



MADISON

COMMUNITY PROFILE

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This chapter profiles the people of Madison, by analyzing the history and patterns of growth of the population. The purpose of a community profile is to help determine what can be expected in the future. Most of the information presented here has been taken from various sources supplied by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The most common measure of a town’s level of development and prosperity is its population. How and why the population changes is just as important as the population change itself. What happens in the future is a combined function of planning decisions and the manner in which the town evolved in the past. The information presented in this chapter is about what happened with Madison’s population in the past and how that will inevitably affect what happens in the future.

Madison is undeniably evolving, and the population is changing. Innovative ideas and strategies will be needed to accommodate the changing population. The information supplied here will be used throughout the plan.

Throughout this document, the population number varies between 4,726 and 4,782. This is because the population of 4,726 was taken from the 2020 Decennial U.S. Census, while the population of 4,782 was taken from the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) which is an estimate. Not all data is available from the 2020 Decennial Census, requiring reference to 2024 ACS data in certain areas and tables. In other instances, further information was extrapolated (by the U.S. Census Bureau) using ACS data. To change between population data sources and recalculate would render the information inaccurate. It is important to understand this, because it could be construed as a mistake, and it is not. These discrepancies have been annotated wherever possible.

HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS

Over the course of its existence, Madison has experienced population fluctuations similar to that of its neighboring communities, as well as the State of Maine. Economic and cultural factors have influenced these population changes. Table 1 shows an overview of the record births and deaths in Madison between the years of 2012-2024. Table 2 and Figure 1 depict the overall population changes beginning in 1810 through 2024.

Table 1: Births and Deaths in Madison, 2012 - 2024

Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Births	39	44	43	48	36	44	28	35	43	44	49	39	46
Deaths	75	85	89	67	97	76	81	89	72	53	44	48	40
Net	-36	-41	-46	-19	-61	-32	-53	-54	-29	-9	5	-9	6

Source: Madison Town Clerk

Table 2: Population Change, 1810 to 2024

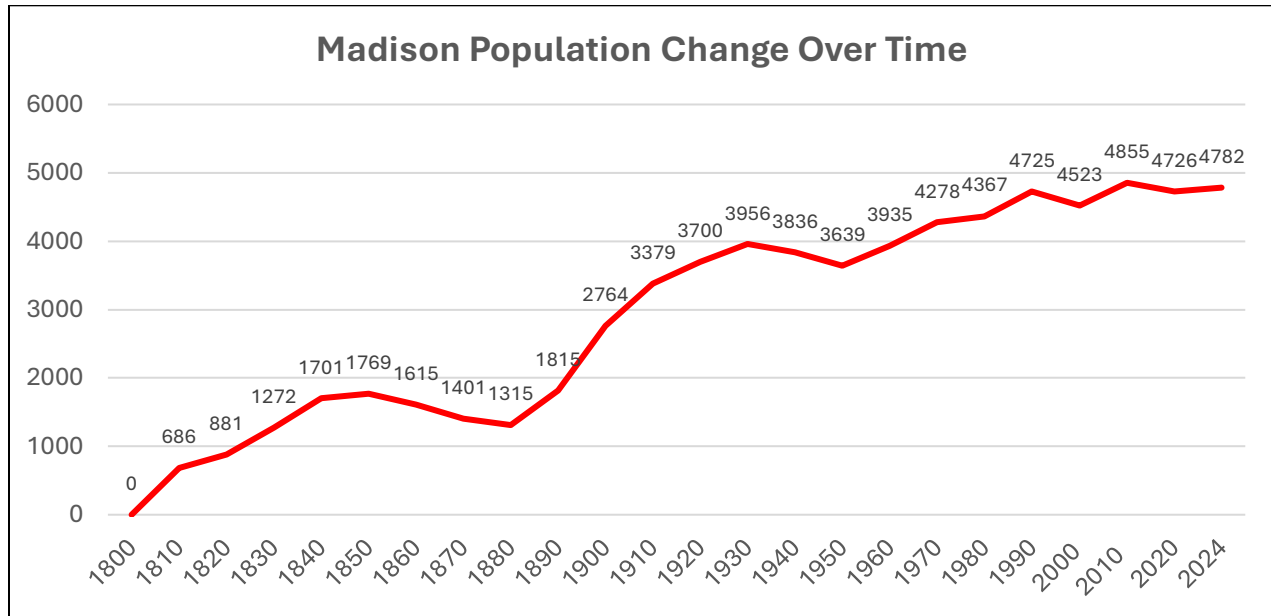
Year	Population	Year	Population
1800	N/A	1920	3,700
1810	686	1930	3,956
1820	881	1940	3,836
1830	1,272	1950	3,639
1840	1,701	1960	3,935
1850	1,769	1970	4,278
1860	1,615	1980	4,367
1870	1,401	1990	4,725
1880	1,315	2000	4,523
1890	1,815	2010	4,855
1900	2,764	2020	4,726
1910	3,379	2024*	4,782*

*Source: U.S. Decennial Census and *American Community Survey*

Table 1 & 2 Highlights:

- Historic population trends for Madison can be seen as slow and steady, with increases in its population since its founding in 1804.
- In the early decades, the town's population rose from 686 in 1810 to a peak of 1,769 in 1850, reflecting the expansion of agriculture, local industries, and settlement in rural Maine during the early 19th century.
- The population decrease after the 1850's coincided with westward expansion.
- The Industrial Revolution around the early 1900's resulted in a sharp population increase, which lasted until the 1930's. After that, growth became more gradual.
- Madison's population reached another peak in 2010, with a population of 4,855 people.
- Currently, according to the 2024 ACS (most recent data available), Madison's population hovers around 4,782 people.
- The past 30 years show virtually no net change in population despite the rise in the death rate over birth rate.
- Despite economic shifts, Madison's population has remained relatively stable over the past three decades.

Figure 1: Population Change in Madison Over Time



*Source: United State Decennial Census and *American Community Survey*

Additional U.S Census and ACS data can help with long-term planning for Madison by looking at the various demographics of the community. Examples of the different demographics that are often used in understanding the past, present and future of Madison's community are depicted in Tables 3, 4, and 5 below, each showing changes over the years.

Table 3: Median Age and Average Household Size Trends

	2000	2010	2014*	2020	2024*
Median Age (years)	41.5	44.0	44.2	46.6	49.6
Average Household Size	2.33	2.32	2.39	2.19*	2.03
Average Family Size	2.81	2.82	2.90	2.43*	2.57

*Source: U.S Decennial Census and *American Community Survey*

Table 3 Highlights:

- The median age in Madison has been rising over the last 25 years. The current median age in Madison is 49.6 years old, representing a median age increase of around 12% since 2014.
- The average household size is decreasing. As of 2024, the average household size in Madison was 2.03 individuals, down from 2.39 in 2014.
- Overall, the average family size is decreasing. Between 2000 and 2014 the average family size was increasing, however in 2020 there was a 16% decrease in the average family size. Currently, Madison's average family size is 2.57 individuals, an increase of roughly 6% since 2020, but still down from an average family size of 2.90 in 2014.

The ACS defines average household size as the number of people living in one place, who may or may not be related. This contrasts with average family size, which is defined as people living in one location who are related to one another.

Smaller average household size is a national trend, reflecting social changes like smaller families, lower birth rates, and independent elderly living. What this equates to is that fewer people per household necessitates more houses just to sustain the current population numbers.

This data is imperative when considering the population and housing demands for the



future. For example, if the number of people in each household continues to decrease, the community will require not only more houses, but a housing stock made up of smaller houses to accommodate smaller families and one and two person households.

Ribbon cutting ceremony signifying the completion of one and two bedroom apartments Located on Weston Avenue, Madison. - Image Source: Newscenter Maine

Table 4 below shows a broader picture of Madison's demographics.

Table 4: Population and Household Characteristics

General Population Characteristics	2000	2010	2020	2024*
Total Population	4,523	4,855	4,726	4,782
Male Population	2,135	2,457	2,387	2,453
Female Population	2,388	2,398	2,339	2,329
Median Age	41.5	44.0	46.6	49.6
Total Households	1,893	1,976	1,975	2,246
Family Households	1,273	1,271	1,205	1,203
Married Couple Family Households**	1,056	971	861	979
Nonfamily Households	620	705	770	1,043
Nonfamily Households Living Alone	518	571	620	665
Households with children (under 18)	578	548	458	375
Single-Person Household 65 years +	269	267	311	371
Average Household Size	2.33	2.32	2.19	2.03

*Source: U.S Decennial Census and *American Community Survey*

*** Prior to the 2020 Decennial Census, the definition of "Married Couple Family" was legally defined as a husband-wife couple. In the 2020 Census, the definition changed to include two spouses (regardless of sex).*

Table 4 Highlights:

- The number of total households has increased, which corresponds to the shrinking average household size. As previously mentioned, fewer people per household necessitate more houses to sustain current population numbers.
- The number of households living alone has increased, as well as the number of people living alone who are 65 years and older.
- Households with children under 18 have decreased substantially over the past 25 years.
- Nonfamily households have substantially increased, suggesting a trend towards smaller households composed of roommates and people living alone.

Madison's population demographics are broken down even further in Table 5, comparing the specific age groups against the total population over a ten-year period. These statistics confirm that Madison's population is getting older, and that there are fewer young people, less families, and smaller household sizes overall. These trends point to a future in which Madison must adapt to a shrinking youth population, a growing retiree base, and increased pressure on services for older adults, while also addressing challenges of a shrinking workforce and long-term sustainability.

Table 5: Madison's Age Distribution Over 10 Years

Population Category	2014 % Of Total	2024 % Of Total	10-Year Change
Population	4,791	4,782	-9 (-0.1%)
Median Age	44.2	49.6	5.4 (12.2%)
Under 5 years old	326 (6.8%)	124 (2.6%)	-202 (-62%)
5 - 17 years old	676 (14.1%)	588 (12.3%)	-88 (-13%)
18 years and older	3,785 (79%)	4,070 (85.1%)	285 (7.5%)
18 - 24 years old	335 (7%)	300 (6.3%)	-35 (-10.4%)
25 - 44 years old	1,078 (22.5%)	1,130 (23.6%)	52 (4.8%)
45 - 54 years old	695 (14.5%)	606 (12.7%)	-89 (-12.8%)
55 - 59 years old	292 (6.1%)	396 (8.3%)	104 (35.6%)
60 - 64 years old	436 (9.1%)	439 (9.2%)	3 (0.7%)
65 years and older	949 (19.8%)	1,199 (25.1%)	250 (26.3%)

Source: American Community Survey

Table 5 Highlights:

- The age distribution has shifted dramatically over the last ten years, underscoring a growing demographic imbalance.
- The most dramatic decline occurred among children under age five, whose numbers dropped by over 60%, from 326 to 124.
- Overall, the population of children under the age of 18 has fallen by nearly 30% since 2014.
- The 18–24 age group also fell sharply, losing around 10% of its population — a sign that many young adults are leaving Madison after high school.
- At the same time, the population of people aged 55 and older rose by 21%.
- People over the age of 65 now make up the largest percentage of the population at around 25%. This is a big change from ten years ago, when people in the younger working age group (25-44) made up the largest percentage of the population.

It is no surprise that Madison is one of 72 Maine communities recognized as Age-Friendly by AARP. As of 2021 there were 35 community action plans in place to address the needs of our senior residents and find ways to work together as an intergenerational community. According to AARP, Maine leads the nation in the number of designated age-friendly communities.

As Madison's population continues to age, it is important to consider the unique vulnerabilities of older residents during extreme weather events, prolonged power outages, and public health emergencies. Madison's designation as an Age-Friendly Community offers a strong foundation for developing targeted resiliency strategies, such as wellness checks, emergency contact registries, and home weatherization programs to reduce exposure to cold and heat-related risks.

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE:

The ebb and flow of population changes within a community often follow cyclical or rhythmic patterns that are driven by a mix of natural, economic and social changes. Common factors include birth / death rate, migration, economic development, education, quality of life, urbanism, and job availability. These all have played a role in the constantly changing population in Madison throughout its history.

Population fluctuation is part of a town's history. These changes are never solely a case of; there are various contributing factors for people to move to a new home. Population change in a community is a result of both natural change and migration. Natural change is the difference between deaths and births in the community over a period. Migration accounts for people moving in and moving out. Net migration is population change not explained by births and deaths.

Major trends that affect a town's population are increasing median age, smaller household sizes, and decreasing population, all of which have occurred in Madison to varying degrees.

However, population trends can be combated in several ways. Madison has plenty of available land which allows for the building of additional housing units. It is also just a short drive from Skowhegan, Waterville, and Farmington. The close proximity to these other major communities allows for more employment opportunities, as well as entertainment activities.

Outdoor recreational activities are abundant in Madison with access to Lake Wesserunsett and the Kennebec River. Access to water and other outdoor recreational activities, such as trails, are also available within Madison and it's neighboring communities.

While the rate of natural change cannot be impacted by town policy, the rate of migration can be affected by managing land use controls, promoting economic sectors that fit the character of the town, and offering public services that town residents want and need.



Lake Wesserunsett

SEASONAL POPULATION:

All population data cited above refers to year-round residents. Madison also has a modest seasonal population that includes camp owners/renters, visitors, day-trippers, and people staying at the summer camps, particularly around Lake Wesserunsett in East Madison.

According to the 2024 ACS, there are 438 homes in Madison classified for seasonal use, recreation, or occasional use. This does not mean there are no other homes used seasonally; they are likely just unreported to the Census Bureau.

Of the 2,684 (2024 ACS) total housing units in Madison, the 438 seasonal homes account for just above 16 percent. With a substantial seasonal population, Madison is affected by seasonal fluctuations, seasonal crowding, increased traffic, and an increased demand on commercial establishments.

Possibly the biggest contribution of the seasonal population to Madison is in the tax base collected from their properties and their purchases in town when they visit. Since they are only in Madison seasonally, their children do not attend Madison schools, furthering their tax contribution to the town.

In recent years, the town has also seen an increase in transient residents, individuals or families with short-term stays or unstable housing. These shifts reflect a changing housing dynamic that has implications for local services, school enrollment, and economic planning.



U. S. Route 201 – Image Source: VisitMaine.com

Furthermore, Madison is strategically located along U.S. Route 201, also known as the Old Canada Road, a historic and scenic byway that connects central Maine to Quebec. This route is a vital north-south corridor for travelers heading to and from the Canadian border, as well as those exploring Maine’s renowned outdoor recreation destinations such as the Forks, Moosehead Lake, and the western mountains.

Madison sits at a natural crossroads, offering access to both the Kennebec River Valley and the Carrabassett Region. Despite this advantageous location, the town has not always fully capitalized on the steady flow of seasonal travelers and outdoor enthusiasts who pass through. With better signage, visitor services, and tourism infrastructure, Madison has the potential to position itself as a welcoming gateway for recreation-based tourism and regional economic activity.

SERVICES:

While the closure of Madison Paper Industries in 2016 significantly impacted the local economy, the Town continues to function as a modest service center for surrounding rural communities. Madison hosts one of the smallest Hannaford grocery stores in the state, which nevertheless serves a broad customer base from neighboring towns. Other essential services, including the local hardware store, gas stations, and eateries. These services support a daytime population that exceeds the number of residents.

Additionally, the former mill site has been repurposed by TimberHP, a manufacturer of wood fiber insulation, which has reactivated the industrial space and begun to draw both employees and business visitors into Madison on a regular basis. While not a major regional hub, Madison provides a critical commercial and service role for the immediate area.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DATA:



School enrollment data is detailed more thoroughly in the Public Facilities and Services chapter of this Plan. Madison is part of Regional School Unit (RSU) 59, which has one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. This RSU is also known as Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 59.

Table 6: School Enrollment Data

County/Town	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	10 Year Average
Madison	633	655	622	617	571	580	575	549	544	522	587
Skowhegan	2,514	2,493	2,445	2,386	2,260	2,239	2,235	2,246	2,194	2,187	2,320
Norridgewock	512	503	498	480	469	435	434	461	460	414	467
Fairfield	1,037	1,026	1,005	1,051	1,053	980	936	920	905	862	978
Canaan	365	381	366	350	340	328	312	312	297	277	333
Cornville	146	159	184	156	150	140	145	145	147	154	153
Smithfield	98	93	100	94	98	90	90	96	112	115	99
Mercer	81	82	76	82	84	75	70	75	77	76	78
Starks	73	93	97	106	96	72	70	81	78	79	85
Somerset County	7,672	7,590	7,536	7,479	7,378	6,885	6,863	6,937	6,881	6,673	7,189

Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data

Table 6 Highlights:

- Madison's student enrollment decreased by 17.5 percent in this 10-year period.
- Smithfield and Starks were the only neighboring towns that had increased student enrollment in this time period. Every other town and Somerset County saw a decline in student enrollment.
- Every school in the neighboring towns and Somerset County saw a decrease in enrollment during the pandemic.
- Decreasing student enrollment corresponds to the trend of increasing median age and smaller household sizes.

The combination of increasing housing prices, the median age range in Maine, and the decreasing family sizes all contribute to the reduced school enrollment.

Decreased student enrollment impacts various factors of the education system including costs, staffing, and quality of education. While declining enrollment does not directly raise overall school costs, it increases per-student spending by spreading fixed expenses such as facility maintenance and administration across fewer students. At the same time, reduced enrollment lowers revenue, forcing difficult budget decisions such as staff reductions or potential school closures. Since districts cannot quickly scale back fixed costs, the result is a higher cost per student. Factors that contribute to the increase per-student costs include:

- Fixed costs stay constant as enrollment falls
- Funding declines with fewer students
- Staffing rules and pay trends limit cost cuts

- Course offerings reduced in smaller schools
- School closures add costs and disruptions

As a state, Maine should consider the implications behind this trend. As a town, Madison should prepare for future years of decreased school enrollment, which will affect everything from school bus routes, teaching jobs, school buildings, teaching styles, and the quality of education provided.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS and IMPACTS:

Population projections are mathematical extrapolations of past trends, such as population fluctuation, age distribution, household size, and more. For this reason, they can be influenced by unexpected, outside factors. Projections are useful for planning for future growth, but they are not precise.

The Office of the State Economist publishes population projections. Their 2023 projected estimation of Madison's population 16 years from now to be 4,641 people by the year 2042. This is a decrease of around three percent (141 people) of Madison's current population of 4,782 individuals.

This population projection is based partially on the increasing median age of the residents and other observable trends. It is imperative to bear in mind that this is just a projection based on past trends and data. However, since the COVID pandemic, climate change, and the influx of refugees, trends and projections are anything but reliable. Regardless of accuracy and potential variables, this population projection provides a rough population estimate for planning purposes for the future.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the smaller the average household size becomes, the more houses necessary to house the same number of people. The above estimate assumes that household size is a continuation of the decades-long trend, going from 2.32 in 2010 to 2.19 in 2020, then dropping to 2.03 in 2024. The trend of decreasing household size appears to be slowing, but even if it levels out at 2.02 (five percent less than 2.03) in 2042, additional housing may be needed to accommodate the same population.

Due to Madison's ideal location as a bedroom community for Skowhegan, Waterville, Fairfield and other more populated areas, an increase in Madison's housing stock could be beneficial for both Madison and the surrounding communities. Madison's current housing stock is 2,684 housing units, of which approximately 438 are seasonal homes, meaning 2,246 houses are available for year-round habitation.

The current housing market in Madison will be covered further in the housing chapter including housing availability and turnaround time, listing to sale time, which depends on various factors.

The rate of housing development is an effective way to estimate population growth, but it is also an effective way to manage it. Local policies can affect the rate of housing growth through their influence on the cost of development or land use restrictions, which in turn, affects population growth.

Growth in population and household types and sizes increases the demand for both public services and commercial development. Senior citizens require more in home services unless their homes are specifically designed for senior citizens. Younger, larger households have the potential to generate school children. Nearly all households require added waste management and road maintenance costs. All these factors must be considered when projecting population growth.

Table 7 below shows different scenarios using the population projection from the State Economist’s Office, the current average household size, and the hypothetical decrease in average household size by 5 percent.

Table 7: Population Projections and Housing Needs

	<i>Population</i>	<i>Total Current Housing Units (Minus Seasonal)</i>	<i>Average Household Size</i>	<i>Amount of Housing Needed</i>	<i>Deficit?</i>
Current	4,782	2,246	2.03	2,356	N/A
State Economist’s Population Projection	4,641	2,246	2.03	2,286	Yes, deficit of 40 houses
State Economist’s Population Projection with Decreased Average Household Size	4,641	2,246	2.02	2,297	Yes, deficit of 51 houses

Based on 2024 ACS data

Based on Table 7, Madison would need more houses in both scenarios of the average household size staying the same and decreasing by five percent in conjuncture with the Maine State Economist’s population projection. This data is not; however, a reflection of the considerable housing shortage the state is already experiencing. Housing details will be covered more thoroughly in the Housing chapter.

The most likely scenario for Madison is minimal population change and a continuing need for additional housing stock. These projections do not take into account the age of the population and other demographic factors. As detailed throughout this chapter and this Plan, the region's median age has been increasing for years. The most pressing need will likely be for elderly housing options and services. With fewer school-aged children and declining school enrollment, the town needs to stay vigilant about the changing needs of its population.

It is important that Madison pays attention to annual changes in housing development and other local and regional indicators. The town should continue to monitor the rate of new construction and the type of homes that are being built. They should also continue to discuss the implications and address them through policy changes, as necessary.

Summary of Analysis:

- Madison's population has been growing steadily since its formation, and has remained relatively stable over the past three decades. The current population is estimated to be 4,782 people.
- The median age for Madison residents is gradually increasing. The current median age is estimated to be 49.6 years as of 2024.
- The average household size has been decreasing for several decades. Between 2000 and 2024, it decreased by around 13 percent.
- The average family size is also decreasing, but at a slower rate.
- Both increasing median age and decreasing average household sizes are national trends.
- Aligning with this trend there has been an increase in single-person households where the householder is 65 years of age or older.
- The most obvious age trends observed in Madison are fewer young people and more people over 55 years of age.
- Madison has a modest seasonal population. 438 homes out of the 2,684 total housing stock, are considered seasonal homes.
- School enrollment has been declining since 2017. This is a common trend in neighboring towns as well.
- The Maine State Economist predicts Madison will have a population of around 4,641 people by the year 2042, a decrease of 141 people from Madison's current population estimate.