



COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION
of Southwest Idaho

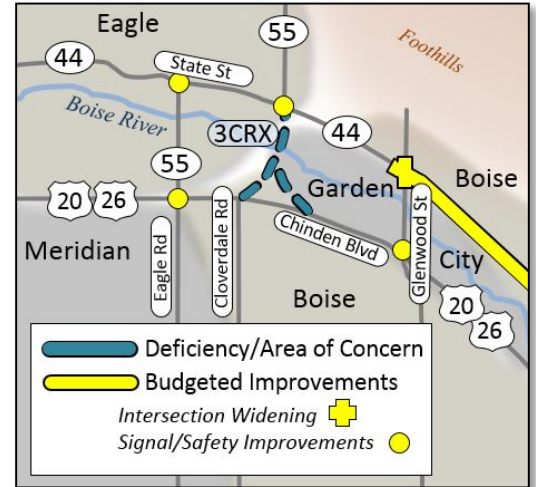
Three Cities River Crossing *Preserving land for a future project – bridge over the Boise River east of City of Eagle*

Priority 27

Background

State Highway 55 connects communities throughout Ada and Canyon Counties and is the primary route for traffic to and from Boise, Owyhee, and Valley Counties. Along Eagle Road (part of State Highway 55) in Ada County, the highway is lined with commercial and residential development. The Eagle Road and Fairview Avenue intersection is the highest-volume intersection in the Treasure Valley, accommodating more than 6,300 vehicles during the peak hour.

A proposed river crossing, called the Three Cities River Crossing (3CRX), was studied for its potential to connect the intersection of State Highway 55 and State Highway 44 (State Street) on the north with US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) on the south. This would 1) provide an alternate to the Eagle Road and Glenwood Street river crossings (four miles apart); 2) provide an alternative connection from parts of Boise and Garden City to State Highway 55 north; and 3) relieve future congestion on Glenwood Street.



The Corridor at a Glance

- Distance from State Highway 44 (State Street) to US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) is more than 1½ miles
- No current road running north-south through corridor; some local streets and access roads in corridor interior
- No north-south bike or pedestrian facilities, but greenbelt trail runs east-west along north side of Boise River
- Bus Routes #11 (Chinden/Five Mile) and #44 (Highway 44 Express) pass along north and south edges of area; Route #10 (Hill Road/Maple Grove) traverses Glenwood Street on east edge of area; park-and-ride lot in Eagle at intersection of State Highway 44 (State Street) and Edgewood Lane
- Points of interest (north to south)
 - Retail center and St. Luke's Eagle Medical Plaza at State Highway 44/State Highway 55 north intersection
 - Concrete and stone sales, gravel pits, and abandoned/flooded gravel pits
 - Boise River, Eagle Island, and greenbelt trail
 - West Boise Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Boise WaterShed Education Center
 - Joplin Cemetery
 - HP campus and Boise Research Center at US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard)/Cloverdale Road intersection



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Problem

State Highway 55 (Eagle Road) and State Highway 44 (Glenwood Street) are the only Boise River crossings serving much of Garden City, Eagle, Meridian, and west Boise. Both are heavily used but stand four miles apart. A new river crossing aligned with State Highway 55 would ease conditions on both bridges, especially for future conditions on State Highway 44 (Glenwood Street).

Current and Future ¹	2013	2040
Population	3,112	3,631
Households	1,210	1,632
Employment	8,108	10,290

Additionally, State Highway 55 is already overwhelmed by the demands of being the only major north-south route connecting the Treasure Valley to Boise and Valley Counties. Aligning a new river crossing with State Highway 55 will also improve traffic flows on east-west routes like US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) and State Highway 44 (State Street).

- Traffic on State Highway 44 (Glenwood Street) at the Boise River is projected to increase from about 40,000 vehicles per day in 2010 to more than 57,000² by 2040.
- Traffic on State Highway 55 (Eagle Road) at the Boise River is currently about 40,000 vehicles per day, and is projected to increase to more than 60,000 by 2040.
- Traffic on State Highways 44 and 55 at the Boise River would be about 45,000 vehicles per day in 2040 if the 3CRX project and all the unfunded needs discussed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Table 6.5) were built.
- Traffic on the 3CRX Boise River crossing would be about 52,000 vehicles per day in 2040 if it were funded and built and if all the unfunded needs discussed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Table 6.5) were built.

When a road, transit line, bikeway, or other part of the transportation system is improved, it can accommodate more traffic and therefore attracts more users. Even with more traffic, traveling conditions will be better with the improvements.

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, as well as vehicles such as bicycles, freight trucks, farm equipment, and buses, may also share the road.

Environmental Issues

Changes to a corridor 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 environmental regulations as well as provide for “environmental justice,” ensuring all people can be involved and are treated fairly.³

There are few sensitive areas to consider in this corridor:

- A historic trail passes along the Boise River.
- As with any river crossing, there are wetlands and wildlife habitat issues.

The 3CRX area does not include high concentrations of minority or low-income populations.

¹ Population, housing, and employment are based on the neighborhoods (census tracts) that border the length of the road/corridor.

² www.achdidaho.org/Projects/Media/29/992_purple_table.pdf

³ See federal environmental justice definitions at www.epa.gov/region07/ej/definitions.htm.



COMPASS
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Budgeted Projects

There are no road, pathway, or park and ride construction projects, or any new bus services, in any approved budgets for the 3CRX area.

Unfunded Future Needs

Roadway: The 3CRX project could provide an additional river crossing and an alternate to State Highway 55 (Eagle Road) and State Highway 44 (Glenwood Street) river crossings. Results from a study for 3CRX concluded that the project would reduce future traffic volumes by about one fourth per weekday on each of the two existing river crossings.

- State Highway 44 (Glenwood Street) traffic could be reduced by 12,000 vehicles daily
- State Highway 55 (Eagle Road) traffic could be reduced by 15,000 vehicles per day

Unfortunately, the cost of the 3CRX project is quite high (estimated in January 2014 at \$82,500,000), especially when considered against the costs and benefits of other priorities in the region, and a “No-Build” alternative was recommended at the conclusion of the study. If funding were to become available for the construction of the river crossing, agencies indicated preference for an alternative that would connect to Cloverdale Road and Mountain View Road in a “split” approach.⁴ All options considered would provide a four-lane arterial with separate bike and pedestrian pathways.

Bus Services/Park and Ride: The regional transit services plan, *valleyconnect*, does not propose any new routes in the 3CRX area, it but does call for increased frequencies and expanded services for existing routes on State Highway 44 (State Street) and US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) in the near- to medium-term.

New park-and-ride lots are proposed in the near-term near two State Highway 44 (State Street) intersections: at State Highway 55 (north) and at Glenwood Street. A third is planned for the intersection of US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) and State Highway 55 (Eagle Road). In the medium-term, another new park-and-ride lot is proposed for the intersection of US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) and Glenwood Street, and improvements are planned for the lot on State Highway 44 (State Street) at Edgewood Lane.

Walking/Biking: City of Eagle and ACHD plans show future pathways crossing the proposed roadway along the Boise River.

The preferred alternative from the study included bike lanes on both sides of the road and bridges, a separate shared-use path for walking and biking on one side of the road, and a walking path on the other side.

Updated July 2014

⁴ www.achdidaho.org/Projects/Media/29/430_Alt6.pdf