

REGION 7W DESCRIPTION

Demographics

Region 7W is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. The region's close proximity to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA) has spurred growth in Region 7W. Continued growth will lead to an increased demand for transportation services.

The 2000 census showed that the region had a total population of 217,341 compared to 167,673 in 1990. **Table 1** shows the population change for Region 7W and the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area. Region 7W grew by 29.6 percent between 1990 and 2000 compared to a growth rate of 13.6 percent for the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area. In comparison, the state of Minnesota had a 12.4 percent rate of growth during this period (Moving Minnesota 2002, 2003). Sherburne County reported the largest percentage increase in population between 1990 and 2000, with an increase of 53.6 percent. Stearns County has the largest population with a 2000 count of 133,166. Population estimates for 2003 show that Region 7W is continuing to grow with an estimated change in the population of 11.0 percent between 2000 and 2003.

Table 2 shows the Region 7W age distribution for 1990 and 2000. In the year 2000, the majority of the population was in the 30-39 year old age group with 17.2 percent of the total. This was followed closely by the number of persons in the 40-49 year old age group with 15.2 percent of the total. The largest percentage increase between 1990 and 2000 was 64.6 percent for the 50-59 year old age group. Persons in the 40-49 year old age group showed a substantial increase with a change of 64.4 percent over the 10-year period. The only age group to show a decline was the 25-29 year old group with a 3.6 percent decrease. Growth in the number of older people in Region 7W is expected to continue into the future. **Figure 2** shows the projected change in population distribution by age between 2000 and 2030 for the Region 7W counties. All age groups 55 and older are projected to double in population in the next 25 years.

The age of Region 7W's population affects the demand for various transportation services. An increase in the number of households with children will influence the number of automobile trips. An increase in the number of older persons age 65 and older will most likely increase the demand for transit services. Region 7W's population is aging, but there is still substantial growth in the number of children in the various age groups. The overall trend in the age distribution is that the population of Region 7W will grow older, which will impact future transportation needs in Region 7W.

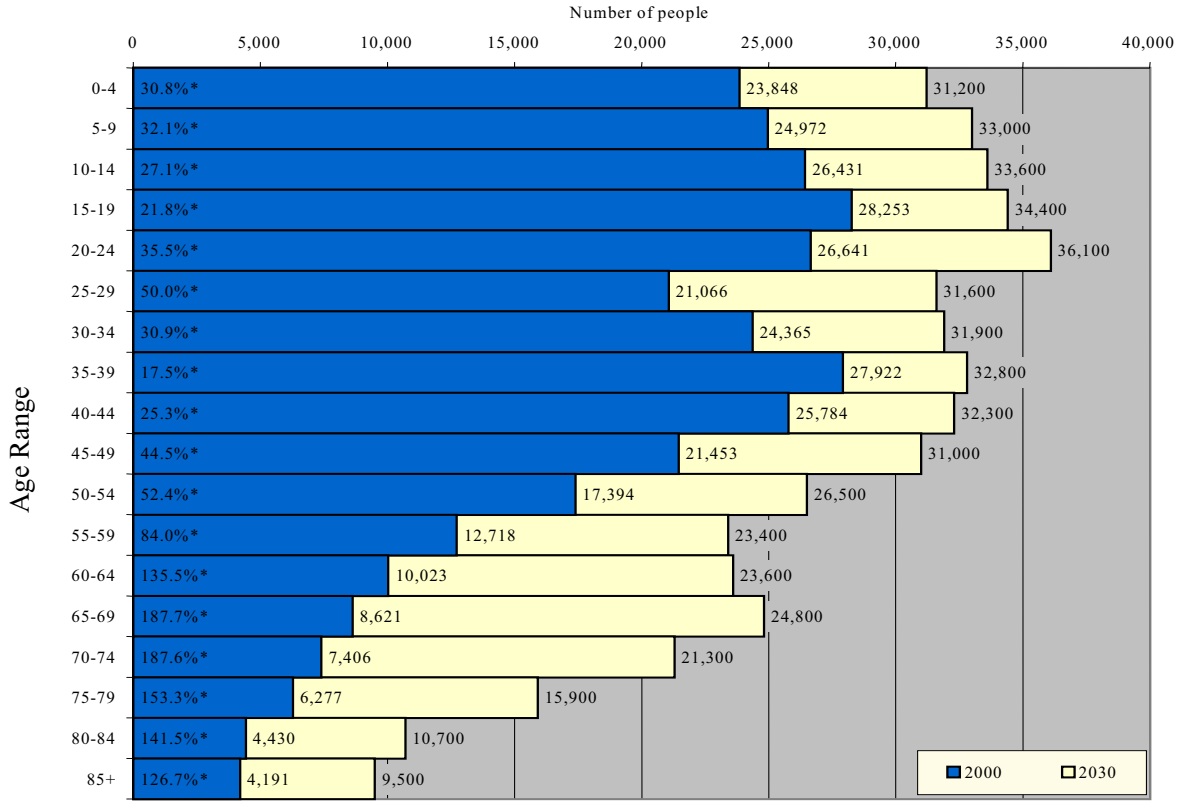
Table 1
Region 7W
1990 - 2003 Population Change

County	LOCATION		POPULATION			POPULATION CHANGE			
	Minor Civil Division	1990 Census	2000 Census	2003 Estimate ¹	1990-2000 Pop. Change	2000-2003 Pop. Change	1990-2000 % Change	2000-2003 % Change	
Multi-County City	Sartell city	5,409	9,641	11,583	4,232	1,942	78.2%	20.1%	
Benton	Sauk Rapids city	7,825	10,213	11,690	2,388	1,477	30.5%	14.5%	
Multi-County City	St. Cloud city	48,812	59,107	62,850	10,295	3,743	21.1%	6.3%	
Stearns	St. Joseph city	3,294	4,681	5,119	1,387	438	42.1%	9.4%	
Stearns	Waite Park city	5,020	6,568	6,696	1,548	128	30.8%	1.9%	
Benton	Minden township	1,900	1,790	1,719	-110	-71	-5.8%	-4.0%	
Benton	Sauk Rapids township	852	723	714	-129	-9	-15.1%	-1.2%	
Sherburne	Haven township	1,921	2,024	2,111	103	87	5.4%	4.3%	
Stearns	Le Sauk township	2,157	1,880	1,668	-277	-212	-12.8%	-11.3%	
Stearns	St. Augusta (city)	2,657	3,065	2,637	408	-428	15.4%	-14.0%	
Stearns	St. Cloud township	7,549	0	N/A	-7,549	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Stearns	St. Joseph township	2,567	2,449	2,227	-118	-222	-4.6%	-9.1%	
Stearns	St. Wendel township	1,995	2,313	2,254	318	-59	15.9%	-2.6%	
St. Cloud Metro		91,958	104,454	111,268	12,496	6,814	13.6%	6.5%	
Region 7W (-)		167,673	217,341	241,252	49,668	23,911	29.6%	11.0%	
Benton		30,185	34,226	36,970	4,041	2,744	13.4%	8.0%	
Sherburne		41,945	64,417	74,763	22,472	10,346	53.6%	16.1%	
Stearns		118,791	133,166	137,777	14,375	4,611	12.1%	3.5%	
Wright		68,710	89,986	103,010	21,276	13,024	31.0%	14.5%	
TOTAL		259,631	321,795	352,520	62,164	30,725	23.9%	9.5%	

DATANET

11/29/2004

**Figure 2
Region 7W
2000 and 2030 (Projected) Population Distribution by Age**



* Note, these percentages are the 2000-2030 percent change for the age range in the Region 7W counties.

Source: 2000 US Census. State Demographer.

Table 2
Region 7W
1990 - 2000 Population By Age

Age	1990		2000		Percent Change
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total	
4 and under	14,602	8.7	17,345	8.0	18.8
5-9	16,563	9.9	18,361	8.4	10.9
10-14	15,508	9.2	19,356	8.9	24.8
15 - 19	13,220	7.9	18,033	8.3	36.4
20 - 24	10,237	6.1	11,776	5.4	15.0
25 - 29	13,795	8.2	13,292	6.1	-3.6
30 - 39	28,032	16.7	37,291	17.2	33.0
40 - 49	20,148	12.0	33,127	15.2	64.4
50 - 59	12,795	7.6	21,057	9.7	64.6
60 - 64	5,473	3.3	7,144	3.3	30.5
65 - 69	5,153	3.1	5,848	2.7	13.5
70 - 79	7,775	4.6	9,160	4.2	17.8
80 and over	4,374	2.6	5,551	2.6	26.9
Total Population	167,675	100.0	217,341	100.0	29.6

Source: DATANET

Households

Growth in the number of households occurred at a faster rate in Region 7W than in Minnesota. **Table 3** shows the change in the number of households for Region 7W between 1990 and 2000. Fast-growing Region 7W saw the number of households increase by 35 percent to almost 75,000 households. In comparison, Minnesota had a 15.0 percent increase in the number of households. The average household size in Region 7W declined from 3.02 persons per household in 1990 to 2.90 persons per household in 2000. Sherburne County ranked first in average household size (2.91) and Wright County ranked fourth (2.83) in the state. Generally, household sizes are largest in areas that attract the most families with children. Even so, the number of households with children declined from 47 percent in 1990 to 44 percent of all households in 2000.

**Table 3
Region 7W
1990 - 2000
Number of Households**

	1990	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total	1990-2000	
					Change	Percent
Households	55,487	100.0	74,841	100.0	19,354	34.9
With Children	25,794	46.5	32,975	44.1	7,181	27.8
Persons per Household	3.02		2.90		-0.12	<1

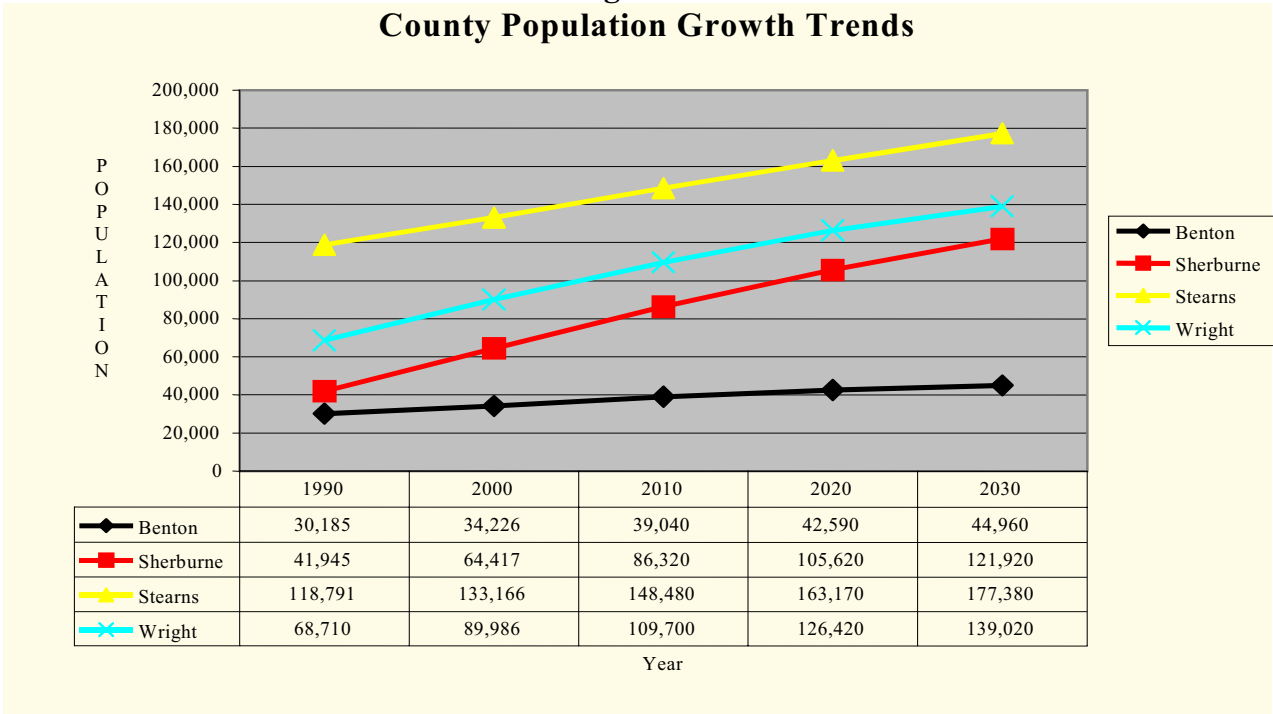
Source: DATANET

Population Projections

Region 7W's population is expected to continue to grow into the future. **Figure 3** shows 1990 and 2000 census numbers and population projections through the year 2030. Region 7W counties are projected to grow by 50 percent between 2000 and 2030 with an increase in population of 161,485. Population projections have typically underestimated growth in areas that are rapidly growing, so these projections are probably conservative.

**Figure 3
Region 7W**

County Population Growth Trends



Economics

Employment

Employment increased in Region 7W between 1990 and 2000 by over 50 percent from 80,098 to 121,552. Employment grew substantially faster than the population of the area. **Table 4** shows a summary of the change in employment in Region 7W between 1990 and 2000.

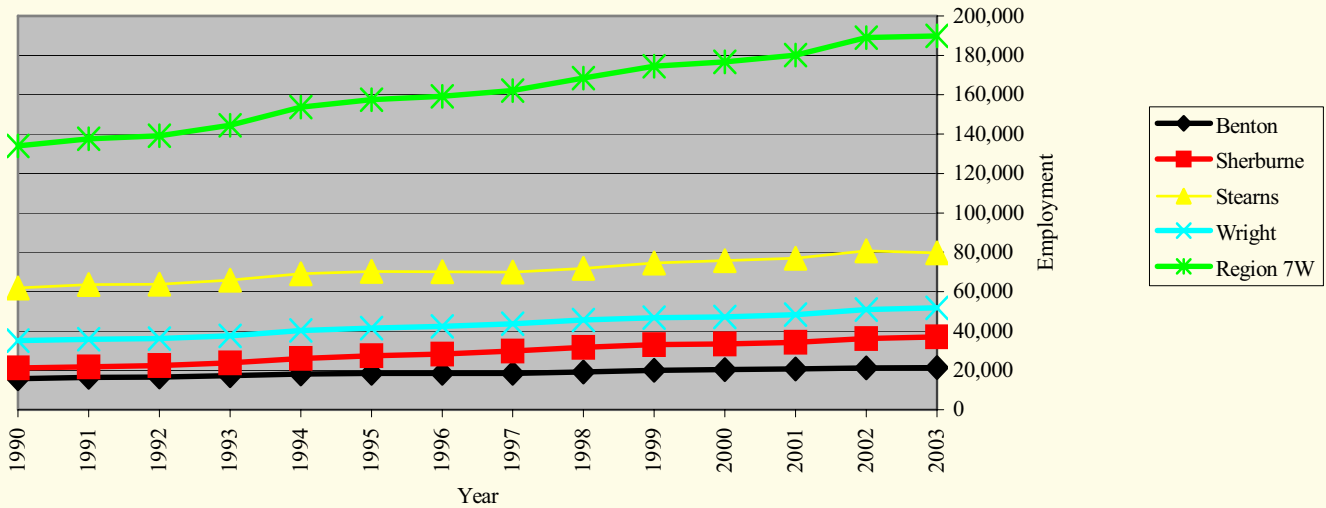
Table 4
Region 7W
1990 - 2000 Employment

	1990	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total	Percent Change
Population 16 and Over	118,191	100.0	166,652	100.0	41.0
In Labor Force	91,297	77.2	125,273	75.2	37.2
Not in Labor Force	26,894	22.8	41,379	24.8	53.9
Employed	80,098	67.8	121,552	72.9	51.8

Source: DATANET

Change in employment between 1990 and 2003 for the Region 7W counties, including the St. Cloud Metro Area is shown in **Figure 4**. During the period between 1990 and 2003, Sherburne County had the greatest percentage increase with a growth in employment by 74.7 percent. Stearns County has the most people employed with almost 80,000, but only grew by 29.0 percent during the 14-year period. Overall employment grew for Region 7W counties between 1990 and 2003.

Figure 4
Region 7W
1990 - 2003 Employment by County



According to the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, the Central Minnesota Region, which includes Regions 6E, 7W, and 7E, is a net exporter of workers. This means that there are more working residents than jobs in the Central Minnesota region. **Table 5** shows the difference between the number of workers and the number of jobs in the Region 7W counties in 2000. It shows that Stearns County had 9,700 more jobs than workers. The county is a net importer of workers due to the fact that St. Cloud is a regional trade center. Benton, Sherburne and Wright Counties are net exporters of workers. Sherburne and Wright counties have 13,000 and 15,000 more workers than jobs, respectively. This is probably because of their proximity to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The impact of the net export of workers in the Region 7W is that the number of workers commuting to the Twin Cities will continue to increase, impacting the Region's transportation system.

Table 5
Region 7W
2000 Import and Export of Workers

County	Number of Workers*	Number of Jobs	Difference
Benton	17,658	13,790	3,868
Sherburne	32,154	19,089	13,065
Stearns	66,584	76,285	-9,701
Wright	44,278	28,833	15,445

- Excludes self-employed and unpaid family workers

Source: 2000 Census and MDES, Covered Employment and Wages (ES-202)

Commuting Patterns

County-to-county worker flows can be examined to identify commuting patterns in an area. According to the 2000 census, suburban counties adjacent to the Minneapolis and St. Paul area have the lowest percentages of residents who work in their county of residence. Sherburne County has the lowest percentage of residents who live and work in the same county (32.2 percent). In order to provide a regional perspective, regional commuting flows can be analyzed. Census data on commuting work flows show a continuing trend for Minnesotans to work further away from where they live. **Table 6** shows a comparison of the percentage of residents living and working in the same region. It shows that only 72.6 percent of the residents work in Region 7W, which equates to a net outflow of 28,141 workers who are commuting outside the region to work. The vast majority of workers from 7W (34,212) are commuting to the Twin Cities Metro area. In each census since 1970, the percentage of people that live and work in the same county has decreased substantially. This trend is expected to continue, which will increase traffic volumes on both the state and local road system.

Table 6
Region 7W
2000
Percent of Workers in Each Minnesota Region
Who Live Within the Region

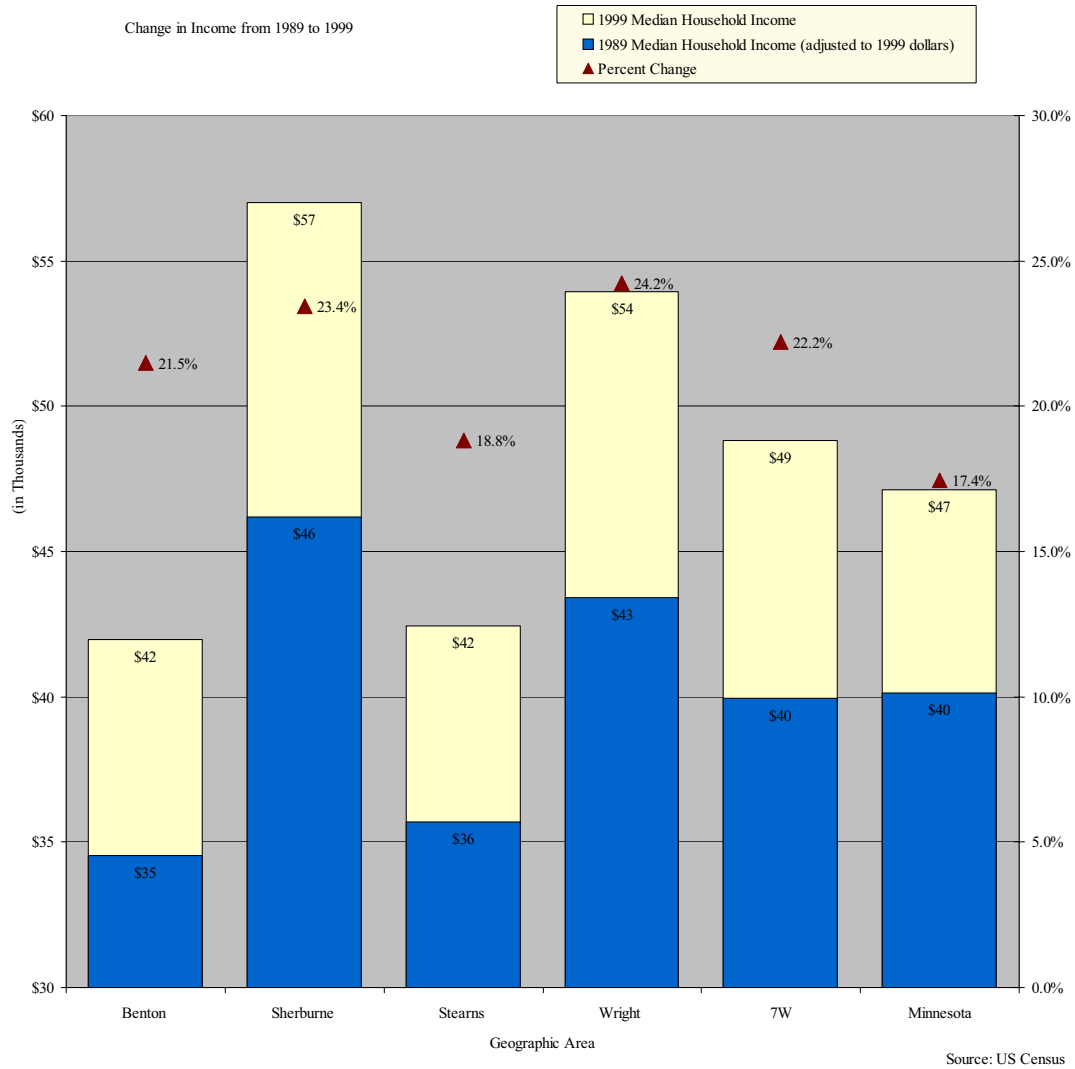
Region	Residents Working In Region	Residents Working Outside Region	Non-Residents Working in Region	Percent of Residents Working in Region	Net Flow	Rate of Flow per 100 Workers	Ratio of Worker In-Flow to Worker Out-Flow
1 – Northwest	40,950	5,943	3,970	85.5	-1,973	-4.2	0.7
2 – Headwaters	33,251	4,392	3,461	86.8	-931	-2.5	0.8
3 – Arrowhead	145,432	8,351	9,677	94.3	1,326	0.9	1.2
4 – West Central	99,551	21,301	10,424	78.6	-10,877	-9.0	0.5
5 – North Central	68,375	10,458	6,291	84.7	-4,167	-5.3	0.6
6E – Mid-MN	58,075	9,834	6,709	83.1	-3,125	-4.6	0.7
6W – Upper MN Valley	22,761	3,657	2,106	83.9	-1,551	-5.9	0.6
7E – East Central	65,883	28,843	8,781	56.2	-20,062	-21.2	0.3
7W – Central	171,125	46,854	18,713	72.6	-28,141	-12.9	0.4
8 – Southwest	59,698	4,689	4,905	92.1	216	0.3	1.0
9 – South Central	115,221	12,575	5,901	89.1	-6,674	-5.2	0.5
10 – Southeast	236,070	21,373	18,600	90.9	-2,773	-1.1	0.9
11 – Twin Cities	1,416,118	26,064	121,891	98.2	95,827	6.6	4.7

Source: 2000 Censuses County-to-County Worker Flow Files

Income

Median household incomes in the Region 7W counties increased substantially between 1989 and 1999 as shown in **Figure 5**. The median income rose by about \$9,000 from 1989 to 1999. Additionally, 7W's median income is higher than the state's median income. Sherburne and Wright counties have the highest median incomes in rural Minnesota. As indicated earlier, this is probably due to the fact that many Region 7W residents work in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area where incomes are higher.

Figure 5
Region 7W
Median Household Incomes



Land Use

Existing Land Use

Growth is occurring in regional trade centers and along major corridors of I-94, Highway 10, Highway 55 and Highway 169. Both commercial and residential growth is occurring along the major highways in Region 7W. **Figure 6** shows 1990 land use. As growth continues in population, housing and commercial businesses, traffic volumes will increase throughout Region 7W.

Future Land Use

All Region 7W counties have completed comprehensive plans within the last 10 years. Wright County has the oldest comprehensive plan, which was adopted in 1988. Both Benton and Sherburne counties updated their plans in 2004. Stearns County adopted their current comprehensive plan in 1998. **Appendix A** includes the land use plans for all four counties. The plans show expanded urban, commercial, and residential areas along major corridors on both the state and local road system. Growth of urban and commercial areas along the major corridors of I-94, Highway 10, Highway 55, and Highway 169 as well as major county and city roads is expected to continue, creating increased traffic volumes.