

Leadership in Government, Ada County (Non-Roadway)

Valley Regional Transit, Main Street Station

Main Street Station – an underground, multi-modal transit center in downtown Boise – represents the successful culmination of years of planning and the development of strong public and private sector partnerships to achieve a common goal. The facility improves the overall transportation infrastructure in downtown Boise and positions Valley Regional Transit to accommodate the future.

To understand the significance of the project, it is important to first look at the infrastructure that it replaces and its impact on transit customers. The old downtown transit mall consisted of ValleyRide buses parked along a five-block area on Main and Idaho Streets. For some riders needing to transfer to another bus, this sometimes meant a long sprint in the rain or snow or heat. Customer service amenities, such as route information, were nonexistent.

Main Street Station provides a central location to catch the bus, learn about public transportation services, buy bus passes, wait out of the elements, and store bikes. Main Street Station also provides a multi-modal approach to transportation that includes shuttles, vanpools, taxis, and bicycles.

On a larger scale, Main Street Station's impact on downtown Boise is significant. The station is located in the core of downtown, close to development, and is easy to for people to access. Just as important, it serves as a gateway to the downtown area for commuters, tourists, and visitors, and serves as a catalyst for implementation of broader land-use and economic development goals.

Finally, Main Street Station represents an innovative public/private partnership that energized a project that had previously stalled. The station has been recognized by the Federal Transit Administration as an example that other public transportation agencies can learn from. Valley Regional Transit had to work through many challenges in this very complex project and used adversity to make the project better than any stakeholder could have imagined.