3 Population Trends

Goals

- Prepare to meet the needs of the future population in specific age groups.
- Acknowledge the diversity of Southfield's population through sponsored acknowledgments or festivities.
- Support area educational organizations to exceed the County's average education attainment level.

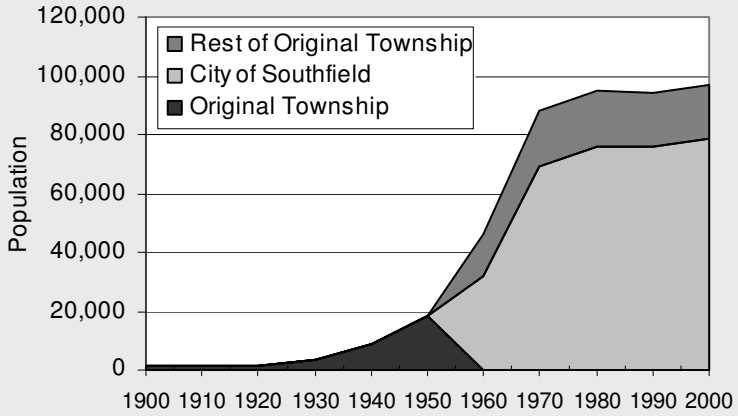
Current Conditions

Understanding demographic changes over time helps provide a better picture of what the future may hold for a community. Analyzing past and present demographic, social and economic data may help Southfield anticipate future land use patterns and community needs. This Comprehensive Plan uses a wide range of community data as a foundation to provide guidance for both land use and development decisions. It uses the most current information available, including the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, the 2005 American Community Survey, and local and regional information to accurately reflect current conditions and trends in Southfield.

Population Trends. In 1950, Southfield Township had approximately 18,500 residents and comprised 36 square miles, containing land now known as the cities of Southfield and Lathrup Village and the Villages of Bingham Hills, Franklin, and Beverly Hills. Between 1950 and 1960, the cities and villages in the Township began incorporating during a period of rapid growth. In 1958, at the time of Southfield's incorporation, the City had approximately 29,000 citizens. By 1970 that number had grown to nearly 70,000. Southfield's population reached more than 75,000 by 1980, but growth was already slowing considerably. The historical population growth of Southfield can be seen in Figure 3-1, which depicts the rapid growth spurt of 120 percent between the time of the City's incorporation and 1970.

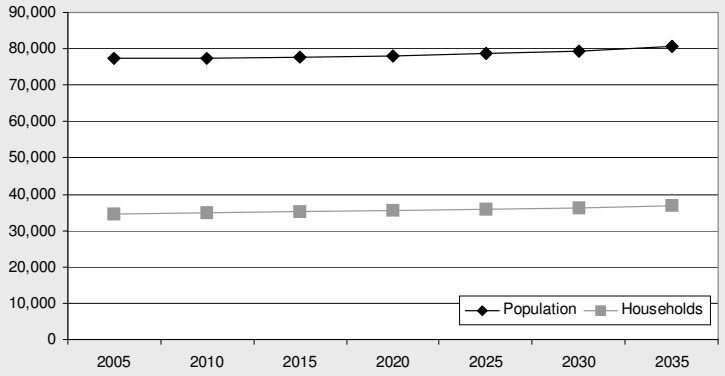
As of May 2008, the city of Southfield had an estimated 76,400 residents, according to the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). This figure is down 2.5 percent from the population reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the year 2000; however, the recently released 2035 Forecast for Southeast Michigan by SEMCOG predicts that the population will increase over the next 30 years. As depicted in Figure 3-2, SEMCOG forecasts that the population will increase to approximately 80,600 by 2035, an increase of 3.9 percent over the 2005 population estimate.

Figure 3-1: Historical Population, Southfield Township



Source: SEMCOG Historical Population

Figure 3-2: Population & Household Trends

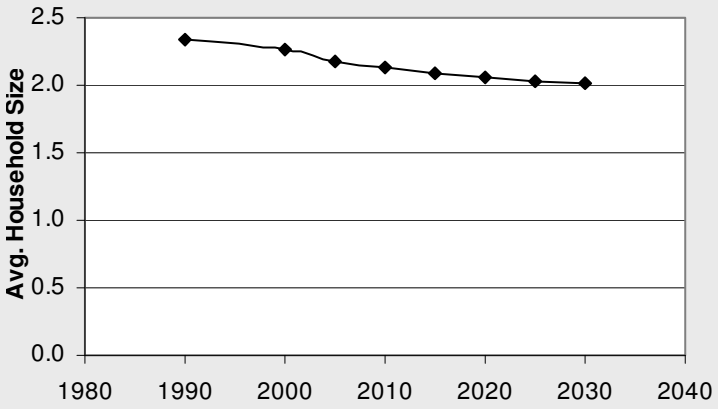


Source: SEMCOG Regional Forecast

Household Trends. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as all persons inhabiting a housing unit. Households can include one or more families or one or more unrelated persons who share living quarters. Southfield's number of households is forecasted to increase slightly. This is due in part to a decreasing average household size. Between 2000 and 2030, the average household size is forecasted to decline from 2.27 to 2.01 persons per household, as seen in Figure 3-3. The decrease in household size is more significant than the increase in the number of households, resulting in a declining population overall. Shrinking household size is a national phenomenon as American families are having fewer children on average. Southfield's average household size is smaller than those in Oakland County, metro Detroit and the state of Michigan. This is likely due to the high number of multiple-family housing units, which typically house a higher proportion of childless households. The large number of multi-family households in Southfield is discussed further in Chapter 4.

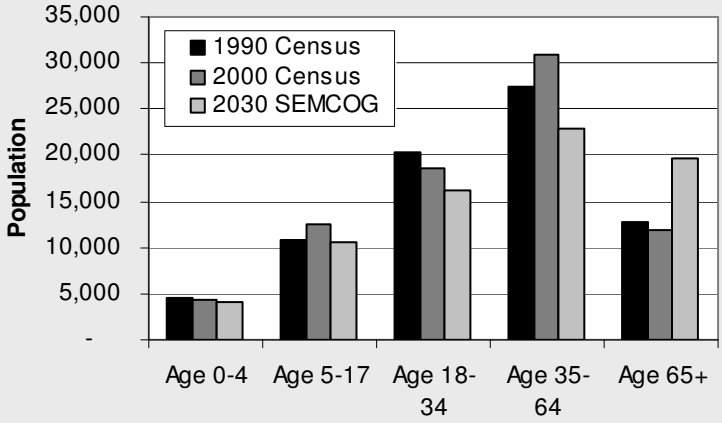
Age. The age distribution of the City's residents has been slowly changing (see Figure 3-4). The aging of the baby-boomer generation greatly impacts the community's age distribution over time. This effect is seen by the recent reduction in the number of residents in the 35-64 age bracket and increases in the age 65+ age bracket. The share of residents in the 35-64 age group is forecasted to decline significantly as the baby boomer generation advances into the 65+ group. The result of this expected shift is a population that will be equally distributed across the age categories; however, a significantly higher share of residents will be in the highest age bracket, one that generally requires costly public services. Southfield already has a higher percentage of residents in the 65+ age group than Oakland County, metro Detroit, and the state of Michigan, as seen in Table 3-5. As this segment of the population grows, the City must adapt by providing services to meet their changing needs.

Figure 3-3: Average Household Size



Source: SEMCOG Regional Forecast

Figure 3-4: Age Distribution, 1990-2030



Source: SEMCOG Regional Forecast

Table 3-5: Retirement Population, 2000

Community	Percentage
Southfield	15%
Oakland County	11%
Metro Detroit	12%
Michigan	12%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Race. The racial distribution of Southfield residents has experienced a major shift in recent years. In 1990, Southfield had a very balanced racial mix, generally in line with the County as a whole. The population was comprised primarily of white and black residents[i]. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of white residents declined by nearly 21,000 or over 40 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, as shown in Table 3-6. During the same period, the black population increased by more than 20,000. This significant shift resulted in the black population now comprising more than 54 percent of Southfield residents. This trend is consistent with other communities across the Detroit metro area, as the suburbs of Detroit gained nearly twice as many black residents between 1990 and 2000 than any other racial or ethnic group[ii].

Income. Southfield's residents are primarily middle-class. In constant dollars, the median household income fell approximately 3.5 percent over 10 years to $52,468, as seen in Table 3-7. Southfield has a higher median household income than the Detroit metro area as a whole, although the margin is shrinking, as can be seen in Figure 3-8. On the other hand, incomes in Southfield are approximately 15 percent lower than in Oakland County. The County's large number of wealthy outer-ring suburbs helps explain this discrepancy. Additionally, the City's higher proportion of older residents tends to suppress median income because retirees generally have less income than working households.

Income varies across neighborhoods. Residents with higher incomes have more choice on where to live. Neighborhoods with high numbers of upper-income residents tend to be more stable. Conversely, those with high concentrations of lower-income residents tend to be less stable and can lead to declining home values and increasing safety concerns. Figure 3-9 shows the variation in median income across the various neighborhoods in Southfield. Most neighborhoods fall in the middle income categories, but several have high concentrations of lower-income or upper-income residents. These areas are generally dispersed throughout the City and no large concentrations of high or low income neighborhoods are found. The neighborhoods in the lowest income bracket contain the high concentrations of multiple-family units in Southfield which includes some of the most affordable housing in the City.

Table 3-6: Racial Distribution, 1990-2000

Race	1990 #	1990 %	2000 #	2000 %
White	51,427	68%	30,431	39%
Black	22,053	29%	42,454	54%
American Indian	190	0%	157	0%
Asian	1,790	2%	2,416	3%
Pacific Islander	11	0%	24	0%
Other Race	275	0%	498	1%
Multi-Racial	N/A		2,342	3%
Total	75,746		78,322	

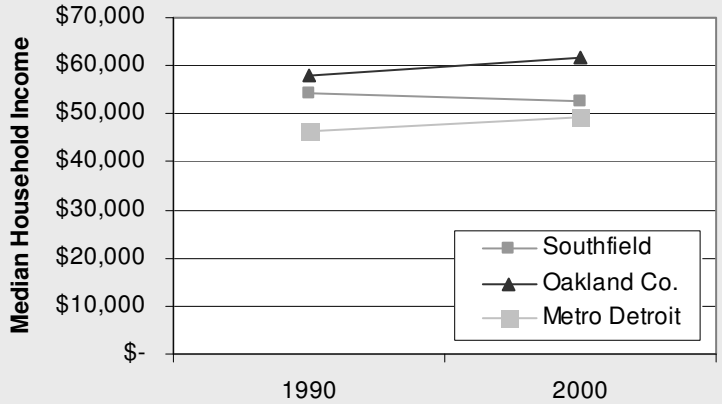
Source: SEMCOG Regional Forecast

Table 3-7: Median Household Income, 1990-2000 (in 1999 dollars)

Community	1990	2000
Southfield	54,380	52,468
Oakland Co.	58,170	61,907
Metro Detroit	46,584	49,175

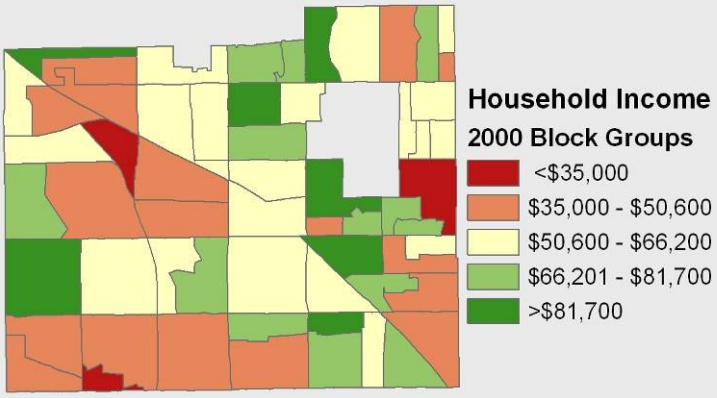
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 3-8: Median Household Income, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

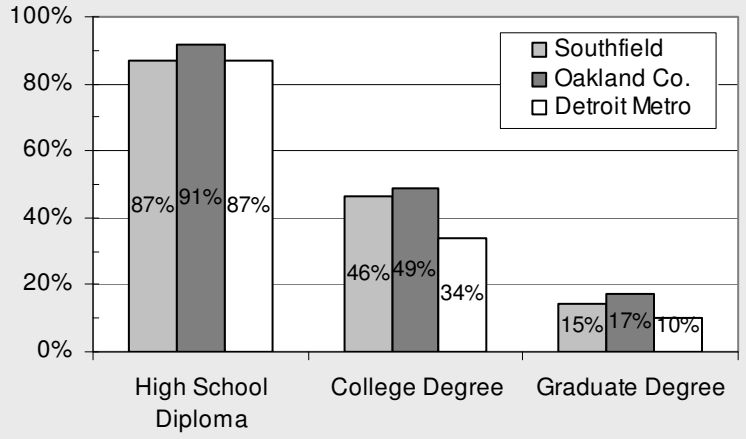
Figure 3-9: Median Household Income by Neighborhood, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Education. A snapshot of the educational characteristics of the City is important because education levels are strongly related to economic success, particularly as Michigan and metropolitan Detroit transition from a manufacturing economy to one that is largely knowledge-based. Concentrations of educated citizens attract and sustain jobs and tend to provide governments with a higher tax base. The educational attainment of Southfield's adults is slightly higher than the metro area and slightly lower than Oakland County, as seen in Figure 3-10. Eighty-seven percent of Southfield adults 25-years-old or older have at least a high school diploma, compared to 91 percent in the County and 87 percent in the metro area. Forty-six percent of residents have a college degree, compared to 49 percent in the County and 34 percent in the metro area.

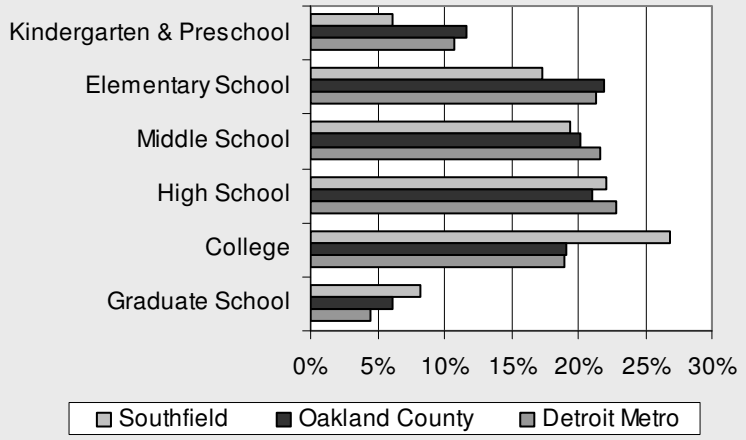
Figure 3-10: Educational Attainment of Adults 25 Years or Older, 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

School enrollment data gives a slightly different picture of the educational characteristics of the community. A significantly higher proportion (35 percent) of Southfield's population is enrolled in college or graduate school than in the County or metro area, as seen in Figure 3-11. The relatively high number of colleges and universities in Southfield accounts for the high post-high school enrollment. The high proportion of these students has likely created the environment which Southfield employers find attractive and has made Southfield a major employment center in metro Detroit.

Figure 3-11: School Enrollment of Population Three Years and Older, 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

If Southfield can be proactive in enticing students with college degrees to remain in the City after graduation, it will see its share of high school- and college-educated residents rise, ultimately helping to preserve and strengthen its healthy economy.

[i] Fasenfest, D., Booza, J., Metzger, K. (2004). Living Together: A New Look at Racial and Ethnic Integration in Metropolitan Neighborhoods, 1990-2000. Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.

[ii] Brookings Institution. (2003). Detroit In Focus: A Profile from Census 2000. Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.