

1. Epsom Today *(Demographics)*

Overview: It is the objective of the Implementation Chapter to assist the Town's boards, committees, and residents in using, reviewing, and implementing The Master Plan continuously. There are two mandatory chapters in the 2024 Master Plan, the Vision chapter and the Existing and Future Land Use chapter. In addition to these two chapters, other chapters were developed, including Demographics, Implementation, Transportation, Housing, Community Facilities, and Natural Features to provide a more comprehensive plan.

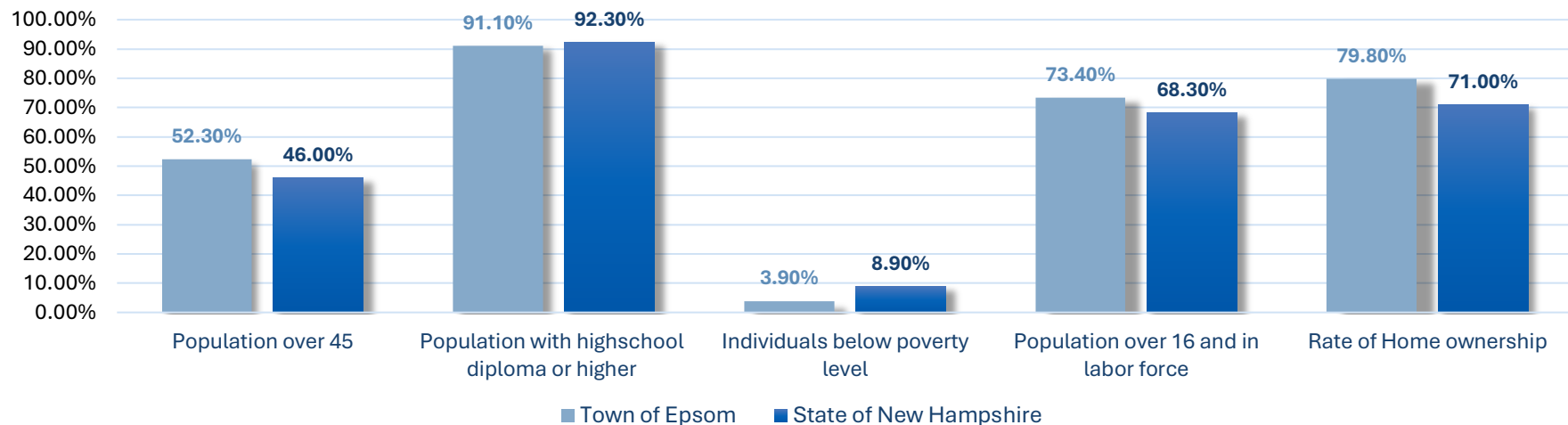
Epsom Today

Understanding how your community has developed requires a step back to inventory what we know is happening – what the demographic trends and patterns of development are and what residents perceive as positive influences or challenges going forward. By analyzing data in combination with public outreach efforts such as the survey and visioning session, the story of Epsom today emerges and sets the framework for identifying what needs to be addressed now and in the future. There are two main parts to telling the story: where we are today and where we want to be going forward. Once we understand the present, including data and trend analysis and what we heard from the public outreach efforts, we can look to the future with an understanding of our vision and what we want to

accomplish. The most current and readily available data is from the American Community Survey (ACS), usually from 2022. Data on social and economic characteristics are estimate data from ACS tables, not data from counts that are part of the decennial census. Older data is drawn from decennial censuses. Most of the tables and figures show data going back two or three decades to demonstrate trends over time. In addition to data from the U.S. Census, data is also drawn from various units of the New Hampshire state government including Planning and Development, Employment Security, Education, and Revenue Administration. Town of Epsom annual reports are an additional source. For comparison purposes, data is often shown for Epsom, Merrimack County, and New Hampshire. Some comparisons show data for Epsom and its six abutting communities.

The data used for the illustrations and analyses in this chapter are largely drawn from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

FIGURE 1.0: KEY COMPARISON AND OVERVIEW



Source: ACS 2022 5 Year Estimates

Recent Trends

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Over the past fifty years, the state experienced a short period of substantial growth followed by four decades of positive but slowing growth. Though the state has continually gained population in absolute terms during the past half century, the percent increase year-over-year has gradually decreased. This trend is projected to continue through 2030. New Hampshire is known, along with its neighbor Maine, for having the two oldest populations among the fifty states. The older age structure contributes to the slow but still positive growth rate.

MERRIMACK COUNTY

The county’s population growth mirrors that of the state, though it does not include either of the state’s two most populated cities (Manchester and Nashua). The county’s growth rate remains slightly higher than the state’s growth rate.

EPSOM

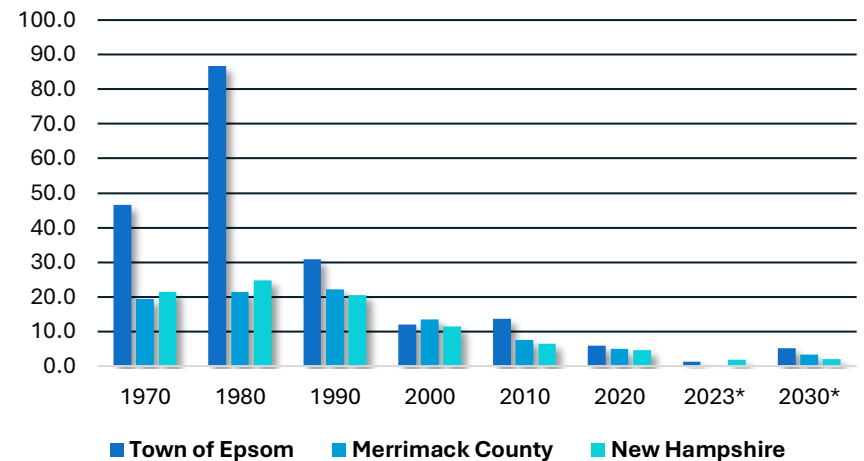
Though Epsom remains a small town, it has experienced periods of substantial growth. From 1960 to 1980, the town population spiked. The town’s population at the last decennial census in 2020 was over four times larger than its population in 1960. Though still growing, Epsom’s population has gradually slowed in percentage terms. The projection for 2030 shows positive growth but still in the single digits. This estimated growth through 2030 may bring the number of residents to over 5,000.

Table 1.0: Historic and Projected Population Trends

Year	Epsom		Merrimack County		New Hampshire	
	Pop.	Change (%)	Pop.	Change (%)	Pop.	Change (%)
1960	1,002	32.5	67,785	7.6	60,6921	13.8
1970	1,469	46.6	80,925	19.4	737,681	21.5
1980	2,743	86.7	98,302	21.5	920,610	24.8
1990	3,591	30.9	120,005	22.1	1,109,252	20.5
2000	4,021	12.0	136,225	13.5	1,235,786	11.4
2010	4,566	13.6	146,445	7.5	1,316,256	6.5
2020	4,834	5.9	153,808	5.0	1,377,313	4.6
2023*	4,897	1.3	154,099	0.2	1,401,828	1.8
2030*	5,151	5.1	159,385	3.4	1,430,601	2.1

*Estimates. Source: US Census Bureau; State of New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development

Figure 1.1: Percent Change in Population, 1970-2030



Source: US Census Bureau; State of New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development

Demographic Details

NATURAL INCREASE

Epsom’s demography has featured considerably more deaths than births. The difference between births and deaths has been in the double digits for the past decade. When births are greater than deaths, the result is natural increase. When deaths are greater than births, a natural decrease occurs. A place’s population size is a function of the difference between births and deaths plus the net migration. Epsom’s number of births rose from 2016 to 2022 before dropping sharply in 2023. Many years over the past decade, the number of deaths has been 60 or higher.

MIGRATION

A recent study by Kenneth Johnson of the University of New Hampshire shows that in 2021-2022, New Hampshire’s population grew because of a net positive migration. While deaths exceeded births resulting in natural decrease, net migration (leaving versus arriving) was positive for both domestic and foreign moves. The decline in population due to natural decrease was compensated for by the net positive immigration. Migrants from other states comprised the vast majority of arrivals, with relatively few people coming from other countries. Migrants from Massachusetts were the largest group of new state residents. See Kenneth M. Johnson, *Migration Sustains New Hampshire’s Population Gain: Examining the Origins of Recent Migrants*. University of New Hampshire, Carsey School of Public Policy, Carsey Research, Regional Issue Brief #174, Fall 2023.

RELATIVE SHARE OF POPULATION (MERRIMACK COUNTY)

After a period of rapid growth in the 1970s, Epsom has maintained a relatively stable percentage of the county’s

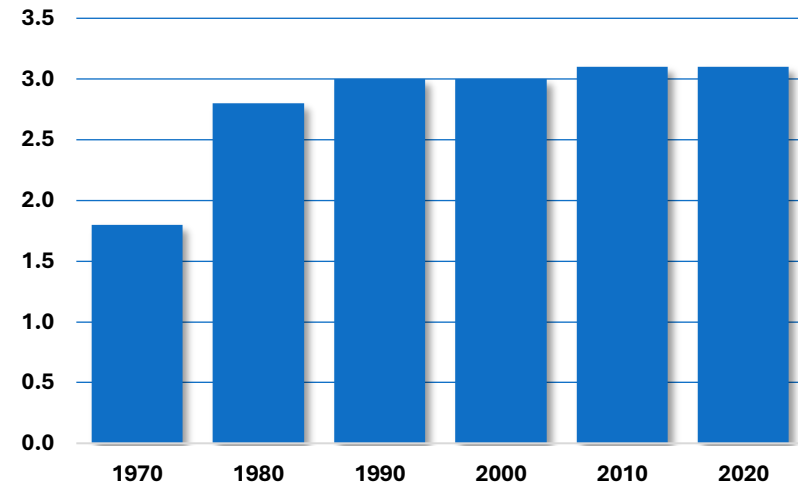
total population. There is a continuing growth trend from 1980 to 2020, however.

Table 1.1: Births and Deaths in Epsom, 2014-2023

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Births	33	28	12	17	21	23	24	28	39	22
Deaths	52	64	60	44	68	42	61	61	67	66
Natural Decrease	-19	-36	-48	-27	-47	-19	-37	-33	-28	-44

Source: Town of Epsom Annual Reports

Figure 1.2: Epsom’s Share of Population, Merrimack County



Source: prior edition of Epsom master plan; 2020 data from U.S. Census Bureau, Merrimack County and Epsom profiles

Epsom, Surrounding Communities

PAST AND PROJECTED POPULATIONS

Epsom and its abutting towns generally grew in population from 2000 to 2020, a trend that is expected to continue in 2030. However, there were exceptions to the positive growth trend. For instance, Allenstown’s population dropped in 2010 by over 500 people but then grew by almost 400 in 2020. Furthermore, Pittsfield’s population decreased slightly from 2010 to 2020 but is projected to grow by 2030.

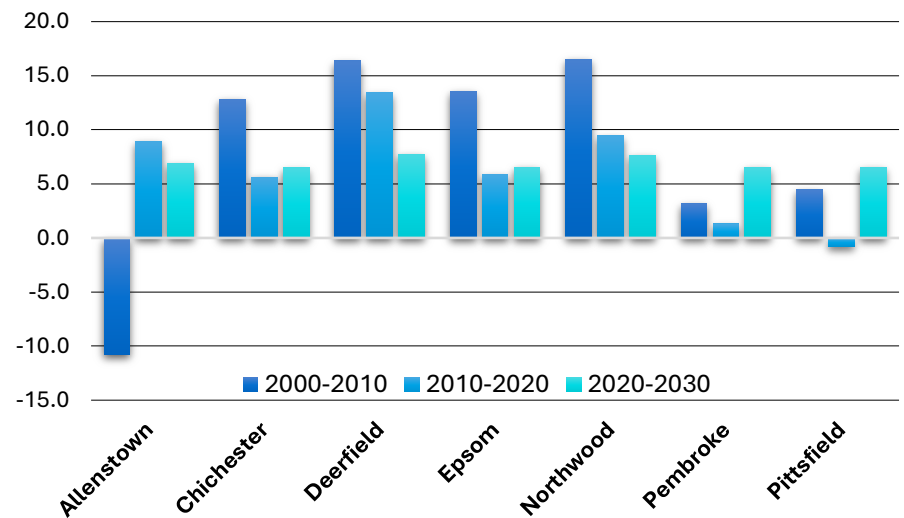
Comparing the rate of population growth between Epsom and its six abutting communities, Epsom, Deerfield, and Northwood grew substantially between 2000 and 2010. Allenstown lost population during that decade while the remaining towns had slight growth. Six towns including Epsom saw increases from 2010 to 2020, though potentially negatively influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pittsfield had a small decline that decade. Projections for 2020-2030 show Epsom and abutting communities growing between five and ten percent.

Table 1.2: Past and Projected Populations for Epsom and Abutting Communities

Year	2000	2010	2020	2030
Allenstown	4,843	4,322	4,707	5,031
Chichester	2,236	2,523	2,665	2,838
Deerfield	3,678	4,280	4,855	5,230
Epsom	4,021	4,566	4,834	5,151
Northwood	3,640	4,241	4,641	4,994
Pembroke	6,897	7,115	7,207	7,678
Pittsfield	3,931	4,106	4,075	4,342

Source: State of New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development; Robert Scardamalia, *State, County, and Municipal Population Projections: 2020-2050*

Figure 1.3: Percent Change in Population, 2000-2030



Source: State of New Hampshire Office of Planning and Development; Robert Scardamalia, *State, County, and Municipal Population Projections: 2020-2050*

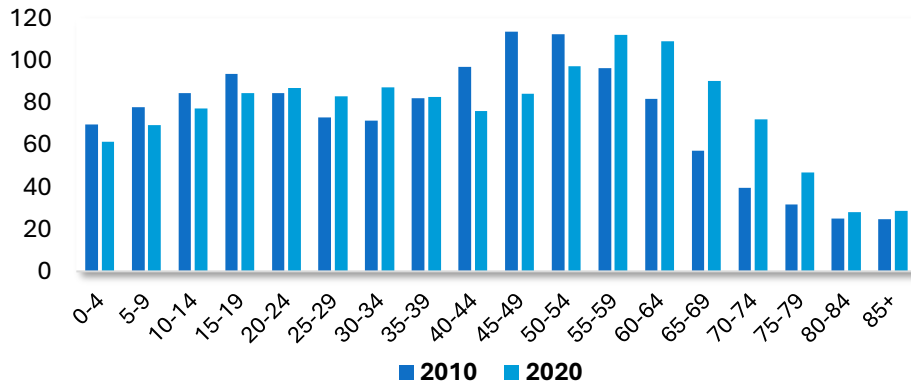
AN AGING POPULATION

The population of the United States is aging, and New Hampshire’s age structure largely mirrors that of the country as whole. Census data from 2010 and 2020 show the increasing number of people in the older age cohorts (55 years old and above). This shift in age distribution occurred in the same decade as the COVID 19 pandemic when older residents were at greater risk of illness and death from the virus. In addition to the natural progression of a population moving into older ages, the state may also attract older residents from other states who seek to retire in a state with low taxes.

Epsom’s age structure shows variability in the younger age cohorts across the three years from which the data was drawn. Like the data for the entire state of New Hampshire, Epsom has increasing numbers of residents ages 55 or older. The data also shows smaller numbers of residents 20-24 and

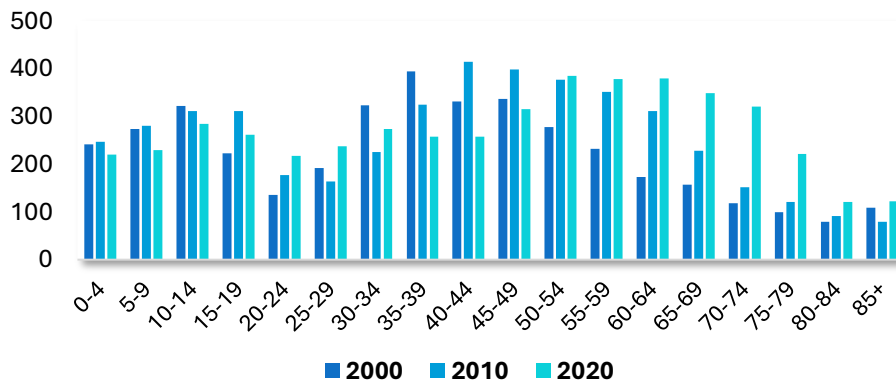
25-29 compared to the remaining age cohorts. This may be due to the lack of housing, particularly smaller or more affordable units that would appeal to people in their twenties.

Figure 1.4: New Hampshire’s Population by Age



Source: US Census Bureau, DP 1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics for 2010; DP 1 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, 2020.

Figure 1.5: Epsom’s Population by Age



(Figure 1.5) Source: State of New Hampshire, Office of Planning and Development for 2000 and 2010; US Census DP 1 General Population and Housing Characteristics for 2020.

CHALLENGES DUE TO CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

The rapid aging of the population has multiple challenges for both New Hampshire and Epsom. Older residents are likely to leave the workforce, potentially creating a smaller pool of employees. Housing needs will change too as residents may wish to move from large single-family homes into smaller townhouses or apartments. Regardless of the size of their housing, older residents may seek housing that is all on one floor to avoid having to use stairs. Access to health care, particularly on an emergency basis, becomes more important as people age.

These broader changes may impact Epsom differently than other communities. Having the right mix of housing types and sizes will be needed to ensure that residents can remain in Epsom as they age. Transportation is a second concern when so many residents rely upon a personal vehicle to get around. Older residents may no longer be able to drive yet public transportation is limited. Younger residents may not be able to afford the limited supply of housing and so may move elsewhere, thus reducing the pool of potential workers for local businesses.

School Enrollment

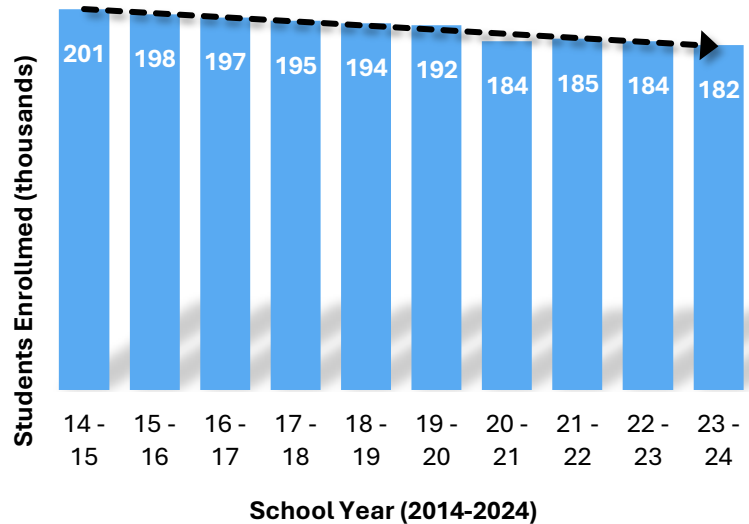
ENROLLMENT TRENDS

The shifting age distribution of New Hampshire’s population can also be seen in the total number of students enrolled in the state’s elementary and secondary schools. Figure 1.7 shows a steady decline in the total enrollment of the state’s public and private schools over the past decade. Note that this data includes enrollment for private schools which will likely include some students from other states. However, the majority of the students attend public schools are drawn from New Hampshire communities.

Over the past decade, enrollment in grades K-8 at Epsom Central School rose slightly until the 2016-2017 school year. It then declined gradually. The lowest enrollment occurred in 2020-2021, as the pandemic began to fade. The 2022-2023 enrollment was slightly higher than the previous two years, however, there has been a declining trend since 2016-2017.

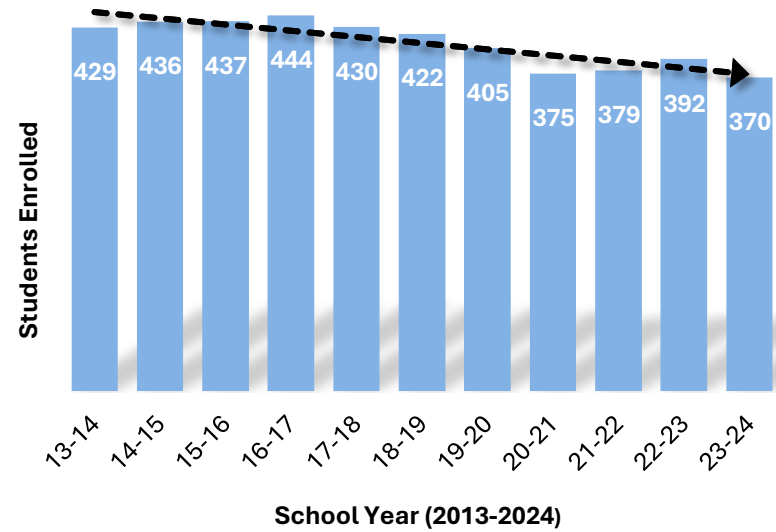
Similarly to the K-8 enrollment at Epsom Central School, enrollment of students in grades 9-12 at Pembroke Academy has declined gradually.

Figure 1.6: New Hampshire K-12 School Enrollments, Combined Public and Private



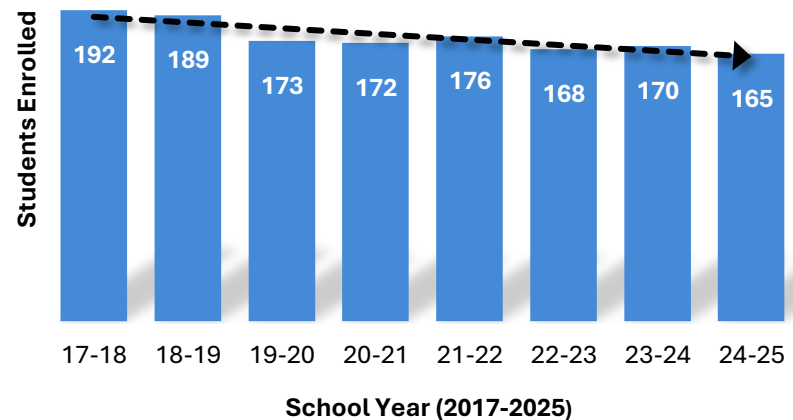
Source: State of New Hampshire Department of Education

Figure 1.7: Epsom Central School Enrollment



Source (figures 1.7,1.8): State of New Hampshire Department of Education, iPlatform Reports, District Fall Enrollment

Figure 1.8: Epsom Student Enrollment in Grades 9-12



Education Attainment, Income, & Poverty Level

Table 1.3: Education Attainment for Epsom and Surrounding Communities

	Population	Less than	9th-12th	HS Diploma	Some College	Associate's	Bachelor's	Graduate
	Aged 25+	9th grade	(no diploma)	or GED	(no degree)	Degree	Degree	Degree
Allenstown	3054	42	317	1032	523	554	408	178
Chichester	2020	4	60	574	366	280	475	261
Deerfield	3400	0	264	849	571	367	984	365
Epsom	3491	123	199	928	524	363	874	480
Northwood	3447	14	92	1165	437	573	764	402
Pembroke	4938	106	122	1707	877	811	661	654
Pittsfield	1503	0	145	734	236	154	125	109

Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 5 Year Estimates Subject Tables

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

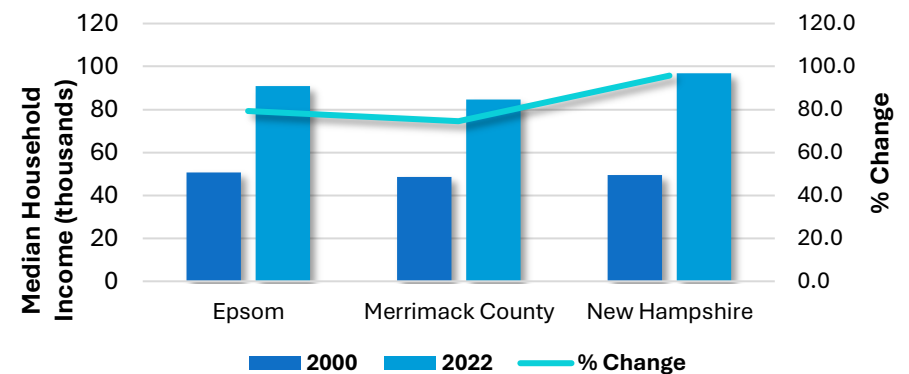
For six of the seven towns in this comparison, the most common education attainment level was a high school diploma or general equivalency degree (GED). Deerfield is the exception where a bachelor’s degree is the most common attainment level. Epsom’s residents have considerable variation in education attainment. Over 1700 Epsom residents earned an associate’s degree or higher, but over 100 residents ended their formal education before reaching the high school grades.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In 2000, Epsom, Merrimack County, and New Hampshire had broadly comparable median household incomes. Epsom had the highest value of the three places at \$50,685. All three locations experienced considerable growth in

median income between 2000 and 2022. New Hampshire’s median income rose the most of the three, up almost 96%. Epsom’s 2022 median income (\$90,805) lags for the state but is still higher than Merrimack County. When comparing data for 2000 and 2022, it must be recognized that dollar values in 2022 are not the same as for 2000. Note also that 2022 data are estimates.

Figure 1.9: Median Household Income Change, 2000-2022



(Figure 1.7) Source: 2000 Census DP 3 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics; 2022 ACS 5 Year Estimates

POVERTY

Poverty measurement is comprised of Income-based data within a 12-month period (usually relating to the most recent 12-month period). Of the three geographic areas in the table below (town, county, and state), Epsom’s poverty rate is the lowest.

Table 1.4: Percent Below Poverty

Epsom	3.3%
Merrimack County	6.8%
New Hampshire	7.2%

Source: ACS 2022 1 Year Estimate S1701 Poverty Status in Last 12 Months

Housing

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Epsom’s average household size has remained fairly constant over a twenty-year time span.

Table 1.5: Average Household Size in Epsom (2000-2020)

2000	2.63
2010	2.86
2020	2.71

Source: 2000 DP 1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics; 2010 and 2020 ACS 5-year estimate

Epsom and its neighbors have seen their population density increase from 2000 to 2020, except for Allenstown and Pittsfield which experienced a slight decline. Compared to its abutting communities, Epsom’s population density in 2020 (140.5) falls in the middle of the range of values (95.6 to 318.4).

Table 1.6 Persons per Square Mile

	Land Area	2000 Pop	2000 Density	2010 Pop	2010 Density	2020 Pop	2020 Density
Allenstown	20.463	4,843	236.7	4322	211.2	4707	230.0
Chichester	21.187	2,236	105.5	2523	119.1	2665	125.8
Deerfield	50.758	3,678	72.5	4280	84.3	4855	95.6
Epsom	34.417	4,021	116.8	4566	132.7	4834	140.5
Northwood	28.156	3,640	129.3	4241	150.6	4641	164.8
Pembroke	22.635	6,897	304.7	7115	314.3	7207	318.4
Pittsfield	24.024	3,931	163.6	4106	170.9	4075	169.6

Source: 2000, DP1 Profile of General Demographic Characteristics; 2010 and 2020, P1 Race. Calculations use land area, not total area, in square miles.

The seven communities in this comparison generally permit fewer than twenty new housing units per year. Notable exceptions to this were Allenstown with 49 in 2020 and Pembroke with 55 also in 2020. Epsom’s annual totals range from 6 to 12 in this three-year span.

Table 1.7 Residential Building Permits

Town	2020	2021	2022
Allenstown	49	11	4
Chichester	9	14	5
Deerfield	21	17	11
Epsom	12	6	10
Northwood	12	7	15
Pembroke	55	5	20
Pittsfield	14	18	15

Source: Office of Planning and Development, Housing Units Permitted in NH in 2022 by Municipality

Employment

LABOR FORCE

According to NH Employment Security’s Community Profiles, Epsom has seen a very slight growth in the number of people in the civilian workforce between 2013 and 2023. The number of workers increased from 2,897 to 2,932, a gain of just 35.

OCCUPATION AND EMPLOYERS

Epsom’s workers are employed across a variety of occupation sectors. The largest number of Epsom civilian employees are in sales and office occupations (532) followed by education, legal, community service, arts, and media (309), and management, business, and financial (300). The rough balance between employment sectors is a positive characteristic. In times of economic downturn in one sector, other Epsom workers might not be affected. The percent employed is not 100 due to rounding.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

All the towns in the comparison have low unemployment rates, and all have lower rates in 2024 than in 2022. Epsom’s unemployment rate is the same or lower than its neighbors.

Table 1.9: Unemployment Rates, Epsom & Abutting Communities

	2022	2023	2024
Allenstown	2.7	2.1	2.1
Chichester	2.1	1.8	1.7
Deerfield	2.0	1.8	1.9
Epsom	1.9	1.6	1.7
Northwood	2.1	2.0	1.8
Pembroke	2.1	1.9	1.9
Pittsfield	2.4	2.1	2.3

Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau

Table 1.8: Occupations of Employed Epsom Residents

Field	Employed	Percentage
Management, business, & financial	300	12.3
Computer, engineering, & science	266	10.9
Education, legal, community service, arts, media	309	12.6
Healthcare practitioners & technical occupations	191	7.8
Service	273	11.1
Sales and office	532	21.7
Natural resources, construction, & maintenance	290	11.8
Production, transportation, & material moving	287	11.7
Total employed persons over 16 years of age:	2,448	99.9%

Source: ACS 2022 5 Year Estimates, S2401 Occupation by Sex for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over

EMPLOYERS

The town’s ten largest employers are shown in the table. The two largest employers, White Mountain Cable and Epsom Healthcare Center, have substantially more employees than the next eight organizations. Note that transportation, government including education, and restaurants comprise most of the top ten employers in Epsom by size of workforce.

Table 1.10: Largest Employers in Epsom

Company	Employees	Location
White Mountain Cable	250-499	Dover Road
Epsom Healthcare Center	100-249	Suncook Valley Hwy
Dail Transportation	50-99	NH Rt 107
New England Traffic Control	50-99	Suncook Valley Hwy
Special Education Office	50-99	Black Hall Road
Epsom Central School	50-99	Black Hall Road
Tim's Truck Capital	50-99	Suncook Valley Hwy
McDonald's	20-49	Dover Road
Circle Restaurant	20-49	Suncook Valley Hwy
Town of Epsom	20-49	Suncook Valley Hwy

Source: NH Employment Security, Granite Stats, Employers, Epsom

WAGE COMPARISONS

The seven towns in this comparison vary in terms of their areal size, population, and thus so does their number of employed workers. When comparing the average weekly wage, Epsom (\$1,076) is in the middle of the range (\$991 to \$1,256) for private industry. The average weekly wage for government employees is significantly lower than for employees of privately owned companies.

Table 1.11: Average Annual Weekly Wage, 2023

Private Industry			Government		
Annual Average Units	Annual Average Employment	Avg Weekly Wage \$	Annual Average Units	Annual Average Employment	Avg Weekly Wage \$
52	487	993	8	348	955
89	795	1,239	3	97	752
89	471	1,026	2	66	704
102	1,141	1,076	4	159	842
115	997	991	4	155	860
163	2,121	1,256	12	514	1,054
93	1,014	1,190	5	201	794

Source: NH Employment Security, Covered Employment and Wages

Commuting Patterns

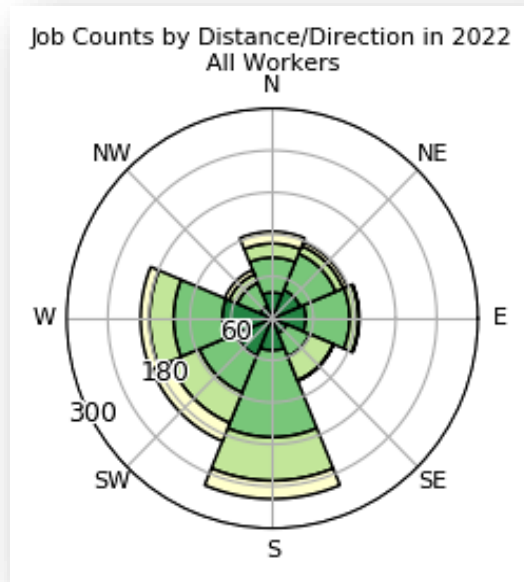
PLACE OF WORK

According to the ACS 2022, almost all (97.2%) of Epsom’s workforce was employed in New Hampshire. A large majority (63.3%) were employed in Merrimack County. The Census Bureau’s *OnTheMap* data tool used 2022 data to calculate commuting distance from home to work.

Most Epsom workers travel less than 25 miles to get to work. Almost a third travel less than ten miles. The largest group of workers (41.8%) travels between 10 and 24 miles to reach their job. Many Epsom residents travel to the west and south, likely toward Concord and Manchester, for work.

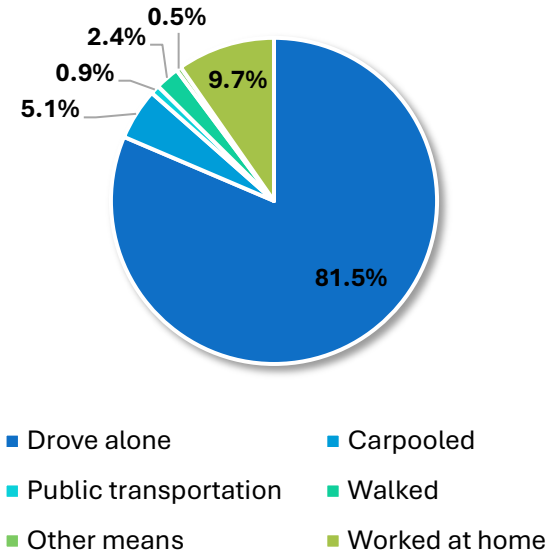
Figure 1.10: Job Counts by Distance and Direction, 2022

DISTANCE (MI)	JOBS (% OF)
0-10	29.6
10-24	41.8
25-50	20.2
50+	8.4



Source: Census Bureau, OnTheMap tool, distance/direction analysis, Epsom, New Hampshire

Figure 1.11: Means of Transportation to Work



Source: ACS 2022 5 Year Estimates, S0801

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

As is so common in American communities, most (81.5%) workers in Epsom travel to work in in a car by themselves. Carpooling (5.1%) increased the amount of Epsom residents whose transportation is by car. Public transportation was the means for just 0.9%, less than even the percentage of people who walked to work (2.4%). All other means of getting to work comprised 0.5%. Almost one tenth (9.7%) of Epsom employees worked from home.

Town Tax Rates

Epsom’s total tax rate, consisting of four separate taxes, has gone up almost 5.00 per \$1,000 between 2020 and 2024. The largest component of the total tax rate is the local education rate, standing at 18.21 per \$1,000 in 2024.

Comparing Epsom to its six abutting communities, the town has higher state and local school tax rates. Epsom also has a higher total tax rate. The full value tax rate, however, is the second lowest in the group.

Table 1.12: Epsom’s Tax Rates, 2020-2024

Year	Municipal Rate per \$1,000	County Rate per \$1,000	State Education Rate per \$1,000	Local Education Rate per \$1,000	Total Rate per \$1,000
2020	3.95	2.49	1.91	13.48	21.83
2021	3.71	2.38	1.83	15.72	23.64
2022	3.71	2.48	1.26	16.39	23.84
2023	3.64	2.23	1.81	16.95	24.63
2024	4.07	2.74	1.62	18.21	26.64

Source: NH Department of Revenue Administration, Municipal Tax Rates

Table 1.13: Equalized Tax Rates of Epsom and Abutting Communities

Community	Net Valuation \$	State School Tax Rate per \$1,000	Local School Tax Rate per \$1,00	Total Tax Rate per \$1,000	Full Value Tax Rate per \$1000
Allenstown	520,079,617	1.25	11.94	21.20	19.10
Chichester	538,312,739	1.14	9.98	16.42	16.31
Deerfield	707,889,402	1.65	15.63	22.66	14.21
Epsom	512,752,825	1.81	16.95	24.63	14.77
Northwood	941,068,635	1.35	9.98	13.80	12.45
Pembroke	771,321,448	1.83	17.57	27.88	18.13
Pittsfield	352,151,213	1.66	12.96	24.97	15.91

Source: NH Department of Revenue Administration, 2023 Municipal Tax Rates; 2023 Comparison of Full Value Tax Rates