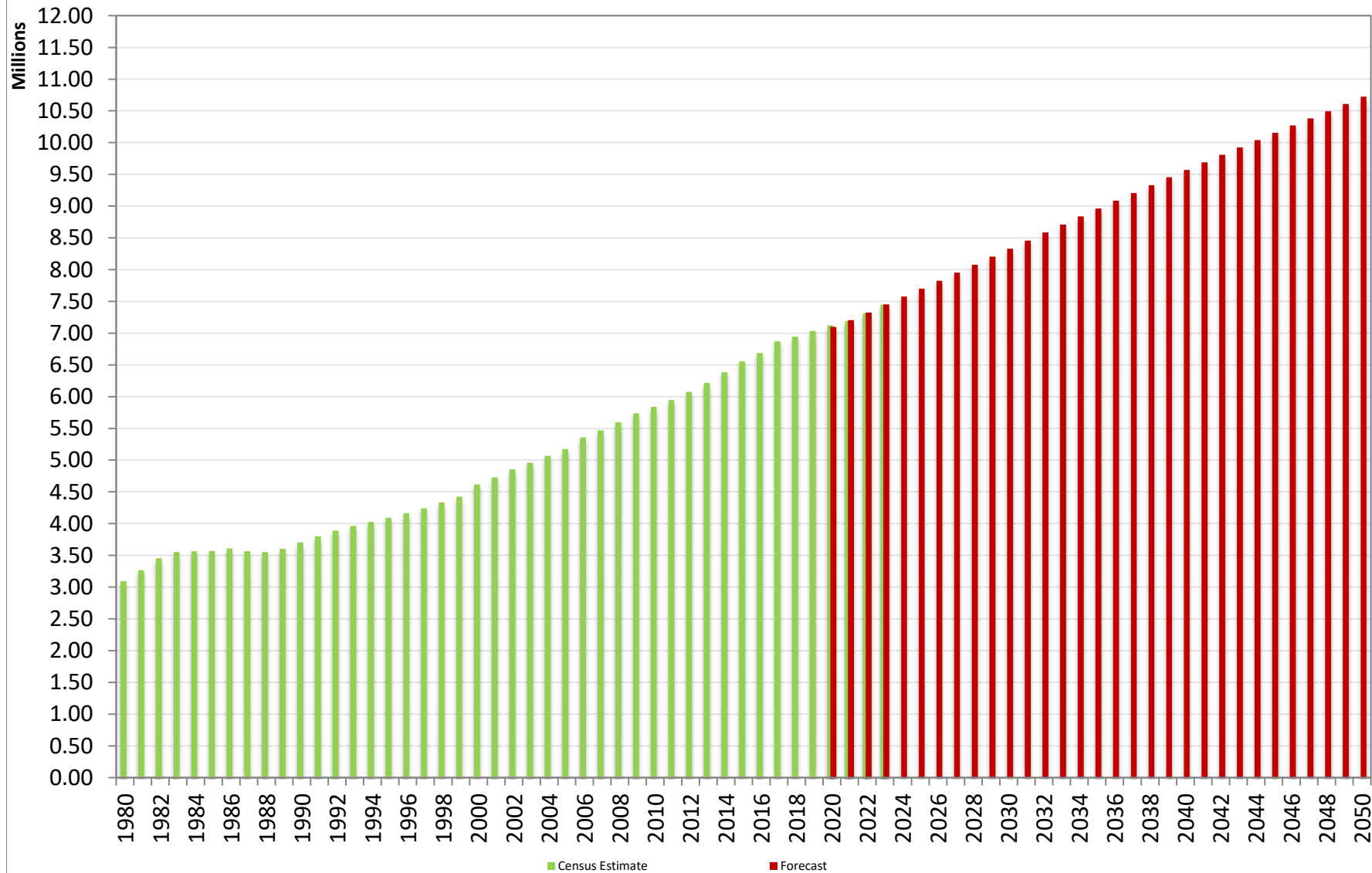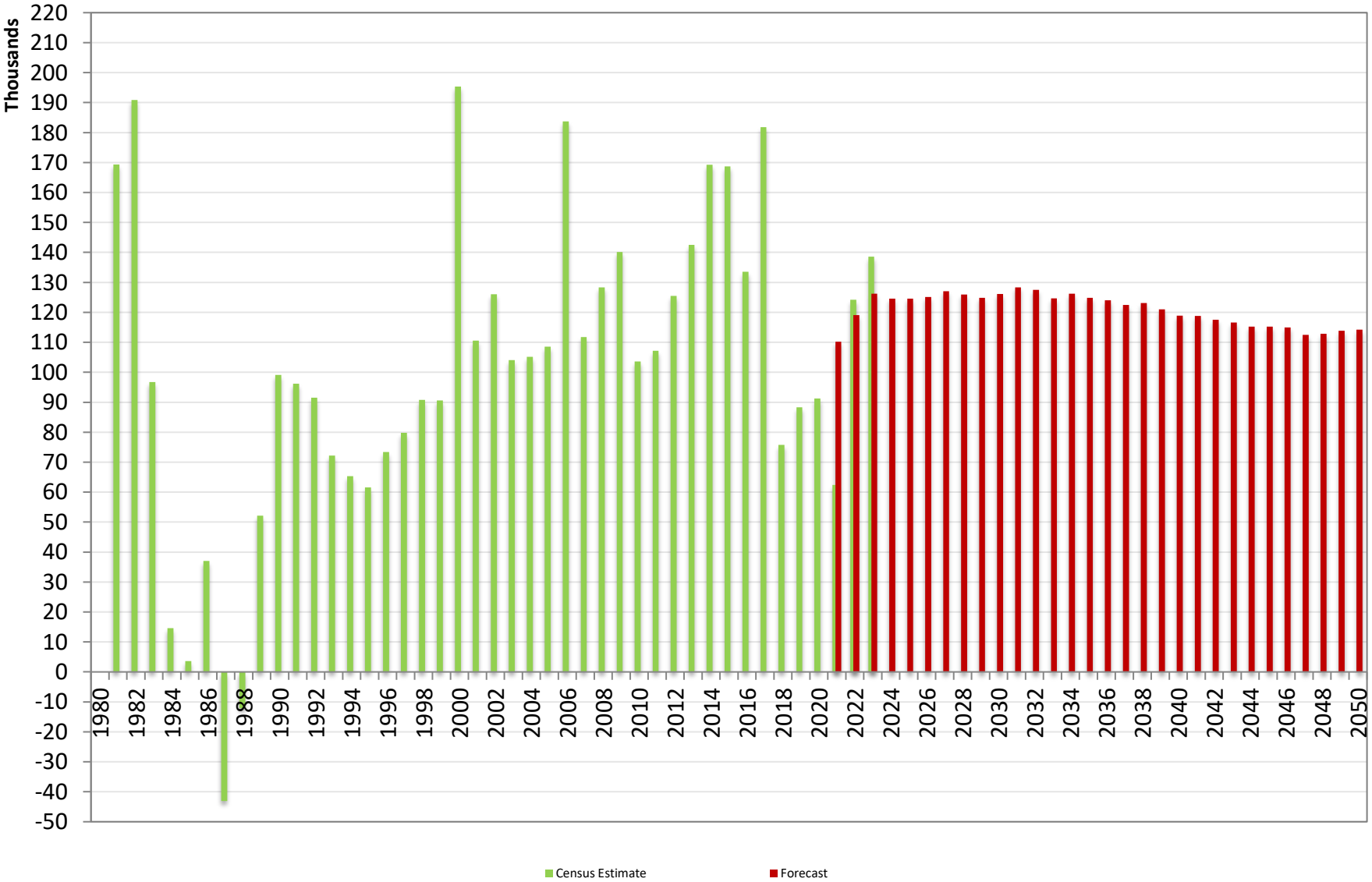**Annual Population**

H-GAC demographic forecast indicates steady population growth in the region, with an average annual increase of 1.4%. The 8-county H-GAC region's population is projected to reach 10.72 million by 2050, representing an increase of 3.6 million people over the next 30 years (2020–2050). Using 2020 as the base year, the overlapping bars for 2020–2023 illustrate how the model's predictions align with population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast

Annual Population Change

The model predicts annual population growth in the region to range from 110,000 to 130,000. The spike in 2006 is attributed to mass relocation following Hurricane Katrina, while the spike in 2000 likely reflects a discrepancy between the 2000 Decennial Census counts and the U.S. Census Bureau's 1999 estimates. It is likely that population growth in the early 2000s mirrored trends from the late 1990s. The downward bars represent years when the region experienced population loss, notably in 1987 and 1988.
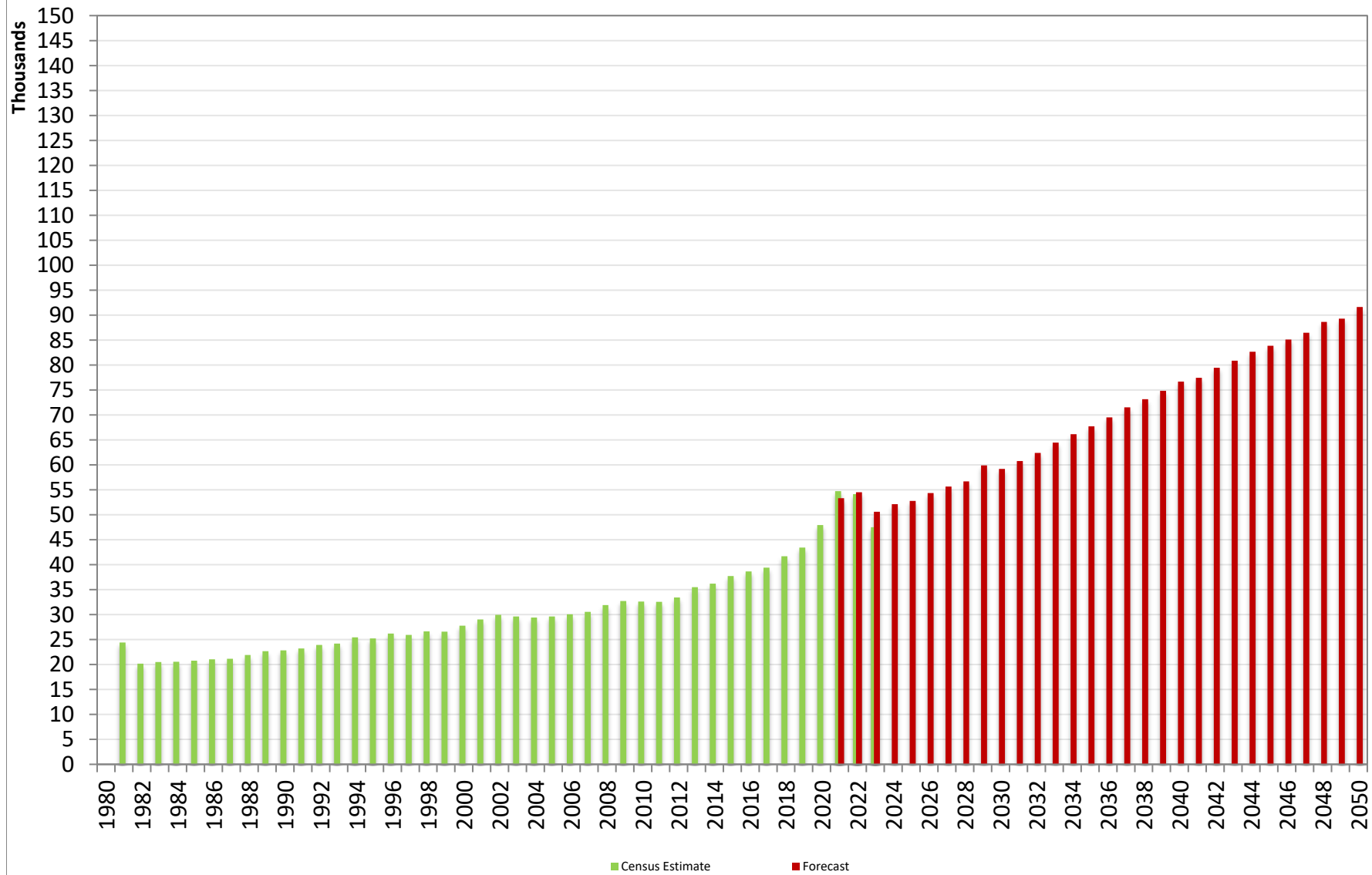
Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast

Annual Number of Births
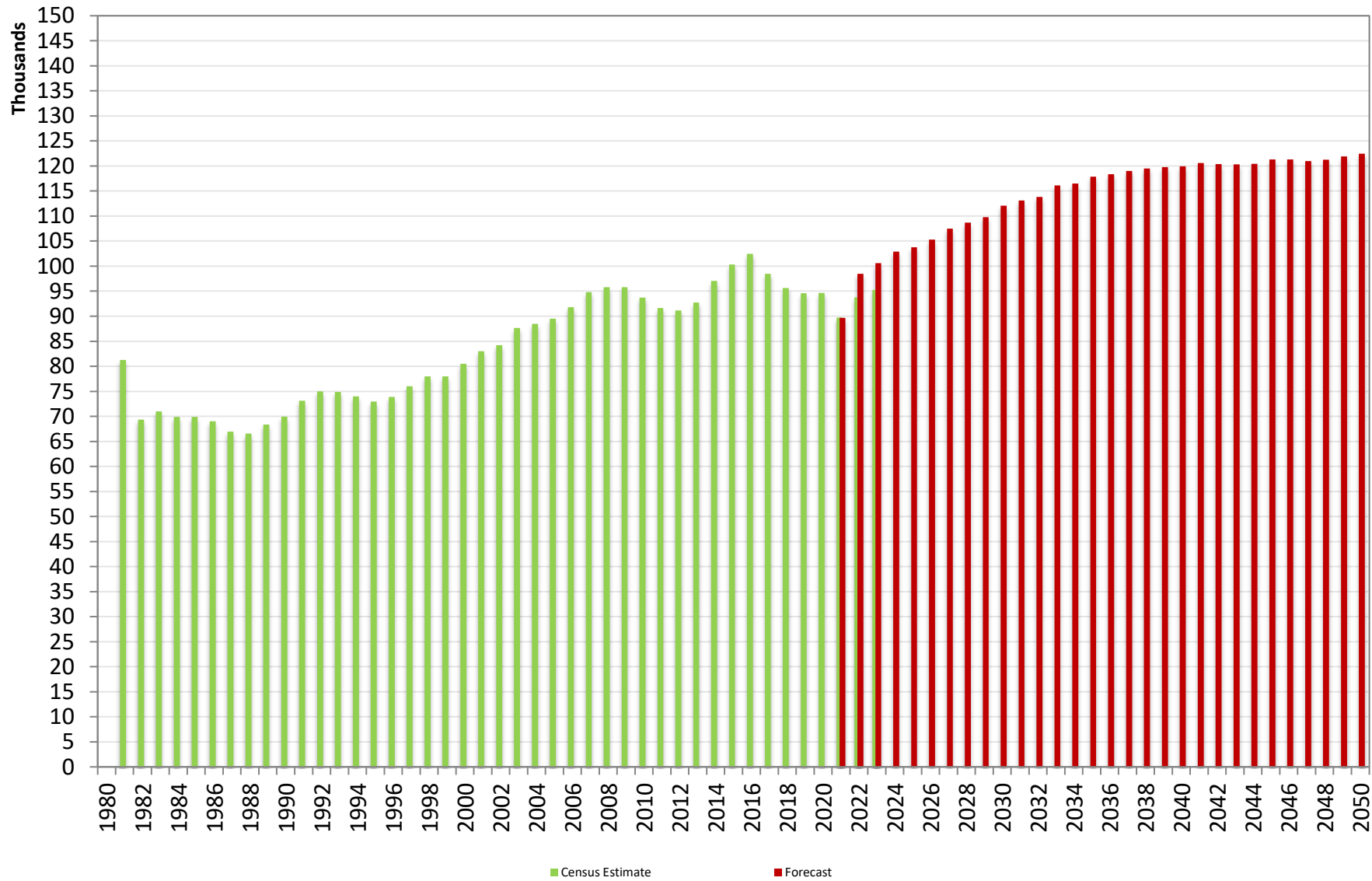
The annual number of births in the region is currently 90,000 to 95,000. The number of births is expected to grow gradually, reaching 122,000 in 2050.
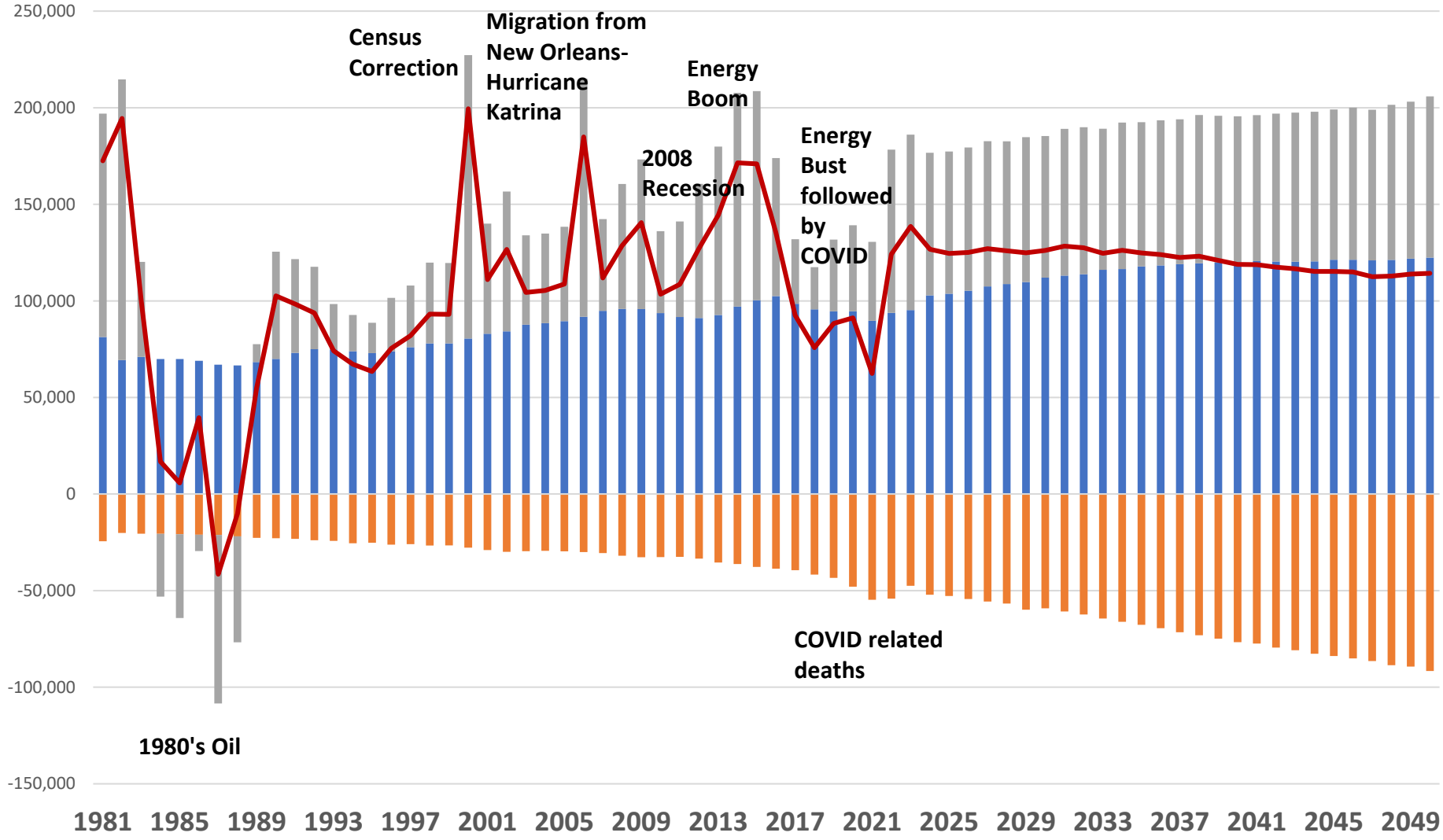
Annual Number of Deaths

Currently, the region experiences over 45,000 deaths annually. The increase in deaths observed between 2020 and 2022 was primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the baby boomer generation continues to age, this number is projected to rise significantly, reaching approximately 92,000 by 2050.

Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast

Annual Net Migration
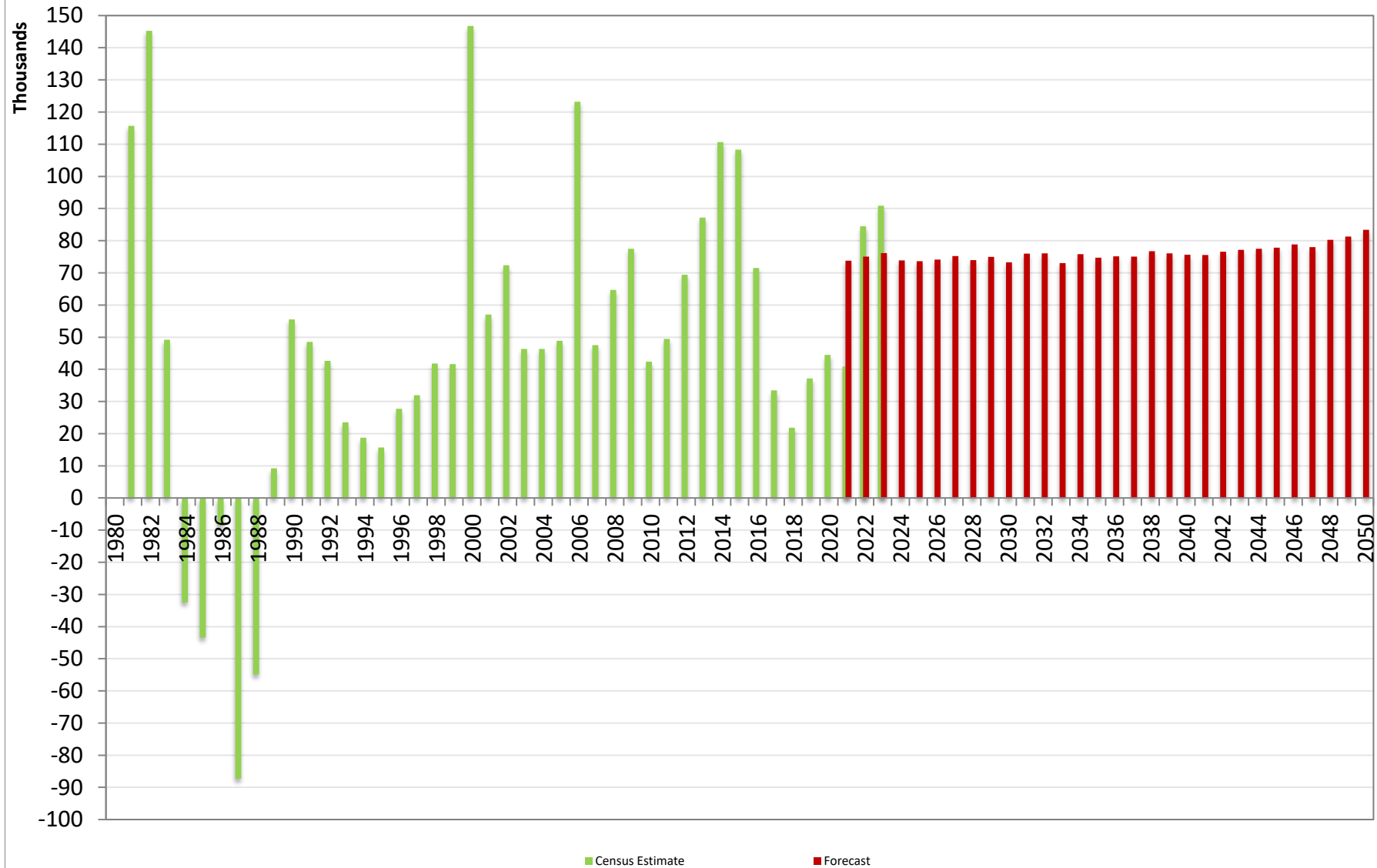
Net migration is the difference between the number of people who move into the region and the number who move away from the region. The annual net migration in the region is expected to be around 76,000. The spike in 2000 is a statistical artifact: the additional 100,000 instead should be spread over the decade of the 1990s.

Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast

H-GAC Region Population Change Components 1980-2050

Census Correction

Migration from New Orleans-Hurricane Katrina

Energy Boom

2008 Recession

Energy Bust followed by COVID

COVID related deaths

1980's Oil

Births   Deaths   Net Migration   Annual Change

Source- H-GAC 2024RGF

Ethnic Composition of the Population

Legend: Black, Hispanic, Other, White, % Black, % Hispanic, % Other, % White
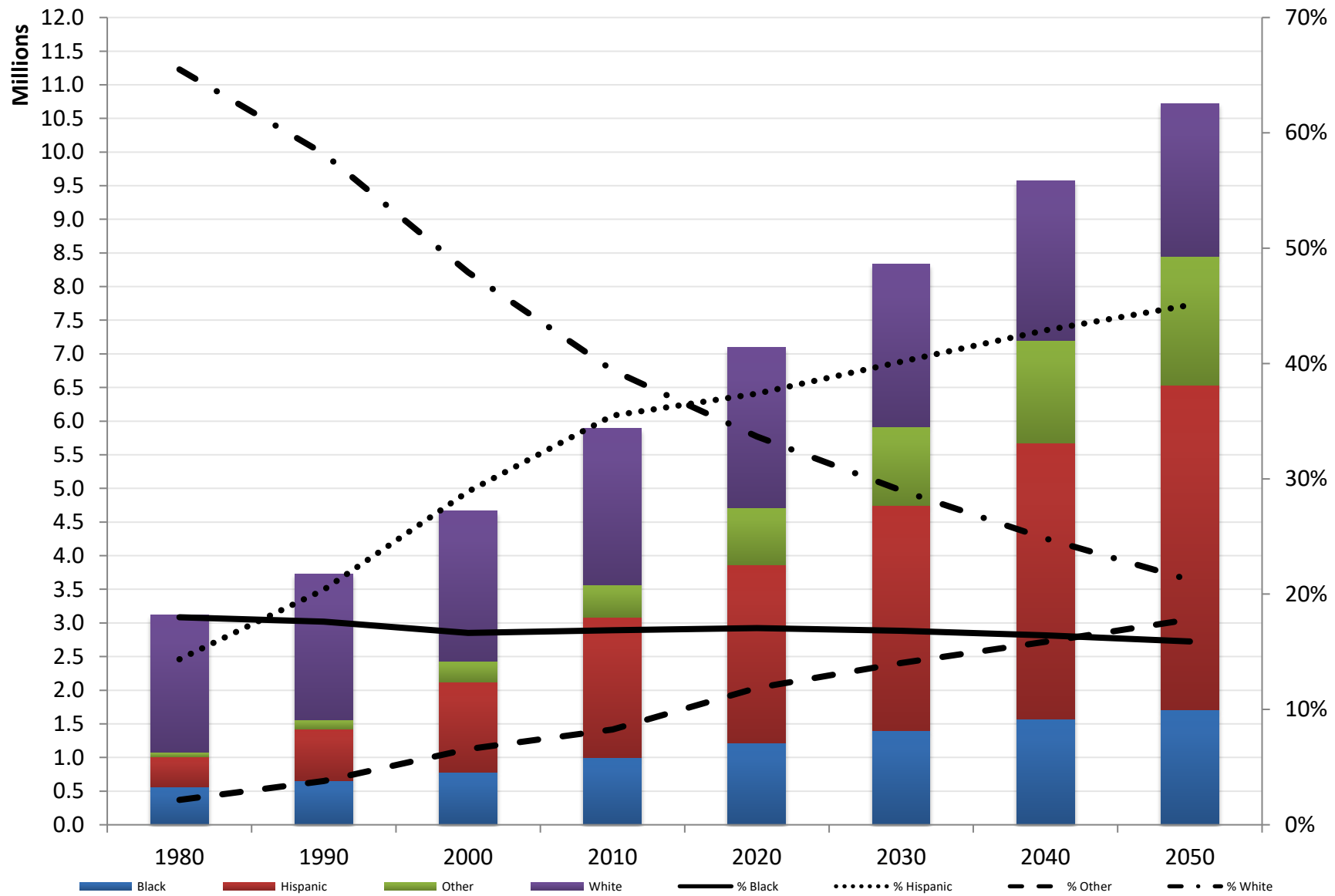
Our forecasting model also deals with ethnicity. While all groups will gain population in absolute terms, the relative shares will continue to change, most notably for the Hispanic and White populations. By the middle of the current decade, the share of Hispanic population is expected to equal (37%) that of the White population. By 2050, the share of the Hispanic population is expected to be over 45%. Ethnicity in our model is "inherited" by the child from the mother, which neglects the ethnicity of the other parent. As more and more children are being born from parents with different ethnicities, the meaning and usefulness of the current ethnic categories is likely to change.

Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast
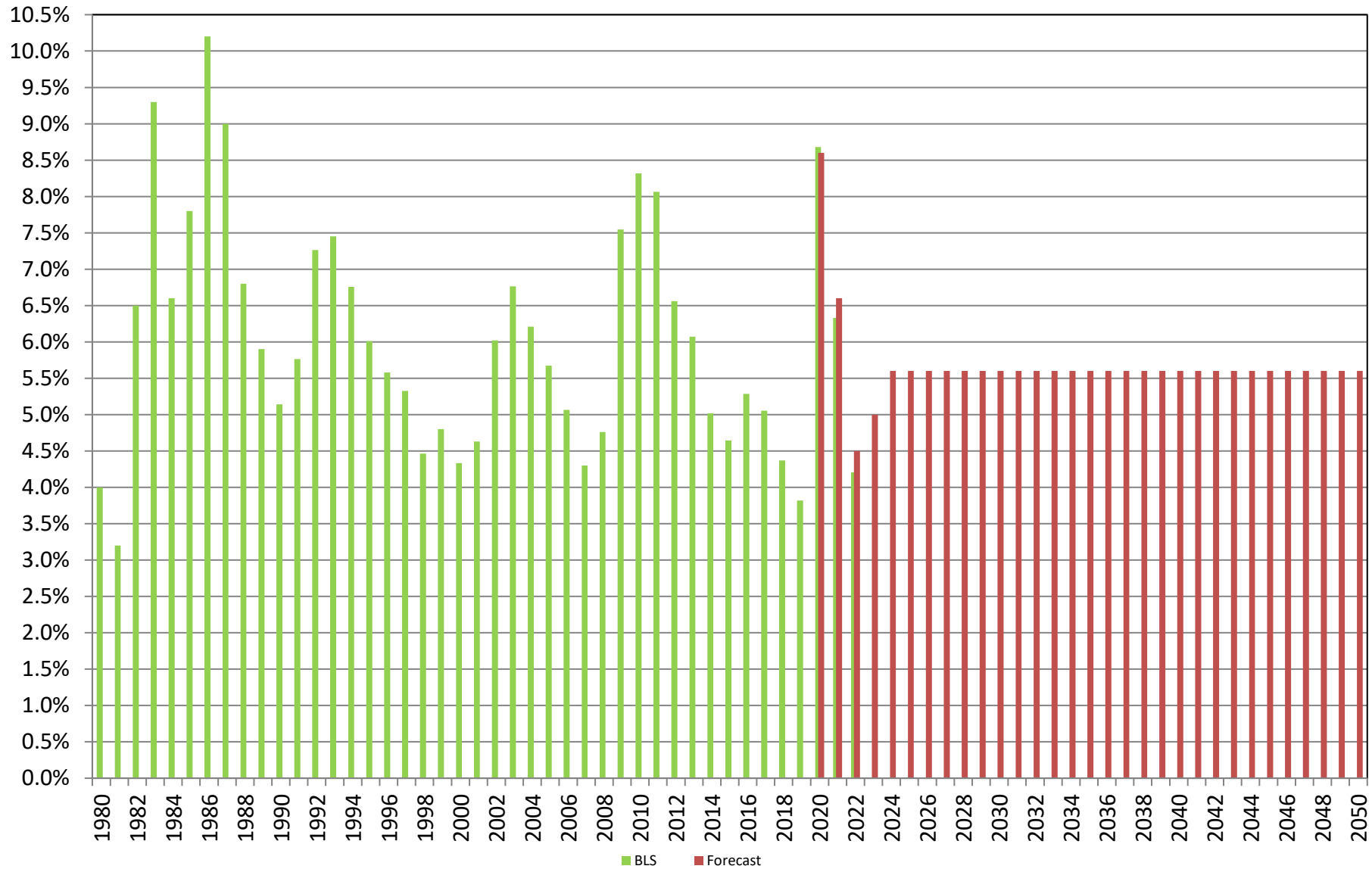
Age Composition of the Population
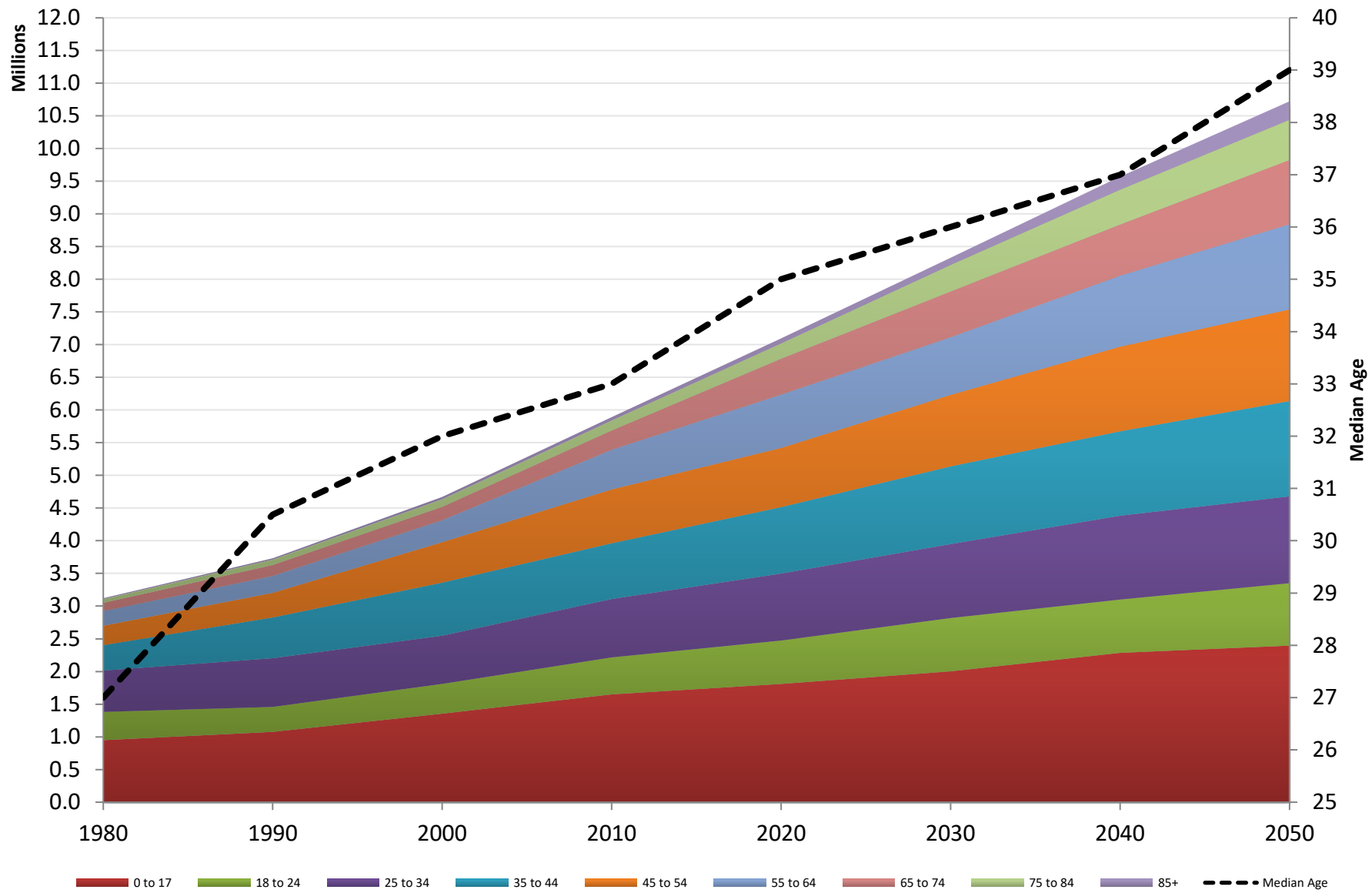
Short of a radical increase in the fertility rates, the share of the older cohorts in the population will increase gradually, driving the median age of the population from 33 in 2010 to close to 39 by 2050. The share of people 65 years and older will more than double, increasing from 12% in 2020 to close to 18% by 2050.

Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast
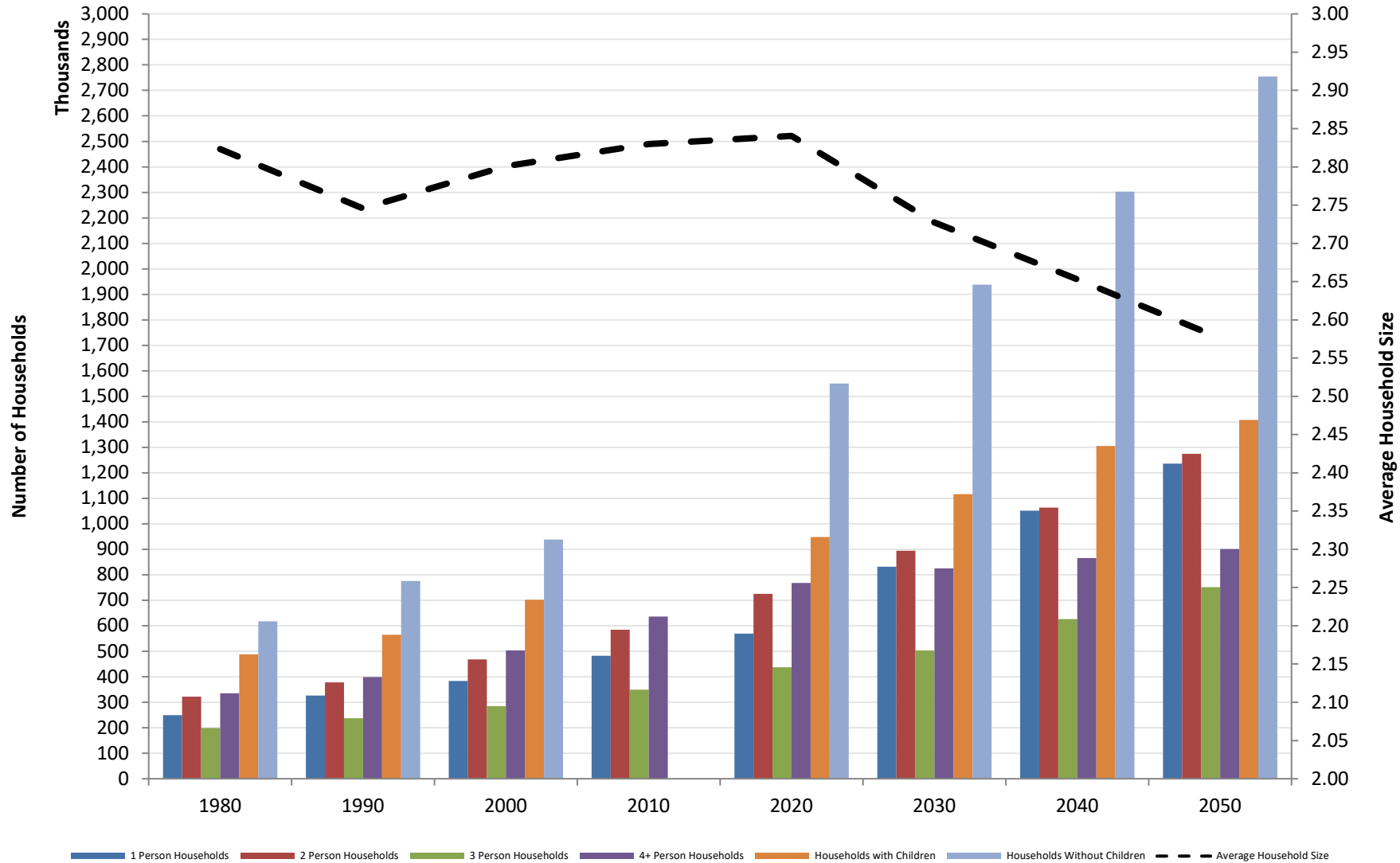
Households

The aging of the population also affects the household dynamics. Average household size is expected to decrease, while the share of single-person households is expected to increase. Also expected to increase is the share of households without children, from 62% in 2020 to 66% in 2050. However, the housing patterns of the elderly population may also change in the future.

Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast

Unemployment Rate

Over the last 40 years, the unemployment rate in the region ranged from 3% to 10%. The future unemployment rate is set to 5.6%, which is an average rate since 2000. The fluctuations in the unemployment rate are tied to the business cycle, and it is virtually certain that the unemployment rate in the future will vary year to year; however, for the purposes of long-term forecasting, using a constant rate is appropriate.
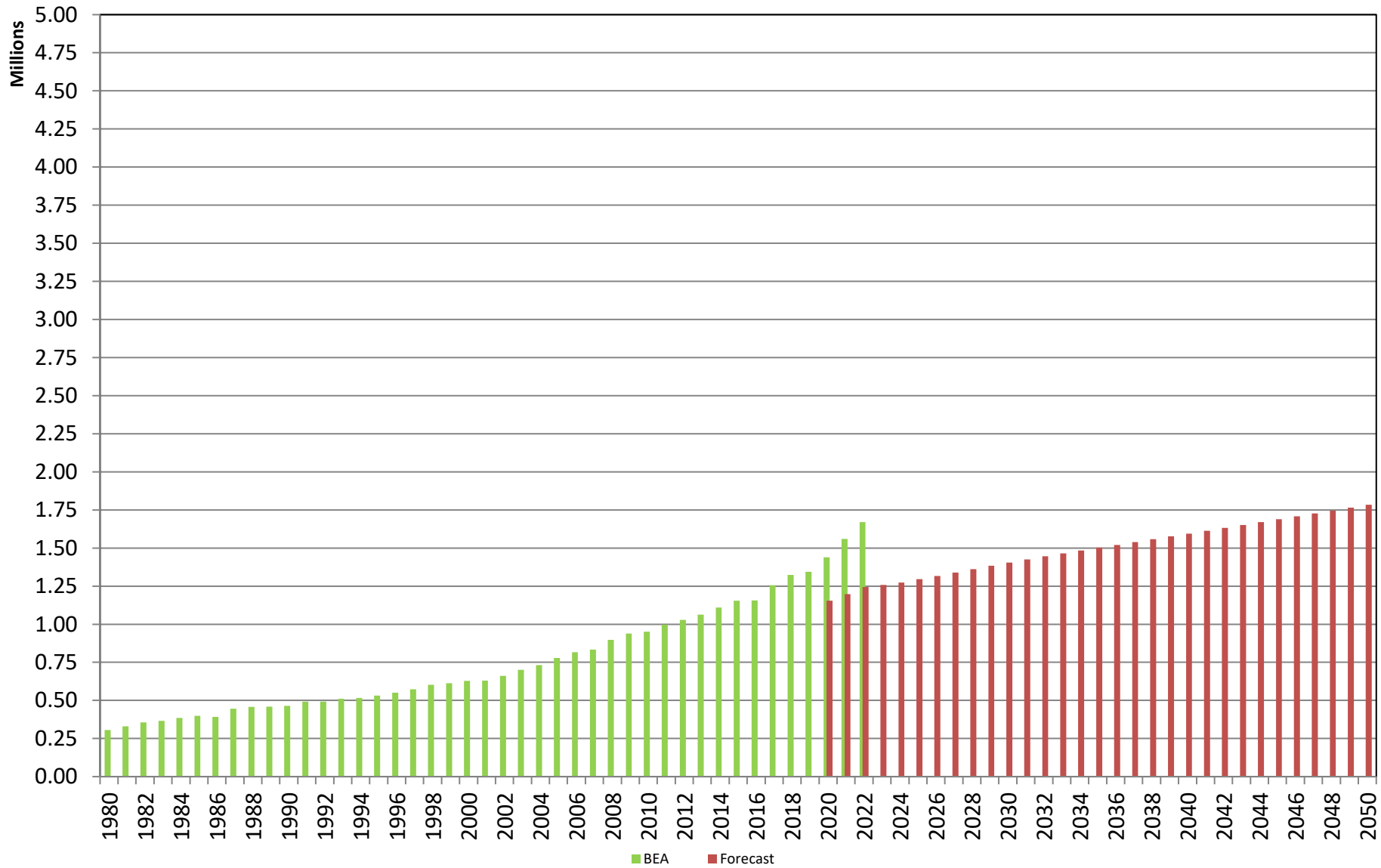
Labor Force
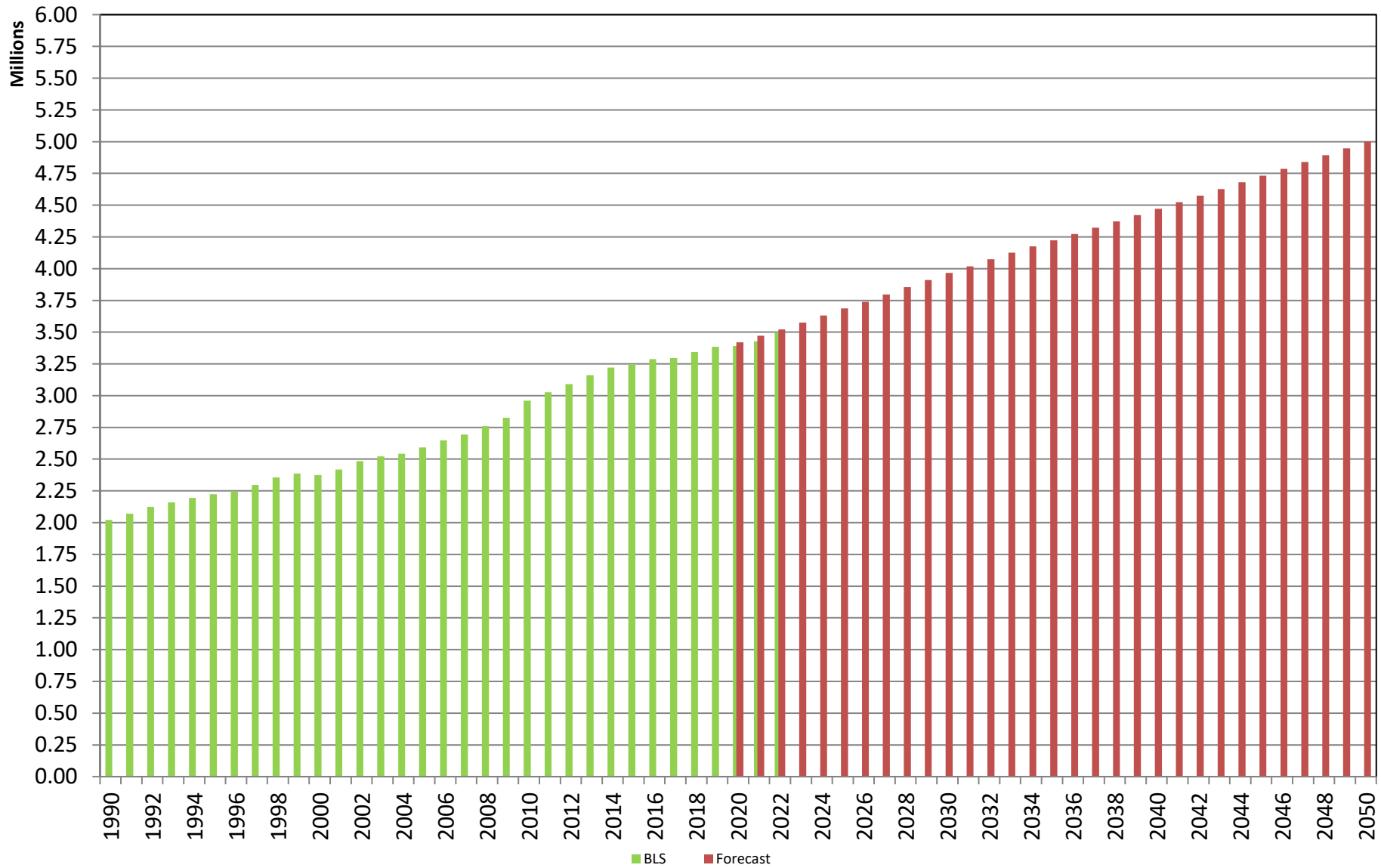
Labor force, which includes both the employed and those looking for work, is expected to grow steadily, from just 3.5 million in 2010 to almost 5.5 million in 2050.

Wage & Salary Jobs

Wage and Salary Jobs, which do not include self-employed, are projected to grow steadily, from 3.2 million in 2020 to over 4.8 million in 2050.
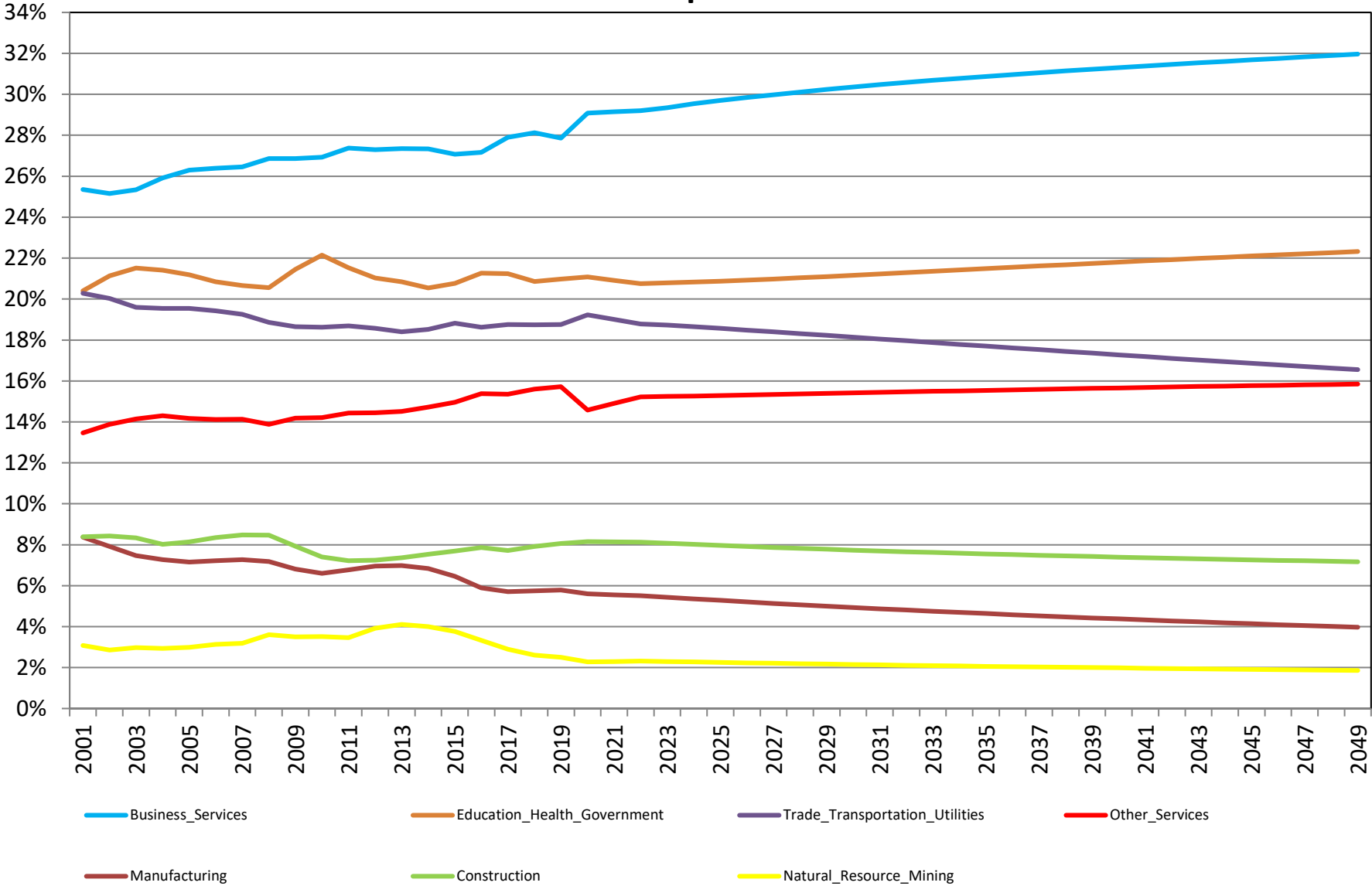
Self-Employed Jobs

The trend in the growth of the self-employed jobs is expected to continue. Over the next 30 years, the number of the self-employed jobs will increase by 0.5 million, reaching 1.7 million in 2050.

Jobs/Population Ratio
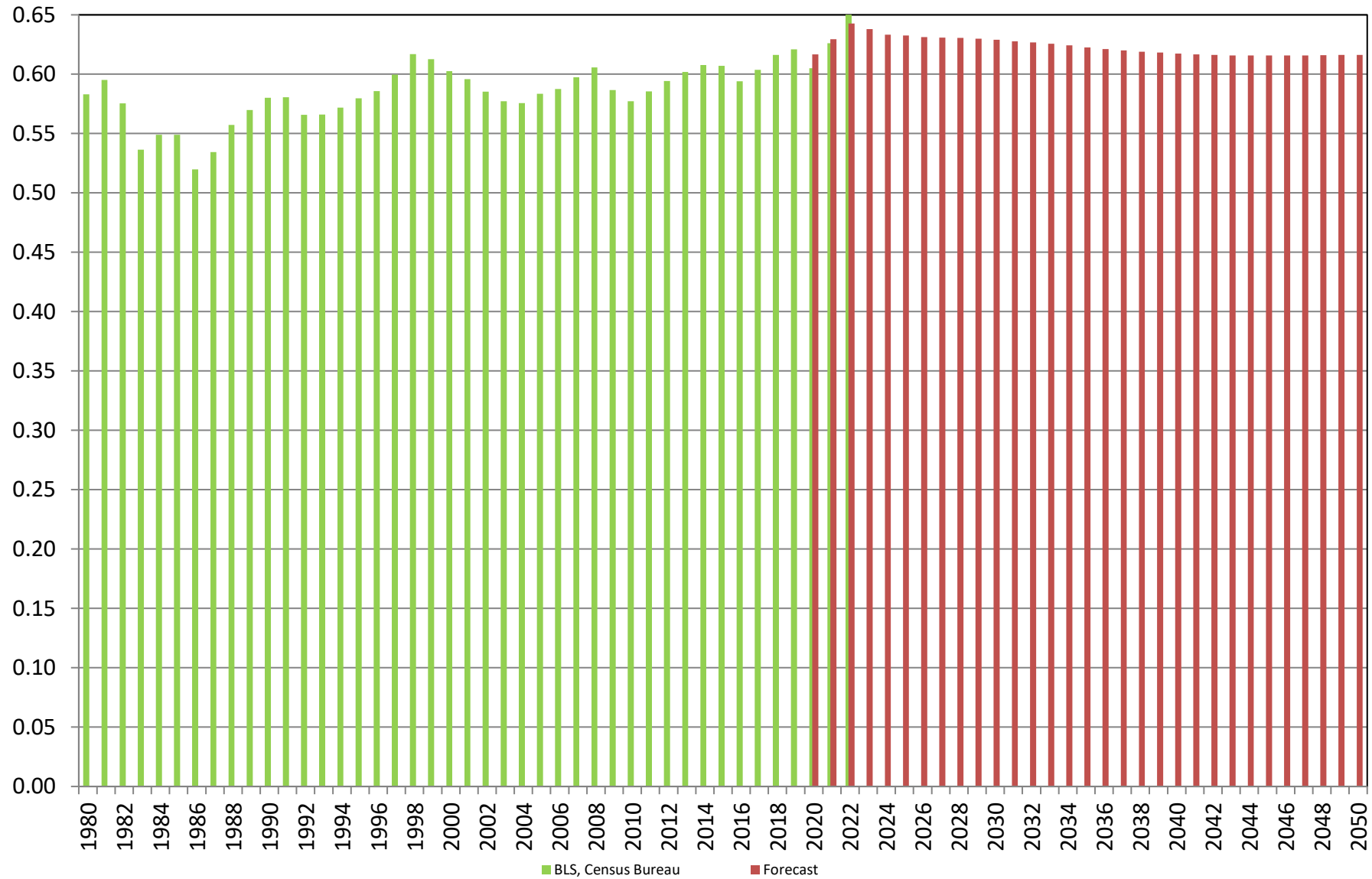
Jobs to population ratio responds to the changes in the employment as well as to the changes in the demographic composition of the population. While the job market is expected to remain strong in the future, the aging of the population will drive the ratio down. Nevertheless, over the next 30 years the ratio will remain well within the sustainable range.

Source: H-GAC 2024 Forecast

Sectoral Composition of Jobs

Legend:
- Business_Services
- Education_Health_Government
- Trade_Transportation_Utilities
- Other_Services
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Natural_Resource_Mining

Only minor shifts are expected in the sectoral composition of employment: by 2050, the share of manufacturing will drop by 2 percentage points.