

A. POPULATION

1. Purpose

Population is one of the most basic elements of a comprehensive plan. In order to understand the town's current and future needs, a detailed examination of population characteristics is necessary. For example, the age structure of the population will affect the need for school facilities. The purpose of this section is:

- a. to document Bucksport's recent population trends;
- b. to compare the town's population trends with those in Hancock County and the state; and
- c. to review likely future population trends.

2. Key Findings and Issues

- ❖ Bucksport's population grew at a somewhat slower rate between 1990 and 2000 than was projected in the 1992 comprehensive plan. As of 2000 it had 4,908 year-round residents. There is a relatively small increase in the town's summer population because year-round residents own approximately two-thirds of the seasonal homes in town.
- ❖ The town's population is getting older, but it is still younger than the county as a whole.
- ❖ Bucksport residents have a higher median household income than the state and the county as a whole, but lower than those of most nearby towns. However, median incomes are higher than some of the nearby service center communities.

3. Historical Trends

Bucksport's recent year-round population trends are shown on Table A.1. The rate of population growth has varied in recent decades, but overall, the town has grown rapidly. While the 1992 plan projected a population of 5,351 by 2001, the U.S. Census reported a population of 4,908 in 2000. The town has grown slower than expected and slower than it has in recent decades.

Year	Population	Ten-year change (%)
1940	2,927	-
1950	3,120	6.6
1960	3,466	11.0
1970	3,756	8.3
1980	4,345	15.7
1990	4,825	11.0
2000	4,908	1.7

SOURCE: U.S. Census 2000 and 1992 Comprehensive Plan

While Bucksport's population grew at a slower rate than the overall population for Hancock County (see Table A.3), the town had a faster growth rate than many of the other nearby service center communities in Eastern Maine. Service centers are larger communities that provide the majority of a region's jobs and other services. As seen in Table A.2, Bucksport had a higher population growth rate than most of these communities with the exception of the highly tourist-oriented communities of Blue Hill, Ellsworth and Bar Harbor.

Municipality	1990	2000	Percent Change
Bucksport	4,825	4,908	1.7%
Bar Harbor	4,443	4,820	8.5%
Blue Hill	1,941	2,390	23.0%
Ellsworth	5,975	6,456	8.1%
Bangor	33,181	31,473	-5.1%
Belfast	6,355	6,381	0.4%
Winter Harbor	1,157	988	-14.6%

SOURCE: U.S. Census

4. Current Conditions

a. Age Characteristics

The change in age distribution in Bucksport between 1970 and 1990 is shown in Table A.3. An understanding of age characteristics is important for several reasons.

First, an aging population will have different service demands than those of a younger population. Second, a growing younger population may increase the birthrate for the town and place more demands on services such as the school system. The data indicate that Bucksport is experiencing a shift to an aging population.

The data show that the fastest rate of population growth between 1970 and 1990 was for the prime childbearing age group (18-44). The second fastest rate of growth was for the 65 and older age group, followed by the 4 and under age group. The slowest rate of growth (2.8 percent) was for the 5-17 age group. This group decreased by 0.4 percent between 1980 and 1990.

**Table A.3
Age Distribution Bucksport and Hancock County: 1970, 1980, 1990**

	Years of Age	1970	% of total	1980	% of total	% change '70-'80	1990	% of total	% change '80-'90	% change '70-'90
B U C K S P O R T	0-4	307	8%	321	4.6%	7%	396	8%	23.4%	29.0%
	5-17	1006	27%	1038	3.2%	24%	1034	21%	-0.4%	2.8%
	18-44	1224	33%	1659	35.5%	38%	1965	41%	18.4%	60.5%
	45-64	826	22%	829	0.4%	19%	857	18%	3.4%	3.8%
	65 +	393	10%	498	26.7%	11%	573	12%	15.1%	45.8%
	Bucksport Total	3,756	100%	4,345	15.7%	100%	4,825	100%	11.0%	28.5%
H A N C O C K C O U N T Y	0-4	2,652	8%	2,610	6.2%	-1.6%	3,205	6.8%	22.8%	20.9%
	5-17	8,593	25%	8,409	20.1%	-1.0%	8,130	7.3%	-3.3%	-4.3%
	18-44	10,810	31%	15,865	38.0%	45.4%	19,057	40.6%	20.1%	74.6%
	45-64	7,596	22%	8,465	20.3%	11.4%	9,401	20.0%	11.1%	23.8%
	65 +	4,939	14%	6,432	15.4%	30.2%	7,155	15.2%	11.2%	44.9%
	Hancock County Total	34,590	100%	41,781	100%	20.8%	46,948	100%	12.4%	35.7%

Source: U.S. Census 1970-1990

While data presently available for the 2000 Census are not entirely comparable to those for previous decades, some comparisons can be made (see Table A.4).

First, there has been a 31 percent decrease in the 4 and under age group. This could mean a decline in school enrollment in the future.

Second, there were 1,070 persons in the 5-19 age group in 2000 compared to 1,034 in the 5-17 age group in 1990. This means that there has been relatively little change in this age group.

Third, there has been a decrease in the prime childbearing age group. In 1990 there were 1,965 persons in the 18-44 age group, compared to 1,690 in the 20-44 age group in 2000.

Fourth, the 45-64 age group increased from 857 in 1990 to 1,211 in 2000, a 41 percent rate. There was also a 16 percent increase in those aged 65 and older.

Overall, the median age in Bucksport increased from 29.6 in 1980, to 32.1 in 1990, and to 38.3 in 2000. These increases, however, should be viewed in the context of Hancock County as a whole. The median age for the county increased from 35.8 in 1990 to 40.7 in 2000. Bucksport thus has a lower median age than the county.

Table A.4 Age Breakdown, 2000		
Bucksport		
Years of Age	Numbers	Percent
0-4	272	5.5%
5-19	1,070	21.8%
20-44	1,690	34.4%
45-64	1,211	24.7%
65+	665	13.5%
Total	4,908	100.0%
Hancock County		
0-4	2,516	5%
5-19	10,292	20%
20-44	16,809	32%
45-64	13,889	27%
65+	8,285	16%
Total	51,791	100%
Source: 2000 U.S. Census, General Demographic Characteristics		

b. Household Size

Table A.5 compares household sizes in Bucksport and Hancock County. Bucksport has a larger household size than the county as a whole. This is at least partially due to its somewhat younger population. Household sizes nationally have been declining in recent decades due to factors such as lower birth rates, higher divorce rates and increasing life expectancy. Bucksport shows a steady decrease in its average household size. This

information is important in determining how many homes will be needed to serve a given population. Because of the smaller average household size, more homes will be needed if the population continues to increase. Due to the aging of the town's population, further decreases in household size are likely. The figure shown for the year 2010 is an extrapolation because there is no way to accurately predict how much of a decrease there will be.

Table A.5
Change in Household Size, Bucksport and Hancock County

		1980	1990	2000	2010*
Bucksport	# persons per household	2.74	2.65	2.38	2.35
Hancock County	# persons per household	2.62	2.48	2.31	2.31

Source: U.S. Census;

* Year 2010 estimates are extrapolations

c. Income

Income statistics are important in gauging the financial health of a community. The medium household income in Bucksport is higher than the state and county median, but lower than the medium income in most nearby towns (see Table A.6).

The 2000 U.S. Census listed the median household income in Bucksport as \$34,812 compared to \$35,811 for Hancock County. This is in contrast to 1990 when the town had a median income of \$26,265 compared to \$25,247 for the county. Household incomes that were once above the county median are now below that median. Census data indicate that the town had a 10.8 percent poverty rate for individuals in 2000 compared to a 10.2 percent rate for the county. In 1990 the town also had a 10.8 percent poverty rate.

Bucksport's income statistics look more promising when compared to other service centers. While incomes in Blue Hill and Bar Harbor are higher than those in Bucksport, incomes in other nearby service center communities are lower (see Table A.7).

**Table A.6
1998 Median Household Income, Bucksport and Adjacent Towns**

Town	Median Household Income
Bucksport	\$32,969
Dedham	\$42,333
Holden	\$38,842
Orland	\$38,269
Orrington	\$40,763
Winterport	\$35,042
Penobscot	\$31,538
Hancock County	\$31,716
State of Maine	\$31,952

Source: State Planning Office

**Table A.7
1998 Median Household Income, Bucksport and Adjacent Service Centers**

Town/City	Median Household Income
Bucksport	\$32,969
Bar Harbor	\$36,088
Blue Hill	\$33,056
Ellsworth	\$28,091
Bangor	\$29,026
Belfast	\$20,874
Winter Harbor	\$26,422

Source: State Planning Office

d. Other Information

The U.S. Census reported the ethnic composition of the population to be mainly Caucasian (98.1 percent), with other ethnic groups accounted for as follows: 43 Hispanic, 15 Native American, 8 Asian 4 African-American, 3 Pacific Islanders, 7 of "other races" and 58 of two or more races. Ethnic group information is required for many federal grant funding applications.

As of 2000, 39 persons resided in group-living quarters in Bucksport. This compares to 17 in 1990 and none in 1980. Group-living quarters include assisted living units, nursing homes and dormitories.

5. Seasonal Population

The 2000 Census identified 137 housing units for seasonal or recreational use, which is a small portion of the overall housing stock. The comprehensive planning committee estimated that citizens who reside year-round in Bucksport own approximately two-thirds of these homes. Because of the small number of non-residents who own seasonal homes, there is only a minor increase in the town's population during the summer months.

6. Projected Population

It is always risky to project future population growth. It is particularly difficult without the complete results of the 2000 Census, which would document in-migration rates and offer more detailed age breakdown of the population. Given the aging of the population and recent growth trends, a five percent growth rate between 2000 and 2010 appears to be a realistic number. This would give the town a year-round population of 5,153 by 2010.