

VI

POPULATION & HOUSING

"A great city is not to be confounded with a populous one"

Aristotle

6.0 POPULATION & HOUSING

6.1 GOALS

Goals: Maintain Eastchester's diverse housing stock and reinforce housing opportunities for the town's shifting population

6.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. Population Trends:

The characteristics of Eastchester's population have a direct influence on long range planning for the town. The provision of adequate housing, the distribution of municipal services, the development and utilization of parks and the schools are examples of items dependant upon a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the town's population and demographics.

The 1990 census established Eastchester's population at 18,537 residents. The town's population peak of 23,750 was noted in the 1970 census (Figure #6-1). The most recent census figures indicate that Eastchester's population has declined 22% in twenty years.

This trend reflects the experiences of many of the older developed communities in lower Westchester County. This trend has been typically attributed to declining household sizes, lower rates of residential construction, and declining numbers of births to residents.

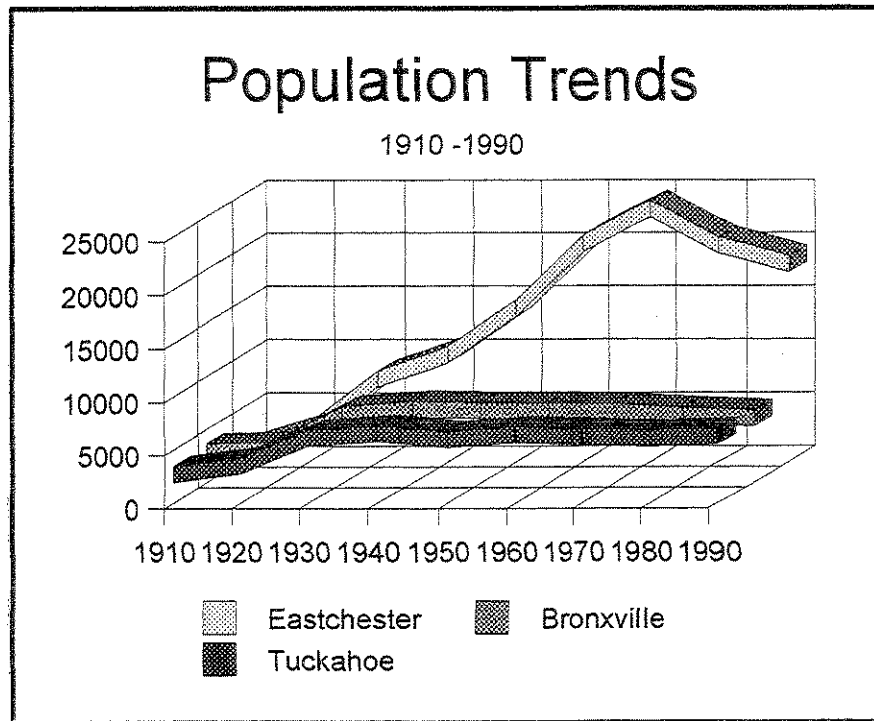
During the coming years, the composition of Eastchester's population will likely shift from traditionally larger families, to smaller families, and a relatively greater number of older and elderly residents.

Eastchester's growth and population trends are a product of and directly linked to the historical development of the neighboring villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe.

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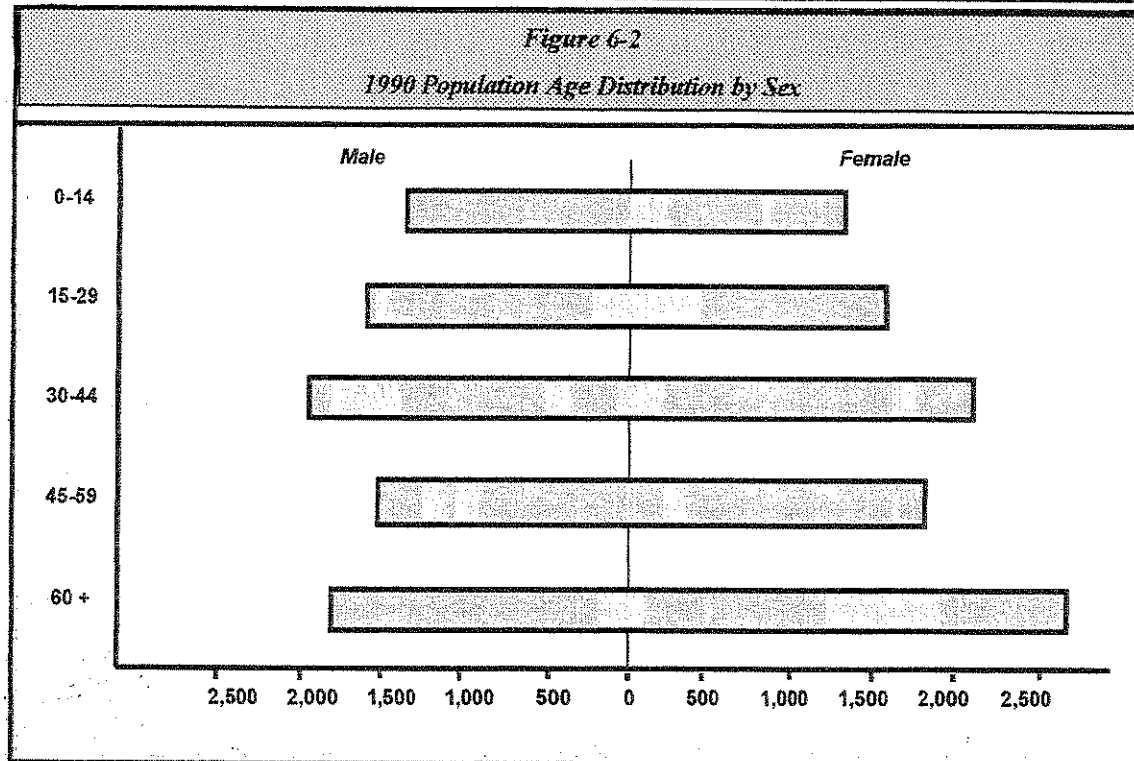
Figure 6-1



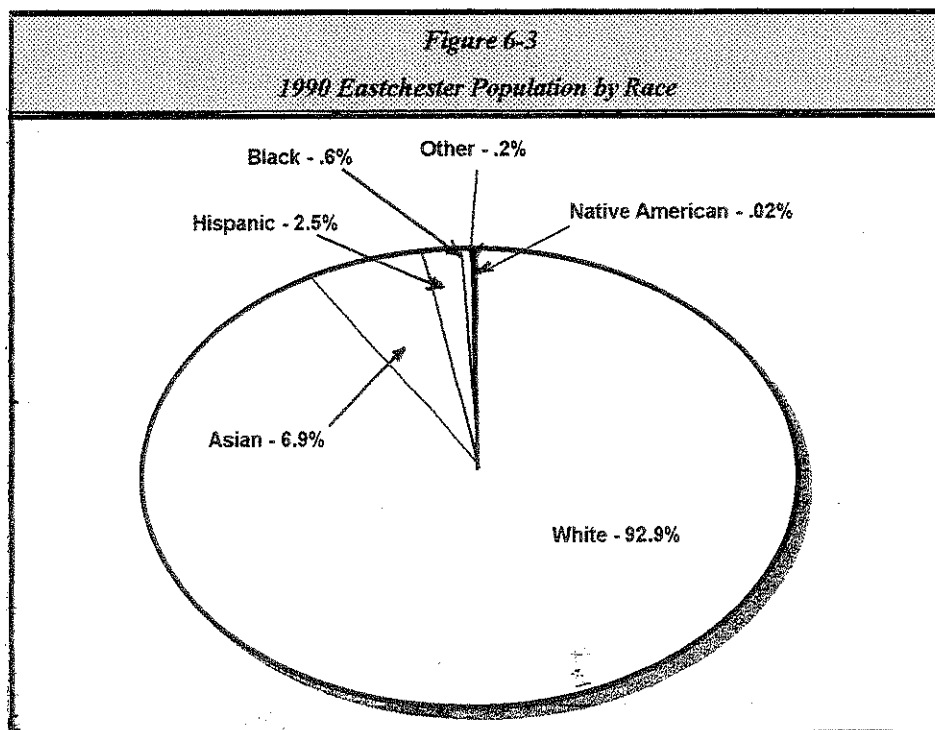
Fully one-quarter
of the town's
population is
above the age
of 60.

Both Bronxville and Tuckahoe evolved, and became established as hubs of commercial activity, transportation, and residences by the early part of this century. By 1930, both villages had stabilized in population and evolved into a form essentially similar to that which is evident today. Eastchester, situated along the fringe of the concentrated development exhibited by the villages, developed as a community substantially later, experiencing rapid growth throughout the 1930's, but not stabilizing until the 1970's.

Eastchester's population is 54% female, and 46% male. 16% of the town population is under the age of 14. 17% is between the ages of 15 and 29, 24% between 30 and 44, 18% between 45 and 59, and the largest segment of the town's population, 25% or fully one-quarter is above the age of 60 (Figure #6-2).



Racially, Eastchester's population is predominantly white. The 1990 census reported that 17,099 residents, or 92.2% of the population indicated their race as white (Figure 6-3).



The next highest reported group was Asian totalling 1,281 residents or 6.9% of the population. These groups were followed by Hispanics, 459 residents or 2.5% (represented as either black or white in census data), Black 108 or .6%, "Other" 46 or .2%, and Native American with 3 residents or .02% of the total town population .

B. Housing:

Eastchester hosts a broad array of housing types and opportunities. 7,884 dwelling units make up the town's housing stock, the vast majority of which is devoted to single family houses. However, two and three-family units are present, as are traditional apartments buildings, garden apartment complexes, and apartments above first floor commercial uses (Figure #6-4).

The town hosts
7,884 dwelling units

Figure 6-4
Distribution of Housing Units

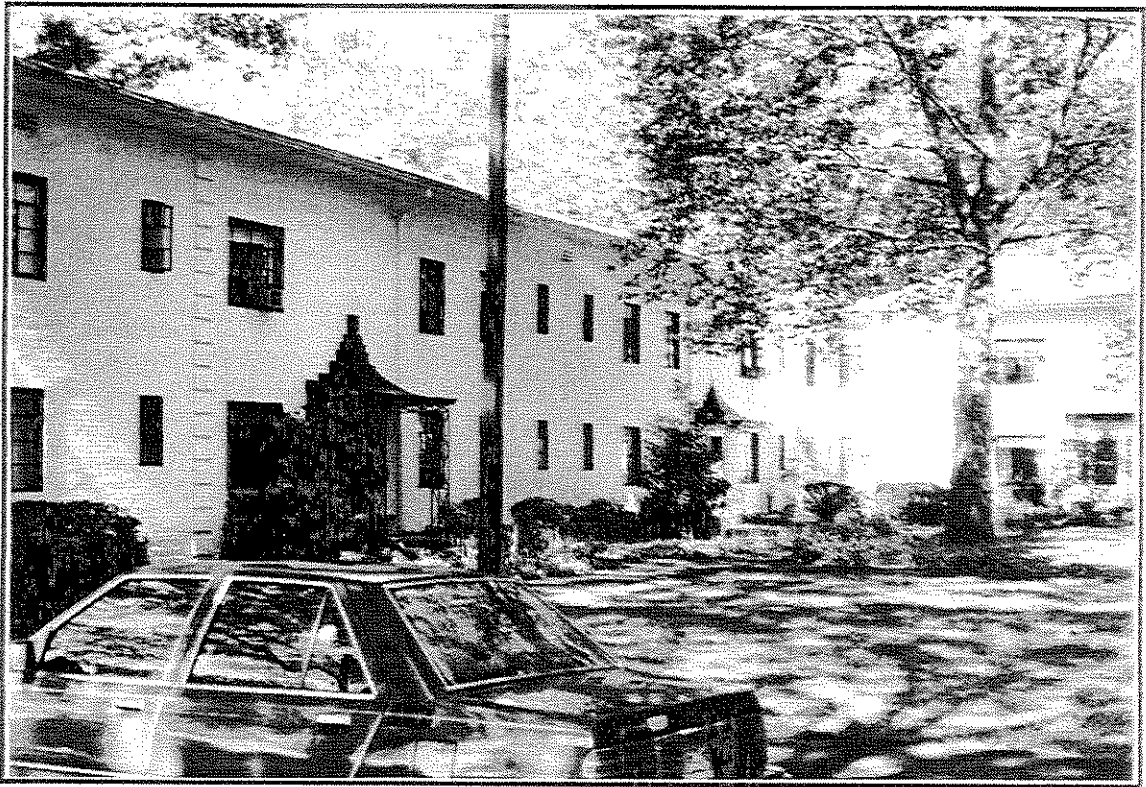
Housing Type	Number of Units
Single Detached	3,966
Single Attached	129
2 Family	371
3/4 Family	576
5-9 Dwellings	282
10-19 Dwellings	196
20-49 Dwellings	747
50+ Dwellings	1,562
Other	55
Total	7,884

76% of the town's
housing stock is
owner occupied, 24%
is renter occupied

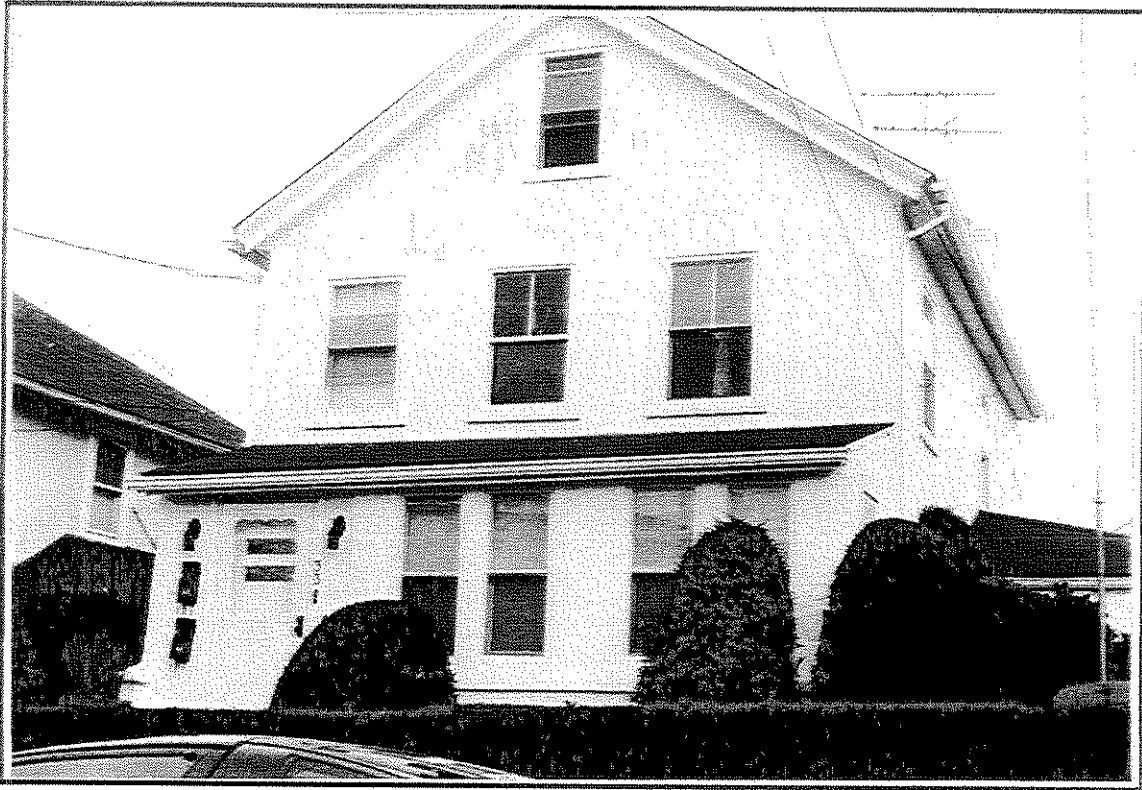
Of these 7,884 dwellings, 5,708 or 75.8% are owner occupied, while 1,827 or 24.2% are renter occupied. These figures represent a shift in the percentages recorded in the 1980 census which revealed owner occupied units accounting for 63.3% and renter occupied units 36.7%. The decrease in



(Multi-Family Apartment)



(Garden Apartment)



(Two-Family Dwelling)



(Single-Family Dwelling)

80% of the town's housing stock was constructed by 1960.

rental units is a direct result of the popularity of condominium and cooperative conversions that swept through the region in the 1980's. The 1990 census recorded 349 vacant units or 4.4% of the entire stock.

Due to the diversity of the town's housing stock, housing opportunities exist for those with modest means and for those able to afford luxury. It is possible to acquire a one bedroom cooperative apartment for under \$50,000. At the other end of the spectrum, homes in an area such as Lake Isle have recently sold for over one million dollars. Home sales activity in Eastchester is described as good.

About 1/3 of the town's housing stock was constructed prior to 1939, making these units 50 or more years old. The condition of these homes remains good, due in part to the private real estate market's influence on the housing stock, combined with effective building code enforcement. The peak years of new home construction occurred during the post war period. By 1960 nearly 80% of the town's housing stock was in place (Figure #6-5).

Figure 6-5

Housing Units by Period of Construction

Total Number Housing Units	1980-1990	1970-1980	1960-1970	1950-1960	1940-1950	1939 or Earlier
7,884	283	352	961	2,146	1,249	2,893

Eastchester supports 200 publicly assisted Section 8 units

Eastchester supports 200 publicly assisted Section 8 housing units in various locations throughout the town. The town also hosts a 117 unit publicly assisted senior citizen housing facility.

Accessory apartments are a phenomenon common to most mature communities. Generally constructed illegally, accessory apartments support a "hidden population." Often extremely difficult to identify, illegal non-conforming accessory apartments may reflect, by some measures, as much as 5 to 10% of a community's housing units.

A number of significant negative impacts are associated with the proliferation of illegal accessory apartments. Chief among them, most illegal dwellings do not meet local building and fire safety codes, and occupants may live in substandard or unsafe conditions. Secondly, since illegal units are difficult to identify, the town and school district are denied tax revenues needed to pay for increased services. Further, these dwellings can physically strain a neighborhood and overburden features such as parking, traffic, infrastructural support, etc.

The proliferation of accessory apartments can be linked to the lack of affordable housing opportunities in the region. Accessory apartments can provide attractive housing options. A basement apartment in a single family neighborhood may be preferable to some rather than an apartment in a high density neighborhood.

Beyond simply offering an affordable dwelling to a tenant, an accessory apartment helps to offset the cost of a single family home, which in Westchester County averages nearly \$300,000, thereby supporting the home owner as well.

Legal accessory apartments can be accommodated in existing neighborhoods in instances where they generally conform to the character of the neighborhood, when they do not strain resources such as parking and open space, and when they enhance the "livability" of the surrounding neighborhood.

6-1 Maintain existing zoning controls and patterns of land use that provide for a diversity of housing types and costs.

6.3 POLICIES

6-1 Maintain existing zoning controls and patterns of land use that provide for a diversity of housing types and costs.

6-2 Maintain and enhance affordability in the housing stock for the benefit of the entire Eastchester community, particularly for young families and an increasing senior citizen population.

6-3 Support the development of apartments above retail and service establishments in commercial areas.

6-4 The town, working with local realtors, should compile an index of affordable housing opportunities, and should make

that listing publicly available.

6-5 Properties obtained by the town through tax foreclosures, should be first evaluated for their suitability to provide affordable housing opportunities.

6-6 Address illegal accessory apartments by exploring the adoption of an accessory apartment ordinance that legalizes apartments in exchange for building and fire code compliance while simultaneously preserving existing residential neighborhoods through a review process.

6-7 Permit the conversion of larger single family homes to two-family homes in transitional areas between commercial areas and single family neighborhoods.

6-8 Encourage "shared housing." As an example, this concept allows for an elderly homeowner living in a large home to take in an unrelated tenant in exchange for a reduced rent plus a maintenance, upkeep transportation or simply companionship contribution.

6-9 Encourage the provision of rental housing to offset the loss of rental units to cooperative conversions in the 1980's.

6-10 Ensure the safety and character of residential areas by developing performance standards for non-compatible uses that are situated near residential neighborhoods.