

CHAPTER 1: Population Characteristics and Trends

Ocean City has experienced consistent, and in some time periods, remarkable growth. The number of both daily and seasonal visitors has increased steadily over the years. The year-round population, in particular, has remained stable within the past 15 years even during a national economic recession and global pandemic. US Census estimates of the permanent resident population in April are 7,172 (2000), 7,102 (2010) and 7,0556,844 (20152020) with less than 1% change between each a 3.6% reduction in the last 10-year period. This chapter reviews past changes in both year-round and seasonal populations, provides a profile of the characteristics of these populations, identifies expected future population trends and projections and assesses the implications of expected future population trends for purposes related to community planning.

New information for this 10-year cycle review will be the addition of data for each of Ocean City's census tracts (9500 Downtown, 9501 Midtown, and 9503 North OC), and where useful including comparison data for Ocean City zip code area that incorporates portions of West OC in Worcester County representing a community of interest.

Goal:

To collect and utilize information regarding the demographic characteristics of Ocean City (both year round and seasonal) and to identify trends or changes which should be evaluated by the Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives: In order to achieve the population characteristics and trends goal, the following objectives are adopted:

- 1.1 Update population estimates and other data collected through the US Census and American Community Survey.
- 1.2 Review traditional and new methods of estimating peak seasonal population to identify trends or changes. Improve data collection and tracking methods.
- 1.3 Communicate information with other City Departments, Planning Commission, Mayor and City Council to support local decision making in other planning documents such as the Capital Improvement Plan, Code revisions, etc.
- 1.4 Reference data collected in Chapter 1 throughout the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate adequate public facilities.

- 1.5 Study seasonal visitor demographics by zip code origin to determine unique population characteristics.
- 1.6 Incorporate Town of Ocean City, MD Strategic Plan principles into the evaluation of demographic information.

1.7 Recognize the connections between OC (Town) and West OC (County) to encourage cooperative land use planning which benefits both communities.

The Town of Ocean City is a diverse and international community. This diversity is underscored by the wide range in characteristics of the seasonal visitor population and of the stable base of year-round residents. These residents and visitors to Ocean City can be characterized as follows:

- Year-round residents
- Non-resident property owners
- Overnight visitors
- Day visitors
- Seasonal workers / residents

The Town of Ocean City is a ‘hard to count’ community for the U.S. Census because of the high percentage of seasonal rental housing and the population survey count based on a single day in April, once every 10 years. The American Community Survey is completed more often, however the method of sampling representative sites does not adequately capture the dynamic seasonal changes that occur. ~~and d~~Data collected by zip code includes areas outside of the municipal boundary.

Limited availability of data has traditionally meant that population statistics are consolidated into two groups: year-round residents and seasonal visitors. Best available information from many sources is used to provide a basis for understanding and meeting present and future planning needs. This Chapter is organized in three parts, each providing discussion of:

- **Population size and characteristics.** Population size serves as the benchmark for planning the physical needs of the community. It provides the basis for estimating overall land and facility needs. Analyzing the characteristics of the population assists policymakers in making informed judgments regarding how the needs and service demands of the present population can best be met.
- **Population projections.** Population projections provide the basis for estimating future service, housing, and employment needs and determining how community demand for services can be expected to change over time. Projections are based on both recent trends and the capacity of the Town of Ocean City to adapt to growth and redevelopment. Given a wide range of variables that can influence future year-round and visitor population characteristics, projections should be considered less than precise, but nevertheless useful for estimating future demand for community facilities and services.

- **Recommendations.** The recommendations for action identify key items or issues to be addressed related to population. They are designed to implement the spirit of the Comprehensive Plan and facilitate the progress of Ocean City’s ongoing planning program.

Ocean City at Night

As a tourist destination with many scheduled special events and destination locations, the location of the population can be very important as well as the time of day or night. The downtown area of the Boardwalk provides a gathering point for thousands of summer visitors in the evening hours, and special events such as the annual Air Show will concentrate the visitor population and increase the demand for public services.

Healthy Eating Active Living

The Town of Ocean City is ~~now~~ recognized as a healthy community by joining with the HEAL – healthy eating and active living – Cities & Towns Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic, which champions local government policies that improve access to healthy foods and physical activity. ‘HEAL’ wants all Marylanders to live high quality, healthy lives and Ocean City works to maximize free resources that can benefit our citizens and the wellbeing of our entire community.

~~In June 2017,~~ Ocean City achieved Gold Level recognition for meeting 3 goals:

- Healthier vending options at Park concession stands
- Promoting worksite wellness
- More accessible bike and walking paths

At risk Population

Adoption of the Ocean City Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2023 recognizes a unique segment of the resident and visitor population that may require advance notice of identified community hazards, and potentially higher levels of emergency response to specific locations.

Aging Population

National trends toward an aging population are supported by the 2020 Census data. Implications for Ocean City will be incorporated in this Plan update.

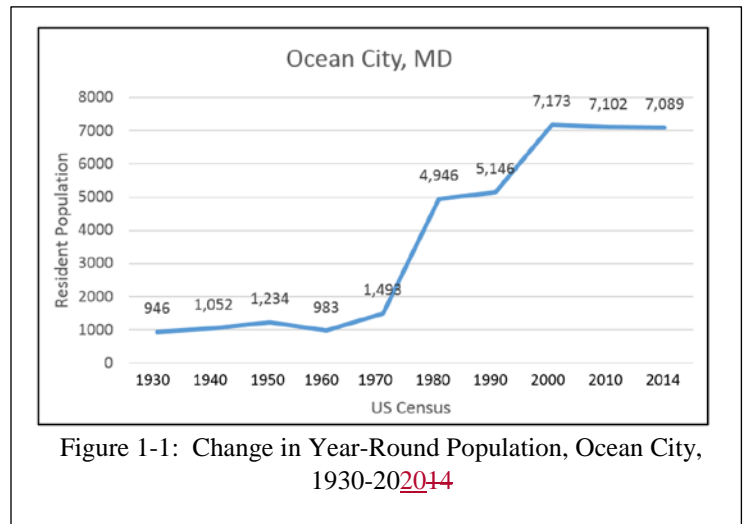
Population Size and Characteristics

Year-round Population

During its early years, Ocean City was a small resort community experiencing slow year-round resident growth. Through four decades from the period 1930-1970 the Town’s resident population grew by only 547 new residents. The Town’s population declined in the 1950s only to recover in the 1960s when the northern section of the island was annexed. The modest population decline in the 1950s has been attributed to permanent residents moving to the mainland, either selling or renting their high-value island property. During the 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s growth in the year-round population increased steadily. This growth period resulted from the increasing tourist economy enabling more households to be supported year-round by the summer trade, and the expansion of public facilities to serve an increasing population. In addition, there has been an influx of retirees who have found Ocean City to be a desirable place to live.

As a resort town, Ocean City is affected by the strength of the national economy. Year-round resident population has stabilized but generally not dropped significantly during recent recessionary periods in the early 1980’s and again recently beginning in 2008/09. Although the year-round resident population has increased almost 5 fold since 1970, current 2020 Census data indicates the resident population on April 1st may have stabilized around 7,100 persons that had remained stable over 7,000, has now decreased to 6,844 persons.

| Table 1-1: Year-Round Population, Ocean City 1930-2010 | | |
|---|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Year | Population | Average Annual Change |
| 1930 | 946 | |
| 1940 | 1,052 | 1.1% |
| 1950 | 1,234 | 1.7% |
| 1960 | 983 | (-2.0%) |
| 1970 | 1,493 | 5.2% |
| 1980 | 4,946 | 23.1% |
| 1990 | 5,146 | 0.4% |
| 2000 | 7,173 | 3.9% |



| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 2010 | 7,102 | (-0.1%) |
| 2020 (estimate) | 6,844 <u>6,844,055</u> | (-3.60) <u>(-3.60-7%)</u> |

Source: U.S. Census for years 1930 through 2020. 2015 estimate from the American Community Survey illustrates the same stable growth trend in year-round population evident from 2000 to 2010

Table 1-2 compares the growth of Ocean City’s permanent population to that of the County, Eastern Shore Region and the State of Maryland. Traditional growth rates across the State of Maryland and especially on the Eastern Shore have been stable over the last 10 year period ranging from 1 to 1.5 percent annual average increase. The slight decline of year-round population in Ocean City ~~is consistent in 2020 is trending back up~~ with 2022 ACS 5 year estimates ~~however it does not necessarily indicate a demographic trend of 6,879.~~

| Table 1-1.5 | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Population by Census Block | | | | |
| | <u>9500</u> | <u>9501</u> | <u>9503</u> | <u>Total</u> |
| <u>2010</u> | <u>2,080</u> | <u>1,728</u> | <u>3,294</u> | <u>7,102</u> |
| <u>2020</u> | <u>1,917</u> | <u>1,845</u> | <u>3,156</u> | <u>6,844</u> |

| Table 1-2 | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|--|
| Population Change in Ocean City and Selected Jurisdictions 1970-2010 | | | | | | |
| | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | <u>2020</u> | Average Annual Change -2000 - <u>2020</u> |
| Ocean City | 4,496 | 5,146 | 7,173 | 7,102 | <u>6,844</u> | -3.60 <u>-1%</u> |
| <u>21842 Zip Code</u> | | | <u>10,274</u> | <u>11,089</u> | <u>11,104</u> | <u>0.1%</u> |
| Worcester County | 30,889 | 35,028 | 46,543 | 51,454 | <u>52,460</u> | 1.06 <u>1.95%</u> |
| Lower Eastern Shore (w,w,s,s,oc) | 145,240 | 163,043 | 186,608 | 214,102 | <u>220,562</u> | <u>3.01<u>4.7%</u></u> |
| State of Maryland | 4,216,933 | 4,780,753 | 5,296,486 | 5,773,552 | <u>6,177,224</u> | 7.00 <u>9%</u> |
| Sussex County, Delaware | 98,004 | 113,229 | 156,638 | 197,145 | <u>237,378</u> | <u>20.45<u>9%</u></u> |
| Source: U.S. Census Quick Facts | | | | | | |

The Ocean City Office of Planning and Community Development has indicated the official ~~2010~~ 2020 Ocean City population of ~~7,102~~6,844 as determined by the U.S. Census may not accurately represent the number of actual year-round residents based on the single April 1st survey date and the seasonal nature of the resident population. For planning purposes however, the number of permanent residents has been identified as an important indicator of stable residential neighborhoods, as a benchmark for providing minimum year-round public services, as a core employee workforce, and as a critical factor to maintain a strong base of registered voters and local governance. In many ways tThe permanent resident population is not as important in many other ways as-compared with the total maximum number of people in the Town, including both the permanent and transient population.

Seasonal Visitor Population

In a resort such as Ocean City, it is much more important to understand the demographics of the total population, including year-round residents and seasonal visitors, rather than only the resident population. Planning for future development and for the provision of public facilities must be based on the total maximum population to be accommodated and served within a 10 to 20 year planning period. With recent efforts to expand events and activities for seasonal visitors throughout the year, there will be a continued need to evaluate the implications of an extended peak season and higher sustained service levels year-round.

Measuring the seasonal visitor population is a difficult task for any resort community. Since the 1970s, Ocean City has estimated its total population by a mathematical formula called “demoflush”. Demoflush estimates population based on flow amounts through the sewage treatment system. When compared to other indicators of population, demoflush population estimates may seem to overstate the actual number of people in Ocean City, however it has served as a valuable tool to compare population over time and by season since it provides a consistent methodology for estimating seasonal and year to year changes in population.

Over the last ~~5-15-20~~ years, the Mayor and City Council have directed that an alternative way of estimating seasonal visitor population should be developed and calibrated so that the use of the demoflush method can be phased out. The Tourism Commission has been collecting a consistent set of statistics since May 2012 that may allow the use of a tax revenue and room occupancy based approach in the future. With this Plan update, the traditional demoflush information has been updated for comparison purposes until a new method is adopted.

| Table 1- 3 Peak Summer Seasonal Population Estimates, Ocean City | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Year | Peak Summer daily Population | Annual Percent Change |
| 1990 | 326,859 | -3.7% |

| | | |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| 1991 | 333,795 | 2.1% |
| 1992 | 326,859 | -2.1% |
| 1993 | 322,919 | -1.2% |
| 1994 | 330,133 | 2.2% |
| 1995 | 319,755 | -3.1% |
| 1996 | 332,547 | 4.0% |
| 1997 | 319,309 | -4.0% |
| 1998 | 335,798 | 5.2% |
| 1999 | 334,096 | -0.1% |
| 2000 | 331,755 | 0.7% |
| 2001 | 311,330 | -6.2% |
| 2002 | 339,309 | 9.0% |
| 2003 | 340,344 | 0.1% |
| 2004 | 345,671 | 1.6% |
| 2005 | 322,308 | -6.8% |
| 2006 | 311,321 | -3.4% |
| 2007 | 315,649 | 1.4% |
| 2008 | 326,249 | 3.4% |
| 2009 | 325,805 | -1.4% |
| 2010 | 332,547 | 2.1% |
| 2011 | 330,688 | -0.6% |
| 2012 | 330,300 | -0.1% |
| 2013 | 322,558 | -2.4% |
| 2014 | 306,353 | -5.3% |
| 2015 | 318,840 | 4.1% |
| 25 year average 1990 to 2015 | 326,658 | |

Source: Mathematical formula called "Demoflush" which estimates population based on volume of flow through the Town's Sewage Treatment System

Peak Day- Table 1-3 shows the peak seasonal population for each year from 1990 to 2015. This is the estimated number of people in Ocean City on the peak day in each year. The table indicates that a peak day population of 332,547 in 2010 and a 25 year average of 326,658 with a maximum annual variance of 6%.

| | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|
| January | 51,312 | 72,886 | 75,152 | 77,469 | 67,425 | 64,831 | 76,182 | 68,868 | 71,343 | 78,345 | 73,571 | 73,141 | 77,376 | 82,897 | |
| February | 70,662 | 69,853 | 72,492 | 64,372 | 80,237 | 81,826 | 94,783 | 72,877 | 78,427 | 88,512 | 82,575 | 84,296 | 86,807 | 83,116 | |
| March | 73,474 | 78,829 | 90,594 | 82,658 | 78,745 | 95,971 | 96,129 | 92,412 | 94,173 | 97,159 | 99,051 | 96,648 | 92,321 | 90,427 | |
| April | 97,603 | 103,150 | 110,769 | 107,924 | 112,000 | 117,203 | 107,845 | 104,655 | 114,284 | 119,909 | 119,839 | 122,004 | 111,307 | 115,938 | |
| May | 157,839 | 169,437 | 171,387 | 177,330 | 163,605 | 160,895 | 159,734 | 159,245 | 180,979 | 166,248 | 176,124 | 159,245 | 167,658 | 164,276 | |
| June | 223,496 | 230,008 | 229,953 | 230,188 | 233,540 | 234,628 | 236,381 | 227,303 | 233,698 | 235,772 | 234,451 | 228,621 | 216,510 | 227,775 | |
| July | 307,187 | 303,968 | 313,402 | 302,532 | 311,009 | 311,323 | 307,457 | 315,618 | 317,699 | 303,440 | 301,623 | 308,588 | 301,476 | 297,825 | |
| August | 300,222 | 321,199 | 309,708 | 303,496 | 310,374 | 307,680 | 290,921 | 294,950 | 307,242 | 301,235 | 315,749 | 293,940 | 300,882 | 292,175 | |
| September | 211,986 | 212,694 | 229,944 | 211,868 | 211,570 | 188,055 | 217,827 | 208,996 | 208,202 | 201,077 | 192,231 | 185,854 | 204,564 | 209,476 | |
| October | 99,806 | 105,385 | 110,521 | 127,358 | 125,319 | 132,145 | 115,294 | 128,285 | 127,442 | 123,424 | 132,006 | 122,863 | 120,588 | 127,104 | |
| November | 67,147 | 77,941 | 73,418 | 84,353 | 92,696 | 107,115 | 83,241 | 90,899 | 95,283 | 92,939 | 99,401 | 89,578 | 91,010 | 96,795 | |
| December | 43,049 | 63,277 | 49,473 | 67,598 | 80,230 | 67,065 | 62,819 | 54,107 | 75,273 | 72,786 | 76,373 | 76,519 | 65,795 | 71,393 | |
| Avg./Mo. | 141,982 | 150,719 | 153,068 | 153,095 | 155,563 | 155,728 | 154,051 | 151,518 | 158,670 | 156,737 | 158,583 | 153,441 | 153,024 | 154,933 | |
| % Change | | 6.2% | 1.6% | 0.0% | 1.6% | 0.1% | (1.1)% | (1.6)% | 4.7% | (1.2)% | 1.2% | (3.2)% | (.27)% | 1.2% | |

Source: Town of Ocean City, Dept. of Tourism/Planning and Community Development, 2015

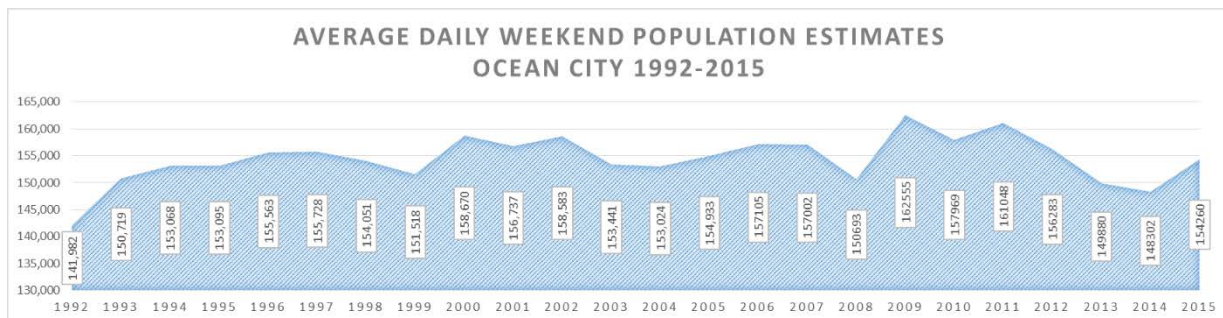
(Table 1-4 continued next page)

**Table 1-4
Average Weekend Population Estimates, Ocean City
1992--- December 2015**

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 23 yr. avg. | 2015 change from avg. |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| January | 81201 | 77678 | 70700 | 67972 | 78671 | 80491 | 75003 | 72493 | 75051 | 87336 | 74058 | +17.9% |
| February | 82173 | 80758 | 80543 | 72045 | 98297 | 81229 | 79655 | 65549 | 78047 | 90613 | 79989 | +13.3% |
| March | 87250 | 94917 | 85424 | 89864 | 117189 | 97503 | 90320 | 88828 | 83531 | 95559 | 91207 | +4.8% |
| April | 108114 | 122456 | 113041 | 123296 | 118012 | 179179 | 112516 | 103550 | 121094 | 105258 | 115456 | -8.8% |
| May | 168882 | 175860 | 169545 | 197363 | 165111 | 178563 | 191561 | 166852 | 177055 | 171529 | 170680 | +0.5% |
| June | 225056 | 237214 | 235301 | 261854 | 230917 | 247544 | 250146 | 225784 | 214003 | 222739 | 232203 | -4.1% |
| July | 296859 | 295491 | 298946 | 294471 | 299248 | 314120 | 303502 | 305111 | 283517 | 289831 | 303510 | -4.5% |
| August | 293910 | 296365 | 285436 | 289993 | 293740 | 308546 | 290670 | 290964 | 281370 | 273199 | 298082 | -8.3% |
| September | 208435 | 207747 | 178441 | 214532 | 213150 | 224137 | 198698 | 203345 | 189908 | 213984 | 206113 | +3.8% |
| October | 140220 | 128469 | 123792 | 139793 | 120022 | 136867 | 122213 | 125207 | 121142 | 144274 | 124981 | +15.4% |
| November | 108269 | 91712 | 92402 | 106726 | 92148 | 78888 | 91679 | 78686 | 79755 | 84206 | 89429 | -5.8% |
| December | 84895 | 75358 | 74750 | 92755 | 69125 | 67508 | 69436 | 73190 | 75145 | 72596 | 70021 | +3.7% |
| Avg./Mo. | 157105 | 157002 | 150693 | 162555 | 157969 | 161048 | 156283 | 149880 | 148302 | 154260 | 154425 | -0.1% |
| % Change | 1.4% | -0.1% | -4.0% | 7.9% | -2.8% | 1.9% | -2.9% | -4.1% | -1.1% | 4.0% | | |

Source: Mathematical formula called "Demoflush" which estimates population based on volume of flow through the Town's Sewage Treatment System
Source: Town of Ocean City, Dept. of Tourism/Planning and Community Development, 2015

Average Weekend- The average weekend population by month is shown in Table 1- 4. Since 1992 the year-round average weekend population has varied from 5 to 8 percent above or below the 24 year average and typically ranges from 150,000 to 160,000 over the years. The average weekend populations through the summer months have remained quite stable through the 1992-2015 period. Most noteworthy are trends reflecting more substantial increases in average weekend populations during the peak season shoulder months and winter months. Through the period shown in Table 4, the months of January, February, and October 2015 each recorded substantial weekend population increases of 13 to 18% above average.



**Table 1-5
Average Weekend Population by Season
1992--- 2005**

| | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Winter | 55,008 | 68,672 | 65,706 | 69,813 | 75,964 | 71,235 | 77,928 | 65,284 | 75,014 | 79,881 | 77,506 | 77,985 | 76,659 | 79,135 |
| Spring | 109,638 | 117,138 | 124,250 | 122,637 | 118,117 | 124,689 | 121,236 | 118,771 | 129,812 | 127,772 | 131,671 | 125,966 | 123,762 | 123,547 |
| Summer | 276,968 | 285,058 | 284,354 | 278,739 | 284,974 | 284,544 | 278,253 | 279,290 | 286,213 | 280,149 | 283,941 | 277,050 | 272,956 | 272,592 |
| Fall | 126,313 | 132,006 | 137,961 | 141,193 | 143,195 | 142,438 | 138,787 | 142,727 | 143,642 | 139,147 | 141,213 | 132,765 | 138,721 | 144,458 |

**Table 1-5
Average Weekend Population by Season
2006 --- 2015**

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 24 Year Average | 6 year Average | 2015 Change from 6yr | 2015 Change from 24yr |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Winter | 82,756 | 77,931 | 75,331 | 77,591 | 82,031 | 76,409 | 74,698 | 70,411 | 76,081 | 83,515 | 74,690 | 77,191 | +8.2% | +11.8% |
| Spring | 121,415 | 131,078 | 122,670 | 136,841 | 133,437 | 151,748 | 131,466 | 119,743 | 127,227 | 124,115 | 125,781 | 131,289 | -5.5% | -1.3% |
| Summer | 271,942 | 276,357 | 273,228 | 282,106 | 274,635 | 290,070 | 281,439 | 273,953 | 259,630 | 261,923 | 277,932 | 273,608 | -4.3% | -5.7% |
| Fall | 152,308 | 142,643 | 131,545 | 153,684 | 141,773 | 146,631 | 137,530 | 135,746 | 130,268 | 147,488 | 140,174 | 139,906 | +5.4% | +5.2% |

Source: Town of Ocean City, Dept. of Tourism/Planning and Community Development

Source: Mathematical formula called "Demoflush" which estimates population based on volume of flow through the Town's Sewage Treatment System

Shoulder Season- Information shown in Table 1-5 appears to confirm trends toward increases in visitor populations during the shoulder seasons (non-summer months). Table 5 shows the average weekend population during the summer season from 1992 through 2015 has typically remained constant although there was a 4% to 5% reduction in the last few years. In absolute numbers, the population for all seasons has increased over the past decade as a result of significant increases in average weekend populations in all other seasons, particularly the winter months where average weekend populations have grown by over 11.8% over the 24 year average. These changes suggest that efforts to expand the traditional tourist season have been successful.

Annual- Total annual visitor population has been estimated at 8.1 million in 2009 (3.6M in the summer months), 7.6 million in 2012 (3.4M in the summer months), and 8 million in 2015.

As noted earlier, estimating the visitor population using the Demoflush methodology may overestimate the population. To illustrate, comparing the 2015 average summer population estimate (277,932), less about 10 percent day visitors, to the number of housing units (30,119 as reported by the 2010 Census plus about 10,000 hotel units) results in an average of 7.0 persons per unit. It seems more likely that, if the average unit contains 2 bedrooms, four to six people would occupy the average unit in the summer.

Thus, a population estimating methodology that incorporates persons per unit indicates that up to 204,607 people are in Ocean City at any time during the peak season (based on an assumed 85% occupancy and excluding day visitors and non-resident workforce). Adding another 10 percent to account for day visitors who are not staying overnight, and an estimated 5,294 non-resident employees) yields a maximum of about 230,362 as a total average summer population (about 83 percent of the Demoflush figure). This is probably a more accurate population estimate for purposes of planning for parks, recreation, police, fire and emergency medical facilities and services as well as Town administrative facilities. However, demoflush figures should be utilized as a basis for ongoing planning to assure adequate water supplies and satisfy wastewater treatment capacity needs until another methodology is tested and approved.

Population Density

Total land area within the Town of Ocean City is approximately ~~4.46~~ 4.5 square miles or just under ~~2,8532,880~~ acres. Table 1-6 presents the population density (persons per square mile) for the year round population (~~1,5921,510~~ persons per square mile) and for the average weekend demoflush population by season (16,746 to 62,316 person per square mile, depending on the season). By way of comparison, the population density of Baltimore City is approximately ~~7,7007,236~~ persons per square mile and the density within the City of Annapolis is approximately ~~5,7005,664~~ persons per square mile.

Table 1-6
Population Density– ~~2010~~2020
Town of Ocean City

| Population type | Population | Density (persons per square mile) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Year-Round Population | 7,1026,844 | 1,5921,521 |
| Winter (Average Weekend) | 74,690 | 16,746 |
| Spring (Average Weekend) | 125,781 | 28,202 |
| Summer (Average Weekend) | 277,932 | 62,316 |
| Fall (Average Weekend) | 140,174 | 31,429 |

Source: ~~2020~~2010 U.S. Census; Town of Ocean City Department of Tourism/Planning and Community Development

Resident Population Characteristics

It is common for a comprehensive plan to reference the US Census as a consistent way to analyze the various characteristics of a community’s population, such as age, sex, race, income and education. Selected data from both the ~~2010~~-2020 Census and the ~~2015~~-2022 American Community Survey have been used to complete a current update of the Comprehensive Plan with emphasis on meeting the adopted goals and principles of Ocean City’s Strategic Plan. While such information can serve to inform many actions related to future planning, the size and

characteristics of the community’s visitor population will continue to be of greater import for planning purposes due to its much greater size ~~which drives a~~and much greater demand for public facilities and services.

As noted earlier, growth in the Town’s resident population accelerated during the period 1990 to 2000 and then stabilized over the last ~~15-12~~ years near ~~7,1007,000~~ residents. This stable rate of growth in the resident population is expected to continue. Worcester County also sustained an accelerated rate of growth during the 1990's. County population grew from 35,028 residents in 1990 to 46,543 in 2000, reflecting a 33% increase for the decade, and now has stabilized with 51,454 residents in 2010 (10.6% over the last decade), and an estimated ~~51,540~~52,460 in ~~2015~~ 2020 reflecting a ~~0.23~~% growth rate.

| Table 1-7 Selected Population Characteristics, 2000-2010-2020 and Estimated 2015 | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Town of Ocean City and Worcester County | | |
| Population | Ocean City | Worcester County |
| 2000 | 7,173 | 46,543 |
| 2010 | 7,102 | 51,454 |
| 2015 <u>Estimated 2020</u> | 7,055 <u>6,844</u> | 51,540 <u>52,460</u> |
| 2010-2020 Population by Sex and Age | | |
| Male | 3,652 <u>3,414</u> | 25,044 <u>25,382</u> |
| Female | 3,450 <u>3,430</u> | 26,410 <u>27,078</u> |
| Percent Population Change | | |
| 2000-2010 - 2020 | -1.03 <u>.6%</u> | +10.61 <u>.95%</u> |
| Median Age in 2010-2020 | | |
| | 54.2 <u>56.3</u> | 47.0 <u>50.5</u> |

Source: ~~2010-2020~~ U.S. Census

Ocean City completed a strategic planning process in recent years which resulted in the identification of certain demographic characteristics which are incorporated into the Strategic Plan vision, goals, principles, and strategies. More detailed information is available from the 2010 US Census which allows these characteristics to be measured and evaluated along with the traditional measures of change in population and community characteristics. One example is Strategic Plan vision principle # 4: Choice of today’s families, and Goal #1: 1st Class Resort

and Goal #3 More Livable Community for Residents to increase the number of year round residents. 2010 US Census data on these topics has been added with this update.

Age and Sex Characteristics of Year-Round Population

Table 1-8 presents a comparison of the age characteristics for the year-round permanent population of Ocean City ~~in 2000 and~~ 2010 and 2020. Based on the evident shift in population to increases in all age groups over 45 years, Table 1-10 has been modified to provide additional detail regarding this area of the resident population.

| <u>Table 1-8</u> | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Year Round Population</u> | | | | | |
| <u>Year 2000 and 2010 Age Characteristics</u> | | | | | |
| <u>Age</u> | <u>2020</u> | | <u>2010</u> | | <u>Change</u> |
| | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> | |
| <u>Under 5 years</u> | <u>157</u> | <u>2.3%</u> | <u>194</u> | <u>2.7</u> | <u>-19.1%</u> |
| <u>5 to 9 years</u> | <u>170</u> | <u>2.5%</u> | <u>167</u> | <u>2.4</u> | <u>+1.8%</u> |
| <u>10 to 14 years</u> | <u>191</u> | <u>2.08%</u> | <u>150</u> | <u>2.1</u> | <u>+27.3%</u> |
| <u>15 to 19 years</u> | <u>208</u> | <u>3.0%</u> | <u>215</u> | <u>3.1</u> | <u>-3.2%</u> |
| <u>20 to 24 years</u> | <u>294</u> | <u>4.03%</u> | <u>396</u> | <u>5.6</u> | <u>-25.7%</u> |
| <u>25 to 34 years</u> | <u>810</u> | <u>11.9%</u> | <u>780</u> | <u>11.0</u> | <u>+3.8%</u> |
| <u>35 to 44 years</u> | <u>576</u> | <u>8.4%</u> | <u>699</u> | <u>9.8</u> | <u>-17.6%</u> |
| <u>45 to 54 years</u> | <u>861</u> | <u>12.6%</u> | <u>1051</u> | <u>14.9</u> | <u>-18.1%</u> |
| <u>55 to 59 years</u> | <u>573</u> | <u>8.4%</u> | <u>656</u> | <u>9.2</u> | <u>-12.6%</u> |
| <u>60 to 64 years</u> | <u>682</u> | <u>10.0%</u> | <u>693</u> | <u>9.7</u> | <u>-1.6%</u> |
| <u>65 to 74 years</u> | <u>1409</u> | <u>20.6%</u> | <u>1175</u> | <u>16.5</u> | <u>+19.9%</u> |
| <u>75 to 84 years</u> | <u>672</u> | <u>9.8%</u> | <u>733</u> | <u>10.3</u> | <u>-8.3%</u> |
| <u>85 years and over</u> | <u>241</u> | <u>3.5%</u> | <u>193</u> | <u>2.7</u> | <u>+24.8%</u> |
| | <u>6844</u> | <u>100.0</u> | <u>7102</u> | <u>100.0</u> | |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Median Age | 56.3 |
| Population 18(19) years of age and older | |
| 2020: | 6,206(90.7%) |
| 2010: | 6,458 (90.9%) |
| Population 65 years of age and older | |
| 2020: | 2,322 (33.9%) |
| 2010: | 2,101 (29.6%) |

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Table 1-9
Year Round Population

| | Number | % of total |
|--------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Male | 3,652 3,414 | 51.449 .9 % |
| Female | 3,450 3,430 | 48.650 .1 % |

Source: ~~2010~~2020 U.S. Census

Table 1-10
Trend Growth in Year Round Population Age 55 and Older

| Year | Persons Age 55 and older | Total Population | Percent of Total |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1970 | 418 | 1,493 | 28.0% |
| 1980 | 1,401 | 4,496 | 28.3% |
| 1990 | 1,919 | 5,146 | 37.3% |
| 2000 | 2,879 | 7,173 | 40.1% |
| 2010 | 3,450 | 7,102 | 48.6% |
| <u>2020</u> | <u>3,577</u> | <u>6,844</u> | <u>52.3%</u> |

Source: ~~2020~~2010 U.S. Census

Certain characteristics or trends regarding the age and sex characteristics are noteworthy. They include:

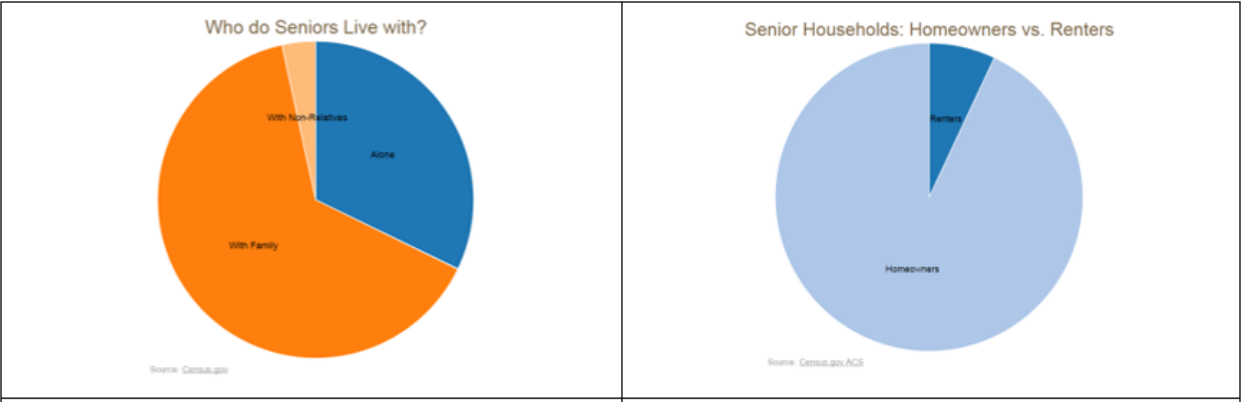
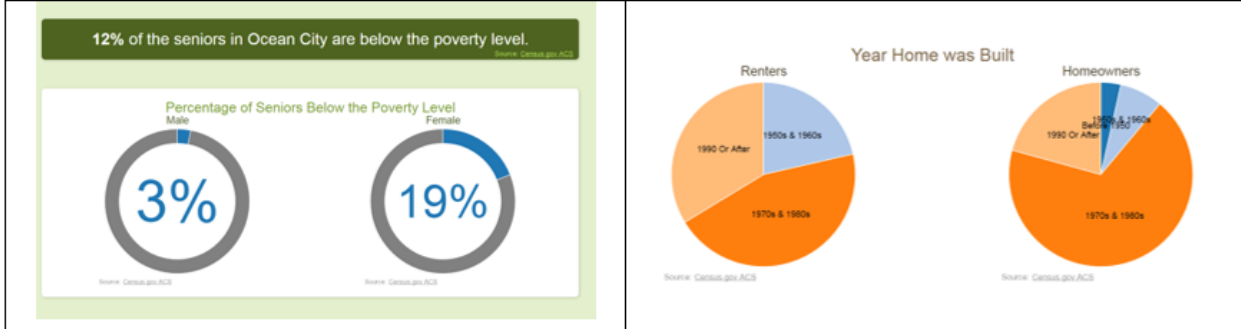
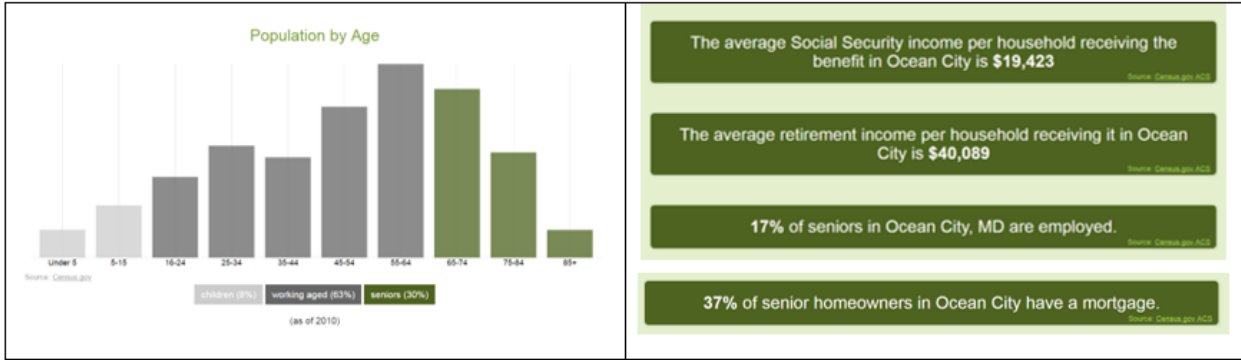
- The general population is remains evenly divided between males (~~49.951~~.4%) and females (~~50.148~~.3%). Within the seniors age group (65 and older) representing ~~33.930~~% of the population, there is a larger difference between males ~~45.946~~% and females ~~54.154~~%.
- The population under 18 years of age represents a much smaller percentage of total population (~~9.391~~%) than population under 18 years of age in Worcester County (~~17.418~~.3%) and the State of Maryland (~~22.123~~.4%)
- The school-aged population, in the age group 5-~~1917~~ years of age, makes up only ~~6.663~~ percent of the total population as compared to the County school age population which represents ~~15.513~~.8% of the total County population.

- The median age of the Town’s population is ~~56.354.2~~ years of age. This is substantially higher than the median age of the Worcester County population (~~50.548.1~~) and the State (~~38.838.0~~). ~~From 2000 to 2010, there was an increase in all age groups over 45 and decrease in all age groups under 45. The age group 85 and older doubled in size over the 10-year period.~~
- ~~The median age of men (52.5 years of age) and women (55.8 years of age) as compared to the County (47.0 years of age for men and 49.2 years of age for women) and State (36.4 for men and 39.3 for women)~~ Comparison data demonstrates the general aging of the existing population and the attractiveness of Ocean City for seniors and retirees.
- Probably the most important observation of the analysis of the age characteristics of the Ocean City year-round population is the large percentage of the population over 55 years of age. In Ocean City, ~~52.340.1~~% of the year-round population is over 55 years of age, compared to ~~43.933.0~~% in the County and ~~29.520.3~~% in the State as a whole. The trends demonstrating a substantial increase in this age group as a percentage of total population in the Town over the past 30 years are also important to note (Table 1-10).

In both Ocean City and Worcester County, the older population is growing almost three times as rapidly as the general population. From 1995 to 2020, the population age 55 and over is projected to increase by over 100% while the general population will likely increase by only 40%. The numerical and percentage increase in the retirement age group has been substantial, especially in the 1980s. It is likely to continue to be an important ongoing trend as the Town’s year-round population continues to grow over time, and may require planning for various forms of assisted housing and place greater demands on emergency medical services and health care services in the future.

Key senior statistics compiled from US Census data at www.seniorcare.com are highlighted below to illustrate both the strengths and vulnerability of a growing segment of the Ocean City resident population.

Figure1-2
Senior Population Characteristics



30% of the population of Ocean City, MD are seniors Source: [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

32% of those seniors living in Ocean City, MD are living alone Source: [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

25% of the seniors in Ocean City are veterans Source: [Census.gov ACS](https://www.census.gov)

66% of Ocean City, MD residents 60 and over received food stamps in the last year Source: [Census.gov ACS](https://www.census.gov)

The average Social Security Income in Ocean City is **\$19,423/year** Source: [Census.gov ACS](https://www.census.gov)

There are **360 working seniors** in Ocean City Source: [Census.gov ACS](https://www.census.gov)

Source: www.seniorcare.com

Family and Racial Characteristics of the Year-Round Population

The 2010-2020 Census continues to provides greater detail about the family characteristics of households than in previous years. With a stable resident population of 7,102,684, it is important to track changes in family population (4,300 or 60.5% 4,433 in 2020, and 5,049 in 2010) compared to non-family population (2,802 or 39.5% 2,441 in 2020, and 2,145 in 2010).

Over the last ten years, there has been a ~~2.5~~12.2% decrease in resident family household population, compared to a 13.8% increase in resident non-family household population. Census data estimates that 533 children under age 18 reside in Ocean City (59% in a two parent household, 41% in a single parent household).

Table 1-11 shows the ~~2010-2020~~ population by race of Ocean City compared to previous Census surveys. ~~Significant~~Growth in the Hispanic or Latino population is likely the result of increased efforts in the 2010 and 2020 Census to collect this data, as well as a reflection of the natural progression of day trip visitors and vacationers to full time residents and resident employees. All minority populations increased by 1 to 6% with a corresponding reduction in the white population to 89% of the total year round residents.

| Race | 1980 | | 1990 | | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2020 | | 2010 to 2020 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|----------------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | 10-year change |
| White | 4,815 | 97.4 | 4,956 | 96.3 | 6,758 | 94.2 | 6,310 | 88.8 | 5,923 | 86.5 | -2.3 |
| Black | 76 | 1.5 | 129 | 2.5 | 179 | 2.5 | 189 | 2.7 | 137 | 2.0 | -0.7 |
| Hispanic or Latino | | | | | 81 | 1.1 | 417 | 5.9 | 409 | 6.0 | 0.1 |
| Asian | | | | | 53 | 0.7 | 93 | 1.3 | 122 | 1.8 | 0.5 |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | | | | | 9 | 0.1 | 12 | 0.2 | 10 | 0.1 | -0.1 |
| Two or More | | | | | 68 | 1.0 | 71 | 1.0 | 220 | 3.2 | 2.2 |
| Other | 55 | 1.1 | 61 | 1.2 | 25 | 0.4 | 10 | 0.1 | 23 | 0.4 | 0.3 |

Source: [2020 U.S. Census](#)

Educational Attainment of the Year-Round Population

Educational levels in Ocean City have increased along with Worcester County and Maryland in general. Table 1-12 shows the educational attainment level of the year—round population of Ocean City compared to the County and State. Among Ocean City’s year-round residents, well over one-half (~~60.5~~64.2%) have some college experience as compared to ~~56.1~~61.4 percent of County residents. As the area recovers from the Great Recession and COVID pandemic, a weak tight job market has led to increased educational attainment as more people stay in school gaining the skills and training needed to compete effectively. (Source: ~~MDP Status Report on the 2020~~ ACS Survey ~~2005-2014~~)

**Table 1-12
Educational Attainment of Persons 25 years and
Older in Year-Round Population**

| Educational Attainment | Ocean City 6,094 5,749 | | Worcester County (%) 38,428 39,612 | Maryland (%) 3,973,193 4,164,698 |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | Number | Percent | | |
| Less than 9 th Grade | 79 <u>204</u> | 1.3 <u>3.5</u> | 2.9 <u>2.2</u> % | 4.3 <u>3.9</u> % |
| 9 th to 12 th Grade (No Diploma) | 408 <u>345</u> | 6.7 <u>6.0</u> | 7.8 <u>5.5</u> % | 6.7 <u>5.6</u> % |
| High School Graduate | 1,926 <u>1,509</u> | 31.6 <u>26.2</u> | 33.3 <u>30.8</u> % | 25.7 <u>24.2</u> % |
| Some College | 1,322 <u>1,264</u> | 21.7 <u>22.0</u> | 20.4 <u>23.3</u> % | 19.6 <u>18.7</u> % |
| Associate Degree | 317 <u>625</u> | 5.2 <u>10.9</u> | 7.5 <u>8.3</u> % | 6.3 <u>6.8</u> % |
| Bachelor's Degree | 1,225 <u>1,167</u> | 20.1 <u>20.3</u> | 17.1 <u>18.7</u> % | 20.3 <u>21.8</u> % |
| Graduate or Professional Degree | 823 <u>635</u> | 13.5 <u>11.0</u> | 11.1 <u>11.1</u> % | 17.0 <u>19.1</u> % |
| Percent High School graduate or higher | 5,606 <u>5,200</u> | 92.0 <u>90.5</u> | 89.3 <u>92.2</u> % | 89.0 <u>90.6</u> % |
| Percent Bachelor's degree or higher | 2,042 <u>1,802</u> | 33.5 <u>31.3</u> | 28.2 <u>29.8</u> % | 37.3 <u>34.9</u> % |

Source: ~~2010-2014~~2020 ACS 5 year estimate

Income

The last 10 years included a ~~great deal~~measure of economic turmoil in the Nation and Maryland with the peak of ~~the~~housing bubble as well as the ~~devastating~~Great Recession and COVID pandemic. By and large, Ocean City has continued to thrive, ~~while many of the rural areas on the Eastern Shore had a hard time recovering from lost income, unemployment, and cost burdens for homeowners and renters on fixed incomes~~. During this time, Maryland's median income ~~fell~~increased by ~~3.3~~7.1%, and Worcester County's ~~unemployment rate increased 5.9 percent~~labor participation decreased by only -0.5%. (Source: ~~MDP Status Report on the~~ ACS Survey ~~2005-2014~~2020)

People who work in the service and hospitality industries depend on the tourist season for a majority of their income. Owners of businesses in these industries rely on making enough profit during the ~~extended~~summer season in order to sustain themselves through the year. Table 1-13 illustrates increases of income levels over \$50,000 and reductions in all lower income levels indicating general upward growth in income over the last 5 years along with workforce reductions.

- The median household income is ~~\$56,458~~\$55,954.
- Approximately 30% of the households make less than \$35,000 annually, which is similar to the County at 31.7%.
- Around 28% of the households have an income of above \$100,000.

| Table 1-13 | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Households (2010<u>2020</u>) By Household Income: Ocean City (Town) and Worcester County | | | | |
| Household Income | Ocean City | % | Worcester County | % |
| Less than \$10,000 | 114 <u>227</u> | -3.46 <u>1</u> | 1128 <u>1065</u> | -5.54 <u>7</u> |
| \$10,000 to \$14,999 | 106 <u>112</u> | 3.2 <u>3.0</u> | 1047 <u>679</u> | 5.1% <u>3.0</u> |
| \$15,000 - \$24,999 | 278 <u>223</u> | 8.36 <u>0</u> | 1782 <u>2243</u> | 8.7% <u>9.9</u> |
| \$25,000 - \$34,999 | 509 <u>495</u> | 15.2 <u>11.7</u> | 2531 <u>2243</u> | 12.4% <u>9.9</u> |
| \$35,000 - \$49,999 | 362 <u>509</u> | 10.81 <u>13.3</u> | 2320 <u>2583</u> | 11.3% <u>11.4</u> |
| \$50,000 - \$74,999 | 763 <u>740</u> | 22.7 <u>19.9</u> | 4056 <u>3739</u> | 19.8% <u>16.5</u> |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 287 <u>391</u> | 8.5 <u>10.5</u> | 2647 <u>3490</u> | 12.9% <u>15.4</u> |
| \$100,000 - \$149,999 | 396 <u>521</u> | 11.81 <u>14.0</u> | 2876 <u>3467</u> | 14.0% <u>15.3</u> |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999 | 231 <u>249</u> | 6.9 <u>6.7</u> | 1099 <u>1337</u> | 5.4% <u>5.9</u> |
| \$200,000 or more | 313 <u>324</u> | 9.3 <u>8.7</u> | 1006 <u>1790</u> | 4.9% <u>7.9</u> |
| | | | | |
| Total | 3,359 <u>3,720</u> | | 20,492 <u>22,661</u> | |
| | | | | |
| Median household income | \$56,458 <u>62,401</u> | | \$58,820 <u>76,689</u> | |
| Median Non Family Household Income | \$47,500 <u>44,369</u> | | \$32,888 <u>44,628</u> | |
| Median Family Income | \$71,938 <u>88,333</u> | | \$70,298 <u>97,408</u> | |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2014-2020 ACS <u>5</u> -year estimates | | | | |

Visitor Population Characteristics

Since 1987, each summer, the Ocean City Tourism/Public Relations office conducts a non-scientific sample survey of vacationers to attempt to learn where the Town’s visitors come from and to frame a profile of visitor characteristics. This information is important to the city government and to various private entities in their attempt to identify visitor needs, assess market trends, and identify service demands, business opportunities, and recreational offerings that respond to dynamic changes in visitor population interests over time. In Recent years there has been an emphasis on ~~the collection of zip code information in order to evaluate the effectiveness~~

~~of location-specific marketing efforts, directed marketing to specific geographic regions including _____, _____, and _____.~~

~~Review of the results of standardized questions indicates that the profile of the visitor population has not changed substantially over the past 10 years. Geographic diversity was influenced recently with the impact of Hurricane Sandy on communities and beaches in New Jersey causing an increase in visitors from those locations, and more recently with targeted advertising to larger market areas in New York and New Jersey.~~

~~*Insert geographic market areas graphic.*~~

J-1 Visa students Seasonal Workforce

Ocean City, Maryland maintains a long tradition of organizing and welcoming international students for summer seasonal employment under the J-1 visa work program. Each year approximately 3,000 to 4,000 young adults join the local population as both visitors and workforce. Seasonal workforce (12,000 per year) also includes resident employees that meet the needs of both private and public sector employers. Meeting housing needs of this seasonal workforce is discussed in Chapter 6.

Short Term Visitors

Seasonal populations have different characteristics and impacts on the community depending on their length of stay: monthly, weekly, or weekend only. Over the last ~~10 to~~ 20 years, Ocean City has adapted as family vacations became shorter, more frequent, organized around school and sport schedules, enhanced with new activities and special events, and reliant on homes, condos or hotels for lodging. Emphasis on scheduled special events, concerts and performances, and sports competition is working to make Ocean City a year round resort community.

Current trends toward internet based reservation systems, short term rental of single family housing in established neighborhoods, and new hotel construction and competition from national flagship corporations demand new approaches. This demographic change of short term visitors will have positive and negative effects on the local economy and the stability of established residential neighborhoods.

Day trip visitors also have their own unique characteristics which change over time. Growth projections for West Ocean City and Berlin, suggest that there will be more shuttles to the beach from remote hotels and campgrounds and more demand for parking and public services from a non-resident population.

Non-resident property owners continue to play an important role in defining the future of Ocean City. Second home owners carry all of the expectations of their primary home communities plus the demand for high levels of outdoor recreation, entertainment and public services.

Encouraging reinvestment and maintenance of all properties is increasingly important as construction from the early development years reaches 50 years old. A zip code map illustrates the geographic location of existing non-resident property owners who consider Ocean City to be their second home (Fig. 1-3)

Visitor Survey Zip Code Results

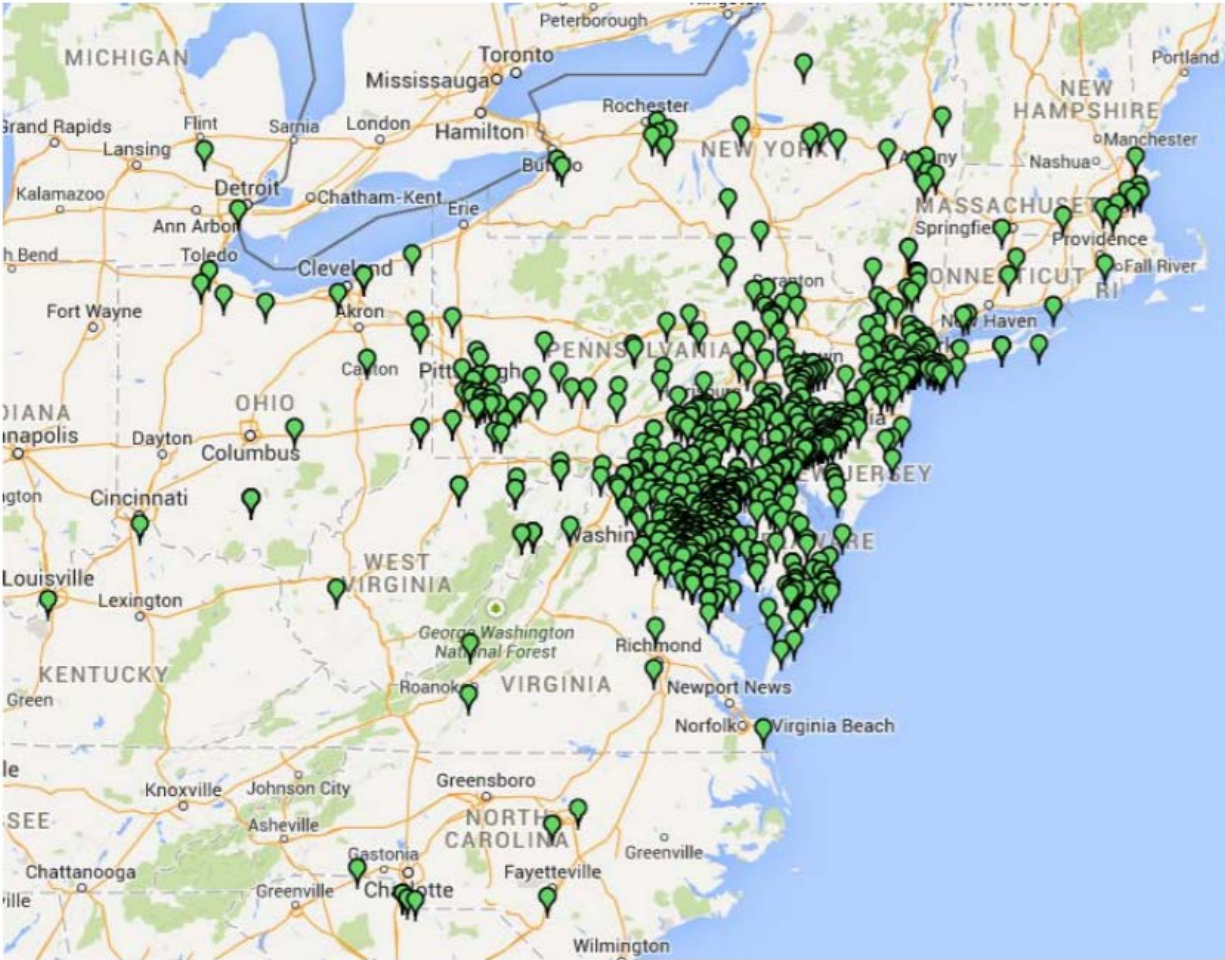


Figure 1-3

Population Projections

Population projections are based on assumptions and projected trends. They cannot necessarily consider unknown future changes in policies regarding growth or major market forces that can influence community growth over time. The projections of permanent and seasonal population which follow assume a continuation of current policies, and no major economic downturns. The projections are intended to provide a range for policy analysis and consideration of future facility needs.

~~Projecting year round resident and seasonal population in Ocean City is complicated by several factors. The uncertainty about the accuracy of the Census and the small size of the year round population compared to the total population decreases the accuracy and importance of projecting future year round population.~~

Seasonal population projections present their own set of problems. Vacationers and seasonal workers are not counted by the Census, so historical counts rely on symptomatic data, such as wastewater flows, traffic counts or tax collections which can only offer a surrogate measure as a basis for projection. Future growth depends of a variety of economic and demographic characteristics. Finally, Ocean City's physical capacity (a largely built community with 98% of the land developed) and land use policies will have a major effect. It is likely that much of the change in the capacity of the City to absorb increases in the peak seasonal visitor population will be largely influenced by City redevelopment policies as much as new development over the next 20 years.

Regional and national trends will also influence future increases in population and/or the rate of occupancy for existing housing units. The National Coastal Population Report (March 2013) prepared by NOAA and the US Census is a reminder that 52% of the U.S. population lives in coastal counties in 2010. This report projects that Maryland coastal shoreline counties are projected to receive a 10% increase in population between 2010 and 2020 many of which will be age 65 and older based on past trends.

Year-round Population Projections

For planning purposes, the size of Ocean City's year-round population is an important indicator of the community as a whole. The number of people in the city at any time is much larger than the year-round population and is of much greater import in influencing demand for community facilities and services.

Population projections from MDP for Maryland jurisdictions (~~July 2014~~December 2020) incorporate historic and projected projections-populations for the Baltimore Region based on Rounds ~~8A~~ 9A from the Baltimore Metropolitan Council of Government's Cooperative Forecasting Committee. Worcester County has not met previous projections for a 1.18% increase by 2020. The current projection has been reduced to 0.53% in 2025 and 0.37% by 2045, is projected to increase population beginning at a rate of 1.18% between 2015 and 2020, and decreasing to a rate of 0.37% by 2040.

Table 1-14 presents both the historic and projected year-round population. Given the unique characteristics of Ocean City as a resort community, two alternative forecasts or projections are provided utilizing different approaches. Assumptions made are provided to define the likely range of growth in the year round population that might be anticipated.

The projections provided in column one titled "*Proportionate Share*" (about 1% per year increase) are based on the assumption that the proportion of the Worcester County population that lives in Ocean City [(14.69% in 1990), (15.4% in 2,000), ~~and~~ (13.8% in 2010) and (13% in 2020)] will remain relatively constant at 14.13% of the County population in the future. Population projections prepared by the Maryland Office of Planning for Worcester County are used to derive Ocean City "Proportionate Share" projections.

Projections provided in Column two titled “*trend growth*” assume that the rate of increase in the year-round residential population will be more affected by recent growth trends within the Town itself, which were approximately 1.5% annually over the twenty-five year period from 1990 to 2015.

The actual rate of future growth in the Town of Ocean City will be influenced by a number of factors including the state of the national and regional economies over time, as well as the implementation of Maryland’s Planning Visions as they are applied in Worcester County over time. It is likely that the rate of growth will fall somewhere between the two alternative projections provided with future resident population in 2045 between 7,598 and 8,834 at 8,053 within another 25 years.

The Town of Ocean City has the capacity to absorb a surge in year-round population growth with existing seasonal housing stock and available infrastructure which has traditionally been required to support its visitor population.

| Table 1-14 Year-Round Resident Population Projections Town of Ocean City | |
|---|--------------------|
| Year | Population |
| 1930 | 946 |
| 1940 | 1,052 |
| 1950 | 1,234 |
| 1960 | 983 |
| 1970 | 1,493 |
| 1980 | 4,496 |
| 1990 | 5,146 |
| 2000 | 7,173 |
| 2010 | 7,102 |
| <u>2015-2020</u> | <u>7,055-8,844</u> |

| | Proportionate Share | Trend Growth |
|------|---------------------|--------------|
| 2020 | <u>7,8546,844</u> | 7,160 |
| 2025 | <u>8,2257,144</u> | 7,267 |
| 2030 | <u>8,4637,430</u> | 7,376 |
| 2035 | <u>8,6737,905</u> | 7,486 |
| 2040 | <u>8,8348,053</u> | 7,598 |

Note: Figures shown in Table under Proportionate Share assume the Town will maintain its proportionate share of the county population in future years as established by the 2010-2020 Census (14.13% of County Population). Figures shown under “Trend Growth” assume the Town’s rate of growth in Year round population from 1990-2015 (approximately 1.5% annually) will continue in future years, have been paused due to the current reverse trend.

Total (Seasonal) Population Projections

The projection of future total, or seasonal, population is also important to planning efforts in Ocean City. It is the total number of people in the city that impact the environment and demand for public services and facilities. This plan continues to project future peak seasonal population based on the demoflush population figures from 1994 through 2015 (Table 1-15). Until such time that another method of measuring and estimating seasonal population is developed and calibrated, the demoflush data will be maintained for reference.

In ~~this recent~~ the last 6 year period up to 2015, the peak seasonal visitor population has been relatively stable with an average peak weekend day of 323,547. This plan update anticipates that the trend toward a maximum carrying capacity for Ocean City will be maintained in the foreseeable future, in part because of the successful expansion of shoulder seasons which allow visitors multiple opportunities to visit Ocean City rather than just during peak periods.

“Adjusted” population figures are presented which are 85 percent of the demoflush population. (See discussion on page 1-10.) These projections assume that there is no major change in local policy toward or regulation of development, and that new hotel construction and/or redevelopment will continue to occur through the 2015-2020-2040 period that will increase capacity to attract visitors during peak weekends.

**Table 1-15
Estimated Recent and Projected Peak Summer Seasonal Population**

| Year | Peak Weekend Population* | Annual Percent Change | Peak Population Adjusted** |
|-------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1994 | 330,133 | 2.2% | 280,613 |
| 1995 | 319,755 | -3.1% | 271,792 |
| 1996 | 332,547 | 4.0% | 282,665 |
| 1997 | 319,309 | -4.0% | 271,413 |
| 1998 | 335,798 | 5.2% | 285,428 |
| 1999 | 334,096 | -0.1% | 283,982 |
| 2000 | 331,755 | 0.7% | 281,992 |
| 2001 | 311,330 | -6.2% | 264,631 |
| 2002 | 339,309 | 9.0% | 288,413 |
| 2003 | 340,344 | 0.1% | 289,292 |
| 2004 | 345,671 | 1.6% | 293,820 |
| 2005 | 322,308 | -6.8% | 273,961 |
| 2010 | 332,547 | 3.2% | 282,665 |
| 2015 | 318,840 | -4.1% | 271,014 |
| 2020 | 323,622 | 1.5% | 275,078 |
| 2025 | 328,476 | 1.5% | 279,204 |
| 2030 | 333,403 | 1.5% | 283,392 |
| 2035 | 338,404 | 1.5% | 287,643 |
| 2040 | 343,480 | 1.5% | 291,958 |

Source: Ocean City Department of Planning and Community Development * Demoflush Population** Adjusted Population (83% of Demoflush)

Recommendations

Based on the historic data and projections presented in this Population Element, the following recommendations are made:

1. Continued growth in year—round population should be encouraged in order to provide /maintain the critical mass for expanded offerings of economic, social and cultural goods and services and to reflect the “Visions” of the Maryland Planning Act of 1992 which call for growth to be directed to existing population centers and suitable areas.
2. The Town’s ability to provide park facilities and health, safety, and other vital services should be coordinated with seasonal population growth over time.
3. The composition of seasonal and off—season population should be monitored regularly for market research purposes and to assure the Town’s range of services and facilities and visitor attractions and offerings are responsive to any changes in the characteristics of the visitor population over time.
4. Continued growth in the older population both in numbers and as a percentage of the total year-round population should be anticipated. This may prompt additional demand for medical and EMS services which should be monitored over time to assure such services are responsive to this special population need.
5. Projections of the resident and seasonal population should be reviewed and updated every five years since characteristic of growth in both populations are dynamic and have not always shown consistent patterns of growth. Adjustments to anticipated facility and service needs should be made accordingly.
6. Evaluate the implications of an extended peak season and higher sustained service levels year-round based on recent efforts to expand events and activities for seasonal visitors throughout the year. Monitor and describe unique characteristics of ‘OC at night’.
7. Develop an improved method of estimating seasonal population, which incorporates data known as the Tourism Metrics Report.
8. In future updates, Demoflush information should be summarized within an Appendix that describes the model, input data, mathematical formulas, flow to population ratio, and limitations for continued use.
9. Measure community health as a new demographic characteristic of the population, and continue to promote initiatives through the HEAL Campaign.