



COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION
of Southwest Idaho

State Highway 16/McDermott Road Kuna-Mora Road to Ada/Gem County Line

Priority 14

Background

State Highway 16 is the main commuter route from Gem County to the Treasure Valley. An increase in traffic and accidents on this highway have been a concern for several years, and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) designated it as Idaho's first "safety corridor"—that is, a priority for funding for improvements.

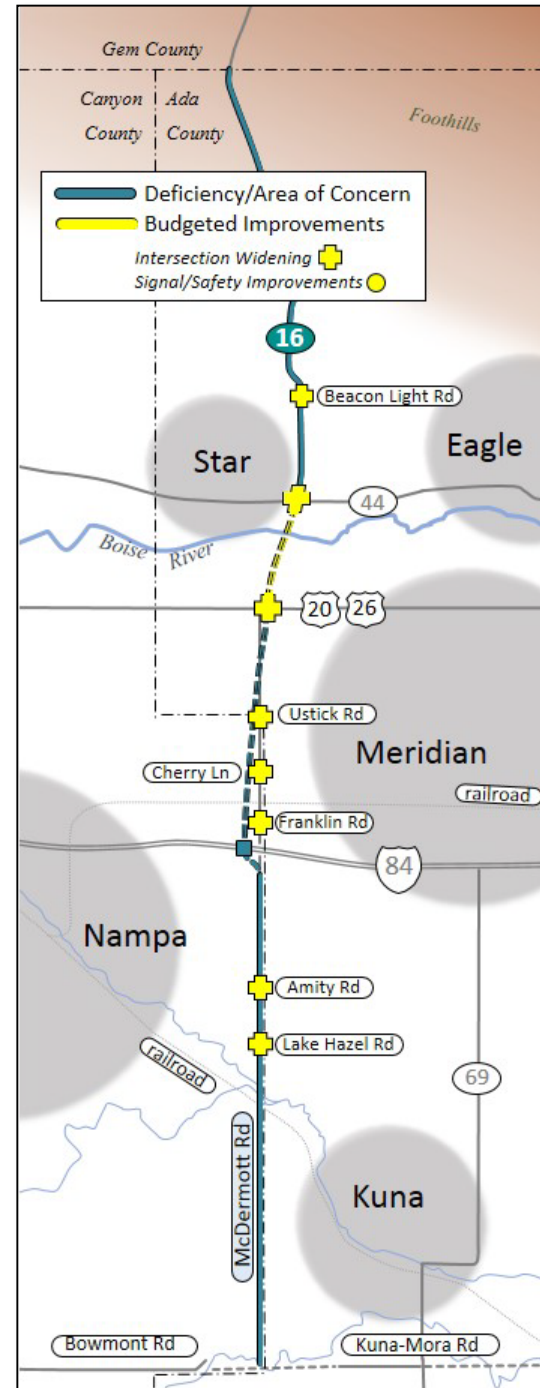
Additionally, ITD has studied the creation of an expressway to extend Highway 16 to connect to I-84. The future expressway would parallel McDermott Road.

One of the study recommendations was a new bridge over the Boise River, now under construction, that will extend State Highway 16 from State Highway 44 (State Street) south to US Highway 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard).

Other studies are needed to consider McDermott Road as a possible extension of State Highway 16 south of I-84. Note that Ada County Highway District and Nampa Highway District share authority of McDermott Road from Ustick Road southward to Kuna-Mora Road.

The Corridor at a Glance

- Mostly rural
- Two lanes wide
 - The new Boise River bridge is four lanes wide
- More than 24 miles long
 - Gem County to State Highway 44 is 8¼ miles
 - Bridge and connection to US 20/26 is two miles
 - US 20/26 to I-84 is 4½ miles
 - I-84 to Union Pacific Road is 4½ miles
 - Union Pacific Railroad to Mora Canal is nearly five miles
- Currently no transit services on State Highway 16 or McDermott Road; no park-and-ride lots
- No bike lanes or sidewalks
- From Ustick Road to Kuna-Mora Road, the Ada County/Canyon County boundary follows McDermott Road
- Points of interest (north to south)
 - Foothills, brush and grassland, little irrigation
 - Willow Creek drainage, Firebird Raceway
 - River Birch Golf Course and Woodriver Cellars
 - Irrigated farmland and irrigation canals from foothills to Kuna-Mora Road
 - State Highway 44 (State Street) intersection
 - Bridge over Boise River and connection to US Highway 20/26 under construction
 - A few homes/driveways on McDermott Road from US 20/26 to I-84





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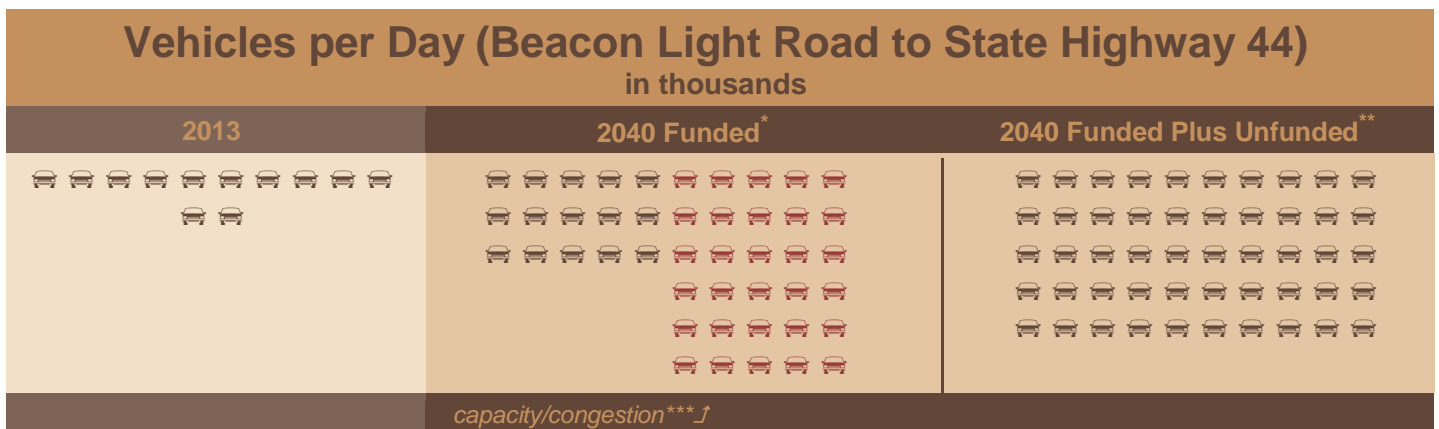
- Railroad crossing (Boise Valley Railroad)
- No overpass on I-84, no north-south connection
- Several rural subdivisions, homes/driveways on McDermott south of I-84 to Victory Road
- No bridge/crossing over Indian Creek or railroad (Union Pacific)
 - North-south connection available via Locust Lane and Greenhurst Road
- Road ends at Mora Canal; no direct connection to Bowmont Road or Kuna-Mora Road

Problem

State Highway 16 is the main commuter route from Gem County to the Treasure Valley. It is only two lanes wide and the location of increased traffic and accidents. ITD, local citizens, and elected officials have identified improvements needed in the corridor.

Current and Future ¹	2013	2040
Population	5,447	38,294
Households	1,803	13,863
Employment	1,260	11,392

Traffic north of State Highway 44 is projected to increase from about 12,000 vehicles per day in 2013 to about 45,000 vehicles in 2040. This is similar to the current level of traffic on State Highway 55 (Eagle Road). One major development north of the City of Eagle could add 6,000 or more homes, plus a significant amount of commercial space.



* *2040 Funded* reflects the 2013 regional transportation system and all the expansion/improvement projects that are *funded* in agencies' approved budgets or capital improvement plans, listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Tables 6.2 and 6.3).

** *Unfunded* projects/improvements includes all the *unfunded* needs discussed in this summary and listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Table 6.5).

*** This is an approximate level where there is too much traffic for the road to carry and speeds will get slower as congestion gets worse. Each road's capacity depends on a number of variables, including truck traffic, number of driveways, and road conditions.

It's interesting to note the effects a funded project, or the lack of a project, can have on parallel roadways. ACHD has funds committed to widen Linder Road from Franklin Road north to Beacon Light Road. Without widening State Highway 16 north of State Highway 44, traffic on Linder Road is expected to swell to 44,000 vehicles per day, well over its capacity.

¹ Population, housing, and employment in the corridor are based on neighborhoods and other developments near State Highway 16 and McDermott Road.



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As the Treasure Valley grows, more capacity will also be needed south of State Highway 44. ITD has already studied a future State Highway 16 expressway between State Highway 44 and I-84. Without the expressway, traffic on McDermott Road is anticipated to increase to 14,000 vehicles per day—near or at capacity for the roadway.

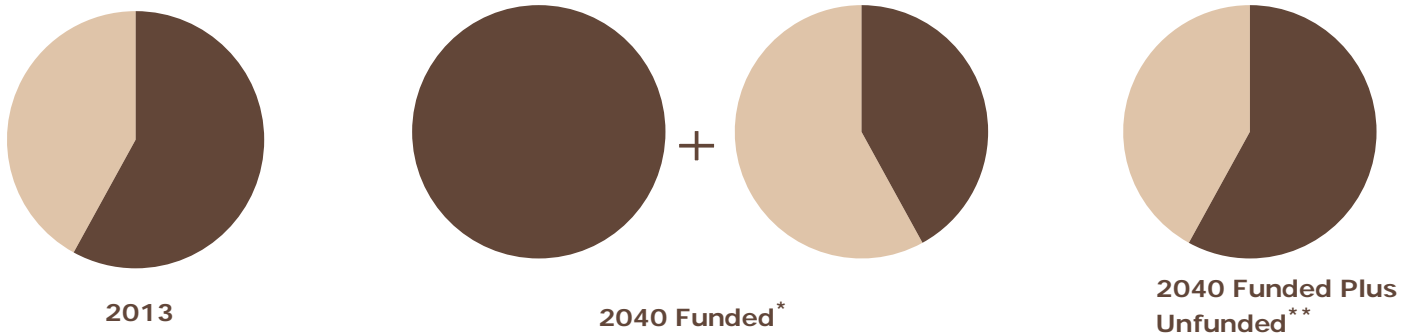
If no improvements are made to McDermott Road south of I-84, traffic is expected to increase from 500 vehicles per day in 2013 to 12,000 per day in 2040. More studies are necessary to explore the need for and feasibility of other projects south of I-84:

- connecting the expressway/I-84 to McDermott Road with a full interchange
- filling in gaps on McDermott Road (canal and railroad crossings)
- preserving right-of-way for future widening and other improvements to McDermott Road

Currently, on an average day, it takes 35 minutes to drive from the Ada /Gem County line to the end of McDermott Road near Bowmont Road/Kuna-Mora Road. Without improvements to State Highway 16 and McDermott Road, the same drive in 2040 could take one hour and 25 minutes. If the unfunded project needs for this corridor (see below) plus needs identified for other corridors were to be built, the same drive in 2040 would not take any longer than it does today.

Drive Times, 2013 vs. 2040, Gem County Line to Bowmont Road/Kuna-Mora Road

Each pie chart represents one hour. Drive times are in dark brown.



* 2040 Funded reflects the 2013 regional transportation system and all the expansion/improvement projects that are funded in agencies' approved budgets or capital improvement plans, listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Tables 6.2 and 6.3).
 ** Unfunded projects/improvements includes all the unfunded needs discussed in this summary and listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Table 6.5).

Other Considerations

Roadway Users

Most of the analysis to identify the increased traffic issue is based on cars, the main mode of transportation on streets and highways. Pedestrians and vehicles such as bicycles, freight trucks, farm equipment, and buses, may also share the road. On expressways, pedestrians and bicyclists are usually prohibited.

Environmental Issues

Changes to a roadway can impact the surrounding environment as well as the people who live nearby. Before major road projects are built, their potential effects are analyzed to make sure they meet



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environmental regulations as well as provide for “environmental justice,” ensuring all people can be involved and are treated fairly.²

There are a number of sensitive issues to consider in this corridor:

- historic structures near the alignment, particularly near SH 44 and Ustick Road
- wildlife zones and historic trails along the Boise River
- wildlife area in the northern portion, from Chaparral Road to the county line
- properties along the highway north of SH 44 and south of I-84 largely un-assessed for historic issues
- one historic structure south of I-84 near the alignment

The corridor does not include minority or low-income population concentrations.

Budgeted Projects

Roadway

ITD is currently designing a pavement rehabilitation project on State Highway 16 from the junction of State Highway 44 to the City of Emmett. The project will be constructed in 2016 for about \$1.1 million.

Also, ITD obtained Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE) bond funds to build a new river crossing from State Highway 44 to US Highway 20/26 near the cities of Eagle, Meridian, and Star. The project will be complete in 2014 and cost about \$111 million.

ACHD's *Capital Improvements Plan*³ (CIP) includes

- a project to improve the State Highway 16 and Beacon Light Road intersection for \$1,730,000; and
- several intersection improvement projects along McDermott Road, at Ustick Road, Cherry Lane, and Franklin, Amity and Lake Hazel Roads. The total cost is estimated at \$9,562,000 (this includes costs for Canyon County agencies, as well).

Unfunded Future Needs

Roadway: A continuous four-lane route from the Ada/Gem County line south to Bowmont Road/Kuna-Mora Road (see priority 32) could alleviate future congestion and lower accident incidence along State Highway 16. Right-of-way along McDermott Road south of I-84 could be preserved as a future expressway, and connect to another future expressway proposed for Kuna-Mora Road.

The State Highway 16 expressway connecting Emmett to State Highway 44 and US 20/26 to I-84 is not funded. The work on State Highway 16 would include design, purchase of right-of-way, and construction of a four-lane expressway with interchanges at State Highway 44, US 20/26, Ustick Road and Franklin Road/I-84.

Incremental implementation—building new or widened sections that can be retained in a conversion to a divided highway/expressway—may be an option. Driveway access in parts of this corridor could be limited, and interchanges could replace intersections.

McDermott Road is vital to the region because of its future role as a north-south route. ITD, Ada County Highway District, the Nampa Highway District, and the City of Nampa will need to work together to determine what type of road this could be south of I-84.

To widen McDermott to arterial standards (five lanes wide) south of I-84, a bridge across the Union Pacific tracks will be required and numerous waterways will also need new bridges. A corridor study would be needed to identify right-of-way, access points, intersection designs, and tie-in with Bowmont Road and Kuna-Mora Road.

² See federal environmental justice definitions at www.epa.gov/region07/ej/definitions.htm.

³ www.achdidaho.org/Departments/ROWDS/CIP.aspx



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COMMUNITIES IN MOTION 2040 | PRIORITY CORRIDOR SUMMARY

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In January 2014 the combined estimated cost for these projects, widening State Highway 16 from the Gem County line to Highway 44, constructing a new four-lane expressway from State Highway 44 to I-84, and widening McDermott Road to 5 lanes from I-84 to Kuna-Mora Road, was \$525 million.

Bus Service/Park and Ride: The regional transit services plan, *valleyconnect*, calls for the following in the near- to medium-term:

- Bus Route #48, a regional express route connecting Emmett to the College of Western Idaho transfer center. Regional express routes serve limited stops and run about every 30 minutes during peak hours.
- other bus routes and park-and-ride lots that allow users to access a possible future transit station at the Boise Valley Railroad
- new park-and-ride lots in the near-term
 - City of Emmett
 - intersection of State Highway 44 and State Highway 16
 - City of Kuna
- new park-and-ride lots in the medium-term
 - one between Star and Emmett
 - intersection of US Highway 20/26 and State Highway 16 (future expressway)
 - intersection of Ustick Road and State Highway 16 (future expressway)

Walking/Biking: There are no pathways proposed for State Highway 16. However, there are several pathways planned for the surrounding area, including:

- bike lanes on several streets that cross State Highway 16 (Beacon Light Road and Floating Feather Road) and McDermott Road (McMillan Road and Ustick Road)⁴
- pathways that would cross McDermott Road along waterways near US Highway 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard), McMillan Road, Ustick Road, Cherry Lane, Overland Road, and Victory Road, as well as a path adjacent to the Boise Valley Rail Road⁵

Operations, Management and Technology Projects: Aside from road widening, other actions such as improving driveways or changing the traffic signals can help improve traffic conditions. The regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) plan⁶ calls for the following on existing segments of State Highway 16:

- a weather information and warning system, a pilot project that deploys road-weather-based safety and warning systems in up to two high-accident locations that are prone to severe weather conditions due to elevation or exposure
- ITS deployment installations
 - fiber-optic communications and conduit from State Highway 44 (State Street) to US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard)
 - speed detection
 - approximately two closed-circuit television cameras

Updated July 2014

⁴ <http://www.achdidaho.org/Projects/PublicProject.aspx?ProjectID=77>

⁵ http://www.meridiancity.org/parks_rec.aspx?id=2667

⁶ *Final Report: Treasure Valley Transportation System: Operations, Management, and ITS*, is online at www.compassidaho.org/prodserve/cms-intro.htm.