

Two development plans for Valley hit rough times

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Two long-range regional plans now being drafted have hit some proverbial bumps in the road.

Blueprint for Good Growth, an \$824,500 land-use and transportation plan for Ada County and its six cities, is on schedule and on budget, but has a \$219,000 funding shortfall.

Communities in Motion, a \$1 million, six-county transportation plan, is on budget and funded, but behind schedule.

Mike Lauer, a Kansas-based planner working on Blueprint, said his group will be ready to submit a draft of Blueprint by the end of February as planned, which marks the end of Phase One — drafting a plan. But due to the funding shortfall, he is not sure if changes are going to be made to Phase Two — the implementation phase.

Lauer said discussions are under way on whether some of the implementation projects can be trimmed, reducing the budget.

Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, the organization preparing Communities in Motion, said it needs more time to select and prioritize transportation corridors. The board recently approved a 90-day extension to formally adopt the plan from April to May.

"We will hold a formal hearing sometime in June or early July and will ask the board to adopt the plan at their meeting on July 17. The cost of the plan remains the same. The deadlines have been extended with no new money," said COMPASS spokeswoman Terri Schorzman.

Blueprint in particular has suffered a bumpier road than Communities in Motion because Blueprint is a voluntary plan, while Communities in Motion is federally mandated.

Because participation in Blueprint is voluntary, there is some concern that not all jurisdictions will implement Blueprint's recommendations, especially

recommendations with which a city or the county may disagree. The plan is not enforceable. Each jurisdiction must rewrite its codes or ordinances to reflect Blueprint recommendations.

Boise Mayor Dave Bieter says several issues remain unresolved, specifically planned communities, areas of impact, annexation and minimum density limits. But he does not think these controversies will derail Blueprint.

"We'll continue to have some pretty hot-button issues among the jurisdictions, but that hopefully won't result in sidetracking Blueprint," Bieter said.

Ada County Commissioner Fred Tilman said reaching a consensus can be challenging, but that is to be expected.

"This is a process we have to go through. There are going to be bumps on that road to reach that consensus," Tilman said. "When you get the number of players we have and the variety of different responsibilities we each have, it is going to take some time to find a common vision we can all buy into."

Despite the bumps, Tilman said the county is still on board for Blueprint.

"From day one we have been committed to Blueprint, to the concept and the process," said Tilman, who does not think the Blueprint process is falling apart. "I am very optimistic. What is happening is people are expressing their points of view. I do not see it getting sidetracked or sideways."

Bieter, too, agrees Blueprint is hitting some bumps, but overall is on track, and the city, too, is committed to the project. "I do think there is consensus to see Blueprint through. That is what gives us reason for optimism. It provides the context to move forward and hopefully resolve some of these things."

Blueprint for Good Growth budget

Costs

Phase 1 (plan writing): \$405,000

Phase 2 (implementation): \$350,000

Project coordination: \$69,500

Total: \$824,500

Contributions through Dec. 30

Ada County: \$160,00

Ada County Highway District: \$150,000

Boise: \$100,000

Idaho Transportation Dept.: \$50,000

Meridian: \$30,000

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: \$22,500
Eagle: \$20,000; Kuna: \$20,000; Star: \$20,000; Garden City: \$10,000; COMPASS: \$9,500
Boise River Flood Control District No. 10: \$7,500
Hewlett Packard Boise: \$5,000
Tom Ryder: \$500
Total: \$605,500
Shortfall: \$219,000
About the plans

Blueprint for Good Growth

This cooperative land-use and transportation study involves Ada County and its six cities — Boise, Eagle, Garden City, Kuna, Meridian and Star — as well as the Ada County Highway District. The blueprint will shape development patterns, which create transportation needs, bridging the gap between land use and transportation planning. The study will serve as a tool for Ada County and its cities to update their comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and planning policies. A draft of the plan should be completed by the end of February.

Cost: \$824,500.

Information: www.blueprintforgoodgrowth.com.

Communities in Motion

The joint project of COMPASS and the Idaho Transportation Department is a federally mandated long-range transportation plan for six Treasure Valley counties — Ada, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem and Payette. The plan will evaluate growth and transportation issues with an emphasis on creating policy rather than a list of projects. The COMPASS board is slated to formally adopt the plan July 17.

Cost: \$1 million.

Information: For chapter drafts, technical documents, maps and meeting schedules visit www.communitiesinmotion.org or call 855-2558, Ext 228.

Ideal Treasure Valley growth scenario

Planners are drafting Blueprint for Good Growth and Communities in Motion based on an ideal growth scenario selected last fall called "Community Choices." The planners are contrasting that "Community Choices" scenario with a "Trend" scenario that shows what the Valley would look like if current sprawl patterns continue.

About Community Choices

This version proposes that each Valley community have choices in housing, such as single family, town home, patio home, condominium, or apartment; in the proximity of shopping, services, and residential; and in transportation options ranging from automobile to public transit to bike paths.

Highlights include an expanded public transportation system, shorter trips with more opportunities for walking and biking, fewer major road improvements, and infrastructure that is sensitive to established areas.

- For every \$1.40 spent on roads, \$1 is spent on transit.
- 1.5 percent of population rides transit (40,000 people).
- Households will spend \$217 per year on transit and \$302 per year on major road projects.

- 55 percent of housing is single family.
- More open space and agricultural land remain.
- Communities offer housing, jobs, services and shopping in close proximity.
- Fewer five-lane or larger roads are built.
- Shorter vehicle trips with more opportunities for walking and biking.
- Expanded public transit system, including buses and light rail.
- Three-fold increase in the number of people using transit.
- \$4.28 billion price tag.

About Trend

The trend version assumes residential areas remain low density — 2 to 3 units per acre. Homes are farther from jobs, shopping and services; distinctions between cities gradually vanish, resulting in solid urban/suburban development between cities in Ada and Canyon counties. Personal vehicles remain primary means of transportation. Transit services stay at levels similar to today, and fewer people walk or bike.

- For every \$9 spent on roads, \$1 is spent on transit.
- Less than half of 1 percent rides transit (13,000 people).
- More 5-lane or larger roads built.
- Households will spend \$44 per year on transit and \$394 per year on major road projects.
- 72% of housing is single-family.
- Homes become farther away from jobs, shopping and services.
- Cars remain the only effective means of transportation.
- \$3.62 billion price tag.