

# Introduction

## 1-1 Historical Context

### Early History

Mormon pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. After declaring “This is the Place,” Brigham Young’s vanguard detachment of twenty-three wagons and 143 men, three women and two children, began the task of surviving that first year. In the fall of 1848, a pioneer named Joseph Harker crossed the Jordan River to procure better grass for his animals. He built his dugout along the west bank of the river near what is now 3300 South. Several other families followed in 1849 including Samuel Bennion, Thomas Mackay, Thomas Tarbet, William Farrer, William Blackhurst and John Robinson. In 1850, these families moved to 4800 South and began building permanent homes.

The U.S. Army under Captain Johnston arrived in the Valley in 1857. The soldiers crossed the Jordan River near the present site of the Salt Lake County Fairgrounds, marching southwest to 1700 West and continuing directly south to Camp Floyd. Unfortunately, their horses and cattle caused considerable damage to local property. Protests from families living along 1700 West were so strong that Johnston received orders for his soldiers to put up fences to protect these farms. Redwood from California was used to build the fences and 1700 West became known as Redwood Road.



Between 1866 and 1870 the pioneers, who were primarily Mormon and included many foreign-born Mormon converts, moved up from the Jordan River bottom and onto the “flats.” New homes, chapels, irrigation canals and roads were built and fruit trees were quickly planted to insure greater self-sufficiency. Buildings were constructed mainly with adobe brick, and logs from the mountains were used in stake and pole fencing. Development was slow due to the lack of reliable water and the harsh conditions.

Farming was a challenge for the pioneers. Initially, dry farming was practiced due to the limited water supply, with results ranging from very successful to disastrous. Soon irrigation canals were dug to provide a steady supply of water. Unfortunately, the high water table left the area prone to becoming waterlogged and often the high mineral content close to the surface rose with the water level and poisoned the crops. Many residents found they needed additional sources of income to support their families.

As it grew, the land “over Jordan” became known as Brighton, Granger, Hunter and Pleasant Green. By the 1880s, improved and extensive canal systems pushed dry farming to larger areas to the west and the

south and horse driven threshers were replaced by mowing machines. Homes began to be constructed of lumber and brick, and locust and poplar trees were planted to provide shade and to slow the wind. Several water wells were driven with sledge hammers, some to a depth of 100 feet. Jacob Hunter started Granger's first business by building a smoke house and curing meat for his neighbors.

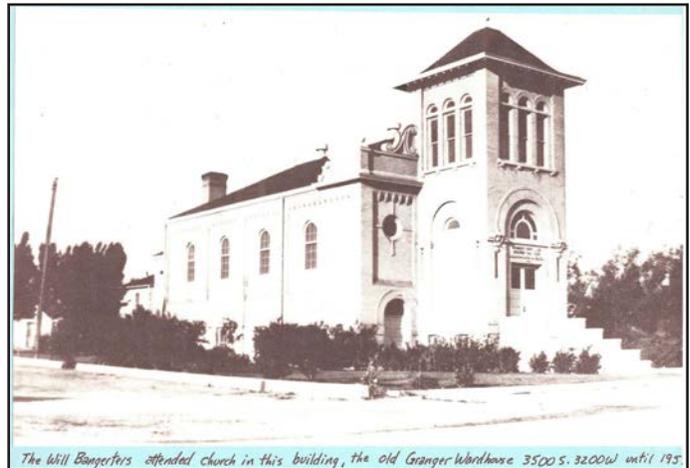
### 1900- 1980

Granite School District was formed in 1904 and several new schools were erected. Joseph Fairbourne became the community's first blacksmith and started the first Granger Post Office at 3200 West and 3500 South. In Hunter, mail could be picked up at Rasmus Nielson's country store. The Bamberger and Orem railroads linked the area with Salt Lake and Provo by 1917, and were used to move cash crops such as peas, tomatoes, onions, apples and sugar beets.



Beginning in 1910, Granite High School, the "Farmers' School," emphasized classes in agriculture, home economics and trade industries. By 1920, the P.T.A. had been organized, as well as the West Side Commercial Club, to further the interests of business in the Granger, Hunter and Pleasant Green areas. Kennecott Copper Mine and Hercules Aerospace brought vastly expanded employment opportunities to the west side.

The area known as Chesterfield was settled during the Great Depression. Land was inexpensive and those without a place to stay could set up camp until they had the means to buy property and build a home. Those were hard times with many people spending the winter in tents or one room make-shift homes. Permanent homes were eventually constructed, and the area today is still a unique neighborhood with an agrarian feel.



*The Will Bangerfers attended church in this building, the old Granger Wardhome 3500 S. 3200W until 195.*

The 1930s also brought increased industrial and commercial growth. In 1932, the Winder family relocated Winder Dairy from South Salt Lake to 4400 West and 4100 South. Fassio Egg Farms opened at 5200 West and 3650 South. Several coal and feed businesses sprung up along with gas stations, grocery stores and cold storage lockers.

The first two subdivisions for Granger were recorded in 1948 and homes sold for \$4,200. The Granger-Hunter Improvement District was created by the Salt Lake County Commissioners on January 13, 1950 to provide infrastructure for water and sewer service. With water finally readily available, the area grew rapidly. Granger High School was completed in 1958 and had an enrollment of over 900 students in its first year.



1947 - The Granger Lions Club - Standing - Herman, Albert, Fred, Will  
Seated - Willis B. Schmidt, Emma B. Lohacker, Alice Weaver-Bangert, Frederick L. Bangert, Clara B. Moore

The first organizations to represent pre-incorporation communities to the County and State were the Granger Lions Club and the Hunter Lions Club, organized in 1947 and 1952. The Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1963. In the mid-1960s these organizations, with the help of the newly formed Jaycees, organized the Granger Hunter Community Council. Several shopping centers, banks, savings and loan and medical centers were also welcomed into the growing community. At the close of 1962, Granger had 77 subdivisions with space for nearly 5,000 building lots.

The 1970s saw continued growth and expansion of business, industry and education. Valley Fair Mall, major industrial parks and further subdividing led to a strengthened tax base. In 1975 the County opened the Redwood Multipurpose Center, providing recreational facilities as well as social services to the Redwood and Chesterfield neighborhoods.

### **Incorporation and the 1980s**

Through the 1970s, many residents in the Granger, Hunter and Redwood area began to look at creating a new city through incorporation. They were increasingly frustrated with high taxes, limited control of the planning and zoning process, the threat of annexation of the northern part of Granger Hunter by Salt Lake City, and a perception that the east side of the Valley was getting more County attention than the west side.

Yet, there was considerable opposition from those who felt that the proposed city did not have an adequate tax base. Opponents were also worried because the law at the time required second class cities, those with populations over 60,000, to form their own school districts. Estimates showed that the proposed city would reach that population in a few years, adding the costs of setting up a new school district to the costs of setting up a new city government. This was the deciding factor for many people, and the initial attempt at incorporation was defeated in 1978.

The idea did not die. That same year, the Legislature changed the law so that second class cities were no longer required to create separate school districts. This eliminated much of the financial concern and made the incorporation idea more feasible to residents. Another vote was held in February 1980, and this time the residents of Granger, Hunter and Redwood narrowly approved incorporation. The opposition did not give up and scheduled a disincorporation vote for July 8, one week after the official birth of the City. They were unable to dissolve the new city, however, as residents again expressed support for incorporation.

At the time of the 1980 incorporation vote, there was also a vote for City officers. Henry Price, one of the prime movers behind incorporation, became the first mayor of West Valley City. He, along with

two commissioners, Renee Mackay and Jerry Wagstaff, helped form the administrative and legislative bodies of the new City. Their goals included limiting taxes, encouraging home ownership, improving the appearance of the City, respecting property rights and creating a park system.

A referendum changed the City's government to a council/manager form, effective January 4, 1982. The first Council was comprised of Gerald K. Maloney as Mayor and Brent F. Anderson, Larry D. Bunkall, Michael R. Embley, Jay G. Jackson, Claude L. Jones and Quentin C. Winder as Councilmen. John D. Newman became West Valley City's first City Manager.

In March of 1988 the City annexed the land around the Hercules rocket fuel manufacturing plant (now Alliant Techsystems, Inc.). In 1984 Hercules was Salt Lake County's largest private employer with more than 5,000 employees and a payroll of \$115 million. There was considerable controversy because Hercules insisted that there be 'overpressure zones' surrounding their plant to protect against damage from potential explosions. A complex plan was worked out between Salt Lake County, Hercules and West Valley City to issue a revenue bond to buy land in the overpressure zone for recreational use and an industrial park. Hercules was to purchase additional land and give some to West Valley. The area became known as West Ridge and the West Ridge Golf Course was built. Improvements were installed to make the area an attractive commercial park. Frito Lay is the largest of several businesses that have located there.

### **1990 through 2007**

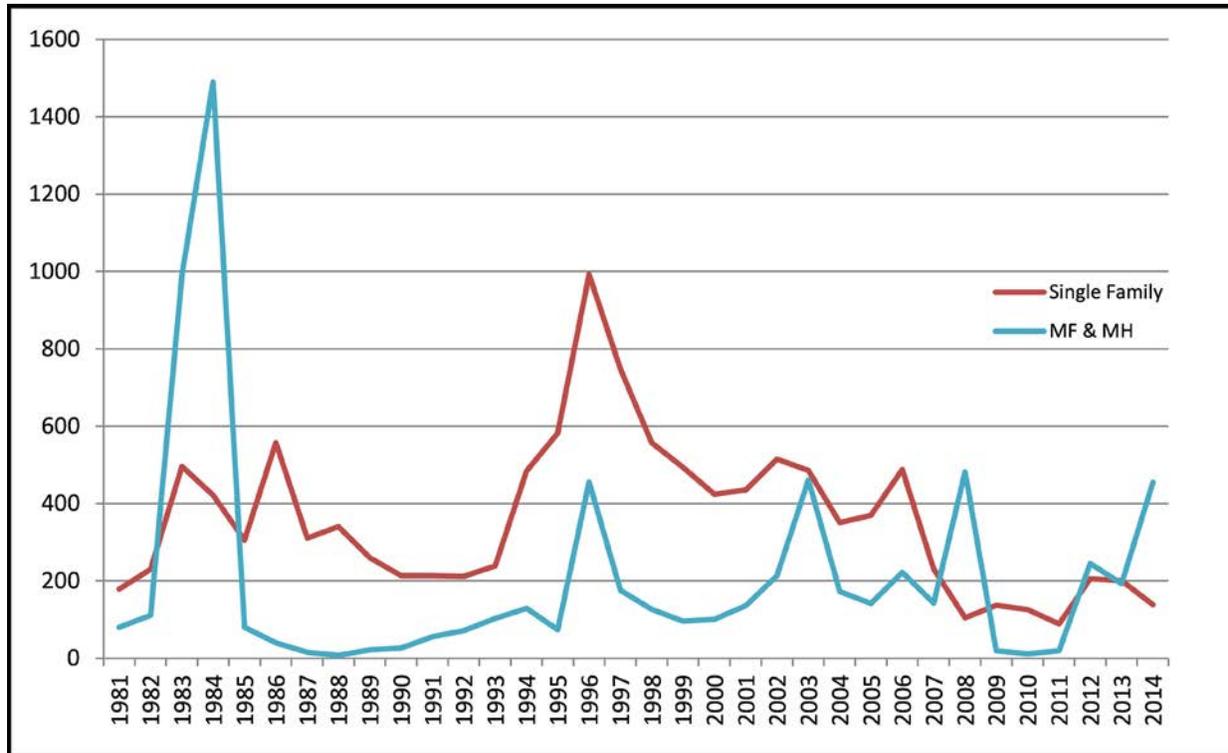
Major changes for the City began in the mid 1990's. In March of 1996, the City annexed approximately 680 acres located generally south of 6200 South that includes the Diamond Summit subdivision. Significant growth occurred in residential and commercial development in the mid to late 1990s. Figure 1-1 below shows residential permit activity for



single family and multi-family dwelling units. With the exception of 1983 and 1984 when large apartment complexes were developed, the mid to late 1990s have been the fastest growing period since incorporation. During this same period, the Lake Park Corporate Center, Presidential Business Park, and the entertainment area around the Maverik Center were developed. Centennial Park, the City's largest park, was also developed in the late 1990s.

Residential construction remained strong from 2000 until 2007, when residential development slowed due to the national credit crisis. Residential land values rose dramatically during this period. In 2001, residential land was estimated at \$45,000 per acre. Land values increased to just over \$100,000 per acre in 2005 and over \$180,000 per acre in 2007. For this reason, the City saw residential development occur in areas that were previously intended for industrial development as well as significant infill development. Major subdivisions developed since 2000 include Vivante, Stonegate, Meadowlands, Hunter Village and Sugarplum. Strong commercial development along 5600 West north of 3500 South during this period has made this corridor a major regional commercial center.

Figure 1-1: Building Permit Activity for New Residential Construction Since 1981



Source: West Valley City Building Inspection Department

### 2008 to Present

By 2008, the real estate bubble had burst and the housing market had crashed. Single family home construction slowed considerably compared to historic rates, and with the exception of the E-Gate apartments near the Maverik Center, multi-family construction practically stopped for the next three years. As of 2015, single family home construction has risen considerably, averaging about 200 new units a year for the last several years, and multi-family construction has increased considerably as well. The Residences at Fairbourne, the Sage Gate Apartments, the Pinnacle at Highbury, the Villages at Westridge, and the Truong Townhomes are among recent multi-family developments.

While housing construction went through a lull, commercial construction has been strong since 2008. The 5600 West commercial corridor has experienced significant new construction, and has emerged as a retail and restaurant center for residents of the City and the west side of the valley. Target anchors the Highbury Centre project, which has shops, restaurants, a theater, and a Marriott TownePlace Hotel.

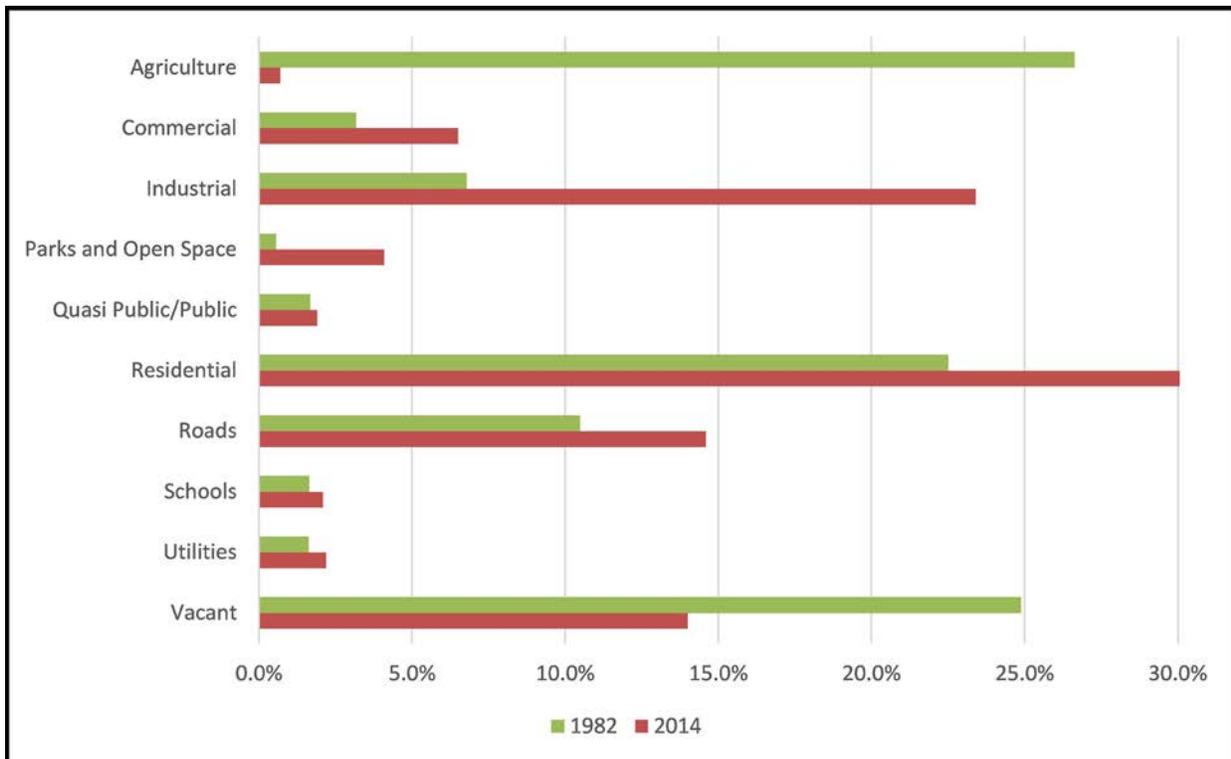
Construction activity around Fairbourne Station has been strong as well, with the continued expansion of Valley Fair Mall, the completion of the Embassy Suites in 2012, reconstruction of the Plaza and Phase One of the Promenade in 2012, and the reconfiguration of the 3500 South I-215 exit together with the construction of the 2400 West frontage road.

# 1-2 State of the City

## Existing Land Uses in West Valley City

West Valley City's land use has changed substantially since 1982 when the City's first land use study was performed. As Figure 1-2 and Table 1-1 indicate, the amount of land in agricultural use has declined considerably, as has vacant, unbuilt land. Accounting for this, in large part, is the increase of land developed for residential land uses.

Figure 1-2: Land Use Within West Valley City 1982 and 2014



Source: West Valley Community & Economic Development

Another noteworthy change shown in Table 1-1 is the 33% increase in total City acreage realized through several annexations.

### Residential

Since incorporation, the percentage of residential land developed for single family homes has remained fairly constant; single family homes represented 87% of developed residential land in 1982, and that figure has only dropped to 84% by 2014. However, multi-family residential land has increased from 3.6% of all residential land in 1982 to 8.6% in 2014.

### Commercial

The percentage of land dedicated to commercial uses has doubled since 1982, and now represents 6.5% of the City. Community shopping centers at 4100 South and 5600 West, 4700 South and 4000 West, and 6200 South and 5600 West provide vital goods and services to the immediate areas.

5600 West north of 3500 South is rapidly developing and has become a regional draw. Commercial properties continue to redevelop along 3500 South and Redwood Road.

**Table 1-1: Land Uses in West Valley City 1982 and 2014**

Land Use	1982			2014		
	Acres	% of City	% of Residential	Acres	% of City	% of Residential
Agriculture	4,605	26.6%		170	0.7%	
Commercial	550	3.2%		1,502	6.5%	
Industrial	1,175	6.8%		5,367	23.4%	
Parks & Open Space	98	0.6%		951	4.1%	
Quasi-Public/Public	291	1.7%		425	1.9%	
Residential Total	3,892	22.5%		6,999	30.5%	
<i>Single Family</i>	3,387	19.6%	87.0%	5,892	25.7%	84.2%
<i>Duplex</i>	153	0.9%	3.9%	159	0.7%	2.3%
<i>Mobile Home</i>	211	1.2%	5.4%	348	1.5%	5.0%
<i>Multi-Family</i>	141	0.8%	3.6%	600	2.6%	8.6%
Roads	1,815	10.5%		3,338	14.6%	
Schools	285	1.6%		471	2.1%	
Utilities	281	1.6%		503	2.2%	
Vacant/Undeveloped	4,303	24.9%		3,026	14.0%	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17,294</b>			<b>22,932</b>		

Source: West Valley City Community & Economic Development

**Industrial**

Industrial land has expanded dramatically from 6.9% in 1982 to 23.4% in 2014. Alliant Techsystems Inc. owns nearly 40 percent of all industrial land in West Valley City. West Ridge, Presidential Business Center, the trucking and heavy equipment companies along the SR-201 frontage road, and the ARA Industrial Center are all major industrial centers.

**Parks and Open Space**

The allocation of land for parks and recreation increased substantially in the early days of the City, from 98 acres in 1982 to 951 in 2014. This growth was fueled by the development of West Ridge Golf Course, Centennial Park, Stonebridge Golf Course, and several regional and neighborhood parks of varying sizes.

**Agriculture**

Agricultural land has given way to development. Over a quarter of the City was in agricultural use in 1982. Through the development of new residential subdivisions, shopping centers and industrial parks, agricultural property now constitutes less than 1% of the City’s total area.

## Important Development Projects

Since the last General Plan Update, the areas around 5600 West and Fairbourne Station have experienced significant development:

- The Highbury development is well underway. This is a mixed-use project featuring a variety of retail uses along 5600 West, a mix of housing types, schools, and open space with significant water features. Highbury will complement the Lake Park project, a major regional employment center.
- At Fairbourne Station, the Embassy Suites Hotel has been built, the first phase of the Residences at Fairbourne is complete, and the Plaza and first phase of the Promenade have been built.
- As of 2015, the Valley Fair Mall continues their expansion and renovation plans. Valley Fair Mall has increased their retail square footage from 600,000 to 1,000,000 square feet.
- The City formed the North West Economic Development Area for the ARA Industrial Center development, which will bring up to 3.4 million square feet of new warehousing space to the City.

## Transportation Improvement Projects

A number of significant transportation and transit projects have also been completed or are underway:

- The reconstruction of 3500 South with dedicated center Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes and raised passenger platforms was completed in 2010.
- The West Valley City TRAX Green Line began operating in 2011.
- As of 2015, Phase One of the Mountain View Corridor (two lanes each travel direction with surface intersections) has been built from the south end of the valley to 5400 South. Property acquisition for the entire freeway through West Valley City is well underway.

## Housing and Demographics

The graphs and table that follow provide a basic picture of the current state of West Valley City with information on employment, housing tenure and household size and other pertinent statistics. The introduction and background sections of each chapter provide more detailed information relevant to the particular chapter. For example, the background section of the Transportation element includes information on traffic volumes on major streets.

As of 2013, West Valley City had an estimated 39,520 housing units with an average household size of 3.47 people. The relatively dramatic increase in the average household size of renter-occupied units has pushed the total average household size up over the past twenty years (2.85 in 1990 to 3.41 in 2013), despite the relatively stable household sizes of owner-occupied units (3.58 in 1990 to 3.52 in 2013). Of all of the states in the nation, Utah has the highest average household size at 3.05 persons per household (the national average is 2.60). See Table 1-2.

**Table 1-2: West Valley City Housing Tenure & Household Size**

	1990	2000	2010	2013
Occupied Housing Units	25,933	32,253	37,139	37,451
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	17,456	23,418	25,975	25,518
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	8,477	8,835	11,164	11,933
Average Household Size - Owner Occupied Units	3.58	3.48	3.51	3.52
Average Household Size - Renter Occupied Units	2.85	3.05	3.41	3.41
Total Average Household Size	3.35	3.27	3.48	3.47

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

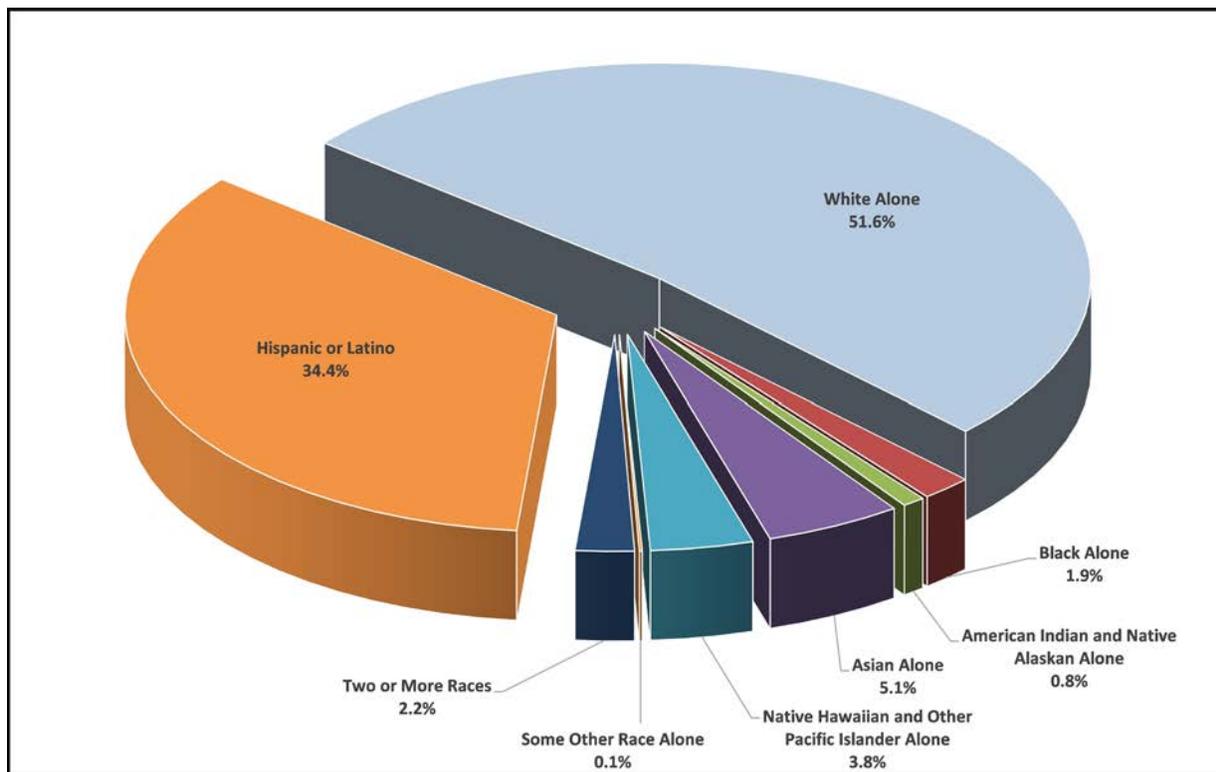
The residents of West Valley City represent a broad variety of races and ethnic backgrounds, compared to the state as a whole. Approximately half (48.4%) of West Valley City residents identify with a race and ethnicity other than white/Caucasian, while the same is true for only about two in ten (19.9%) Utah residents. West Valley City has 5,029 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander residents – 3.8 percent of the total population. Similarly, the City has a significant number of residents (34.4 percent) who identify as Hispanic or Latino, a share that has grown tremendously over the past two decades. It is important to note that Hispanics can be of any race. As of 2013, 51.6 percent of West Valley City residents identified as white and non-Hispanic, making West Valley City one of the most diverse cities in a rather homogenous state. As the LDS Church continues to draw people from all over the world to its Utah headquarters, and as ethnic and racial minorities continue to establish durable networks and successful communities in West Valley City, this trend toward greater diversity will likely continue. Table 1-3 and Figure 1-2 provide race and ethnicity data for 2013.

**Table 1-3 Race and Ethnicity in West Valley City 2013**

	Total Population	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	Asian Alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino
Utah	2,813,673	2,253,922	28,130	27,654	57,439	25,547	3,682	48,747	368,552
	100%	80.10%	1.00%	1.00%	2.00%	0.90%	0.10%	1.70%	13.10%
Salt Lake County	1,048,314	772,326	15,560	7,048	35,853	16,231	1,833	18,689	180,774
	100%	73.70%	1.50%	0.70%	3.40%	1.50%	0.20%	1.80%	17.20%
West Valley City	130,843	67,561	2,475	1,108	6,679	5,029	145	2,885	44,961
	100%	51.60%	1.90%	0.80%	5.10%	3.80%	0.10%	2.20%	34.40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 1-3 Race & Ethnicity in West Valley City 2013



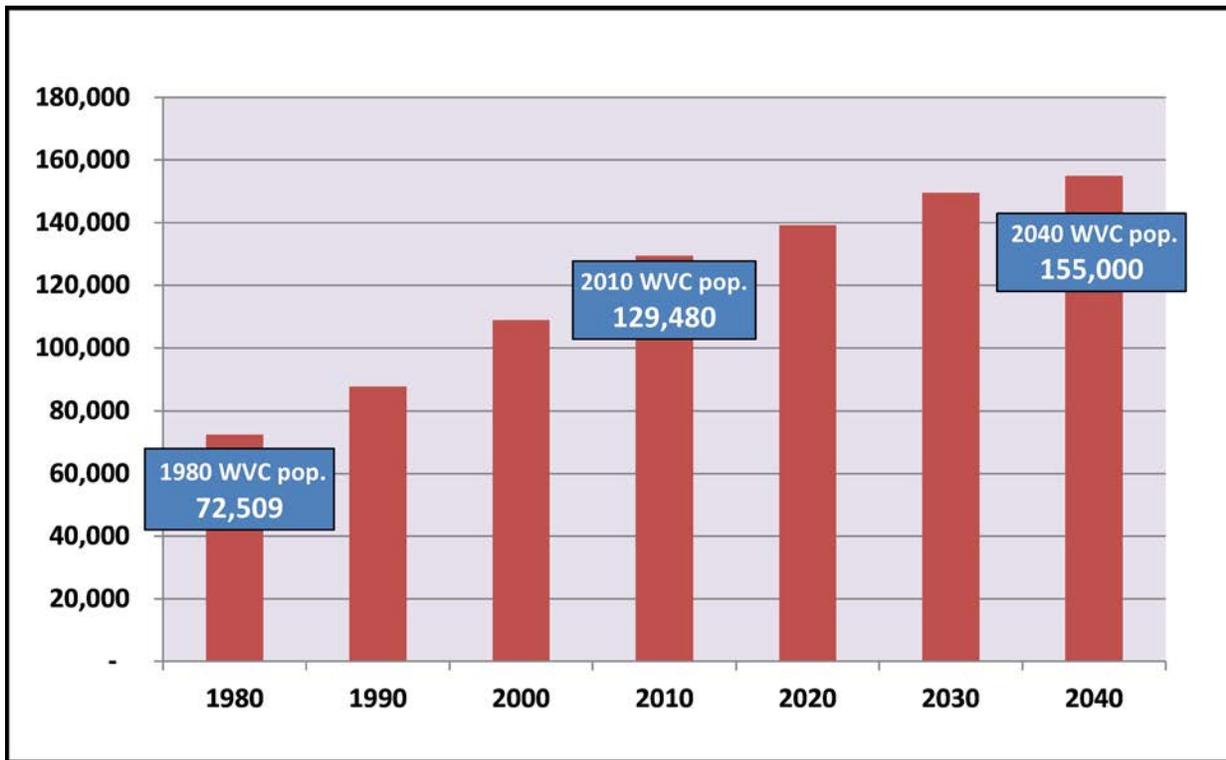
Source: American Community Survey

### 1-3 Projections

The population of West Valley City, as with the rest of the Wasatch Front, is expected to grow through 2030 and beyond. Internal growth and potential annexation will impact the overall population of the City. As Salt Lake County expands and fills in, the demand for transportation, transit, retail, and natural resources will also grow regionally. Significant growth is expected at the south end and the west benches of the Salt Lake Valley, which may mean tremendous impacts to West Valley City as a place of residence, as a destination and as a thoroughfare.

West Valley City had a population of 108,896 in 2000 and 129,480 in 2010. West Valley City's population is expected to grow by almost 20% from 2010 to 155,000 by 2040. Salt Lake County's population was 898,387 in 2000 and 1,029,655 in 2010, and in the same period from 2010 to 2040, Salt Lake County's population is expected to grow by an estimated 47% to 1,507,997 in 2040. Figure 1-4 shows population estimates and projections for West Valley City.

Figure 1-4: Population Estimates and Projections Through 2060



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and West Valley City Estimates

The current and expected future population pyramids show an important countywide transition toward an older population. The median age in Salt Lake County in the year 2000 was just over 27 years of age. In 2010 the median age was 30.8, which is projected to increase to 32 in 2020 and to 33 in 2030. This trend matches that of the State of Utah during the same period. The life expectancy within the State of Utah is expected to increase as well, growing for females from 81.9 years in 2000 to 85.9 years in 2030; and for males, 75.5 years in 2000 to 80.5 years in 2030. The greater life expectancies and transition of the Baby Boomers into retirement age indicate a greater share of older residents in the future.

This 'aging' population may have many potential impacts on the County and on West Valley City including increases in needs for senior housing and other services, as well as greater demand for walkability and transit options. In economic development terms, the City could experience more demand for health services, greater retail oriented to older patrons, and demand for recreational services. In regards to housing and transportation, an aging population may demand more walkable neighborhoods, more compact housing without a lot of yard care, and may desire more efficient transit options to fit a fixed income. While we expect to have a greater share of older residents in the future, there will remain a substantial share of young people in West Valley City. This means that while we expand opportunities for older residents we must also pay attention to the sustained demands for support and services aimed at younger populations. Figure 1-5 shows age trend projections for Salt Lake County.

Figure 1-5: Salt Lake County Population Pyramid Projections

