

Impacts of Transportation on Compensation and Housing Study 2019



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

IDAHO POLICY INSTITUTE

INTERFAITH SANCTUARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Interfaith Sanctuary, a non-profit organization, came to the Idaho Policy Institute seeking a research study. The executive director was interested in learning more about the employment needs of businesses in the Treasure Valley, average wages currently being paid, and affordable housing options for employees. Boise State graduate students Teresa Goodsell and Jessica Spoja met with the executive director to identify data sources that would show distances from affordable housing to available jobs and find areas where transportation options could be improved. Gaining additional insight through a study of current data would help support Interfaith Sanctuary's mission of providing practical services that help people transition out of homelessness. Graduate students Goodsell and Spoja conducted a needs assessment and completed a comprehensive research study that provides valuable information for Interfaith Sanctuary and the community at large.



PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Interfaith Sanctuary opened in Boise in 2005 as a community response to homelessness. The shelter received funding from many sources, including federal funds. In 2016 the organization transitioned to a 501(c)3 nonprofit in order to more fully meet the needs of homeless families and individuals in the community. Interfaith Sanctuary offers a variety of services including parenting classes, case management support, after-school programs for school-aged children, early education programs, snacks and scheduled nap times.¹

¹interfaithsanctuary.org

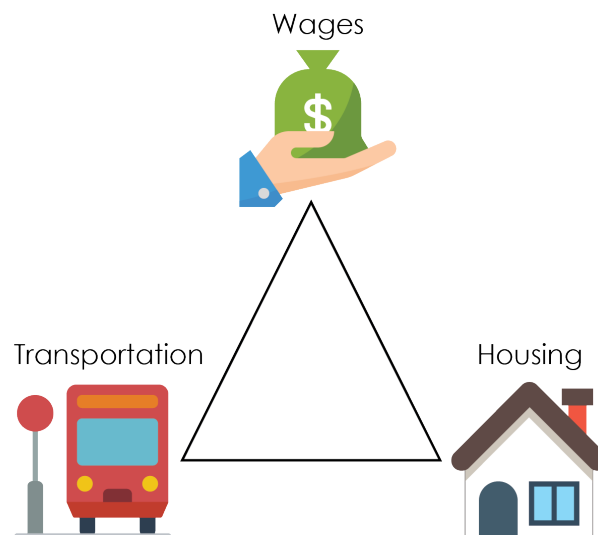
PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of Interfaith Sanctuary is to serve people of all genders, races, religions and sexual orientation, as well as families with children, by providing safe overnight emergency shelter and practical services to transition out of homelessness. Services include an emergency shelter, physical and mental health assessments, income opportunities, employability and education assessments. The emergency shelter provides overnight shelter each night of the year for up to 160 men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. Their service programs are focused on connecting guests with appropriate community partners from shelter entry to shelter exit.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The study being conducted has a threefold purpose:

- Gauge the impact of current average wages in the Treasure Valley, across multiple industries, to ascertain an individual's ability to find affordable housing near their place of employment
- Compare current fair market rents to establish where affordable housing is located in the Treasure Valley
- Assess current public transit options in the Treasure Valley to determine if individuals reliant on the service, for employment opportunities, have available coverage during peak and off-peak hours



EVALUATION DESIGN

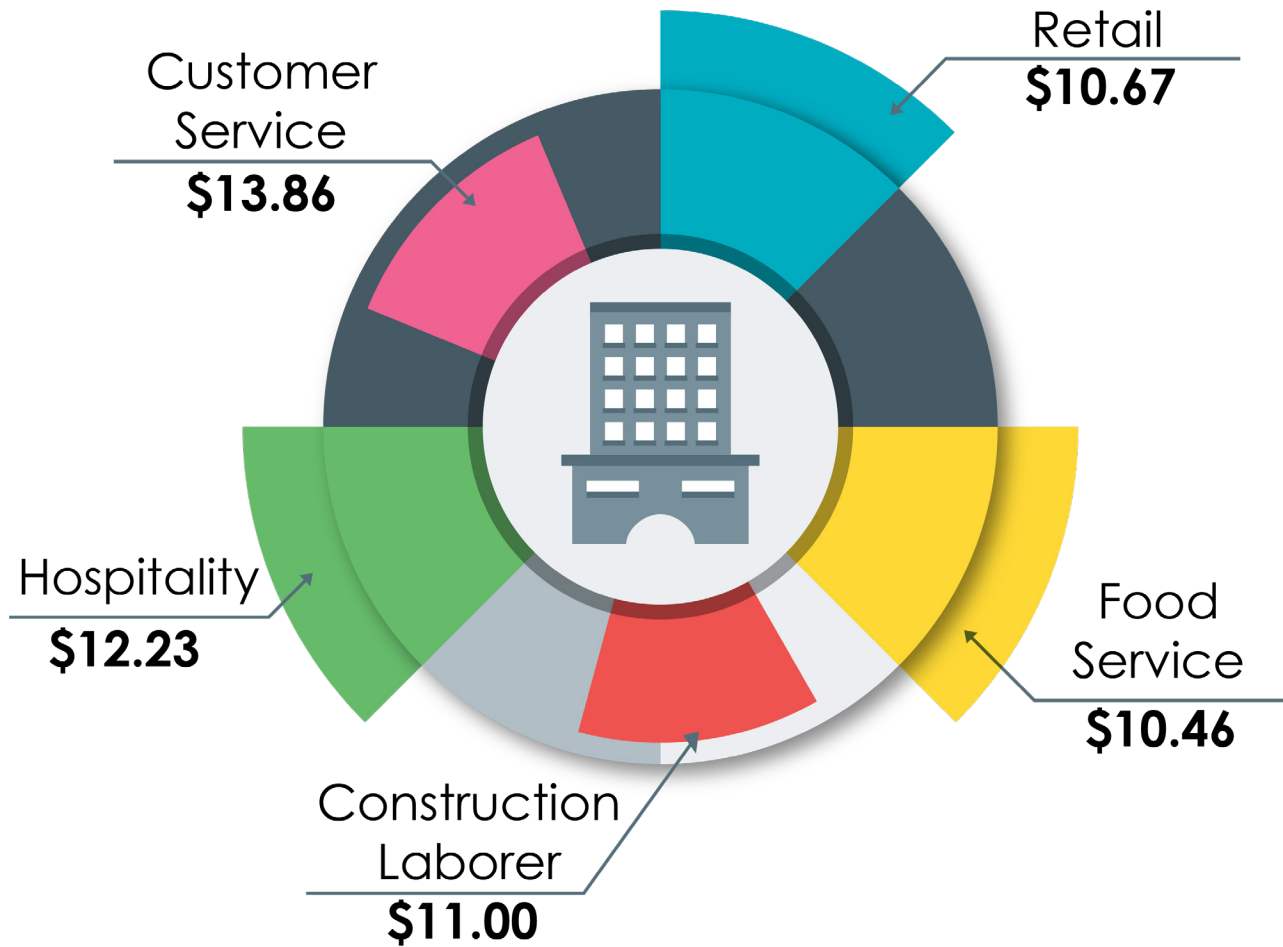
Boise State University graduate students Goodsell and Spoja developed a study purpose and conducted a needs assessment along with a review of existing Interfaith Sanctuary guest records. Additionally, the students completed an analysis of current quantitative data including fair market rents for housing, average wages, and available transportation options in order to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important.

TREASURE VALLEY HOURLY WAGES



* All wages based on data voluntarily provided by company employees through indeed.com on October 22, 2019

AVERAGE INDUSTRY WAGES IN IDAHO



GROCERY CLERK SCENARIO

Suzy

\$7.33/hr
19 Hours/wk

Net
Bi-Weekly
Paycheck:
\$257



TREASURE VALLEY FAIR MARKET RENTS (FMR)

Fair Market Rent is determined each fiscal year by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is used to set payment standards for federal housing assistance programs in Idaho. FMR is the 40th percentile of typical rentals in a given region.²

Zip	City	County	FMR 1bd	FMR 2bd
83616	Eagle	Ada	\$840.00	\$1,070.00
83634	Kuna	Ada	\$830.00	\$1,050.00
83642	Meridian	Ada	\$750.00	\$950.00
83646	Meridian	Ada	\$670.00	\$850.00
83669	Star	Ada	\$880.00	\$1,120.00
83680	Merdian	Ada	\$700.00	\$890.00
83703	Garden City	Ada	\$690.00	\$880.00
83714	Garden City	Ada	\$670.00	\$850.00
83701	Boise	Ada	\$700.00	\$890.00
83702	Boise	Ada	\$680.00	\$860.00
83704	Boise	Ada	\$730.00	\$920.00
83705	Boise	Ada	\$680.00	\$860.00
83706	Boise	Ada	\$720.00	\$910.00
83707	Boise	Ada	\$700.00	\$890.00
83709	Boise	Ada	\$850.00	\$1,080.00
83711	Boise	Ada	\$700.00	\$890.00
83712	Boise	Ada	\$640.00	\$810.00
83713	Boise	Ada	\$800.00	\$1,020.00
83715	Boise	Ada	\$700.00	\$890.00
83716	Boise	Ada	\$890.00	\$1,130.00
83717	Boise	Ada	\$700.00	\$890.00
83719	Boise	Ada	\$700.00	\$890.00
83605	Caldwell	Canyon	\$610.00	\$780.00
83606	Caldwell	Canyon	\$650.00	\$820.00
83607	Caldwell	Canyon	\$650.00	\$830.00
83626	Greenleaf	Canyon	\$610.00	\$780.00
83639	Marsing	Canyon	\$630.00	\$800.00
83641	Melba	Canyon	\$610.00	\$780.00
83644	Middleton	Canyon	\$930.00	\$1,180.00
83651	Nampa	Canyon	\$650.00	\$830.00
83653	Nampa	Canyon	\$650.00	\$820.00
83656	Notus	Canyon	\$650.00	\$820.00
83660	Parma	Canyon	\$610.00	\$780.00
83676	Wilder	Canyon	\$610.00	\$780.00
83686	Nampa	Canyon	\$650.00	\$830.00
83687	Nampa	Canyon	\$710.00	\$900.00

² Idaho Fair Market Rent for 2019. (2019). Retrieved from RentData.org: <https://www.rentdata.org/states/idaho/2019>

TREASURE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION

ADA COUNTY

- 1 Harris Ranch via Parkcenter
- 2 Broadway
- 3 Vista
- 4 Roosevelt
- 5 Emerald
- 6 Orchard
- 7 Fairview (Routes 7A • 7B)
- 8 Five Mile
- 8x Five Mile • Chinden
- 9 State Street
- 10 Hill Road
- 11 Garden City
- 12 Maple Grove
- 16 VA • Hyde Park
- 17 Warm Springs
- 28 Cole • Victory
- 29 Overland

INTERCOUNTY

- 40 Nampa • Meridian Express
- 42 Happy Day Transit Center • Towne Square Mall
- 43 Caldwell Express
- 45 BSU Express

CANYON COUNTY

- 51 East Nampa
- 52 Caldwell Blvd
- 53 CWI Shuttle

FARES AND PASSES

General Fares

Single Ride

	LOCAL	UNIVERSAL
Adult	\$1.50	\$4.50
Child (0-5 yrs.)	FREE	FREE
Student*/Senior*/ Person with a disability/ Medicare Card Holder	\$0.75	\$2.25

One Day

	LOCAL	UNIVERSAL
Adult	\$2.50	\$7.50
Student*/Senior*/ Person with a disability/ Medicare Card Holder	\$1.25	\$3.75

Passes

31-Day Pass

	LOCAL	UNIVERSAL
Adult	\$42.00	\$90.00
Student*/Senior*/ Person with a disability/ Medicare Card Holder	\$21.00	\$45.00

One Year Pass

	LOCAL	UNIVERSAL
Adult	\$282.00	\$594.00

* Data provided by valleyregionaltransit.org. Route and fare information reflect increased fares effective October 1, 2019



INTERFAITH SANCTUARY STATISTICS



\$9.92

Average Hourly Wage for Single Adults



\$11.44

Average Hourly Wage for Adults with Families



35hrs

Average Number of Weekly Hours Worked



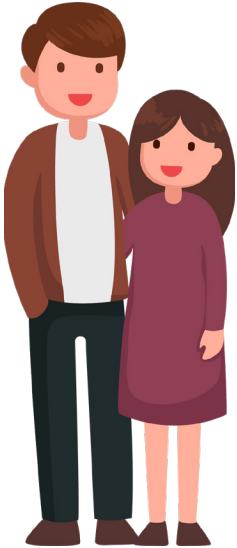
The data provided by Interfaith Sanctuary reflects guests residing in the shelter from September 2019 - November 2019.

SCENARIO 1: Dave & Lily

Housing Information

Number of Adults: 2
Number of Children: 0

Current Location: Caldwell
Rent: \$620/mo. - 1bd 1ba, 750 sqft*



Occupational Information

Dave's Job: Customer Service Rep
Dave's Net Monthly Income: \$1,898
Lily's Job: Unemployed
Lily's Net Monthly Income: \$0

Total Net Monthly Income: \$1,898



Transportation Information

Vehicles Owned: 1
Vehicle Type: 2003 Honda Civic

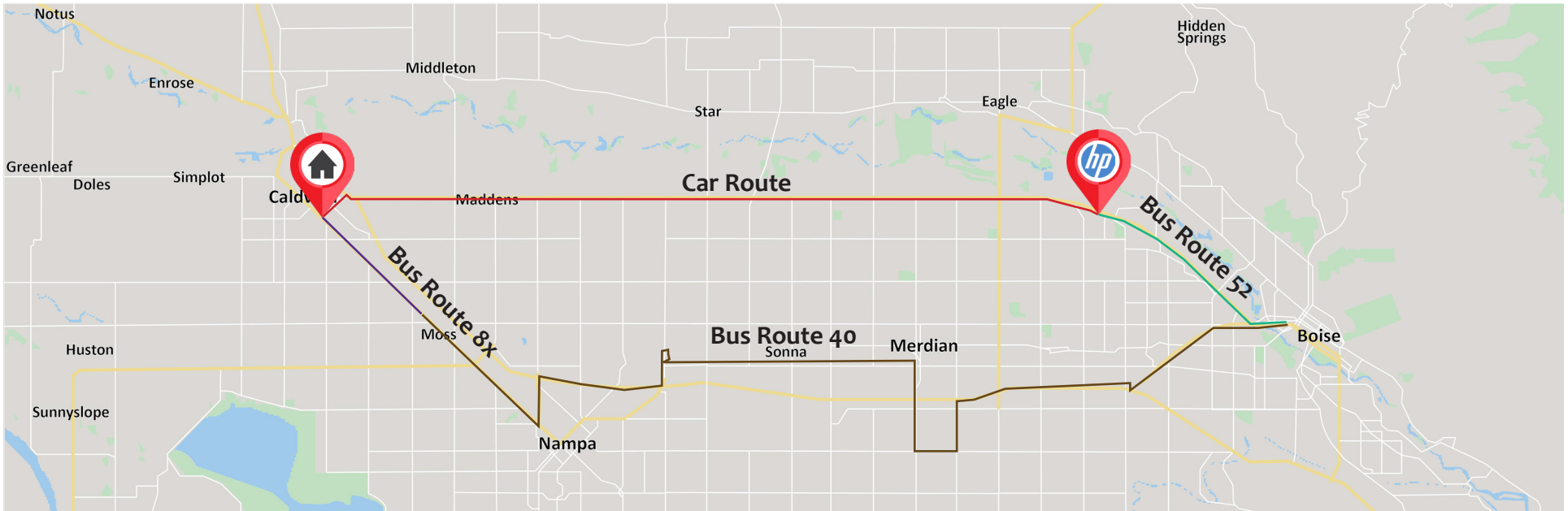
Miles to work (car): 18.4 mi
Travel time to work (car): 32 min

Bus Fare One-Way: \$7.50
Travel time to work: 2hr 27min
Number of Routes: 3



Family Story

Dave currently works as a Customer Service Representative for Hewlett Packard. Unfortunately, Dave and Lilly experienced a terrible car accident a few months ago which disabled Lilly. She is currently unemployed and Dave has been unable to repair their vehicle. The car is still operational, although it has been breaking down quite often. Dave's income has not been enough to pay for repairs. He often finds himself using public transportation.



* Rent based on lowest-priced, available unit listed on apartmentguide.com on November 18, 2019

SCENARIO 2: Kellen, Helen, Charlene and Baby Charles

Housing Information

Number of Adults: 2
Number of Children: 2

Current Location: East Boise
Rent: \$995/mo. - 2bd 2ba, 985 sqft*



Occupational Information

Kellen's Job: Replenishment Associate
Kellen's Net Monthly Income: \$970
Helen's Job: Courtesy Associate
Helen's Net Monthly Income: \$1,270



Total Net Monthly Income: \$2,240

Transportation Information

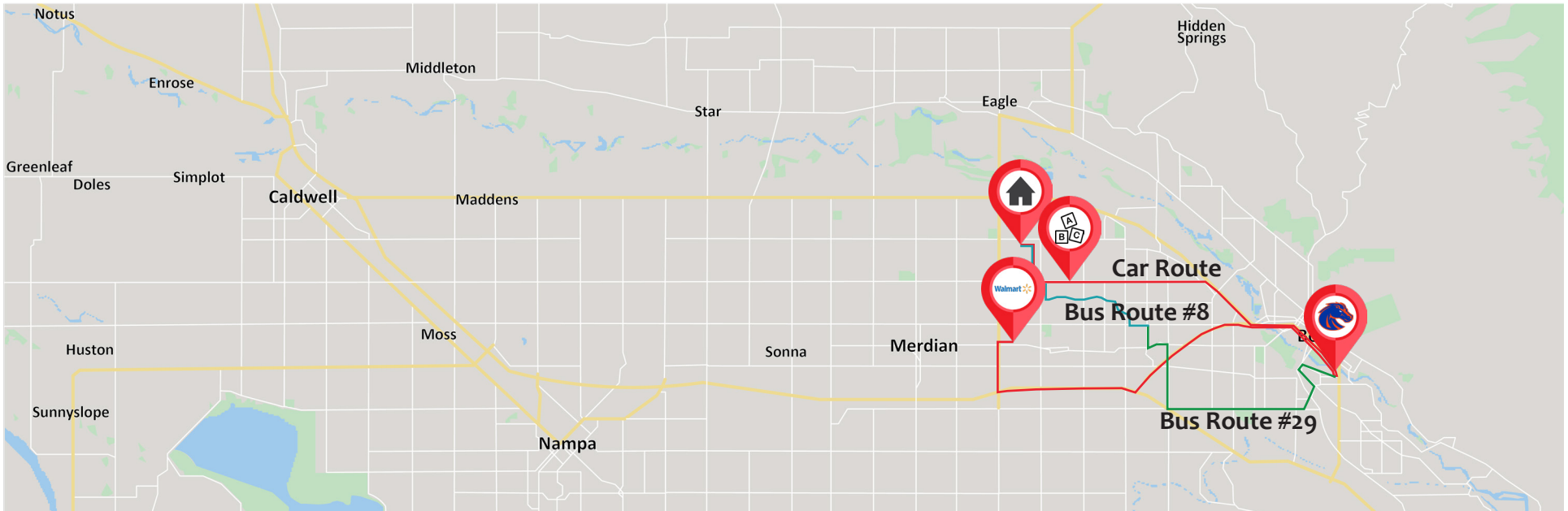
Helen takes children to daycare, drops Kellen off at BSU then goes to work. Kellen usually walks from BSU to work and takes the bus from work to home.

Vehicles Owned: 1 Vehicle: 2015 Nissan Rogue
Miles to work (car): 20.5 mi Travel time: 41 min

Bus Fare One-Way: \$2.50
Travel time from work to home: 1hr 14min
Number of Routes: 2

Family Story

Kellen is currently a Replenishment Associate for Walmart working part-time while he completes his undergraduate degree in Business at Boise State University. His wife Helen recently returned to work as a Courtesy Associate for Albertson's after giving birth to their second child. Unfortunately, baby Charles was born prematurely and required an extended stay at the hospital. Helen is a full time employee with insurance, but with the new family member, her deductibles will increase and the costs for daycare will be substantially higher.



* Rent based on lowest-priced, available unit listed on apartmentguide.com on November 18, 2019

SCENARIO 3: Steve, Sara, Grandpa, Grandma and Sam

Housing Information

Number of Adults: 4
Number of Children: 1

Current Location: Nampa
Rent: \$1,495 – 3 bd 2 ba, 1275 sqft.*

Occupational Information

Steve's Job: Customer Service Rep

Steve's Net Monthly Income: \$1,733

Sara's Job: Deli Associate

Sara's Net Monthly Income: \$971

SYKES

FredMeyer

Total Net Monthly Income: \$2,704

Transportation Information

Vehicles Owned: 1

Vehicle Type: 2012 Ford Edge

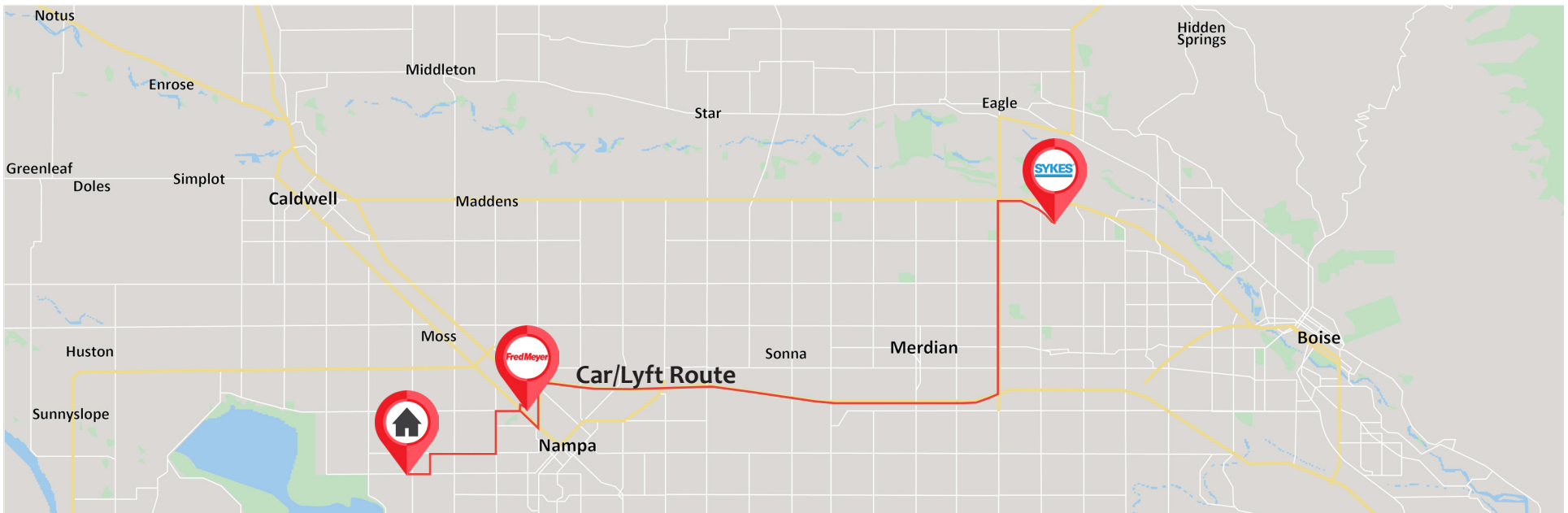
Bus information was not available due to closures

Lyft Fare One-Way to Sykes: ~ \$30

Travel time One-Way to Sykes: 33min

Family Story

Steve works full-time as a Customer Service Representative at Sykes, with shifts beginning at 3:00 p.m. Grandpa and Grandma live with the family due to Grandpa's Alzheimer's disease. Sara works part-time morning shifts as a Deli Associate at Fred Meyer so she can care for her dad. Sam attends AM Kindergarten and rides the school bus. The family has one operating vehicle after Grandpa was involved in an accident. Steve often relies on the bus to get to work since Grandpa has afternoon doctor's appointments.



* Rent based on lowest-priced, available unit listed on apartmentguide.com on November 18, 2019

WAGES, TRANSPORTATION, & HOUSING

SCENARIO BREAKDOWNS

Scenario 1: Dave & Lily

Prior to their terrible car accident, Dave & Lily were a two income household. Married with no children, they worked 40 hour work weeks. Although they both worked full time, the couple struggled financially. Unfortunately, Dave and Lily's situation is common as nearly 78% of U.S. workers live paycheck to paycheck.³ Unforeseeable expenses arising from the car accident only worsened their financial situation. Estimates for car repairs came in between \$650-\$875. Dave and Lily are unable to afford the repairs. The couple's circumstances are typical as roughly 44% of American households could not cover a \$400 emergency expense.⁴ Having to use an unstable vehicle results in regularly taking the bus to work. Traveling from Caldwell means Dave would need to pay \$90 per month or \$15 each day for bus fare. Bus fares pile up quickly and only further prevent Dave from being able to save up for vehicle repairs. While taking the bus is less expensive up front, over time it could cost more than the repairs. In addition to the monetary cost, Dave loses time with his family. Needing to take 3 bus routes takes him five times longer than driving. To gain more financial stability, Dave is going to ask his employer for a raise but is unsure if his supervisor will approve the request. If his pay increase does not go through, they may not be able to make rent for much longer.



Scenario 2: Kellen, Helen, Charlene and Baby Charles

Kellen, Helen, Charlene and Baby Charles are the average family. Kellen is studying hard to earn his Bachelors degree. Raising two children can be costly and Charles' medical bills have been piling up. The family saved a few thousand dollars in order to prepare for the arrival of their second child however rent and medical bills quickly drained their accounts. Although Helen works full time, she did not get paid while she was on maternity leave. The family had to survive on Kellen's part time income and fell behind on their bills. Finding affordable daycare has been quite a struggle. Helen thought about staying home to care for the children but they need the second income to stay afloat. It is estimated in Ada County there are 19,670 children with both parents working, but a child care capacity of only 16,908. That leaves more than 2,700 children needing child care.⁵ When qualified workers are forced to stay home to care for their children due to insufficient wages, employers unintentionally shrink their hiring pool and lose out on talented individuals. Helen and Kellen continue to search for child care as they sit on multiple waitlists. Debt collectors have started to call to collect on baby Charles' medical bills. Helen and Kellen are trying to figure out how to pay off debt collectors, afford child care, and make their rent payments on time.



Scenario 3: Steve, Sara, Grandpa, Grandma and Sam

Steve, Sara, Grandpa, Grandma and Sam have been residing together for about a year. Steve works at Sykes in Boise which operates 24hrs/day. Having only one vehicle means Steve has limited transportation options. When looking for a bus route that goes from Nampa to Boise, both Valley Regional Transit Trip Planner and Google Maps claimed there were no routes available. If a route were available, Steve would not be able to take the bus home since he works until midnight and buses do not run that late. Sara is usually able to drop Steve off at work except when grandpa has doctors appointments. His other option is to take a Lyft to or from work. Traveling to Boise from Nampa can be expensive. A one-way Lyft ride is about \$30. Taking a Lyft is not sustainable longer term. Steve works 5-days a week and one week of Lyft rides is \$300 per week. They have been trying to save for a second car, but their limited income for five people makes saving nearly impossible. Sara may have to return to work full time in order to make ends meet but they cannot afford to hire an aid to look over grandpa all day.



³ Dickler, J. (2019, August 24). *Most Americans live paycheck to paycheck*. Retrieved from CNBC: <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/24/most-americans-live-paycheck-to-paycheck.html>

⁴ Milligan, S. (2019, January 11). *Stretched thin*. Retrieved from U.S. News: <https://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2019-01-11/stretched-thin-majority-of-americans-live-paycheck-to-paycheck>

⁵ Harding, H. (2019, April 5). *Looking for day care in Boise? You're not alone. Lack of providers means a 'crisis'*. Retrieved from Idaho Statesman: <https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/local/community/boise/article227323624.html>

CHALLENGES/LIMITATIONS

Graduate students Goodsell and Spoja identified a few challenges and limitations that impacted this study, which are listed below:

- Fair Market Rent is only determined once each fiscal year by (HUD) for setting payment for federal housing assistance programs in Idaho and represents only the 40th percentile of typical rentals in the Treasure Valley. However, according to a recently released report, rents in Boise' have increased 1.3% since June 2019, and are up 2.2% year-over-year.⁶
- The data provided by Interfaith Sanctuary represents a strictly quantitative analysis of the wages employed guests earned during their stay. It is therefore not representative of any employment data prior to a guest's entrance into homelessness.
- Transportation data provided in this report is only representative of currently available public transportation options known to the researchers. It is possible that other means, such as non-profit and for-profit organizations in the Treasure Valley, have provided modes of transportation for individuals in need.

While existing data provides a historical perspective of identified issues, the data may not be fully representative of current or even near future aspects of growth and livability in the Treasure Valley.



Photo by Eyes of the World Imports Boise ©

⁶ CBS 2 News Staff. (2019, July 8). *Boise's rent increases lead state and national average*. Retrieved from CBS 2 News: <https://idahonews.com/news/local/boises-rent-growth-leads-state-and-national-average>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Homelessness is a complex issue that is not easily resolved. Interfaith Sanctuary has engaged in a holistic approach to meet their guest's needs, however there are multiple factors within the Treasure Valley that exacerbate the homelessness situation.

HOUSING

Rent prices in Boise have soared in recent years. The HUD budget, which provides rental assistance through Section 8 vouchers for low-income, disabled, and elderly persons, has been insufficient. The wait list for rent assistance was closed for nearly a year due to budget restrictions. Increasing available affordable housing in locations where jobs exist is a necessary pillar to abating homelessness.⁷

WAGES

Boise has the seventh highest income inequality of any metropolitan area in the country. Raising the minimum wage could go a long way towards closing the income gap and helping lift workers out of poverty. However, Idaho state government has consistently voted against bills meant to address income inequality and raise the minimum wage in addition to passing a law preventing cities or counties from changing their minimum wage.⁸ Educating Idaho voters about income inequality and the responsibility policy makers have for ensuring working individuals are able to earn a living wage is essential to addressing this contributing factor and reducing homelessness in the Treasure Valley.



⁷ White, Madeline (June 27, 2019). *Affordable housing crisis leading to rise in first-time homelessness in Boise*. <https://www.kivitv.com/news/state-of-208/affordable-housing-crisis-leading-to-rise-in-first-time-homelessness-in-boise>

⁸ Herrick, Scott (February 24, 2019). *High inequality and high rents cause problems for Boise*. The Arbitrator <https://arbitronline.com/high-inequality-and-high-rents-cause-problems-for-boise/>



TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation options in the Treasure Valley are far too limited for a city that has made multiple national “best of” lists for the past five years. When comparing Boise with other large and growing cities, we have the least available public transit routes. Other regions comparable to the size of the Treasure Valley have approximately 5.5 million riders annually, yet Valley Ride Transit (VRT) reports only 1.3 million riders. Bus routes are nearly indecipherable without a map and buses stop running early in the evening which rules out a large segment of the service sector that works late into the evening. These are two key reasons potential riders may avoid using public transportation.

Public transportation can be favorable so long as it is affordable, convenient, and available during peak and off peak hours. Currently the legislative process promotes a car centric view rather than advancing public transportation. To build a robust regional transit system, Idaho leaders and policy makers must commit to providing a dedicated funding source. It is time to advance public transportation through advocacy, innovation, and information sharing to ensure transportation is available for the 15% of the population that falls below the poverty line.⁹ Nearly 33% of all individuals experiencing homelessness are employed and public transportation provides a means for moving these individuals towards greater employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to address potential gaps in public transit options, affordable housing, and wage rates in the Treasure Valley that may be contributing factors of homelessness. The results of this study report on distances from affordable housing to the workplace and identify areas with insufficient transportation. Additionally, the study can serve as a guide for stakeholder collaboration between Interfaith Sanctuary, local employers, transportation authorities, city officials, and policy makers working towards solutions that promote livability in the Treasure Valley.

⁹ Vitu, Teya (February 10, 2017). *Boise struggles with limited public transit options*. Idaho Business Review. <https://idahobusinessreview.com/2017/02/10/2-boise-struggles-with-limited-public-transit-options/>



This report was prepared by the Idaho Policy Institute at Boise State University
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