



State Highway 55 (Eagle Road) Three Cities River Crossing

State Highway 55 is vital to the region as a major inter/intra-county connector.



WHY THIS CORRIDOR MATTERS

State Highway 55 (SH 55) connects communities throughout Ada and Canyon Counties and is the primary route for people commuting to and from Boise County and weekend resort destinations in Boise and Valley Counties or further north. The Ada County section of the corridor leaves I-84 north along Eagle Road, goes east along SH 44 (State Street), and then turns north to continue into Boise County. Traffic pressures on the corridor are caused from a lack of other major north-south corridors in the area. The corridor changes as it passes through a diversity of areas.

Travel on SH 55 is tied to [The Three Cities River Crossing¹](#) project (3CRX), planned as a new road and bridge to cross the Boise River and connect the intersection of SH 55 and SH 44 (State Street) on the north with US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) on the south. Eagle Road in Ada County is a primary thoroughfare lined with commercial and residential development. The Eagle Road and Fairview Avenue intersection is the highest volume intersection in the Treasure Valley (over 6,300 vehicles in the peak hour). Current volumes range from 53,000 north of I-84 to 40,000 south of SH 44. By 2035, volumes are forecasted at 67,000 south of SH 44. Traffic could go higher, but the capacity of this corridor has already been overwhelmed.

Goals for *Communities in Motion* (CIM)

Connections: Provide options for safe access and mobility in a cost-effective manner for 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.

Recommendations for State Highway 55 Corridor to meet CIM goals:

- ❖ Complete Three Cities River Crossing to relieve congestion on surrounding roadways.
- ❖ Complete the improvements recommended in the Eagle Road Improvement Project, including new traffic signals, increased traffic signal coordination, intersection improvements, median barriers, and pedestrian and bicycle pathways (where desirable) separated from the roadway with landscaping.

Recommendations for State Highway 55 Corridor Public Transportation:

- ❖ Development and street design should allow for direct access to transit stops and consider appropriate locations for shelters and bus pull-outs.
- ❖ Park-and-ride facilities should be considered.
- ❖ This corridor is a likely candidate for major fixed-route services given the residential and commercial uses.

Land use decisions needed to implement the plan:

- ❖ To reinforce the future land-use pattern, local governments along the corridor are recommended to focus development in designated growth areas.
- ❖ Jurisdictions need to work collaboratively in making decisions about proposed new developments along the north Ada County section of the corridor.
- ❖ Land-use decisions need to ensure access to the SH 55 corridor is consistent with the standards of the Idaho Transportation Department.

¹ Three Cities River Crossing, ACHD Project Website <http://www.achdidaho.org/Projects/PublicProject.aspx?ProjectID=29>

Regional Connection



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As a primary transportation corridor that crosses several cities and counties, State Highway 55 will carry larger volumes of traffic. As the region’s population continues to grow, conflicts will continue to arise between the traffic generated by commuters wanting to efficiently travel long distances and local traffic traveling between nearby homes and businesses. Growth in Boise County and in the resort towns further north will place additional traffic pressure on SH 55 in northern Ada County. Cities will be challenged to anticipate and plan for the cumulative effects of proposed developments along the corridor, but outside of city impact areas.

Challenges, however, also create the opportunities. The corridor has the potential to be both an effective thoroughfare and to provide access to residential and commercial developments surrounding it.

Determining how best to resolve the immediate challenges to SH 55 could provide a case study for how to conduct effective land use and transportation planning across multiple jurisdictions. The future of this corridor needs to be considered in concert with proposed improvements to SH 16 and McDermott Road. With the extensive development and access issues on SH 55, particularly between SH 44 and I-84, speeds are likely to drop even more. ITD has approved a plan to drop the posted speeds on this portion of SH 55 and to construct medians that would control left-turn movements across the roadway. (See below for Eagle Road Improvement Project.) While these system management improvements will help, travel demand will affect parallel roadways such as Cloverdale and Locust Grove Road.

Past and Current Investments through 2015	Funded Investments through 2035	Unfunded Improvements through 2035
<p><u>1980s</u>: work started to “relocate” portions of SH 55 from previous alignments. The portion through downtown Meridian was moved to Eagle Road. A new interchange was constructed at Eagle Road and I-84.</p> <p><u>1990s</u>: A new road was constructed parallel to Horseshoe Bend north of SH 44. Eagle Road was widened in the late</p> <p><u>2004</u>: Rapid growth in western Ada County caused 2004 traffic volumes to exceed the 2015 forecasts. The Eagle Road Arterial Study recommended strategies to improve traffic flow along the route. The project moved into the design phase and is called the Eagle Road Improvement Project.²</p> <p><u>2006</u>: An extended turn lane and a raised median were implemented from I-84 to Franklin Road. This helped reduce congestion. Signal coordination timing plan was also implemented.</p> <p>The Eagle/Fairview intersection was used in an analysis of innovative designs.³</p> <p>2008-current: Evaluation of potential impacts to the regional transportation system due to future development in the northwest foothills is ongoing. ACHD’s Northwest Transportation Study was adopted by the Commission in 2008.</p>	<p>No major improvements are funded.</p> <p>Operational improvements, including signal timing and turn lanes, may be funded as identified.</p>	<p>Widen SH 55 from two lanes to four lanes as a divided highway between Beacon Light and Brookside north of Eagle. Estimated Cost: \$1,822,000</p> <p>Provide for necessary transit infrastructure, such as bus pull-outs and shelters, along the urban areas of the SH 55 corridor.</p> <p>Construct the recommendations from the Eagle Road Improvement Project . ITD proposed construction in three phases estimated costs in 2004 dollars:</p> <p>North Phase: \$8,750,000</p> <p>Central Phase - \$26,810,000</p> <p>South Phase - \$16,410,000</p> <p>SH 55 (Eagle Road), I-84 to River Valley Street. Widen to six lanes. \$19,517,000</p> <p>Construct Three Cities River Crossing (3CRX) from SH 44 (State) to U.S. 20/26 (Chinden) at four to five lanes including a new bridge. Estimated Cost: \$105,359,000</p>

² This project can be found at <http://itd.idaho.gov/Projects/d3/id55eagle/>

³ *High Volume Intersection Study: Volumes 1-3*. Can be found at <http://compassidaho.org/reports.htm>