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Project Description & History

Treasure Valley Futures: Alternative Choices for the American West is a grant project to look at how transportation and land use planning interact. The \$510,000 grant was awarded in July 1999 by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under its [Transportation and Community and System Preservation \(TCSP\)](#) program. The grant covers the [Treasure Valley](#), which consists of Ada and Canyon Counties including 14 cities, and is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2000. A [coalition](#) of Treasure Valley agencies, schools, companies, non-profit organizations and citizens are carrying out the work of the grant, using expert consultants where needed. Many of the coalition members are donating time to the grant, so the actual value to the community will be much higher (a minimum of 20%) than the amount awarded by the Federal Highways Administration.

Treasure Valley Futures is designed to help decision makers from the public, private, and non-profit sectors understand and implement the TCSP goals as well as the goals of local communities. This means that individual communities can decide what their future should look like. A variety of responses, or alternatives, are expected from the grant dependent on existing natural and man-made restrictions, structure of government and zoning ordinance implementation, existing transportation facilities, proposed future land use, proposed future transportation facilities, goals of the citizenry,

The grant is designed around six [project benchmarks](#) that detail the work to be done. Each benchmark will result in a project product created by grant members working with the public. Each benchmark will also include evaluation.

The benchmarks are:

1. Introduce Local Policy Makers to the TVF Project
2. Establish a Regional "Trend" Baseline
3. Conduct an Implementation Barriers Analysis
4. Compile an "Alternative Choices Catalog"
5. Develop Local Demonstration Project Prototypes
6. Conduct a Regional Forum on "Next Steps for the Treasure Valley"

The grant is designed to work within the Treasure Valley's fragmented political framework and deeply held beliefs around the importance of private property rights. However, this regional grant will help policy makers from the public, private and non-profit sectors understand that, if the Treasure Valley is to reap the benefits of compact development and efficient infrastructure investment, no land use, transportation, or infrastructure decision can be made in a vacuum. The consequences of each decision must simultaneously be evaluated at both the local and regional level.

The ultimate impact of the project will be to establish ways to allow growth that lets individual communities make local decisions about land use within a clearly defined regional context. Planning activities among cities and counties will be better coordinated with each other as well as with the highway districts, the Idaho Department of Transportation, and the Idaho Division of Environmental Quality. This coordinated approach should allow communities to retain

how each community sees its future, and other relevant factors.

The grant is designed to address the five TCSP goals. [The five TCSP goals are:](#)

- a. Improve efficiency of the transportation system;
- b. Reduce impacts of transportation on the environment;
- c. Reduce costs of infrastructure investment;
- d. Ensure efficient access to jobs, services and trade centers; and
- e. Encourage private sector development patterns to help meet the other four goals.

their unique identities, but also ensure that local decisions around future growth also fit within the regional goals. Ultimately, this should provide better environmental protection, reduce water consumption, enhance air quality, minimize infrastructure investments, maintain farmland, and preserve the wild and scenic places that Treasure Valley residents value.

A video of the grant was prepared for presentations given to various groups, and makes a nice visual summary of the Treasure Valley Futures project. It will be available soon to view on this site.