Guest opinion: How do you want to see the Treasure Valley grow?

- By MATT STOLL
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By the year 2050, nearly 1.1 million people will call Ada and Canyon Counties “home” – 300,000 more than live here today.

COMPASS – the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho – is updating the long-range transportation plan for Ada and Canyon Counties to look to the year 2050 to accommodate that growth.

To do that, COMPASS needs to forecast where all of us – those of us living here now plus those who will be arriving over the next 30 years – will live, work, and play, and how we’ll get around. We’ll be answering questions such as: Will growth be spread out? Concentrated in certain areas? Some of both? Do we want rail service connecting Caldwell to Boise? Do we want to widen roads? How will we pay for growth and everything that comes with it?

We need your help. How do you want to see the region grow?

Over 3,700 Treasure Valley residents participated in a survey last fall to share how they see their lives changing over the next 30 years. Were you one of them? If so, thank you.

We have used what we heard from that survey to develop four different potential “growth scenarios” for the year 2050. Each scenario represents a different way the valley could grow, from where new housing and jobs would be, to what types of transportation improvements would be needed.

We’re asking for everyone who lives in Ada or Canyon Counties to participate in a 10-minute online survey to provide us feedback on those different scenarios. What would you think if the valley grew like “this” or like “that”? What issues are most important to you? Do you support changes that would be needed to make the different scenarios happen?
Your input will help COMPASS make sure we are planning a transportation system that meets your future needs and reflects how Treasure Valley residents want to see their valley grow. The more people who respond, the better the information we will have, which means we’ll be able to develop a better plan.

Log on to www.compassidaho.org to take the survey and find opportunities to learn more, watch online presentations, and ask questions. The survey and all resources are entirely online, so you can participate from the comfort and safety of home. When you have finished, share the survey link with your friends and family so everyone’s voices are heard. The survey will remain open through Saturday, July 11.

If you prefer to remain offline, you can request a paper copy of the survey or ask questions at 208/475-2229 or info@compassidaho.org.

I recognize that it can be hard to look ahead 30 years when tomorrow holds so much uncertainty. However, the future will come whether we have planned for it or not. Participate today to help shape that future.

Matt Stoll is the executive director of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS), an association of local governments that plans for the future of Ada and Canyon Counties.