

HOWEY-IN-THE HILLS

EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This report is the first in a series of presentations of community data, trends and issues affecting Howey-in-the-Hills as the town undertakes the periodic review of its comprehensive plan. This report will focus on the town’s demographic profile based on data available from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Florida, and the State Office of Economic and Demographic Research. The initial sections will focus on the town’s population change over time, specific characteristics of the population that provide a profile of key demographic components, some information on housing, and social characteristics of the population. The report will also provide an estimate of population for the period from 2023 through 2040 using several alternative methods.

The data presented in this report will be one of the key inputs into the review of the various comprehensive plan elements. Future Land Use, Housing and Transportation Elements will particularly rely on this data. The population projections will be compared to the projections developed for the 2017-2018 Evaluation and Appraisal process.

POPULATION CHANGE OVER TIME

U.S. Census data on the population of Howey-in-the-Hills goes back to 1930; the first census when the town was recognized as a municipal entity in the census records. Table 1 provides census counts from 1930 through 2020. The data shows the town has seen spurts of population change rather than a steady progression of growth. Between 1930 and 1950 the town had a declining population, reaching a low point of 188 residents in 1950. The first large growth spurt occurred between 1950 and 1960 which saw the town increase by almost 114 percent. Lesser growth spurts came between 1970 and 1980 (34%), 1990 and 2000 (32%) and 2010 to 2020 (49%).

Given the small base of population, these periodic growth spurts are not unexpected as even a modest sized residential project can have a larger effect on the numbers. For example, the 2010 to 2020 growth was likely driven in large part by the completion of the

Venezia South subdivision and some infill development primarily along South Florida Avenue. Earlier growth spurts can be tied to residential development in the Mission Inn complex.

TABLE 1 TOWN-OF-HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS U.S. CENSUS POPULATION COUNTS 1930 - 2020			
YEAR	POPULATION	CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
2020	1,643	545	49.6
2010	1,098	142	14.9
2000	956	232	32.0
1990	724	98	15.7
1980	626	160	34.3
1970	466	64	15.9
1960	402	214	113.8
1950	188	-15	-7.4
1940	203	-135	-39.9
1930	338	NA	NA

The town’s official population for 2023 as set by BEBR and published by the State Office of Economic and Demographic Research is 1,790 or an increase of 147 over the 2020 census count. Most of this population increase is driven by development in the Talichet Phase 1 project. The Talichet Phase 2 homes are just now coming online and will be reflected in the 2024 population counts. Remember that the official state counts are done as of April 1st of each calendar year and are largely driven by electric meter statistics. New residents moving into homes in town after the end of March will not be counted until next year.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

The following information provides a snapshot description of the current population with regard to several descriptive statistics. This data comes from the American Community Survey and is based on survey data that has an accuracy range of 90% probability. As such the totals in some cases may not align completely with the census data or the estimates of population provided by BEBR. Nevertheless, the data can be useful in giving a reasonably accurate picture of the town residents. The tables provide some information on social characteristics and economic characteristics.

TABLE 2 TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS POPULATION BY RACE		
RACE	TOTAL	PERCENT
White	1321	80.4
Black	100	6.1
Asian	16	1.0
Other	62	3.8
More Than One	144	8.8
Total	1643	100.0

Data based on 2021 ACS

TABLE 3 TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS SCHOOL ENROLLMENT		
GRADE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Pre-School	20	6.0
Kindergarten	16	4.8
Elementary	113	33.7
High School	127	37.9
College	59	17.6
Total	335	100.0

Data based on 2021 ACS

TABLE 4 TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
INCOME RANGE	HOUSEHOLDS	TOWN PERCENT	FLORIDA PERCENT
<10,000	35	4.5	5.9
10,000 - 14,999	8	1.0	3.9
15,000 - 24,999	58	7.4	8.6
25,000 - 34,999	53	6.8	9.3
35,000 - 49,999	101	12.9	13.0
50,000 - 74,999	147	18.7	18.2
75,000 - 99,999	114	14.5	12.8
100,000 - 149,999`	120	15.3	14.7
150,000 - 199,999	93	11.8	6.3
200,000 +	56	7.1	7.3

Data based on 2021 ACS

TABLE 5 TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS AGE PROFILE	
AGE RANGE	PERCENT
< 5	3.8
5 - 9	5.1
10 - 14	4.0
15 - 19	5.2
20 - 24	3.8
25 - 34	10.1
35 - 44	9.6
45 - 54	17.2
55 - 59	5.8
60 - 64	9.9
65 - 74	13.2
75 - 84	9.1
85 +	3.2

Data based on 2021 ACS

The statistics profile a community that has relatively few minorities, has a school age population of about 17.5 % from pre-school through high school, and has a retirement age population of just over 25%. Household incomes tend to run above the averages for Florida as a whole. The median household income is reported as \$73,813 and the mean household income is reported as \$93,332. These figures exceed the state median of \$61,777 and state mean income of \$88,267.

Data on employment shows that about 60% of the residents are employed with the other 40% not currently in the workforce. Unemployment was low with only 2.1% of the persons in the labor force being reported as unemployed.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Information was gathered on selected housing characteristics to add to the community profile and to assess housing needs based on several traditional categories. The census reported on 855 total housing units of which 785 units were occupied and 70 units were identified as unoccupied. The percentage of units unoccupied was 8.2% versus a statewide average of 16.5%. Unoccupied units are often vacant units for sale and seasonally occupied units. These reported percentages suggest the town has fewer seasonal residents than the state as a whole.

Housing statistics also confirm the town has relatively few units that are not single-family detached homes. The data shows 736 detached single-family units, 29 attached single-family units, five units in two-family dwellings and 85 units in buildings with three or four units. Again, the timing of this data precedes the completion of Talichet Phases 1 and 2 and the addition of the townhouse units in Venezia South. The following summaries provide some additional information. Table 6 shows a community that is dominated by owner occupied units with very few units lacking in some facilities or exhibiting overcrowding conditions.

TABLE 6 TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS SELECTED HOUSING STATISTICS		
Occupied Units	785	
Owner Occupied	666	84.8%
Renter Occupied	119	15.2%
Facilities		
Lacking Plumbing	2	
Lacking Kitchen	2	
Occupants per Room		
1.00 or Less	733	98.3
1.01 - 1.50	10	1.3
1.51 of More	2	0.4

Data based on 2021 ACS.

The next set of tables provides information on the value of owner-occupied units in comparison with state statistics, gross rent, and gross rent as a percentage of income. As the data indicates, Howey-in-the-Hills has generally higher housing values than the state averages while rents tend to be a little lower. However, like most communities the percentage of renters paying more than 30% of their income for housing is an issue of affordability with 62% of renters exceeding the 30% level. The thirty percent mark is typically identified as the standard maximum for affordable housing expenditures. The median rent is reported as \$1,347 monthly.

TABLE 7			
TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS			
VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED UNITS			
VALUE RANGE	UNITS	TOWN PERCENT	FLORIDA PERCENT
< 50,000	5	0.8	6.1
50,000 - 99,999	21	3.2	8.0
100,000 - 149,999	68	10.2	9.5
150,000 - 199,999	90	13.5	13.5
200,000 - 299,999	239	35.9	25.2
300,000 - 499,999	153	23.0	24.7
500,000 - 999,999	90	13.5	10.0
1,000,000 +	0	0.0	2.9
		100.0	100.0

TABLE 8			
TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS			
GROSS RENT			
VALUE RANGE	UNITS	TOWN PERCENT	FLORIDA PERCENT
< 500	0	0.0	4.5
500 - 999	25	21.0	21.4
1,000 - 1,499	51	42.9	38.5
1,500 - 1,999	25	21.0	22.8
2,000 - 2,499	18	15.1	8.0
2,500 - 2,999	0	0.0	2.6
3,000 +	0	0.0	2.2
		100.0	100.0

TABLE 9			
TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS			
GROSS RENT AS A PERCENT OF INCOME			
VALUE RANGE	UNITS	TOWN PERCENT	FLORIDA PERCENT
< 15	9	7.6	8.7
15 - 19.9	10	8.4	10.6
20 - 24.9	10	8.4	12.2
25 - 29.9	16	13.4	11.6
30 - 34.9	14	11.8	9.6
35 +	60	50.4	47.2
		100.0	100.0

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are an essential requirement of the planning process, but projections for small units of government or small areas are notoriously difficult to accurately generate. Relatively small actions can have an outsized impact on projections when the initial population base is small. In the 2017 EAR update the 2020 population was projected to be 1,520 and the 2025 population was projected as 1,652. These projections were a little low as the census counted 1,643 in 2020 and BEBR estimated the 2023 population at 1,790. The residential housing market after 2017 was more robust than anticipated and the accelerated building program that saw the completion of Venezia South single-family neighborhood and the rapid build-out of Talichet Phases 1 and 2 accelerated the population growth ahead of estimates.

With the build-out of Talichet anticipated in early 2024 there may be a lull in residential construction in the town as there is not a ready supply of lots for development. The Hillside Groves Phase 1 is moving through final development approvals, but once approved the construction of roads and other infrastructure is likely to take most of a year to bring new residential lots online. This is assuming the development moves quickly to construction once approvals are obtained. The other pending projects including Watermark, Lake Hills and Whispering Heights are being delayed in part by the lack of sewage treatment availability.

The Office of Economic and Demographic Research has done some analysis of trends affecting population growth in Florida. They note that by 2025-2026 all population growth in Florida will be from net migration. Deaths will outnumber births leaving population growth to be determined by the excess of in-migrants over those departing the state. This condition leaves the state particularly vulnerable to events elsewhere in the country. Weak housing markets in the Northeast or Midwest could limit the ability of residents in these areas to sell their homes and move to Florida.

The agency also projects that retirees will be a key driving force generating new residents. The median age range for Lake County is already high falling between 45.6 and 52.6 years. As noted above, the retiree age population in Howey is already 25% and most of the new developments being proposed are targeting the retiree market. The agency also projected that people over 60 will constitute 53% of the population growth between 2010 and 2030. We are just over halfway through this period and the statistics are supporting the projection.

One method of projecting population growth is to assume Howey-in-the-Hills will maintain a constant share of the Lake County population over the planning period. Table 10 provides a comparison of the Lake County population projections with a constant share projection for Howey.

TABLE 10 TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS TOWN POPULATION AS A PERCENT OF LAKE COUNTY			
YEAR	LAKE COUNTY POPULATION	HOWEY POPULATION	PERCENT
2020	383,956	1,643	0.43
2025	432,345	1,859	0.43
2030	474,963	2,042	0.43
2035	509,812	2,192	0.43
2040	538,082	2,314	0.43

Lake County projections from BEBR

Another option is to assume an absorption rate for new units that have been approved for development and then convert the units to population based on the average household size of 2.39 persons. The Talichet developments are the most recent examples of new developments. Based on the project total of 114 units which have largely been constructed in the three-year period between 2021 and 2023, the absorption rate has averaged about 38 units per year. Allowing for some infill development in other areas of the town, an absorption rate of 40 to 45 units annually seems reasonable. One expects that this absorption rate may be on the low side as outside of Talichet there have been very few lots available for development. If one of the other approved projects had been available for construction, there may have been sufficient market to support added residential development. Table 11 provides a summary of population growth based on the absorption rate assumptions.

TABLE 11 TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS TOWN POPULATION BASED ON ABSORPTION RATES			
YEAR	PROJECTED UNITS	NEW POPULATION	TOTAL POPULATION
2020			1,643
2023			1,790
2025	80	191	1,981
2030	200	478	2,459
2035	225	538	2,997
2040	225	538	3,535

TMH Consulting Projections

Table 11 assumes an absorption rate of 40 units per year through 2030 and 45 units per year through 2040. New population is generated based on 2.39 people per unit. When compared with Table 10, the population projection is larger than is generated by a constant share approach. Under the Table 11 assumptions, Howey-in-the-Hills will be 6.6% of total county population by 2040.

From 2023 through 2040 the town's population would grow by 97%. Comparing this growth rate to the historical growth rate for the ten years leading up to 2023 which was 64%, the absorption rate calculation seems to be reasonable. For the 10-year historical period, the only larger scale projects were Venezia South and Talichet. Going forward there are four approved projects totaling almost 1,900 dwelling units. The population projection assumes that only about 40% of these units will be developed over the planning period. As a best projection, Table 11 results are recommended as the population projections for use in the current update.