

What are the Key Elements of the Treasure Valley Regional Public Transportation Plan?

Valley Regional Transit (VRT), the regional public transportation authority for Ada and Canyon counties was established by a majority of citizens (70 percent) in a ballot referendum held in November 1998. VRT is a public agency governed by a board of 28 local elected and appointed officials charged with planning, coordinating and implementing public transportation services in the two-county region.

The 2005 base system was established by VRT in a restructure of transit services in and between the cities of Nampa, Caldwell, Boise and Garden City. The goals for the restructure were to establish a foundation to build future regional service improvements, improve regional connections, make the system simple and direct, and offer more frequent services on key corridors.

The plan for service expansion builds on the 2005 base system and offers services in every city in Ada and Canyon counties. The build-out for the system would be completed in a six-year time frame with the requested funding level.

The coverage and frequency of services and hours of operations are scaled to fit the need of rural and urban communities. Transit infrastructure such as park and ride lots, transit centers, and maintenance and operations facilities are proposed to tie the services together through a regionally coordinated capital plan.

The plan emphasizes improving regional connections along major corridors and improving options to make the services more desirable to commuters as well as those who are dependent on the transit system to meet their transportation needs. The services would include expanded hours of service (5 a.m. to 10 p.m.) along many of the major routes, as well as additional frequency, which would increase peak service from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes in key regional corridors and local routes.

Beyond the six-year plan, the longer-term vision for transit in the region includes acquiring the existing rail corridor, and locating, designing and building the transit infrastructure referenced above. High capacity transit, such as bus rapid transit and fixed-guideway streetcar services will be developed in key transportation corridors and urban centers.

If You Build it Will They Ride?

Local and state leaders have heard from thousands of citizens between 2002 and 2005 through public opinion surveys, open houses, informational meetings, hearings and community presentations designed to seek comments and gain an understanding of the needs and wants of area residents for a regional public transportation system. Below are some of the common themes found in outreach efforts:

- **2002** – In a random telephone survey conducted by Northwest Research of 600 households in Ada and Canyon counties 88 percent of survey respondents in both Ada and Canyon counties said they support developing regional transit services. Eighty percent of respondents indicated they would use the services one to two times a week
- **2003** – A random telephone survey of 600 residents in Idaho found that 60 percent of survey respondents identified a lack of public transportation services in Idaho as the #1 and #2 “major causes” of transportation problems in the state.
- **2004** poll of Boise Metro Chamber members concerning the quality of life in the Treasure Valley found that 70 percent of respondents think the adequacy of the transportation system to support growth is a major challenge facing the region’s businesses.
- **2003 through 2005** approximately 2,000 residents from the Treasure Valley participated in workshops, open houses and presentations on the regional transportation system. Strong support for public transportation was a common theme throughout the planning process.

Increasing gas prices and the pressures of growth on the transportation system in the Treasure Valley will likely solidify the already strong support for public transportation.

Operations Plan

Commuter Services

Service Area	Current Service Levels	Six-Year Build Out
Nampa-Meridian-Boise	30 minute peak express Hourly peak service Three-hour midday service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifteen minute, all day service • Commuter express services to major employers
Caldwell-Meridian-Boise	One peak express trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifteen minute, all day service • Commuter express services to major employers
Caldwell-Middleton-Star-Eagle-Boise	No current service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service every 15 minutes in peak hours • Commuter express services to major employers

Local Services

Service Area	Current Service Levels	Six-Year Build Out
Boise Major corridors in area east of Boise Towne Square Mall	Half-hourly all day service on State, Hyde Park, Warm Springs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All major corridors run every 15 minutes all day
West of Milwaukee Street	Hourly service along Five Mile, and along Chinden to Cloverdale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifteen-minute service on major corridors connecting to Meridian including Overland, Franklin, Emerald, Fairview, Ustick, and Hwy 20/26
North of State Street, west of 20th Street	Hourly local service Through-service to mall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirty-minute service north of State and west of 20th
Eastern and southern periphery (south of Bergeson, east of Old Penitentiary)	No service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirty-minute fixed-route service with route deviation south of Bergeson, and also northeast of river between downtown and junction of Hwy 21/Gowen Road
Eagle	No service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service every 15 minutes in peak hours to both Caldwell and Boise. All-day fixed-route service with deviation in some neighborhoods
Garden City East of Glenwood, south of river	Hourly, both directions on Chinden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifteen-minute service on Chinden and on Adams
West of Glenwood, north of Boise River	Service on Glenwood only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifteen minute peak service on State Street
Kuna	No Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peak service every 30 minutes connecting to other routes in the system
Meridian	No Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive coverage with 15 minute frequency on all major routes • Flex route service south of Overland between Cloverdale and Cole • Flex services in neighborhoods west of Meridian road and north of Ustick
Nampa, Caldwell	Thirty-minute service along the Boulevard between the two cities. Hour service in south and east Nampa and Caldwell.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly two-way service, every 15 minutes along the Boulevard between Nampa and Caldwell and to southern Nampa, otherwise every 30 minutes within each city • Flex routes for east and west sections of each city Stops w/in ¼ mile of each home
Melba	No Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly service, with demand-responsive access within each city
Star, Middleton	No Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service every 15 minutes in peak hours to both Caldwell and Boise
Parma, Wilder, Greenleaf, Notus	No Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly service to Caldwell, via Greenleaf and via Notus, with demand-responsive access within each city
Annual Operating Cost	\$7.5 million	\$39.6 million (after six-year build out)

Capital Facilities and Equipment Plan

Service Area	Six-Year Build Out
Boise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling stock and equipment • Fixed bus stop system with shelters and benches • Downtown multi-modal transfer center • Towne Square Mall transfer center • Expanded maintenance and operations facility
Meridian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling stock and equipment • Downtown Meridian administration facility and transfer center • Transfer center near I-84
Nampa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling stock and equipment • East Nampa transfer center • Downtown Nampa transfer center • Nampa maintenance and operations facility
Caldwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling stock and equipment • Downtown Caldwell transfer center
Ada County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling stock and equipment • Park and ride facilities serving key commuter corridors
Canyon County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rolling stock and equipment • Park and ride facilities serving key commuter corridors • Rural services transfer centers
Total Six-Year Capital Investment	\$53.3 million

High Capacity Transit Service Development Plan

Service Type	Project
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corridor preservation
Bus Rapid Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Street from Eagle to 23rd St.
Street Car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Boise circulator system
Potential Budget for High Capacity Transit Program	\$300 million (over 20 year plan)