



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Plan For Our Future, Rooted In Our Past

GEM COUNTY, IDAHO





Gem County Comprehensive Plan
Adopted: TBD January 2023
Last Updated: December 2022

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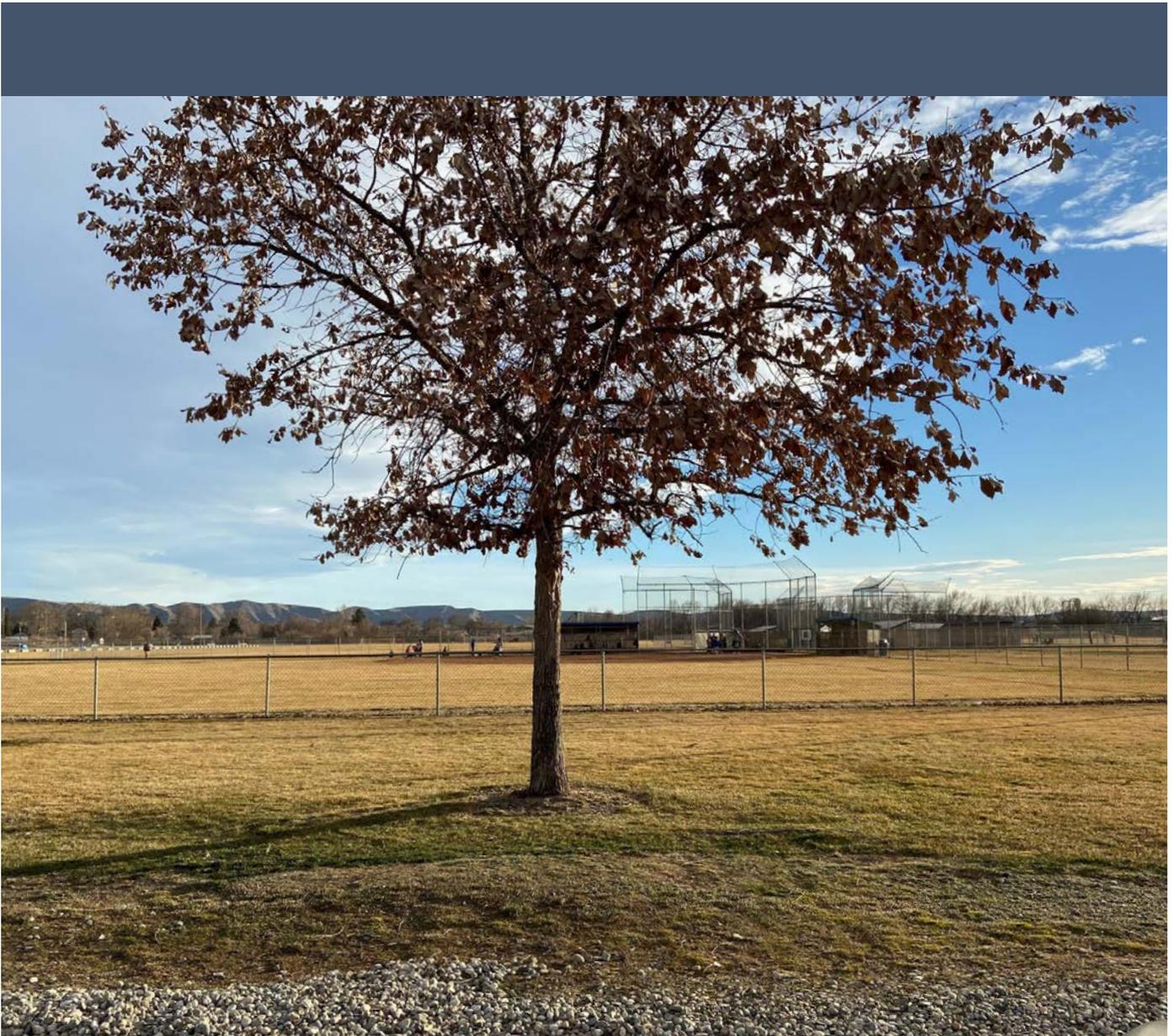
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Special Thanks to the Gem County Community

Thanks to the community members, residents,
and business owners who helped shape the
vision for the future of Gem County.



1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



PLAN OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive Plan is Gem County's primary policy document which guides land use and development choices within all unincorporated areas of Gem County over the next 10-20 years. This plan is sensitive to the changing needs of the community and recognizes a commitment to preserve the lifestyle values identified by residents.

Developed through a community-driven outreach and planning process, the Gem County Comprehensive Plan is built around a cohesive vision for the future of the County.

PLAN PURPOSE

The Comprehensive Plan is intended for use by a broad range of persons, including County decision-makers and staff, developers, and community members, to serve the following purposes:

- To meet the requirements of the Local Land Use Planning Act, Idaho Code, Title 67, Chapter 65
- To establish a community supported and developed, long-range aspirational vision for Gem County
- To identify desired land use patterns and goals and policies to work toward the vision
- To respect the rights and encourage responsibilities of property owners
- To enable the Board of County Commissioners and the Planning and Zoning Commission to establish a decision-making framework through the application of long-range land use, transportation, services, conservation, and growth goals and policies.

The plan provides a flexible basis for specific development decision-making over an extended time frame. Because of the general nature of the plan, amendments and reviews must be conducted on a regular basis in an attempt to retain the value of the plan in the face of changing conditions or needs.

Vision Statement:

Gem County is a community of caring and friendly neighbors working together to preserve and foster our beautiful rural landscapes and quality of life.

Together we will:

- ◇ ***Preserve agricultural land***
- ◇ ***Honor our rural heritage***
- ◇ ***Coordinate responsible growth***
- ◇ ***Support a resilient local economy***
- ◇ ***Build and maintain reliable infrastructure***
- ◇ ***Enable quality affordable housing***
- ◇ ***Invest in opportunities for all generations***
- ◇ ***Reinforce healthy lifestyles and recreation***
- ◇ ***Protect our open space and natural resources***

PLANNING AREA AND APPLICABILITY

Under Idaho's local land Use Planning Act (LLUPA), Idaho Code, Title 67, Chapter 65, the Comprehensive Plan applies to all lands in the unincorporated area of Gem County, including Emmett's Area of City Impact, to the extent allowed by Federal and State law. Under State law, many actions, such as development projects, specific plans, master plans, community plans, zoning, subdivisions, public agency projects, and other decisions must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

LLUPA requires that the County's ordinances regulating land use be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance, individual project proposals, and other related plans and ordinances must be consistent with the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

Legal Basis for the Plan

The State Legislature enacted the Local Land Use Planning Act in 1972. This act serves as a guide for planning growth within the state of Idaho, and mandates criteria for developing comprehensive plans. The Act states its purposes in section § 67-6502: The purpose of this act shall be to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the state of Idaho as follows:

1. To protect private property rights while making accommodations for other necessary types of development such as low-cost housing and mobile home parks.
2. To ensure that adequate public facilities and services are provided to the people at reasonable cost.
3. To ensure that the economy of the State and localities is protected.
4. To ensure that the important environmental features of the State and localities are protected.
5. To encourage the protection of prime agricultural, forestry, and mining lands for production of food, fiber, and minerals, as well as the economic benefits they provide to the community.

6. To encourage urban and urban-type development within incorporated cities.
7. To avoid undue concentration of population and overcrowding of land.
8. To ensure that the development on land is commensurate with the physical characteristics of the land.
9. To protect life and property in areas subject to natural hazards and disasters.
10. To protect fish, wildlife, and recreation resources.
11. To avoid undue water and air pollution.
12. To allow local school districts to participate in the community planning and development process so as to address public school needs and impacts on an ongoing basis.
13. To protect public airports as essential community facilities that provide safe transportation alternatives and contribute to the economy of the State.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS

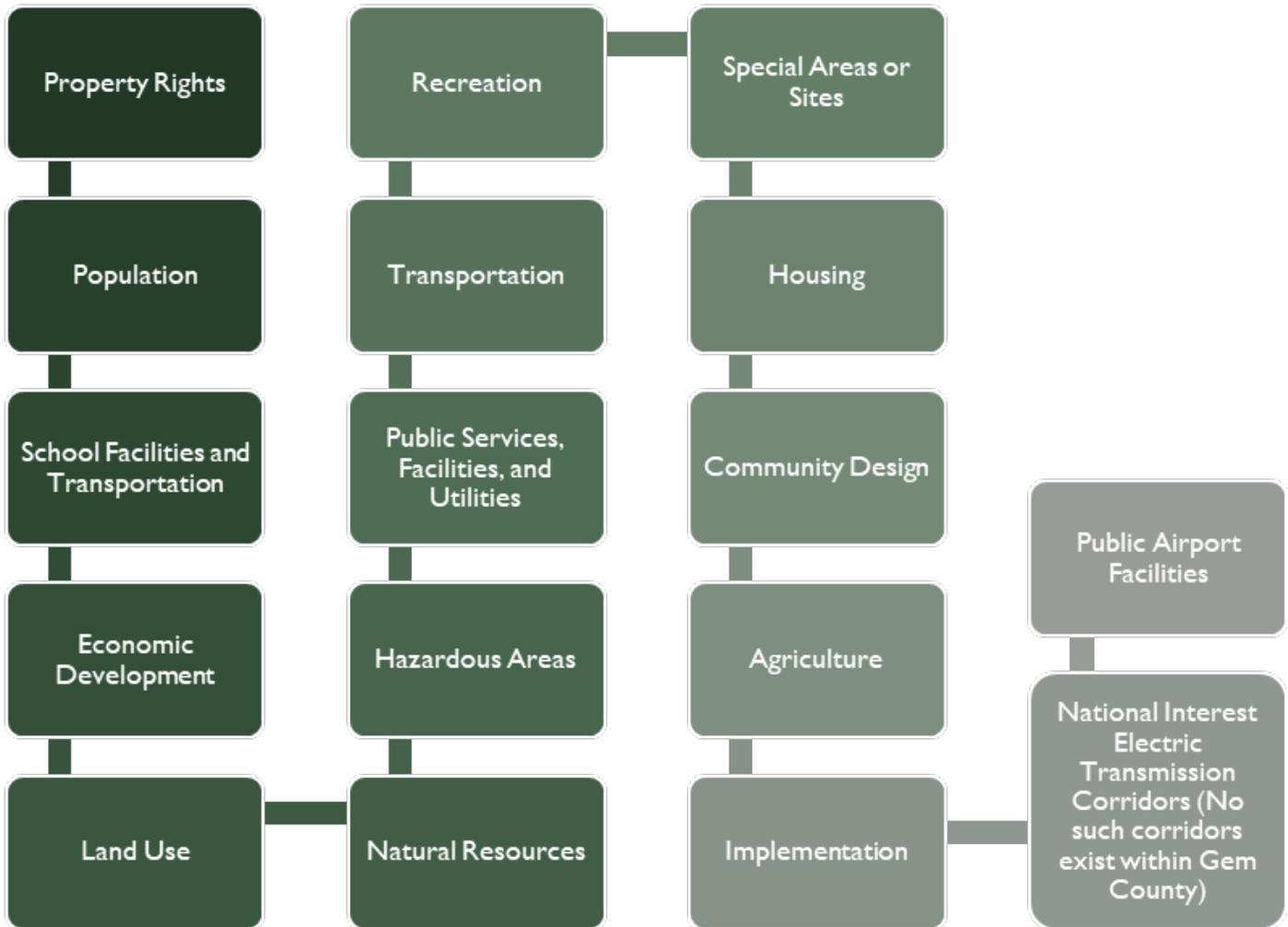
The Comprehensive Plan is the official statement of Gem County's vision. Though this Comprehensive Plan covers a broad range of topics, it does not provide the specific level of detail required or desired for all topics, issues, or geographic areas within the County. The Plan, therefore, is intended to be used in conjunction with other County and regional plans.

Generally, the Comprehensive Plan should be viewed and used first when considering decisions that have comprehensive planning considerations.

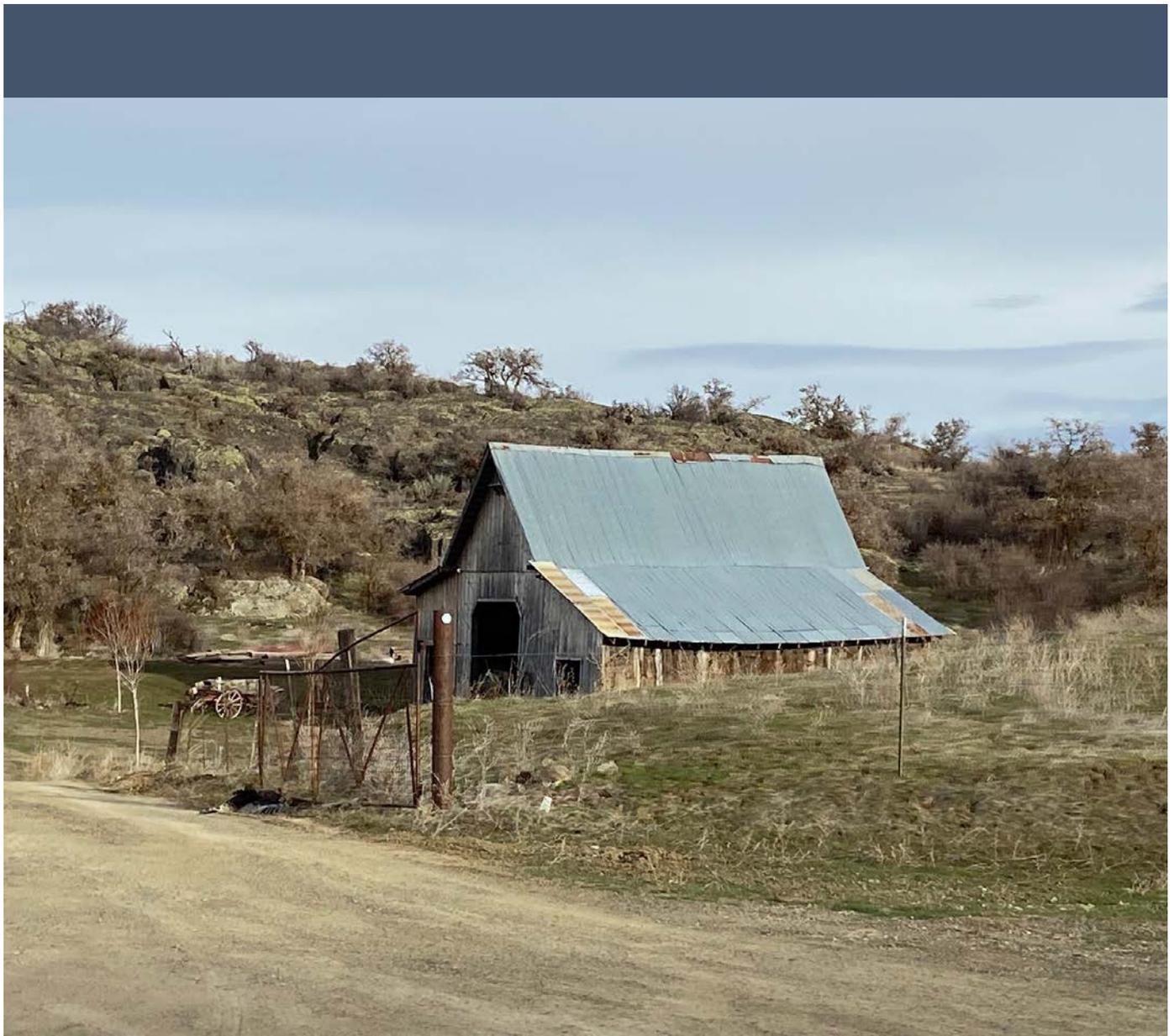
Other County plans generally provide more detail on short- and mid-term priorities and site-specific standards and projects.

Required Planning Elements

The Gem County Comprehensive Plan is prepared in accordance with the state of Idaho's Local Land Use Act, Title 67 Chapter 65, which requires, at a minimum, consideration of each of the following topics:



2. PLANNING CONTEXT



EXISTING CONDITIONS SNAPSHOTS

This chapter presents a series of existing conditions that provide the background and historic trends that were used to inform the direction of the Gem County Comprehensive Plan. This document highlights issues and needs and illustrates data trends and land uses. In providing this overview of baseline conditions, we can start to understand how these conditions may influence development of policies and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan. This report is not an exhaustive inventory, but instead focuses on relevant data to inform the planning process. Each section tells Gem County's story – from where we've been to where we are headed in the future.

Using the best available data from Gem County, the State of Idaho, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other sources, data and trends were researched and synthesized into twelve planning topics.



Planning Topics

1. Population and Growth
2. Housing
3. Economic Development
4. Land Use and Property Rights
5. Agriculture
6. Historic and Cultural Resources
7. Community Design
8. Recreation and Open Spaces
9. Education
10. Public Services and Utilities
11. Transportation and Airport Facilities
12. Natural Resources and Hazardous Areas

Population and Growth

Population At-A-Glance

19,123

2020 Total Population

(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

46 Years

2020 Median Age

(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

17.3%

Percentage without Health Care Coverage

(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

14.6%

Veterans

(U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019)

17%

Poverty Rate

(U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019)

Population Growth

The total population in Gem County has increased from 16,719 in 2010 to 19,123 in 2020. This 14% increase has largely occurred over the past 5 years as a likely result of growth in the surrounding areas of Boise, Star, Meridian, and Nampa. Gem County has experienced less population growth from 2010 to 2020 as compared to other counties in the greater Treasure Valley region.

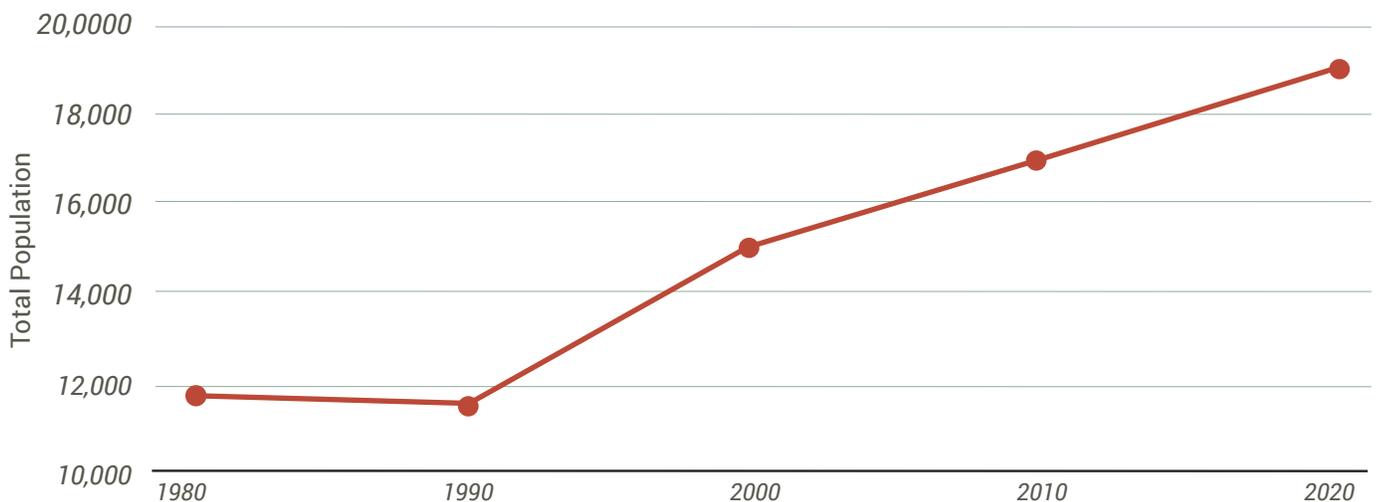
Population by Age

Over 21% of Gem County's population is older than 65 yrs old, nearly half of whom are between 65 and 74. An additional 23% of Gem County's population is under the age of 18. This large proportion of seniors and youth creates a need for public and community services including daycare, senior living options, healthcare, and family-oriented activities.

Compared to surrounding counties, Gem County has the oldest median age.

Since 2010, the median age in Gem County has increased from 41.7 to 44.6 years old, indicating an increase in the population of older residents over the past decade.

Population Growth, 1980-2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Individuals with Disability

The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” Just under 21% of Gem County residents reported some type of disability in 2019. This indicates a higher need for disability services, especially for seniors and children.

Compared to other counties in Idaho and nationally, Gem County and the region have a higher proportion of residents who are living with a disability.

American Legion. According to the Valor Health 2020 Community Assessment, mental health and stress among veterans was of high concern to 60% of survey respondents. Respondents did describe Idaho as veteran-friendly and indicated that there are a lot of resources for veterans, but many are not aware of these resources and do not know how to navigate them.

Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. A family's total income must be less than the threshold otherwise every individual in that family is considered in poverty. Close to 17% of Gem County's total population are considered to be living below the federal poverty level. Of those 2,920 individuals, 11% of them are boys between the age of 6-11 and 10% are women age 25-34. Additionally, 47% of Gem County households are struggling to meet basic needs (United Way Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed Project, 2020).

This high proportion of households that are struggling financially threatens the economic sustainability of the County and the region as a whole.

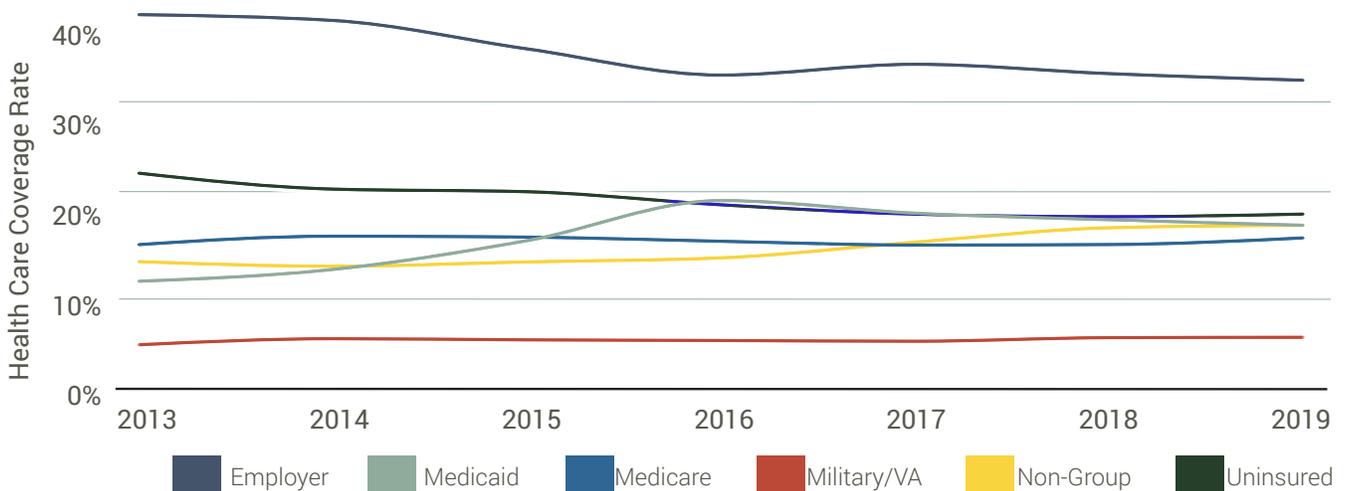
Health Care Coverage

Based on the 2020 Decennial Census, 17% of Gem County residents do not have health care coverage, showing little change in the past few years. Approximately a third of residents receive health care coverage from their employer with significant portions of the population also receiving health care coverage from either Medicare or Medicaid.

Veterans

Nearly 15% of Gem County residents are veterans (ACS 5-Year Estimate, 2019). Gem County also has an active Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and

Health Care Coverage by Source, 2013-2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019

Housing

Housing At-A-Glance

7,563

2020 Total Housing Units

(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

\$326,273

2020 Median Home Value

(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

\$45,492

2020 Median Household Income

(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

564

Housing Units Built Since 2010

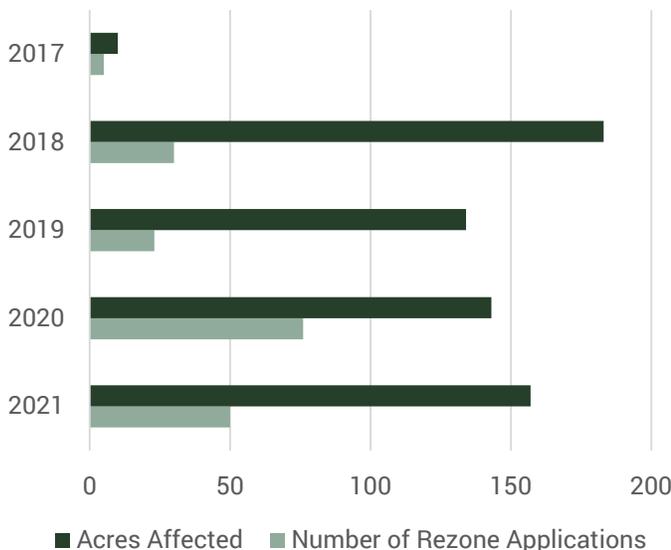
(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

75%

Homeownership Rate

(U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019)

Recent Rezone Applications and Acres Affected, Resulting in More and Smaller Lots in Gem County



Home Ownership

While the number of housing units in the County has increased since 2010, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units rose from 70% in 2010 to 75% in 2019. This indicates that while the overall housing stock is increasing, there are fewer housing units available for rent because homeowners are occupying their homes rather than renting them.

Housing Affordability

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development uses a threshold of 30% of household income as the basis for what households could pay on rent or mortgage payments before being “cost-burdened.” Households paying more than 30% are assumed to have insufficient income for other essential expenses such as food, transportation, and health care.

In Gem County, 30% of households are considered to be cost-burdened (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2019). The same data shows a stark difference between owner- and renter-occupied households, with almost 39% of renter-occupied households being considered cost-burdened while only 13% of owner-occupied households are considered cost-burdened.

Median Home Value and Household Income

Between 2010 and 2020, the median home value in Gem County rose by 30% from \$251,773 to \$326,273. This increase in median home value greatly outpaced the increase in the County annual median household income, which only rose by 6% from \$42,749 to \$45,492 (Decennial Census, 2020).

Median home value in Gem County rose by 30% from 2010 to 2020.

Source: Gem County Development Services, December 2021

Housing Units

Leading up to the 2008 recession, Gem County saw a large increase in residential development according to Gem County building permit data. In the following decade after the recession residential development remained slow until 2019. Between 2019 and November of 2021, over 300 residential units were built in the unincorporated County.

Gem County has a total of 7,563 housing units, only 5% of which are vacant, according to Decennial Census data. Compared to 2010, the number of housing units has been slightly outpaced by the increase in number of families in Gem County, with only an 8% increase (Decennial Census, 2020).

While the County has seen an increase in the number of units being built, home construction is comprised of predominately owner-occupied single-unit residences, with few rental or multi-family housing units. Due to existing-market costs to buy a starter-home, rental apartments in lieu of ownership are becoming a desirable alternative choice for many.

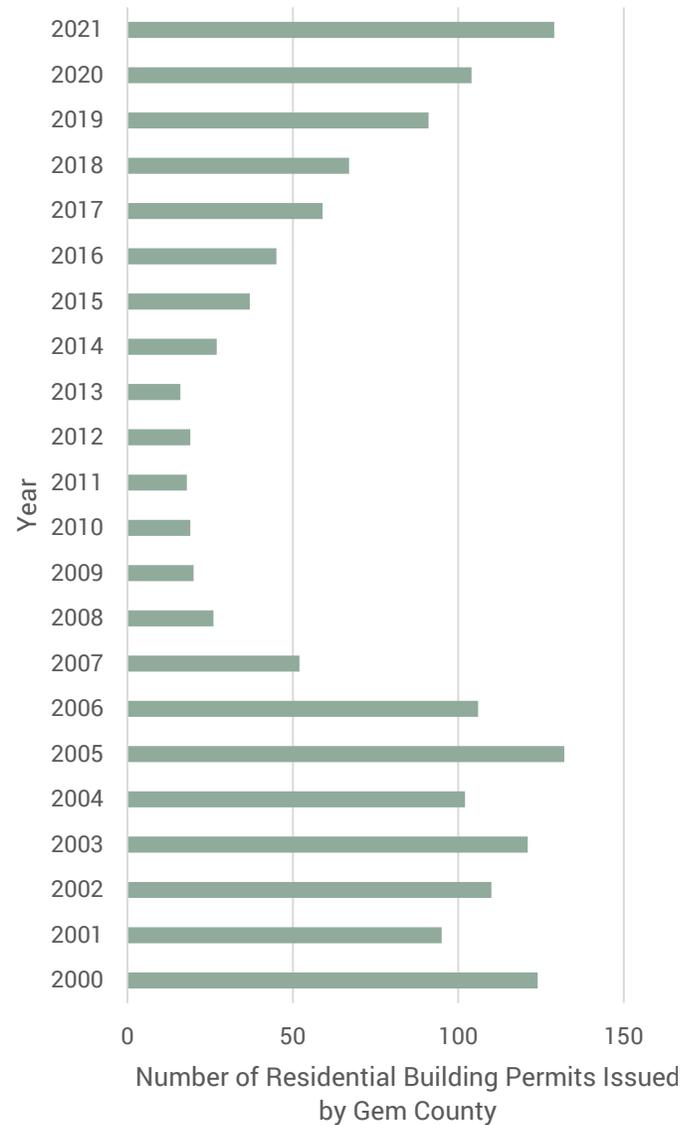
Household Size and Composition

Between 2010 and 2021 the number of households in Gem County grew by 13%, from 6,495 to 7,313 (ESRI 2021 Community Profile, 2021). In addition, between 2010 and 2021, the number of families in Gem County grew by 11%, from 4,611 to 5,096. However, both the average household size and the average family size remained relatively stable over the same period at 2.9 people and 3.13 people respectively.

Housing Types

Gem County's housing stock lacks diversity of housing types; over 78% of occupied units are classified as single-unit detached structures, 12% as mobile homes, and only 5% as apartment buildings of 10-units or less. In addition, 70% of occupied housing units are two- or three-bedroom units, and only 8% of units as studio or one-bedroom units. In the unincorporated County, housing is primarily single-unit detached structures.

Residential Building Permits Issued by Gem County 2000-2021



Source: Gem County Development Services, November 2021

As highlighted in the *Population and Growth* section, there is a need for more senior housing. Many of the existing senior living facilities are at capacity, and there has been a rise in inquires at the Building Department regarding the opportunities to build new facilities, as well as homeowners requesting to build a mother-in-law unit for their aging parents.

Economic Development

Economy At-A-Glance

3,800

Total Jobs at Gem County Establishments

(U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2019)

7,600

Total Employed County Residents

(U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2019)

880 jobs

Top Employment Sector: Healthcare & Social Services

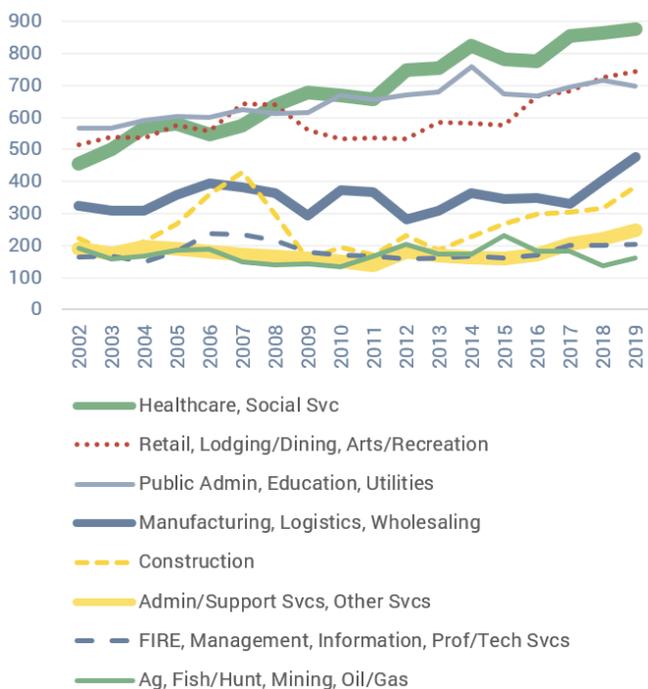
(U.S. Census OnTheMap, 2019)

564

Housing Units Built Since 2010

(U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2020)

Job Growth by Industry, Gem County Establishments



Employment and Industry Growth

For decades, the Gem County economy thrived somewhat independently from Canyon and Ada Counties, thanks in large part to a major Boise Cascade mill facility on Emmett's north side, engaged in lumber drying operations and later, plywood and glue-lam beam processing. Since the mill's departure (beginning in 2001, but stretching over more than a decade), the County has continued to see steady moderate growth, but without a major "basic sector" (dollar-importing) industry driver.

While there have been modest manufacturing wins in the County (adding approximately 150 jobs over 2018 and 2019), the main force for growth has increasingly been residential construction and service-sector establishments catering to those new residents. In fact, Gem's two largest and fastest-growing sectors since 2010 have been healthcare and retail/hospitality. The school district and other public sector workplaces also account for a steady source of employment, combining for over 600 positions countywide.

The County's largest employer is Valor Health (formerly Walter Knox Hospital), a county-owned health system on Emmett's northeast side. Designated as a Critical Access Hospital (federally subsidized rural-serving medical facility), Valor employs approximately 160 workers, with non-physicians earning a \$58,000 salary on average. Until it receives a trauma center designation or cultivates some other specialty niche, Valor is unlikely to grow hospital services much beyond its current 20 to 25-bed capacity.

In fact, other Emmett-area healthcare and social service employers have accounted for much of the local growth in that sector. These include assisted living centers, rehabilitation facilities, and related support organizations. With the exception of management and trained nurse/physician staff, these facility types tend to be lower-paying, on average, relative to hospitals.

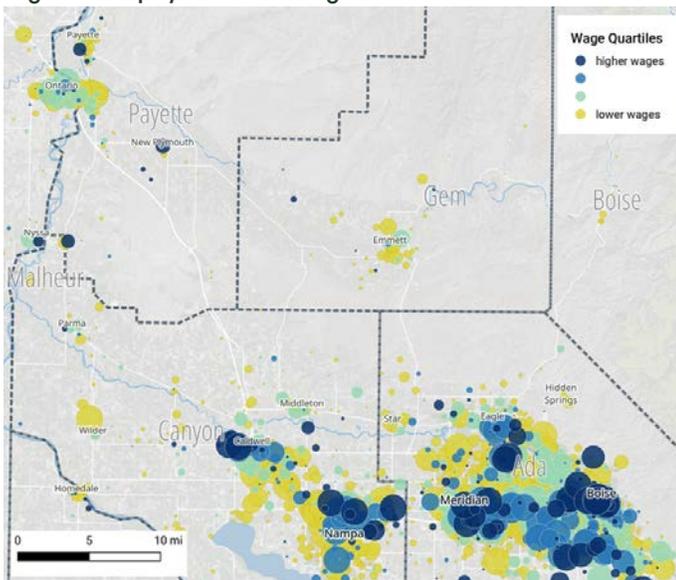
Wages

Aside from strong hospital wages at Valor Health, Emmett has generally lower-paying employment than the more urbanized Ada and Canyon Counties to the south, and a far smaller concentration of

jobs overall. In 2020, Gem County employers paid workers \$36,900 on average, not far from Canyon County's average of \$40,800, but well below the \$56,200 average paid in Ada County.

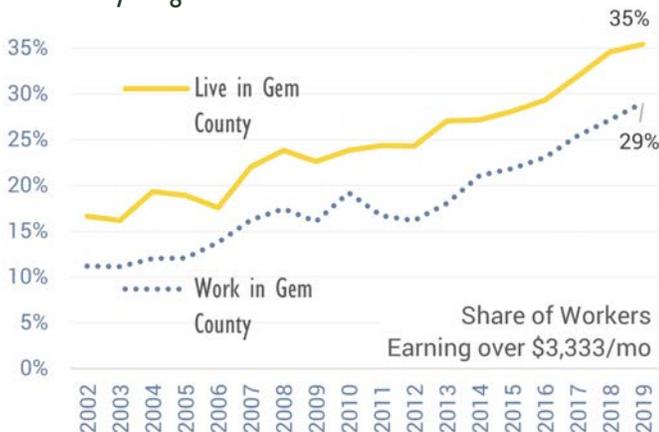
The map below shows the geographic distribution of employment in and around Gem County with dots scaled by number of jobs and shaded by wage level by Census block. There are no significant employers in northern Gem County.

Regional Employment and Wage Distribution



As shown in the chart below, workers residing in Gem County (regardless of workplace) have consistently tended to be higher earners than people working in the County (regardless of place of residence). This discrepancy could widen due to rising home prices in the County—except that Ada and Canyon are seeing even faster housing cost increases.

Gem County Wages



Housing and Economic Development

The prevailing cost of housing in Gem County relative to that in Ada and Canyon Counties is an increasingly important factor shaping the economy of Gem County—especially for the City of Emmett and surrounding unincorporated lands.

As shown below, home values in both Canyon and Gem historically stayed at 70% to 75% of Ada County values, with Gem consistently around 10% higher than those in Canyon. 2020 was a watershed year, however, Canyon County surpassed Gem County in median values, spurred by strong job and population growth in Nampa and Caldwell.

Although recent growth in local housing costs has been remarkable (and alarming from an affordability standpoint), the County remains a relative bargain when compared to Ada and now even Canyon County. This price difference is expected to fuel growing interest in southern Gem County as a residential alternative for folks either priced out of the Boise-Meridian-Nampa sphere or simply interested in maintaining some separation from the spreading urbanization.

Median Home Values

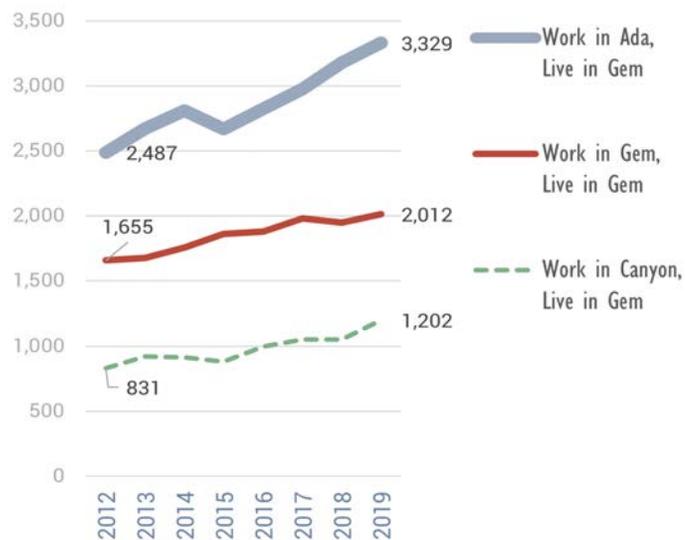


Commuting Flows

The County’s geographic and topographic isolation has historically contributed to a relatively high internal workplace and commuting efficiency, with over half of Gem County’s 3,800 jobs filled by County residents. Out-commuting is still the norm for County residents, however, with over 3,300 working in Ada County and 1,200 in Canyon County. The combination of living in Gem and working in Ada has seen the steepest increase over recent years, as shown in the graph below.

In the coming years, Gem’s appeal as both a place of employment and potential residential option may see a significant boost with the planned Central Valley Expressway, a major freeway-style capacity expansion for Hwy 16 south to I-84.

Where Gem County Residents Work



Business Recruitment and Retention

Gem County and Emmett work with the Western Alliance for Economic Development to promote the County as a destination for business relocation and expansion by actively recruiting promising employers through a variety of channels including website information sharing, conventions, and personal outreach. Industry targeting is generally consistent with statewide and regional recommendations (with tech manufacturing and food processing as top cluster targets).

The most powerful incentive tool for attracting and retaining employers involves tax rebates or

exemptions. Property taxes can be granted on a discretionary basis by County Commissioners, while the Idaho Commerce Department manages a performance-based incentive. Tax Reimbursement Incentive (TRI) is a featuring a credit of up to 30% for up to 15 years on new state tax revenues generated by companies seeking to expand in or relocate to Idaho by adding new, qualifying jobs. Because the program is statewide, the County is on even footing with other counties potentially competing for the same recruitment targets. Other state-level incentives include a sales tax abatement available to new data centers, discretionary help with infrastructure costs for manufacturing facilities, training cost reimbursements, etc.

While incentives can certainly help, employers are often most swayed by quality-of-life factors that are more difficult to directly control, but that can be addressed over the longer term through smart planning and investment in desirable public amenities.

The site of the former Boise-Cascade lumber mill has recently become home to two private sector success stories, both with potential to advance the County’s economic development, but in very different ways. First, the sawmill facilities themselves have been retooled with upgraded equipment and put to new use by Woodgrain Lumber, a wood products manufacturer that has recently vertically integrated by taking on more of the lumber sourcing role themselves. They now have a handful of mills, including the Emmett/Gem location, dedicated to procurement and rough sawing of sustainably harvested local lumber.

Meanwhile, another new user has taken a very different approach to repurposing a separate portion of the historic mill. Operators of a highly successful roadhouse/dancehall-styled country music venue in Las Vegas have converted the dormant mill facility into a 1,200 square foot performance stage and dancefloor complete with full food and beverage service. In addition to directly boosting County property and sales tax revenues, that operation (already working on expansion plans including a multi-turn road racing track and affiliated RV park on adjacent land) has the potential to indirectly boost the profile of Gem County by creating a growing regional entertainment destination.

Land Use and Property Rights

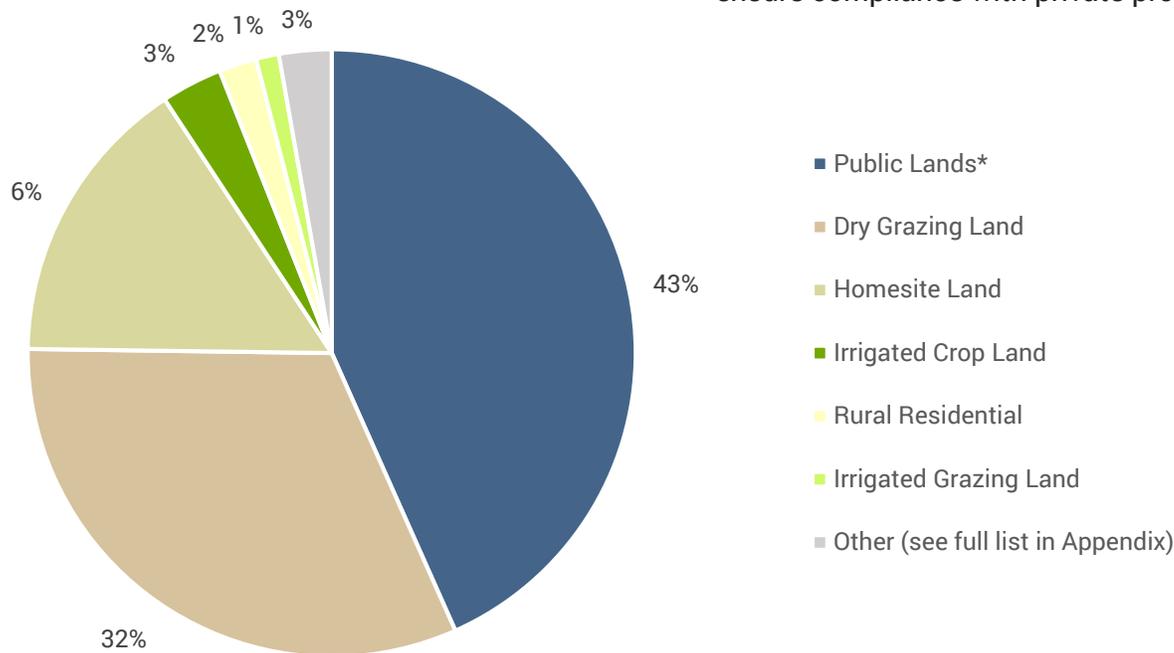
Existing Land Use

Land Use is often confused with zoning. Existing land use refers to the current use of a property, which is also the basis for property tax rates (i.e. commercial, residential, agricultural, etc.). Zoning is a regulatory designation that looks toward future growth and development potential. As such, zoning should be based on the Future Land Use designations established in the Comprehensive Plan.

The existing land use in Gem County is determined by the Parcel Class Code in the County Assessor Parcel Data. This analysis shows that the largest private use of property is for Dry Grazing Land (32%) and Homesite Land (12%). Just under 12,000 acres are used for Non-residential uses on Homesites and Irrigated Crop Lands, respectively. Only 3,174 acres are considered vacant.

Three percent of the unincorporated County area is broken up into 27 other land use categories, none cumulatively encompassing more than 2,000 acres, and some as small as 3 acres. A full list of the existing land uses can be found in Addendum A.

Existing Land Use in Unincorporated Gem County



Source: Gem County Assessor Parcel Property Class Code, October 2021

Land Ownership

Gem County encompasses roughly 566 square miles, of which less than 1% is water, including the Black Canyon Reservoir and Payette River. At 43% of the County, approximately 154,722 acres is public land in Gem County, which includes federal and state lands, as well as land owned by the City of Emmett and by Gem County.

As of October 2021, there were about 6,858 privately-owned parcels within the unincorporated areas of Gem County, excluding public lands, utility and right of way corridors, and areas within the City of Emmett.

The average parcel size is 29 acres, with varying sizes up to 907 acres.

Property Rights

Gem County respects the rights of its citizens and their property, and is committed to counter negligence, abuse, or devaluing of private property by others. Residents should feel their private property rights are respected and secure. The Idaho Regulatory Takings Act Guidelines checklist is used in reviewing proposed regulations or actions to ensure compliance with private property rights.

*Public Lands refers to Federal, State, and other Tax Exempt Land

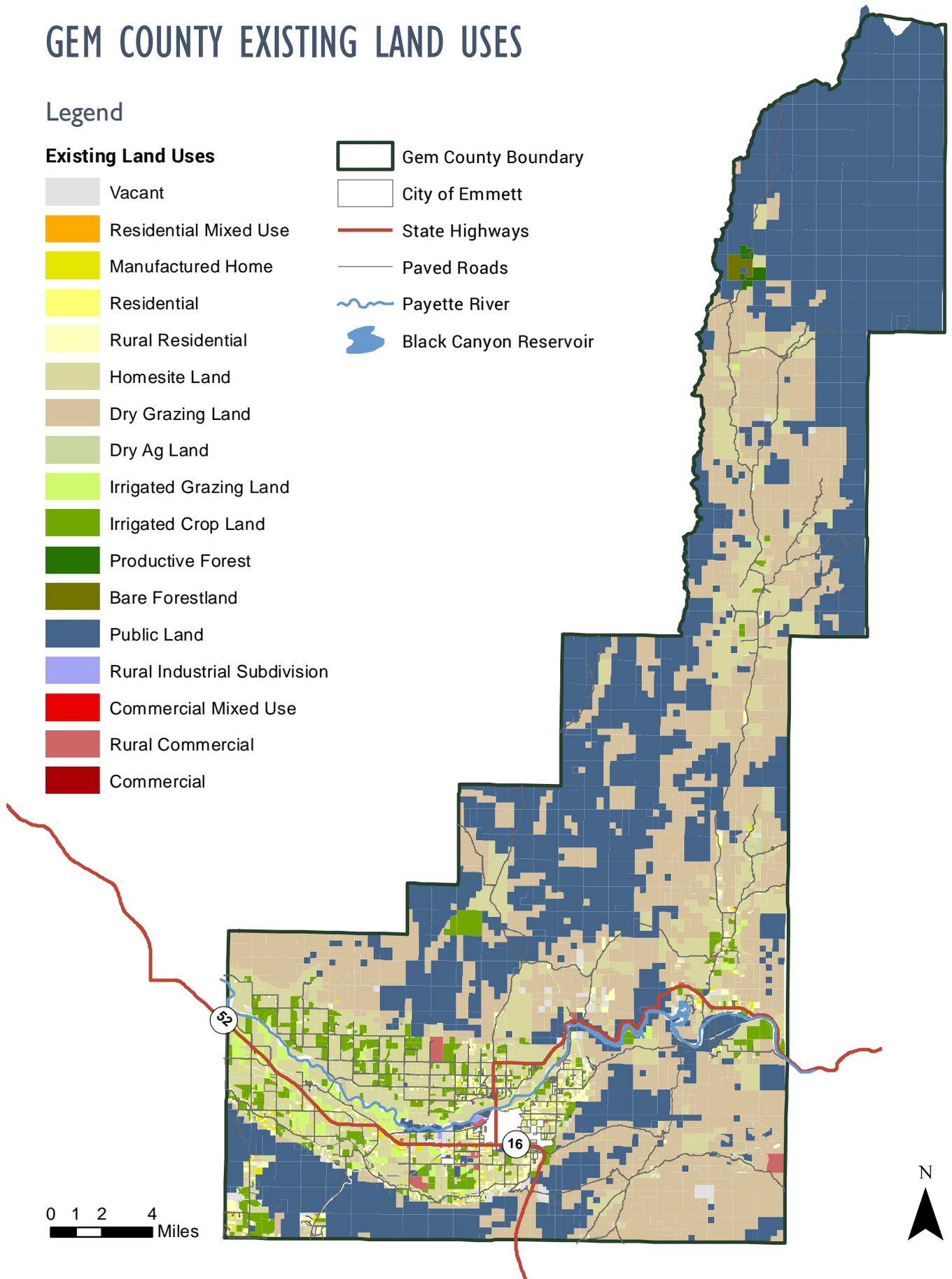
GEM COUNTY EXISTING LAND USES

Legend

Existing Land Uses

- Vacant
- Residential Mixed Use
- Manufactured Home
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Homesite Land
- Dry Grazing Land
- Dry Ag Land
- Irrigated Grazing Land
- Irrigated Crop Land
- Productive Forest
- Bare Forestland
- Public Land
- Rural Industrial Subdivision
- Commercial Mixed Use
- Rural Commercial
- Commercial

- Gem County Boundary
- City of Emmett
- State Highways
- Paved Roads
- Payette River
- Black Canyon Reservoir



Emmett Area of City Impact

The Emmett Area of City Impact (AOCI) covers land surrounding the city limits, a boundary that is determined jointly by the City of Emmett and Gem County. Unincorporated properties within this area are governed by Gem County for day-to-day administration of zoning matters. However, development and subdivision standards within the AOCI is the result of negotiations between the City of Emmett and Gem County in accordance with State law (§ 67-6526 of Idaho Code). Land uses and policies are critical to the efficient and successful implementation of both City and County goals regarding this area.

Land within this boundary is expected to ultimately be served with sewer and other municipal services. Build out residential densities are expected to be higher in the Area of City Impact than the rest of the County.

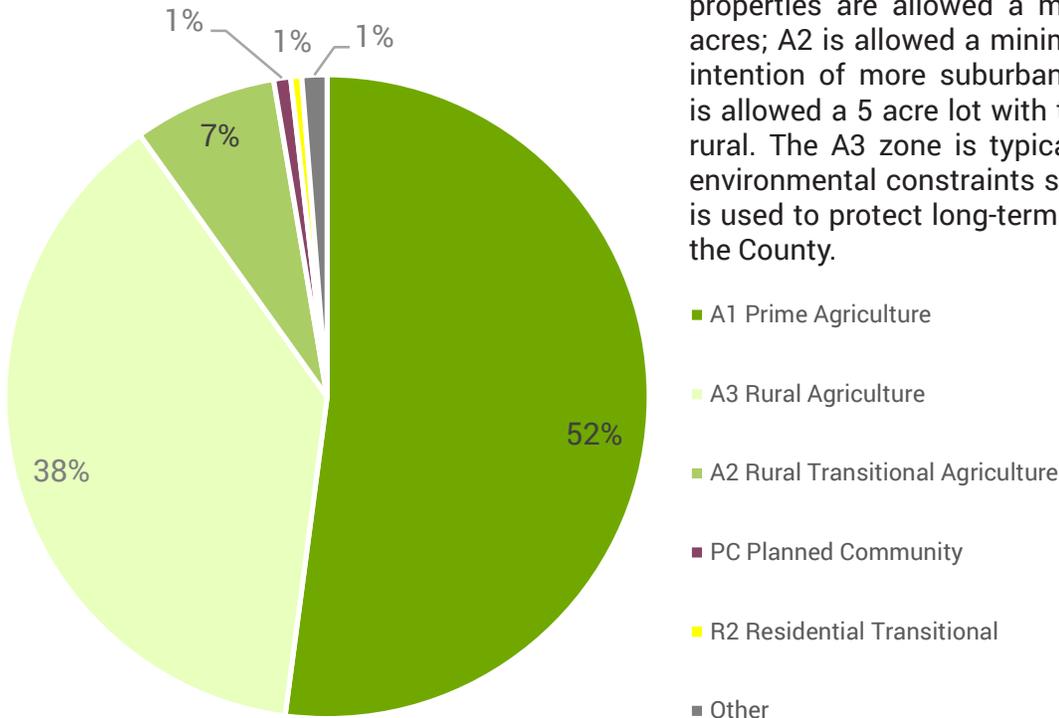
Zoning

Zoning is a tool used by municipalities to regulate the way a property is used (residential, commercial, open space, etc), minimum lot sizes, and how buildings on those lots should relate to their surroundings including streets, property lines, and other buildings. These regulations are in place to protect community members’ quality of life and provide predictability in new development. In Gem County, there are 13 different zoning districts: three agricultural, two commercial, two industrial, four residential, one mixed use, and one public.

A significant portion of the land in Gem County is zoned for agricultural purposes; A1 Prime Agriculture makes up 52% of the unincorporated county; A2 Rural Transitional Agriculture makes up 7%; and A3 Rural Agriculture makes up 38% leaving roughly 3% of unincorporated county land zoned for traditional or higher-density residential, commercial, or industrial.

In these zones, single family housing are the only permitted type of housing. Manufactured home parks and group quarters (over 8 residents) may be allowed in some cases with a Special Use Permit (SUP). The biggest difference between these zoning categories is the minimum allowed lot sizes; A1 properties are allowed a minimum lot size of 40 acres; A2 is allowed a minimum 5 acre lot with the intention of more suburban development; and A3 is allowed a 5 acre lot with the intention of staying rural. The A3 zone is typically used in areas with environmental constraints such as topography and is used to protect long-term agricultural pursuits in the County.

Current Zoning in Unincorporated Gem County



Source: Gem County Zoning, October 2021

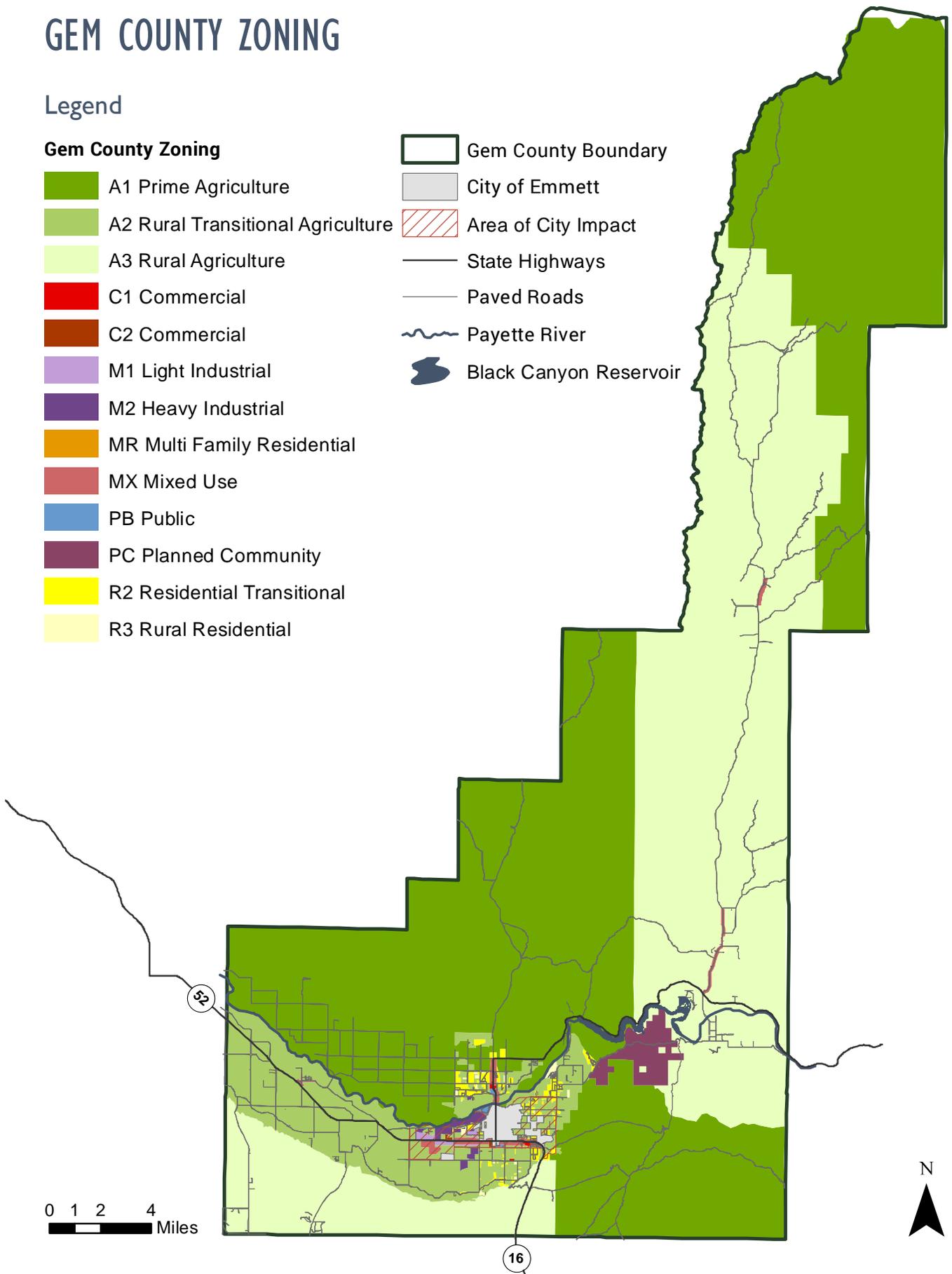
GEM COUNTY ZONING

Legend

Gem County Zoning

- A1 Prime Agriculture
- A2 Rural Transitional Agriculture
- A3 Rural Agriculture
- C1 Commercial
- C2 Commercial
- M1 Light Industrial
- M2 Heavy Industrial
- MR Multi Family Residential
- MX Mixed Use
- PB Public
- PC Planned Community
- R2 Residential Transitional
- R3 Rural Residential

- Gem County Boundary
- City of Emmett
- Area of City Impact
- State Highways
- Paved Roads
- Payette River
- Black Canyon Reservoir



0 1 2 4 Miles



Agriculture

Agriculture At-A-Glance

**\$8.5
Billion**

**Annual State Revenues
from Livestock and Crops**
*(2020 Financial Condition
of Idaho Agriculture report)*

183,177

Acres of Farmland
*(2017 USDA Gem County
Agricultural Census)*

77%

**of Farmland is
Pastureland**
*(2017 USDA Gem County
Agricultural Census)*

16%

of Farmland is Irrigated
*(2017 USDA Gem County
Agricultural Census)*

213 acres

Average Size of Farm
*(2017 USDA Gem County
Agricultural Census)*

46%

**of Farms are Smaller
than 9 acres**
*(2017 USDA Gem County
Agricultural Census)*

11,266
ACRES OF HAY

3,931
ACRES OF CORN

1,665
ACRES OF WHEAT

13,372
ACRES OF CATTLE

5,771
ACRES OF SHEEP

Agriculture and Livestock

Gem County is home to an abundance of agricultural activity, from the production of fruits like strawberries and cherries, to livestock and various grains. In fact, 183,177 acres of Gem County are farm operated, contributing to the County's strong agricultural character and identity. The main crops produced in the region are corn, wheat, barley, hay, sugarbeets, and potatoes. The county is also adorned by orchards that enhance the areas beauty while providing local produce to residents. This agricultural dominance also contributes to greater nationwide food access as the State of Idaho is the number one producer of potatoes in the country and the second largest producer of peas and barley.

Idaho also has national significance in the dairy industry, contributing significantly resources to the western United states. According to the 2020 Financial Conditions of Idaho Agriculture report, crops and livestock represent more than \$8.5 billion in annual revenues for the State of Idaho and Gem County is a contributor to that economic output. Its livestock contributions are not limited to the dairy industry as cattle, hogs, sheep, and chicken can also be found in Gem.

In addition to its greater impact statewide and nationwide, Gem County's agricultural lands directly benefit the local community. Events like the Emmett Cherry Festival, the Emmett Harvest Festival and Street Fair to provide the community learning opportunities for home growers and engage in meaningful dialogue with their neighbors.

Agriculture is interwoven throughout the culture of Gem County, not only through its economic impact but through the agricultural community's integration into local affairs. This rich dynamic celebrates the history of Gem County while integrating town and county life.

Source: NIDIS, October 2021

Historic and Cultural Resources

HISTORY OF PLACE

Named from the “Gem of the Payette,” Gem County is located thirty miles northwest of Boise and encompasses a total area of 566 square miles. The Payette River and its tributaries provide the foundation for original settlements in Gem County. The river continues to provide water for irrigation to support agriculture and recreation and is home to many kinds of wildlife. Many industries have spurred the County’s economic development, to include lumber, livestock, and agriculture—particularly the fruit industry.

Over time, the area welcomed residents of varying backgrounds: Basque shepherders, Europeans sheep ranchers, Japanese farmers, and Hispanic farm workers, among others. The character of Gem County is defined by the interaction of the many cultures and values introduced and embraced by its residents. Indeed, the diversity of our citizenry gives our community its uniqueness.

The region’s history and its people are what shape present-day life in Gem County.

The Gem County Historical Society and Museum provides information related to the history and culture of the Native Americans who originally inhabited the Payette Valley and chronicles the contributions of the trappers, miners, and settlers who irrigated valley lands and established the local fruit industry. An overview of Gem County’s prehistory and history follows.



Pre-Contact: Until the 1870s, the Payette was a natural route for Native Americans as they moved seasonally in search of food, attracted by the large number of salmon, big game, edible roots and berries.

1818: The Payette River was named after Francois Payette, who was put in charge of Fort Boise and traveled through the area. The Treaty of 1818 also formalized joint U.S.-British occupation and settlement of what is now Idaho.

1830s: The first European and American men to inhabit the area were fur trappers in the mid-1830s.

1846: The Oregon Treaty settled the joint U.S. British occupation issue. Idaho and other lands officially became U.S. territory.

1860s: Permanent settlement began after gold discoveries in the Boise Basin brought people over the already established stage and pack train routes.

1863: Idaho established as a territory of the US.

1864: The Payette River Valley was a major transportation route to the mining fields set up along the river.

1883: Emmett was platted.

1900: Emmett was incorporated as a town.

1902: Idaho Northern Railway came to the valley.

1906: Pearl mines closed.

1915: Gem County was established from portions of Canyon County and Boise County.

1924: Black Canyon Dam was constructed.

1939: Gem County Courthouse was built.

1974: A Joint City-County Planning Council was created between Gem County and City of Emmett.

1976: Gem County’s first Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

1996: A Joint City/County Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

GEM COUNTY'S HISTORIC, NATURAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Sehewoki'i Newenee'an Katete:

Rising 5,906 feet, this butte stands at the north end of the Valley as a historic landmark for Native Americans and other travelers. Formerly Squaw Butte, it was renamed in 2022 by the US Department of the Interior.

Black Canyon Dam:

With the pressing need for irrigation water, the Bureau of Reclamation completed this 183-foot-high dam in 1924. It was built on a natural dam site, created by the huge black basalt rocks that blocked travel up the canyon, and for which the canyon was named.

City of Emmett:

The only incorporated city in Gem County is Emmett, which is also the county seat. There are seven properties in the city that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Ola:

Fifteen miles north of Sweet, Ola was settled in 1864. It remains a farm and ranch community today. Ola's community hall, two-room schoolhouse, and church built around 1910, are still used today. The Schoolhouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sweet:

In the early 1880's, during the gold rush, Sweet served as an important freight station. At the turn of the century, Sweet boasted of three hotels, three saloons, a bank, a newspaper, two lodge halls, and other business. After the gold rush subsided and a series of fires in the business district, the town began to deteriorate, and was not rebuilt. The Methodist Episcopal Church in Sweet is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Montour:

In the early 1860s, the Marsh-Ireton Ranch was established as a stage and mail stop on the freight road to the Boise Basin. After the railroad came through the Valley in 1911, the Montour business district and town were platted. Dreams of prosperity faded, when in 1941, the new highway bypassed Montour.

Regan's Butte:

Daniel Regan built one of the largest cattle outfits in the area in the late 1800's.

Pearl:

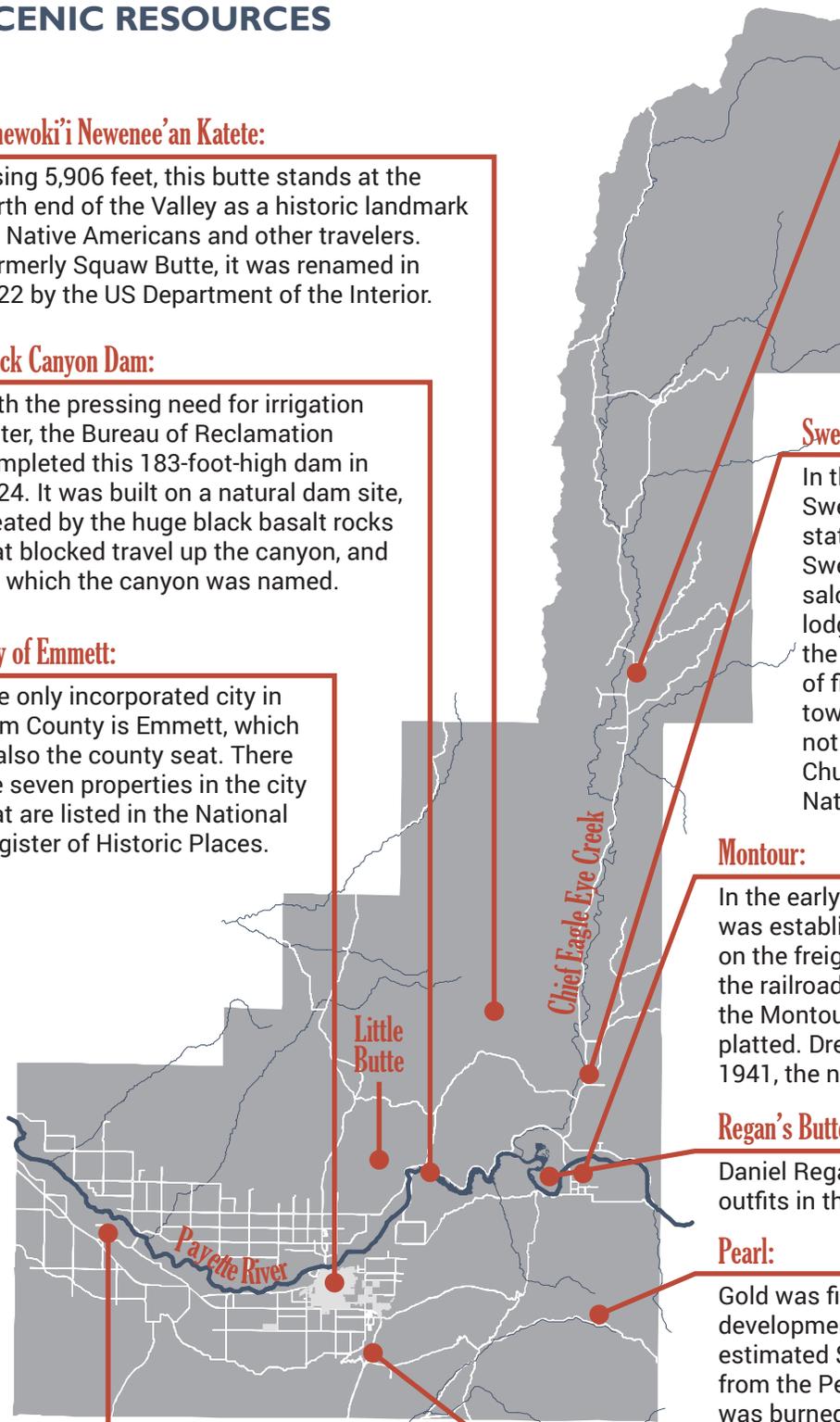
Gold was first discovered here in 1867, but development took off between 1894-1908. An estimated \$12 million worth of ore was taken from the Pearl area. What remained of the town was burned down in 2004.

Letha:

In 1910, Colonel Barnard and W.W. Wilton envisioned a town and major rail center to connect New Plymouth to Emmett. That dream was never realized.

Freezeout Hill:

Steep terrain limited access to the Emmett Valley from the southeast. Freezeout Hill was so named because travelers had to lock or "freeze" their wagon wheels and slide down the hill. Views of the Emmett Valley are valued.



Gem County Prehistory

The Payette River, named after the trapper and explorer Francois Payette, supported American Indians who hunted and fished from its shores prior to European settlement. The Nez Perce, Bannock, Kutenai, and Shoshoni peoples gathered along the Payette River to reap the benefits of the plentiful salmon, sage-grouse, geese, and larger mammals. It is estimated that roughly 8,000 American Indians inhabited the region prior to when European explorers moving into the region. Spanish explorers began venturing northward from Mexico in 1592, introducing new crops and animals to the American Indians within the Northwest region of the United States. After the Lewis and Clark expedition traversed and documented what is now central Idaho, French-Canadian and American fur trappers arrived in the area. This bountiful river later attracted these trappers who hunted game in large numbers. Their presence is memorialized through names such as Boise, an Anglicization of bois, which is French for “the trees.”

Settlement History

In 1862, Tim Goodale led a wagon train over a new segment of the Oregon Trail into the Payette Valley through what has since been called “Freezeout Hill.” Freezeout Hill got its infamous name from the travelers having to “freeze,” or lock, their wheels then slide down the hill. Taking this route required the fording of the Payette River at the approximate location of modern-day Emmett.

In 1864, a ferry was built to assist people taking the Freezeout Hill route by Nathaniel Martin and Jonathon Smith. The growing settlement adjacent to the crossing, called “Martinsville” in honor of Nathaniel Martin, served as a hub for trade and traffic through the region. On May 3, 1863, Emmett Lee Cahalan was born in Edina, Missouri. His family emigrated to Martinsville a year later. In 1868, Emmett’s father, Thomas, was appointed postmaster and the post office moved from Martinsville to the Cahalan ranch. Thomas Cahalan then named the new town “Emmettsville,” after his son and the Irish patriot, Robert Emmett.

In 1883, a townsite of 40 acres was platted and in 1885, an independent school district established. By 1885, the community’s name was changed to Emmett in order to differentiate their Idaho community from Emmettsville, Iowa.

Shortly after gold was discovered in the area, Idaho Territory was established in 1863. Although gold was mined at Pearl as early as 1870, and again in 1893, the town did not see substantial growth until after 1894. When interest in silver mining collapsed in 1892, the focus turned to gold and Pearl became a center of activity. It is estimated that Pearl produced 20,000 ounces of gold.

Emmett boasted 600 residents at the time of its 1900 incorporation. Construction of the Idaho Northern Railway through the valley brought about a boom in 1902. The 1910 completion of the rail line between Emmett and New Plymouth fueled a second boom. In 1915, Emmett was designated as the County seat of the newly created Gem County. By 1920, Emmett had grown to a size of 6,427 residents, remarkably close to its modern-day population.

RESOURCES

There are archaeological resources and historic properties that have been previously identified in Gem County, as highlighted below. However, without having completed extensive historic surveys or archaeological field studies, there are likely many unidentified archaeological and historic resources in the County.

Archaeological Resources

Documented human occupation of southwestern Idaho goes back 12,000 years.

According to the Idaho State Historical Society, there are currently 257 archaeological sites recorded in Gem County, the majority of which are on Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, or Forest Service lands.

Archaeological site locations are held as confidential information and not released to the general public.

Tribal Governments

Today there are five federally recognized tribes located in the state of Idaho: the Shoshone-Bannock, the Shoshone-Paiute, the Coeur d'Alene, the Kootenai, and the Nez Perce.

Historic Properties

There are 219 Gem County properties listed in the Idaho Historic Sites Inventory, a database of known and documented historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts. Of those, 168 properties are within the City of Emmett; 51 are located throughout the unincorporated areas of Gem County. Many of these properties are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), although only 10 have been listed in the NRHP.

There are a total of 69 unevaluated properties within Emmett and the surrounding rural areas, in addition to 97 ineligible properties, most of them located within Emmett, but 11 of them are in Sweet.

National Register-listed Properties:

- Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church
- Ola School
- Oregon Short Line Railway Depot (Emmett Depot)
- Gem County Courthouse
- F.T. Bliss House
- First Baptist Church of Emmett
- Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church
- Emmett Presbyterian Church (Emmett First Southern Baptist Church)
- Methodist Episcopal Church (listed in the 1980s; subsequently demolished)

Emmett Historic Central Business District

The City of Emmett designated a Historic Central Business District that encompasses the downtown area between the Payette River to the north and 4th Street to the south, Wilson Street to the west and Pine Street to the east. This Historic Central Business District is used and referenced in the City of Emmett Design Manual.



Community Design

Entryway Corridors

Historically, many settlers entered the Emmett Valley from the south over “the Camelback” and down the steep hogback of Old Freezeout Road. Today, Highway 16 is a safer alternative but the views from Freezeout Hill Monument over the Valley are still just as stunning.

Idaho State Highway 52 (HWY 52) runs east-west through the Emmett Valley. HWY 52 connects the many communities and destinations including Sweet, Montour, Black Canyon Recreation Area, City of Emmett, and Letha. The highway doubles as a primary entrance to the County and the primary connecting road between communities.

Neighborhoods

Gem County is comprised of one incorporated city, Emmett, and a handful of other unincorporated communities, including, Letha, Montour, Sweet, and Ola.

Emmett is the population center of the County, with a historic downtown and several commercial centers while the unincorporated communities are mainly rural residential and agricultural areas. When asked what community members love most about Gem County in the public kick off for this project, many people answered that they value the small town character and rural feel that Gem County provides.



Recreation and Open Spaces

Parks and Open Space At-A-Glance

104

Acres of Formal Parks
(Gem County)

4.8

Square Miles of River and Reservoir
(USGS)

1,992

Acres of Wildlife Protection Areas in Black Canyon and Montour
(USGS)

Parks and Trails

There are roughly 81 acres of formal public park in the County between Sweet City Park, Emmett City Park, Blaser Park, and 12th St Ball Park. Gem Island Sports Complex is the only park owned by the County. All other park facilities are owned and operated by Emmett City, with the exception of Sweet City Park (owned and operated by the Sweet Community Improvement Board).

In addition to these public parks, there are nearly 40 acres of parks in the unincorporated County within the Black Canyon Reservoir along the Payette River. The five Black Canyon Parks are owned and managed by the Bureau of Reclamation and are most often used for fishing, boating, and other water sports. Of

the five parks, all but Wild Rose Park and Cobblestone Park include boat launch access and Montour and Triangle Park include overnight camping areas. The parks and wildlife reservoirs along the Payette River are the most accessible recreation opportunity for unincorporated County residents. There are four new boat launches along Payette River, including one with at Gem Island Sports Complex.

Alongside formal parks, Gem County has an abundance of public lands, trail networks, and other recreation amenities such as several Idaho Fish and Game owned fishing ponds along the Payette River; Gem County Fairgrounds, which hosts the annual Gem Boise County Fair and Rodeo in July; Little Gem Cycle Park which is owned and operated by the Bureau of Land Management and consists of about 400 acres of trails; and a large portion of the Boise National Forest in the northern portion of the County with camping/picnic areas and trails. The community also often utilizes schools after-hours as a recreational amenity, utilizing their sports fields, playgrounds, and common areas for gathering, sports events, and casual recreation.

Gem County has a wide range of trails, mostly within BLM-owned land and within Boise National Forest. Additionally, Gem Island Sports Complex has a multiuse loop trail surrounding the facility.

Gem County Recreation District

Founded in 1991, the Gem County Recreation District is run by a Board of Directors with 4 year terms. The district operates a rec center/ office in Emmett City separate from local and county government and hosts public events, after school and summer youth programs, and recreation programs for all ages and abilities.

Park	Acres	Fee	Amenities
Gem Island Sports Complex	64.2	No	Sports Complex (fee), Ball Fields
Black Canyon	12.45	Yes	Picnic, Boat Launch, Playground
Wild Rose	9.9	No	Picnic, Playground
Cobblestone	5.34	No	Picnic
Triangle	5.7	Yes	Picnic, Boat Launch, Camping
Montour	6.4	Overnight	Picnic, Boat Launch, Camping

Education

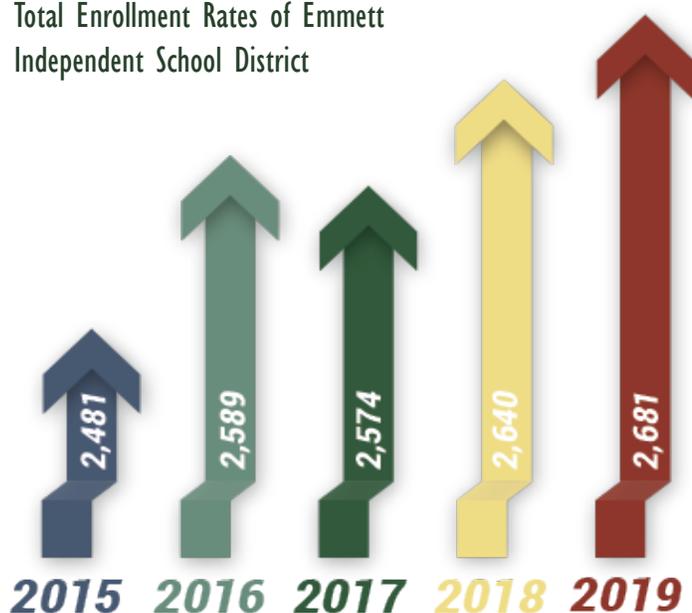
Educational Providers

Gem County residents are served by Emmett Independent School District (EISD) and several privately-funded pre-school and faith-based providers. EISD has eight school facilities, serving approximately 2,600 students: five elementary schools, one middle school, and two high schools. The Payette River Regional Technical Academy (PR2TA), a state-approved, district-managed public charter school offers professional technical programs to students through a charter school designation.

As of September 2019, 2,681 students were enrolled in the Emmett Independent School District, which is a 1.5% increase from the year before and a 7.5% increase from 2015.

EISD enrollment stabilized in 2012 after significant decline in 2000, and has increased almost every year 2015 - 2019.

Total Enrollment Rates of Emmett Independent School District



Source: Emmett Independent School District

Educational Attainment

Within Gem County, 88% of the community over the age of 25 has a high school diploma or the equivalent. A smaller portion of the community, about 17.5% has a bachelors degree or higher among the population over 25 years of age.

Early Education

Kenneth Carberry and Shadow Butte elementary schools began Kindergarten READY programs in 2018. The program gives kindergarden-aged children needed support in academics, social-emotional connections, and English language learning. The funding for this program is provided over a 5 year period from a federal grant from the 21st Century Community Learning Center that is managed at the school district level.

Higher Education

There are currently no full-time higher education providers in the County, however students can apply for a program called Advanced Opportunities run by the State of Idaho. This program allows high school students to take dual credit, workforce training, certification exams, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs during their high school studies to advance their education early.

A University of Idaho Extension campus located at the Gem County Fairgrounds offers programs related to agriculture and youth leadership.

Community Education

The EISD offers English as a Second Language (ESL) evening classes for parents of ESL students in K-12, as well as other community residents who are identified by the parents as needing ESL training. The classes are funded by the Idaho State Department of Education through a grant to EISD.

The Emmett public library promotes reading and literacy with year-round programs and events that include access to computers and a wide range of information resources.

Interact, a volunteer program for in-school youth ages 12-18, is sponsored jointly by the Emmett Rotary Club and Gem County Chamber of Commerce. Volunteers assist youth to organize service projects that will engage them in learning about various professions and businesses, and also fundraise to support the projects they have chosen.

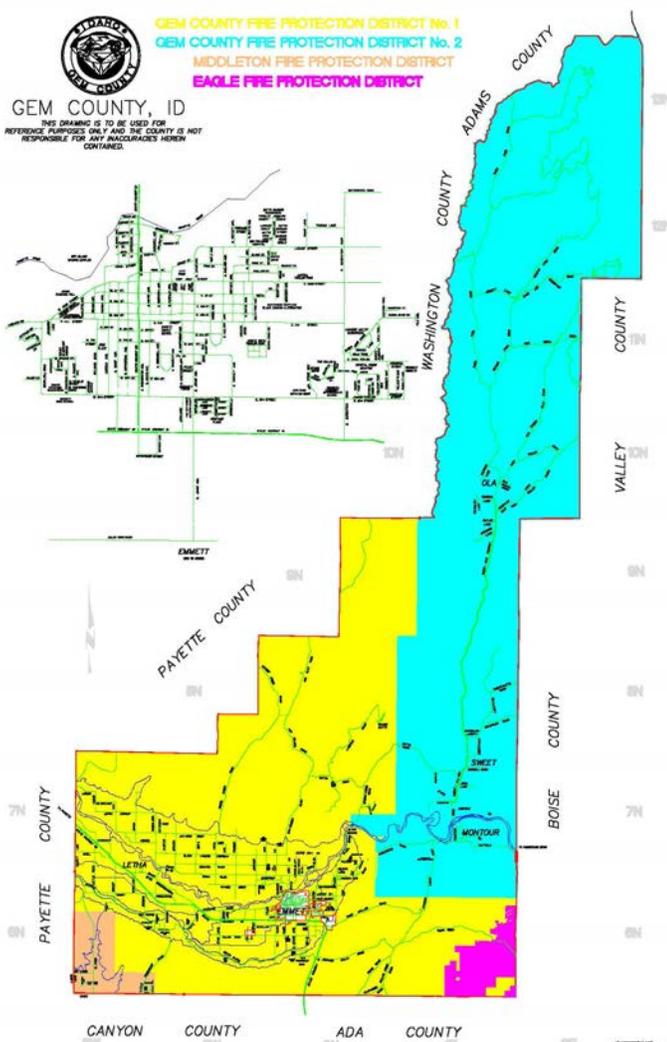
Public Services and Utilities

Public Services and Public Safety

Gem County is governed by three elected County Commissioners who establish public policy, set and administer the budget, and oversee day-to-day county operations. The other elected officials of County government include the Assessor, Coroner, County Clerk, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, and Treasurer.

Gem County is served by the Gem County Sheriff's Department where an elected sheriff enforces the law and oversees county jail alongside several deputies. Emmett City has their own municipal Police Department which coordinates closely with Gem County Sheriff's Department and participates in joint training sessions to ensure the safety of the community.

Fire District Boundaries



Gem County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (Gem County Fire-EMS) provides emergency medical services to all of Gem County. They are based in Emmett City with four ambulances and one additional ambulance in the Sweet community and over twenty trained employees. Gem County's emergency medical services is supported by a mutual aid agreement with neighboring Boise County to provide additional services if needed. Gem County Fire-EMS maintains three fire stations: one in Emmett, one in Letha, and one on the intersection of Butte Road and Van Duesen.

Alongside Gem County Fire-EMS, Gem County is served by five different fire protection agencies in total: City of Emmett Fire Department, Eagle Fire Protection District, Gem County Fire District #1, Gem County Fire District #2 and Middleton Rural Fire District.

Residents in Gem County are protected by five fire districts, two law enforcement agencies, and one emergency medical service.

Library

The single public library in Gem County, the Emmett Public Library, is run by a board of trustees. There is also a non-profit organization tied to the local library known as the Friends of the Emmett Public Library who has membership open to anyone who wishes to join. The organization hosts fundraisers and events and helps increase awareness and use of the public library.

Health Services

Valor Health (previously known as Walter Knox) provides health care for Gem residents. The critical access health system in Emmett boasts a 25-bed hospital, emergency department, urgent care, family medicine, labor and delivery, gynecology, surgical services, orthopedic care, specialty medicine, transitional care, imaging, laboratory, and sleep medicine.

Water Utilities

Water in Gem County is primarily supplied by ground water pumped from public and private wells. Emmett owns and operates two public water systems for their residents and businesses to receive water from three deep wells with two above ground storage reservoirs with capacity of approximately 2,200,000 gallons. In unincorporated Gem County, residents receive their drinking water primarily from individual private domestic wells. Additionally, several neighborhood associations operate public drinking water wells that serve their residents.

Emmett constructed a wastewater treatment center in 2008 that can be extended to handle a population of 30,000. Unincorporated communities in Gem County rely on septic sewer systems with a permit from Southwest District Health.

The Letha Townsite is served by the Letha Sewer District, with a collection system and wastewater treatment. There has been a moratorium on new service hookups due to the system being at capacity.

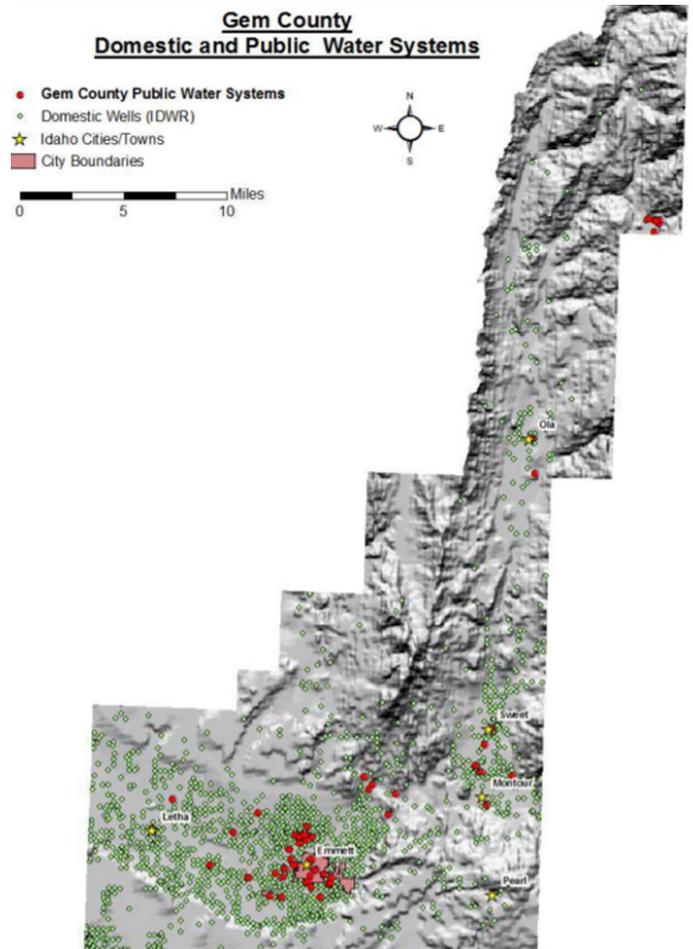
Broadband and Telecommunication Utilities

In addition to water and wastewater management, broadband internet services are a key utility in Gem as more and more residents and businesses are dependent on efficient access to internet and cellular service. Roughly 83% of Gem County has broadband access with most gaps falling within the National Forest Service Wilderness Areas.

National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is tasked with designating National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors, which are areas that have foreseeable constraints or congestion issues that may affect consumers in an area. Currently, the DOE has only affirmed two National Corridor designations; one in the Northeastern States and one in the Southwestern States.

The State of Idaho is indirectly affected as several transmission facilities either cross the state or emanate from the state toward the congested area. If the Idaho State Public Utilities Commission notifies the County of other federally mandated corridors, the Comprehensive Plan will need to be updated.



Source: Gem County Ground Water Quality Improvement and Drinking Water Source Protection Plan (2014)

Transportation

A well designed and maintained transportation system plays a critical role in safe and efficiency mobility. In Gem County, the transportation network is shared by private vehicles, agricultural equipment, freight vehicles, pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) District 3 and the Gem County Road and Bridge Department are the primary public entities responsible for planning and maintaining the transportation network in Gem County. In 2021, Gem County created a Development Impact Fee Program as a new method for funding necessary transportation network improvements. To better understand the type and location of desired improvements, Gem County is currently working on a Transportation Master Plan update.

Travel Patterns

Gem County residents primarily work in other counties, with nearly 75% of residents commuting outside the County for work, mostly in Ada and Canyon Counties. Most of the residents who remain in Gem County for employment work in Emmett (i.e., 20% out of 25%). Similarly, 48% of employees working in Gem County live outside the County, mostly in Ada and Canyon Counties.



Source: US Census Bureau LEHD (2019)

Roads

Gem County Road and Bridge Department currently maintains 345 local road miles and 43 bridges, while ITD District 3 maintains two state highways. State highways are key routes, connecting Gem County communities with neighboring counties—Ada County via SH-16, Boise County via SH-52 eastbound, and Payette County via SH-52 westbound.

ITD traffic volume data shows continued growth in Gem County. Along SH-16 traffic volumes have grown steadily at about 4% per year between 2011–2019, with average annual daily traffic (AADT) of 10,779 in 2019. At both the SH-52 counters, traffic volumes grew at around 3% per year between 2011–2019, with an AADT of 2,489 at the Letha counter and an AADT of 1,780 at the Ola counter, in 2019.

Roadway Improvements

As identified in the *2014 Gem Community Comprehensive Plan*, highway and arterial connections to Ada County and Interstate 84 are necessary for the economic prosperity and quality of life in Gem County. The SH-16 / I-84 interchange, also known as the Central Valley Expressway, is currently in design through ITD. Additionally, ITD has dedicated funding towards the Environmental Assessment for SH-16 between SH-52 and SH-44 in 2026 (ITD Key ORN23175). Other Gem County projects included in the Draft Idaho Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) 2022–2028 include local signing improvements in 2023 and SH-52 roadway resurfacing in 2028. Gem County, through their Transportation Master Plan, is currently investigating the impacts of a new north-south arterial between Substation Rd and Plaza Rd.

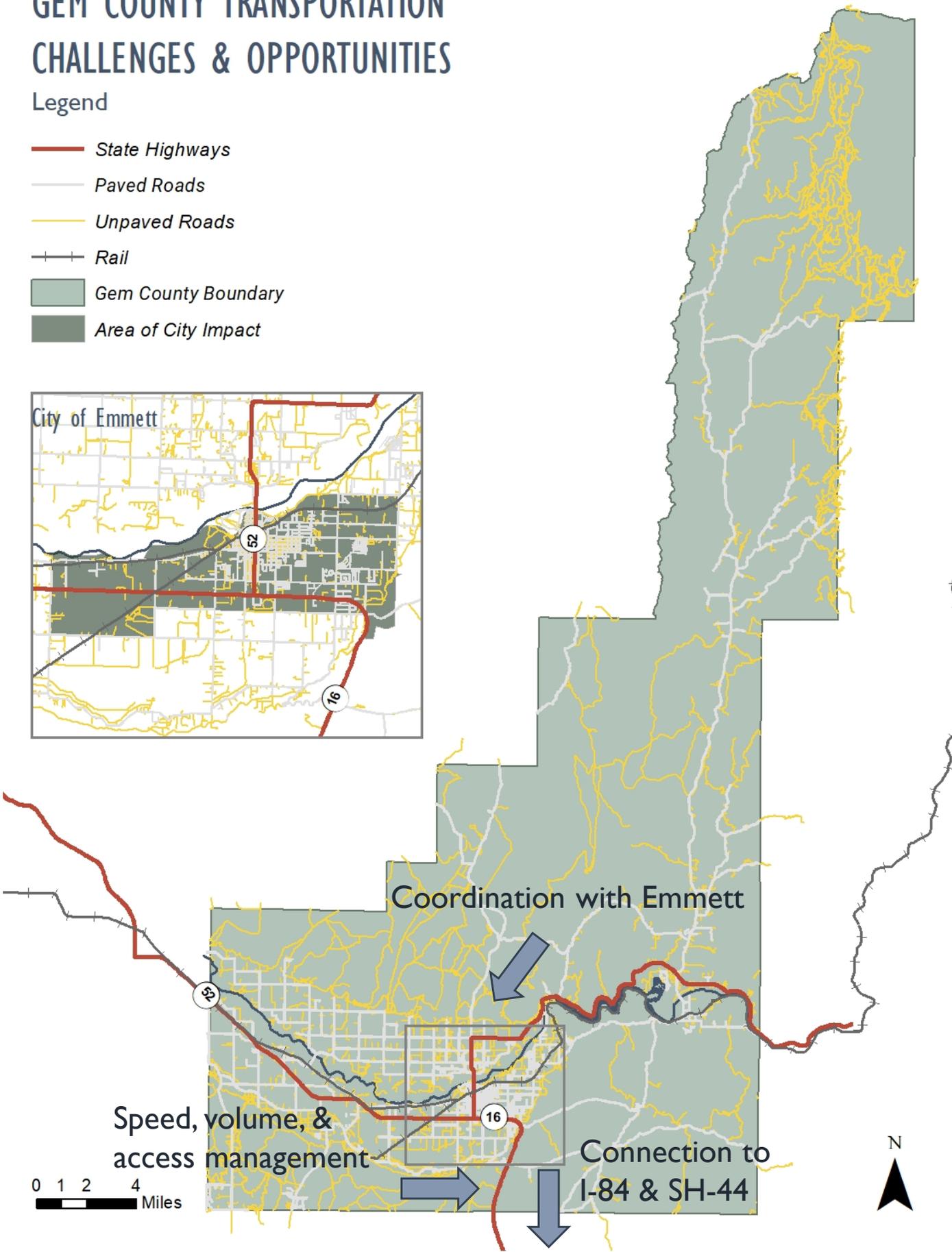
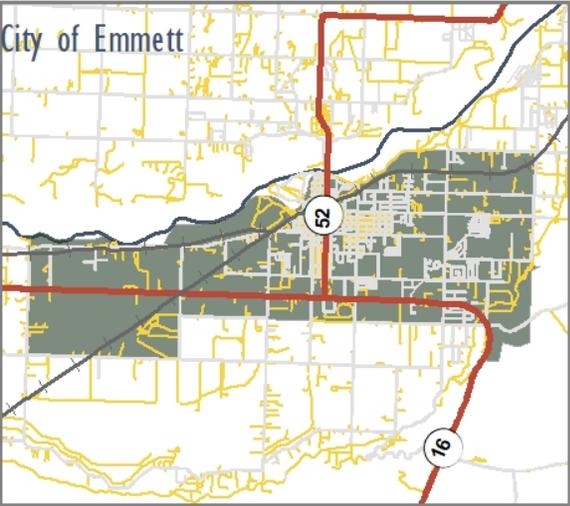
Freight

In the *2014 Gem Community Comprehensive Plan*, designating key freight routes was a key strategy for improving goods movement in Gem County. To date, these routes have not yet been designated, but freight movement remains a top priority for Gem County. In addition to truck movement, Gem County is home to an active rail line of the Idaho North & Pacific Railroad (INPR) between Payette and Horseshoe Bend, that connects through Emmett, with weekly service.

GEM COUNTY TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Legend

- State Highways
- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- +— Rail
- Gem County Boundary
- Area of City Impact



Aviation

Chuck Sawyer Field, located in Emmett is the only public airport in the County. It is owned and operated by the City of Emmett. It serves smaller private aircraft and there is no commercial passenger or large-scale freight service. Although an airport-specific aviation master plan has not yet been created, the Chuck Sawyer Field was included in the *2020 Idaho Airport System Plan Update*. There are no planned improvements for the Chuck Sawyer Field in ITD's *Draft ITIP 2022–2028*.

Pathways

As a scenic community, Gem County is home to a number of pathways for walking, rolling, and biking. Some popular pathways include the Gem Island Complex Path, the Payette River Path at Canal Street, and the 12th Street Park Path. To build a comprehensive network of pathways, there is desire to create a countywide pathways master plan, similar to the plan adopted by Emmett in October 2020.

Existing Challenges/Opportunities

Key challenges and opportunities that Gem County currently faces include:



Creating a connection on SH-16 between SH-44 and I-84



Maintaining safety on SH-16 through speed, volume, and access management



Identifying key freight routes



Providing safe and accessible connections between pathways



Maintaining roads, bridges, pathways, and sidewalks in a state of good repair



Leveraging growth to implement improvements



Coordination with ITD and the City of Emmett.

Natural Resources and Hazardous Areas

Geology

The terrain varies greatly across the County. Elevations in Gem County range from 2,238 feet in the low-lying Emmett Valley, to 7,901 feet of steep peaks in the northern area above Ola. The western area of Gem County lies within the Western Snake River Plain and Western Idaho Basin, a geographically-defined, sub-surface mineral area. Historically Gem County has never had commercial oil or gas production despite exploratory wells being drilled in the past.

Climate

Just as the topography and land types change across Gem County, the climate varies throughout the region as well. The northern areas of the County see more rain and snow than the southern. For example, the average annual rainfall in Ola is approximately 23 inches while Emmett averages 13 inches of rain.

Water Resources and Conservation

Gem Soil and Water Conservation District is one of Idaho's 50 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. It lies in the lower portion of Gem County within the Lower Payette River Watershed. The District acts as a political subdivision to provide assistance to private landowners to enhance the conservation of natural resources in the area. The District approved a Resource Conservation Business Plan to guide water conservation in Gem through 2024. Other goals include the reduction of invasive and noxious weeds as well as assisting landowners and operators in controlling animal waste and excess nutrients from agricultural practices to reduce water pollution.

The Payette River is one of the major drainages of the area bordering several communities including Emmett, Letha, and Montour. Chief Eagle Eye Creek (formerly Squaw Creek) drainage area extends to the north in the panhandle of the county. As of October 2021, stream flow conditions are considered normal despite overall drought conditions in the area. The four largest irrigation canals diverting from the Payette River are the Black Canyon, Last Chance, Farmer's Co-op, and Emmett Irrigation District systems. These canals support the agricultural economy within Gem County and are vital resources for the area.

The Gem Community's drinking water supply comes almost entirely from aquifers and shallow ground water supplies. As drought conditions have a significant impact on these water supplies, considerations for conservation may take on a significant role in the future.

There are 4.8 square miles of water area in Gem County, which accounts for less than 1% of the County.

Natural Hazards

Gem County faces a variety of natural hazards that impact the community. As a precaution against harm, the County adopted a [Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2019](#). This plan identified wildfires, earthquakes, flooding, and dam failure as the highest risk to people and property. In the medium risk category is severe weather and landslides while drought was considered the lowest risk. As of April 2021, Gem County was in good standing with FEMA's Community Rating System and received a Class rating of 9, a 5% discount on flood insurance within SFHA and Non-SFHA areas.

Gem County Natural Hazard Risks

Wildfire Risk	High
Severe Weather	High
Earthquake	Medium
Dam Failure	Medium
Flooding	Medium
Landslide	Low
Drought	Low *

Source: 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan

*The risk calculations from the Hazard Mitigation Plan were based on data that considers potential for injury or death among people and impacts to property as the highest indicators for risk. As a result, drought risk was categorized as low, however drought impacts still have a considerable weight outside of these categories.

Drought

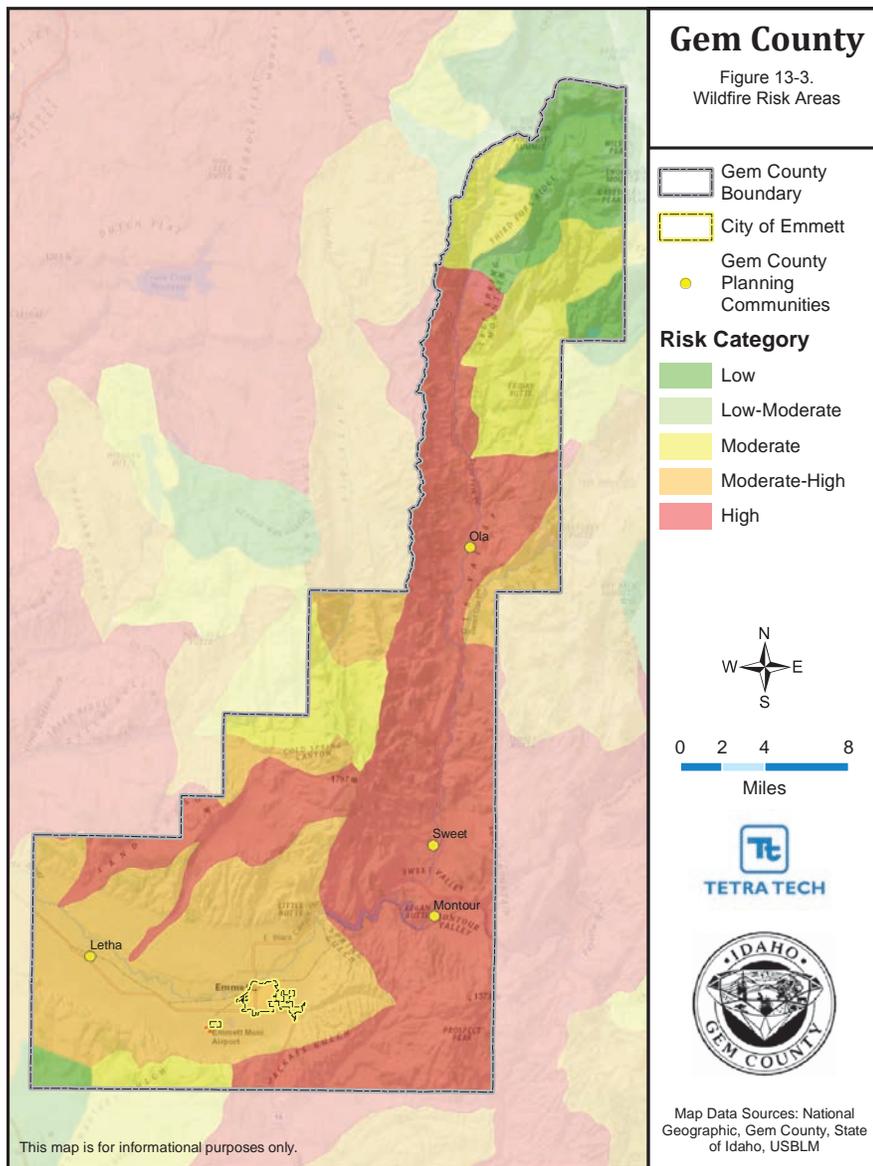
Approximately 44% of Gem County is currently facing severe drought conditions. These conditions are concentrated in the northern portion of the county and impact the area in the following ways:

- the grazing season is shortened
- vegetation is sparse
- crops are left unharvested
- feedlots are not profitable
- river levels are very low which means hydroelectric power is down and irrigation water allotments are significantly curtailed.

The remaining 56% of the county is still under moderate drought conditions which results in the following:

- dryland hay and grain crop yields are low
- other crops and pasture are in poor condition
- well levels decline
- reservoir levels are low
- water shortages occur
- water conservation programs are in place
- fire risk is elevated and fires spread easily

Gem County Wildfire Risk Areas



Wildfire

Due to current drought conditions in the area, risk for wildfires is high and if sparked, can spread quickly. As Gem County has a considerable agricultural presence, wildfires can severely impact the economic prosperity of the community members.

Source: 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan

Flooding and Dam Failure

In 2009, the State of Idaho identified Gem County as a priority for FEMA’s Risk Map program. An initial Risk Map meeting took place in September 2009 where a variety of state, local, and federal stakeholders identified community concerns. The products of that meeting prompted the creation of multi-hazard risk assessment products and updates to the communities’ regulatory flood maps.

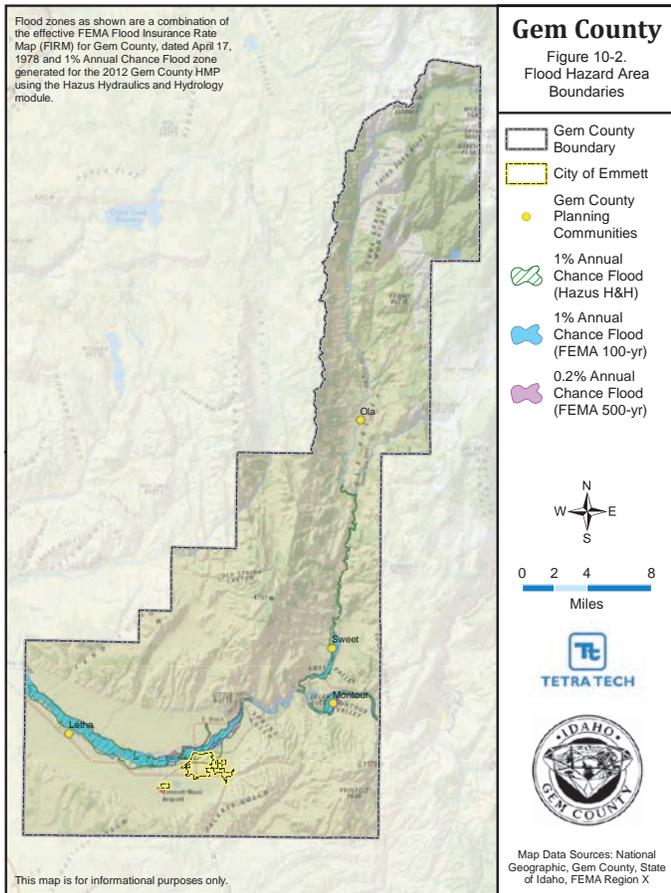
In June of 2018, local, state, and federal representatives met to identify a second Flood Risk Review. Updates to the preliminary findings from 2009 included the incorporation of new USACE Payette River hydrologic analysis, and the future of outreach and coordination related to flood resiliency and risk.

The majority of flooding potential in Gem County surrounds the Payette River and its tributaries. Currently, there is 7.8 square miles of rural

development floodplains in Gem County, 1.4 square miles of exurban development and 0.3 sq miles of commercial/industrial development. As of 2018, there had been no additional development within high risk flood areas.

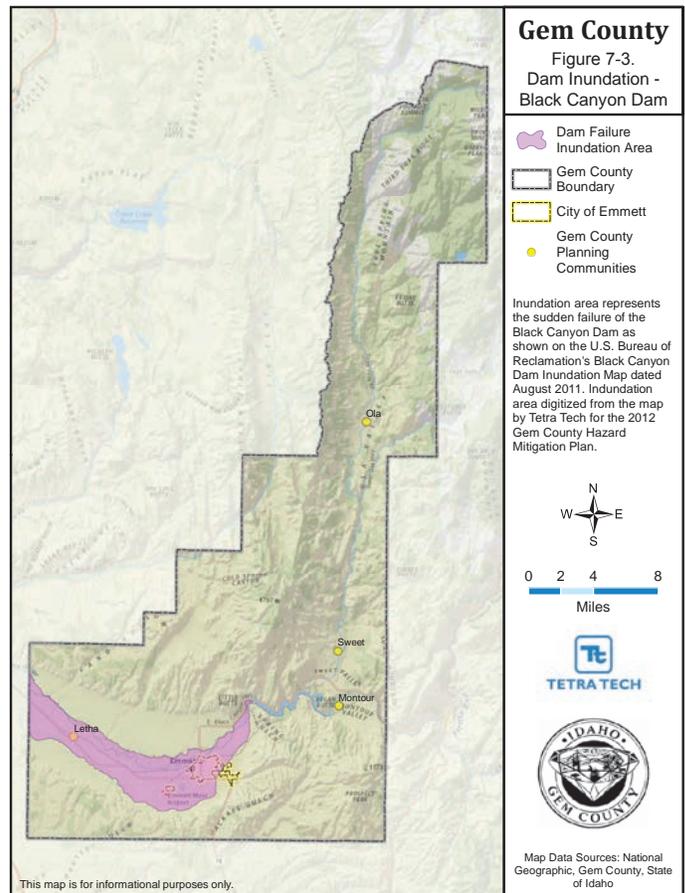
Gem County is the only jurisdiction in Idaho with State buildings located in a dam failure hazard area. Black Canyon Dam presents a risk to 8 State buildings presenting a total of \$1.8 million in damage potential. The Idaho Department of Transportation owns four state buildings located in the Black Canyon dam failure hazard area, however the building with the greatest monetary value is owned by the Idaho Military Division.

Gem County Flood Hazard Areas



Source: 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan

Gem County Dam Failure Inundation Areas



Source: 2019 Hazard Mitigation Plan

Addendum A

EXISTING LAND USES IN UNINCORPORATED GEM COUNTY

Property Class Code	Description	Number of Parcels	Acres	% of County
681	Exempt/ Public Lands	775	155,064	43.3%
105	Dry Grazing Land	997	114,131	31.9%
131	Homesite Land	1103	35,692	10.0%
132	Non-residential improvement on Homesite Land	189	11,817	3.3%
101	Irrigated Crop Land	433	11,644	3.3%
534	Rural Residential	1731	6,152	1.7%
146	Manufactured Home on Homestead	118	6,034	1.7%
102	Irrigated Grazing Land	196	4,355	1.2%
512	Vacant Residential Rural	249	2,095	0.6%
148	Manufactured Home on Homestead	160	1,974	0.6%
0	Right of Way	427	1,862	0.5%
548	Manufactured Home	475	1,719	0.48%
435	Rural Commercial	76	1,257	0.35%
537	Rural Residential Subdivision	737	841	0.23%
718	Other Vacant Land	42	555	0.16%
107	Bare Forestland	2	479	0.13%
106	Productive Forest	4	474	0.13%
103	Dry Ag Land	18	428	0.12%
546	Manufactured Home	151	394	0.11%
314	Vacant Rural Industrial	14	363	0.10%
532	Non-Residential on Rural Residential or Rural Residential Subdivision	42	187	0.05%
336	Industrial on Rural Industrial Subdivisions	4	89	0.02%
515	Vacant Residential Rural Subdivision	29	86	0.02%
317	Vacant Rural Industrial Subdivision	13	45	0.01%
444	Commercial on Exempt Land	2	40	0.01%
413	Vacant Rural Commercial	11	30	0.01%
339	Other	9	17	0.005%
845	Utilities/RR	4	9	0.003%
119	Waste - Roadway	2	8	0.002%

Property Class Code	Description	Number of Parcels	Acres	% of County
518	Other	2	8	0.002%
438	Rural Commercial Subdivisions	15	7	0.002%
525	Residential Common Area	10	3.5	0.001%
740	Other	1	3.1	0.001%
541	Residential	16	2.8	0.001%
619	Other	1	1.6	0.0004%
416	Vacant Rural Commercial Subdivision	4	0.8	0.0002%
520	Vacant Residential	2	0.03	0.00001%

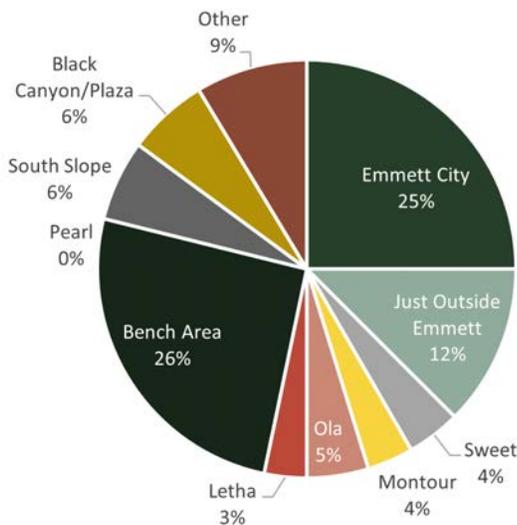
Source: Gem County Assessor Parcel Data (September 29, 2021)

OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

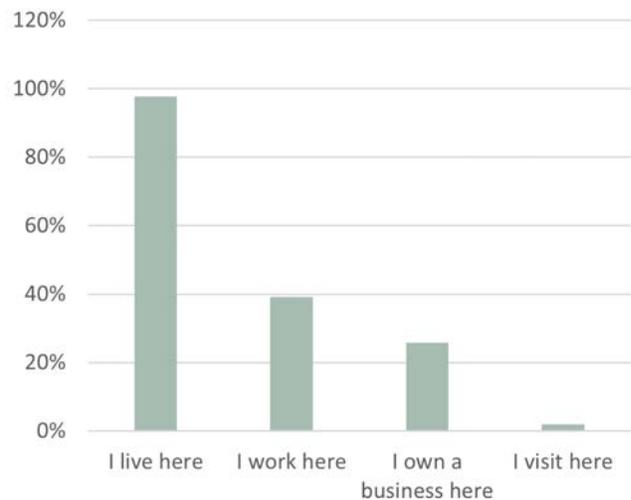
This Comprehensive Plan is the result of an engaging and community-driven planning process that included public outreach efforts at key milestones and a strong Steering Committee process. Public involvement was foundational to the development of this Plan, and all members of the community were encouraged to participate throughout the process.

This concerted engagement effort gathered responses from residents and business owners, and people representing different areas of the County and demographics. Full outreach summaries are included in Appendix B.

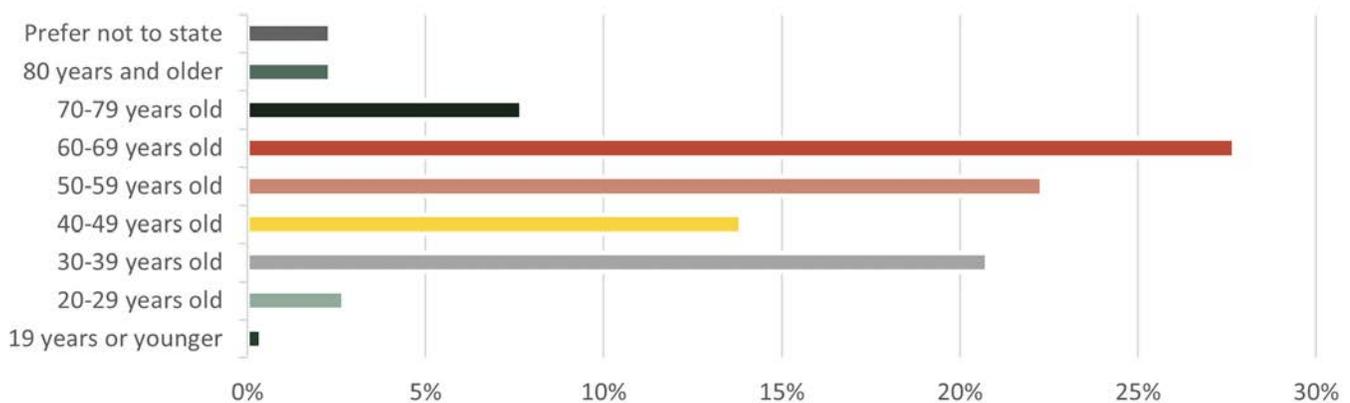
Where is Your Primary Residence?



What's Your Relationship with Gem County?



What Is Your Age?



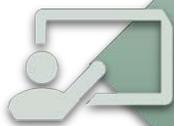
VISIONING FEEDBACK

Visioning is a critical step in every planning process, creating a foundation for more effective community engagement and planning. Visioning ensures that County residents' and community members' values are reflected in the Comprehensive Plan's elements, policies, and priorities.

The first step in the planning process was to develop a vision with the Gem community. Starting in the October 2021 with a public project kickoff event, core values and visioning ideas were collected through an online survey, one-on-one phone interviews, workshops with the project Steering Committee,

Planning and Zoning Commission, and County Commissioners.

These in-person and online forums allowed residents, employees, business owners, and other community members the opportunity to provide and discuss their values, goals, and to prioritize future opportunities for their community. The responses were collected, analyzed, and collated into the draft Vision.



Public Kickoff Event (click to read the summary)

- 61 attendees
- 208 comments collected



Online Kickoff Survey (click to read the results)

- 148 participants
- 670 comments collected



One-on-one Phone Interviews

- 13 participants



Joint Workshop

- 3 Zoning Commissioners and 3 County Commissioners
- 5 County staff



Steering Committee Meetings

- 10 attendees

PUBLIC KICKOFF EVENT: SAMPLE COMMENTS

- “ Thriving businesses, people shopping locally.”
- “ In 20 years, Gem County will be... a haven for microfarms. Where the wide open space is preserved, and the small town feel is still here.”
- “ Having only enough people so you know everyone.”
- “ County setting. Horses, cows, and farmland. Quiet and peaceful setting.”
- “ Very controlled growth, making developers reduce density and pay for the privilege of building here. Respect our county feel.”
- “ Still small, still quiet, still comfortable, still home.”

PHONE INTERVIEWS: SAMPLE COMMENTS

- “ We all take the same highway, drink the same water, float the same river. We need to work together on all this stuff.”
- “ You have to think big. Don't put blinders on. This isn't 'little gem county' anymore.”
- “ We need stronger partnerships to get things done. Let's find the money to get it done right.”

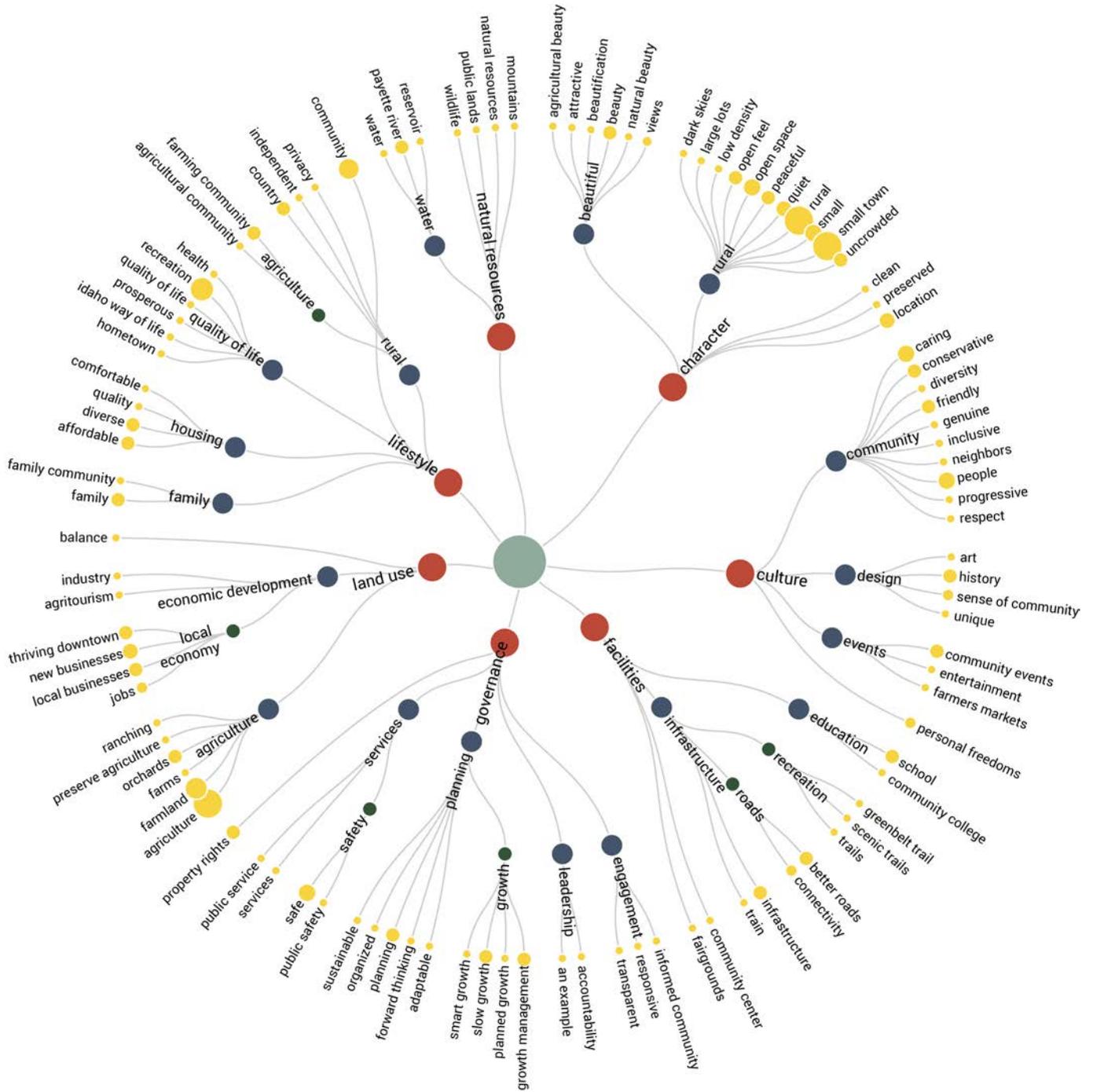
ONLINE KICKOFF SURVEY: SAMPLE COMMENTS

- “ Like the rural atmosphere and small town feel. Like the community events and activities that draw people together.”
- “ The natural beauty, the rural parts of the county, responsive public services, the historical sites.”
- “ I have always loved how the community comes together to help each other.”
- “ I love the quiet agricultural community I live in, the good people who live here, and the small town feel.”
- “ Proximity to Boise but still a 'rural' feel, soil fertility, access to ground water, access to recreation.”
- “ I would hope to see the best Farmlands still farmed, and small farms in the valley. I would like to see the limitation of residential development.”
- “ Growth is inevitable, hopefully we can retain the qualities that make it a great place to live.”



Analysis of Visioning Feedback

All written comments received were analyzed, summarized, and categorized to help identify the core values and visioning topics. The chart below shows part of the comment management and analysis process.



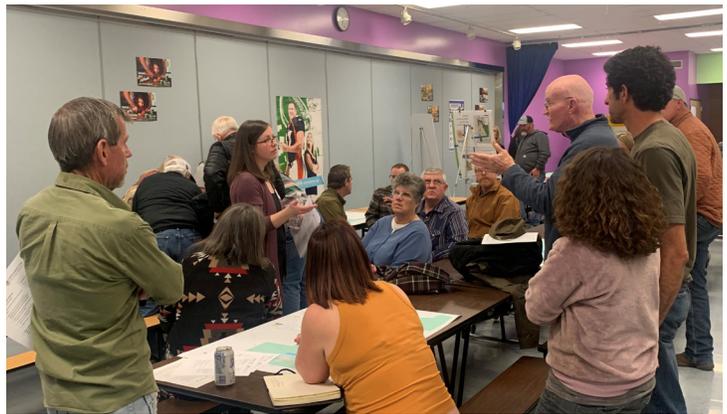
CHOICES FEEDBACK

Community members were invited to participate and provide feedback on high-level policy and implementation opportunities and choices that support the Vision for Gem’s future. This outreach included an in-person workshop held at a local elementary school, a virtual workshop via Zoom, and an online questionnaire.

The topics included land use, housing, economy, transportation and infrastructure, historic preservation, and recreation agriculture and natural resources. Educational information about each choice should be presented and discussed at community workshops, allowing participants to

learn about the tradeoffs and potential benefits that could result from each choice.

This phase of outreach was designed to identify community-supported strategies and direction that will be translated into goals, policies, and implementation actions for the Comprehensive Plan. The public feedback and conversations from these events, as well as from the feedback received through the online questionnaire, provided a clear direction for the plan and steered development of the policies and actions in the final Comprehensive Plan.



Community participation during the Opportunities Workshop

3. ENVISIONING THE FUTURE



VISION

Vision for Gem County

Gem County is a community of caring and friendly neighbors working together to preserve and foster our beautiful rural landscapes and quality of life.

Together we will:

- ◇ ***Preserve agricultural land***
- ◇ ***Honor our rural heritage***
- ◇ ***Coordinate responsible growth***
- ◇ ***Support a resilient local economy***
- ◇ ***Build and maintain reliable infrastructure***
- ◇ ***Enable quality affordable housing***
- ◇ ***Invest in opportunities for all generations***
- ◇ ***Reinforce healthy lifestyles and recreation***
- ◇ ***Protect our open space and natural resources***

The Vision represents the aspirational outlook for the future of Gem County. It establishes the direction that all the goals, policies, and actions work towards.

Importance of the Vision

The Gem County Vision is an aspirational statement that reaffirms a desire to preserve the character and culture of the County. It supports the community's core values and guides priorities for the future. Developing a cohesive vision for Gem County's future offers an opportunity for community members to be heard—and provides assurance that the County's plan for the future reflects a collaborative vision. The Gem County Vision represents their strong voice about what they value in this community and an equally strong mandate for what they want for the future.



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan embodies the community vision, illustrating the desired mix, character, and location of future land uses. The Future Land Uses for unincorporated Gem County are shown on the Future Land Use Map. Each Future Land Use Category, described below, includes defining characteristics, primary and secondary uses, and a guideline for residential density.

The land use element is based on the following objectives:

- **Respect for the responsibilities and rights of land ownership**
- **Location of commercial, industrial or office uses along high-volume traffic corridors**
- **Designating land for urban expansion**
- **Recognizing the unique living qualities and rural lifestyle character of Letha, Montour, Pearl, Sweet, and Ola**
- **Compatibility with the Emmett Municipal Airport in accordance with the City of Emmett Airport Master Plan**
- **Consideration for geological and physical constraints for land use**

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING

The Future Land Use Map and Category descriptions, coupled with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan, help direct development patterns and county-wide infrastructure improvements to achieve the overall community vision.

The Future Land Use Plan is advisory and does not inherently change the existing zoning of any property or the ability of landowners to continue existing legal uses consistent with the existing zoning or nonconforming uses.

Zoning refers to entitlements and requirements that regulate appropriate use, bulk, height, density, and other characteristics appropriate for a specific site.

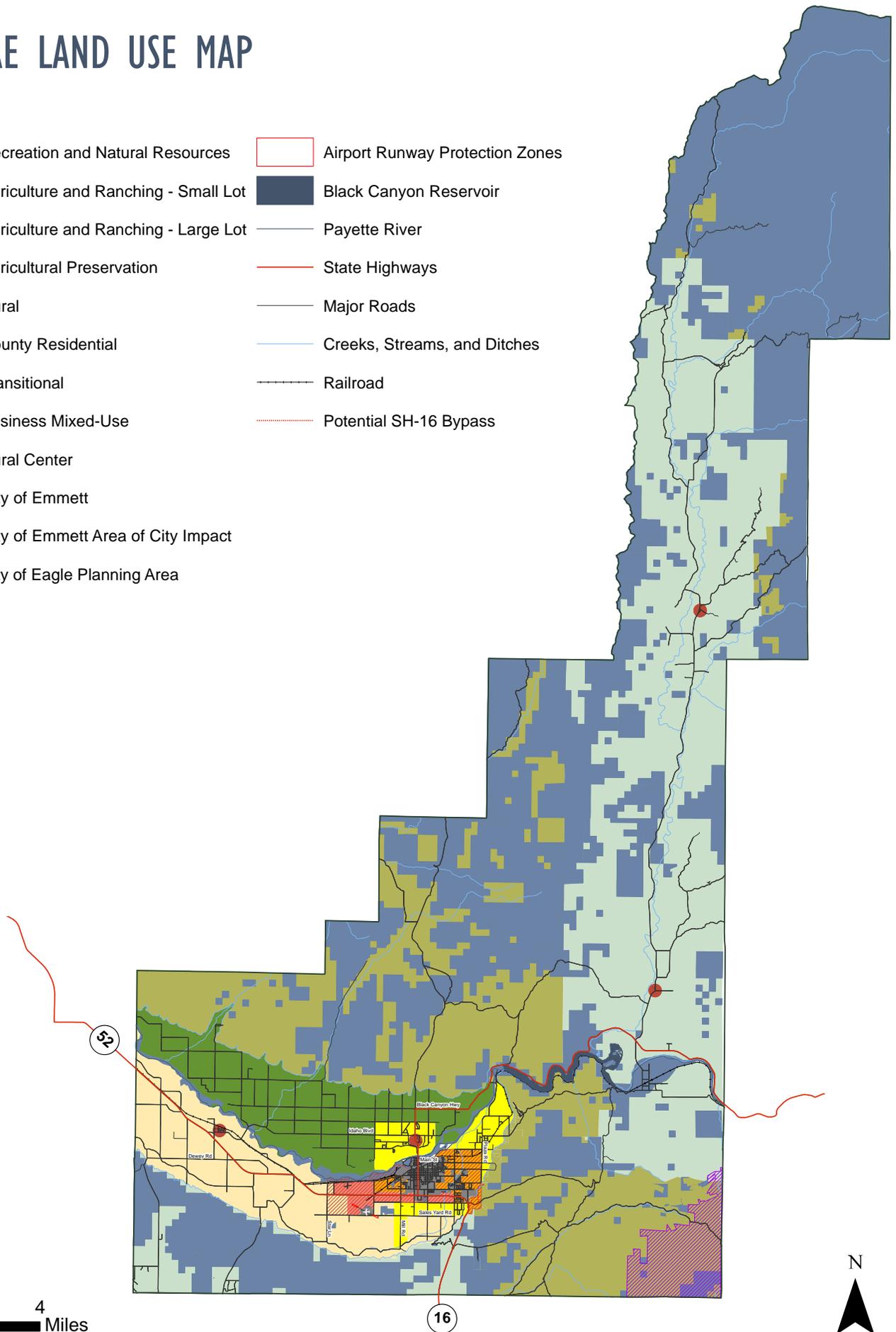
The general recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan form the basis for zoning and county code regulations and updates.

New building and development in Gem County is based upon the existing zoning. For example, if a property is zoned for a certain residential density or land use or if a property has rights granted those rights are not changed by this Comprehensive Plan or its policies. However, development applications must align with this Comprehensive Plan's goals, policies and Future Land Use Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Recreation and Natural Resources |  | Airport Runway Protection Zones |
|  | Agriculture and Ranching - Small Lot |  | Black Canyon Reservoir |
|  | Agriculture and Ranching - Large Lot |  | Payette River |
|  | Agricultural Preservation |  | State Highways |
|  | Rural |  | Major Roads |
|  | County Residential |  | Creeks, Streams, and Ditches |
|  | Transitional |  | Railroad |
|  | Business Mixed-Use |  | Potential SH-16 Bypass |
|  | Rural Center | | |
|  | City of Emmett | | |
|  | City of Emmett Area of City Impact | | |
|  | City of Eagle Planning Area | | |



0 1 2 4
Miles



FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Recreation and Natural Resources

This category includes publicly owned and conserved private lands used for resource conservation and uses/products (i.e. forestry, ranching) on federal, state, and local government-owned lands. Some public lands are open to public access and recreation. Uses in the Recreation and Natural Resource category may include resource uses (i.e. forestry and grazing), outdoor recreation on public lands, watershed protection, hazard mitigation, and conservation easements. Residential uses, research facilities, and public institution uses may be applicable with further consideration.

Agriculture and Ranching (Small Lot and Large Lot)

This category includes agricultural and rangeland uses on primarily non-irrigated, dryland that allow for diverse agricultural and ranching uses. These areas may be restrained by topography, infrastructure, and/or vehicular access and are intended to remain rural in nature. Gem County recognizes these areas as foundational to maintain the rural heritage and character of the County.

This category contains two sub areas that are differentiated by min lot sizes; Large Lot areas have a minimum lot size of 40 acres, and Small Lot areas have a 5 acre minimum lot size.

Agricultural Preservation

This category includes areas that historically have had prolific agriculture production and high quality soils for agriculture. These areas should be retained and protected for agricultural uses and should not be developed for other uses. Agricultural uses may include ranching, agritourism, conservation easements, and industrial/commercial uses that are directly supportive of on-site agricultural production. The minimum lot size is 40 acres.

Rural

This category includes a mix of low-density residential and agricultural development. Uses in this category may include large-lot residential, clustered residential developments, and conservation easements. Other uses such as agriculture, ranching, open space, ranchettes may also be appropriate for Rural designated lands. The minimum lot size is 5 acres.

County Residential

This category describes residential development outside of Emmett's AOCI. These areas should be closer to service connections, existing infrastructure, and supported by the Transportation Plan. The uses in the County Residential category may include large-lot residential and clustered residential. Agriculture, open space, public/quasi public, and educational uses may be appropriate as well. The minimum lot size is 2 acres.

Transitional

This land use category describes low-density residential areas within Emmett's AOCI. Until municipal services are extended to these areas, properties are not eligible for rezone applications and are encouraged to remain at lower densities. Any new development with the Emmett AOCI will be subject to the requirements set forth by the adopted intergovernmental agreement between Gem County and the City of Emmett. This will allow for a more efficient and cost-effective network of roadways, and sewer and water lines to be constructed upon future annexations. The uses may include large-lot residential, agriculture, and open space. Lot sizes are subject to current zoning.

Business Mixed Use

This category anticipates a variety of planned, compatible mixed uses, including commercial, light industrial, warehousing, office, public, and related land uses. These areas are unique in that they are accessible by arterials, and/or rail lines and/or the airport. The vision of these mixed-use areas, within the AOCI, is to allow commercial and light industrial uses without requiring a Special Use Permit as zoning allows. The business mixed use land use designation will most likely be an area that will need City services. Additional uses that may be considered include open space, public/quasi public educational, single-family residential, and residential mixed use.

Rural Center

This category includes community nodes that function as a service center for rural areas to support civic uses and basic needs of the community and do not require urban level facilities and services. Historic townsites, schools, gathering spaces, commercial areas and similar uses create a focal point and foster social and economic resiliency for a community within an otherwise residential, ranching, or agricultural area. Uses may include community and neighborhood retail, office and accommodations. Rural Centers are located in Ola, Sweet, Letha, and on the Bench, and generally cover a 1/4 mile radius from the center.

Area of City Impact and Planning Area Overlay

This category is an overlay land use that includes areas of the County that may see increased development as services and utilities are provided. This includes Emmett's Area of City Impact as well as the planning boundary of the City of Eagle in the southeast. As these municipalities decide to annex and/or extend service and utility infrastructure to these areas, development should follow the guidelines and regulations established through the municipalities' respective comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances. Properties in these areas are not eligible for rezone applications until annexed by the applicable municipality and are subject to current zoning.

EMMETT AREA OF CITY IMPACT

The Emmett Area of City Impact (AOCI) concerns those lands which surround the Emmett city limits. The AOCI generally extends from Plaza Road at the east, Cherry Lane and Sales Yard Road at the south, Star Lane at the west, and the Payette River corridor and Waterwheel Road at the north. As defined by [Idaho Code § 67-6526 AOCI](#), the AOCI should include those areas within a city's boundary of which should be anticipated to be annexed into that city at some point in the future.

Land uses and policies are critical to the efficient and successful implementation of both City and County goals. Development and subdivision standards within the AOCI is the result of negotiations between the City of Emmett and Gem County in accordance with State law. As established by the combined City/County Governing Boards, the Emmett AOCI is shown on the Future Land Use Map.

The boundary is determined jointly by the governing bodies of the City of Emmett and Gem County based on the existing and anticipated ability to serve the area with water, sewer, and other municipal services, trade area and geographic features. Any new development within the Emmett AOCI will be subject to the requirements set forth by the adopted intergovernmental agreement between Gem County and the City of Emmett.

The AOCI is expected to be the most urbanized area of Gem County. Buildout residential densities are expected to be higher in the AOCI due to access to municipal utility services. Until municipal services are extended to outlying parcels in the AOCI, properties are encouraged to remain at lower densities. This will allow for a more efficient and cost-effective network of roadways, and sewer and water lines to be constructed upon future annexations.

What is Clustered Development?

Clustered development is a land use pattern that groups residential development into a designated space to reserve a significant amount of space for continued agriculture or open space, in perpetuity. The reserved land would otherwise be allocated to individual home sites, often leading to sprawl or degradation of agricultural land due to development. Clustered subdivision development is an alternative method of land division that uses flexible lot sizes and location of typically single-family residences.

Clustered development can be applied to specific areas of the County that have high value to maintain agricultural land or natural open space, or as a development option across all areas of the County. As part of establishing this program in Gem County's Code, specific areas (or zoning categories) will need to be identified that would be best suitable for or benefit most from clustered development.

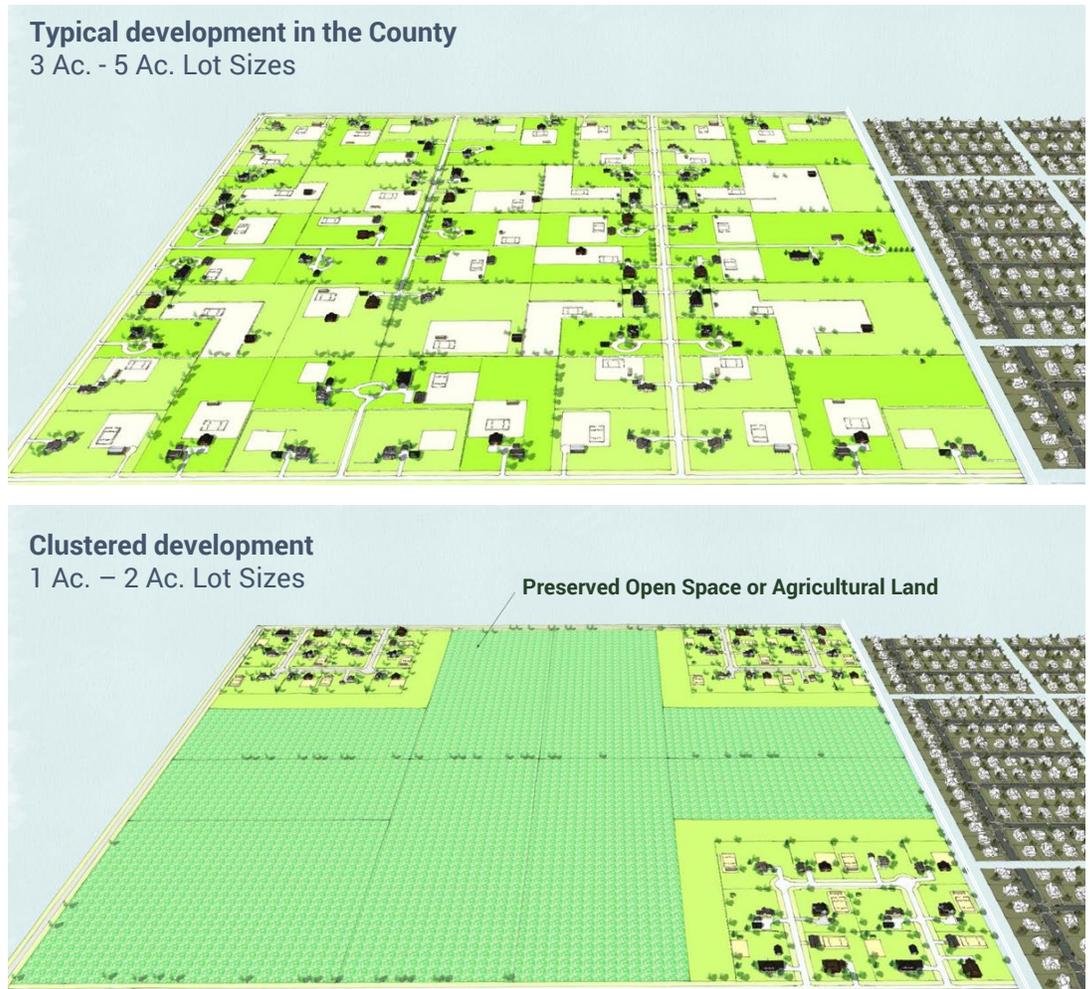
Clustered development maximizes the number of lots while also maximizing common amenities such as open space for the use of those living in the grouped housing area.

Cluster development protects open space by establishing the number of units allowed for each parcel independent of any of the minimum lot size requirements outlined in subdivision standards. Densities may remain the same, overall, however variable sizing of lots optimize the common open space.

Open space is the most common use created by clustered development and can be used in different ways:

- Exclusive use by residents (e.g., private trails and recreational areas)
- Preservation of agricultural land
- Protection of wildlife habitat

Local governments can encourage the non-exclusive use of open space in cluster development areas through its comprehensive plan and subdivision ordinances. Even if access to the preserved open space is limited, the community as a whole can share the overall benefits. Density bonuses could be offered as an incentive to cluster development and preserve agricultural land.



Example of typical residential development in Gem County and clustered development patterns.

GOALS AND POLICIES BY THEME

INTERPRETING THE GOALS AND POLICIES

In reading the Comprehensive Plan, it is important to understand that the goals, policies, and actions are limited to the extent that they are feasible and appropriate for the County to carry them out and to the extent legally permitted by Federal and State law. For example, policies and measures which indicate that the County will “provide,” “support,” “ensure,” or otherwise carry them out do not indicate an irreversible commitment of County funds or staff resources to those activities, but rather, that the County will support them when the County deems that it is financially feasible and appropriate to do so as set forth in the application ordinances. In some cases, the County will carry out various policies and measures by requiring development, infrastructure, and other projects to be consistent with the policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan. In other cases, the County Comprehensive Plan should inform items in the Capital Improvement Program, budget, or other implementation mechanisms, as the County deems appropriate.

Definitions

Goals

Goal statements are expressions of community ideals. They are broad directions that establish ideal future conditions toward which policies are focused.

Policies

Policies are intended to make statements that guide decision-making and give clear indication of intent. It is important to note that policies are guides for decision-makers, not decisions themselves. Policies must be clear to be useful. However, they may range in terms of commitment of resources, importance, and expected results.

Land Use, Community Design, and Property Rights

The goals and policies within this section are intended to promote the County’s desired land development pattern and character in a way that encourages preservation of open space and agricultural lands, manages growth in conjunction with infrastructure capacity, encourages a connected street network, and supports an efficient provision of public services.

Land Use Goal 1: Balance growth, property rights, rural character preservation, and fiscally efficient delivery of public services and infrastructure.

- A. Support development in locations that utilize existing and planned infrastructure and services and minimize impact on agricultural uses.
- B. Encourage clustering and compact development alternatives to minimize development impact and protect the rural character, especially if proposed development is far from available services and infrastructure.
- C. Anticipate infrastructure and public services with new development.

- D. Maintain and improve zoning regulations to provide greater overall predictability for landowners.
- E. Support small-scale and locally-serving non-residential and civic development in Rural Centers to preserve a sense of place and serve the daily needs of the unincorporated communities such as Ola, Sweet, and Letha.
- F. Discourage non-compatible commercial and industrial development within or adjacent to County Residential land use areas. (See the Future Land Use Map)

Land Use Goal 2: Increase intergovernmental cooperation through proactive, long-range planning.

- A. Continue cooperation with adjacent counties to ensure compatibility of land uses on private and public lands, transportation connections, and access to beneficial services and programs.
- B. Strengthen intergovernmental agreements to encourage coordination and cooperation with the City of Emmett and local and regional agencies.

Land Use Goal 3: Focus urban-level development within the City of Emmett’s Area of City Impact (AOCI).

- A. Coordinate with the City of Emmett on review and approval of development submittals within the AOI, to abide by the land use categories as illustrated in the Elevate Emmett Comprehensive Plan. Development within the AOI should achieve consistency with the Emmett Future Land Use Plan and identify provision of urban level services (water, sewer, urban streets, and urban fire protection).
- B. Coordinate shared standards for urban design, fee structure, transportation, and stormwater drainage within the AOI.

Land Use Goal 4: Guide the location, intensity, and pattern of desired development through the Future Land Use Map.

- A. Guide land use patterns as described in the Future Land Use Map and Categories that transition residential density outward from Emmett, conserve connected resource areas, and identify opportunities for non-residential uses based on criteria such as services and infrastructure connections.
- B. Align future rezoning of property to the Future Land Use Map.
- C. Regularly review the Future Land Use Map to ensure it maintains relevancy and update as necessary.

Housing

The goals and policies within this section are intended to strengthen housing development standards, facilitate adequate and affordable housing, and to encourage housing development in ways which conserve open space, reduce unnecessary costs, and provide housing choices. With this approach, Gem County has a way to guide the effects of growth without losing its sense of community.

Land for new housing is available throughout the County with a full range of zoning densities and available utilities. The Future Land Use Map identifies areas and densities to meet such growth. Clustering should be permitted at a higher density to allow for a more useful pattern of open space and recreation areas. The rural urban fringe and large ranchettes will remain a strong attraction for Gem County residents. Development policies and the specified AOCI will allow a managed transition from rural land to urban uses.

To conserve open space and agriculture land and guide the construction of new infrastructure in a cost-effective way, housing should be concentrated where there are services and infrastructure available.

Housing Goal I: Encourage a variety of housing types and developments to benefit all residents within the Gem County.

- A. Encourage the provision of quality housing with a range of price points.
- B. Support an open housing market free from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, family status, mental or physical handicap.
- C. Facilitate flexible and creative subdivision and housing developments such as clustered developments that allow for reduce lot sizes in exchange for shared and preserved open space, flood plain protection, or buffering.
- D. Encourage provisions for low-cost, affordable, and workforce housing, the siting of manufactured/mobile homes in subdivisions and on individual lots.
- E. Encourage rural residential and small ranchette type development in areas where it is compatible with existing agricultural and ranching development.
- F. Support housing developments within the County Residential land use areas that are closer to employment, transportation, schools, and services. (See the Future Land Use Map)
- G. Support properties within Emmett's AOCI and adjacent to city limits to annex for services and utilities.

Economic Development

An important ingredient to a desirable quality of life for county residents, businesses, and property owners, is a robust, prospering local economy. Ideally, that prosperity would be accessible to, and enjoyed by, residents across Gem County’s many places and people.

The Plan’s vision touches on the economic realm in several ways—specifically reflecting the community’s desire for economic resilience, access to opportunity across generations, and preservation of rural and agricultural heritage. Almost every subject area considered in this plan—from housing to land use, to transportation and education—all play critical interlinking roles in keeping the County moving towards economic success.

Given that economic prosperity is ultimately tied to private sector ideas and efforts, the role of the County beyond providing for those basic groundwork elements is naturally somewhat limited. There are, however, some important goals and policies that the County can adopt to help facilitate and align economic development to ensure movement towards that shared vision stays on track

Economic Development Goal 1: Support farm and food-based businesses.

- A. Consider the trade-offs between development that eliminates existing farmland against that permanent agricultural loss.
- B. Support and encourage agritourism and secondary activities on farming properties that may attract visitors with an interest in the agricultural products, activities, and lifestyle.
- C. Actively promote innovation, entrepreneurial activities, and value-added food production or technological innovations in farm/food-based enterprises.

Economic Development Goal 2: Foster a resilient regional economy.

- A. Encourage business expansions or relocations that contribute to the diversity of industries active within Gem County.
- B. Encourage business creation or expansion for firms or industries with a focus on sustainability to reduce irreversible negative impacts to the land or community.
- C. Encourage local, within-county supply chain relationships by investing in important infrastructure linkages and building relationships within the local business community.

Economic Development Goal 3: Prioritize home-grown economic growth and success.

- A. Work with existing local businesses and local start-up entrepreneurs to facilitate facility expansion or development of new facilities.
- B. Collaborate with existing business owners to help develop the necessary workforce and retain resident employees.
- C. Support flexible work environments such as an incubator-type facility and organization where entrepreneurs can experiment with equipment, learn new skills, exchange ideas, and build business relationships in a low-risk environment.

Economic Development Goal 4: Create an efficient, predictable, and transparent environment to coordinate projects that impact both the County and the City of Emmett.

- A. Collaborate with the City of Emmett on procedures and evaluation criteria to help guide prospective developers considering projects within Emmett’s AOCI.
- B. Solicit best-practices input from other City/County examples in Idaho and beyond.

Historic and Cultural Resources

The cultural heritage of Gem County is rich and diverse. This is manifested not only by oral and written record, but also by many existing buildings and historic sites. Sites like the Gem County Courthouse, the Ola school house and Oregon Short Line Railway Depot represent critical time periods that define how life in Gem County operated in the past, and how historic buildings can contribute greatly to the modern day.

The goals and policies below were developed through the parallel process of the Gem County Historic Preservation Plan (Appendix D). They aim to celebrate the existing historic sites that make Gem County unique and inform methods of preservation that benefit present and future generations.

Historic Preservation Goal 1: Increase public awareness of historic resources and preservation opportunities.

- A. Provide public programs to increase community awareness of the economic and aesthetic value of Gem County's historically significant places.
- B. Establish a community-wide network to promote preservation.
- C. Make resources for historic preservation available to the public by integrating them into established community gathering places.

Historic Preservation Goal 2: Celebrate Gem County's historic resources.

- A. Identify Emmett Historic Central Business District with plaques, street light banners, or monuments at the boundary.
- B. Create walking, driving, or virtual tours and other special events within the Emmett Historic Central Business District and to other historic areas in the County.
- C. Promote thematic branding of preservation based off Gem County's unique history.

Historic Preservation Goal 3: Prioritize preservation efforts.

- A. Coordinate preservation efforts between Gem County, City of Emmett, local organizations, and private residents.
- B. Develop a quantifiable system by which decision makers can assess historic preservation and rehabilitation efforts.
- C. Consider revising the County's Zoning Code to incentivize redevelopment of historic properties while maintaining their historic character.
- D. Consider County, state, federal, and non-profit funding incentives.
- E. Consider expanding historic preservation to include unique geographies and aspects of the landscape which have been altered by human activity.
- F. Consider expanding the roles and responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

Historic Preservation Goal 4: Identify and evaluate historic properties.

- A. Identify data gaps within the inventory of historic properties.
- B. Work with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify and evaluate resources for National Register eligibility.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure creates the links that connect Gem County residents, visitors, and businesses. As such, it helps the County achieve its goals across multiple topics. A well designed and maintained transportation system promotes safe and efficient mobility.

In Gem County, the transportation network is shared by private vehicles, agricultural equipment, freight vehicles, and people walking, biking, and even riding horses. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) District 3 and the Gem County Road and Bridge Department are the primary public agencies responsible for planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining the transportation network in Gem County, in addition to the City of Emmett, which is responsible for most roads within its limits. Regional coordination amongst these agencies is crucial to achieve the County's goals and providing the best service to its residents. Gem County will work closely with Idaho Transportation Department in obtaining these goals where appropriate and applicable.

Building from the Future Land Uses, the transportation goals and strategies described in this section address how these elements interact to enhance the quality of life for Gem County residents.

Transportation Goal 1: Maintain existing assets in a state of good repair.

Maintaining existing transportation assets, including roads, bridges, sidewalks, pathways, signs, etc. in a state of good repair is a top priority for Gem County residents.

- A. Prioritize maintaining existing infrastructure over building new infrastructure, such as new roads or additional lanes.
- B. Strategically employ preventative maintenance to maximize maintenance funds.
- C. Coordinate with all utility stakeholders for excavation activities on or adjacent to roadways to prevent unnecessary expense and disruption and include the necessary conduit for fiber optic or other communications cabling as feasible.
- D. Lobby the Idaho State Legislature to place Counties on equal footing for transportation funding as highway districts. Explore the potential formation of a highway district to obtain greater access to maintenance funding if this is not successful.
- E. Evaluate and update the Development Impact Fee Program as necessary.

Transportation Goal 2: Reduce fatalities and serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes.

County arterial roads are critical corridors for the livability and economic vitality of Gem County. Ensuring that corridors like Plaza Road, Main Street, Black Canyon Highway, Dewey Road, Sweet Ola Highway, Substation Road, Mill Road, El Paso Road, Little Freezeout Road, and others are safe for all users through speed, volume, and access management is important to continuing the Gem County way of life.

- A. Encourage appropriate vehicular speeds through roadway design, and if necessary, traffic calming measures.
- B. Support Complete Streets principles where the transportation system is designed, constructed, and maintained to be safe, efficient, convenient, and accessible for all users of all modes, ages, and abilities.
- C. Ensure that all new intersections of two roads functionally classified as a collector or higher consider safety as one of the key metrics for determining the proposed intersection control (e.g., signal, all-way or two-way stop control).

Transportation Goal 3: Provide safe and accessible pathway connections.

Gem County residents desire for people of all ages and abilities to be able to travel safely and comfortably throughout the community to access their essential destinations. Shared use paths, where people can walk, run, bike, and roll are important parts of the transportation system in Gem County, particularly along the Payette River.

- A. Prioritize pathways connecting with key destinations, such as schools, commercial areas, and the Fairgrounds.
- B. Preserve, maintain, and construct a linear park and pathway along the Payette River that increases water access, while providing a safe and comfortable facility for walking, rolling, and biking.
- C. Encourage Pathway Easements along County roads and explore funding options to construct pathways along these easements.
- D. Collaborate with the City of Emmett to promote inter-jurisdictional pathways.
- E. Assure that the land-use planning and approval process includes transportation related goals, policies, and actions.
- F. Collaborate with the City of Emmett to include city street standards in the AOCI agreement and propose street amenities (e.g. curb, gutter, sidewalk) with new development within Emmett's AOCI and within an appropriate distance of city limits.

Transportation Goal 4: Efficiently move people and freight.

As the County and surrounding area grows, the County will seek opportunities to improve the efficiency of the multimodal transportation system.

- A. Ensure that development and associated requirements are producing desired results and are consistent with any applicable Transportation Impact Study (TIS) requirements.
- B. Collaborate with the City of Emmett to ensure that Transportation Impact Study (TIS) requirements are aligned.
- C. Coordinate with the Idaho North & Pacific Railroad (INPR) to plan for and support freight and passenger rail service.
- D. Develop and regularly update the Transportation Plan illustrating desired future roadway connections and pathways. Continue to update functional classification as part of the Transportation Plan as development occurs.
- E. Collaborate with the City of Emmett and ITD to implement Gem County Transportation Plan strategies for connecting SH-16 bypass east of Emmett that is compatible with the County and City's Future Land Use Maps.
- F. Communicate with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), City of Emmett, and other regional partners on local planning efforts.
- G. Support ITD's planning work along the SH-16 corridor as so much as it promotes the overall goals of this Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

Public Facilities, Utilities, and Education

Facilities like schools, parks, libraries, and hospitals contribute to the identity of a community and its quality of life. As such, these facilities are important considerations for long-term planning and Gem County is committed to maintaining desired levels of service where applicable, maximizing the existing infrastructure, and being cost efficient. Access to healthcare is a priority for Gem County to be a healthy and resilient community. Public facilities and utilities are also critically important to economic development and should be improved or expanded where possible to accommodate expected growth.

These goals and policies provide guidance to identify future needs for public facilities and their locational requirements. They do not provide specific locations, the necessary equipment acquisition, personnel needs or other service-related expenditures. While it is important to plan for public facilities, it is also important for Gem County to remain flexible so it can respond to growth and service needs in a fiscally sustainable manner and provide services when and where they are needed.

Through its Area of City Impact Agreement with Gem County, the City of Emmett has the responsibility to plan for and ultimately provide adequate urban services to meet the demand for urbanization within the Impact Area. While transportation and some service systems have potential deficiencies, they are capable of expansion to meet the anticipated needs of the Area of City Impact population as annexations occur.

Public Facilities Goal 1: Coordinate with utility and communication services to keep pace with demand and meet the needs of residents.

- A. Establish criteria to identify general locations for new facilities and areas where services can be expanded which best serve a growing population.
- B. Support the expansion of and accessibility to high-speed internet and broadband in rural areas.
- C. Support siting of utility corridors within identified or designated transportation corridors.
- D. Promote conservation of energy through support of public education, incentives, and other conservation tools.
- E. Recognize other types and sources of energy, beyond the existing electrical infrastructure have a role to play in Gem County's future (e.g. solar, wind, gas).

Public Facilities Goal 2: Ensure residents are adequately served by emergency services.

- A. Support new standard subdivision developments to document access to fire protection and medical emergency services.
- B. Ensure law enforcement is able to serve new developments and has adequate access.
- C. Discourage higher density development in places far from emergency services.

Public Facilities Goal 3: Support and coordinate educational opportunities for residents of all ages.

- A. Continue to coordinate and partner with education providers on growth expectations, land use planning, transportation infrastructure, facility needs, and connectivity.
- B. Collaborate with the Emmett Independent School District to support school planning for shared civic and community facilities and access.
- C. Partner with Emmett Independent School District to establish Safe Routes to School program for students to safely walk or ride bikes to school.
- D. Invite school districts and private school providers to review and comment on potential impacts from development proposals/projects in their vicinity.
- E. Expand partnerships with vocational, technical, and university programs.

Recreation and Open Spaces

Gem County's rural environment with wide open spaces and recreation is a contributing factor to the quality of life here. The intent of the recreation and open spaces goals and policies is to establish a framework of priorities for open space preservation, access to recreational facilities and amenities, and the creation of new or expanded recreation opportunities where possible. With a growing community, there will be an increased demand for access to recreation and open space.

Expansion of recreation and open space areas often entails the acquisition and development of land, as well as the continued funding and maintenance of ongoing operations and facilities. The parks at or near the Black Canyon Reservoir, under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), a federal agency, supplement locally based recreational facilities by providing recreation for the community and the surrounding region.

Recreation and Open Space Goal 1: Expand opportunities and facilities for recreation, exercise, relaxation, and connection with nature.

- A. Expand existing trail system with new connections, trailheads, and trails for a variety of non-motorized users, including equestrian use.
- B. Evaluate the feasibility of rails-to-trails programs and locations.
- C. Partner with the Gem County Recreation District and City of Emmett in planning and provision of regional recreational facilities.
- D. Encourage dedication and integration of natural open space or park space in new developments.
- E. Continue to improve and expand the County Fairgrounds and Rodeo Arena to enhance their use and enjoyment.
- F. Continue to maintain Gem Island Sports Complex with regard to the limitations of development in the designated floodway.
- G. Increase lighting and visibility on trails.
- H. Support other governmental entities, private sector, and community service clubs' involvement in the acquisition and development of land for recreation and open spaces.

Recreation and Open Space Goal 2: Preserve open space and recreation access surrounding the Payette River.

- A. Consider expanding trail system along the Payette River and increase river access points.
- B. Prioritize the acquisition of available lands surrounding the Payette River to preserve as natural open space.
- C. Consider developing a recreation area /focal point specifically tied to easy access to the Payette River, which supports safe and healthy activities for residents and guests of all ages.

Recreation and Open Space Goal 3: Increase access to public land while decreasing public trespassing on private land.

- A. Increase public education and awareness of recreation etiquette by providing information on trailheads and how to identify public spaces versus private space.
- B. Collaborate with public and private land management agencies to improve and increase recreation access points (trailheads campgrounds etc.), signage, and available maps.

Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Hazardous Areas

It is critical to plan for the wise use of Gem County's natural resources, mitigate potential hazards to people and property, and ensure the best possible support and opportunities for continued agricultural operations.

Residents of Gem County treasure the beauty of their surroundings: the Payette River, Sehewoki'i Newenee'an Katete Butte and Little Butte, creeks, irrigation canals, agricultural and ranching lands, clean air, and views of mountain peaks on the horizon. The community values living in a place that is in harmony with these natural beauties and seeks to build the future with these in mind.

The goals and policies in this section are intended to ensure continued preservation of the natural resources and agricultural areas that our community treasures and to identify opportunities to mitigate potential impacts from natural hazards.

Natural Resources Goal 1: Maintain healthy and high-quality natural resources, wildlife habitat, and ecosystems.

- A. Coordinate with USFS, USFW, FEMA, BOR, Idaho Fish and Game, etc. to protect and conserve important natural resources.
- B. Protect and mitigate development impacts to natural open space, wildlife habitat, and sensitive lands through sensitive area standards
- C. Mitigate development impact on scenic views through ridgeline protection standards.
- D. Implement dark sky standards to minimize impacts of excess lighting and preserving Gem County's rural character.

Natural Resources Goal 2: Responsibly manage limited water resources and water quality.

- A. Support drought adaptation, water conservation and efficiency measures for responsible use of limited water resources.
- B. Encourage new subdivisions to assess both the immediate and long-term cumulative impacts on water quantity and quality.
- C. Review and update development regulations to define and strengthen water usage standards.
- D. Collaborate with regional partners and the City of Emmett on water conservation initiatives.
- E. Coordinate with Southwest District Health to determine appropriate densities and setback standards for individual septic systems.

Natural Resources Goal 3: Protect watershed, waterways, and riparian areas to maintain water quality, wildlife habitat, flood protection, and other critical environmental functions.

- A. Preserve the natural beauty and ecosystems of the Payette River, Black Canyon Reservoir, Butte Creek and other waterways and lands abutting these water amenities.
- B. Promote land use and management practices that maintain, restore, and enhance natural ecologic, biological, and geologic function of watersheds, including protection of river corridor ecosystems and soil quality.
- C. Mitigate potential flood damage through flood control projects that maintain ecologic and geologic function of streams and rivers.

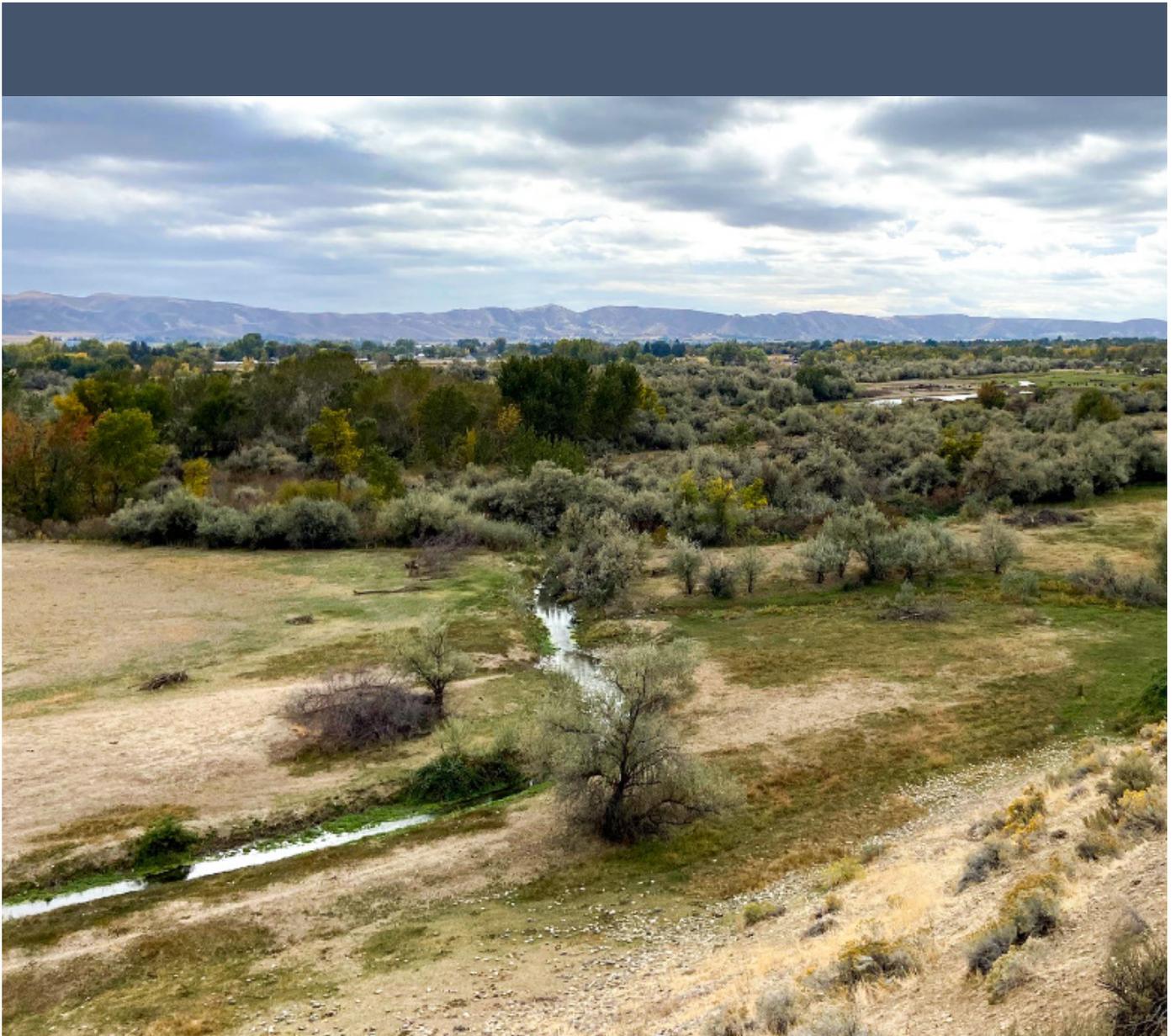
Agriculture Goal I: Sustain existing agricultural, farm, and ranch lands.

- A. Create policies that protect farm and ranch lands from incompatible uses that would adversely affect the long-term economic viability of the agriculture within the County.
- B. Coordinate with private landowners and local, state, and federal land management agencies to improve agricultural land management.
- C. Identify compatible land uses that support continued agricultural operations and update the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance accordingly.
- D. Support flexibility in land uses in agricultural areas such as produce stands, truck farms, event venues, agritourism, seasonal activities, and worker housing.
- E. Discourage the development of highly productive agricultural lands and redirect non-agricultural uses to locate where not suitable for large-scale farming. (See Agricultural Preservation and Agriculture & Ranching - Large Lot land uses in the Future Land Use Map.)
- F. Support programs which encourage the retention of highly productive agricultural lands within the Agricultural Preservation land use area. (See the Future Land Use Map)
- G. Ease the tax burden and operational costs for farms and ranches.

Hazardous Areas Goal I: Mitigate and adapt to impacts from natural hazards.

- A. Reference and implement the Gem County All Hazard Mitigation Plan in all public and private development activities.
- B. Manage or limit development activity in known hazardous areas; take steps to identify hazards and to minimize the public's exposure to these hazards.
- C. Use Wildland-Urban Interface best practices in areas prone to wildfires and/or in high wildfire risk zones.
- D. Promote sustainable best management practices in hazard areas that protect ecosystem values while minimizing catastrophic damage to life and property.

4. IMPLEMENTATION & PLAN MANAGEMENT



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

One of the primary intents of the Plan is to provide information, guidance, and direction for future development in the County. The County's decision-makers have broad discretion in interpreting the Comprehensive Plan and its purposes and are allowed to weigh and balance the various goals and policies when applying them.

Implementation of and alignment with the Plan's Future Land Use Plan and goals and policies will be key considerations during review of future development proposals. As projects are reviewed and competing issues arise, it will be the responsibility of the approving authority to balance these needs to meet the intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

PRIORITY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In addition to use in development review, this Plan will be used to its fullest practical and applicable extent, as a guide to county-initiated regulatory changes, and with other projects, programs, and relevant funding choices.

It is expected that the highest priority recommendations of this Plan will be considered during development of annual budgets and multi-year capital improvement programs.

COUNTY CODE AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

A critical and essential role of this document is to serve as a framework for future updates of the County Code including the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, both in the form of comprehensive updates and targeted revisions. In addition to the provisions of County Code most pertinent to land use, other proposed changes to Code should be evaluated for consistency with this Plan, when relevant and applicable.

Examples of revisions could include:

- **Allow for lot size averaging and clustered developments** (i.e. 5 lots per 50 acres vs 10 acre minimum lots).
- **Develop sensitive area standards** to protect and mitigate development impacts to natural open space, wildlife habitat, and sensitive lands. Include standards for scenic viewshed protection and dark skies lighting.
- **Establish requirements for standard subdivisions** to dedicate natural open space or park space as part of new residential development.
- **Define and strengthen water usage standards.**
- **Evaluate an Agricultural District concept and reevaluate zoning districts and property tax structure** to support perpetual farming and agricultural uses in specific areas.
- **Create shared standards for urban design, fee structure, transportation, and stormwater drainage within the AOCI.**
- **Develop a Dark Skies Ordinance** to minimize impacts of excess lighting while maintaining a safe level of visibility at night.
- **Develop ridgeline protection standards** to mitigate development impact on scenic views.

NEW STUDIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

The Comprehensive Plan's vision and goals can be fortified and realized through the creation of additional plans, studies, and programs.

Examples of these efforts could include:

- **Develop a Water Supply and Quality Study** to understand the supported densities, water use thresholds and risks to water quality that will guide land use decisions in the future.
- **Develop and regularly update a Master Street Map** illustrating desired future roadway connections and pathways. Continue to update functional classification as part of the Master Street Map as development occurs.
- **Develop a Local Road Safety Plan**, as recommended by the Federal Highway Administration, that identifies projects with the greatest potential to improve safety performance and increase funding opportunities for those projects. This is an effective strategy to improve local road safety for all users, while supporting the goals of the Statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- **Develop a Public Lands Etiquette Plan** in coordination with public land management agencies to promote and increase public land access points, educate the public on appropriate access locations, and develop signage.
- **Develop a Gem County Trails and Pathways Master Plan** that prioritize connections between key destinations and assesses feasibility of Rails-to-Trails facilities, Safe Routes to School Initiatives, trails for the Payette River, and timing, partnerships, and funding sources for future trails projects.
- **Create a Greenbelt Program** to preserve, maintain, and construct a linear park and pathway along the Payette River.
- **Update the intergovernmental agreement** with the City of Emmett to reflect the changed AOCI boundary, and development review process.

NEW POLICIES

In addition to the goals and policies included in this Comprehensive Plan, Gem County can formalize additional policies through ordinances and regulations.

Examples of new policies could include:

- **Develop a Dig Once Policy and Dark Fiber Policy** to coordinate excavation activities and include the necessary conduit for fiber optic or other communications cabling on or adjacent to roadways to prevent unnecessary expense and disruption.
- **Develop a Best Value First Asset Management Policy** to strategically employ preventative maintenance to maximize maintenance funds.
- **Develop an Access Management Policy** to apply on key corridors in the County.
- **Adopt a Slow Streets Policy** to encourage appropriate vehicular speeds through roadway design, and if necessary, traffic calming measures.
- **Adopt a Complete Streets Policy**, for example: "We envision a Gem County where the transportation system is designed, constructed, and maintained to be safe, efficient, convenient, and accessible for all users of all modes, ages, and abilities."
- **Adopt an Intersection Control Evaluation Policy** that requires that all new intersections of two roads functionally classified as a collector or higher consider safety as one of the key metrics for determining the proposed intersection control (e.g., roundabout, signal, all-way or two-way stop control).

PLAN MANAGEMENT

AMENDING THE PLAN

The Idaho State Land Use Planning Act provides for amendment(s) and/or revision(s) to the Plan. Any group or person may petition the Gem County Planning and Zoning Commission for a plan amendment at any time. On its own initiative the Gem County Planning and Zoning Commission may also originate an amendment or revision to the Plan.

Recognizing the need for the Comprehensive Plan to remain current and reflective of local issues and policies, State law allows the County to amend the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it is consistent with the conditions, values, expectations, and needs of its residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.

While specific findings may be applied on a project-by-project basis, at a minimum the following standard findings shall be made for each proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Plan Amendment Criteria

- **The amendment is deemed to be in the public interest and in the best interest of Gem County;**
- **The amendment is consistent and/or compatible with the rest of the Comprehensive Plan;**
- **The potential impacts of the amendment have been assessed and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.**

ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS

An annual report on the Comprehensive Plan performance and implementation is expected to be prepared and presented to the Board of County Commissioners. This report will evaluate whether or not objectives are being achieved by reporting on progress on recommended major county initiatives, experience with the development review process, and recommendations for realignment of strategic county priorities related to the Plan.

UPDATING THE PLAN

Plan updates provide an opportunity to more systematically evaluate the content of Comprehensive Plan for ongoing relevancy. This update process allows the County to reconfirm the Plan's vision and direction with the community as recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission and directed by the Board of County Commissioners.

A limited but systematic update is recommended within 5 to 10 years of adoption, or earlier if sufficient need is indicated based on annual reporting and Plan experience.

Plan Updates are not expected to alter the overall organization and structure of the Plan. Moreover, periodic updates should serve to prolong the useful and relevant life of this document and extend the period before which a more comprehensive and complete revamping of the document is deemed necessary.

Minor changes or revisions to the Plan's text, figures, or maps, may be processed administratively to reflect updated information or grammatical corrections, provided that these changes do not modify the intent or substantive content of the document, as adopted.

A. APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access Management: Access management is the process that provides for and manages vehicular access to land development adjacent to a road system, while simultaneously preserving the flow of traffic on the road system to ensure safety, capacity, and speed.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU): see Secondary Dwelling Unit (SDU)

Active Recreation: Recreational activities that require the use of organized play areas, such as playing fields, swimming pools, and basketball courts. Contrasted to “passive recreation” which does not require the use of such areas.

Affordable Housing: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defined affordable housing as housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities, rent or mortgage.

Agritourism: Any activity, project or program that encourages people to visit working farms or ranches for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the farm’s or ranch’s activities. It is often used as a business strategy to promote products of the farm or ranch and to generate additional income on the farm or ranch.

Airport Influence Area: An area that recognizes the benefits and potentially adverse impacts that occur within certain distances from public aviation facilities and that provides a policy framework to minimize these impacts as well as protect the safety and efficiency of aircraft operations.

Amendment: A formal change or revision to the Comprehensive Plan, including either the Plan’s text or its maps.

Annexation: The process by which land is added to the City of Emmett in accordance with Idaho Code § 50-222.

Area of City Impact (AOCI): The Local Planning Act requires that cities adopt a map identifying an area of city impact within the unincorporated area of the county. Within this planning area, the city either provides or may have the potential to provide urban services.

Arterial Highway: A major thoroughfare, used primarily for through traffic rather than for access to adjacent land, that is characterized by high vehicular capacity and continually of movement.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT): The total traffic column during a given period (from 1 to 364 days) divided by the number of days in that period.

Capital Improvement Programs (CIP): A mechanism within government for identifying, financing, scheduling, and constructing significant public improvements.

Clustering: also known as clustered development, this is a provision under planned unit development standards or subdivision standards to allow reduced lot sizes in exchange for open space, flood way protection, or buffering.

Corridor: A broad geographical band that follows a general directional flow connecting major sources of trips that may contain a number of streets, highways and transit route alignments.

Collector Roads: In rural areas, routes serving intra-county, rather than statewide travel. In urban areas, streets providing direct access to neighborhoods as well as direct access to arterials.

Rural Centers: All communities within the Gem Community, whether incorporated or not, such as Emmett, Letha, Ola, and Sweet.

Conservation Easement: A legal agreement between a private landowner and a municipal agency or a qualified, not-for-profit corporation to restrict the development, management, or use of the land.

Density: The ratio of residential units on an acre of land.

Development: Any man-made change in improved and unimproved real estate outside of public rights-of-way, including but not limited to buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation, drilling operations or storage of equipment or materials.

Development Impact Fee: A payment of money imposed as condition of development approval to pay for a proportionate share of the costs of system improvements needed to serve the development pursuant to Idaho Code § 67-8201 et seq.. The term does not include the following:

- A. A charge or fee to pay the administrative plan review, or inspection cost associated with permits required for development;
- B. Connection or hookup charges;
- C. Availability charges for drainage, sewer, water or transportation charges for services provided directly to the development; or
- D. Amounts collected from a developer in a transaction in which the county has incurred expenses in constructing capital improvements for the development if the owner or developer has agreed to be financially responsible for the construction or installation of those capital improvements, unless a written agreement is made, pursuant to Idaho Code § 67-8209(3) as it may be amended, for credit or reimbursement.

Environmental Assessment (EA): Studies the project's impact on wildlife, wetlands, cultural resources farmland, water and air quality and other environmental issues.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): A Federal agency charged with protecting the natural resources on the nation.

Feasibility Study: A study about a project's feasibility. The study addresses issues including the project's benefits, costs, effectiveness, alternatives considered, analysis of alternative selection, environmental effects, public opinions, and other factors.

Floodplain: The channel and relatively flat area adjoining the channel of a natural stream or river that has been or may be covered by water during times of flood.

Geographic Information System (GIS): A system of digital information, organized in layers that can be applied to a specific geographic location to such things as population density, traffic volume, business development, etc.

Goal: A statement that expresses community ideals and broad directions that establish ideal future conditions toward which policies are focused.

Infill: The process of developing vacant or redeveloping under-used parcels within existing urban areas.

Overlay: An area with special standards and concerns and attentions.

Pathway: The term “pathway” in this Plan refers to improved, non-motorized travel corridors that are open to and accessible by the general public. They may or may not be located on property owned by a public entity but always provide legal access through easements, agreements, or ownership. For the purpose of this plan, pathways are distinguished from public sidewalks in that they are not attached to a curb or street and are typically wider.

Ranchette: a small-scale ranch or small rural farm, typically of only a few acres in size.

Runway Protection Zones (RPZ): Defined within the Emmett Municipal Airport Master Plan, the Runway Protection Zones are defined areas on the ground beyond the end of the runway that are maintained clear of incompatible objects and activity in order to protect persons and property from collision hazards.

Secondary Dwelling Unit (SDU): a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone (i.e., detached) single-family home. SDUs go by many different names throughout the U.S., including accessory dwelling units, accessory apartments, secondary suites, and granny flats.

Standard Subdivision: A subdivision of five (5) or more lots resulting from the standard subdivision procedures set forth in the Gem County Code. The standard subdivision procedures apply to all proposed subdivisions not entitled to use the minor subdivision process.

Traffic Counts: ITD monitors daily traffic and computes the average daily traffic (ADT) on the state highway system and on the vast majority of arterials and collectors off the state highway system. ITD also conducts detailed traffic studies for specific purposes, such as deciding whether a signal should be installed at a given intersection. A Rural Traffic Flow Map is published annually. It shows ADT on state highways at county lines, city limits, and junction of state highways. Traffic counts on local streets and highways must be generated locally (through ITD can serve as a central repository).

Value-Added: Value-added is the incremental value that is realized by the producer from an agricultural commodity or product as the result of a change in its physical state, differentiated production or marketing, as demonstrated in a business plan, product segregation, or the economic benefit realized from the production of farm or ranch-based renewable energy.

Vehicle Mile of Travel (VMT): A unit to measure vehicle travel made by a private vehicle, such as an automobile, van, pickup truck, or motorcycle. Each mile traveled is counted as one vehicle mile regardless of the number of persons in the vehicle.

Working River: a river that is used for things such as irrigation, recreation, water for livestock and wildlife, energy production, greenbelt, brown-belt, and pathway development for pedestrian and equestrian uses.

APPENDIX B: ENGAGEMENT SUMMARIES

KICKOFF EVENT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

A hybrid community event was held in mid-October at Emmett Middle School and on Zoom to kick off the Gem County Comprehensive Plan process with the community. Participants were asked to start thinking about what they love and value about Gem County but also what some of Gem’s biggest challenges are. The format for the event was an informal open house with a presentation and interactive activity with the planning consultant, Logan Simpson. Community members could attend in person or listen and participate remotely via Zoom.

This summary highlights the feedback received from the kickoff event activities, including the full Q&A that was asked during the event. Following the event, an online questionnaire was launched on [GemCounty.org](https://www.gemcounty.org) to mirror the event activities and extend the opportunity to participate to those that couldn’t participate at the event.

The full set of the public comments received is available upon request.

HOW WILL THE FEEDBACK BE USED?

This phase of outreach was designed to kick off the Comprehensive Plan process, inform the public about the planning process, and collect preliminary input on community values and desires for the future of Gem County. The public feedback and conversations from this event, as well as from the feedback received through the online questionnaire, help provide a clear understanding about what the community values and sees as a challenge. This information will frame the basis for a community-wide vision as well as the issues and opportunities that should be addressed in detail in Phase 2. Gem County encourages continued participation throughout the planning process—future engagement opportunities will be notified through the County’s website at [GemCounty.org](https://www.gemcounty.org).

EVENT DETAILS

Date and Time: October 13, 2021, from 5:00-7:00 PM with a presentation at 6PM

Location: Emmett Middle School (301 E 4th St, Emmett) and over Zoom

Participation: **36** members of the public signed in at the in-person Kickoff Open House though there may have been more attendees that didn’t sign in. **25** participants joined the Zoom link remotely for the presentation at 6PM. **148** complete responses were collected through the online questionnaire following the event.



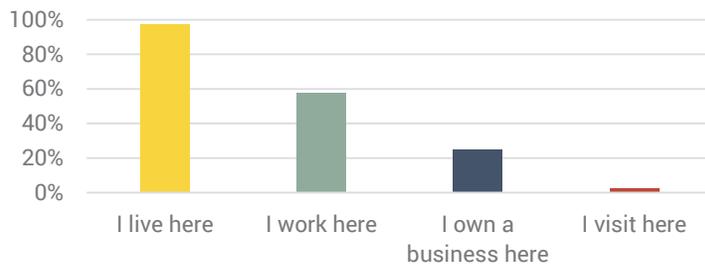
FEEDBACK FROM FACILITATED ACTIVITY

Who Participated?

98% live in Gem County

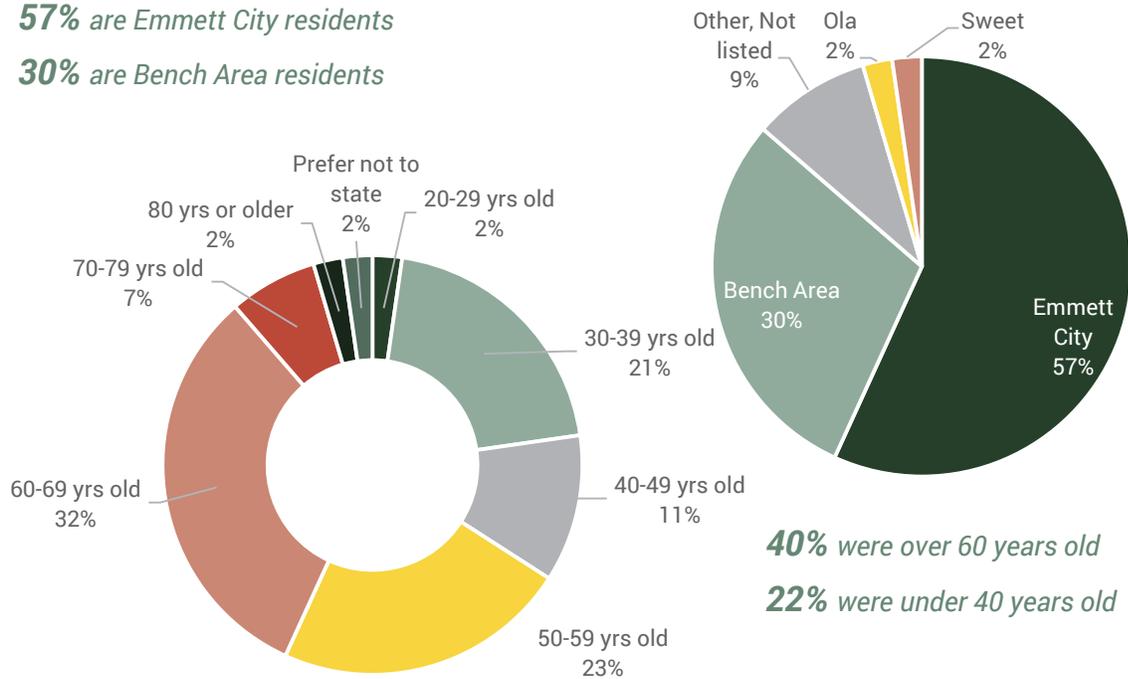
58% work in Gem County

25% own a business in Gem County



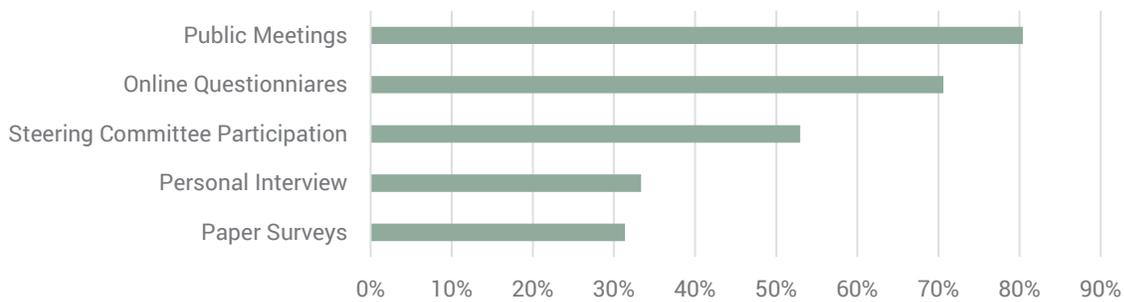
57% are Emmett City residents

30% are Bench Area residents



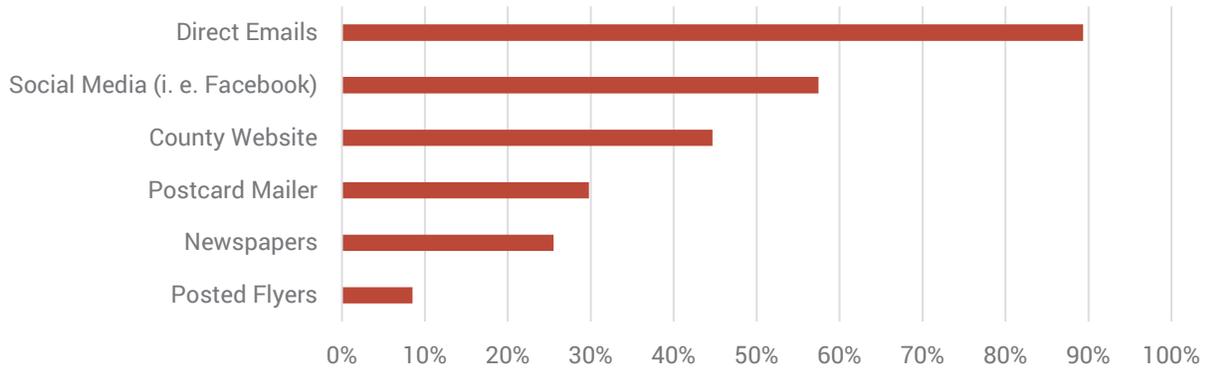
What is your preferred method to provide input or participate in the process?

Public Meetings and Online Questionnaires were identified as the preferred methods. A third of participants still appreciate personal interviews and paper surveys, too. Participants could select more than one option.



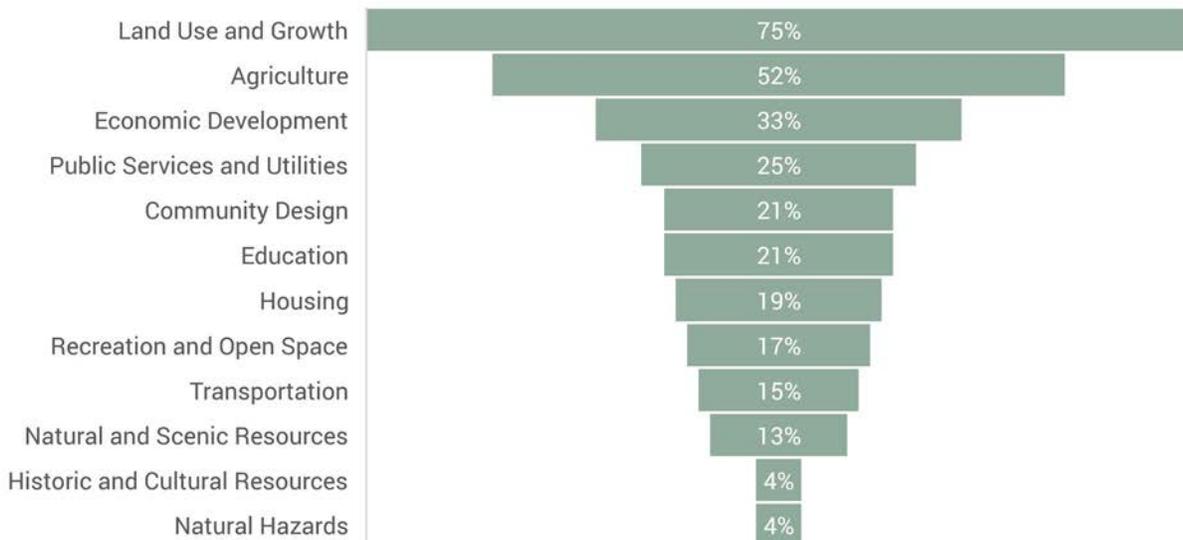
What is the best way for you to receive communication during this process?

Direct Emails were by far the most popular option to receive communication during this planning process. Just over half of participants also indicated that they might follow the process on social media. Participants could select more than one option.



What are your top 3 priorities to address in the new Comprehensive Plan?

These results indicate that every topic is a priority for someone, though Land Use and Growth are a priority for most people and Agriculture is a priority for more than half of participants. All topics will be addressed in the planning process.



OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK SUMMARY

What Do You Love Most About Gem County?

Many participants indicated that they love the people, sense of community, and friendliness of the County residents. Its rural agriculture and small-town feel means that it also feels safe, peaceful, and down-to-earth.

What Are the County's Strengths?

The County's strength is a sense of unity and communication—of people knowing each other and taking care of each other.

If You Left for 20 Years, What Would You Hope to See When You Return?

A vibrant agricultural community with a strong local economy that supports entrepreneurship, values historic preservation, and prioritizes farmland and green space.

What Are The “Ingredients” To A Long-Term Vision for Gem County?

Controlled and fiscally responsible growth that is championed by strong leadership, respects the county feel, and supports all members of the community to live and thrive.

What Are the Biggest Challenges Facing Gem County?

Recent growth and residential development are seen as huge challenges with impacts on rural water supply, infrastructure, and transportation networks. There is a concern that public open space and river corridors, as well as property rights, are not being properly protected.

What Issues Might Arise in The Future If Not Addressed Now?

There is a concern that infrastructure will be an issue in the future, specially looking at roads and transportation, water and sanitation, and schools.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Plan For Our Future, Rooted In Our Past

CHOICES SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

An in-person workshop was held at a local elementary school by Logan Simpson and County Staff. Community members were invited to participate and navigate through five different stations to provide feedback on questions to inform goals and policies for the Draft Plan. The five stations included land use, housing and economy, transportation and infrastructure, historic preservation, and recreation agriculture and natural resources. In addition to the in-person workshop, a virtual workshop was held with break out rooms that engaged participants with the same questions and materials.

An online questionnaire was launched on [GemCounty.org](https://www.gemcounty.org) to mirror the event activities and extend the opportunity to participate to those that couldn't attend the events or had additional feedback to provide. This document highlights the feedback received from the workshops and digital survey. *The full set of the public comments received is available upon request.*

EVENTS

In-Person Workshop: March 15th, 2022, from 6:00-8:00 PM at Kenneth J. Carberry Elementary School

Virtual Workshop: March 16th, 2022, from 6:00-8:00 PM over Zoom

Participation: 76 members of the public signed in at the in-person workshop though there may have been more attendees that didn't sign in. 25 participants joined the Zoom link remotely for the presentation at 6PM. 75 complete survey responses were collected through the online questionnaire.



HOW WILL THE FEEDBACK BE USED?

This phase of outreach is designed to provide input on goals and policies that could be included in the new Comprehensive Plan and collect input on the draft vision statement for the future of Gem County. The public feedback and conversations from these events, as well as from the feedback received through the online questionnaire, help provide a clear direction for the plan and will steer development of the policies and actions in the final Comprehensive Plan. Gem County encourages continued participation throughout the planning process—future engagement opportunities will be notified through the County’s website at GemCounty.org.

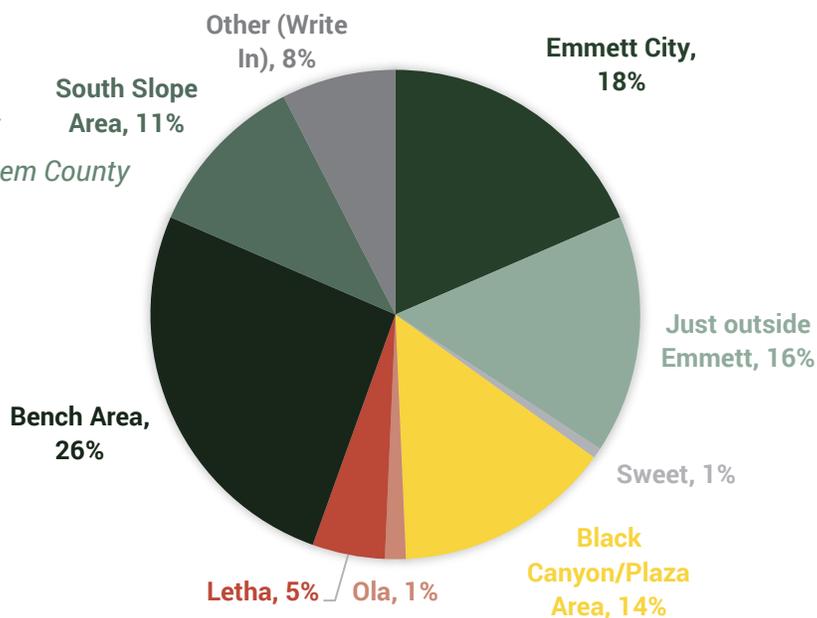
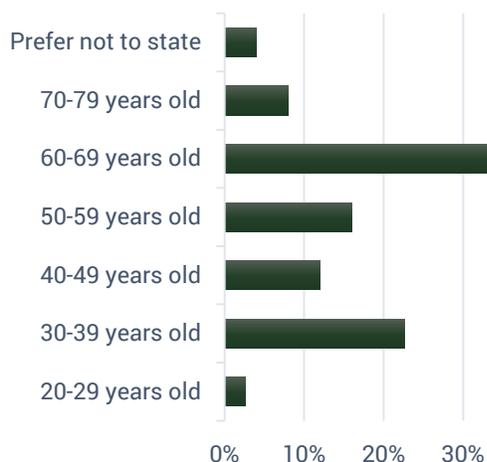


FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKSHOPS AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The public workshops and digital survey were composed of the same questions to ensure residents could provide valuable feedback in whichever setting was most convenient. The following contains responses from all three formats combined.

Who did we hear from?

- 96% of respondents live in Gem County*
- 36% of respondents work in Gem County*
- 27% of respondents own a business in Gem County*



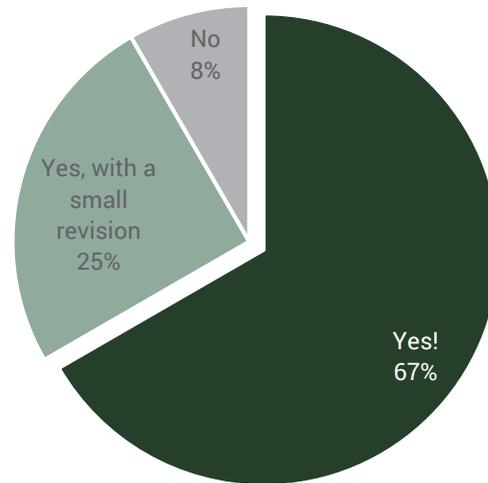
Do you support the draft Vision for the Gem County Comprehensive Plan?

Draft Vision:

Gem County is a community of caring and friendly neighbors working together to preserve and foster our beautiful rural landscapes and quality of life.

Together we will:

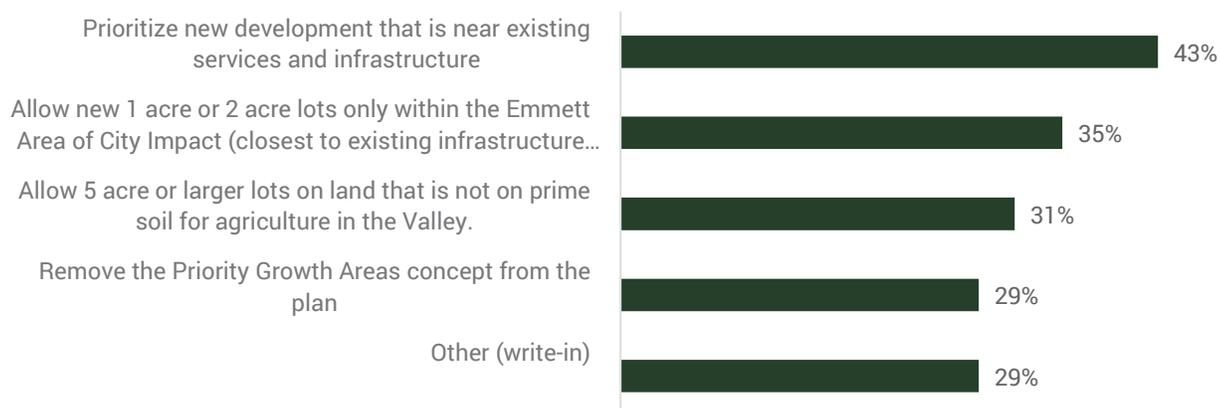
- ***Preserve agricultural land***
- ***Honor our rural heritage***
- ***Coordinate responsible growth***
- ***Support a resilient local economy***
- ***Build and maintain reliable infrastructure***
- ***Enable quality affordable housing***
- ***Invest in opportunities for all generations***
- ***Reinforce healthy lifestyles and recreation***
- ***Protect our open space and natural resources***



Over two thirds of respondents to this question were in favor of the Draft Vision with no additional changes. Roughly a quarter of respondents were in support with small adjustments, mostly related to a concern for the quality of affordable housing being built and ensuring that agriculture and rural lifestyle are preserved. Responses that were not in favor of the vision cited issues with the role of government in working toward these goals, concern with growth of any kind, and with the limitations of infrastructure and funding for these aspirations.

Land Use Questions

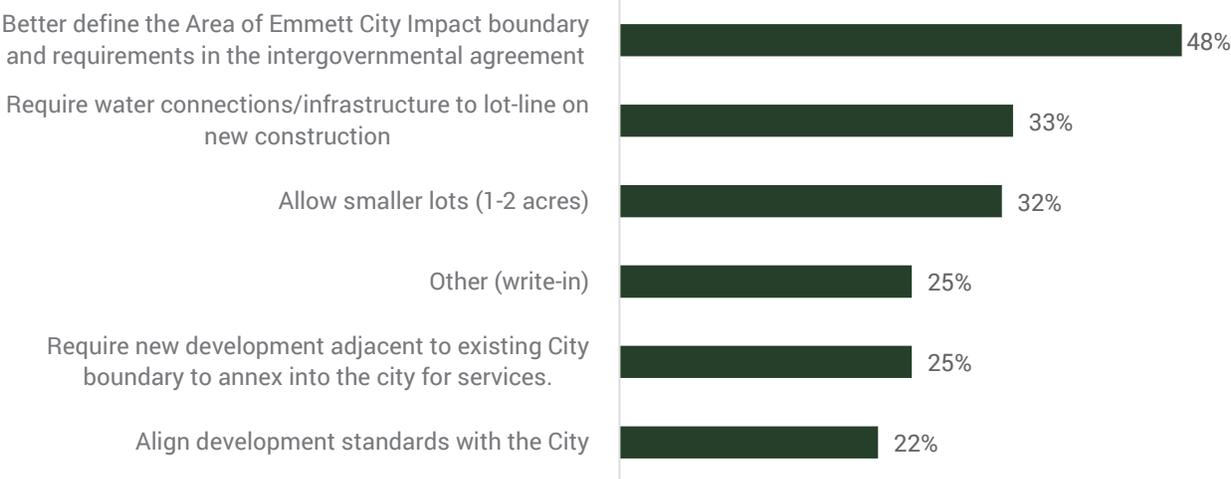
1. How could the County better guide new development? (Select all that apply)



Responses on new development were similar, ranging from 29% support to 45% support. The most popular strategy for new development is to prioritize new development in areas that are close to existing infrastructure. Many write-in comments included concerns about growth, suggesting the County work towards tools to preserve open space and minimize growth.

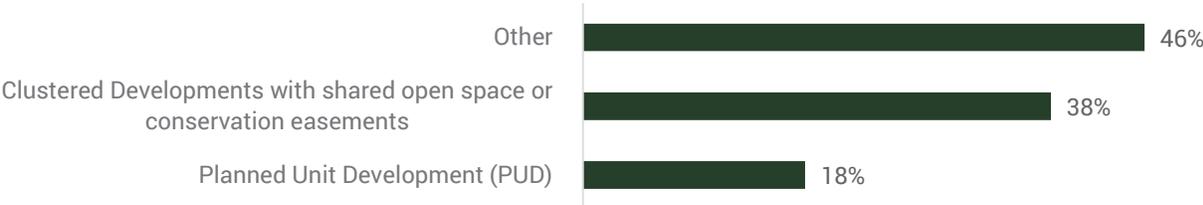
2. What is appropriate coordination for development within Emmett’s Area of City Impact? (Select all that apply)

These results indicate that a better-defined Emmett Area of City Impact and intergovernmental agreement are the most important step in coordination on new development within this area. Other notable contenders include allowing smaller lots within the defined boundary and requiring new development to include infrastructure and connections to the lot line for future service. “Other” comments varied, but many focused on the importance of preserving prime agriculture and maintaining reliable infrastructure.



Housing and Economy Questions

3. Would any of the following subdivision alternatives be appropriate to pursue? (Check all that apply)



Clustered Developments as a subdivision alternative that preserves open space was the preferred option provided on this question, however many chose to write in another option.

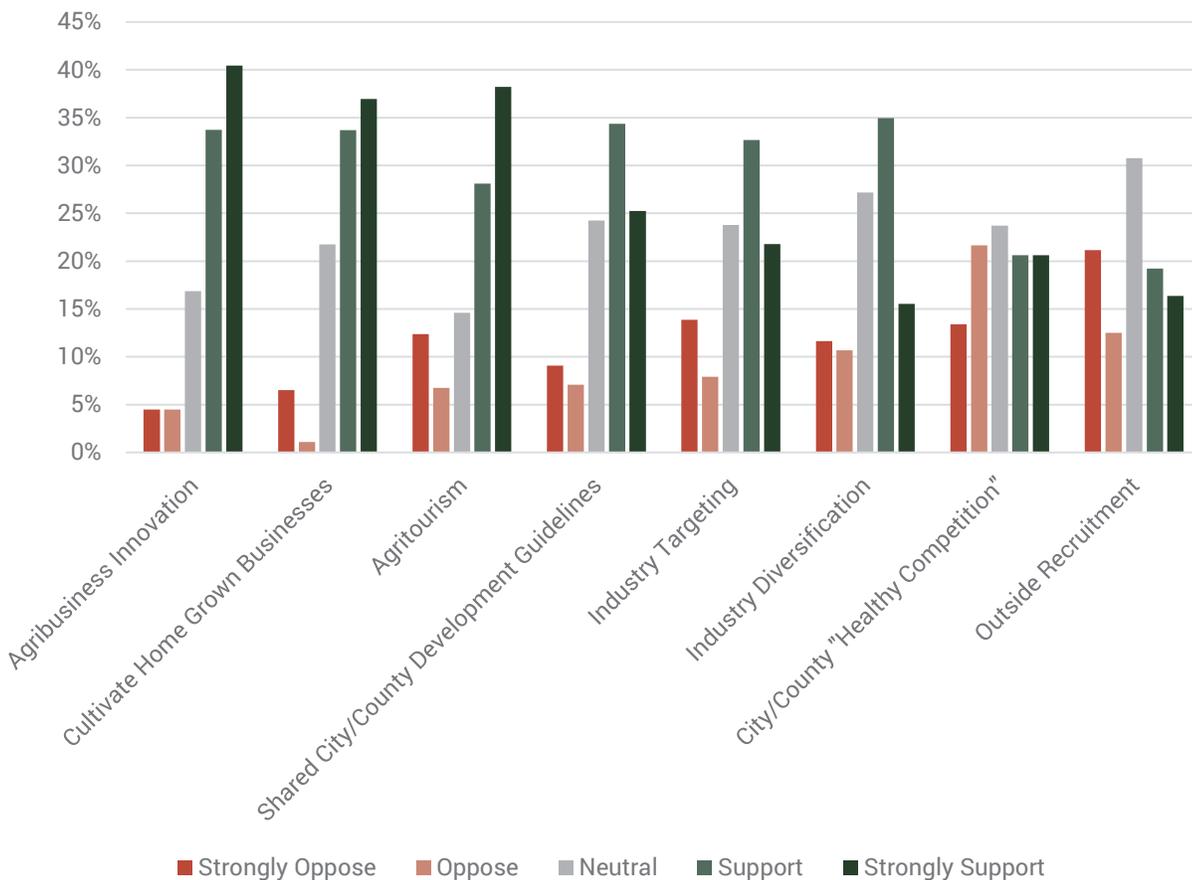
The most common written in ideas were to place a moratorium on subdivisions, make the minimum lot size 5 acres, and to plan for schools, roads, parks, etc with new subdivisions.

4. Did you know that Gem County uses several methods to promote and encourage affordable housing such as allowing accessory/secondary dwelling units and allowing manufactured homes in residential zones? What else would you like to see the County do to support affordable housing?

Many respondents indicated that they are aware of existing efforts and recognize the need for additional affordable housing. There was a mixture of responses wishing to see more townhomes, small lots, etc. in and around Emmett, and some were concerned that it may not be appropriate for the County to invest time and effort into the issue.

5. What is your level of support for the following economic development approaches?

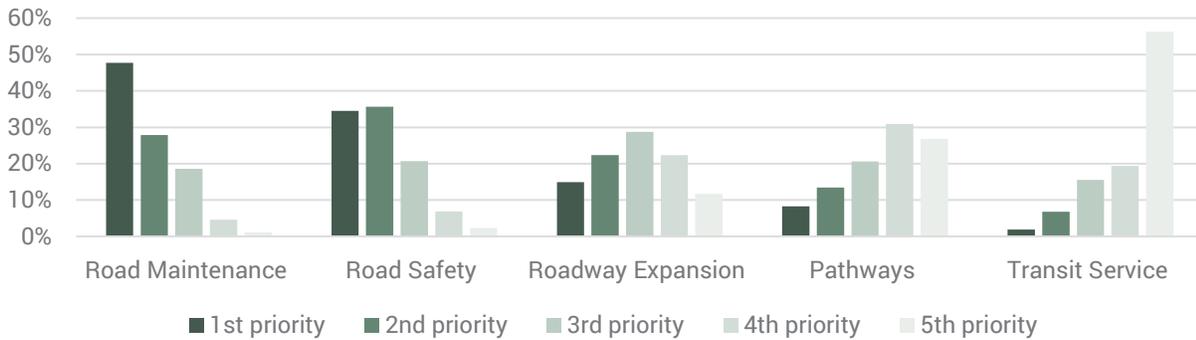
The two highest supported economic development approaches focus on supporting agricultural operations, the least supported include industry targeting, outside recruitment and City/County “healthy competition”. The responses suggest the community is more interested in small businesses and agricultural operations, rather than recruitment of large businesses.



Transportation and Infrastructure Questions

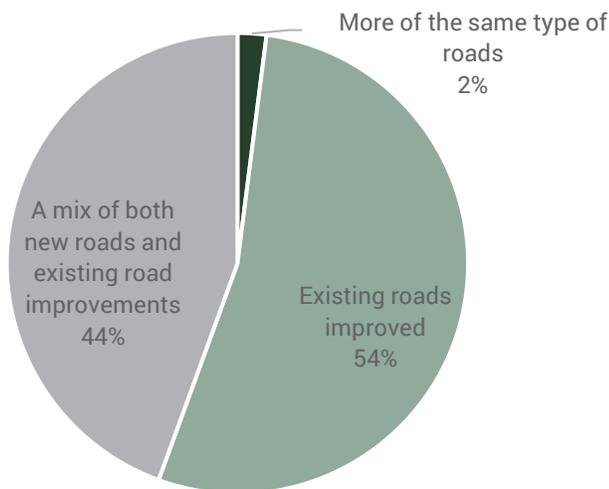
6. How would you prioritize the following items, from highest to lowest?

The highest ranked priority for the majority of respondents was maintenance and repairs on existing County Roads, followed by road safety and then roadway expansion. Alternative methods of transportation such as pathways and transit were consistently marked the lowest priority.



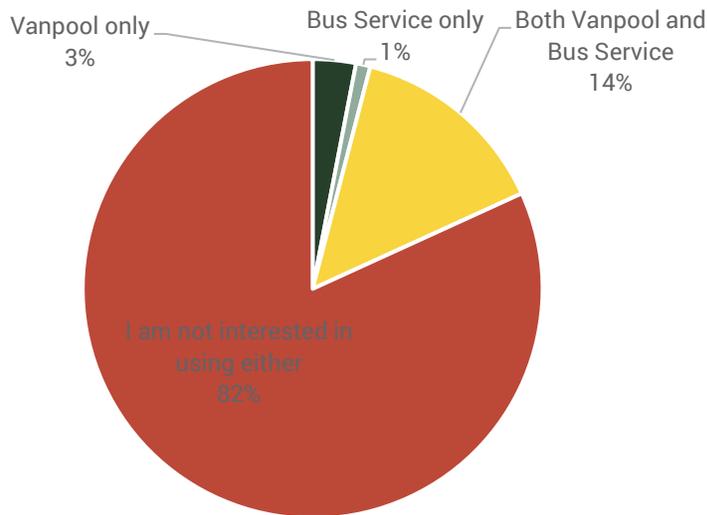
7. Would you prefer to see more of the same type of roads in Gem County or would you like to see existing roads improved?

As in the previous question, there is a strong desire from the community to see existing County Roads improved. Roughly half of respondents would prefer to see efforts split between new roads and maintenance, and the other prefers to focus solely on improvement of existing transportation infrastructure.



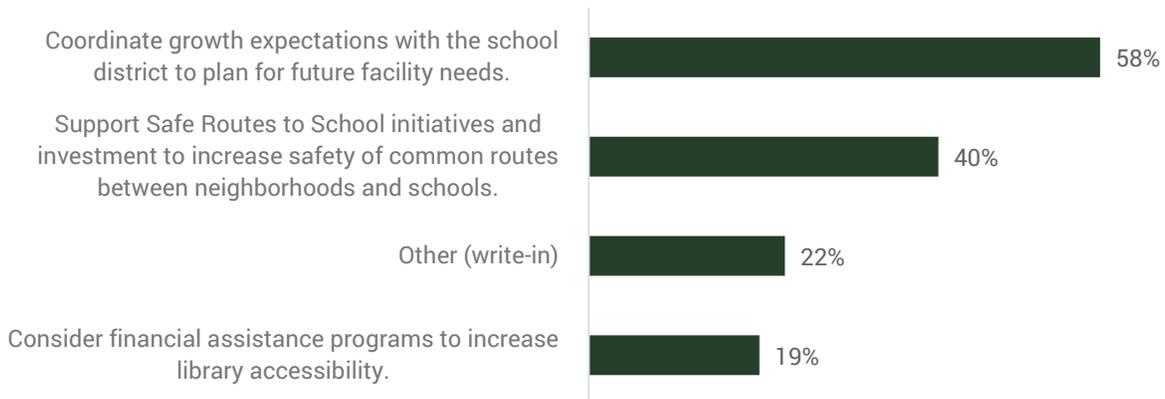
8. Would you be interested in using a vanpool or bus service to commute? Of yes, please note which.

As indicated in the “Transportation Priorities” question, transit and public transportation are not a priority for the majority of Community Members, 82% are uninterested in public transportation in the County.



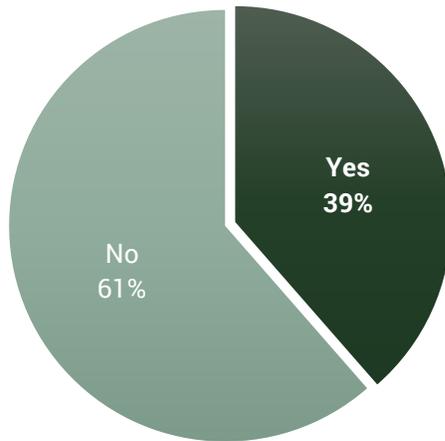
9. What should the County's role be in supporting educational providers? (Select all that apply)

There is support for close coordination between the School District and the County to plan ahead for education needs when new subdivisions are in discussion. Many of the “other” comments suggest that education is adequate or that it shouldn't be the County's role to interfere with the School District.



10. Should this plan focus on expanding broadband infrastructure?

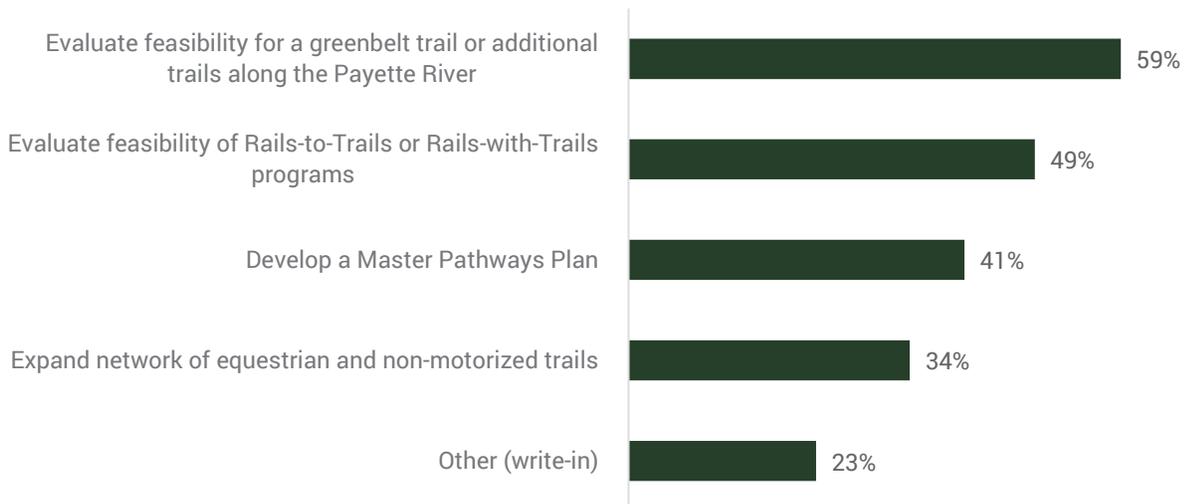
There is not a majority support for the County Expanding broadband infrastructure, many who chose to comment stated that they do not believe this is an appropriate use of public funds and efforts.



Recreation, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Questions

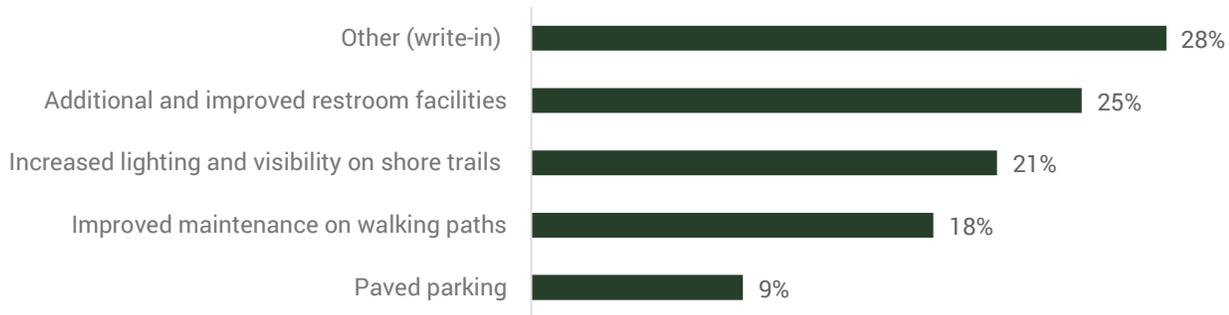
11. How should the County increase access to open space and recreation opportunities? (Select all that apply)

Many respondents are interested in exploring the feasibility of a greenbelt trail and/or trails along the Payette River and for Rails-to-Trails programs. The feasibility of these amenities could be evaluated through a Master Pathways Plan initiated by the County.



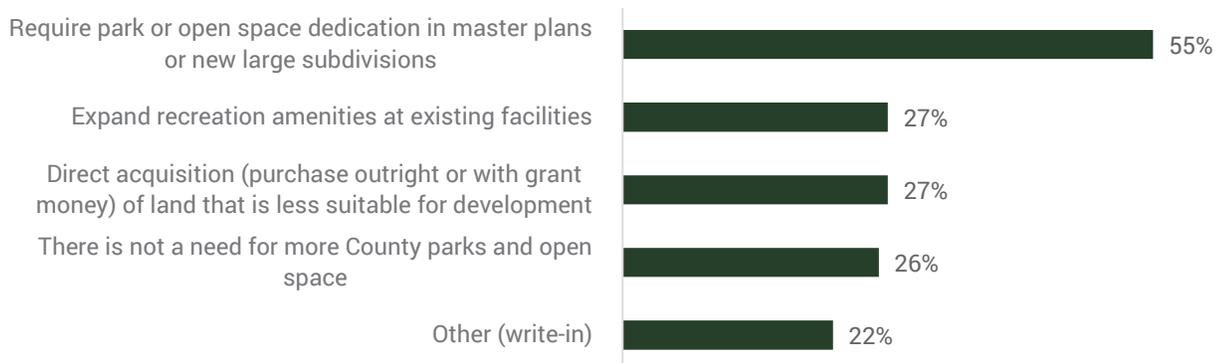
12. How can the County improve or enhance use and access of County recreation facilities? (Select all that apply)

There is not much support for the options provided, nearly a third of respondents chose to write in their own options which include improvements to Gem Island Recreation Center and Plaza Bridge. There was not much detail provided otherwise.



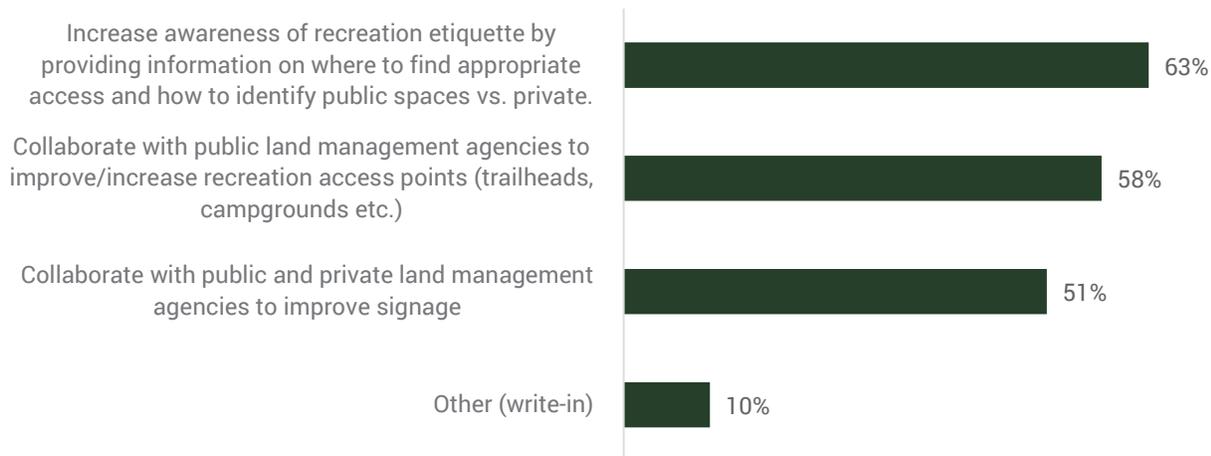
13. How should the County work to provide more parks and open space?

The most favored option to providing additional open space is to require park and open space dedication in the planning of master plans and large subdivisions. This can be easily paired with an earlier strategy that was favored—clustered development—which allow for smaller lot sizes in exchange for dedicated open space. Just over a quarter of participants indicated that they didn't think there is a need for more County parks and open space.



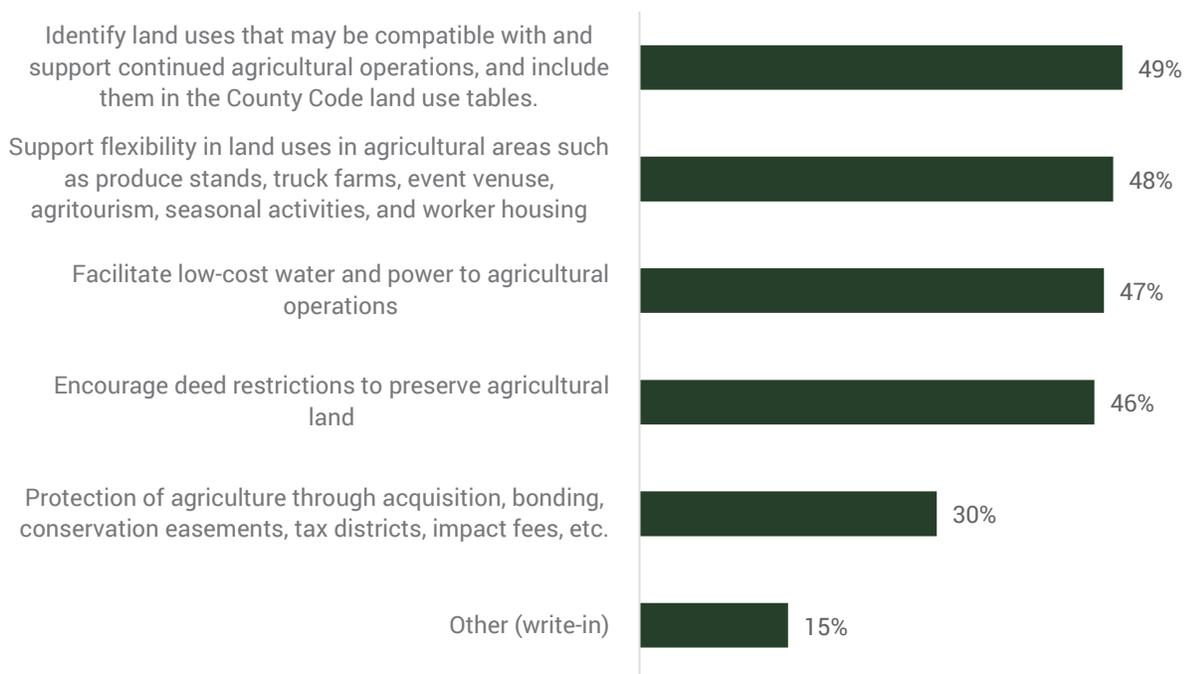
14. How can the County improve use of public lands and minimize private trespassing? (Select all that apply)

There is support for all three of the options provided to maintain public land access and minimize private land trespassing. These strategies could all be pursued and coordinated by the County, City, and other agencies.



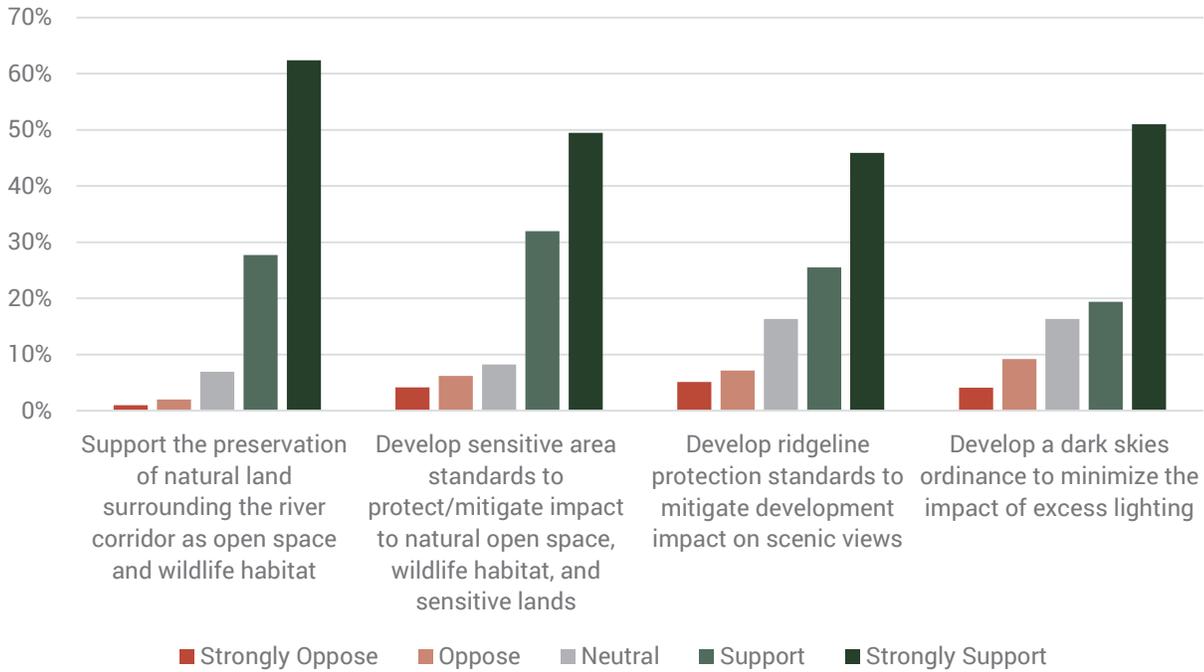
15. Which of these regulatory changes and preservation measures would you support, if any? (Select all that apply)

There is roughly 50% support for all but one of these options. Agricultural preservation is something that we heard a lot of support for through previous outreach efforts in this process. The least supported option here is for protection of agriculture through direct acquisition, bonding, easements, etc.



16. What is your level of support for the County to protect natural resources in the following ways?

By far, the most supported strategy for protection of natural resources is to preserve the natural land surrounding the Payette River Corridor. The other three measures of natural resource protection are supported by the majority, but not as highly as river corridor preservation.





COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Plan For Our Future, Rooted In Our Past

PUBLIC DRAFT PLAN REVIEW SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

An in-person event was held at a local middle school by Logan Simpson and County Staff. Community members were invited to listen to a brief presentation in the auditorium about the process, participation, and content of the draft Comprehensive Plan, and then were invited to ask questions and give comment on the draft in the school cafeteria.

The full draft of the Comprehensive Plan was available for download and to comment on through Konveio, an online collaborative document review tool. This draft was available online through August 1, 2022.

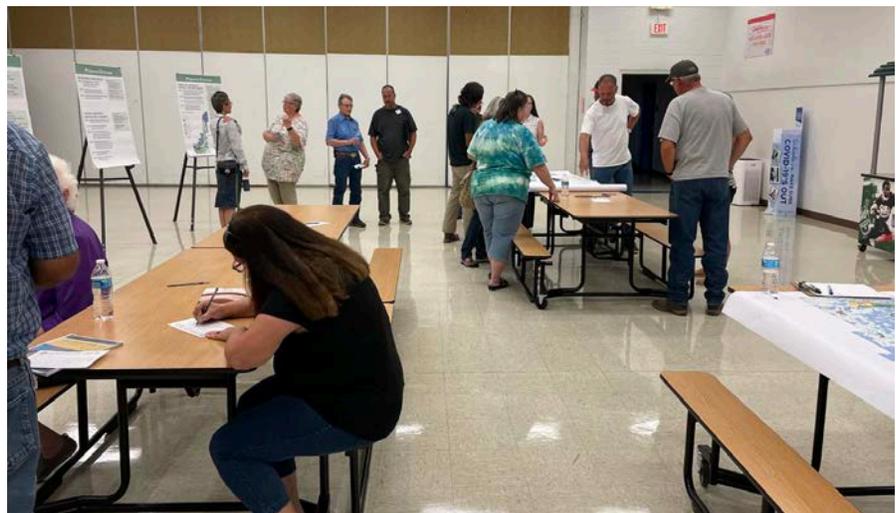
The full set of the public comments received is available upon request.

ONLINE AND EVENT PARTICIPATION

In-Person Event: July 19th, 2022, from 6:00-8:00 PM at Emmett Middle School

Participation: 57 members of the public signed in at the in-person event though there may have been more attendees that didn't sign in.

Online Commenting: 109 comments were submitted through the Konveio review tool, two more comments were emailed.



HOW WILL THE FEEDBACK BE USED?

This phase of outreach is designed as an opportunity for thorough review of the draft Comprehensive Plan. This includes being able to comment on the draft goals and policies, vision, and implementation strategies, as well as review and comment on the new Future Land Use Map and Categories.

FEEDBACK COLLECTED AT THE EVENT AND ONLINE

The public event and online commenting tool ensured that residents could provide valuable feedback in whichever setting was most convenient. The following summarizes the feedback received both online and in-person.

- Preserve existing agricultural land—ensure parcel sizes are large enough to accommodate for farming.
- Manage growth in a responsible way that balances infrastructure and capacity, require developers to pay for public amenities and necessities (schools, roads, water infrastructure).
- Create housing and lifestyle accommodations for the aging population of Gem County.
- Invest in open spaces, trails, and parks to allow the community to engage with the natural areas within Gem County, especially the Payette River.
- Increase road safety and invest in structures or road patterns that encourage safer, slower driving. Respondents identified locations for road improvements in addition to the ones already identified in the Plan.
 - Bowman Road—improve access for farmers
 - Highway 16—prevent passing to reduce accidents
 - Highway 52—find places for connectivity
 - Waterwheel and N. Substation Road—put in a three-way stop to increase safety
- Protect the natural resources of Gem County through natural disaster prevention and mitigation and water conservation.
- Promote community interconnectedness and identity through creation of community spaces and events that center around the rural, small-town lifestyle of Gem County.
 - Many respondents felt that the event space and potential racetrack did not fit in with the community character and prefer that other entertainment options are explored.
- Invest in the local economy through the development of small businesses.
 - Respondents preferred that the County does not allow Big Box stores.
 - Community members expressed the need for another grocery store
 - Promote agritourism and celebration of the rural history and economy of Gem County.

APPENDIX C: REGULATORY TAKINGS ACT GUIDELINES

Gem County staff must use the following questions in reviewing the potential impact of a regulatory or administrative action on specific property to ensure compliance with private property rights.

1. Does the Regulation or Action Result in a Permanent or Temporary Physical Occupation of Private Property?
2. Does the Regulation or Action Require a Property Owner to Dedicate a Portion of Property or to Grant an Easement?
3. Does the Regulation Deprive the Owner of All Economically Viable Uses of the Property?
4. Does the Regulation Have a Significant Impact on the Landowner's Economic Interest?
5. Does the Regulation Deny a Fundamental Attribute of Ownership?
 - a. Does the Regulation Serve the Same Purpose that Would be Served by Directly Prohibiting the Use or Action; and (b) Does the Condition Imposed Substantially Advance that Purpose?

APPENDIX D: MAP BOOK

1. Future Land Uses Map

Full County Extent

Emmett and Valley Extent

2. Existing Land Uses Map

Full County Extent

Emmett and Valley Extent

3. Zoning Map

Full County Extent

Emmett and Valley Extent

4. Soils Map

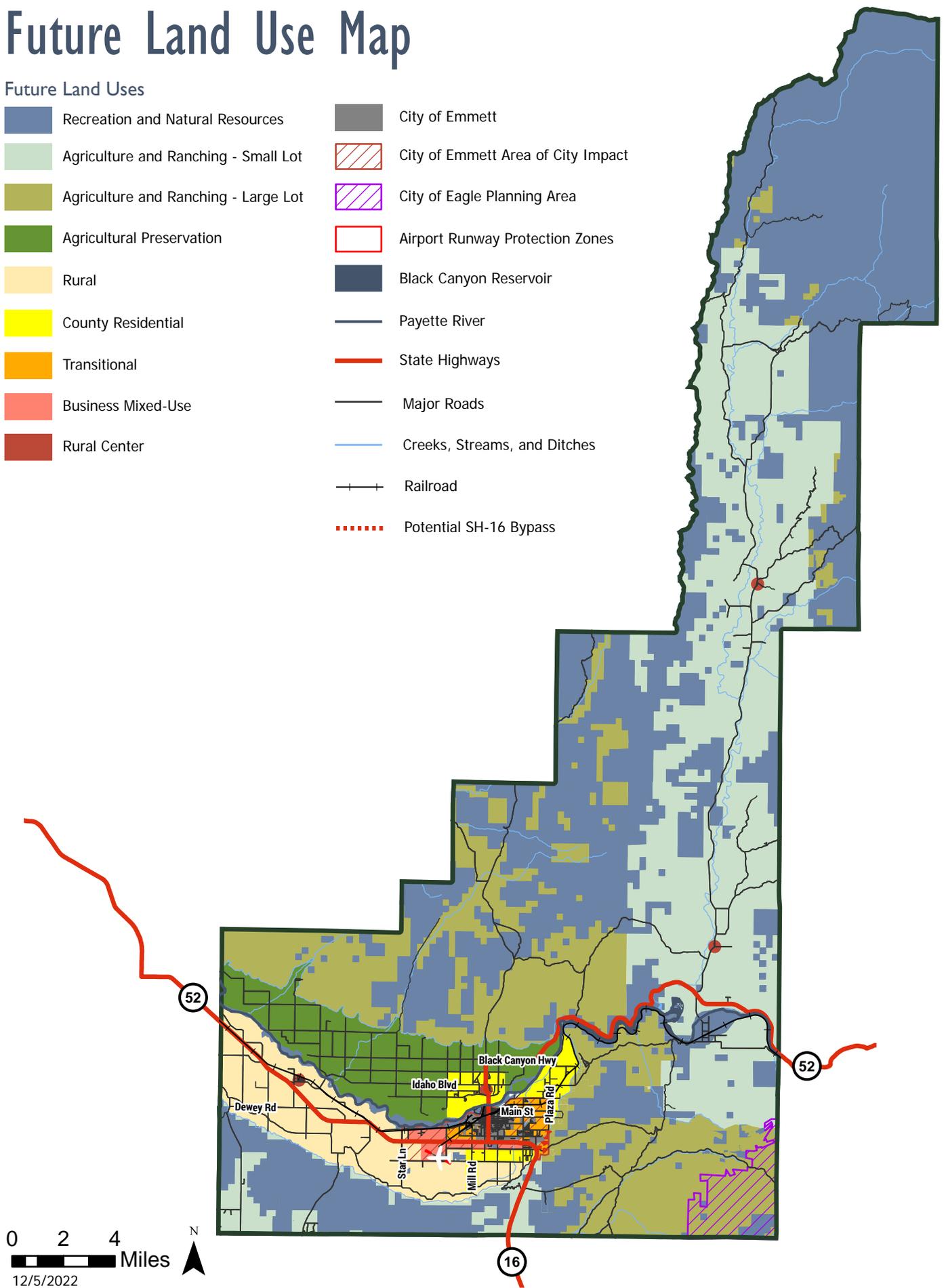
Full County Extent

Emmett and Valley Extent

Future Land Use Map

Future Land Uses

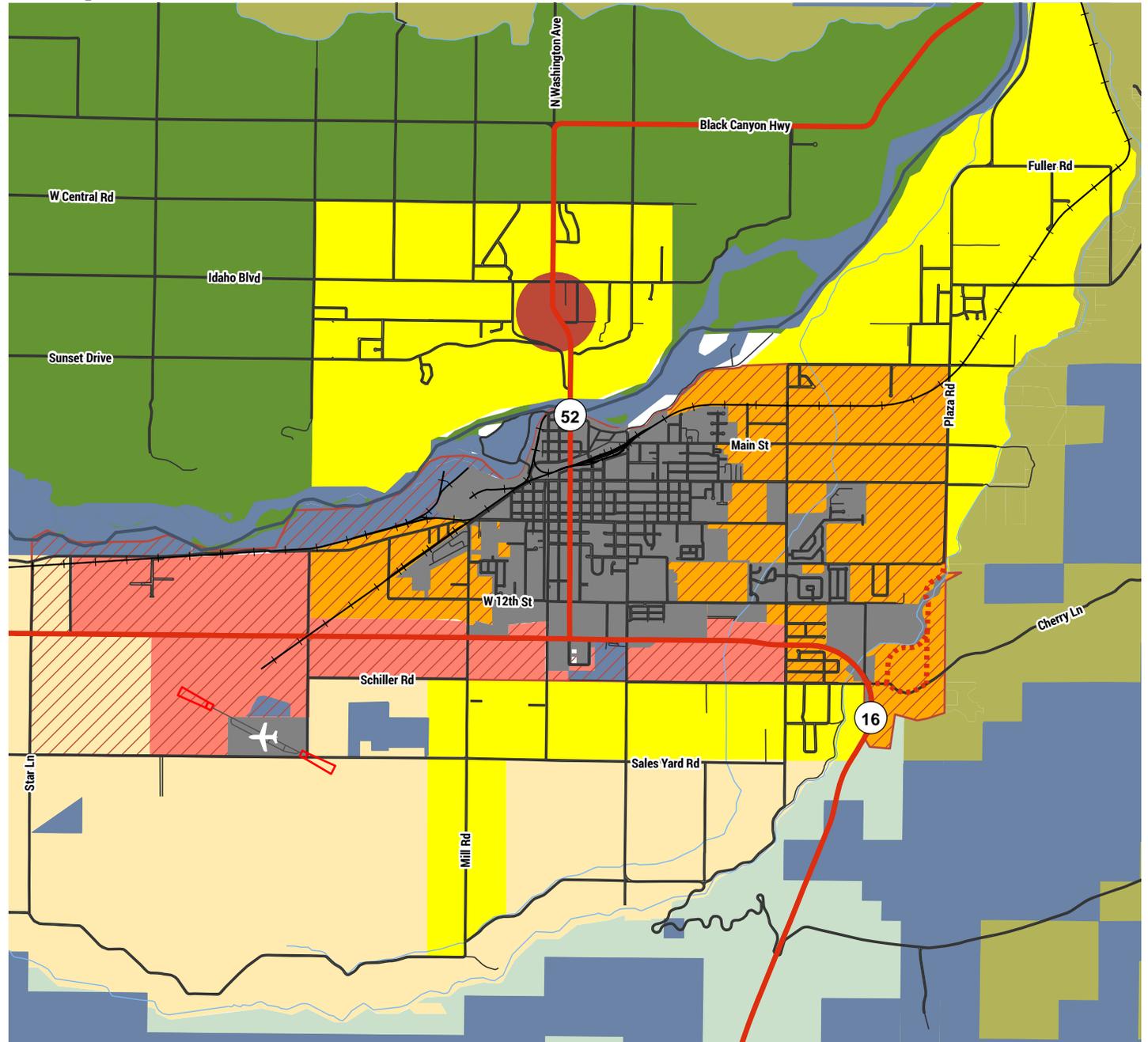
- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|  | Recreation and Natural Resources |  | City of Emmett |
|  | Agriculture and Ranching - Small Lot |  | City of Emmett Area of City Impact |
|  | Agriculture and Ranching - Large Lot |  | City of Eagle Planning Area |
|  | Agricultural Preservation |  | Airport Runway Protection Zones |
|  | Rural |  | Black Canyon Reservoir |
|  | County Residential |  | Payette River |
|  | Transitional |  | State Highways |
|  | Business Mixed-Use |  | Major Roads |
|  | Rural Center |  | Creeks, Streams, and Ditches |
| | |  | Railroad |
| | |  | Potential SH-16 Bypass |



Future Land Use Map

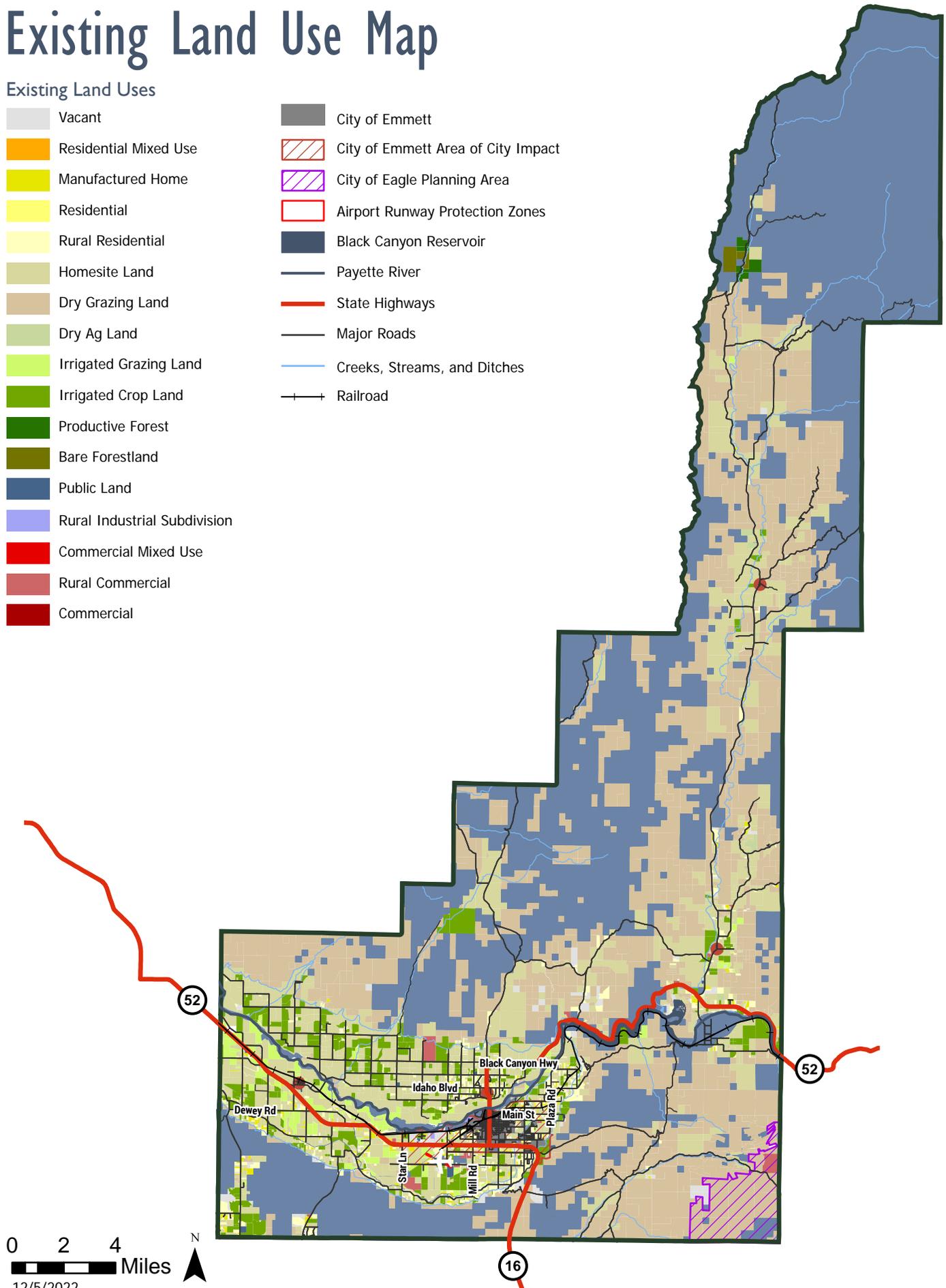
Legend

- Recreation and Natural Resources
 - Agriculture and Ranching - Small Lot
 - Agriculture and Ranching - Large Lot
 - Agricultural Preservation
 - Rural
 - County Residential
 - Transitional
 - Business Mixed-Use
 - Rural Center
 - City of Emmett
 - City of Eagle Planning Area
 - City of Emmett Area of City Impact
 - Airport Runway Protection Zones
 - Black Canyon Reservoir
 - Payette River
 - State Highways
 - Major Roads
 - Creeks, Streams, and Ditches
 - Railroad
 - Potential SH-16 Bypass
- 0 0.5 1 Miles
- 12/5/2022



Existing Land Use Map

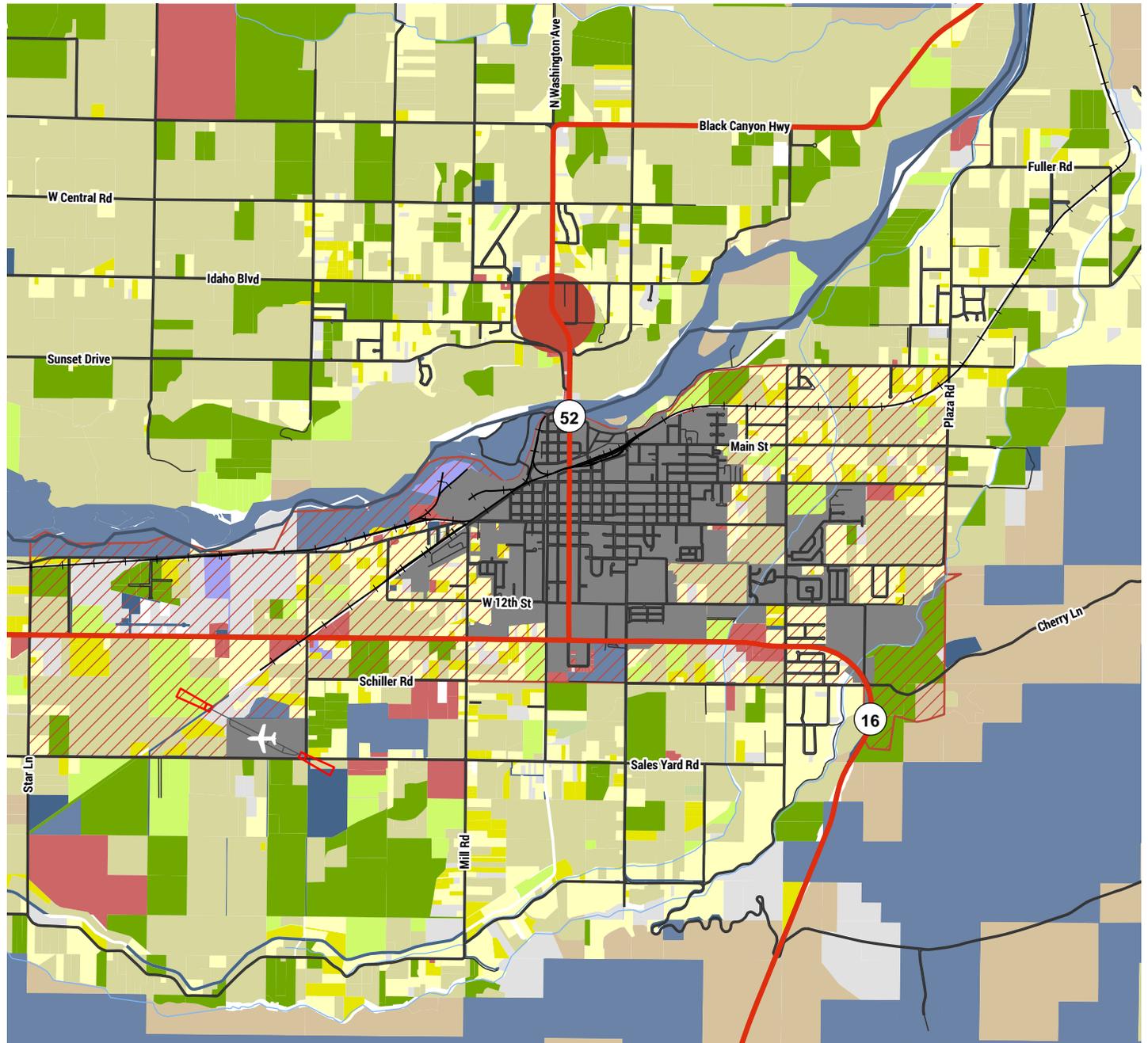
Existing Land Uses



Existing Land Use Map

Existing Land Uses

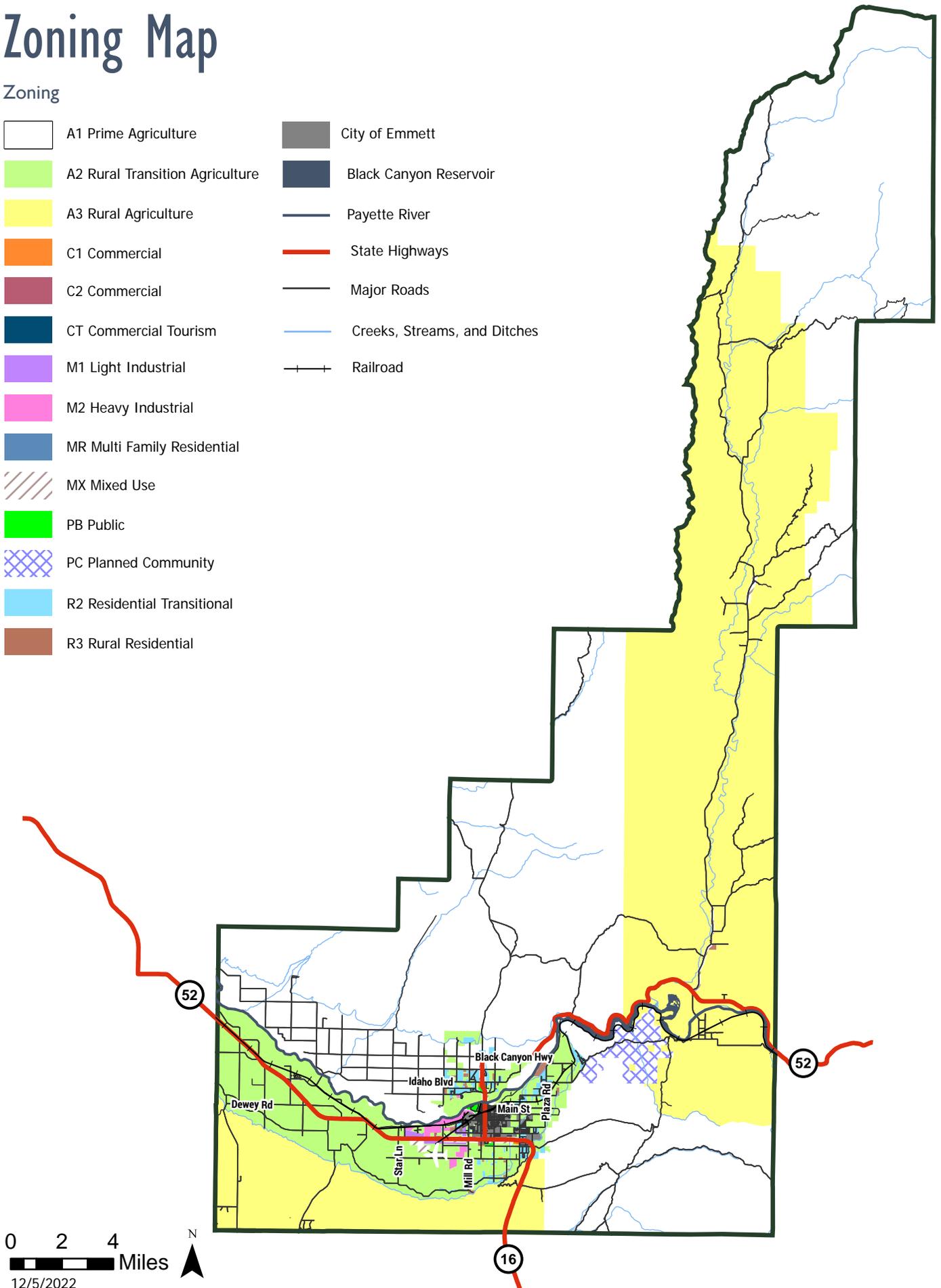
- Vacant
- Residential Mixed Use
- Manufactured Home
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Homesite Land
- Dry Grazing Land
- Dry Ag Land
- Irrigated Grazing Land
- Irrigated Crop Land
- Productive Forest
- Bare Forestland
- Public Land
- Rural Industrial Subdivision
- Commercial Mixed Use
- Rural Commercial
- Commercial
- City of Emmett
- City of Emmett Area of City Impact
- Airport Runway Protection Zones
- Black Canyon Reservoir
- Payette River
- State Highways
- Major Roads
- Creeks, Streams, and Ditches
- Railroad



Zoning Map

Zoning

	A1 Prime Agriculture		City of Emmett
	A2 Rural Transition Agriculture		Black Canyon Reservoir
	A3 Rural Agriculture		Payette River
	C1 Commercial		State Highways
	C2 Commercial		Major Roads
	CT Commercial Tourism		Creeks, Streams, and Ditches
	M1 Light Industrial		Railroad
	M2 Heavy Industrial		
	MR Multi Family Residential		
	MX Mixed Use		
	PB Public		
	PC Planned Community		
	R2 Residential Transitional		
	R3 Rural Residential		



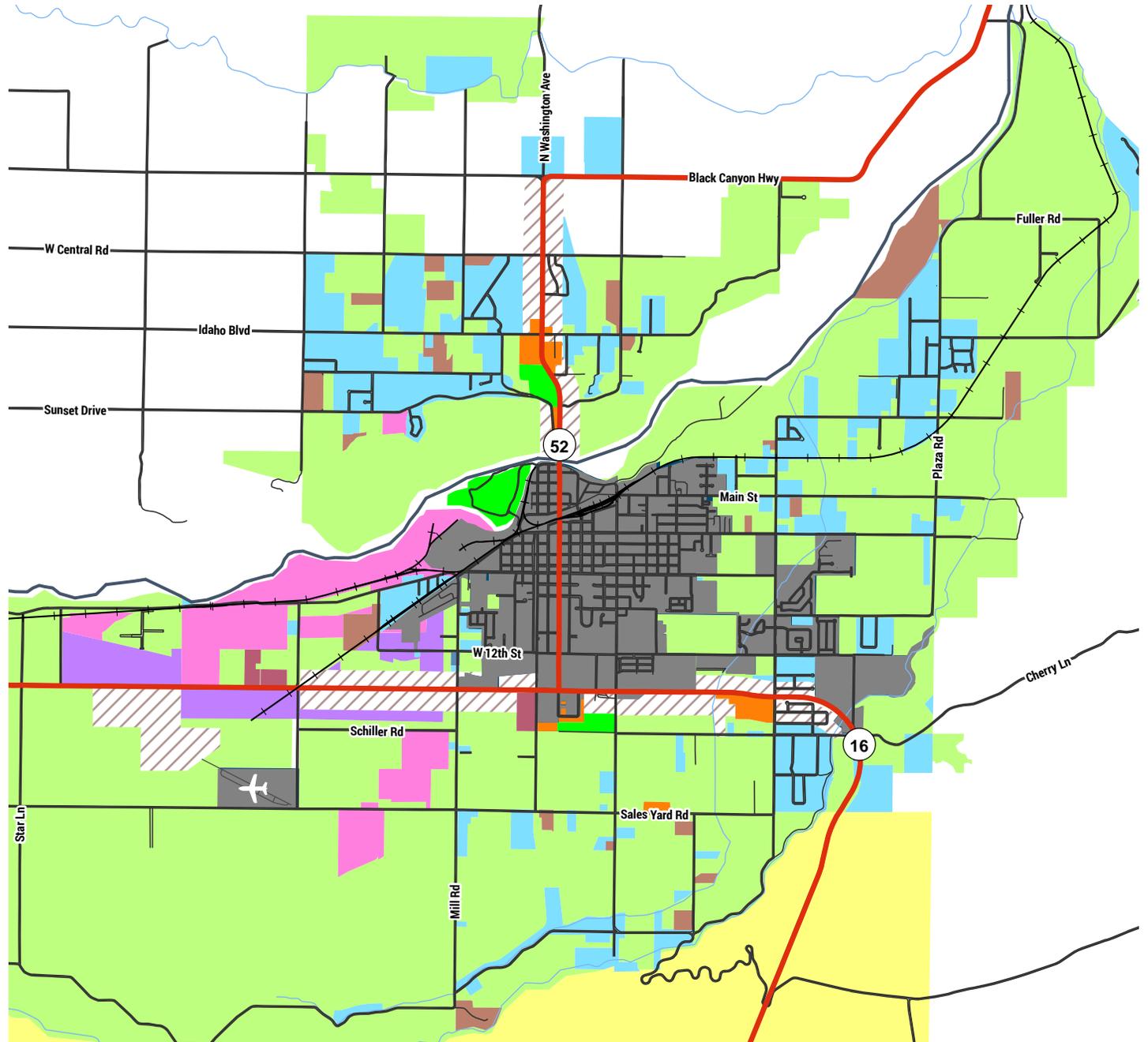
0 2 4 Miles
 12/5/2022

Zoning Map

Zoning

-  A1 Prime Agriculture
-  A2 Rural Transitional Agriculture
-  A3 Rural Agriculture
-  C1 Commercial
-  C2 Commercial
-  CT Commercial Tourism
-  M1 Light Industrial
-  M2 Heavy Industrial
-  MR Multi Family Residential
-  MX Mixed Use
-  PB Public
-  PC Planned Community
-  R2 Residential Transitional
-  R3 Rural Residential

-  City of Emmett
-  Payette River
-  State Highways
-  Major Roads
-  Creeks, Streams, and Ditches
-  Railroad



Gem County Prime Soils

Prime Soils Farmland Class

-  Prime Farmland
-  Farmland of Statewide Importance

 Not Prime Farmland

Source: USDA NRCS, Esri

 City of Emmett

 Black Canyon Reservoir

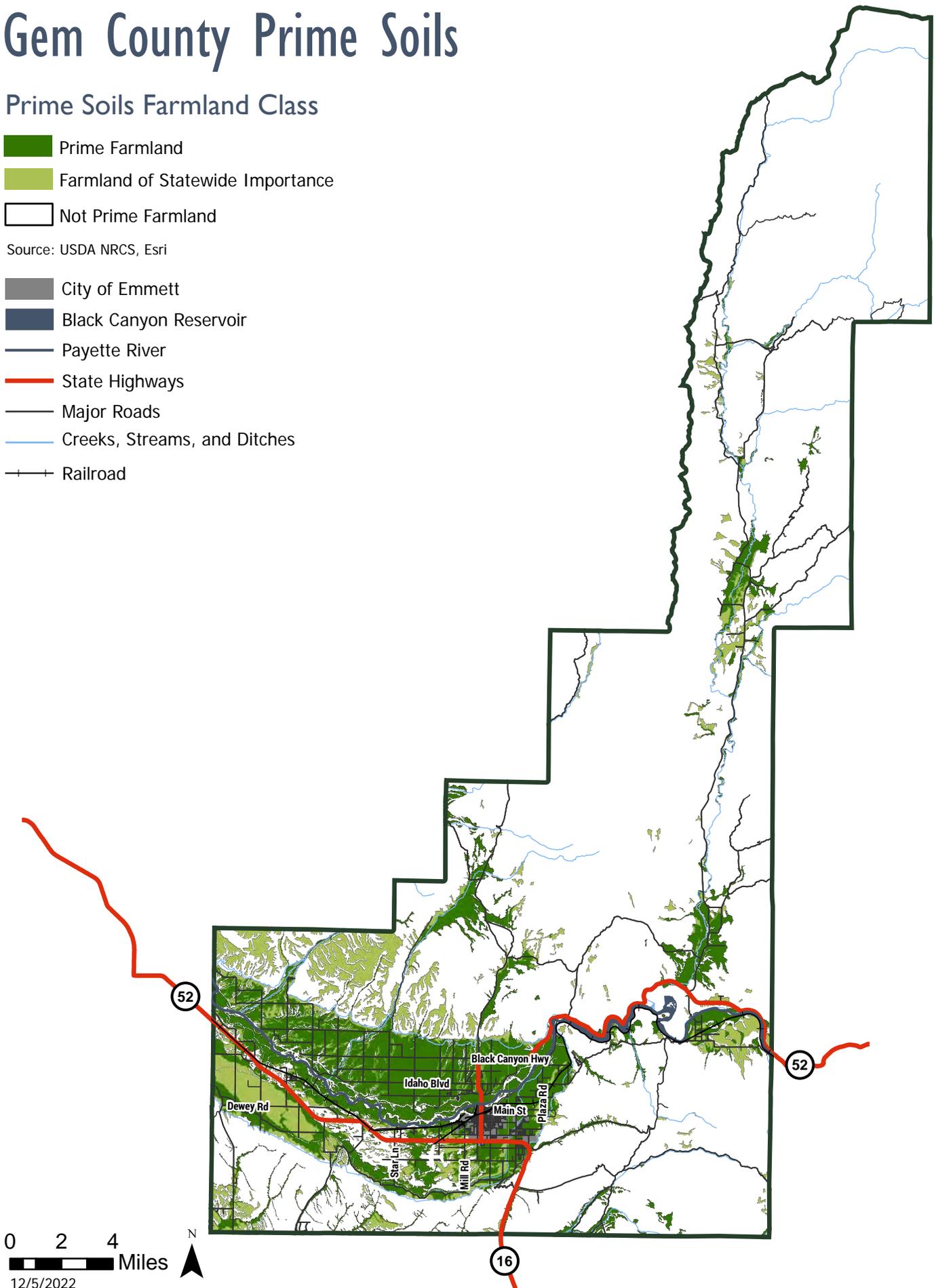
 Payette River

 State Highways

 Major Roads

 Creeks, Streams, and Ditches

 Railroad



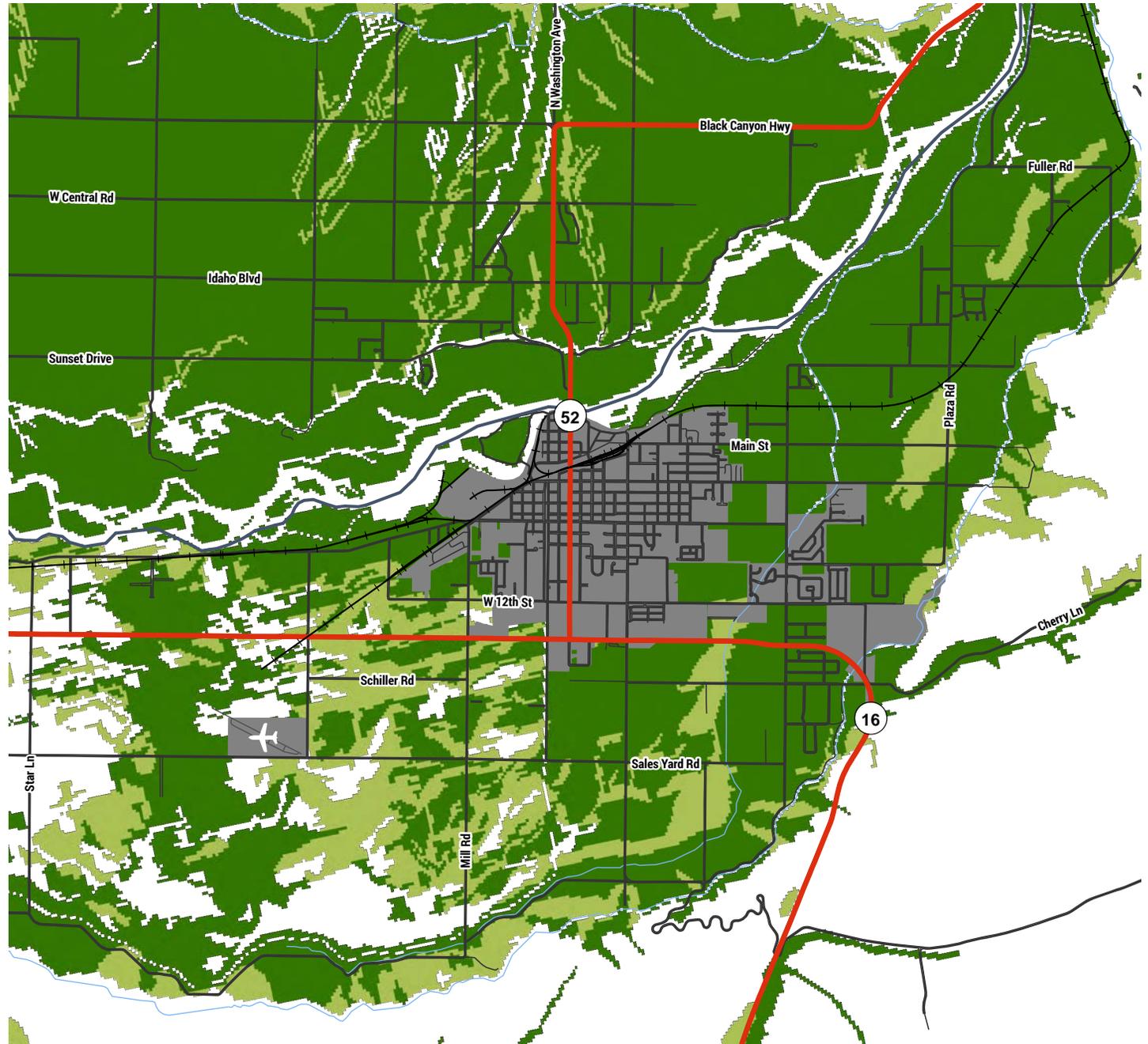
Gem County Prime Soils

Prime Soils Farmland Class

-  Prime Farmland
-  Farmland of Statewide Importance
-  Not Prime Farmland

Source: USDA NRCS, Esri

-  City of Emmett
-  Payette River
-  State Highways
-  Major Roads
-  Creeks, Streams, and Ditches
-  Railroad



0 0.5 1 Miles 
12/5/2022

APPENDIX E: HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN



GEM COUNTY

Historic Preservation Plan



NOVEMBER 2022

PREPARATION AND CREDITS

Prepared for:

Gem County and the Gem County Historic Preservation Commission

Prepared by:

Logan Simpson, with assistance and review by the Gem County Historic Preservation Commission and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office

Acknowledgements

Gem County Historic Preservation Commission

Amy Linville, Chair
Meg Davis
Nick Petersen
Karen Bruner
Janet Monti
Bill Butticci, Gem County Liaison

Gem County Board of County Commissioners

Mark Rekow, Chairman
Bill Butticci
Bryan Elliott

City of Emmett

Brian Sullivan, Development Director

Special thanks to the residents of Gem County, City of Emmett, and communities of Sweet, Ola, and Letha that participated in the planning process to develop this plan.

Disclosure and Funding

This program receives federal funds from the National Park Service through the Idaho State Historical Society. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

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Goals and Objectives	7
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ACRONYMS

CLG – Certified Local Government

HPC – Gem County Historic Preservation Commission

HPP – Historic Preservation Plan

IHSI – Idaho Historic Sites Inventory

NHPA – National Historic Preservation Act

NPS – National Park Service

NRHP – National Register of Historic Places

SHPO – State Historic Preservation Office (or Officer)

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Historic resources permeate the Idaho landscape, reflecting the evolving culture and architecture of its communities. As the state of Idaho grew in population, following the gold rush of the 19th century, settlements and sites of national significance rose from the soil. Throughout Gem County, these same resources touch everyday lives through daily routines and special visits, simultaneously providing a distinct sense of place and personal connection to the unique landscape that is southwestern Idaho. Sites like the Gem County Courthouse, the Ola school house and Oregon Short Line Railway Depot represent critical time periods that define how life in Gem County operated in the past, and how historic buildings can contribute greatly to the modern day. This document aims to celebrate the existing historic sites that make Gem County unique and inform methods of preservation that benefit present and future generations.

The Gem County Comprehensive Plan from February 2014 established a basis for the preservation of historic and cultural resources throughout Gem County, dedicating a chapter to its applicability. Its vision for Gem County links historic resources with a flourishing community saying, “We envision Gem County as a beautiful community where our history is honored, protected and preserved; a community that celebrates, respects and promotes the diversity and culture of its people and natural resources, and creates an environment where culture, arts and heritage flourish.”

The basic goals set forth in the rest of the chapter were to protect existing historic sites from destruction and alteration, utilize available financial incentives for those sites, protect the county’s prominent historic architectural character and establish a Gem County Historical Preservation Commission. A 2022 update of the comprehensive plan will honor and add to these goals in partnership with this Historic Preservation Plan. As the county has evolved, so has its understanding of the most effective avenues for achieving the 2014 vision. The Gem County Historic Preservation Plan will outline these avenues and establish how historic preservation can be a local priority.

WHAT IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

Historic preservation is an established discipline aimed at preserving historic, cultural, and archaeological resources for the benefit of present and future generations. It presents standards, incentives, and guidelines for how to preserve sites for the greatest benefit to the community. Historic preservation planning also provides a framework for deciding how historic resources can utilize other standards of protection, including restoration, rehabilitation, alterations, additions, and reconstruction.

Historic preservation planning has roots at the federal level. The National Park Service derived techniques and evaluation methods to define what historic resources are and how they can be best preserved. States and localities across the country have modeled their local historic preservation planning efforts off these federal practices, while satisfying the unique considerations of their geography and history. Idaho’s State Historic Preservation Plan acts as a guide for local communities like Gem County that wish to add their own unique considerations for preservation in their jurisdiction.

As Gem County embarks upon the path to prioritizing historic resources, documents like these create the opportunity for ongoing conversation and evolving methods of preservation that best serve the community over time.

PURPOSE OF THE PRESERVATION PLAN

Although planning efforts in the past have identified preservation as an important goal, Gem County has not created a document dedicated to the specifics of this goal. As a result, the desire for implementable steps and a clear vision has materialized into this Historic Preservation Plan. Its purpose is to provide a strategy for the protection and enhancement of historic resources within Gem County. These resources can include sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts that have either national, state, or local historical or cultural significance.

Gem County's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was first created by ordinance in 1987 and has worked toward local preservation efforts ever since. This plan aims to strengthen the reach and impact of the existing preservation initiatives that reveal historic resources that have provided the County's foundation, while introducing new ones reflective of today's desires.

Most historic sites across the state have been found in higher population areas, due to available resources. However, rural area preservation is a crucial aspect of Idaho's collective history. Sites like historic barns, silos, granaries and more, represent Gem County's agricultural lifestyle. This plan sets the stage for sites within the rural areas of Gem County and the historic resources in Emmett to be recognized and celebrated at the local level while satisfying the SHPO's goal of encouraging long range planning efforts in more rural areas of the state.

The continued presence of preserved and recognized history in the community relies on more than policies, goals and initiatives related to preservation. The relevance and celebration of historic resources relies on widespread public support for these sites—support robust enough to prompt tangible action to preserve the physical sites when possible, and when not possible, preserve them through documentation. This plan helps to articulate the reasons for individuals and organizations to show that support for preservation efforts.

This plan is the result and documentation of the collaborative process between the Gem County community, Logan Simpson design, and Gem's Historic Preservation Commission. It will guide preservation planning for the foreseeable future, taking into consideration the best practices to promote the robust presence of historic architecture throughout the County. Gem County has the opportunity to raise consciousness about the benefits of integrated history throughout the built environment through the use of preservation conducted by the guidelines in this document.

BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION

Historic sites contribute to a lasting cultural influence reminiscent of the events and people that define the past, present, and future of an area. The robust history of Gem County is physically preserved by these sites, structures, and buildings that have intangible ties to the community. Beloved historic places are the centerpieces and physical representations of the cultural evolution and collective memory of the community. By preserving them, Gem County can weave the past, present and future into a continuous story that can be shared among generations.

The feelings and memories that one experiences at historic sites are captured and compounded with each new and returning visitor. The sites themselves provide physical spaces to feel connected to one's own past and share in the collective experiences of others. The benefits to maintaining these historic buildings as integral pieces of the architectural fabric of Gem County extend to tangible elements like economic benefits, job creation, and several more. These benefits will be explained in further detail below, however, the intangible benefits of historic places, that cannot easily be quantified, those seen and felt amongst the community, are crucial aspects to consider as well.

For simplicity, the benefits of historic preservation have been split into three categories, cultural, economic and social. These categories encompass additional areas of benefit within them and will be expanded, as this plan undergoes updates over time.

Cultural Benefits

Education

The Gem County Historic Preservation Commission has the opportunity to highlight sites with educational potential throughout the county for the benefit of residents and visitors. Often, rural places are described by what they are not, rather than what they are. For example, the Census Bureau defines rural as places that are not urban. By highlighting historic resources within rural areas like Gem County, the community can start to characterize their rurality, not by their lack of urban characteristics, but by the aspects of their area that truly define them. Heritage tourism, a practice of visiting historic sites through walking tours, school programs, publications and other methods, can be a way to represent and pass-on events and lessons from the past. It can inform the design and character of Gem County that the community wishes to carry on with new development. It can also serve as a tool to inform people about the lifestyles, important personas and significant events of the past.

Inclusion of underrepresented sites

The recognition of historic and cultural resources extends far beyond buildings. Industry, transportation, and engineering feats have been traditionally underrepresented by Idaho's listed sites but provide value, uniqueness, and education to communities. Rich agricultural and cultural resources related to farming, Native American tribal history, and other cultures and populations have also traditionally been underrepresented in NRHP listings. Idaho's past encompasses a vibrant range of experiences that can be highlighted through local historic preservation practices.

Economic Benefits

Increased Visitors

Distinctive architectural styles can define a place and attract visitors to the area. As Gem County preserves local buildings that feel essential to the landscape and character of their community, those same buildings can be shared with visitors to attract visitors and business clientele. Historic sites are the essence of many distinguishable communities, as they are unique to the location they reside. By maintaining and enhancing these sites, Gem County has the opportunity to not only celebrate the existing connections that individuals feel to Gem's history but to cultivate new experiences among visitors.

Jobs

The preservation of historic buildings can create job opportunities for local contractors, builders, consulting firms, and more. Historic buildings have unique restoration needs that can be met by local craftsman with the assistance of various financial incentives granted through federal and state level programs. The preservation of these buildings also benefits local businesses, by attracting customers. Historic preservation initiatives can make a clear case for well-maintained infrastructure while simultaneously achieving all the other benefits listed in this chapter.

Cost and Saved Resources

Preserving existing buildings and historic sites can be a wise use of resources, existing infrastructure, and tax dollars. It can encourage investment in the existing roads and utilities that serve the community rather than necessitate the creation of new infrastructure. It also reduces demand for new building materials and the greenhouse gas emissions that result from the materials undergoing international or extensive domestic travel.

Avoiding demolition of historic buildings also reduces the amount of waste that ends up in landfills. In Idaho specifically, about 25% of solid waste volume is comprised of the remains from new construction, renovation, and demolition projects. Historic preservation is a responsible choice for saving waste from local disposal while providing tangible community benefits.

Social Benefits

Aesthetic Value

The preservation of historic buildings contributes to the richness of Gem County and the way its beauty seamlessly integrates into the natural environment. The buildings and sites themselves create a strong sense of place that not only distinguishes it from neighboring communities but evokes a sense of home for the people who live there.

Historic buildings also serve as community landmarks that facilitate social interaction and cohesion. Communities like Gem County, that have an extensive land area with lower building density can find connection through their shared experiences with their environment. The agricultural lifestyle of Gem already has provided a meaningful connection among the community to the land, which is preserved

through agricultural zoning and resource protection. Historic preservation allows those same types of protections for the sites that make up the built environment on the land.

Adaptive Reuse

Historic sites provide opportunities for adaptive reuse according to the evolving needs of a community. Former churches can become community centers and school buildings can become housing. Sites that have provided concrete value to the community in the past can be reused to satisfy fundamental needs of the present day while maintaining the rich heritage and integrity of the former space.

HOW DOES PRESERVATION HAPPEN?

The preservation of historic resources occurs through both public and private actions—from property owners and developers investing in and rehabilitating historic properties, to local governments helping to promote the preservation of important historic resources and landscapes. The following section describes the preservation tools and policies that help advance preservation at the local level.

Preservation Laws, Policies and Programs

There are preservation policies at different levels that apply to Gem County, including applicable federal and state preservation laws, and the Gem County Code. These overarching federal and state laws establish the structure for the county’s preservation program, requirements for projects with federal involvement, and the consideration of historic preservation as part of the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

Federal Regulation

Federal preservation laws establish the responsibility for stewardship of our nation’s cultural and architectural heritage and provide the legal framework that supports the state and local implementation of this stewardship. Key applicable federal laws that affect historic preservation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the National Register of Historic Places.** The NHPA of 1966 built on two earlier measures to support historic preservation, the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Historic Sites Act of 1935. The NHPA created the President’s Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Register of Historic Place, and the National Historic Landmarks Program, which recognizes historic resources significant in the history, architecture, archaeology, and culture of local communities, states, and the country. The National Register does not provide any level of protection to listed properties except for projects involving federal funds, licenses, or permits. The Act established the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to administer the National Register program at the state level and in Idaho, the SHPO is part of the Idaho State Historical Society.

- **Certified Local Government (CLG) Program.** In 1980, Congress amended the NHPA to implement the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, which is one way the state historic preservation offices participate in local preservation planning activities. The National Park Service and the Idaho SHPO administer the CLG program in Idaho. Communities that have committed to historic preservation can become CLGs through establishing a preservation ordinance and creating a historic preservation commission. CLG communities can receive technical assistance and grants. Gem County is a certified local government (CLG) pursuant to Idaho Code (IC 67–4601 to 4619) and the general requirements of the National Park Service (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). As a CLG, Gem County is responsible for maintaining the historic preservation commission; continuing to survey local historic properties; enforcing state or local preservation laws; reviewing National Register nominations; and providing the public with opportunities to participate in historic preservation activities.
- **The U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966** (as amended) gathered 31 different federal offices into a single Cabinet-level department. Section 4(f) of the act prohibits the Federal Highway Administration and other U.S. Department of Transportation agencies from “using land from publicly owned parks, recreation areas (including recreational trails), wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historic properties, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to that use and the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such a use.” (23 CFR Part 774).
- **The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969** (83 Stat. 852, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) provides a framework for evaluating the environmental impact of federally assisted projects with the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- **The Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979** (16 U.S.C. 470aa–470mm; Public Law 96–95 and amendments to it) provides for “the protection of archaeological resources and sites which are on public lands and Indian lands, and to foster increased cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private individuals” (Sec. 2(4)(b)).
- **The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990** outlines the rights of Native American lineal descendants, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations related to the treatment, repatriation, and disposition of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and cultural items. Any local government or institution receiving federal funds must comply with NAGPRA. State and local laws regulate excavations and discoveries, but NAGPRA may apply depending on who controls human remains or cultural items removed from private or state lands as a holding or collection.

Idaho State Regulation

State preservation laws support the statewide coordination and implementation of historic preservation and enable delegation of responsibilities to cities to manage and implement historic preservation at the local level. These are the key applicable Idaho statutes affecting historic preservation, but they are not a comprehensive list:

- **Title 67, Chapter 41, State Historical Society** establishes the State Historical Society to support and encourage the preservation of cultural and architectural properties statewide.
- **Title 67, Chapter 46, Preservation of Historic Sites** enables local governments to establish historic preservation commissions and local historic districts, conduct design review, and generally implement historic preservation at the local level. The legislation also empowers local communities to conduct ongoing architectural surveys, retain title and rehabilitate historic properties when necessary and warranted, as well as accept property easements and transfer of development rights. As opposed to the National Register, local preservation commissions may manage and regulate the exterior alterations of properties included within local historic districts.
- **Title 67, Chapter 65, Local Land Use Planning** enables local land use planning, zoning, and the development of plans to guide planning and decision-making. It also specifies that a comprehensive plan must identify, evaluate and consider “special areas” or “special sites”— areas, sites, or structures of historical, archaeological, architectural, ecological, wildlife, or scenic significance.

Gem County Historic Preservation Ordinance

Gem County adopted its historic preservation ordinance, Ordinance No. 87-2, on April 27, 1987, which was codified within the County Code as [Chapter 2 Historic Preservation Commission](#) under Title 2, Boards and Commissions. The ordinance establishes the desired membership of the commission, defines powers and duties of the commission, and establishes rules and procedures.

Preservation Programs and Partners

- [Idaho State Historic Preservation Office \(SHPO\)](#). Idaho SHPO manages several programs and initiatives, including the National Register of Historic Places, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, Certified Local Governments, and the Section 106 review and consultation process for federally funded and permitted projects impacting historic resources. SHPO staff provide educational and technical support to Idaho communities on preservation issues. The Idaho SHPO maintains the Idaho Historic Sites Inventory (IHSI), which is the permanent statewide inventory of architectural and historic properties and records historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts.

- [Preservation Idaho](#). Established in 1972, Preservation Idaho is the statewide non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to preserving places that are important to Idaho residents. Their work focuses on threatened sites across the state, sponsoring the adoption of a statewide historic preservation tax credit program and managing the Idaho Barns Register, which documents the state's historic barns and agricultural buildings. In addition to their advocacy work, Preservation Idaho offers educational programs, walking tours, and a preservation awards program.
- [Idaho Heritage Trust](#). Established in 1989, the Idaho Heritage Trust provides grants and technical assistance in support of bricks and mortar preservation and cultural resource management projects across Idaho. The Trust receives its much of its funding through its ownership and licensing of the art incorporated on many Idaho license plates. It has funded more than 600 projects totaling over \$4.9 million in grants and technical architectural, engineering, and conservation assistance.
- [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#). The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) is the leading national nonprofit organization dedicated to historic preservation in the U.S. It has a 70-year history of saving places, advocating for national preservation policy, and assisting communities at the local level. The NTHP has financial resources available for project planning in the Preservation Fund. Grants require a committed match and competitive bids/quotes for the proposed scope of work. The grant maximum is \$5,000.

Gem County Historic Preservation Commission Efforts

1980's: Gem County was officially formed as a Certified Local Government (CLG) and the HPC was formed by Ordinance. Since its creation, the HPC members have been available to lead historic talks, tours, and demonstrations. Members of the HPC mapped the Pearl Cemetery, which is on private ground and not open to the public. The records are kept in the Gem County Museum Library for public reference. The HPC also wrote the history of the Sweet Syringa Hall and had outside signage installed.

1995: Members completed Idaho State Historic Site Assessments on many buildings in Downtown Emmett. These records are kept in the Gem County Museum Library for research resources.

2013- 2015: All members of the HPC worked with Brad Clark, Gem County Liaison and Dale Gray, a private contractor with Frontier Historical Consultants of Grand View, Idaho to complete a formal Homestead Survey. The purpose was to research location of sites and homes which were granted during the Homestead Act, to evaluate each identified structure for its potential for future Historic Site Recordation, and to evaluate each structure's potential for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Overall, 20 pre-1890's homes were assessed, photographed, and included in an application to the National Register of Historic Places. However, none were accepted.

2015-2018: HPC members worked in various ways to help with the Sweet Syringa Hall renovation; by attending and participating in meetings, writing letters of referral and recommendations, giving

speeches and presentations, and attending events focused on the project. Through many grants, donations, fund raisers, and widespread community participation the Hall was restored and is used regularly. Sweet-Montour Syringa Club President Sharon McConnell led the project.

2019- 2022: The HPC was actively involved in helping the community of Ola renovate their local elementary school, Ola School. The members of HPC attended meetings including School Board meetings and spoke in favor of the renovation. The HPC also wrote letters to local officials in support of the school and referred the SOS group (Save Ola School) into the network of historic preservation. Some grants were written through the CLG for small school projects. Members attended most SOS activities and fund raisers and visited the school to check on the progress regularly. Today, the Ola School is in full service to the young people of Ola in Gem County.

2020: Led by member Nick Petersen, the HPC is working to make accurate historic signs for the old bridges relocated in Gem County and used in walking paths. This project is ongoing.

2021: Led by member Karen Bruner, the HPC is involved in mapping the cemetery in Sweet Idaho. This project is ongoing.

Since 2015 letters have been written in support of preserving various things in Gem County from the Steam run Corliss at the old site of Boise Cascade Mill, to a sign on a downtown business that is out of compliance with the Design Standards of Emmett City.

CHAPTER 2. HISTORIC CONTEXT

HISTORY OF PLACE

Named from the “Gem of the Payette,” Gem County is located thirty miles northwest of Boise and encompasses a total area of 566 square miles. The Payette River and its tributaries provide the foundation for original settlements in Gem County. The river continues to provide water for irrigation to support agriculture and recreation and is home to many kinds of wildlife. Many industries have spurred the County’s economic development, to include lumber, livestock, and agriculture—particularly the fruit industry.

Over time, the area welcomed residents of varying backgrounds: Basque shepherders, Europeans sheep ranchers, Japanese farmers, and Hispanic farm workers, among others. The character of Gem County is defined by the interaction of the many cultures and values introduced and embraced by its residents. Indeed, the diversity of our citizenry gives our community its uniqueness.

The region’s history and its people are what shape present-day life in Gem County.

The Gem County Historical Society and Museum provides information related to the history and culture of the Native Americans who originally inhabited the Payette Valley and chronicles the contributions of the trappers, miners, and settlers who irrigated valley lands and established the local fruit industry. An overview of Gem County’s prehistory and history follows.

Gem County Prehistory

The Payette River, named after the trapper and explorer Francois Payette, supported American Indians who hunted and fished from its shores prior to European settlement. The Nez Perce,

1800

Pre-Contact: Until the 1870s, the Payette was a natural route for Native Americans as they moved seasonally in search of food, attracted by the large number of salmon, big game, edible roots and berries.

1818: The Payette River was named after Francois Payette, who was put in charge of Fort Boise and traveled through the area. The Treaty of 1818 also formalized joint U.S.-British occupation and settlement of what is now Idaho.

1830s: The first European and American men to inhabit the area were fur trappers in the mid-1830s.

1846: The Oregon Treaty settled the joint U.S. British occupation issue. Idaho and other lands officially became U.S. territory.

1860s: Permanent settlement began after gold discoveries in the Boise Basin brought people over the already established stage and pack train routes.

1863: Idaho established as a territory of the US.

1864: The Payette River Valley was a major transportation route to the mining fields set up along the river.

1883: Emmett was platted.

1900: Emmett was incorporated as a town.

1902: Idaho Northern Railway came to the valley.

1906: Pearl mines closed.

1915: Gem County was established from portions of Canyon County and Boise County.

1924: Black Canyon Dam was constructed.

1939: Gem County Courthouse was built.

1974: A Joint City-County Planning Council was created between Gem County and City of Emmett.

1976: Gem County’s first Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

1996: A Joint City/County Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

2000

Bannock, Kutenai, and Shoshoni peoples gathered along the Payette River to reap the benefits of the plentiful salmon, sage-grouse, geese, and larger mammals. It is estimated that roughly 8,000 American Indians inhabited the region prior to when European explorers ventured into the region. Spanish explorers began moving northward from Mexico in 1592, introducing new crops and animals to the American Indians within the Northwest region of the United States. After the Lewis and Clark expedition traversed and documented what is now central Idaho, French-Canadian and American fur trappers arrived in the area. This bountiful river later attracted these trappers who hunted game in large numbers. Their presence is memorialized through names such as Boise, an Anglicization of *bois*, which is French for “the trees.”¹

Settlement History

In 1862, Tim Goodale led a wagon train over a new segment of the Oregon Trail into the Payette Valley through what has since been called “Freezeout Hill.” Freezeout Hill got its infamous name from the travelers having to “freeze,” or lock, their wheels then slide down the hill.² Taking this route required the fording of the Payette River at the approximate location of modern-day Emmett. In 1864, a ferry was built to assist people taking the Freezeout Hill route by Nathaniel Martin and Jonathon Smith.³ The growing settlement adjacent to the crossing, called “Martinsville” in honor of Nathaniel Martin, served as a hub for trade and traffic through the region.⁴ On May 3, 1863, Emmett Lee Cahalan was born in Edina, Missouri. His family emigrated to Martinsville a year later. In 1868, Emmett’s father, Thomas, was appointed postmaster and the post office moved from Martinsville to the Cahalan ranch. Thomas Cahalan then named the new town “Emmetsville,” after his son and the Irish patriot, Robert Emmett.⁵ In 1883, a townsite of 40 acres was platted and in 1885, an independent school district established. By 1885, the community’s name was changed to Emmett in order to differentiate their Idaho community from Emmetsville, Iowa.

Shortly after gold was discovered in the area, Idaho Territory was established in 1863. Although gold was mined at Pearl as early as 1870, and again in 1893, the town did not see substantial growth until after 1894. When interest in silver mining collapsed in 1892, the focus turned to gold and Pearl became a center of activity. It is estimated that Pearl produced 20,000 ounces of gold.⁶

¹ “History of Payette River WMA,” Idaho Fish and Game, <https://idfg.idaho.gov/wma/payette-river/history>

² Amy J. Thompson, “Freezeout Hill,” *Idaho Harvester*, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives Department, June 10, 2019, <https://harvester.lib.uidaho.edu/posts/2019/06/10/freezeout-hill.html#:~:text=Freezeout%20Hill%20was%20so%20named, freight%20wagon%20up%20the%20hill>

³ Arthur Hart, “Idaho History: Emmett is named for the son of an Irish patriot,” *Idaho Statesman*, retrieved from [Microsoft Word - Idaho History Emmett.doc \(sbbch.org\)](https://www.idahohistory.org/Emmett.doc) on June 13, 2022.

⁴ Gem County Historical Preservation Advisory Board, “History,” retrieved from https://www.gemcounty.org/how_do_i/find_learn_about/history.php on June 13, 2022.

⁵ Meg Davis, “What’s in a Name?” Gem County Historical Society and Museum, retrieved from <https://www.gemcountymuseum.org/history-E.Cahalan.html> on June 13, 2022.

⁶ Merle B. Wells, *Gold Camps and Silver Cities: Nineteenth Century Mining in Central and Southern Idaho*, Moscow: Idaho Department of Lands, Bureau of Mines and Geology, 1983, pages 74-76.

Emmett boasted 600 residents at the time of its 1900 incorporation. Construction of the Idaho Northern Railway through the valley brought about a boom in 1902. The 1910 completion of the rail line between Emmett and New Plymouth fueled a second boom. In 1915, Emmett was designated as the County seat of the newly created Gem County. By 1920, Emmett had grown to a size of 6,427 residents, remarkably close to its modern-day population.

RESOURCES

There are archaeological resources and historic properties that have been previously identified in Gem County, as highlighted below. However, without having completed extensive historic surveys or archaeological field studies, there are likely many unidentified archaeological and historic resources in the County.

Archaeological Resources

Documented human occupation of southwestern Idaho goes back 12,000 years. According to the Idaho State Historical Society, there are currently 257 archaeological sites recorded in Gem County, the majority of which are on Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, or Forest Service lands. Archaeological site locations are held as confidential information and not released to the general public.

Tribal Governments

Today there are five federally recognized tribes located in the state of Idaho: the Shoshone-Bannock, the Shoshone-Paiute, the Coeur d'Alene, the Kootenai, and the Nez Perce.

Historic Properties

There are 219 Gem County properties listed in the Idaho Historic Sites Inventory, a database of known and documented historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts. 168 properties are within the City of Emmett; 51 are located throughout the unincorporated areas of Gem County. Many of these properties are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), although only 10 have been listed in the NRHP.

There are a total of 69 unevaluated properties within Emmett and the surrounding rural areas, in addition to 97 ineligible properties, most of them located within Emmett, but 11 of them are in Sweet.

National Register-listed Properties:

- Sweet Methodist Episcopal Church
- Ola School
- Oregon Short Line Railway Depot (Emmett Depot)
- Gem County Courthouse
- F.T. Bliss House
- First Baptist Church of Emmett
- Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church
- Emmett Presbyterian Church (Emmett First Southern Baptist Church)
- Methodist Episcopal Church (listed in the 1980s; subsequently demolished)

GEM COUNTY'S HISTORIC, NATURAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Sehewoki'i Neweene'an Katete:

Rising 5,906 feet, this butte stands at the north end of the Valley as a historic landmark for Native Americans and other travelers. Formerly Squaw Butte, it was renamed in 2022 by the US Department of the Interior.

Black Canyon Dam:

With the pressing need for irrigation water, the Bureau of Reclamation completed this 183-foot-high dam in 1924. It was built on a natural dam site, created by the huge black basalt rocks that blocked travel up the canyon, and for which the canyon was named.

City of Emmett:

The only incorporated city in Gem County is Emmett, which is also the county seat. There are seven properties in the city that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Ola:

Fifteen miles north of Sweet, Ola was settled in 1864. It remains a farm and ranch community today. Ola's community hall, two-room schoolhouse, and church built around 1910, are still used today. The Schoolhouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sweet:

In the early 1880's, during the gold rush, Sweet served as an important freight station. At the turn of the century, Sweet boasted of three hotels, three saloons, a bank, a newspaper, two lodge halls, and other business. After the gold rush subsided and a series of fires in the business district, the town began to deteriorate, and was not rebuilt. The Methodist Episcopal Church in Sweet is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Montour:

In the early 1860s, the Marsh-Ireton Ranch was established as a stage and mail stop on the freight road to the Boise Basin. After the railroad came through the Valley in 1911, the Montour business district and town were platted. Dreams of prosperity faded, when in 1941, the new highway bypassed Montour.

Regan's Butte:

Daniel Regan built one of the largest cattle outfits in the area in the late 1800's.

Pearl:

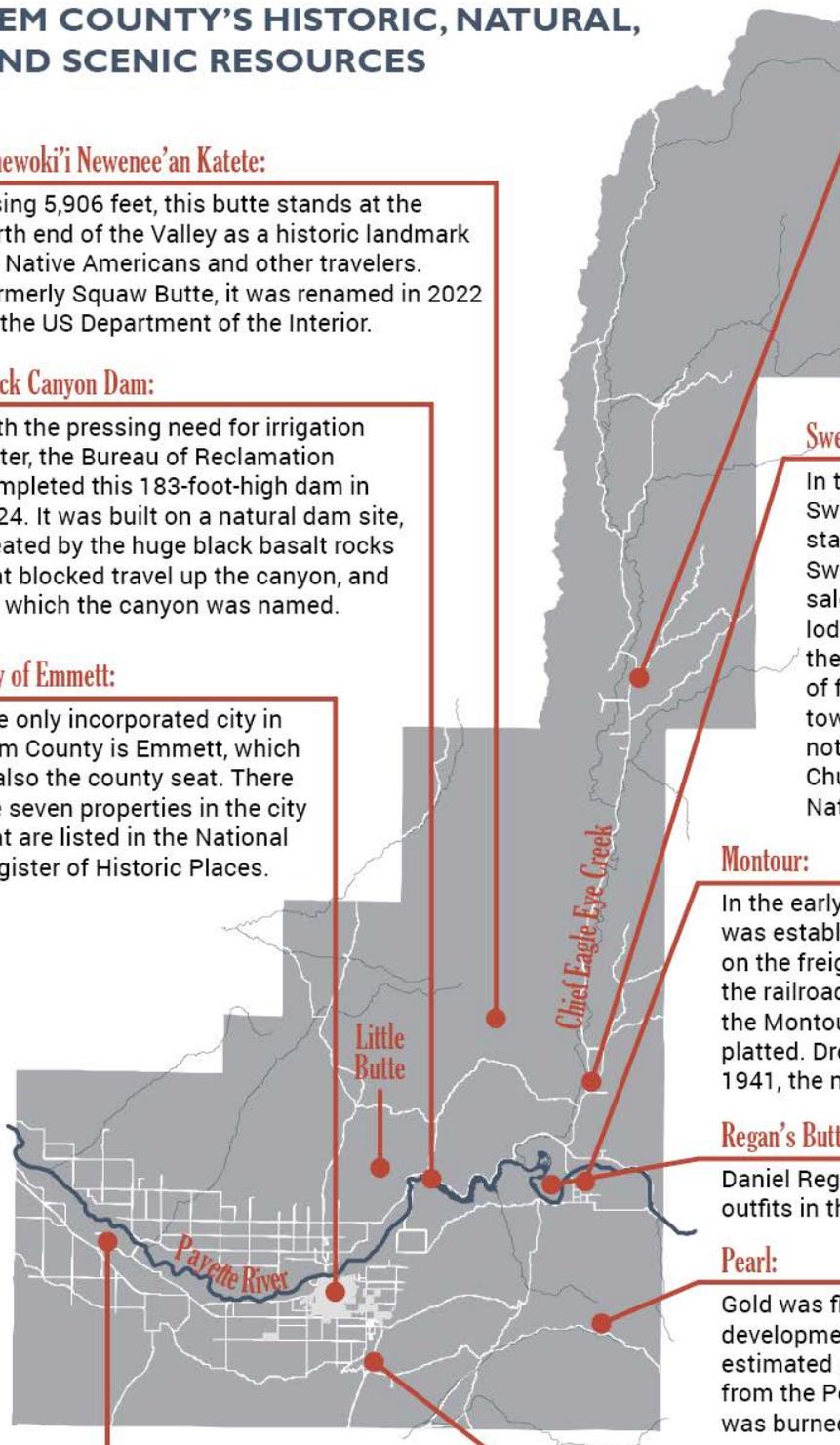
Gold was first discovered here in 1867, but development took off between 1894-1908. An estimated \$12 million worth of ore was taken from the Pearl area. What remained of the town was burned down in 2004.

Letha:

In 1910, Colonel Barnard and W.W. Wilton envisioned a town and major rail center to connect New Plymouth to Emmett. That dream was never realized.

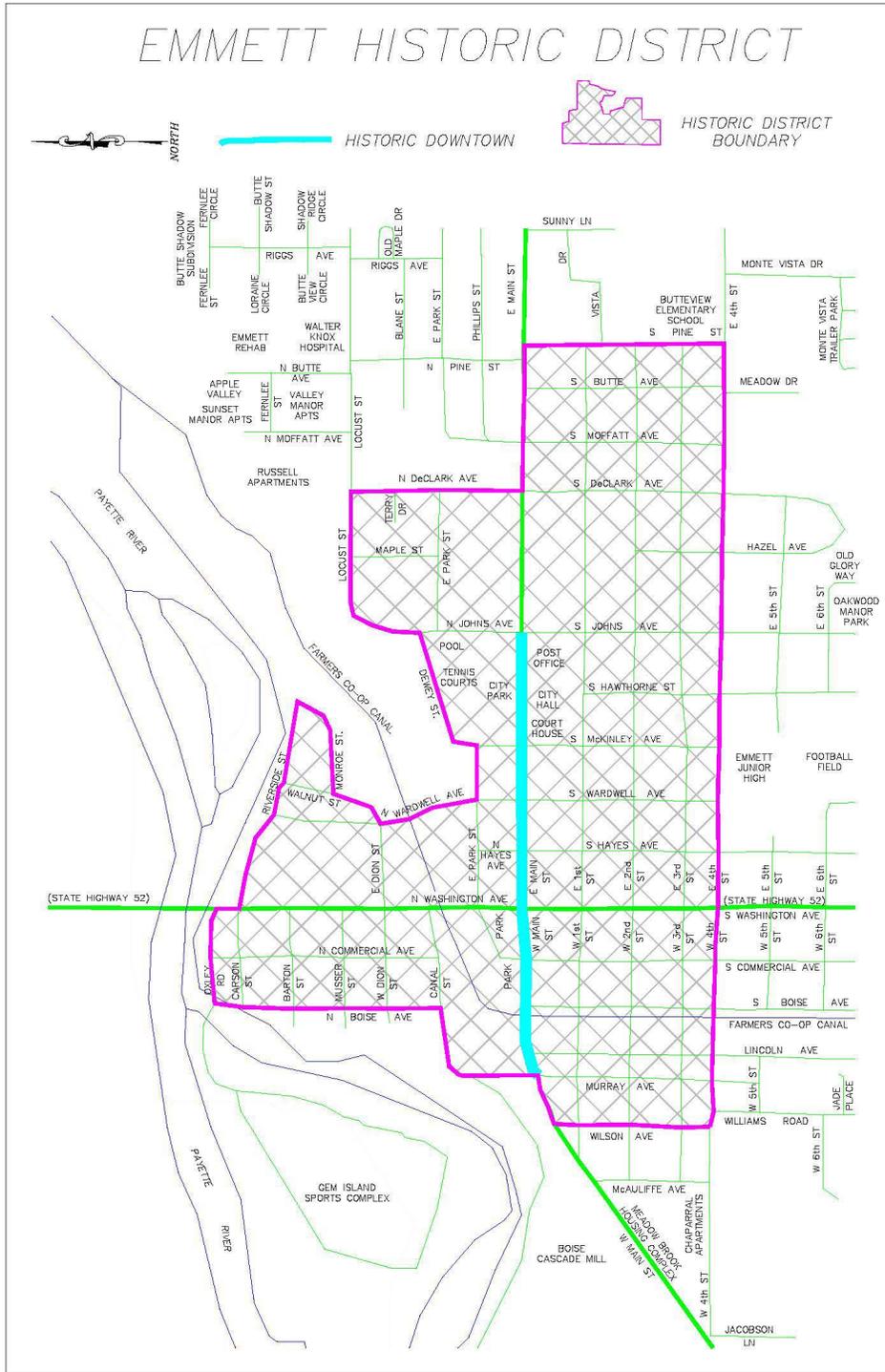
Freezeout Hill:

Steep terrain limited access to the Emmett Valley from the southeast. Freezeout Hill was so named because travelers had to lock or "freeze" their wagon wheels and slide down the hill. Views of the Emmett Valley are valued.



Emmett Historic Central Business District

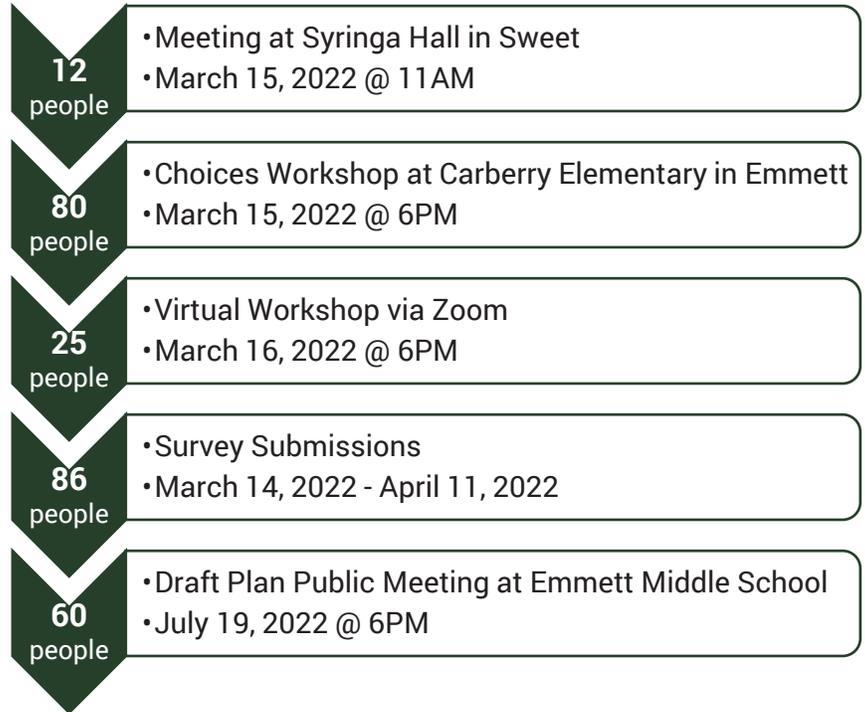
The City of Emmett designated a Historic Central Business District that encompasses the downtown area between the Payette River to the north and 4th Street to the south, Wilson Street to the west and Pine Street to the east. This Emmett Historic Central Business District is used and referenced in the [City of Emmett Design Manual](#).



CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

PRESERVATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OUTREACH

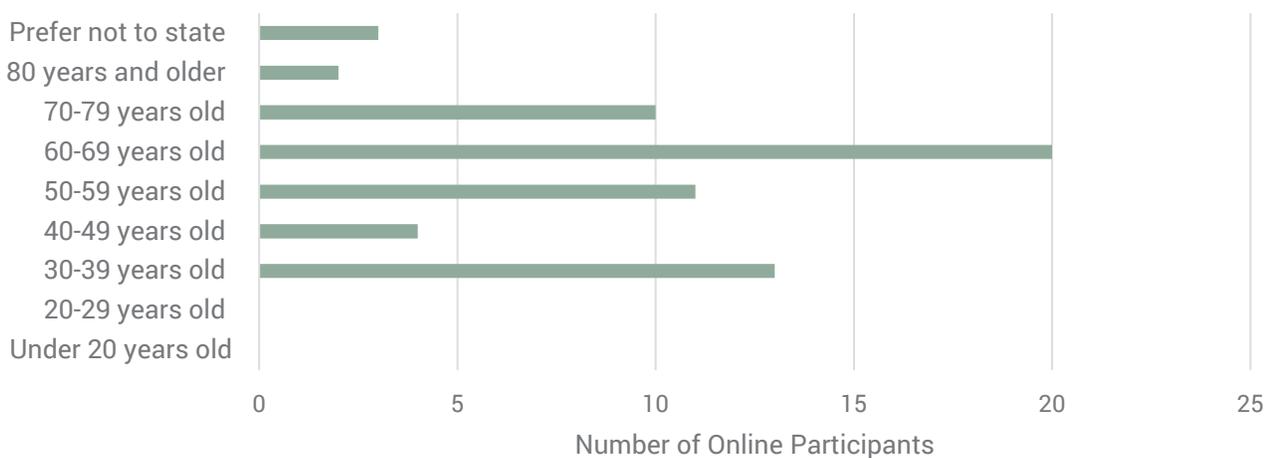
Community feedback on preservation priorities was collected from the Gem County residents at two in-person events, a live online event, and through an online survey for approximately four weeks in March and April. Several of these outreach meetings were done in tandem with the Comprehensive Plan public process. The nine-question survey asked about historic and cultural resources preservation priorities and values. A full report of the survey results (including both online and hard-copy submissions) is in Appendix A.



Participation

Age demographics were tracked for online survey participants. In-person participants were not asked to provide demographic information. Most of the online participants for this plan were between 30-39 years old (~21%) and 60-69 years old (~32%).

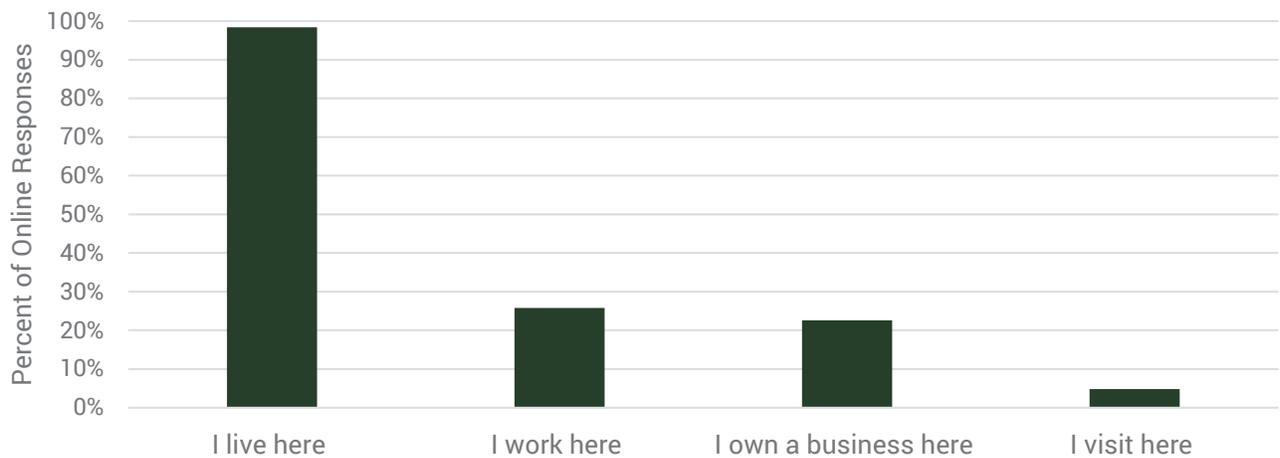
What is your age?



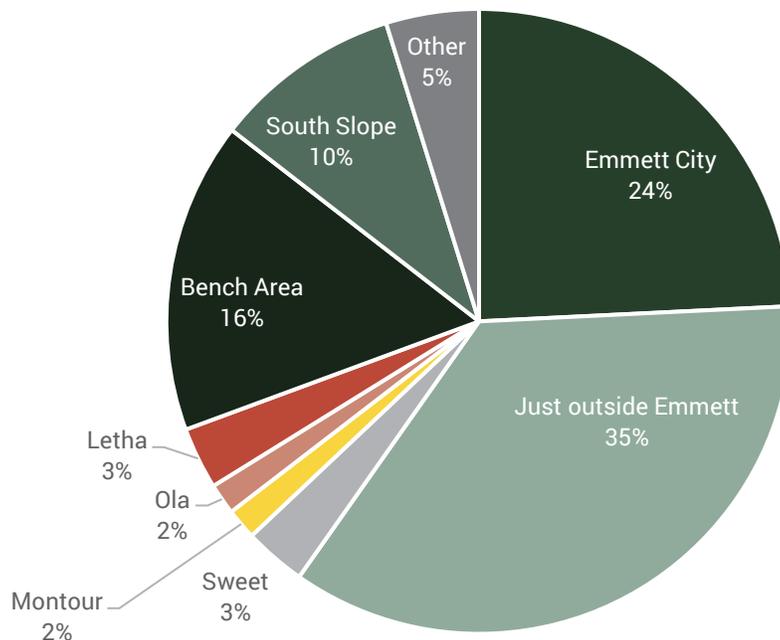
Participants who live just outside of Emmett’s city limits made up the largest group at 35% of online participants, while the second largest area of residence for participants was within Emmett itself (24%). The other areas of Gem County were also represented, from the Bench area to the South Slope and smaller communities like Letha and Ola, however these locations did not have as significant of a response rate.

It is important for this plan to represent the local Gem County community, so the online survey asked about the participants’ relationship to Gem County. Almost all participants indicated that they were local residents (98% of respondents). The survey also captured feedback from business owners and local workers with a small percentage of visitors.

What is your relationship to Gem County?

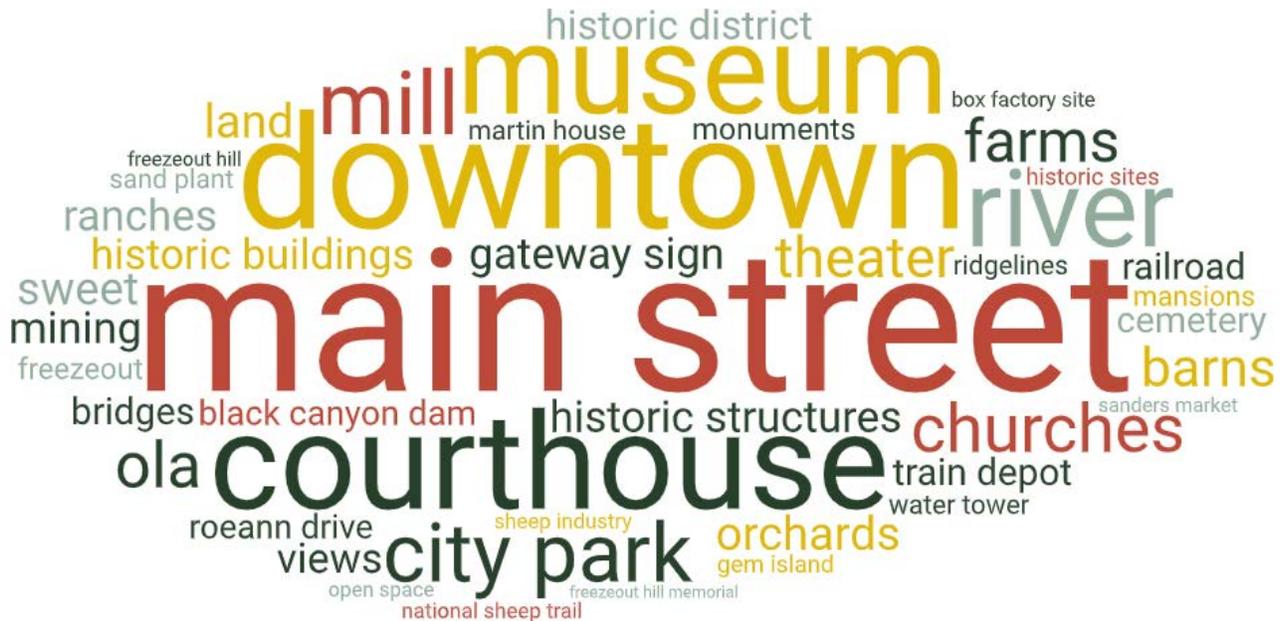


Where is your primary residence?



THE PLACES THAT MATTER

Community members believe that Gem’s historic preservation priorities should largely focus on the brick buildings in Downtown Emmett, sites with agricultural heritage and history, and other specific sites throughout the County like churches and cemeteries. The word cloud below represents the comment responses. The larger the word, the more often it was submitted.



Historic Preservation Priorities

Community participants indicated that priority should be given to preservation of buildings/properties that are identified with historic people or events and represent an important historic period. About half of respondents showed support for preserving buildings with a distinct architectural style or for sites that provide important information in prehistory or history.

Importance of Historic Preservation

The survey responses show significant openness to consider passing ordinances or zoning to strengthen preservation goals in the County. This, paired with other survey questions, indicate that some level of regulatory strategy could be considered.

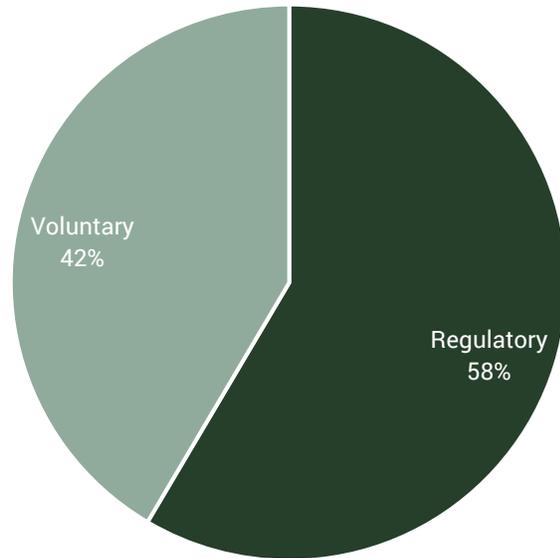
Most respondents also acknowledged that the County needs more historic places to be identified, evaluated, and celebrated. The high number of “neutral” responses indicate that there are many residents that do not know what historic places might qualify for the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP).

Less than a quarter of respondents showed support for the statement that said listing a building on the NRHP would interfere with an owner’s property rights. While in the minority, it still shows that there is an educational component necessary to dispel misunderstandings of what the NRHP listing can influence; the NRHP is largely honorific and doesn’t by itself place any restrictions on the use of the building.

Tools for Preservation

When asked how historic resources should be preserved, participants were split between voluntary and regulatory measures. Several participants said that they would like a balance of both approaches, while others firmly thought that a voluntary approach is preferred, and that the role of the County shouldn't be to impose more restrictions on land uses and building design.

When considering county regulatory measures for historic preservation such as ordinances and zoning, the majority of respondents showed support. While respondents were split on how many historic places in Gem County are eligible for federal nominations like the NRHP, there was significant support shown for local identification and recognition of more historic buildings. The community saw some concern over the impacts of preservation on private property rights, however most feedback reflected a neutral or unconcerned response.



Priorities

Responses showed that the top three priorities for preservation in Gem should be to adaptively reuse historic buildings rather than demolish them, increase the number of historic buildings on the county's radar and provide financial support for those who are actively preserving historic places. Formal nominations to programs like the NRHP and educational programs for schools were lower priorities for the community moving forward.

Participants displayed their care and consideration for preservation through their desire to discourage demolition when possible and encourage preservation as a top priority. Gem County's unique history is cherished throughout the community, with the preservation of historic buildings being a key component of celebrating that past. The community would like to also see new construction preserve the history celebrated by existing buildings while encouraging environmental stewardship within the built environment.

Implementation

Making sure that the previously mentioned preservation priorities could be effectively implemented required a deeper look at ways of encouraging preservation in Gem County specifically. Knowing their specific community and how it functions, respondents identified preservation grants, historic markers and information, and tax benefits as the top ways that preservation could be successful in the County. Less supported measures included low-interest loans, walking tours, or conditional uses for a landmark site.

Satisfaction with Current Preservation Efforts

Although there was uncertainty amongst respondents about how Gem County is currently working toward historic preservation, dissatisfaction with most current initiatives was a dominant theme. The areas in which there is room for improvement have been made clear through the results of this plan and identify ways in which preservation can continue to serve the community better. The areas of highest satisfaction regarding preservation efforts, however, were public involvement and surveying of historic properties.

Information and Education

In order to spread the news about preservation throughout Gem County, the survey participants identified that the most effective methods would be through historic markers and plaques, web-based information, and various exhibits. A mixture of online and in person methods would allow the County to reach residents and visitors in a holistic way. Awards were expressed as the least effective form of educating and informing the public about local historic preservation.

CHAPTER 4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Gem County has an opportunity to celebrate its diverse historic and cultural resources through strengthened preservation efforts that will enable residents and visitors to enjoy these resources for years to come. This chapter features a mission statement, vision statement, and four goals to guide ongoing work by the Gem County Historic Preservation Commission.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Gem County Historic Preservation Commission is to honor our past, educate for today, and preserve for tomorrow.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision Gem County as a beautiful community where our history is honored, protected, and preserved; a community that celebrates, respects, and promotes the diversity and culture of its people and natural resources, and creates an environment where culture, arts, and heritage flourish.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCES AND PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITIES.

Objective 1.1: Provide public programs to increase community awareness of the economic and aesthetic value of Gem County’s historically significant places.

Action: Offer historic tours or educational programs for families and small groups such as service clubs, community groups, Senior Centers, home schoolers, and assisted living facilities.

Action: Partner with the Gem County Chamber of Commerce to develop and promote a self-guided walking tour of historic resources.

Action: Propose declaring May as “Historic Preservation Month” to match the national designation and use a May event to promote HPC efforts.

Objective 1.2: Establish a community-wide network to promote preservation.

Action: Partner with the Idaho State Historical Society, Preservation Idaho, and the Idaho Heritage Trust to develop community workshops and education sessions on how to preserve, rehabilitate, restore, and reconstruct historic properties.

Action: Inform local business owners of the benefits of historic designation and involve them in the process of creating tour maps as a way of promoting their businesses.

Action: Partner with local artists to create promotional materials (stickers, fliers, information cards, posters, etc.) to display at events and historic properties.

Action: Gain demographically diverse feedback regarding future preservation efforts by using a variety of outreach methods.

Objective 1.3: Make resources for historic preservation available to the public by integrating them into established community gathering places.

Action: Catalogue history and preservation-related resources available to public, such as the Museum library, public library, online resources such as the GCHM online website, Emmett design standards documents, and the Historic Preservation Commission. Consolidate all relevant resources online and link them.

Action: Inform people about the preservation opportunities available to them through fliers in water bills, power bills, Assessor's tax notices, and other public mailings.

Action: Use publicly accessible and visible QR codes, and other similar identification systems, to promote historic tours and resources. An example could include a link to educational resources on historic landmark signage and plaques which might outline the tools used to preserve the structure and additional historic resources located nearby.

Action: Use and promote technological innovations for preservation efforts as they come along.

Action: Provide resources and educational materials (handouts, information cards, QR codes) to historic property owners to give out to visitors.

Action: Create user-friendly handbook for the community to understand the options available for their property as well as potential funding sources to support preservation efforts.

GOAL 2: CELEBRATE GEM COUNTY'S HISTORIC RESOURCES.

Objective 2.1: Identify Emmett's Historic Central Business District with plaques, street light banners, or monuments at the boundary.

Action: Match elements of plaques, banners, sign toppers, or monuments to tour maps and online resources where possible to ease wayfinding; consider additional wayfinding materials when appropriate.

Objective 2.2: Create walking, driving, or virtual tours and other special events within Emmett's Historic Central Business District and to other historic areas in the County.

Action: Consolidate information about historic properties online in an easy-to-follow format.

Action: Coordinate with the Museum and Chamber of Commerce to promote historic resources during community wide events such as the Cherry Festival, River Through Time, Harvest Festival, and the Gem/Boise County Fair.

Action: Gain community-wide support for tours by establishing relationships with property owners and informing them of times when numbers of visitors may be heightened.

Objective 2.3 Promote thematic branding of preservation based off Gem County's unique history.

Action: Create themed events, tours, or programs that follow or educate about specific historical events. Examples could include prehistoric cultural sites, old sheep trails, or a 4-wheeler, horseback, or hiking tour of Johnson Creek.

Action: Denote historic places with specifically branded, uniform, plaques building off the County's standard logo or work with local artists to come up with a specific HPC logo.

Action: Continue the Historic Bridge Signage Project to include an informational narrative for each bridge for the website, develop a map brochure as a guide to each bridge, and seek grant funding for interpretive signs.

GOAL 3: PRIORITIZE PRESERVATION EFFORTS.

Objective 3.1: Coordinate preservation efforts between Gem County, City of Emmett, local organizations, and private residents.

Action: Identify a City staff person to oversee city historic preservation efforts and coordinate with the HPC, as a liaison for organizations, local businesses, and stakeholders.

Action: Collect oral and written accounts related to historically significant resources, events, and persons from community members; archive interviews and make them available on the website.

Objective 3.2: Develop a quantifiable system by which decision makers can assess historic preservation and rehabilitation efforts.

Action: Review development applications through a lens of criteria that promote best historic preservation practices.

Action: Develop criteria for what makes a Gem County property eligible for local listing and recognition.

Action: Develop a packet for HPC members outlining the basics of historic preservation, their role in the process, their standards for decision making, and how best to collaborate and conduct meetings.

Action: Consolidate all documents related to historic preservation, including applications, process charts, maps, tour resources, and legislation, in one centralized location on the website.

Action: Educate the community about the advantages of preservation over demolition.

Objective 3.3: Consider revising the County's Zoning Code to incentivize redevelopment of historic properties while maintaining their historic character.

Action: Consider waivers or reductions for required on-site parking to preserve the landscape of historic properties within the zoning code.

Action: Consider relief from nonconformity requirements such as setbacks and building heights in exchange for maintaining and/or restoring a historic structure.

Action: Implement language that encourages the retention of original materials wherever possible in the alteration of historic properties.

Objective 3.4: Consider County, state, federal, and non-profit funding incentives.

Action: Create a County tax incentive program for properties that preserve historic facades, buildings, or sites.

Action: Inform property owners of the 20% federal rehabilitation tax incentive program as an avenue for historic property owners to reduce the cost of qualified rehabilitation work.

Action: Utilize the IRS charitable deduction provision through the donation of a façade easement on a historic property.

Action: Apply for Idaho Heritage Trust grants by September 30th (annual deadline) for technical assistance and financial assistance for preservation work on publicly owned buildings.

Action: Consider reducing fees for improvements on historic properties.

Action: Seek FEMA grants for upgrades to properties at risk due to seismic activity, flooding, or other natural disasters.

Objective 3.5: Consider expanding historic preservation to include unique geographies and aspects of the landscape which have been altered by human activity.

Action: Implement a landmark tree program that is integrated into historic preservation efforts, to define what constitutes a landmark tree and provides standards to preserve and maintain said trees throughout the County. This could apply to historic orchards in addition to individual trees that meet the criteria.

Action: Create educational programs about the history and impact of the irrigation system in the valley.

Action: Prioritize the preservation of farm and ranch land by recognizing Century Farms.

Action: Work with local tribes in consultation with Idaho SHPO and the Archaeological Survey of Idaho to determine areas of high likelihood for archaeological and cultural resources to protect them.

Objective 3.6: Consider expanding the roles and responsibilities of the HPC.

Action: Elevate the authority of the HPC to be the primary recommending body for all demolition and alteration applications.

Action: Incorporate specific evaluation criteria into the County's Zoning Code for alternations and demolitions.

GOAL 4: IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE HISTORIC PROPERTIES.

Objective 4.1: Identify data gaps within the inventory of historic properties.

Action: Establish a process for the public to submit properties they think may be eligible for listing, based on a set of standard criteria.

Action: Map existing historic properties to show clusters and identify if there are additional properties around those areas that could potentially form a district.

Action: Prioritize future survey efforts to fill data gaps.

Action: Continue inventory and mapping project of Sweet Cemetery.

Objective 4.2: Work with the Idaho SHPO to identify and evaluate resources for National Register eligibility.

Action: Apply for a grant to outsource survey work to identify eligible historic properties.

Action: Pursue grant funding and outside expertise to build a data site to be used by real estate agents and government entities.

PLAN MANAGEMENT

It is expected that that this document will be updated every 5 years by Gem County in partnership with the Gem County HPC. The action items listed above should be considered annually by the HPC to establish short-term and mid-term priorities.

APPENDIX F: TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

APPENDIX G: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

PURPOSE OF THE IMPACT FEES

Development impact fees (“Impact fees”) are statutorily defined as “a payment of money imposed as a condition of development approval to pay for a proportionate share of the cost of system improvements needed to serve development” (Idaho Code Section 67-8203(9)). Title 67, Chapter 82 of the Idaho Code provides the authority for local jurisdictions, like Gem County, to enact ordinances for impact fees and to set standards to ensure that the fees are fair and equitable. Under Idaho law, government entities who are jointly affected by development (i.e. fire districts) to enter into intergovernmental agreements with one another for the purpose of developing joint plans for capital improvements and/or to collect and expend impact fees for system improvements.

As Gem County continues to experience growth, both residential and commercial development place additional demands on existing infrastructure and facilities. Because of this development, there is increased demand or required increased quality for such services provided by these facilities. This increase necessarily requires additional funds. General Funds collected via property tax, are insufficient to meet the growing costs caused by the increased demand. To ensure future growth pays for an equitable share of the increased demand and that the existing community is not taxed to pay for future development, impact fees are a proposed solution to pay for the increased demand on public facilities and improvements.

Gem County does utilize “Development Agreements” to negotiate the development of public facilities. However, typically these agreements cover only project-related improvements while impact fees can provide a reliable source of funding for system improvements. Impact fees will not act as the sole funding source for facilities as the County intends to use a combination of sources to meet their future facility goals.

This document is intended to replace any previous versions of a “Gem County Capital Improvement Projects” document.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS (CIP)

Idaho Code Section 67-8208 requires that capital improvement plans be adopted prior to imposing impact fees. The required contents of the capital improvement plans include:

- A. A general description of all existing public facilities and existing deficiencies;
- B. A commitment by the County (or other governmental entity) to cure existing system deficiencies by using other available sources of funding where available;
- C. An analysis of the total capacity and current level of use;
- D. A description of land use assumptions used;
- E. A definitive table establishing specific levels of use or consumption by service unit;
- F. A description of all system improvements and costs attributed to the new development;
- G. The total number of service units attributed to new development;
- H. The projected demand for interim improvements over a specified time period (not to exceed 20 years);
- I. Identification of all funding sources for system improvements;
- J. Agreements for joint governmental improvements (if applicable);
- K. A schedule for the estimated commencement and completion of improvements identified in the CIP.

Under Idaho law, as a governmental entity, Gem County must undertake comprehensive planning pursuant to Idaho Code Section 67-6501 and must incorporate the capital improvement plans as an element of the County Comprehensive Plan. Gem County is incorporating the capital improvement plans and impact fee studies as Appendix G; Capital Improvement Plans of the Gem County Comprehensive Plan.

FINAL REPORT

February 1, 2021

**Gem County, Idaho/Gem County Fire District #1
Impact Fee Study and
Capital Improvement Plans**

Prepared for

Gem County/Gem County Fire Protection District #1

Prepared By

Galena Consulting
Anne Wescott
1214 S. Johnson St.
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Section I.

Introduction

This report regarding impact fees for Gem County/Gem County Fire District #1 is organized into the following sections:

- An overview of the report's background and objectives;
- A definition of impact fees and a discussion of their appropriate use;
- An overview of land use and demographics;
- A step-by-step calculation of impact fees under the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) approach;
- A list of implementation recommendations; and
- A brief summary of conclusions.

Background and Objectives

Gem County and the Gem County Fire District #1 hired Galena Consulting to calculate impact fees for the County Sheriff, County Road & Bridge Department, EMS and Fire.

This document presents impact fees based on the Gem County/Gem County Fire District's demographic data and infrastructure costs before credit adjustment; calculates the Gem County/Gem County Fire District's monetary participation; examines the likely cash flow produced by the recommended fee amount; and outlines specific fee implementation recommendations. Credits can be granted on a case-by-case basis; these credits are assessed when each individual building permit is pulled.

Definition of Impact Fees

Impact fees are one-time assessments established by local governments to assist with the provision of Capital Improvements necessitated by new growth and development. Impact fees are governed by principles established in Title 67, Chapter 82, Idaho Code, known as the Idaho Development Impact Fee Act (Impact Fee Act) which specifically gives cities, towns and counties the authority to levy impact fees. The Idaho Code defines an impact fee as "... a payment of money imposed as a condition of development approval to pay for a proportionate share of the cost of system improvements needed to serve development."¹

Purpose of impact fees. The Impact Fee Act includes the legislative finding that "... an equitable program for planning and financing public facilities needed to serve new growth and development is necessary in order to promote and accommodate orderly growth and development and to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the state of Idaho."²

Idaho fee restrictions and requirements. The Impact Fee Act places numerous restrictions on the calculation and use of impact fees, all of which help ensure that local governments adopt impact fees that are consistent with federal law.³ Some of those restrictions include:

- Impact fees shall not be used for any purpose other than to defray system improvement costs incurred to provide additional public facilities to serve new growth;⁴
- Impact fees must be expended within 8 years from the date they are collected. Fees may be held in certain circumstances beyond the 8-year time limit if the governmental entity can provide reasonable cause;⁵
- Impact fees must not exceed the proportionate share of the cost of capital improvements needed to serve new growth and development;⁶
- Impact fees must be maintained in one or more interest-bearing accounts within the capital projects fund.⁷

In addition, the Impact Fee Act requires the following:

- Establishment of and consultation with a development impact fee advisory committee (Advisory Committee);⁸
- Identification of all existing public facilities;
- Determination of a standardized measure (or service unit) of consumption of public facilities;
- Identification of the current level of service that existing public facilities provide;
- Identification of the deficiencies in the existing public facilities;

¹ See Section 67-8203(9), Idaho Code. "System improvements" are capital improvements (i.e., improvements with a useful life of 10 years or more) that, in addition to a long life, increase the service capacity of a public facility. Public facilities include: parks, open space and recreation areas, and related capital improvements; and public safety facilities, including law enforcement, fire, emergency medical and rescue facilities. See Sections 67-8203(3), (24) and (28), Idaho Code.

² See Section 67-8202, Idaho Code.

³ As explained further in this study, proportionality is the foundation of a defensible impact fee. To meet substantive due process requirements, an impact fee must provide a rational relationship (or nexus) between the impact fee assessed against new development and the actual need for additional capital improvements. An impact fee must substantially advance legitimate local government interests. This relationship must be of "rough proportionality." Adequate consideration of the factors outlined in Section 67-8207(2) ensure that rough proportionality is reached. See *Banbury Development Corp. v. South Jordan*, 631 P.2d 899 (1981); *Dollan v. County/District of Tigard*, 512 U.S. 374 (1994).

⁴ See Sections 67-8202(4) and 67-8203(29), Idaho Code.

⁵ See Section 67-8210(4), Idaho Code.

⁶ See Sections 67-8204(1) and 67-8207, Idaho Code.

⁷ See Section 67-8210(1), Idaho Code.

⁸ See Section 67-8205, Idaho Code.

- Forecast of residential and nonresidential growth;⁹
- Identification of the growth-related portion of the Sheriff, Roadway & Bridge, EMS and Fire Capital Improvement Plans;¹⁰
- Analysis of cash flow stemming from impact fees and other capital improvement funding sources;¹¹
- Implementation of recommendations such as impact fee credits, how impact fee revenues should be accounted for, and how the impact fees should be updated over time;¹²
- Preparation and adoption of a Capital Improvement Plan pursuant to state law and public hearings regarding the same;¹³ and
- Preparation and adoption of a resolution authorizing impact fees pursuant to state law and public hearings regarding the same.¹⁴

How should fees be calculated? State law requires the County/District to implement the Capital Improvement Plan methodology to calculate impact fees. The County/District can implement fees of any amount not to exceed the fees as calculated by the CIP approach. This methodology requires the County/District to describe its service areas, forecast the land uses, densities and population that are expected to occur in those service areas over the 10-year CIP time horizon, and identify the capital improvements that will be needed to serve the forecasted growth at the planned levels of service, assuming the planned levels of service do not exceed the current levels of service.¹⁵ This list and cost of capital improvements constitutes the capital improvement element to be adopted as part of the Gem County Comprehensive Plan.¹⁶ Only those items identified as growth-related on the CIP are eligible to be funded by impact fees.

The entity intending to adopt an impact fee must first prepare a capital improvements plan.¹⁷ To ensure that impact fees are adopted and spent for capital improvements in support of the community's needs and planning goals, the Impact Fee Act establishes a link between the authority to charge impact fees and certain planning requirements of Idaho's Local Land Use Planning Act (LLUPA). The local government must have adopted a comprehensive plan per LLUPA procedures, and that comprehensive plan must be updated to include a current capital improvement element.¹⁸ This study considers the planned capital improvements for the ten-year period from 2021 to the end of 2030 that will need to be adopted as an element in Gem County's Comprehensive Plan.

⁹ See Section 67-8206(2), Idaho Code.

¹⁰ See Section 67-8208, Idaho Code.

¹¹ See Section 67-8207, Idaho Code.

¹² See Sections 67-8209 and 67-8210, Idaho Code.

¹³ See Section 67-8208, Idaho Code.

¹⁴ See Sections 67-8204 and 67-8206, Idaho Code.

Once the essential capital planning has taken place, impact fees can be calculated. The Impact Fee Act places many restrictions on the way impact fees are calculated and spent, particularly via the principal that local governments cannot charge new development more than a “proportionate share” of the cost of public facilities to serve that new growth. “Proportionate share” is defined as “. . .that portion of the cost of system improvements . . . which reasonably relates to the service demands and needs of the project.”¹⁹ Practically, this concept requires the County/District to carefully project future growth and estimate capital improvement costs so that it prepares reasonable and defensible impact fee schedules.

The proportionate share concept is designed to ensure that impact fees are calculated by measuring the needs created for capital improvements by development being charged the impact fee; do not exceed the cost of such improvements; and are “earmarked” to fund growth-related capital improvements to benefit those that pay the impact fees.

There are various approaches to calculating impact fees and to crediting new development for past and future contributions made toward system improvements. The Impact Fee Act does not specify a single type of fee calculation, but it does specify that the formula be “reasonable and fair.” Impact fees should take into account the following:

- Any appropriate credit, offset or contribution of money, dedication of land, or construction of system improvements;
- Payments reasonably anticipated to be made by or as a result of a new development in the form of user fees and debt service payments;
- That portion of general tax and other revenues allocated by the County/District to growth-related system improvements; and
- All other available sources of funding such system improvements.²⁰

Through data analysis and interviews with County/District staff, Galena Consulting identified the share of each capital improvement needed to serve growth. The total projected capital improvements needed to serve growth are then allocated to residential and nonresidential development with the resulting amounts divided by the appropriate growth projections from 2021 to 2030. This is consistent with the Impact Fee Act.²¹ Among the advantages of the CIP approach is its establishment of a spending plan to give developers and new residents more certainty about the use of the particular impact fee revenues.

¹⁵ As a comparison and benchmark for the impact fees calculated under the Capital Improvement Plan approach, Galena Consulting also calculated the Gem County/Gem County Fire District’s current level of service by quantifying the Gem County/Gem County Fire District’s current investment in capital improvements for each impact fee category, allocating a portion of these assets to residential and nonresidential development, and dividing the resulting amount by current housing units (residential fees) or current square footage (nonresidential fees). By using current assets to denote the current service standard, this methodology guards against using fees to correct existing deficiencies.

¹⁶ See Sections 67-8203(4) and 67-8208, Idaho Code.

¹⁷ See Section 67-8208, Idaho Code.

¹⁸ See Sections 67-8203(4) and 67-8208, Idaho Code.

¹⁹ See Section 67-8203(23), Idaho Code.

²⁰ See Section 67-8207, Idaho Code.

²¹ The impact fee that can be charged to each service unit cannot exceed the amount determined by dividing the cost of capital improvements attributable to new development (in order to provide an adopted service level) by the total number of service units attributable to new development. See Sections 67-8204(16), 67-8208(1)(f) and 67-8208(1)(g), Idaho Code.

Other fee calculation considerations. The basic CIP methodology used in the fee calculations is presented above. However, implementing this methodology requires a number of decisions. The considerations accounted for in the fee calculations include the following:

- Allocation of costs is made using a service unit which is “a standard measure of consumption, use, generation or discharge attributable to an individual unit²² of development calculated in accordance with generally accepted engineering or planning standards for a particular category of capital improvement.”²³ The service units chosen by the study team for every fee calculation in this study are linked directly to residential dwelling units and nonresidential development square feet.²⁴
- A second consideration involves refinement of cost allocations to different land uses. According to Idaho Code, the CIP must include a “conversion table establishing the ratio of a service unit to various types of land uses, including residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial.”²⁵ In this analysis, the study team has chosen to use the highest level of detail supportable by available data and, as a result, in this study, Sheriff, EMS and Fire fees are allocated between aggregated residential (i.e., all forms of residential housing) and nonresidential development (all nonresidential uses including retail, office, and industrial), while roadway fees are allocated between single-family residential, multi-family residential, retail, office and industrial land uses.

²² See Section 67-8203(27), Idaho Code.

²³ See Section 67-8203(27), Idaho Code.

²⁴ The construction of detached garages alongside residential units does not typically trigger the payment of additional impact fees unless that structure will be the site of a home-based business with significant outside employment.

²⁵ See Section 67-8208(1)(e), Idaho Code.

Current Assets and Capital Improvement Plans

The CIP approach estimates future capital improvement investments required to serve growth over a fixed period of time. The Impact Fee Act calls for the CIP to “. . . project demand for system improvements required by new service units . . . over a reasonable period of time not to exceed 20 years.”²⁶ The impact fee study team recommends a 10-year time period based on Gem County/Gem County Fire District’s best available capital planning data.

The types of costs eligible for inclusion in this calculation include any land purchases, construction of new facilities and expansion of existing facilities to serve growth over the next 10 years at planned and/or adopted service levels.²⁷ Equipment and vehicles with a useful life of 10 years or more are also impact fee eligible under the Impact Fee Act.²⁸ The total cost of improvements over the 10 years is referred to as the “CIP Value” throughout this report. The cost of this impact fee study is also impact fee eligible for all impact fee categories. Each fee category was charged its pro-rated percentage of the cost of the impact fee study.

The forward-looking 10-year CIP for Gem County Road and Bridge Department include some facilities that are only partially necessitated by growth (e.g., facility expansion). The study team met with the County to determine a defensible metric for including a portion of these facilities in the impact fee calculations. A general methodology used to determine this metric is discussed below. In some cases, a more specific metric was used to identify the growth-related portion of such improvements.

Fee Calculation

In accordance with the CIP approach described above, we calculated fees for each service area by answering the following seven questions:

1. **Who is currently served by the County/District?** This includes the number of residents as well as residential and nonresidential land uses. Because the boundaries of the two entities are different, this data was broken out by entity.
2. **What is the current level of service provided by the County/District?** Since an important purpose of impact fees is to help the County/District continue its level of service²⁹, it is necessary to know the levels of service it is currently providing to the community.
3. **What current assets allow the County/District to provide this level of service?** This provides a current inventory of assets used by the County/District, such as facilities, land and equipment. In addition, each asset’s replacement value was calculated and summed to determine the total value of the entity’s assets.

²⁶ See Section 67-8208(1)(h).

²⁷ This assumes the planned levels of service do not exceed the current levels of service.

²⁸ The Impact Fee Act allows a broad range of improvements to be considered as “capital” improvements, so long as the improvements have useful life of at least 10 years and also increase the service capacity of public facilities. See Sections 67- 8203(28) and 50-1703, Idaho Code.

²⁹ This assumes that the planned level of service does not exceed the current level of service.

4. **What is the current investment per residential and nonresidential land use?** In other words, how much of each service provider's current assets' total value is needed to serve current residential households and nonresidential square feet?
5. **What future growth is expected in the County/District?** How many new residential households and nonresidential square footage will the County/District serve over the CIP period?
6. **What new infrastructure is required to serve future growth?** For example, how many new engines will be needed by the Gem County Fire District within the next ten years to continue the current level of service of the District?³⁰
7. **What impact fee is required to pay for the new infrastructure?** We calculated an apportionment of new infrastructure costs to future residential and nonresidential land-uses for the County/District. Then, using this distribution, the impact fees were determined.

Addressing these seven questions, in order, provides the most effective and logical way to calculate impact fees for the County/District. In addition, these seven steps satisfy and follow the regulations set forth earlier in this section.

Proportionate Share Analysis

In Gem County, as in any local government, not all capital costs are associated with growth. Some capital costs are for repair and replacement of facilities e.g., standard periodic investment in existing facilities such as roofing. These costs *are not* impact fee eligible. Some capital costs are for betterment of facilities, or implementation of new services (e.g., development of an expanded training facility). These costs *are generally not entirely* impact fee eligible. Some costs are for expansion of facilities to accommodate new development at the current level of service (e.g., purchase of new fire station to accommodate expanding population). These costs *are* impact fee eligible.

Projects that are indicated to be 100 percent growth-related were determined by our study to be necessitated solely by growth. Alternatively, some projects have a growth percentage indicated that is lower than 100% as they have some aspects of growth and some aspects of repair and replacement. In these situations, only a portion of the total cost of each project is included in the final impact fee calculation. Finally, some projects such as equipment replacement are not related to growth at all. Instead, as these projects are related entirely to pre-existing capital, they are shown as having a growth percentage of 0%.

It should be understood that growth is expected to pay only the portion of the cost of capital improvements that are growth-related. The County/District will need to plan to fund the pro rata share of these partially growth-related capital improvements with revenue sources other than impact fees within the time frame that impact fees must be spent. These values will be calculated and discussed in Section VI of this report.

Exhibits found in Sections III through V of this report detail all capital improvements planned for purchase over the next ten years by the County/District.

Section II. Land Uses

As noted in Section I, it is necessary to allocate capital improvement plan (CIP) costs to both residential and nonresidential development when calculating impact fees. The study team performed this allocation based on the number of projected new households and nonresidential square footage projected to be added from 2020 through 2030 for the County and District. These projections were based on current growth estimates from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, the County Assessor's records, County building permit data, and recommendations from the members of the Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee and County/District Staff.

Demographic and land-use projections are some of the most variable and potentially debatable components of an impact fee study, and in all likelihood the projections used in our study will not prove to be 100 percent correct. The purpose of the Advisory Committee's annual review is to account for these inconsistencies. As each CIP is tied to the Gem County/Gem County Fire District's land use growth, the CIP and resulting fees can be revised based on actual growth as it occurs.

The following Exhibit II-1 presents the current and future population for Gem County.

**Exhibit II-1.
Current and Future Population, Gem County**

	2020	2030	Net Growth	Growth %
Population	20,412	26,631	6,220	30.5%
Unincorporated Gem County	12,547	16,061	3,514	28.0%

Gem County currently has a population of approximately 20,412, 12,547 of which is in the unincorporated County. Over the next ten years, we expect the County as a whole to grow by approximately 6,220 persons, or at an annual growth rate of 3.1 percent. The unincorporated portion of the County is anticipated to grow by 3,514, or at an annual rate of 2.8 percent.

In this report we will focus on growth in the unincorporated portion of Gem County, as it is growth in this area that will put a demand and fiscal burden on the County's ability to continue current levels of service. Gem County impact fees will not be assessed to growth within the City of Emmett.

The following Exhibit II-2 presents the current and future number of residential units and nonresidential square feet for the unincorporated County.

**Exhibit II-2.
Current and Future Land Uses, Unincorporated Gem County**

	2020	2030	Net Growth
Population	12,547	16,061	3,514
Residential (in units)	4,882	6,250	1,367
Nonresidential (in square feet)	732,302	937,425	205,123

We expect the unincorporated County to have 6,250 residential households and almost 1 million nonresidential square feet by 2030 based on existing growth rates. This represents a growth of 1,367 residential units and 205,123 nonresidential square feet over the next ten years. Ninety-four percent of this growth is attributable to residential land uses, while the remaining six percent is attributable to nonresidential growth. These growth projections will be used in the following sections to calculate the appropriate impact fees for the County Sheriff and Roads Departments. For Sheriff impact fees, the cost will be apportioned by total residential units and total non-residential unit, as the type of residential or type of non-residential land use does not have a measurable difference on the need for capital infrastructure devoted to providing Sheriff services. For Roads impact fees, however, all of the above land use types will be assessed their own fee based on trip generation data set forth in Section IV.

The following Exhibit II-3 presents the current and future population for Gem County Fire District #1. It should be noted that the Gem County Fire District #1 provides EMS within its boundaries, and also for the City of Emmett. Therefore, land use data used to calculate EMS impact fees will consider growth in both of these areas. Fire fees will only be calculated for the unincorporated portion of the Fire District's boundaries.

Exhibit II-3. Current and Future Population, Gem County Fire District #1

	2020	2030	Net Growth	Net Growth in Square Feet ⁽¹⁾	Percent of Total Growth in SF
Population	10,665	13,652	2,987		
Residential (in units)	4,150	5,312	1,162	2,905,913	94%
Nonresidential (in square feet)	622,457	796,812	174,355	174,355	6%
			Total Square Footage Growth =	3,080,268	100%

Section III. Gem County Sheriff

In this section, we calculate impact fees for the Gem County Sheriff's Office following the seven-question method outlined in Section I of this report.

1. Who is currently served by the Gem County Sheriff's Office?

As shown in Exhibit II-2, the Sheriff's Office currently serves 4,882 residential units and approximately 732,382 million square feet of nonresidential land use.

2. What is the current level of service provided by the Gem County Sheriff's Office?

The Gem County Sheriff's Office currently provides a level of service of 1.04 sworn deputies per 1,000 residents. This was calculated by dividing 13 current officers by the current population of 12,547/1,000.

3. What current assets allow the Gem County Sheriff's Office to provide this level of service?

The following Exhibit III-1 displays the current assets of the Gem County Sheriff's Office.

Exhibit III-1. Current Assets – Gem County Sheriff's Office

Type of Capital Infrastructure	Square Feet	Replacement Value
Facilities		
Sheriff's Office	1,100	\$ 385,000
Dispatch Center	800	\$ 240,000
Equipment		
Weaponry/Radios		\$ 156,000
Dispatch Equipment		\$ 1,500,000
Total Infrastructure	1,900	\$ 2,281,000
Plus Impact Fee study		\$ 8,000
TOTAL CURRENT INVESTMENT		\$ 2,289,000

As shown above, the Gem County Sheriff's Office currently owns approximately \$2.3 million of eligible current assets. These assets are used to provide the Department's current level of service.

4. What is the current investment per residential unit and nonresidential square foot for the Gem County Sheriff's Office?

The County has already invested \$442 per residential unit and \$0.15 per nonresidential square foot in order to provide the current level of service. This figure is derived by allocating the value of the Gem County Sheriff's Office current assets between the current number of residential units and nonresidential square feet from Exhibit II-2 in the previous Section of this report.

We will compare our final impact fee calculations with these figures to determine if the two results will be similar; this represents a “check” to see if future residents will be paying for infrastructure at a level commensurate with what existing residents have invested in infrastructure.

5. What future growth is expected in unincorporated Gem County?

As shown in Exhibit II-2, Gem County is expected to grow by 3,514 people, 1,367 residential units and 205,123 square feet of nonresidential land use over the next ten years.

6. What new infrastructure is required to serve future growth?

The following Exhibit III-2 displays the capital improvements needed to support growth by the Gem County Sheriff’s Office over the next ten years.

**Exhibit III-2.
Gem County Sheriff’s Office Department CIP 2021-2030**

Type of Capital Infrastructure	Square Footage	CIP Value	Growth Portion	Amount to Include in Fees	Amount from Other Sources
Facilities					
Additional office space for deputies and dispatch	1,000	\$ 350,000	100%	\$ 350,000	\$ -
Vehicles and Equipment					
Dispatch Equipment - 1 additional console		\$ 80,000	0%		\$ 80,000
Vehicle Replacement - 13 patrol vehicles		\$ 494,000	0%	\$ -	\$ 494,000
Weaponry - Growth Related		\$ 43,697	100%	\$ 43,697	\$ -
Weaponry - Replacement		\$ 156,000	0%		\$ 156,000
Total Infrastructure		\$ 1,123,697		\$ 393,697	
Plus Impact Fee Study		\$ 8,000	100%	\$ 8,000	\$ -
TOTAL GROWTH RELATED CIP		\$ 1,131,697		\$ 401,697	\$ 730,000

As shown above, the total cost of the Gem County Sheriff’s Office’s Capital Improvement Plan from 2021-2030 is approximately \$1.1 million. \$401,697 of this amount is directly related to supporting the 4 new deputy positions and related support staff needed to continue the current level of service of 1.04 deputies per 1,000 residents. This includes office space and weaponry.

The remaining \$730,000 in the CIP includes \$80,000 for an additional dispatch console. While this console is related to growth, it will be funded by E911 revenues. The remaining \$650,000 is the price for the Sheriff’s Office to replace existing patrol vehicles and weaponry. These costs are not attributed to growth or included in the fee calculations. The Sheriff’s Office will therefore have to use other sources of revenue including all of those listed in Idaho Code 67-8207(I)(iv)(2)(h).

Assuming current housing and development trends continue at projected rates, the estimated date for the commencement of the construction of additional station capacity is 2027.

Annual increases in assessed valuation from growth only have only managed to break even with increases in personnel and other costs to balance the operating budget. As a result, no surplus revenue has been available to fund any growth-related capital in the last 10 years. This trend is expected to continue and as such, no other revenue sources exist for these improvements.

7. What impact fee is required to pay for the new capital improvements?

The following Exhibit III-3 takes the projected future growth from Exhibit II-2 and the growth-related CIP from Exhibit III-2 to calculate impact fees for the Gem County Sheriff's Office.

**Exhibit III-3.
Gem County Sheriff's Office Fee Calculation**

Impact Fee Calculation	
Amount to Include in Fee Calculation	\$401,697
Distribution of Future Land Use Growth	
Residential	94%
Nonresidential	6%
Future Assets by Land Use	
Residential	\$ 378,522
Nonresidential	\$ 23,175
Future Land Use Growth	
Residential	1,367
Nonresidential	205,123
Impact Fee per Unit	
Residential	\$ 277
Nonresidential	\$ 0.11

As shown above, we have calculated impact fees for the Gem County Sheriff's Office at \$277 per residential unit and \$0.11 per nonresidential square foot. Fees not to exceed these amounts are allowed to be assessed by the County.

As indicated in #4 above, the calculated impact fee of \$277 per residential unit and \$0.11 per non-residential square foot is less than the amount of \$442 per residential unit and \$.015 per non-residential square foot existing property owners have already paid into the system. This further demonstrates that new development is not be asked to pay more than its proportionate share of future capital.

Section IV. Roads & Bridges

In this section, we calculate impact fees for the Gem County Road & Bridge Department following the seven-question method outlined in Section I of this report.

1. Who is currently served by the Gem County Road & Bridge Department?

As shown in Exhibit II-2, the Gem County Road & Bridge Department currently serves approximately 12,547 residents within approximately 4,882 households. In addition, the Gem County Road & Bridge Department's system serves an additional 732,302 square feet of nonresidential land use.

Unlike impact fee calculations for the Sheriff's Office in which fees were calculated for residential units and nonresidential square feet, roadway fees can be calculated for residential and nonresidential land uses based on street and facility usages generated by more specific uses within each land use type.

Exhibit IV-1 below shows the specific allocation of existing and projected square feet for unincorporated Gem County by land use type over the next ten years.

Exhibit IV-1.

Unincorporated Gem County Growth Projections by Square Feet and Land Use 2020-2030

	2020	2030	Net Growth	Net Growth in Square Feet	Percent of Total Growth in SF
Population	12,547	16,061	3,514		
Residential (in units)	4,882	6,250	1,367	3,350,347	94%
<i>Single-Family</i>	4,638	5,937	1,299	3,247,785	91%
<i>Multi-Family</i>	244	312	68	102,562	3%
Nonresidential (in square feet)	732,302	937,425	205,123	205,123	6%
<i>Retail</i>	183,076	234,356	51,281	51,281	1%
<i>Office</i>	109,845	140,614	30,768	30,768	1%
<i>Industrial</i>	329,536	421,841	92,305	92,305	3%
			Total Square Footage Growth =	3,555,470	100%

Based on this distribution of square feet, we calculate trip generation based on rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers' *Trip Generation Manual*. The trip generation rates estimate the number of p.m. peak hour trips generated by particular land uses. Peak hour trips are appropriate for this calculation because street infrastructure is sized to provide a specific level of service during peak usage hours. Since peak hour trips will be used to distribute infrastructure costs, peak hour estimates should be employed.

Exhibit IV-2 below presents trip generation rates for current land uses in unincorporated Gem County.

Exhibit IV-2. Trip Generation Rates by Land Use Category

Land Use	Current Development	Weighted Trip Generation Factor	Percent Distribution
Residential			
Single Family Units (*1.26)	4,638	5,841	87%
Multi-Family Units (*0.73)	244	178	3%
Nonresidential per 1,000 sf			
Retail/Commercial (*3.04)	183	281	4%
Office (*1.88)	110	207	3%
Industrial (*0.67)	330	<u>222</u>	3%
Total		6,729	100%

Notes: Reflects weekday traffic generation patterns, weekday p.m. peak hour trip rate formula.

Source: International Transportation Engineering *Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition.*

2. What is the current level of service provided by the Gem County Road & Bridge Department?

Gem County’s roadway system currently operates at a level of service “C”, which means that while many streets are increasingly congested, they are not yet at capacity. Additional streets infrastructure is needed to sustain and not worsen the current level of service as growth occurs and vehicle trips increase.

3. What current assets allow the Gem County Road & Bridge Department to provide this level of service?

The following Exhibit VI-3 displays the current assets of the Gem County Road & Bridge Department.

**Exhibit IV-3.
Current Assets – Gem County Road & Bridge Department**

Type of Capital Facility	Replacement Value
Roadways	
220 lane miles paved	\$ 286,000,000
120 lane miles unpaved	\$ 120,000,000
Bridges and Culverts/Intersections	\$ 80,000,000
Facilities - 4500 square feet	\$ 1,350,000
Vehicles and Equipment	\$ 6,308,750
Total Infrastructure	\$ 493,658,750
Plus Cost of Fee-Related Research	
Impact Fee Study Update	\$ 8,000
Plus Mitigation Fund Balance	\$ 280,131
Grand Total	\$ 493,946,881

As shown above, Gem County Road & Bridge Department currently owns approximately \$494 million of eligible current assets. These assets are used to provide the Department’s current level of service.

4. What is the current investment per residential unit and nonresidential square foot?

By dividing the total replacement value of the current capital assets of the Gem County Road & Bridge Department by the number of current households and non-residential square feet whose owners have invested in these assets, we can determine that the County has invested \$92,443 per existing single-family residential unit; \$53,617 per existing multi-family residential unit; \$112.84 per existing retail square foot; \$138.00 per existing office square foot; and \$49.46 per existing industrial square foot.

We will compare our final impact fee with this figure to determine if the two results will be similar; this represents a “check” to see if future County residents will be paying for infrastructure at a level commensurate with what existing County residents have invested in infrastructure.

5. What future growth is expected in the unincorporated portion of Gem County?

As shown in Exhibit II-2, Gem County is expected to grow by approximately 1,367 residential units and approximately 205,123 non-residential square feet.

6. What new infrastructure is required to serve future growth?

Exhibit IV-4 identifies the resulting capital improvement plan for the Gem County Road & Bridge Department for the next ten years.

**Exhibit IV-4.
Gem County Road & Bridge Department CIP 2021-2030**

Project	Estimated Year	Total Cost	Percent Impact Fee Eligible	Amount to include in impact fees	Federal/State Funds	Amount from Other County Sources
Farmer's COOP Bridge Replacement	2022	\$ 1,800,000	75%	\$ 1,350,000		\$ 450,000
Mill Road Bridge Widening	2023	\$ 1,000,000	75%	\$ 750,000		\$ 250,000
Ola Highway Reconstruction	2024	\$ 2,000,000	0%	\$ -	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 200,000
South Slope Widening	2026	\$ 2,000,000	75%	\$ 1,500,000		\$ 500,000
Fuller Road Widening	2027	\$ 2,000,000	75%	\$ 1,500,000		\$ 500,000
Plaza Road/ Fuller Road Realignment	2028	\$ 500,000	50%	\$ 250,000		\$ 250,000
Brownlee Liberty/ Kirkpatrick Road Realignment	2027	\$ 500,000	50%	\$ 250,000		\$ 250,000
East Idaho Widening	2028	\$ 2,000,000	75%	\$ 1,500,000		\$ 500,000
Wills Road Reconstruction	2022-25	\$ 1,500,000	75%	\$ 1,125,000		\$ 375,000
East Central Road Widening	2029	\$ 1,000,000	75%	\$ 750,000		\$ 250,000
Lower Bluff Road Widening	2030	\$ 1,500,000	75%	\$ 1,125,000		\$ 375,000
Bowman Road Bridge Widening	2031	\$ 200,000	50%	\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000
Jag Road Realignment	2031	\$ 500,000	50%	\$ 250,000		\$ 250,000
Old Freeze Out Road Realignment	2031	\$ 500,000	50%	\$ 250,000		\$ 250,000
Roadway Intersections		\$ 500,000	50%	\$ 250,000		\$ 250,000
Roadway Signage		\$ 100,000	29%	\$ 29,154		\$ 70,846
Roadway Safety		\$ 500,000	29%	\$ 145,768		\$ 354,232
Annual Chip Seal		\$ 5,000,000	0%	\$ -		\$ 5,000,000
ADA		\$ 200,000	0%	\$ -		\$ 200,000
Equipment - additional pieces for growth		\$ 510,000	100%	\$ 510,000		\$ -
Equipment - deferred equipment replacement		\$ 2,763,300	0%	\$ -		\$ 2,763,300
Equipment - scheduled replacement of existing		\$ 3,029,550	0%	\$ -		\$ 3,029,550
		\$ 29,602,850		\$ 11,634,922	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 16,167,928
Impact Fee Study		\$ 8,000	100%	\$ 8,000		\$ -
Transportation Master Plan Update		\$ 50,000	100%	\$ 50,000		\$ -
Pedestrian/Pathways Study		\$ 25,000	100%	\$ 25,000		\$ -
Minus Mitigation Fund Balance		\$ 280,131		\$ 280,131		\$ -
		\$ 29,380,719		\$ 11,412,791	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 16,167,928

The estimated dates for the construction and completion of these projects, with the exception of the annual chip seal, are dependent on the actual timing of growth and development within the County. All projects are estimated to be completed by 2031.

Annual increases in assessed valuation from growth only have only managed to break even with increases in personnel and other costs to balance the operating budget. As a result, no surplus revenue has been available to fund any growth-related capital in the last 10 years. This trend is expected to continue and as such, no other revenue sources exist for these improvements.

7. What impact fee is required to pay for the new capital improvements?

As noted above, the calculation of roadway impact fees is based on the projected number of trips each land-use type will generate in the next ten years. Using the current land use by square foot within Gem County found in Exhibit IV-1, and the trip generation figures from Exhibit IV-2, total current trips can be distributed to each land use. Exhibit VI-5 below displays the projected trip generation distribution.

Exhibit IV-5. Gem County Road & Bridge Distribution by Weighted Trip Generation

Land Use	New Development	Weighted Trip Generation Factor	Percent Distribution
Residential			
Single Family Units (*1.26)	1,299	1,636	83%
Multi-Family Units (*0.73)	68	50	3%
Nonresidential per 1,000 sf			
Retail/Commercial (*3.04)	51	156	8%
Office (*1.88)	31	58	3%
Industrial (*0.67)	92	62	3%
Total		1,962	100%

As shown above, the number of daily trips in Gem County is expected to increase by approximately 1,962 trips by 2030. 83% of those trips will be for single-family residential uses; 3% will be for multi-family residential uses; 8% will be for retail uses; 3% will be for office uses; and 3% will be for industrial uses.

Exhibit IV-6 below uses the growth-related CIP from Exhibit IV-4 and the weighted trip generation figures from Exhibit IV-5 to calculate streets impact fees for the Gem County Road & Bridge Department.

Exhibit IV-6. Gem County Road & Bridge Department Fee Calculation

Impact Fee Calculation	
Capital Improvement Plan Value	\$11,412,791
Future Land Use Percentages	
Single Family	83%
Multifamily	3%
Retail	8%
Office	3%
Industrial	3%
Allocated Value by Land Use Category	
Single Family	\$9,517,895
Multifamily	\$290,546
Retail	\$906,024
Office	\$336,520
Industrial	\$361,805
10-Year Growth	
Single Family (total dwelling units)	1,299
Multifamily (total dwelling units)	68
Retail (in square feet)	51,281
Office (in square feet)	30,768
Industrial (in square feet)	92,305
Impact Fee by Land Use (rounded)	
Single Family (per dwelling unit)	\$7,326
Multifamily (per dwelling unit)	\$4,249
Retail (per square foot)	\$17.67
Office (per square foot)	\$10.94
Industrial (per square foot)	\$3.92

The impact fees in each land use category are significantly less than what existing users have paid into the asset inventory (see #4 in this Section). The fees for residential uses are also lower than the average roadway capital improvement mitigation fee currently charged by the County for new development per residential unit.

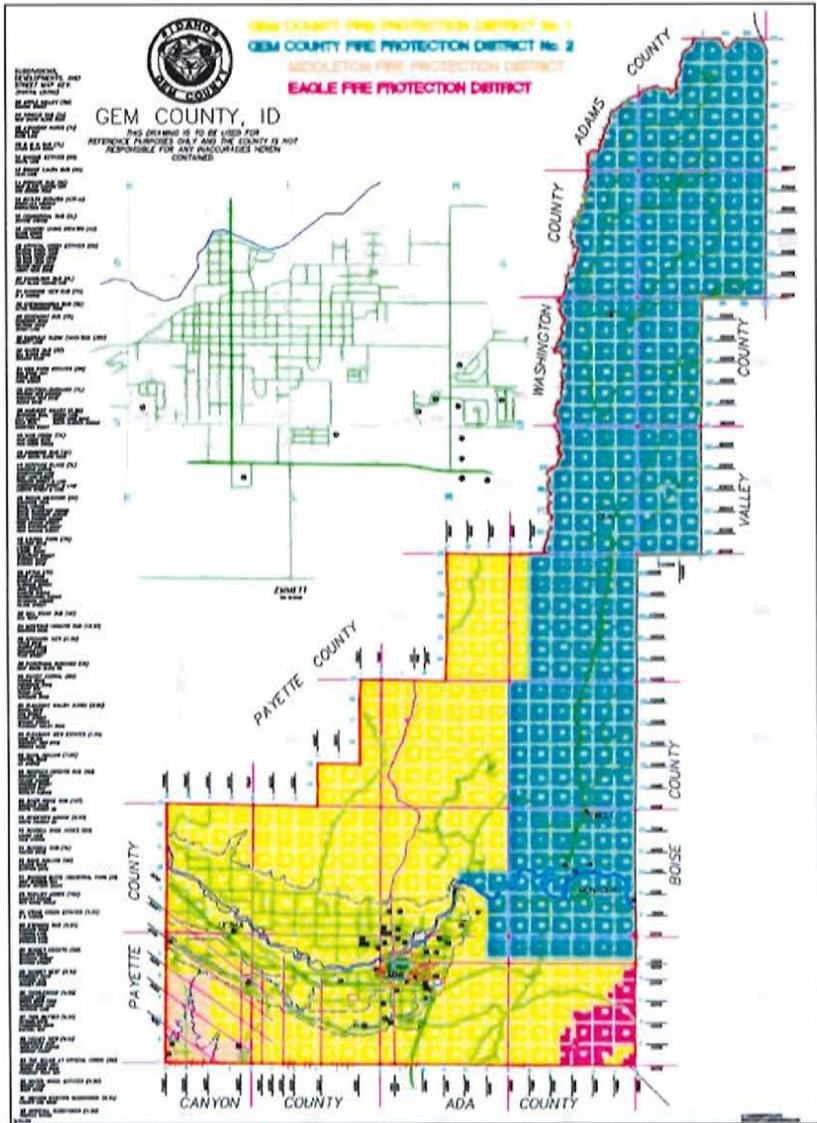
It is recommended that the above impact fee structure replace the existing County Road & Bridge Mitigation Fee Schedule, as it allows growth to pay for the impacts of its trips generated throughout the unincorporated County, and not just in one sub-district.

Section V. Gem County Fire District #1 – Fire and EMS

In this section, we calculate fire and EMS impact fees. The Gem County Fire District #1 provides fire and EMS protection services within its legal boundaries. It also provides EMS services to the City of Emmett on contract, and to Gem County Fire Protection District #2.

Exhibit V-1 outlines the boundaries and service areas of each entity. This map indicates that small portions of both the Eagle Fire District and Middleton Fire District lie within Gem County's boundaries. Gem County Fire District #1 does not provide fire protection or EMS services in those district boundaries.

**Exhibit V-1.
District Boundaries and Service Areas**



The Idaho State Legislature gave taxing districts the authority to collect impact fees in an amendment to State Statute several years ago. Because Districts do not issue building permits, however, they were given the authority to have the City or County collect on their behalf. In the case of the Gem County Fire District #1, relevant development permits are issued by Gem County and the City of Emmett, both of which have indicated a willingness to consider collecting impact fees on behalf of the District.

Therefore, this section refers to the projected growth and capital needs for fire protection within the District boundaries, and capital needs for EMS within the District and City of Emmett following the seven-question method outlined in Section I of this report.

1. Who is currently served by the Gem County Fire District #1?

Exhibit V-2 indicates the population, households and non-residential square feet currently served by the Gem County Fire District #1 for fire protection (District boundaries only).

Exhibit V-2.

Current and Future Land Uses – Gem County Fire District #1: District Boundaries Only

	2020	2030	Net Growth	Net Growth in Square Feet ⁽¹⁾	Percent of Total Growth in SF
Population	10,665	13,652	2,987		
Residential (in units)	4,150	5,312	1,162	2,905,913	94%
Nonresidential (in square feet)	622,457	796,812	174,355	174,355	6%
			Total Square Footage Growth =	3,080,268	100%

Exhibit V-3 indicates the population, households and non-residential square feet currently served by the Gem County Fire District #1 for EMS (District #1, District #2, and City of Emmett boundaries).

Exhibit V-3.

Current and Future Land Uses – Gem County Fire District #1: Entire County

	2020	2030	Net Growth	Net Growth in Square Feet ⁽¹⁾	Percent of Growth in SF
Population	20,412	26,631	6,220		
Residential (in units)	8,092	10,564	2,472	6,179,029	91%
Nonresidential (in square feet)	2,045,665	2,663,124	617,459	617,459	9%
			Total Square Footage Growth =	6,796,488	100%

2. What is the current level of service provided by the Gem County Fire District #1?

The District provides a response time of 8-10 minutes within 5 miles of a station for fire protection, and 3-5 minutes for EMS within 5 miles of Station #4. As the population grows, additional infrastructure and equipment will be needed to sustain the District's current level of service.

3. What current assets allow the Gem County Fire District #1 to provide this level of service?

The following Exhibit V-4 displays the current assets of the Gem County Fire District #1 for fire protection services within the District boundaries.

**Exhibit V-4.
Current Assets – Gem County Fire District #1: Fire Protection Services**

Type of Capital Infrastructure	Square Feet	Replacement Value
Facilities		
Station #1 - Emmett	4,050	\$ 1,620,000
Station #2 - Letha	5,040	\$ 1,008,000
Station #3 - Emmett	1,600	\$ 320,000
Apparatus/Vehicles		
2 Pumps		\$ 1,300,000
1 Truck		\$ 650,000
3 Water Tenders		\$ 1,050,000
1 Ladder Truck		\$ 1,000,000
5 Brush Trucks		\$ 500,000
Air Trailer		\$ 98,000
4x4 Extrication Vehicle		\$ 165,000
2 Support Vehicles		\$ 150,000
Equipment		
32 SCBAs		\$ 192,000
Total Infrastructure		\$ 8,053,000
Plus Impact Fee Study		\$ 8,000
TOTAL CURRENT INVESTMENT		\$ 8,061,000

As shown above, the Gem County Fire District #1 currently owns approximately \$8 million of eligible fire protection assets. These assets are used to provide the current level of fire protection service.

The following Exhibit V-5 displays the current assets of the Gem County Fire District #1 for EMS services within the entire County.

**Exhibit V-5.
Current Assets – Gem County Fire District #1: EMS Services**

Type of Capital Infrastructure	Square Feet	Replacement Value
Facilities		
Station #4 - Emmett	4,760	\$ 1,904,000
Sweet station	500	\$ 200,000
Apparatus/Vehicles		
5 Medic Vehicles		\$ 1,175,000
EMS Rescue vehicle		\$ 58,000
Equipment		
4 Self Compression Units		\$ 72,000
5 Cardiac Monitors		\$ 125,000
Total Infrastructure		\$ 3,534,000
Plus Impact Fee Study		\$ 8,000
TOTAL CURRENT INVESTMENT		\$ 3,542,000

*The Sweet station is owned by Gem County Fire District #2, but utilized by Gem County Fire District #1 to provide EMS services.

As shown above, the Gem County Fire District #1 currently owns approximately \$3.5 million of eligible EMS assets. These assets are used to provide the current level of service.

4. What is the current investment per residential unit and nonresidential square foot?

The Gem County Fire District #1 has already invested \$1,833 per residential unit and \$0.73 per nonresidential square foot in fire protection assets. This figure is derived by allocating the value of the District’s current assets between the current number of residential units and nonresidential square feet within the District boundaries.

The Gem County Fire District #1 has already invested \$398 per residential unit and \$0.16 per nonresidential square foot in EMS assets. This figure is derived by allocating the value of the District’s current assets between the current number of residential units and nonresidential square feet within the District boundaries and the City of Emmett.

We will compare our final impact fee calculations with these figures to determine if the two results will be similar; this represents a “check” to see if future residents will be paying for infrastructure at a level commensurate with what existing residents have invested in infrastructure.

5. What future growth is expected in Gem County Fire District #1?

As shown in Exhibit V-2, Gem County Fire District #1 is expected to grow by approximately 1,162 residential units and 174,355 square feet of nonresidential land use over the next ten years. This growth will increase demand for the delivery of fire protection services.

As shown in Exhibit V-3, Gem County (both fire districts and the City of Emmett) is expected to grow by approximately 2,472 residential units and 617,459 square feet of nonresidential land use over the next ten years. This growth will increase demand for the delivery of EMS services.

6. What new infrastructure is required to serve future growth?

The following Exhibit V-6 displays the capital improvements planned for purchase by the Gem County Fire District #1 over the next ten years for fire protection services.

**Exhibit V-6.
Gem County Fire District #1 CIP 2021-2030: Fire Protection Services**

Type of Capital Infrastructure	CIP Value	Growth Portion	Amount to Include in Fees	Amount from Other Sources
Facilities				
New Station #1 - add living and dorm space for firefighters	\$ 1,200,000	100%	\$ 1,200,000	\$ -
New Station #1 - replace existing station	\$ 2,000,000	0%	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000
Vehicles				
Additional Tender - Pearl	\$ 350,000	100%	\$ 350,000	\$ -
Additional Heavy Brush Truck - Pearl	\$ 100,000	100%	\$ 100,000	\$ -
Growth-related support vehicles	\$ 75,000	100%	\$ 75,000	\$ -
Existing Fire Apparatus/Vehicle Replacement	\$ 915,000	0%	\$ -	\$ 915,000
Equipment				
SCBA Replacement	\$ 192,000	0%	\$ -	\$ 192,000
	\$ 4,832,000		\$ 1,725,000	\$ 3,107,000
Plus Impact Fee Study	\$ 8,000	100%	\$ 8,000	\$ -
TOTAL GROWTH RELATED CIP	\$ 4,840,000		\$ 1,733,000	

To meet the increased demand for fire protection services, the Gem County Fire District #1 intends to replace the existing Station #1. The \$2 million cost of replacing the 5,000 square foot station is not impact fee eligible, and is identified as being 0% growth-related in the above exhibit. The District will need to fund these replacements with other revenues such as property taxes.

The addition of 3,000 square feet of living and dormitory space for the additional firefighters needed to continue to provide the current service level as growth occurs is 100% growth-related and therefore impact fee eligible. Likewise, an additional tender, brush truck, command vehicles and SCBA equipment are necessary to support the anticipated growth. These are all 100% growth-related and impact fee eligible.

The necessary replacement of existing apparatus is not growth-related and cannot be funded with impact fee revenues. The District will therefore have to use other sources of revenue including all of those listed in Idaho Code 67- 8207(iv)(2)(h).

Of the total CIP cost of \$4.8 million, \$1.7 million is growth-related and can be recovered via impact fees.

The start and completion date for the station and associated apparatus will depend on actual growth rates, and the station cannot be built until revenues are available. It is anticipated the station will be completed within the next 5 years, however.

The following Exhibit V-7 displays the capital improvements planned for purchase by the Gem County Fire District #1 over the next ten years for EMS services.

**Exhibit V-7.
Gem County Fire District #1 CIP 2021-2030: EMS Services**

Type of Capital Infrastructure	CIP Value	Growth Portion	Amount to Include in Fees	Amount from Other Sources
Facilities				
New Station #1 - add bay, living and dorm space for EMTs	\$ 800,000	100%	\$ 800,000	\$ -
Vehicles				
Additional Medic Vehicle	\$ 235,000	100%	\$ 235,000	\$ -
Scheduled EMS Vehicle Replacement	\$ 1,175,000	0%	\$ -	\$ 1,175,000
Equipment				
1 additional Cardiac Monitor	\$ 46,000	100%	\$ 46,000	\$ -
Existing EMS Equipment Replacement	\$ 197,000	0%	\$ -	\$ 197,000
	\$ 2,453,000		\$ 1,081,000	\$ 1,372,000
Plus Impact Fee Study	\$ 8,000	100%	\$ 8,000	\$ -
TOTAL GROWTH RELATED CIP	\$ 2,461,000		\$ 1,089,000	

To meet the increased demand for EMS services, the Gem County Fire District #1 intends to add an additional 2,000 square feet to the new Station #1 to provide living and dormitory space for the additional EMTs needed to continue to provide the current service level as growth occurs. An additional medic vehicle and cardiac monitor are also necessitated by growth and impact fee eligible.

The \$1.3 million cost of replacing existing vehicles and equipment is not impact fee eligible. The District will therefore have to use other sources of revenue including all of those listed in Idaho Code 67- 8207(iv)(2)(h).

Of the total CIP cost of \$2.5 million, \$1.1 million is growth-related and can be recovered via impact fees.

The start and completion date for the station and associated apparatus will depend on actual growth rates, and the station cannot be built until revenues are available. It is anticipated the station will be completed within the next 5 years, however.

7. What impact fee is required to pay for the new capital improvements?

The following Exhibit V-8 takes the projected future growth from Exhibit V-2 and the growth-related CIP from Exhibit V-6 to calculate impact fees for fire protection services. These fees would be assessed only to growth within the District’s unincorporated boundaries.

**Exhibit V-8.
Gem County Fire District #1 - District Fee Calculation: Fire Protection**

Impact Fee Calculation	
Amount to Include in Fee Calculation	\$1,733,000
Distribution of Future Land Use Growth	
Residential	94%
Nonresidential	6%
Future Assets by Land Use	
Residential	\$ 1,634,906
Nonresidential	\$ 98,094
Future Land Use Growth	
Residential	1,162
Nonresidential	174,355
Impact Fee per Unit	
Residential	\$ 1,407
Nonresidential	\$ 0.56

As shown above, we have calculated impact fees for fire protection by the Gem County Fire District #1 at \$1,407 per residential unit and \$0.56 per nonresidential square foot. This amount is less than what existing users have paid into the asset inventory (see #4 in this Section).

Fees not to exceed these amounts are recommended for the District. The District cannot assess fees greater than the amounts shown above. The District may assess fees lower than these amounts, but would then experience a decline in service levels unless the District used other revenues to make up the difference.

The following Exhibit V-9 takes the projected future growth from Exhibit V-3 and the growth-related CIP from Exhibit V-7 to calculate impact fees for EMS services. These fees would be assessed to all development in Gem County, including the City of Emmett and that which occurs within the Gem County Fire District #2.

**Exhibit V-9.
Gem County Fire District #1 - District Fee Calculation: EMS Services**

Impact Fee Calculation	
Amount to Include in Fee Calculation	\$1,089,000
Distribution of Future Land Use Growth	
Residential	91%
Nonresidential	9%
Future Assets by Land Use	
Residential	\$ 990,065
Nonresidential	\$ 98,935
Future Land Use Growth	
Residential	2,472
Nonresidential	617,459
Impact Fee per Unit	
Residential	\$ 401
Nonresidential	\$ 0.16

As shown above, we have calculated impact fees for fire protection by the Gem County Fire District #1 at \$401 per residential unit and \$0.16 per nonresidential square foot. This amount is essentially identical to what existing users have paid into the asset inventory (see #4 in this Section).

Fees not to exceed these amounts are recommended for the District. The District cannot assess fees greater than the amounts shown above. The District may assess fees lower than these amounts, but would then experience a decline in service levels unless the District used other revenues to make up the difference.

Section VI. Summary

The following Exhibit VI-1 summarizes the calculated Impact Fees for Gem County and the Gem County Fire District #1.

**Exhibit VI-1.
Gem County/Gem County Fire District #1 - Impact Fee Summary**

TOTAL IMPACT FEE		TOTAL IMPACT FEE	
Sheriff Fees		Fire District Fees	
Residential	\$ 277	Residential	\$ 1,407
Nonresidential	\$ 0.11	Nonresidential	\$ 0.56
Streets Fees		EMS Fees	
Single-Family	\$ 7,326	Residential	\$ 401
Multi-Family	\$ 4,249	Nonresidential	\$ 0.16
Retail	\$ 17.67		
Office	\$ 10.94		
Industrial	\$ 3.92		
TOTAL IMPACT FEE		TOTAL IMPACT FEE	
Single-Family	\$ 7,603	Single-Family	\$ 1,807
Multi-Family	\$ 4,526	Multi-Family	\$ 1,807
Retail	\$ 17.78	Retail	\$ 0.72
Office	\$ 11.05	Office	\$ 0.72
Industrial	\$ 4.03	Industrial	\$ 0.72

Gem County would assess Sheriff and Road & Bridge fees to all development within the unincorporated County. Gem County would assess Fire and EMS fees to all development within the Gem County Fire District #1 and assess EMS fees to all development within Gem Fire District #2 and remit that revenue to the Gem County Fire District #1. The City of Emmett would assess EMS fees to all development within the City of Emmett and remit that revenue to the Gem County Fire District #1.

A comparison of the proposed fees to similar fees in Ada County, Canyon County, Middleton, Eagle, Kuna, Caldwell, Nampa and Star is provided in Exhibit VI-2.

**Exhibit VI-2.
Impact Fee Comparisons**

	Gem County/ Gem County Fire & EMS <i>draft</i>	City of Emmett <i>draft</i>	City of Boise <i>being updated</i>	City of Caldwell/ Caldwell Fire District	City of Eagle/ Eagle Fire District	City of Kuna/ Kuna Fire District	City of Meridian/ Meridian Fire District	City of Middleton/ Middleton Fire District	City of Nampa/ Nampa Fire District	City of Star/ Star Fire District	Twin Falls/ Twin Falls Fire District <i>draft</i>	Wildier Fire District	Marsing Fire District
Police/Sheriff per Residential Unit	\$ 277	\$ 731	\$ 289	\$ 97	\$ 111	\$ 90	\$ 152	\$ 367	\$ 359	\$ -	\$ 180	\$ -	\$ -
per Non-Residential sf	\$ 0.11	\$ 0.39	\$ 0.16	\$ 0.05	\$ 0.04	\$ 0.04	\$ 0.24	\$ 0.15	\$ 0.21	\$ -	\$ 0.09	\$ -	\$ -
Fire per Residential Unit	\$ 1,407	\$ 1,555	\$ 619	\$ 649	\$ 897	\$ 824	\$ 693	\$ 849	\$ 560	\$ 829	\$ 657	\$ 825	\$ 1,285
per Non-Residential sf	\$ 0.56	\$ 0.83	\$ 0.21	\$ 0.32	\$ 0.36	\$ 0.41	\$ 0.64	\$ 0.42	\$ 0.28	\$ 0.39	\$ 0.33	\$ 0.41	\$ 0.64
EMS per Residential Unit	\$ 401	\$ 401	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>
per Non-Residential sf	\$ 0.16	\$ 0.16	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>	<i>being developed</i>
Parks per residential unit	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,723	\$ 1,190	\$ 1,446	\$ 939	\$ 2,098	\$ 2,204	\$ 1,699	\$ 2,050	\$ 1,560	\$ -	\$ -
Streets per single-family residential unit	\$ 7,326	\$ 2,218	\$ 2,904	exacted	\$ 2,904	\$ 2,904	\$ 2,904	\$ 2,572	\$ 2,841	\$ 2,904	\$ 1,385	\$ -	\$ -
per multi-family residential unit	\$ 4,249	\$ 1,188	\$ 1,683	exacted	\$ 1,683	\$ 1,683	\$ 1,683	\$ 2,572	\$ 1,648	\$ 1,683	\$ 742	\$ -	\$ -
per retail/commercial sf	\$ 17.67	\$ 4.92	\$ 7.87	exacted	\$ 7.87	\$ 7.87	\$ 7.87	\$ 2.32	\$ 6.85	\$ 7.87	\$ 3.07	\$ -	\$ -
per office sf	\$ 10.94	\$ 2.92	\$ 4.23	exacted	\$ 4.23	\$ 4.23	\$ 4.23	\$ 2.32	\$ 4.24	\$ 4.23	\$ 1.83	\$ -	\$ -
per industrial sf	\$ 3.92	\$ 0.90	\$ 1.58	exacted	\$ 1.58	\$ 1.58	\$ 1.58	\$ 0.09	\$ 1.52	\$ 1.58	\$ 0.56	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 9,411	\$ 4,905	\$ 5,535	\$ 1,936	\$ 5,358	\$ 4,757	\$ 5,847	\$ 5,992	\$ 5,459	\$ 5,783	\$ 3,782	\$ -	\$ -
per single-family residential unit	\$ 6,334	\$ 3,875	\$ 4,314	\$ 1,936	\$ 4,137	\$ 3,536	\$ 4,626	\$ 5,992	\$ 4,266	\$ 4,562	\$ 3,139	\$ -	\$ -
per multi-family residential unit	\$ 18.50	\$ 6.30	\$ 8.24	\$ 0.37	\$ 8.27	\$ 8.32	\$ 8.75	\$ 2.89	\$ 7.94	\$ 8.26	\$ 3.49	\$ -	\$ -
per retail/commercial sf	\$ 11.61	\$ 4.30	\$ 4.60	\$ 0.37	\$ 4.63	\$ 4.68	\$ 5.11	\$ 2.89	\$ 4.73	\$ 4.62	\$ 2.25	\$ -	\$ -
per office sf	\$ 4.59	\$ 2.28	\$ 1.95	\$ 0.37	\$ 1.98	\$ 2.03	\$ 2.46	\$ 0.66	\$ 2.01	\$ 1.97	\$ 0.98	\$ -	\$ -
per industrial sf													

ACHD fees are calculated on a general average for the purpose of the comparison; actual fees will vary
Roadway impact is collected via exaction for Streets improvements in Caldwell
Where fees range by size of unit, 2500 sf unit is assumed

Notes:

1. Gem County would eliminate its roads CIP mitigation fee program and replace it with impact fees. The average mitigation fee (all areas aggregated) is currently approximately \$8,300.
2. Ada County is currently developing impact fees for Sheriff, Jail, Coroner's Office and EMS. Canyon County and the Canyon County Highway District #4 are currently developing impact fees for roads, and the Canyon County Commission has indicated its interest in pursuing impact fees for Sheriff, Jail and EMS as well.
3. Impact fees cannot be easily compared as they are required by statute to reflect the growth, service level and cost of capital improvements necessary for a specific entity. These variables differ greatly between jurisdictions. The more rural the area, even when growing, the fewer units there are available to absorb the necessary costs. Therefore, fees will tend to be higher in more rural areas.

County/District Participation

Because not all the capital improvements listed in the CIPs are 100 percent growth-related, the County/District would assume the responsibility of paying for those portions of the capital improvements that are not attributable to new growth. These payments would come from other sources of revenue including all of those listed in Idaho Code 67-8207(iv)(2)(h).

To arrive at this participation amount, the expected impact fee revenue and any shared facility amount need to be subtracted from the total CIP value. Exhibits VI-3 and VI-4 divide the Gem County/Gem County Fire District's participation amount into two categories: the portion of purely non-growth-related improvements, and the portion of growth-related improvements that are attributable to repair, replacement, or upgrade, but are not impact fee eligible.

It should be noted that the participation amount associated with purely non-growth improvements is discretionary. The County/District can choose not to fund these capital improvements (although this could result in a decrease in the level of service if the deferred repairs or replacements were urgent). However, the non-growth-related portion of improvements that are impact fee eligible *must* be funded in order to maintain the integrity of the impact fee program.

Exhibit VI-3.

Gem County Participation Summary, 2021-2030

	Required	Discretionary	Total
Sheriff	\$ -	\$ 730,000	\$ 730,000
Streets	\$ 5,175,078	\$ 10,992,850	\$ 16,167,928
TOTAL	\$ 5,175,078	\$ 11,722,850	\$ 16,897,928

Exhibit VI-4.

Gem County Fire District #1 Participation Summary, 2021-2030

	Required	Discretionary	Total
Fire	\$ -	\$ 3,107,000	\$ 3,107,000
EMS	\$ -	\$ 1,372,000	\$ 1,372,000
TOTAL	\$ -	\$ 4,479,000	\$ 4,479,000

The total amount Gem County would be *required* to contribute over 10 years, should the County adopt fees at the calculated amount, will be approximately \$5.2 million for roadway and bridge improvements. The County/District could also choose to fund the discretionary infrastructure of \$11.8 million for additional non-growth related capital improvements in the Sheriff's Office and Roads & Bridges over the 10-year period. While County has the option to fund these capital improvements over the 10-year period, these payments are not required.

The District has no required amount it must contribute if it chooses to adopt fees at the calculated amount. The District could choose to fund the discretionary infrastructure of \$4.5 million for capital replacement over the 10-year period. While District has the option to fund these capital improvements over the 10-year period, these payments are not required.

Implementation Recommendations

As County/District evaluates whether or not to adopt the Capital Improvement Plans and impact fees presented in this report, we also offer the following information for your consideration. Please note that this information will be included each individual impact fee enabling ordinance.

Capital Improvements Plan. Should the Advisory Committee recommend this study to County/District and should County/District adopt the study, the County/District should revise its existing Capital Improvement Plans using the information in this study. A revised capital improvement plan would then be presented to Gem County for adoption as an element of the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to the procedures of the Local Land Use Planning Act.

Impact Fee Ordinance. Following adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan, the Gem County Board of Commissioners and The Gem County Fire District #1 Board of Commissioners should review the proposed Impact Fee Ordinance for adoption as reviewed and recommended by the Advisory Committee.

Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is in a unique position to work with and advise County/District Council to ensure that the capital improvement plans and impact fees are routinely reviewed and modified as appropriate.

Impact fee service area. Some municipalities have fee differentials for various zones under the assumption that some areas utilize more or less current and future capital improvements. The study team, however, does not recommend the County/District assess different fees by dividing the areas into zones. The capital improvements identified in this report inherently serve a system-wide function.

Specialized assessments. If permit applicants are concerned they would be paying more than their fair share of future infrastructure purchases, the applicant can request an individualized assessment to ensure they will only be paying their proportional share. The applicant would be required to prepare and pay for all costs related to such an assessment.

Donations. If the County/District receives donations for capital improvements listed on the CIP, they must account for the donation in one of two ways. If the donation is for a non- or partially growth-related improvement, the donation can contribute to the Gem County/Gem County Fire District's General Fund participation along with more traditional forms, such as revenue transfers from the General Fund. If, however, the donation is for a growth-related project in the CIP, the donor's impact fees should be reduced dollar for dollar. This means that the County/District will either credit the donor or reimburse the donor for that portion of the impact fee.

Grants. If a grant is expected and regular, the growth-related portion of that grant amount should

be reflected upfront in the fee calculations, meaning that the impact fees will be lower in anticipation of the contribution. If the grant is speculative or uncertain, this should not be reflected up-front in the fee calculations since the entity cannot count on those dollars as it undergoes capital planning.

The rational nexus is still maintained because the unexpected higher fund balance, due to the receipt of a grant, is deducted from the calculations as a "down payment on the CIP" when the fee study is updated.

Credit/reimbursement. If a developer constructs or contributes all or part of a growth-related project that would otherwise be financed with impact fees, that developer must receive a credit against the fees owed for this category or, at the developer's choice, be reimbursed from impact fees collected in the future.³⁷ This prevents "double dipping" by the County/District.

The presumption would be that builders/developers owe the entirety of the impact fee amount until they make the County/District aware of the construction or contribution. If credit or reimbursement is due, the governmental entity must enter into an agreement with the fee payer that specifies the amount of the credit or the amount, time and form of reimbursement.³⁸

Impact fee accounting. The County/District should maintain Impact Fee Funds separate and apart from the General Fund. All current and future impact fee revenue should be immediately deposited into this account and withdrawn only to pay for growth-related capital improvements of the same category. General Funds should be reserved solely for the receipt of tax revenues, grants, user fees and associated interest earnings, and ongoing operational expenses including the repair and replacement of existing capital improvements not related to growth.

Spending policy. The County/District should establish and adhere to a policy governing their expenditure of monies from the Impact Fee Fund. The Fund should be prohibited from paying for any operational expenses and the repair and replacement or upgrade of existing infrastructure not necessitated by growth. In cases when *growth-related capital improvements are constructed*, impact fees are an allowable revenue source as long as only new growth is served. In cases when new capital improvements are expected to *partially replace existing capacity and to partially serve new growth*, cost sharing between the General Fund or other sources of revenue listed in Idaho Code 67-8207(I)(iv), (2)(h) and Impact Fee Fund should be allowed on a pro rata basis.

Update procedures. The County/District is expected to grow rapidly over the 10-year span of the CIPs. Therefore, the fees calculated in this study should be reviewed annually. Fees can be updated on an annual basis using an inflation factor for building material from a reputable source such as McGraw Hill's Engineering News Record. As described in Idaho Code 67-8205(3)(c)(d)(e), the Advisory Committee will play an important role in these updates and reviews.

³⁷ See Section 67-8209(3), Idaho Code.

³⁸ See Section 67-8209(4), Idaho Code.