

## Chapter 1 Socio-Demographics

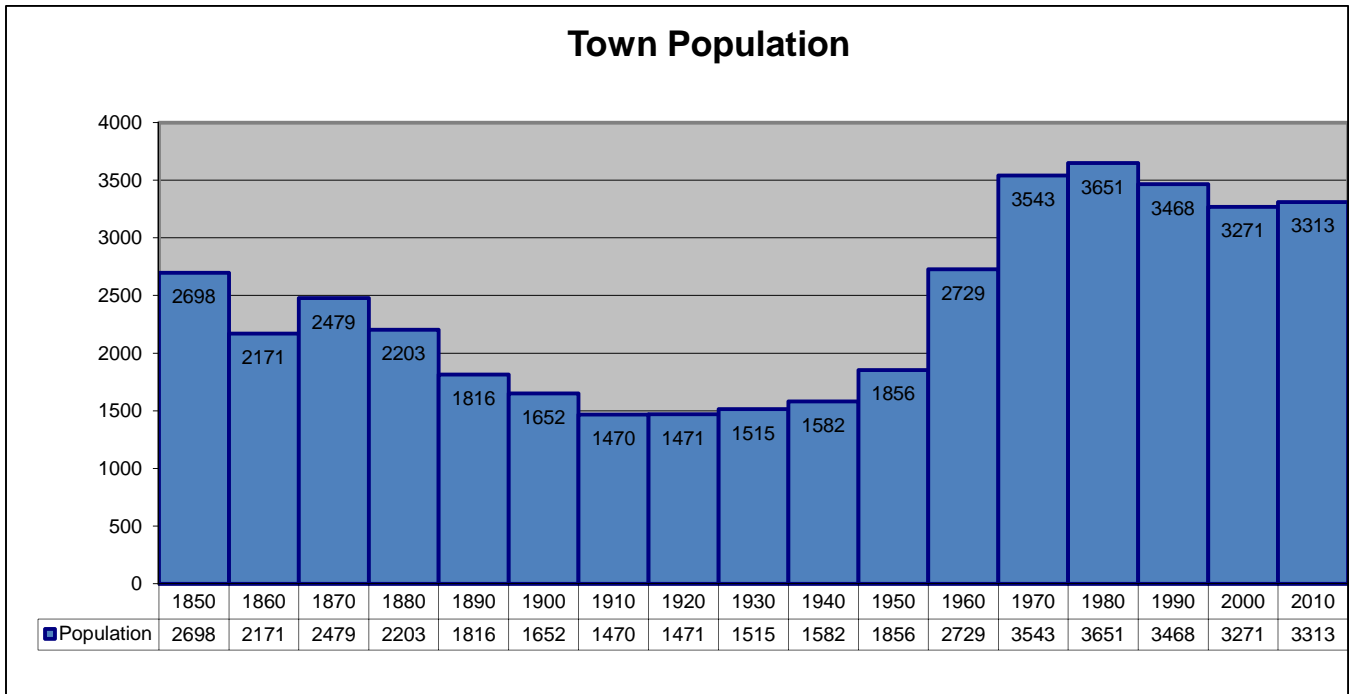
**VISION:** *The Town will create policy appropriate for the aging population and inviting for future generations. The Town will work to allow individuals to age in place and maintain the bedroom community feel that the Town currently enjoys.*

This demographic information is vital to the comprehensive plan process. Readers of this plan and planners of the Town need a basic understanding of socio-demographic trends, relative to all future planning and development activities in Veteran, Chemung County, and the Southern Tier. Demographers like to say “demographics are destiny”; given the current population and economic climate, a demographic outcome can be estimated. In this case, plans for the future of Veteran should be supported by the community vision, the existing built environment, local economic trends, and agreement with the demographic data. Information found throughout this chapter will guide the recommendations found throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

### Population

The Town of Veteran is a small, rural community in upstate New York. Veteran is located just north of the Elmira-Horseheads urban area in Chemung County. As of the 2010 Census, the population of the Town was 3,313 people. Fewer than 5% of Town residents live in poverty and nearly 80% of households report income between \$25,000 and \$150,000 per year.

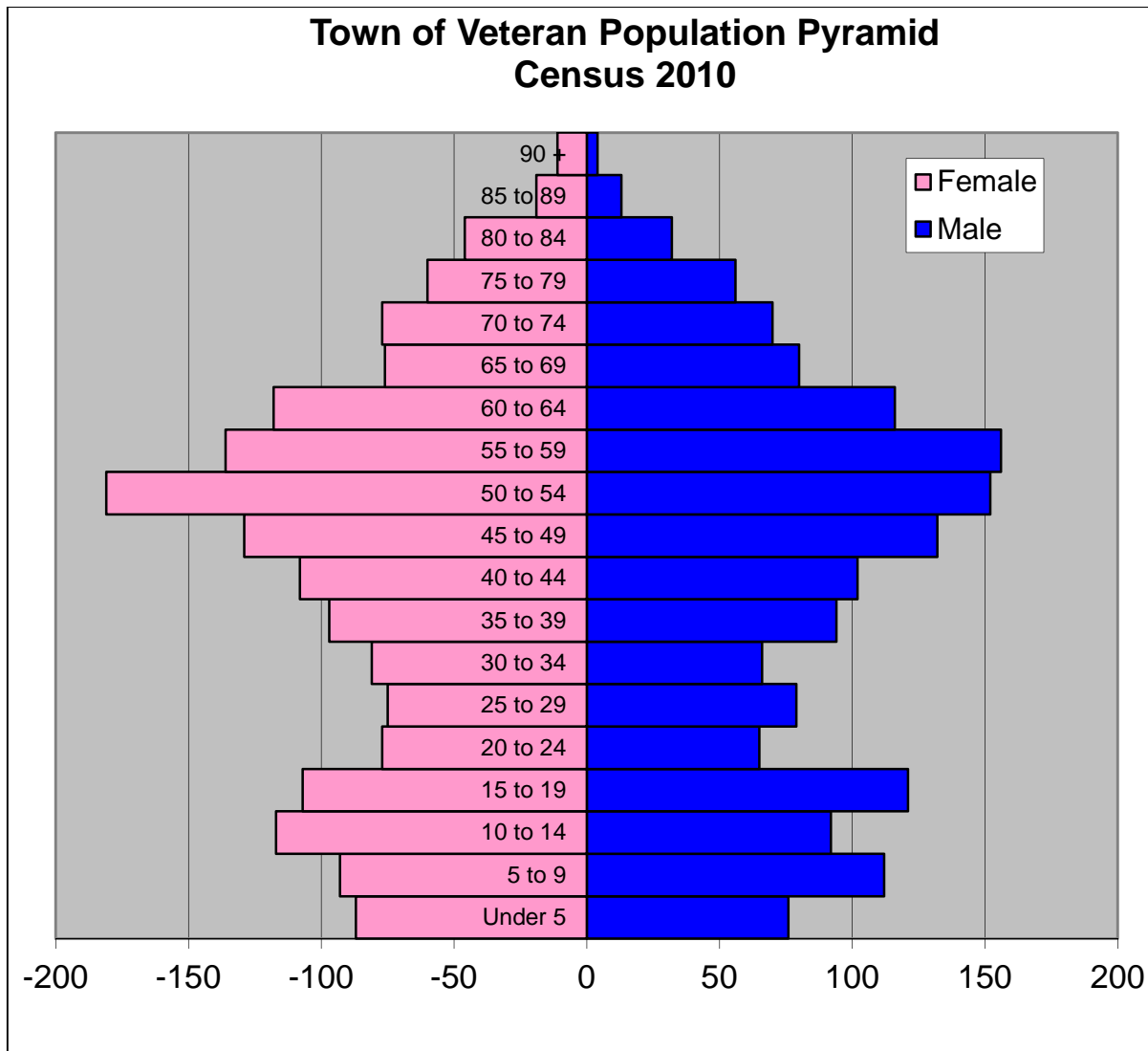
**Chart 1: Town’s Population**



As illustrated in the above chart, the population of the Town has fluctuated significantly in the past 160 years. Three important trends are obvious: a relatively stable population between 1890-1960, a substantial increase in population between 1960-1980 with an increase of almost 100 people per

year<sup>1</sup>, and finally relative stability of the population between 1980-2010. The current, stable population of approximately 3,300 individuals is not placing excess strain on the local government or the road system. If the population were to increase significantly, increased involvement of the local government would be necessary. Water and sewer issues, traffic concerns, and property rights issues are all likely in the case of increased population.

**Chart 2: Town Population Pyramid**



This population pyramid shows a fairly normal population distribution for upstate New York. Average numbers of children are being born to parents in the Town. Unfortunately beginning at age 18, college-bound students leave the Town for educational opportunities. This “Brain Drain” is occurring in rural communities across the nation. Restricted employment opportunities in rural America keep young people from returning ‘home’, until they are able to secure steady employment.

<sup>1</sup> The increase from 1960-1970 coincides with general economic growth in the region and the tail-end of the baby boom. However, the continued increase between 1970-1980 is a pattern unique to Veteran; increased residential development and new-home construction are the likely causes.

Recent data suggest that these young migrants may eventually return to the rural community with children of their own, but only if employment opportunities become available.

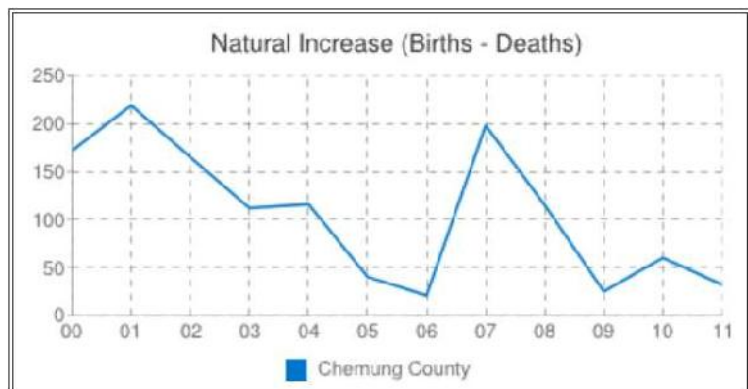
The dominance of baby boomers in Veteran is obvious; ‘boomers’ represent approximately 33% of the population in the Town. As this group ages, they will have access to less earned income and have a greater need for social services. County planning agencies are already beginning to address this problem. This ‘rapidly aging population’ will have two primary impacts on the Town:

- 1) The Town may have some obligation to ensure that a minimum level of service is provided to maintain the health and well-being of Town residents; this will become increasingly costly in the next 20-30 years.
- 2) Proper maintenance of housing is essential to maintaining property values and aging baby boomers will face increasing difficulty performing and affording home maintenance; the Town may have to take a stronger role in enforcing adequate maintenance of properties throughout Veteran.

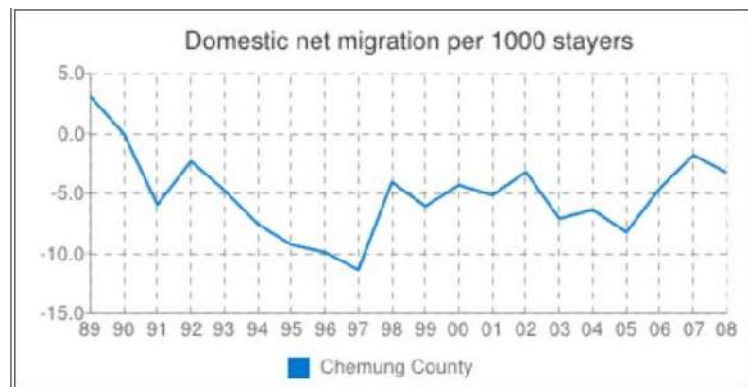
### Demographics

The fundamental elements of demographic projections are births, deaths, and migration. This type of demographic data is only collected at the county level. The data for Chemung County (as collected from [www.pad.human.cornell.edu](http://www.pad.human.cornell.edu)) are in Charts 3 and 4.

Births within the county are low; since the 2007-2009 recession. The total number of births in the county has held steady at approximately 975. This very low fertility rate (27 births per 1,000 women of childbearing age) will not result in any significant population increases within the county. Moreover, few women of childbearing age live in Veteran (only 640 women aged 15-50); it is unlikely the Town will experience a significant population increase due to childbearing. The teen birthrate in the Town is lower than or equal to the state and county average. Between 38 and 63 births were recorded per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 in the Veteran area versus 52 in Chemung County or 56 in New York State. This data indicates that teen births are less of a problem in the Town of Veteran.



**Chart 3: Chemung County Natural Increase**



**Chart 4: Chemung County Domestic Net Migration**

Deaths in the county are typical for an upstate NY community, the total number of deaths per year is approximately 940; total deaths have held steady since 2008. The age distribution of Veteran is similar enough to Chemung County, that death rates within the Town are likely proportional to the county population. Between 1998-2005 the net migration rate has held steady at a rate of approximately -5 per 1000 county residents. Between 2005-2011 the net migration rate is approaching zero, meaning no net loss of population.

Based on 2010 US Census data, the Cornell Program on Applied Demographics has created County level estimates of population change between 2010 and 2025. This projected population pyramid shows that a stable population is likely in Chemung County by 2025. Such stability (similar numbers at all age groups) is also likely in the Town of Veteran.

**Chart 5: Chemung County Projected Age Distribution**

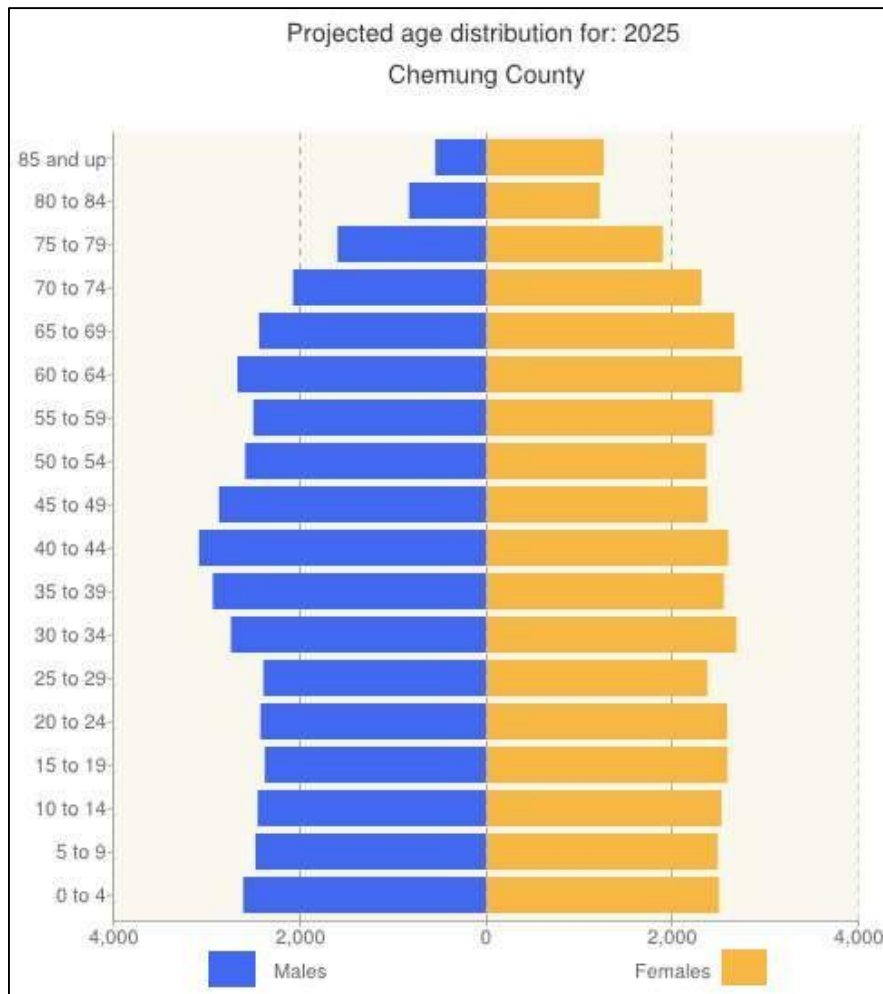
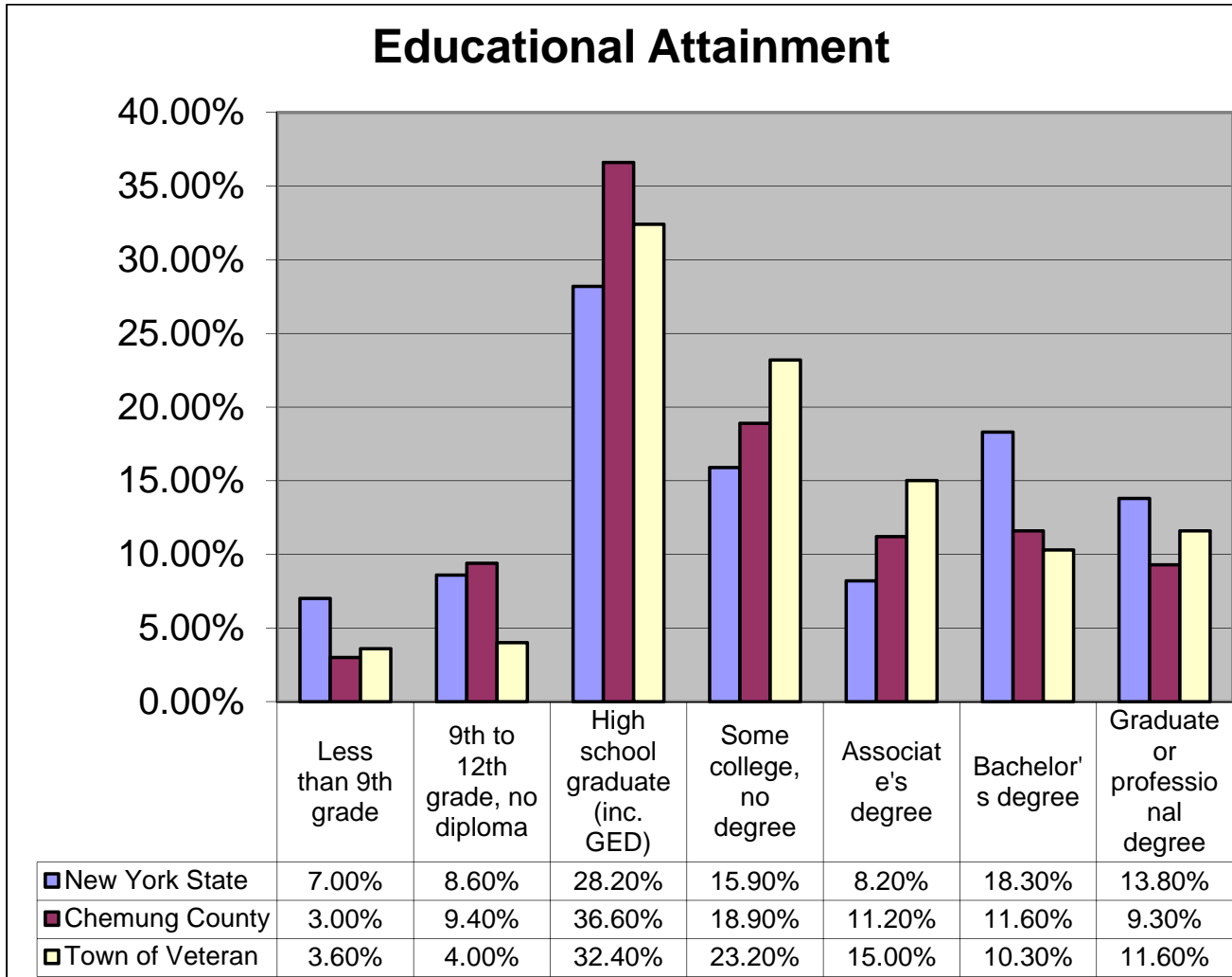


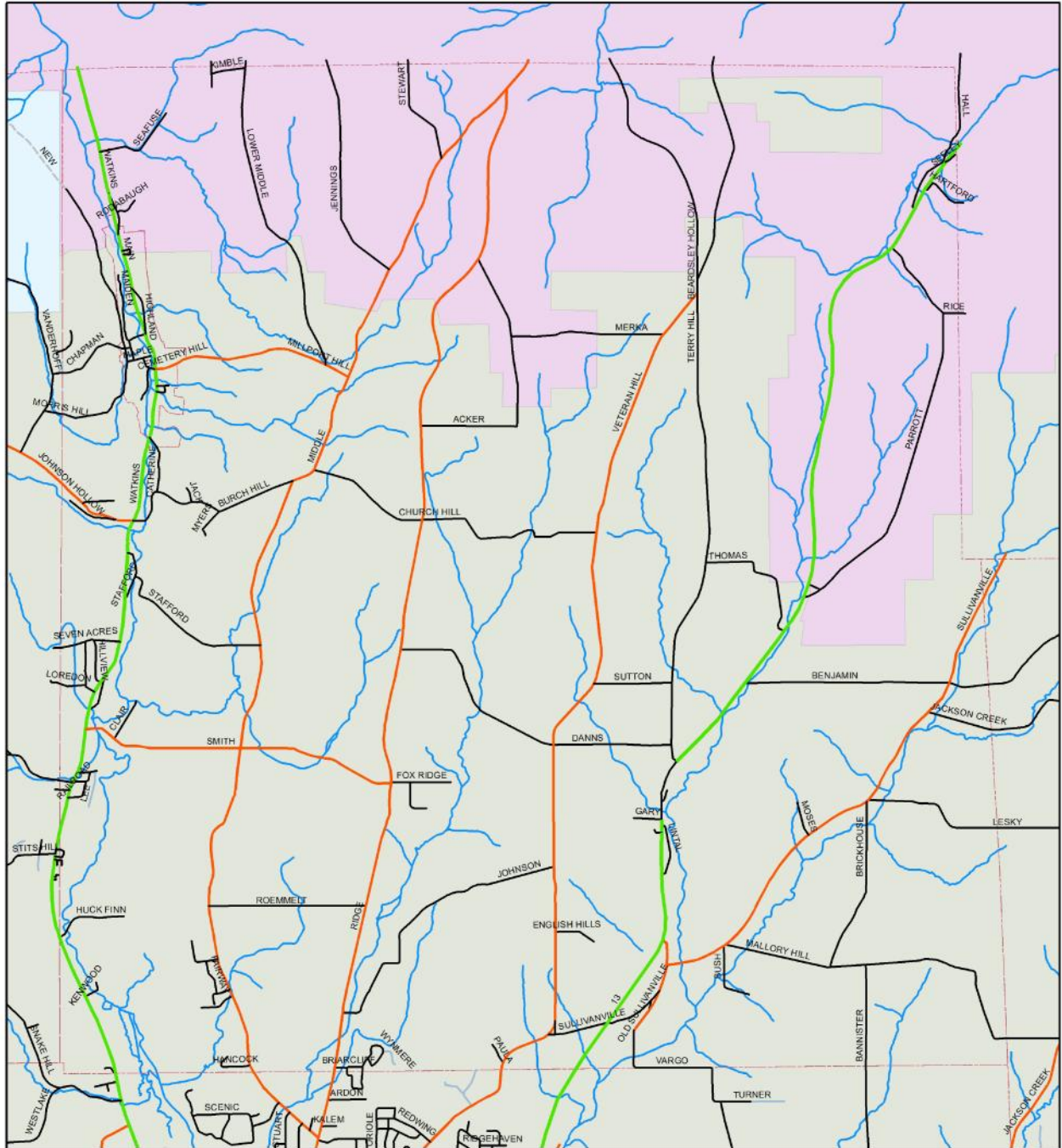
Chart 6: Educational Attainment (comparative)



**Education**

Residents of Veteran are well educated, when compared to Chemung County or New York State residents. No significant lapses of education are present in the community, according to this data. Access to quality primary education is a factor that contributes significantly to residential property values and local migration rates. Veteran residents typically attend school in the Horseheads district; the district is known locally for providing a quality education and is ranked 305 out of 697 of all districts in NYS.

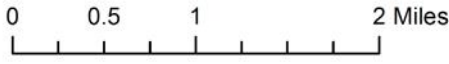
# Map 1: School Districts



**Legend**

State	HORSEHEADS
Private	ODESSA-MONTOUR
County	WATKINS GLEN
Seasonal	
Interstate	
Local	
Town Boundaries	
Rivers and Streams	

## Town of Veteran School Districts Map



Map Created 5/18/13

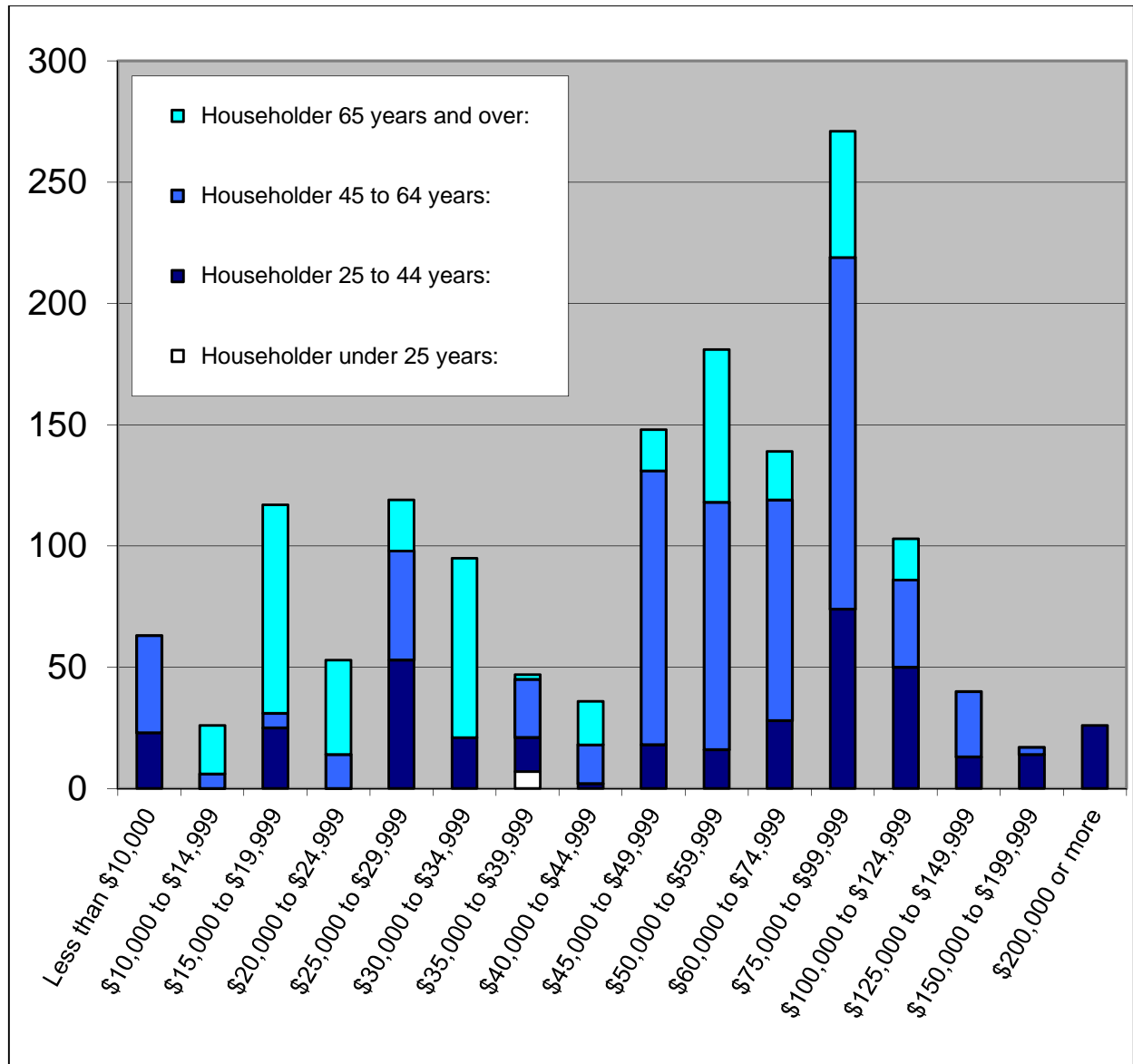
## Income

**Table 1: Income (comparative)**

Geography	Median Household Income	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income	Poverty Rate
New York State	\$55,603	\$67,405	\$30,948	14.2%
Chemung County	\$44,502	\$55,246	\$26,457	15.2%
Town of Veteran	\$51,037	\$57,926	\$26,330	4.8%

## Wealth and Poverty

**Chart 7: Wealth and Poverty by Age**



**RECOMMENDATION:**

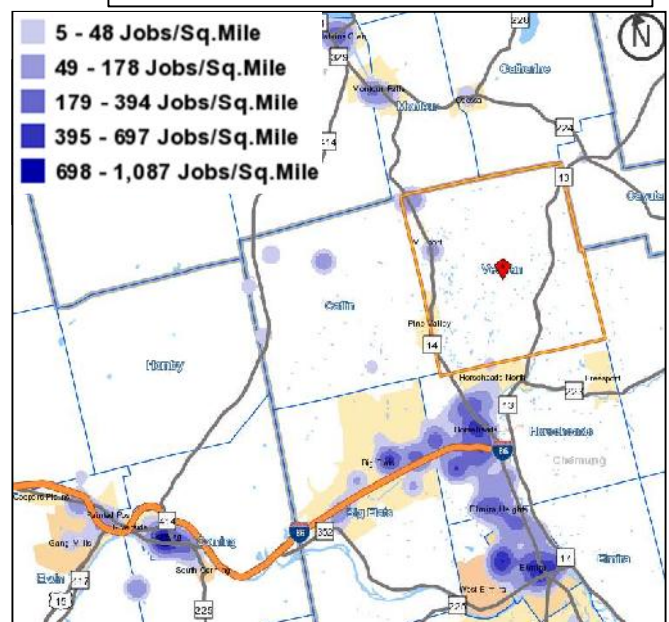
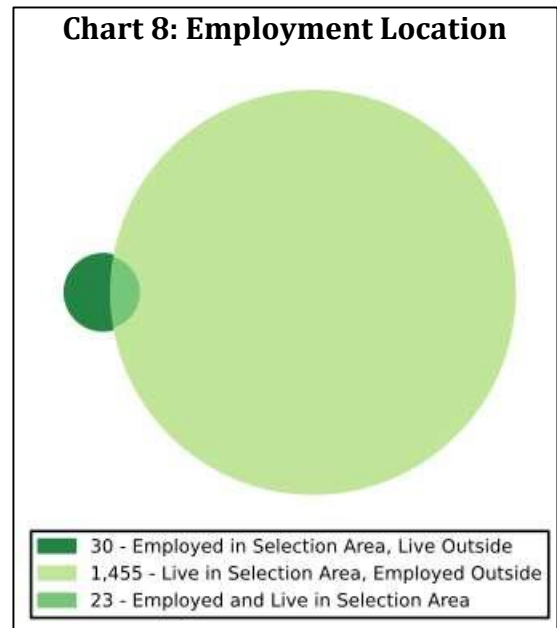
- 1a. Create an environment that is suitable for current Town residents to age in place.
- 1b. Ensure Town can support the increased needs of aging population. Consider immediately beginning coordination with local service agencies to meet the needs of current elderly residents.

**Employment**

To retain the rural character of the community, residents must be able to afford low density living. Professionals who enjoy the rural way of life and can afford to maintain a 5-20 acre property could be the ideal demographic for the future of the Town. Other target demographics include the semi-retired who may also be able to afford a rural lifestyle. Young families and working farmers are the final demographic groups that the Town should try to attract to the community.

Veteran is the ultimate bedroom community. According to the US census there are only 53 people employed within the Town. Town residents are almost all (98%) employed outside of the Town. Townspeople are primarily employed in the Elmira, Horseheads, Big Flats, and Corning areas. While there are not many employment opportunities in the Town of Veteran, the Town is a bedroom community for workers throughout the Elmira-Corning area. Strengthening the economy within the Elmira-Corning area will be a vital step in attracting young professionals to live in Veteran.

As this ‘commute shed’ map shows, the residents of Veteran are mostly employed in the greater Elmira area, with a second cluster of employment in the Corning Valley. This employment pattern indicates that Veteran is a desirable place to live and that commuting distances are not burdensome. Therefore, efforts to promote the Town should focus on these nearby employment destination communities. Many other employees in the Elmira-Corning area may not be aware of the potential benefits of moving to Veteran.



**Map 2: Regional Commute Shed**



## Housing

There are 1,409 housing units in Veteran, almost 94% are occupied. During the 2010 Census, only 94 units within the Town were vacant. This indicates a very tight housing market within the Town. The vast majorities (87%) of housing units are owner occupied; only 159 rental units are available in Veteran. Most of the units in the Town are single family homes, although some multi-family units appeared in the 2006-2010 American Community Survey. The American Community Survey also showed 135 mobile homes in the Town and 15 occupied motor vehicles. This assortment seems normal for a stable and relatively well-off rural community and is very similar to the housing pattern in nearby Schuyler County.

**Table 2: Housing Built Date**

YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT	Estimate
<b>Total housing units</b>	1,516
<b>Built 2005 or later</b>	27
<b>Built 2000 to 2004</b>	76
<b>Built 1990 to 1999</b>	74
<b>Built 1980 to 1989</b>	139
<b>Built 1970 to 1979</b>	306
<b>Built 1960 to 1969</b>	261
<b>Built 1950 to 1959</b>	138
<b>Built 1940 to 1949</b>	48
<b>Built 1939 or earlier</b>	474

*\*Data from American Community Survey (includes mobile homes)*

The substantial population increase in the Town between 1960-1980 occurred as part of a local housing boom. During that time, many new homes were built in the community. The housing unit age table highlights this trend; the homes built between 1960-1980 make up a substantial portion of the Town's housing stock. As these units continue to age, increased housing maintenance will be required. Also, the preferences of home-buyers have changed over time. Within the next 15 years, these older homes may no longer be attractive to buyers.

There has been some new-home building activity in the Town of Veteran since 2005. In the last 6 years approximately 27 new homes have been built in the Town. This rate of home-building will keep the local real-estate market from becoming stagnant.

**Figure 1: Veteran Residence**



**Chart 9: Value of New Home Construction**

