

# Valley will see \$783 million in road work

## 5-year schedule includes paving, paths, preservation

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Over the next five years, Ada and Canyon counties will see 209 projects totaling nearly \$800 million under the state's new road and transit plan that includes smoothing bumpy Interstate 84 east of Boise and building new bicycle paths in Eagle and Caldwell.

Treasure Valley residents can expect to see — some as early as this year — rebuilt I-84 overpasses, new traffic signals in downtown Boise and Meridian and on Vista Avenue and Orchard Street, new alternative-fueled buses, a new highway reader board on I-84 west of Garrity for Amber alerts and other messages, and a new prominent Boise home for a vintage steam engine.

Most of these projects are financed by a combination of federal and local money that comes from the state, cities, counties and highway districts. And for the first time this year, the state will be paying some of its highway costs with GARVEE bonds, a new source of money that has been called both controversial and creative.

GARVEE will be used to finance highway projects now and repay the costs over time using anticipated future federal transportation money. The bonds were the governor and the 2005 Legislature's way to jump-start a massive statewide \$1.6 billion highway-improvement effort.

Seventeen elements of three major Ada County road projects will be financed with \$505 million in GARVEE funds, accounting for 65 percent of the \$783.4 million tab for Ada and Canyon counties.

The GARVEE dollars will pay for the majority of the I-84 improvements, which thrills Vertie Doty who commutes on the corrugated freeway to work at the Stage Stop truck stop east of Boise.

The state will rebuild I-84 from Gowen Road to Isaacs Canyon east of Micron, starting the \$10.75 million resurfacing project in 2007. Doty, who's driven to her job at the Stage Stop for 10 years, likens the bumpy stretch to gravel washboard on a backcountry road.

"I drive in the fast lane because it is a little smoother and not quite as bumpy. I just grit my teeth and hold on," Doty said. She is not the least bit bothered by the prospect of lane closures or construction hassles.

"The slight inconvenience of road construction is well worth it if they get that fixed."

New bike paths, bridges coming to Eagle

Drivers aren't the only ones who will benefit. Eagle pedestrians and cyclists can look forward to a new

bicycle tunnel under Eagle Road and more paved trails that will connect Eagle-area bicycle paths to Merrill Park and let cyclists stay off busy State Street and Eagle Road.

"The new pathways are part of Eagle's vision to complete the pathway system within our city to provide interconnectivity, alternative transportation opportunities and to accomplish a regional plan to connect Eagle Island Park to Lucky Peak," said Eagle Mayor Nancy Merrill.

It's also good news to cyclists who hope to see the long-planned completion of the Boise and Garden City Greenbelt sections link to points further west. Merrill said the Greenbelt could one day extend all the way to Indian Creek in Caldwell.

"As roads get more busy, a lot of people would love to ride their bikes along the river to work in Boise," she said.

The underpass will be north of the bridge near the Hilton Hotel and connect to the Merrill Park pathway systems. A new pedestrian bridge will cross the Boise River's North Channel, completing a pathway system for residents of south Eagle in Island Wood, Two Rivers and Banbury subdivisions to walk or pedal to Merrill Park and north Eagle. Construction on the \$1.2 million projects is scheduled for 2008.

A new home for Big Mike at the Boise Depot

A project that involves neither improved roads nor alternative transportation is relocating Big Mike, the vintage steam engine on display in Julia Davis Park, to the Boise Depot in 2007 at a cost of \$306,000.

No, this doesn't mean federal transportation money is being used to put Big Mike back into service to provide public rail transportation.

A federal program pays for historic transportation-preservation projects like Big Mike and restoring the 1906 Oregon Short Line Train Depot in Caldwell, said Idaho Transportation Department spokeswoman Mollie McCarty.

Big Mike was built by the American Locomotive Co. in 1920 and originally pulled freight trains between Cheyenne and Laramie, Wyo. Big Mike was the last steam locomotive to operate between Pocatello and Boise. Union Pacific donated it to Boise in 1959.

## **GARVEE 101**

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Idaho does not borrow money to pay for road construction. If the state has the money, a project gets built. No money, no project. But the Idaho governor and Legislature decided to try a new approach this year.

The Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE) program allows states to borrow money by selling bonds to pay for highway projects now, and repay the debt over time with the state's federal transportation money.

The Idaho Legislature's approval this year allowed the state to accelerate construction that would otherwise take years to become a reality. Gov. Kempthorne's push to improve

the state's highway system was the impetus for the GARVEE legislation. The Legislature approved Idaho borrowing \$1.6 billion against future federal transportation projects to fund 13 projects to improve the state highway system. The projects are planned around the entire state, including a four-lane freeway from Sandpoint to Coeur d'Alene in North Idaho; a new Snake River bridge in South-central Idaho; and a new 56-mile, four-lane divided highway through Indian Valley in Central Idaho.

Three of the projects are in the Treasure Valley:

- A four-lane divided Idaho 16 from Emmett to Interstate 84.
- Expand Interstate 84 to six lanes between Caldwell and Meridian.
- Add new lanes and replace all the interchanges on Interstate 84 from Orchard past Micron.

The five-year state plan includes 17 different elements to complete these three projects. But some of those elements do not yet have construction dates set.

Idaho Transportation Board has the authority to replace any of these 13 debt-funded projects if the board determines the project cannot be built.

### Find out more

#### • ATTEND THE OPEN HOUSE:

COMPASS hosts an open house at its office Aug. 3 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. featuring its 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Programs, maps and projects lists.

Representatives from COMPASS, Idaho Transportation Department, Valley Regional Transit, Commuteride and cities within the two counties will be available at the open house. COMPASS is at 800 S. Industry Way, Suite 100, Meridian.

#### • SHARE YOUR COMMENT:

Public comments will be accepted through Aug. 16.

Send written comments to COMPASS, attn: Toni Tisdale, 800 S. Industry Way, Suite 100, Meridian, Idaho, 83642, or e-mail to [ttisdale@compassidaho.org](mailto:ttisdale@compassidaho.org).

For more information, call COMPASS at 855-2558, ext. 228 or go to

[www.compassidaho.org](http://www.compassidaho.org).

#### • SEE THE STATEWIDE PLAN:

The draft Idaho Transportation Department Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for 2006-2010 is available for public review. The document identifies approximately \$1 billion in transportation-related projects planned for construction through the year 2010, plus those in preliminary development and the Connecting Idaho — GARVEE Program.

People who want a copy can contact the Division of Transportation Planning at (208) 332-7823, [sonnalynn.fernandez@itd.idaho.gov](mailto:sonnalynn.fernandez@itd.idaho.gov), or P.O. Box 7129, Boise, ID 83707-1129. The draft STIP also is available online at

[www.itd.idaho.gov/planning/reports/category.htm](http://www.itd.idaho.gov/planning/reports/category.htm).

## What the plan includes for Ada, Canyon counties

Key projects by area, including construction start year and cost:

### **Interstate 84**

- Construct turn lane for Eagle Road/Idaho 55 off-ramp to Franklin Road; 2006; \$1,345,000.
- Rebuild Gowen Road to Isaacs Canyon, east of Micron; 2007; \$10,750,000.
- Install sound wall along north side from Cole Road to Broadway Avenue; 2009; \$6,840,000.

I-84 projects planned but not yet scheduled for construction include:

- Widening from Cole Road to Gowen Road.
- New Ten Mile Road interchange.
- Rebuilt Gowen, Broadway, Vista and Orchard interchanges.

### **Downtown/Boise State/East/ Southeast Boise**

- Warm Springs Avenue: Install historic district entry arches; bicycle and pedestrian improvements at Granite Way intersection; 2007; \$425,000.
- Julia Davis Park: Relocate Big Mike to Boise Train Depot; 2007; \$306,000.
- Downtown: Replace traffic signals from State Street to River Street and from 16th Street to 8th Street; 2010; \$482,000.
- Eckert Pathway: Extend from Boise Avenue to Amity Road; 2006; \$660,000.
- Boise State: Construct bus shelters; 2006; \$393,750.
- Boise State: Construct Greenbelt pathway providing linkage to downtown and nearby parks; 2007; \$670,000.
- Idaho 21 and Grand Forest Drive: Construct turnbay; 2007; \$225,000.

### **Northwest/Central/Southwest Boise**

- Orchard Street and Vista Avenue: Rehabilitate I-84 overpasses; 2007; \$1,270,000.
- Curtis Road: Rehabilitate bridge over I-184; 2006; \$798,000.
- Catalapa Drive: Bus stop upgrade, sidewalks; 2006; \$1,095,000.
- Vista Avenue: Replace 11 outdated traffic signals; 2006; \$150,000.
- Orchard Road: Replace 11 outdated traffic signals; 2008; \$160,000.

### **Meridian/Eagle**

- Eagle Road and Hobble Creek Drive: Install traffic signal; 2006; \$345,000.
- Meridian: Replace 11 traffic signals; 2007; \$215,000.
- Eagle Road Underpass Pathway: Construct pathway under Eagle Road at North Channel Boise River; 2008; \$647,000.
- Merrill Park: Pave 1,000 feet of unpaved pathway and build a bridge linking two North Channel Boise River pathway systems; 2008; \$574,000.
- Meridian Road/Idaho 69: Rehabilitate I-84 overpass; 2007; \$1,110,000.

### **Nampa/Caldwell/Canyon County**

- Reconstruct interchange bridge at I-84 Franklin Road exit; 2008; \$17,549,000
- Build new I-84 Karcher Road interchange; 2006; \$25,379,000.
- Install reader board on I-84 westbound west of Garrity for traffic messages, Amber alerts and other information; 2006; \$175,000.
- Construct 3.21 miles of new bike/walk trails in Caldwell including a bridge over Dixie Slough; 2007; \$204,000.
- Improve Idaho 55 and Farmway Road intersection; 2006; \$225,000.

- Purchase two vacuum sweeper trucks, a de-icer truck and a flusher truck; 2007-2008; \$751,000.
- Improve 16th Avenue Bridge in Nampa; 2008; \$3,146,000.
- Reconstruct and realign Idaho 55, Marsing to Sunnyslope curve; 2008; \$8,074,000.
- Enhance U.S. 95 through downtown Parma with new sidewalks, pedestrian ramps and crossings, street lighting, landscaping and highway drain grates; 2007; \$573,000.
- Signalize intersection of Logan Street and 10th Avenue in Caldwell; 2009; \$658,000.
- Restore Oregon Short Line Train Depot; 2006/2008; \$621,000.

### **Transit**

- Design and build a new facility for ACHD Commuteride; 2006; \$1,154,000.
- Purchase 45 15-passenger commuter vans for ACHD Commuteride vanpool program; 2006-07; \$1,390,000.
- Public education/outreach for new regional transit system; 2006; \$240,000.
- Purchase wheelchair accessible, alternative fueled replacement vehicles for Valley Regional Transit Boise service area; 2006-2008; \$2,520,000.
- Analysis and preliminary engineering for Downtown Multi-Modal Transit Center; 2006; \$500,000.

### **Studies**

- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Data Collection on I-84 and 1-I84; 2006; \$20,000.
- High Volume Intersection Study; 2007; \$200,000.
- Environmental Study of I-84 from Idaho 44 to Five Mile; 2007; \$1,005,000.
- Treasure Valley Air Quality Study; 2008; \$396,000.
- Idaho 16, I-84 to Emmett Study; 2008; \$8,750,000.
- Idaho 69 Corridor Plan; 2008; \$235,000.
- Three Cities River Crossing from US 20/26 to Idaho 55 Corridor Study; 2009; \$2,650,000.
- Idaho 16 Improvement Study for Ada and Gem counties; 2010; \$2,737,140.