



BLUEPRINT for  
Good GROWTH

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**BGG Steering Committee  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Overview..... 1

    A. Issues..... 1

    B. Guiding Principles ..... 3

    C. Future Steps ..... 5

    D. Definitions..... 6

II. Blueprint Objectives & Policies..... 9

    A. Growth Management ..... 9

        Growth Tiers Defined ..... 9

        Growth Management Goal, Objective and Policies:..... 10

    C. Transportation Goal, Objectives and Policies..... 20

    D. Utilities Goal, Objectives and Policies ..... 23

    E. Public Schools Goal, Objective and Policies ..... 25

III. Strategies..... 26

    A. Plan Amendments ..... 26

        Future Land Use Map Amendments ..... 26

        Policy Amendments ..... 26

    B. Intergovernmental Coordination ..... 27

        Areas of Impact..... 27

        ACHD Coordination ..... 28

        COMPASS Coordination..... 29

        ITD Coordination..... 30

        Valley Regional Transit Coordination ..... 30

    C. Regulatory Changes ..... 30

    D. Legislative Initiatives..... 32

    E. Plan Amendments ..... 32

    F. Educational Initiatives ..... 33

IV. Appendices..... 34

    Appendix A: Growth Projections..... 34

    Appendix B: Scenarios Analysis ..... 34

    Appendix C: Plan Policy Amendments ..... 34

    Appendix D: Regulatory Models ..... 34

    Appendix E: Intergovernmental Agreements Models ..... 34

    Appendix F: Blueprint for Good Growth Maps..... 34

        Map 1: Tier Map ..... 35

        Map 2: Transit Corridors ..... 36

        Map 3: Functional Classification Map..... 37

## I. Overview

Ada County is a desirable place – the climate, natural resources, and economic opportunities available here continue to draw new people and new development to this area. The Blueprint for Good Growth is a collaborative multi-jurisdictional effort intended to coordinate land use and public facility decisions so that growth in Ada County will be an asset to existing residents and future generations. The plan establishes an overall framework for growth management in Ada County that includes policies and strategies that ultimately will be incorporated into the plans, regulations and practices of Ada County, Boise, Eagle, Garden City, Kuna, Meridian, Star, Ada County Highway District (ACHD) and Idaho Transportation Department (ITD).

This document identifies the main issues to be addressed by the Blueprint for Good Growth, establishes goals, objectives and policies for the plan, and identifies strategies that should be pursued by each of the participants in this process to achieve the mutually beneficial goals established in this plan. While this plan does not prescribe specific land use amendments, it establishes a growth tier map that establishes distinct growth policy areas and the applicable policies. It also establishes an on-going process to sustain effective interagency coordination required to effectively address the growth challenges faced by Ada County residents, businesses and service providers.

This plan was developed in coordination the Community Planning Association’s program to update the region’s Long Range Transportation Plan. This “Communities in Motion” program established and evaluated numerous growth scenarios that are described in the appendix of this Plan. The policy areas and policies established in the Blueprint for Good Growth are consistent with and complementary to those included in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

### A. Issues

Ada County jurisdictions face a variety of growth issues which were identified in the Needs, Issues and Opportunities Report. This section refines and prioritizes these issues to help establish a schedule for implementation and to guide decisions involving competing objectives.

Key issues that need to be resolved over the course of Blueprint Plan development include:

- **Land Use and Development.** Coordinating land use and infrastructure decisions, maintaining strong and vibrant downtown areas and healthy neighborhoods, developing better systems for managing regionally significant development projects, and promoting sustainable infill development are just a few of the land use issues facing each jurisdiction.

|   |
|---|
| <p><b>Key Issues:</b></p> <p>Land Use &amp; Development</p> <p>Transportation</p> <p>Agriculture</p> <p>Environment &amp; Recreation</p> <p>Business &amp; Economic Development</p> <p>Intergovernmental Coordination</p> |
|---|

- **Transportation.** While there is an overall belief that ACHD has greatly improved its transportation planning and development practices, there also are numerous ways to improve the transportation planning process. Ultimately, roadways must serve residents, not just vehicles. Land use and transportation planning and actions need to be coordinated to provide greater transportation choices and create healthier neighborhoods, to continue remedying existing deficiencies, to balance investment in new projects with operation, maintenance and repair needs, and to explore innovative ways to provide transit and non-automotive travel modes such as sidewalks, paths, bicycles, buses, and trains.
- **Agriculture.** The retention of agribusiness and agricultural land uses is a cultural, economic and fiscal issue. Escalating land prices, development encroachment, increasing traffic congestion and the disappearance of agricultural support infrastructure limits the potential for large-scale agriculture in Ada County. While agri-tourism, community-based agriculture and other small scale operations are likely to be the remaining face of agriculture in Ada County, large-scale operations have greater potential in Canyon County. Major issues are how much and what types of agriculture can be sustained and how to provide economic support to farmers to help them realize as much gain from retaining agricultural lands as they would from land development.
- **Environment and Recreation.** The natural environment is the key factor in the local quality of life. The emergence of Ada County as a recreation destination is directly related to successful efforts to clean up the Boise River. Current decisions about development and transportation will affect environmental quality and recreation opportunities for years to come. Current decisions about development and transportation need to be made simultaneously with preservation of natural areas and the environment and the creation of park, recreation and open-space areas.
- **Business and Economic Development.** Ada County is in the enviable position of having an attractive environment for economic growth. This growth should provide diverse employment opportunities for residents while remaining sensitive to quality of life issues.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation.** Ada County, ACHD, the cities, ITD, Valley Regional Transit, the Idaho Transportation Department and other service providers should implement this plan through mutually reinforcing intergovernmental agreements that maintain local autonomy while addressing: expansion of annexation areas and areas of impact; location, form and mix of residential and economic growth; preservation of open spaces and environmental resources; and allocation of federal, state and local funding.

## **B. Guiding Principles**

Prior to selecting a preferred growth management strategy, the Blueprint for Good Growth Steering Committee developed a set of guiding principles on which this plan is based.

### **General Principles**

- We love our home in the Treasure Valley. The valley has grown and we expect it to grow more. It will be a better place if we plan growth to meet our most important priorities, which follow.
- We will ensure growth is a benefit to all citizens and the economy. Our plans will support good jobs and a strong, sustainable economy.
- We will support growth in all communities to allow choices in where to live and work.
- We will manage growth with fiscal responsibility, discipline and creativity.
- Our plans will limit sprawl and promote other kinds of more responsible development.
- We will invest in our neighborhoods to create and maintain attractive and livable places that nurture community and reflect our pride in the Treasure Valley.
- We will offer a quality transportation system for private vehicles with increasing choices for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.
- We will maintain a vibrant central city in Boise and strong downtowns in all cities.
- We will protect the natural resources that we value.

### **We will manage growth with fiscal responsibility, discipline, and creativity.**

- Growth must pay for itself.
- We will reduce infrastructure costs by
  - building higher densities in appropriate locations;
  - better managing growth in impact areas;
  - Aligning capital improvement plans with areas targeted for new growth; and
  - Considering new and innovative ways to accomplish these things.
- We will reduce transportation costs and pollution if we can create complete communities where jobs, shopping and housing are near each other.

### **Our land use plans will complement a strong economy.**

- Our land use plans must allow developers to offer products that the public will buy.
- Our land use plans will complement our strategies to produce well-paying jobs and broad prosperity.
- We must have a strong education system to have a quality community and a strong economy. When we plan, school representatives will be included on the team.

**We will limit sprawl and promote other kinds of more responsible development.**

- We will emphasize infill development and increasing the density of residential development.
- We will require master planning of larger, undeveloped areas to ensure an appropriate mix of commercial, residential, and open space uses.
  - We will focus most commercial and residential development within cities and in contiguous portions of defined areas of impact.
  - We will consider master-planned communities outside of developed areas if they demonstrate they will pay for their impact on the area and will not burden other communities by shifting capital, operations and maintenance costs.
- Residential development will include a range of densities, housing types, and price levels.
- We will create a transportation system that will support the land use patterns we want and will be the least harmful to the environment.
- We will work creatively using our group strength to implement the land use patterns we want.

**We will enhance our neighborhoods and sense of community.**

- We will educate and work with neighborhoods and communities so they know who they are and what they want to be.
- Development must respect, and creatively enhance, community identities.
- We will distribute growth to all communities so that citizens have choices of where to live and work.

**We will create attractive places to live, work, shop and play.**

- Neighborhood and community design will support community identity and discourage sprawl.
- We will design attractive streets that are as safe as possible for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- We will develop community centers that promote activities day and night.
- We will develop safe, attractive communities.
- We will emphasize the planting of trees and flowers.

**We will offer a quality transportation system for private vehicles with increasing choices for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.**

- We will construct mixed-use patterns along main streets and in downtowns.
- We will connect neighborhoods, parks, schools and open space to shopping areas and other area assets with complete sidewalks, transit stops and bike paths.
- We are firmly committed to identifying, preserving and using key highway and rail corridors.
- We are firmly committed to expanding and strengthening highway and transit connections between communities.
- We will coordinate investments to create efficient transportation corridors.

- We will ensure our transportation systems support our land use decisions and provide alternatives to vehicular travel.
- We will create stable and equitable funding sources for transportation.

**We will maintain a vibrant central city in Boise and strong downtowns in all cities.**

- We will maintain a vibrant downtown Boise as the region's center for government, commerce and entertainment.
- We will accommodate growth through infill, redevelopment and expansion.
- We will build stronger neighborhoods through mixed-use development.
- We will promote an effective regional transportation system by building developments that support transit.
- We will create a city where car ownership is not required to travel freely.
- We will encourage expansion and reinvestment in all downtowns.

**We will protect the natural resources we value.**

- The natural resources we value most are our clean air and water, our trees, the Boise Foothills, the Boise River and floodplains, Lake Lowell and agricultural lands.
- We will protect these assets by
  - building higher densities in appropriate locations,
  - better concentrating and coordinating growth in impact areas,
  - providing incentives to property owners, [Comment: new idea for discussion]
  - adopting development regulations that encourage protection of natural resource areas, and [Comment: new idea for discussion]
  - Participating in the planting of trees and flowers, and
  - Supporting programs that result in tree and flower proliferation.
- We will better protect these assets if we are able to locate jobs, shopping and housing near each other.

### **C. Future Steps**

The Blueprint for Good Growth is an ongoing effort to coordinate growth decisions to ensure that each of these decisions contributes to Ada County's quality of life. Quality of life encompasses so many factors that the project's success will depend on incremental improvements that will be accomplished in phases. The highest priority for the initial phase in the ongoing Blueprint for Good Growth process is improved integration of land use and transportation planning. Projected growth will bring increased traffic congestion and increased challenges in funding the capital, operations and maintenance costs for transportation. While these transportation and related public facility issues are the focus of this initial plan, the BGG Steering Committee discussions of a much broader range of topics provide an outline for future Blueprint efforts, including:

- **Air quality improvement.** This regional effort will require coordination with surrounding counties and should start with a focus on auto inspections.

- **The resolution of stormwater management and floodplain issues.** While stormwater management is an issue that involves private property owners, ACHD, local governments and irrigation companies, there is no single entity with responsibility for coordinating these efforts. Key to the successful coordination of stormwater management efforts will be the establishment of a dedicated funding source, which could include a combination of stormwater utility fees, special district assessments, impact fees (for capital costs only) and other sources.
- **Continued improvement of water quality.** Dramatic improvement in the quality of Boise River water quality is a notable accomplishment. Continued coordinate efforts to protect water quality should be coordinated with stormwater management efforts.
- **Open space retention within and surrounding communities.** Despite the large percentage of publicly owned land within Ada County, BGG Steering Committee members cited open space retention within and abutting developed areas of the county as a key component of the local quality of life for its aesthetic, recreational, environmental and economic benefits. Subsequent BGG efforts should assist participants in establishing standards for open space retention in urban, suburban and rural settings.
- **Coordination of greenways and trails with transportation and recreation amenities.** Participants in the process identified greenways and trails as high priorities for increasing residents' transportation options. Current recreational trails are of limited benefit to many bicycle commuters. Better integration with the street-based bikeways and the trail system could increase commuter options.
- **Long-term retention of viable agricultural operations in the Treasure Valley.** The combination of land prices, remaining land quality, residential encroachment and lack of support infrastructure has reduced the viability of large-scale agricultural operations in Ada County. However, due to the economic benefits of the regional agricultural industry (primarily in Canyon County), the Steering Committee cited coordinated agricultural preservation strategies as a future BGG initiative.

#### ***D. Definitions***

One key to achieving a coordinated growth management strategy is agreement on a common language. The following terms, used through the Blueprint for Good Growth, shall have the following meanings:

**Adequate public facilities** – requirement that essential public facilities will be provided at adopted levels of service prior to or concurrent with the creation of new demands for those facilities.

**Compatibility** – the ability of uses to coexist adjacent to one another without reducing the value or viability of either use due to noise, light, shadows, traffic, odors and other potential nuisances. Scale, height, density, building design, site design, setbacks, buffers, use and materials are some of the factors affecting

compatibility. Each of these factors may be modified to enhance the compatibility between adjacent uses that may differ in use, intensity or design.

**Conservation subdivision** – a development technique in which the size of lots may be reduced in order to provide for a greater amount of undeveloped open space, which may be permanently preserved through a variety of methods.

**Density, Gross** – the total number of dwelling units divided by the total number of acres in the tract on which those units are located.

**Density, Net** – the total number of dwelling units divided by the total number of acres in the tract on which those units are located minus land located within floodways, steep slopes, rights-of-way, and public lands.

**Downtown development** – development within Boise’s defined downtown area and other future areas characterized by high intensity development. See Main Street development.

**Economic impact** – changes in employment, considering targeted salaries or wage rates; changes to property values; and changes in retail sales.

**Environmental protection** – implementation of programs to retain specific environmental resources in their natural state, enhance the quality of degraded environmental resources or to protect environmental resources from degradation.

**Environmental resources** – specific water, land, or air resources that are designated for protection due to some fiscal, cultural, biological, recreational, aesthetic or public safety value. For purposes of this plan, the specific environmental resources targeted for protection include: floodways, locally defined water quality protection zones, slopes in excess of 30%, identified habitat areas, wildlife corridors and scenic vistas.

**Essential public facilities** – facilities for which the capacities may be specifically linked to the approvals of developments that create demands for those facilities. For purposes of this plan, essential public facilities include water, wastewater, stormwater, transportation system, fire protection and schools.

**Fiscal impact** – the net monetary affect of a development on all public service providers after considering all costs and revenues resulting from the development.

**Growth Tier** – a defined area that is subject to a set of policies that are distinct from the policies of other growth tiers.

**Infill** – development that occurs on small or remnant parcels within otherwise developed neighborhoods.

**Level of Service** – an adopted, quantifiable measure of the capacity of a facility to meet anticipated demands.

**Main Street development** – development occurring within the established downtowns or city centers of cities other than Boise. See downtown development.

**Mixed-use development** – development that includes integrated residential and non-residential uses within a single project area. Uses may be mixed horizontally or vertically, but each mixed use project contains both residential and non-residential uses.

**Multiple use development** – development that may include two or more different types of uses that are not developed as a single, integrated project.

**Open Space** – any parcel of land maintained in an essentially unbuilt state and reserved for public or private uses, including, but not limited to habitat protection, water quality protection, passive recreational uses, livestock grazing or field crop production (see open space policies).

**Planned community** – a new mixed-use community developed from vacant land that includes all the services and uses needed by residents to live work and play (see planned community policies).

**Planned development** – a flexible zoning tool that allows for deviation from minimum lot sizes and other standard code requirements in return for provision of amenities such as common open space and other design features. Also known as planned unit development.

**Transit-oriented development** – development designed to reduce the use of private automobiles by increasing the number of trips by walking, bicycle, carpool, bus, streetcar, rail, or other transit mode. TODs generally feature higher densities, a mix of uses, and greater emphasis of a pedestrian scale. (see appendix for TOD model)

**Transit-supportive development** – development featuring a balanced transportation network where walking, bicycling, and transit work in harmony with the private automobile.

**Urban Development** – areas characterized by a variety of housing types and densities as well as the availability of goods, services, employment and provision of essential public services.

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## II. Blueprint Objectives & Policies

### A. Growth Management

This section establishes the framework for management of growth through coordinated decisions that are consistent with the guiding principles established above. Objectives and policies in this section identify growth tiers, the targeted proportion of growth to occur in each tier and conditions applicable to development in each tier. Additionally, this section outlines areas to improve coordination between participating agencies and addresses the timing/phasing of development in relation to the availability of adequate public facilities and services.

### Growth Tiers Defined

**Map 1** establishes a variety of growth tiers covering Ada County. The growth tiers described below define areas with different development opportunities and policies which are defined in this plan.

#### Activity Centers

This tier includes commercial and mixed use development at various scales and intensities of development that serve neighborhoods, communities and the region. Most neighborhood activity centers, and all community and regional activity centers should be designed to support access by transit services as well as other modes of transportation. Standards for each of these centers shall be established within each community's land development regulations.

- **Neighborhood activity centers**, which are not shown in **Map 1**, serve one or more neighborhoods and are characterized by relatively small scale retail and service uses that may include mixed use or attached housing opportunities. These centers are characterized by designs and scales that support pedestrian access from adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Community activity centers** meet the needs of a group of neighborhoods or the entire community. These are characterized by shopping centers that include grocery stores as anchors, moderate to high density housing, office and service uses and mixed-use or multiple-use development.
- **Regional activity centers** meet the needs of one or more community and include large scale employment and retail uses, high density residential development and mixed use projects that draw business from throughout the Treasure Valley.

#### Areas of Impact

These areas are adjacent to incorporated cities and reflect an area that could reasonably be expected to be annexed and to be served by centralized sewer service within the next twenty years. Some rural residential development that does not receive centralized sewer service may be included within areas of impact

in accordance with the applicable municipality's comprehensive plan. The primary purposes of areas of impact are to:

- Protect future city growth areas from inappropriate development that would constrain future growth;
- Facilitate coordinated land use and facility planning so service providers can better anticipate and plan to meet future demands;
- Provide a predictable framework for private development decisions;
- Provide for orderly and sequenced annexations and to reduce pressure for rapid area of impact boundary adjustments to encompass short-term annexation plans; and
- Ensure financial and physical capability to provide needed public facilities and services.

### **Cities**

This tier includes currently incorporated municipalities and will be modified to reflect future annexations and incorporations.

### **Rural Tier**

This tier includes all unincorporated land that is not located within an area of impact or approved planned community.

### **Planned Communities**

This tier includes planned communities that are located outside an area of impact. The planned community tier should change to reflect the boundaries of planned communities approved through the County's comprehensive plan and planned community zoning processes. Note that this plan encourages development of planned communities and developments that include the characteristics of planned communities within areas of impact and cities.

### **Public Lands**

This tier includes lands owned by a federal, state or local governmental agency.

### **Transit Corridors**

This tier includes lands along existing or planned high volume transit routes that may be served by buses, bus rapid transit (BRT) a fixed guideway system (e.g., commuter rail or light rail). Also included in this tier are the primary bus routes that follow many of the County's arterial streets. Note that the type of service to be provided will depend on the mix, intensity and design of uses along the corridors. The highest volume transit services will follow those routes with the greatest potential ridership as measured by the amount of transit-supportive development and the level of transit dependency along the routes.

## **Growth Management Goal, Objective and Policies:**

**Goal:** To establish and maintain sustainable development patterns that foster a high quality of life in Ada County.

*Comment: Quality of life is defined by the guiding principles and subsequent policies. While these policies also more fully define what is meant by sustainable development patterns, generally sustainability means that development will result in:*

- ***A Healthy Economy**, with sustainable jobs and businesses that develop and nurture the local work force, where decision-making takes into account the interdependence of economic, environmental and social well being;*
- ***A Healthy Environment**, where decision-making takes into account long term consequences of development on natural and built up areas, and efforts are made to prevent problems before they occur;*
- ***Social Equity**, which is the promotion of fair and equal treatment across generations and among different groups in society, as well as the reduction in disparities in risks and access to benefits. Evidence of social equity includes housing and employment opportunities for all residents, regardless of age, education, cultural background or income, as well as inclusive and participatory decision-making processes. Social equity also means that the benefits derived from growth do not shift burdens to existing residents; and*
- ***Efficiency**, which includes the efficient use of energy and resources with little or no waste. This includes the efficient use of natural and fiscal resources (e.g., taxes and fees).<sup>1</sup>*

**Objective:** Within two years of adoption of the BGG, local governments will update their comprehensive plans to be consistent with the BGG, and within three years of adoption of the BGG, local governments will update their land development regulations to be consistent with the policies established in BGG.

### **General Growth Management Policies**

**GM-1: Map 1** establishes the growth tiers covering Ada County. To implement this plan in a consistent and coordinated manner, local governments shall use the growth tier map in conjunction with the applicable policies established in this section of the BGG to guide growth management decisions, including capital improvements planning, comprehensive plan amendments, annexations, area of impact extensions and development decisions.

**GM-2:** Ensure that development decisions are coordinated with the availability of essential public facilities so that adequate public facilities will be provided before or concurrent with the generation of demands for

<sup>1</sup> Text modified from *Exploring Sustainable Communities*, a teachers guide by World Resources Institute for secondary education.

those facilities. [*Comment: this will require ongoing coordination between local governments and independent public service providers.*]

**GM-3:** Coordinate land use and capital facility planning by requiring capital improvement programs by service providers to be consistent with adopted comprehensive plans and the Blueprint for Good Growth.

**GM-4:** Establish and use the BGG revision process to ensure that local growth management decisions are consistent with the County-wide growth management strategy established in the BGG. [*Comment: see the implementation section for a description of the BGG revision process.*]

**GM-5:** Develop and update local transportation elements of the comprehensive plans in conjunction with ACHD, Valley Regional Transit, ITD and COMPASS to ensure that policies reflect the ability to provide and maintain adequate transportation system capacity. Local plans and development decisions shall be consistent with the ACHD Capital Improvements Program, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and the Valley Regional Transit Regional Operations and Capital Improvement Plan, as amended from time to time.

**GM-6:** Coordinate development decisions with local and regional plans for the full range of public facilities, as well as open space and environmental protection.

**GM-7:** Encourage cities and the county, as applicable, to establish long-term annexation agreements pursuant to policy GM-18 to minimize intergovernmental conflicts and provide greater predictability for property owners.

**GM-8:** Evaluate development proposals and future land use map amendments, are consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan and the 20-year ACHD Capital Improvements Plan. For new development:

1. Require the submittal of a concept plan for all contiguous land holdings prior to the first preliminary plat approval.
2. Ensure that the proposed development is consistent with the applicable comprehensive plan, the BGG tier map, and the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the ACHD 20-Year CIP.
3. Establish the base residential and non-residential intensity at the time of concept plan approval, considering:
  - a. the adequacy of essential public facilities;
  - b. applicable comprehensive plan policies;
  - c. the proximity of the project to existing employment centers;
  - d. consistency of the project with the Long Range Transportation Plan and the ACHD 20-Year CIP; and
  - e. physical limitations of the site.

**Activity Center Policies**

**GM-9:** Identify activity centers within individual comprehensive plans that are consistent with the BGG Tier map and assign appropriate land use categories and densities within each activity center to promote a sustainable mix of land uses that reduces automobile dependency and supports pedestrian trips.

**GM-10:** Establish standards for community and regional activity centers that require minimum densities of residential areas of at least 8 dwelling units per acre, where feasible, minimum levels of pedestrian connectivity and transit facilities that are sufficient to support viable transit service. The following intensities are provided to guide local jurisdictions in defining centers:

| Activity Center Type | Typical Residential Unit Types  | Density Ranges (1)                 | Non-Residential Project Size                       |
|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Regional</b>      | Two plus story townhomes, apartments, condominiums  | Greater than 20 dwellings per acre | Greater than 150,000 sq.ft. of gross leasable area |
| <b>Community</b>     | Mixed density projects, Townhomes, low-rise apartments, condominiums                        | 12 to 20 dwellings per acre        | 25,000 to 150,000 sq.ft. of gross leasable area    |
| <b>Neighborhood</b>  | Low intensity townhomes, other attached single family units, garden apartments, patio homes | 8 to 16 dwellings per acre         | Less than 25,000 sq.ft. of gross leasable area     |

(1) Open space, civic uses, on site amenities and other factors may reduce gross densities. See model TOD standards for examples

**GM-11:** Establish mixed-use development standards that allow appropriate scales of mixed use development by right within each type of activity center.

**Areas of Impact Policies**

**GM-12:** Establish and adjust Area of Impact boundaries based upon:

1. coordinated 20-year capital facility plans that reflect historical or reasonably anticipated funding levels to facilitate the efficient provision of adequate water, wastewater, stormwater and transportation facilities;
2. recent growth trends and projected growth of the applicable city;

3. the availability of adequate land supplies within the city and its area of impact to meet the amount and diversity of growth that may be reasonably anticipated by the city [*Comment: the evaluation of land supplies should consider the availability of a mix of infill and green-field development opportunities required to meet projected growth demands.*];
4. the existence of short-term (e.g., 5-year) capital improvements programs that are adequately funded to accommodate growth anticipated within at least 20 percent of the area of impact; and
5. inter-governmental agreements with the County and applicable service providers to coordinate land use and infrastructure decisions in accordance with the policies established in this plan.

**GM-13:** Within Areas of Impact, identify areas where essential public facilities are available and areas where essential public facilities are scheduled to be available based on 5-year CIP to coordinate development patterns with efficient infrastructure system development.

**GM-14:** Where essential public facilities are available, the County may approve development applications that are consistent with local plans, regulations and adopted facility extension/connection policies.

**GM-15:** Where essential public facilities are scheduled to be available in accordance with and adopted 5-Year CIP, the County may approve development that is consistent with local plans, regulations and facility connection policies, subject to the extension of public facilities and the applicable service providers' reimbursement policies for capacity that exceeds demands generated by the development.

**GM-16:** Where essential public facilities are not scheduled to be provided within adopted 5-Year an CIP, the applicable city and Ada County may take one of the following actions after considering the factors listed below:

**Actions<sup>1</sup>**

- Approval of the entire development application subject to execution of a development agreement that provides for adequate public facilities for the entire development and compliance with mutually agreed upon plans, regulations and infrastructure policies; or
- approval of development of up to 20 percent of the land area<sup>2</sup> in the development, subject to execution of a development agreement assuring that:

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<sup>1</sup> Through any development approval, the City and County may require the reservation of sufficient right-of-way and easements to serve planned development in the vicinity of the project. Dry sewers may be required if elevations can be determined at the time of development.

- the initial portion to be developed will be consistent with the applicable city’s comprehensive plan, development regulations and infrastructure policies, and
  - the concept plan for all contiguous land holdings is consistent with the applicable city’s comprehensive plan, development regulations and infrastructure policies, and
  - the applicant commits to future annexation and full funding of facilities, including funding for future connection of the portion of the site that is initially developed to centralized water and wastewater systems; or
- Disapproval of the development application.

**Factors**

- Consistency of the concept plan for the portion to be developed and the entire property with the applicable city’s comprehensive plan;
- System-wide benefits provided by proposed public facilities;
- Local and regional fiscal and economic benefits;
- Capital obligations generated by the development;
- Operations and maintenance obligations generated by the development; and
- Other benefits consistent with the city’s adopted comprehensive plan goals (e.g., housing, environmental, recreational, economic, transportation, etc).

**GM-17:** When an applicant seeks an exception to adopted public improvement standards within an area of impact, the exception shall require approval by both the applicable city and Ada County to avoid future infrastructure deficiencies that impede future growth and service delivery.

**GM-18:** Adjustments to area of impact boundaries to reflect 20-year growth plans shall include an agreement not to annex beyond the area of impact unless approved by the county or the other affected city if the area lies within the other city’s area of impact. Pursuant to Policy GM-7, local governments are encouraged to enter into annexation boundary agreements that establish ultimate boundary lines between individual cities and are based upon the following factors:

- Anticipated growth and the need for additional land to serve the cities’ residential and non-residential land use needs;

<sup>2</sup> The remaining 80 percent may be developed when the City determines that the full range of facilities and services are adequate to serve the entire site.

- Sewer service basins and the capacity to serve development in those basins;
- Other service area boundaries (e.g., school districts, fire districts)
- Geographic features (e.g., ridges, waterways, arterial streets, railroads, greenways) that form appropriate breaks between communities; and
- Public input from affected property owners.

### **City Policies**

**GM-19:** Ensure that development decisions are consistent with the adopted comprehensive plans, regulations, the Long Range Transportation Plan, the ACHD 20-year CIP and the Valley Regional Transit plans.

**GM-20:** Establish a mix of uses that maintains or improves the balance of jobs, housing and services in each city to improve local fiscal health and reduce long-term transportation demands.

**GM-21:** Base annexation decisions on the availability of essential public facilities, the schedule for provision of those facilities in applicable capital improvements plans, area of impact boundaries, fiscal benefits, economic benefits, the need for additional development areas, and the local comprehensive plan.

### **Rural Tier Policies**

**GM-22:** Limit development in the rural tier to an average of three percent (3%) of projected county-wide population growth within any three-year period, exclusive of development approved within a planned community. This limitation should be based on new lot creation and, if applications for new lots reaches the three percent (3%) allocation, subdivision action shall be deferred until the following year in accordance with adopted County standards.

**GM-23:** Establish an equity-based program to secure permanent open space within the rural tier through the use of techniques such as: conservation subdivisions, transfers of development rights, or purchases of land, conservation easements or development rights.

### **Planned Communities Policies**

**GM-24:** Subject to the policies of this section, comprehensive plan consistency and compliance with applicable development regulations, encourage planned communities to be established within cities and areas of impact and allow for planned communities in rural areas of the County. If the total number of lots platted within the rural tier plus the lots platted in all planned communities located outside of an area of impact exceeds

seven percent (7%) of the total lots platted throughout the county for any and given year, then the BGG Consortium will evaluate plan policies and regulations to assess the need for modifications to encourage more infill development.

**GM-25:** For planned communities located within an area of impact, abutting an area of impact or located within the distance from city's corporate boundaries established in Idaho Statutes §50-101, require an annexation agreement as a condition of project approval.

**GM-26:** Adjust development standards to encourage planned communities or developments providing the benefits of planned communities within cities and their areas of impact. These standards, described more fully in the implementation section of this plan, may include, minimum density thresholds, by-right development patterns that allow a mix of uses and dwelling types subject to administrative review, trip-generation credits for mixed use and transit-oriented development patterns and other incentives to create more sustainable development patterns.

**GM-27:** For all planned communities:

1. Require the submittal of a concept plan for all contiguous land holdings to be included within the planned community. Prior to approving any extensions to a concept plan require the cumulative analysis of facility, service and fiscal impacts for all lands to be included within the planned community, including the creation of facility and service demands in portions of the development located outside of Ada County.
2. Prior to approval of a planned community, ensure that the development is consistent with the County's comprehensive plan, the BGG tier map, the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the ACHD 20-Year CIP.
3. Assign the base residential and non-residential intensity at the time of concept plan approval, considering:
  - a. the adequacy of essential public facilities;
  - b. consistency of the project with the Long Range Transportation Plan, the ACHD 20-Year CIP and the Valley Regional Transit Plan;
  - c. the proximity of the project to existing employment centers; and
  - d. physical limitations of the site.

**GM-28:** Refine existing County development regulations addressing planned communities outside areas of impact to implement policy GM-28 and the following policies:

1. Ensure that planned communities fund 100 percent of on and off-site capital improvement costs for essential public facilities and emergency service facilities required to serve the proposed development.
2. Ensure that development will fully fund operations and maintenance costs for water, wastewater, transportation, public safety and emergency services at adopted levels of service. (see Strategies section for discussion of alternative funding tools)

**GM-29:** Ensure that planned community regulations establish a mix of uses and housing types that:

- Serve diverse income and age groups;
- Reduces trip generation by at least 20% below that which would be generated by similarly situated single use development;<sup>3</sup>
- Integrate parks and open space areas that are consistent with local plans and regulations and provide an incentive to preserve high value natural resources;<sup>4</sup> and
- Distinguish standards for open space and land use mix based on the type of planned community and its location.

### Public Lands Policy

**GM-30:** Coordinate with state, federal and local agencies to:

1. develop and maintain an inventory of public lands for use by all service providers in identifying opportunities for collocation of compatible public uses;
2. identify potential land swaps that result in more efficient protection of resources within Ada County;
3. maintain or enhance access to public lands for public access and emergency service provision;
4. maintain or enhance connectivity between public lands for recreational or wildlife purposes;
5. review the impacts of proposed development of lands on
  - a. the preceding polices;
  - b. land use compatibility; and
  - c. transportation system function.

### Transit Corridor Policies

*Note: While the emphasis of this section is on the preservation of transit corridors that are anticipated to provide some level of service within the next 20 years, this plan anticipates that long term need for more extensive transit*

<sup>3</sup> Note that trip reduction targets may be reduced for developments that are located within a mile of a designated community or regional activity center or a major employment center.

<sup>4</sup> Regulations may provide for the mitigation of a portion of open space requirements through off-site land preservation.

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*services to efficiently move people throughout Ada County and other portions of the Treasure Valley. The preservation of future transit opportunities is critical to ensure that needed services needed beyond the planning period can be established to serve future residents.*

**GM-31:** **Map 2** shows the key arterial routes that have the greatest potential as primary bus transit corridors. Local governments should require development within these bus transit corridors to safely and efficiently accommodate necessary transit facilities as identified by Valley Regional Transit. These facilities may include on-street bus stops with convenient pedestrian and bicycle access, pullout lanes at community activity centers or on-site transit stations at regional activity centers, and shall comply with Valley Regional Transit design standards.

**GM-32:** To support the provision of efficient and convenient transit service, cities should encourage or require minimum gross densities of at least 8 dwelling units per acre near activity centers and potential transit stops within identified bus transit corridors. Where stable neighborhoods or natural resources inhibit the compatible establishment of higher densities, seek to obtain transit supportive densities and designs in mixed use activity centers in other areas along the corridors.

**GM-33:** **Map 2** illustrates the corridors most likely to support high capacity transit services (e.g., bus rapid transit, light rail or commuter rail). Light or commuter rail is planned for the existing rail corridor. Bus rapid transit (BRT) service has been studied and is proposed for the State Street corridor. Chinden Boulevard could provide another opportunity for BRT if the right-of-way and abutting development support the service. To enable the provision of high capacity transit services, local governments should require minimum densities of at least 16 dwelling units per acre within one-quarter mile of potential transit stops. Potential stops are illustrated on **Map 2**, for the light rail and State Street corridors. The identification of potential sites along the Chinden corridor will require more study.

**GM-34:** Adopt and apply transit-oriented development design standards that address connectivity, pedestrian access, parking and transit facility design within all bus transit corridors and within one-half mile of all high capacity transit facilities. [*Comment: TOD design standards to be included in implementation section appendix*]

**GM-35:** Ensure that local development decisions are consistent with adopted transportation and transit plans to promote effective movement of people and goods.

## C. **Transportation Goal, Objectives and Policies**

This section establishes policies to coordinate transportation facilities with future development. In addition to establishing policies for road corridor preservation, it addresses transit corridor preservation and the incorporation of non-motorized (e.g., bike/pedestrian) transportation facilities and services into the overall transportation system. Other key transportation policies address connectivity, streetscape, traffic calming techniques, interconnectivity and other issues identified in this Plan.

*[Comment: Many of the following policies are contingent upon the adoption of different level of service (LOS) standards for different areas/road segments (e.g., lower congestion thresholds in rural areas, such as LOS B or C and the identification of constrained facilities in high priority areas such as downtowns and activity centers that may continue to operate at LOS E without impeding future development).]*

**Transportation Goal: To coordinate land use and transportation decisions to efficiently meet the full range of mobility needs.**<sup>5</sup>

### **Objectives:**

- Establish a formal plan amendment review process to ensure that local comprehensive plans, the Long Range Transportation Plan, the ACHD 20-year CIP, ITD Improvement Plans and the Valley Regional Transit Regional Operations and Capital Improvement Plan are consistent to ensure that planned land uses and transportation facilities are mutually supportive.<sup>6</sup>
- Within four years of adoption of the Blueprint for Good Growth, implement a transportation management program that is consistent with the following transportation policies.

### **Transportation Policies**

**T-1:** Establish appropriate level of service standards that:

- Allow greater levels of congestion in cities and activity centers than in outlying areas;
- Recognize the capacity constraints of some key corridors by allowing for greater levels of congestion in constrained corridors;
- Allow for greater levels of congestion along identified transit corridors.

<sup>5</sup> Mobility in this goal refers to the ability to move goods and people throughout Ada County.

<sup>6</sup> ACHD will continue to plan for street capacity to serve development approved by local governments. While near term projects shown in the 20-year CIP will reflect approvals that more closely reflect trend development patterns, longer term projects should reflect planned land uses that are consistent with “Community Choices”, the preferred growth scenario adopted through the Long Range Transportation Plan and locally adopted land use plans.

- T-2:** Establish context sensitive street cross-sections that safely convey existing and projected traffic in accordance with established level of service standards, while addressing the following factors:
1. Compatibility with planned land uses along the corridor, which may include setbacks needed to buffer existing or planned development from noise and odors generated within the transportation corridor;
  2. Safe access to abutting properties (note: this may be provided through parallel roads, alleys or private drives along arterial streets);
  3. Bicycle and pedestrian traffic;
  4. Access to and compatibility with transit services; and
  5. Stormwater and flood management needs.
- T-3:** **Map 3** is the functional classification map that indicates the planned function of future roadways. This map shall be used in conjunction with cross-sections developed pursuant with policy T-2 to identify right-of-way needs and to prevent encroachment of development into rights-of-way needed to serve existing and planned development. Local governments, ACHD, IDT and Valley Regional Transit shall coordinate to ensure that adequate right-of-way is protected and secured.
- T-4:** Along corridors where additional right-of-way is needed, require development to provide its pro-rata share of the right-of-way and improvements. If additional right-of-way is needed and it is not conveyed to ACHD, ITD or other entity prior to development, buildings and required parking shall be located outside of the planned right-of-way even. The maximum development intensity of the project shall be based on the land area of the site prior to acquisition of the additional right-of-way, so the property owner can maintain the site's development value even after the additional right-of-way is conveyed.
- T-5:** Establish minimum connectivity requirements to improve traffic flow, pedestrian connectivity, bicycle access, transit access and minimize projected vehicle miles traveled from new development. Require new development along arterial streets to provide access parallel to the arterial street via an appropriate combination of frontage roads, private drives and parallel collector streets.
- T-6:** Establish and maintain a more detailed transportation model that will track existing, committed (e.g., approved), and planned traffic demands, as well as their impacts on arterial and collector intersections. Continually refine the model to provide more effective guidance in the review of traffic mitigation proposals.
- T-7:** Adopt and implement the ACHD Pedestrian-Bicycle Transportation Plan to establish routes that make walking and bicycles a viable

transportation alternative for some individuals. The Plan shall address the need to establish bicycle and pedestrian access to identified transit routes.

**T-8:** In conjunction with the development of context-sensitive street cross-sections, develop and adopt a menu of traffic calming provisions in the design manual that:

1. Identifies alternative traffic calming designs (e.g., bulb-outs, boulevards, roundabouts and medians);
2. Effectively slow traffic;
3. Allow streets to function at planned capacities; and
4. Do not obstruct emergency access to and through neighborhoods.

**T-9:** To facilitate transit services that provide effective alternatives to automotive travel, ensure that development and street designs are consistent with the Transit Corridor development policies established in GM-31 through GM-35.

**T-10:** Refine street system capital funding sources so that adequate funds are available for capacity expansion in addition to the maintenance and operations of existing facilities. Evaluate the full range of strategies to enhance capital funding, including, but not limited to:

1. Ongoing adjustment of local street impact fees to ensure that they keep up with rising construction and right-of-way costs;
2. Expansion of impact fees to include state routes and the collector street system;
3. The use of special districts to fund extraordinary capital and operations/maintenance costs associated with developments of regional impact;
4. Vehicle registration fees and other user charges;
5. Dedication and improvement requirements for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

## **D. Utilities Goal, Objectives and Policies**

Coordination of utilities with growth and development decisions is an objective that will be difficult to achieve due to the large number of service providers. Utilities are provided within Ada County through a collection of municipal, public and private service providers. Electrical service is provided by Idaho Power. Water and sewer service is provided by municipal and other public and private service providers. Stormwater management responsibilities are shared between local governments, irrigation entities, ACHD and various flood control agencies. Despite the challenges created by the fragmented service provision, this plan strongly supports continued efforts to share information and coordinate capital and service provision plans.

### **Utility Goals:**

1. To compatibly and safely integrate necessary utility facilities with future growth and development;
2. To ensure that utility systems are adequate to meet the needs of residents and businesses;
3. To minimize energy consumption and water demands through aggressive conservation measures (e.g., green buildings, xeriscaping, grey-water usage); and
4. To minimize the negative impacts of utility provision on the natural and built environments.

### **Utility Objectives:**

1. Within two years of adoption of the BGG, local governments will update local plans to identify public utility needs and to make accommodations for the facilities required to deliver projected services.
2. Within three years of adoption of the BGG, local governments will update their land development regulations to be consistent with the policies established in this section.

### **Utility Policies**

**U-1:** Adopt and enforce minimum fire flow requirements or alternative fire suppression options for all development located within cities and all development within areas of impact that is served by centralized water and sewer service.

**U-2:** Plan for the extension of municipally approved sewer service throughout cities and their areas of impact, except in areas specifically planned for large lot residential development. Ensure that development in planned sewer service areas is designed to be connected to the municipal sewer system. Where development of interim facilities is authorized pursuant to policy GM-16, ensure that provisions are made for the future connection of the development to the applicable municipal system.

**U-3:** **Map 4** illustrates the general locations of electrical system substations required to serve planned development within each community. Local

governments shall coordinate with Idaho Power to ensure that adequate land is planned for siting these facilities and associated power lines.

- U-4:** Annually review of applicable short and long-range utility capital plans with all utility providers<sup>7</sup> to discuss projected short and long-term demands from development, facility siting and construction needs, and right-of-way and easement acquisition needs.
- U-5:** Coordinate development reviews with applicable service providers to ensure that new development can be served safely and adequately.
- U-6:** Evaluate alternatives to coordinate and provide a stable funding source for coordinated stormwater and flood management services that address the needs of ACHD, irrigation entities, flood control districts and local municipalities, including compliance with NPDES stormwater quality requirements. Alternatives may include the expansion of an existing agency's mandate or the creation of a new stormwater management utility.
- U-7:** Promote energy conservation, protecting solar access and support the use of clean, renewable alternative energy production technologies.

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<sup>7</sup> This should include all water, wastewater, electric, telecommunications and natural gas service providers.

**E. Public Schools Goal, Objective and Policies**

Three school districts provide public school facilities and services in Ada County. Each of these districts faces unique growth related challenges, the outcome of which will have a dramatic impact on the quality of life in Ada County. The most significant challenge faced by local school districts is the funding of the capital facilities needed to serve anticipated growth.

**Public School Goal:** To coordinate development decisions with the capacity of local school districts to provide high quality educational facilities and services.

**Public School Objective:** To establish adequate public school facility requirements within two years after the adoption of the Blueprint for Good Growth.

**Public School Policies**

**PS-1:** Coordinate with local school districts to secure sufficient funding to meet anticipated demands from the state or other local sources.

**PS-2:** Coordinate with local school districts to:

- identify land acquisition needs for public schools and facilitate dedication and or acquisition of needed sites; and
- ensure that public school facilities are adequate to meet projected demands from new development.

**PS-3:** Coordinate with school districts to establish appropriate school siting criteria that address:

- Appropriate access for elementary, middle and high schools;
- Opportunities for collocation of recreation and other appropriate facilities; and
- The extension and funding of support infrastructure, including, but not limited to water, sewer and streets.