



COMPASS
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION
of Southwest Idaho

Boise Downtown Circulator

Priority 15

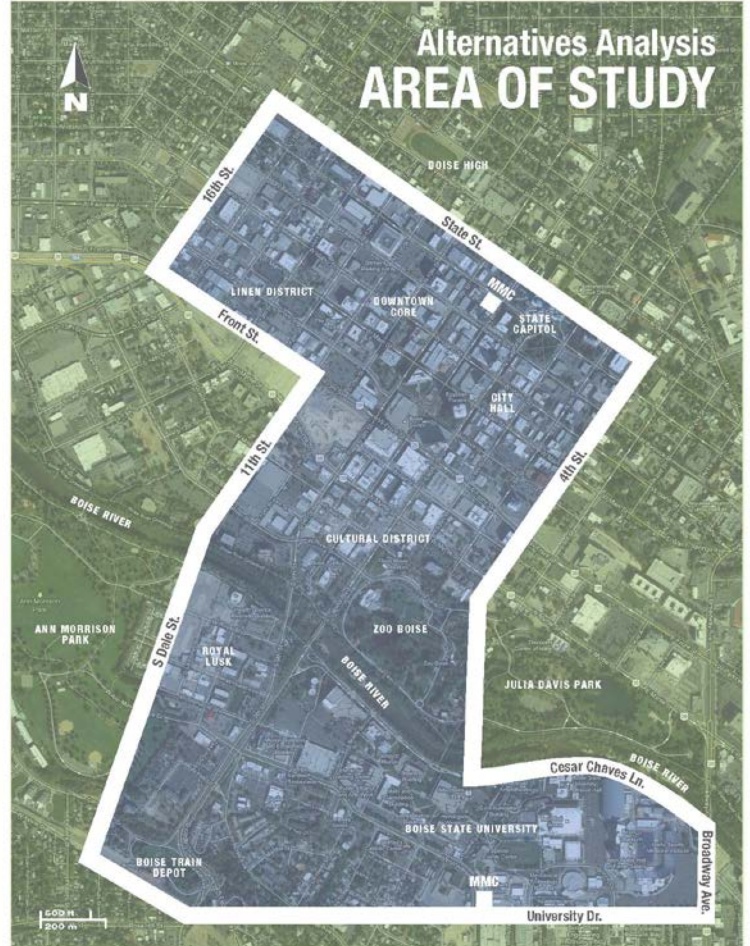
Background

Downtown Boise and the surrounding neighborhoods are a dynamic area of the region and home to a variety of activity centers. The highest concentration of employment in the Treasure Valley is located in downtown Boise.

Problem

Growth is projected to continue in the downtown area and other parts of the Treasure Valley, and more transit options will be necessary to accommodate this increase. Plans are in the works for a Boise downtown circulator, transit that would make it easier for people to move around the downtown area and to get to and between surrounding neighborhoods. The circulator can help reduce the need for people to drive and park their car at more than one location in the downtown area. Planners are still considering what type of transit—streetcar, trolley, bus, or some other kind of vehicle—the circulator will be.

The City of Boise received a federal grant to conduct the first phase of a study and plan for the downtown circulator. A consultant has been hired to study different types of vehicles and specific route possibilities. The end result will be known as a “locally preferred alternative.”



Other Considerations

In 2007, COMPASS, Valley Regional Transit, and other agencies conducted a study to analyze transportation alternatives for the I-84/I-184 corridor and in downtown Boise. This initiative, the Treasure Valley High Capacity Transit Study, considered three related projects, including the downtown circulator.² The following are the recommended objectives for each of these projects:

Current and Future for Downtown Boise and Surrounding Neighborhoods ¹	2013	2040
Population	3,591	6,981
Households	1,521	3,831
Employment	20,971	36,938

- Reflect community values and secure strong public acceptance from stakeholders such as downtown businesses, residents, property owners, commuters, transit riders, elected officials, and participating jurisdictions.
- Reduce the number of short single-occupancy auto trips occurring within downtown Boise.
- Provide a service that is frequent, convenient, and easily understood by regular transit commuters as well as by occasional users, visitors, and tourists.

¹ Population, housing, and employment in the corridor are based on neighborhoods and other developments near the road.

² www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/specialprojects-tvhtcts.htm



Boise Downtown Circulator

Priority 15

- Minimize the impacts on existing downtown development, people, cultural resources, the environment, and traffic.
- Become a key component of an overall strategy to increase transit ridership to and within the downtown.
- Create a transit system that is visually attractive and compatible with pedestrian travel.
- Coordinate and be compatible with investment in the downtown multimodal center.
- Accommodate the full range of functions identified through the planning process and recommended by the Downtown Policy Advisory Committee and adopted by the VRT board of directors.
- Support and stimulate downtown economic development, including the influencing of location decisions consistent with local planning goals.
- Identify an achievable initial segment that can be expanded to a future system that supports the planned growth of the downtown and immediately adjacent employment and housing.
- Enhance urban living by connecting the downtown residential housing with downtown employment and activity centers.

Budgeted Projects

Roadway:

- ACHD's *Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)*³ includes projects to improve intersections on Broadway Avenue at Idaho Street/Warm Springs Avenue and at Front Street.
- ITD has budgeted funds to replace the Broadway Avenue bridge over the Boise River in the near future, and to work with ACHD on improvements to the Broadway Avenue/Myrtle Street intersection.

Walking/Biking: The first phase of Valley Regional Transit's Boise Bike Share project, which will offer bicycles for short-term rental in the downtown area, is slated to open in the summer of 2014; future phases are not yet funded.

Operations, Management and Technology Projects: Aside from road widening, other actions such as improving driveways or changing traffic signal timing can help improve traffic conditions. The regional Intelligent Transportation System plan⁴ includes upgrading traffic signals with better timing and communication technologies at many downtown intersections.

Unfunded Future Needs

Bus Service/Park and Ride: A number of bus routes serve downtown Boise, most of them beginning or ending there. The regional transit services plan, *valleyconnect*, calls for more frequent service by existing routes in the near- to medium-term. Several routes may potentially share the same streets with the downtown circulator.

The Treasure Valley High Capacity Transit Study⁵ and the State Street Transit and Traffic Operational Plan (TTOP)⁶ have recently studied options for high-capacity transit, such as bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit, to bring more people into downtown Boise. Some of the projects identified in these studies are funded for implementation in the future, but most are not. A downtown Boise circulator study is underway as the next step in improving transit services for downtown Boise.

In January 2013 the estimated cost of adding circulator service in downtown Boise was \$41.9 million.

Updated July 2014

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

⁴ *Final Report: Treasure Valley Transportation System: Operations, Management, and ITS* can be found online at www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/cms-intro.htm.

⁵ www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/specialprojects-tvhcts.htm

⁶ www.achdidaho.org/projects/PublicProject.aspx?ProjectID=185