

CHAPTER ONE: THE PEOPLE

The importance of the study of population to the planning process cannot be over emphasized. People, as they grow or decline in numbers and family size, move, develop land, and abandon it, are the basis for planning. A useful plan is built on a sound foundation consisting of accurate information about the characteristics of the population; such as size and location. Many economic factors that influence township growth are located outside of the township; these factors can affect the size and location of the population. Many people are attracted to Burt Township, specifically Grand Marais, because of the excellent recreation opportunities that the area offers. In addition to the resident population, seasonal population increases affect the economy of the area. Planning makes a positive contribution to a township by evaluating existing facilities and determining the need for new ones. The first step in the process is to determine the population to be served.

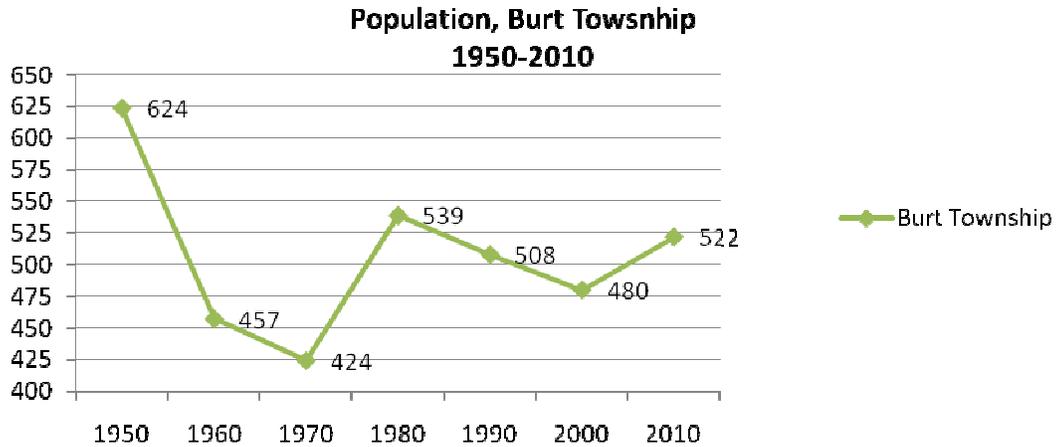
Demographic information is based on available Census data. In 2010, the Census Bureau mailed out a revised short form to American households. The traditional long form associated with the decennial census has been replaced by the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing national survey that produces period estimates rather than point in time estimates approximating April 1st of the census year. With the ACS, households across the nation are randomly sampled every month and data from the monthly surveys are accumulated and pooled over 12, 36, and 60 months. Even though the ACS contains most of the Census 2000 long form questions and the data are tabulated and packaged in a similar manner, ACS data are not the same as Census 2000 long form data. The ACS is based on a smaller sample, Census 2000 data collection is intended to represent a point in time whereas ACS data represent time periods consisting of 12, 36, or 60 months, the Census 2000 defines place of residence by “usual place of residence” while the ACS defines it by the place a person has resided for two months or more. The ACS is intended to describe a community’s characteristics based on a small sample of households surveyed every month. For smaller communities, such as Burt Township and Alger County, ACS data is only available on a 5-year basis and this data is used in the plan.

POPULATION TRENDS

During the 1970's Alger County and Burt Township, as well as other central Upper Peninsula geographic areas, experienced an increase in population. This increase reflected the natural trend of population redistribution from urban to rural areas. It is likely that population trends were rooted in a number of socio-economic factors. Many individuals desired large lots and the amenities of rural and semi-rural living. Others were likely influenced by the lower property taxes of rural townships. Prior to the 1980's, the cost of energy, mortgage money, vehicles, and other factors stimulated new construction of homes in rural areas. The Township’s population had declined significantly since 1980; the Township’s population rebounded from 2000 to 2010, possibly due to an increase in the retired population.

Governmental Unit	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1950-2010	% Change 2000-2010
Burt Township	624	457	424	539	508	480	522	-16.3	+8.8
Alger County	10,007	9,250	8,568	9,225	8,972	9,862	9,601	-4.1	-2.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, years cited.



	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Burt Township	624	457 (-26.8)	424 (-7.2)	539 (+27.1)	508 (-5.75)	480 (-5.5)	522 (+8.8)
Alger County	10,007	9,250 (-7.6)	8,568 (-7.4)	9,225 (+7.7)	8,972 (-2.74)	9,862 (+9.9)	9,601 (-2.6)
Central U.P.	194,865	157,257 (+5)	165,744 (+10)	182,390 (+10)	177,692 (-2.58)	174,717 (-1.7)	172,429 (-1.3)
Michigan	6,371,766	7,823,194 (+23)	8,875,083 (+13)	9,258,344 (+4)	9,295,297 (+.40)	9,938,444 (+6.9)	9,883,640 (-0.6)
United States	150,697,361	179,325,671 (+19)	203,211,912 (+13)	226,504,825 (+11)	248,709,873 (+9.8)	281,421,906 (+13.2)	308,745,538 (+9.7)

Source: United States Bureau of the Census, years cited.

The central U.P. region consists of Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee and Schoolcraft Counties. The number in parenthesis is the percentage change in population over the previous decade.

The economic recession of the early 1980's adversely affected the distribution of population in rural areas. As the work force was reduced, people joining the labor force were unable to find employment locally. People left the area to seek employment elsewhere. During the 1980's, there was a reported 31 person decline in the number of residents. Alger County's population has decreased 2.6 percent since 2000, while the population of the Central U.P. has decreased by 1.3 percent. In Burt Township, the population trend has been one of decline, reversal, decline and reversal.

AGE CHARACTERISTICS

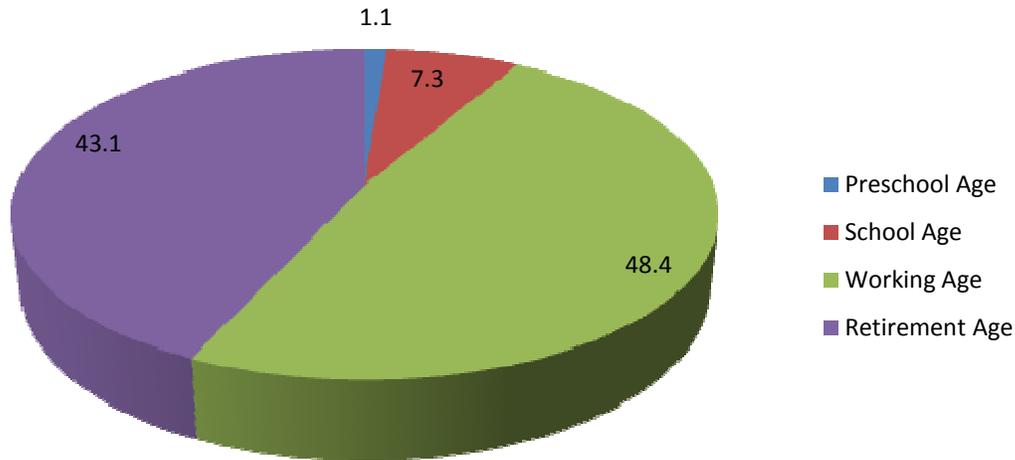
The age of the residents of an area may indicate emerging needs for a new facility or new facilities, both public and private. Age categories were altered from the 1980 and 1990 Censuses to the 2000 Census; 2010 data is also included.

Table 1-3 Population Distribution by Age Group, Burt Township, 1980 and 1990				
Age Group	1980		1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Preschool Age				
Under 5	15	3.0	29	6.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>6.0</i>
School Age				
5 to 17	113	21.0	86	17.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>21.0</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>17.0</i>
Working Age				
18 to 20	19	3.0	12	2.0
21 to 24	27	5.0	9	2.0
25 to 44	113	21.0	101	20.0
45 to 64	143	27.0	144	28.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>56.0</i>	<i>266</i>	<i>52.0</i>
Retirement Age				
65+	108	20	127	25
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>20.0</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>25.0</i>

Table 1-4 Population Distribution by Age Group, Burt Township, 2000 and 2010				
Age Group	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Preschool Age				
Under 5	6	1.3	6	1.1
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1.1</i>
School Age				
5 - 9	13	2.7	11	2.1
10 - 14	23	4.8	14	2.7
15 - 19	31	6.5	13	2.5
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>14.0</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>7.3</i>
Working Age				
20 - 24	31	6.5	6	1.1
25 - 34	8	1.7	19	3.6
35 - 44	44	9.2	35	6.7
45 - 54	83	17.3	71	13.6
55 - 59	53	11.0	58	11.1
60 - 64	37	7.7	64	12.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>53.4</i>	<i>253</i>	<i>48.4</i>
Retirement Age				
65 - 74	94	19.6	128	24.5
75 - 84	52	10.8	71	13.6
85 years and over	15	3.1	26	5.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>33.5</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>43.1</i>
Total	480		522	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Table DP-1: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics 2000 and 2010.

Burt Township, Population by Age Group, 2010



These figures illustrate the population characteristics of Burt Township are changing with the national aging trend. The median age in 2010 of all Township residents was 62.6 years compared to 56.7 in 2000, 48.1 in 1990 and 42.3 in 1980. Burt Township recorded the highest median age of all Alger County municipalities.

The age of the younger age group has an important impact from an educational standpoint. The number of school age children has decreased over the past two decades; the number of pre-school (under 5 years) has also decreased.

Burt Township's population is aging rapidly. In 1980 only 20.0 percent of the population was of retirement age; by 2010, over 43 percent of the population was 65 and older. As indicative of the drastically aging population of the Township, more than 80 percent of the Township's population is over the age of 45.

In recent decades, there has been a shift in population from the school age and working age population into the retired age group. This change has occurred almost universally across the country. The proportion of individuals in the preschool and school age groups continues to shrink which contributes declining school enrollment. Many residents in the working age population have been forced to move to areas with more employment opportunities. As the "baby boomers" begin to reach retirement age, a smaller proportion of the population is participating in the workforce. With a diminishing workforce, there are fewer people contributing to pension funds and additional programs that support retirees. As the number of working persons decreases in comparison to retirees, there is distress over the future of programs such as Social Security.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

The largest population concentration in Burt Township is centered near Grand Marais. In Burt Township, there are 522 persons with 771 housing units of which 333 are occupied. The majority (52.5 percent) of vacant housing units are used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, reflecting the recreational nature of the area.

Grand Marais is one of the main access points to the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and this fact is one of the major reasons why people have chosen to live in Grand Marais and the area immediately surrounding the community. People settle in Grand Marais because of the amenities that are offered there, including the natural beauty and the tranquility of the area.

EDUCATION

Educational and training requirements have been increasing for workforce entrants. Employers who previously required little in the way of formal education are, in many instances, now looking for employees with post-high school education, due to the complexity of the equipment and methods being utilized in the workplace. A highly trained, educated workforce is an asset in attracting employers to a community.

Table 1-5 Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Over, 2000 and 2005-2009, Burt Township and Alger County								
Educational Level	Burt Township				Alger County			
	2000		2005-2009		2000		2005-2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9 th Grade	11	3.1	7	2.2	428	6.0	306	4.3
9 th - 12 th Grade, No Diploma	34	9.5	9	2.8	895	12.5	694	9.7
High School Graduate	146	40.9	199	61.8	3,035	42.3	3,115	43.3
Some College, No Degree	77	21.6	34	10.6	1,463	20.4	1,262	17.5
Associate Degree	18	5.0	10	3.1	296	4.1	564	7.8
Bachelor Degree	46	12.9	58	18.0	760	10.6	914	12.7
Graduate or Professional Degree	25	7.0	5	1.6	292	4.1	336	4.7
High School Graduate or Higher	--	87.4	--	95.0	--	81.5	--	86.1
Bachelor Degree or Higher	--	19.9	--	19.6	--	14.7	--	17.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 and American Community Survey Estimates 2005-2009, Selected Social Characteristics.

According to 2005-2009 American Community Survey estimates, nearly 95.0 percent of the persons age 25 and over in Burt Township have at least a high school diploma; in 2000, nearly 88.0 percent of residents graduated from high school, while in 1980 only 15 percent of adults had graduated from high school. Burt Township has a higher percentage of high school graduates and adults who hold a bachelor’s degree or higher when compared to Alger County. Burt Township residents also maintain a higher level of graduate and professional degrees when compared to Alger County.

The increased number of college educated persons may be attributed to the educational levels of new residents who have decided to settle in the area, including retirees. Recent trends indicate that employers are now requiring their employees to have higher educational levels. The economy is increasingly global, with companies both acquiring goods and services in foreign countries and selling their products internationally. In this regard employers certainly want individuals who have higher levels of technical competence. Employers are also looking for potential workers with high-level proficiency in more general higher-order skills, including communication, computation, problem solving and critical thinking.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

An important population characteristic is the average household size and the number of households. Consistent with the national average, the household size has decreased from 1980 to 2010. The average size of a Burt Township household is significantly smaller than Alger County.

Table 1-6 Household Characteristics, Burt Township and Alger County, 1980-2010									
Area	Number of Households				Average Household Size				% Change in Size 1980-2010
	1980	1990	2000	2010	1980	1990	2000	2010	
Burt Township	209	202	243	333	2.76	2.52	1.98	1.57	-43.1
Alger County	3,279	3,337	3,785	3,898	2.38	2.34	2.35	2.20	-7.6

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, Table DP-1; 2000 Census of the Population and Housing, STF 1A, 1990 Census of the Population and Housing, STF 1.

Evaluation of the changes in household characteristics in a community can often provide additional insight regarding population trends. Household relationships reflect changing social values, economic conditions, and demographic changes, such as increased lifespan and the increasing mobility of our society. The Census defines a household as all persons who occupy a housing unit, i.e., a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any group or related or unrelated persons sharing living quarters. A *family* consists of a householder and one or more persons living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A *non-family household* can be one person living alone, or any combination of people not related by blood, marriage or adoption.

From 1990 to 2010, the number of households in the Township increased by 131, as the population increased by only 2.8 percent. The average household size decreased from 2.52 persons to 1.57 persons per household. Across the region and the United States, smaller household sizes have been the trend, largely due to an increase in the number of single-parent households. Non-family households have also increased from 63 to 200, with 192 householders living alone. There were 179 householders over the age of 65 living alone as reported in 2010. Overall, Alger County has experienced a modest increase in the number of households.

Household Type	BURT TOWNSHIP				ALGER COUNTY			
	1990	2000	2010	Percent 2010	1990	2000	2010	Percent 2010
Total Households	202	243	333	100.0	3,337	3,785	3,898	100.0
Family Households	139	149	133	39.9	2,435	2,587	2,479	63.6
Married Couple Family	121	132	117	35.1	2,041	2,157	2,035	52.2
Male Householder	4	4	7	2.1	112	143	168	4.3
Female Householder	14	13	9	2.7	282	287	276	7.1
Non-Family Household	63	94	200	60.1	902	1,198	1,419	36.4
Householder Living Alone	60	88	192	57.7	810	1,061	1,232	31.6
Householder 65 Years and Older	39	52	179	53.8	419	477	1,364	35.0

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of the Population and Housing, STF 1A, P003, P016 and H017A; 1990 Census of the Population and Housing, STF 1, 003, 016 and 035.

Of the 333 households in Burt Township, 35.1 percent are married couple households, while 57.7 percent are single person households, and 4.8 percent are single parent households. Of the 3,898 households in Alger County, 52.2 percent are married couple households, 31.6 percent are single person households and 11.4 percent are single parent households. Burt Township has a larger percentage of single person households than Alger County as a whole has.

ETHNIC COMPOSITION

The racial composition of Burt Township has been predominately white. In 1970, there were four persons reported as American Indian; in 1990 there were 10 individuals, only four residents reported as American Indian in 2010. The 2000 Census included a new question regarding two or more races; 9 Township residents reported in this category in 2000; in 2010, 12 residents selected this category. The racial composition of Burt Township's population is illustrated on the following table. No significant change in the racial diversity seems likely in the foreseeable future.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
White	420	530	498	468	500
Black or African American	0	--	0	--	2
American Indian	4	6	10	3	4
Asian	0	--	0	--	3
Other	0	3	0	--	1
Two or More Races	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	12

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, Table DP-1; 2000 Census of the Population, STF, 1A Table P006; 1980 Census of the Population, STF 1, Table 007.

INCOME

An examination of local income trends and comparison of local income information to state and national averages is useful in determining how much wealth is available locally to purchase goods and services. Income figures also reflect the wages and salaries paid to local workers.

Median incomes in the Upper Peninsula are significantly lower than statewide averages. While this can be offset somewhat by lower housing costs locally, the ability of local households to afford housing is impacted by these lower incomes.

Per capita income is determined by dividing the total reported income within a unit of government by its official population.

Median household incomes use incomes from all households including families. The median income figure is the middle value of the incomes reported.

Family incomes include those of married-couple families and other households made up of persons related by blood, marriage or adoption. The median income figure is the middle value of the incomes reported. This category does not include persons living alone or unrelated persons sharing living quarters or other non-family households. Income levels are presented in Table 4-10.

When measuring the income of an area, many statistics are used to examine the area. It is useful to compare local levels with those of broader geographic areas, and to study them over time. Income levels are depicted as follows:

Per capita income for Burt Township, which is a measure of total income divided by the population, was \$17,458 for 2005-2009; while Alger County's per capita income was \$20,207. Both figures were significantly lower than per capita income levels reported for the state, \$25,172.

The Township's median household income was substantially lower (\$27,891) for 2005-2009, than Alger County's reported median household income of \$41,234. Both figures were significantly lower than median household income figures reported statewide (\$63,805).

The poverty rate in Burt Township, according to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, was substantially higher than the state average, while Alger County had fewer persons below the poverty threshold than the state as a whole. Statewide 14.5 percent of all persons had incomes below the poverty level, as compared to 28.3 percent for Burt Township. Alger County's 2005-2009 poverty rates for individuals was 13.7 percent.

Poverty statistics in ACS products adhere to the standards specified by the Office of Management and Budget. The Census Bureau uses a set of dollar value thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. Poverty thresholds are applied on a national basis; they are not adjusted for local, state, or regional variations in the cost of living. The poverty level roughly represents three times the cost of an economy food plan designed by the Department of Agriculture. The poverty line for a family of four in 2011 was \$22,350.

More children under 18 years of age (63.7 percent) were in poverty in Burt Township than statewide, where the poverty rate for children was 19.8 percent. The same is true for elderly persons, where 8.8 percent of persons 65 and over in the Township had incomes below the poverty rate as compared to 8.5 percent for the State of Michigan. Within Alger County 10.1 percent of the elderly have incomes below the poverty level.

Of the 13 total female householder families in Burt Township, 46.2 percent reported incomes below the poverty rate. Approximately 60 percent of single mothers with children are below the poverty level.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Burt Township has become somewhat of a retirement community. According to local estimates, many former residents and young people desire to return to the area, but are unable due to a lack of employment opportunities.
- The population is aging at a rapid rate due to smaller families (low birth rates), retiree in-migration and longer life expectancies. The median age of Burt Township residents is 62.9 years, the highest among local governments of Alger County.
- If Alger County's population continues to decline over the next ten years, many communities may consider consolidation of services to save money and to continue to maintain high level of services.
- Burt Township parallels the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and Grand Marais is one of the gateways to the Lakeshore. Grand Marais is undergoing change and the growth associated with the development of the Lakeshore. Condominiums have been built in Grand Marais, and other developers have shown a similar interest. As tourism continues to increase and accompanying tourist facilities are developed, it is likely that Grand Marais and Burt Township will become the focus of increased attention and development.
- Currently, tourism is the mainstay of the economy in both Alger County and Burt Township; however, Township residents have expressed a desire to broaden their economic base. They would like to see the economy become more diversified; more year-round versus seasonal employment opportunities.