



News Release

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COMPASS Passes Federal Certification Review; Receives Update from Lt. Governor Little on Transportation Financing

Meridian, ID – The Board of Directors of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) heard from two guest speakers at its monthly Board meeting on June 21, 2010. Both speakers shared critical information with the Board concerning transportation and planning issues in the Treasure Valley.

Gus Shanine from the Federal Highway Administration presented the results of the COMPASS "certification review." As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for an area with a population of 200,000 or more (called a "Transportation Management Area"), COMPASS must undergo a review by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration every four years to ensure COMPASS planning programs and practices meet all federal requirements.

COMPASS underwent the review in 2009, submitting extensive written documentation and hosting a three-day site visit by federal representatives. The final report was prepared this spring and officially presented to the COMPASS Board in June.

Mr. Shanine reported that COMPASS passed the review and its planning program is "Certified with Conditions" to operate for the next four years.

COMPASS received commendations for many of its efforts, including its Unified Planning Work Program document, environmental mitigation process, public outreach efforts, and travel demand modeling. However, issues were also noted where COMPASS needs improvement – particularly in showing that its planning documents are "fiscally constrained," meaning that COMPASS must clearly demonstrate that every transportation project that appears in a COMPASS plan has funding available to pay for it.

"We're pleased with the outcome of the review process," states COMPASS Executive Director Matt Stoll. "COMPASS strives to always produce the highest quality of work products and we're pleased to see many of our programs recognized for that hard work. However, we acknowledge we have areas that need improvement and will be working diligently to change our processes to address those issues."

The COMPASS Board also received a presentation from Lt. Governor Brad Little on the Governor's Task Force on Modernizing Transportation Funding, which he chairs. Lt. Governor Little updated the Board on the work of the Task Force and shared the results of a survey which addressed Task Force members' opinions on the need for additional transportation revenue for Idaho.

The survey results show that Task Force members do clearly recognize the need for additional funding; now they must tackle the difficult issue of how to raise that money. According to Lt. Governor Little all potential mechanisms for generating funding are "on the table." Options will be compared on many different factors before any recommendations are made. The Task Force will submit its final report to Governor Otter by December of this year.

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