

Chapter 1: 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 need for new ones. The first step in the process is to determine the population to be served.

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. Important was the desire of many individuals for 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.

Population Trends: 1950-1990

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>
Alger County	10,007	9,250	8,568	9,225	8,972
Burt Township	624	457	424	539	508
		<u>1950 – 1990</u>		<u>1980 – 1990</u>	
		<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Alger County		-1035	-10.34	-253	-2.74
Burt Township		-116	-18.59	-31	-5.75

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

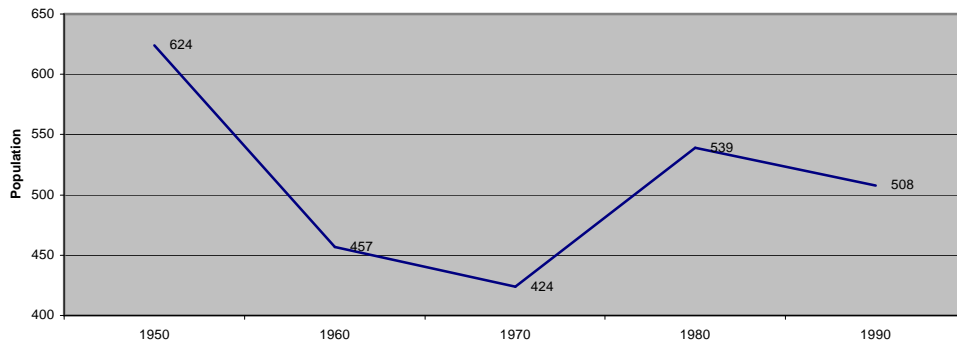
Population Trends Selected Years: 1950 – 1990

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Burt Township	624	457 (-26.8)	424 (-7.2)	539 (+27.1)	508 (-5.75)
Alger County	10,007	9,250 (-7.6)	8,568 (-7.4)	9,225 (+7.7)	8,972 (-2.74)
Central U.P.	194,865 (+5)	157,257 (+5)	165,744 (+10)	182,390 (+10)	177,692 (-2.58)
Michigan	6,371,766 (+21)	7,823,194 (+23)	8,875,083 (+13)	9,258,344 (+4)	9,295,297 (+.40)
United States	150,697,361 (+14)	179,325,671 (+19)	203,211,912 (+13)	226,504,825 (+11)	248,709,873 (+9.8)

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

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.

Population Trends 1950 - 1990
Burt Township



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The economic recession of the early 1980's adversely affected the distribution of population in rural areas. As the workforce 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.

In Burt Township, the population trend has been one of decline, reversal, and decline.

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 Distribution – Burt Township

Age Cohorts	1980 Population		1990 Population	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 Years	15	3	29	6
5 to 17 Years	113	21	86	17
18 to 20 Years	19	3	12	2
21 to 24 Years	27	5	9	2
25 to 44 Years	113	21	101	20
45 to 64 Years	143	27	144	28
65+ Years	108	20	127	25

These figures illustrate the population characteristics of Burt Township are changing with the national aging trend. The median age in 1990 of all the Township residents was 48.1, as compared to 42.3 in 1980.

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 decade, however, the number of pre-school (under 5 years) has increased. The pre-school age group has risen by 13 children which is an 82% increase over 1980.

The other age groups, with the exception of the 45 and over group, have decreased. The greatest percentage decrease occurred in the 21 to 24 year age group. As indicative of the aging population of the Township, over 1/2 of the Township population are ages 45 and over.

Population Distribution

The largest population concentration in Burt Township is centered around Grand Marais. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, there are 304 persons residing in the community, representing 60% of the total township population. Within the community there are 365 housing units, of which only 123 are occupied. In Burt Township as a whole, there are 508 persons with 687 housing units of which 202 are occupied.

Grand Marais is one of the main access points to the Pictured Rocks National Lake Shore, 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 Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Over: 1990
Burt Township and Alger County

	Burt Township		Alger County
	No. of Persons	Percentage	Percentage
Elementary (less than 9 th Grade)	61	15	11
High School:			
9 th – 12 th Grade, no diploma	44	11	15
High School Graduate	130	33	42
College:			
Some College, no degree	60	15	15
Associates Degree	9	3	5
Bachelors Degree	50	13	8
Graduate or Professional	40	10	4
TOTAL	394		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Nearly three quarters of the persons aged 25 and over in Burt Township have at least a high school diploma; in 1980 only 15 percent of the adults had graduated from high school. While Burt Township and Alger County have about the same percentage of high school graduates, Burt Township has a greater population of college educated persons than Alger County. Of the adults (aged 25 and over) in Burt Township, 40 percent have attended some college as compared to 31 percent for Alger County. The proportion of college graduates is twice that of Alger County. Burt Townships educational attainment level of college graduates compares very favorably with the State of Michigan's level of 17.4 percent.

The increased number of college educated persons may be attributed to the educational levels of newer residents who have decided to settle in the area, including retirees.

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 1990. The average size of a Burt Township household is less than Alger County or the central U.P.

Area	Households		Change		Average Population per Household	
	1990	1980	Number	Percent	1990	1980
Alger Co.	3,337	3,279	-58	-1.8	2.52	2.76
Burt Twp.	202	209	-7	-3.3	2.34	2.38
Central UP	66, 996	63,225	3,771	6.0	2.56	2.88

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

While there has been a trend of an increase in the number of households within an area, this has not been the case for Burt Township. During the past decade, the Township has experienced a slight drop in total households.

Overall, Alger County has experienced a very modest increase in the number of households.

Household by Size and Type: 1990 and 1980

	Alger County		Burt Township	
	1990	1980	1990	1980
One Person Household	810	711	60	63
One or More Person Household, married couple family	2041	2159	121	121
Other Family:				
Male Household (no wife)	112	83	4	6
Female Household (no husband)	282	245	14	13
Non-Family Household	902	81	3	6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Of the 202 households in Burt Township, 60% are married couple households, 30% are single person households, and 9% are single parent households. Of the 3,339 households in Alger County, 61% are married couple households, 24% are single person households, and 12% are single parent households. Burt Township has a larger percentage of single person households than Alger County as a whole has.

The slight increase in the number of households headed by a female may be the result of a number of factors including the increased independence of women, there increased participation in the labor force, rising divorce rates, the improved financial security of elderly women living alone, and the trend of single individuals to have and raise children alone.

Minorities

The ratio composition of Burt Township has been predominantly white. In 1970, there were four persons reported as American Indian; in 1990, there were 10 individuals. The increase in the American Indian population could be the result of greater awareness of Native Americans heritage. The ratio composition of the townships population is illustrated on the following table. No significant change in the racial diversity seems likely in the foreseeable future.

Population by Race: 1970 – 1990

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>
White	420	530	498
Black	0	0	0
American Indian	4	6	10
Asian	0	0	0
Other	0	3	0

Income

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:

Income Levels: 1979 – 1989

	1979 Income		1989 Income		Percent Change 1979-1989
	Dollar	Percent of Michigan	Dollar	Percent of Michigan	
Per Capita Income					
Burt Township	\$ 5,470	71.1	\$ 8,651	61.1	58 %
Alger County	\$ 4,591	59.7	\$ 9,669	68.3	111 %
Michigan	\$ 7,688	100.0	\$ 14,154	100.0	84 %
Household Income					
Burt Township	\$ 8,490	44.2	\$ 17,903	57.7	111 %
Alger County	\$ 14,224	74.0	\$ 21,569	69.5	52 %
Michigan	\$ 19,223	100.0	\$ 31,020	100.0	61 %
Family Income					
Burt Township	\$ 13,846	62.6	\$ 20,536	56.0	48 %
Alger County	\$ 16,354	74.0	\$ 25,750	70.3	57 %
Michigan	\$ 22,107	100.0	\$ 36,652	100.0	66%

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 & 1990.

Per capita income for Burt Township, which is a measure of total income divided by the population, was 70% of the statewide level in 1979. Ten years later the township per capita level increased, but the figure represented only 60% of the statewide average. This indicates that even though there was income growth locally, the income growth decreased when compared to Michigan as a whole.

Just the opposite was true for Alger County; in 1979 the county per capita level was almost 60% of the statewide average and by 1989 the per capita income level had increased to 68% of the Statewide average. There was both local income growth and actual income growth when compared to the state.

The township's median household income more than doubled during the past ten years, from \$8,590 to \$17,903, where household income in the county increased by slightly more than 50%. The township's median household income was at 58% of the statewide level in 1989, increasing from a 44% level in 1979.

The poverty rate in the township, according to the 1990 Census, was generally equivalent to the state average, while Alger County had proportionally more persons below the poverty threshold than the state as a whole. Statewide 13.1% of all persons had incomes below the poverty level, as compared to 13.2% for Burt Township. Alger County's 1990 poverty rate was 14.5%.

Poverty status is determined based on 1989 income, family size on April 1, 1990, presence and number of family members under the age of 18. 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 the 1990 Census was \$12, 674.

Fewer children under 18 years of age (11.4%) were in poverty in Burt Township than statewide where the poverty rate for children was 18.2%. The same is true for elderly persons, where 9.8% of persons 65 and over in the township had incomes below the poverty rate as compared to 10.8% for the State of Michigan. Within Alger County 15% of the elderly have incomes below the poverty level.

Of the total female householder families in Burt Township, one-third have income below the poverty rate. There are eight single mothers with children under the poverty level.

Issues and Opportunities

While income levels of Burt Township residents have increased, their incomes remain below the statewide averages. As a whole the population is well educated.

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 increases and the accompanying tourist facilities are developed, it is likely that Grand Marais and Burt Township will become the focus of increased attention and development.

There will be development and increased tourist activity as Superior Scenic Drive is developed between Munising and Grand Marais. 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.