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Population Trends in Buffalo-Niagara

Ramon Garcia

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Population Trends in Buffalo-Niagara

Abstract

Like a number of places in the nation's manufacturing belt, the Buffalo-Niagara metropolitan area has been losing population over the past several decades. This decline reflects the ongoing population shift from the Northeast and Midwest to warmer places in the South and West, as well as the considerable loss of manufacturing jobs in the region. In recent decades, some large metros experiencing domestic out-migration have seen their populations bolstered by migrants from abroad. But while the Buffalo metro's rate of out-migration has been roughly average, the rates of both domestic and international in-migration have been very low. Like many cities across the U.S., the City of Buffalo has seen a considerable decline in its population since WWII as growth shifted to the suburbs. As a result, the City of Buffalo has represented a shrinking share of its metro's total population.

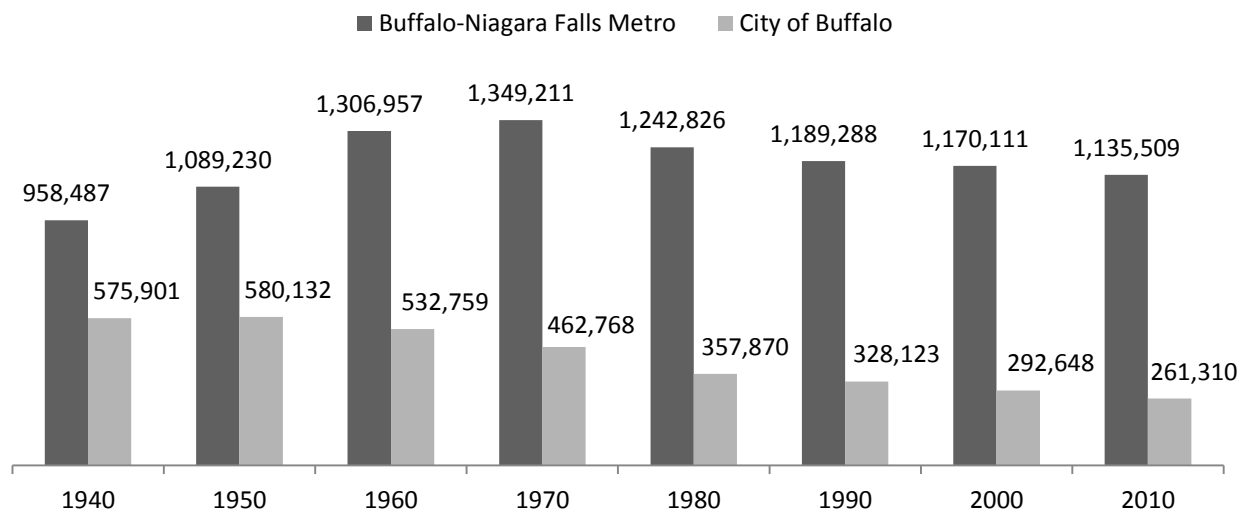
Keywords

Buffalo, Data/Demographics/History, Demographics and Data, Fact Sheet, PPG, PDF

Population Trends in Buffalo-Niagara

Ramon Garcia

Total Population, Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metro and City of Buffalo, 1940-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1940-2010

Like a number of places in the nation's manufacturing belt, the Buffalo-Niagara metropolitan area has been losing population over the past several decades. This decline reflects the ongoing population shift from the Northeast and Midwest to warmer places in the South and West, as well as the considerable loss of manufacturing jobs in the region. In recent decades, some large metros experiencing domestic out-migration have seen their populations bolstered by migrants from abroad. But while the Buffalo metro's rate of out-migration has been roughly average, the rates of both domestic and international in-migration have been very low.

Like many cities across the U.S., the City of Buffalo has seen a considerable decline in its population since WWII as growth shifted to the suburbs. As a result, the City of Buffalo has represented a shrinking share of its metro's total population.

10 Fastest Growing Large U.S. Metros*, 2000-2010

Rank	Metro	% Change in Population
1	Raleigh-Cary, NC	41.8
2	Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	41.8
3	Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	40.3
4	Provo-Orem, UT	39.8
5	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX	37.3
6	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	36.1
7	Boise City-Nampa, ID	32.6
8	Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	32.1
9	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	29.8
10	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	29.8

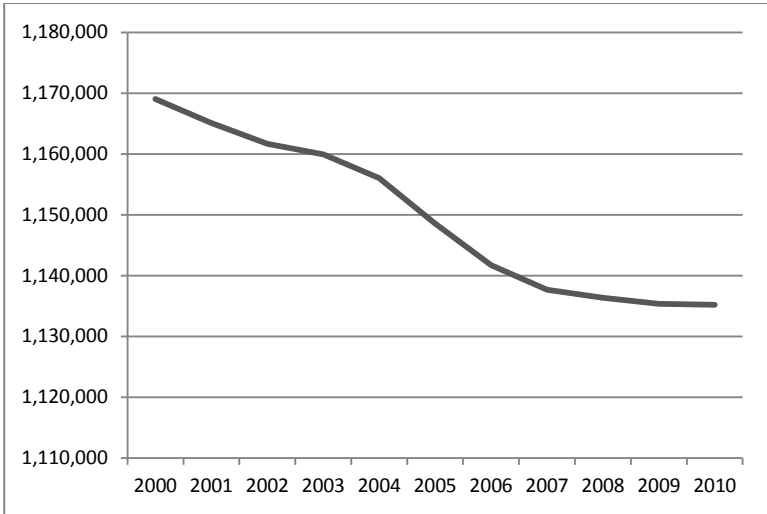
10 Slowest Growing Large U.S. Metros*, 2000-2010

Rank	Metro	% Change in Population
91	Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	1.1
92	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	0.5
93	Dayton, OH	-0.8
94	Toledo, OH	-1.2
95	Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	-3.0
96	Pittsburgh, PA Metro	-3.1
97	Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	-3.3
98	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	-3.5
99	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	-6.2
100	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	-11.3

*100 most populated U.S. metropolitan areas (Population over 514,100),
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000 & 2010; author's calculations

The nation's broad migration trends are evident in the tables above. The 10 fastest growing metros over the past decade are all located in the Sun Belt. Apart from New Orleans, which experienced out-migration due to Hurricane Katrina, the metros that have lost population are all, like Buffalo, former manufacturing hubs in the Snow Belt: Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Dayton, Youngstown, Toledo, and Detroit.

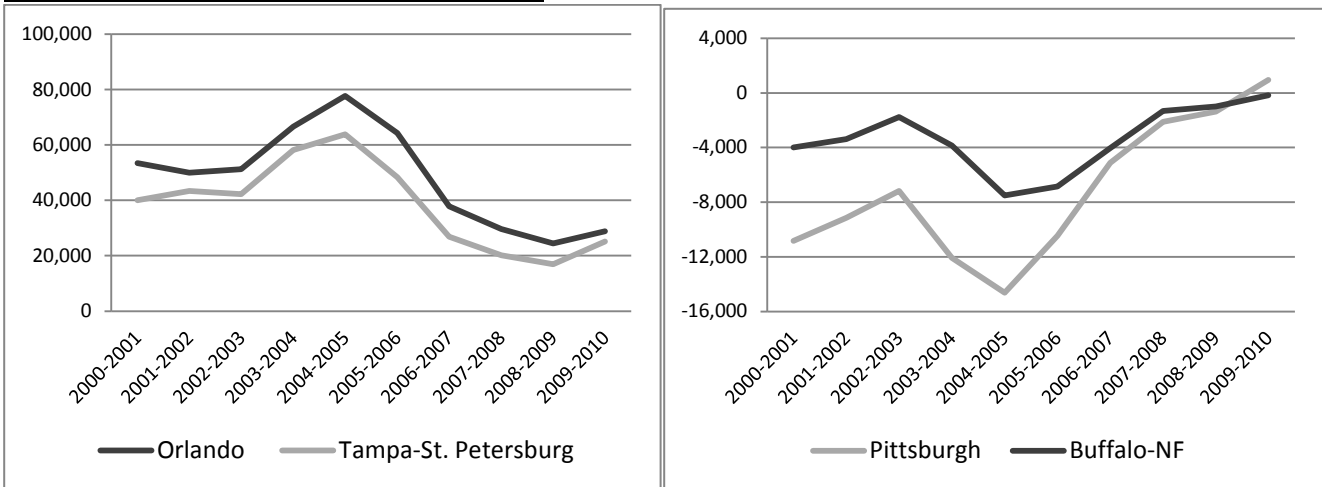
Total Population, Buffalo-Niagara Falls Metro, 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Intercensal Population Estimates, 2000-2010; author’s calculations

The last decade ended very differently than it began, however. After 2007, the decline in the region’s population slowed considerably, almost ceasing entirely by the end of the period. This abrupt change has been attributed to the bursting of the nation’s real estate bubble and subsequent severe recession, which have drastically altered migration patterns across the United States.

Annual Change in Population, 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Intercensal Population Estimates, 2000-2010; author’s calculations

The shift in migration patterns is demonstrated in the charts above. Warmer regions with real estate driven economies like Orlando and Tampa had been growing rapidly in the first half of the decade – due in part to domestic migration from cold-weather places with industrial economies like Pittsburgh and Buffalo. However, the tumultuous end of the decade saw growth in many warm-weather regions slow considerably, while the annual decline in population across the snow-belt almost came to a halt. In fact, a study by the Brookings Institution showed that, from 2007-2008, domestic migration in the U.S. was at its slowest pace since WWII.

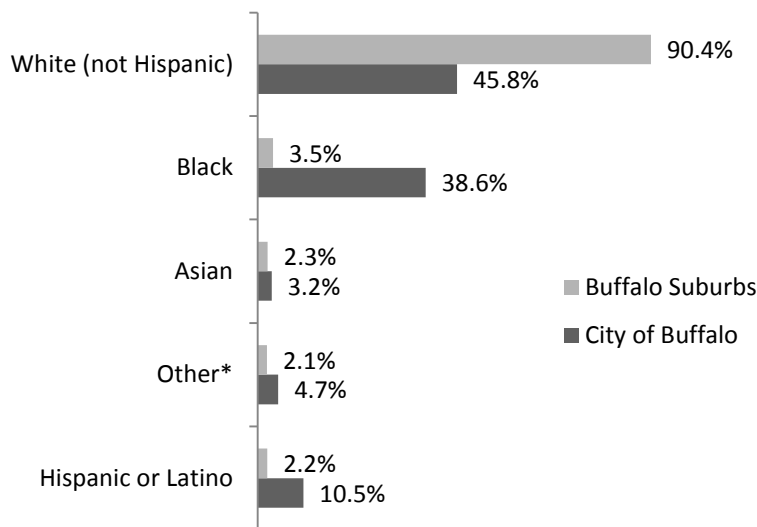
Percent Share of Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, U.S. and Buffalo Metro, 2000 and 2010

	US		Buffalo Metro	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
White (not Hispanic)	69.1	63.7	82.5	79.5
Black	12.3	12.6	11.7	12.2
Asian	3.6	4.8	1.3	2.3
Other*	3.4	4.0	2.0	2.6
Hispanic or Latino	12.5	16.3	2.9	4.1

* Includes American Indian and Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native and Other Pacific Islander, and persons declaring two or more races. Values do not add up to 100% because all categories are not mutually exclusive. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000 & 2010; author’s calculations

The Buffalo metro’s weak immigration is suggested by its comparatively small numbers of minorities. From 2000-2010, the minority share of the population grew in both Buffalo and the nation as a whole. However, the Buffalo metro continues to be much less diverse than the U.S., with whites representing a much larger proportion of the population (79.5% vs. 63.7%). This difference is mostly attributable to the Buffalo metro’s relatively small Hispanic population, whose share is only about one-fourth that of the nation’s.

Share of Population by Race and Hispanic Origin, City of Buffalo and Buffalo Suburbs, 2010**

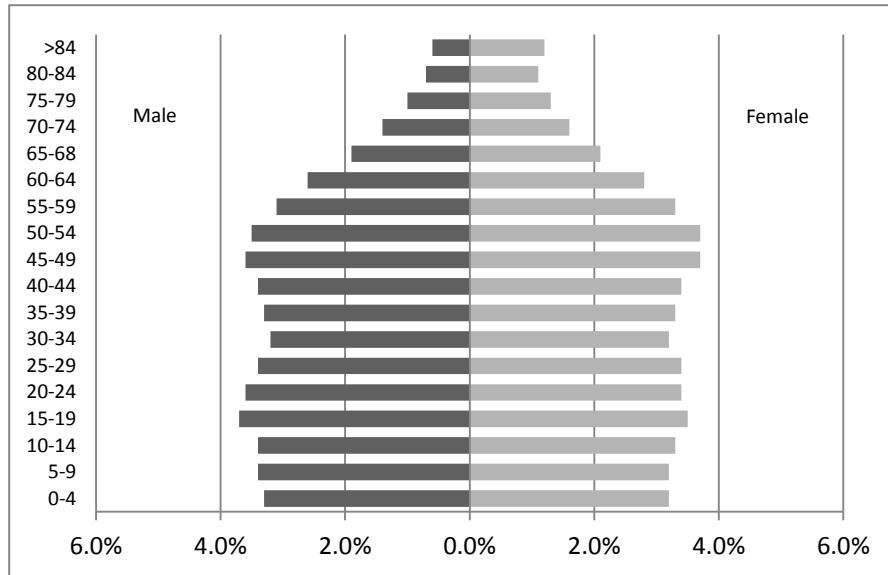


*Includes American Indian and Alaskan Native, Hawaiian Native and Other Pacific Islander, and persons declaring two or more races. Values do not add up to 100% because all categories are not mutually exclusive. **Erie County only. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010; author’s calculations

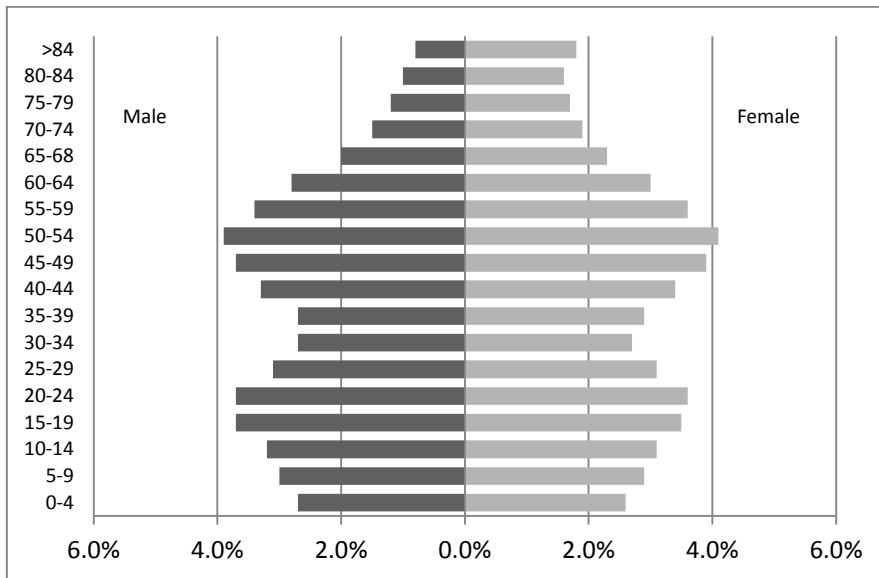
The Buffalo metro is relatively segregated, with the great majority of the region’s minority population residing in the City of Buffalo. In 2010, only 45.8 % of the City Buffalo’s population was white compared to over 90% of the metro’s suburban population.

Share of Population by Age, U.S. and Buffalo Metro, 2010

U.S.



Buffalo Metro

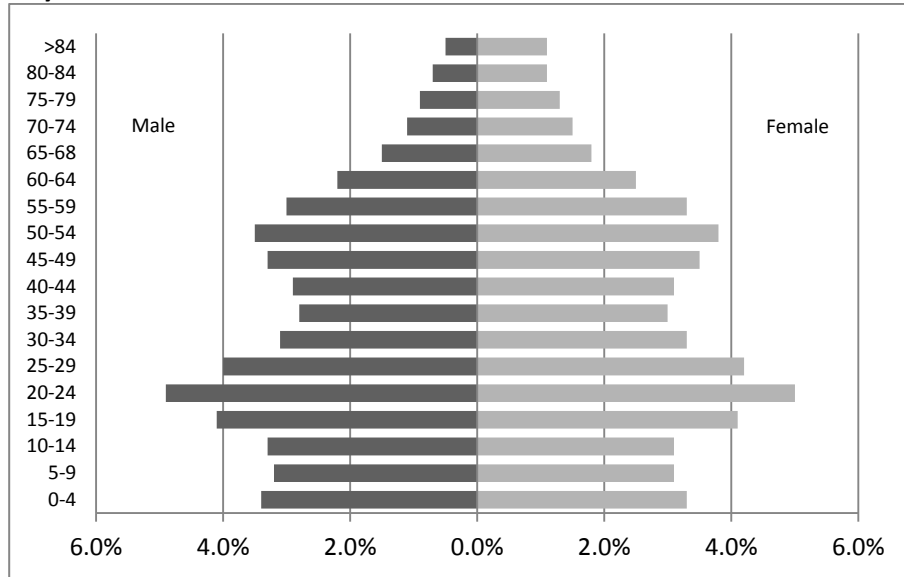


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010; author's calculations

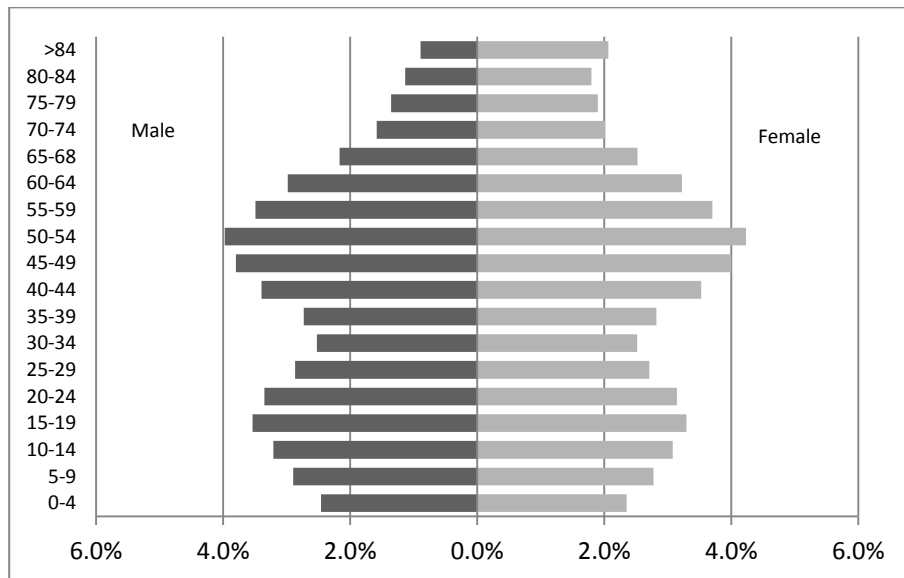
In the population pyramids above, each bar represents the share of the population in a particular age cohort. As shown, Buffalo metro's age structure is notably different than the nation's as a whole. Overall, the region is somewhat older than the U.S., with a larger proportion of its population over age 50. Most notable are the metro's more pronounced indentations in the middle and bottom of the pyramid as compared to the U.S. This pattern is indicative of the aforementioned migration trends, which have resulted in a lower share of young families in the region.

Share of Population by Age, City of Buffalo and Buffalo Suburbs*, 2010

City of Buffalo



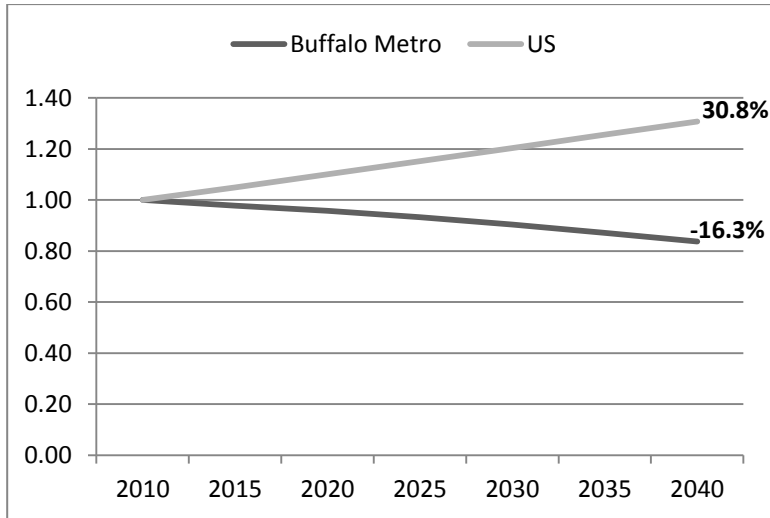
Buffalo Suburbs*



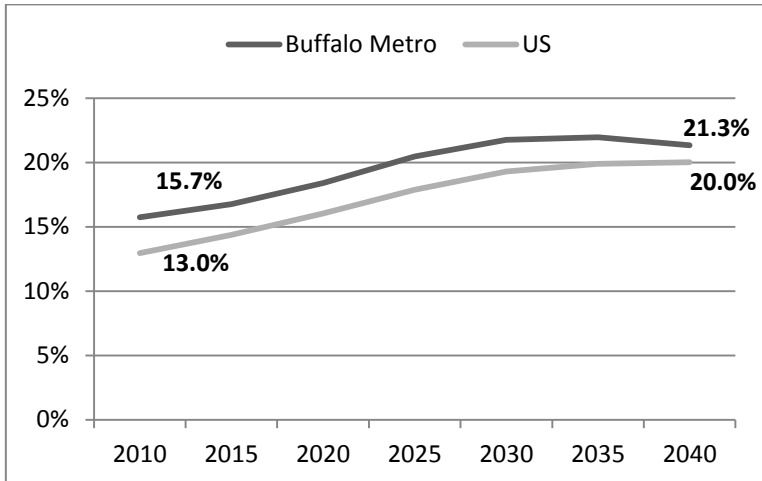
*Erie County only; Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010; author's calculations

Like racial structure, the age structure of the City of Buffalo and its suburbs varies considerably. Overall, the city is younger than the suburbs, with a much larger share of its population under age 35.

Index of Projected Change in Population, U.S. and Buffalo Metro, 2010-2040



Projected Change in Percentage of Population Age 65 and Over, U.S. and Buffalo Metro, 2010-2040

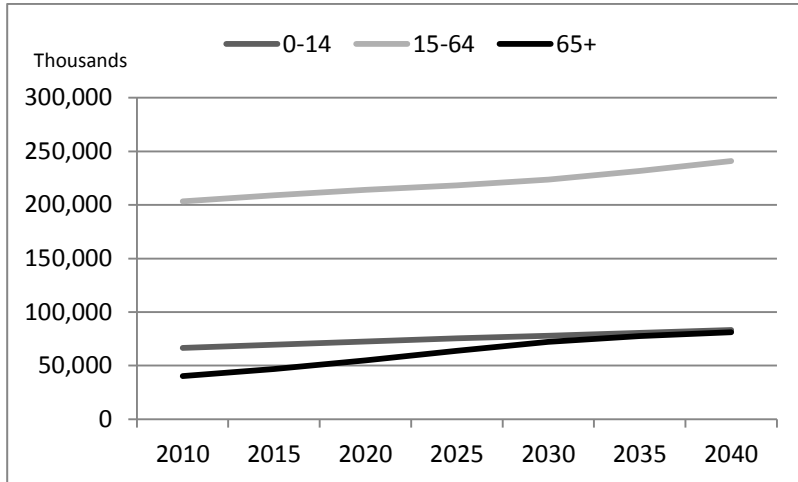


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010; Population Estimates and Population Projections Programs, Cornell University, New York State Information System; author's calculations

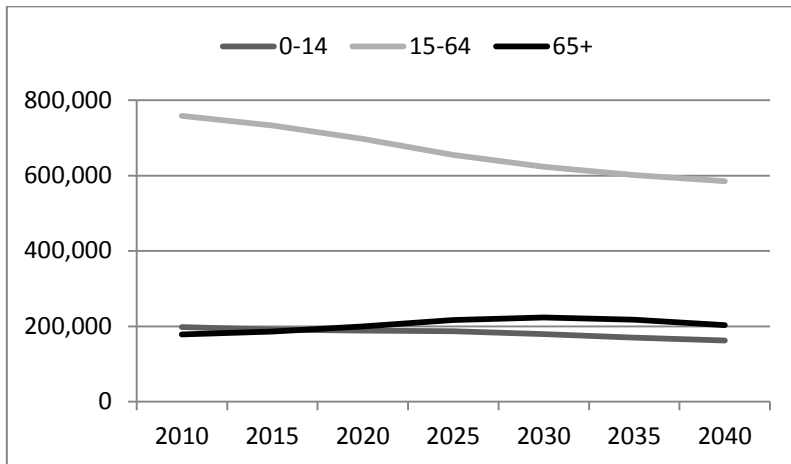
Over the next 30 years, total populations in the U.S. and the Buffalo metro are projected to continue their current trajectories, with the nation's growing by 30.8% and the region's declining 16.3%. One of the challenges facing the region over the next few decades is the aging of its population as the baby boom generation (born between 1946 and 1964) moves into retirement age. As shown above, the share of the population age 65 and over is likely to rise considerably over the next 25 years, with the Buffalo metro continuing to have a larger share of older people than the national average. As we have seen, however, population trends can shift abruptly, and so all long-range projections should be viewed with caution

Projection of Population by Age Cohort, U.S. and Buffalo Metro, 2010-2040

U.S.



Buffalo Metro



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2010; Population Estimates and Population Projections Programs, Cornell University, New York State Information System; author's calculations

While both the nation and the Buffalo metro will likely see a rise in the share of the population age 65 and over, the reasons for these increases differ. The U.S. is expected to see growth in all three age cohorts shown in the above chart: children (0-14), working age adults (15-64) and older people (65+), with the elderly population rising relative to the other two cohorts combined. In contrast, the Buffalo metro is projected to see its elderly population, as well as its child population, hold relatively steady, while the working-age population declines considerably.

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www.ppgbuffalo.org
237 Main St., Suite 1200, Buffalo NY 14203