

CHAPTER 1: A VISION FOR BOISE CITY

Boise will continue to grow in stature as a world-class city with valued neighborhoods; outstanding natural, scenic, recreational, educational, historical, and cultural amenities; and economic vitality. Boise's growth will happen in a sustainable, efficient, and responsible manner that maintains and enhances its treasured quality of life, while meeting the challenges of the future. Boise is committed to becoming a more sustainable community by taking steps to enhance the local, regional, and global environment. A sustainable community is one where the integrated economic, social, and environmental systems are structured to support healthy, productive, and meaningful lives for its residents, while laying the foundation for a high quality of life without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Boise will be known for:

- Environmental stewardship;
- A predictable development pattern;
- Stable neighborhoods and mixed-use activity centers;
- Being a connected community;
- Being a community that values its culture, education, arts, and history,
- Having a strong, diverse economy; and
- Being a safe, healthy, caring community.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Citizen input provided the basis for the city's 1997 *Comprehensive Plan* and for the generalized vision that guided its development. Based on extensive community input received as part of recent regional planning efforts, such as the Blueprint for Good Growth and Communities in Motion, as well as part of the *Blueprint Boise* process, many of the ideals embedded in the 1997 vision still ring true. Those ideals have been expanded and refined in this updated *Comprehensive Plan* to reflect the changes that Boise City has experienced during the last ten years and those it is likely to face during the next ten to twenty years.

Blueprint Boise Objectives

Four “big picture” objectives were identified to guide the *Blueprint Boise* process:

- Create a clear vision for the future;
- Establish a strong linkage between land use, transportation, and urban design;
- Provide clear guidance at the planning-area level; and
- Synchronize regulations with the community's vision.

An explanation of each objective is provided below.

Create a clear vision for the future

Although many of the vision, concepts and policies contained in the city's 1997 plan remain valid today, newer concepts (e.g., transit-oriented development, mixed-use activity centers) introduced by recent regional planning efforts highlighted the need for Boise City to clearly define how regional policies would play out at a local level from a community vision, policy, and regulatory standpoint. In addition to unifying local and regional planning efforts, the *Blueprint Boise* process was also tasked with reinforcing the concept of Boise as a unified community in itself and defining a clear vision for the city's future, both of which play a key role in helping to preserve the quality of life that residents value.

Establish a strong linkage between land use, transportation, the environment, and urban design

The need to define a more integrated approach to land use and transportation was a major objective

of the *Blueprint Boise* process. As with the vision, significant momentum had been established with regional efforts; however, additional work was needed to translate regional land use and transportation concepts, such as mixed-use activity centers and transit corridors, to Boise specifically. Because Boise City streets fall under the jurisdiction of the Ada County Highway District (ACHD), close coordination was and will continue to be required. To help address these and other issues, ACHD developed a plan for the implementation of the *Blueprint for Good Growth* effort entitled the *Transportation and Livable Streets Design Guide* (LSDG). Coordination with ACHD on LSDG occurred throughout the *Blueprint Boise* process and a foundation established for the two plans to work in unison once complete.

Boise City residents clearly value the livability and character of their community. While a strong emphasis has been placed in recent years on the design and character of the urban fabric within Downtown, the role of urban design in other areas of the community has been less clear. The importance of linking urban design with *Blueprint Boise* planning efforts was raised within the context of ensuring future growth is supportive of mass transit (e.g., density in appropriate locations, pedestrian-oriented design, public spaces) as well as a means of ensuring that future infill is viewed as a positive rather than a negative change within the city's existing fabric.

Provide clear guidance at the planning-area level

Although the role of the *Comprehensive Plan* is primarily to address citywide planning issues, it sometimes can be challenging to reassure neighborhoods about the impacts—or lack thereof—of citywide policies on their area of the city. To help increase the level of predictability for Boiseans about the potential for future changes in their “backyards” and steer the development community to areas where future development activity may be most desirable, the *Blueprint Boise* process was designed to proactively seek feedback from residents in different planning areas. Feedback received as a result of this targeted outreach strategy was used to develop the more detailed policies for each planning area contained in Chapter 4. Although each planning area is distinct in its character and specific issues, planning area policies are clearly linked to the citywide vision and policies contained in Chapter 2.

Synchronize regulations with the community's vision

The city's limited set of land use tools has led to uncertainty for both neighborhood residents and the development community and often resulted in unwarranted controversy for projects that were supported by the 1997 *Comprehensive Plan*.

In order to make sure the city had the right tools in place to implement its new *Comprehensive Plan*, Boise City committed to take on an update of its Development Code concurrently. This ambitious effort demonstrates Boise's strong commitment to the implementation of the community's vision and the overall health of the region.

State Requirements

In addition to this introduction, the *Comprehensive Plan* is organized into four chapters that address the 13 elements mandated by Section 67-6508 of the *Idaho State Code*. Table 1 on the following page identifies chapter locations for each state-mandated element. Many of the elements are addressed to some degree in multiple locations throughout the plan. Table 1 on the following page identifies locations within the plan where each element is most directly addressed.

TABLE 1: LOCATION OF REQUIRED ELEMENTS IN THIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive Plan Elements Required by Section 67-6508 of the Idaho State Code	Chapter 2: Vision and Policies							Chapter 3: Community Structure and Design	Chapter 4: Planning Area Policies	Chapter 5: Action Plan	Appendix A: Plans and Property Rights	Appendix B: Glossary of Comprehensive Plan Terms	Appendix C: Areas of Stability and Change Maps
	#1: Environmental Stewardship	#2: A Predictable Development Pattern	#3: Stable Neighborhoods and Mixed-use Activity Centers	#4: A Connected Community	#5: A Community That Values its Culture, Education, Arts, and History	#6: A Strong, Diverse Economy	#7: A Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community						
Land Use		•	•					•	•				•
School Facilities				•	•								
Agriculture	•		•										
Population		•											
Transportation				•				•	•				
Housing	•		•			•							
Economic Development						•							
Recreation				•	•		•						
Natural Resources	•												
Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities	•	•		•			•						
Natural Hazards							•						
Hazardous Areas							•						
Growth Management (optional)		•	•	•									
Community Design	•		•		•			•	•				
Special Areas or Sites									•				•
Property Rights											•		
Implementation										•			

Blueprint Boise Process

Extensive public outreach was conducted as part of the *Blueprint Boise* process. Outreach efforts focused at several levels to ensure different geographic areas of the community and different interest groups were represented, as well. In addition to feedback received during the many community meetings and from the project website, the following groups met regularly with the project team:

Committee of Champions

A Committee of Champions was appointed by the Mayor and endorsed by the City Council to serve as a sounding board for the planning team throughout the development of the plan—reviewing draft work products and providing strategic direction to the process. The Committee included a diverse group of community leaders with the proven ability to provide strategic direction and leadership in their particular area of expertise. Committee members

provided representation in the areas of health care, education, real estate, neighborhoods, development, engineering, and many others.



A Neighborhood Council helped shape the Comprehensive Plan during numerous workshops held as part of the planning process.

Neighborhood Council

A Neighborhood Council was established to review draft work products and provide feedback on issues specific to each of the city's eleven planning areas. The Council was composed of neighborhood representatives in each planning area. Materials for Neighborhood Council meetings were tailored to each planning area to allow for focused input. In addition, planners from Planning and Development Services were appointed to each Planning Area to work directly with residents and neighborhood representatives. Materials provided at meetings were also made available to neighborhood groups that wished to seek input and have discussions with other residents in their neighborhood outside of the Council meetings.

Ordinance Review Committee

An Ordinance Review Committee (ORC) was established to provide targeted input on the Development Code update portion of the *Blueprint Boise* process. The ORC consists of 28 members representing a cross-section of professionals who use the code on a regular basis, such as architects, engineers, developers, and surveyors, as well as representatives at the neighborhood level, Boise City staff, and elected officials. During the *Comprehensive Plan* process, the ORC met as often as bi-monthly and focused primarily on the reorganization of the existing code. The group will also play a key role in the *Blueprint Boise* process by providing feedback on substantive updates to the reorganized code that will be needed to implement many of the concepts in this *Comprehensive Plan*.

Planning and Zoning Commission/ City Council Study Sessions

Joint and individual study sessions with the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission were held at key points during the process. Sessions were used by the project team to provide progress updates, present preliminary findings and alternative solutions, and to seek policy and regulatory direction.

Project updates, meeting announcements and results, interim work products, and on-line surveys and other input tools were also posted on the city's website for those not able to attend meetings.

Relationship to the Boise City Zoning Ordinance

Section 67-6511 of the *Idaho State Code* states that "zoning districts shall be in accordance with the adopted plan."

Since the principal method for the implementation of the *Comprehensive Plan* is the city's Zoning Ordinance, the term "in accordance with" is defined as follows:

A development approved or undertaken shall be in accordance with the *Comprehensive Plan* if the land uses, densities or intensities, capacity or size, timing, and other aspects of the development are compatible with and further the goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the *Comprehensive Plan* as it existed on the date of the application to the City.

Relationship to Ada County Planning Processes

Over the last twenty years, Ada County has adopted the Boise City *Comprehensive Plan* to apply to lands outside the Boise city limits but within the Area of City Impact (AOCI). The AOCI is an area where the city expects to annex, and its creation is governed by the provisions of Idaho Code 67-6528. Boise City and Ada County have a mutually adopted agreement on the administration of land use decisions with the AOCI. In addition to the application of the Boise City *Comprehensive Plan* to land use decisions, other important provisions include a requirement that development adjacent to city limits must first request annexation to Boise City, the imposition of police, fire and park impact fees, and the processes for mutual amendments to the city and county *comprehensive plans* and zoning ordinances.

With an AOCI, land use authority is still retained by Ada County. Boise City will recommend the county apply whichever existing zoning standards and reasonable conditions that the county has at its disposal to most closely match the intent of the Boise City *Comprehensive Plan*. The City of Boise operates and maintains a public sewer system both inside and outside the Boise City Limits. Boise City desires to use existing sewer to the greatest extent possible while minimizing the expense of new pipeline construction. To that end, when development is proposed within the Area of City Impact, Boise City will require a recommendation of approval by the Boise City Council and confirmation of the County adopting the Boise City Council's recommended conditions of approval prior to approval of sewer extension within the impact area. The Boise City Council recommendation is based on compliance of the proposal with the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The city will also work with Ada County in an effort to develop complementary implementing ordinances. Annual city reviews of the *Comprehensive Plan* shall evaluate goals and policies in light of any newly adopted County or regional plans or studies and the city will seek to amend the *Comprehensive Plan* as appropriate to remain consistent with those studies.

In 2008 the *Blueprint for Good Growth* Consortium of local elected officials adopted a standardized process to guide the expansion of areas of city impact. The primary goal is to ensure that cities expand only when appropriate levels of urban services are planned and/or provided within a reasonable time.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The *Comprehensive Plan* text and map may be amended as provided by Section 67-6509 of the Idaho Code and the *Boise City Zoning Ordinance*. No amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan* shall be recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission or approved by the Mayor and City Council unless such an amendment is internally consistent with the other components of the *Comprehensive Plan*, including the Land Use Map and the goals, objectives and policies of the plan, or the amendment is also designed to change goals, objectives, and policies of the plan in such a way as to maintain internal consistency.

Any amendment proposed that is inconsistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* shall include proposed additions, revisions, or deletions to the *Comprehensive Plan*. The Planning and Zoning Commission may recommend map amendments to the plan to the Mayor and City Council not more frequently than every six months.

Plan Amendment Criteria

A plan amendment may be approved if the City Council makes the following specific findings:

- ❑ That the amendment is required for the public convenience or necessity, or for the general welfare of the community; and
- ❑ That the amendment is necessary to address changes in conditions within the community that have occurred since the *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted; or is necessary to correct one or more deficiencies that exist in the Plan;
- ❑ That the amendment is in compliance with and will further the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan; and
- ❑ That the amendment will not create inconsistencies between the goals, objectives and policies within or between any chapter of the Plan; and
- ❑ That the amendment will not place an undue burden on transportation or other public facilities in the planning area, and does not adversely impact the delivery of services by any political subdivision providing services.

Monitoring the *Comprehensive Plan*

The *Comprehensive Plan* should be reviewed annually and revised as necessary to reflect the availability of new implementation tools, changes in state and federal law, changes in funding sources, and the results of monitoring the effectiveness of existing policies and the impacts of past decisions. In addition to reporting on the above elements, the annual review process should include a component addressing the progress of other plans and studies that are related to the *Comprehensive Plan*. In concert with the city's Planning and Zoning Commission, the Planning and Development Services Department shall report annually to the council on the status of the plan and progress made in its implementation. Annual reviews of the *Comprehensive Plan* should include an element detailing activities associated with updates to the Zoning Ordinance. The Housing Element must be reviewed every year as required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in conjunction with the update of the Consolidated Housing Plan and revised as necessary to reflect new conditions, shifting local attitudes, and technological advances.

Plan Organization and Administration

Following this introduction, there are four chapters that constitute this plan as follows:

- **Chapter 2: Citywide Vision and Policies** – outlines the city's vision for the future through seven themes with corresponding principles, goals, and policies.
- **Chapter 3: Community Structure and Design** – includes the Land Use Map and describes the types of places the community would like to promote. This chapter also includes design principles to guide future development in each of these places.
- **Chapter 4: Planning Area Policies** – includes the future land use, goals, and policies for Boise City's 11 planning areas.
- **Chapter 5: Action Plan** – defines priority actions to facilitate the implementation of this plan over the next one to three years.

In addition to the above chapters, there are three appendices. Appendix A describes property rights applicable to this plan as prescribed by the Fifth Amendment to the *United States Constitution* and State Regulations. Appendix B serves as a glossary of terms used in this *Comprehensive Plan*. Appendix C contains the Area of Change and Stability Maps for all 11 planning areas.

The city's official Land Use Map is available through the Planning and Development Services Department and on the city's website.

A Note About Specificity

As discussed in this chapter, this *Comprehensive Plan* was developed based on input from a wide range of participants over several years. It contains many new policies to reflect this broad input, but also carries forward many policies that were included in the 1997 *Comprehensive Plan* and remain valid today. As a result, the reader may notice that policies vary, sometimes significantly, in their level of specificity. This variation is intentional—it reflects the many voices that have helped shape this plan, highlights particular areas of focus for the community where additional specificity was needed, and reinforces the ongoing evolution of the city's growth and policy direction.

INTRODUCTION



The Boise Airport Terminal, 2015, is a major element of the region's economy. The passenger terminal complex, completed in 2005, consists of three primary components—the main terminal, one connected concourse, and an integrated ground load concourse—with a total area of approximately 418,000 square feet and 22 aircraft gates in all.