

Demographic Studies

Community planning is largely the task managing change. In some cases, that change may be decline; in other cases it is growth. Demographics are one of the easiest ways to analyze community growth or decline. This section of the Comprehensive Plan will present a statistical portrait of the population of Clinton and Buffalo Townships. In undertaking such a survey, The Comprehensive Plan can then have enough information to make intelligent estimates of future growth or development, and prepare for it accordingly.

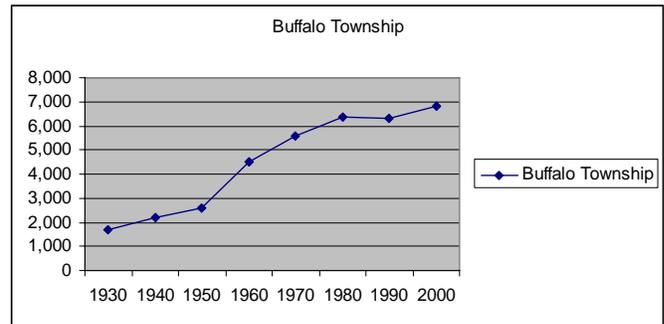
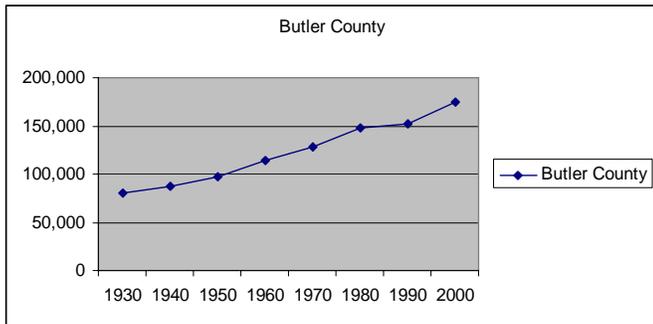
Both Buffalo and Clinton Townships have seen almost continuous growth and development for the past 70 years. This is actually unusual within the context of Western Pennsylvania. Many communities in the region have seen continuous population loss for the past seven decades. For example, The City of Butler has fallen from 23,568 to 15,121 persons in the same period. The entire 10 county region saw a population loss of over 194,000 persons from 1980-1990, due to significant economic restructuring. Southwestern Pennsylvania now has fewer total persons than it did in 1940. As seen in the chart, this typical regional loss was only reflected slightly in Buffalo Township during the 1980's.

**Table 4-1
 Total Population
 1930-2000**

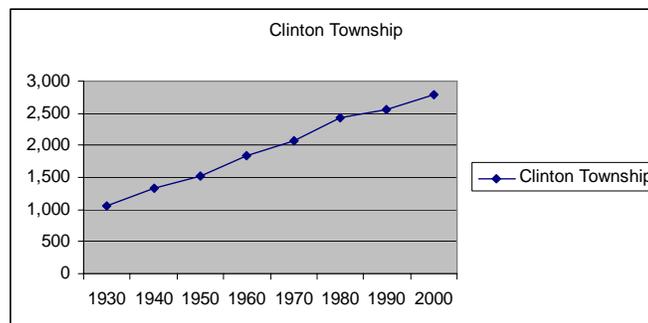
	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Butler County	80,480	87,590	97,320	114,639	127,941	147,912	152,013	174,083
Buffalo Township	1,718	2,184	2,595	4,480	5,595	6,371	6,317	6,827
Clinton Township	1,056	1,341	1,523	1,829	2,072	2,432	2,556	2,779

Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.

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The economic depression of the early 1980's does appear in the Clinton and Butler Countywide population change charts as a slowing of growth. However, Butler County, Buffalo Township, and Clinton Township remain exceptions, rather than the rule.



The levels of historic growth and development are anticipated to continue or increase in Butler County and within the study area. The Southwest Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) has developed regional forecasts of population to the year 2025. While these population forecasts are based upon 1997 Census Bureau population estimates, rather than 2000 census counts, they remain the best uniform population projections available. They were adopted as the official population forecasts for the 2002 Butler County Comprehensive Plan, and after intense examination and discussion, have been adopted for this Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan.

Table 4-2				
Populations Projections: Clinton and Buffalo Townships				
Year	Buffalo Twp. Total Population	Change	Clinton Twp. Total Population	Change
1997 Est.	6,751		2,792	
2002 Est.	7,941	+1,190	3,284	+492
2010 Projected	10,396	+2,455	4,155	+871
2020 Projected	10,741	+345	4,268	+113
2025 Projected	10,704	-37	4,255	-13

The region can thus be expected to grow significantly between now and 2010. After 2010, growth will taper off, and unless there is a major increase in birthrates or immigration by 2020, the both townships will begin losing population. It is interesting to compare the estimates in this projection series with the Census of 2000 counts.

Table 4-3				
Comparison of SPC Population Estimates and The Census of 2000				
Year	Buffalo Twp. Total Population	Variance with Census Count	Clinton Twp. Total Population	Variance with Census Count
2000 Census	6,827	NA	2,779	NA
1997 Est.	6,751	-76	2,792	+13
2002 Est.	7,941	+1,114	3,284	+505

As can be seen in the table, the Census of 2000 and the 1997 estimates were extremely close. In the case of Buffalo Township, the margin of error was 1.1 percent. In the case of Clinton Township, The margin of error was only 0.4 percent. While the variance with the 2002 Estimate was more significant, the accuracy of the base numbers indicates that timing may change, but the long-term forecast will ultimately be fairly accurate. Since 2000 each township has seen very high levels of subdivision activity. It is entirely possible that each community has reached the level of the 2002 estimate already, or soon will.

In the case of Buffalo Township, the projection assumes a growth rate of about 100 persons per year. From 1990-2000, The Township actually gained 50 or so persons per year. Most of this growth occurred between 1995 and 2000, so the estimate of 100 persons per year is not outlandish.

As previously mentioned, populations grow in two ways. One is natural increase, or the birth of children. The other is through migration. The 10 County Southwestern Pa. Region is beginning to reach the level where the age of population slow birthrates, and inhibits natural increase. Thus, the growth projected is almost entirely dependent on in-migration from other Southwestern Pennsylvania communities. The Butler County Comprehensive Plan has noted that without in-migration, the County population would have grown only 0.3 percent from 1990-2000, instead of the nearly 15 percent growth rate the County actually saw.

The projected growth will have a land use impact in each of the two townships. Based upon the SPC projections described on Page 2 of this Section, the Township of Buffalo foresees a need to accommodate perhaps another roughly 1,000 households over the next twenty years. Clinton Township foresees a need to accommodate about 400 new households in the same planning period. Each Township believes these numbers to be consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. This plan calls for a high regional projection in this part of Butler County (about 18,000 persons). However, each

Township believes that major shifts in infrastructure will steer this to other municipalities in the region, such as Middlesex Township. Future household information is summarized in the next table, and is adopted by this plan as the official projection of new households. This will become the basis of future land use planning and planning for future housing needs of residents.

Table 4-4 Clinton and Buffalo Township Number of households 2002-2025				
Year	Buffalo Twp. Total Households	Change	Clinton Twp. Total Households	Change
2002 estimate	2866	n/a	1177	n/a
2010 Projected	3777	+911	1497	+320
2020 Projected	3931	+154	1549	+52
2025 Projected	3932	+1	1551	+3

Source: Southwest Pennsylvania Commission and Consultants Projections

Population Characteristics: In earlier decades, Comprehensive Plans frequently contained massive amounts of Census Data. Since the widespread availability of the Internet, basic demographics are available to anyone in nearly an instant. Rather than repeat endless statistics, the standard of good planning is now to examine what trends are discernable under the statistics. In addition to the aforementioned growth, there are some other trends worth noting. One is that the population of both communities remains racially homogenous. Only 0.28 percent of Clinton Township Citizens chose a category other than “White” on the Census racial question. The ratio

for Buffalo Township is only 0.65 percent. Nationwide, racial minorities represent about 21 percent of the total population.

Another difference between local demographics and state and national norms, is the larger proportion of older persons in the two townships. Median age for Clinton Township, Buffalo Township, Butler County, The Commonwealth, and the Nation is illustrated in the next table.

Comparative Median Age, 2000	
Selected Places	
Place	Median Age in 2000
Clinton Township	39.1
Buffalo Township	39.8
Butler County	37.6
Pennsylvania	38.0
USA	35.3

The slightly higher median age of residents translates to larger numbers of older persons. This has both labor force and housing implications that are discussed more fully in the economic and housing sections. However, for the purposes of planning for the two townships, the most important demographic factor to be considered is the future anticipated number of households. This has a number of crucial land use implications. This is discussed more fully in the Housing Plan Section.