Population/ Managed Growth

A TOP 5 PRIORITY ISSUE

Identified as a focus for the next 10 years

4.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

Situated in one of the fastest growing states in the country currently, and located within 35 miles of one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, Mountain Home is uniquely positioned to experience noticeable population growth. This chapter illustrates **bold** and **moderate** projections of the city's future population growth (see **Graph 4.1**), as well as touches on demographics of Mountain Home residents in terms of age, ethnicity, household size, income, military service and educational attainment. Comparisons of Mountain Home's data to statewide data, and additional contextual data, can be found at **Appendix D**.
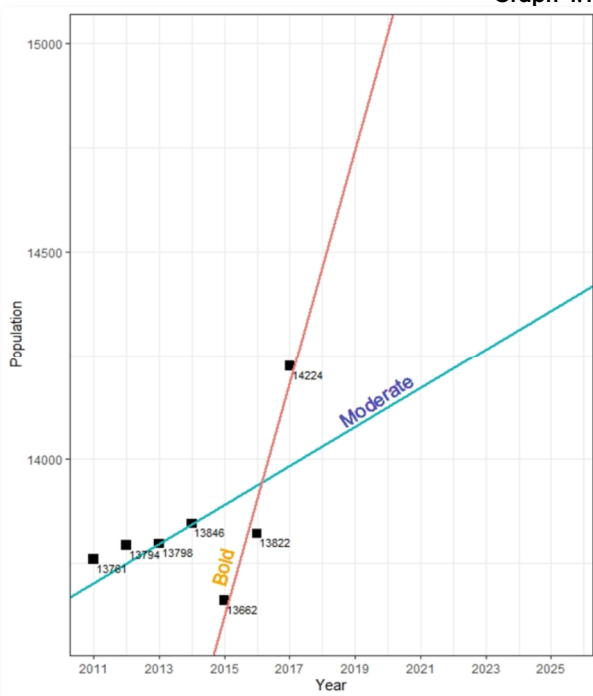
4.2 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Compared to the rest of the state, Mountain Home's population tends to be younger, more diverse and more involved in military service (due to the City's relationship and proximity to Mountain Home Air Force Base). But Mountain Home's residents also tend to have a slightly lower median income and lower education levels.

Between 2010 and 2017, the city of Mountain Home's population has remained fairly consistent (see **Graph 4.2**). Despite a few annual swings during this time period, a slight decline in residents early in the decade has been offset by consecutive years of growth during 2015-17. Overall, though, the city's population has decreased by 0.3% since 2010.

To be clear, even though there was a slight population decline at the beginning of the decade, like most things Mountain Home experiences, changes occur at a delayed rate. The growth in population is still anticipated to spill over from Boise, simply a little later.

Mountain Home's population has typically been between 13,600 and 13,800 residents since 2011. In 2017 it increased to 14,224. Population projections using regression were produced for 2018-2025 based on the actual populations from the years 2011-2017. According to a **moderate** model, the city is expected to grow by about 46 new residents every year. Based on this expectation, Mountain Home's population should reach near 14,358 residents by the year 2025.

Graph 4.1

* This Chapter is a summary of data excerpted from a comprehensive statistical narrative, which is attached, along with citations, as **Appendix D**.

4.2 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In reference to **Graph 4.1**, the **bold** projection model predicts 281 new residents to be added annually based on the 2016-2017 populations. This annual addition represents a much faster rate of population growth than the moderate model explained on the same graph. The difference of growth rate between the moderate and bold models stems from the city experiencing both the peak (14,224 in 2017) and the trough (13,662 in 2015) of the decade's population within just three years.

Exclusive reliance on this short period of time with extreme values produces a very different projection model compared to using data from longer periods of time. Although Mountain Home is likely to continue growing, the rate of that growth is uncertain.

Graph 4.2
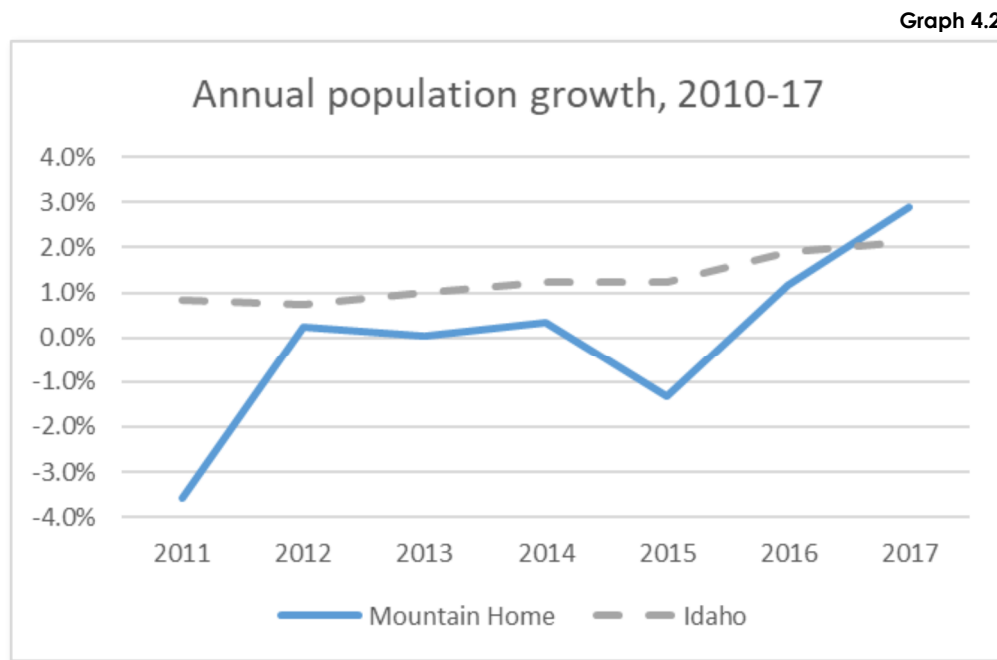
U.S. Census Bureau; Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017.

4.3 FUTURE

Mountain Home's population growth is influenced by many factors, including the national economy, the influx of residents from the Treasure Valley and changes to the nearby Air Force Base, among others. If any of these factors change, like an economic recession or the development of more housing closer to, or within, the Treasure Valley, the sudden population growth between 2015 and 2017 may not hold. As such, the bold projection model may not reliably take into account long-term factors.

The projections made here, both the moderate and bold, are provided for informational purposes only. Population growth projection models, even when made with the best data and knowledge, are still susceptible to the uncertain nature of the future.

For context of growth in Idaho and how it may impact and influence growth in Mountain Home, population projections for the state of Idaho are presented for reference in **Appendix D**.

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4.4 MOUNTAIN HOME AIR FORCE BASE:
Impact on Population

Mountain Home Air Force Base (MHAFB) is reported as a separate entity from the City of Mountain Home and is designated by the U.S. Census Bureau as a "Census-Designated Place" (or CDP). As any substantial change in the size of the military personnel stationed in MHAFB would have an impact on the city in many aspects, including but not limited to housing or to economic development, it would be helpful to be aware of the recent trends.

MHAFB had a total population of 3,238 in 2010 decennial census, and 8,894 in the 2000 decennial census. The total population was 3,245 in 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimates, and then 3,070 in 2013-2017 ACS 5-year estimates. Taken together, these figures suggest that there had been a major decline between 2000 and 2010, but the size sustained around 3,000 through the decade after 2010.

4.5 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE

Mountain Home's median age, 30.3 years, remained virtually unchanged over recent years. It continues to be lower than Idaho's median age of 35.9, which increased from 34.7 in 2012. Among the city's residents, 27% are younger than 18 years old and 11% are 65 and older (see graph to the left for illustration of these statistics).

The remaining residents are aged 18 to 29 (22%), 30 to 39 (14%), 40 to 49 (11%) and 50 to 64 (15%). This is slightly different compared to the statewide breakdown, where the youngest and oldest groups make up 26% (under 18) and 15% (over 65). Idaho's other age groups are 18 to 29 (16%), 30 to 39 (13%), 40 to 49 (12%), and 50 to 64 (18%).

Mountain Home		Idaho
27%	Under 18	26%
22%	18 to 29	16%
14%	30 to 39	13%
11%	40 to 49	12%
15%	50 to 64	18%
11%	Over 65	15%

RACE

As of 2017, 76.4% of Mountain Home residents identify exclusively as white and 12.1% claim Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race). These numbers have not significantly shifted in recent years. Across Idaho, 82.5% are white (down 1.4% since 2012) and 12.2% have Hispanic or Latino heritage (up 1%). The main difference in ethnic makeup between the city and state is that, on the state level, other minority groups constitute a slightly larger share of the overall population.
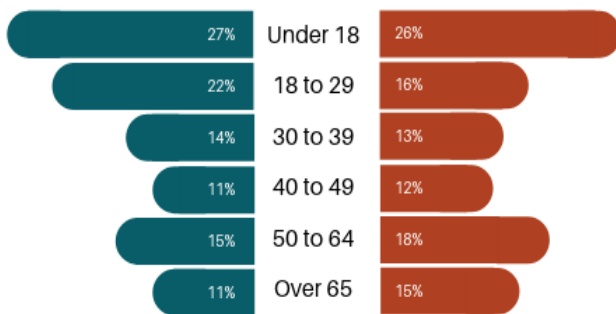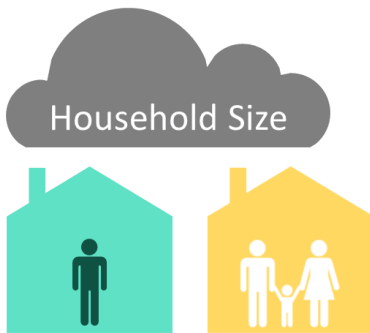
Household Size

## 4.6 Population: Economics

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The average households in Mountain Home and Idaho are of a comparable size—in 2012, each jurisdiction had 2.66 residents per household. Since then, Idaho's average has essentially remained the same while Mountain Home's has slightly decreased to 2.56 per household. A similar trend exists in household composition. 67.1% of homes in the city are occupied by families, while the remaining 32.9% are nonfamily. Across the state, the split among households is 68% family and 32% nonfamily. Each jurisdiction experienced a similar 2% decrease in family-occupied households between 2012 and 2017.

INCOME

Mountain Home's median household income is $48,625, slightly lower than Idaho's median income of $50,985. The city also has a larger share of residents below the poverty level (16.5%) compared to the state's 14.5%. Mountain Home, and Idaho's number of residents experiencing poverty, has gradually increased over the last two decades. In 2010, the city and state had 12.8% and 13.6% of residents below the poverty line, respectively. Poverty rates were lower still in 2000, when Mountain Home had 10.4% and Idaho 11.8%.


Mountain Home labor force, 2017

- Armed Forces ■ Civilian
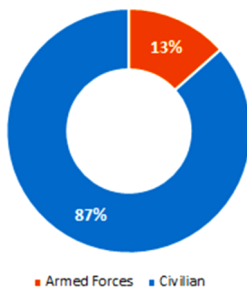
JOBS

It is estimated that 6,766 Mountain Home residents are part of the labor force, which is 64.9% of residents over the age of 16. Among those in the labor force, 13.4% are serving in the military, a substantial share compared to Idaho's 0.5%, which is a direct consequence of Mountain Home Air Force Base's proximity to the city. **Mountain Home's unique connection to the armed forces is also seen in its veteran population.** Civilian veterans in Mountain Home make up 25.3% of all adults, compared to only 9.5% in Idaho, and only 7.6% nationwide.

Educational attainment, 2017
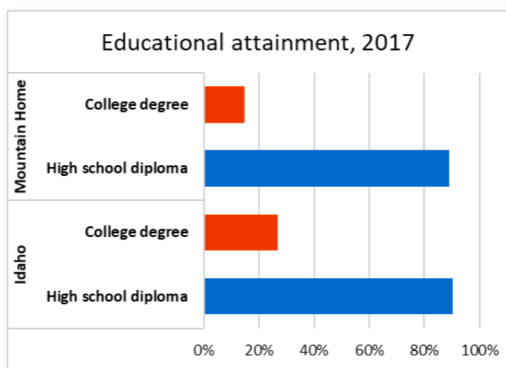
EDUCATION

Regarding educational attainment, 89.1% of residents have a high school diploma or equivalent, which is consistent with the statewide rate. There is a significant difference, however, among   college graduates. Only 14.7% of city residents hold a four-year degree, compared to 26.8% of Idahoans. The city and state are currently experiencing inverse trends related to higher education. Since 2000, the   former has been losing college graduates while the latter has been gaining ground. Specifically, Mountain Home's number of degree   earners has decreased by about 5%, while the state's percentage has increased by the same amount.

4.7 GOAL 1

To proactively manage growth by taking steps to maintain Mountain Home's "small town" character.

    A.   Actively utilize population forecast tools to project facility, service and utility needs, as well as to strategize actions necessary to preserve the character of the community.

    B.   Remain proactive and become highly focused on balancing the housing needs in concert with ensuring that population growth does not outpace the City's ability to provide services.

    C.   Partner with the Air Force, state and federal officials on future planning for   Mountain Home Air Force Base.

    D.   Update development regulations for compatibility with anticipated growth.

    E.   Ensure that no development is granted building privileges unless water, sewer, gas and power availability and capacity can be secured/verified.

    F.   Improve the level of development monitoring and generate status reports on subdivision and building permits on a routine basis.

4.8 GOAL 2

Facilitate smart growth strategies to increase and diversify economic development and enhance the quality of life for citizens.

    A.   Promote density in areas near existing commercial and community development to capitalize on existing infrastructure.

    B.   Encourage development in areas that are environmentally compatible with nearby surroundings to protect the quality of life.

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