

COMPASS wants your input -- again -- on Canyon County I-84 widening

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CANYON COUNTY, ID - The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (also known as COMPASS) is asking for public input -- for a second time -- on widening Interstate 84 in Canyon County.

In April of last year, COMPASS asked for public feedback on a project to widen I-84 within the City of Nampa. COMPASS officials say they received over 800 comments; 85% were in favor of the widening project. Now COMPASS is asking for feedback again -- this time, regarding continuing that widening to the City of Caldwell.

Widening I-84 in Canyon County was identified as the Number One unfunded priority in "Communities in Motion 2040," the regional long-range transportation plan for Ada and Canyon Counties.

Following public comment last year, "Communities in Motion 2040" was amended in June to add funding for the eastern portion of the corridor. On December 14, 2017, the Idaho Transportation Board recommended additional funding to extend improvements westward to the City of Caldwell.

The Idaho Transportation Board's recommendation is to allocate the remainder of the GARVEE (Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle) bonding authority -- and various sources of state and federal funds -- to continue safety and capacity improvements to the I-84 corridor between the Cities of Caldwell and Nampa.

In the same meeting, the Idaho Transportation Board made a recommendation to allocate \$6 million in state funds for preliminary engineering on the extension of State Highway 16 between I-84 and US-20/26. "These funds will refine the scope, right-of-way needs, and cost estimate for the corridor. The remaining design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction is currently unfunded; previous estimates place

construction costs at approximately \$400 million. Extending State Highway 16 from US 20/26 to Interstate 84 is #14 on COMPASS' list of unfunded priorities," said COMPASS Communication Coordinator Amy Luft.

In addition, Valley Regional Transit wants to develop a transit-oriented development in the City of Nampa. "This project would address a portion the #11 unfunded priority in to 'Communities in Motion 2040.' Currently, only design of the project is funded (\$310,000); construction costs will be determined through this design phase and funded later," Luft said.

For any of these projects to move forward, the COMPASS Board of Directors must first amend "Communities in Motion 2040" and the regional budget for federal transportation funding to show that funding has been identified for them.

"In April, we requested public feedback on widening the eastern portion of I-84 in Canyon County and heard a resounding 'Yes!' We are now asking for feedback on widening the western portion," said COMPASS Executive Director Matt Stoll. "While I acknowledge this may seem redundant, it is a significant financial investment and COMPASS wants public feedback before committing your tax dollars."

While the three projects are being proposed at the same time, each project is independent and each will be considered for inclusion in "Communities in Motion 2040" based on its own merits, Luft explained.

If "Communities in Motion 2040" is amended to include any or all of these projects, the regional budget for federal transportation funding would subsequently be amended to include them as well. Other changes to the regional federal transportation budget are also being considered and feedback on them is being solicited now as well, she added.

COMPASS will be accepting public comments on these projects through Tuesday, January 23rd. You can learn more -- and submit comments -- at www.compassidaho.org or at the COMPASS office at 700 NE 2nd Street, Suite 200, Meridian, ID 83642. You can e-mail questions to info@compassidaho.org or call the organization at 208-855-2558.