



Transportation Planning Certification Review
COMPASS Planning Area
(Ada and Canyon Counties, Idaho)
April 19-21, 2005

Final Report
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Prepared by
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration

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Executive Summary

This review has two purposes; *first*, for the reasons described in the “Introduction” section of this report, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) is required to review and evaluate the transportation planning processes of transportation management areas (TMAs) no less than once every three years. Upon completion of the review and evaluation, the results must support a joint certification by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that the transportation planning processes substantially meet federal planning regulations. The review covers actions by all agencies (State, metropolitan planning organization (MPO), transit operator, local governments) that are charged with cooperatively carrying out the processes on a daily basis. Failure to certify is significant as it can result in the withholding of USDOT funds. A *second*, but equally important reason for the review is to enhance the quality of the planning process and ensure that federal projects can advance without delay.

In February 2005, FHWA and FTA provided a preliminary list of review questions to the COMPASS MPO, corresponding to the major topics shown in the table of contents of this report. The questions were drawn from federal regulatory requirements referenced herein and set the stage for a later on-site review.

In March of 2005, MPO staff provided the USDOT review team with responses to the initial questions and copies of relevant documents such as agreements, and planning products. Using these materials, the review team developed a final agenda for the on-site review.

On April 19-21, 2005 the federal review team conducted an on-site review which included meetings with MPO, transit authority, state and local government staff and a public meeting where comments on the planning process were sought. As part of the on-site review, the federal review team also held a public meeting (see Attachment A). The body of this report documents the major findings, corrective actions, and recommendations of the review. “Corrective actions” describe activities needed to address conditions, which if left unaddressed, might result in failure to meet federal planning regulations and maintain USDOT certification. “Recommendations” are suggestions that may be considered to enhance processes that already meet minimum federal requirements.

The outcome of this review is that the FTA and FHWA have jointly certified the planning process in the COMPASS planning area, subject to the one corrective action and other recommendations summarized in the following section of this report.

Full text of all findings, corrective actions, comments and recommendations can be found in the relevant sections of this report.

Summary of Corrective Actions, Comments & Recommendations

Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Study Area and Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study Area: We commend the MPO for choosing to include both urbanized areas within a single organization. For a given area, a single unified MPO is typically more efficient and better able to address regional transportation issues than are multiple MPOs. • Organizational Structure: Given the large size of the COMPASS Board, consideration should be given to establishing a Policy Committee. • Voting: The intra-county voting concept, when utilized on a limited basis, is a practical and reasonable approach for the MPO to address issues unique to the individual counties.
Metropolitan Planning Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In light of the fact that the MPO is addressing programming and planning activities outside of the current Planning Area, consideration should be given to expanding the Planning Area correspondingly.
Agreements and Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements: Continue to improve the systematic review and update of COMPASS' interagency agreements.
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UPWP is an excellent document that provides a user-friendly presentation of program activities in concise yet complete manner. • The addition of a brief description on the priorities and areas of emphasis for the work program would further improve the UPWP.

Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Transportation Planning Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend the COMPASS Board for its active and enthusiastic participation by elected officials from both counties. This level of involvement is a testament to the effectiveness of the MPO's planning process. • We commend the MPO and its staff for its efforts to encourage and support member participation; particularly from its new members in Canyon County.

Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend the MPO and the State for their exceptional efforts thus far in the development of their new transportation plan, Communities In Motion. We commend the MPO for its recognition of and responsiveness to land use issues in the development of the transportation plan. • We commend the MPO and its Ada County members for their efforts to advance the transportation/land use connection in transportation planning through its “Blue Print for Growth” initiative in conjunction with the transportation plan development. • We encourage the MPO to determine and articulate the roles and responsibilities of transit planning and to document these in the transportation plan. In addition, the MPO needs to put more emphasis on implementing its transit planning policies. • Once Communities in Motion is adopted, we will expect the MPO to take the policy themes of the plan and apply them to the area’s transportation program.
TIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend the State and MPO for their development and administration of various funding programs (e.g., CMAQ, STP-Enhancement, and STP-Urban/Rural). • We commend the MPO for its efforts and progress in implementing the TELUS project programming system

Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Project Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial plans in the current long range plan (Destination 2030) and TIP lack sufficient detail and scope to satisfactorily fulfill Federal regulations (23 CFR 450.322 and .324) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation Plan and TIP: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COMPASS needs to present comprehensive estimates of all revenue from existing and proposed funding sources that can reasonably be expected to be available for transportation uses within its planning area. This effort will require coordination with the MPO members including ITD. 2. The MPO members, and ITD in particular, need to provide COMPASS with more detailed, long term transportation revenue forecast data than what is currently being made available. 3. COMPASS needs to present comprehensive estimates of transportation system costs to construct, maintain, and operate the transportation system over the periods of the plan and TIP. 4. The MPO members and ITD in particular need to provide COMPASS with forecasts of transportation system costs to construct, maintain, and operate the system. 5. COMPASS needs to demonstrate consistency between anticipated transportation costs and revenues. 6. COMPASS needs to identify as “illustrative” those projects for which funding is not identified in the financially constrained financial plan.

Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
Public Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend the MPO and staff for their initiative and efforts exhibited in conjunction with COMPASS' public outreach program. The MPO has an exceptional process that is well organized, creative, and results oriented. In particular, we were pleased with the MPO's quantitative assessment of its public involvement process.
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend the MPO and its staff for its initiative and expertise on air quality and conformity matters. In particular, we were pleased with the MPO's success in establishing and supporting an Interagency Consultation Committee (ICC) and the integral role that this committee plays in the MPO's execution of its air quality and conformity responsibilities.
Congestion Management System (CMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend the MPO and its staff for its efforts and success in developing a CMS. The innovative concept developed by COMPASS is simple, practical and effective system for introducing essential information on congestion needs and solutions into the MPO's transportation planning and programming processes.
Self-Certifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend the MPO for its thoroughness in addressing this requirement. In particular we were pleased with the MPO's use of a matrix in the UPWP to document its consideration of the Federal planning factors.

Topic Area	Corrective Actions	Comments & Recommendations
TITLE VI and Related Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend ITD for its leadership and oversight of the MPO's Title VI activities. In particular we are pleased with the State's efforts in providing its MPOs with Title VI plan templates. • We encourage the MPO to take prompt action on developing and submit a DBE Plan to ITD (as required by Federal law). • We commend the MPO for its efforts identifying and mapping the area's low income and minority populations for consideration of environmental justice issues. We encourage the MPO to next develop procedures for incorporating this data into the planning and programming processes.
Intelligent Transportation Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commend ITD and ACHD for their initiative in leading the area's ITS efforts including ongoing work to develop an inter-agency Traffic Management Center. • We acknowledge that the area's current ITS plan is consistent with the Regional ITS Architecture. • We acknowledge that there is joint ITD/ACHD effort under way to update the area's ITS plan to reflect existing and planned additional ITS programs.

Introduction *(23 CFR 450 Subpart C)*

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning processes for each Transportation Management Area (TMA) no less than every three years to determine if those processes meet the requirements of *23 CFR Part 450, Subpart C - Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming*. In addition, in TMAs that are non-attainment or maintenance areas for transportation related pollutants, the review must also evaluate the metropolitan planning organization's (MPO) processes to ensure that they are adequate to ensure conformity of plans and programs in accordance with procedures contained in *40 CFR Parts 51 and 93 - Air Quality: Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects*.

Upon completion of the review and evaluation, FHWA and FTA must either:

1. Jointly certify that the transportation planning process meets or substantially meets the requirements of *23 CFR 450 Subpart B*;
2. Jointly certify the transportation planning process subject to certain specified corrective actions being taken;
3. Jointly certify the transportation planning process as the basis for approval of only certain categories of programs and projects or;
4. Withhold certification and the approval of certain apportionments and projects.

A transportation management area (TMA) is an area designated by the Secretary of Transportation, having an urbanized area population of over 200,000. The Boise urbanized area and its surrounding planning area was designated as a TMA on July 8, 2002. The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) is the designated metropolitan planning organization which carries out the transportation planning program for the area.

All Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) projects funded under *Title 23, U.S.C. (Highways)* or *Chapter 53 of Title 49 U.S.C. (Transportation)* must be selected from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) produced by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). In order for projects located within MPO boundaries to be included in the STIP, they must be consistent with the MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and be included in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In TMAs, projects funded under the National Highway System (NHS), Bridge, and Interstate Maintenance programs are selected for implementation from the TIP/STIP by the State, in consultation with the MPO and any affected transit operators. Most other projects are selected by the MPO in consultation with the State and transit operator. In all cases, FHWA and FTA must jointly certify that the transportation planning process in a TMA meets or substantially meets federal planning regulations before recognizing the RTP and TIP. Thus failure to certify is significant as it can result in the withholding of USDOT funds.

Study Area Organizational Structure (23 CFR 450.306)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (23 USC 134(b); 49 USC 5303) requires the designation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals. The policy board of the MPO shall consist of (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials.

This designation remains in effect until the MPO is re-designated. The addition of jurisdictional or political bodies into the MPO or members to the policy board generally does not constitute a re-designation of the MPO.

As a result of TEA-21, 23 USC 134(b)(2) was modified with respect to Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). Upon designation of a MPO as a TMA (rather than only when the MPO itself is designated/re-designated), the policy board shall be structured to include (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials.

Findings:

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Ada and Canyon Counties. COMPASS is organized and operates under a joint powers agreement between local governments and Bylaws. COMPASS has several standing committees established through its bylaws to advise the Board of Directors on relevant issues. The standing committees are as follows: Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Regional Technical Advisory Committee, Demographic Advisory Committee, and Transportation Model Advisory Committee. With the exception of the Executive Committee, each standing committee has its own bylaws outlining roles and responsibilities. Additional details on the COMPASS organizational structure are as follows:

- Governor Designation of MPO:
The MPO for the Boise urbanized area was first designated by then Governor John V. Evans on April 27, 1977.
- The Boise urbanized area in Ada County was determined through the 2000 Census to have a population in excess of 200,000 and as a result the area was designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) on July 8, 2002.
- The Nampa area in Canyon County (including the cities of Nampa, Middleton, and Caldwell) was identified as having an urban population in excess of 50,000 in the 2000 Census and therefore was identified as an urbanized area on May 1, 2002.

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- The COMPASS Board formally approved the expansion of COMPASS to serve as the MPO for both Ada and Canyon Counties and their associated urbanized areas in March 2003. This expanded planning area also constitutes the new limits of the TMA.
 - MPO membership consists of :
 - 18 regular (voting) members representing cities, counties and highway districts within the planning area;
 - 7 special (voting) members representing schools, universities, State government, and the local transit authority; and
 - 3 ex-officio (non-voting) members representing special districts and the Governor's Office.
 - Included among the features of the bi-county MPO is a provision allowing for intra-county voting when the subject of consideration is principally an interest of the members of one county.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- **Study Area:** We commend the MPO for choosing to include both urbanized areas within a single organization. For a given area, a single unified MPO is typically more efficient and better able to address regional transportation issues than are multiple MPOs.
- **Organizational Structure:** Given the large size of the COMPASS Board, consideration should be given to establishing a Policy Committee. Other MPOs around the United States have successfully employed Policy Committees to help prepare the full Board for their participation and decision-making on strategic issues and controversial policy matters. For instance, a Policy Committee can insure that a staff presentation, decision agenda, or report for the full Board has been sufficiently developed and all options thoroughly analyzed. The work of such a Committee can save time and enhance staff credibility and quality of Board decisions by providing a forum for earlier input by elected officials into the policy development process and introduction of ideas and trade-offs that may not have yet been considered.
- The Denver Regional Council of Governments has both a policy and a technical committee to assist the Board in the decision-making process. According to the DRCOG website “Current committees include the [Regional Transportation Committee](#) and the [Transportation Advisory Committee](#). Working groups and ad hoc groups are also created and appointed as need dictates.” For further information see the DRCOG website: <http://www.drcog.org/index.cfm?page=PlanningProcess>
- **Voting:** The intra-county voting concept, when utilized on a limited basis, is a practical and reasonable approach for the MPO to address issues unique to the individual counties.

Metropolitan Planning Boundaries (23 CFR 450.308)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (23 USC 134(c); 49 USC 53039(d)) requires boundaries of a metropolitan planning area to be determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor.

Each metropolitan planning area shall encompass at least the existing urbanized area and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period; and may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

Findings:

The Boise Metropolitan Area began transportation planning in July 1958, but was not officially designated an MPO until 1977. The organization has undergone many name changes: Boise Transportation Planning Organization, Boise Metropolitan Transportation Study, Ada Council of Governments, Ada Planning Association, and finally the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS).

In 1978, the planning area was expanded beyond the City of Boise and consecutive suburbs due to air quality non-attainment status for carbon monoxide and total suspended particulates, and subsequently coarse particulate matter (PM₁₀). The new planning area for the Boise Urbanized Area to this day includes all of Northern Ada County, which consists of the entire county north of the “Boise Baseline.” The Boise Baseline is a horizontal line across the county seven miles south of Kuna. Ada County acquired air quality “maintenance” status in December 2001 for carbon monoxide and December 2002 for PM₁₀.

The COMPASS planning area changed again through the results of the 2000 Census. The Nampa area was not identified as an urbanized area in the 1990 Census, and grew to the point of being the second largest urbanized area in the State of Idaho in 2000. Officials from the Nampa Urbanized Area decided that COMPASS should provide the MPO services for the area in March 2003, thus providing a regional agency for transportation planning. The Nampa Urbanized Area planning boundary is based on a slightly larger area than the Census urbanized area designation.

By the 2010 Census, technical analysts believe that the Boise Urbanized Area and Nampa Urbanized Area will likely merge together due to the extremely high growth rates in the region. Additional details on the COMPASS area boundaries are as follows:

- Several boundaries exist within the COMPASS area. They include:
 - Transportation Management Area planning boundary
 - Air quality planning boundary
 - FHWA adjusted urbanized area boundary
 - US Census designated urbanized area boundary

- Approvals of the various boundaries are current.

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- There are no formally recognized Tribal lands within the COMPASS planning area boundary.
 - There are Federal lands within the COMPASS planning areas boundary.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- In light of the fact that the MPO is addressing programming and planning activities outside of the current Planning Area, we recommend that COMPASS consider expanding the Planning Area to correspond with the location of these activities.

Agreements and Contracts *(23 CFR 450.310 and 312)*

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (*23 USC 13*) requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies in carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process. These agencies determine their respective and mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. Federal regulation requires that these relationships be specified in agreements between the MPO and the State and between the MPO and the public transit operators:

- “The responsibilities for cooperatively carrying out transportation planning (including corridor and sub area studies) and programming shall be clearly identified in an agreement or memorandum of understanding between the State and the MPO.” *23 CFR 450.310(a)*
- “There shall be an agreement between the MPO and operators of publicly owned transit services which specifies cooperative procedures for carrying out transportation planning ” *23 CFR 450.310(b)*

The regulations also require an agreement between the MPO and any other agency responsible for air quality planning under the Clean Air Act. A single agreement should be executed among the MPO, State, transit operators, and designated air quality regulations “to the extent possible.” *23 CFR 450.310 (d)*.

Findings:

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) currently has four agreements and contracts in place. These consist of:

- The Memorandum of Understanding Operation and Financing of the Metropolitan Planning Organization in the Boise and Nampa Urbanized Areas. This Memorandum of Understanding is reviewed annually with the Idaho State Transportation Department. Adopted April 9, 2004.
- The Memorandum of Understanding Transit Planning Responsibility and Coordination within Ada and Canyon Counties Regarding Metropolitan Planning. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to identify and define the process by which COMPASS and Valley Regional Transit (formerly known as ValleyRide) will coordinate and conduct public transportation planning within the two counties. A Planning Agreement between COMPASS and Valley Regional Transit was originally signed on December 20, 2001. The Planning Agreement was expanded to the current Memorandum of Understanding which was adopted September 1, 2004.

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- The Air Quality Planning Memorandum of Understanding. Parties include State of Idaho, Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Environmental Quality and COMPASS (formerly Ada Planning Association). The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to coordinate the participating parties by outlining agency responsibilities for air quality planning. This MOU was adopted March 17, 1995 and remains in place.
 - The Memorandum of Understanding between the Idaho Transportation Department, Community Planning Association, Bannock Planning Organization, Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Local Highway Technical Assistance Council regarding State distribution of the Surface Transportation Program-Urban Funds. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to create a cooperative method of the distribution of Surface Transportation Program – Urban dollars throughout the state. This MOU was adopted September 20, 2001.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We encourage COMPASS to systematically review and update of its interagency agreements.

Unified Planning Work Program *(23 CFR 450.314)*

Regulatory Basis:

23 CFR 450.314 identifies the requirements for unified planning work programs (UPWPs) to be prepared in Transportation Management Areas. *23 CFR 420.109* governs how FHWA planning funds are distributed to the MPOs. 49 USC 5303(h) allocates FTA assistance to MPOs.

MPOs are required to develop the UPWPs in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies [*450.314(a)*].

Elements to be included in the UPWP are:

- Discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area.
- Description of all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related air quality planning activities anticipated within the next 1 or 2-year period, regardless of funding source or agencies conducting activities, indicating:
 - *Who* will perform the work
 - *Schedule* for completion of the work, and
 - Intended *products*;
- Include all activities funded under *Title 23* and the Federal Transit Act [*450.314(a)(2)*]

Findings:

The development of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho's (COMPASS) UPWP is guided by the requirements of the Federal Regulations and the commitments of the established agreements. Currently COMPASS staff develops the list of projects with input and requests from member agencies.

A preliminary budget is prepared and presented to the Regional Technical Advisory Committee (RTAC), which has representation from all member agencies. RTAC reviews and recommends endorsement to the COMPASS Board.

The Finance Committee, a standing committee of the COMPASS Board, reviews the financial information contained in the UPWP and presents a recommendation to the COMPASS Board.

The UPWP is then presented to the full board for adoption. With formal adoption, the UPWP is then forwarded to the Idaho Transportation Department and FHWA for approval.

COMPASS has structured the UPWP such that tasks are categorized as follows:

- Pass-Through funds to other agencies. (Program Numbers 200)
- Projects are those that are mandated by the Federal Guidelines, Agreements and activities that are managed by COMPASS staff and approved by the COMPASS Board. (Program Numbers 600)
- Services include tasks that respond to member agency and public requests as well as providing support to projects managed by others. (Program Numbers 700)
- System Maintenance is the on-going support to staff, committees and working tools used by COMPASS in the planning process. (Program Numbers 800)
- Indirect/Overhead are the costs that support the agency as a whole. (Program Numbers 900).

Within each of these categories a program number is identified and a description is developed that outlines the objectives, benchmarks by quarter, lead staff, end product, estimated date of completion, participating agencies, funding sources and resource requirements. These Program Worksheets are compiled to create the Financial Worksheets to show the financial activity for the current fiscal year.

Valley Regional Transit, the public transportation authority for Ada and Canyon counties in southwest Idaho projects are included in the Transportation Supplement section within the document. Projects and funding sources are described in this section.

Additional details on the COMPASS UPWP are as follows:

- The UPWP documents all planning activities performed with funds provided under *Title 23 and Title 49*, as well as most activities performed by member jurisdictions with other funds. The following types of FTA and FHWA funding have been used for planning in the metropolitan area during the past three years:
 - FHWA PL funds
 - FHWA STP funds
 - FHWA CMAQ funds
 - FTA *Section 5303* funds
 - FTA *Section 5307* funds
- In addition to providing information on planned work tasks and budgets, the UPWP includes and reaffirms member agency agreements as well as the MPO's annual "self-certification" of the planning process.
- COMPASS explicitly considers the Federal and state requirements related to the 3C planning process, including the planning emphasis areas supplied by the federal agencies. This consideration is documented by means of a matrix which cross-references the work tasks to the Federal planning emphasis areas.
- Planning for *Title VI* compliance and DBE Goal development is reflected in the UPWP and the annual Self-Certification of compliance is included in the adopted UPWP.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- The UPWP is an excellent document that provides a user-friendly presentation of program activities in concise yet complete manner.
- We recommend that COMPASS add a brief description on the priorities and areas of emphasis for the work program.

Transportation Planning Process (23 CFR 450.312, 316 & 320)

Regulatory Basis:

Federal regulations 23 CFR 450.312, and 450.316 specifically identify metropolitan transportation planning process requirements:

23 CFR 450.312– Responsibilities, Cooperation, and Coordination

Key provisions are:

- The MPO in cooperation with the State and with the operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process... and shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in the conduct of the planning process, including corridor refinement studies... the unified planning work program, regional transportation plan, and transportation improvement program. [23 CFR 450.312(a)]
- The MPO shall approve the regional transportation plan and its periodic updates. The MPO and the Governor shall approve the metropolitan transportation improvement program. [23 CFR 450.312(b)]
- In non-attainment or maintenance areas, the MPO shall coordinate the development of the transportation plan with the State Implementation Plan (SIP)... including the development of the transportation control measures... the MPO shall not approve any transportation plan or program that does not conform with the SIP. [23 CFR 450.312(c) and (d)].

The regulation also requires cooperative development of congestion management systems, participation by the State in the development of metropolitan transportation plans, and participation by Federal agencies and Indian tribal governments in areas with Federal public lands and/or Indian tribal areas.

23 CFR 430. 316 – Elements

Planning factors that must be considered as part of the planning process are identified [23 CFR 450.316(a)]. As modified by TEA-21 [23 USC 134(f)], the seven factors are:

- Support economic vitality
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life

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- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
 - Promote efficient system management and operation; and
 - Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

Findings:

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) has been the MPO in the region since 1977, formed upon dissolution of the Ada Council of Governments (ACOG). Then known as the Ada Planning Association (APA), it was, and is, a voluntary association formed under the Joint Power legislation of the State of Idaho. Comprising the local governments of Ada County, members were the cities, school districts, Ada County, Boise State University, and the Boise Auditorium District.

One member of COMPASS, the Ada County Highway District (ACHD), is worthy of special mention. As established under Idaho Code, since 1970 the ACHD has jurisdiction over all public roads and rights-of-way in Ada County that are not under the jurisdiction of the Idaho Transportation Department. As a result, the cities and the County have no roadway authority. ACHD has a separately elected board, its own taxing authority, and the ability to adopt ordinances.

This unusual circumstance has changed the role of the MPO over the years. While other MPOs have determined the division of federal funds between local road jurisdictions, this issue was rendered moot by the existence of ACHD. Furthermore, the coordination of projects that frequently occurs at the MPO level has been less relevant.

Canyon County members have been part of COMPASS since 2000, with five cities, the County, and four highway districts now members of COMPASS. Canyon County does not have a county-wide highway district. All of the cities in Canyon County have jurisdiction of their own roads. Many of the smaller cities contract road building services to the four highway districts.

As a “voluntary” association, the role of COMPASS over the years has been a forum for coordination. The plans have been negotiated with local members and often result in compromises rather than radical changes. Idaho Code does not reference regional plans to any extent, and all powers are vested in the individual comprehensive plans. The powers of the highway districts relative to the comprehensive plans are subject to interpretation. ACHD has pointed to Idaho Code provisions, noting that the Code gives it sole jurisdiction. But others note that the Land Use Planning Act of 1975 requires that plans and programs of special districts must be consistent with the comprehensive plans. Certainly, the authority given to regional plans in some states is not present in Idaho.

Another significant issue within Idaho is the limited powers given to local governments under Idaho Code. Actions not expressly permitted under Code are not allowed. This is of special relevance in terms of funding. The only taxing power controlled by local governments is the property, with a limited exception allowed for communities with high proportions of tourism.

Local option tax powers exercised by communities in other states do not generally exist in Idaho. Furthermore, the property tax is limited to annual increases of 3% after allowance for real growth. These issues strongly constrain local governments from funding new or expanded programs, regardless of perceived or real needs.

Valley Regional Transit, the joint powers entity formed subsequent to the county-level votes on regional public transportation authorities in 1998, is also a voting member. Also joining COMPASS recently as voting members are the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and the Idaho Department of Environment Quality (IDEQ).

The Board is the decision-making group for COMPASS. Members are generally elected officials representing dues-paying members of local and state governments. Of the fourteen cities in Ada and Canyon Counties, eleven are members. The combined population of non-member cities is less than 3,000, or 0.6% of the regional population.

To support the process, there are a number of committees that now exist:

- Executive Committee: This committee is comprised of the executive officers of the COMPASS Board along with specific local government entities who are empowered to address specific activities established under COMPASS Bylaws such as approval of grant applications, formal correspondence, and to review the performance of the Executive Director.
- Finance Committee: This committee provides guidance on the financial aspects of COMPASS including dues, budget, and financial tracking.
- Regional Technical Advisory Committee (RTAC): Provides guidance on the transportation plans and studies, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and other issues as directed by the Board. Any dues paying member of COMPASS is entitled to a voting seat on RTAC. The RTAC is the committee of longest standing.
- Transportation Model Advisory Committee (TMAC): This committee provides guidance on the assumptions and procedures used in the travel demand model. Also advises on the appropriate uses of the model to help avoid abusive or inappropriate uses. Members are drawn from COMPASS member staff and from consulting firms related to transportation and land use.
- Demographic Advisory Committee (DAC): This committee provides guidance on the assumptions and processes used to develop and monitor growth and land use allocations. Members are drawn from COMPASS members and from entities related to economics or infrastructure planning.

Two other committees that have been endorsed but have not yet been formed are:

- Public Participation Committee (PPC): This committee will provide guidance on the public involvement process and evaluate materials and reports to ensure they are clearly written.

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- Regional Geographic Information System Advisory Committee: This committee will provide guidance on improving GIS processes and investments to improve its utility in meeting the needs of transportation planning.

COMPASS, ITD and Valley Regional Transit (VRT) work together to cooperatively determine their respective responsibilities in carrying out the planning and programming processes. To further facilitate this cooperation, COMPASS has a planning agreement with the ITD and VRT.

Coordination with the area's regional airport is accomplished by having the airport represented on the RTAC and the Board through the City of Boise, which is the entity controlling the airport.

Approvals of the COMPASS Plan and TIP and amendments thereof are acted on by the Board in consideration of recommendations by the RTAC, supporting technical analyses by COMPASS staff and public input.

As an air quality maintenance area, COMPASS coordinates with the area's Interagency Consultation Committee to resolve air quality and conformity issues in conjunction with the development of the Plan and TIP.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We commend the COMPASS Board for its active and enthusiastic participation by elected officials from both counties. This is a sound testament to the effectiveness of the MPO's planning process.
- We commend the MPO and its staff for its efforts to encourage and support member participation; particularly from its new members in Canyon County.

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Development *(23 CFR 450.322)*

Regulatory Basis:

Federal regulations require the development of a Regional Transportation Plan as a key product of the metropolitan planning process:

“The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing at least a twenty year planning horizon. The plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.” *23 CFR 450.322* The transportation plan is to be updated every three years in non-attainment and maintenance areas to ensure its consistency with changes in land use, demographic, and transportation characteristics.

The regulation also identifies a number of required elements that must be addressed in the Transportation Plan, including:

- Demand analysis *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (1)]*;
- Congestion management strategies *[23 CFR 450.322(b)(2) and (4)]*;
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle facilities *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (3)]*;
- System preservation *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (5)]*;
- Design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities, in sufficient detail to permit conformity determinations in non-attainment and maintenance areas *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (6)]*;
- A multimodal evaluation of the transportation, socioeconomic, environmental, and financial impact of the overall plan *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (7)]*;
- Consideration of the area’s comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives, to the extent that they exist; national, State, and local housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, and environmental resource plans; local, State and national goals and objectives such as linking low income households with employment opportunities and the area’s overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (9)]*;
- Transportation enhancements *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (10)]*;
- A financial plan that documents “the consistency of proposed transportation investments with already available and projected sources of revenue” *[23 CFR 450.322(b) (11)]*
- Public official and citizen involvement (in accordance with the requirements of *23 CFR 450.316(b)(1)*), including participation during the early stages of plan development, availability of document for public review, and at least one formal public meeting in non-attainment TMAs *[23 CFR 450.322(c)]*;
- Conformity determination in non-attainment and maintenance areas *23 CFR 450.316 (d)]*;

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- Copies must be provided to FHWA or FTA [23 CFR 450.322(e)].

Findings:

The Regional Transportation Plan is one of the major documents required of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Since designation of COMPASS, then known as Ada Planning Association (APA), in 1977 there have been seven updates to the RTP. Since the TMA designation in July 2002, the following activities have been undertaken in regards to the area's transportation plan:

- Canyon County Long Range Transportation Plan: In anticipation of the likely prospect that a new urbanized area would be identified in Canyon County as a result of the 2000 Census, COMPASS, in cooperation with its Canyon County members, initiated a project to develop a long range transportation plan for Canyon County. Subsequently, the Census Bureau did establish the Nampa urbanized area (Nampa/Middleton/Caldwell) on May 1, 2002.
- Ada County Long Range Transportation Plan: Following TMA designation in July 2002, COMPASS and its voluntary members in Canyon County engaged in a lengthy evaluation and discussion concerning whether COMPASS would formally expand to include the new Nampa urbanized area or, alternatively, if a new MPO should be created to provide planning services for that area. Ultimately, it was decided in March 2003 that COMPASS would, in fact, formally include the Nampa urbanized area (and its surrounding planning area). While it was understood that this newly expanded area would ultimately need to be covered by a single unified transportation plan, it was also recognized that development of plan of this scale would take more time than was available before the existing Ada County long range transportation plan would expire in July 2005. As a result, a limited update was undertaken and, subsequently adopted in December 2004.
- Bi-County Long Range Transportation Plan – Communities in Motion: In the Spring of 2003, COMPASS staff began planning for a new long-range transportation plan for the region – *Communities in Motion*. This plan will merge long-range transportation planning for Ada and Canyon Counties. By late summer 2003, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) started discussions regarding merging *Communities in Motion* with planning efforts they were beginning for the rural counties surrounding Ada and Canyon Counties.

Negotiations with ITD resulted in an expanded planning area to include Ada, Canyon, Boise, Elmore, Gem, and Payette Counties, with an emphasis on Ada and Canyon Counties. The additional counties are referred to as "Partnering Counties." These counties were chosen based upon a high percentage of commute traffic coming into Ada and Canyon Counties on a daily basis, as well as expectations of high percentages of population growth over the next 25-30 years.

The COMPASS Board wanted the *Communities in Motion* process to look at multiple land use and transportation system scenarios, provide innovative outreach opportunities, and consider public transportation alternatives. The desire was to avoid starting with a list of transportation projects; instead, the process would emphasize the desired outcomes of the community in terms of policies. The projects could then be evaluated in terms of their contribution to attaining the desired outcome. ITD was very supportive of a project selection criteria process to support the funding decisions.

In addition, a land use scenario process is being coordinated with the *Blueprint for Good Growth* project in Ada County. *Blueprint for Good Growth* will take the scenario outcomes and work with local governments to evaluate needed comprehensive plan and ordinance changes to implement the scenario.

Currently, *Communities in Motion* is wrapping up the land use scenario element of the Plan development process. The next steps include finalizing the prioritization process and transportation project selection. The target date for adoption of *Communities in Motion* is February 2006.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We commend the MPO and the State for their exceptional efforts thus far in the development of their new transportation plan, *Communities In Motion*. There is a significant and strategic opportunity for the COMPASS Board to influence the long term sustainability of the Valley's quality of life through the adoption of a far reaching and visionary plan. Please let FHWA and FTA officials know what we can do to assist you in completing this undertaking.
- We commend the MPO for its recognition of and responsiveness to land use issues in the development of the transportation plan.
- We commend the MPO and its Ada County members for its efforts to advance the transportation/land use connection in transportation planning through its "Blue Print for Growth" initiative in conjunction with the transportation plan development.
- We encourage the MPO to determine and articulate the roles and responsibilities of transit planning and to document these in the transportation plan. In addition, the MPO needs to put more emphasis on implementing its transit planning policies. To that end, the MPO should prepare specific staffing options and commit resources to the implementation of these policies. Many of the preferred futures of *Communities in Motion* rely upon the establishment of multi-modal transportation systems to provide choices to the urban sprawl of the "Trends" land use model of development. Without

actions that will change transportation investment, the historic American land development features/patterns will take over the Treasure Valley.

- Once Communities in Motion is adopted, we will expect the MPO to take the policy themes of the plan and apply them to the area's transportation program.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (23 CFR 450.324, 326 & 328)

Regulatory Basis

The MPO is required, under 23CFR 450.324, to develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, include:

- Updating of the TIP and approval by the MPO and Governor, according to a cycle (at least every two years) compatible with development of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). [23CFR 450.324(b)]
- Conformity determination by FHWA and FTA in non-attainment and maintenance areas. [23CFR 450.324(b)]
- Reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with 23CFR 450.316(b)(1) and, in non-attainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process. [23CFR 450.324(c)]
- The TIP shall cover a period of at least 3 years; additional years may be covered if priorities are identified and financial information is provided. [23CFR 450.324 (d)]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall give priority to eligible Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) identified in the STIP [23CFR 450.324 (d)] and projects included for the first two years shall be limited to those for which funds are available or committed. [23CFR 450.324 (e)]
- The TIP shall be financially constrained by year and include a financial plan identifying projects that can be implemented using current revenue sources and projects requiring proposed additional sources. The State and the transit operator must provide MPOs with estimates of Federal and State funds available for the transportation system serving the metropolitan area. [23CFR 450.324 (e)]
- The TIP shall include: all transportation projects, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, proposed for funding under Title 23, U.S.C., including Federal Lands Highway projects, but excluding safety projects funded under 23 U.S.C 402, emergency relief projects, and planning and research activities not funded with NHS, STP or MA funds; all regionally significant transportation projects for which FHWA or FTA approval is required and, for informational purposes, all regionally significant projects to be funded from non-federal sources; only projects that are consistent with the Transportation Plan. [23CFR 450.324(f)]
- Information shall be provided as follows for each project included in the TIP: sufficient descriptive material to identify the project or phase; estimated total cost; the amount of federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year; proposed source of federal and non-federal funds; identification of funding recipient/project sponsor; in non-attainment and maintenance areas, identification of TCMs and sufficiently detailed description to permit conformity determination. The total federal share of projects proposed for funding under Section 9 of the Federal Transit Act may not exceed authorized funding levels available to the area. [23CFR 450.324(g), (h) and (k)]

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- Projects that the State and MPO do not consider to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, geographical area, and work type [23CFR 450.324(i)]. In non-attainment and maintenance areas, classifications must be consistent with the exempt project classifications contained in the U.S. EPA conformity requirements. [40 CFR part 51]
 - Sub-allocation of Surface Transportation Program (STP) or *Section 9* funds to individual jurisdictions or modes shall not be used (unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the distribution of funds is based on considerations addressed as part of the planning process). [23CFR 450.324 (l)]
 - As a management tool for monitoring progress in implementing the Transportation Plan, the TIP shall identify the criteria and process for prioritizing the implementation of elements through the TIP; list major projects implemented from the previous TIP and identify significant delays in implementation. [23CFR 450.324(n)(1) and (2)]
 - In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall describe progress in implementing required TCMs and include a list of all projects found to conform in a previous TIP and which are now part of the base case in determining conformity [23CFR 450.324(n)(3) and (4)];
 - FTA and/or FHWA administrators may approve operating assistance in the absence of an approved metropolitan TIP. [23CFR 450.324(o)]

Several other regulations govern different aspects of TIP development and implementation:

- 23CFR 450.326 addresses modification of the TIP, stating that the TIP can be modified at any time, subject to the following conditions:
 - In non-attainment or maintenance areas, adding or deleting projects that affect emission levels requires a new conformity determination
 - Public involvement opportunities are provided consistent with requirements for complete information, timely notice, full public access to key decisions, and other relevant provisions.
- 23CFR 450.328 governs the relationship between TIP and STIP:
 - A Governor- and MPO- approved TIP shall be included without modification in the STIP
 - In non-attainment and maintenance areas, a conformity finding by FHWA and FTA must be made before incorporation in the STIP

Findings:

- The COMPASS TIP is updated annually. The procedures, criteria, and other requirements associated with these updates and amendments thereto are detailed in COMPASS' TIP guidance document entitled, "Policy and Procedures Guide for the TIP".

Collaboration between the State, the MPO, and the transit authority occurs at several points during the TIP update process. The State provides a schedule for the STIP, after

which COMPASS prepares a coordinated TIP schedule to ensure State deadlines are met. The State provides COMPASS an initial list of projects to insure coordination with development of the preliminary TIP project list and the air quality conformity analysis. The transit operator, Valley Regional Transit, also provides their project list to COMPASS to ensure its inclusion in the preliminary TIP. Both the State and Valley Regional Transit participate in the public review of the proposed TIP. The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) Office of Transportation Investment provides COMPASS with program funding estimates to ensure that TIP development is fiscally constrained.

The TIP shows *Section 5309* Federal Transit Administration funding committed to the area in the first year of the TIP. At the request of FTA, anticipated *Section 5309* funds are no longer shown in subsequent years. (They are added by amendment after they become available.)

- COMPASS' TIP Policies and Procedures Guidebook contains the sets of criteria used to rank proposed projects. Criteria have been established for 1) roadway and ITS projects, 2) alternative modes projects, and 3) transportation-related studies. Separate criteria have also been established for ranking projects proposed for Transportation Enhancement funding. All ranked projects are then included in the proposed TIP subject to fiscal constraints by fiscal year.
- The determination as to whether projects are consistent with the Plan is based on the project either being explicitly listed in the Plan or is judged to clearly advance goals and policies of the Plan.
- The COMPASS TIP historically includes project programming for a five-year period and an additional year for Preliminary Development (PD).
- The COMPASS TIP contains:
 - All the transportation projects to be funded under *Title 23, U.S.C.*
 - All regionally significant transportation projects, regardless of funding source.
 - Cost estimates.
 - Project phase and implementation status.
 - The amount of federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year.
 - Proposed source of federal and non-federal funds.
- TCMs are not required in the COMPASS area and therefore are not included in the TIP.
- The TIP is financially constrained by year.

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- The TIP does include a separate table of projects that are priorities for discretionary funding. COMPASS has not historically received this type of funding, but has increased efforts in the past years to have projects included in the upcoming federal transportation reauthorization bill.
 - The TIP Guidebook describes how public involvement is incorporated. The projects are solicited annually in writing and at a series of open meetings between COMPASS and member agencies' transportation committees, City Councils, or other groups designated by the member agency. Once the preliminary TIP is drafted, a 30-day comment period is held, during which an all-day public open house is hosted by COMPASS. COMPASS publicizes this meeting using direct mailing to stakeholders, website notice, legal notice, display advertisements in the region's two largest newspapers, and press releases. Any comments received and their disposition are provided to the COMPASS Board in the staff report when they adopt the final TIP in August and are also provided to ITD prior to their adoption of the STIP.
 - ITD incorporates, without modification, directly or by reference, the "final" approved TIP into the STIP.
 - The MPO follows the Federal procedures included in the STIP to determine when a TIP amendment is necessary and the level of additional public involvement. All TIP amendments are brought to the Regional Technical Advisory Committee for a recommendation, after which the item is placed on the COMPASS Board agenda for action. If public involvement is required, COMPASS hosts an open meeting and provides a 30-day comment period prior to Board action on the amendment. Once approved by the COMPASS Board, COMPASS forwards the amendment to ITD requesting that the amendments be included in the STIP.
 - The TIP is provided on the COMPASS website and available in hard copy. It does not include an ongoing list of current year's obligations but it does include a list showing the status of projects from prior years (e.g., committed, delayed, or completed).

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We commend the State and MPO for their development and administration of various funding programs (e.g., CMAQ, STP-Enhancement, and STP-Urban/Rural).
- We commend the MPO for its efforts and progress in implementing the TELUS project programming system

Project Selection *(23 CFR 450.332)*

Regulatory Basis:

The metropolitan planning organization (MPO), State and transit operators are required to select projects for implementation from the approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in accordance with *23 CFR 450.332*. Specific requirements include:

- In transportation management areas (TMAs), all *Title 23* and Federal Transit Act funded projects not included in the first year of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as an “agreed to” list of projects (except projects on the National Highway System (NHS) and projects funded under the bridge, interstate maintenance, and Federal Lands Highways programs) shall be selected from the approved metropolitan TIP by the MPO, in consultation with the State and Transit operator. *[23CFR 450.332(b)]*
- The first year of an approved TIP shall constitute an “agreed upon” list of projects unless Federal funds available are significantly less than authorized amounts. *[23CFR 450.332(c)]*
- If the State or transit operator(s) wish to proceed with a project in the second or third year of the TIP, MPO project selection procedures must be followed unless expedited project selection procedures formally exist. *[23CFR 450.332(c)]*
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, priority will be given to the timely implementation of transportation control measures (TCMs) included in the applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP). *[23CFR 450.332(e)]*

The Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) *[23USC134(h)(7)(B)]* requires the publication of an annual listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. This list shall be consistent with the categories identified in the TIP.

Findings:

In 2004, the Community Planning Association for Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) produced a Policy and Procedures Guide for the TIP that describes the basic features of the TIP (geographic area, time period, relationship to the long-range transportation plan), the process for soliciting and ranking of proposed projects, the coordination with the air quality conformity analysis, public involvement, amendment procedures, and project tracking.

COMPASS provides a list of preliminary projects to the State throughout the early part of each year. In March, a list of proposed projects is prepared for review by the Regional Technical Advisory Committee, of which the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) is a member. The

list is further refined upon the selection of projects by ITD for Surface Transportation Program (STP) -State, STP-Transportation Enhancement (TE), and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) projects. For transit projects, COMPASS is provided a list of projects by Valley Regional Transit and ACHD Commuteride that their respective Boards adopt for inclusion in the TIP and STIP.

Findings:

- None

Comments and Recommendations:

- None

Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint (23 CFR 450.322 & 324)

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for financial analysis are contained in 23 CFR 420.322(b), for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and 23 CFR 450.324(e), for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The provisions related to the RTP include the following requirements:

- Demonstrates consistency of proposed transportation investments with already available and projected sources of revenue;
- Compares estimated revenue from existing and proposed sources that can reasonably be expected to be available to estimated costs of constructing, maintaining, and operating the total transportation system over the period of the plan;
- Describes funding shortfalls by existing revenue source and identifies strategies for ensuring availability of proposed new revenues or revenue source;
- Balances existing and proposed revenues with all forecasted capital, operating, and maintenance costs of the existing and planned transportation system;
- Reflects existing revenues and historical trends; and
- For non-attainment/maintenance areas, addresses the specific financial strategies to ensure implementation of required air quality projects. (Also see *Air Quality* topic area.)

The provisions related to the TIP include the following requirements:

- Demonstrates financial constraint by year;
- Includes a financial plan demonstrating which projects can be implemented with current revenue sources and which projects require proposed revenue sources;
- Takes into account the costs of adequately maintaining and operating the existing transportation system;
- Developed by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in cooperation with the State and transit operator;
- Developed with estimates of available Federal and state funds provided by the state and transit operator;
- Includes only projects for which construction and operating funds can reasonably be expected to be available;
- Includes strategies for ensuring the availability of new funding sources;
- For the financial analysis, considers all projects funded with federal, state, and local private resources; and
- In non-attainment/maintenance areas, only includes projects in the first two years for which funds are available and committed.

Findings:

Financial plans for the long range transportation plan (RTP) and TIP have been limited in scope and detail for a number of reasons.

RTP Revenues and Costs:

The RTP's financial plan has primarily been based on data provided by ACHD to identify historic revenue sources; develop acceptable and reasonable forecasts of these sources; assess current and projected costs; and assess the amount of future funding that may be available after accounting for current and future systems maintenance. ACHD has a sizeable body of information on revenues, general expenses, project costs, and pavement/bridge management systems. Revenue forecasts have been prepared, based on tying future revenue streams to population or vehicle increases. Cost forecasts have also been prepared using ACHD data. Breaking out maintenance costs has been problematic, even for ACHD, due to the way in which reconstruction costs are often included in capacity-expansion projects. The biggest challenge has been to isolate the costs of maintaining a future system separately from the initial capital costs of building new highway capacity.

ITD has not provided similar long-range revenue estimates for use in the RTPs, although COMPASS has used broader studies prepared by ITD. COMPASS also makes use of financial records maintained by ITD, including Highway Distribution Account funds, vehicle registration data, fuel sales, etc. ITD is now engaged in a Forum on Transportation Investment that is evaluating long-term financial outlooks. This information is not likely to be available in time for *Communities in Motion*.

Financial capacity evaluations were prepared for the Canyon County plan in 2003, but, as with the Ada County plan, there were no estimates of costs for maintaining a future system.

Financial forecasts for transit activities have proven difficult for Idaho. Lacking a dedicated revenue source, transit has been dependent on discretionary funding at the local level. If a city funds transit, it does so out of general revenue sources such as property taxes or distributions of sales taxes by the State of Idaho. However, these are funds for which other services compete: police, fire, parks, libraries, etc. Also, many cities provide little or no funding for transit.

Federal transit capital funds have been difficult to forecast, due to the limited experience with discretionary funding until the last few years. Federal Transit Administration staff has indicated that projecting future FTA funding increases might be questionable unless there are new sources of local matching funds. Without a historical basis, it is difficult to estimate what is reasonable. Over the past several years, however, local transit providers have been successful in obtaining Section 5309 funds, primarily for bus acquisition.

TIP Revenues and Costs:

COMPASS works with its member agencies and ITD to establish the reasonableness of the estimated revenues. ITD, COMPASS and other agencies participate in a “balancing committee” with statewide representation to monitor use of STP funds. ITD also provides feedback on the amount of Section 5307 and other Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. ACHD has its own financial staff to monitor available funds. With respect to costs, COMPASS has good information on projects costs but has little if any information available to it on operating and maintenance costs of highway facilities.

Reasonableness Checks of Revenues and Costs:

COMPASS ensures that RTP and TIP financial plan costs and revenues are based on data reflecting the existing situation and historical trends by using the best information available at the time. Past efforts have gone back 10 years to establish cost and revenue trends. Forecasting both costs and revenues has proven difficult for COMPASS, especially for revenues where the amount is tied to policy changes such as State legislative actions on Idaho’s gas tax.

The financial plans for the RTP and TIP propose new revenue/revenue sources, but do not make any distinction as to the reasonableness of such new sources or likelihood that they might ultimately be available.

Maintenance Costs:

Cost estimates in conjunction with the RTP and TIP financial plans have been difficult for COMPASS to establish since many maintenance projects are mixed with roadway expansions. Historic maintenance costs may or may not indicate maintenance needs are being met at that level, since many agencies have not established a pavement management system with long-term tracking of system performance.

New Revenue Sources:

The financial plan for the RTP and the TIP proposes new revenue/revenue sources, but does not guarantee such sources will be available. Local governments have almost no power to approve new taxes without specific enabling legislation. Most funding tools, especially those related to new/increased taxes or debt, require not only enabling legislation but also are often tied to voter approval. The Governor of Idaho has recently approved a bill allowing the State to use Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE) bonds for a variety of projects around the state.

Financial Plan Checks in Conjunction with RTP and TIP Amendments:

RTP amendments have been rare, and so the issue has not been a concern. TIP amendments typically involve corrective actions or project exchanges within available funding limits as provided by the ITD Office of Transportation Investment.

Corrective Actions:

- The financial plans in the current long range plan (Destination 2030) and TIP lack sufficient detail and scope to satisfactorily fulfill Federal regulations (23 CFR 450.322 and .324)

Comments & Recommendations:

- Transportation Plan and TIP:
 - COMPASS should present comprehensive estimates of all revenue from existing and proposed funding sources that can reasonably be expected to be available for transportation uses within its planning area. This effort will require coordination with the MPO members including ITD.
 - The MPO members, and ITD in particular, should provide COMPASS with more detailed, long term transportation revenue forecast data than what is currently being made available.
 - COMPASS should present comprehensive estimates of transportation system costs to construct, maintain, and operate the transportation system over the periods of the plan and TIP.
 - The MPO members, and ITD in particular, should provide COMPASS with forecasts of transportation system costs to construct, maintain, and operate the system.
 - COMPASS should demonstrate consistency between anticipated transportation costs and revenues.
 - COMPASS should identify as “illustrative”, those projects for which funding is not identified in the financial plan.

Recommended references for presenting financial information and analyses of transportation programs include:

1. The Denver Regional Council of Governments' Long Range Transportation Plan (http://www.drco.org/documents/2025_Interim_Regional_Transportation_Plan_4-17-02_Part_3_of_3.pdf)
2. Wasatch Front Regional Council's Long Range Transportation Plan (<http://www.wfrc.org/reports/lrp/CHAP%208%20Financial%20Plan.pdf>)
3. The FHWA/FTA Transportation Capacity Building program (http://www.planning.dot.gov/Peer/Vail_Peer/Vail_peer.htm)

Public Outreach (23 CFR 450.316, 322 & 324)

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for public involvement are set forth primarily in 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1), which addresses elements of the metropolitan planning process (see also *Transportation Planning Process* topic area). Public involvement also is addressed specifically in connection with the Transportation Plan in 450.322(c) and the TIP in 450.324(c); air quality-related public involvement requirements, which pertain to the Transportation Plan and TIP, also are included in 450.322(c) and 450.324(c),

Requirements related to the planning process generally are summarized in 450.316(b)(1), as follows:

- A proactive process
- Complete information
- Timely public notice of public involvement activities and information about transportation issues and processes
- Full public access to key decisions and time for public review and comment
- Early and continuing public involvement in developing the TIP
- A minimum public comment period of 45-days before adoption or revision of the public involvement process
- Minimum 30-day review period for the TIP and major amendments in non-attainment areas
- classified as serious and above
- Explicit consideration and response to public input
- Consideration of the needs of people traditionally underserved by transportation systems, including low-income and minority households; consistency with *Title VI* of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Periodic review of public involvement effectiveness
- Coordination of metropolitan and statewide public involvement processes

The requirements pertaining to the (450.322(c)) are further elaborated as follows:

- Opportunity for public official and citizen involvement in the development of the, in accordance with 450.316(b)(1), including involvement in the early stages of Plan development, public comment on the proposed Plan, at least one formal public meeting

annually to review planning assumptions and the plan development process.

- TIP related requirements [450.324(c)] include:
- Reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with the requirements of 450.316(b)(1) and, in non-attainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process and provision for public review and comment.

Findings:

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) developed a policy for public involvement in 1994; the policy is reviewed every three years. It was last amended in 2003. The primary goal is to offer an active public involvement process that provides comprehensive information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans. A second goal is to consider and implement the principles of equality for all citizens as formulated in Title VI and the Executive Order for Environmental Justice to the extent reasonably possible.

COMPASS achieves these goals by:

- Hosting public meetings, workshops, public hearings, focus groups, surveys, and ad hoc committees and task groups and by providing comprehensive information such as posting meetings (dates, sites, agendas, summaries), and major documents on website;
- Offering presentations to organizations identified as stakeholders;
- Holding joint public meeting and other events with similar agencies;
- Notifying the public in a timely manner through paid advertisements, news releases, public service announcements, and legal notices;
- Providing full access to key decisions by publicizing meeting dates and sites, providing options for making comments, making draft documents and informational materials available, holding open house meetings to discuss projects/plans;
- Encouraging stakeholders (interested groups, businesses, neighborhoods, elected officials, agency staffs, and citizens) to offer continual feedback;
- Providing summary transcripts of public comments to elected officials prior to their decisions;
- Distributing citizen comments, staff recommendations, and board decisions to appropriate venues (website, libraries, etc).

COMPASS provides individuals and groups with timely information through a number of means, including news releases/news features, display ads, legal notices, newsletters (including project specific newsletters, agency partners, member agencies, associations, etc), postcards, e-mail distribution, and websites.

Information is available to the public both in hardcopy and on the internet. The public receives notice of the availability of this information during general project notification

(website announcement, email, legal notices, news release), by contacting COMPASS staff, and by searching the COMPASS website.

The public is invited to comment on key decision points:

- *Planning*: during visioning/goal setting, during the transportation improvements/components phase, and during the draft plan
- *Programming*: COMPASS staff works with local groups to select projects for the TIP; the public is invited to review and comment on the TIP annually in July for one month, including a daylong public meeting (8:00 am – 8:00 pm).
- *Project Development Phases*: COMPASS participates in the public involvement process with other agencies involved with project development, such as with the Ada County Highway District for the “Three Cities River Crossing” project, or those with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). As COMPASS begins to manage corridor studies and similar projects, there will be more opportunity for public involvement during project development phases.

COMPASS staff prepares an evaluation of each public involvement effort, along with notebooks containing notification samples, media response, public comment, and such. We can determine the level of effectiveness in assuring full and open access by the amount of publicity received, the placement of ads, the number of people attending and/or providing comment, and the level of interest raised.

COMPASS considers the underserved population by including the offer of Spanish translation in its newsletters and notifications, by offering a translator at public meetings/hearings, by locating public meetings in areas accessible by alternative transportation, and by distributing information through a variety of media, including Spanish language radio and newspapers, churches, and support groups.

Unless significantly and substantially altered, COMPASS does not go back to the public with revisions for an additional comment period. If such occurs, COMPASS will place a notice on the website and in local newspapers, and will contact via email those who made comment, to review the revised document.

COMPASS works closely with ITD to advertise public comment period and public open houses for the TIP, and to have staff and materials supporting the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) at the meeting. COMPASS also invites other transportation agencies to have staff and materials available at public meetings.

Entities with particular interest in transportation such as Commuteride, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Boise Airport are familiar with and involved in COMPASS’ public involvement activities through their membership in COMPASS.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We commend the MPO and staff for the initiative and efforts exhibited in public outreach program. The MPO has an exceptional process that is well organized, creative, and results oriented. In particular, we were impressed with the MPO's quantitative assessment of its public involvement process.

Air Quality

Regulatory Basis:

Section 176(c)(1) of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment (CAAA) states:

“No metropolitan planning organization designated under *Section 134 of Title 23, United States Code*, shall give its approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under *Section 110*.” The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 subsequently included provisions responsive to the mandates of the CAAA. Implementing regulations have maintained this strong connection.

Provisions governing air quality-related transportation planning are incorporated in a number of metropolitan planning regulations, rather than being the primary focus of one or several regulations. For MPOs that are declared to be air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas, there are many special requirements in addition to the basic requirements for a metropolitan planning process. These include formal agreements to address air quality planning requirements, requirements for setting metropolitan planning area boundaries, interagency coordination, Transportation Plan content and updates, requirements for a Congestion Management System (CMS), public meeting requirements, and conformity findings on s and TIPs. Sections of the metropolitan planning regulations governing air quality are summarized below:

- An agreement is required between the MPO and the designated agency responsible for air quality planning describing their respective roles and responsibilities (Also see *Agreements and Contracts* topic area) [23 CFR 450.310(c)]
- In a metropolitan area that does not include the entire non-attainment or maintenance area, an agreement is required among the State department of transportation, State air quality agency, affected local agencies, and the MPO providing for cooperative planning in the area outside the metropolitan planning area but within the non-attainment or maintenance area. [23 CFR 450.310(f)] In metropolitan areas with more than one MPO, an agreement is required among the State and the MPOs describing how they will coordinate to develop an overall transportation plan for the metropolitan area, and in non-attainment and maintenance areas, the agreement is required to include State and local air quality agencies [23 CFR 450.310(g)]
- The MPO is required to coordinate development of the transportation plan with the SIP development process, including the development of transportation control measures (see *Regional Transportation Plan* topic area). [23 CFR 450.312(c)] The MPO shall not approve any transportation plan or program that does not conform with the SIP [23 CFR 450.312(d)]
- In TMAs designated as non-attainment areas, federal funds may not be programmed for any project that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles, unless the project results from a CMS meeting the requirements of 23 CFR 500, *subpart E*. [23 CFR 450.320(b)].

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- The transportation plan shall identify SOV projects that result from a CMS meeting Federal requirements. [23 CFR 450.322(b)(4)] and include design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and future transportation facilities to permit conformity determinations [23 CFR 450.322(b)(6)]. The FHWA, FTA, and MPO must make a conformity determination on any new or revised transportation plan in non-attainment and maintenance areas (see Regional Transportation Plan topic area). [23 CFR 450.322(d)]
 - In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the FHWA, FTA and MPO must make a conformity determination on any new or amended TIPs [23 CFR 450.324(b)] and [23 CFR 450.330(b)].
 - In non-attainment TMAs, there must be an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process [23 CFR 450.324(c)]
 - In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall give priority to eligible TCMs identified in the approved SIP and shall provide for their timely implementation. [23 CFR 450.324(d) and 450.330(b)]
 - In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall include all regionally significant transportation projects proposed to be funded with federal and non-federal funds [23 CFR 450.324(f)(4) and (5)] and identify projects identified as TCMs in the SIP [23 CFR 450.324 (g)(6)]. Projects shall be specified in sufficient detail to permit air quality analysis in accordance with U.S. EPA conformity requirements. [23 CFR 450.324(h)]
 - For the purpose of including Federal Transit Act section 3 funded projects in a TIP, in non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall describe the progress in implementing required TCMs [23 CFR 450.324(m)(3)] and include a list of all projects found to conform in a previous TIP and are now part of the base case used in air quality conformity analysis [23 CFR 450.324(m)(4)].
 - In non-attainment or maintenance areas, if the TIP is amended by adding or deleting projects that affect transportation-related emissions, a new conformity determination will be required. [23 CFR 450.326]
 - In TMAs that are non-attainment or maintenance areas, the FHWA and FTA will review and evaluate the transportation planning process to assure that the process is adequate to ensure conformity of plans and programs in accordance with procedures contained in 40 CFR part 51. [23 CFR 450.334 (c)].

Findings:

Northern Ada County is designated as a maintenance area in attainment of the carbon monoxide (CO) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). A violation of the CO NAAQS has not been recorded since 1987. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) submitted the *Limited Maintenance Plan and Request for Redesignation to Attainment for the Northern Ada County Carbon Monoxide Not-Classified Nonattainment Area* to the EPA in December 2001. The EPA approved the Plan and subsequently redesignated the area in December 2002.

Additionally, Northern Ada County is designated as a maintenance area in attainment of the coarse particulate matter (PM₁₀) NAAQS. No violation of the PM₁₀ NAAQS in Northern Ada

County has been recorded since 1991. Prior to March 12, 1999, Northern Ada County was designated as a non-attainment area for PM₁₀. On that date the EPA Administrator signed a revocation of Northern Ada County's non-attainment designation. This ruling was challenged in the Ninth District Circuit Court. On January 31, 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice approved a settlement agreement for the Idaho Clean Air Force et al. v. EPA et al. lawsuit. A major component of the settlement agreement required an update to Northern Ada County's PM₁₀ SIP. In September of 2003, the EPA approved the *Northern Ada County PM₁₀ SIP Maintenance Plan and Re-designation Request*.

Commonly, exceedences of the 24-hour PM₁₀ NAAQS in Northern Ada County have occurred during severe wintertime air stagnation events. These events, known as atmospheric inversions, are caused when cold, stagnant air is held close to the valley floor by warmer air aloft. During these events, particulates form in the atmosphere out of such gaseous pollutants as nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC). Thus, both NO_x and VOC are considered precursors of PM₁₀. As a result, the PM₁₀ Maintenance Plan contains approved PM₁₀, NO_x, and VOC motor vehicle emissions budgets.

Within the past few years, exceedences of both the 24-hour fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and the 8-hour ozone NAAQS have occurred in both Northern Ada County and neighboring Canyon County. However, the exceedences have not led to violations of the NAAQS. Thus Northern Ada County and Canyon County are designated as attainment for both ozone and PM_{2.5}.

Responsibilities under Section 174 of the Clean Air Act are delegated between MPOs and the IDEQ, per state administrative rules. Specific to Northern Ada County, IDEQ is the lead agency for preparing and submitting SIPs, with the exception of the CO SIP. The Ada Planning Association (now COMPASS) was designated as the lead planning authority for CO. However, IDEQ must review and approve any SIP prior to submissions to the EPA. COMPASS is also designated as the lead agency for interagency consultation.

In 2001, Idaho State Administrative Code established rules for interagency consultation in non-attainment areas per 40 CFR 93. The Northern Ada County Interagency Consultation Committee on Air Quality (ICC) meets on a regular basis to discuss transportation conformity demonstrations and their components. State Administrative Code designates COMPASS as the lead agency for the consultation process.

The ICC meets regularly to discuss and approve the assumptions used to assess the regional air quality impacts associated with programmed projects. In addition, projects being planned for "out-years" (years beyond the five years of the TIP) are incorporated into the regional emissions analysis. The analysis is limited to roadway projects, as COMPASS' travel demand model is not currently capable of including the impacts associated with many intersection-level improvements. However, COMPASS' regional emissions analyses do include impacts from programmed projects not required in the analysis by 40 CFR 93. Once the project lists (or model networks) are approved by the ICC, a regional emissions analysis is completed by COMPASS and a draft conformity demonstration made available for public comment. After the public comment period, the TIP, along with its conformity demonstration, is adopted by the Board. The

TIP, with the associated conformity demonstration, is then submitted to the FHWA, FTA, and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) for inclusion into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

A 30-day public comment period is established for every conformity demonstration prior to the adoption of a TIP or RTP. Comments made on the conformity demonstration are addressed as applicable and included in an appendix to the demonstration. Additionally, meetings of the ICC are open to the public and noticed 30-days prior to the meeting date.

The projects listed in the RTP are those qualifying as “Regionally Significant” per the ICC’s current working definition. This list, along with other long-range project lists, like the Ada County Highway Districts’ Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), are used to assess the air quality impacts associated with the roadway network that is planned, assuming the same fiscal constraints that were incorporated to produce each list. Ultimately, it is up to the ICC to approve the project list used for regional emissions analyses.

IDEQ is the designated lead agency for SIP development for all pollutants, with the exception of carbon monoxide. IDEQ, therefore, is responsible for the evaluation and documentation of TCMs in SIPs. Both the SIP and TCM development processes would involve, to some degree, the ICC as motor vehicle emissions budgets and TCMs should be assessed for their reasonableness.

There are no TCMs needing implementation in any of the Northern Ada County’s Maintenance Plans. However, if there were, they would be included in the SIP, UPWP, TIP, and/or RTP. COMPASS is designated as the lead agency for implementation of TCMs, which would be accomplished via the TIP and RTP processes as applicable. In some cases, it may involve working with local governments to adopt ordinances. The ICC monitors the progress towards meeting any implementation schedules. Should action be needed to implement TCMs, the ICC would identify the appropriate action and work to see that action was taken by the appropriate agency.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We commend the MPO and its staff for its initiative and expertise on air quality and conformity matters. In particular, we were pleased with the MPO’s success in establishing and supporting an Interagency Consultation Committee (ICC) and the integral role that this committee plays in the MPO’s execution of its air quality and conformity responsibilities.

Congestion Management System (CMS) (23 CFR 450.320 & 500.109)

Regulatory Basis

An effective CMS is a systematic process for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and enhancing the mobility of persons and goods to levels that meet State and local needs. The CMS results in serious consideration of implementation of strategies that provide the most efficient and effective use of existing and future transportation facilities. In both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, consideration needs to be given to strategies that reduce single occupancy vehicles (SOV) travel and improve existing transportation system efficiency. Where the addition of general purpose lanes is determined to be an appropriate strategy, explicit consideration is to be given to the incorporation of appropriate features into the SOV project to facilitate future demand management and operational improvement strategies that will maintain the functional integrity of those lanes. *23CFR 500.109(a)*

Transportation management areas (TMAs) in non-attainment areas are required, under *23CFR 450.320*, to develop a CMS. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, include:

- “In TMAs designated as non-attainment for ozone or carbon monoxide, Federal funds may not be programmed for any projects that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles...unless the project results from a CMS...” *23 CFR 450.320(b)*
- “In TMAs, the planning process must include the development of a CMS that provides for effective management of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies and meets the requirements of 23 CFR Part 500.” *23 CFR 450.320(c)*
- “The effectiveness of the management systems in enhancing transportation investment decisions and improving the overall efficiency of the metropolitan area’s transportation systems and facilities shall be evaluated periodically, preferably as part of the metropolitan planning process.” *23 CFR 450.320(d)*

The CMS shall include:

- Methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multimodal transportation system, identify the causes of congestion, identify and evaluate alternative actions, provide information supporting the implementation of actions, and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented actions;
- Definition of parameters for measuring the extent of congestion and for supporting the evaluation of the effectiveness of congestion reduction and mobility enhancement strategies for the movement of people and goods. Since levels of acceptable system

performance may vary among local communities, performance measures and service thresholds should be tailored to the specific needs of the area and established cooperatively by the State, affected metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and local officials in consultation with the operators of major modes of transportation in the coverage area;

- Establishment of a program for data collection and system performance monitoring to define the extent and duration of congestion, to help determine the causes of congestion, and to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented actions. To the extent possible, existing data sources should be used, as well as appropriate application of the real-time system performance monitoring capabilities available through Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies;
- Identification and evaluation of the anticipated performance and expected benefits of appropriate traditional and nontraditional congestion management strategies that will contribute to the more efficient use of existing and future transportation systems based on the established performance measures. The following categories of strategies, or combinations of strategies, should be appropriately considered for each area: Transportation demand management measures, including growth management and congestion pricing; traffic operational improvements; public transportation improvements; ITS technologies; and, where necessary, additional system capacity.
- Identification of an implementation schedule, implementation responsibilities, and possible funding sources for each strategy (or combination of strategies) proposed for implementation; and
- Implementation of a process for periodic assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented strategies, in terms of the area's established performance measures. The results of this evaluation shall be provided to decision makers to provide guidance on selection of effective strategies for future implementation. *23 CFR 109(b)(1-6)*

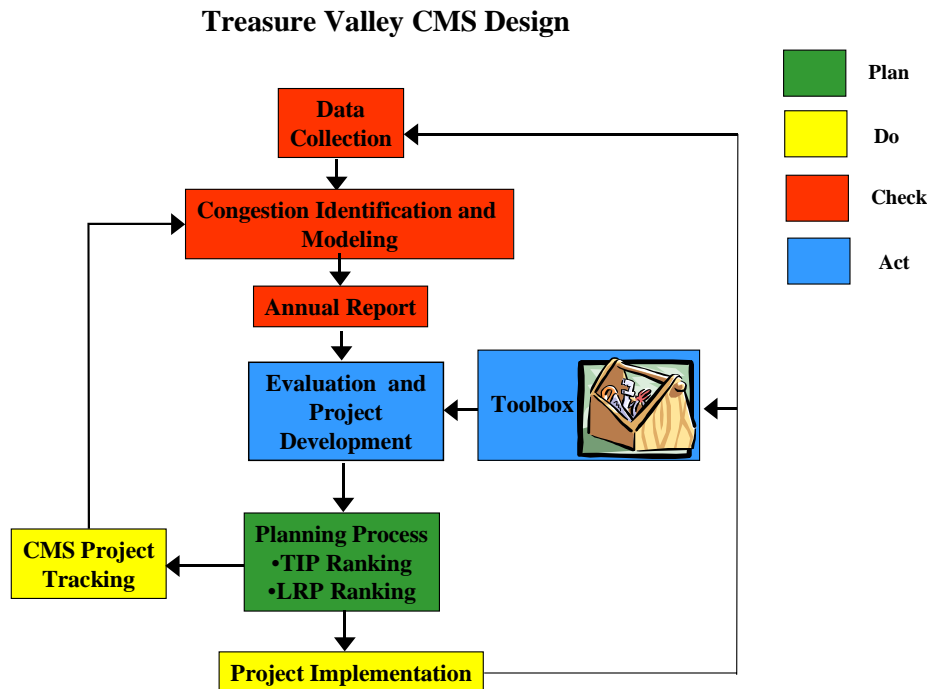
Findings:

To aid in the development of the Treasure Valley Congestion Management System (CMS) the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) Regional Technical Advisory Committee (RTAC) formed a subcommittee, the Congestion Management Team. The Congestion Management Team, along with the COMPASS staff, is charged with developing, reviewing, and maintaining the Treasure Valley CMS and its elements. The subcommittee is made up of staff from the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) local office, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), Ada County Highway District (ACHD), the Association of Canyon County Highway Districts (ACCHD), and Valley Regional Transit. Recognizing the impacts of land use decisions on congestion, the Cities of Boise, Nampa, and Caldwell; and Ada and Canyon Counties also participate. Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), Idaho Smart Growth, and transportation experts from various local consulting firms also provide input on the system.

The Treasure Valley CMS is designed to identify recurrent congestion as it applies to principal arterials and interstates. Roadway congestion is the most prevalent form of congestion in the area

and impacts both public and private transportation. However, as the transit and pathway systems within the Treasure Valley become more significant, the CMS may need to identify and define congestion specific to these facilities.

Fundamentally, a management system is a framework used to develop a plan, implement the plan, monitor the results of the plan, and take corrective action to improve the performance of the plan. Commonly, this framework is referred to as a “Plan-Do-Check-Act” cycle and is used as the basis for quality and environmental management systems throughout the world.



The current version of the Treasure Valley CMS collects travel time data on roadways with a functional classification of either interstate or principal arterial in Ada and Canyon Counties. Travel time data for some of these facilities were already being collected by the Idaho Transportation Department at the time the system was developed.

Travel time is collected for both peak (AM and PM) and ideal (free flow as measured in the early morning). Travel time is defined as the time it takes to travel a segment of the transportation system using a specific mode. Average travel times can be calculated and used to describe congestion along larger corridors or an entire system. Analysis of travel time data yields information about trends in roadway congestion on specific travel routes within cities, districts, or specific locations (e.g. near intersections). Annual changes in travel time are noted as are projects that were implemented that may have contributed to the identified change.

The actual performance measure used in the CMS is the ratio of peak travel time to ideal travel time. This ratio is referred to in the Treasure Valley CMS as the Sanderson Index (SI). An SI of

2.0, for example, means that it takes twice as long to travel the route during the peak (or congested) period than during free flow (or ideal) conditions. Congestion is classified as low, medium, or high based on SI and the location of the roadway. Modeled travel times are also used to look at how the project contained in the RTP may impact travel times. However, the modeled travel times cannot be directly compared to collected travel time data.

At this time only general purpose roadway congestion is monitored with the reasoning being that public transportation facilities and most of the goods movement in the area utilize the roadway system. As the other modes of transportation develop in the area, the CMS may be updated to define, measure, report, and mitigate congestion specific to other modes.

The CMS was designed and developed with input from local experts on transit and traffic operations by involving them in the Congestion Management Team. Additionally, local transit and traffic operations experts are asked to review and comment on the annual changes observed in the CMS data. This is done via an annual CMS report produced by COMPASS.

Each year a CMS annual report is generated and distributed to implementing agencies. The annual report contains information on all of the various outputs of the system. This includes travel time data, congestion classification and identification, project tracking, and changes in congestion.

Data collected as part of the Treasure Valley CMS or calculated as part of a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) deficiency analysis is reported back to transportation and land use planning agencies in the form of an annual report. These local agencies can then design mitigation strategies for the congested roadway segments in their jurisdictions using the CMS "Toolbox." Once a strategy has been selected for a highly congested roadway segment, it receives points during the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project prioritization process. Once the project is funded and implemented, the annual data collection process tracks its impact on mitigating congestion.

Projects or studies that will mitigate congestion on a roadway segment identified as highly congested by the CMS receive more prioritization points during TIP project prioritization. It is intended that projects or studies that mitigate congestion receive preferential treatment when being considered for Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds in the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) boundary.

Systemic changes to the CMS will be made as necessary. Triggers may include increased use/availability of public transportation, nonattainment designations, or the need to refine the definition of congestion in the Treasure Valley.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is used to allocate resources to the maintenance of the CMS, annual travel time data collection, and annual CMS reporting. Included in the CMS task is an activity referred to as CMS Maintenance which provides resources for the annual data collection effort, preparation of the annual report, and system modifications as needed.

Corrective Actions:

None

Comments & Recommendations:

We commend the MPO and its staff for its efforts and success in developing a CMS. The innovative concept developed by COMPASS is simple, practical and effective system for introducing essential information on congestion needs and solutions into the MPO's transportation planning and programming processes.

Self-Certifications (23 CFR 450.334)

Regulatory Basis:

Annual self-certification of the metropolitan planning process is required under 23 CFR 450.334: The State and the MPO shall annually certify to the FHWA and the FTA that the planning process is addressing the major issues facing the area and is conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of:

- 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303-5306; Section 174 and 176(c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act (if applicable).
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each state.
- Section 1003(b) of ISTEA regarding involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in FHWA/FTA funded planning projects.
- Americans with Disabilities Act and US DOT regulations governing transportation for people with disabilities (49 CFR parts 27,37, and 38).
- “Anti-lobbying” provisions found in 49 CFR part 20.
- All other applicable provisions of Federal law.

A certification review by FTA and FHWA is required in TMAs at least once every 3-years, in addition to the annual self-certification by the MPO and State.

Findings:

The annual self-certification for the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) is completed annually, signed by the Executive Director and forwarded to the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) for approval and signature. Completed certification is included in the Unified Planning Work Program and Budget (UPWP).

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

We commend the MPO for its thoroughness in addressing this requirement. In particular we were pleased with the MPO’s use of a matrix in the UPWP to document its consideration of the Federal planning factors.

TITLE VI and Related Requirements (23 CFR 450.316 & 334)

Regulatory Basis:

It has been the U.S. Department of Transportation's (US DOT) longstanding policy to actively ensure non-discrimination under *Title VI* of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI states that, "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." *Title VI* bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (e.g. neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups. The planning regulations [23 CFR 450.316(b)(2)] require consistency with *Title VI*; the *Title VI* assurance executed by each State adds sex and physical handicap to characteristics protected against discrimination.

Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, further amplifies *Title VI* by providing that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." In compliance with *Executive Order 12898*, the US DOT Order on Environmental Justice was issued in 1997.

23 CFR 450.334(a)(3) requires the FHWA and FTA to certify that the "planning process... is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of... Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794."

Findings:

The COMPASS Board and technical committee have adopted a *Title VI Plan* that the ITD compiled for the MPOs throughout the State. This plan addresses all aspects of Title VI and Environmental Justice.

COMPASS conducts personnel practices in compliance with applicable federal and state law regarding religion, race, color, gender, age, physical or mental disability, national origin, or veteran status. The personnel practices include hiring, wages and benefits, promotions, termination of employment, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

COMPASS' Title VI policy includes specific procedures for responding to formal grievances.

No Title VI or ADA complaints have been lodged against COMPASS or its planning process.

COMPASS seeks the viewpoint of every citizen through a variety of ways as further discussed in the section on Public Involvement. Some of these strategies used to solicit public comment include: newspaper legal ads and regular advertisements (in both English and Spanish versions), radio ads and talk shows (in both English and Spanish versions), television talk shows (in both

English and Spanish), letters to individuals and/or organizations, presentations to various service organizations, and posting to the website.

COMPASS supports contracting with state certified DBE. Accordingly, specific guidance as to contract, working, proposal preparation, bid submittal procedures or other assistance may be offered, but only to the degree that brings DBE firms to a level equal with other submitting companies.

COMPASS has established policies for contracting with DBEs.

Environmental Justice-Specific Issues:

COMPASS created a database and map of all areas that are high in minority and low-income populations in Ada and Canyon Counties at the Census Block Group level. The methodology for an environmental justice “consideration area” follows:

- The Tract/Block Group is *either* above 30% in the minority population and/or contains 50% or more low-income people
 - Minority is everyone who does not consider themselves as “white alone”
 - Low-income is defined as 60% of Median Household Income

Ada County has 22 consideration areas for minority/low-income populations – although all of these include only low-income populations. Canyon County has 23 consideration areas for minority/low-income populations. (The Environmental Justice consideration maps were attached to the email with this document.)

COMPASS does not currently make a distinction between needs and values of minority populations in the planning process. All projects are planned equally among all populations.

Recently, COMPASS has begun an effort to identify projects in the long-range transportation plan as to whether or not they go through low-income or minority population areas.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We commend ITD for its leadership and oversight of the MPO’s Title VI activities. In particular we are pleased with the State’s efforts in providing its MPOs with Title VI plan templates.
- We encourage the MPO to take prompt action on developing and submit a DBE Plan to ITD (as required by Federal law).

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- We commend the MPO for its efforts identifying and mapping the area's low income and minority populations for consideration of environmental justice issues. We encourage the MPO to next develop procedures for incorporating this data into the planning and programming processes.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (23 CFR 940)

Regulatory Basis:

The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards were issued on January 8, 2001, to implement section 5206(e) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). This Final Rule/Policy requires that all ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account conform to the National ITS Architecture, as well as to USDOT adopted ITS Standards. The Final Rule on ITS Architecture and Standards is published in 23 CFR Part 940.

23 CFR Part 940 states that:

- Regions implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must have a regional ITS architecture in place by April 8, 2005. Regions not implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must develop a regional ITS architecture within four years from the date their first ITS project advances to final design.
- All ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund (including the Mass Transit Account), whether they are stand-alone projects or combined with non-ITS projects, must be consistent with the Final Rule/Policy.
- Major ITS projects should move forward based on a project level architecture that clearly reflects consistency with the National ITS architecture.
- All projects shall be developed using a systems engineering process.
- Projects must use USDOT adopted ITS standards as appropriate.
- Compliance with the regional ITS architecture will be in accordance with USDOT oversight and federal-aid procedures, similar to non-ITS projects.

Findings:

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) in 1997 launched the development of a Preliminary Intelligent Transportation System Plan for the Treasure Valley, referred to as ITS Plan, Phase I. The primary purpose of Phase I was to identify potential ITS applications for the area's transportation system. Based upon the success of Phase I, the ITS Technical and Policy Committees recommended follow-up work, under Phase II, to develop four ITS system plans for the Treasure Valley. These are:

- Signal System Master Plan;
- Freeway Management Plan;
- Communication Master Plan; and
- System Integration Plan.

The Treasure Valley ITS, Phase II was launched in November 1998 with participation by federal, state and local governments, transportation agencies and emergency-response organizations in the Treasure Valley. The Intelligent Transportation System Policy Committee and its Technical Subcommittee developed cohesive strategies for traffic management and freeway management in the Treasure Valley. Federal funding was applied for the implementation of these plans and the development of a Treasure Valley Traffic Management Center (TMC).

The Phase II ITS plan was completed and approved in 1999. Following its adoption, the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) began implementation.

ACHD completed work on the TMC in January 2000. The TMC controls ACHD's traffic signal system and arterial street camera system. ACHD worked with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to make this a joint center that will control operations on all arterial streets within Ada County and the Treasure Valley freeway system.

The joint operation of the center has been beneficial to drivers within the Treasure Valley. As incidents are detected on the freeway system, messages are posted on variable message signs and vehicles can be diverted to parallel arterial streets. The operators can then change the signal timing to those arterials to accommodate the increase in traffic flow. The various components that will be controlled by the center are discussed in the following sections.

ACHD is responsible for over 326 traffic signals within Ada County. Approximately 225 of those traffic signals are controlled directly from the center. These signals are controlled from a standard desktop computer. Traffic flows are monitored and as conditions warrant, new signal timing plans can be downloaded to any one of these 225 intersections in less than one minute.

ACHD is in the process of installing incident management cameras commonly called Closed Circuit Television Cameras at various intersections in Ada County. These cameras will initially be installed on arterial streets to monitor traffic flow, adjust signal timings and detect incidents. ACHD plans to install 50 cameras on I-84 and I-184. These cameras will also be used for incident detection and to monitor traffic flow on the freeway.

ITD has installed variable message signs on I-84, I-184 and Eagle Road as part of the WYE Interchange construction project. These signs were used to post construction related messages during the WYE construction project. The signs are controlled from the ACHD TMC and used for incident management.

An effort is now underway to consider expanding the TMC concept to a larger region and to incorporate other functions such as emergency and public transportation dispatch. ITD funded a local consultant to work with transportation, transit, and emergency services in the region. The second meeting was held in March 2005, with a follow-up meeting slated for May 2005. This process may be amended to include updating the 1999 ITS plan to reflect the larger regional and service concept, include progress of actions under the 1999 plan, and incorporate new ITS architectural standards that have been instituted since 1999.

ITS Roles and Responsibilities:

COMPASS is one of a number of partners in Idaho's ITS initiative in southwest Idaho. While there is no formal ITS function within COMPASS, representatives of the MPO have been attending ITS meetings and COMPASS did administer the initial ITS architecture standards development project in 1999.

ACHD has been assigned duties to maintain the ITS system. ACHD administers the traffic signal program within Ada County, including those signals on the State system. A project is now underway to evaluate the creation of a regional operations center/system that could include other counties as well as emergency services.

Due to the potential expansion of the area to be covered by ITS and the age of the Plan, an update is needed. Current work addressed under the regional operations center development will likely result in a recommendation to update the plan. As part of that update, the question of what agency or agencies would be tagged for responsibility for ensuring that projects are developed using the systems engineering process would be addressed.

Corrective Actions:

- None

Comments & Recommendations:

- We commend ITD and ACHD for their initiative in leading the area's ITS efforts including ongoing work to develop an inter-agency Traffic Management Center.
- We acknowledge that the area's current ITS plan is consistent with the Regional ITS Architecture.
- We acknowledge that there is joint ITD/ACHD effort under way to update the area's ITS plan to reflect existing and planned additional ITS programs.

Appendix A: Public Comments

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

April 20, 2005 Public Meeting

The public meeting for the certification review was held at the Best Western (Rama) Inn in Meridian, Idaho. The location is central to the COMPASS planning area, both geographically and population-wise. Those in attendance consisted of both citizens from the area and representative from Federal, State, and local government (including COMPASS and Valley Regional Transit). Total attendance (excluding the Federal review team) was approximately fifteen. Of that number, seven could be classified as interested citizens not affiliated with local governments.

The meeting consisted of a fifteen minute overview of the purpose for the certification review followed by an opportunity for those in attendance to share their comments and questions on COMPASS and its transportation planning process. A summary of the nature and general content of the questions and comments from the interested citizens attending the meeting are as follows:

- Question concerning whether a change in political leaders could lead to a change in MPO structure. Specifically, it was questioned whether Nampa might someday have its own MPO rather than be included within COMPASS. In response the team explained that the MPO structure is a local decision but that redesignation of an MPO also requires Governor's approval.
- Comment concerning the way in which the formation of a regional transit authority (Valley Regional Transit) resulted in the enactment of fleet composition changes by the local transit operator. In response it was explained that such changes are at the discretion of the transit authority, not FTA or the MPO.
- Comment that the current planning process was good and that it provided a lot of planning resources and information such maps.
- Comment that there is a need to do more in the way of encouraging alternative transportation options such as cycling and car pooling.
- Comment that pollution and noise are important and growing concerns.
- Comment that far too much emphasis is still placed on roads and not enough on buses and the public transit system.
- Comment expressing concern that the absence of weighted voting (based on population) might have altered the decision on whether to Nampa/Middleton/Caldwell urbanized area would form a separate MPO or join the COMPASS MPO.

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- Comment expressing preference for Nampa/Middleton/Caldwell to have its own separate MPO rather than being included in COMPASS.

In addition to the above comments received during the public meeting, additional comments were received by writing (by email and by letters) from consultants, local government officials, and a neighborhood association. A summary the nature and general content of the questions and comments received in writing from the various sources noted above are as follows:

- Comment expressing satisfaction with COMPASS' performance as the MPO for the area. (Comment by local government staff in Canyon County).
- Comment expressing satisfaction with both COMPASS' planning process and its staff. (Comment by local government staff in Canyon County).
- Comment expressing compliments to COMPASS' staff concerning their level of expertise and the quality of their work. (Comment by local consultant).
- Comment expressing satisfaction with both COMPASS' planning process and its staff. Also expresses concern that we (the transportation community as a whole) may be adequately considering or evaluating technological solutions to our transportation problems. (Comment by neighborhood association in Ada County).
- Comment expressing satisfaction with COMPASS' staff and particularly the new Executive Director. Expressed view that COMPASS should place a priority on continuing its development of truly regional cooperation. Expressed need for re-evaluating the current membership structure of the Balancing Committee to afford representation of the area's largest city. Expressed desire for COMPASS to lead in the implementation of stronger policies and requirements for mitigating transportation impacts. Expressed desire for COMPASS to take the lead in advocating further funding of transit with FHWA (STP) funds. Expressed concern that the ACHD Capitol Improvement Program is developed independently from the planning process and, as a result, it may not be consistent with the goals and objectives of COMPASS' long range transportation plan. Expressed concern that COMPASS does not provide a sufficiently vigorous analysis of the consequences of land use changes to transportation. (Comment by local government staff in Ada County).
- Comment expressing concern that much more time and effort needs to be devoted to working on a good public transportation system for Boise. Furthermore it was pointed out that the area's current subdivision designs favoring the use of cul-de-sacs is confounding Boise's transportation problems due to the lack of circulation that they provide. (Comment by local citizen).

Appendix B: Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	American With Disabilities Act
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
CO	Carbon monoxide
COMPASS	Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho
IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAUB	Federal-Aid Urban Boundary
FA	Federal-Aid
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HOV	High Occupancy Vehicle
HPMS	Highway Performance Management System
IRI	International Roughness Index
ITD	Idaho Transportation Department
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan (also referred to as the RTP or RTSP)
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards

NHS	National Highway system
Nonattainment Areas	Areas that have failed to meet the NAAQS
PM	Particulate Matter
PM10	Particulate matter with a diameter less than 10 micrometers
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan (also referred to as the RTSP or MTP)
RTSP	Regional Transportation System Plan (also referred to as the RTP or MTP)
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SOV	Single Occupancy Vehicle
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TCM	Transportation Control Measure
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Plan
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled

Appendix C: Federal Review Team

Scott Frey
Federal Highway Administration
Idaho Division
3050 Lakeharbor Lane, Suite 126
Boise, ID 83703
E-mail: scott.frey@fhwa.dot.gov
Phone: (208) 334-1843

Rick F. Krochalis
Federal Transit Administration
Region 10
915 Second Street, Room 3142
Seattle, WA 98174-1002
E-mail: rick.krochalis@fta.dot.gov
Phone: (206) 220-7954

Robin Mayhew
Federal Highway Administration
Office of Planning, HQ
Evergreen Plaza, Suite 501
711 South Capitol Way
Olympia, WA 98501-1284
E-Mail: robin.mayhew@fhwa.dot.gov
Phone: (360) 753-9416