

Road work ahead



Nampa's Amazon fulfillment center to make major impact on Idaho roads

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With a 650,000-square-foot Amazon fulfillment center set to open in Nampa in the fall, drivers should expect some significant changes coming to the roads surrounding the site.

The growth spurred by the facility will add significant volume to roads that are already ill-equipped to handle current traffic levels, according to Matt Stoll, executive director of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, or COMPASS.

The center will create more than 1,000 jobs and generate nearly 7,000 vehicle trips per day during peak season around the holidays.

A 2018 traffic impact study identified more than 40 projects necessary in the area through 2030. The study identified these projects based on the expected impacts from Amazon — which

at that time was known publicly only as “Project Bronco” — along with overall traffic growth and non-Amazon-related projects in the pipeline.

Some of the projects the study calls for include widening Franklin Road to five lanes, with two lanes in each direction and a center turn lane; converting the roundabout on Star and Franklin roads to a signal intersection; and installing seven other roundabouts or traffic signals and six new intersections.

Several road projects are planned near the Amazon fulfillment center in the next several years, according to Jeff Barnes, Nampa's deputy public works director for transportation.

Some of these projects, Amazon is taking charge of, while others are being completed by public agencies, he said. Not all of the projects are in response to the fulfillment center, he said, as several were in the works before Amazon's plans.

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Here is a list of the projects drivers should look out for in the near future:

- Intersection improvement at Highway 20/26 and Star Road
- Intersection improvement at West McMillan Road and Star Road
- New traffic signal at Ustick Road and Star Road
- New roundabout or traffic signal at Cherry Lane and Star Road
- New roundabout at North Can Ada Road and Cherry Lane
- New traffic signal at East Franklin Road and Star Road
- Two intersection improvements along East Franklin Road along the Amazon site

- Intersection improvement at East Franklin Road and North Idaho Center Boulevard
- Three intersection improvements near Garrity Interchange
- Intersection improvement at Robinson Boulevard and Airport Road
- New roundabout or traffic signal at Airport Road and North Happy Valley Road
- New roundabout or traffic signal at East Victory Road and North Happy Valley Road

HIGHWAY 16 & GARRITY

Amazon vehicles will likely rely heavily on Garrity Interchange as the closest access point to Interstate 84 until Highway 16 is extended from Chinden Boulevard to the interstate, a nearly five-mile stretch.

Amazon's new center is projected to boost traffic by up to 10% at the Garrity Interchange during the holidays, according to the traffic impact study.

Nampa officials have reached out to the Idaho Transportation Department to encourage the department to expedite the construction of Highway 16, as the highway could relieve the pressure added to the Garrity Interchange. But ITD Spokesman Jake Melder said the project is currently unfunded and is not high on ITD's priority list, even with the Amazon center coming in.

The Highway 16 extension is expected to cost around \$450 million, based on 2019 dollar values, Melder said. Without additional funding, Stoll said it could be another 20 years until Highway 16 is finished.

"We're not speeding up anything, because there is nothing to speed up," Melder said.

Road work is ongoing, along Franklin Road in Nampa, near the site of the new 650,000-square-foot Amazon fulfillment center, Monday, Nov. 25, 2019.

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