

Growth Assumptions

Since levels of service (LOS) are based on population for the majority of services, it is necessary to understand just how much the population of unincorporated Spokane County may grow over the planning period. Per RCW 43.62.035, the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) provides each county with a population forecast range. The County chooses a population growth rate within this range and then allocates (or distributes) the population to the municipalities within its jurisdiction. The Board of Commissioners for Spokane County adopted a population forecast for planning purposes on August 3, 2017 (BCC Resolution 2016-0553). The forecast used the Office of Financial Management’s medium forecast for Spokane County.

On April 1, 2021, the Office of Financial Management estimated a population of 159,560 for unincorporated Spokane County, which is an increase of 1,036 from the 2020 census. The CFP assumes the same growth rate to project population for 2023 to 161,652. High, medium, and low population forecasts from 2022 through 2037 for the purposes of this CFP are shown in Table 1. This CFP assumes the medium forecast, calculated to be an average annual growth rate of .781 for unincorporated Spokane County.

Table 1: Population Projections

	2020 Population Census	2023 Population Estimate ¹	LOW 2037 Population Projection ²	MEDIUM 2037 Population Projection ³	HIGH 2037 Population Projection ⁴
Spokane County	539,339	549,209	583,409	612,404	685,786
Unincorporated Spokane County	158,524	161,652	176,780	180,252	201,852
Cities and Towns	380,815	387,556	406,629	432,152	483,934

The CFP initially adopted in 2018 assumed a similar growth rate but showed an unincorporated county population of 3,472 lower than the medium projection incorporated into this plan. This is because population between 2018 and 2021 grew at a faster rate than was initially forecast. The population projections in Table 1 employ a range of annual average growth rates, similar to those included in earlier planning studies.

¹ Based off growth rate between 2020 Census and the 2021 Estimate provided by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) on April 1, 2021.

² Assumes the same growth projection to 2037 as determined by the Board of Commissioners for Spokane County on August 3, 2017 (BCC Resolution 2016-0553).

³ Assumes the previous annual average growth rate established for 2017-2037 of .781

⁴ Assumes the annual average growth rate from 2017-2023 of 1.599