



2017 LIVABILITY REPORT

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

You've heard me say it many times: As Mayor, my goal is to make Boise the most livable city in the country.

A livable city is thoughtfully designed, at all levels, to support healthy, productive and meaningful lives. A livable city empowers and encourages every resident of every age in everything they do. A livable city makes it easier for all of us to work, to learn, to build a business, to raise a family, and to enjoy nature, recreation and culture. And the job is never done. You'll never see me cut a ribbon on livability itself. We will always have more work to do, more room for improvement.

When I was growing up in Boise, I was able to walk to school, to our neighborhood park, to the library. My father was able to get to work in 10 minutes or less. People like Joe Albertson and J.R. Simplot found Boise a great place to start a business. In summer, I played City Rec baseball; in winter, I learned to ski at Bogus Basin thanks to the city, too. Boise was safe, clean, and, well, livable.

It was also much smaller — 65,000 people, compared to an estimated 225,000 today, in a valley that has grown to almost 700,000. Idaho is now the fastest-growing state in the nation. Our challenge is to maintain and enhance our quality of life — not just in spite of our continued growth, but because we've become more adept at harnessing the talents and energies of these new Boiseans to ensure that our city grows in ways that are healthy, efficient, responsible, and sustainable.

Making Boise the most livable city in the country is not my goal alone. It's a goal we all share, and it's how we how we will create the best community for all of us, our children, and their children.



David H. Bieter, Mayor



LETTER FROM CITY COUNCIL



We share the Mayor's goal of making Boise the most livable city in the country.

Livability means many things to many people. For the city council, livability is sustainability in action — it's the result of a triple bottom line approach recognizing the interconnectedness of the environment, the economy, and opportunity for everyone in our community.

City council launched a sustainability program for this very reason: policies that protect our lasting environment, build an innovative economy and create a just and vibrant community all work to create a livable city where residents thrive.

We all have our Boise story. Lauren discovered Boise with her husband just after college and knew that this must be their home. Elaine grew up here and chose to stay because she knew it offered the best for her family. Each of us is a part of the #iamboise story; it's our residents' commitment to this community that make Boise what it is.

This report shares our aspirations and sheds light on the success and challenges that we confront in a changing world. We're working hard to make our city safe for all residents, with community policing and policies that welcome all people. We're investing in building our economy with the tools available to us and watching small businesses and entrepreneurs take off. We're protecting our clean water and open spaces and building parks for an unrivaled quality of life. We're learning how to walk our talk.

Together with the mayor we know this is endless work. We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and getting to work with each of you to make our city the most livable in the country.

Lauren McLean, Council President

Elaine Clegg, Council President Pro Tem



83% of Boiseans said their neighborhood was a good or excellent place to live.

2016 citizen survey

Treefort, 2017

Photo: Matthew Wordell



INTRODUCTION

First introduced in 2015, the livability report is meant to be Boise's barometer to try and measure livability and ask "how are we doing?" It is a way for us to measure progress, hold ourselves accountable and share stories and programs that highlight what it means to live in Boise. There are countless data points, financial and growth statistics that the city can pull from to produce any number of reports. Yet without context, numbers and data simply don't tell the story of our city. And while measuring a city's livability is an imperfect science, we hope this document will serve as a guidepost on Boise's mission to be the most livable city in the country.



**\$1.3
BILLION**

Value of public,
private investment
downtown.

(Completed and
planned 2015-2020.)

*The Downtown Boise
Association*

Alive After Five

THE BIG PICTURE

Our VISION: Boise strives to be the most livable city in the country.

Our MISSION: The City of Boise has adopted a “triple bottom line” approach to evaluate our performance – based not just on financial results, but on social and environmental outcomes as well.

Create **L**ASTING ENVIRONMENTS

Cultivate **I**NNOVATIVE ENTERPRISES

Build **V**IBRANT COMMUNITIES



Our GOALS: The city strives to achieve livability through these seven targeted goals

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|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|
|  SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITY |  HEALTHY COMMUNITY |  RESPONSIBLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT |  CONNECTED COMMUNITY |  ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY |  STRONG, DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY |  CREATIVE AND INFORMED COMMUNITY |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|

The following sections discuss these goals and offer examples of the programs and initiatives we’ve launched to achieve them. Many of these efforts address more than one goal. We prioritize projects that help us create a fabric between multiple targeted goals. All aspects of Boise’s livability are interconnected, and our approaches to enhancing that livability should complement one another in the same way.

A photograph of a fire truck spraying a large volume of water into the air, creating a dense mist. In the foreground, a young girl in a dark dress is running towards the water. Other people are visible in the background, some holding small orange cones. The scene is set outdoors with trees in the background.

93% of Boiseans
feel safe.

2016 citizen survey

National Night Out



SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITY

Providing a safe and secure place for people to live, work and play is one of the City of Boise's highest priorities. Offering high-quality public safety services means we don't just respond to problems – we actively work to prevent them. We can do that only through innovative approaches and community partnerships that promote trust and help build a safe community for the long term.

SAFE AND SECURE COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



NEW

REFUGEE LIAISON PROGRAM

The U.S. State Department has designated Boise as a Refugee Resettlement Community. The city is proud of its efforts to welcome people fleeing their countries from political and religious oppression, and providing them with support and help to ensure their success as new Americans. The refugee outreach and engagement program expanded in 2017 to include a 10-week Refugee Mentoring Program, which paired members of our local refugee community with police officers. The Boise Police Department also trained officers throughout the department on the use of professional interpreters and developed an educational video to help refugees understand traffic stops and explain how to interact with officers. The Boise Police Department's Refugee Liaison position and additional community policing efforts in refugee communities have **earned national recognition.**



NEW

COMMUNITY POLICING ADVANCEMENT

As part of our commitment to community policing, the Boise Police Department is forming a Chief's Community Advisory Panel. This group will serve as a resource for the chief in forming strategies, developing community policing concepts, improving public services, and building trust. The panel will include a diverse cross section of leaders in the community representing a broad spectrum of viewpoints. The intent is to engage and collaborate with the community to increase public safety, confidence and trust.



NEW

FIRE TRAINING CENTER

The Boise Fire Department Training Facility, a state-of-the-art complex featuring a five-story tower that will provide real-life training scenarios, will allow the department to produce experienced and thoroughly proficient first responders. The result will be a dramatic enhancement in the state of readiness and preparedness of our firefighters, which ultimately means safer communities. The facility will be shared with fire departments of other nearby cities and an estimated 450-550 firefighters will be trained annually, providing a foundation for collaborative response efforts that are essential in addressing actual emergencies.





City of Boise manages over
1600 ACRES
OF PARKLAND
at over 90 locations.

Esther Simplot Park



HEALTHY COMMUNITY

A healthy community begins with our natural environment — clean air, water, and soil, all protected by strong management practices and high-quality public facilities. A healthy natural environment allows for local food production along with ample opportunities for outdoor recreation, all of which benefit the physical health of our residents. Just as important is our interconnectedness between housing, transportation and well-being. Healthy residents rely on an urban environment where walking and biking are valued and used, helping to create and preserve vibrant, active neighborhoods that care for their vulnerable members.



NEW

ESTHER SIMPLOT PARK

This gorgeous public space is Boise Parks and Recreation's latest addition to the "Ribbon of Jewels," a series of parks donated to the city in honor of some of our finest women leaders. This park began with the city taking an area with many legacy contaminant issues and turning it into an amazing amenity for generations to enjoy for years to come. The **55-acre park** offers a wide-range of recreational opportunities that enrich the community. Visitors can swim in multiple connected ponds, gain easy access to nearby Greenbelt paths, take time to reflect on Friendship Island and its beautiful views of the Boise Foothills and enjoy an afternoon with the entire family at the playground and children's beach.



PROGRESS

PRE-K PROGRAM

This innovative approach brings public and private partners together to offer free public preschool in identified Boise neighborhoods. Preschool is an important strategy to improve livability for the entire community: Early education before kindergarten has been identified as a key turning point in a young person's life, increasing the likelihood of later success in academics, social and emotional well-being, and even earning potential. Early research has shown that **more than 86 percent of children enrolled in Boise's program scored at or above benchmark scores** on the Idaho Reading Indicator, compared to just 53 percent of those not enrolled in the program. Early evidence has shown a positive impact on the students enrolled in the first two groups.



NEW

A NEW PARTNERSHIP — HOMELESSNESS AND JOB CREATION

In 2017, Boise Parks and Recreation partnered with Interfaith Sanctuary to hire people experiencing homelessness as park maintenance workers. The program was very successful and continues to grow, with more shelter residents gaining employment and moving into permanent housing. **The pilot year started with fourteen participants, and next year's group is anticipated to grow up to eighteen participants.** The job program's most important contribution might be to prove that homeless people with difficult pasts and challenging lives can become viable candidates for gainful employment — the foundation for a productive life. Because of the program, one participant is no longer homeless and another participant has progressed to a full-time regular employee.



Library!

O V E R
90%

rated Boise quality of life
as good or excellent —
consistent with surveys
going back to 2005.

Library! at Bown Crossing



RESPONSIBLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The “built environment” is everything around us created by people: buildings, neighborhoods, roads, parks, utilities and more. Boise is committed to thoughtful and careful development that values every square foot of land, because we recognize that our physical environment is key to our livability. This means moving beyond conventional sprawl-style development, which consumes open space and tends to increase the cost of services to current residents. Instead, Boise actively promotes compact development that respects existing neighborhoods, stable and walkable mixed-use, diversity in housing types, efficient use of infrastructure, and access to a wide array of open spaces and services.

RESPONSIBLE BUILT ENVIRONMENTS HIGHLIGHTS



PROGRESS

CENTRAL ADDITION/LIV DISTRICT

The Central Addition's revitalization through collaborative public and private investment made significant strides since 2015. A complete remodel of the Broad Street corridor was completed in 2017 and included the installation of green stormwater infrastructure, extension of the nation's largest geothermal system, fiber optic access and a tree-lined street that expands urban canopy and promotes walkability and economic development. The result is Boise's first **green turnkey development** in the city's first urban core neighborhood.



NEW

LIBRARY! AT BOWN CROSSING

After seven years of planning, public input, and construction, the Library! at Bown Crossing opened its doors to an eager public in 2017. In addition to housing a collection of **more than 40,000 items**, state-of-the-art information technology, and a children's section, the library also features public art and serves as a community center for Southeast Boise residents and businesses. The library

was also designed with sustainability and efficiency in mind. The city used responsibly sourced and recycled materials, including sustainable cork floorings, recycled glass in the interior concrete, locally sourced sandstone, and insulation made from reused materials including shredded blue jeans. Solar panels and adaptive lighting were installed for energy efficiency, and water-wise landscaping and natural stormwater filtration lessen the library's environmental impact.



NEW

GREEN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION CODE

Focusing on environmentally responsible site development and land use, water conservation, energy conservation, indoor environmental quality and other factors, Boise's adoption of the code was a major milestone. The code is now standard for all city-owned construction projects but voluntary for other developers. Projects that meet the standards receive expedited permit processing and assistance throughout the development process. Upon completion, a plaque commemorating the building's designation as a "Boise Green Building" project is installed on its exterior.



Up to
70%

of residents are
satisfied with ease
of travel via car,
bike and walking.

2016 citizen survey

8th Street, downtown Boise



CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Beginning with practical mobility choices for all citizens, a connected community means – being able to walk, ride, take public transit and drive to the places we need to go every day for work, school, shopping and having fun. A wide range of mobility choices improves our health and connection to our neighbors; promotes economic prosperity by linking people to goods, services, and jobs; and serves as the backbone for a vibrant community. Instead of simply building and expanding roads, the city's priority is the wise and efficient use of our existing transportation system while investing in public transportation that is safe, affordable, and convenient.

CONNECTED COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



PROGRESS

TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

Establishing Boise's vision for a modern, well-balanced transportation system, the Transportation Action Plan lays the groundwork for a city where all people enjoy practical transportation choices that offer safety, make the most of transportation systems and resources and support vibrant neighborhoods. The plan lists six actions, or "Mobility Moves," that would provide the greatest benefit to residents. These initiatives reflect the needs of different population groups, different locations within the city, and different modes of travel. For example, the Emerald / Americana project will add dedicated bike lanes in both directions and provide bicycle connectivity from Downtown Boise to the Boise Bench and beyond. The project will also fill significant gaps in the existing sidewalk system, install several new traffic signals and add safety lighting along the corridor.



PROGRESS

INNOVATION AT THE BOISE AIRPORT

The Boise Airport is not just another airport; it's a key economic driver for Southwest Idaho and a vital part of the community. In 2017, **3.5 million passengers traveled through the airport**, where the best of Boise is brought to them. Passengers get to enjoy eateries and shops that feature local favorites while taking in the vast array of public art. The airport is also highly focused on




sustainability, **adding 12 solar panels** that meet almost half of the facility's hot water needs and designing a new Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting Station that meets international environmental and energy efficiency standards.



PROGRESS

BOISE GREENBIKE

Boise GreenBike provides city residents, workers and visitors with a convenient and healthy way of getting from one place to another without contributing to traffic congestion or air pollution. As the city continues to grow and expand, so have GreenBike stations and the fleet of bikes. Ten new stations were added to city parks, improving access to the Greenbelt's 25 miles of tree-lined pathways that follow the Boise River through the heart of the city. Membership in the Boise GreenBike network topped 11,000 in 2017. Since the system launch in 2015, **users have taken over 67,000 trips and covered nearly 140,000 miles.** Before the close of 2018 the system will grow to include about 250 bikes and 70 stations. More bikes, for more people, in more places.



75%
of Boise residents
are interested in
both energy efficien-
cy and water reduc-
tion incentives for
their businesses
and homes.

2016 citizen survey

Paddling on the Boise River



ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

In Boise, sustainability isn't just a buzz word; it represents the city's genuine commitment to lead through policies and projects that ensure the stability, longevity, and resiliency of the community, economy, and environment. An environmentally sustainable community promotes, protects, and conserves our environment in areas of energy, materials management, air quality, water resources, and open spaces.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE HIGHLIGHTS



NEW

CITYWIDE COMPOST PROGRAM

Since its launch in 2017, the city's new residential compost program has been an incredible success story. More than 70,000 Boiseans participate in the program and to date have **produced nearly 40 million pounds of high-quality compostable materials**. Along with the recycling program, the city has kept nearly 41 percent of its total waste out of the landfill, far exceeding goals. The city offered a free compost give-back event; within four hours, hundreds of participants received 300 cubic yards of high-quality compost. More give-back events and ongoing availability are planned for the future.



NEW

IDAHO'S FIRST COMMERCIAL NET-ZERO ENERGY BUILDING

Construction of the state's first net-zero building demonstrates how a super-efficient structure can offset its small amount of energy use by generating renewable energy. Serving as the oper-

ations center of the city's 20-Mile South Farm, the new building produces a surplus of electricity every year, showing the positive return of annual energy savings despite a higher initial investment. This innovative facility is part of a larger story for the city, which is implementing energy-reduction measures for existing buildings to 50 percent by 2030, and new buildings to be net-zero by that date. As Idaho's first commercial net-zero structure, the building is setting the bar and challenging others to follow suit.



PROGRESS DIXIE DRAIN

A first-of-its-kind project, the Dixie Drain Phosphorus Removal Facility greatly enhances water quality of the Boise and Snake rivers by **removing up to 140 pounds of phosphorus per day** from water flowing downstream. In its first full year of operation, the facility removed 7,250 pounds of phosphorus in 92 days of operation in 2016, exceeding current federal permit removal requirements. The city and its partners devised this ground-breaking approach, which is more effective and has a much higher environmental return on investment than typical approaches.

Boise was voted
#1 CITY
for small business
friendliness.

*Business Wire,
October 2017*



2017 X Games Qualifier, Rhodes Park, Boise



\$ STRONG, DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY

Boise is a great place to do business, as we can see in our ever-changing skyline and our diverse business community. City leaders and staff work closely with the community to ensure we maintain and advance our status as the employment center of choice for the region and the state. A sustainable business community has a diverse mix of industries and employers. We know that strong neighborhoods are served by local businesses, so we work hard to support entrepreneurs by expediting our permit processes and giving them access to the resources they need to succeed. Every day, we help to ensure that Boise has the human capital necessary for a growing and diversifying local economy.

STRONG, DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY HIGHLIGHTS



PROGRESS TRAILHEAD

Boiseans have always worked together to build a better future. In that collaborative spirit, the city joined with business leaders and community partners to launch a startup hub called Trailhead, a downtown space where entrepreneurs can connect to people and resources, explore new technologies, and create something all their own. Trailhead brings together a network of mentors, accomplished experts and founders with the passion to help Boise's best ideas flourish. **In 2017, Trailhead expanded and opened Trailhead North**, which continues the services of entrepreneurial opportunity.



PROGRESS BOISE CODES

Jobs in computer science are a key contributor to a successful workforce. **By 2020, computer occupations are projected to add 3.4 million new jobs across the United States.*** To meet this growing demand, the city, the Library!, and Trailhead have partnered on BoiseCodes, an innovative program that provides easily

accessible opportunities to learn computer coding and helps make Boise a competitive tech community. This program provides coding education for all ages, builds a digitally literate workforce, helps to attract and retain businesses and a skilled workforce, and supports collaboration and innovation between industry and community.

**Bureau of Labor Statistics*



NEW X GAMES

Some of the world's best extreme athletes came to compete at Rhodes Skate Park in Boise for the X Games Park Qualifier on June 9 and 10, 2017.

With over 10,000 people visiting the park over the two-day event, 60 athletes from all over the world brought their family and friends to visit Boise, boosting the local economy and providing local vendors plenty of new business. As a testament to the initial success, Boise will again play host to a bigger and better X Games experience in 2018.

A young man with short brown hair is playing a resonator guitar on a crowded bus. He is pointing his right index finger towards the camera with an open-mouthed expression. He is wearing a grey sweater and a red and orange wristband. The bus is filled with passengers, including a woman in a blue puffer jacket and a white knit hat, and a woman in a brown jacket and blue dress who is smiling and holding a green phone. The bus interior has overhead handrails and a digital display screen showing a blue screen with red dots.

Boise ranked **TOP 10** for best
city to live for an active lifestyle.

2018 Business Insider

ValleyRide "TreeLine" bus, Treefort 2017



CREATIVE AND INFORMED COMMUNITY

Boise's culture is authentic, vibrant, and inclusive. Our citizens make, feel, experience, and champion that culture on an everyday basis. A creative and informed community is one that supports access to arts, history, technology, and the natural environment while promoting and providing opportunities for discovery, cultural enrichment, and life-long learning for all. We preserve, invest in, and protect historically significant assets and support high-quality events and entertainment that create community cohesion while attracting and retaining a creative workforce.

CREATIVE AND INFORMED COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



NEW

BOISE WATERSHED RIVER CAMPUS

A collaborative project designed by artists, engineers, and educators, the Boise WaterShed River Campus combines interactive exhibits and beautiful artwork to engage children and adults in the importance of water conservation and renewal. The park-like setting takes the visitor on a simulated journey from the headwaters in our mountains to Lucky Peak Reservoir and Dam, through Boise's urban streets and on to a representation of one of the city's water renewal facilities. A flowing "Boise River" is a place for play where diversions can be made, and children act as dam managers.



PROGRESS

JAMES CASTLE HOUSE

In 2015, the city purchased the house where internationally recognized Idaho artist James Castle (1899-1977) lived and developed his self-taught style of visual art. To honor the artist's work and life, the James Castle House **opened in 2018** with art and interpretive exhibits, educational programs, and a yearlong

international artist-in-residence. The formal dedication of the James Castle House featured a community party at the historic Egyptian Theatre, a three-day inaugural symposium and citywide exhibitions and receptions, culminating in the public opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony.



NEW CULTURAL PLAN

The city council officially adopted the City of Boise's first ever Cultural Master Plan in 2017. The plan is a tool to understand the evolution of Boise's rich history, tell the story of our communities and recommend how we develop an integrated, vibrant cultural environment. From the vision of over a thousand Boise residents, a review of research, and an analysis of the community's needs and opportunities, five goals were identified as necessary to fully develop Boise's lasting, innovative, and vibrant future. The goals seek to develop a cultural policy, enhance and preserve neighborhood places, maintain and develop cultural assets, foster organizations and partnerships, and expand cultural resources for individuals.



Learn More
Get Involved
Track Progress
LIVBOISE.ORG

LASTING ENVIRONMENTS + INNOVATIVE
ENTERPRISES + VIBRANT COMMUNITIES
= A LIVABLE BOISE



CITY *of* **BOISE**