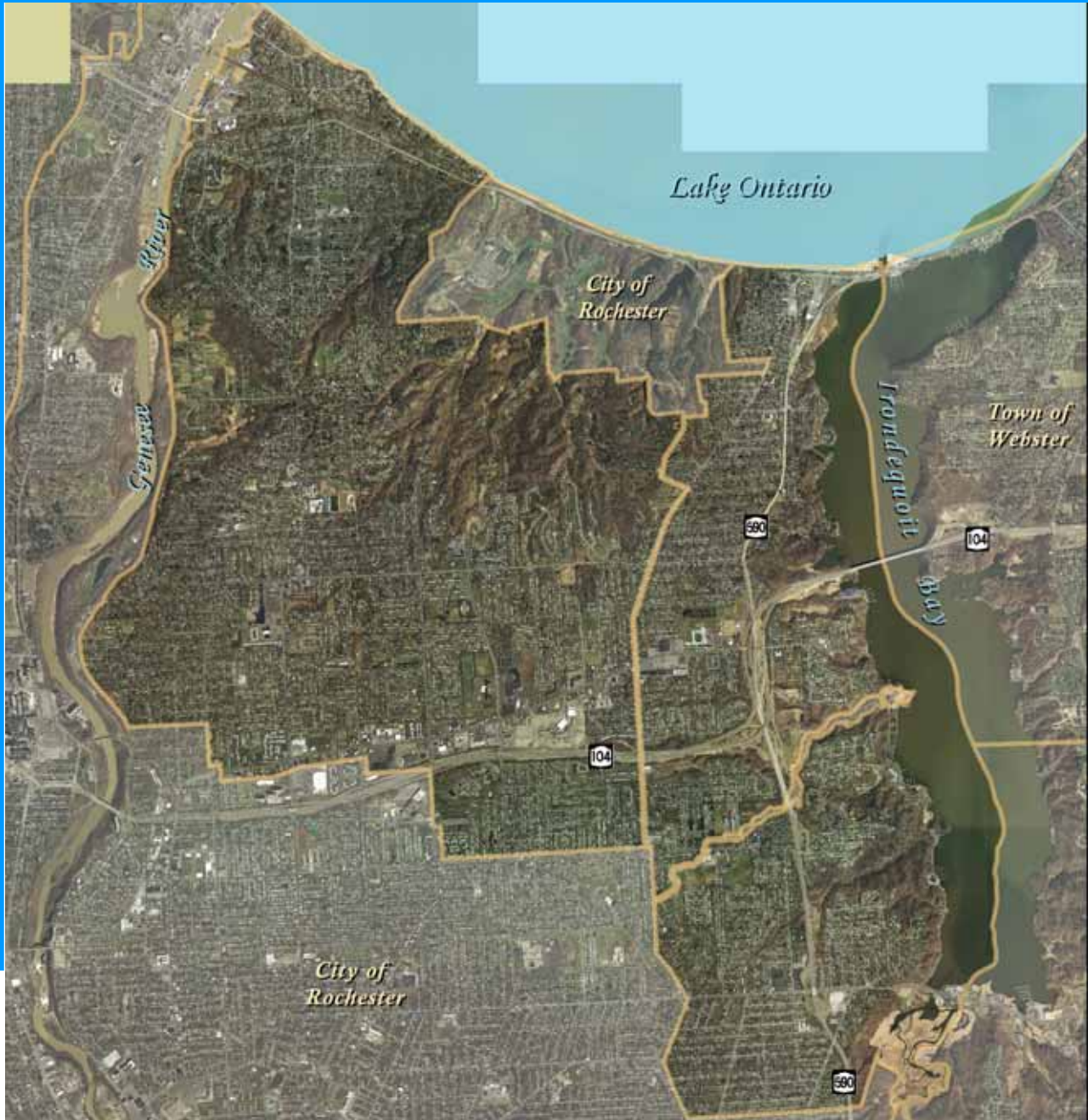


Table of Contents

Section 1: Plan Introduction.....	1-1 - 1-3
Section 2: Community Profile	2-1 - 2-25
Section 3: Irondequoit’s Vision and Case for Action	3-1 - 3-3
Section 4: Maintaining Healthy Neighborhoods.....	4-1 - 4-16
Section 5: East Ridge Road Corridor Plan.....	5-1 - 5-55
Section 6: Waterfront Redevelopment Plan.....	6-1 - 6-63
Section 7: Parks, Recreation and Trails Plan	7-1 - 7-86
Section 8: Irondequoit Community Center	8-1 - 8-6
Section 9: Future Land Use & Community Design	9-1 -
Section 10: Implementation Strategies	10-1 -
Appendices	
Appendix A: Existing Conditions Mapping and Narrative	
Appendix B: US Census Data Tables	
Appendix C: Market Analysis Report	
Appendix D: Community Input Summaries	
Appendix E: Parks and Recreation Public Opinion Survey & Results	

Section 1: Plan Introduction



OUR TOWN OUR VISION, OUR FUTURE

The town of Irondequoit is located in western New York within the Greater Rochester Metropolitan Area. The Rochester region is known for its rich history of innovation and its highly skilled work force. The local economy, once dominated by Eastman Kodak and other large manufacturing companies, is now more diverse. Today, leading employers include the University of Rochester Medical Center and the Infotonics Technology Center.

Irondequoit’s convenient location within the region, and its potential to offer a high quality of life in attractive, affordable neighborhoods, provide an opportunity for the town to evolve into a preferred place to live and work in the region.

Irondequoit borders three bodies of water, and, in fact, its name is derived from an Iroquois term meaning “where the land and waters meet.”

The town was incorporated in 1839, and grew slowly through the nineteenth century. After World War II, a two-decade population boom transformed Irondequoit into a bedroom suburb offering a wide range of housing that appealed to entry-level workers as well as corporate executives. The town developed into a dynamic and convenient community that met residents’ civic, cultural, and recreational needs.

Irondequoit still embodies many of these qualities today. Citizen’s pride, commitment, and vision have laid the foundation of a truly great place to live and work. Exploiting existing assets, enhancing Irondequoit’s strong sense of community, and ensuring the town presents a favorable image to both residents and outsiders, are key goals of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Our Town, Our Vision, Our Future

Developing Irondequoit’s Comprehensive Master Plan was an opportunity to capitalize on community pride, identify common ground among diverse stakeholders, and allow citizens to take ownership of our community’s future.

Irondequoit’s motto for the plan’s development—Our Town, Our Vision, Our Future—reflects the collaboration and forward thinking that are the foundation of this plan. The motto reminds us that everyone has a vested interest in and responsibility to ensure Irondequoit’s future is bright.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

What will it be like to live in Irondequoit five years from now? Ten years from now? What steps does the community need to take to make life in Irondequoit the best it can possibly be? The Comprehensive Plan is a vehicle through which a community can respond to these questions. It enables residents to create a vision for their community's future, and then outline the policies and projects required to achieve that vision. The plan addresses all aspects of community life. Through its policy recommendations, it suggests new ways of making a living, protecting open space and environmental assets, enhancing recreational opportunities, attracting visitors, and revitalizing neighborhoods.

Work on the Town of Irondequoit Comprehensive Plan began in 2007 with an inventory analysis of the town and its surroundings. Information was gathered regarding land use patterns, economic and demographic trends, environmental features, transportation networks, and other relevant data. In order to develop a plan that reflects the voice of the community, the planning process drew upon focus group meetings, general public meetings and design workshops, interviews with Town and business leaders, and a Comprehensive Plan website that allowed the public to voice its ideas.

In addition to the plan's main focus on neighborhoods it includes three target plans addressing the East Ridge Road corridor, waterfront development, and parks and

Previous Studies and Plans

To prepare the Comprehensive Master Plan, we reviewed previous planning studies and reports that addressed a wide range of topics and geographic areas in the Town.

- Master Plan for the Town of Irondequoit (1985)
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (1988)
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan (1988)
- Ridge Road Corridor Study (1996)
- Newport Cove Park (1997)
- LaSalle's Landing Development Plan (1997)
- Sea Breeze Revitalization Plan (1998)
- Town Facilities Feasibility Study (2001)
- Town-wide Traffic and Transportation Study(2001)
- Open Lands Inventory (2002)
- Library/Community Center Studies (2003-Present)
- Town Center (Titus/Cooper/Hudson) Master Plan (2003)
- Draft Irondequoit Bay Harbor Management Plan (2003)
- Town Wide Drainage Study (2005)
- NYS Route 590 (Sea Breeze Drive) Final Design Report (2006)
- Cooper-Titus Shared Parking Project (2007)
- Lighthouse Point (Pattonwood) Area Development Plan (2008)
- East Ridge Road Rehabilitation: Draft Design Report (2008)
- Irondequoit Bay Slope Vegetation Management Plan (2008)
- Emergency Operations Plan (2009)

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats

At the first public meeting, participants brainstormed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The following issues were identified as priorities. The full brainstorming list is provided in Appendix D.

Strengths

- Proximity to the water
- Location
- Schools
- Police department
- Recreational opportunities
- Affordable housing
- Expressway access
- Hospital

Weaknesses

- Schools and the perception of the schools
- Empty mall
- Recreational facilities
- Division of the Town into east and west
- No Town center
- Two school districts
- Not enough commercial revenue, increased burden on the residential areas

Opportunities

- Develop town center areas that currently exist but are underdeveloped
- Centralized library
- Keep libraries non-centralized
- Corridor redevelopment
- Make more of a “green” movement with new and redevelopment.
- Reuse of existing structures
- Mass transit improvements

Threats

- Urban blight / Deteriorating neighborhoods
- Unwilling to change or a fear of change
- Control of taxes/increase in taxes
- Cost of running the Town
- Narrowing roads and lower speed limits
- Divide between east and west
- Aging infrastructure

recreation. The draft Comprehensive Master Plan was presented to the Town’s Comprehensive Master Plan Advisory Committee, department heads, Town Board, and the public for comment, revision, and final approval. Finally, a detailed implementation schedule was developed to help the Town leaders organize projects and formulate annual improvement plans. The recommendations embrace both short-term and long-term projects that will together lead to an improved quality of life for Irondequoit’s residents, both present and future.



Public Kick-off meeting

Section 2: Community Profile



IRONDEQUOIT TODAY

In order to plan for the future, we must understand the community's existing capacities, circumstances, and needs. Providing the services and amenities expected by both existing and new residents will be critical to the success of this plan. As the following analysis indicates, the challenge for Irondequoit is to capitalize on existing assets and to create an environment that retains existing residents and businesses and attracts new ones.

MAINTAINING FUNDAMENTAL ASSETS

Irondequoit's peak period of growth occurred between 1945 and 1970. After World War II, Irondequoit experienced a development boom. Until that time, the southern tier of town between Titus Avenue and East Ridge Road was a district of vegetable farms. Within two decades the area was completely transformed by residential and commercial development.

During the 1950s and 1960s Rochester was experiencing significant growth due to the success of Kodak and Xerox. In the 1950s, growth in the eastern part of town was accelerated by the construction of the Sea Breeze expressway. The construction of the Keeler Street Expressway (NYS route 104) and the Bay Bridge made commuting to both Kodak and Xerox facilities convenient for Irondequoit residents. The relocation of Rochester General Hospital to a site just south of the Irondequoit Town line brought a major employment center to town and attracted other healthcare related institutions to the area.

In addition to single family homes, the period also saw a proliferation of apartment complexes. Along East Ridge Road, farm stands, homes and greenhouses were rapidly displaced by suburban commercial development. Most of Irondequoit's schools and churches were also constructed during this period.

By the 1970s, most of Irondequoit was developed although new houses continue to be built on scattered infill sites. As was the case in inner suburbs throughout the nation, some of the factors that contributed to Irondequoit's early growth eventually became development challenges. Even in the 1970s and 1980s, when the region was experiencing moderate growth and development, the Town itself was losing population, and its employment base was already on the decline. Increased use of automobiles resulted in new development patterns oriented to highways and more suited to the large open spaces available in the middle and outer-ring suburbs.

These events, coupled with the gradual decline of Rochester’s manufacturing economy, resulted in negative pressures on some elements of Irondequoit’s built “fabric.” Today, some of the town’s neighborhood commercial areas, apartment complexes, and sections of the East Ridge Road corridor appear tired and suffer from underinvestment.

Despite the challenges, there is ample evidence (expressed throughout the public meetings for this plan) that residents have a deep belief in the future of their town. Repeatedly, citizens have stated they are willing to roll up their sleeves and work to preserve neighborhoods, support thoughtful economic development, and enhance the overall quality of life. They are aware that national real estate development trends indicate a move of people and businesses back to the inner ring suburbs.

RESPONDING TO CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

A Stable Population

The Town of Irondequoit covers approximately 16.8 square miles and has a population of 52,354 (2000 Census). Irondequoit accounts for about 7 percent of Monroe County’s population, though the proportion has been slowly decreasing since the 1960s.

Irondequoit’s population boom occurred between 1940 and 1970, when it increased from 23,376 to 63,675. Since its peak in 1970, Irondequoit’s population has declined slightly, with the most significant loss (9.5%) occurring between 1970 and 1980.

Figure 2.1 on page 7 provides historic and projected population counts for the town and county generated by the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council. According to these projections, Irondequoit’s population will decrease by 1.2% by 2010 and Monroe County will increase by 1.9%.

These figures vary slightly from those obtained from *DemographicsNow* (see the Market Analysis in Appendix B, Table 1, page 3), which projected a 3.7% decrease for Irondequoit and no change (0.0%) in the county.¹

While this data is useful for illustrative purposes, it is important to note that data projected for smaller areas, like Irondequoit, is subject to larger margins of error.

¹Note: Population counts for 1990 and 2000 were obtained from US Census data. Estimated and projected data for 2007 and 2012 were obtained from *DemographicsNow*, which derives its data from US Census figures.

Why Did This Happen?

Irondequoit’s population declined by about 20 percent (or 11,323) in the two decades between 1970 and 1990. In the immediate postwar era, rising automobile ownership enabled many employers and urban residents to relocate to suburban areas like Irondequoit, where the American dream of owning a suburban home was delivered in the marketplace. By the 1970s, the very factor that was crucial to the growth of the Town – its livability – may have proved increasingly inadequate in comparison to the lifestyle afforded by the outer suburbs.

This dynamic continues, albeit at a slower rate. According to Internal Revenue Service data, between 1990 and 2000, most new residents to Irondequoit came from the City of Rochester (8,860); and most of those leaving Irondequoit moved to Webster (3,410).

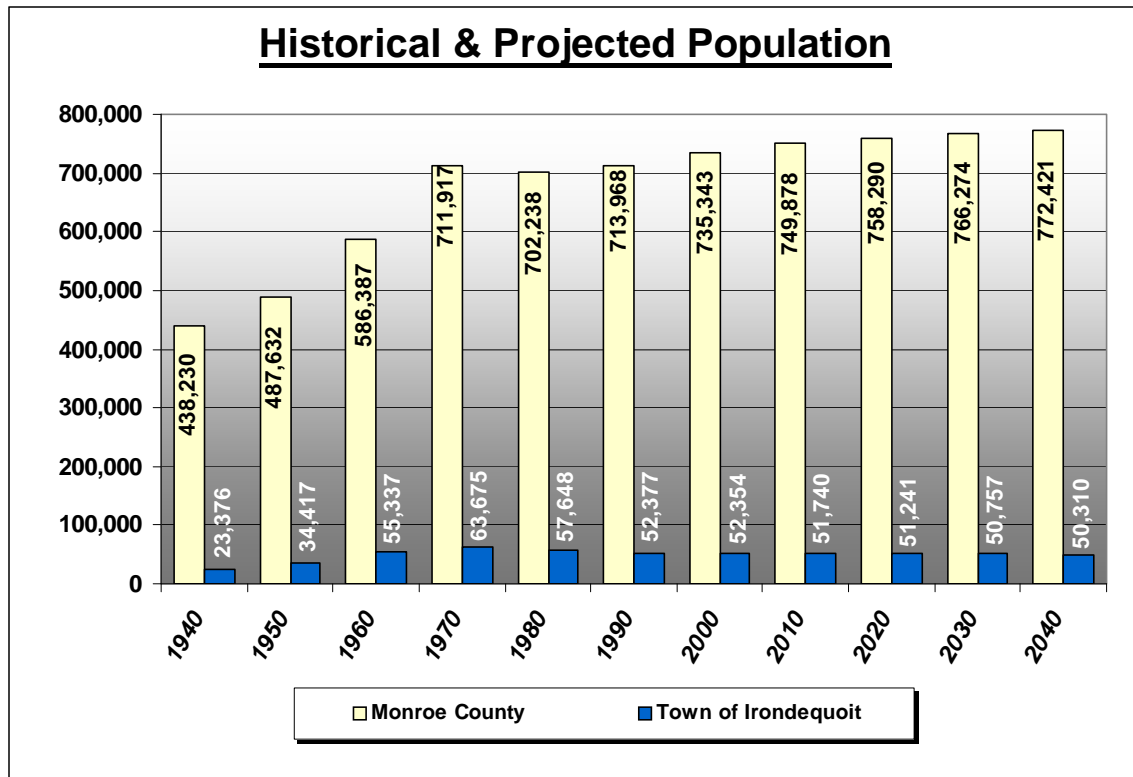


Figure 2.1—Source: Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

Regional Comparisons

As part of existing conditions review, Irondequoit was compared to five other communities in Monroe County:

- Greece
- Brighton
- Gates
- Webster
- Pittsford

Greece, Brighton and Gates were selected because they are inner-ring suburbs like Irondequoit. Pittsford and Webster were selected because they are mid-ring suburbs and were mentioned specifically in several public meetings as the “competition” - the places where Irondequoit’s residents relocate.

We conducted a cursory review of demographics, cost of living ratings and education statistics for all six communities to identify local trends and determine what impact the changes in other communities could tell us about recent trends in our town.

For this comparative assessment, we utilized data from the US Census, individual municipalities and Sperling’s Best Places (www.bestplaces.net), a website created to analyze data about people and provide accurate and up-to-date information about communities across the country.

Demographics

Based on the most recent census data, Irondequoit was the only community in the group that decreased in population, although the decrease (23 people) over ten years is considered statistically insignificant. As shown in the chart on the following page, population growth was highest in Webster and Pittsford; minimal increases were noted in Brighton, Gates and Greece.

The marginal growth in the other inner-ring suburbs was likely due to recent housing developments. Those three towns are less fully built-out than Irondequoit. The growth in Pittsford and Webster reflect local and national housing trends whereby new residential and commercial development leapfrogs past inner-ring suburbs, moving farther away from urbanized city centers. Newer construction in these towns has been designed to address current market trends including large lots and large homes equipped with open floor plans, elaborate kitchens, and master bedroom suites.

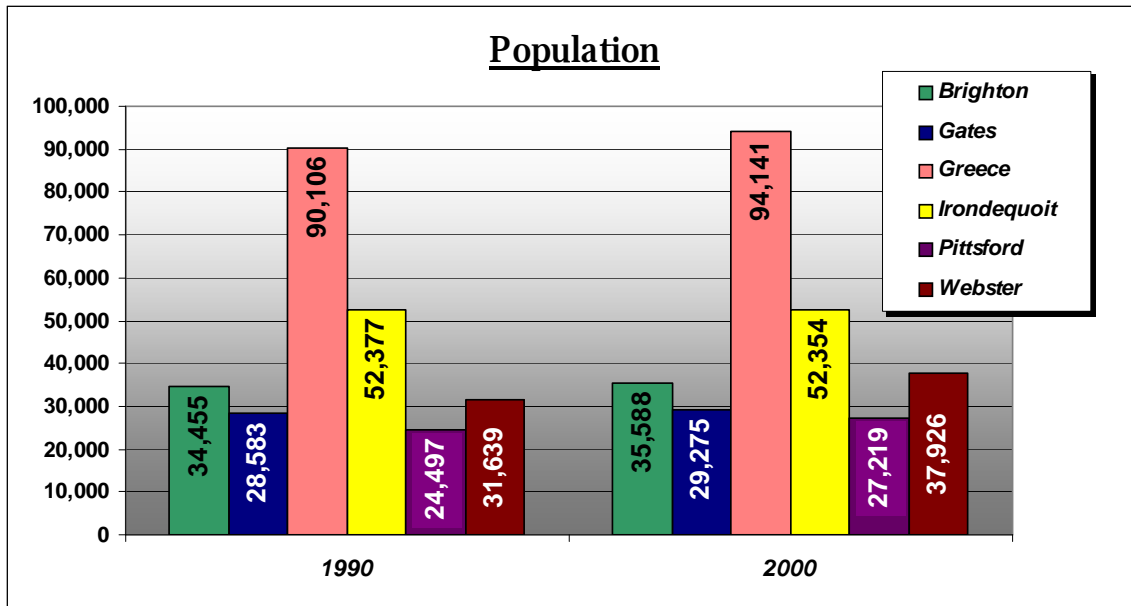


Figure 2.2—Source: US Census

Irondequoit’s relative lack of growth in recent years despite good initiatives undertaken by the Town indicates that the problem is a foundational one. Addressing this problem in the future will require the Town to foster continued collaboration among residents and community leaders as well as a focused approach to deal with neighborhood-specific problems.

Along with population, the size of households in Irondequoit has been decreasing. Irondequoit’s trend of shrinking household size is consistent with national trends. In large measure, the shrinking family size is the result of an aging population, lower birth rates, and social changes in the family structure, such as single-parent families and single-person households. Clearly, these are dynamics outside Irondequoit’s circle of influence. The household-size data do, however, explain why the relatively large population loss in recent decades has not been accompanied by notable housing abandonment.

Town of Irondequoit—Average Household Size	
Year	Average Household Size
1980	2.46
1990	2.35
2000	2.25
2005	2.22

Figure 2.3—Source: US Census

A Changing Population

Understanding a community’s age composition is an important component of future planning efforts. It is useful in forecasting trends in labor force, household formation, and social security needs. An aging population (depending on its composition) can potentially increase the fiscal and infrastructural burden on the community. Figure 2.4 illustrates Irondequoit’s age distribution trends between 1990 and 2000.

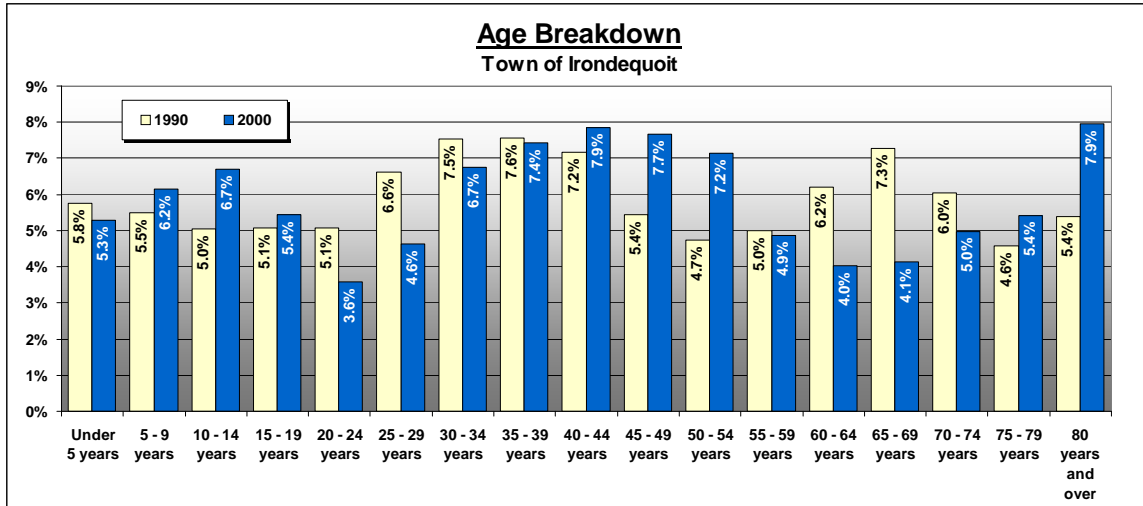


Figure 2.4—Source: US Census

A significant portion of the population ranged from 25 to 54 years in age, with 39.0% in 1990 and 41.2% in 2000. Many of these individuals will likely be experiencing significant life changes in the next ten years as their children leave the home. This same group is also in or beginning to enter their peak employment and earning potential years. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of 25-39 year olds decreased and the percentage of 40 to 54 year olds increased. The age groups behind this category, and particularly those aged 20-24 years, are not nearly large enough to replace them. The loss of residents 20-24 years in age could have significant implications on the entry-level labor market, not only for Irondequoit, but also for the entire region. Future planning to meet the needs of the 25 to 54 age categories could hold the greatest potential for Irondequoit.

Compared to the other towns, Irondequoit has the highest percentage of seniors and among the lowest percentage of pre-school and school aged residents.

The percentage of population aged 25 to 54 in 2000 ranged from 38.4% in Pittsford to 45.5% in Webster. Irondequoit had the second lowest percentage in that age group, 41.5%.

Irondequoit’s aging population and decreasing number of school age residents will impact future educational demands, including the facility and staffing requirements needed to maintain today’s level of service.

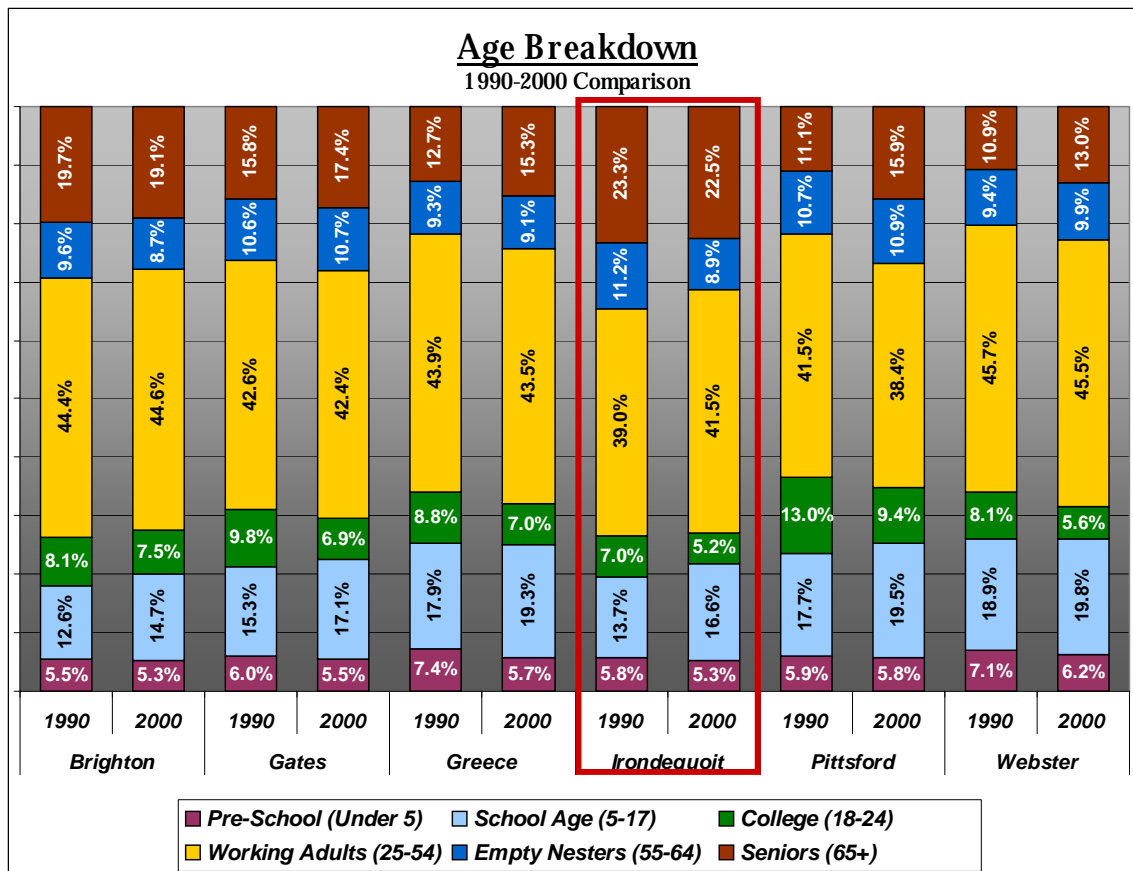


Figure 2.5—Source: US Census

Race

Many social scientists note that innovative or potentially-innovative communities are culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse.

A large majority (93.0%) of the town’s residents are white (Caucasian), compared to 79.1% in the Monroe County. The breakdown of Irondequoit’s remaining race categories in 2000 was Black (3.6%), Hispanic or Latino (3.1%); Asian/Pacific Islander (1.0%), Other Race ((1.0%) and American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.2%).

Projected population data indicate the town’s racial diversity will expand only slightly through 2012, with the percentage of white residents decreasing to 90.8% and increases in the percentage of Black and Hispanic/Latino residents.

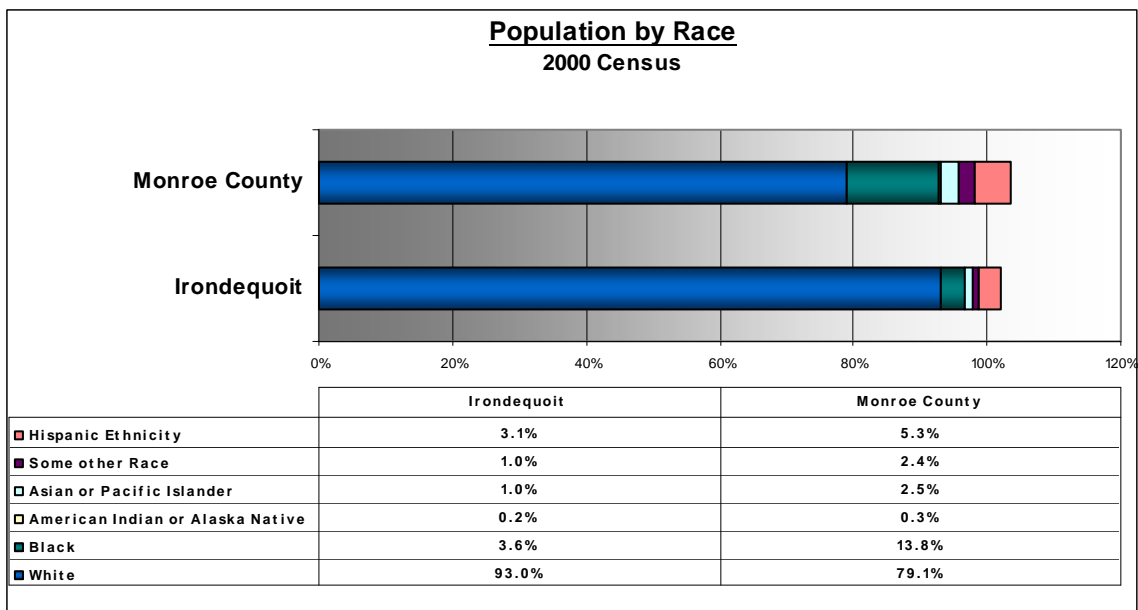


Figure 2.6—Source: DemographicsNow

A Well-Educated, Professional Population

In the not so distant past, it was not uncommon for an individual to graduate from high school and begin working in the manufacturing and trade industries. For many, if their father worked as a plumber, then they too would apprentice as a plumber. In Irondequoit, the close proximity of universities and high-tech industries, especially Kodak, has resulted in a highly educated workforce.

Has this trend continued until today? Is Irondequoit’s workforce positioned to march into the 21st century? Today’s “smarter,” information-driven industries require “smarter” workers. Consequently, Irondequoit residents’ educational attainment will determine their ability to participate in today’s “New Economy” driven by knowledge-intensive industries.

A person’s education level is often related to other demographic information such as income and employment. Places with more educated residents tend to have better employment, higher median incomes, and higher valued homes.

Based on educational attainment reported in 1990 and 2000, Irondequoit residents’ educational levels have increased. Figure 2.7 shows that just over 37% of Irondequoit residents over the age of 25 had obtained as Associates Degree or higher in 2000, compared with 32.2% in 1990. Despite the significant increase, Irondequoit’s percentage of college educated residents still slightly lagged behind the county’s, which was 40.9% in 2000.

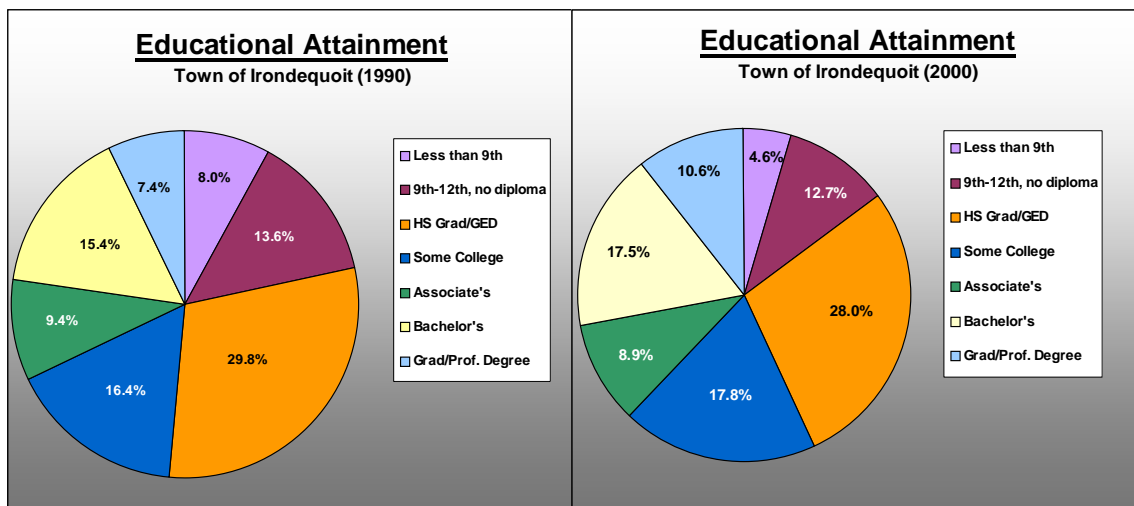


Figure 2.7—Source: US Census

The lower number of college educated residents may be due to continuing outward migration of population within the Rochester metro area. In the 1950s and 1960s, the newest homes and neighborhoods were located within Rochester’s inner-ring suburbs. Since that time, residential growth and high income households have migrated to middle and outer-ring towns such as Pittsford, Mendon, and Victor. Educational attainment varies across the six comparison towns with Pittsford and Brighton achieving higher rates. This may in part be explained by the proximity of these Towns to schools such as the University of Rochester, St. John Fisher & Nazareth Colleges and M.C.C., all of which are either within or closely border the Towns of Pittsford and Brighton.

For residents 25 and older, the percentage of Irondequoit residents with a high school graduate or higher was 87%, which was higher than only one other community. Irondequoit’s percentage of residents with Bachelor’s degrees or higher was 31%, which was greater than Gates (16%) and Greece (24%). Webster had a slightly higher percentage (38%) and Brighton and Pittsford had much higher percentages in this category, 60% and 68% respectively.

When we examined educational attainment by age groups, Irondequoit’s percentage of college educated residents increased significantly for the 25 to 34 year old age group (41.6%). However, Irondequoit position among the comparison communities remained unchanged.

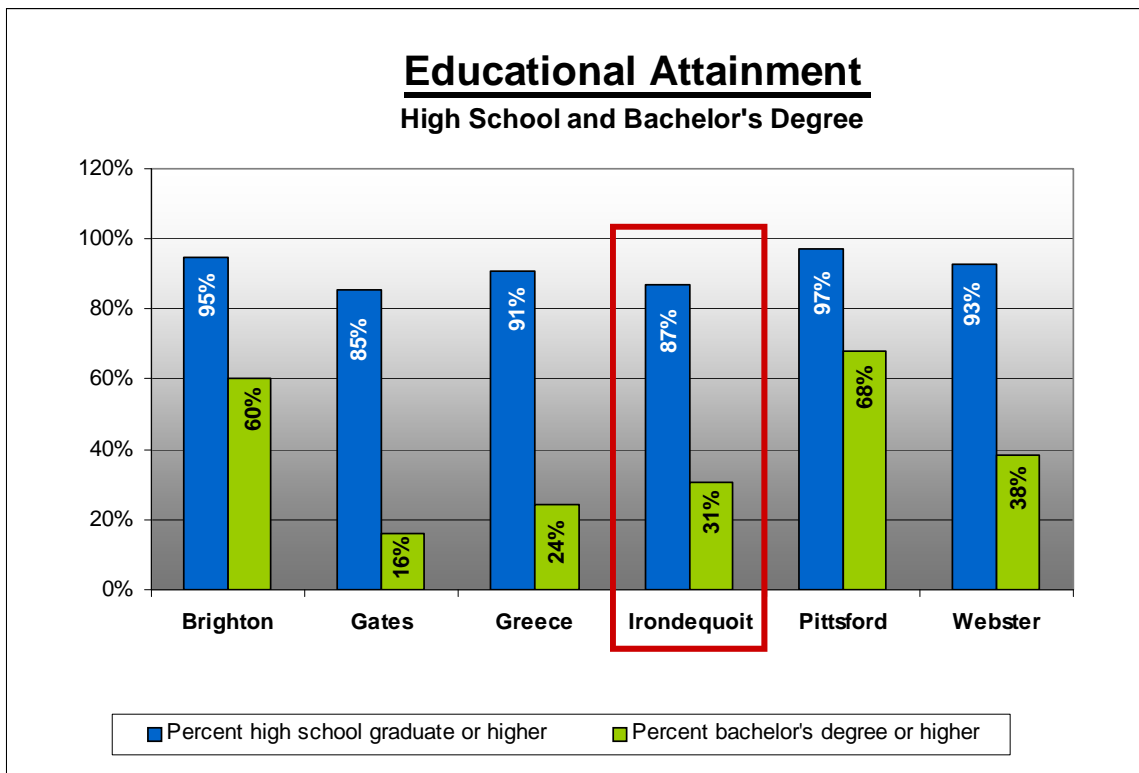


Figure 2.8—Source: US Census, 2005-2007 Estimates

Feeling the Effects of Economic Transition

Understanding a community’s income characteristics is an important indicator for determining a community’s economic well-being. One of these key indicators is median household income. Figure 2.9 shows how Irondequoit measures up to comparison communities in Monroe County.

Based on 2000 Census figures, Irondequoit had the lowest median household income, \$45,276. However, when the incomes for 1990 and 2000 were compared and adjusted for constant dollars, it was determined that the median income decreased across all of the communities. Irondequoit’s median income, although slightly lower, is not significantly dissimilar compared to Gates, Greece or Brighton.

Pittsford and Webster, as “mid-ring” suburbs that have more opportunities for new development on vacant land, are obviously much different than the older suburbs above.

The largest percentage of Irondequoit’s population fell into the \$25,000 to \$49,000 income range. The same was true for Brighton, Gates, and Greece. The largest percentage of Pittsford’s residents earned \$100,000 or more (40.3%) and Webster’s highest concentration was in the \$75,000-\$99,999 income range.

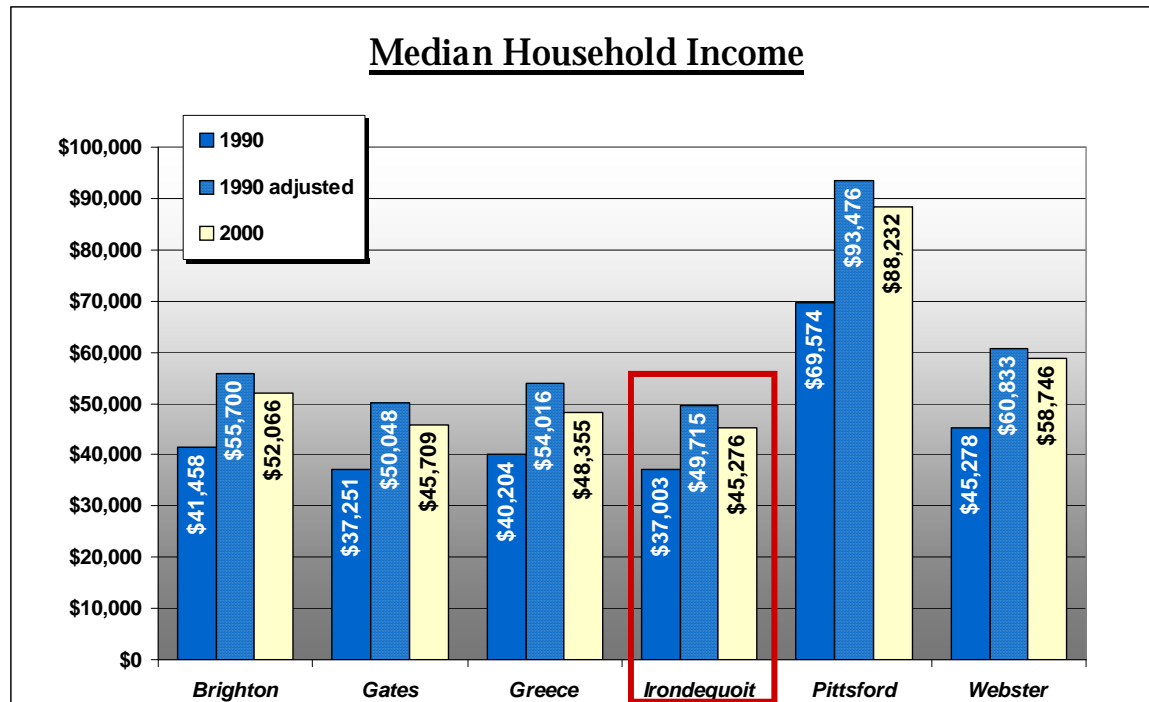


Figure 2.9—Source: US Census

Across all communities, Irondequoit had the largest percentage of its population in the under \$25,000 category (21.2%) Gates was a close second with 20.5%. Pittsford had the fewest households in this category (8.7%).

Irondequoit had a smaller percentage of residents in the \$100,000 or more category (9.2%) compared to every town except for Gates (7.3%). Pittsford had the highest percentage in this category (40.3%).

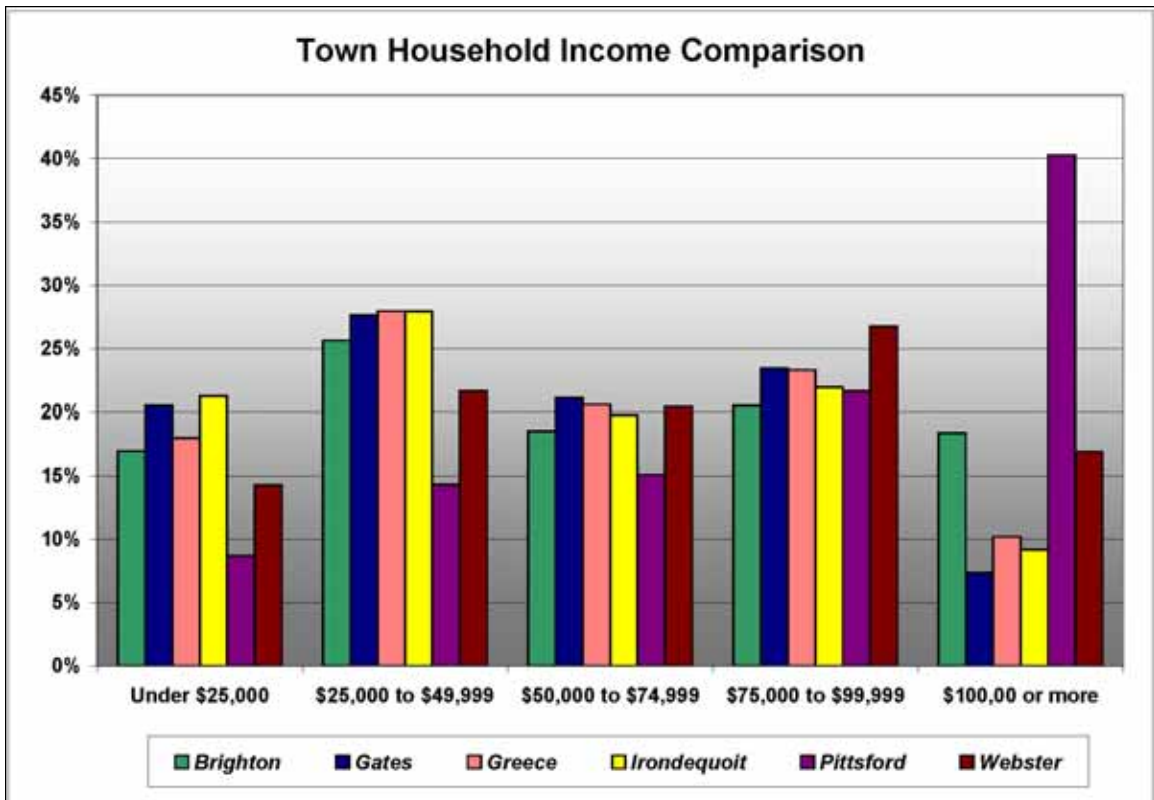


Figure 2.10—Source: US Census

Examining the income types of a community can also help us understand its well-being. Figure 2.11 shows the source of income for Irondequoit’s residents. About 21 percent of the town’s household’s report no income from employment or self-employment, the highest percentage of all the comparison communities. Irondequoit also has the highest level of households reporting Social Security and retirement incomes, as well as a small, but meaningful, percentage of households receiving public assistance. These types of income, of course, are relatively fixed and represent a significant population that is particularly sensitive to downward shifts in the economy and property tax increases. Individuals and families on fixed incomes also depend heavily on public services, such as recreation and senior programs, because they can’t afford alternatives.

Income Type Received by Household (2000)												
	Brighton		Gates		Greece		Irondequoit		Pittsford		Webster	
	Count	% total	Count	% total	Count	% total	Count	% total	Count	% total	Count	% total
Wage & Salary	11,874	74.9%	8,786	74.8%	27,937	75.5%	15,490	69.5%	7,219	76.4%	11,811	80.0%
Self-employment	2,043	12.9%	866	7.4%	3,061	8.3%	2,170	9.7%	1,691	17.9%	1,595	10.8%
Social Security	4,464	28.2%	4,095	34.8%	11,105	30.0%	8,327	37.4%	2,780	29.4%	3,830	25.9%
Public Assistance	153	1.0%	285	2.4%	697	1.9%	382	1.7%	55	0.6%	236	1.6%
Retirement Income	2,966	18.7%	3,118	26.5%	9,638	26.1%	5,893	26.5%	2,137	22.6%	2,954	20.0%
Total Households	15,856		11,752		36,985		22,276		9,446		14,766	

Figure 2.11—Source: US Census

Changing Housing Setting

One foundation of this plan is to recognize the value of Irondequoit’s neighborhoods as a primary building block for a prosperous future. These neighborhoods consist of households. Understanding the occupancy and ownership rates of these households is one measure for assessing the stability of communities and neighborhoods.

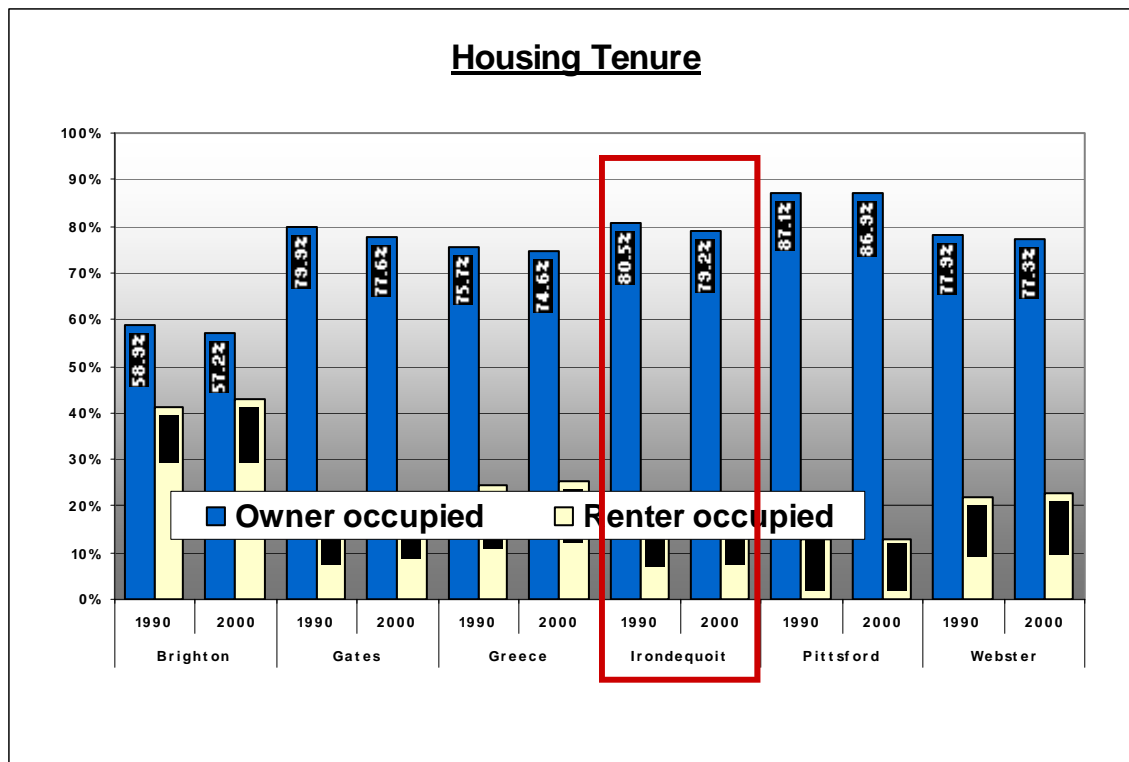


Figure 2.12—Source: US Census

Although research has not defined a definitive percentage of homeownership for a stable community, state and national trends indicate that roughly 50 percent homeownership is the minimum necessary to avoid falling or stagnating property values, diminished neighborhood appearance, and increasing code violations. Historical Census data shows that since the 1940s, homeownership rates in the United States have been steadily rising. In 2000, over 66 percent of American households were owner-occupied.

The stability of neighborhoods and residential areas is often tied to housing tenure. If a downward shift in homeownership is accompanied by diminished neighborhood appearance, lower or stagnant property values, or increased code violations, then the increase in rental properties are often blamed. Code violations in Irondequoit are evenly split among owner- and renter-occupied housing, which suggests rentals are not adversely affecting neighborhoods stability. Anecdotal comments from Town staff indicate many code violations occur as older home owners find it more difficult to maintain their properties.

In 2000, Irondequoit had the second highest percentage of owner-occupied housing units (79.2%). Pittsford had the highest, with 86.9%. Brighton had the lowest with 57.2% of residential units being classified as owner-occupied. Except for Brighton, all of the towns exceeded the national owner occupancy rate (66.2%).

Irondequoit's percentage of owner-occupied housing decreased less than 1% from 1990, which was consistent with the other towns.

ECONOMIC, RETAIL, AND REAL ESTATE ANALYSIS

A clear understanding of recent trends and existing conditions is a prerequisite for sound planning. To be realistic, recommendations for the future must consider demographic, economic, retail, and real estate conditions.

Population change is the most important element within a local or regional economy, driving the demand for housing and consumer spending. Employment generates income, which in turn creates demand for household purchases. These factors cumulatively determine the quantity and location of development within a given community.

Economic Indicators

From 2000 to 2006, Irondequoit lost nearly 100 businesses and 400 to 500 jobs. The decrease in businesses represented an 8% decline in the total number of businesses located within the town. During the same period, Monroe County experienced a 1.5% increase in the number of businesses. Despite the overall loss of business in Irondequoit, three business sectors increased including real estate, professional/technical services, and educational services.



Local retail business located on Cooper Road

The average weekly wage in Irondequoit, across all industries, was \$645 in 2006.

This was less than that for either Monroe County or New York State. However, the 27% growth exhibited in Irondequoit’s average wage since 2000 was well above the county and state rate of growth, and well above the inflation rate (17%).



National chain store on East Ridge Road

Approximately 45% of Irondequoit workers commute to Rochester, while 18% both live and work in Irondequoit.

Retail Business

In recent years Irondequoit has witnessed a decline in retail business activity. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of retail establishments in the town dropped from 294 to 258 or a decrease of approximately 12%. The loss of retailers corresponded to a decline in the total sales within the town as well as a decline in the average sales per store type.

Much of the decline in sales may be attributed to the loss of several auto dealerships. When auto sales are excluded, the data indicates the town experienced 4% growth in retail sales in all other categories. The estimated 4% growth (exclusive of auto) in Irondequoit lags behind both the 14% growth occurring in Monroe County and the 12% growth in the Rochester metro area. Another factor contributing to the loss of stores and sales during this period was the demise of the Irondequoit Mall (now Medley Center). By 2003 the mall was 80% vacant.

In 2008, the estimated consumer spending demand of Irondequoit households was approximately \$596 million, or \$27,000 per household. Much of this demand is not captured by local retailers, including spending demand for electronics, bookstores, clothing stores, and restaurants. The void in Irondequoit's current retail offerings suggests an opportunity for future growth. A repositioning of the existing stores in Irondequoit or the introduction of new retailing options could recapture some of these "lost" sales.

There is an estimated 21.7 million square feet (SF) of shopping center space in the greater Rochester market, with approximately 2.5 million SF (11.5%) located in Irondequoit. Irondequoit's inventory of shopping center space includes the largely vacant Medley Centre Mall on East Ridge Road. The new owners of the Medley Centre have proposed an aggressive redevelopment of the property. Medley Centre is to undergo a \$250 million redesign to a mixed-use project to include retail, housing, restaurants, a multi-plex movie theater, and a thirty-five-story hotel.

Housing

The Town of Irondequoit is primarily a residential community and is largely built-out. Over the last five years (2003 to 2007), there has been an annual average of 17 building permits for single-family residential development, representing 1% of the activity in Monroe County. The average value of the residential permits activity in Irondequoit is less than \$110,000 and represents about 59% of the average value in Monroe County, indicating that housing is comparatively affordable in Irondequoit.

Local real estate professionals identify Irondequoit as a very affordable market. The town is a reasonably active residential market as retirees sell their homes to new families and first-time homebuyers. One professional offered that 30% of Irondequoit's residential real estate market is comprised of retirees, many of whom wish to downsize and remain in town, but are unable to find a suitable residential product.

Office Market

The Rochester metropolitan area contains approximately 15.9 million SF of office space with approximately 9.1 million SF of the total located in downtown Rochester. It is estimated a total of 721,500 SF of office space is located in the town of Irondequoit, which represents 4.5% of the metropolitan area total. Between 10% and 15% of Irondequoit's office space is vacant compared with 15.6% downtown office in Monroe County. Much of Irondequoit's office space is located in smaller office buildings constructed during the 1960s and 1970s and former retail space converted to office use.

There is slightly more than 1.4 million SF of office space available in downtown Rochester and another 680,000 SF under development. Over the last twenty years, development of large scale suburban office parks has weakened the demand for downtown office space. The development of new office space particularly in Henrietta, Brighton, Perinton, Pittsford, and Webster has also competed with smaller older office facilities such as those found within Irondequoit.

Local real estate professionals, as well as representatives of Rochester General Hospital, indicate a demand for modern medical office space in Irondequoit.

Tax Base Analysis

The town of Irondequoit contains 21,200 parcels of land, which cover 7,985 acres. The largest area is occupied by residential (65%) followed by vacant land (12%) and commercial land (9%). The East Ridge Road commercial corridor comprises 783 acres and accounts for 9.8% of the town's land area. Irondequoit's waterfront districts occupy 254 acres and account for 3.2% of the town's land area.

The 2008 assessed value of all property in Irondequoit is \$3 billion, of which \$2.5 billion is taxable. Approximately 84% of the taxable value in Irondequoit is derived from residential properties. The majority (62%) of the town's commercial taxable properties are located within the East Ridge Road corridor. The total assessed value of properties in the corridor amounts to \$320.4 million or 13% of the town's taxable value.

The average assessed value for all property types in Irondequoit is approximately \$79/SF. Residential properties average \$77/SF while commercial properties average \$73/SF. The lower value of commercial properties compared with residential may

reflect Irondequoit’s inventory of older commercial retail space that has not been updated. Commercial properties in the East Ridge Road corridor have an average value of \$70/SF, suggesting that the town’s primary commercial corridor has a combination of lower valued, older, and under-improved properties.

Approximately one-half of Irondequoit’s operating budget, is derived from property taxes and nearly 84% of this is received from residential property owners. The remaining revenue comes from other sources including sales tax receipts. If other revenue sources, such as sales tax receipts or state funding are reduced, the additional tax burden will fall primarily on residential property owners.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

The Comprehensive Plan will recommend policies and projects to ensure Irondequoit’s prosperity in future decades. These recommendations must take into consideration the Town’s and taxpayers’ ability to pay. This fiscal impact analysis is intended to be one of several tools policy makers can use to evaluate future initiatives. Using this analysis should allow policy makers to have a general sense of how Irondequoit might be better prepared when developing a marketing strategy for the community. This combined with such other decision criteria such as quality of life, conservation values, existing infrastructure, community character, and others, should help provide a framework for Irondequoit’s future.

Tax Rates

The Town of Irondequoit has a higher equalized property tax per \$1000 of taxable value than any of the other comparison communities, with both the highest town and school district tax rates.

	2007 Town Tax Comparison					
	Brighton	Gates	Greece	Irondequoit	Pittsford	Webster
Equalization Rates	100%	100%	100%	88%	100%	91%
Town & County Tax	\$15.65	\$14.72	\$14.27	\$16.04	\$10.84	\$18.80
Primary School District	\$23.62	\$23.63	\$22.36	\$25.92 (East)	\$23.07	\$22.55
				\$24.61 (West)		

Figure 2.13—Source: Tax Assessor’s Departments of the Towns of Brighton, Gates, Greece, Irondequoit, Pittsford and Webster; Monroe County Finance Department.

The reason for this emerges in Figure 2.14. Irondequoit has the lowest taxable full values as a ratio of population . This is an indication that property values in Irondequoit have appreciated at a lower rate in recent years than in the comparison communities – a sign of unmet market demands.

2007 Taxable Value Ratio						
	Brighton	Gates	Greece	Irondequoit	Pittsford	Webster
Total Taxable Value	\$3,352,355,587	\$1,441,880,229	\$4,667,261,018	\$2,481,543,819	\$2,566,970,735	\$2,374,812,916
2007 Population Taxable	34,357	28,464	93,020	50,021	28,278	41,290
Value/Population	\$97,574	\$50,656	\$50,175	\$49,610	\$90,776	\$57,515

Figure 2.14—Source: Monroe County, <http://www.monroecounty.gov/property-taxrates.php>

School District Finances

A look at the school district finances (Figure 2.15) indicates that Irondequoit’s school districts’ spending is similar to the comparison communities. The total expenditure per pupil in the town of Irondequoit is in line with the comparison communities. This suggests that the lower assessed value of commercial and residential property is the primary reason behind the town’s comparatively higher tax rate.

2007 School District Finances			
	Number of Pupils	Total Expenditures	Total Expenditures Per Enrolled Pupils
Brighton CSD	3,542	\$59,698,470	\$16,854
Gates-Chili CSD	5,025	\$100,957,048	\$20,091
Greece CSD	13,004	\$209,605,541	\$16,119
East Irondequoit CSD	3,456	\$67,693,938	\$19,587
West Irondequoit CSD	3,955	\$57,837,313	\$14,624
Pittsford CSD	5,989	\$112,242,200	\$18,741
Webster CSD	8,844	\$129,477,186	\$14,640

Figure 2.15—Source: NYS Comptroller, 2007 Financial Data for School Districts, http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/datanstat/findata/index_choice.htm

Local Finances

The average town government expenditure per capita in the comparison communities is \$626. Figure 2.16 illustrates that the Town of Irondequoit’s spending is only slightly above average.

	2007 Local Finances					
	Brighton	Gates	Greece	Irondequoit	Pittsford	Webster
2007 Population	35,588	94,141	29,275	52,354	27,219	37,926
2007 Total Expenditures	\$26,730,833	\$54,661,806	\$14,250,672	\$34,912,079	\$16,046,417	\$25,705,798
Expenditures Per Capita	\$751	\$581	\$487	\$667	\$590	\$678

Figure 2.16—Source: NYS Comptroller, 2007 Financial Data for Towns, http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/datanstat/findata/index_choice.htm

Even though tax rates are relatively high, a homeowner in Irondequoit still pays less in property taxes than the average homeowner in the comparison towns because the cost of homes is among the lowest of the municipalities surveyed.

However, when we take into account the fact that Irondequoit has the lowest median household income of all areas under comparison, the advantage in affordability seems to vanish completely. As Figure 2.17 shows, the typical homeowner in Irondequoit spends a little over 8 percent of household income on property taxes, which is around average when compared to other communities.

Tax Cost of Homeownership							
	Brighton	Gates	Greece	Irondequoit		Pittsford	Webster
				EICSD	WICSD		
Median Home Value	\$155,000	\$103,200	\$118,000	\$104,800	\$104,800	\$232,000	\$158,900
Town Tax Rate	6.065171	6.861965	6.370005	7.182474	7.182474	2.785022	4.325339
Town Tax/\$1000	\$940	\$708	\$752	\$753	\$753	\$646	\$687
School Tax Rate	23.620479	23.63041	22.360922	25.927298	24.606602	23.068695	22.54893
School Tax/\$1000	\$3,661	\$2,439	\$2,639	\$2,717	\$2,579	\$5,352	\$3,583
County Tax Rate	8.963592	7.071191	7.075958	7.952274	7.952274	7.680788	8.086864
County Tax/\$1000	\$1,389	\$730	\$835	\$833	\$833	\$1,782	\$1,285
County Services Tax Rate	0.62601	0.78661	0.827113	0.903844	0.903844	0.387933	0.639954
County Services	\$97	\$81	\$98	\$95	\$95	\$90	\$102
Total Tax Burden	10.4%	7.6%	8.1%	8.7%	8.5%	8.3%	8.7%
2007 Median HH Income	\$58,439	\$51,869	\$53,341	\$50,264	\$50,264	\$94,344	\$64,819

Figure 2.17—Source: Tax Assessor’s Departments of the Towns of Brighton, Gates, Greece, Irondequoit, Pittsford and Webster; U.S. Census Bureau.

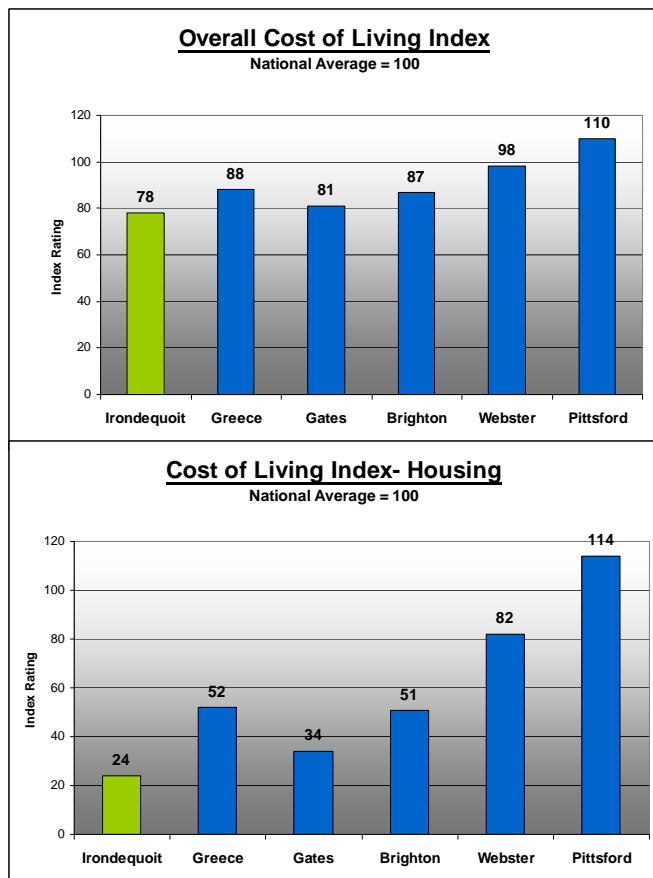


Figure 2.18—Source: Sperling’s Best Places, www.bestplaces.net

Cost of Living

In recent years, the Rochester region’s sluggish economy has produced the benefit of a lower cost of living and more affordable housing than is found in much of the country. According to Sperling’s Best Places, five of the six local towns surveyed have an overall cost of living lower than the national average (index rating of 100). Irondequoit, with an index rating of 80, is the lowest of the group while Pittsford is the highest.

More variation between the towns is revealed in the comparison of housing costs. Irondequoit’s index of 25 falls significantly below the national average index of 100. The other three inner-ring suburbs fall above Irondequoit but significantly below the national average. With larger inventories of newer and larger homes, housing is more expensive in Webster and Pittsford, although only Pittsford has costs above the national average.

Summary

Tax rates in Irondequoit are comparatively on the higher side, and the community is relatively less wealthy than the comparative communities. A significant reason for this appears to be a lower tax base. A lesser reason for high tax rates may be attributed to local finances. While it may seem beneficial for Irondequoit to streamline its expenses and, if at all possible, avoid raising taxes, in the long run, fiscal health will depend on the Town’s ability to revitalize the tax base and attract investment. Equally important, the Town needs to focus on fostering and maintaining the perception that it is a friendly, safe, economical place to live and do business in.

PRESERVING NEIGHBORHOODS

The Town of Irondequoit is divided into 13 census tracts. According to the US Census Bureau, census tracts are areas with generally uniform social and economic characteristics and identifiable boundaries. While significant variations in housing type and income may exist within individual census tracts, an examination of census tract data can provide a useful, if general, overview of neighborhood conditions.

The percentage of owner-occupied housing can be an indicator of neighborhood economic health and stability. In Irondequoit, the concentration of apartment complexes within some census tracts, and the absence of multi-family housing in other areas is evident in the census tract comparison of owner-occupied housing (Figure 2.20).

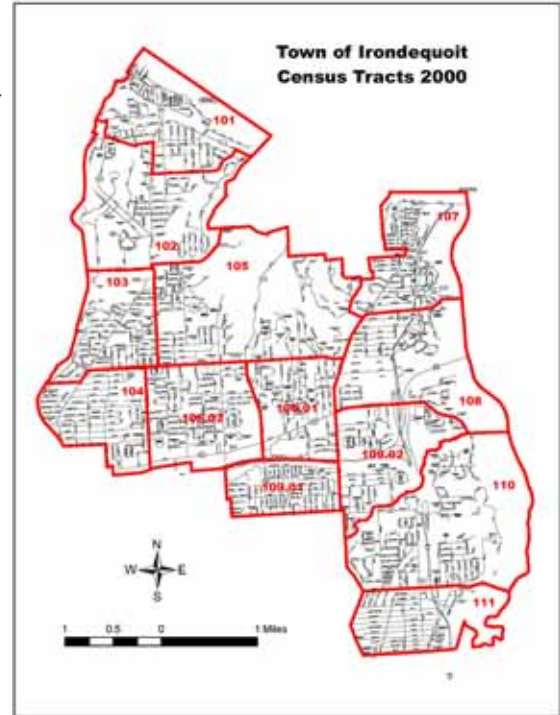


Figure 2.19—Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Generally, the census tracts with the highest percentage of rentals are located in the south portion of town. These tracts contain most of Irondequoit’s large apartment complexes. Variations in income generally correspond with owner occupied housing patterns.

The census tract figures for median household income generally correspond to percentage of owner-occupied housing. The census tracts having Irondequoit’s highest incomes include recent construction overlooking the bay, large-lot neighborhoods surrounding Durand Eastman Park, lakefront homes, and well established older neighborhoods.

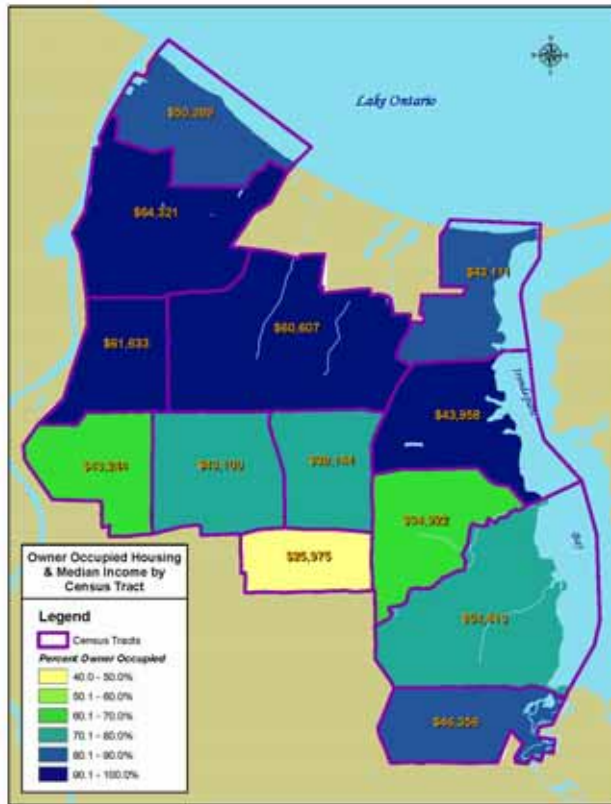


Figure 2.20—Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

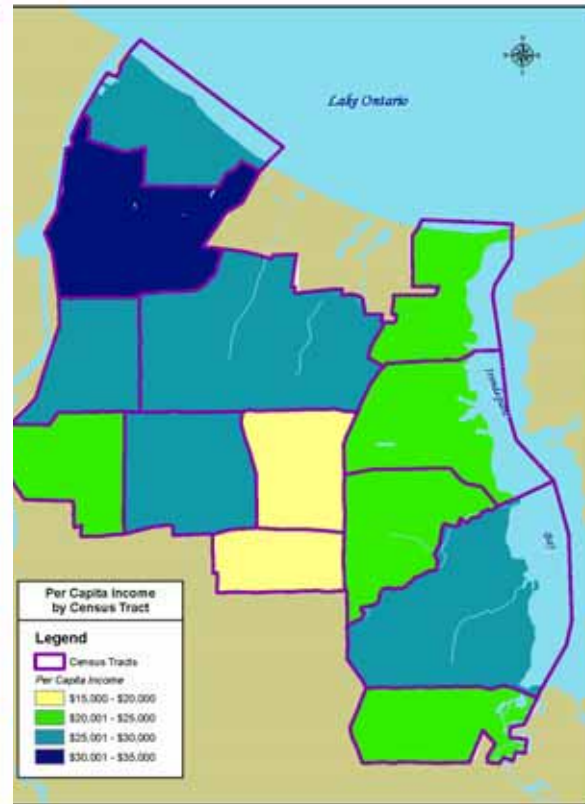


Figure 2.21—Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

2000 Census Tract Comparisons									
Census Tract	Population Per Tract	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	Median Age	Percent Owner-Occupied			Average Household Size	
					Owner	Total	%		
101.00	3,886	\$50,389	\$27,076	42.0	1,465	1,683	87.0%	2.31	
102.00	3,870	\$64,321	\$30,794	44.9	1,471	1,501	98.0%	2.56	
103.00	3,902	\$61,633	\$25,411	39.6	1,477	1,537	96.1%	2.53	
104.00	5,118	\$43,244	\$22,172	40.6	1,527	2,207	69.2%	2.31	
105.00	4,448	\$60,607	\$29,090	42.9	1,684	1,730	97.3%	2.57	
106.01	2,638	\$38,144	\$19,483	46.1	880	1,194	73.7%	2.20	
106.02	3,709	\$43,100	\$25,849	49.1	1,199	1,683	71.2%	2.20	
107.00	3,625	\$43,111	\$20,822	38.7	1,328	1,527	87.0%	2.37	
108.00	3,193	\$43,958	\$21,316	41.5	1,288	1,346	95.7%	2.37	
109.01	5,212	\$25,975	\$16,657	50.7	995	2,253	44.2%	2.01	
109.02	3,155	\$34,922	\$22,189	46.1	967	1,520	63.6%	2.07	
110.00	5,220	\$54,413	\$25,122	41.9	1,703	2,211	77.0%	2.36	
111.00	4,431	\$46,356	\$20,192	37.7	1,665	1,872	88.9%	2.35	

Figure 2.22—Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Census tract 109.01 has the lowest percentage of owner occupied housing and lowest median family income in Irondequoit. The neighborhood abuts the city of Rochester and is physically separated from residential areas to the north by the Route 104 expressway and the East Ridge Road commercial district. In addition to apartment complexes, the area contains a significant amount of rental senior citizen housing. With a median age of 50.7, the census tract has the oldest median age found within the town.

During public and focus group meetings, residents debated an “east-west” divide in Irondequoit, a perception that one side of the town is more desirable than the other. As the data show, there is no statistically meaningful difference in terms of socio-economic data between the eastern and western halves of Irondequoit. The only objectively discernable factor that could realistically fuel perceptions of “two” Irondequoit’s is the existence of two school districts.

Public Safety

Public safety can have a major impact on a community’s quality of life and ability to attract and retain residents and businesses. In 2007, Irondequoit’s rates of both violent and property crime were slightly higher than those of the comparison communities. However, Irondequoit’s crime rates are trending downward significantly faster than in the other towns.

Crime Rates Per 100,000						
	1997		2007			
	Violent Crime	Property Crime	Violent Crime	Percent Change 97-07	Property Crime	Percent Change 97-07
Brighton	115.1	3436.9	81.5	-29.2	2822.2	-17.9
Gates	163	3888.7	197.2	21	3754	-3.5
Greece	89.1	3328.3	131	47	2305.6	-30.7
Irondequoit	181.7	4919.6	149.7	-37.4	3139.3	-56.5
Webster	34.8	2248.1	48.2	48.4	1451.6	-35.4

Figure 2.23—Source: USDOJ Bureau of Justice Statistics, FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports <http://bjsdata.ojp.usdoj.gov/dataonline/Search/Crime/Local/LocalCrime.cfm>
 Pittsford is not included in this FBI database, which includes only jurisdictions with their own police force.

CONCLUSIONS: OUR TOWN, OUR VISION, OUR FUTURE

Like many inner-ring suburbs, over the last decade, Irondequoit has felt the effects of national and regional trends, including population shifts and economic changes. Fortunately, because the town possesses a well-educated population; appealing, stable, and affordable neighborhoods; and unmatched environmental assets, younger new families and long-time residents still find it an appealing community to call home.

To ensure Irondequoit remains competitive, community leaders must work today to create a climate that is even more appealing to people and business. This means renewing the town’s image in the region, revitalizing Irondequoit’s few challenged neighborhoods (and protecting the majority that are strong), protecting natural features, exploiting the town’s recreational opportunities, and increasing the tax base through thoughtful commercial and waterfront development.

To be successful, Irondequoit leadership and residents alike must be willing to commit to a common direction, take simple coordinated steps to get reinvestment, and attract new partners. Finally, and most importantly, the community must be prepared to maintain a long-term commitment to re-establishing itself.