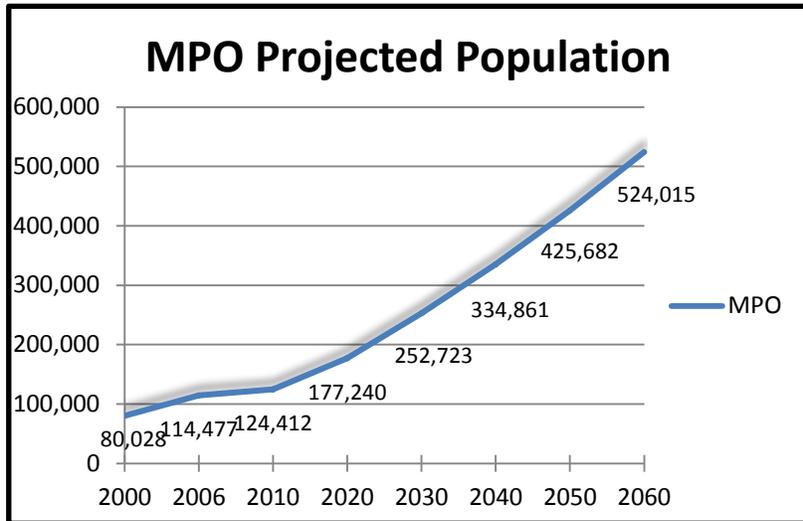


Chapter 2 –Need and Purpose

According to the U.S. Census, the 2013 estimated population of Washington County, Utah is 147,800 people. According to the Utah Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED), the Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization (Dixie MPO) population is expected to grow to over 177,000 by 2020; to over 252,700 by 2030; and to 334,800 by 2040.



This 2015-2040 Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan outlines how various jurisdictions within the Dixie MPO intend to meet the area’s transportation demands and needs over the next 25 years. The area has many geographical features (hills, bluffs, and rivers) that challenge the circulation of people and freight and the creation of various transportation systems. The area is also habitat to threatened and endangered plant and wildlife species and is governed by county, state, and federal regulations.

The expected population growth coupled with the community’s desire to retain mobility for people, goods, and services defines the need for this plan. This plan’s purpose is to outline how these needs could be addressed over the next 25 years with consideration of geography, environment, socioeconomic trends, and anticipated transportation demand (needs).

The Dixie MPO encompasses the U.S. Census Bureau defined St. George Urbanized Area and the Hurricane Urbanizing Area. The Dixie MPO planning boundary includes the cities of Hurricane, Ivins, LaVerkin, Leeds, Santa Clara, St. George, Toquerville, and Washington and immediately adjacent sections of unincorporated Washington County in southwestern Utah as illustrated in the planning boundary Map #2 in Appendix A.

The Dixie MPO was designated by the Governor September 20, 2002. In compliance with federal guidelines the Dixie MPO develops and approves processes and procedures for conducting long range planning, identifying proposed transportation projects for consideration in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and social, economic and environmental implications of the regional transportation system and the traffic growth being experienced and anticipated in the future.

On July 6, 2012, the President of the United States signed P.L. 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).. The \$105 billion law reauthorized federal surface transportation programs through (FY) 2013 and 2014. The reauthorization has persisted through May 2015 through continuing resolutions. Reauthorization of a similar transportation bill is anticipated soon, but not in time for consideration in this plan.

MAP-21 Transforms the framework for investments to guide the growth and development of the country’s vital transportation infrastructure. MAP-21 continues to focus on safety and security, and

requirements for public participation. The law also includes key transit and environmental requirements with an emphasis toward developing transportation alternatives ranging from passenger rail and transit to bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Common to MAP-21 and previous Acts, is the consideration in the planning process of broad based requirements or issues. MAP-21 identifies the following goals:

1. Leverage \$1.75 billion of the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan program funds into \$34 billion in private sector and other investments for transportation projects.
2. Develop a new transit safety program to assure safety on buses, subways, streetcar, and light-rail systems.
3. Step up safety efforts, including the fight against distracted driving, and to improve truck and motor coach safety.
4. Consolidate highway and transit programs, eliminating duplicate or outdated programs.