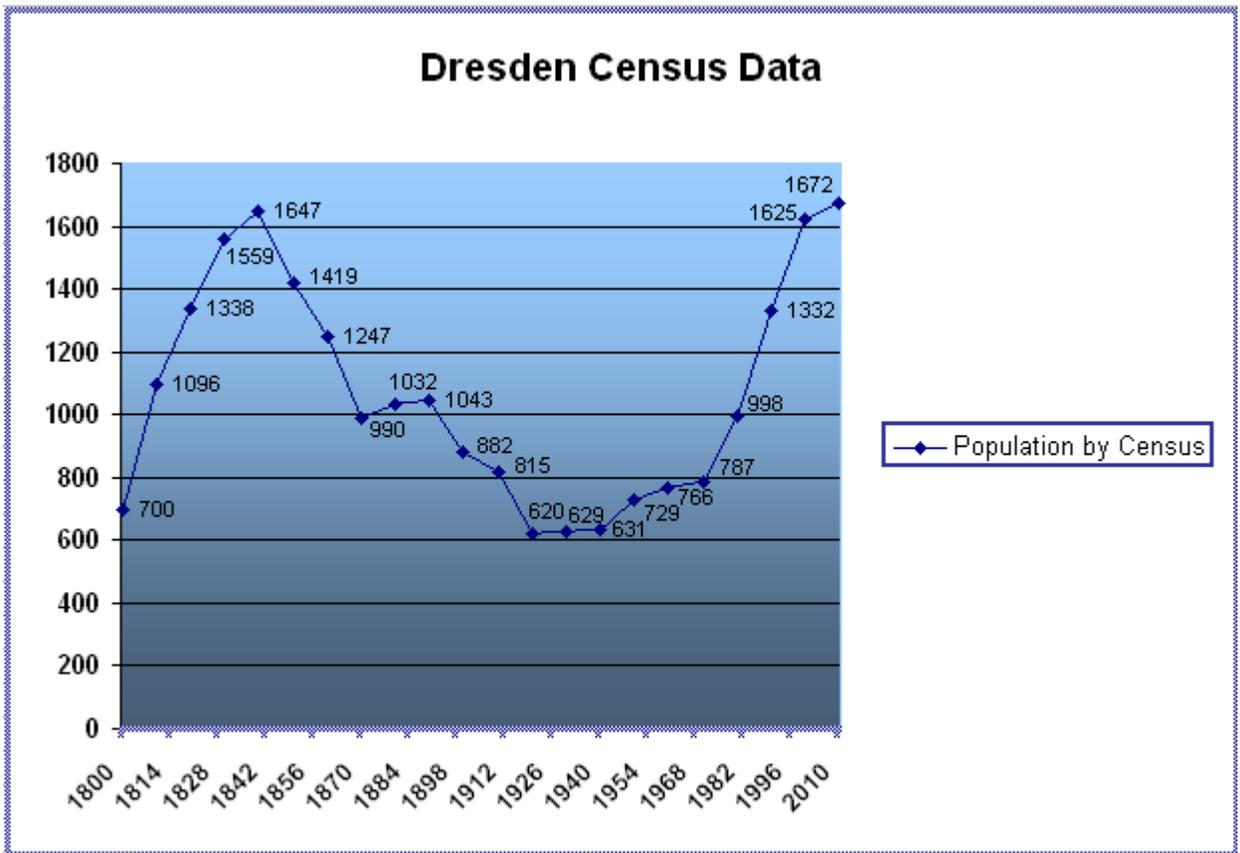


Population and Demographics

1. Is the rate of population change expected to continue as in the past, or to slow down or speed up? What are the implications of this change?

Dresden's population per the 2010 census is 1672 residents. This is an increase of 2.8% from the 2000 census. However, the preceding biennium's census data (1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000) had much greater increases during those ten year periods. Dresden's population increased from 1970 to 1980 by 27%, from 1980 to 1990 by 33% and then again by 22% from 1990 to 2000. Historically, Dresden's population has gone through peaks and valleys. Dresden's highest peak, not including the current census, was in 1840 with a record population of 1647. The population was lowest in 1920 with a census of 620. Dresden's population seems to have peaked and may have leveled out if the current ten year census is any indication.



The statewide prediction is for Maine's population to peak some time over the next twenty years and then to decline. This is generally due to the aging population in our state as a whole. Maine has the highest median age of all fifty states (42) and Dresden's current median age is 45 years old. The largest age groups in Dresden's current population are the ranges 45-49 (163), 50-54(160) and 55-59 (162). 1330 of Dresden's residents are over the age of 18. This seems to indicate a shrinking youth and an increase in our older age groups.

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Enrollment in our local school system seems to agree with the trend. In 1999, the elementary school had an enrollment of 140 students. By 2005, this number had shrunk to 125 and as of October, 2011 the enrollment is hovering around 92 students. Statewide, enrollments are declining and projected to continue to decline until approximately 2014. The Department of Education is predicting we shall “bottom out” and student enrollments should begin to increase after 2014. What this increase looks like, no one really knows. Lincoln County as a whole is projected to lose a total of 18% of their total student enrollment by 2014. Statewide, the loss is around 10% during this same period.

If Dresden’s population has peaked as census data indicates, the implications are that we can expect the median population age to increase while the overall population begins to decline. Our “baby boomers” will demand services more geared to health care and elder housing. Older residents represent asset-rich and lower income population as a whole. The burden of real estate taxes has to be taken into consideration as well on an aging population.

2. Which demographic groups are the fastest growing and which are in decline?

2005-2009 Demographic Characteristics (US Census Bureau)

The largest age group in Dresden is the 45 to 64 range- 38% of Dresden’s residents fall into this category. 19% of Dresden’s population falls into the 25 to 44 age group and 19% are under age 18. Our over-65 age group is 14% of the population and 9% (the smallest) fall into the 18 to 24 year old range. 52% of our population is female and 48% are male.

2010 Census (US Census Bureau)

In 2010, the numbers change slightly but are similar for the prior five year period. The 2010 census reveals that 36% of the population fall into the 45 to 64 age group while 14% of our citizens are still in the over 65 category. The 25 to 44 age group is now approximately 23% while the under 18 group comes in at 23%. Our 18 to 24 age group is just 4% of our population. The male to female ratio changed to 51% male to 49% female during the 2010 census.

The above demographic data reveals that our older population (over 45) is still strong and represents about half of our citizenry. However, the over 45 group did decline slightly and the 25 to 44 age group gained 4% during the same period. Our 18 to 24 group continues to shrink which indicates perhaps that our young people leave to attend school or find jobs and may not return.

3. What will be the likely demand for housing, municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics, both as a result of overall change and as a result of change among age groups?

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Based on the change in population, the demand for school services is likely to shrink unless there is an influx of newcomers into our community. The State Planning Office data shows the average size household in Dresden is 2.39 and there are 183 households (out of 700) that have children under age 18. This would mean less demand and a smaller enrollment in the local elementary school. Currently, there are 951 housing units in Dresden and 751 of those are single, detached one unit homes. 149 of the housing units are mobile homes. The vast majority of homes built in Dresden were built prior to 2000. Only 22 structures have been built after 2005, per census figures. The demand for housing appears stagnant as we currently have 136 vacant units in Dresden (and 815 occupied).

An increase in municipal services seems unlikely as Dresden currently has a volunteer fire department, a limited public water supply and very little recreation programs. Our public opinion shows residents find snow removal/sanding, solid waste and recycling, and fire services to be satisfactory. Most citizens agree road maintenance could improve. Statewide this appears to be an issue, not just at the local level. Dresden's lack of municipal services does not appear to be an issue for its residents.

4. If most of the population growth is the result of newcomers, what can the community do to foster shared outlooks?

According to our community survey, 73% of respondents have resided in Dresden for over 10 years and 16% are lifelong residents. Statistics from the US Census Bureau also indicate that 63% of citizens have lived in Dresden more than 10 years and another 20% have been residents for more than 5 years. 16.5% of residents, per US Census data, have moved into the community since 2005. This indicates about 55 new residents per year over a five year period. The community survey suggests a rural environment and location are prime influences when deciding to move to Dresden. Also, some residents felt reasonable taxes and family were reasons to move to Dresden, as well. Taking that into consideration, the residents can foster relationships with newcomers by including them in community events and making sure

Questions 5 and 6 do not apply to Dresden as we do not have a significant seasonal population nor is Dresden a major service center.