



1.3.1 Population and Employment

The Dallas/Ft. Worth region is growing at a tremendous pace, placing significant demands on the transportation system. Population in the region is forecast to grow by almost 80% between 2000 and 2030. Employment in the region is forecast to grow by almost 72% in this same time period. Growth within the area within one-half mile of the proposed LRT alignment will be strong as well, especially in terms of employment. In 2000, employment in the vicinity of the proposed alignment outnumbered population by over 41,600 jobs. In 2025, the surplus of jobs over population in this same area is expected to grow to more than 87,200. When the area is expanded to include the entire Las Colinas and DFW Airport areas, the surplus of jobs over population in 2030 jumps to 272,300. Current population and employment and forecast growth are shown in **Table 1-1**.

**TABLE 1-1
FORECAST POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH**

Area	Population			Employment		
	2000 ¹	2030	% Difference	2000	2030	% Difference
DFW Region ²	5,067,400	9,107,900	79.7%	3,158,200	5,416,700	71.5%
Dallas County	2,232,476	2,817,191	26.2%	1,745,100	2,529,400	44.9%
City of Dallas	1,202,592	1,404,847	16.8%	1,038,314	1,390,219	33.9%
City of Irving	196,632	225,714	14.8%	165,435	276,941	67.4%
DFW Airport Area	4,962	4,950	-0.2%	48,785	85,212	74.7%
Las Colinas Area	25,066	38,203	52.4%	77,992	142,985	83.3%
Irving/DFW Alignment ³	16,473	21,850	32.6%	58,081	109,106	87.9%

¹ NCTCOG estimate adjusted from 2000 Census count; does not include group quarters

² Ten-county region as defined by NCTCOG

³ Defined as the geographic area within one-half mile of the proposed LRT alignment and based on NCTCOG Traffic Survey Zone data

Source: NCTCOG 2030 Demographic Forecast, 2003

1.3.2 Travel Patterns and Congestion

The primary flow of traffic within the corridor is north and south along the major arterials within Irving (Belt Line Road, MacArthur Boulevard, and O'Connor Boulevard), and northwest and southeast along the central freeway of the corridor, SH 114, as well as Spur 348 (Northwest Highway). SH 114 and Spur 348 exhibit traditional commuter traffic patterns in that most traffic is traveling southeast towards Dallas during the AM peak, and most is traveling northwest away from Dallas during the PM peak. However, the Las Colinas Urban Center is a center of employment within the corridor which causes some reverse commuting on SH 114 between Las Colinas and Dallas. Finally, SH 161 (the President George Bush Turnpike) provides a cross-town route, which is an alternative to the more heavily traveled IH 35E when traveling from IH 635 to SH 183 or the south DFW Airport entrance.

Traffic volumes in the Dallas urbanized area are considered some of the highest in Texas. The project corridor is bounded on the east by IH 35E, which carries an average of 226,000 vehicles per day north of the corridor. In addition, the project corridor is just south of IH 635 (LBJ Freeway) which, when it travels through north Dallas, carries the highest volumes of traffic in the Dallas urbanized area with approximately 300,000 vehicles per day. The busiest freeway in the project corridor is SH 183 which carries an average of 177,000 vehicles per day near Texas Stadium. SH 114 carries an average of 86,000 to 100,000 vehicles per day, and SH 161 carries an average of 35,000 to 47,000 vehicles per day. Traffic volumes on most of the arterial roadways in the study corridor are also high, with some carrying over 30,000 vehicles per day. Along many of these major arterial roadways, high traffic volumes contribute to congestion delays. The high volume-to-capacity ratios on many of these arterials result in unacceptable traffic operating conditions as defined by local and national standards.