

**CHAPTER 2. BRIEF HISTORY, DEMOGRAPHIC, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS**

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**Brief History (from Town website)**

James LeRay acquired roughly 350,000 acres of land in Northern New York as payment for assisting the fledgling United States during the American War of Independence.

Penet Square is an integral part of the history of the Town of Orleans. In 1788 an Oneida Indian treaty ceded a tract ten miles square to Peter Penet "for services rendered". Penet gave his name to the land, but soon sold it, and it passed through many purchasers before it came into the hands of John La Farge sometime between 1817 and 1823. Litigation clouded settlers' titles to their farms until 1830.

Penet Square lay wholly within the original Town of Orleans, but when the Town of Clayton was formed, the new town included two fifths of Penet Square. Settlement began, despite the legal squabbles, around 1806 by squatters, who took the land and developed their farms, knowing they had no real title but hoping for the best.

John La Farge had little sympathy with the squatters, some of whom disputed his ownership. The first of the farmers was Roderick Frazier, who built his log cabin in 1806 about two miles north of what is now

Stone Mills. Peter Pratt followed in 1807, making his clearing south of Stone Mills. Word of this "free land" spread in the Mohawk Valley, drawing many penniless settlers from that area. No record has been kept of them, and when La Farge demanded payment, they left the area.

Dr. Reuben Andrus and Benjamin Page, both Vermonters, settled in 1816, heading a flood of legal settlers. On 3 April 1821, the Towns of Brownville and Le Ray gave birth to the Towns of Alexandria, Philadelphia and Orleans, Orleans being the only one to be created wholly from Brownville. Thus researchers find that people recorded in Brownville in the census of 1820 are found in Orleans in the census of 1825, without ever having moved.

Orleans is located in the northernmost range of towns within Jefferson County, with a neck of land giving it access to the St Lawrence River, and cutting Wellesley Island in two pieces. The Town of Clayton is its west boundary, Brownville and Pamela are on the south, while Le Ray, Theresa and Alexandria make up the eastern boundary. The St Lawrence River and the Town of Alexandria lie to the north, giving Orleans a Canadian border, made more important by the international Thousand Islands Bridge.

The principal village/hamlet of the Town of Orleans is LaFargeville, named for the early proprietor of the town. Originally called Log Mills, it is the site of a once impressive stone mansion, now in ruins, built by Mr. La Farge. Stone Mills, originally Collins' Mills, was probably the first settlement in the town.

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Today, the Northern New York Agricultural Museum in Stone Mills houses extensive exhibits of early farming and housekeeping in the area, as well as a restored church, school and cheese factory.

Orleans Four Corners, formerly Shantyville, is a crossroads in the eastern part of the town, today reduced to a church and a cluster of houses.

More populous and developed were the later settlements on Wellesley, originally Wells, Island, one of the larger of the Thousand Islands. In the 1870s, a Methodist camp meeting association laid out lots on the upper end of the Island, today known as Thousand Island Park, a summer resort also having a year round population.

Grand View Park and Fine View are other communities on the island, which also holds a large state park. Other places on the mainland are Fisher's Landing, De La Farge Corners, Port Orleans and Collins Landing. Collins Landing is now occupied by the approaches to the Thousand Islands Bridge.

Regarding agriculture, the gas motor and extensive use of electricity enhanced farming methods throughout the nation, as well as in the Town. Small farms are no longer feasible for producing a livable income. Over the years, many small farm fields lay idle, with some being absorbed into larger farms.

Changes in dairy farming including increased use of machinery and better transportation of milk to markets, helping foster large farm success through built-in efficiencies. Small cheese factories that once flourished and accepted milk from neighboring farms, vanished from the landscape decades ago.

New interest in farming, increases in product prices, and some Amish establishments have driven a recent rise in demand for land being converted back to farming.

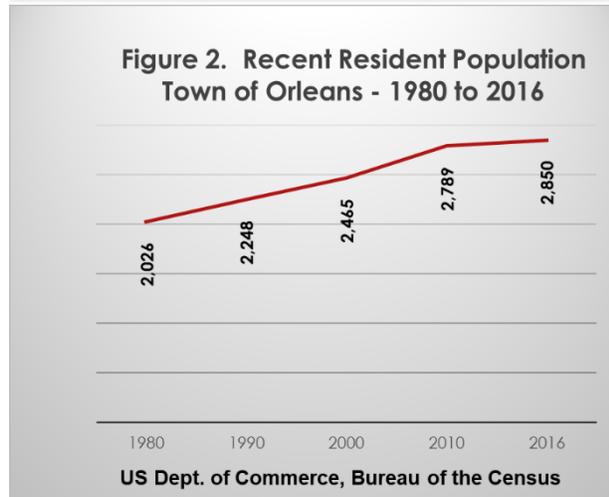
According to the National Historic Register, there are many historic sites and 1 historic district within the Town of Orleans.

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Figure 1. Orleans Town-wide Population Trends



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census



Resident Population

According to the US Census Bureau, the population within the Town of Orleans grew by 30 percent from 1890 to 2016 overall.

Figure 2 illustrates that from 1980 to 2016, the Town experienced an uptick in growth, with a 41% increase in total population.

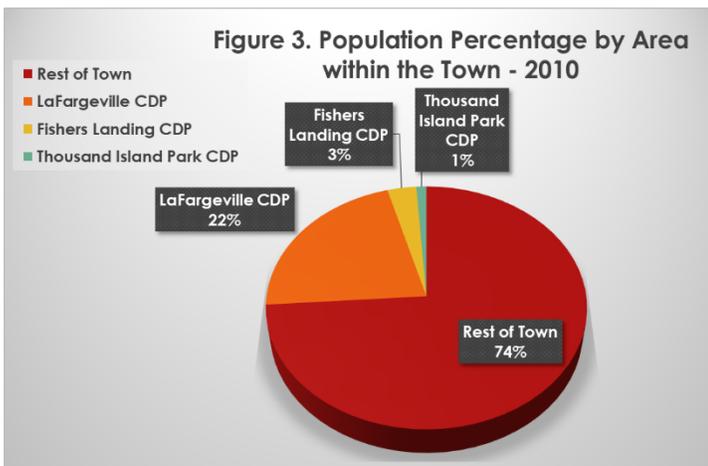
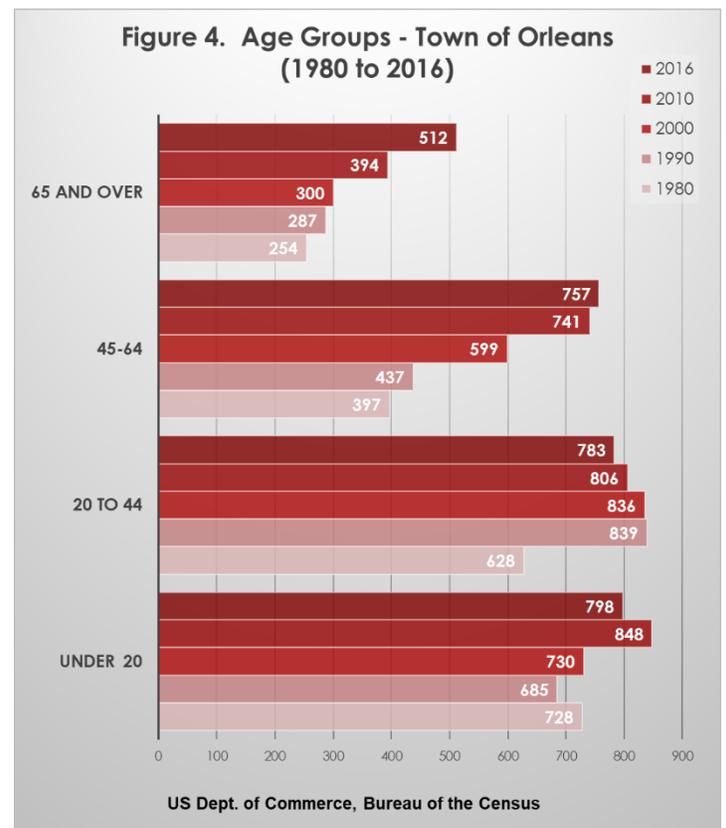
During the last two Census’s, three hamlets were added as Census Designated Places (CDP) so that each community can track population and other trends. LaFargeville was added to the 2000 Census, and Fishers

Landing and Thousand Island Park were added to the 2010 Census process.

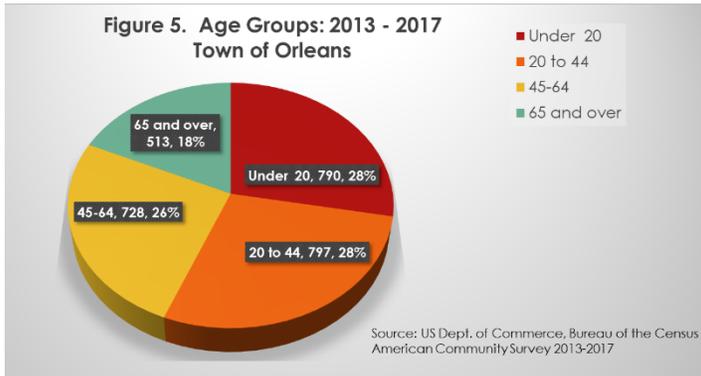
Therefore, comparing each hamlet or CDP using the most recent full census will help gauge their percentage of population and housing trends within the Town.

Age Groups

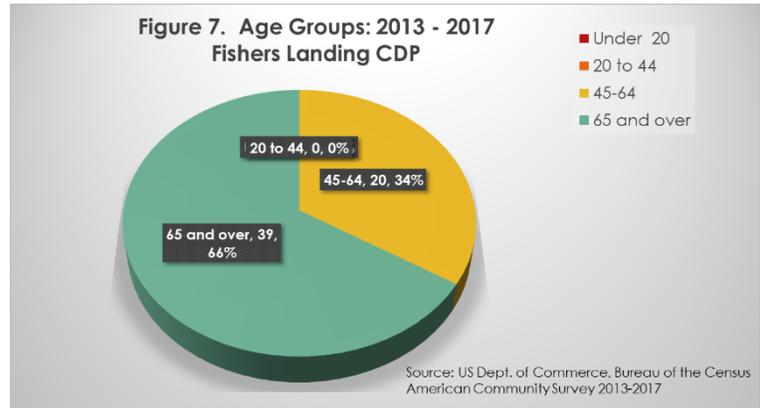
Contrary to the National trend, population within the youngest age group is not declining within the Town. However, expansion within the Town’s oldest age group remained steady since 2000, while the National trend shows an increase in that portion of the population as well. In fact, each age group experienced increases



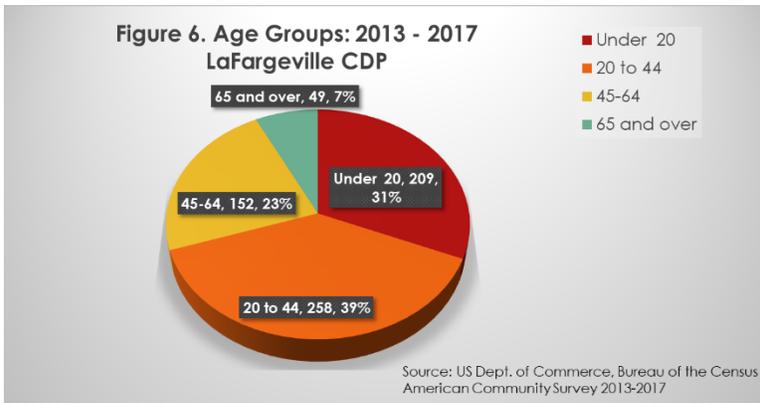
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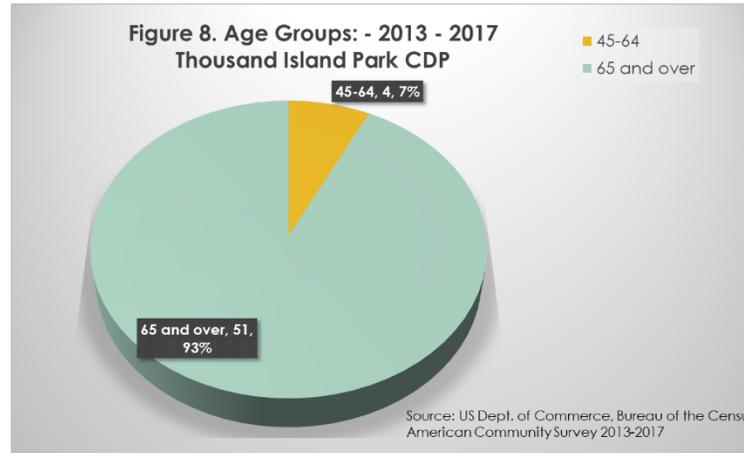
during the period, therefore the Town’s natural population growth should continue depending on migration patterns or potential employment shift or other change in trends or limitation.



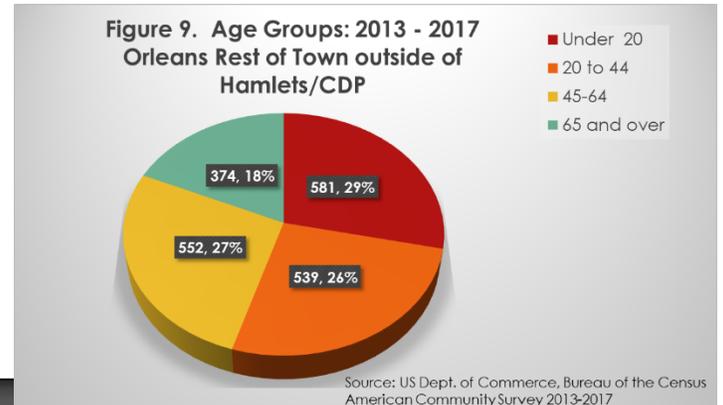
64 (34%) and 65 and over (66%). Similarly, within Thousand Island Park (Figure 8) the largest segment is also the 65 and over (93%) and 45 to 64 (7%). Both Fishers Landing and Thousand Island Park consist of largely seasonal communities with a high percentage of seasonal homes, therefore, a



Age Groups within each Census Designated Place and the rest of the Town of Orleans considered here for the 2013-2017 estimate.



Townwide, the largest two groups are the Under 20 and the 20 to 44 age group with 28% each, illustrated by Figure 5. This pattern is similar within LaFargeville (Figure 6) and the Rest of Town outside the Hamlets as Figure 9 illustrates.



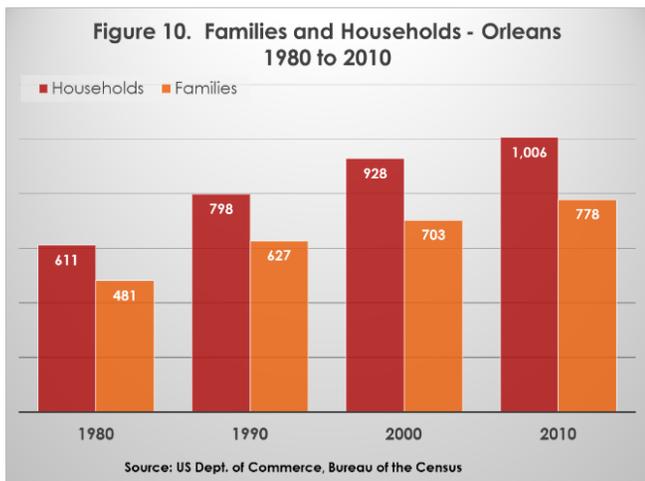
Alternatively, within Fishers Landing (Figure 7) the two segments with residents are 45 to

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large percentage of older and retired residents are expected.

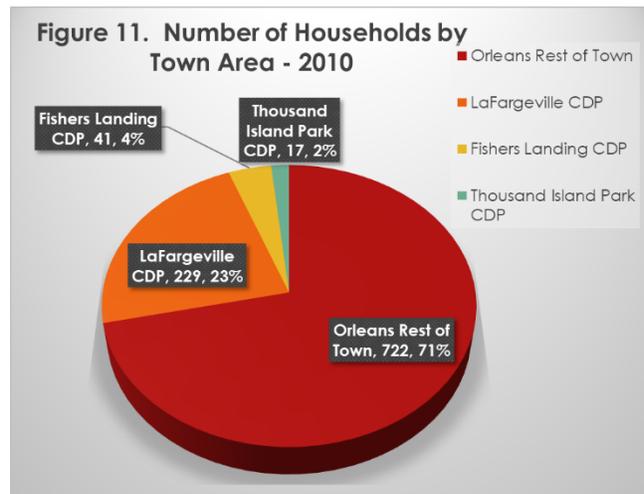
**Families and Households**

A family is defined by the US Census Bureau as a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption and resides together. A household is defined as all people who occupy a housing unit (related or unrelated).

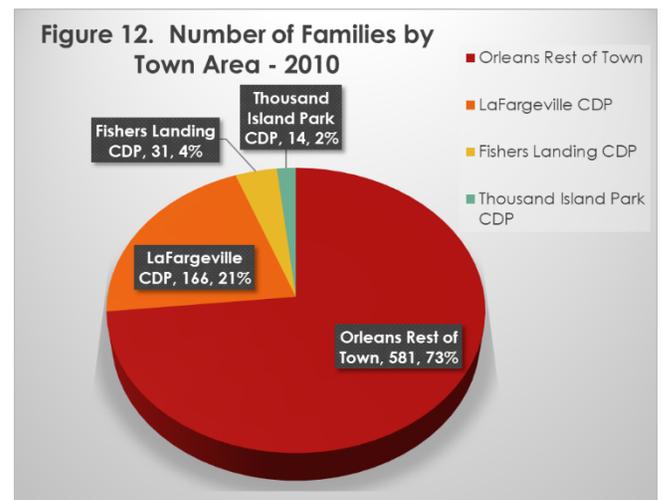


According to the US Census Bureau, the number of households in the Town of Orleans increased steadily from 1980 to 2010, increasing by 65%. Similarly, the number of families increased during the time period, by 62%. Overall, the Town added 395 households and 297 families between 1980 and 2010.

Within the Town, areas outside the Hamlets or Census Designated Places had the highest percentage of Households and Families as of 2010. Orleans outside the hamlets had 71% of the households, and 73% of the families.



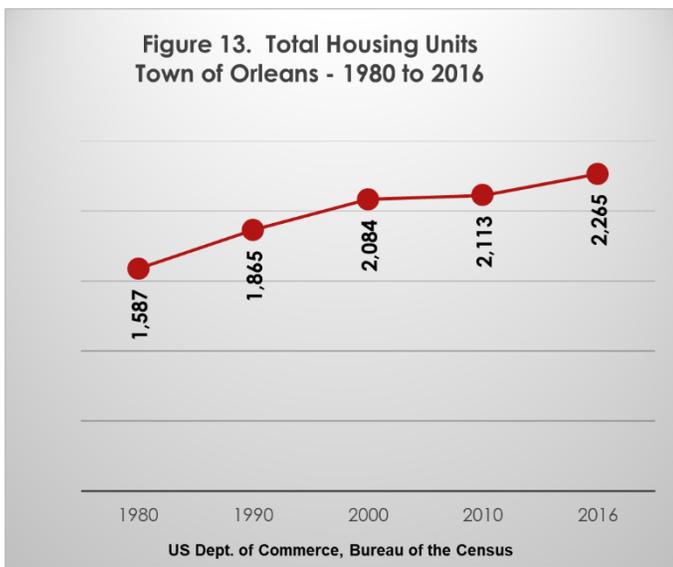
Second highest in terms Families and Households was LaFargeville, which contained 23% of Households (Figure 11) and 21% of Families (Figure 12) in 2010.



## HOUSING TRENDS

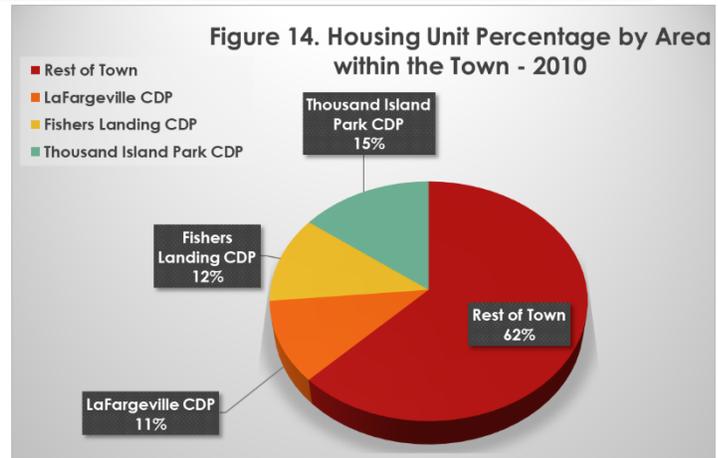
### Housing Units

According to the Census Bureau the number of housing units within the Town increased by 43 percent from 1980 to 2016. This total includes year round, seasonal, and vacant units that are not seasonal, both year round and seasonal increased overall during the time period.



The Hamlets or Census Designated Places include 38% of the housing units in the Town of Orleans. Therefore, 62% of the housing units can be found outside LaFargeville, Fishers Landing, and Thousand Island Park.

Thousand Island Park has the most housing units of the CDP's with 15% of the total units in the Town. Fishers Landing consists of 12% of the housing units, while LaFargeville contains 11%. However, when exploring such numbers, it is important to acknowledge how many year-round,



seasonal, and vacant units occur in each area to better appreciate the makeup of the Town.

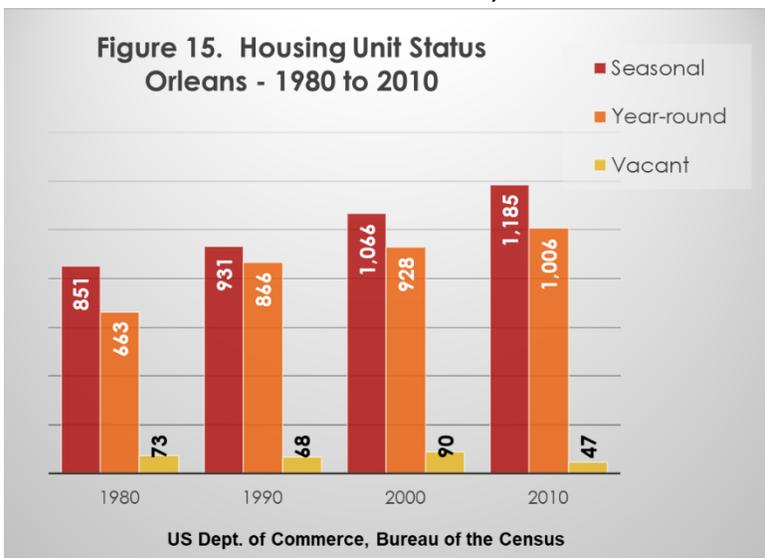
The rest of the Town has the highest number of housing units; representing 62% of the total units in the Town. This reflects shoreline units outside Fishers Landing and TI Park, as well as other geographic areas of the Town away from the shoreline.

The individual trends for seasonal, year round and vacant units within the Town, LaFargeville, Fishers Landing, and TI Park, and areas outside the CDPs are found on the following page. Housing unit types such as single family, multi-family, and mobile home trends can be found on pages 14 and 15.

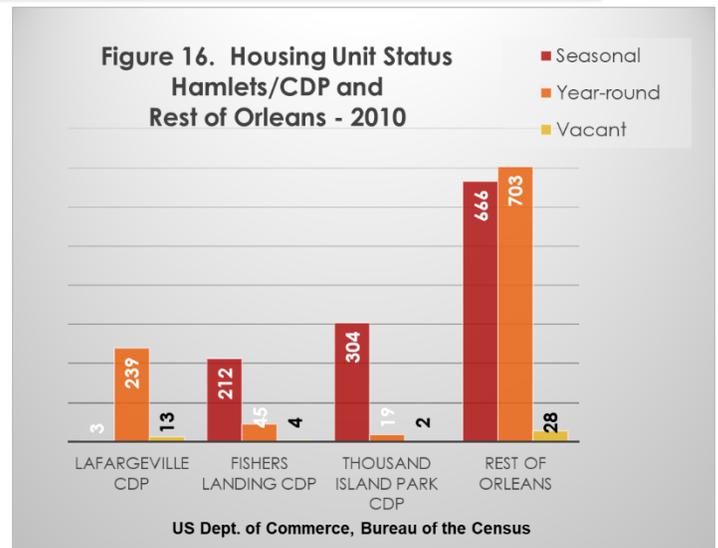
The Census Bureau now studies communities every few years in the form of the American Communities Survey. Such data was historically gathered as part of the Census, but to simplify the Census and capture more frequent reporting for such survey based data, such information is now gathered every four to five years.

Housing Unit Status

The number of seasonal and year-round housing units Town-wide experienced increases each decade 1980 to 2010 as Figure 15 illustrates. At the same time, the number of vacant units decreased. Overall, the number of seasonal housing units increased by 39 percent. Year-round units increased by 52% during the time period. Vacant units decreased by 36%.

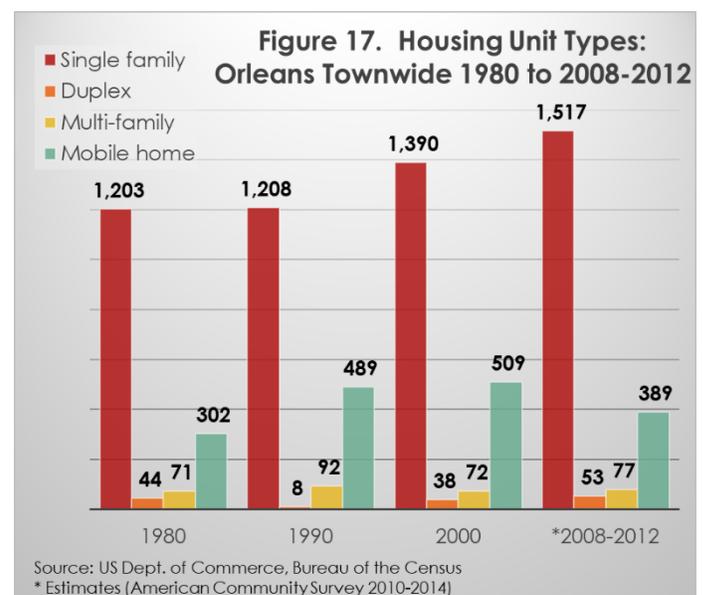


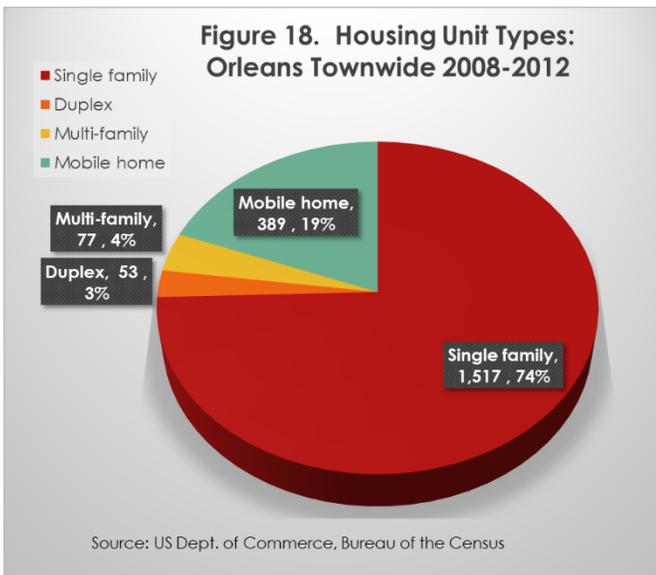
In the Hamlets/CDPs, housing units occur as expected with larger numbers of seasonal homes within the waterfront communities such as Fishers Landing and Thousand Island Park. LaFargeville also follows as expected with the bulk of units being year-round as it is the center of the Town and largest community and isn't on a large waterbody where seasonal homeowners flock. Also of note, the number of vacant housing units has declined, most of those units are within either LaFargeville or the rest of the Town.



Housing Unit Type

Examining the various housing unit types over the past 40 or so years, helps examine housing change in Orleans. Housing unit numbers include both year round and seasonal units. As expected, single family units make up the majority housing type,



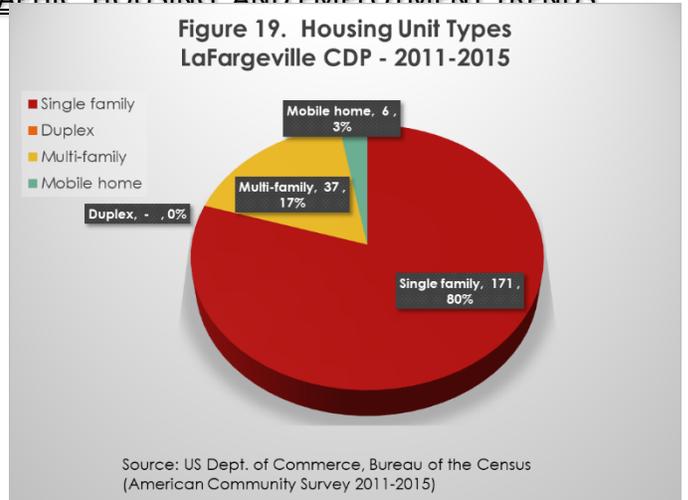


increasing the most from 1980 to 2008-2012 as shown below.

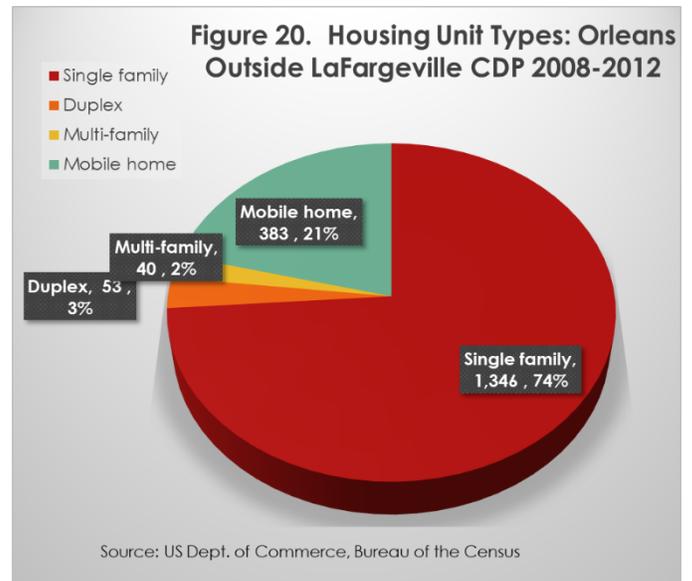
Single family units increased by 26% during the time period, while mobile home units increased by 29% overall for the same time period.

Town-wide, single family homes make up the majority of unit types with 74% and mobile homes making up the second largest segment with 19%, as the Figure 18 illustrates.

When comparing housing unit types by Town Area, one can see that the LaFargeville CDP is different with 17% of its units being multi-family and 3% were mobile homes when the estimates were made, with 80% being single family units, which contrasts to the Townwide numbers above where the second highest number of units were mobile homes.



Conversely, the number of single family units has increased during the 1980 to 2008-2012 time period in the areas outside the Hamlets or CDPs.



Therefore, housing unit types in the Town outside the Hamlet were also dominated by single family homes in 2008-2012, however, second to those are mobile homes in terms of the number of units.

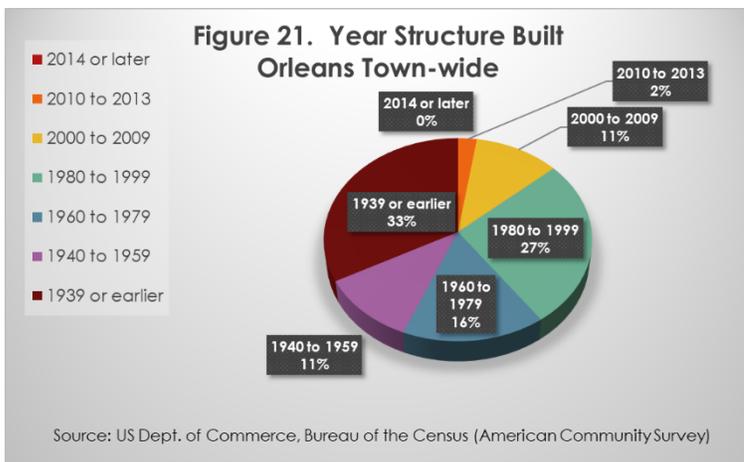
Year Structure Built

Some of Orleans housing units were built quite some time ago. The largest percentage (33%) were built prior to 1939, as the chart below illustrates. However, it also demonstrates that 13% of the housing units have been built after 2000 in the Town, and 27% have been built 1980 and 1999, so more than a quarter of the homes within the Town were built less than 40 years ago.

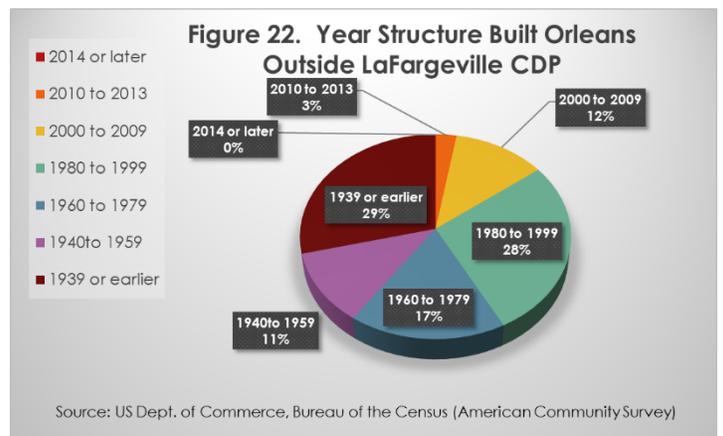
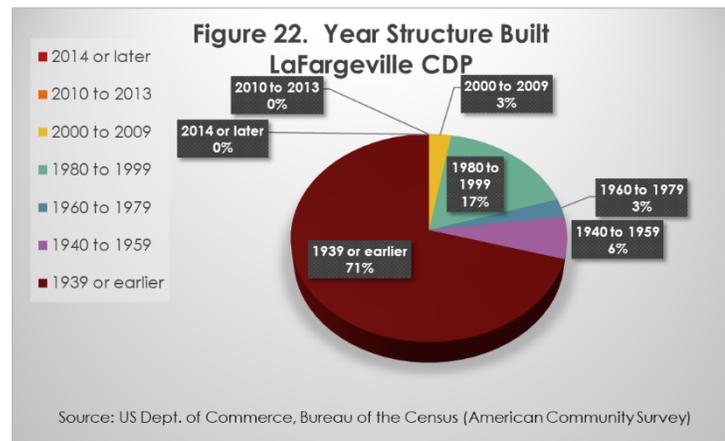
hamlet’s housing units were constructed before 1940. Therefore LaFargeville has a smaller percentage of newer units than the Town as a whole. As of the recent census estimates, 3 percent of the units were built between 2000 and 2009, while 17% were built between 1980 and 1999, bringing the total built less than 40 years ago to 20%.

The large number of older housing units in the Hamlet serve as a visible legacy to the community’s growth and development that occurred many years ago.

As expected, many housing units outside of LaFargeville are newer, as a large portion of the residential growth outside the Hamlet occurred more recently. Only 29% of the housing units outside of the Hamlet were constructed prior to 1940. Also, 12% were built between 2000 and 2009, and another 28% were built between 1980 and 1999. Therefore, 43% have been built since 1980.



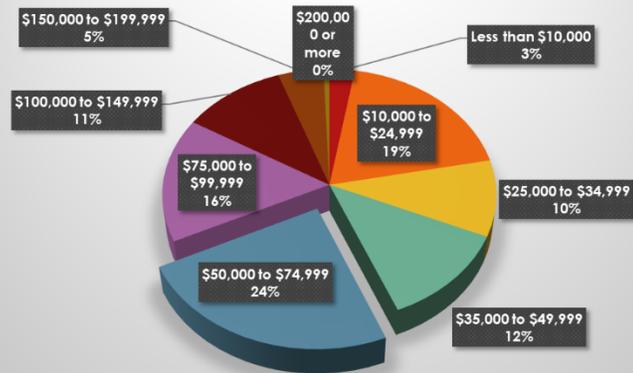
However, the bulk of LaFargeville’s housing units were built prior to 1940, as Figure 22 shows. Almost three quarters (71%) of the



Household Income

Town household income, gathered by the American Community Survey for 2011 - 2015 is illustrated by Figures 23, 24 and 25. The largest segment for the Town, or 24% of households earned between \$50,000 and \$74,999. The second largest segment, or 19%, earned from \$10,000 to \$24,999.

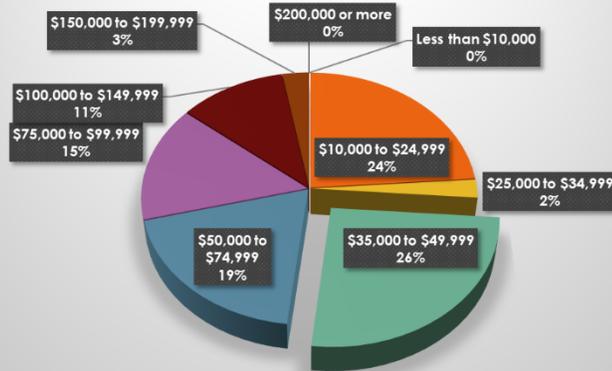
**Figure 23. Household Income - Orleans Townwide (2011-2015 estimate)**



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (American Community Survey 2011-2015)

In the Hamlet of LaFargeville, the largest segment of household income was \$35,000 to \$49,999 segment at 26% of households (Figure 24). Similarly, the second largest, or 24% of households earned from \$10,000 to \$24,999.

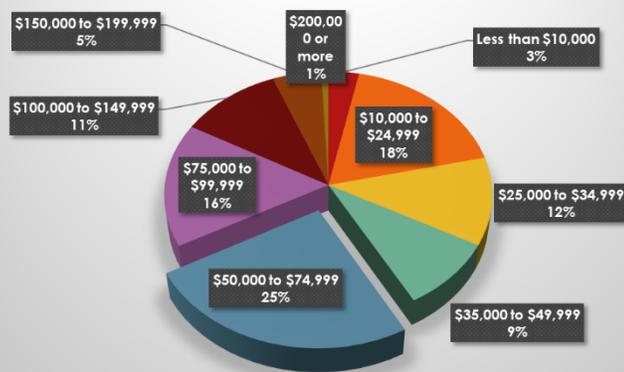
**Figure 24. Household Income - LaFargeville CDP (2011-2015 estimate)**



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (American Community Survey 2011-2015)

In the Town of Orleans outside Hamlet of LaFargeville, the largest segment echoed the overall Town’s largest estimated segment with 25% of households earning \$50,000 to \$74,999. Similarly, the second largest segment outside the Hamlet of LaFargeville earned between \$10,000 and \$24,999.

**Figure 25. Household Income - Orleans Outside LaFargeville CDP (2011-2015 estimate)**



Source: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (American Community Survey 2011-2015)

EMPLOYEE TRENDS

Resident Occupation

The Census Bureau defines occupation as the kind of work a person does on the job. Town-wide, several trends occurred regarding occupations from 1980 to 2011-2015.

Figure 26 illustrates that Townwide, the management, professional occupations increased each decade, albeit a smaller increase in the last Census Estimate for 2011-2015. The service occupations, sales and office occupations, and the natural resource, construction, and maintenance occupations increased as well. Only the production, transportation, and material moving occupations decreased during the time period.

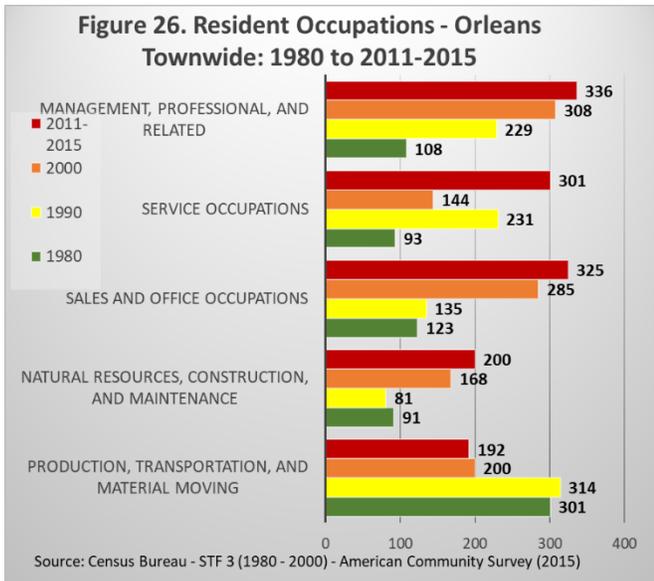
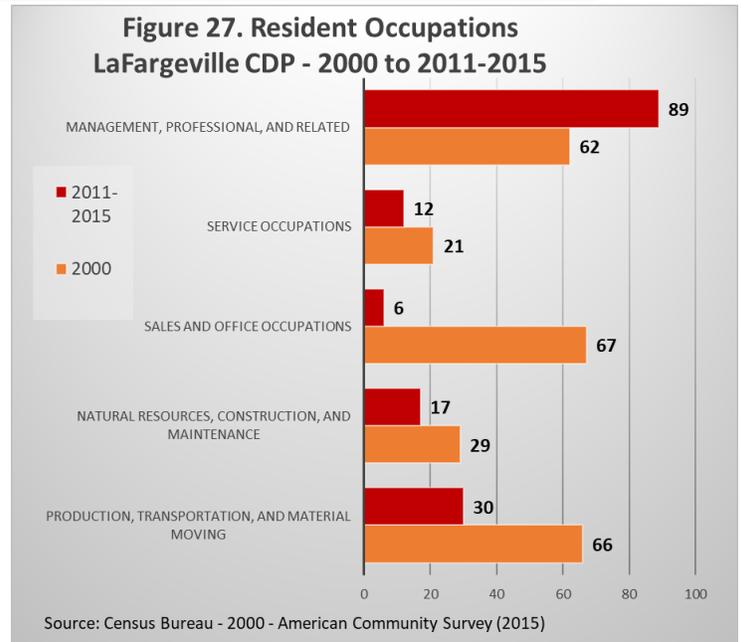
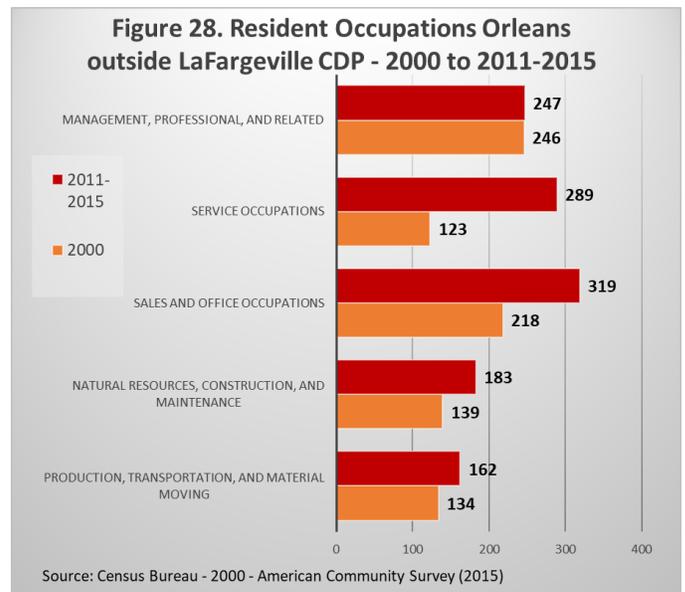


Figure 27 demonstrates resident occupations within LaFargeville nearly all



declined from 2000 to 2011-2015 except within the management, professional, and related occupations which increased 43.5% during the time period.

Conversely, all resident occupation types increased outside the Hamlet (Figure 28).



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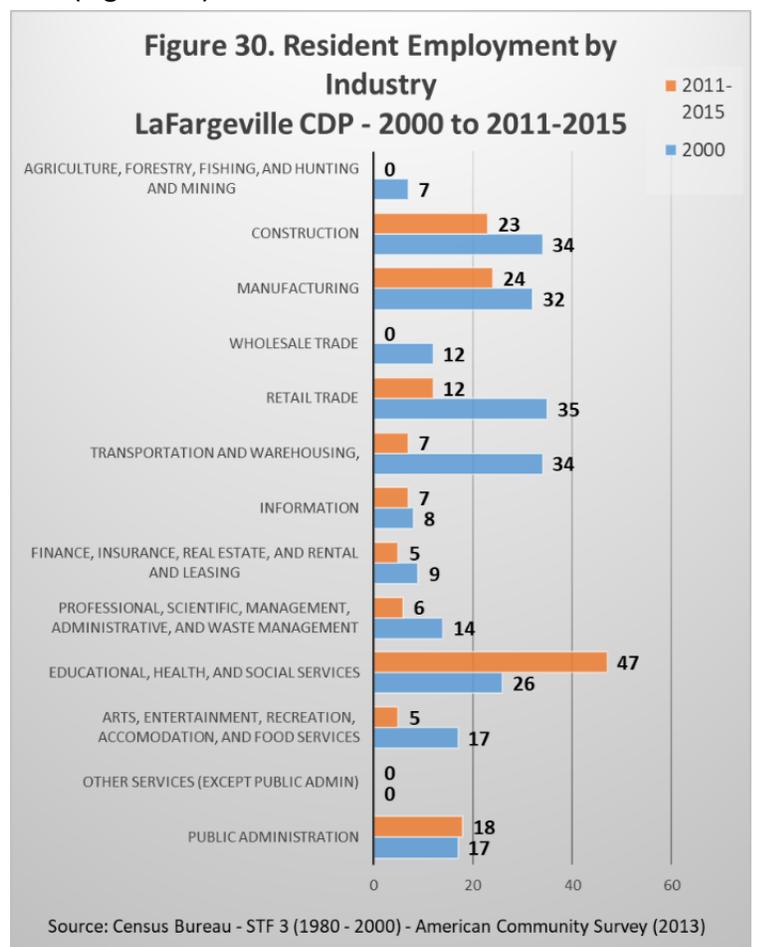
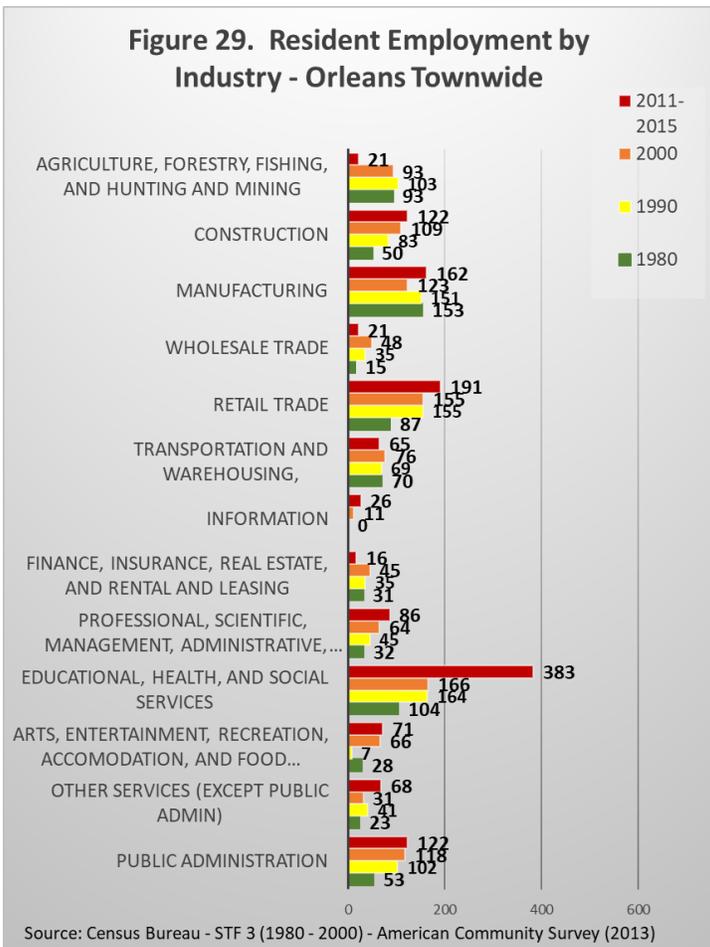
**Resident Employment Industries**

The Census Bureau defines Employment Industry as the kind of business conducted by a person’s employing organization. Several trends have occurred regarding Town and Hamlet employment industries from 1980 to 2011-2015.

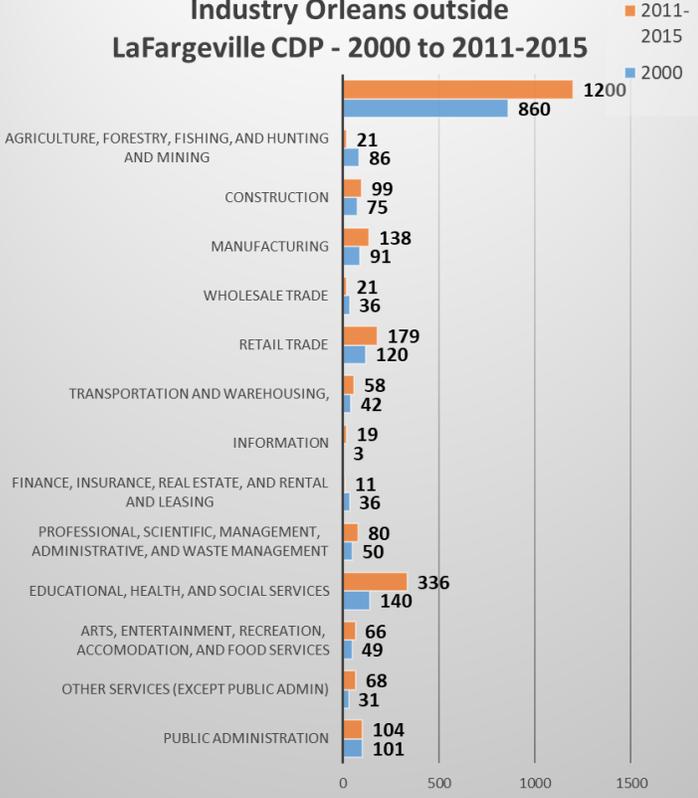
Town-wide (Figure 29), people who worked in the educational, health, and social services industry increased each decade, as did public administration, retail trade, construction, and the professional, scientific, management and administrative industries. Retail trade and the construction industries

increased and then decreased somewhat. Manufacturing started to decline but bounced back during the most recent estimate.

Within the LaFargeville CDP, estimates show that ten sectors of resident employment declined from 2000 to 2011-2015, however, the educational, health and social services sector increased by 80.8%, and public administration increased by 5.9% with recent estimates. The upcoming census should be more conclusive regarding such changes. Conversely, eleven resident industry types increased outside the Hamlet (Figure 31).

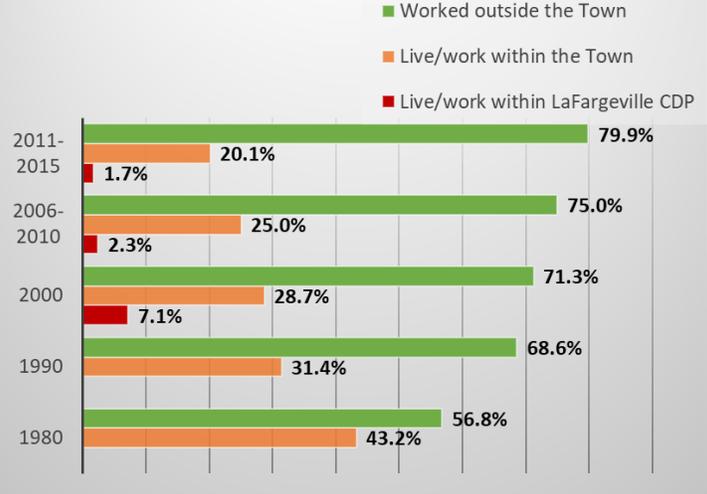


**Figure 31. Resident Employment by Industry Orleans outside LaFargeville CDP - 2000 to 2011-2015**



Source: Census Bureau - STF 3 (1980 - 2000) - American Community Survey (2013)

**Figure 32. Place of Work, Town of Orleans 1980 to 2012-2016**



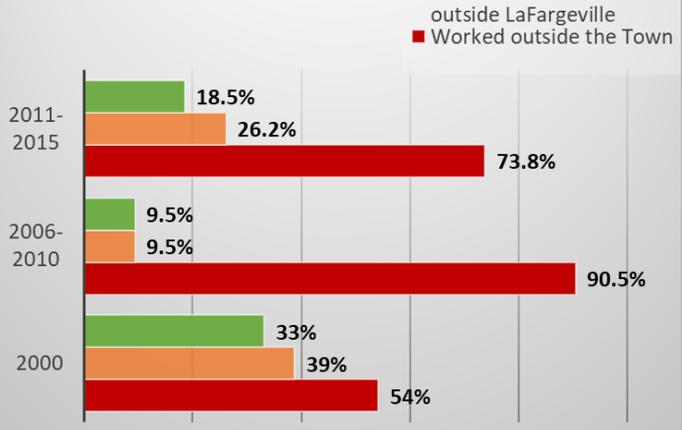
Sources: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, \*American Community Survey Estimate (2012-2016)

LaFargeville’s workforce has fluctuated since 2000, however, now 73.8% of those working who live the Hamlet work outside the Town (Figure 33).

**Commuting Trends**  
Place of Work

Residents in the Town and Hamlet seek employment in various places, many of whom commute daily to and from their workplace. From 1980 to 2012, those employed outside the Town increased, from 56.8% of residents working outside the Town in 1980, to now 79.9% percent of those employed (Figure 32). While LaFargeville employment decreased and employees outside LaFargeville increased, those who lived and worked in the Town, dropped from 43.2% in 1980 down to 20.1% in 2011-2015.

**Figure 33. Place of Work - LaFargeville CDP 1990 to 2012-2016**

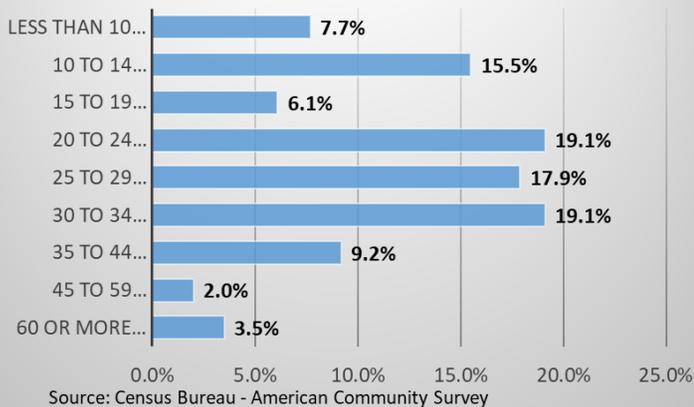


Sources: US Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, \*American Community Survey Estimate (2012-2016)

Travel Time to Work

Figure 34 illustrates nearly thirty percent (29.3%) of the Town workforce traveled less than 20 minutes a day to work as of 2011-2015. Of the workers who live in LaFargeville, over a third (35%) of its workforce travel time was less than 20 minutes (Figure 35).

**Figure 34. Travel Time to Work (minutes) - Orleans Town 2011-2015**



**Figure 35. Travel Time to Work in minutes - LaFargeville CDP 2011-2015**

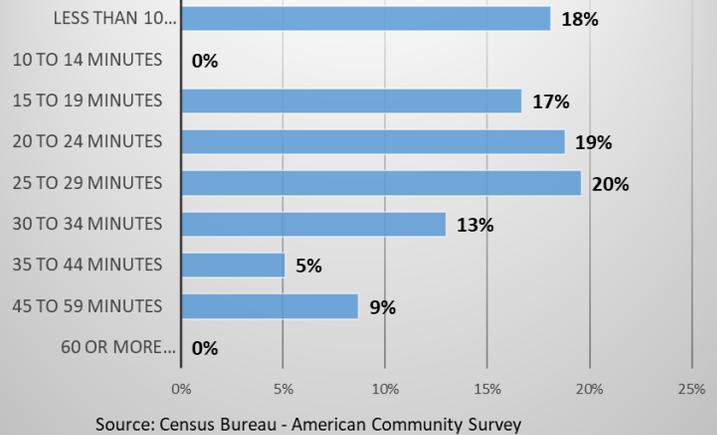


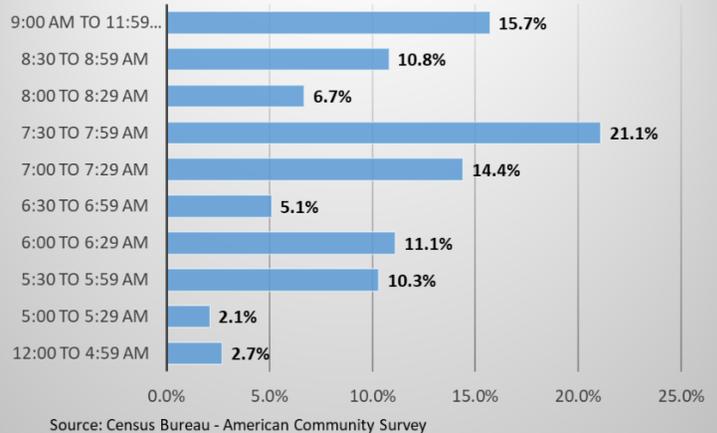
Figure 36 illustrates that Town-wide, the largest two segments of exclusively morning commuters left the home between 7:00 and 7:29 am at 14.4%, and 7:30 to 7:59 am at 21.1% of workers respectively. Typically, peak time varies between 7:30 and 8:30am, while for some in the Town’s case it appears to be a bit earlier.

As commute times can be affected by routine traffic levels and congestion, habitual delays can cause commuters to leave earlier then lead to longer commutes on average.

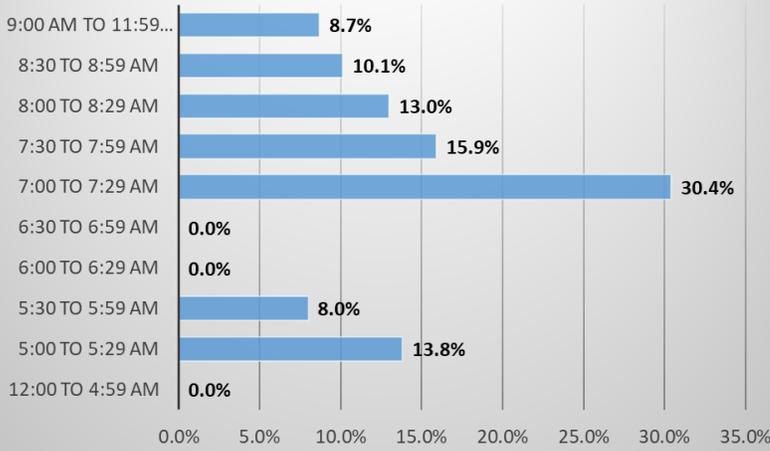
Time Leaving to Go to Work

The Census Bureau’s American Community Survey also asks when people leave home to go to work to gauge commuting trends related to departure times.

**Figure 36. Time Leaving to Go to Work - Orleans: 2011-2015**



**Figure 37. Time Leaving to Go to Work - LaFargeville CDP: 2011-2015**



Source: Census Bureau - American Community Survey

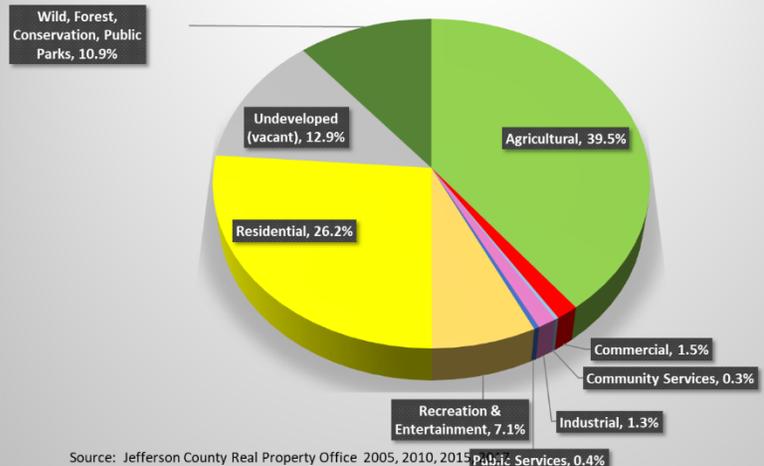
Figure 37 illustrates that within LaFargeville, the largest segment of commuters left home between 7:00 and 7:29 am at 30.4%. The second largest (15.9%) departed between 7:30 and 7:59 am. Similar to the Townwide trend, LaFargeville residents tend to depart earlier than the typical peak time period.

## LAND USE TRENDS

### Land Use Trends

The Town of Orleans agricultural land use predominates the Town as a whole making up 39.5% of the acreage, while residential land use makes up 26.2%. While commercial land may only make up 1.5% of the land area, it provides many services, employment opportunities and destinations for residents and tourists.

**Figure 38. Land Use Acreage by Assessment Category: Town of Orleans - 2017**



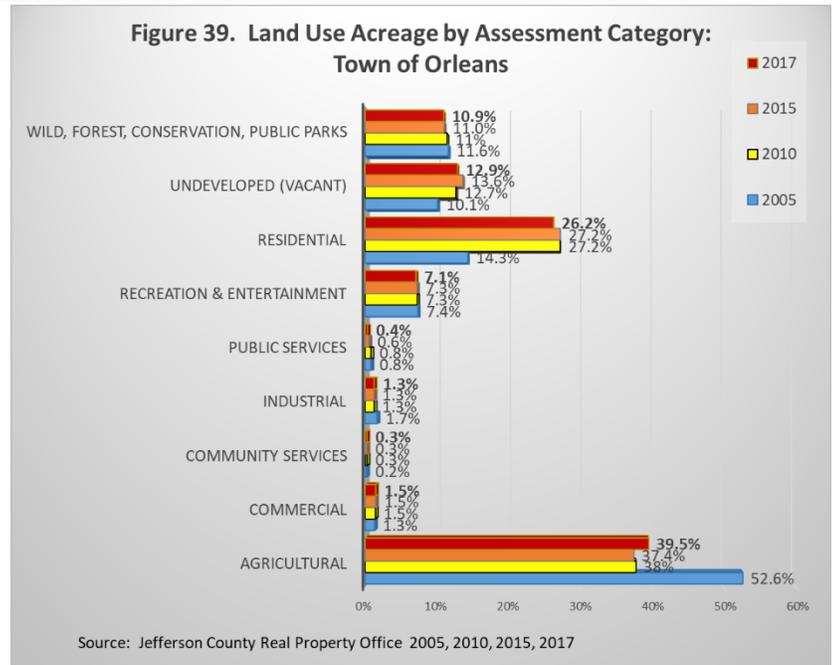
Source: Jefferson County Real Property Office 2005, 2010, 2015

Land Use Trends

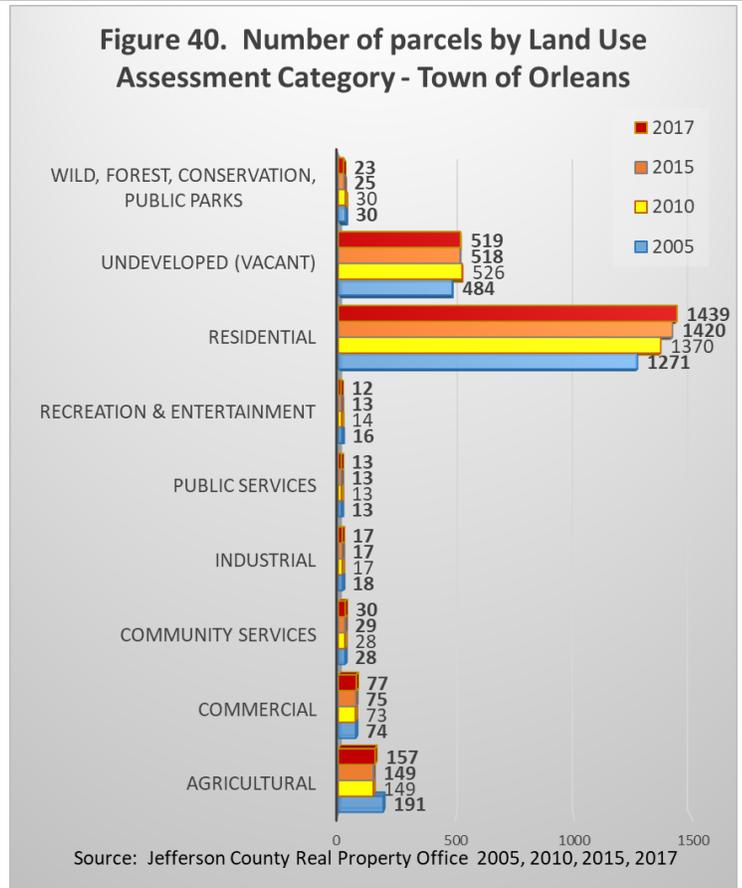
Figure 39 illustrates that since 2005, the Town of Orleans declined in Agricultural acreage, going from 52.6% in 2005, to a low of 37.4% in 2015. Since then, however, agricultural acreage has increased some to total 39.5% in 2017.

Residential acreage has also declined slightly, going from 27.2% in 2010 to 26.2% in 2017.

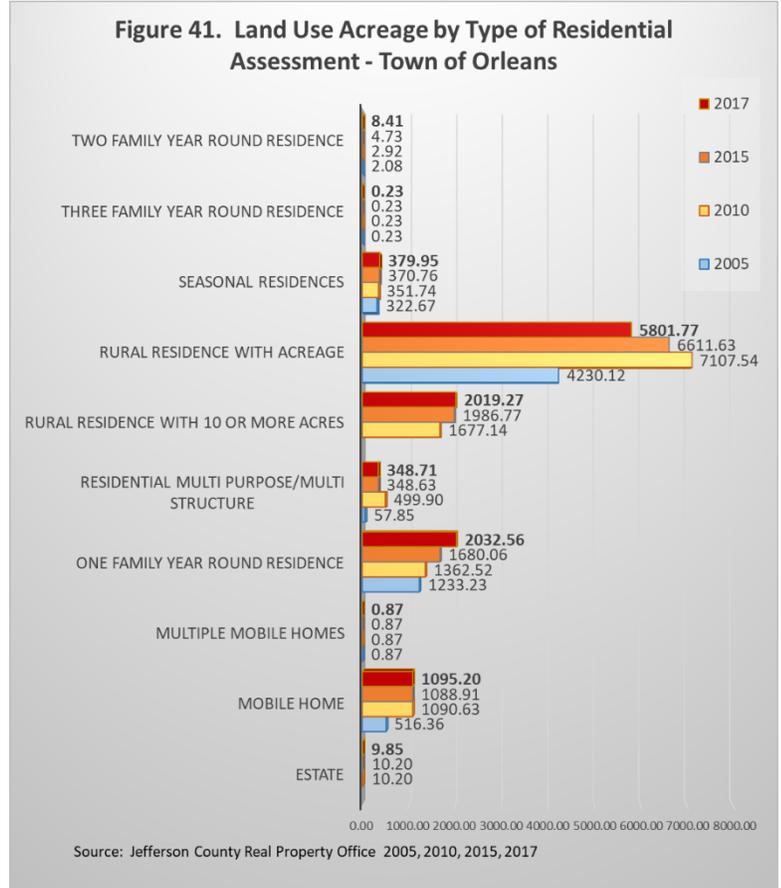
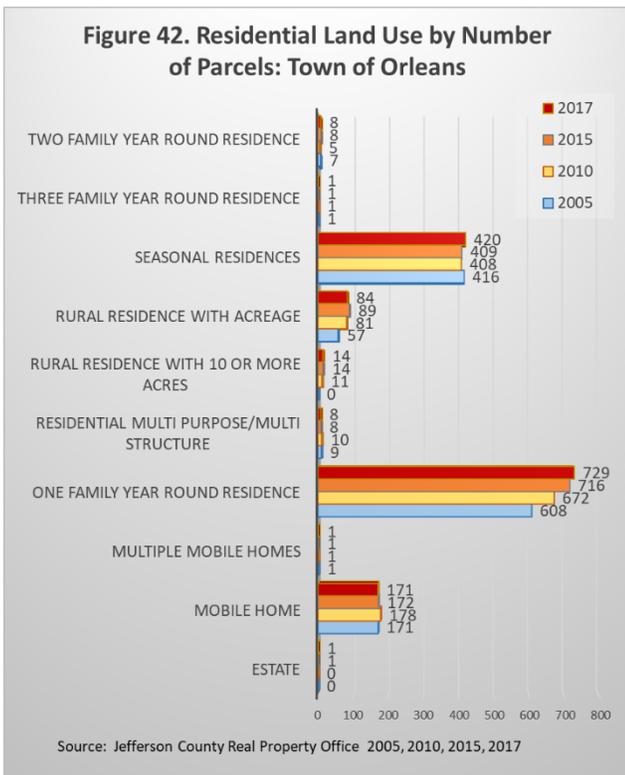
Commercial acreage, however, has increased from 1.3% in 2005 to 1.5% by 2017.



The number of residential parcels predominate the Town of Orleans, increasing from 1,271 in 2005 to 1,439 by 2017. The number of agricultural parcels has declined, from 191 in 2005, down to 149 in 2015. However, agricultural parcels rebounded, so by 2017 they numbered 157 properties.



**CHAPTER 2. BRIEF HISTORY, DEMOGRAPHIC, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS**



**Residential Land Use Trends**

Figure 41 shows that one family year round residences increased from 2005 to 2017 by 799.33 acres. Seasonal residences by acreage increased from 2005 to 2017, by 57.28 acres in 2017.

Rural residences with acreage initially increased significantly from 2005 to 2010, but then declined slightly in terms of acreage from 2010 to 2017.

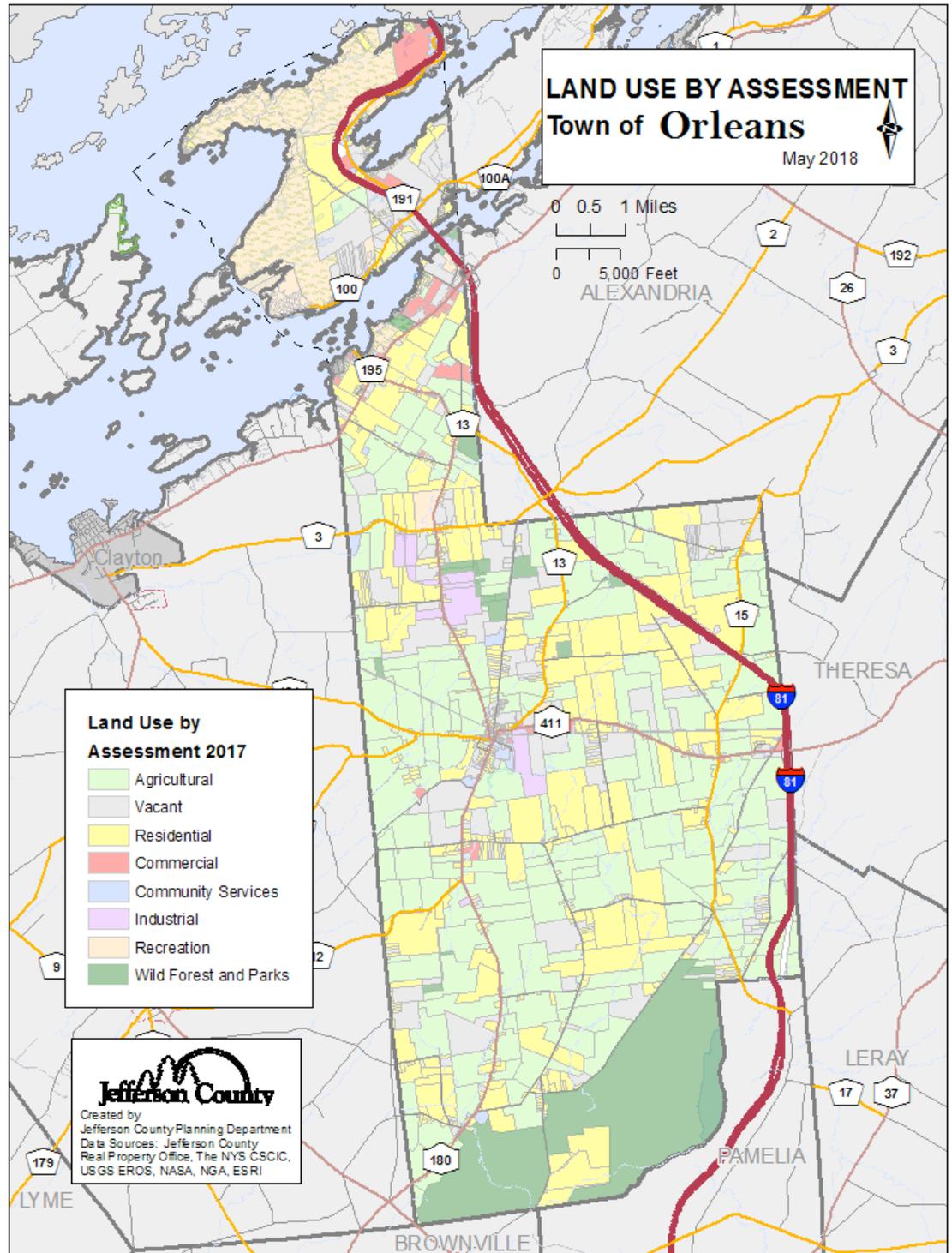
Figure 42 illustrates the number of parcels by residential land use assessment category. As expected, one family year round residences increased the most with 121 parcels. Perhaps unexpectedly, seasonal parcels only increased by four, while the seasonal acreage increased by 57.28 acres during the time period.

Clearly some of the increases in one family year-round residences were due to conversions of seasonal homes which influence the acreages and parcels from year to year.

Landuse Patterns

Over the years, the Town has experienced a distinct pattern of more dense community settlement in LarFargeville, with spread-out homes and businesses in the more undeveloped agricultural and former farmed areas of the Town.

The two maps illustrate 2017 land use by parcel assessment, and residential land use by parcel assessment, according to the Jefferson County Real Property Tax Services Office.



**CHAPTER 2. BRIEF HISTORY, DEMOGRAPHIC, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS**

The abundance and variety of waterfront parcels and islands, however, resulted in seasonal waterfront estates, and later cottages and homes. Throughout the last century such areas have still fostered seasonal homes, but now an increase in year-round homes is evident along shoreline areas. Arguably, the views and scenic qualities along the St. Lawrence River that attracted early settlement continue to attract residents, visitors, and investment.

**General Trends at a Glance**

- ✓ Town population increased 41% from 2000 to 2016.
- ✓ Three Census Designated Places (a concentration of population for statistical purposes) were added during the last two census's.
- ✓ The older age groups (65 and over and the 45 to 64 age group) in the Town are increasing and the youngest age group (under 20) increased as well from 1980 to 2016.
- ✓ Households increased by 65% from 1980 to 2010, while families increased by 62% during the time period.

