

# Population Projections

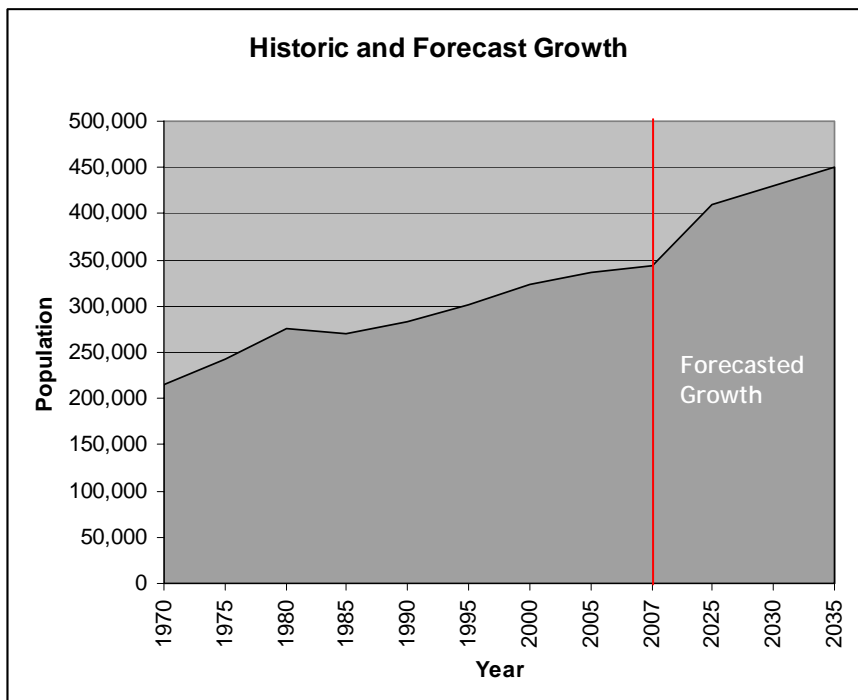
- How can the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area accommodate anticipated growth while enhancing the environment and our overall quality of life?
- How should the metro area's planning adapt to accommodate new residents?
- Where should these future new residents live and work?
- Depending upon where new housing or employment centers are planned, how will transportation and government services need to change?

These questions are all part of the planning process that is being undertaken by the cities of Eugene, Springfield, and Lane County to develop both local and regional growth strategies. Population projection and allocation plays a key role in this process, allowing communities to evaluate different growth scenarios and determine how best to distribute forecasted growth. This workshop considers the two largest cities in Lane County, Eugene and Springfield. Lane County contains ten other cities that are also required to share appropriate proportions of the coordinated population projections for the entire county.

## Why are we studying population forecasts?

Oregon State law requires cities to have a 20-year population forecast as the basis for the buildable lands inventories and urban growth boundaries contained in their comprehensive plans. The population forecast is used to determine future regional needs for housing, jobs, transportation, water, sanitary sewer, fire and police stations, and parks. Other businesses, schools, and hospitals may also rely on these forecasts to plan for future expansions.

In the past, the cities of Eugene and Springfield shared a single regional population forecast, which was the basis for the population forecast in the *Metro Plan*. Recent changes in state law require Eugene and Springfield to separate and update their population forecasts in support of separate urban growth boundaries and buildable lands inventories for each city.



*Lane County as a whole experienced substantial growth between 1970 and 2000, increasing by almost 50 percent to reach a population of 322,977. Between 2007 and 2035 Lane County as a whole is forecast to grow by an additional 107,000 people, increasing 31 percent to reach a population of 451,038 people.*

### Sources:

- 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 U.S. Census
- 1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2007 Portland State University Population Research Center
- Lane County population forecast is from the OEA's 2004 "Forecasts of Oregon's County Populations and Components of Change, 2000-2040"

Since population growth and development directly affect the demand for infrastructure, land, goods and services, the decisions made about where to accommodate new growth will start to form the basis of our preferred pattern of urbanization. Discussions about preferred growth strategy will address a number of issues, including:

- Environmental impacts;
- Economic prosperity;
- Adequate and affordable housing;
- Mobility; and
- Efficient use of existing infrastructure.

### **What happens if the population forecast is not correct?**

Population forecasts provide a general guide to aid local planning. It is important that the population forecast be as accurate as possible, as miscalculations can pose significant implications for each community and the region. If the projection is too low, the cities and region will not be able to adequately plan for needed infrastructure. Alternatively, if the forecast is too high, it could result in costly improvements that may not be needed.

Factors not under local control, such as national economic trends or the arrival of a major employer, can affect local growth rates in unanticipated ways. Actual growth rates are monitored every few years and compared to the 20 year forecast. The 20 year forecast may be amended to reflect new trends and special circumstances.

### **How is the population forecast derived?**

The long-term population forecasts for Oregon and its counties are developed by the state's Office of Economic Analysis (OEA), using a forecast model that takes into account federal census data about existing age and sex characteristics to project birth and death rates, as well as in-and-out migration rates for Oregon and its counties.

Lane County is responsible for coordinating the distribution of the projected countywide population created by OEA among the twelve cities in the county and the rural areas. Lane County is in the process of developing a new coordinated population forecast for Lane County and its urban areas. The specific methodology for this new forecast has not yet been developed.

An option available for cities to forecast their growth is the "safe harbor" method. Under this method, cities base their proposed forecast on the population forecast prepared by OEA for the entire county and assume that the city's share of the future forecasted county population will be the same as the city's current share of the county population.

In either method, the totals of all the cities, urban growth areas, and rural areas must be consistent with the OEA forecast for the county total.

### **Where can I get more information?**

State rules for population projections may be found in:

- Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Section 660-024-0030
- Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) Section 195.034
- Annual Oregon Population Report: <http://pdx.edu/prc>
- OEA Demographic Forecasts: <http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/OEA/demographic.shtml>

If you have questions, please contact one of the agency representatives below:

City of Eugene, Neil Björklund, Senior Planner, 541-682-5507

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City of Springfield, Greg Mott, Community Planning Manager, 541-726-3774

Website: [www.lcog.org/coordination](http://www.lcog.org/coordination)