



Working together to plan for the future

News Release

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COMPASS Receives National Competitive Grant to Enhance Transportation Safety

Meridian, ID – The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) is proud to announce the receipt of a nationally competitive *Safe Streets and Roads for All* supplemental planning grant.

The \$276,000 grant will provide funding to develop a system-wide prioritized installment plan for leading pedestrian intervals, accessible pedestrian signals, and other low-cost crosswalk improvements to help make Treasure Valley roads safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and other users.

COMPASS applied for this project, called "SPEARS" (Safe Pedestrian Intersection Prioritization for Enhanced Road Safety) in May and received notification of the award on September 5, 2024. "Federal grants are highly competitive," states COMPASS Grant Writer Matt Carlson. "This is the second grant COMPASS has received through the *Safe Streets and Roads for All* program. Grant funding such as this can help us move the needle toward zero deaths and serious injuries."

"The project will focus on simple, low-cost tools that can save lives," explains COMPASS Principal Planner Hunter Mulhall. "A leading pedestrian interval changes how a traffic signal functions to give pedestrians a few seconds head start when crossing the street. Accessible pedestrian signals help people who need a little extra assistance to safely cross, such as the 'wait' and 'walk' voice you hear at crosswalks or positioning the call button so that it can easily be reached by a child or someone in a wheelchair."

COMPASS' Regional Safety Action Plan, currently under development, highlights the disproportionate consequences of traffic crashes on certain road users, such as pedestrians, who are involved in less than 1% of crashes, but make up nearly 8% of fatalities and serious injuries. The Regional Safety Action Plan, funded with a similar national grant in 2023, identifies locations with the highest likelihood of serious crashes and will provide a toolkit of strategies to help save lives at those locations.

"The Ada County Highway District, the Idaho Transportation Department and the Cities of Caldwell and Nampa all own and/or operate traffic signals, and many locations already have one or both of these types of devices in use," states Mulhall. "We will work with them to develop a data-driven prioritized installment plan to improve pedestrian safety at intersections across the Treasure Valley."

COMPASS anticipates receiving the grant funding in early 2025 and completing the plan by 2026. Local agencies can then use the plan to strategically install these safety devices at the valley's most dangerous intersections to help make the roads safer for everyone.