

# City's population forecast plummets with new report

By ERIC A. HOWALD

Of the Keizertimes

In 2019, Keizer started planning to absorb roughly 10,000 residents during the next 20 years.

The projection is now almost half of what it was two years ago.

According to a preliminary report from the Portland State University Population Forecast Program, Keizer may only grow by 5,700 between now and 2045. The projections have not been formally adopted, but there are a number of circumstances that led to the dramatic decrease.

First and foremost, the projections are the first ever to estimate Keizer's growth as distinct from Salem. The two cities share an Urban Growth Boundary and Keizer officials requested a separate forecast for planning purposes.

Numerous trends in population estimates will also have an impact:

- Growth in Marion County is forecast to flatline by 2045 and remain relatively constant for at least until 2070. The county population may, however, increase before sliding to nil.

- Much of the decrease will come as a

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— SHANE WITHAM  
INTERIM DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

result of migration to the area. Currently, net migration into Marion County remains higher than the numbers of those leaving. The peak of net migration to Marion County so far was in 2017.

Shane Witham, Keizer's interim community development director, addressed the data point in a meeting of the Keizer Planning Commission Wednesday, April 14.

"We have a more elderly population right now and fewer people moving into

the area and, as the county ages, the more likely they are to stay in place," Witham said.

Deaths are expected to outnumber births. In 2020, deaths appeared to have outnumbered births for the first time. There were roughly 2,000 more deaths in 2020, more than 1,600 of those were attributed COVID-19. The birth-death rate could return to pre-pandemic projections, but the speed at which that will happen remains uncertain. During 2044-2045,

according to the report, there will be 4,796 deaths, compared to 3,813 births.

"County-wide we are looking at a net reduction of about 60,000 people," Witham said. The Keizer planning commissioners will have to spend a significant amount of time talking about the new numbers, he added.

Keizer officials were planning to adopt an updated assessment of the city's housing needs in May or June, but the report was based on the now-outdated projections.

The reduced projections may end up saving the city money because they might negate the need to also produce a housing strategy.

The city currently has an estimated population of 39,968 and is expected to grow to 45,700 by 2045.

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