

The History of Public Transportation in Idaho

Prior to 1991

- Little federal funding and no state funding for public transportation
- Two cities classified "small urban" by the U.S. Census (population more than 50,000) - Boise and Pocatello
- Two metropolitan planning agencies – Ada Planning Association and the Bannock Planning Agency
- No state "office" of public transportation
- Small "rural" transit program

Since 1991

- Public transportation needs/options studied to death
- Three interim legislative committees
- Four attempts to establish PT policy
- Four attempts to address funding needs
- Elimination of local citizen input on PT
- Changing conditions caused by growth
- A marked increase in federal funding

Highlights

1991

- The Idaho Collaborative Project (ICP) was formed in the Idaho Falls area to address perceptions that the state was not interested in public transportation in Idaho. In its final report, members called for comprehensive PT services for all state residents, a statewide policy, a lead agency and identification of a stable funding source.

1992

- Legislation passed (Idaho Code 40-514) that provided for all the ICP recommendations, including formation of the state-level Public Transportation Advisory Council (PTAC) and the Interagency Working Group. The legislation also required a state commitment to improve public transportation (but did not define what that "state commitment was). It did not provide a funding mechanism for public transportation.

1994

- Legislation was proposed that would for the formation of regional public transportation authorities (RPTA) by a vote of the people. It also included a funding mechanism. Legislators refused to consider the legislation unless the funding provision was removed. It was removed and the legislation became law (Chapter 21, Title 40, Idaho Code).

1995

An interim committee researching public transportation urged lawmakers to consider funding methods that would allow ITD to participate in funding public transportation.

Also, a coalition made up of the Community Transportation Association of Idaho, ITD and PTAC recommended that the title transfer fee be raised by \$2, with the proceeds dedicated for public transportation. The proposal was made in 1996, but failed to get out of the House Transportation Committee.

1996

Bonneville County voters approved the first RPTA in the state. After the vote, some cities in the county said they did not want to participate. The law was amended to provide a second method of establishing RPTA boundaries that permitted exclusion of political subdivisions that declined to participate.

1997

A tire tax proposal to add \$1 to the purchase price of each new tire (with the funds earmarked for public transportation) failed to get out of the House Transportation Committee. The proposal, which included policy that confirmed the state's support role, would have raised \$1.2 million a year. A second proposal, calling for a fee of up to \$5 per vehicle (with approval by voters), passed the House but failed to get a

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hearing in the Senate. That money would have been earmarked for use by RPTAs.

1998

A new effort to pass the title transfer fee (now called a surcharge) failed on the House floor. The fee would have raised \$1.2 million a year.

1999

The exact same policy that passed the House in 1997 was introduced in the Senate. It did not receive a hearing.

2000

Idaho Code 40-514 was amended. It expanded the Interagency Working Group, required the reporting of more detailed performance data, and eliminated regional advisory committees.

2003

The Idaho Task Force on Public Transportation researches PT in Idaho and possible solutions to funding problems.

2004

Task force members present its findings to a joint meeting of the House and Senate Transportation committees. State legislators authorize the Legislative Council to appoint a committee to undertake and complete a study of Idaho's transportation system, including strategies for providing private and public funding of public transportation services. This committee, which also examined air quality issues, consisted of 14 legislators (eight from the Treasure Valley). The panel held three meetings—all in Boise. The committee, in its final report, did not address funding—only policy. It recommended adoption of public transportation policy legislation.

2005

Proposed legislation setting a statewide public transportation policy is introduced in the Senate. It passes unanimously. It did not receive a hearing in the house.

2006

Plans are to introduce proposed legislation setting a statewide public transportation policy in the House.