

**Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project  
Boise, Ada County, Idaho**

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

by the

**U.S. Department of Transportation**

**Federal Transit Administration**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has determined, in accordance with 23 CFR §771.121, that the proposed Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment.

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is based on the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment (EA), issued in June 2009 and incorporated by reference, other documents and attachments as itemized in this FONSI and the findings herein. The EA and these other documents have been independently evaluated by the FTA and determined to accurately discuss the project purpose, need, environmental issues, impacts of the proposed project, and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
R. F. Krochalis  
Region 10 Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

Date\_\_\_\_\_



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**FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION  
REGION 10**

**Finding of No Significant Impact  
And Other Determinations of Environmental Compliance**

**Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project  
Valley Regional Transit  
Boise, Ada County, Idaho**

**1. Introduction**

This document provides basis for the determination of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and other determinations of environmental compliance for the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project proposed by Valley Regional Transit (VRT) in Boise, Idaho. These determinations are made in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4332 et seq.) as amended. Appendix A: Written Comments and Responses includes all comments submitted on the EA and responses to them. Appendix B: Mitigation Commitments contains commitments that are part of the project design and mitigation measures to which the VRT commits to be completed.

**2. Description of the Proposed Project**

The proposed Downtown Boise Multimodal Center is envisioned as the downtown Boise “hub” for various transportation services. The multimodal center is proposed to be located on the ½-block site east of North 11<sup>th</sup> Street, between West Idaho and West Bannock Streets in the western part of the Boise central business district. In time, the center would be served by buses, streetcars and regional high-capacity transit such as passenger rail or bus rapid transit. It will be a vital and attractive center in downtown Boise.

The proposed multimodal center facility will accommodate transfers between bus routes and other modes while fostering pedestrian and bicycle access to downtown Boise. The facility will include off- and on-street bus bays (12 bays total), a passenger plaza and sheltered waiting areas, transit information kiosks, public restrooms and operator break facilities, bicycle storage, public art, vanpool and carpool drop-off/pick-up areas, a taxi stand and an auto drop-off/pick-up area, and retail space.

In addition, a planned joint development component of the project would include air space development above the multimodal facility for parking. The parking structure would include approximately 500 parking spaces total in a new five- to six-story parking structure. The parking spaces would replace the approximately 100 displaced parking spaces that currently exist on the site and on the street adjacent to the site and will be provided as part of the transit center project. The parking structure will also provide approximately 400 additional spaces to be used primarily for commuter parking for several surrounding planned and existing office buildings.

The Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project is planned to be completed by the end of 2011. The parking structure above the transit center could be constructed either concurrent with the multimodal center or at a later date.

### **3. Project Development, Agency Coordination, and Public Involvement and Comment**

During the past couple of decades transportation and land use planning efforts conducted at both the local and regional level in the Treasure Valley have been consistent in calling for additional investments in alternative forms of transportation including transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The vision is to move towards a more balanced transportation system that offers alternatives to the continued rapid growth in automobile trips to and within downtown Boise and the region. The *Downtown Boise Mobility Study*, completed in 2005, specifically identified the need to develop a system of more efficient and effective local and regional transit services. A central feature of the implementation strategy from the mobility study was the development of a downtown Boise Multimodal Center that would serve as a visible focal point for the community's transit services. The mobility study identified a 12-block area at the western edge of the downtown core as the preferred general location for a downtown multimodal center.

The concept of a new multimodal center in the downtown Boise core area was further refined in 2007 in the *Treasure Valley High Capacity Transit Study*. This study resulted in planning for three related projects bundled together due to their interrelated characteristics, including:

- **A multimodal center** – a facility that will bring together various transportation modes and functions.
- **A downtown circulator** – a service that improves mobility between primary destinations within and adjacent to the downtown.
- **I-84 priority corridor** – a high capacity transit service for locations along I-84 within Ada and Canyon Counties.

The proposed multimodal center responds to these previous studies and an extensive site identification and evaluation process. VRT collaborated with the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS), the City of Boise, the Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC), Ada County Highway District (ACHD) and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to advance the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project study.

A working group of VRT, COMPASS, CCDC and City of Boise staff was assembled to identify and evaluate candidate sites. In addition, a Downtown Technical Advisory Committee (DTAC) and Downtown Policy Advisory Committee (DPAC) were created to support VRT's efforts to identify potential sites, evaluate the identified sites and select a preferred multimodal transit center location.

The site selection process has included an extensive public outreach and information process, including open houses and outreach to businesses and property owners in the area. Public and business outreach has included:

- On January 17, 2008 a public open house was held in downtown Boise by the sponsoring agencies for Treasure Valley residents and key stakeholders. Invitations, which included a project overview, were mailed to 21,200 stakeholders in the project area. Nearly 500 participants attended and many provided written comments on sticky notes and comment cards.
- In March 2008 a follow-up newsletter was mailed to 21,000 residents, businesses and stakeholders.
- On April 1, 2008 a business meeting was held by the sponsoring agencies with property owners and businesses surrounding potential sites. Business and property owners were notified through a personal letter. About 40 participants attended. A follow-up letter was sent to 260 surrounding businesses and property owners.
- On May 22, 2008 a second public open house was held for Treasure Valley residents and stakeholders. Invitations, which included a project update, were mailed to 22,500 stakeholders. Approximately 250 people attended.
- In December 2008 a project update newsletter was prepared and sent to 5,025 area residents, businesses and other stakeholders.
- On February 18, 2009 VRT hosted a second business meeting. Business and property owners were notified through a personal letter. Fifty-six business and property owners attended. This meeting introduced a new 10<sup>th</sup> Street transit center option. Following the meeting, 26 comment sheets and 40 letters from the business community were received. Many were opposed to the new 10<sup>th</sup> Street option.
- On March 4, 2009 another open house was held. Invitations, which included a project update, were mailed to 20,277 stakeholders. Approximately 300 people attended. The public comments favored the Site H Alternative over the 10<sup>th</sup> Street transit center option.

After the May 2008 open house and recommendations from the DTAC and DPAC on the preferred site letters of support for selection the proposed site were provided from the following agencies:

- Ada County Highway District
- Idaho Transportation Department
- City of Boise
- Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho
- Capital City Development Corporation

Copies of these letters are in Appendix A of the Environmental Assessment.

The Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment was approved by FTA and released for agency and public review on June 1, 2009. VRT and COMPASS made copies of the EA and Executive Summary available to agencies and the public through a variety of means, including:

- Emailing notice to the DTAC and DPAC members with information on how to view or receive a copy of the document.
- Providing a newspaper notice advertisement on the availability of the environmental assessment on Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> in the *Idaho Statesman*. The advertisement is shown below:

**Notice of Environmental Assessment Availability**

# Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project

**Treasure Valley High Capacity Transit Study**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the hard copies of both the executive summary and the entire Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center will be available for public inspection through June 30, 2009 at the following locations:

- **Boise City Hall**, 150 N Capitol Boulevard, Boise  
Boise Planning & Development Services, 2nd Floor  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday
- **Boise Public Library**, 715 S. Capitol Boulevard, Boise  
Available at the third floor reference desk  
Monday - Thursday, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- **Capital City Development Corporation**, 121 N. 9th. Street, Suite 501, Boise  
Available in the office lobby  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday
- **Valley Regional Transit**, 830 N. Main Street, Suite 230, Meridian  
Available at the front desk  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

The EA as well as other project-related information is also available on the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho website:  
<http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/specialprojects-tvhlcts.htm>

**Comments pertaining to the Boise Multimodal Center EA must be received by 5 p.m. Mountain Time on June 30, 2009. Submit comments to:**



- Mail: Mark Carnopis, Multimodal Center Comments, 830 N. Main St., Ste. 230, Meridian, ID 83642
- Email: [mcarnopis@valleyregionaltransit.org](mailto:mcarnopis@valleyregionaltransit.org)
- Fax: (208) 846-8564

Type "*Comment on Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment*" in the email/letter/fax subject line.

Submit questions or special needs requests to Mark Carnopis by using one of the options listed above. Type "*Question (Special Needs Request) on Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment*" in the email/letter/fax subject line.

Valley Regional Transit (VRT) is committed to compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all related regulations and directives.

*Se les recomienda a las personas que necesitan un intérprete o arreglos especiales que llamen al (208) 855-2558 x 248.*

- Mailing a post card to 1,525 people on the project mailing list, announcing availability of the document and providing information on how to view or receive a copy. The postcard notice is shown below.

**DOWNTOWN BOISE MULTIMODAL CENTER**

**The Environmental Assessment for the new downtown Boise multimodal center is ready for public review.**

**HOW CAN I COMMENT OR ASK A QUESTION?**  
 All comments must be received no later than 5 p.m. MDT on June 30, 2009. Please mail, e-mail or fax your comments or questions to:

**MAIL: Mark Camopis**  
 Community Relations and Marketing Manager  
 Valley Regional Transit  
 830 N. Main St., Suite 230  
 Meridian, ID 83642

**E-MAIL: mcarnopis@valleyregionaltransit.org**

**FAX: (208) 846-8564**

In the e-mail/letter/fax subject line, indicate "Comment on Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment" or "Question on Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment."

**WHERE CAN I FIND IT?**

- [www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/specialprojects-tvhcts.htm](http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/specialprojects-tvhcts.htm)
- Boise Public Library (Main Library, 715 S. Capitol Blvd., Boise, Third floor reference desk)
- Capital City Development Corporation (121 N. 9th St., Boise, Lobby)
- Valley Regional Transit (830 N. Main St., Meridian, Front desk)
- Boise City Hall (150 N. Capitol Blvd., Boise, Second floor, City of Boise Planning & Development Services)




- Posting a notice of availability of the EA and Executive Summary of the EA on the project web page at:  
<http://www.compassidaho.org/prodserv/specialprojects-tvhcts.htm>
- Providing hard copies of the document for public review at the several locations, including:
  - ✓ **Boise City Hall**, 150 N Capitol Boulevard, Boise, 83702  
 Planning & Development Services, 2nd Floor  
 8:00 am-5:00 pm, Monday-Friday.
  - ✓ **Boise Public Library**, 715 S. Capitol Boulevard, Boise, 83702  
 Third floor reference desk  
 Monday-Thursday 10 am-9 pm; Friday 10 am-6 pm; Saturday 10 am-5 pm.
  - ✓ **Capital City Development Corporation**, 121 N. 9th. Street, Suite 501, Boise, 83702  
 Office lobby, Monday-Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm.
  - ✓ **Valley Regional Transit**, 830 N. Main Street, Suite 230, Meridian, 83642  
 Available at the front desk 8:00 am-5:00 pm.

Section 5 of the EA further documents the public and agency involvement processes undertaken to engage and inform the public and agencies about the multimodal center study and proposed project.

#### **4. Comments on the Environmental Assessment**

VRT received a small number of written comments and letters in response to the EA. Appendix A contains all of the written comments received. Comments were received from:

1. Allen Xan, PO Box 2296, Boise ID 83701-2296
2. Susan E. Buxton, Moore Smith Buxton & Turcke, Chartered, 950 W. Bannock Street, Suite 520, Boise, Idaho 83702
3. Diane Ronayne, 746 Santa Paula Court, Boise ID 83712
4. Kenneth L Pidjeon, 1829 Canal Street, Boise, ID 83705-4819
5. Kathleen M Lacey, Planning and Development Services, City of Boise, 150 N. Capitol Blvd. Boise ID 83702

Responses were prepared to all written comments and are included in Appendix A of the FONSI.

#### **5. Mitigation Measures to Minimize Harm**

Appendix B Mitigation Commitments describes the mitigation measures that are required of Valley Regional Transit as conditions of this FONSI. These mitigation commitments are based on the potential mitigation measures identified in the EA and the mitigation measures required for compliance under Federal and state laws and regulations. FTA finds that with the accomplishment of these mitigation commitments, VRT will have taken all reasonable, prudent, and feasible means to avoid or mitigate significant impacts, if any, from the proposed action.

#### **6. Determinations of Environmental Compliance and Findings**

##### **6.1 National Environmental Policy Act Finding**

FTA served as the lead agency under NEPA for this project. Valley Regional Transit prepared the EA in compliance with NEPA, 42 U.S.C Sections 4321 et. seq., and with FTA's regulations, 23 CFR Part 771. FTA has made an independent evaluation of the EA. The EA discusses the potential impacts of the project so that FTA can determine whether significant adverse impacts (CEQ §1508.27) are probable. If such a determination were made, an Environmental Impact Statement would need to be prepared.

Valley Regional Transit has incorporated environmental considerations into its study of project alternatives and has conducted evaluations of the project's potential environmental impacts. The EA was issued in June 2009. The EA found that the project's construction and operation would cause no significant adverse environmental effects that would not be mitigated. This finding applies to all applicable environmental elements, including Land Use, Transportation, Social and

Economic Impacts, Biological Resources, Water Quality and Hydrology, Vibration and Noise, Air Quality, Historic and Archeological and Cultural Resources, Visual Quality and Aesthetics, Geology and Soils, Utilities and Public Services, Safety and Security, Energy and Hazardous Materials.

After carefully considering the EA, its supporting documents, and the public comments and responses, **FTA finds under 23 CFR §771.121 that the development and operation of the proposed project, with the mitigation as provided herein to which Valley Regional Transit shall implement as part of the project, will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment.** The record provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required.

## **6.2 Section 106 Compliance Finding**

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, requires the review of federally assisted projects for impacts to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects listed in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places. Federal agencies must coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and potentially affected tribes to make this determination. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has established procedures for the protection of historic and cultural properties in, or eligible for, the National Register (36 CFR Part 800).

The cultural resources assessment included an archival review, consultation with the Idaho SHPO, field reconnaissance of the project area and surrounding area, and preparation of the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Historic and Cultural Resources Report. The report documents the analysis, findings and consultation related to the project.

An area of potential effect (APE) was identified that included the subject property, the adjacent property on the same block and the area within ½-block of the block where the proposed site is located. In a letter dated April 30, 2008 the Idaho SHPO concurred with the APE. On May 14, 2009 FTA forwarded a draft of the Historic and Cultural Report to the SHPO for review. On May 19, 2009 the SHPO responded to FTA in a letter stating they had determined that the project would have “no effect” on historic properties.

No Native American tribes have identified Ada County as their traditional and customary lands, so no tribal consultation was conducted for this project.

The project will not adversely affect any identified historic or known cultural resources within the project vicinity. No mitigation is required or recommended for historic structures that are within the APE for the downtown Boise multimodal center Project. If the relocation of the bank drive up teller function, which has not yet been defined, would affect the historic bank building, then additional analysis and consultation between the project sponsors, FTA and the SHPO may be necessary.

The potential exists for previously unidentified archaeological resources to be present at the project site. Since traditional methods of archaeological survey are not practicable, an

archaeological investigation will be conducted at this location in conjunction with project construction, immediately after asphalt has been removed and the ground surface is exposed. If additional recommendations regarding archaeological resources are necessary, they could be made at that time, which could include, but would not be limited to, such options as:

- no additional management,
- creation of an unanticipated discovery plan, or
- monitoring

Based on the cultural resources analysis included in the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center: Historic and Cultural Resources Report, the Environmental Assessment and coordination with the Idaho SHPO, **FTA finds that the project will have “no adverse effect” on any identified or likely cultural or historic resources, and that the Section 106 consultation requirements for this project have been fulfilled.**

### **6.3 Section 4(f) Finding**

Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966, codified at 49 U.S.C. §303, declares a national policy that a special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside, public park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. The Secretary of Transportation may not approve transportation projects that require the use of publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, state or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, state or local significance (as determined by the Federal, State or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, area, refuge or site) unless a determination is made that: (i) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land; and (ii) the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use (23 CFR §771.135).

The existence of potential Section 4(f) resources was evaluated as part of the EA. No public parks, recreation land, wildlife or waterfowl refuges were identified in the vicinity of the project site. The nearest parks are over 5 blocks away and along the Boise River. In addition, no effects, or use of, any historic or cultural resource is expected from the project. **FTA finds that the proposed project will not use or significantly impact any park, recreational area or other resource protected by Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966.**

### **6.4 Endangered Species Act Finding**

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 as amended (16 USC 1531-1544) is intended to protect threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems on which they depend. The ESA requires a federal agency to ensure that any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in direct mortality or destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat of listed species. This requirement is fulfilled under Section 7 of the ESA by a review of the proposed actions and consultation with the appropriate agency responsible for the conservation of the affected species. If necessary, mitigation would be required to avoid jeopardizing listed species or their habitat.

Both the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provide listings of threatened and endangered species under their jurisdiction. For Idaho these listings are available through the Idaho Fish and Game web site. The current list from Idaho Fish and Game indicates that the Yellow-billed cuckoo is the only species listed for Ada County, Idaho. It is listed as an ESA candidate species. Downtown Boise is not suitable habitat for the Yellow-billed cuckoo; therefore the project site does not include suitable habitat for any listed species. As a result, **FTA has determined that the proposed action would have “no effect” on any threatened or endangered species.**

Implementation of the project would have negligible effects on vegetation because the project site has been previously disturbed and no native vegetation is present. Some existing ornamental street trees may be removed for project construction. **FTA has determined that Implementation of the proposed project would have no effect on habitat because of the previously disturbed nature of the project area, nor is it expected to affect migratory species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.** Wildlife species within the project area have adapted to the urban environment and would not be affected by this change. There are no aquatic species on the project site or in the immediate vicinity; therefore there would be no effects to aquatic species.

## **6.5 Magnuson-Stevens Act Finding**

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), federal agencies are required to consult with NMFS regarding any of their actions or proposed actions authorized, funded, or undertaken that may “adversely affect” Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as designated by MSA (16 U.S.C. §1855 (b)(2)). “Essential Fish Habitat” means “those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity” (16 U.S.C. § 1802(10)). Freshwater EFH for Pacific salmon includes all those streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and other water bodies currently, or historically accessible to salmon in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California, except areas upstream of certain impassable man-made barriers, as identified by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), and longstanding, naturally-impassable barriers (i.e., natural waterfalls in existence for several hundred years). The Boise River is not considered an EFH area for Pacific salmon due to identified barrier constraints.

**FTA has determined that the proposed actions of the project will have “no effect” on Essential Fish Habitat under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.**

## **6.6 Conformity with Air Quality Plans Finding**

Under the 1990 federal Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), no federal agency or department may support, license, permit, or approve any activity that does not conform to the state implementation plan (42 U.S.C. §7506(c)). Federal agencies are required to make a conformity determination under the transportation conformity regulations promulgated by EPA (40 CFR §93.100 to 93.128). Conformity determinations are based on quantitative and qualitative assessments of a project’s estimated motor vehicle emissions and possible violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). For FTA, the federal funding agency for this

project, to make a conformity determination, it must be demonstrated that the project will not cause or contribute to any new violations of the NAAQS, increase the frequency or severity of any existing violations or delay the timely attainment of the NAAQS.

Federally-funded transportation projects in non-attainment and maintenance areas must be consistent with air quality goals and strategies, as described in the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The regional emissions analysis compares the emissions for all transportation projects in a region and is performed by the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization, in this case, the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS). A transportation project meets the first part of the conformity requirements if it is identified specifically in the current regional transportation plan and transportation improvement program (TIP), which have been analyzed for regional air quality impacts and been found by USDOT to conform.

The proposed Boise Multimodal Center is included in the adopted Regional TIP and the STIP. The TIP and STIP were found to fulfill federal and state regional air quality conformity requirements. The transit center is included on the list of projects in the Destination 2030 Limited Update (Table 5.2, project number 26, on page 74). Analyses are described in the more recent, updated conformity documents: Conformity Demonstration of the FY2008-2012 Northern Ada County Transportation Improvement Program Amendment and the 'Communities in Motion' Amendment, Report No. 04-2008, COMPASS, November 19, 2007, and Conformity Demonstration of the FY2009-2013 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, Report No. 14-2008, COMPASS, August 18, 2008.

To meet conformity at a localized, or project level, a project must not cause or contribute to a new violation of the NAAQS, increase the severity of an existing violation, or delay timely attainment or maintenance of the standards. To determine whether a project meets project level conformity, traffic levels at local intersections must be examined. A hot-spot analysis is required if the project is forecast to significantly increase intersection-level traffic and degrade the intersection performance. A hot-spot analysis may involve air quality modeling to determine whether a project conforms to the NAAQS. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) *Air Quality Screening Procedures Manual* (January, 2009)<sup>1</sup> provides screening alternatives to demonstrate intersection conformity in some cases, based on project type, level-of-service (LOS), or traffic volumes. Project traffic analyses for No-Build and Site H Alternative are evaluated for existing year, 2007 (No-Build only), design year, 2011, and future year 2025/2030; see further clarification regarding analysis years in the traffic report (Kittleson & Associates, Inc, April 2009).

Based on the Project's traffic analysis, a local hot-spot analysis is not necessary because most of the intersections in downtown operate at a LOS A or B (a.m. and p.m. peak hour) in the opening year (2011) and in the 2030 forecast year. In 2011, only three intersections in the study area are forecast to perform below LOS C and 11 intersections are predicted to perform below LOS C in 2030. Both FHWA guidance and the ITD screening methods preclude further CO hot-spot analysis for intersections having LOS of C or better.

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<sup>1</sup> The ITD Air Quality Screening Procedures Manual is available at the following web page:  
[http://itd.idaho.gov/manuals/Online\\_Manuals/Air/AQSP.htm](http://itd.idaho.gov/manuals/Online_Manuals/Air/AQSP.htm)

One intersection in 2011 p.m. peak hour (N 9<sup>th</sup> Street and W Front Street) and one intersection in 2030 p.m. peak hour (N 9<sup>th</sup> Street and W Idaho Street) would degrade from LOS C to LOS D. In both instances, the increased traffic at the intersections is generated by the joint-development parking structure. The added traffic volumes would account for less than three percent of the hourly directional volume and one percent or less of the total intersection volume. This analysis included the additional traffic associated with the new parking structure, but did not account for the planned elimination of existing surface parking lots across the street from the multimodal center. Total intersection Average Daily Traffic (ADT) levels for N 9<sup>th</sup> Street and W Front Street are expected to be 63,960 and 84,770, for 2011 and 2030, respectively. Total intersection ADT levels for N 9<sup>th</sup> Street and W Idaho Street are expected to be 25,945 and 34,355, for 2011 and 2030, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Based on the model screening methods, both of these intersections are well within the analysis exemption criteria of 100,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) value for 2010, and 175,000 AADT for 2030.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this project would not include or directly affect any roadways for which forecast traffic volume will exceed the screening level volume of ITD's Project Level Air Quality Screening Procedure. It is therefore concluded that the project will have no significant adverse impact of air quality due to carbon monoxide.

**At both the regional and project levels, the proposed Project is found to conform to the purpose of the current SIP, and to all requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.**

## **6.7 Farmland Finding**

The project would not use any prime or unique agricultural land. The site for the proposed multimodal center is covered with asphalt and concrete and currently used as a surface parking lot. The area is within the highly urbanized downtown Boise Central Business District. **FTA finds that there would be no adverse impacts to agricultural lands caused by the project.** The project would be consistent with the Farmlands Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981 (7 U.S.C. §§4201 - 4209) and other applicable federal farmlands protection policies, orders, and guidance.

## **6.8 Environmental Justice Finding**

Executive Order 12898 provides that “each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.” The Department of Transportation's (DOT) Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations similarly requires agencies to explicitly consider human health and environmental effects related to transit projects that may have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority and low-income populations. It also requires them to implement procedures to provide “meaningful opportunities for public involvement” by members of these populations during project planning and development (DOT Order No. 5680.1). The DOT Order specifically provides for the

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<sup>2</sup> Email from Kittelson & Associates, Inc. to URS, April 17, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Note that because they are not adjusted for lower traffic volumes on weekends, ADT volumes are typically slightly higher than AADT volumes, therefore these comparisons are conservative.

consideration of mitigation and enhancement measures, as well as project benefits in making determinations regarding disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations.

The Environmental Assessment includes an environmental justice analysis in accordance with the Executive and the DOT's Orders. The analysis determined that there are no concentrations of minority or low-income households located close enough to the project site to experience potential adverse environmental effects of either construction or operation of the proposed development. Based on the analysis of environmental justice included in the Environmental Assessment, **FTA finds that the construction and operation of the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations.**

Within downtown Boise, the minority population is not concentrated in any specific areas. None of the five residents in the immediate project area identified as non-white, Hispanic, elderly, or disabled. No comments were received during the public outreach effort regarding minority populations or related issues. As a result, the proposed project would not have a disproportionate adverse impact on minority elderly, or disabled populations. The project would benefit the surrounding community of disabled residents in downtown Boise by enabling better transit access.

The proposed project would improve transit service in downtown Boise. It would improve the transit system by increasing connectivity between modes and facilitating transfers between bus routes and it would provide an indoor weather protected waiting area and restrooms for patrons. The improved transit facilities would serve all people in Boise, including low-income residents who could be transit dependent. It would improve the current transit user condition where neither restrooms nor a waiting area exist. As a result, the project could benefit minority and low-income populations who rely on transit.

The broader community of downtown Boise, which for ADA County has a higher than average representation of minorities as well as a lower than average median income level, should benefit from the multimodal center and improved access to transit service, as it provides additional mobility and thus access to a wider range of employment and housing opportunities. These benefits further support the conclusion that no disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations would result from the project.

## **6.9 Floodplain Finding**

Pursuant to Executive Order 1198 (Floodplain Management), Valley Regional Transit determined that the proposed project site is not within the 100-year floodplain or floodway of the Boise River, which is approximately ¾-miles to the south. The Environmental Assessment found that the project is outside of the 100-year floodplain. **FTA finds that no significant adverse impacts to 100-year floodplains or floodways would occur as a result of the proposed project.**

## **6.10 Wetland Finding**

The United States Department of Transportation seeks to assure the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the nation's wetlands to the fullest extent practicable during the planning, construction, and operation of transportation facilities and projects (DOT Order 5660.1A). This is consistent with Executive Order 11990, requiring that new construction located in wetlands be avoided unless there is no practicable alternative to the construction and that the proposed action include all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands that may result from such construction. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulates discharges of dredged or fill materials into waters of the United States, including wetlands, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Corps requires that wetland impacts be avoided or minimized to the extent practicable, and mitigation would likely be required for unavoidable wetland impacts.

The EA found that there are no wetlands or waterways on the project site or in close proximity to the project site therefore **FTA has determined there would be no effects to wetlands or waterways resulting from the project.**

### **6.11 Environmental Finding**

Based on the Environmental Assessment and its associated supporting documents, the Federal Transit Administration finds pursuant to 23 CFR §771.121 that there are no significant adverse impacts on the environment associated with the development and operation of the proposed Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Project.



## **Appendix A: Written Comments and Responses**



**COMMENTS RECEIVED**  
on the  
**Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment**

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**COMMENT NUMBER 1**

**Received Thursday June 18, 2009 via email:**

Mr. Carnopis:

I have read the entire Environmental Assessment and the project looks good to build. I have a small concern about interaction between bike riders, bus or circulator passengers and autos (dropping off/picking up) at the center and hope any jostling will be benign. I live downtown and do not own a car; most of my movement around Boise is by biking or walking, with an occasional bus ride.

I'm on your mailing list twice. Please remove one of them to save postage. Thanks.

Allen Xan  
PO Box 2296  
Boise ID 83701-2296

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**COMMENT NUMBER 2**

**Received Monday, June 22, 2009 via email:**

Mark-

Thank you for making the Downtown Boise Multimodal Transportation Center EA information available for review and comment. I have reviewed the Executive Summary and have been following the progress of this project over the last year. The project staff deserves thanks for the transparent and detailed methodology for reviewing the range of alternatives. After review, Alternative H stands out to be the best alternative. The No-Build alternative just pushes the problem out several more years and will undoubtedly cost more to re-study, plan and construct. Boise residents and those people who travel downtown for work, shopping, entertainment, and the like will be disserved if the No-build alternate is selected. Alternative H clearly addresses the transit and parking issues while benefiting an area of downtown that is currently underdeveloped. Alternative H should be selected and financing for that project should be aggressively sought. I have concerns that the downtown streetcar may gain popular support faster than Alternative H. Such event would be unfortunate as the Multimodal Transportation Center should pre-date the streetcar development if either is to be viable. Said another way, the streetcar should not be developed prior to the Multimodal Transportation Center. Federal funds should be appropriated for the Multimodal Transportation Center first then funding for the streetcar should be pursued. The transportation and environmental benefits for Air Quality and related environmental concerns would best be realized with the Multimodal Transportation Center being completed as soon as practicable.

Again, thank you for providing me the opportunity to comment. My comments should be attributed solely to me as an individual citizen and not to my firm or any of our clients.

Best regards,  
Susan

*Susan E. Buxton*

Moore Smith Buxton & Turcke, Chartered  
950 W. Bannock Street, Suite 520  
Boise, Idaho 83702  
Phone: 208/331-1800  
Fax: 208/331-1202  
[seb@msbtlaw.com](mailto:seb@msbtlaw.com)

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### COMMENT NUMBER 3

**Received Friday, June 26, 2009 via email:**

**From:** Diane Ronayne [<mailto:dianeronayne@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Friday, June 26, 2009 12:44 PM

**To:** Mark Carnopis

**Cc:** Kelli Fairless; [maucutt@downtownboise.org](mailto:maucutt@downtownboise.org); Terri (BAHD) Schorzman; Karen Bubb; David (home) Eberle; Maryanne (council) Jordan; Alan (Council) Shealy; Elaine (Council) Clegg; Vern (Council) Bisterfeldt; Gary Richardson

**Subject:** Boise Multimodal Center EA - comment

To whom it may concern:

Thanks to the DBA (Morgan Aucutt's 6-26-09 e-newsletter), I received notice of the Environmental Assessment for the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center dated June 1. I very much appreciate DBA's service in providing this information to its members and interested parties.

I am delighted to see that the 10th Street transit center option has been dropped, and am equally pleased that a true multimodal center (Site H Alternative) has been selected. I believe the initial expense will be justified by decades of functionality. I'm especially pleased that this alternative allows for the inclusion of public art.

As far as I can tell, the environmental impacts listed in the EA are complete and accurate. I hope the agencies involved in making this project happen will move forward rapidly, secure any federal stimulus funds that might be available, and take advantage of the current drop in construction costs.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Diane Ronayne

---

DIANE RONAYNE WRITING/EDITING/PHOTOGRAPHY

746 Santa Paula Court, Boise, ID 83712  
208-336-2128; [dianeronayne@gmail.com](mailto:dianeronayne@gmail.com)

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**COMMENT NUMBER 4****Received Tuesday, June 30, 2009 via email:****From:** K L PIDJEON [mailto:commo23@msn.com]**Sent:** Tuesday, June 30, 2009 9:03 AM**To:** Mark Carnopis**Cc:** rebecca.reyesalicea@dot.gov; john.witmer@dot.gov**Subject:** Comment on Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment**First Point**

In March 2009, after holding a public hearing on the proposed multi modal center, the City of Boise directed Valley Regional Transit (VRT) to provide to the City three (3) additional on street location alternatives to the proposed multi modal center within 45 days. The existing Transit Mall (the no build option), with enhancements, was to be one potential location. The Mayor of Boise proposed the block around City Hall as another potential alternative location. Public input on alternative locations was to be sought. This is a matter of public record. Attached is the pertinent part of the minutes for the Boise City City Council meeting of March 10, 2009.

The existing Transit Mall was to be re-evaluated with the provision that the re-evaluation include enhancements and modifications to make it more functional in the current operating environment and also to have it meet various current standards.

I cannot find in the Environmental Assessment any discussion of these facts. The 45 day period would have expired about a month before this EA was approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in Seattle, Washington.

Nor is there any discussion of which on street alternative locations, if any, were evaluated and the outcome of the assessment, both operational and environmental, of these locations. There appears to be no discussion, or environmental analysis, of the current Transit Mall with enhancements and modifications.

In short, Site "H" may have been the preferred site prior to the public hearing but it is clear from the Boise City City Council motion that additional locations were to be considered. The EA does not mention those other locations. Based on the Council motion, it appears a final recommended location has not been formally determined - only a location to be forwarded to FTA for environmental review purposes.

I am requesting that this proposed Environmental Assessment be modified to include a discussion about the three (3) additional on street alternatives requested by the City of Boise, the operational and environmental assessments of those locations, and the results of the operational and environmental assessments of those locations.

**Second Point**

The public comment period expires June 30, 2009. The EA was approved by the FTA Region X Regional Administrator on June 1, 2009. Region X offices are located in Seattle, Washington. Considering original document transmission time from Seattle (which would be at least one day) to Boise, making the appropriate number of copies of the document for distribution, the distribution of those copies to the places designed for public review, and the time required to publish the public notice of the availability of the EA itself it appears Boise residents have not had the full 30 days required to comment on this EA.

I am requesting another 30 day EA public comment period be established by FTA and Valley Regional Transit. A 30 day public comment period which allows the citizens of the Boise area a full 30 days to review and comment upon the document as required by law.

Kenneth L Pidjeon  
1829 Canal Street  
Boise, ID 83705-4819

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**COMMENT NUMBER 5**

**Received Tuesday, June 30, 2009 via email:**

**From:** Kathleen Lacey [mailto:KLacey@cityofboise.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 30, 2009 4:08 PM  
**To:** Mark Carnopis  
**Cc:** Amanda Brown; Adam Park; HAL SIMMONS; Jade Riley; Michael Zuzel; Patricia Nilsson  
**Subject:** MMC EA, Boise City Comments

Mark,

Please find attached the City of Boise's comments on the Environmental Assessment for the Downtown Boise Multi-modal Center.

Sincerely,

Kathleen

*Kathleen Marie Lacey  
Comprehensive Planning  
Planning and Development Services  
150 N. Capitol Blvd.  
Boise, Idaho 83702  
208-384-3835  
[klacey@cityofboise.org](mailto:klacey@cityofboise.org)*



## Planning & Development Services

**Bruce Chatterton**  
Director

Boise City Hall  
100 N. Capitol Boulevard

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Web  
[www.fyathel.org/fonsi](http://www.fyathel.org/fonsi)

**Mayor**

David H. Iversen

**City Council**

President  
Marjorie Jordan

Council Pro Tem  
Alan W. Shady

Vernon L. Rasmussen  
Ernie Clegg  
David Cheek  
Jim Tish

June 30, 2009

Mark Carnopis  
Community Relations/Marketing Manager  
Valley Regional Transit  
830 N. Main Street, Suite 230  
Meridian, ID 83642

Re: Multi-Modal Center Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Carnopis:

After review of the Environmental Assessment, the City of Boise supports Site H as the recommended location for the Downtown Boise Multi-modal Center (MMC). Located on the east side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street, between Idaho Street on the south and Bannock Street on the north, the site fulfills the purpose, need, goals and objectives of an MMC for Boise and the region. The preferred site will accommodate the essential functions of the MMC, including bus bays, pedestrian plaza and waiting area, operator break facility, public restrooms, bicycle parking, downtown circulator platform, public art, retail space, and auto drop-off and pick-up.

The City will continue to work with Valley Regional Transit (VRT) on the design of the MMC to assure a facility which enhances the downtown and accommodates MMC requirements. The City will assist VRT as the project proceeds through the City's entitlement process. The City's support of Site H does not negate nor imply approval of the city's standard design review and permitting functions.

Sincerely,

  
Kathleen M. Lacey  
Planning and Development Services  
Comprehensive Planning  
City of Boise  
150 N. Capitol Blvd.  
Boise, ID 83702

**RESPONSES**  
**to the Comments Received on the**  
**Downtown Boise Multimodal Center Environmental Assessment**

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**COMMENT NUMBER 1 - Allen Xan**

**Comment 1A:** I have read the entire Environmental Assessment and the project looks good to build.

**Response:** Comment noted. Project staff intends to continue to move the project forward through design and into construction and then operations of the facility.

**Comment 1B:** I have a small concern about interaction between bike riders, bus or circulator passengers and autos (dropping off/picking up) at the center and hope any jostling will be benign. I live downtown and do not own a car; most of my movement around Boise is by biking or walking, with an occasional bus ride.

**Response:** As the more detailed design of the Multimodal Center is developed, the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists will be a primary concern. The design of the bus circulation and auto drop-off/pick-up will be thoughtfully defined to ensure safety of all, efficient flow of vehicles and minimize conflicts. The design of the Downtown Circulator (a separate project) in the vicinity of the multimodal center will also be done with the utmost care for safety of pedestrians, bike riders and autos.

**Comment 1C:** I'm on your mailing list twice. Please remove one of them to save postage. Thanks.

**Response:** The project mailing list was compiled from a variety of sources, including attendance at the project related open houses. If a person attended more than one open house their name may have been put into the database more than one time. Efforts were made to reduce duplication, but some duplicates may have been missed. VRT will update the mailing list to ensure that you are only listed one time.

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**COMMENT NUMBER 2 - Susan E. Buxton**

**Comment 2A:** Thank you for making the Downtown Boise Multimodal Transportation Center EA information available for review and comment. I have reviewed the Executive Summary and have been following the progress of this project over the last year. The project staff deserves thanks for the transparent and detailed methodology for reviewing the range of alternatives.

**Response:** Comment noted. Thank you!

**Comment 2B:** After review, Alternative H stands out to be the best alternative. The No-Build alternative just pushes the problem out several more years and will undoubtedly cost more to re-study, plan and construct. Boise residents and those people who travel downtown for work, shopping, entertainment, and the like will be disserved if the No-build alternate is selected. Alternative H clearly addresses the transit and parking issues while benefiting an area of downtown that is currently underdeveloped.

**Response:** VRT plans to move forward with the Site H Alternative as described in the EA.

**Comment 2C:** Alternative H should be selected and financing for that project should be aggressively sought. I have concerns that the downtown streetcar may gain popular support faster than Alternative H. Such event would be unfortunate as the Multimodal Transportation Center should pre-date the streetcar development if either is to be viable. Said another way, the streetcar should not be developed prior to the Multimodal Transportation Center. Federal funds should be appropriated for the Multimodal Transportation Center first then funding for the streetcar should be pursued. The transportation and environmental benefits for Air Quality and related environmental concerns would best be realized with the Multimodal Transportation Center being completed as soon as practicable.

**Response:** VRT intends to pursue the use of both Federal and local funding for the project as described in the finance section of the EA. If current plans are realized, the multimodal center will be constructed prior to the downtown circulator (a separate project).

**Comment 2D:** Again, thank you for providing me the opportunity to comment. My comments should be attributed solely to me as an individual citizen and not to my firm or any of our clients.

**Response:** Comment noted. Thank you!

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**COMMENT NUMBER 3 – Diane Ronayne**

**Comment 3A:** Thanks to the DBA (Morgan Aucutt's 6-26-09 e-newsletter), I received notice of the Environmental Assessment for the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center dated June 1. I very much appreciate DBA's service in providing this information to its members and interested parties.

I am delighted to see that the 10th Street transit center option has been dropped, and am equally pleased that a true multimodal center (Site H Alternative) has been selected. I believe the initial expense will be justified by decades of functionality. I'm especially pleased that this alternative allows for the inclusion of public art.

As far as I can tell, the environmental impacts listed in the EA are complete and accurate. I hope the agencies involved in making this project happen will move forward rapidly, secure any federal stimulus funds that might be available, and take advantage of the current drop in construction costs.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

**Response:**

VRT also appreciates the DBA's support in getting word out to as many people as possible that the EA was available for public review. VRT intends for the project at Site H to be a significant public asset in downtown Boise, including the public art element. VRT also appreciates the review of the EA and intends to move the project forward as quickly as possible.

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**COMMENT NUMBER 4 – Kenneth L Pidjeon**

**Comment 4A:**

First Point

In March 2009, after holding a public hearing on the proposed multi modal center, the City of Boise directed Valley Regional Transit (VRT) to provide to the City three (3) additional on street location alternatives to the proposed multi modal center within 45 days. The existing Transit Mall (the no build option), with enhancements, was to be one potential location. The Mayor of Boise proposed the block around City Hall as another potential alternative location. Public input on alternative locations was to be sought. This is a matter of public record. Attached is the pertinent part of the minutes for the Boise City City Council meeting of March 10, 2009.

The existing Transit Mall was to be re-evaluated with the provision that the re-evaluation include enhancements and modifications to make it more functional in the current operating environment and also to have it meet various current standards.

I cannot find in the Environmental Assessment any discussion of these facts. The 45 day period would have expired about a month before this EA was approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in Seattle, Washington.

Nor is there any discussion of which on street alternative locations, if any, were evaluated and the outcome of the assessment, both operational and environmental, of these locations. There appears to be no discussion, or environmental analysis, of the current Transit Mall with enhancements and modifications.

In short, Site "H" may have been the preferred site prior to the public hearing but it is clear from the Boise City City Council motion that additional locations were to be considered. The EA does not mention those other locations. Based on the Council motion, it appears a final recommended location has not been formally determined - only a location to be forwarded to FTA for environmental review purposes.

I am requesting that this proposed Environmental Assessment be modified to include a discussion about the three (3) additional on street alternatives requested by the City of Boise, the operational and environmental assessments of those locations, and the results of the operational and environmental assessments of those locations.

---

*Attached to Mr. Pidgeon's comment was the March 10, 2009 City of Boise Council meeting minutes. The following excerpt from the meeting minutes pertains to the subject issue.*

Moved by SHEALY and seconded by TIBBS that the Council not endorse a preferred site for downtown Boise multimodal center and no recommendation be forwarded to the Valley Regional Transit Board; that the board go back with a much more articulated and comprehensive user friendly public process, and other on-street sites be examined for the installation of a public transit mall for the bus system.

Substitute motion moved by JORDAN and seconded by CLEGG that we advance to the Valley Regional Transit Board site H for the environmental document; with the request the Council receive periodic reports on the public process that will be advanced during that document stage and any other public processes going forward.

Amended substitute motion moved by EBERLE and seconded by CLEGG that the Council forward site H for the environmental review and that Valley Regional within 45 days, will present three (3) alternative in-street options that will meet the pedestrian and transit multimodal criteria that have been set forth in the process.

Roll call on the amended substitute motion resulted as follows: YEAS: CLEGG, EBERLE and JORDAN. NAYS: SHEALY and TIBBS.

Motion carried.

**Response:** The Boise City Council motion was made to forward support for Site H to continue as the preferred site for the EA and to have staff explore other "in-street" alternatives with a 45 day time limit to return an analysis to the City Council. The Boise City Council direction to city staff to evaluate a series of sites for the multimodal center was in essence a "Plan B" in case the Site H Alternative did not work out. Valley Regional Transit staff worked closely with city staff as city staff defined the process for meeting the direction of council. This analysis was to define a potential back up plan if for some reason the Site H Alternative was not able to move forward. The city council wanted to ensure that a range of alternatives were examined in case it became necessary to have a back up site. The intent was not to introduce a new project alternative(s) to the locally selected preferred alternative (Site H) that was being advanced in the EA document. City staff worked closely with the City Council to implement the Council's direction, in both the intent and spirit. VRT supported the effort by providing technical support.

VRT will further address site layout and design issues with the City of Boise through a Conditional Use Permit and Design Review Process application for the proposed multimodal center. Through the Conditional Use Permit and Design Review Process the City of Boise will have the opportunity to further address detailed site layout and design issues regarding Site H.

The existing on-street transit center site was considered in the EA as the No-Build Alternative. As one of the in-street site options, the city did explore an option that would have enhanced the existing transit center site with improvements on Main Street and removed the transit facilities on Idaho Street.

As noted in the City of Boise's letter dated June 30, 2009 and included as Comment Number 5 in this Appendix to the FONSI, the City has reviewed the EA and reaffirms their support for the Site H Alternative.

**Comment 4B:**

Second Point

The public comment period expires June 30, 2009. The EA was approved by the FTA Region X Regional Administrator on June 1, 2009. Region X offices are located in Seattle, Washington. Considering original document transmission time from Seattle (which would be at least one day) to Boise, making the appropriate number of copies of the document for distribution, the distribution of those copies to the places designed for public review, and the time required to publish the public notice of the availability of the EA itself it appears Boise residents have not had the full 30 days required to comment on this EA.

I am requesting another 30 day EA public comment period be established by FTA and Valley Regional Transit. A 30 day public comment period which allows the citizens of the Boise area a full 30 days to review and comment upon the document as required by law.

**Response:** The draft EA was prepared by VRT and independently reviewed by FTA over a period of several months. Upon completion of FTA's review and approval of the draft EA document, the FTA Region 10 Administrator approved and signed the cover page on June 1<sup>st</sup>. FTA staff transmitted the approval and document signature electronically to the VRT staff via email. The electronic transmission occurred the same day as the Administrator's approval and signature. Upon receipt of the signed document, VRT staff began the process of making the document available to the public. It was posted on the project web page and made available as noted previously in Section 3 of this FONSI.

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**COMMENT NUMBER 5 – City of Boise**

**Comment 5A:**

After review of the Environmental Assessment, the City of Boise supports Site H as the recommended location for the Downtown Boise Multi-modal Center (MMC). Located on the east side of 11<sup>th</sup> Street, between Idaho Street on the south and Bannock Street on the north, the site fulfills the purpose, need, goals and objectives of an MMC for Boise and the region. The preferred site will accommodate the essential functions of the MMC, including bus bays, pedestrian plaza and waiting area, operator break facility, public restrooms, bicycle parking, downtown circulator platform, public art, retail space, and auto drop-off and pick-up.

The City will continue to work with Valley Regional Transit (VRT) on the design of the MMC to assure a facility which enhances the downtown and accommodates MMC requirements. The City will assist VRT as the project proceeds through the City's entitlement process. The City's support of Site H does not negate nor imply approval of the City's standard design review and permitting functions.

**Response:** Comment noted. Thank you for reconfirming the City of Boise's support of the selection of the Site H Alternative. VRT looks forward to working further with the City of Boise through the entitlement process including the Conditional Use and Design Review processes and subsequent permitting.



## **Appendix B: Mitigation Commitments**



**Downtown Boise Multimodal Center  
Mitigation Commitments  
July 2009**

Following the issuance of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by the Federal Transit Administration, Valley Regional Transit proposes to initiate final design of the project. The Environmental Assessment (EA) discusses a variety of potential mitigation measures. The mitigation measures to be implemented are described below. With the construction of the project, Valley Regional Transit shall implement the following mitigation measures:

**1. Transportation.** Transportation Mitigation Measures are discussed in section 3.1.6 of the EA.

Several design measures are recommended and shall be evaluated to provide for a safe, functional access to the proposed multimodal center:

- The signal timing in the immediate vicinity of the development will be evaluated for potential optimization measures that would improve traffic flow near the site.
- The multimodal center site access/egress on West Bannock Street should be located as far from the W. Bannock Street/N. 11th Street intersection as possible, taking into consideration both the access to the parking structure and access to the transit center. It should be designed to minimize traffic effects on W. Bannock Street while ensuring safety of the two access points and pedestrians using the sidewalk.
- Signage/stripping plans for W Bannock Street adjacent to the transit center will be designed to be safe and ensure that warning is provided to both drivers and pedestrians of potential conflicts (buses turning in and out of the transit center, cars turning in and out of the parking garage and pedestrians crossing the access to the MMC).

Mitigation for long term transportation related impacts include, but is not limited to:

- Evaluate feasibility and recommend replacement of lost parking for both on-street (18 spaces) and off-street (approximately 100) spaces.
- If existing on-street loading is displaced, ensure that loading needs can be met in the surrounding area.
- As the project design moves forward, coordinate with the City of Boise and Ada County Highway District to ensure that bus circulation, bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation on and around the site provides for the safe movement of buses, pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles accessing the parking structure.

**2. Land Use.** As discussed in Section 3.2 of the EA, the proposed action is not expected to have any adverse land use impacts. Therefore no land use mitigation measures are necessary. Valley Regional Transit shall ensure that the project is designed to ensure consistency with the city's land use policies. A Conditional Use Permit and Design Review must be secured for the project prior to Building Permits from the City of Boise.

**3. Economics.** As discussed in Section 3.3 of the EA, the proposed project would not result in adverse economic impacts. Therefore no economic mitigation measures are necessary.

**4. Neighborhoods, Environmental Justice and Displacements.** As discussed in Section 3.4 of the EA, the proposed project is not expected to have any adverse neighborhood, environmental justice impacts. Therefore no neighborhood or environmental justice mitigation measures are necessary.

The project would displace some on-street and surface parking lot parking and a drive up banking teller facility. Parking mitigation is discussed above in the transportation section. The drive through banking facility is associated with the bank location on the same block. It is expected to be replaced on-site, possibly on the bank's northwestern side (facing the existing alley). VRT will comply with Federal displacement and relocation requirements (USC Title 42 and 49 CFR Part 24).

**5. Noise and vibration.** As discussed in Section 3.5 of the EA, operation of the proposed project is not expected to result in any adverse noise or vibration impacts. Therefore no operational noise or vibration mitigation measures are necessary.

Although construction noise and vibration is not expected to result in significant impacts, some simple measures will be employed to minimize the effects of construction on nearby locations. These measures are discussed below in Section 16 Construction.

**6. Air Quality.** As discussed in Section 3.6 of the EA, the proposed action is not expected to have any adverse Air Quality impacts. The Site H Alternative would meet air quality conformity criteria; therefore no operational air quality mitigation is required.

The project has potential for temporary and localized air quality affects from construction activities. The temporary impacts would result from activities such as demolition, grading, paving and the use of heavy equipment. Construction related Air Quality mitigation measures are discussed below in Section 16 Construction.

**7. Visual and Aesthetics.** As discussed in Section 3.7 of the EA, the proposed project would not result in adverse visual impacts. Therefore no visual or aesthetic mitigation measures are necessary. The following are potential mitigation measures that could minimize negative visual effects of the proposed project and, where feasible, should be included:

- Work with the community through the design review process to develop a structure that fits harmoniously with the surrounding built environment.
- Select signage, station furniture, and other appurtenances to harmonize with their surroundings and minimize visual intrusion.
- Temporary screening of the site during construction.

**8. Public Services, Utilities and Energy.** As discussed in Section 3.8 of the EA, the proposed project would not result in adverse impacts to public services, utilities or energy. Therefore no mitigation measures are necessary.

**9. Historic and Archaeological.** As discussed in Section 3.9 of the EA, the proposed project will not adversely affect any identified historic or known cultural resources within the project vicinity. No mitigation would be required or is recommended for historic structures that are within the APE for the downtown Boise multimodal center Project. If the relocation of the bank drive up teller function, which has not yet been defined, would affect the historic bank building, additional analysis and consultation between the project sponsors, FTA and the SHPO may be necessary.

The potential exists for previously unidentified archaeological resources to be present at the project site. Since traditional methods of archaeological survey are not practicable, an archaeological investigation will be conducted at this location in conjunction with project construction, immediately after asphalt has been removed and the ground surface is exposed. Additional recommendations regarding archaeological resources could be made at that time, which could include, but would not be limited to, such options as:

- no additional management,
- creation of an unanticipated discovery plan, or
- monitoring

**10. Parks and Recreation Lands (Section 4(f) Resources).** As discussed in Section 3.10 of the EA, there are no publicly owned parks, recreation land, wildlife refuges in the vicinity of the proposed project. There would therefore be no use of any of these resources, or need for mitigation measures. As noted in Section 9 above, no effect to or use of any historic or archaeological resource is expected. Therefore no mitigation is required.

**11. Hazardous Materials.** As discussed in Section 3.11 of the EA, the proposed project site has potential to contain environmental contamination. To reduce the risk of liability and comply with FTA Circular 5010.1C, Chapter II.2 (October 1, 1998), a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment will be completed prior to purchase of parcels for the project. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is part of the due diligence process required by lenders and typically includes review of regulatory agency files and permits, a site reconnaissance visit, and interviews with current or previous property owners who are knowledgeable of the past use of the property. Based on findings of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment may be warranted. A Phase II Environmental Site Assessment typically includes a focused investigation of the subsurface media through sampling or geophysical techniques.

If the presence of contamination is confirmed, soils and (or) groundwater will be monitored during construction and managed appropriately for proper off-site disposal by trained and equipped contractors. A work plan will be designed for the project that would include actions to be implemented in the event construction activities encounter contaminated soil.

**12. Soils, Geology and Seismic.** As discussed in Section 3.12 of the EA, the proposed project would not result in adverse impacts related to soils, geology or seismic conditions. The proposed parking structure will be designed to current local seismic standards as required by the Idaho building code. Therefore no soils, geologic or seismic mitigation measures are necessary.

**13. Biological Resources.** As discussed in Section 3.13 of the EA, the proposed project would not result in adverse biological resource impacts. Because there would be no effects to biological resources, no mitigation is required.

**14. Water Quality and Hydrology.** As discussed in Section 3.14 of the EA, the proposed project is not expected to result in adverse water quality or hydrology impacts. To comply with the city of Boise's requirement for detainment of stormwater runoff, a stormwater site plan will be required through the design review process. The plan will require on site detainment and specific construction related Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize any construction related impacts. On-site detention of stormwater would provide a net benefit to water quality in the area. Options for on-site detainment could include bioswales, a green roof, working with existing wastewater infrastructure, or ponding/retaining within the proposed impervious surface area. The Design Review process required by the City of Boise would ensure compliance with the storm water regulations.

**15. Safety and Security.** As discussed in Section 3.15 of the EA, the proposed project would not result in adverse safety or security impacts. The project will address safety and security issues further through the refinement of the project design. Security features of the proposed project could include use of durable materials, surveillance equipment/cameras, ensuring good lighting, creating good lines-of-sight and incorporating on-site uses that provide human presence. Potential security problems would be managed with regular security visits and monitoring to ensure the safety and security of the facility. Valley Regional Transit and the joint development owner of the parking structure will provide periodic roving security personnel to enhance safety and security at the transit center and within the parking structure.

**16. Construction.** As discussed in Section 3.16 of the EA, the proposed project is not expected to result in adverse impacts from construction. Measures to mitigate possible construction effects will begin during final design and will be implemented through the duration of construction. Mitigation measures during construction will include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinate with the building owners and tenants of the structures in the same block to minimize effects of the project construction, such as ensuring access to loading and garbage pick up.
- Traffic mitigation measures during construction will include, but are not limited to:
  - Development of a construction related traffic management plan to minimize traffic impacts during construction
  - Provide information to the public by posting signs directing traffic during construction within the right-of-way. Provide temporary traffic safety control devices and signage for detours or lane closures
  - Provide notice in advance of any lane closures and/or temporary detours
  - Coordinate construction traffic measures with Ada County Highway District
  - Maintain access to existing uses wherever possible.

- Noise - Although construction noise is not expected to result in significant impacts, some simple measures should be employed to minimize the intrusion of construction noise into nearby commercial receiving locations. For example, construction noise could be reduced with properly sized and maintained mufflers, engine intake silencers, engine enclosures, turning off idle equipment. Stationary equipment at active construction areas and especially at any material staging areas near existing buildings should be placed as far away from the potentially sensitive receiving locations as practicable. Where this is infeasible, portable noise barriers should be placed around the equipment with the opening directed away from the sensitive receiving property. These measures are especially effective for engines used in pumps, compressors, welding machines, and similar equipment that operate continuously and contribute to high, steady background noise levels. Substituting hydraulic or electric models for impact tools such as jack hammers, rock drills, and pavement breakers should also be used, where feasible, to reduce construction and demolition noise. Although back-up alarms are important safety devices at construction sites, noises from such devices are among the most annoying sounds from a construction area. Where feasible, equipment operators should drive forward rather than backward to minimize this noise. Another potentially very effective mitigation measure for backup alarm noise would be to equip all vehicles that are required to use backup alarms with ambient-sensing alarms that broadcast a warning sound loud enough to be heard over background noise but without having to use a preset, maximum volume. An even more effective strategy would be to use ambient-sensitive broadband backup alarms instead of typical pure tone alarms. (4) Such alarms have been found to be very effective in reducing annoying noise from construction sites. Finally, noise from material handling could also be minimized by requiring operators to lift rather than drag materials wherever feasible.
- Air Quality - The construction contractors will be required to comply with relevant federal, state and local air quality regulations. They will also implement air quality best management practices (BMPs) during project construction, such as spraying the site to manage dust, prompt cleanup of any transported spill material on public roads by use of street sweepers or other methods, and maintain construction machinery to minimize exhaust emissions.
- When the site has been cleared, conduct an archaeological investigation on the site.
- Prepare a health and safety plan for construction incorporating a work plan for handling any identified hazardous materials on the site.
- Implement the storm water management plan during construction and include specific construction related BMPs to minimize construction related effects.

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(4) Pure tone alarms broadcast sounds primarily in a single frequency that people with normal hearing perceive very well, even at distance from the noise source. In contrast, broadband alarms emit sounds in a large number of frequencies so that the warning noise is highly audible close to the source but may be much less audible at distance from the source.

