

Central Massachusetts Regionally Customized Methodology

Central Massachusetts Regionally Customized Socio-Economic Projections Prepared for the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) June 2023.

Introduction

In 2017 and 2018 the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) led a statewide effort supported by the Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) in Massachusetts to develop an updated set of socioeconomic projections. The projections included population, household, and employment projections made for each of the planning regions in ten-year bands out to the horizon year of 2040. MassDOT contracted with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to complete the projections with the assistance of an advisory committee of regional and statewide stakeholders. UMDI's work focused on population and employment trends and projections while MAPC's work focused on housing growth and changes to the labor force. The CMRPC felt that these projections (Vintage 2018) accurately depicted a likely future scenario for the Central Massachusetts Region.

In 2021 MassDOT contracted with UMDI and MAPC to produce a new set of updated projections with a new horizon year of 2050 to aid in the development of the regional Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs) being developed across the state. The CMRPC felt that these projections (2022) did not necessarily reflect an accurate likely future scenario for the Central Massachusetts Region. The projections are made by calculating a regional control total for each region that caps the population setting a ceiling on growth. For the first time, the regional control totals for the Central Massachusetts region were projected to decline between ten-year bands. Additionally, the projections while using the most up-to-date data available are still being heavily impacted by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic such as immigration rates and death rates. Additionally, the 2022 projections do not assign the Worcester area a metric known as "the college fix" which helps account for areas with large college-aged populations even though the Worcester area has a substantial college population. The CMRPC felt it was important to illustrate a possible scenario with a more optimistic but in line with previous projections view of the region that could be used to aid in scenario planning.

The methodologies for the 2022 projections can be found at the following links:

- [Long-Term Population Projections for Massachusetts Municipalities and Regional Planning Areas Methodology](#)
- [Massachusetts State and Regional Employment Projections](#)
- MAPC Allocation Methodologies Placeholder (to be updated upon receipt)

Methodology

To aid the CMMPO staff in scenario planning for the development of the 2024 LRTP and future transportation and land use planning efforts the CMRPC developed a set of regionally customized projections for the Central Massachusetts area.

Since the 2022 projections were a departure from previously realized growth shown in decennial census counts from 1920 – 2020 and past projections staff determined a more optimistic set of projections following past growth rates realized and projected would complement the official statewide projections. Staff calculated what the regional control total would be had the growth rates from the Vintage 2018 projections have been applied to the 2020 Census.

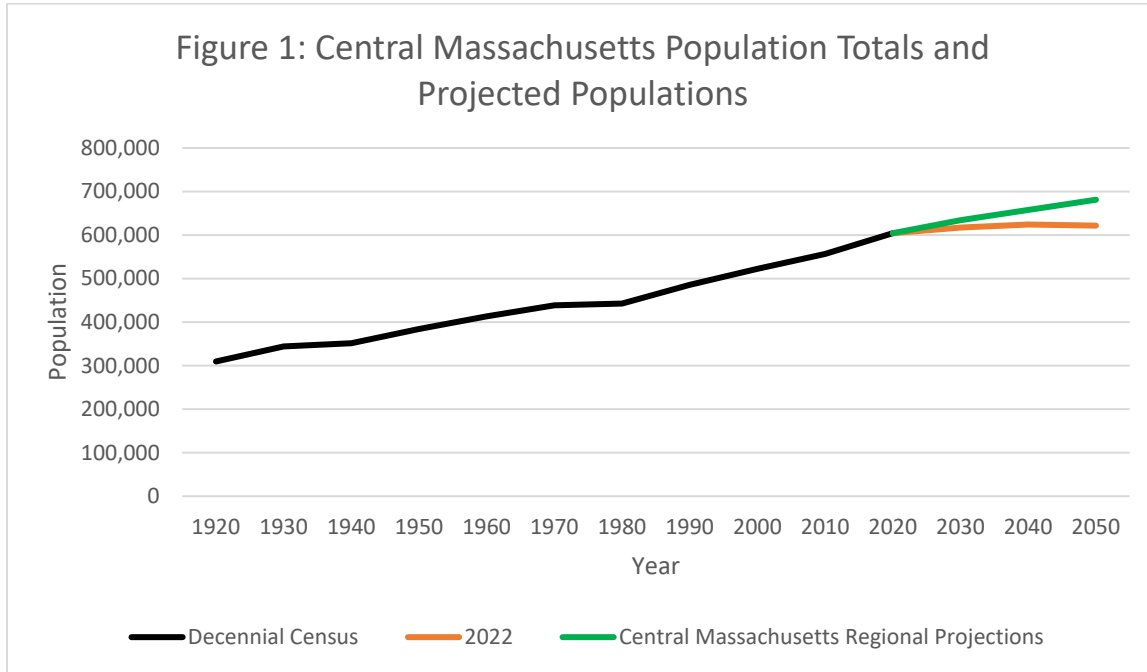


Table 1 lists the regional control totals for both the 2022 and the Central Massachusetts Regional Projections.

Year	2020	2030	2040	2050
2022	604,631	617,353	642,210	621,469
CMRPC Regional	604,631	634,271	657,750	681,229

The forecast year projections at the community level were prepared by re-scaling the 2022 community allocations prepared by MAPC to match the higher CMRPC control totals. Thus, the process considered how MAPC’s community forecasts reflected how growth in neighboring regions to CMRPC, impact growth in Central Massachusetts.

To account for group quarters population which was not fully considered in the MAPC allocation the CMRPC calculated the ratio of group quarters population to total population for each community in the Vintage 2018 projections for the horizon year 2040. This rate was then applied to each of the 2022 projections years to project the total population (household and group quarters) for each community in the CMRPC region.