

CHAPTER 2. POPULATION

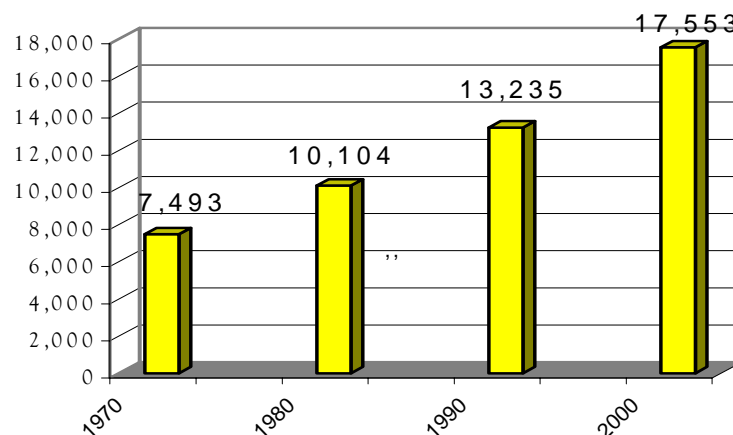
Population and demographic change are among the most important measures to express growth and its likely impact on land uses in a community. Therefore, it is helpful to recognize the Township's population and growth trends in preparing a realistic and meaningful Master Plan. This chapter of the Community Profile Report describes Township population and demographic characteristics, and serves as part of the foundation for drawing conclusions about the Township's likely future.

POPULATION GROWTH

To begin, it is appropriate to determine the overall growth the Township has experienced in the recent past. Like many metropolitan townships in Michigan, Byron primarily existed as a rural farming community until experiencing modest low-density post-war growth, primarily in the form of acreage "estates." Since 1970, however, the United States Census illustrates that the Township's population increased from 7,493 to 17,553 in 2000, or by a total of 10,060, representing a 134% increase. In other words, the Township has grown at an average annual rate of 4.47% over the last 30 years. These figures are reflective of larger scale suburban growth that the township now experiences.

Figure 2.1 Byron Township Population Growth

Byron Township has seen a slightly greater rate of growth than the entire metropolitan region on average.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

The overall Grand Rapids metropolitan region is growing in population, and Byron Township naturally captures a portion of that growth.

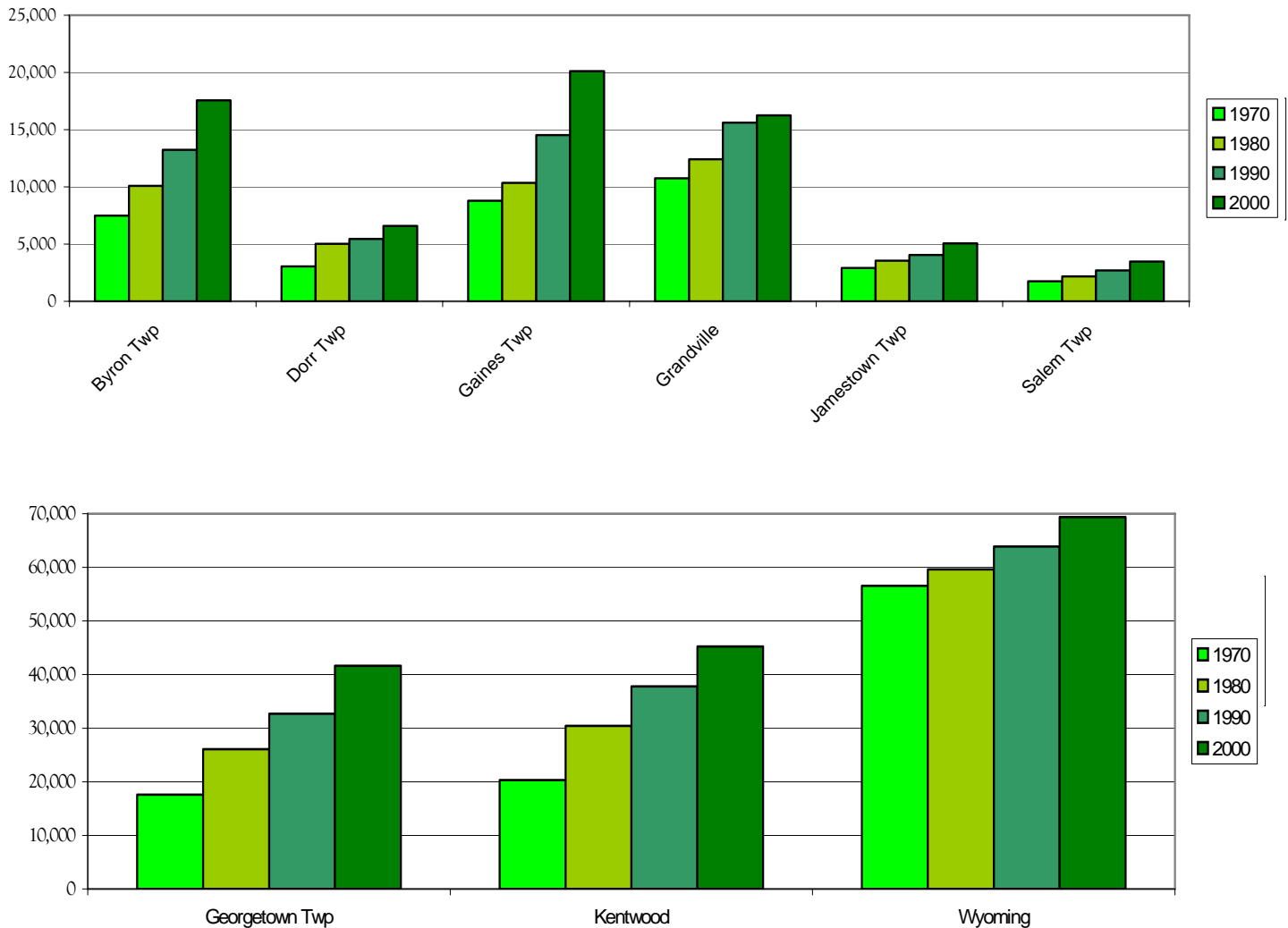
From 1990 to 2000, Byron Township grew from 13,235 to 17,553, or by 33%. During this same period, Kent County grew by 14.7%; the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Statistical Area grew by 16%; and, the State of Michigan grew by 6.9%.⁹ Therefore, Byron has seen a slightly greater rate of growth than the entire metropolitan region on average.

The bulk of Byron's recent growth has occurred around the Byron Center community, and in the northeast quadrant of the Township. These are the areas where utilities are present and development is encouraged.

To put Byron's recent growth trends in perspective, it is appropriate to compare the Township with neighboring communities. Figure 2.2 compares the 30-year population growth history of Byron Township with that of eight other neighboring municipalities.

⁹ United States Census Bureau, 2000

Figure 2.2 Comparative Rates of Population Growth in Area Communities



Source: West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

Gaines and Byron Townships experienced the highest percentage growth rates from 1990 to 2000, while the largely built-out cities of Grandville and Wyoming experienced the slightest growth rates.

Every surrounding jurisdiction has continued to see increasing growth, similar to the growth experienced by the bulk of West Michigan communities.¹⁰ Much of the growth in outlying townships can be attributed to an overall pattern of out-migration from urban to suburban and rural areas, and respectable West Michigan economic growth. In addition, the overall Grand Rapids metropolitan region is growing in

¹⁰ West Michigan Regional Planning Commission

population, and Byron Township naturally captures a portion of that growth.

The following table illustrates growth from 1990 to 2000, according to information from the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission that was derived from the 1990 and 2000 Census.

Table 2.1 Comparative Rates of Population Growth

Municipality	1990 Population	2000 Population	Increase	% Change
Byron Township	13,235	17,553	4,318	33%
Dorr Township	5,453	6,579	1,126	21%
Gaines Township	14,533	20,112	5,559	38%
Georgetown Township	32,672	41,658	8,986	28%
City of Grandville	15,624	16,263	639	4%
Jamestown Township	4,059	5,062	1,003	25%
City of Kentwood	37,826	45,255	7,429	20%
Salem Township	2,708	3,486	778	29%
City of Wyoming	63,891	69,368	5,477	9%

In communities south and southwest of Grand Rapids, Gaines and Byron Townships experienced the highest percentage growth rates from 1990 to 2000, while the largely built-out cities of Grandville and Wyoming experienced the slightest growth rates. The average growth rate for the above communities was approximately 23%. Byron Township’s 33% growth rate was well above the average growth rate of its neighbors. Table 2.1 indicates that Byron and its neighbors have generally experienced a very rapid rate of growth between 1990 to 2000.

As many as 3,875 new residents may have moved to – or are moving to – the Township since the 2000 Census.

Byron Township has experienced significant growth since the 2000 Census was taken. From 2000 to 2004, the Township issued about 1,430 residential building permits. Multiplying this figure by the average household size of 2.71 persons per household,¹¹ an estimate of the number of people occupying those residential units can be determined. As many as 3,875 new residents may have moved to – or are moving to – the Township since the 2000 Census.¹²

¹¹ United States Census Bureau, 2000

¹² Number of approved units as of April 2005.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

To estimate future population growth, statistical averaging techniques were employed to project the Township’s likely population growth to the year 2030. These techniques may be helpful, especially since the most recent Census information is five years old. These approaches are intended to provide a very general sense of future growth. Future growth trends may not parallel historical statistical trends in communities such as Byron that have experienced rapid rates of development, in part because developable acreage has been consumed over time. The following generalizations are limited in scope and are based on past trends documented by the United States Census Bureau and the Byron Township Building Department.

These projections have implications pertaining to future land use, the demand for various public services and capital improvements, and help to understand the future position of the Township in terms of growth and total population. The following describes the projection techniques.

The Constant Proportion (or ratio) Method of projecting population assumes that Byron Township will continue to represent the same percentage of Kent County’s projected population in the years 2010, 2020, and 2030 that it represents today. In 2000, Byron Township comprised 3.05% of Kent County’s total population. Using the population projections for Kent County as estimated by Woods and Poole Economics,¹³ and extending those trends through 2030, the following illustrates the results of the constant proportion method for Byron Township.

In 2000, Byron Township comprised 3.05% of Kent County’s total population.

CONSTANT PROPORTION METHOD

	2000 <u>Population</u>	2010 <u>Population Projection</u>	2020 <u>Population Projection</u>	2030 <u>Population Projection</u>
Kent County	576,040	694,570	780,960	909,428*
Byron Twp	17,553	21,165	23,798	27,713

* Woods and Poole did not project county population through 2030; this figure results from an extrapolation of the rates of growth projected from 2000 through 2020 for another ten years.

¹³ Woods and Poole Economics data was gathered from the Right Place Program.

The Growth Rate (or geometric) **Method** projects future population growth based on the rate of growth in the Township in the past. Using the growth rate method, the following assumes that growth in the future will occur at the same average rate as has occurred annually since 1970. As indicated previously, the Township has experienced a 4.47% average annual growth rate since 1970.

GROWTH RATE METHOD

	Average Annual Growth Rate				
	<u>1970-2000</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>
Byron Twp	4.47%	17,553	25,399	36,752	53,180

The Arithmetic Method is similar to the growth rate method in that population projections are based on growth that occurred in preceding decades. This method, however, bases population growth on the overall average increase in the number of persons per year, rather than on growth rates. The following projections are based on the average net increase of 10,060 persons between 1970 and 2000.

ARITHMETIC METHOD

	Average Increase Each Decade	2000	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>
	(Number of Persons)	<u>Population</u>			
Byron Twp	3,353	17,553	20,906	24,259	27,612

The Building Permit Method may be the most reliable projection technique since it depicts present growth trends based on the actual number of residential building permits issued by the Township. Byron Township has issued 286 new residential building permits on average per year between 2000 and 2004.¹⁴ The Township’s average household size is 2.71 persons.¹⁵ Extrapolating these figures into the future may project likely population growth, if current trends remain the same. This population projection technique holds that Byron Township will grow by 775 persons per year.

¹⁴ Byron Township Building Department

¹⁵ United States Census Bureau, 2000

BUILDING PERMIT METHOD

<u>Average No Permits/Year</u>	<u>Persons per H/H</u>	<u>2000 Population</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>
286	2.71	17,553	25,303	33,053	40,803

... Byron Township will grow to approximately 23,000 persons by the year 2010; roughly 29,500 by the year 2020; and over 37,000 by the year 2030.

The table below summarizes the preceding information. By averaging the results of these methods, it is reasonable to predict that the population of Byron Township will grow to approximately 23,000 persons by the year 2010; roughly 29,500 by the year 2020; and over 37,000 by the year 2030. The projections summarized here assume that past trends will continue into the future, and are limited in scope by such a supposition. Projections are based on population counts documented by the United States Census and building permit data from the Township.

POPULATION PROJECTION SUMMARY

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>
Constant Proportion	17,553	21,165	23,798	27,713
Growth Rate	17,553	25,399	36,752	53,180
Arithmetic	17,553	20,906	24,259	27,612
Building Permits	<u>17,553</u>	<u>25,303</u>	<u>33,053</u>	<u>40,803</u>
Average	17,553	23,193	29,465	37,327

From 2000 to 2004, the Township issued about 1,430 residential building permits ... the average 2010 population estimates are most likely conservative.

As previously stated, from 2000 to 2004, the Township issued about 1,430 residential building permits. This may imply that as many as 3,875 people may have moved to the Township since the 2000 Census. Therefore, the average 2010 population estimates above are most likely conservative.

It is reasonable to assume that Byron Township will continue to see growth and development. Natural beauty, high quality public and private schools, access to public and private recreational facilities, and close proximity to choice employers, expressways, churches, and regional shopping destinations may work as part of the magnetism that draws families to the community.

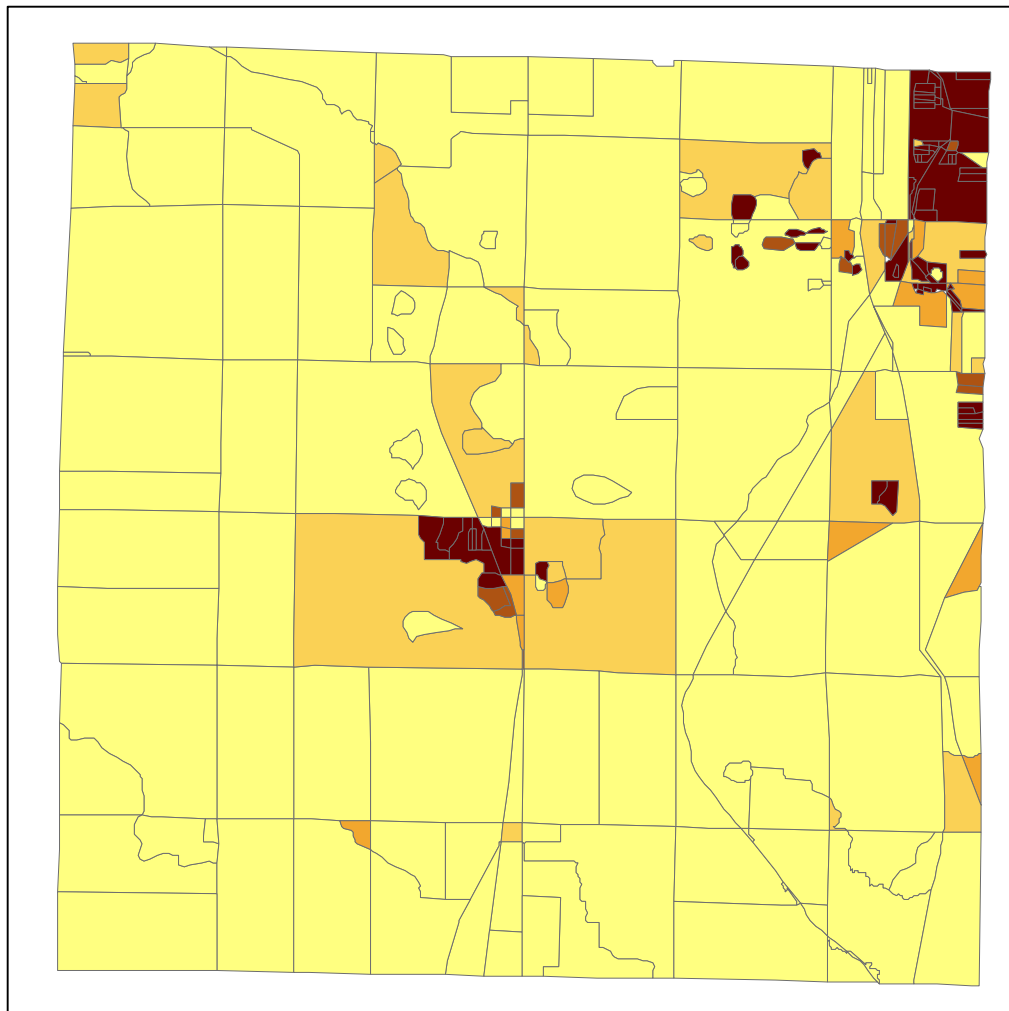
CHANGE IN POPULATION DENSITY

The predominate development pattern in Byron Township is low to moderate density, and characteristic of “the suburbs.”

Figure 2.3 on the following page illustrates population density by Census Block for 1980, 1990, and 2000. A careful examination of this graphic reveals how new population has been distributed since 1980. Since 1980, the Township has grown by 7,449 people. Though some greater density is apparent in 1990 and 2000, the predominate development pattern in Byron Township is low to moderate density, and characteristic of “the suburbs.”¹⁶ A continuation of this relatively low development density of 0.5 to 1.1 dwelling units per acre will necessitate use of an automobile to travel about the community.

¹⁶ U.S. Census block group data as developed by Tetrad, PCensus.

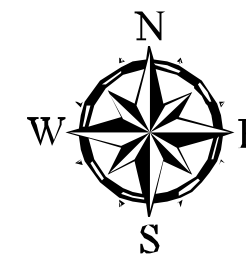
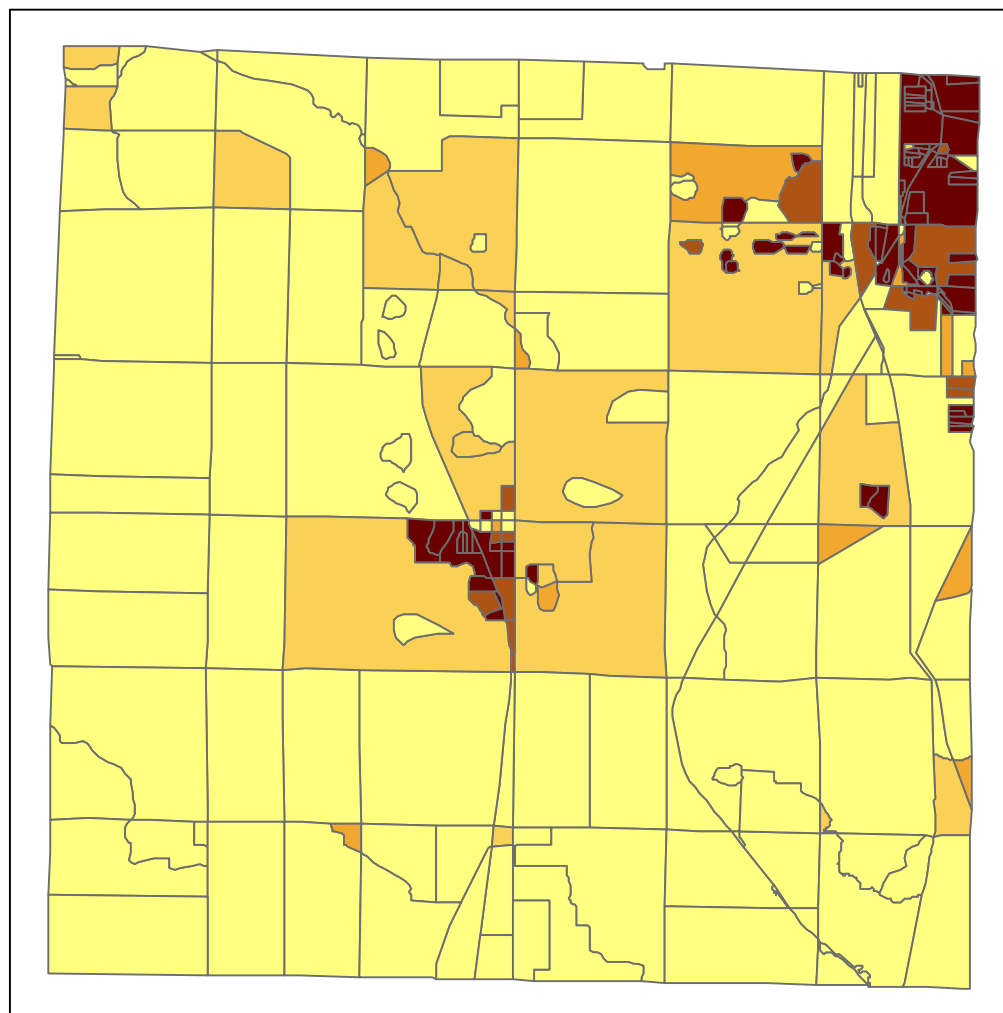
1980



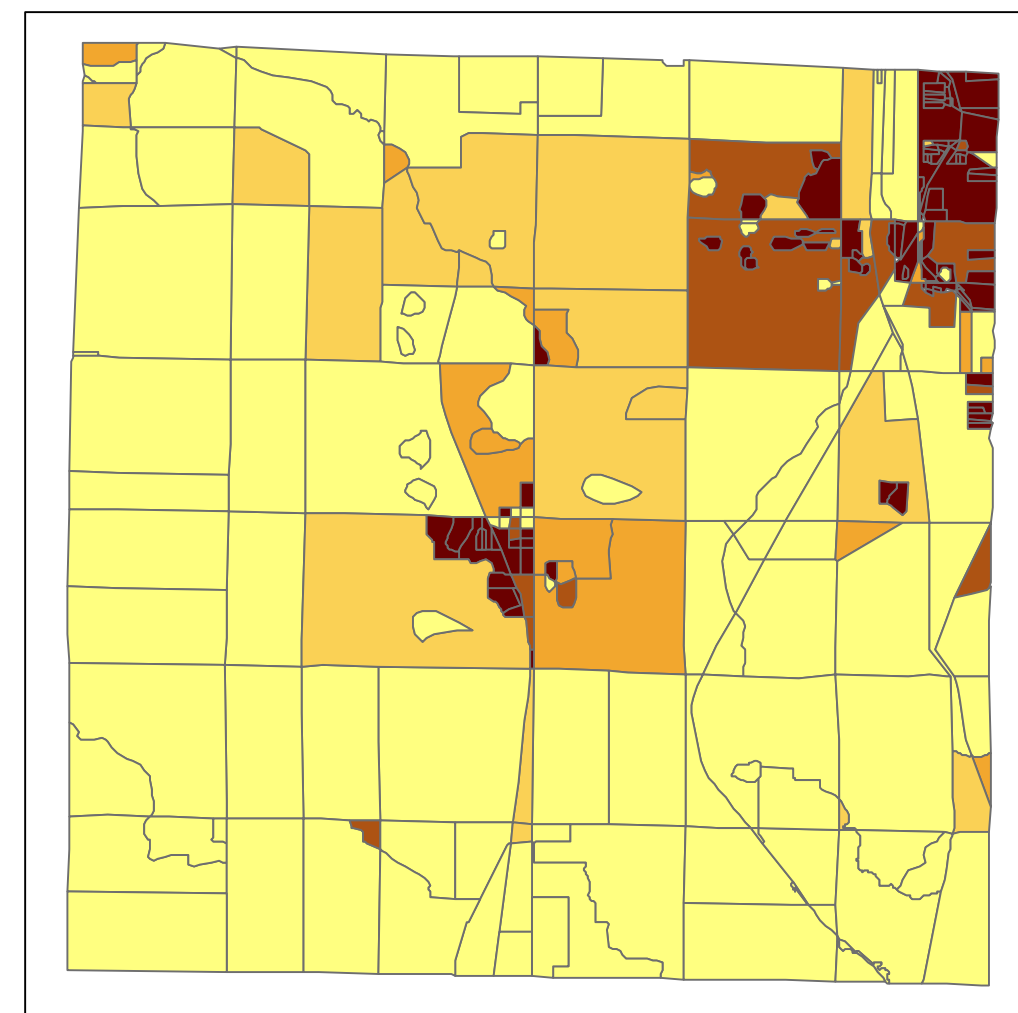
Dwelling Units Per Acre



1990



2000



Byron Township

Kent County, Michigan

Change in
Population Density
by Census Block
1980 - 2000

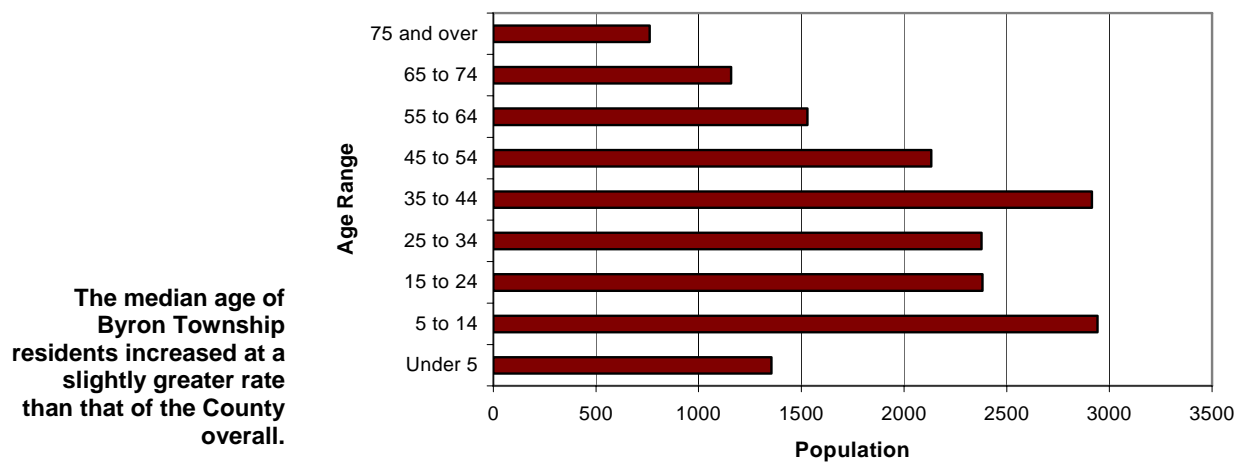
Figure 2.3

AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY CHARACTERISTICS

Contemplating age characteristics can assist in determining the type of housing demands and recreational facilities that may be needed. For example, if a large portion of the population were younger, the Township may benefit from additional park and playground facilities. Similarly, the rate of increase in a senior population may have implications for more senior living opportunities, such as condominiums, and public services.

In 2000, the median age of Byron Township residents was 33.9 years, slightly older than the County (32.5 years), and slightly younger than the State and the U.S. (35.5 and 35.3 years, respectively). The median age represents the mid-point in the range of all ages within the Township; one-half of the population is younger and one-half of the population older.

Figure 2.4 Byron Township Population Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Similar to national and statewide trends, the population of Kent County and the Township is aging. In 1990, the median age of the County was 30.8 years; and in 2000 it had risen to 32.5 years. The median age in Byron Township in 1990 was 30.4, and had increased to 33.9 in 2000.¹⁷ Therefore, the median age of Byron Township residents increased at a slightly greater rate than that of the County overall. Despite the aging of the “baby boomer” population, a substantial portion of the Township is

¹⁷ United States Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

in the 5 to 14 category, indicative of a stable family population and probably suggesting a need for schools, parks, and other youth-related facilities.

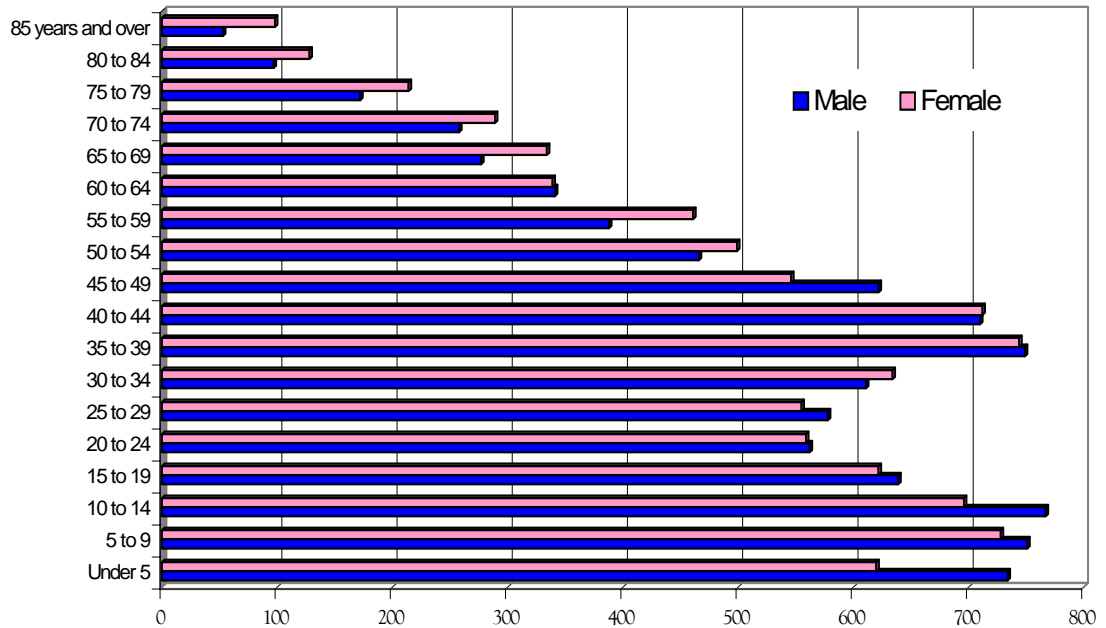
The 25 to 44 years age group is significant since this represents the bulk of the wage-earning population, and is the main age division for family formations. The Census reveals that 30.2% of the Township's population falls in the 25 to 44 age group. These age groups tend to demand single-family housing, and school and recreational facilities for children. These age groups typically indicate future increases in the 5 to 19 years age groups and increased school enrollment, and a demand for family-oriented services, such as casual restaurants, cultural and entertainment venues, and recreational facilities.

A need may emerge for increased senior living opportunities, public transportation, and passive recreational facilities.

Roughly 21% of the Township is age 45 to 64. This age division is generally comprised of empty nesters and aging baby boomers and implies disposable incomes. Almost 9% of the Township is aged 55 to 64 years, and will likely enter retirement within the next ten years. Indicative of retirees and senior citizens, 11% of the Township is over 65 years of age (compared with 10.3% of Kent County). These figures, in addition to statistics on general aging, point toward a possible need for increased senior living opportunities, public transportation, and passive recreational facilities, such as parks and pedestrian facilities which connect land uses and neighborhoods. In addition, other amenities may be warranted as the population ages, such as street signs with larger lettering; traffic lights that give more time for pedestrians to clear crosswalks; accessory apartments within or attached to single-family homes; benches in pedestrian areas, and abundantly lighted walking paths.

Figure 2.5 illustrates that males outnumber females between the ages of 0 to 29. Females outnumber males in every other age group with the exception of the 35 to 39, 45 to 49, and 60 to 64 year age groups. In general, this age and gender pattern parallels characteristics for Kent County and should have no impact on land uses in the community.

Figure 2.5 Year 2000 Comparison of Age and Gender (in 5-Year Increments)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

The Township is predominantly white. The portion of the population classified as “white alone” at the 2000 Census represents 94.8% of the community. Black or African Americans represent 1.2% of the Township; American Indian and Alaska Natives represent .3%; Asians represent 1.1%; and other races (including those classified as “two or more races”) comprise 2.6% of the Township. According to the 2000 Census, there are no Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders in the Township. Just over 21% of Michigan’s population is nonwhite, while Byron is 5.2% nonwhite. These figures should have no impact on land uses in the community.

INCOME

Mean (or average) household income is a popular measure for determining the economic strength of an area. Income may also have implications for land use and public services, since people with higher incomes usually invest more in their houses, and may expect more from local government.

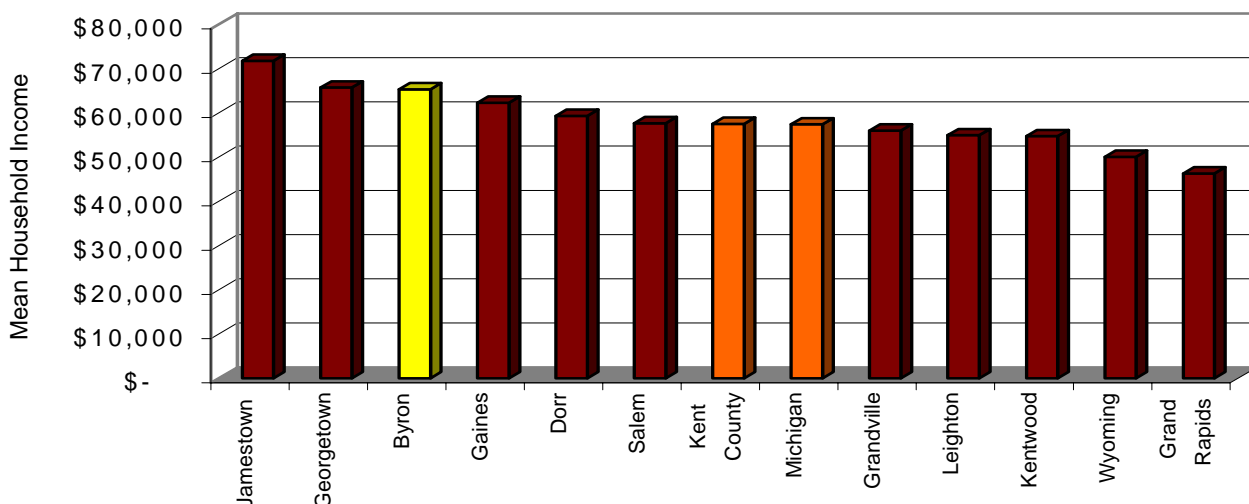
Figure 2.6 compares the 2000 mean household income between Byron, its neighbors, the County, and the State of Michigan. The mean household income in the Township was \$65,337, compared with \$57,512 in the County and \$57,400 for Michigan. The Township’s median household income of \$49,672 exceeds that of Kent County (\$45,980) by about 8%. In a broader context, the median household income for Michigan in 2000 was reported at \$44,667. Thus, Byron Township slightly exceeds mean and median household income reported both for Kent County and Michigan. Comparing Byron’s neighbors, Jamestown Township had the highest mean household income at \$71,754, while the City of Wyoming had the lowest, \$50,045.

The mean household income in the Township was \$65,337, compared with \$57,512 in the County and \$57,400 for Michigan.

These income levels reflect the significant growth that occurred during the 1990s. Median household income reported for Byron Township in 1990 was \$32,222 while that figure for Kent County was \$32,358. Therefore, during the 1990s, incomes in Byron Township grew by 54%, or at an annualized rate of 5.4%. For the County, incomes grew by about 42% for the decade or at an annualized rate of about 3.5%. Since inflation for the decade generally fell below 3% per year, these figures reflect true growth in household incomes within both Byron Township and Kent County.

As Figure 2.6 illustrates, the bulk of the southwestern suburbs of Grand Rapids enjoy similar incomes to the County and the State of Michigan, on average.

Figure 2.6 Comparison of Mean Household Incomes in Neighboring Communities



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

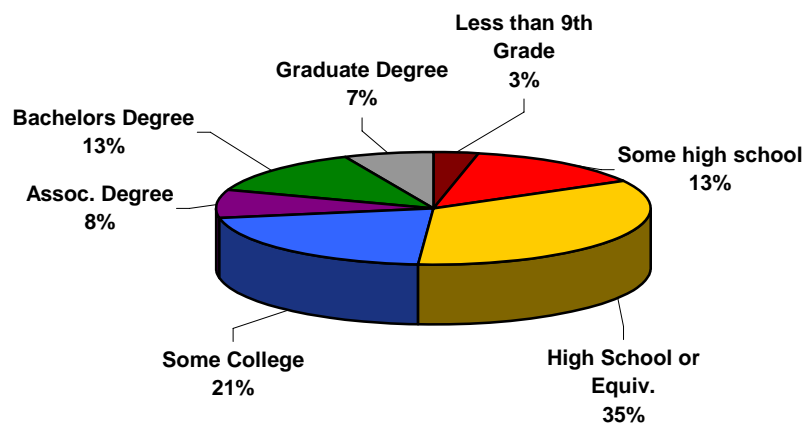
In addition to age, gender, and ethnicity characteristics, it is appropriate to catalog educational attainment trends in the community. This information may be an indicator of local school district quality, which is assumedly a major pull for families moving into the area. School district attributes are discussed in Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services.

A greater percentage of Township residents have graduated high school than County residents, but a greater percentage of County residents have attained a bachelor's degree or higher than Township residents.

The 2000 Census indicates that within Byron Township, approximately 34.2% of the population over 25 years of age have the equivalent of a high school education (83.1% of the population has graduated high school or a higher institution), with 19.6% having a bachelor's degree or higher. In Kent County, roughly 28.3% of the population have the equivalent of a high school education with 25.9% reporting a bachelor's degree or higher. Thus, a greater percentage of Township residents have graduated high school than County residents, but a greater percentage of County residents have attained a bachelor's degree or higher than Township residents.

Similarly, the 2000 Census reports that 31.3% of the population in Michigan has a high school education or similar equivalency, and 21.8% has at least a bachelor's degree. A higher percentage of the population in Byron Township has attained the equivalent of a high school education when compared with the State. However, a lower percentage of the Township's population has attained advanced degrees at the college, graduate, professional, and doctorate levels.

Figure 2.7 Educational Attainment in Byron Township, Percent of Population 25 Years and Over



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000