

Appendix 6:

Demographic, Economic Activity and Housing Analysis

Swanzy NH 10 Demographic, Economic Activity & Housing Analysis

Demographic Profile

Demographic factors such as population growth trends, density, age, and income can impact transportation patterns and needs within the corridor. This section provides an overview of demographic trends in the Town of Swanzy, with a particular focus on the NH 10 Study Area where demographic data at that geography is available.

Population Change

Predicting population change specifically for the Study Area is difficult to determine, due to shifting Census block geographies and the absence of population projections at that level of resolution. As of 2010 - the last veritable population count for the area - the total population of Census blocks that intersect with the Study Area was approximately 2,000 people, which represented about 28% of the total population of the Town of Swanzy at that time.¹ Based on a survey of driveway permitting in the area and town issued housing permits across Swanzy during the last decade, it does not appear that there was a large number of development activity on the Corridor, so the population has probably not changed significantly in the last 10 years.²

Swanzy has seen extensive growth in the past, however. Between 1970 and 2010 the Town of Swanzy's population increased 70% from 4,254 to 7,230, which is slightly slower than the State of New Hampshire's population, which grew 78%. During that same period Swanzy grew at a much faster rate than Cheshire County as a whole, which only grew 47%.

According to the most recent population projections from the NH Office of Strategic Initiatives (NH OSI) (2016), population growth trends for the Town of Swanzy are predicted to follow historical patterns in which Swanzy grows faster than Cheshire County, but slower than the State as a whole. The NH OSI estimates that the Town of Swanzy's population, which was 7,230 in 2010 is predicted to increase to 7,662 by 2040. This represents a total growth from 2010 to 2040 of 5%, as opposed to a predicted growth of 2% for Cheshire County and 9% for the State. During that same time period, Swanzy is projected to grow at a much slower rate than the United States as a whole, which has a growth of 16.5% projected by 2040. In the following chart, the projections for Swanzy's population growth is compared to the other geographies mentioned above, as well as neighboring communities. Only the Town of Marlborough is expected to grow as fast as Swanzy among this group of municipalities.

¹ The official 2010 Census Block count for the study area was 2,038 people. Please note that Census Blocks differ greatly in size and shape, and some larger rural blocks included in this Study Area population calculation include people living outside of the quarter mile radius from NH 10.

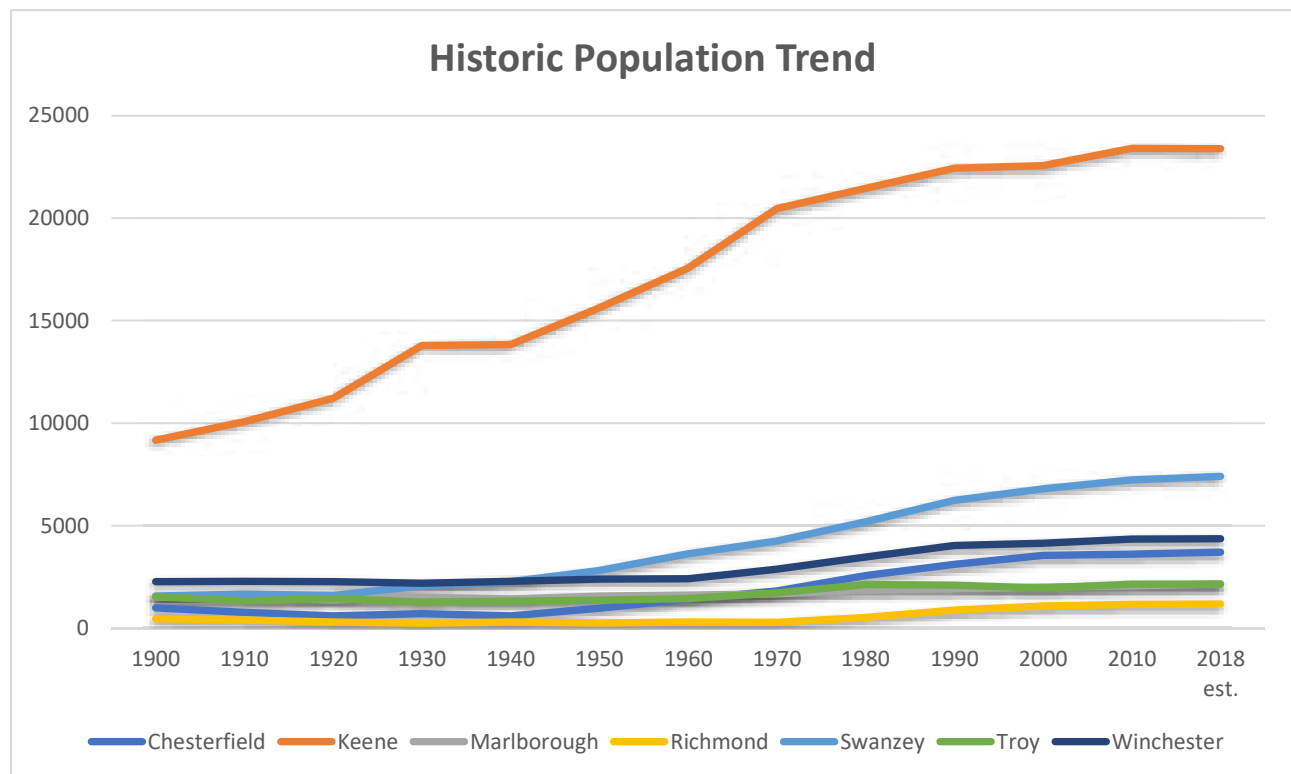
² There were 136 housing units permitted between 2010 and 2019 in Swanzy and only 4 new driveway permits issued for housing by NHDOT on NH 10 during the same period.

TABLE 1: Population Change over Time for Swanzey and Surrounding Towns

	Census	NH Office of Strategic Initiatives September 2016 Projections						Change
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2010-2040
New Hampshire	1,316,470	1,330,501	1,349,908	1,374,702	1,402,878	1,422,503	1,432,730	9%
Cheshire County	77,117	77,342	77,653	78,002	78,315	78,543	78,695	2%
Southwest Region	43,947	44,237	44,490	44,763	44,944	45,075	45,162	3%
Chesterfield	3,604	3,610	3,598	3,588	3,602	3,613	3,620	0%
Keene	23,409	23,550	23,641	23,743	23,839	23,908	23,954	2%
Marlborough	2,063	2,110	2,130	2,151	2,160	2,166	2,170	5%
Richmond	1,155	1,159	1,172	1,185	1,189	1,193	1,195	3%
Swanzey	7,230	7,339	7,445	7,554	7,585	7,607	7,622	5%
Troy	2,145	2,135	2,159	2,185	2,194	2,200	2,205	3%
Winchester	4,341	4,334	4,345	4,357	4,375	4,388	4,396	1%

NH Office of Strategic Initiatives

Figure 1: Historical Population for Swanzey and Surrounding Towns

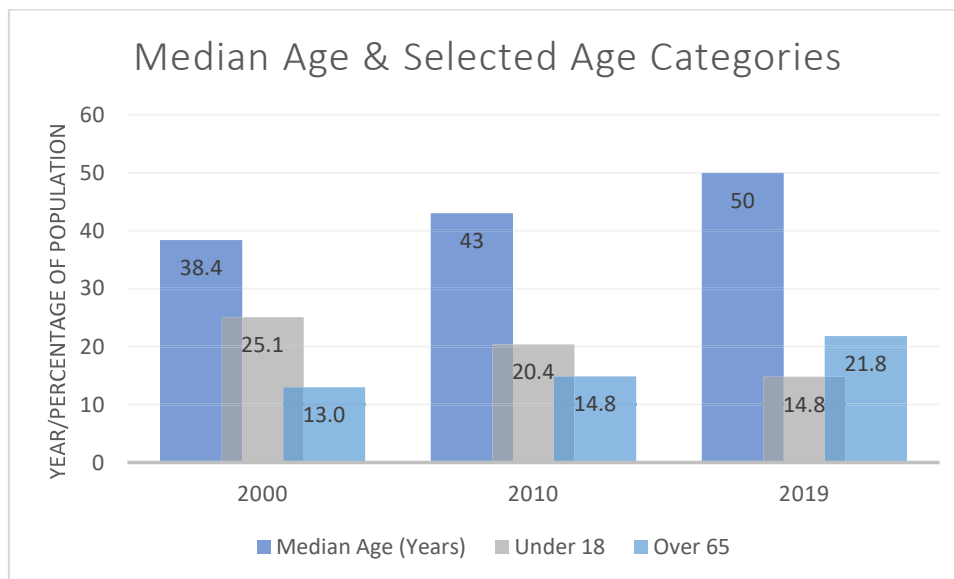


U.S. Census

Age Distribution

Different age groups tend to have different transportation needs. Both young and older persons may have a need for transportation alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles, and a higher overall portion of working-age adults may signal the presence of more single-occupancy vehicles and subsequently potential commuting traffic. The mix of different age groups and the propensity of certain age groups over others may also have an impact on future land use, which in turn shapes transportation needs and patterns. In Swanzey, the median age has increased from 38.4 years in the 2000 Census to 43 years in 2010, with an estimated 50.0 years as of 2019.³ At the same time, the proportion of the population under 18 years has decreased over time from 25.1% in 2000 to 20.4% in 2010, with an estimated decrease to 14.8% in 2019.⁶ At the same time as the population under 18 is decreasing, Swanzey experienced a significant increase in the portion of the population that is over 65, increasing from just 13% of the population in 2000 to 21.8% of the population in 2019. While it is difficult to estimate the age distribution within the Study Area due to changing census geography, the Town of Swanzey demonstrates a clear trend of an increase in median age and those over 65 coupled with a decrease in those under 18. This trend of an aging population could have a substantial impact on the transportation needs for the Demographic Study Area in the future.

Figure 2: Median Age and Selected Age Categories



U.S. Census and American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Table S0101

³ US Census, Table S0101, 2019: ACS 5-Year Estimate Tables.

Population Density

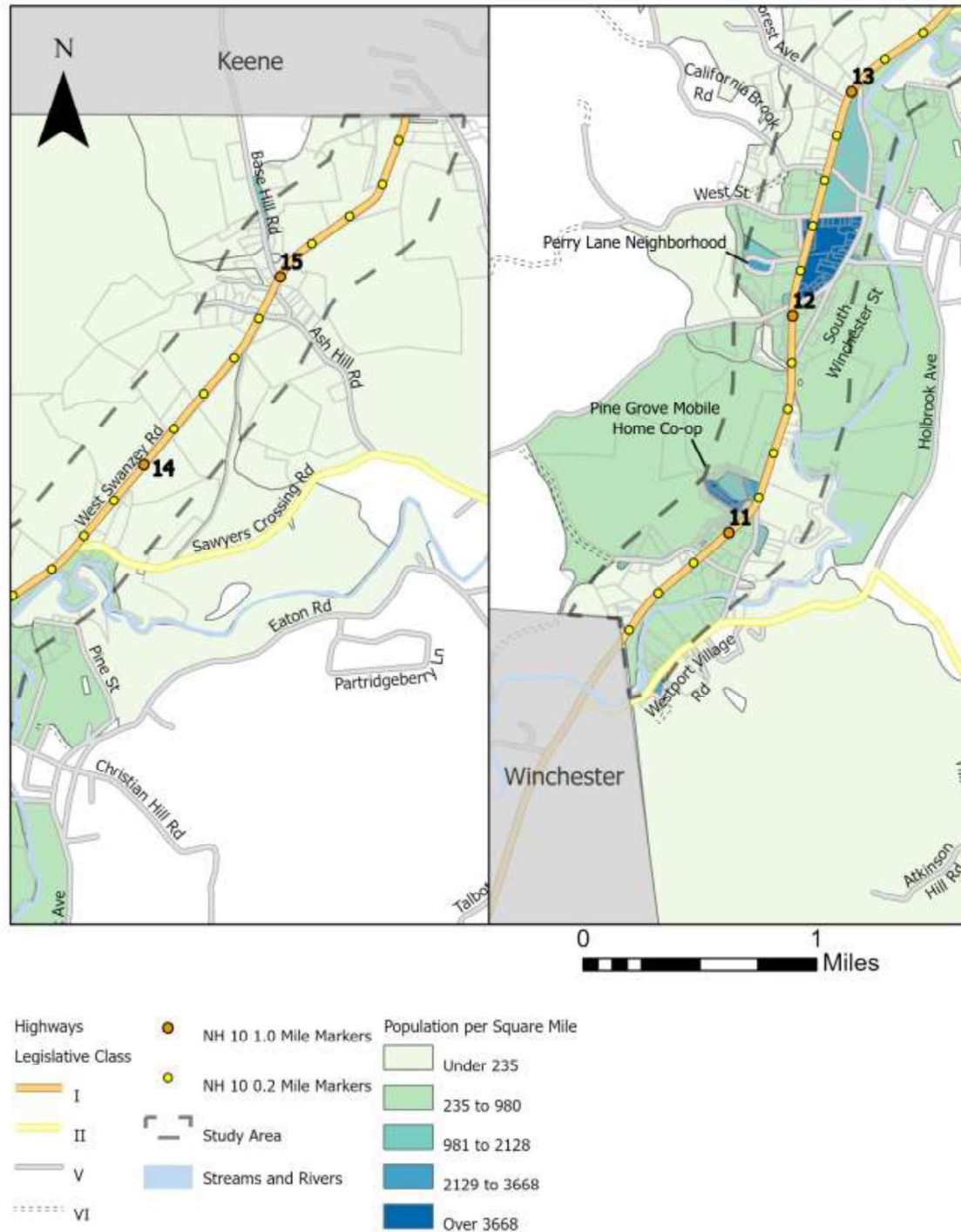
Population density can have a major effect on the forms of transportation options that are viable, as well as the overall patterns of transportation within the larger corridor. Population density within the Study Area was determined at the Census block level, which is the smallest geography available for the Study Area. Population counts used to determine density were derived from the 2010 U.S. Census, and density was calculated as the number of people per square mile. Due to the irregular sizes of Census blocks some blocks may have artificially high density per square mile while other blocks may encompass a wider area of both residential and non-residential or rural areas.

With these limitations taken into account, the population density of the Study Area can provide some insight to the distribution of population within the Study Area. By far the blocks with the highest density were in West Swanzey Village in an area roughly bounded by North Winchester Street, South Winchester Street, Cobble Hill Road and NH 10. Both the Perry Lane neighborhood and the Pine Grove Mobile Home Park Cooperative also demonstrate higher densities. Apart from these pockets of density, many of the blocks south of Forest Avenue and Sawyers Crossing Road have moderate population density and distributed population which aligns with the residential zoning along major streets extending from the Study Area. As can be expected, the Census blocks north of Sawyers Crossing Road or Forest Avenue are lower in density than Census blocks in the southern half of the Study Area.

Calculation of population density via U.S. Census data can be combined with parcel-level housing and land-use data to gain a more complete understanding of population distribution within the Study Area. Higher densities along the corridor generally coincide with specific housing developments, such as the Perry Lane neighborhood or the Pine Grove Mobile Home Park Co-operative with the exception of West Swanzey Village.

MAP 1: Population Density in the study area by block group

Study Area Population Density



Median Household Income and Poverty

Socio-economic factors can influence transportation needs and trends. Income can determine the transportation modes households utilize and may also indicate the relative burden of transportation costs on households. The table below provides the median household income for the Town of Swanzey as well as the West Swanzey Census Designated Place, or the Census geography for West Swanzey Village. While median household incomes for both geographies increased from 2010 to 2019, West Swanzey Village is shown to have consistently lower median incomes than the Town of Swanzey as a whole. Outside of West Swanzey Village, the Study Area has a number of clusters of low- and moderate-income populations because of the presence of two housing developments owned by Keene Housing which are subject to income restrictions, as well as the Pine Grove Mobile Home Park.

Table 2: Median Income Over Time

	2010	2019
Swanzey, Cheshire County, New Hampshire	\$52,053	\$65,019
West Swanzey CDP, New Hampshire	\$40,259	\$58,494

American Community Survey 2018 5-year estimates, Table S1901

Table 3: Population Under Poverty

Poverty Status, 2019			
Geography	Total Population	Population 150% or more under the Federal Poverty Level	Percent of total population 150% or more under the Federal Poverty Level
New Hampshire	1305013	169,285	13%
Cheshire County	71402	11,438	16%
Swanzey	7185	862	12%
West Swanzey CDP	896	76	8%

American Community Survey 2019 5-year estimates, Table S1701

Key Demographic Findings

- West Swanzey Village, and likely the Study Area as a whole, has lower incomes than the Town of Swanzey as a whole
- The Town of Swanzey is anticipated to have a very slow population growth rate in the future, slower than the State of New Hampshire as a whole and much slower than the national average.
- The Study Area is home to approximately 28% of the Town of Swanzey's population as of the 2010 Census, although this is likely an inflated statistic due to the irregularities of the Census block geography.
- The Town of Swanzey is aging, with the median age and share of the population over 65 increasing and the share of the Town's population under 18 decreasing over time.
- The majority of the population in the Study Area lives in the southern half of the corridor, and the highest population densities outside of specific multifamily or manufactured housing developments can be found in West Swanzey Village.

Jobs and Commuting Patterns

Using Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, this section will provide an overview of employment and commuting patterns for workers and residents of the Corridor area. Analysis includes an overview of employment within the Study Area itself, a profile of workers within the Study Area, an overview of the inflow and outflow of workers from the Study Area, and finally an overview of the commuting distance and destinations for those who live and work in the Study Area. This section will provide data for 2010 and 2018 to provide insights into the recent economic changes and trends along the corridor. As NH 10 is a major commercial and industrial hub for the Town of Swanzey, understanding commuting patterns and trends can provide significant insights into existing transportation patterns along the corridor, particularly in the peak weekday commuting hours. For this section, the Study Area is defined as the 0.25-mile buffer from the NH 10 centerline within the Town of Swanzey.

Study Area Employment

The Study Area saw a dramatic increase in jobs from 2010 to 2018, increasing by 267 jobs or 114%. The vast majority of these new jobs, 213, were in the retail sector. This likely reflects the development of Market Basket within the northern section of the Study Area and to a lesser degree the Dollar General in the southern section of the Study Area since 2010. Workers within the Study Area also were younger and lower income in 2018 when compared to 2010. Those aged 29 or younger made up the majority of workers within the Study Area in 2018 (40.9%), while in 2010 the majority of workers were 30 to 54. There were also many more low-earning jobs within the Study Area in 2018 compared to 2010, with 48.1% of jobs earning \$1,250 or less in 2018 as compared to 32.9% in 2010. These trends are consistent with the growth in retail trade as the dominant industry within the Study Area. The Study Area also saw increases in the industries of Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade and Other Services.

While employment within the Study Area grew substantially between 2010 and 2018, there were a number of industries that saw losses in employment. The most dramatic decrease was in the Educational Services sector which decreased from 45 positions, about 20% of all jobs in 2010, to no jobs in 2018. The sectors of Accommodation, Food Services and Public Administration also saw a decrease in their total number of jobs in the Study Area.

Table 4: Study Area Labor Market Overview

Total All Jobs				
	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	501	100.0%	234	100.0%
Jobs by Worker Age				
	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Age 29 or younger	205	40.9%	56	23.9%
Age 30 to 54	193	38.5%	117	50.0%
Age 55 or older	103	20.6%	61	26.1%
Jobs by Earnings				
	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
\$1,250 per month or less	241	48.1%	77	32.9%
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	156	31.1%	93	39.7%
More than \$3,333 per month	104	20.8%	64	27.4%
Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector				
	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Construction	31	6.2%	34	14.5%
Manufacturing	25	5.0%	2	0.9%
Wholesale Trade	43	8.6%	30	12.8%
Retail Trade	264	52.7%	51	21.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	16	3.2%	0	0.0%
Information	2	0.4%	1	0.4%
Finance and Insurance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3	0.6%	7	3.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1	0.2%	1	0.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	13	2.6%	0	0.0%
Educational Services	0	0.0%	45	19.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	12	2.4%	10	4.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	22	4.4%	33	14.1%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	68	13.6%	12	5.1%
Public Administration	1	0.2%	8	3.4%

U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

Worker Inflow-Outflow

While the number of workers both living and working in the Study Area grew from 2010 to 2018, very few workers both lived or worked in the Study Area in either year. In 2018, despite a 114% increase in employment, only 10 people both lived and worked in the Study Area, up from 7 in 2010. This may indicate a mismatch between the skill set and education of those who live in the Study Area and the employment opportunities available along the NH 10 corridor.

Both the number of jobs based in the Study Area and workers living in the Study Area increased significantly from 2010 to 2018. However, the number of jobs grew far faster than the number of workers living in the area, with a 114% increase of the former and a 24.6% increase in the latter. In 2018, the number of jobs in the Study Area was more than the number of workers living in the Study Area, which is a reversal from 2010 where the number of workers far outstripped the number of jobs along NH 10 in Swanzey.

Table 5: In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (All Jobs)

	2018	2010	Change 2010-2018
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	10	7	42.9%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	421	338	24.6%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	491	227	116.3%

U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment plays a significant role in the skillset of the workforce in a community, and the types of positions that are filled by the residents of that community. In 2019, the population of Swanzey that is 25 and over had comparable levels of educational attainment to Cheshire County and the State of New Hampshire. Notable trends in education include a higher percentage (9%) of those that only reached a high school level of education compared with the State, and a 7% lower percentage of those that had obtained a Bachelor's degree. In West Swanzey Village, which represents the major concentration of population in the Study Area, the percentage of those who had only obtained a high school diploma was much higher, 15% above the State and 12% higher than the Cheshire County. The high percentage of population with a high school level of education would lend itself to a greater percentage of residents in Swanzey who work in the retail and service sectors. However, this is not reflected in the efficiency of the workforce, as most of the workforce is commuting outside of the Study Area even as retail jobs make up the majority of positions in the Study Area. This may indicate that educational attainment is not the primary driver of whether residents of the Study Area fill positions created locally as opposed to commuting outside of the Study Area.

Table 6: Educational Attainment for Persons 25 and Over

	Less than Highschool	Highschool	Some College	Associates	Bachelors	Masters or Above
New Hampshire	7%	28%	19%	10%	22%	14%
Cheshire County	7%	31%	19%	10%	20%	13%
Swanзей	7%	37%	21%	13%	15%	11%
West Swanзей CDP	9%	43%	15%	2%	21%	16%

American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates, Table B15003

Distance of Travel

Between 2010 and 2018, the population of individuals who work in the Study Area commuting long distances increased dramatically. The portion of those who work in the Study Area and travel greater than 50 miles to get to work increased 355% over this time period from 20 to 91 workers, while the number of individuals travelling between 25 and 50 miles between work and home increased 263% from 19 to 69 workers. In addition, the share of all workers employed in the Study Area who travelled less than 10 miles to work decreased from 59.8% in 2010 to 48.1% in 2018.

Table 7: Distance to Home for Study Area Workers

	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	501	100.0%	234	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	241	48.1%	140	59.8%
10 to 24 miles	100	20.0%	55	23.5%
25 to 50 miles	69	13.8%	19	8.1%
Greater than 50 miles	91	18.2%	20	8.5%

U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

Overall, for those who live in the Study Area commute distances increased slightly but remained primarily stable. There was an increase in the number of workers who lived in the Study Area, from 345 in 2010 to 431 in 2018, but a slight decrease in the share of workers travelling less than 10 miles to work. Those who live in the Study Area increasingly were travelling from at least 10 miles to work, although the share of workers travelling greater than 50 miles to work daily decreased slightly from 2010 to 2018.

Table 8: Distance to Work for Study Area Residents

	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	431	100.0%	345	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	239	55.5%	203	58.8%
10 to 24 miles	55	12.8%	34	9.9%
25 to 50 miles	68	15.8%	45	13.0%
Greater than 50 miles	69	16.0%	63	18.3%

U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

Home/Work Destinations

In both 2010 and 2018, those who live in the Study Area overwhelmingly work in the City of Keene, while those who work in the Study Area live in a diverse range of locations. Despite an increase in the number of workers who live in the Study Area, the portion of all workers who worked in the City of Keene increased from 2010 to 2018. While the number of workers who live in the City of Keene and work in the Study Area also increased, their relative share of the overall population employed in the Study Area decreased. There was also an increase in those who worked in larger communities farther away, such as Concord, Nashua, Manchester, and Derry.

Table 9: Residence of People Working in Study Area

	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Keene city, NH	98	19.6%	50	21.4%
West Swanzey CDP, NH	18	3.6%	12	5.1%
Winchester CDP, NH	12	2.4%	7	3.0%
Nashua city, NH	7	1.4%	2	0.9%
Manchester city, NH	6	1.2%	2	0.9%
Troy CDP, NH	6	1.2%	3	1.3%
Derry CDP, NH	5	1.0%	-	-
Hinsdale CDP, NH	5	1.0%	5	2.1%
Concord city, NH	4	0.8%	-	-
Jaffrey CDP, NH	4	0.8%	1	0.4%
All Other Locations	336	67.1%	152	65.0%

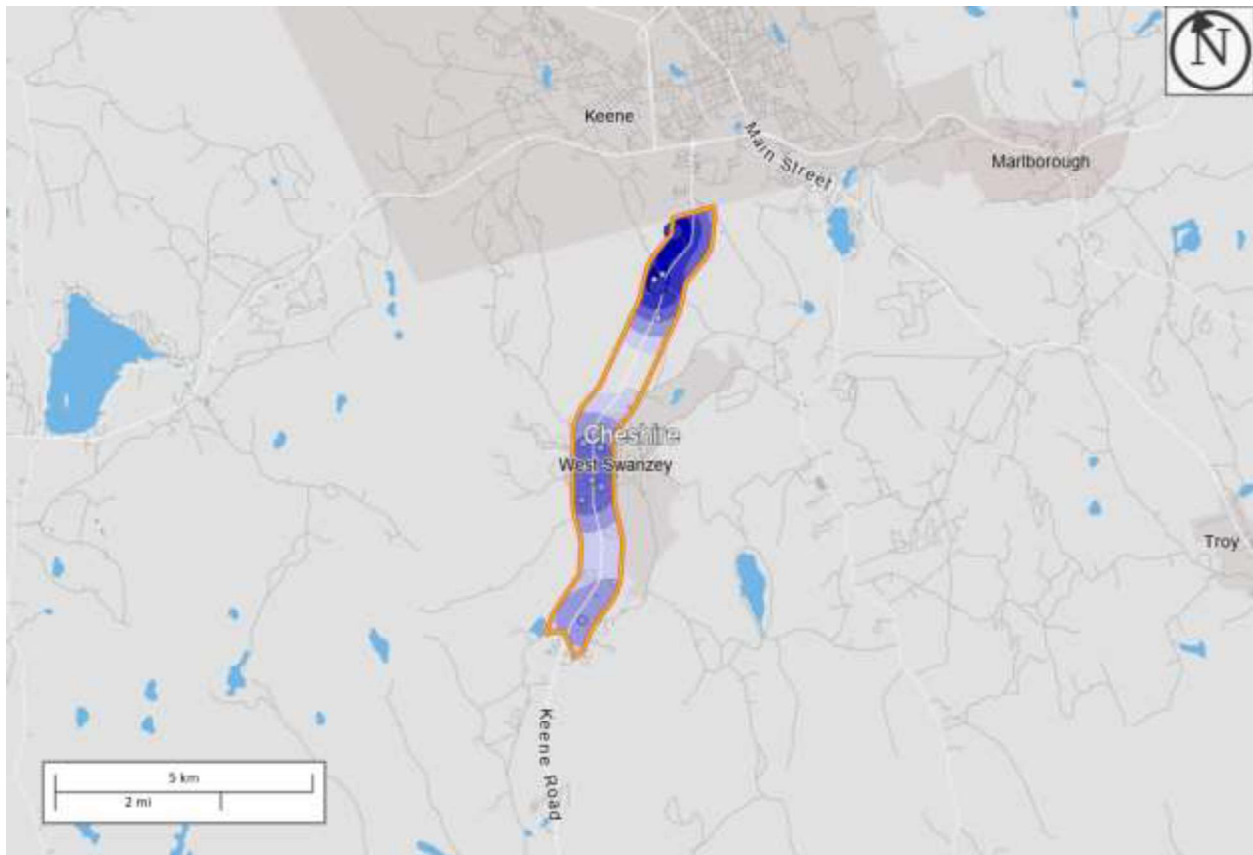
U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

Table 10: Work Destinations for Study Area Residents

	2018		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Keene city, NH	171	39.7%	133	38.6%
Brattleboro CDP, VT	13	3.0%	12	3.5%
Concord city, NH	12	2.8%	9	2.6%
Manchester city, NH	7	1.6%	8	2.3%
Lebanon city, NH	6	1.4%	10	2.9%
Hanover CDP, NH	5	1.2%	7	2.0%
Nashua city, NH	4	0.9%	4	1.2%
Portsmouth city, NH	4	0.9%	3	0.9%
Hinsdale CDP, NH	3	0.7%	1	0.3%
Rochester city, NH	3	0.7%	-	-
All Other Locations	203	47.1%	158	45.8%

U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

Figure 3: Job Density within the Study Area, 2018



U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics

Key Jobs & Commuting Findings

- The Study Area experienced a significant increase in jobs over the last decade and a shift in dominant industries from Construction, Education, Food and Accommodation, and Retail Trade to an employment base overwhelmingly comprised of jobs in the Retail Trade sector.
- The highest density of employment in the corridor is in the far northern section of the Study Area, adjacent to the border with the City of Keene. This likely represents the Market Basket commercial plaza as well as businesses off of Whittemore Farm Road.
- Those who work in the Study Area are younger, have lower incomes and commute farther on average in 2018 when compared to 2010. This is likely a result of the growth in Retail Trade in the Study Area during this period.
- There is almost no overlap between those who live within the Study Area and those who work in the Study Area. However, the number of jobs in the Study Area and the number of workers in the Study Area are almost equal. This may reflect a mismatch in the industries and opportunities present in the Study Area and the skills and needs of those who live in the Study Area.
- While the majority of those who work in the Study Area in 2018 still commute less than 10 miles between work and home, the number of workers who travelled 25 to 50 or over 50 miles increased substantially between 2010 and 2018. Over the same time period, commute times for those who live in the Study Area remained relatively stable and the majority of Study Area workers travelled less than 10 miles to work daily.
- The majority of those who live in the Study Area work in Keene, and Keene is also the largest source of employees commuting into the Study Area for work.
- The Educational Services sector completely disappeared from the Study Area between 2010 and 2018, and is the loss of a significant industry that provided 19.2% of all jobs in the Study Area in 2010.

Housing

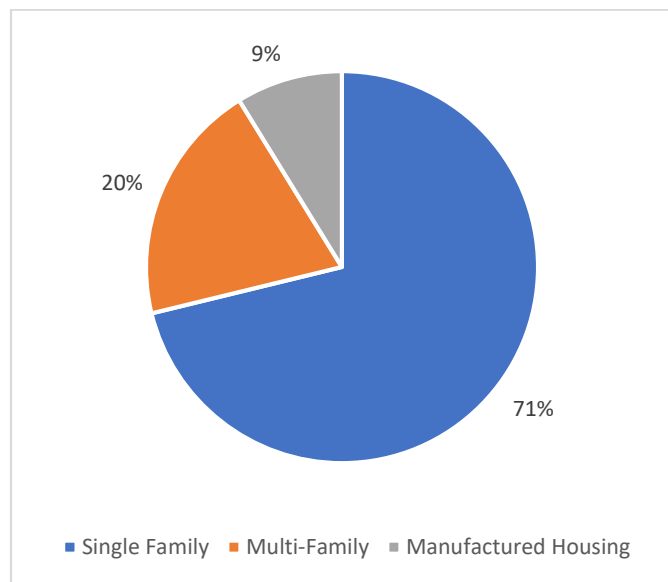
Housing is a critical piece of understanding current and future transportation needs and influences almost all other facets of land use and economic activity that also determine the transportation patterns and needs within the Study Area. This section will provide an overview of the current housing stock along the corridor, including housing types, housing affordability and availability, and how demographic factors can be used to predict future housing need. Data for this section is derived from parcel-level assessing data from the Town of Swanzey, the American Community Survey, the U.S. Census, and the NH OSI.

Housing Stock along the Corridor

In 2010, the Census blocks that intersected with a 0.25-mile buffer of NH 10 contained a total of 921 housing units. This is approximately 29% of the 3,205 housing units in the Town of Swanzey as of the 2010 Census. However, as mentioned before, Census blocks have irregular shapes and sizes, and this represents a far larger area of land than the quarter-mile radius around NH 10. While housing type is not

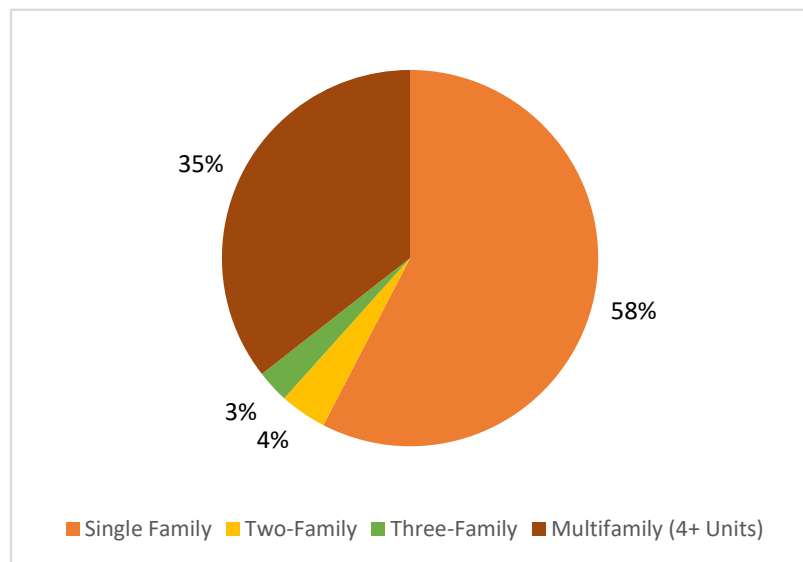
available at the block level, in 2010 the Town of Swanzezy had approximately 71% of their housing stock as single-family units, 20% as multi-family units and 9% as manufactured housing units

Figure 4, Swanzezy Housing Types in 2010



New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives

Figure 5, Parcel-level Study Area Housing Types



Town of Swanzezy Assessing Data

To gain a more granular understanding of the housing stock along the Corridor, land use information from parcel-level assessing data can be used. Assessing data in the Town of Swanzezy identifies four land use

codes for residential uses. The land use code “L-R1” represents a single-family home, “L-R2” represents a duplex, “L-R3” represents a triplex and “L-R4” is used for all parcels with four or more units. According to assessing data, there are 644 units of housing within the Study Area across 402 total parcels. Of those, the majority (57.6%) of units are single-family homes, followed by multi-family units on parcels with four or more units which make up 42.4% of all units. Duplex and triplex properties comprise 4% and 2.8% of the housing stock in the Study Area, respectively. Of those units in multifamily buildings with 4 or more units, 92 units are subject to some form of income limitation while 137 units are unrestricted units on the private market.

An important detail for parcels identified with the “L-R1” land use code is that manufactured housing units are included and are classified as single-family homes. Within the Study Area, Pine Grove Mobile Home Cooperative represents the only concentration of manufactured housing. Cross-referencing address and land use data, 116 or 31.2% of “L-R1” properties appear to be in the Pine Grove Cooperative and are manufactured housing. This also represents 18% of all housing units in the Study Area.

According to assessing data for the Town of Swanzey, the median lot size for a parcel with housing indicated as its land use is 0.5 acres. This indicates that at least half of all residential properties are less than an acre, which is the minimum lot size for all zones in the Study Area with the exception of the Village Business District I and II.

Table 11: Parcel-level housing information for the Study Area

Housing Type	Land Use Code	Number of Parcels	Number of Units	Housing Type as Percentage of Stock
Single Family*	L-R1	355	371	57.6%
Duplex	L-R2	12	26	4%
Triplex	L-R3	6	18	2.8%
Four or more units	L-R4	12	229	35.6%
	Total:	385	644	
<i>*Includes 116 units of Manufactured Housing in the Pine Grove Cooperative</i>				

Town of Swanzey Assessing Data

Housing Affordability & Availability

According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the Town of Swanzey had an estimated 3,089 occupied housing units, 71% of which were owner occupied and 29% renter occupied. Of those owner-occupied units, 63% had a mortgage and 37% had no mortgage. This ratio of owner and renter occupied units is in line with the State and Cheshire County, with a 71% portion of units being owner occupied statewide and 69% of units being owner occupied in Cheshire County. In 2019, Swanzey had an estimated 6.5% vacancy rate for all housing units, however, Swanzey also had an estimated 0%

vacancy rate for rental units in the Town. While this number is an estimate, it indicates that there is a severely low vacancy rate in the Town for rental housing. The estimated rental vacancy rate in the State of New Hampshire is 3.9%, and 3.4% in Cheshire County. For owner occupied units in Swanzey, there is a 1.8% vacancy rate, which is on par with Cheshire County and the State of New Hampshire. Similar to rental units, a 1.8% vacancy rate is below the level typically considered healthy for a housing market.

An important metric in understanding the housing market for the Town of Swanzey is the level of housing cost burden for households, which is defined as the number of households paying over 30% of their monthly household income on housing. According to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, in Swanzey an estimated 28.3% of homeowners with a mortgage and 17.3% of homeowners without a mortgage pay over 30% of their monthly household income on housing costs. The percentage of homeowners both with and without a mortgage that are cost burdened is similar to both the State and Cheshire County. For renters in Swanzey, 48.5% of those who rent their home pay over 30% of their monthly income on housing costs. The percentage of cost burdened renters in Swanzey is on par with the State of New Hampshire (46.2%) and Cheshire County (45.4%). The estimated median monthly housing costs for renters in the Town of Swanzey is \$1,028, which is slightly lower than the State of New Hampshire median (\$1,111) and slightly higher than the Cheshire County median (\$949).

While housing represents a significant cost to households, housing does not exist in a vacuum. The location of housing and its relationship to transportation networks and employment hubs can have a major impact on the transportation costs faced by households. Within the Town of Swanzey, the combined costs of housing and transportation, on average, represent 54% of a household's income⁴. On average, transportation costs represent a quarter of a household's income in Swanzey. This may be impacted by both the location of housing, but also the nature of employment in the Study Area. As mentioned previously, almost no workers who live in the Study Area work within the Study area, and almost all of those employees work in a community outside of Swanzey. In the most extreme examples, at least 16% of Study Area workers commute over 50 miles to work daily. When examining housing availability and affordability, it is important to factor in transportation costs as an important factor in the overall affordability of the housing market.

Housing Need

To calculate the need for housing, population projections published by the NH OSI can be paired with household size information from the U.S. Census to estimate the number of units needed to accommodate future population growth while maintaining the same average household sizes. However, this form of analysis leads to an oversimplification and underestimation of housing need and does not incorporate changing demographics and employment trends of both Swanzey and the Region.

The high number of renters burdened by the cost of housing in Swanzey may indicate that the current housing stock does not adequately meet the needs of the current population in Swanzey. In addition, if the average household size decreases, as is common with an aging population, more housing units will be

⁴ Center for Neighborhood Technology (2021). New Hampshire H+T Index by Census Tract [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://htaindex.cnt.org/download/data.php>.

needed to accommodate a greater number of smaller households. The critically low vacancy rates Swanze experiences, especially for rental housing, also indicate that there is an immediate need for more housing even without factoring in any population growth or changing demographics.

Key Housing Findings

- Availability of both homeowner and rental housing units is scarce within the Town of Swanze. For renters, this may translate to higher housing prices and more households burdened by the cost of housing.
- One third of all multi-family housing units within the Study Area are subject to some form of income restriction for occupancy. While a valuable resource to low-income families, many income-restricted housing developments have long wait lists for units and may not provide relief to renters searching for housing in housing markets with low vacancy rates such as Swanze.
- The Study Area has a more diverse housing stock than the Town of Swanze as a whole, with 116 (18%) units of manufactured housing, 255 (39.6%) units of single-family homes, and 229 (35.6%) units of multi-family units in properties with four or more units. This is likely reflective of the presence of water and municipal sewer infrastructure compared to other areas of Swanze.
- At least half of all parcels with housing as its land use is less than half an acre, which is less than the required minimum lot size in the Residence District. This indicates that zoning requirements are not in line with the current pattern of housing development in the Study Area.
- Renters in Swanze are disproportionally burdened by the cost of housing, with 48.5% of households who rent their home paying more than 30% of their monthly income on housing, which is the generally accepted definition of affordable.
- While an analysis purely based on projected population growth only calls for the development of 4.6 units of new housing per year to accommodate growth, many factors such as low vacancy rates and high rates of housing cost burden indicate that more housing may be needed to accommodate current and future populations.