

Facts about Washington:

1. According to the US Census, Washington's population grew from 629 in 1990 to 907 in 2000, an increase of 278 or 44.2% in the last decade (4.4% per year). Between 2000 and 2005 Washington's estimated population has grown to 1043, an additional 15% (3% per year).

2. In 2000 Washington issued 9 building permits and in 2005 30 were issued for new homes. This is an increase of 233%. If the building rate remained level at 30 per year and each building permit represents approximately 2.3 people, this would mean an increase of 69 people a year or 690 people in the next decade.

3. The Planning Board adopted an update to the Master Plan in 2006 and added a Natural Resource Inventory and Conservation Plan in 2007. As noted in the document the primary goal is to preserve and protect the quality of life and to maintain Washington's rural character.

4. Washington has over 685, 2 acre and smaller lots of buildable land. These are unimproved lots of residentially zoned land that if built could put sizeable pressure on existing Town facilities, services, and overall quality of life. Large developments would put an immediate strain on the Town's infrastructure.

5. Washington has a large amount of seasonal and second homes, which in time can be converted for year round living. At present the Town has a year round population of 1043 but has 1047 existing housing units. If each existing housing unit became a year round home with an average of 2.3 people in residence the population would rise to 2408 or 131% of the present population.

6. The growth rate in Washington (44% from 1990-2000) far exceeds that of most of the surrounding towns. Several nearby towns have all passed Growth Management Ordinances, including Hillsboro, Deering and Henniker.

7. In 2007 Washington finished its Natural Resource Inventory and Conservation Plan. These documents told us what a special place Washington is in terms of natural resources and showed that we have resources of state wide significance in abundance. There are many tracts of open and forested land worth protecting in town.

8. The NRI/Conservation Plan build-out scenario showed that with our current lot size and frontage requirements an additional 4400 lots could be created if all non-protected land were subdivided under our conventional subdivision rules.

We need to develop mechanisms now to deal with growth before Washington, with its rural character and high quality of life, is gone.