

III. Grand Island Profile

This section will profile various aspects that have an effect on the housing stock of Grand Island. It is necessary to understand these aspects and their effect on the housing market to ascertain current and projected housing needs. As part of this profile, Grand Island will be compared to two Midwest cities of similar size and demographic composition -- Salina, Kansas and Joplin, Missouri.

Population Characteristics

Historically, Grand Island has seen steady population growth since 1980, with the most significant growth taking place from 1980 to 1990. This is primarily due to a number of annexations over that time span. Overall, Grand Island has had a much better population growth rate by percentage over the past twenty years than the State of Nebraska. It also exceeds that of Salina, Kansas and Joplin, Missouri. Although Grand Island’s population growth rate of 9.5% from 1990 to 2000 is nearly half of what it was from 1980 to 1990, it still ranks second among the four comparisons.

Table 3-1: Historic Population

	1980	1990	% Growth	2000	% Growth
Grand Island	33,180	39,386	18.7%	43,121	9.5%
State of Nebraska	1,569,825	1,578,385	0.5%	1,711,263	8.4%
Salina, KS	41,843	42,303	1.1%	45,753	8.2%
Joplin, MO	39,126	40,961	4.7%	45,548	11.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

Grand Island’s population has experienced strong growth over the past few years. As expressed in Table 3-2, during the past six years, the population of Grand Island has increased by an impressive 2,630 persons. In fact, since 2000, estimates by the City have depicted that the population has grown at nearly twice the rate of Nebraska as a whole. The city’s continued emergence as a central Nebraska hub has fueled this population increase. Employment base expansions in 2000 at Case IH, Saint Francis Medical Center, and Principal Financial represent a portion of the workforce increase over the past few years.

Table 3-2: Existing Population

	Grand Island	% Growth Since 2000	Nebraska	% Growth Since 2000
2000 Census	43,211		1,711,263	
2001 Estimate	43,423	0.49%	1,718,965	0.45%
2002 Estimate	44,180	2.24%	1,726,753	0.91%
2003 Estimate	44,530	3.05%	1,738,013	1.56%
2004 Estimate	45,050	4.26%	1,747,704	2.13%
2005 Estimate	45,237	4.69%	1,758,163	2.74%
2006 Estimate	45,841	6.09%	1,768,331	3.33%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, City of Grant Island

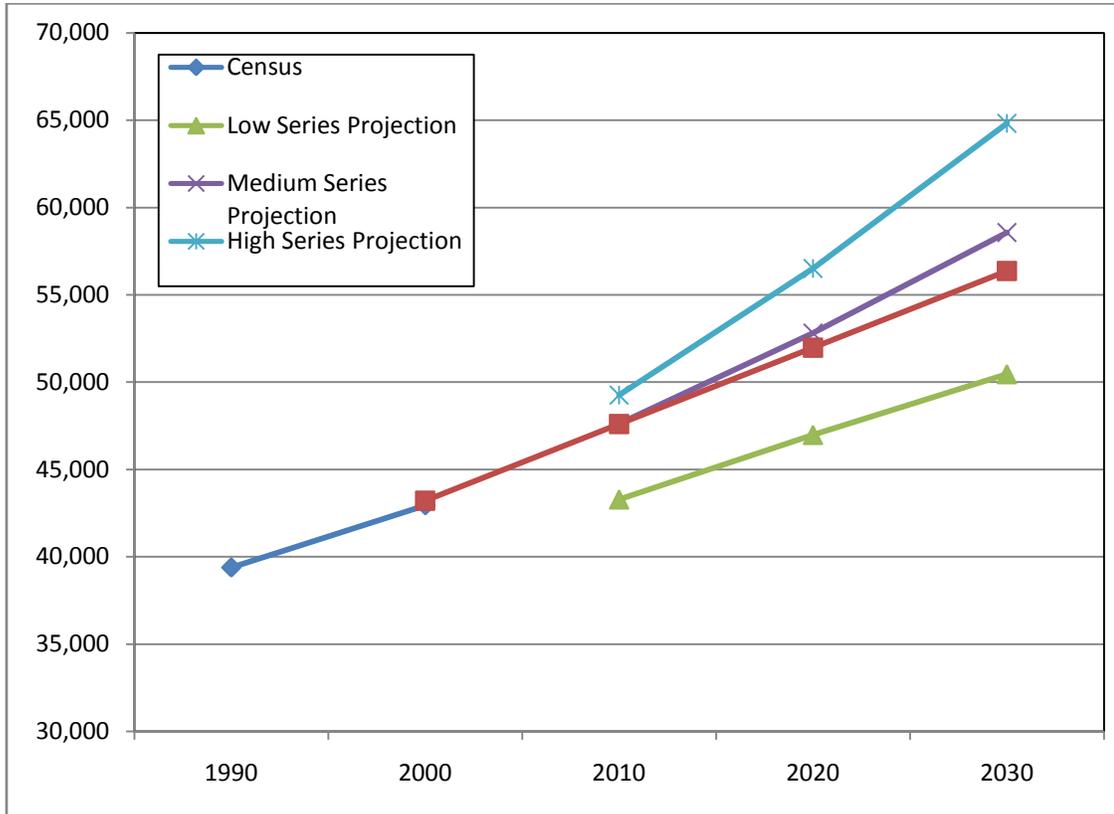
Projections

By conducting a simple trend line analysis of the City’s population, it can be seen that the city will break the 50,000 mark by 2020 with an estimated population of 51,978. By 2030, the population is expected to be around 56,361.

Based on comparisons with the 2004 Grand Island Comprehensive Plan and discussions with City staff, the best projection line selected for the study was the Medium Series Projection of the Comprehensive Plan as depicted in Figure 3.1.



Figure 3-1: Population Projections



Source: City of Grand Island, Grand Island Comprehensive Plan 2004, US Census Bureau

The midline projection depicts a 2020 population of 52,812 and a 2030 population of 58,569. This is a modest, yet realistic projection of the population based on assumed increased growth rates as the city draws more importance regionally.

Additionally, a recent Regional Labor Market Analysis completed by Nebraska Workforce Development states that Hall County’s population is expected to increase by 12,924 persons from 2005 to 2020. This would, by far, constitute the largest increase of any county located outside of the Omaha and Lincoln metro areas.

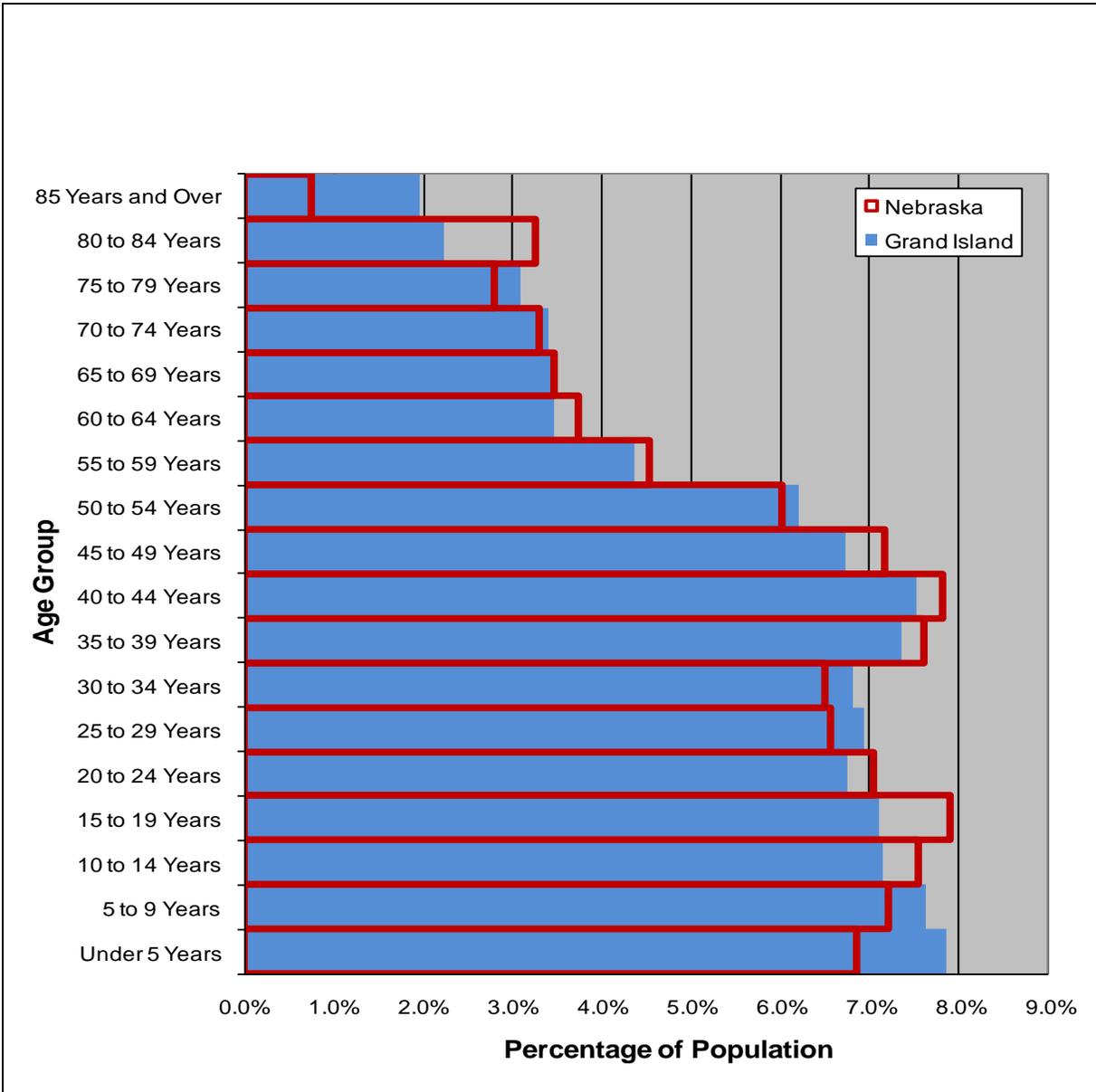
Population Age

There are two main issues that arise when looking at the age breakdown (Figure 3-3) of Grand Island residents: 1) persons 80 years of age or older, and 2) persons 10-24 years of age. As shown in the 2000 Census for Grand Island, 2% of the total population is 85 years old or older. This is 1.3% more than the percentile breakdown of Nebraska's population. However, 3.3% of Nebraskans are 80 to 84 years of age, 1.1% more than Grand Island, nearly canceling out the skew of the 85 years old or older segment of the city's age population in relation to the state. The result is a more gradual decrease across the population age groups for the city compared to the state. This allows for greater ease of adjustment for entities that assist the elderly in Grand Island as the community is not as drastically affected by increases in the number of elderly needing assistance as other communities in Nebraska.

The percentage of residents in the 10 to 24 age category is relatively low compared to the state. However, the population of persons in the child-bearing years, 25 to 34 years of age, is proportionately higher than Nebraska's. This is reflected in the population of children 0 to 9 years of age (15.4%). Although this is a good sign for the growth of Grand Island, this younger echelon of the adult population will place a greater demand on affordable housing over the next five years.



Figure 3-2: Population by Age 2000



Source: U. S. Bureau of Census

Household Size

The average household size of both renter and owner occupied units in Grand Island is higher than that of the State of Nebraska and comparable Midwest cities. It is significantly higher than Salina and Joplin, but it is only mildly higher than what is typically seen in Nebraska.

Table 3-3: Average Household Size

	Grand Island	State of Nebraska	Salina, KS	Joplin, MO
Per Occupied Housing Unit	2.55	2.49	2.39	2.28
Per Owner-Occupied Housing Unit	2.71	2.63	2.51	2.36
Per Renter-Occupied Housing Unit	2.28	2.20	2.16	2.18

Source: U.S. Survey of Housing

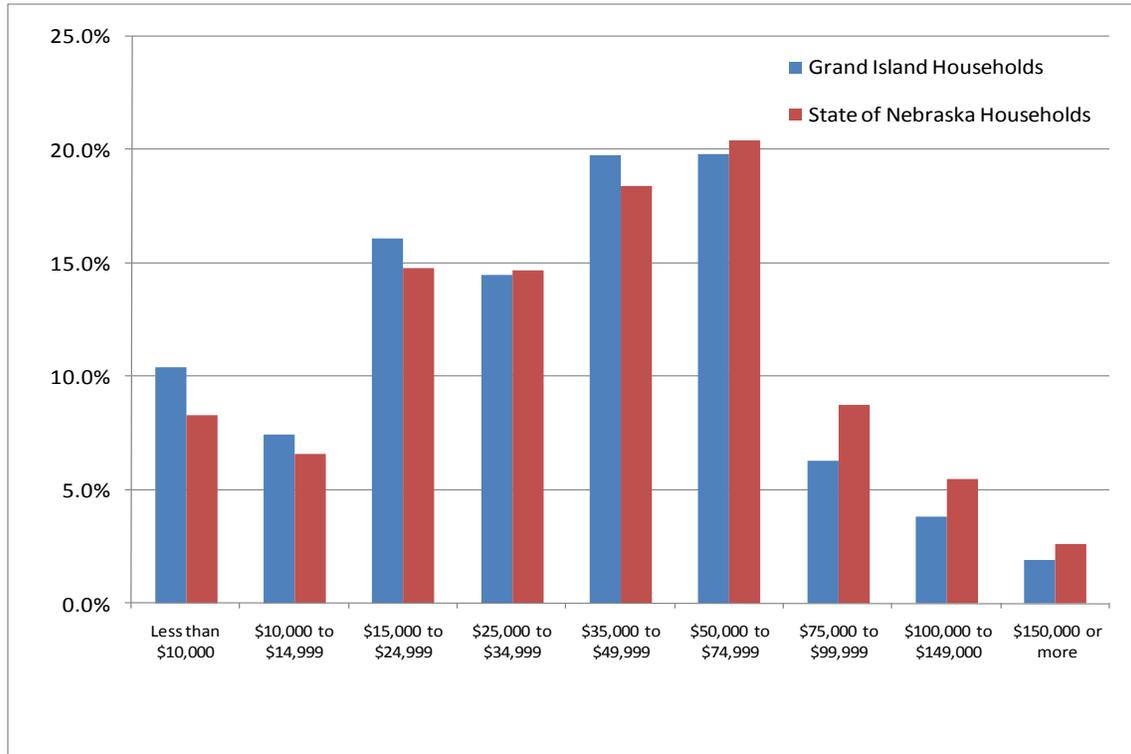
The higher average household size is an interesting point to consider when comparing the housing stock of the three cities. With a larger average household size, the demand for units with a higher number of bedrooms per unit is increased. Existing housing stock and existing housing demand in Grand Island should be comprised of units with a higher number of bedrooms than the comparable cities listed above.

Employment and Economics

Household Income

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the median household income for Grand Island residents was \$43,748 or \$3,206 less than the State median of \$46,954. Figure 3-3 shows the income distribution among households in the City and the State. Grand Island has a higher percentage of households in the lower income ranges, but the middle and upper income ranges were below the State’s averages. The higher percentage of lower income households cannot be ignored in reference to affordable housing needs. Grand Island has to account for the housing needs of this significant segment of the population.

Figure 3-3: Household Income



Source: US Bureau of Census, 2000

To obtain a clearer image of future housing needs of Grand Island residents, it is important to review the change in household income over time and provide a projection of these household income characteristics. With an accurate projection of the household income for the target year, affordable housing needs can be ascertained and goals developed to meet that need.

The estimates in Table 3-4 show the change in household income over the past eight years and give a projection for household income distribution through 2013. These estimates depict a significant change in the median household income over a 13 year span. The numbers show a significant drop in the number of households with incomes under \$50,000, and an increase in the number of households with incomes from that income level and higher. However, looking at the statistics in this manner should be cautioned as general inflation will have an impact on the number of households in each grouping and the overall median income. It should also be noted that the recent downturn in the economy may have a notable impact on the future household income projection, lowering the projected median income for 2013.

Table 3-4: Household Income (2000-2013)

Dollars	Grand Island (2000)		Grand Island (2008 Est.)		Grand Island (2013 Est.)	
	# Of Households	Percent	# Of Households	Percent	# Of Households	Percent
Less than \$15,000	2,926	17.9%	2,365	14.0%	2,125	12.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2,633	16.1%	2,180	12.9%	1,923	11.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2,376	14.5%	2,271	13.4%	2,049	11.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3,240	19.8%	2,770	16.4%	2,664	15.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	3,245	19.8%	3,893	23.0%	3,869	22.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,028	6.3%	1,703	10.1%	2,100	12.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	623	3.8%	1,165	6.9%	1,671	9.7%
\$150,000 to \$249,999	247	1.5%	413	2.4%	580	3.4%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	55	0.3%	110	0.7%	163	0.9%
\$500,000 or more	9	0.1%	27	0.2%	49	0.3%
Median income (dollars)	\$36,187		\$43,840		\$49,071	

Source: Claritas, 2008

More household income related information is available in Chapter 4, including the percent of income spent on housing.

Occupation

Grand Island’s largest employers include: JBS Swift, Grand Island Public Schools, St. Francis Medical Center, Case IH, Chief Industries, McCain Foods, and Principal Financial Group. These employers have increased their workforce by well over 1,400 workers in the past five years. Although the recent national economic downturn has caused lay-offs that have reduced this number, it exemplifies the capacity of these employers to re-fill these positions without a significant investment in building expansion.

Table 3-5 projects the employment in each occupation through 2016 for the Central Economic Region. Although the Central Economic Region is a relatively large area, Grand Island accounts for over 1/6th of the region’s 2006 employment base. The region, as a whole, is expected to increase in employment by 11.6% from 2006 to 2016. The largest gains are expected to be seen in the Management of Companies and Enterprises, Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Administrative and Waste Management Services areas.

Table 3-5: Occupation Projections

	2006 Annual Employment	2016 Projected Employment	Change in Employment 2006-2016	Percent Change (%)
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	13,540	13,772	232	1.7
Mining	144	150	6	4.2
Utilities	56	58	2	3.6
Construction	4,764	5,431	667	14
Manufacturing	16,219	18,727	2,508	15.5
Wholesale Trade	5,250	5,698	448	8.5
Retail Trade	14,048	14,522	474	3.4
Transportation and Warehousing	3,567	4,541	974	27.3
Information	1,319	1,361	42	3.2
Finance and Insurance	3,911	4,463	552	14.1
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	658	709	51	7.8
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,123	2,396	273	12.9
Management of Companies and Enterprises	889	1,290	401	45.1
Administrative & Waste Management Services	3,420	4,099	679	19.9
Educational Services (incl. state and local gov)	10,988	12,230	1,242	11.3
Health Care and Social Assistance	15,062	18,403	3,341	22.2
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	945	1,096	151	16
Accommodation and Food Services	8,082	8,852	770	9.5
Other Services (except Government)	4,582	4,926	344	7.5
Government	9,315	9,955	640	6.9
Total	118,882	132,679	13,797	11.6%

Source: Nebraska Workforce Development, 2006-2016 Nebraska Long-Term Industry Employment Projections, 2008

The need for affordable housing is usually more pronounced for those employed in the government, retail, and service occupations. Wages in these sectors often do not increase as quickly as housing costs, creating a need for additional affordable housing. These sectors represent 58.4% of the entire workforce and account for 60.3% of the projected growth. **Providing affordable housing to meet the needs of Grand Island’s portion of the projected additional 8,315 workers in these occupations will need to become a priority of the City.**

Homelessness

The growing number of homeless persons in Grand Island is a public concern. As shown in Table 3-6, six percent of students attending Grand Island Public Schools during the 2007-2008 school year met the McKinney-Vento definition of "Homeless." This is especially troubling when considering that these 475 homeless students represent only a portion of the total homeless population for Grand Island. Not included in these numbers are the number of adult homeless persons, a figure that is expected to be notably higher than that of homeless students.

Table 3-6: Homeless Population

Location	Number
Shelters	248
Doubled	139
Hotels	30
Other (incl. cars)	58
Total	475
Percent of Enrollment ('07-'08)	6.0%

Source: Grand Island Public Schools, 2008

McKinney-Vento Definition of "Homeless"

Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act) defines "homeless" as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"--

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) includes--

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Grand Island Profile Summary

- Grand Island has a population growth rate percentage that is higher than the State of Nebraska, a trend that is expected to continue into the next decade.
- The population of a significant portion of persons in the child-bearing years, ages 25 to 34, is proportionately higher than Nebraska's. This indicates a greater need for apartments and "first time homebuyer" affordable homes.
- The average household size in Grand Island is larger than that of the State and the comparable cities of Salina, Kansas and Joplin, Missouri.
- Grand Island has a high number of households that report "less than \$10,000" in household income.
- The number of households with incomes below \$50,000 is expected to drop considerably within the next census survey, mainly due to inflation. Yet the estimated number of households in 2008 that are below \$50,000 in household income is 56.7%, which is still a majority of the households in Grand Island.
- Growth in government, retail, and service occupations is expected to represent 60.3% of the overall occupational growth. Providing affordable housing for additional employees in these sectors of the workforce will become critical.
- Recent statistics from Grand Island Public Schools indicate a 6.0% homelessness rate among their 2007-2008 enrollment.

Grand Island is approaching a population of 50,000 in the near future. A positive growth rate can provide additional opportunities for a city and increase tax revenues. However, the City will have to address issues related to the quality and quantity of the housing stock to accommodate this population growth. This is especially important when considering that the city has higher percentages of lower income households than the state.