

10-14-2021

Population Growth in Mountain West Cities and Suburbs, 2010-2020

Dielle T. Telada

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, dielle.telada@unlv.edu

William E. Brown Jr.

Brookings Mountain West, william.brown@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_cities



Part of the [Growth and Development Commons](#), [Human Geography Commons](#), [Public Policy Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Telada, D. T., Brown, W. E. (2021). Population Growth in Mountain West Cities and Suburbs, 2010-2020. *Cities & Metros Fact Sheet No. 5* 1-5.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/bmw_lincy_cities/5

This Report is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Report in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Report has been accepted for inclusion in Cities & Metros by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

POPULATION GROWTH IN MOUNTAIN WEST CITIES AND SUBURBS, 2010-2020

Cities & Metros Fact Sheet No. 5 | October 2021
Prepared by: Dielle T. Telada and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

COVID-19 altered population growth trends within large cities and the relative growth of cities and suburbs within the nation's largest metropolitan areas. Brookings senior fellow William H. Frey suggests "that most big cities with populations exceeding 250,000 experienced lower population growth in the year the pandemic began than in the previous year."¹ This Fact Sheet examines annual growth rates within selected Mountain West metros and suburbs from 2010 and 2020.

ABOUT THE DATA:

On May 27th, 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau released annual "evaluation estimates" of the nation's largest cities. This fact sheet draws on the Census Bureau's released estimates of annual city population changes between July 2019 and July 2020 as cited in Brookings scholar William H. Frey's report, "America's largest cities saw the sharpest population losses during the pandemic, new census data shows."² This fact sheet explores the Mountain West's largest city populations by size category (cities exceeding 250,000 people) and the annual population growth of primary cities and their respective suburbs within major metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) during the decade.

Metropolitan statistical area³: Metropolitan statistical areas consist of the county or counties (or equivalent entities) associated with at least one urbanized area of at least 50,000 population, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Among the Mountain West's 15 largest cities (Table 1), Phoenix, Las Vegas, Mesa, Colorado Springs, Aurora, Henderson, North Las Vegas, Reno, Gilbert, and Glendale experienced declines in population growth rates since the 2010 Census.
2. The Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale MSA, Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise MSA, and the Tucson MSA saw a high level of migration to the suburbs in 2019 and 2020. Two major metropolitan areas, the Salt Lake City MSA and the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA, did not experience suburban migration.
3. Henderson, NV (2.37%) and North Las Vegas, NV (2.79%) experienced the highest population growth rates between 2019 and 2020 (Table 1) as compared to the other 13 largest Mountain West cities.
4. During the years 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019, Henderson, NV (3.41%, 3.46%, 3.76%) reported the highest three population growth rates among Mountain West Cities.
5. Salt Lake City, UT experienced an increase in suburb population growth rates between 2010 and 2011. From 2019-2020, the growth rate of the primary city exceeded suburban population growth.

¹ William H. Frey, "America's largest cities saw the sharpest population losses during the pandemic, new census data shows," June 2021, The Brookings Institution (<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-largest-cities-saw-the-sharpest-population-losses-during-the-pandemic-new-census-data-shows/>).

² Ibid.

³ See United States Census Bureau, "Metropolitan and Micropolitan", 2016 (Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standards, 8 Sep. 2016). (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/metro-micro/about/glossary.html>).

Table 1 shows the annual population growth rates of the fifteen largest Mountain West cities (population over 250,000 people) between 2010-2011, 2015-2016, and 2019-2020. The growth rates highlighted in yellow represent the year of that city’s lowest annual growth rate and growth rates highlighted in blue represent the highest annual growth rate between 2010 and 2020. Rates in red represent a negative growth or population decrease.

Most peaks in population growth rates – seven out of fifteen – occurred during 2010 and 2011. Only five major Mountain West cities experienced population growth since the 2010 decennial census.

Table 1: Mountain West Cities: Annual Growth Rates, 2010-2011, 2015-2016, 2019-2020

Rank	City	Population size 2020	Annual Growth Rates			Change from 2010 to 2020
			2010-2011	2015-2016	2019-2020	
1	Phoenix, AZ	1,708,127	1.43%	1.80%	1.50%	-0.19%
2	Denver, CO	735,538	2.86%	1.89%	1.38%	0.10%
3	Las Vegas, NV	662,368	0.36%	1.48%	1.29%	-0.25%
4	Albuquerque, NM	562,540	0.98%	0.23%	0.31%	0.11%
5	Tucson, AZ	553,571	0.68%	0.36%	0.84%	0.18%
6	Mesa, AZ	528,159	1.52%	1.85%	1.86%	-0.21%
7	Colorado Springs, CO	482,131	1.63%	2.06%	0.86%	-0.17%
8	Aurora, CO	387,377	2.15%	1.45%	0.45%	-0.85%
9	Henderson, NV	329,172	0.51%	2.60%	2.37%	-1.38%
10	Chandler, AZ	265,398	0.16%	1.71%	1.62%	0.08%
11	Scottsdale, AZ	262,647	1.46%	2.86%	1.63%	0.10%
12	North Las Vegas, NV	260,098	0.68%	1.72%	2.79%	-0.20%
13	Reno, NV	259,290	0.64%	1.73%	1.26%	-1.05%
14	Gilbert, AZ	257,658	0.94%	2.04%	1.40%	-0.28%
15	Glendale, AZ	255,307	1.36%	1.15%	1.06%	0.00%

*Adapted from William H. Frey's analysis of annual Census Bureau estimates, July 2010-July 2020, released May 27, 2021. Note: These are evaluation estimates determined independently from the 2020 census.

Table 2 shows the annual population growth rates of the Arizona’s seven largest cities (population over 250,000 people) between 2010 and 2020. The growth rates highlighted in yellow represent the year of that city’s lowest annual growth rate and growth rates highlighted in blue represent the highest annual growth rate between 2010 and 2020. Rates in red represent a negative growth or population decrease.

Tucson, Chandler, and Scottsdale AZ defied national trends and saw a higher population growth the year the COVID-19 pandemic began than in the previous year. Gilbert, AZ experienced steady growth in population during 2011 to 2018. Mesa, AZ (-0.21%) and Gilbert, Az (-0.28%) experienced the highest growth at the start of the decade, but experienced overall population growth by 2020.

Table 2: Arizona Major Cities: Annual Growth Rates, 2010-2020

City	Population size 2020	Annual Growth Rates										Change from 2010 to 2020
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Phoenix, AZ	1,708,127	1.43%	2.01%	1.82%	1.90%	1.82%	1.80%	1.33%	1.31%	1.68%	1.50%	-0.19%
Tucson, AZ	553,571	0.68%	0.23%	0.21%	0.35%	0.16%	0.36%	0.75%	0.69%	0.66%	0.84%	0.18%
Mesa, AZ	528,159	1.52%	2.07%	1.72%	1.80%	1.84%	1.85%	1.90%	1.60%	2.07%	1.86%	-0.21%
Chandler, AZ	265,398	0.16%	0.35%	0.94%	0.42%	1.16%	1.71%	2.32%	1.41%	1.55%	1.62%	0.08%
Scottsdale, AZ	262,647	1.46%	1.98%	1.64%	2.21%	3.05%	2.86%	1.40%	1.25%	1.52%	1.63%	0.10%
Gilbert, AZ	257,658	0.94%	2.11%	2.65%	2.57%	2.24%	2.04%	2.34%	2.97%	1.68%	1.40%	-0.28%
Glendale, AZ	255,307	1.36%	1.87%	1.41%	1.31%	1.31%	1.15%	0.77%	0.89%	1.06%	1.06%	0.00%

* Adapted from William H. Frey's analysis of annual Census Bureau estimates, July 2010-July 2020, released May 27, 2021. Note: These are evaluation estimates determined independently from the 2020 census.

Table 3 shows the annual population growth rates of Colorado's three largest cities (population over 250,000 people) between 2010 and 2020. The growth rates highlighted in yellow represent the year of that city's lowest annual growth rate and growth rates highlighted in blue represent the highest annual growth rate between 2010 and 2020. Rates in red represent a negative growth or population decrease.

Denver defies national trends by seeing to a larger growth rate during 2019 and 2020 than the previous year and an increase in population from 2010. Both Colorado Springs and Aurora see their lowest population growth rate during 2019 and 2020.

Table 3: Colorado Major Cities: Annual Growth Rates, 2010-2020

City	Population size 2020	Annual Growth Rates										Change from 2010 to 2020
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Denver, CO	735,538	2.86%	2.37%	2.25%	2.35%	2.83%	1.89%	1.23%	1.63%	1.28%	1.38%	0.10%
Colorado Springs, CO	482,131	1.63%	1.28%	1.27%	0.93%	1.66%	2.06%	1.46%	1.56%	1.03%	0.86%	-0.17%
Aurora, CO	387,377	2.15%	2.03%	2.24%	1.91%	2.41%	1.45%	1.03%	1.84%	1.31%	0.45%	-0.85%

* Adapted from William H. Frey's analysis of annual Census Bureau estimates, July 2010-July 2020, released May 27, 2021. Note: These are evaluation estimates determined independently from the 2020 census.

Table 4 shows the annual population growth rates of Nevada's three largest cities (population over 250,000 people) between 2010 and 2020. The growth rates highlighted in yellow represent the year of that city's lowest annual growth rate and growth rates highlighted in blue represent the highest annual growth rate between 2010 and 2020. Rates in red represent a negative growth or population decrease.

All major cities in Nevada experienced their lowest growth rate during 2010 and 2011 but retained constant growth until 2019 and 2020.

Table 4: Nevada: Major Cities: Annual Growth Rates, 2010-2020

City	Population size 2020	Annual Growth Rates										Change from 2010 to 2020
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Las Vegas, NV	662,368	0.36%	1.15%	1.07%	1.41%	1.58%	1.48%	1.40%	1.31%	1.54%	1.29%	-0.25%
Henderson, NV	329,172	0.51%	1.76%	1.91%	2.24%	2.90%	2.60%	3.41%	3.46%	3.76%	2.37%	-1.38%
North Las Vegas, NV	260,098	0.68%	1.64%	1.58%	1.49%	1.70%	1.72%	1.70%	2.07%	2.99%	2.79%	-0.20%
Reno, NV	259,290	0.64%	0.83%	0.91%	1.35%	1.69%	1.73%	1.84%	1.43%	2.32%	1.26%	-1.05%

*Adapted from William H. Frey's analysis of annual Census Bureau estimates, July 2010-July 2020, released May 27, 2021. Note: These are evaluation estimates determined independently from the 2020 census.

Table 5 shows the annual population growth rates of New Mexico's largest city (population over 250,000 people) between 2010 and 2020. The growth rates highlighted in yellow represent the year of that city's lowest annual growth rate and growth rates highlighted in blue represent the highest annual growth rate between 2010 and 2020. Rates in red represent a negative growth or population decrease.

Albuquerque, NM experienced incremental growth throughout most of the decade. Despite this, Albuquerque is one of the five major Mountain West cities to see an increase in population since the 2010 census.

Table 5: New Mexico Major City: Annual Growth Rates, 2010-2020

City	Population size 2020	Annual Growth Rates										Change from 2010 to 2020
		2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Albuquerque, NM	562,540	0.98%	0.54%	0.45%	0.00%	0.09%	0.23%	0.08%	-0.02%	0.20%	0.31%	0.11%

*Adapted from William H. Frey's analysis of annual Census Bureau estimates, July 2010-July 2020, released May 27, 2021. Note: These are evaluation estimates determined independently from the 2020 census.

Table 6 shows the annual population growth rates for five of the largest metros in the Mountain West. The Annual Growth Rates in blue represent upticks in population in suburbs and primary cities between 2010 and 2011. The growth rates in red represent upticks in population in suburbs and primary cities between 2019 and 2020.

During 2019 and 2020, the year the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Arizona MSA and the Tucson, Arizona MSA experienced significant suburb growth compared to other Mountain West MSAs.

From 2010 to 2011, Salt Lake City, UT experienced greater population growth within suburbs, however, primary city growth superseded suburb growth during 2019 to 2020.

Table 6: Growth Rates for Primary Cities and Suburbs in the Mountain West, 2010-2011 and 2019-2020 Major Metropolitan Areas⁴

Metropolitan Area	Estimated Metropolitan Area Population 2020*	Growth Rates, 2010-2011			Growth Rates, 2019-2020		
		Primary City Growth	Suburb Growth	City>Suburb Growth **	Primary City Growth	Suburb Growth	City>Suburb Growth **
Tucson, AZ MSA	1,061,175	0.7	0.7		0.8	1.5	
Salt Lake City, UT MSA	1,240,029	0.9	1.5		1.9	0.5	**
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV MSA	2,315,963	0.4	0.6		1.6	1.8	
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO MSA	2,991,231	2.4	1.6	**	1.0	0.8	**
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA	5,059,909	1.5	0.9	**	1.6	2.7	

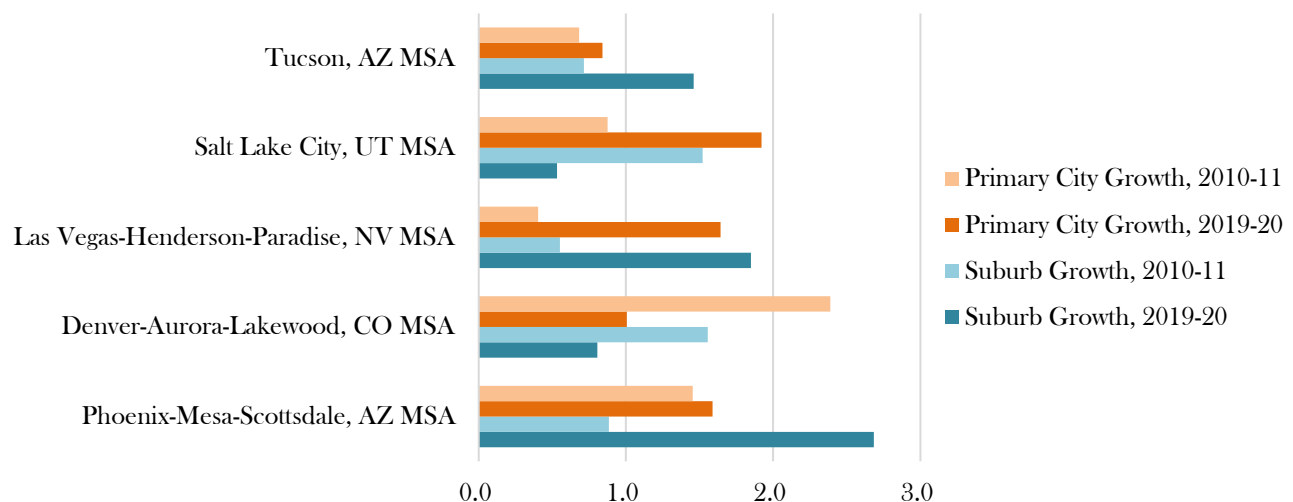
** Primary city growth exceeds suburb growth

*Adapted from William H. Frey's analysis of annual Census Bureau estimates, July 2010-July 2020, released May 27, 2021.

Note: These are evaluation estimates determined independently from the 2020 census.

Figure 1 illustrates the annual population growth rates for five of the largest metros in the Mountain West including their respective suburbs. The Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA experienced significant growth rates in primary cities both in 2010 through 2011 and in 2019 and 2020. While the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise MSA experiences the trend of greater growth rates in its suburbs compared to primary cities.

Figure 1: Growth Rates for Primary Cities and Suburbs in the Mountain West, 2010-2011 and 2019-2020 Major Metropolitan Areas⁵



*Adapted from William H. Frey's analysis of annual Census Bureau estimates, July 2010-July 2020, released May 27, 2021.

Note: These are evaluation estimates determined independently from the 2020 census.

⁴ 3 Metropolitan Areas with populations exceeding one million according to 2020 Census estimates (Independent from the US 2020 Decennial Census). Primary cities are consistent with Brookings typology that includes the metropolitan areas' largest city and up to two additional cities with populations exceeding 100,000.

⁵ Ibid.