

CHAPTER 5

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Treasure Valley transportation system comprises a number of elements, including roadways, facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, and public transportation that function together to get people where they need to go.

CIM 2040 commits to maintaining the existing transportation system as its top priority, reflected by goal 1.3 of the plan—*Protect and preserve existing transportation systems and opportunities*—and by the funding priorities discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 5.1 summarizes key statistics that illustrate the overall performance of the existing transportation system; the same information for the year 2040 is shown in Chapter 6, which addresses future transportation system needs.

Table 5.1. 2013 existing transportation network characteristics

Transportation Network Characteristics	2013
Population	599,840
Employment	250,697*
Vehicle miles of travel, average weekday	12,077,400
Hours of delay, average weekday	27,670

* Source: Idaho Department of Labor data, June 2013

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

Travel time to/from common destinations	
• Caldwell to downtown Boise	34 minutes
• Nampa to Boise Airport	23 minutes
• CanAda Road in Star to St Luke's in Boise	30 minutes
• North Meridian to Veteran's Memorial Parkway	20 minutes
• City of Eagle to St Luke's Meridian	17 minutes
ValleyRide	
• Number of bus routes (fixed)	26
• Total one-way passenger trips	1,506,289
Treasure Valley Transit	
• Number of bus routes	N/A; this is demand-response
• Total one-way passenger trips	39,039
Commuteride	
• Number of vanpools	102
• Total one-way vanpool passenger trips	274,735

Transportation System Goals

The CIM 2040 goals addressing transportation management and maintenance are:

Goal 1.1: 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.

Goal 1.2: Improve safety and security for all transportation modes and users. (Discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.)

Goal 1.3: Protect and preserve existing transportation systems and opportunities.

Goal 1.4: Develop a transportation system with high connectivity that preserves capacity of the regional system and encourages walk and bike trips.

Goal 6.1: Develop a regional transportation system that connects communities, provides access to employment centers, and provides efficient truck, rail, and/or air freight movement throughout the Treasure Valley.

Goal 8.1: Protect and enhance transportation routes for the efficient movement of farm equipment and products.

Performance measures and targets are discussed in Chapter 6.

Roadway Management and Maintenance

Roadway management and maintenance activities can include safety improvements, travel demand management, and investments in intelligent transportation systems,

but typically focus on maintaining the integrity of pavement and bridges.

According to information provided by individual transportation agencies, it is reasonable to conclude that their systems are *currently* in good condition. For example, according to ITD, as of 2013, 85% of ITD's pavement statewide was in good or fair condition and 74% of ITD's bridges statewide were in good condition.

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However, agencies have expressed concern about falling behind in maintaining pavement conditions, particularly chip sealing and maintenance overlays. Over time, more investment will also be needed to preserve and restore deteriorating bridges, but specific strategies have not been developed.

Chapter 6 details specific maintenance needs, including those funded by federal dollars, in the Treasure Valley.

Public Transportation

Public transportation provides options for people to meet their travel needs and is a key component of the overall transportation system. In addition to providing a transportation option for all individuals, public transit systems often provide the sole source of transportation for people who do not, or cannot, operate a motor vehicle because of personal choice, income, disability, or age.

Public transportation is a shared passenger transportation service, such as a bus or train, available for use by the general public. It does not include taxis or carpools.

In the Treasure Valley, buses are the primary form of public transportation.

The major public transportation providers in southwest Idaho are discussed in Chapter 4.

VRT is the regional public transportation authority for Ada and Canyon Counties, and oversees the ValleyRide bus system. One of VRT's priorities is improved coordination of existing transportation services to enhance mobility and access for the people who are typically most dependent on them.

Management and maintenance of the existing public transportation system is as much a priority as maintaining existing roadways and bridges. However, it appears VRT will likely fall behind in its ability to keep up with bus replacement. Based on the size and age of the current fleet, annual expenditures for bus replacements should be doubled or tripled.

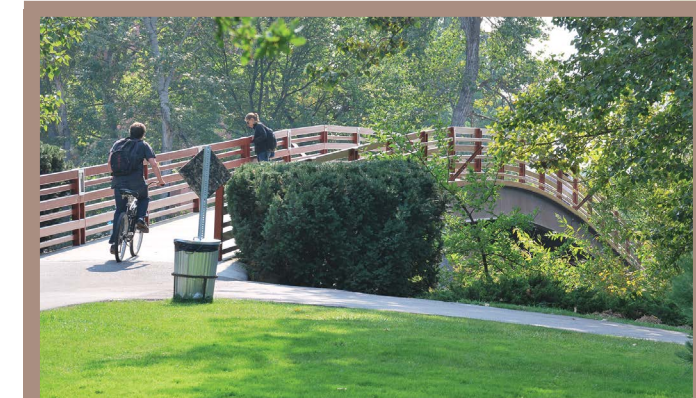
VRT's *valleyconnect* plan identifies current and future potential transportation options, other than driving alone, in Ada and Canyon Counties. It also details how customers can access information about routes and services, and discusses future improvements to the system. These improvements are discussed in Chapter 6 as unfunded needs.

In 1994, the Idaho State Legislators passed a law (Title 40, Chapter 21) giving citizens the opportunity to vote on the formation of public transportation authorities. The purpose was to establish a single governmental agency oriented entirely toward public transportation needs within a county or region.

Bike and Pathways

The region has a long history of bikeway planning dating back to the 1970s and the start of a "greenbelt" in Ada County. Today, a 30-mile-plus greenbelt runs alongside the Boise River and there are more than 150 miles of on-street bike lanes.

Figure 5.1 depicts the current regional pathway map for Ada and Canyon Counties. The two-county Foundation for Ada/Canyon Trail Systems, Inc. (F.A.C.T.S.) is a nonprofit organization working to expand the existing Boise River Greenbelt to create one path from Lucky Peak Dam to where the Boise River meets the Snake River west of Parma. Many local jurisdictions also have their own bike and pathway plans. In Ada County, ACHD has a bikeways plan, the City of Eagle has a map of proposed bicycle and trail connections, the City of Boise has a map of existing trails and the greenbelt, as well as their maintenance needs, and the City of Meridian has a pathways master plan and a map of planned bicycle facilities. The City of Kuna¹ also has a bicycle and pathway plan. In Canyon County, Caldwell and Nampa have adopted bike and pathway plans, and Middleton is working to expand its pathway system.



The Boise River Greenbelt. Photo: Toni Tisdale, as part of the *Your Treasure Valley Future Photo Challenge*.

¹ This will become its own document, but the information is currently included in the City of Kuna Comprehensive Plan, 2013: www.kunacity.id.gov/DocumentCenter/View/69.

of safety features such as speed zone flashing beacons, paths and sidewalks, and raised curbs, which provide a physical separation between pedestrians, bikes, and motorists.

Complete Streets

A complete street is safe and convenient for all users of the street, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists. Since users will have different needs for a road based on its location and context, a two-lane road without sidewalks or bike lanes may be considered complete in a rural area but incomplete in a downtown area.

The COMPASS Board adopted a Complete Streets policy in August 2009. Many other agencies in Ada and Canyon Counties have Complete Street policies, and more are being developed all the time.

COMPASS uses a Complete Streets Level of Service (CSLOS) model to evaluate the completeness of transportation corridors for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit services, and to provide a level of service (LOS) letter grade (A-F) for each mode of travel. The model is based on the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual methodology. For more information, see the COMPASS Complete Streets Report.

A comprehensive approach to complete streets planning encourages stakeholders from land use, economic development, housing, community infrastructure, health, and other fields to work collaboratively towards a more inclusive transportation network.

In 2013, COMPASS completed an initial complete streets analysis of all principal and minor arterials and select collector roadways to identify LOS for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes of transportation. Figure 5.2 portrays the LOS for these users for 2013. Maps reflecting the optimal LOS proposed for 2040 and the percentage of the 2040 LOS currently completed are available online.

Figure 5.1. Current pathways in Ada and Canyon Counties²



Full bike racks at Washington Elementary School, Boise. Photo: Marcus Orton, as part of the *Your Treasure Valley Future Photo Challenge*.

Safe Routes to Schools

Safe Routes to Schools is a national program that encourages students to walk and bike to school to promote a healthy lifestyle, reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and enhance quality of life in our communities. There are Safe Routes to Schools programs in the Boise School District, Joint School District #2, and Cities of Caldwell and Nampa.

The enhanced vehicle registration fees, approved by Ada County voters in 2008, have

helped ACHD, as part of its partnership with Safe Routes to Schools, install a variety

² [www.compassidaho.org/documents/prodserv/CIM2040/Maps/CurrentPathways_5_1\[Converted\].pdf](http://www.compassidaho.org/documents/prodserv/CIM2040/Maps/CurrentPathways_5_1[Converted].pdf)

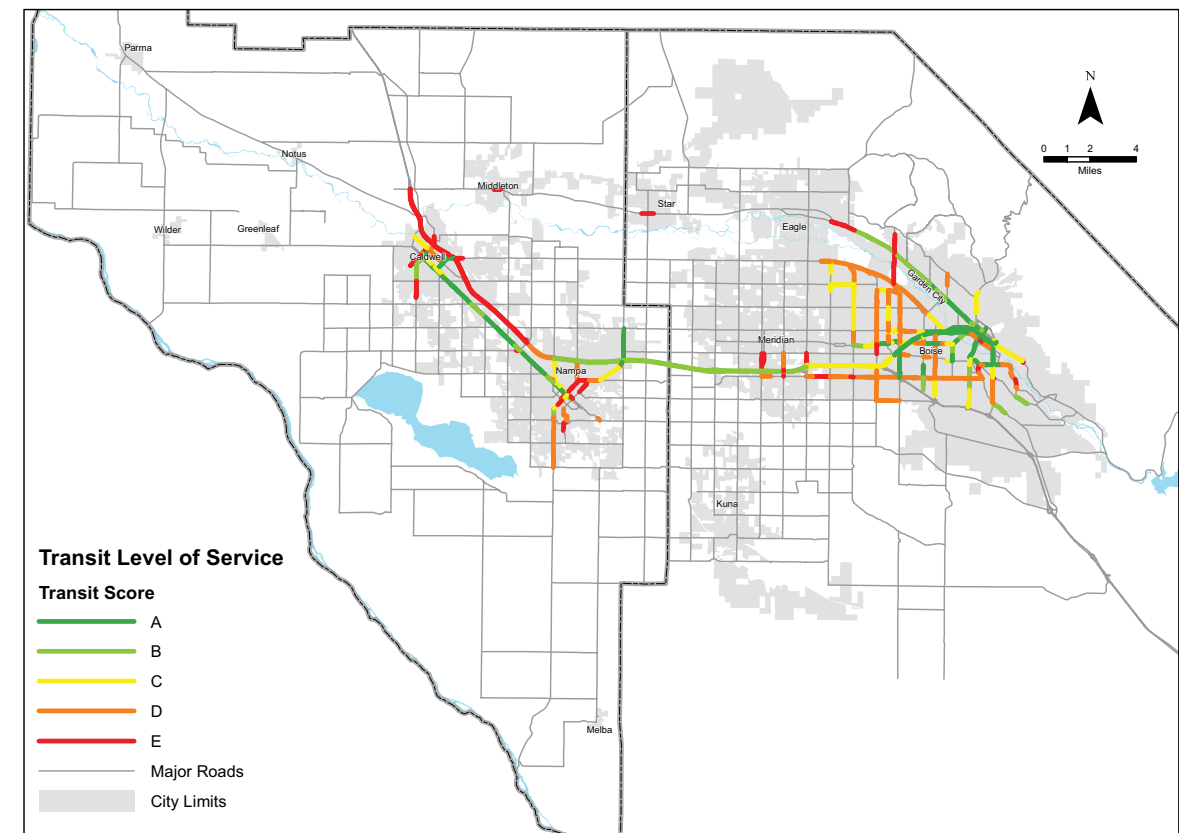
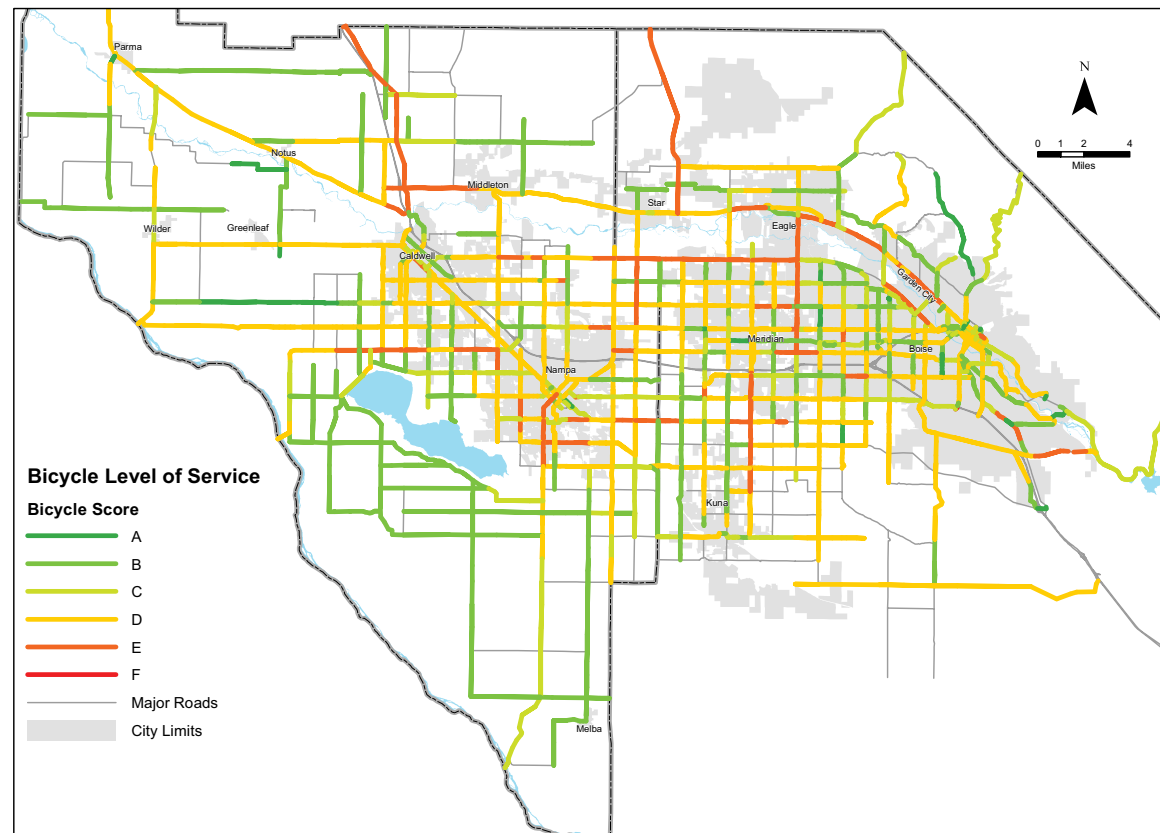
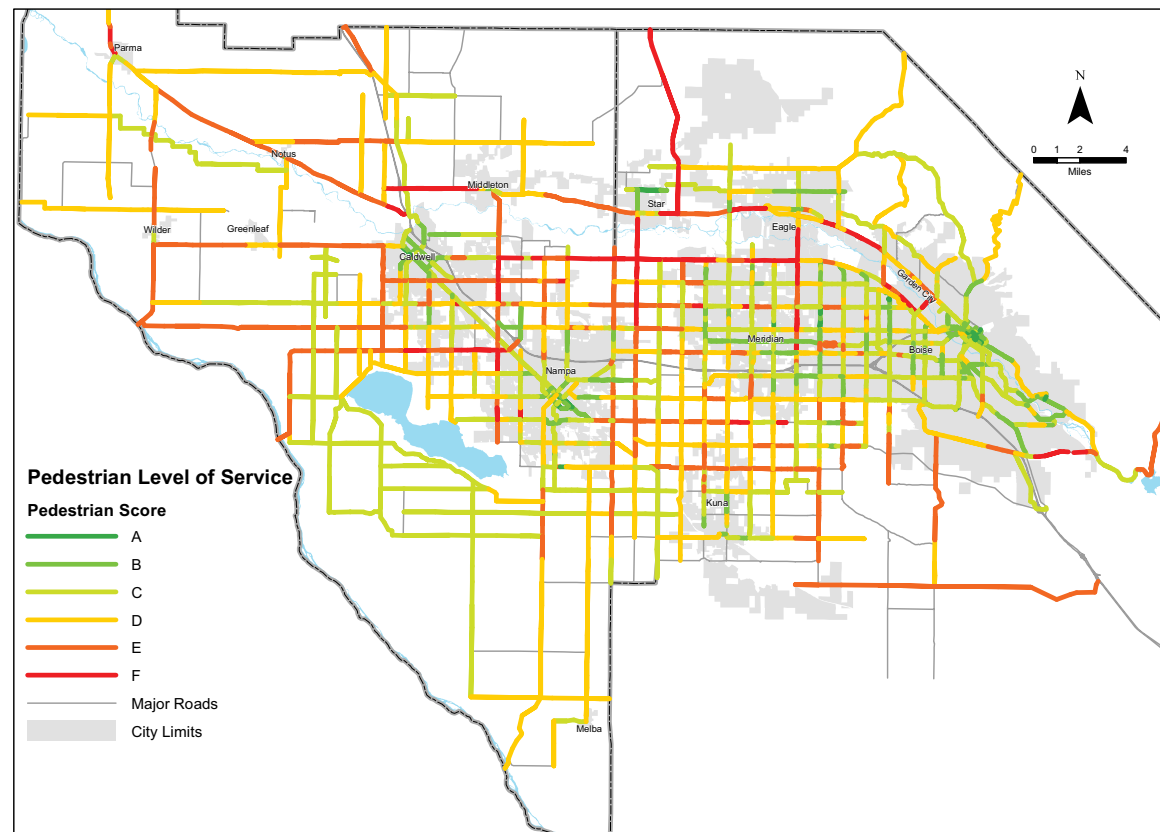


Figure 5.2. Current (2013) LOS for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users³



Freight

The ability to move freight efficiently is a key to national, state, and regional economic growth and vitality. Truck freight affects, and is affected by, travel times on major roads. Minimizing delays in the freight system cuts costs and thereby improves our economy.

The importance of freight can be seen through employment data. Of the 240,000 jobs in Ada and Canyon Counties, about 43,000 have a strong tie to freight, including agriculture, warehousing, manufacturing, and construction (Figure 5.3).⁴

³ www.compassidaho.org/documents/prodser/CIM2040/Maps/Current_Bike_Ped_Transit_LOS_5_2.pdf

⁴ Source: Idaho Department of Labor 2010 data using North American Industrial Classification (NAICS) codes

Figure 5.3. Freight-related employment and the National Highway System.⁵ The size of the dots reflects the number of employees in that area whose jobs are tied to freight. National Highway System routes are shown in red.

State Freight Plan

In 2013, ITD completed a statewide freight plan. Working with a committee of private and public interest groups, ITD set forth the following initial recommendations:

- Collect and analyze freight data.
- Facilitate the efficient movement of freight.
- Expand sources for freight infrastructure funding.
- Strategically invest in a freight network, including corridors and new/expanded multi-modal facilities and connections.
- Align transportation policy and projects with economic-development strategies.
- Create an institutional framework for communication, collaboration, and partnership.

⁵ [www.compassidaho.org/documents/prodserv/CIM2040/Maps/FreightDependentEmployment_5_3\[Converted\].pdf](http://www.compassidaho.org/documents/prodserv/CIM2040/Maps/FreightDependentEmployment_5_3[Converted].pdf)

The Treasure Valley Freight System

While trucks carry most of the freight in the Treasure Valley, air, rail, and pipeline are other main methods of moving freight.

Truck

Almost all material goods spend time on a truck, even if they spent time on a plane or train. In Idaho, trucks carry 65% of the freight by value and 58% by weight. Freight carried by truck is expected to increase from 80 million tons in 2011 to 139 million tons by 2040.⁶

In 2008, COMPASS commissioned the *Treasure Valley Truck Freight Travel Survey* to provide information on truck freight issues in Ada and Canyon Counties.

Based on the survey information, an estimated 330,000 internal commercial vehicle trips (starting and ending in Ada/Canyon Counties) occurred each day inside the two-county area. The study also concluded that through trips (originating outside the area and not stopping in Ada/Canyon Counties for any reason) were 15% of eastbound I-84 and 9% of westbound I-84 commercial vehicle trips.

The most common freight routes⁷ through Ada and Canyon Counties are listed below. Five of these corridors (marked with an asterisk) are part of prioritized, unfunded needs in this plan (Chapter 6).

East-West Routes

- Interstate 84*
- Chinden Boulevard (US Highway 20/26)*
- State Street (State Highway 44)*
- Franklin Road⁸*
- Fairview Avenue
- Overland Road*
- Emerald Street

North-South Routes

- Eagle Road (State Highway 55)
- Franklin Boulevard⁹
- Cole Road
- Cloverdale Road

⁶ Note that mode is how the freight was shipped in Idaho, not how it ultimately arrived at its destination.

⁷ Routes used for most local freight, based on results from the commercial vehicle survey.

⁸ Franklin Road and Franklin Boulevard reported as one.

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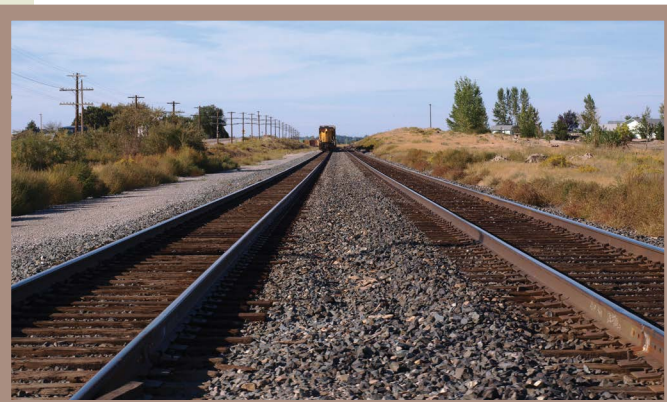
Air

Air freight's share of tonnage is slight but the value of its shipments is high. Exports to other countries by air from Idaho were just 0.06% of the weight of shipments but were 5.5% of the total value in 2011, which is the most recent year data are available. Total Idaho air freight is forecasted to increase from 5,000 tons in 2011 to 7,000 tons in 2040.

CIM 2040 addresses the road access to airports located in Boise, Caldwell, and Nampa. The Boise airport is the largest in the region and is served by four interchanges along Interstate 84. The Caldwell and Nampa airports are both constrained due to runway lengths and weight limits. Each is primarily served by two interchanges. All three airports have adequate road access for freight.

Rail

Shipping by rail is relatively inexpensive; rail cost per ton is low compared to other modes. Rail freight in Idaho is projected to increase from 13 million tons in 2011 to 24 million tons by 2040.



Railroad along Shortline Road, Kuna. Photo: Troy Behunin, as part of the *Your Treasure Valley Future Photo Challenge*.

A main line track runs through Ada and Canyon Counties, with a side track called the Boise Cutoff running from a rail yard in Nampa through Meridian and Boise (Figure 5.3, above). The rail lines in the region are owned primarily by the Union Pacific Railroad. The City of Boise owns 18 miles of track south of Gowen Road to a point north of the junction of the Boise Cutoff and the main line. The main line is heavily used, seeing more than 35 trains a day, while the Boise Cutoff provides local freight service

with two trains a day. A transload facility (where truck trailers are loaded/unloaded onto rail cars) is being considered south of Boise.

Pipeline

Pipeline freight is second to truck freight in Idaho in terms of tonnage, carrying 40 million tons in 2011 and forecasted to increase to 67 million tons by 2040. The pipeline in Ada and Canyon Counties serves primarily cars and trucks, as it supplies most of the gasoline to the region. The tank farm in Boise generates a lot of truck traffic.