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ECONOMIC TRENDS ANALYSIS

Town of Agawam, MA

December 2019

*Prepared for the Town of Agawam, Massachusetts by the
Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management
at the University of Massachusetts, Boston*

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INTRODUCTION

Agawam and Project Context

Traditionally an agricultural community in the lower Connecticut River valley region of Massachusetts, Agawam today is a moderately developed, residential suburban community with a respectable economic base. It has a population of 28,838. While overall its population grew by 86% since 1960, most of this rapid growth occurred between 1960 and 2000. Since the year 2000, its population has stabilized and shown much more modest rates of growth.

The municipal charter specifies that Agawam shall be known as the Town of Agawam. Agawam, however, is governed under a Mayor/Council form of government, which is a city form of government in Massachusetts. The mayor is elected to a two-year term of office and is the chief executive officer. There is an 11-member city council, which serves as the legislative branch of the town. Each member is elected to a 2-year term.

Agawam is in the southernmost end of the Connecticut River Valley in Massachusetts (sometimes referred to as the Pioneer Valley) and lies directly on the state border with Connecticut. It is situated within 4 miles of Springfield, MA and within 25 miles of Hartford, CT. The City of Springfield itself has a population of 154,758, making it the third largest city in Massachusetts. Hartford has a population of 123,400. The combined population of Hampden County in Massachusetts (in which Agawam and Springfield are situated) and Hartford County in Connecticut, was 1,312,206 as of 2017. Therefore, Agawam, by virtue of its location immediately west of Interstate 91, running north/south along the Connecticut River through each of these counties, is well connected to the sizeable population and economic base of western Massachusetts and northern Connecticut. This connectivity of the region largely explains the growth of Agawam as a residential bedroom community providing workforce and consumer demand within the region.

The high levels of residential growth in Agawam stimulated by the construction of I-91 were fortunately balanced by the development of a substantial commercial and industrial economic base during the same time period. The resulting balance of residential and nonresidential tax base has supported a much-appreciated quality of life among residents, while providing financial resources to support a wide range municipal services and local schools serving residents.

In this context, the report that follows discusses the current state of Agawam's population, demographics, economic activities, and other data which describe the community. From there it reveals some of underlying trends that have recently shaped Agawam's present condition and outlines how those trends may continue to shape Agawam's future. The project team hopes that the report will help to inform town officials, residents, and community stakeholders, and will increase their understanding of forces acting on Agawam and how they will continue to shape the community in the future.

Agawam in Comparison with Comparable Communities

To provide further context for Agawam's current status, this report discusses demographic and economic trends in a set of comparison communities. These comparison communities are like Agawam in terms of factors such as population, land area, labor force, tax valuations, and fiscal characteristics. The

populations of the five communities are within a few thousand of Agawam's, although population densities do vary widely.

Comparison of Agawam and Comparable Communities						
Factor	Agawam	Northampton	Milford	West Springfield	North Attleboro	Randolph
2015 Population	28,839	28,540	28,614	28,693	29,071	33,699
Land Area (Sq. Miles)	23.31	34.24	14.75	16.71	18.87	10.10
Population per Sq. Mile	1,237	834	1,940	1,717	1,541	3,337
2016 Labor Force	15,905	16,052	15,333	14,558	15,869	17,643
2016 Unemployment Rate	2.90%	2.00%	2.80%	3.20%	2.60%	3.20%
2015 Per Capita Income	28,198	34,875	32,906	26,402	38,987	26,849
2009 Housing Units/Sq. Mile	520.76	371.73	773.69	759.84	614.52	1,221.57
2013 Road Miles	151.9	178.9	123.0	143.7	132.0	117.4
EQV Per Capita	102,655	123,495.0	112,511.0	93,735.0	132,299.0	93,707.0
Resident'l Valuat'n (Billions)	\$2.2090	\$2.7180	\$2.5840	\$1.9380	\$3.1140	\$2.9890
CIP Tax Valuation (Billions)	\$0.7310	\$0.6700	\$0.7020	\$0.8630	\$0.6670	\$0.4200
Total Tax Valuation (Billions)	\$2.9400	\$3.3880	\$3.2860	\$2.8010	\$3.7810	\$3.4090
Per Cent CIP	24.9%	19.8%	21.4%	30.8%	17.6%	12.3%
2018 Residential Tax Rate	\$16.61	\$17.04	\$16.56	\$17.05	\$13.34	\$14.14
2018 CIP Tax Rate	\$31.47	\$17.04	\$31.06	\$32.90	\$13.37	\$14.14
Avg Single Family Tax Bill	\$3,740.00	\$5,240.00	\$5,055.00	\$3,941.00	\$4,917.00	\$4,847.00
General Fund Rev. per Cap	\$3,033.60	\$3,077.10	\$3,347.00	\$3,389.60	\$2,765.60	\$2,690.20
General Fund Exp. per Cap	\$3,006.80	\$3,075.50	\$3,306.30	\$2,954.70	\$2,781.50	\$2,723.40

(Source: MA DOR Communities at a Glance Reports)

These comparison communities were also chosen to represent different parts of the Commonwealth, including two nearby communities in the Connecticut River Valley, a border community near Rhode Island, an inner beltway Boston suburb, and an I-495 outer beltway community.

Data Sources and Methodology

Data for this report came largely from the U.S. Census Bureau, including the decennial census and the 5-year average American Community Survey (ACS). The Census Bureau provides demographic data that are extremely rich in detail. However, limitations must be acknowledged and considered when viewing results. Some data come directly from the 2010 Decennial Census. This is the latest version of the Decennial Census currently available and will be updated following the 2020 Decennial Census, which is about to begin. Therefore, current conditions may differ somewhat from those recorded at the turn of the decade.

Additional data come from estimates published by the Census Bureau as part of the American Community Survey. To achieve an appropriate level of geographic detail, this report uses results obtained by the Census Department through surveys over a rolling 5-year period, in the case of this report the average annual ACS data are from the years 2012-2016. Because the data are collected by survey, it is considered

as ‘estimated’ and is generally thought of as having a margin of error of around 3-5%. It is also not directly comparable to Decennial Census data. In addition, both the decennial census and the survey are sometimes prone to undercounting specific groups of persons, especially low-income persons, young adults, non-English speakers, recent immigrants, and persons “doubled up” in housing units.

Another key source of data was the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, which provides information on municipal-level trends in businesses, employment, and wages by industry. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue’s “Municipal Databank” was used relative to municipal tax levy and finances.

Some Census Bureau data collected and analyzed for this report is presented geographically, to demonstrate how conditions can vary across Agawam by location. The Census Bureau collects this data at the individual and/or household level but aggregates the data to larger geographic units before publication. The most detailed data are generally published by ‘Block Group’. Agawam has 15 such census block groups. This report contains several maps that present data within block group boundaries.

The project team reviewed a variety of earlier economic development and housing plans and zoning reform efforts to aid in interpreting data and validating key findings in this report. Those reports are referenced in the section entitled *Related Studies and Reports*.

Lastly, the project team interviewed several informed individuals familiar with the economic trends, opportunities, and challenges in Agawam. The project team would like to acknowledge the assistance and support of the following:

- Marc Strange, Director of Planning and Development, Town of Agawam
- Timothy Brennan, Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Richard Sullivan, President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts
- Anne Burke, Vice President, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts
- Dr. John Cook, President, Springfield Technical Community College
- Kristin Peterson, Agawam resident and President of Peerless Precision Company a precision machining manufacturer located in Westfield
- Technical Review and Permitting Staff for the Town of Agawam

KEY FINDINGS

This Economic Trends Report was prepared by the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management at UMass Boston to establish a solid foundation of data from which to inform future policy decisions. Key findings of the report include the following:

1. Following a period of rapid growth in much of the second half of the twentieth century, Agawam's residential population stabilized since the 1990s. Today, it is characterized by a median age that is higher than that of the surrounding region and of Massachusetts. The share of population over 60 is projected to grow significantly by 2030, which is likely to further increase the median age. The data are inconclusive as to whether Agawam will retain a younger segment of the population of what might be considered prime working age. The data does indicate that Agawam does better in attracting older working age residents in the 45 to 65 age group.
2. The portion of Agawam's population that identifies as either Hispanic, Non-Hispanic Black, or Non-Hispanic Asian is 12%, compared to the statewide average of 27%. The population remains largely white, with a small but measurable increase in diversity within in the past 20 years. Eighty-six percent of residents five years of age or older report that they speak only English at home, while 14% of the population report that they speak a language other English in the home. Of this group, however, 10% report that they also speak English 'very well'.
3. Agawam does well both in terms of educational attainment and graduation rates. Residents with a high school diploma or equivalent earn a median income that is higher than the state median income. Residents with a bachelor's degrees and graduate degrees lag behind the state median income. The level of educational attainment of Agawam's residents ages 25 and older, relative to comparable communities and to Massachusetts, can be summarized as follows:
 - Larger percentages of residents have a minimum of a high school diploma and perhaps some college or Associates Degree – a combined 63.3% compared to 48.8% statewide.
 - Smaller percentages of residents have attained a bachelor's degree or graduate degree – 28.8% compared with 41.3% statewide.

7.9% of Agawam's residents lack a high school diploma, which is slightly below the statewide level of 9.9%. Agawam's educational attainment profile largely mirrors that of West Springfield, except that in the case of West Springfield, 11.4% of residents lack a high school diploma.
4. Most of Agawam's households are composed of married couples and homeowners. The Housing Production Plan notes that 38% of households, however, are individuals constituting nonfamily households.
5. Agawam enjoys a favorable level of Median Household Income, on par with neighboring Northampton and West Springfield but less than the statewide median. 40% of the population earns less than \$50,000 per year while 32% earns between \$50,000 and \$100,000. The remaining 28% earns more than \$100,000 per year. The 2017 Housing Production Plan indicates that recent gains income appears to be among households reporting more than \$100,000 per year and

relatively flat income growth for households reporting less than \$50,000. 9.3% of Agawam residents live below the income poverty line established by the federal government.

6. Just over half of all Agawam residents were employed in five industry sectors during the period from 2012-2016: Health Care and Social Assistance (15.2%); Retail Trade (13.2%); Educational Services (11.2%); Manufacturing (10.2%) and Finance/Insurance (6.5%). Three of these five sectors – Health and Social Assistance, Educational Services, and Manufacturing – have been listed as growth areas for the regional economy by the Regional (Workforce) Employment Board.
7. Based on the number of business establishments operating in Agawam between 2001 and 2017, Agawam has a stable business economy that has remained consistent over time, including the recession 2008 to 2012. In terms of the distribution of establishments, Agawam has a demonstrated strength in retaining establishments in the Manufacturing sector, a sector projected to grow in Agawam by 11.4% by 2026.
8. There is a healthy non-residential tax base, as Agawam has been deliberate in its efforts to shift the tax burden away from residents. Agawam's financial position trends toward increasing levels of Free Cash and Stabilization Fund balances, which is indicative of a well-managed operating budget. While Agawam has chosen to shift its tax burden away from residential taxpayers and towards commercial, industrial, and personal (CIP) property taxpayers, this does not appear to undermine its ability to maintain a healthy industrial sector. Shifting this burden to the maximum, however, does create exposure to unexpected increases in residential tax bills during an economic downturn that reduces CIP tax values.
9. An Interdepartmental Technical Review and Permitting team is in place. Individual participants express support for the approach and comment that there has been an overall benefit to their departmental operations in terms of information sharing and decision-making. There is a lack of strategic understanding of the value of expediting permitting and decision making in and of itself and proactive support and problem solving for the local business community.
10. Agawam has identified Mixed Use Development as a land use tool which might lead to the redevelopment of several vacant or underperforming development sites in the community. The Town has amended its Zoning By-laws to codify this particular land use development tool but faces challenges in terms of the aggregation of key parcels held in separate ownership and external market conditions.

HISTORY OF AGAWAM¹

Agawam was originally settled by William Pynchon as Agawam Plantation in 1635 and was originally included as part of the colonial Springfield grant. As an early part of the exercise of that broader grant, Agawam became the first colonial settlement in the Pioneer Valley. Farmsteads were established along the Connecticut River meadows and later at Feeding Hills, and by the mid-1600s a strong agricultural economy was establishing itself and would continue to expand throughout the Colonial Period of 1635-1775.

Agawam was subsequently included within the West Springfield parish in 1696. The Feeding Hills parish, established in 1760, was likewise included as part of the newly incorporated Town of West Springfield in 1774 and later formed to become part of the larger Agawam parish in 1800. The Town of Agawam, the boundaries of which would be recognizable today, would not become incorporated until 1855.

Agawam developed as an agricultural town on the periphery of the metropolitan Springfield region, and as Springfield grew as a regional economic and industrial center in the Connecticut Valley, Agawam took on an added role as a residential suburb to the more urban Springfield established on the far eastern side of the river. The agricultural economy that had been established in Agawam quickly expanded during the Colonial Period in Massachusetts (1675-1775) and maintained strong agricultural growth well into the ensuing Federal Period (1775-1830).

Notwithstanding this strong growth in agriculture, there were early attempts to establish local industrial operations, earliest examples of which were two sawmills established in 1640 and 1672. In 1801, Elijah Porter established a distillery in Agawam for the purpose of manufacturing alcohol from local produce, notably potatoes. Later, Porter established a grist mill for the purpose grinding grains to produce what became known as Agawam Gin, a product which is said to have gained a national reputation and market.

Porter also established the first textile mill on Three Mile Brook (which may have been the Agawam Cotton, Wool and Linen Manufacturing Co. which later became the Agawam Manufacturing Co. in 1812). The Town's second textile mill was likewise built on Three Mile Brook, and by 1812 it was producing woolen broadcloth with intermittent success until the midcentury mark when it was viewed as successful.

As this midcentury mark approached, there was a modest increase in the diversity of undertakings. By 1859, there were three paper mills in operation, and it is said that the earlier textile mills were now operating as ongoing and increasingly prosperous enterprises. By 1865, Agawam Gin was believed to have attained the highest value on any manufactured product in Agawam, reflecting, perhaps, its connection to local agricultural produce.

Despite these early industrial activities and enterprises, agriculture remained the most significant economic activity and the largest source of employment in the Town. The significance of Agawam's role in meeting the agricultural needs of the growing metropolitan Springfield is reflected in the reluctance to

¹This history relies extensively on two historical surveys prepared by the Mass. Historic Commission: MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Agawam (1982) and MHC Historic and Archaeological Resources of the Connecticut River Valley (1984). See also Community Profile: Agawam prepared by the Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission (Rev. 2015) and A History of Agawam: Significant Dates 1636-1912 from a 1930s manuscript currently in the Agawam Historic Association collection.

allow the Agawam parish to separate itself from the Town of West Springfield. It took until 1855 for Agawam to achieve the support necessary to become incorporated as the Town of Agawam.

Agawam's growth as an agricultural producer continued into the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1880, only Westfield in the lower Pioneer Valley had more farms than Agawam. Nevertheless, Agawam led the county that year in the production of milk, eggs, tobacco, potatoes, and Indian corn.

By the 1920s, the eastern side of Agawam was rapidly becoming a residential suburb to industrial Springfield, although Feeding Hills continued to remain active in producing agricultural products. No new industrial manufacturing enterprises were established, although among earlier establishments, the Worth Paper Company and the Agawam Woolen Mfg. Co. remained in operation.

One of Agawam's principal landmarks, Riverside Park, was further developed at the turn of the century and through the first half of the twentieth century catered largely to riverboat excursions bringing more affluent residents from Springfield and other river towns in the valley. The park formerly operated as Riverside Park continues today as Six Flags New England and is a major regional attraction in New England.

Regionally, the Connecticut Valley was one of the fastest growing regions of Massachusetts during this period. By the early nineteenth century, Springfield and other Connecticut River and tributary towns, notably Chicopee, Holyoke, and Westfield, began to take on the urban characteristics with strong local connections to agricultural communities such as Agawam. With increased industrial development and urbanization, the attractiveness of the rural communities as residential suburbs increased and soon a relatively low density, residential suburb development model began to emerge.

The Springfield urban core came to dominate the lower portion of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts. Springfield itself incorporated in 1852 and quickly gained national ranking and recognition as a preeminent center of commerce, industry, and distribution. Two factors contributed to Springfield's position as an economic center in New England:

1. The intersection of the region's primary east/west and north/south rail lines clearly strengthened and enhanced its reputation as a center of commerce and distribution. Strengthening these transportation connections remains a key regional economic development strategy today; and
2. The growth of the U.S. Springfield Armory in the run up to the Civil War. With the loss of its sister armory in Harpers Ferry, VA to confederate forces in 1861, the Springfield Armory became the primary supplier of arms to Union forces during the Civil War and beyond. The Springfield Armory's innovative approach of outsourcing interchangeable parts to its firearms to local machinists up and down the Connecticut Valley is widely attributed as having created a regional competency in precision machining and tooling that continues to be a regional strength to this date.

More rapid residential development occurred between midcentury and the year 2000, when the population of the town grew from approximately 10,000 in 1950 to 28,184 in 2000. The town has seen very modest change in total population since the year 2000. Today, Agawam is recognized as an attractive residential, suburban community that is supported by the significant commercial and industrial tax base that helps provide residents with a range of quality municipal and educational services

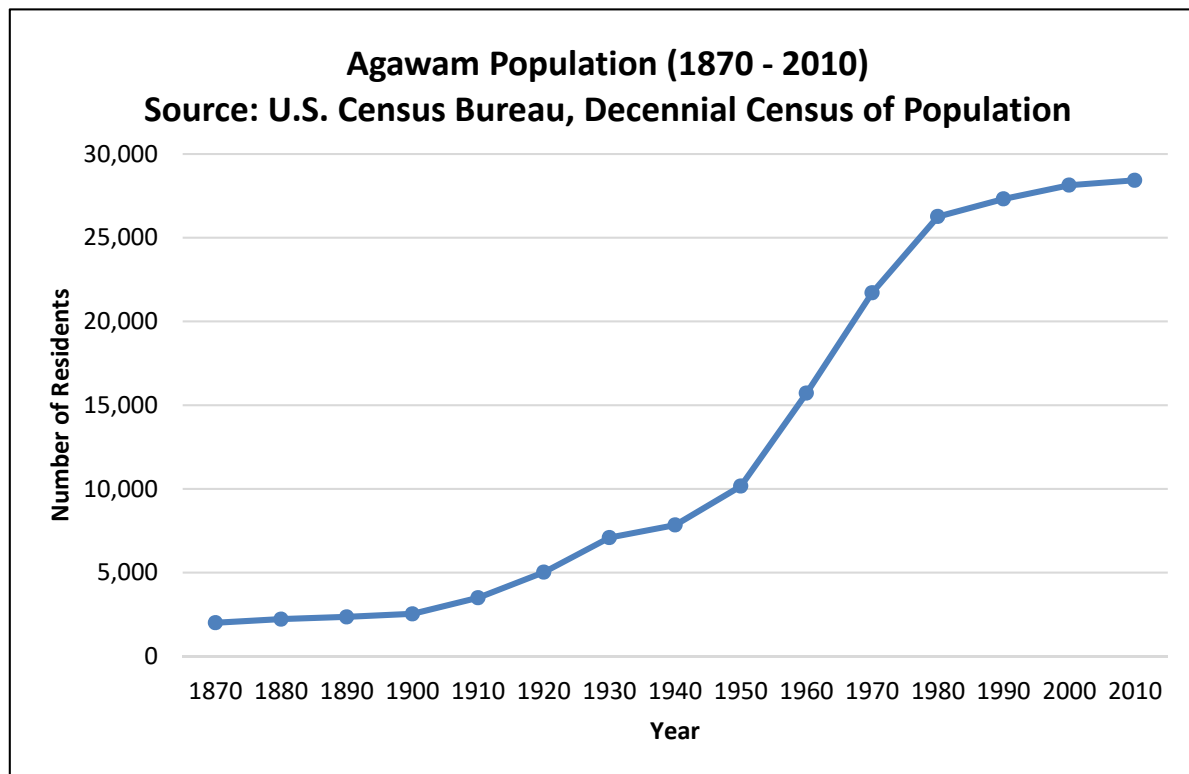
RESIDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Finding 1: Following a period of rapid growth in much of the second half of the twentieth century, Agawam's residential population stabilized since the 1990s. Today, it is characterized by a median age that is higher than that of the surrounding region and of Massachusetts. The share of population over 60 is projected to grow significantly by 2030, which is likely to further increase the median age. The data are inconclusive as to whether Agawam will retain a younger segment of the population of what might be considered prime working age. The data does indicate that Agawam does better in attracting older working age residents in the 45 to 65 age group.

POPULATION GROWTH

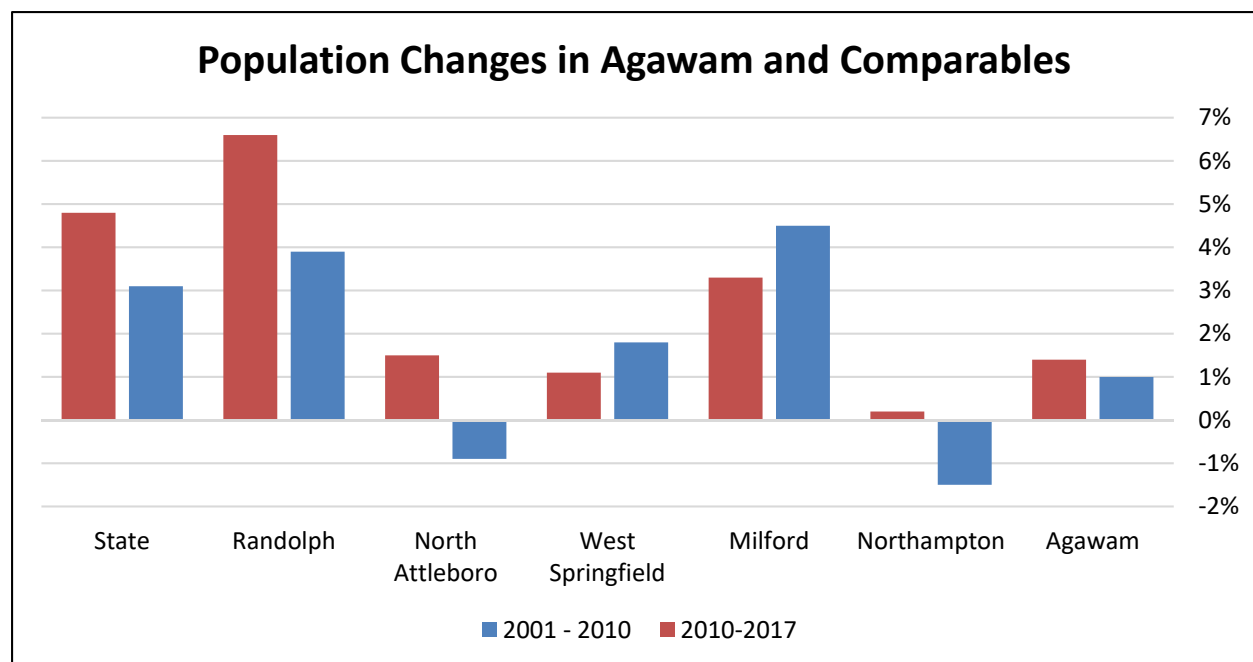
Typical of the post-World War II trend toward suburbanization, Agawam's population increased significantly in the second half of the twentieth century. Between 1950 and 1970, its population more than doubled in size, growing 130%. It continued this rapid pace of population growth between 1970 and 1980, at which point the rate of growth began to moderate.

Looking at the time period of 1970 to 2010, the population grew by 30.95%, outpacing both Northampton and West Springfield in population growth during this time period, with Northampton decreasing in population by 3.7% and West Springfield essentially maintaining its 1970 level. Agawam outpaced the statewide growth in population of 15.10%. Randolph saw population growth slightly above the rate of growth statewide, while Milford and North Attleboro saw rates of growth significantly higher than Agawam, at 44.48% and 53.83% respectively.



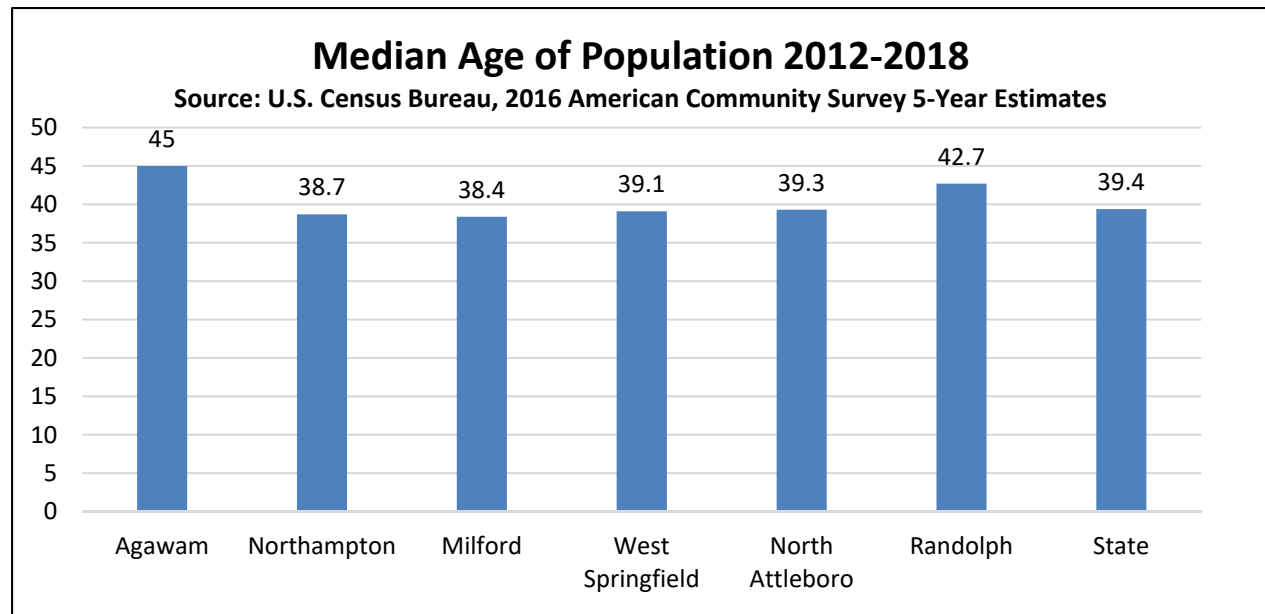
Between 2000 and 2017, Agawam's population had clearly stabilized in the mid twenty-eight thousand range. It grew by only 2.4% percent during this seventeen-year period. This was somewhat less than West Springfield (a little less than 8%) and more than Northampton (which decreased in population by a little more than 1%). Agawam's population growth during this time was substantially below the statewide change in population. Randolph and Milford each posted higher rates of growth at 10.5% and 7.8% respectively.

Population Change (1970-2010)			
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2010 Decennial Census of Population			
Municipality	1970 Census	2010 Census	Percent Change 1970-2010
Agawam	21,717	28,438	30.95%
Northampton	29,664	28,549	-3.76%
Milford	19,352	27,999	44.68%
West Springfield	28,461	28,391	-0.25%
North Attleboro	18,665	28,712	53.83%
Randolph	27,035	32,158	18.95%



POPULATION AGE AND COMPOSITION

The median age of the population of Agawam is slightly older than the group of comparable communities, as well as compared to the median age of Massachusetts as a whole.

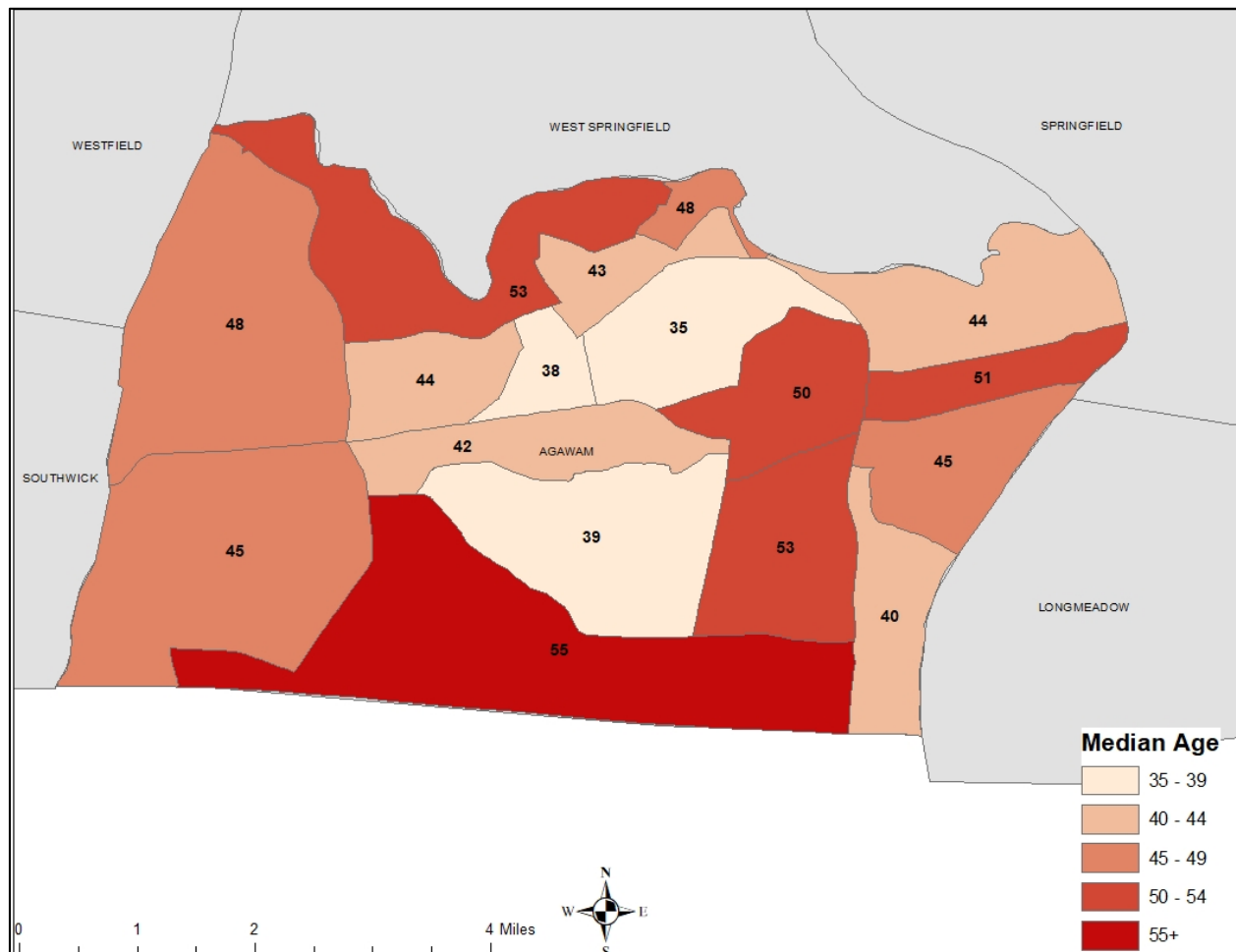


In looking at the distribution, the population of this slightly older median population in Agawam, 28.7% of its population falls into the age bracket of 20-44-year-olds. This is a significant age bracket and one that plays a critical role in providing the workforce within the region and assuring the replacement of older workers in the Pioneer Valley as they retire. Agawam, at 28.7%, is slightly behind the comparable communities examined in this report, as well as the MA state average of 33.4% in this age group.

Distribution of Populations by Age (2012-2016)							
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates							
Age	Agawam	Northampton	Milford	West Springfield	North Attleboro	Randolph	State
0-19	21.30%	22.00%	25.40%	24.30%	27.20%	21.40%	23.70%
20-44	28.70%	35.20%	33.80%	32.70%	32.20%	32.40%	33.40%
45-64	30.90%	27.20%	27.50%	27.70%	29.20%	30.40%	27.70%
65+	19.30%	15.90%	13.20%	15.40%	11.40%	16.10%	15.10%
Total Population	28,701	28,534	25,701	28,575	28,945	33,526	6,742,143

Agawam fares slightly better in retaining residents in the 45-64 age group, with 30.9% of residents falling into this age bracket, compared to 27.7% statewide, perhaps reflecting the attractiveness of the community in terms of raising children and supporting families. This is consistent with the higher median age of its population. Similarly, 19.3% of Agawam residents are over the age of 65, compared to 15.1% statewide. Overall, Agawam has higher percentages of residents older than 45 than all comparable communities and the state of Massachusetts overall.

MEDIAN AGE BY CENSUS BLOCK IN AGAWAM (U.S. CENSUS 2010)

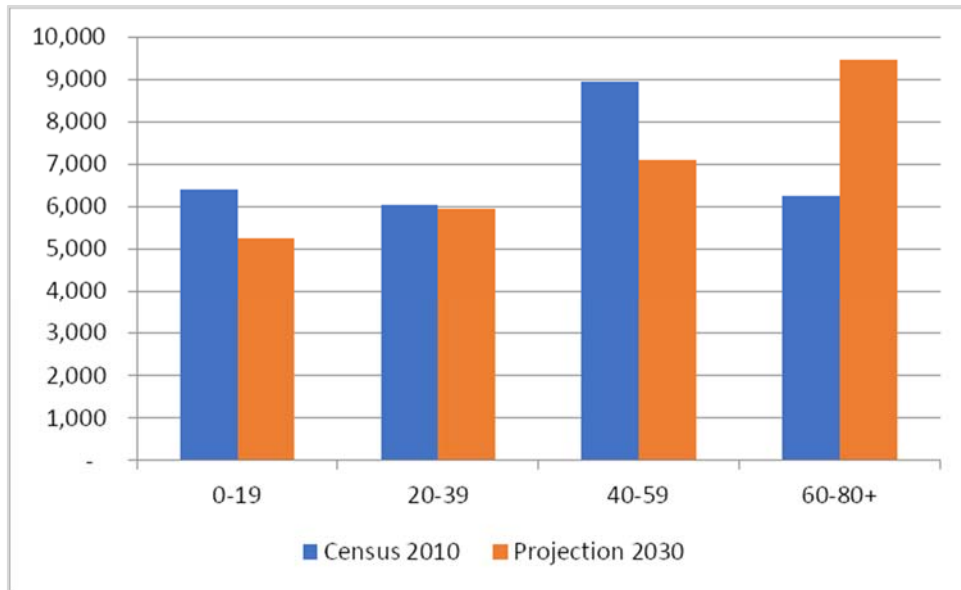


The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) prepared a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan for the Town of Agawam in 2010 and documented the changes in these age groups over the time 1990 – 2007. The PVPC provided comparable data for its regional planning service area. The data reveal a combined loss of residents 25-44 years of age of 6.3%, and a gain in the number of residents ages 45-64 years of age of 9.5%. The losses in the 25-44 age group are greater than the Pioneer Valley region, which saw a reduction of 3.7% in the group, and the gains in residents aged 45-64 were greater than the region, which gained 2.3%.

Agawam Population Change by Age Group: 1990 – 2000 – 2007 Source: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Comprehensive Economic Development Plan for Town of Agawam (2010)					
Age Group	1990 Percent	2000 Percent	'90 – '00 Change	2007 Percent	'00 – '07 Change
Under 5	6.2	5.5	-0.7	5.2	-0.3
5 – 14	12.2	12.7	0.5	11.1	-1.6
15 – 19	6.4	6.1	-0.3	6	-0.1
20 – 24	6.8	4.2	-2.6	5	0.8
25 – 34	17.3	12.6	-4.7	13	.04
35 – 44	16.7	17	0.3	14.7	-2.3
45 – 54	10.6	15.4	4.8	16.5	1.1
55 – 64	8.7	9.7	1	12.3	2.6
65 – 74	8.5	7.4	-0.9	6.7	-0.7
75 – 84	4.7	6.5	1.7	5.7	-0.8
85 and Over	1.9	2.9	1	3.7	0.8
Pioneer Valley Region Population Change by Age Group: 1990 – 2000 – 2007 Source: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Comprehensive Economic Development Plan for Town of Agawam (2010)					
Age Group	1990 Percent	2000 Percent	'90 – '00 Change	2007 Percent	'00 – '07 Change
Under 5	6.9	6	-0.9	5.6	-0.4
5 – 14	13	14.1	1.1	12.1	-2
15 – 19	8.1	8.3	0.2	7.5	-0.9
20 – 24	9.4	7.7	-1.7	8.5	0.8
25 – 34	16.4	12.4	-4.0	13.9	1.5
35 – 44	14.5	15.5	1	13.3	-2.2
45 – 54	9.3	13.7	4.4	14.5	-0.8
55 – 64	8.3	8.3	0	11.1	2.8
65 – 74	8.1	6.7	-1.4	6.2	-0.5
75 – 84	4.4	5.4	1	4.8	0.6
85 and Over	1.5	1.8	0.3	2.5	0.7

The *Agawam Housing Production Plan 2018-2020* includes a projection from the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute that suggests steep losses in the number of residents between 40-60 years of age substantially offset by projected increases in the number of residents older than 60 years of age. At the same time, the number of residents younger than 20 is projected to decrease, and the number of residents between 20 and 40 years of age is projected to remain relatively flat. All this points to a future in which the median age of Agawam is likely to continue to increase.

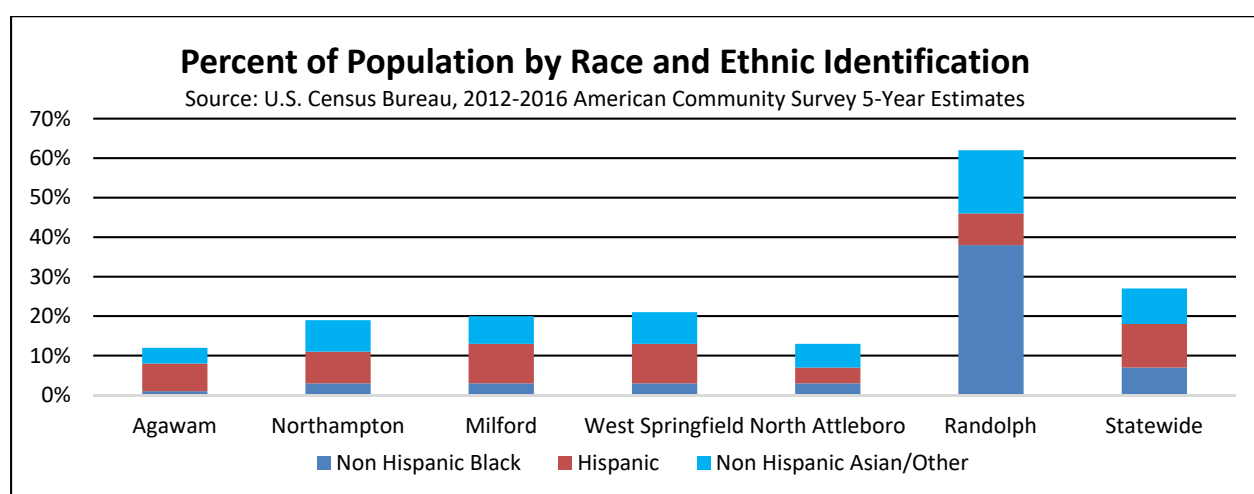
**Project Population Growth by Age Groups
2010 Census – 2030 Projected**



Source: UMass Donahue Institute

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Finding 2: The portion of Agawam’s population that identifies as either Hispanic, Non-Hispanic Black, or Non-Hispanic Asian is 12%, compared to the statewide average of 27%. The population remains largely white, with a small but measurable increase in diversity within in the past 20 years. Eighty-six percent of residents five years of age or older report that they speak only English at home, while 14% of the population report that they speak a language other English in the home. Of this group, however, 10% report that they also speak English ‘very well’.



In Agawam, 86% of residents of at least five years of age report that they speak only English at home, while 14% of the population report that they speak a language other English in the home. Of this group, however, 10% report that they also speak English ‘very well’. This is somewhat less than the statewide percentage of 14%.

Of note, in neighboring comparable community of West Springfield, 24% of residents speak a language other than English as home (compared to the state average of 23%), and 15% of this group report that they speak English “very well”.

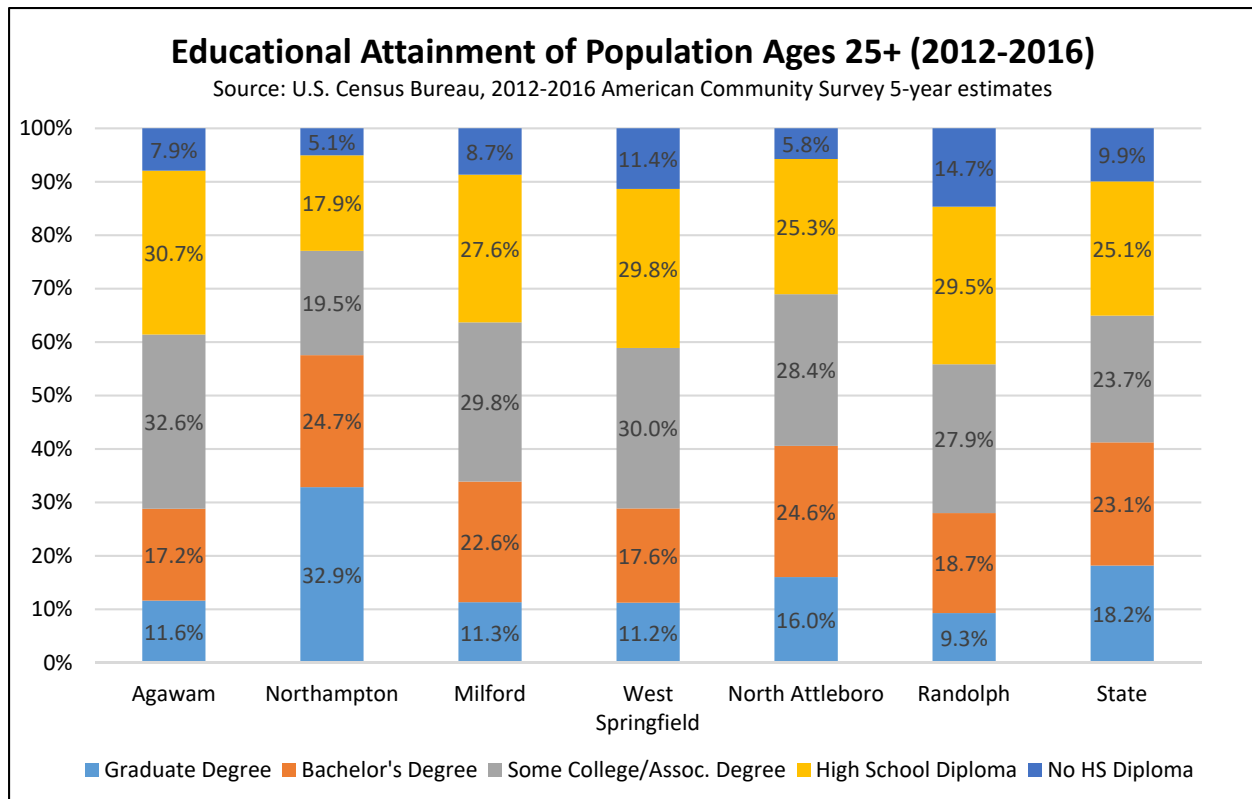
Language Spoke at Home among Residents ages 5 and Older (2012-2016)							
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates							
Language	Agawam	Northampton	Milford	West Springfield	North Attleboro	Randolph	State
English Only	86%	88%	74%	76%	89%	62%	78%
Language Other than English	14%	11%	26%	24%	11%	38%	23%
Also Speak English "Very Well"	10%	10%	18%	15%	8%	22%	14%
Speak English Less Than "Very Well"	4%	3%	8%	9%	3%	16%	9%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND EARNINGS

Finding 3: Agawam does well both in terms of educational attainment and graduation rates. Residents with a high school diploma or equivalent earn a median income that is higher than the state median income. Residents with a bachelor's degrees and graduate degrees lag behind the state median income. The level of educational attainment of Agawam's residents ages 25 and older, relative to comparable communities and to Massachusetts, can be summarized as follows:

- Larger percentages of residents have a minimum of a high school diploma and perhaps some college or Associates Degree – a combined 63.3% compared to 48.8% statewide.
- Smaller percentages of residents have attained a bachelor's degree or graduate degree – 28.8% compared with 41.3% statewide.

7.9% of Agawam's residents lack a high school diploma, which is slightly below the statewide level of 9.9%. Agawam's educational attainment profile largely mirrors that of West Springfield, except that in the case of West Springfield, 11.4% of residents lack a high school diploma.



In the educational performance of its public high school, Agawam compares favorably to most comparable communities. Graduation rates from Agawam's public high school fall below Northampton and North Attleboro but are higher than other comparable communities and the state average.

Agawam also has a higher percentage of graduates who plan to attend a two-year college (32%), exceeded only by West Springfield at 43%. A smaller percentage of Agawam graduates plan to attend a four-year

college or university (49%) than most comparable communities and the state. The statewide percentage is 61%.

In areas of MCAS proficiency, Agawam students perform at slightly higher levels than the statewide average.

Subject	Agawam Students	MA Students
English/Language Arts	97.4	96.5
Math	93.1	89.9
Science	87.7	78.3

The performance of Agawam students in English, Math, and Science compares favorably to the performance of students from the comparable communities evaluated. Agawam students are generally on par with the performance of students in West Springfield, Northampton, Milford, and North Attleboro and they perform at significantly higher levels than students in Randolph.

Educational Performance for High Schools in Agawam and Comparable Communities							
MCAS Proficiency (%)	Agawam	West Springfield	Northampton	Milford	North Attleboro	Randolph	Statewide
English Language Arts	97.4	94.2	98.1	97.9	98.6	91.8	96.5
Math	93.1	87.4	92.8	89.7	94.8	81.3	89.9
Science	87.7	78.8	80.4	80.6	87.3	67.9	78.3
Source: Massachusetts Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education (2018) School and District Profiles Available at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ , accessed 12/22/18							

The median earnings of Agawam residents aged 25 and older with either no high school diploma or at the high school diploma level are generally higher than those of the comparable communities. (Only North Attleboro is higher among earners in possession of a high school diploma). Median earnings in both categories are higher than the statewide median.

Agawam residents with a bachelor's degree have median earnings of \$53,872, compared to the statewide median earnings level of \$58,534. This is also slightly more than bachelor's degree holders in Randolph and West Springfield. It also exceeds the median earnings in Northampton, which likely reflects the high percentage of recent graduates from nearby colleges entering the workforce.

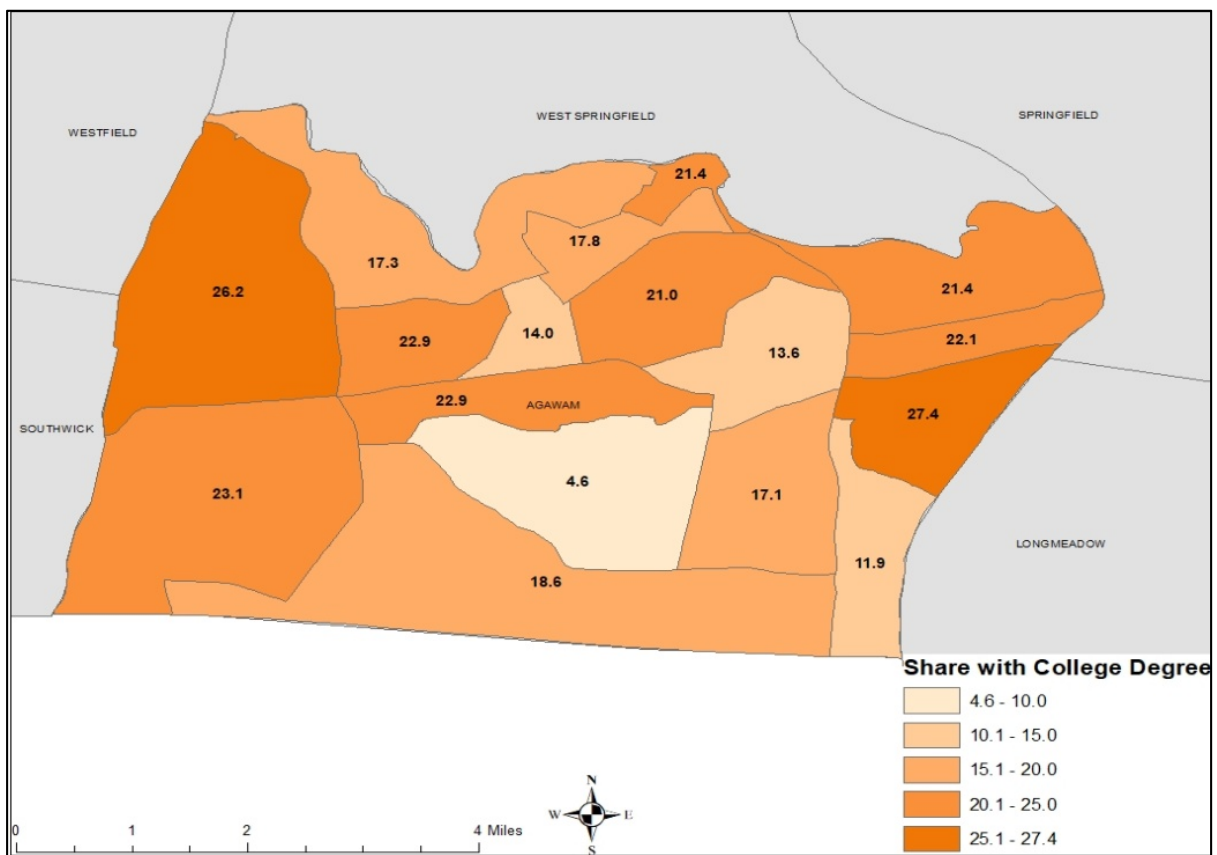
Earners in Agawam with a graduate degree likewise fall below the statewide median in earnings – the Agawam median is \$63,837 compared to the statewide median of \$74,841. It is on par with Northampton (\$62,283) and West Springfield (\$61,985).

Median Earnings of Residents - Ages 25+ by Level of Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Educational Attainment	Agawam	Milford	Northampton	North Attleboro	Randolph	West Springfield	Mass.
No H.S. Diploma	\$31,568	\$23,843	No Data	\$26,738	\$28,613	\$22,059	\$24,464
H. S. Diploma	\$34,040	\$32,750	\$29,439	\$38,245	\$33,295	\$30,838	\$32,940
Some College or Assoc. Degree	\$40,629	\$45,881	\$36,119	\$42,400	\$37,480	\$35,658	\$39,791
Bachelor's degree	\$53,872	\$60,902	\$40,463	\$63,075	\$51,574	\$51,649	\$58,534
Graduate or Professional Degree	\$63,837	\$67,483	\$62,283	\$79,439	\$68,092	\$61,985	\$74,841

PERCENT WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREE BY CENSUS BLOCK (US CENSUS 2010)



The distribution of the share of Agawam's population with a bachelor's degree by Census Block ranges from a low of 6.62% to a high of 27.43% but is primarily concentrated in the 17% to 23% range.

COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLDS

Finding 4: Most of Agawam's households are comprised of married couples and homeowners. The Town's Housing Production Plan, however, notes that 38% of households are individuals constituting nonfamily households.

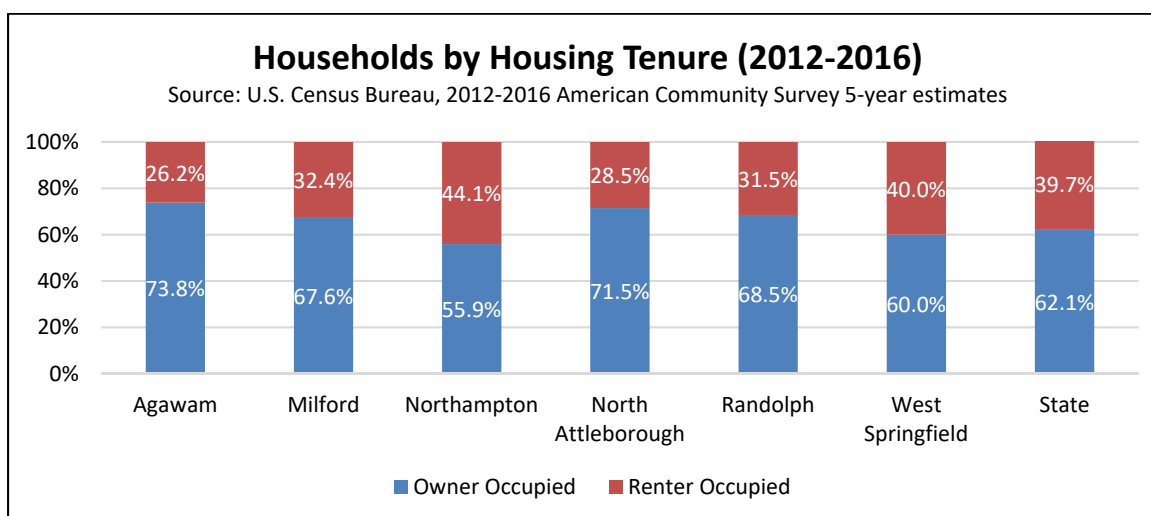
Nearly half of Agawam's households are classified as a married couple, slightly above the statewide percentage of 46.9%. Another 38% are considered a nonfamily household, a little less than the statewide percentage. The average household size is 2.42 persons per household, which compares to the statewide household size of 2.54 persons.

On balance, Agawam's household profile looks a lot like Milford and the statewide household profiles.

Household Distribution by Type (2012-2016)						
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates						
Household Type	Agawam	Milford	Northampton	North Attleboro	Randolph	West Springfield
Married-couple family household	49.0%	50.5%	36.6%	53.9%	40.7%	39.7%
Male householder, no wife present, family household	2.7%	4.6%	3.4%	3.5%	6.4%	5.1%
Female householder, no husband present, family household	10.4%	11.5%	10.4%	10.7%	20.0%	13.7%
Nonfamily household	38.0%	33.4%	49.6%	31.9%	32.8%	41.5%
Average Household Size	2.42	2.55	2.19	2.75	2.7	2.44

73.8% of households in Agawam are owner-occupied housing, while 26.2% rent their homes. This profile is most similar to North Attleborough and Randolph. The percentage of households residing in owner occupied housing units is significantly higher than the statewide percentage of 62.1% and Northampton's rate of 55.9%.

These demographics indicate that there is opportunity to create more high-density housing to target the rental population and capture younger individuals entering the workforce.



INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Finding 5: Agawam enjoys a favorable level of Median Household Income, on par with neighboring Northampton and West Springfield but less than the statewide median. 40% of the population earns less than \$50,000 per year while 32% earns between \$50,000 and \$100,000. The remaining 28% earns more than \$100,000 per year. The 2017 Housing Production Plan indicates that recent gains in income appear to be among households reporting more than \$100,000 per year and relatively flat income growth for households reporting less than \$50,000. 9.3% of Agawam residents live below the income poverty line established by the federal government.

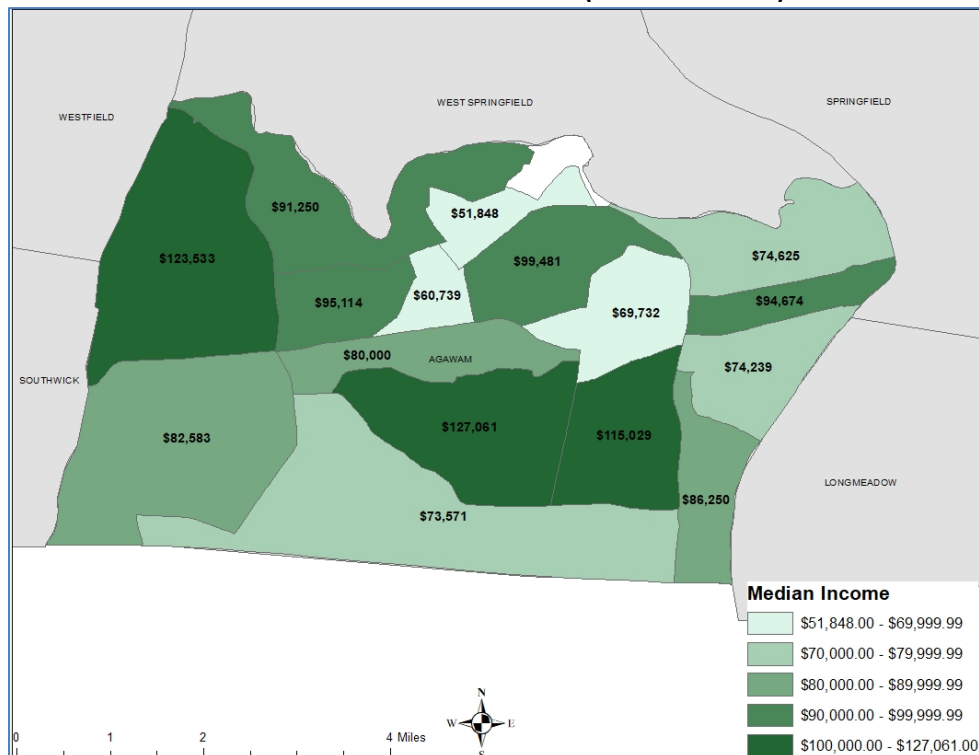
28.5% of Agawam residents earn more than \$100,000 per year. This is less than the statewide average of 35.3% but on par with Northampton and Randolph, and more than West Springfield (21.4%).

At the other end of the spectrum, 40.1% of Agawam residents earn less than \$50,000 per year, compared to the statewide average of 36.8%.

In the middle range, 31.4% of Agawam residents earn between \$50,000 and \$100,000, which is slightly higher than the state average. This overall profile of household income distribution most closely resembles that of Northampton and Randolph.

Median Household Income (2012-2016)	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates	
Agawam	\$60,201
Milford	\$72,750
Northampton	\$61,813
North Attleboro	\$83,735
Randolph	\$65,316
West Springfield	\$50,649
State	\$70,954

MEDIAN INCOME BY CENSUS BLOCK (US CENSUS 2010)

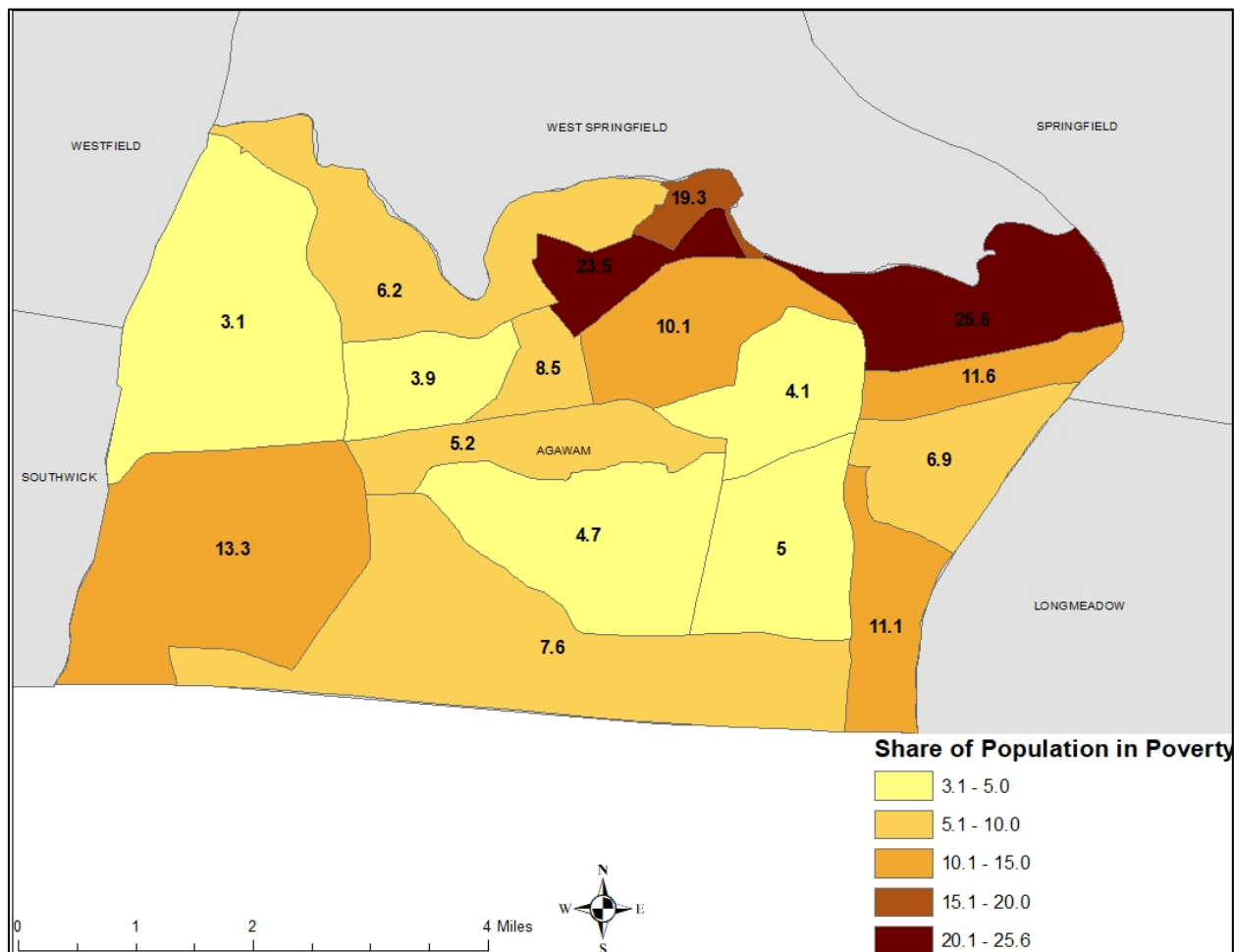


POVERTY

For the period of 2012 to 2016, an average of 9.3% of Agawam residents had income that placed them below the poverty line. This percentage is less than the state average of 11.4%, but higher than the comparable communities of Milford and North Attleborough. Northampton, West Springfield and Randolph, each had higher percentages of residents living below the poverty line.

Similarly, for this same period for families with children under 18 years of age, 11.4% were below the poverty line. This compares to 12.9% for the state. Agawam shows the same relative position to the comparable communities as it shows for all residents.

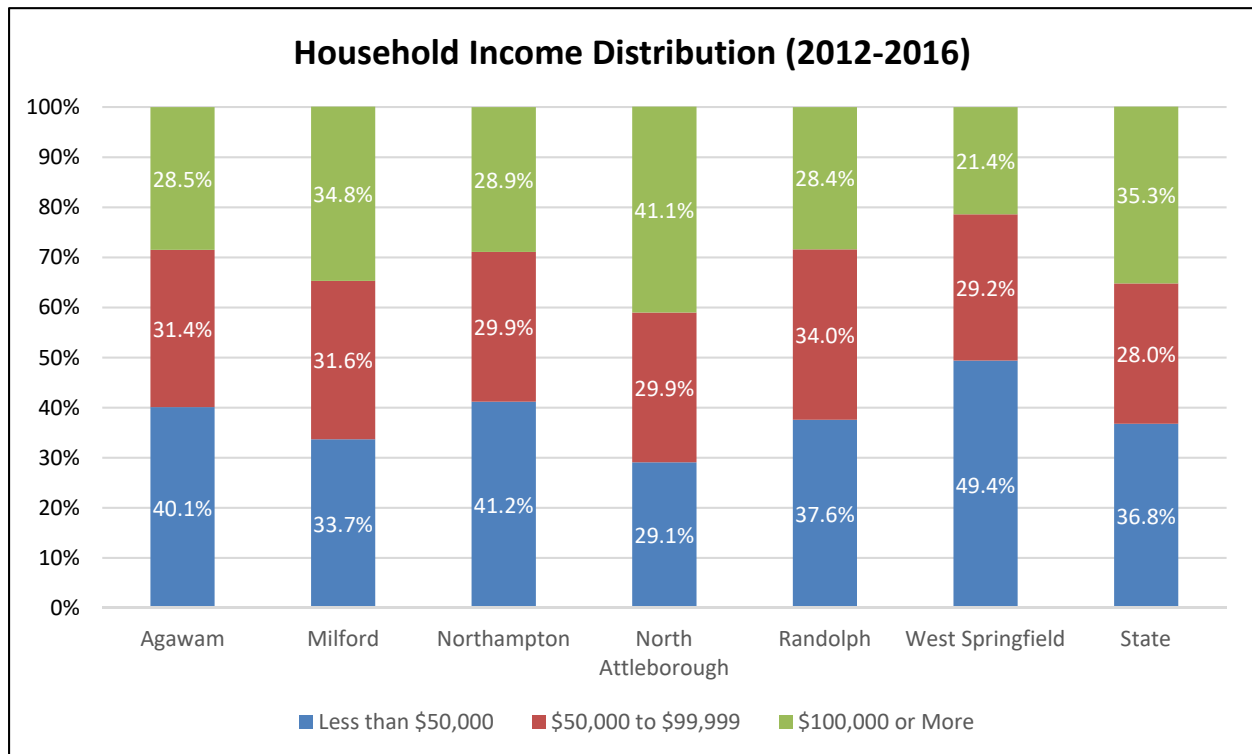
PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LEVEL BY CENSUS BLOCK (US CENSUS 2010)



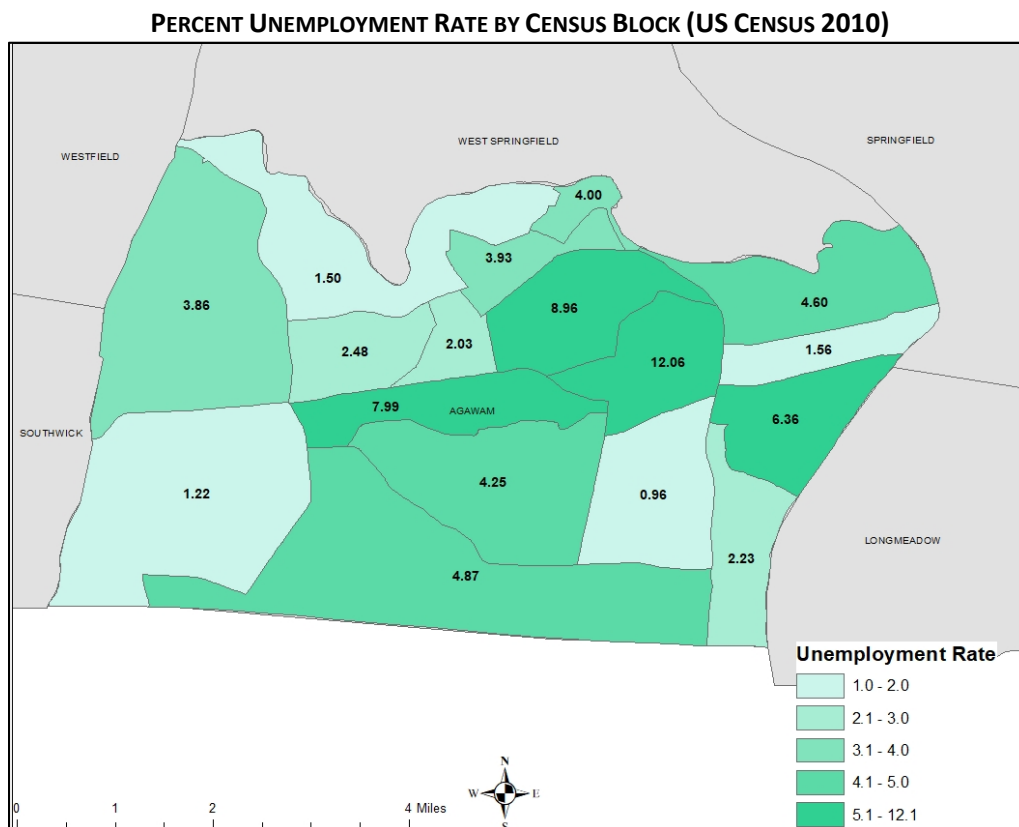
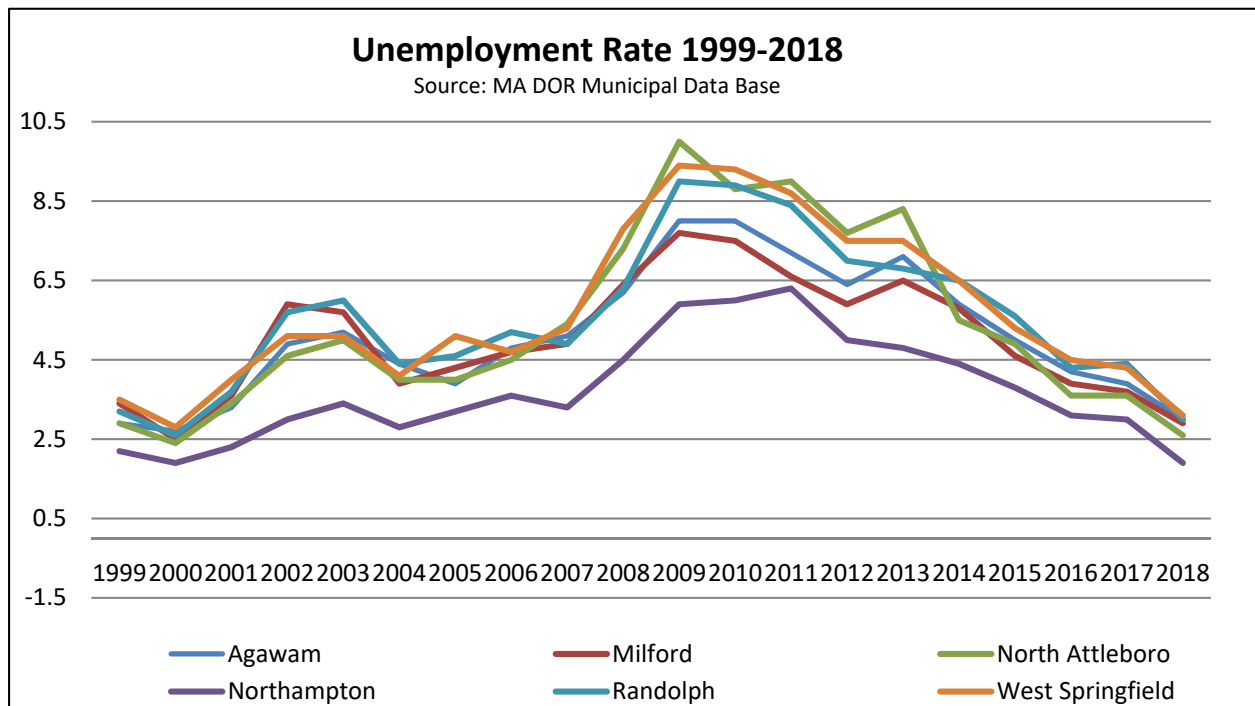
Share of Residents with Income Below Poverty Level (2012-2016)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Group	Agawam	Northampton	Milford	West Springfield	North Attleboro	Randolph	State
All Residents	9.30%	15.80%	7.70%	13.20%	6.30%	11.70%	11.40%
Under 18 years old	12.40%	19.10%	10.00%	19.40%	6.90%	21.50%	14.90%
65 years or older	7.90%	9.00%	6.10%	5.40%	4.90%	11.00%	9.00%
All Families	6.70%	8.70%	5.10%	9.60%	3.90%	9.50%	8.00%
With Children Under 18	11.40%	14.10%	8.80%	15.30%	6.30%	18.00%	12.80%



The unemployment rate in Agawam has closely tracked the statewide unemployment rate over the past 22 years.



EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

Finding 6: Just over half of all Agawam residents were employed in five industry sectors during the period from 2012 to 2016: Health Care and Social Assistance (15.2%); Retail Trade (13.2%); Educational Services (11.2%); Manufacturing (10.2%); and Finance, Insurance (6.5%). Three of these sectors have been identified by the Regional Employment Board as priority sectors for the region. These sectors are those in which there are often shortages of skilled/trained workers. The data indicate that Agawam is well connected to the regional economy and has a workforce with skills that match the demands of employers in these priority sectors.

Agawam compares favorably to the state with a slightly higher average percentage of residents employed in these sectors. 47.8% of MA residents are employed in these same 'top 5' sectors. Agawam's success in employment in these sectors is matched by West Springfield, which saw 52.2% of its residents employed in these same sectors.

In the 'Top Five' sectors in which the highest percentages of Agawam residents are employed, earnings lag the MA statewide median earnings in two sectors: Health Care and Social Services (\$7,425 below MA); and Manufacturing (\$5,738 below MA). Since these have been identified as critical, priority sectors in which to focus training and skills development resources by the PV REB, this suggests that there may be opportunities to leverage training and educational services for Agawam residents pursuing careers in these two sectors. Agawam residents' median earnings in Educational Services, Retail Trade, and Finance/Insurance are higher than the MA statewide median earnings in these sectors.

Median Earnings of Employed Residents Age 16+ by Industry (2012-2016)				
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates				
Industry	% of Agawam Residents Employed	Agawam Median Earnings	State Median Earnings	Difference in Earnings
Health care and social assistance	15.2%	\$33,030	\$40,455	(\$7,425)
Retail trade	13.2%	\$29,583	\$23,586	\$5,997
Educational services	11.2%	\$52,894	\$44,551	\$8,343
Manufacturing	10.2%	\$49,656	\$55,394	(\$5,738)
Finance and insurance	6.5%	\$69,135	\$68,027	\$1,108
Accommodation & food srvc	6.3%	\$12,345	\$16,644	(\$4,299)
Transportation & warehousing	5.6%	\$49,773	\$41,076	\$8,697
Construction	5.1%	\$46,385	\$45,799	\$586
Professional, scientific, and technical services	4.8%	\$57,417	\$73,021	(\$15,604)
Administrative & support & waste management services	4.4%	\$27,656	\$30,973	(\$3,317)
Other services, except public administration	4.1%	\$26,917	\$25,812	\$1,105
Public administration	3.7%	\$56,944	\$63,039	(\$6,095)
Wholesale trade	2.4%	\$50,750	\$50,258	\$492
Information	2.1%	\$28,875	\$60,383	(\$31,508)
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	2.0%	\$17,614	\$20,164	(\$2,550)
Real estate & rental & leasing	1.5%	\$53,723	\$46,961	\$6,762
Utilities	1.3%	\$86,516	\$74,818	\$11,698

The two largest employment classes in which Agawam residents are employed are private, for profit companies (68.26%) and local, state, and federal governments (16.22%). 84.48% of Agawam residents were employed in these settings, compared with 78.11% statewide. Most of the comparable communities (excepting Northampton due to the predominance of private nonprofit employment) shared this pattern, with slightly higher percentages of employment in private, for profit companies in Milford, North Attleborough, and Randolph.

Working Residents Ages 16+ by Class of Worker (2012-2016)							
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates							
Employment class	Agawam	Milford	Northampton	North Attleboro	Randolph	West Springfield	State
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	14,605	15,265	15,219	15,850	17,247	14,058	3,468,864
Private for-profit companies	68.26%	73.38%	44.19%	72.59%	70.97%	67.24%	66.04%
Private not-for-profit organizations	8.15%	8.11%	24.69%	7.77%	12.11%	9.94%	12.81%
Local, state, and federal government workers	16.22%	8.78%	16.32%	13.73%	11.22%	15.61%	12.27%
Self-employed in own incorporated business	2.18%	3.46%	3.76%	2.50%	1.52%	2.48%	2.82%
Self-employed in own not-incorpor'd business & unpaid family workers	5.20%	6.27%	11.05%	3.41%	4.18%	4.73%	6.05%

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

Agawam and its regional comparables, Northampton and West Springfield, each experienced comparable Median Travel Time to Work between 2012 and 2016. The median travel time to work for Agawam, Northampton, and West Springfield was approximately 20 minutes. The median time in MA is 27.7 minutes. Randolph had the highest travel time of 34.7 minutes.

Median Travel Time to Work Among Employed Residents Ages 16+ in Minutes	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates	
Agawam	20.3
Milford	28.6
Northampton	19.0
North Attleborough	27.7
Randolph	34.7
West Springfield	19.6
State	27.7

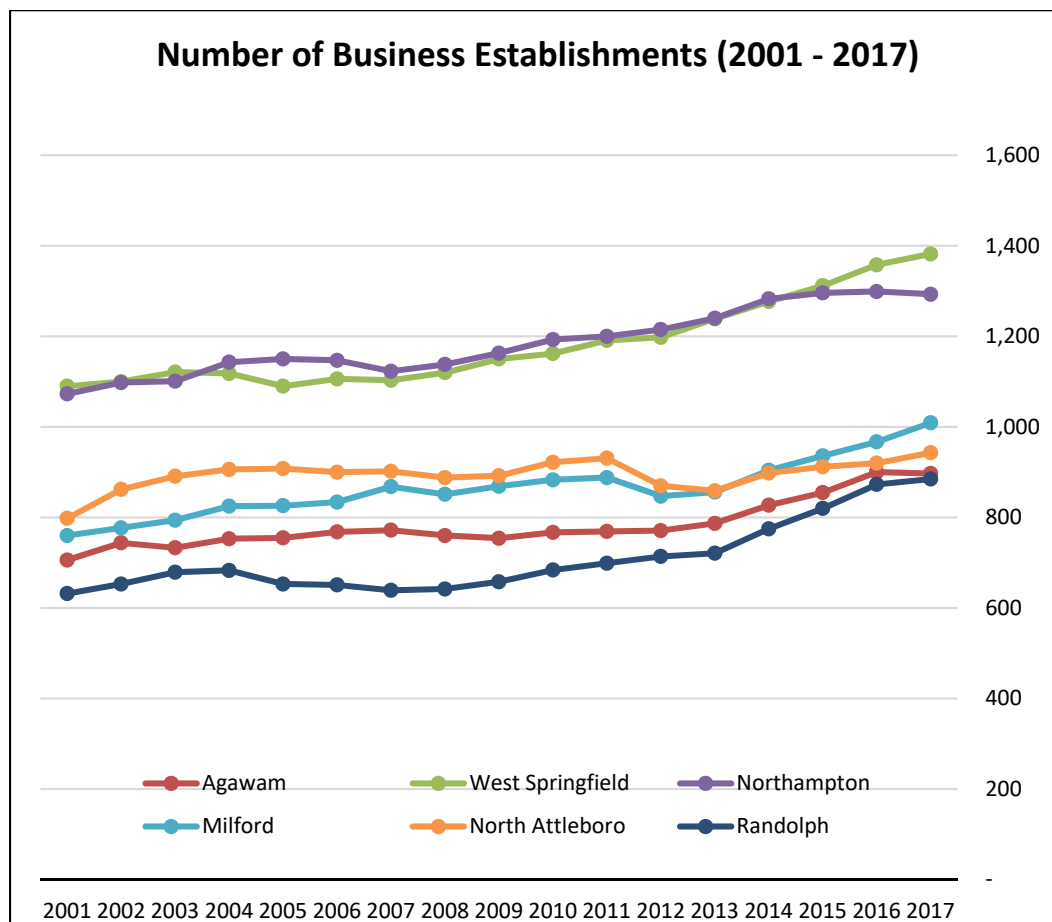
LOCAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

Finding 7: Based on the number of business establishments operating in Agawam between 2001 and 2017, Agawam has a stable business economy that has remained consistent over time, including the recession 2008 to 2012. In terms of the distribution of establishments, Agawam has a demonstrated strength in retaining establishments in the Manufacturing sector, a sector projected to grow in Agawam by 11.4% by 2026.

West Springfield and Northampton lead the survey group in the Number of Business Establishments, each beginning with a little less than 1,100 businesses in 2001 and showing relatively consistent growth through 2017, at which point West Springfield had 1,382 and Northampton had 1,293.

Agawam and three other communities had comparable experience of relatively flat growth during the period 2001 through 2017 with each demonstrating relatively moderate growth in establishments beginning in 2013 and by 2017 were closely clustered in a range of approximately 900 to 1,100 establishments.

Agawam itself increased the number of business establishments from 706 to 897 during this time frame - an increase of 191 establishments (or 27%). Statewide the number of business establishments grew by 31%.



Number of Business Establishments 2001-2017 for Agawam and Comparables							
YEAR	Agawam	West Springfield	Northampton	Milford	North Attleboro	Randolph	Statewide
2017	897	1,382	1,293	1,009	943	885	254,077
2016	900	1,358	1,299	967	920	873	249,802
2015	855	1,312	1,296	936	912	820	242,041
2014	827	1,277	1,283	904	898	775	234,695
2013	787	1,239	1,240	856	859	721	223,743
2012	771	1,198	1,215	847	870	714	220,128
2011	769	1,191	1,200	888	931	699	225,235
2010	767	1,162	1,193	883	922	684	221,723
2009	754	1,150	1,163	869	892	658	213,762
2008	760	1,120	1,138	851	888	642	213,882
2007	772	1,103	1,123	868	902	639	211,843
2006	768	1,106	1,147	834	900	651	208,860
2005	755	1,090	1,150	826	908	653	207,788
2004	753	1,118	1,143	825	906	683	212,746
2003	733	1,121	1,101	794	891	679	206,190
2002	744	1,100	1,098	777	862	653	200,317
2001	706	1,090	1,073	760	798	632	193,547
Source: EOLWD. (2018). <i>Employment and Wages (ES-202)</i> , Labor Market Information at http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/lmi_es_a.asp							

DISTRIBUTION OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS BY SECTOR (2017)

Of the 897 business establishments operating in Agawam in 2017, 251 establishments were in the Health Care and Assistance sector. This represents 28% of all business establishments in Agawam. It is significant that the Pioneer Valley Regional Employment Board has identified Health Care as a sector of strategic importance for workforce development in the Pioneer Valley. West Springfield led the group of comparable communities with a total of 434 establishments in Health Care and Assistance Sector, representing 31.4% of its 1,382 total business establishments, slightly ahead of Agawam on a percentage basis. Randolph and Northampton reported 344 and 333 establishments respectively in Health Care and Assistance, representing 38.9% and 25.8% of establishments.

The second significant sector in terms of the distribution of establishments is the Construction sector. Eighty-seven such establishments operate in Agawam. The communities of Milford and North Attleborough have 129 and 118 such establishments, respectively. Neighboring West Springfield reported 92 construction establishments.

The third significant sector in terms of the distribution of establishments is the Retail sector. Agawam reported 82 establishments, placing it in lower end of the range of comparable communities. Milford led the group with 201 retail establishments, followed by the communities of West Springfield and

Northampton with 182 and 162 retail establishments, respectively. Only Randolph reported fewer retail establishment at 77.

There were 72 Professional and Technical Services sector establishments in Agawam in 2017. Northampton led the comparable group with 166 establishments followed by Milford with 129. Agawam was clustered with West Springfield (83) and North Attleborough (85). Randolph had 47 establishments in this sector.

The fifth most significant sector is the Other Administrative Services sector, of which there were 66 establishments in Agawam.

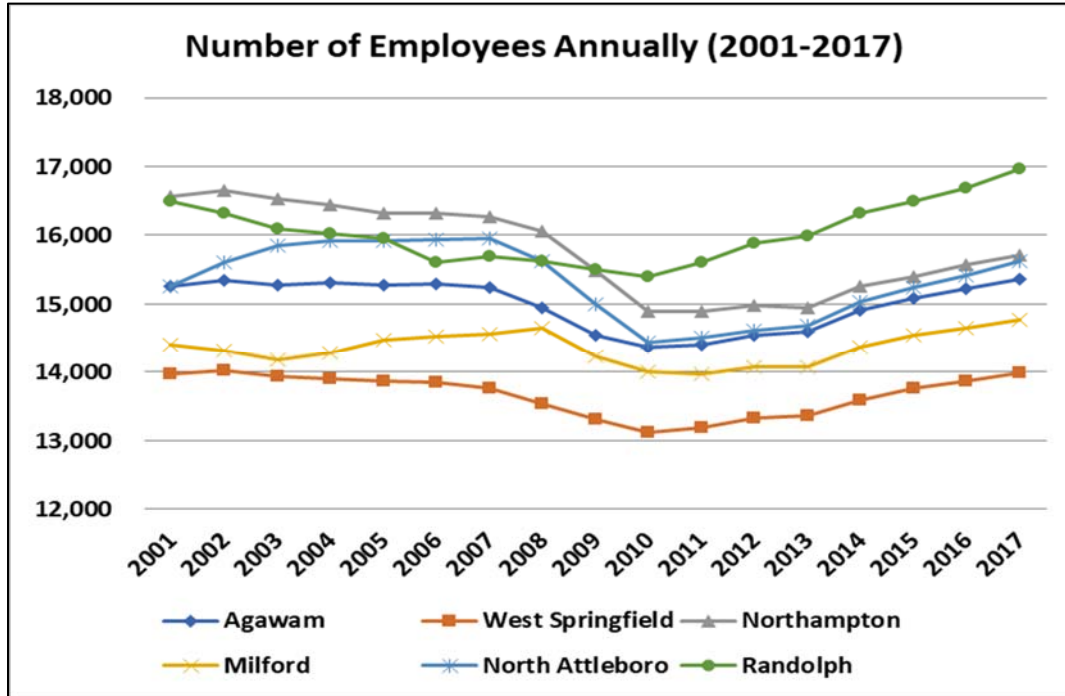
While not one of the top five sectors in terms of number of establishments, the Manufacturing sector is worthy of note for two reasons. First, the Pioneer Valley Regional Employment Board has identified Advanced Manufacturing as a strategic growth industry in the region and one which is experiencing shortages in skilled labor. Second, Agawam and other businesses operating in this sector report strong markets and growth potential notwithstanding their challenges in finding skilled labor.

Agawam had 49 Manufacturing sector establishments in 2017. Neighboring West Springfield had 59 establishments, leading the comparable group, and North Attleborough had 51. A more detailed look at the manufacturing sector in Agawam is presented below.

Distribution of Establishments by Industry (2017)							
Industry	Agawam	West Springfield	North-ampton	Milford	North Attleboro	Randolph	Statewide
Agriculture							916
Mining							90
Construction	87	92	57	129	118	69	21,532
Manufacturing	49	59	29	31	51	33	6,793
Utilities	4	3		3			511
Wholesale Trade	47	65	31	43	52	36	14,394
Retail Trade	82	182	162	126	201	77	23,718
Transportation & Warehousing	22	41	14	19	16	35	4,911
Information	8	19	32	16	19	12	5,502
Finance and Insurance	30	54	45	34	29	27	10,345
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	17	50	29	23	30	19	7,034
Professional & Technical Services	72	83	166	100	85	47	33,211
Management of Co's & Entrprises	4		5	7			1,464
Administrative & Waste Services	63	58	41	47	48	40	12,847
Educational Services			47			8	4,704
Health Care and Social Assistance	251	434	333	210	100	344	59,241
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	15	13	30	14	21	6	3,989
Accommodation & Food Services	55	102	106	82	69	60	17,050
Other Srvs, Except Public Admin	66	91	113	91	83	62	21,568
Public Administration			49	25			4,257
Unexplained Variance	25	36	4	9	21	10	-
Total	897	1,382	1,293	1,009	943	885	254,077
Source: EOLWD. (2018). <i>Employment and Wages (ES-202)</i> , Labor Market Information at http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/lmi_es_a.asp , accessed 1/7/19							

Average Monthly Employees by Manufacturing Subsector (2018)							
	Food Manufacturing	Printing and related support activities	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	Nonmetallic mineral product manufactruing	Machinery Manufacturing	Transportion Equipment Manufacturing	Miscellaneous
2001	n/a	n/a	543	n/a	269	83	11
2002	n/a	n/a	516	n/a	233	74	n/a
2003	n/a	n/a	591	n/a	199	71	n/a
2004	n/a	183	627	n/a	211	71	n/a
2005	n/a	254	638	77	203	76	n/a
2006	n/a	297	650	80	199	85	n/a
2007	n/a	306	656	80	215	83	n/a
2008	512	290	676	80	221	85	n/a
2009	526	257	584	n/a	181	83	n/a
2010	550	242	602	72	225	84	n/a
2011	651	231	628	n/a	245	92	15
2012	593	214	660	73	245	93	18
2013	585	224	675	73	217	90	16
2014	635	194	672	70	211	90	n/a
2015	619	207	685	70	215	87	10
2016	603	191	683	n/a	215	89	10
2017	635	167	726	n/a	211	97	12
Source:	EOLWD. (2018). Employment and Wages (ES-202), Labor Market Information						

Manufacturing Subsectors (2001-2017) in Agawam by Number of Establishments							
	Food Manufacturing	Printing and related support activities	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	Nonmetallic mineral product manufactruing	Machinery Manufacturing	Transportion Equipment Manufacturing	Miscellaneous
2001	n/a	n/a	21	n/a	9	3	3
2002	n/a	n/a	21	n/a	9	3	n/a
2003	n/a	n/a	19	n/a	8	3	n/a
2004	n/a	3	19	n/a	7	3	n/a
2005	n/a	4	19	3	7	3	n/a
2006	n/a	4	16	3	7	3	n/a
2007	n/a	5	17	3	7	3	n/a
2008	4	4	17	3	6	3	n/a
2009	4	3	17	n/a	6	3	n/a
2010	4	3	17	3	7	3	n/a
2011	4	3	19	n/a	7	3	3
2012	4	3	20	3	7	3	3
2013	5	3	21	3	6	3	3
2014	5	4	20	3	6	3	n/a
2015	5	5	19	3	6	3	3
2016	5	5	18	n/a	6	3	3
2017	5	5	17	n/a	6	3	3
Source:	EOLWD. (2018). Employment and Wages (ES-202), Labor Market Information						



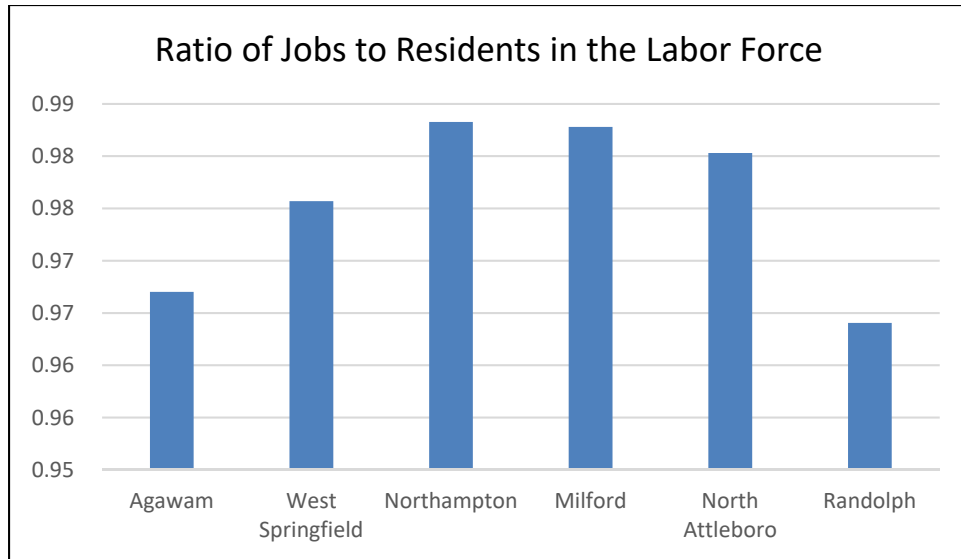
Number of Employees Annually Between 2001 and 2017							
	Agawam	West Springfield	Northampton	Milford	North Attleboro	Randolph	Statewide
2017	15,361	13,989	15,713	14,780	15,620	16,973	3,513,900
2016	15,223	13,864	15,572	14,657	15,421	16,691	3,448,400
2015	15,093	13,766	15,405	14,547	15,251	16,494	3,417,600
2014	14,907	13,597	15,259	14,380	15,034	16,321	3,328,700
2013	14,594	13,369	14,942	14,070	14,683	15,998	3,266,600
2012	14,549	13,321	14,981	14,076	14,620	15,894	3,241,400
2011	14,414	13,189	14,900	13,968	14,519	15,601	3,208,300
2010	14,367	13,125	14,903	13,999	14,449	15,406	3,183,800
2009	14,540	13,312	15,493	14,229	14,991	15,507	3,207,500
2008	14,942	13,538	16,060	14,655	15,623	15,632	3,270,200
2007	15,243	13,765	16,263	14,568	15,964	15,703	3,266,700
2006	15,291	13,846	16,317	14,526	15,941	15,611	3,230,800
2005	15,280	13,862	16,324	14,483	15,929	15,955	3,215,300
2004	15,309	13,909	16,443	14,278	15,924	16,020	3,224,700
2003	15,272	13,929	16,534	14,184	15,853	16,090	3,233,600
2002	15,340	14,020	16,648	14,321	15,611	16,320	3,248,500
2001	15,262	13,968	16,560	14,416	15,264	16,489	3,260,700

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. (2018). Labor force and Unemployment data available at http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/lmi_lur_a.asp

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS BY SECTOR (2016)

Projected Employment by Sector in 2026			
Agawam	Actual Employees in 2017	Projected Change by 2026	Projected Total 2026
Total, All Industries	12,166	7.40%	13,066
Agriculture		11.70%	-
Mining		7.30%	-
Construction	679	4.50%	710
Manufacturing	2,164	11.40%	2,411
Utilities	287	-4.20%	275
Wholesale Trade	766	2.00%	781
Retail Trade	925	2.40%	947
Transportation and Warehousing	250	6.00%	265
Information	41	1.00%	41
Finance and Insurance	245	3.10%	253
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	98	4.10%	102
Professional and Technical Services	633	13.80%	720
Management of Companies and Enterprises	47	5.80%	50
Administrative and Waste Services	663	7.50%	713
Educational Services		11.90%	-
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,600	13.10%	1,810
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,402	9.00%	1,528
Accommodation and Food Services	834	8.50%	905
Other Services, Except Public Administration	376	5.80%	398
Source:	EOLWD. (2018). Industry Employment Projection		

As detailed above, just over half of all Agawam residents are currently employed in five industry sectors during the period from 2012-2016: Health Care and Social Assistance; Retail Trade; Educational Services; Manufacturing; and Finance & Insurance. Yet the largest growth is projected in Manufacturing. This is also an area that the Pioneer Valley Regional Employment Board has identified as one which is experiencing shortages in skilled labor. This dichotomy presents an opportunity for Agawam to take advantage of significant growth through training and support programs to develop and retain both businesses and employees in this sector.



Agawam Residents in the Labor Force (1995-2016)	
Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	
1995	18,407
2000	18,351
2005	18,449
2010	19,707
2015	19,264
2016	19,171

LOCAL REVENUES

Finding 8: *There is a healthy non-residential tax base, as Agawam has been deliberate in its efforts to shift the tax burden away from residents. Agawam's financial position trends toward increasing levels of Free Cash and Stabilization Fund balances, which is indicative of a well-managed operating budget. While Agawam has chosen to shift its tax burden away from residential taxpayers and towards commercial, industrial, and personal (CIP) property taxpayers, this does not appear to undermine its ability to maintain a healthy industrial sector. Shifting this burden to the maximum, however, does create exposure to unexpected increases in residential tax bills during an economic downturn that reduces CIP tax values.*

Taxable property is divided into five property categories by local tax assessors, including residential, open space, commercial, industrial, and personal property. Personal property consists of non-real estate, tangible assets. These can include utility poles, underground conduit, lights in parking lots, machinery, tools and equipment (except for tools used by tradesmen), furniture, and merchandise, among others.

The total assessed valuation for the purpose of property taxes equals the full and fair market value of the all real property in a community, and its associated personal property, as determined by the local assessor. The assessed value multiplied by the tax rate in a given fiscal year determines the amount of property tax to be paid by the property owners in that year. The amount of property tax revenue to be received by a municipality is known as the tax levy.

PROPERTY TAX LEVY GENERALLY

Across all five property categories combined, Agawam's property tax levy totaled \$59,676,680 in fiscal year 2018, a figure that is in the middle of the range of the comparison communities, although also the second lowest. North Attleborough was the lowest total property tax levy in the group at \$50,440,247. Randolph was the highest at \$62,390,392.

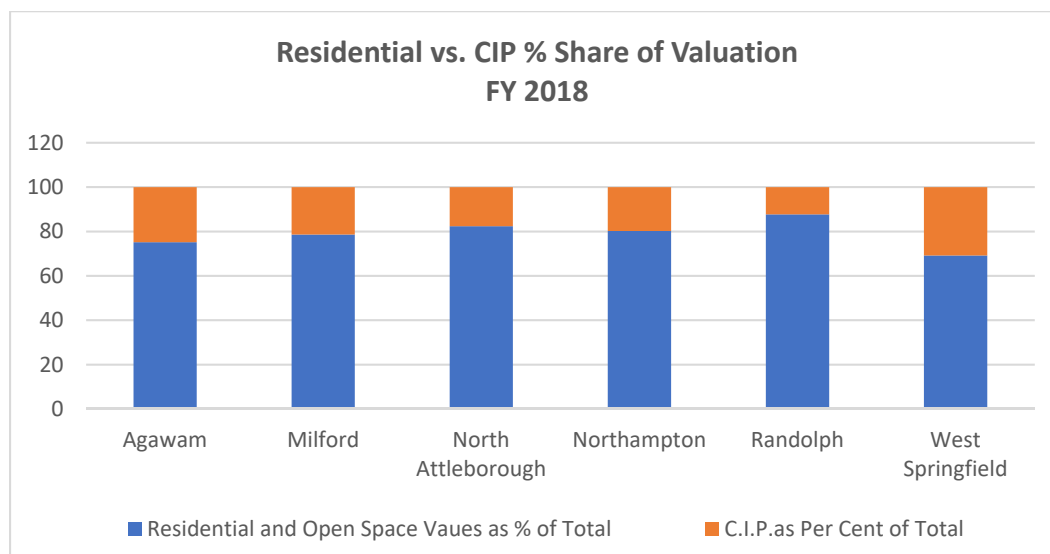
Most communities in Massachusetts support local operations through a combination of property taxes, an annual distribution of state government revenues (known as "state aid"), and a variety of other local receipts and available funds. In Agawam, the Town government had total revenues \$103,527,395 from all sources, and property taxes constituted 54.7% of these revenues. Only North Attleborough operated in less total revenue than Agawam.

Municipality	Total Property Tax Levy FY 2018	Total Revenues FY 2018	Levy Percent of Total Revenues
Agawam	56,676,680	103,527,395	54.7%
Milford	64,603,228	110,261,057	58.6%
North Attleborough	50,440,247	100,493,724	50.2%
Northampton	57,747,167	119,663,718	48.3%
Randolph	62,390,392	121,017,249	51.6%
West Springfield	61,426,661	111,792,662	54.9%

COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY (CIP)

Residential and CIP Share of Tax Valuations - FY 2018		
	Residential and Open Space Values as % of Total	C.I.P.as Percent of Total
Agawam	75.20	24.80
Milford	78.60	21.40
North Attleborough	82.40	17.60
Northampton	80.20	19.80
Randolph	87.70	12.30
West Springfield	69.20	30.80

In terms of tax valuations, 24.80% of total valuations were in the CIP categories of property in 2018. This is the second highest percentage among the comparable communities. 30.8% of valuations in West Springfield were in the CIP categories. Still, assessed as a straight percentage of assessed valuation, residential property in Agawam would generate 75.2% of property tax revenue.



However, state law in Massachusetts allows for local cities and towns to shift the burden of property taxes between residential and open space property classes (which are referred to broadly as Residential and the CIP classes). Known as a 'tax classification shift', the mechanism is frequently used to reduce the amount of the total tax levy borne by residential property taxes by increasing the amount borne by CIP taxpayers within a prescribed set of limits established by the MA Department of Revenue. The result is a dual tax rate: one rate for residential property owners and a different, higher tax rate for CIP property owners.

Agawam and three other comparable communities took advantage of this option to shift property tax burden from residential taxpayers by some percentage in FY 2018. Only Northampton and North

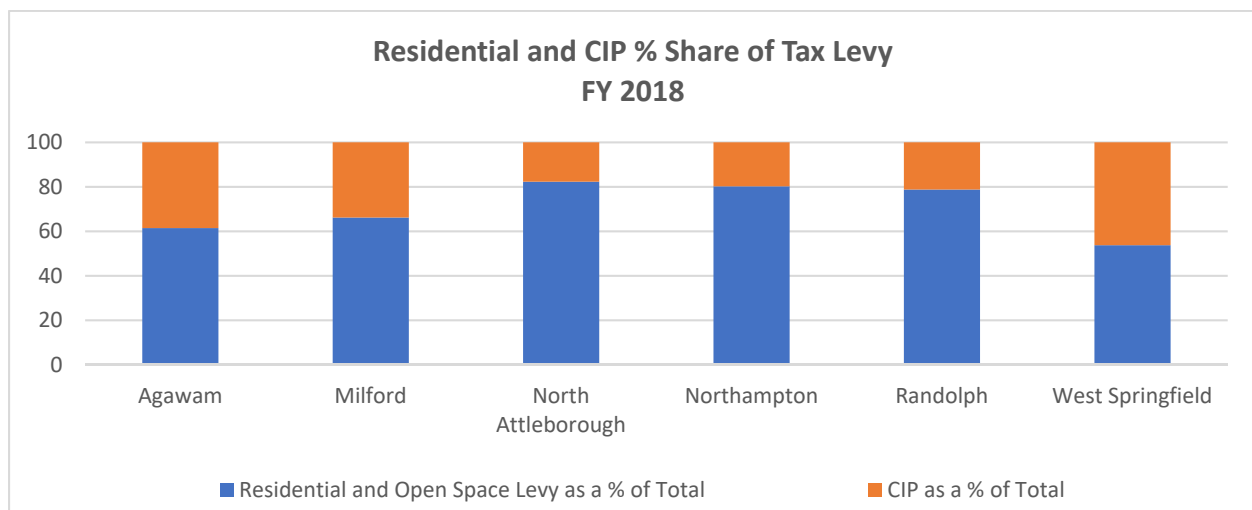
Attleborough chose not to employ the shift and as a result established a uniform tax rate across all five property classes.

Residential and CIP Percent Share of Tax Levy - FY 2018		
	Residential and Open Space Levy as a % of Total	CIP as a % of Total
Agawam	61.49	38.51
Milford	66.24	33.76
North Attleborough	82.36	17.64
Northampton	80.22	19.78
Randolph	78.82	21.18
West Springfield	53.8	46.2

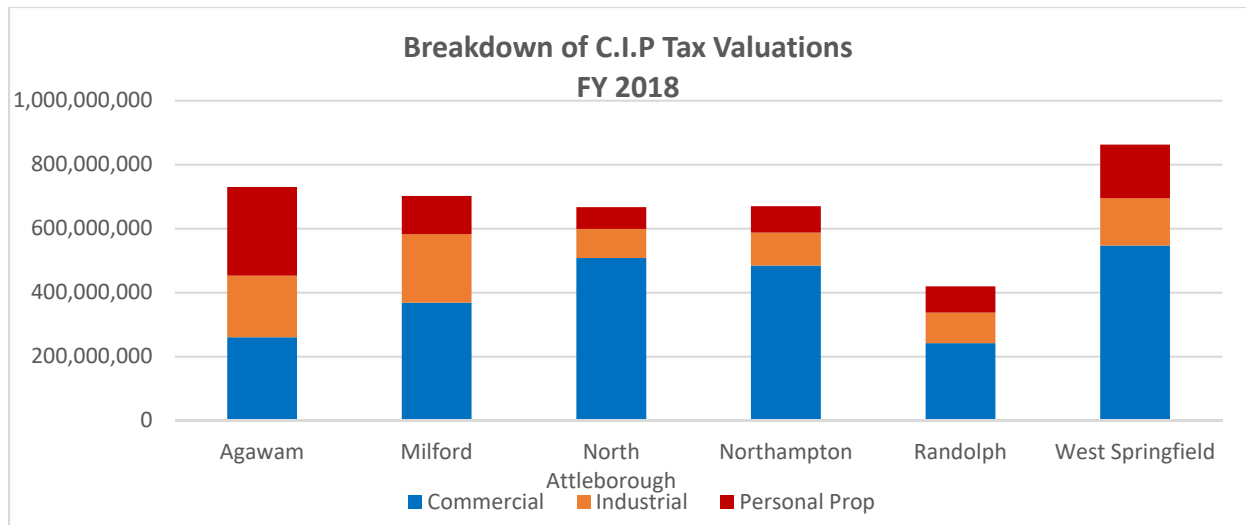
Therefore, while CIP properties in Agawam constituted 24.80% of the total taxable valuation in FY 2018, after employing the tax classification shift, 38.51% of the actual tax levy was charged to C.I.P. taxpayers. Conversely, the amount that would have otherwise been collected from residential owners dropped from 75.20% to 61.49%, which was the actual shared they paid.

In the comparable communities, only West Springfield had a lower percentage of residential share of tax levy after employing the tax classification shift. They shifted the residential burden from 69.2% to 53.8%.

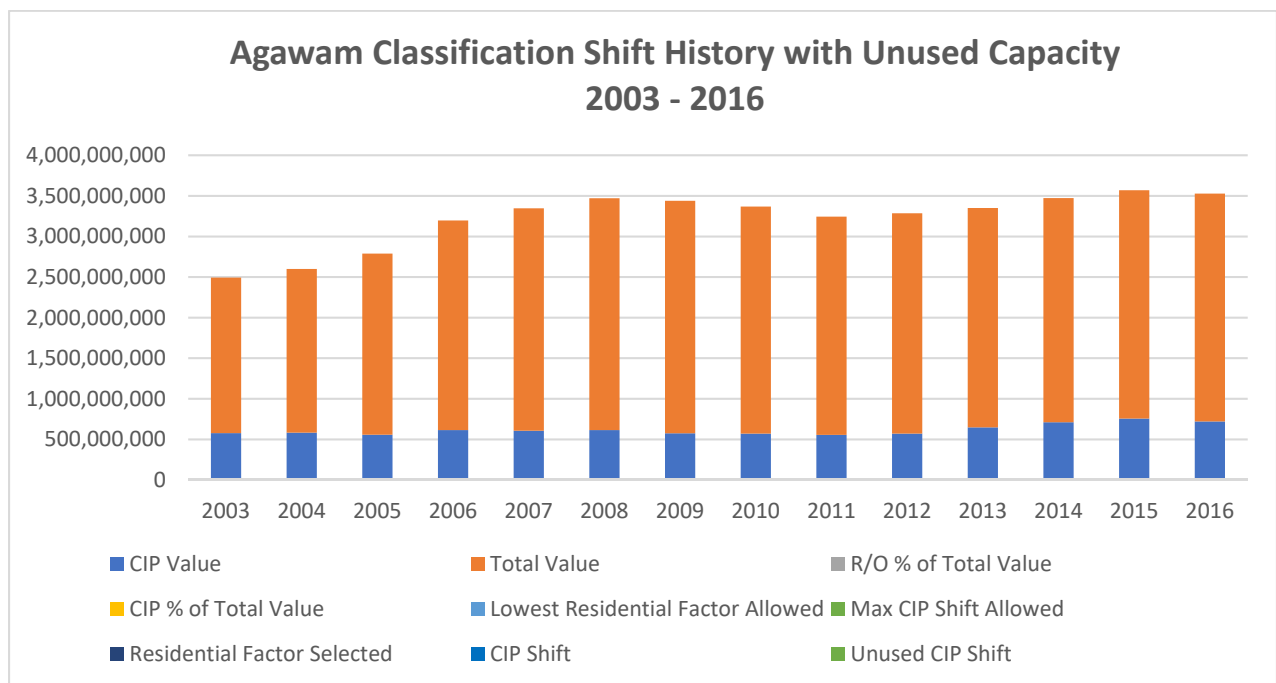
Moreover, only West Springfield had a lower Residential Percentage Share of the total tax levy in FY 2018 than Agawam. Agawam in turn is slightly below Milford and significantly below North Attleborough, Northampton, and Randolph.



Agawam was second only to West Springfield in terms of the taxable value of Commercial, Industrial, and Property. Of note, however, is the fact that in FY 2018 Agawam relied on the value of taxable Personal Property to the highest degree among the comparable communities.



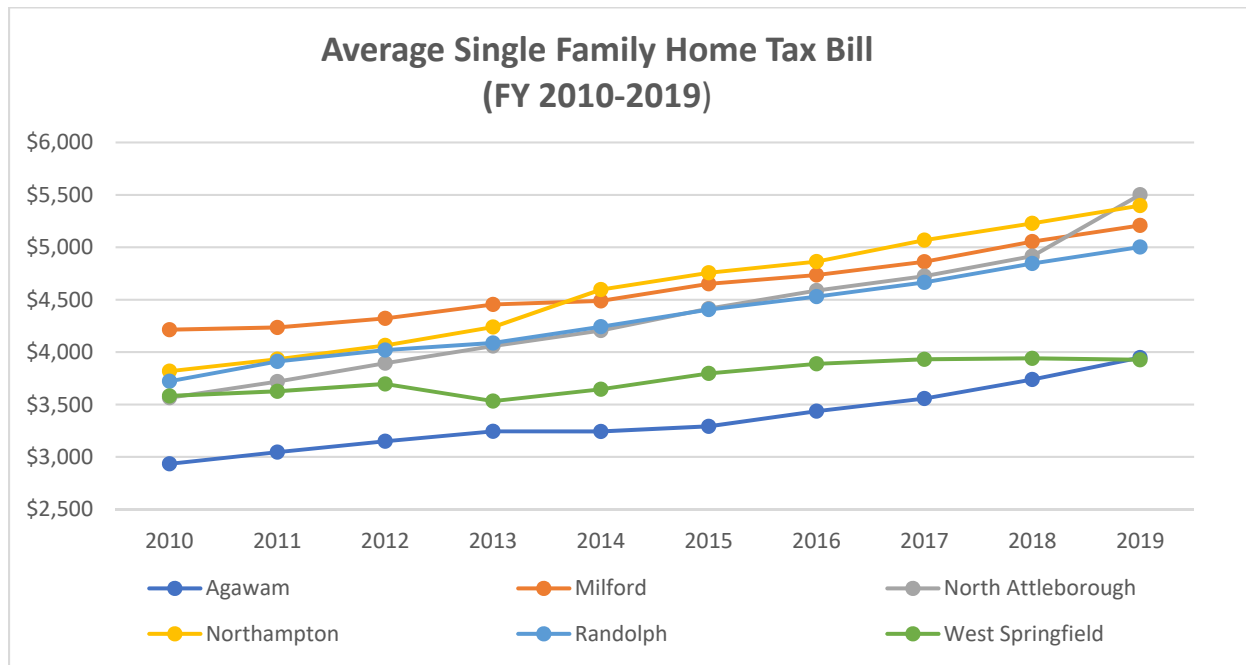
Agawam has historically shifted the property tax burden from residential taxpayers to CIP taxpayers by significant amounts. Shifting property tax burden at the maximum permitted under state law creates a risk of sudden, unplanned shift in tax burden back on to residents should CIP values decline sharply, for instance during a recession.



SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TAXES

Because Agawam is a mostly residential suburban community, residential property taxes remain a substantial portion of the Town's property tax levy. The average Single-Family Residence (SFR) tax bill therefore is a frequently used measure of the residential tax burden for comparison purposes between communities. The average SFR tax bill in any given community will be a function of the average SFR property valuation in that community and the ultimate tax rate for residential tax classes established in that community in that same year. Agawam's average single-family residential tax bill compares favorably

to all other communities in the survey group and, in fact, has consistently been the lowest until FY 2019 when it crept above West Springfield's (\$3,949 vs. \$3,928 in that fiscal year.)



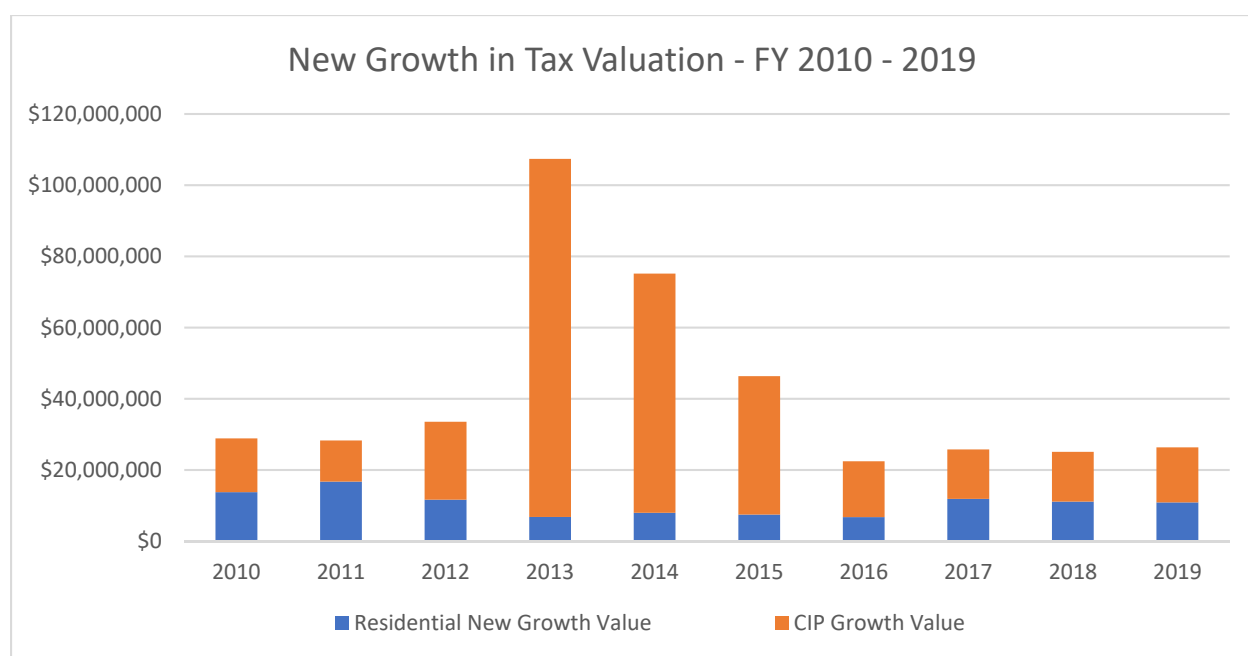
Year	Agawam	Milford	North Attleborough	Northampton	Randolph	West Springfield
2010	2,935	4,215	3,565	3,819	3,722	3,583
2011	3,047	4,236	3,720	3,933	3,912	3,627
2012	3,150	4,323	3,895	4,064	4,020	3,696
2013	3,245	4,455	4,059	4,240	4,087	3,533
2014	3,243	4,489	4,207	4,597	4,243	3,646
2015	3,292	4,652	4,416	4,757	4,407	3,798
2016	3,437	4,737	4,588	4,865	4,530	3,889
2017	3,558	4,863	4,726	5,069	4,666	3,932
2018	3,740	5,055	4,917	5,230	4,847	3,941
2019	3,949	5,210	5,503	5,399	5,003	3,928

Average Single Family Home Tax Value						
Year	Agawam	Milford	North Attleborough	Northampton	Randolph	West Springfield
2010	226,851	299,354	341,432	302,155	267,015	223,945
2011	217,672	278,342	317,391	303,473	252,901	216,923
2012	218,722	267,330	318,502	304,422	250,810	214,267
2013	208,040	262,841	317,635	297,323	235,585	214,878
2014	208,562	253,768	317,766	298,669	233,513	222,204
2015	209,119	265,062	336,053	301,078	243,501	223,562
2016	212,415	275,750	347,036	301,040	260,479	228,920
2017	218,128	289,643	357,462	303,705	288,376	230,619
2018	225,165	305,241	368,592	306,908	305,253	231,128
2019	237,154	315,021	386,414	310,814	333,983	231,591

NEW GROWTH IN PROPERTY TAXES THROUGH DEVELOPMENT

The total maximum amount of property tax that may be levied in any given fiscal year is a function of the total maximum levy the immediately preceding year, plus 2.5%, plus an additional amount certified by the MA DOR based on new taxable property value created through the development, upgrade, or enhancement of property (referred to a 'New Growth Revenue".) New Growth Revenue is often an important component in a community's efforts to support and enhance levels of service in a community. A growth in new revenue attributable to the creation of additional tax value in the CIP property classes is often viewed as particularly desirable in that the conventional wisdom is that these properties do not impact the demand for local services to the extent that residential users may.

Agawam has a consistent history of New Growth Revenues from development, improvement, and enhancement of property. It enjoys a reasonable mixture of new growth in valuation from both residential and CIP tax classes.



PROPERTY TAX RATES – FISCAL YEAR 2019

It is considered difficult to compare tax rates between communities since the tax rate is the result of not only the size of the total tax levy in a given year, but also the total valuation of property within that community, by which it is divided to determine the rate per thousand dollars of value needed to raise the amount to be levied. It is further complicated by the fact that each community makes a unique local policy decision as to whether to shift properties taxes between residential taxpayers and CIP taxpayers and, if so, by how much. Nevertheless, the comparison is often made between communities that are considered comparable.

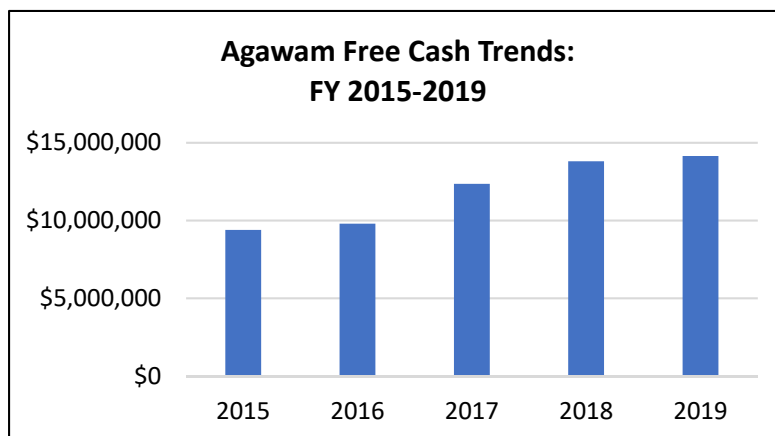
Agawam's FY 2019 residential tax rate of \$16.65 per \$1,000 is comfortably in the range of Milford, Northampton, and West Springfield, but higher than the communities of North Attleborough and Randolph.

Agawam's FY 2019 CIP tax rate of \$31.92 per \$1,000 is the second highest among the comparable community group, second only to West Springfield (\$32.55) and slightly higher than Milford and Randolph. The lowest FY 2019 CIP tax rates in the comparable community group occur in Northampton and North Attleborough, neither of which has a history of substantially shifting tax burden onto CIP tax classes.

FY 2019 Tax Rates						
	Agawam	Milford	North Attleborough	Northampton	Randolph	West Springfield
Residential/OS	16.65	16.54	14.24	17.37	14.98	16.96
C.I.P.	31.92	30.88	17.48	17.37	29.01	32.55

LIQUIDITY AND FINANCIAL RESERVES

The term 'Free Cash' is a term of art in Massachusetts municipal finance and is a measure of the amount of cash on hand to support local operations if necessary, perhaps due to an unanticipated event or emergency. Generally speaking, 'Free Cash' is the Unencumbered Fund Balance for the city or town's



General Fund, minus certain outstanding accounts payable and contractual obligations that remain payable. It is an amount that is certified annually by the MA DOR for each community in the Commonwealth after the close of a fiscal year and is thereupon available to a community in the new fiscal year.

Agawam has a positive trend in terms of annual growth in certified Free Cash. The amount certified for FY

2015 was \$9,395,223. For comparison purposes, this amounted to 11.15% of operating expenses in that year. By FY 2019, the amount of Free Cash certified was \$14,149,177, which amounts to 14.61% of operating expenses.

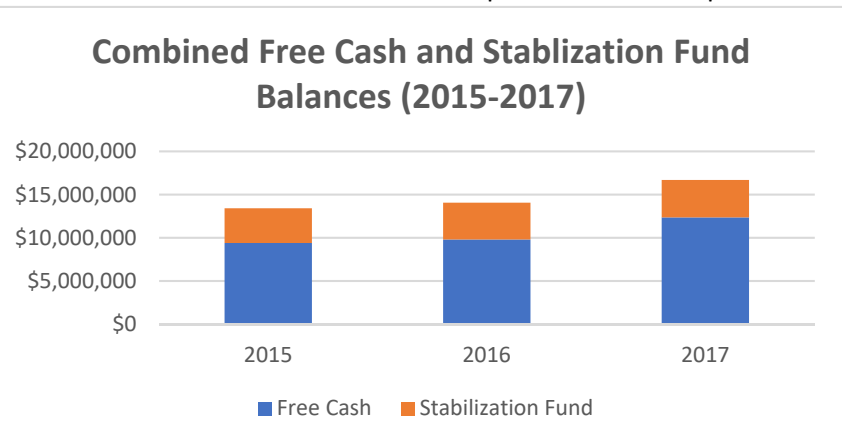
A second, widely used measure of financial reserves for cities and towns in Massachusetts is the fund balance in its Stabilization Fund. A Stabilization Fund is a dedicated reserve fund authorized under state law into which a community may appropriate funds which remain in the fund from year to year, together with accumulated interest, and are available for appropriation to meet an extraordinary need. Unlike Free Cash, where a mathematical calculation is made each year by the MA DOR and will fluctuate according with annual financial performance, the balance in the Stabilization Fund, together with earned interest, remains available from year to year.

Data for Stabilization Fund Balances is available through 2017. Agawam's reported Stabilization Fund balance for 2017 was \$4,334,767.

The combined total for Free Cash and Stabilization Fund for Agawam at the close of FY 2017 was \$16,694,465, amounting to a combined reserve of 18.28% of operating expenses in that fiscal year.

Free Cash and Stabilization Fund Balances - FY 2015- 2017				
	Free Cash	Stabilization Fund	Total	Combined Percent of Operating Budget
2015	9,395,223	4,031,344	13,426,567	15.80%
2016	9,802,923	4,268,106	14,071,029	15.96%
2017	12,359,698	4,334,767	16,694,465	18.28%
Source: MA DOR, Division of Local Services Municipal Database				

In looking at combined Free Cash certified for FY 2019 and reported Stabilization Fund balances as of the close of FY 2017, Agawam's combined total of 19.29% fares well in comparison with comparable communities. Only Milford and Northampton reported higher combined balances of these financial reserves as a percent of operating expenses: 27.36% in the case of Milford and 24.76% percent in the case of Northampton. West Springfield reported combined totals of 15.89%, while North Attleborough and Randolph reported 4.14% and 15.89%, respectively.



Comparison of Free Cash (2019) and Stabilization Fund (2017) Balances						
	Agawam	Milford	North Attleborough	Northampton	Randolph	West Springfield
Free Cash (2019)	14,149,171	3,869,569	1,078,467	4,250,342	492,390	7,088,693
Per Cent of Operating	14.61%	3.61%	1.16%	4.27%	0.48%	6.63%
Stabilization Fund (2017)	4,334,797	24,450,721	2,530,718	19,919,155	5,758,630	9,300,308
Per Cent of Operating	4.68%	23.75%	2.98%	20.49%	5.98%	9.26%
Total	18,483,968	28,320,290	3,609,185	24,169,497	6,251,020	16,389,001
Per Cent of Operating	19.29%	27.36%	4.14%	24.76%	6.46%	15.89%
Source: MA DOR, Division of Local Services Municipal Database						

APPENDICES: RELATED STUDIES AND REPORTS

Finding 9: *An Interdepartmental Technical Review and Permitting team is in place. Individual participants express support for the approach and comment that there has been an overall benefit to their departmental operations in terms of information sharing and decision-making. There is a lack of strategic understanding of the value of expediting permitting and decision making in and of itself and proactive support and problem solving for the local business community.*

Finding 10: *Agawam has identified Mixed Use Development as a land use tool which might lead to the redevelopment of several vacant or underperforming development sites in the community. The Town has amended its Zoning By-laws to codify this particular land use development tool but faces challenges in terms of the aggregation of key parcels held in separate ownership and external market conditions.*

Several earlier planning studies and reports revealing economic trends in Agawam were reviewed by the project team during the course of this project, of which the most relevant and recent are:

- Town of Agawam, Housing Production Plan FY 2018-2022, prepared by JM Goldson Community Preservation and Plan (2017)
- Town of Agawam, Comprehensive Economic Development Plan, prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (2010)
- Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint 2018-2022, prepared jointly by the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. and the Franklin County Regional Employment Board, Inc. (2018)

This section summarizes findings and recommendations from those reports relevant to the Economic Trends Analysis presented in this report.

AGAWAM HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN, 2018-2022 (2017)

This housing plan was prepared for the Town of Agawam with funding provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Planning Assistance Toward Housing Program and incorporates an earlier 2016 Housing Needs Assessment prepared under a separate contract. The plan lays out a variety of goals related to housing and comments on a variety of underlying economic trends. Among the notable goals articulate are:

1. Encourage multifamily units in mixed income housing developments utilizing smart growth principles in area of town that are or could be made walkable and present a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial uses.
2. Establish resources for lower income homeowners to undertake housing rehabilitation efforts.
3. Provide foreclosure assistance to homeowners.
4. Include affordable housing development for Agawam's households with very low family income.
5. Foster conversion of larger, existing homes for affordable housing opportunities for larger families and households with very low-income levels.
6. Foster development of affordable and accessible housing units for disabled and elderly residents.
7. Create 300 or more units of housing eligible for the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) over a 5-year period ending in 2022.

Among the more notable local strategies suggested in the plan to accomplish these goals are:

1. Strengthen and building local government capacity to undertaken housing activities.

2. Establish zoning for Mixed Use Business Districts and Planned Unit Developments (PUD) with inclusionary zoning provisions
3. Consider zoning amendments to allow Infill Development on undersized lots, allow for Accessory Dwelling Units,
4. Focus potential development interest on underutilized and vacant commercial sites, such as the Walnut St. Extension area
5. Foster the development 'Age Targeted Housing' and create resources to support older residents preferring to 'age in place' and remain in Agawam.

The plan comments on many of the same trends identified this Economic Trends Analysis:

1. Rapid residential development and population growth throughout the second half of the 20th century during which it grew from 7,095 people in 1930 to 28,143 people in 2000. Growth has slowed dramatically since that time and the population is expected to grow by approximately 3% through 2030, when the project population will reach 29,259.
2. The greatest increase in population through 2030 will be in the age groups over sixty years of age, creating demand and pressure on affordable and barrier free housing:
 - a. 60-69 year old group will grow by 25% by 2030
 - b. 70-79 year old group will grow by 49%
 - c. 80 year old and over group will grow by 34%
3. In its racial makeup Agawam is largely white/Caucasian although there is a small trend towards increased diversity. In 2000, 96.7% of all residents were counted as 'White' by the US Census 2016 This percentage dropped to 93.4% in 2014 using the American Community Survey average estimate for that year. Meanwhile Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian residents increased their percentage shares of the population by 0.3%, 3.8% and 1.3%, respectively.
4. Single individuals living alone counted for 30% of all households in Agawam in 2010.
5. 40% of households in Agawam have family income that is less than 80% of regional median family income.
6. 800 households were severely 'housing cost-burdened'
7. Agawam's residential housing choices are largely in the form of detached Single-Family Homes. Of the 9,836 residential parcels in Agawam:
 - a. Single Family Residential units constitute 78% of the total parcels;
 - b. Condominiums represent 16%; and
 - c. Apartment Buildings represent 0.6%

TOWN OF AGAWAM COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2010)

The Town engaged the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), the regional planning agency serving Agawam and 42 communities in the Pioneer Valley region of Massachusetts, to prepare a comprehensive economic development plan for the Town. The plan was undertaken against the backdrop of Agawam as a relatively built out residential community with a healthy industrial/commercial tax base, but with a shortage of significant tracts of land under existing zoning to support further economic development. A stated goal of the 2010 CED, therefore, was to examine potential amendments to the Town's Zoning By-law to support potential development and redevelopment of five designated priority development areas:

- Walnut Street Extension area
- Tennis Road
- Garden/Shoemaker St.

- South Feeding Hills area
- Bondi's Island

Based on feedback from the public and from town officials, the 2010 Agawam CED led the town to focus its immediate interests on the Walnut St. Extension area (including redevelopment of the Games and Lanes property, a designated brownfield site) and the Tennis Road area. With respect to the Walnut St. Extension area the 2010 Agawam CED noted potential development challenges stemming from multiple owners and the likelihood that costs associated with aggregating individual parcels might be prohibitive in terms of large-scale redevelopment. Nevertheless, a local strategy of redeveloping this underutilized area as a new 'Town Center' with appropriate design standards for architecture, landscape, and pedestrian movement appears to exist. In 2015, the Town Council adopted an amendment to the Town's Zoning By-law to create a Mixed-Use Business district in the Walnut St. Extension area, allowing a mixture residential, commercial, and industrial uses and including several 'bonuses' in terms of height and lot coverage to support development of affordable housing. A successful redevelopment along these lines would likely create new housing choices for both the projected growth in older residents between now and 2030 and the presumed desire to attract younger residents choosing to work in the region, particularly if the redevelopment is guided by 'smart growth' principles, including a strong sense of 'place' and walkability, and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to employment centers in the immediate area.

Strong community support is said to exist for the development of local retail businesses along Tennis Rd. The strategy cited with the 2010 Agawam CED is to develop a Planned Unit Development (PUD), a development model which brings together civic uses, retail, and commercial uses, and creation of open space amenities. The PUD development concept is envisioned to provide linkage to nearby elderly housing and future age targeted housing that will become increasingly important to residents as the overall population of Agawam continues to age.

From a transportation standpoint, the Agawam CED acknowledges that Agawam has traditionally benefited from superior connections to the nearby Metropolitan Springfield but also the larger Connecticut River corridor, including Hartford, Connecticut, via Interstate 91. This connection explains both the success of Agawam in its residential growth in the second half of the 20th century as well as the success of its industrial sector, which outperforms the larger Pioneer Valley over time. It is felt, however, that that superior transportation advantage is increasingly constrained by traffic congestion on local roads and by bottlenecks at bridges crossing the both the Connecticut and Westfield Rivers separating it from I-91. Route 57, a major east/west four lane divided highway in Agawam, has been one of the most significant such connections passing over the Connecticut River via the South End Bridge. The four lane Route 57 continues westward to the intersection Route 187. The Towns of Agawam and Southwick had long advocated for the widening of Route 57 further westward into Southwick. However, that project was placed on hold by the MA DOT in 2005, and its future is uncertain. Meanwhile, Route 57's six interchanges continue to provide access to I-91.

Municipal water is supplied by the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission from its nearby water treatment plant and is delivered wholesale to the Agawam Water Commission, which owns and operates the water distribution system delivering the water to its municipal customers. The Town has a contracted supply capacity of 1.5 billion gallons of water annually. While the 2010 Agawam CED placed Agawam's actual annual consumption of water at 1.3 billion gallons in 2007, the more recent 2018 Housing Production Plan cited annual consumption of 1.42 billion gallons as of 2018.

Similarly, Agawam's wastewater is delivered to the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission for primary and secondary treatment, prior to its discharge into the Connecticut River. There is an extensive wastewater collection system serving at least 88% of the community. The largest area of unserved geography is in the Town's south west corner, which is commented upon as a constraint to development in the Agawam CED. The Town, however, had begun a phased approach to bringing the wastewater collection system to this neighborhood and addressing related system constraints such as pump stations in the process.

Neither the 2010 Agawam CED or the 2018 Agawam Housing Production Plan mention either water supply capacity or wastewater disposal limits as a constraint to growth and economic development. To the extent that constraints exist, they likely lie in the existing water distribution and wastewater collection systems.

PIONEER VALLEY LABOR MARKET BLUEPRINT (2018)

The Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint, prepared jointly by the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. and the Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board, Inc., was released in 2018. Regional employment boards, sometimes referred to as Workforce Investment Boards, are required under federal law as a precondition for state governments to participate in federal funding for workforce development and job training. Agawam lies within the planning and service delivery area of the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County. The blueprint seeks to identify industries that represent the most significant growth opportunities in the Pioneer Valley, and to match available workforce training and educational assets in the region to the task of assuring that an adequately trained workforce is available to support employment in industries that project employment growth.

Based on an assessment of the labor needs of employers in the Pioneer Valley and the projected shortfalls in work force supply to meet this demand, the PV Labor Blueprint identified the following three industries as most important to the economic success of the Pioneer Valley region in the future:

1. Health Care and Social Assistance
2. Education Services
3. Advanced Manufacturing

The data developed during this project indicate that large numbers of Agawam residents are currently employed in these three critical sectors. In fact, these three sectors deemed critical to the economy of the region account for three of the top five employment sectors for Agawam residents. Together with the Retail and Finance sectors, these five sectors employ more than half of Agawam residents employed in the regional work force.

Notably, in the areas of Health and Social Assistance and Manufacturing, median wages for Agawam residents lag the statewide average. In a future where shortfalls are projected for health care and social assistance workers, this would suggest that a concerted training program would open career advancement opportunities for many workers employed in these sectors and with that advancements, higher wages.

In the areas of Education, Retail, and Finance, Agawam residents earn median wages above the statewide median for earnings in those sectors, suggesting that Agawam residents are well positioned to participate in these industries into the future.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management in the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston was established in 2008 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all levels of government. The Center is funded by the Commonwealth and through fees charged for its services.



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