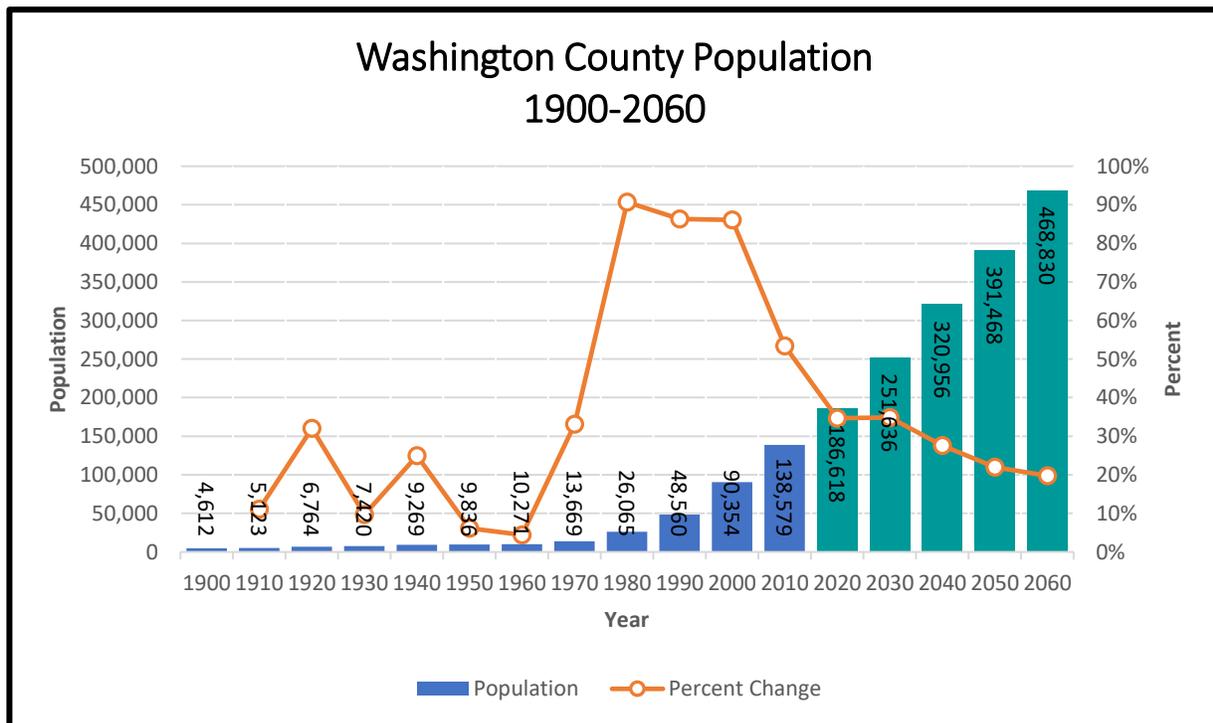


Chapter 2 – Need and Purpose

According to the U.S. Census, the 2018 estimated population of Washington County, Utah is 171,600 people. That population is expected to grow to 251,600 by 2030; and to 321,000 by 2040 and to 391,500 by 2050 according to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute and the Utah State Governors’ Office of Management and Budget.

As the population continues to grow, so too will the demand for transportation facilities and services.

This 2019-2050 Regional Transportation Plan outlines how various jurisdictions within the Dixie MPO intend to meet the area’s transportation demands and needs over the next 30 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 30 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 B.

The Dixie MPO was designated by the Governor of Utah on 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 December 4, 2015, President Obama signed Public Law 114-94, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). The FAST Act funds surface transportation programs—including, but not limited to, Federal-aid highways—at over \$305 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2016 through 2020. It is the first long-term surface transportation authorization enacted in a decade that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation.

Setting the course for transportation investment in highways, the FAST Act establishes and funds new programs to support critical transportation projects to ease congestion and facilitate the movement of freight on the Interstate System and other major roads. Examples include developing a new National Multimodal Freight Policy, apportioning funding through a new National Highway Freight Program, and authorizing a new discretionary grant program for Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (FASTLANE Grants).

The FAST Act authorizes \$226.3 billion in Federal funding for FY 2016 through 2020 for road, bridge, bicycling, and walking improvements. In addition, the FAST Act includes provisions designed to improve freight movement in support of national goals.

Building on the reforms of MAP-21 and FHWA's Every Day Counts initiative, the FAST Act incorporates changes aimed at ensuring the timely delivery of transportation projects. These changes will improve innovation and efficiency in the development of projects, through the planning and environmental review process, to project delivery.