

Chapter 8

TRANSPORTATION

While transportation in the County includes railways and an airport, the predominant form of transportation for the citizens of Jerome County is the automobile.

Transportation Agencies

Jerome County has three entities maintaining all public roads. The Jerome Highway District (JHD) maintains the western part of Jerome County, Hillsdale Highway District (HHD) maintains the eastern part of Jerome County, and Idaho Transportation Department provides maintenance on all state and federal highways. Generally, the cities maintain roads that are within their corporate boundaries with some crossover from other transportation agencies. All other roads within Jerome County are considered to be private until one of the districts accepts them for maintenance. The map identifying each district's jurisdiction is located in Appendix B: 8-1.

Highway districts are bodies corporate. Every highway district organized, as provided by law, is a body politic and corporate. As such, it has the power specified in Idaho Code, including the power of eminent domain and powers as necessarily implied from those expressed. The power of a highway district lies within the highway commissioners or by agents and officers acting under their authority or authority of law.



The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is the state of Idaho governmental organization responsible for state transportation infrastructure. This includes ongoing operations and maintenance as well as planning for future needs of the state and its citizens. The agency is responsible for overseeing the disbursement of federal, state, and grant funding for the transportation programs of the state. ITD also maintains a Division of Aeronautics and interfaces with railroads and utilities. ITD is divided into six regions, and Jerome County is located in the South Central Region, District 4.

These agencies typically have comprehensive plans specific to their agencies.

THOROUGHFARES

Highways, railroads, and airports are commonplace features of a county. These thoroughfares attract and benefit commercial development providing exposure of nearby business to their potential customers, as well as customer access to them. They also provide a readily available means for manufacturers to import raw materials and export finished products. Zoning along these corridors is discussed further in the Community Design and Land Use chapter.



Roadways

The majority of roads in the County are based on a grid road system via section lines. Using coordinates that are centered in the City of Jerome at the intersection of Main and Lincoln, the north/south roads begin on the west boundary of the County, five miles west of the center of the City of Jerome. The first north/south road is known as 500 West. The north/south roads extend 35 miles east to 3000 East. The east and west roads at the beginning of the north boundary of the County are nine miles north of the center of the City of Jerome. The first east/west road is known as 900 North with the farthest east/west road located at 1500 South. Miscellaneous roads within the County may have names rather than coordinates, some of the roads were named by locals, and over a period of years, the names prevailed over the coordinates. Many roads in subdivisions and private lanes have also been given names rather than coordinates. A map of Jerome County Roads is located in Appendix B: 8-2.



State and Federal Highways

Although there are several important highways in the County, two are of major significance – Interstate 84 and U.S. Route 93. These two roadways are the major east-west and north-south transportation routes through the region. Interstate 84 crosses the southern portion of the County, linking the Pacific Coast to destinations east. This route is a source of substantial commercial activity at a national level. U.S. Route 93 passes through western Jerome County, connecting I-84 with destinations as far south as Las Vegas, Nevada; and as far north as the U.S./Canadian border. Two major tourist destinations—Sun Valley, Idaho and the Sawtooth Mountains—are accessed via I-84 and U.S. Route 93. Other highways having an impact in the County include State Highways 25 and 50. Highway 25 connects the cities of Jerome, Eden, and Hazelton while Highway 50 brings travelers from Twin Falls County across the Snake River on the “Hansen Bridge,” providing access to and from I-84. After crossing Interstate 84, Highway 50 merges into Highway 25 west of Eden. Improvements to these highways are under the jurisdiction of ITD. Scheduled projects for District 4 may be found on the ITD website <http://itd.idaho.gov/d4/>.

Bridges



It should be noted that principal public-access points across the Snake River from Jerome County to Twin Falls County, on the southern side of the river, are limited to three bridges. The Perrine Bridge is located on U.S. Route 93 and takes travelers directly into the city of Twin Falls.

To the east is the Hansen Bridge, located on State Highway 50, connecting central Jerome County with Twin Falls County and the cities of Hansen, Kimberly, and Twin Falls as it merges with State Highway 30. Both bridges are readily accessible from Interstate 84. Farther east, the third bridge—the Murtaugh Bridge—is less accessible from Interstate 84 and utilized more often by local

traffic having no specific directional signage. The Murtaugh Bridge crosses the river connecting to the city of Murtaugh and ultimately to State Highway 30. Visitors to Cauldron Linn are likely to stumble across the Murtaugh Bridge. A fourth access point, more of a sportsman's access, is located at Milner Dam. Not unlike the Murtaugh Bridge, there is limited directional signage, and it is typically used only by local citizens who are aware of its presence.

Intersections

As conducive as thoroughfares are to commercial growth, they are even more so at those points where they intersect one another. The ideal nature of these points stem from the double amount of exposure that two thoroughfares can provide to a single site and the business located there: the ease of customer access that the interchange provides to the businesses located nearby and the logistical abilities for businesses to receive materials from and send goods towards all directions. There are several of these points of intersecting thoroughfares in the County. Jerome County boasts seven exits on Interstate 84, and it shares one exit with Minidoka County. This is not only important to our citizens and travelers; it is also a key factor for economic development.

- Interstate 84 / State Highway 25/Main St
- Interstate 84/ Lincoln Blvd./Golf Course Drive
- Interstate 84 / U.S. Route 93 (Crossroads)
- Interstate 84 / State Highway 50
- Interstate 84 / Valley Road
- Interstate 84 / State Highway 25/Ridgeway Rd.
- Interstate 84 / State Highway 25/Kasota Rd.

Another important intersection is the east entrance to the City of Jerome with the County Airport located at the intersection.

- U.S. Route 93 / State Highway 25

Railroad

The Eastern Idaho Railroad (EIRR) began operating two disconnected clusters of former Union Pacific branches in 1993. The Snake River portion runs from Buhl/Wendell to Minidoka. The EIRR carries a wide variety of product annually and is administered out of Twin Falls. The railway travels along the north side of the cities of Hazelton and Eden and south of the City of Jerome. Away from the cities, the tracks venture into open space-- often running parallel with the edge created where agricultural lands abut BLM property.

Airports

The Jerome County Airport is located off Highway 25 and less than a quarter mile from the intersection of U.S. Route 93 and Highway 25. Certain commercial uses, such as

manufacturing and other non-retail business, are typically compatible with airports given that they are serviced by them and not disturbed by airplane noises. However, the area around this airport offers the added benefits of close highway access, availability of city sewer and water services, and being within the impact zone of the City of Jerome.



The Hazelton Airport is located between I-84 and the city of Hazelton. The principal air traffic utilizing this facility is the crop-dusting industry, which is in turn supported by a chemical plant that has been established adjacent to the airport. The airport is located within a mile of an interchange that connects to I-84.

ALTERNATIVE MODES

Though the automobile is the dominant form of transportation in Jerome County, other modes are expected to play a role in the County's future transportation system.

Public Transit

Transit relies on high ridership typically associated with urban areas. Jerome County's low-density development and reliance on the automobile do not foster transit use. Despite this, a continuing effort is needed to expand public transit. Transit will not only help reduce vehicular traffic, but also provide transportation access to jobs and services for all residents and employees-- including the young, elderly, physically challenged, and those who do not have access to a private vehicle. The provision of a transit system is also an important component of an economic strategy to encourage businesses to locate in Jerome County. Trans IV is the only service that offers pedestrian transport from Jerome to Twin Falls and back. Taxi service (originating in Twin Falls) and network transportation services are also available.

Metropolitan Planning Organization

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making and planning body formed to work on plans for transportation. MPO's are formed when an area is considered urbanized, meaning there are 50,000 or more citizens in a specified area. Urbanized areas may be a collection of cities as well as counties. An MPO is the entity responsible for transportation planning in a designated urbanized area. In the future, Jerome County may be considered as a part of MPO's in association with Twin Falls City and/or County. The Idaho Transportation Department assists in the formation of these organizations. <http://itd.idaho.gov/planning/>

Bicycle Pedestrian System

As construction and maintenance to the County's road system occur, improvements would ensure the integration of bicycle and walkway systems into the design of transportation facilities. Jerome Recreation District established a plan, in coordination with Jerome County and the City of Jerome, which creates a system of walkways and bike paths inter-connecting throughout the County and City. ITD has also integrated some, if not all, of the plan into their future plans for highway improvements.