

CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is key to the CIM 2040 planning process. Developing a plan that serves the needs of area residents requires more than providing opportunities for public input; honest, meaningful analysis of the feedback is just as essential.

COMPASS has an overarching public involvement policy that's updated and adopted by the COMPASS Board every three years. The policy states that COMPASS' public involvement process shall provide comprehensive information, timely public notice, and full public access to key decisions, and support early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans.

In October 2011, the COMPASS Board adopted a public involvement plan specific to CIM 2040. The plan is consistent with COMPASS's overarching public involvement policy.

Long-term planning processes often comprise periods of behind-the-scenes planning and technical work, punctuated by bursts of public outreach.

The planning processes of COMPASS shall include an active public involvement process...

The public involvement plan reiterates COMPASS' commitment to engaging the public and targeted stakeholders throughout the development of CIM 2040. This ensures all residents of Ada and Canyon Counties, including traditionally underrepresented populations, have opportunities to actively

Note: A glossary of terms is available at www.compassidaho.org/comm/glossary.htm. Acronyms in this document are defined in Appendix B.

participate in the planning process. This commitment is also stated in the COMPASS Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plans and is reflected in its process of identifying locations of Environmental Justice (minority and low-income) populations.

Outreach Structure and Timing

The development of CIM 2040 included four public comment periods (Figure 2.1) and three scenario planning workshops. COMPASS also provided quarterly email updates and ongoing participation opportunities to keep the public and stakeholders informed during periods of behind-the-scenes technical work.

This chapter will focus on the ongoing outreach, the scenario planning workshops, and the four public comment periods.



Figure 2.1. CIM 2040 public participation opportunities

Ongoing Outreach

COMPASS employed several platforms to keep the CIM 2040 planning process in front of stakeholders and the public.

Advisory Committees

COMPASS invited representatives from multiple stakeholder groups (Table 2.1) to serve on the CIM 2040 Planning Team and CIM 2040 Leadership Team to provide in-depth knowledge and expertise throughout the planning process. The Planning Team met regularly between September 2011 and May 2014 to provide technical input and review; the Leadership Team met bi-monthly for the same time period to provide policy-level input and review. Both teams worked closely with COMPASS staff and made recommendations on action items to the COMPASS Board.

Table 2.1. CIM 2040 Planning and Leadership Team representation

Agriculture/farmland	Irrigation districts
Business/economic development	Native American tribes
<u>COMPASS member agencies</u>	Real estate/developers
COMPASS Public Participation Committee	Refugee advocates
Emergency management	Smart growth advocates
Federal Highway and Transit Administrations	Transit/alternative transportation
Health	Transportation engineers
Housing	Utilities

Additionally, representatives from environmental resource agencies and organizations were invited to lend their expertise to the planning process. This environmental review work group and the COMPASS staff collaborated to develop an environmental suitability analysis of priority corridors for the plan (Chapter 9).

Web Updates

COMPASS provided details about the development of CIM 2040 on its [website](#). The website was, and continues to be, updated regularly and contains information on all aspects of this plan, including the plan itself and links to background on the issues and policies discussed within it. Draft plan chapters were posted online for public review and comment as they were completed. The plan was posted for final public comment March 3–April 27, 2014.

Quarterly Email Updates

COMPASS sent quarterly email updates to approximately 1,700 people on its CIM 2040 email list.¹ The emails outlined the technical work and public involvement activities that had occurred in the previous three months and highlighted those planned for the next three. These quarterly email updates were also posted on the [CIM 2040 web page](#).

COMPASS included a section titled “Why Should I Care?” in each email update to generate interest in the plan. This section featured thought-provoking submissions from the email audience and participants at COMPASS events explaining why it makes sense to think about long-range planning now. Some of these submissions were also spotlighted quarterly in the [COMPASS Executive Director’s blog](#).

Youth Art Contest

To kick off the development of CIM 2040, COMPASS sponsored a youth art contest in fall 2011. Elementary-aged children in Ada and Canyon Counties were asked to draw what they thought their community would look like in 25 years. The winning artwork was displayed in the COMPASS office, at CIM 2040 outreach events, and on ValleyRide buses. First-place winners are shown in Figure 2.2. All winning entries are posted [online](#).

Picture This! Youth Video Contest

As a follow-up to the art contest for elementary-aged children, COMPASS sponsored the *Picture This!* CIM 2040 youth video contest in fall 2012.

Students in 7th–12th grades in Ada and Canyon Counties were asked to create videos reflecting what the Treasure Valley might look like and what life might be like in 2040.

¹ Sign up for COMPASS emails by emailing a request to info@compassidaho.org.



Figure 2.2. Youth art contest winners



« click image to play video

The winning video, *2040: A Sneak Peek into the Future*, created by East Junior High students Vera Gaddi and Sarah Dean, portrayed a future with electric vehicles and hover-

craft, with a decreasing dependence on fossil fuels. COMPASS displayed the video at outreach events throughout 2013 and 2014 and will continue to use it as CIM 2040 is implemented.

Your Treasure Valley Future Photo Challenge

COMPASS invited people of all ages to participate in the yearlong *Your Treasure Valley Future Photo Challenge*.

From December 2012 through November 2013, residents submitted photos that represent values, ideals, and other aspects of Ada and Canyon Counties that they would like to see carried into the year 2040 or changed for the better. Several of these photos are used throughout this document to illustrate the future through the lenses of those who live here. Visit the [COMPASS website](#) or [Facebook page](#) to view all of the submitted photos.



(L) Children fish in a pond within Meridian's Paramount subdivision. Photo: Shelly Houston. (R) Units in the Waterfront District along the Boise River in Garden City. Photo: Diane Kushlan. Both were submitted as part of the *Your Treasure Valley Future Photo Challenge*.

Facebook

Throughout the planning process, COMPASS used its [Facebook page](#) to highlight public comment opportunities, promote education series speakers and other events, showcase photo challenge submissions, and more.

Blog

In [his blog](#), COMPASS Executive Director Matt Stoll discussed a variety of issues relating to CIM 2040. The blog featured a series of posts discussing the CIM 2040 elements and how each relates to transportation as well as “Why Should I Care?” submissions.

Education Series

Throughout the development of CIM 2040, the [COMPASS education series](#) featured speakers who addressed elements covered in the plan.

Presentations

COMPASS offered presentations to community groups throughout the planning process, with increased frequency during specific public comment periods. In total, COMPASS staff gave 67 presentations to approximately 1,160 individuals between January 2012 and June 2014.

Traveling Display

A freestanding display highlighting CIM 2040, with an emphasis on the adopted CIM 2040 Vision, was placed in eight public locations, including libraries, city halls, health district offices, and YMCA facilities throughout Ada and Canyon Counties between May and November 2013. The display helped increase awareness of CIM 2040 by reaching out to people in a simple, low-key manner in public gathering places.

Scenario Planning Workshops

In February and March 2012, COMPASS hosted three all-day workshops as a first step in developing a “preferred growth scenario” (the CIM 2040 Vision) to serve as the basis for CIM 2040. The scenario planning process is discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

For CIM 2040 to be successful, it was imperative to include diverse perspectives in the discussion. A total of 577 individuals representing a wide variety of interests (Table 2.2) were invited to participate in the workshops. In addition, 49 individuals submitted self-nomination forms, indicating their interest in participating; all self-nominees were invited to attend. A special effort was made to include participants from a wide variety of stakeholder groups.

Individuals who indicated they planned to attend were sent meeting reminders as well as a scenario workshop guidebook in advance to help them prepare.



CIM 2040 scenario planning workshops. Photos: COMPASS staff.

To help remove barriers to attendance, COMPASS offered reimbursement for childcare costs, language translation and Spanish-speaking facilitators, and transportation assistance to participants.

Of the 577 invitees and 49 self-nominees, approximately 170 community leaders, elected officials, stakeholders, and members of the general public participated in one of three day-long workshops, where they examined regional issues and developed potential visions for growth in the Treasure Valley between now and 2040.

Attendees participated in keypad polling to share their priorities on regional issues and the policies and programs that could address those issues. Participants then broke into work groups to develop maps of Ada and Canyon Counties for the year 2040, using interactive [CommunityViz® software](#). As the groups worked through this process, they were able to see the results of their decisions in real time and compare those to their priorities.

The workshops yielded 27 distinct future growth scenarios. Results from the workshops were distilled to develop four alternative scenarios submitted for public comment.² More information on the workshops and the scenario planning process can be found in Chapter 3.



A CIM 2040 scenario planning workshop participant explores effects of growth in the Treasure Valley. Photo: COMPASS staff.

Table 2.2. Scenario workshop invitees

Advocates for the disabled	First responders	Real estate agents
Advocates for the elderly	Government “watchdogs”	Recreation groups
Agriculture	Health interests	Refugees/refugee agencies
Bankers/lenders	Healthy/local foods	Schools/school districts
Bike/pedestrian advocates	Housing agencies	Special districts
Business community	Local emergency management	State and federal agencies
Community groups	Low-income groups	Tourism/hospitality
COMPASS Board	Major employers	Transit groups
COMPASS Leadership Team	Military	Transportation/land use professionals
COMPASS member agencies	Minority groups	Universities and trade schools
Developers/builders	Neighborhood and homeowner associations	University students
Economic development	News media	Utilities
Elected officials	Non-COMPASS-member cities/highway districts	Vanpool users
Environmental interests	Property managers	Youth
Faith-based organizations	The public at large	

² A report describing the process used to create the four scenarios and information about the scenarios can be found at www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/cim2040_scenarioplanning_process.htm (see “Step 2”).

Public Comment Periods

While public feedback was welcomed at any time during the development of CIM 2040, COMPASS held four formal public comment periods. Each comment period solicited feedback on specific issues in advance of the COMPASS Board making decisions on those issues.

May–June 2012: Comment on Alternative Scenarios

The first public comment period was held May 7–June 17, 2012. During this time, COMPASS solicited feedback on the four alternative growth scenarios that resulted from the scenario planning workshops held in February/March 2012.

COMPASS publicized and facilitated the public comment period via:

- Advertising and promotion
 - Radio and print ads
 - Email
 - Social media
 - News releases and interviews
 - Flyers
 - Community calendars
- Open houses (3)
 - Idaho Hispanic Cultural Center, Nampa
 - COMPASS office, Meridian
 - Library! at Hillcrest, Boise
- Presentations to community groups (26)
- Booths at public events (10)
- Comment materials at libraries (9 libraries)
 - Scenario handouts and comment forms available
- Meetings in a bag (17 meetings)
 - COMPASS provided materials for members of the public and agency representatives to host their own public comment meetings.
- Website outreach
 - Many CIM materials posted online for review and comment
 - Details regarding CIM 2040 open houses and libraries that had information available for review
 - Opportunity to comment online or download and print PDF comment forms

Throughout this comment period, COMPASS received 283 comments. Public comment results were used to create a draft preferred growth scenario. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of that process; additional information is also available online (see “Step 3” [here](#)).

December 2012–January 2013: Comment on Plan Processes and Components

From December 27, 2012, through January 15, 2013, COMPASS held its second public comment period, this one to solicit input on four plan components:

- Proposed goals, objectives, and tasks for CIM 2040 (Chapter 1)
- Proposed process for prioritizing transportation projects (Chapter 6)
- Proposed changes to the “functional classification” of roads (Chapter 6)
- Proposed transportation investment areas (not included in the plan⁴)

COMPASS publicized and provided opportunities to comment via:

- Advertising and promotion
 - Print ads
 - Email
 - Social media
 - News release
 - Flyers
 - Community calendars
- Website outreach
 - Many CIM 2040 materials posted online for review and comment
 - Details regarding CIM 2040 open houses
 - Opportunity to comment online or download and print PDF comment forms
- Open houses (2)
 - Caldwell Public Library, Caldwell
 - COMPASS office, Meridian

³ Per direction from the COMPASS Board, transportation investment areas are not included in this plan.

Forty comments were received. In addition, open house participants were encouraged to write comments directly on a large map of the two-county area. Twenty-three comments were left on maps at the open houses.

Open-ended comments reflected support for:

- Safe Routes to Schools funding
- Protection of the Boise River

A majority of respondents agreed with the proposed prioritization process (58.3%) and proposed functional classification map (52.6%). Forty-seven percent agreed with the proposed changes to the functional classification map; the same percentage indicated they were unsure. All other questions requested open-ended responses.

Two primary themes emerged from the open-ended comments: support for [Safe Routes to Schools](#) funding (as part of the discussion of prioritization) and support for protection of the Boise River (as part of the discussion of goals).

All comments were provided to the COMPASS Board prior to the Board making decisions on those issues. Comments were also provided to COMPASS advisory committees and are available [online](#).

August–September 2013: Comment on Prioritized Corridors and Projects

COMPASS held a third public comment period August 5–September 4, 2013, to solicit input into a list of 33 prioritized corridors and projects for CIM 2040 (Chapter 6).

COMPASS publicized and provided opportunities to comment via:

- Advertising and promotion
 - Print ads
 - Email blasts
 - Social media
 - News release
 - Flyers
 - Community calendars
- Website outreach
 - All background and comment materials posted online for review and comment
 - Details regarding CIM 2040 open houses and other comment opportunities
 - Interactive online map

- Open houses (2)
 - Hugh Nichols Public Safety Building, Nampa
 - COMPASS office, Meridian
- Discussion group (1)
 - National Federation for the Blind
- Comment materials at libraries and other public locations (9 locations)

COMPASS specifically reached out to youth via drivers' education programs, providing instructors with information about public comment opportunities to pass along to their students via emails and a newsletter distributed by the Driver Education Coordinator at the Idaho State Department of Education. COMPASS also offered to present information to drivers' education classes but did not receive any responses to this offer.

As noted above, COMPASS led a discussion group on transportation priorities with visually impaired individuals through the National Federation for the Blind. The group discussed how they currently travel throughout the Treasure Valley, what types of transportation issues they would like improved, and their priorities based on the 33 identified priority corridors and projects. All priorities identified by the group were related to transit or park and ride facilities. Discussion group notes are [online](#).

In addition to those received from the discussion group, 24 other comments were received during this comment period. Verbatim comments are [online](#). Six comments related to priority rankings and the rest discussed individual corridors. No specific themes emerged from the comments.

March–April 2014: Comment on Draft Plan Document

COMPASS held a fourth and final public comment period March 3–April 27, 2014, on the full draft CIM 2040 plan document. The public was invited to comment on any or all portions of the plan, but specific questions focused public comment on the plan's primary policy issues:

- CIM 2040 goals (Chapter 1)
- CIM 2040 Vision (Chapter 3)
- Focus of federal transportation funding on maintenance (Chapter 6)
- Unfunded priority corridors and projects (Chapter 6)

- Performance measures (Chapter 10)
- Implementation policies (Chapter 11)

With the exception of performance measures and implementation policies, these issues had also been previously vetted with the public during the course of the planning process.

COMPASS publicized and provided opportunities to comment via:

- Advertising and promotion
 - Print ads
 - Radio ads
 - ValleyRide bus billboards
 - Op-ed that ran in the *Idaho Statesman* and *Idaho Press Tribune*
 - Email blasts
 - Social media
 - News releases
 - Flyers (focusing on low-income and minority neighborhoods [Figure 2.3])
 - Community calendars
- Open houses (3)
 - Library! at Cole/Ustick, Boise
 - Hugh Nichols Public Safety Building, Nampa
 - COMPASS office, Meridian
- Presentations to community groups (20)
- Discussion groups (3)
 - Latino/low-income
 - Elderly/low-income
 - Refugee/low-income
- Comment materials at libraries and other public locations (18 locations; Figure 2.3)
- Newsletter articles (3)
 - National Federation for the Blind
 - Central District Health
 - Women in Transportation Seminars
- Website outreach
 - Draft plan and all comment materials posted online for review and comment
 - Details on CIM 2040 open houses and other comment opportunities
 - Virtual open houses (2 + “anytime”)
- Opportunity to comment online or download and print PDF comment forms

Note: Low-income areas are calculated for each census tract using the 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year data, the most recent data available at the time of publication. Minority areas are calculated using the 2010 Decennial Census, which allows for the analysis of block groups (smaller than census tracts). Income information is not available from the 2010 Decennial Census. Low-income areas maintain a median household income that is 60 percent of the median household income of the respective county. Minority areas maintain at least 30 percent of the population that is Non-white or Hispanic.

Figure 2.3. Locations of comment materials and flyers posted for 2014 public comment period; shown with Environmental Justice consideration areas (minority and low-income)⁴

As noted above, COMPASS provided virtual (online) open houses during this public comment period. During two “hosted” virtual open houses, COMPASS provided a live presentation, an opportunity for questions/answers on the presentation, and live (real-time) online chats to respond to questions. In addition, for six weeks, COMPASS provided the same virtual open house experience, but in an “unhosted” format, with a pre-recorded presentation. COMPASS staff checked and responded to chat comments daily. In total, 53 individuals participated in the virtual open houses. For more information on the virtual open houses, see a full report [online](#).

⁴ www.compassidah.org/documents/prodserv/CIM2040/Maps/CommentFlyerLocations_2-3.pdf

A total of 114 comments were received during the comment period, in addition to notes from the three discussion groups and notes/questions left in the chat rooms of the virtual open house. All comments, as well as quantitative results from comment forms, can be found [online](#).

As shown in Figure 2.4, comments showed general support for the primary policies/concepts in the plan, with the following percentages selecting either “somewhat” or “strongly” agree on the comment form: goals (69%), implementation polices (65%), CIM 2040 Vision (62%), focus federal funding on maintenance (53%), and priority corridors (44%).

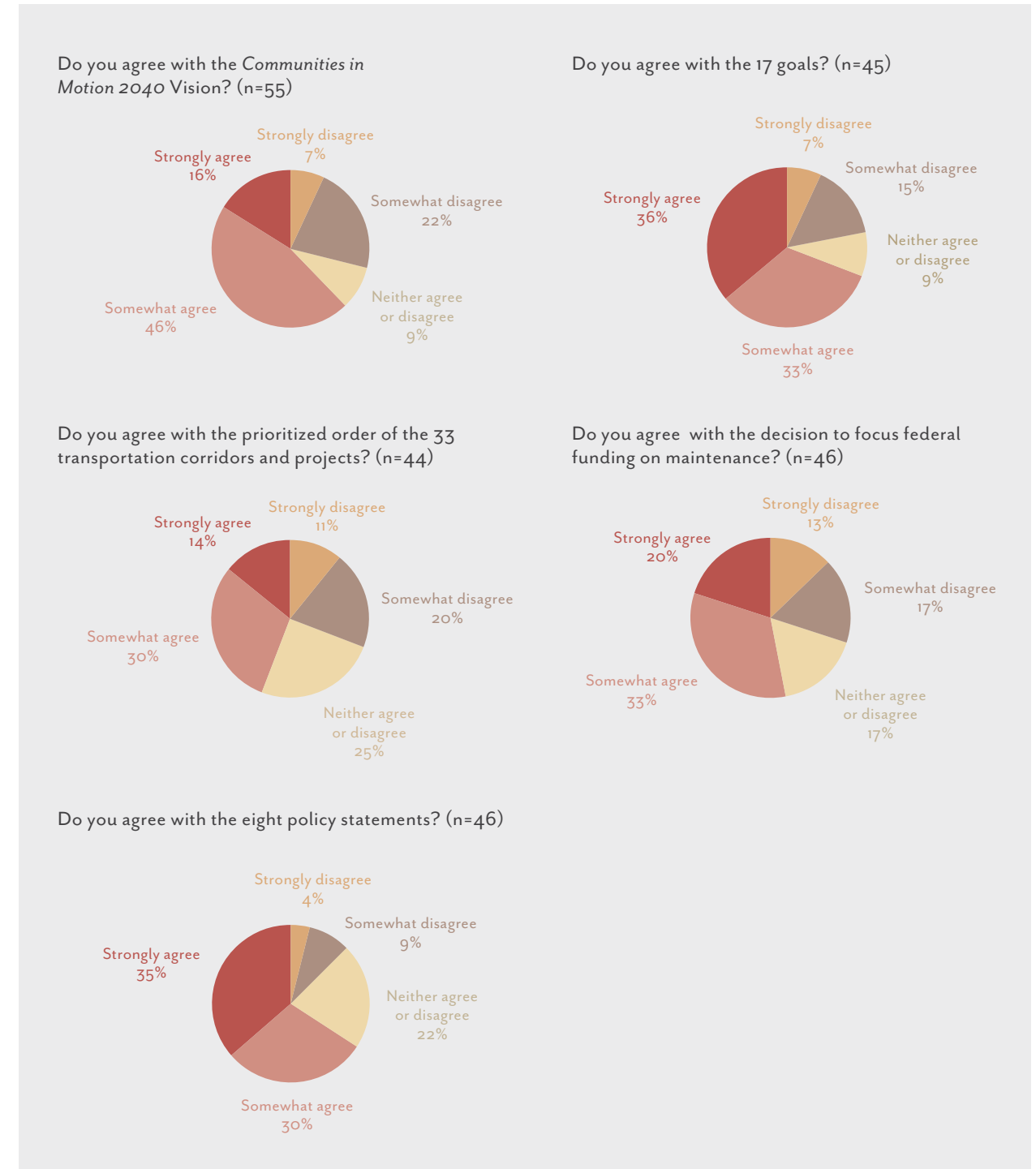


Figure 2.4. Public comments reflecting general support for the primary policies/concepts in the full draft CIM 2040 plan

Open-ended comments varied greatly, but the following themes emerged:

- Remove the Beacon Light/Purple Sage connection from the list of unfunded projects ([priority #33 on the list of unfunded projects](#)).
- Remove the Linder Road expansion/improvements from the list of unfunded projects ([priority #6](#)).
- Support more transit (ranged from specific comments on light rail to general comments on the need for more transit).
- Support improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Focus regional traffic on the state system.
- Support improvements/expansion to State Highway 16 ([priority #14](#)).

The discussion groups (elderly/low-income, Latino/low-income, and refugee/low-income) had varying comments:

- The elderly and refugee groups expressed strong support for improvements to the transit system.
- The Latino group indicated they did not use the transit system at all.
- All three groups supported the decision to focus federal transportation funding on maintenance.
- Responses regarding ways to increase transportation funding varied within and between the groups.

COMPASS responded by email to questions submitted during the public comment period, when an email address was provided. Comments submitted in the virtual open house chat room were responded to in the chat room. Those responses, as well as responses to questions when there was not a mechanism for a direct response, can be found with the [comments online](#).

All comments were provided to the CIM 2040 Planning Team, CIM 2040 Leadership Team, Public Participation Committee, and COMPASS Board of Directors. In addition, the comments are available on the [COMPASS website](#) and were sent to the COMPASS email list.

Comments requesting or suggesting changes to the plan were addressed in one of three ways, and are noted with the [comments](#):

- Suggested changes to text or format for clarity were reviewed and changes were made by staff, as appropriate.
- Suggested technical changes, such as addition of information or corrections to technical details, were reviewed by staff in collaboration with the entity requesting the change and were made, as appropriate.
- Suggested changes to policy issues or other items previously acted upon by the COMPASS Board of Directors were reviewed by staff, and recommendations were presented to the CIM 2040 Planning Team. The Planning Team reviewed the staff recommendations, as well as all comments, and recommended the draft plan, with changes (based on staff and Planning Team recommendations) to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team then reviewed the Planning Team's recommendations and recommended the plan, with changes, to the COMPASS Board for adoption.

The following five policy recommendations were approved by the COMPASS Board, in response to public comment and staff and committee recommendations. These have been incorporated into the final plan.

- The words “and connectivity” were added to Goal 1.1 (Chapter 1), to read: “Enhance the transportation system to improve accessibility and connectivity to jobs, schools, and services; allow the efficient movement of people and goods; and ensure the reliability of travel by all modes considering social, economic, and environmental elements.”
- A ninth implementation policy was added to the list of implementation policies in Chapter 11: “Focus available federal funding on maintaining the existing transportation system.”
- Several tasks were revised to better articulate how they will be accomplished to meet plan goals. The tasks are not part of the plan document, but are available [online](#) with other supporting documents.

- The unfunded priority corridor list was kept intact (Chapter 6). Public comments had been received requesting that some of the priorities—particularly a connection between Beacon Light and Purple Sage Roads—be removed. The identified transportation needs were based on underlying land uses and existing entitlements, which have not changed; therefore, the priority list was kept intact.
- The discussion of the division of funding between roadways/transit/planning and special projects in Chapter 6 was clarified to state that the division of funds will be calculated on a five-year rolling average to allow flexibility for larger projects in any of the categories to move forward and still remain consistent with the policy.

Additional changes made to the plan in response to public comment are noted with the verbatim comments.

Summary

Throughout the planning process, from September 2011 to July 2014, COMPASS involved community leaders, specific stakeholders, and the general public in its planning processes.

Individuals were kept up-to-date on progress and public involvement opportunities through the COMPASS website, quarterly email updates, social media, a traveling display, and more.

Stakeholders and members of the general public were invited to participate in the planning process through all-day scenario planning workshops, art and video contests, a photo challenge, commenting on plan chapters posted online, and submitting reasons why they care about CIM 2040 for the quarterly email update and executive director’s blog. Specific stakeholders were also invited to participate as members of the CIM 2040 Planning Team, Leadership Team, or environmental review work group to directly contribute to the plan update throughout the planning process.

In addition, COMPASS held three public comment periods to receive public input into planning issues before those issues were brought to the COMPASS Board for action. Finally, a fourth public comment period was held March 3–April 27, 2014, to receive feedback on the entire draft plan document.

Figure 2.5 shows the number of comments received, by zip code, during the four public comment periods, in relation to minority and low-income populations (Environmental Justice consideration areas).

Figure 2.5. Total number of public comments received by zip code; shown with minority and low-income Environmental Justice consideration areas⁵

⁵ www.compassidaho.org/documents/prodserv/CIM2040/Maps/ZipCodesComments_EJ_2-5.pdf