

# Elevate EMMETT

*Planning Our Future Together*



## EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

*1 March 2022*





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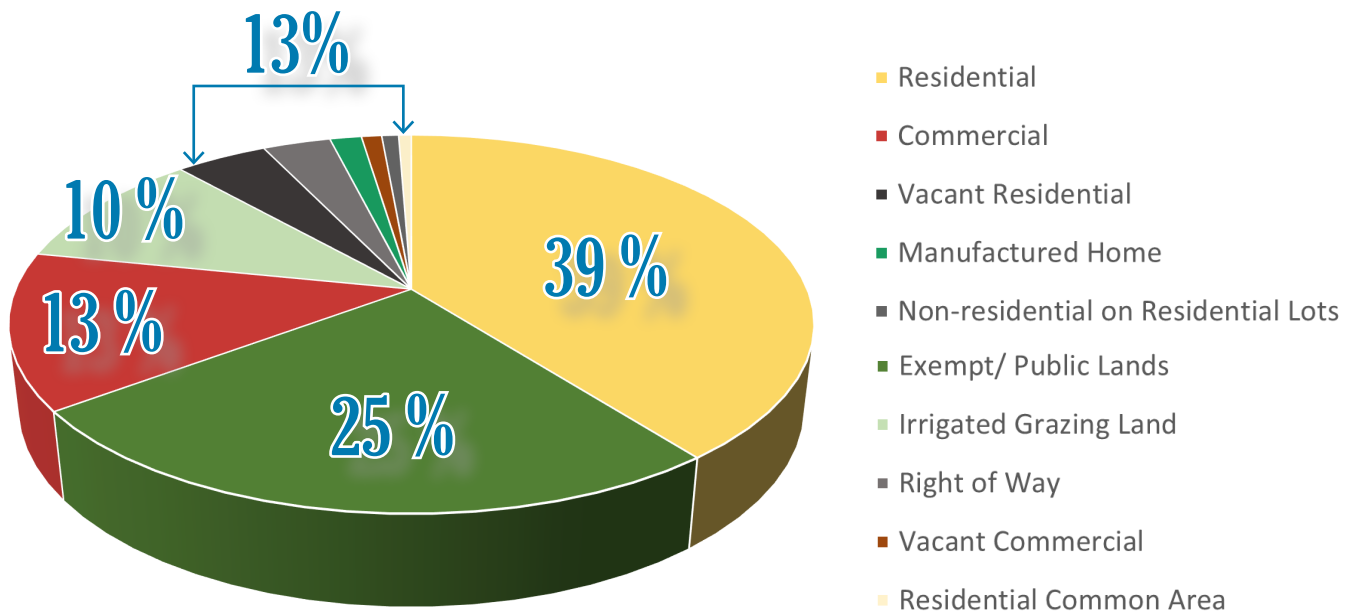
# OVERVIEW

This Existing Conditions Report provides background information and statistics that will be used to inform the direction of the Elevate Emmett Comprehensive Plan. This document highlights information for the following elements, as identified for inclusion in Comprehensive Plans by Idaho State Statutes:

- population
- land use
- economic development
- housing
- transportation
- recreation
- public services, facilities, and utilities
- school facilities and transportation
- natural resources
- hazardous areas
- community design
- agriculture
- national electric transmission corridors
- public airport facilities
- property rights
- special areas or sites

This understanding of baseline conditions will influence the development of policies and strategies further into the process of the Comprehensive Plan. Many of the elements and associated data was researched and included in response to early feedback from the community in the form of What residents love about the City and what they felt could be improved. It is targeted to address key issues such as population growth, housing issues, and continued economic growth. The document has been compiled using the best, and most currently available data from the City of Emmett, Gem County, State of Idaho, U.S. Census Bureau, and other sources.

## Existing Land Use in Emmett



Source: Gem County Assessor Parcel Property Class Code, November 2021

# LAND USE, PROPERTY RIGHTS, AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

**Existing Land Use.** Land use is often confused with zoning. Existing land use refers to the current use of a property, which is also the basis for property tax rates (i.e., commercial, residential, agricultural, etc.). Zoning is a regulatory designation that looks toward future growth and development potential. In short, zoning ties the existing and desired future land use to a set of regulations. Zoning should be based on the future land use designations established within the Comprehensive Plan.

Existing land use in the City is determined by the Parcel Class Code in the City Parcel Data. This analysis shows that the largest private use of property is for Residential Land (39%) and Exempt/Public Land (25%) which includes Federal, State, and other Tax Exempt Land. An additional 13% of the land within the City is used for Commercial Uses and 10% is Irrigated Grazing Land. 81 acres (5%) of land within the City is considered vacant; 15 acres of which are commercial. The remaining 8% of the City is broken up into 12 other land use categories, none cumulatively encompassing more than 50 acres, and some as small as one acre.

**Area of City Impact.** Emmett's Area of City Impact (ACI) covers land surrounding the city limits, a boundary jointly determined by the City of Emmett and Gem County. Unincorporated properties within this area are governed by Gem County for day-to-day administration of zoning matters. However, development and subdivision standards within the ACI is the result of negotiations between the City of Emmett and Gem County in accordance with State law (§ 67-6526 of Idaho Code). Land uses and policies are critical to the efficient and successful implementation of both city and county goals regarding this area.

Land within the ACI is expected to ultimately be served with water, sewer, and other municipal services. Build out residential densities are expected to be higher in the ACI than the rest of the County.

**Property Rights.** The City of Emmett respects the rights of its residents and their property, and is committed to counter negligence, abuse, or devaluing of private property by others. Residents should feel their private property rights are respected and secure. The Idaho Regulatory Takings Act Guidelines checklist is used in reviewing proposed regulations or actions to ensure compliance with private property rights.

**Zoning.** Zoning within the City is largely residential (72%) with commercial zoning centered along Highway 16 (SH-16) and South Washington Avenue. Just over 12% of the City is zoned for commercial use and 3% is zoned for industrial use. Emmett currently has four different residential zone districts of different density and use allowances. 1.5% of the land zoned for residential purposes is zoned for manufactured home parks, and 10% is zoned for apartments. Over half of the residentially-zoned land is zoned for single- and two-family dwellings. This means that only 11% of the residential land within the City allows more than two dwelling units per lot, which has likely contributed to the increase in the number of subdivision applications in and around the ACI.

Within the ACI, over 54% of land is zoned for agriculture and only 11% is zoned for residential use. This high proportion of land zoned for agricultural uses shows a strong preference to maintain the existing agricultural nature of the area with limited residential development. An additional 20% of the land within the ACI is zoned for industrial development, indicating potential for additional economic growth.

# POPULATION AND GROWTH

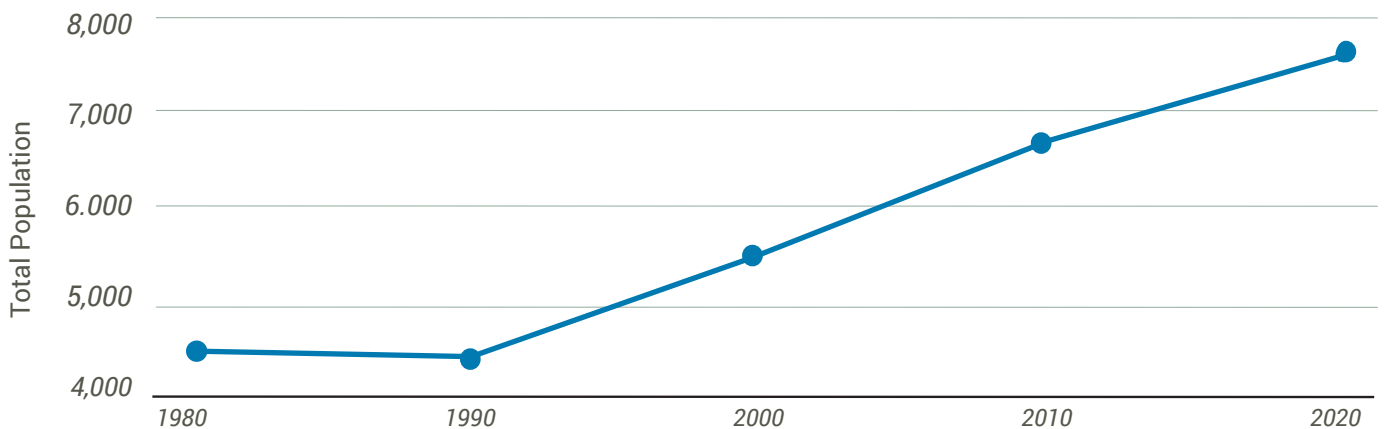
**Population and Growth.** In 2020, the City of Emmett had a total population of 7,647 and comprised 40% of Gem County’s total population. Since 2010, Emmett has grown by 17%. This increase has largely occurred after 2015 and is a likely result of growth in the Boise metro area.

**Age.** Nearly 18% of Emmett’s population is older than 65 years old, over half of whom are between 65 and 74. An additional 27% of Emmett’s population is under the age of 18. The large proportion of seniors and youth indicates that the economically active population and the overall community face a greater burden to support and provide the social services needed by children and by older persons including schooling, child-care, senior living options, healthcare, and family-oriented activities within the City. This same trend was noted in the Gem County Existing Conditions Report for the unincorporated County.

**Race and Ethnicity.** In 2019, the three largest ethnic groups in Emmett were White (Non-Hispanic) comprising 78% of the population, Other (Hispanic) comprising 12% of the population, and White (Hispanic) comprising 5% of the population. In total, 19% of the population of Emmett identified as Hispanic according to the 2019 US Census ACS 5-Year Estimate. Nearly 16% of the population of Emmett speaks a language other than English at home, the majority of which speak Spanish at home.

Compared to the overall County Emmett has a lower median age indicating a higher proportion of youth in the City than the unincorporated County.

Population Growth, 1980-2020



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

**7,647**  
Total Population  
(2020)

**36**  
Median Age  
(2020)

**16%**  
of households speak  
a language other than  
English at home

**14%**  
Veterans

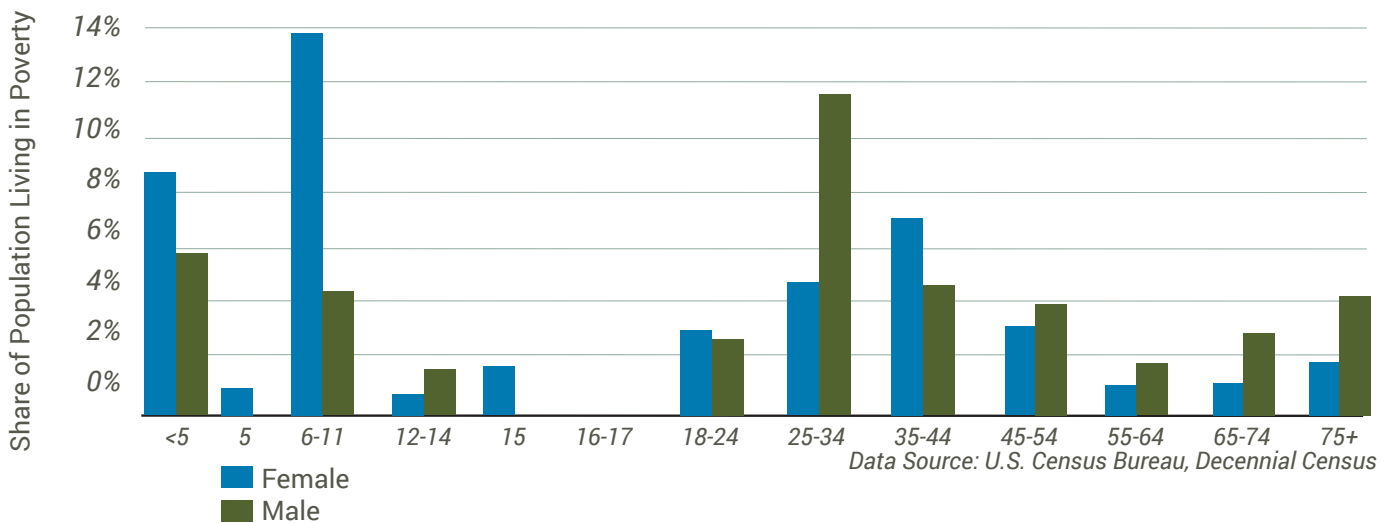
**25%**  
Poverty Rate

**Veterans.** Over 14% of Emmett residents are veterans, the majority being over the age of 65 according to the 2019 US Census ACS 5-Year Estimate. According to the Valor Health 2020 Community Assessment, mental health and stress among veterans was of high concern to 60% of survey respondents. Respondents did describe Idaho as veteran-friendly and indicated that there are a lot of resources for veterans, such as the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and American Legion, but many residents are not aware of these resources and don't know how to access them.

**Poverty.** The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine poverty level. Over 25% of the total population of Emmett is considered to be living below the federal poverty level. Of those individuals living in poverty, 39% of them are under the age of 18. In addition, 60% of unemployed males are considered to be living in poverty according to the 2019 US Census ACS 5-Year Estimate. This high percentage of individuals and especially youth living below the poverty level can lead to additional health and nutrition concerns and negatively impact the economy of the area.

Over 25% of the total population of Emmett is considered to be living below the federal poverty level.

Poverty by Age and Gender, 2019



# HOUSING

**Home Ownership.** In 2019, Emmett had a total of 3,119 housing units, 38% of which are renter-occupied. From 2013 to 2017, homeownership increased from 56% to 66%, but has continued to decrease every year to the 2019 percentage of 62%. This trend indicates that even though overall housing stock is increasing, fewer homeowners are occupying their homes and more units are either vacant or being rented.

**Housing Affordability.** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses a threshold of 30% of household income as the basis for what households could pay on rent or mortgage payments before being “cost-burdened.” Households paying more than 30% of their income on housing are assumed to have insufficient income for other essential expenses such as food, transportation, and healthcare.

In Emmett, over half of households are considered to be cost-burdened. The same data shows a stark difference between owner- and renter-occupied

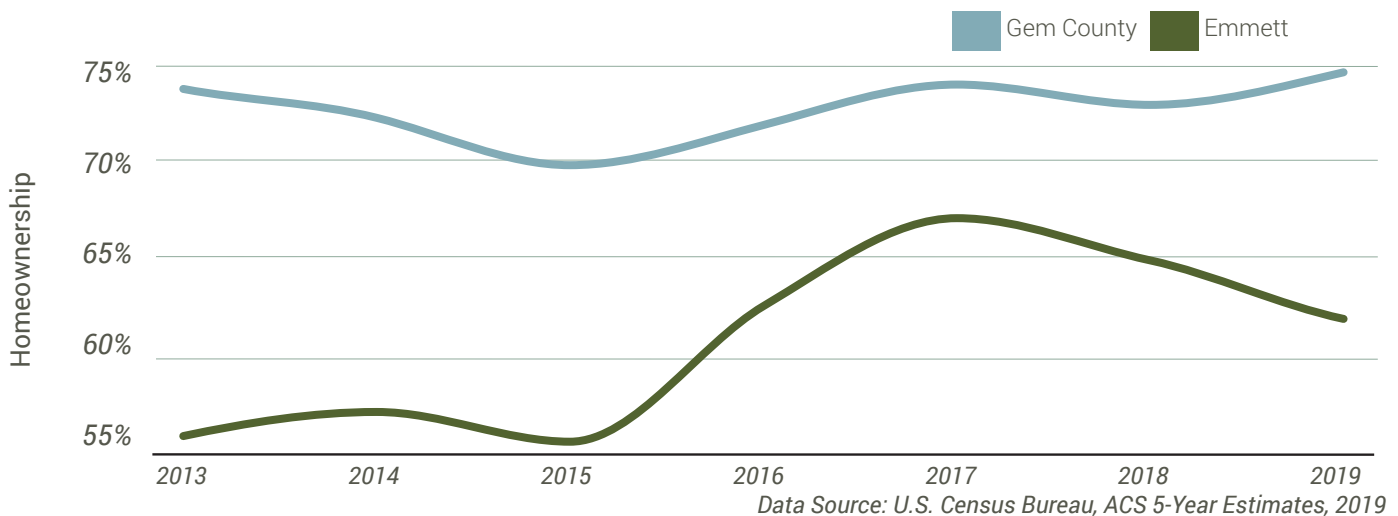
households, with over 51% of renter-occupied households being considered cost-burdened while only 36% of owner-occupied households are considered cost-burdened.

**Median Home Value and Household Income.** As of October 2021, the median home value in Emmett has increase by 23.5% over the past year from \$263,000 to over \$350,000. This increase in median home value greatly outpaced the increase in the City annual median household income, which only rose by 11% from (Decennial Census, 2020). Compared to Gem County, Emmett has a higher median home value but a lower median household income.

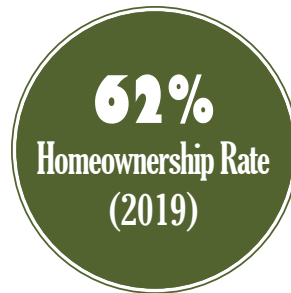
**Housing Units.** Like many other communities, Emmett experienced a large increase in residential development leading up to the 2008 recession according to Emmett building permit data. Between 2019 and November of 2021, 190 units were built within the City of Emmett. These units comprise 20% of the total units built within Emmett from 2000-2021.

51% of households in Emmett are considered to be cost-burdened.  
(U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019)

### Homeownership Rate 2013-2019







**Household Size and Composition.** Between 2010 and 2021, the number of households within Emmett increased by 9% (2021 ESRI Community Profile). In addition, between 2010 and 2021, the number of families in Gem County grew by 4%, from 1,572 to 1,742. However, both the average household size and the average family size remained relatively stable over the same period at 2.45 people and 3.06 people respectively.

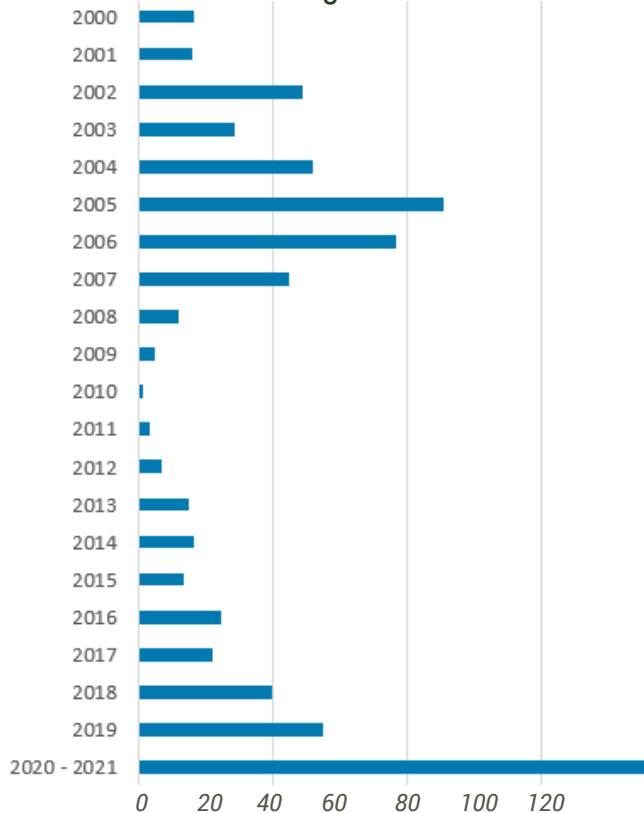
**Housing Type.** The majority of housing within the City of Emmett is currently classified as single-unit detached structures. Emmett has a greater proportion of rental apartments than the unincorporated County. Within Emmett, over 68% of units are classified as single-unit detached structures, 13% as apartment complexes, 11%

as small apartment buildings, and 7% as mobile homes. In addition, 68% of occupied housing units are two- or three-bedroom units.

Due to existing-market costs to buy a starter-home, rental apartments in lieu of ownership are becoming a desirable alternative choice for many.

As highlighted in the *Population and Growth* section, there is a need for more senior housing citywide. Existing senior living facilities are at capacity, and there has been an increase in inquires at the Building Department about opportunities to build new facilities, as well as homeowners requesting to build a mother-in-law unit for their aging family members.

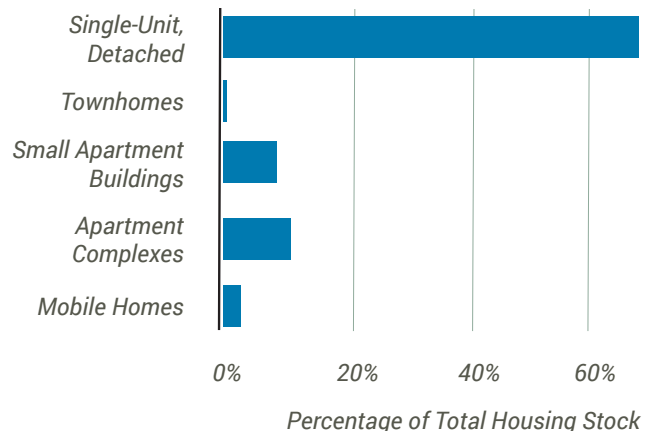
Issued Residential Building Permits, 2000-2021



Data Source: City of Emmett Building Permit Data, 2021

Median home value in Emmett rose by 23.5% from January 2020 to October 2021.

Home Type, 2019



Data Source: Neighborhood Scout, 2019

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Employment and Industry Growth.** For decades, the Emmett area economy thrived somewhat independently from Canyon and Ada Counties, thanks in large part to a major Boise Cascade mill facility on Emmett’s north side just beyond the city limits. Since the mill’s departure, the job base has seen steady moderate growth, but without a major “basic sector” industry driver.

Emmett’s two largest and fastest-growing sectors since 2010 have been healthcare and retail/hospitality. As county seat, Emmett has a significant share of public sector jobs employed by the City, County, or Valor Health.

**Employment Sectors.** Emmett’s largest private-sector employer is Valor Health Medical Center. Designated as a Critical Access Hospital, Valor employs approximately 160 workers earning nearly \$65,000 on average. Until it receives a trauma center designation or cultivates some other specialty niche, Valor is unlikely to grow beyond its current size. Other area healthcare and social service employers have accounted for most of the local job growth, including assisted living centers, rehabilitation facilities, and related medical and social support organizations. With the exception of management and trained nurse/physician staff,

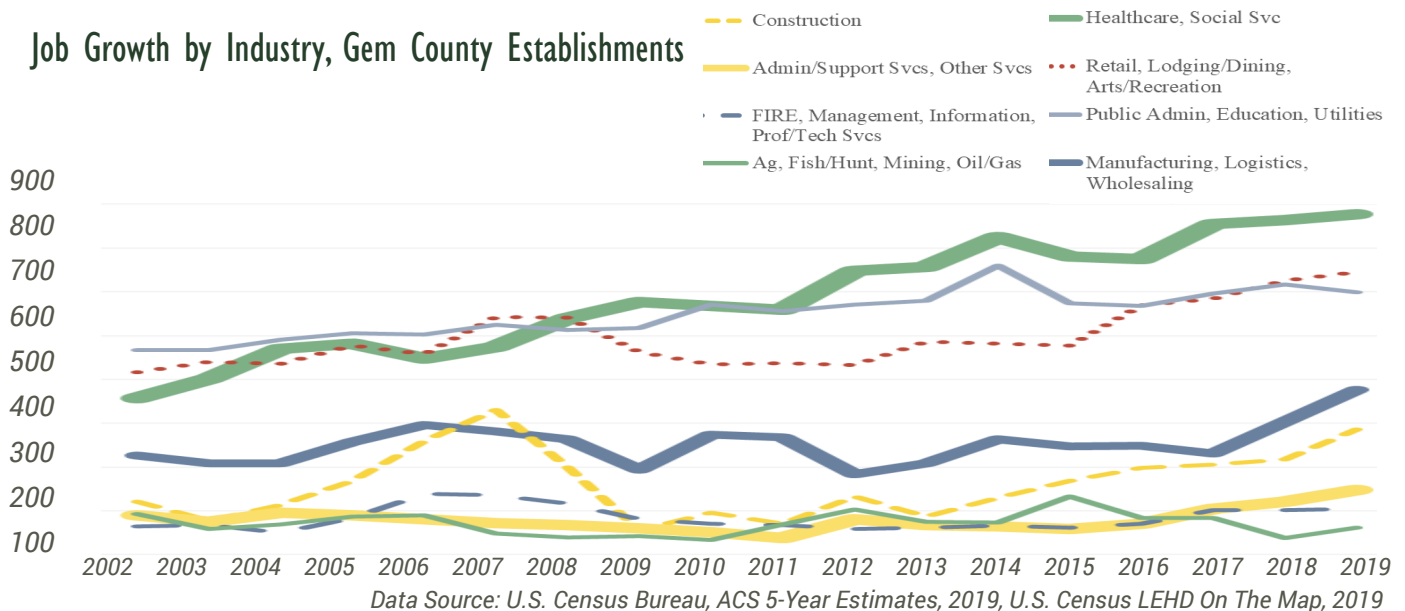
these facility types tend to be lower-paying, on average, relative to hospitals. Since a peak year for jobs in 2009, Emmett has seen a decrease in the number of healthcare jobs, while jobs elsewhere in the County have grown from 100 to almost 350 employees.

Public administration, education, and utilities has generally been the second largest employment sector in Emmett employing nearly 700 employees in 2019. Since 2002, this sector has remained relatively stable, seeing only slight growth from 2002 to 2019.

**Workforce Characteristics.** Women play a disproportionately important role in the Emmett-area workforce. Ada and Canyon Counties employ a roughly 50/50 mix of men and women, and a slight male majority, respectively. Emmett’s workplaces, are 58% female—down from a high of 62% in 2009, and is likely due to the prevalence of nursing-related jobs.

**Housing Affordability and Economic Development.** The prevailing cost of housing in the Emmett area, relative to that in Ada and Canyon counties, is an increasingly important factor shaping commuting patterns.

Job Growth by Industry, Gem County Establishments



**2,000**  
Total Jobs

**2,900**  
Total Employed Residents

**530**  
Jobs in Healthcare and Social Services

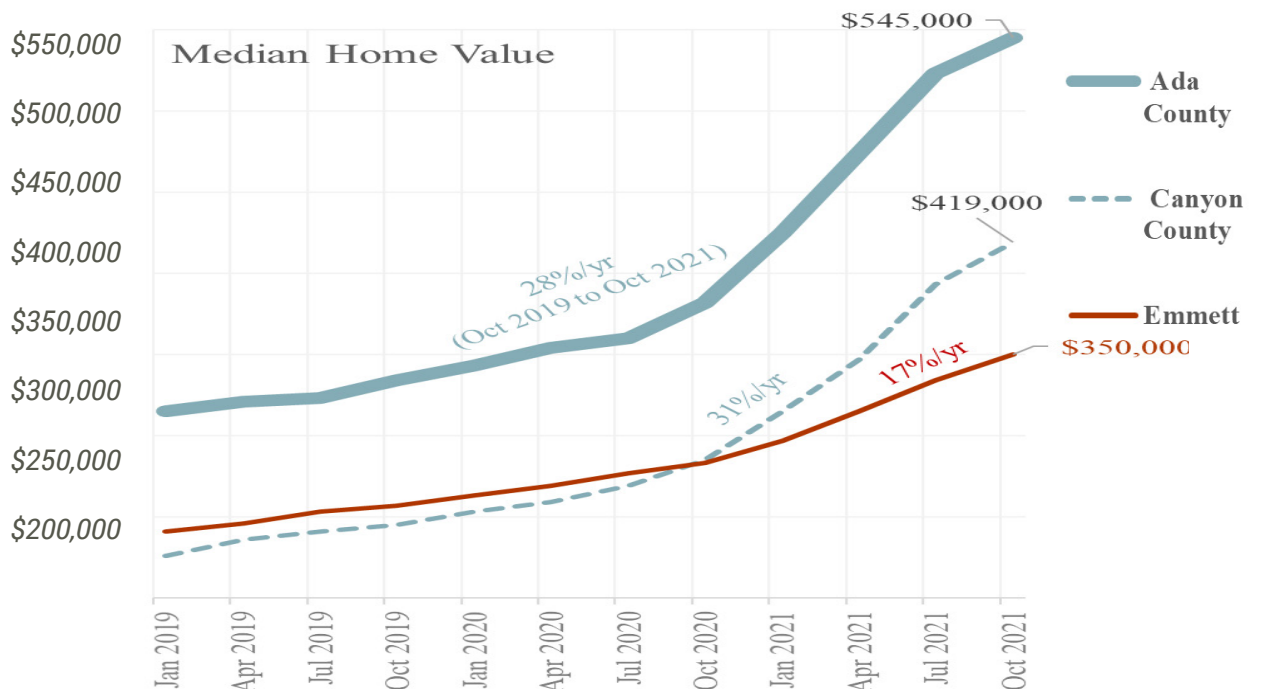
As shown below, home values in both Canyon and Gem counties have historically stayed at 70% to 75% of Ada County values, with Gem consistently around \$10K higher than those in Canyon. In 2020, Canyon County surpassed Gem County in median values, spurred by strong job and population growth in Nampa and Caldwell.

Although recent growth in local housing costs has been remarkable (and alarming from an affordability standpoint), the area remains a relative bargain when compared to Ada and Canyon counties. This price difference is expected to fuel growing interest in Emmett and the larger county, as a residential alternative for folks either priced out of the Boise-Meridian-Nampa sphere or simply interested in maintaining some separation from the spreading urbanization.

**Wages.** Aside from strong hospital wages at Valor Health, Emmett has generally lower-paying employment than Ada and Canyon counties, and a far smaller concentration of jobs overall. In 2020, Gem County employers paid workers \$36,900 on average, not far from Canyon County’s average of \$40,800, but well below the \$56,200 average paid in Ada County.

The map on the next page shows the geographic distribution of employment in and around Emmett. A band of higher-wage jobs lies south of Emmett, stretching along I-84 from Caldwell, through Nampa and Meridian, to downtown Boise.

### Median Home Value



Data Source: U.S. Census LEHD On The Map, 2019

Workers residing in Emmett have consistently had a larger share of higher wage earners than people working in Emmett regardless of place of residence. About one-third of employed Emmett residents earned more than \$3,333 per month, as of 2019. This discrepancy is likely to remain as homes in Ada and Canyon counties continue to rise in price faster than Emmett area homes.

### ***Business Recruitment and Retention.***

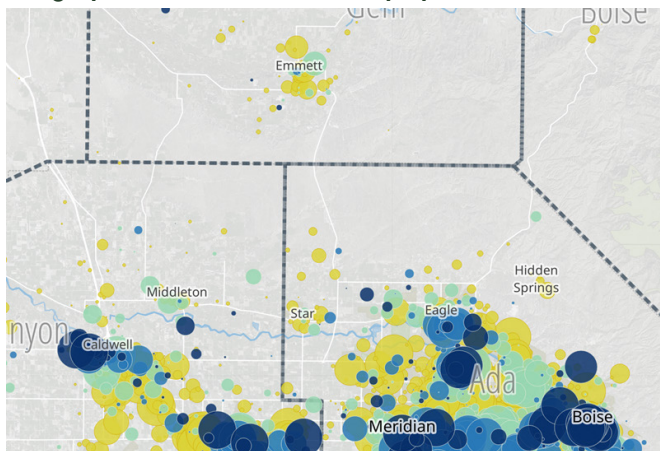
Emmett and Gem County work with the Western Alliance economic development organization to promote the county as a destination for business relocation and expansion by actively recruiting promising employers through a variety of channels including website information sharing, conventions, and personal outreach. Industry targeting is generally consistent with statewide and regional recommendations

The most powerful tool for attracting and retaining employers involve tax rebates or exemptions. Property taxes can be granted on a discretionary basis by County Commissioners, while the Idaho Commerce Department's manages a performance-

based. Tax Reimbursement Incentive (TRI) is a featuring a credit of up to 30% for up to 15 years on new state tax revenues generated by companies seeking to expand in or relocate to Idaho by adding new, qualifying jobs.

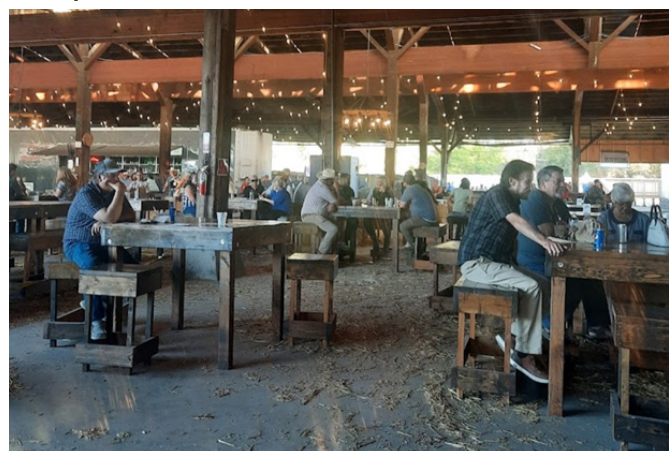
While incentives can help, employers are often most swayed by quality-of-life factors that are more difficult to directly control, but that can be addressed over the long term through smart planning and investment in desirable public amenities. One example of a private sector initiative with potential to boost local quality of life is the recent acquisition and adaptive reuse of the Boise-Cascade mill property into Stoney's Roadhouse a dancehall/country music venue. This may be joined by a new multi-turn auto racetrack with paid seating and an affiliated RV park on the adjacent property. Whether or not the redevelopment directly generates substantial sales and property tax revenues, such ideas have the potential to indirectly help to attract and retain businesses by increasing the appeal of Emmett as a destination and desirable place to live.

## **Geographic Distribution of Employment**



Data Source: U.S. Census LEHD On The Map, 2019

## **Stoney's Roadhouse**



## EDUCATION

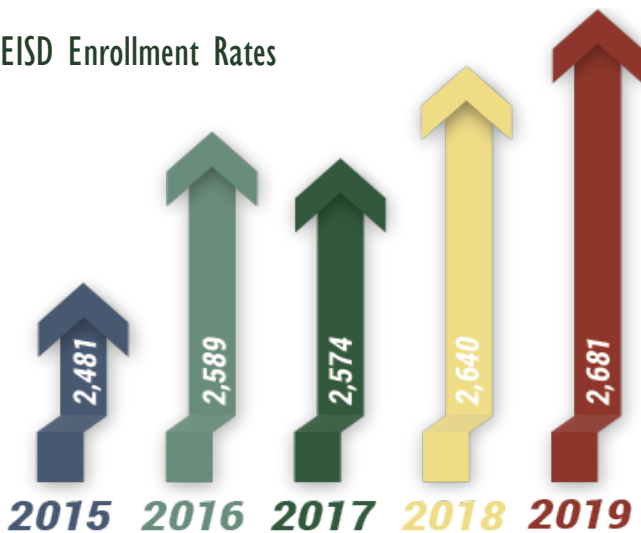
**Educational Providers.** The Emmett Independent School District (EISD) is the primary educational provider for the City. EISD has eight school facilities: five elementary schools, one middle school, and two high schools. In 2019, 2,681 students were enrolled in EISD.

Kenneth Carberry and Shadow Butte elementary schools began Kindergarten READY programs in 2018, giving children support in academics, social-emotional connections, and English language. The funding for this program is provided over five years through a federal grant.

The Payette River Technical Academy (PR2TA) provides professional career technical education to students through a charter school designation. PR2TA offers nine programs in high demand job areas and has been recognized nationally with 93 student certifications in 2019 for students between 9th and 12th grade.

Other area educational providers include Calvary Christian Academy, a K-12 private Christian school in Emmett, Middleton Academy, an alternative school in Canyon County; and Forge International Charter School, a bilingual public charter school in Middleton. Home school is also provided through several online options as well as distance learning through EISD.

### EISD Enrollment Rates



Data Source: Emmett Independent School District

**2,681**  
Students Enrolled  
in EISD (2019)

**49%**  
Students from Low-  
Income Families

**Higher Education.** Students can apply for the Idaho state run program called Advanced Opportunities. This program allows high school students to take dual credit, workforce training, certification exams, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs.

**Community Education.** EISD offers English as a Second Language (ESL) evening classes for parents and other community residents.

EISD enrollment has increased almost every year from 2015 to 2019.

**Special Education.** The Emmett Early Childhood Special Education Preschool is available as a community resource. Children ages three to five can attend sessions one to three days per week based on individual needs. The Individual Education Plan team partners with parents to determine which curriculum and skills each student needs based on individual preferences. EISD also provides special education resources for children five years of age through 12th grade.

**School Provided Meals.** According to the Idaho State Department of Education, 49% of EISD students are from low income families. EISD has a Free Meal Program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture which allows EISD to serve all traditionally enrolled students at no cost, through May of 2022. EISD also provides affordable meals for adults and guests with prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$4.00.

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**Valor Health.** Valor Health is a major employer and the leading healthcare facility and hospital in the City. The Valor Health Campus includes a 16-bed critical access hospital that offers labor and delivery, emergency services, full-service laboratory, surgery, imaging, and transitional care, as well as a family practice and urgent care clinic.

**Health Ranking.** Health rankings evaluate health outcomes by measuring both length of life and quality of life metrics. The rankings evaluated health factors, assessing health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment.

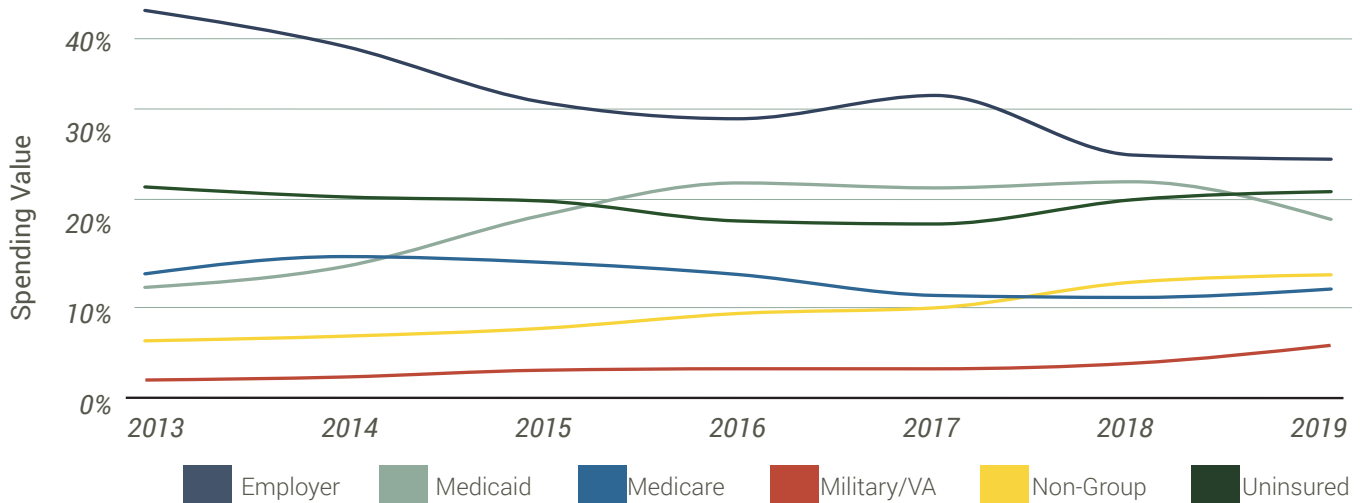
According to the Idaho 2020 County Health Rankings Report, Gem County is ranked 31st for health outcomes and 29th for health factors out of 42 ranked Idaho counties.

**Healthcare Coverage.** 23% of Emmett residents do not have healthcare coverage (2019 US Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates), and as compared to Gem County and the State of Idaho, at 17% and 11% respectively, Emmett has fewer residents with healthcare coverage. Of the residents that do have healthcare coverage approximately a quarter of residents receive healthcare coverage from their employer with over 30% of the population also receiving healthcare coverage from either Medicare or Medicaid.

**Individuals with Disability.** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” 23% of city residents reported some type of disability in 2019 (US Census Bureau ACS estimates). This indicates a higher need for disability services, especially for seniors and children. Over 70% of residents over the age of 75 reported some form of disability as well as 11% of children age 5 to 17. This presents a challenge to provision of healthcare services for both groups and an added challenge of education.

Compared to other counties in Idaho and nationally, the City of Emmett and Gem County have a higher proportion of residents who are living with a disability.

Healthcare Coverage by Source, 2013-2019



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019

**23%**  
of residents without  
healthcare  
coverage

**23%**  
of population with  
a disability

**Mental Health Services.** When asked to identify health and social services currently lacking, 51% of all respondents from the 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment’s Community Survey (published by Treasure Valley United Way) identified mental healthcare services. As part of the Assessment, 38% of respondents also stated that mental health and stress were top health concerns for themselves or their families, primarily related to economic hardship, parent or guardian separation, and housing instability.

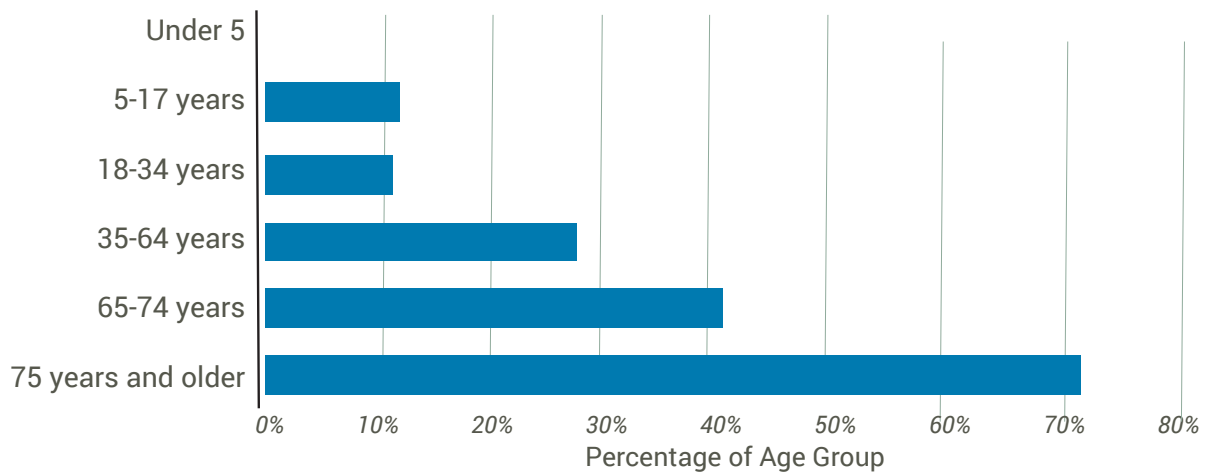
The respondents’ focus on mental health emphasized the importance of expanding these specific types of health services, making them more easily accessible throughout the County. Gem County has a 2020 ratio of 1 mental health provider per 1,130 residents, below the State ratio of 1 mental health provider per 460 residents.

51% of all respondents from the 2020 Community Health Needs Assessment’s Community Survey identified mental healthcare services as lacking in Gem County.

**Healthy Lifestyles.** With a higher proportion of elderly residents compared to the State of Idaho, it is important that the City of Emmett encourages and provides opportunities for healthy lifestyles that will allow seniors to age comfortably while remaining healthy and active. In 2017, the percentage of the adult population that reported a body mass index that is considered as being obese was 38% in Gem County as compared to 29% throughout Idaho, and the percentage of adults with diagnosed diabetes was 13% in Gem County as compared to 9% throughout Idaho.

These healthy lifestyle metrics serve as measures for evaluating diet and limited physical activity. Although relevant health data is only available at the county level, the City of Emmett undoubtedly plays a significant role in providing opportunities to obtain healthy foods, engaging in physical activity, and receiving quality healthcare services.

**Disability by Age, 2019**



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019

# NATURAL RESOURCES AND HAZARDOUS AREAS

## Water Resources and Conservation.

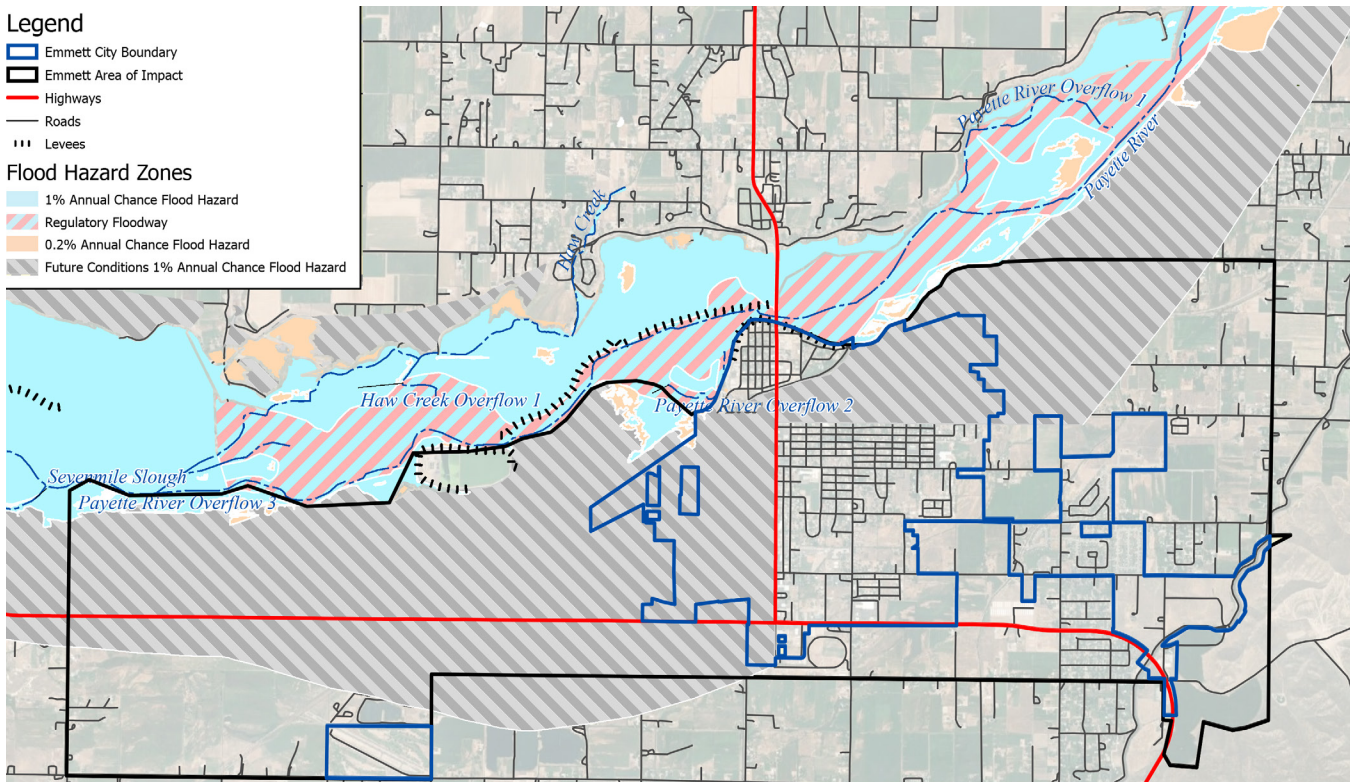
Emmett is a part of the Gem Soil and Water Conservation District and lies in the lower portion of Gem County within the Lower Payette River Watershed. The District acts as a political subdivision to provide assistance to private landowners to enhance the conservation of natural resources in the area. Currently, the City lies just south of an Idaho DEQ nitrate priority area with elevated levels of nitrate in the ground water

The Payette River is one of the major drainages of the area bordering several communities including Emmett. As of October 2021, stream flow conditions were considered normal despite overall drought conditions in the area. As drought conditions have a significant impact on these water supplies, considerations for conservation may play a significant role in the future.

**Flooding and Dam Failure.** Current flooding potential in Emmett comes primarily from the Payette River and its tributaries. Flooding potential reaches the northern city limits with future predictions entering into the city boundary. The City currently participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and has committed to maintaining compliance and good standing with the program as a proactive safety measure for the community.

60% of Emmett is located in the Black Canyon Dam failure inundation area. The 2019 [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) estimated that 87% of the City's population and potentially 2,362 buildings would be affected upon dam failure. These buildings and their contents represent about \$893M in value. The greatest indicator for risk from Black Canyon Dam is the safety of the same levee that protects Emmett from Payette River flooding.

## Federal Emergency Management Area (FEMA) Flood Potential



Data Source: Idaho Flood Hazards Map , FEMA Flood Hazard Areas

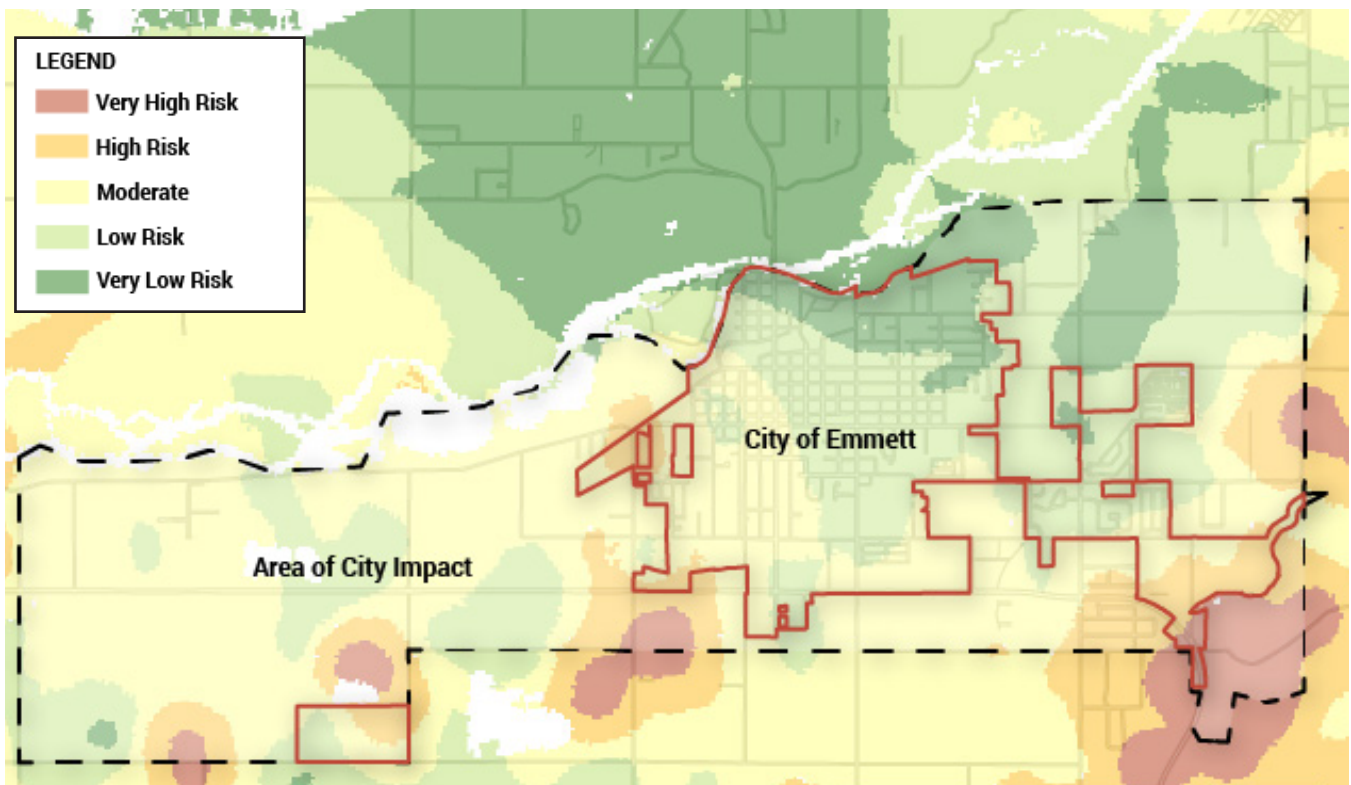


Flash flooding and canal flooding are also considerations for Emmett, along with the secondary hazards of bank erosion and sandbar formations.

**Canals.** The main canal running through the City is the Farmers Co-op Canal, which flows southwest along Riverside Avenue and south along Lincoln Street. Drainage Canal and Last Chance Canal also run through the southern portion of the City. These canals assist in flood control and carry water to agricultural areas but according to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, could present a flood risk to adjacent housing.

**Wildfire.** Emmett averages 13 inches of rain annually, however, similar to the greater state of Idaho, the City is currently facing drought conditions. These conditions exacerbate wildfire potential from the surrounding areas. While the majority of the City and ACI are within moderate to low risk zones, areas along the southern border are categorized as high and very high risk.

## Wildfire Hazards



Data Source: Idaho Department of Water Resources

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

**History.** The first wagon train of settlers was led over Freezeout Hill into the Payette Valley in 1862. This route became a northern alternate of the Oregon Trail and required forging the Payette River at the approximate location of modern-day Emmett. Once gold was discovered in the Boise Basin, many more people began traveling to the Payette Valley over the Boise Trail.

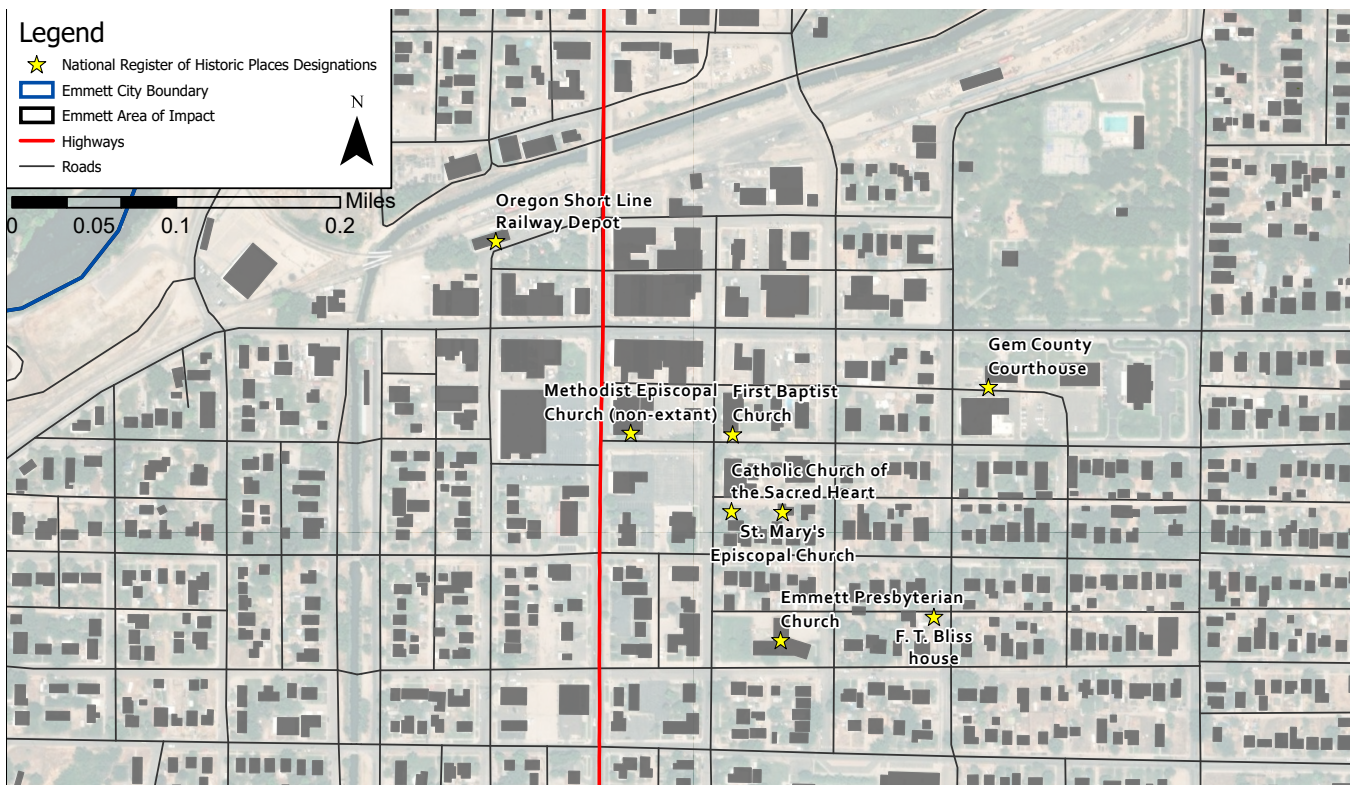
In 1863, a ferry was established by Nathaniel Martin and Johnathan Smith where two of these established routes joined at the Payette River. The settlement, called “Martinsville” in honor of Nathaniel Martin, grew at the site and facilitated local trade and traffic through the region.

Thomas D. Cahalan, a prominent lawyer of the period, was appointed postmaster in 1861 and named the first post office in the lower Payette Valley “Emmettsville” after his son Emmett Lee Cahalan and the Irish patriot Robert Emmett.

The post office changed locations several times before settling in Martinsville. By 1871 the new town had adopted the name of their post office. In 1883, a townsite of 40 acres was platted and in 1885, an independent school district established. By 1885, the community’s name was changed to Emmett in order to differentiate their Idaho community from Emmittsville, Iowa.

Emmett became an agricultural community, with fertile soil that allowed the area to contribute to Idaho's national significance in the potato and dairy industry. Annual log drives down the Payette River provided raw materials for sawmills and a sash-and-door factory. Residents began digging ditches to provide irrigation over the extensive fertile plains on each side of the river, and by 1894 surveying began to construct a canal system to cover 20,000 acres of land west of the town. The series of irrigation projects that followed

## National Register of Historic Places Designations in Emmett



Data Source: Idaho State Register of Historic Places

## Emmett has 8 National Register of Historic Places listed.

enabled farming, particularly orchards, to become a major component of the local economy with more fruit being shipped from Emmett than from any other place in Idaho. During the mining era, the valley was known as the “garden” for the mining regions and by the early 1900’s, fruit packers had adopted the name “Gem of Plenty”.

Emmett was incorporated in 1900 with 600 residents. The community boomed in 1902 when the Idaho Northern Railroad was built through the valley, and again in 1910 when the railroad was completed between Emmett and New Plymouth. In 1915, Emmett was designated as the County seat of the newly created Gem County. By 1920, Emmett had grown to a size of 6,427 residents, remarkably close to its modern-day population.

**Historic Structures and Sites.** The City of Emmett contains 168 sites listed in the Idaho Historic Sites Inventory of known and documented historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts, many of which are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Only seven existing buildings and one non-extant building have so far been formally recognized and listed on the register, including the Oregon Short Line Railway Depot (Emmett Depot), Gem County Courthouse, F.T. Bliss House, First Baptist

Church of Emmett, Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, and Emmett Presbyterian Church (Emmett First Southern Baptist Church). The Methodist-Episcopal Church was formally listed on the register in 1980s, but no longer exists.

**Arts and Culture.** Since the 1930’s, the City of Emmett has hosted the region’s longest running festival—The Emmett Cherry Festival—held at City Park during the second week of June. The Festival features multiple concerts and a carnival and draws over 55,000 residents and visitors from the greater region. Other annual events within or adjacent to Emmett include the Harvest Festival Street Fair, Gem-Boise County Fair and Rodeo, and the Gem County 4th of July Celebrations.

The Gem County Historical Society and Museum provides education on the Native Americans who originally inhabited the Payette Valley, and contributions of the trappers, miners, and settlers who irrigated the land and established the local fruit industry. In addition, the City includes the Frontier Cinema, Lake Dance Steps dance school, Innovative Fighting Arts martial arts school, and provides additional arts education programs through the Center for Arts and Education and the Gem County Recreation District.

## Photos of National Register of Historic Places Designations in Emmett



# RECREATION AND OPEN SPACES

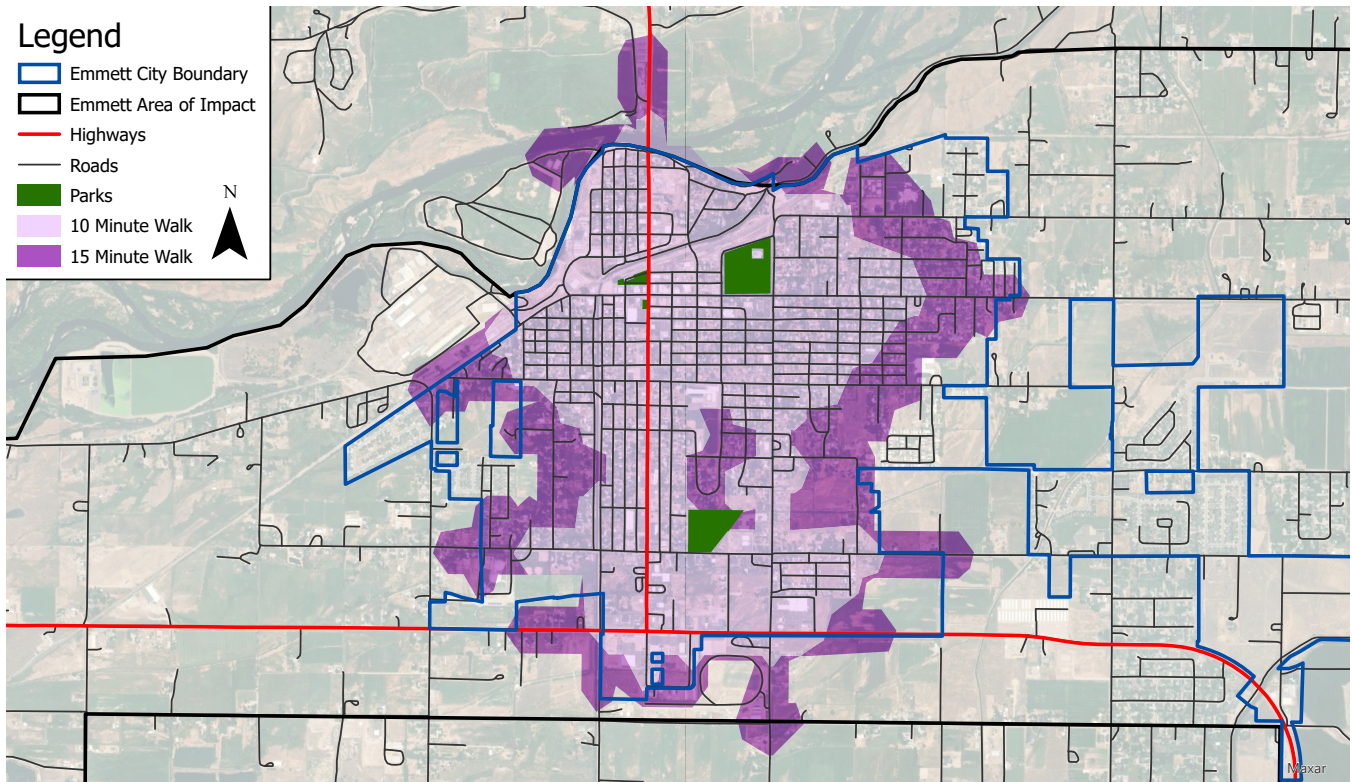
**Parks and Open Spaces.** The City of Emmett has three local parks and approximately 17 acres of parkland, including Emmett City Park, Blaser Park, and the 12th Street Ball and RV Park. At the edge of the City are the Gem County Fairgrounds and the Gem Island Sports Complex, both owned and operated by the County. The Fairgrounds host the annual Gem County Fair and Rodeo and include a horse racetrack, arena, barns, buildings, and training stables. Gem Island is a 64.2 acre sports complex that hosts the County’s annual 4th of July Celebration and features a 1.1-mile multi-use, paved pathway, picnic area, fishing pond, skate park, baseball fields, soccer fields, and basketball courts.

With a total 2020 population of 7,647 residents and 81.2 acres of park space located within or adjacent to the City, Emmett’s level of service is approximately 10.6 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. This exceeds the national benchmark and best practice of 10 acres of park space per 1,000 residents.

**Park Access.** The Trust for Public Lands maintains a database of local parks for communities across the country and has created 10-minute (or 1/2 mile) walkable service areas based on the distribution of parks and residents. This analysis takes into account physical barriers, such as highways, train tracks, and rivers, to identify walkable routes to access local parks and identifies priority barriers for new parks.

Emmett’s level of service is approximately 10.6-acres of park space per 1,000 residents.

## Walkability to Parks and Open Spaces in Emmett



Data Source: The Trust for Public Lands ParkServe

According to this database, 64% of Emmett’s residents live within a 10-minute walk from a park, compared to a national average of 55%. These findings indicate that Emmett is currently exceeding the national average and is better positioned than many communities across the country for park accessibility but still requires additional parkland to ensure all City residents have access to a park within a 10-minute walk from their homes.

***Gem County Recreation District.*** The Gem County Recreation District's main office and recreation center are located within the City. The Recreation District provides high-quality programming throughout the region for all age groups, including sports, community events, after school and summer youth programs, and classes and activities such as square-dancing, karate, tumbling, and self-improvement courses.

64% of Emmett’s residents live within a 10-minute walk from a park.

Park	Acres	Fee	Amenities
Emmett City Park	12.1	No	Picnic, Playground
Blaser Park	0.9	No	Playground
12th Street Ball and RV Park	3.7	No	Picnic, Ball Fields
Gem County Fairgrounds*	5.7	No	Fairgrounds
Gem Island Sports Complex*	64.2	No	Sports Complex (fee), Ball Fields

*\*Outside the City of Emmett but frequented by residents*

### Parks and Open Spaces in Emmett



# PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

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**Public Services and Public Safety.** The City of Emmett has their own municipal Police Department which coordinates closely with Gem County Sheriff's Department and participates in joint training sessions to ensure the safety of the community.

Residents in Emmett are protected by two law enforcement agencies, two fire agencies, and one medical service.

Emmett is served by the City of Emmett Fire Department. Gem County Fire and Emergency Medical Services provides additional emergency medical services to all of Gem County. They are based in the City with four ambulances and over 20 trained employees. Gem County's emergency medical services is supported by Boise County to provide additional services if needed.

**Library.** The single public library in Emmett, the Emmett Public Library, is run by a board of trustees. There is also a non-profit organization tied to the local library known as the Friends of the Emmett Public Library who has membership open to anyone who wishes to join. The organization hosts fundraisers and events and helps increase awareness and use of the public library.

**Health Services.** Valor Health Hospital provides healthcare for Emmett residents. The 16-bed critical access hospital offers family medicine, gynecology, laboratories, orthopedic care, sleep specialists, specialty medicine, surgical services, and transitional care.

**Water Utilities.** Emmett owns and operates two public water systems which receive water from three deep wells with two above-ground storage reservoirs with capacity of approximately 2.2M gallons.

Emmett constructed a wastewater treatment center in 2008 that can be extended to handle a population of 30,000.

**Broadband and Telecommunication Utilities.** In addition to water and wastewater management, broadband internet services are a key utility in Emmett as more residents and businesses are dependent on reliable access to internet and cellular service. Roughly 83% of Gem County has broadband access with most gaps falling within the National Forest.

# TRANSPORTATION

**Transportation Network.** A well-designed and maintained transportation system plays a critical role in safe and efficient mobility. In Emmett, the transportation network is shared by private vehicles, agricultural equipment, freight vehicles, pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists. Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) District 3 and the City of Emmett Public Works Department are the primary public entities responsible for planning and maintaining the transportation network in Emmett. To better understand the existing system, Emmett established a Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and inventory assets, and in 2018 Emmett finalized the Emmett Transportation Plan. The City of Emmett is currently developing a Development Impact Fee Program as a new method for funding necessary transportation network improvements, with the Public Works Department scheduled to receive one-fourth of total funds for roadway improvements.

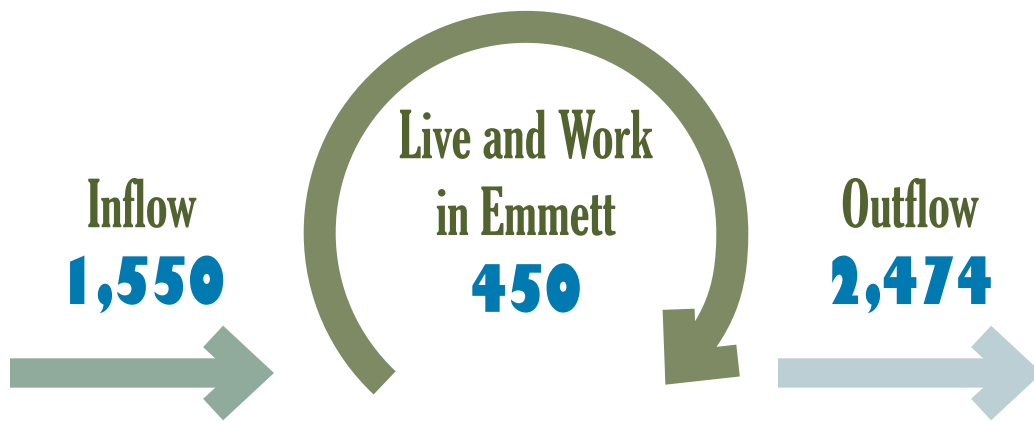
**Travel Patterns.** There are about 2,930 residents of Emmett in the civilian workforce. Emmett residents primarily work in other places, with nearly 85% of residents commuting outside the city for work, many to Ada or Canyon

Counties. Emmett is also an employment center, with nearly 1,550 workers commuting to the city daily for work, in addition to the 450 Emmett residents who are also employed in Emmett. Nearly 52% of Emmett employees live in Ada and Canyon Counties. Emmett also attracts workers from as far away as Twin Falls, Idaho and Ontario, Oregon.

**Roads.** All non-State Highway roads within city limits are maintained by the City of Emmett Public Works Department, which is responsible for approximately 78 lane-miles of paved roads. Roads located within the ACI are maintained by the Gem County Road and Bridge Department but are required to adhere to Emmett City subdivision ordinances.

ITD District 3 owns and operates State Highway 16 (SH-16) which connects Gem County with Ada County to the south, and terminates at the east-west junction of SH-52, which connects to Boise County eastbound and Payette County westbound. Outside of city limits, ITD traffic volume data shows continued growth along both state highways in Emmett, with 4% growth along SH-16 and 3% growth along SH-52, between 2011 and 2019.

## Emmett Travel Patterns, 2019



Data Source: US Census Bureau LEHD (2019)

**Roadway Improvements.** As identified in the 2014 Gem Community Comprehensive Plan, highway and arterial connections to Ada County and Interstate 84 are necessary for the economic prosperity and quality of life in Emmett. The SH-16 extension and SH-16 / I-84 interchange are currently in design. ITD has dedicated funding towards an Environmental Assessment for SH-16 between SH-52 and SH-44 in 2026. Other local projects included in the *Draft Idaho Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) 2022 – 2028* include local signing improvements in 2023 and SH-52 roadway resurfacing in 2028. The 2018 Transportation Plan identified Capital Improvement Projects, including seven roadway projects and one bridge project, to be completed by FY25 in partnership with ITD.

**Freight.** In the 2018 Transportation Plan, the City of Emmett elected to not designate SH-52 as a freight route, although most commercial vehicles traverse this corridor. An active rail line of the Idaho North and Pacific Railroad (INPR) runs between Emmett and Payette, with weekly service.

**Key Intersections.** Identified in the 2018 Transportation Plan, key intersections in Emmett include:

- Washington Ave./4th St – daily level-of-service (LOS) D, three pedestrian/bicycle crashes over 5 years
- Washington Ave./12th St. – daily LOS D, recommended for signal or roundabout
- Washington Ave./Main St. – daily LOS D, third highest crash frequency (14 crashes over 5 years)
- Washington Ave./SH-16 – second highest crash

### Key Intersections and Transportation Corridors Emmett



Data Source: ITD



frequency (17 crashes over 5 years)

- Substation Rd./12th St. – safety concerns due to proximity to Kenneth Carberry Elementary School and seasonal bypass traffic
- S Johns Ave./SH-16 – highest crash frequency (19 crashes over 5 years)

***Pedestrian Facilities, Bicycle Facilities, and Pathways.*** Active transportation facilities that serve walking, biking, and rolling are limited within Emmett. Sidewalks are most contiguous within the downtown area, and of 520 inventoried curb ramps, only 8 comply with ADA standards. Any type of ramp was absent at 290 additional locations surveyed. A bike lane is present on W. 12th St. between Washington Ave. and Johnson Ave., and another is under construction on St. Johns Ave. between 4th St. and 12th St.

As a scenic community, Emmett is home to a number of pathways, including the Gem Island Complex Path, the Payette River Path at Canal Street, and the 12th Street Park Path. As part of the *2018 Transportation Plan*, the City of Emmett created an ADA Transition Plan for sidewalks and curb ramps in 2015. In October 2020, the City of Emmett adopted a Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Pathways Plan that established design standards and outlines future pathway corridors.

***Public Transit.*** As noted in the *Travel Patterns*, many workers commute between Gem, Ada, and Canyon Counties. In 2015, a park and ride lot was opened at the SH-16/St. Johns Ave. intersection to serve private carpooling as well as ACHD Commuteride vanpools. Currently, Valley Regional Transit, the transit provider in Ada and Canyon Counties, does not offer bus service to Emmett.

***Aviation.*** Emmett Municipal Airport, also known as Chuck Sawyer Field, is the City of Emmett owned and operated general aviation airport that serves the region. It serves smaller private aircraft and there is no commercial passenger or large-scale freight service. There are no planned improvements for the airport in ITD’s Draft ITIP 2022 – 2028, although the Emmett Municipal Airport, Idaho Airport Development Plan 2017 recommends numerous facility upgrades, including additional runway length, width, and strength increases; additional hangar storage and apron tie-down spaces; and telecommunications infrastructure provision.