



MEMO

To: 2024 Annual Demographic Workshop Attendees
From: Kevin Kane, Supervisor, Demographics & Growth Vision Program
Date: Sept. 27, 2024
Re: 2024 Demographic Workshop – Follow-Up Questions and Answers

Staff followed up with workshop panelists to provide written answers to several of the questions from the webinar that were not addressed during the event.

WILL THE POWERPOINTS BE SHARED WITH ATTENDEES?

Yes, PowerPoints and event videos are available on the [SCAG website](#).

HAS THERE BEEN AN ASSESSMENT OF WHAT IS THE IDEAL POPULATION NUMBER GLOBALLY?

Panelists have not seen any estimates of “ideal” population, which may be because the answer is contingent on many assumptions about technology and social structures. A sustainable number could be higher if resource use per person were lower (and vice versa). One might focus the question more on “Can people have the number of children they want to have, or are there barriers?”. This includes both access to contraception/family planning services and access to family-supportive policies. In addition, “Are policies and social structures aimed at being efficient/sustainable?”.

IT WAS SAID THAT REGIONALLY, INFLATION-ADJUSTED INCOMES WENT UP BY 17%. WERE THERE SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS IN THE HOUSEHOLD INCOME INCREASE ACROSS SOCIAL COUNTIES?

Yes, as detailed in the [2023 American Community Survey \(ACS\) 1-year data](#) report, median household incomes varied widely across the region’s counties, with Orange and Ventura counties leading, while Los Angeles County trailed by \$4,500.

FOR CONSIDERING HOUSING IN DOF’S ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS–WILL YOU ALSO BE LOOKING AT PEOPLE LIVING IN NON-TRADITIONAL HOUSING UNITS SUCH AS ADUS? HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?

The Department of Finance collects information on the number of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) built each year. Some of these are held vacant, but the remainder are filled with the average number of inhabitants from the American Community Survey (ACS), and it is normally one or two persons. In so

much as people experiencing homelessness were counted in the decennial census they exist in the DOF population estimates. There is no reliable annual data source that is comprehensive enough to attempt to incorporate unhoused population directly into the annual estimates.

THERE WAS DISCUSSION OF HOW HIGH LIVING COST IMPACTS FERTILITY. IS THERE ALSO A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHANGES IN BIRTHRATES BY WOMAN'S AGE AND COST-TO-INCOME RATIOS—I.E., YOUNGER WORKERS HAVE HIGHER LIVING COSTS RELATIVE TO THEIR INCOMES, AND THEY'RE NOT GETTING TO A COMFORT LEVEL UNTIL LATER IN LIFE?

One panelist notes one paper on how housing affordability is associated with delayed age at childbearing, which is [Housing Affordability Crisis and Delayed Fertility: Evidence from the USA \(Japaridze & Sayour, 2024\)](#). The author's results suggest that renters versus homeowners, as well as those in less affordable housing markets versus more affordable housing markets, delay childbearing.

WHY ARE HOUSEHOLD FORMATION (HEADSHIP) RATES SHOWN FOR PEOPLE STARTING AT THE AGE OF 15? THEY LEGALLY CAN'T EVEN SIGN A RENTAL CONTRACT—SHOULDN'T THIS BEGIN AT 18?

The age groups are to align with the data available. The surveys, such as the American Community Survey, that we use to inform head-of-household data have age 15 as their minimum age. While rare, there are some 15-year-old heads of household in the data. They could be emancipated or still a ward of their parents but living alone.

A VERY LARGE SHARE OF THE NEW UNITS BUILT IN SOCAL IN RECENT YEARS ARE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUS). IS THIS A DETRIMENT TO FUTURE HOUSEHOLD GROWTH?

Probably not in the short term as ADUs provide housing opportunities for singles or perhaps partnered individuals and thus are an important component in the region's housing stock. The problem might be that if ADUs are too dominant, there will be insufficient more traditional housing for those individuals to move into when they wish to start a family or any of a number of other life events. For context, ADUs account for roughly 21 percent of the total housing growth in the SCAG region from 2020 to 2024, and multifamily units made up about half of the total housing growth over this period.

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 20 MILLION PARKING SPACES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, OR APPROXIMATELY 200 SQUARE MILES OF LAND AREA WHICH COMPETES WITH SPACE FOR HOUSING. HOW CAN THIS RESOURCE BE TRANSITIONED TO LAND FOR HOUSING?

Given the relative expansiveness of Los Angeles County it is difficult to envision most cars disappearing—perhaps in a much longer-run scenario like 2060. Densification well beyond the “near transit hub” approach being taken in regional plans today would be required.

HOW DO WE JUSTIFY GREATER AND GREATER EDUCATIONAL SPENDING DESPITE DECREASING ENROLLMENT? IS THIS SIMPLY DUE TO INFLATION OR ARE THERE OTHER FACTORS?

Two perspectives to offer here. First, as people have fewer children, we need more (not less) investment per child to ensure they grow up to be healthy, happy, productive members of society. Second, there are many districts with existing unmet needs (crumbling buildings, insufficient support staff like librarians, counselors, and aids, etc...) while other districts are incredibly well resourced. Part of the solution may be one of more equitably allocating resources.