

Elmore County – Policy Brief

Integration into the COMPASS Regional Transportation Model

Purpose

Elmore County seeks to join the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) for regional transportation model. This action will align the County with Treasure Valley transportation planning, improve coordination across jurisdictions, support development review, and enhance access to state and federal funding.

Why This Matters

- Growth Pressures: Development along the I-84 corridor demands coordinated planning.
 - Consistency: Ensures Elmore County projects and forecasts are part of regional analyses.
 - Funding Leverage: Strengthens eligibility for regional, state, and federal transportation funding.
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Key Stakeholders

- Elmore County – Land use authority and local lead
 - City of Mountain Home – Land use authority and County seat
 - COMPASS – Regional modeling lead
 - Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) – I-84 & state highways oversight
 - Mountain Home Highway District (MHHD) – One of the roadway jurisdictions serving the Western Elmore County
 - Ada County Highway District (ACHD) – Regional roadway coordination with Ada County
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Proposed Approach

1. Joint Letter of Request for boundary expansion to the COMPASS Board of Directors.
 2. Develop/Amend Joint Powers Agreement to include a portion of Elmore County
 3. MOU Development – Define roles, responsibilities, and data-sharing.
 4. Data Integration – Share land use, zoning, roadway, and growth data.
 5. Model Expansion – Extend COMPASS travel demand model to Elmore County.
 6. Funding Commitment – Explore dues/cost-sharing consistent with COMPASS members.
 7. Regional Participation – Join COMPASS committees; ensure inclusion in *Communities in Motion* (long-range plan).
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Next Steps

- Authorize staff to open discussions with COMPASS.
 - Assign County staff liaison.
 - Engage ITD, City of Mountain Home, MHHD, and ACHD in coordination.
 - Identify potential budget allocations to support membership and modeling.
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Recommendation

Elmore County should proceed with a “Letter of Request” to COMPASS Board. Integrate into the regional transportation model will enhance planning capacity, improve regional coordination, and position the County for greater funding opportunities in urbanized areas throughout the County.

 ***Prepared for the Elmore County Board of Commissioners – 9/9/2025***

MEMORANDUM

TO: Elmore County Board of Commissioners

FROM: [Your Name / Department]

DATE: [Insert Date]

SUBJECT: Framework for Integrating Elmore County into COMPASS Regional Transportation Model System

Background

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Ada, Boise and Canyon Counties. COMPASS maintains and operates the regional travel demand model that supports transportation planning, forecasting, project prioritization, and enhance federal funding eligibility.

As Elmore County continues to experience growth and increasing travel demand, particularly along the I-84 corridor—regional coordination has become essential. Integrating urbanizing areas of Elmore County into the COMPASS transportation model system will provide Elmore County with access to the same forecasting tools and planning resources available to other jurisdictions in the Treasure Valley, ensuring consistency in project evaluation and long-range planning.

Objectives

- Establish a cooperative framework for integrating Elmore County into the COMPASS regional transportation model system.
- Ensure Elmore County's growth forecasts, land use patterns, and roadway projects are integrated into regional planning analyses.
- Position Elmore County to access regional transportation funding and participate in coordinated long-range planning processes.

Stakeholders

Successful implementation of this plan will require coordination with:

- **Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)** – oversight of the state highway system, including I-84 and regional connectivity.
 - **City of Mountain Home** – County Seat
 - **Mountain Home Highway District** – primary local roadway jurisdiction within Elmore County.
 - **Ada County Highway District (ACHD)** – regional roadway coordination in Ada County, particularly for cross-county travel demand impacts.
 - **COMPASS** – MPO and technical lead for regional travel demand modeling.
 - **Elmore County** – land use authority and local project sponsor.
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Proposed Plan

1. Request for Formal Agreement and Joint Powers Agreement

- Develop and execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Elmore County and COMPASS outlining roles, responsibilities, and data-sharing protocols, with stakeholder consultation from ITD, City of Mountain Home, Mountain Home Highway District, and ACHD.

2. Data Integration

- Provide COMPASS with Elmore County's most current land use data, zoning, roadway inventories, and development forecasts.
- Coordinate with ITD and the highway districts to ensure roadway and traffic data is current.

3. Model Calibration and Expansion

- COMPASS will expand its existing travel demand model to include Elmore County geography, generally the active development areas in the western county region, roadway networks, and trip generation characteristics.
- Joint technical workshops will be held with ITD, Mountain Home Highway District, and ACHD to validate model assumptions.

4. Funding and Resource Commitment

- Explore cost-sharing options for model expansion and maintenance.

- Consider annual dues or project-specific contributions consistent with COMPASS' existing member structure.

5. Planning Coordination

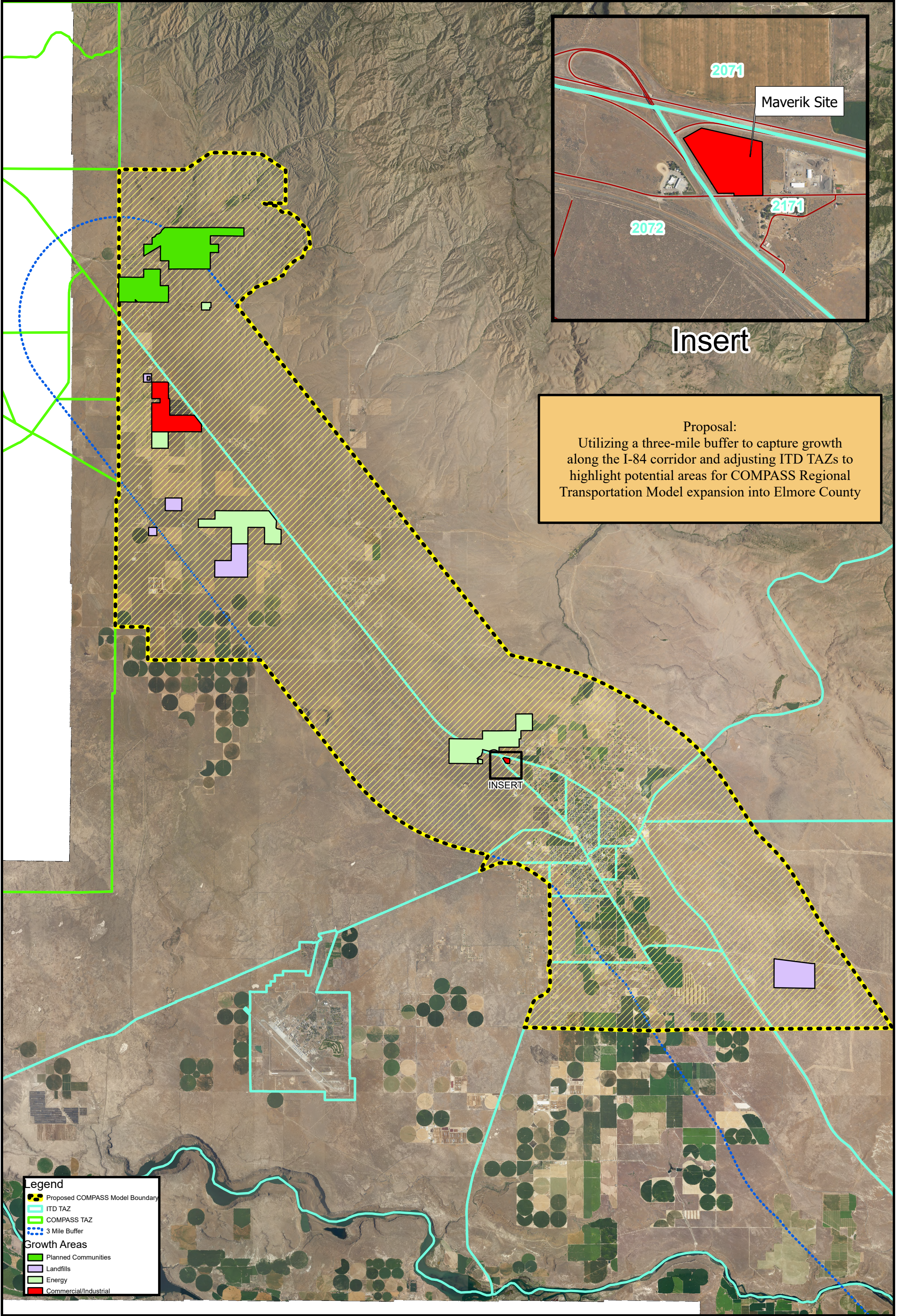
- Ensure Elmore County is included in regional long-range transportation plans (e.g., Communities in Motion).
- Formalize Elmore County participation in COMPASS technical and policy committees, with coordination among ITD, Mountain Home Highway District, and ACHD.

Next Steps

- Authorize staff to initiate discussions with COMPASS leadership regarding an MOU or an amendment to an existing MOU if one already exists.
- Assign a county staff liaison to coordinate technical and policy input.
- Engage ITD, Mountain Home Highway District, and ACHD in preliminary coordination meetings.
- Identify potential budget allocations to support COMPASS membership and model expansion activities.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board approve moving forward with the initiation of a cooperative agreement with COMPASS, with the goal of integrating Elmore County, generally the active development areas in the western county region, into the regional transportation model system. This action will provide Elmore County with enhanced planning capabilities, improved regional coordination, and greater access to state and federal transportation funding opportunities.



Proposed COMPASS Regional Transportation Model Expansion in Elmore County

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