

California Counts

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROFILES

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California's Inland Empire

The Leading Edge of Southern California Growth

By Anthony Downs

Summary

The Inland Empire of California—Riverside and San Bernardino Counties—is a vast territory at the forefront of population growth in California. Between April 2000 and July 2005, this region added more than a half-million new residents, reaching a population of 3.8 million. It accounted for 20 percent of the state's entire population growth during this period and by 2005 was home to one of every ten Californians. It contained more residents than 25 states—yet large eastern and northern portions of this region remain sparsely populated desert and mountains. The sheer physical size of the Inland Empire is remarkable; combined, the two counties cover more than one-sixth of California, about the same area as the state of Virginia. Statistics such as these, especially when applied to population increases over a short time period, can pose unique challenges for a region's residents and for policymakers. This edition of *California Counts* describes the Inland Empire's recent dramatic population changes, with a focus on the stages of development across its subregions and on some of these demographic and economic challenges.

The Inland Empire is not a monolithic region. The forces of growth pressing eastward from the coastal counties of California—Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego—drawn initially by the relatively low cost of undeveloped land have generated discrete, identifiable stages of evolution in different subregions of the Inland Empire. The westernmost portions of the region have been experiencing those growth pressures the longest, so they have evolved into relatively mature urban settlements. In the northwest, mature subregions in and around the cities of Riverside and San Bernardino contain the region's most complex economy and costliest housing and are heavily influenced by demographic and economic forces originating in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. In the southwest, growth is more heavily influenced by

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forces from San Diego and southern Orange County. As growth presses farther inland from these mature subregions, agricultural and undeveloped lands are being converted into residential subdivisions at an accelerated pace, providing housing that is becoming more costly but still less so than in coastal regions. Farther east is the Coachella Valley subregion, a unique part of the Inland Empire because of its long history of retirement and recreational developments around Palm Springs and Palm Desert. Only at the far eastern reaches of this territory, in desert subregions, is the land as yet largely untouched by forces of growth from the west.

Despite the region's strong population and job growth, the Inland Empire, in aggregate terms, is one of the poorest large metropolitan areas in the United States. Per capita incomes and wages are well below state and national averages. Moreover, as the population has grown, per capita income has fallen even further behind that in the rest of the nation. Educational attainment levels are also relatively low. Only 18 percent of adults ages 25 and older have a bachelor's degree, compared to 30 percent of adults in the rest of the state. Still, incomes vary dramatically across the subregions of the Inland Empire, and in the entire region 16 percent of households have annual incomes that exceed \$100,000, compared to 21 percent statewide.

As growth continues to press eastward, the difficulties in building adequate infrastructure to support the population growth, in improving that population's skills and education levels, and in broadening the region's economic activities will test the region's leadership in both public and private sectors.

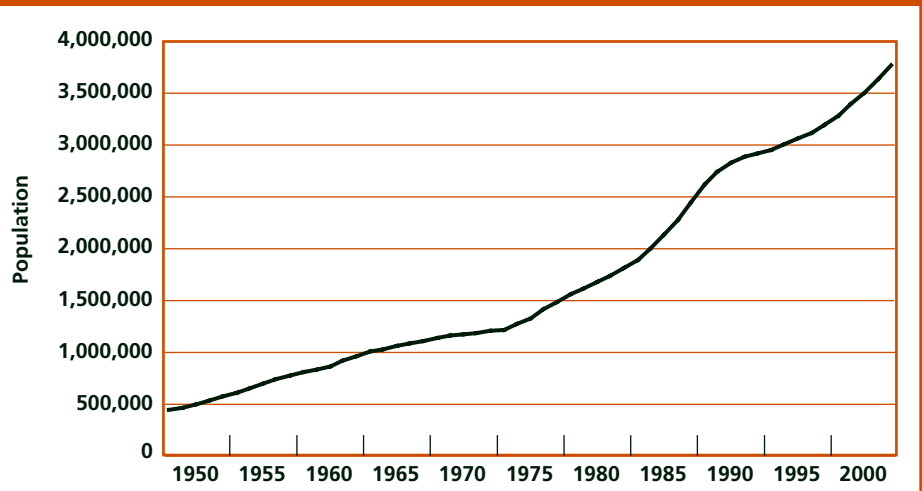
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Introduction

California's Inland Empire is a metropolitan area composed of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.¹ The region covers 27,410 square miles—an area more than one-sixth of California as a whole, equal to the size of Virginia, and larger than 17 states. In January 2005, it contained 3.8 million residents, or more people than live in each of 25 states. Moreover, from July 1, 2003, to July 1, 2004, the region grew by 102,000 residents—more than any of 44 individual states grew in the same period. This one-year growth rate of 2.87 percent was greater than that of all American states except Nevada and Arizona.² During the past three decades, the Inland Empire has consistently ranked as either the fastest-growing or one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the United States, with its population more than tripling during that time period (Figure 1). Within California, the region is consistently the fastest-growing large metropolitan area in the state. By 2005, it was home to one of every ten Californians and accounted for almost one-fifth of the state's population growth between 2000 and 2005 (Table 1). Projections suggest that this growth will continue, with the population estimated to reach 4.3 million people by 2010 and 5.1 million by 2020.³

During the past three decades, the Inland Empire has consistently ranked as either the fastest-growing or one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the United States, with its population more than tripling during that time period.

Figure 1. Inland Empire Population, 1950–2004



Source: California Department of Finance.

Table 1. Population of California and the Inland Empire, 2000 and 2005

	2000 Census	January 1, 2005	Increase
California	33,871,648	36,810,000	2,938,710
Inland Empire	3,254,821	3,823,202	568,381
Riverside County	1,545,387	1,877,000	331,613
San Bernardino County	1,709,434	1,946,202	236,768
Inland Empire share of state, %	9.6	10.4	19.3

Since 1990, the number of jobs in the Inland Empire has increased 59 percent, compared to an increase of only 16 percent statewide. Even during the severe recession of the early 1990s and the economic downturn in the early 2000s, the Inland Empire's economy continued to add jobs.

Population growth in the Inland Empire can be directly attributed to three demographic forces:

- Domestic migration from the rest of the United States—mostly from the coastal counties of Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego—added 338,000 residents to the Inland Empire from 2000 to 2004, which was 63 percent of its total population increase during that period.⁴
- International migration, primarily from Mexico, contributes substantially to the Inland Empire's population growth. Census Bureau figures show that immigration from abroad added 67,000 residents to the Inland

Empire from 2000 to 2004, 12 percent of the region's total population increase in that period.

- The relatively youthful population of the Inland Empire leads to strong rates of natural increase (births minus deaths). Between 2000 and 2004, the region had 237,000 births and only 102,000 deaths. Natural increase accounted for 25 percent of the region's population growth during that time period.

The Inland Empire's economy is growing rapidly, adding large numbers of jobs. From 2000 to 2004, the region added over 400,000 new jobs. Since 1990, the number of jobs in the Inland Empire has increased 59 percent, compared to an increase of only 16 percent statewide. Even during the severe recession of the early 1990s and the economic downturn in the early 2000s, the Inland Empire's economy continued to add jobs. Many of these are in the construction industry (19% of all new jobs from 2000 to 2004) and in retail trade (15% of all new jobs) and can be directly attributed to the rapid population growth of the region.⁵ The logistics and transportation sectors play a small but increasing role in employment. This is attributable to the region's geography: Imports, mostly from Asia, arrive at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the most active maritime complex in the country, and many

must move through the Inland Empire's rail lines and warehouses to reach the rest of the United States. Despite this employment growth, the region continues to send thousands of commuters to coastal counties every day. Commute times have continued to increase and now average 30 minutes for one-way commutes.⁶

The Inland Empire's Multistage Growth

The Inland Empire is strongly influenced by economic and demographic forces flowing into it from the more populous Southern California coastal metropolitan regions of Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. This coastal region contained 16.3 million residents in 2005, or 44 percent of California's 36.8 million people.⁷ The population shift from the west has changed the Inland Empire through distinct development stages, with each subregion of the Inland Empire at one of these stages of development:

- **The pre-rapid-growth and pre-development stage.** Some existing settlements may exist, but the area also includes much open land. Few new subdivisions have been built. Housing and land prices are far lower than in coastal areas.
- **The initial rapid development stage.** Home builders start con-

structuring new subdivisions with homes selling at lower prices than in the coastal counties. Some industrial warehouses are built. A significant amount of land is converted from agriculture or vacant land to housing and warehousing uses, but most land remains untouched by growth pressures. Few jobs exist in the subregion and many workers have long commutes.

- **The residential services stage.** Enough new homes have been built to justify creation of shopping centers, restaurants, dry cleaners, and other businesses servicing the new residents. Warehouses are built for distribution centers for Southern California. This creates some local jobs but few new businesses are established, and many residents still commute to jobs located in other areas.
- **The early-development stage.** Entrepreneurs start opening new firms or branches of existing ones aimed at using local workers to create products and services. Some of these firms are involved in the logistics industry because of their connection to the networks of major highways and rail lines crossing the Inland Empire and, to a lesser extent, Ontario International Airport. More higher-cost housing is built as growth pressures raise land prices. More skilled, higher-paid workers move in, who in turn attract more firms.

- **The mature growth and development stage.** Large-scale communities have been created that contain housing at differing quality and price levels, and all the activities that service this housing, as well as a notable number of employers. Commercial activity shifts away from low-density warehousing to higher-intensity office and industrial uses. Some export-oriented activities other than distribution facilities appear.⁸ More high-density housing is constructed, as is higher-priced single-family housing. Larger and more high-end shopping centers are developed.

The Process of Urbanization

Most of the subregions of the Inland Empire have been affected by growth emanating from the coastal counties directly west. Thus, Temecula in southern Riverside County was and is most affected by growth from San Diego County and southern Orange County; by contrast, Rancho Cucamonga, Ontario, and San Bernardino, farther north, were most affected by overflows from central Los Angeles County. This process is typical of what has happened at the edges of large metropolitan areas all over the nation.

As this evolution toward mature urbanization occurred along the

Most of the subregions of the Inland Empire have been affected by growth emanating from the coastal counties directly west.

western edge of the two counties, it drove additional growth farther east onto still-inexpensive land, where the entire process was repeated. However, this evolution often skipped over some parcels and took place at different speeds in different subregions. So a relatively uneven pattern of development occurred in various parts of the Inland Empire. Also, three subregions—the Palm Springs area in Riverside County and the two mountain subregions in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties—have unique characteristics that had earlier spawned a different development process there because of amenities that attracted tourists, retirees, and second-home buyers.

As a result of this uneven developmental process, different stages are now visible simultaneously in various parts of the Inland Empire. These can be seen as distinct subregions, each roughly forming a band running north and south, at different distances from the western edge of the two counties.

Local citizen resistance to higher-density projects could limit population growth.

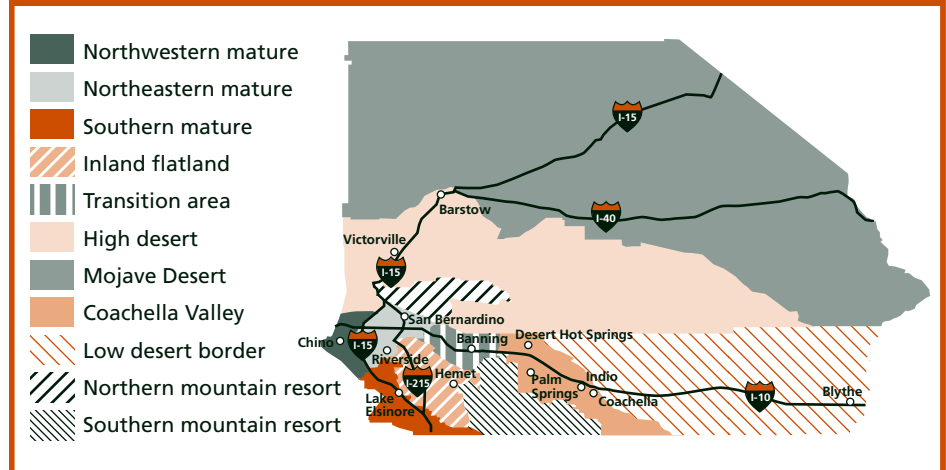
In the future, continued growth in Southern California as a whole will stimulate population and job growth in the Inland Empire because it still has more vacant, relatively inexpensive land than any other part of the region. This will mean further expansion eastward and higher-density in-fill projects in areas already built up. However, local citizen resistance to higher-density projects could limit population growth.

Geographic Subregions of the Inland Empire

The Inland Empire can be divided into 11 subregions (Figure 2), each relatively homogeneous in terms of its evolutionary stage of development, as follows:

1. **The northwestern mature urban development area** along the western borders of the two coun-

Figure 2. Inland Empire Subregions



ties around Ontario International Airport and including the extreme western portions of the cities of Riverside and San Bernardino. This subregion includes urban areas on the western side of I-15 north of the junction of I-15 and State Route 91. This subregion has been most heavily influenced by growth forces from Los Angeles County and parts of Orange County. At present, what remains of large dairy farms near Chino and Ontario are being converted from agricultural to urban uses.

2. **The northeastern mature urban development area** lying on the eastern side of the same portions of I-15 described above as bounding the northwestern mature urban development area. This subregion includes many older neighborhoods within the

cities of San Bernardino and Riverside. The older part of the City of Riverside, which is in this subregion, has among the most affluent neighborhoods in the Inland Empire. However, much of its eastern territory has been more recently developed than the northwestern mature urban development area. Therefore, the land in this subregion is less costly than land in the northwestern mature urban development area, which lies closer to the coastal counties. Consequently, most housing prices here are lower. The ratio of jobs to residents is also lower.

3. **The southern relatively mature urban development area** along the western border of Riverside County south of the intersection of I-15 and State Route 91 along both sides of I-15 south to the San

Diego County boundary. This includes Murrieta, Temecula, and Lake Elsinore. This subregion has been heavily influenced by growth forces from San Diego County and southern Orange County. A portion of this subregion along the Orange County border contains national forest lands not subject to development.

4. **The inland flatland area** in Riverside County along both sides of I-215 from the junction with I-15 in Murrieta north to the vicinity of March Air Reserve Base and extending east along State Route 74 through Hemet to the San Jacinto Mountains, and north along State Route 79. This subregion contains a large amount of relatively flat, formerly agricultural or vacant land on which dozens of new residential subdivisions are being built or have recently been completed. The subregion is mainly in the initial residential development phase, although some parts are more fully developed and others are still agricultural or vacant. At its eastern end, much of the land is still used for dairies or other farming but is gradually coming under residential- and some industrial- or warehouse-development pressures.

5. **The transition area** to the Coachella Valley between the northeastern mature urban development subregion and the Coachella Valley subregion where rapid develop-

ment of housing is occurring as growth pushes eastward from the northeastern mature urban development subregion into Banning, Beaumont, and surrounding towns.

6. **The high desert area** along both sides of I-15 north of the junction with I-215 in San Bernardino County to Barstow and slightly east. This subregion includes Hesperia, Apple Valley, Victorville, and Barstow. It is undergoing a rapid residential and service-business growth pattern.

7. **The Mojave Desert area** lying north and east of Barstow and extending eastward along I-15 and I-40 to the eastern border of California. This is a relatively undeveloped and uninhabited subregion, as yet not much affected by growth pressures. A significant portion of the land here is public or military land.

8. **The Coachella Valley area** along I-10 east of Banning extending to the Salton Sea. This subregion contains the unique and relatively wealthy resort and retirement areas from Palm Springs to La Quinta as well as a lower-income agricultural area at its eastern end.

9. **The border low desert area** from the Salton Sea to the Arizona border along I-10. This subregion has not yet been heavily affected by growth pressures from

the west and remains mainly agricultural or desert.

10. **The northern mountain resort area** in the highlands along State Route 18 from Crestline to Lake Arrowhead to Big Bear City. This mountainous area contains vacation homes and resort communities that cater to visitors from all over Southern California and beyond, but it has a very small permanent population.

11. **The southern mountain resort area** in the highlands of the San Jacinto Mountains. This is a much smaller and less fully developed resort area than the northern mountain resort area described above, with fewer residents and fewer resort facilities. Idyllwild is the principal town.

Population and Housing Characteristics of the Inland Empire and Its Subregions

Populations and population densities vary tremendously across the Inland Empire's subregions and correspond with the stages of development noted above.⁹ The three mature subregions contain 1.9 million people (Table 2). Fifty-eight percent of all Inland Empire residents in 2000 lived in the three mature development areas, with the remaining 42 percent living in the eight less-developed areas. The five areas with the largest populations each held more than 300,000

Table 2. Population Characteristics of the Inland Empire and Its Subregions

	All Subregions	Subregion Number										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Total population in 2000	3,254,821	632,070	1,060,778	197,506	456,093	110,877	349,707	32,841	318,125	25,955	56,431	14,438
% of total	100.00	19.42	32.59	6.07	14.01	3.41	10.74	1.01	9.77	0.80	1.73	0.44
Households	1,034,812	187,340	315,293	62,713	151,430	40,980	120,954	7,719	116,624	5,760	20,654	5,826
Persons per household	3.15	3.37	3.36	3.15	3.01	2.71	2.89	4.25	2.73	4.51	2.73	2.48
Number of census tracts	587	83	182	34	106	23	59	8	71	8	10	3
Riverside County	342	29	77	34	106	14	0	0	71	8	0	3
San Bernardino County	245	54	105	0	0	9	59	8	0	0	10	0
Ethnic groups, %												
White	47.4	42.9	35.4	64.9	51.4	68.7	62.0	73.7	47.8	35.9	72.2	81.9
Hispanic	37.8	40.7	46.7	24.0	31.1	22.2	24.6	17.2	46.4	46.4	22.1	12.1
African American	7.5	6.7	10.4	3.9	9.6	3.0	7.0	1.9	2.0	13.4	1.0	0.8
Asian	4.1	7.0	4.2	3.4	4.2	2.5	2.0	1.3	2.0	1.2	0.8	1.6
Multiracial/other	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7	4.3	6.0	1.8	3.1	3.9	3.5
Age distribution of population, %												
Under 18	31.4	31.6	33.8	33.8	30.7	27.3	30.5	26.0	27.0	21.8	28.3	23.1
18 to 25	11.1	11.3	12.2	8.7	10.8	8.7	12.0	6.7	9.5	14.6	8.2	6.2
26 to 35	14.1	16.1	15.0	13.9	12.4	11.0	12.5	9.7	12.7	21.6	11.2	7.5
36 to 50	21.8	23.9	21.2	24.5	20.9	21.2	21.4	21.7	18.9	25.3	25.0	24.4
51 to 64	11.2	10.6	10.0	10.2	11.0	13.6	11.9	18.0	13.6	9.6	16.3	19.4
65 and older	10.5	6.5	7.8	8.9	14.3	18.3	11.7	17.9	18.4	7.2	11.0	19.4
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 2000 decennial census.

Notes: See Figure 2 for subregion locations. Ethnic groups are mutually exclusive.

residents in 2000; together, they encompassed 87 percent of the entire Inland Empire population. The smallest four subregions in population contained only 4 percent of the overall population, although one of these—the Mojave Desert area—was by far the largest subregion in physical area. About one-

third of all Inland Empire residents lived in the northeastern mature urban development area, which is home to over one million residents. Population data for the 48 cities in these subregions (Table 3) show that the three fastest-growing subregions from 2000 to 2004 were the southern mature urban

development area, the transition area, and the Coachella Valley area.

As in the rest of California, no racial or ethnic group constitutes a majority of the population of the Inland Empire. As of 2003, non-Hispanic whites made up 44 percent of the population and Hispanics made up 41 percent.

African Americans (7%) and Asians (4.5%) made up small shares, but these groups have experienced strong rates of increase.¹⁰ Table 2 reveals considerable variation in the ethnic compositions of the subregions in 2000. The Hispanic or Latino share ranged from a low of 12 percent in the small southern mountain resort area to a high of 47 percent in the northeastern mature urban development area. Among the four most populous subregions, Hispanics made up 40 percent of the population, only slightly above the 38 percent reported in the 2000 census for the entire Inland Empire.

The Inland Empire has a young population. The median age is 31 years, compared to 34 for the entire state; 30 percent of the Inland Empire's population is composed of children. This is largely the consequence of the migration of young adults and families from coastal areas. The age distributions of the populations in the 11 subregions vary considerably. The proportion of children under age 18 is largest in the three mature subregions, where about one-third of all residents are in that group. Children make up about one-fourth of all residents in the transition, Mojave Desert, Coachella Valley, and southern mountain resort subregions. At the other end of the age scale, those age 65 and older constitute high percentages of the population in the southern

mountain resort, Coachella Valley, and transition subregions, because those regions attract many retired persons. This age group is relatively small in the three mature subregions and the border low desert area. The three mature subregions, which contain 58 percent of all Inland Empire residents, have the youngest families and the greatest proportion of children.

Educational attainment levels are relatively low in the Inland Empire. Only 18 percent of adults ages 25 and older have a bachelor's degree, compared to 30 percent of adults in the rest of the state. Data from the 2000 census indicate that in every one of the Inland Empire's 11 subregions, the share of college graduates is lower than in the rest of the state. The Palm Springs area had the highest share of college graduates (27%), but other parts of the Coachella Valley had very low shares. Among the more populated subregions, the high desert area had the lowest levels of educational attainment (only one in ten adults age 25 and older had graduated from college) whereas the mature subregions in the western part of the county had substantially higher shares (about one in five adults were college graduates).

Housing drives growth in the Inland Empire in at least two important ways. First, the low cost of land, compared to the costs in areas closer to the ocean, makes Inland Empire housing much less

In 2003, 67 percent of the region's households owned their own homes and 33 percent rented.

expensive and in turn makes housing a strong motivator for many people to move there. Second, housing construction is one of the largest industries in the region and has become increasingly important in the recent past. Despite lower average incomes, home ownership rates are quite high in the Inland Empire: In 2003, 67 percent of the region's households owned their own homes and 33 percent rented. In contrast, only 58 percent of all California households owned the house they lived in. In fact, nine subregions—all but the sparsely populated border low desert and Mojave Desert areas—had owner-occupant home percentages well above the state average, with five exceeding 70 percent.¹¹ Many coastal residents move to the Inland Empire to become first-time homeowners; others move to the region for a larger house and local amenities.

The housing cost differential between the Inland Empire and the three counties along the coast

Table 3. Inland Empire City Population Changes, 1980–2004

County and City	Subregion No.	Population January 1, 2004	Absolute Population Change				Percent Change			
			1980–1990	1990–2000	2000–2004	1980–2004	1980–1990	1990–2000	2000–2004	1980–2004
Riverside County		1,776,700	507,214	374,974	231,313	1,113,501	76	32	15	220
Banning	4	27,200	6,552	2,990	3,638	13,180	47	15	15	201
Beaumont	4	16,350	2,867	1,699	4,966	9,532	42	18	44	332
Blythe	8	21,950	1,643	12,015	1,487	15,145	24	142	7	922
Calimesa	4	7,350	*	7,139	211	7,350		–	3	–
Canyon Lake	2	10,650	*	9,952	698	10,650			7	–
Cathedral City	7	48,600	30,085	12,562	5,953	48,600		42	14	162
Coachella	7	27,650	7,767	5,828	4,926	18,521	85	34	22	238
Corona	1	141,800	38,152	49,023	16,834	104,009	101	65	13	273
Desert Hot Springs	7	17,700	11,668	4,914	1,118	17,700		42	7	152
Hemet	3	63,800	13,640	22,718	4,988	41,346	61	63	8	303
Indian Wells	7	4,430	1,253	1,169	614	3,036	90	44	16	242
Indio	7	59,100	15,239	12,266	9,984	37,489	71	33	20	246
Lake Elsinore	2	35,350	12,334	10,612	6,422	29,368	206	58	22	238
La Quinta	7	32,500	11,215	12,479	8,806	32,500		111	37	290
Moreno Valley	3	155,100	118,779	23,602	12,719	155,100		20	9	131
Murietta	2	77,700	*	44,282	33,418	77,700		–	75	–
Norco	1	25,500	3,570	855	1,343	5,768	18	4	6	162
Palm Desert	7	44,800	11,451	17,903	3,645	32,999	97	77	9	288
Palm Springs	7	44,250	7,785	2,663	1,443	11,891	24	7	3	153
Perris	3	41,300	14,673	14,689	5,111	34,473	215	68	14	235
Rancho Mirage	7	15,500	3,497	3,471	2,251	9,219	56	35	17	264
Riverside	1	277,000	55,955	28,620	21,834	106,409	33	13	9	190
San Jacinto	3	26,700	9,112	7,569	2,921	19,602	128	47	12	215
Temecula	2	77,500	27,099	30,617	19,784	77,500		113	34	286
Sum of above cities		1,299,780	404,336	339,637	175,114	919,087	106	43	16	227
Balance of county		476,920	102,878	35,337	56,199	194,414	36	9	13	189

is clearly demonstrated by comparing 1999 and 2005 home sales prices, shown in Table 4. The 1999 median home value in Riverside County was 21 percent lower than the median in Los Angeles County. By 2005, the Riverside County median price had more than doubled, but it was still 21 percent below the Los Angeles

median price. The relative price gap between Riverside County and San Diego County narrowed somewhat (Riverside County median home prices were 30% below San Diego County's in 1999 and 21% below in 2005), but the gap remained large. The median home price in San Bernardino County was even lower—28 percent below

the Los Angeles County median in 1999 and 33 percent lower in 2005. Thus, despite dramatic price increases between 1999 and 2005, the Inland Empire had retained its *relative* home price advantages over more western coastal counties.

Detached single-family homes account for more than 84 percent of all owner-occupied dwellings in

Table 3. continued

County and City	Subregion No.	Population January 1, 2004	Absolute Population Change				Percent Change			
			1980–1990	1990–2000	2000–2004	1980–2004	1980–1990	1990–2000	2000–2004	1980–2004
San Bernardino County		1,886,500	523,364	291,054	177,066	991,484	58	21	10	189
Adelanto	5	21,250	4,627	11,339	3,120	19,086	214	167	17	412
Apple Valley	5	61,300	46,079	8,160	7,061	61,300		18	13	133
Barstow	5	23,200	3,782	–353	2,081	5,510	21	–2	10	146
Big Bear Lake	9	6,025	5,351	87	587	6,025		2	11	113
Chino	1	72,100	19,526	7,486	4,932	31,944	49	13	7	164
Chino Hills	1	76,400	*	66,787	9,613	76,400		*	14	*
Colton	1	50,800	18,963	7,389	3,138	29,490	89	18	7	156
Fontana	1	154,800	50,430	41,394	25,871	117,695	136	47	20	233
Grand Terrace	5	12,250	2,448	680	624	3,752	29	6	5	153
Hesperia	5	70,300	50,418	12,164	7,718	70,300		24	12	139
Highland	1	49,250	34,439	10,166	4,645	49,250		30	10	143
Loma Linda	1	20,950	7,776	211	2,269	10,256	73	1	12	132
Montclair	1	34,750	5,806	4,615	1,701	12,122	26	16	5	209
Needles	6	5,375	5,191	–361	545	5,375		–7	11	104
Ontario	1	167,900	44,359	24,828	9,893	79,080	50	19	6	178
Rancho Cucamonga	1	154,800	45,889	26,334	27,057	99,280	83	26	21	216
Redlands	1	68,800	16,776	3,196	5,209	25,181	38	5	8	150
Rialto	1	98,100	34,921	19,478	6,227	60,626	93	27	7	174
San Bernardino	1	196,300	45,882	20,725	10,899	77,506	39	13	6	169
Twentynine Palms	5	25,950	11,821	2,943	11,186	25,950		25	76	220
Upland	1	72,700	15,727	5,019	4,307	25,053	33	8	6	159
Victorville	5	77,700	26,454	23,355	13,671	63,480	186	57	21	240
Yucaipa	4	47,450	32,819	8,388	6,243	47,450		26	15	145
Yucca Valley	5	18,700	*	16,865	1,835	18,700		*	11	*
Sum of above cities		1,587,150	529,484	320,895	170,432	1,020,811	93	29	12	193
Balance of county		299,350	–6,120	–29,841	6,634	–29,327	*	*	*	*
Total		3,663,200	1,030,578	666,028	408,379	2,104,985	66	26	13	204

Source: Author's calculations based on census counts and California Department of Finance estimates.

*Indicates unincorporated area at the start of the period.

Table 4. Median Home Prices in Selected Counties

County	August 1999	August 2005	Percent Increase 1999–2005
Orange	241,000	617,000	156
San Diego	213,000	493,000	131
Los Angeles	191,000	494,000	159
Riverside	150,000	388,000	159
San Bernardino	137,000	334,000	144

Source: DataQuick.

the Inland Empire. Single-family units also accounted for 38 percent of all rented units in the Inland Empire in 2000, with units in structures containing five or more units accounting for another 34 percent. Altogether, 71 percent of all housing units in the Inland Empire occupied by both owners and renters are either detached or attached single-family units. Owner-occupied units constituted two-thirds of all occupied housing units in 2000.

Economic Characteristics of the Inland Empire and Its Subregions

The Inland Empire has experienced strong job growth, but it remains a region with relatively few jobs in relation to the size of its population. Many of the Inland Empire's workers commute to jobs in coastal counties. In 2000, more than one of every six Inland Empire commuters spent more than 60 minutes one-way to

get to work (Table 5). Commute times were greatest in the more densely settled western subregions, with the longest commutes in the southern relatively mature development subregion, where about one of every four workers spent more than 60 minutes commuting one-way, many to jobs in San Diego County.

Moreover, jobs in the Inland Empire typically have lower wages than elsewhere: The average annual wage per job in 2003 was 12 percent below the national average (\$32,564 versus \$37,130) and 22 percent below the state average (\$41,795).¹² As a result, household incomes are lower and poverty rates are higher in the Inland Empire than elsewhere. The 2004 median household income in the Inland Empire was 13 percent below that for the entire state (\$60,565 in the Inland Empire and \$69,605 for the entire state according to the 2004 American Community Survey). The fraction

of Inland Empire residents with incomes below the poverty level in 2004 was 14.5 percent, compared to 13.3 percent in the entire state.

Incomes vary dramatically across the Inland Empire. The northwestern mature urban development subregion was the most prosperous: It had the highest average income (\$65,226 in 1999) and the highest average owner-occupied home price (Table 5). The southern relatively mature urban development subregion was a close second. These economic data reflect the way parts of the Inland Empire have evolved as growth pressures moved east. The more recently developed communities in the high desert, inland flatland, and transition subregions are less economically mature than the three subregions along the Inland Empire's western border, which felt growth pressures first. The sparsely inhabited Mojave Desert and bordering low desert subregions on the far eastern edges of the Inland Empire have as yet hardly felt growth pressures from the west and so have the lowest incomes and home values among all subregions.

Table 6 shows the percentage shares by industry of Inland Empire and California jobs as of 2004. The Inland Empire has higher percentages of workers in activities focused on serving the growing—but primarily residential—population, with the exception of the transportation and

Table 5. Economic Characteristics of 11 Inland Empire Subregions

	All Subregions	Subregion Number										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
% of workers who commuted by:												
Private vehicles	94	95	94	96	95	96	93	88	94	92	92	94
Public transit	2	2	2	1	1	1	6	1	2	0	2	0
Traveling 60 minutes or more	15	17	14	25	18	10	17	8	6	2	17	17
Average household income in 1999, \$	54,362	65,226	51,110	64,121	49,712	52,316	45,339	41,582	58,860	41,372	57,824	53,832
Household incomes in 1999, %												
Under \$20,000	22	14	23	15	24	25	26	26	24	32	20	26
\$20,000 to \$29,999	13	10	13	9	14	15	15	17	14	16	13	12
\$30,000 to \$44,999	18	16	19	15	18	17	19	21	19	15	17	18
\$45,000 to \$59,999	14	15	14	15	14	13	14	14	13	13	13	12
\$60,000 to \$74,999	11	13	11	14	11	10	10	9	9	10	12	10
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11	14	11	15	10	10	8	7	8	9	12	9
\$100,000 to \$124,999	6	8	5	8	5	5	4	3	5	3	6	6
\$125,000 to \$149,999	2	4	2	4	2	2	1	1	3	1	3	2
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	1	2	3
\$200,000 and over	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	0	3	1	2	2
All incomes, %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
% of aggregate household incomes received by households with incomes of \$200,000 and over	1.6	10.7	8.4	1.9	1.0	1.9	0.7	0.4	3.5	0.9	2.2	1.8
% of homes owner-occupied	67	67	61	76	71	74	68	57	66	59	71	79
Average value of owner-occupied housing units, \$	149,772	194,257	135,465	193,055	129,641	135,475	105,676	97,196	181,904	100,277	180,303	174,824

Source: 2000 decennial census.

Notes: All data are for 2000, unless otherwise noted. Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 6. Employment by Industry, Inland Empire and California

Industry	Percent of total workers in 2004 in		Ratio (Inland Empire to California)
	Inland Empire	California	
All levels of government	18.1	16.0	1.13
Federal	1.5	1.7	0.87
State	2.3	3.1	0.73
Local	14.4	11.3	1.28
Retail trade	8.5	6.3	1.35
Manufacturing	13.0	10.8	1.20
Leisure and hospitality	10.3	10.3	1.00
Health care and social assistance	9.9	9.7	1.02
Construction	8.9	8.7	1.02
Administrative support and waste services	9.5	5.7	1.67
Transportation and warehousing	7.1	6.4	1.10
Wholesale trade	4.2	2.9	1.48
Financial activities	3.8	4.4	0.87
Professional, scientific, technical services	3.9	6.1	0.64
Educational services	2.6	6.1	0.44
Information	1.2	1.8	0.66

Source: Author's calculations based on industry employment estimates from the California Employment Development Department.

warehousing industries. The construction industry is exceptionally large because of the need for more homes and other new structures to handle constant growth. The high share in local government is driven by education and includes K–12 teachers. In contrast, the region is underrepresented in some high wage sectors, such as financial activities, professional and business services (especially professional, scientific, and technical services), and information.

One notable component of the Inland Empire's economy is the

logistics industry, built partly on the shipment of goods eastward out of the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.¹³ About 30 percent of the value of all waterborne imports into the 50 largest U.S. ports in 2003 came through those two ports.¹⁴ In 2002, more than 10,000 containers per day were being offloaded in the combined port complex.¹⁵ In the first six months of 2003, these two ports handled 42.6 percent of all cargo containers carrying imports into the United States and 23.6 percent of all those sending exports else-

where.¹⁶ About 50 percent of the goods arriving in these ports are bound for locations outside California. Changes in business practices (e.g., same-day, point-of-sale inventories) have also led to growth in distribution centers and warehousing.

Key Challenges

The challenges facing the Inland Empire are closely related to its rapid population growth. In 2005, the region added more than 2,000 new residents per week. These newcomers need more homes, jobs, roads, schools, parks, water supply and sewage removal systems, police and fire services, medical care, and all the other services that governments are supposed to provide.

Decentralized Land-Use Planning

There are dozens of separate communities within both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, each responsible for planning and approving land-use developments within its own borders. Efforts have been undertaken in recent years to address concerns about the lack of coordination; the Riverside County Integrated Project, an ambitious effort to coordinate land-use, transportation, and conservation planning in that county, is one example.¹⁷ Regional agencies within the Inland Empire, including the San Bernardino

Associated Governments, the Western Riverside Council of Governments, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, and the Riverside County Transportation Commission, also work to coordinate planning. One area of success appears to be in transportation planning, with voters approving innovative financing that rewards local jurisdictions for following regional plans. However, coordination of future land-use developments remains a major challenge facing Inland Empire leaders. Effective coordination could improve outcomes for each jurisdiction and for the region as a whole. Of course, effective regional planning has been elusive in California for some time, and it is possible that active state support will be necessary to overcome some of the disincentives to regional collaboration.¹⁸

Housing and Infrastructure

The Inland Empire supplies a large share of Southern California's new housing and offers the least expensive housing in metropolitan Southern California. In 2003, the two counties of the Inland Empire granted permits for 41,880 units, or 805 housing units per week, 115 a day. That was 22 percent of all the new units granted permits in the entire state, although the Inland Empire contained only 10 percent of the state's population in July 2003.¹⁹ Key concerns here revolve around paying for the

infrastructure necessary for new housing, as well as the preservation of open space and environmentally important lands. But the housing industry is also a key part of the Inland Empire's overall economy, with construction accounting for more than 9 percent of the Inland Empire's jobs, compared to only 5 percent statewide. In fact, because housing construction has been increasing in the Inland Empire, both absolutely and as a share of statewide housing production, housing is becoming even more significant economically. There are some signs of increasing resistance to further rapid growth, especially in the mature subregions. Nevertheless, the Inland Empire still includes the lowest-cost housing in Southern California (with the exception of Imperial County). Because there is still a substantial amount of open land within the Inland Empire, its frontier role may last for several more decades. In the high desert subregion, the inland flatland subregion, the transition subregion, and parts of the Coachella Valley subregion, new housing construction has accelerated in the past few years.

Employment

Another challenge facing the Inland Empire is the creation of jobs for its residents. The Inland Empire has long been partly a bedroom community for coastal counties, but the share of Inland Empire residents working within

The challenges facing the Inland Empire are closely related to its rapid population growth. In 2005, the region added more than 2,000 new residents per week.

the region is rising. In fact, job growth in the Inland Empire has recently exceeded that of the coastal counties: From 1990 through 2004, the Inland Empire gained 437,000 nonfarm jobs, whereas Los Angeles County lost 143,000 and Orange County gained 288,000. In percentage terms, the Inland Empire gained 59 percent, Los Angeles County lost 3.5 percent, and Orange County gained 25 percent.²⁰ However, wages for Inland Empire jobs are relatively low and have not kept pace with increases in wages elsewhere in the state and nation. This situation poses great challenges to policymakers and others concerned with economic development, who must help generate jobs for large numbers of workers and seek to improve labor force skills in the region to attract more highly skilled and better paying jobs.

Education

Educating the many young people living and arriving in the Inland Empire is another major challenge posed by rapid growth. The public school districts in these two counties contained about 750,000 students in 2003, roughly the same as the Los Angeles Unified School District.²¹ The Inland Empire had been adding about 19,500 students per year in the previous decade, gaining 35 percent over that period. Coping with these huge additions to the school-age population required constantly expanding the area's school capacity, as shown in Table 7.²² Projections of school enrollment suggest that growth will slow but remain strong, increasing by 21 percent over the next ten years.²³

Education officials in Riverside County, where 25 languages are spoken in the homes of its school-age population, estimated that 23 percent of students were limited in their ability to speak English. In the two counties, the percentage of Latino students has risen notably in recent years. In San Bernardino County, 32 percent of all public K–12 students were Latino and 53 percent were white in the 1990–1991 school year. By 2004–2005, this had almost exactly reversed, with 52 percent identified as Latino and 28 percent white. In Riverside County in 2004–2005, 52 percent of K–12 students were Latino and 33 percent were white.²⁴ In both

Table 7. Schools and School Enrollment in the Inland Empire, 2004–2005

	Riverside County	San Bernardino County	Total
Elementary schools	237	306	543
Middle schools	69	76	145
High schools	60	46	106
Charter and other schools	52	71	123
Total public schools, 2004–2005	418	499	917
Enrollment K–12, 2004–2005 ^a	380,267	412,514	792,781
% Latino	51.8	50.5	51.12
% white	33.4	30.2	31.73
% African American	7.8	11.5	9.73
% all other	7.0	7.8	7.42
Increase since 1993–1994	128,120	110,011	238,131
Average no. of students in K–12 schools, 2004–2005	1,039.0	963.8	998.5
Average no. of K–12 schools added yearly since 1993	12.33	11.41	23.74

Sources: Websites of Riverside County Office of Education at <http://www.rcoe.k12.ca.us/report2005/diversity.html> (ethnic composition), <http://www.rcoe.k12.ca.us/report2005/enrollment.html> (enrollment), and <http://www.rcoe.k12.ca.us/report2005/demographics.html> (number of schools). Also, see the websites of San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools at <http://www.sbcss.k12.ca.us/sbStats/table06abcG.pdf> (enrollment) and San Bernardino County Directory of Public Schools at http://www.sbcss.k12.ca.us/news/gen_info/resources/dir_04-05.pdf, p.137 (number of schools and total K–12 enrollment), and <http://www.sbcss.k12.ca.us/sbStats/table06abcG.pdf> (ethnic composition). All websites accessed on February 22, 2005.

^aThese figures are based on enrollments in 2003–2004.

counties, African Americans make up about one in ten students, and Asians make up about one in 20 students.

Transportation

Providing adequate public transportation and roads is an ongoing challenge throughout the state, but in the Inland Empire, the challenge is even greater because of rapid population increases and the increasing role of the logistics and transportation industries. As noted above, many of the goods

offloaded at the large coastal ports in Southern California travel through the Inland Empire. Many containers are initially moved from the two ports to intermodal yards where they are loaded onto either trucks or railroad cars for travel to their final destinations. The area's two railroads are operating close to the maximum capacity of their present tracks, and trucks are already overloading local roads with heavy traffic, contributing to the region's air pollution problems. There is a need

for more freight-handling capacity to cope with both existing and even larger future trade from Asia. Some regional experts have proposed solutions such as (1) more tracks for both major railroads, (2) at least two more intermodal transfer yards, (3) many railroad overpasses where existing tracks cross roads at grade, interrupting road traffic, (4) exclusive truck lanes because traffic congestion slows the movement of trucks out of ports and intermodal yards, and (5) mitigation of the serious air pollution caused by the diesel engines on trucks and trains used to transport freight through the Inland Empire.²⁵ Some of these proposals are controversial, and funding sources are uncertain.

Conclusion

Rapid population growth is shaping both present conditions and the future course of life in this enormous portion of California. Although that growth is felt in almost every part of the Inland Empire, the region is not monolithic. The western edges of the region are at later stages in the development process, having experienced strong population growth for many decades. Those regions are increasingly serving as locations for new jobs. Other subregions are truly on the forefront of new growth. New subdivisions such as those in the high desert

are now the leading edge of the extensive Southern California urban area. Those subregions contain many new homes but few jobs and are at the beginning stages of a development process that has occurred repeatedly throughout Southern California.

The spillover of economic and population growth from coastal areas to inland areas is occurring throughout the state. The Inland Empire has the longest regional history of such growth and serves as an example of what is happening at a smaller scale in other inland areas. Some may view the rapid growth of the Inland Empire as a cautionary tale, but others may view that growth as the sign of a vibrant region developing its own economy and identity. In either case, the Inland Empire will continue to be at the forefront of population growth in California. The ability of leaders and of the millions of residents who make up the Inland Empire to meet the tremendous challenges of its likely future growth, and to cope with the relatively predictable evolution those challenges are producing, will affect the future of the entire state of California. ♦

Notes

¹ Metropolitan areas as designated by the Office of Management and Budget include entire counties or groups of counties even if much of the county is not urbanized.

² This rate is based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates of state population growth from 2003 to 2004 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004a) and California Department of Finance estimates of population growth from 2003 to 2004 for individual counties (California Department of Finance, 2004a).

³ California Department of Finance (2004b).

⁴ Data on components of change (births, deaths, domestic migration, and international migration) in all U.S. counties from 2000 to 2004 can be found in U.S. Census Bureau (2005a).

⁵ These estimates of employment by industry were developed by the California Employment Development Department.

⁶ This estimate is based on the 2004 American Community Survey, which includes all forms of commuting.

⁷ Data on the population of California counties in 2005 are from California Department of Finance (2005).

⁸ Examples in the Inland Empire are small aerospace industries, defense manufacturing firms, and firms connected with the March Air Reserve Base.

⁹ In this report, each of the 587 census tracts in the Inland Empire is assigned to one of these 11 subregions. Some updated population totals are provided for the cities in the region, with both the California Department of Finance and Census Bureau providing recent estimates.

¹⁰ Two percent of the region's population was non-Hispanic multiracial, and less than 1 percent was American Indian. Population and education statistics in this section are based on the 2003 American Community Survey.

¹¹ Regional figures are based on the 2003 American Community Survey, and subregional figures are from the 2000 decennial census.

¹² Wage data are estimates from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

¹³ Transportation and warehousing is an important component of this industry.

¹⁴ U.S. Waterborne Foreign Commerce (2003).

¹⁵ Haveman and Hummels (2004), p. 10.

¹⁶ U.S. Maritime Commission.

¹⁷ See <http://www.rcip.org/>.

¹⁸ See Barbour (2002) for a thorough discussion of metropolitan planning in California.

¹⁹ Based on California Department of Finance estimates.

²⁰ These estimates of employment by industry were developed by the California Employment Development Department.

²¹ Private schools account for a relatively small share of enrollment in the region. In 2000, all private schools in these two counties contained 66,611 students in grades K–12, or 8.73 percent of all public and private students in those grades.

²² These data are mainly from websites of the Department of Education in each county. See www.rcoe.k12.ca.us/report2004/enrollment.html for Riverside County and www.sbcss.k12.ca.us/sbstats/sbstat.htm for San Bernardino County.

²³ California Department of Finance (2004c).

²⁴ This information is from the California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, available at <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.

²⁵ These experts include Norman King, Executive Director of the San Bernardino Associated Governments, John Husing, of Economics and Politics, Inc., and Andrew McCue of the University of California at Riverside.

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