



## Chapter Two: Community Profile

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- Purpose and Intent**
- Geographic Setting**
- History of Airway Heights**
- Community Characteristics**
  - Population
  - Tribal Lands
  - Education
  - Income
- Population Forecast**

### **Purpose and Intent**

The geographic setting of Airway Heights, its recent past and the community characteristics help establish a context for the plan's vision, goals and policies. The physical landscape helps determine where and to what extent development can, or should, occur. Community history and demographics help determine the likelihood of development. This Chapter discusses the community setting and characteristics, describing who the residents are, and how their lives may impact and shape future community development. The intent of this Chapter is to look at these factors and see how each shapes how the community of today evolves into the Airway Heights of tomorrow.

### **Geographical Setting**

One of the City's most important features is its proximity to Spokane, and its inclusion in the Spokane Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). It is centrally located between Fairchild Air Force Base to the west, and Spokane International Airport to the southeast. Both facilities have an influence on the economic climate of Airway Heights and also play a major part in the overall community population.

The City is also bisected by U.S. Highway 2 and is located just north of Interstate 90. Both highways are major east-west freight ways with Interstate 90 linking to U.S. Highway 395, a designated international trade route linking the U.S. to Canada and Mexico.

U.S. Highway 2 plays a major role in shaping the future development of the City. In addition to traversing the City, U.S. Highway 2 also has an extensive right-of-way which further divides the City into its "south" and "north" districts. The City is also heavily influenced by the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) of Fairchild Air Force Base (FAFB), which extends into much of the City's southern half.

The South district is comprised primarily of industrial and commercial activities with scattered residential development while the North district consists of mostly residential and commercial uses.

As for the actual physical lay of the land, the City is relatively flat with some low, rolling hills. Changes in elevation do not exceed 100 feet. The soils are primarily silt loam, with the average depth to the subsurface water table ranging from six to eight feet. A more detailed look at the City's environmental characteristics is found in Chapter 11, Natural Environment.

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## History of Airway Heights

Historically, the West Plains (west of Spokane) have always been slow to develop, primarily because of the area's poor suitability for agriculture and lack of surface water. Areas such as Spokane Valley and the Palouse (south of Spokane) were much more conducive to development activities. However, due to the development of two military airports, a central City on the West Plains began to evolve.

In 1940, the U.S. War Department took over Sunset Airport and transformed it into Geiger Air Base for the purpose of training bomber pilots. In 1941, the City of Spokane had purchased land on the West Plains, which it then donated to the War Department for an air combat depot. This depot would eventually evolve into FAFB.

In 1942, Carl and Flora Lundstrom, residents of Electric City, Washington, purchased a section of land (640 acres), for \$6 per acre, on the south side of the Sunset Highway (U.S. Highway 2). Recognizing the need for housing and businesses in the area, officials from the air depot approved the sale.

As World War II was coming to an end, three subdivisions were filed in 1946: Airway Heights Addition, Airway Heights First Addition, and Airway Heights Second Addition. In 1951, the Lundstrom family donated land to the City for a school, and soon after Sunset School was opened and incorporated into the Cheney School District. At the Sunset Highway building, social gatherings and church services were held until the opening of Sunset School. Church services remained at the school until 1954, when the Lundstrom family donated land for the Airway Heights Evangelical Free Church.

In 1953, Carl Lundstrom announced plans to incorporate one square mile of the West Plains into the City of Airway Heights. At the time, this area had approximately 400 residents and a service station, café, furniture store, barber shop, lumber yard, post office, and school. On April 15, 1955 the City was incorporated by a 50 to 8 vote. The first City council meeting was held on May 3, 1955 with Carl Lundstrom presiding as mayor.

The City of Airway Heights is still a young and evolving community. Within the past few years, the City has experienced significant growth, placing increased demands on the City's ability to provide services and infrastructure. Due to limitations in available funding to meet these needs, the City must rely on fair and equitable project prioritization to meet the character and personality of the community, as well as look for creative and innovative ways to implement projects to meet demands. The City has a mix of temporary and long-term permanent residents, making planning for the City's future a challenging task. This results in a community of constant formation and continuous transition.

## Community Characteristics

### *Population*

Population tends to drive development. The demand for City services tends to grow as population increases. Demand also increases for living areas, work areas, shopping areas, social and cultural areas, and the many other areas necessary for daily life. The data on the following tables are compiled the U.S. Census Bureau and data from Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM).

As illustrated in Table 2.1 and illustrated in Figure 2.1, there was an increase of 4,152 residents living in Airway Heights from 1960 to 2006 putting the population of the city at 4,840. Out of the current 4,840 population numbers, 2,140 are housed at the Airway Heights Correction Center.

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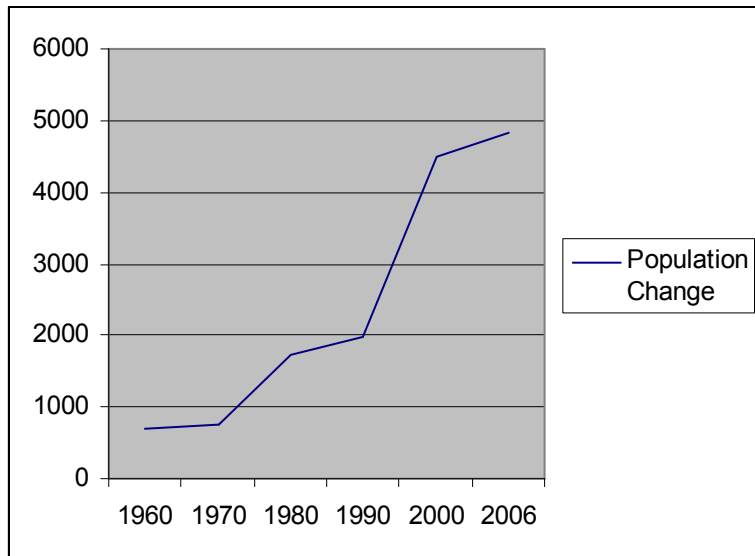
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**Table 2.1**  
*Population Increase, 1960 - 2000 & 2006*

Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population
1960	708	1980	1,730	2000	4,500
1970	744	1990	1,971	2006	4,840*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau & Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), 2006.  
Notes: (\*) are official estimates from OFM.

**Figure 2.1**  
*Population Increase, 1960 - 2000 & 2006*



### *Population Characteristics*

Table 2.2 shows that the population of Airway Heights is a community of people comprised of varying ages and racial backgrounds. The majority of residents (88.2 percent) living in Airway Heights are of Caucasian descent. Those of Asian or Pacific Islander descent are the next two primary ethnic groups of residents. For the most part, the City is a relatively young community with the majority of residents falling in the 25 to 34 year old age group. Even with the majority of young people living in Airway Heights, the numbers of older community members continues to rise, indicating the need of services warranted by an aging population.

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**Table 2.2**  
*Gender, Age, and Racial Population*  
*Distribution, 1990 and 2000*

Gender Distribution	1990		2000			
	People	Percentage	People	Percentage		
Male	1,005	51.0	3,261	72.5		
Female	966	49.0	1,239	27.5		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>100.0</b>		
Age Distribution	Male		Female		Total	
	People	Percentage	People	Percentage	People	Percentage
18 Years or Older	2,860	63.6	880	19.6	3,740	83.1
65 Years or Older	113	2.5	83	1.9	196	4.4
Age Distribution	1990		2000			
	People	Percentage	People	Percentage		
4 or less	201	10.2	228	5.1		
5 – 9	164	8.3	214	4.8		
10 – 14	153	7.8	207	4.6		
15 – 19	165	8.4	205	4.6		
20 – 24	251	12.7	427	9.5		
25 – 34	366	18.6	1,098	24.4		
35 – 44	241	12.2	1,007	22.4		
45 – 54	200	10.2	620	13.8		
55 – 59	83	4.2	171	3.8		
60 – 64	48	2.4	127	2.8		
65 or older	99	5.0	196	4.4		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>100.0</b>		
<b>Median Age</b>			<b>33.8</b>			
Racial Distribution	1990		2000			
	People	Percentage	People	Percentage		
Caucasian	1,738	88.2	3,575	79.4		
African American	63	3.2	471	10.5		
Native American	32	1.6	144	3.2		
Asian	113	5.7	83	1.8		
Pacific Islander			17	0.4		
Other	no data	no data	70	1.6		
2 or More Races	25	1.3	140	3.1		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>100.0</b>		
<b>Source: U.S. Census</b>						

Table 2.3 shows the population of people housed in the Airway Heights Correctional Center, versus the rest of the population, and Table 2.4 illustrated the household characteristics with a comparison between the City, Spokane County, and the state. The prison opened in 1990. After 1995, about 41 percent of the population was housed in the correctional center.

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2006

**Table 2.3**  
*Non-Institutionalized vs. Institutionalized Population Comparison*

Year	Non-Institutional Population	Institutional Population	TOTAL POPULATION	% of Total Population Institutionalized
1990	1,971	0	1,971	0.0
1995	2,910	2,100	5,010	41
2000	2,678	1,822	4,500	40.5
2006	2,700	2,140	4,840	44
<b>Source: U.S. Census, OFM, 2006, Washington State Department of Corrections</b>				

**Table 2.4**  
*2000 Household Characteristics*

Households by Type	Number	Percentage	
<b>Families</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>68.5</b>	
<i>w/ children &lt; 18</i>	390	40.7 (of total house holds)	
Couples	438	45.7	
<i>w/ children &lt; 18</i>	221	23.1	
Female Only, No Husband	181	18.9	
<i>w/ children &lt; 18</i>	143	14.9	
<b>Non-Families</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>31.5</b>	
<i>Living Alone</i>	242	25.3	
<i>Living Alone (65 Years or Older)</i>	59	6.2	
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Households w/ Individuals 18 Years or Younger</b>			
	417	43.5	
<b>Households w/ Individuals 65 Years or Older</b>			
	126	13.2	
	<b>Airway Heights</b>	<i>Spokane County</i>	<i>Washington State</i>
<b>Average Household Size</b>	<b>2.55 people</b>	<i>2.46 people</i>	<i>2.53 people</i>
<b>Average Family Size</b>	<b>3.02 people</b>	<i>3.02 people</i>	<i>3.07 people</i>
<b>Source: U.S. Census</b>			

## Education

In 2000, the majority of residents (71.7 percent) are enrolled in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The remaining residents (23.6 percent) are enrolled at a university or college level. This breakdown is illustrated in Table 2.5 on the following page.

**Table 2.5**  
*2000 School Enrollment*

School Category	1990		2000	
	People	Percentage	People	Percentage
Preschool	23	4.7	47	5.0
Kindergarten			53	5.6
Elementary (1-8)	350	71.7	350	37.3
High School (9-12)			185	19.7
College/Graduate School	115	23.6	304	32.4
<b>TOTAL ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Source: U.S. Census</b>				

# Final

2006

Table 2.6 shows the employment class of worker for 1990 and 2000. In 1990 there were 66.2 percent of workers in private industry, 26.7 percent in government and 7 percent self-employed. In 2000 there were 73.7 percent who worked in the private industry, 21.2 percent in government and 4.5 percent self-employed.

**Table 2.6**  
*Employment by Class of Worker, 1990 and 2000*

Class of Worker	1990 Percentages			2000 Percentages			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%		#	%		
Private for Profit Wage and Salary	462	66.2	76.4	749	73.7	77.1	76.1
Government	187	26.7	15.7	215	21.2	15.7	18.5
Self-Employed	49	7.0	7.4	46	4.5	6.9	7.2
Unpaid Family	-	-	0.5	6	0.6	0.3	0.3
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYED (over 16)</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>1,016</b>	<b>100.0</b>		
Source: U.S. Census							

Table 2.7 shows the employment by industry for 1990 and 2000. There were 25.9 percent of workers in retail trade, 18.9 percent in educational, health and social careers and 12.8 in manufacturing in 1990. In 2000, there were 19.7 percent of workers in educational, health and social careers, 12.4 percent in retail trade and 10.9 percent in manufacturing.

**Table 2.7**  
*Employment by Industry, 1990 and 2000*

Employment Industry	1990 Percentages			2000 Percentages			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%		#	%		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	4	0.6	2.0	9	0.9	0.9	2.5
Construction	39	5.6	5.0	37	3.6	6.4	7.0
Manufacturing	90	12.8	12.6	111	10.9	10.1	12.5
Wholesale Trade	14	2.0	5.6	35	3.4	4.6	4.1
Retail Trade	181	25.9	19.3	126	12.4	12.7	12.1
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	55	7.9	4.4	97	9.5	4.6	5.4
Information	11	1.6	2.4	12	1.2	2.3	3.4
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	23	3.3	6.7	38	3.7	7.1	6.1
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management	*	*	*	92	9.1	8.7	9.8
Educational, Health, and Social	132	18.9	24.1	200	19.7	23.9	19.4
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food	7	1.0	1.6	99	9.7	8.2	7.9
Other Services	68	9.8	11.9	86	8.5	5.7	4.8
Public Administration	74	10.6	4.3	74	7.3	4.7	5.0
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYED (over 16)</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>1,016</b>	<b>100.0</b>		
Source: U.S. Census							

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Table 2.8 shows resident commute patterns in 1990 and 2000. In 1990, 75.6 percent of people drove alone to work and 17.8 percent carpooled. In 2000, 71.3 percent drove alone and 17 percent carpooled.

**Table 2.8**  
*Resident Commute Patterns in 1990 & 2000*

Commute Method	1990			2000			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%		#	%		
Drove Alone	638	75.6	77.8	749	71.3	76.7	73.3
Carpooled	150	17.8	11.0	178	17.0	12.3	12.8
Public Transit, including Taxi	14	1.7	2.8	22	2.1	2.8	4.9
Walked	34	4.0	1.3	54	5.1	2.8	3.2
Worked at Home				40	3.8	4.1	4.3
Other Methods	8	0.9	7.1	7	0.7	1.2	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>1,050</b>	<b>100.0</b>		
	<b>Airway Heights</b>		<b>Spokane County</b>	<b>Washington State</b>			
<b>Average Travel Time to Work</b>	<b>23 minutes</b>		<b>21 minutes</b>	<b>26 minutes</b>			
<b>Source: U.S. Census</b>							

## Income

Table 2.9 represents a comparison of current and past income levels in the City, Spokane County, and the State of Washington. In 1989, 31.1 percent of residents earned between \$15,000 and \$25,000. That number decreased to 21 percent in 1999. The second highest wage earner group was in the less than \$9,999 income bracket at 19.2 percent in 1989. This group shifted to the \$25,000 to \$34,999 bracket at 19.3 percent in 1999.

**Table 2.9**  
*Household Income Comparison, 1989 and 1999*

Household Income	1989 Percentages				1999 Percentages			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%			#	%		
Less than \$9,999	148	19.2	17.8	12.9	88	9.1	10.0	7.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	127	16.5	10.5	8.5	106	10.9	7.2	5.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	240	31.1	20.1	17.9	204	21.0	15.0	11.7
\$25,000 to \$34,999	133	17.2	17.0	16.8	187	19.3	14.6	12.5
\$35,000 to \$49,999	97	12.6	17.5	16.8	159	16.4	17.5	17.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	23	3.0	11.5	19.6	167	17.2	19.3	21.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2	0.3	3.0	15.8	39	4.0	8.5	11.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2	0.3	1.6	2.4	8	0.8	5.4	8.3
\$150,000 to \$199,999	-	-	0.8	1.3	7	0.7	1.2	2.1
More than \$200,000	*	*	*	*	5	0.5	1.3	2.2
<b>TOTAL H.HOLDS</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>100.0</b>			<b>970</b>	<b>100.0</b>		
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$18,977</b>		<b>\$25,769</b>	<b>\$25,138</b>	<b>\$29,829</b>	<b>\$37,308</b>	<b>\$45,776</b>	
<b>Source: OFM, 2002.</b>								

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Table 2.10 shows the number of households either employed or on public assistance in 1999 compared to county and state averages. There were 82.3 percent employed, 10.3 percent on public assistance, and 21.5 percent living on retirement income. Households may have more than one type of income.

**Table 2.10**  
*Household Income by Type, 1999*

Income Type	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
# of households		%		
Employment	798	82.3%	79.1%	81.9%
<b>Mean Employment Income</b>	\$36,332		\$47,213	\$57,172
Social Security	241	24.8%	25.6%	22.9%
<b>Mean Social Security Income</b>	\$8,054		\$11,743	\$11,914
Supplemental Security	61	6.3%	4.4%	3.7%
<b>Mean Supplemental Security Income</b>	\$5,625		\$6,446	\$6,466
Public Assistance	100	10.3%	4.9%	3.8%
<b>Mean Public Assistance Income</b>	\$3,322		\$3,356	3,579
Retirement	209	21.5%	16.6%	17.1%
<b>Mean Retirement Income</b>	\$13,051		\$15,870	\$18,241

Source: OFM, 2002.

Table 2.11 shows a comparison of family incomes in 1989 and 1999 for Airway Heights compared to the county and the state. Most people made \$15,000 to \$24,999 at 30.5 percent in 1989. In 1999, there were 20.5 percent of people who made the same income. The median income in Airway Heights was \$20,125 in 1989 and \$31,344 in 1999.

**Table 2.11**  
*Family Income Comparison, 1989 and 1999*

Family Income	1989			1999			
	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Airway Heights		Spokane County	Wash. State
	#	%		#	%		
Less than \$9,999	91	16.5	9.6	35	5.3	5.1	4.5
\$10,000 to \$14,999	92	16.7	7.7	74	11.3	4.5	3.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	168	30.5	19.4	134	20.5	11.4	9.1
\$25,000 to \$34,999	92	16.7	18.7	119	18.2	13.8	11.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	84	15.2	21.9	125	19.1	19.4	17.2
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20	3.6	15.3	114	17.4	24.2	24.5
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2	0.4	4.1	34	5.2	11.1	14.3
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2	0.4	3.1	8	1.2	7.2	10.4
\$150,000 to \$199,999	-	-	1.1	7	1.1	1.6	2.7
More than \$200,000	*	*	*	5	0.8	1.6	2.7
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</b>	551	100.0		655	100.0		
	Airway Heights	Spokane County	Airway Heights	Spokane County	Wash. State		
<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$20,125	\$31,784	\$31,344	\$46,463	\$53,760		

Source: OFM, 2002.



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2006

## Population Forecast

Table 2.12 below forecasts the likely population change over the next 20 years. The methodology for determining this forecast was based on the number provided by the State of Washington's Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the numbers assigned to the city by Spokane County Board of County Commissioners.

**Table 2.15**

*Population Forecast for Airway Heights,  
2006 - 2026 based on a 3.46 % growth  
rate*

Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population
2006	4840	2013	6141	2020	7792
2007	5007	2014	6354	2021	8062
2008	5181	2015	6574	2022	8341
2009	5360	2016	6801	2023	8629
2010	5545	2017	7036	2024	8928
2011	5737	2018	7280	2025	9237
2012	5936	2019	7532	2026	9556

### *Tribal Lands*

The City includes and is adjacent to tribal lands for the Kalispel Tribe and the Spokane Tribe. Within the city limits, the Kalispel Tribe has 292 acres located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Hayford Road and Sprague Avenue down to U.S. Highway 2 and is developing the area into a destination complex for entertainment, retail sales and services, and a tribal casino.

Adjacent to the city limits, but within the Urban Growth Area (UGA), the Spokane Tribe also owns 300 acres that will develop into a destination complex for retail, commercial, and entertainment. Only 145 acres of this 300 acre development is currently within the designated UGA.

These destination complexes directly and indirectly influence development of the City. These types of facilities generate a significant number of visitors to the City, and sufficient amenities must be available, including commercial, retail, and restaurants.