

YOUNG ADULTS

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Young Adults, which we define as being age 20-39, are a key element in the future of Berkshire County. Young adults provide the labor force to power our economy into the future as well as aid in sustaining our education systems.

HISTORIC CHANGE

Since before the 1950's, older teens in the region would leave the county when they reached college and a number of them would not come back to the region. Since 1990, that trend has continued, however the region also now sees the departure of young adults throughout their 20's and early thirties.

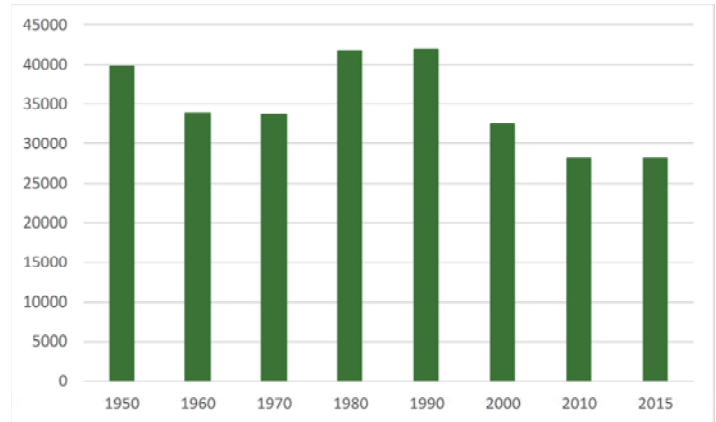
RECENT CHANGE

Since 2000, the number of young adults has decreased by 4,191, or 13% from 32,319 to 28,128. Since 2010 however, the county young adult population has actually gone up by 23, or 0.1%. While the number may not be significant, there is evidence the trend may have changed.

Looking at age cohorts within young adults, one can see that we have gained some population in the 20-24 years old cohort as well as in the 30-34 year old cohort. The 20-24 year old cohort is most likely just due to a shift in college enrollment as we lose a similar number in the 25-29 year old cohort. However, the increase in the number of 30-34 year old's of over 450 people is significant. The number of 35-39 year old's has decreased by over 500, so the increase in 30-34 year old's doesn't amount to a net increase in young adults.

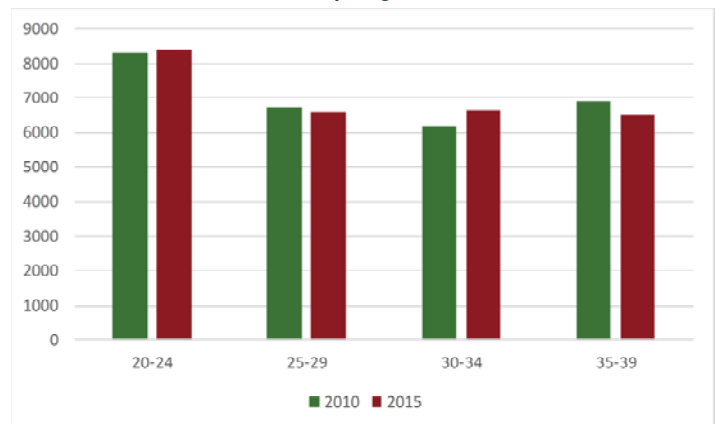
The trends above are useful for seeing how one cohort changes over time (similar to comparing different generations), but it does not aid in understanding what people do as they age. For this, shifting previous years populations to match today's population can provide insight into migration. For example, the 20-24 year old cohort in 2010 is the 25-29 year old cohort in 2015. This analysis is made more difficult for this age group due to the influence of the colleges in the county, however some analysis can be done.

Exhibit 1: Young Adults over time



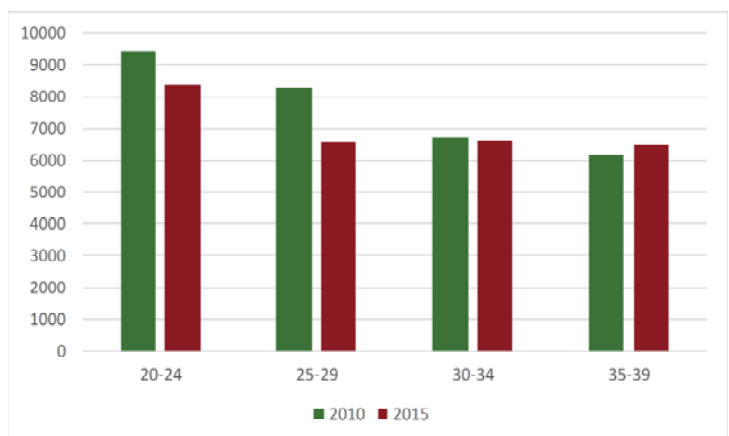
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit 2: Berkshire County Age Cohorts 2010-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit 3: Berkshire County Age Cohorts 2010-2015 (age adjusted)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The 15-19 year old cohort shows an increase of 1,566 since 2010. This is due to more people coming into the county for college than leaving. However at the 20-24 year old cohort, we see a decrease of -1,044, which indicates the students are now leaving the region after they get their degrees. The 25-29 year old cohort also exhibits a loss of 1,682. Combining these three cohorts, you get a net loss of 1,160. This equates to the number of people who grew up in the Berkshires and left for college and did not come back as well as those who moved away regardless of college.

The 30-34 year old group shows a loss of 82, which would indicate that the population, while still declining, has mostly stabilized. The 35-39 year old cohort shows an increase of 329, as well as increases throughout the 40-44 and 45-49 year old cohorts. This indicates that older young adults and middle aged adults are moving to the region.

LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

The change in young adults as a region is important, however the change is not uniform throughout the region.

While young adults have seen a loss regionally over the last five years, some of our larger communities have seen an increase. Pittsfield has seen an increase of 270 young adults (based on age adjustment) since 2010 and Adams has seen an increase of 54. These gains have been more than offset by losses in Great Barrington (-356), North Adams (-747) and the rest of

the county (-1,700). The losses in North Adams and the rest of the county is largely due to college students leaving after college, however that is not the entire story. If one looks at the age cohorts that are not impacted by the college age population, one sees a different picture. From age 30-39, the county gained 247 people, with most of that gain in Pittsfield, but also some in Adams. North Adams and Great Barrington both continue to see losses. The remaining portion of the county actually grew in this age cohort over the last five years.

Overall, the county is seeing a decrease throughout the 20's and early thirties, while it grows in the late 30's. Pittsfield sees its growth in the late 20's and early 30's, but declines in the late 30's. North Adams is the opposite of Pittsfield and sees a decline throughout the 20's and early 30's, followed by a increase in the late 30's. Adams sees both gains and losses throughout, but is roughly staying level. Great Barrington on the other hand loses population throughout the entire young adult age group. The rest of the county, which is mostly rural with some larger towns, is reacting similar to North Adams in losing population throughout the 20's and early 30's, but gains in the late 30's.

CHILDREN

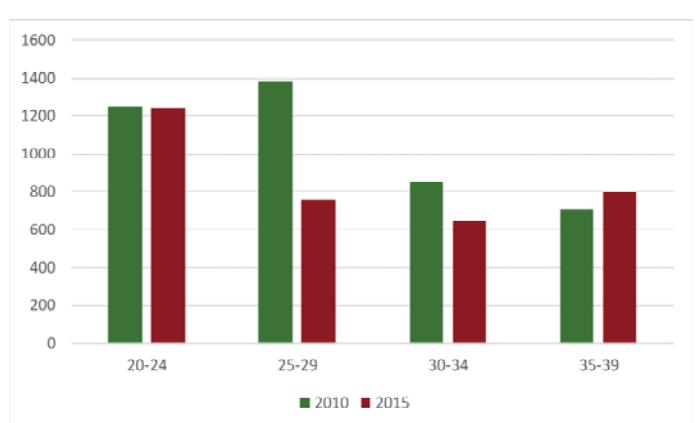
One way to examine the impact of young adults and to verify the change that is being seen is to look at birth data. Since 2010, the number of births has dropped from 1,174 to 1,031 and averaged 1,111. This decline in births continues a long trend and is indicative of both a declining young adult population as

Exhibit 4: Pittsfield Age Cohorts (age adjusted)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit 5: North Adams Age Cohorts (age adjusted)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

well as fewer children per person. Looking at the more urban communities, their birth data shows a more stable population, while the rural communities exhibit a more rapid decrease in births.

Another way to check the young adults is to review the school enrollment. Since 2003 (earliest available), the total enrollment has consistently declined. Kindergarten enrollment, which would be more indicative of young adults, has also exhibited a steady decline, however it varies each year with some slight increases. Within the communities examined previously in this report, the kindergarten enrollment appears steadier than the more rural communities .

PROJECTIONS

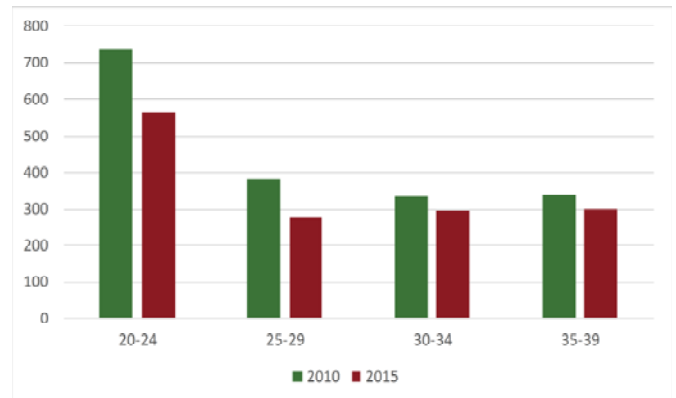
Based on the existing population distribution by age, a continued decline in young adults is expected. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's population projections estimate an average loss of around 250 young adults a year for the foreseeable future. However, the projections are at the county scale. While BRPC has not conducted official projections at the municipal level, given historic and global trends, the more urban communities will likely see a more stable young adult population, while the more rural communities would continue to see a steady decline in young adults.

CONCLUSION

From the data analyzed throughout this report, it is clear that Berkshire County continues to lose young adults, however the gain of young adults in the late 30's throughout the county is a positive direction. The increase in young adults in Pittsfield in the late 20's and early 30's indicate that the city does offer an environment that is attractive to this population, but the subsequent loss in the late 30's is disappointing.

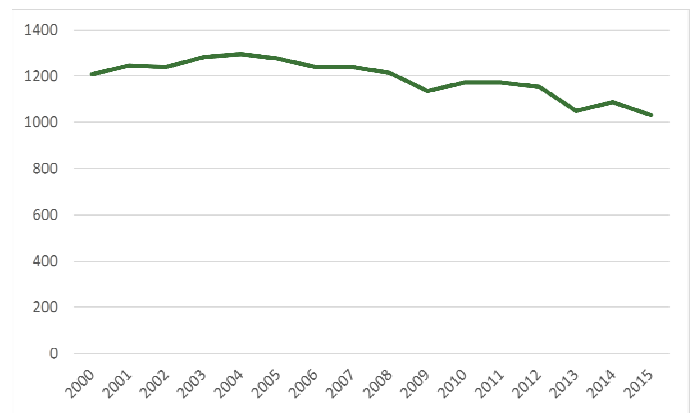
It appears that young adults are attracted to the more urban environment while they are younger, most likely due to employment opportunities, affordable housing and the urban environment, however those in the late 30's appear to be attracted to the mid-size communities and more rural areas. This attraction however is tempered by higher housing prices in some locations, turning a potential attraction into a detriment.

Exhibit 6: Great Barrington Age Cohorts (age adjusted)



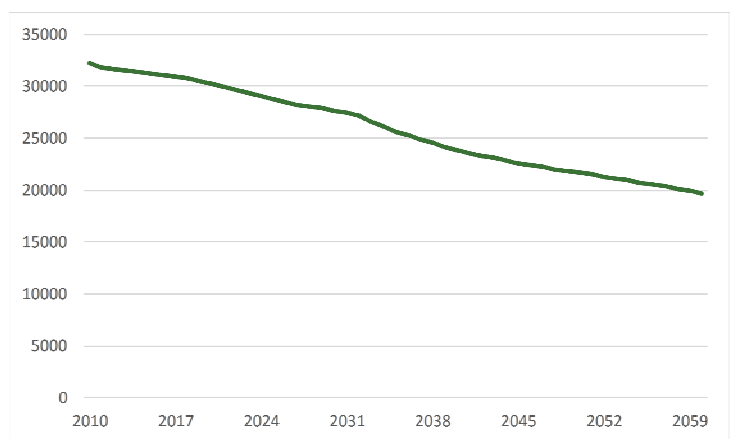
Source: US Census Bureau

Exhibit 7: Births



Source: MassCHIP

Exhibit 8: Young Adult Projections



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit 8: Young Adult Population by Municipality

Geography	2010	2015				Total	Change 2010-2015
		20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39		
Adams	1,875	549	402	481	548	1,980	105
Alford	61	22	9	6	29	66	5
Becket	322	51	73	90	83	297	(25)
Cheshire	611	96	174	119	122	511	(100)
Clarksburg	316	79	42	58	88	267	(49)
Dalton	1,283	402	161	295	352	1,210	(73)
Egremont	170	33	37	20	51	141	(29)
Florida	141	24	51	42	37	154	13
Great Barrington	1,377	566	277	296	300	1,439	62
Hancock	100	18	36	48	50	152	52
Hinsdale	387	69	84	86	161	400	13
Lanesborough	554	183	197	180	101	661	107
Lee	1,296	433	574	204	153	1,364	68
Lenox	712	198	53	288	142	681	(31)
Monterey	156	29	35	26	33	123	(33)
Mount Washington	19	3	2	5	10	20	1
New Ashford	36	19	14	8	16	57	21
New Marlborough	245	25	30	58	30	143	(102)
North Adams	3,685	1,243	763	649	796	3,451	(234)
Otis	292	25	50	56	76	207	(85)
Peru	159	38	35	70	57	200	41
Pittsfield	10,429	2,602	2,901	2,983	2,467	10,953	524
Richmond	189	37	50	59	56	202	13
Sandisfield	140	51	13	22	30	116	(24)
Savoy	114	34	21	20	47	122	8
Sheffield	552	76	146	68	194	484	(68)
Stockbridge	308	111	51	106	68	336	28
Tyringham	40	8	13	3	7	31	(9)
Washington	88	7	31	11	11	60	(28)
West Stockbridge	170	45	38	51	64	198	28
Williamstown	2,136	1,269	202	212	304	1,987	(149)
Windsor	142	31	40	18	26	115	(27)
Berkshire County	28,105	8,376	6,605	6,638	6,509	28,128	23

Source: U.S. Census Bureau