

## Planners decide on blended growth model for Treasure Valley

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Two plans to manage how the Treasure Valley grows can now move forward because planners have finally selected an ideal scenario for the valley.

Planners and analysts have been identifying and testing different growth models for almost a year. This week, the board of directors for Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho selected a model to use for developing two plans aimed at valley-wide coordination.

"We now have a goal: consume less land, create live/work/play communities, with access to services, that support a transit system," said Boise City Councilwoman Elaine Clegg, who is also a COMPASS board member.

People seeking a good quality of life continue to move to Ada County, making it one of the nation's fastest-growing counties, according to some estimates. Land-use experts warn that the quality of life is at stake if the county and its cities don't work together to manage rapid growth. That's why Treasure Valley leaders say this effort is so important.

The selected model is blended, placing some development in established neighborhoods and retail spots and some within existing small communities or satellite cities.

Clegg said the blended model is "tremendously better" than sprawl development, which now dominates the valley.

Planners will use the blended model as a guide for two planning projects: Communities in Motion, a regional, long-range transportation plan; and Blueprint for Good Growth, a land-use and transportation plan for Ada County.

Planners for the two projects have been working on them in sync for more than a year. Now that the model has been selected, the two plans will be separated and planners will begin writing drafts and preparing the implementation.

### **Panelists consider mid-course corrections**

The Idaho chapter of the Urban Land Institute, an international, nonprofit land-use and research organization, hosted a panel last week to discuss Communities in Motion and Blueprint for Good Growth and whether the plans needed mid-course corrections.

Panel members included Meridian Mayor Tammy de Weerd, COMPASS board member; Peter O'Neill, River Run developer and member of the Blueprint steering committee; and Frank Martin, Hidden Springs

developer and Ada County Planning and Zoning commissioner.

Here are some comments from panel members:

Peter O'Neill

"I've lived in this community for 40 years, and I'm getting a little impatient. We are very good at doing studies. We are very good at making plans. We are really terrible at implementing them.

"I think the biggest single mid-course correction we could make (to Blueprint) is it needs to be on more people's radar screens, more people need to be paying attention to it, not just the special interests."

Meridian Mayor Tammy de Weerd

"I live in this valley. I drive the streets, walk here and I breathe the air and (Blueprint) means a lot to me personally, to my family. I think why Ada County is into this Blueprint process is all of us agree — every one of our cities, our highway district and our county — we all agree something needed to happen. I don't want my kids to inherit something that I would be embarrassed that they inherit."

Frank Martin

"A planned community is essentially good planning. It is a choice that can fit into the toolbox for this region. Planned communities do offer an alternative. They should be self sufficient in terms of utilities and impacts on local roads. They should be made to pay their fair share."

#### **Additional Information**

##### **Know your plans ...**

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Blueprint for Good Growth and Communities in Motion are two long-range plans now being developed. Communities in Motion, a joint project of COMPASS and the Idaho Transportation Department, is a federally mandated long-range transportation plan covering the Treasure Valley's six counties — Ada, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem and Payette.

The \$1 million plan will evaluate growth and transportation issues, with an emphasis on creating policy rather than a checklist of projects. The plan should be completed in February 2006.

Blueprint for Good Growth is a cooperative land-use and transportation study involving Ada County's six cities — Boise, Eagle, Garden City, Kuna, Meridian and Star — and the Ada County Highway District. The blueprint will shape development patterns, which create transportation needs, bridging the gap between land-use and transportation planning. The \$800,000 study will serve as a tool for Ada County and its cities to use to update their comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and planning policies. The plan should be completed in February.

**See the plans for yourself**

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COMPASS plans to present a preliminary draft of the Communities in Motion plan to the public on Aug. 24 at the Hispanic Cultural Center in Nampa and on Aug. 25 at the Idaho Historical Museum in Boise.

Both open houses will be from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The public will have an opportunity to offer comments on the draft. A final draft will be presented for public comment in early January.

Blueprint for Good Growth will put its plan out for public review in September.