



Population Projections — 2010 - 2030

In late November, preliminary **Population Forecasts** were circulated to all Berkshire community Select Boards and Planning Boards, the region's two Mayors, and to the BRPC commission members and alternates for community and public review and comment. The Table below presents a summary of county and community Census population counts from 1970 - 2000, projected figures for 2010 to 2030, and the percent change in population over the past thirty years and the thirty year projection period ahead.

Population forecasts are produced for the region's communities with the goal of providing information for community discussion and planning — as a starting point for consideration of future community scenarios -- and for

long-range regional transportation planning purposes.

Predicting population changes 10 to 30 years in the future is a risky endeavor, since the region is subject to external economic and other influences. Particularly challenging is forecasting community figures in a region with communities of such small size. For this reason the full forecast packet sent to communities (availability information on back) contains tables and charts showing "mid range" predictions and "hi" and "lo" alternatives for each community and the county, underscoring the degree of difficulty and full range of possibilities of population changes which may be ahead. A review of BRPC forecasts from the 1990's indicates a consistent expectation that the county decline will end by 2010.

Population Forecasts: Preliminary (11-21-02)					FORECASTS:			%CHANGE %CHANGE	
Community	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	1970-2000	2000-2030
Adams	11,722	10,381	9,445	8,809	8,471	8,734	9,363	-25%	6%
Alford	302	394	418	399	414	457	521	32%	31%
Becket	929	1,339	1,481	1,755	1,932	2,255	2,710	89%	54%
Cheshire	3,006	3,124	3,479	3,401	3,686	4,244	5,043	13%	48%
Clarksburg	1,987	1,871	1,745	1,686	1,720	1,875	2,119	-15%	26%
Dalton	7,505	6,797	7,155	6,892	7,083	7,752	8,773	-8%	27%
Egremont	1,138	1,311	1,229	1,345	1,405	1,559	1,785	18%	33%
Florida	672	730	742	676	696	763	864	1%	28%
Great Barrington	7,537	7,405	7,725	7,527	7,731	8,481	9,641	0%	28%
Hancock	675	643	628	721	778	892	1,057	7%	47%
Hinsdale	1,588	1,707	1,959	1,872	1,962	2,194	2,538	18%	36%
Lanesborough	2,972	3,131	3,032	2,990	3,104	3,425	3,904	1%	31%
Lee	6,426	6,247	5,849	5,985	6,225	6,910	7,943	-7%	33%
Lenox	5,804	6,523	5,069	5,077	5,235	5,746	6,519	-13%	28%
Monterey	600	818	805	934	1,039	1,222	1,479	56%	58%
Mount Washington	52	93	135	130	146	174	212	150%	63%
New Ashford	183	159	192	247	268	309	368	35%	49%
New Marlborough	1,031	1,160	1,240	1,494	1,560	1,739	2,006	45%	34%
North Adams	19,195	18,063	16,797	14,681	14,045	14,410	15,374	-24%	5%
Otis	820	963	1,073	1,365	1,536	1,825	2,226	66%	63%
Peru	256	633	779	821	952	1,158	1,440	221%	75%
Pittsfield	57,020	51,974	48,622	45,793	44,184	45,488	48,476	-20%	6%
Richmond	1,461	1,659	1,677	1,604	1,794	2,120	2,576	10%	61%
Sandisfield	547	720	667	824	885	1,011	1,192	51%	45%
Savoy	322	644	634	705	782	917	1,108	119%	57%
Sheffield	2,374	2,743	2,910	3,335	3,648	4,265	5,169	40%	55%
Stockbridge	2,312	2,328	2,408	2,276	2,314	2,513	2,829	-2%	24%
Tyringham	234	344	369	350	376	431	509	50%	45%
Washington	406	587	615	544	604	710	858	34%	58%
West Stockbridge	1,354	1,280	1,483	1,416	1,464	1,616	1,847	5%	30%
Williamstown	8,454	8,741	8,220	8,424	8,694	9,548	10,839	0%	29%
Windsor	468	598	770	875	967	1,132	1,364	87%	56%
County Total	149,352	145,110	139,352	134,953	135,700	145,875	162,650	-10%	21%
North	45,541	43,713	41,254	38,629	38,362	40,802	45,078	-15%	17%
Central	85,510	81,838	77,636	74,929	74,820	79,782	88,156	-12%	18%
South	18,301	19,559	20,462	21,395	22,519	25,291	29,416	17%	37%
Pittsfield MSA	99,816	93,871	88,695	84,699	84,057	89,126	97,963	-15%	16%

Methodology & Assumptions: County

Population forecasts for Berkshire County communities are derived from future county totals for the forecast period (2010-2030) produced by the REMI model (Regional Economic Models, Inc.), a widely used forecasting and policy simulation model.

The REMI model takes national and regional (Northeast) level economic forecasts produced by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and Census Bureau population data and forecasts, and then apportions Berkshire County a future share of projected population growth or change based on the model's estimate of the region's likely future population and economic trends. The model incorporates a full range of historical demographic and economic data from 1969 to the present: 2000 is the latest actual data year.

REMI-produced future county population totals:

2010: 135,700
2020: 145,875
2030: 162,650

Sources: U.S. Census: 1970-2000; Regional Economic Models, Inc. for County Totals & BRPC for community figures for 2010-2030 Forecasts

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REMI provides the “long view” in population projections. What some might view as overly optimistic future population figures represent that long view — that an area such as

Regional Implications

Berkshire County — with its economic history, location near important economic centers, and historical population growth trend – won’t continue in unending decline, but will rebound and regain population, and new or expanded economic activities and employment opportunities.

The Table on the right sorts communities by the percent change in population which took place from 1970 to 2000, as counted by the Census. These figures provide a perspective on regional changes in population forecast for the next thirty years. Between 1970 and 2000 the U.S. population growth rate was 38%, while Berkshire County lost 10% of its population. The REMI model predicts that national population will continue to climb from 2010-2030, increasing by 30%. That continuing climb in population is predicted to impact the Berkshires -- turning a 30 year trend of decline into modest (relative to the U.S.) growth of 21% in the coming thirty year projection period.

That growth is expected to be distributed unevenly throughout the region, as has been the historic pattern. While the northern (-15%) and central (-12%) sub-regions have seen population decline, southern and outlying (non-corridor) communities (+17%) have experienced dramatic changes in population (note the percent changes). A variation on those differences will continue with the region's cities and northern and central communities showing population gains (17%-18%) but that turnaround hardly approaching the 37% increase in population predicted for the southern region of the county.

Future changes in population throughout the region will be heavily influenced by factors outside regional control. Still, discussions now taking place throughout the region in the Community Development Planning program and planning for housing, community economic development, open space and recreation, and community services will serve as thresholds for future population change.

**Methodology & Assumptions: cont'd.)
Community Projections:**

The REMI-projected county totals serve as the control for community forecasts. BRPC projects population trends for each community starting with each community's historic share of county population (from 1940 through Census 2000), and alternative (statistical) future trends out to 2030. These trendlines produce an estimate of future population share for the years 2010-2030. Along with these “mid range” figures are calculated “hi” and “lo” ranges responsive to past community population fluctuations to accommodate similar future unpredictability. As a final step in the process, each community’s middle, “hi,” and “lo” range figures are then proportionally fit to the REMI (control) county totals for future years, and “hi” and “lo” county totals.

Sorted by 1970-2000 % change			Sorted by 2000 to 2030 change		
Community	%CHANGE 1970-2000	%CHANGE 2000-2030	Community	CHANGE 1970-2000	CHANGE 2000-2030
Peru	221%	75%	Pittsfield	-11,227	2,683
Mount Washington	150%	63%	Williamstown	-30	2,415
Savoy	119%	57%	Great Barrington	-10	2,114
Becket	89%	54%	Lee	-441	1,958
Windsor	87%	56%	Dalton	-613	1,881
Otis	66%	63%	Sheffield	961	1,834
Monterey	56%	58%	Cheshire	395	1,642
Sandisfield	51%	45%	Lenox	-727	1,442
Tyringham	50%	45%	Richmond	143	972
New Marlborough	45%	34%	Becket	826	955
Sheffield	40%	55%	Lanesborough	18	914
New Ashford	35%	49%	Otis	545	861
Washington	34%	58%	North Adams	-4,514	693
Alford	32%	31%	Hinsdale	284	666
Egremont	18%	33%	Peru	565	619
Hinsdale	18%	36%	Adams	-2,913	554
Cheshire	13%	48%	Stockbridge	-36	553
Richmond	10%	61%	Monterey	334	545
Hancock	7%	47%	New Marlborough	463	512
West Stockbridge	5%	30%	Windsor	407	489
Lanesborough	1%	31%	Egremont	207	440
Florida	1%	28%	Clarksburg	-301	433
Great Barrington	0%	28%	West Stockbridge	62	431
Williamstown	0%	29%	Savoy	383	403
Stockbridge	-2%	24%	Sandisfield	277	368
Lee	-7%	33%	Hancock	46	336
Dalton	-8%	27%	Washington	138	314
Lenox	-13%	28%	Florida	4	188
Clarksburg	-15%	26%	Tyringham	116	159
Pittsfield	-20%	6%	Alford	97	122
North Adams	-24%	5%	New Ashford	64	121
Adams	-25%	6%	Mount Washington	78	82
County Total	-10%	21%	County Total	-14,399	27,697
North	-15%	17%	North	-6,912	6,449
Central	-12%	18%	Central	-10,581	13,227
South	17%	37%	South	3,094	8,021
Pittsfield MSA	-15%	16%	Pittsfield MSA	-15,117	13,264

Sources: U.S. Census: 1970-2000 ; 2010-2030 Forecasts: REMI (County Totals) & BRPC (community)

Population Forecast Packet

A complete Forecast Packet which includes a summary sheet of all communities, county totals, and community level charts showing population trendlines from 1940 to 2000 and projections continuing out to 2030 are available at the BRPC office in downtown Pittsfield or online at: berkshireplanning.org