

## 9.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the majority of Mountain Home's major arterial roads being state highways, and therefore under the jurisdiction of the state, transportation in Mountain Home is a complex yet central topic when it comes to community planning.

Currently **the foremost reference and planning document for transportation and connectivity in Mountain Home** is the **"2009 — 2031 Master Transportation Plan" (MTP)** adopted by the City in 2009. The MTP covers the following key planning points:

- It evaluates various modes of transportation
- Contains numerous maps for land use planning
- Identifies future transportation needs
- Recommends improvements that will enhance mobility

This 2019 Comprehensive Plan update has taken key points from the MTP to provide a high-level summary of transportation considerations for land use planning.

### WHY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING?

As Mountain Home continues to grow, appropriate levels of mobility and access must be strategized; without strategic planning the City's existing network of roadways will begin to experience declining levels of service that will have negative impacts on the community such as traffic congestion, air quality issues, decreased pedestrian safety, potential delays in emergency services, deteriorating roadways and stormwater management issues.

With Mountain Home's population rate still anticipated to grow well beyond standard rates (a 3.4% rate from 1990 to 2009, 2009-2031 MTP), development within the community will continue to increase, therefore transportation must be planned in concert.

Key areas of focus for Mountain Home's transportation network include proactive planning of roadways both for connectivity and implementing Complete Streets concepts. Keeping linkages congruent between neighborhoods, and throughout the city in general, will create a truly cohesive transportation network.



Average travel/commute times in Mountain Home versus state and national trends:

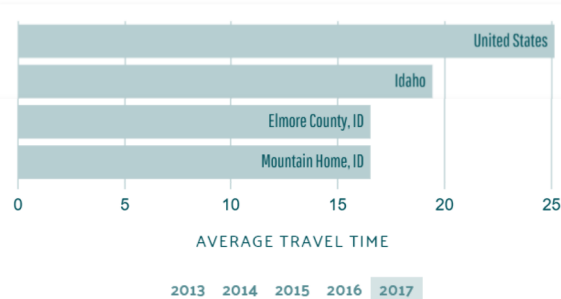
### Commute Time

16.8 minutes

#### AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME

Using averages, employees in Mountain Home have a shorter commute time—16.8 minutes; than Idaho workers — 20 minutes; or US workers—25 minutes. However, 1.77% of employees in Mountain Home have "super commutes" which are commutes in excess of 90 minutes.

Data provided by [the Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimate](#).



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## 9.2 BACKGROUND

In 2004, the City of Mountain Home participated in the preparation of the “**Elmore County Transportation Plan**”, which inventoried existing transportation systems and identified existing and future needs for improvements to the City’s transportation system. Then in 2008 the City commissioned the “**2009—2031 City of Mountain Home Master Transportation Plan**”.

Both Plans’ analyses indicated that Mountain Home was well served by state and regional highways, and a grid system of local arterial and collector roads. In addition to the arterial system, the community is served by two-lane local streets with right-of-way widths that range from 36’ to 40’ wide; the City’s goal is to increase the local streets standard to 50’ right-of-way widths for all future development.

For pedestrian traffic, sidewalks are provided on the majority of streets in the City, at a standard width of 5-feet. Additionally, the City has developed a multi-use pathway system which extends from the intersection of North 3rd East Street and McMurtrey Street East, to North 18th East Street, south of the Interstate 84 overpass.



### Commuter Transportation

#### MOST COMMON METHOD OF TRAVEL

1. Drove Alone  
84.8%
2. Carpooled  
9.48%
3. Worked At Home  
2.1%

In 2017, the most common method of travel for workers in Mountain Home, ID was Drove Alone, followed by those who Carpooled and those who Worked At Home.

Data provided by [the Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimate](#)

## 9.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The majority of Mountain Home’s transportation and mobility needs and transit capacity are being met by existing systems. As former plan documents have mentioned, there are of course areas in need of improvement and expansion, but current use is not found to be at a level of service yet that requires resolution of circumstances (based on traffic counts taken at key locations over the course of the summer prior to this Comprehensive Plan update).

### ACCESSIBILITY

In comparison to other rural Idaho communities, Mountain Home is very well situated within close proximity to an international airport, and an interstate freeway corridor, both offering easy access to metropolitan and interstate destinations; in addition, the city is close to five additional regional/rural airports within 50 miles, and several state highways, that all converge and transect the community in the downtown core.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

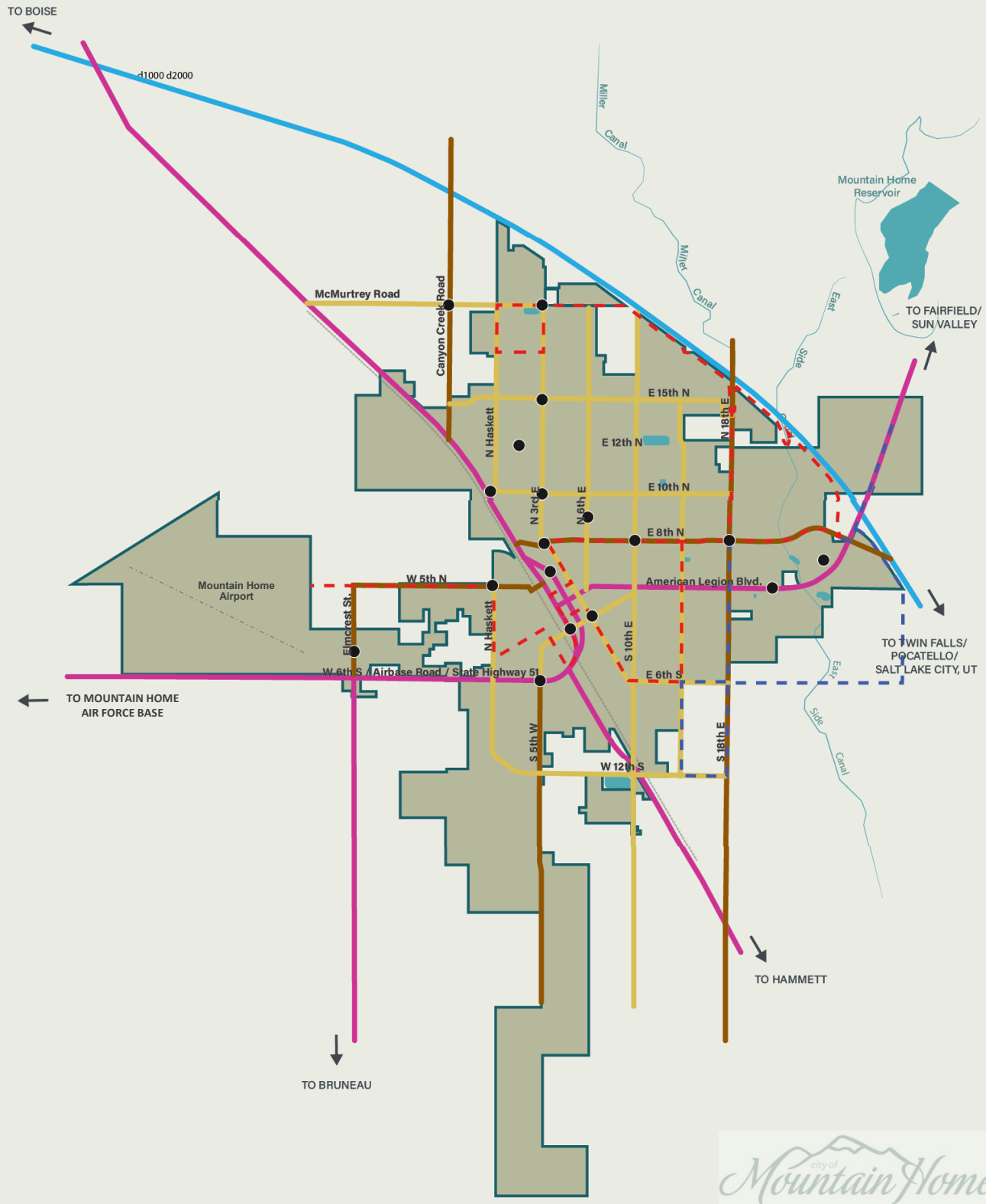
A service most communities of this size cannot provide, Mountain Home enjoys a public transit system that offers a valuable alternative to vehicle ownership, since for many families transportation costs are second only to their housing costs. The average household in Mountain Home spends \$9,212 annually on transportation-related expenses<sup>4</sup>.

Public input from the survey conducted for this Comprehensive Plan update showed that, though 89.42% of respondents do not use the transit system, 48.66% responded that they are in favor of expanding the bus system. This may point to the need for the City to perform additional study in this area, to see what forecasts may be for increased usage of the service.



Map 9.1

## Mountain Home Transportation Map: Roadways, Pathways, Transit



- Freeway
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- - - Bike Path
- - - Proposed Bike Path
- Bus Stops (City Routes)

0 2000 4000  
1000 3000



city of  
*Mountain Home*

## 9.4 FUTURE—GROWTH ACCOMMODATION

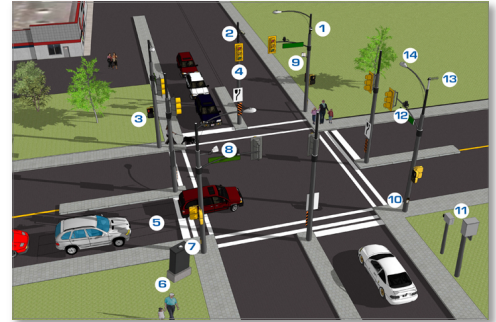
Very much a vehicle oriented community, Mountain Home's future growth areas imply that automobiles will remain the main mode of travel within the region. Given this, along with the projection of growth in population, traffic volumes will increase correspondingly.

The MTP considered several scenarios that could have an effect on transportation within the community when determining recommendations to accommodate the increase. Chapter 5 of the MTP includes a table listing intersection and roadway improvements for the City to consider; the table provides both short term (2009-2013) and long term (2013-2018) recommendations.

### Some Recommended Improvements Generally Included\*:

- Proposed signalized intersections
- Intersection redesigns
- Additions of roundabouts
- Construction of new roadways/routes
- Conversion of 2-way streets to 1-way streets

*\*To date, three (3) of the listed improvements have been completed.*



### 9.4.1 COMPLETE STREETS

Other improvements to the transportation network that are not listed in the MTP, but which the City is integrating into all future transportation planning are **Complete Streets Principles**<sup>5</sup>.

**Complete Streets is a transportation policy, and a design approach, that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities, regardless of their mode of transportation.**



The benefits to the transportation network that will be achieved with the application of Complete Streets principles are based on proven projects throughout the nation that span years back. Key traits of complete streets principles are traffic calming, increased safety to pedestrian experiences, placemaking, pathways for alternate modes of access, greenscapes and increased sustainability. When integrated into a community these traits work to benefit the economy as well as the livability of the entire City; and they can be applied anywhere in the community, not just in downtown environments.

For Mountain Home, linking separate (and some isolated) parts of the city with distinct and interconnected pathways, bikeways and well-designed roadways will work to not only unify the community, but also to redistribute nodes of the transportation system, which will be essential to maintaining an uncluttered network of mobility with continued growth.

## 9.5 GOAL 1

**The City shall develop and adopt a Complete Streets policy that supports all modes of transportation and addresses the inclusion of pedestrian and bicycling facilities in new and existing road corridors, where appropriate.**

- A. Perform an audit of zoning codes and ordinances to ensure that standards are in place that protect and provide for appropriate design and improvement standards in support of Complete Streets principles.
- B. Review all new development insuring compliance with incorporation of "Complete Streets" elements.
- C. Ensure clear vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian mobility throughout the City, and increase bicycle and pedestrian access between neighborhoods and activity centers.
- D. Investigate opportunities for accommodating differing modes of travel within existing curb-to-curb widths.
- E. Seek to identify and secure right-of-way for future transportation needs when feasible.
- F. Ensure bicycle and pedestrian routes receive equal consideration as vehicular travel in planning and design.
- G. Provide traffic calming measures on local / residential streets and require new developments to integrate traffic calming methods to site plans in order to ensure the safety of pedestrians and residents.
- H. Create and adopt development code for sidewalk and street design standards including width and make-up, as well as requirements for limiting access on collectors and arterial streets.
- I. Establish project development program with LHTAC and ITD to access all available state and federal funds.
- J. Designate truck routes which would reduce truck traffic in the residential areas and designate mandatory hazardous waste routes.
- K. Develop and implement a sidewalk plan throughout the City. First priority should be to provide sidewalks for use of children in route to school and to facilitate the repair of existing broken and hazardous sidewalks.





## 9.6 GOAL 2

**Improve road systems and pedestrian networks to enhance neighborhood, commuter and environmental livability and quality.**

- A. Encourage subdivisions to provide access from collector streets and discourage the use of local streets as alternatives (a bypass) to arterials.
- B. Promote connectivity throughout residential street patterns.
- C. Where cul-de-sacs are permitted, the City shall promote pedestrian and bicycle travel by including pathways as appropriate to connect cul-de-sacs to other streets or community facilities such as parks and schools.
- D. Promote and support timely and appropriate development adjacent to major transportation corridors.
- E. Require new development to provide adequate connectivity to existing transportation networks.
- F. Protect neighborhoods from intrusive traffic from areas outside the neighborhood (pass-through traffic).
- G. All neighborhood streets and circulation improvements should favor pedestrians, bicyclists and local traffic.
- H. Regularly utilize and access the recommendations of the Master Transportation Plan, implementing recommendations for improved transportation outcomes.
- I. Prepare and implement a unified wayfinding system throughout the community.

## 9.7 GOAL 3

**Promote alternative transportation and commuting options.**

- A. Promote public transit as a positive and viable alternative mode of travel within the community.
- B. Expand transit system frequency and service areas to serve more neighborhoods, special needs locations (such as access to hospitals) and high capacity transit connections.
- C. Include shaded and maintained shelters at all high use bus stops.
- D. Encourage other forms of transportation to the automobile that will reduce vehicular congestion and that will accommodate the transportation needs of more people.
- E. Support and encourage private enterprise in their efforts to provide public transportation.
- F. Support the efforts of public in providing van pool services between the Mountain Home and Ada County to facilitate workforce commute into Mountain Home and Mountain Home Air Force Base.



## 9.8 GOAL 4

**Develop, construct, operate and maintain comprehensive and continuous pedestrian and bicycle facilities.**

- A. Develop a continuous, comprehensive, safe system of pedestrian and bicycle pathways that provide access to key destinations throughout the community with appropriate linkages to neighborhoods.
- B. Separate bicycle facilities from corridors with heavy vehicular traffic when feasible.
- C. Identify opportunities to designate collector streets as bicycle routes, providing cyclists' with the option to avoid major arterial traffic if desired.
- D. Continue to investigate and pursue funding sources for acquisition, development and maintenance of paths and trails for bicycles and pedestrians that are located in separate rights-of-way or physically separated from automobiles.
- E. The City shall encourage wide, landscaped, shaded sidewalks along key pedestrian corridors identified in the City's Transportation Plan.
- F. The City shall consider pedestrian safety as part of project review, including evaluation of the need for crosswalks and other pedestrian safety features.
- G. Appropriate street furnishings and pedestrian scale lighting should be installed for new development or redevelopment proposals that will generate higher pedestrian traffic.
- H. Installation of medians for pedestrian refuge should be prioritized, where roadway width allows, on parkways, major arterials and minor arterials with four or more travel lanes.

## 9.9 GOAL 5

**Maintain parking and ensure adequate parking is provided, and that parking areas promote safety and aesthetics.**

- A. Perform an audit of zoning codes and ordinances to ensure that requirements are in place for the provision of adequate parking with all new development and redevelopment, and to ensure appropriate design and improvement standards.
- B. Commission a study of existing parking throughout the community in key locations to ensure adequate parking opportunities and to determine if additional parking options are warranted.



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