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# Population Outlook for the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area

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by Barry Edmonston, Director, Population Research Center and Professor, School of Urban Studies and Planning  
Masud Hasan, Graduate Research Assistant, Population Research Center

While many people both inside and outside Oregon retain the image of the state as a place of picturesque coastal bluffs, Mt. Hood and other mountain peaks, and large forests, the state's population is primarily urban and has been for many decades. In 2000, three-quarters of Oregon's 3.4 million residents lived in towns and cities. And almost one-half of Oregon's population lived in the metropolitan Portland area.

This paper offers an overview of population dynamics in the metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area—describing current trends for population growth in its counties; the effect of births, deaths, and migration on population growth; how the age, sex, and ethnic composition are changing; and where residents live within the metropolitan area. Finally, the paper discusses likely growth prospects and their implications.

The metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area includes five of Oregon's thirty-six counties—Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington, and Yamhill—and Clark County in the state of Washington. Figure 1 shows a map of the metropolitan area, including its six constituent counties. This paper refers to the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area as the total metropolitan area, including the Oregon and Washington portions. We refer to the metropolitan Portland area when limiting discussion to the five Oregon counties.

## POPULATION GROWTH

Population growth in metropolitan Portland-Vancouver historically has exceeded growth for the United States, but the differential in growth rates has declined over time. Between 1990 and 2000, the United States grew by about 13 percent and metropolitan Portland-Vancouver increased by almost 27 percent. The ratio of population growth for metropolitan Portland-Vancouver compared to the United States from 1990 to 2000 exceeded 2.0, meaning that the metropolitan areas grew at more than twice the national average.

### Recent Growth

Metropolitan Portland-Vancouver has steadily increased its population since 1990, growing from 1.5 million in 1990 to 1.9 million in 2000, an increase of 400,000

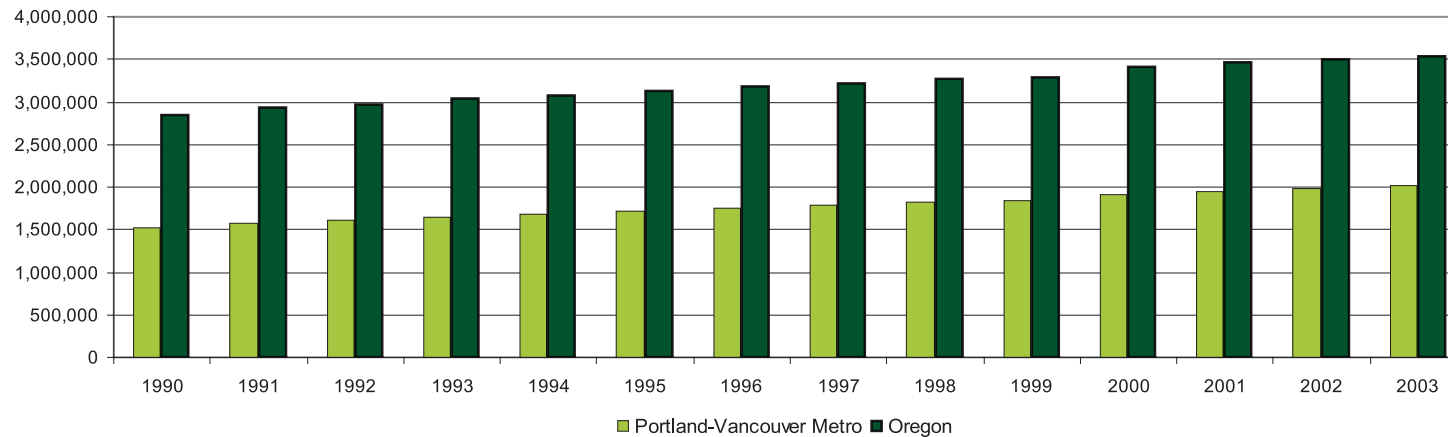


Figure 1. Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area

people or 27 percent (see Figure 2). About 1.6 million or 82 percent of the total metropolitan Portland-Vancouver population resided in Oregon in 2000. In 2003, the estimated population for the metropolitan area was 2.0 million, an increase of more than 90,000 since 2000.

The metropolitan Portland population – limiting attention to the five metropolitan counties in Oregon—grew from 1.3 million in 1990 to almost 1.6 million in 2000, an increase of 23 percent. Clark County, Washington experienced the most rapid population growth during the 1990 to 2000 period, considerably greater than the Washington state's population increase of 13 percent. The higher rate of growth in Clark County affected the total Portland-Vancouver growth rate. The total metropolitan growth rate of 27 percent reflects the growth rate of 23 percent for the five Oregon counties and 45 percent for Washington's Clark County.

Figure 2. Population growth in PVMA and Oregon, 1990 - 2003



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Oregon Population Reports produced by the Population Research Center

During the same 1990-2000 period, Oregon's state population increased at a slightly lower rate of 20 percent. Because the metropolitan Portland population expanded more rapidly than did the Oregon population, an increasing proportion of the Oregon population was in the metropolitan Portland area (see Figure 2). At the beginning of the decade, in 1990, 45 percent of Oregon's population lived in the five counties of metropolitan Portland; by 2000, this percentage increased to 46 percent.

Population growth can be viewed in either absolute or relative terms. Washington County was Oregon's fastest growing county in metropolitan Portland—in both absolute and relative terms. Washington County added 134,000 new residents to the metropolitan area from 1990 to 2000, an increase of 43 percent. Yamhill County was the second fastest growing county in relative terms, increasing 30 percent and adding 19,000 residents. Multnomah County added 77,000 residents during the same period, although its 13 percent growth was the smallest change in relative terms of metropolitan Portland counties.

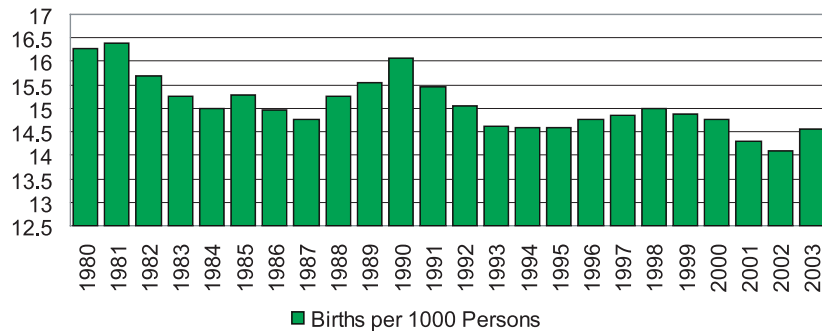
### Natural Increase

Population growth depends on changes in three factors: birth, deaths, and migration. The difference between births and deaths is called natural increase. In most populations, there are more births than deaths, and the population grows from natural increase. If in-migration is insufficient to counter-balance negative natural increase, the population declines. In most cases, however, both natural increase and net in-migration contribute to a growing population.

Both mortality and fertility levels have remained fairly steady in the metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area for the past two decades. The crude death rate (the number of deaths per 1,000 residents) has remained at about 8 per 1,000 since 1980. In 2000, life expectancy at birth in Oregon was 74.6 years for men and 80.6 years for women, slightly higher than the U.S. national average for men and women. Life expectancy increased from 68.4 years for men and 76.2 years for women in 1970.

The crude birth rate (the number of births per 1,000 residents) has moved within a narrow range of 14 to 17 per 1,000 since 1980. The crude birth rate decreased from 1981 to 1987, fluctuated up and down from 1987 to 1993, and remained slightly over 14.5 since 1993 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Metropolitan Portland birth rate has fluctuated since 1980.



Source: Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics

At present fertility levels, the average couple in the metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area has about two children by the end of their childbearing years. In order to exactly replace the population, couples need to have 2.1 children. Present metropolitan fertility levels are slightly less than the replacement level. In the long run, the metropolitan population would decrease at a very slow rate if there were no net in-migration.

Natural increase contributed about 18 percent of the metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area's growth from 1990 to 2000. The area's overall population growth of 452,000 was comprised of a natural increase of 134,000 and an estimated net in-migration of 318,000.

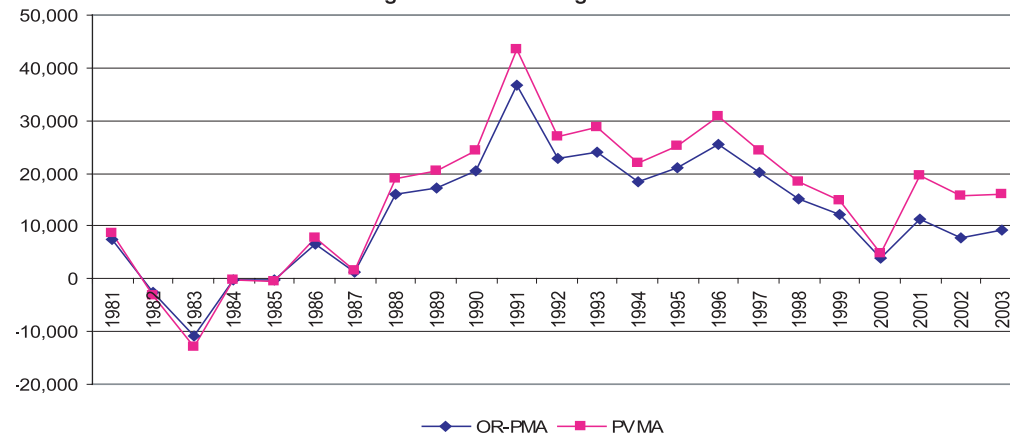
The metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area population is relatively young, with a sufficient number of people in the childbearing years to produce a sizeable number of births, offsetting fertility levels that are somewhat less than the long-term replacement level. Since 1990, there have been about 26,000 births and 13,000 deaths annually in the metropolitan area, adding about 13,000 people each year through natural increase.

Fertility and mortality levels do not vary greatly among the Oregon and Washington counties of the metropolitan area. However, the annual number of births and deaths are affected by modest differences in the age composition of the different counties. Overall, there are only slight differences in the rates of natural increase for the metropolitan counties.

### Net Migration

Migration is the main factor affecting population growth in the metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area. Net migration into the metropolitan area has been positive since 1980, except for an estimated out-migration of about 10,000 people during the economic downturn in 1982-1983. Economic conditions and employment opportunities were especially strong from 1988 to 1998 as evidenced by net migration levels at 20,000 and above (see Figure 4, which shows net migration for the Oregon portion of the metropolitan area and for the total Portland-Vancouver area). There were particularly high levels of net in-migration to the metropolitan area from 1990 to 1992 with annual net migration exceeding 40,000. Net in-migration in 2000 decreased to a decade low of about 5,000 persons. In the past several years, net in-migration has been in the 15,000 to 20,000 range.

Figure 4. Net Migration into the Metropolitan Area experienced a large increase during the 1990's.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics

Migration accounted for more than two-thirds of the area's population increase from 1990 to 2000 and provided more than half of the increase for each of the area's counties. Clark County, Washington experienced a net gain of about 79,000 from migration during 1990 to 2000, with migration accounting for almost three-

fourths of its overall growth. Four other counties—Clackamas, Columbia, Washington, and Yamhill—derived more than two-thirds of their growth in the 1990s from migration. In the past three years, the metropolitan population has grown by more than 90,000, with about 55 percent of the population increase due to net in-migration (see Figure 5). Net in-migration has slackened somewhat in recent years. As a result, its proportionate contribution to overall population growth has decreased. Net migration, however, remains the dominant factor in the population growth of the metropolitan area.

Migration was important for all counties in the metropolitan region. Although Multnomah experienced the slowest overall growth rate, increasing 13 percent from 1990 to 2000, it received 42,000 net migrants, and migration accounted for more than one-half of its total population increase. Since 2000, the contribution of net migration has decreased for all counties. In Multnomah County, less than 5,000 net migrants arrived during 2000 to 2003, and net migration accounted for about one-fourth of the county's population growth. In Washington and Yamhill

counties, net migration provided more than 40 percent of population increases. And in Clackamas, Columbia, and Clark counties, net migration made up about two-thirds of population growth.

### Immigration

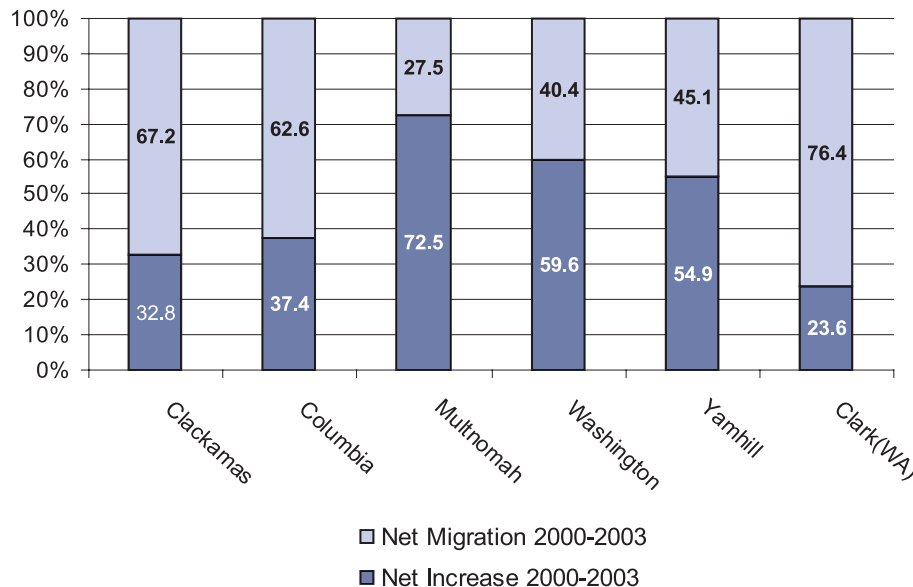
International migrants to the state of Oregon represented nearly 27 percent of the total population increase from 1990 to 2000. However, the immigrants to Oregon throughout the 1990's represented less than one percent of the total immigrants to the United States. Except for an increase in 1991 (1.3 percent) and, more recently in 2000 (1.0 percent), the annual number of immigrants to Oregon represented less than one percent of the total annual immigrants to the United States during the 1990's.

In the metropolitan Portland area about two-thirds of the immigrants reported by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 2000 came from only seven areas: Russia and other countries of the former USSR (18 percent of all immigrants), Mexico (17 percent), China (7 percent), Vietnam (8 percent), India (5 percent), Korea (3 percent), and the Philippines (3 percent). The most unique aspect about the metropolitan area's immigration is the relatively high proportion of immigrants from the former USSR – primarily from Russia. The proportion of Russians among Portland's immigrants is more than twice the national average. Since immigrants to the metropolitan area are generally younger than residents, they contribute to a somewhat younger age composition, in addition to affecting the ethnic composition.

But immigration does more than change the age or ethnic mix of the population. The presence of migrants with different skills affects economic growth, adding new workers to the metropolitan labor force and, in some cases, providing needed skilled employees for local industries with job shortages.

Although foreign-born men are somewhat more likely to be in the high-education, high-paying jobs, they are also far more common in low-education, low-paying jobs. Compared with native-born men, immigrants are found in some occupations requiring high levels of education, such as college teachers and engineers, as well as some occupations requiring little schooling, such as tailors, waiters, and unskilled service occupations. The picture for immigrant women is similar. Foreign-born women in the metropolitan area are disproportionately employed in a few high-education occupations, such as foreign-language teachers and physicians, but they

**Figure 5. Most of the growth during 2000-2003 was due to migration although there are differences between counties.**



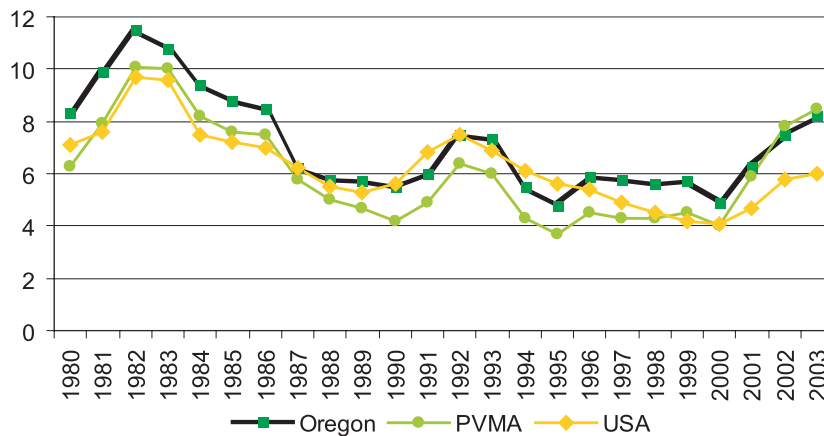
Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics

also make up a large share of employment in many occupations that require little formal schooling: dressmakers, graders and sorters of agricultural products, waitresses, and private household service workers.

### Factors Affecting Metropolitan Population Growth

Unemployment rates decreased from their peak of over 10 percent in 1982 and, except for an upswing in 1992-1993, remained below 5 percent between 1988 and 2000 (see Figure 6). Improved employment opportunities have attracted in-migrants as well as retarding out-migrants who might have departed the metropolitan areas in search of jobs if attractive employment had not existed here. In recent years, the unemployment rates in Oregon and the metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area have increased, exceeding more than 8 percent in the state and metropolitan area in 2003.

**Figure 6. PVMA unemployment rates started to increase over the Oregon rates in recent years.**



Source: State of Oregon, Oregon Employment Department

Shifts have occurred in the major economic sectors for employment in the metropolitan area. The most noteworthy changes since 1980 have been (a) increases in the service sector, (b) substantial increases in high-tech, and (c) decreases in lumber-related employment. Overall, more than two-thirds of all current employment in the metropolitan area is in services, trade, and government.

Income in the metropolitan Portland area has been increasing since 1982. In 2000 constant dollars, taking inflation into account, average per capita income in the metropolitan Portland area increased from 21,705 dollars in 1980 to over 24,915 dollars in 1990. Since 1990, per capita increases have been noteworthy, reaching 31,620 dollars in 2000.

### Factors Affecting Population Distribution

Population growth has been more rapid in the outlying areas of the metropolitan region than in the central areas. From a demographic perspective, family and individual residential location is influenced by income, age and life cycle status, ethnicity, housing choices, location of employment, and transportation options and preferences. Given the employment decentralization observed in the metropolitan area, population decentralization was certain to occur. The consequences of the other factors are more ambiguous.

Over the 1990 to 2000 period, per capita income increased more rapidly than median household income in the metropolitan area. The difference between the two is attributable to the composition of households. The mix of households in the metropolitan area has changed since 1990 as the number of single-parent, childless-couples, and single-adult households increased. By and large this change amounted to a shift toward household types that traditionally had lower incomes. This shift retarded growth in household median income at the same time that earnings growth, while not as strong as in the 1950s and 1960s, remained robust. As a result, increases in income may have contributed more to decentralization of population than the median income figures would suggest.

Decentralization tendencies created by income change and employment dispersion have been partially offset by an influx of migrants and changing household size. For the metropolitan area as a whole, over three-fourths of the population increase from 1990 to 2000 was attributable to net migration. Most of this migration is made up of people from elsewhere in the United States who are presumably attracted to the metropolitan Portland area by the growing economy and job op-

portunities, the attractive environment, or both. About one-fourth of metropolitan Portland's migration is attributable to migration from abroad.

**AGE COMPOSITION**

Fertility and mortality levels and the volume and composition of migration affect the age composition of the metropolitan population. If there were no migration, then the current population would become steadily older because fertility levels are relatively low. In the long run—again, assuming no migration—the median age of the metropolitan population would increase from its current level of about 35 years to about 41 years in 2050. Migration into the metropolitan area has the short-run effect of making the population slightly younger. In the long run, however, continued in-migration will increase the average age of the metropolitan population. This statement may seem counter-intuitive. But migrants eventually become older themselves. A steady stream of in-migrants, even if somewhat younger at the time of migration, will increase the number of people who become older and will, eventually, increase the number and proportion of elderly in the metropolitan area.

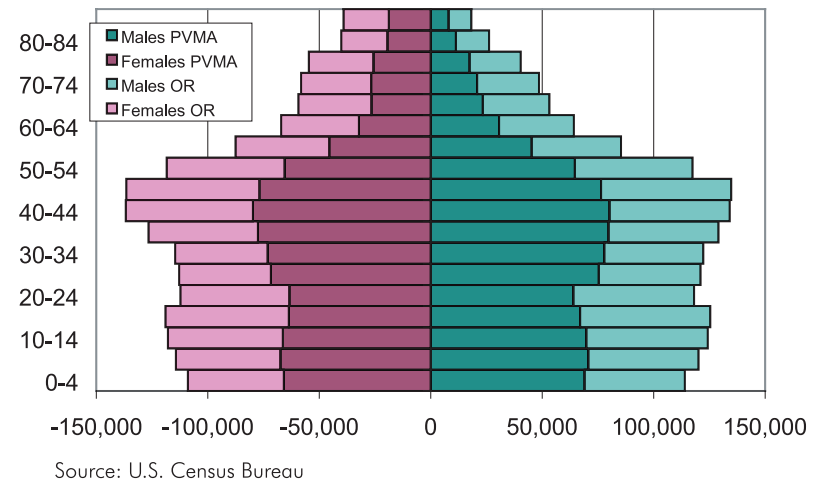
Figure 7 displays both metropolitan Portland's and Oregon's population pyramid. Compared to Oregon and the United States, metropolitan Portland is slightly younger, reflecting the larger number of young adults who have arrived recently in the area.

The age composition of the metropolitan population is important for a variety of reasons. The number and proportion of people by age affects schools, the labor force, health care, and the demand for recreation, entertainment, and stores. Figures 8 shows current trends in the metropolitan age structure.

Children under the age of 5, although not yet attending school, determine the future needs of schools. The proportion of the population represented by this age group decreased from 7.6 percent to 7.0 percent despite an increase of 20,000 persons from 1990 to 2000.

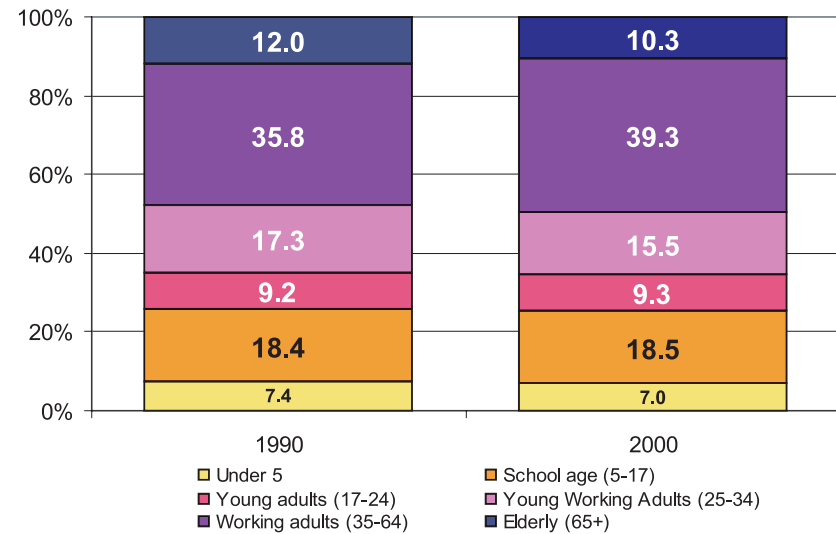
Slightly less than one-fifth of metropolitan residents, or 18 percent, are between the ages of 5 to 17 years. In 2000, there were 354,000 metropolitan residents in these school ages, an increase of 80,000 from 274,000 in 1990. This increase is reflected in the substantial growth of elementary, middle school, and high school students, particularly in school districts with rapid increases in younger couples.

**Figure 7. The metropolitan area includes a relatively young population, while Oregon's population is just slightly older.**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Figure 8. Working adults have slightly increased and the elderly have decreased.**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Younger adults in the population, aged 18 to 24 years, are an important population group. They are the primary age group for the college population, for getting married, and for entering the labor force. The young adult population increased from 140,000 in 1990 to 178,000 in 2000, an increase of 38,000.

Despite an increase of 43,000 persons between the ages of 25 and 34, the age group's proportion decreased slightly, almost 2 percent, from 1990 to 2000. This group is very career mobile and is, therefore, affected by employment trends. However, once their young children become school age, they are less likely to migrate. The highest rates of net in-migration for the metropolitan area are for ages 20 to 34 years: more than one-half of younger in-migrants to Oregon settled in the metropolitan Portland area in the 1990s.

The working ages of 35 to 64 years are the main age group in the labor force. This age group also includes most parents in the metropolitan area. The population in the working ages grew from 530,000 to 754,000 during 1990 to 2000, and their representative proportion of the total population also grew nearly 4 percent.

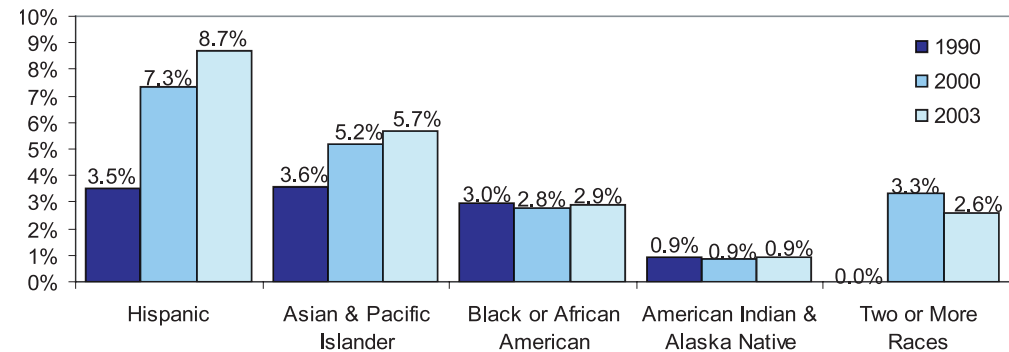
The elderly population includes people who have a lower proportion in the labor force and are important users of health services. Although the number of elderly increased by 15,000 from 1990 to 2000, growing from 183,000 to 198,000, their proportion of the total population decreased almost two percent.

## ETHNIC COMPOSITION

The metropolitan Portland area population has a less diverse population than do other major population areas in the United States or on the West Coast. Metropolitan Portland's minority population constituted 20 percent of the metropolitan population in 2003. For metropolitan areas with population greater than one million, the U.S. average was 36 percent. Moreover, the metropolitan Portland population is considerably less diverse than other metropolitan areas such as Seattle, San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, or San Diego.

However, the metropolitan area's ethnic composition has experienced a recent dramatic increase in the minority population. Every county in the metropolitan area has experienced gains in the minority population since 1990. The overall minority population—including Asian Americans, Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, African Americans, American Indians, and persons reporting two or more races—increased from 140,000 in 1990 to 307,000 in 2000, an increase of 119 percent (more than four times the rate of increase for the overall metropolitan increase of 23 percent during the same period).

Figure 9. The proportion of minorities in the Portland metropolitan area has been growing.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Data for 2003 are based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates for the ethnic composition of counties. Because of the major changes in racial and ethnic reporting in the 2000 census, post-2000 census estimates are still in the process of development and need to be interpreted with caution. 2003 population estimates indicate that Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander population has continued to grow. Although the 2003 estimates show slight decreases for the multiracial population, this is a new and difficult group for population estimates. Given the increasing rates of racial intermarriage, it is more likely that the multiracial population in the metropolitan area has continued to increase.

The sources of the growth of the minority population vary. Almost all the African American and American Indian residents in metropolitan Portland are native-born. However, many Asian American and Hispanic residents are foreign-born, although native-born children often accompany them.

Fueled by internal and international migration, as well as fertility levels above the Oregon state average, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority population in the metropolitan area. The Hispanic population increased from 45,000 in 1990 to 115,000 in 2000, an increase of 155 percent during the period. Hispanics are currently the largest of the various minority groups in the Portland metropolitan area. U.S. Census Bureau estimates suggest that the Hispanic population numbers 176,000 in 2003, an increase of more than 60,000 since 2000.



Asian Americans, including Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, have the second fastest rate of growth of minority groups, increasing from 46,000 in 1990 to 81,000 in 2000, a growth of 76 percent. In 2003, an estimated 116,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were living in the metropolitan area, an increase of 25,000 since 2000. Asian Americans have fertility levels similar to the Oregon state average. Metropolitan Portland receives a large number of immigrants from Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Philippines, and Japan as well as Asian Americans who move here from other states. Asian Americans are the second largest minority population in the metropolitan area.

African Americans are the third largest minority population in the metropolitan area, numbering 44,000 in 2000, and increasing 16 percent from 1990. There is a net migration of African Americans into the metropolitan area, but at a considerably lower level than for Hispanics or Asian Americans. U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2003 indicate little overall change in the number of African Americans in the metropolitan area since 2000.

The metropolitan Portland area included 14,000 American Indians and Alaskan Natives in 2000. This is a slight increase from the 1990 population of 12,000. There is modest net migration of American Indians into the metropolitan area, from Oregon and nearby states, but the metropolitan American Indian population remains relatively small and does not appear to have changed significantly since 2000.

### **New Ethnic Categories**

In 1998, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget directed the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies to begin the transition to a revised federal classification scheme for racial and ethnic data. The new scheme affected 2000 census data and will gradually become common for other federal statistical data. The new scheme involves two major changes. First and foremost, the census, surveys, and federal data collection forms allow respondents to report two or more race or ethnic groups, if they wish. Second, native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders report themselves separately from Asian Americans.

Prior to the 2000 Census, we lacked accurate estimates for the number of Oregonians and metropolitan Oregonians who might report themselves as having multiple racial origins—that is, as identifying with two or more racial/ethnic groups. The majority of residents in Portland and Oregon reported themselves as white

(80 percent) in the 2000 census. However, 3.3 percent of the population (53,480 in the metropolitan Portland area) identified themselves as having two or more races in the 2000 census.

Pacific Islanders are a very small population group in Oregon in 2000, numbering only 8,000—of whom 4,500 lived in metropolitan Portland. Although we lack data on net movements from Pacific Island areas; especially Hawaii, American Samoa and Guam; migration of Pacific Islanders from Hawaii and other Pacific Island areas likely added to the metropolitan population in the 1990s. However, Pacific Islanders are likely to remain the smallest of Oregon's and metropolitan Portland's minority populations for the foreseeable future.

### **Influence of Immigration**

The size of the international migration influx to the United States in the 1990s rivaled the great waves of immigration experienced at the beginning of the century. Taking illegal immigration into account, the best available estimate is that the total inflow amounted to about 1.1 million persons per year, or about 11 million during the 1990's decade. During 2000, California received about 26 percent of these newcomers, and another 40 percent went to the other five major immigrant-receiving states of New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois.

Oregon's share of total U.S. immigration has been relatively modest. Oregon received about 1 percent, or 8,000 to 9,000 persons, annually of the total immigrant population arriving during 1990 to 2000. Over 80 percent of immigrants arriving annually in Oregon, or about 6,000 to 7,000, went to the metropolitan Portland area.

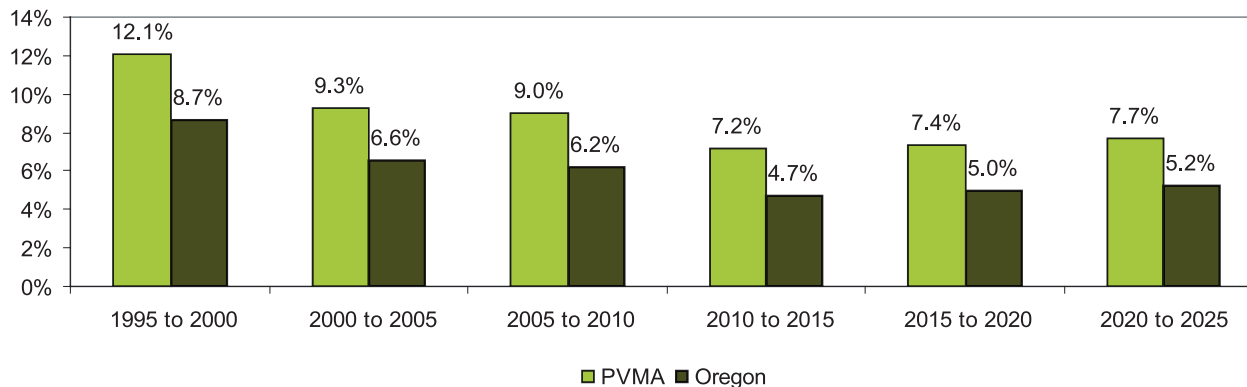
While the flow of immigrants into Oregon may not be large, other evidence suggests that many immigrants, especially those from Mexico, originally settled elsewhere before moving to Oregon. As a result, the growth of the foreign-born population includes an unknown number of foreign-born persons who moved to the metropolitan area from other states. At the current time, economic conditions in Mexico and nearby Central American countries continue to produce a steady stream of migrants intent on relocating in the United States. A plausible assumption is that some of the new immigrants to the United States from Latin America may eventually settle in Oregon, even if they initially live in some other state. The large and growing Mexican-origin population in California guarantees a source of future migrants who find Oregon attractive if job opportunities exist.

The social, political, and economic consequences of the inflow of migrants, both native and foreign-born, are substantial. The major social consequence is that an area that has been ethnically homogeneous is becoming less so. While active political participation for some ethnic groups will take time, general minority participation in city, state, and congressional campaigns increased in the past decade. Economically, the influx of new residents has increased the number of younger minority workers in the metropolitan labor force, adding low and semi-skilled workers as well as managerial and professional workers.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE GROWTH**

Population in the metropolitan Portland-Vancouver area grew from 1.5 million in 1990 to 1.9 million in 2000 and, assuming a continuation of current state and local area conditions and policies, will grow to close to 2.1 million in 2005 and about 2.3 million in 2010. The Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area is expected to increase by 9.3 percent between 2000-2005 and 9.0 percent between 2005-2010, an annual population growth rate of 1.8 percent for the 2000-2010 period (see Figure 10). Long-term population forecasts suggest that the metropolitan population will increase to 2.4 million in 2015, 2.6 million in 2020, and 2.8 million in 2025.

**Figure 10. Metropolitan population growth will continue in the coming decades, with the PVMA growing faster than the rest of the state.**



Source: Metro, Portland, Oregon

The age composition of the metropolitan population will change as a result of low fertility, increasing life expectancy, and continued net in-migration (see Figure 11). Although all population age groups will increase between 2000 and 2025, the percentage distribution of the population by age will change.

- A slight increase is initially expected in the proportion of the population less than 18 years of age due to the high number of recent in-migrants in child bearing ages. As this in-migration pattern ceases, the proportion of children less than 18 years of age will decrease, reflecting a continuation of existing low fertility levels.
- The proportion of young adults, aged 18 to 24 years, will decrease slightly.
- The proportion of the population in the working ages, 25 to 64 years of age, will increase modestly during the next 10 years, reflecting continued in-migration of younger persons, will peak in about 2010, and then will decrease between 2010 and 2025.
- The population in Oregon who are currently between 55 and 64—and who will retire as they reach 65 years of age and older during the next decade—were born from 1935 to 1945, a period of very low fertility during the Great Depression and World War II. Oregon’s population, similar to the U.S. population, will not experience rapid increase in the older population until the larger birth cohorts of the Baby Boomers begin to retire. The first large group of Baby Boom births occurred in 1946 and will become 65 years of age in 2011. After 2010, therefore, there will be sharp increases in Oregon’s older population, steadily increasing the older population in relative and absolute numbers for the following twenty years, from about 2010 to 2030.

- The proportion of persons 65 years of age and older showed an unexpected increase from 1995 to 2000 but will decrease until about 2005 and then begin to increase as the Baby Boomers enter this age group.

The accuracy of these forecasts depends upon a series of assumptions concerning national, regional, and state trends, especially for the local metropolitan economy. Oregon’s Office of Economic Analysis prepares population forecasts for Oregon and its counties. Metro prepares population and related forecasts for the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area.

The pace of population growth in the metropolitan Portland area has slackened appreciably in the past several years, following strong economic and population growth throughout most of the 1990s. Although economic recession has decreased employment opportunities, prospects for future population increases are moderate.

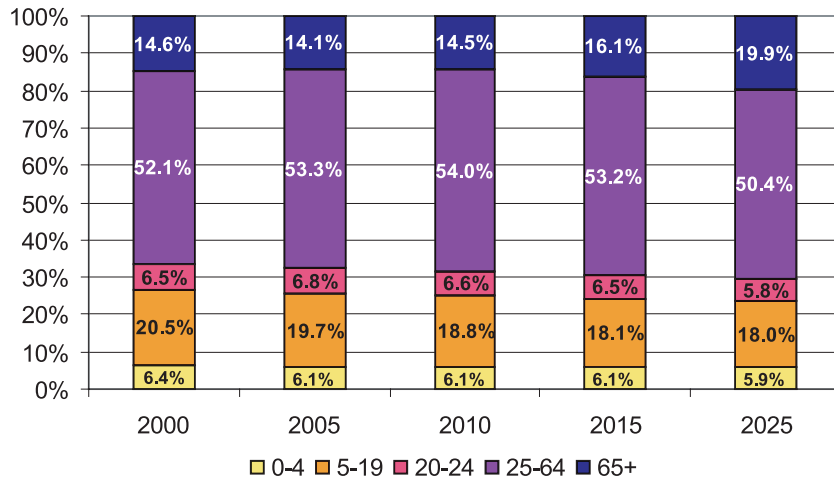
Compared with trends of the previous decade, our forecasts for population growth in the next ten years indicate that moderate growth will occur. In the past, metropolitan Portland-Vancouver has thrived in good times and, except for dra-

matic shifts in the regional economy in the 1980s, has survived fairly well in bad times. Despite currently higher unemployment rates, little evidence exists that the metropolitan area has lost its favored status among West Coast metropolitan areas for future continued moderate population growth.

**NOTE**

The Population Research Center provides a research and teaching focus for the investigation of the causes and consequences of demographic change, with a special focus on Oregon and its counties and cities. The Center houses the Oregon State Data Center, the lead agency in Oregon for contact and collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau and for dissemination of census data and documents. The Center is also responsible for developing state and local population estimates and projections. Staff at the Population Research Center hold academic appointments in the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University, where a large portion of their activities are directed toward the production, analysis, and dissemination of population information, such as school enrollment forecasts, survey research on population issues, and social and economic factors affecting demographic change. For more information regarding the Center and the U.S. Census Bureau, please see [www.upa.pdx.edu/CPRC/](http://www.upa.pdx.edu/CPRC/) and [www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/).

**Figure 11. Oregon’s age composition will change in the coming decades.**



Source: State of Oregon, Office of Economic Analysis and Metro, Portland, Oregon