

POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

January 2005

Suffolk County Department of Planning

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1
 Study Objectives 1

METHODOLOGY 2
 Data Sources 2
 Procedure 2

HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS TOWNS OF BROOKHAVEN, HUNTINGTON, AND
SMITHTOWN, 1960 THROUGH 2003 4
 Population Overview 4
 Population 4
 Total Housing Units 5
 Occupied Housing Units 6
 Household Size 7
 Seasonal Housing Units 7
 Seasonal Population Increase 8

2000 CENSUS POPULATION ANALYSIS - NORTH SHORE WATERSHED STUDY AREA0
 Population, 2000 10
 Total Housing Units, 2000 11
 Housing Unit and Population Density Per Acre, 2000 11
 Occupied Housing Units, 2000 12
 Household Size, 2000 12
 Seasonal Housing Units, 2000 13
 Seasonal Population Increase 13

REFERENCES 15

APPENDIX 16

LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS

TABLES

Table 1. Population: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown in Suffolk County 4
Table 2. Percentage Increase in Population: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown
in Suffolk County 5
Table 3. Total Housing Units: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown in Suffolk
County 5
Table 4. Percentage Increase in Housing Units: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and
Smithtown in Suffolk County 7
Table 5. Occupied Housing Units (Households): Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and
Smithtown in Suffolk County 7
Table 6. Household Size: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown in Suffolk County 8
Table 7. Seasonal Homes: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown in Suffolk County 8
Table 7. North Shore Watershed Population and Housing Characteristics by Town, 2000 10
Table 8. North Shore Watershed Population and Housing Unit Density Per Acre by Town, 2000 2

CHARTS

Chart 1. Population, Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown, Suffolk County 4
Chart 2. Occupied Housing Units (Households), Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and
Smithtown, Suffolk County 7
Chart 3. Seasonal Homes, Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown, Suffolk County . 8
Chart 4. Year-Round and Seasonal Population, 2000, Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and
Smithtown, Suffolk County 9
Chart 5. Population Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by Town, 2000 10
Chart 6. Housing Units Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by Town, 2000 11
Chart 7. Occupied Housing Units (Households) Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by
Town, 2000 12
Chart 8. Household Size Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by Town, 2000 13
Chart 9. Year-Round and Seasonal Population Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by
Town, 2000 14

INTRODUCTION

Study Objectives

The objectives of this population analysis are as follows:

- Summarize historical population trends in the towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County, New York. (The Town of Islip was not included in the historical population analysis because only a small portion of the Town of Islip is included in the North Shore watershed). This information will provide an overview of demographic trends in the part of Suffolk County that includes the North Shore Watershed land use study area.
- Calculate the existing population and total number of dwelling units (housing units) for each town and incorporated village within the North Shore Watershed study area.
- Calculate the number of year-round versus seasonal housing units for each town and incorporated village within the North Shore Watershed study area.
- Calculate the household size within the North Shore Watershed study area.
- The existing population, housing unit and household size data developed in this report, in conjunction with land use information, will be used in a subsequent analysis to estimate total population in the North Shore Watershed land use study area under saturation development conditions.

METHODOLOGY**Data Sources**

Several data sources were used in producing the information contained in this report. For the historical population trend analysis, U.S. Census data at the town level were used from the U.S. Censuses of 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. The Long Island Power Authority's *2003 Long Island Population Survey* was used for 2003 population estimates of the three main study area towns.

The population analysis of the specific North Shore Watershed study area required the use of more detailed census products. 2000 Census block maps and the 2000 Census Tract/Block GIS coverage were utilized to define the study area boundary precisely and organize the data. Block data from the 2000 Census were used in obtaining information regarding data on population, housing units, population living in households, occupied housing units, and seasonal housing units for each census block in the study area. Approximately 1,900 census blocks comprise the North Shore Watershed study area. 2000 Census data are the most recent data available at the block level.

Procedure

The study area boundary line was based on the line delimiting the 25-year time of travel for groundwater to reach the coast. To ensure complete accuracy in the North Shore Watershed population calculations, the boundary line was modified slightly to allow for easier and more accurate analysis of the characteristics of the study area. Before any population calculations were made, the North Shore Watershed study area boundary was drawn so that it did not split property lot lines. Also, an attempt was made to avoid splitting census block boundaries to make the population calculations more accurate and straightforward.

By overlaying the 2000 Census Tract/Block GIS coverage with the North Shore Watershed study area boundary, the Planning Department's GIS Division generated a list of census tracts and census blocks located in the North Shore Watershed land use study area. Four Excel spreadsheet files were created containing these census block numbers, one file for each town. The generated list of blocks was verified for accuracy. Some blocks were listed multiple times because they appeared multiple times on the GIS-generated block maps; these duplicate entries were deleted.

One map for each town was created by showing the study area boundary and the census blocks included in the study area. The GIS-generated maps included many blocks that lie just outside the North Shore Watershed study area boundary. This occurred because the lines for the study area boundary coverage and the census block lines in the 2000 Census coverage do not match up exactly. Therefore, dozens of census block numbers were included when they should not have been included. After a thorough check of the study area map against the map showing census blocks, these errant blocks were deleted from the block lists before population and housing data were assembled.

POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

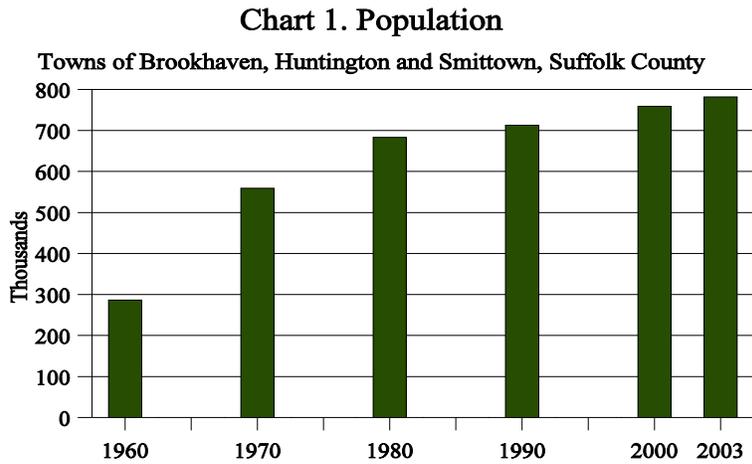
Next, the population and housing data at the block level were researched at the U. S. Census Bureau's "American Factfinder" web site, <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet>. Census 2000 "Summary File 1" 100% data from all households was researched for the census blocks in the study area. Using the Census Bureau's online research tools, detailed data tables were obtained showing the following data for each block in the study area: total population (table P1), population in households (table P16), housing units (table H3), and vacant housing units (table H5). Data for population in households were used to determine household size, because this data excludes population residing in group quarters (as opposed to household settings). The housing units table included data on the number of occupied housing units (households). The vacant housing units table included data on the number of housing units that were held for "seasonal, recreational, or occasional use," yielding data on the number of seasonal homes.

The population and housing unit data from these tables from the 2000 U. S. Census for each census block in the study area were then entered onto the PC in Excel format, one spreadsheet for each study area town. The census blocks were then sorted to arrange them by incorporated village so that data could be extracted for the incorporated villages in the study area. The necessary demographic data were tabulated by town and incorporated village using Excel software.

HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS IN THE TOWNS OF BROOKHAVEN, HUNTINGTON, AND SMITHTOWN, 1960 THROUGH 2003

Population Overview

The towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, Islip and Smithtown are part of the Nassau-Suffolk Metropolitan Division of the New York - Northern New Jersey - Long Island, NY-NJ-PA Metropolitan Statistical Area. Population density on Long Island is greatest in the western portion



of the island and generally decreases as one heads east. The Suffolk County towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown, the main towns in the North Shore Watershed study area, lie in western Suffolk County, approximately in the center of the Nassau-Suffolk metropolitan area. Population density in these three towns was 2.97 persons per acre in 2003, compared to 0.59 persons per acre in the five eastern Suffolk towns and 7.32 persons per acre in Nassau County.

The three Suffolk County towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown together comprise slightly more than 50% of Suffolk County’s total population. The population of these towns has steadily grown since 1960, increasing from 286,000 in 1960 to 782,000 by 2003. (See Chart 1.) The raw increase was greatest in the decade of the 1960s, followed by the 1970s. Population growth in these three towns was slightly faster in the 1990s and 2000s than in the 1980s. Yet while the population of these three towns has continued to grow slowly in recent years, the rate of growth is still much smaller than it was in the 1960s and 1970s.

Population

Of the three main study area towns, Brookhaven has had the largest population since 1970, while Smithtown has had the fewest residents. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Population: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County

Town	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003
Brookhaven	109,900	245,260	365,015	407,977	448,020	466,837
Huntington	126,221	199,486	201,512	191,474	195,289	197,626
Smithtown	50,347	114,657	116,663	113,406	115,715	117,575
3 Town Total	286,468	559,403	683,190	712,857	759,024	782,038

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, LIPA

POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

While population growth continues in Suffolk County, the growth is not nearly as dramatic as it was thirty and forty years ago. The population in Suffolk’s towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown grew by 95% in the 1960s, 22% in the 1970s, and 4% during the 1980s. (See Table 2.) From 2000 to 2003, the total population increased by 3%. Percentage increases in each of the three towns were extremely high during the 1960s. By the 1970s, dramatic growth had ended in Huntington and Smithtown, but Brookhaven had a 49% increase. In the 1980s and 1990s, moderate growth continued in Brookhaven, while decreases occurred in the 1980s in Huntington and Smithtown, and small increases occurred in those two towns in the 1990s. Between 2000 and 2003, population gains among the towns have been moderate, ranging from 1% in Huntington to 4% in Brookhaven.

Table 2. Percentage Increase in Population: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County

Town	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990-2000	2000-2003
Brookhaven	123%	49%	12%	10%	4%
Huntington	58%	1%	-5%	2%	1%
Smithtown	128%	2%	-3%	2%	2%
3 Town Total	95%	22%	4%	6%	3%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, LIPA

Total Housing Units

A housing unit is defined by the U. S. Census Bureau as a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. A housing unit may be occupied or vacant. Vacant housing units are comprised of seasonal housing units, units for sale, units for rent, or other types of vacant housing. Growth in the number of housing units in the towns of Huntington, Smithtown and Brookhaven has been continuing. The number of housing units doubled between 1960 and 2000, increasing from 38,168 to 76,791. (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Total Housing Units: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County

Town	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Brookhaven	49,694	78,660	120,833	140,723	155,510
Huntington	36,775	53,929	61,585	64,842	67,708
Smithtown	13,260	27,944	32,781	36,828	39,357
3 Town Total	99,729	160,533	215,199	242,393	262,575

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

The rate of growth in the number of housing units decreased from 61% during the 1960s to 34% in the 1970s. The increase during the 1980s was smaller, 13%, and was 8% in the 1990s. (See Table 4.) The time of dramatic growth in housing units in these towns has passed.

Table 4. Percentage Increase in Housing Units: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County

Town	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990-2000
Brookhaven	58%	54%	16%	11%
Huntington	47%	14%	5%	4%
Smithtown	111%	17%	12%	7%
3 Town Total	61%	34%	13%	8%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

In the 1960s, Smithtown led the two other study area towns in housing unit growth. Smithtown’s percentage increase in housing units in the 1960s was 111%, moderating significantly by the 1970s. The Town of Brookhaven has had the largest increase in housing units since 1970. The number of units in Brookhaven rose by 54% from 1970 to 1980, and by another 16% from 1980 to 1990.

Occupied Housing Units

An occupied housing unit is a household. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements. These households are year-round in nature. The number of households has been steadily increasing in Huntington, Smithtown and Brookhaven. In 1970, there were 145,000 households in the three towns and by 2003 that number had increased 78% to 258,000. (See Table 5 and Chart 2.)

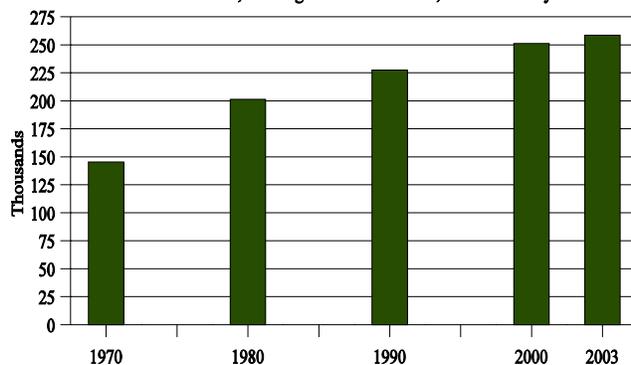
Table 5. Occupied Housing Units (Households): Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County

Town	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003
Brookhaven	65,989	109,266	129,137	146,828	152,903
Huntington	52,351	60,142	62,841	65,917	66,642
Smithtown	27,037	31,986	35,565	38,487	39,082
3 Town Total	145,377	201,394	227,543	251,232	258,627

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, LIPA

Over the same period (1970 to 2003) the population in the three towns increased by 40%. The growth rate in households has exceeded the growth in total population because household sizes have declined considerably. This trend toward smaller household sizes has also taken place both regionally and nationally. Locally however, the decline in household size appears to be ending.

Chart 2. Occupied Housing Units (Households)
Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington and Smithtown, Suffolk County



In the towns of Huntington, Smithtown and Brookhaven the number of households increased overall by 39% in the 1970s, 13% in the 1980s and 10% in the 1990s. In the first three years of the 2000s the number of households has increased by 3% in the three towns. As with total population, the growth in the number of households continues but is not as large as it was during earlier years.

Household Size

Over the past 30 years, the average size of a household in Suffolk County has declined considerably. New housing developments tend to contain younger families and larger household sizes. Since much of the County’s housing was developed in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, young families moved into these new homes during those years. As families have matured, the children have moved out to form their own households, contributing to a decline in overall average household size. In addition, family sizes today are smaller than in the past. Now that western Suffolk County is maturing, household types are less homogenous and the size of the average household has not declined dramatically in recent years. Table 6 shows the average household size for each of the study area towns since 1970.

Table 6. Household Size: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County

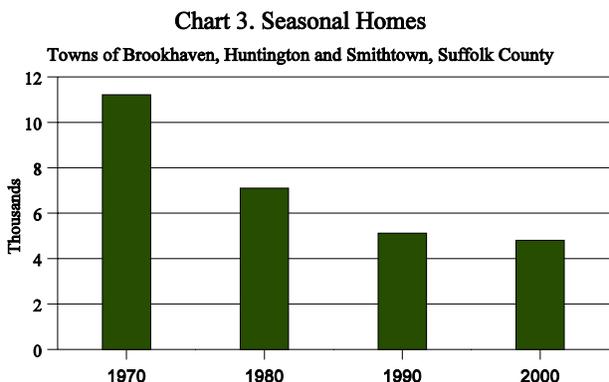
Town	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003
Brookhaven	3.59	3.26	3.07	2.97	2.95
Huntington	3.70	3.28	3.00	2.91	2.92
Smithtown	3.99	3.53	3.10	2.95	2.95

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, LIPA

Smithtown had nearly four persons per household in 1970, but by 2000 and 2003 that figure had declined and stabilized at 2.95. Brookhaven and Huntington had slightly less dramatic declines. All three towns showed little movement in average household size between 2000 and 2003. Brookhaven had a household size of 2.95 in 2003 and Huntington had 2.92 persons per household. It is expected that average household size in the region will remain relatively stable for the foreseeable future.

Seasonal Housing Units

Seasonal housing units are defined as vacant housing units that are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. These housing units are used or intended for use only in certain seasons or for weekend or other occasional use throughout the year. Historically, seasonal homes have played an important role in Suffolk County’s demographics during the summer months. However, in western Suffolk, the vast majority of seasonal homes have been converted to year-round use. In 2000, less than 2% of all housing units in the three study area towns were second or seasonal homes. Between



POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

1970 and 2000, the number of seasonal homes decreased from 11,000 to 4,800. (See Chart 3 and Table 7.) This was a 57% decrease in 30 years. The vast majority of the remaining seasonal homes in the three towns are located on Fire Island in the Town of Brookhaven, which lies outside the study area.

Table 7. Seasonal Homes: Towns of Brookhaven, Huntington, and Smithtown in Suffolk County

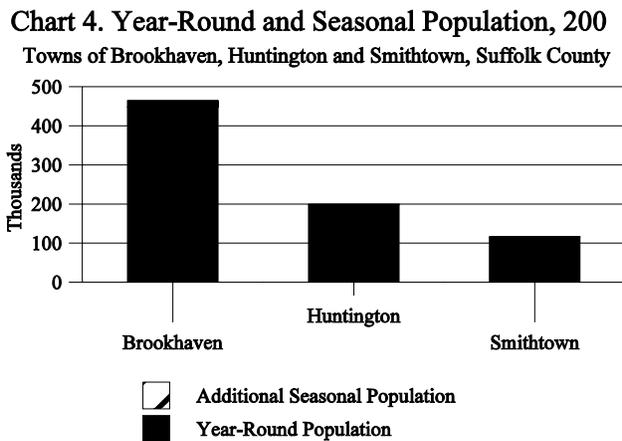
Town	1970	1980	1990	2000
Brookhaven	10,053	6,373	4,683	4,195
Huntington	793	465	272	415
Smithtown	368	262	160	195
3 Town Total	11,214	7,100	5,115	4,805

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Of the three study area towns, Brookhaven contains the largest number of seasonal homes. The number of seasonal homes decreased in Brookhaven from 4,683 in 1990 to just under 4,200 in 2000, a 10% decrease. Yet 71% of the seasonal units in Brookhaven Town are located in oceanfront Fire Island.

Seasonal Population Increase

The population of eastern Suffolk County increases substantially during the summer months because of tourism and the presence of seasonal homes. In western Suffolk, where the study area is located, the presence of seasonal homes is inconsequential. At an estimated four persons per seasonal housing unit, the additional seasonal population in the three study area towns was estimated. In Brookhaven Town, it is estimated that seasonal homes account for an additional 16,000 residents, adding 3.7% to the population. (See Chart 4.) However, 71% of these seasonal residents are on Fire Island outside the study area. In Huntington and Smithtown, the seasonal population increases are estimated to be 1,600 and 700, respectively, adding a negligible percentage increase in population.



POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

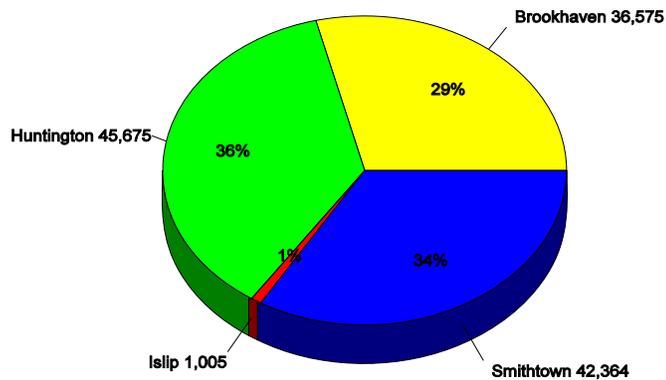
2000 CENSUS POPULATION ANALYSIS - NORTH SHORE WATERSHED STUDY AREA

Population, 2000

The population within the North Shore Watershed land use study area for each town was calculated for 2000 based on 2000 Census data. The 2000 Census provides the most recent detailed population and housing statistics for towns and small block areas. The next census will be taken in the year 2010.

The total population of the North Shore Watershed study area in 2000 was 125,619 persons. This figure represents 8.9% of the population of Suffolk County. The population was fairly evenly split between the three main study area towns. The largest population in the study area was contained in the Town of Huntington, with 45,675 persons living in the study area. (See Chart 5.) The Town of Smithtown had 42,364 persons in the study area, and Brookhaven’s share was 36,575. Islip Town had 1,005 residents in the study area.

Chart 5. Population
Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by Town, 2000



Huntington contains 36% of the North Shore Watershed study area population, Smithtown contains 34%, Brookhaven 29%, and Islip 1% of the total North Shore Watershed population.

Table 8 is a summary of the 2000 population and housing characteristics for each of the four towns in the North Shore Watershed study area. Population and housing data for each incorporated village in each town are shown in the Appendix.

Table 8. North Shore Watershed Population and Housing Characteristics by Town, 2000

TOWN	Brookhaven	Huntington	Islip	Smithtown	STUDY AREA TOTAL
Population	36,575	45,675	1,005	42,364	125,619
Housing Units	11,243	17,381	287	14,314	43,225
Occupied Housing Units (Households)	10,733	16,748	282	14,040	41,803
Seasonal Housing Units	261	223	0	89	573
Persons Per Household	2.79	2.71	3.31	2.92	2.81

Source: Suffolk County Department of Planning based on 2000 Census data.

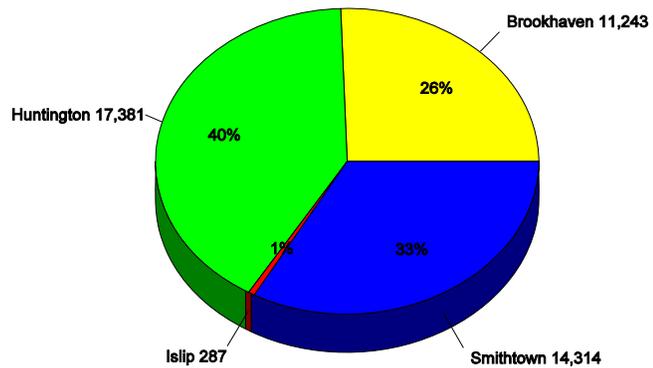
POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

Total Housing Units, 2000

The number of housing units in the study area was calculated using detailed 2000 Census data. The number of housing units in the study area totaled 43,225 in 2000. Huntington Town, with the largest population in the North Shore Watershed study area, also had the most housing units, 17,381. (See Chart 6.) Smithtown Town, with the second largest North Shore Watershed population, also had the second highest number of housing units with 14,314. Brookhaven was third, having 11,243 dwelling units in 2000. Islip’s housing unit count in the North Shore Watershed study area was just 287 in 2000.

Chart 6. Housing Units
Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by Town, 2000



Huntington Town’s share of housing units in the North Shore Watershed study area was 40%, followed by Smithtown at 33%, Brookhaven with 26%, and Islip with 1% of the housing units in the North Shore Watershed study area.

Housing Unit and Population Density Per Acre, 2000

Density figures were calculated using population and housing unit figures in conjunction with acreage totals for each town in the North Shore Watershed study area from the *North Shore Watershed 2001 Existing Land Use Inventory* (Suffolk County Department of Planning 2004). The overall population density in the North Shore Watershed land use study area was 2.42 persons per acre in 2000. Population density in the study area was highest in the Town of Brookhaven, at 2.87 persons per acre. In the study area, the population density was 2.29 in Smithtown, 2.24 in Huntington, and 2.45 in Islip.

The overall housing unit density in the North Shore Watershed land use study area was 0.83 housing units per acre in 2000. Housing unit density in the study area was highest in the Town of Brookhaven, at 0.88 housing units per acre. In the study area, the housing unit density was 0.85 in Huntington, 0.78 in Smithtown, and 0.70 in Islip. Table 9 shows the population and housing unit density figures for each North Shore Watershed study area town.

Table 9. North Shore Watershed Population and Housing Unit Density Per Acre by Town, 2000

TOWN	Brookhaven	Huntington	Islip	Smithtown	STUDY AREA TOTAL
Population Per Acre	2.87	2.24	2.45	2.29	2.42
Housing Units Per Acre	0.88	0.85	0.70	0.78	0.83
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POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

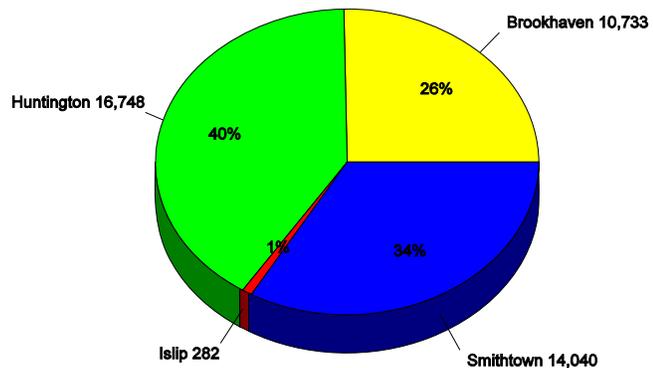
The Appendix contains the population and housing unit density figures for each incorporated village in the North Shore Watershed study area, by town.

Occupied Housing Units, 2000

The occupied housing unit figures in the North Shore Watershed study area were derived from 2000 census block data. In the study area, 93% of the population resides in households. The remainder live in group quarters. In the study area, by far the largest group quarters population is at SUNY Stony Brook, where more than 6,000 persons live in group quarters, i.e. dormitories. The remaining non-household population reside in group quarters such as nursing homes, adult homes, and schools.

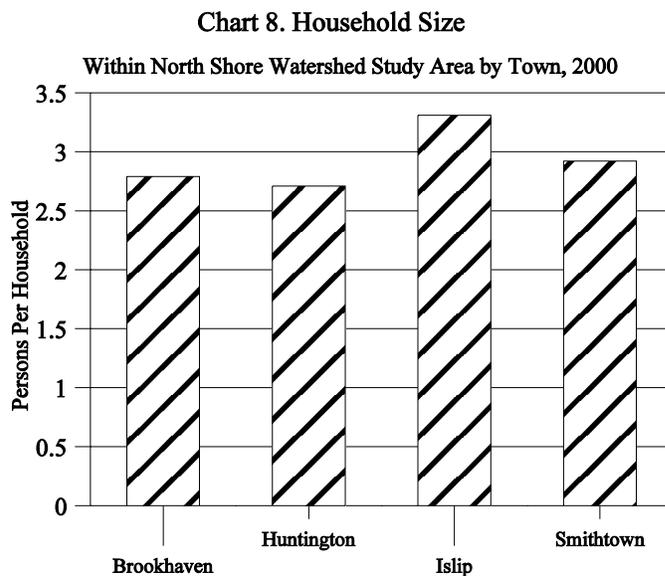
Once again, Huntington leads the North Shore Watershed towns, having 16,748 households (40% of the total), followed by Smithtown with 14,040 (34% of the total) and Brookhaven with 10,733 (26% of the total). Islip had 282 households in the study area, 1% of the total. (See Chart 7.)

Chart 7. Occupied Housing Units (Households)
Within North Shore Watershed Study Area by Town, 2000



Household Size, 2000

The average number of persons per household was derived for the North Shore Watershed study area from 2000 census block data. In the North Shore Watershed area, the average household



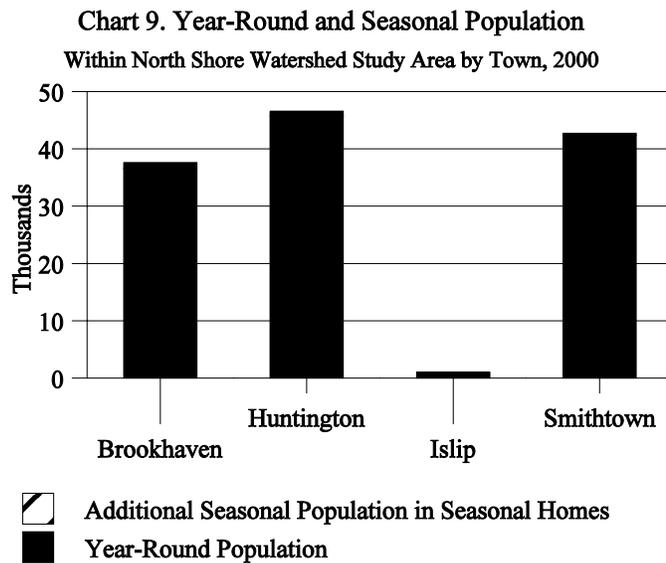
size was 2.81 persons per household in 2000. In comparison, Suffolk County as a whole had a 2000 average household size 5% larger, or 2.96 persons. Household sizes in the North Shore Watershed study area towns ranged from 2.71 persons per household in Huntington, 2.79 in Brookhaven, 2.92 in Smithtown, and 3.31 in Islip. (See Chart 8.) The relatively high household size figure in Islip reflects the fact that the small residential area of the town included in the study is comprised of two traditional single-family home neighborhoods. The large portions of the other study area towns include slightly more varied housing types.

Seasonal Housing Units, 2000

The numbers of seasonal housing units in the North Shore Watershed study area were obtained from 2000 census block data. Seasonal housing units are a minor component of the housing stock in the study area.

The resulting data on number of seasonal housing units showed that there were 573 seasonal housing units in the North Shore Watershed study area. This figure represents just 1.3% of the housing units in the study area. The vast majority of the 38,000 seasonal housing units in Suffolk County are located in eastern Suffolk and on Fire Island, well outside this study area. In the North Shore Watershed study area, there were 261 seasonal housing units in Brookhaven, 223 seasonal units in Huntington, 89 in Smithtown and 0 in Islip.

A few concentrations of seasonal housing exist in certain parts of the study area. Of Brookhaven’s 261 seasonal housing units, 95 were located on a spit of waterfront public land known as West Meadow Beach. To allow the land to revert to parkland, demolition of approximately 90 of these houses began in October 2004 and was complete by the end of 2004. There were also 24 seasonal housing units in the Village of Old Field in the Town of Brookhaven. The Village of Asharoken in the Town of Huntington contained 45 seasonal housing units. All the remaining seasonal housing units were widely scattered across the study area.



Seasonal Population Increase

Seasonal population is insignificant in the North Shore Watershed study area. At an estimate of four persons per household in seasonal homes, it is estimated that the population in the North Shore Watershed study area may increase by 2,292 persons in the summer months because of seasonal homes. This represents a 1.8% increase in population in the summer above the year-round population of 125,619.

The population in the North Shore Watershed portion of the Town of Brookhaven increases by an estimated 1,044 or by 2.9% from seasonal home occupants in the summer. (See Chart 9.) The North Shore Watershed portion of Huntington Town increases by 892 (2.0%), and Smithtown’s North Shore Watershed area population rises by 356 or 0.8% in the summer from seasonal homes.

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POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program

APPENDIX

North Shore Watershed Population and Housing Characteristics by Town and Incorporated Village, 2000

Town of Brookhaven

	Village of Belle Terre	Village of Old Field	Village of Poquott	Village of Port Jefferson	Unincorporated area	Town Total
Population	832	947	975	7,653	26,168	36,575
Housing Units	297	346	378	3,013	7,209	11,243
Occupied Housing Units	286	313	350	2,932	6,852	10,733
Seasonal Housing Units	6	24	12	18	201	261
Persons Per Household	2.91	3.03	2.79	2.44	2.93	2.79
Population Per Acre	1.5	0.7	2.6	3.9	3.1	2.87
Housing Units Per Acre	0.5	0.3	1.0	1.5	0.8	0.88

Town of Huntington

	Village of Lloyd Harbor	Village of Huntington Bay	Village of Northport	Village of Asharoken	Unincorporated area	Town Total
Population	3,651	1,496	5,838	673	34,017	45,675
Housing Units	1,179	560	2,375	320	12,947	17,381
Occupied Housing Units	1,138	539	2,296	267	12,508	16,748
Seasonal Housing Units	15	12	21	45	130	223
Persons Per Household	3.17	2.78	2.52	2.48	2.71	2.71
Population Per Acre	0.5	2.5	4.8	0.7	3.1	2.24
Housing Units Per Acre	0.2	0.9	2.0	0.3	1.2	0.85

Town of Islip

	Unincorporated area	Town Total
Population	1,005	1,005
Housing Units	287	287
Occupied Housing Units	282	282
Seasonal Housing Units	0	0
Persons Per Household	3.31	3.31
Population Per Acre	2.45	2.45
Housing Units Per Acre	0.70	0.70

Town of Smithtown

	Village of Head of the Harbor	Village of Nissequogue	Village of the Branch	Unincorporated area	Town Total
Population	1,274	1,543	1,444	38,103	42,364
Housing Units	445	570	468	12,831	14,314
Occupied Housing Units	429	533	464	12,614	14,040
Seasonal Housing Units	6	20	0	63	89
Persons Per Household	2.97	2.89	2.86	2.93	2.92
Population Per Acre	0.8	0.4	3.5	3.0	2.29
Housing Units Per Acre	0.3	0.2	1.1	1.0	0.78

POPULATION ANALYSIS

Long Island Sound Study - Suffolk County North Shore Watershed Management Program
