

2023 COMPASS State Legislative Positions

Approved by the COMPASS Board of Directors, December 19, 2022

Transportation Revenue

COMPASS supports continued investment in Idaho's state and local transportation systems. Idaho's current transportation funding level remains inadequate to address the state's needs. State and local transportation entities continue to face critical funding shortfalls for safety, maintenance, and expansion projects. Ada and Canyon Counties' combined population is forecast to be nearly 1.1 million people by the year 2050. An increase of over 300,000 people in 27 years will further strain a transportation system that is already congested and lacks mobility options for the region's residents. An additional \$193 million per year investment in the transportation system is needed to expand and maintain the system to safely meet the region's future mobility needs.

- **Increase state motor fuels excise tax.** The state fuel excise tax is currently the most effective "user fee" to secure additional funding for state and local transportation needs. COMPASS supports increasing the state fuel excise tax to meet the infrastructure needs of Idahoans.
- **Support exploring alternative user-charge concepts.** New automotive technologies and increased fuel efficiency necessitate expanding transportation user fee concepts. A mileage-based user fee should be considered to ensure all users of the system pay a share of infrastructure costs.
- **Support local option sales tax authority.** Local option sales tax authority would provide local units of government with a tool to supplement investments in specific infrastructure projects subject to the approval at the ballot box by affected residents.
- **Support a dedicated funding source for public transportation.** Idaho is one of a few states that does not provide a dedicated funding source for public transportation needs. As the population of the state and region continues to grow and diversify, both urban and rural public transportation entities struggle to meet the mobility needs of their communities.
- **Support a dedicated funding source for safe, community-oriented bicycle and pedestrian options.** Funding for safe community and neighborhood-oriented bicycle and pedestrian options should be a priority for the state.

State Transportation Policy

COMPASS supports the following changes to Idaho statutes to further improve the ability of state and local transportation entities to meet the transportation needs of the state and region.

- **Property taxes.** COMPASS supports removing the property tax cap that limits local taxing districts' ability to deliver needed infrastructure in high-growth areas. Recent actions by the legislature to arbitrarily cap taxing district budgets and limit adjustments for new growth has had a negative effect on local jurisdictions' ability to meet the increasing infrastructure needs associated with new growth.
- **High occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.** COMPASS supports changing existing statutory authority to allow HOV lanes to be considered by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) Director in any region in Idaho. Current statutory language restricts HOV lanes to counties with populations under 25,000 and a resort community.
- **Interstate passenger rail service.**
 - COMPASS supports the establishment of an informal working group, appointed by the Governor, and in partnership with ITD, to continue coordinating state-level activities in support of restoring passenger rail service to Idaho.
 - COMPASS encourages the Legislature to pass a resolution demonstrating its support for the return of passenger rail service, continuing conversations with the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) and Amtrak officials, and supporting the FRA Corridor ID Program application for service between the Boise Metro Area and Salt Lake City Metro Area.
 - COMPASS supports allocation of state funding to ITD to assist in a future cost-benefit analysis of the possible restoration and state funding of passenger rail service in Idaho.
- **Impact fee flexibility.** COMPASS supports statutory changes to allow for more flexible uses of development impact fees within a jurisdiction's right-of-way. Current statutory language limits the allowable use of development impact fees to roadway infrastructure to the exclusion of alternative transportation capital improvements, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or bus/transit improvements.
- **Speed limits on state highways.** COMPASS supports improved coordination and cooperation between ITD and local governments in the consideration and establishment of speed limits on state highways.