

1 "Welcome" Poster:

Let's Ride Treasure Valley.

Please review the information.

We want to hear from you! Be sure to complete the questionnaire and provide your feedback.

2 "Study Background" Poster

Let's Ride Treasure Valley is a partnership between the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) and its member agencies to further examine a future high-capacity transit connection east to west across the region south of the Boise River.

The poster contains a map showing the study area from Caldwell to Boise, south of the Boise River.

3 "Past Planning" Poster

This study builds on several previous planning efforts

2003 - Rail Corridor Evaluation Study. Initial examination of rail transit options.

2009 - Treasure Valley High-Capacity Transit Study. Advanced examination of transit corridors (rail, bus, etc.).

2020 - Treasure Valley High-Capacity Transit Study Update. Update to the 2009 study with new data.

2021 - COMPASS conducted the All Aboard! Survey

It asked Treasure Valley stakeholders about their travel patterns and thoughts on high-capacity transit. Over 11,700 people responded. Some potential benefits of high-capacity transit they shared included:

- Increased mobility and accessibility for people who don't drive
- Positive environmental impacts
- Reduced drinking and driving
- Access to special events
- Saves time, money, and stress

4 “Planning and Environmental Linkages Study” Poster

What is a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study?

The PEL process is a formal federal process to help streamline future environmental analysis. The process is guided by the project partners and considers:

- Transportation issues, opportunities, and priorities
- Environmental resources concerns and opportunities
- Stakeholder and public input

The general steps include:

- Collect - Collect information to define the transportation problem the project seeks to address.
- Utilize - Use information to develop a range of potential transportation solutions including routes and transit technologies.
- Analyze – Analyze how routes perform in the future transportation system
- Refine - Screen routes against certain factors such as reliability, environmental impacts, and future development and planning.
- Develop - Develop recommendations for the project to move forward including potential phasing.

Post-PEL project steps:

1. NEPA Analysis Preliminary Design (pending project funding)
2. Final Design
3. Construction

5 “Purpose Statement” Poster

The purpose of the project is to improve the mobility, accessibility, and efficiency of east-west travel between Boise, Meridian, Nampa, and Caldwell, providing reliable and convenient high-capacity transit service that links key origins and destinations with strong potential for transit use.

Key Terms:

- Mobility: Traveling from one place to another
- Accessibility: Ease of entering and exiting a transit stop/station
- Efficiency: Transit working well and organized, without wasting time or energy
- Convenience: Making transit simple and intuitive for the user
- Reliability: The transit service arrives and departs as scheduled

6 "Need" Poster

Why is High-Capacity Transit Needed in our Region?

1. Lessen future stress on the region's transportation infrastructure due to population and employment growth.

By 2050, the city areas of Boise, Meridian, Nampa, and Caldwell (within the study area) will account for 78% of the region's jobs

Ada County grew by 81% between 2000 and 2023 and is expected to grow by another 35% by 2050, from 545 thousand in 2023 to 733 thousand in 2050

Canyon County grew by 95% between 2000 and 2023 and is expected to grow by another 40% by 2050, from 257 thousand in 2023 to 359 thousand in 2050

2. Provide greater mobility choice given the region's forecasted deteriorating travel times.

By 2050, travel times between Caldwell and downtown Boise are projected to increase by 50% (peak morning/ evening directions)

Transit reliability will continue to degrade with growing congestion.

3. Support the region's east-west travel patterns

The region's focused East-West travel patterns will persist between the region's business, governmental, cultural, and educational centers.

By 2050, 31% of all study area commute trips will focus on downtown Boise.

7 "Tiered Process" Poster

Tier 1. Fatal Flaw Evaluation. Answers "yes" or "no" if the route supports the purpose and need.

Tier 2. Detailed Evaluation. Provides a detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis and ranking of the routes.

Tier 3. Final Options. Identifies the top three performing routes for final evaluation and modeling.

Tier 3 eventually will lead to a future National Environmental Policy Act study.

The process becomes increasingly more detailed at each tier.

Tier 1:

Routes are examined to determine if they meet the purpose for the project. If the answer is "yes," they continue to Tier 2.

Tier 2:

Each route is refined based on Tier 1 input and assigned a type of transit vehicles (called "modes" e.g., light rail, bus rapid transit, commuter rail). The routes and associated modes are compared to one other, with the top three performing options continuing to Tier 3.

Tier 3:

The top three performing options are further refined and evaluated in more detail.

8 "Tier 1 Evaluation" Poster

The Tier 1 Evaluation asked three questions.

Does this route...

Improve regional mobility and accessibility for east-west travel across the study area?

Provide convenient high-capacity transit service that links key origins and destinations with strong potential for transit use in Boise, Meridian, Nampa, and Caldwell?

Provide efficient and reliable high-capacity transit service across the study area?

9 “Tier 1 Community Feedback”

COMPASS held two open houses and gathered feedback through an online public survey in fall 2024 that received over 300 responses.

Feedback highlights included strong consensus on the need for improved high-capacity transit solutions to address rapid population growth and traffic congestion in the region. Most survey respondents agreed or mostly agreed (an average of 94%) with the purpose and need, goals and objectives, and route proposals.

Respondents ranked the five goals in order of importance. The results are:

1. Provide more ways to travel
2. Connect to places with more people and places people want to go
3. Provide more transit, bike, and walking/rolling routes to more destinations
4. Make sure transit arrives and departs as scheduled and
5. Ensure that projects are compatible with various funding programs or other relevant opportunities.

Key takeaways from open-ended comments include:

- Ensure that transit options are accessible and affordable for all residents, particularly those who cannot drive and lower-income communities.
- Highlight the environmental benefits of transit solutions, and the potential risks of inaction, to build motivation and support.
- Use existing train tracks and depots to minimize costs and maximize efficiency.
- Maintain and improve existing transit routes that provide essential connections to people and destinations including Chinden, Ustick, Overland, and Victory.
- Connect to key destination routes, such as the Boise Airport, Boise State University, Micron Campus, parks/recreation, healthcare, and government offices.
- Concerns about securing adequate funding from state and federal sources.
- Provide pedestrian and bike connectivity to ensure an accessible transportation network.
- Transit solutions are urgently needed to alleviate worsening traffic congestion, particularly on major routes such as I-84 and Eagle Road.

10 “Tier 2 Mode Options” Poster

Mode defines the type of transit vehicle or technology that will be used. The initial mode options for consideration build on the previous high-capacity transit planning that narrowed the mode options to those listed below.

- Regional – commuter rail:
 - A heavy-rail vehicle operating within the existing freight rail corridor. Safety features are necessary due to potential interactions between freight and passenger services.
- Light rail transit (LRT):
 - A light-rail vehicle operating in its own dedicated corridor. Light rail cannot safely operate on freight rail tracks and would require significant separation from freight.
- Bus rapid transit (BRT): BRT can operate similarly to a train, using dedicated bus lanes with significant amenities at stops (raised platforms, benches, real-time displays, etc.). This study explores three potential configurations:
 - BRT – exclusive guideway:
 - Buses run in center lanes and are physically separated from other traffic.
 - BRT – business access and transit (BAT) lanes:
 - Buses run in outside lanes, primarily used for buses, but other vehicles may use the lanes to access adjacent businesses and residences or as right-turn lanes.
 - BRT – mixed traffic:
 - Buses run in general purpose lanes alongside other vehicles. Includes some improvements like BRT stop amenities and signal priority.

11 "Tier 2 Modes Evaluation" Poster

Step one was to assess the suitability of different modes for high-capacity transit within Treasure Valley using the following questions:

1. Does the mode improve transit connectivity and reliability?
2. How does the mode fit into the existing context of the corridor?
3. Is the mode financially feasible and constructable?

The mode evaluation proposes carrying forward regional commuter rail, bus rapid transit running in an exclusive guideway, and BRT running in a business access and transit lane. Light rail transit is not proposed to be carried forward because it is the most expensive mode, it requires the most space, there are safety considerations if operating in the freight rail corridor, and it is best suited for short urban routes. BRT running in mixed traffic is not proposed to be carried forward because it is less reliable service compared to other modes and requires more vehicles to maintain service frequencies.

Step 2 was to pair Tier 2 routes with appropriate mode. Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane was paired with BRT running in an exclusive guideway (center) and bus rapid transit running in a business access and transit lane (side). Franklin road was paired with BRT running in an exclusive guideway (center) and BRT running in a business access and transit lane (side). Interstate 84/184 was paired with BRT running in a business access and transit lane (side), and the Boise Cutoff rail corridor was paired with regional commuter rail.

12 "Tier 2 Route Options" Poster

The poster contains a map showing the study area from Caldwell to Boise, south of the Boise River with four routes listed: the Boise Cutoff, Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane, Franklin Road, Interstate 84/184.

13 "Tier 2 Evaluation" Poster

Step 3 was to assess each option along with its mode based on the criteria below that build on the goals and objectives from the purpose and needs.

Goals and Objectives/Measures

Goal: Improve Transit Connectivity and Mode Share

Objectives/Measures:

- Does the option connect key origins and destinations?
- Does the option provide access to important community resources (e.g., healthcare, grocery stores, government facilities)?
- Does the option connect areas with the potential for high transit usage?
- Does the option connect to population and employment centers?

Goal: Improve Transit Reliability and Expand Travel Choices and Mobility

Objectives/Measures:

- Does the option integrate with the existing and planned transit network?
- Is the option reliable and predictable for users?
- To what magnitude are traffic operations potentially impacted?
- Does the option connect to existing and planned trails, sidewalks, and/or bike lanes?

Goal: Develop compatible plans for high-capacity transit, land use, and transportation

Objectives/Measures:

- Does the option go through areas with transit supportive land uses (employment centers and higher density housing)?
- Does the option present environmental challenges?
- Does the option manage impacts and/or enhance opportunities to support freight/goods movement?

Goal: Advance Financially Feasible Solutions

Objectives/Measures:

- To what extent does this option align with available funding opportunities?
- Can the corridor be protected or preserved for future high-capacity transit service?
- How difficult would it be to implement the option?

14 "Tier 2 Evaluation Summary" Poster

The poster presents a table or matrix detailing the performance of each route/mode combination in the Tier 2 evaluation across fifteen different criteria. In summary, three options are recommended to proceed to the Tier 3 evaluation:

- Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane with center-running BRT Exclusive lanes
- I-84/I-184 with side-running BRT BAT lanes
- Boise Cutoff with commuter rail

A detailed summary of the results can be found on slides 15 and 16, both titled "Tier 2 Evaluation Results." The evaluation criteria for each goal area are summarized below:

Under the goal area titled "improve transit connectivity and mode share" there are five evaluation criteria.

1. Connects key origins and destinations (activity centers)?
2. Connects community services (healthcare, grocery stores, etc.)?
3. Connects area of potential high transit usage (seniors, students, etc.)?
4. Serves high share of the region's population (current and future)?
5. Serves high share of the region's jobs (current and future)?

Under the goal area titled "Improve transit reliability" there are two evaluation criteria:

1. Provides exclusivity and priority for transit?
2. Presents potential impacts to traffic?

Under the goal area titled "Expand travel choices and mobility" there are two evaluation criteria:

1. Integrates with the transit network?
2. Integrates with active transportation (bike, pedestrians)?

Under the goal area titled "Develop compatible plans for high-capacity transit, land use, and transportation" there are three evaluation criteria:

1. Serves planned existing or future transit supportive development opportunities?
2. Presents potential environmental issues?
3. Supports freight/goods movement?

Under the goal area titled "Advance financially feasible solutions" there are three evaluation criteria:

1. Aligns with federal, local, and private funding opportunities?
2. Preserves the corridor for future high-capacity transit service?
3. Increases complexity of implementation?

15 "Tier 2 Evaluation Results" Poster

Below describes the major findings from the Tier 2 evaluation. Each remaining option was evaluated against the criteria and each other.

Boise Cutoff: Commuter Rail

Benefits:

- Passes through key regional activity centers.
- Provides exclusive and reliable service, as trains get priority at crossings and travel in dedicated right of way.
- Fewer environmental challenges or impacts.
- Requires the least amount of property acquisitions.
- Track and crossing upgrades may improve freight efficiency.

Considerations:

- Serves lower share of the region's population and jobs (current and future).
- Feasibility dependent on negotiations with railroad owners and operators.

I-84/I-184: BRT-BAT

Benefits:

- Passes through communities with higher likelihood of using transit.
- Serves a higher share of the region's jobs (current and future).
- Provides exclusive and reliable service as buses would operate in dedicated lanes.
- Fewer anticipated traffic impacts.
- Intersects many existing and future transit routes.
- Fewer environmental challenges or impacts
- Requires fewer number of property acquisitions.
- Potentially lower cost to implement.

Considerations:

- Passes through fewer key regional activity centers.
- Intersects fewer existing and future pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane and Franklin Road: BRT-BAT and BRT-Exclusive

Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane and Franklin Road (arterial routes) score similarly for numerous criteria. Both routes have the following benefits and considerations:

Benefits:

- Provide connections to key destinations, community resources, jobs, existing and future transit, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Pass through communities with higher likelihood of using transit.
- Serve high share of the region's population and jobs (current and future).

Considerations:

- Will have moderate to high traffic impacts.
- Require significant roadway widening to construct and high number of property acquisitions.
- Will impact a large number of historic sites.
- Potentially complex and costly to implement.

The analysis found that BRT-BAT (side) would have greater impacts compared to BRT-Exclusive (center).

- BRT-BAT requires the most amount of right-of-way to construct the corridor resulting in:
 - Greater number of historic sites impacted.
 - More property acquisitions.
 - More expensive to construct.
- BRT Exclusive may result in:
 - More difficulty accessing businesses.
 - Greater impacts to freight operations.

16 "Tier 2 Evaluation Results" Poster #2

Proposed Options Not Carried Forward

○ FRANKLIN ROAD

Franklin Road provides similar benefits and impacts to Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane, but there are several factors for why the corridor is not proposed to advance to Tier 3.

1. Franklin is a critical urban freight corridor and high-capacity transit may disrupt freight operations.
2. Fewer people are forecasted to live along the route option.
3. Passes through fewer communities with higher likelihood of using transit.

Following initial outreach to study stakeholders, there was interest in combining the most promising segments of the Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane and Franklin Road routes to connect to more key regional and community destinations.

○ FAIRVIEW AVENUE/CHERRY LANE (BRT-BAT)

The Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane BRT-BAT mode option is not proposed to advance to Tier 3. While the route provides similar benefits to the exclusive BRT option, BRT-BAT would result in:

1. Greater number of property acquisitions
2. Significant changes to the right-of-way to accommodate the service
3. Significant impacts to a large number of historic properties

○ LIGHT RAIL (LRT)

LRT was not carried forward following the mode evaluation. Ultimately, when compared to other modes, LRT scored lower compared to other mode options due to several factors:

1. More expensive to construct.
2. Requires more space to safely operate in the freight rail corridor.
3. Most effective in urban environments with frequent stops.
4. Incompatible with typical freight corridor design and purpose.

○ BRT - MIXED TRAFFIC

BRT Mixed Traffic was not carried forward following the mode evaluation. When compared to other modes, BRT Mixed Traffic scored lower compared to other modes due to several key issues:

1. Buses would face congestion and delays similar to other vehicles. Delays are compounded over the 30-mile corridor.
2. BRT improvements are expensive. Potential poor return on investment if buses are stuck in traffic.
3. BRT is expected to be faster and more predictable than local service. Mixed traffic BRT would not meet rider expectations.

Proposed Options Carried Forward to Tier 3

○ BOISE CUTOFF: COMMUTER RAIL

The Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail option is proposed to advance to Tier 3 for the following reasons:

1. Provides reliable and exclusive service to regional activity centers including downtown Caldwell, Nampa, and Meridian, while requiring shuttle service to Boise's center.
2. Most of the infrastructure could be constructed within the existing right-of-way.
3. Fewer environmental impacts compared to other options.

○ I-84/I-184: BRT-BAT

The I-84/I-184 BRT-BAT option is proposed to advance to Tier 3 for the following reasons:

1. Provides similar reliability and exclusivity as Commuter Rail at a reduced cost.
2. Most of the infrastructure could be constructed within the existing right-of-way.
3. Fewer environmental impacts compared to other options.
4. Minimal traffic impacts.

○ FAIRVIEW AVENUE/CHERRY LANE: BRT EXCLUSIVE

Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane is proposed to advance to Tier 3 rather than Franklin Road for the following reasons:

1. Provides more connections to key destinations, community resources, jobs, existing and future transit, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities compared to Franklin Road.
2. Passes through more communities with higher likelihood of using the service.
3. Provides services to more people (current and future).

While the Franklin Road route is not proposed to advance into Tier 3, initial outreach to stakeholders showed interest in combining the Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane and Franklin Road routes to capture activity centers along Franklin.

17. "Potential Routes" Maps

Five potential route options are under consideration, including the no action option.

1. No Action. The Communities in Motion 2050 long-range transportation plan includes a list of transportation projects that are reasonably expected to be complete by 2050, given current funding levels. "No Action" assumes that only these transportation projects will be completed by 2050. Each potential high-capacity transit option will be compared to each other and to "No Action" to determine its relative potential benefits and challenges.
2. Boise Cutoff Commuter Rail. This route connects Boise from the Boise Depot to downtown Caldwell via commuter rail primarily within the freight rail corridor.
3. I-84/I-184. Connects Main Street Station in downtown Boise to downtown Caldwell, primarily using I-84 and I-184.
4. Arterial Options (Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane and Franklin Road). While the Franklin Road route was not proposed to advance into Tier 3, initial outreach to study stakeholders showed interest in combining Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane and Franklin Road routes to better connect activity centers along Franklin Road. The map below shows both route options which are identical from downtown Caldwell to Franklin Road in Nampa and from Orchard Street into downtown Boise.
5. Boise Airport and Micron Extensions. While not evaluated as part of Tier 2, connections to the Boise Airport and Micron have been identified by the community as important destinations to connect to via high-capacity transit. Connections to these destinations by relevant route options will be evaluated in Tier 3.

18 "Tier 3 Evaluation" Poster

Three route options and the No Action are proposed to be carried forward into the Tier 3 evaluation. The Airport Connection and the Micron Connection options will be considered with the remaining routes (as appropriate) during the Tier 3 evaluation. Tier 3 will include more detailed analysis of the route's potential performance, including considerations for stop locations, transit demand, benefits, and costs.

- The no action option was carried forward for further analysis as the baseline condition
- Chinden Boulevard was removed from further analysis in Tier 1
- Ustick Road was removed from further analysis in Tier 1
- Overland Road was removed from further analysis in Tier 1
- Victory Road/Powerline Road was removed from further analysis in Tier 1
- Franklin Road is proposed to be removed from further analysis in Tier 2
- Fairview Avenue/Cherry Lane is proposed to advance to Tier 3
- Boise Cutoff Railroad is proposed to advance to Tier 3
- Interstate 84/184 is proposed to advance to Tier 3
- Boise Airport Connection is proposed to be integrated with other routes as options in Tier 3
- Micron Connection is proposed to be integrated with other routes as options in Tier 3

19 "Comment" Poster

Please Share Your Input!

Please complete a comment form now, either written or online.

Need more information?

Contact the study team:

Email: info@compassidaho.org

Call: 208.855.2558

Submit your comments anytime through March 2, 2025.