

1. 2025 Growth Scenario

The 2025 Growth Scenario and the resulting land-use plan envisions an increase of 4.8 million square feet of office space, 500,000 square feet of retail space, and 4,300 additional housing units throughout downtown Boise in the next 20 years. These increases, combined with the other recommendations of the Transportation System Plan, will help define downtown Boise as the foremost urban center for business, government, culture, education, and urban living in the region. The next section of this report describes the land-use districts found in downtown Boise, identifies major opportunity sites for development, and suggests ways to achieve this preferred level of growth.

1.1 Growth Areas Map

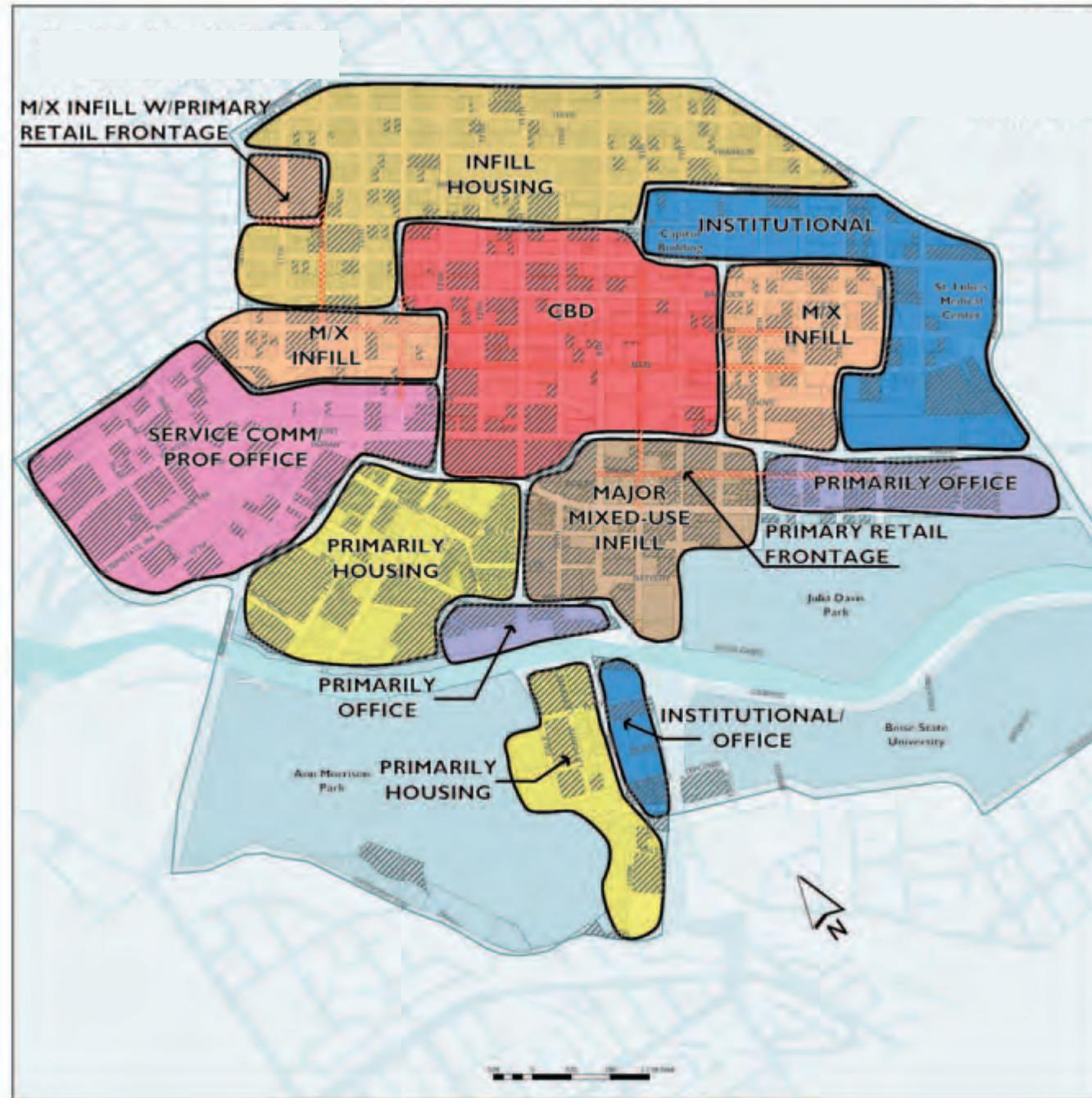
Figure 1.1, Land-use Growth Areas map, shows the pattern of districts, defined by primary uses, and the opportunity sites that describe the downtown-wide growth predicted in the market study will be allocated. Existing land-use and zoning regulations will determine the development capacity for each opportunity site, and some opportunity sites may take longer than the 20-year horizon of this study to develop.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AREA

The Central Business District area—defined roughly as bordered by State Street, 5th Street, Front Street, and 13th Street—is predicted to continue as the major downtown employment center. This area has the potential for limited housing development, but the identified opportunity sites will most likely tend towards medium- to high-density office development, with complementary retail and entertainment uses as well.

MAJOR MIXED-USE INFILL AREA

The area just south of the CBD—bordered by Front Street, 5th Street, River Street, and 11th Street—has a number of large development opportunity sites and the existing Cultural District. This area has a high potential for mixed-use projects (such as the planned Boise Downtown project) with a mix of housing, retail, and office uses or medium-scale housing or office projects with retail along key streets. This area has the potential to develop as a “lifestyle” center, with a mix of housing and retail uses catering to people who find downtown Boise an attractive place to live, work, and shop. This area has the greatest development potential for mixed use.



MIXED-USE INFILL AREAS

The growth areas map identifies three areas as “Mixed-Use Infill.” The land-uses and development intensities anticipated for these three areas are similar.

Eastside Downtown

Jefferson Street, 2nd/3rd Streets, Front Street, and 6th Street define the Eastside Downtown area, just east of the CBD. This area has seen recent mixed-use infill activity—such as the Veltex Building in the Old Boise/Eastside district—and will continue to see medium-density infill of residential, neighborhood-serving retail, restaurants, and small office uses in the future. Old Boise/Eastside is expected to have small-scale, infill projects—a mix of housing and office with some ground floor retail—clustered in the Eastside portion of this sub-area. The size of projects is a function of:

- Many historic buildings that create a smaller-scale fabric.
- Existence of an historic district, which limits development potential.
- Small block and parcel size.
- Vacant land is rare and is often one to two lot intermixed with currently-developed lots.
- There is strong community sentiment about Old Boise/Eastside, which urges protecting it from significant redevelopment and large-scale projects.

Westside Downtown

A second area, Westside Downtown, is centered on the Idaho/Main retail corridor between 13th Street and 18th Street, west of the CBD. Idaho Street and Main Street currently have strong retail activity through the CBD, and it is expected that this activity will spread to the west over time as the surrounding area revitalizes. The scale of development in this area will likely be higher than in the Eastside Area because:

- The mixed condition of existing character
- Available vacant land and surface parking lots
- Uses often occupy half or full blocks
- A number of these blocks are in single ownership
- Very few historic buildings
- No historic districts
- Limited development potential within historic districts such as the newly formed Hays Street District
- No real image or expectation for the preservation of the area’s character by the public.

Mixed-Use Infill

A third area defined as Mixed-use Infill includes the existing Albertsons store and the adjacent shopping center—the area bounded by Franklin Street, 16th Street, State Street, and 18th Street. Redevelopment of these blocks is a long-term possibility. If redeveloped, it will be a good opportunity for retail uses to be combined with housing.

INFILL HOUSING AND PRIMARILY HOUSING EMPHASIS AREAS

Downtown housing is likely to cluster around existing residential uses and areas where land-use policy and/or existing physical conditions are conducive to residential development. Current plans call for an in-town neighborhood taking shape on the Westside and centered around a plaza along 14th Street. Given the historic nature of the Near North End, it is likely that major expansion of housing supply will, appropriately, occur in this part of downtown. Amenities such as neighborhood-serving commercial and recreational uses are important elements for attracting future residential development. The northern quadrant of the growth areas map, labeled “Infill Housing” on the map, has a small number of opportunity sites that will be attractive moderate-density housing sites due to the proximity to the Near North End and the established residential uses in this area. Some recent housing developments in this area, such as Hyde Park Place, demonstrate the potential scale of future development.

The River Street neighborhood is another housing growth area. Recent successful projects, coupled with supportive land-use policies and large-opportunity sites, make this area attractive for moderate- to high-density residential development into the future. Another major focus will be establishing more housing developments in the Westside of Downtown.

Finally, the area on the east side of Ann Morrison Park and near the Boise River has the potential for housing developments that cater to BSU students. Some recent developments in this area give a sense for the likely scale of future developments, and the large footprint opportunity sites make this a prime location for future housing growth in downtown Boise.

INSTITUTIONAL AREAS

Figure 1.1, Land-use Growth Areas map, shows two areas with “Institutional Uses” identified. One area is the north and east side of downtown and includes the State Capitol Mall complex along State and Jefferson Streets, St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center on Avenue B between Jefferson and Main Streets, the Statehouse, various state office buildings, and the new Ada County Courthouse on Front Street. New development in this area is likely to be employment-focused, with some office and a majority of institutional uses.

A second institutional area, along 9th Street, focuses on uses that complement nearby BSU. The potential for change in this area is somewhat limited, but the identified opportunity sites will likely tend towards uses that are focused on either directly-related university functions or related research uses. There will likely be a few strategic opportunities to provide support for commercial retail uses in these areas; care will need to be given in siting them so they can successfully draw clientele from a larger area.

PRIMARILY OFFICE AREAS

Two areas on the map are identified as “Primarily Office.” One of these is bordered by Front Street, Broadway, Myrtle Street, and 5th Street. While part of this area is designated as a “Housing Emphasis Area” in existing policy documents, the current street conditions of Front and Myrtle Streets

are not conducive to housing developments. Given the likelihood of high traffic levels into the future, these conditions are unlikely to change significantly enough to support housing development. While it is conceivable that mixed-use development around Capitol Boulevard could trigger some housing development moving east along Broad Street, it is more likely that the area will develop primarily with office uses within the horizon of this study.

The second office area is an existing cluster of office uses in the River Street neighborhood along the north side of the Boise River. These sites could intensify with infill office uses on existing surface parking lots during the time frame of this study, but large-scale redevelopment of the area is unlikely.

SERVICE COMMERCIAL/PROFESSIONAL OFFICE AREA

Because the market analysis predicts all growth in the next 20 years can be accommodated on existing opportunity sites, the area identified as “Service Commercial/Professional Office” in the Growth Areas map is likely to retain its current character. Although some of the opportunity sites may redevelop—particularly with some of the uses displaced by more intense development in the Westside Downtown area—the character of this district, centered on Fairview Avenue, is likely to remain the same, with a mix of low-density service commercial and professional office uses.

1.2 Land Use Implementation Program

The preferred land-use growth scenario will require concerted implementation efforts in both the near and long terms. In the near-term, efforts should be focused on removing existing barriers to transit- and pedestrian-oriented development. In the long term, efforts should be concentrated on strategic planning, public investment, and efforts to attract appropriate private investment that advance the goals of this study. These efforts can range from design guidelines for specific types of development to detailed opportunity site analysis. The long-term implementation efforts should be oriented around key catalyst sites and areas that will help achieve the elements of the growth scenario that are more aggressive in relation to current market conditions, such as the Westside Downtown Mixed-use Infill Area, primarily housing areas, or development along the Front Street/Myrtle Street corridor. As growth is attracted to downtown, ensuring an available mix of housing types for all income levels is a critical concern.

SHORT-TERM ZONING CHANGES

Some of the prototypes and uses in the Growth Scenario are at odds with existing zoning designations. In other locations, development that is keeping with the goals of the project would be facilitated through the modification of existing standards. Table 1.1, on the following page, provides a detailed list of recommended modifications to existing zoning standards:

Table 1.1 Zoning Changes by Area

Land-use Growth Area	Recommended Change	Notes
Eastside Downtown Mixed-use Infill and Institutional Expansion Area	Create Mixed-use Overlay Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the Eastside area is currently zoned either R-O or C-5. R-O does not allow sufficient intensity within the 35' height limit and 43.5 dwelling unit per acre (du/acre) density limit. A mixed-use zone should allow for building heights up to 55' and 70 du/acre. The 4.0 FAR allowed in the C-5 district for non-residential uses should be applied to residential uses as well.
Westside Downtown Residential and Office Development	Modify Zoning to Allow Residential and Office Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential growth areas are predominantly zoned C-2 with maximum residential density of 43.5 du/acre. Office expansion areas have maximum FAR of 4.0. These intensities are not sufficient to allow new development at levels envisioned in framework plan and Growth Scenario.
Near North End Residential Infill Area	No changes	
River Street/Myrtle Street Primary Residential Area	Revise Parking Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand P-2 and P-3 parking districts to include parts of the River Street/Myrtle Street districts identified as the "Primary Housing Area" in the Growth Scenario. The P-2 District should be expanded to include all areas between 15th Street, River Street, and the existing P-2 District boundaries. The P-3 District should be expanded to include all areas north of the Boise River and west of 9th Street not currently included in the district.
	Develop Alternative to R-O Zone for Housing Emphasis Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The R-O Zone allows only 43.5 du/acre, which does not provide for intensities that support goals and allocation of the Growth Scenario. Revised zoning designation should allow intensities of 70-100 du/acre and include special provisions for infill housing projects that promote walkability, (possibly including setback requirements, height limits, orientation of unit entries to the street, etc.)
BSU/Morrison Park Residential Infill Area	Develop Appropriate Zoning for Housing Emphasis Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R-O zone allows only 43.5 du/acre, which does not provide for intensities that support goals and allocation of the Growth Scenario. A revised zoning designation for the housing emphasis areas should allow intensities of 70-100 du/acre and include special provisions for infill housing projects that promote walkability, (possibly including setback requirements, height limits, orientation of unit entries to the street, etc.). The C-2 zone allows a maximum FAR of 4.0. A revised zoning designation for the office emphasis areas should include a maximum FAR of 7.0 to better support the goals and allocation of the Growth Scenario.

CONDUCT DETAILED CATALYST DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND DEVELOPER REQUESTS FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQS)/REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS (RFPS)

The preferred growth scenario anticipates the development of some residential and mixed-use building types that are either absent or rare in downtown Boise. In order to facilitate development types and intensities recommended in this plan, and to successfully integrate new buildings into the existing context, CCDC should undertake design and feasibility studies on two to three key opportunity sites where it controls the land. These sites should be located in catalyst development areas, such as the Old Boise/Eastside area, the River Street housing emphasis area, or the Westside Downtown Area (although the large-scale change anticipated for the Westside Area in the Framework Plan may be farther off than some other downtown sub-areas).

The sites that are selected should be ready for development in the relatively near term following the completion of the development study, because related market feasibility studies have “limited shelf life” given the dynamics of the real-estate market.

The studies should develop and analyze development prototypes, including use, building and site design, and financial feasibility. The information will not only aid in the development of the specific site but will provide more detailed information regarding barriers to specific

prototype developments. This would allow a more fine-grained definition of development regulations and other measures to facilitate development of desired housing and mixed-use types and densities in the wider area. Some issues that could be addressed in the studies are:

- What mixture of uses will be supported by the existing market?
- Where is mixed-use feasible/infeasible?
- How do the parking provision and parking standards impact the feasibility of development?
- What price or rent levels would be needed to make certain unit types feasible?

The primary goal of the studies would be to provide refined direction for pilot development projects on properties that are controlled by CCDC. Following the completion of a study, CCDC would prepare and issue a Request For Qualifications or Proposal (RFQ or RFP), using the study’s results to provide additional guidance and requirements for the responding developers. The resulting developments would serve as examples and catalysts for further private investment. A secondary outcome of the studies would be an increased understanding of the market conditions and development potential of other downtown opportunity sites.

1.3 Long-Term Strategic Implementation

Beyond the short-term zoning modifications, a number of long-term implementation efforts are needed to support the preferred growth scenario. Existing plans for the downtown area provide a solid foundation that supports the land-use vision of this document. However, there are several key issues to be addressed as part of future planning efforts:

- Existing documents do not present a clear and comprehensive set of implementation steps to move towards a vision.
- There is a need for greater clarity in land-use planning and development regulations.
- Implementation should build from existing strengths around key catalyst uses and opportunity sites in order to focus growth.

The implementation actions listed in this section are intended to address these issues. The agency or agencies that would be primarily responsible for the effort are underlined. Much of the growth will be initiated by the private sector, as market conditions create the basis for investment in the downtown area. However, the public sector has a key role in guiding and, in some cases, leading private initiative to appropriate locations. These actions are only some of the potential steps available, and as growth and change occur over the next 20 years, other efforts will be necessary.

DEVELOP INFILL HOUSING DESIGN GUIDELINES

The adoption of the Hays Street Historic District presents unique issues for infill development in the Study Area. Boise City should use this opportunity to define how new development should relate to the historic character of an area and define possibilities for mixed-use infill in strategic locations. Defining criteria and guidelines will allow new development to be integrated with the existing neighborhood to respect the historic fabric of the community. The infill housing guidelines could also be used in the North End and Old Boise/Eastside historic districts.

EXPAND DESIGN REVIEW GUIDEBOOK TO GUIDE FUTURE GROWTH

The existing design standards and framework plans do not address pedestrian design issues in detail, nor do the standards clearly provide guidance for key design issues for new development. CCDC and Boise City should develop detailed design guidelines and standards to give greater certainty to the creation of a pedestrian-supportive environment in the study area. The guidelines should focus on the relationship of buildings to the street environment, including entryways, articulation, and architectural design features. As mentioned above, these guidelines could be used as model guidelines for other implementation efforts.

DEVELOP SERVICE COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

While large-scale growth and change is not anticipated in the Fairview Service Commercial/Professional Office Area, small-scale improvements with incremental change can make the area more supportive of pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the long term. Boise City should develop guidelines and standards to address barriers to the creation of a pedestrian-supportive environment in the area (such as buffering of surface parking, orienting entries to the sidewalk, pedestrian realm improvements, etc.).

TARGET PUBLIC INVESTMENTS TOWARD IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PEDESTRIAN REALM

Public investments can direct growth and help ensure new development supports the study goals. Boise City, CCDC, ACHD, and ITD should identify and pursue key improvements to the pedestrian realm: bulb-outs; tree/landscape planting and maintenance; expansion of sidewalk widths; and provision of benches, pedestrian lighting, and other streetscape improvements throughout downtown Boise. Improvements identified in framework master plans form the basis for greater improvements to the pedestrian realm that will provide a foundation for new development.

IMPLEMENT INVESTMENTS RECOMMENDED IN THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN

The Transportation System Plan (discussed in Chapter 2) was developed in concert with the vision for future growth and is necessary to support the development of transit- and pedestrian-oriented development in downtown Boise.

