

POPULATION BRIEF

COUNTY POPULATION DECLINE

Berkshire County has been experiencing a decline in population since the 1970's as seen in Exhibit 1. In 1970, the population of the county was 149,402. In 2010, the population has declined to 131,219, a decrease of 18,183 people, or 12.2%. Our current population brings us back to a level last seen in the late 1940s.

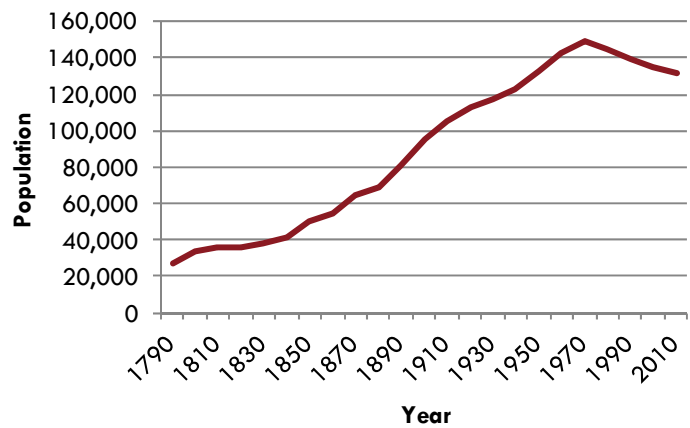
When comparing our population decline to Massachusetts and the United States (Exhibit 2), the decline stands out in stark contrast. Berkshire County has seen an average of 3.2% decline per decade over the last 40 years, while Massachusetts has seen an average growth of 3.6% per decade and the United States has seen an average growth of 11.0% growth per decade. Berkshire County's total decline of 12.2% over the last 40 years is vastly different from the Massachusetts's growth of 15.1% and the United States growth of 51.9%.

MUNICIPAL POPULATION CHANGE

When examining the makeup of our population decline at the municipality level, a different picture appears (See Exhibit 8). When comparing the municipalities that were over 3,000 people in 2000 to those that were under 3,000 people, a dramatic difference can be found. Ten of the municipalities were over 3,000 people in 2000. Of these, all of them lost population by 2010, for a total loss of 3,924. For the 22 communities below 3,000 people, 8 of the communities lost population by 2010, while the remaining 14 gained population. The result for the smaller communities is a net growth of 190 people.

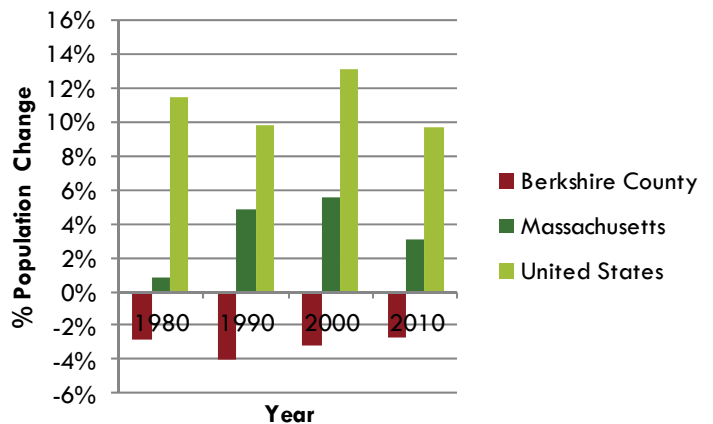
The larger communities, which all saw a decline in population, all exist in the central valley of the county, while the smaller communities, which have tended to grow, are all in the hills to the east and west of the central valley (Exhibit 3). Most of the jobs in the region exist in these larger central communities, however if the residential growth continues to occur outside of these communities, the characteristics and needs of the region will continue to change.

Exhibit 1: Berkshire County Population



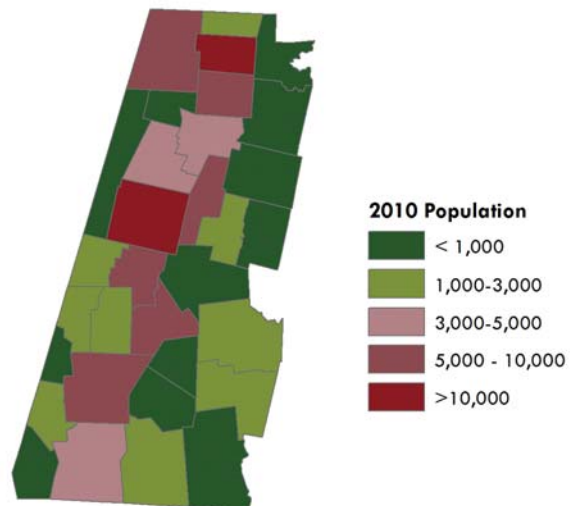
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit 2: Percent Population Change



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit 3: Population by Municipality



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

AGE

The population of Berkshire County, when examined by age, depicts a picture of uneven age cohorts and a dissimilarity to both the nation and the state. Berkshire County exhibits a much lower birth rate (8.6 births/1,000 people) as compared to the state (11.5 births/1,000 people.), so our population starts out well below the state and nation. The county then catches up to the state and nation at age 19. From age 20 to 32, the county exhibits a steep decline in population, far steeper than the state and nation, and continues to be significantly less than the state and nation until the mid 40's, where the county catches up. From the age 47 on, the county has a larger share of the population than the state and nation.

All of these age cohort discrepancies are related to each other. The lack of children being born in the region is directly related to the significant deficit in young families of childbearing age. The region catches up to the state and nation by the time college begins due to the presence of local colleges attracting new students, however the decline starting at age 20 is caused by local students moving away for college and not coming back as well as the students who moved here for college moving away when they graduate. On top of that, some people who attend college locally or do not attend college move away for new op-

portunities. The population over age 47, which has a larger share of the population than the state or nation, is the population most affected by the layoffs that occurred in the 1970's and 1980's, yet their population has actually stayed in the region. It is this populations children that has moved away and led the decline in our overall population. This older population cohort exhibits an expected steady decline as they age.

NATURAL CHANGE

The components that make up the natural change in population is the number of births and deaths. As can be seen in Exhibit 5, the number of deaths are more than the number of births. This results in a natural decrease in the regions population.

MIGRATION

In addition to births and deaths, migration can impact a region's population. Migration is made up of both in-migration, those moving into the region, and out-migration., those moving out of the region. As shown in Exhibit 6, Berkshire County has consistently been having more residents move out of the region than those that are moving in. The trend for both in- and out-migration is going down, but the county is still experiencing a net loss of population due to migration.

Exhibit 4: Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

RACE

Berkshire County's racial makeup is homogeneous in nature with 92.5% of the population considered white. The remaining 7.5% is a mix of races, predominately black or African American alone (2.7%) or two or more races (2.1%). (Exhibit 7) In addition to these races, 3.5% of the population is classified as Hispanic.

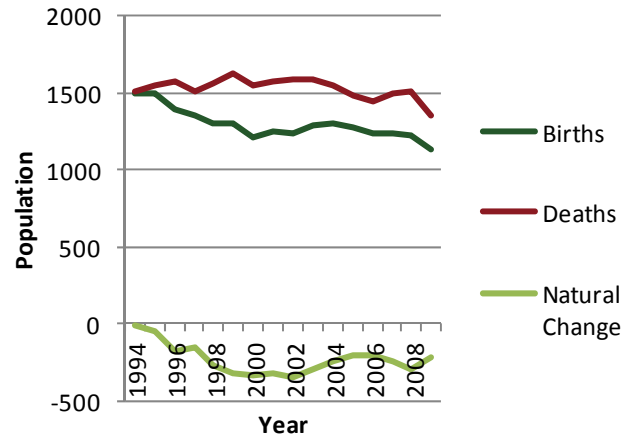
Comparing our racial diversity over time presents a picture of change. While our total population has dropped 3,734 between 2000 and 2010, the white population has dropped almost 7,000. All other races has seen increases. The population that considers itself Hispanic has almost doubled in 10 years. Some other race and two or more races, while still small portions of the population, have also almost doubled. This trend will lead to a more diverse population in the decades ahead.

OUTLOOK

The overall imbalance of age cohorts in the region has the potential to cause significant population change going forward. With the significantly larger portion of our population getting older, the number of deaths will only rise over the next few decades. The number of births however, will either stay steady or continue to decline. Normally the number of deaths is offset by the number of births, but due to the region's unnatural age imbalance, this will not happen. The only way a region can make up this deficit is through a net gain in migration. Berkshire County, however, has a net loss in migration, further exasperating the problem. Combining births, deaths and net migration, presents a picture of continued further decline in the population over the coming decades.

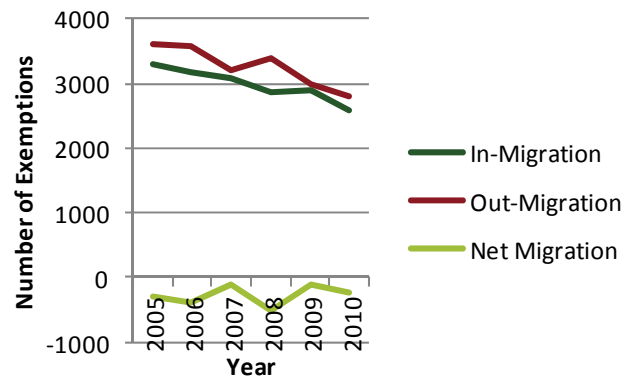
Based on modeling using existing trends, the regions population is expected to decline approximately 2,000 by 2020 and an additional 5,000 by 2030. After 2030, the population will face significant decreases of over 10,000 per decade, until 2060 when the population decline will slow. In 2060, the population is estimated to be around 88,000 people. The only way the region can offset this is to have significant increases in net migration.

Exhibit 5: Births and Deaths



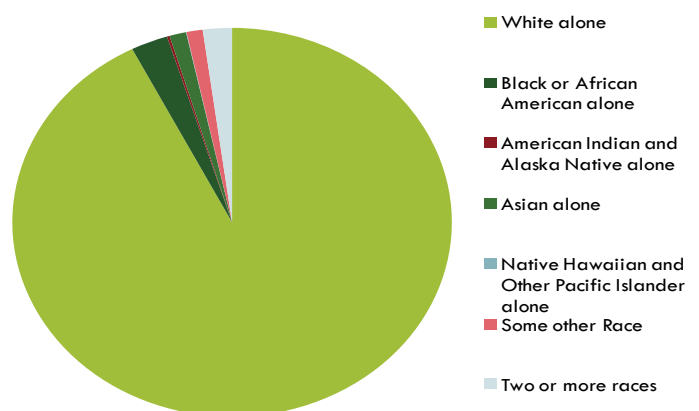
Source: MassCHIP

Exhibit 6: Migration



Source: Internal Revenue Service

Exhibit 7: Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit 8: Population by Municipality

Municipality	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	Change since 1970	Change since 2000
Adams	11,772	10,381	9,445	8,809	8,485	-27.9%	-3.7%
Alford	302	394	413	399	494	63.6%	23.8%
Becket	929	1,339	1,493	1,756	1,779	91.5%	1.3%
Cheshire	3,006	3,124	3,479	3,401	3,235	7.6%	-4.9%
Clarksburg	1,987	1,871	1,599	1,682	1,702	-14.3%	1.2%
Dalton	7,505	6,797	7,099	6,892	6,756	-10.0%	-2.0%
Egremont	1,138	1,311	1,177	1,345	1,225	7.6%	-8.9%
Florida	672	730	723	676	752	11.9%	11.2%
Great Barrington	7,537	7,405	7,841	7,515	7,104	-5.7%	-5.5%
Hancock	675	643	422	716	717	6.2%	0.1%
Hinsdale	1,588	1,707	1,952	1,877	2,032	28.0%	8.3%
Lanesborough	2,972	3,131	3,020	2,991	3,091	4.0%	3.3%
Lee	6,426	6,247	5,850	5,993	5,943	-7.5%	-0.8%
Lenox	5,804	6,523	4,986	5,077	5,025	-13.4%	-1.0%
Monterey	600	818	774	936	961	60.2%	2.7%
Mount Washington	52	93	135	130	167	221.2%	28.5%
New Ashford	183	159	192	247	228	24.6%	-7.7%
New Marlborough	1,031	1,160	1,233	1,494	1,509	46.4%	1.0%
North Adams	19,195	18,063	16,964	14,691	13,708	-28.6%	-6.7%
Otis	820	963	1,067	1,364	1,612	96.6%	18.2%
Peru	256	633	779	816	847	230.9%	3.8%
Pittsfield	57,020	51,974	48,792	45,797	44,737	-21.5%	-2.3%
Richmond	1,461	1,659	1,677	1,604	1,475	1.0%	-8.0%
Sandisfield	547	720	667	824	915	67.3%	11.0%
Savoy	322	644	634	705	692	114.9%	-1.8%
Sheffield	2,374	2,743	2,903	3,335	3,257	37.2%	-2.3%
Stockbridge	2,312	2,328	2,402	2,272	1,947	-15.8%	-14.3%
Tyringham	234	344	365	346	327	39.7%	-5.5%
Washington	406	587	592	544	538	32.5%	-1.1%
West Stockbridge	1,354	1,280	1,481	1,426	1,306	-3.5%	-8.4%
Williamstown	8,454	8,741	8,426	8,418	7,754	-8.3%	-7.9%
Windsor	468	598	770	875	899	92.1%	2.7%
Berkshire County	149,402	145,110	139,352	134,953	131,219	-12.2%	-2.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau