

National, State and County Population Trends: Part II

This is the second of a two-part article that examines recent population trends and forecasts for the nation as well as Oregon and its individual counties. The first part, published last month, summarized the results from the U.S. Census Bureau's most recent forecasts of state and national population growth.¹ This second part presents the state and county population forecasts recently released by the Department of Administrative Services Office of Economic Analysis (DAS OEA).

As noted in Part I of this article, numerous factors, including population growth, influence growth in highway travel.² 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 first summarizes the state and county population trends of the recent past and then presents the major results of the new OEA forecasts.

Historical State/County Population Growth Trends

Oregon's population grew from 2,091,533 in 1970 to 3,421,399 in 2000, at an average rate of 1.65% per year.³ The state's most rapid growth occurred in the decade of the 1970s when its population increased by 2.33% per year. In both the decades of the 1970s and 1990s, Oregon was the 11th fastest growing state in the nation.

Most of the state's growth between 1970 and 2000, particularly in the latter part of this period, was attributable to net in-migration. Oregon experienced five straight years of net out-migration from 1981 to 1986, with an average of over 14,000 more people leaving than moving into the state each year. Net migration then turned positive in 1987 and boomed during the 1990s, averaging 42,151 persons per year.⁴ As compared to 22% during the de-

cade of the 1980s, over 73% of Oregon's population growth in the 1990s came from net in-migration.

Table 1 compares the state's five most populous counties in 1970 and 2000. While Multnomah was easily the most populous county in both years, the table illustrates by far the largest absolute growth occurred in Washington County. Washington moved from the 4th most populous county in 1970 to the 2nd most populous in 2000, and its share of the state's total population increased from 7.6% to 13.0%. Clackamas and Marion remained the 3rd and 5th most populous counties, respectively, while Lane County dropped from 2nd to 4th. Other than these five counties, no other county had an increase of over 100,000 persons between the two years.

Table 2 shows the five most rapidly growing Oregon counties in percentage terms from 1970 to 2000. For the period as a whole, Deschutes was clearly the fastest growing county, followed by Washington, Morrow, Jefferson and Josephine. Deschutes moved from the 16th to 7th most populous county as its share of the state's population increased from 1.46% in 1970 to 3.37% in 2000. The 6th through 10th fastest growing counties over this period were Yamhill (2.53%/year), Clackamas (2.40%/year), Crook (2.20%/year), Jackson (2.19%/year) and Marion (2.13%/year).

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Projected State/County Population Growth Trends

Table 3 shows Oregon's population is projected to increase from 3,436,750 in 2000 to 5,425,408 by 2040, or at an average rate of 1.15% per year.⁵ Net in-migration is expected to slow somewhat from the rapid pace of the 1990s, but still play a dominant role and account for a continuously increasing share of the state's growth between 2000 and 2040.⁶

Table 4 lists the five most populous Oregon counties in 2000 and compares them to the five counties predicted to have the most persons by 2040. As for the past three decades, Washington County is expected to have the largest absolute increase over this period and replace Multnomah as the state's most populous county by 2035. Clackamas, Lane and Marion are projected to remain the 3rd, 4th and 5th most populous counties, respectively. These five counties together are expected to account for over 62% of Oregon's population growth between 2000 and 2040.

Table 5 shows the five counties projected to be the fastest growing in percentage terms. Although Deschutes is forecast to remain the most rapidly growing county out to 2010, its growth is projected to slow somewhat after that.⁷ Polk is expected to be the fastest growing county between 2010 and 2030, with Yamhill County becoming the fastest growing from 2030 to 2040. For the 2000-2040 period as a whole, Deschutes is projected to remain the most rapidly growing county, followed closely by Polk, Morrow, Washington and Crook.⁸ The next five fastest growing counties are expected to be Yamhill (1.68%/year), Jefferson (1.60%/year), Clackamas (1.52%/year), Jackson (1.23%/year) and Hood River (1.16%/year).

The OEA forecasts suggest the trend toward the urbanization of Oregon's population will continue for the foreseeable future. After falling from 65.8% in 1970 to 64.9% in 1980, the share of the state's population residing in the urbanized counties rose to 66.2% in 1990 and 67.1% in 2000. The forecasts predict this share will continue to rise, to 68.0% in 2020 and 68.9% by 2040. The proportion of Oregon's population residing in the Willamette Valley is expected to increase from 70.9% in 2000 to 72.2% by 2040. Because of the continued rapid growth predicted for Clackamas and particularly Washington counties, the Metro counties share of the total is projected to grow from 42.2% in 2000 to 43.9% in 2040.⁹

The forecasts also predict the components of population growth will vary significantly between different counties and groupings of counties. Growth due to natural change (i.e., an excess of births over deaths) is expected to be much more concentrated in the urbanized counties, while growth due to net in-migration will be more evenly spread over both the urbanized and non-urbanized counties. For the 2000-2040 period, the urbanized counties are anticipated to account for almost 90% (and the Willamette Valley over 97%) of the state's natural growth, but less than 64% of the state's net in-migration.

Between 2000 and 2040, all Oregon counties are forecast to experience net in-migration, while 14 of the 36 counties will lose population due to natural change. In absolute numbers, Washington County is expected to lead the state in both natural growth and net in-migration, with its growth fairly evenly split between the two. For many other counties, however, one component or the other will dominate. Almost 95% of Deschutes County's and 95.4% of Jackson County's growth is projected to result from net in-migration. At the other extreme, only 27.1% of Multnomah County's and 37.5% of Marion County's growth is expected to come from net in-migration, with the balance resulting from natural growth.

Summary

This second of a two-part article on population trends and forecasts has summarized the trends of the past three decades and presented the major results of the new forecasts released by the DAS Office of Economic Analysis.

Oregon's population grew from 2,091,533 in 1970 to 3,421,399 in 2000, an average rate of 1.65% per year. By far the largest absolute growth occurred in Washington County, whose population grew from 157,920 in 1970 to 445,342 in 2000. The only other counties experiencing an increase of over 100,000 in their population between the two years were Clackamas, Marion, Lane and Multnomah. These five counties accounted for 61% of Oregon's population growth between 1970 and 2000. In percentage terms, Deschutes was clearly the fastest growing county over this period, followed by Washington, Morrow, Jefferson and Josephine.

The OEA forecasts project Oregon's population will increase to 5,425,408 by 2040, at an average rate of 1.15% per year from the 2000 base. Washington County is expected to continue to experience the largest absolute

increase over this period and surpass Multnomah as the state's most populous county by 2035. Clackamas, Lane and Marion are forecast to remain the 3rd, 4th and 5th most populous counties, respectively.

Deschutes is expected to remain the fastest growing county in percentage terms out to 2010. Between 2010 and 2030, Polk is projected to be the fastest growing county, while Yamhill County is expected to be fastest growing between 2030 and 2040. For the 2000-2040 period as a whole, the five most rapidly growing counties are forecast to be Deschutes, Polk, Morrow, Washington and Crook.

The forecasts suggest net in-migration will slow somewhat from the rapid pace of the 1990s, but still account for over 2/3rds of Oregon's population growth out to 2040. The components of the state's population growth will vary significantly between the individual counties and between the urbanized versus non-urbanized counties. Natural growth will play relatively more of a role in the growth in the urbanized counties, particularly those in the Willamette Valley, while net in-migration will account for a greater portion of the growth in the non-urbanized counties.

¹ “National, State and County Population Trends: Part I”, *Policy Notes*, August 2004.

² Although population growth can itself drive growth in travel, many economists believe changes in employment and real income generally lead changes in population, and that employment and income growth are therefore the prime drivers of travel growth. Over longer periods, however, there tends to be a good correlation between population and employment/income growth, so that the former can serve as a surrogate for the latter. This is important from a practical standpoint, the reason being that while updated population forecasts out to 2040 are available at the county level, comparable forecasts for employment are not available presently.

³ The sources for all numbers reported in this article are the DAS Office of Economic Analysis (OEA), the Portland State University Population Research Center (PSU-PRC), and the U.S. Census Bureau. All growth rates are expressed as average annual rates (AAGRs). Due to the economic recession, Oregon’s population growth slowed somewhat over the past couple years. The July 1, 2003 PSU-PRC estimate is 3,541,500, representing an AAGR of 1.16% from the 2000 Census number. Given that Oregon has had one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation during this period, even this slower growth is fairly remarkable.

⁴ This contrasts with an average annual net in-migration of under 4,900 during the 1980s and is the reason Oregon’s population growth rate surged from an annual average of 0.77% during the 1980s to an average of 1.87% during the 1990s. Net in-migration was particularly strong during the first half of the 1990s when it averaged over 49,000 per year, the two highest years being 1993 (53,713) and 1990 (52,130).

⁵ For the purposes of this article, the base for the OEA forecasts is the July 1, 2000 PSU-PRC estimates rather than the April 1, 2000 census numbers (i.e., the base statewide population is taken to be 3,436,750 rather than the census estimate of 3,421,399). As noted in Part I of this article, the Census Bureau and OEA forecasts were produced at quite different times, by different agencies, and for different periods, and therefore will necessarily differ. The OEA forecasts predict a faster population growth for Oregon than the Census Bureau projections discussed in Part I of this article.

⁶ The published OEA forecasts do not distinguish between interstate (or inter-county) migration and immigration. Therefore, as used in this article, the term “net migration” includes both.

⁷ This projection has been controversial in Central Oregon, with some Deschutes County officials believing their county will continue to grow more rapidly than suggested by the OEA forecasts. Oregon’s State Demographer, on the other hand, has argued it is unrealistic to think any county can grow indefinitely at the pace Deschutes has in recent decades. It is also worth noting the forecasts hardly suggest growth in Deschutes County will come to a standstill, but rather only that this growth will slow after 2010. The forecasts in fact predict Deschutes will continue to be one of the faster growing counties, with its population increasing from

116,600 in 2000 to 257,088 by 2040. Any way one looks at it, this is a huge increase from the 30,442 persons residing in the county in 1970.

⁸ This is because of Deschutes County’s continued rapid growth in the first ten years of the period. If one instead looks at the period 2010-2040, Polk is projected to easily be the fastest growing county and Deschutes’ ranking falls to 7th.

⁹ The urbanized counties are Clackamas, Jackson, Lane, Marion, Multnomah, Polk and Washington. The Willamette Valley counties are Benton, Clackamas, Columbia, Lane, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Washington and Yamhill. The Metro counties are Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington.

Table 1. Ranking of County Populations: 1970 and 2000								
1970			2000			1970-2000 Change		
		% of			% of			% of
		State			State		Change in	State
County	Population	Total	County	Population	Total	County	Population	Total
Multnomah	554,668	26.5%	Multnomah	660,486	19.3%	Washington	287,422	21.6%
Lane	215,401	10.3%	Washington	445,342	13.0%	Clackamas	172,303	13.0%
Clackamas	166,088	7.9%	Clackamas	338,391	9.9%	Marion	133,525	10.0%
Washington	157,920	7.6%	Lane	322,959	9.4%	Lane	107,558	8.1%
Marion	151,309	7.2%	Marion	284,834	8.3%	Multnomah	105,818	8.0%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1,245,386</i>	<i>59.5%</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>2,052,012</i>	<i>60.0%</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>806,626</i>	<i>60.7%</i>
State Total	2,091,533		State Total	3,421,399		State Total	1,329,866	

Table 2. Ranking of County Population Growth Rates: 1970-2000							
Period							
1970-1980		1980-1990		1990-2000		1970-2000	
County	AAGR*	County	AAGR*	County	AAGR*	County	AAGR*
Deschutes	7.40%	Washington	2.40%	Deschutes	4.41%	Deschutes	4.54%
Morrow	5.35%	Deschutes	1.89%	Morrow	3.73%	Washington	3.52%
Josephine	5.11%	Yamhill	1.71%	Washington	3.64%	Morrow	3.05%
Washington	4.53%	Jefferson	1.66%	Jefferson	3.35%	Jefferson	2.70%
Clackamas	3.83%	Clackamas	1.43%	Crook	3.12%	Josephine	2.53%
State Total	2.33%	State Total	0.77%	State Total	1.87%	State Total	1.65%

*AAGR = average annual growth rate for period indicated. The growth rates are calculated based on the April 1 decennial census populations for each county.

Table 3. Projected Oregon Population and Components of Change: 2000-2040

Year/Period	Estimated/ Projected Oregon Population*	Absolute Change	Average Annual Growth Rate	Share of Change Due To:	
				Natural Growth	Net In- migration
2000	3,436,750	---	---	---	---
2010	3,843,900	407,150	1.13%	39.3%	60.7%
2020	4,359,258	515,358	1.27%	35.3%	64.7%
2030	4,891,225	531,967	1.16%	31.3%	68.7%
2040	5,425,408	534,183	1.04%	24.5%	75.5%
2000-2020	---	922,508	1.20%	37.0%	63.0%
2020-2040	---	1,066,150	1.10%	27.9%	72.1%
2000-2040	---	1,988,658	1.15%	32.1%	67.9%

* 2000 population is PSU-PRC July 1 estimate; 2010-2040 populations are OEA projections.

Table 4. Ranking of Estimated/Projected County Populations: 2000 and 2040

2000		2040			2000-2040 Change			
County	Estimated Population	% of State Total	County	Projected Population	% of State Total	County	Projected Change in Population	% of State Total
Multnomah	662,400	19.3%	Washington	920,852	17.0%	Washington	471,602	23.7%
Washington	449,250	13.1%	Multnomah	842,009	15.5%	Clackamas	280,703	14.1%
Clackamas	340,000	9.9%	Clackamas	620,703	11.4%	Multnomah	179,609	9.0%
Lane	323,950	9.4%	Lane	471,511	8.7%	Marion	162,371	8.2%
Marion	286,300	8.3%	Marion	448,671	8.3%	Lane	147,561	7.4%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>2,061,900</i>	<i>60.0%</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>3,303,746</i>	<i>60.9%</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1,241,846</i>	<i>62.4%</i>
State Total	3,436,750		State Total	5,425,408		State Total	1,988,658	

Table 5. Ranking of Projected County Population Growth Rates: 2000-2040							
Period							
2000-2010		2010-2020		2020-2040		2000-2040	
County	AAGR*	County	AAGR*	County	AAGR*	County	AAGR*
Deschutes	3.14%	Polk	2.76%	Polk	1.78%	Deschutes	2.00%
Morrow	2.04%	Deschutes	2.19%	Yamhill	1.70%	Polk	1.95%
Washington	1.91%	Washington	1.98%	Morrow	1.70%	Morrow	1.85%
Crook	1.79%	Morrow	1.98%	Crook	1.69%	Washington	1.81%
Polk	1.51%	Yamhill	1.87%	Washington	1.68%	Crook	1.74%
State Total	1.13%	State Total	1.27%	State Total	1.10%	State Total	1.15%

* AAGR = average annual growth rate for period indicated. The growth rates are calculated based on the OEA forecasts for 2010-2040, using the July 1, 2000 PSU-PRC estimates as the base for the 2000-2010 and 2000-2040 rates.