User Guide for the *Communities in Motion (CIM) 2050* Development Review Checklist

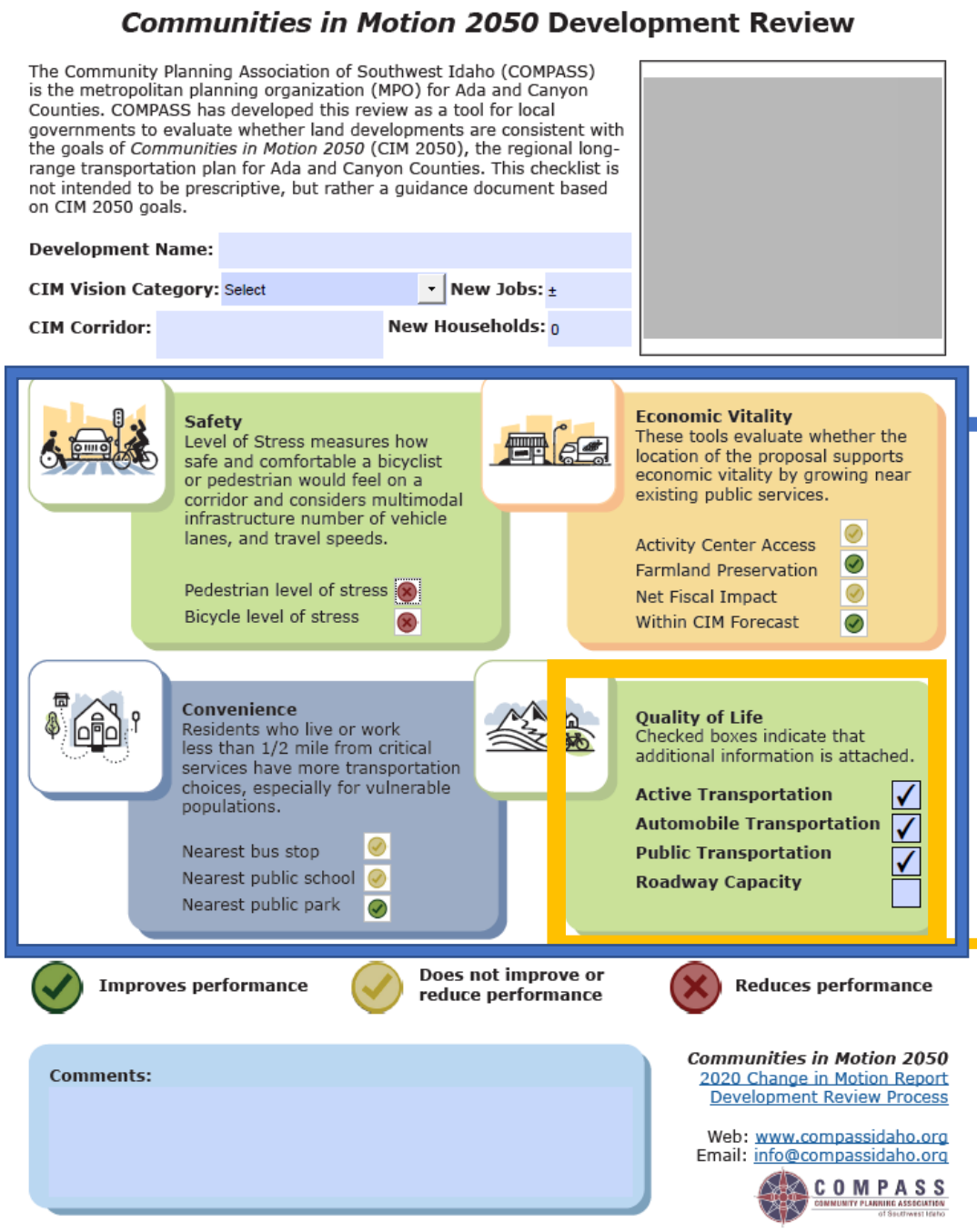
The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) is the metropolitan planning organization for Ada and Canyon Counties, Idaho. Since 2015, COMPASS has provided development review checklists for local governments to evaluate whether projects are consistent with the goals of *Communities in Motion* (CIM), the regional long-range transportation plan for Ada and Canyon Counties. These checklists are not intended to be prescriptive, but provide input to decision-makers to help guide development toward aligning with the regional vision identified by COMPASS member agencies – local jurisdictions in Ada and Canyon Counties.

COMPASS provides development review checklists for developments that will generate more than:

- 50 residential units,
- 50,000 square feet of retail, office, or industrial space, or any combination of residential units or retail, office, or industrial space.

COMPASS will also provide development reviews on land development applications such as conditional use permits, preliminary plats, and rezones where specific quantities of households and/or square footage are proposed or can be calculated. COMPASS will not review final plat applications, variances, height exceptions, landscape plans, etc., or applications that do not require land entitlement public hearings. Please see the COMPASS Development Review Protocol document for more information.

This document explains the methodology and performance metrics used in the most recent development review checklist, created for *Communities in Motion 2050*.



1 | Performance Measures

COMPASS uses color-coded indicators to show whether the proposed development improves performance toward regional goals of "Safety," "Convenience," and "Economic Vitality."

Green- improves performance
Yellow - does not improve or reduce performance
Red - reduces performance

Descriptions of the thresholds for performance measures are included in *Section 1 | Performance Measures.*

2 | COMPASS Recommendations

To progress towards the regional goal of "Quality of Life", COMPASS provides decision-makers recommendations on the proposed development. Checkmarks here show where additional detail or recommendations are provided by COMPASS. Recommendations are based on principles in the *COMPASS Congestion Management System Plan* and included as attachments to the checklist. Examples of the attachments are provided in *Section 2 | COMPASS Recommendations.*

Note: For "Roadway Capacity" a check indicates there is a funded transportation project nearby. When this is checked, information on the project is attached.

1 | Performance Measures

"Safety," "Convenience," and "Economic Vitality" are three goal areas established in *Communities in Motion 2050*.

The color-coded indicators in the checklist show whether the proposed development improves performance toward regional goals (green), does not improve or reduce performance (yellow), or reduces performance (red). Below are detailed descriptions of the thresholds established for each performance measure.

Safety

Bicycle and Pedestrian Level of Service: Is the adjacent roadway corridor safe and comfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians?

Level of Stress (LOS) uses the presence of multimodal infrastructure (bike lanes, sidewalks, etc.), number of vehicle lanes, and travel speeds to measure how safe and comfortable a bicyclist or pedestrian would feel on a corridor. The LOS metric measures and scores corridors on a 1 to 4 scale; a LOS level 1 corridor would be safe and accommodating, while a level 4 corridor would be uncomfortable or even dangerous.

	Bicycle Level of Stress Score
	1-2
	3
	4

	Pedestrian Level of Stress Score
	1-2
	3
	4

Convenience

Nearest Bus Stop: Is the development within walking distance of a bus stop?

Nearest Public School: Is the development within walking distance of a public school?

Nearest Park: Is the development within walking distance of a public park?

One-half mile is generally considered a "walking distance" from a destination. Thus, developments within 0.5 mile of a bus stop, public school, or public park provide more transportation choices for residents. Locations between 0.5 and 1 mile from a destination are still conceivably within walking distance, while locations more than 1 mile away are not considered to be a convenient walking distance from the development.

	Distance to the Nearest Bus Stop
	Within ½ mile
	Within ½ - 1 mile
	1+ mile

	Distance to the Nearest Public School
	Within ½ mile
	Within ½ - 1 mile
	1+ mile

Note: Only public schools (including public charter schools) are included in this analysis.

	Distance to the Nearest Public Park
	Within ½ mile
	Within ½ - 1 mile
	1+ mile

Economic Vitality

Activity Center Access: How close is the development to an activity center?

Activity centers are concentrations of residential and commercial areas, such as downtowns, office parks, and shopping centers. They represent the highest densities and most diverse land uses in the region and support a robust mix of transportation modes. Regional activity centers are identified in the *Communities in Motion 2050* Vision – the forecasted growth allocation for Ada and Canyon Counties by the year 2050. If a development is close to an activity center, residents will have access to a greater range of services and transportation choices.

	Distance to the Nearest Activity Center
	Within 2 miles
	Within 3 miles
	4+ miles

Farmland Preservation: How much farmland exists around the development?

Farmland preservation is a regional objective identified in *Communities in Motion 2050.* This measurement identifies the amount of prime farmland that exists near the proposal.

	Amount of Prime Farmland Near the Development
	Development is not within 0.25 miles of prime farmland
	Development is within 0.25 miles of prime farmland, but less than 1,000 acres of farmland exists within a one-mile buffer
	Development is within 0.25 miles of prime farmland, and more than 1,000 acres of farmland exists within a one-mile buffer

Note: 0.25 mile buffer = 125.6 acres, 1-mile buffer = 2,009.6 acres.

Net Fiscal Impact: How much time will it take for the development to "break even"?

Fiscal impact analysis is based the type and location of development and the expected public revenues and expenditures associated with the proposal. The COMPASS Fiscal Impact Tool measures the amount of time it takes for a city, county, school district, or highway district to fiscally "break even" on the development. The indicator is based on the cumulative combined fiscal impact for those four types of public organizations.

	Years Required to "Break Even"
	0-5
	6 and above
	Does not break even

Within CIM forecast: Do the number of jobs and households proposed exceed the CIM 2050 forecast for this area?

The *Communities in Motion 2050* Vision forecasts how many households and jobs the region is likely to have by 2050. Using these data, COMPASS conducts road deficiency analyses. If developments propose more jobs and households than are forecasted for that location, planned transportation infrastructure improvements may not be able to efficiently support the development.

	Do the Number of Jobs/Households Exceed the CIM 2050 Forecast?
	Yes
	n/a
	No

2 | COMPASS Recommendations

To progress towards the regional goal of “Quality of Life,” COMPASS provides decision-makers recommendations on the proposed development. Recommendations are based on principles in the *COMPASS Congestion Management System Plan* and included as attachments to the checklist.

There are three categories of recommendations:

- Active Transportation - Recommendations to adjust land-use to support bicycle/pedestrian transportation or improve/provide bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure
- Automobile Transportation – Recommendations to improve access and parking management
- Public Transportation- Recommendations to adjust land-use to support public transportation or improve/provide public transportation infrastructure

In addition, when applicable, information on nearby budgeted roadway improvements is provided. (Not included in this sample.)

These recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive but provide input to decision-makers to help guide development toward aligning with the regional vision identified by COMPASS member agencies. Examples of a set of recommendations are below.

Active Transportation

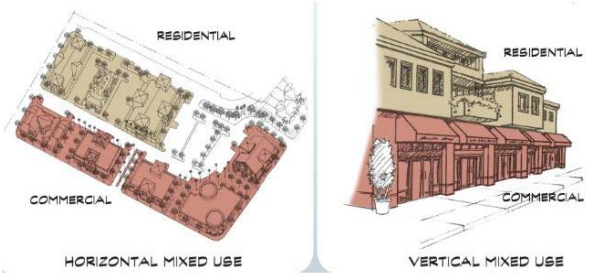
Land Uses to Support Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

Land use decisions can support the safety and comfort of bicyclists and pedestrians. A robust mix of nearby housing, jobs, and services can:

Promote safe and comfortable walking and biking by reducing the number of vehicles on the road

Reduce the distance between housing and services, especially for vulnerable populations

Reduce the requirement for large and costly parking facilities



Credit: Lakeland Village Plan

Land use mix can either be horizontal or vertical. A horizontal mix indicates a variety of uses across a neighborhood, while vertical mix refers to different uses within the same building or lot. To measure land use mix, consider how many different uses (e.g., residential, office, retail, industrial, service, entertainment, education, health, etc.) are within each community or area. Higher mixes reflect more convenient access to a wide range of jobs and services.

Some steps to take to increase bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are:

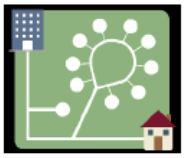
- ✓ Provide sidewalks and pathways between horizontal mixed-use areas to promote walking and biking between areas.
- ✓ Place residential uses near services such as parks, schools, grocery stores, or employment centers.
- ✓ Place higher-density residential uses close to employment, bus service, schools, or parks.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

An individual's trip is the entire journey from beginning to end. In many cases, a trip may combine a number of modes. While motorized vehicles will provide longer trips, users complete the first and last portion on their own. For example, almost every vehicle trip includes a walk or bike trip to the parking lot or transit stop. Good street connectivity increases the number of travel options and reduces the distances traveled to reach destinations. One way to measure route directness is take the ratio of the route distance to the straight line-distance. The closer the ratio is to 1, the better for connectivity of the area.

Some steps that can be taken to improve walk/bike infrastructure include:

- ✓ Providing sidewalks, crosswalks, and micropaths to connect destinations
- ✓ Providing an improved pathway along a canal as a transportation and recreational option
- ✓ Siting pathways and sidewalks as directly as conditions allow or provide wayfinding signs
- ✓ Reducing street lengths to discourage speeding on local roads
- ✓ Providing sufficient and covered bike parking near destinations



A disconnected system means more trips onto arterial roads, resulting in fewer cyclists and pedestrians and less efficiency for vehicles.

A connected system provides options, including walking, cycling, or driving. More trips can be taken on local roads, avoiding busier arterials.

Public Transportation

Public Transportation Infrastructure

Providing safe and comfortable transit stops and appropriate amenities can make public transportation a more convenient and competitive option, reduce the overall cost of housing + transportation, and expand the potential customer base for businesses.

While stop location and spacing will depend on the circumstances of the route, there are some general guidelines to improve the user experience:

- ✓ Locate bus stop amenities in areas that are expected to generate the most ridership, such as near employment centers, residential areas, retail centers, education centers, or major medical facilities.
- ✓ Provide sidewalks and/or bike paths designed to meet the needs of all users (including elderly, children, and individuals with disabilities) to connect development to transit stops.
- ✓ Provide bicycle parking that includes covered bike racks at transit stops; ensure it does not conflict with vehicular or pedestrian travel.
- ✓ Provide shelters, benches, trash receptacles, lighting, and landscaping to enhance the overall comfort and attractiveness of transit; ensure amenities do not block pathways, sidewalks, or bike lanes.
- ✓ Include doors with 32 inches of clear passage space, and at least one zero-step entrance and accessible bathroom on the main floor to support those with limited mobility.
- ✓ Join the Valley Regional Transit group pass program: https://www.valleyregionaltransit.org/group-pass-programs
- ✓ Use Valley Regional Transit's Bus Stop Location and Transit Amenities Development Guidelines for siting new bus stops and reviewing current and bus stops.

Land Use to Support Public Transportation

Locating higher-density commercial and residential uses close to transit nodes increases the availability and convenience of public transportation. Successful transit-oriented developments often follow the three Ds: density, diversity, and design. Density places a critical mass of people near trip origins or destinations so that transit ridership becomes practical and economical. Diversity of land uses can help to serve multiple users, such as employment centers, retail centers, and recreation. Design encourages safe and comfortable walking and biking between the transit station and the final destination. Other considerations include:

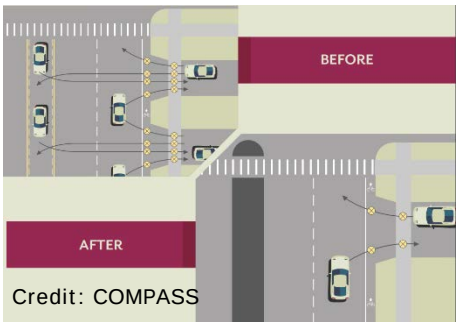
- ✓ Guide new development to areas planned for growth in the long-range plan forecast so that transportation infrastructure can keep up with new demand.
- ✓ Provide more than 8 housing units per acre, or a combination of 25 total persons (population + jobs) per acre, near future transit stops.
- ✓ Orient buildings toward potential transit corridors, with parking on the back side rather than the street side.
- ✓ Where appropriate, cluster buildings near intersections to consolidate transit stops and street crossings.
- ✓ Incorporate retail and other uses into the development, drawing customers both from the transit-oriented development and nearby areas.

The COMPASS-compiled catalog of Transit Oriented Developments in the *Communities in Motion Implementation Guidebook* provides examples of how higher-density development can integrate in existing neighborhoods.

Automobile Transportation

Access Management

Access management is a set of techniques to control vehicular access to roadways. The benefits of access management include improved traffic efficiency, fewer vehicle conflicts, and reduced crashes. Access management can help to improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians by limiting the number of conflict points and separating the conflict points.



Credit: COMPASS

Several steps can be taken to improve efficiency and safety of the transportation network using access management:

- ✓ Space access (driveways or cross streets) to increase the distance between potential conflict points.
- ✓ Provide more access on lower functionally classified roads, such as collectors, instead of arterials, to facilitate efficiency and safety.
- ✓ Provide cross or shared access to reduce the need for excessive access on major roads.
- ✓ Provide stub roads to help enable future connections between properties and reduce the need for access to high-speed, high-volume roadways.
- ✓ Provide adequate driveways and drive-through queues to ensure that when a vehicle leaves a roadway it does not affect traffic on the roadway or access to businesses.

More information is available in the *COMPASS Access Management Toolkit* and the *COMPASS Access Management Business Guide*.

Parking Management

Getting to the right balance of parking is important. Not enough parking means that parking spills into nearby areas, customers can't get to businesses, and safety is decreased due to illegal parking and increased traveling to find parking spaces. However, an oversupply of parking can result in less land for businesses and diminished efforts to promote other modes. Curb space is where people and vehicles intersect. Increasingly the curb has become a key place to balance needs between conflicting users. While safety is paramount, demand from different users, different days of the week, and different times of the day creates challenges and opportunities.


Credit: Global Designing Cities Initiative

Several steps can be taken to make parking and curbside management work for communities:

- ✓ Arrange parking near destinations to limit the amount of circling for nearby parking spaces and create multiple smaller parking lots rather than large parking lots.
- ✓ Provide shared parking between multiple users or destinations that have different peak periods. For example, office buildings traditionally need day-time parking while restaurants need space later in the evening.
- ✓ Improve walking and cycling infrastructure to make them feasible alternatives to driving and parking.
- ✓ Add landscape islands and designated walking paths to enable the safe and comfortable paths to businesses.