



River Street Master Plan

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES | CITY of BOISE

DECEMBER 5, 2017

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Introduction and History

By John Bertram

The River Street neighborhood is an area with a wide mix of uses and activities that serve as a transition area from the adjoining residential neighborhoods to the downtown core. The neighborhood is a mixture of commercial, high density residential and single-family residential with some established industrial uses maintaining their locations adjacent to I-184. Maintaining a healthy supportive mixture of uses in this area is very important while allowing for transitions of properties to new uses.

Real estate speculation drove the development of the River Street neighborhood from the very beginning. The arrival of the Oregon Short Line Railroad launched development in the River Street neighborhood, as early developers subdivided and platted the area in hopes that a rail connection would spur development. During the first half of the twentieth century, a collection of residential houses were built along the streets between the railroad tracks on the north, River Street on the south, 16th Street (Americana Boulevard) on the west, and 10th Street on the east. Warehouses occupied the area from 10th Street to Capitol Boulevard.

In addition, along the river front between 9th and 11th Streets, a private company during this time constructed a 10-acre Riverfront Park that included a baseball diamond with grandstand, dance pavilion, pathways and promenade. This demonstrates that the river has long been viewed as an amenity for the City. The history associated with the baseball field in this area is particularly interesting given the

current interest in promoting a new multi-use sports stadium in the general vicinity.

By the 1920s, the River Street neighborhood was poised for growth, with new housing stock and expanding warehouse space that provided jobs for local residents and commerce for the City. In addition, between 1900 and 1920, Boise grew from a population of approximately 6,000 residents to over 21,000. River Street remained a working-class neighborhood with a largely Basque and European immigrant population. World War II brought a large number of African American soldiers to the military bases at Gowen Field and Mountain Home. With few housing options, the soldiers and their families settled in the River Street neighborhood, which was one of the few in the area that allowed blacks to either rent or buy property. The history of African American settlement in this neighborhood is a part of the larger story of civil rights story in America and across Idaho. Grants may be available to pursue further study and documentation with interpretive signage or other means.

The growth of the River Street neighborhood closely mirrors that of the City. However, by the 1960s that growth had stalled. A combination of expanded transportation and irrigation infrastructure, as well as relatively inexpensive land spurred suburban expansion and a decline of the downtown and adjacent areas. Older buildings in downtown Boise were decaying and many of the houses in the River Street neighborhood were over 50 years old. In addition, many of the absentee property owners in the neighborhood let their rentals decline, resulting in the area becoming an eyesore. Crime also increased during this time, with Pioneer Street becoming a notable gambling / red light district.

As a result of Urban Renewal, many of the older buildings were lost. New condominiums and apartments replaced the small, detached, single-family dwellings. Early attempts at historic preservation failed, resulting in a fractured neighborhood that neither has the makings of a historic district, nor the high-density urban feel of part of the downtown. What the neighborhood does retain is a strong sense of community that is both eclectic and vibrant, and definitely livable.

Committee and Public Outreach

The River Neighborhood Committee was formed in May 2016 and is comprised of property owners, business owners, and residents. The Committee met regularly for 6 months and assisted the City team in developing the master plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the plan on August 7, 2017 and City Council adopted the plan on December 5, 2017 by RES-614-17.

Existing Conditions

The River Street Neighborhood is the area between the Boise River Greenbelt, the I-184 Connector, Myrtle Street and 9th Street. This is a large district of downtown that is somewhat underdeveloped and is uniquely situated for urban renaissance. This district interacts with and benefits from the proximity of the downtown central business district to the northeast, the Boise River to the south, the West End and West Downtown to the northwest and the Cultural district to the east. The Cultural District, focused on the 8th Street Corridor, is undergoing its own planning effort and is viewed as closely related to but separate from the River Street Neighborhood.

The River Street Neighborhood has been prioritized in the River/Myrtle Urban Renewal Plan for urban residential development and such development has occurred with the CitySide Lofts condominiums, the Mercy Housing senior apartments and a variety of affordable housing developments in the vicinity of 13th Street, River Street and Grand. However, the district also includes older lower density housing such as mobile homes, townhomes, small apartments and several blocks of alley loaded single family detached housing similar to that found in the North End. It also contains key social services, medical services, modern office buildings, industrial warehouses and limited retail uses. Several large areas of the neighborhood have a distinctly suburban character, with large blocks, surface parking lots and low rise construction. The neighborhood has much underutilized property along with significant roadways and pathways that can be redesigned to enhance the urban function of the area.

Statistics

Area: 206 acres

Zoning: R-OD (Residential Office with Design Review)

R-ODD (Residential Office with Downtown Design Review)

C-2DD (General Commercial with Downtown Design Review)

C-3D (Service Commercial with Design Review)

C-3DD (Service Commercial with Downtown Design Review)

C-5DD (Central Business with Downtown Design Review)

L-OD (Limited Office with Design Review)

A-1 (Open Land, Parks)

M-1D (Limited Industrial with Design Review)

Total Jobs: 2,728

Total Households: 582

Total Residents: 1,010

Context

The River Street Neighborhood is uniquely poised for new development and rehabilitation of existing structures. Its location along the Boise River with great access in and out of town as well as to the nearby amenities of the downtown and cultural district make it an area for high density residential and mixed-use development. The area is defined by the I-184 Connector and Myrtle Street on the north, along with the Boise River to the south and 9th Street to the east.

Existing Plans and Policies

Blueprint Boise

The study area is located within the Downtown Planning Area and designated as Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map. The Mixed Use designation promotes a variety of uses such as retail, commercial, professional offices, restaurants, financial institutions, and high-density, including live-work units.

River Street- Myrtle Street Master Plan (CCDC)

The River Street-Myrtle Street Urban Renewal District was formed in 1994 consisting of 242 acres, and was expanded to include areas within Old Boise in 2004 and renamed River Myrtle – Old Boise Urban Renewal District. The District contains a total of 340 acres and two sub-districts: Old Boise-Eastside and River Street-Myrtle Street. The master plan was used to guide and provide the basis for the River Street Master Plan, and dictates streetscape configurations within the boundaries of the Urban Renewal District. Additionally, the master plan provides guidance for specific areas which lie outside of the boundaries of the River Street Master Plan.

Zoning

The area is zoned with a mix of the more highly intensive base districts – General Commercial (C-2) is mainly located along Shoreline and Americana. Service Commercial (C-3) is located to the northwest of Americana and includes many professional offices and low impact commercial uses. Residential Office (R-O) surrounds the commercial uses to the south and northwest to transition into the more intense downtown development. Industrial (M-1) is located adjacent to the Connector and mainly covers the Idaho Power properties. Open Space (A-1) is located along the Boise River and includes Riverside Park and the Idaho Fallen Firefighter Memorial. Portions of the master plan area are covered by the P-2 and P-3 parking overlay districts, which reduce parking requirements based on land use, promoting urban development patterns which are not dependent on large areas of surface parking.



Legend

- River Street Neighborhood Plan Area

River Street Subdistricts

- Edge District
- Pioneer Neighborhood District
- River District
- Shoreline District
- Warehouse District

Master Plan Policy Recommendations

Summary

This new River Street Master Plan builds upon development policies first established in the River/Myrtle Urban Renewal Plan for the area. This set of policies also takes into account the dramatic growth and development that have occurred in the area over the past five years and seeks to clarify an urban vision that will guide the continuing build out of this unique downtown sub-district. This plan focuses on the categories of Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Open Space/ Recreation, Economic Development, and Sustainability. Due to the large size of the district, most of these policy areas are discussed in the context of sub-districts, as follows.

Sub-District Policies

The River Street neighborhood is a large area with a very wide range of uses including single family residential, multi-family, office, medical, commercial, industrial, entertainment, public facilities and social services. In order to consider issues, opportunities and policies, it is helpful to think of the area in terms of sub-districts that are defined by a combination of geography, roadways and existing land uses. Five distinct sub-districts may be defined as follows:

- Pioneer Neighborhood District – Bounded by 15th, Myrtle, 11th and River Street
- Warehouse District – Bounded by 11th, Myrtle, 9th and River Street
- River District – Bounded by Pioneer Path, River Street, 9th and the Boise River Greenbelt
- Shoreline District – Bounded by Americana/15th, River, Pioneer Path and the Boise Greenbelt
- Edge District – Bounded by I-184 Connector, Myrtle, 15th/ Americana and the Boise River Greenbelt

The following section describes the form and function of each sub-district and provides policy statements for each in the categories of Land Use and Housing, Transportation, Open Space and Recreation, and Economic Development.

Pioneer Neighborhood District



The nine block Pioneer Neighborhood district is primarily residential with over 500 housing units in a wide range of product types, price ranges and age of construction. These include recent developments such as CitySide Lofts condominiums, the Grand Avenue Homes condominiums, Mercy Housing senior apartments and River Plaza Apartments; and older projects like Pioneer Square Apartments and Redwood Apartments. There are also approximately four blocks of narrow townlot single family housing of historic vintage interspersed with small apartments and mobile homes. The Boise Rescue Mission also provides shelter housing in the area and there are several office buildings of various ages and sizes as well as a community center operated by the City of Boise.

Together these developments form a well-defined and unique mixed income urban neighborhood. The Pioneer Pathway traverses through this area as do the local streets Grand Avenue, Lee Street, Ash Street

and Miller Street, which in concert with the numbered streets form a classic “town-lot” neighborhood grid pattern with a fairly intimate and relatively quiet pedestrian-oriented character. The Pioneer Pathway connects the neighborhood to Central Downtown and the Boise River, while the Grand and Miller Streets potentially connect the neighborhood to the Cultural District and Julia Davis Park to the east. The connection of the Pioneer Pathway at 11th and Myrtle is currently ill-defined and could be strengthened through a more substantial design treatment such as a small plaza space.

The City of Boise and CCDC have both owned land that aligns along the Pioneer Pathway and Ash Street. The City property is a small triangular park on the north side of River Street next to the pathway, the historic Hayman House on the corner of Ash and River Street, and the Community Center on the corner of Ash and Miller Street. CCDC recently transferred their five lots that form the west frontage of Ash Street between the Hayman House and Miller Street to a housing developer. This block, which shares the Pioneer Pathway with the Mercy Senior Housing development is a major opportunity for civic and private investments.

The former CCDC property is currently approved for construction of an attached workforce housing project with a small dining/coffee shop element on one end. The City is in the process of purchasing and determining how to reuse the Hayman House as a public benefit in conjunction with the neighborhood park. With redevelopment, restoration, redesign and reuse of these combined properties, there is high potential to enhance the neighborhood and create strong identity. In addition to the City and CCDC properties, two partial blocks with frontage on Myrtle are vacant and are also a prime opportunity for new development.

As described in the SWOT analysis, this neighborhood is challenged by the impact of the shelter housing and social services that exist across 15th Street to the west as well as within the neighborhood. Loitering and littering by homeless individuals create perceived and real safety issues for residents and visitors to the Pioneer neighborhood and may stigmatize the neighborhood to the point that home values stagnate or deteriorate. Policing, shelter operation and distribution of social services into other parts of the community should all be pursued as a means of protecting this neighborhood from further impacts. Work force housing within the neighborhood should be the focus of new housing efforts rather than further emphasis on shelter housing or very low income housing. A true mixed income neighborhood can be a vital element of the downtown.

Lastly, the neighborhood residents and apartment owners in the area also have expressed concern about the availability of on-street parking for residents, which is often occupied by downtown workers who park here for free and walk the several blocks to the downtown. Creation of a residential parking district should be pursued for this area as a means of supporting the health of this important neighborhood.

Land Use and Housing Policies

1. The Pioneer Neighborhood should be promoted and enhanced as a walkable mixed income residential district, with an emphasis on work force and “missing middle” housing.
2. Existing blocks of “town-lot” single family housing on 14th Street and Lee Street should be prioritized for rehabilitation and/or reconstruction in order to retain that unique housing product in the neighborhood. Other residential products may be allowed, provided that they are designed to similar scale.
3. The Pioneer Neighborhood should be recognized as having a large amount of shelter housing and significant new developments of this type should be considered for dispersion to other parts of the community.
4. Any creation of a new urban renewal district in or around the Pioneer Neighborhood should include financial support for workforce and affordable housing.
5. New developments along the edges of the Pioneer Neighborhood should be encouraged to include neighborhood serving retail uses. Lots with Myrtle Street frontage may support office development in addition to other uses.
6. New developments along the Pioneer Pathway should be designed in such a manner as to activate the pathway with attractive designs that face and/or open directly onto the path.
7. A residential parking district should be established in the Pioneer Neighborhood.

Transportation Policies

1. Grand and Miller Streets should be maintained and enhanced as primary residential and pedestrian oriented corridors that connect the neighborhood to the 8th Street Corridor via a connection to Fulton Street at 9th Street. Detached sidewalks should be installed in those areas where there are gaps in the pedestrian network.
2. The existing street grid should be protected from vacation.
3. 13th Street should be considered for a bike-pedestrian crossing signal at Myrtle Street.
4. 11th Street should be striped for bike lanes on both sides.
5. The Pioneer Pathway intersection at 11th Street should be strengthened through creation of defined plaza space.

Open Space/Recreation Policies

1. The Hayman House should ideally be maintained in its present location and be operated in concert with the Pioneer Pathway and Pioneer Neighborhood Park as one interrelated set of facilities that enliven the neighborhood with open space, transportation and cultural amenity functions.
2. The Parks Department should explore a small, grassy park for passive/unorganized field activities by neighborhood youth, preferably in conjunction with the Hayman House.

Economic Development Policies

1. The Pioneer Neighborhood District should be recognized as an economically important component of downtown that provides convenient housing opportunities at price points downtown office and service workers can afford. Elements that threaten the perceived safety or desirability of this area should be controlled through policing, facility designs that minimize loitering, and operational changes to ensure that existing social services are well maintained and supported.
2. A Neighborhood Association should be formed for the Pioneer Neighborhood as a means of advocating for the health and identity of the district and directing grant funding for further improvement.



Warehouse District



The six block Warehouse District, as the name implies, is largely characterized by a number of older mostly-brick warehouse type buildings, some of significant size and/or attractive design. These include the large two-block Downtown Storage and Records warehouse, the full block Idaho Records Management warehouse and the half block Hanson Janitorial Supply building. Similar buildings, though not used as warehouses, are the Mardi Gras events building, the former Sage International School building and the Intermountain Medical Imaging building all on 9th Street. There is also a full block of vacant land in this area, along with some smaller parcels that are used for off-site surface parking.

Street connectivity is generally good. This area shares the 9th Street boundary, east-west street connections and similar building types with the 8th Cultural District across 9th Street. Miller Street in particular nearly aligns with Fulton Street in the Cultural District. A pedestrian crossing signal has been installed at Fulton and 9th to better link the two districts. This connection could be further

strengthened through streetscape/plaza improvements that visually and functionally connect Miller to Fulton. For example, the small landscape strip on the southeast corner of Miller and 9th could be converted to a hardscaped plaza. If the very large Idaho Records Management Warehouse is substantially remodeled, an effort should be made to connect Lee Street through the block to connect to 11th. Alleys are currently missing in the two blocks on either side of Lee Street and establishment of alleys should be considered in any remodeling of buildings on those blocks. A 10th Street connection to Myrtle would improve the sense of connection of this area to the JUMP project.

River Street provides a direct east-west connection to the 8th Street cultural and library area across 9th Street to the east. The intersection of River Street and 9th forms the boundary of several subdistricts and includes active uses including the Cottonwood Grill on the southwest corner and the Afton mixed use development on the northeast corner. The properties immediately around this intersection could form the basis for an Activity Center with further commercial development on the northwest corner within the Warehouse District.

Based on the existing inventory of classic brick buildings and good street network, this warehouse district may have potential for consideration as an expansion or spinoff of the mixed use Cultural District. The JUMP project to the north may also influence development of this area as does the intersection of the Pioneer Pathway at 11th and Myrtle in the northwest corner of the district. Loft housing or other urban forms may be an element of new development in this area, but an effort should be made to focus on the cultural opportunities the setting would seem to promote.

Land Use and Housing Policies

1. The Warehouse District provides a unique opportunity for expansion of cultural facilities and activities by reusing, remodeling, or replacing existing warehouse buildings for performance and gallery space, indoor markets, artists' studios and similar uses.
2. Loft housing and live/work spaces are appropriate and encouraged in the Warehouse District.
3. New surface parking lots are strongly discouraged in this district while a parking garage would be appropriate for construction in concert with development in the area.
4. Redevelopment or modification of any buildings along 9th Street should include a design that provides doorways and windows onto 9th.
5. An Activity Center should be defined at the intersection of 9th and River Street.

Transportation Policies

1. The connection of Miller Street with 9th Street should be redesigned to serve as an identifiable and functional pedestrian entryway to the Warehouse District as well as to create a stronger visual and physical connection to Fulton Street in the 8th Street Cultural District to the east. Creation of a small plaza in the landscape strip on the southwest corner of Miller and 9th may provide this function.
2. 10th Street should be considered for direct connection to Myrtle Street.
3. Lee Street should be considered for connection between 10th and 11th Streets in the event that the intervening building is significantly modified or redeveloped.
4. The Lee Street streetscape should be improved between 9th and 10th Streets.
5. Alleys should be established in the two blocks on the north and south side of Lee Street, between 9th and 10th Streets in the event that the two blocks are redeveloped or significantly modified.

Open Space/Recreation Policies

1. Small outdoor public gathering places in the form of plazas and patios should be promoted in conjunction with arts and entertainment uses in the Warehouse District.

Economic Development Policies

1. The Warehouse District should be promoted and marketed as an expansion of the 8th Street Cultural District and as a distinct arts and entertainment sub-district of Downtown to which visitors should be directed as a downtown attraction.



River District



The River District is defined by a row of five mid-rise suburban style office buildings that sit on the south side of River Street adjacent to the Greenbelt. This development is of relatively modern vintage and was intended to take advantage of the greenbelt and river views. Four of the buildings are owned by Hormaechea Limited Partnership and include the Cottonwood Grill on the corner of 9th and River. The fifth building is the Arid Club, under separate ownership. These buildings, while fully developed, sit at the back of large surface parking lots that front onto River Street.

In most downtown areas, surface lots are considered candidate areas for redevelopment with structured parking garages and new mixed use building space. This is prime real estate and future development of the parking lots is a distinct possibility. If and when this occurs, an effort should be made to create a local roadway network within the row of parking lots that can serve to link them together as cohesive blocks.

The west end of this district includes a vacant parcel that abuts the realigned Pioneer Pathway at the Greenbelt. Development of this parcel should feature a land use and design that will activate the pathway with windows, doors and direct access. Residential development would be appropriate.

Biker and pedestrian access to the Greenbelt along this lengthy frontage is currently limited to the Pioneer Pathway at the west end of the district, and two sidewalks associated with Cottonwood Grill at the east end of the district. An additional access point midway between the two existing locations would be desirable.

Land Use and Housing Policies

1. The parking lots along the south side of River Street are candidate sites for infill mixed use development including housing.
2. Development of the parcel adjacent to the Pioneer Pathway at the Greenbelt shall feature a land use and design that will activate the pathway with windows, doors and direct access. Residential development is appropriate.

Transportation Policies

1. If infill development occurs in the office parking lots along River Street, a local roadway network internal to the development should be devised to link the properties together and provide travel options besides River Street.

Open Space and Recreation Policies

1. An additional pathway connection to the Greenbelt should be pursued at approximately the mid-point of the River Street District.

Shoreline District



The Shoreline District forms the large central core of the River Street neighborhood along Shoreline Drive and is difficult to define by land uses, geography or street pattern. This district combines elements of all the surrounding sub-districts in addition to some unique uses.

Existing uses along Americana Blvd. include the former K-Mart building and parking lot now occupied by St. Luke's along with some unoccupied small retail buildings to its north. In the center of the district is a block of industrial buildings and the large Shoreline Plaza Apartments which are an extension of the Pioneer Neighborhood District. The eastern portion of the district includes a large Federal Post Office facility, a new self-storage development, a new dormitory building for Riverstone School exchange students, the new Payette brewery and tasting room, and an office building.

The river frontage portion of this district is essentially a continuation of the River District office park with five more suburban style office buildings and surface parking lots. The now-closed Pantry restaurant is also located in the district. A defining feature of this district are the large surface parking lots, mostly one story buildings and the absence of a traditional downtown street grid – the blocks are very large. The area along the Pioneer Pathway, particularly where it lands at the Greenbelt with a large vacant lot, is a key area of opportunity for new residential or mixed use development. This site can expand the activity created by the new Payette Brewery and provide a stronger link between Ann Morrison Park and Downtown via the Pioneer Pathway.

The large parking lots throughout the district are another major opportunity for new development of a more urban nature; and even for a catalyst project. The Americana Boulevard frontage currently occupied by St. Luke's is probably the largest opportunity for change in the entire River Street neighborhood. This eight acre-site (excluding a private dentist office), which is mostly parking lot, is the subject of a current effort to develop a mixed use sports stadium complex that could house the Boise Hawks minor league baseball team as well as other sports. Redevelopment of this site and adjoining parcels for any use, including the stadium or other concepts, should ideally include structured parking in place of surface parking, retail and dining uses along street frontages, opportunities for dense urban housing, and new street connections (and/or retention of existing streets such as Spa Street) wherever possible. Additional street segments would potentially allow for creation of "festival streets" that could be closed to traffic for special events. Creation of a new urban renewal area may be considered for some or all of the properties in this area as a means of implementing a significant mixed use development.

Land Use and Housing Policies

1. The K-Mart/St. Luke's and adjoining properties on Americana Blvd. and Shoreline Drive are a substantial opportunity for urban mixed use development of a catalytic nature, including a multi-use sports stadium concept. Elements of redevelopment on this site should include combinations of residential, retail and office development in a mid-rise form with street front retail and a strong de-emphasis on surface parking lots and a preference for structured parking.
2. Throughout the Shoreline District, existing surface parking lots should be considered candidate sites for mixed use infill development.
3. Neighborhood serving retail including groceries and dining should be considered priority uses in new development.

Transportation Policies

1. Existing roadways should be protected from vacation or new roadways should be retrofit into the district where possible through infill development.
2. A festival street(s) should be considered as a potential element of redevelopment in this area.

Open Space and Recreation

1. Infill development of the office properties along the river should include additional access to the Greenbelt.



Economic Development

1. The larger properties within the Shoreline District shall be recognized for the potential as economic drivers, including the concept of a mixed use sports stadium. Creation of a new urban renewal district as an implementation tool should be considered.

Edge District



The Edge District occupies an area which is somewhat isolated by the I-184 Connector that looms over it on the north side and blocks street connections in that direction. As with the Shoreline District, the land uses are very diverse. They include Idaho Cold Storage, Interfaith Sanctuary homeless shelter, small residential lots, small offices and retail, and medical uses along the Americana Blvd, 15th Street and 16th Street frontages. Offices, apartments, a City park/Firefighter Memorial, a Boise Fire Training facility and a vacant ACHD parcel exist along the river frontage south of Shoreline Drive. The interior area includes a Cash and Carry restaurant supply grocery store, industrial uses, the Powerhouse Events Center and an Idaho Power Substation. ACHD owns vacant or underused property on both sides of Shoreline Drive at the Connector that would be suitable for redevelopment. The impacts associated with the shelter housing facility on 16th Street have caused some concerns for businesses in this district as well as residents in the Pioneer Neighborhood District.

On the south side of the Boise River is the site of a former KOA RV campground that is partially redeveloped with offices and an assisted living facility. The remainder of the property was previously approved for attached housing but remains vacant. The Boise Greenbelt has been recently extended past this area and the property remains suitable for attached housing and even mixed use development including dining that would cater to Greenbelt and park users.

It is difficult to crystallize an overall vision for this sub-district other than to suggest that the current mix of uses should be supported with perhaps the addition of some neighborhood retail uses to serve the Pioneer Neighborhood District. Street connectivity within the district should be protected and enhanced where possible. A desirable connection would be from S. 17th Street to Americana Boulevard midway between Shoreline and River Street. Residential or mixed use development should be considered for the Fire Training facility site if it is eventually relocated as planned. Redevelopment of this site would best be accomplished in conjunction with development of the vacant ACHD parcel to the north.

Land Use and Housing Policies

1. The Edge District is a diverse area that should continue to develop and redevelop with a range of uses including retail, office and residential.
2. Additional social services should be discouraged in this area in order to avoid undue concentration of such services in one location.
3. New retail and office development should be designed as store fronts on the street.
4. Properties near the Boise River and Greenbelt shall be considered appropriate for dense residential and mixed use development.

Transportation

1. Existing streets shall be protected from vacation and new street connections shall be sought where appropriate at the time of development. In particular, a local street connection should be pursued from S. 17th Street to Americana Boulevard, midway between Shoreline and River Street.

Transportation/Infrastructure

The preceding discussion of the various sub-districts included specific transportation policies that were closely related to the issues associated with each geographic area. However, there are some larger transportation issues that cross sub-district boundaries and that are best discussed in the context of the overall area. The following section provides that analysis, with attendant policies. It also provides a map that illustrates some of the transportation recommendations contained in the sub-district discussions.

Transportation and Circulation

The River Street District has a high degree of access to several transportation modes. The roadway network has been in place for many years and is partially an extension of the downtown street grid. A pathway network is also in place. Some segments of the roadway network would benefit from completion of gaps in the bikeway network.

North-South Corridors

9th Street forms the eastern boundary of the district and is a solid connection to the downtown. The western edge of the district is formed by the I-184 Connector with an eastbound off ramp at River Street. Americana and the 15th/16th Street couplet also provide a strong north-south connection between the downtown and the bench. Other numbered streets including 13th and 11th Streets connect across Front and Myrtle to the downtown as well. The Pioneer Pathway is an important bike and pedestrian facility that also runs through the district in a north-south direction, providing connection between the Greenbelt and the downtown.

East-West Corridors

Myrtle Street forms the north border of the district and is paralleled by River Street, two blocks to the south which is the primary east-west roadway internal to the district. Shoreline Drive also becomes a significant internal east-west roadway, but is existing only in the western half of the district. The local streets of Miller and Grand form a key east-west residential and pedestrian-friendly corridor. The Boise Greenbelt forms the southern boundary of the district.

Bike and Pedestrian Facilities

The Greenbelt and the Pioneer Pathway are the most significant bike/ped facilities in the River Street District. However, bike lanes also exist on some key streets. Americana has a long-standing bike lane that extends from Latah on the Bench to the North End via the 15th/16th Street couplet. River Street has existing bike lanes that extend from 9th Street to approximately 12th Street, but which disappear west of 12th. There is also a short missing segment of westbound bike lane on the north side of River Street between 9th Street and 10th Streets. 9th Street, while a primary north-south connection to the downtown, does not currently have a bike lane striped on it anywhere south of Main Street in downtown. However, 11th Street is a bike lane street in the downtown but it has no bike lane south of Front Street. It may

be desirable to extend bike lanes on 11th Street south from Myrtle Street as a direct bike route into downtown from the central portion of the River Street District.

The Pioneer Pathway is an important bike route connection through the River Street District, but as described elsewhere in this report, its presence at the key intersection of 11th and Myrtle is very weak and could be strengthened with some type of plaza design at that location.

Street Widths and Bike Facilities

In reviewing the roadway/bikeway network in the River District, it becomes apparent that some segments may have more travel lanes than are needed, at the expense of bike lanes. In particular, River Street seems to function well as a three-lane road with bike lanes between Capitol Boulevard and 12th Street. West of 12th, River Street inexplicably jumps to five lanes and loses its bike lanes. The City and ACHD should explore whether this stretch of River Street could be reduced to three lanes, with bike lanes added to the remaining right-of-way to complete the bike lane connection across the district to the existing bike lanes on Americana.

Similarly, the 15th/16th Street couplet provide a total of six travel lanes before they reduce to four lanes on Americana Boulevard. It may be possible to reduce the lanes on the couplet by one in each direction and provide a safer bike lane connection to Rhodes Park and the rest of the downtown from the River Street District.

Transit

The study area is served by existing ValleyRide bus routes that operate along 9th, 13th, 15th and 16th streets and Americana Boulevard. Buses also operate on River Street and Shoreline Drive. There are a total of 11 bus stops currently located within the River Street District and coverage is relatively good. An additional bus stop at 15th and River Streets would seem to be a logical addition to serve the Pioneer Neighborhood Subdistrict.

The Circulator is currently being studied for inclusion of a 9th Street route. A stop that services the River Street District should be considered as part of ongoing planning.

Transportation and Circulation Policies

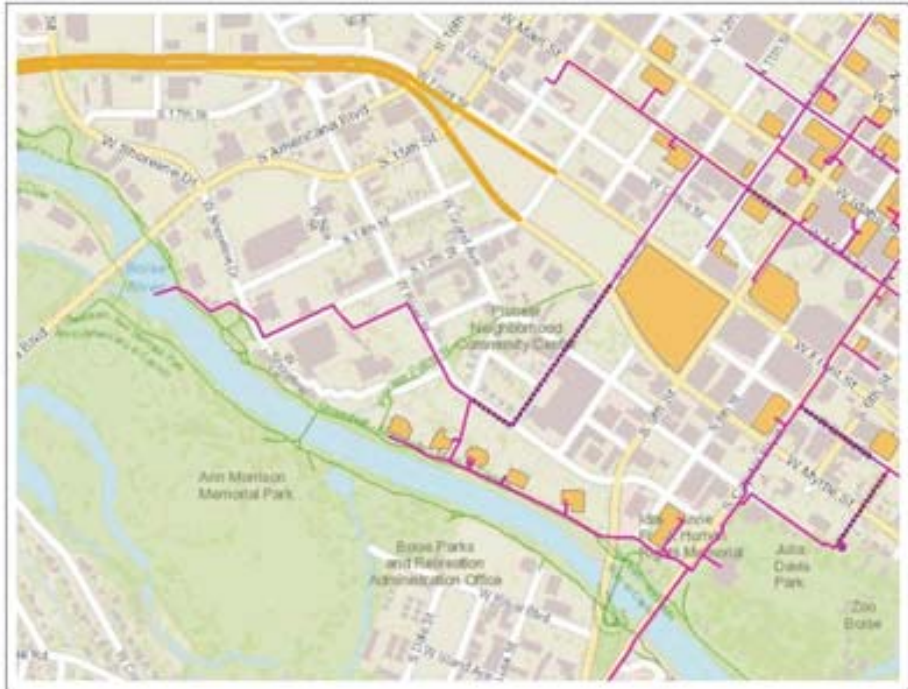
1. River Street west of 12th Street should be studied for the possibility of reduction from five lanes to three lanes.
2. 15th and 16th Streets should be studied for the possibility of reduction from three lanes each to two lanes each.
3. Missing bike lane segments on River Street should be completed to provide a continuous bike lane in both directions from Americana to Capitol Boulevard.

4. Bike lanes should be added to 11th Street.
5. A bus stop should be studied for the corner of 15th Street and River Street.
6. The Circulator Study should consider a transit stop on 9th Street adjacent to the River Street District.
7. The following map illustrates the roadway and other transportation improvements that were described in the sub-district discussions.



Sustainability

The River Street District is situated to participate in and benefit from a number of sustainability programs available and being implemented in adjoining downtown districts. For example, the City of Boise geothermal line currently runs along the Greenbelt from 9th Street with service to the five existing office buildings in the River Street Sub-District. An emergency discharge line extends from that point north on River Street and jogs down 12th Street to Shoreline Drive where it then returns to the Greenbelt via Shoreline Park and ends at the river. Note that this emergency discharge segment cannot service new connections unless a collection line segment is extended.



Public Works planning for the geothermal system includes a future extension on 11th Street that will create a return loop between the existing lines in River Street and Main Street in downtown. As the River Street District continues to develop and redevelop over time, additional connections to the geothermal system should be pursued. The Warehouse Sub-District on the east side of 11th may particularly benefit from geothermal service.

Like other downtown districts, the River Street District abuts the Boise River. There are five storm drains in the district that empty directly into the River between Americana and 9th Street. A particularly large drain is located just west of 9th Street. As such, storm drainage should be handled as carefully as possible to avoid direct runoff of pollutants and sediment into the River. Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI)

practices should be utilized with new development or redevelopment projects to promote more effective management of stormwater.

Ideally over time these systems would be replaced and completely disconnected from the river, though that would be very difficult. In the shorter term, there may be environmental and aesthetic benefits to daylighting one or more of the drains for a short distance from the river back toward the source of origin in order to encourage natural filtration and infiltration. However, this would be difficult and adequate space is probably not available to accomplish this.

ACHD, CCDC and the City of Boise have recently partnered to install permeable pavers in alleys and parking areas of other nearby districts. This effort should be extended to the River Street District to include the Pioneer Pathway and other hard surfaces.



As noted elsewhere in this plan, the Downtown Circulator is being studied for an extension to BSU via 9th Street. One or more stops for the River Street District should be explored as part of this route. The value of the Greenbelt along this district as a bicycle commuter corridor should also be recognized by limiting conflicts along the route and adding direct connections back into the district.

Sustainability Policies

1. The geothermal line should be extended on 11th Street as planned and connections to new construction and remodels in the district should be promoted.
2. Storm drainage in the River Street District should be carefully maintained and enhanced with best practices to minimize discharge of pollutants and sediment directly into the Boise River.
3. Existing storm drains in the district should be explored for opportunities to disconnect them from the river or to daylight portions of them as public amenities and environmental features that filter pollutants. The storm drain next to River Side Park should be particularly considered for his potential.
4. Alleys, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks and pathways throughout the district should be explored for reconstruction with permeable pavers.
5. Planning for the Downtown Circulator should include transit stops adjacent to the River Street District.
6. The Greenbelt should be recognized as a bicycle commuter corridor and direct connections into the River Street District should be provided.

River Street Master Plan Implementation

Priority Timing: Immediate-concurrently with plan adoption; High Priority 2-3 years after adoption; Medium Priority 3-5 years after adoption

Number	Action	Section	Timing	Lead
1	Establish a residential parking district in the Pioneer Neighborhood Sub-District	Pioneer District Land Use	Immediate	Parking Control
2	Pursue a small, grassy park for passive/unorganized field activities by neighborhood youth, preferably in conjunction with the Hayman House	Pioneer District Open Space/Recreation	Immediate	Parks Department
3	Pursue creation of a new Urban Renewal District centered around the east side of Americana Boulevard as a means of promoting a mixed-use sports stadium	Shoreline District Economic Development	Immediate	PDS/CCDC
4	Pursue improvement of an enhanced pedestrian plaza as part of the Pioneer Pathway at the southwest corner of 11th Street and Myrtle	Pioneer District Transportation	Medium Priority	PDS/CCDC
5	Pursue improvement of an enhanced pedestrian plaza on the southwest corner of Miller Street and 9th Street that visually connects Miller Street to Fulton Street across 9th	Warehouse District Transportation	Medium Priority	PDS/CCDC
6	Request ACHD to study feasibility of lane reductions on River Street, Americana, 15th and 16th Street	Transportation/Infrastructure Transportation	Medium Priority	PDS/ACHD
7	Explore streetscape design improvements for Grand and Miller Streets	Pioneer District Transportation	Medium Priority	PDS/Public Works/ CCDC/ACHD
8	Work with ACHD and ITD to stripe a bike lane on 11th Street	Pioneer District Transportation	Medium Priority	PDS/ACHD/ITD
9	Work with ITD to install a bike and pedestrian crossing signal at 13th Street and Myrtle	Pioneer District Transportation	Medium Priority	PDS/ACHD/ITD