



Working together to plan for the future

News Release

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High-Capacity Transit: COMPASS Board of Directors Selects Commuter Rail to Advance for Further Study

Meridian, Idaho – The Board of Directors of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) has selected commuter rail on the Boise Cutoff alignment as the “preliminary locally preferred alternative” for future high-capacity transit service connecting the Cities of Boise, Meridian, Nampa, and Caldwell south of the Boise River.

This decision, made in its August 18, 2025, Board meeting, represents a significant milestone toward the development of high-capacity transit in Ada and Canyon Counties and is the primary outcome of the “Let’s Ride Treasure Valley” study, underway since January 2024.

The need for the study is grounded in forecasted growth resulting in 1.1 million people in Ada and Canyon Counties by 2050 and in the distinct east/west commute pattern, due to the linear nature of the valley.

“Let’s Ride Treasure Valley” included three rounds of analysis, each with public feedback, to narrow options from 10 potential routes to one: commuter rail along the existing rail corridor.

“The ‘Let’s Ride’ study is a Planning and Environmental Linkages study,” explains COMPASS Planning Team Lead and project manager Austin Miller. “It is a precursor to a larger study as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. By narrowing to one ‘preliminary’ preferred option now, a future NEPA study can be conducted faster and more efficiently,” explains Miller.

“Both the technical analysis and public feedback overwhelmingly supported commuter rail as the best option for the valley,” states COMPASS Executive Director Craig Raborn. “That gives me a great deal of confidence that selecting commuter rail was the right thing to do. However, it is ‘preliminary’; we are not ‘locked in’ to that decision — if something significant were to change, the COMPASS Board certainly can, and will, consider that before final decisions are made.”

Work on the study will now focus on writing the final report, including outlining future steps beyond the scope of the current “Let’s Ride” study. The final study is expected to be complete in February 2026, at which time it will be brought to the COMPASS Board of Directors for official adoption.

Before moving on to the next significant step in the planning process – conducting a NEPA study – the region will need to cultivate an ongoing, dedicated funding source for transit. “Predictable funding for transit is something that COMPASS has advocated for over the past 20 years and we’ll continue to work with the Idaho Legislature to secure a dedicated funding source. Without funding, this project will not advance and our region will miss out on a proven way to accommodate the growth we know is coming,” concludes Raborn.

More information about the “Let’s Ride Treasure Valley” study can be found online at <https://compassidaho.org/public-transportation-high-capacity-transit/>.

COMPASS is the forum for regional collaboration in southwest Idaho that helps maintain a healthy and economically vibrant region, offering people choices in how and where they live, work, play, and travel. Among other programs, COMPASS conducts regional transportation planning and budgets federal transportation funding for Ada and Canyon Counties.

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