



Demographic Profile

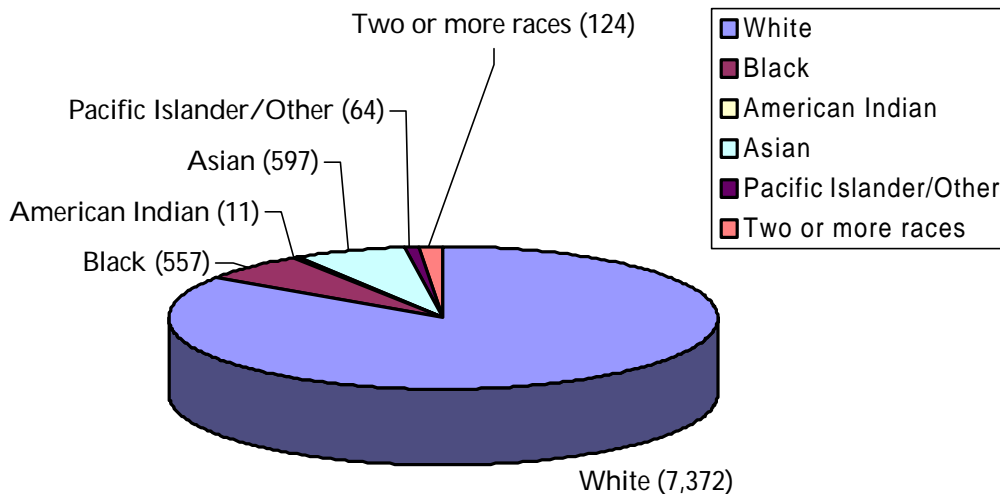
In the last ten years, the City of Suwanee experienced a growth rate that exceeded the norm for most communities throughout our country. Suwanee's population grew 262 percent — from 2,412 persons in 1990 to 8,725 in the year 2000. Located northeast of Atlanta along Interstate 85 in Gwinnett County, Suwanee's accessible location was and is the prime reason for this extreme growth.

Initially, Suwanee neighborhoods were highly desired for their affordable price and rural, expansive nature; however, recent years have seen the price of homes escalate as more residents relocate to the Atlanta Metropolitan area. Gwinnett County's reputation for a superior school system has also contributed to the increased demand for residential and commercial development.

Also attributable to the high desire by citizens to live in the Suwanee area has been the pristine natural environments that exist, with large tracts of woods located among streams, rivers, wetlands and vast expanses of farmland. Rapid growth over the past ten years has seen the depletion of many of these natural environments that have been a major factor in relocation to the area.

Statistics from the 1990 and 2000 census show that the total housing units grew from 825 in 1990 to 3,199 in 2000 an increase of approximately 288 percent. Statistics provided by the Comprehensive Suwanee Town Master Plan, completed in November of 2000, show that the yearly growth rate has nearly tripled what it was in the 1980's.

2000 Population by Race



A closer look at the demographic profile of the community finds a racial make-up with greater diversity than existed ten years ago. According to 1990 estimates, 93.6 percent of the population was white, while 4.4 percent was black and the remaining 2 percent was Asian, Pacific Islander or other. Today, the commu-

nity has a population that is 85.5 percent white, 6.8 percent black with the remaining population made up of Asian, Pacific Islander or other races.

The demographic breakdown by age finds that the community has seen minimal shifts over the last ten years, with the only increase found in those aged 45 to 54 (an increase from 9.1 to 15.2 percent). The population of Suwanee remains young, with 39.4 percent



between the ages of 25 and 44. Another large segment of the population (16.9 percent) is aged 5 to 14 indicating a high presence in the community of young families with school age children. The second largest population group is represented by those aged 45 to 59 (18.9 percent). Residents above the age of 60 account for 6.2 percent of the population, while those under the age of 5 account for 8.6 percent. Ten percent of residents were found to be aged 15 to 24.

Economic statistics from the 1990 census show that Suwanee residents had a median household income of \$47,552 and a per capita income of \$16,725. Comparisons to county and state statistics finds that Suwanee residents had a median household income that was \$3,000 higher than other county residents and \$16,627 greater than state residents.

Comparisons to the county and state per capita incomes show that Suwanee residents had a lower per capita income than the county (\$1,100 less) and a higher per capita income than the state (\$3,200 more).

Estimates provided by Jackson Electric Membership Corporation show that the 1999 estimated median household income in Suwanee was \$70,614 while the average income equaled \$78,905. The estimated per capita income was \$29,213. Comparisons to the state of Georgia and Gwinnett County found a county median household income of \$61,776 and a per capita income of \$27,414 while the state median income equaled \$41,327 with a per capita income of \$21,224. These economic statistics provide evidence of a growing, economically stable and affluent community.

Gwinnett County saw a population change of 66.7 percent from 352,998 in 1990 to 588,448 in 2000—representing an annual growth rate of 6.67 percent. The City of Suwanee grew at four times that rate, with an average yearly growth rate of 28.8 percent. County projections show that over the next 20 years the area encompassing the City of Suwanee is expected to grow in population by 300 percent as more people move into the region for new jobs and housing opportunities. Future growth in Suwanee is limited by the land available for development within the city boundary, however; future annexations into the city may further impact population growth.

Review of the city's comprehensive master plan shows that future development standards could have varying impacts on the growth of the population. At the completion of the master plan in November of 2000, the remaining undeveloped land in the city accounted for 1,924.30 acres of which 595.54 was zoned for single and multi-family residential. If land was developed as currently zoned, the city could expect an additional 3,835 residents.¹ Non-residential development was projected to bring an additional 17,351 people to the area for jobs that would be created by new businesses.

The Suwanee Comprehensive Town Master Plan made recommendations to deviate

¹ Source: The Suwanee Town Master Plan. Cooper-Ross Urban Planners & Muldawer Associates Architects & Town Planners, November 2000.



from the historic land use patterns that have been employed throughout Suwanee's development to ones that encourage a sense of community. These uses have been labeled "character areas" and promote development patterns that use traditional neighborhood design practices where residential and office/commercial uses are placed in close proximity to one another, promoting a more walkable and bikeable community. These practices serve to preserve natural habitats by clustering higher density developments on smaller land areas. Under the proposed land use, the population of Suwanee could increase by an additional 12,682 persons to 21,407 by the year 2020.

Other population projections based on census tract boundaries have been made by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). The City of Suwanee is contained within census tract 502.02, which in 2000 was projected to have a population of 11,446. The portion of residents living within tract 502.02 who were within the Suwanee city limits accounted for an estimated 9,191 people. The ARC estimated that the population of tract 502.02 would grow to 36,801 residents by the year 2020, of which 29,551 would be residents of Suwanee. This projection represents an increase of 20,360 over the next twenty years or an annual growth rate of 22.6 percent.

Demographic Analysis

Demographic research has revealed that the rapid growth of Suwanee over the last 10 years has provided a greater ethnic and age diversity than has ever existed before. Young, upwardly mobile families with school age children represent a large segment of the population indicating the likelihood of a highly active community. Economic stability is evidenced by higher household incomes than exist in other parts of the county and state. The projected growth of the community over the next twenty years will continue to create a more diverse Suwanee.

The comprehensive town master plan provided three variations for future population statistics based on varying development practices. These projections estimate a population growth ranging anywhere from 3,835 people to 21,407 people over the next 20 years. The highest of these projections shows a minimal decline in growth compared to the previous 20 years, placing Suwanee at the pinnacle of its evolution.

The next several years promise to change the Suwanee surroundings forever. The make-up of the current population suggests a community that is likely to desire and support an aggressive parks and recreation development plan. The youthful, economically-stable profile of city residents indicates an ability to financially and physically provide the necessary means to maintain and improve on the attributes that drew them to the city.

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