

Portland region grows to 2.35 million residents, Census estimates, with newcomers leading the way

By Nick Christensen

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Mar 26, 2015 11:43am You don't have to travel far around the Portland metro area to see a bunch of out-of-state license plates. New estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, explain why.

Portland Metropolitan Area

2014 pop: 2,348,247 (2,314,747 in 2013)

Domestic migration: 16,329 (7,901)

Int'l migration: 5,583 (5,280)

Natural growth: 11,161 (11,607)

Multnomah County

2014 population: 776,712 (766,082)

Domestic migration: 4,728 (1,113)

Int'l migration: 2,407 (2,390)

Natural growth: 3,665 (3,719)

Washington County

2014 population: 562,998 (555,547)

Domestic migration: 1,485 (1,601)

Int'l migration: 1,913 (1,898)

Natural growth: 4,106 (4,100)

Clark County

2014 population: 451,008 (443,312)

Domestic migration: 4,440 (2,644)

Int'l migration: 683 (686)

Natural growth: 2,173 (2,363)

Clackamas County

2014 population: 394,972 (388,457)

Domestic migration: 4,958 (3,333)

Int'l migration: 451 (445)

Natural growth: 857 (877)

Portland's growth surged from 2013 to 2014, the Census Bureau said Wednesday, with the seven-county metropolitan area's population rising to an estimated 2.35 million. Portland's growth was 15th-fastest among the country's 50 largest metro areas.

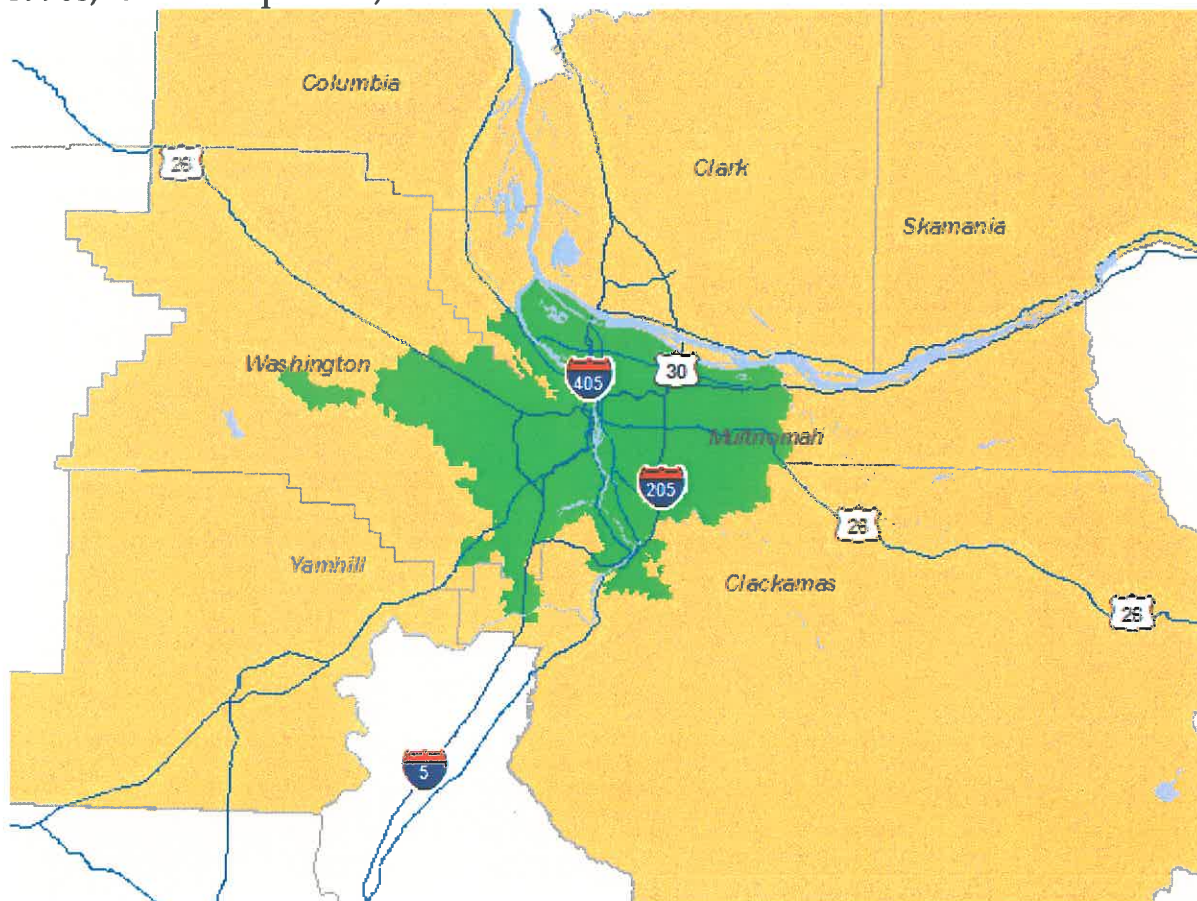
Nearly half of the growth of 33,500 residents came from domestic migration – people moving to the metropolitan area from other parts of the United States. Another 15 percent moved

here from outside the United States, the Census said. In fact, the Portland metro had the 10th-highest rate of domestic migration out of the 50 largest urban areas, the Census Bureau estimated. That domestic migration rate of 49 percent was the highest this decade.

More than 16,000 people moved to the Portland metro from the rest of the country, ranking 11th among big cities. The Census-defined Portland metropolitan area includes Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Columbia and Yamhill counties in Oregon, and Clark and Skamania counties in Washington.

Clackamas County experienced the fastest growth rate in the Portland region from 2013 to 2014, the Census Bureau estimated, with 6,515 new residents and 1.67 percent growth. That made it the 97th-fastest growing of the 591 American counties with more than 100,000 residents. Multnomah County registered more than 10,000 new residents, growing to an estimated population of 776,712, the Census Bureau said.

This isn't the fastest growth the region has experienced, said Risa Proehl, population estimates manager at the Portland State University Population Research Center. "During the 1970s, the average annual population growth in the 7-county area was 2.2 percent; in the 1990s, it was 2.4 percent," Proehl said.



The Portland Metro UGB (in green) is only a portion of the U.S. Census Bureau's 7-county Portland metropolitan statistical area (orange). About 1.5 million of the region's estimated 2.3 million residents live within the UGB.

Since 2010, an estimated 116,168 people have moved to the Portland metropolitan area, more than the population of Gresham. That's a 5.2 percent growth rate from 2010 to 2014 – the 20th-fastest in the country among big cities, and fourth-fastest outside the Sun Belt. The Denver, Washington, Seattle and Salt Lake City metro areas grew faster in that time.

The estimates come as the Metro Council reviews the regional urban growth boundary, to see if it has enough land to accommodate 20 years of growth. They also come amid growing concerns about the costs of growth, as neighborhoods in inner Portland experience business growth and increased density, and cities on the edge struggle with how to pay for new infrastructure.

"This population growth speaks to the attractiveness of our region's communities as places to live and work," said Ted Reid, a Metro planner who works extensively on growth management. "With two-thirds of the growth coming from people moving here from elsewhere, this is right in line with our long-term forecast. The challenge that we have is to improve people's quality of life as the population grows. More than ever, there's a need to plan ahead."

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