



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*
DATE: May 27, 2014
SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Plan – Growth Forecasts and Demographic Trends**

AT A GLANCE

The RTC Board will have the opportunity to review and discuss the new 2035 population and employment forecasts developed through Clark County’s Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update process. The Board presentation will also include an in-depth look at other significant demographic trends and data that influence regional travel patterns and behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Establishing household and employment growth forecasts and allocations are important steps in the RTP update process. The number and location of future households and jobs is an integral part of defining the future the plan will address. At the June RTC Board meeting, RTC staff will review the progress in developing the forecasts and allocations. While the number and location of households and employment are major factors that influence the magnitude and patterns of future travel in the region, they are not the only demographic factors that influence future travel behavior and decisions. At the Board meeting, RTC staff will also review additional national, state and county demographic trends and other socioeconomic factors that influence regional travel patterns and behavior. These will include the following: age, driver licensing, race and ethnicity, poverty, auto ownership/availability, employment sectors and commuting patterns.

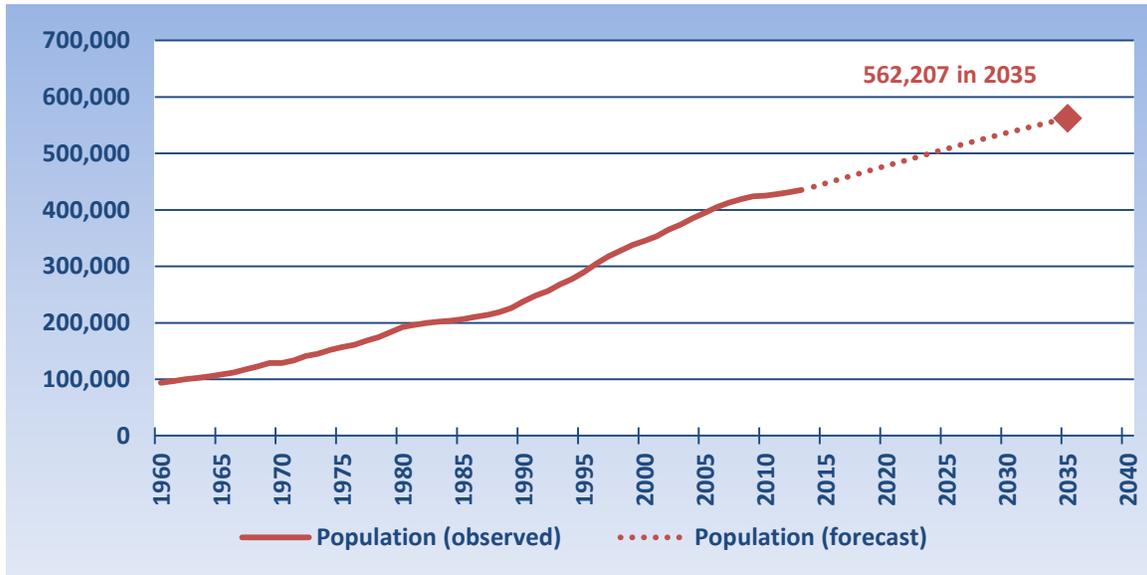
NEW POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS

Clark County is currently in the process of updating the county’s Comprehensive Growth Management Plan in accordance with the state Growth Management Act (GMA). Through the county’s process new 2035 population and employment forecasts have been adopted by the Board of Clark County Commissioners (BOCC) and a final allocation of growth is expected to be completed during the early-summer. RTC staff anticipates using the growth forecast and allocation developed through the county’s GMA update process as the 2035 household and employment growth scenario for the RTP update.

The county GMA Update process has produced BOCC adopted population and employment forecasts. In January, the BOCC adopted the Washington State Office of Financial Management’s (OFM) most recent medium-range 2035 population projection for Clark County, 562,207 persons, as the county’s official population projection for the GMA update (Figure 1). This represents an average annual growth rate of about 1.1%.

Figure 1: Clark County Population 1960 to 2040 – Observed and Adopted GMA Forecast

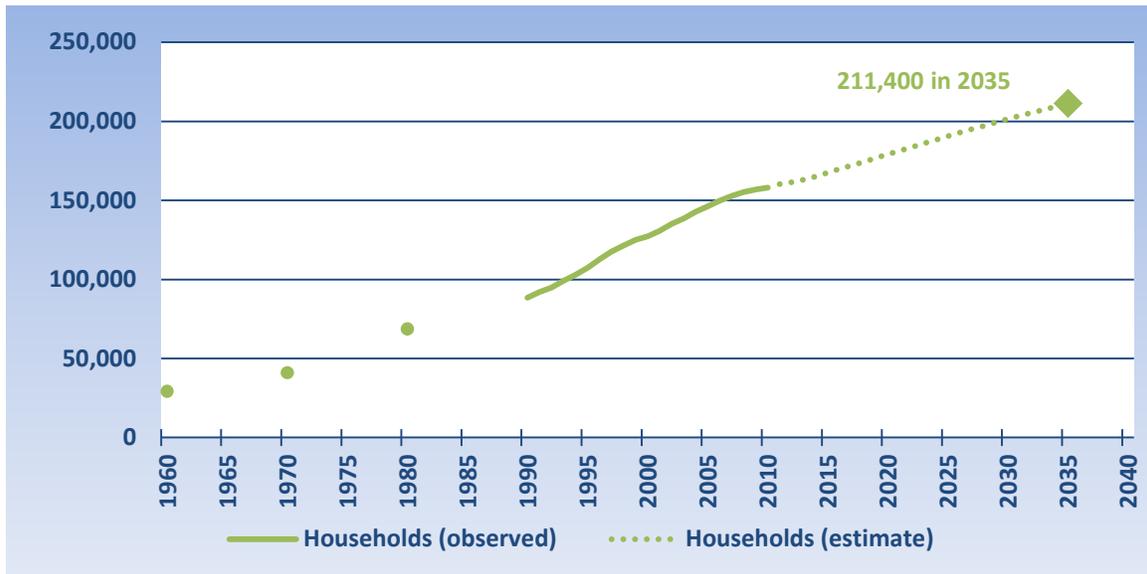
(Sources: US Census and Washington State OFM)



Using the current GMA planning assumption of 2.66 persons per household in 2035, there will be an estimated 211,400 households residing in the county in 2035 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Clark County Households 1960 to 2040 – Observed and GMA Forecast

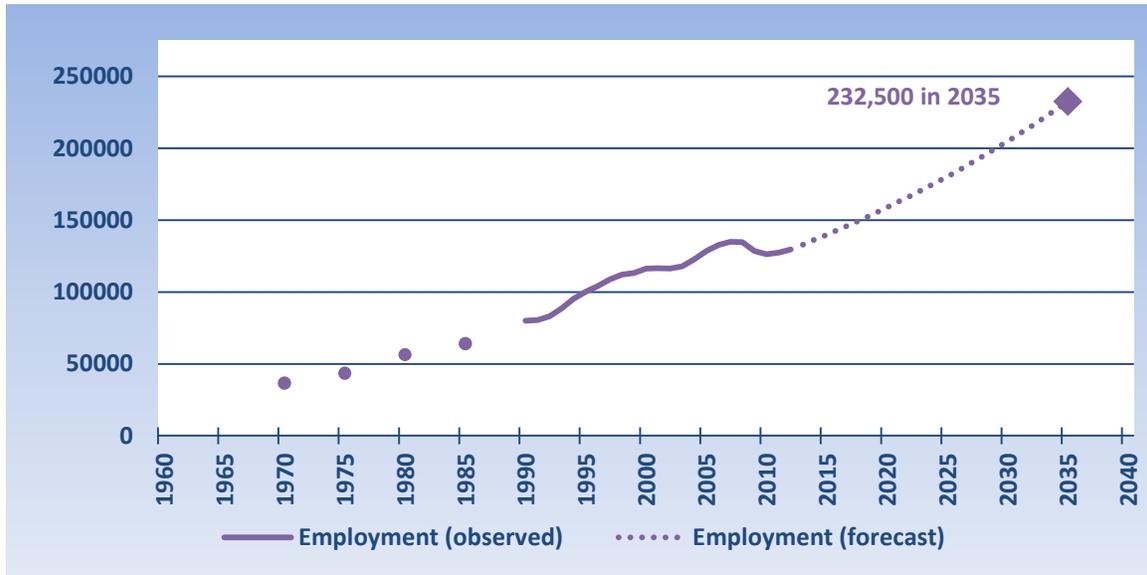
(Sources: US Census and Washington State OFM)



In April the BOCC adopted a 2035 employment forecast of 232,500 total non-farm jobs (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Clark County Non-Farm Employment 1960 to 2040 – Observed and Draft GMA Forecast

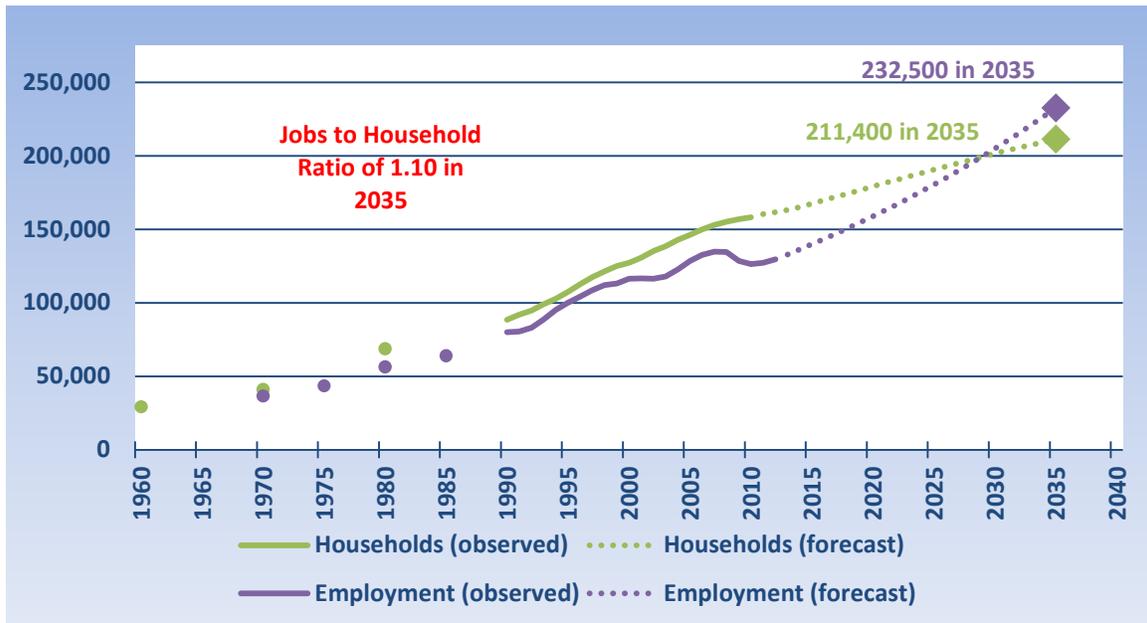
(Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Washington ESD)



This results in a 1.1 jobs to household ratio in 2035 and represents an average annual growth rate of about 2.58% (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Clark County Household and Employment 1960 to 2040 – Observed and Draft GMA Forecast

(Sources: US Census, Washington State OFM, US Bureau of Economic Analysis and Washington ESD)



CURRENT RTP GROWTH FORECAST

The current RTP, adopted by the RTC Board in December of 2011, has a horizon year of 2035. The forecast and allocation was developed in early 2011 in partnership with RTC's member jurisdictions. The principles guiding the forecast and allocation process included the following:

- Maintain consistency with adopted GMA plans and current land use designations
- Incorporate official state population forecasts from OFM
- Consider long-term industry employment projections from ESD
- Account for the impacts of the recent economic recession
- Consider region-wide econometric assumptions developed by Metro
- Use the adopted MTP 2030 forecast and allocation as the starting point

That effort resulted in the current Plan's 2035 household forecast of 248,750 (representing 641,800 people) with and an employment forecast of 256,200 jobs. The household and employment allocation was based on the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan for Clark County (update adopted September 2007).

The new population and employment forecasts developed through the county's GMA update process represent a departure from the forecasts utilized in RTC's current Plan. Changing growth trends, along with the effects of the recent recession have resulted in a 2035 population forecast of 562,207 compared to the previous 641,800 – nearly 80,000 persons less. The newly adopted GMA jobs forecasts is about 24,000 fewer, 256,200 jobs in the 2011 MTP and now 232,500 jobs in the adopted 2035 forecast for the GMA update.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Beyond looking at the population and employment growth forecasts, RTC staff will present information and data on significant demographic trends and other socioeconomic factors that influence regional travel patterns and behavior.