

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEFINING THE VISION

We envision a Treasure Valley where quality of life is enhanced and communities are connected by an innovative, effective, multi-modal transportation system.

Communities in Motion (CIM) is the regional long-range transportation plan for Southwest Idaho and provides regional transportation solutions for the next twenty-plus years for Ada, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, and Payette counties. *Communities in Motion* evaluates projected population and employment growth, current and future transportation needs, safety, financial capacity, and preservation of the human and natural environment.

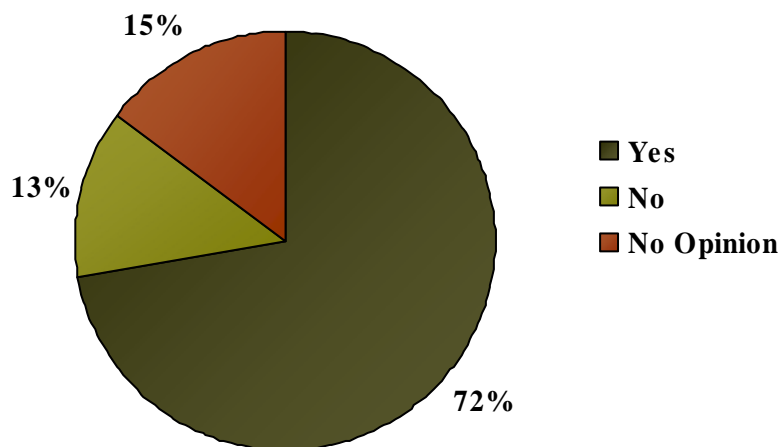
Communities in Motion offers a vision for land

use, known as “Community Choices” and addresses:

- How land use affects transportation
- How investments in transportation influence growth
- What the transportation system supposed to achieve
- How transportation projects are selected
- How transportation projects serve regional needs

The CIM planning process identified a broad vision, community goals, objectives, and measurable tasks. This was accomplished by engaging people early in the process. Over 2000 residents, stakeholders, and elected officials participated in developing the plan.

Of those who reviewed and commented on the plan, 72 percent supported it.



Goals:

Connections

Provide options for safe access and mobility in a cost-effective manner in the region.

Coordination

Achieve better inter-jurisdictional coordination of transportation and land use planning.

Environment

Minimize transportation impacts to people, cultural resources, and the environment.

Information

Coordinate data gathering and dispense better information.

***Communities in Motion* supports:**

Balance between housing and jobs

Choices in housing types

Choices in transportation and shorter commuting distance

Connectivity through higher densities

Preservation of open space and farmland

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) is responsible for producing the region's long-range transportation plan. COMPASS outlined these guidelines when beginning the planning process:

- Projects from prior plans would not be carried over automatically.
- Projects would be selected by a rational evaluation process.
- Land use preferences would start the planning process.
- Regional perspectives and broad corridor-level projects would be the focus.
- Public transportation would be considered in a meaningful way.
- The plan would be financially constrained and include only projects that could be funded with existing levels of revenue over the next twenty-five years.

GROWING OUR REGION

“Community Choices” encourages growth inside city “areas of impact,” and emphasizes higher densities and mixed-uses with jobs, shopping and services closer to housing. If growth and development do not follow “Community Choices” and instead follow the current pattern (known as “Trend”), it will be possible to drive through Southwest Idaho and not be able to tell when you’ve left one town and entered another because residential growth will have blurred the boundaries.

More and more people commute to Ada and Canyon counties from Gem, Payette, Boise and Elmore counties every day. For example, more than half of Boise County’s working population and 37 percent of Gem County’s commuted to Ada and Canyon in 2000 according to the U.S. Census, and the percentages keep growing. Other travel pressures exist as well. Recreational travel affects Boise County, while Payette County faces heavy truck traffic along U.S. 95.

But the traffic problems of today will pale in comparison to the problems in 2030, due in part to population growth. In 2000, the six-county region had slightly over 500,000 residents; by 2030, the population may swell to nearly 1 million or more. The location of jobs to support this growing population will be critical. Growth and

what it means for the future of our region is the reason for *Communities in Motion*.

The *Communities in Motion* planning process looked at how our region might develop. Using input from public workshops, local governments, stakeholders, and elected officials, COMPASS developed the growth scenario -- **“Community Choices”** -- on which the plan is based. The scenario offers a vision for a more cost-effective, multi-modal transportation system. To support this vision, funding for public infrastructure must be directed to areas of growth consistent with those outlined in CIM. If done, new growth patterns will mean that our region will:

- Consume less land
- Save more open space
- Offer more housing choices
- Foster the use of public transportation
- Cut one million daily vehicle miles of travel
- Ease traffic congestion
- Reduce fuel consumption

DESIGNING THE FUTURE

Communities in Motion identifies the need for roads and transit for the region through 2030. With a population approaching 1 million in 2030, and with significant investment, the roadway system will still be over capacity by 23 percent. Without this investment, the system will be over capacity by 43 percent.

Some believe that 1.5 million people will live in the region in 2030. If so, more than 70 percent of the roads will be over capacity.

Just 5 percent of the roads are over capacity today (2006).

CIM recommends a transit system more than ten times the size of the system today. The State of Idaho, however, neither provides funding for transit nor an option for communities to tax themselves to pay for expanded transit, so this expanded transit system is unfunded in the plan. Getting the funding for transit is a high priority for implementation.

Communities in Motion does not preclude local governments from approving development that is not consistent with the location, nature and amount of growth shown under the “Community Choice” scenario. Public funding, however, would not be available for transportation infrastructure to serve such growth.

Roadways

Roadway improvements identified in *CIM* focus on regional corridors. This focus means *CIM* does not include “minor” improvements such as intersections, traffic signals and shorter-length roadway projects. Many of the corridors cross multiple jurisdictions and several of these roadways connect county to county. Each corridor is described in detail in Chapter 4 and includes:

- Regional importance
- Characteristics and use
- Recommendations to meet *CIM* goals
- Land use decisions required to implement *CIM* goals (actions needed to occur to preserve the corridor for the future improvements)
- Opportunities or challenges
- Past, current or programmed improvements
- Recommended investments in the funded portion of *CIM*
- Additional desired improvements (illustrative) or other actions needed in the future—perhaps beyond 2030

The need for an optimal transportation system simply outweighs the amount of money the region has available over the next twenty plus years. Therefore, *CIM* ranks corridors for funding based on the ability of the corridor to save time, to fill in gaps in the system, to support growth areas identified in “Community Choices” and to support a regional transit route.

Ultimately, the corridors selected for funding will be those that support areas of desired growth and where the transportation benefits are highest.

Funded Road Corridors in Ada County and Canyon County¹

Amity Road: Southside Blvd-Cloverdale Road.
Widen from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

Cherry Ln: Middleton Road-Ten Mile Road.
Widen from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

Cloverdale Road: Lake Hazel Road-Chinden Blvd. Widen from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

Fairview Ave.: Meridian Road-Orchard.
Widen from 5 lanes to 7 lanes.

Franklin Road: Can Ada Road-Linder Road. Widen from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

Greenhurst Road: Middleton Road-Happy Valley Road. Widen from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

I-84: Cole/Overland IC-Isaacs Canyon IC. Widen from 4 lanes to 8 lanes. Includes interchange reconstruction at Orchard, Vista, Broadway and Gowen.

I-84: Exit 29-Garrity IC. Widen from 4 lanes to 6 lanes. Includes reconstruction of Franklin and Nampa Blvd interchanges and existing over/underpasses.

I-84: Future SH 16 Interchange: (vicinity of McDermott). Construct new interchange with ramps to connect with Franklin.

I-84: Garrity IC-Meridian IC. Widen from 4 lanes to 8 lanes. Includes reconstruction of Garrity interchange and existing over/underpasses.

Lake Hazel Road: Happy Valley - Eisenmann Road (including Gowen Road Realignment)

Meridian Road: Waltman Dr-Ustick Road. Complete corridor improvements to 5 lanes. Includes partial couplet involving Main Street and Meridian Road.

SH 16: Ada/Gem line-I-84. Construct expressway with interchanges at Chaparral, Beacon Light, SH 44, US 20/26, & Ustick Road. Overpass/underpass at other roadways

SH 44: I-84-Ballantyne Road. Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lane limited access divided highway. Includes a new alternate route around Middleton.

SH 44 (State Street): SH 55 (Eagle Road) to downtown Boise (Multi-Modal Center)

Ten Mile Road: Lake Hazel - Chinden Blvd. Widen from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

Three Cities River Crossing: SH 44-Chinden Blvd. Construct new roadway at 4/5 lanes and new bridge.

US 20/26: Exit 29-Eagle Road. Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lane limited access divided highway.

Ustick Road: Caldwell/Nampa Blvd.-Curtis Road. Widen from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.

¹ Additional unfunded and transit corridors are described in Chapter 4.

Transit

CIM supports transit, walking and biking.

Both a fixed-guideway system and a scheduled fixed-route service are options for transit. A fixed-guideway system can be light rail, commuter rail or bus rapid transit services, all of which offer higher-speed transportation on separate travel ways — a real benefit when the streets are congested.

Scheduled fixed-route services, such as a buses operating on specific streets, are important for linking into guideway systems as well as serving more local trips and lower density corridors.

The proposed transit system will have:

- Fifteen minute frequency during peak hours
- Expanded service on evenings and weekends
- Commuter bus services expanded to Elmore, Payette, Gem and Boise counties
- Rail or other fixed-guideway service between Caldwell, Nampa, Meridian and Boise
- Bus rapid transit service between Eagle and Boise

The transit system in the Treasure Valley will not improve much beyond what we have today without a local funding source.

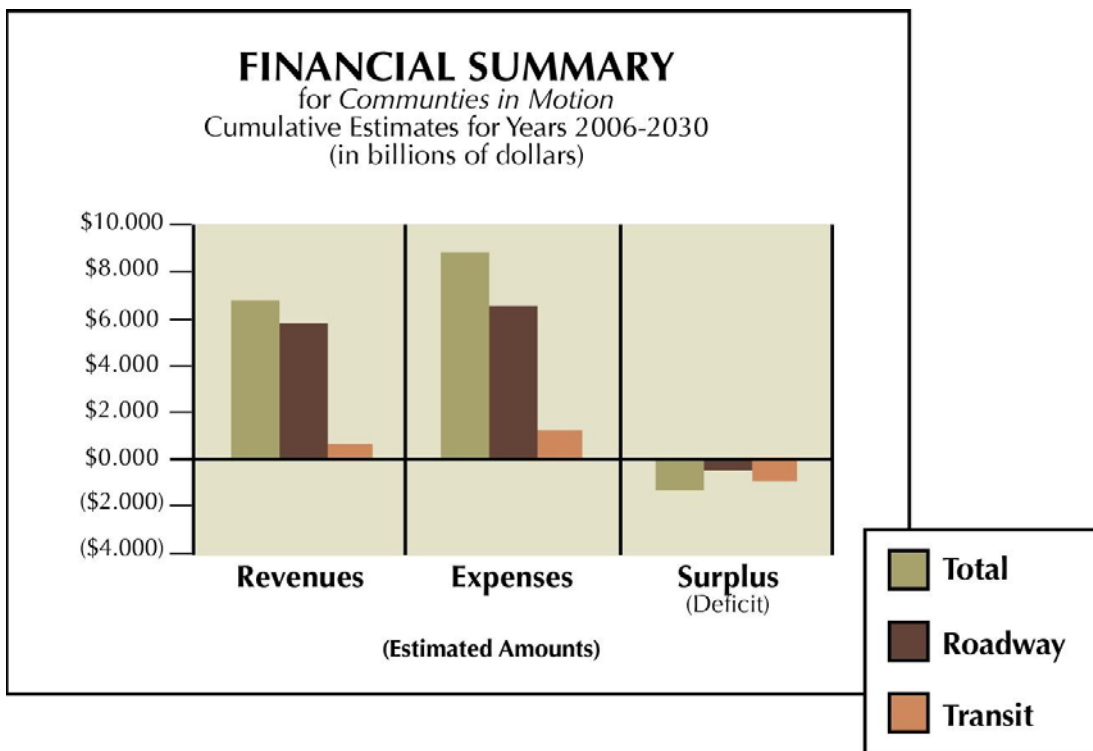
To obtain local funds for transit, the Idaho Legislature needs to provide local governments the option to ask citizens to tax themselves — locally — to pay for the optimal system.



FINDING THE MONEY

There is not enough money to complete all the corridors included in the optimal transportation system. The region has slightly over \$6 billion available for roads and almost \$700 million for transit between 2006 and 2030, and most of it will be used for operations and maintenance. We need another \$629 million for roadways, and \$1.1 billion for transit, or \$1.7 billion needed for road and transit together.

What do these large numbers mean for a resident of our region? The total shortfall could be met with additional revenues of less than \$200 per household per year. Funding for transportation comes from three general sources: federal funds, state highway distribution account and local funds. Funding is not equally available, either. In some counties, there are very few resources in place to build new major roadways or offer transit services.



PUTTING COMMUNITIES IN MOTION INTO ACTION

A plan is not a solution. It is a guidebook. Where do we want to be? How might we get there? What are the opportunities and costs? Implementing the plan is essential. Between now and the next update in 2010, COMPASS and its members will focus on putting the vision and goals for *Communities in Motion* into effect. If we fail to move forward with the plan, it means we are willing to accept current development patterns

What steps do we take to ensure a brighter future?

- Search and ensure funding streams
- Protect corridors for future needs
- Develop guidelines for how transportation routes function, look, feel
- Refine how projects are selected
- Track changes in plans and ordinance and work with local governments to encourage a more compact and diverse pattern of development where appropriate
- Citizen involvement



The future community envisioned in *Communities in Motion* is a metropolitan area of at least 825,000 – and probably more. The area will have more congestion, but well-designed streets, an effective transit system, and a mixture of housing and business can result in a vital future for Southwest Idaho.