

# CHAPTER 5

## Population



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## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines population and demographic trends and forecasts of population changes that may affect land uses supported by this master plan through 2040. The content of this chapter will enable the County to develop policies and plan for the needs of existing and future populations. It also provides a base from which other elements of this master plan, such as housing and economic development, may be formulated.

Many changes have taken place in Storey County since adoption of the 1994 Master Plan. Storey County's past industries including brothels, mining, and tourism are now shadowed by massive growth in manufacturing, distribution, technology, and associated commercial enterprises. While Storey County remains rural, it has become a major economic player in the State of Nevada and in the western United States. This is largely due to the expansion of the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center, which has become an economic hub attracting employment and residents to the area.

Over the past two decades, economic expansion in Storey County and western Nevada resulted in substantial population growth in the county. Shifts in population distribution and demographics in the county have also occurred. Once concentrated in Gold Hill and Virginia City, the county's population is now distributed almost equally throughout half of its land mass.

Population and demographic trends identified in the past two decades are expected to continue. However, as economic growth and employment opportunities increase, the potential for deviation in past trends may become a growing element affecting land use planning. Regardless of trend changes that may occur, economic, social, and ecological responsibility and sustainability will remain at the forefront in determining the rate and pattern of population growth in the county.

With the completion of a Housing Needs Assessment and with a County focus on providing suitable areas for potential additional housing to balance with the increase of developed industrial properties, the population and demographic trends may change significantly in the future. For this master plan update, this chapter is assessing what has happened in the past, where the county stands at the moment, and what the near future may bring. Projections for population at this time are based on the existing trends of population and demographics, with data provided by the US Census Bureau and Nevada State Demographer (see Appendix F for State Demographer projections). If new housing tracts come to fruition, it would be appropriate to analyze this topic more thoroughly in future Master Plan updates.

## 5.2 Population & Demographic Trends

### 5.2.1 Population Trends

Similar to other "boom-and-bust" mining towns in Nevada, Storey County's early history was marked by volatile population swings. Following the mining bonanza in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the county's population steadily declined. Between the 1920s and 1940s, nearly half of its population was lost, and by 1960 it had decreased to a mere 568 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 1960). This trend continued through most of the 1970s.

By the 1980s, the county population stabilized and began to trend upward. Consistent positive growth was seen in the 1990s. From 1980 to 2000, the county’s population grew 126 percent from 1,503 to 3,399 residents. Substantial growth was also seen in the following decade, especially between 2004 and 2007 when western Nevada, during the “housing-boom,” experienced an influx of new residents arriving other states. Table 5.2-1 lists data indicating the upward population trend and Figure 5.2-1 illustrates the outlier that represents the upsurge. Following the downturn of the national economy beginning in 2007, the county’s rate of population decreased from the brief peak period. From 2010 to 2022, the county’s population remained relatively stable, increasing slightly by approximately 2 percent over the period.

**Table 5.2-1: County & Regional Population Estimates**

Year	County & Regional Population					Percent Change
	2000	2010	2015	2020	2022	
Storey County	3,399	4,016	3,929	4,086	4,095	20.48
Carson City	52,457	55,375	54,482	55,244	58,249	11.04
Douglas County	41,259	47,042	47,259	48,486	49,476	19.91
Lyon County	34,501	51,515	51,657	55,667	59,435	72.27
Washoe County	339,486	422,528	446,903	486,492	496,745	46.32

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2022 American Community Survey: DP05 ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census: DP1: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics.

**Figure 5.2-1: Percent Change of County Population 2000-2022**

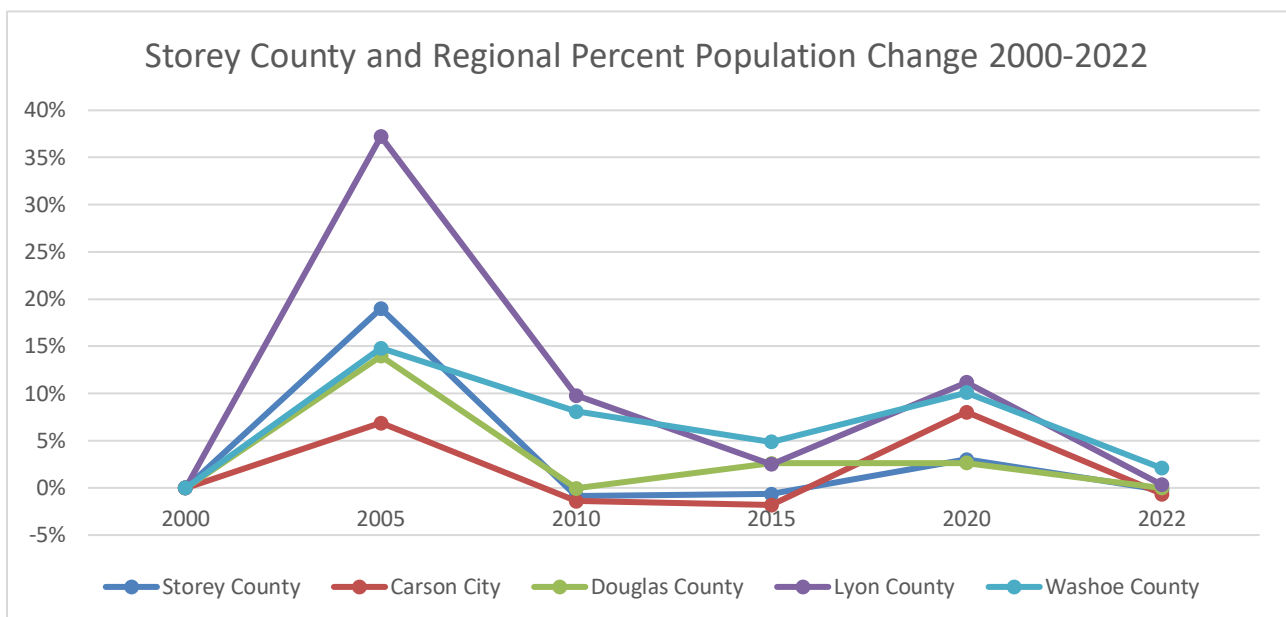
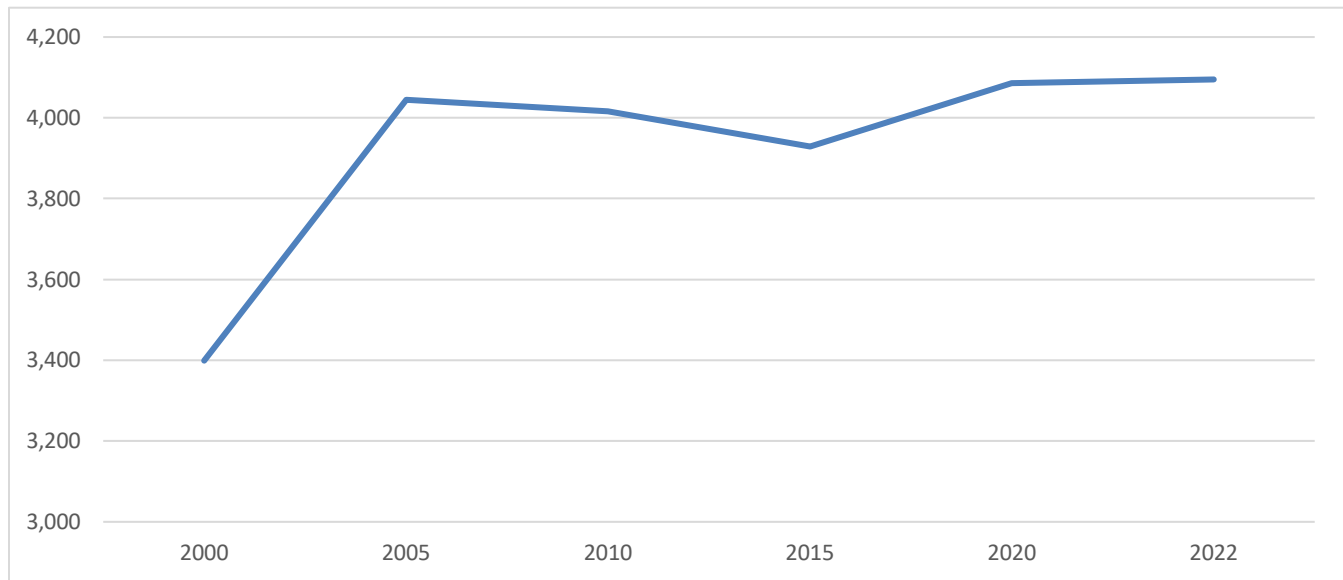


Figure 5.2-2: Storey County Population 2000-2022



## 5.2.2 Growth Pattern

Substantial residential growth occurred in Storey County over the past three decades. Through good land use planning policy and practices, conformance with the master plan, and strong leadership, Storey County allowed sustainable residential and commercial development to occur while preventing encroachment of suburban sprawl from its growing neighbors.

Between 2000 and 2023, Storey County's population increased 20.48 percent. The county's growth was 15.84 percent lower than the increase experienced in Washoe County. Lyon County was the outlier in the region, which experienced a population growth of approximately 72.27 percent during that same period; this increase was 51.79 percent higher than the increase of Storey County.

Storey County recognizes the need to maintain a sustainable future for its residents, employees, businesses, and natural environment. When forecasting potential residential growth, the availability of water, geographic constraints (particularly the topography of the region), transportation interconnection, of public services, and local and regional sustainability will be at the forefront of planning policy and decision making. Conforming to best development practices will ensure a sustainable future and enhance services and quality of life in the county's existing towns and population centers.

## 5.2.3 Population Distribution

Table 5.2.2 lists U.S. Census Bureau and Nevada State Demographer's Office reported population trends for Storey County and its two unincorporated towns, Gold Hill and Virginia City. Population estimates for the county's remaining communities were derived by multiplying the number of dwellings therein by the average county household size.

Most growth between 1994 and 2024 occurred as in-fill within the county's existing communities. Lockwood had the highest percentage growth in the county between 1994 and 2005. This trend sharply dropped off after 2005 with the build-out of the Rainbow Bend residential planned unit development.

Substantial growth was seen in the Highlands between 2000 and 2023. Virginia City, Lockwood, and Mark Twain populations remained relatively consistent during this period. As housing units did not significantly change in these areas, the decrease is assumed to be related to household size and an aging population.

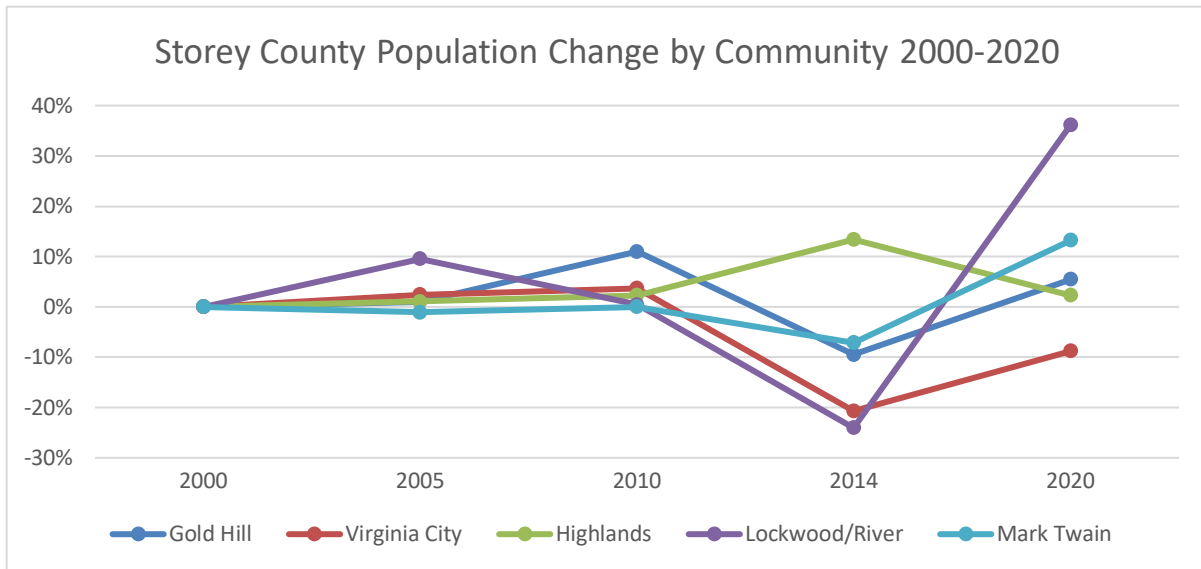
**Table 5.2-2: Population Distribution of Storey County and Communities**

Population Distribution by Community							
	2000	2005	2010	2014	2020	2022	Total Change
Storey County	3,399	4,045	4,016	3,934	4,086	4,095	+696
Gold Hill	198	200	222	201	212	228	+35
Virginia City	988	1,012	1,049	832	759	918	-3
Highlands*	1,192	1,205	1,233	1,398	1,430		
Lockwood/River*	1,171	1,283	1,289	979	1,333		
Mark Twain*	750	742	742	689	780		
<i>Household Size</i>	2.38	2.27	2.27	2.1	2.38		

Sources: Storey County Assessor’s Office; U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2022; Nevada State Demographer 1994-2020, Certified Population Estimates.

\*Assessor’s Office earliest available housing data from which community estimates were based. Figures provided are estimates only based on household size and the number of households in each community – estimates provided may not be reflective of actual community numbers and will not match the census provided total population figure. Note, data for the year 2022 is not available.

Figure 5.2.3: Storey County Population Change by Community 2000-2020



Population growth in each community is constrained by local geography, lack of public services and infrastructure, and limited availability of water. These constraining factors make each community in the county incapable of accommodating rapid population growth. Residential development that occurs outside of existing population centers and in unsustainable areas such as areas without available water not identified in this master plan are considered to have a substantially negative impact on the county’s existing land uses, natural resources, sustainability, existing quality of life, and future economic development.

## 5.2.4 Demographic Trends

### 5.2.4.1 Gender and Ethnic Distribution

From 2000 to 2022, the disparity in population between males and females changed from 2.4 percent-more females than males, to 5 percent more males than females. By 2042, this disparity is projected to decrease to approximately 2.9 percent. This disparity accounts for a projected difference of 509 more males than females by 2042. Trends in the population growth between males and females are more extreme than those seen throughout the Nevada as a whole. This disparity may be a result of the available jobs in the region – largely influenced by the expanding Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center attracting employees of traditionally male- dominated sectors such as manufacturing, transportation, and technology.

The most predominant ethnic group in Storey County remains individuals of White descent, who accounted for 83.8 percent of the population in 2022. Non-White ethnicities accounted for 16.2 percent of the total county population. The population gap between White and non-White narrowed slightly between 2000 and 2022. Hispanics at 5.4 percent of the overall county population in 2022 were the largest minority group. The county’s remaining minority populations were between 0.1 and 2.0 percent of the overall population.

Tribal lands are of a sovereign nation in the United States, of which Storey County and this master plan has no legal jurisdiction. However, Storey County will continue to maintain its close relationship with the Tribe and coordinate with its membership on local and regional land use matters. Table 5.2-3 lists Gender and Ethnic Distribution data for 2000 through 2022.

**Table 5.2-3: Storey County Gender & Ethnic Distribution, 2000-2022**

	2000	2010	2015	2020	2022	Change in Percent of Population (2000-2022)
<b>Total Population</b>	3,399	4,016	3,929	4,086	4,095	+20.5%
<b>Gender Distribution</b>						
<b>Male</b>	1,762 (51.8%)	2,018 (50.2%)	1,882 (47.9%)	2,143 (52.4%)	2,149 (52.5%)	+ .7%
<b>Female</b>	1,637 (48.2%)	1,998 (49.8%)	2,047 (52.1%)	1,943 (47.6%)	1,946 (47.5%)	- .7%
<b>Ethnic Distribution</b>						
<b>White</b>	3,161 (97.6%)	3,668 (91.3%)	3,703 (94.2%)	3,422 (83.7%)	3,433 (83.8%)	-13.8%
<b>Hispanic</b>	174 (5.1%)	264 (6.6%)	147 (3.7%)	106 (2.6%)	222 (5.4%)	+ .3%
<b>Black</b>	10 (0.3%)	40 (1.0%)	17 (.4%)	112 (2.7%)	81 (2.0%)	+1.7%
<b>Asian</b>	34 (1.0%)	22 (0.5%)	57 (1.4%)	34 (0.8%)	45 (1.1%)	+ .1%
<b>American Indian</b>	49 (1.4%)	69 (1.7%)	66 (1.6%)	17 (0.4%)	4 (0.1%)	-1.3%
<b>Hawaii/Pacific Is.</b>	5 (0.1%)	15 (0.4%)	7 (.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	- .1%
<b>Other</b>	7 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (.1%)	11 (0.3%)	28 (0.7%)	+ .5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of American Community Survey 2000-2022

Note: This graph does not include a breakdown of individuals who identify as two or more races. Ethnic distribution percentages may not reflect 100% of the population.

### 5.2.4.2 Age and Household Distribution

Storey County’s aging population trend is similar to that of its neighboring counties and the state of Nevada. Between 2000 and 2022, Storey County’s median age increased approximately 48.14 percent from 37.6 to 55.7 years old. By 2022, its median age was the highest in the state of Nevada, with the next closest being Esmerelda County at a median age of 55 years. Storey County’s 65-and-older group was 13 percent of the county’s total population in 2000 and has since increased up to 37.3 percent of the total population. Table 5.2-4 lists data for median age trends and Table 5.2-5 lists age distribution.

While Storey County’s senior population is increasing, its school-aged population is decreasing. Between

2000 and 2022, the percentage of individuals 18 years of age or younger within Storey County has decreased by 5.4 percent since 2000 declining from 21.6 percent of the population in 2000 to 16.2 percent in 2022. The U.S. Census Bureau and Nevada State Demographer estimates concur with the downward trend and anticipate it to continue through 2042. School enrollment data is provided in Table 5.2-6 and household distribution data is provided in Table 5.2-7.

The average household size in 2020 was 2.38 persons per household, the same average household size experienced in 2000; however, the average household size decreased to a low of 2.1 in 2014 before increasing back to 2.38 persons per household in 2020. Renter-occupied households experienced a drastic increase in household size, increasing from 3.01 individuals in 2010 to 4.68 individuals in 2022. Family households with children has decreased by 16.7 percent from 1990 to 2022, while family households without children have increased by 71.73 percent from 1990 to 2022. Non-family households have grown by 149.2 percent from 1990 to 2022. Non-family households with children have decreased since 2000, dropping by approximately 58.1 percent from 2000 to 2022.

The aging pattern seen in Storey County and throughout the state of Nevada is partially due to “baby-boomers” entering retirement age, stabilizing birth rates, longer life expectancy, and younger generations tending to have fewer children. The county’s close proximity to surrounding metropolitan areas and health care facilities, as well as the state of California, also attracts out-of-state retirees, whereas younger populations tend to move to the metropolitan areas. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 72.5 percent of Nevada’s residents were born outside the state of Nevada in 2022. This is consistent with the composition of Storey County’s population, of which 73 percent of Storey County residents were born outside the state of Nevada in 2022. The ageing trend is exacerbated by the county’s challenging geography and climate, and relatively few amenities when compared to neighboring metropolitan areas, which tend to discourage young families with children.

With the average age in the county is approaching 56 years of age, and shrinking family size and school enrollment, the County might put special attention to attracting a younger demographic to ensure younger generational growth keeps pace with an aging demographic. The Painted Rock mixed-use development and potential housing opportunities that may be facilitated by this master plan in the southern areas of the county should help address this issue in part of the county by providing more attractive housing options to the region to attract families in an area of anticipated growth. Continued expansions of the Tahoe- Reno Industrial Center will help attract more working-age residents to the county.

There are improvements to county infrastructure and services that may appeal to younger demographics while not adversely impacting the existing communities of the county. The allowance of accessory dwelling units is currently an acceptable practice in certain areas of the county, and one which should be explored further as may be appropriate. Accessory dwelling allowances should be encouraged and expanded to allow family members to share land and housing, and where appropriate, facilitate two-family living on a single parcel containing multiple dwellings. The county, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding with CC Communications, is currently developing fiber broadband internet infrastructure throughout the county. These and other improvements and entitlements will help attract younger generations and contribute to their successful establishment in the county. The County should encourage opportunities are presented to implement these ideas.

**Table 5.2-4: Median Age Trends**

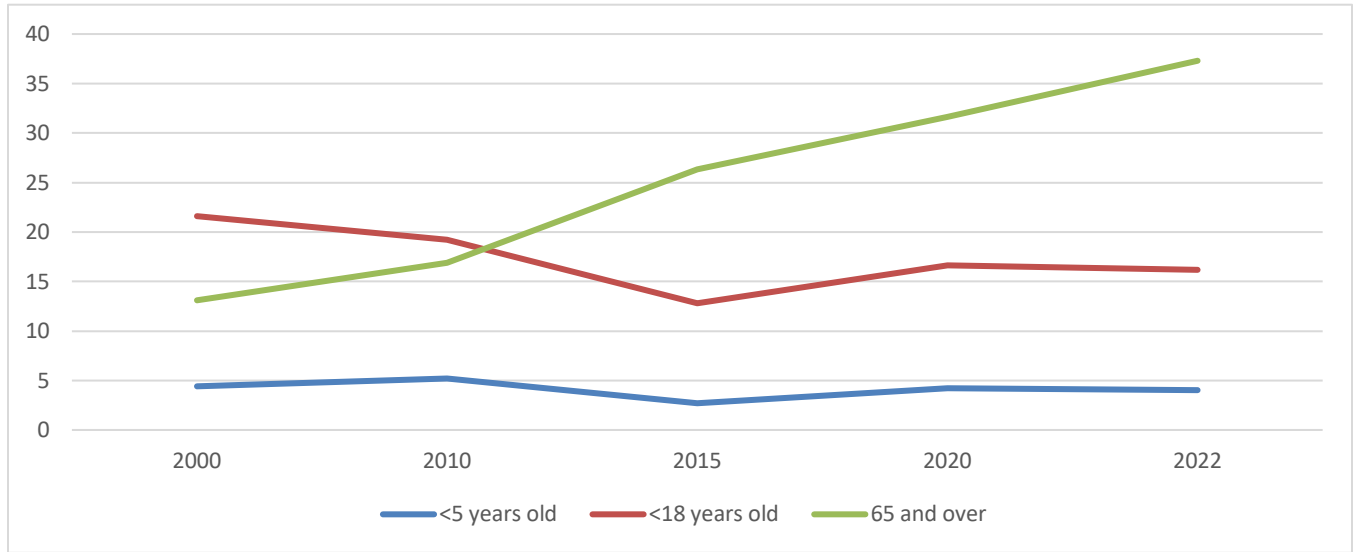
Location	2000	2010	2013	2020	2022	Percent Change
<b>United States</b>	35.3	37.2	37.3	38.2	39	18.54
<b>Nevada</b>	35.3	36.3	36.6	38.2	39	17.11
Elko	31.2	33.4	33.3	34.7	34.9	18.7
Lincoln	33.4	39.9	35.7	43.7	40.6	21.56
Humboldt	33.4	36.2	35.7	37.1	37	20.91
Clark	34.4	35.5	35.8	37.5	38.3	15.71
Washoe	35.6	37.0	37.2	38.5	39.2	16.67
Lander	28.7	37.1	37.3	37.6	40	39.37
Eureka	38.3	42.4	38.3	42.5	48.4	45.34
Churchill	34.7	39.0	39.2	40.5	39.7	20.30
Pershing	34.4	41.0	40.4 (μ)	42.6	40.4	27.44
White Pine	37.7 (μ)	40.8	40.9	40.8	41.4	22.48
Lyon	38.2	40.9 (μ)	41.6	43.9	43.2	18.68
Carson City	38.7	41.7	41.9	42.2	42.1	15.66
Esmeralda	45.1	52.9	47.9	54.6	55	53.63
Douglas	41.7	47.4	47.9	52.9	53.5	47.79
Nye	42.9	48.4	49.7	53.1	52.9	44.93
Mineral	42.9	49.2	50.1	53.3	39.8	17.4
<b>Storey County</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>55.7</b>	<b>48.14</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, "U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2010, 2013, 2020, and 2022 American Community Survey: S0101 Age and Sex  
 Mu (μ) indicates the mean average age in each county category.

**Table 5.2-5: Age Distribution**

	2000		2010		2015		2020		2022		Change in Percent
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	
<b>Total</b>	3,399	-	4,016	-	3,929	-	4,086	-	4,095		
<5 years old	150	4.4	209	5.2	106	2.7	172	4.2	164	4.0%	-.4%
<18 years old	735	21.6	771	19.2	503	12.8	679	16.6	664	16.2%	-5.4%
65 and over	446	13.1	679	16.9	1,033	26.3	1,292	31.6	1526	37.3%	+24.2%

Figure 5.2-4: Percent of Storey County Population by Age



Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010, 2015, 2020, and 2022

Table 5.2-6: School Enrollment, 2003 - 2022

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2011-12	2012-13	2021-22	Percent Change 2003/04 – 2021/22
District	468	478	450	454	408	415	432	-7.69%
VCHS	137	152	150	155	133	132	155	+13.1%
VCMS	122	118	114	117	93	92	102	-16.4%
HGES	143	140	127	123	131	139	127	-11.2%
HES	66	68	59	59	51	52	48	-27.3%

Source: 2003-2022 Storey County School District (second enrollment month of each year)

VCHS = Virginia City High School

VCMS = Virginia City Middle School

HGES = Hugh Gallagher Elementary School

HES = Hillside Elementary School

**Table 5.2-7: Household Distribution, 2000 - 2022**

	2000	2010	2013	2020	2022	Percent Change 2000-2020
Total household	1,462	1,826	1,843	1,704	1,692	68.19%
Family Households	969	1,350	1,161	1,048	907	31.26%
<i>With children &lt;18 years</i>	319	598	385	271	263	-16.77%
<i>Without children &lt;18 years</i>	650	752	776	777	644	71.73%
Non-Family Households	493	476	682	656	785	149.2%
<i>With children &lt;18 years</i>	105	27	124	79	44	-
<i>Without children &lt;18 years</i>	374	449	558	577	741	195.22%
Average Household Size	2.32	2.20	2.14	2.38	2.41	-1.23%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2022; American Community Survey S1101 – Households and Families

\*Insufficient or unreliable data

### 5.2.4.3 Economic Distribution

Economic development and job creation influences local population trends by attracting working-age (19 to 55 years of age) people. Areas with strong employment typically have higher average household size, lower median age, and a higher percentage of family households. Storey County on the other hand has a high level of employment relative to its population size but shows some demographic trends that are similar to counties with older populations and less employment opportunities.

The median household income in Storey County was the third-highest in the state at \$86,932 per year. Only Elko and Lander counties, each with a disproportionate number of high-wage mining jobs, have greater median incomes. This demographic trend is partially a result of a decade of significant economic and employment growth in Storey County in relation to its population. Comparative economic measures are provided in Table 5.2-8.

**Table 5.2-8: Comparative Economic Measures**

Measure	Carson City	Douglas County	Lyon County	Storey County	Washoe County
Median Household Income 2022	\$67,465	\$84,262	\$70,026	\$86,932	\$80,125
Per Capita Income 2022	\$37,677	\$49,115	\$36,330	\$44,539	\$44,448
Average Weekly Wage 2022	\$1,297/week	\$1,620/week	\$1,346/week	\$1,671/week	\$1,540/week
Number of Employees 2022	27,320	21,687	26,233	1,345	255,160
Percent of Employees to Population 2022	57%	50.4%	54.3%	38.3%	62.7%
Average Persons per Household 2022	2.38	2.34	2.54	2.41	2.47

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Nevada Department of Employment and Rehabilitation; U.S. Census, U.S. Bureau Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The population living at poverty levels in Storey County have improved from 2013-2022. Poverty levels are consistently decreasing across Nevada as a whole. Trends in population growth and poverty levels indicate an improved economy within the county, even when compared to other similar counties. If current trends continue, an increasing population in conjunction with a decrease in poverty and an increase in median income will contribute to an improved economy for Storey County. Table 5.2-9 provides data for comparison of population living at certain poverty levels for the period 2013-2022.

**Table 5.2-9: Population and Poverty Levels, 2013-2022**

Year	Population	Below .50 Poverty Level	.50 to 1.25 of Poverty Level	1.25 to 1.50 of Poverty Level	1.50 to 1.85 of Poverty Level	1.85 to 2.00 of Poverty Level
2013	3,936	6.8%	4.6%	3.5%	6.7%	2.1%
2014	3,917	6.1%	6.1%	1.4%	5.5%	3.2%
2015	3,915	4.1%	4.9%	2.1%	6.1%	3.9%
2016	3,925	3.2%	7.8%	2.2%	2.6%	5.0%
2017	3,877	3.8%	8.1%	5.3%	3.4%	4.7%
2018	3,927	4.5%	7.9%	3.8%	2.9%	4.2%
2019	3,970	5.0%	5.8%	2.7%	3.9%	3.2%
2020	4,070	6.1%	5.5%	1.8%	3.2%	1.4%
2021	4,032	5.5%	8.6%	3%	2.9%	1.4%
2022	4,083	3.4%	7.2%	.5%	3%	1.6%

Source: US Census Bureau/American Community Survey. "S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months"  
Multiple years: 2009- 2013 through 2016-2022 American Community Surveys.

## 5.3 Population & Demographic Forecasts

This section uses past and current population, economic, workforce, and other data to estimate potential changes in the county population over the next 20-year period. It also forecasts potential population changes that are expected to occur in each of its existing population centers. Potential factors that may result in deviations from the forecast are also summarized.

The population forecast is based on analyses of quantitative and qualitative data. Information was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and Nevada State Demographer's Office; County Assessor and Clerk's Office; Storey County School District; regional and state employment and economic development agencies, and other sources. It includes population counts, estimated population projection, property owner information, school enrolment counts, and economic and employment data. Community growth patterns, known services and infrastructures, and findings from community workshops were also used in formulating the data-driven and ground-based model from which realistic estimates of change may be determined.

### 5.3.1 State Demographer & Historic Growth Rate Forecasts

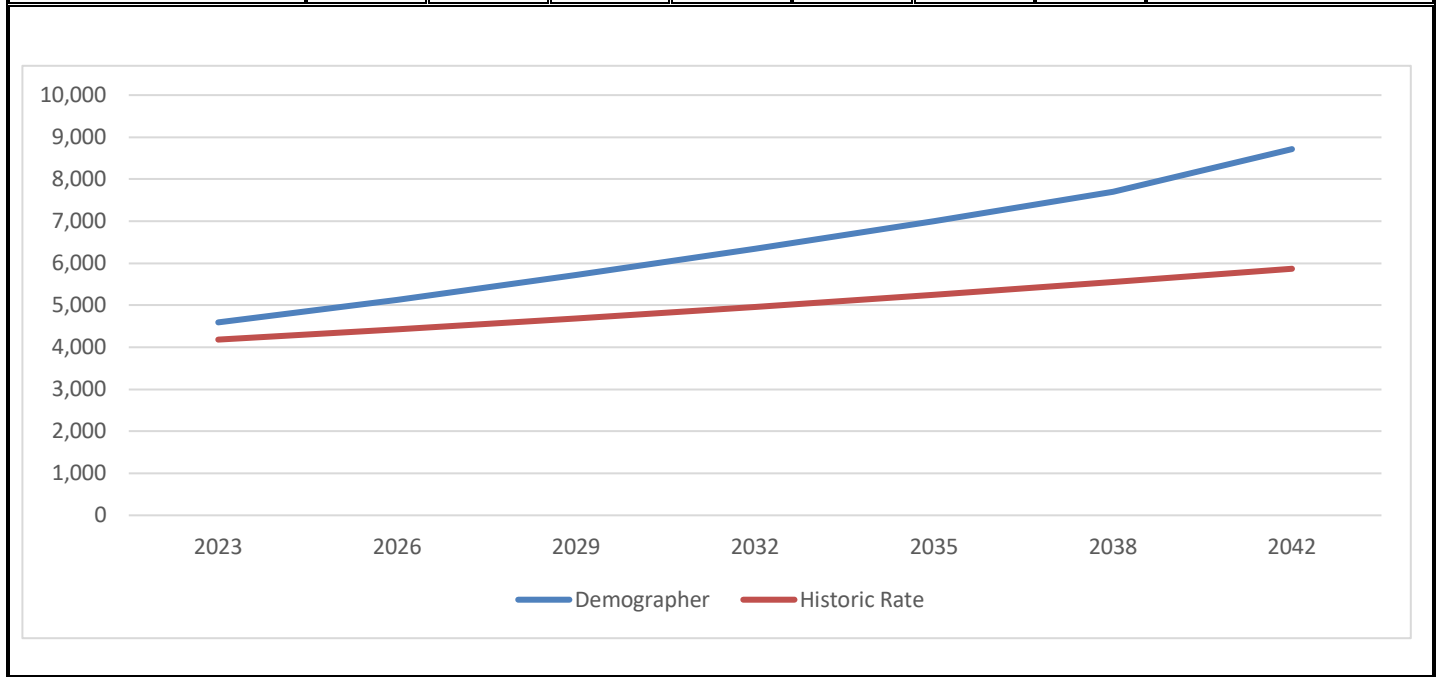
Forecast information from the Nevada State Demographer is provided in Table 5.3-.1. Data indicate projected population growth in the county between 2023 and 2042 as developed using the Regional Economics Model, Inc. estimation model. The Demographer's forecast addresses Nevada's 17 counties and 23 major economic sectors to estimate future population trends. The forecast relates the economic and demographic characteristics of Nevada's counties to each other and the United States as a whole. Table

5.3-1 also provides the flat historic growth rate in the county and compares it to the Demographer’s forecast. The flat rate includes the average annual growth rate of 1.9 percent during the 24-year period.

The Nevada State Demographer’s projection indicates population growth in the county over the next 14-year period to be similar to earlier trends. An approximate increase from 4,592 persons in 2023 (the U.S. Census Bureau reports 4,095 persons in 2022) to 8,715 by the year 2042 is expected. The flat historic rate shows a slower rate of increase. From the base 4,182 population in 2023, the flat historic growth rate shows an estimated population of 5,868 by the end of the 24-year period. The difference between the demographer’s projections and the flat historic growth rate is approximately 49.5 percent with the demographer’s model estimating more than 2,847 people at the end of the forecast period.

**Table 5.3-1: Population Projections**

	2023	2026	2029	2032	2035	2038	2042	Percent Change
Demographer	4,592	5,131	5,716	6,340	7,002	7,706	8,715	89.8%
Historic Rate	4,182	4,424	4,682	4,954	5,241	5,546	5,868	40.3%



Source: “Demographer” based on Nevada State Demographer’s Office, Nevada County Population Projections for 2023 to 2042.

“Historic Rate” based on 1.9 percent growth reported by the U.S. Census and the Nevada State Demographer.

Note: Population percent increases are the sum of three-year increments.

### 5.3.2 Key Elements Influencing Population Change

The rate at which the state and county grows economically and in population is influenced by economic, social, and geographic factors. The availability of jobs, education opportunities, and qualified persons to fill local employment needs influence population growth. Local and regional infrastructure capacity such as roads, public transportation, and utilities, and the availability of water and other natural resources will also affect the area's ability to diversity its citizen base and attract business.

The following elements were evident in Storey County over the past two decades and are expected to remain influential factors over the next 20-year period:

#### *Factors Limiting Potential Growth*

- Available water
- Transportation/connectivity
- Capacity for public services
- Access to higher education and training
- Limited low-cost housing
- Declining family households with children

#### *Factors Contributing to Potential Growth*

- Overall job growth
- Growing economic diversification
- Local quality of life
- Positive State and local tax climate
- Proximity to large metro/industrial areas
- Continued in-migration of retirees

### 5.3.2.1 Economic Development

Storey County's population has grown at a rate somewhat slower than its neighboring counties. However, like other counties in western Nevada a significant portion of its growth was from retirees arriving from out- of- state. For example, the percentage of individuals 65 years or older increased by 24.2 percent since 1990. Disproportionate growth by this sector limits available workforce and other human resources needed by existing and prospective businesses. This trend also causes lower career opportunities for new working-age families and young generations desiring to remain living in their home-county.

Changing this demographic trend will largely depend upon the ability of the county to attract and retain business. Over the past decade the county has endeavored to diversify its economy, provide education and training opportunities, and work collaboratively with regional entities to improve economic conditions in the county and Nevada. Its efforts have yielded success. Between 2000 and 2024, Storey County attracted over 100 large businesses, including many Fortune 500 companies, and created a diversified commercial and industrial employment base for about 18,000 people with several thousand more to be hired in the next couple of years. Most of these companies are located at the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center in McCarran. Many of these jobs provide higher income opportunities, which can help attract more working age individuals to the county, diversifying the age pool and increasing the potential for more families to join the community.

Economic trends in Virginia City remain centered on tourism and hospitality and promote mostly seasonal, part-time, and low-wage jobs. However, mining had been a substantial contributor to medium- and high-wage jobs on the Comstock and nearby communities. Because the success of mining, particularly precious metal mining, is strongly linked to the commodities market, it is not clear how long this sector will remain influential in the local economy and population trends.

Employment in Storey County has increased significantly over the past two decades. Overall jobs by industry have increased from 2010 to 2021. The largest increase in jobs comes from the manufacturing industry, which increased by 11,000 jobs from 2010 to 2021. The largest decrease in jobs came from the government and, public administrative industries, which decreased by 102 jobs. Nearly every industry experienced a growth in jobs, while only three industries (government; public administration; arts, entertainment, recreation, and other services) experienced a decrease. In a similar vein, jobs by occupation experienced an increase in every occupation except for the community and social services sector. The largest increase came from the production sector, largely due to the expansion of the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center.

Table 5.3-2 lists number of jobs by NACS Code for 2010 and 2021 and Table 5.3-3 lists number of jobs by SOC Code for 2014 and 2020.

Table 5.3-2: Number of Jobs by NAICS Code, 2010 and 2021

NAICS 2-Digit Code	Type*	Store		Nevada	
		2010 <sup>y</sup>	2021	2010	2021
11: Ag, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	NSR	23	81	4,276	6,906
21: Mining, Quarry, Oil/Gas Extraction	NSR	62	62	12,338	15,021
22: Utilities	SR	68	89	4,323	4,064
23: Construction	NSR	157	924	69,573	106,313
31: Manufacturing	NSR	394	11792	39,633	60,079
42: Wholesale Trade	SR	41	137	34,155	37,396
44: Retail Trade	SR	85	92	133,044	152,036
48: Transportation, Warehousing	SR	1,302	4419	47,811	88,362
51: Information	SR	<10	287	13,764	15,535
52: Finance and Insurance	SR	<10	<10	35,387	42,833
53: Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	SR	<10	24	27,212	32,698
54: Professional, Scientific, Tech Services	SR	44	116	56,604	75,483
55: Mgmt. of Companies/Enterprises	SR	<10	11	18,290	23,851
56: Administrative and Support	SR	169	285	79,298	99,981
61: Educational Services	SR	<10	<10	12,333	16,677
62: Health Care and Social Assistance	SR	12	148	98,934	139,109
71: Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	SR	72	38	30,960	34,167
72: Accommodation, Food Services	SR	116	153	286,042	234,078
81: Other Services (except Public Admin)	S	152	65	52,833	63,106
90: Government, Public Admin	PA	181	79	171,021	179,845
99: Unclassified Industry	-	<10	13	690	16,300

Source: Nevada Economic Assessment Project: Socioeconomic Baseline Report, Storey County; 2022

Table 5.3-3: Number of Jobs by SOC Code, 2014 and 2020

SOC 2-Digit Code	Type *	Storey		Nevada	
		2014	2020	2014	2020
11-Management	1	230	1,411	66,542	81,891
13-Business and Financial Operations	1	98	689	47,443	63,998
15-Computer and Mathematical	1	29	365	18,867	24,741
17-Architecture and Engineering	1	38	866	12,435	16,735
19-Life, Physical, and Social Science	1	32	150	9,465	10,996
21-Community and Social Service	1	41	39	12,775	16,332
23-Legal	1	<10	13	9,254	9,793
25-Education, Training, and Library	1	11	33	53,580	56,200
27-Arts, Design, Entertain, Sports, Media	1	27	66	25,529	26,462
29-Healthcare Practitioners and Tech	1	<10	29	52,244	73,133
31-Healthcare Support	2	25	59	39,998	47,579
33-Protective Service	2	20	51	40,850	40,985
35-Food Preparation and Serving Related	2	123	140	169,329	147,370
37-Building/Grounds Cleaning, Maint.	2	53	84	81,492	66,739
39-Personal Care and Service	2	48	49	73,370	65,585
41-Sales and Related	3	182	544	144,930	146,028
43-Office and Administrative Support	3	649	1,970	180,890	183,115
45-Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	4	13	61	2,592	4,678
47-Construction and Extraction	4	228	723	64,644	90,242
49-Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	4	193	734	52,440	56,044
51-Production	5	594	5,515	50,038	52,106
53-Transportation and Material Moving	5	2,077	4,324	113,340	129,189
55-Military	6	<10	<10	9,304	10,323
99-Unclassified	-	0	0	0	0

Source: Nevada Economic Assessment Project: Socioeconomic Baseline Report, Storey County; 2022

### 5.3.2.2 Housing

Economic and employment growth and the availability of housing will affect the rate at which the county's projected population may deviate from the Demographer's forecast.

Between 2000 and 2022, the County enacted land use policy decisions on in-fill residential development and two large-scale planned unit development proposals. The County's actions to provide for residential

growth conformed to the 1994 and 2016 master plans and are indicative of the pattern of growth that may be permitted over the forecasted period of this master plan.

Construction of housing units has been steady over the years, with approximately 10 new dwelling units per year. With exception of several special use permits issued for single-family residents in remote parts of the county all were issued for in-fill development in existing population centers. Storey County's treatment of two proposals for planned unit developments in 2006 and 2007 also exemplify its position on balancing housing and population needs with policy and sustainability.

In 2006, a zone change for the Painted Rock mixed-use development was approved. The tentative proposal included a wide range of residential and commercial uses combined into one cohesive mixed-use development. The location, scale, and design-of the proposal were key elements in determining its conformance with the 1994 master plan and the potential positive and negative impacts that it may have on the county. Painted Rock has yet to be developed; however, the potential for a new population center shows promise for Storey County's expanding economy and size.

However, the opposite occurred in 2007 when the County denied a master plan amendment request for a 17,000-home development – named “Cordevista” – approximately two miles north of the Highlands. The planning commission's findings for denial cited the proposal's non-compliance with the master plan and zoning ordinance, inadequate evidence of available water for the development, and the potential for population growth beyond the county's ability to provide necessary services. The County prevailed in litigation against it by the developer in the District Court and the Nevada Supreme Court.

Since 2006 and since the adoption of the 2016 master plan, the county has recognized the need to facilitate housing that will serve the needs of the growing industrial development in Northern Nevada. This master plan continues to support expansive housing opportunity at Painted Rock. Additionally, this master plan recognizes the close-drive-proximity (roughly 35 minutes) of the greater Mark Twain-Flowery Range areas to Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center, as well as this area's gentle topography and close proximity to area utilities in supporting responsible residential growth.

Most housing units in Storey County are owner-occupied at 97 percent, with renters making up the remaining 3 percent (Table 5.3-4). Renter-occupied units peaked at 15.5 percent in 2016 and have trended down to their current rate. The majority of housing units are single unit (76.8 percent), with mobile homes / recreational vehicles making up 21.8 percent of the housing market. Only 1.4 percent of existing housing units are multi-unit (Table 5.3-5).

Since 2010, housing size has steadily increased, growing from 2.11 persons per household, to 2.42 persons per household in 2022 (Table 5.3-6). This could be seen as a sign that family sizes are increasing, or that housing affordability has resulted in individuals living together to offset increased housing costs.

Occupied housing units have decreased since 2010, going from 90.4 percent in 2010 to 86.2 percent in 2022. In contrast, housing occupancy has gradually increased across the state of Nevada as a whole, growing from 85.9 percent in 2010 to 89.9 percent in 2022 (Table 5.3-7).

**Table 5.3-4: Housing Units and Percent Owned or Rented**

Year	Occupied Housing Units	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
2010	1,826	90.20%	9.80%
2012	1,839	94.70%	5.30%
2014	1,823	92.90%	7.10%
2016	1,752	84.50%	15.50%
2018	1,598	87.50%	12.50%
2020	1,704	96.50%	3.50%
2022	1,692	97%	3%

Source: US Census Bureau/American Community Survey. "DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics" Multiple years: 2010 through 2022 American Community Surveys.

**Table 5.3-5: Housing Types**

Year	Single Unit	2- to 4-Units	5- to 19-Units	20+ Units	Mobile Home, RV, etc.
2010	78.10%	1.20%	0.00%	0.00%	20.70%
2012	75.10%	0.00%	1.40%	0.00%	23.50%
2014	76.90%	1.90%	1.50%	0.00%	19.70%
2016	75.40%	3.80%	1.30%	0.00%	19.40%
2018	74.80%	2.00%	0.00%	0.00%	23.10%
2020	76.40%	2.10%	0.00%	0.00%	21.40%
2022	76.80%	1.40%	0.00%	0.00%	21.80%

Source: US Census Bureau/American Community Survey. "DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics" Multiple years: 2010-2022 American Community Surveys.

**Table 5.3-6 Household Size**

Year	Storey County Owner Occ. Households Size	Storey County Renter Occ. Households Size	Nevada Owner Occ. Households Size	Nevada Renter Occ. Households Size
2010	2.11	3.01	2.69	2.6
2012	2.12	2.85	2.69	2.68
2014	2.13	2.11	2.71	2.71
2016	2.25	2.09	2.72	2.72
2018	2.42	2.63	2.72	2.64
2020	2.34	3.62	2.7	2.58
2022	2.42	4.68	2.72	2.55

Source: US Census Bureau/American Community Survey. "DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics" Multiple years: 2010-2022 American Community Surveys.

**Table 5.3-7: Housing Occupancy Status**

Year	Storey County Occupied Households	Storey County Vacant Households	Nevada Occupied Households	Nevada Vacant Households
2010	90.40%	9.60%	85.90%	14.10%
2012	91.60%	8.40%	84.80%	15.20%
2014	91.30%	8.70%	84.90%	15.10%
2016	87.60%	12.40%	85.90%	14.10%
2018	83.10%	16.90%	87.10%	12.90%
2020	86.50%	13.50%	89.10%	10.90%
2022	86.20%	13.80%	89.90%	10.10%

Source: US Census Bureau/American Community Survey. "DP04: Selected Housing Characteristics" Multiple years: 2010-2022 American Community Surveys.

### 5.3.2.3 Interconnectivity

Geographic barriers and the interrelationship between each community in the county and its employment centers is an important factor in determining population forecasts. Distance, time, and geographic barriers between most communities in the county currently separate job opportunities from most of its residents.

Most of the county's employment growth in the past decade took place at McCarran. Lockwood is the primary residential center for this area with the remaining River District providing a much lesser degree of housing opportunities for workers. While some housing opportunities currently appear available, including availability of affordable housing, job growth at McCarran may ultimately exceed housing availability in the River District.

Challenging and remote geography and long drive distances separate many of the county's other population centers from the jobs provided at McCarran. Mixed-use residential and commercial development that may occur at Painted Rock, and also the greater Mark Twain-Flowery Range area with completion of the USA Parkway connection between Interstate 80 and US Highway 50 in 2017, are considered potential factors that may contribute to increased working-age families in the county and a resultant deviation from countywide population forecasts.

Total net commuters in Storey County have notably increased by 15,000 from 2010 to 2021. However, the large increase comes from only the inbound commuters, while the total outbound commuters have slightly decreased over the 11 years. The total inbound commuters have increased from 2,593 in 2010 to 17,527 in 2021 (Table 5.3-8).

**Table 5.3-8: Outbound vs Inbound Commuters**

Year	Commuters	Outbound	Inbound
2010	2,593	198	2,395
2011	2,787	196	2,591
2012	3,085	198	2,886
2013	3,486	188	3,298
2014	4,374	188	4,187
2015	5,141	162	4,978
2016	6,129	172	5,957
2017	10,091	194	9,897
2018	16,025	184	15,841
2019	16,788	188	16,600
2020	16,678	181	16,497
2021	17,527	184	17,343

Source: Nevada Economic Assessment Project Socioeconomic Baseline Report Storey County 2022

#### 5.3.2.4 Water

The availability of water is a critical determinate in the rate at which population may expand and to the extent to which the growth rate in the county may deviate from the Nevada State Demographer's projections. As discussed in Chapter 10 – Water and Natural Resources the patterns of success and failure of groundwater development and limitations on other water sources in Storey County imply that new development, especially residential development, should be approached very carefully. In 2008, Storey County voters passed Advisory Questions 1 and 2 advising the county to require all future applicants for master plan amendments, zone map amendments, planned unit developments, and other applications involving residential development to identify and obtain permits for water resources prior to application. These regulatory elements have since been incorporated into the county's land division, planned unit development, zoning, and other ordinances.

The availability of water is just as important for the county's existing residential communities, particularly the Highlands and Mark Twain-Flowery Range, as it is for potential new developments. Because of inadequate groundwater resources for these communities, full build-out of the Highlands, and significant residential and commercial development of the greater Mark Twain-Flowery Range area are not likely possible without importing water from other basins and developing municipal water systems to serve new residents.