

A Tale of Two Oregons: Charting Urban, Rural, and In Between

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Throughout rural and urban Oregon, citizens voice similar concerns: the need for good jobs, sufficient food, and adequate shelter; the desire for healthy communities; and the health of our environment. These broadly shared concerns transcend local government borders as well as distinctions between urban and rural.

Nevertheless, the places we live exhibit different characteristics, offer different opportunities, and present different barriers to success. These differences to some degree depend upon attributes that we associate with urban or rural living: the density of our living environment and the distances between where we live and more densely populated areas. While we can generally look at density and distance as describing rural and urban, there is no typical urban or typical rural: both urban and rural places are very diverse.

Aside from our shared concerns, the other factor that unites urban and rural is our interdependence. Our futures are interwoven, and decisions about one place may influence the success or failure of the others.

This presentation sets the stage for the remainder of the day by highlighting some of the important characteristics and interconnections of urban and rural places, including:

- **Jobs and income:** What sectors dominate urban and rural economies, and how has this changed over time? What are the differences in income?
- **Population growth and diversity:** Where is population growing the fastest? How has this changed over time? What areas of our state are experiencing increasing diversity?
- **Poverty:** Who is poor, and where do the poor of our state live?
- **Quality of life:** Where are residents most burdened by long commutes and high crime?
- **Natural resources:** What is the distribution of the natural resource-based economy?
- **Health:** How do density and distance affect Oregonians' ability to access quality health care?
- **Education:** How do rural and urban areas deal with funding challenges, and how do these challenges affect student performance?

This presentation also raises questions about how urban and rural are interdependent. These questions, to be answered throughout the remainder of the day, include issues of migration, trade in goods and services, the need for and benefits from environmental assets, and the flow of public services and taxes.