

# Experts thought Meridian would have 150,000 people by 2040. They don't think that now.

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Meridian's population growth is outpacing previous estimates, according to new data.

Just last year, the city estimated that its population would grow to 150,000 residents by 2040. Now, Meridian is likely to [hit that milestone by 2029](#), according to new data estimates provided by a consultant to the city.

The estimates come from Raftelis, a firm the city hired to evaluate the city's [impact fees](#), which pay for the cost of growth by charging developers.

Raftelis also predicts that as the number of residents grow, the number of car trips will, too. The number of trips will increase by about 30 percent in the next decade, the firm predicts.

Meridian in 2019 grew to 114,680 residents, up 8,270 people from last year, according to [estimates from COMPASS](#), the Treasure Valley's [regional planning agency](#).

For the past five years, the growth has outpaced anything the Treasure Valley has seen before, said Carl Miller, chief demographer for COMPASS.

"Can we continue that or will it taper off?" he asked in an interview. "That's a question that I think a lot of us are asking, because we've had many years without a recession."

Of the 13,000 residents the Treasure Valley adds each year, 6,000 are moving to Meridian, he said.

"That would be almost half of the region's growth made up by Meridian," he said. "They are the No. 1 growth city in the state."

Meridian, once a rural farm community, has grown into a sprawling suburb in the last few decades. In the midst of this rampant growth, some neighbors are asking Meridian to find ways to protect the city's [agricultural history](#) and [low-density areas](#).

Meanwhile, Meridian Mayor Tammy de Weerd has tried to [boost the number of jobs in the city](#), so its residents don't need to commute to Boise.

“Growth equals jobs,” Meridian City Councilman Treg Bernt said. “The more growth we have, the more jobs we'll have. The more money that will be spent in our economy, the more prosperous we'll be.”

But that growth needs to be managed, Bernt said. He is hopeful that Meridian's new comprehensive plan, the guiding document that lays out a plan for future land uses, will outline a path for Meridian's development.

“That's going to be our road map,” he said.

“Ten years ago, people didn't have jobs. They didn't know how they were going to pay their bills and feed their families,” he added. “This is a great problem to have.”

The city has [made it on several](#) “Best Places to Live” lists in the last few years, putting the city on the map and boosting its reputation.

Other cities in the Treasure Valley are growing fast, too. [Nampa](#) this year became the first city in Canyon County to surpass 100,000 residents. It was once the second-largest city in Idaho, until [Meridian outgrew it](#) in 2016.

“Meridian is really a unique city from the growth they have experienced from the past,” Miller said. “We expect that they'll continue to grow in the future.”