



COMMUNITY PLANNING:  
**Transportation  
Mobility**

WOOD  
RIVER  
LAND  
TRUST



## Regional Coordination

In addition to the Blaine County government and the five cities therein, community partners in transportation mobility include:

Blaine County  
Recreation District

Blaine County Regional  
Transportation Committee

Blaine County School District

Environmental Resource  
Center (ERC)

Idaho Transportation  
Department (ITD), including  
its subsets like the Office  
of Highway Safety

Mountain Rides  
Transportation Authority

The Senior Connection

Sun Valley Resort

## Baseline Characteristics:

### TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY

Though classified as a minor arterial,<sup>1</sup> State Highway 75 represents the north-south spine of Blaine County and is by far its busiest roadway.<sup>2</sup> To the south– SH75 connects with US Highway 93 in rural Lincoln County,<sup>3</sup> then to the nearest metropolitan area and the region's largest city, Twin Falls.<sup>4</sup> The 116-mile stretch of SH75– between Shoshone and Stanley, to the north in Custer County– is federally designated as the Sawtooth Scenic Byway for its cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities.<sup>5</sup> Local zoning aims to protect the qualities of the byway by prohibiting billboards, limiting commercial development beyond the cities, preserving hillside open space, and managing landscape features within the County's Scenic Highway Overlay District.<sup>6</sup>

As SH75 moves through the Wood River Valley, it doubles as Main Street for the Bellevue, Hailey and Ketchum downtown cores. At points SH75 is just two lanes, although it repeatedly swells to five. While the speed limit is posted at 25 MPH in the downtown sections, the majority of the corridor is posted at 55 MPH and subject to a higher design speed.<sup>7,8</sup> Crossing Main Street in Hailey at Croy Street means crossing more than 60 feet of pavement. In Bellevue at Broadford Road, it means crossing more than 80 feet of pavement. Wider roads are known to compromise safety, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists, because wider lanes and roads accommodate higher vehicle speeds<sup>9</sup> and lower visibility/sight distance.<sup>10</sup> The descriptor “stroads” draws attention to the safety issues associated with multi-lane arterials like Blaine County's Main Streets on SH75.<sup>11</sup> Aside from bus pull-outs and a forthcoming Park n' Ride mid-valley, there is no other infrastructure on SH75 designed to give transit or high-occupancy vehicles an advantage over cars.<sup>12,13</sup>

Travel behavior patterns on State Highway 75 are seasonal, peaking annually in July as tourists and summer contractors<sup>14</sup> take to the roads. Average daily traffic (ADT) counts on State Highway 75 peaked in July 2021 with an average of roughly 21,400 vehicle trips per day.<sup>15</sup> Tallies have generally stayed above pre-pandemic levels since, with some 20,300 average daily trips in July 2023 and no fewer than 12,600 daily trips in all other months.<sup>16</sup>

Regionally, jobs are concentrated in the Wood River Valley—places where housing costs are traditionally highest.<sup>17</sup> The employment hubs in the Wood River Valley attract commuters from across the county and well outside it, spanning southern-central Idaho.<sup>18</sup> In 2021, 34.8% of workers in Blaine County traveled 50 miles or more to their jobs, whereas 34.3% of workers traveled less than 10 miles to their jobs.<sup>19</sup> The remaining 30.9% of commuters traveled an average distance between 10 to 50 miles to their jobs– with 24.5% commuting between 10 and 24 miles, and 6.4% traveling between 25 and 50 miles to their jobs.<sup>20</sup>

Increasing rates of vehicle trips exacerbate regional issues and counter Blaine County's goals for a “multimodal” transportation system.<sup>21</sup> Transportation was the county's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in 2018, contributing 40% of all carbon dioxide.<sup>22</sup> And, crash data ending in 2021 shows a “concerning trend” on State Highway 75, the valley's main spine, according to ITD.<sup>23</sup> From 2018 to 2022, drivers reported 1,581 total crashes in Blaine County; 27 were fatal and 53 resulted in serious injuries.<sup>24</sup> Of those crashes, more than one in five involved wildlife and 45% occurred on state roads.<sup>25</sup> Vehicle trips not only have high safety and environmental costs, they are also materially expensive. Various levels of government are exploring mechanisms to recoup the costs that vehicles impose on roadway preservation and maintenance, by vehicle miles traveled and weight classifications.<sup>26,27</sup>

Mountain Rides Transportation Authority, the local transit agency provides fixed-route bus, demand-response paratransit and non-emergency medical transportation, plus vanpool services. Such transit services increase community mobility options, providing alternatives to vehicle travel. After a dip during the pandemic, transit ridership has continued



Mountain Rides' Transit Services<sup>38</sup>

to grow. Most notably, the north-south Valley Route, the principal commuter service between Bellevue and Sun Valley, has seen massive year-over-year gains in recent years. Over the course of 2023, the route clocked over 340,000 rides on the Valley Route—about double the number in 2021.<sup>28</sup> Mountain Rides is currently integrating battery electric buses into its fleet, which significantly cut fuel costs and greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>29</sup> In November 2023, more than 90% of Mountain Rides miles were traveled by electric buses, resulting in an 89% drop in emissions. The transportation authority aims to open a new battery electric bus facility in 2025 to support its fleet.

Mobility options that provide alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips align with locally shared goals and policy statements that call for a safe and connected multimodal network.<sup>30</sup> Such goals emphasize providing infrastructure for active transportation modes, as well as end goals that support road safety and reduce travel times for commuters on SH75.<sup>31</sup>



Wood River Trail<sup>53</sup>

Stretching 20 miles from Bellevue to Ketchum, the Wood River Trail— a two-lane “rail-to-trail” paved path<sup>32</sup>— offers a major amenity for recreationists and commuters alike.<sup>33</sup> Commonly called the “bike path” in the summer, the BCRD maintains the trail as a groomed Nordic facility in the winter. Active transportation infrastructure throughout the cities and downtown cores connect to the WRT.<sup>34</sup> Example facilities include rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB), bulb-out curbs, in-street pedestrian crossing signs, shared-use paths, bicycle lanes and tracks, sidewalks, ADA curb ramps, and more.<sup>35</sup> The Blaine County Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan— published in 2014,<sup>36</sup> then updated in 2016 and 2024— guides bike and pedestrian development across Blaine County.<sup>37</sup>

## Planning for Mobility

Community design shapes a community’s travel behavior patterns. In turn, the characteristics of a transportation network— including the types of infrastructure and transit services available— influence ongoing land uses and planning. Where people live, work and how they travel in between the two— in addition to other locations— make up travel behavior patterns. Land use and transportation planning are interrelated— just as development patterns affect roadway designs, roadway designs shape travel behavior and the social process of land use planning.<sup>39</sup>

Automobile dependency for everyday basic needs is reflected in land use planning with segmented, single-use zoning districts; long high-speed road segments; disconnected neighborhoods; and sprawled<sup>40</sup> development. Longer distances between basic needs and differing land uses incentivize vehicle travel.<sup>41</sup> By design, transportation networks that lack facilities for walking and bicycling compromise vulnerable road users.<sup>42,43</sup>

Transportation agencies across the United States have historically, and conventionally, relied on travel demand forecasting tools to re-engineer roads that increase vehicle throughput to increase roadway “capacity.”<sup>44</sup> Yet, case studies from around the country and world demonstrate that expanding roadways to increase “traffic throughput” is only found to temporarily relieve congestion and in the long-term “induce[s] demand.”<sup>45</sup> Planning for car traffic begets car traffic— negatively impacting road safety, community health and access to basic needs.<sup>46</sup>

Multimodal streets are more spatially efficient than those designed for private vehicle travel, they accommodate more people per square foot.<sup>47,48</sup> “Repurposing street space” and measuring throughput or capacity by people, rather than by vehicles, presents a paradigm shift with mobility benefits.<sup>49</sup> Mobility— the right and act of moving— hinges on accessible design for all people. In order for people of different ages, abilities and means to access everyday basic needs, a transportation network needs to be safe, convenient and connected by design.<sup>50</sup> Beyond the design of a street or roadway, planning for mixed land uses and density in key places<sup>51</sup>— for example, alongside transit corridors— shortens trips and increases access to network facilities. Planning for mobility relies on the 3D’s of land use planning: density, diversity and design.<sup>52</sup>

# Shared Goals

## PROCESS

Recognizing the significant overlap in Comprehensive Plan policy statements from Blaine County and its cities– Carey, Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley– the Wood River Land Trust scoped the Community Planning program and its action plan objectives (Chapter 3) to stem from goals shared between three or more municipalities. This Chapter 2: Shared Goals presents shared goals backed by Comprehensive Plan policy statements, as displayed in the following tables. Furthermore, the following tables present aspirational ideals meant to house and guide shared goals.

## POLICY BACKING

For each focus area, see the policy statements that support the shared goal. From the Land Trust’s perspective, shared goals in each focus area work towards the following set of ideals.



## TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY

**IDEAL:** A multi-modal transportation network increases land use efficiency, connectivity, and mode choice in Blaine County.

SHARED GOALS	SUPPORTING POLICIES
<p><b>T.1 - Leverage land-use decisions to reduce automobile dependency and single-occupancy vehicle travel.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Blaine County</a> - Chapter 1: Transportation, Policy Statements A-2, A-4, A-5, A-7, B-2, B-3, C-6, E-3, E-4, E-5. Chapter 2: Housing - Policy Statement A-5; Chapter 6: Public Services, Facilities and Utilities, Health and Social Services Policy Statement, C-18. School Facilities and Transportation, C-19; Chapter 8: Land Use, Policy Statement C-13.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Carey</a> - Transportation System, Desirable Goal 1. Economic Development, Desirable Goal 1.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Bellevue</a> - Chapter 3: School Facilities and Transportation, Goal 1, Objectives 1, 3. Chapter 9: Transportation, Goal 1, Objectives 3, 4, 5. Chapter 12: Housing, Goal 1, Objective 1.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Hailey</a> - Section 5: Land Use, Population and Growth Management, Goals 5.1, 5.2, 5.5. Section 13: School Facilities and Transportation, Goal 13.1.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Ketchum</a> - Chapter 7: Mobility, Goal M-1, Policies M-1.1, 1.3. Goal M-2, Policies M-2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.8. Goal M-6, Policy 6.3; Goal M-8, Policies M-8.3, 8.4, 8.5.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Sun Valley</a> - Principle I, Goal 3, Objective 3.1. Principle II, Goal 5, Objective 5.3.</p>
<p><b>T.2 - Enhance the Main Street corridors for the safety and enjoyment of all road users, especially pedestrians and commuters.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Blaine County</a> - Chapter 1: Transportation, Policy Statements A-10, C-1, C-3, E-6, E-7.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Carey</a> - Transportation System, Objective 7.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Bellevue</a> - Chapter 7: Hazardous Areas, Goal 2, Objective 5. Chapter 9: Transportation, Goal 1, Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Chapter 13: Community Design, Goal 1, Objective 2.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Ketchum</a> - Chapter 7: Mobility, Goal M-1, Policies M-1.2. Goal M-4, Policies M-4.1. Goal M-7, Policy M-7.1.</p>
<p><b>T.3 - Promote active and public transportation options for residents and visitors.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Blaine County</a> - Chapter 1: Transportation, Policy Statements A-2, A-4, A-6, A-7, A-11, B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, D-2, E-1, E-3, E-4, E-5, E-7. Chapter 3: Recreation, Policy Statements E-2, E-3, E-5, E-7, E-9. Chapter 7: Economic Development, Policy Statements C-11.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Bellevue</a> - Chapter 3: School Facilities and Transportation, Goal 1, Objectives 1, 3. Chapter 7: Hazardous Areas, Goal 2, Objective 5. Chapter 9: Transportation, Goal 1, Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Chapter 10: Recreation, Goal 1, Objectives 5. Chapter 13: Community Design, Goal 1, Objective 2.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Hailey</a> - Section 10: Transportation, Goal 10.1. Section 13: School Facilities and Transportation, Goal 13.2.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Ketchum</a> - Chapter 1: Community Vision and Core Values 10. Chapter 7: Mobility, Goal M-1, Policies M-1.3. Goal M-2, Policies M-2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8. Goal M-4, Policies M-4.1. Goal M-5, Policies M-5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4. Goal M-6, Policies M-6.1, 6.2, 6.3. Goal M-7, Policy M-7.2. Goal M-8, Policies M-8.1, 8.2. Chapter 10: Community Health and Wellness, Goal CHW-4, Policies CHW-4.1, 4.2.</p> <p><a href="#">City of Sun Valley</a> - Principle II, Goal 7, Objectives 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4. Principle III, Goal 8, Objectives 8.4.</p>

# Action Plan

## OBJECTIVES

For each focus area and shared goal, see a subset of high-level objectives. The objectives are intended to be broad, so that they offer flexibility in implementation. The following Implementation section provides information about how the objectives will be prioritized over time.

## APPROACHES

In shaping the scope and objectives of the Community Planning program at the Land Trust, the leaders in local government identified five approaches through which they welcome our support and partnership. Every objective adopts one of the following approaches:



### ENGAGE:

Centering the community, the “engage” approach describes how the Land Trust will listen to, share information with, and involve stakeholders in land use planning. On various levels and through a mix of mediums, we will facilitate and host conversations about how to steward a more livable future for the people and wildlife of Blaine County.



### EVALUATE:

The “evaluate” approach prioritizes access to up-to-date information. Reliable and relevant data is necessary to respond to the community’s concerns, inform planning decisions, and prioritize solutions. Importantly, accurate information can also help build consensus. We see where there are gaps in knowledge and understanding, then collaborate with partners to investigate the dynamics behind community needs and potential solutions.



### EDUCATE:

When community issues or needs arise, they generally stem from a complex combination of factors. Ecological, hydrologic, geographic, economic and social trends influence the baseline characteristics of the Community Planning focus areas– summed up in our lived experience. Education supports us to understand the complexity of our lived experience, including the challenges we need to resolve and the solutions that support our shared goals.



### ENCOURAGE:

The Land Trust recognizes the remarkable alignment between its vision for conservation and the shared goals of our leading partners, in local government. All the while, the Land Trust understands the pressures of competing priorities and developmental markets that threaten to compromise the bountiful environment and quality of life that the local community cherishes. The Land Trust is prepared to encourage its partners to act in alignment with our core values, when it’s most important to do so.



### COORDINATE:

When the community needs a leader to address a community need or problem, the Land Trust is poised to coordinate solutions. Coordination involves going between people and groups to organize deliberation, resolution and action. Being flexible– plus overseeing a service area that is regional, not just local– the Land Trust is well positioned to work up and down the valley, between jurisdictions. Coordination is needed to coexist and make efficient use of resources.

## TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY

Ideal: A multi-modal transportation network increases land use efficiency, connectivity and mode choice in Blaine County.

SHARED GOALS	OBJECTIVES
<b>T.1 - Leverage land-use decisions to reduce automobile dependency and single-occupancy vehicle travel.</b>	T.1.a - Evaluate how much land in the cities is designated for passenger vehicle parking.
	T.1.b - Educate the community about the relationship between land use patterns and travel behavior.
	T.1.c - Educate partners about the mechanisms and potential of transit oriented design and development.
	T.1.d - Encourage increased and improved access to transit services, i.e. first/last-mile solutions.
<b>T.2 - Enhance the State Highway 75 and Main Street corridors for the safety and enjoyment of all road users, especially pedestrians and commuters.</b>	T.2.a - Engage the public in the large infrastructure projects slated for State Highway 75, along the rural and the downtown sections.
	T.2.b - Evaluate measures to decrease the number of wildlife vehicle collisions on State Highway 75.
	T.2.c - Educate the community about context-sensitive transportation design.
	T.2.d - Encourage infrastructure that increases mobility options and improves road safety on State Highway 75.
<b>T.3 - Promote active and public transportation options for residents and visitors.</b>	T.3.a - Engage the City governments to become designated as Bicycle Friendly Communities through the League of American Bicyclists.
	T.3.b - Engage the community in mode shift, as well as in the public processes behind transit service design and active transportation network decisions.
	T.3.c - Evaluate travel behavior patterns, including the origins and destinations of commuter trips on State Highway 75.
	T.3.d - Encourage an initiative to guarantee funding for transit services.
	T.3.e - Encourage mobility options for older adults and people with disabilities. Especially door-to-door and on-demand services.
	T.3.f - Coordinate the provision, monitoring, and sharing of transportation data across the County.



# WOOD RIVER LAND TRUST



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to view the  
full report**



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