



COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION
of Southwest Idaho

State Highway 44/State Street High Capacity Corridor

Priority 2

Background

State Highway 44/State Street runs from I-84 in Canyon County through parts of the cities of Middleton, Star, Eagle, and Garden City to downtown Boise.

It is a commuter route from several communities to downtown Boise and provides access to many businesses and residential neighborhoods. It's also the only major roadway between Ada and Canyon Counties north of the Boise River.



Land along State Highway 44/State Street is being developed, transforming parts of the highway from a rural roadway into a busy urban street.

The Corridor at a Glance

- Two lanes wide for 14 miles, from I-84 through the cities of Middleton and Star
- Four lanes wide for about 13 miles, from Linder Road in Eagle to 8th Street in Boise
 - ITD completed widening from Linder Road to Ballantyne Road in October 2013
- Two lanes wide for several blocks in downtown Boise, from Capitol Boulevard to Fort Street
- Only continuous east-west route north of the Boise River connecting the two counties
- No bike lanes; sidewalks in downtowns, but many areas without sidewalks
 - Several recent sidewalk projects completed by ACHD between Collister Road and 36th Street/Veterans Memorial Parkway
- ValleyRide bus route #9 (State Street) has the most riders in the system
- Urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout corridor

Problem

Growth in Middleton, Star, and Eagle will bring dramatic increases in traffic and congestion. This will impact all modes of travel in the corridor, including walking.

- Average driving time between Middleton Road and downtown Boise is projected to double, from 35 minutes in 2013 to 75 minutes in 2040.
- Traffic between Middleton Road and State Highway 16 will likely increase from about 7,000 vehicles per day in 2013 to 30,000 in 2040.
 - This would be similar to current traffic on State Highway 55 west of Middleton Road.
- Levels of traffic between State Highway 16 and Glenwood Street range from 15,000 to 34,000 vehicles per day, and are projected to increase to 55,000 per day.

Current and Future ¹	2013	2040
Population	29,731	60,080
Households	12,158	25,288
Employment	10,301	24,959

¹ Population, housing, and employment in the corridor are based on neighborhoods and other developments near the road.



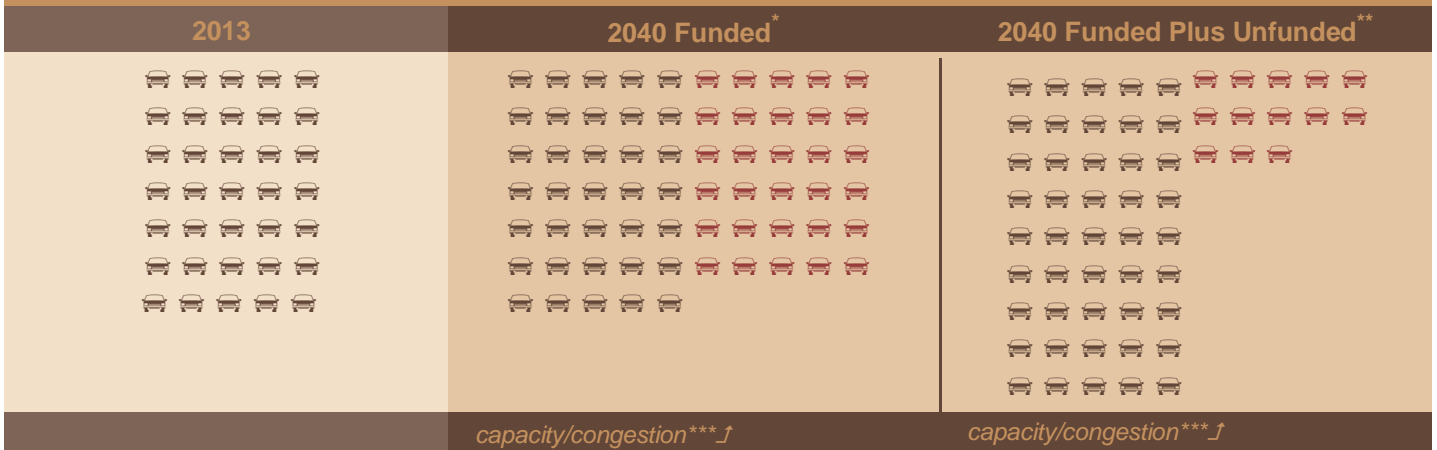
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- Traffic between Glenwood Street and downtown Boise will likely increase from 35,000 vehicles per day in 2013 to 65,000 per day by the year 2040.
 - This would be higher than current levels of traffic on Eagle Road between Fairview Avenue and Franklin Road.

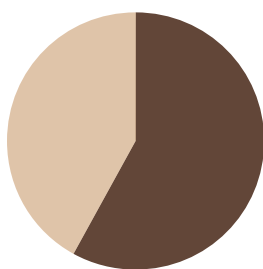
Vehicles per Day between Glenwood Street and Downtown Boise in thousands



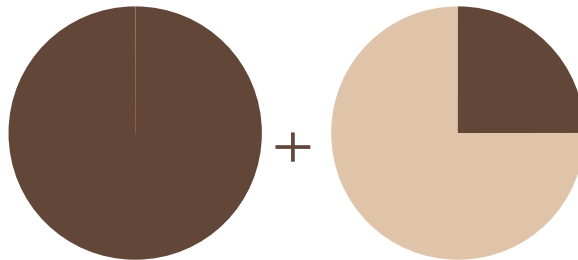
* *2040 Funded* reflects the 2013 regional transportation system and all the expansion/improvement projects that are *funded* in agencies' approved budgets or capital improvement plans, listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Tables 6.2 and 6.3).
 ** *Unfunded* projects/improvements includes all the *unfunded* needs discussed in this summary and listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Table 6.5).
 *** This is an approximate level where there is too much traffic for the road to carry and speeds will get slower as congestion gets worse. Each road's capacity depends on a number of variables, including truck traffic, number of driveways, and road conditions.

Drive Times, 2013 vs. 2040, Middleton Road to Downtown Boise

Each pie chart represents one hour. Drive times are in dark brown.

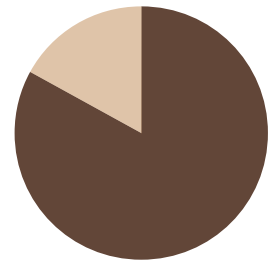
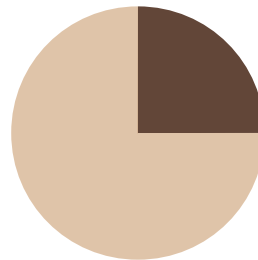


2013



2040 Funded*

+



2040 Funded Plus Unfunded**

* *2040 Funded* reflects the 2013 regional transportation system and all the expansion/improvement projects that are *funded* in agencies' approved budgets or capital improvement plans, listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Tables 6.2 and 6.3).
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When a road, transit line, bikeway, or other part of the transportation system is improved, it can accommodate more traffic and, therefore, it attracts more users. Even with more traffic, traveling conditions will be better with the improvements.

Other Considerations

Corridor Preservation Study

To plan improvements to the highway, ITD partnered with COMPASS in 2005 to conduct a corridor preservation study.² Over the past seven years, ITD has

- conducted an environmental analysis of the corridor west of Eagle Road (see map below);
- developed concepts for the highway design and identified access management strategies,³ and
- held open planning houses to communicate with the public and other stakeholders.

Once the preservation study is complete, ITD will use it to manage improvements in the corridor. Part of the study involves evaluating and planning for a bypass around downtown Middleton.

Options for the Corridor's Eastern End

The State Street Transit and Traffic Operational Plan (TTOP), which was completed in 2011, outlines innovative ways to keep traffic and transit moving smoothly in the east end of the corridor as development increases. Agencies continue to monitor and update the TTOP document on a regular basis (see map).

Long-term recommendations for the eastern part of the corridor include widening the street by adding an outside/curbside lane in each direction. The new outside lanes would be reserved⁴ for carpools, buses, and cars that need to make a turn. A high-capacity transit service, such as a bus rapid transit (BRT), would also use the lane in the future. Bike lanes and sidewalks would also be completed.



Roadway Users

Most of the analysis to identify the increased traffic issue is based on cars, the main mode of transportation on streets and highways. Pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles such as freight trucks, farm equipment, and buses may also share the road.

² www.compassidaho.org/prod/serv/specialprojects-sh44.htm

³ Access management is "the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway" (Transportation Research Board Committee on Access Management).

⁴ Idaho Statute 49-1421A.8 currently limits the employment of restricted lanes to certain rural counties; the Idaho legislature would need to act before this recommendation could be implemented.



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Bus Service/Park and Ride

Several ValleyRide bus routes and park and ride lots serve the corridor.

ValleyRide Bus Routes	Public Park and Ride Lots
Route #9 (State Street)	I-84 Exit 25 (ITD Weigh Station)
Route #9X (State Street Express)	Old Highway 30 (Shell Station/Bud's)
Route #10 (Hill Road/Maple Grove Road)	Middleton (Middleton Fine Arts Center)
Intercity Route #44 (State Highway 44 Express)	Star (Star Christian Church)
	Ballantyne Road Park and Ride Lot
	Riverside Drive Park and Ride Lot

The Middleton, Meridian, and Boise school districts, as well as several charter and private schools, transport students by bus to various schools along State Highway 44/State Street. This includes Middleton Middle School, Taft and Lowell Elementary Schools, and Boise High School.

Walking/Biking

- No bike lanes on State Highway 44/State Street
- The Boise River Greenbelt is adjacent (approximately one mile away) to State Highway 44 through Eagle
- Sidewalks
 - on both sides in downtown Middleton, Star, and Boise west to 36th Street
 - on at least one side near downtown Eagle
 - on at least one side in Boise/Garden City from Bullrun Lane to 36th Street
 - no sidewalks or pathways in areas between the cities

Environmental Issues

Increased traffic on a road can impact the surrounding environment as well as the people who live nearby. Before major road projects are built, their potential effects are analyzed to make sure they meet environmental regulations as well as provide for “environmental justice,” ensuring all people can be involved and are treated fairly.⁵

There are a number of sensitive areas to consider in this corridor:

- small concentrations of minority populations in the west and east ends
- prime farmland soils along State Highway 44
- irrigation canals, drains and ditches parallel to and crossing under the roadway
- Dry Creek (Eagle) and Willow Creek (Middleton) floodways
- Boise River floodplain
- Middleton Middle School adjacent to highway west of downtown Middleton
- elementary schools and charter and private schools next to or near the roadway
- Veterans Memorial Park (state park) and local parks next to roadway

⁵ See federal environmental justice definitions at www.epa.gov/region07/ej/definitions.htm.



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Each of the following studies include more detailed analyses of environmental factors in the corridor:

- ITD is conducting an environmental assessment (EA) of the State Highway 44 corridor, which must be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval.⁶ The EA must be approved and issued before significant road improvements can occur or before land can be acquired.
- ACHD prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) while studying a potential future Boise River crossing between State Highway 44/State Street, Highway 55 (north), and Chinden Boulevard (US Highway 20/26).⁷ The study is commonly referred to as the Three Cities River Crossing. Funds are not currently available to design and build the project (see priority #27).
- ITD completed an EIS in preparation for the State Highway 16 extension and bridge over the Boise River.⁸

Budgeted Projects

Roadway

- Construct new intersection for State Highway 16 (and extend State Highway 16 south over Boise River – under construction)
- Widen State Highway 44 between State Highway 16 and Linder Road (four lanes)
- Add safety improvements at State Highway 55/Eagle Road intersection
- Widen State Street between Glenwood Street and 27th Street (seven lanes)⁹
 - Improve intersections at Glenwood Street/Gary Lane, Pierce Park Lane, Collister Drive, and 36th Street/Veterans Memorial Parkway
 - State Street is under the jurisdiction of ACHD from Glenwood Street eastward.

Walking/Biking: The City of Eagle plans to build a trail connection between Eagle Island pathways and Dry Creek Trail via a bike/pedestrian underpass, west of Eagle Road/State Highway 55.

Operations, Management and Technology Projects: Aside from road widening, other actions such as improving driveways or changing the traffic signals can help improve traffic conditions. The regional Intelligent Transportation System plan¹⁰ includes a special project in 2014 that will upgrade and coordinate the traffic signals on both sides of the Boise River between Eagle Road and Glenwood Street, and State Highway 44/State Street and Chinden Boulevard/US Highway 20/26.



Unfunded Future Needs

Roadway: In January 2014 the estimated costs to complete the following recommended improvements was \$140.8 million.

- Widen highway to four lanes from I-84 to Middleton bypass
- Construct Middleton alternate route south of downtown, from Canyon Lane to Duff Lane

⁶ <http://itd.idaho.gov/projects/d3/SH44Corridor>

⁷ www.achdidaho.org/projects/PublicProject.aspx?ProjectID=29

⁸ http://itd.idaho.gov/Projects/garvee/D3/Idaho16_I84_44_environmentalStudy.asp

⁹ See the ACHD Capital Improvements Plan (20-year budget): www.achdidaho.org/Departments/ROWDS/CIP.aspx

¹⁰ *Final Report: Treasure Valley Transportation System: Operations, Management, and ITS* can be found online at www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/cms-intro.htm.



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- ITD concluded that the alternate route should be considered rather than widening the highway through downtown Middleton
- Cemetery Road would be extended to intersect with the bypass
- Widen highway from Middleton bypass through Star to State Highway 16

Bus Service/Park and Ride: The TTOP and *valleyconnect* plans identify near-term, medium-term, and long-term needs for the corridor. Some of the specific needs are listed below. In January 2014 the estimated costs to increase and expand this list of services was \$197.4 million.

- Near-term
 - Increase service on existing ValleyRide routes (#9, #9X, #10, and #44)
 - Expand park-and-ride lots, and build new lots at select locations (see priority #5)
- Medium-term
 - Establish new local ValleyRide routes and extend Route #9 in Eagle
 - Establish new flex routes serving Middleton, Star, Eagle, and northwest Boise
 - Establish commuter (rush hour) routes from Horseshoe Bend to downtown Boise
 - Add high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes¹¹ from Glenwood Street to 23rd Street for buses, carpools, and vanpools
 - Expand park-and-ride lots, and build new lots at select locations (see priority #10)
- Long-term
 - Install bus bypass lanes at key intersections
 - Add high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes¹² from Eagle Road/State Highway 55 to Glenwood Street for buses, carpools, and vanpools
 - Extend services of ValleyRide Route #9 and other local routes in City of Eagle
 - Implement high-capacity transit such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) using the HOV lanes between Eagle Road and downtown Boise

Walking/Biking

- The City of Middleton plans to have several paths following waterways, and bike routes on streets, that cross State Highway 44
- The City of Eagle's pathway plans include a proposed bike lane on the north side of State Highway 44 from Sierra View Way to Eagle Road, with connections to the Greenbelt, and extending the Greenbelt pathway on the south side of the highway west to Eagle Island State Park
- Improve pedestrian connections and complete gaps in sidewalks (east of Eagle Road)

Operations, Management and Technology Projects: The regional ITS plan¹³ includes a number of projects for State Highway 44/State Street, including upgrading traffic signals, installing fiber optic cables, and adding traffic cameras.

Updated July 2014

¹¹ Idaho Statute 49-1421A.8 currently limits the employment of restricted lanes to certain rural counties; the Idaho legislature would need to act before this recommendation could be implemented.

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