



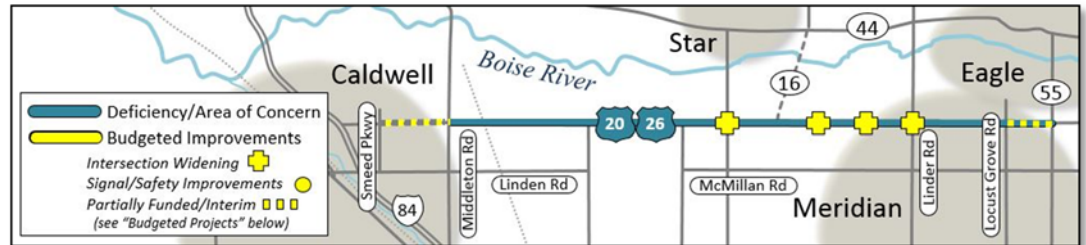
COMPASS  
COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION  
of Southwest Idaho

## US Highway 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) Middleton Road to Eagle Road

### Priority 3

#### Background

US Highway 20/26 is one of a few east-west roadways that stretch from Caldwell to Boise. Its role as an alternate to I-84 makes it a vital transportation route, supporting more regional travel in the Treasure Valley than any other arterial roadway.



Development is encroaching in both the western and eastern ends of this corridor as Boise, Eagle, Meridian, and Caldwell have extended their city limits to US 20/26. Additional development, including housing, shopping centers, and mixed-use neighborhoods, is anticipated in the corridor.

Congestion is especially heavy on the portion of US Highway 20/26 between Linder Road and State Highway 55 (Eagle Road), which has only two travel lanes. Additionally, intersections at Middleton Road and Linder Road will become even busier once activity centers planned for these areas are built.

In Ada County, US 20/26 is commonly referred to as Chinden Boulevard.

#### The Corridor at a Glance

- Two lanes wide for 14.5 miles, from Smeed Parkway to State Highway 55 (Eagle Road)
  - City of Caldwell collaborated with ITD in 2012 to widen US 20/26 to four lanes, from Aviation Way (near I-84) to Smeed Parkway (.5 mile)
  - A future Caldwell and ITD project will widen highway from Smeed Parkway to Middleton Road (1.5 miles)
  - 13 miles from Middleton Road to State Highway 55 (Eagle Road)
  - A long-range ITD project will widen the highway to four lanes for one mile between Locust Grove Road and State Highway 55 (Eagle Road)
- There are no bike lanes or transit services on this stretch of the highway
- Sidewalks have been placed in front of several new developments in the corridor, but they are not connected to each other, and the longest sidewalk is less than 1,500 feet long
- Most of the corridor is currently rural with many acres in crop production, but suburban development is occurring at the west and east ends of the corridor
- Points of interest (west to east)
  - Irrigation canals and ditches parallel to and crossing the highway
  - Industrial area along the railroad spur east of Middleton Road
  - Fifteen Mile Creek drainage
  - State Highway 16 extension/intersection (to be complete in 2014)
  - Residential subdivisions and Spurwing Golf Course west of Linder Road
  - Challenger School (private) adjacent to highway
  - Retail center and (former) Foxtail Golf Course east of Linder Road
  - Suburban developments west of State Highway 55/Eagle Road (mostly residential)



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#### Problem

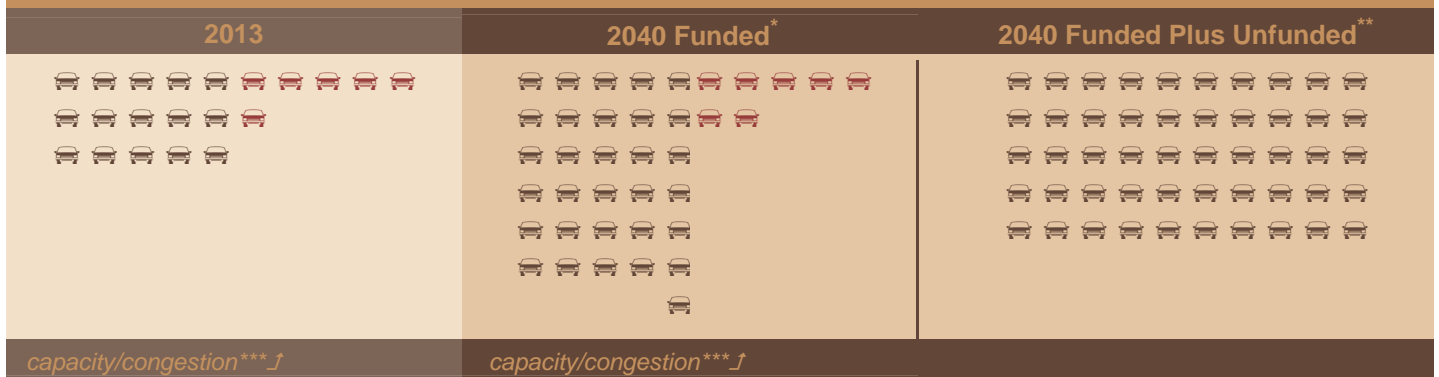
As a major mobility highway, US 20/26 is experiencing congestion along much of its length but especially between Linder Road and State Highway 55 (Eagle Road), a stretch with only two travel lanes. US 20/26 has been a regional priority for a number of years but it remains unfunded, causing traffic to divert to other routes such as McMillan Road. In addition to high traffic levels on this road, the intersection with State Highway 55 (Eagle Road) is ranked #2 on ITD's list of high-accident locations.

Current and Future <sup>1</sup>	2013	2040
Population	8,947	29,077
Households	2,773	9,796
Employment	1,347	8,287

By 2040, daily traffic between Middleton Road and State Highway 55 is expected to increase substantially.

- From Middleton Road to Star Road, traffic is projected to more than double, from 12,000 in 2013 to 30,000 in 2040.
- From Star Road to Linder Road, traffic is projected to double, from 14,000 in 2013 to 28,000 in 2040.
  - This would be similar to current traffic on US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard) in Garden City.
- From Linder Road to State Highway 55 (Eagle Road), traffic is projected to increase 80%, from 21,000 in 2013 to 38,000 in 2040.
  - This would be similar to current traffic on Eagle Road north of US 20/26.
- Rush hour driving time between Middleton Road and Glenwood Street is expected to more than double, from 25 minutes in 2013 to 60 minutes in 2040.

### Vehicles per Day, Linder Road to State Highway 55/Eagle Road in thousands



\* 2040 Funded reflects the 2013 regional transportation system and all the expansion/improvement projects that are funded in agencies' approved budgets or capital improvement plans, listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Tables 6.2 and 6.3).

\*\* Unfunded projects/improvements includes all the unfunded needs discussed in this summary and listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Table 6.5).

\*\*\* This is an approximate level where there is too much traffic for the road to carry and speeds will get slower as congestion gets worse. Each road's capacity depends on a number of variables, including truck traffic, number of driveways, and road conditions.

<sup>1</sup> Population, housing, and employment in the corridor are based on neighborhoods and other developments near the road.



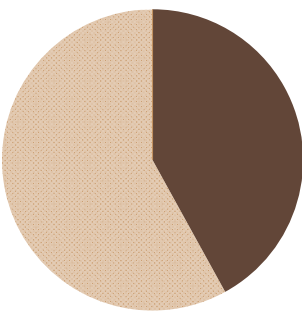
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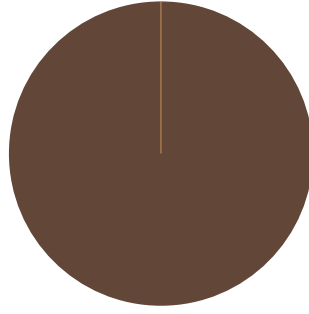
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### Drive Times, 2013 vs. 2040, Middleton Road to Glenwood Street

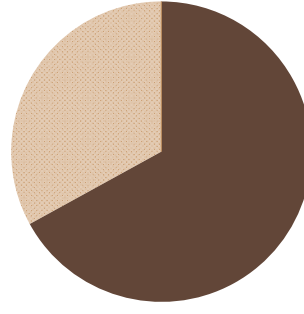
Each pie chart represents one hour. Drive times are in dark brown.



2013



2040 Funded\*



2040 Funded Plus Unfunded\*\*

\* 2040 Funded reflects the 2013 regional transportation system and all the expansion/improvement projects that are funded in agencies' approved budgets or capital improvement plans, listed in CIM 2040 (Chapter 6, Tables 6.2 and 6.3).

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When a road, transit line, bikeway, or other part of the transportation system is improved, it can accommodate more traffic and, therefore, it attracts more users. Even with more traffic, traveling conditions will be better with the improvements.

### Other Considerations

#### Roadway Users

Most of the analysis to identify the increased traffic issue is based on cars, the main mode of transportation on streets and highways. Pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles such as freight trucks, farm equipment, and buses may also share the road.

#### Environmental Issues

Increased traffic on a road can impact the surrounding environment as well as the people who live nearby. Before major road projects are built, their potential effects are analyzed to make sure they meet environmental regulations as well as provide for "environmental justice," ensuring all people can be involved and are treated fairly.<sup>2</sup>

As of publication date (February 2014), ITD is in the final stages of preparing a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) of US 20/26 for Federal Highway Administration review. The EA will specify any environmental considerations that must be taken into account when acquiring land for right-of-way and performing future road improvements in this stretch from Middleton Road to State Highway 55 (Eagle Road).

There is a small area with minority population concentrations on the western end of the corridor near I-84.

<sup>2</sup> See federal environmental justice definitions at [www.epa.gov/region07/ej/definitions.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region07/ej/definitions.htm).



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#### **Corridor Preservation Study**

In 2005, ITD began a corridor preservation study in partnership with COMPASS to identify the transportation improvements needed to preserve the US 20/26 corridor from Caldwell to Boise in order to accommodate future traffic demands. The study includes an EA, highway concept plan, and access management plan, with expected completion in 2014. The public (including adjacent property owners) and other stakeholders were invited to open houses to learn about and/or provide input into the plan.

Should funding become available for the US 20/26 corridor, improvements would be broken into several projects, in the following priority order: 1) corridor preservation (right-of-way) per the corridor preservation plan; 2) construction in the eastern end of the corridor (Linder Road to State Highway 55 [Eagle Road]); and 3) widening the western and central portions of the highway (Middleton Road to Can-Ada Road, and Can-Ada Road to Linder Road).

#### **Budgeted Projects**

**Roadway:** ITD obtained Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE) bond funds to build a new river crossing for State Highway 16 from State Highway 44 to US Highway 20/26 near the cities of Eagle, Meridian, and Star. The project will be complete in 2014 and cost about \$111 million.

Although US Highway 20/26 is administered by ITD, ACHD recognizes that most intersections will have costs shared between the two agencies. ACHD's *Capital Improvements Plan*<sup>3</sup> includes a budget for intersection improvements at Star, Black Cat, Ten Mile and Linder Roads, with costs totaling \$7.68 million.

ITD also has a budgeted project in the long-term to widen US 20/26 to four lanes from Locust Grove Road to State Highway 55 (Eagle Road). However, by the year 2040, six lanes will be needed to accommodate demand on the highway.

#### **Unfunded Future Needs**

**Roadway:** To ease future congestion and accommodate increased demand on US 20/26, the long-term need is to provide a six-lane arterial between State Highway 16 and State Highway 55 (Eagle Road), and four travel lanes west of Highway 16 to Caldwell.

The City of Caldwell plans to work with developers and ITD to widen US 20/26 from Smeed Parkway to Middleton Road (2.5 miles) in the near future. Design of the project is proposed to begin in FY2014, but construction is currently unfunded.

**Bus Service/Park and Ride:** The regional transit services plan, *valleyconnect*, includes the following for the near- to medium-term:

- Express Bus Route #46, which is planned to run along US 20/26 from the Caldwell transfer center to the Downtown Boise multimodal center. Express routes serve limited stops and run every 15 to 30 minutes during peak hours and every 30 to 60 minutes during midday.
- Several park-and-ride lot expansion/improvements along US 20/26
  - Franklin Road in Caldwell, west of the I-84/US 20/26 interchange (expansion/improvement)
  - Intersection of US 20/26 and proposed State Highway 16 extension (future)
  - US 20/26 (Chinden Boulevard)/State Highway 55 (Eagle Road) intersection (future)

**Operations, Management and Technology Projects:** Aside from road widening, other actions such as improving driveways or changing the traffic signals can help improve traffic conditions. The regional Intelligent Transportation System plan<sup>4</sup> calls for a number of traffic signal improvements, intersection cameras, and speed detection devices along this section of US 20/26.

<sup>3</sup> [www.achdidaho.org/Departments/ROWDS/CIP.aspx](http://www.achdidaho.org/Departments/ROWDS/CIP.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> *Final Report: Treasure Valley Transportation System: Operations, Management, and ITS* can be found online at [www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/cms-intro.htm](http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/cms-intro.htm).