

## National, State and County Population Trends: Part I

Growth in highway travel is influenced by numerous factors. These include the relative cost of driving, as well as population, employment, and income growth in the state, in neighboring states, and the nation as a whole. Of these, population growth must be considered one of the prime drivers of travel growth. Although there are exceptions, generally those states and localities experiencing rapid population growth will also experience relatively rapid traffic growth.

As part of a project to forecast growth in vehicle travel for Oregon and its individual counties, Policy Unit staff has analyzed the U.S. Census Bureau's most recent state and regional forecasts as well as the new population forecasts released by the Department of Administrative Services Office of Economic Analysis (DAS OEA). Both forecasts contain some interesting and important information for transportation planners and others involved in forecasting future traffic growth.

Because of the breadth of the subject area, this article is broken into two parts. This first part summarizes the major results from the Census Bureau's most recent state and national population forecasts. The second part, to be published next month, examines the OEA forecasts of population growth for Oregon and its 36 counties.<sup>1</sup> Both parts begin with a brief recap of past population growth trends, followed by an examination of forecasts of future population growth and a summary of the major trends indicated by the forecasts.

### Historical State Population Growth Trends

Table 1 compares Oregon's population and population growth rate with that of the nation as a whole for the period 1970–2000.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the decade

of the 1980s, Oregon's population growth has been well above the national average. Over this 30-year period, the state's population grew at an average rate of 1.65% per year versus 1.09% per year for the nation as a whole. While most attention has been directed to Oregon's rapid growth during the 1990s, it is interesting to note the state's fastest growth actually occurred during the decade of the 1970s when its population increased by an average of over 2.3% per year.

Table 2 shows the five fastest growing states and Oregon's rank for selected time periods. Although the state's growth exceeded the national average for all but the decade of the 1980s, the table illustrates Oregon has not been one of the very fastest growing states since 1970. That honor has instead gone to states like Nevada, Arizona, Florida and Utah. Oregon's highest ranking was achieved in the decades of the 1970s and 1990s, when in both cases it was the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state. Whether the torrid growth of states such as Nevada and Arizona is expected to continue for the next 20-plus years is examined in the next section.

### Projected State Population Growth Trends

The Census Bureau's latest forecasts of state populations cover the 30-year period 1995–2025. Table 3 compares Oregon's population and population growth rate with the nation's as a whole for this period. Oregon's growth, as well as the nation's, is expected

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to moderate from the relatively rapid growth of the past three decades. For the forecast period as a whole, Oregon's growth rate is projected to average 1.09% per year as compared to the national average of 0.81% per year.<sup>3</sup> The nation's population is projected to be 335,050,000 and Oregon's 4,349,000 by 2025.

California is expected to easily remain the most populous state, with its population increasing to 49.3 million by 2025. Fully 45% of the nation's net population change between 1995 and 2025 will occur in just three states – California, Texas, and Florida – with each gaining more than 6 million persons. No other state will gain more than 2.7 million persons. Texas, which replaced New York as the second most populous state in 1994, will continue in that position and Florida is projected to pass New York as the third most populous state by 2020. Oregon is expected to become the 26<sup>th</sup> most populous state by 2025, moving up from 29<sup>th</sup> in 1995 and 28<sup>th</sup> in 2000.

Table 4 shows the five states projected to be the fastest growing and Oregon's ranking for selected periods out to 2025. Oregon is expected to be the 13<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state for the 1995-2025 period as a whole.<sup>4</sup> With the exception of Florida and Texas, the fastest growing states are all projected to be in the West. Population growth in Nevada, by far the fastest growing state for the past three decades, is forecast to slow somewhat after 2005. Between 2005 and 2025, the three most rapidly growing states are expected to be California, Hawaii, and New Mexico.

The Census Bureau breaks its population forecasts for each state into three components: natural change (i.e., births minus deaths), net interstate (state-to-state) migration, and immigration. Only a small portion (17.7%) of Oregon's growth is expected to result from natural change. Oregon, in fact, ranks 48<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in the share of its overall population growth projected to result from natural change and 39<sup>th</sup> in its projected ratio of births to deaths.<sup>5</sup>

As for the past three decades, the large majority (82.3%) of Oregon's population growth out to 2025 is expected to come from net in-migration.<sup>6</sup> Oregon is projected to rank 9<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states over the 1995-2025 period in the total number of net in-migrants, 3<sup>rd</sup> (behind only Arkansas and Florida) in the share of its total population growth accounted for by net migration, and 2<sup>nd</sup> (behind only Florida) in net interstate migrants per 1,000 population. Almost 4/5<sup>ths</sup> of Oregon's total net in-migration is

forecast to result from interstate migration and only 1/5<sup>th</sup> from immigration.<sup>7</sup> Overall, 64.5% of Oregon's population growth is expected to come from net interstate migration, 17.8% from immigration, and 17.7% from natural growth.

## Summary

Population growth is one of the prime drivers of travel growth. Information on population trends and forecasts is therefore useful to transportation planners and others charged with projecting future demands on our state's highway system. This article and one to be published next month examine recent population trends and forecasts for the nation as well as the state and its individual counties.

During the three decades from 1970 to 2000, Oregon was one of the faster - but not very fastest - growing states in the nation. The state's population grew at an average annual rate of 1.65%, from 2,091,533 in 1970 to 3,421,399 in 2000. Oregon's growth over this period was well above the national average of 1.09% per year, but at the same time below the torrid growth of states such as Nevada (4.81%/year), Arizona (3.60%/year), and Florida (2.89%/year). Oregon's highest ranking occurred during the decades of the 1970s and 1990s, when in both cases it was the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state in the nation.

According to the Census Bureau's forecasts, the nation's population growth is projected to slow from an average annual rate of 1.09% over the period 1970-2000 to an average rate of 0.81% per year between 1995 and 2025. With the exception of Florida and Texas, most of this growth is forecast to occur in the western states. The five fastest growing states over this 30-year period are expected to be California, New Mexico, Hawaii, Arizona, and Nevada. Oregon's population is projected to increase by an average of 1.09% per year, making it the 13<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state. Over 82% of Oregon's population growth between 1995 and 2025 is expected to come from net interstate migration plus immigration and less than 18% from natural growth (births minus deaths).

<sup>1</sup> Although the Census Bureau solicits the input of state officials in making its projections, its charge is to produce a consistent set of state forecasts directly tied to its forecasts for the nation as a whole. Therefore, its forecasts for any given state will typically differ from those made by officials of that state. Another reason for a difference is the timing and period covered by the forecasts. The latest available Census Bureau forecasts were made several years ago and extend out to the year 2025, whereas, in Oregon's case, the latest OEA forecasts were just released four months ago and extend out to 2040.

<sup>2</sup> The source for all numbers reported in this article is the U.S. Census Bureau. All growth rates are expressed as average annual rates (AAGRs). The 1970-2000 numbers are the official, April 1 decennial census numbers. The 1995-2025 numbers are Census Bureau projections.

<sup>3</sup> The Census Bureau actually produces two different sets of state forecasts. Both are derived using the standard cohort-component method, but they use (in some cases quite) different assumptions about state-to-state migration. The Series A or preferred forecasts reported in this article are based on a time-series model of historical data on interstate migration. The Series B forecasts are based on Bureau of Economic Analysis employment projections. The two methods produce generally similar forecasts for most states. Oregon's 2025 population, for example, is projected to be 4,349,000 (1.09% AAGR from 1995) under Series A and 4,361,000 (1.10% AAGR from 1995) under Series B. For some states, however, the two methods produce significantly different forecasts – e.g., California's 2025 population is projected to be 49,285,000 (1.49% AAGR) under Series A, but only 41,480,000 (0.91% AAGR) under Series B.

<sup>4</sup> These rankings are again based on the Series A forecasts. The Series B forecasts produce somewhat different results, with Oregon projected to rank as the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest growing state for the 1995-2025 period as a whole.

<sup>5</sup> Only Florida (5.6%) and Arkansas (4.3%) rank lower than Oregon in the share of their population growth projected to come from natural change. The five states with the highest projected ratios of births to deaths are Alaska (4.02), Utah (2.70), California (2.67), Hawaii (2.09), and Texas (2.01), all well above Oregon's ratio of 1.17. West Virginia is the only state projected to have a ratio (0.78) under one and is expected to lose 160,000 population due to natural change over the 1995-2025 period.

<sup>6</sup> Although the Census Bureau's published forecasts do not specify which other states are expected to account for the bulk of Oregon's net in-migration, it will most likely be the same states as in the recent past – namely, California, Washington, Arizona, Idaho, Colorado, and Texas.

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, California's situation is expected to be almost the exact opposite of Oregon's. Under the Series A forecasts, that state is expected to add 13.8 million people and be the fastest growing state both in absolute and percentage terms between 1995 and 2025. The majority (76%) of California's growth is projected to come from natural change, while the state is actually forecast to lose

over 4.4 million people due to net out-migration. This loss, however, is expected to be more than offset by the addition of over 8.7 million immigrants from other countries (almost 36% of the total immigration for the U.S. over this period).

**Table 1. U.S. and Oregon Populations: 1970-2000**

Year/ Period	U.S. Population	Average Annual Growth Rate	Oregon Population	Average Annual Growth Rate	Oregon % of U.S. Population
1970	203,302,031	-	2,091,533	-	1.03%
1980	226,545,805	1.09%	2,633,105	2.33%	1.16%
1990	248,709,873	0.94%	2,842,321	0.77%	1.14%
2000	281,421,906	1.24%	3,421,399	1.87%	1.22%
<b>1970-2000</b>		<b>1.09%</b>		<b>1.65%</b>	

**Table 2. Ranking of State Population Growth Rates for Selected Periods**

Period							
1970-1980		1980-1990		1990-2000		1970-2000	
Rank	State*	Rank	State*	Rank	State*	Rank	State*
1	Nevada (5.06%)	1	Nevada (4.15%)	1	Nevada (5.22%)	1	Nevada (4.81%)
2	Arizona (4.35%)	2	Alaska (3.19%)	2	Arizona (3.42%)	2	Arizona (3.60%)
3	Florida (3.68%)	3	Arizona (3.03%)	3	Colorado (2.70%)	3	Florida (2.89%)
4	Wyoming (3.51%)	4	Florida (2.87%)	4	Utah (2.63%)	4	Utah (2.52%)
5	Utah (3.27%)	5	California (2.32%)	5	Idaho (2.54%)	5	Alaska (2.46%)
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
11	Oregon (2.33%)	21	Oregon (0.77%)	11	Oregon (1.87%)	14	Oregon (1.65%)

\* Rankings exclude the District of Columbia. Figures in parentheses are average annual growth rates for period indicated.

<b>Year/ Period</b>	<b>U.S. Population</b>	<b>Average Annual Growth Rate</b>	<b>Oregon Population</b>	<b>Average Annual Growth Rate</b>	<b>Oregon % of U.S. Population</b>
1995	262,755,000	-	3,141,000	-	1.20%
2005	285,981,000	0.85%	3,613,000	1.41%	1.26%
2015	310,133,000	0.81%	3,992,000	1.00%	1.29%
2025	335,050,000	0.78%	4,349,000	0.86%	1.30%
<b>1995-2025</b>		<b>0.81%</b>		<b>1.09%</b>	

<b>Period</b>							
<b>1995-2005</b>		<b>2005-2015</b>		<b>2015-2025</b>		<b>1995-2025</b>	
<b>Rank</b>	<b>State*</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>State*</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>State*</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>State*</b>
1	Nevada (3.07%)	1	California (1.85%)	1	California (1.77%)	1	California (1.49%)
2	Idaho (2.44%)	2	Hawaii (1.47%)	2	Hawaii (1.55%)	2	New Mexico (1.47%)
3	Arizona (2.17%)	3	New Mexico (1.33%)	3	New Mexico (1.28%)	3	Hawaii (1.42%)
4	Utah (2.14%)	4	Florida (1.29%)	4	Florida (1.14%)	4	Arizona (1.41%)
5	New Mexico (1.81%)	5	Alaska (1.23%)	5	Texas (1.14%)	5	Nevada (1.39%)
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12	Oregon (1.41%)	11	Oregon (1.00%)	9	Oregon (0.86%)	13	Oregon (1.09%)

• Rankings exclude the District of Columbia. Figures in parentheses are average annual growth rates for the period indicated.