

2004 Leadership Conference



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY POINTS OF THE 2004 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, TITLED "DEVELOPING REGIONAL PUBLIC POLICY: TEN YEARS OF PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE":

A decade of effort pays off with historic Ada land use/transportation agreement (details, page 1)

Institute for Urban & Regional Planning announced for BSU (details, page 1)

Growing maintenance burden threatens transportation projects (details, page 2)

"Revenue sharing" spreads funds & problems (details, page 2)

Strange but true: failed projects found crucial role in early valley development (details, page 2)

Going there, doing that: tales of what's being done in other regions (details, page 3)

Conference attendees say focus must remain regional and include Canyon County (details, page 3)

Next step: Get into details, take risks (details, page 3)

A DECADE OF EFFORT PAYS OFF WITH HISTORIC ADA LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT

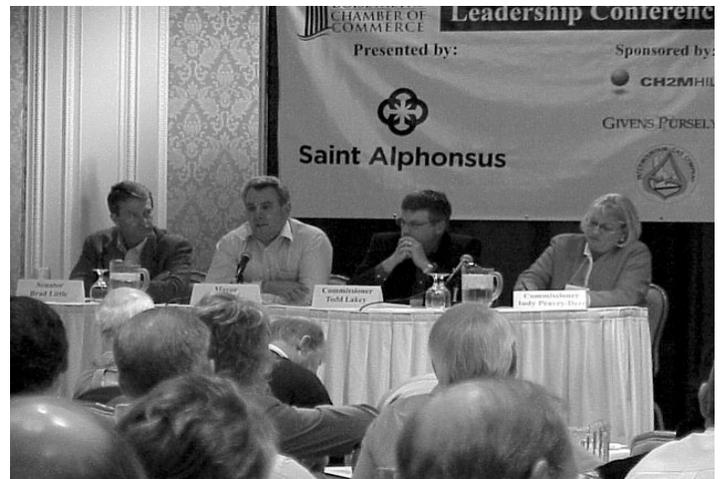
County's mayors, commission and highway district agree to hire national expert to unite comprehensive plans and transportation policies

Groundbreaking regional initiatives often emerge from the annual Leadership Conference. But what's considered to be the single most important agreement ever was announced at this year's meeting, held April 25-27 at the Sun Valley Inn.

The Ada County Highway District Commission, the Ada County Commission and the county's six mayors announced signing a historic agreement to coordinate land use and transportation.

Over the years, these entities have sometimes clashed over jurisdictional issues, conflicting comprehensive plans and turf. But the groups have now agreed to a rigorous 18-month process to allow nationally recognized expert Robert Freilich to develop the plan and implementing ordinances.

"This plan will give us the ability to coordinate our common goals and attract the kind of development that will minimize traffic



State Senator Brad Little, Boise Mayor Dave Bieter, Canyon County Commissioner Todd Lakey and Ada County Commissioner Judy Peavy-Derr discuss regional public policy.

congestion and air pollution," said John Franden, ACHD president.

The effort will be developed in two concurrent phases:

- A land use and transportation growth management plan that will explore alternative growth patterns that reflect free market approaches

and more viable economic development; and

- Implementing the growth management plan into each entity's comprehensive land use and transportation plan, ordinances and regulations.

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INSTITUTE FOR URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING ANNOUNCED FOR BSU

School will lend expertise to assist in vision and implementation of regional efforts

Boise State University is fulfilling its goal of becoming a "metropolitan university" in more ways than one.

In yet another major development at this year's Leadership Conference the formation was announced of the Institute for Urban & Regional Planning at Boise State University. The Institute, which is to be publicly and privately funded, will work in conjunction with the development of the Ada County land use/transportation plan in collaboration with government and industry (see

story above).

"We need to encourage regional vision and promote regional planning and we cannot wait for the state or federal government to act on this," said Michael Blankenship, Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs at BSU, who is also leading the efforts to fund and assemble the Institute. "We need the community's involvement and support to make this happen."

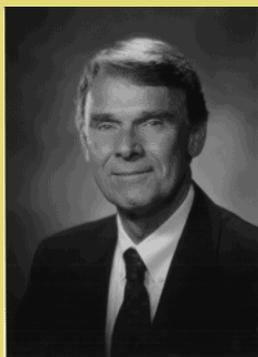
Some of the details to be worked out include how exactly the Institute will help out with the Ada County agreement;

how the Institute can be of use to Canyon County; and how the Institute will work with local governments and entities such as COM-PASS. While attendees agreed implementation won't be easy, they agreed about the need to move forward with the initiative.

"It's not too often that we have our destiny in front of us," Blankenship said. "We need to be engaging in planning 20 and 50 years out, so our future generations can say, 'They didn't fail us.'"

Growing maintenance burden threatens transportation projects

More driving, lower density shifts budget from expansion to upkeep



“Leadership is important, but just as important is the followership. We must have people in business and government who will stand behind the leaders and make sure they’re not committing political suicide when they take a chance.”

Dan Stevens, 2004 Conference Chairman, President and CEO, Home Federal

“The letter that was signed (by Ada County governments) was a huge development. We always leave these conferences excited and energized, but now we’re leaving with a plan in place. We’re going to be doing joint cooperative planning. It won’t be easy, but we have to do it.”

**Maryanne Jordan
Boise City Council**

For most of the 1990s, the Ada County Highway District spent about a third of its budget on maintenance, leaving most of the rest for new roads, bridges and inter-sections and expansion projects.

But that’s starting to change and speakers at the Leadership Conference warned the trend will make it harder to keep up with growth.

Growth expert Robert Freilich told the conference that lower-density development means fewer tax-payers to support each mile of road. But lower density requires more driving, which adds to wear and tear and generates demand for expansion.

“Ten years ago, the ACHD’s budget was 20 per-cent for operations and maintenance and 80 per-cent for growth and today it’s 50-50,” Freilich said. “By 2010, its going to be 20 percent for growth and 80 percent for maintenance. You’re building miles of road you can’t afford to main-tain.”

Attendees said addressing the imbalance is worri-some and affects Canyon County as well.

“The ACHD’s increasing maintenance budget is a sledgehammer for everyone,” said Elliot Werk, state senator, District 17. “If we can’t build roads and we can’t even maintain the roads we have, how are you going to build a subdivision?”

~Strange but true ~

Idaho Power didn’t build the Swan Falls dam—investors built it to power silver mining operations, which failed. The New York Canal began as a hydrau-lic mining venture that also failed.

BSU history professor Todd Shallat cited the dam, canal and other local landmarks as cautionary tales in his talk about chaos theory and public policy.

For example, although the dam and canal were fail-ures for their original purposes, Shallat noted they played a crucial role in the valley’s growth for dec-ades by supplying cheap electricity and water for factories, homes farms and the new trolley system.

“There is order in history disguised as randomness, but the connections are more complex,” Shallat said. “Changing the nature of the physical landscape influences strange and unexpected events.”

“Revenue sharing” spreads funds & problems

It’s a common problem for fast-growing regions: People work and shop in one city and live in another, bur-dening one city with demands for schools, police, fire, roads and recreation—but generating commercial tax revenue in another city.

Perhaps the ultimate sign of regional cooperation is when jurisdictions share their tax revenue. In the 1970s, the Minneapolis/St. Paul area took that leap and shared 40 percent of the regional tax base with cities that lacked commercial and industrial growth. While the program had successes, it was also hard to manage, said David Childs with the International City/County Management Association. Refinements to the system included a proposal in the late 1990s to add high-value housing in the sharing pool.

“Stronger suburbs would lobby on one side, and losers group lobbied on the other side, and it created jeal-ousies and hard feelings,” Childs said. “Tax base sharing has unintended consequences; lobbying groups rally around winners and losers and that fractures public policy relationships.”

A decade of effort pays off with historic Ada land use/ transportation agreement *(continued from page 1)*

The Ada County Highway Dis- trict’s legal and planning con- sulting firm of Freilich, Leitner & Carlisle of Kansas City will assist in the coordination and develop- ment of the plan.

“This new effort is to actually begin the implementation of the widely shared goals and objectives that have been building over a ten year

effort to build a vision, develop the studies and create the consensus for action” said Freilich, who gave a presentation at the conference.

Nancy Vannorsdel, President and CEO of the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, said the BSU Insti- tute and the planning agreement show that local officials are com- mitted to protecting the Treasure

Valley’s quality of life.

“This is significant progress for the business community, because without our quality of life, our economy will suffer,” Vannorsdel said. “We all have a stake in keeping this a good place to live and the BSU Institute and the county-wide plan are important continuing steps in that process.”

Going there, doing that: Tales of what's being done in other regions

Toughest measures include limiting road access and capping building permits

A regional government around Lake Tahoe, Calif., caps building permits and there's a 10-year waiting list. In Atlanta, Ga., a regional government decides if a development can hook up to the road system—essentially determining what gets built.

These are the more extreme powers that regional governments have, speakers told attendees at this year's Leadership Conference. And, while they're strict by our standards, regional cooperation to some degree is necessary.

"The new reality is that to be competitive in the world market, you must adopt regionalism as a decisive strategy for economic success,"

said regional growth expert Catherine Ross. "The economies of scale are right for managing issues like water quality, air quality and transit funding."

Local control is a sensitive issue, Ross said. It's crucial to have a regional plan that all cities accept.

Ross said the "new regionalism" being practiced in other places emphasizes:

- The quality and attractiveness of development;
- The walkability of developments, their mix of uses and how well they connect to the region;
- Open space conservation;

- Efficient management of infrastructure expansion.

Summer Sharpe, a planning consultant, said Portland's regional government has been effective in promoting better growth. Officials there, however, have been careful to engage the public.

"If there's understanding and agreement about how much growth is going to occur here and who is going to be the service provider, you can then talk about the type of community you want and how to pay for it," Sharpe said.



"It takes more than transportation solutions to address transportation problems. You must coordinate land use, zoning and housing to address it comprehensively."

**Catherine Ross,
Georgia Tech University**

Conference attendees say focus must remain regional and include Canyon County

Ada County's historic land use and transportation agreement is great news, but we need to keep our focus on the entire Treasure Valley, said attendees at this year's conference.

"We're seeming to shift gears now. We're redefining the region as Ada County," said Canyon County Commissioner Todd Lakey. "What Ada County is doing is good, but it's not regional. It's Ada County."

Phil Kushlan, executive director of the Capital City Dev-

elopment Corporation (CCDC), agreed the region must move forward as a whole.

"We need to address Canyon County and we need the public policy piece," Kushlan said.

Several people at the conference said just getting all the Ada jurisdictions to agree was difficult enough and they hoped the Ada agreement could inspire Canyon to undertake a similar effort. Then, region-wide land use and transportation coordination could be possible.

Next step: Get into details, take risks

Breakout sessions call for leadership, cooperation

The 2004 Leadership Conference ended with a manifesto to leaders in business, government and academia: show leadership and don't be afraid to consider a form of regional government.

On the final morning of the conference, attendees broke into groups to discuss how to apply the lessons of the conference to the Treasure Valley.

"A lot has been accomplished over this past 10 years," said BSU Prof. Jim Weatherby, summing up the group he facilitated. "I think you are talking about regional government, but we need to meet more often, at least in a few months from now."

Attendees had many ideas for regional cooperation.

"I'd like to see a study of the economics of a region-wide sewer system, a region-wide water system," said Dean Obray, Mayor of Kuna. "It looks like you could cut down on lots of costs. How are we going to know that if

we can't study it?"

However, attendees in different groups kept raising the same issue: How to balance independence and cooperation.

"The region must define the model. Is it going to be centralized or decentralized?" said LaMont Keen, Idaho Power CEO. "It seems like we're going with a decentralized model, and we'll do what we can with 35 leaders at the table."

Developer Peter O'Neill said the current patchwork of agencies complicates regional initiatives.

"Do we really need 9 sewer districts? Portland has a regional park district," O'Neill said. "The real challenge is to put some teeth in the plan. Maybe thinking locally has been keeping us where we are."

"It's a question of will. When you have 35 different projects, it's a question of will to say, 'We have to agree to stick with it and focus on it and draw it to a conclusion, even if it's a decade long.'"

Mark Falconer, governmental affairs, Hewlett-Packard

"We haven't addressed the Hispanic community. They are becoming a larger segment of the population, and where are we incorporating them? How do they fit in not just as users, but also as participants and contributors?"

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