



3.0 SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Population, housing, employment and economic factors were utilized as data input to generate traffic volumes in the 2005 TransCAD model. Traffic volumes were calibrated with the use of pneumatic tube counters to correlate the trips generated by the driving population. A study was conducted to determine the current growth trends and redistribution of the population base. Trend data was used to project growth rates for the years 2015 and 2025. Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed discussion regarding historical and projected growth rates. This chapter summarizes Appendix A.

3.1 Population

Population Distribution

Current Distribution

Approximately 88 % (30,615) of Silver Bow County’s population resides within the Butte urban limits, while approximately 12% (3,991) of the population resides in areas outside the urban boundaries. Within the urban limits, nearly 33% (9,986 people) of the population is concentrated in Census Tracts 1 and 2, 37% (11,350 people) is contained in Census Tracts 3, 4 and 5 and the remaining 30% (9,041 people) is concentrated in Tracts 6, 7 and 8 (within the urban limits). Refer to Figure 3.1 for map of urban limits and Census Tracts, and Figure 3.2 for population growth and decline at the census tract level.

Redistribution

U.S. Census Bureau figures from 1990 and 2000 indicate that Butte-Silver Bow experienced an internal redistribution of population that could potentially impact the road system. Census Tracts 1 through 5 showed losses ranging from 0.9% to 8.3%, with losses generally occurring within the urban limits in the following specific areas:

- North side or Kennedy Elementary School area
- West Elementary School area
- Emerson Elementary School area
- Whittier Elementary School area
- Old Greeley School area

Areas of growth during the period occurred primarily on the periphery or outside the urban limits to the north, east and south and in Census Tracts 6, 7 and 8. Notable areas of growth included:

- Beef Trail/Little Basin Creek area
- Black Tail Loop area
- Bull Run area
- Hillcrest Elementary School area (Country Club-Holly Lane areas)
- East Ridge area
- Hanson Rd. (new YMCA, Old Stockyards area)
- Moulton Reservoir area

Current redistribution of the population is consistent with this historic data based on new housing starts.



Vehicles per Household and Means of Transportation to Work (2000 Census)

Butte-Silver Bow had approximately 26,095 vehicles available to households in 2000 compared to 24,277 in 1990—a 7.5% increase over the ten-year period. The mean number of available vehicles per household in 2000 was 1.81, up from the 1990 Census figure of 1.78. The county had 15,600 workers in 2000, the majority of whom drove alone to their workplaces. (Refer to Table 3-1.) Of those who did not work at home, the mean travel time to work was 14.4 minutes. The majority of these workers left home between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

Means of Transportation	Total Number	Percent
Drove Alone	12,664	81.2%
Carpooled	1,639	10.5%
Public Transportation (including Taxi Cab)	90	0.06%
Bicycled or Walked	673	4.3%
Motorcycle or Other Means	110	0.07%
Worked at Home	425	2.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Transportation Planning Package (CTPP 2000)

Future Growth

Overall Growth

Table 3-2 presents three scenarios for growth. In the low growth scenario, Butte-Silver Bow gains 1,046 people between 2005 and 2025 for a 3% rate of growth. The moderate growth scenario shows a gain of 2,113 people for a 6% rate of growth, and the high growth scenario presents a 12% growth rate for a gain of 4,287 people over the 20-year period. While the road system is generally able to accommodate low and moderate growth, it would be impacted by a growth rate of greater than 6% (an additional 2000 or more people) at Harrison Ave. between Amherst St. and Dewey Blvd.. This location is currently over capacity.

Year	Low Growth Scenario	Moderate Growth Scenario	Higher Growth Scenario
2005	34,688	34,688	34,688
2015	35,207	35,729	36,769
2025	35,734	36,801	38,975



Growth Distribution

The pattern of population redistribution is generally expected to continue into the year 2025 at a decelerated rate, with Census Tracts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 losing population, and gains occurring in Tracts 6, 7 and 8. Tract 2 has the potential for growth and is projected to start gaining population between 2015 and 2025. Growth is expected to occur specifically in the following areas:

- Beef Trail/Little Basin Creek Area
- Black Tail Loop Area
- Bull Run Area
- Hillcrest Elementary School Area (Specifically Country Club-Holly Lane Areas)
- East Ridge Area
- Hanson Rd. (New YMCA, Old Stockyards Area)
- Moulton Reservoir Area

3.2 Housing Units

Number of Housing Units

Butte-Silver Bow County had a total of 16,176 housing units in 2000, an increase of 4.5% (702 units) over 1990. The county experienced a growth rate of 3.8% in occupied housing units during the decade 1990-2000, going from 13,899 to 14,432.

Distribution of Occupied Units

Current Distribution

According to 2000 Census figures, 89.8% (14,523) of occupied housing units were located inside the urban cluster of Silver Bow County. Just over 10% (1,653) were located outside the urban cluster. Ninety-one percent (1,498) of units in the rural areas are contained in Tract 8, with the remaining 9% (155) of rural units in Tract 6. Within the urban limits, just over 30% of occupied units were concentrated in Census Tracts 1 and 2. Nearly 33% of the units are located in Census Tracts 3, 4 and 5.

Redistribution

Changes in occupied housing units followed the pattern of population redistribution. There were losses to Census Tracts in 1, 3, 4 and 5 during the decade 1990-2000, and gains to Tracts 6, 7 and 8. Tract 2 did not show an overall loss due to gains within two small pockets of growth inside its boundaries. Tract 8 experienced the highest growth in occupied units during the period, gaining 458 units for a 31% rate of growth, while Tract 7 gained 227 units for a growth rate of 21.48%.

Future Growth

Overall Growth

Refer to Figure 3.3 for projected housing gains and losses at the census block level. Future growth in the number of occupied housing units is also linked to successful economic development efforts and the in-migration of population. Following the low population growth scenario, occupied housing units would grow at a rate of approximately 7.76% for a total gain of 1,136 housing units over the 20 year period 2005-2025.



Growth Distribution

Distribution of additional occupied housing units is expected to follow the general pattern of population distribution into the year 2025. Census Tracts 1, 3, 4 and 5 will continue to lose units while Tracts 6, 7, 8 and pockets of Tract 2 will experience gains. Tract 8 is expected to see the highest growth at a 30% rate, Tract 7 is projected to experience 20% growth, and Tract 6 is projected to grow by 18.8% between 2005 and 2025. Specific areas of growth in occupied housing units are expected to occur in the same areas of projected population growth.

3.3 Employment

Current Distribution

Refer to Appendix A for additional information regarding employment. The total number of people employed in Butte-Silver Bow in 2003 was 14,135. Of the total employed, 25% were employed in the retail industry and 75% were employed in non-retail industries.

Retail employment is concentrated in two main areas in the county including the Harrison Ave. corridor, which passes through Census Tracts 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, with the highest concentration in Tract 6, and the uptown business district, which is primarily in Census Tract 1. Other pockets of retail employment exist along Montana St., Front St. and Amherst Ave. Because retail jobs generate more drive-in customers, they have a higher volume of vehicle trips per job.

Non-Retail employees are spread across the eight Census Tracts in Butte-Silver Bow, with many located on the periphery or outside the urban limits. Census Tracts 1 and 8 contain 42% of all non-retail employees in the county.

Future Growth

Overall Growth

The number of employed in Butte-Silver Bow is projected to grow by almost 21% between 2005 and 2025. Total employed is expected to reach 15,685 by 2015 and 17,393 by 2025.

Employment in the retail sector would, under this scenario, grow at a rate of 28% over the 20-year period for a gain of 998 employees and a total of 4,547 employees. Non-retail employment would grow by 18.6% for a gain of 2,013 employees and a total of 12,846 employees. (Refer to Table 3-3 for employment figures).

Table 3-3 Growth Projections by Number of Employed Silver Bow County 2003-2025				
	2003 Base Year	2005 Projection	2015 Projection	2025 Projection
Retail	3,462	3,549	3,985	4,547
Non-Retail	10,673	10,833	11,700	12,846
Total	14,135	14,382	15,685	17,393

Source: Based upon Historic and Forecast Employment Data for Silver Bow County; NPA Data Services, Inc, 2003

Growth Distribution

Growth in employment is likely to continue in the current pattern of distribution. Retail employment will continue to be concentrated in Census Tract 1, primarily in the uptown business district and in Tract 6 along the Harrison Ave. corridor. Growth in non-retail employment is expected to be concentrated in Tracts 1 and 8.