Appendix G
Environmental Reports

LET'S RIDE
TREASURE VALLEY

Environmental Resources Report

COMPASS
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION of Southwest Idaho

LET'S RIDE
TREASURE VALLEY

Environmental Resources Report

Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)

November 15, 2024 –
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAAA	Clean Air Act as Amended
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980
CFR	*Code of Federal Regulations*
COMPASS	Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWG	Community Working Group
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ERWG	Environmental Review Workgroup
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GIS	geographic information system
ICRIS	Idaho Cultural Resource Information System
IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
IDPR	Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
IFWIS	Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information Service
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Conservation
ITD	Idaho Transportation Department
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MSAT	mobile source air toxics
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory

PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages
PEM	palustrine emergent
PFO	palustrine forested
PM	particulate matter
$PM_{2.5}$	fine particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns
PM_{10}	fine particulate matter smaller than 10 microns
PSS	palustrine scrub-shrub
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976
RHA	River and Harbors Act of 1899
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SWAP	State Wildlife Action Plan
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zones
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TWG	Technical Working Group
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VRT	Valley Regional Transit

1 Introduction

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) and their member jurisdictions have initiated the Let's Ride Treasure Valley study. Consistent with the regional vision and goals outlined in *Communities in Motion 2050* (CIM 2050) (COMPASS 2022), this Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study is examining a future high-capacity transit connection east to west across the Treasure Valley region south of the Boise River. In combination with land use planning and policies pursued by local jurisdictions, high-capacity transit solutions evaluated in this PEL study are intended to support the goals and objectives of CIM 2050, as well as other relevant local and regional plans. This PEL study marks a formal (but early) step in the federal environmental process to begin to position a potential future project (or projects) for federal transit funding. The federal lead agency for this study is the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

This report documents the regulatory context, data sources, resource conditions, and scoping input for environmental resources in the study area, which is described in Section 1.1. This information supplements the *Existing and Future Conditions Report* prepared for this PEL study that documents other relevant factors including population, employment, land use, and the transportation system in the study area. Environmental resource information is presented using existing desktop data resources. No field data collection was undertaken, and limitations of available desktop data remain to be addressed.

This information is intended to aid in the screening of high-capacity transit alternatives for this PEL study. Alternatives screening documentation will characterize key environmental concerns for each alternative. Additional data collection will be necessary during future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phases, including data for resources not covered in this report such as visual impacts, general wildlife species, and water quality. This report focuses on resource topics for which stakeholders have expressed concern, resource topics with regulatory requirements relevant during early project planning, and resource topics with the potential to influence decision-making during this PEL study. All environmental resources as required by NEPA will be identified and evaluated during future project-level NEPA phases.

All spatial data referenced in this document is available digitally on the Let's Ride Treasure Valley (PEL Study) Master Map (Master Map) through the COMPASS geographic information system (GIS) platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

The display of data for each resource can be controlled through the layers tab located near the upper left corner of the map display. Environmental resource layers can be found in the built environment and natural environment layer categories.

1.1 PEL Study Area

The study area encompasses the Treasure Valley generally south of the Boise River in southwestern Idaho, spanning approximately 25 miles between the City of Boise and the City of Caldwell in Ada and Canyon counties. Along with the cities of Meridian and Nampa, also located in the study area, these communities comprise four of the five largest cities in the State of Idaho, forming the greater Boise metropolitan region. Figure 1-1 displays the study area, which captures the major east-west transportation corridors connecting the metropolitan region. The limits of the study area were determined by these major transportation corridors as well as COMPASS-defined demographic areas called Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs).

Figure 1-1. PEL Study Area

Source: COMPASS, Study Team

2 Project Scoping Efforts

The study team has conducted stakeholder and public outreach to solicit input on the study including interests and concerns of federal, state, and local agencies as well as the general public. Input relevant to the resources discussed in this report is summarized in the resource discussions that follow. Scoping efforts are summarized below.

Stakeholder Survey – The study team solicited input from nearly 250 people who serve on COMPASS committees and workgroups using an online questionnaire, with questions ranging from how high-capacity transit is perceived to where service should be provided. A total of 52 stakeholders responded to the survey.

Key Stakeholder Interviews – The study team conducted eight interviews with senior leadership and elected officials from the study area representing the following local jurisdictions and organizations:

- Canyon County
- Ada County
- Ada County Highway District
- City of Caldwell
- City of Nampa
- City of Meridian
- City of Boise
- Valley Regional Transit

Technical Working Group (TWG) – The TWG includes local, state, and federal agency representatives. The group includes members of the existing COMPASS Public Transportation and Environmental Review Workgroups (ERWGs). The TWG has met three times thus far to discuss the overall vision for high-capacity transit in the Treasure Valley, the purpose and need for the project, and the specific objectives to be achieved. Local, state, and federal resource agency representatives who participate in the COMPASS ERWG received a draft of this report for review and comment. The ERWG was also invited to participate in an October 2024 meeting to discuss the environmental data collection and resource considerations in the study area. Agency input received through this process is included in the scoping summary of each resource section of this report. The ERWG Meeting summary is available in Appendix A.

Community Working Group (CWG) – The CWG includes local representatives of chambers of commerce, community organizations, economic development groups, transportation groups, educational institutions, businesses, medical facilities, and event centers. The first CWG meeting was held on August 20, 2024, to introduce the study and solicit input on the draft Purpose and Need, the range of alternatives being considered, and the process for evaluating alternatives. Feedback from the CWG was used to develop content and messaging for the public scoping meetings.

Public Meetings – Three public meetings are planned to solicit input from the public on the purpose and need, the transit routes under consideration, the alternatives screening process, and the alternatives screening results. Input received will be summarized in the PEL Report.

3 Farmland

3.1 Regulatory Context

Prime and Unique Farmlands are protected under the FPPA. The FPPA is intended to minimize the impact federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. Under the FPPA, farmland includes prime and unique farmland (national) and land of statewide or local importance. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations define these categories of important

farmland in Title 7 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 657.5, as summarized below.

- **Prime Farmland** is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water).
- **Unique Farmland** is land other than prime farmland that is used to produce specific high-value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** is in addition to prime and unique farmland and is of statewide importance to produce food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the appropriate state agency or agencies. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. In some states, additional farmlands of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by state law.
- **Farmland of Local Importance** are lands not identified as having national or statewide importance. In some local areas, there is concern for using additional farmlands to produce food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by the local agency or agencies concerned. In some locations, additional farmlands of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

USDA regulations further define important farmland in 7 CFR Part 658.2 as excluding land already in or committed to urban development or water storage, which includes land meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Land identified as an “urbanized area” on the U.S. Census Bureau Map
- Land mapped with a tint overprint on the U.S. Geological Service topographical maps
- Land designated as urban-built-up on the USDA Important Farmland Maps
- Land with a development density of 30 structures per 40-acre area
- Land that receives a combined score of 160 points or less using the land evaluation and site assessment system via USDA Form AD-1006

The Idaho Agricultural Protection Area Act, adopted in 2024, requires that each Idaho board of county commissioners establish an Agricultural Protection Area ordinance to allow for the creation of Agricultural Protection Areas (*Idaho Code* Section 67-9704). Farmland within the protection areas will carry limitations for rezoning or development of non-agricultural land uses. The act also limits the use of eminent domain except for the expansion or maintenance of an existing right-of-way. The law has not yet been implemented at the time this report was prepared. Future NEPA analyses should include review of established or planned Agricultural Protection Areas within the study area.

3.2 Data Sources

The NRCS web-based Web Soil Survey (NRCS 2016) was used to determine soil types within the study area and identify soils with characteristics of prime or unique farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and/or farmland of local importance.

The U.S. Census Bureau urban areas layer from 2020 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau 2023) was used to identify land committed to urban development. COMPASS data for existing and future land use was reviewed to understand land use trends and how projected urban development may affect existing agricultural land use. COMPASS compiled existing and future land use data from local agency comprehensive plans as part of the CIM 2050 regional transportation plan (COMPASS 2022).

Farmland and land use data for the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Built Environment → FPPA Farmland (NRCS)
- Built Environment → Census Urbanized Areas
- Built Environment → Current Land Use
- Built Environment → Future Land Use
- Built Environment → 2023 Crops (USDA)

3.3 Resource Conditions

The majority of farmland in the study area that is likely subject to the FPPA is concentrated in a large swath west of Meridian and east of Nampa and Caldwell that stretches from the northern to the southern limits of the study area. Smaller pockets exist to the south and west of Caldwell and southeast of the Boise Airport. These areas include two categories of NRCS farmland: prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance.

This analysis used only one of the FPPA exemption criterion; lands identified as urbanized area in the 2020 Census data. This preliminary assessment is conservative and may include lands that meet one or more of the other exempting criteria listed in Section 3.1. During future NEPA phases, additional analyses may further exclude farmland from FPPA analysis requirements. A farmland conversion impact rating calculation via Form AD-1006 would be required if the project has potential to affect any prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance.

COMPASS mapping of existing and future land use indicates substantial residential and commercial development of agricultural land through 2050. If these projected development trends through 2050 occur, it is expected there will be very little remaining farmland subject to FPPA in the study area. Appendix B lists the non-urban soil map units and farmland ratings for the soils mapped by the NRCS within the study area that are outside urbanized areas as designated by the 2020 U.S. Census.

3.4 Scoping Input

During the second TWG meeting held on May 2, 2024, participants discussed the importance of protecting agriculture, especially in western Canyon County and preventing sprawl in that area. Participants noted that this project could be integral in helping reduce sprawl because it would potentially allow for more focused development patterns.

Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) also recommended reviewing a USDA cropland geospatial data layer recording the cropland and landcover since 1997 (USDA 2023). ITD noted that while FPPA does not require using this data during NEPA, it could be useful to identify conversion of cropland to urban development, particularly when development plats or agreements are not readily available (Wasdahl, pers. comm. 2024). While these data were not used to identify land subject to FPPA, it was added to the Master Map for reference.

4 Cultural Resources

4.1 Regulatory Context

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) defines a “historic property” as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historic properties are considered under two acts on transportation projects: NHPA and Section 4(f) U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act, both passed in 1966. Historic properties, whether they are included on the NRHP (formally listed) or eligible for listing on the NRHP, are treated the same under these regulations. The review conducted for the purpose of this report does not constitute evaluation under these regulations; compliance activities under these regulations will be conducted once a project is identified and the NEPA review process is initiated.

The NHPA and its implementing regulations found in 36 CFR 800 are commonly referred to as the Section 106 process, requiring consideration of the effects to cultural resources created by projects receiving funds, permits, licenses, or approvals from federal agencies. The Section 106 process requires consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the involvement of consulting parties in determining effects to historic resources. Consulting parties may include local governments, historic preservation commissions, and non-profit organizations with an interest in historic preservation. Consulting party involvement includes establishment of the Area of Potential Effects and identification of historic properties, as well as assessing effects.

A project may result in one of three determinations of effect under Section 106: (1) no historic properties affected, (2) no adverse effect, and (3) adverse effect. The Section 106 process requires federal agencies to consider the effects to historic resources, and when avoidance is not possible, the agency should consider alternatives to minimize the impact. If avoidance and minimization are not possible, and the project

results in a determination of adverse effect, the agency will be required to mitigate impacts to historic resources.

The USDOT Act along with its implementing regulations in 23 CFR 774 requires agencies under the authority of the USDOT to avoid the use of Section 4(f) resources, which include historic sites listed on or eligible for the NRHP. For historic sites, the Section 4(f) determination relies on the Section 106 process to identify properties eligible for consideration under Section 4(f) in addition to informing the appropriate Section 4(f) approval process.

4.2 Data Sources

On September 10, 2024, the study team reviewed the Idaho Cultural Resource Information System (ICRIS) Database to identify historic properties and previous surveys within the study area (SHPO 2024). Due to the numerous urban centers and large study area, the results identified thousands of historic properties. The analysis also included reviewing historical U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) maps (2024) and aerial photographs to identify areas of historical development through online searches of USGS and Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC (NETR 2024).

Historic properties data for the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Built Environment → Historic Properties

These data provide the location of historic properties within the study area except for archaeological sites for which location information is sensitive.

4.3 Resource Conditions

The following information summarizes the results of the literature search for the study area. According to SHPO's ICRIS database, 408 cultural resources surveys have occurred in the study area between 1957 and 2024. However, each of the transportation corridors under consideration in this study are approximately 27 miles long and remain mostly unsurveyed. Therefore, the presence of historic resources is largely unknown.

ICRIS includes the following categories of historic properties: historic district, site, building, structure, object, or linear resource. This section provides a summary of resources in each category identified in the study area.

The study area includes a total of three previously evaluated NRHP-eligible historic-era archaeological sites. The archaeological sites consist of building foundations, construction materials, and other debris.

The ICRIS database identified 2,597 historic buildings and 30 historic districts in the study area. Of these properties, 1,015 are listed in the NRHP, including 17 historic districts. The remainder are eligible for listing in the NRHP but have not been formally listed. Most of the historic buildings fall within historic districts in the communities of

Boise, Caldwell, Nampa, and Meridian. Outside historic districts, many historic buildings have been identified along transportation corridors. The primary historic use of historic buildings was for domestic purposes, while other use types listed included commerce/trade, agriculture/subsistence, education, and healthcare.

Of the 17 NRHP-listed historic districts, 15 represent collections of commercial or residential buildings in the following cities: Boise (8 districts), Garden City (1 district), Meridian (1 district), Nampa (2 districts), and Caldwell (3 districts). The two additional districts are a farmstead south of Meridian (Mittleider Farmstead) and a school (Whitney School) southwest of Boise.

A total of 51 historic structures in the study area are recorded in the ICRIS database. Structures include built non-shelter resources such as bridges, culverts, and retaining walls. Most of the structures are concentrated in Boise (30 structures), Nampa (10 structures), and Caldwell (6 structures), with the remaining structures in outlying areas. The primary use types listed for the noted structures included transportation, industry/processing, and military/defense.

A total of four historic objects in the study area have been recorded in the ICRIS database. As opposed to buildings and structures, objects are primarily artistic in nature or are small in scale. The objects within the study area are in Boise (three objects) and Caldwell (one object) and consist of monuments or markers.

ICRIS identified 134 historic linear resources within the study area. Most of the linear resources are irrigation canals associated with the theme of agriculture/subsistence. Transportation themed resources such as roads and railroads were the next largest category of linear resources. The Oregon Short Line Railroad between Boise and Nampa, which reflects portions of the Boise Cut Off alternative, has been previously evaluated as NRHP-eligible.

In summary, the results of the literature search indicate a considerable number of historic property studies and evaluations have occurred within the study area identifying thousands of historic properties. Many of these properties are located in the historic downtown areas of Boise, Meridian, Nampa, and Caldwell that this project is intended to connect with high-capacity transit. A particularly sensitive resource type that may be encountered are historic districts, which often include streetscape elements that may be character-defining features of the historic property. It is also relevant to note that due to the southeast to northwest orientation of irrigation canals prevalent in the study area, the east-west transportation corridors being evaluated in this study cross dozens of these historic linear resources.

4.4 Scoping Input

Feedback received through the stakeholder survey included respondents' thoughts on potential positive and negative impacts of implementing high-capacity transit in the Treasure Valley. One respondent noted that a potential benefit could be the revitalization of historic buildings along transit corridors and suggested that connecting historic downtowns was important. On the flip side, the same respondent noted a potential

negative impact as improper renovation or loss of historic buildings along transit corridors.

During the ERWG review of this report, U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the SHPO inquired about the involvement of tribes and local historic preservation commissions in the study. Involvement of historic preservation commissions was discussed during the October 2024 ERWG Meeting. The SHPO concluded that coordination with these entities should occur during NEPA as part of formal Section 106 consultation.

While the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe had been invited to participate the study, the study team had received no response from the tribe. On November 7, 2024, the team met with an alternate tribal contact, who expressed willingness to participate on the TWG. This meeting is documented in Appendix C. Tribal interests communicated during this meeting included 1) fast, convenient, and accessible transit service, 2) free transit access for tribal members, and 3) opportunities to incorporate tribal art in the transit system or facilities.

5 Recreation Properties

5.1 Regulatory Context

Recreation properties are regulated by Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 and Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965.

Section 4(f) protects significant publicly owned parks and recreation areas that are open to the public. Significance for parks and recreation areas is determined by the official with jurisdiction. When the official with jurisdiction[1] determines that a park or recreation area is not significant, FTA reviews the determination for reasonableness per 23 CFR 774.11(c). In the absence of a significance determination by the official with jurisdiction, FTA assumes the resource is significant (FTA 2016). FTA may not approve the use of Section 4(f) property unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative for using the land from the property, and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use (23 CFR 774.3). Section 4(f) also applies to historic sites and wildlife and waterfowl refuges. Historic sites are addressed in Section 5 of this document. The only refuge identified is the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge that abuts the southwest boundary of the study area and is not discussed further.

Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act ensures that investments in the LWCF are maintained for public outdoor recreation use (36 CFR Part 59). These properties include parks and recreation facilities that have been developed with the assistance of LWCF grants. Section 6(f) applies to all projects involving possible conversions of the LWCF-funded property whether or not federal funding is being used for the project. The LWCF Act prohibits the conversion of property acquired or developed with grants from this fund to a non-recreational purpose without the approval of the National Park Service. The National

[1] As defined in 23 CFR 774.17, “Official(s) with jurisdiction are the officials of an agency or agencies that own or administer the Section 4(f) property and who are empowered to represent that agency on related matters.”

Park Service will only consider conversion of LWCF-funded properties (whole or in part) to other than public outdoor recreation use if (1) all practical alternatives to the proposed conversion have been evaluated, (2) the substitution property is of at least equal fair market value, (3) the property proposed for replacement is of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location, (4) the substitution property meets the eligibility requirements for LWCF acquisition, (5) the unconverted area remains recreationally viable, (6) all necessary coordination with other federal agencies has been satisfactorily accomplished, (7) all environmental review requirements related to the proposed action have been met, (8) state intergovernmental clearing-house review procedures have been adhered to, and (9) the proposed conversion and substitution are in accordance with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and/or equivalent recreation plans.

5.2 Data Sources

COMPASS has compiled recreation data from local jurisdictions in the study area, including parks, open space, and bicycle and pedestrian data. School locations were identified through a google search (Google Maps 2024) to locate outdoor recreation facilities associated with schools. The USFWS National Wildlife Refuge website was accessed to determine locations of wildlife and waterfowl refuges in the study area. Data for fishing and boating access sites were provided by IDFG.

A comprehensive list of Ada and Canyon counties sites that have received funding through the LWCF was obtained from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR). COMPASS created geospatial data of the properties using this list (Muir, pers. comm. 2024b).

Recreation property data for the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Built Environment → Recreational Resources → Public Parks and Recreation Areas
- Built Environment → Recreational Resources → K12 Schools
- Built Environment → Recreational Resources → Pathways/Trails
- Built Environment → Recreational Resources → LWCF Outdoor Recreation Projects
- Built Environment → Recreational Resources → Fishing-Boating Access (IDFG)

5.3 Resource Conditions

Recreation properties in the study area were compiled to identify sites potentially subject to Section 4(f). A small number of those properties have received LWCF Act funding, and are therefore also subject to Section 6(f). This research identified 235 parks (golf courses, parks, and other public open spaces), 3 fishing access sites, and 40 K-12 school properties with outdoor recreation facilities. The data also includes public parcels serving as greenways and undeveloped parcels that are designated for future public use. The study area hosts an extensive network of recreation paths that includes regional greenways and local paths.

Section 4(f) Properties

While many of the recreation facilities in the study area are likely subject to Section 4(f), the applicability of Section 4(f) will not be confirmed as part of this PEL study. Additional coordination with local jurisdictions is needed to review this broad network of recreation facilities to confirm desktop data and supplement resource information. Some of the parcels designated as public open space would only be subject to Section 4(f) if they serve recreation activities or are managed for wildlife conservation. Golf courses can be considered Section 4(f) properties if they are publicly owned and open to the public. The web map displays both public and private golf courses because more information is needed to confirm ownership. School playgrounds, fields, and recreation areas, if accessible to the community outside of school hours, can be protected under Section 4(f). Applicability of Section 4(f) to recreation resources in the study area will be confirmed during future NEPA phases.

Section 6(f) Properties

IDPR records indicate that 27 parks and 3 recreation paths funded through the LWCF are in the study area. Because LWCF funds were used to develop or improve these properties, they are subject to the requirements of 36 CFR Part 59, as described in Section 6.1, Regulatory Context. The parks include community parks, pools, sports complexes, school playgrounds, sports courts, and fields. The recreation paths, which are listed each as a single resource but have multiple funded segments, include the Boise River Greenbelt and the Ada County Highway District Bikeway. Table 5-1 lists these sites.

Table 5-1. Study Area Sites Funded Through LWCF

Resource Name	Type
Ada County Highway District Bikeway	Recreation Path
Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial	Park
Julia Davis Park	Park
Boise River Greenbelt – Dale to 8th Converted Parcels	Recreation Path
Riverside Park	Park
Shoreline Park	Park
Boise Greenbelt	Recreation Path
Lady Bird Park	Park
Charles F. McDevitt Youth Sports Complex	Park
Cassia Park, Phases I and II	Park
Fairmont Park	Park
Shoshone Park	Park
Fort Boise Park	Park
Owyhee Park	Park
Willow Lane Athletic Complex	Park
Veterans Memorial Park	Park
Capital High School Tennis Courts (Park)	School Park
Demeyer Park	Park
Jullion Park	Park
Storey Park	Park

Resource Name	Type
Meridian City Park/Storey Park/Pool	Park
Meridian High School Park/Tennis Courts	School Park
Fuller Park	Park
Caldwell Swimming Pool/Memorial Park	Park
Nampa, West Park Phases I and II	Park
West Park	Park
Caldwell Community Park/Syringa Middle School	School Park
Caldwell Jr. High Park/Jefferson Middle School Park	School Park
Wilson Park (Caldwell)/Wilson Elementary School Park	School Park
Brothers Park	Park

Source: IDPR 2024

5.4 Scoping Input

IDPR confirmed that online data for LWCF-funded properties that the study team had obtained from the Trust for Public Lands were incorrect and provided comprehensive lists of Ada and Canyon counties sites that have received funding through the LWCF (Muir, pers. comm. 2024a). Follow-up communication sought to confirm LWCF greenbelt sites (Muir, pers. comm. 2024b).

During the ERWG review of this report, IDFG indicated they maintain fishing and boating access sites that might be within the study area (Flack, pers. comm. 2024a). These types of recreation sites typically qualify for protection under Section 4(f), and it was confirmed that three sites exist within the study area. These data were added to the Master Map and the Resource Conditions sections of this report.

6 Transit Noise and Vibration

6.1 Regulatory Context

Transit noise and vibration are assessed using the procedures outlined in the FTA *Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (2018).

In some cases, a project could be considered a multimodal project requiring the use of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) procedures at 23 CFR 772. Multimodal projects include new construction for general purpose lanes as well as dedicated bus and high-occupancy vehicle lanes and rail transit projects that involve changes to the highway travel lanes or existing highway noise barriers. The determination of whether a project is subject to FHWA procedures depends upon the specific circumstances of a project. A proposed transit project that would share an existing highway right-of-way is not necessarily an FHWA-defined multimodal project under 23 CFR 772.7(a). A transit project that meets all three of the following criteria is not considered a multimodal project subject to 23 CFR 772:

- FTA is the lead agency in the NEPA process and FHWA's limited participation is as a cooperating agency.

- The main transportation purpose of the project, as stated in the purpose and need statement of the environmental document, is transit related and not highway related.
- No federal aid highway funds are being used to fund the project.

Because FTA is the lead agency and the purpose of the project is transit-related, only FTA criteria is summarized in this section. However, depending on the transit mode selected and the need for highway-related improvements, the project may be considered multimodal, requiring an analysis per FHWA 23 CFR 772. During future NEPA phases, consultation with all agencies should be conducted to determine the procedures required for assessing noise and vibration.

The FTA has a multi-step process for evaluating noise and vibration for NEPA approvals. The level of analysis to evaluate noise and vibration on a transit project is based on the type and scale of the project, stage of project development, and environmental setting. The first step is to conduct a noise and vibration screening procedure to identify if noise-sensitive and vibration-sensitive land uses or receptors are located within the study area. The study area is developed based on the project type and a screening distance. The noise screening distances vary depending on the project type and if there are any intervening buildings. The vibration screening distances also vary depending on the project type and land use categories. If noise-sensitive and vibration-sensitive receptors are identified, then a General Noise Assessment or Detailed Noise Analysis (as defined in the FTA manual [2018]) are conducted.

- **General Noise Assessment** is used to examine potential noise and vibration impacts. It is based on generalized information available during the early stage in the project development process. Noise contours are developed to identify the number of noise-sensitive receivers potentially impacted as a result of the project.
- **Detailed Noise Analysis** is a comprehensive assessment that produces the most accurate estimates of noise impacts for a proposed project (if more detailed and case-specific inputs data are used compared to the General Assessment). A Detailed Noise Analysis is often conducted during the development of the final NEPA document once a preferred alternative is identified.

6.2 Data Sources

When transit noise and vibration are assessed for alternatives during a future NEPA phase, sensitive receptors would be identified using Google Earth, County Assessor websites, and other GIS sources. Receptors would also be confirmed during a field visit. At this stage in the planning process, land use data were used in the PEL study to generally identify the types of sensitive receptors in the study area. For vibration-sensitive receptors, this was supplemented with a Google Earth search of business and institutional land uses near the Boise Valley rail line that can be considered highly sensitive to vibration.

COMPASS compiled existing and future land use data for the CIM 2050 regional transportation plan. Land use data were collected from local agency comprehensive plans. These data can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS

platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Built Environment → Current Land Use

6.3 Resource Conditions

Noise- and vibration-sensitive receptors are categorized by land use type based on how sensitive the land uses are to noise. For example, most commercial and industrial uses are not considered noise sensitive because activities within these buildings are generally compatible with higher noise levels. However, residential uses and outdoor amphitheaters are more sensitive to disturbance from noise. Land use categories for transit vibration assessment include residential and other land use and buildings where people typically sleep. However, these land uses are considered less sensitive to vibration than other land uses such as television stations, recording studios, and facilities with vibration-sensitive equipment. The land use categories for transit noise and vibration assessment are listed in Table 6-1 and Table 6-2, respectively.

Table 6-1. Land Use Categories for Transit Noise Assessment

Land Use Category	Land Use Type	Description of Land Use Category
1	High Sensitivity	Land where quiet is an essential element of its intended purpose. Example land uses include preserved land for serenity and quiet, outdoor amphitheaters and concert pavilions, and national historic landmarks with considerable outdoor use. Recording studios and concert halls are also included in this category.
2	Residential	This category is applicable to all residential land use and buildings where people normally sleep, such as hotels and hospitals.
3	Institutional	This category is applicable to institutional land uses with primarily daytime and evening use. Example land uses include schools, libraries, theaters, and churches where it is important to avoid interference with such activities as speech, meditation, and concentration on reading material. Places for meditation or study associated with cemeteries, monuments, museums, campgrounds, and recreational facilities are also included in this category.

Source: FTA 2018

Table 6-2. Land Use Categories for General Vibration Assessment

Land Use Category	Land Use Type	Description of Land Use Category
-	Special Buildings	This category includes special-use facilities that are very sensitive to vibration and noise that are not included in the categories below and require special consideration. However, if the building will rarely be occupied when the source of the vibration (e.g., the train) is operating, there is no need to evaluate for impact. Examples of these facilities include concert halls, TV and recording studios, and theaters.
1	High Sensitivity	This category includes buildings where vibration levels, including those below the threshold of human annoyance, would interfere with operations within the building. Examples include buildings where vibration-sensitive research and manufacturing[a] are conducted, hospitals with vibration-sensitive equipment, and universities conducting physical research operations. The building's degree of sensitivity to vibration is dependent on the specific equipment that will be affected by the vibration. Equipment moderately sensitive to vibration, such as high-resolution lithographic equipment, optical microscopes, and electron microscopes with vibration isolation systems are included in this category.[b] For equipment that is more sensitive, a Detailed Vibration Analysis must be conducted.

Land Use Category	Land Use Type	Description of Land Use Category
2	Residential	This category includes all residential land use and buildings where people normally sleep, such as hotels and hospitals. Transit-generated ground-borne vibration and noise from subways or surface running trains are considered to have a similar effect on receivers.[c]
3	Institutional	This category includes institutions and offices that have vibration-sensitive equipment and have the potential for activity interference such as schools, churches, and doctor's offices. Commercial or industrial locations including office buildings are not included in this category unless there is vibration-sensitive activity or equipment within the building. As with noise, the use of the building determines the vibration sensitivity.

Source: FTA 2018

[a] Manufacturing of computer chips is an example of a vibration-sensitive process.

[b] Standard optical microscopes can be impacted at vibration levels below the threshold of human annoyance.

[c] Even in noisy urban areas, the bedrooms will often be in quiet buildings with effective noise insulation. However, ground-borne vibration and noise are experienced indoors, and building occupants have practically no means to reduce their exposure. Therefore, occupants in noisy urban areas are just as likely to be exposed to ground-borne vibration and noise as those in quiet suburban areas.

Noise-Sensitive Receptors

Development patterns within the study area range from rural to urban. Current land use in the study area is primarily residential. A wide swath of agricultural land lies in the center of the study area between Caldwell, Nampa, and Meridian. Commercial areas are located at the city centers and line many of the major roadways. Industrial areas are primarily near the Boise Airport and along I-84 near Caldwell and Nampa.

Typical noise sources within the study area include traffic on major and local roadways, buses on local and regional routes, railroad operations, aircraft flights, and activities from local industries and businesses. Near railroad facilities, major sources of train noise include diesel locomotive engines, sounding of horns at grade crossings, and rolling interaction of train wheels over rails. All of these existing noise sources contribute to the ambient noise background, which is used as the basis for determining how much noise the project adds to the ambient conditions.

Existing noise levels are already dominated by noise sources similar to those that would occur if high-capacity transit is implemented and would vary depending on the noise source and distance to sensitive receptors. The eastern and western portions of the study area and near the city centers are urbanized, and existing noise levels are likely to be highest. From approximately Black Cat Road west to the city limits of Nampa, the study area is more rural in nature and likely quieter.

Along transportation corridors, existing noise levels at surrounding receptors are affected by the type and volume of vehicles on the route, and also by the presence of buildings and noise barriers. Existing buildings located between receptors and the transportation corridor can affect the sound path and block some of the noise generated from the transportation routes. Similarly, noise levels adjacent to transportation routes would be lower in areas where existing noise barriers are constructed. No comprehensive database for noise barriers in the study area exists, but the following list identifies existing noise barriers on state routes (Ceja, pers. comm. 2024).

- Both sides of Chinden Boulevard west of Eagle Road

- I-84
  - Left side of I-84 westbound just north of Ustick Road
  - Both sides of I-84 between Five Mile Road and Maple Grove Road
  - Right side of I-84 westbound from Cole Road to Broadway Avenue
- I-184
  - Right side of I-184 westbound east of the I-84 junction (two segments)
  - Right side of I-184 eastbound east of the I-84 junction

Vibration-Sensitive Receptors

Transit vibration is a potential issue for transit projects using rail modes. The FTA *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (FTA 2018) indicates that it is uncommon for transit projects that do not include steel-wheel trains to result in vibration impacts. It is unknown at this time which study corridors would include rail as a mode option.

Categories of vibration receptors with higher sensitivity, including buildings with vibration-sensitive research and manufacturing, vibration-sensitive equipment, or special-use facilities that are very sensitive to vibration, would be identified as part of project-level analyses during future NEPA phases. Communication with businesses and institutions is often required to confirm the presence of vibration-sensitive receptors. Examples of these types of facilities are listed in Table 6-2.

6.4 Scoping Input

The study team communicated with the ITD regarding noise barriers in the study area. Noise barriers have not been mapped, but ITD provided a list of noise barriers along state routes (Ceja, pers. comm. 2024).

7 Air Quality

7.1 Regulatory Context

Air quality is regulated at the federal level through the 1970 Clean Air Act (Title 42 *United States Code Section 85* [42 U.S.C. 85]) and its amendments from 1977 and 1990 (CAAA). The EPA adopted the CAAA and has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six criteria pollutants—ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$)[2], nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and lead— (Pb)) to protect public health and welfare. These standards represent the maximum allowable concentrations of selected pollutants in ambient air above which could cause adverse effects on public health and welfare.

[2] PM_{10} = fine particulate matter smaller than 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = fine particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns

The CAAA requires EPA to classify regions with respect to each criteria pollutant, depending on whether the area's monitored air quality meets the NAAQS. A region that is meeting the NAAQS for a given pollutant is designated as being in "attainment" for that pollutant. If the region violates (does not meet) the NAAQS for a given pollutant, it is designated as being in "nonattainment" for that pollutant. Under Section 175A of the CAAA, maintenance plans are developed to show how the area is maintaining the NAAQS. EPA will make the redesignation of maintenance to attainment for an area after the area shows pollutant concentrations stay lower than the NAAQS for 20 years.

The 1977 CAA Amendments required each state to develop and maintain a State Implementation Plan (SIP) for each criteria pollutant that violates the applicable NAAQS. The SIP serves as a tool to avoid and minimize emissions of pollutants and to achieve compliance with the NAAQS.

Conformity

The transportation conformity requirement is based on CAAA Section 176(c), which prohibits the USDOT and other federal agencies from funding, authorizing, or approving plans, programs, or projects that do not conform to the SIP for attaining the NAAQS for CO, NO_2, O_3, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. Conformity requirements apply only in nonattainment and maintenance areas of the NAAQS. The EPA has issued two conformity regulations: one is the transportation conformity rules that apply to transportation plans and projects, and the other is the general conformity rules that apply to all other federal actions. If the proposed project is funded and approved by FHWA or FTA, the project may be subject to transportation conformity requirements. Demonstration of conformity with the CAAA takes place on two levels for transportation projects:

- **Regional conformity** is concerned with how well the regional transportation system supports plans for attaining the NAAQS. Regional conformity is based on emission analysis of Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and federal Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) that include the transportation projects planned for a region over a period of at least 20 years for the RTP and 4 years for the TIP. RTP and TIP conformity uses travel demand and emission models to determine whether the implementation of those projects would conform to motor vehicle emission budgets or other tests at various analysis years, showing that requirements of the CAAA and the SIP are met. If the design concept, scope, and "open-to-traffic" schedule of a proposed transportation project are consistent with the descriptions in the conforming RTP and TIP, then the proposed project meets regional conformity requirements.
- **Project-level conformity** is concerned with how well the project will attain the NAAQS. At this level, a project must not do the following:
    - Cause or contribute to any new localized CO and PM10/PM2.5 violations
    - Increase the frequency or severity of any existing CO and PM10/PM2.5 violations
    - Delay timely attainment of any NAAQS or any required interim emission reductions, or other milestones in CO and PM10/PM2.5 nonattainment and maintenance areas

While not anticipated, if the proposed project is funded and approved by the Federal Railroad Administration, then the project would also be subject to general conformity requirements. General conformity applicability analysis requires quantification of direct and indirect construction and operation emissions for the project in tons per year and in comparison of those emission levels to baseline emission levels. An action is exempt from further general conformity analysis (i.e., the action is presumed to conform) if the total net project-related emissions (construction and operation) would be less than the *de minimis* thresholds as in 40 CFR 93.153(b). If the net emissions increases associated with the project exceed the applicable general conformity *de minimis* levels for the peak year or any milestone year for attainment of NAAQS, a formal general conformity demonstration is required. An action that would produce emissions that exceed conformity thresholds is required to demonstrate conformity with the SIP through mitigation or other accepted practices.

NEPA

Beyond conformity requirements under the CAAA, additional air quality regulations and guidance must be addressed during NEPA.

Mobile Source Air Toxics

In addition to criteria pollutants, EPA also regulates air toxic emissions. Although there are no established criteria for determining when mobile source air toxics (MSATs) emissions related to transit projects should be considered a problem, the FHWA guidance provides an approved approach to evaluating potential effects. FHWA considers the following priority MSATs, 1,3-butadiene, acetaldehyde, acrolein, benzene, diesel particulate matter (PM), ethylbenzene, formaldehyde, naphthalene, and polycyclic organic matter. Unlike the criteria pollutants, MSATs do not have ambient air quality standards. Potential MSAT effects from the project operation would be evaluated following the FHWA memorandum titled *Updated Interim Guidance on Mobile Source Air Toxic Analysis in NEPA Documents* (FHWA 2023). The interim guidance recommends a tiered approach to analyzing MSATs in NEPA documents:

- No analysis for projects with no potential for meaningful MSAT effects (categorical exclusion projects)
- Qualitative analysis for projects with low potential MSAT effects
- Quantitative analysis to differentiate alternatives for projects with higher potential MSAT effects

According to the guidance, projects that improve operations of highway, transit, or freight without adding substantial new capacity or without creating a facility that has meaningfully increased MSAT emissions are considered to have low potential MSAT effects.

7.2 Data Sources

Current attainment status of criteria pollutants was obtained from the EPA and IDEQ websites (EPA 2024a; IDEQ 2024a).

Air quality monitoring locations in the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Natural Environment → Air Quality Monitoring Network (IDIQ)

7.3 Resource Conditions

The study area is located within Treasure Valley, in Ada and Canyon counties, which are designated as attainment areas by EPA for all criteria pollutants. However, IDEQ has identified Treasure Valley as an area of concern for $PM_{2.5}$ and O_3 because increases in these pollutants are approaching limits established by the CAAA.

Northern Ada County was designated nonattainment for CO and PM_{10} in 1990. Since 1990, the county has made significant improvements and was redesignated to attainment with a maintenance plan for CO and PM_{10} in 2002 and 2003, respectively. The maintenance period for Northern Ada County to demonstrate attainment of the CO and PM_{10} standards ended in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Therefore, Northern Ada County is currently in attainment and no longer subject to conformity requirements for CO and PM_{10}.

The Treasure Valley, which is the largest and most populated area in Idaho, is subject to wintertime inversions that trap cold air and pollutants near the ground, resulting in poor air quality (IDEQ 2024a). This area also experiences poor air quality during the summer due to calm wind and high temperatures producing accumulations of ozone near the ground. This area is designated by IDEQ as an area of concern for $PM_{2.5}$ and O_3 because local air quality monitors have recorded increases in these pollutants, which are approaching NAAQS. There are three air monitoring networks within Ada and Canyon counties: Nampa, Meridian, and Garden City (IDEQ 2024a). All three of these monitors report $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations, and the Meridian monitor reports ozone concentrations. Exceedances of these pollutants have been reported at these monitoring stations over the past several years.

Implementation of high-capacity transit in the study area is likely to be federally funded but is located within attainment areas and would not be subject to conformity requirements. However, the attainment status could change for some pollutants in the study area in the future. If the attainment status changes, the project could be subject to conformity requirements during future NEPA phases. Interagency consultation may be required to determine if the project is subject to conformity.

Implementing a new high-capacity transit facility would likely require an environmental impact statement (EIS) under NEPA. Analyses of MSATs and greenhouse gases are required for projects requiring an EIS under NEPA.

7.4 Scoping Input

Feedback received through the stakeholder survey included respondents' thoughts on potential positive and negative impacts of implementing high-capacity transit in the

Treasure Valley. One respondent noted that a potential benefit could be improved air quality resulting from reduced traffic congestion.

IDEQ confirmed the State of Idaho is in attainment for all criteria pollutants and the Treasure Valley (Ada and Canyon counties) is an area of concern for $PM_{2.5}$ and ozone (Johns, pers. comm. 2024).

8 Hazardous Materials

8.1 Regulatory Context

Hazardous materials include substances or materials determined by EPA to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, or property. Hazardous materials may exist within the study area at facilities that generate, store, or dispose of these substances, or at locations of past releases of these substances. Examples of hazardous materials include asbestos, lead-based paint, heavy metals, dry-cleaning solvents, and petroleum hydrocarbons (for example, gasoline and diesel fuels), all of which could be harmful to human health and the environment.

Hazardous materials are regulated by various state and federal regulations. NEPA as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq., Public Law 91-190, 83 Stat. 852), mandates that decisions involving federal funds and approvals consider environmental effects from hazardous materials. Other applicable regulations include the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.), which provides federal authority for the identification, investigation, and cleanup of sites throughout the United States that are contaminated with hazardous substances (as specifically designated in the CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA) (42 U.S.C. 321 et seq.), which establishes a framework for the management of both solid and hazardous waste. The federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984 established a new comprehensive regulatory program for underground storage tanks containing petroleum products and hazardous chemicals regulated under CERCLA.

The Idaho Administrative Procedures Act Rules and Standards for Hazardous Waste, Section 58.01.05, governs the identification, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste. These regulations apply to the management of hazardous waste that is spilled, generated, or discovered during the construction of a project.

8.2 Data Sources

The IDEQ Terradex Facility Mapper was reviewed in July 2024 (IDEQ 2024b). The IDEQ Terradex Facility Mapper includes statewide information on sites known to generate or store hazardous materials or known to have released hazardous materials into the environment that may require remediation.

The EPA EnviroAtlas (EPA 2024b) was also searched to identify any additional documented facilities or sites reporting to federal agencies, such as superfund sites on the National Priority List.

Hazardous materials site data for the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Built Environment → Regulated Hazardous Materials Sites

8.3 Resource Conditions

The Terradex query of IDEQ recorded facilities identified 1,694 recorded hazardous materials sites or facilities documented across the study area (IDEQ 2024b). These hazardous materials sites are concentrated along the major commercial corridors in the study area. Table 8-1 summarizes the database listings in the study area. Each facility may be listed in multiple databases.

Table 8-1. Summary of Hazardous Materials Site in Study Area

Program	Count
Brownfields	49
General Remediation	228
RCRA Hazardous Waste	909
Underground Storage Tank	818
Leaking Underground Storage Tank	316
Voluntary Cleanup Program	8
Formerly Used Defense Site	1
Solid Waste	13
Not Specified	3
Different, Other	5

IDEQ Terradex Facility Mapper

The EPA EnviroAtlas generally corroborated these results and confirmed that no National Priority List (Superfund) sites are present in the study area, or in Ada and Canyon counties in general (EPA 2024b).

The results of publicly available data do not identify major hazardous materials concerns that would factor into route selection. Hazardous materials assessments during future NEPA phases will likely include a more comprehensive database records radius search and review of historical land use records provided by EDR or similar private company.

8.4 Scoping Input

The study team has received no input from stakeholders or agencies regarding hazardous materials.

9 Aquatic Resources

9.1 Regulatory Context

Aquatic resources encompass both wetlands and surface waters. These resources are safeguarded under Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA) (33 CFR Part 322) and the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 CFR 323). The RHA governs any alterations to navigable waters of the United States—including activities such as dredging, disposal of dredged materials, excavation, filling, and rechannelization—and applies to construction of any structure in or over any navigable water of the United States. The CWA, an amendment to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, established the framework for regulating the discharge of dredged or fill materials into jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the United States. Projects that may discharge dredged or fill materials into these areas are regulated by Section 10 of the RHA and Section 404 of the CWA.

9.2 Data Sources

Several data sources were reviewed including the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) (USFWS 2023), NRCS soil survey maps (NRCS 2024), and the NHD (USGS 2024b).

Surface water features are divided into three categories: freshwater ponds, lakes, and riverine. Freshwater ponds in the study area are classified as palustrine aquatic beds. Lakes are classified as lacustrine systems with either limnetic or littoral bottoms. Riverine features are further classified into riverine lower perennial and riverine intermittent, with modifiers added as necessary. Wetlands are classified using the Cowardin classification system (Cowardin et al. 1979) and categorized into three types: palustrine emergent (PEM), palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS), and palustrine forested (PFO).

These datasets are suitable for the high-level analysis presented in this report; however, more detailed data sources, including field surveys, will be necessary during future NEPA phases for comprehensive identification of aquatic resources.

Aquatic resources data for the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Natural Environment → NHD Waterways
- Natural Environment → National Wetlands Inventory
- Natural Environment → NHD Waterbodies

9.3 Resource Conditions

Within the study area, 5 lakes, 230 freshwater ponds, 253 freshwater emergent wetlands, 89 freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, and 435 riverine features have been

identified using data from the NWI and NHD datasets (USFWS 2023; USGS 2024b). The linear features are distributed throughout the study area with multiple crossings of the east-west transportation corridors being evaluated for this study. No navigable waters of the United States subject to Section 10 of the RHA are present in the study area.

Surface Water Features

The study area is located within the Lower Boise watershed (hydrologic unit code 17050114), which is located in Ada and Canyon counties in southwestern Idaho between Lucky Peak Dam (river mile 64) and the confluence of the Boise and Snake Rivers (river mile 395) (USGS 2006). A total of 670 surface water features have been identified within the study area. In the urban portions of the study area, many of the riverine features were altered and/or placed in underground drainage systems.

The Boise River is the most prominent surface water feature within the Lower Boise watershed that intersects the study area and runs east to west along the northern extent of the study area. In addition to the Boise River, several tributaries are interconnected by a complex irrigation system of canals, laterals, and drains, with most of these waterbodies being intermittent or ephemeral drainages generally flowing from southeast to northwest. Other unnamed surface water features include springs or seeps. The Snake River is the receiving water body for all surface water features in the study area.

Rivers and creeks in the study area are generally either perennial, indicating that surface water is flowing year-round during a typical year, or intermittent, indicating that water may only be flowing water during certain times of the year or under certain circumstances (such as during or after high precipitation events). Rivers and creeks within the study area are described in Table 9-1.

The available desktop data for surface waters from NWI and NHD data do not account for all culverts or drainage features that may exist due to land developments both within and adjacent to the study area.

Table 9-1. Rivers and Creeks within the Study Area

Waterbody	Location	Classification
Boise River	Flowing east to west across northern extent of study area through Boise and Garden City	Perennial throughout study area
Fifteenmile Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Meridian and Southeast Nampa	Perennial throughout study area
Fivemile Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Meridian and Southeast Nampa	Intermittent from its headwaters to the Evans Drain and perennial from Evans Drain to its confluence with Tenmile Creek
Eightmile Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Meridian and Southeast Nampa	Intermittent throughout study area
Ninemile Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Meridian and Southeast Nampa	Intermittent throughout study area

Waterbody	Location	Classification
Tenmile Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Meridian and Southeast Nampa	Intermittent from its headwaters to Meridian Road and perennial from Meridian Road to its confluence with Fivemile Creek
Mason Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Nampa	Perennial throughout study area
Indian Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area, west of Mason Creek, through Nampa and Caldwell	Perennial throughout study area

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season (EPA 2023). Water saturation (hydrology) largely determines how the soil develops and the types of plant and animal communities living in and on the soil. The prolonged presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of specially adapted plants (hydrophytes) and promote the development of characteristic wetland (hydric) soils. According to the National Technical Committee of Hydric Soils, hydric soil is defined as “soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part of the soil profile” (NRCS 2024).

Wetlands in the study area are often associated with a surface water feature, but isolated features with no surface water connection are also present. Wetlands associated with surface water features are found alongside the Boise River and creeks listed in Table 9-1, and other areas where there is frequent hydrology and/or flowing water. Isolated wetlands can arise from a variety of conditions, including from irrigation of lawns and fields and other agricultural practices. Wetlands can be found throughout the entirety of the study area across various land covers.

According to NWI data, there are 342 wetlands in the study area, with 253 classified as PEM, 14 as PSS wetlands, and 75 as PFO wetlands. The total area of PEM wetlands is 479.71 acres, PSS is 149.68 acres, and PFO is 293.13 acres, for a combined total of 704.39 acres. NWI data is based on interpretation of aerial imagery and is not ground-truthed. Some features that may exist, such as roadside wetlands, are not accounted for in the data set. Some mapped features in the data may no longer be present due to urban development. Onsite wetland delineations to determine the presence of appropriate hydrology, hydrophytes, and hydric soils is necessary to confirm the presence of wetlands within the study area.

9.4 Scoping Input

During the ERWG review of this report, USACE noted there are no surface waters in the study area that are subject to Section 10 of the RHA. This fact was clarified in the Resource Conditions section.

10 Floodplains

10.1 Regulatory Context

Floodplains are the low-lying areas on either side of a waterbody that are inundated when the capacity of the waterbody is exceeded. The National Flood Insurance Program encourages state and local governments to adopt sound floodplain management programs. To provide a national standard without regional discrimination, FEMA adopted the 100-year flood as the base flood for floodplain management and flood insurance purposes.

A 100-year flood is the calculated level of flood water expected to be equaled or exceeded every 100 years on average; thus, it has a 1 percent chance annually of being equaled or exceeded. For certain mapped 100-year flood zone types, FEMA has established base flood elevations that correspond to the edges of the flood zone. Changes in the floodplain, such as adding fill material, constructing buildings or bridges, or limiting the natural conveyance of floodwaters, can cause a rise in the 100-year water surface and can subsequently impact properties that were not previously anticipated to be affected by a 100-year storm event.

A regulatory floodway means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without collectively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height (FEMA 2020). Communities must regulate development in these floodways to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations. For streams and other watercourses where FEMA has provided base flood elevations, but no floodway has been designated, the community must review floodplain development on a case-by-case basis to ensure that water surface elevation increases do not occur (FEMA 2020).

The following regulatory requirements apply to the floodplains:

- Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management (1977), was authorized to direct federal agencies to "provide leadership and take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impacts of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains." This Executive Order was authorized to assist in furthering NEPA, the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (amended), and the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973.
- CFR, Title 44 - Emergency Management and Assistance, Chapter I - FEMA, contains the basic policies and procedures of FEMA to regulate floodplain management and to analyze, identify, and map floodplains for flood insurance purposes. These regulations are typically enforced by local governments. Routes that require development or fill within the regulated floodway will need to identify and evaluate impacts to the floodplains. Project development could require coordination with the planning departments at Ada and Canyon counties, as well as cities within the study area to minimize floodplain impacts and obtain necessary floodplain permits for project construction. A no-rise certification may be necessary to demonstrate no or minimal impact to the floodplain.

10.2 Data Sources

The FEMA national flood hazard layer, a geospatial database showing effective flood maps, was queried via the FEMA Map Service Center (FEMA 2024).

Floodplains data for the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Natural Environment → Flood Hazards (FEMA)

10.3 Resource Conditions

Approximately 95 percent of the study area (141,906 acres) is categorized as minimal flood hazard (Zone X). Five percent (7,675 acres) is categorized as a high-risk special flood hazard areas with a 1 percent annual chance of flooding (Zones A, AE, AH, and AO). Approximately 1 percent (2,121 acres) of the study area is regulated floodway, all within mapped AE zones.

The flood zones are generally associated with the rivers and creeks listed in Table 10-1, each with intermittent reaches of regulated floodway. The Master Map depicts the locations and orientation of floodplains across the study area.

Table 10-1. FEMA Mapped Floodplain Summary

Waterbody	Location	100-Year Floodzone Type	Base Flood Elevations Available	Regulatory Floodway Mapped
Boise River	Flowing east to west across northern extent of study area through Boise and Garden City	A AE AO	No Yes No	No Yes No
Fifteenmile Creek and major tributaries (Fivemile Creek, Eightmile Creek, Ninemile Creek, Tenmile Creek)	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Meridian and Southeast Nampa	A AE AH	No Yes No	No Yes No
Mason Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area through Nampa	A, AE	No Yes	No Yes
Indian Creek	Flowing southeast to northwest, crossing diagonally across the study area, west of Mason Creek, through Nampa and Caldwell	A AE	No Yes	No Yes

Source: Study team; FEMA 2024

10.4 Scoping Input

The study team has received no input from stakeholders or agencies regarding floodplains.

11 Sensitive Species

11.1 Regulatory Context

Natural resources discussed in this memo are protected by the following federal and state regulations and policies:

- The U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) protects federally listed plant and animal species with the goal of ensuring their long-term survival.
- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act protect migratory birds, nests, and nesting activities, which have the potential to be disrupted or destroyed during vegetation clearing, earth moving, bridge demolition, and other construction activities.
- Idaho's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is a statewide plan for conserving and managing Idaho's most at-risk fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats (IDFG 2024). The SWAP provides strategic voluntary guidance on priority conservation actions needed for state-ranked species as determined by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). The plan also emphasizes prevention of future species listings under the ESA, thus helping maintain state-led management authority for Idaho's native fish, wildlife, and plants.

11.2 Data Sources

A desktop review of available data were conducted for federal and state-listed species and migratory birds that could potentially occur in the study area or be affected by activities in the study area. The following sources were reviewed:

- USFWS online Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) decision support system (USFWS 2024) (Appendix D)
- IDFG's Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information Service (IFWIS), Species Diversity Database (IDFG 2021)

Online IDFG species data were reviewed, but occurrence data were not requested due to the size of the study area. These data will be collected as part of project-level analyses during future NEPA phases. Threatened and endangered species data for the study area can be viewed on the Master Map through the COMPASS GIS platform at https://compassidaho.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=78bec62d0ea24343abb0049df950a806.

Relevant data layers can be accessed as follows:

- Natural Environment → Threatened and Endangered Species Critical Habitat (USFWS)

11.3 Resource Conditions

General Habitat

Land use in the study area has historically been dominated by agriculture, particularly large-scale farming and ranching operations. Since the 1990s, the communities within the study area have experienced significant urban expansion leading to the development of numerous residential subdivisions and commercial areas. Urban sprawl and low-density residential properties have replaced much of the historic open space and agricultural lands.

The terrain in the study area is diverse, ranging from flat agricultural lands to rolling hills and mesas. The region is characterized by a mix of urbanized areas, agricultural fields, and natural landscapes. The Boise River and its tributaries play a significant role in the valley's hydrology and support a variety of riparian habitats. The landscape includes a mosaic of grasslands, shrublands, and woodlands, with riparian vegetation along the waterways.

Land use within the study area reflects a dynamic interplay between urban development and traditional agricultural practices, with ongoing efforts to preserve the region's natural landscapes and open spaces.

State-listed Species

IDFG maintains a repository for species data on Idaho's fish, wildlife, and plant diversity through their IFWIS app (IDFG 2021). The IFWIS app stores the state rankings of species that have been observed, or that have potential to occur, in the State of Idaho on a scale of 1 to 5. The rank is primarily based on the number of known occurrences, but other factors such as habitat quality, estimated number of individuals, narrowness of range of habitat, trends in populations and habitat, threats to the element, and other factors are also considered. The ranking system is meant to exist alongside national and state rare species lists because these lists often include additional criteria (e.g., recovery potential, depth of knowledge) that go beyond assessing threats to extinction. Within the study area, hundreds of state-ranked species have been observed, or have the potential to occur within, the study area.

Identification of state-listed species with potential to occur where high-capacity transit is proposed will be part of project-level analyses for future NEPA phases in coordination with IDFG. In the State of Idaho, there is no regulatory mechanism for the enforcement of the protection and preservation of state-listed species. Conservation actions for state-ranked species as determined by the IDFG are voluntary, but should be enacted whenever feasible.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Based on a review of the USFWS online IPaC System, there are three federally listed species and one federally proposed species with the potential to occur in, or be impacted by, implementation of high-capacity transit in the study area. Federally designated critical habitat for Slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) also occurs within and adjacent to the study area (USFWS 2024). Threatened and endangered species with the potential to occur in the study area are listed in Table 11-1. No species under the jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries were listed as threatened or endangered within the study area.

Table 11-1. Threatened and Endangered Species with the Potential to Occur in the Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	Suitable Habitat Present within Study Area	Critical Habitat Present within Study Area	Notes
Mammals					
North American Wolvernie	*Gulo gulo luscus*	Threatened	No	N/A	Requires deep, persistent, and reliable spring snow cover in boreal forests and tundra. Suitable habitat must include areas that are cold enough to reliably maintain deep persistent snow late into the warm season.
Birds					
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	Threatened	Yes	No	The yellow-billed cuckoo primarily nests in low to moderate elevation riparian woodlands covering 50 acres or more within arid to semi-arid landscapes. This species utilizes wooded riparian habitats with dense cover, including woodlands with low, scrubby vegetation, overgrown orchards, abandoned farmland, and dense thickets along streams and marshes.
Insects					
Monarch Butterfly	*Danaus plexippus*	Candidate	Yes	N/A	During the breeding season, monarchs lay their eggs on their obligate milkweed host plant (primarily *Asclepias* spp.), and larvae emerge after 2 to 5 days. Milkweed is commonly found within the study area, indicating that there is possibility of monarch presence. Since the monarch is a candidate species and not yet listed or proposed for listing, consultation with USFWS under Section 7 of the ESA is not required.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	Suitable Habitat Present within Study Area	Critical Habitat Present within Study Area	Notes
Flowering Plants					
Slickspot Peppergrass	*Lepidium papilliferum*	Threatened	Yes	Yes	Slickspot peppergrass is a tap-rooted, intricately branched plant, which typically grows in small areas within larger sagebrush habitat called "slickspots." Slickspot peppergrass is found only in southwest Idaho, including Ada, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, and Twin Falls counties. In the southeast corner of the study area, near where I-84 exits the study area boundary, a small area of critical habitat for Slickspot peppergrass was identified in May 2023. This critical habitat is not in the vicinity of the transportation corridors being evaluated for this study, although there is potential for suitable habitat to occur within sagebrush habitat found throughout the southern portion of the study area.

Source: USFWS 2013, 2024

Notes:

N/A = No Critical Habitat has been designated for this species.

Migratory Birds

The MBTA protects migratory birds and their nests. The IPaC resource list for the study area identifies several migratory birds that may occur (USFWS 2024). The full list can be found in Appendix D.

Given the urbanized nature throughout the majority of the study area, it is unlikely that nesting and breeding habitats for these bird species would be disturbed by project construction noise. Species that nest and perch in trees may be present along riparian corridors or areas where the ecological integrity remains largely undisturbed and suitable habitat is present. The Boise River corridor, and other larger surface water features (Table 9-1) generally provide suitable habitat for many species protected under the MBTA. Suitable habitat could also include man-made structures for species that use buildings, bridges, or other structures for nesting and perching. Ground nesting species may also be present in riparian and agricultural areas.

11.4 Scoping Input

The study team has received no input from stakeholders or agencies regarding special status species. However, during the ERWG review of this report, EPA inquired about wildlife movement corridors through the study area. Data for migration routes and wildlife-vehicle conflicts was not collected due to the urban nature of the study area. IDFG indicated that while big game species may occur in the northeastern portion of the study area, migration through the study area is not generally a concern (Flack pers. comm. 2024b).

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Appendix A: ERWG Meeting Summary – October 2024

MEETING MINUTES

Project:	Let's Ride Treasure Valley
Subject:	ERWG Scoping Meeting – Minutes
Meeting Date:	Thursday, October 31, 2024
Meeting Time:	2:00 pm to 3:30 pm
Meeting Location:	*MS Teams*

The table below details the topics for discussion and meeting minutes. The attendee list is included in Attachment 1. Comments submitted through the chat function are captured in Attachment 2.

Table 1: Agenda Topics and Minutes

No.	Topic	Minutes
1.	Welcome and Introductions	Attendees introduced themselves and the agency/organization they represent. Lila reviewed the agenda and provided the purpose for the meeting.
2.	Study Overview	Chris described the study area and the purpose of the study, which is to evaluate high-capacity transit alignments and alternatives between Boise and Caldwell. The study is a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study and is laying the groundwork for a NEPA document, should a project advance. Chris explained the study process: (1) Project Development, (2) Tier 1 and 2 Screening, (3) Tier 3 Screening, and (4) Recommendations + Strategies. Chris also explained the stakeholder and community engagement strategy and that the project has conducted one round of public meetings. Chris explained the routes under consideration and the results from the Tier 1 screening. Attendees did not have questions or clarifications on the material Chris presented.
3.	Purpose and Need	Laura provided the background of how the purpose and need statement was developed. Laura noted that the purpose and need will be sent to FTA shortly for concurrence. Attendees did not have questions or clarifications on the material Laura presented.

No.	Topic	Minutes
4.	Environmental Scan	Laura outlined the Environmental Scan task, which includes environmental data collection, development of an interactive master map hosted on the COMPASS website, and preparation of the Environmental Resources Report (ERR), which documents existing resource conditions in the study area. Laura noted that the study considers environmental resources during alternatives development and screening, so that future NEPA teams do not need to backtrack in the alternatives process. Laura reviewed the environmental resources included in the draft ERR and the desktop data sources for each resource. She noted the project team sent the draft ERR to the workgroup about two weeks prior to the meeting for them to review. Laura asked for questions or comments about the environmental resources included or the data sources. Questions and comments are summarized below: • Susan Sturges (EPA) suggested including more information about the tribes in the ERR. Laura and Chris explained a Shoshone-Paiute Tribal representative is part of the ERWG and has been invited to meetings and to review the ERR but has not responded. Danielle Casey (FTA) asked for clarification on how the study team has reached out to the Shoshone-Paiute. Lila and Chis responded that COMPASS has emailed the tribal representative throughout the study but has not received a response to date and asked if there were recommendations for how to get ahold of the tribe. Ashley Molloy (SHPO) added to the chat (Chat screenshots below), "We'll send you new contact person for Section 106 consultation." Danielle Casey (FTA) stated in the chat, "email me the addresses or contact information used to contact the tribe(s). Depending on the branch, I may have a contact or way to get in touch." Lila noted that she would follow up with FTA by sending an email summary of tribal outreach to date and thanked SHPO for putting the team in contact with a new contact person. • Susan Sturges (EPA) asked about wildlife corridors within the study area that might intersect with alternatives. Laura noted that the team has not currently collected data for wildlife movement or conflicts given the largely urban nature of the study area. It was discussed that one data point for that topic is vehicle-wildlife collisions and that ITD may have that information for the interstate corridor. Laura noted that the project team would check to see if any information is available.

No.	Topic	Minutes
5.	ERWG Resource Input	Laura asked each agency to provide input regarding environmental resources in the study area under their jurisdiction: • Ada County: No concerns. • DEQ: No concerns. • SHPO: Will FTA take the lead for Section 106 during the NEPA phase? Project team responded that the assumption is that FTA would be the NEPA lead agency if and when the project advances to NEPA. • ITD HQ Environmental: No comments. • LHTAC: No comments. • BLM: No comments, but a note that the federally listed threatened and endangered species may require coordination with USFWS during NEPA. • EPA: No additional comments. • USACE: NHD and NWI are good data sources to start with. Glad to hear the team is cognizant not to prematurely remove alternatives that could be the LEDPA. No additional comments. Enjoyed the maps. • FTA: If the project is advanced to NEPA, FTA will need a formal designation letter to be the lead NEPA agency. Lila asked SHPO about their written suggestion to coordinate with local historic commissions. Ashley Molloy (SHPO) explained that there is a certified local governments program and those within the program have historic preservation commissions. Ashley said that coordination with those commissions should occur during the formal Section 106 process during NEPA, rather than during the PEL but the need for future coordination with those commissions should be noted in the ERR.
6.	Next Steps and Action Items	Lila noted that the next step is to develop and screen the Tier 2 alternatives and that the screening will consider information from the ERR.

Attachment 1 – Attendee List

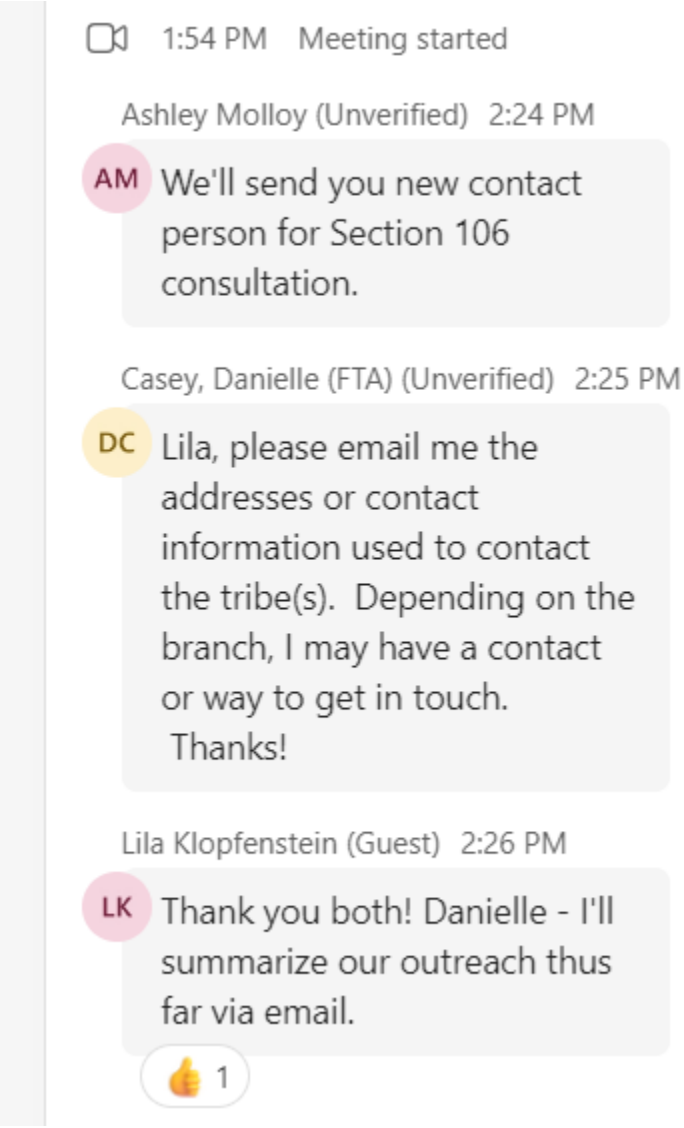
Attachment 1: Attendee List – ERWG Meeting

October 31, 2024

ERWG Members				
Agency	**First**	**Last**	**Invited**	**Attended**
Ada County Development Services	Brent	Moore	X	X
Ada Soil and Water Conservation District	Josie	Erskine	X	
American Farmland Trust	David	Anderson	X	
BLM, Boise District Office	TJ (Terrell)	Meeks	X	X
EPA, Region 10	Susan	Sturges	X	X
FHWA, Idaho Division	Gus	Loeffelholz	X	X
FTA, Region 10	Barney	Remington	X	X
FTA, Region 10	Danielle	Casey	X	X
ID DEQ, Boise Regional Office	Beth	Bahem	X	
ID DEQ, Boise Regional Office	Rebecca	Blankenau	X	
ID DEQ, Boise Regional Office	Matthew	Pabich	X	X
ID Fish and Game	Brandon	Flack	X	
ID Water Resources	Emily	Barnes	X	
ID Water Resources	Neeley	Miller	X	
ITD, District 3	Scott	Rudel	X	
ITD, HQ Environmental	Ester	Ceja	X	X
LHTAC	Karissa	Nelson	X	
LHTAC	Clarissa	Lucas	X	X
Shoshone-Paiute Tribes	Sherry	Crutcher	X	
SHPO	Ashley	Molloy	X	X
SHPO	Chris	Shaver	X	
SHPO	Kayla	McElreath	X	X
SHPO	Travis	Pitkin	X	
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Randi	Connell	X	
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Kassondra	Dumke	X	
USACE, Boise Field Office	Greg	Martinez	X	
USACE, Boise Field Office	Jacob	Cordtz	X	X
USDA, Idaho State Office	Amie	Miller	X	
USDA, Idaho State Office	David	Anderson	X	
USDA, Idaho State Office	Greg	Becker	X	

Project Team				
Agency	**First**	**Last**	**Invited**	**Attended**
COMPASS	Austin	Miller	X	X
COMPASS	Eric	Adolfson	X	X
COMPASS	Lila	Klopfenstein	X	X
COMPASS	MaryAnn	Waldinger	X	X
Consultant - HDR	Christopher	Proud	X	X
Consultant - HDR	Zach	Bentzler	X	X
Consultant - Jacobs	Laura	Meyer	X	X

Attachment 2 – Screenshot of comments within "Chat" function



Matthew Pabich (Unverified) 2:37 PM

MP No idea whats with mic.

No concerns though

Proud, Christopher 2:37 PM

CP Matthew if you have topics you want us to talk about please note them in the chat here.

Ashley Molloy (Unverified) 2:38 PM

AM Is FTA taking the lead for Section 106 consultation when we get past the PEL?

Matthew Pabich (Unverified) 2:38 PM

MP Had no concerns, if anything it would reduce the chances and volumes of hazmat potential.

Appendix B: Summary of NRCS Farmland Classifications in Non-Urbanized Areas of the Study Area

Summary of NRCS Farmland Classifications in Non-Urbanized Areas of the Study Area

Soil Name	Farmland Classification
Aquic Torriorthents, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Baldock loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Baldock loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Bram silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Bram silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Brent loam, low rainfall, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Catherine silt loam	Prime farmland if irrigated
Chance fine sandy loam	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Chilcott silt loam, bedrock substratum, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Chilcott silt loam, bedrock substratum, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Chilcott-Sebree complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Chilcott-Sebree complex, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Chilcott-Sebree complex, bedrock substratum, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Chilcott-Sebree complex, bedrock substratum, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Chilcott-Sebree complex, bedrock substratum, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Draper loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Draper loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, bedrock substratum, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, bedrock substratum, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, bedrock substratum, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah silt loam, bedrock substratum, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Elijah-Chilcott silt loams, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Elijah-Vickery silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Falk fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Greenleaf-Owyhee silt loams, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Greenleaf-Owyhee silt loams, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Greenleaf-Owyhee silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Jenness fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Jenness loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated

Soil Name	Farmland Classification
Jenness loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Lankbush sandy loam, 7 to 12 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Lankbush-Elijah-Vickery silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Marsing loam, 12 to 20 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Marsing loam, 7 to 12 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
McCain silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
McCain silt loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
McCain silt loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
McCain stony silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, extremely stony	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
McCain stony silt loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes, extremely stony	McCain stony silt loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes, extremely stony
Moulton fine sandy loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Moulton fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Moulton fine sandy loam, saline, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Moulton loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Moulton loam, saline, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Moulton loamy sand, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Moulton-Notus complex, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Notus soils	Prime farmland if irrigated
Notus-LesBois complex, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and drained
Oliaga loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Oliaga loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Oliaga loam, saline-alkali, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Paulmyers silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Potratz silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Potratz-Power silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Potratz-Power silt loams, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Power silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power silt loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power silt loam, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Power silt loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Power-Potratz silt loams, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power-Potratz silt loams, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power-Purdam silt loams, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power-Purdam silt loams, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Power-Purdam silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Purdam silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Purdam silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Purdam silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Purdam silt loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Purdam silt loam, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Purdam silt loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Purdam silt loam, water table, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Purdam-Power silt loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated

Soil Name	Farmland Classification
Purdam-Sebree silt loams, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Purdam-Sebree silt loams, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Scism silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated and reclaimed of excess salts and sodium
Tenmile very gravelly loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Tenmile very gravelly loam, 4 to 12 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated
Tindahay fine sandy loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Vickery-Marsing silt loams, 1 to 3 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Vickery-Marsing silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated
Xeric Haplocalcids, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance, if irrigated

Appendix C: Shoshone-Paiute Meeting Summary – November 7, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

Project:	Let's Ride Treasure Valley
Subject:	Shoshone-Paiute Tribe Meeting – Minutes
Meeting Date:	Thursday, November 07, 2024
Meeting Time:	1:00 pm to 2:00 pm
Meeting Location:	*MS Teams*

ERWG Scoping Meeting

The following is a list of meeting attendees:

- Jade Roubideaux, Cultural Director – Shoshone-Paiute Tribes
- Lila Klopfenstein, COMPASS
- Laura Meyer, Jacobs

The table below details the topics for discussion and meeting minutes.

Table 1: Agenda Topics and Minutes

No.	Topic	Minutes
1.	Study Overview	Lila provided a project overview including the intended outcomes, process, and schedule for study and communicated that planning products developed in the study may be adopted or incorporated by reference into future NEPA studies. Lila also reviewed the study area, purpose and need, and the routes under consideration. Jade had no specific comments on the study process, the purpose and need, or initial set of alternatives.
2.	Presence of Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) or other tribal resources	Noted that other tribes may have interest in the project. Suggested the study team reference BLM list of tribes that have claim to Idaho lands – Laura to reach out to BLM contact. Noted that a written record may be helpful, but mapping is not an ideal way to convey the breadth of bands and families whose ancestral lands fall in the study area. Unlikely to find archeological resources in the urbanized areas or farmland after years of development. Eagle Rock Park, near the Old Penitentiary is an important gathering place but it is just outside of the study area. https://www.cityofboise.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/parks/chief-eagle-eye-reserve/chief-eagle-eye-reserve-history/
3.	Other tribal interest in the project	Expressed interest in free transit access for tribal members and noted that the tribe has students at Boise State. Make the service convenient, fast, and accessible for elderly. Would appreciate an opportunity for tribal input on community art that celebrates the history of tribes for future transit system/facilities.

No.	Topic	Minutes
4.	Coordination and Consultation	Jade will be the contact for the study team. We can add her to the TWG, but she may not always be available for meetings due to time constraints. She would like to receive the meeting materials and minutes. Jade noted that the tribe does not consider an unanswered letter or email to be consultation. Staff resources are minimal, and they receive many communications. If no response is received from written communications, reach out via phone and talk to someone.
5.	Other discussion items	Open to project tabling at celebration of the Original Boise Valley People @ Eagle Rock Park on June 13, 2025 – Jade can reach out to Lila with event details. Working to build a cultural center in the study area – plans TBD
6.	Action Items	- Laura to contact BLM for list of tribes relevant to study area. - Chris to add Jade to the TWG mailing list.

Appendix D: USFWS IPaC Report

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Idaho Fish And Wildlife Office
1387 South Vinnell Way, Suite 368
Boise, ID 83709-1657
Phone: (208) 378-5243 Fax: (208) 378-5262

In Reply Refer To: 07/03/2024 16:20:41 UTC
Project Code: 2024-0111411
Project Name: HCT PEL

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological

evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/endangered-species-consultation-handbook.pdf

Migratory Birds: In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts, see https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-permit/what-we-do.

The MBTA has no provision for allowing take of migratory birds that may be unintentionally killed or injured by otherwise lawful activities. It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures, see https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/threats-birds.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 provides for the protection of both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. For information regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186, please visit https://www.fws.gov/partner/council-conservation-migratory-birds.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List
- USFWS National Wildlife Refuges and Fish Hatcheries
- Bald & Golden Eagles
- Migratory Birds
- Wetlands

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Idaho Fish And Wildlife Office
1387 South Vinnell Way, Suite 368
Boise, ID 83709-1657
(208) 378-5243

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2024-0111411
Project Name: HCT PEL
Project Type: Standing Analysis (SA) Administration (Non-ESA)
Project Description: The PEL study provides a unique opportunity to focus the analysis of alternatives, formally engage our federal partners, and position the project for the most efficient and cost-ffective subsequent steps through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/@43.6065336,-116.45317050754316,14z

Counties: Ada and Canyon counties, Idaho

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 4 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries[1], as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
North American Wolverine *Gulo gulo luscus*	Threatened

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5123
General project design guidelines:
https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/6X6NCTAR2JEOTLGPIGTB74OIYA/documents/generated/7151.pdf

BIRDS

NAME	STATUS
Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*	Threatened

Population: Western U.S. DPS
There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3911
General project design guidelines:
https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/6X6NCTAR2JEOTLGPIGTB74OIYA/documents/generated/7151.pdf

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus*	Candidate

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743

FLOWERING PLANTS

NAME	STATUS
Slickspot Peppergrass *Lepidium papilliferum*	Threatened

Population:
There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location overlaps the critical habitat.
Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4027
General project design guidelines:
https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/6X6NCTAR2JEOTLGPIGTB74OIYA/documents/generated/7151.pdf

CRITICAL HABITATS

There is 1 critical habitat wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction.

NAME	STATUS
Slickspot Peppergrass *Lepidium papilliferum*	Final

https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4027#crithab

USFWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE LANDS AND FISH HATCHERIES

Any activity proposed on lands managed by the National Wildlife Refuge system must undergo a 'Compatibility Determination' conducted by the Refuge. Please contact the individual Refuges to discuss any questions or concerns.

The following FWS National Wildlife Refuge Lands and Fish Hatcheries lie fully or partially within your project area:

FACILITY NAME	ACRES
DEER FLAT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE https://www.fws.gov/our-facilities?$keywords="%5C%22DEER+FLAT+NATIONAL+WILDLIFE+REFUGE%5C%22"	10,617.834

BALD & GOLDEN EAGLES

Bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act[1] and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act[2].

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to bald or golden eagles, or their habitats[3], should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described in the links below. Specifically, please review the "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles".

---

1. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940.
2. The Migratory Birds Treaty Act of 1918.
3. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

There are likely bald eagles present in your project area. For additional information on bald eagles, refer to Bald Eagle Nesting and Sensitivity to Human Activity

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, see the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY below to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Dec 1 to Aug 31

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1680	Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31

PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles", specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

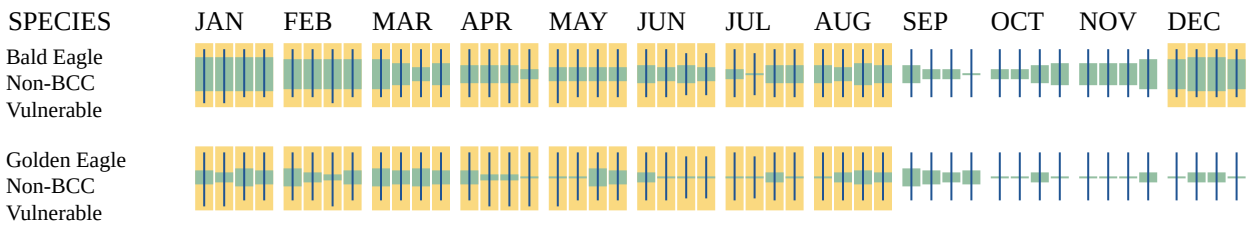
Probability of Presence (▪)

Green bars; the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during that week of the year.

Breeding Season (▪)
Yellow bars; liberal estimate of the timeframe inside which the bird breeds across its entire range.

Survey Effort (|)
Vertical black lines; the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps.

No Data (–)
A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.



Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management

- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Certain birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act[1] and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act[2].

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to migratory birds, eagles, and their habitats[3] should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described in the links below. Specifically, please review the "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles".

---

1. The Migratory Birds Treaty Act of 1918.
2. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940.
3. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, see the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY below to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/11927	Breeds Apr 21 to Aug 10
American White Pelican *pelecanus erythrorhynchos* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6886	Breeds Apr 1 to Aug 31
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Dec 1 to Aug 31

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Black Rosy-finch *Leucosticte atrata* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9460	Breeds Jun 15 to Aug 31
Black Tern *Chlidonias niger surinamenisis* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3093	Breeds May 15 to Aug 20
Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9454	Breeds May 20 to Jul 31
Broad-tailed Hummingbird *Selasphorus platycercus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/11935	Breeds May 25 to Aug 21
California Gull *Larus californicus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10955	Breeds Mar 1 to Jul 31
Calliope Hummingbird *Selasphorus calliope* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9526	Breeds May 1 to Aug 15
Cassin's Finch *Haemorhous cassinii* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9462	Breeds May 15 to Jul 15
Clark's Grebe *Aechmophorus clarkii* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10575	Breeds Jun 1 to Aug 31
Evening Grosbeak *Coccothraustes vespertinus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9465	Breeds May 15 to Aug 10
Flammulated Owl *Psiloscops flammeolus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7728	Breeds May 10 to Aug 15

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/11953	Breeds Mar 1 to Aug 15
Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10567	Breeds May 1 to Jul 31
Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1680	Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31
Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9679	Breeds elsewhere
Lewis's Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9408	Breeds Apr 20 to Sep 30
Long-eared Owl *asio otus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3631	Breeds Mar 1 to Jul 15
Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9481	Breeds elsewhere
Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8350	Breeds Apr 1 to Sep 15
Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3914	Breeds May 20 to Aug 31
Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9561	Breeds elsewhere

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Red Knot *Calidris canutus roselaari* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8880	Breeds elsewhere
Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8002	Breeds Apr 15 to Jul 15
Sage Thrasher *Oreoscoptes montanus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9433	Breeds Apr 15 to Aug 10
Western Grebe *aechmophorus occidentalis* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6743	Breeds Jun 1 to Aug 31
Willet *Tringa semipalmata* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10669	Breeds Apr 20 to Aug 5

PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles", specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

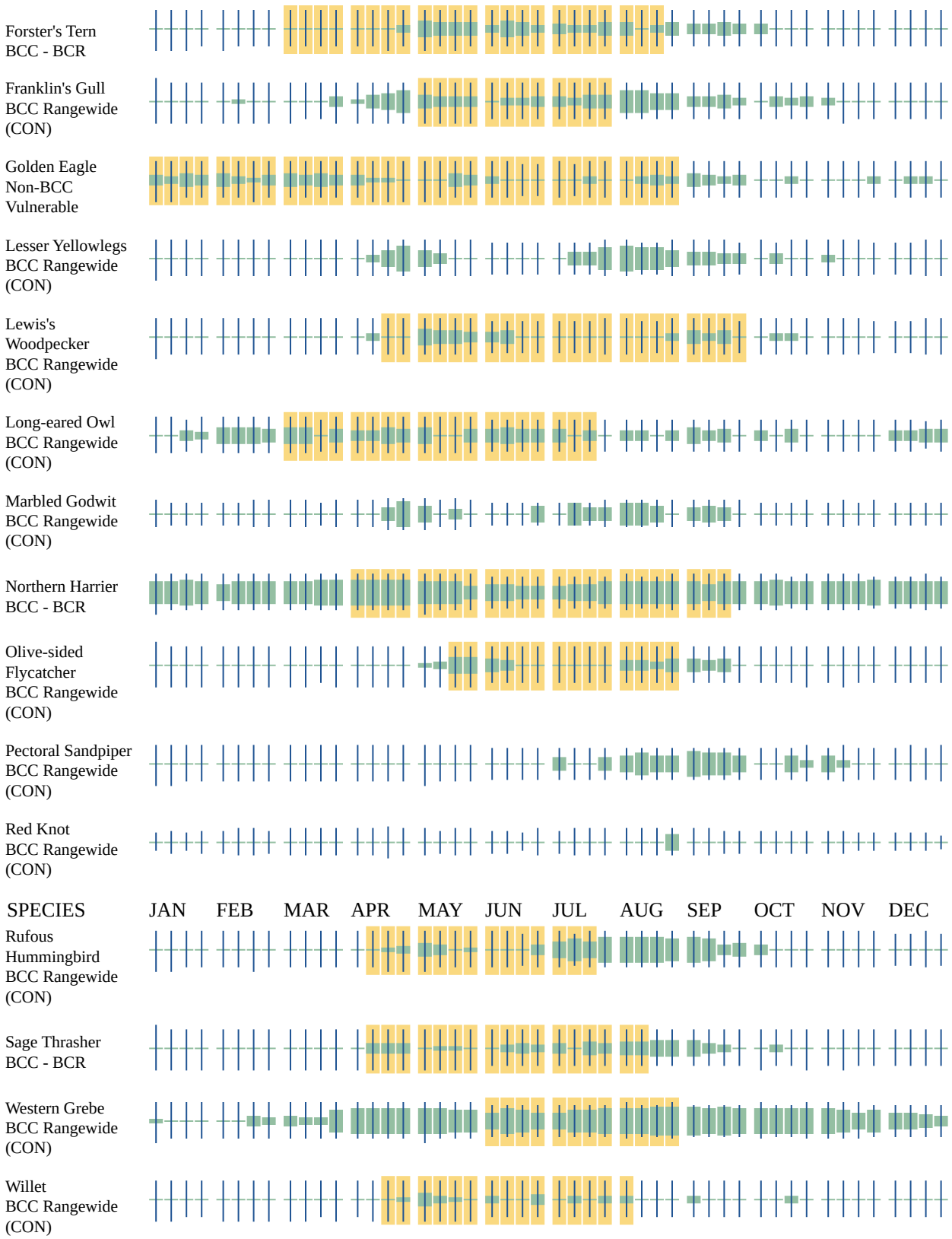
Green bars; the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during that week of the year.

Breeding Season (■)
Yellow bars; liberal estimate of the timeframe inside which the bird breeds across its entire range.

Survey Effort (|)
Vertical black lines; the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps.

No Data (–)
A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

probability of presence | breeding season | survey effort | no data


Forster's Tern BCC - BCR
Franklin's Gull BCC Rangewide (CON)
Golden Eagle Non-BCC Vulnerable
Lesser Yellowlegs BCC Rangewide (CON)
Lewis's Woodpecker BCC Rangewide (CON)
Long-eared Owl BCC Rangewide (CON)
Marbled Godwit BCC Rangewide (CON)
Northern Harrier BCC - BCR
Olive-sided Flycatcher BCC Rangewide (CON)
Pectoral Sandpiper BCC Rangewide (CON)
Red Knot BCC Rangewide (CON)
SPECIES
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
Rufous Hummingbird BCC Rangewide (CON)
Sage Thrasher BCC - BCR
Western Grebe BCC Rangewide (CON)
Willet BCC Rangewide (CON)

Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action

WETLANDS

Impacts to NWI wetlands and other aquatic habitats may be subject to regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or other State/Federal statutes.

For more information please contact the Regulatory Program of the local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District.

Please note that the NWI data being shown may be out of date. We are currently working to update our NWI data set. We recommend you verify these results with a site visit to determine the actual extent of wetlands on site.

Due to your project's size, the list below may be incomplete, or the acreages reported may be inaccurate. For a full list, please contact the local U.S. Fish and Wildlife office or visit https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.HTML

RIVERINE

- R4SBCx
- R4SBA
- R4SBCr
- R4SBC
- R3UBH
- R5UBFx
- R3USC
- R2UBH
- R5UBH
- R3USA
- R2UBHx

FRESHWATER EMERGENT WETLAND

- PEM1Cx
- PEM1A

- PEM1K
- PEM1Fh
- PEM1Cd
- PEM1F
- PEM1/FO1A
- PEM1Kx
- PEM1Ch
- PEM1B
- PEM1Fr
- PEM1Fx
- PEM1Fd
- PEM1C
- PEM2F

LAKE

- L1UBHx
- L2EM2Fh
- L2USCh
- L1UBHr

FRESHWATER FORESTED/SHRUB WETLAND

- PSS1Ch
- PSS1/USC
- PFO1Ah
- PSS1Cx
- PFO1C
- PSS1J
- PFO1Ch
- PFO1A
- PSS1/USA
- PSS1C
- PSS1A

FRESHWATER POND

- PUSCh
- PUB/AB4Hx
- PAB4H
- PUBK
- PAB4/UBH

- PAB4Hx
- PUBHr
- PUSC
- PUS/SS1A
- PUS/SS1C
- PUBHx
- PAB4Fx
- PUBFx
- PUS/FO1A
- PUSCr
- PUBF
- PAB4Hh
- PUBH
- PUBHh
- PUBFh
- PUBFr

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: Private Entity
Name: Erik Lauritzen
Address: 999 Main St., Suite 1200
City: Boise
State: ID
Zip: 83702
Email erik.lauritzen@jacobs.com
Phone: 9168349652

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Lead Agency: County of Ada


LET'S RIDE
TREASURE VALLEY


LET'S RIDE
TREASURE VALLEY

Environmental Impacts and Considerations for NEPA

COMPASS
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION
of Southwest Idaho

LET'S RIDE TREASURE VALLEY

Environmental Resource Impacts and Considerations for NEPA

Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)

November 5, 2025

Contents

Tables

Figures

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BFE	base flood elevation
CAAA	Clean Air Act and amendments
CFR	*Code of Federal Regulations*
CIM 2050	*Communities in Motion 2050*
CLOMR	Conditional Letter of Map Revision
COMPASS	Community Planning Association of Southwest
CWA	Clean Water Act
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ERWG	Environmental Review Workgroup
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
ICRIS	Idaho Cultural Resource Information System
IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Conservation
LOMR	Letter of Map Revision
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MSAT	mobile source air toxic
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter
PM_{10}	particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter

RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RHA	River and Harbors Act
ROW	right-of-way
SIP	state implementation plan
UPRR	Union Pacific Railroad
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	underground storage tank

1 Introduction

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) and their member jurisdictions have initiated the Let's Ride Treasure Valley study. Consistent with the regional vision and goals outlined in *Communities in Motion 2050* (CIM 2050) (COMPASS 2022), this Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study is examining a future high-capacity transit connection east to west across the Treasure Valley region south of the Boise River. In combination with land use planning and policies pursued by local jurisdictions, high-capacity transit solutions evaluated in this PEL Study are intended to support the goals and objectives of CIM 2050, as well as other relevant local and regional plans. This PEL Study marks a formal (but early) step in the federal environmental process to begin to position a potential future project (or projects) for federal transit funding. The federal lead agency for this Study is the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The PEL Study included consideration of environmental resources in the development and evaluation of high-capacity transit solutions to address the purpose and need. Available desktop data was used to identify resources in the study area. No field data collection was undertaken, and limitations of available desktop data remain to be addressed. Additional data collection will be necessary during future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phases, including data for resources not covered in this report such as visual impacts, general wildlife species, and water quality. These and other resource issues are not addressed in this report because the PEL Study considered resource topics for which stakeholders expressed concern, resource topics with regulatory requirements relevant during early project planning, and resource topics with the potential to influence decision making during this Study. All environmental resources as required by NEPA will be identified and evaluated during future project-level NEPA phases. Research for environmental resources in the study area, including regulatory context, data sources, resource conditions, and scoping input, is documented in the *Environmental Resources Report* (COMPASS 2024) prepared for this PEL Study.

Scoping input on environmental resources in the study area was provided by members of the Environmental Review Workgroup (ERWG), which participated in the kick-off meeting for the PEL Study, reviewed the *Environmental Resources Report* and provided comments, and met with the study team for a discussion of environmental resource considerations in the study area. During this meeting, held on October 31, 2024, the study team presented the purpose and need, explained the study process, and reviewed the environmental data presented in the *Environmental Resources Report*.

This report documents environmental resource concerns relevant to the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative, which is the preliminary locally preferred alternative identified in the Let's Ride Treasure Valley PEL Study (PEL Study). It also describes additional data collection, analyses, and agency coordination for future NEPA phases, and identifies authorizations and permits likely to be needed.

1.1 Farmland

Prime and unique farmlands are protected under the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 (FPPA). The FPPA is intended to minimize the impact federal programs have on the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Under the FPPA, farmland includes prime and unique farmland (national) and land of statewide or local importance.

Existing Conditions

The Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (NRCS 2016) was used to identify soil types within the study area and determine the presence of soils classified as prime or unique farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and farmland of local importance. The majority of farmland likely subject to the FPPA is concentrated in a broad swath of land west of Meridian and east of Nampa and Caldwell that spans from the northern to the southern limits of the study area. In addition, smaller pockets of farmland are present to the south and west of Caldwell and southeast of Boise Airport. These areas primarily include two NRCS farmland classifications: prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. Farmland along the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative corridor is concentrated between Ten Mile Road and Idaho Center Boulevard.

Potential Impacts

Impacts to FPPA farmland for the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative are estimated to be approximately 1 acre. This planning-level estimate accounts for census urban areas and transportation right-of-way (ROW), which are exempted from land subject to FPPA requirements. Additionally, COMPASS mapping of existing and future land use indicates substantial residential and commercial development of agricultural land through 2050. If these projected development trends through 2050 occur, it is expected there will be little remaining farmland subject to FPPA in the study area. During this Study, Technical Working Group participants expressed their belief that this project could help to protect farmland by allowing for more focused development patterns that may reduce urban sprawl.

Next Steps

The NEPA phase will provide a more comprehensive assessment of potential impacts and identify appropriate mitigation strategies. If the project affects farmland, a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form will be completed and coordination with the NRCS will occur to comply with FPPA and minimize adverse effects on agricultural lands. Mitigation needs can be determined in coordination with the NRCS based on results of the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form.

1.2 Cultural Resources

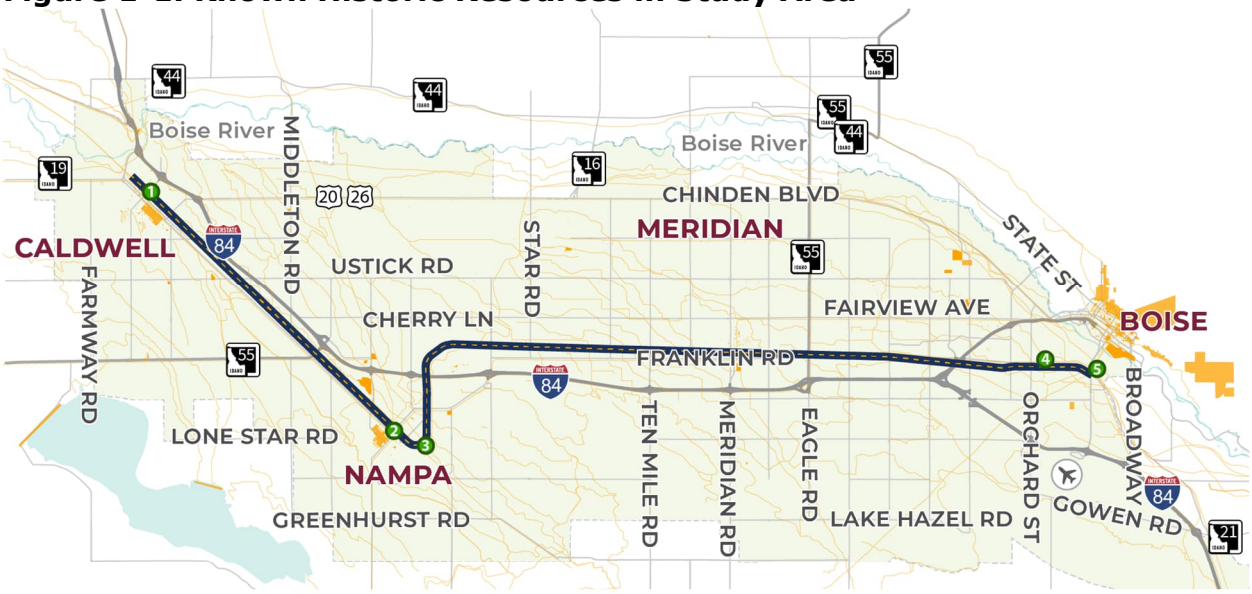
The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) defines a “historic property” as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Historic properties are considered under two acts on transportation projects: NHPA and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act, both passed in 1966. Historic properties, whether they are included on the NRHP (formally listed) or eligible for inclusion on the NRHP, are treated the same under these regulations.

Existing Conditions

The Idaho Cultural Resource Information System (ICRIS) database was reviewed to identify previously documented historic properties (SHPO 2024). Within the study area, the ICRIS database includes 2,597 historic buildings, 51 historic structures, 4 historic objects, 134 linear resources, and 30 historic districts that are listed or eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. Most of the historic buildings and structures are in or near historic districts in the communities of Boise, Caldwell, Nampa, and Meridian, while the linear sites are distributed throughout the study area (Figure 1-1). The proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail corridor intersects linear resources and structures and is proximate to numerous additional structures, buildings, and historic districts.

Two of the identified historic linear resources proximate to the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative corridor relate to the Oregon Short Line Railroad ROW, known today as the Union Pacific Railroad’s (UPRR) Boise Cutoff. The proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail corridor follows a portion of the historic Oregon Short Line Railroad ROW (previously recorded as 10EL1423, 10JE146, 10BK274, 10CU252, 10GG493, 10WN785, 10LN341, 10MA144, 10CN102, and 10AA417). The historic Oregon Short Line Railroad Utility Line (10CN3165), which once paralleled the railroad line, has also been recorded parallel to the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative corridor. Other linear historic properties proximate to the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative corridor include irrigation ditches, railroads, and roadways.

Figure 1-1. Known Historic Resources in Study Area



Potential Impacts

In total, the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative would directly intersect 32 linear resources and 3 structures previously determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. Construction and operation of a commuter rail in the historic Oregon Short Line Railway ROW, which includes the historic Oregon Short Line Railway Utility line, would affect these two historic linear properties, but it is unknown if it would be an adverse effect. The effects on the railroad and utility line from upgrades to the existing freight tracks, construction of parallel tracks, and the addition of commuter rail station platforms with fee stations, shelters, or other amenities within the railroad ROW will need to be evaluated to determine if they constitute an adverse effect on these two linear resources.

The remaining 30 linear resources would be bisected by the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative. Typically, modifications at intersections result in only a small portion of the larger linear resource being modified and thus usually would not result in an adverse effect. For example, the proposed improvements perpendicularly intersect the NRHP-eligible Old Highway 30 (10BK272, 10BL39, 10CU216, 10BK309, and 10CU237) and State Highway 55 alignments (10VY1866) in several locations but is not anticipated to adversely affect these resources given the small portion of the larger linear resource impacted.

The three historic structures that the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative would intersect have been identified as a footbridge, culvert, and ditch on Idaho Northern &

Pacific Railroad (10AA3973), a concrete culvert at Idaho Northern & Pacific Railroad (10CN1186), and the 11th Avenue Union Pacific Overpass (10CN3279). Removal or substantial modifications to these three historic structures could result in adverse effects.

Historic properties directly adjacent the project footprint may be adversely affected if aboveground elements such as buildings, structures, and signage are added, creating visual changes that could affect the integrity of setting for adjacent historic properties. For example, the historic Boise Union Pacific Passenger Depot (10AA1025), at 1701 Eastover Terrace, is at the east end of the project. The proposed improvements would overlap the parcel on which the NRHP-listed train station is located; however, it is not known if the historic site boundary would be intersected because the NRHP nomination form does not include a map of the historic site boundary. Modifications to the existing train platform or landscape elements of the historic depot will need to be evaluated to determine if they diminish the depot's integrity. The addition of aboveground signage, lighting or other project elements would need to be reviewed for potential effects to the historic depot and other adjacent historic properties.

The project area includes other historic railroad depots adjacent to the alternative, such as the Oregon Short Line Railroad depots in Nampa (1200 Front Street, 10CN2139) and Caldwell (701 S 7th Street, 10CN3236). The continued use of the railroad ROW for trains would not adversely affect the depots unless aboveground changes adjacent to the depots diminish the integrity of the property. Current design plans indicate that the historic Caldwell depot would be flanked by a new two-story park and ride structure and station building. These changes have the potential to result in an adverse effect by diminishing the depot's integrity of setting and feeling.

Next Steps

In compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA, consultation during NEPA will involve identifying consulting parties, establishing the project area of potential effects, field surveys to inventory historic-era properties within the area of potential effects, and evaluation of NRHP-eligibility and project effects. An archaeological and historic survey report and effects determinations report will be prepared to facilitate Section 106 consultation. While this Study identified numerous known historic resources in the ICRIS database, the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail corridor remains mostly unsurveyed. Therefore, field investigations could identify additional NRHP-eligible resources.

If adverse effects to historic properties are identified, avoidance measures should be considered. If an adverse effect to historic properties cannot be avoided, a Memorandum of Agreement will be prepared among the lead federal agency, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, and consulting parties to identify mitigation measures to resolve the adverse effects.

Consulting parties may include local governments, historic preservation commissions, and non-profit organizations with an interest in historic preservation. Consultation also includes tribal governments. The FTA invited the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe to participate in the project scoping for this Study with no response. After additional outreach, tribal interests communicated during a meeting with a tribal representative included (1) fast,

convenient, and accessible transit service, (2) free transit access for tribal members, and (3) opportunities to incorporate tribal art in the transit system or facilities.

1.3 Recreation Properties

Recreation properties are subject to federal protections under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act and Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF).

Section 4(f) requirements stipulate that the FTA and other Department of Transportation agencies cannot approve the use of land from significant publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historical sites unless one of these criteria are met:

- There is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative to the use of land, and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use (Title 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] 774.3); or
- The FTA determines that the use of the property will have a de minimis (negligible) impact.

Potential impacts to historic Section 4(f) resources are summarized in Section 1.2.

Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act ensures that investments in the LWCF are maintained for public outdoor recreation use. These properties include parks and recreation facilities that have been developed with the assistance of LWCF grants.

Existing Conditions

Recreation data was compiled from local jurisdictions within the study area, Google Maps, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) website, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG). Additionally, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation provided a comprehensive list of sites that received LWCF grants in Ada and Canyon counties. Follow-up communication with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation verified there are LWCF-funded greenbelt segments in the study area (Muir, pers. comm. 2024).

The study area includes 235 parks and open spaces, 3 fishing access sites, and 40 school properties with outdoor recreation facilities, along with greenways and undeveloped parcels designated for future public use, which may qualify for protection under Section 4(f). Section 6(f) applies to 27 parks and 3 recreation paths that received LWCF funding, including assets like community parks, pools, school playgrounds, and regional trails such as the Boise River Greenbelt and the Ada County Bikeway.

Desktop research for this Study identified 12 recreational resources adjacent to the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail corridor. These resources are listed in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Recreation Resources Adjacent to the Proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Corridor

Recreational Resource	Location	Description
Griffith's City Park	2218 Griffith's Pkwy. Caldwell, ID 83605	A public park featuring sports fields and walking paths
Indian Creek Pathway	Caldwell Idaho; located west of East Ustick Road and I-84	A multiuse pathway for pedestrian and bicycle use
Lakeview Regional Park	914 N Fritz Miller Ct. Nampa, ID 83687	A regional park with amenities for community recreation and gatherings
Stampede Park	1222 11th Ave. N Nampa, ID 83687	A public park with sports fields and playgrounds
Centennial Golf Course	2600 Centennial Dr. Nampa, ID 83687	An 18-hole public golf course operated by Nampa Parks and Recreation
McDonagh Soccer Park	2200 E Karcher Rd. Nampa, ID 83687	A public park focused on youth soccer, with fields and walking paths
Unnamed Pathway near North Milwaukee Street	Located at the northwest corner of West Franklin Road and I-184 in Boise	A multiuse pathway for pedestrian and bicycle use
Unnamed Pathway near North Roosevelt Street	Located near Morris Hill Park in Boise	A multiuse pathway west of Morris Hill Park
Lewis & Clark Middle School	4141 E Pine Ave. Meridian, ID 83642	Middle school with grounds featuring sports fields and greenspace
Morris Hill Park	10 N Roosevelt St. Boise, ID 83706	A neighborhood park in Boise with playgrounds, picnic areas, and open space
Boise Depot Park	2603 W Eastover Terrace, Boise, ID 83706	A historic site used for public and private events
Platt Gardens	2601-2651 Crescent Rim Dr, Boise, ID 83706	A formal garden area in front of the Boise Depot, considered a public park

Potential Impacts

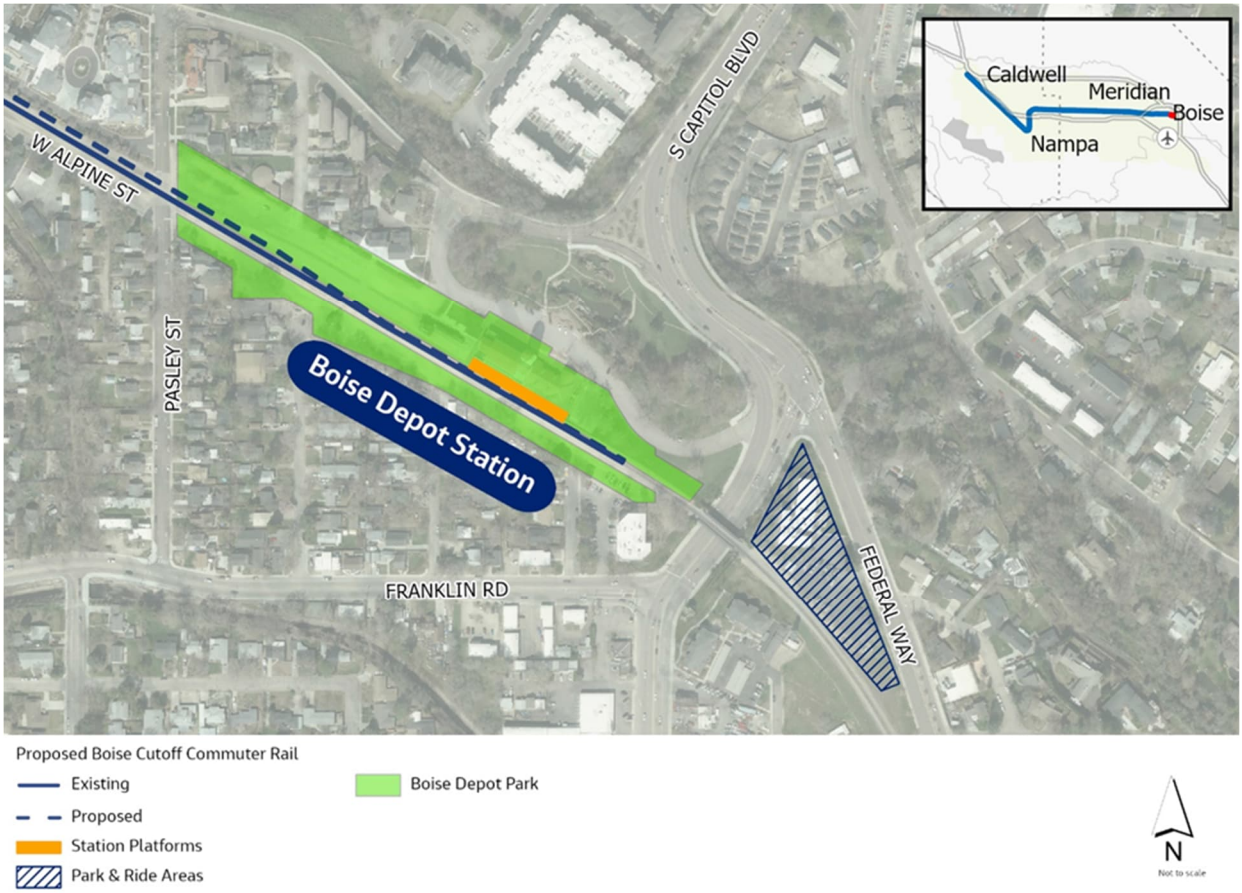
To evaluate potential impacts of the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative on recreational resources, a planning-level project footprint was overlaid with boundaries of public parks, open space, athletic fields, greenways, trails, and other recreation facilities. This analysis identified potential effects on an unnamed multiuse pathway located near North Milwaukee Street (Figure 1-2) and to Boise Depot Park (Figure 1-3). No impacts to Section 6(f) resources are anticipated, because none are proximate to the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative.

It is unclear whether Section 4(f) would apply to either the unnamed trail or Boise Depot Park. Section 4(f) is applicable to "significant" publicly owned recreation resources that are open to the public and for which the primary purpose is recreation. Section 4(f) may be applicable to the unnamed trail if the primary purpose of the trail is recreation and the City of Boise determines that the trail plays an important role in meeting the recreation objectives of the City. The Boise Depot Park is operated by the Boise Parks and

Recreation Department and described as a “public ceremonial or meeting space and historic site,” which indicates that recreation may not be the primary purpose (City of Boise n.d.). However, as discussed in Section 1.2, Section 4(f) would apply to the depot because of its historic significance.

Figure 1-2. Unnamed Pathway Located near North Milwaukee Street

Figure 1-3. Boise Depot Park



Next Steps

As the project advances from the PEL Study into NEPA, comprehensive inventory, mapping, and assessment of park and recreational resources is needed to identify potential impacts and appropriate mitigation strategies. If impacts to Section 4(f) properties are unavoidable, a formal Section 4(f) finding will be prepared in coordination with the FTA and the official with jurisdiction over the affected resources.

If new properties funded through the LWCF are identified during NEPA, a proposed conversion to non-recreational use would require approval from the National Park Service and must meet strict criteria, including evaluation of alternatives and provision of suitable replacement land

1.4 Transit Noise and Vibration

Transit noise and vibration are assessed using the procedures outlined in the FTA *Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (2018). The FTA has a multistep process for evaluating noise and vibration for NEPA approvals based on the type and scale of the project, stage of project development, and environmental setting.

Noise- and vibration-sensitive receptors are identified within a study area based on the project type and screening distance. Noise and vibration-sensitive receptors are categorized by land use type based on how sensitive the land uses are to noise. For example, most commercial and industrial uses are not considered noise sensitive because activities within these buildings are generally compatible with higher noise levels. However, residential uses and outdoor amphitheaters are more sensitive to disturbance from noise. Land use categories for transit vibration assessment include television stations, recording studios, and facilities with vibration-sensitive equipment such as hospitals. Residential and other land uses where people typically sleep are also considered in a vibration assessment, but are considered less sensitive to vibration than the other land uses.

Existing Conditions

Noise

Development patterns within the study area range from rural to urban. Current and future land use in the study area is primarily residential, with commercial areas located at city centers and along major roadways, and industrial areas mostly concentrated near the interstate and rail corridors (Figure 1-4 and Figure 1-5). Land uses with noise-sensitive receptors exist along the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative corridor. Pockets of residential land use, which is more sensitive to noise than other uses like commercial or industrial, are spread throughout the corridor.

Typical noise sources along the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail corridor include train noises such as diesel locomotive engines, sounding of horns near at-grade crossings, and rolling interaction of train wheels over rails, as well as noises from surrounding industries, businesses, neighborhoods, and local roadways. These existing noise sources collectively contribute to the ambient noise background, which is used as the basis for determining how much noise the project adds to the ambient conditions.

Vibration

Categories of vibration receptors with higher sensitivity include buildings with vibration-sensitive research and manufacturing, vibration-sensitive equipment, special-use facilities, or historic properties that are very sensitive to vibration. Communication with businesses and institutions is often required to confirm the presence of vibration-sensitive receptors.

Figure 1-4. Current Land Use

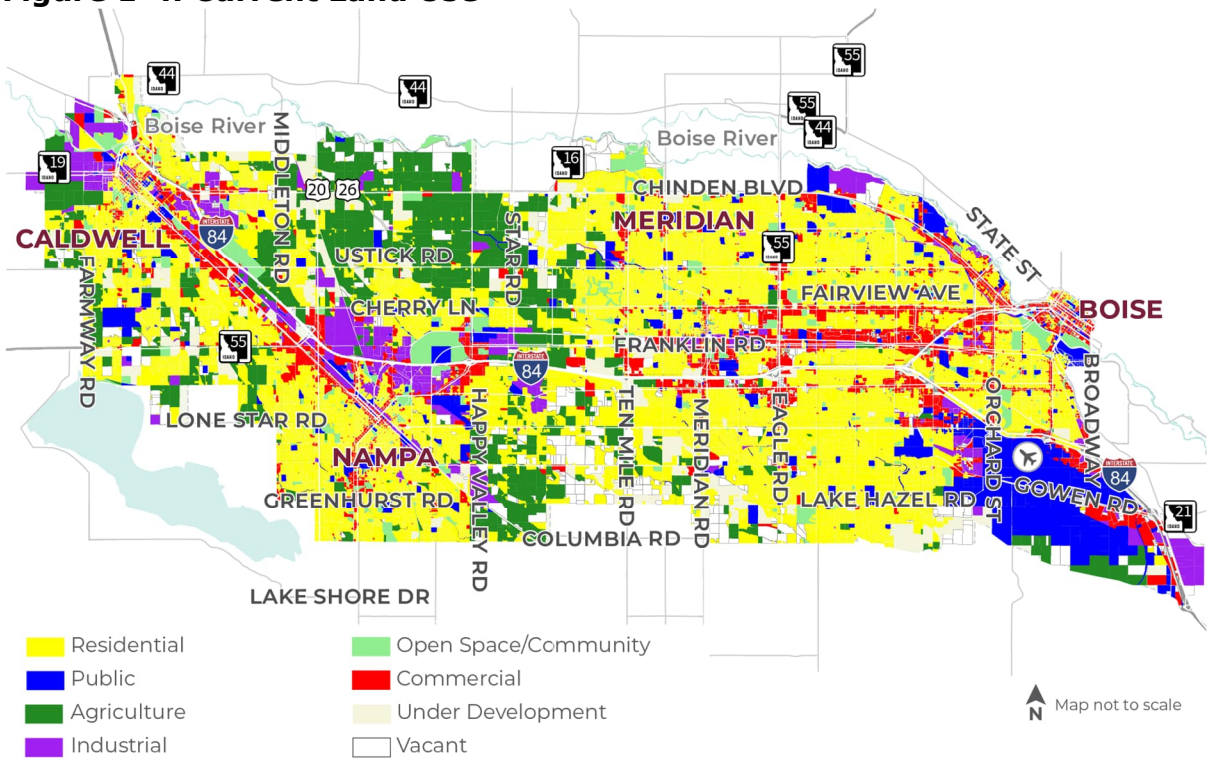
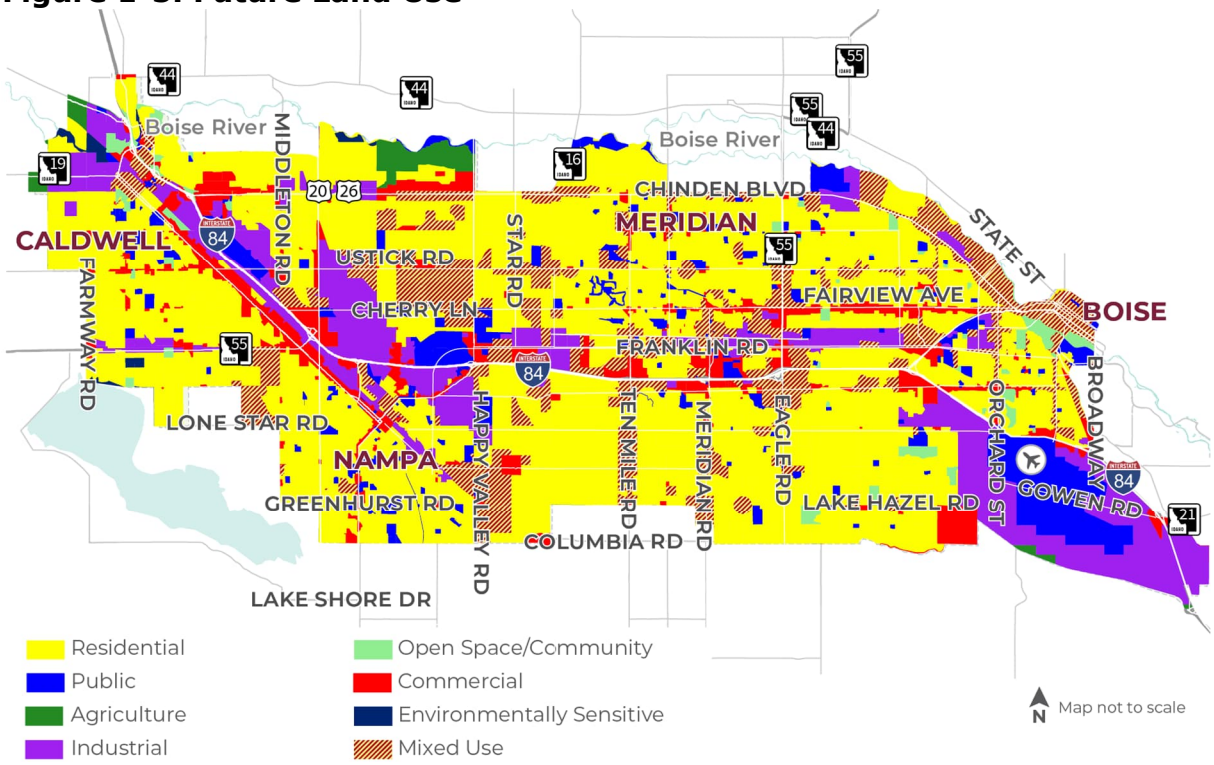


Figure 1-5. Future Land Use



Potential Impacts

Noise

The amount of project-related noise heard by the community from rail operations would vary due to a number of factors, including the number of locomotives and/or cars, their speeds, the frequency of train pass-bys and time of day, intervening terrain and buildings, and the distance between the receptor and the track.

Along the route identified for the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative, noise from current freight operations varies based on the current level of freight activity. Current freight operations on the Boise Cutoff freight rail line between Boise and Nampa consist of a single train heading east departing from Nampa in the morning and returning in the afternoon. Daily freight operations along the UPRR mainline between Nampa and Caldwell are more substantial. The planning-level operations plan for the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative assumes there would be passenger trains running 16 hours a day at 30-minute headways on the weekdays, 14 hours a day at 60-minute headways on weekends, and 12 hours a day at 60-minute headways on holidays.[1] This equates to 64 trains per day passing by any given receptor on weekdays, 38 trains on weekends, and 24 trains on holidays. Noise-sensitive receptors located adjacent to the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative could experience noise impacts with the increase in train operations.

Noise levels are typically highest from horn noise near at-grade crossings. Along the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative, there are numerous at-grade crossings in and near residential neighborhoods in the following vicinities:

- In Boise between S Vista Avenue and S Orchard Street
- In Boise between N Hartmann Street and Allumbaugh Street
- In Meridian between N Meridian Road and McDermott Street, primarily along the north side of the railroad corridor
- In Nampa between Idaho Center Boulevard and E Karcher Road, primarily along the north side of the rail corridor
- In downtown Nampa
- Small pockets in Nampa and Caldwell between W Karcher Road and S Lake Avenue
- In downtown Caldwell

Another source of noise associated with the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative would be the stations. The conceptual design for the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative includes nine stations along the rail corridor. Park and ride lots are proposed at seven of the nine stations. Vehicle traffic is likely to increase near these stations, which may result in noise increases.

[1] The headway refers to the interval or period of time between trains along a transit route.

Vibration

The level of vibration received at a neighboring structure is a function of the type of trains, track system and condition, speeds, distance from track, typical geological condition, and type of receiving structure. Vibration, which may be felt by adjacent properties, is typically generated as a result of the travel of train wheels rolling over rail. Ground-borne vibration can be a common concern with rail transit projects. Vibration waves can propagate through the ground into nearby buildings by noticeable movement of building floors, rattling windows, shaking of items on shelves or hanging on walls, and rumbling sounds. Ground-borne vibration is more common in close proximity buildings and depends on the local geology and structural details of the building. If highly sensitive vibration receptors are identified adjacent to the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative, they could experience vibration impacts.

Next Steps

Noise-sensitive receptors are present in the study area, and vibration-sensitive receptors are also likely present. Therefore, a general noise assessment or detailed noise analysis (as defined in the FTA manual [2018]) would be conducted depending on the project information available. For this type and size of a project, a general noise assessment is recommended to examine potential noise and vibration impacts. However, a detailed noise analysis may be needed for any areas with severe impacts or where noise mitigation is recommended. For rail assessment, data collection would include the number of train pass-bys, number of vehicles per train, train speeds in miles per hour, guideway configuration, and location of highway and at-grade street crossings. For stationary sources, data collection would include number of layover tracks and hour of use, number of buses, and capacity of parking lot.

Mitigation measures should be evaluated for severe impacts. Treatments should be considered where feasible at the noise source, along the source-to-receiver propagation path, or at the receiver. The most effective treatment is applied at the noise source, including, but not limited to, resilient or damped wheels, vehicle skirts, undercar absorption, and quiet fan design and placement. Establishing quiet zones can also reduce the occurrence of horn noise where the rail line crosses roads at-grade. Public authorities seeking to establish quiet zones must obtain approval from the Federal Railroad Administration.

1.5 Air Quality

Air quality is regulated at the federal level through the 1970 Clean Air Act (*United States Code* Title 42 Section 85) and its amendments from 1977 and 1990 (CAAA). The U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted the CAAA and has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six criteria pollutants—ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead to protect public health and welfare.

The CAAA requires the EPA to classify regions with respect to each criteria pollutant. A region that is meeting the NAAQS for a given pollutant is designated as being in

attainment for that pollutant. If the region violates (does not meet) the NAAQS for a given pollutant, it is designated as being in nonattainment for that pollutant.

The 1977 CAAA required each state to develop and maintain a state implementation plan (SIP) for each criteria pollutant that violates the applicable NAAQS. The SIP serves as a tool to avoid and minimize emissions of pollutants and to achieve compliance with the NAAQS.

The transportation conformity requirement is based on CAAA Section 176(c), which prohibits the USDOT and other federal agencies from funding, authorizing, or approving plans, programs, or projects that do not conform to the SIP for attaining the NAAQS for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. Conformity requirements apply only in nonattainment and maintenance areas of the NAAQS.

In addition to criteria pollutants, the EPA also regulates air toxic emissions. Although there are no established criteria for determining when mobile source air toxics (MSATs) emissions related to transit projects should be considered a problem, the Federal Highway Administration guidance (FHWA 2023) provides an approved approach to evaluating potential effects.

Existing Conditions

The study area is within Treasure Valley, in Ada and Canyon counties, which are designated as attainment areas by the EPA for all criteria pollutants. However, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) has identified Treasure Valley as an area of concern for $PM_{2.5}$ and ozone because increases in these pollutants are approaching limits established by the CAAA.

The Treasure Valley, which is the largest and most populated area in Idaho, is subject to wintertime inversions that trap cold air and pollutants near the ground, resulting in poor air quality (IDEQ 2024). This area also experiences poor air quality during the summer due to calm wind and high temperatures producing accumulations of ozone near the ground. There are three air monitoring networks within Ada and Canyon counties: Nampa, Meridian, and Garden City (IDEQ 2024). All three of these monitors report $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations, and the Meridian monitor reports ozone concentrations. Exceedances of these pollutants have been reported at these monitoring stations over the past several years.

Potential Impacts

Implementation of high-capacity transit in the study area is likely to be federally funded and regionally significant but is within an attainment area and would not be subject to conformity requirements. Air quality impacts under NEPA are not likely because projects that improve operations of highway, transit, or freight without adding substantial new capacity or without creating a facility that has meaningfully increased MSAT emissions are considered to have low potential MSAT effects.

Next Steps

IDEQ has identified Treasure Valley as an area of concern for $PM_{2.5}$ and ozone because increases in these pollutants are approaching limits established by the CAAA. If the attainment status in the study area should change for any criteria pollutants prior to NEPA, the project could be subject to conformity requirements during NEPA. Interagency consultation may be required to determine if the project is subject to conformity.

While not anticipated, if the proposed project is funded and approved by the Federal Railroad Administration, then the project would also be subject to general conformity requirements. General conformity applicability analysis requires quantification of direct and indirect construction and operation emissions for the project in tons per year and in comparison of those emission levels to baseline emission levels. An action is exempt from further general conformity analysis (i.e., the action is presumed to conform) if the total net project-related emissions (construction and operation) would be less than the de minimis thresholds in 40 CFR 93.153(b). If the net emissions increases associated with the project exceed the applicable general conformity de minimis levels for the peak year or any milestone year for attainment of NAAQS, a formal general conformity demonstration is required. An action that would produce emissions that exceed conformity thresholds is required to demonstrate conformity with the SIP through mitigation or other accepted practices.

1.6 Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials include substances or materials determined by the EPA to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, or property. Hazardous materials may exist within the study area at facilities that generate, store, or dispose of these substances, or at locations of past releases of these substances. Examples of hazardous materials include asbestos, lead-based paint, heavy metals, dry-cleaning solvents, and petroleum hydrocarbons (for example, gasoline and diesel fuels), all of which could be harmful to human health and the environment. NEPA requires consideration of environmental effects of hazardous materials. State and federal regulations govern the identification, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste.

Existing Conditions

The IDEQ Terradex Facility Mapper, reviewed in July 2024, includes statewide information on sites known to generate or store hazardous materials or known to have released hazardous materials into the environment that may require remediation (IDEQ n.d.). The EPA EnviroAtlas was also searched to identify additional documented facilities or sites reporting to federal agencies, such as superfund sites on the National Priority List (EPA n.d.). Review of these mapping databases identified many hazardous materials sites along the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail corridor. Existing soil and/or groundwater contamination associated with these sites may be present along the Boise Cutoff route. No National Priorities List Superfund sites were identified near the route.

Five hazardous material sites were identified at locations where potential property acquisition may be required for the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative. The sites and their hazardous materials database listings are included in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2. Hazardous Materials Sites Where Property Acquisition May Occur

Site Name	Site Address	Database Program
Boise Station	1701 Eastover Terrace Boise, ID	• UST • RCRA Hazardous Waste Site
Old Town and County Bakery	3005 Crescent Rim Drive Boise, Idaho	• UST
Meridian Station	614 North Main Street Meridian, ID	• RCRA Hazardous Waste Site
College of Western Idaho	5500 East Opportunity Drive Nampa, ID	• General Remediation • RCRA Hazardous Waste Site
UPRR Nampa	1313 North 1st Street Nampa, ID	• LUST • UST • General Remediation • RCRA Hazardous Waste Site

Notes:
LUST = leaking underground storage tank
RCRA = Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
UST = underground storage tank

Potential Impacts

The identified hazardous material sites are typical of an urban corridor. No sites were identified where complete avoidance would be recommended, such as a National Priority List superfund site. The sites listed in Table 1-2 have a moderate risk to impact excavations during construction and property acquisition based on the potential presence of soil and groundwater contamination on the properties. Impacts may include increased costs associated with site investigations, remediation prior to or during construction, disposal of contaminated media, and health and safety considerations. These five sites present the most apparent risk for impacts because they are associated with parcels with potential for acquisition/use. These may not be the only sites that have potential to impact the project. Additional investigation would be needed during the NEPA phase, as discussed in the following section. Other sites with potential for impacts may be identified as part of the investigation.

The conceptual design process identified 10 bridge structures that may require replacement to implement the project. Building structures may also require renovation or demolition. If structure demolition/renovation is warranted to construct the project, a regulated building materials survey (i.e., asbestos and lead surveys) would be required and may result in abatement projects.

Next Steps

Additional hazardous materials investigation would be needed to identify and mitigate potential impacts. Hazardous materials assessments during future NEPA phases will likely include a more comprehensive database records radius search and review of

historical land use records provided by Environmental Data Resources or a similar private company. Where substantial or full ROW acquisition is needed, American Society for Testing and Materials International standard environmental site assessments would be warranted prior to construction. In addition, subsurface investigations may be needed within the proposed construction footprint to determine the extent of potential contaminated soil and/or groundwater contamination. The investigations would inform about disposal options and cost as well as health and safety measures. Regulated building material surveys would be needed if structures are proposed for demolition/renovation and may result in abatement projects. Health and safety plans and material management plans may be required by the contractor depending on the findings and severity of the potential impacts.

1.7 Aquatic Resources

Aquatic resources is an inclusive term for wetlands and surface waters. Aquatic resources are protected under Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act of 1899 (RHA) (33 CFR 322) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 CFR 323). The RHA regulates activities that alter navigable waters—such as dredging, filling, or building structures, while the CWA governs the discharge of dredged or fill materials into jurisdictional wetlands and waters.

Existing Conditions

Wetlands and surface waters in the study area were identified using national datasets, including the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), NRCS soil surveys, and the U.S. Geological Survey National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). Within the study area, data from national inventories identified 5 lakes, 230 freshwater ponds, 253 emergent wetlands, 89 forested or shrub wetlands, and 435 riverine features. These linear features are spread throughout the study area. During the ERWG review, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) confirmed that no surface waters in the study area are subject to Section 10 of the RHA.

Numerous surface waters including creeks, canals, and laterals intersect with the proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative corridor. Wetlands identified by the USFWS NWI within the planning-level project footprint of this alternative are minimal.

Potential Impacts

Using a desktop analysis based on the NWI and NHD, the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative would intersect with 24 NHD-classified waterways. The alternative may have permanent and/or temporary impacts to nearly all of these streams and waterways and may be subject to Section 404 of the CWA. **Error! Reference source not found.** through **Error! Reference source not found.** illustrate three locations along the rail corridor where existing aquatic resources are concentrated, indicating areas with a higher potential for aquatic impacts.

Figure 1-6. Aquatic Resources and Floodplains Near Meridian

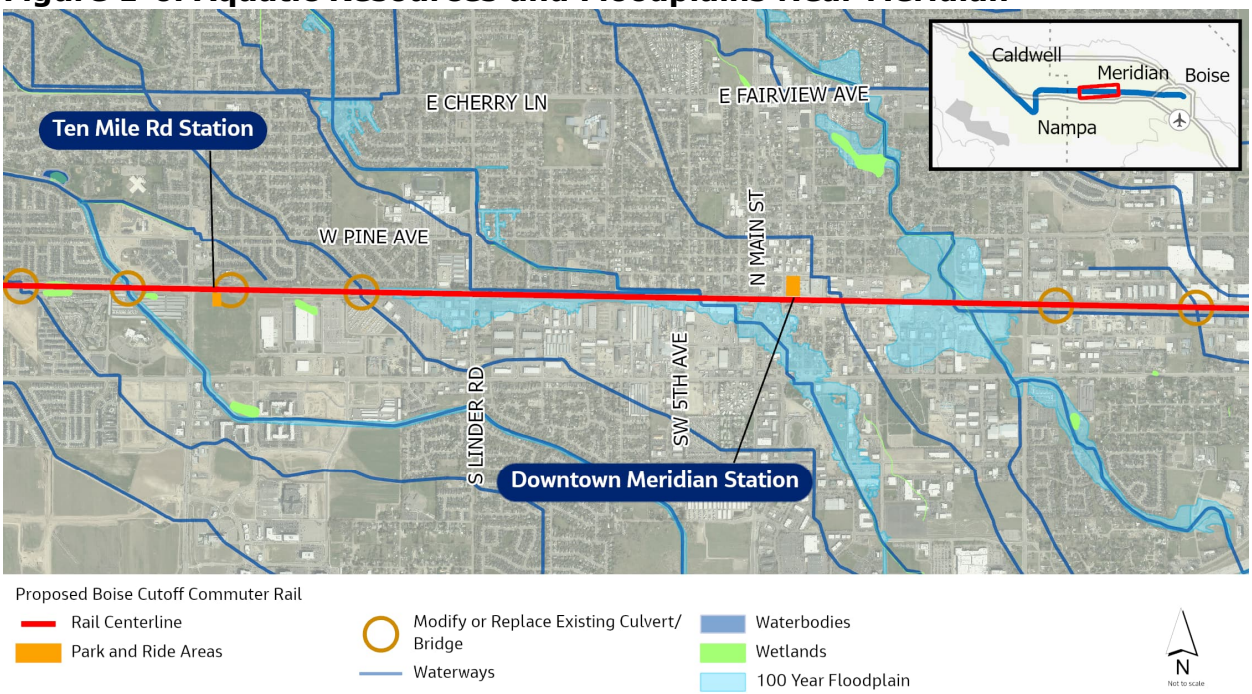


Figure 1-7. Aquatic Resources and Floodplains Near Nampa

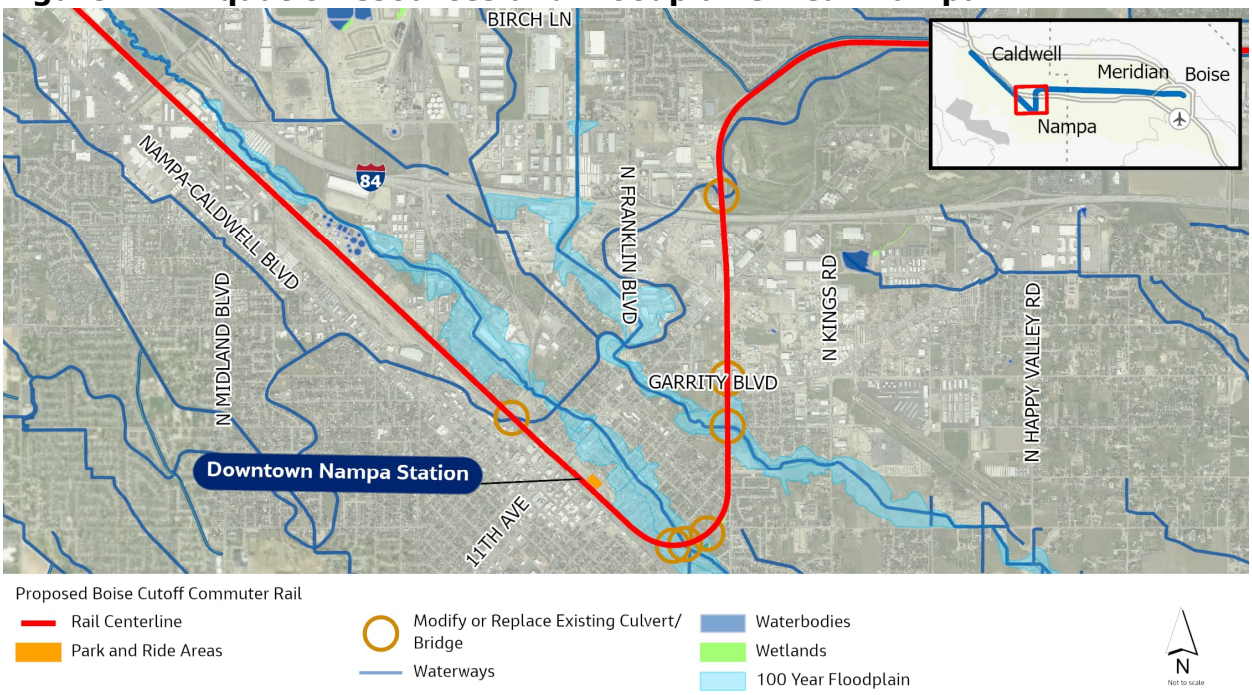


Figure 1-8. Aquatic Resources and Floodplains Near Caldwell

The conceptual design process identified eight bridges along the rail corridor spanning the various creeks and canals that would need to be modified or replaced to accommodate a second parallel track for the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative. These include two crossings of Indian Creek, three crossings of Phyllis Canal, two crossings at the Ridenbaugh Canal, and one crossing at the Electric Light Switch Lateral. In addition to these bridges, modification or replacement of approximately 16 culverts is anticipated, primarily associated with creek and canal crossings.

The alternative is also estimated to impact approximately 0.24 acre of NWI-mapped wetlands. This estimate should be considered preliminary. Due to the conceptual nature of the current design and the limitations of NWI data, the actual extent and location of wetlands within the project area remains uncertain. Based on a review of aerial imagery, the highest potential to encounter aquatic resources, including wetland areas, along the rail corridor are where it parallels the Indian Creek in several locations between Nampa and Caldwell as depicted on Figure 1-7 and Figure 1-8.

Next Steps

As the project advances into the NEPA phase, desktop findings for wetlands and surface waters will be verified through field surveys to determine the precise location and type of aquatic resources. Field delineations are required to accurately identify and verify wetland boundaries, and more design is needed to determine the full extent of potential impacts. Future design efforts will focus on avoiding and minimizing impacts.

Coordination with the USACE will be necessary to identify features regulated under the CWA. Delineations and functional assessments will be conducted during future NEPA studies to establish the boundaries of wetlands and other waters of the United States and determine affected wetland types and functional values. Per Section 404 of the

CWA, impacts to wetlands and other waters of the United States must be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. All impacted wetlands will be mitigated in accordance with current USACE mitigation policies and Section 404 Permit conditions. Because no waters in the study area fall under the RHA, no further review under that statute is required.

1.8 Floodplains

Floodplains are low-lying areas next to waterbodies that are inundated when the capacity of the waterbody is exceeded. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) establishes and maps flood zones and uses the 100-year flood standard to guide floodplain management and insurance, promoting consistent practices nationwide through the National Flood Insurance Program. A 100-year flood is the level of flood water expected to be equaled or exceeded every 100 years on average; thus it has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year. Changes to the floodplain, like construction or adding fill, are regulated because they can raise water levels and affect areas not previously at risk. Within the floodplain, a regulatory floodway includes the river channel and nearby land needed to safely carry floodwaters without significantly raising water levels. Communities must regulate development in these areas to prevent upstream flooding.

Existing Conditions

Potential The FEMA national flood hazard layer, a geospatial database showing effective flood maps, was queried via the FEMA Map Service Center (FEMA 2024) to identify flood hazard zones in the study area. Approximately 95% of the study area is classified as Zone X, indicating minimal flood hazard. Around 5% of the study area falls within special flood hazard areas (Zones A, AE, AH, and AO), which are considered high-risk and subject to a 1% annual chance of flooding. Within these high-risk zones, about 1% of the study area is designated as regulated floodway, all located within mapped AE zones.

The proposed Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail corridor crosses and parallels several floodplains that contribute to localized flood risk, with key areas concentrated in Meridian, Nampa, and Caldwell, as shown on Figure 1-6 through Figure 1-8. Floodplains within these areas are primarily associated with Fivemile Creek, Eightmile Lateral, and Ninemile Creek near Meridian; Mason and Indian Creek near Nampa; and various locations along Indian Creek as the rail alignment turns northwest toward Caldwell.

Potential Impacts

The Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative may impact approximately 2.6 acres of designated floodplain, primarily due to its alignment parallelling segments of Indian Creek and its crossings of several waterways, including Indian Creek, Mason Creek, Ninemile Creek, and Fivemile Creek. These impacts occur where the alignment intersects broader sections of the floodplain and follows natural drainage corridors. Additionally, the conceptual design identified nine locations in or directly adjacent to designated floodplains where existing bridge or culverts would need to be modified or replaced to accommodate the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative. These include the

Eightmile Lateral, Tenmile Creek, Mason Creek, 3rd Street North, two crossings of Indian Creek, E. Railroad Street, Caldwell Highline Canal, and Notus Canal.

Next Steps

As the project transitions from the PEL Study into environmental review under NEPA, ongoing coordination with local planning departments and agencies that enforce federal floodplain regulations will be needed to address impacts to floodplains and floodways and obtain necessary permits.

Floodplain development permits will be needed from the local jurisdictions that enforce federal floodplain regulations. Coordination with these agencies will be conducted throughout the design process regarding potential impacts and permitting of work within floodplains and floodways. Floodplain modeling would likely be required to evaluate how the project might affect floodplains at crossings. Construction in these areas could lead to changes in existing floodplain or floodway boundaries. In addition to floodplain development permits, some projects may require FEMA approval through a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) before construction and a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) after construction. A CLOMR is needed if the project would increase the base flood elevation (BFE) by more than 1.0 foot in Zone AE areas without a designated floodway, as required by 44 CFR 60.3(c)(10). In areas with a designated floodway, any increase in BFE is prohibited unless a zero-rise analysis proves no impact.

1.9 Sensitive Species

Sensitive species or special status species include federally and state-designated wildlife and plant species, and species that are specifically protected by regulations or policies, which include the following:

- The Endangered Species Act, which helps prevent the extinction of vulnerable plant and animal species by supporting their recovery and long-term survival.
- Idaho's State Wildlife Action Plan, which provides voluntary strategies to conserve the state's most at-risk species and their habitats. The plan also helps avoid future federal listings by encouraging proactive, locally led conservation efforts.
- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which safeguard migratory birds and their nesting areas, especially important during construction activities like vegetation clearing or bridge removal.

Existing Conditions

To determine which federally and state-listed species and migratory birds could potentially occur in the study area or be affected by activities in the study area, a desktop review was conducted. Online sources reviewed include the following:

- USFWS online Information, Planning, and Conservation (IPaC) decision support system (2024)

- IDFG, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information Service, Species Diversity Database (2024)
- Online IDFG species data were reviewed, but occurrence data were not requested due to the size of the study area. These data will be collected as part of project-level analyses during future NEPA phases.

Wildlife in the area includes state-ranked species, which are tracked by the IDFG through its Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information Service database (IDFG 2024). These rankings help identify species that may be vulnerable due to limited populations, habitat threats, or other factors. While Idaho does not have laws enforcing protection of these state-listed species, conservation actions are encouraged whenever feasible.

Based on a review of the USFWS online IPaC system, three federally listed species, the North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), and slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*), and one federally proposed species, the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), have the potential to occur in or be affected by activities within the study area. Additionally, critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass has been mapped in the southeastern corner of the study area, near the point where I-84 exits the study area boundary.

During review of the *Environmental Resources Report* (COMPASS 2024), the EPA inquired about wildlife movement corridors. However, data on migration routes and wildlife-vehicle conflicts were not collected due to the highly urbanized nature of the overall study area. According to the IDFG, while big game species may occasionally be present in the northeastern portion of the study area, wildlife migration through the study area is not considered a significant concern (Flack, pers. comm. 2024).

Several migratory bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act may be present in the study area, as identified through the USFWS IPaC resource list (USFWS 2024). The full list can be found in Appendix E of the *Environmental Resources Report* (COMPASS 2024). Much of the study area is urbanized and unlikely to support nesting habitats, however, suitable conditions may still exist along riparian corridors. Some migratory bird species may also nest on man-made structures such as bridges or buildings, and ground-nesting birds could be present in agricultural or undeveloped areas.

Potential Impacts

Construction of the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative would occur primarily within the existing railroad ROW and previously disturbed land where park and rides are proposed. Disturbance to natural areas resulting in habitat loss to state or federally protected species would be limited to riparian corridors where the alignment parallels or crosses waterways. Because this alternative would follow the existing freight rail ROW, no new habitat fragmentation would occur as a result of implementing the Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail Alternative. Although the proposed improvements would occur along and within riparian areas, impacts to migratory bird species would be minimal given the existing freight rail operations in these areas.

Next Steps

During the NEPA process, updated lists and occurrence data of special status species and state-listed species should be obtained to identify additions or removals since the PEL Study. Updated lists and occurrence data will guide further analysis and coordination with the USFWS, IDFG, and the Idaho Office of Species Conservation to determine appropriate methodologies for identifying habitat and assessing potential impacts. As part of this coordination, field surveys would occur to evaluate habitat conditions and potentially confirm the presence or absence of listed species. Consultation with the USFWS and IDFG is anticipated to assess potential impacts and identify appropriate conservation measures.

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LET'S RIDE
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