrive, Suburbs Sputter." State of Metropolitan America, Number 56 of 62, Brookings Institution, June 29, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Speck, Jeff. Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012. Page 21.

<sup>6</sup> Speck, Jeff. Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012. Page 4.

**alternatives and cultural amenities, is poised to capture this market segment if it can provide the right type of housing and transportation improvements.**

## **Transportation Trends**

According to a new study conducted by U.S. PIRG Education Fund<sup>7</sup>, the Driving Boom – a six decade-long period of steady increases in per-capita driving in the United States – is over. Americans drive fewer total miles today than we did at the end of Bill Clinton’s first term. The unique combination of conditions that fueled the Driving Boom – from cheap gas prices to the rapid expansion of the workforce during the Baby Boom generation – no longer exists. Meanwhile, the Millennials are demanding a new American Dream less dependent on driving. In fact, Americans took nearly 10 percent more trips via public transportation in 2011 than in 2005. The nation also saw increases in commuting by bike and on foot.

A return to the steady growth in per-capita driving that characterized the Driving Boom years is unlikely given the aging of the Baby Boom generation, the projected continuation of high gas prices, anticipated reductions in the percentage of Americans in the labor force, and the peaking of demand for vehicles and driver’s licenses and the amount of time Americans are willing to spend in travel.

The Millennial generation has led the recent change in transportation trends – driving significantly less than previous generations of young Americans. Young people aged 16 to 34 drove 23 percent fewer miles on average in 2009 than they did in 2001 – a greater decline in driving than any other age group. Millennials are more likely to want to live in urban and walkable neighborhoods and are more open to non-driving forms of transportation than older Americans. They are also the first generation to fully embrace mobile Internet-connected technologies, which are rapidly spawning new transportation options and shifting the way young Americans relate to one another, creating new avenues for living connected, vibrant lives that are less reliant on driving.

The amount of driving in the United States in 2040 is likely to be lower than is assumed in recent government forecasts. If the Millennial-led decline in per-capita driving continues for another dozen years, even at half the annual rate of the 2001 – 2009 period, total vehicle travel in the United States could remain well below its 2007 peak through at least 2040 – despite a 21 percent increase in population.

The recent reduction in driving and the less auto-dependent ways of living by Millennials and others creates a golden opportunity for America to adopt transportation policies that use resources efficiently, preserve our existing infrastructure, and provide support for Americans seeking alternatives to car travel. **Montclair Township’s Unified Land Use and Circulation Plan provides the support from a land use and transportation perspective for a less auto-dependent way of living.**

## **Form Based Code**

Key to the success of any future development is design. Traditional zoning ordinances are use-based, with limited control over project design details. Montclair Township has

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<sup>7</sup> “A New Direction: Our Changing Relationship with Driving and the Implications for America’s Future.” U.S. PIRG Education Fund. Spring 2013.

typically utilized the redevelopment process which maximizes control over project design. Redevelopment, however, cannot be used to ensure good future design throughout the Township. Form-based code provides an alternative to traditional zoning to provide improved design.

According to the Form Based Codes Institute, a form-based code is a “method of regulating development to achieve a specific form and a desired physical outcome.” Form based code prescribes building types first, then defines permitted uses. This difference in emphasis between “use-based” zoning and “form-based” zoning reflects different priorities. Use-based zoning is focused on separating land uses and assigning different uses to different areas; form-based zoning, while still regulating uses, is more focused on regulating community form. This is accomplished by regulating building types and their relationship to streets and other public spaces. This results in a high-quality public realm by using physical form rather than separation of uses as the organizing principle for the code.<sup>8</sup> **The Unified Land Use and Circulation Plan provides the basis for a regulating plan in a form-based code for the Township’s business districts.**

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<sup>8</sup> Rodrigues, Carlos. Form Based Codes in New Jersey: Issues and Opportunities. Regional Plan Association, July 2010.