

Chapter A Population

1. Purpose

Population is a foundational data set to guide all aspects of a comprehensive plan. The understanding of the town's past, current and future population trends support many other aspects of the plan, such as housing, land-use and transportation and will help the town prepare for future municipal expenditures and investments. This chapter:

- a) describes Brooksville's population trends;
- b) discusses how these recent trends relate to and contrast with Hancock County and the State; and
- c) reviews likely future population trends.

2. Key Findings & Issues

In 2020 Brooksville's median age stood at 55 years, higher than surrounding towns, the County and State. Brooksville also had a higher median income (\$63,036) than that of the surrounding towns and state. The school age and workforce age population of Brooksville has decreased as a proportion of the total population. Total population was projected to be on the decline after the 2010 census, but the 2020 census shows that the decline was either incorrect, or has rapidly reversed quite recently, and now stands at virtually the same number of total residents (936) as were living here in 2010 (934). A large majority of survey respondents expressed the wish to attract more young families and retain current young families, a view also expressed in the survey results from the 2006 Comprehensive Plan.

3. Key Findings & Issues from the 2006 Plan

In 2006 Brooksville had the highest median age in Hancock County, at 48.6 years, and a rapidly shrinking population under 45. The town also had a slightly higher educational attainment and household income than the surrounding towns and the county. In 2006, 84% of survey respondents wished to attract young families and retain current young families already residing in Brooksville. Seventy percent of seasonal residents planned to make Brooksville their year-round home within five to ten years.

4. 2018 Public Opinion Survey Results

As in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan's survey, a large majority of residents wish to attract more young families and to retain young families already in town. 67.5% of respondents support a slow increase of the population; 24.2% wish to maintain the current population, while only 1.1% supported a rapid increase. In addition to the large support for increasing the population, the overwhelming majority of respondents support maintaining the rural character and way of life in Brooksville (83%).

5. Historical Trends

Table A – 1 shows historical population changes and projections through 2036. A graphical depiction of this data is shown in Figure A-1. Many factors influence rural populations, including proximity to larger urban centers, access to mass transit and transportation and the condition of local and regional economies. Brooksville’s population increased rapidly until the Great Depression (1929-1933) and then fluctuated between population decrease and increase from the 1950s until 2000. Since then, the population has increased slightly between the years 2000 and 2010 at 2.5%, and then decreased (or, more accurately, was projected to decrease). In 2018, the Maine State Economist projected Brooksville’s population to reverse the decreasing trend and start increasing (by 7.6% in 2021) and then gradually decrease again over the next fifteen years. The results of the 2020 census will undoubtedly require a recasting of those projections.

Brooksville’s trends were not projected to follow the larger regional trends projected for Hancock County and the State. The County’s population did decrease dramatically in 1920. However, it then rose steadily over the following decades. The population projection for Hancock County showed a slight decrease of less than 1% between 2010 and 2036. This mostly mirrors the State’s population projection with gradual population increases for each decade and a slight decline projected in 2036. As with Brooksville’s projections, the projections for the County and the State will need to be revisited by the State Economist now that the 2020 census is available.

At the time of writing rural Maine’s population appears to be increasing dramatically due to the influx of residents either fleeing denser population areas due to the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, and/or climate impacts in other regions of the United States, such as severe drought, wildfires and seasonal storms. National projections forecast a continued migration towards rural places like Maine for the coming years. Brooksville’s population may thus increase far beyond the 2018 projections, as more people seek out areas of lower population density, provided they are able to work remotely. Access to broadband/fiber internet could become an important determinant for many rural towns’ populations.

Figure A-1
Brooksville’s Population

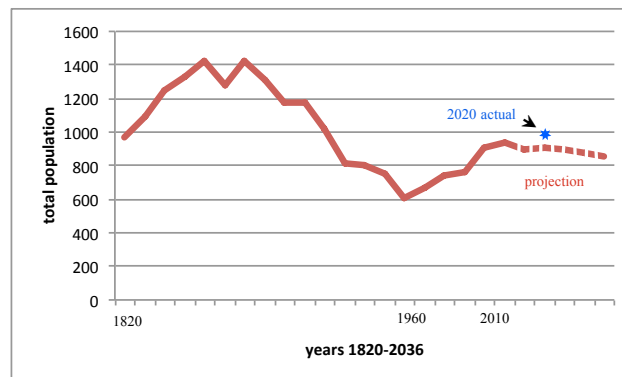


Table A-1

Historic & Projected Population						
Year	Brooksville		Hancock County		State of Maine	
	Population	Percent Change	Population	Percent Change	Population	Percent Change
1820	972	N/A	31,290	N/A	298,335	N/A
1830	1,089	12.00%	24,336	-22.20%	399,455	33.90%
1840	1,246	14.40%	28,605	17.50%	501,793	25.50%
1850	1,333	7.00%	34,372	20.20%	583,169	16.20%
1860	1,428	7.10%	37,757	9.80%	628,279	7.70%
1870	1,275	-10.70%	36,495	-3.30%	626,915	-0.20%
1880	1,419	11.30%	38,129	4.50%	648,936	3.50%
1890	1,310	-7.70%	37,312	-2.10%	661,086	1.90%
1900	1,171	-10.60%	37,241	-0.20%	694,466	5.00%
1910	1,176	0.40%	35,575	-4.50%	742,371	6.90%
1920	1,019	-13.40%	30,361	-14.70%	768,014	3.50%
1930	810	-20.50%	30,721	1.20%	797,423	3.80%
1940	805	-0.60%	32,422	5.50%	847,226	6.20%
1950	751	-6.70%	32,105	-1.00%	913,774	7.90%
1960	603	-19.70%	32,293	0.60%	969,265	6.10%
1970	673	11.60%	34,590	7.10%	992,048	2.40%
1980	743	11.90%	41,781	20.80%	1,124,660	13.40%
1990	760	0.90%	46,948	12.40%	1,227,93	9.20%
2000	911	19.90%	51,791	10.30%	1,274,923	3.80%
2010	934	2.50%	54,418	5.10%	1,328,361	4.20%
2018	918		54,911		1,341,160	
2020	936	0.02%	55,478	1.95%	1,362,359	2.56%

Sources: US Decennial Census including 2020: years 2018 and 2019 are projections from American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, and Maine State Economist Population Projections, Office of the Governor. Future projections will need revision based on 2020 census data. Percent change in 2020 compares 2020 with 2010.

6. Current Conditions

Age Characteristics:

Tables A – 2 to A– 4 show age characteristics for Brooksville, Hancock County and the State from 1990 until 2018. The most recent data relies on the 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, which do have a higher margin of error compared to the 1990, 2000 and 2010 Decennial US Census. However, the data is still usable especially if verified by local knowledge of the Comprehensive Planning Committee. Furthermore, the 2020 Census count

was completed during a time of significant in-migration to rural Maine, and during height of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The numbers may not be a true reflection of actual population numbers for Brooksville, and also Hancock County. Thus, for the Plan we will rely on the 2018 ACS data.

Age distribution for Brooksville follows a trend similar to neighboring towns, Hancock County and the State in general, but does not reflect larger trends within the United States.

Brooksville's population is getting older, and by 2018 had a median age of 55 years, compared to Blue Hill's 51, neighboring Sedgwick's 46.5, Castine's 21.3 and Hancock County's median age of 48.5 years of age. Brooksville's median age is also much higher than the 2018 State of Maine median age of 44.6 years.

In Brooksville the age cohorts that showed the largest decrease as a percent of the total population between the years 2000 to 2018 are the following: Under 5 (-5.6 %), 5 to 17 (-17.8 %) and 18 to 44 (-25.9 %). The remaining three age cohorts all increased at the following rates: 45 to 64 (18.2 %), 65 to 84 (34.8) and 85 + (34.5 %). While population decreased from 2010 to 2018, there was an increase of 4.1 % since 2000. The town followed the larger population trends of both Hancock County and the State, which experienced similar decreases in the younger age cohorts and increases in the cohorts above 45 years of age. While the population for the State of Maine has increased since 2000, Hancock County's decreased slightly in the years between 2010 and 2018 as did Brooksville's.

Educational Attainment:

Brooksville has significantly higher educational attainment than surrounding towns and the county for the population over 25 years of age. This is especially true for graduate level and professional degree holders. In 2018 only Castine had a higher portion of graduate degree holders, at 30.5%, compared to Brooksville's 24.1%, but this is probably is due to the presence of the Maritime Academy. Neighboring Sedgwick has both a higher percentage of high school diploma holders and bachelor's degree holders, but a lower percentage of graduate and professional degree holders in the population over 25. See Table A – 5

Table A-2

Age Distribution for Brooksville								
Age Cohort	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2018	% of Total	% Change 2010 - 2018	% Change 2000 - 2018
0 - 4	41	4.5%	35	3.7%	20	2.2%	-75.0%	-105%
5 -17	123	13.5%	108	11.6%	137	15.3%	21.2%	10.2%
18 - 44	242	26.5%	223	23.9%	175	19.5%	-27.4%	38.3%
45 - 64	317	34.8%	333	35.6%	255	28.5%	-30.6%	24.3%
65 - 84	162	17.8%	206	22.1%	304	33.9%	32.2%	46.7%
85+	26	2.9%	29	3.1%	5	0.6%	-480%	-420%
Total	911	100%	934	100%	896	100%	-4.2%	-1.7%
<i>Source: US Decennial Census: 2018 American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates</i>								

Table A-3

Age Distribution for Hancock County								
Age Cohort	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2018	% of Total	% Change 2010 - 2018	% Change 2000 - 2018
0 - 4	2,516	4.9%	2,603	4.8%	2,383	4.4%	-9.2 %	-5.6 %
5 -17	8,365	16.2%	7,374	13.5%	7,099	13.1%	-3.9 %	-17.8 %
18 - 44	18,736	36.2%	16,155	29.7%	14,884	27.5%	-8.5 %	-25.9 %
45 - 64	13,889	26.8%	18,350	33.7%	16,969	31.4%	-8.1 %	18.2 %
65 - 84	7,219	13.9%	8,662	15.9%	11,068	20.5%	21.7 %	34.8 %
85+	1,067	2.1%	1,275	2.3%	1,628	3.0%	21.5 %	34.5 %
Total	51,792	100%	54,422	100%	54,031	100%	-0.7 %	4.1 %
<i>Source: US Decennial Census: 2018 American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates</i>								

Table A-4

Age Distribution for the State of Maine								
Age Cohort	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2018	% of Total	% Change 2010 - 2018	% Change 2000 - 2018
0 - 4	70,726	5.6 %	69,520	5.2 %	62,813	4.7 %	-10.7 %	-12.6 %
5 -17	230,524	18.1 %	205,013	15.4 %	183,540	13.7 %	-11.7 %	-25.6 %
18 - 44	471,280	37.1 %	432,077	32.5 %	424,553	31.6 %	-1.8 %	-11.0 %
45 - 64	315,783	24.8 %	410,676	30.9 %	387,328	28.8 %	-6.0 %	18.5 %
65 - 84	160,086	12.6 %	181,944	13.7 %	251,325	18.7 %	27.6 %	36.3 %
85+	23,316	1.8 %	30,032	2.3 %	34,653	2.6 %	13.9 %	32.7 %
Total	1,271,715	100 %	1,329,523	100 %	1,344,212	100 %	1.1 %	5.4 %
<i>Source: US Decennial Census: 2018 American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates</i>								

Table A – 5
Educational Attainment: Brooksville, Region, County & State
(persons over 25 years old)

Degree Type	Brooksville	Sedgwick	Blue Hill	Castine	Hancock County	Maine
High School Diploma	21.9%	34.6	33.6	14.5	32.3	31.8
Some college, or Associate's Degree	27.5%					
Bachelor's Degree	25.7%	27.1	18.4	23.8	19.4	19.6
Graduate / Professional	21.6%	14.5	13.8	30.5	12.9	11.3
Total	96.7%					
<i>Source: US Decennial Census: 2018 American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates</i>						

Household Size:

Since 2000, Brooksville’s Average Household Size has increased from 2.21 persons per household to 2.33, following a pattern similar to some neighboring towns such as Sedgwick and Castine, but diverging from trends in the County and State both of which had decreasing household sizes. Between 2010 to 2018 Brooksville’s Average Household Size (AHS) surpassed the County’s, though the reasons for this divergence from previous trends are hard to surmise without looking more closely at local data.

**Table A – 6
Average Household Size: Brooksville, Neighboring Towns, County & State**

Town / Place	2000	2010	2018	Percent Change 2000 - 2018
Brooksville	2.21	2.14	2.33	5.2 %
Sedgwick	2.34	2.26	2.40	2.5 %
Blue Hill	2.23	2.08	2.18	-2.3 %
Castine	2.16	2.13	2.28	4.0 %
Hancock County	2.31	2.20	2.24	-10.7 %
State	2.39	2.40	2.33	-2.6 %

Source: US Decennial Census: 2018 American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates

Income:

According to the American Community Survey 5 year estimate, Brooksville’s median income of \$71,058 is much higher than that of surrounding towns such as Sedgwick (\$48,750), Blue Hill (\$59,324) and Castine (\$52,500. It is also higher than that of Hancock County (\$53,068) and the State (\$55,425).

Other Information:

The 2000 Decennial Census identified Brooksville as 98.7% white. The 2018 ACS 5 – Year Estimates show a slight increase in multi-cultural diversity with 94.6% of Brooksville white. By 2018 approximately 46% of the total population held a Bachelor’s degree or higher, and many residents were employed outside of Brooksville with an average commute time of 23.3 minutes. While seasonal household units have increased since 2000, it will be important to see how many of those units are converted to year-round residences in 2020 and 2021.

Seasonal Population:

Brooksville's seasonal population has increased significantly since 2000. Maine Housing reports that by 2017, 55%, or 512 housing units out of 938 total occupied units were vacant seasonally. Based on the current average household size, this could add 1,192 persons in the summer months. The town also has two summer camps on Walker Pond, two summer inns, and several bed and breakfasts that contribute to the seasonal population.

7. Projected Population

Projecting small town population is often imprecise due to the many factors that influence rural population. Any estimate will need to be reviewed within five years to measure accuracy. Sources for more up-to-date population projections will be developed, and hopefully will result in more accurate predictions than were possible in 2018. At the time of writing, many unforeseeable factors are impacting migration patterns throughout the United States. These include climate change induced wildfires in California and Colorado, years long mega droughts in much of the western United States, the COVID-19 Global Pandemic and civil unrest in some urban areas. All of these have prompted many people to reevaluate city living and the west coast. Recent real estate turnover and prices indicate many of these people are moving to rural Maine. To predict how Brooksville's population will change in the future, it will be necessary on an ongoing basis to review updated school enrollment figures as well as permits for new structures.

8. Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Brooksville will strive to maintain its rural character in the course of population growth that is both gradual and includes increased diversity among peoples and ages.			
Objective	Strategy	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
Ensure residents can remain in town for as long as possible, well into their senior years.	Support age in place policies and investments that provide for facilities and services to support this need.	Select Board and/or designee(ies)	Ongoing
Promote Brooksville as a place to live and actively seek out new residents and young families.	Work with local tourism and development agencies to reach a broad audience.	Select Board and/or designee(ies)	Ongoing
Maintain an annual understanding of population changes in Brooksville.	Regularly review ACS and Census data, along with local sources of data to monitor population fluctuations.	Select Board, Planning Board, HCPC	Ongoing
Support Broadband/Fiber Internet Access throughout Brooksville to retain residents and attract new/younger residents.	Work cooperatively with state agencies and other towns in the region to secure better internet	Brooksville Broadband Committee, Select Board	Immediate – Ongoing