



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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January 8, 2026

Reply To: HPR-ID

Mr. Scott Stokes, Director
Idaho Transportation Department
P. O. Box 7129
Boise, ID 83707

Dear Mr. Stokes:

Subject: 2026-2029 Idaho Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and Planning Finding

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) reviewed the Idaho Transportation Department's (ITD's) 2026-2029 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), submitted on November 24, 2025, for federal approval in accordance with 23 CFR 450 Subpart A, B and C, 49 U.S.C. Sections 5303-5305 and 23 U.S.C. Sections 134 and 135.

In conjunction with the STIP approval, the FHWA and FTA conducts a Federal Statewide Planning Finding, which is a formal action taken by the FHWA and FTA to ensure the STIP is developed according to statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes consistent with statutory and regulatory planning provisions outlined in Title 23 and Title 49. The Finding serves as an opportunity to highlight areas that need improvement in statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes and is a prerequisite to FTA/FHWA approval of the STIP.

In addition, this review also includes a determination on whether areas currently designated as nonattainment for national air quality standards, or which are operating under a Federally approved air quality maintenance plan can demonstrate that their transportation improvement programs (TIPs) conform to the state's air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP). Consistent with this requirement, FHWA and FTA have jointly determined that the 2026-2029 TIP for the Bannock Transportation Planning Organization (BTPO) conforms to Idaho's SIP. Please note that transportation conformity rules may apply to any projects in non-attainment or maintenance areas

that are not exempt projects per 40 CFR § 93.126 and 40 CFR § 93.128. Requirements regarding project-level conformity may be found in 40 CFR § 93.104(d).

Based on a joint FHWA/FTA review of Idaho's 2026-2029 STIP and the overall statewide and metropolitan transportation planning process, we find that the program:

- identifies all proposed highway and transit projects in the State funded under Title 23 and the Federal Transit Act including Federal Lands projects,
- is consistent with the State's adopted Long-Range Transportation Plan,
- includes, without modification, the metropolitan transportation improvement programs approved by the respective metropolitan planning organizations and by ITD acting on behalf of the Governor,
- in air quality non-attainment areas, only includes projects determined to conform with the SIP,
- meets the requirements of 23 CFR 450.220 (project selection) for the projects listed in each program year, and
- was developed with adequate public involvement.

Based on our review, FHWA and FTA find that the 2026-2029 STIP is based on a transportation planning process that substantially meets the federal planning requirements of Title 23 and 49 and, therefore, give joint approval. Please see the attached Federal Finding for recommended actions for continued improvement.

For questions on this approval, please contact Katie Potts, FHWA Montana at (406) 441-3914; katie.potts@dot.gov and Carlos Herrera, FHWA Idaho at (208) 671-2133; carlos.herrera@dot.gov or Danielle Casey, FTA Region 10 at (206) 220-7964 danielle.casey@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

Lucia Olivera
Acting Idaho Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Susan Fletcher
Regional Administrator, Region 10
Federal Transit Administration

cc:

Colleen Wonacott, ITD, colleen.wonacott@itd.idaho.gov

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Danielle Casey, FTA, danielle.casey@dot.gov

MPOs: BMPO, BTPO, COMPASS, KMPO, LCVMPO, MVMPO

Attachment

Fiscal Year 2026 Idaho Federal Planning Finding on the Statewide/Metropolitan Planning Process

Introduction

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are required under 23 CFR 450.220(b), to document and issue a Federal Planning Finding in conjunction with the approval of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The Federal Planning Finding verifies that the development of the STIP is consistent with the provisions of both the Statewide and Metropolitan transportation planning requirements of 23 U.S.C. 134, 135; 49 U.S.C. 5303-5305; 23 CFR parts 450 and 500, and 49 CFR part 613. This report substantiates the issuance of the FHWA/FTA Federal Planning Finding to support FHWA/FTA approval of the STIP based on the review of STIP and TIP documents, statewide and metropolitan planning self-certification statements (23 CFR 450.220; 23 CFR 450.336), and related supporting documentation.

FHWA and FTA will continue to work with ITD and other relevant partner planning agencies on a regular basis to monitor progress and provide technical guidance for the recommendations identified below. This coordination and assistance will, at minimum, include involvement in ITD's system migration to STIP Manager at key decision-making points in the process and monitoring MPO coordination activities on a quarterly basis, including monitoring progress on the functional classification review. This assistance may also include the delivery of training and/or educational opportunities for the state, if warranted.

Based on our review documented on the following pages, the FHWA and FTA find that the STIP meets the requirements of U.S.C. 134, 135; 49 U.S.C. 5303-5305; 23 CFR part 450 and 500, and 49 CFR part 613. In addition, FHWA and FTA offer recommendations for improvement to support the State and MPO planning processes.

Fiscal Year 2026 Federal Planning Finding

Below are recommendations identified by FHWA and FTA to improve the federally required transportation planning process conducted in Idaho. A number of these recommendations are new, and others are carried forward from 2025 to further expand on on-going improvements

STIP Development, Content, and Documentation

- 1. Consistency with LRTP:** Regulations found in 23 CFR 450.218 require a STIP to be consistent with the State DOTs long-range transportation. Recommend adding context to the narrative in the STIP that ITDs long-range plan is policy based and explain how policy outlined in the plan is driving project selection for the STIP.
- 2. Consultation with Tribal Governments:** The STIP is lacking a description of the consultation process with tribal governments as required in 23 CFR 450.210(c). Recommend including a summary of the consultation process or directing the public, through a weblink or other means, to the documented tribal consultation process that ITD has adopted.
- 3. Transit Tables:** Template project tables work well for FHWA funded projects. Additional information in each project table is necessary for FTA to confirm grant awards can be provided to project sponsors. FTA will coordinate with ITD Transit staff to develop new template project tables for FTA funded projects.
- 4. Performance Measures & Pavement Condition:** ITD has commendable practices to identify projects in the notes column that are aimed at addressing progress towards meeting the states performance measures. Recommend including a statement in the STIP narrative under the Pavement Condition to highlight this practice, consistent with the language included in the Bridge Condition and Travel Time Reliability narratives.
- 5. Advanced Construction:** Recommend adding a statement in the STIP narrative that phases programmed using AC are listed in the year programming requests are made, not in the year that funds are anticipated to convert to federal sources.
- 6. Regionally Significant Projects:** Regionally significant projects are defined in 23 CFR 450 Part A. ITD references these project types as all projects that are not included as part of a grouped project category. ITD should confirm these projects are consistent with the definition and make necessary adjustments to the STIP to identify projects that are consistent with the definition provided in regulation or include an ITD specific definition for a regional significant project in the STIP.

MPO Coordination and Support

FHWA/FTA acknowledges the improvements made to enhance MPO oversight and coordination activities. To further this effort, FHWA/FTA recommends that ITD develop and document procedures and protocols for continued support of MPOs. These procedures should address the process for coordination of UPWP review and approval, including eligibility of proposed activities and budget accuracy. Procedures should also be developed to support the scoping and development of MPO long range transportation plan, TIP/STIP coordination, and overall expanded oversight of MPO progress toward meeting federal planning requirements.

Functional Classification Review and Oversight

Changes to highway functional classification associated with the Census-defined urban area boundaries were required to be completed by December 29, 2025. It is the responsibility of ITD to complete the functional classification update process and provide oversight of functional classification review if conducted at the local level. FHWA recommends ITD continue working with MPO areas to complete this review in a timely manner, with ITD conducting review and oversight of all recommendations. In addition to the completion of the urban area reviews, procedures should be reviewed and updated to support ITD staff during their review of functional classification recommendations from local agencies. Checklists may be developed to confirm reviews were conducted consistent with the 2023 FHWA Highway Functional Classification, Concepts, Criteria, and Procedures Guidance. Emphasis should be placed on the collection of traffic counts and their relation to adjacent roads, analysis of system continuity, and impacts to adjacent roadways based on recommendations. Updates to existing procedures and development of review checklists should be completed by the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2026.

Please note the functional classification updates affect the April 15th and June 15th HPMS data submissions for the following year and need to conform to the approved urban area boundary.