

CHAPTER 2

POPULATION

INTRODUCTION

The Helena Growth Policy addresses population and economic conditions affecting the City now and what it is expected to be like in the future. Helena’s current and future population patterns will strongly influence the community’s livability, business opportunities and operating conditions, and environment.

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The number of people, their social and economic traits, and their geographic distribution are important to public and private planning in the Helena area. The City of Helena serves as the population and economic center of west-central Montana. It is also an employment and commercial center for households located near but outside City boundaries. Just as these nearby areas have major effects on day-to-day operations inside Helena, the City also affects the surrounding area.

Population projections are estimates used to anticipate future infrastructure needs for City services in addition to other community needs. These estimates can be related to water and wastewater plants, bus services and recreation programs in addition to school enrollments and a variety of social programs such as housing, elderly, and healthcare services. Although predicting the future is not an exact science, population projections can be used to help anticipate future needs and approximate timelines for addressing those needs through the budget process. However, it should be noted that changes in federal and state regulations and the necessary responses can have a greater influence than population estimates.

This chapter uses available data to present existing trends and provide estimated future projections for population growth and demography for Helena and the surrounding area to the year 2030. Information in this chapter comes from the 2000 U.S. Census and its annual estimates derived from available statistics and from the Montana Department of Commerce. (A new U.S. Census was conducted in April 2010. As results from the 2010 Census become available, data provided in Helena’s Growth Policy will be updated). Population growth forecasts foretell increases in the Helena area’s need for public and private services while balancing social and environmental issues.

The U.S. Census and the Montana Census and Economic Information Center typically do not create projections. NPA Data Services Inc. uses 2000 U.S. Census data to create population projections for Lewis and Clark County, but not for Helena. Figures may differ depending on parameters, definitions, and information-gathering techniques. As a result, it is difficult to accurately predict the future based upon current trends. In addition, national and state economic situations can affect individual decisions to move to or from an area. Predicting the future is not an exact science; numbers and figures within this chapter should not be considered definitive, but are intended to describe a general condition.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

POPULATION GROWTH

Population growth is a major indicator for public and private service needs. In recent decades population growth in the greater Helena area has exceeded population growth for Montana overall, with a growth rate more than twice the rate of Montana. However, population growth within the City of Helena has been slower.

In 2009, the Montana Census and Economic Information Center estimated the City of Helena's population at 29,939 residents, making Helena Montana's sixth most populated City. The Helena area is projected to grow faster in the next twenty years than it did during the last twenty, with the City population predicted to reach approximately 39,268 by 2030.

Historically, Helena and Lewis and Clark County both have enjoyed a steady growth rate. However, in the mid-1990s, the City's growth rate surpassed the County's for the first time, reflecting a statewide trend of urban population growth. Incorporated areas are growing faster than unincorporated areas, and annexation will be an important factor for forecasting population numbers. How fast the City of Helena grows in the future will depend primarily upon how fast annexation occurs.

While the following population forecasts attempt to account for the effects of the U.S. recession that began in 2008, a slow national economic recovery could mean slower population growth during the next decade, 2010-2020.

Montana's Population Growth

The U.S. Bureau of Census estimates indicate that Montana's population increased 40.4% from 694,409 in 1970 to an estimated 974,989 in 2009. Between 1970 and 2000, most growth was in unincorporated areas governed by county regulations. However, from 2000 to 2009, incorporated areas began growing faster than unincorporated areas according to those estimates.

Lewis and Clark County's Population Growth

Between 1970 and 2009, Lewis and Clark County's population increased 86.1% from 33,281 to an estimated 61,942, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Those estimates indicate that from 1970 to 2000, the unincorporated areas of the County grew at a much faster percentage than the incorporated areas of Helena and East Helena. The increases in population percentages for the unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County are significant from 1960-2000 as shown on the *Comparison of Population Changes by Decade* table. However, from 2000 to 2009, the incorporated areas of East Helena and Helena began growing faster than other parts of the County.

Helena's Population Growth Compared to Unincorporated Areas

From 1890 to 1950, people were moving away from family farms, and most immigrants from abroad were settling in cities. During this period, the cities of Helena and East Helena received most of Lewis and Clark County's population increases. Helena's rate of population growth continued to be outpaced by the unincorporated area in Lewis and Clark County until the 1990s, when the pattern changed. Now, this trend toward more growth in the unincorporated areas is reversing as environmental requirements increase and it becomes more cost-effective to develop to denser standards.

Population settlement patterns changed after World War II. Population estimates can be reviewed in terms of percentage changes in addition to actual numbers. Between 1950 and 1990, more people lived in the incorporated areas of Lewis and Clark County while the County grew at a faster percentage rate (per decade) than the City of Helena. According to the 2000 Census, the trend was reversed with more people living in the unincorporated area of the County than in Helena and East Helena combined. However, by 2009, the City of Helena not only had a larger percentage increase but had also returned to having a larger population than the unincorporated area - a trend that is predicted to continue.

Preparing future population projections is not an exact science and typically the US census population estimates include a statistical margin for error. The 2001 Helena Growth Policy had estimated that Helena would have 26,447 people and Lewis and Clark County would have 62,978 residents by 2010. Yet, the 2009 Montana census estimates indicate Helena already had 29,939 people while Lewis and Clark County had 61,942 residents. Population estimates will be further refined as new census data becomes available.

Helena Micropolitan Area

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines a *micropolitan area* as a *geographic area containing an urban core of at least 10,000 (but less than 50,000) population and including the county containing the core urban area as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the urban core.*

The Helena micropolitan area includes persons living within the City of Helena, the Town of East Helena, unincorporated areas of southern Lewis and Clark County (Helena Valley), northern Jefferson County, and the northern area of Broadwater County west of the Missouri River. These areas are very closely related with the social, employment, commercial, and public services located in Helena. Many persons living outside Helena make daily trips to into the City for work, shopping, services, and recreation.

Residents of outlying, unincorporated areas contribute to Helena's culture and economy, but they also are major users of public services, adding to the cost of public services and increased environmental effects within the City.

The Helena micropolitan area had approximately 72,180 people in 2008, for an estimated population increase of 9.8% from the year 2000. The number of births exceeded the number of deaths and the number of people migrating into the micropolitan area over the eight-year time frame. Later data is not currently available until the forthcoming release of information from the 2010 census.

During that period between 2000-2009, the City's population increased by 13.6% from 25,780 residents to 29,939, and Lewis and Clark County's population increased by 10.9% from 55,716 to 61,942 people.

From 1990 to 2000, the greatest net-increase of population in the Helena micropolitan area occurred outside Helena City limits. The same pattern of greater population growth occurring outside City limits was happening in Montana's other larger cities as well.

By 2030, approximately 90,365 people could reside in the Helena Valley area. The population of Helena, East Helena, and the adjacent unincorporated areas is projected to continue to grow steadily, by approximately 65%-66% between 2010 and 2030. The population of the City of Helena is projected to increase from 25,780 in 2000 to 39,268 by 2030 based upon an estimated annual growth rate of 1.3%.

If Lewis and Clark County's population grows at an annual rate of 1.33%, from the 2009 census estimate of 61,942, the County could increase from 55,716 people in 2000 to 80,591 by 2030. Using the same 1.33% rate of growth, the population of the entire unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County is projected to increase from 28,294 to about 36,908 residents by 2030, based upon an estimated annual rate of 0.52%.

The unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County includes all of the population located outside of the cities of Helena and East Helena based upon 2009 data from US census estimates. However, 2009 data is not currently available for southern Lewis and Clark County, northern Jefferson County and western Broadwater County. The 2009 census estimates indicate the original 2010 estimates (prepared in 2007) had underestimated the growth for the cities and had overestimated the population for Lewis and Clark County and its unincorporated areas. Population estimates for all of these areas can be revisited when the 2010 census data becomes available.

Recent Population History, Current Population, and Forecasted Population

Between 1990 and 2009, the greater Helena area experienced substantial population increases. Population forecasts for 2010-2030 foresee continuing population growth in the Helena area.

POPULATION GROWTH BY THE NUMBERS AND BY PERCENTAGE

Growth rates can be analyzed in different numerical formats, including percentage rates that may be computed annually, by decade and in 20-year increments. US census data provides this information for Helena, East Helena, Lewis and Clark County and the unincorporated portion of Lewis and Clark County. Percentages can be useful for a small time frame to show an annual change, or to gain a perspective on a longer time period, and can help identify a logical projection for the estimated future rate of population growth.

The following table shows the percentage changes in population for the State of Montana, Lewis and Clark County, Helena, East Helena, and the unincorporated areas of Lewis and Clark County by decades, 1890-2009.

Comparison of Population Changes by Decade

DECADE	State of MT census data	% Change Per Decade	Lewis & Clark County Co. census data	% Change Per Decade	City of Helena census data	% Change Per Decade	City of East Helena census data	% Change Per Decade	Unincorp. L & C Co. census data	% Change Per Decade
1890	142,924		19,145		13,834				5,311	
1900	243,329	70.25%	19,171	0.14%	10,770	-22.15%		0.00%	8,401	58.18%
1910	376,053	54.55%	21,853	13.99%	12,515	16.20%		0.00%	9,338	11.15%
1920	548,889	45.96%	18,660	-14.61%	12,037	-3.82%		0.00%	6,623	-29.07%
1930	537,606	-2.06%	18,224	-2.34%	11,803	-1.94%	1,039	0.00%	5,382	-18.74%
1940	559,456	4.06%	22,131	21.44%	15,056	27.56%	1,143	10.01%	5,932	10.22%
1950	591,024	5.64%	24,540	10.89%	17,845	18.52%	1,216	6.39%	5,479	-7.64%
1960	674,767	14.17%	28,006	14.12%	20,227	13.35%	1,490	22.53%	6,289	14.78%
1970	694,409	2.91%	33,281	18.84%	22,730	12.37%	1,651	10.81%	8,900	41.52%
1980	786,690	13.29%	43,039	29.32%	23,938	5.31%	1,647	-0.24%	17,454	96.11%
1990	799,065	1.57%	47,495	10.35%	24,609	2.80%	1,538	-6.62%	21,348	22.31%
2000	902,195	12.91%	55,716	17.31%	25,780	4.76%	1,642	6.76%	28,294	32.54%
2009	974,989	7.90%	61,942	10.90%	29,939	13.60%	2,134	28.70%	29,869	7.20%

Source: US Census Data

Based upon this 99-year (1890-2009) long-range perspective of the local population changes, the average percent of population change per decade ranges from a low of 7.21% for the City of Helena, to a high average of 19.88% for the unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County. East Helena had the second lowest average percentage at 9.79%, followed by Lewis and Clark County with 13.29%. The State of Montana had the second highest average percentage per decade with 19.26%.

Considering an alternative shorter 49-year (1960-2009) time frame, the lowest average percent of population change per decade ranges from a low of 8.70% for the City of Helena to a high of 35.74% for the unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County. The second highest average percentage by decade was Lewis and Clark County at 16.8%, followed by East Helena at 10.32% and the State of Montana at 8.79%. Another method to analyze population changes considers annual population percentages. From 1990-1999 Lewis and Clark County had the fastest average annual percentage rate of 1.44% while the State of Montana had the slowest average annual rate of 0.11%. During that same decade, the City of Helena had the second slowest average annual rate of 0.17%, followed by the unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County with 0.34% and East Helena with 0.36%.

In the current decade of 2000-2009, the State of Montana currently has the lowest average annual percentage population, change with 0.01% followed by the unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County at 0.17%. East Helena has the fastest average annual growth percentage with 2.98% followed by the City of Helena at 1.43% and Lewis and Clark County at 1.15%.

A population summary of the average decade and average annual percentage changes for the State of Montana, Lewis and Clark County, the City of Helena, East Helena, and the unincorporated area of Lewis and Clark County is show in the following table.

Population Summary of Average Decade and Average Annual Percentage Changes

Geographic Area	99-Year Average % Change per decade 1890 - 2009	49-Year Average % Change per decade 1960 - 2009	% Change July 1,1990- July 1, 1999	Average annual % change 1990-1999	% Change July 1,2000- July 1, 2009	Average annual % change 2000-2009
Montana	19.26%	8.79%	7.90%	0.11%	8.10%	0.01%
Lewis and Clark County	13.29%	16.80%	10.90%	1.44%	11.20%	1.15%
Helena city	7.21%	8.70%	13.60%	0.17%	16.10%	1.43%
East Helena town	9.79%	10.32%	28.70%	0.36%	30.00%	2.98%
Unincorp. L & C Co	19.88%	35.74%	7.20%	0.34%	5.60%	0.17%

Source: Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233

The City of Helena's future growth rate can be affected by natural change (births and deaths), in-migration and out-migration, and annexation of developed properties. External factors such as variations in the national and local economy, changes in federal and state environmental legislation, and local incentive programs can also influence population growth. After reviewing the 99-year and 49-year decade and annual average population percentage changes for the City of Helena, projecting an annual rate of 1.3% for a projected decade increase of 13.79% appears to be reasonable. This percentage would anticipate an estimated 34, 510 City residents in 2020, and 39,268 people in 2030. These population estimates are summarized in the following table.

Summary of Population Projections

<u>Community</u>	<u>2009 Estimate</u>	<u>2020 Estimate</u>	<u>2030 Estimate</u>	<u>Estimated Annual Growth Rate</u>
Helena	29,939	34, 510	39,268	1.3%
Lewis & Clark County	61,942	69,187	80,591	1.33%
Unincorp. L&C County	29,869	33,572	36,908	0.52%
Montana	974,989	1,033,880	1,113,669	0.75%

DEMOGRAPHY

The U.S. Bureau of Census *American FactFinder* demography table below displays selected characteristics for residents of the City of Helena. (When statistics specific to the City of Helena were not available, data estimates are provided.) This table compares demographic characteristics of persons living within the City of Helena with characteristics of Lewis and County residents living outside of the City which includes unincorporated areas and the Town of East Helena.

Data from 2009 has been included when it was available. It should be noted the *American FactFinder* data does not exactly match the rest of the 2009 US census data for total population estimates. Therefore, the total population estimates for Helena, Lewis and Clark County, and Montana do not use *FactFinder* estimates to provide consistency with the rest of this document. However, the remaining US census *FactFinder* information is useful to give a broader understanding about who Helena's residents are at the current time.

2000-2009 Selected Demographic Characteristics for Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana, and United States (Figures are based upon 2009 estimates unless otherwise noted.)

	Helena	Lewis & Clark County	Montana	United States
POPULATION				
2009	29,939	61,942	974,989	301,621,157
2000	25,780	55,716	902,195	281,421,906
Population change	2411	6,226	55,666	20,199,251
% change 2000 -2009	8.7%	17.31 %	5.3%	7.2%
MEDIAN AGE				
Median Age 2000	38.8	37.6	37.5	35.3
Median Age 2009	40.3	39.8	39	36.5
AGE DISTRIBUTION				
Population < age 5	5.4%	5.9 %	6.2%	6.9%
Population age 5-19	17.8%	19.9 %	19.8 %	No information
Population age 20-64	63.3 %	61.4%	60%	No information
Population age 65 +	14.5%	13 %	14.1%	12.6%
MALE/FEMALE				
Male	48.1 %	49.5 %	49.9 %	49.3%
Female	51.9 %	50.5 %	50.1 %	50.7%
RACE & ETHNICITY (2009 estimate)				
White	93.8 %	94.4 %	89.5 %	74.5 %
Black	0.2%	0.3%	0.6%	12.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.3 %	1.9 %	6.2%	0.8 %
Asian	1.3 %	0.9 %	0.7%	4.4%
Hispanic/ Latino origin	2.9 %	2.2 %	2.8%	15.1%
HOUSEHOLD & FAMILY SIZE (2009 estimate)				
Persons per household	2.19	2.47	2.49	2.6
Persons per Family	3.01	3.14	3.07	3.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census *American FactFinder*

(a) Includes persons reporting only one race.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

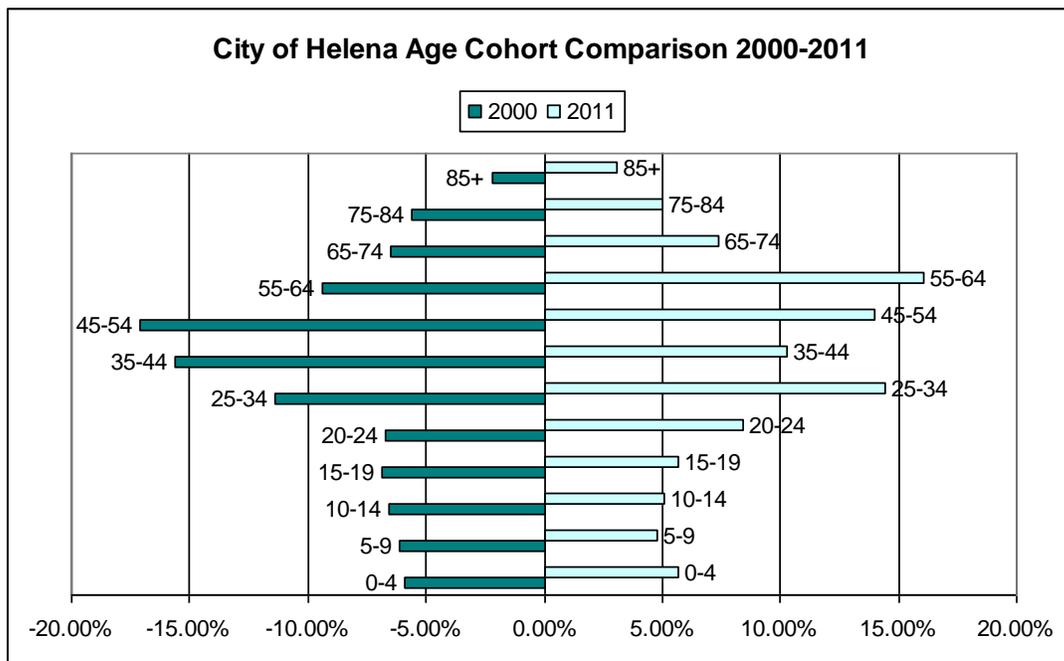
Cultural and social diversity are essential elements of a healthy, pluralistic community. The Helena area has a fairly limited racial and ethnic diversity. Race and ethnic characteristics for Helena and non-City residents of Lewis and Clark County are similar. White persons are estimated to make up about 93.8% of the Helena population compared to 94.4% of the remainder of the County. Only 5.3% of City and 5.7% of Lewis and Clark County populations are non-white, compared to 20% of the overall population of the United States.

Native American Indians and Alaska natives are Helena’s second largest racial group representing 1.3% of Helena residents and 3% of residents of Lewis and Clark County. In 2009, Native Americans were estimated to compose the greatest share of Montana’s non-Caucasian population at 6.2%. Blacks, Asians, Native Hawaiians, and mixed races composed only 4.2% of Montana’s populations.

Nationally, persons of Hispanic or Latino origin are the fastest growing ethnic group. In 2009, 15.1% of the national population was Hispanic or Latino compared to 2.9% of Helena residents and 2.2% of residents of Lewis and Clark County areas.

AGE

The population of Helena and Lewis and Clark County is aging, as is all of Montana. Helena’s population is projected to age rapidly in large part because of the aging baby boom population—which includes the fastest growing age cohort (55-64)—as well as the “brain drain” of younger age cohorts to other locations. By 2030, approximately one-third of the population will be over 60 years old, the highest percentage on record for this age group.



Age statistics for residents of the City of Helena and non-City residents of Lewis and Clark County area are similar as shown in the Age Cohort Comparison graph based upon census data and prepared by Jim Boyer for the City of Helena. The 2009 median age for City residents was 40.3 years old compared to 40.4 for Lewis and Clark County residents; the median age for Montana residents was 39 years and the national median

age was 36.5 years. Statistics indicate that the Helena and non-City populations are older than the national norm. The community is not only getting older, but the percentage of the older population is increasing according to US census figures.

The largest share of households living outside the City of Helena is *families with children*. The greatest share of the City population is 19-64 years old. Helena has a greater percentage of residents 65 years old and older than Lewis and Clark County. Demographic analyses foresee an increased number of older residents living in the greater Helena area, particularly within the City, presumably because of convenience and access to services.

The aging of the Helena area population warrants particular attention when addressing future needs. An aging population presents challenges for health care, transportation, and social interaction. Some older employees, who may have been working with the same business for many years, will be retiring, taking with them extensive institutional history and experience. Others will want or need to remain in the workforce. Many live alone. It will be important to help these new senior citizens maintain important societal bonds and to discourage discriminatory activities in housing and employment.

Social issues are not limited to older citizens. Studies include the 2009 Lewis and Clark County Youth Risk Behavior Study for middle school and high school students; Lewis and Clark County 2009 Leading Public Health Indicators; 2003-2005 and 2006-2008 Teen (15-19 years old) Pregnancy Numbers and Rates; and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services Prevention Needs Assessment Survey Results for 2006 Report for Lewis and Clark County. Each of these studies provides different information related to behaviors for youths in grades 7-12 indicating a risk for dropping out of high school, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, or crime.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND FAMILY SIZE

In 2009, average household and family sizes were larger for Lewis and Clark County's non-City residents than for City of Helena residents. The average household size for Lewis and Clark County was 2.47 people and the average family size was 3.14 members, the City of Helena's average household was 2.19 people and the average family size was 3.01 persons.

OTHER SOCIAL INDICATORS

Data provided in the 2009 U.S. Census *Other Social Statistics* table compare social-economic conditions in Helena with conditions elsewhere in Lewis and Clark County, the state, and the nation. Later data for the City of Helena is not currently available.

OTHER 2009 SOCIAL STATISTICS - Helena, Lewis and Clark County, Montana, and United States

	Helena	Lewis and Clark County	Montana	United States
POPULATION				
	29,939	61,942	957,861	301 million
EDUCATION of PERSONS AGE 25 AND OLDER				
High School Degree	94. %	93.8 %	90.4 %	No information
Bachelor's degree or higher	42.8 %	33. %	27.0 %*	No information
INCOME				
Median household income (2007)	\$47,152	\$50,245	\$43,00089	\$51,425
Median family income	\$68,300	\$66,003	\$54,475	\$62,363
Per capita income	\$28,285	\$25,745	\$22,881	\$27,041
Persons w/ income below poverty	12.3 %	10.4%	14.47%	No information
OTHER				
Persons w/ disability ** (2000) (Note: 2009 information not available)	14.9%**	14.9%**	15.2%**	16.5%**
Mean travel time to Jobs (minutes)	13.5	16.7	17.3	25.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census *American FactFinder*

* Persons with a **Bachelor's Degree or Higher** are those who have received a bachelor's degree from a college or university, or a master's, professional, or doctorate degree. These data include only persons 25 years old and over. The percentages are obtained by dividing the counts of graduates by the total number of persons 25 years old and over.

Education

As the national and state economies become more technically oriented, higher education levels are an advantage. Education levels for City residents and other residents of Lewis and Clark County are higher than state and national norms. According to US Census estimates for Helena's selected social characteristics (2005-2009), 94.7% of Helena residents graduated from high school and 42.8% graduated from college, making City of Helena population graduation levels among the highest in Montana.

These figures are higher than recently stated by the Helena School District which notes there are different methods to calculate the dropout rate resulting in confusion about the actual numbers. In Helena, the graduation rate averages between 80 - 85 percent. Helena graduation rates are comparable to other large high schools in Montana and our graduation rate exceeds the national average. There are over 120,000 adults over the age of 18 in Montana without a high school diploma including over four thousand in Lewis and Clark County. (<http://www.helena.k12.mt.us/news.php?id=1192&category=c-25>)

Income

Median family income (the point at which half the families have higher incomes and half the families, lower) and per capita income for residents of Helena are greater than for non-City residents of Lewis and Clark County. Helena's median family income is higher than the median family income of persons living outside the City.

The *household income* data group includes families as well as two or more unrelated persons living in the same dwelling unit. Household median incomes are greater for non-City residents than for City residents. Unrelated households tend to have lower incomes than family households, and more of these households live inside Helena than outside of the City.

The income levels of residents of Helena and non-City areas are lower than national income levels. Lower salaries could present a disadvantage in maintaining residents or attracting new residents to the Helena area.

Poverty

Approximately 12.3% of City residents had incomes below the poverty level in 2009, a greater percentage of persons living within Helena than for non-City residents of the county. The poverty rate for all of Lewis and Clark County was 10.4%, which is lower than the state norm. As the regional population grows, its low-income population also is expected to grow.

Persons with Disabilities

In 2000, 14.9% of Helena and non-City residents of Lewis and Clark County had a disability. This disability rate was lower than state and national norms. Current data for this population sector is not currently available.

ISSUES RELATED TO POPULATION GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHY

As the City grows and annexes, upgrades may be needed to meet the demands of an increased number of people. More people in the outlying county areas will continue to put additional stress on infrastructure and services such as fire and police protection. Additionally, as the unincorporated Helena Valley continues to grow, infrastructure, such as water and sewer, and other services may also need to be extended to those areas to address future environmental concerns.

An aging population will affect employment practices, housing, schools, and services related to transportation, health care, and recreation. Although some older citizens may gain more leisure, they also may have changing interests, be less active, have more health issues, have a more limited income, be socially isolated, and may need more support systems to stay connected to the community.