



REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2050

MOVING SOUTH JERSEY FORWARD

APPENDIX C DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS

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Photo: Ocean City Beach,
Ocean City, New Jersey



MODELLING ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2050

Demographics

Beginning in May 2019, discussions were had between SJTPPO staff and SJTPPO TAC representatives regarding updates to the RTP 2050 demographics. A demographics consultant was hired for the last RTP update, completed in 2016, to forecast demographics out to 2040. The initial plan was to extend the consultant's forecasts out an additional 10 years using a straight-line projection. However, the demographics were found to differ from Census Bureau estimates by a wide margin. According to Census Bureau estimates for 2018, the regional population was approximately 30,000 less than what had been forecasted by the consultant. The Census Bureau was reporting that the population of the region was in decline since 2010, while the consultant forecasted an optimistic growth through 2040. As a result of this discrepancy, SJTPPO proposed the following solution:

Adjust the existing demographics to match the 2018 Census Bureau estimates, and

1. Adopt the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development growth rates moving forward (these growth rates are less optimistic and more closely match the observed trend).
2. This proposal was discussed at the May and July TAC meetings and endorsed by the TAC and Policy Board in September 2019. [Figure 1](#), was included as an exhibit.

Adjustment factors were developed for each county. To determine the adjustment factors, the 2018 Census Bureau estimated population was divided by the 2017 consultant projected population. The adjustment factors were applied to each traffic analysis zone (TAZ) in each county to adjust their population to the 2018 Census estimate.¹ The proportional distribution of population at the municipal level was kept the same. The same growth rates and adjustment factors were applied to both population and employment, as employment estimates were not available from the Census Bureau. It is assumed that workforce participation will remain the same, which the consultant had forecasted.

Following the determination of the adjustment factors, growth factors were applied to the 2018 base year to forecast to 2020, 2030, 2040, and 2050. Growth rates were taken from the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Growth rates were available out to 2034. The 2030-2034 growth rate was continued through 2050 to forecast 2040 and 2050. A very modest population growth was forecasted for Atlantic and Cumberland counties, while a slight decline in population was forecasted for Cape May and Salem counties. These results more closely match the Census trends since 2010.

For external zones in Camden and Gloucester counties, SJTPPO contacted DVRPC and received their most current zonal demographics. An additional set of growth rates was computed and applied based on DVRPC's population forecasts for each of the two external counties.

¹ Loosely based on Census Block Groups, TAZs are the basic unit of geography utilized by SJTPPO's Regional Travel Demand Model. For more information on the SJTDM, see: <https://www.sjtpo.org/model>.

Figure 1 – Comparison of Census Population Estimate, NJ State Projections, and SJTPO 2050 RTP Projections

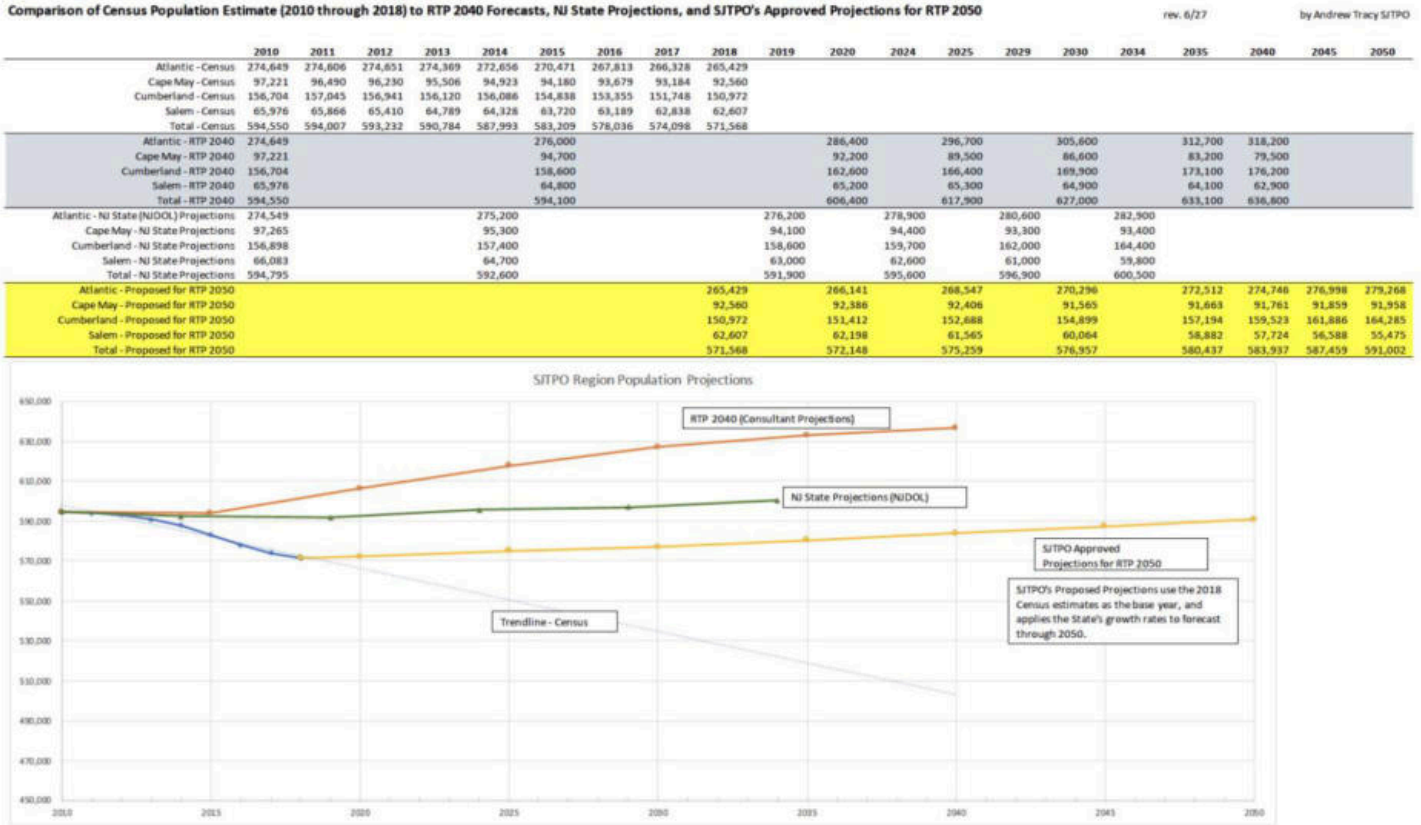


Table 1, below, summarizes the revised population forecasts:

Table 1 RTP 2050 Population Projections

| Population | 2018 (Census est.) | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2045 | 2050 |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Atlantic | 265,429 | 266,141 | 268,547 | 270,296 | 272,512 | 274,746 | 276,998 | 279,268 |
| Cape May | 92,560 | 92,386 | 92,406 | 91,565 | 91,663 | 91,761 | 91,859 | 91,958 |
| Cumberland | 150,972 | 151,412 | 152,688 | 154,899 | 157,194 | 159,523 | 161,886 | 164,285 |
| Salem | 62,607 | 62,198 | 61,565 | 60,064 | 58,882 | 57,724 | 56,588 | 55,475 |
| Total | 571,568 | 572,148 | 575,259 | 576,957 | 580,437 | 583,937 | 587,459 | 591,002 |

Employment Projections

The adjustment factors described above were also applied to total employment in each TAZ. The TAZ's were then aggregated to come up with county employment totals, which are shown in [Table 2](#), below:



Table 2 RTP 2050 Employment Projections

| Employment | 2018* | 2020 | 2030 | 2040 | 2050 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Atlantic | 155,368 | 155,785 | 158,217 | 160,822 | 163,469 |
| Cape May | 62,732 | 62,614 | 62,058 | 62,191 | 62,324 |
| Cumberland | 68,579 | 68,778 | 70,363 | 72,463 | 74,626 |
| Salem | 26,501 | 26,328 | 25,424 | 24,434 | 23,482 |
| Total | 313,180 | 313,505 | 316,062 | 319,910 | 323,901 |

*As Census does not provide employment estimates, this was calculated, from existing 2018 TAZ total employment data.

Seasonal Projections

SJTPO took the consultant’s seasonal projections, as included in the 2040 RTP, and computed the most extreme scenario. The most extreme scenario is the one with the highest number of people. In this case, the extreme scenario is the sum of the Summer Weekend Residents, Visitors, Households, and Employment.

SJTPO interpolated between the consultant’s 2015 and 2020 seasonal projections by county to get projections for 2017. 2017 was when the most recent model scenario occurred, whereas 2018 was the most recent year for which Census estimates were available. An adjustment factor consisting of the year-round RTP 2050 projections, divided by the 2017 base-year RTP 2050 year-round projections was computed for each of the counties in each of the analysis years.

Starting with 2018, these adjustment factors were applied to each of the 4 counties’ 2040 RTP seasonal projections for the 2020, 2030, 2040 and 2050 analysis years to generate revised seasonal numbers for RTP 2050, which are presented in [Table 3](#), below:

Table 3 RTP 2050: Seasonal Projections *

| Seasonal Population | 2018 (Census est.) | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 | 2045 | 2050 |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Atlantic | 716,614 | 718,535 | 725,031 | 729,755 | 735,736 | 741,767 | 747,847 | 753,977 |
| Cape May | 703,922 | 702,598 | 702,753 | 696,352 | 697,098 | 697,846 | 698,594 | 699,342 |
| Cumberland | 199,577 | 200,158 | 201,845 | 204,769 | 207,802 | 210,881 | 214,005 | 217,175 |
| Salem | 84,894 | 84,340 | 83,481 | 81,445 | 79,843 | 78,273 | 76,733 | 75,223 |
| Total | 1,705,006 | 1,705,632 | 1,713,109 | 1,712,321 | 1,720,480 | 1,728,766 | 1,737,178 | 1,745,718 |

*The most extreme case for the seasonal projections is depicted here, consisting of the sum of Summer Weekend Residents, Visitors, Households, and Employment.

For the purposes of regional conformity modeling, minor adjustments to seasonal population are not expected to impact regional VMT.