Demographic and Economic Changes

What's it like to live in the fastest growing region of the fastest growing state? For Treasure Valley residents, it's meant new retail stores and more job opportunities, but also higher housing prices, more crowding in schools and on the road, and other impacts on quality of life.

Communities in Motion 2050 (CIM 2050) transportation needs are largely determined by the projected population, housing, and economic changes over the next three decades. Knowing where people will need to travel and the resulting impacts on the transportation system requires an understanding of where residents will live, work, shop, and recreate today and into the future.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Population

As of April 2022, Ada and Canyon Counties were home to approximately 782,430 people—that's twice as many as just one generation ago.[1] This growth has made the Treasure Valley the fastest-growing mid-sized metropolitan area in the nation over the last decade (Table 1).[2]

Table 1. Fastest-Growing Metropolitan Statistical Areas (Population Between 500,000 and 1 Million)

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	2020 Census	2010 Census	Increase
Boise City, ID MSA	764,718	616,561	+148,157
Provo-Orem, UT MSA	671,185	526,810	+144,375
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL MSA	760,822	618,754	+142,068
Charleston-North Charleston, SC MSA	799,636	664,607	+135,029
North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL MSA	833,716	702,281	+131,435

Source: US Census Bureau, 2020 census data

Annual Population Estimates

To ensure transportation analyses are up to date, COMPASS develops population, housing, and employment estimates annually using a housing unit method. This method is based on the premise that changes in the number of occupied housing units reflect changes in population.

The calculation COMPASS uses to build population estimates is as follows:

Population = [(h + r) * s * o] + q
where
    h = decennial census households
    r = new residential units permitted
    s = household size
    o = residential occupancy rate
    q = group quarters population

Population estimates are calculated and assigned to the cities and unincorporated county areas based on city limits at the time. COMPASS uses decennial census counts as one of the factors for developing estimates; the release of the 2020 census enabled COMPASS to update population estimates based on these new data.

More information about COMPASS population estimates is available on COMPASS' website.[3] In addition, COMPASS publishes annual residential permit data in its Development Monitoring Report.[4]

Demographics

The Treasure Valley as a whole is younger and less ethnically mixed than most of the United States. However, there are some distinct differences between Ada County and Canyon County (Table 2), as Ada County is slightly older, wealthier, and less ethnically diverse than in Canyon County.
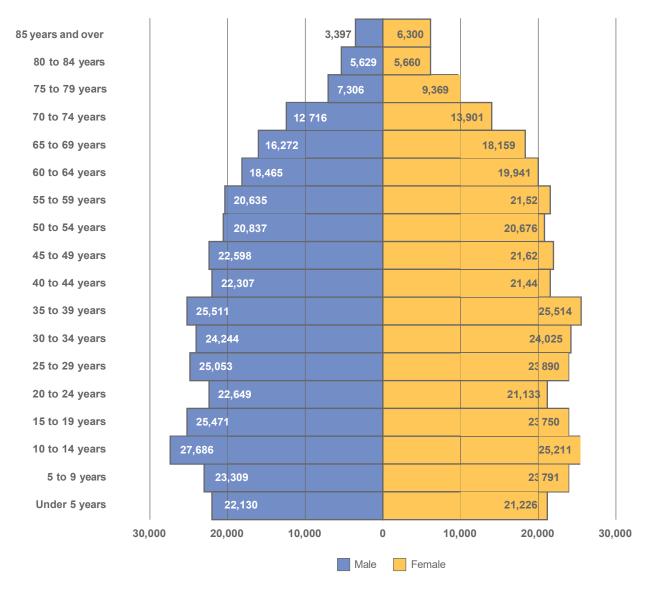
Table 2. Treasure Valley Demographics

	Median Age	Non-White Ethnicity	Median Household Income
Ada County	37.2	10.6%	$69,952
Canyon County	33.8	19.4%	$56,916
Region (Ada and Canyon Counties)	36.1	13.4%	$65,607
Idaho	36.6	11.6%	$58,915
United States	38.2	29.6%	$64,994

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2020 5-year estimates

COMMUNITIES
IN MOTION 2050

When looking at age and gender, the distribution of a population typically forms the shape of a pyramid; the wide base and narrow tip reflect a young population, with more children and fewer seniors (Figure 1). However, with a sharp decline in birth rates and longer life expectancies, the traditional "population pyramid" is forecasted to more closely resemble a rectangle by 2050—fewer children are being born (narrower at the bottom) and seniors are enjoying longer lives (wider at the top) (Figure 2). This demographic shift could have wide-ranging implications for housing, land use, and transportation, as an older population may alter traditional commute patterns, demand on public transportation, and housing needs.

POPULATION PYRAMID 2020

Age	Male	Female
85 years and over	3,397	6,300
80 to 84 years	5,629	5,660
75 to 79 years	7,306	9,369
70 to 74 years	12,716	13,901
65 to 69 years	16,272	18,159
60 to 64 years	18,465	19,941
55 to 59 years	20,635	21,52
50 to 54 years	20,837	20,676
45 to 49 years	22,598	21,62
40 to 44 years	22,307	21,44
35 to 39 years	25,511	25,514
30 to 34 years	24,244	24,025
25 to 29 years	25,053	23,890
20 to 24 years	22,649	21,133
15 to 19 years	25,471	23,750
10 to 14 years	27,686	25,211
5 to 9 years	23,309	23,791
Under 5 years	22,130	21,226

30,000   20,000   10,000   0   10,000   20,000   30,000

■ Male   ■ Female

Figure 1. US population pyramid 2020.
Source: American Community Survey 2020, 5-year data.

POPULATION PYRAMID 2050

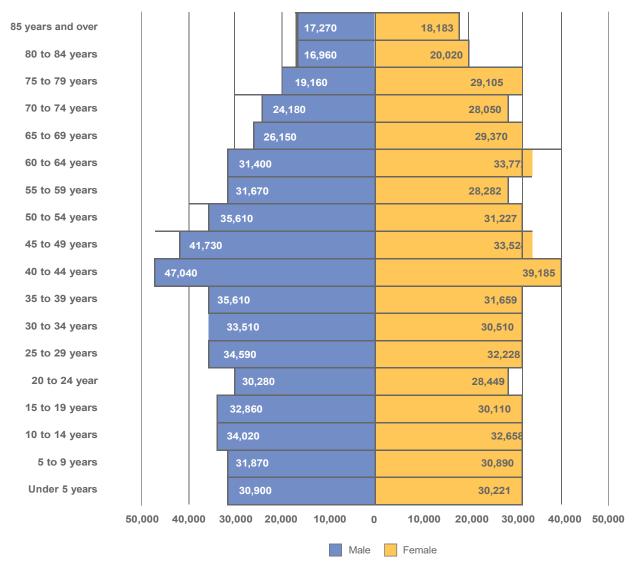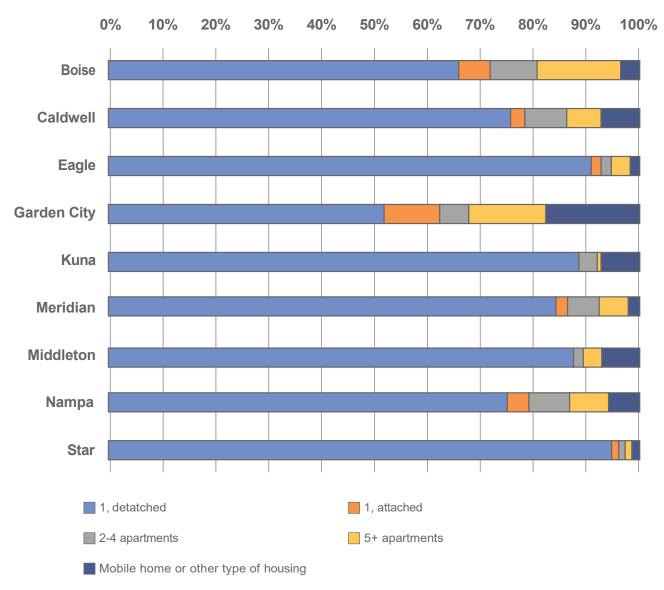| Age Group	Male	Female
85 years and over	17,270	18,183
80 to 84 years	16,960	20,020
75 to 79 years	19,160	29,105
70 to 74 years	24,180	28,050
65 to 69 years	26,150	29,370
60 to 64 years	31,400	33,77
55 to 59 years	31,670	28,282
50 to 54 years	35,610	31,227
45 to 49 years	41,730	33,52
40 to 44 years	47,040	39,185
35 to 39 years	35,610	31,659
30 to 34 years	33,510	30,510
25 to 29 years	34,590	32,228
20 to 24 year	30,280	28,449
15 to 19 years	32,860	30,110
10 to 14 years	34,020	32,658
5 to 9 years	31,870	30,890
Under 5 years	30,900	30,221

■ Male   ■ Female

Figure 2. Treasure Valley population pyramid 2050.
Source: COMPASS.

Housing

Housing types and distribution

Most housing in the region is single-family, detached housing. The remaining housing is a mix of single-family attached, multi-family, and mobile homes (Figure 3). The distribution of housing is not uniform throughout the region. In more urban areas, the proximity to job centers increases land prices and leads to more diverse and dense housing.
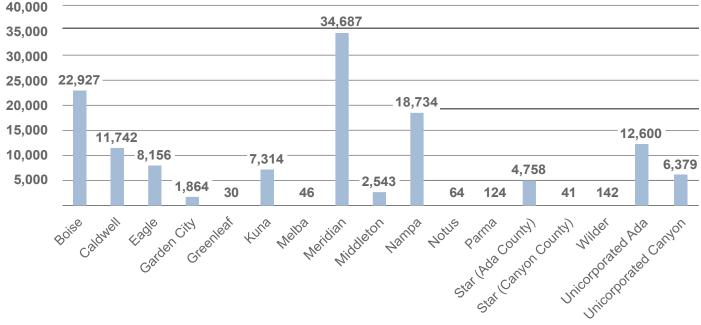
HOUSING BY UNIT STRUCTURE

Legend:
- 1, detached
- 1, attached
- 2-4 apartments
- 5+ apartments
- Mobile home or other type of housing

Figure 3. Housing by unit structure, for select Treasure Valley cities.
Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2019 5-year estimates.

Similarly, while all cities in the region have felt the impact of growth, the distribution in the amount of new housing built across the last decade has not been dispersed evenly. Some cities have been relatively stagnant, while others have seen rapid growth (Figure 4).

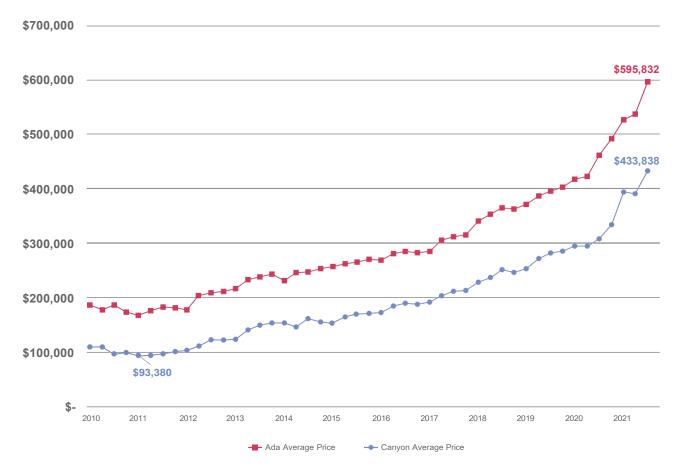**Figure 4. New residential units by city, 2001-2021.**
Source: COMPASS.

Housing Affordability

The Treasure Valley's high quality of life has caused the rest of the nation to notice. The increase in net migration has driven an increase in demand for housing, and affordability has suffered (Figure 5).

The search for more affordable housing has often pushed homebuyers further from employment centers to locations where land is cheaper. However, this can often mean longer commutes and the accompanying higher costs of car maintenance and gas. High gas prices can cause a significant burden to household budgets.

AVERAGE SINGLE-FAMILY HOME SALES

Figure 5. Average sales price of a single-family home, 2010–2021.
Source: Intermountain Multiple Listing Service 2022.

Jobs and Economic Conditions

COMPASS uses Idaho Department of Labor data, which includes firms' locations, industry sector types, and numbers of employees, to develop annual regional employment estimates. Despite the worldwide pandemic and subsequent global and national recessions, the Treasure Valley has weathered the economic storm well. As of March 2022, the unemployment rate in the Boise/Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area was 2.6%, less than the national average of 3.6%.[5]

FUTURE CONDITIONS

Predicting macro-scale migration, regional housing preferences, and the residential and commercial real estate markets over the next several decades is difficult. The recent pandemic has shown the complexity of predicting the future. However, that does not preclude the need to plan for it.

> *"I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been."*
> —Wayne Gretzky

2050 Forecast Methodology

COMPASS developed the CIM 2050 forecast using best practices in population forecasting. Several methodologies were considered, including:

- cohort component
- econometric
- trend
- peer or analogous area
- top-down or ratio

COMPASS reviewed these methodologies (Table 3) and the resulting forecasts with the COMPASS Demographic Advisory Workgroup. These forecasts were averaged for a forecasted 2050 two-county population of 1.075 million (Figure 6).

Table 3. Forecast Method Comparison

	Method	Forecast base on	Considerations	Forecasted Population
	Cohort component	Anticipated births and expected survival of the existing population.	Birth rates are declining, while life expectancy is increasing.	981,522
	Econometric	Relationship among economic variables such as the size of labor force and gross metropolitan product.	The job market in the region has been strong, but history tells us that while the Treasure Valley has seen incredible growth, there have also been periods of slowdowns.	1,055,916

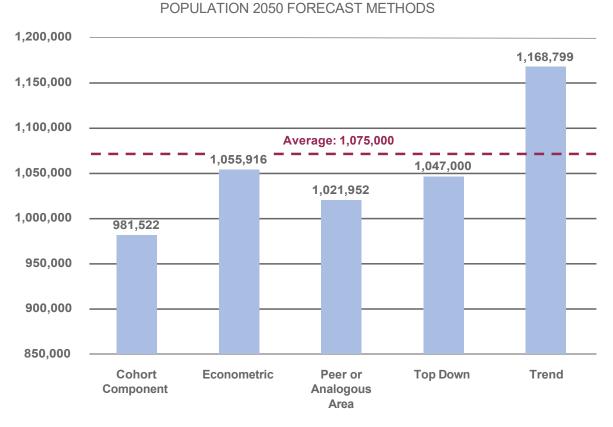|	Method	Forecast base on	Considerations	Forecasted Population
	Peer or analogous area	How metropolitan areas with similar characteristics grew over a specific period of time.	These forecasts not only assist in forecasting future population, but also provide insight into how and why peer areas grew to inform local growth assumptions. COMPASS compared the Treasure Valley to: • Oklahoma City, OK • Omaha, NE • Salt Lake City, UT • Tucson, AZ	1,021,952
	Top-down or ratio	The relationship of population growth among different areas.	COMPASS used the Woods and Poole econometric forecast of the larger Mountain Region as the basis for the Treasure Valley forecast.	1,047,000
	Trend	Extending the rate of past population changes into the future.	Past performance is no guarantee of future results; however, rapid growth due to births and in-migration is expected to likely continue into the future.	1,168,799

POPULATION 2050 FORECAST METHODS

Figure 6. Forecast method comparisons

CIM 2050 VISION

The Treasure Valley's growth may be exciting, annoying, or scary, depending on how well the region prepares and responds. To plan for this growth in a way that provides a plausible vision for the future while addressing public values and needs, COMPASS used a series of three interactive public involvement surveys to ask residents how they want to see their region grow. Learn more about the three surveys in _Public Participation_.[6]

> _"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."_
> —John F. Kennedy

Using survey results as a guide, COMPASS worked with cities and counties to develop the CIM 2050 Vision[7]—a growth forecast that incorporates community ideals while also aligning with local land use plans.

The CIM 2050 Vision (Figure 7) allocates future growth across the region (Table 4) and establishes the official demographic assumptions for CIM 2050 transportation analyses based on a total regional 2050 population of 1,075,000 (see above) and the results of the three surveys. The CIM 2050 Vision helps maintain the high quality of life that the region has enjoyed by focusing growth in areas where services can be made easily available, preserving farmland, supplying a variety of transportation choices, and providing affordable housing and transportation options in the valley.

COMPASS conducted an analysis of the net fiscal impact (revenues minus expenditures) of the *Communities in Motion 2050* (CIM 2050) Vision growth allocation, the net fiscal impact of recent growth trends to the 2050 horizon year, and a comparison of the two sets of results. Overall, the CIM 2050 Vision yields an approximately $34,000,000 annual net fiscal benefit compared to trend.
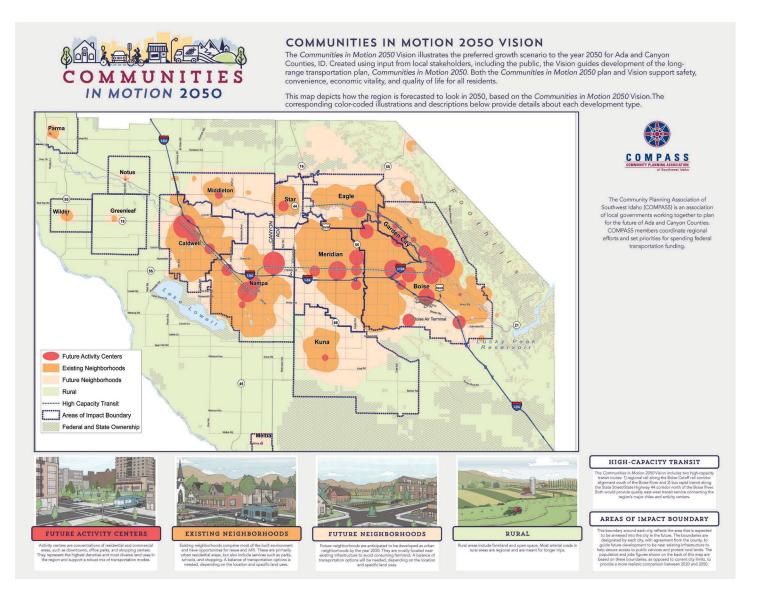

Figure 7. CIM 2050 Vision Map[8]

Table 4. 2020 and 2050 Population by City

	2020 Population	2050 Population
Ada County		
Boise	271,010	314,520
Eagle	33,540	54,670
Garden City	12,290	19,000
Kuna	31,730	72,020
Meridian	123,810	192,540
Star	11,810	22,380
Ada County Rural	10,780	40,690
Ada County Total	494,970	715,820
Canyon County		
Caldwell	66,680	111,190
Greenleaf	2,910	4,170
Melba	970	1,700
Middleton	15,660	40,570
Nampa	115,860	168,140
Notus	990	1,460
Parma	2,700	3,330
Wilder	2,940	3,620
Canyon County Rural	22,400	25,000
Canyon County Total	231,110	359,180
Region (Ada + Canyon Counties)	**726,080**	**1,075,000**

Note: The figures in this table are based on areas of city impact as of July 2021 and rounded to the nearest 10.
Source: COMPASS.

While the CIM 2050 Vision sets the expectations for future growth in a rapidly growing area, it is also flexible; COMPASS updates, or reconciles, the growth allocation annually to account for new entitled developments and changing land use plans and policies. This process helps maintain consistency between the forecast and entitled development. It also provides more accurate data for travel model analyses and helps meet federal requirements for using the most recent data for air quality conformity demonstrations.[9]

CONCLUSION

Ada and Canyon Counties have been growing rapidly for several decades. Multiple factors support the assumption of continued strong growth into the future—demographic and economic conditions in the region, historical trends, and overall the quality of life all continue to entice migration from around the nation and especially the West Coast.

> *"The best way to predict the future is to create it."*
> —Abraham Lincoln

However, there are some considerations that could curtail that growth. While the economy is currently strong, a national recession could impact the local job market. In addition, inadequate transportation funding has hampered the region's ability to provide a robust transportation system that adequately serves all modes and users, an issue that will be exacerbated if additional funding is not secured. Accessing transportation funding will be key to the region's continued growth and prosperity.[10]

Working toward the CIM 2050 Vision will require a cooperative and coordinated effort throughout the region. Successful implementation will help maintain the region's quality of life and make the best use of limited transportation dollars by aligning transportation investments with anticipated growth.

ENDNOTES

1   US Census Bureau, 2020

2   Ibid.

3   Current and Historical Population Estimates, COMPASS,
     www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/demo-current.htm

4   Development Monitoring Reports, COMPASS,
     https://compassidaho.org/development-monitoring-report/

5   State Employment and Unemployment Summary, Bureau of Labor Statistics,
     www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.nr0.htm

6   Public Participation, CIM 2050, https://cim2050.compassidaho.org/PublicParticipation.pdf

7   CIM 2050 Vision, https://cim2050.compassidaho.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CIM_2050_Vision_
     Map_Final.pdf

8   Ibid.

9   "Determining Conformity of Federal Actions to State or Federal Implementation Plans," Code of Federal
     Regulations, Title 40, 93.110.
     www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-C/part-93/subpart-A/section-93.110

10   Financial Plan, CIM 2050, https://cim2050.compassidaho.org/FinancialPlan.pdf