

## IDAHO USER FRIENDLY STIP

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### INTRODUCTION

This is a great opportunity for us to share experiences and exchange success stories on numerous aspects of ISTEA which most states have been struggling with over the past four years. The preparation, review, and approval of Idaho's State Transportation Improvement Program has been one of those ISTEA requirements which has been particularly challenging and has been scrutinized by the state legislature, the Idaho Transportation Board, local government officials, the general public, and the media. I feel that our new approach is worth sharing with other states.

### ISTEA

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) requires that each State prepare a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP, among other things, shall include all transportation modes, cover a period of at least three years, be consistent with the statewide transportation plan, and be financially constrained.

### OBJECTIVE

Idaho, like other states has faced the challenge of meeting the requirements of ISTEA in development of a STIP that meets both federal requirements and State needs. I believe that Idaho has met this challenge by the development of what I refer to as a USER FRIENDLY STIP.

The objective of Idaho was to accomplish the following with a single document:

- Satisfy both FHWA and FTA requirements.
- Provide a document that the public could relate to and understand our planning process.
- Have a geographic focus (with maps) consistent with the six districts.
- Combine all transportation modes.
- Involve Idaho's three metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).

### FEDERAL SUPPORT

We have received much more support for changes from FHWA than from FTA. This situation is mainly due to the physical proximity of the two agencies. FHWA has

an office in Boise, while the FTA office is located in Seattle. Idaho's transportation planning process would be greatly enhanced and streamlined through the consolidation of FHWA and FTA so that we had a single point of contact.

### INTERMODAL WORKING GROUP

The main reason for the success that Idaho has realized in the development of a USER FRIENDLY STIP is in the organization of an effective intermodal working group (Group). The Group consists of representatives from the ITD Planning, Highways, Public Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Rail, Districts, and Public Affairs offices as well as the FHWA. The Group meets monthly and coordinates the activities of all modes. An annual schedule and calendar for the STIP update is developed by the Group. All transportation modes are coordinated with individual schedules adjusted to the benefit of the overall STIP process. The Group strives toward a common format of getting information out for public review and comment and minimizes the number of public meetings through the consolidation of activities. Also, there is a common interest in the development of a STIP document that has a uniform format that is truly multimodal.

### SCHEDULE AND PROCESS FOR STIP DEVELOPMENT

All key players involved in the development, review, and adoption of the STIP worked together to establish a schedule and ground rules for finalization. A consensus was reached on process and steps necessary to meet everyone's expectations and needs. The MPOs were also key players in this process. Their local metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) are required to be incorporated into and mirror the STIP. In addition, two of the MPOs must also undertake air quality conformity determinations before projects can be approved for inclusion in the TIPs. Once the STIP reaches Idaho Transportation Board review, any changes affecting project contributing to conformity could affect the acceptance of the overall STIP. Therefore, procedures and contingencies during the review process were established up front by state and MPO Policy Boards.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

There has been an ongoing problem with providing the public with information that is easily understood and serves as the basis for review and comment. We have concluded that the use of maps and an emphasis on routes are important. The public is usually concerned about what is planned for their particular area or along a certain route rather than funding source or jurisdiction. Project information was made available with cross reference to district maps regardless of funding category. The importance of a good visual aid for orientation and use cannot be overemphasized.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The STIP should be viewed as an implementation tool of the long-range transportation plan. ISTEA requires that projects in the STIP be selected based on the plan. The display of all modes of transportation on district maps is most helpful in the analysis of implementing the plan's vision of the future and action strategies.

**FUTURE FUNDING**

Idaho's format of the STIP is conducive to potential future flexible funding. Re-authorized legislation may give states considerably more flexibility in funding projects regardless of transportation mode. This places more importance on planning and intermodal issues that need to be addressed. We are confident that better policy decisions will be made through the use of good maps and the implementation of a seamless transportation system contained in the STIP.

**AVAILABLE COPIES**

Copies of Idaho's recently adopted STIP document may be obtained by contacting:

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