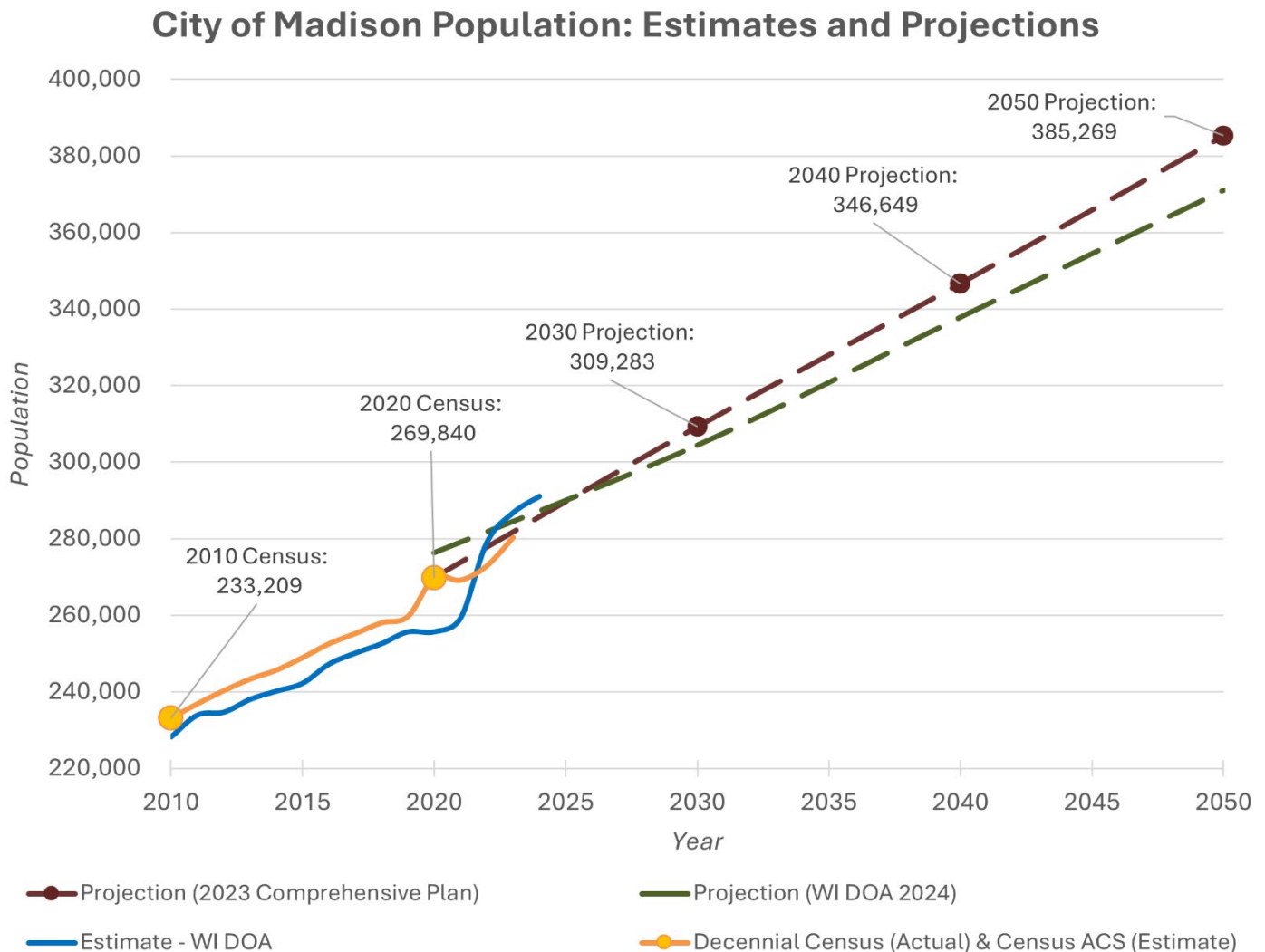


# City of Madison Population Projections Through 2050

The City of Madison projects Madison's 2050 population to be approximately 385,269, an increase of 115,269 from the 2020 Decennial Census count of 269,840.



## Why do we need population projections?

Madison has consistently been the fastest growing city in Wisconsin based on numerical increase and amongst the fastest growing by growth rate. The housing shortages and housing costs faced by Madison residents are [well documented](#). It is important for the City to understand how much growth is anticipated to plan for housing, jobs, and to guide public sector and private sector investments in infrastructure and services.

## Why has the City produced this particular population projection?

The State of Wisconsin Department of Administration's (DOA) Demographic Services Center produces population projections on a regular basis for all Wisconsin municipalities. However, DOA's projections have tended to significantly underestimate Madison's growth. Its [2013 projection](#) estimated a 2020 population of 251,550 for Madison; the city's 2020 Census population was 269,840. DOA's [2024 update](#) projects Madison's 2030 population will be 304,407. However, DOA also estimated a Madison population of 291,307 for January 1, 2024, meaning the City would only grow by 13,100 residents over the next approximately six years. That's less than 2,200 new residents per year when Madison averaged almost 3,700 new residents per year between 2010 and 2020 – a pace estimated to have increased, not decreased, since the 2020 Census. The difference grows over the following decades, with DOA projecting 371,138 for the City's 2050 population, compared to the City's projection of 385,269. Given the inaccuracy of DOA's past projections, the City produced its own projections for the [2023 Comprehensive Plan](#) that are more responsive to actual growth.

### What is the City's projection based on?

The projection is an unweighted average of two components:

- Madison's past 20-year growth rate per the [Decennial Census \(2000-2020\)](#).
- A modification to the population projections prepared by the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) for the [2050 Regional Development Framework](#) (RDF).

The first component, Madison's 20-year growth rate, is a 1.31% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) based on the 2000 Census count (208,054) and the 2020 Census count (269,840). This is a more conservative assumption than the City's 10-year growth rate (1.47% CAGR for 2010-2020), but a faster growth rate than the 30-year trend (1.16% CAGR for 1990-2020).

The second component is a modification to the population projections prepared by CARPC for its 2050 RDF. CARPC employed consulting firm [Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.](#) to prepare detailed projections for Dane County and its individual municipalities. See Appendix B of the RDF report for the CARPC population projection methodology. The CARPC projections, found on page 77 of the Framework report, were also created prior to the publication of the 2020 Census counts and missed Madison's actual 2020 population by 12,254 persons. Planning Division staff used the [Wisconsin DOA 2022 population estimate](#) for Madison (279,012) as a base year to forecast out subsequent years with the annual compound growth rates for 2020-2035 (1.17%) and 2035-2050 (0.80%) as derived from the CARPC tables. Minor adjustments to include portions of the Town of Madison<sup>1</sup> and other town areas that will be attached to the City of Madison through intergovernmental agreements after 2022 were based on the 2020 Census count for these areas.

*Note: the text of this document was updated on January 7, 2025 to account for the Wisconsin Department of Administration's (DOA) updated population projections. It was updated again on February 28, 2025 to include the DOA's new population projection, the DOA's population estimates, and the Census Bureau's population estimates on the graph. The City's population projection shown on the graph remains the same as the projection used in the 2023 Comprehensive Plan update.*

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<sup>1</sup> The City absorbed the Town of Madison after the 2020 Census. The City's 2020 population, adjusted for the Town absorption, is 274,667, according to the US Census Bureau.